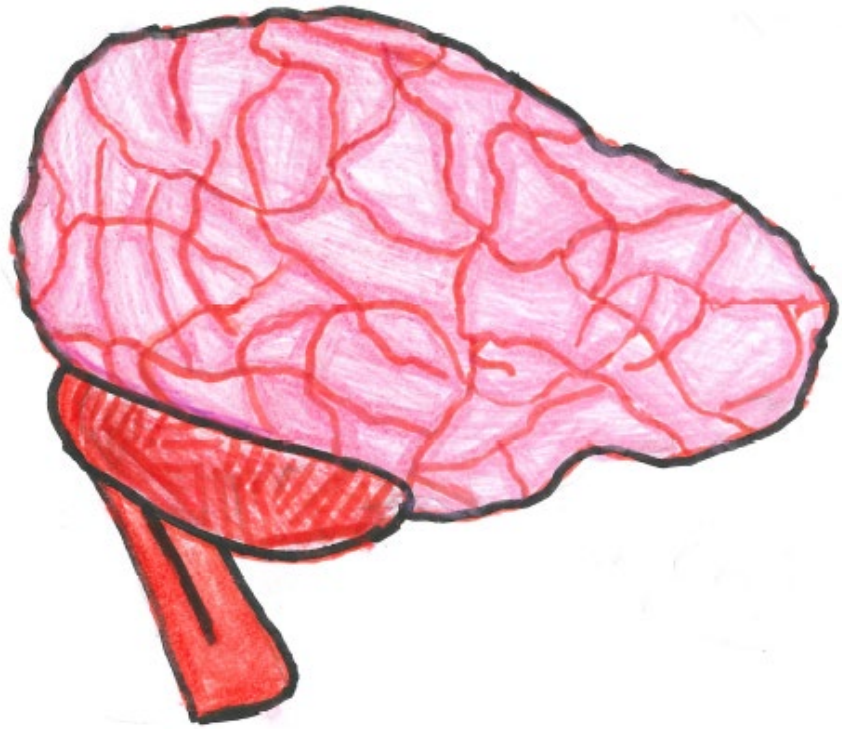
The Dictionary of Brain Building Words

A common language for understanding brain development across systems



"A Brain," by Evelyn St Pierre (age 9)

Foreword

Dictionaries often conjure a sense of nostalgia; something large, smelling faintly of dust and vanilla, an authoritarian repository of all the words one would ever need in any given language.

Many of those named as authors and contributors to this dictionary have read, and discussed at length their love of, the book by Australian author and social researcher, Pip Williams' *The Dictionary of Lost Words*. This book highlights the power of language and how it both shapes and is shaped by our experiences, interactions, and the social and cultural systems we live within. The vision for this dictionary is that it remains a living document, one where the metaphorical slips of paper can be added, removed, iteratively defined and redefined.

How to use this dictionary

This dictionary is not intended as a complete glossary of brain building terms nor a definitive list of definitions. Instead, it provides an initial start point for establishing, interrogating, and sharing a common language for brain building across child, adolescent and family focused systems.

The words included in this dictionary represent those that are commonly referred to when applying understanding of brain development into policy and practice with children, adolescents and their families. For each term, a definition has been selected based on alignment with the principles of neuro-informed policy and practice (outlined in more detail here) and through consultation with academics, practitioners and those with lived experiences in these spaces. There are, of course, many ways in which words are used and defined, and where possible we have indicated and linked to other definitions to consider and further information to guide understanding.

In addition to other sources, the dictionary specifically draws content from the Understanding Brain Development Modules developed by Emerging Minds in collaboration with the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and researchers at The University of Queensland.

The Dictionary also draws on a range of additional resources available through the Enabling Workforces Toolkit co-ordinated by the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership in collaboration with Emerging Minds, Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation, The University of Queensland, Dovetail, and the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

Social and cultural positionality

It is important to note that the words and definitions used within this dictionary come from organisational and scientific sources that reflect specific and narrow cultural, social and historical contexts. Further, the contributors to this dictionary also bring to this work their own positionality that influences how words are selected and defined. It is important to acknowledge, therefore, that this dictionary in no way reflects all the rich understandings of brain building and brain development across cultures and communities. Future iterations or modifications to this dictionary led by and reflective of broader language, culture and social perspectives is invited and encouraged.

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Contents

A

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to some of the most intensive and frequently occurring sources of stress that children may suffer early in life[a]

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include harms that affect children directly (e.g., abuse and neglect) and indirectly (e.g., parental conflict, substance abuse, or mental illness) through their living environments [b]

Source: [a] World Health Organisation[1]; [b] The Lancet [2]

Additional Notes: The term ACEs comes from a study that was conducted in the United States in the 1980s that found a significant link between a person's exposure to ACEs and their later physical and mental health. Studies show that the more ACEs a person has experienced, the greater the risk of them experiencing chronic disease, depression and anxiety during their lifetime[3,4]. ACEs are defined by the Centre for Disease Control as events occurring between 0-17 years of age[4]

Related Terms: Toxic Stress, Trauma, Adversity, Positive childhood experiences (PACES)

Additional Resources:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES): Impact on brain, body and behaviour[5]

What are adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)? - Emerging Minds[6]

Adversity

Adversity is a range of circumstances or experiences that can have a negative, harmful, or unfavourable effect or prevent positive development or success.

Source: Modified from Merriam-Webster[7] and Cambridge English Dictionary[8]

Additional Notes: Adversity and Trauma are often used interchangeably but should be considered as distinct. Adversity can be thought of as the circumstances that can lead to or result in trauma or other adverse outcomes, while trauma is the experience of the individual to these events or circumstances. Stress, trauma and adversity can all have profound effects on the brain and body[9].

Related Terms: Trauma, Stress, Resilience

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

What is trauma and adversity? - Emerging Minds[10]

B

Behavioural Regulation

Behavioural regulation refers to the process recognising, managing and directing actions and impulses in a contextually appropriate way in everyday contexts.

Sources: Modified from Early Child Development and Care[11] and Child and Youth Care Forum [12]

Additional notes: It is important to recognise that what is defined as a socially and contextually appropriate behaviour will be different across different situations and should reflect individual and developmental differences[12].

Related Terms: Emotional regulation; Behavioural regulation

Brain Architecture

Brain Architecture refers to the physical structure and organisation of the brain, including the connections between different regions and the patterns of activity that occur within them.

Source: Emerging Minds [9]

Additional Notes: Our brain architecture is shaped by the interaction of our genes and experiences over time and the foundations of brain architecture are constructed early in life [3,9]

Related Terms: Brain Development, Neuroplasticity, Sensitive Periods

Additional Resources:

Brain Architecture: An ongoing process that begins before birth[13]

The Brain Architects Podcast: Brain Architecture: Laying the Foundation[14]

How a child's brain develops through early experiences - YouTube[15]

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Brain Building or Brain Builder

Brain Building is used to denote the application of neuro-informed policy and practice at individual, community and system levels.

A ‘brain builder’ is anyone who directly or indirectly (via systems and services) interacts with a child, young person or their family.

Source: Shared Stories of Brain Building Across Workforces in Queensland[16]

Additional Notes: Every time we interact with a child, young person or their family, we are helping to build brains. Thus, we are all brain builders. [16]

Related Terms: Neuro-informed Policy and Practice, Neurodevelopment, Child Development

Additional Resources:

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership: We are all brain builders[17]

How a child's brain develops through early experiences - YouTube[15]

Brain Development

Brain development refers to changes and growth that occur in the brain across the lifespan.

Sources: Modified from Neuropsychology review [18], NeuroImage [19]

Additional Notes: Brain development is a lifelong process, but it is especially rapid during sensitive periods of brain development in the early years of life and adolescence. Brain development is shaped by the interaction of molecular, genetic and environmental influences [3,20,21].

Related Terms: Neurodevelopment, Child Development, Sensitive Periods

Additional Resources:

Timeline of brain development[22]

Explore milestones in human brain development | Britannica[23]

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Brain Health

Brain Health is the state of brain functioning across cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, behavioural, and motor domains. It allows a person to realise their full potential over their life course, irrespective of the presence or absence of disorders.

Source: World Health Organization: Brain Health [24]

Additional Notes: Brain Health and Mental Health are inter-related but distinct concepts (see Mental Health).

Related Terms: Mental Health, Wellbeing, Neuro-informed Policy and Practice

Additional Resources:

Optimizing Brain Health Across the Life Course [25]

What Is Brain Health?[26]

C

Child Development

Child development refers to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive changes that occur across the childhood period

Source: Modified from Child development - Be You [27]

Additional Notes: Children and young people develop at different rates and in different ways. While age can give a general idea of a child's stage of development, it does not determine exactly how they think, feel, or learn [9].

Related Terms: Brain Development, Neurodevelopment, Sensitive Periods

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Child development - Be You[28]

F-words for Child Development[29]

Child's Ecology

A child's ecology refers to the interconnected biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors that influence a child's life. These factors - including relationships, surroundings, culture, and economic conditions - collectively shape the child's development and overall wellbeing.

Source: Modified from Emerging Minds[9]

Additional Notes:

Related Terms: Whole Child

Additional Resources:

The child and their local ecology - Emerging Minds[30]

The Nest Wellbeing Framework - ARACY[31]

Co-regulation

Coregulation is the dynamic and bi-directional process in which each partner's behaviours, emotions and biological responses are influenced by and adapt to the changing behaviours, emotions and biology of another.

Source: Modified from Children[32] and Emotion Review[33]

Additional Notes: Co-regulation is not limited to early childhood; it remains essential for healthy emotional, behavioural, and physiological development and functioning throughout the lifespan. In infants and young children, co-regulation with a caring, responsive adult is vital for supporting the development of physical, emotional, and behavioural responses and for helping them make sense of the world around them[32,33].

Related Terms: Emotional Regulation, Behavioural Regulation, Positive Interactions

Additional Resources:

Managing big feelings together - The Centre for Early Childhood's Explainer series[34]

Critical periods

A critical period is a specific time window, usually early in life, when the brain requires certain experiences to properly develop the neural circuits responsible for basic senses.

Source: Modified from *Handbook of Clinical Neurology*[35]

Additional Notes: The term 'critical periods' should **not** be used interchangeably with sensitive periods. While critical periods are thought to occur within humans (for example hearing and eyesight), evidence of these periods is primarily theoretical and difficult to test and establish in humans. As such the term ***sensitive periods*** is more appropriate when referring to human development[35,36].

Related Terms: Sensitive Periods, Brain Development, Child Development, Neurodevelopment

D

Development

Development refers to the process by which an individual grows and changes over time. This includes physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural changes.

Source: Emerging Minds[9]

Additional Notes: Development does not occur for each person in the same way at the same time but is shaped by the unique interaction of each person's biology, genes and environments.

Related Terms: Brain Development, Neurodevelopment, Sensitive Periods

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Child development - Be You[28]

UNICEF - The Adolescent Brain: A Second Window of Opportunity[37]

E

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the process of noticing internal and external cues, identifying and interpreting emotions, and applying strategies to adjust emotional responses so they align with the demands of a given situation.

Source: Modified from Educational Psychology Review[38]

Additional Notes:

Emotional regulation is a complex physiological and neurological process. It is shaped by how we perceive internal and external cues, interpret these inputs based on past experiences, and use available strategies, both internal and external, to adjust our emotional responses to meet the

demands of the situation[39]. Please note emotional regulation is related to, but distinct from behavioural regulation[38] (see *Behavioural Regulation*).

Related Terms: Behavioural regulation, Self-regulation; Executive functioning

Executive Functions

Executive functions, also known as executive functioning, are a group of mental skills that enable individuals to focus and shift attention, plan, and manage their behaviour to reach goals, particularly in situations where instinctive or automatic responses are not sufficient.

Sources: Modified from Annual Review of Psychology[40] , Emerging Minds[9]

Additional Notes: These skills include the ability to hold information in mind (working memory), ignore distractions (inhibitory control), and adjust to changing circumstances (cognitive flexibility). Executive functions continue to develop throughout childhood and adolescence, but they typically do not fully mature until adulthood. This development requires consistent modelling, support, and opportunities for practice [40].

Related Terms: Behavioural Regulation, Co-regulation

Additional Resources:

Our Brain's Air Traffic Control (Executive Function) | NSPCC[41]

F – G

H

Healing

Healing refers to developing a sense of personal wholeness that involves physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of human experience[a].

Healing occurs at a community, family and individual level and enables people to address distress, overcome trauma and restore wellbeing[b].

Sources: [a]Annals of Family Medicine[42] , [b] Healing Foundation[43]

Additional Notes: Ways to support healing include reconnecting with culture, building a strong sense of identity, restoring safe and lasting relationships, and helping communities understand how past experiences have shaped behaviours so they can work toward positive change[43].

Related Terms: Wellbeing; Trauma; Brain Health

Additional Resources:

Creative healing practices to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children | Podcast[44]

Health

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Sources: Constitution of the World Health Organization[45]

Additional Notes: Health is a broad concept that describes a person's overall state of being. Its meaning can vary between individuals and communities, influenced by expectations and context. For some, good health means being free from illness or disability. For others, it may mean managing a condition so that it does not significantly affect their quality of life[46]. Health is shaped by many factors, including genetics, lifestyle, and importantly the social and physical environment in which a person grows up in and lives[47]

Related Terms: Brain Health; Wellbeing; Healing

Additional Resources:

What are Social Determinants of Health [48]

I

Interaction

Interactions are reciprocal dynamic exchanges between individuals, including children, adults and peers, as well as between individuals and their environment.

Sources: Modified from Infant and Child Development[49]

Additional Notes: Interactions can be verbal, non-verbal and physical.

Related Terms: Positive Interactions, Positive Relationships; Serve and Return; Serve-Return-Rally-Learn

J - K – L

M

Mental Health

Mental health is a state of well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.

Source: World Health Organization[50]

Additional Notes: Mental Health and Brain Health are inter-related but distinct concepts (see Brain Health definition).

Related Terms: Brain Health, Health, Wellbeing

Additional Resources:

Black Dog Institute: e-Mental Health in Practice [51]

N

Neurodevelopment

Neurodevelopment refers to how the brain and nervous system develop. It includes the formation, growth, and maturation of neural cells, establishment of neural connections, and acquiring neurological functions such as learning, memory, attention, and social skills. This process begins in-utero and continues through childhood, adolescence, and into early adulthood, shaping an individual's cognition, emotion, and behaviour[1, 2].

Sources: Modified from Free Neuropathology[52] , Neuropsychopharmacology[53]

Additional Notes: Neurodevelopment refers to the process by which the nervous system matures, including the growth and organisation of the brain, its functions, and its connections with the rest of the body. Children's neurodevelopment influences how they experience, influence, and make sense of the world around them and the events that happen to them[9].

Related Terms: Brain development

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term that recognises the natural variation in how brains function. It encompasses a range of developmental conditions and lived experiences.

Sources: Modified from Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)[54], Harvard Health Publishing[55]

Additional Notes: The concept of neurodiversity highlights that people perceive, learn, and engage with the world in different ways. These differences are not deficits, but part of human diversity[55].

Related Terms: Neurodevelopment

Additional Resources:

Neurodiversity and neurodivergence: a guide for families[56]

Neuro-Informed Policy and Practice

Neuro-informed policy and practice is the method and outcome of translating and applying current evidence from neuroscience and related fields about the processes underpinning human development and behaviour to guide policy and practice actions. The intent of neuro-informed policy

and practice is to create and promote optimal conditions for brain health and(or) related positive physical, social, and community outcomes.

Source: Brain Sciences[57]

Additional Notes: Understanding the brain within the context of social, physical, and systemic environments is essential for connecting scientific evidence to effective policy and practice. Neuro-informed Policy and Practice is underpinned by 12 key knowledge bases, drawn from current applications across health, education, social services, law, and the built environment[57].

Related Terms: Brain Health, Neurodevelopment, Whole Child

Additional Resources:

Neuro-informed Policy and Practice Framework[58]

Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity is the brain's remarkable capacity to reorganise itself by forming, modifying, and strengthening neural connections in response to both internal experiences and external stimuli (environments).

Source: Brain Research[59]

Additional Notes: Neuroplasticity works through two main processes: the growth of new connections between brain cells (like synaptic plasticity and neurogenesis), and the brain reorganising itself to use different areas for certain tasks[60]. Although neuroplasticity is strongest in early childhood, it remains active throughout life, helping with learning, memory, and healing after injury or illness[59].

Related Terms: Sensitive Periods; Neurodevelopment; Brain Building; Brain Architecture

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

O

P

Play

Play is a spontaneous, voluntary, pleasurable and flexible activity involving a combination of body, object, symbol use and relationships[a].

Children's play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise [b].

Source: [a]The Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development[61] , [b]International Play Association[62]

Additional Notes: Play is usually spontaneous and unstructured, focused more on the experience itself than on achieving specific goals[61]. It involves exploring, experimenting, copying, and enjoying both the surroundings and the company of others[63]. Play is a universal part of childhood and is recognised as a fundamental right that should be available to all children[61,64].

Related Terms: Wellbeing

Additional Resources:

Early Childhood Australia's Statement on Play[65]

Children's Right to Play - IPA[62]

Positive Interactions

Positive interactions are interactions between a child and their caregivers, peers, or environment that are responsive, sensitive, and/or enriching.

Source: Modified from Child Development Perspectives[66]

Additional Notes: Positive interactions are essential for supporting for both building and protecting the developing brain, and underpin social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth[49,67–69]

Responsive interactions are back and forth, timely, and lean into the child's interests[49]

Sensitive interactions accurately notice, interpret and respond to each child's cues and communication attempts in developmentally appropriate way[67,68]

Enriching interactions build on each child's cue and communication attempts to enhance and expand their social emotional physical and cognitive development[49,67–69]

Related Terms: Interactions, Serve-Return-Rally-Learn, Interactions, Resilience

Positive Relationships

Positive relationships are caring and trusting connections built over time through warm, responsive interactions that help individuals feel safe, supported, and understood.

Source: Modified from Personality and Social Psychology Review[70] and *Early Child Development and Care*[71]

Additional Notes: Positive relationships promote social and emotional growth by encouraging communication, empathy, and cooperation[70]. Positive relationships create the basis for children to develop communication skills, build meaningful connections, and overcome challenges[71].

Related Terms: Positive Interactions, Serve-Return-Rally-Learn, Interactions

Positive Stress

Positive stress refers to everyday emotions such as frustration or disappointment. It is brief and mild to moderate in magnitude.

Source: Emerging Minds[9]

Additional Notes: Children are usually able to bounce back quickly from positive stress, especially when they have supportive, stable, and responsive environments and relationships. This type of stress, known in the scientific literature as *eustress,* is natural, functional, and important for learning how to cope with challenges. In contrast, toxic or negative stress, caused by prolonged or intense adversity without enough support, can harm a child's development and well-being[9].

Related Terms: Stress; Toxic stress; Tolerable stress; Trauma; Adversity.

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Protective Childhood Experiences

Positive Childhood Experiences are supportive and enriching experiences during childhood that help promote healthy development and protect mental health later in life.

Source: Modified from World Psychiatry[72] and Anxiety Stress and Coping[73]

Additional Notes: Protective Childhood Experiences are often called Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs). Unlike Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), PACEs provide the relationships and resources needed for healthy development. Examples of PACEs include positive relationships with caregivers and friends, feeling safe at home, having access to education, and being part of a community[72,73].

Related Terms: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Positive Relationships, Positive Interactions

Q

R

Resilience

Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences

Sources: *APA Dictionary of Psychology*[74]

Additional Notes: Resilience can only be seen when someone faces a challenge[75]. It's not just the absence of negative emotions, nor is it a fixed trait that a person either has or doesn't have. Instead, resilience is a flexible process that differs between individuals and can change over time based on their circumstances. It also varies across cultures, as different communities have unique ways of defining and showing strength and coping[76]. Resilience is shaped by both personal qualities and the support a person receives from their environment, such as family, friends, and community resources. Together, these factors help people adapt and recover from difficult experiences.

Related Terms: Trauma; Stress; Adversity' Wellbeing

Additional Resources:

What Surrounds Us Shapes Us[77]

S

Sensitive periods

Sensitive periods are periods of development where our experiences and environments have a greater impact on our brain development

Source: Emerging Minds[9]

Additional Notes: Sensitive periods are distinct phases in neurodevelopment when the brain demonstrates increased plasticity and is particularly responsive to environmental inputs. During these times, neural pathways undergo rapid growth and reorganisation, facilitating the acquisition of essential skills such as language, executive functioning, and social interaction[3,78–80].

Related Terms: Neurodevelopment; Brain Architecture; Child Development

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is a broad umbrella term that refers to the ability to control behaviours, thoughts, and emotional reactions

Source: Modified from Educational Psychology Review[38]

Additional Notes: There are currently more than 447 concepts related to self-regulation in academic literature, showing its broad and wide-ranging use and interpretation[81]. For this reason, the use of more specific terms such as *Emotional Regulation* or *Behavioural Regulation,* is recommended to improve clarity of meaning.

Related Terms: Emotional Regulation, Behavioural Regulation, Executive Functions

Serve and Return

Serve and Return describes the back-and-forth interactions between an adult an infant, comparing these interactions to a ball game, such as tennis or volleyball

Source: Modified from Center on the Developing Child[82]

Additional Notes: *Serve and Return* is a metaphor originally coined by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child and Frameworks Institute. When a child makes a sound, gesture, or cry and an adult responds with eye contact, words, or a hug, it helps build strong brain connections. These interactions support the child's communication, social, and emotional development. This metaphor has more recently been extended to include rally and learn (see *Serve-Return-Rally-Learn*).

Related Terms: Serve-Return-Rally-Learn, Interactions, Positive Experiences

Additional Resources:

Serve and Return: Back-and-forth exchanges[82]

Responsive relationships builds strong brains | Serve & Return | NSPCC[83]

Serve-Return-Rally-Learn

An extension of the serve and return metaphor to emphasise the importance of responsive and sustained back-and-forth adult-child interactions, or rallies, for building and protecting the young brain[66].

Sources: Child Development Perspectives[66]

Additional Notes: Serve-return-rally-learn (SRRL) is a framework that promotes learning through ongoing back-and-forth interactions between adults and children[66]. It highlights why these exchanges matter for development and focuses on both *what* happens and *how* it happens. Research shows that extended interactions with at least four turns support growth in children aged 2-5 years. They also benefit younger children, where ongoing verbal and non-verbal exchanges, known as sustained joint attention, play an important role.

Related Terms: Serve and Return; Interactions, Positive Interactions, Positive Relationships

Additional Resources:

Serve, Return, Rally and Learn with Ash Barty and First 5 Forever[84]

Stress

Stress is a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives.

Source: World Health Organisation[85]

Additional Notes: Stress is a process that begins with a stimulus (called a stressor), which the brain perceives as a challenge or threat[86]. This perception triggers the body's stress response, often known as the fight-or-flight reaction, involving multiple systems in the body. Stress can take different forms and affect people in different ways. Three key types are positive stress, tolerable stress, and toxic stress, each with varying effects on brain and body development.

Related Terms: Positive Stress, Tolerable Stress, Toxic Stress

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

T

Tolerable Stress

Tolerable stress is a strong and/or prolonged stress response to serious events that can be recovered from with stable, supportive relationships and a nurturing environment.

Source: Modified from Children - Toxic Stress: Effects, Prevention and Treatment[87]

Additional Notes: Where children and young people have supportive adult relationships to help them make meaning of stressful life events, they are well placed to recover from these experiences without it affecting their brain development[87].

Related Terms: Stress, Toxic Stress, Positive Stress

Additional Resources:

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Toxic Stress

Toxic stress is the prolonged activation of the body's stress response without enough support from caregivers to help the body recover.

Source: Modified from Children - Toxic Stress: Effects, Prevention and Treatment[87]

Additional Notes: Toxic Stress occurs when a child experiences serious or ongoing adversity, such as abuse, neglect, violence, or extreme poverty, without stable emotional support, which prevents the stress system from returning to normal. Over time, toxic stress can negatively affect brain development and increase the risk of long-term health, emotional, and social problems[87].

Related Terms: Stress, Tolerable Stress, Positive Stress

Additional Resources:

How Toxic Stress Affects Us, and What We Can Do About It[88]

Understanding Brain Development Modules - Emerging Minds[9]

Trauma

Trauma is any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behaviour, and other aspects of functioning.

Source: APA Dictionary of Psychology[74]

Additional Notes: Trauma can be defined in different ways depending on the context and may be classified as simple, complex, developmental, relational, or attachment based. People's responses to traumatic experiences vary widely, as each individual processes and reacts to trauma differently[89,90].

Related Terms: Adversity, Toxic Stress, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Additional Resources:

Trauma and the Brain - Dovetail[91]

What is Trauma and Adversity[10]

Trauma-informed

Trauma-informed refers to an approach that recognises the widespread impact of trauma and understands how it affects individuals, families, groups, organisations, and communities.

Source: Modified from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services[92,93]

Additional Notes: Trauma informed involves three key elements: (1) realising the prevalence of trauma, (2) recognising its effects on everyone involved, including staff, and (3) responding by applying this understanding in policies, practices, and interactions to promote healing, safety, and support[92,93].

Related Terms: Trauma, Toxic stress, Healing

U – V

W

Wellbeing

Well-being is a positive state experienced by individuals and societies

Source: World Health Organization[94]

Additional Notes: Wellbeing is about how people feel and function in their lives, including their physical, mental, emotional, social and brain health [95]. It also includes having purpose, feeling safe, being connected to others, and having access to the things needed for a good life - like food, housing, education, and clean air. Wellbeing is shaped by our environment, community, and economy, and it helps us understand whether people and societies are healthy, supported, and able to cope with challenges[95,96].

Related Terms: Brain Health, Health, Healing, The Whole Child

Additional Resources:

The Nest Wellbeing Framework - ARACY[31]

Child health and wellbeing - ARACY[97]

Whole Child Approach

The Whole Child is as a holistic perspective that understands a child is shaped by multiple interacting influences, including their individual characteristics, relationships, family, culture, community, and broader environment (child's ecology).

Source: Modified from Emerging Minds[30]

Related Terms: Child Development, Wellbeing, Brain Health

Additional Resources:

The whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child - Emerging Minds[98]

The whole child - Emerging Minds[99]

X – Y – Z

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