

# Understanding the Complexities of Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Children and Young People

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July**

**Professor Eamon McCrory**

**UCL and Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**

## The neuroscience of child-maltreatment related trauma: Implications for Complex PTSD

It is well established that childhood adversity, in the form of maltreatment and neglect, is associated with increased risk of PTSD, and this risk endures across adulthood. More recently it has become clear that individuals exposed to maltreatment are at increased risk of more severe and co-morbid disorders across the lifespan, as well as impaired functioning across a number of other domains. These individuals are also less responsive to traditional treatments, pointing to the possibility of a distinct underlying 'ecophenotype'. I will review the evidence that childhood maltreatment is associated with altered functioning across a range of neurocognitive systems. According to the theory of Latent Vulnerability these changes may reflect adaptations that carry some adaptive value in the short term. However, I will argue that over the longer-term they accrue developmental costs that may contribute to increased risk of Complex PTSD. Implications for intervention and the rationale for an increasing focus on preventative intervention will be considered.

Our Patron: **Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge**

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a company limited by guarantee, company number 03819888, and a registered charity, number 1077106.