


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

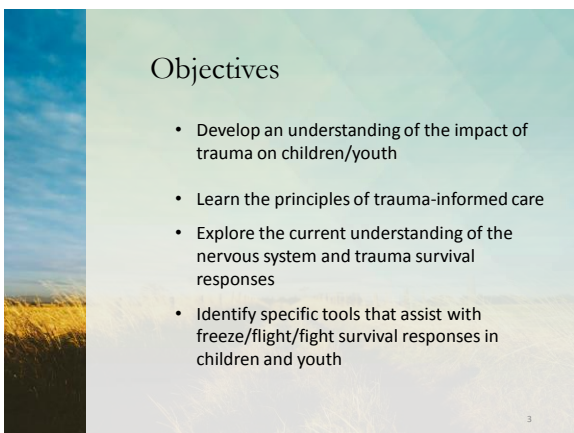
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Being Trauma-Informed

- Provides a new paradigm that views trauma as an injury
- The shift is from *"What is wrong with you?"* to *"What has happened to you?"*
- Understands freeze, flight and fight as survival responses
- Recognizes that trauma is pervasive
- ACE Study - Adverse Childhood Experiences
  - Trauma in childhood can impact adult physical and mental health (1998)
  - [www.acestoohigh.com](http://www.acestoohigh.com)

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Principles of Being Trauma-Informed

- Safety
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What Is Trauma?

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Defining Trauma

"Trauma is when we have encountered an out of control, frightening experience that has disconnected us from all sense of resourcefulness or safety or coping or love."

*Brach, 2011*

"...the common denominator of psychological trauma is the feeling of **"intense fear, helplessness, loss of control and threat of annihilation"**

*Herman, 1992*

7

---

---

---

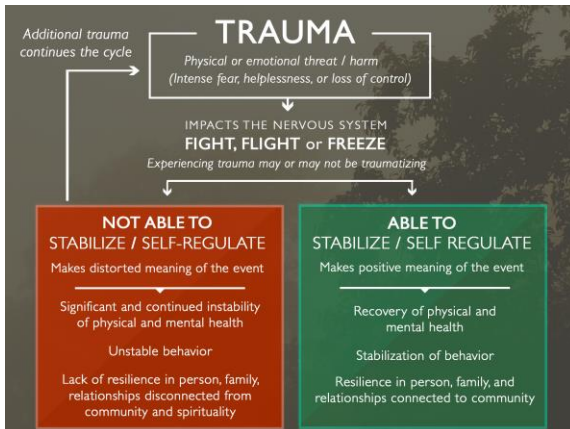
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## When A Child Or Adult's Trauma Is Unresolved

They often:

- Feel unsafe
- Feel disconnected from self, family, friends, community, spirituality
- Are unable to regulate mood, emotions, or behavior
- Live in freeze, flight and fight survival responses
- Are on guard, hyper-vigilant
- Feel helpless – A loss of choice and voice

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## History: How We Have Thought About Trauma

- We used **to not talk** about trauma
- **Then** we focused on telling your whole story
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD diagnosis added in 1980)
- **Now we talk** about the impact of trauma on the nervous system and how to regulate it
- **Now we are beginning to recognize** the impact of historical trauma
- **Now we are beginning** to acknowledge cultural differences in healing
- **Now we focus** on the importance of how we tell our stories in order to make meaning in our lives

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Making Sense of Trauma

- Trauma is in the responses of the nervous system (*Levine, 1997*)
- What is traumatic for one child or youth (adult) may not be for another:
  - Frequency, duration and severity of the traumatic event and their developmental stage
  - Moving from a mixed up story to a coherent narrative

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Keeping your balance

- We invite you to take a break and settle yourself:
  - Move in some way, take time to stretch
  - Take some deep even, slow breaths
  - Bring to mind someone who you find comforting
  - Have something to eat or drink

12

---

---

---

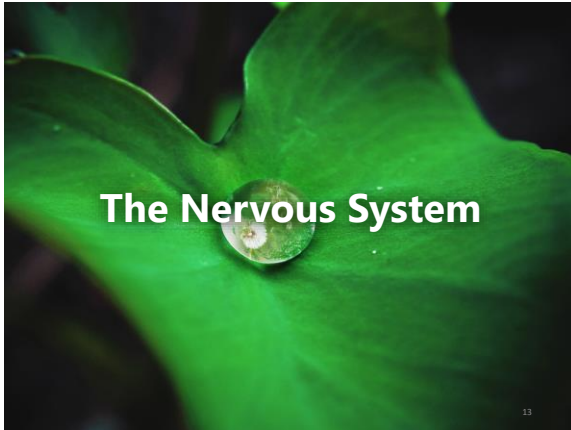
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Nervous System

**Definition :** Brain and all the nerves in the body

- Neuroplasticity **"What fires together wires together"** (Hebb, 1994)
- Sympathetic Nervous System
  - Think of it like the gas pedal on a car
- Parasympathetic Nervous System
  - Think of it like the brake pedal
- Genetics and temperament shapes children's responses

---

---

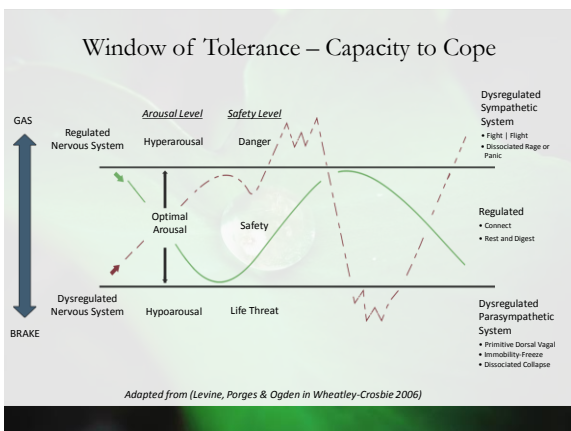
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Healthy Ways That You Can Regulate

- What do you do to put on the gas?
- What do you do to put on the brake?
- List three things that you do to self-regulate

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Brain & Development

---

---

---

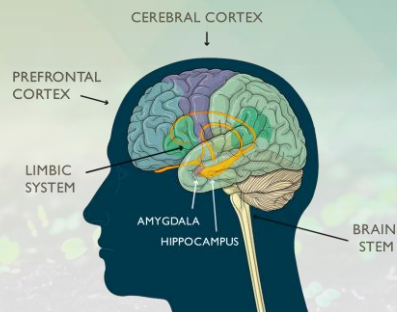
---

---

---

---

## Parts Of The Brain



18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## The Downstairs and Upstairs Brain

- The **"Downstairs Brain"** (Siegel and Bryson, 2011) includes the limbic region and the brain stem, it is more primitive and is responsible for:
  - Basic functions (*breathing, heart rate etc.*)
  - Survival Response (*fight, flight or freeze*)
  - Strong emotions (*anger, fear*)
  - Like a thermostat in regulation
- The **"Upstairs Brain"** (Siegel and Bryson, 2011) includes the cerebral cortex, is most recently evolved and is responsible for:
  - Executive Functioning (*thinking, imagining, planning*)
  - Soothing the **"Downstairs Brain"**

19

## The Downstairs and Upstairs Brain and Self-Regulation

- **Upstairs Brain – Under Construction**
  - Comes online more fully at age 2 and is fully developed by mid 20's
- Activated amygdala is like an alarm – blocks access to the Upstairs Brain
- Developmentally, children need another nervous system to help settle themselves
- During development the pathways in our brain are created for the survival responses of fight, flight, and freeze, as well as soothing

20

## Trauma and Development

- Children do not understand their nervous system, their body and how it responds to trauma
  - Children's understanding is shaped by the developmental stage they are in
- "Children's traumatizing experiences, particularly when chronic, can compromise all areas of childhood development..."

James, 1994

21

## Keeping your balance

- We invite you to take a break and settle yourself:
  - Get up and stretch, go for a walk
  - Take some deep, even, slow breaths
  - Call or text a friend
  - Listen to some music

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Working Towards Trauma Resolution

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Importance of Co-Regulation

- Using our own nervous system to help regulate another nervous system
  - Eventually leads to children practicing self-regulation
- Children and youth also respond to the adults reactions to the traumatic event
  - Positive and negative responses and reactions

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Working Towards Trauma Resolution

- Creating Safety and Stabilization
  - Developing resources
- Being empowered, having a voice, real choice and being able to collaborate
  - Working with/integrating memories  
(*or not*) is optional
- Developing Safe and Healthy Relationships
  - Developing a coherent story about the child, the trauma and their capacity to grow

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Trauma Begins To Be Resolved By...

- Learning to self-regulate
  - Increases capacity to cope and promotes resilience
  - Assists in mastering their developmental stage
- Making meaning
  - Creating a coherent story or narrative
  - Repair and Reconnect – with self and others
- Using appropriate resources – cultural, play
- Regaining Hope

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Keeping your balance

- We invite you to take a break and settle yourself
  - Stretch, move around your space
  - Take some deep, even, slow breaths
  - Look around your space. What do you notice
  - Notice if your space is the right temperature

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Understanding Freeze

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



### Why Focus on Freeze, Flight, and Fight?

- Central to being trauma-informed
- Recognizing that our survival responses are hard-wired in our nervous systems
- Describes many of the patterns of children and adults' behavior that we see and helps to make sense of why they happen

29

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



### Examples of Freeze

- Spacey, "***not here***"
- Disconnected from yourself
- Frozen, numb, can't move
- Stuck in some part of the body
- "***I don't know***" – and they don't
- No voice

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Dissociation Continuum

- Dissociation is adaptive and exists on a continuum (*Braun, 1988*)
- Daydreaming | Freeze | Shock
- A neurobiological event that occurs under extreme stress can result in blocked memory and emotions, bodily numbness (*Rothschild, 2000*)
- To split consciousness in some way resulting in distortions of experience and memory (*Rothschild, 2000, 2010*)

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tools For Responding To Freeze

- Settle your body, engage your upstairs brain, use your curiosity (*Siegel and Bryson, 2011*)
- Notice their bodily sensations – feet on the floor, seat on the chair, take a deep breath
- Connect to the present – ask them to name something in the room they see - a neutral object (**not you**) 5-4-3-2-1 exercise
- Remind them they are going to be ok – how can they notice this
- Understanding freeze helps develop a sense of control

32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Flashbacks - Connecting To The Present

- Flashbacks are memories that do not know they are memories
- Help them learn skills to connect to the present
- Help them know that **"it"** is over
- Flashback protocol (*Rothschild, 2000, 2010*)

33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Keeping Your Balance




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Understanding Readiness and Flight




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Readiness – Try This

- Imagine a small child is running towards you, full speed, wanting to give you a hug
- How would you stand so as not to be tipped over when you catch them
  - Place one foot a little ahead of the other
  - Bend your knees, tightening your muscles
  - Hold your arms open, tightening your muscles preparing to catch the child
  - Remember to breathe
- Notice what it is like to hold this position

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Examples of Flight

- Restless, fidgety
- Jumpy legs
- Big or darting eyes
- Feeling trapped, ***“gotta’ get out of here”***
- Wanting to get away
- Rapid breathing
- Pounding heart

37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tools For Flight

- Settle your body, engage your upstairs brain, use your curiosity (Bryson and Siegel, 2011)
- Name it to tame it (Bryson and Siegel, 2011)
  - Validating the impulse to get away and helping them to understand this is survival response
  - Listening for, acknowledging where they would want to be
- Encourage Movement - squirming, fidgeting, pacing
  - Engage them in moving their bodies, this promotes self regulation
- Insisting on direct eye contact can be threatening

38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tools For Flight (Cont.)

- Predictability and planning – co-regulating
- Create an imaginary safe place within themselves
- Containment exercises – using large muscle groups of the legs
- Maintaining connection
  - Expressing worry vs. anger about their desire to run away or when they actually run away
  - Negotiating contact using phone calls, texts, emails, Facebook, twitter
  - Reconnecting - What message do you want to communicate when they return?

39

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

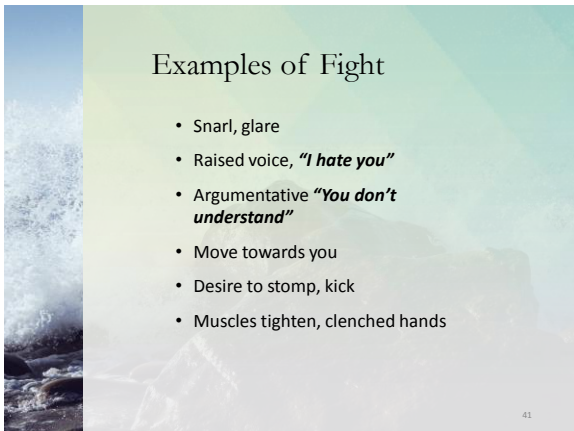
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## We're Stuck – Adults and Kids Caught in Fight

- Getting stuck is inevitable for both adults and kids
- Your acknowledging **"being stuck"** helps kids (and adults) recognize their pattern
- **"Stuck"** is a discussion you can share separate from the argument
- The two sides are often saying **"don't yell"** or **"you're not listening to me"**
- Allows you to reassure and repair the rupture after a fight or getting stuck
- **"We will find a way to get through this, we will get unstuck."**

43

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How to talk to children about freeze, flight and fight

### Do:

- Create a sense of safety
- Make the experience playful and fun
- Engage everyone's curiosity
- Learn what helps them settle
- Stop when needed and help them to settle
- Have caregivers &/or parents participate fully

### Don't:

- Make children or youth talk about their past experiences
- Scare children to demonstrate what survival responses are like

Resource available at [www.makingsenseoftrauma.ca](http://www.makingsenseoftrauma.ca)

44

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Mindfulness

45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What Is Mindfulness

"Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally"

*Kabat-Zinn, 1994*

- Examples of mindfulness practices: eating mindfully, walking meditation, meditation, centering prayer,
- Many examples of guided mindfulness practices on YouTube or other resources online

46

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Keeping Your Balance

### Guided Meditation

Guided Meditation- Oxford Mindfulness  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVW\\_1E1nsKE&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVW_1E1nsKE&feature=related)

■

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Compassion

- We are all compassionate when we show empathy, love and kindness to others.
- The incredible power of compassion is that it renews the receiver and the giver.
- Importance of self-compassion in healing  
[www.chcm-ccsm.ca/compassion-project](http://www.chcm-ccsm.ca/compassion-project)  
[www.self-compassion.org](http://www.self-compassion.org)  
[www.mindfulselfcompassion.org](http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org)

48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### When More Bad Things Happen

- Give age appropriate information
- Keep a routine
- Limit access to TV, particularly news, or watch with them
- Offer reassurance/information
  - I am here
  - We are going to get through this
- It is appropriate to seek help if changes in behaviour persist past 6-8 weeks
- Get assistance for yourself
- Further training – [mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://mentalhealthfirstaid.ca)

50

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### How To Listen To Trauma Stories

- Co-regulation
  - Keeping yourself regulated
- Helping them self-regulate
  - Connect to the present, notice their breath and heart rate - managing your own response
- Listening to the story and staying within the window of tolerance
  - Start at the end of the story (*if possible*)
  - Interrupting gently, taking a break, hearing a little bit of the story at a time if possible
- What's helping them get through
  - If you can, start by helping them know they will get through the current challenge

51

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Creating New Pathways

- Pathways are created in our brain when we repeat a pattern of thoughts or images over and over, negative or positive patterns.
  - Create opportunities for integration with new pathways
  - Promotes self-regulation and stability
- How to create new pathways:
  - Imagine having the help from a trusted adult (missing resource)
  - Imagine a safe place
  - Practicing new self or co-regulation strategies

52

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



## Grief And Sadness

- Loss threatens a persons sense of safety, mastery and control
  - Especially for children who are in care: They have lost a great deal when they come into care family relationships, possessions, community
- Children grieve at their developmental age not necessarily their chronological age
- It is important to create space, time and rituals to enable a child to grieve
  - Be present
  - Acknowledging sadness/anger can be the first step
  - Helping them recognize that the waves of emotion/sensation can pass
  - Teach them to settle themselves
  - Help them to honor who or what they are grieving

53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## How We Heal Is In Relationship

- Ruptures occur in all relationships
- Repair is a choice we all make – offering a gesture of repair or accepting it
  - Children often make small gestures of repair that are overlooked e.g. can you play with me
  - Offering repair teaches and models for children how to build and maintain healthy relationships
  - You and the child know that the relationship is restored (*the amygdala has been settled*) when the gesture of repair is accepted
- How might you offer or accept a gesture of repair?
- Can you and your child plan how you will repair after the next rupture?

54

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---






---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



### When My Nervous System Is Regulated

- I am operating within my window of tolerance
- I feel: curious, connected to my body, open to connect, competent, relaxed yet alert, responsive and present
- I know I have choices and options and can reach out for support
- I recognize when I am moving out of my window of tolerance and have tools to re-establish stability

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Laughing Baby

What regulation of a nervous system looks like...



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Becoming Trauma-Informed

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



## Principles of Being Trauma-Informed

- Safety
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Cultural, historical and gender issues
- Recognizing that trauma is pervasive
- Understanding freeze, flight and fight responses

59

---

---

---

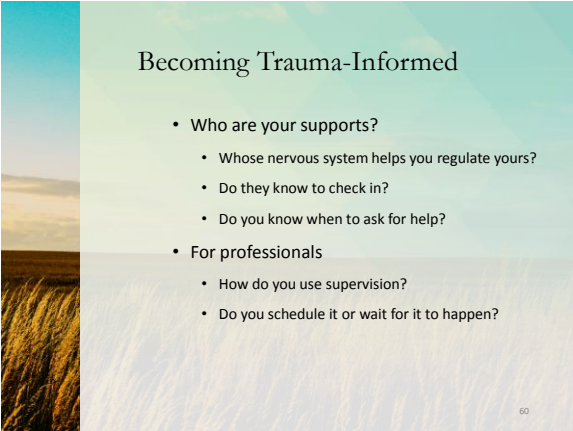
---

---

---

---

---



## Becoming Trauma-Informed

- Who are your supports?
  - Whose nervous system helps you regulate yours?
  - Do they know to check in?
  - Do you know when to ask for help?
- For professionals
  - How do you use supervision?
  - Do you schedule it or wait for it to happen?

60

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Making Sense of Trauma For Children And Youth

- Assisting children/youth/adults in understanding freeze/flight/fight and how their bodies respond to threat
- Learning to self-regulate
- Reconnection and repair of relationships
- Making meaning – Help children and youth create or imagine a possible ending to the story
- Back on track developmentally – We need to be able to differentiate between healthy development and responses to trauma

61

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Thank you for your attention  
and participation.**

62

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---