



THE OXFORD BRAIN STORY

Professor Elizabeth Rapa & Professor Louise Dalton
Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford

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Executive Summary

The Oxford Brain Story has delivered training to over 1,500 professionals across England, Scotland and Wales, with this now being integrated into various professional training programmes. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation data demonstrates a positive change in participants' knowledge and application of the science to a hypothetical (real-world) scenario after training. The team have leveraged this work to successfully obtain funding for additional projects from other foundations, enabling them to embed the Brain Story within lessons for school pupils, a support package for young parents and assessing needs within child-facing services.

INTRODUCTION

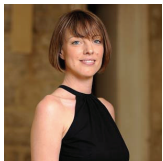
The Oxford Brain Story has aimed to introduce a UK audience to the science of early child development and how experiences shape long-term health outcomes using the Brain Story metaphors and resources.

The team have delivered training online or in person across the UK through sessions lasting between one and three hours. Recorded training sessions have also been shared through professional networks and included into services' induction programmes or resource hubs. Profs Elizabeth Rapa and Louise Dalton have also delivered keynote lectures about the Brain Story at national meetings and conferences.

TRAINING CONTENT

The learning themes for the Brain Story training are outlined in Appendix 1. These themes closely followed the 'core story' of brain development, using the five Brain Story metaphors with an introduction to the science underpinning each metaphor. The sessions included 'micro sessions' for attendees to consider the practical application of the concepts to their professional role and an opportunity to ask questions.





Elizabeth Rapa
*Senior
Postdoctoral
Researcher*

Elizabeth Rapa is an Associate Professor at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford. She has a background in laboratory-based science; her DPhil explored the difference in gene expression of two types of the paediatric cancer rhabdomyosarcoma and investigating the use of nanoparticles for treating malignancies. She has extensive experience running clinical trials and worked as a senior post-doctoral researcher in Psychiatry with Professor Alan Stein on large global projects both in the UK and low and middle income countries. She contributes to the teaching of students from Medicine, Nursing and Teaching at Oxford and regularly supervises undergraduate and postgraduate research projects.



Louise Dalton
*Consultant
Clinical
Psychologist*

Louise Dalton is an Associate Professor at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford. She has over 20 years experience as a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS, predominantly working alongside medical and surgical colleagues in an acute teaching hospital to support children, adults and families affected by long term health conditions. She has combined her clinical expertise and research interests through roles as a therapist and Principle Investigator on trials to test novel psychological treatments for parents and babies in the perinatal period. She is an experienced clinical supervisor and also supervises student research.

Professors Rapa and Dalton co-lead a programme of work at the University of Oxford which aims to understand and mitigate the impact of different forms of adversity (for example serious physical or mental illness) on child and family outcomes. They are passionate about working with different parts of the professional system and amplifying the voices of people with lived-experience to create sustainable progress. Since 2020 their mission has been to establish a shared understanding of the Brain Story across professional and community groups in the UK, with the aim of achieving service delivery and configuration that is driven by the science.



EVALUATION OF THE BRAIN STORY: KNOWLEDGE, APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

KNOWLEDGE

Participants' knowledge of key scientific concepts was assessed by a set of 21 or 12 multiple choice questions (MCQs) pre and post Brain Story training sessions. The set of 21 MCQs were answered by professionals working with various populations, and the set of 12 MCQs were answered by parents and students (aged 16–19). Mean scores were calculated for each participant.

Of the 721 participants, matched data are available for 601 participants. Participants who only answered pre-session questions were excluded from analysis. Within the matched data participants, all four subgroups showed an increase in the mean scores post-session compared to pre-session, indicating an increase in knowledge (Figure 1).

APPLICATION OF THE BRAIN STORY TO EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Participants' application of the Brain Story concepts was assessed by their responses to a vignette describing a scenario that would be relevant and familiar to their professional role. These participants had a range of professional backgrounds (e.g., education, social work, healthcare) but were all currently working with children age 0–18 years, which enabled the use of a single scenario to be relevant for all. Answers to the prompt: "What are your initial ideas or hypotheses about what might be happening for each member of this family? What would your approach to this situation be? What would you plan to do next?" before and after training were scored using a structured marking scheme, with paired data for 165 participants presented in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Average score for each subgroup pre and post session delivery. Professionals, working with either a 0–16-year-old population or a mixed population across the lifespan, answered 21 MCQs. Parents and students answered 12 MCQs.

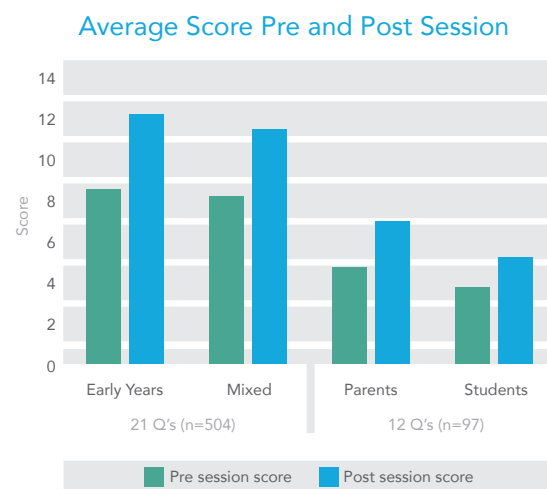
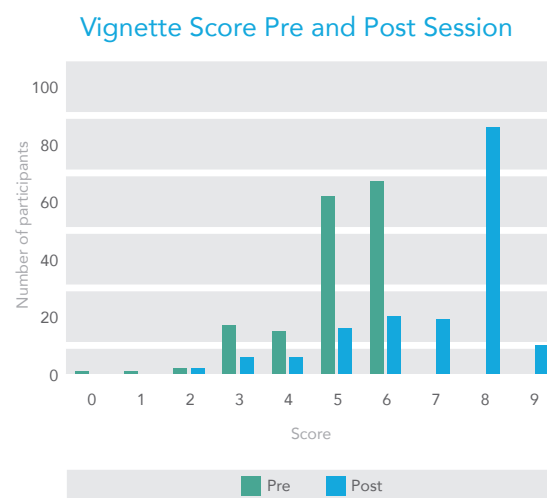


Figure 2: Scores to vignette scenario shown pre and post session.



Implementation of the Brain Story

Participants who had attended a Brain Story training session were invited to indicate their willingness to be invited to arrange a follow-up interview 3–6 months later about their experience of implementing the Brain Story. Qualitative interviews were held with 29 participants and used a Topic Guide to explore their experience of the Brain Story training, implementation and perceived impact of the Brain Story within their organisation and facilitators and barriers to implementation. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Five themes were identified:

1. Building knowledge and confidence
2. Building cohesion
3. Providing accessible education
4. Implementing systemic change
5. Relevance to personal experiences, individual clients and wider society

1. BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE

"It gives us the why? Why would we want to spot emerging concern early? The Brain Story has helped us do that. So all my staff now feel much more confident to say, well, think about the brain story."

"It certainly helped to elevate my practice in the sense that I now feel better equipped to have discussions."

2. BUILDING COHESION

"We all have that as our baseline knowledge and that we can use that common language with families, because what we hear from families is they go somewhere else and somebody else talks in a different way, whereas actually this would be so helpful if this is the sort of language that they hear wherever they go, whether that be the paediatrician, their family doctor, you know, the school that their children attend."

3. PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

"The brain story metaphors are really clear. These are the things that we need to be mindful of."

"So it's set out what potentially could be quite complex in a really accessible and understandable way, and also in a quite short way."

4. IMPLEMENTING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

"So it's just about introducing those conversations into the Healthy Child program delivery and I've incorporated it in my templates so staff can easily record quickly that they've had that conversation."

"We've built in the brain story information into our Elearning on Early Help, so that now is open and available for all partners in [county]. Next month it will be mandatory that everybody has to complete that before they can come onto an Early Help skills session."

5. RELEVANCE TO PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS AND WIDER SOCIETY

"We're all human and a lot of us are parents and a lot of us have experienced difficulties either as young children or currently."

"What I think is so powerful about the brain story is that it belongs to everybody because essentially, we're working with human beings."

"Using the brain story for grandparents and the wider community and family really, you know using it that it takes a village to raise a child. So I think there's definitely a lot of tools within that that would suit all the generations."

SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION INTO PROFESSIONAL TRAINING STRUCTURES

The Oxford Brain Story is now embedded within the following training courses, with lectures and seminars delivered on an annual basis to each cohort of students.

- Oxford Brookes Nursing (600 students per year)
- University of Oxford PGCE (150 students per year)
- University of Oxford Undergraduate Medical Students (135 students per year)
- Oxford Postgraduate Psychiatry Course (30 students per year)

ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

The team have also integrated the key concepts and resources of the Brain Story into additional projects with the aim of disseminating and embedding this knowledge to specific groups.

EMBEDDING THE SCIENCE WITH SCHOOL STUDENTS AGE 11–14: THE SEEN OXFORD PROJECT

Dalton LJ, Aukland L, Lloyd-Newman E, Buechner H, McCall A, Rapa E. Development and evaluation of neuroscience lesson content to improve Key Stage 3 (11–14 year old) students' understanding of the early years in England. *The Curriculum Journal*. 2024.

In partnership with Kindred Squared, The SEEN (Secondary Education around Early Neurodevelopment) Oxford project aimed to embed an understanding of the key principles of early development through the Key Stage 3 science curriculum. It was delivered by students' usual teacher through three lessons covering brain development, the role of the caregiver and implications for long-term health outcomes. The sessions specifically included the Brain Story metaphors of Brain Architecture, Serve and Return, Stress and Resilience.



A total of 3,722 students took part in the lessons, with matched pre and post lesson data analysed from 2,767 students from 20 schools in England. The new curriculum successfully increased both students' scientific understanding and practical application of knowledge about neurodevelopment and the role of the caregiver. Students' mean multiple choice question scores (assessing knowledge) were higher post lesson compared to pre lesson; this increase was consistent across gender and year group. The post lesson and 6–8 week follow-up scores were similar, indicating a retention in students' knowledge. Students were also asked how they would care for a two-year-old child to promote brain development; before the lessons 89% of students provided no or a basic level answer, but after the lessons 50% of students provided detailed or advanced comments. The lessons were feasible and acceptable; both teachers and students stated the curriculum should be taught to other students. Qualitative analyses indicated that the lessons inspired the curiosity of both teachers and students and were perceived to impact on students' interaction with children in their current lives and their future career choices.

Introducing these scientific concepts within the classroom may also facilitate spreading the message to other members of the community, with a third of students reporting that they had shared something they had learnt with someone outside the classroom, most frequently their parent or carer.

ADDRESSING ADOLESCENTS' DEPRESSION AND THEIR PARENTING (AADAPT)

In partnership with the Prudence Trust, the Oxford team have developed a package of support for adolescent parents (age 16–24 years) who are experiencing depression. Developed in collaboration with people who have lived experience of being a young parent, the project aims both to improve parents' mood but also enhance Serve and Return with their baby. Parents are encouraged to watch a series of short videos about their vital role in supporting their baby's brain development; these include the concepts of Brain Architecture and Serve and Return, with practical suggestions about different activities (aligned with these metaphors) they can try with their baby.

The feasibility trial for this initiative is currently ongoing, with recruitment continuing until May 2025 and results anticipated Winter 2025.



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Excited to launch the
AADAPT study

Support for young Mums and Dads
age 16-24 years who are feeling
low, depressed or stressed

Find out more and get involved by
scanning the QR code below

or click https://trial-deck.com/trial/aadapt?reg_code=YP_vBBU9vnxov

INVESTIGATING CHILD-FACING PRACTITIONERS' UNDERSTANDING OF ADVERSITY, IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT, SERVICE CONFIGURATION AND PROVISION

Smout, E., Buechner, H., Lynch, R., Dalton, L. and Rapa, E., 2024.
Investigating child-facing practitioners' understanding of adversity and its impact on children's development and service provision. *Heliyon*. 2024

The Oxford team have facilitated Emily Smout (Senior Social Worker with Oxfordshire Children's Services) to successfully apply for and complete a 12-month Internship at the University of Oxford funded by the NIHR Academic Research Collaboration-Thames Valley. She used this opportunity to complete three research projects to establish current understanding, practice and the extent to which this was consistent with the Brain Story science.

Her work highlights ongoing training needs for child-facing practitioners across Education, Health and Social Care services about the prevalence and impact of adversity to inform service delivery. A review of routine assessments is needed to ensure that children's exposure to adversity is consistently identified; this will facilitate families to access appropriate support to mitigate the impact of such experiences. A case series (paper submitted for peer review) of children who had been referred for an Education, Healthcare Needs Assessment revealed many children had an extensive history of adversity that was infrequently acknowledged or used to inform their support needs. Better information sharing across professional groups and services is also needed to provide holistic care and address the intergenerational needs of families. The research papers arising from these studies highlight the importance of the Brain Story training as an opportunity to address the gaps in professional knowledge and encourage better collaboration and cooperation across services.

FLINTSHIRE AND FLEETWOOD

Under the supervision and support of the Oxford team, the Brain Story training has been adopted by the Early Years Integration and Transformation North Wales Regional Group. Training sessions recorded by the Oxford team were delivered across locations in North Wales (Flintshire, Wrexham, Conway, Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Anglesey) and facilitated in person by the Flintshire Staff Training and Development Officer. The Regional Group employed an external agency to evaluate the training; this was extremely positive (see Infographic Appendix 2). The training has now been rolled out to an additional 120 staff in Flintshire Children's Services. The Regional Leads have all agreed to rolling the training out within their area and have established Strategic and Operational Groups to take this forward.



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@OxBrainStory

Excited to share our results about the importance of understanding brain development for effective clinical practice and joined up care across sectors and services

We need to consider children's experiences and how these can impact on behavior and learning
[@RCPCHtweets](#)



“ Over half of the CfPs in this survey ‘did not know’ or ‘did not agree’ that public services offer interventions to support families experiencing domestic abuse, parental mental health difficulties and addiction, or the impact of these adversities on children’s wellbeing. ”

— Smout et al., 2024

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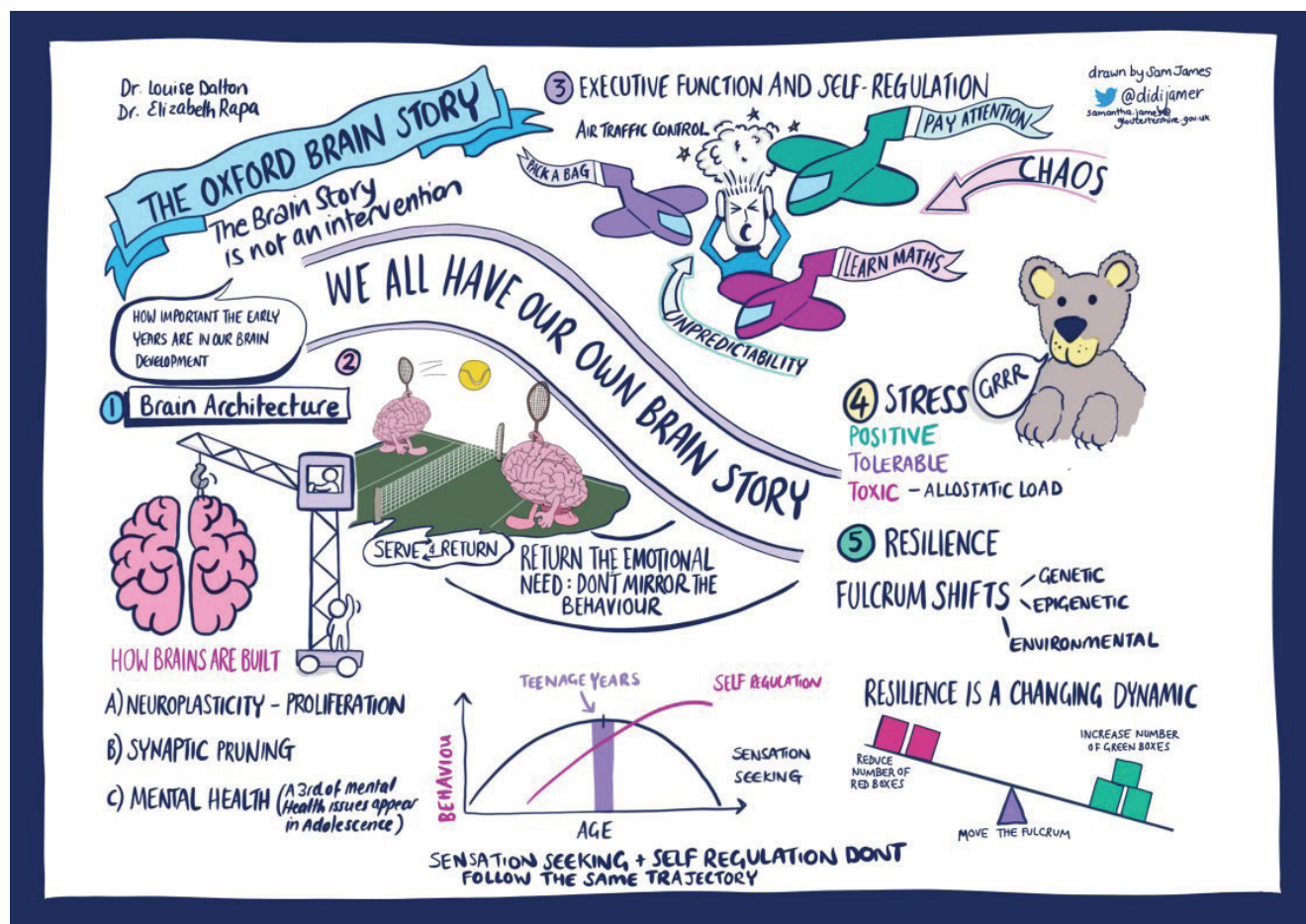


@Oxford Brain Story

In October 2024, schools in Fleetwood (Lancashire) facilitated a training day attended by staff from local primary and secondary schools. Representatives from local support services, including Health Visitors and Social Workers, also attended. The attendees watched pre-recorded video training from the Oxford team and played the Brain Architecture Game. The group have now committed to disseminating the training to all colleagues within the school system, with an ambitious plan to include parent workshops and introduce the SEEN materials in secondary schools.

ANTICIPATED PIPELINE

The Oxford Brain Story will continue to deliver training to groups of professionals and seek opportunities to embed the core scientific principles and Brain Story metaphors within professional training structures and organisational strategy. This includes work with the Department for Education Family Hubs team, advising and supporting implementation of the Brain Story within Fleetwood and an ambitious whole-school approach in Cambridge. Capturing evidence of change (using both qualitative and quantitative methodology) for individuals, professionals and organisations associated with Brain Story training and implementation to leverage more widespread adoption remains a core ambition.



APPENDIX 1: TABLE 1: LEARNING THEMES FOR THE BRAIN STORY TRAINING

BRAIN ARCHITECTURE AND NEUROPLASTICITY

Neural development, neural plasticity, sensitive periods of development. Interaction between genes and environment.



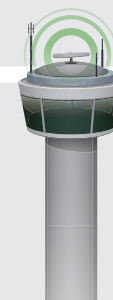
SERVE AND RETURN METAPHOR

The role of contingent responsiveness in promoting cognitive, emotional and behavioural outcomes.



AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL METAPHOR

What is Executive Function; sensitive periods of development; impact of adversity on executive function skill development, recognising difficulties with executive function, ways to build or scaffold executive function skills.



TOXIC STRESS METAPHOR

Differences between positive, tolerable and toxic stress. Adverse Childhood Experiences and the dose-dependent risk of poorer behavioural, physical and mental health outcomes. Relevance of this data to client/patient group relevant to audience.



RESILIENCE SCALE METAPHOR

Introduction to three principles to improve outcomes (increasing positive supports, reducing sources of stress and improving skills and abilities). Practical application of the Resilience Scale metaphor in routine practice (discussion of the Resilience Scale for a fictional adult or child).



BRAIN STORY IMPLEMENTATION

Potential benefits of shared knowledge and understanding amongst professional and wider community. Opportunities for further training.





EVALUATION OF THE OXFORD BRAIN STORY TRAINING PILOT

The Oxford Brain Story (OBS) is a framework that shares key scientific knowledge about early brain development through tools, resources and a certification course. It aims to build families' and communities' resilience.

You can find out more here: oxfordbrainstory.org/for-professionals
This evaluation was by Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The North Wales OBS project aimed to:

- enhance the understanding of how brains are formed in children's early years.
- support and promote positive child development.



Work with the University of Oxford to develop training.



Deliver the training to professionals and practitioners across the North Wales region.



Gather the feedback and evaluate the results.



Use the results to develop recommendations.

Appendix 2

THE EVALUATION

35 professionals took part in this pilot. Most participants worked in Early Years, Education and Social Care.

We wanted to know...

Do participants feel more informed about early years brain development key messages and would this positively impact their practice by attending the training?

STEP 1

Professionals filled in a questionnaire

- before training to find out their knowledge
- after the training to find out the difference it made.

STEP 2

Professionals took part in focus groups to talk about what they thought of the OBS training.

The feedback helped shape the recommendations.

SOME KEY FINDINGS

Before the training

54% said the course content will be helpful to their professional role

83% said the course content will be helpful to their everyday life

After the training

88% said the course content will be helpful to their professional role

94% said the course content will be helpful to their everyday life

SOME FEEDBACK

The feedback on all parts of the course was positive. People said:

The training provided them with the confidence and the tools to explain to others about their individual brain story.

They wanted to apply and promote this model as a way forward across services.

KNOWLEDGE IMPROVED THROUGH THE TRAINING



THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Develop and expand this pilot.
- 2 Make OBS training part of the induction process for new workers in the early years.
- 3 Look at rolling out this training to other statutory services.
- 4 Develop guidance and principles on using OBS training to assess parents' needs.
- 5 Set up an OBS forum to share good practice and promote OBS skills.
- 6 Set up a North Wales OBS Community of Practice to share knowledge between research & practice.
- 7 Develop a plan to raise awareness of the OBS, healthy brain development and trauma.
- 8 Develop a plan for how services can share the evaluation findings.



ONLINE WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Attendees work in prison and probation services.

Workshop Title: The Oxford Brain Story

Date: 7 May, 2024

Guest Speakers

Professor Louise Dalton

*Associate Professor & Consultant Clinical Psychologist /
University of Oxford*

and

Professor Elizabeth Rapa

Associate Professor / University of Oxford

Speakers average score **97%**
Overall Event average score: **98%**
No. of attendees: **86**
% Feedback..... **44%**

HOW WELL DID THE WORKSHOP MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

Speakers

100% gave a good to excellent rating

Workshop Talk

100% gave a good to excellent rating

Workshop Q&A

92% gave a good to excellent rating and the remainder satisfactory

Workshop Overall

97% gave a good to excellent rating and the remainder satisfactory

Relevancy

97% gave a good to excellent rating and the remainder satisfactory

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE WORKSHOP?

- I felt the way the concepts were explained make the content accessible to everyone. The workshop was relevant to my role and I was kept interested throughout.
- Very up to date with all relevant data and resources. It was very interesting to learn about the brain in the way it was presented.
- The content was fantastic and really informative. I learned so much and found the whole seminar really useful.
- The detailed explanations and examples provided.
- Lots of useful information with connecting science to help show how the brain works and how that science can be used to work effectively with prisoners.
- I liked the link between science and brain development. Addiction was very interesting—I would like to understand this more.
- Very informative and engaging.
- Clear informative, digestible and accessible language to support understanding of scientific concepts.
- Clarity and coverage of topic.
- The way complex topics were explained in an easy to understand way and related to the prison service. The use of examples throughout was helpful as were the diagrams.
- Interesting and useful concepts and techniques explained in an accessible way.
- Explaining the science of the brain, how this is impacted by trauma, neglect and/or addiction, the air traffic control metaphor. The whole event engaged me and made me want to find out more.
- Very well presented by knowledgeable practitioners.
- Really informative and related to those in criminal justice.

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE WORKSHOP? CONTD/...

- Information about brain development, in particular the fulcrum.
- Both professors explained concepts very clearly, from an academic learner point of view, I really enjoyed this session (and the pre-video).
- I particularly liked the aspect around neurodiversity and development. Speakers were clear and offered a lot of information.
- Guest speakers were very interesting, especially the views of HMIP on healthy and nutritious meals.
- Being able to hear from experts in the field about the subject matter.
- The early years are the best for a child's brain to develop the connections they need to be healthy, capable, successful adults.
- An uncomplicated way of delivering the information and easily understandable.
- I found it to be really informative and a different way of looking at supporting the prisoners I work with.
- I enjoyed that it had interactive parts and that there was more than one speaker. It was useful content which was presented well.
- Insightful and engaging.
- The material was delivered in a very engaging way by the speakers—they brought it to life. I loved how the concepts were worded.
- Really interesting and informative content, knowledgeable expert speakers.
- I think the premise of it is fantastic and I recommend people take part in the Oxford Brain Story.
- Made complex information accessible.
- It was relevant to the work I do and provided a different angle on the service users.
- The mix of learning materials was helpful, in terms of the videos, data tables and case study.
- Very well presented and fascinating material.
- Easy to understand despite the topic, useful discussions and time to ask questions.
- Opportunity to contribute throughout and challenge own thinking.

- The speakers were very competent and knew the subject very well. The content was well presented and was pitched at the right level for the audience.
- Helping us understand the impact of childhood on adults.
- Overall, the workshop was very interesting and informative.
- I found the workshop incredibly informative and engaging.
- Great evidence and the presenters were really engaging.

ARE THERE ANY ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOPS YOU THINK WE COULD IMPROVE?

- I was unable to speak or unmute my mic for most of the seminar and I was unable to type a question throughout the event so I couldn't join in with the interactive sections of the seminar.
- When given five-minute thinking tasks, it might be better to just share straight away, so the ending isn't rushed. I was alone whilst doing the training so had no one to share ideas with. I think doing hands up or chat box immediately would help.
- The chat box wasn't open and I would have liked to ask questions/join in. I wonder if there is so much content that 3 sessions of 1.5 hrs might give the chance to explore the amazing learning and it could be broken down more—gone into more depth. I.e. Addiction, working around the resilience scale more, emotional scaffolding. I enjoyed the training a lot, and I have shared the links to the website with Healthcare/my family... as many people as I could really :)
- More time for breakout rooms.
- Would like additional time to cover some of the topics.
- I didn't have access to the chat, but I still felt engaged regardless.
- Send slides ahead of time.

ARE THERE ANY ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOPS YOU THINK WE COULD IMPROVE? CONTD/...

- To me it wasn't the content but the method (online). I would have got more out of a face to face event; however, I understand the times we are in.
- More group discussion—I was in a room on my own and would have been better to talk and apply the knowledge amongst a (multi-disciplinary) group. Parts overran which didn't allow this to happen.
- It would be great to have a more in-depth look into neurodiversity links with the Brain Story.
- I personally found the start of the session repetitive to the video we were asked to watch before joining this meeting. E.g., the air traffic, to and fro conversation, etc. I found I started to zone out with only a 5 minute break, perhaps limit the number of attendees or reduce the content or deliver over 2 sessions?
- Making it a two-day event
- I find it really hard to focus for 3 hours online so maybe offering more breaks than just 5 minutes. Near the end, I had to leave to attend another meeting before the end of the day and my chat function has been stopped.
- Timings were slightly off, which impacted some of the interactive opportunities. However, that didn't change the effectiveness of the overall workshop.
- Nothing, I would love to attend more/learn more in relation to the Oxford Brain Story.
- The joining instructions were very specific about needing to view the recording of the previous event in advance to ensure the right prior knowledge, then I found some of that was repeated (albeit with some more detail) during the event. I thought the time could have been better spent with more interactive discussion / more expansion of the detail.
- For a neurodiverse person there was a lot of speaking. I think it could be more interactive with more breaks.
- I need to improve my ability to concentrate for that period of time!
- Provide more tools and coping mechanisms to address the issue.

- Quite fast paced, with a lot of information. It would have been helpful to have smaller breakout groups for discussion, to break the slides up a little. This would have helped with the engagement also, as I did not have access to the chat function.
- Longer session so not as rushed (or over 2 shorter sessions).
- The speakers spoke for a very long time with very little interaction from the audience, which I found made me disengage from the talk. I think the speakers went over time and this meant that the interactive aspect (breakout rooms) was missed completely.
- Speakers talked very fast, possibly to get all of the content in and I sometimes found it very hard to keep up.
- It would be helpful to have some exercise based activities (breakout rooms).
- I felt that the event was very well organised and facilitated and have no suggestions for improvement.
- I think it is a long time for people to listen online, and they would have benefitted from some group work mid-way through.

WILL YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING THIS WORKSHOP?

- I have already sent the website to a governor in my establishment to ask if this could somehow be incorporated into officer training. Or even just made available to officers to have a look at in their own time.
- Engage more with biological aspects of the brain and research.
- I will adapt some of my staff training to include information about the Brain Story.
- I will be more aware of the return and serve side of my role.
- It has inspired me to go look at more of the material as I feel I good bringing in the resilience monitor into my way of work. I also think it was useful for my own staff training to make them aware of receiving and sending.

WILL YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING THIS WORKSHOP? CONTD/...

- I want to explore work around the resilience scale, and ATC—I think prisoners, to some extent, stop / can't use their ATC systems. Their lives become controlled by others when they move, where decisions done to them. They need then to redevelop their ACT systems.
- I would like to go back through the information, now received, and take it from there.
- Introduce some of this information into training for staff and prisoners.
- Staff training of knowledge gained. Further consideration given to the Brain Story of individuals I support.
- We are reviewing interventions currently and will implement the Brain Story into training events for practitioners but also programme content so practitioners can explore addiction, executive functioning and air traffic control with participants.
- I will use the resilience scale when speaking with prisoners and when planning enrichment opportunities.
- Yes, thinking about serves and returns and how I respond. I will consider undertaking the certificate.
- I will not be doing anything differently; however, it has enabled me to better explain why I do things.
- Will be more aware when dealing with people in custody and friends/family outside.
- Think about how the green boxes on the scale can be maximised.
- Not in my immediate practice as a Neurodiversity Support Manager, however I may be able to use some of the metaphor explanations within one-to-one session cases in the future. I will also make contact with the professors directly regarding a more personal (albeit potentially linked to professional) area of study.
- Yes, I am more mindful about my communication and have a deeper knowledge of brain development, particularly found the teenager section interesting and how choices are made based on peers. Has opened quite a few conversations with my colleagues and own teenager as a result!
- I think there will be elements of the learning that I will take forward into both my personal and professional life.
- Make better links with reason and behaviour and support people better.
- I would like to rewatch aspects of the training as I feel there are aspects I could use to readjust my understanding of the prisoners I work with.
- Incorporate some of the information into the training I deliver to other staff—especially around building positive experiences.
- Learn more about the biological aspects of the brain.
- Absolutely, it has given me a greater understanding of brain development, which is helpful in both a professional and personal capacity.
- In my professional life, I will use the knowledge from this workshop to better design policies / services with young adults in mind. In my personal life, there's lots of information I've gained which I will apply to parenting my one year old!
- Yes. I will try to explain the principles I have learnt to others and use the language provided to try and help others.
- Yes, I will be integrating it into practice guidance, particularly the resilience scale, as well as considering how I interact with clients, and my own children!
- I will be more mindful when discussing the issues and finding the solutions.
- I have purchased the book that was referenced and I am enjoying learning more about the subject matter.
- Yes, try to get lots of people to look at the website and attend the presentation!

WILL YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING THIS WORKSHOP? CONTD/...

- We often lean to using trauma-informed care—going back a step and supporting others to understand how the brain works appears to be more effective to then allow them to effectively support someone.
- Time to watch all the videos.
- Yes, I've been telling lots of staff about Oxford Brain Story and the recommended book and videos.
- Looking into developing air traffic control skills section in more detail.
- I'm not sure I will do anything differently but my learning will definitely have an impact on my thinking and influence future approach and decision making within my work area.
- I will incorporate the learning and resources into my own teaching.

OTHER

- Excellent training session that held my attention for the duration. Thank you.
- I'm interested in epigenetics and specifically epigenetic modifications, and wanted to ask the professors about those areas. I am currently studying an MA Inclusive Education at Reading University with just the dissertation modules to complete.

I am based locally in Oxfordshire and I work at HMP Huntercombe near Henley! I also have contacts within the English department at Oxford University. I was intrigued as to whether the Brain Story could work with our prison, as we are not far from each other?

Quite a lot to potentially discuss, happy to be contacted on matthew.kenderdine@justice.gov.uk or mattkenderdine@hotmail.co.uk

Thank you both for your really interesting sessions and I hope that we can work together in the future!

Matt

- A neurodiversity specific focus would be really helpful.
- The event was very thought provoking; however I did feel that the presentation was a little bit one sided, and regional support offer many of the services already that was discussed.
- It was brilliant that it was free and easy to access.
- Just a shame that the session over-ran and people had to leave before we got through the final exercise. Thanks so much for delivering this however, it was really interesting and appreciated. Take care.
- Can we have more of these events and run an event for all YOIs prison staff, Youth Policy and Youth Justice Board. Thank you.
- Thank you for your time and for organising.
- Thank you very much.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ORGANISATION OF THIS WORKSHOP?

- 100% gave the organisation of the Workshop a good to excellent rating.

ONLINE SEMINAR FEEDBACK

Attendees work in the criminal justice system.

Seminar Title: The Oxford Brain Story - the science of brain development

Date: 17 January, 2024

Guest Speakers

Professor Louise Dalton

Associate Professor & Consultant Clinical Psychologist / University of Oxford

and

Professor Elizabeth Rapa

Associate Professor / University of Oxford

Speakers average score	98%
Overall Event average score	99%
No. of attendees	321
% Feedback.....	21%

HOW WELL DID THE SEMINAR MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

Speakers

100% gave a good to excellent rating

Seminar Talk

100% gave a good to excellent rating

Seminar Q&A

91% gave a good to excellent rating and the remainder satisfactory

Seminar Overall

100% gave a good to excellent rating

Relevancy

100% gave a good to excellent rating

WHAT WAS YOUR OBJECTIVE FOR ATTENDING THIS SEMINAR?

Interest in topic	94%
Sharing best practice	35%
Networking online	0%
Learn about Academy.....	2%

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE SEMINAR?

- Very informative presentations and thoughtful discussions.
- Expertise knowledge. Evidence-based practice.
- Explanation of brain development and the times this occurs. That the teenage brain is wired to take risks.
- Understanding the impact of brain activity on young people and how this manifests as they age.
- Passionate speakers presenting their subject in an engaging, imaginative and compelling manner.
- It challenged my thinking and made me realise there are other factors to consider when examining behaviour of vulnerable individuals in the Criminal Justice System.
- So useful when working with children. I found it hopeful and inspiring. Being a succinct presentation made it all the more accessible. Thank you.
- Good format and interesting speakers.
- Such an interesting seminar- I wanted to know more!
- Clear presentations.
- Enthusiastic presenters and knowledgeable.
- The presentation, the presenters, the host— all were superb!
- Builds on knowledge around ACES.
- Depth of knowledge of presenters, objectives of the project and relevance to everyone.
- The speakers were clearly very passionate and knowledgeable in their field.

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE SEMINAR? CONTD/...

- The highly engaging presentation the experts delivered, fascinating stuff.
- Accessible approach, made relevant to a range of people and workplaces, and no need for prior knowledge. And I liked the different way of talking about 'trauma' informed working, as I have always found that phrase frustrating and a bit meaningless.
- Interesting topic, great speakers.
- Clear, enthusiastic speakers.
- Very knowledgeable speakers, good slides, great topic, signposting to the free CPD content.
- Very informative.
- Excellent speakers who presented the subject very well.
- Provided lots of information and built on my existing knowledge.
- Knowledge of speakers.
- The content and the knowledge/passion of the speakers.
- The speakers were excellent and the videos were really good.
- The simple imagery—can see myself using a see-saw metaphor.
- Excellent speakers, with the subject matter made very simple so it can be applied to any situation. Particularly liked the scales.
- This was one of the best seminars I have attended with a very clear presentation.
- Extremely informative and delivered very well.
- Good topic linking theory to experience.
- Well organised, good balance of subject matter and clearly presented.
- Interesting info, probably not new content to me but interested in new ways to present it.
- It was an outstanding demonstration of how to practically apply the results of academic research to clinical practice.
- It was very relevant to my area of work and I found the speakers engaging and motivated, which kept my attention at a time of day where I can find it hard to concentrate.
- Knowledge of presenters, ability to answer questions succinctly.
- A very important topic presented in a way that exceeded expectations in every way.
- The particular speakers and the way in which they portrayed the subject, particularly online. It was simple but also managed to convey the complexity of the subject.
- The research-based information, and the useful, simple metaphors.
- Very accessible and well explained content.
- The way it was presented, informative, clear, not too heavy on jargon, also really interesting. The speakers were excellent at explaining in simple terms.
- A lot of information in a short time but helpful signposting to additional resources which can be freely used and shared.
- Knowledge of subject. Good content.
- Interesting to be reminded about brain development—especially working with young people.
- Clear understanding of the topic and relevance to field.
- Clarity of speakers.
- Speakers were clear with good slides.
- Expertise and enthusiasm regarding this subject was awesome.
- The knowledge shared in a very accessible way.
- Speakers knowledgeable, enthusiastic, very focussed.
- Level of content and delivery of information.
- Engaging presenters.
- It was very relevant, engaging, easily understandable, interesting.

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE SEMINAR? CONTD/...

- The presenters were very engaging and presented the material well.
- Knowledge of presenters and engagement with audience.
- The simplicity of the presentation which tackles some complex themes. These concepts are vital to the probation service so we can help explain to sentences why someone might be offending and how trauma may have impact on current behaviour.
- Very accessible yet enough detail to be informative.
- Enthusiasm of the speakers—concept well explained.
- Both speakers were highly knowledgeable and clear presenters. They delivered an introduction to their work in a concise and understandable format within a limited timescale.
- The quality and relevance of the evidence and accessibility of the information.
- Simple and easy to follow while informative. Excited to be able to use the material/films.
- Real examples of how to apply in practice.
- Knowledge of facilitators.
- Learning about brain development and counterbalancing trauma with positive intervention. I really loved the picture of the see-saw to describe this.
- The speakers were excellent and clearly very knowledgeable in this area. The presentations were easy to follow and informative.
- New information about brain development. Good discussion about neurodiversity which has become such a relevant topic in my work. And gaining understanding about current research in brain development and new terminologies being used. It was well delivered and engaging.

ARE THERE ANY ASPECTS OF THE SEMINARS YOU THINK WE COULD IMPROVE?

- More or separate events on the teenage brain.
- The seminar for me was pitched at the right level.
- The Q&A seemed to lose a little momentum.
- Maybe recommend further reading but I think this was covered in the seminar (I have not checked the notes).
- Just more!
- Longer to explore the topic.
- Bit more interactive elements e.g., videos / earlier in afternoon start time.
- Considering the very large audience, you did magnificently!
- Length of time—could have had 90 minutes as so much to go through.
- More time, I could have listened to the speakers for longer, it felt a little rushed.
- I would have liked it if time was made to see the all the videos and have the Q and A time cut short instead—I feel like the visuals would have been really good and engaging as part of the presentation whereas questions could be asked after in the chat or via email without losing their impact.
- Some of the audience can come across a bit shirty with questions—maybe an introduction at the beginning to keep questions kind, relevant and sensitively worded.
- More time for the presentation may have been useful.
- Possibly scope to answer all questions, even if this was written afterwards due to time.
- More varied presentation / video clips / case study, etc.
- Very well structured.

ARE THERE ANY ASPECTS OF THE SEMINARS YOU THINK WE COULD IMPROVE? CONTD/...

- Just more of these please.
- Difficult, but really emphasise that chat is for questions, and if possible ask people to keep these until the end. One way is to close the chat until, say, the summing up at end of the talk, then open chat for questions so people can type them in then.
- I miss being face to face, though now don't live in London and so like webinars.
- Maybe more detail but that would probably require a two part seminar maybe?
- Presenters talking very fast doesn't always mean there's more learning. More interactive learning would also be better. Link for slides doesn't work and I'm keen to read them ASAP.
- No, it was exceptional. Thank you.
- Not that I can think of as I write this.
- Pace was rather fast. I know there was a lot to get through in a short space of time but it was a bit too rushed.
- More discussion time would have been good.
- I did find a lot of the questions popping up distracting—I think there is a mode that can minimise questions, mark them as answered, etc.
- They always feel too short but any longer makes it difficult to commit regularly.
- Relating directly to practise.
- Always prefer Zoom to Teams.
- It was very basic for those of us who work with trauma all the time, but maybe it was about how we share the basic message to others—some additional references to read and research further?
- Would love to know more about how it can be incorporated into practise.
- Longer, as felt there was a lot to take in. It was a good taster but would be good to have a bit longer.
- Q&A.

- It was great that Janet started the presentation by asking people to limit the chat entries—it would be better if people respected this! It can be distracting to vast amounts of chat—just my opinion!
- Access to the supporting materials doesn't seem to be working.
- I feel that the knowledge and learning was not new. It was a great reminder.
- No, it was superb.
- Personally, I think I expected to learn more in-depth knowledge about this area as the majority of the information presented was already familiar from my role as a clinical psychologist. However, the talks were excellent and I can appreciate how valuable it is for other professionals to be aware of what was covered. Many thanks.

WILL YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING THIS SEMINAR?

- Learn more about the Brain Story and share with others in my team.
- Improve assessment and service provision.
- communicate this and relate to it in planning.
- This was a for interest session.
- I'm already evangelizing about the work of the Oxford Brain Story to anyone who will listen (and some who won't)!
- I will definitely read more about the Oxford Brain Story and reflect on my work in reducing offending in Birmingham.
- Focus keenly on the changes that can be made with adolescents.
- I will research further and am going to look at the free online course.
- The content will inform my work.
- Utilise the tools available.
- Share the Sway with colleagues inside and outside HMPPS.

WILL YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING THIS SEMINAR? CONTD/...

- Incorporating into our reducing reoffending work—I have sent out website and seminar recording to our core team and partners and contacted the seminar leaders. We are part of West Yorkshire trauma-informed services and will be forwarding to them too.
- Share my knowledge.
- I look forward to seeing the Brain Story resources as I am hoping to be able to use them in my practice to aid explanation to foster carers and children
- Better insight into impact of early years brain development and impact on adulthood.
- I would be interested to know (and will be asking around) if this area of study has been linked to the counter terrorism space in HMPSS, in relation to assessment and interventions.
- Use resources for supporting professionals and families.
- I will have a look at the materials mentioned by the speakers and share these with my colleagues.
- Improved understanding of the science behind brain development and behavioural presentations.
- Share with schools/professionals.
- Share this information with other agencies and reinforce decisions made around children using this knowledge.
- Share learning with colleagues.
- I will look at feeding this back to our organisation to give them food for thought and to look at how we compare.
- I will share it with colleagues.
- Will use some of the explanations to further explain and embed trauma into everyday work.
- I am going to use the scales as a tool.
- It made me think more about how early traumas and early interventions with parents/carers and children affects how the child grows up. Working with children looking at the bigger picture of a child's life from early years upwards is vital.
- Yes, I am undertaking the training and will ensure my staff team do as well to inform our practice.
- Contacted them about research.
- Might use some of the resources.
- Yes, I am following up on the resources signposted, and will be directly applying the new information in my clinical practise.
- Yes, I have signed up for the Brain Story CPD course to further my knowledge and hopefully enhance my practice.
- I have already mentioned the Oxford Brain Story to colleagues and signposted members from another training group focussed on attachment awareness, relationships and resilience.
- I have registered for further training on the topic.
- I think I will refer to this work more—take time to reflect on it and how to apply it to the work I'm doing.
- Further reading/research; engagement with material on the website.
- Review my understanding to be able to talk to the content—this will help a lot of people I work with.
- Use this a way of formulation.
- Share resources with front line colleagues and services.
- I am still reflecting on some of the info.
- No, it was to further my current knowledge, which it did.
- It will help with training for adoptive parents or talking about brain concepts simply.
- More of the same please.
- I will take the Brain Story CPD and try to put what I learned into practice at home and in work and share with colleagues.

- I will probably give more consideration to why people are the way they are and how previous adverse experiences they encountered can manifest into certain challenging behaviours.
- Be more aware of the impact of early years.
- Think more about the 'air traffic controller' with the people with whom I am working.
- I will make changes to my practice as a result of this seminar and I have already shared the website and promoted it with colleagues.
- Share learning with colleagues.
- Yes, it will inform my practice.
- I think I might sign up for the 20 hr training, and I have already signposted many colleagues to this and I feel more confident in my knowledge about brain development.
- Share with others the basic ideas.
- The seminar reinforced my thinking and reminded me to be understanding of behaviours and to explore further—considering a person's whole story not just the presenting behaviour.

- I knew some of this already but will approach using it with more confidence.
- Use the films and other resources in my work.
- Continue as we are already working with consideration of young people's brain development and impact of early childhood impact.
- Absolutely—I have already shared info on the study and the AWFI and have enrolled for modules. It is a blessing that you organise these seminars and they really are of benefit to how we work.
- Share some of the key aspects covered with others more widely.
- Further reading on brain development and sharing the information learned.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND ACADEMY SEMINARS TO YOUR COLLEAGUES?

- **100%** of delegates would definitely recommend Academy Seminars