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TEN KEY MESSAGES ABOUT TRAUMA-SENSITIVE PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS

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This resource offers ten key messages as an invitation for reflection and conversation. For example, which three points resonate most with you? If you were to add a message to the list, what might it be?

1. Trauma is a form of toxic stress which overwhelms our capacity to cope (Harvard Centre on the Developing Child, 2015; Herman, 1997). It's about our *perception of threat* (Levine, 2008).
2. Trauma alters baseline arousal (Perry, 2021).
3. The developing brain is more vulnerable to harm and to healing (Tobin, 2016; UNICEF, 2017).
4. Trauma can impact children and young people's capacity to "learn, form relationships, and function appropriately in the classroom" (Cole, et al., 2005, p.1).
5. Depending on the timing of the trauma, different aspects of development will be affected (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011).

6. The window of tolerance is a helpful framework to observe ourselves and others, and to notice what we need (Siegel, 2010).
7. The sequence of engagement is “regulate, relate, reason” (Perry, 2020).
8. Unless we’re in our window of tolerance we can’t learn or use our social skills (Siegel, 2010; Perry, 2020).
9. It’s helpful to notice what pushes us/our students out of our window of tolerance. And what helps us to return to our window of tolerance.
10. A sense of safety is the antidote to trauma. Two powerful ways to build a sense of safety are:
 - i) predictable relationships, routines, expectations, boundaries (Golding et al., 2013).
 - ii) PACE, which is an acronym for an attitude of playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy (Bombér & Hughes, 2013).

If you’d like to learn more about whole school approaches to trauma-sensitive practice, positive behaviour support, or supportive and educative supervision, please contact me at sonja@sonjavanderaa.com.au

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