

HELPING CHILDREN MAKE SENSE OF THEIR STORY: WHY TRAUMA-INFORMED LIFE STORY WORK MATTERS

When you're supporting a child or young person who's lived through trauma, one thing becomes clear pretty quickly: their past doesn't stay neatly tucked away behind them. It shows up in their behaviour, their emotions, their relationships, and sometimes in ways that catch you off guard. A child might react strongly to something small, shut down without warning, or ask questions that feel impossibly big.

And underneath all of that is a story — their story — one they're trying to understand, piece together, or make sense of.

That's where trauma-informed life story work comes in.

It's not about creating a pretty book or filling in a timeline. It's about helping a child understand their own journey in a way that feels safe, honest, and manageable. It's about giving them the “why” behind their experiences so they're not left guessing or blaming themselves.



UNDERSTANDING WHY TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE MATTERS

While many children enjoy talking about their families, others may find it confusing or emotionally challenging. This can include children who:

- live in kinship care, foster care, or residential care
- have experienced trauma, loss, or separation
- have blended or complex family structures
- have strained or unsafe relationships with adults at home
- feel unsure about what they are “allowed” to share

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HOW PAST TRAUMA SHOWS UP IN THE PRESENT

Trauma has a way of echoing into the present. Even when a child is in a safe environment, their nervous system might still be reacting to old experiences.

You might see:

- big emotions over small triggers
- fear of new people or situations
- difficulty trusting adults
- confusion about identity
- shutdowns or withdrawal
- behaviours that seem “out of the blue”

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work helps children connect the dots between past experiences and present feelings. When they understand why they feel or react a certain way, it reduces shame and increases emotional safety.



WHO DOES LIFE STORY WORK — AND WHERE IT HAPPENS

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work isn't limited to one profession. It's used by:

- Foster parents
- Adopters
- Social workers
- Residential workers
- Teachers
- Therapeutic practitioners
- Family support workers



Parents and Professionals who support a child with a complicated history can be part of this process.

And it doesn't necessarily happen in a formal office or a clinical room. It happens wherever the child feels safe — often in familiar, quiet spaces with people they trust. The environment matters because the child needs to feel grounded enough to explore their story without becoming overwhelmed.

WHERE THE LIFE STORYBOOK BELONGS

A Trauma-Informed Life Storybook isn't something that gets filed away in an office or lost in a drawer. It belongs to the child.

That means:

- it's stored somewhere safe and accessible
- the child knows exactly where it is
- they can look at it when they want to
- it moves with them if they change homes

It's their story — and they should always have access to it.

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO DO THIS SAFELY AND CONFIDENTLY...

The Foundations of Trauma-Informed Life Story Work series of courses is designed to help you put all of this into practice. It teaches you how to communicate difficult histories safely, support children through their story, and create life story work that genuinely helps them make sense of their past.

Access for 8 weeks

Foundations of Trauma-Informed Life Story Work

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Foundations of Trauma-Informed Life Story Work

Access for 8 weeks

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Making sense of the child's identity

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Making sense of the child's identity

Access for 8 weeks

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Understanding the Child or Young Person

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Trauma-informed Life Story Work: Understanding the Child or Young Person

Access for 8 weeks

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Communicating Difficult Histories

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Communicating difficult histories.

Access for 12 weeks

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Managing triggers and behaviours

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Trauma-informed Life Story Work: Managing Triggers and Behaviours

Access for 8 weeks

Trauma-Informed Life Story Work: Prioritising Self Care

3 hours



Centre of Excellence in CHILD TRAUMA

Trauma-informed Life Story Work: Prioritising Self Care

More information on our Trauma-Informed Life Story Work can be found at <https://trauma-informed-parenting.learnworlds.com/courses>