

Distressed or Deliberately Defiant? Managing Challenging Student Behaviour Due to Trauma and Disorganised Attachment

Judith Howard, 2013, Toowong, Australia: Australian Academic Press, 104 pp., A\$24.95,
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Dr Judith Howard has produced a very user-friendly and informative guide to assist schools in supporting students with trauma and disorganised attachment. The book utilises case studies based on composite students that Howard has known in her past positions as school counsellor, educator, behaviour specialist, and researcher in Queensland, Australia, to illustrate how environment can impact on the neurological development and functioning of youngsters' brains. Howard acknowledges the challenges that educating students with complex traumas present and offers educators insight and a more productive way of viewing these students.

Howard adeptly introduces the reader to attachment theory (Chapter 2) and brain physiology and functions (Chapter 3) in an accessible way, clearly connecting brain science to the types of behaviours observed in youth who have or continue to experience trauma. Key points are in bold, enabling those with some background knowledge in attachment theory or neuroscience to skim-read this background information. Those new to these fields are encouraged to read these sections as they lay the foundation for the strategies offered in Chapters 5 through 7. The book offers practical advice to assist schools in helping these students in developing relationships with educators and peers, and in emotional self-regulation. Howard offers schools alternatives to traditional suspension and expulsion and the process of resolving such practices when necessary.

Who Should Buy This Book?

This text is recommended to anyone who works with young people who have experienced trauma due to dysfunctional relationships with their primary carers. Teachers, school executives, special educators, social workers, educational psychologists and school counsellors will find this book a great addition to their professional libraries. The strategies presented are suitable for early childhood through to secondary settings. Moreover, this book would make an excellent and affordable secondary text in postgraduate education subjects focused on managing challenging behaviours.

The information presented in this book could easily be adapted to a valuable staff development session in raising awareness of disorganised attachment and productive intervention strategies that promote inclusion rather than exclusion.

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