



The Association  
for Child and Adolescent  
Mental Health

# Building Safety and Connection in the Context of Relational Trauma

Relational trauma can disrupt a child's experience of security and trust in relationships, with potential emotional consequences.

How adults respond in everyday interactions plays an important role in supporting connection, understanding, and the possibility of change

***PACE captures a way of being that helps adults connect with children, remain open and engaged, particularly in moments of stress or challenge***

**P**

**Playfulness**

*Bringing warmth and enjoyment into the relationship, reflecting interest in the child*

**A**

**Acceptance**

*Recognising and accepting the child's internal experience without necessarily approving their behaviour*

**C**

**Curiosity**

*Taking time to wonder about what might be happening for the child instead of reacting or judging too quickly*

**E**

**Empathy**

*Showing understanding of the child's experience so they feel understood, not just managed*



Want to see how these principles translate into practice? Join our upcoming event with Dr. Kim Golding.