



Trauma and It's Link to Youth Gangs

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Goals

- The influence that trauma can have on young people wanting to engage in gang activity
- The estimated prevalence rates of trauma in who engage in gangs
- The reason why youth feel insulated against suffering further trauma when they join gangs
- The dance that needs to occur in order to engage youth without becoming complicit and enabling of the gang culture that they live in
- The importance of supporting youth with stabilization before going into their traumas.

Thoughts...

‘ If we think we are fragile and broken, we will live a fragile, broken life. If we believe we are strong and wise, we will live with enthusiasm and courage. The way we name ourselves colors the way we live. Who we are is in our own eyes. We must be careful how we name ourselves.’

- Wayne Muller

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Condition where physiological and psychological processes are in a state of disequilibrium, altered by trauma impact.
- Involves intrusive symptoms with subjective loss of control and lack of awareness of trauma triggers, but fear of them.

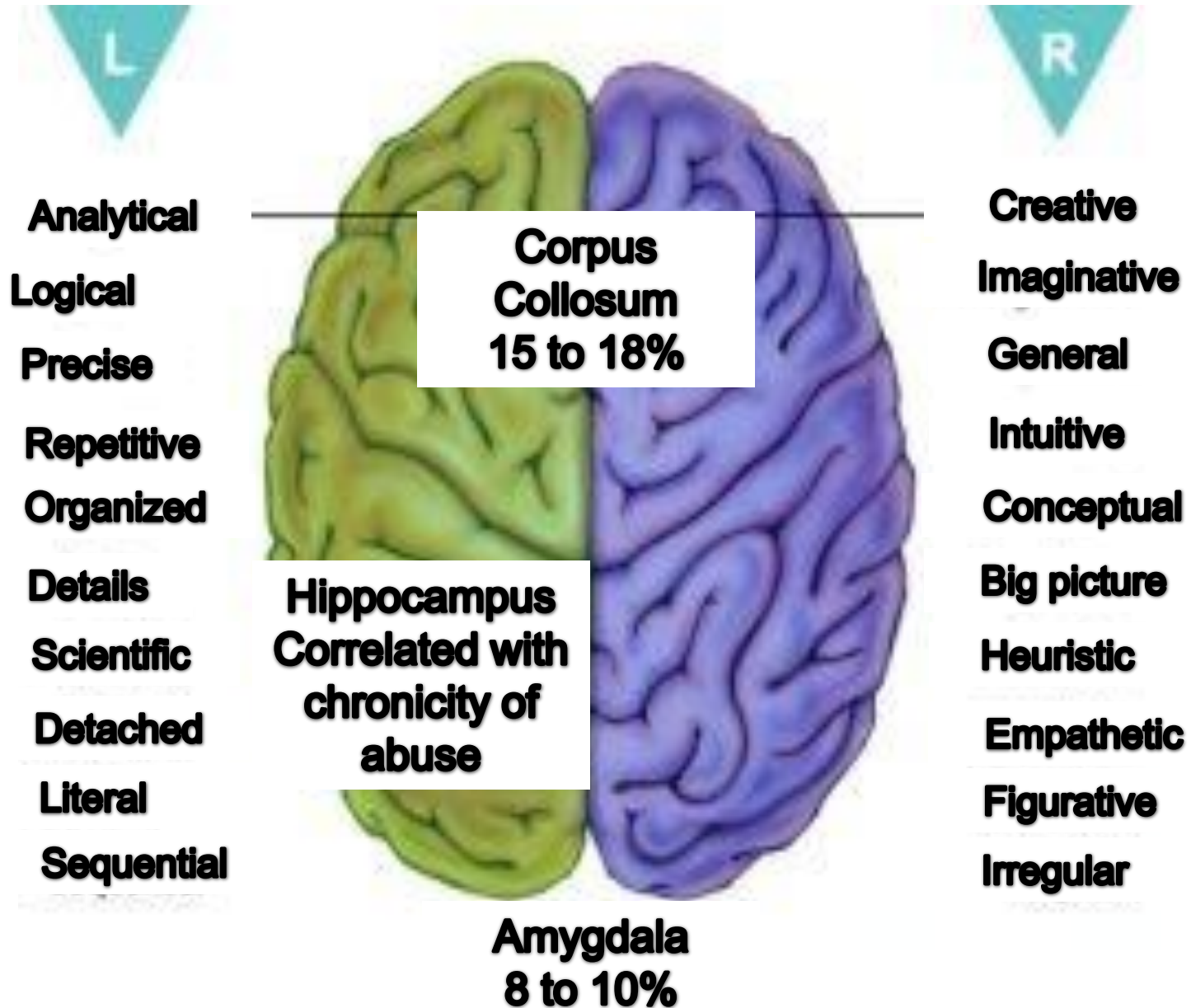
Tyrone – Alexia -- John

Trauma and Dysregulation

- Early trauma leads to affect dysregulation due to excess stimulation of Central Nervous System (CNS).
- Youth have problems learning how to regulate the intensity of feelings and impulses.
- Results in a wide array of problems- physical and mental.
- Inability to identify specific emotions.
- **Hard to live in body** (somatic reactions occur).

Tyrone – Alexia -- John

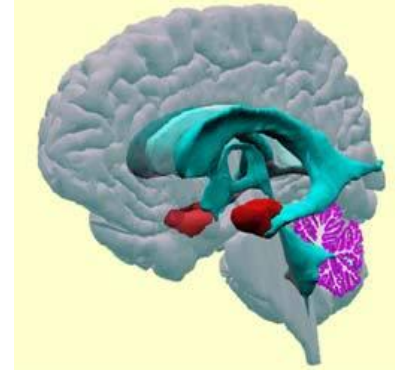
Psychophysiology of Trauma



Putting this into Context - J

- Context setting
- Father in the gangs and guns unit
- Comes in late
- I needed to get him thinking
- Offer choices
- Discuss consequences and options

Amygdala



- Shown in **red** is the emotional control center of the brain.
- When smaller this can lead to depression, irritability and hostility.
- We can instantly feel emotions and perceive them in others.
- Amygdala helps us recognize early danger signs & activate fight or flight response to mobilize out of danger.
- Bottom Up experience – we feel it before we cognitively register the trigger.

Case Scenario: Tye

- 18 going on 50
- Constant state of arousal – always feels unsafe and struggles to come to program without his gun
- Remembers his first “beatings” at 3
- At 6 remembers giving them when bullied for smelling bad
- Didn’t mean to hurt people but couldn’t help it
- PTSD makes his life more difficult

Needs for Connection

- Joined a gang for protection.
- Joined to have a family.
- Joined to be connected.

Struggles With Connection

- Trust issues effecting friendships and relationships – (I get jealous)
- Has hostages not friends
- The smells (alcohol from his stepfathers beatings) - Subway
- He hears people arguing, loud noises etc.
- Someone looks at him
- His nervous system is hijacked and...

Hippocampus

- Functions to retrieve verbal and emotional memories.
- Places our experiences in categories;
- Size decrease is correlated with chronicity of the abuse.
- Leads to a difficulty in attention and concentration and many do not remember details about important life experiences.
- When the Amygdala is stimulated it bypasses the hippocampus – we then are unable to access logic, previous experiences...

AJ

- Age 18
- Kicked out of house at 17
- Suffered incest from father and uncle from the age of 9
- Would be doing well in the program until she:
 - Was complimented,
 - Was looked at by boys
 - Her worker was not paying attention to her
- She then dissociates or starts to fight.
- Struggles when things are good i.e.:

AROUSAL LEVELS

- ✓ **When exposed to repetitive crisis;**
 - ✓ **Our arousal begins to rise;**
- ✓ **Hyper or Hypo arousal becomes the constant State;**
 - ✓ **This influences positively and negatively how we deal with conflict?**

When Over-Reaction is a Theme

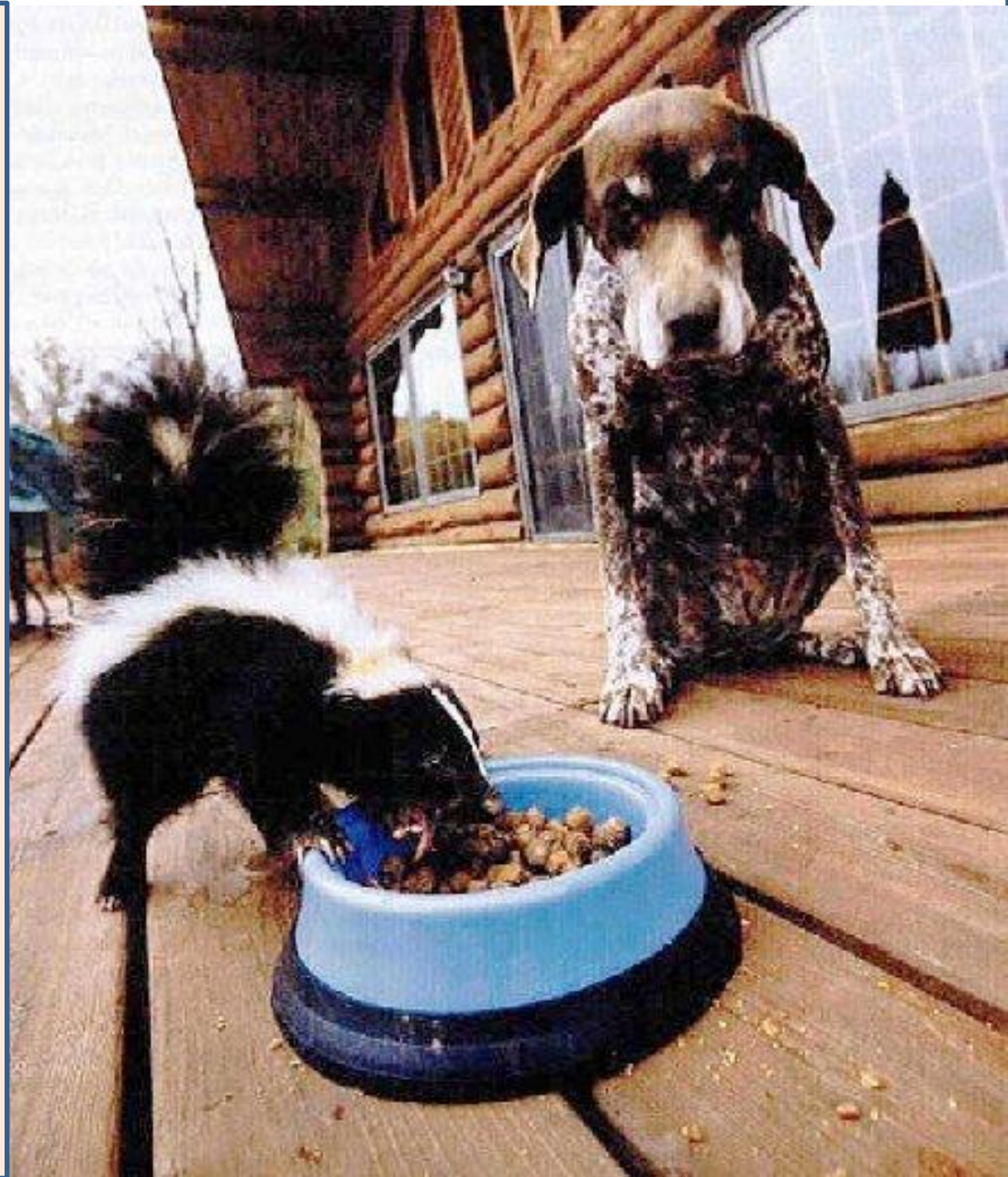
- Teach them about the brain
- Help them learn how to think when getting angry
- Teach them skills to do:
 - Deep breathing
 - Grounding skills

REMEMBER

 It is **BETTER**
TO be **EFFECTIVE**
Than it is to be
RIGHT

**Two of the
greatest
qualities in life
are:**

- 1. Patience**
- 2. Wisdom**



Things to Think About

- Emphasizes **Collaboration** between the therapist and client
- **Evocation** (i.e., eliciting intrinsic motivation from the client),
- **Autonomy** requires the client to be responsible for change.

After a Shooting

C – I am going to pop a cap in...

W – So you do that and what happens?

C – I don't care

W – Damien – what will happen?

D – they coming back to us

W- (looking at Chris) so Damien is dead – who is next.

C – (cocks his fist to punch the wall and stops – Kisses his lips – he is thinking!)

Ved

- PTSD
- Struggle to not bring weapons to work
- Feels terrified but appears tough as nails
- Is tough as nails
- People respect and fear him
- After warning him – I have to let him go (fire) him from the program

Breathing Exercises

- Sipping – have your client pretend to be taking deep breaths through a straw. Inhale is through the straw, exhale is through the nose.
- Three to Six breaths – have your client inhale deeply to the count of three and exhale for up to six seconds.
 - Contraindication – this could make people feel lightheaded.

BIO Formula

- **Behaviour** Identify the behaviour or situation;..
- **Impact** Be specific about how it impacts you;
- **Options/Outcome** Let them know what you want to see happen – give options.

Sensory Grounding and Containment

Body 3 - 2 - 1

NAME	SEE	HEAR	FEEL
Three things you:			
Two things you:			
One thing you:			

Safe Place

Visualization/Filmmaking

- So let's go to your "happy place."
 - Tell me - can you see... ?
 - What is _____ doing?
 - What are you doing?
 - What do you...
-
- The job of the worker is to have discussed something that the person enjoys and **work** to have them visualize the experience.
 - Please use the template to assist you.

Safety & Stabilization

Body

Trigger List & Titration

- Time-out (braking explained)
- Trigger List (age related)
- Use brakes when needed
- Create guardrails (limit discussion – how many words the person can use to describe an event)
- SUD'S Rating “Titration”
- Add till complete

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Putting Theory to *Action*

How you *know* you have *learned*:

- If you *feel* differently
- *Think* differently
- *Act* differently

Name three areas where you will use the skills – *brainstorm!*

