



### ***Handout to accompany Webinar***

#### **Stage 1: Our Trauma Reduction Strategy**

According to Martin Luther King - the words crisis and opportunity go hand in hand. This is too big a historical event to not have some kind of purpose, some kind of legacy...

It is now most urgent that schools become trauma responsive in their practice, so that all they do is trauma *reducing* not trauma *inducing*.

Van Der Kolk describes seven preconditions for trauma: a lack of predictability, immobility with fear/powerlessness, loss of connection, numbing out and spacing-out, a loss of sense of time and sequence, a loss of safety, a loss of purpose.

Our job right now is to ensure we do all we can to counter these preconditions to protect each other so that we emerge with healthy minds and bodies.

We must FIRST attend to the grown-ups, and then attend to the pupils in our care. There is REAL wisdom in this.

Remember the possible state and nervous system that we can be in at any given moment. Right now, we are surrounded by an invisible threat, and so we are spending a lot of time in the ALARM state – the FIGHT/FLIGHT system – mobilisation with fear. As we are in lockdown it is hard to actively flee, and much easier to fight. This is therefore a very risky time for relationships and families right now. We need to find a way to re-direct all this energy through mobilising ourselves and each other to support safety.

Remember the bottom up, neuro-sequential approach advocated for by Dr Bruce Perry – 1) regulate 2) relate 3) reason and 4) repair. We must RESPECT our biology in order to thrive as human beings, not merely survive.

Right now, we have opportunity to counter the possible impact of COVID 19 upon our mental health and well-being as adults and pupils by facilitating **predictability, mobilisation, connection, grounding, structure, felt safety** and a **sense of purpose**. We discussed many possible ways of attending to these for both adults and the pupils in our care.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

**Bloom, S.L & Farragher. B** (2013) *Restoring Sanctuary. A new Operating System for Trauma Informed Systems.* OUP: USA.

**Bombèr, L.M. & Hughes. D.** (2013) *Settling to Learn: Why relationships matter in school.* Worth Publishing: London

**Bombèr, L.M** (2020) *Know Me to Teach Me.* Worth Publishing: London

**Maté, G.** (2019) *When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress.* Vermillion: USA

**Porges, S & Dana. D** (2018) *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory.* W.W. Norton: USA

**Van Der Kolk, B** (2015) *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma.* Penguin Books: Great Britain