

Relational Learning:

Supporting learning, development and wellbeing through relationship.

Secure relationships have a direct bearing on children's capacity to succeed in school. Relationships and belonging are key to success for all children and essential for those who have experienced relational losses and trauma.

Relational learning provides a framework for whole school development and universal provision, as well as attachment based mentoring for those who have the greatest need.

The Approach

It is clear that if we are going to effectively support all children in school we need to understand the power of relationships and the impact of adverse childhood experiences on development. We need to understand what their difficulties and behaviour is telling us about what they need. Studying the features of a secure relationship and the factors which promote social and emotional wellbeing, helps us to understand what we must provide for children if we are to enable them to succeed.

The approach draws together research from several areas of psychology, biology and education. We started by thinking about the needs of the child in school and applying the theory and research which we felt would be most helpful for them. The theoretical underpinnings come from the areas of neuroscience, attachment and connection, resiliency, solution focused coaching, restorative approaches and cognitive science. We have drawn on the expertise of therapists and educational practitioners, our own experience and the views and voices of the children we have worked with to develop a holistic model of support. **The relationship is central.**

We see Relational Learning as both a **universal approach** as well as a **targetted approach** for those who are most in need and require more intensive support. We emphasise the importance of relational skills and the need to be reflective about how we are with children, as well as what we do. We aim to turn sometimes complex theory into practical approaches that can make a difference.

Relational Learning aims to develop a belief in and understanding of how schools can support all children through individual relationships, classroom practice, and policy which supports practice systems which are responsive to their needs.

Key Principles

With the correct support all children can be fully included in their educational setting, enjoy learning and succeed.

Good relationships, within which children learn to feel safe and secure, trust and regulate, are the key to learning and development.

Schools are ideally placed to offer relational support. This support can and should become part of our everyday interactions with the children we work with.

This is a universal way of working with children and also a targetted approach for those in most need.

We believe that it is most helpful to consider what we know helps children to develop rather than to focus on deficits. We focus on the psychological theory that tells us what makes a good relationship, what behaviour is telling us in terms of what we need to do and on what the child is telling us about what helps them, rather than diagnosing or labelling children.

Children need to have a voice, feel heard and have opportunities to develop a sense of agency if support is to be meaningful and effective.



Our Relational Learning Core

- Develop an understanding of how adverse experiences and trauma may impact on emotional development and wellbeing
- Raise empathy and understanding for children who may be finding school hard
- Develop whole school practice, procedures and policy aligned to relational learning
- Enable the adults working with children to be able to read their behaviour in terms of underlying needs and provide for these needs in terms of what they are doing and how they are being with them

Attachment Based Mentoring

The Attachment Based Mentoring Programme aims to meet the specific needs of children who are most in need, by providing them with a significant adult in school who will become a safe base and is able to provide relational support through coaching and mentoring.

This three day training draws on theories and research from the fields of attachment, coaching and resilience, ABM is a comprehensive practical guide as to what to do and how to be to ensure that the individual needs of each child are met.

The approach aims to enable children to feel safe, connected, and capable - forming positive relationships and enjoying learning. You will:

- Understand the needs of all children including the most vulnerable and how they can find it difficult to engage with learning
- Learn how to become the child's significant adult
- Meet attachment needs by considering the mentoring relationship
- Develop solution focused coaching and mentoring skills
- Consider the wider role of the mentor in terms of social learning, advocacy and practical support

This course is aimed at: Teachers and Teaching Assistants who will be Attachment Based Mentors and Senior Leaders who have a responsibility for student support and wellbeing.

Relational Learning: Relationships for Learning, Development and Wellbeing

This one day course explores the theories which underpin our understanding of effective relationships and their role in learning, development and wellbeing as well as developing the skills and practical strategies that underpin the relational approach. The course includes:

- Why relationships are key to teaching and learning
- The biology of emotions, behaviour and social development
- The role of the adult as a source of safety, security, regulation and belonging
- The impact of anxious relationships on thoughts, feelings and behaviour and what we can do to help
- Using Relational Support Plans to develop universal to targeted support

This course is suitable for whole school inset and can be delivered as a conference for larger groups.

Learning Programmes

Aims

- Support adults to develop the skills they need to form secure relationships with the children they work with, use coaching skills to support their development and practical skills to support their inclusion
- Support adults to become reflective practitioners who can be responsive to children's needs and adapt to different situations

Developing Whole School Relational Practice and Policy

Aimed at senior leaders, this one day course introduces a whole school approach to relational practice and policy by providing guidance on:

- Establishing a shared understanding and framework for building relationships, regulating and de-escalating challenging behaviour and using restorative approaches to promote learning and reparation
- Developing behaviour policies which support a relational rather than behaviourist approach to personal development and which are in line with up-to-date guidance, research and evidence
- Whole school practice and systems which are inclusive, responsive and promote positive relationships and an ethos which is beneficial to all members of the school community
- A graduated response which enables schools to meet the needs of children who are most in need

This course is aimed at: [Headteachers and Senior Leaders responsible for whole school development.](#)

Train the Trainer Attachment Based Mentoring Programme

Our Train the Trainer programme is a five day training programme providing you with everything you need in order to deliver the ABM programme yourself. Updated materials, video sessions and email support are available with the programme's annual subscription. The Trainer Manual is included and delegate reference books are available.

This comprehensive, research and evidence based programme enables your Local Authority, Educational Psychology Team, Virtual School Team or Multi-Academy Trust to deliver our Attachment Based Mentoring programme to your local schools and staff. This model represents excellent value for money and offers you the opportunity to earn revenue on your delivery of the three day school programme.

Contact us to find out more and to discuss options to suit your requirements:

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www.babcockldp.co.uk/relational-learning

Evaluation of our training

“A blend of passion, knowledge and humour which led to exceptional effectiveness of course delivery from start to finish.” Primary school teacher (Bradley Barton School)

“Fabulous in all aspects – content, concept, application, practice, resources. This is easily the best and most useful course I have participated in.” School mentor (Appledore Primary School)

“Two outstanding trainers with different styles of delivery, experience and insights. A course filled with impactful discussion and exploration without feelings of being overwhelmed.” Head of teaching and learning (Haytor Primary School)

“Very informative and engaging, the best training ever in 16 years as a teacher.” Teacher in a specialist provision (South and West Devon Academy)

“A three day epiphany.” Head of Inclusion (South Dartmoor Community College)

Impact of our Attachment Based Mentoring programme

Evaluation of the mentoring project to date indicates that the mentoring is having a positive impact in several areas.

Adults working with the children (both teachers and mentors) commented that the mentoring had an impact on the children’s ability to be open and trusting. They also commented on increased feelings of self-worth, confidence and happiness.

In addition to the role of the significant adult, coaching has enabled the children to experience ownership, a clear sense of agency and success in areas that are most meaningful to them. This has been significant in terms of giving the children a voice and increased confidence and motivation. The children themselves appear to have greatly valued feeling listened to and having someone in school to talk to.

During the pilot study, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires were completed by the teachers of a sample of 10 children who were being mentored. Scores showed that after 12 weeks of mentoring 9/10 children showed an improvement with regard to the total difficulties score.

The findings so far indicate that Attachment Based Mentoring is supporting children to access learning and be included. Actively working on their relationship needs and sense of security as well as providing coaching to support them to move forward has had a positive effect on many areas of their development, their ability to engage with education and to experience success at school.

“Oliver had experienced trauma and being able to trust was a big milestone for him. Since the mentoring, he has made very good progress. He has turned a corner- he will now seek out adult help as he hasn’t done before.” Mentor

“Since the mentoring my attitude towards people has changed. I didn’t want to work before. I argued with the teachers and now I don’t. My teacher is really proud and says I’m doing amazingly well. My mum is impressed because I am better at home too. I think I feel happier than I did.” Child being mentored





Practical Support



Development



Attachment and Relationships

Our People

Relational Learning - meet the researchers, creators and trainers

Catherine Dunnett was a secondary school teacher working in London for 10 years before moving to Devon and training to be an Educational Psychologist. Catherine has worked in schools across Devon supporting the inclusion of children with special educational needs and disability. Catherine has a particular interest in working with vulnerable children with social emotional needs and in supporting schools to develop their practice and capacity to meet the needs of these children. Catherine has specialisms in working with CIC and using solution focused processes to support the development of children and adults.

Matt Jones was a primary school teacher and SENCo before joining the Social Emotional Mental Health Team, where he supports schools with the inclusion of vulnerable children as well as developing whole school practice in the area of Relational Learning.

Matt has worked extensively with children who have experienced relational losses and trauma and the adults who work with them, ensuring they are included and successful at school.

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