

OTHER PEOPLE THROUGH THE EYES OF A TRAUMATISED CHILD

THREAT DETECTORS

When a child has survived frightening experiences or significant loss, their nervous system becomes wired to detect future threat much quicker than other children. Their 'threat detectors' often see neutral information as threatening.

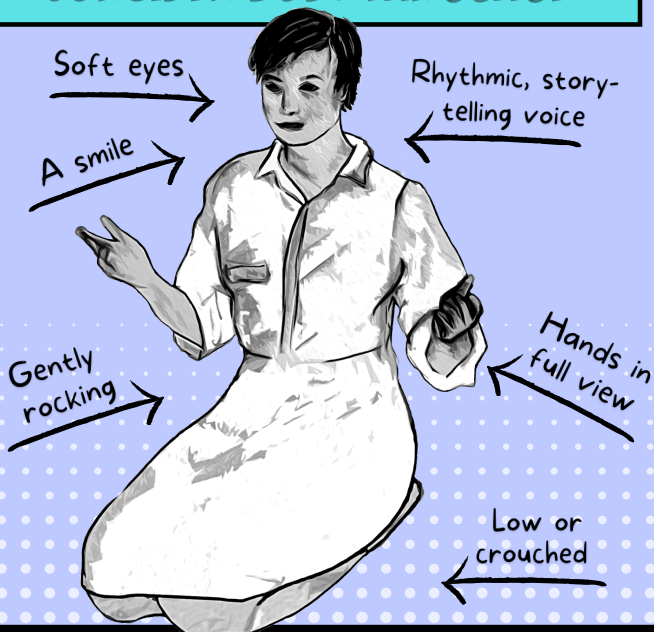


For example, a blank face from a teacher or parent might be experienced as...

...an angry or rejecting face which flips the child into fight, flight, freeze or collapse.

To help re-train the child's traumatised nervous system, we need to be **EXPLICIT** and **CLEAR** with our communication. Here are things you can do to communicate effectively with a traumatised child...

CONSIDER BODY LANGUAGE



MAKE YOUR FEELINGS EXPLICIT

"You are safe here."

"Right now my face might look stressed because I'm just trying to juggle a few things to do with work, it's nothing about what you have said or done."

"Let's talk about what just happened, but before we do I want you to know that you are safe here, and I'm right here for you."

"I do feel sad and upset that you hit me, and I also still love you very much. It's normal for people to have two different feelings at the same time."

"You might have seen me talking to Sam about what happened. It's important that I keep things safe for everyone and that you know I don't feel cross or angry"

TRY A PSYCHO-EDUCATION GAME: Play emotion charades, together write down as many emotions as you can think of, then take turns picking them out of a hat and guessing what they are. This can be a great way to teach children about the tiny facial differences in emotions and also helps you to understand what expressions they find hard to understand so you can have explicit conversations about what this might look like.