The Iceberg Activity - guidance

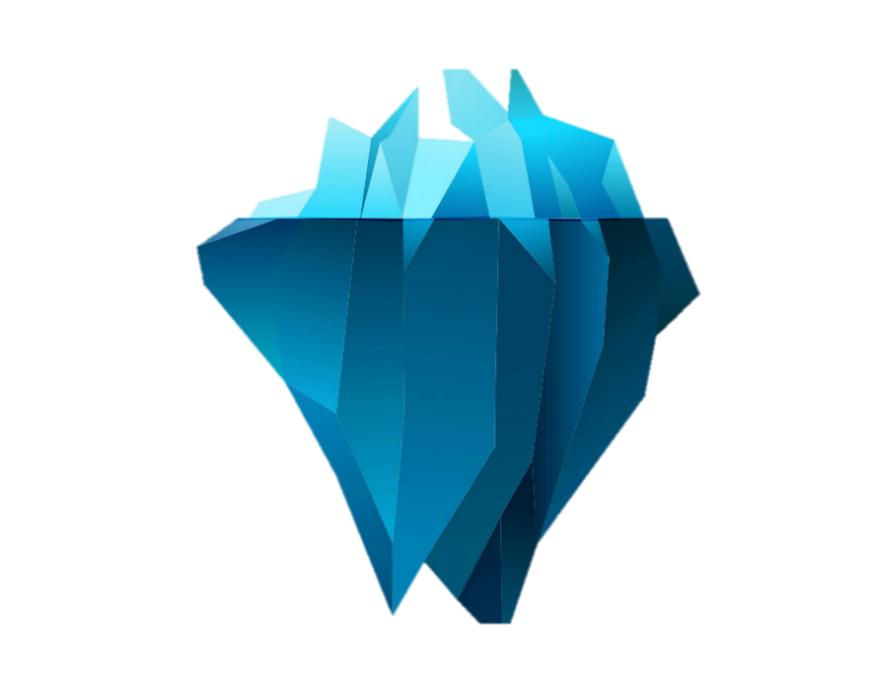
We know that neglect (also known as the trauma of abandonment), abuse and other forms of trauma can have a significant impact upon the development of a child. This includes their emotional, cognitive, social and other areas of development, their ability to self-regulate, cope and manage and to form close, trusting relationships. This in turn can result in negative ‘core beliefs’ - i.e. the way a child views themselves, others and the world around them. For example, a child may feel unworthy unlovable, may view others as rejecting and uninterested and the world as an unsafe place. This can then be reflected in the way the child presents to the world and how those around the child view them (see Gingerbread activity).

The Iceberg activity can be a really helpful tool to work with parents/carers to help them to make sense of the child/young person’s presentation and behaviour. It can also be helpful for social care practitioners to support their reflection and planning. The activity can also be applied to the parent/carer to help think about what may be happening for them, especially if they have a trauma history of their own.

A behavioural approach which focuses on the child and tries to correct, and ‘fix’ does not result in long-term healing. Instead it risks further shaming and reinforces the negative feelings under the surface. There needs to be a focus on recognising and connecting with the underlying causes to help the child to heal and to feel safe enough to trust the world around them so they can relax their behaviours. Parents and carers are key to this recovery – the best recovery from trauma is within the context of a loving relationship – so the environment around a child is crucial.

Use the blank iceberg to map the behaviours/presentation that parents/carers are seeing or experiencing. This is also an opportunity to consider which behaviours in particular the parent/carer struggles with and why this may be a particular concern for them (e.g. were they raised to believe lying is always wrong?). Help the parent/carer to consider the underlying factors influencing the child/young person’s behaviours. You can use the child’s core beliefs to frame this – their view of themselves, others and the world. Help the parents/carer to understand the importance of connection in repair and recovery.

The Iceberg activity



**CORRECTION**

Anger

Impulsivity

Aggression

Not trusting of others

Repetitive behaviours

Lack of eye contact

Violence

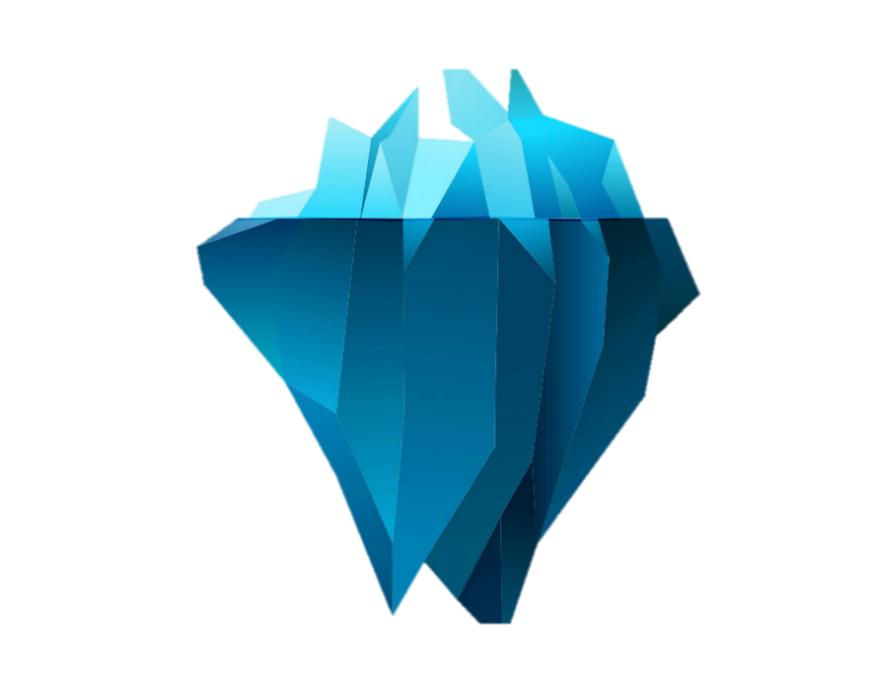
Clinginess

Bizarre behaviour

Provocative behaviour

Vulnerable to exploitation

Stealing



Suicidal ideation

Self-injury

Controlling

Attention needing behaviours

Criminal activity

Going missing

Substance misuse

**CONNECTION**

Frightened

Afraid

Vulnerable

Abused

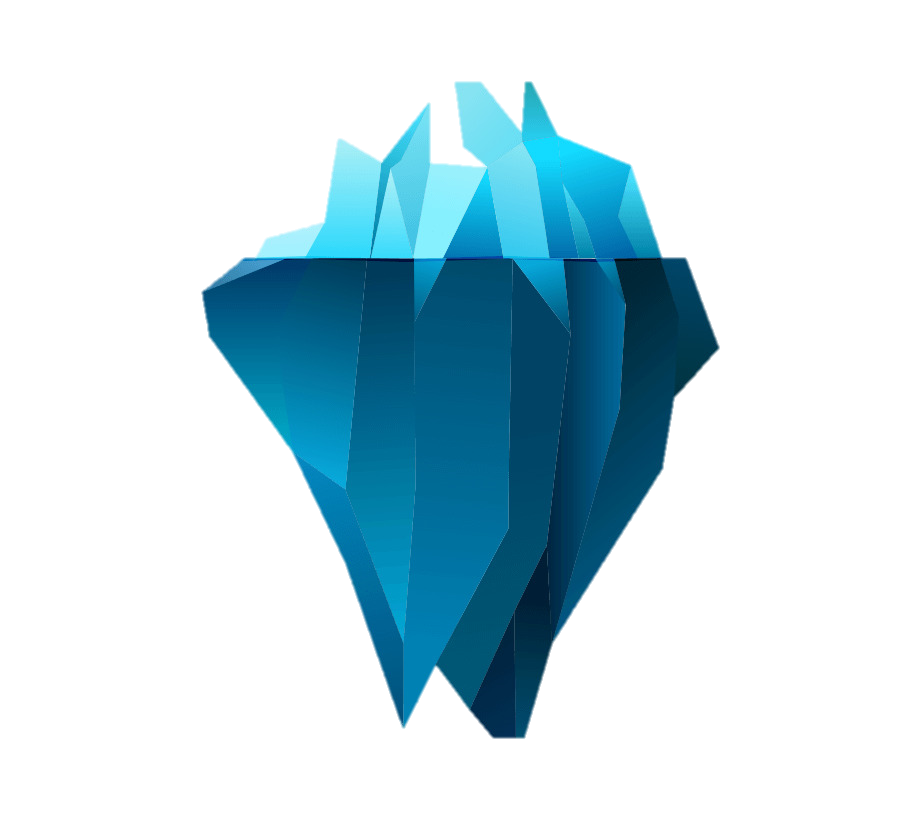
Neglected

Not worthy

Low self-esteem

Unsafe

Unable to trust others



Lonely

Insecure

Rejected