



# IMPACTS OF TRAUMA



Government  
of South Australia

Childhood trauma can have a range of impacts on emotions and behaviour, physical health and the body, how children see themselves and their relationships with others, and their memory and communication skills.

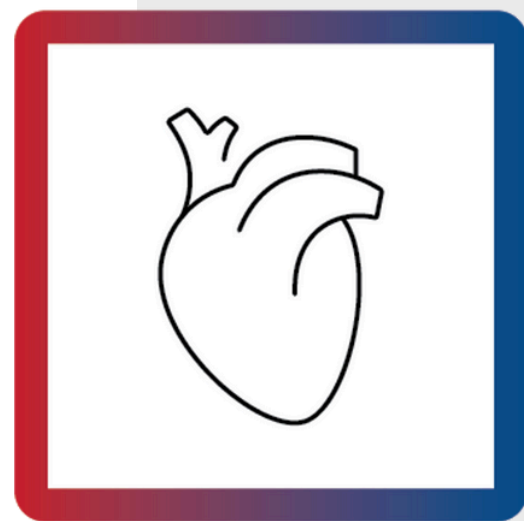
## Emotions and behaviour



### Children who have experienced trauma may:

- Be more sensitive to feeling threatened and unsafe, even in safe situations
- Have more frequent or intense reactions and behaviours than their peers – and they may occur unexpectedly
- Need extra support to understand and manage their feelings

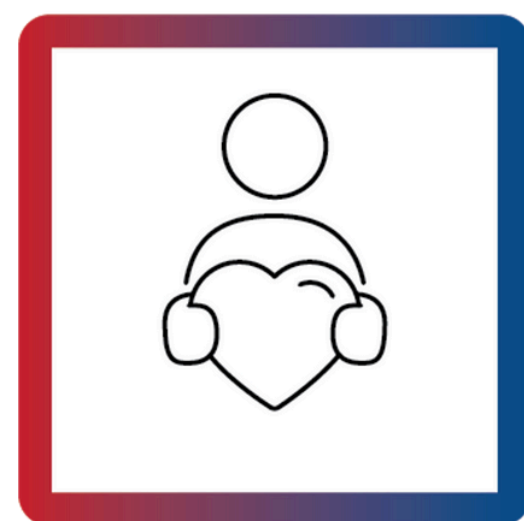
## Body and physical



### Children who have experienced trauma may:

- More often feel tense or rigid, have headaches, stomach aches, poor sleep, irregular eating and high heart rate
- Be over or under-sensitive to sounds, lights, smells, tastes and other sensory experiences
- Lag behind peers in terms of physical coordination and other motor skills
- Benefit from extra support and encouragement to get involved and participate

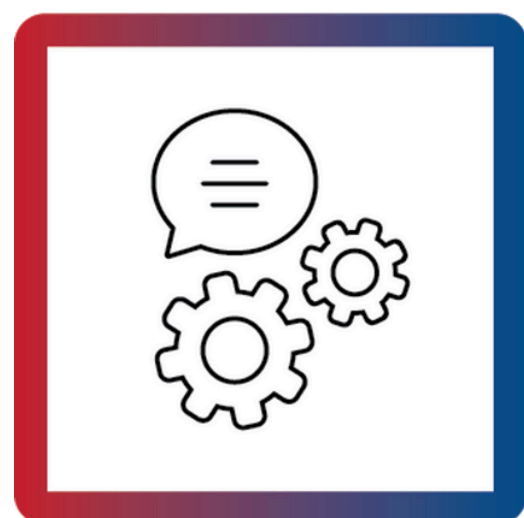
## Relationships and self-worth



### Children who have experienced trauma may:

- React defensively or aggressively if they feel attacked or criticised
- Reject attempts to relate to them, and may seem guarded and indifferent
- Show controlling behaviours to avoid further hurt and disappointment
- Be overly compliant and vulnerable to being taken advantage of

## Memory and communication



### Children who have experienced trauma may:

- Have difficulty remembering and following instructions
- Mask lack of recollection or understanding with other behaviour – such as refusing to participate, laziness or being distracted

