



***Handout to accompany Webinar***  
**Stage 2: Re-Entry to School**

No adult or child will be untouched by this crisis. When we come out of social distancing and isolation our children, our young people, their families, our staff, and our school communities are all going to need continued support with their regulation, and in their relationships.

We are aware that collective anxiety is building right now around re-entry as we are still in the midst of collective trauma. We are aware that this is impacting our regulation right now, and that our first port of call for all is to support regulation.

According to Dr Bruce Perry we should always follow the neuro-sequential order of the 3 Rs to honour and respect our biology. How can we access our pre-frontal cortex, where reason, cognition, reflection takes place if we are not grounded, if we don't have a sense of 'felt safety'? We need our pre-frontal cortex to be able to teach, and for our pupils to be able to learn.

Felt safety according to Dr Stephen Porges, has more to do with meaningful, genuine and **familiar connection**, than to do with the absence of threat.

To support us increase felt safety cues we need to:

- ❖ Increase familiarity – people and spaces
- ❖ Communicate open, warm body language
- ❖ Smile
- ❖ Use a storytelling voice
- ❖ Be playful
- ❖ Use humour
- ❖ Facilitate mobilisation for all through movement and exercise
- ❖ Create safe, retreat spaces of sensory comfort in our schools for both adults and children

We considered the importance of slowing everything right down, right now. Of staggering transitions even further to support the emotional well-being and mental health of staff and pupils alike.

We considered together the importance of staff having protected time together before the pupils return, to navigate the physical spaces in school, and to have opportunity to reconnect with one another. There is a need for reorientation as we have all been changed as a result of this pandemic,

and we are now all using a COVID -19 lens in how we interpret ourselves, others and the school context.

We considered four important areas for staff and pupils alike – **increasing felt safety, re-establishing connection, navigating loss, and practising appreciation.**

We reflected on the importance of using **PACE** as a core way of being within Dyadic Developmental Practice with both staff and pupils.

We discussed how we can learn a lot from those in our care who have been looked after or adopted, those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, relational trauma and loss. Many of these pupils have actually settled more in their behaviour and in their learning at home. We can often learn very wise lessons from the few that serve the collective whole. It seems a lesson learned that we can build upon moving forwards is the need to:

- Create smaller contexts
- Increase the adult: child ratio
- Remove the power imbalance
- Communicate a sense of togetherness
- Reduce stress

We considered how to transform this situation we are faced with now, this crisis – as an opportunity to become truly attachment aware and trauma responsive, to strengthen our compassion for one another, especially towards those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and to balance out inequalities in education and in our wider society.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

**Bombèr, L.M** (2011) *What About Me? Inclusive Strategies to support pupils with attachment difficulties through the school day.* Worth Publishing: London

**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

**Golding K.S; Phillips S; Bombèr L.M.** (To be published autumn 2020) *Working with Relational Trauma in Education: A Practical Guide to Using Dyadic Developmental Practice with Educators, Children and Families.* Jessica Kingsley: London

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

**Siegel D. & Byrson T.** (2020) *The Power of Showing Up:* Scribe: UK

**Taransaud D.** (2011) *You Think I'm Evil.* Worth Publishing: London

#### **Helpful websites:**

[www.traumainformededucation.org.uk](http://www.traumainformededucation.org.uk)

[www.touchbase.org.uk](http://www.touchbase.org.uk)

**Please note that all the recorded webinars and accompanying handouts can now be purchased for use within a local authority at £500 each. Contact [OliverWBardentouchbase@gmail.com](mailto:OliverWBardentouchbase@gmail.com) for more info.**