

Trauma & Suicide



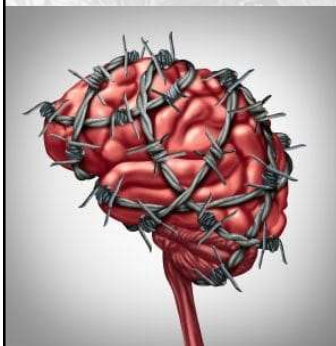
The greater the trauma, the greater the risk for alcohol abuse . . . drug use, depression, suicide attempts, and other negative outcomes”

(Rosenberg, 2011, p.428).

1

Trauma is the emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experiences of threat, violence and life-changing events.

Childhood association



“State of high arousal in which normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed in response to the perception of threat”
(Cozolino, 2002:270)

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

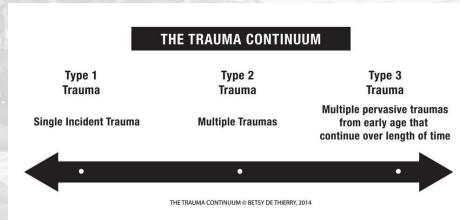
SAMSHA

The word trauma derives from the Greek word for wound.

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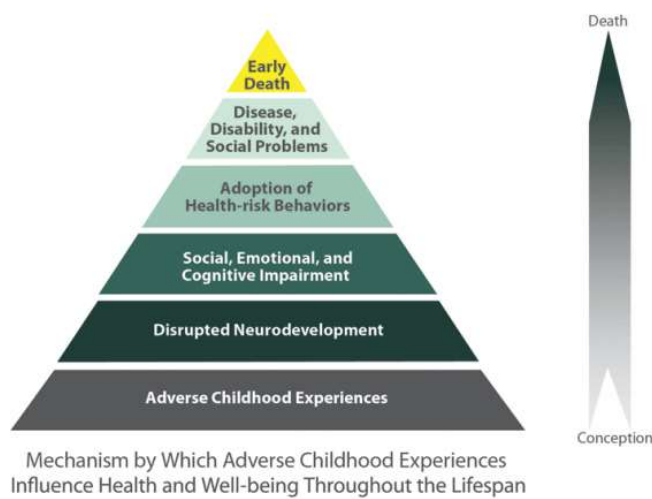
Trauma Types

- Attachment
- Chronic mis-attunement
- Developmental
- Single incident/natural disasters
- Single incident interpersonal abuse
- Intergenerational
- Complex trauma



3

ACE's



4

TRAUMA

4 core assumptions fundamental to our belief in such invulnerability:

- (1) The world is benevolent or at least benign;
- (2) Life is meaningful;
- (3) We have control over our lives; and
- (4) Positive self-worth.

DSMIV

5

Trauma Reaction – Impact Spectrum

Event and impact are based on a number of factors

- Pre traumatic
- Peri traumatic
- Post traumatic

Based on these three areas we can end up with:

- Simple trauma
- Developmental trauma
- PTSD
- Complex or multiple trauma

6

Trauma Reactions

- **intrusive reactions:**
- **avoidant reactions:**
- **hyper-arousal reactions:**

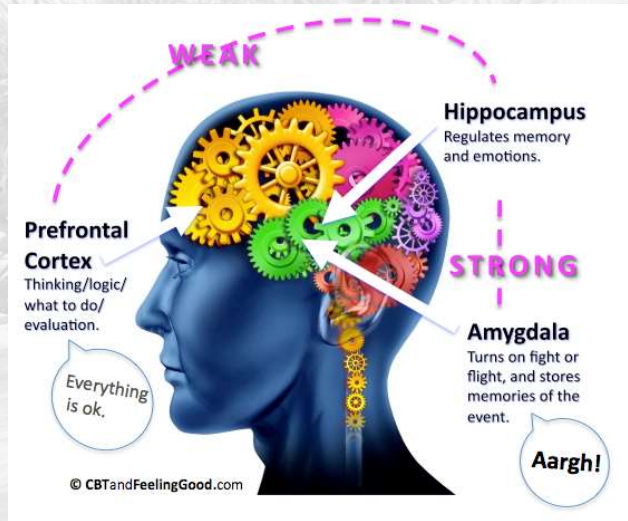
7

Societal Impacts

- **Chronic and complex grief**
- **High rates of suicide and homicide**
- **High rates of violence**
- **Accidental deaths**
- **Lateral violence**
- **Incarceration**
- **Conditions that impact on functioning**
- **Residential schools**
- **Loss of language, identity & culture - through various acts of assimilation**
- **High rates of family violence**
- **High rates of abuses; physical & sexual abuse, targeted to women & children**
- **Poor social conditions - extreme poverty, housing, water, sewage**
- **Culture of dependency**

8

The Brain

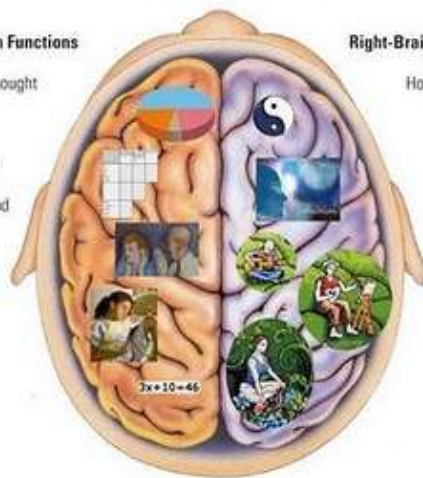


9

Left and Right Brain Functions

Left-Brain Functions

Analytic thought
Logic
Language
Science and math

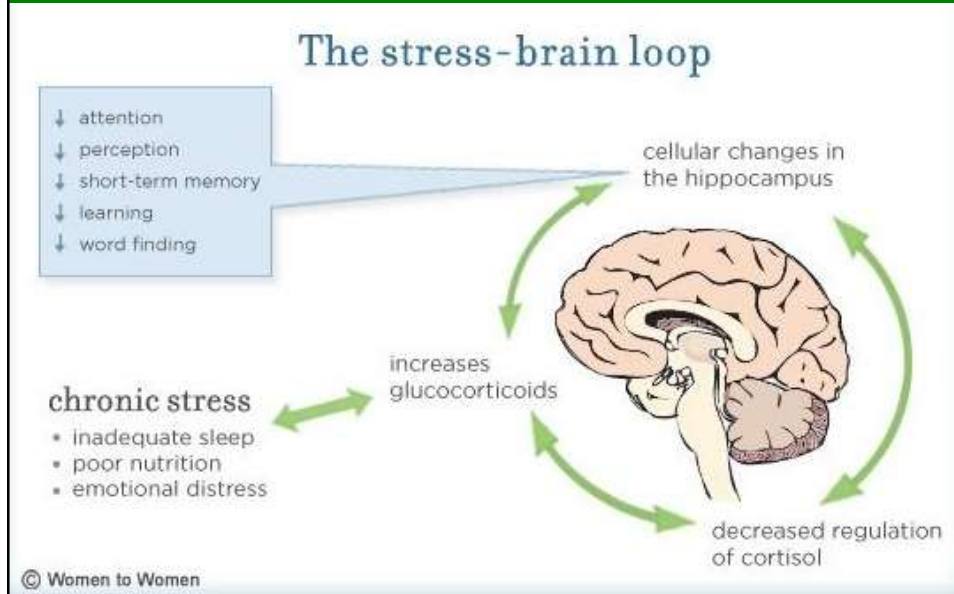


Right-Brain Functions

Holistic thought
Intuition
Creativity
Art and music

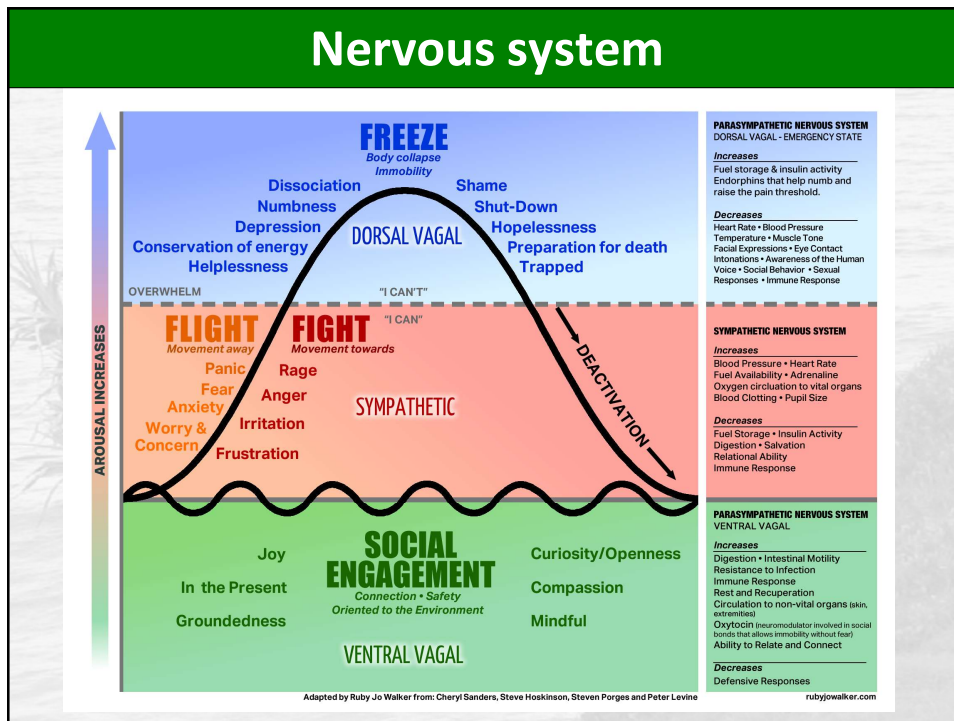
10

Long Term Exposure & Brain Biochemistry



11

Nervous system





12


Nervous System Response

In Dr Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, 3 systems evolved sequentially:

- 1** The **parasympathetic nervous system:** shutdown, 'freeze', feign death
Survival mechanism of primitive passive feeders

Immobilization (Freeze/Faint) 
- 2** The **sympathetic nervous system:** fight or flight
Supported more active survival responses of early mammals

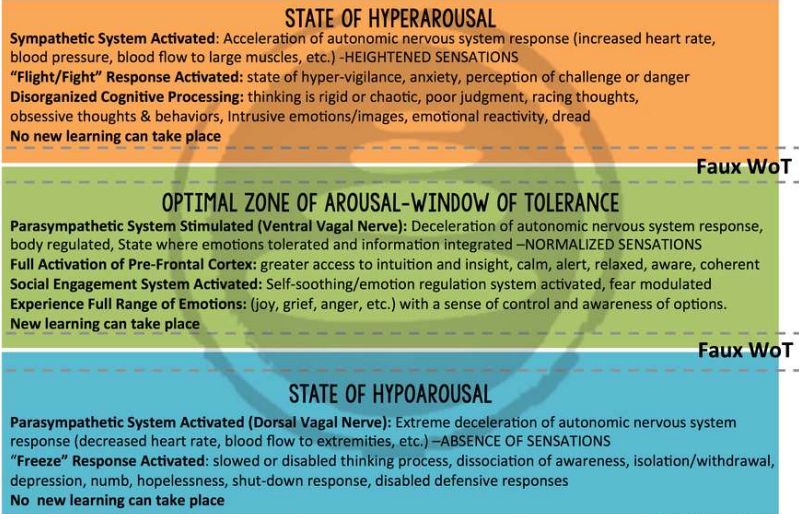
Mobilization (Fight/Flight) 
- 3** The **'social nervous system':** get help from others
Secures dependent care and bonds newborn to mother

Social Engagement 

Under stress, the human mobilises these systems in reverse order

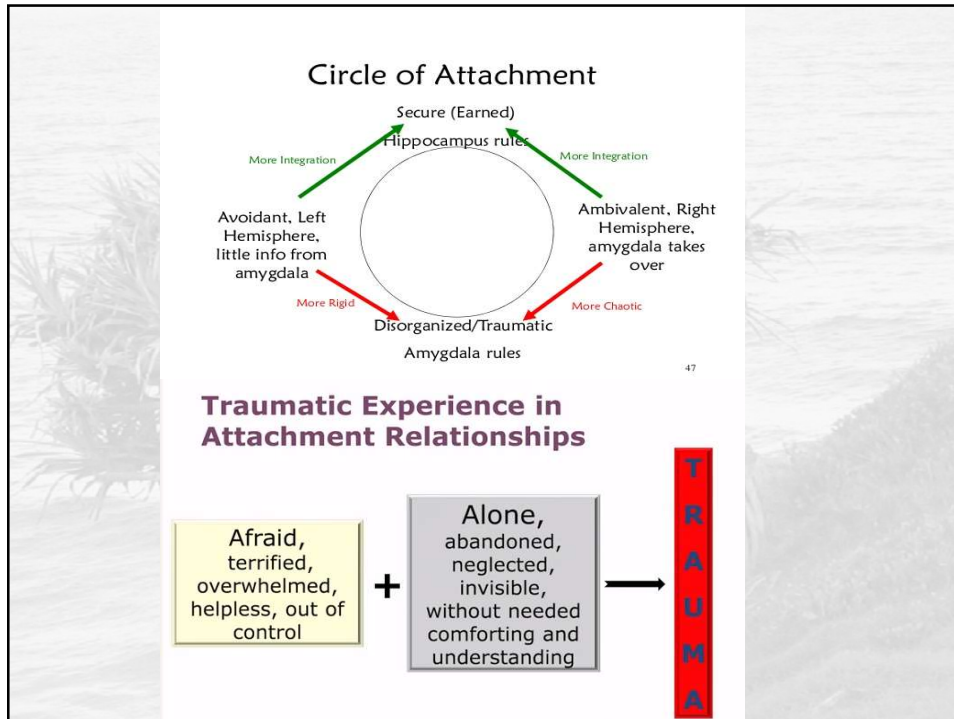
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WINDOW OF TOLERANCE (POLYVAGAL THEORY)

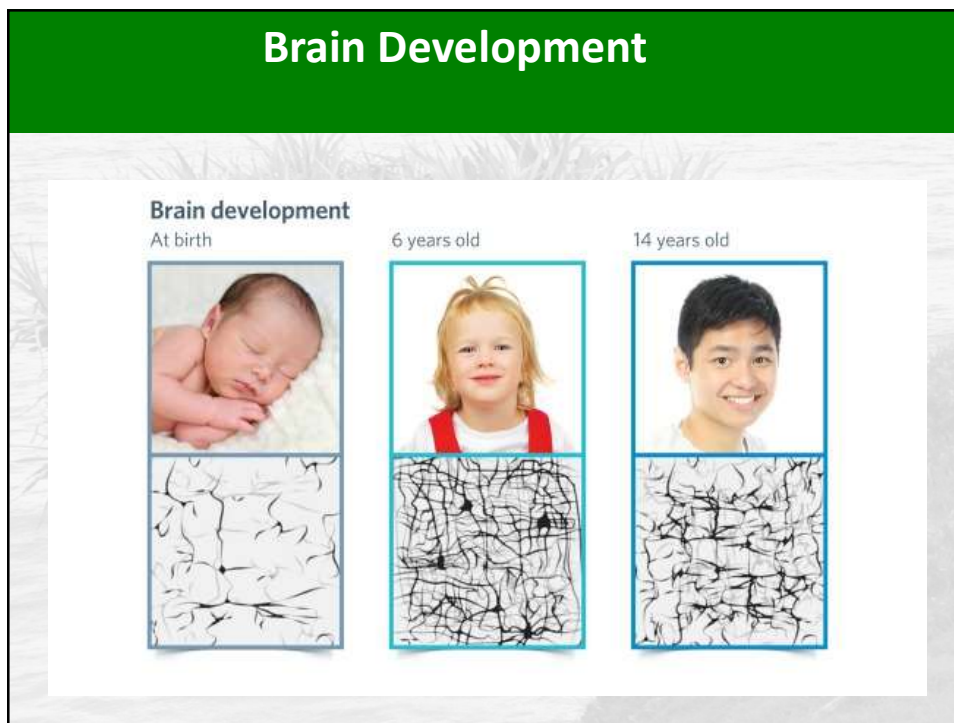


adapted from Steven Porges

14

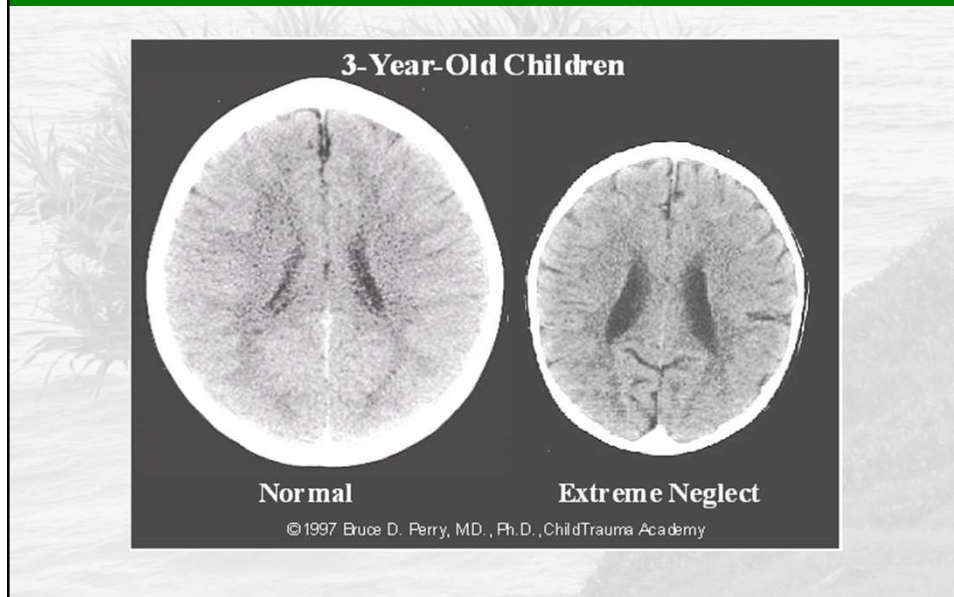


15



16

Brain Development



17

Brain Maturation

Nucleus Accumbens
(highly active in adolescence)

- Pleasure center
- Active during pleasurable activities, including feeding, sex, and drug use
- Plays a major role in

Prefrontal Cortex
(matures late adolescence or early adulthood)

- Impulse control
- Decision-making
- Organizing and planning
- Abstract thought, rational thinking
- Attention, focus
- Working memory

Better with Age

16-20 YEARS OLD
It handles more complex reasoning

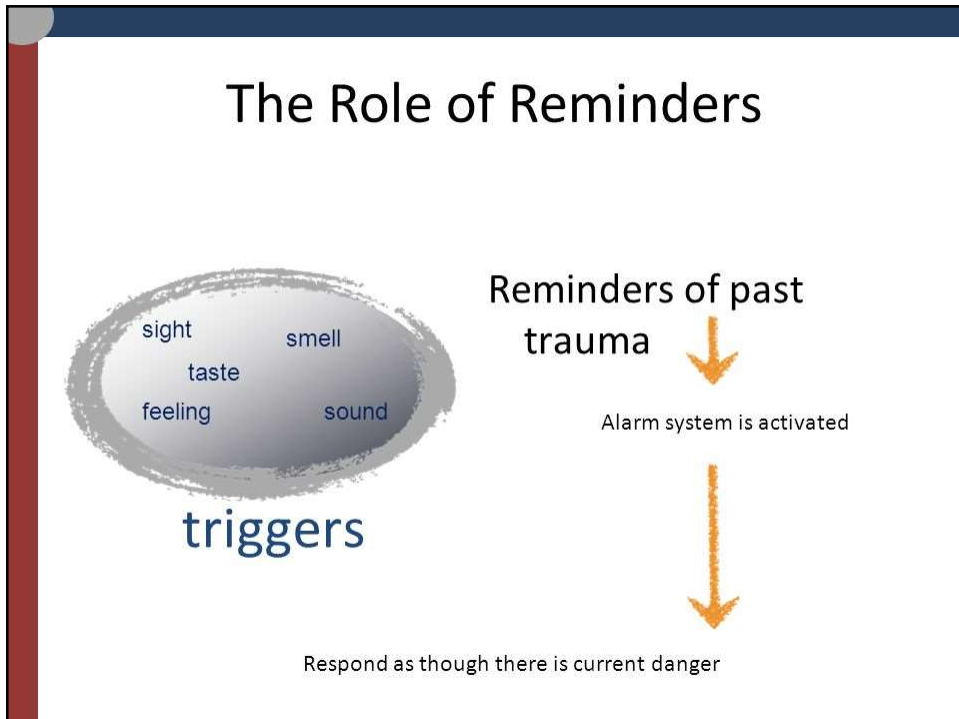
10-15 YEARS OLD
It's better equipped to plan, retain, solve, control emotions

9 YEARS OLD
Its circuitry is fine-tuning

18

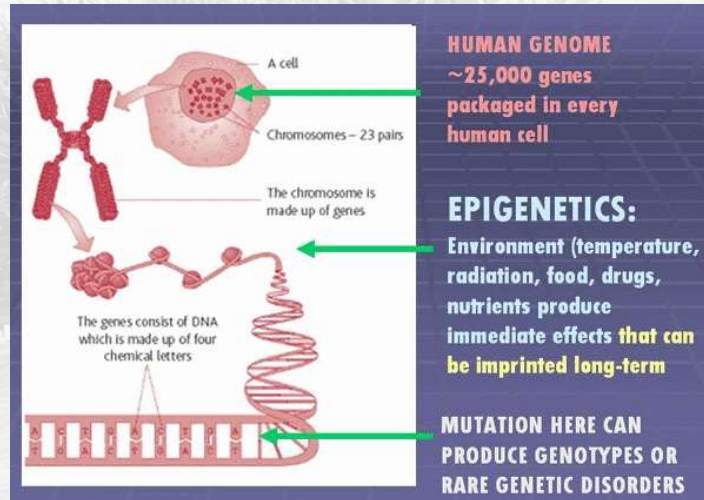


19



20

Epigenetics



21

Psychological & Physical Effects of Trauma

Attachment and Relationships:

- Relationship problems with family members, adults, and peers
- Problems with attachment and separation from caregivers
- Problems with boundaries
- Distrust and suspiciousness
- Social isolation
- Difficulty attuning to others and relating to other people's perspectives

Thinking & Learning:

- Difficulties with executive functioning and attention
- Lack of sustained curiosity
- Problems with information processing
- Problems focusing on and completing tasks
- Difficulties with planning and problem-solving
- Learning difficulties
- Problems with language development

Physical Health: Body & Brain:

- Sensorimotor developmental problems
- Analgesia
- Problems with coordination, balance, body tone
- Somatization
- Increased medical problems across a wide span
- Developmental delays/regressive behaviors

Behavior:

- Difficulties with impulse control
- Risk-taking behaviors (self-destructive behavior, aggression toward others, etc.)
- Problems with externalizing behaviors
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbances
- Substance abuse
- Oppositional behavior/difficulties complying with rules or respecting authority
- Reenactment of trauma in behavior or play (e.g., sexual, aggressive)

Emotional Responses:

- Difficulty with emotional self-regulation
- Difficulty labeling and expressing feelings
- Problems knowing and describing internal states
- Difficulty communicating wishes and needs
- Internalizing symptoms such as anxiety, depression, etc.

Dissociation:

- Disconnection between thoughts, emotions and/or perceptions
- Amnesia/loss of memory for traumatic experiences
- Memory lapses/loss of orientation to place or time
- Depersonalization (sense of being detached from or "not in" one's body) and derealization (sense of world or experiences not being real)
- Experiencing alterations or shifts in consciousness

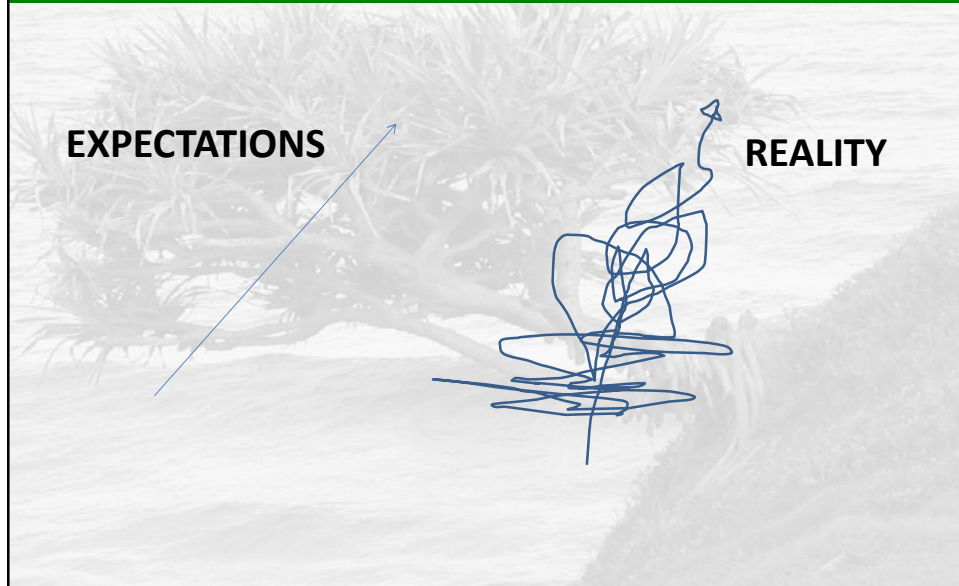
Self-Concept & Future Orientation:

- Lack of a continuous, predictable sense of self
- Poor sense of separateness
- Disturbances of body image
- Low self-esteem
- Shame and guilt
- Negative expectations for the future or foreshortened sense of future

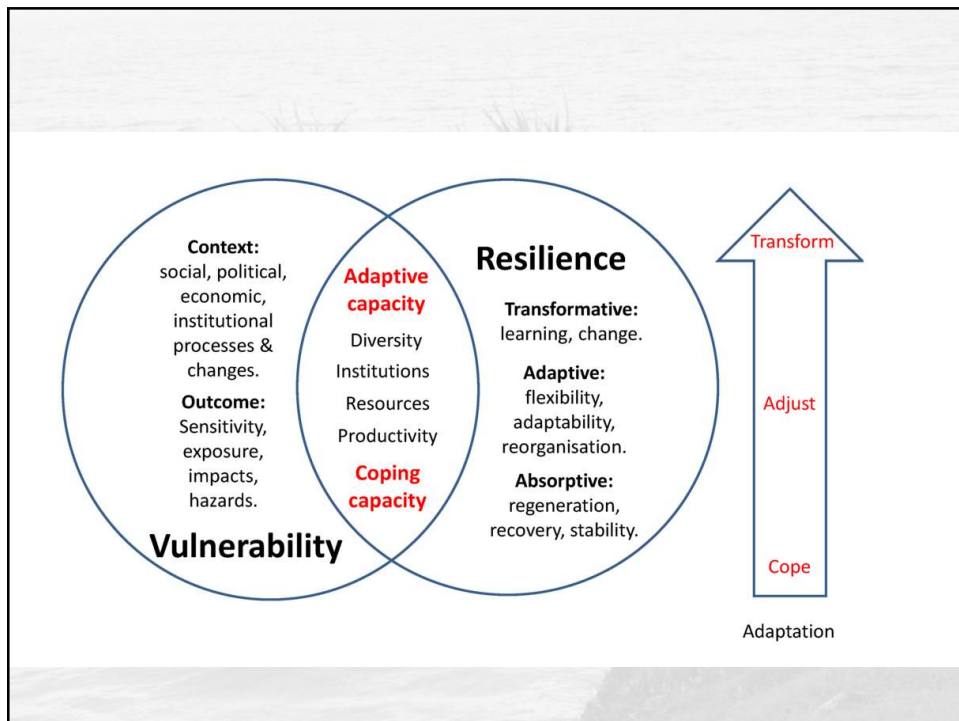
*The information above is adapted from Cook et al., 2005.

22

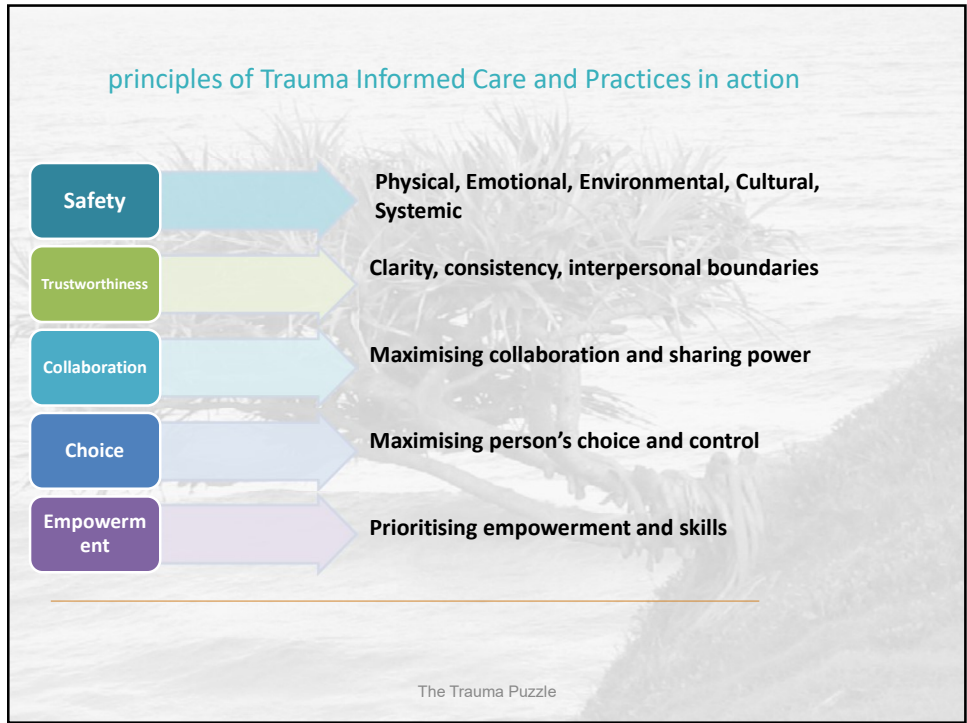
Recovery



23



24



25

Trauma Framework

Social & Psychological Experiences	Components of Trauma Reactions	Recovery Goals
Chronic fear/Chronic alarm/Unpredictability/Inescapability	Anxiety/feelings of helplessness/ loss of control	To restore safety, enhance control, reduce feelings of anxiety & fear
Disruptions to connections to family friends & community	Relationship changes/capacity for intimacy changes/grief & depression	To restore attachments, connections to other human beings that can offer emotional support
Destruction of the value of human existence	Loss of trust/ meaning & identity destroyed/ loss of moral reasoning	To promote meaning & purpose of life.
Humiliation & degradation of self	Guilt & shame	To restore dignity and value, which includes reducing shame and guilt.

The Trauma Puzzle

26

4
WAYS TO RECOGNIZE TRAUMA

(Huckshorn & Lebel, 2013)

RE-EXPERIENCING THE EVENT

AVOIDANCE AND EMOTIONAL NUMBING

CHANGES IN SLEEPING PATTERNS

HYPERAROUSAL

Four facts about trauma-informed care and suicide

1. Patients need to feel safe and comfortable enough to share trauma experiences with providers.
2. Trauma survivors are the majority of clients who end up in human services systems (Elliott, et al., 2005).
3. A traumatized person becomes at risk of suicide when they cope with their trauma in unhealthy ways.
4. Individuals who experience trauma may be at a higher risk for suicide than those who have not experienced trauma.

27

Supporting Recovery – what works?

- Addressing safety and trust/connection
- Promoting protective factors & identifying risk factors
- Psycho-education/understanding of self
- Awareness - advocating for trauma sensitive spaces
- Nervous system regulation/mindfulness/Grounding practices/Window of tolerance work – supports attunement and being present
- Preventing re-traumatisation
- Fostering resiliency and post traumatic growth
- Capacity and Skills to assist
- Gradual steps
- Responsive & respectful AND non judgemental
- Client centre/Willingness to apply approaches consistent with strength of client
- Cultural competence

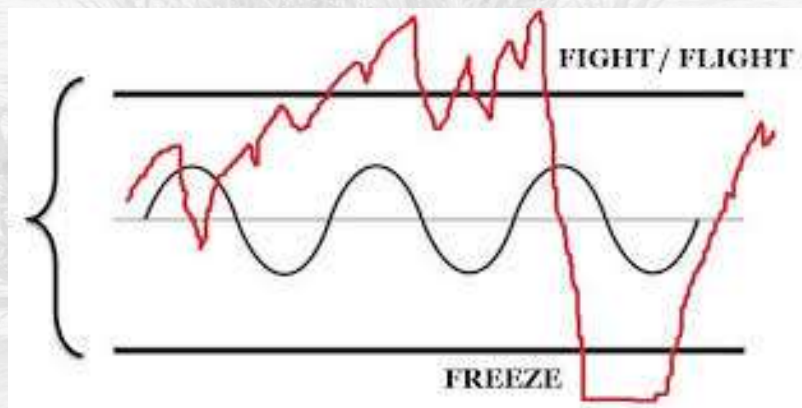
28

Personal Self Care

- Daily exercise
- Balanced diet
- Sufficient sleep
- Build competence : skills & confidence/mastery/celebrate
- Social interaction/connect – peer based/fun based
- Spiritual practice
- Practice gratitude
- Maintain boundaries
- Building our protective factors/resilience

29

Window of Tolerance



Source: Pat Ogden (2000)

30

Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

[Mindfulness](#) is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you carefully observe your thoughts and feelings without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to your current experience, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. (Psychology today)

What:

Observing
Describing
Participating

How:

No Judgement
Focus one at a time
Doing what is needed



31

Grounding

Grounding is about learning to stay present -or for some get present in the first place - in your body in the here and now.

Activities build

- Sensory awareness
- Cognitive awareness



32

Problem solving

What are the barriers to learning to solve our own problems, rather than someone else's?

We can advise? Why is it so hard to extend compassion inwardly the way we do outwardly?

- **Stop seeing barriers**
- **Set some goals – simple but achievable**
- **Make choices**
- **Focus on re-ablement**

33

Safety Plans

**Planning ahead to
prevent reaction and
regain control**



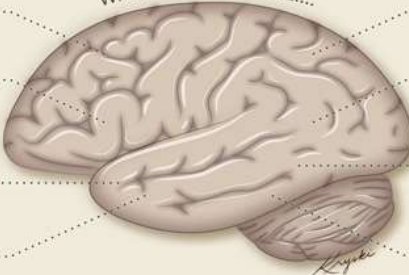
34

The brain and exercise

YOUR BRAIN LOVES THE GYM

(OR SIDEWALK, BIKE TRAIL, POOL,...)

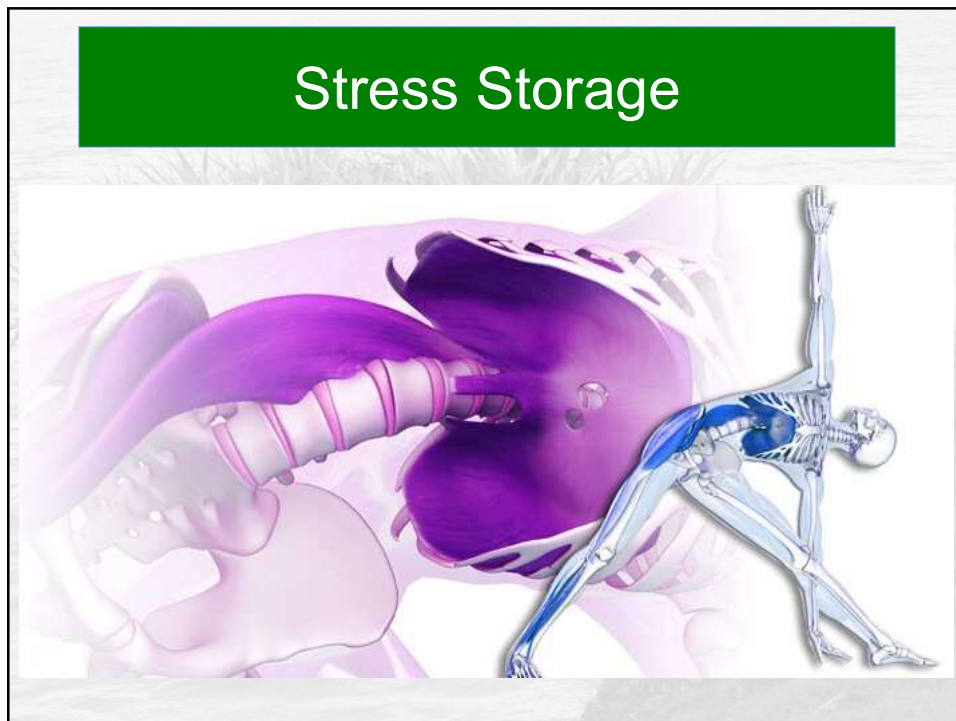
WHEN YOU EXERCISE...



- Norepinephrine is released, improving attention, perception and motivation.
- Brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is released, protecting and repairing neurons from injury and degeneration.
- Hormones combine with BDNF to grow brain cells, regulate mood and provide mental clarity.
- The hippocampus, a part of the brain concerned with learning and memory, grows in size with regular exercise over time.
- Endorphins are released, dulling the sensation of pain.
- Serotonin is released, enhancing mood.
- Blood flow to the brain increases, delivering more oxygen and nutrients and improving waste removal.
- Dopamine is released, improving motivation, focus and learning.

35

Stress Storage



36

The Mental Health Benefits of Art

1. Mimesis
2. Ritual
3. Catharsis
4. Language
5. Cognition
6. integration

Art, in whatever form, is often said to invoke certain feelings or emotion. It is arguably the basis of all art: the need to convey a message or to create a sense of sentiment. Whether you're creating it, or buying and enjoying it, the benefits gained by art in all of its forms are many. Where the health benefits of music has begun to be more fully understood, visual art delivers its own set of benefits to collectors and artists alike. The next time you pass up the opportunity to browse your local art gallery, remember that you may just be robbing yourself of the following brain and mental health advantages:

REDUCTION IN STRESS LEVELS
Creating a space filled with art, photography or sculptures that speak to you and your emotions can help reduce stress. Engaging in the creative process of art serves as an even better stress-reduction technique.

IMPROVEMENT IN PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS
Because there are no wrong answers in the creation of art, problem-solving and critical thinking skills are enhanced when exercising the imagination.

INCREASED PROTECTION OF BRAIN FUNCTIONS
Art therapy has been proven to increase memory function and cognitive skills in the elderly and with patients that have Alzheimer's and dementia.

BOOST IN CREATIVITY
You don't have to actually be an accomplished artist to enjoy increased creativity through art. Simply buying and enjoying the art process stimulates the areas of the brain that helps imagination to flourish.

INCREASE IN AWARENESS
By indulging in the nuances of a painting, a sculpture or a well-drafted poem, art helps to bolster your ability to be more observant by taking in more details and being able to pay more attention to your surroundings.

37

Music and the brain

Playing and listening to music works several areas of the brain

Corpus callosum: Connects both sides of the brain

Motor cortex: Involved in movement while dancing or playing an instrument

Prefrontal cortex: Controls behavior, expression and decision-making

Nucleus accumbens and amygdala: Involved with emotional reactions to music

Sensory cortex: Controls tactile feedback while playing instruments or dancing

Auditory cortex: Listens to sounds; perceives and analyzes tones

Hippocampus: Involved in music memories, experiences and context

Visual cortex: Involved in reading music or looking at your own dance moves

Cerebellum: Involved in movement while dancing or playing an instrument, as well as emotional reactions

SOURCE: Music for Young Children
DESERET NEWS GRAPHIC

38

Cross Cultural Competency

'Many non-Western societies place more emphasis on the connections between the **mind, body and spirit** and on the **community** rather than the individual.'

Callaghan 1993

Different cultures understand illness to have causes and meanings that are different from Western beliefs

Ethnicity shapes the way a person will deal with traumatic stress:

- how a person seeks help
- how they feel about sharing emotional troubles, and
- what their attitudes are towards pain

Westernised therapies can be alienating to people from non-European backgrounds

- It is appropriate to include aspects of traditional medicine in treatment models

39

39

Preventing Re-Traumatization

- Sensitivity to past events and their ongoing impact
- Acting out needs to be viewed as response to distress – doesn't mean you need to ignore though
- Allow choices and control
- Help see them see what may have set them off
- Trust
- Encourage self soothing and grounding

40

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41

**Thank you for your
participation!**

42