



EMERALD STUDIES IN  
TRAUMA-INFORMED  
EDUCATION

# IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA- INFORMED PEDAGOGIES FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

Shifting Schools from  
Reactive to Proactive

HELEN STOKES  
TOM BRUNZELL

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Shifting Schools from  
Reactive to Proactive

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*This book is dedicated to Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull  
(1952–2018)  
who started this research journey with us.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## ABOUT THE SERIES EDITORS

**Helen Stokes** (Ph.D.) is a Professor in Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne. Her experiences in education research have led to a long-term interest in how to engage vulnerable young people in education through curriculum programmes that assist them with self-regulation and engagement with learning.

**Lyra L'strange** (Ph.D.) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research and teaching in trauma-aware education contributes to redefining support systems for children and adolescents living with the outcomes of complex trauma.

**Meegan Brown** (Ph.D.) is a Lecturer in the School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research in building trauma-informed teachers is critical in a world of growing mental health concerns and challenging student behaviours to enhance the capacity of teachers.

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# FOREWORD TO THE SERIES

## **Trauma-informed Education: Contextualising the practice.**

The area of trauma-informed education is a recently emerging field to support children and young people through their educational journey. As educational settings contend with the impacts of social inequity, many students identify as trauma-affected with significant unmet learning and social-emotional needs. It is therefore necessary that improvements in learning and teaching encompass the impacts of chronic stress experienced by students. To this end, trauma-informed education draws on the interdisciplinary fields of neurobiology, therapeutics, wellbeing, and social justice (Stokes et al., 2023). Trauma-informed education has grown out of the need for new responses at all levels of education to effectively provide education for trauma-affected students.

Trauma-informed practice crosses many fields of education. The series will provide an understanding of the breadth of the area and the practice of trauma-informed education across different contexts. It will include international perspectives of trauma-informed practice in the educational sector while highlighting the breadth of the newly emerging practice in this area as well as understanding how different contexts embed trauma-informed practice. Perspectives from leaders, in-service teachers, and initial teacher education in all levels of the education sector will be included in the series from early childhood through to higher education as well as alternative settings.

The first book in the series, *Implementing Trauma-informed Pedagogies for School Change: Shifting Schools from Reactive to Proactive*, provides a review of trauma-informed education more broadly before focussing on trauma-informed positive education (TIPE). To provide an understanding of how TIPE is embedded in schools and its impact, there are case studies of a primary and a secondary school who have implemented TIPE pedagogical change in their schools over the last four years.

The second book will focus on trauma-informed educational leadership to understand how leaders enact trauma-informed leadership practices as they engage with bringing change to teaching practices in the schools as well as improved academic and social-emotional learning for the students.



Further books in the series will include trauma-informed culturally responsive pedagogies as well as the perspectives of teacher educators who work in trauma-informed and culturally responsive ways in Indigenous communities. In other books, there will be a focus on neuroscience and how that informs trauma-informed practice in early childhood settings as well as what it means to enact trauma aware practice in higher education settings and foster emotional wellbeing. Bringing together the education sector will be a book on policy and practice in trauma-informed education. Across the series will be a breadth of perspectives on trauma-informed education that will be of interest to policy makers, academics, researchers, educational practitioners (from early childhood to higher education), and students (particularly in initial teacher education).

*Helen Stokes*  
*Lyra L'strange*  
*Meegan Brown*

# FOREWORD

The area of trauma-informed positive education (TIPE) is a recently emerging field in educational studies. Schools serving communities that are contending with educational inequity have many students identified as trauma-affected with significant unmet learning and social-emotional needs. This trend has only been exacerbated during COVID-19 with socio-economic inequalities being further entrenched in communities experiencing disadvantage. TIPE has grown out of the need for new responses at all levels of education to effectively provide education for trauma-affected students.

This book tells the journey of two schools (Garron Secondary College and Wiyal Primary School) as they move from being trauma-affected to trauma-informed. They are both situated in a suburb that has high levels of financial and social disadvantage, and low levels of educational achievement. Over the preceding years, both schools experienced difficulty with their delivery of learning and in achieving both learning and wellbeing outcomes for their students. These case studies provide an example of how implementing TIPE pedagogical practices can bring about school change. It is a story of professional learning undertaken to engage teachers and their support staff in TIPE practices. Coupled with this is a committed leadership and staff working together to implement TIPE strategies and practices. In the first four years of this journey, the focus has been on improving student wellbeing and collective teacher efficacy, while assisting students to be ready to learn.

TIPE was originally developed in close collaboration between the authors and Professor Lea Waters at the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education and provides the conceptual underpinning of the Berry Street Education Model (Brunzell, Norrish, et al., 2015), which has been implemented in schools across Australia and internationally. This book deepens the evidence and evaluation supporting TIPE, which has evolved over the last decade through mixed-method and quasi-experimental research designs and direct work implementing TIPE within hundreds of Australian schools and beyond (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019; Stokes, Kern, et al, 2019; Stokes & Turnbull, 2016; Stokes, Turnbull, et al., 2019).

This is the first longitudinal research in TIPE that engages the voices of leaders, teachers, educational support staff, students, and their parents. It is also the first research to link the professional learning and ongoing implementation of TIPE pedagogical practices to improved student perceptions of school and collective teacher efficacy over a four-year period.

We hope the case studies of TIPE pedagogical practice will be of interest to school practitioners and system leaders, as many school systems struggle with students who are disengaged from school and are not yet ready to learn.

Helen Stokes and Tom Brunzell

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Individually we gratefully acknowledge the support we receive on an ongoing basis in our lives from family and friends and through work from colleagues at Berry Street and the University of Melbourne.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, work, and learn, the waters we reside by, the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. It is a privilege to stand on their lands and it's our collective responsibility to care, protect, and nurture country.

We acknowledge the rich and diverse living cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We acknowledge their strength and resilience, and commit to empowering young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become strong cultural leaders in their community.

*Written by Noongar and Torres Strait Islander students at Garron Secondary College*