

Session Title:	Connection Counts
Speaker(s):	Hannah Simnett, Founder of ‘Cherished’ Charity (Charity No.: 8570635)
Chair:	Sarah Arnold, WP & Student Recruitment Officer, University of Bristol; HELOA South West – Vice Chair for Membership & Comms.
Reporter:	Jamie Graney, UK Student Recruitment Officer, University of Liverpool

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah trained as a teacher before starting Cherished to work with children experiencing, or who have experienced, trauma. • Cherished is a charity who provide attachment-focused and trauma responsive support for children and young people in Primary and Secondary schools across Birmingham. They ensure that every child who they support feels safe, seen, soothed and secure. Cherished is their service to support girls, and Roar supports boys. • The support that they offer includes 1:1 mentoring, school courses, Blossom and Roar groups, workshops and events. They also offer training for parents, carers and professionals and volunteering opportunities. • Cherished focuses on working around the Midlands and is supported by West Midlands Police and numerous learning trusts, as well as Merseyside Police. Cherished has also received National Lottery funding.
Overview/Aim of session:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop understanding of how disruptive behaviour within classrooms and outreach activities can actually be communication from students experiencing trauma. • Increase knowledge of what behaviour could result from trauma.
Workshop Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching staff can have unhelpful assumptions about kids who are actually in pain (they’re just disruptive, they’re attention seeking) – find out what is going on in their lives • Behaviour is communication – if students are misbehaving, what are they trying to communicate to me? • ‘Trauma’ is Greek for ‘wound’ or ‘injury’ – behave how you would with a physically injured person • 67% of an average classroom have experience trauma, or are going through it right now

- Create an environment where people are comfortable to be in your presence – you yourself, somehow, could be a trigger (your perfume, your clothing)
- Powerful but simple tool – stand at the door to the classroom/lecture theatre and welcome each student in as they pass you on the way in. Say that you're glad that they're here – make them feel good!
- People buy people – if you're not entertaining and not enjoying leading sessions, this will be obvious and the connection is lost
- It's fine to be aware that you're not enjoying your role or aspects of your job – action this
- Students are looking for the 4 S's – Safe, Seen, Soothed and Secure. They're like tanks that need filling to fuel a child through school
 - Safe – safe in their environment
 - Seen – awareness of them, I'm proud of you, you're amazing
 - Soothed – nurtured and encouraged
 - Secure – confident in myself, secure in who I am
- Children may not come to school for the following most-common reasons, according to a Department for Education report:
 - Poor grades (I'm not clever enough for school or university)
 - Illness (I'm ill, or my family is ill)
 - Mental health (my own or my family's)
 - Bullying
 - Being a young carer
 - Poverty
- Sometimes teaching staff themselves can be a bad trigger – “Watch out for this lot, they're really disruptive.”
- Learn to recognise the reactions that can manifest in the Five F's – Fight, Flight, Freeze, Friend and Flop:
 - Fight – anger, outbursts, aggression
 - Flight – walking out of class/session
 - Freeze – unresponsive, uninterested
 - Friend – overenthusiastic, befriend the danger before it can hurt me
 - Flop – ignore everything, disengage, escape my current reality
- Leave the students with positive energy and a good experience, no matter how minor
- How we experience and interpret the world is based on your younger experiences – how will children grow up to interpret their world if you leave them with negative experiences?

<p>Case Studies/Examples:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah worked with a group of female students about to be expelled for ‘bad behaviour’. Hannah recognised that the girls were actually communicating their trauma to her through ‘disruptive behaviour’ and telling her ‘I’m the bad one’. Hannah actively engaged a particular student in helping deliver her sessions and set up the class – this student then went on to work for Hannah’s charity for a number of years before going to university to become a social worker.
<p>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other reasons children may not come to school could include lack of money to get to school, anxiety, bad interactions with teachers or staff, lack of basic needs being met like food and sleep, embarrassment academically or materially (I can’t afford a PE kit) and a lack of inspiration
<p>Questions and Answers:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
<p>Summary/Key takeaways:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the power of an hour – from the moment you step into that classroom, how much good and how much damage you can do by not recognising and acting upon communications students are trying to send to you through ‘disruptive behaviour’. • Recognise signs of the Five F’s and ensure the students’ Four S’s are topped up. • Rarely is disruptive behaviour aimed at you personally or intended to harm you – it’s communication – so listen and communicate back!