Services
For Education

DSL DISCUSSIONS...EMOTIONAL NEGLECT

Raising the topic...

Emotional Neglect is an adverse childhood experience (ACE) and can have a large and detrimental effect on children's emotional development and relationships with others.

Childhood emotional neglect occurs when a child's parent or parents fail to respond adequately to their child's emotional needs. It can be one of the hardest ACEs to identify, as children may not have signs or be suffering from physical neglect at the same time.

It is important that staff know that an unmet need for love can be as traumatic as an unmet need for food or shelter. All adults in your setting must be emotionally available, particularly to those children who have experienced other ACEs. Having at least one adult who provides care and support can be hugely beneficial.

Questions to discuss...

- What are the signs and symptoms of Emotional Neglect? How do these differ from other types of abuse?
- What would be your first steps if you suspect a child is suffering with emotional neglect?
- How can we teach children about their self-worth? And how they can seek emotional support if they are not receiving it at home?
- How might parents emotionally neglect their children without being intentionally cruel or nasty?
- How can children be victims of emotional neglect when they are not the intended target?

What can you do?

All adults in school should be emotionally available:
Adults should understand what emotional neglect is and how they can be emotionally available for the children in your setting.

Ensure staff and children know the signs:
Support and empower the children to know and share the signs of neglect in themselves and others.

Teach children about resilience and self-worth:
Ensure children know that they deserve love and care, provide a positive environment for children to grow their self-esteem.

Record & Monitor:
Build up a picture of the child's lived experience. What steps need to happen next?

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