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Domestic abuse,
mental ill health &
trauma informed
practice

healing 
together

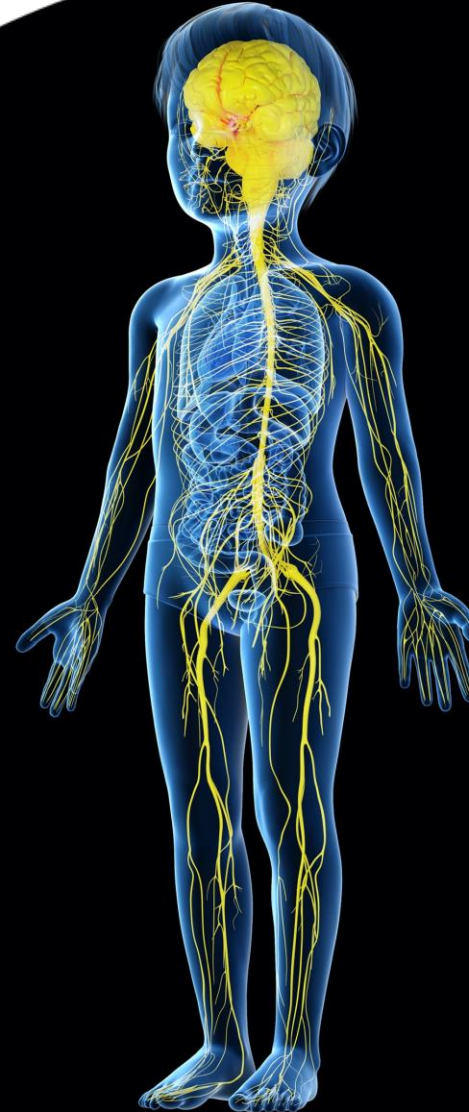
Dr Asha Patel, Clinical Psychologist &
CEO

Domestic abuse is a 'whole being' experience

Every part of an adult and a child experiences, absorbs and stores the fear, tension, stress and unpredictability of the domestic abuse and violence.

Their nervous system will automatically record and hold onto any and all of the sensory and emotional experiences as essential 'survival' information for the future

Without them realising this...



They are likely to have experienced domestic abuse growing up

BUT...may have minimised it and / or genuinely don't make the links so go carefully!

They only knew their childhood as 'the norm'.

Which means they may be confused about why therapeutic interventions are important for their calmness as well as their child's.

I don't want to blame my Mum / Dad for what happened to me

I never got hit but...

We had great holidays but sometimes Mum / Dad ruined them

There was a lot of arguing but...



Mental Ill Health

Substance
abuse

Autism

Anxiety

Depression

Eating Disorder/
Disordered Eating

Personality
disorder

Learning
difficulties

Self harm

ADHD

Suicide

Feeling unsafe makes life hard

- External signs of safety aren't enough – safe parent may be frustrated with their child
- Trust is hard for parent and child – so if with a foster carer or kinship carer this may add to the stress
- Concentration is often impossible
- Overwhelm of emotions and physical fears and anxieties is constant
- Numbing out or constant movement feels essential



No privacy: Professional interventions

- Visits from professionals at home can be exhausting
- A constant reminder / triggering
- Stressful as it's another person who knows their past
- Child and parent have to participate in 'interventions' driven by tick boxes and / or court proceedings
- Coordinating appointments
- Referrals made to services without consent
- Education – non-attendance



Trauma Informed Practice

- **Prevent re-traumatisation**
- **Safety**
- **Trustworthiness**
- **Choice**
- **Collaboration**
- **Empowerment**
- **Cultural consideration**



- A way of being
- You will become frustrated
- Every interaction & connection

Source: Working definition of trauma-informed practice, 2022
by Office for Health Improvement & Disparities



To work with trauma you need to be...

Able to ground yourself and notice your energy

Ok with repetition

Able to notice when you are triggered

Part of a judgement-free support system

Able to tap into compassion in all situations


Not results focused

Able to 'hold a safe space'

Hold strong beliefs

Present with 'now'



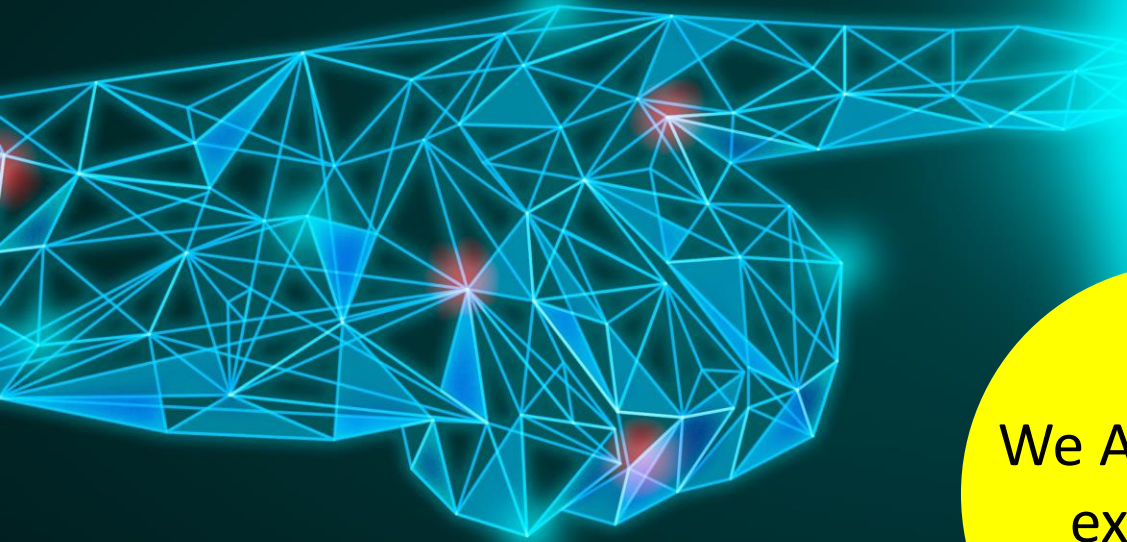
A group of meerkats is shown in a natural, outdoor setting. One meerkat is prominently featured in the center, standing upright on its hind legs. To its right, another meerkat is also standing upright. In the foreground, two more meerkats are visible, one sitting and one standing. In the background, a fourth meerkat is partially visible. The meerkats have light brown and grey fur with dark spots. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with some green grass and brown earth.

Their
nervous system
will automatically
pick up on...

How calm, regulated and safe
your
energy feels
It's always the
key thing!



How attuned are you to your emotional energy?



We ALL quickly exchange energy!



Access to
& location
of doors

Smells

Noise

Physical Space Checklist

Temperature

Other
changes

Seating

Anything
else?




Your beliefs really matter...

- Sometimes we think we 'know' about the person we are working with
- Maybe you've worked with them before
- Or you've read about them
- Been told their 'story'
- Know their family 'history'
- Or heard others talk about them in a certain way


You serve them fully
if you UPGRADE
what **YOU** choose
to believe. And by...
**'learning the
person
in front of you.'**



Vicarious Trauma



The cost
of caring



The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as being able to walk through water without getting wet.

Rachel Naomi Remen

Clinical Supervision

Vicarious
trauma

Reflective

Learning
resource –
access
information

Evidence
based
practice

Celebrating
good practice
& reflecting
on clinical
problems

Risk
management

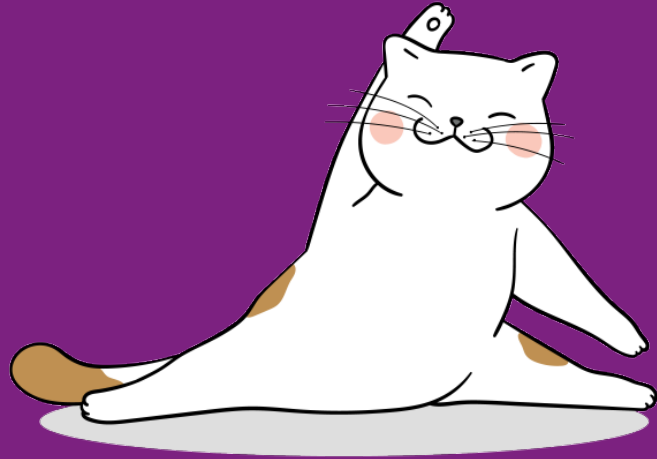
Supervisor:
clinician or
experiences
within the
sector

Case
management

Method: 1:1
and /or
group

Frequency

See you soon



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