

Trauma: Body and the Brain Module 2

Case Study- Mia

Mia is 8 years old and currently living with her maternal grandmother and step-grandfather with her younger sisters who are 6 and 4 years old. She was placed in her grandparents care 6 months ago, following disclosures of sexual assault by her step-father. Her step-father also perpetrated family violence that included physical, emotional and verbal abuse. Mia was often required to care for the physical well being of her younger siblings including changing nappies and feeding. Mia's mother has her own history of childhood sexual abuse and has misused alcohol and other drugs in the past. Mia's grandmother has brought her to counselling for support regarding the impacts of the sexual assault and family violence she has experienced. Mia is described by others as "no trouble", "eager to please", and as clingy to her grandmother. When you first meet Mia she runs toward you and gives you a hug.

Reflecting on the case studies consider the following questions:

- Who is showing up for these clients?
- What worldview might they be holding?
- What do you notice that tells you this?
- What impacts do you think this might have in their lives?

Case Study- Emma

Emma is 30 years old and reports multiple experiences of FV since age 19, disclosing various patterns of significant verbal, emotional and physical abuse by previous partners. Emma also describes her childhood as 'chaotic', with 2 older brothers who were volatile in the home, both regularly displaying verbal and physical violence towards her. She left home as a teenager as 'it wasn't a safe place' and left school at the same time. She does not recall her parents intervening in her brothers' violence against her, however states proudly 'But I held my own'. She says her memory of her whole childhood is sparse, 'just a flash here and there' and even now reports problems with her memory.

Emma reports she has misused drugs and alcohol regularly over the past 10 years, and describes engaging in high risk behaviours such as purposely driving recklessly at speed, resulting in injuries sustained in an accident. She reports wanting to trust people and have increased social connection in life, but says she currently has few friends, explaining, "People just try to play you, I don't take that". Emma presents saying she really wants to try counselling, however in initial sessions sits with her arms crossed in front of her and often seems to avoid any eye contact.

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- What worldview might they be holding?
- What do you notice that tells you this?
- What impacts do you think this might have in their lives?