

Mending Hurts

workbook



co-regulate

guide



support

kca.
KNOWLEDGE ■ CHANGE ■ ACTION

■ kca exercises

Five to Thrive is the KCA model for promoting secure attachment. It describes a sequence of relational activities that build healthy brains in babies and young children and maintain healthy brain function throughout life. It provides a bridge between professional understanding of current research in neuroscience and everyday experience.

Brains develop in response to challenging experience but only when we can regulate the stress that is produced by challenges. If for any reason we cannot regulate the stress it becomes toxic and brain activity closes down. At that point we need access to someone else who will hold us in their own mind (mindfulness), connect with us and self-regulate (soothing, co-regulation) and prompt integrated brain activity (stimulation, co-learning). The five key activities of Five to Thrive set out this neurological process in terms of everyday relationships.

Five to Thrive is useful in work with anyone unable to regulate stress. This may include the following groups:

- Babies and young children
- Adolescents
- Vulnerable families
- Anyone who has lived through traumatic experience from which they have not yet recovered

For practitioners across children's services Five to Thrive helps embed systemic relational approaches to work so that they can engage with their service users and each other in new and transformative ways.

For the general population, the Five to Thrive model provides access to important messages about healthy brains. The Five to Thrive resources effectively communicate these ideas to parents and carers of children of all ages through simple messages and artwork:



Respond • Engage • Relax • Play • Talk

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Mending Hurts is the KCA model for promoting recovery from trauma by enabling people to notice what they, or other people, do in their most effective interactions with vulnerable and traumatised people.

When we notice ourselves do something well we become both more conscious of our activity and more competent in it.

People in a state of toxic stress need to connect to a safe and trusted person in order to:

- **stabilise**
 - settle the disruption of the nervous system
- **integrate**
 - reconnect internally so that the whole brain and nervous system is working optimally
- **adapt**
 - reconnect socially with others

When we successfully meet these needs in another person there is an observable sequence of activity in our response to the person. This is the Mending Hurts sequence.

CO-REGULATE – GUIDE – SUPPORT

Co-regulating involves empathy and self-regulation. It means being aware of the dysregulation in the other person because our own nervous system reacts to mirror the disruption, and then self-regulating to reduce the arousal. Since humans are born to connect, mirror and match this reduction in stress is then replicated in the other person (usually unconscious/gut level/feeling).

Respond • Engage • Relax • Play • Talk

Guiding involves engaging our own brain and nervous system in an integrated way to make sense of what is happening and share this with the other person in a way that they can understand (conscious/head level/thinking).

Respond • Engage • Relax • Play • Talk

Supporting involves using our own capacity for social engagement and social responsiveness to enable the other person to engage socially and become responsive and connected to others (integrated/heart level/feeling and thinking).

Respond • Engage • Relax • Play • Talk

■ kca exercises

Recognising indicators

Before we can begin Mending Hurts, we must be able to recognise behaviours as indicators of need – the need for stabilisation or integration or adaptation. Only then are we able to adapt how we respond to ensure that we are most likely to meet the need in the other person, or at least to do no harm.

Think about this in relation to:

- Your own day to day practice
- Your setting
- Your community

Day to day practice

How do you, or how could you, remind yourself to notice the need in the other person when you encounter behaviour which makes you feel uncomfortable?

Examples of trauma-informed practice could include:

- Prepare for the day or a particular encounter by reflecting on the needs of those you will meet who are traumatised
- Reflect at least once a day on all those encounters
- Share reflection in formal or informal supervision
- Keep a journal or notebook of ideas and reflections on these interactions

What do you do already? What could you do in the future?

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Your setting

How do you, or how could you, enable others in your setting to understand trauma and the needs of people who are in a state of toxic stress?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Colleagues
- Children and young people
- Parents or carers

Your community

How do you, or how could you, enable others in the community to understand trauma and the needs of people who are in a state of toxic stress?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Other professionals working with the children and young people
- Organisations and individuals providing community activities
- Friends and relatives of the traumatised person

Co-regulate

Humans are born to connect, mirror and match. When we CO-REGULATE with someone who is in a state of toxic stress, we are choosing to use some of our energy to enable another person to recover.

- First our nervous system mirrors their stress and we make the choice to **respond** by accepting this connection with them
- Then we find a way to **engage** with them, so that they know we are responding to them and can connect with us and mirror our inner state
- And finally we self-regulate – **relax** – so that they can match this and let go of their stress

This activity is only possible for us when we have the resilience to use our energy in this way. It is much harder to co-regulate when we are feeling vulnerable, and very difficult indeed if we are in a state of toxic stress ourselves.

Day to day practice

How do you, or how could you, practise and improve your skills in co-regulating?

Examples of trauma-informed practice could include:

- Learn new, or develop existing, skills in self-regulating stress
- Practise noticing the toxic stress recovery needs of people around you in all sorts of situations
- Pay attention to your own resilience, and ensure that you maintain the resources that keep you emotionally healthy
- Build relationships that provide you with the support and co-regulation you need when you become overwhelmed

What do you do already? What could you do in the future?

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Your setting

How do you, or how could you, enable others in your setting to develop and practise their skills in co-regulation?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Colleagues
- Children and young people
- Parents or carers

Your community

How do you, or how could you, enable others in the community to understand

- The co-regulation needs of people in a state of toxic stress?
- What co-regulation is?
- And why it is needed in order to build resilience throughout the community?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Other professionals working with the children and young people
- Organisations and individuals providing community activities
- Friends and relatives of the traumatised person

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Guide

People in a state of toxic stress can only recover if they are able to connect to other people who are responsive to their recovery needs. So when we GUIDE them this is not about telling them what to do, but it is about connecting with them so that we can recognise when they are in a calm enough state to explore new ideas or possibilities for themselves. With this responsive guidance we can help them to develop their own ability to self-regulate, process and communicate emotions, and produce accurate and coherent narrative.

- So we communicate non-verbally – **play** – to establish a social and emotional connection
- And we communicate verbally – **talk** – to ensure whole brain engagement

Day to day practice

How do you, or how could you, practise and develop your own skills in responsive guidance?

Examples of trauma-informed practice could include:

- Learn new, or develop existing, skills in listening
- Learn new, or develop existing, skills in teaching relaxation
- Learn new, or develop existing, skills in teaching emotional literacy
- Learn new, or develop existing, skills in teaching narrative

What do you do already? What could you do in the future?

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Your setting

How do you, or how could you, enable others in your setting to practise and develop their skills in responsive guidance of others?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Colleagues
- Children and young people
- Parents or carers

Your community

How do you, or how could you, enable others in the community to understand

- The guidance needs of people who are in a state of toxic stress?
- What responsive guidance is?
- And how responsive guidance contributes to building resilient communities?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Other professionals working with the children and young people
- Organisations and individuals providing community activities
- Friends and relatives of the traumatised person

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Support

Trauma disconnects us from our core self and also from other people. When people recover from trauma they need to reconnect with other people and the world around them. We provide SUPPORT to enable and promote this re-engagement with the world, recognising when they are in an outgoing state and able to connect with others. With this sensitive support we can help them to develop their own social responsiveness, joy in living and discover a true sense of self-worth.

So we maintain a connection (**respond** – **engage** – **relax** – **play** – **talk**) while encouraging social activity

Day to day practice

How do you, or how could you, practise and develop your own skills in providing social support?

Examples of trauma-informed practice could include:

- Recognise points of interaction in which you can encourage social responsiveness, empathy and social skills
- Use opportunities for sharing joyful experiences, such as shared projects, trips and outings, creative activities and so on
- Encourage children and young people to notice their own positive development of attributes, skills, talents and interests

What do you do already? What could you do in the future?

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Your setting

How do you, or how could you, enable others in your setting to develop their own skills in providing sensitive social support to others?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Colleagues
- Children and young people
- Parents or carers

Your community

How do you, or how could you, enable others in the community to understand

- The support needs of people who are in a state of toxic stress?
- What sensitive social support is?
- And how social supportiveness builds resilient communities?

Examples of relevant groups might include:

- Other professionals working with the children and young people
- Organisations and individuals providing community activities
- Friends and relatives of the traumatised person

