



IMPACTS OF TRAUMA IN CHILD (CONT.)

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TRAUMA IMPACT 5 – 7 YEARS

- Behavioural change
- Increased tension, irritability, reactivity and inability to relax
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares, night terrors, difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Regression of behaviour
- Lack of eye contact



TRAUMA IMPACT 5 – 7 YEARS

- ‘spacey’, easily distracted or hyperactive behaviour
- Toileting accidents/enuresis or smearing of faeces
- Bodily aches and pains – no apparent reason
- Accident proneness
- Eating disturbances



TRAUMA IMPACT 5 – 7 YEARS

- Absconding/truanting from school
- Firelighting, hurting animals
- Obvious anxiety, fearfulness and loss of self-esteem
- Specific fears
- Efforts to distance from feelings of shame, guilt, humiliation and reduced capacity to feel emotions



TRAUMA IMPACT 5 – 7 YEARS

- Reduced capacity to feel emotions – may appear ‘numb’ or apathetic
- ‘frozen watchfulness’
- Vulnerable to anniversary reactions caused by seasonal events, holidays Repeated retelling of traumatic event
- Withdrawal, depressed affect



TRAUMA IMPACT 5 – 7 YEARS

- ‘blinking out’ or loss of concentration when under stress at school with lowering of performance
- Verbally describes experiences of sexual abuse, pointing to body parts and telling about the ‘game’ they played
- Excessive concern or preoccupation with private parts and adult sexual behaviour
- Verbal or behavioural indications of age-inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Running away from home



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Changes in behaviour
- Hyperarousal, hypervigilance, hyperactivity
- Regression in recently acquired developmental gains
- Sleep disturbances due to intrusive imagery
- Enuresis and encopresis



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Eating disturbances
- Loss of concentration and memory
- Post-traumatic re-enactments of traumatic event that may occur secretly and involve siblings or playmates
- Trauma driven acting out, risk taking behaviour



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Flight into driven activity or retreat from others to manage inner turmoil
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Fear of trauma recurring
- Mood or personality changes
- Loss of, or reduced capacity to manage emotional states or self-soothe



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Increased self-focusing and withdrawal
- Concern about personal responsibility for trauma
- Wish for revenge and action oriented response to trauma
- May experience acute distress encountering any reminder of trauma



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Lowered self-esteem
- Increased anxiety or depression
- Fearful of closeness and love
- Likely to have detailed, long-term and sensory memory for traumatic event –sometimes the memory is fragmented or repressed
- Speech or cognitive delays



TRAUMA IMPACT 7 – 9 YEARS

- Factual accurate memory may be embellished by elements of fear or wish – perception of duration may be distorted
- Intrusion of unwanted visual images and traumatic reactions disrupt concentration and create anxiety often without parent awareness
- Vulnerable to flashbacks of recall and anniversary reactions to reminders of trauma



WHAT CAN I DO AS TRAUMA COUNSELLOR?

- Make sure the abuse or other trauma has stopped
- Begin to build a relationship, by being honest, reliable and doing what you say you will do
- Understand trauma
- Help them feel safe through nurture, structure and support
- Use boundaries and logical consequences
- Stay calm and well-regulated – even as you set limits on aggression – to avoid power battles



WHAT CAN I DO AS TRAUMA COUNSELLOR?

- Understand your own traumas, so you can reflect on your own feelings and reactions
- Co-regulate with the child: use your calm to soothe and help them calm
- Don't take their behaviour personally
- Use discipline without shaming
- Engage with family members and carers



Thank You!

