ATTACH: 2016
Keynote: Mistrust to Trust

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The Neurobiology of Attachment-focused Therapy, Norton, 2016
And Brain Based Parenting, Norton, 2012

AGENDA

- EXPERIENCE-BASED BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
- "NEUROCEPTION AND "INTERSTATE TRAVEL": THE BRAIN ELEVATOR
- SOCIAL BUFFERING: HOW GOOD CARE PROTECTS THE CHILD'S BRAIN FROM TOO MUCH STRESS AND PROMOTES SECURE ATTACHMENT
- BLOCKED TRUST: ADAPTING TO VERY POOR CARE...... BLOCKING THE PAIN OF REJECTION, DISSOCIATING, SUPPRESSING SOCIAL EMOTIONS, "PROVISIONING", "MANIPULATING", RESISTING AUTHORITY, STORY TELLING AND SWEAT-FREE LYING, ETC.
- BLOCKED CARE: WHEN CARING IS TOO STRESSFUL
- MUTUAL MISTRUST: BLOCKED CHANGE, NEGATIVE CYCLES, HOPELESSNESS
- TRUSTBUILDING AND THE KEY CYCLE: ATTUNEMENT, MISATTUNEMENT, REPAIR....... REAWAKENING THE CHILD'S POTENTIAL TO TRUST AND DEPEND ON A CARING CAREGIVER

AGENDA, CONT’D

- RESTORING THE BLOCKED “CALL AND RESPONSE” DYADIC SYSTEM: REAWAKENING THE CHILD'S ABILITY TO FEEL THE NEED FOR COMFORT, REQUEST IT, AND GET IT.... REVIVING THE NATURAL CHEMISTRY OF PARENT-CHILD BONDING (OPIOIDS/ OXYTOCIN/DOPAMINE)
- EMBRACING THE HULK: CARING FOR THE WHOLE CHILD, MISTRUST AND ALL... GETTING ABOVE "IT’S PERSONAL"
- NEURODYNAMICS OF CHANGE: SHIFTING THE CHILD’S DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY
- STORY TELLING, STORY VOICE, EMBODYING NEW NARRATIVES
- GOOD SURPRISES: VIOLATING CHILDREN'S NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS TO AWAKE THEIR BRAINS TO THE "GOOD NEWS" OF BEING SAFE HERE, WITH ME
- THE 4 Rs OF BRAIN CHANGE: REVERSAL, RECONSOLIDATION, REFLECTION, REAPPRAISAL
- PACE: A STATE OF MIND FOR BEING A TRUSTBUILDER
- WHOLE BRAIN CAREGIVING: MANAGING STRESS AND STRENGTHENING THE ABILITY TO BE A PACEFUL, AMYGDALA-WHISPERING, CINGULATING TRUSTBUILDER
POOR TENDING ACTIVATES PREMATURE DEFENDING

AND........ THIS DEFENDING CAN BECOME A CHRONIC PROCESS = BLOCKED TRUST

DEFENSE SYSTEM/ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM

BLOCKED TRUST: WHEN YOUNG CHILDREN BLOCK THE PAIN OF REJECTION AND THE CAPACITY TO DELIGHT IN ORDER TO SURVIVE IN A WORLD WITHOUT COMFORT AND JOY

BLOCKED CARE: WHEN THE CHILD’S BLOCKED TRUST TRIGGERS THE SUPPRESSION OF CARING IN THE CARER

A BRAIN-BASED MODEL OF TREATMENT: UNBLOCKING BLOCKED TRUST AND BLOCKED CARE TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN TO TRUST SAFE, TRUSTWORTHY CAREGIVERS

STAGES OF BRAIN AND DEVELOPMENT

STAGE ONE: VERTICAL INTEGRATION
FRONTAL—LIMBIC CIRCUIT
0-18 MONTHS
(ESSENTIAL FOR BASIC SELF-REGULATION)

STAGE TWO: HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION
LEFT AND RIGHT INTERACTION: brain balance, non verbal and verbal, forest and trees, feelings into words

STAGE THREE: LATERAL INTEGRATION
FRONTAL—PARIETAL CONNECTION, MATURATION OF THE DLPC
17-25 YEARS
Goal-directed Thinking; sustained caring; "effortful control" Of impulses; ABILITY TO GET ABOVE "IT'S PERSONAL"

ALL INVOLVE GENE-EXPERIENCE INTERACTIONS: EPIGENETIC BRAIN DEVELOPMENTAL
Divergent Developmental Pathways in Response to the Quality of Early Care

GOOD CARE

THE TRUSTING BRAIN

FEELINGS
COGNITIONS
BEHAVIOR

POOR CARE

THE MISTRUSTING BRAIN

FEELINGS
COGNITIONS
BEHAVIOR

NEUROCEPTION (Stephen Porges, the polyvagal theory)

ULTRA-FAST, VERY ROUGH APPRAISAL OF SAFETY AND THREAT: MUCH TOO FAST FOR CONSCIOUS PROCESSING AND “THINKING”

“BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY”

ENVIRONMENT

NERVOUS SYSTEM

amygdala

SAFETY

DANGER

LIFE THREAT, NO ESCAPE

DEFENSE: ACTIVE FIGHT, FLIGHT
DEFENSE: PASSIVE FREEZE AND DISSOCIATE

INTERSTATE TRAVEL OR THE “ELEVATOR” MODEL OF THE BRAIN:

SAFE ENOUGH TO NOT PLAY DEFENSE: SOCIAL STATE OF MIND

ACTIVE SELF DEFENSE: BEAT ‘EM UP OR RUN

PASSIVE SELF DEFENSE: NO ESCAPE, SO PLAY DEAD, DISSOCIATE

PLAYFUL, JOYFUL, CURIOUS LOVING ME
OPEN/ENGAGED

FIGHTIN’/FLEEN’IN’ ME
FIGHT/FLIGHT

FROZEN ME
FREEZE-IN-FRIGHT
PEOPLE PROCESSING: MULTI-REGIONAL BRAIN SYSTEM

- A= amygdala
- H= hippocampus
- FG= fusiform gyrus
- STG= superior temporal gyrus
- OFC= orbital frontal cortex
- MPFC= middle prefrontal cortex

MID BRAIN ALARM SYSTEM: HIGHJACKING THE CHILD’S BRAIN

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS: EMOTION REGULATION, EMPATHY, SELF CONTROL

ATTACHMENT-FOCUSED TREATMENT

STRESS HORMONES: CORTISOL, CRH

EARLY LIFE TRAUMA

SALENCE NETWORK: EMOTIONAL IMPORTANCE/PERSOAL RELEVANCE

DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR: FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE

AROUSAL: HEART RATE, BREATHING, ETC.

THE STRESS RESPONSE CIRCUIT: TURNING ON, TURNING OFF, “LOCKING ON”

HYPOTHALAMUS

CORTISOL

CRH

ACTH

ADRENAL GLAND

PITUITARY GLAND

AMYGDALA

Hippocampus

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Hippocampus is not fully functional in the first year of life. Also, stress hormones can damage the hippocampus.
CHRONIC STRESS on THE BRAIN: Different Effects Depending on Age of Exposure and Type of Stress

- Loss of Dendritic Branches and Synapses
- Damage to the Hippocampus
- Underdevelopment of the corpus callosum, mid region
- Overactivation of the right side, underdevelopment of the left
- Underdevelopment of the cerebellar vermis
- Underdevelopment of PFC

EXPERIENCE ON THE BRAIN: EPIGENETIC EFFECTS

- Gene Expression
- Gene Code
- Activation Zone
- "ON" (Acetylation)
- "OFF" (Methylation)
- Genes for:
  - Oxytocin Receptor
  - Serotonin Receptors
  - Dopamine Receptors
  - Estrogen Receptors
  - Cortisol Receptors
  - Brain Growth Factors: BDNF

THE CARING SYSTEM IN THE BRAIN: WE CAN TURN IT ON AND OFF, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION AND WHETHER OR NOT IT FEELS SAFE TO CARE

- Amygdala
- Insula
- Corpus Callosum
MUTUAL DEFENSE SOCIETY  
(MUTUAL MISTRUST SOCIETY)

BLOCKED TRUST + BLOCKED CARE

"I don’t trust you!!!"

"I don’t trust you!"

CHRONIC MISTRUST

MUTUAL DEFENSE SOCIETY

NO CHANGE: NO SURPRISES, NO “VIOLATIONS OF EXPECTATIONS”, NO “NEWS OF A DIFFERENCE” TO TRIGGER “REVERSAL LEARNING”, ETC.

NO “POSITIVE PREDICTION ERRORS”

I don’t trust you!!!

I don’t trust you!!!!

CHRONIC MISTRUST

CORE CONCEPTS: THE STEPS TO HEALING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

CO-CONSTRUCTING NEW MEANING AND DEVELOPING COHERENT NARRATIVES TO REPLACE TRAUMA-DRIVEN BELIEFS

REPROCESSING IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT FEAR-DRIVEN MEMORIES IN CONTEXT OF A SAFE RELATIONSHIP: DESENSITIZATION AND RECONSOLIDATION

AWAKENING THE SUPPRESSED ATTACHMENT SYSTEM AND THE CAREGIVING SYSTEM: CREATING NEW POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF BEING NURTURED

SOCIAL BUFFERING AND TRUSTBUILDING: COREGULATING THE CHILD’S NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AND QUIETING THE HYPERACTIVE SALIENCE NETWORK

The Trust-Building

Process: PUTTING CONNECTION OVER CORRECTION

- ATTUNEMENT, MISATTUNEMENT, REPAIR
- SAFETY MESSAGES TO THE AMYGDALA: DISARMING THE DEFENSE SYSTEM AND BECOMING A SOCIAL BUFFER
- NON VERBALS TRUMP LANGUAGE: FACE, VOICE, TOUCH, GESTURE
- GOOD SURPRISES: POSITIVE PREDICTION ERRORS
- REVERSAL LEARNING: MISTRUST TO TRUST
- EXPOSURE AND RESPONSE PREVENTION: REPROCESSING IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT FEAR-BASED MEMORIES OF FRIGHTENING “CARE”
- AWAKENING THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX FOR NEW LEARNING
- “SET SHIFTING”: CHANGING CORE BELIEFS ABOUT SELF, RELATIONSHIPS, SAFETY USING THE MIDDLE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND THE DLPFC
INTERGENERATIONAL ATTACHMENT-FOCUSED TREATMENT: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INSECURITY
WORKING WITH PARENTS “FROM THE INSIDE OUT”: HELPING PARENTS MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS AND DEVELOP COMPASSION FOR THE CHILD’S MISTRUST

IS IT PERSONAL?

ENGAGING AND COACHING CAREGIVERS: MORE CONNECTING, LESS CORRECTING, THE SHIFT TOWARDS ATTACHMENT-BASED PARENTING

DEALING WITH SURVIVAL ISSUES: FOOD, MONEY, HOUSING

HEALING INTERGENERATIONAL BLOCKAGES

COACHING AND GUIDING: WE’RE IN THIS TOGETHER AND I HAVE A ROADMAP

BUILDING TRUST AND ADDRESSING BLOCKED CARE: PACEfully, WITHOUT JUDGING, WITH COMPASSION AND DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE STRESS OF PARENTING A CHILD WITH BLOCKED TRUST
On Being a Social Buffering, Cingulating, Amygdala Whisperer....

**PACE**: PLAYFULNESS, ACCEPTANCE, CURIOSITY, EMPATHY

**SOCIAL BUFFERING**: SENDING SAFETY MESSAGES INTO THE BRAIN OF THE MISTRUSTING CHILD

- FACE (KIND EYES)
- VOICE (PROSODY)
- SOOTHING TOUCH

Adult’s compassionate state of mind towards the child enables the adult to send calming nonverbal messages to the child’s amygdala, facilitating the switching process in the child’s brain from defensiveness to engagement.

- PACE
  - **Playfulness**: Light, hopeful, open and spontaneous
  - **Acceptance**: Unconditionally directed at all of the experience of the other
  - **Curiosity**: Nonjudgmental, not-knowing, active interest in the other’s experience
  - **Empathy**: Felt sense of the other; actively experienced and communicated.