

Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Spring 2 2024

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2024 from the Virtual School.

The deadline for Spring PEPs is the 23rd February. Please ensure your PEPs are completed as soon as possible before that date. Barnet's finance systems are changing this term so the systems will shut down earlier than usual, so we have no flexibility on late payments. **Please remember that we hold both recovery funding and Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children and that you can request this through the PEP attached to an outcome for the young person.** Any questions please just get in touch. Sarah Deale

Trauma Informed Schools Conference

TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS CONFERENCE@ PDC

MARCH 21ST 2024
9-3.15PM

Free event open to all Barnet schools!

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

Ashley John-Baptiste
Mick Simpson & Steven Baker
Louise Michelle Bombèr

An opportunity to hear about the impact of becoming a trauma informed school from some of the leading speakers in the field. The day will explore the benefits of taking a relational approach and the difference it can make.

BOOK A PLACE
BOOK online @ Training & Events | BELS | Barnet Education and Learning Service (belstradedservices.uk)

GET IN TOUCH
If you have any questions about the day, please contact nicola.axford@barnet.gov.uk

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Training

Is it EAL or language difficulties?

11/3/24 10—11am This workshop will focus on how to differentiate between a child who has English as second language (EAL) vs a child who comes from a bilingual background and has core language difficulties i.e. what is the difference, myth busters and when to refer on.

Leaders: Speech and Language therapists

Lies, stealing and fantasy worlds

20/02/2024 9.30—11.45 on TEAMS

In this session you will explore why children and young people in care or who are adopted may lie, steal and tell fantasy like stories, consider when to address lying or stealing and look at supportive and non-shaming ways of responding to a child/young person when they lie or steal.

Suitable for all school staff.

Leader: Dr Amy Gibb, Educational Psychologist

Our training is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI/Bels

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

28/2/24—3.00—5.00 on Teams In this course you will gain a better understanding of EBSA. It will explore, among other things, the language used, anxiety, stress and the body's stress response system, brain development, understanding behaviour as communication, identifying EBSA and working with the child and parents/carers

Leader: Amelia Brunt AC Education Amelia Brunt is a specialist teacher, trainer and supervisor working with educational complexity. With almost 30 years of experience as a classroom teacher, SENDCo and SEMH consultant, she works from a sound grounding of evidence based trauma informed practice. This training will provide you with both a good place to begin and to develop your EBSA learning journey.

Purposeful PEPS—best practice approaches for Personal Education Plans

19/3/2024—9.30—11.30 on Zoom In this course you will gain an understanding of the PEP process and your role within it, explore ways to gather pupil voice for the PEP and gain support with writing SMART targets/outcomes.

This workshop is suitable for Designated Teachers for Looked After Children or other people who lead on PEPs in schools

Leader: Sam Rothwell, IAT and Caroline Gladkow, Virtual School

Emotion Coaching

We are running a number of sessions on Emotion Coaching. These will all be in person at the PDC from 1pm—3pm

- 11th March Emotion Coaching training – early years and primary OR
- 14th March Emotion Coaching training – early years and primary
- 26th February, Emotion Coaching training - Secondary & 6th form OR
- 29th February Emotion Coaching training – Secondary & 6th form
- 22nd February Emotion Coaching training – Special schools

Suitable for all practitioners. Please choose the session suitable for your setting

Leader: Dr Cora Figueira-Bates Educational Psychologist

To book these training courses, please open this link: [Training & Events | BELS | Barnet Education and Learning Service \(belstradedservices.uk\)](#)

Stealing and Lies: a survival strategy

It isn't uncommon for children and young people who are adopted, in foster care, or living in kinship or special guardianship care, to tell lies or steal. Most of these children have experienced developmental trauma, where they have been faced with high levels of fear, abandonment, and shame. To escape these painful feelings, they often tell lies or steal as a self-protective strategy.

As adults, it can be frustrating and confusing, and if we're not careful, our response can further increase the child's need to use these strategies. By responding with playfulness acceptance, curiosity and empathy, we can slowly help the child to drop these survival strategies.

Why lie?

If I tell the truth, you will hurt me

The real world is too painful. It's safer to live in a fantasy world

I wasn't good enough for my family, I'm a bad person. If I Lie, you might like me better

I told the truth once but then I was taken into care. Truth = pain

I was feeling scared, so I told a lie to protect myself. In the moment my brain couldn't think about the consequences

You might like me more if I hide the truth

If I make up something good about me, I like myself more

When I lie you notice me and give me attention

Sometimes I get so scared I can't remember what just happened. I make up a story to fill in the gaps

I did something that I know wasn't ok but that fills me with guilt and shame, so I convince myself it didn't happen. I tell lies to avoid feeling bad about myself

I don't want you to see my flaws, so I lie to cover them up

Why steal?

If I take something of yours, it helps me feel connected to you

I haven't had enough of something before (e.g. food, clothes, toys) so I'm going to take things when I can, just in case I don't have enough in the future

I need you to notice me, even if I do the wrong thing

If I have 'things', then I will be somebody

I've been taken away from my family, so why not take things from you?

I don't want you to see my flaws, so I lie to cover them up

How to respond

Focus on helping the child/young person to feel safe. This will slowly lessen their need to protect themselves through lies and stealing. Be accepting, empathic and gently curious.

Offer safety and connection – recognise that lies or stealing are a sign that the child/young person is feeling vulnerable. In that moment they are needing safety and connection with you. Show warmth, empathy and understanding.

Avoid asking 'why' – this can induce further feelings of shame and lead to further lies or stealing.



Lies and stealing continued

Avoid asking 'did you' – this just increases the opportunity for the child to lie or steal again. Say *'I saw you take the toy from Mya's bag. Let's put it back'* instead of *'Did you take the toy from Mya's bag?'*

Be curious – gently explore (without judgement) how the child was feeling when the lie/stealing took place. *'I wonder what was going on for you then?'* *'My guess is that you were feeling really scared when you said that. Let's try to figure out what you were scared about.'*

Show understanding – while lying and stealing isn't ok, let the child know you understand why they did it. *'When you're feeling lonely and rubbish about yourself, you try to find ways to feel better. Sometimes you take things that don't belong to you, so you feel you fit in and belong.'* Avoid disapproval and punishment, as this will generate shame, greater vulnerability and a need to lie/steal.

Gently acknowledge elaborate lies – where an elaborate story has been told, gently let the child know they aren't describing reality, in a way that is respectful and non-shaming e.g. *'Wow, that's amazing that you went to Australia in your mind! It's nice to pretend we're somewhere else. It can make us feel better and forget other things.'*

Praise truthful behaviour – reward them for positive behaviours. Focus on moments of truthfulness and respect for other people's things. Take the heat away from lies and stealing.

Offer alternatives – tell or show them what they can do when feeling vulnerable, instead of lying/stealing e.g. speak to a trusted adult about something they are concerned about, write or draw a creative story (rather than lie).

Want to know more? Join our online training session on 'Lies, stealing and fantasy worlds' on Tuesday 20th February, 9:30-11:45am. Sign up here [Lies, stealing and fantasy worlds | BELS | Barnet Education and Learning Service \(belstradedservices.uk\)](#)

Written by Amy Gibb (Child & Educational Psychologist)

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