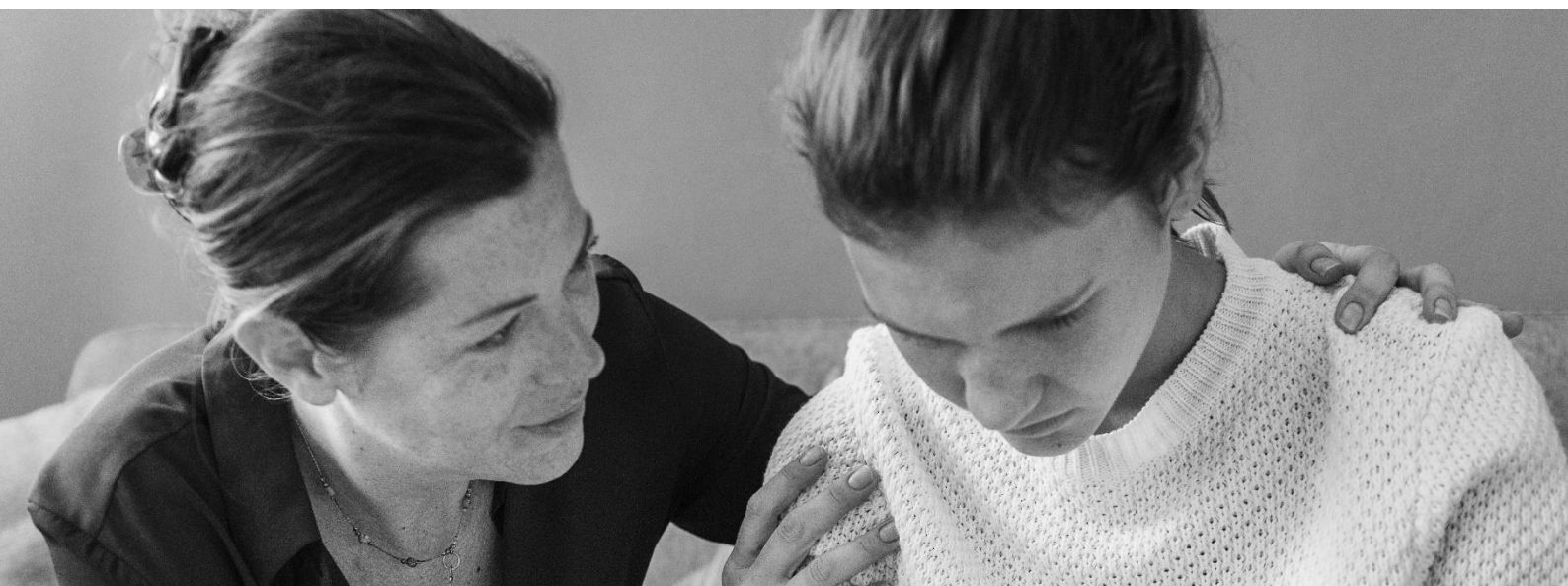


# Child Development and Trauma Specialist Practice Resource: 12-18 Years



Developmental Trends		
The Following information needs to be understood in the context of the overview statement on child development:		
Physical skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant physical growth and body changes</li> <li>develops greater expertise/skills in sport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changing health needs for diet, rest, exercise, hygiene and dental care</li> <li>puberty, menstruation</li> <li>sexuality and contraception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased need for nutritious balanced diet, including adequate calcium, protein and iron</li> </ul>
Self concept		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can be pre-occupied with self</li> <li>secondary sex characteristics affect self concept, relationships with others and activities undertaken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dealing with own sexuality and that of peers</li> <li>developing identity based on gender and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming an adult, including opportunities and challenges</li> </ul>
Cognitive and creative characteristics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thinks logically, abstractly and solves problems thinking like an adult</li> <li>may take an interest in/develop opinions about community or world events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can appreciate others' perspectives and see a problem or situation from different angles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>career choice may be realistic, or at odds with school performance and talents</li> </ul>

### Social-emotional development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>empathy for others</li> <li>ability to make decisions (moral)</li> <li>values and a moral system become firmer and affect views and opinions</li> <li>spends time with peers for social and emotional needs beyond parents and family</li> <li>peer assessment influences self concept, behaviour/need to conform</li> <li>girls have 'best friends', boys have 'mates'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may explore sexuality by engaging in sexual behaviours and intimate relationships</li> <li>develops wider interests</li> <li>seeks greater autonomy personally, in decision making</li> <li>more responsible in tasks at home, school and work</li> <li>experiences emotional turmoil, strong feelings and unpredictable mood swings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interdependent with parents and family</li> <li>conflict with family more likely through puberty</li> <li>able to negotiate and assert boundaries</li> <li>learning to give and take (reciprocity)</li> <li>focus is on the present - may take significant risks</li> <li>understands appropriate behaviour but may lack self control/insight</li> </ul>
---	--	---

### Possible Indicators of Trauma

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased, tension, irritability, reactivity, and inability to relax</li> <li>accident proneness</li> <li>reduced eye contact</li> <li>sleep disturbances, nightmares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lack of control over bladder and bowel movements</li> <li>eating disturbances/disorders</li> <li>absconding or truanting and challenging behaviours</li> <li>substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aggressive/violent behaviour</li> <li>firelighting, hurting animals</li> <li>suicidal ideation</li> <li>self harming eg. cutting, burning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>efforts to distance from feelings of shame and humiliation</li> <li>loss of self-esteem and self confidence</li> <li>acute psychological distress</li> <li>personality changes and changes in quality of important relationships evident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased self-focusing and withdrawal</li> <li>reduced capacity to feel emotions – may appear 'numb'</li> <li>wish for revenge and action oriented responses to trauma</li> <li>partial loss of memory and ability to concentrate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trauma flashbacks</li> <li>acute awareness of parental reactions; wish to protect parents from own distress</li> <li>sexually exploitive or aggressive interactions with younger children</li> <li>sexually promiscuous behaviour or total avoidance of sexual involvement</li> <li>running away from home</li> </ul>



## Trauma impact

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sleep disturbances, nightmares</li> <li>hyperarousal, hypervigilance, hyperactivity</li> <li>eating disturbances or disorders</li> <li>trauma acting out, risk taking, sexualised, reckless, regressive or violent behaviour</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flight into driven activity and involvement with others or retreat from others in order to manage inner turmoil</li> <li>vulnerability to withdrawal and pessimistic world view</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vulnerability to depression, anxiety, stress disorders, and suicidal ideation</li> <li>vulnerability to conduct, attachment, eating and behavioural disorders</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mood and personality changes and changes in quality of important relationships evident</li> <li>loss of, or reduced capacity to attune with caregiver</li> <li>loss of, or reduced capacity to manage emotional states or self soothe</li> <li>lowered self-esteem</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flight into adulthood seen as way of escaping impact and memory of trauma (early marriage, pregnancy, dropping out of school, abandoning peer group for older set of friends)</li> <li>fear of growing up and need to stay within family orbit</li> </ul> | <p><b>Memory for trauma includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acute awareness of and distress with intrusive imagery and memories of trauma</li> <li>vulnerability to flash backs, episodes of recall, anniversary reactions and seasonal reminders of trauma</li> <li>may experience acute distress encountering any reminder of trauma</li> <li>partial loss of memory and concentration</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|





## Parental / carer support following trauma

### Encourage parent(s) carers to:

- seek, accept and increase support for themselves to manage their own shock and emotions
- remain calm - encourage younger and older adolescents to talk about traumatic event with family members
- provide opportunities for young person to spend time with friends who are supportive and meaningful
- reassure young person that strong feelings - whether of guilt, shame, embarrassment, or wish for revenge – are normal following a trauma
- help young person find activities that offer opportunities to experience mastery, control, and self-esteem
- encourage pleasurable physical activities such as sports and dancing
- monitor young person's coping at home, school, and in peer group
- address acting-out behaviour involving aggression or self destructive behaviour quickly and firmly with limit setting and professional help
- take signs of depression, self harm, accident proneness, recklessness, and persistent personality change seriously by seeking help
- help young person develop a sense of perspective on the impact of the traumatic event and a sense of the importance of time in recovering
- encourage delaying big decisions
- seek information/advice about young person's developmental and educational progress
- provide the young person with frequent high protein snacks/ meals during the day
- take time to recharge



### Reference:

*Australian Victorian State Government Health and Human Services  
 Adapted for a global audience by Get into Neurodiversity.*