

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

A Survivor's Journey

Pamela Wong, Norfolk Human Services

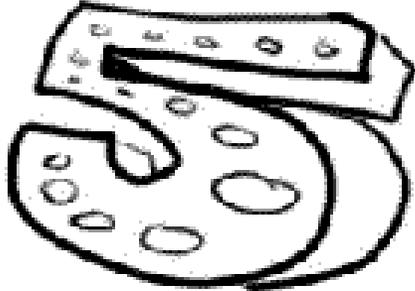
Devitta Jones, Advocate

Adapted from:
Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network
Trauma & Resilience 101, Surviving and Thriving
Dr. Allison Sampson- Jackson
John Richardson-Lauve

Hampton Roads Trauma Informed Care Network



A typical day



STAGES of



brick
FOR
STEPS



ACES: Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Emotional abuse
- Physically abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Not loved, not important
- Poverty
- Separation/divorce
- Using drugs/substances
- Mother- interpersonal violence
- Substance abuse
- Mentally health diagnosis
- Prison



ACES STUDY
Kaiser Permanente &
Center for Disease Control

Risk Associated with Trauma

Shift from an ACE Score of 0 to 4 = + -

242% more likely to smoke

222% more likely to become obese

357% more likely to experience depression

443% more likely to use illicit drugs

1133% more likely to use injected drugs

298% more likely to contract an STD

1525% more likely to attempt suicide

555% more likely to develop alcoholism

Groundbreaking implications for public health!

The effects of trauma can last a lifetime – let's interrupt the cycle!

Prevalence of Trauma

Haunted by the Past: Foster Children with PTSD

One in four alumni had experienced PTSD in the previous 12 months and more than half had experienced at least one mental health problem such as depression, social phobia, or panic syndrome



Study Finds Foster Kids Suffer PTSD

Foster children are twice as likely as U.S. war vets to be afflicted with Stress Disorder



Fight, Flight or Freeze

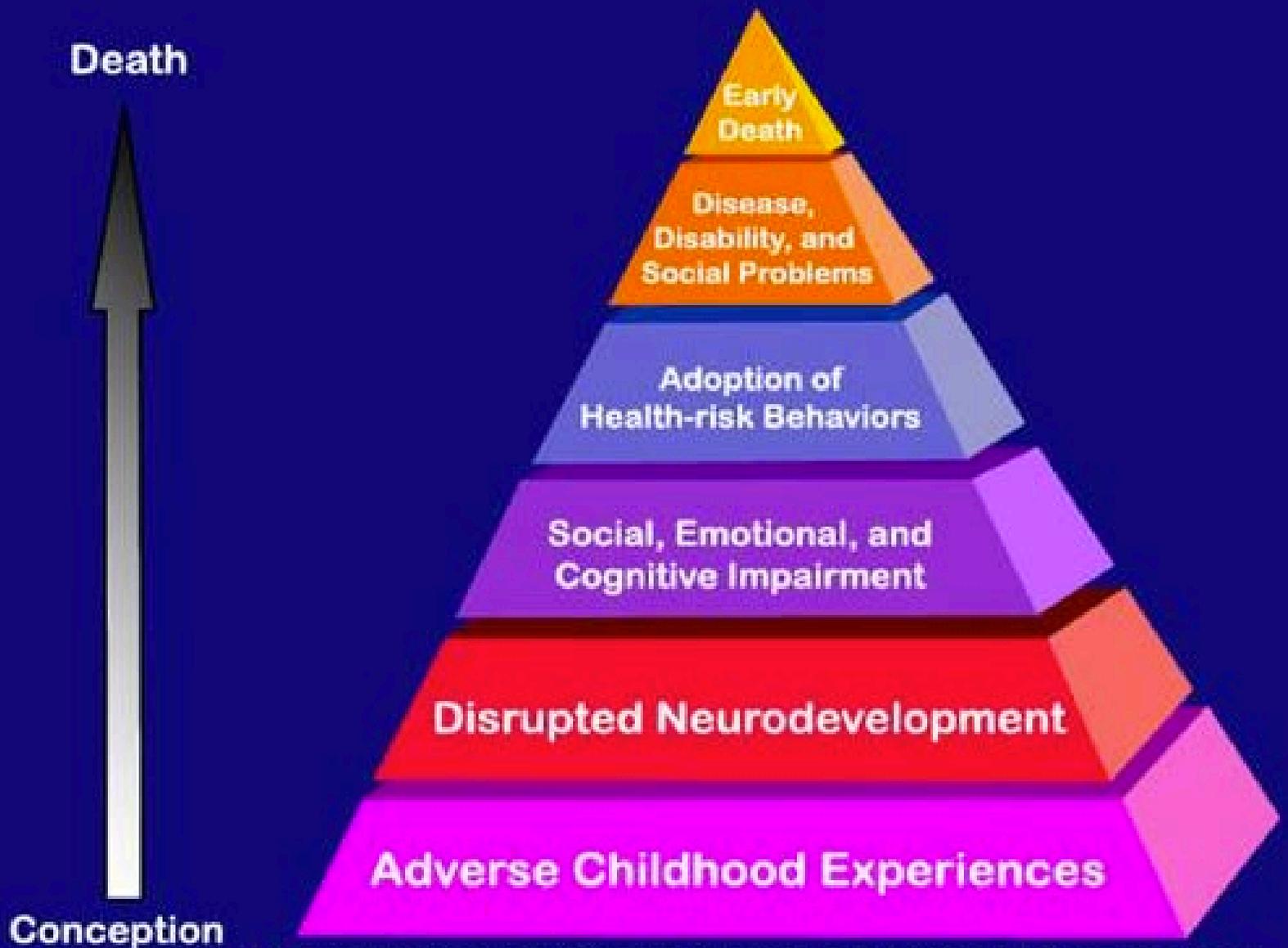


Trauma is a brain injury

When you feel threatened, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, which rouse the body for emergency action. Your heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens, and your senses become sharper.

These physical changes are to protect you from perceived danger. Our clients live the stress response, and may not realize it. It negatively affects decision making and problem solving.

Trauma victims may stay on high alert, stuck on the stress response.

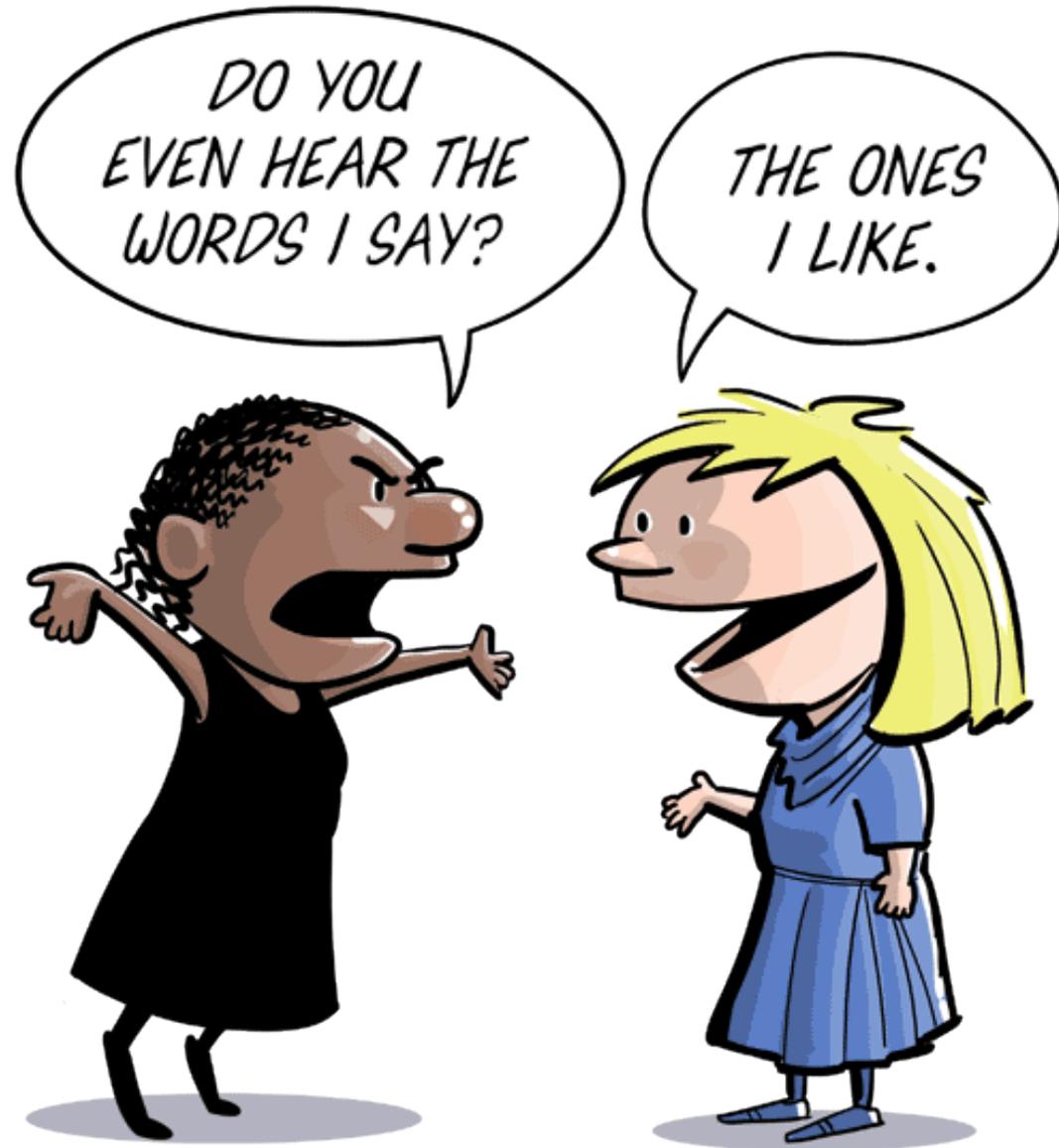


Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Strategies For Helping Childhood Survivors Of Trauma

Adapted from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network
From Blaustein & Kinniburgh (2010) Treating Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents

Who is having this conversation?



My Child's Invisible Suitcase



Beliefs about self – shame, guilt

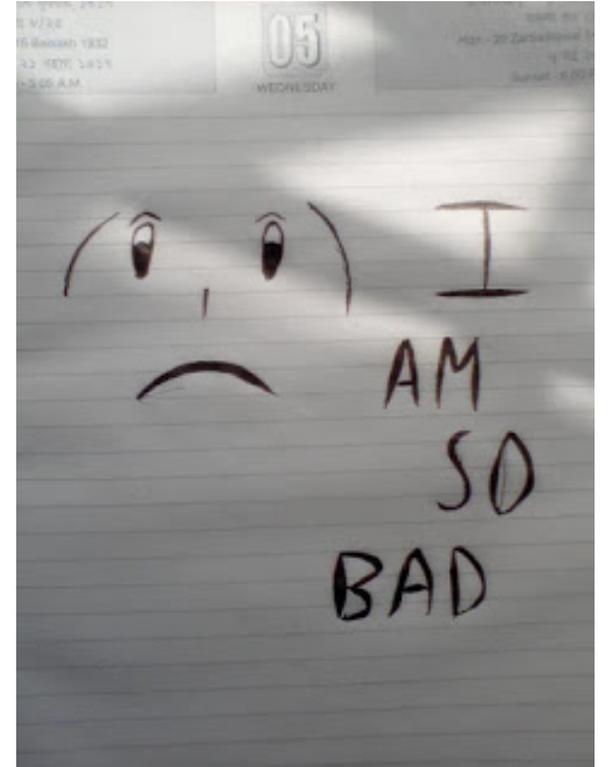
I am bad, bad things happen to me because I deserve it, something is **wrong** with me

Beliefs about caregivers – mistrust, fear

The people I care about and trust will hurt me, they don't really want me, I will push them away before they reject me

Beliefs about the world – loss of control, hopelessness, loneliness

I have to protect myself, I am unlovable



Needs and beliefs influence behavior

RESPOND TO THE NEED, NOT THE BEHAVIOR

Trauma & Loss

Is the experience of loss!

Due to that loss, people seek:

- Power and Control
- Boundaries
- Safety, Trust and Protection
- Attention
- Attachment and Connection
- Consistency
- Positive Sense of Self (purpose and contribution)
- Tension Release
- Soothing
- Sensation and Feeling



Trauma affects everyone differently

i.e. car accident, same event, different experience and different effects. Frequency, duration, dosage, history, age, etc. The injuries are on the inside.



Repacking the Invisible and HEAVY Suitcase

Ways to help a child feel safe ...

- Be an emotional container
- Tune in, listen and empathize
- Respond calmly
- Educate parents, foster parents and children about trauma!
- Manage the child's hot spots/triggers
- Help the child identify and express feelings
- Help your child understand and manage overwhelming emotions
- Help your child understand and modify problem behaviors
- Don't think about what is wrong, what is strong?

Children's Resilience Initiative

Three basic building blocks to success:

Adapted from the research of Dr. Margaret Blaustein

Attachment - feeling connected, loved, valued, a part of family, community, world

Regulation – learning about emotions and feelings and how to express them in a healthy way

Competence - acting rather than reacting, accepting oneself and making good choices



Children's Resilience Initiative

ATTACHMENT & REGULATION

Connect, Then Redirect

Think: lack of skill not intentional misbehavior

Think: nurture not criticize

Think: teach not blame

Think: discipline not punishment

Think: building missing skills not shaming for
lack of skills

Targeting Resilience Skills

Positive Self-Identity and Competency

- Positive Self-Concept – repack the invisible suitcase, children learn what they live
- Positive Path for Self-Development – build competence

Self-Regulation

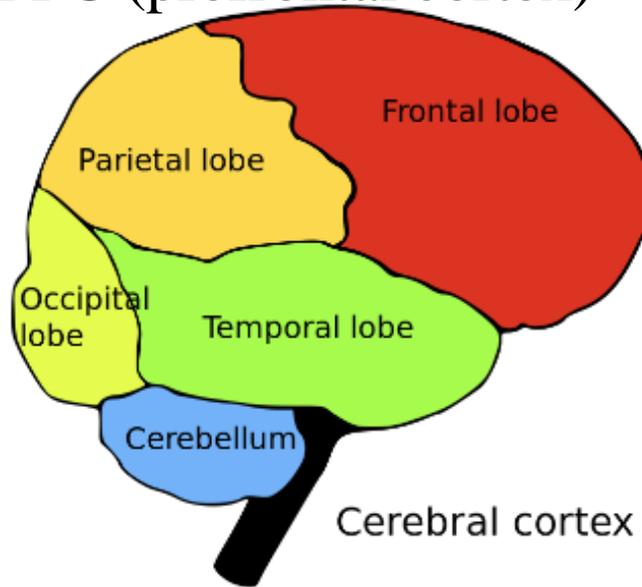
- Feelings Regulation – educate about feelings identification
- Being “present” – mindfulness
- Body Regulation – self awareness and control, problem solving

Co-regulation (Relationships)

- Secure working model of caring relationship – healthy boundaries, honesty
- Empathy – important for parents, too
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills – communication, assertiveness

Activate Executive Functions & Develop Competency

- PFC (prefrontal cortex)



1. Accessing upstairs brain

- Delay responses
- Anticipate consequences
- Evaluate outcomes
- Make a decision

2. Build Problem Solving Skills

3. Acting vs Reacting

4. Awareness of Choice

1

Caregiver Education, Awareness & Self Care

2

Attunement

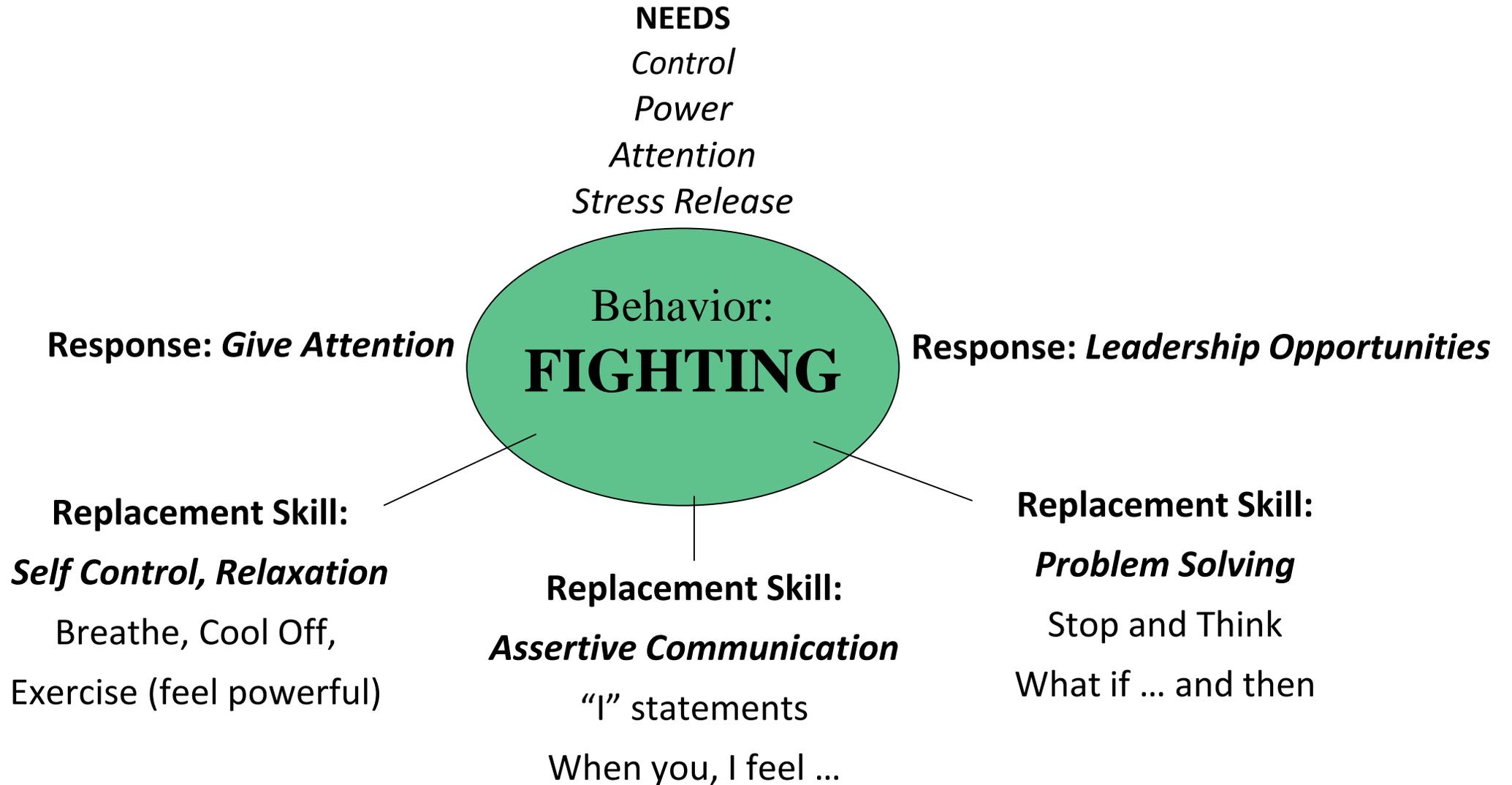
- Tuning in and Reading Cues
- Education about Trauma Triggers
- Help Identify Feelings
- Connect before you Redirect
- Reflective **L i s t e n i n g** Skills

3

Consistent Response

- Set expectations, remain calm, be predictable, do what you say you are going to do
- Anticipate and manage triggers and set routines
- Give youth a voice and choice

Respond to the Need, Not the Behavior



FOCUS ON WHAT IS STRONG!

Things to Avoid

- Invalidating the child's emotions
- Lecturing or interrogating
- Telling the child what to feel
- Silence/Ignoring
- Criticizing
- Blaming the child



TUNE IN, LISTEN, GIVE

Gentle (Be)

Interested (Act)

Validate

Easy Manner (Use an)

http://www.dbtselfhelp.com/html/dbt_skills_list.html

Feelings Identification

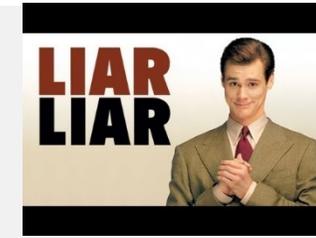
- Connection between emotions and experiences
- Teaching the upstairs and downstairs brain

Modulation

- Keeping your body in control when your emotions are out of control



Affect Expression

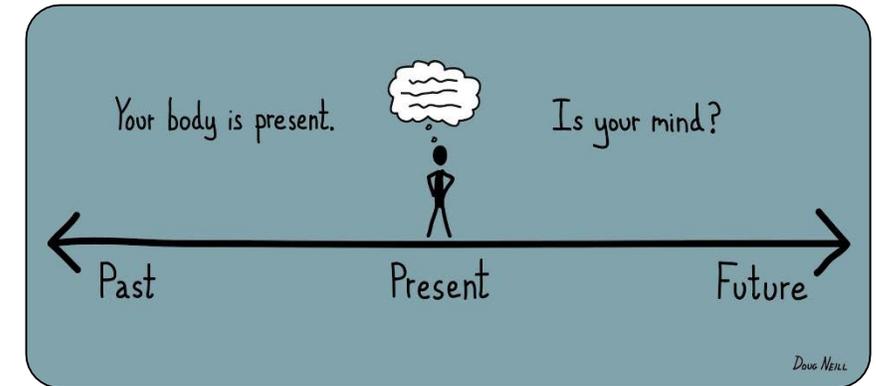


Expressing Emotions

- Emotions are the building blocks of relationships
- Trauma blocks willingness to be vulnerable (truthful?)
- Sharing emotional experiences is critical

If a person cannot identify or share emotions

May lack healthy relationship skills, i.e. communication, assertiveness, poor decision making, i.e. multiple sexual partners, high risk behaviors, etc.



Ways to Help

- Mindfulness
- Effective non-verbal communication (space boundaries, tone of voice, eye contact)
- Effective verbal communication (“I” statements)

Self Development & Identity Formation



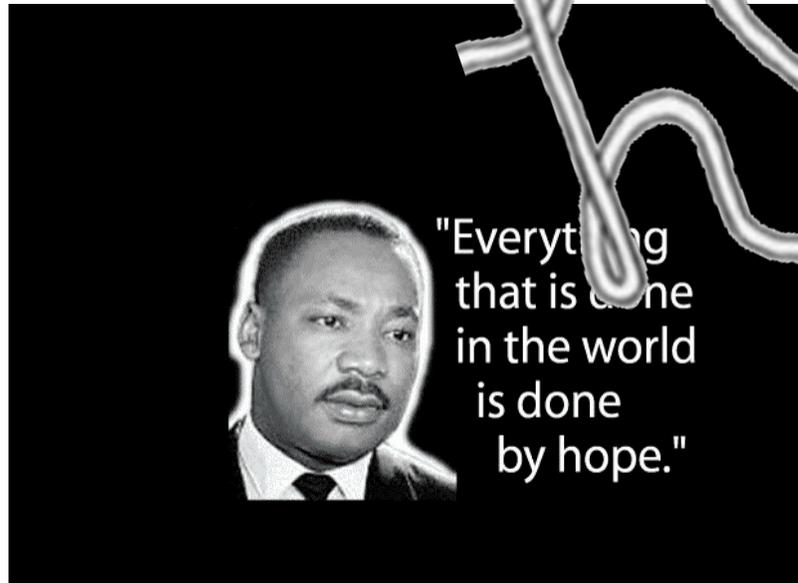
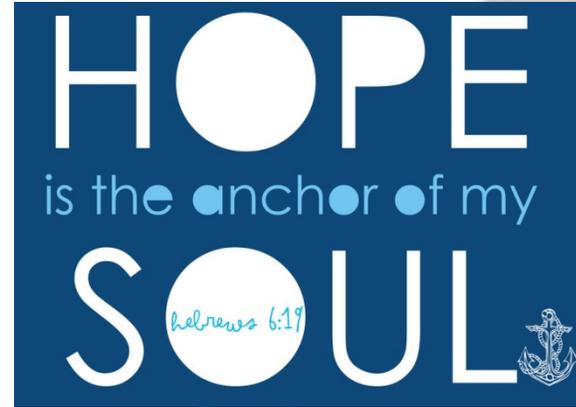
Seeing a sense of future

HEALING

Developing a healthy sense of self



- Unique self
- Positive Self – I can do it!
- Coherent Self (before and after trauma)
- Future Self



HOPE
HOLD ON, PAIN ENDS.

Contact Info

Pamela Wong

Pamela.wong@Norfolk.gov