Nurtured Heart Approach from a Trauma Informed Perspective

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The super-power of humankind is our capacity to connect. It is regulating, rewarding and the major “route” by which we can teach, coach, parent, heal and learn.
Why do we need to be Trauma-Informed?

Being a trauma-informed means understanding trauma and its manifestations and approaching all interactions through a trauma-informed lens.

Being trauma-informed can help increase safety for you, the person with whom you are interacting and the community as a whole.

What is Traumatic?

The same event can be experienced, adapted to, and carried forward in different ways by different children.

So, it is the response by the individual to the experience or event that is “traumatic” – not the event itself.
Lack of a specific pattern of experience during developmental periods impact brain organization and functioning.

It is not about a lack of will, it is about a lack of skill!

Lack of a specific pattern of experience during developmental periods impact brain organization and functioning.

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FAMILY PORTRAIT BY A 14 YEAR OLD BOY. NEGLECTED BY CAREGIVER DURING FIRST 18 MONTHS OF LIFE.

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The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABUSE</th>
<th>NEGLECT</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Incarcerated Relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother treated violently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Divorce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experiences build on one another - impact development & functioning

Adverse Childhood Experiences have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration and lifelong health and opportunity.

Impact of chronic stress and how it impacts brain development.
Brain is naturally set up to watch for danger, interpret new experiences as dangerous.

Brain develops templates in order to quickly assess risk in novelty

The brain can generalize from the single abusive father to all adult males.

The brain takes associations from a single or specific event and generalizes to other situations.

This process, generalization, can literally alter the way future experiences are sensed, perceived and processed.

Association is at the heart of understanding attachment, good and bad, as well as trauma-related symptoms

The brain makes associations between patterns of neural signals co-occurring in any given moment in time

This capacity allows humans to learn, create images of the future and survive.

This capacity can also make humans vulnerable to false associations – e.g., creating fears of non-threatening objects.
Brain development starts with the first building blocks of early experiences

The brain looks for past similar patterns to match up to current experiences with past experiences which then reinforces and strengthens existing neural connections.

EVERYTHING we experience is processed thru the lowest functioning areas of our brain which is responsible for regulating, interpreting our world thru our senses and automatically responds to perceived dangers.

If this part of our brain is oversensitive and over reactive it sends very different signals to the higher brain areas.

Greater generalizing of specific experiences when younger due to a lack of sufficient templates

Exposure to abusive man at early age → Generalize to all men

Child more globally reactive → Leads to more global problems.

Exposure to abusive man in adulthood → Specific cue related reactions to that man or similar actions.

Adult w/history of developmental chaos, trauma are more likely to be over reactive to later situations as well
Present is filtered thru the past

The brain will match the present sensory inputs to similar past associations and this will reinforce the association. In order to change the template there must be repetitive, dosed exposure within a safe context.

Child learns thru multiple interactions that the world and adults are predictable and safe and they are cared for.
Child learns thru multiple interactions that the world and adults are dangerous, unpredictable and the must create their own sense of safety

Caregiver as a Disorganized Stress Regulator
*Absent, Overwhelmed, Disengaged, Anxious, Angry*

The most basic elements of brain functioning and instinctual basic needs kick in when a person does not feel safe.

Traumatized persons may overreact to triggers and perceived threats, they will act out when they do not feel safe: Safe from harm by others, or from themselves.

Expecting a person to know why they did something or to assume they reasoned out their action when they are in this lower level of brain functioning with a heightened stress response is unreasonable.
Humans become humane.

Being born a human being does not ensure a child will become humane.

The capacity to care, to share, to listen, value and be empathic – to be compassionate – develops from being cared for, shared with, listened to, valued and nurtured.

Humane caregiving expresses our capacity to be humane. Inhumane caregiving can decrease or even destroy this capacity.

Humans are INTERDEPENDENT not INDEPENDENT creatures

Human beings are fundamentally relational with a neurobiological “design” intended for creating, managing and maintaining relationships.

Relational qualities and capacity determine the global health of a group.
Affiliation

Attachment bonds arise from one on one relationships.
Affiliation in groups is more complex and require the capacity to regulate anxiety, impulsivity and frustration.
Mastery of one-on-one or adult child relationships does not predict mastery of one-to-many relationships.
Role of parents and adults in community to support seeking new and positive interactions.

People are relational creatures. We take our cues from those around us. We regulate by our associations.

Co-regulation
Reactive child and well-regulated teacher

Present, parallel, patient, persistent – facilitate multisensory, multi-domain, repetitive activity

Rhythm & Relationship = Regulation

Time

Terror
Fear
Alarm
Alert
Calm

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These kids will find their own ways to self soothe or will model the negative methods they have seen demonstrated by those around them.

Physically Abused Children See Anger Where Others See Fear

Graphic by: Seth Pollak, courtesy PNAS
Rewards and Consequences need to match the mental state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Time</th>
<th>Extended Future</th>
<th>Days Hours</th>
<th>Hours Minutes</th>
<th>Minutes Seconds</th>
<th>Loss of Sense of Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary _secondary Brain Areas</td>
<td>NEOCORTEX Subcortex</td>
<td>SUBCortex Limbic</td>
<td>LIMBIC Midbrain</td>
<td>MIDBRAIN Brainstem</td>
<td>BRAINSTEM Autonomic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>“Emotional”</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Reflexive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental State</td>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>ALERT</td>
<td>ALARM</td>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>TERROR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### State Dependence of Cognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional IQ</th>
<th>120-100</th>
<th>110-80</th>
<th>90-60</th>
<th>70-50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY Brain Area</td>
<td>NEOCORTEX Cortex</td>
<td>CORTEX Limbic</td>
<td>LIMBIC Diencephalon</td>
<td>DIENCEPHALON Brainstem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Brain Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Abstract Reflective</td>
<td>Concrete Routine</td>
<td>Emotional Reactive</td>
<td>Reactive Reflexive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental State</td>
<td>CALM</td>
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Manageable dosing of stress

Structure, predictability, set schedules, clear and concise rules, and assistance and forewarning when there are changes or transitions as possible to reduce anxiety.

We must understand what sets a person off (trigger) and what helps them to calm down in order to deescalate situations.

Focus on de-escalation, not threats and confrontation.

Where is the therapist?

You don’t have to be a therapist for your interaction to be therapeutic.

Staff, teachers, etc can help process problematic behaviors with a youth and support their ability to improve their self regulation skills.

Help them implement techniques such as deep breathing, relaxation, time-outs, imaging, problem solving, or refocusing which they are likely learning in therapy.

Youth will watch how adults who work with them behave towards others, authority figures, and handle anger or frustration

Be consistent in your interactions

The most important time to interact with youth is when they are quiet and doing well.

That is when they are most apt to learn and change.
The super-power of humankind is our capacity to connect.

Positive, repetitive and consistent interactions build new associations and lessen over reactivity of the stress response system.

Activating the brain with positive and manageable doses of stress with sufficient repetition creates best chance to change the brain.

Calmer mental states create more pathways to the highest brain areas, healthier templates to guide our responses, and increases our ability for reasoning and high level cognitive functioning.

Be consistent in your interactions

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### Trauma Informed Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Flock</th>
<th>Freeze</th>
<th>Flight</th>
<th>Fight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predictable Behavior</td>
<td>Calm sounds</td>
<td>Quiet voices</td>
<td>Comforting and predictable voice, invited therapeutic touch</td>
<td>Calm affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(behaviors of the teacher when the child or classroom is in various states of arousal)</td>
<td>Personal space</td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Invited therapeutic touch</td>
<td>Disengage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictable routine</td>
<td>Rhythmic movement</td>
<td>Clear directions</td>
<td>Singing, humming, music</td>
<td>Turn-off lights, white noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant (developmentally matched)</td>
<td>Sensory-motor sensations</td>
<td>Reflective listening</td>
<td>Reassurance</td>
<td>Reduce sensory input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Six R’s
- Relevant
- Rhythmic
- Repetitive
- Relational
- Rewarding
- Respectful

#### The Eight P’s
- Present
- Parallel
- Patient
- Persistent
- Patterned
- Predictable
- Positive doses
- Protected

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**Key Elements of Positive Development and Creating Relational Space for Healing**

**The Six R’s**
- Relevant (developmentally matched)
- Rhythmic (resonant with neural patterns)
- Repetitive (patterned)
- Relational (safe)
- Rewarding (pleasurable)
- Respectful (child, family, culture)

**The Eight P’s**
- Present
- Parallel
- Patient
- Persistent
- Patterned
- Predictable
- Positive doses
- Protected (safe) experiences

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**Neurosequential Network**

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**NMT**

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