



Ambition
Community Trust



Relational Inclusion Newsletter

July 2026

www.ambitioncommunity.uk



What's been Happening?



It's been a brilliant and packed year for ACT, I have enjoyed working closely with you all and getting to know you all a little better.

Relational Inclusion Champions

Congratulations to our RICs who have completed their training. I know that you are all already doing a great job in school with the children, supporting their emotional wellbeing and making a difference to their experience in school. We are excited to continue the journey with you next year so that you can enhance your practice and share your expertise. Remember we are always here to support and the RIC network events will continue throughout the next academic year.

Emotional intelligence training

It's been exciting to partner up with Cliff Lansley and Aaron Garner to learn more about emotional intelligence, it was great to see our RICs and therapists on the two-day training with Cliff and Aaron, thinking about and learning how our understanding of emotional intelligence enhances our work with children across our schools.



Neuro Feedback

We are so excited to be bringing Neuro feedback to the primary schools within our trust, by the time we return in September all our primary's will have a member of staff trained up to deliver Neuro feedback with our children. We are really looking forward to how it will impact on their wellbeing in school, such a great opportunity for us all.



Therapists

Our therapy team have been working hard across all our schools this year and it has been great to grow the team and hear all the positive feedback about the work they have been doing with our children. I know that they are dedicated to improving the mental health and wellbeing of our children.

A big thank you to all of them.



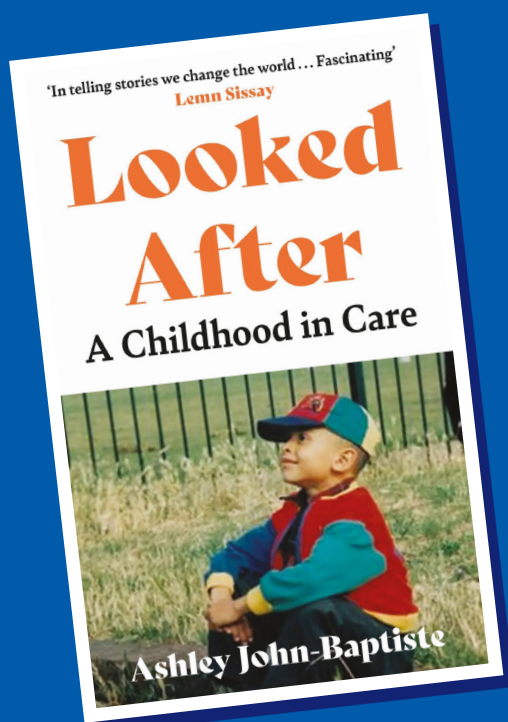
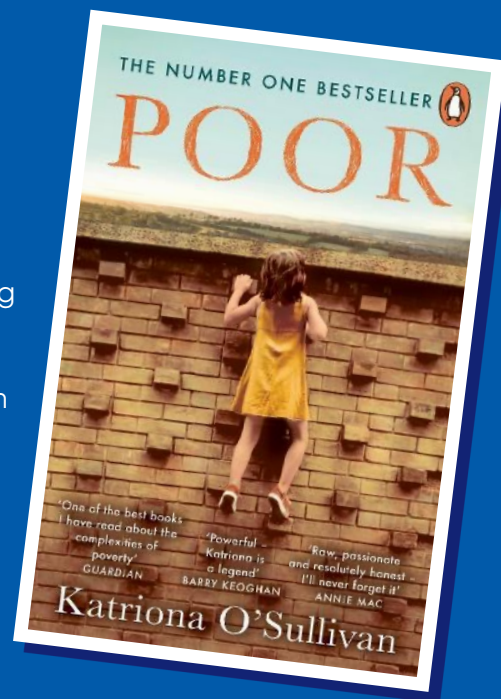
Recommended Reading



I have read...

Poor by Katriona O'Sullivan

I found this book really interesting and inspiring; it looks at poverty and neglect and how this has a profound effect on children and their life opportunities. It touches on the times when teachers within education had provided, hope, care and dignity and also when the opposite happened, reflecting back to me why the work we do within relational inclusion is so important for children who have adverse childhood experiences. If you like the book and want to hear more from Katriona O'Sullivan she is on many podcasts talking about her book but also talking about the work she does now to improve life chances for children



I am reading...

Looked After by Ashley John-Baptiste

A moving, honest memoir about growing up in the British care system.

If you have read anything inspirational lately let me know.

Thank You!

I just want to take time to thank all our staff across the trust for the hard work you do on a daily basis for children, all the small things that really matter, we think you are all wonderful, have a well deserved rest over the summer.

Are adults reducing children's capacity to tolerate the world we live in?

I want to talk about mental health, and what good mental health can look like for children.



Somewhere along the way, many adults seem to have understandably started to believe that protecting children's mental health means shielding them from discomfort. This might include conflict, falling out with friends, not being chosen for something, not winning, feeling bored, or having difficult conversations.

However, in my work with children and families, I often see the opposite. The children who appear to develop the strongest sense of self-esteem, identity and emotional resilience are not those who have been protected from every difficulty. They are the children who have been supported through discomfort, safely and with trusted adults alongside them.

It is when children learn to tolerate uncomfortable feelings that they begin to feel stronger. This is not about leaving children to cope alone. It is about helping them understand that difficult feelings are part of life, and that they can move through them.



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Children do not develop resilience by being told to “get over it”. They develop resilience through co-regulation. ”

For parents and educators, this can be hard. Our own histories, worries and fears can easily be projected onto the child or the situation. One question I often ask parents is: “Is this the most difficult thing your child is ever going to experience in life?”

For example, if the issue is a friendship breakdown, the answer is probably no. That does not mean the child's feelings are not real or important. It means this moment can become an opportunity to help them build emotional capacity, rather than an emergency that must be fixed immediately.

So how can adults support children to tolerate uncomfortable feelings?

One of the most powerful things we can do is resist the urge to fix everything too quickly. Instead, we can sit with the child, acknowledge their feelings, and help them work through the emotions. This might sound simple, but it can be incredibly difficult, especially when we love the child and want to take their pain away.

In busy lives, fixing can feel quicker and easier. But when we always remove discomfort, we may unintentionally reduce a child's opportunity to develop confidence, autonomy and emotional resilience.

There can also be more complex reasons why this feels difficult for adults. If a parent or carer did not have their own emotions safely held as a child, it may feel painful to witness their child struggling. They may assume the child is experiencing the same level of pain that they once felt. This is why adult self-awareness is so important.

A helpful place to start is with small, everyday challenges.

Take boredom, for example. We often hear children complain that they are bored. But boredom is not always a problem to solve. Boredom can create space for imagination, creativity and independent thinking. If every moment of boredom is filled by an adult, children may not get the chance to discover what they can create for themselves.

Over time, children can become dependent on external stimulation to feel satisfied. This may contribute to frustration, low confidence and a sense of helplessness when things are not immediately provided or resolved for them.

Supporting children's mental health is not about making life constantly comfortable. It is about helping children know that they can experience discomfort, be supported through it, and come out the other side.

This does not mean children should be left to struggle alone, or that serious issues should be dismissed as simply "part of life". There is an important difference between discomfort and harm. Bullying, trauma, discrimination, neglect or persistent emotional distress should always be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

What I am talking about is the everyday discomfort that helps children grow: disappointment, boredom, frustration, friendship changes, not getting their own way, or learning to have difficult conversations. These moments can feel painful, but with a calm and trusted adult alongside them, they can also become powerful opportunities for growth.

Children do not develop resilience by being told to "get over it". They develop resilience through co-regulation: having an adult who can stay steady, name what is happening, validate the feeling, and gently support them to find their own way through.

Practical ways parents and educators can support this:

- Create environments that encourage creativity, curiosity and exploration.
- Allow children to move through their emotions without rushing to fix them.
- Acknowledge feelings without immediately removing the challenge.
- Model age-appropriate emotional regulation.
- Talk about feelings during everyday moments, not only when things become difficult.
- Encourage movement, play and time outdoors to help children process emotions through the body.
- Reflect on your own reactions, coping strategies and self-awareness, as children often learn more from what adults do than what they say.
- Support a child when they are experiencing a rupture, modelling a speedy, authentic repair.

Children do not need a world without discomfort. They need adults who can help them feel safe enough to face discomfort, understand it, and grow from it.

By Sonja Evason



You Matter

A poem by Sonja Evason



As the year comes to a close,
we pause.
Not because the work is finished,
but because the journey deserves to be noticed.

We look back
on the mornings that began before we were ready,
the corridors full of noise,
the classrooms full of need,
the plans changed,
the moments repaired,
the children who needed just one more chance
to begin again.

And through it all,
you showed up.

You showed up with patience
when patience was hard to find.
You showed up with warmth
when the day felt heavy.
You showed up with boundaries,
with kindness,
with steady voices,
with soft eyes,
with the quiet belief that every child
is more than the behaviour we see.

You chose connection over correction.
Presence over power.
Curiosity over judgement.
You remembered that behind every reaction
there is a story,
and behind every child
there is a need to feel safe,
seen,
and held in mind.

There were days when the difference you made
may not have been obvious.
No applause.
No immediate change.
No perfect ending.

But still, it mattered.

Every welcome mattered.
Every repair mattered.
Every calm response mattered.

Every time you said,
"Let's try again,"
"I'm here,"
"You belong,"
"I can see this is hard,"
you planted something.

And some seeds grow quietly.

They grow in the child
who came into school a little more settled.
In the parent who felt listened to.
In the colleague who felt less alone.
In the classroom that became a little safer.
In the moment a child realised
that making a mistake
does not mean losing connection.

This is the work of relational inclusion.

It is not always loud.
It is not always seen.
It is not always easy.

But it is powerful.

Because schools are not changed
only by policies, plans or strategies.
They are changed by people.
By adults who keep believing.
By teams who keep reflecting.
By small acts of care,
repeated again and again,
until a culture begins to shift.

So as this school year ends,
may you know this:

You have made a difference.

In ways you saw,
and in ways you may never fully know.
In the words you chose,
the tone you softened,
the dignity you protected,
the hope you held
when a child could not yet hold it for themselves.

Thank you
for your hard work.
For your dedication.
For staying relational
when it would have been easier not to.
For seeing the brilliance
before the behaviour.
For helping school become more than a building.

A place of safety.
A place of belonging.
A place of possibility.

And as you step into rest,
may you carry with you
the truth of this year:

You mattered.
The work mattered.
The relationships mattered.

And because of you,
children leave this year
not just taught,
but known.

How to find out more?

If you would like more information or to have a further discussion about
what Ambition Community Trust offers, please contact:

Anthony Benedict (CEO) **07710 437 473**

or email via the website:

[Ambitioncommunity.uk](https://ambitioncommunity.uk)