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With Kids is a registered Scottish Charity SC022467 and Private Limited Company registered in Scotland SC343897

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We specialise in delivering play therapy, and therapeutic interventions with partner nurseries and schools and in our three playrooms within our office.

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Glasgow G3 7XE
Tel: 0144 5550 5770

15 Annfield Place
Tel: 0144 5550 5770



We worked with 604 children a year (22-23) delivering 7907 therapy services in over 40 partner schools and nurseries.


Key referral reasons are difficulty regulating emotions, anxiety and worries and maintaining relationships (school, peer and family)

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We train play therapists

- Three year part time training course at Queen Margaret University.
- Direct observation, developmental, psychological and neurobiological theory with psychodynamic principles in infant, child and adolescent development
- Exploring and understanding the full range of child development and how this is shaped by attachment, the environment, adversity and trauma.
- This takes the form of lectures, placement, baby/child observation, clinical supervision, research and student seminars.




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Being trauma informed

- Understanding the impact of ACE's on families and children
- Creating a safe environment that is sensitive to human lived experience.
- Building trust relationships between staff, families and children.
- Listening and being able to see others point of view
- Working together and being clear about boundaries,
- Most of all being kind and thoughtful to others and oneself



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Trauma informed theories

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? ...ories such as:
window of tolerance – Dan Siegel

Adverse Childhood Experiences
Trauma informed Government 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
Bruce Perry/Oprah



**Trauma is NOT what happens to you.
Trauma is what happens INSIDE YOU
as a result of
what happens to you.**
Gabor Mate



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Trauma Informed Practice before Covid

- Before Covid we may have had pockets of trauma experience that we were able to manage.
- We were knowledgeable about trauma informed practice.
- We were open to training, asking questions, sensitive to the children and families we work with.
- We had extensive energy reserves.
- There was an excitement and a buzz around trauma informed practice.

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Post pandemic- a Traumatized Society

- Cost of living crisis
- Poverty and homelessness on the rise
- War in faraway places
- Increase of demand on services
- Community service cuts
- Health concerns
- Fear of the future
- Increase in anxiety
- Physical and mental exhaustion




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The Roar

A communication wheel that helps to reflect on

- How we talk to others
- How we listen to others
- What we think we hear
- How our bodies respond to what we hear or see
- How we might respond to our body's communication

WHY?

If we can pause, reflect and think before we react to a child's communication it can have a dramatic impact on the interaction.



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Dictionary definition

1. to utter in sound in a
2. to sing or shout
3. to make or group/crowd
4. to laugh loudly
5. to be boastful
6. To burn fiercely
7. Blow or burst
8. Gun fire

...zed deep

... in a

... s or storm



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R.O.A.R

Recognise Observe Acknowledge Respond

Recognising -there is a communication either from inside us or from others

Observing -what that communication is and where

Acknowledge - the communication and accept it is happening

Respond rather than react to the communication.

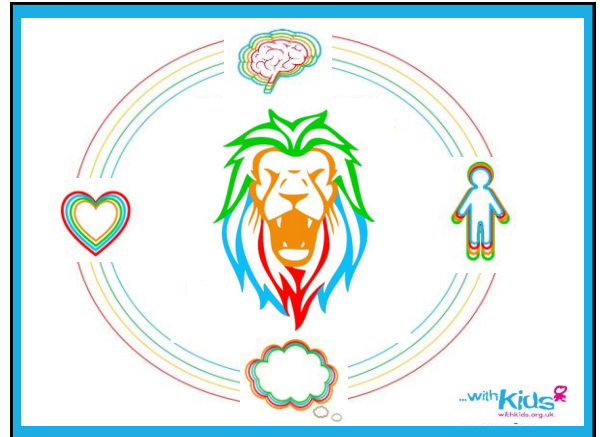


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Common ways **Adults** process trauma

- Re-experiencing the memory , feelings.
- Re-framing the memory through minimisation or maximisation
- Avoidance – unable to acknowledge what has happened or even that anything has happened.
- Emotional Numbing – there are no strong feelings either up or down, everything is “fine”
- Hyper arousal – heightened alert to everything
- Hypo arousal- no reaction
- Re- enactment through Relationships and habits

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The Brain Information processing

- This is an early system developed in the womb rooted in the brain stem
- Connected to other body systems.
- Unconscious process
- Information from outside and around the body
- Processes nonverbal and verbal communication
- Needs the Mind and the Heart to make sense of the information

The Body-Sensations

- Part of the early communication of the Brain directly linked to the Central Nervous system.
- Unconscious processing of physical sensations response to nonverbal communication
- Brain and body connection develops through experience of relationships, playfulness and emotional exploration.
- Layers of experience can dull and disconnect the brain from the body.
- Needs the Mind and the Heart to make sense of the communication



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The Mind Thoughts

- Conscious logical processing
- Focus on facts and verbal information
- Influenced by personal perceptions, viewpoint and previous experiences
- Make assumptions about what someone is thinking, doing or feeling.
- Can ignore physical sensations by rationalizing the sensations in the body

The Heart Feelings

- Conscious thoughts
- Focus on how you feel and how others might feel
- Influenced by emotions, hopes and fears.
- Attuned to internal physical sensations and external physical cues
- Emotional reasoning can overwhelm the Mind (thoughts) disabling the ability to think things through.
- Can ignore information from the brain not the body.
- Sensitive to nonverbal communication



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Common primary ROAR combinations

- **Brain- Mind** focused = Cognitive thinker- Minimization
- **Brain – Heart** focused – Emotional thinker- Maximization
- **Brain- Heart- Mind** focused= Rationalizing emotions and avoiding body sensations
- **Brain – Heart- Body** focused – Connected to how we feel, intuitive processing of sensations, spontaneous reaction to nonverbal communication.
- **Brain- Mind –Body** - Cognitive reasoning makes sense of physical sensations from a logical viewpoint.



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Trauma Processing *Back to Basics*

- Trauma is a somatic experience shown through nonverbal communication and felt throughout the body.
 - These experiences have always been beyond words for the children and families you work with.
 - The trauma experience is now your lived experience.
 - These experiences have a direct impact on how we respond to other people's trauma.
 - What part of your ROAR is primed to listen to the nonverbal as well as the verbal?
- Does this shape what you can accept or avoid when you hear children's trauma stories?



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Carrie age 5 years old and about to start school. At nursery staff have noticed she:

- Steals toys and food from other children's
- lies about everything.
- Defiant and unpleasant to staff and children
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Pushes and hurts other children
- Never cries

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Conscious reflection on Carrie's story

Use your ROAR reflection sheet :

- Do you **Recognise** Carrie's communication?

Observe how you are processing this information (**Brain facts**)

What is your typical response?

Heart – does this evoke strong feelings linked to a memory of a child's experience

Mind- Are you thinking about practicalities from your training/experience?

Body – Do you feel uncomfortable if so, how?

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She painted this picture when she started school. Each session she takes it out and looks at it.



Carrie is referred by the nursery for play therapy this continues for three years at school.

Carrie has been in foster care twice as her mum struggles with mental health and there has been reports of neglect and emotional abuse

She currently lives in kinship care arrangement in an overcrowded flat with her grandparents and their three children and is highly disruptive.

Carrie is finding it hard to cope emotionally.

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Unconscious response to Carrie's story

Use your ROAR reflection sheet :


- Pick a card from the table
- What in the image has drawn you to it?
- If you can think of one word to describe how you feel what would it be?

Acknowledge and accept the feelings or thoughts you might be having about Carrie.

How might this impact or shape your response/support for this child?

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Responding to Carrie

In small groups discuss:


What do you think Carrie needs?

How do you think Carrie feels?

How might you support them?

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Carrie's viewpoint

6 months into Primary one

Carrie has found a safe place with consistent rules.

She has found she is bright and loves to learn.

School has given her a sense of who she is, what she is good at and a real sense of belonging.

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Why take time to Observe?

- Observation starts when we have Recognised there is a communication.
- Time to focus uninterrupted on what/who we are observing.
- Being attentive to the subtle nuances of body language, facial expressions or interactions with others.
- Setting aside our assumptions and over thinking what might be happening.
- To be present in the moment.
- Responding to the situation rather than reacting



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Leon age 11 years old and about to start secondary school. He has been having problems with his emotions since Primary 6.

- He has been excluded 3 times.
- Falls out and fights with his friends.
- Easily frustrated and shouts at his teacher when they try to help.
- Either shouts or cries uncontrollably
- He cannot say why he behaves like this.
- He does not appear sorry.



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Conscious reflection on Leon's story

Use your ROAR reflection sheet :

- Do you **Recognise** Leon's communication?

Observe how you are processing this information (**Brain facts**)

What is your typical response?

Heart – does this evoke strong feelings linked to a memory of a child's experience

Mind- Are you thinking about practicalities from your training/experience?

Body – Do you feel uncomfortable if so how?



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- He has a stable family life.
- Parents often communicate by shouting at each other.
- Mum is intrusive and overwhelming.
- He is not allowed to go out by himself
- He has no independence
- Mum still dresses and baths him.



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Unconscious response to Leon's story

Use your ROAR reflection sheet :

- Pick a card from the table
- What in the image has drawn you to it?
- If you can think of one word to describe how you feel what would it be?

Acknowledge and accept the feelings or thoughts you might be having about Leon.

How might this impact or shape your response/support for this child?

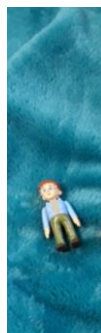


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Responding to Leon

In small groups discuss:

- What do you think Leon needs?*
- How do you think Leon feels?*
- How might you support them?*



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- Leon wants to separate from his mum.
- He stays with his grandad often to get away from his mum.
- He needs to do things for himself such as
Take the lid off the play doh
Open the therapy door.
Tie his own shoelaces
Ask his mum to give him some privacy.



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Revisiting Trauma

Is there a difference between the two trauma stories?

What changes the impact of the stories:

The situation?

The type of abuse?

Gender?

Age?

The family set up?

The behaviours of the children?

These will be unique factors that are personal to each and every one of us.

The ROAR can help us identify when this is influencing our response



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Acknowledgement, Acceptance, Avoidance, Awareness

- When working with children and families a range of emotions can be triggered.
- As we have shared experiences of trauma it can be hard to separate our own experiences from those of families we may work with.
- This can become more difficult with challenging situations and boundaries can become blurred.
- It can be hard to not react negatively as it can feel like a personal attack.
- Using the ROAR reflections can help us rebalance and pause before we respond.



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Being a ROAR regulator

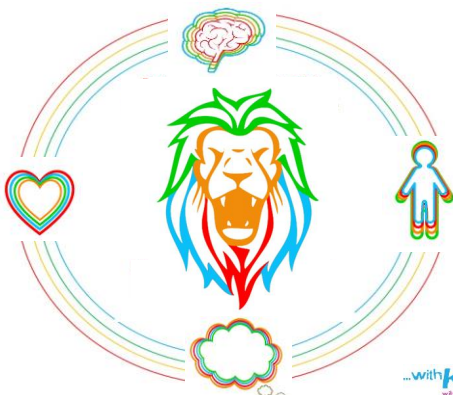
- Awareness of your own body sensations and breathing
- Awareness of the other person's nonverbal cues – I feel what you feel.
- Are we mirroring them? You are angry, I am angry
- Does this impact on our understanding of their actions or behaviours?
- The key is holding dual attention



Awareness of how we feel and Awareness of the child's



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ROAR reflections to take away



- When you recognise nonverbal communication -interaction, take a moment to observe what is happening for you and the child (or other adult!)
- Think about the possible triggers for any conflicts and note how this felt for you.
- How do you process nonverbal communication?
- What part of your ROAR is listening, responding or reacting?
- How do your children ROAR?
- Is there something that stands out?



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Understanding children from a Play Therapy Perspective

COMING SOON

- A new 20 week course underpinned by latest neurobiological research presents a unique way to relate to children of all ages.
- Adults frame children's communication within the context of what has happened to them, rarely do we consider what has happened to us. Our experiences as a child and adult shape our judgements and perceptions,
- The course uses a blended approach of information presentation, child observation, video exercises, experiential activities, group discussion, sharing experiences to develop an understanding of children from a play therapy perspective.

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