

## Working With Vulnerable Children - Developmental Differences

# Diminished Social Reward and Enhanced Threat Bias

### Diminished Social Reward

Social rewards play an important role in social learning, both at the conscious and unconscious levels of awareness. We learn to engage in social and goal-directed behaviour by the experience of social reward. Social reward networks in the brain can be separated into at least two different networks: one to do with social motivation (“wanting”) and one to do with the pleasure of reward (“liking”); each mediated by different neural and neurotransmitter pathways. Each of these pathways stimulates biochemistry designed to reinforce behaviour—thereby strengthening behaviours that are related to feelings of satisfaction or pleasure. This network can be disrupted through experiencing trauma, which can inhibit the ability to learn social cues.

### Enhanced Threat Bias

In evolutionary terms, the ability to rapidly detect and respond to potential danger is critical to our survival; it is a built-in survival mechanism across many different species. In most cases, the appraisal and response happen almost instantly and below the level of our conscious awareness—it is a rapid, automatic, and powerful response that can trigger a cascade of “fight or flight” survival responses within the human brain. Enhanced threat bias occurs when we consistently respond to both threatening and benign events as though they were dangerous. This can be very disruptive to a child’s ability to concentrate.

### WORKSHOP DETAILS

#### WHO IS IT FOR?

This workshop is available for kindergartens with eligible School Readiness Funding  
Minimum of three participants

#### FORMAT

Online

#### DURATION

3 hours

#### COST

\$195 (+gst) per person

#### CONTACT

For more information or to apply for this workshop, contact Meli

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#### Please note:

- Workshop content can be modified to meet the needs of particular kindergartens/educators
- Delivery of workshops outside of standard working hours may be an option - please contact us to discuss