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Creating TRUST: Trauma, Understanding & Sensitive Teaching in the ACT

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Education and Training



ACATLGN..

- Increases knowledge and understanding of impact of adverse life experiences and trauma on children and young people.
- For people working with children and for parents and carers.





Trauma sensitive schools

- Development and implementation of trauma sensitive schools framework in US.
- Staying in school improves life outcomes **in almost every facet of life** (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012).
- Research is very clear about impacts of adversity and trauma on behaviour, mental health & learning.



Spokane Elementary School ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study (2012)

- 2100 children in 10 primary schools in the US.
- Teachers reported on childrens exposure to traumatic and adverse experiences.
- Even those children who had experienced 1 adverse / traumatic event were:
 - 1.5 times more likely to have academic failure
 - 2 times more likely to have severe attendance probs
 - 2.5 times more likely to have severe school behaviour concerns
 - 2 times more likely to have frequent reported poor health



Spokane ACE's continued...

- Children who had 3 or more trauma / adverse experiences were:
 - 3 times more likely to have academic failure
 - 5 times more likely to have severe attendance problems
 - 6 times more likely to have severe school behaviour concerns
 - 4 times more likely to have frequent reported poor health



Mitigating the impact

- Trauma informed and trauma sensitive schools with:
 - Procedures to manage behaviour that are not punitive and further alienate vulnerable kids
 - Recognition of deficits in learning, emotion regulation and relationships, and skills development in these areas
 - opportunities for vulnerable children to gain mastery within school environment
 - Modeling of safe, supportive adult relationships



Collaboration and partnership

- Collaboration with Education and Training Directorate (ETD), ACT
- Already doing some trauma informed training available to schools on request.
- Agreed to partnership to develop a whole of school approach – trauma informed and trauma sensitive.





Processes

- Approval sought from funding agency.
- Review of literature.
- ACATLGN / ETD working group, including Community Services Directorate.
- Negotiation around project plan and implementation.
- Ethics approvals.



The pilot schools

- Information sessions for Principals & then an EOI.
- An opt in for schools – 4 were chosen.
- 2 primary schools in disadvantaged communities.
- 1 early childhood school.
- 1 school for children with disability.





Getting school executives on board

- A relational approach – weekly 1 hour meetings with each school for 10 weeks to build relationships, increase knowledge & understanding and motivation and willingness to change.
- 100% of school exec found sessions valuable / very valuable and would recommend TRUST to other schools

“Because I have seen you each week, I feel like I can trust you and tell you what is really going on in the school”.



Teacher training

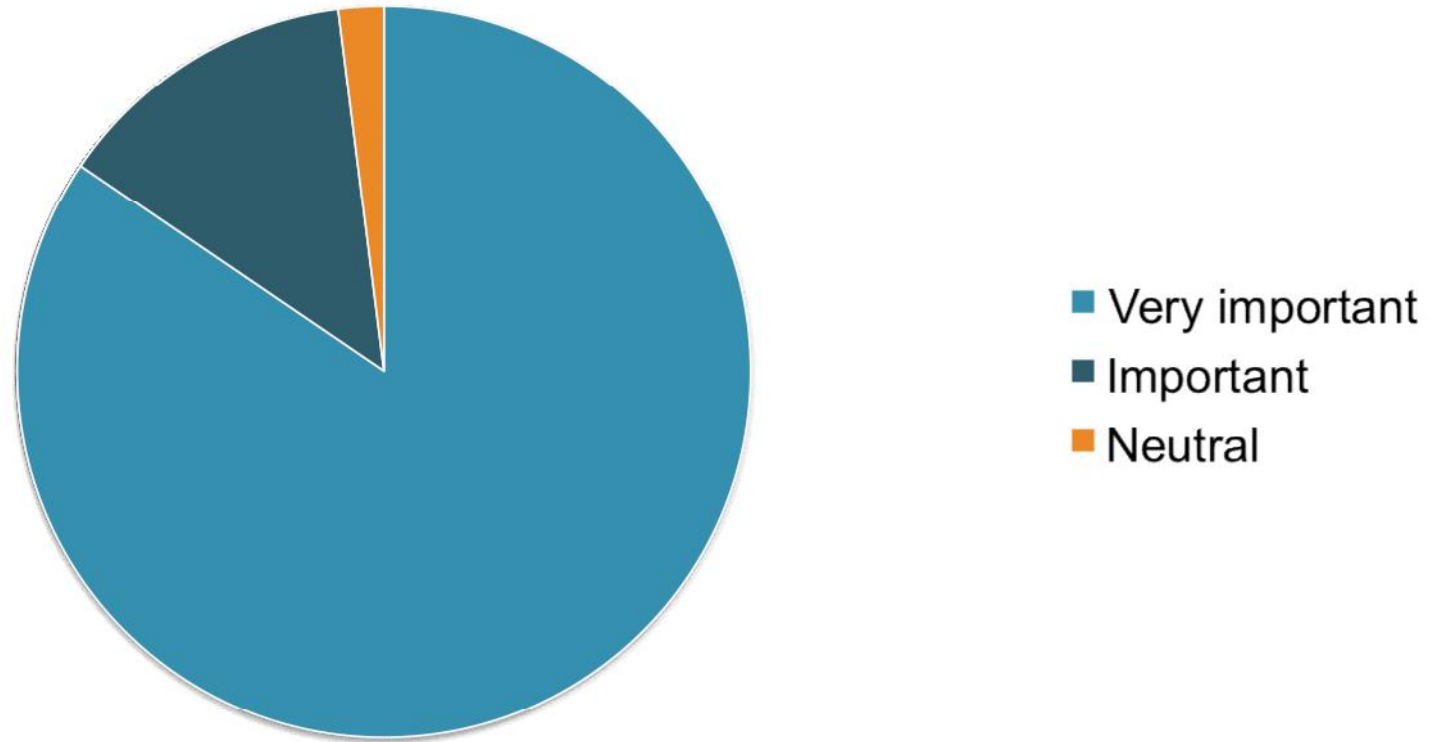
- Close to 200 school staff received training – including **all staff** from each pilot school.





Pre-training questionnaire

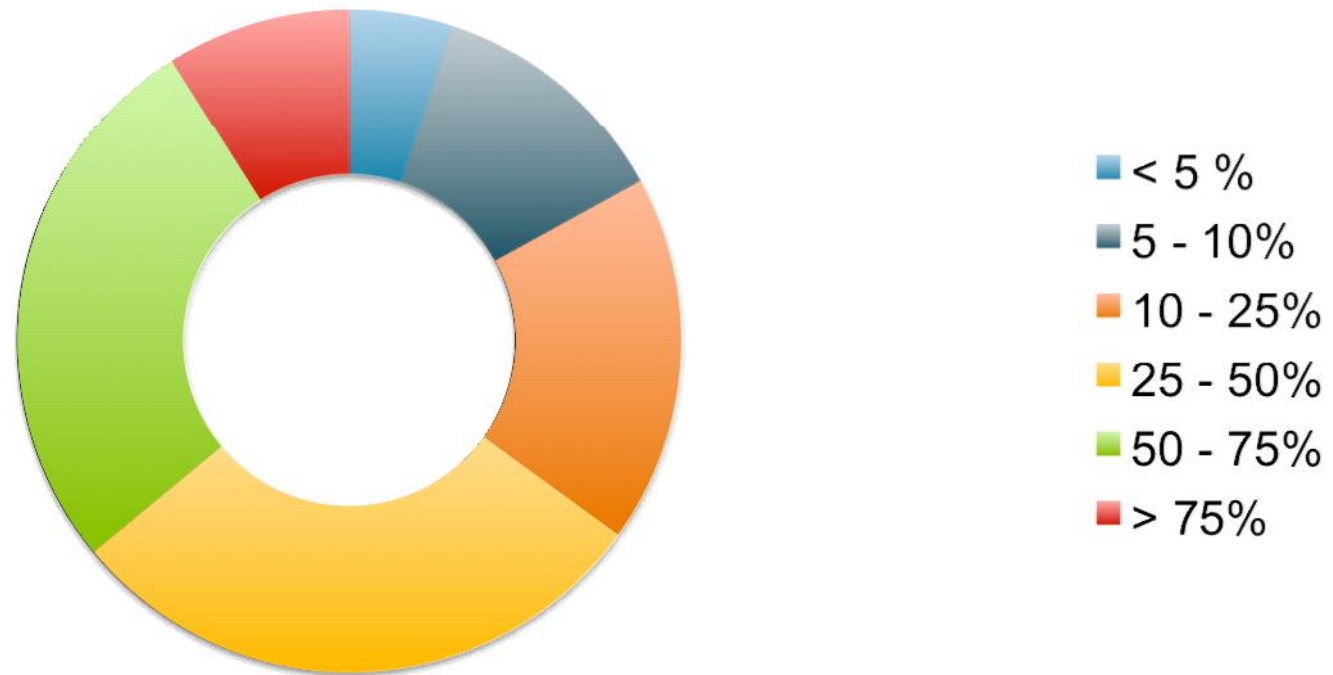
Importance of learning about adversity & trauma





Pre-training questionnaire

% of children in your classroom you believe have experienced adversity & trauma





Teacher reported difficulties

- Attention
- Learning delays
- Emotion regulation
- Behavioural problems
- Aggression
- Difficulties in engagement
- Inability to trust others
- Anxiety
- Self esteem
- Poor social skills
- Difficulties following instructions
- Non-communicative
- Speech delays
- Impulsiveness
- Literacy problems



Challenges & complexities

- Systemic change takes time. Teachers want children's difficulties (especially behavioural) to improve today, but a whole of school approach takes time.
- Maintaining funding investment over time.
- Measuring success.
- Challenges that arise for teachers working with these students.



Next steps

- Continued professional learning for pilot schools.
- Weekly coaching and mentoring.
- Parent / carer evenings.
- Evaluating outcomes.
- Expand to high schools.