

Understanding Trauma and Trauma Informed Practice

22nd Annual National Prosecutors' Conference

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'Psychological Trauma'

Psychological trauma is the **unique individual experience** of an event or enduring conditions, in which:

The individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or

The individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity.

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p. 60)

Brain Architecture



TRAUMA

Individual, Group, Community.....

- **Single incident trauma** - unexpected and overwhelming
- **Complex trauma** - inter-personal and enduring
- **Developmental trauma**: exposure to early life trauma ACEs
- **Intergenerational trauma**: living with trauma survivors
- **Historical trauma**: CSA, residential schools etc.
- The experience of **immigrants, refugees, marginalised groups & ethnic minorities**



Bullying



Poverty



**Peer rejection and
having no friends**



**Experience of
racism**



**Death, multiple and
traumatic loss**



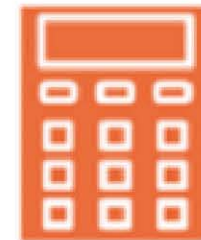
**Community
violence**



**Food
scarcity**



**Experience of
the care system**



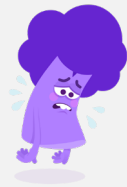
**Poor academic
performance**



**Living in an unsafe
environment**



1. The Thinking Centre is under-activated



2. The Emotion Regulation Centre is under-activated



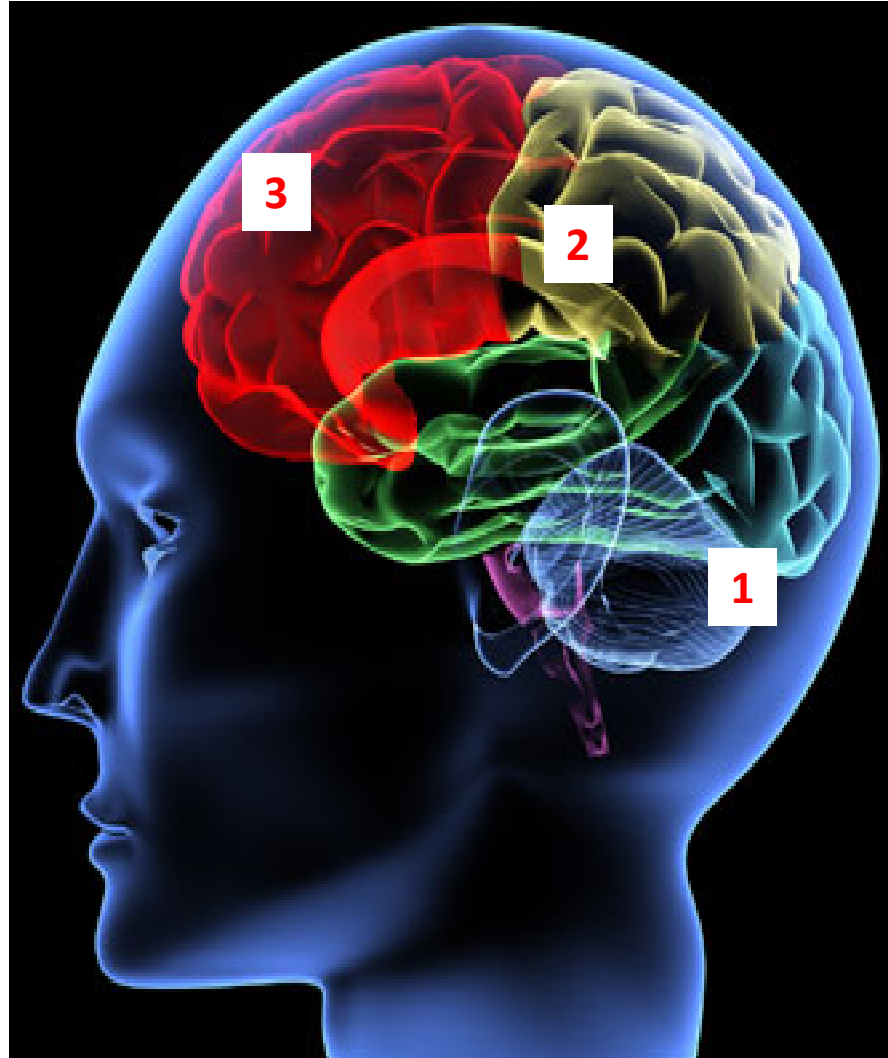
3. The Fear Centre is over-activated.

Stress & the Brain

Trauma & the Brain

3. Pre frontal cortex/ Thinking Brain

Analyses,
problem
solves &
learns from
experiences



2. Limbic

System/Emotional Brain

Perceives & reacts
to threat

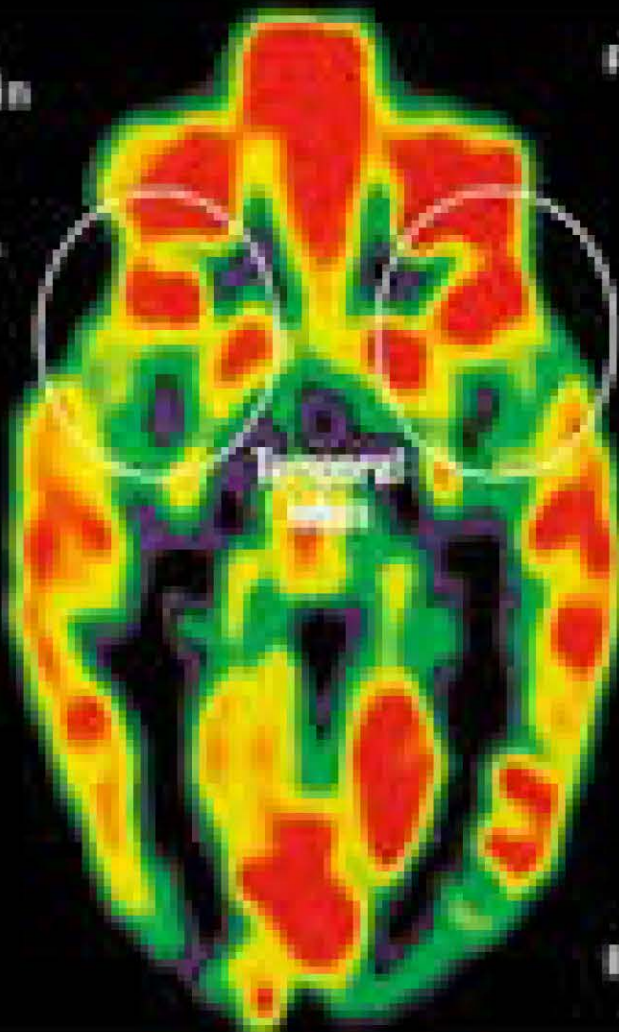
1. Amygdala

Controls instinctive
responses

Right amygdala, fear,
memory, emotion,
procedural

Healthy Brain

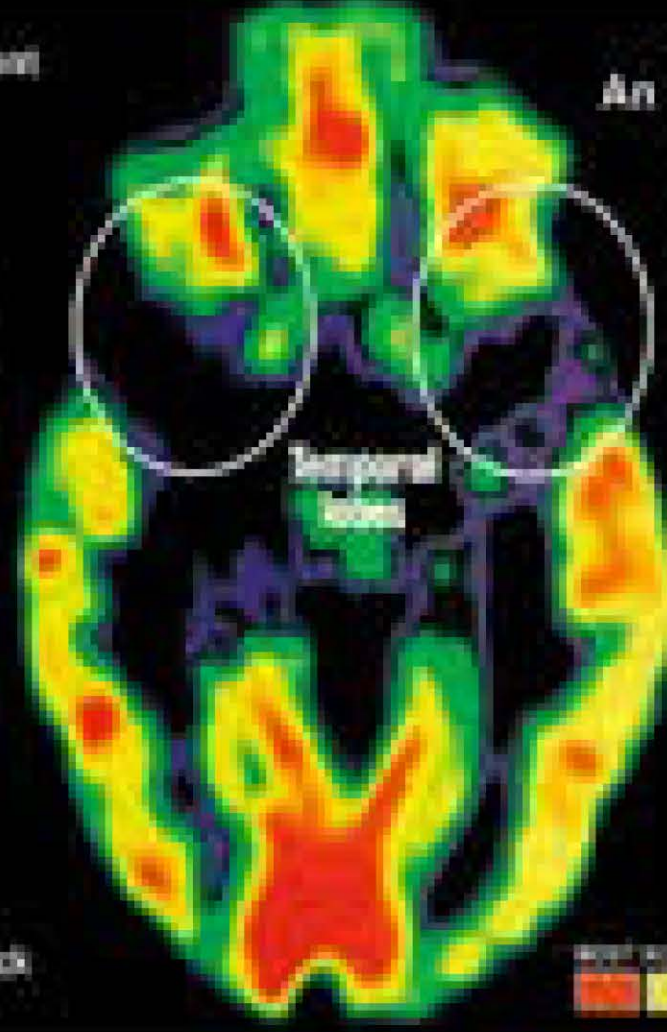
The PET scan of the brain of a normal adult shows signs of high metabolic activity and healthy activity in both, left and right temporal lobes. The temporal lobes of the brain are primarily fully functional, as shown by the symmetrical high activity patterns experienced with the scans.



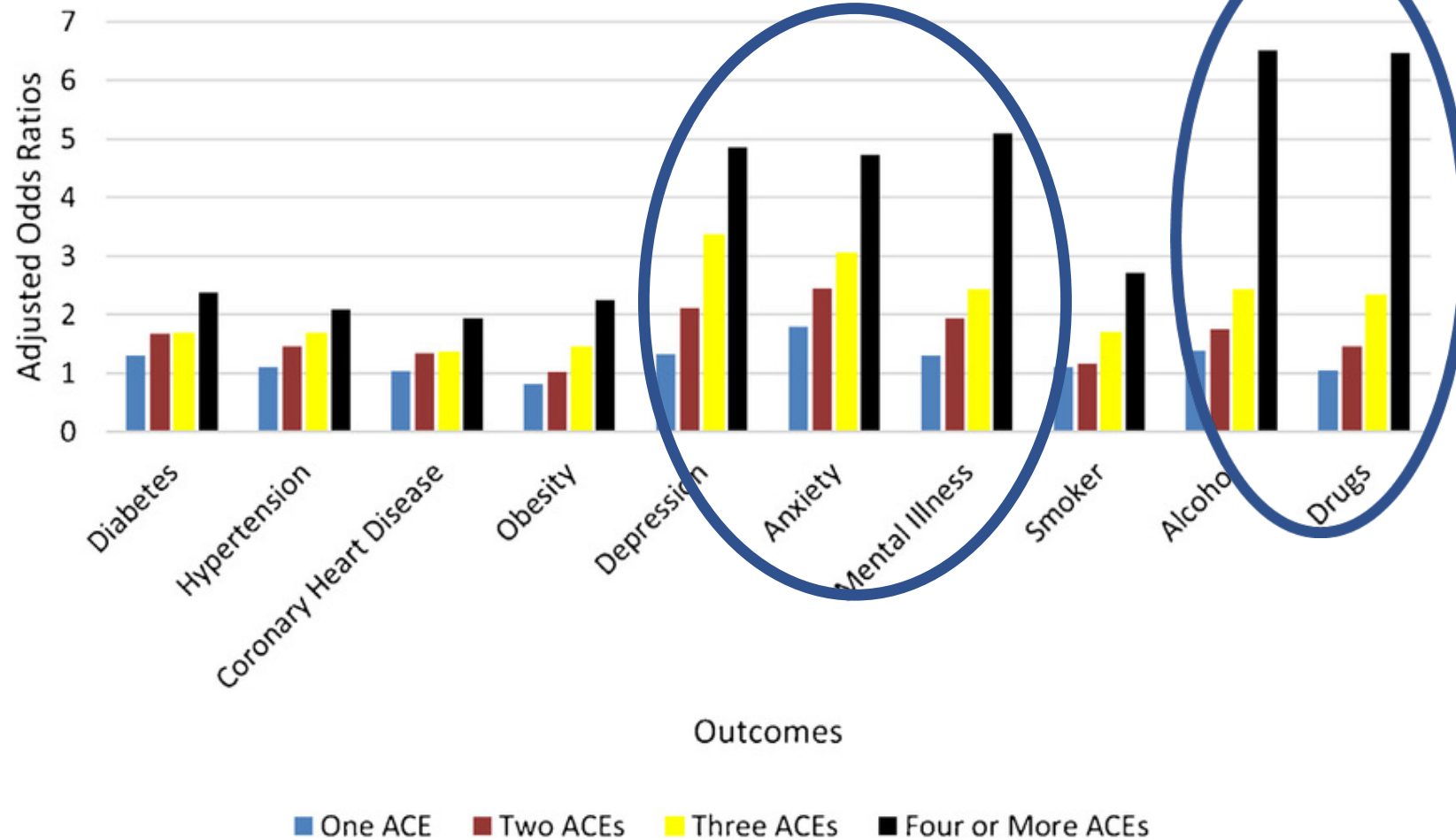
Front

An Abused Brain

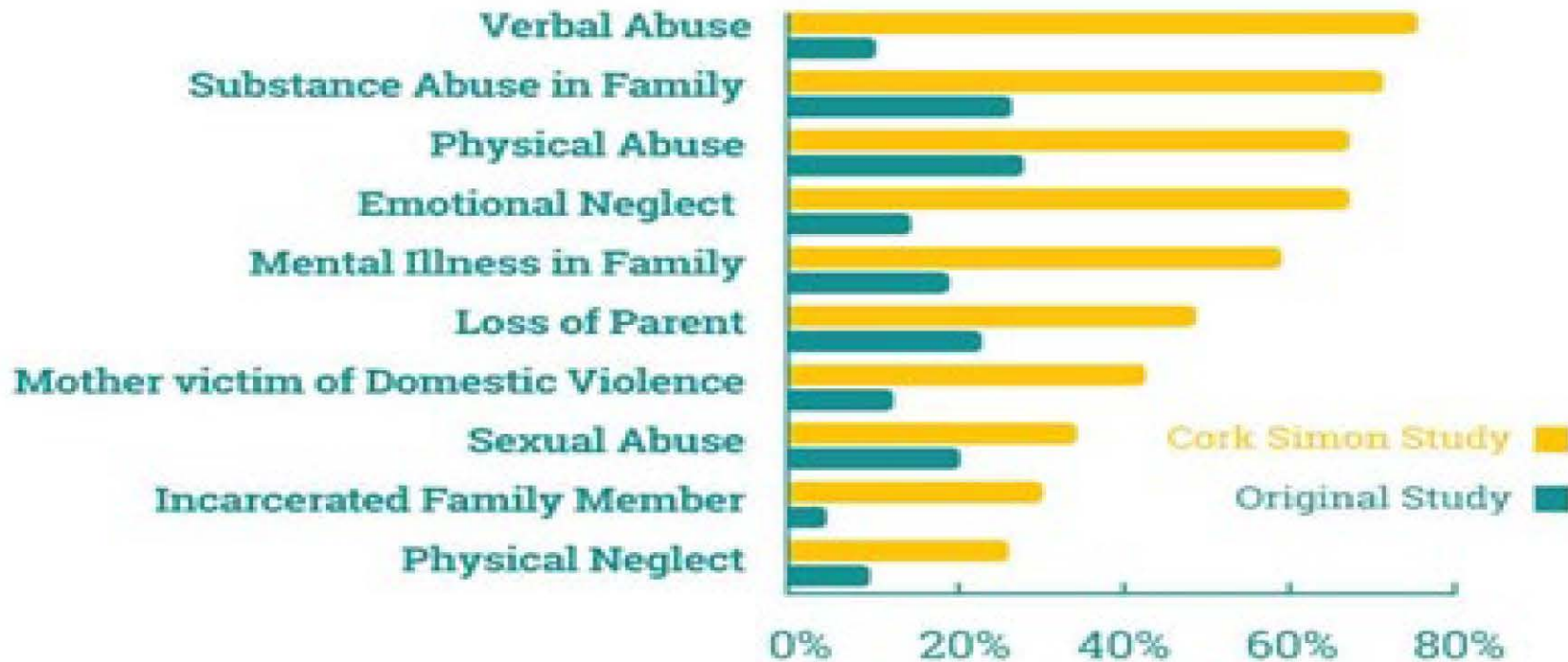
The PET scan of the brain of a former addict, who has experienced chronic withdrawal, shows the effect of chronic substance use on the temporal lobes. The temporal lobes are significantly less active, as shown by the low activity patterns experienced with the scans.



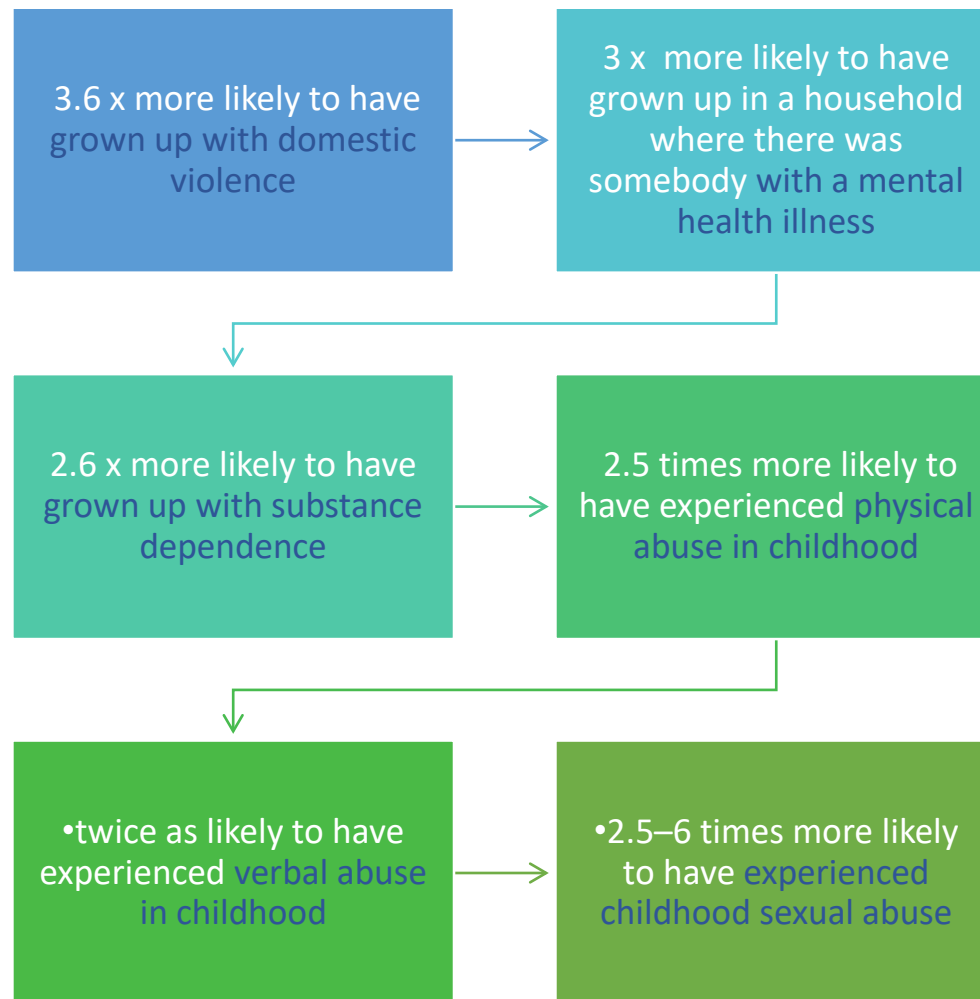
Dose Response Relationship



ACEs among Cork Simon service users compared to the general public in the original ACE study:



Women In Contact With The Probation Service



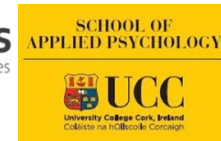
Dermoddy, A. Gardner, C., Davis, S., Lambert, S., Dermoddy, J. and Fein, M. (2018) 'Resilience in the face of trauma: Implications for Service Delivery'. *Irish Probation Journal*, 15 :161-178

Young People: Justice System

	GYDP	General pop (59)
0 Aces	4%	36.1%
1 ACE	5%	26.0%
4 or more ACEs	63%	12.5%
Emotional abuse/verbal abuse	68%	10.6%
Physical abuse	38%	28.3%
Sexual abuse	8%	20.7%
Emotional neglect	52%	14.8%
Physical neglect	34%	9.9%
Loss of parent	74%	23.3%
Domestic violence	20%	12.7%
Household substance abuse	66%	26.9%
Household mental illness	54%	19.4%
Incarcerated family member	40%	4.7%

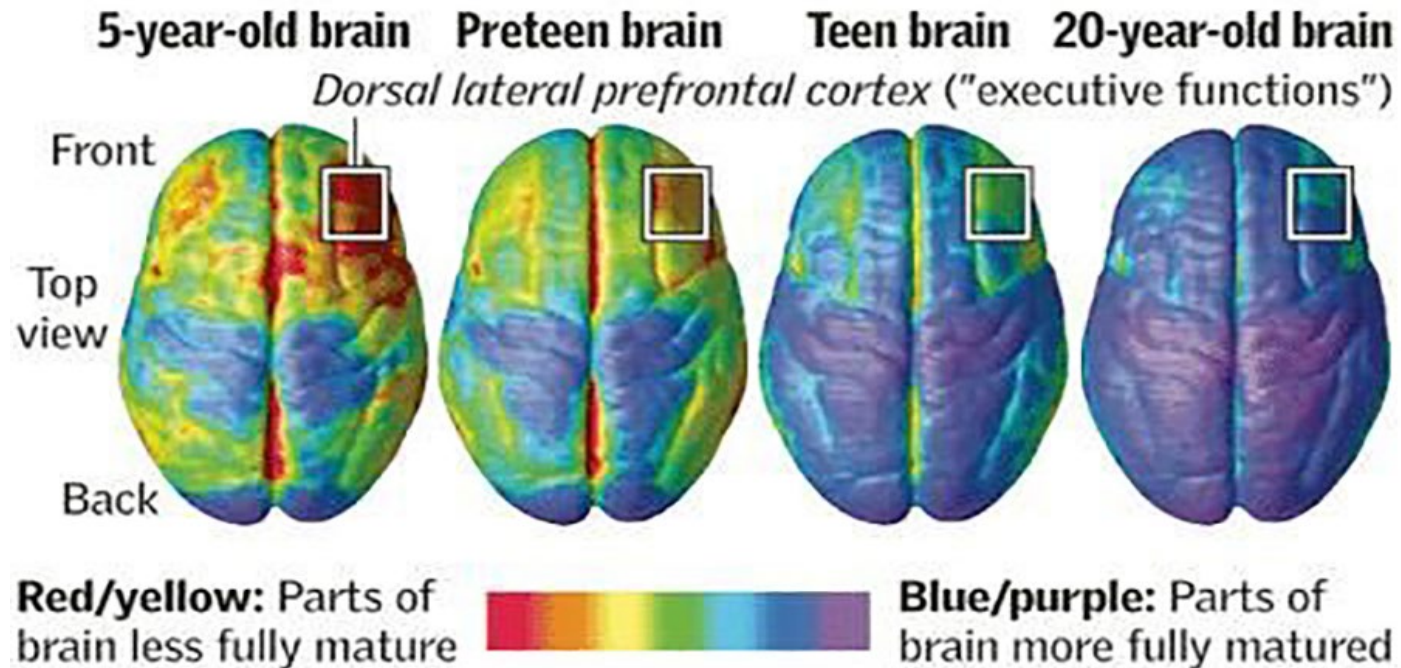


An Garda Síochána
Ireland's National Police and Security Service

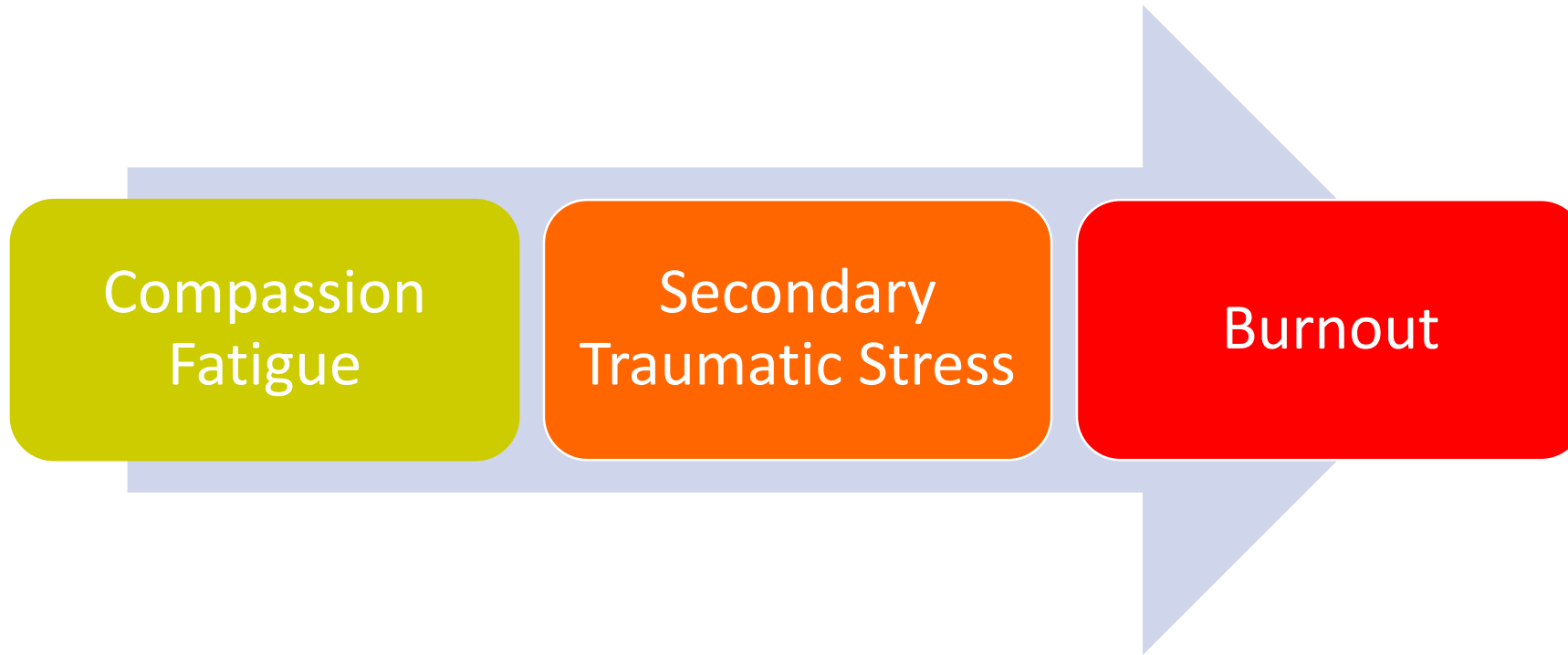


Young Adults

weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses — is among the last to fully mature. Brain development from childhood to adulthood:



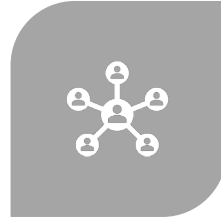
Trauma Contagion?



Signs OF STS



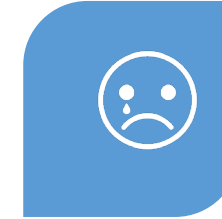
INCREASED FATIGUE OR
ILLNESS,



SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL,



REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY,



FEELINGS OF HOPELESSNESS,
DESPAIR, NIGHTMARES,



FEELINGS OF RE-
EXPERIENCING OF THE
EVENT, HAVING UNWANTED
THOUGHTS OR IMAGES OF
TRAUMATIC EVENTS,



ANXIETY & EXCESS
VIGILANCE,



AVOIDANCE OF PEOPLE OR
ACTIVITIES, OR PERSISTENT
ANGER AND SADNESS



IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS
(ISTSS, 2005)

Responding

- ✓ Organisational Culture
- ✓ Supervision
- ✓ Reflective Practice
- ✓ Trauma Aware
- ✓ Self Compassion



A white, cloud-shaped sticker is centered on a corkboard background. The sticker has a soft, irregular border and contains the text "Thank you!!" written in a bold, black, handwritten-style font. The corkboard background is a light brown color with a visible, textured surface of small, irregular pieces of cork. The entire scene is framed by a solid blue border.

Thank
you!!