



# Trauma Informed Interventions

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7/3/2019

A decorative orange wave graphic spans the bottom of the slide, transitioning from a lighter shade on the left to a darker shade on the right.

# Learning Objectives



- Define trauma reminder
- Describe how thoughts and feelings influence behaviors
- Identify three trauma-informed interventions to address trauma reminder reactions

- “Trauma is any event that threatens someone’s well-being or the well-being of a loved one”
- “Witnessing or experiencing an event that poses a *real or perceived threat* to the life or wellbeing of the child or someone close to the child”

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers

## **Six Key Principles to Trauma-Informed Approach**

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

# Trauma Reminders



- A person, place, situation, sensation, feeling, or thing that reminds a child of a traumatic event.
- A child may re-experience the *intense and disturbing feelings* associated with the original event

# Trauma Reminder Responses

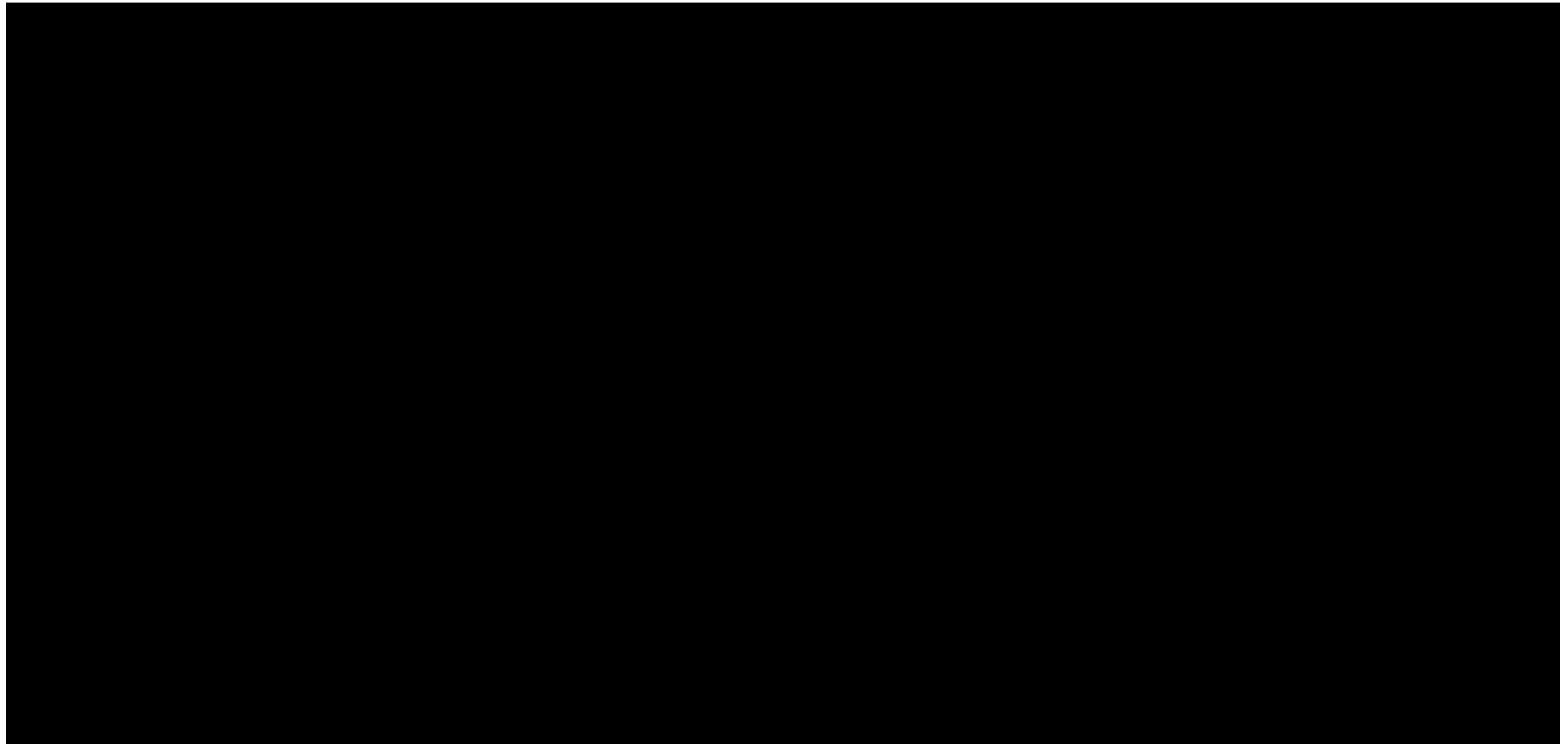


- Child may feel frightened, jumpy, angry, or might shut down
- Feel vulnerable, helpless
- Strong emotional outburst
- Unable to verbalize the memories
- Act out the traumatic events in play
- Dissociation

# The ANS regulates three physiological states

- First level is **Social Engagement**, we call out for help, support, and comfort from the people around us.
- Second level is a more primitive way to survive, **Fight-Flight**, as no one comes to our aid, or we are in immediate danger.
- Third level, **Freeze or Collapse** occurs when the second level fails, as we are unable to fight off our attacker, run to a safe place, held down or trapped. The organism tries to preserve itself by shutting down and expending as little energy as possible.

# Video: Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development





# Intervention



- Consider the child's history from his or her point of view
  - What you know
  - What you don't know
- Create safe environment
  - Physical
  - Psychological/Emotional
- Challenge Beliefs

# Tailoring Interventions



- A child will change their behavior when he/she feels capable of managing their world without that behavior. Children often do so at their own pace.
- When traumatized children feel they do not have control of a situation, they predictably get more symptomatic.
- Frame the “consequence” as a choice for them.

- “Every single human encounter is an opportunity to create a template of positive human interaction”.

- Relational - safe
- Relevant - developmentally matched
- Repetitive – patterned
- Rewarding - pleasurable
- Rhythmic - neutral patterns, synchrony
- Respectful – child, family, culture

# Non-intrusive Interventions



- Playfulness
- Acceptance
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Encouragement
- Restatement / Reflection

# PACE Model



- **Playfulness** – an open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude.
- **Acceptance** – unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe, and loved.
- **Curiosity** – without judgment child becomes aware of their inner life.
- **Empathy** – a sense of compassion for the child and her feelings.

# Myths about Anger

- Anger is inherited.
- Anger automatically leads to aggression.
- You must be aggressive to get what you want.
- Venting anger is always desirable.



# Avoidance Behavior



- Avoidance behavior occurs when fear and terror threaten to overwhelm the child.
- The behavior is usually accompanied by some sign of emotional distress; crying, frightened eyes, screaming.
- Child has to feel that they are in control of their actions, rather than driven to act by their emotions.



# Types of Aggression

## Verbal

- Yelling
- Cursing
- Using threats
- Ultimatums
- Passive-aggressiveness

## Physical

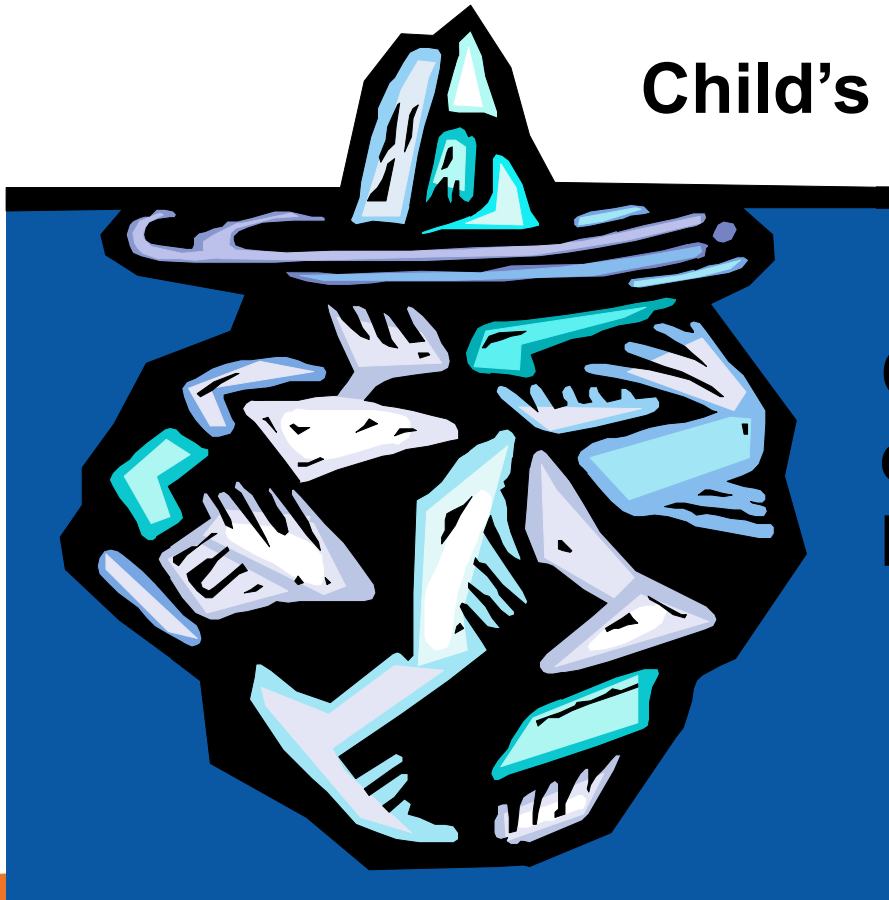
- Kicking
- Punching
- Spitting
- Throwing things
- Pushing
- Slapping

# The Escalated Client

- Raised voice
- Rapid speech
- High-pitched voice
- Pacing
- Excessive sweating
- Excessive hand gestures
- Balled-up fists
- Fidgeting
- Aggressive posture
- Shaking
- Crying
- Erratic movements

# Seeing Below the Surface

**Child's behaviors**



**Child's feelings, thoughts, expectations, and beliefs**

# Regulated Caregivers



- In a calm and receptive state
- Emotionally, physically, psychologically
- Tolerate the behaviors, and remain curious about them
- Accept the affect and perceptions that drive the behavior
- Help the child feel felt, and supported in reflecting on what the behavior means
- New experiences create the possibility of new beliefs

# Helping Control Emotions



- Nurture
- Be consistent and predictable
- Play
- Teach feelings
- Teach self-regulation
- Model appropriate emotional expression
- Parent based on emotional age
- Look beyond the behavior before punishment/consequences
- Take care of yourself

# Outside the Window of Tolerance

- Caregivers respond to child's discomfort and distress with empathy and emotional support.
- Security provides children with opportunities to develop the capacity for self-regulation.
- Interventions must assist the child with regaining regulation and managing the distress.
- Defensive reactions are rooted in anxiety and profound fear, from their traumatic experiences.
- Restraint is not a therapeutic intervention.

# Co-Regulation



- Contrast defensiveness
- Regulated bodies
- Safe hands
- Thinking Minds
- Adults must demonstrate that nothing the child does will result in abuse or rejection of the child

# Support ways to increase feelings of safety



- Identify triggers
- Sensory processing
- Emotional tone of caregivers
- Help the child learn safety, protection, problem solving, and communication skills
- Calm the Amygdala
- Reawaken the Hippocampus



# Enrich the Environment with Regulating Exercises

- Zen zone, safe space
- Sensory calming box
- Positive me diary
- Journaling
- Calming corner
- Positive self talk
- Muscle tension and relaxation techniques
- Music, arts

- “Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives”.
- “Social support is not the same as merely being in the presence of others. The critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else’s mind and heart”.

## Left brain expression (Academic)

detail oriented  
(Looks at parts)  
Logical  
Sequential  
Rational  
math and science  
can comprehend  
Analytical  
Objective  
uses logic  
facts rule  
words and language  
present and past  
knowing  
acknowledges  
knows object name  
reality based  
forms strategies  
order/pattern perception  
practical/planned  
safe  
cautious



## Right brain expression (Creative)

'big picture' oriented  
(Looks at wholes)  
Random  
Intuitive  
Holistic  
philosophy & spiritualism  
can 'get it' (the meaning)  
Synthesizing  
Subjective  
uses feeling  
imagination rules  
symbols and images  
present and future  
believes  
appreciates  
knows object function  
fantasy based  
presents possibilities  
spatial perception  
impetuous/spontaneous  
adventurous  
carefree/risk taking

Illustration by: VaXzine

Written and slide design by Dr C Daniels 2008

# Integrating the logical left brain and the emotional right brain

- Connect and redirect
- Name it to tame it
- Engage don't enrage
- Use it or lose it
- Move it or lose it
- Use the remote of the mind
- Remember to remember
- Let the clouds of emotion roll by
- SIFT – pay attention
- Exercise mindsight
- Enjoy each other
- Connect through conflict

# Connection with Correction, 7 steps in parenting



## 1. NOTICE

- What is happening?
- Do I need to step in?
- What immediate steps do I need to take to ensure everyone's safety?

## 2. IMPACT

- Am I regulated and can I stay open and engaged?
- Am I becoming defensive?
- Do I need a break, or can I get back to being open and engaged?
- Can I be compassionate to myself?

# Connection with Correction



## 3. **REGULATION** or **REFLECTION**

- What part of the child's brain is activated?
- Do I need to provide; sensory regulation, emotional regulation?
- Or can I help the child to reflect?

## 4. **CURIOSITY** and **UNDERSTANDING**

- Reflect with the child or on behalf of the child.
- What is the child's internal experience that led to this behavior?

# Connection with Correction



## 5. **ACCEPTANCE and EMPATHY: CONNECTION**

- How can I help the child to know that I get it?

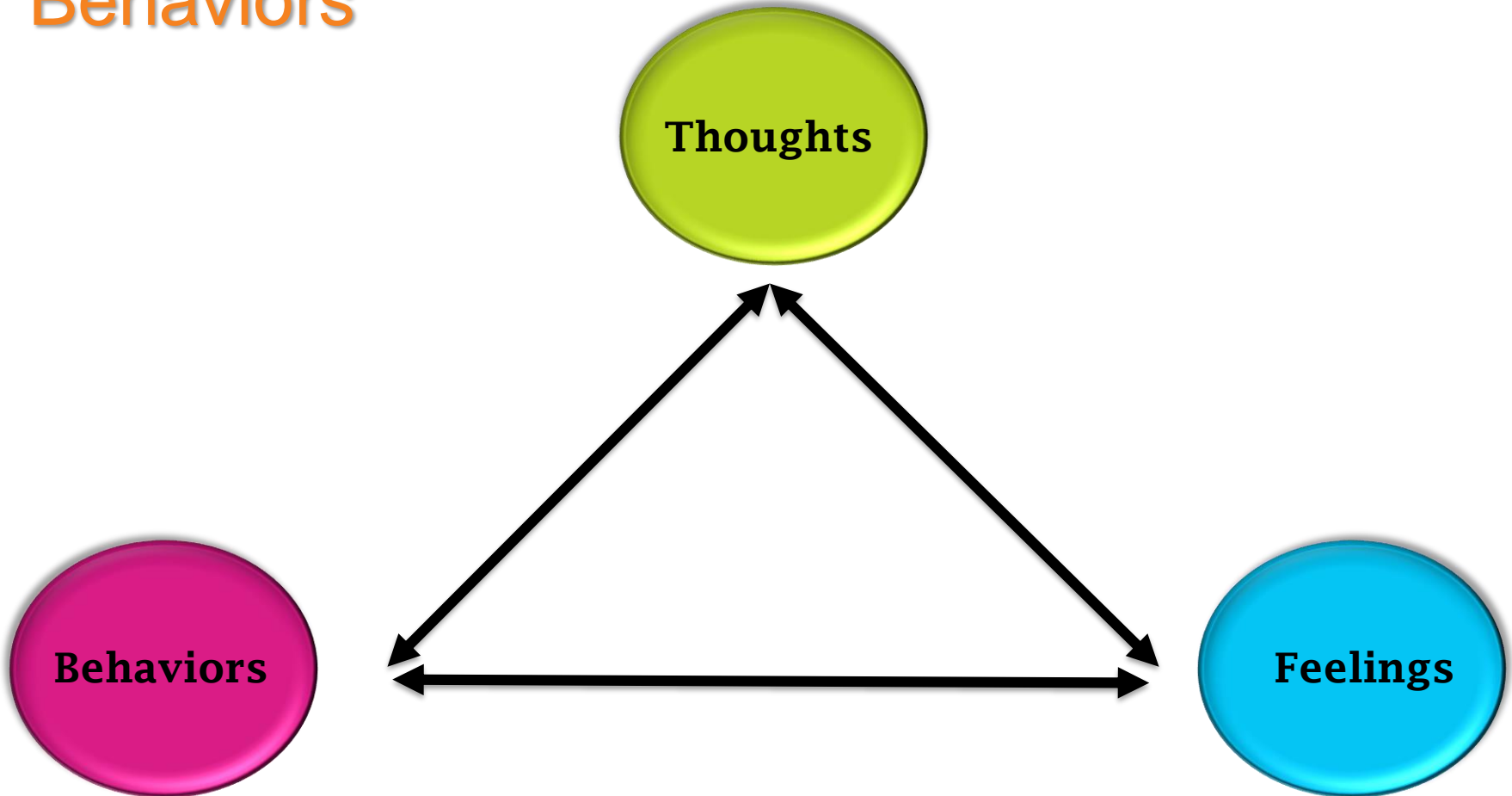
## 6. **CORRECTION**

- Do I need anything further?
- Increase structure and supervision
- Provide a consequence
- Problem solving

## 7. **REPAIR RELATIONSHIP**

- Do I need to repair the relationship so that the child knows he/she is loved unconditionally?

# Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors





## The Vaccine for Violence

- Attachment
- Self-Regulation
- Affiliation
- Attunement
- Tolerance
- Respect

# Video



- **The Science of Resilience**

# Key Concepts of Resilience



- One stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.
- Biological resistance to adversity *and* strong relationships with the important adults
- Learning to cope with manageable threats is critical for the development of resilience.

# Self reflection and Self care



- Be aware of your own emotional reactions
- Triggers
- Hotspots
- Practice self-care
- Practice self-reflection

# Sanctuary Model, 7 Elements



- Nonviolence
- Emotional Intelligence
- Inquiry and social learning
- Shared governance
- Open communication
- Social responsibility
- Growth and change

# Trauma can be healed



The roots of trauma lie in our instinctual physiologies. As a result, it is through our bodies, as well as our minds, that we discover the key to its healing.

The healing of trauma is a natural process that can be accessed through an inner awareness of the body.

Trauma evokes a biological response that needs to remain fluid and adaptive, not stuck and maladaptive.

Post-traumatic symptoms are fundamentally, incomplete physiological responses suspended in fear.

# Helpful Tools – Mindfulness

- Apps:
  - Take A Chill
  - iZen Garden
  - Silent Island Relaxation Lite
  - Enchanted Meditation
  - Headspace
- Books and online resources:
  - Mindsight Book - Dan Siegel
  - This is Your Brain on Mindfulness - Michael Baime
- Why we will come to see Mindfulness as Mandatory - Madeleine Bunting
- Tai Chi and Qi Gong - webmd.com
- Qigong Institute - qigonginstitute.org
- Audio:
  - Wheel of Awareness MP3- drdansiegel.com
  - Podcast: What Makes a Healthy Mind with Dr. Dan Siegel
  - Insight Meditation Society Audio Meditation - dharma.org

# Known Trauma-Specific Interventions

- Addiction and Trauma Recovery Integration Model (ATRIUM)
- Essence of Being Real
- Risking Connection
- Sanctuary Model
- Seeking Safety
- Trauma, Addiction, Mental Health, and Recovery (TAMAR)
- Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET)
- Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM and M-TREM)



# Recommended further reading



- Allan Schore
- Stephen Porges
- Bessel Van Der Kolk
- Jaak Panksepp
- Daniel Siegel
- Bruce Perry
- Pat Ogden
- Babette Rothschild
- Alan Fogel
- Susan Aposhyan
- Martin Teicher

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- <https://www.isrc.us/sites/default/files/workshops/Trauma%20FINAL%200collinsville.pdf> Dr. Bruce Perry's NME Core Concepts and Trauma Informed Practices
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