



Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools

Research team lead by Dr Neil Harrison

neil.harrison@education.ox.ac.uk

@DrNeilHarrison @ReesCentre

<http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk>

Please note that this presentation contains emerging findings that have not yet been formally published – the contents should therefore be treated as draft and not cited without permission.

NICE guidelines (2015)

- “Educational psychologists and health and social care provider organisations should work with **local authority virtual school heads and designated teachers** to develop and provide training courses for teachers of all levels on:
 - how attachment difficulties begin and how they can present in children and young people
 - how attachment difficulties affect learning, education and social development
 - understanding the consequences of maltreatment, including trauma
 - how they can support children and young people with attachment difficulties.”

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2015): Recommendation 1.2

Emerging understanding

- Broad, and still developing, field of academic enquiry – key contributions from psychology and neuroscience:
 - Focus on how young people form and maintain **attachment** relationships, particularly with key adults (Colley & Cooper, 2017; Holmes, 2014)
 - Also concerned with how **trauma** impacts children's lives through brain structure and performance (Anda *et al.*, 2006; Teicher *et al.*, 2016)
 - Relationship with **emotion coaching** and other strategies for helping young people to self-regulate their behaviour (Gus *et al.*, 2017)
- Crowded 'marketplace' in attachment theory (e.g. Bombèr, 2007; Cairns, 2006)

Early work (1)

- ‘Pilot’ programmes with 52 schools across three local authorities (2016 to 2018) – **Leicestershire, Stoke-on-Trent** and **Bath & North East Somerset** (Dingwall & Sebba, 2018a,b; Fancourt & Sebba, 2018)
- Training in attachment and trauma provided to teaching staff across a sample of schools (primary, secondary and special)
- Varying training content and modes of delivery
- Measurable school-level outcomes tracked for three years – before and after intervention
- Qualitative data collected from staff and young people

Early work (2)

Summary of findings

Majority of schools in two LAs recorded lower **persistent absence** rates – rates rose in third LA in line with national picture. Difficulties getting exclusion data.

Attainment improved in 24 out of 33 primaries and six out of 13 secondaries. Only seven schools saw attainment fall – national picture mixed.

Staff more aware of the reasons behind young people's behaviour. Staff and pupils reported improvements in **wellbeing and calmer environment**.

Timpson Programme

- Five year programme, started in late 2017
- Based in the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford
- Funded through the Alex Timpson Trust
- Target to work with **300 schools across England** – mixture of schools types and local authority settings
- Involvement of schools negotiated through virtual school
- Training approach decided by local authority – commercial trainers, educational psychology service, virtual school staff or other providers
- Training funded through Pupil Premium Plus – different models

Programme facts and figures

- Currently working with **21 local authorities**, with four more joining soon and seven others in discussion
- Total of **238 schools** recruited so far – some authorities with multiple cohorts
- Includes **151 primary schools**, **52 secondary schools** and various through-schools, special schools and pupil referral units
- Over **4,500 staff** and **11,500 pupils** have completed online surveys
- Will have completed **30 school visits** by end of November 2019



Key questions

- 1** How do staff adapt their micro-practices as a result of attachment and trauma awareness training?
- 2** How do schools change their policies and practices with increased understanding of attachment and trauma?
- 3** Do staff and children report changes to the school climate as a result of attachment and trauma awareness?
- 4** Do children attend better and make more progress in attachment and trauma aware schools?

Research outline

Online surveys with staff and pupils, repeated over two year period to identify changes

Case studies of a sample of 30 to 40 schools – focus groups with pupils and interviews with staff

Observation of training sessions and interviews with training providers, virtual school heads etc.

Analysis of school and local authority data on school attendance, progress, attainment and exclusions

Very early findings



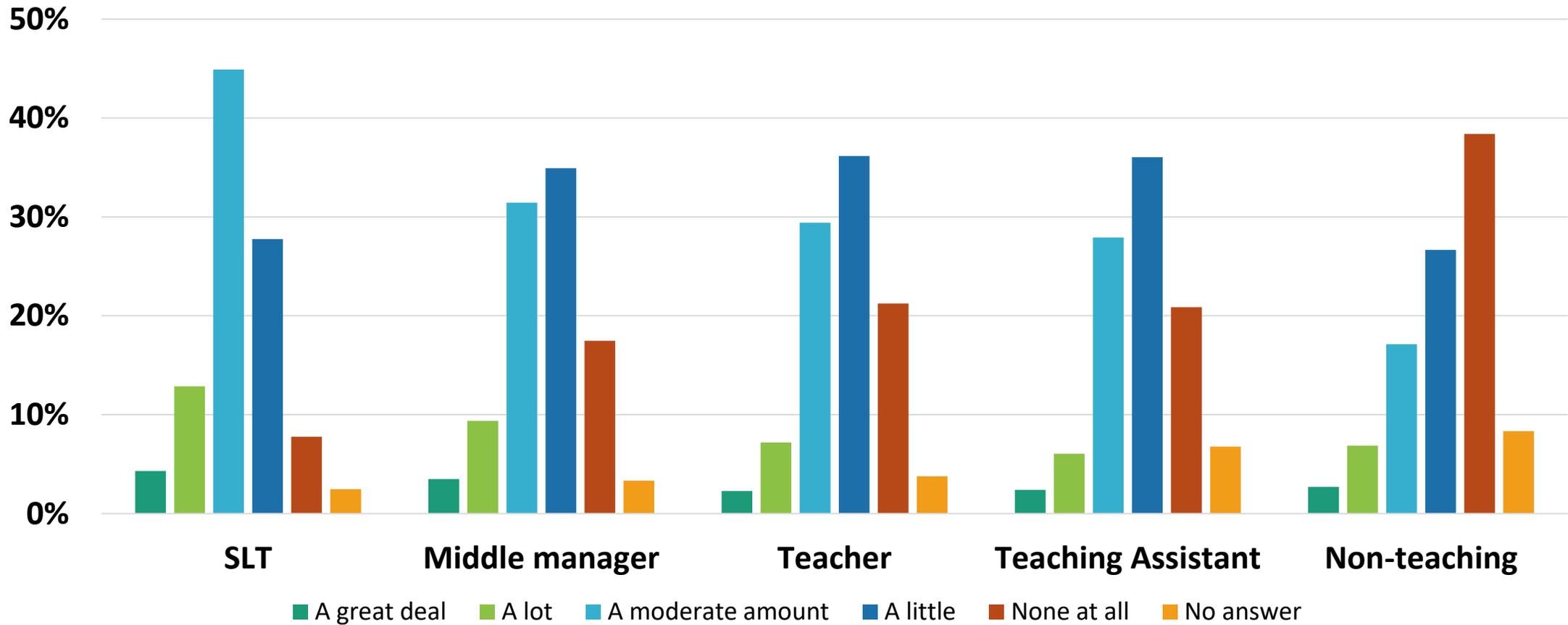
You are here!

Children's view of school

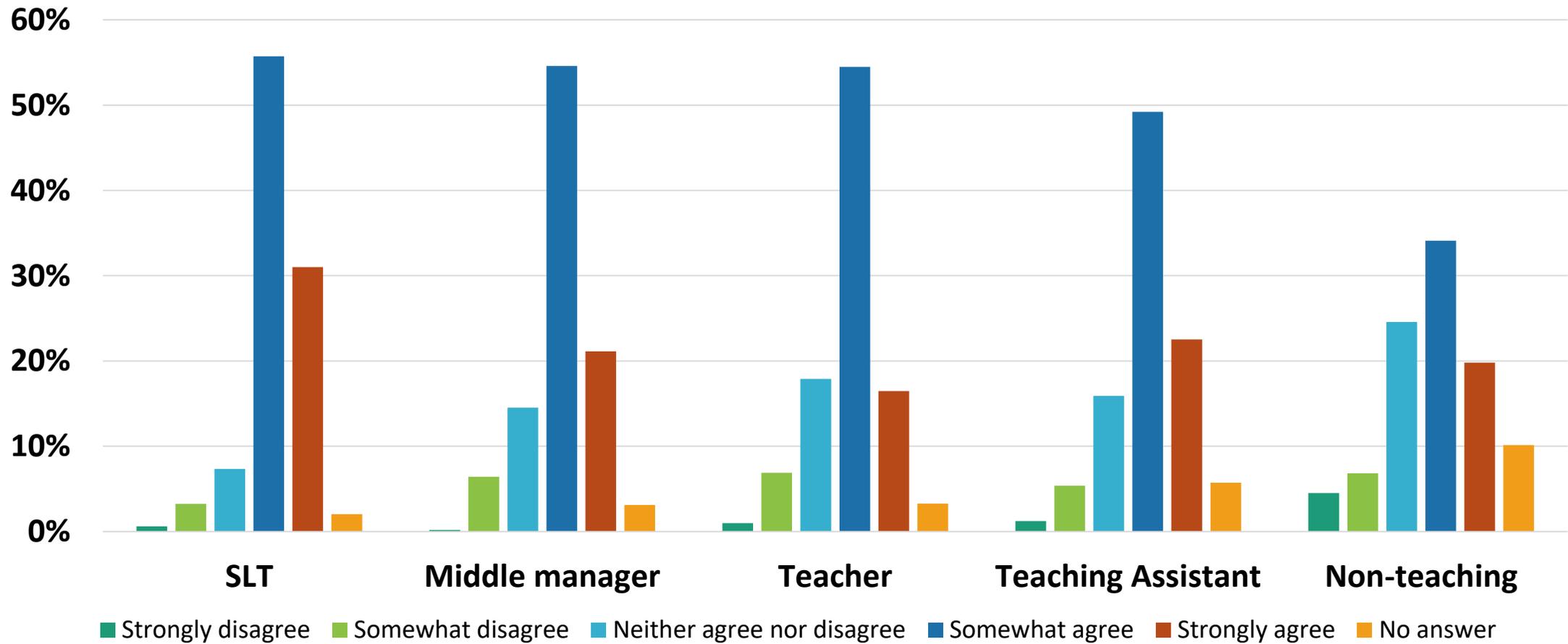
- Most positive feelings, on average, towards their teacher – evidences importance of trusted adult relationships
- Young people's positive feelings towards school decline with age
- Strong differences between schools in terms of young people's feelings and responses to difficulty – future analysis around demographics, OfSTED ratings etc.



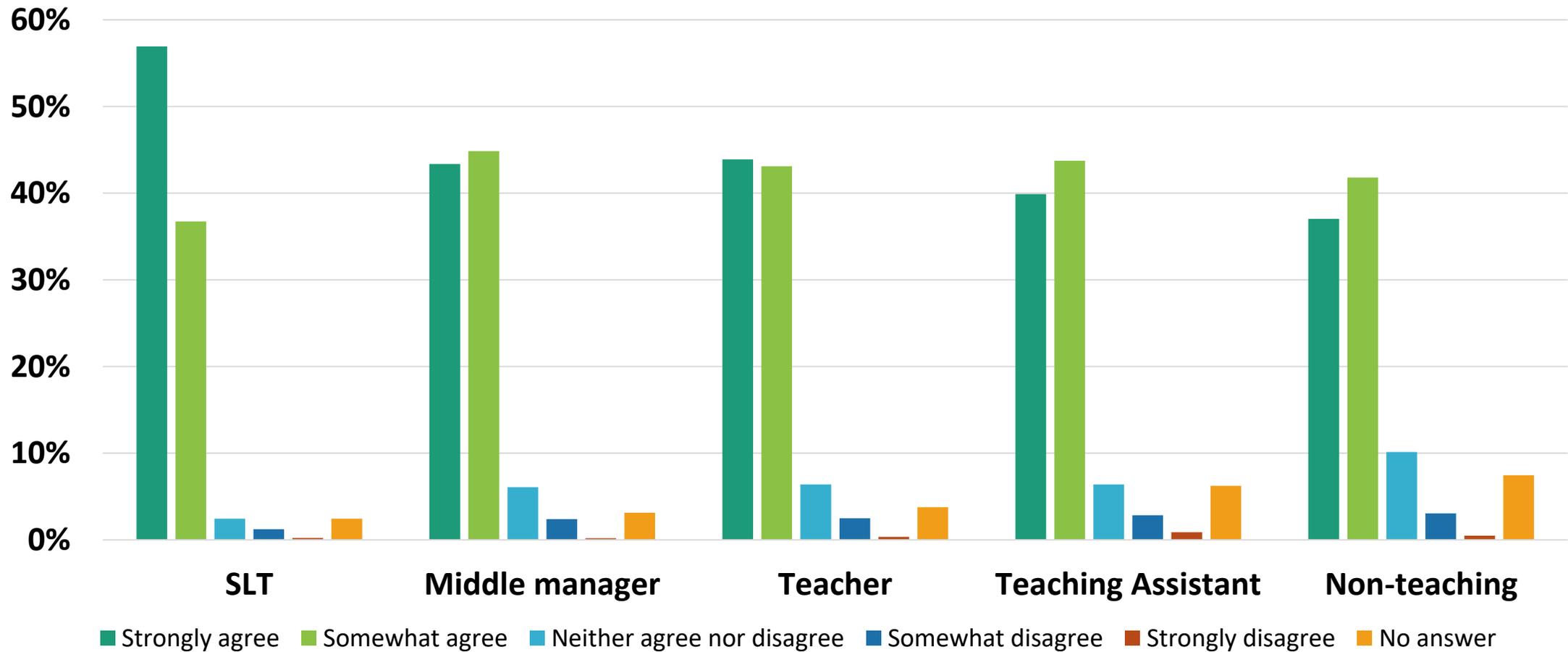
Prior attachment training



Confidence with attachment



Good support for staff



Schools on a journey

- Emerging picture from case study schools:
 - Some knowledge of attachment theory and importance of home life, but trauma is less well understood among staff
 - Some already using attachment-informed practices like ‘chill out’ areas, open door policies, time-out cards and learning mentors
 - Training has seeded new initiatives in schools, including ‘stop and think’ time from staff and more use of mentoring and ‘theraplay’

*“So it’s not intervention for half a dozen children, it’s actually how we can be inclusive in how we support all of our children”
(Headteacher, Primary)*

“I’d just ask, like ask for a tutor or a TA who have been with you, ‘Can I talk to you for five minutes, I’ve got something on my mind?’” (Pupil, Secondary)

Making it work

Enablers	Inhibitors
Whole school approach – non-teaching staff	Lack of visible senior leader support
Regular reinforcement through staff meetings and follow-up sessions	Single one-off training session
Consistent adoption of attachment/trauma-aware vocabulary and concepts	Stubbornness or scepticism from some staff
Integrated with physical, procedural and policy changes within school	Difficulties for teachers engaging after their own traumatic experiences
Process of trust-building with adults in the school	External pressures on school and overlap with other initiatives
Cascading knowledge to pupils – e.g. PSHE	No training of new staff

Strong local relationships

- Different models of how training being delivered at the local authority and virtual school level
- One example of good practice – not the only one:
 - Conceptualisation of training as a **coherent ‘programme’**
 - **Competitive process** for schools to join – limited places
 - Use of a trailblazer school to **mentor new joiners**
 - **Regular networking events** for schools to share experiences
 - Close relationship with **educational psychology service**
 - **Sustained training engagement** over several months
 - **Multiple overlapping interventions** in schools

A turning tide...?

“**Based on academic research** you have developed a school that is sensitive to supporting pupils with attachment and complex trauma histories. This new approach **removed reliance on external sanctions** and rewards to control behaviour. The emphasis changed to understanding the internal reasons for behaviour. [...] The impact of this new approach has been the creation of a school focused on **understanding why pupils struggle** to control their behaviour. [...] Behaviour in school is exemplary and pupils make **outstanding progress** in their learning.”

Extract from OfSTED inspection of Hope School, Liverpool, April 2019

Find out more

- Timpson Programme webinar series:
 - **Sir John Timpson:** *Why is understanding attachment and trauma so important?*
 - **Duncan Roberts, Headteacher, Maple Cross School (primary):** *How do schools address attachment and trauma?*
 - **Richard Glenny, Deputy Headteacher, Priestlands School (secondary):** *What benefits and challenges do secondary schools face in implementing whole school approaches to attachment and trauma?*



A quick plug...

- Next webinar coming up soon:

Tuesday 3rd December – 4pm to 5pm

Tony Clifford and Richard Parker from ARC

“Building Resilience for Young People in Your School”

For details: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/building-resilience-for-young-people-in-your-school>

Free and all welcome – no need to be active participant!

References

- Anda, R., Felitti, V., Bremner, J., Walker, J., Whitfield, C., Perry, B., Dube, S. and Giles, W. (2006) The enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood: A convergence of evidence from neurobiology and epidemiology. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 256(3): 174-186.
- Bombèr, L. (2007) *Inside I'm Hurting; Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools*. London: Worth Publishing.
- Cairns, K. (2006) *Attachment, Trauma and Resilience*. London: BAAF.
- Colley, D. and P. Cooper (2017) *Attachment and Emotional Development in the Classroom: Theory and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Dingwall, N. and Sebba, J. (2018a) *Evaluation of The Attachment Aware Schools Programme: Final Report (Bath and North East Somerset)*. Oxford: Rees Centre.
- Dingwall, N. and Sebba, J. (2018b) *Evaluation of The Attachment Aware Schools Programme: Final Report (Stoke-on-Trent)*. Oxford: Rees Centre.
- Fancourt, N. and Sebba, J. (2018) *The Leicestershire Virtual School's Attachment Aware Schools Programme: Evaluation Report*. Oxford: Rees Centre.
- Gus, L., Rose, J., Gilbert, L. and Kilby, R. (2017) The introduction of emotion coaching as a whole school approach in a primary specialist social, emotional and mental health setting: positive outcomes for all. *Family Studies Journal* 9: 95-110.
- Holmes, J. (2014) *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory*. London: Routledge.
- National institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE] (2015) *Children's Attachment: Attachment in Children and Young People who are Adopted from Care, in Care or at High Risk of Going into Care*. London: NICE.
- Teicher, M., Samson, J., Anderson, C. and Ohashi, K. (2016) The effects of childhood maltreatment on brain structure, function and connectivity. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 17: 652-666.



Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools

Research team lead by Dr Neil Harrison

neil.harrison@education.ox.ac.uk

@DrNeilHarrison @ReesCentre

<http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk>