

Understanding Memory

Blue Knot Foundation fact sheet to foster understanding about memory

- 1** Memory is complex and its different types and categories function in different ways.
- 2** *Implicit* (largely non-conscious) memory develops first.
- 3** *Explicit* (conscious, able to be verbalised) memory develops later with the hippocampus in the second year of life.
- 4** *Implicit*, pre-verbal memories are stored in different parts of the brain and do not 'disappear'.
- 5** The stages of memory occur in the following order: *encoding*, *consolidation*, and *retrieval*:
 - *Encoding* (or formation) is the laying down of memory in the brain.
 - *Consolidation* (or retention) is the stabilisation and storage of memory.
 - *Retrieval* (or recall) is remembering, revival or restoration of memory to consciousness.
- 6** All memory is reconstructed. No memory is an exact replica of prior experience (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2017).
- 7** Retrieved memories are subject to change each time they are recalled (Rydberg, 2017). Current research establishes that all memory, *implicit* and *explicit*, is reconstructed to some degree. This does not mean that either is necessarily unreliable.

Further reading on memory is available with the following fact sheets:

- [The Truth of Memory and the Memory of Truth \(including references\)](#)
- [Memory Classification](#)
- [Understanding Traumatic Memory](#)
- [Recovered Memory](#)