

# Emerging Minds.

## National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health

### RACGP/Emerging Minds webinar four The effects of trauma on children's mental health 7pm, AET 20 June, 2019

#### Case study – Charlie – Part One

Access video: <https://youtu.be/NhBI21WO4kk>

*Charlie is a 9-year-old boy who lives with his mother Kate and father Chris. Chris is a real estate agent and Kate works part-time in administration. Chris loved playing football when he was younger and is president of the local football club. He is busy with lots of out of hours appointments for his work and with the football club. He wants to share his passion for footy with Charlie, but Charlie doesn't seem so keen. Chris exerts a strong influence over the family in terms of the financial and social decisions which can leave Charlie and Kate feeling like they don't have much of a say.*

*Lately, Charlie has been hearing Chris scream at his mother at night time. Chris says that Kate is 'useless' and 'stupid.' Charlie is worried his dad is going to hurt his mum, because he has heard him threaten her. Kate is becoming worried about Charlie as she has noticed he has changed over the past months. He doesn't seem himself, spending more time in his room or in the shed with Rex's old things. Rex was the family dog who died of old age about 3 months ago. Kate has noticed Charlie has wet the bed on occasions over the past few months, something he has not done for years. She has not talked with him about this as he hides his wet pyjamas under his bed.*

*At school Charlie has typically been an average student but his teachers have noticed he is not doing as well with his work and is demonstrating some challenging behaviours. Kate has met with the school upon their request, however no clear explanation for the changes in Charlie's behaviour were identified. Kate's neighbour urges her to 'control' Charlie or have him diagnosed for ADHD.*

Charlie's psychological recovery from experiences of trauma, loss and other adverse experiences may be dependent on his network of supportive and nurturing relationships. Mental health difficulties can be exacerbated by lack of access to support mechanisms that help children make sense of what has happened to them, and that they are not to blame for what happened to them. A GPs role is often pivotal in supporting the establishment of these networks, particularly for children who are socially and economic isolated or who have problematic relationships with the adults in their lives.

This webinar examines frameworks that GPs and other professionals use to remain curious about the circumstances of children who have been affected by trauma, while establishing support networks that assist in recovery. Our Emerging Minds' Child and Family Partner will discuss their views on curiosity and how this has been used (and neglected) in their experience.

By attending this webinar participants will be able to:

- Discuss the impacts of trauma, loss and adversity on the developing brain and how this might affect a child's behaviour and social and cognitive functioning.
- Outline effective preventative approaches that can reduce the likelihood of mental health and behavioural concerns developing in infants and children who have experienced trauma or loss.
- Counsel parents and children about the effects of trauma in a way that provides hope and a way forward.
- Recognise the potential mental health risks for infants and children who have experienced trauma or loss and intervene proactively and sensitively to mitigate immediate risks. – patient safety learning outcome

Delivery partners:



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