Toolkit resources

Introduction

This toolkit contains a range of resources that we have used at Carlton Primary. We are lucky enough to have a whole school approach to our trauma informed practice and this has resulted in a readily available range of resources that we can dip in and out of. But we acknowledge that not every educator interested in pursuing a trauma informed approach will have the backing of leadership and colleagues. In light of this, here is a toolkit of resources that can be used in a classroom, or a learning team. Some are activities that you could successfully undertake in a lesson straight away, and some are about slowly building relationships, sense of connectedness, and understanding of self. These take time and can be slowly introduced.

Whether you are taking this on as an individual in a school, alongside a few colleagues, or as a whole school, consistency is vital. Shared language and clear expectations around behaviour are vital, as are consistent methods of dealing with tricky behaviour. Using the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support program or the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships program are ways that you can start to build these shared understandings and shared language. Of course, a trauma informed approach requires differentiated behaviour support, which can be seen as unfair. It is normal to experience pushback, especially when some students appear to be given more chances or treated differently; others will naturally see this as being ‘unfair’. However, we can develop an understanding amongst students that teachers treat behaviour like any other learning requirement, and when students show that they still have some behavioural learning to do, teachers will respond by doing their thing – teaching! Equity is a complicated concept to understand, but an important one to teach.
Behaviour support plan

Student’s current situation:

- Age
- Grade
- Home
- Friendships
- Care situation
- Food
- Sleep

Student’s relevant history – what we know:

- Exposure to Violence
- Homelessness
- Parental mental health or attachment
- Care situation
- Previous living situations
- Other

Evidence based impacts of these previous experiences

Our trauma informed knowledge tells us ...

Behaviour/physical presentation – what we see:

- Hyper vigilance
- Hyper/hypo arousal
- Violence
- Proximity seeking
- Shunning others
- Agitation
- Can’t be still

Strengths

- Kind
- Helpful
- Good at maths

Known triggers (before or during tricky behaviour)

- Transitions
- CRTs
- Specialist subjects
- Behaviour of others (teasing, chasing)

**Self-soothing**
- Constant movement
- Screen
- Hiding

**Anything we know that works?**

**Anything we want to try?**

**School’s safe space/safe people**

**Pre-emptive and ‘in the moment’ approaches**

**If this happens ...**

**We will try ...**
New family interview

This is adapted from the interview we had for families taking part in our school-readiness program, and has a focus on pre-school experiences.

Background

- Parent Name
- Child Name
- Child Birthdate
- Previous pre-school experience: type, amount, where
  - Family Day Care/Long Day Care/Sessional Kinder/HIPPY
- Relatives at CPS
- Who lives at child’s house?
- Any health issues or links to other professionals?
- Tell us about your child
  - What sort of activities do you do together?
  - Books/park/library/swimming ...
- How do you feel about your child starting prep/at a new school?

Participation

- Would you be interested in joining in activities or helping at school? How?
- What information about your child’s education are you most interested in hearing about from their teacher?
- Parent sessions – would you be interested? (Topics might include, or you suggest …)
  - Helping your child learn at home
  - Helping children with their behaviour
  - How to help out in the classroom
  - How to read books in English with your child
A sensory classroom

Using sensory aids can be helpful for children experiencing:

- A need to move around a lot
- Inability to sit for very long/low muscle tone
- Trouble with focus, easily distracted
- Problems with pencil grip/writing and drawing issues
- Struggles with self-regulation
- Auditory processing issues
- Hyperactivity

A sensory support classroom kit might include:

- Noise-cancelling headphones for auditory sensitivity
- Fidgets to support focus – Blu Tak is the easiest
- Hug seats to provide pressure around a child
- Wobble seats for those who need constant movement
- Calm jars to help with self-regulation
- Weighted vests or cushions
- Aromatherapy that provides comforting smells to aid calming (use a diffuser or a tissue) – or even fresh orange or lemon peel smells great
- Therabands wrapped around chair legs to allow something to kick and flick
- Egg chair to reduce sensory input (from Ikea!)

Of course, it is important to have some rules around these items – for example, we have the rule that sensory items can’t be distracting to the student, teacher or other students. They can be used freely in the wellbeing space, and with more thought in the classroom.

Sensory aids encourage children to be present in their bodies and to feel more grounded; they tap in to our senses and a variety of items can be creatively used. There are a growing number of websites with ideas for sensory interventions, and there are many that you can make yourself, or with children.
Reset process

Background

We became aware that students who were regularly removed from class as a result of behavioural issues were not participating in learning activities and we wanted to address this. We devised a system that supported students to build their skills and continue their learning, even when struggling in the classroom.

The process

Students who are struggling to be focused learners are able to ‘reset’, either in class, or away from the classroom. A reset card is issued and identifies what is happening for the student. For example, the card might identify that a student is struggling with learning due to self-regulation problems. The card is used to support a conversation about what has led to the reset.

The reset cards have been designed to align with the school’s ‘3 Bs’ (Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner) and our five learning dispositions (Persistence, Self-regulation, Reflectiveness, Bravery, Curiosity). On receiving the card, the student finds an appropriate person to reset with. The reset should be linked directly to the issue at hand, so a reset for a student struggling to self-regulate might involve a short activity aimed at practicing focus, while a student not demonstrating respect might write a reflection imagining themselves in another person’s shoes.

We have collated activities that are associated with various reset reasons, so that we can offer consistency in our approach. Students who regularly have resets might also have a book to reflect what is happening for them. This book includes their own words alongside wellbeing coordinator reflections. The book also has space to identify what strategies are working well for the student.

Data is collected each time a student has a reset. We record all relevant elements of the reset and analyse this information to identify tricky times across terms or to track particular children, classes or year levels and assess where additional support is needed.

Reset process summary:

- Teacher identifies that a student needs a reset.
- Teacher lets student know, nominating either an in-class reset (some classes might have a reset space) or an out of class reset.
- Teacher gives student a reset card that names the behaviour observed.
- Student finds appropriate person to reset with (beginning with the wellbeing coordinator, but identifying someone from a list of five people, depending on who is available).
- Student is directed and supported with their reset.
- Student goes back to class.
- Reset details are recorded for data analysis.
Front door greetings

We gather at the front door in the mornings, when the end of day bell rings, and at recess and lunch times, to take the opportunity to connect with individual students.

This is also an opportunity to keep an eye on any students who might need to check in before they get to class, either to calm or to share something.

Morning greetings

- Good morning [name]
- Lovely to see your smiling face
- Great shoes!
- How wonderful to see you this morning
- Is this your little brother/sister?
- I hope you had a good sleep
- Ready for a day of learning?
- Hello, my friend
- Welcome back!

Recess/lunch exit greetings

- Have fun heading out into the sunshine
- Thanks for walking so sensibly!
- What a lovely group of friends heading out to play
- Enjoy that skipping rope
- Have fun playing soccer

Recess/lunch returning greetings

- Great job coming inside so calmly
- Looks like you had a nice lunch time
- Grab a drink to get ready for learning
- Do you need help calming before you head back to class?

Greetings to parents (after school)

- Your boy/girl/child had a great day!
- We did some great maths in class today
- What a great learner you have
- How was your day?
Supporting students with regulation

Sometimes, students who appear dysregulated may have the capacity to self-regulate, but frequently they will need some adult support with this.

The *Window of Tolerance* is a helpful way to illustrate the difference between being regulated (and ready to learn) and being dysregulated (and in no state to learn). When we are in our window of tolerance, we are in a state of balance and not having distracting physiological reactions to stimuli. A student outside their window of tolerance might be in, or moving toward, a state of hyperarousal or hypoarousal, and will require adult support to move back into a state in which they are ready to learn.

Here is a helpful illustration from the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioural Medicine (they have a number of free resources).

If you are trying to support a student (or anyone) to re-enter their window of tolerance, it is vital that you are also regulated; otherwise, the best thing you can do is to source help from someone else.

**Ways to facilitate a return to regulation:**

- **Breathing** – notice breathing and have the child try to mirror your regulated breathing (using bubbles or pinwheels can promote deep breathing)
- **Ask questions** that will engage the pre-frontal cortex (encourage the child to count, notice colours, or notice other things around them)
- **Use essential oils, leaves or flowers** to engage the sense of smell
- **Have the child hold something with texture** and encourage them to notice it
- **Get a drink** – sometimes an extra cold drink is helpful
• Have something to eat
• Play calming music and invite the student to listen
• Do some familiar yoga poses
• Push against something that provides resistance
• Use therabands or resistance bands to engage big muscles
• Have a run around the oval
• Read a story together
• Carry a heavy thing, such as a weighted blanket
• Do some drawing or colouring in
• Play with kinetic sand
• Run hands under water
• Tense and release muscles
• Hug a cushion

Children might have their own suggestions about what helps them calm down. In some cases you will have to weather quite a storm before the child is willing to attempt to return to a regulated state. Ideally, we are supporting children to understand what is happening to them and what helps them to regulate so that they are able to self-regulate before they get to a state of hypoarousal or hyperarousal.
Casual Relief Teacher information

It is vital that CRTs have the information required to maintain routines and watch for children who struggle with change. Teachers can use a template to create a folder containing instructions and information specific to their classrooms, and their students. Instructions should include any behaviour plans, along with routines of the day and other helpful information like where to find the regularly used songs, which brain breaks are used and other activities regularly used in each class.

Teachers:

Support staff:

Grade:

Learning area:

Principal:

Business manager:

Wellbeing team:

Staff room and first aid room code:

Location of:

- Pink card (for emergency assistance)
- Work program
- Cash sheet
- Roll
- Emergency Exit Plan
- Staffroom
- Yard duty
- Wet day routine:
- Eating in classroom:
- Special programs: [teacher, day, time]
Dear Casual Relief Teacher

Welcome to the ________________ Learning Area at Carlton Primary School.

Staff at Carlton Primary predominantly work in teams and today you are part of the _______________________ team. Please follow the lead of the learning area teacher and refer to the guidelines below.

Check in with the learning area teacher to find out what today’s work program entails. In the event that both learning area teachers are absent, please refer to the learning area ‘Away Day’ work program housed in this folder.

Please support the learning area teacher by:

- setting up resources and packing up at the end of the day
- supporting identified individual or small groups of students
- assisting with classroom behaviour management (see below for further information)
- leading or supporting learning experiences where negotiated

Please observe our school-wide positive behaviours:

- We are safe
- We are respectful
- We are learners

A detailed classroom learning agreement is visible within the learning area. When students do not demonstrate these behaviours, the school-wide ‘reset procedure’ is to be followed (instructions for the procedure are contained in this folder).

Positive consequences:

‘Raindrops’ can be awarded to students demonstrating the learning behaviours: reflection, curiosity, bravery, self-regulation and persistence. ‘Rainbows’ may be awarded when students demonstrate acts of kindness. Raindrops and rainbows can be collected by students from the main office and displayed in our foyer.

Specific learning area positive consequences:

- Being kind to other students
- Listening to the teacher and other students when sitting on the floor
- Putting your hand up and being brave to share your thinking

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Students to be aware of:

- Eric – very active; often requires support to engage with the learning.
- Jack – very anxious; can run away when highly anxious.
- Abdi – can have difficulties engaging.
- Jayden – can refuse to leave for a reset. Often helps if he goes with a buddy. Best away from Billy and Ahmed.
- Billy – Best away from Jayden and Ahmed.
- Ahmed – very anxious; will self-select to “go to reset” when overwhelmed.
- Mohamed – may be non-responsive. If he refuses to leave the room for a reset, contact wellbeing support and calmly relocate the class.
- Pearl – can be disengaged with the learning and will do her own thing. One-on-one focus and a conversation about the work can help.

Do not hesitate to ask for help with any students. We maintain a positive, non-punitive approach with students, but you are not expected to deal with every issue alone.
Reflecting on behaviour

There are many ways for students to reflect on behaviour, and on their related emotions. On some occasions, we might ask them to think about how they have impacted another person – or themselves – and to consider alternative behaviours and associated skill building. Asking leading questions like “what else could you have said/done?” or “What might you consider doing/saying next time, or when you go back to class?”

We often check in with children about how they are feeling – what the bodily sensations are – and this can provide clues as to what’s going on for them. These conversations promote emotional self-knowledge and provide a path to building students’ capacity for self-regulation.

At other times, we might simply choose to take a positive approach, encouraging desired behaviours by assuring children that we believe they know how to behave in a given situation. We might ask a child to think of a time when they showed the skills that we are looking for. We can talk about our skills moving with us, whatever situation we are in, and we can support a child to identify what skill sets they always carry with them.

Writing or drawing can be ways to gather feelings and thoughts together and to buy some calming down time. We have a range of activities built around this.
What does it look like when we are being learners at school?
What does it look like when we are being respectful at school?
What does it look like when we are being safe at school?
Behaviour Reflection - Older Students

What will you do to make sure your behaviour improves when you go back to class?

What were the consequences of your behaviour? (i.e. I hurt someone when I ...)

Which one of our three behaviours weren't you doing?

- I was not being a learner.
- I was not being respectful.
- I was not being safe.

Draw what happened...

Date:  

Place:  

Time:  

Name:  

Out of class
Put your hands on your tummy.

Blow all of your breath out.

Put your hands on your tummy.

Big breaths.

Breathe out and feel your tummy shrink.

Grow.

Take a big, deep breath in and feel your tummy grow.

Take three more of these big, deep belly breaths.
Learning super powers/Learning kryptonites

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<th>(Assets)</th>
<th>(Challenges)</th>
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Learning Plan

How can I use my learning super powers, and make a pre-emptive strike against my Learning Kryptonites?
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<tr>
<th>What happened?</th>
<th>What is happening now?</th>
<th>What will happen next?</th>
<th>What will happen?</th>
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Stretch the moment
When you don’t want to ask “Why did you do that?”

Children frequently have no answer to this question – they honestly do not know. They might still be in a heightened state, or might have had a trigger response that has not left them with a clear memory of the incident; their response might confuse them.

Other ways to get information include waiting until the child is calm, first doing some sitting, or running, or colouring in, then trying to gather some information.

- Asking:
  - “How did your body feel when that happened?”
  - “Can you draw me a picture of what happened?”
  - “Can you show me with a drawing what you felt like?”
  - “Can you show me what happened”
  - “Tell me about what has happened since you woke up today”

- Using Lego.

- Using cards with images that reflect facial expressions (there are many of these available to buy, or you could make them) to help a child identify their feelings.

- Sit with them and play with kinetic sand or something similar; reflect to them what you are feeling in your body.

- When the child is feeling more able to share with you, you can ask what they would like to be feeling, or what they are feeling now, and have them recognise the shift.
**Socio-emotional skill teaching programs**

**Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships**


Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships is a state-wide program in Victoria. Resources are comprehensive, and available for students from prep to year 10. Resources can be dipped into – you can take bits from across year levels and add your own spin. The resources were developed as a primary prevention program, and have been designed to be engaging and appealing.

**School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program**


School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program is endorsed by the Victorian Department of Education, and is practiced worldwide. It is not cumbersome, but does need to be a school-wide program. The resources are simple and clear and promote a positive school environment for students and teachers alike.

**The Berry Street Education Model**

**Website:** [https://www.childhoodinstitute.org.au/educationmodel](https://www.childhoodinstitute.org.au/educationmodel)

The Berry Street Education Model offers training and practical skill building to operate a trauma informed practice. It is a whole of school model for both primary and secondary.
Sensory shopping list

Here are some suggestions based on the types of things that we have in our classrooms. The rule here is that these interventions can’t be distractions – and sometimes it takes a while to find the right thing for the right child. Lots of useful resources can be created easily or bought cheaply.

- Mini trampoline to help with regulation
- Noise-cancelling headphones for auditory sensitivity
- Fidget toys to support focus (Blu Tak works!)
- Hug seats to provide pressure around a child
- Wobble seats for those who need constant movement
- ‘Calm jars’ to help with self-regulation (you can make your own)
- Weighted vests or cushions
- Aromatherapy that provides comforting smells to aid calming
- Therabands to wrap around chair legs – for legs that move a lot
- Small pieces of sensory material, like velvet, to hold while listening is required
- Bubbles to blow to promote deep breathing
- Visual timers (e.g.: hourglass)
- Cush balls and stress balls
- Kinetic sand
- Crash pads against a wall to push against, to engage big muscle groups
- Play dough (can also be scented with essential oils)
When I got here today:

My body is/was feeling

Something else?

Family

Me

Home

I was thinking about

www.childhood.org.au

SPACE exercise

Mapping the day

When I got here today