

Play  
your  
part

# Virtual School Conference

## ELSA



Dr Alison Brown

Senior Child and Educational Psychologist

Child and Educational Psychology Service



# What is ELSA?

- **Emotional Literacy Support Assistants**
- Training and supervision for staff working in schools
- Introduces psychological theory and frameworks that support social and emotional development, emotional wellbeing and resilience



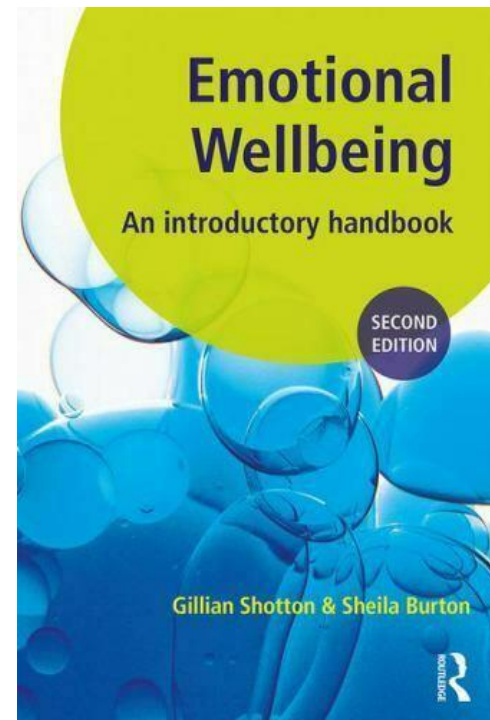
**ELSA**  
NETWORK

## ELSA in CW&C

- Introduced in 2014
- 213 ELSAs trained to date – from nursery, primary, secondary and specialist settings
- CEPs supervise 152 ELSAs in 101 CW&C schools plus 3 OOB supporting Children in our Care
- Recognised as an important protective factor for children and young people's mental health when developing the local Recovery Model

# ELSA Initial Training

- Introduction to ELSA
- Raising Emotional Awareness & Emotional Literacy in schools
- Self-esteem
- Active Listening
- Anger Management
- Working through puppets
- Social Skills
- Autism
- Therapeutic Stories
- Social and Friendship Skills
- Loss, Bereavement and Family Break-up



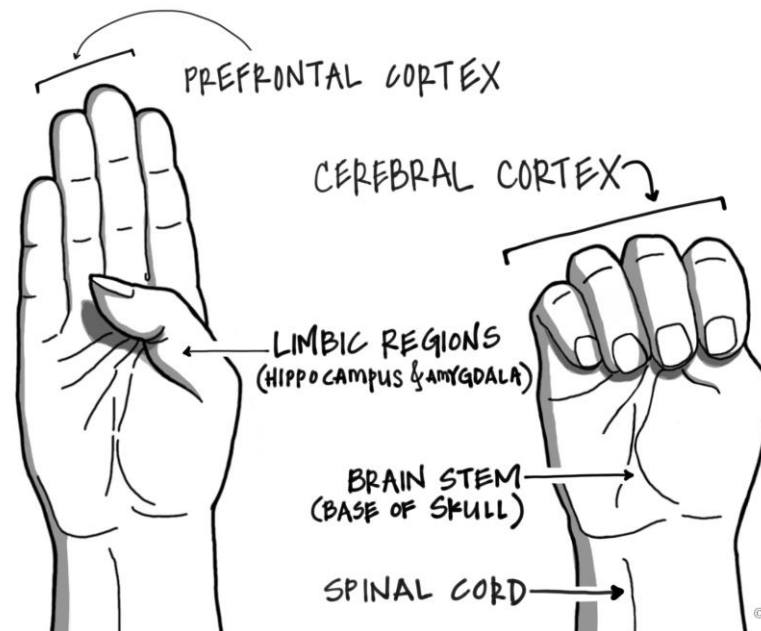
# Why do we need ELSA?

- Increase in rates of probable mental disorders in CYP in England
- Effects of lockdown
- Prevalence of ACEs
- Increased vulnerability to mental health difficulties of children who have experienced abuse and neglect (UK Trauma Council)

# Stress Responses

Dan Siegel's

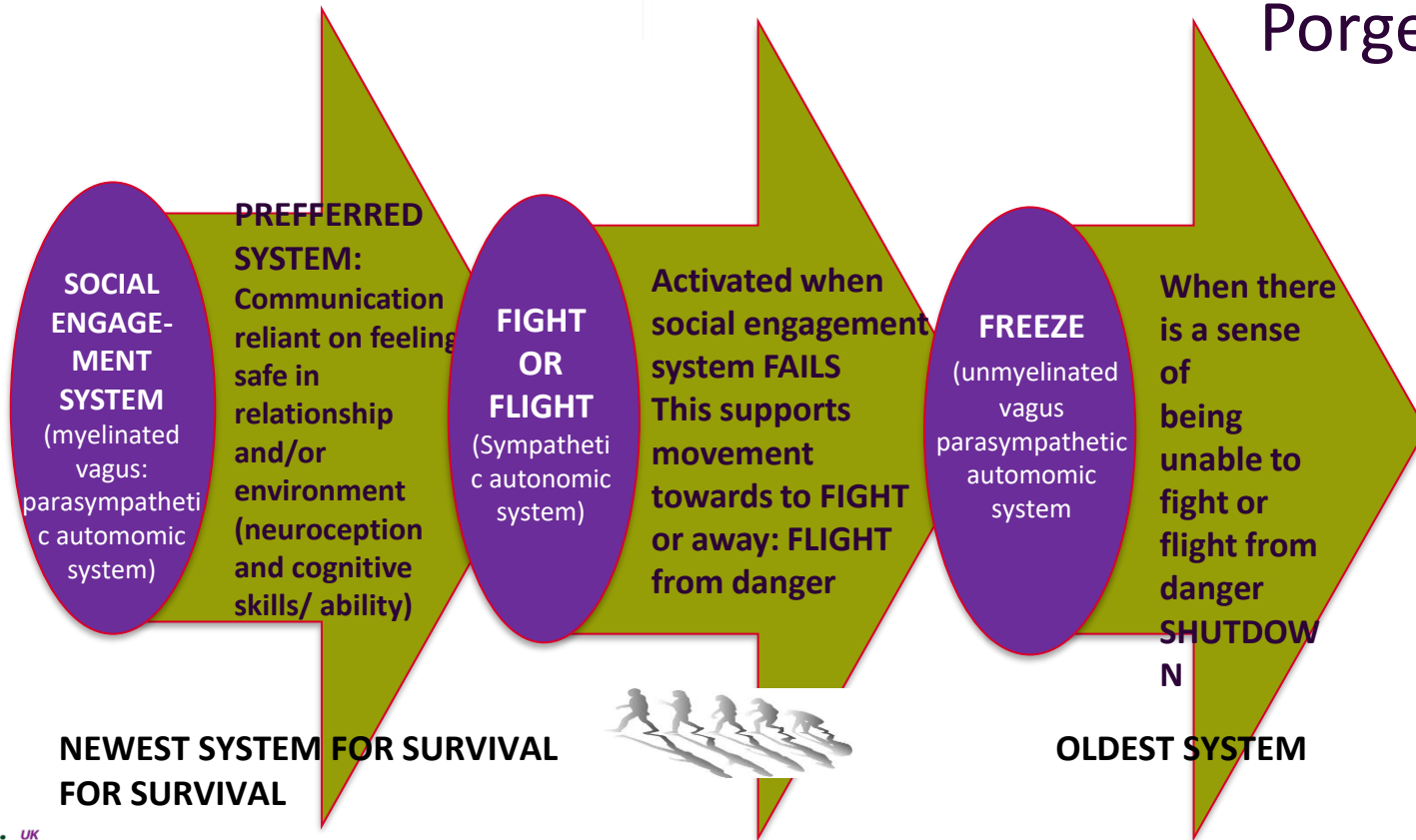
Hand Model of the Brain





# Stress Responses: 3 Systems

Porges, 2011





# Trauma

- Simple – one event that disrupts a child's life that threatens their safety
- Complex/developmental – ongoing, affect sense of safety over a period of time
- Individual responses: Resilient, Recovery, Delayed, Enduring

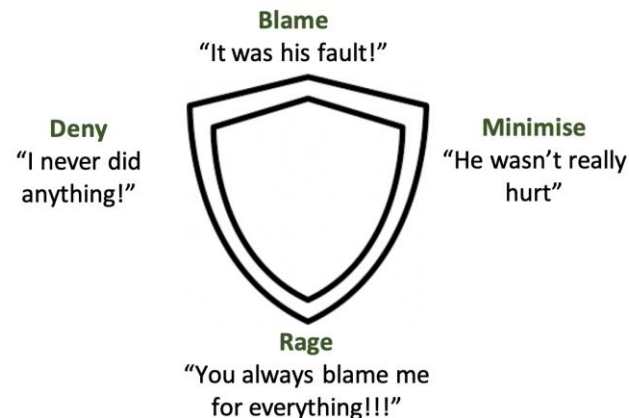


# 4 Key Challenges

- Blocked trust (Baylin & Hughes, 2016)
- Fear of intersubjectivity
- Understanding shame
- Understanding hidden and expressed attachment needs

(Golding, 2017)

## The Shield of Shame





# What works?

- Safety
- Self-regulation
- Self-reflective information processing
- Traumatic experience integration
- Relational engagement

(Dan Hughes 2016)

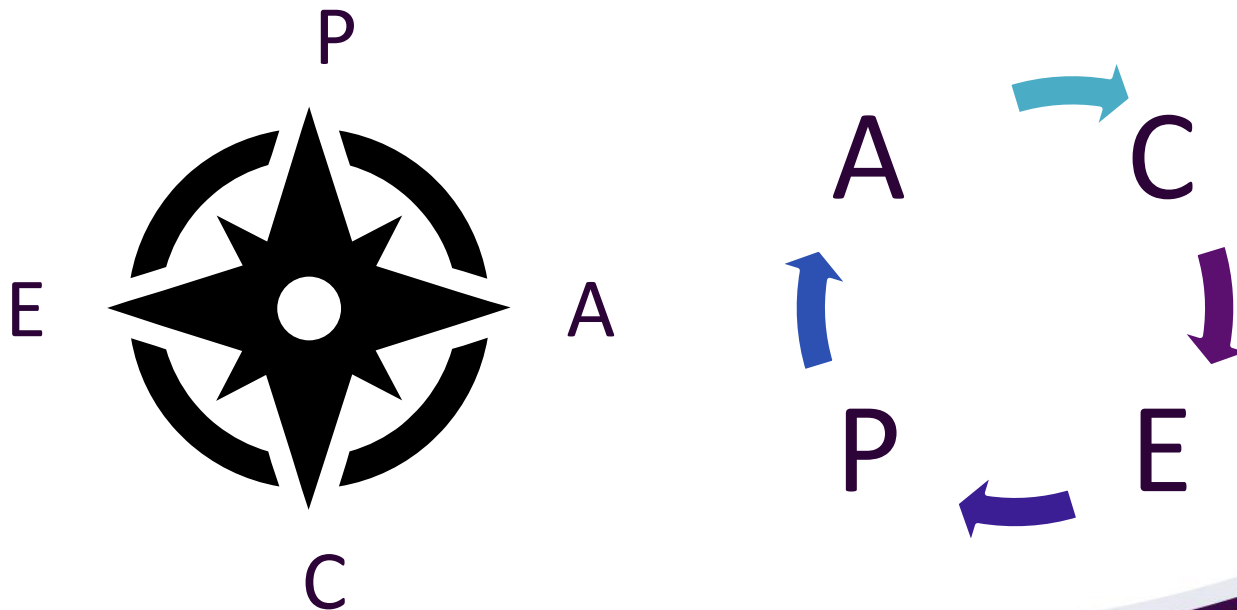
# ELSA & Children in Our Care

## What works?

- Time and support available to develop trusting relationships between ELSA and the child or young person
- Promoting attachment via therapeutic activities
- Creativity, flexibility and playfulness
- SMT understanding the building blocks for successful outcomes, including building trust, providing nurture activities and giving children time and space to grow and develop

# PACE

- Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy
- Connection before Correction
- Adults need to be open and engaged





# Trauma Informed Practice

“What happened to you?”

instead of

“What’s wrong with you?”

**Any questions?**



**Thank you!**

