



# Five to Thrive: Attachment, Trauma and Resilience in Wiltshire

## What is Five to Thrive and what are we aiming to achieve?

Five to Thrive: Attachment, Trauma and Resilience is an ambitious training programme for people who work with expectant parents, children, young people and families. It is part of the Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) programme and provides high level training to enable those working with these groups to have the most positive impact. The workforce will be able to:

- support secure attachment: help build healthy relationships which are essential to wellbeing
- promote self-regulation and resilience: better support people to manage their emotions and behaviours positively which will help strengthen their ability to recover quicker from difficulties
- be trauma informed: understand the potential impact of trauma on children and young people and know how best to respond
- understand the impact of adult responses to the behaviour of children, young people and families to improve outcomes
- develop a common language and understanding.

## How far reaching is the project?

- Over 500 **Five to Thrive/trauma informed champions** who work with expectant parents, children and young people aged 0-19, and families are expected to complete the Five to Thrive: Attachment, Trauma and Resilience (FTT:ATR) course delivered by Kate Cairns Associates (KCA).
- A small multi-agency group of trained champions will then become FTT:ATR Trainers.
- FTT:ATR Trainers will go on to train a further 1,500+ staff.
- Champions and trainers will be part of a **Five to Thrive/trauma informed champions** network to share practice and support champions to embed the new learning in practice.

### Training over 2,000 staff in Wiltshire to:

- support secure attachment
- promote self-regulation and resilience
- be trauma informed.

## What is Five to Thrive?

### Five to Thrive:

- Represents a sequence of activities that happen when one person connects, in the best way, with another person to meet an **attachment need\***. This sequence is necessary for our brains to be healthy.
- Is based on neuroscience.
- Is a sequence that we do not usually think about consciously. For many people the five steps, starting with respond and ending with talk, happen automatically during our interactions with others, but this is not the case for everyone.
- Is a model that when applied consciously helps to:
  - promote healthy brain development in children and young people
  - maintain healthy brain function through the life course
  - support recovery from trauma
  - build resilience.
- Is a **strengths-based model\*\***.



## What are the 'Five to Thrive' steps?

Step	What's happening?	Importance for the brain
<b>RESPOND</b>	being emotionally available for someone	develops patterns in the brain for feeling safe and belonging
<b>ENGAGE</b>	close proximity between two people so nervous systems can match	develops patterns in the brain for connecting with others and trusting others
<b>RELAX</b>	supporting someone with attachment needs to relax	develops patterns in the brain for self-regulation
<b>PLAY</b>	processing the activity using positive non-verbal communication and stimulating the right brain	develops patterns in the brain for understanding and managing feelings
<b>TALK</b>	creating a narrative and stimulating the left brain	develops patterns in the brain for making sense of experience through the use of words and narrative



## \*What are attachment needs?

Attachment needs occur when someone feels critically unsafe or that they do not matter. This then triggers attachment behaviours.

For babies, attachment behaviours include: crying, screaming, back-arching (aversive attachment behaviours) or smiling, gurgling, cooing (attractive attachment behaviours). Attractive attachment behaviours stop if there is no response.

In later childhood or adulthood, unregulated stress can trigger aversive attachment behaviours such as fight, flight or freeze.

## When attachment needs are being met...

### **Safety and mattering are essential for a healthy functioning nervous system**

When attachment needs are being met in children and young people it supports them to form a strong sense of identity, to develop their ability to self-regulate and to build resilience. In turn this enables them to form positive relationships and to integrate well into the community.

Attachment needs manifest throughout our lives and Five to Thrive provides a model to help us understand the importance of addressing these and how to fulfil these needs most effectively across the life course.

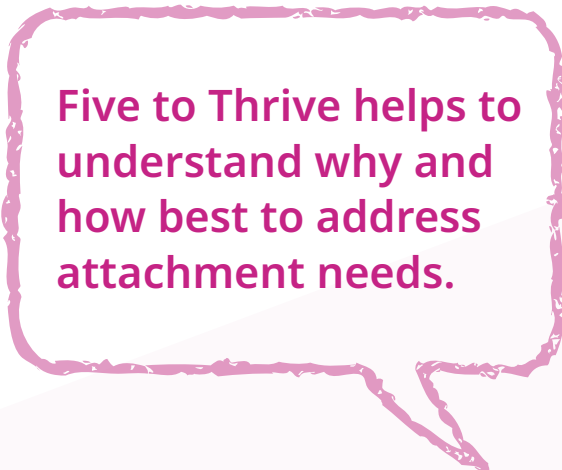
The first 1,001 days (conception to two years) of a baby's life are most critical for laying the foundations for future cognitive, emotional and behavioural development due to the rapid

development of the brain in these early years. Babies are born without the ability to self-soothe and rely entirely on a responsive, attuned primary carer to meet their attachment needs. Healthy Five to Thrive responses from a carer are necessary for healthy brain development and the development of self-regulation.

## When attachment needs are not being met...

When attachment needs are not being met a range of different behaviours and/or challenges can be observed including those listed on the next page. Recognising these behaviours and/or challenges among children and young people and relating them to Five to Thrive can indicate which steps in the sequence may benefit from more focus from a calm, supportive adult.

Whilst the focus here is on supporting children and young people these challenges are not unique to children and can be observed into adulthood. Five to Thrive support can, therefore, be applied in the same way.



**Five to Thrive helps to understand why and how best to address attachment needs.**

## Step

## If attachment needs are not being met children may:

### RESPOND

- Be unable to form a core sense of identity.
- Lack any fundamental sense of safety – high risk or risk averse.
- Demand attention.
- Have bonding difficulties.
- Try to control others.
- Be unduly dependent /independent .

### ENGAGE

- Have difficulty recognising feelings in self or others.
- Lack motivation for social interaction.
- Be unable to develop empathy.
- Fail to recognise social cues.
- Be unable to use words for feelings.

### RELAX

- Have difficulty regulating stress and may display evidence of either:
  - Hyperarousal – vigilance, reduced attention span, and concentration, impaired memory.
  - Dissociation – switched off, reduced sensory awareness, impaired memory.
- Have difficulty regulating emotions: panic, rage, volatility or disconnection.

### PLAY

- Be unable to enjoy co-operating and taking turns.
- Be unable to manage destructive impulses:
  - Unable to account for their actions.
  - Unable to benefit from discipline based on rewards and sanctions.
- Be unable to manage shame: highly reactive or switched off in response to criticism or praise.

### TALK

- Find it difficult to understand accurately what is said to them.
- Be unable to distinguish between fact and fantasy.
- Struggle with metaphor.
- Have difficulties with understanding and managing time.
- Have impaired thinking skills.

## Taking action: what you can do

- Recognise behaviours and/or challenges among children and families that may indicate the need for more support.
- Focus more on the Five to Thrive step that will help the most.

## \*\*Strengths-based model

Five to Thrive is to be used as a model that empowers people and builds on their strengths. It enables practitioners to:

- Recognise the positive impact of 'Five to Thrive' interactions when working with children, young people and families.
- Support parents to notice when positive Five to Thrive interactions are happening and share the knowledge that this interaction is promoting healthy brain development and/or supporting healthy brain function as well as promoting self-regulation and resilience.
- Support young people to understand the basic principles of healthy human interaction and how this can help them and others.

This strengths-based approach is encouraging and empowering for practitioners and parents and motivates them to repeat this style of interacting.

## Taking action: what you can do

- Recognise and reflect on the positive impact of your own Five to Thrive interactions with children and families.
- Tell parents when you notice positive Five to Thrive interactions and help them understand the benefits.
- Support young people to understand Five to Thrive and how it helps.

## Normalising, not stigmatising

Five to Thrive is a model that can be used when working with anyone to promote healthy brain development and also in a targeted way with those who need more support.

### We are all vulnerable

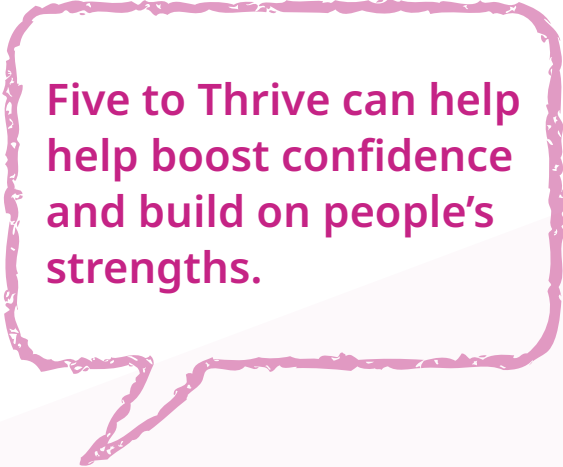
- We all have attachment needs when we feel unsafe.

### We are all resilient

- We can all contribute to meeting the attachment needs of other people.

### People need people

- Five to Thrive interactions are important throughout the life course providing us with the healthy nourishment our brains need.



**Five to Thrive can help help boost confidence and build on people's strengths.**

## What is trauma informed practice?

Trauma is brain injury caused by exposure to events that cause overwhelming stress, sometimes known as 'toxic' stress. Humans are not born able to regulate stress but develop this ability through being with self-regulating, responsive adults. Support from caring adults protects children from trauma. It is, therefore, vital that everyone who works with children and young people understands trauma and is able to embed this learning into their practice.

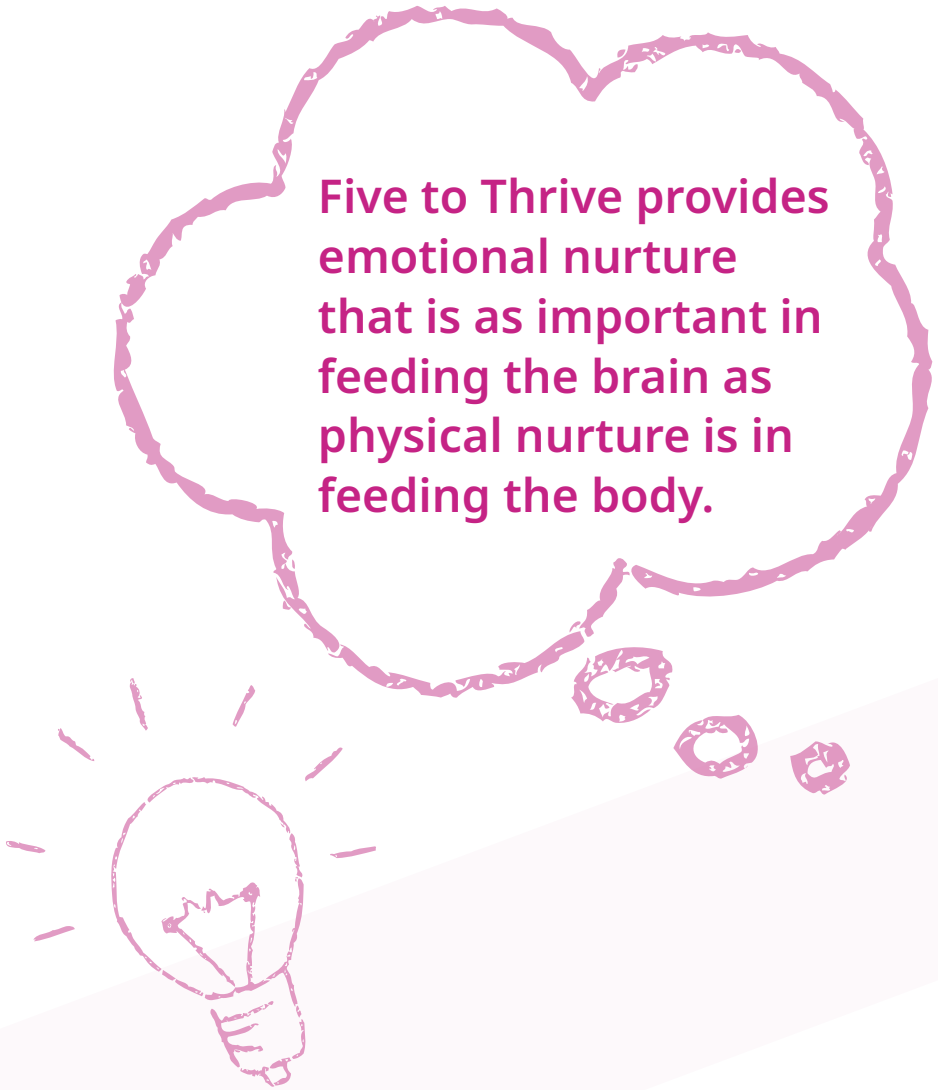
Adults can also experience overwhelming levels of stress and will need the support of other caring adults to recover. If the stress is complex and has been affecting their emotions and behaviour since childhood, the support they will need is likely to be intensive and lengthy.

Most people recover spontaneously from traumatic life events however, some are left traumatised. Until they recover people affected by toxic stress struggle to: self-regulate; process information and manage the world around them; and make and maintain relationships.

Five to Thrive is an easily accessible model that can be woven into everyday interactions to support recovery from trauma. It is not a replacement for intensive therapy that some people may need, but it is supportive and accessible to all. The Five to Thrive steps reflect a process of co-regulation, guidance and support needed for families, children and young people in this situation.

## For more information and resources

Visit **KCA Connected** and click on the link to register. This will then give you access to a range of resources and information developed by Kate Cairns Associates (KCA), the training provider for this programme.



**Five to Thrive provides emotional nurture that is as important in feeding the brain as physical nurture is in feeding the body.**