



AUSTRALIAN Residential Care Responds to COVID-19



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

NTRCA Representatives

Led by

Shelley Wall

Patricia McNamara PhD

*Featuring responses from young people from
CREATE Foundation*

Contact: mcnamara.p@unimelb.edu.au



National Therapeutic
Residential Care Alliance

Current Status

- Cumulative impacts of adversity, trauma and chronic stress.
- Impacts vary depending on factors like age at the time of incidents, the type of events and frequency, and the presence of resilience factors
- Some impacts include:
 - Difficulty regulating arousal
 - Difficulty with attention and memory
 - Sensory Sensitivity
 - Social, emotional and relationship difficulties
 - Problems with planning, waiting and impulse control
 - Increased threat sensitivity
- Often separation from family, key relationships and cultural connections
- Parallel Process for Staff and Organisations

Useful Supports

- Providing predictable environments, activities and routines
- Establishing both psychological and physical safety
- Supporting coping skills for emotional regulation
- Enacting strategies to assist Professional Support Staff to manage stress
- Accessing support services

COVID-19 Impacts

- Undermines routines
 - Impedes access to support networks and activities
 - Introduces heightened stress to peer networks
 - Changes to staffing and usual supports
 - Increased stress on Professional Support Staff and Families
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- Compromised Psychological Safety

Related Events -ve

- Increased incidents:
 - Aggression
 - Property Damage
 - Self-harm
 - Rule breaking – General and COVID-19 safe practices
- Disruption to family and cultural connections
- Staff shortages
- Rostering changes
- Difficulty with attunement and co-regulation
- Increased care burden during key times

Related Events +ve

Children and Young People

- Shared experience with staff and empathy
- Appreciation
- Engagement in new activities; even more chores complete
- Habituation and tolerance for waiting
- Increased resilience
- More frequent and sometimes better family connection

Staff and Organisation

- Demonstrated commitment and generosity
- Stronger focus on wellbeing
- More regular check-in's and connection
- New modalities of training
- Video-links for alternative schooling
- Increased connection to children and Young Peoples' families
- Insight into stress and lack of autonomy

Future Issues

- Recognise risks and resilience factors
- Rest, reset and repair
- Retain
 - Focus on wellbeing
 - Successful connection to school
 - Family contact and inclusion
 - Connected service networks that provided support
- Challenge ourselves to learn, grow and hold hope.