



# The Impact of Trauma on a Child's Brain and Body

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# Objectives

## Part 2:

Discuss mechanisms to reset the Stress Response Dysregulation

Concrete examples for everyday issues

Recommendations for treatment, books, activities

Real-life trauma survivors

# Put on Your Trauma Lens



# Stress Response Dysregulation

Emotional coaching

Consistency and predictability

Alter the environment

Grounding techniques

Nutrition, sleep, exercise

Hormone regulation

Trauma therapy

# Emotional Coaching



# Emotional Coaching

   **List of Feelings**   

	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Sad</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Other feelings</b>	
	Calm	Ashamed	Annoyed	Afraid	
	Cheerful	Awful	Bugged	Anxious	
	Confident	Disappointed	Destructive	Ashamed	
	Content	Discouraged	Disgusted	Bored	
	Delighted	Gloomy	Frustrated	Confused	
	Excited	Hurt	Fuming	Curious	
	Glad	Lonely	Furious	Embarrassed	
	Loved	Miserable	Grumpy	Jealous	
	Proud	Sorry	Irritated	Moody	
	Relaxed	Unhappy	Mad	Responsible	
	Satisfied	Unloved	Mean	Scared	
	Silly	Withdrawn	Violent	Shy	
	Terrific			Uncomfortable	
	Thankful			Worried	

[www.RewardCharts4Kids.com](http://www.RewardCharts4Kids.com)

      

# Emotional Coaching



# Consistency and Predictability

- Increases a sense of safety as the world becomes less scary and more predictable
- Over time allows the child to relax their vigilance and control
- They have less energy devoted to fight/flight/or freeze
- It opens the door for reshaping their development
- Aids the child in their ability to organize their world
- This is not to be confused with rigidity—consistency still allows for flexibility



# Consistency and Predictability

- Set a schedule: mealtimes, naps, bedtime
  - Mealtimes--sit at table, adjust table sitting to each child, utensils
  - Naps—sleep in same place
  - Bedtime routines—bath/book/teeth/stories
  - Find time to play every day
- Consistency allows child to be less vigilant, relax in the environment, and able to emotionally regulate
- Transfer these skills to school setting
  - Sit in same spot every day
  - Let child know the plan for the day
  - Consider the non-scheduled times (recess, lunch) and how to support

# Alter the Environment

Placement in the room, small vs large environment, busy or quiet

Introduce objects/tools slowly with added time for adjustment

Frequent breaks, anticipate and plan for transitions

Monitor response to transitions, meals, change

When you start to see emotional dysregulation, slow down, regroup

Safe place for emotional reset

Demonstrate how to take an emotional break and regroup



# Alter the Environment

- Areas that cause fear/discomfort:
  - Bathrooms, bed, closets, basements
  - Lights, sounds, touch, heat/cold
  - Playgrounds, museums, restaurants, relatives
- Consider altering silverware, cups, food containers for ease of use and fewer accidents.
- Child may not be able to fold laundry, hang clothing on hangars, clean up room, put away toys. Alter environment to accommodate their abilities.

# Grounding Skills

Grounding skills are useful for traumatized kids when:

The child is experiencing a flashback

The child is triggered

The child is dissociating/tuning out/shut down

The child needs to reconnect to the present

The child needs help to feel safe

The child needs help to modulate arousal

# Grounding Tools

Sight--visual cards, look out the window

Smell—lotions on hand/wrist, teabags

Taste—cinnamon gum, hard candy

Touch—squishy ball, playdough

Hearing—music, singing, noise reducing headphones

# Nutrition, Sleep, Exercise

Nutrition: Teach parent and child healthy choices, small changes frequently

Sleep: Address first and continually readdress

Exercise: Must be natural and fun, 60 minutes of increased heart rate every day



# Transition Objects

**Help a child change from one situation or environment to another**

**No age limit on having a transition object**

**No sex restriction on type of object**

Blankets, necklace, rocks, stuffed animal, picture, anything with special meaning to the child



## Bruce Perry

“The only way to move from a super-high anxiety state, to a more calm cognitive state, is rhythm. Patterned, repetitive rhythmic activity: walking, running, dancing, singing, repetitive meditative breathing, you use brainstem related somatosensory networks which make your brain accessible to relational reward and cortical thinking.”



# Examples of Rhythmic Physical Movement

- Yoga
- Swimming
- Singing
- Drumming
- Roller/ice skating
- Crocheting/knitting
- Walking/running
- Biking
- Skateboarding
- Deep breathing









# Take Home Points

- Trauma to children causes brain damage, changes their epigenetics and immune system, and alters their development
- Children are resilient: every one of us is a part of their resiliency. Hope can be built.
- Recognizing trauma related behaviors in children is important so the reaction to the behavior does not further traumatize the child
- Traumatized children can be repaired
- Treating, teaching, and parenting traumatized children is exhausting but very rewarding

# Resources

## **National Child Traumatic Stress Network**

Act of Congress 2005, in response to 9/11 and the national trauma experienced by children affected by this act of terrorism

## **Center for Youth Wellness, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, TED talk**

## **Washington State Department of Social and Health Services**

- 1-866-END HARM (1-866-363-4276)
- Mandatory Reporters

## **Education: Darkness to Light**

- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Trainings and resources

<http://www.edutopia.org>

<http://massadvocates.org/tlpi/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/index.html>

## **Paper Tigers Documentary**



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