



Evidence-Based Intervention: Applied Trauma Responsive Classroom Model (ATRCM)

Introduction

The ATRCM is a practical framework developed to help educators **sequence trauma-responsive strategies** in the classroom. It bridges theory and practice, offering a structured way to meet the evolving needs of children affected by adversity.

Purpose of Intervention

To provide **accessible, classroom-based support** that promotes developmentally appropriate practice and embeds developmentally attuned interventions for children and young people who may have experienced adversity. The model benefits all children, not just those identified as at risk of post-traumatic stress. By sequencing support in a bottom-up way, prioritising foundational needs such as safety, connection and belonging, we are ensuring learners are more likely to be able to access their learning in a meaningful way.

Target Audience

Children and young people in education settings who may have experienced **trauma, adversity, or delays in their developmental trajectory**. The model is inclusive and adaptable across age groups and needs, and has been used with early years, post-16 settings, universities as well as alternative and specialist provisions.

Who Can Deliver the Intervention

Any **education professional**; teachers, teaching assistants, SENCOs, pastoral staff. Preferably those who have already received **basic training in trauma-informed practice**. It's designed to be embedded into everyday classroom life.

Session Structure

The model is not a fixed program but a **sequenced child-centred approach**. It can be used considering an individual child's needs or to consider a whole cohort/group/schools' needs. It can also be used to structure and sequence interventions. The model also includes:

- An observation and planning schedule to support assess, plan, do, review cycles.
- Strategies/sequenced responses based on the child's current psychological, emotional and relational needs

Frequency and Duration

Ongoing and **embedded into daily practice**. The model encourages **continuous reflection and adaptation**, rather than time-limited sessions.

Key Principles

The ATRCM looks to create a thread between the knowledge and theory related to trauma-informed practice, how we support overcoming adversity and build resilience in our learners, and the implementation of these ideas. It utilises the evidence and research in the field of trauma-informed practice and assimilates it into a practical, applied model of support for education settings.

Training and Implementation

Training in understanding and using the model can be accessed through the Psychology and Therapeutic Services. In addition, the Trauma Aware ELSA training utilises the model as a means of sequencing intervention and support for children and young people who have experienced adversity.



Evidence and Outcomes

The ATRCM was created utilising evidence, theory and research in the field of trauma informed practice. A survey for educational psychologists, educators and allied professionals to look at the usefulness and impact of utilising the ATRCM was carried out in February 2024. It found the following:

- 73% of respondents found using the model *Incredibly/ very/ extremely useful*
- 27% found using the model *useful*

The themes around impact where as follows:

1. Improved Communication of Trauma-Informed Principles

"Very useful to have a clear model to communicate to schools basic TIP principles and encourage child-centred working"

2. Promoting a Relational-First Approach

"A relational-approach is mentioned often, and it's not always clear what this means, and so the model offers an accessible way to communicate and emphasise the value of this. "

3. Enhanced Professional Practice and Reflection

"I have found this very helpful during consultations and solution circles to introduce a trauma informed approach and facilitate discussion and next steps."

"school staff have really liked the visual and found it very easy to understand and relate to the young people they are working with."

4. Collaboration between school staff and supporting professionals

"Often use it within consultation with school staff. It works really well to share it on the screen and collaboratively explore the child's needs and discuss the implications of this in terms of support"

5. Facilitating Systemic Change

"I think it is a positive tool for change - I prefer to show people what they can be doing and ask them to reflect on what they do/ what else they can do rather than start a conversation with a critique of what adults supporting in school 'do wrong' as I think this is a better starting point to promote change."

Feedback

Educators report that the model is:

- **Accessible and practical**
- **Empowering for staff**
- **Supportive of relational approaches** It helps staff feel **less overwhelmed** and more equipped to meet complex needs.

Further Information and Resources

[trauma responsive practice guidance for schools](#)

[Using the Applied Trauma Responsive Classroom observation schedule - edpsy.org.uk](#)

[ATRCM carter](#)