

BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED



AMY EBBESON, LCSW

WWW.WORCESTERACTS.ORG

WORCESTER

ACT's

Addresses Childhood Trauma

ABOUT US / WARM UP

Raise your hand if you....

- have addiction in your family
- have gone through a personal crisis
- have ever lost control of your emotions
- know someone who died by suicide
- have felt different for any reason
- tried to help someone you thought was in danger
- have been helped by someone



GOALS FOR TODAY



- Understand the importance of early childhood
- Understand how mental health providers define trauma
- Recognize trauma is a root cause of distress throughout our lives & use this info to:
 - Respond with more empathy and understanding for ourselves and others
 - Build skills and relationships in pursuit of our best lives and best community

STIGMA

mark of disgrace or infamy; a stain or reproach, as on one's reputation

- stigma is a barrier that discourages individuals and their families from seeking help
- many people would rather tell employers they served time in jail than admit to being in a psychiatric hospital
- an estimated 44 million Americans experience a mental disorder in any given year (NIMH)
- Can be triggering for anyone

PHYSICAL ILLNESS

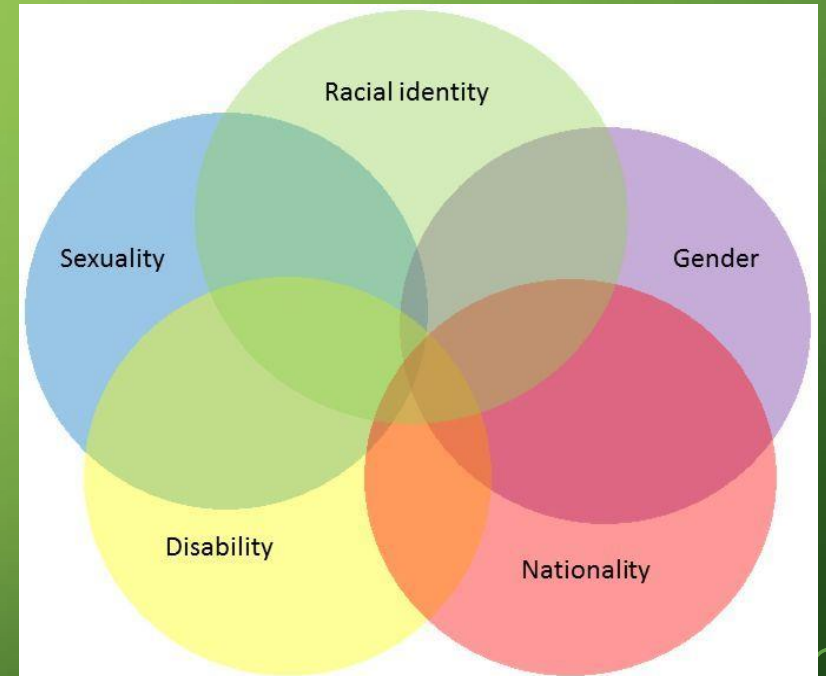


MENTAL ILLNESS



IDENTITY MATTERS

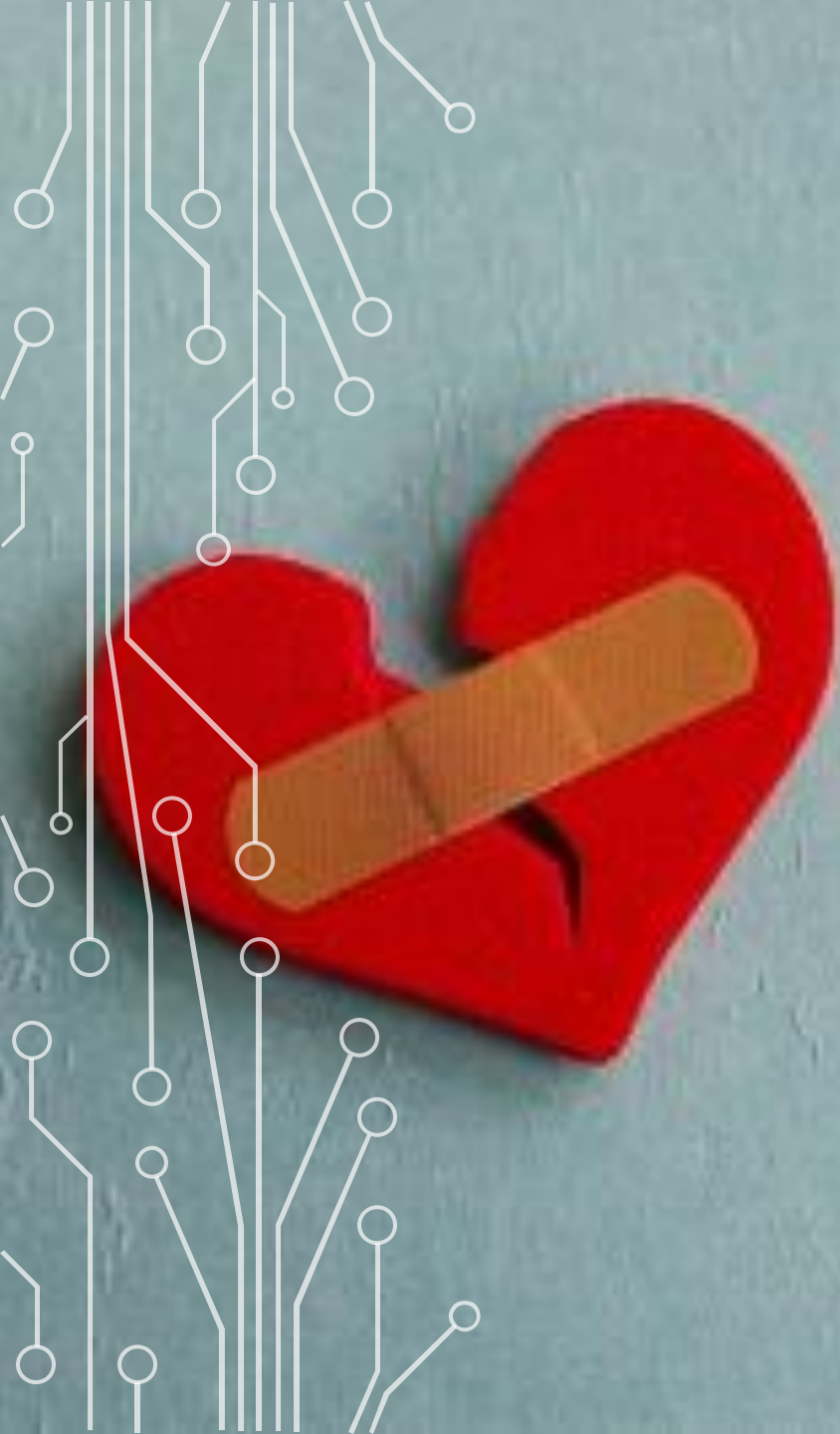
- The identity groups you belong to impact stigma, stress levels and available choices
- Personal experiences in your childhood
- Cultural beliefs about families and mental health
- Groups are not afforded equal power
- Racism/ Sexism/ Heterosexism & Oppression
- Positional power (their life, your job)



If you are unfamiliar with the person's culture, ask them to tell you about it!

TRAUMA

- Psychological trauma is an occurrence which is outside the scope of everyday human experience and which would be notably distressing to almost anyone (American Psychiatric Association, 1987).
- It is not the event that determines whether something is traumatic- it's the individual's experience of the event.
- It can be a single occurrence or a chronic, repetitive experience.
- Trauma engages your fight/flight/freeze stress response.
- The traumatic occurrence or experience causes the body and mind to be overwhelmed and results in nervous system dysregulation.
- https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime

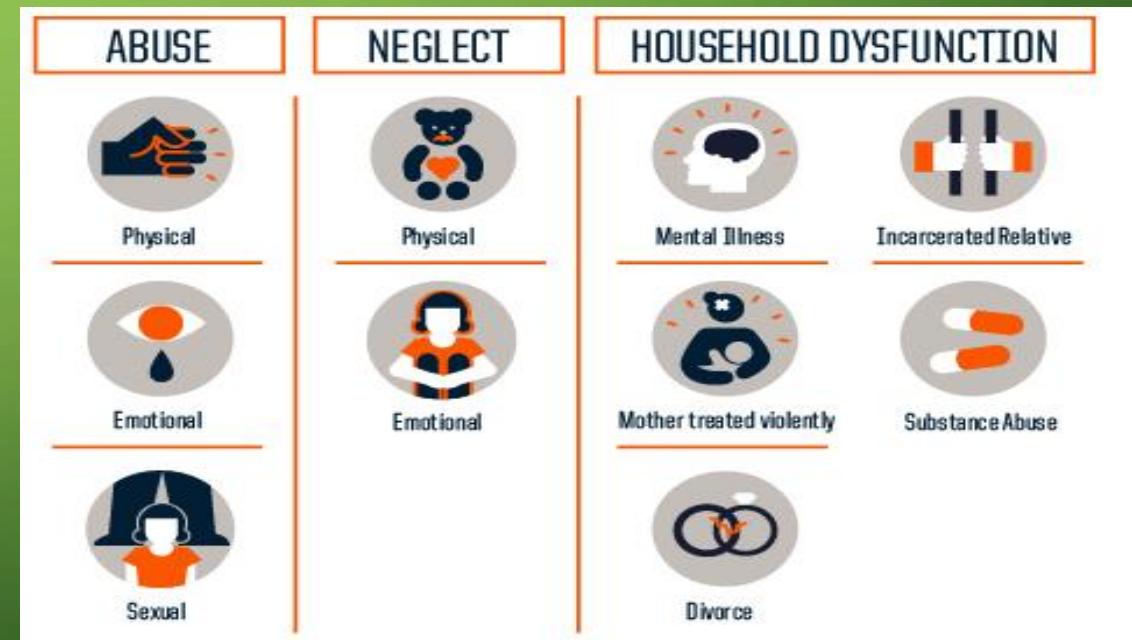


TRAUMA IS COMMON

- According to the CDC, Over 50% of American's have suffered at least one traumatic event
 - One in five was sexually molested as a child
 - One in four was beaten by a parent to the point of a mark being left on the body
 - One in eight witnessed their mother being hurt (Van de Kolk)
 - Experiencing Poverty and Racism should be considered according to American Academy of Pediatrics
 - <https://youtu.be/ybDa0gSuAcg>



ACEs- Adverse Childhood Experiences



“WITHIN NORMAL RANGE”

- What happens in your family is your normal
- Norms are personal, social, & cultural
- Norms are often invisible and indisputable
- Norms can be comforting, damaging, and anything in between
- Norms impact our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Norms set our baseline



CULTURE × RACE
× EXPERIENCE ×
GENDER × DNA ×
EDUCATION × AGE
× INCOME × STATUS
= 6,836,502,318
TYPES OF NORMAL

TRAUMA IMPACTS HEALTH



Trauma impairs: memory, concentration, new learning and focus.



Trauma has been correlated to: heart disease, obesity, addiction, pulmonary illness, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, cancer.



Trauma impacts an individual's ability to: trust, cope, form healthy relationships.



Trauma disrupts: emotion identification; ability to self-soothe or control expression of emotions; one's ability to distinguish between what's safe and unsafe.



Trauma shapes: a person's belief about self and others; one's ability to hope; one's outlook on life.

BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke

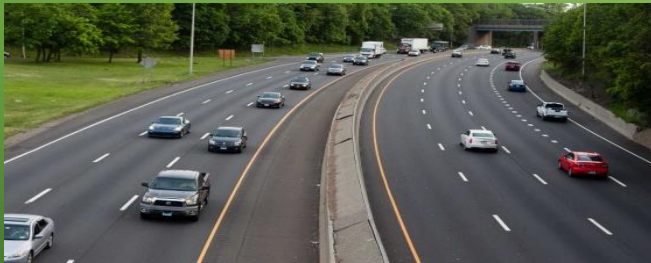


COPD



Broken bones

TRAUMA'S IMPACT ON THE BRAIN



- The brain: a use dependent organ
- Each experience shapes the architecture of the brain
- Emotion super charges it
- The more an experience happens, the better traveled the path is
- Very mad and sad kids become mad and sad adults
- Abuse feels normal and expected
- In crisis, we take the highway
 - Moving from Sorrow Lane and Anxiety Highway to Happy Street and Calm Avenue

TRAUMA AFFECTS BEHAVIOR

Steven Covey was traveling in a subway, a man gets in with his two sons, the boys are running all over the place bothering people. This continues, so he finally gets irritated enough to ask the father why he doesn't do something to control his kids.

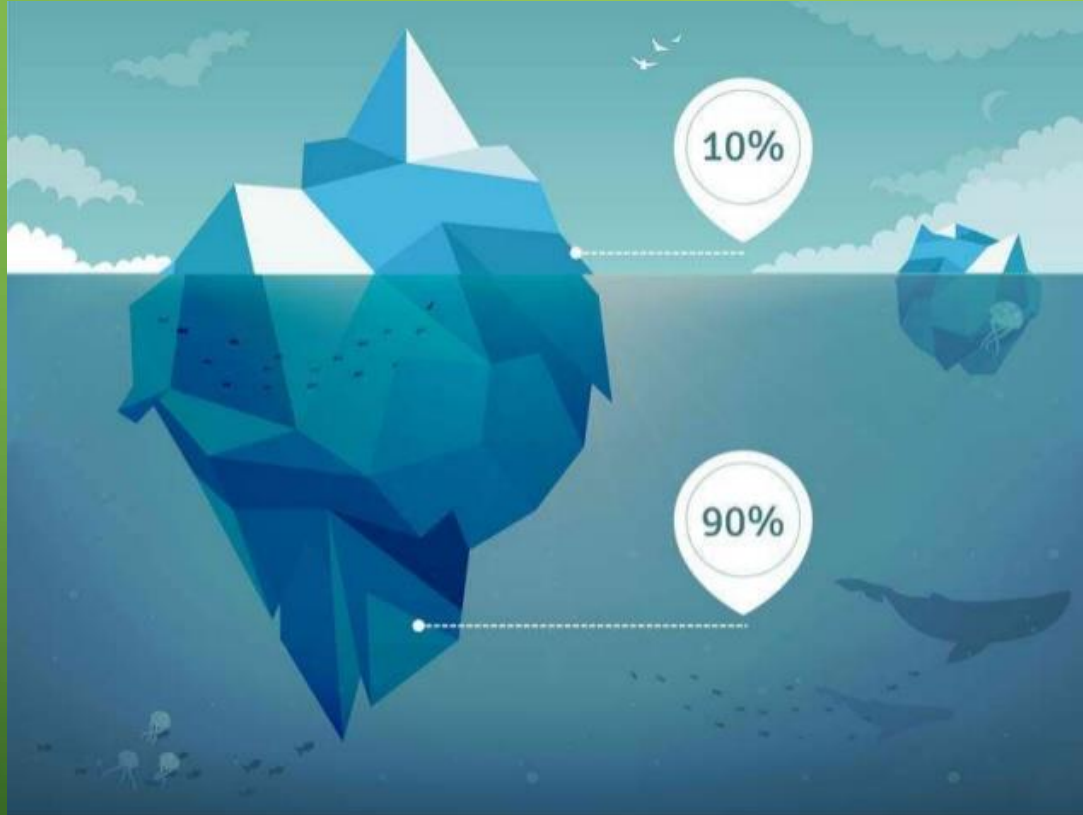
The father replies,

“We just got back from the hospital where their mother died. I don't know how to handle it and I guess they don't either.”



**Did your opinion change
when you got new
information?**

THE ICEBERG THEORY



What the child shows is usually the tip of the iceberg:

- there is much more underneath,
- if you see cause for alarm, you are almost certainly right.

POST TRAUMA - DELAYED REACTION

- Often, symptoms of childhood abuse show up in adulthood, when they're out of danger:
 - In romantic relationships
 - In the workplace
- The symptoms that are effective in coping during the trauma, are not effective when it subsides, but may persist including:
 - Guilt, shame, self-blame
 - Withdrawing from others
 - Stressed out at baseline

Children Learn What They Live

by Dorothy Law Nolte

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
He learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.

GENERATIONAL TRAUMA

- Parents who are struggling themselves have children who struggle
- DCF kids having DCF kids
- A person with PTSD who becomes a parent may recover traumatic memories as their children age, this can have a big impact on kids
- Chaotic Environments
- Generous Assumption



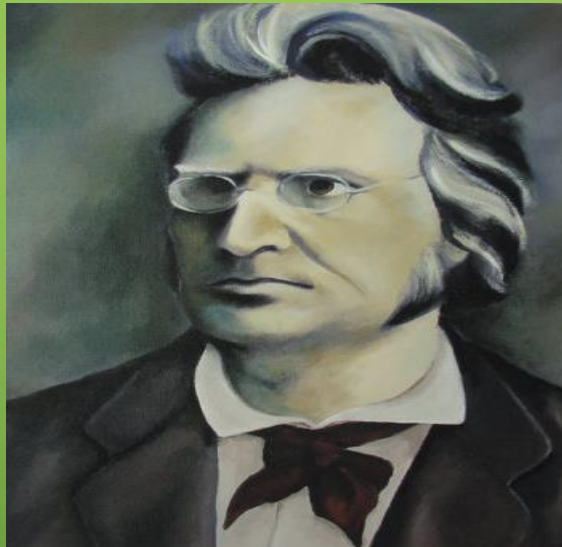
SELF MEDICATION

the therapist



Give me 2 or 3 months in therapy and you'll begin to feel better.

the psychiatrist



Give me 2-3 weeks on these meds and you'll begin to feel better.

the bartender



Give this shot 2-3 minutes and you will be feeling better!

TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

- Avoidance
- Arousal
- Feeling too much or too little
- Defense mechanisms protect us from being consciously aware of a thought or feeling we cannot tolerate
- All symptoms relate to the trauma
- Happens at all levels: micro, mezzo, & macro



CHILDREN IN CRISIS...

- Often feel shameful, bad, or broken
- May still be operating in fight/flight/freeze
- Have been taught by experience to mistrust
- Have little confidence/ overwhelmed/ low self esteem/ can be revictimized
- Need to be treated with kindness above all



**When a flower doesn't bloom
you fix the environment in
which it grows, not the flower.**

Alexander den Heijer

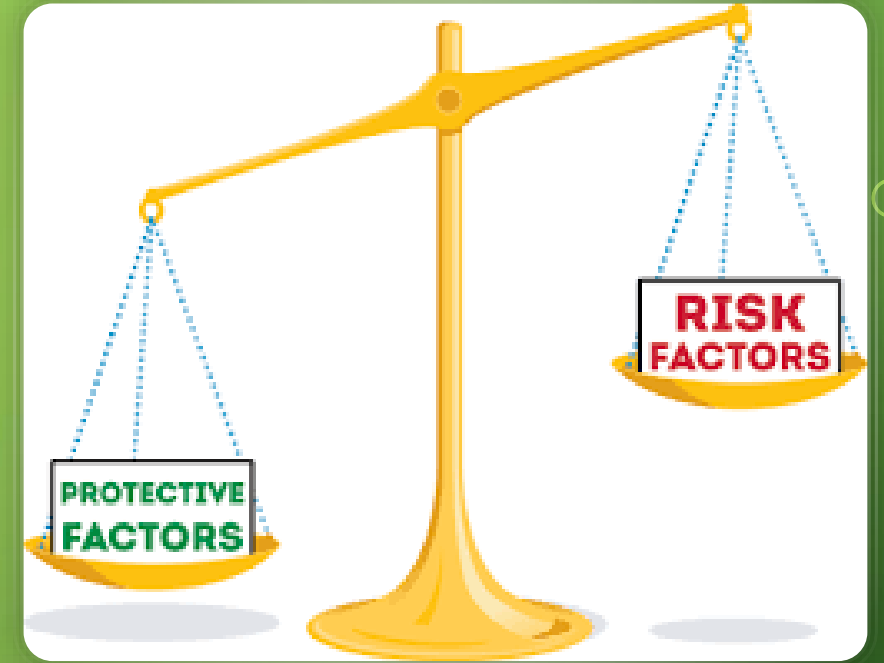
PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS (SAMHSA)

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Consideration of Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues



BUILDING RESILIENCE

- Decrease Stress
- Basic needs first: sleep, food, warmth
- Structure & Routine = Safety
- Mindfulness & living in the present
- Reduce sense of present danger
- Feeling seen and cared about



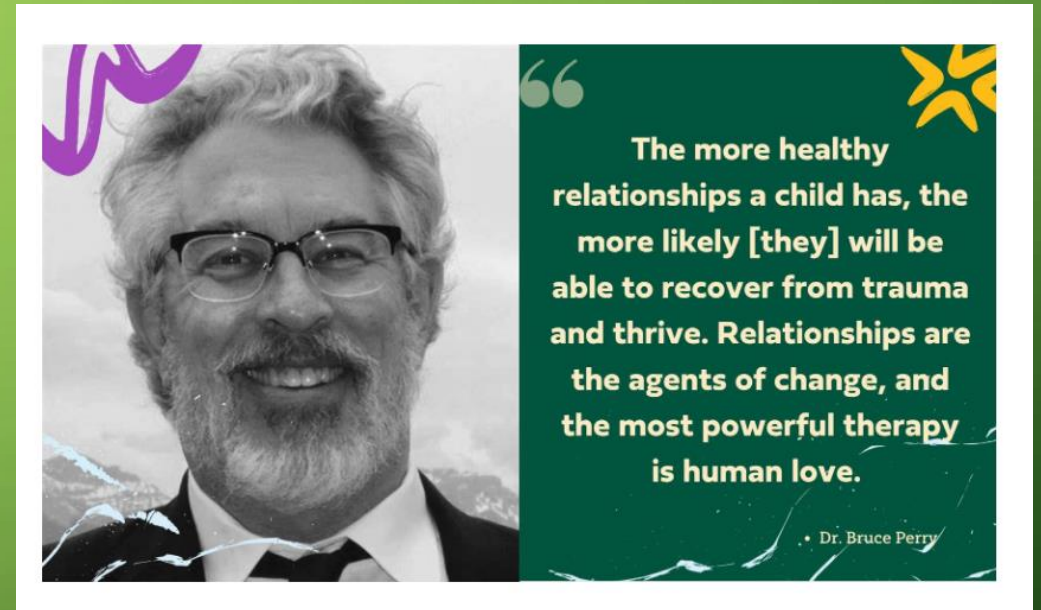
resilience:

“an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

A HELPING RELATIONSHIP

- Is a “protective factor”
- Can lessen or undo traumatic effects
- Unconditional positive regard
- Builds resilience
- Offers role models
- Encourages healing
- Is more effective than anything else

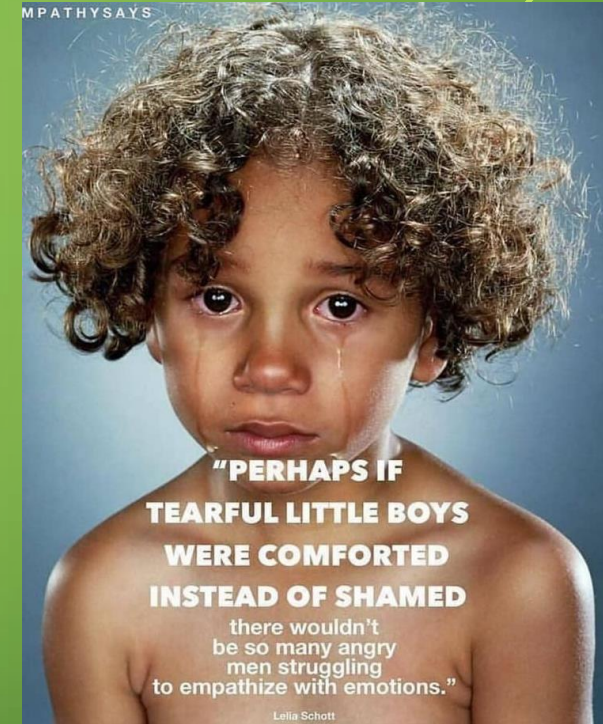


“When you criticize me, I intuitively dig in to defend myself. However, when you accept me like I am, I suddenly am willing to change”

-Carl Rogers

FACTORS OF A HEALING RELATIONSHIP

- Communicating a non-judgmental attitude
- Believing in the child's potential to do well
- Giving quality attention to the child's feelings
- Genuineness / Authenticity
- Accurate communication of empathy
- The "Shame Backpack"



"If you put shame in a Petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence and judgment. If you put the same amount of shame in a Petri dish and douse it with empathy, it can't survive," -Dr. Brene Brown

ATTENTION: THE SKILL OF MANAGING BEHAVIOR

- Is a basic need
- Positive, Negative, None
- Whatever you put your attention on, you give power to
- Paying attention to someone is one of the best things you can do (and it's free)
- The things you ignore go away (after an extinction burst)
- It's the most effective tool in your toolbox



**Self-Care is a
priority and necessity
- not a luxury -
in the work that we do.**

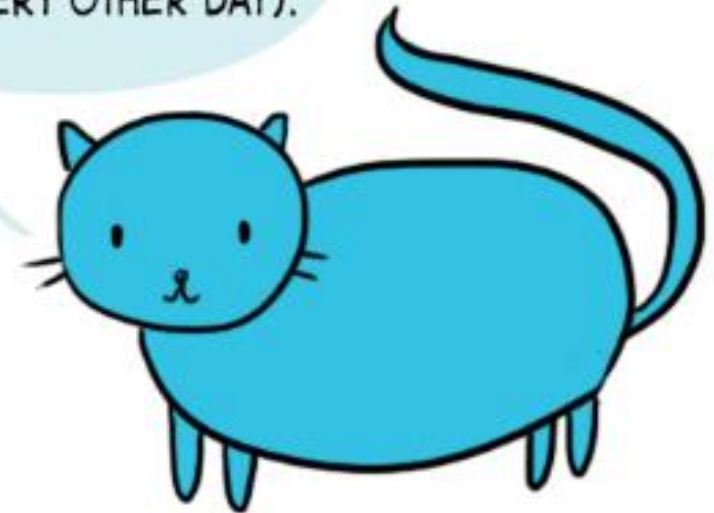
TAKE CARE OF YOU

- Try not to take it personally
- Remember: hurt people hurt people
- Reduce Your Stress
- Attend to your Physical Health
- Mindfulness
- Increase Restful Sleep

When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help.

- Thich Naht Hanh

IT'S A GOOD DAY TO
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
(SO IS EVERY OTHER DAY).



REWARDS OF CARING

- Feeling useful, helpful & important
- Helps you see the good in your own life
- Spiritual/ Soul work/ Right living
- Intervention with individuals can have a dramatic, life long impact and may change the course of their life trajectory

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop
-Mother Teresa



因緣 Karma

What you put out into the world comes back to you. How you live your life determines what kind of life you will have.

THE POWER OF YOU

- Intervention with individuals can have a dramatic, life long impact
- May change the course of their life trajectory
- Prevention is preferable to intervention
- Early Childhood ROI (return on investment)
- Planting Seeds
- Building strong foundations
- Go make the world better because you're in it!
- <https://youtu.be/GcZqClYTcwo>

IT IS EASIER
TO BUILD
STRONG
CHILDREN
THAN TO
REPAIR
BROKEN MEN.

~ Frederick Douglass

Tickled Mum Quotes @ TickledMummyClub.com.au

