

# Why Connect? Insights from the recent neuroscience. ACRC 'Curating Quality' Conference

8/4/2021

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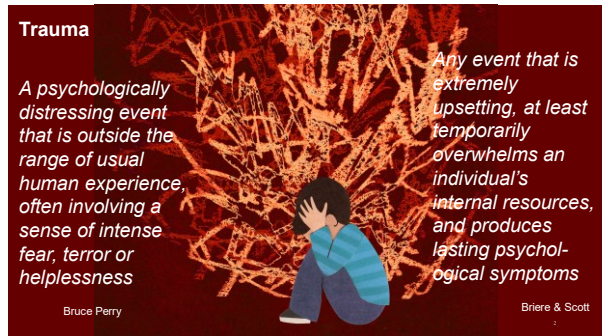


## Why Connect?

Insights from the literature on interpersonal neuroscience

with Dr Howard Bath

### Trauma



*A psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience, often involving a sense of intense fear, terror or helplessness*


*Any event that is extremely upsetting, at least temporarily overwhelms an individual's internal resources, and produces lasting psychological symptoms*

Bruce Perry

Briere & Scott

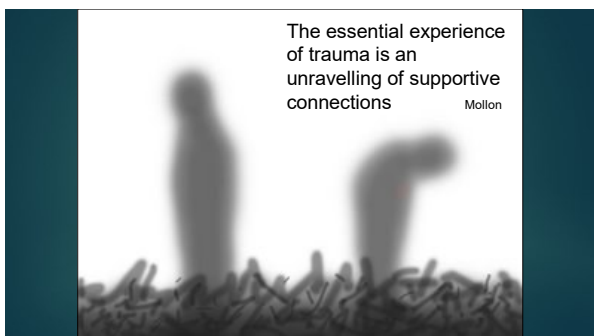
*Connectedness evolved as the primary biological imperative in mammals in their quest for survival*

Stephen Porges



The essence of trauma is feeling godforsaken, cut-off from the human race

van der Kolk



The essential experience of trauma is an unravelling of supportive connections

Mollon

*An adverse event becomes traumatic when it is accompanied by a sense that one is not accompanied - that one's... mind is alone*

Peter Fonagy

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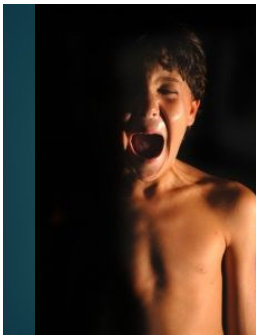
*being alone may be central to potential trauma becoming embedded trauma*

*Trauma is...a relational experience in that embedding of trauma may arise not primarily from the nature of events, but from **who is with us** before, during, and after overwhelming happening (or non-happening in the case of neglect).*

Bonnie Badenoch

*Normally an accessible other mind provides the social referencing that enables us to frame frightening or otherwise overwhelming experiences.*

Peter Fonagy



*A young child who receives inconsistent, neglectful, or rejecting caregiving is forced to manage overwhelming experiences by relying on primitive coping skills such as aggression, dissociation, and avoidance.*

Kinniburgh et al.

*I learned never to trust anybody but myself. You know I purposefully detached from any caretaker that I ever had cause that was my survival technique*

*If I could find someone to talk with or trust, I think my life would be easier, but history teaches me not to trust*

Young adults formerly in care

*The ability to offer the safe sanctuary of presence is central to treating trauma...If we felt alone, we needed accompaniment. If we were frightened, we needed protection. If we were shamed, we needed acceptance. If we were hurt, we needed comfort...*

***Lack of support in the midst of wounding seems central to the movement from potential trauma to embedded trauma, and the provision of support that is responsive to the particular wounds is equally central to healing***

Bonnie Badenoch

*The more healthy relationships a person has, the more likely he/she will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agent of change.*

Perry & Szalavitz

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*Our sense of safety modulates everything from our ability to attend, concentrate, and learn, to our core beliefs about the world, the future and ourselves.*

Louis Cozolino

*Being able to feel safe with other people is the single most important aspect of mental health*

Bessel van der Kolk

THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

*Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*

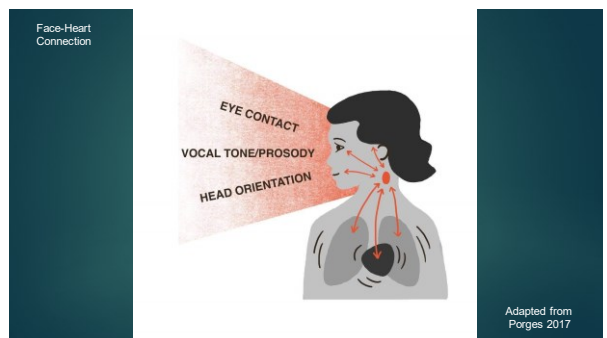
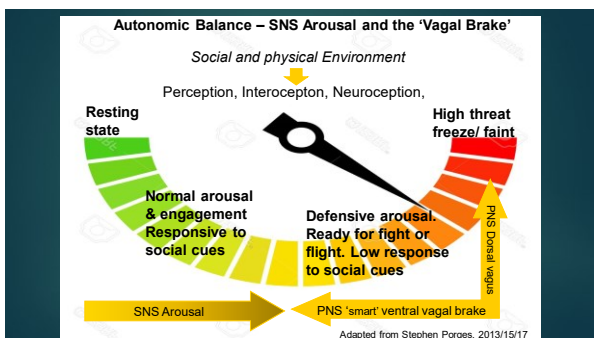
BESSEL VAN DER KOLK

Traumatized children reset their normal level of arousal ... where no external threat exists they are in a persistent state of alarm

Bruce Perry

*Humans are on a quest to calm neural defence systems by detecting features of safety...*

Stephen Porges



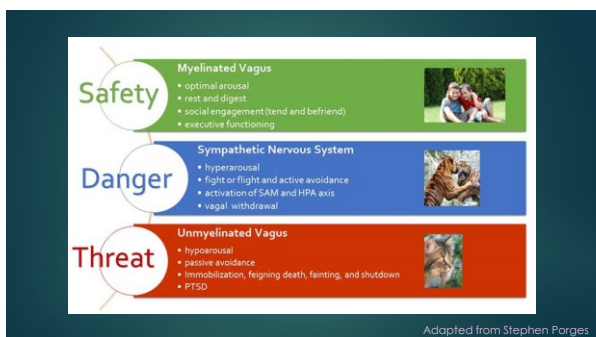
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*Our nervous system 'anticipates a reciprocal response to a social engagement behaviour'. This promotes 'social interactions, bonding, and trust.' When the expectation is violated, the expectancy 'may trigger physiological states of defence'*

Porges, 2017



*Some children who experience trauma and abuse, experience a mismatch; the nervous system appraises the environment as dangerous even when it is safe. This mismatch results in physiological states that support defensive strategies*

Stephen Porges

*The removal of threat is not the same as the creation of safety*

Stephen Porges

*Humans are on a quest to calm neural defence systems by detecting features of safety...*

*This quest is initiated at birth and continues throughout the lifespan, with needs for trusting friendships and loving partnerships*

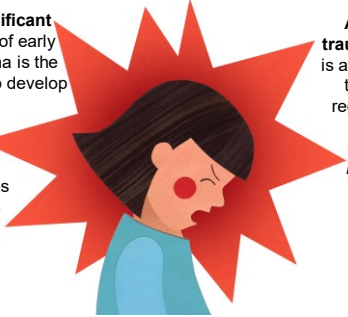
Stephen Porges

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**The most significant consequence** of early relational trauma is the child's failure to develop the capacity to self-regulate the intensity and duration of emotional states

Allan Schore



**At the core of traumatic stress** is a breakdown in the capacity to regulate internal states.

Bessel van der Kolk

*The traumatised young person is 'drowning in a sea of fragmented and overwhelming emotions, sensations, and frightening thoughts'*

Louis Cozolino



*The primary function of parents can be thought of as teaching their children skills that will help them manage their emotional arousal*

Bessel van der Kolk

*...dyadic regulation shapes self-regulation... the child learns to regulate her own states of arousal and inner processing through interactions with another*

Daniel Siegel

*At its root, the ability to learn self-regulation is dependent on there being available, trustworthy, empathic and committed caregivers*

Allan Schore

*Self-regulation is not a learned skill...through processes of co-regulation an individual develops a capacity to self-regulate*

Stephen Porges

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*Self-regulation is a product of... 'the mutual, synchronous, and reciprocal interactions between individuals...'*

Stephen Porges



Kids in stress create in adults their feelings and, if not trained, the adults will mirror their behavior

Long & Fecser

*Rather than advocating teaching self-regulation, we might speak about entering into relational environments that support internalization of nourishing others for ongoing regulation*

Bonnie Badenoch



*Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued...*

Brené Brown