

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog

And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook

Dr Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz

A review and Evaluation of the 2017 edition.



In the SEND environment we are well versed in the psychological theories that underpin the behaviours of children and young people. More so than in mainstream education, we talk about the “fight or flight” response almost daily and we recognise that the behaviours displayed by our learners are a result of their additional needs and adverse childhood experiences. Nevertheless, school staff often know little about the chemical and neurological changes in the brain that cause these behaviours.

In *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, renowned child psychologist, Dr Bruce D. Perry, explores how traumatic experiences in early childhood can have noticeable impacts on the brain and alter the way children process stressful situations forever. Reflecting on a series of cases throughout his career, Dr Perry considers the inexplicable horrors that some young people face and how these events shape their lives. In doing this, Perry also explores the ways in which we can support these vulnerable young people by using our understanding of the impacts on their brains to understand how their experience of the world has been affected.

This is a book that will make you reconsider how you respond to the behaviours, demands and seemingly unexplainable whims of every child you come into contact with. It will open your eyes to the impact of adverse childhood experiences during vital periods of brain development, as well as demonstrating the entrenched results of neglect that can run through generations. To be sympathetic, empathic and understanding of the experiences of others is vital in supporting them to improve and thrive as they move towards adulthood. It is easy to forget that not everyone has experienced love, affection and emotional care, and if you haven't experienced it, how can you be expected to know that it is vital for growth and development?

I would recommend this book, even implore you to read it, regardless of whether you work with children or not. The stories included are not easy to read; they are hard-hitting, incredibly sad and often harrowing. Nevertheless, what we can learn from the experiences of these children and, more-importantly, from their recoveries, could be the change needed to prevent the same happening for another child.