Every Child Matters

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Outline

- Working with refugee children with disabilities, refugee trauma and settlement issues
- Neurofeedback clinic at STARTTS
- Case presentation
- Children and their Families - what needs addressing
- Multimodal approach – what’s next?
Impact on families

- Exile, migration, resettlement stressors, cultural transition
- Disrupted attachment & parenting strategies
- Insufficient or Adverse sensory experiences
- Normal life cycle issues
- Stigma
- Assessment & Diagnosis
- Disability
- Cultural awareness
- Eligibility limitations
- Impact on family carers
- Reduced family & social support
- Protective factors (internal and external)
- War & Trauma
- Settlement issues
- Displacement
- Multiple losses
- Parent’s inability to engage emotionally, nurture or stimulate a child
- Perinatal experiences including loss, deprivation
- Language and knowing the system
Neurofeedback brings together the physiological and psychological, which impact social adjustment.
Use of Neurofeedback in addressing psychophysiological effects of trauma

- Neurofeedback is a tool to improve CNS regulation through “holding a mirror” to the brain
- Neurofeedback trains the brain’s ability to self-regulate
- This is done by providing a feedback on selected EEG rhythms related to regulation
- Repeated sessions enable permanent learning
- The brain itself does the work
Adam:

- 7 y.o. M
- COB: Iraq
- Family came as refugees to Australia in 2017
- Youngest of 3 children
- Refugee trauma & displacement
- Witnessed parental distress on daily basis

Presenting symptoms:

- Diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disability
- No speech, vocalising random words mostly in Arabic
- Disorganised
- Dysregulated
- Over-reactive
- Parents confused & worried
Referrals to the NF clinic:

- Learning difficulties
- Behavioural problems
- Sleeping issues
- Affect dysregulation
- Anger
- Bedwetting
- Social isolation
- Attachment issues

Treatment plan:

- Referrals to the NF clinic:
  - Working with Parents/Caretakers
  - Working with schools/other services
  - EEG Assessment
  - NF treatment

Protective factors (internal and external)

- Mother fully accepting her child; joyous of each movement forward
- Extraordinary teacher and her support and feedback
Current symptoms and continuing treatment

• Can verbalise much better and use simple sentences
• Much more regulated
• Counting, trying to read and trace letters
• Still agitated when cannot express himself
• Parents happy with progress
Teacher’s Perspective

• Was first introduced with Adam in term 4 of last year.
• Unconventional with his education setting.
• I felt overwhelmed when I was asked to have him in my class this year.
• Term 1 was hard due to many circumstances such as anger, language barrier and expectations of another new environment.
• As the year has gone on and with the introduction of Neuro Feedback Therapy the changes in Adam have been outstanding and amazing.
• Adam has settled so much more through the interventions he is receiving.
• I’m not being bias for being his teacher, in the wonderful progress he has made. I’ve talked to a few teachers and teachers aide and this is what they had to say about Adam.
“He is a changed boy.”

“He has come so far. Who knows where this may lead if he continues down the path he is on.”

“I remember when I was his support aide last year and all he would do was roll around and carry on. Now look at him, he is sitting and participating in the class”. It really is beautiful.

“He is so much calmer, and he listens and follows instructions”.
Pre-Post EEG Changes

- Posterior alpha showing brain maturation
- Can see a huge improvement in speed of processing with increased alpha

Normal Posterior slow wave of youth

Increased alpha frequency

Dramatically decreased slow content

Pz-Av
“Brains are exquisitely designed to be able to interact socially, pay attention and comprehend information; to achieve full human potential; to focus, think, reason, dream, and create”

Robert Hill Phd. & Eduardo Castro, MD ‘Healing Young Brains: The Neurofeedback solution’

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Thank you for listening