

Staffordshire Virtual School **Attachment & Trauma and Emotion Coaching Training Final Report**

August 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2018 Emotion Coaching UK was commissioned by Staffordshire Virtual School to provide 3, 1-day training events on Attachment & Trauma (A&T) and 3, 1-day training events in Emotion Coaching (EC). This training programme was part of a project to support multi-agency understanding of the impact of attachment and trauma issues on the education of looked after children and to ensure that looked after children thrive in education in Staffordshire. All training events were carried out at the Families First Children's Centre, Faraday Road in Staffordshire.

Attachment & Trauma 1-day training event			
Session	Date	Attendees	Trainer
Session 1	25.01.2019	13	Dr. Marnie Aston, Educational Psychologist & Lead Practitioner Trainer Emotion Coaching UK
Session 2	21.03.2019	29	Dr. Janet Rose Co-founder Emotion Coaching UK
Session 3	20.03.2019	33	Dr. Janet Rose Co-founder Emotion Coaching UK
Total number of attendees = 75			

Emotion Coaching 1-day training event			
Session	Date	Attendees	Trainer
Session 1	24.11.2019	22	Dr. Louise Gilbert Co-founder Emotion Coaching UK
Session 2	05.04.2019	43	Licette Gus Educational Psychologist & Co-founder Emotion Coaching UK
Session 3	23.05.2019	27	Dr. Louise Gilbert Co-founder Emotion Coaching UK
Total number of attendees = 92			

This report will provide an evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative data of the 3 Attachment & Trauma 1-day training events and the 3 Emotion Coaching 1-day training events.

2. TRAINING PROGRAMME OUTLINE

2.1 ATTACHMENT & TRAUMA TRAINING DAY

This programme provided a one-day introduction to Attachment Aware Schools and Trauma Informed Practice. It was designed to be informative, interactive and empowering in its delivery. This included explanation of concepts, videos, participant activities and opportunities for peer learning, personal reflection and planning of practice. The training framework related to the current evidence base on why it is important for schools to adopt attachment aware and trauma informed practice; what creates an attachment aware school and the promotion of trauma-informed practice for practitioners. These key aspects were explored through:

- The key tenets of attachment theory and attachment styles, social baseline theory and an understanding of trauma (notably adverse childhood experiences (ACE's))
- The neurophysiology of the attachment process and the consequences of trauma, including an insight into the stress response system; the vagal system and how attachment and attunement shapes the social engagement system
- The impact of attachment and trauma on behaviour, self-regulation, mental health, learning in the classroom, growth mindsets, physical health and life outcomes
- An outline of the Attachment Aware Schools framework and the key messages
- Identification and practical illustration of key strategies to support implementation of attachment awareness and trauma informed practice
- Evidence-based case study illustrations of attachment aware and trauma informed practice in schools

At the end of the course, each participant was given a copy of the text: Colley, D. and Cooper, P.(ed.) (2017) *Attachment and emotional development in the classroom, theory and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. This is an edited text with twenty chapters, from experts in the field of child attachment and emotional development. It includes chapters on trauma and resiliency, neuroscience of learning, Emotion Coaching and Attachment Aware Schools. It provided post-course support and offered opportunities for independent personal and professional development

2.2 EMOTION COACHING TRAINING DAY

This programme involved a one-day introduction to Emotion Coaching (EC) in educational settings and practice. It was designed to be informative, interactive and empowering in its delivery and included explanation of current concepts, videos, participant activities and opportunities for peer learning, personal reflection and planning of practice. The training included critical consideration of the evidence base for basic neurophysiology of function and maturation of the typical brain; the role of emotions for survival, learning and self-regulation; fostering critical awareness of educational neuromyths; what is Emotion Coaching; why Emotion Coaching is important in learning and useful for educational settings; how to do Emotion Coaching; when to use Emotion Coaching; current Emotion Coaching research from UK educational focussed research and consideration of adoption and adaption in personal and setting practice. Topics covered during the day included:

- Neuroscience and physiology supporting the use of EC. Links were made to the stress response system (including polyvagal theory) and theories of attachment.
- The importance of adult meta-emotion philosophy (how we think about emotions and act in response to them).

- The theory of EC - John Gottman's work focussing on four different styles used when dealing with emotions. A four-step framework for EC.
- How to do EC - including: practice at identifying what is and what is not EC; participating in scripted role plays to allow reflection on how it feels to be the pupil and adult in both EC; emotion dismissing/disapproving scenarios; identifying the underlying feelings and practice at devising EC scripts of their own.
- Identification and practical illustration of key strategies to support implementation of EC informed practice
- Evidence-based case study illustrations of EC informed practice in educational settings

At the end of the course, each participant was given a copy of the text: Colley, D. and Cooper, P.(ed.) (2017) *Attachment and emotional development in the classroom, theory and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. This is an edited text with chapters from experts in the field of attachment and emotional development, including chapters on Emotion Coaching; resiliency and Attachment Aware Schools. It provided post-course support and offered opportunities for independent personal and professional development.

3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION FOR EVALUATION

The focus for evaluation of the Attachment & Trauma and Emotion Coaching training days was based on the principle that continuing professional development aims for new knowledge and understanding that can be assimilated into participants everyday practice to support children and young people.

Therefore, the same training-evaluation form evaluated participant experience, but the focus was either Attachment & Trauma or Emotion Coaching. The paper-version evaluation form had two main questions and a space for participant comments. Each of the questions had two parts: a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 5 = a lot) and a descriptive response part. Therefore basic quantitative and qualitative data was able to be collected. (See Appendix A for details of the training evaluation form). The forms did not request personal details, so confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability of the responses was guaranteed.

Participants were asked to evaluate their training-day experience by answering the following questions:

Attachment & Trauma Training Day Evaluation	
Question 1:	Do you feel this training has raised your understanding/knowledge about Attachment & Trauma? (<i>Likert Scale 1-5</i>)
	List three things you have learnt or learnt more about from the day? (<i>descriptive qualitative data</i>)
Question 2:	Do you think you will be able to use what you have learnt about Attachment & Trauma in your work/life? (<i>Likert Scale 1-5</i>)
	In what ways do you think you would be able to use this new learning about Attachment and Trauma on their work/life? (<i>descriptive qualitative data</i>)

Emotion Coaching Training Day Evaluation	
Question 1:	Do you feel this training has raised your understanding/knowledge of how to Emotion Coach? (<i>Likert Scale 1-5</i>)
	List three things you have learnt or learnt more about from the day? (<i>descriptive qualitative data</i>)
Question 2:	Do you think you will be able to use Emotion Coaching in your work with pupils, school and families? (<i>Likert Scale 1-5</i>)
	In what ways do you think you would be able to use this new learning about Emotion Coaching in their work/life? (<i>descriptive qualitative data</i>)

We wanted to measure:

- Participants' perceived knowledge and understanding of the training content (referenced below as **1. Development of knowledge and understanding**)
- Participant perception of the relevance and value in relation to current practice and ongoing professional development (referenced below as **2. Application of Attachment & Trauma or Emotion Coaching training into everyday practice to support children and young people**)
- Any other comments from participants about their personal experience of the day and/or training focus (referenced as **3. Participants' concluding comments**).

4. SUMMARY OF TRAINING DAY EVALUATIONS

4.1 Attachment & Trauma Training Days

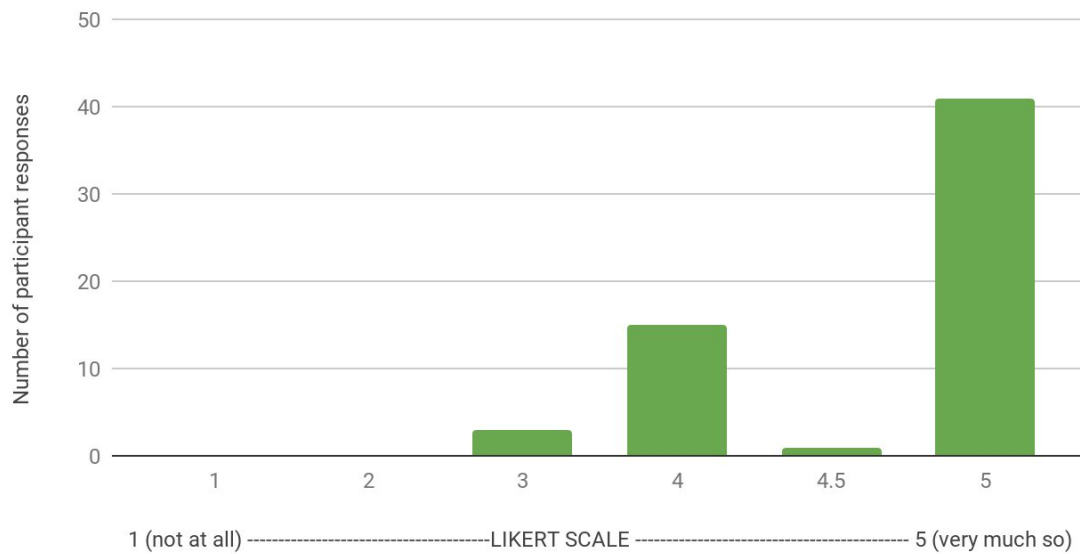
A total of 75 people, involved in local authority children and young people's settings and services, attended the three, 1-day Attachment and Trauma training sessions (January to March 2019).

1. Development of Knowledge and Understanding

Figure 1. illustrates the responses made by participants to the first training evaluation question: "***Do you feel that the training has raised your understanding/knowledge about Attachment and Trauma***".

The Likert scale range was 1-5, with 1 representing 'not at all' and 5 representing 'very much so'. The average response to the question was **4.64** (Range = 3-5, Median = 5, Mode = 5), suggesting that the training had supported and developed participants' knowledge and understanding of attachment and trauma. The opportunity to focus on current theories and concepts was considered useful and positively contributed to participants' understanding and consideration of strategies that could be used in educational settings.

Figure1: Participants rating about their their learning about Attachment & Trauma



Content and thematic analysis identified the topics participants considered to be of most benefit and interest. From the 141 comments given, the following three topics/themes emerged as being most popular (each being referenced 34 times): *attachment as a concept*; *physiology and neuroscience of learning and trauma* and *practical applications to support attachment in educational settings*.

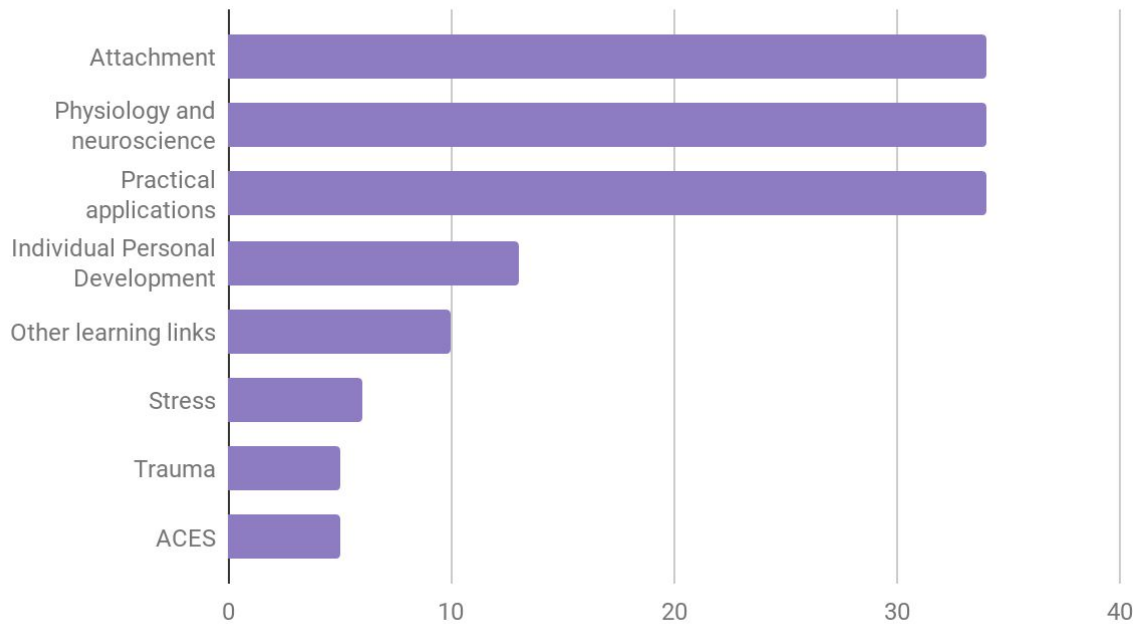
Within the theme of '*attachment as a concept*' comments related to the theories, concepts and ideas underpinning attachment, the different types of attachment styles and individual differences in attachment.

Comments pertaining to the *physiology and neuroscience relevant to attachment and trauma* specifically identified the hand-model of the brain, vagal tone and the social engagement system as the most popular new topics/ extensions of learning.

The interests in *practical applications of attachment and trauma* were in relation to both micro (individual practitioner) and macro (educational setting) levels. Practitioner practice (micro) related to the strategies individuals could use in settings, for example; Emotion Coaching, games/play to support regulation and how to deal with specific instances e.g. meltdowns. Macro level strategies for whole settings approaches referenced the interest to develop supportive Attachment Aware Schools systems.

Figure 2. (below) shows the most frequently referenced themes/topics by participants.

Figure 2: Participant comments about what was learned about Attachment & Trauma

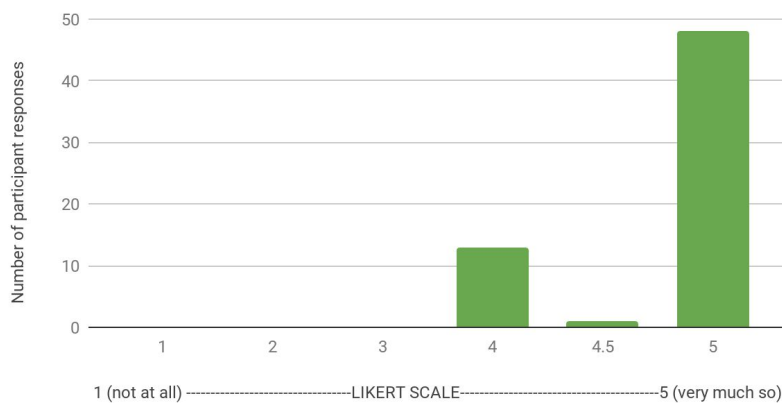


2. Application of Attachment & Trauma training into everyday practice to support children and young people

Figure 3.(below) illustrates the responses made by participants to the second evaluation question: ***“Do you think you will be able to use what you have learnt about Attachment & Trauma in your work/life?”***

The Likert scale range was 1-5, with 1 representing ‘not at all’ and 5 representing ‘very much so’. The average response to the question was **4.78** (Range = 4-5, Median = 5, Mode = 5) suggested that participants felt that they would be able to transfer the learning from the Attachment & Trauma training into everyday practice to support children and young people.

Figure 3: Participants rating about their ability to apply the learning from the Attachment & Trauma training to their work to support children and young



Participants were asked to comment on the ways in which they would be able to use the ideas about Attachment & Trauma presented in the training. Content and thematic analysis were conducted on the

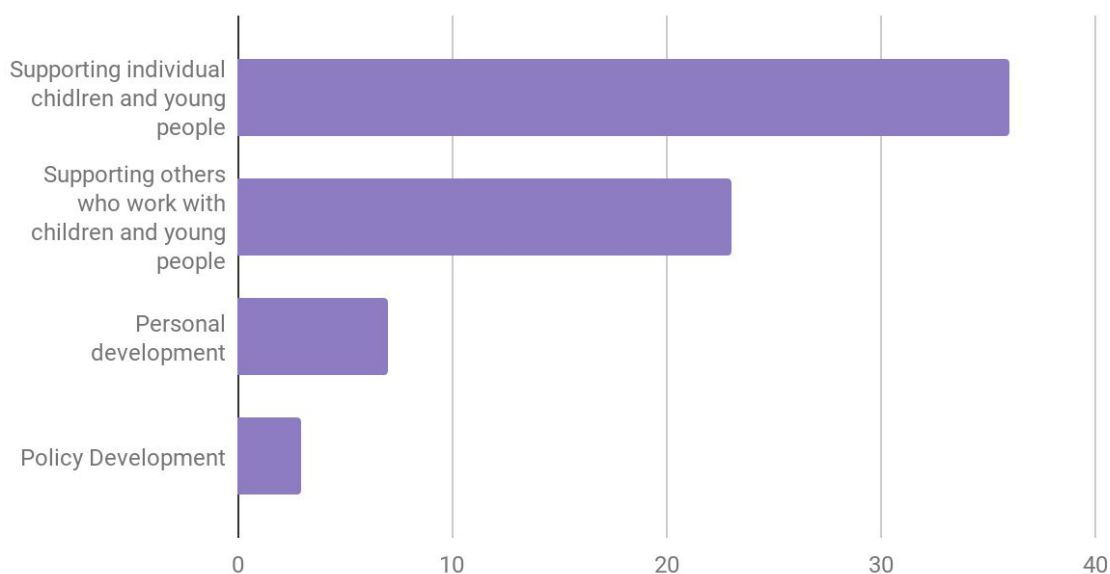
69 comments made by the practitioners and **Figure 4.** (below) identifies four themes: *individual work with children; supporting others who work with children; personal development and policy development.*

As a result of attending the training day, knowledge and understanding to support *individual work with children* related to adopting new practices and adapting their existing practices. New activities to support individual children included: theraplay activities, focus on welcoming children, focus on regulating activities and whole class games. It was suggested that adaptation of existing practices to support individual children could happen through changing the nature of communication with children, changing practitioner approaches to responding to children's attention needs, developing teams around the child in educational settings and introducing transition programme for year 6/7 children.

Comments related to '*supporting others who work with children and young people*' identified using their knowledge and understanding to support colleagues and other adults as well as focussing on the fundamental support systems supporting the school culture and ethos.

Some participants mentioned how the training had influenced them at a personal and professional level. Recognising effects of the training on *personal development and policy development* reflected shifts in personal thinking about behaviour and the desire for further training e.g. in Emotion Coaching and meditation. The need to promote relational policies focussed on developing a shared relationship policy in their schools rather than addressing behavioural management policies.

Figure 4: Participant comments about how they will be able to use what they learned about Attachment & Trauma in their work/life



4.2 Emotion Coaching Training Days

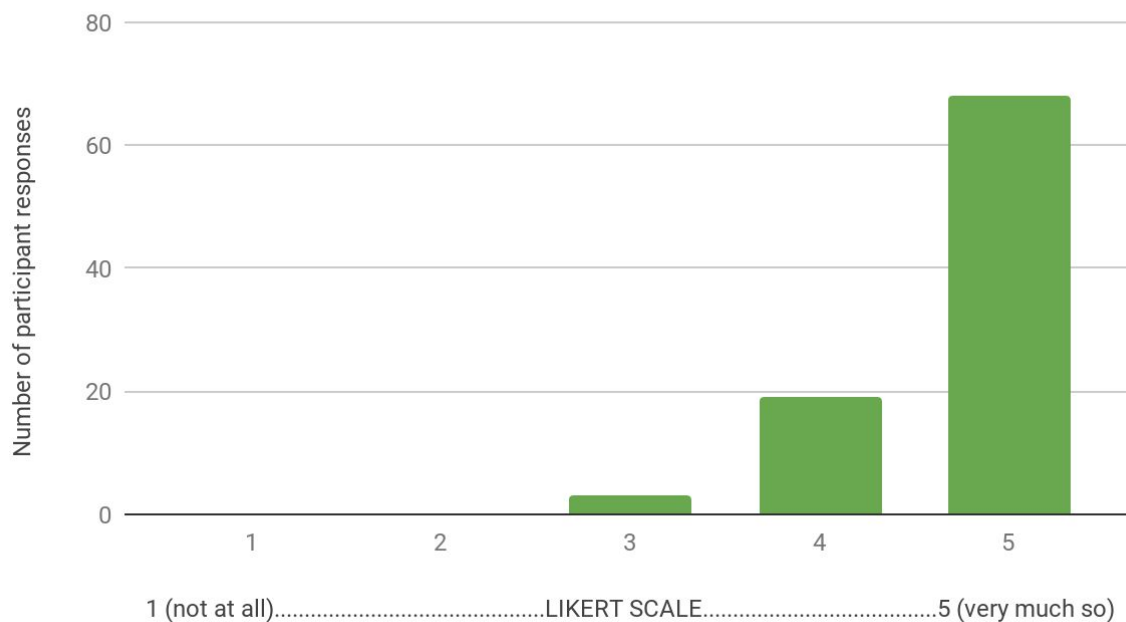
A total of 92 people, involved in local authority children and young people's settings and services, attended the three, 1-day Emotion Coaching training sessions (November 2018 to May 2019).

1. Development of Knowledge and Understanding

Question 1 asked participants to respond to consider: **“Do you feel this training has raised your understanding/knowledge about Emotion Coaching?”** using the Likert scale range 1-5, with 1 representing ‘not at all’ and 5 representing ‘very much so’.

The average response to the question was **4.73** (Range = 3-5, Median = 5, Mode = 5), suggesting that the training content was considered strongly supportive in promoting knowledge and understanding of Emotion Coaching. Similar to the findings from the Attachment & Trauma training days, the opportunity to focus on the theories and concepts that underpin Emotion Coaching were mentioned as furthering participants’ understanding of practical strategies for practice in educational settings. Participants particularly noted the importance of raising emotional awareness and the labelling of emotions in educational settings to promote and support self-regulation for children.

Figure 5: Participants rating about their learning about Emotion Coaching



Content and thematic analysis identified the topics participants considered to be of most benefit and interest. From the 202 comments given, the following four topics/themes emerged as being most frequently referenced: *The four steps of EC; neuroscience and the handheld brain model; vagal tone & stress management and attunement*. These overarching dominant themes evidence that participants felt that they had developed their knowledge and understanding of common physiological processes informing behavioural responses, and this was considered relevant and useful to their professional role.

The theme of *the four steps of EC*, was the most referenced (55 comments) and comments related to increased understanding of the process of Emotion Coaching. Reference to recognising and understanding differing reactions, responses and reasoning to emotions as well as the incremental steps to managing emotional behaviours were noted.

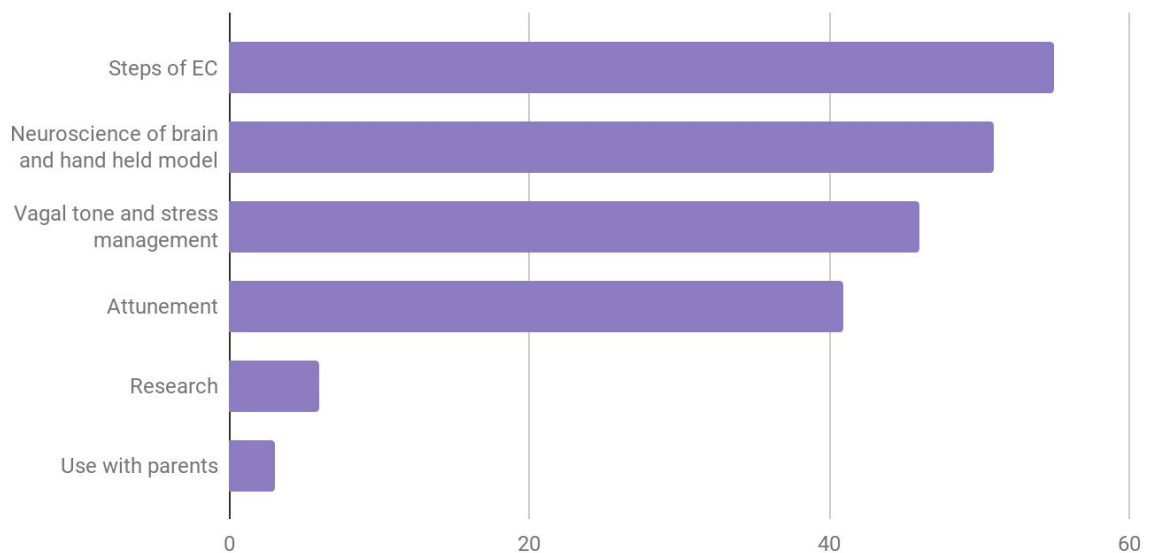
Increased understanding of how brains typically mature, function and are built through positive and negative experiences, environment and relationships were frequently given (51 comments). The

'neuroscience and the handheld brain' theme included reference to not only increased participant understanding of brain function but also to how this knowledge contributed to their understanding of Emotion Coaching. Many of the comments related to the importance of learning about the 'hand-held brain model'. This was seen as a simple and accessible tool to explain to children and others how emotions really do matter to the learning brain.

Frequent reference to the importance of 'vagal tone and stress management' stress (46 comments) suggests that having increased awareness of innate physiological processes were considered useful and relevant to supporting appropriate educational practice. Comments focussed on an increased ability to recognise varied reactions and responses to stress in self, children and others. Raised awareness of emotions and acknowledgement of emotions informing behaviour was referenced, with one participant noting "children need more time to understand emotions".

The theme *Attunement* (41 comments) included comments pertaining to increased awareness of the importance of the quality of relationships and the role of empathy in supporting emotional regulation. Word choices, tone and prosody were noted as integral to effective interactions and the building of relationships.

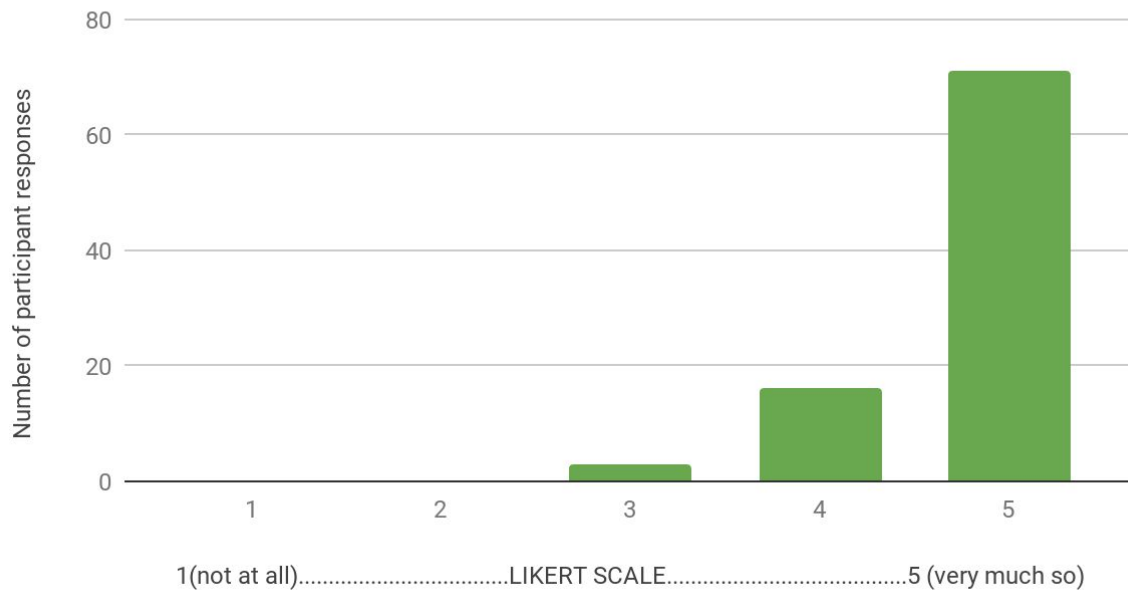
Figure 6: Participant comments about what was learned about Emotion Coaching



2. Application of Emotion Coaching training into everyday practice to support children and young people

Question 2: "Do you think you will be able to use Emotion Coaching in your work with pupils, school and families?" assessed participants' perception of the application of Emotion Coaching training into everyday practices. The Likert scale range was 1-5, with 1 representing 'not at all' and 5 representing 'very much so' to measure responses. The average response to the question was **4.76** (Range = 3-5, Median = 5, Mode = 5) suggesting that participants strongly believed that Emotion Coaching would be of use as part of their everyday practice to support children and young people.

Figure 7: Participants rating about their ability to apply the learning from the Emotion Coaching training to their work to support children and young people



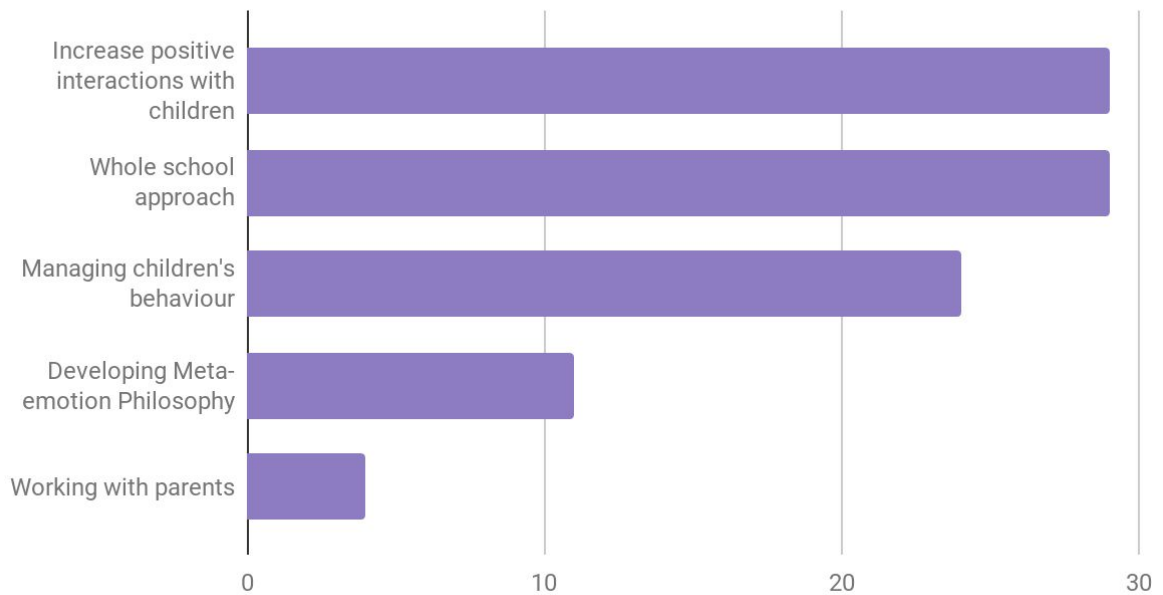
Participants were asked to comment on the ways in which they would be able to use the ideas about Emotion Coaching presented in the training. Content and thematic analysis were conducted on the 97 comments made by the practitioners. **Figure 8.** (below) presents the four identified themes: *Increase positive interactions with children; Whole school Approach; Managing children’s behaviours; Developing Meta-Emotion Philosophy.*

The themes of ‘*Increase positive interactions with children*’ and ‘*Whole school approach*’ encompass the most frequently given comments in relation to using Emotion Coaching in everyday practice (29 comments in each theme). These include suggestions that Emotion Coaching would be used to support a more relational approach to behavioural regulation, to increase positive interactions within settings and develop self-regulatory skills. It was noted by one practitioner that “*children need to have their own emotional toolkit to enable their learning*”. Emotion Coaching was described as an inclusive approach which could support pastoral and behavioural policies, therefore suitable to be promoted as a whole setting approach.

Using Emotion Coaching to ‘*Manage children’s behaviour*’ was often referenced (24 comments) and included comments in regards to use with specific children and specific situations as well as using as a practical approach to managing emotional situations/ outbursts in settings.

11 comments, grouped as ‘*Developing Meta-Emotion Philosophy*’, stated that Emotion Coaching would support both reflection and development of personal practice in regard to increasing awareness and confidence in managing both personal and children’s emotions. The relevance to ‘*Working with parents*’ was noted, however, the lower number of references is probably a reflection of the focus of the training day, rather than a belief of lack of relevance to parents.

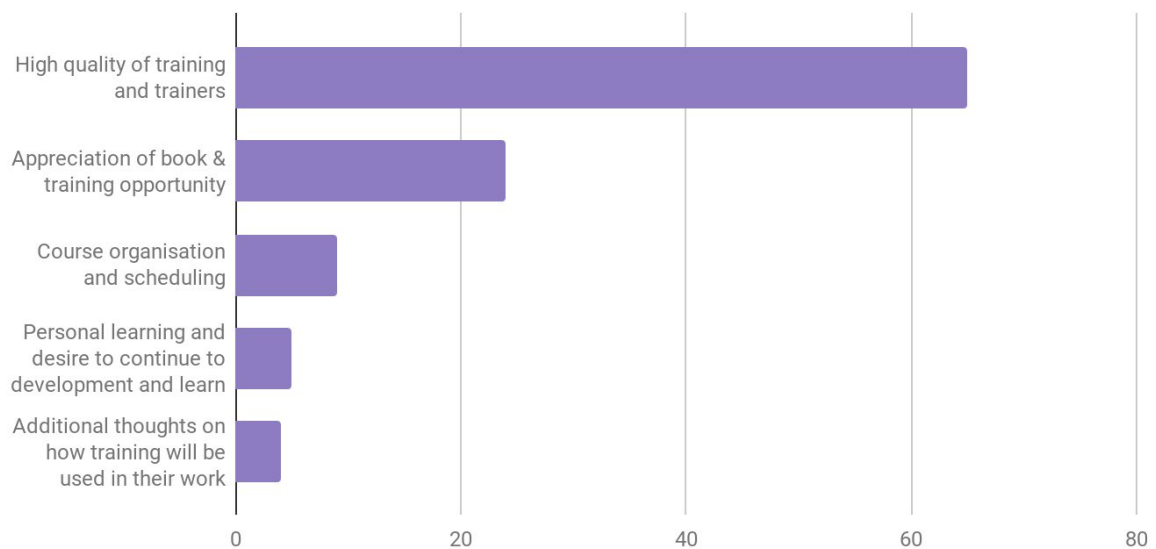
Figure 8: Participants comments about how they will be able to use what they have learned about Emotion Coaching in their work/life



4.3 Participants' Concluding Comments

At the end of each evaluation form, there was a space for participants to write any other comments in regard to the training day focus and/or training experience. The comments from the Attachment and Trauma and Emotion Coaching training course have been amalgamated, analysed and organised thematically, as seen in **Figure 9**.

Figure 9: Additional comments made by participants about the Attachment & Trauma and Emotion Coaching training



The final comments in regards to the training days echo the high levels of satisfaction recorded in regards to the development of participants knowledge and understanding and applicability into everyday practice (see previous Figures 1, 3, 5 and 7 for results).

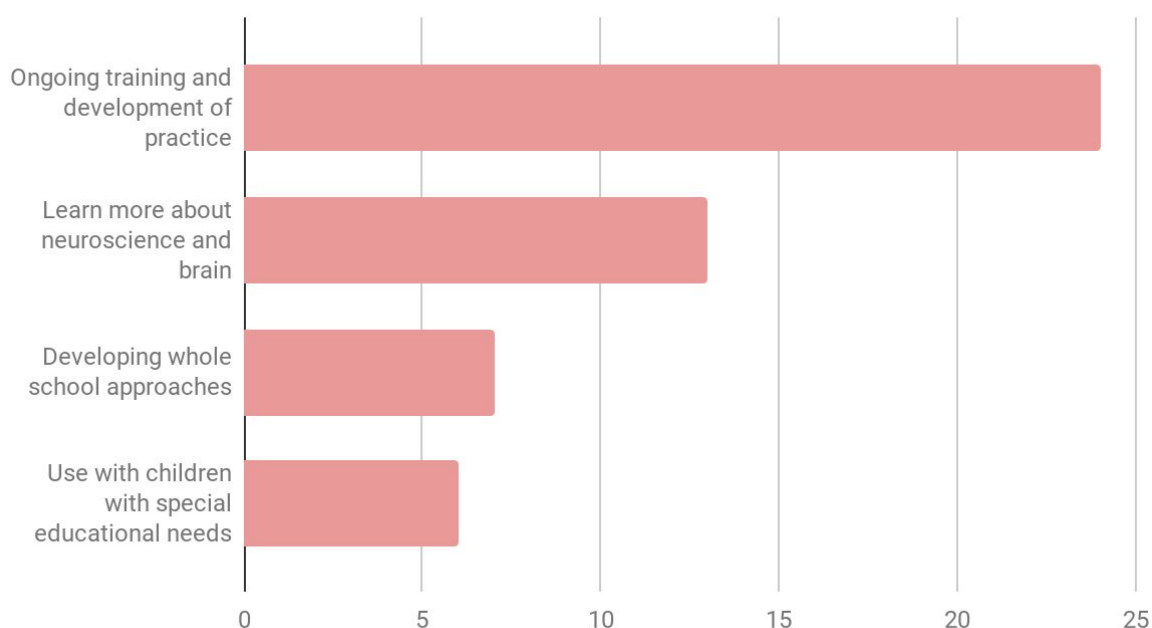
Participants particularly commented on the quality of both the training day content and the trainers. The course was considered *“brilliant”, “fantastic”, “interesting” and “helpful”*. Participants described the training as being *“very informative and relevant to my setting”, “very personable with lots of interesting scientific information and practice tips”* and as *“fantastic training, one of the best training sessions I have ever attended”*. The trainers were described as *“excellent”, “very knowledgeable”, “fun” and “very informative, engaging and passionate”*. The course content and delivery were summed up as *“a fantastic knowledgeable course with lots to take away and implement”* and as being *“expertly delivered in an engaging way”*.

Although there were a few comments on initial difficulties with IT compatibility, miscommunication of training day scheduling and lack of post support resource (textbook), these issues were rectified by the subsequent sessions. Overall, in spite of these minor logistical issues, participants were positive about the courses training content, delivery and relevance to their practice .

The opportunity for participants to attend the courses and take away a textbook that complemented and extended the training day content was appreciated. It was considered a useful and appropriate resource that would support independent learning .

There was a desire by participants to continue learning about Emotion Coaching and Attachment & Trauma. Analysis of participants’ comments (72 comments) in regards to ‘one thing you want to find out more about’ revealed the following as the identified next steps :

Figure: 10 Next steps identified by participants



The theme '*Ongoing training and development of practice*' identifies participants' desire to continue learning, and recognition of the need to 'practise to improve practice'. There was a desire to find out more about how to use their new knowledge and understanding with the children they work with. There was also reference to wanting to find out more about adapting the knowledge and understanding to accommodate wider audiences, such as use with groups of children or children with identified special. Further support in regards to supporting activities and shared practices were considered important.

Many practitioners expressed desires to '*learn more about neuroscience and the brain*' through additional training and independent study. Both courses adopted an interpersonal neurobiological approach to development and learning, and included information on typical physiological and maturational processes and the role of environmental, experiential and relationships. The aim was to provide participants with basic, but critical understanding to explore how attachment and trauma and emotional regulation inform and are informed by cognitive and emotional factors. The theme '*children with special educational needs*' reflected participants desires to find out more about how to extend their own knowledge and understanding to work with specialist groups including looked after children and children on the autism spectrum.

Finally, practitioners were interested to find out how to use the course content to support colleagues and other practitioners in their settings to develop '*whole school approaches*'.

5. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This report used data taken from participant evaluations of the Attachment & Trauma and Emotion Coaching training days. The findings suggest that practitioners who attended these training days felt that the training was appropriate, accessible and of good quality in content and delivery. The training affirmed, updated and developed practitioners' knowledge and understanding in regards to children's learning opportunities and emotional regulation. It provided an opportunity to engage and share in new knowledge and understanding with peers, and reflect on personal and setting practice. The provision of a supporting textbook which included and extended the focus of the training days was popular, and seen as effective post-course support to further independent professional development.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The training days provided by Emotion Coaching UK (three days on Attachment and Trauma and three focussing on Emotion Coaching) were designed to represent one strand of a three strand project for Staffordshire Virtual School. The two other strands, delivered by independent agencies, were the support and implementation of the Staffordshire Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Self-Assessment Tool, and the development of Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed networks in the north and south of the county.

Staffordshire Virtual School's aim was to develop multi-agency understanding of the impact of attachment and trauma issues on the education of looked after children. It wanted to ensure that the child's journey into care, including the impact of attachment and trauma is understood and supported to ensure that looked after children can thrive in education.

Therefore, Emotion Coaching UK created bespoke training days to accommodate the needs of the Virtual School and Looked After Children. The training days were based on a strong evidence-based evaluated model, with each training day facilitated and led by one experienced trainer. Sessions were interactive with video and audio resource support and opportunities for planning implementation in settings. All participants who attended received a text book: Colley, D. & Cooper, P. (2017) *Attachment and emotional development in the classroom, theory and practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. This was to support independent learning and sessions were evaluated using written evaluation forms.

Recognising that this Staffordshire Virtual School three-strand is a novel and exciting initiative, and the feedback from participants and trainers has been positive, we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. That there is a shared overview and communication between the three strands as to the logistics of how the different strands of the project connect and coordinate, e.g. in dates, locations and content. This would help to organise the training days to ensure that they reference/ signpost the other strands in the project so maximising effect and support.
2. For the training days strand it would be useful for Emotion Coaching UK to have an understanding of how practitioners were recruited and Staffordshire's expectation of practitioner attendance to the two different training days. With this information we would be able to plan the training sessions to ensure they complement and develop understanding for practitioners who attend either Emotion Coaching or Attachment and Trauma or both training days.
3. We would like to endorse the ongoing provision of the textbook as it proved to be supportive of the training day focus, confirm and extend the training day content, and facilitate independent learning.
4. Having completed the analysis of the training day we would like to offer all Emotion Coaching training day participants a 'reflective log' to support further development of practice. These simple reflective records allow participants to record incidents where Emotion Coaching was used and monitor their practice progress.
5. Recognising the demand for ongoing support post-training, and the need to 'practise to improve and embed practice' we would suggest that it could be useful to offer further, post-training sessions in localities. This could allow the development of support hubs , which could then generate sustainable and accessible support.

7. Citation

Gus, L & Gilbert, L. (2019) Staffordshire Virtual School: Attachment & Trauma and Emotion Coaching Training Final Report.

Written by Licette Gus and Louise Gilbert, August
2019

APPENDIX A



TRAINING EVALUATION			
Location:		Date:	
1-day Attachment & Trauma/Emotion Coaching Training			
<p>Did you feel the training has raised your understanding and knowledge of Attachment & Trauma/Emotion Coaching?</p>			
<p>Please <u>comment</u> :</p>	<p>Three things you have learned or learned more about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>One thing you want to find out more about:</p>		
<p>Do you think you will be able to use Attachment & Trauma/Emotion Coaching in your work/life?</p>			
<p>Please comment in which ways:</p>			
<p>Any further comments?</p>			