

ReLATE – Rethinking Learning and Teaching Environments: Early findings from a pilot evaluation of a trauma-informed school model in Victoria, Australia

Julie Avery, PhD candidate, Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation
Educational and Developmental Psychologist

Supervision:
Prof. Helen Scutellari
Dr. Heather Morris
Prof. Joanne Deppeler, Education Futures, Monash University

3 – 4 February, 2020, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Monash Centre for Health Research & Implementation, Implementation Knowledge to Action Framework:
generating & translating evidence to impact



Definitions of Trauma



Trauma occurs as a result of actual or extreme threat of harm to self or to others that overwhelms an individual's internal and external coping mechanisms and has lasting adverse effects on the individual (Van der Kolk, 2007)

Complex trauma

Intergenerational/ historic trauma

Trauma can result from a single event, or multiple events over time

Not every adverse event is experienced as traumatic



Trauma-Informed Schools

Understanding, recognising and responding to the effects of trauma on student wellbeing, behaviour and learning are evident in the school's frameworks and strategies, practices, policies and culture

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA, 2014)



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

4 R's of a trauma-informed approach

REALIZE

the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery

RECOGNIZE

the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system

RESPOND

by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices

RESIST

re-traumatization



3 Core Components



1. Staff professional development on trauma impact



2. Organisational Changes



Organisational changes – trauma-informed policies and procedures to maximize learning & reduce incidents & unnecessary conflict

- **modifying disciplinary practices** - alternatives to punitive approaches
- **preventative & skill building focus** i.e. SEL, psycho-ed
- **school-climate change** – intentionality towards relational connection, compassion, empowerment, safety & support
- **communication protocols** – staff, student, parents, community agencies.

3. Practice Change



1. **relational and respectful connection**
2. **calming space** / sensory room & items: water bottles, chewing gum, fidgets
3. **routine, consistency & predictability**
4. **coaching & supervision**
5. **Care co-ordination teams** guide trauma-informed behavioural support planning
6. **Student capacity building** - trauma psycho-education, SEL, coping & social skills; opportunities to 'compromise' & 're-do'



Learnings from USA study tour

- **relational**
- **Teacher wellbeing actively supported**
- **reflective proactive team meetings**
 - what is driving the multiple crises a day?
 - supervision and coaching
 - safe places
 - build coping skills

process v pieces
|
relational
|
collaborative
|
collective care

Maori pedagogy and trauma-responsive practice

ako and whakawhanaungatanga

Ako – a responsive and reciprocal process where teaching and learning roles are shared.

Whakawhanaungatanga – the process of constructing relationships in the classroom between people, between students' cultural knowledge and domain knowledge.

- Bishop (2019) *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations*
- a **philosophical** shift in the way they think about teaching and learning
- anti-deficit thinking – strengths based / positive psychology based
- strong belief in students

ReLATE: Rethinking Learning and Teaching Environments

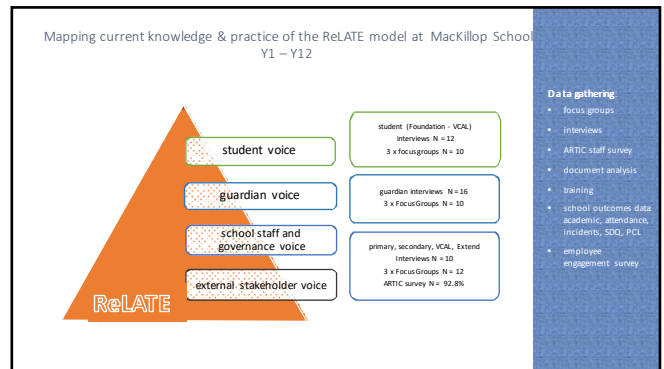
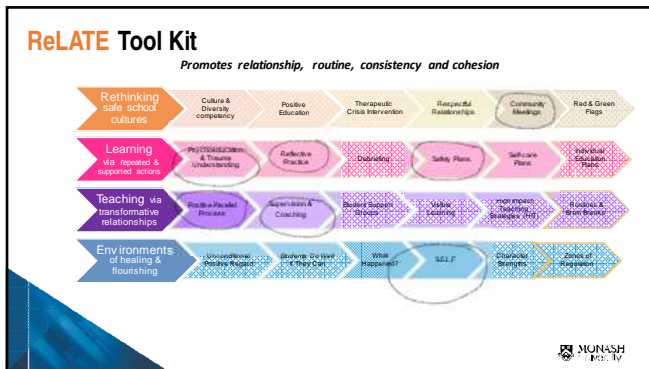
The ReLATE model guides schools and education services to create safe and supportive learning environments for the whole school community.



Specialist Campus
62 students from Foundation to VCAL

26 staff (teaching & non-teaching)

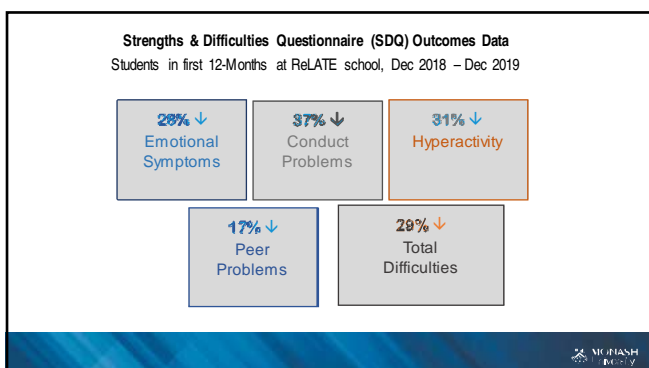
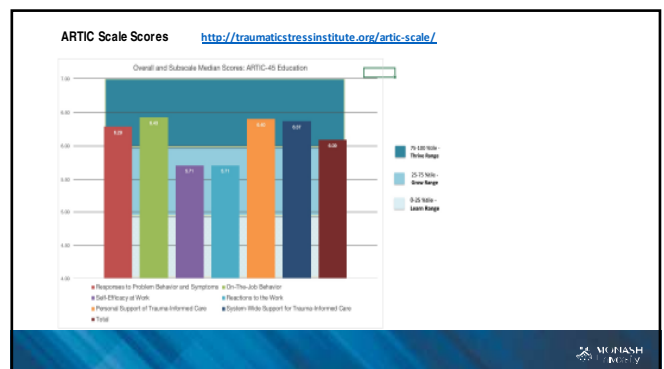
ReLATE is also being piloted at 3 mainstream Catholic Education primary schools with additional schools starting implementation this year



Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scales

- 1. understanding of underlying causes** of problem behaviour
- 2. prioritise** empathy, relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety as the agent of change
- 3. Attuned On-The-Job Behaviour**- empathy-focused staff behaviour versus control-focused
- 4. Self-Efficacy at Work**- feeling able to meet the demands of the work
- 5. Positive Reactions to the Work**- appreciating the effects of secondary trauma, support-seeking versus ignoring or hiding the impact
- 6. Personal Support of Trauma-Informed Care**- confident about implementation of TIC
- 7. System-Wide Support of Trauma-Informed Care**- supported by colleagues, supervisors, and management to implement TIC

MONASH UNIVERSITY



Caregiver voice

"The [major] difference is...these guys get it, they're not just teachers; they're teachers that just get it....."

"they're focussed on the child and what the child's going to need, and all that type of stuff..."

at the same time dealing with the behavioural portion to allow that child to be able to regulate themselves, and work that out themselves; potentially with the teacher"

MONASH UNIVERSITY

teacher voice

...the level of collaboration...is the point of difference

"It's really the collapsing of those walls that make it work. Like, I think we'd have huge problems if teachers were, like, oh, that's wellbeing, that's not mine. That's not my problem"

Yes, there's a distinct care and appreciation, I think, between the staff, which is beautiful to see and doesn't happen in many environments

...when you realise the level of collaboration with the agencies and families, just the communications is, like, whoa, you know. Initially, it's kind of, like, am I good to do this? But it's a very open and encouraged space"



student voice

the no violence one is a big one, because we try and not escalate to a point where people are going to get angry, but sometimes it does happen, but the teachers are pretty good at dealing with it. And they always deal with it the proper way instead of like, they're knowledgeable in their way...and normally, there's no fighting (secondary student)

I've improved in all of my aspects with emotions and writing and stuff altogether. Improved since I've got here (secondary)

Teachers actually understand and they actually listen to you (primary)



student voice

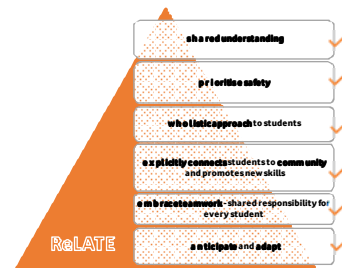
"I don't have that many safe places, but this is a safe place for me. Well, I mean totally safe, that I feel like nothing is going to happen" (secondary student)

"I don't know [why I'm more hopeful], I think how the teachers try and make you become the best you can be" (secondary)

We learn how to tell the teachers [about strong emotions] and learn how to actually talk about it, instead of keeping it in, it's really,calmer and I feel less stress because I have less pressure on me.and then when I came here, the stress basically just got lifted off me.



Map school data with TLPI six core values of a trauma-sensitive school



Preliminary findings: triangulated data

The ReLATE trauma-informed model demonstrates promising outcomes, and a trauma informed school culture that reflects the key elements of trauma informed practice.

REALIZE RECOGNIZE RESPOND RESIST



ReLATE – Rethinking Learning & Teaching Environments

Online ReLATE information:

<https://www.mackillop.org.au/programs/relate-model-2>

<https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Helping-Traumatized-Children-Learn.pdf>

Julie Avery: Julie.avery@monash.edu



References

- Baker, C.N., Brown, S.M., Wilcox, R.D., Overstreet, S., & Arora, P. (2016). Development and psychometric evaluation of the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale. *School Mental Health*, 8(1), 61-76.
- Barley, C., Kilar, A., Cox, R., Beggs-Hart, A., Avery, J., Skouteris, H., & Latham, D. (2018). Systematic review of organisation-wide, trauma-informed care models in child and adolescent settings. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 27, 1010-1122.
- Bishop, R. (2019). *Reaching to the Next-Edge: Relationship-Based Learning in Practice*. NACER Press, New Zealand.
- Cole, S., & (2015). *How Can Educators Create Safe and Supportive School Cultures?* Boston, MA: Massachusetts Advocates for Children.
- Cole, S., & (2019). *Helping Traumatized Children Learn, Volume 1: Supportive School Environments for Students Traumatized by Family Violence*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Advocates for Children.
- Cole, S., & (2013). *Helping Traumatized Children Learn, Volume 2: Creating and Advocating for Trauma-Sensitive Schools*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Advocates for Children.
- Deppeler, J. (2019). <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/trauma-informed-schooling>. Retrieved September 18, 2019.
- Jones, W., Berg, J., & Osher, D. (2018). *Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI): Trauma-Sensitive Schools Descriptive Study: Final Report*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-48846. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Contact email: julie.avery@monash.edu



Thank-you



ReLATE --- From the NewsRoom.....



Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) six **core values** for creating a trauma-sensitive school



Adapted from TLPI:
Cole, S. et al. (2005).

*Helping
Traumatized
Children Learn
Vol. 1*
Cole, et al (2005,
p 47)

