

We are proud to be the first in the UK to be awarded the Mentally Healthy Organisation award by TIS UK.

But what does it mean to be a Trauma Informed School?

A trauma informed school is one that is able to support children who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning.

Two of our staff have received training to become Trauma Informed and Mental Health practitioners (L.Cooper-Smith and C.O'Brien) The training programmes were born out of a response to major public health studies that have shown that when children who have suffered several painful life experiences, are un helped, there is a very high chance of them going on to suffer severe mental and physical ill-health.

TIS UK therefore support schools, communities and other organisations in providing relationships for these children that heal minds, brains and bodies. Key conversational skills in addressing and making sense of what has happened are central to our work as is a major shift in whole school/organisation/community culture.

'Rising numbers of children are presenting with mental health difficulties in schools and current teaching environments are struggling to keep up. Many children have a high ACE score (meaning multiple adverse childhood experiences) known to leave children at risk of mental and physical ill-health later in life and even early death' (The ACE study Felitti and Anda, a study involving over 17,000 people). Children spend 190 days a year at school so we believe that our schools are very well placed to help these children.

We have Helping Us Thrive HUTs in all of our schools and these give children access to well trained pastoral support throughout the day when necessary. "There is evidence that appropriately-trained and supported staff such as teachers, school nurses, counsellors, and teaching assistants can achieve results comparable to those achieved by trained therapists in delivering a number of interventions addressing mild to moderate mental health problems (such as anxiety, conduct disorder, substance use disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder)"

It is our mission at Discovery MAT to be inclusive and to support children to be ready to learn.

Lindsay Cooper Smith