

FRIDAY 10TH APRIL 2020 EASTER SUPPLEMENT 4 STAYING CONNECTED AND CURIOUS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Knowledge and understanding of attachment and trauma

The impact of isolation

"When our children return to school the learning landscape will be changed forever. The language around isolation & the use of 'isolation' as a 'punishment' will evoke deep feelings of separation, fear, grief & loss. A trauma-responsive approach will harm no-one but heal many."

Sarah Morgan, Shropshire Education and Children's Social Care

As a keen Archers listener, I was very interested a few months ago, when a horse was unable to go out to pasture because of an injury. Alistair (the Ambridge Vet) recommended that a donkey be borrowed from a neighbouring farm so that the injured horse would have company and not experience isolation. He went on to explain that as a herd animal, the horse strongly desires social contact and interaction with members of the same species.

Human beings are also 'herd animals'. We are a highly social species and the effects of being isolated from other people can be extreme and traumatic.

Despite this scientific knowledge about the impact of isolation, many schools, including Primary and Special Schools, continue to use isolation as a behaviour management strategy. Indeed, the government's so-called 'behaviour tsar' for England, Tom Bennett, is a keen advocate for isolation.



Isolation booths in a Primary School

Please read the following article:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jan/17/schools-converting-toilet-blocks-into-isolation-booths>

Questions for reflection

1. Does your school use isolation in any form as a response to unwanted behaviour?
2. What other types of isolation may children experience in schools?
3. Anxiety, aggression, forgetfulness and hallucinations are just a few of the common psychological effects of isolation in human beings. Can isolation ever result in children being more successful learners, and improve prosocial behaviour?
4. How might the current narrative around isolation trigger fear and horror on children returning to school if the isolation booths agenda continues to grow?
5. *“When our children return to school the learning landscape will be changed forever. The language around isolation & the use of ‘isolation’ as a ‘punishment’ will evoke deep feelings of separation, fear, grief & loss. A trauma-responsive approach will harm no-one but heal many.”* How can you personally, and your school in general, respond to Sarah Morgan's words?

Today is Good Friday, and many of us would be meeting with family and/or attending church services. How are you coping with isolation today? What do you need to do today to care well for yourself? Please share with me by email, text or on social media. Have a good day, keep safe and healthy and ring or email me to chat if that would help. *Jenny x*