

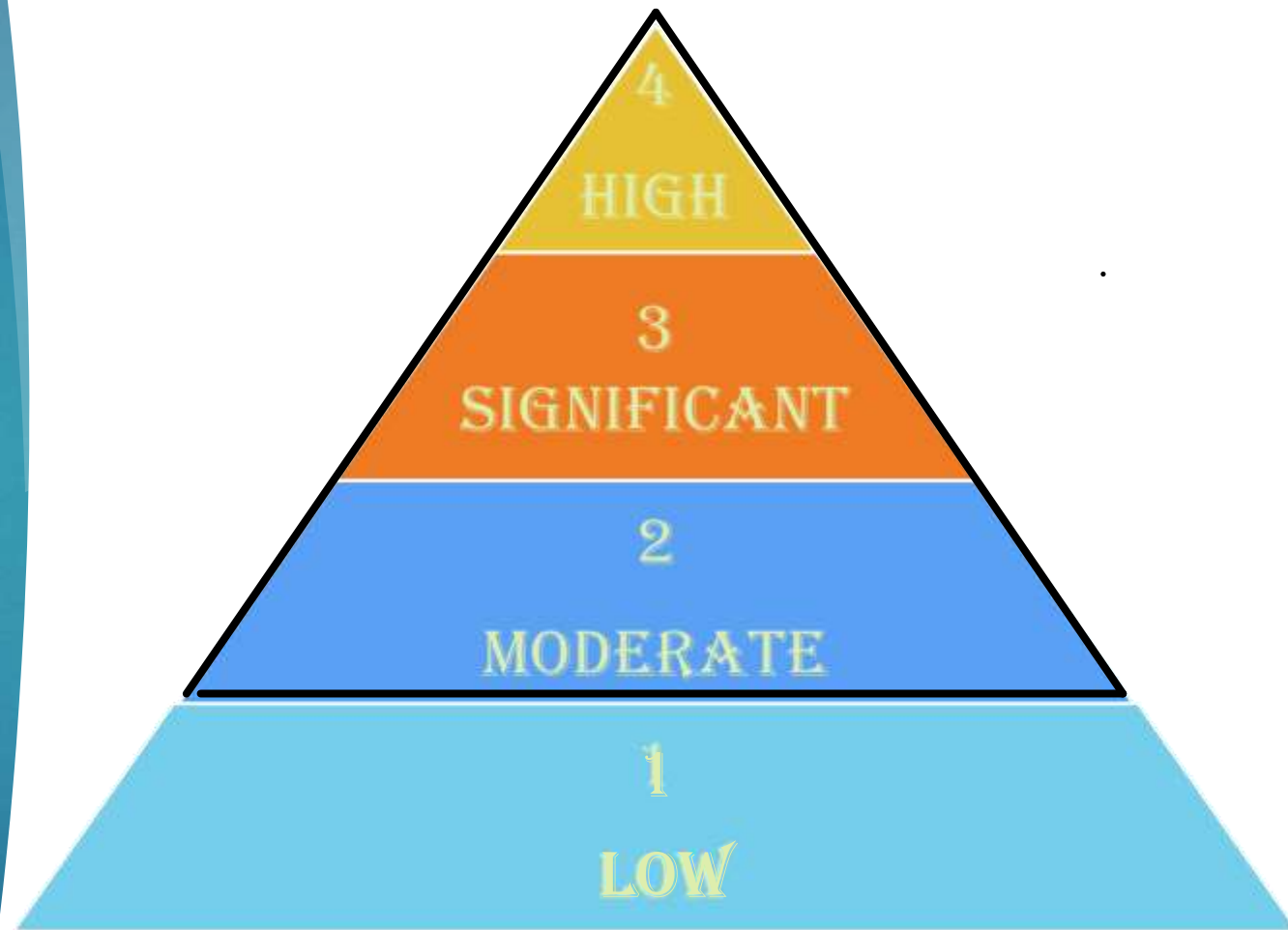
Supporting Children, Families and Staff During a Community Trauma Session 7 Responding to Moderate to High Level Needs

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The Children Most Affected

See also the Sefton Return to School Plan



All Levels (S6)

All children will need a holistic recovery – a basic Recovery Curriculum:

- A Relational Curriculum

- A Therapeutic Curriculum

- A Play-Based Curriculum

- A Compassionate Curriculum

Moderate, Significant and High Level Needs

- ▶ Children with more personalised and complex needs may develop maladaptive coping strategies, which prevent them accessing social, academic and recreational activities, and we're going to spend some time now exploring some of those extended difficulties.
- ▶ I want to highlight regression because many children will have regressed in some way during this time, and it's essential for educators to understand about regression, how it looks, what its purpose is and how to respond appropriately.

Level 2 - Moderate

- ▶ Some may need a concentrated recovery program, personalised to their particular needs e.g.
 - ▶ Remote bereavement- friend of a friend
 - ▶ Violence – riots in local community
 - ▶ Behaviours e.g.
 - ▶ Extended separation anxiety (beyond six weeks)
 - ▶ Social regression – friendships, sharing, waiting

Level 2 Needs

- ▶ Children with Level 2 needs will probably not need external support or individual, tailored interventions.
- ▶ They will benefit from whole-group/class activities and approaches, although they should not be expected to 'co-operate' with other children.
- ▶ Small group and one-to-one work will also be of great benefit, including extended play, creative, nurturing and physiological interventions.
- ▶ They will not be in a state of learning readiness immediately after the event, and will benefit from simply adjusting to 'being' at nursery.
- ▶ Exposure to limited numbers of peers will facilitate tolerating others, but do not initially expect pro-social behaviour such as sharing, waiting, turn taking.

Level 2 Needs

- ▶ Make lots of provision for solitary and parallel play.
- ▶ Provide sufficient resources so that sharing and waiting are not necessary.
- ▶ Mediate social/relational games so that children play in a pairs or triads at the most, and are supported by an adult.
- ▶ The curriculum should initially be mainly delivered through practical, physical, sensory activities.
- ▶ Take your lead from the child and introduce formal learning/sitting/listening very gradually.
- ▶ Avoid any practices that involve standing around, such as lining up etc.
- ▶ Allow supported separation from parent/carer, where possible

Level 3: Significant

- ▶ Others may need an intensive, extended recovery period, to allow for a comprehensive assessment and response to the extent of their trauma and emergent attachment issues. These may include children who
 - ▶ Are related to, or very familiar with children who were involved in the attack
 - ▶ Who witnessed the riots
 - ▶ Whose family/carers are unable to provide a safe base at home.
 - ▶ Issues may include:
 - ▶ Separation Anxiety Disorder (beyond four weeks)
 - ▶ Fear of leaving home - reclusivism
 - ▶ Hypervigilance
 - ▶ Survival mode frequently
 - ▶ OCD type obsessive behaviours
 - ▶ Significant social, emotional and physical regression

Level 3 Needs

- ▶ In addition to comprehensive in-house support, children with Level 3 needs may external support and individual, tailored interventions.
- ▶ Consider all Level 2 provision plus ...

Level 3 Needs

- ▶ Plenty of one-to-one relational activities
- ▶ Referral to play therapist or similar
- ▶ Drawing and Talking, Lego-therapy or similar
- ▶ ELSA/Mental Health Practitioner support
- ▶ Trauma-responsive play opportunities
- ▶ Extensive outdoor play
- ▶ Risky play ...

Reflection: Meeting Level 2 and Level 3 Needs

- ▶ Based on your own practice and experience so far, as educational practitioners, senior leaders/managers, how will you best ensure that Level 2 and 3 needs are met?
- ▶ What do you predict will be the major obstacles to meeting these needs?
- ▶ What strategies can you put in place with your teams to overcome these obstacles?

Level 4: High

- ▶ These may include children who
 - ▶ witnessed, or whose parents or siblings witnessed the attack
 - ▶ Lost a sibling, relative or close family friend
 - ▶ A sibling, relative or close family friend was present and/or hurt in the attack
 - ▶ Children live in the vicinity of Hart Street or St Luke's Road
 - ▶ Is a close relative of an adult who was an organizer of the event
 - ▶ Parents/family involved in riots
 - ▶ Parents/carers unguarded in talking about their opinions and may use extreme and graphic language
 - ▶ Parents or CYP victims of riots
 - ▶ Family members were emergency service workers in the immediate response
 - ▶ Family or child had/has links with the alleged perpetrator

Level 4: Multi-layered trauma

- They may also have multi-layered trauma and attachment issues related to their past experiences, and the event will have compounded their already, significant trauma.
- Some of these experiences may pre-date the attack; others will have emerged as a result of the stress of the event:
 - ▶ Death or serious injury of a loved one
 - ▶ Domestic violence
 - ▶ Alcohol and drug abuse
 - ▶ Mental health difficulties
 - ▶ Poverty
 - ▶ Malnutrition
 - ▶ (P)LAC
 - ▶ 'At risk': abuse and/or neglect
 - ▶ Refugees
 - ▶ Parental arrest/prosecution
 - ▶ SEND

This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive

Level 4 Needs

- ▶ All of the above at lower level and an abundance of
 - ▶ Love
 - ▶ Nurture
 - ▶ Kindness
 - ▶ Compassion
 - ▶ Empathy
 - ▶ Play

Level 4 Needs

- ▶ Actions need to reflect an understanding of the underlying chronic fear and uncertainty that drives the behaviour.
- ▶ Early identification of such vulnerability is crucial as it takes time to make a difference.
- ▶ Reliable and consistent boundaries which reflect the adults' and the whole setting/school's capacity to keep everyone safe are essential.
- ▶ Continuity of relationships over time which make it possible to experience being held in mind and understood and a sense of continuity and persistence.

Level 4 Needs

- ▶ Focus on developmental stage in that moment and respond appropriately.
- ▶ Routines for co-regulation – den, exit card etc.
- ▶ Address the class/group rather than the individual.
- ▶ Predictability – all transitions and changes in the day, week and year should be anticipated and planned for, especially endings and goodbyes.
- ▶ Play-based and sensory curriculum
- ▶ Rhythmic physical exercise and music
- ▶ Short burst tasks and activities, broken up with mechanical or physical task.

Level 4 Needs

- ▶ Inclusion in the curriculum of development of a sense of geography and time
- ▶ Emphasis on the development of words which describe feelings – the use of stories with an emotional content and the use of metaphor – ‘Where the Wild Things Are’ for example helps to process feelings of anger against mother. ET can help to process loss.
- ▶ Metaphors for physical containment, boxes, houses, boats and buildings are helpful. Good use of metaphor can allow unconscious feelings to be expressed without threat. Making large and small containers for objects and self will provide a sense of containment.
- ▶ Explore feelings and scenarios without reference to self in order to maintain emotional safety.

Level 4 Needs: Sensory Diet

- ▶ Sensory nourishment – additional stimuli
- ▶ Sensory snacks and breaks – stretching, lifting, pressure
- ▶ Protective strategies – ear defenders, eye-mask/dark glasses, appropriate clothing, tent/den, neutral colour schemes
- ▶ Useful website for sensory assessment and recommended activities:
SEMH.co.uk - Sensory Suggester

Level 4 Needs: Truncated responses

- ▶ When we successfully use a survival response, e.g. fighting off an attacker, fleeing a burning building, we experience euphoria.
- ▶ When a child has been unable to fight or flee because of their immobility and smallness, their bodies have multiple stored, truncated fight/flight responses to threat, where the only possible response has been flop/dissociation.

Level 4 Needs: Uncompleted cycle

- ▶ When we meet them they may be able to fight and flee, and they complete their truncated response in nursery (and other places) in reaction to 'ordinary' stimuli, such as hunger, cold, loud voices.
- ▶ Instead of punishing, facilitate the response through the provision of positive fight/flight play activities.

Positive fight/flight activities

- ▶ Martial arts
- ▶ Boxing
- ▶ Wrestling
- ▶ Punch bag
- ▶ Trampoline
- ▶ Kneading clay
- ▶ Rugby
- ▶ All resistance activities
- ▶ Heights
 - ▶ climbing trees, frames, walls
- ▶ Speed
 - ▶ swing on vines, ropes, playground swings
 - ▶ slide on sleds, skis, skates, or playground slides
 - ▶ shoot down rapids on logs or boats
 - ▶ ride bikes, skateboards, and other devices fast enough to produce the thrill of speeding away

Level 4 Needs: Dissociation

- ▶ Child may appear to be quiet, shy, 'away with the fairies', a daydreamer, compliant, conforming, 'good as gold', 'no trouble', 'absolutely fine'.
- ▶ The child's survival mode is dissociation – the body is there but the mind has left the room.
- ▶ The child experiences emotional numbness, fragmented memory, identity confusion, feeling that 'I'm not real' or that others aren't real, mood swings, out of body experiences – 'looking down' on self, confusion about what represents safety or threat...
- ▶ The earlier a child has experienced trauma the more likely they will use dissociation

Dissociation: Grounding Techniques

- ▶ Touch
- ▶ Mindfulness/yoga
- ▶ Grounding questions (Who are you? Favourite colour? Pet's name?)
- ▶ Sensory anchoring – 5 things you can see; 4 things you can hear ...
- ▶ Grounding objects/sensory triggers – pebble, shell, snow globe, toy, candle/room spray/scented hanky. Use repeatedly so they become familiar and feel safe.

Engagement: The Capacity to Learn

- ▶ Being ready to learn, able to settle to learn and fully engaged with learning

The Journey

- ▶ The primary focus of schools and settings at this time should be to embark on a long, sometimes challenging, journey with each individual child, through a process of re-engagement, reconnection, which guides and supports them back to being ready to learn, able to settle to learn and fully engaged with learning.
- ▶ Accurate assessment of where a child is on this journey, that is, what level of need they have, will ensure that the recovery curriculum is pitched at the right level for each child.

The Journey

- If the expectations are unrealistic, the child will become increasingly anxious. If we don't attend to the attachment/survival system it will always override the learning system and the child will not progress on the journey to full engagement with learning.
- Some may race ahead, some may stop and start, some may take a wrong turn, some may even turn back.
- Can you meet their needs, change direction with them as appropriate, follow their route rather than insist on yours, provide fuel for the journey, point out helpful landmarks and dangerous obstacles, suggest detours and unexpected pathways?

Reflection

1. Do you need to develop a Vulnerability Scale for staff? For families?
2. If yes, how might you respond?
3. What are the key points you need to consider in the development of a strategic plan to deliver the recovery curriculum in the short, medium and long term?
4. What will be the role of other agencies in operationalising and fulfilling your strategic plan?
5. What opportunities/challenges does responding to the critical incident present for your setting/school?
6. What are your hopes for the future of your setting/school and its children?

Self Care

Creating your own
Calm Box