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Becoming an attachment and trauma aware school Your school's team for change

The most effective organisational change is led from the top. When parents and professionals describe their children having positive school experiences, they talk not only about what the school has done for their child but also more broadly about the school's ethos and values. The school's leadership must drive and model the changes they wish to see

The most effective work in schools is when the school identifies a small group or "taskforce" of people who are:

- Committed and motivated because of their personal or professional interest
- Powerful enough to make changes from the top
- Involved enough in the day to day life of the school to model the changes they want to see
- Connected enough to win the hearts and minds of others in the school



Initially this group or "taskforce" should have a defined, time bound task: work towards creating a more attachment and trauma aware school.

Defining the tasks will help you to stick to the focus, rather than allowing it to grow so broad that you cannot effectively address it

Your team should include:

- The Head Teacher/Principal
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO in UK) or person who is responsible for this area of support within school
- A member of staff representing the teachers
- A member of staff representing teaching assistants/support assistants
- A governor
- An adoptive parent and a permanency carer (Special Guardian/Foster Carer/Kinship Carer) from the school community
- An adopted and a care experienced young person

Schools are busy places and nobody wants to attend meetings for the sake of it.

It is helpful to identify what each person has to contribute and how they can best make that contribution.

Key things to consider:

- Does everyone need to attend each session?
- What actions can be taken between meetings?

Then together think about who is contributing each of the following skills and information and when they are needed:

- Lived experience of adoption and what it means to be an adopted person or adoptive family
- Lived care experience and what it means to be care experienced and live in an alternative family
- Understanding of the impact of attachment, trauma and loss
- Communication skills to build bridges between the group, wider school and the adoptive and care experienced community
- Links to and contacts with resources within the local authority/government and wider community
- Organisational skills to ensure the groups stays on track and follows through on agreed targets

The group or "taskforce" needs to keep everyone in the school up to date with the progress they are making, so that staff feel that change is being done with them rather than to them. The group will also need to consult with adoptive parents and permanency carers within the school community. This is a particularly important aspect if the taskforce doesn't include any adoptive parents (though this should be a key component) but it is recognising that the voice of one adoptive parent or permanency carer is not representative of the voices of all.

Resources:

Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools

Working with Relational Trauma in Schools: An Educator's Guide to Using Dyadic Developmental Practice

