

TRAUMA IN THE EARLY YEARS: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

This training is essential for early years practitioners and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of how early life adversity affects later mental, physical, and relational health. The training also aims to empower practitioners to support parents who are struggling to connect with their infants and who wish to parent differently from their own upbringing.



Drawing on current neuroscience and psychological research, the training will explore how difficult early experiences shape infant development, with a focus on recognising signs of distress, prevention, and effective intervention. The training is deeply enriched throughout, by moving film footage of actual parent-infant relational interactions to vividly illustrate key learning points.

Importantly, the presenter will explore traumas of omission, where infants have missed out on vital relational experiences necessary for language, cognitive development, emotional regulation, capacity for attention and concentration, and secure attachment. She also examines traumas of commission, including intrusive or shaming adult–child interactions and exposure to violence, and their long-term impact on the developing brain, sense of self, and relationships.

The session offers a strong message of hope. Due to the brain's capacity for change (neuroplasticity), healing adult–child relationships can positively impact on neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, mind, and body. Evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies are highlighted to support genuine recovery.



Presenter: Dr Margot Sunderland

Neuroscience scholar and Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychotherapist with over 30 years' experience. Author of over 20 books in child mental health including *The Science of Parenting* (First Prize winner British Medical Association Book Awards). Director of Education and Training, Centre for Child Mental Health. Director of Innovation and Research, Trauma Informed Schools UK.

For booking and further enquiries contact: **01752 278477**
www.trauma-informed.uk | info@traumainformedschools.co.uk



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