

Nevada Division of Child and Family Services

Foster Parent Pre-Service Training: Session 3

October 17 & 19, 2023

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm

Presented by

Kevin Quint, Clinical Program Manager

Kelly McKiddie, LMFT, AFC Coach



Welcome



Agenda for the Day

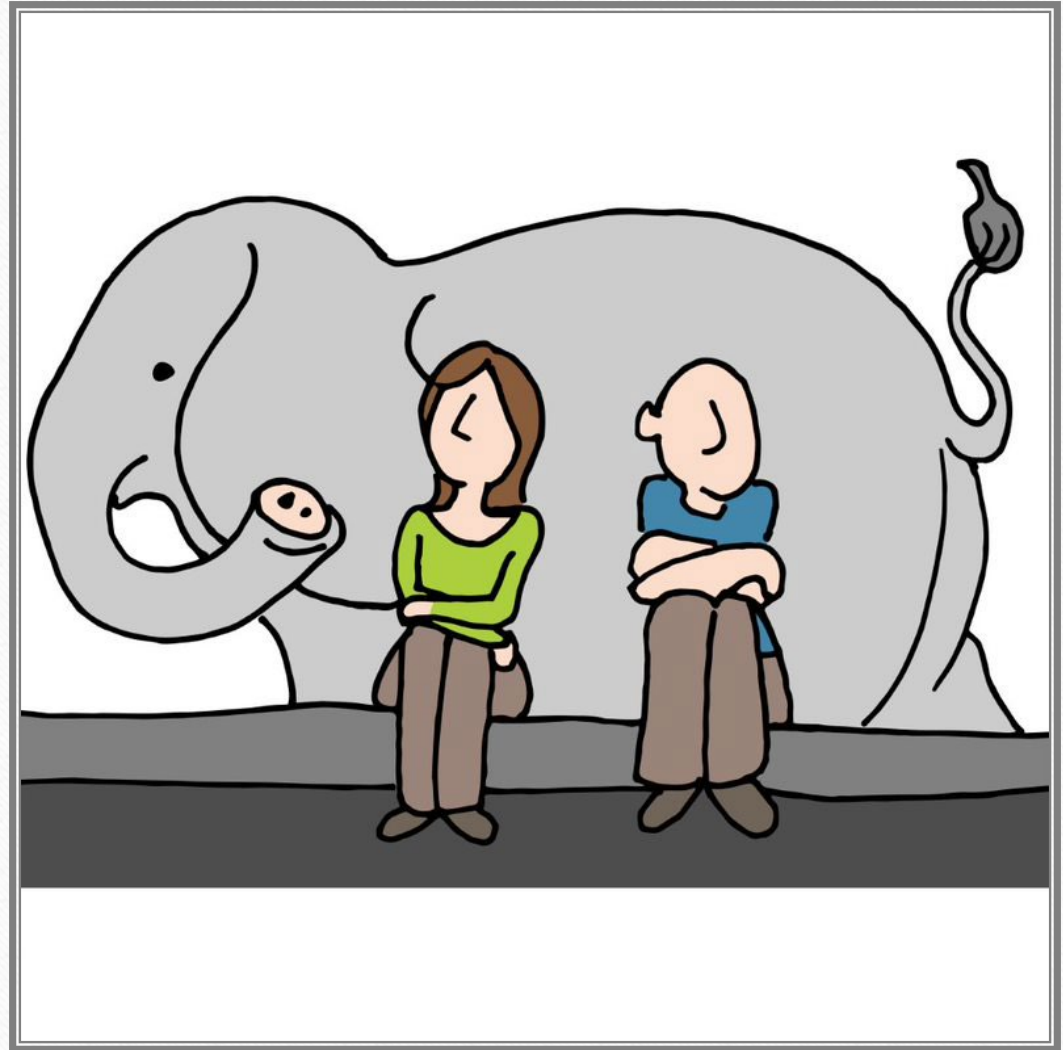
- Welcome, Introductions, and Re-Introductions
- Review from Session 2 and review homework
- Helping Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
- Trauma, the Conflict Cycle, & Power Struggles
- Wrap Up



Session 2 Review

- What were some of the topics from Session 2?
- What sticks in your mind from Session 2?
- Any questions from last time?
- Review and discuss homework

Trauma Elephant

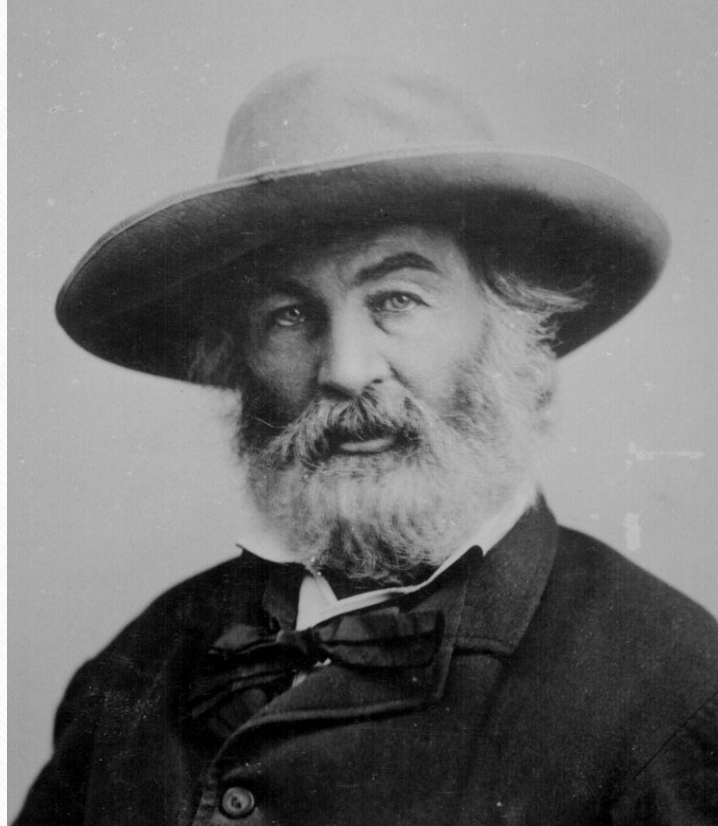




My Child #1

1. Definition of Trauma

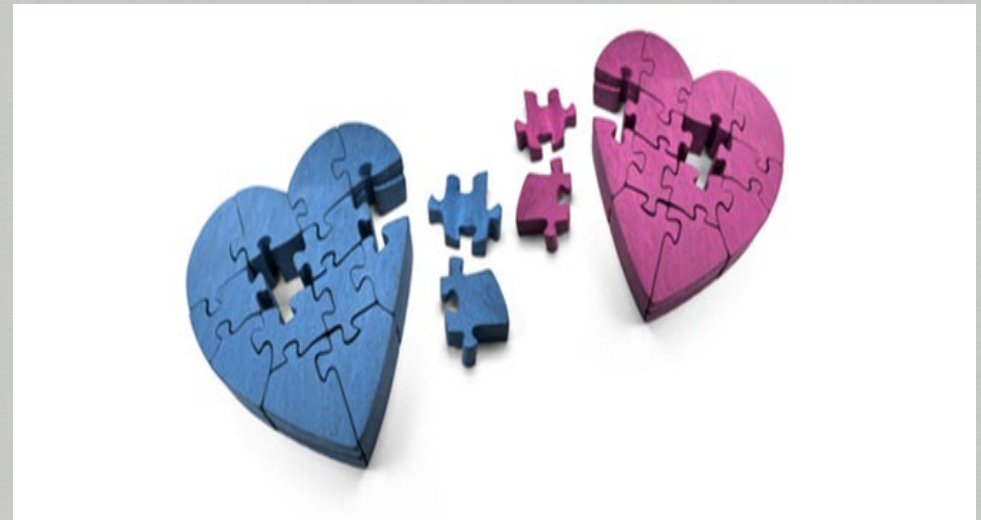




There was a child went
forth every day and all
that he looked upon
became part of him.

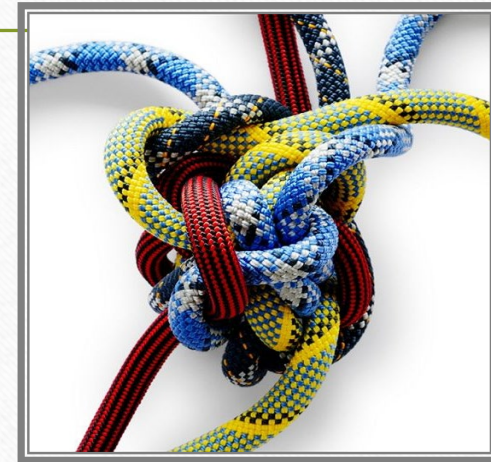
Walt Whitman

Trauma is not the thing
that happened but
the effect left within us
by our experiences...



Trauma Defined

- A traumatic event or events can be many things
- The common theme of trauma...
- Types of trauma
- Complex trauma
- What about neglect?



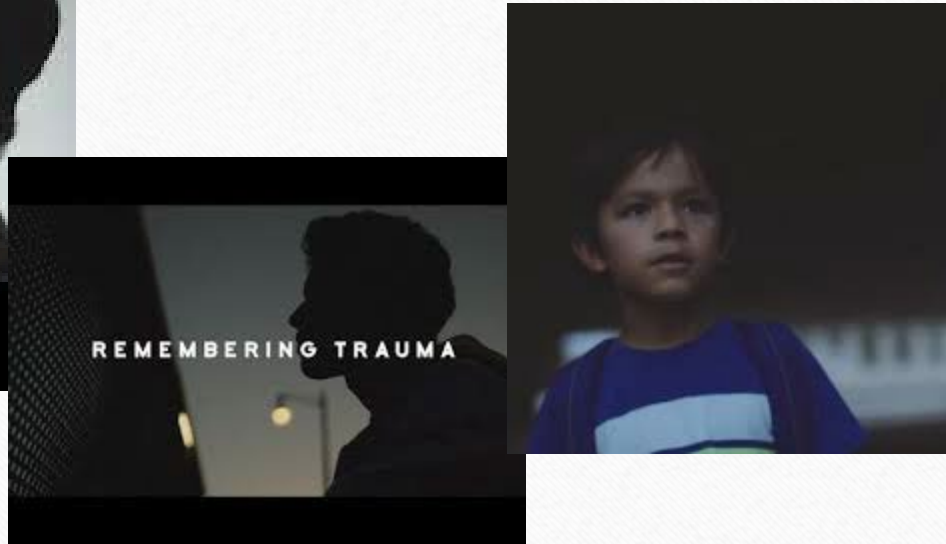
2. How children respond to trauma



How Children Respond to Trauma

- Long-term trauma can interfere with healthy development
- A child's reactions to trauma will vary depending on numerous factors and variables





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v13XamSYGBk&feature=youtu>
Remembering Trauma Official Film (2017)

Group Discussion on Remembering Trauma



Little Tiny

**STRETCH
BREAK™**

Children's reactions may vary by age

- Pre-School Children
- School-Aged Children
- Teens



How would you feel?

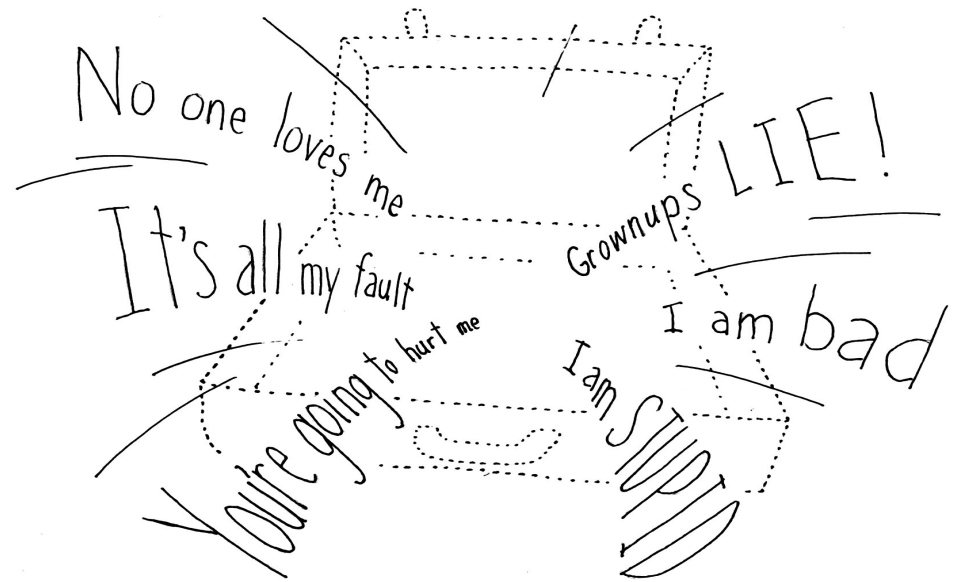
- Think of five of your most important connections, relationships, things of value, etc. in your life and write down one on each of five 3x5 index cards.
- Hold these like a hand of cards.
- We'll give you instructions from there!

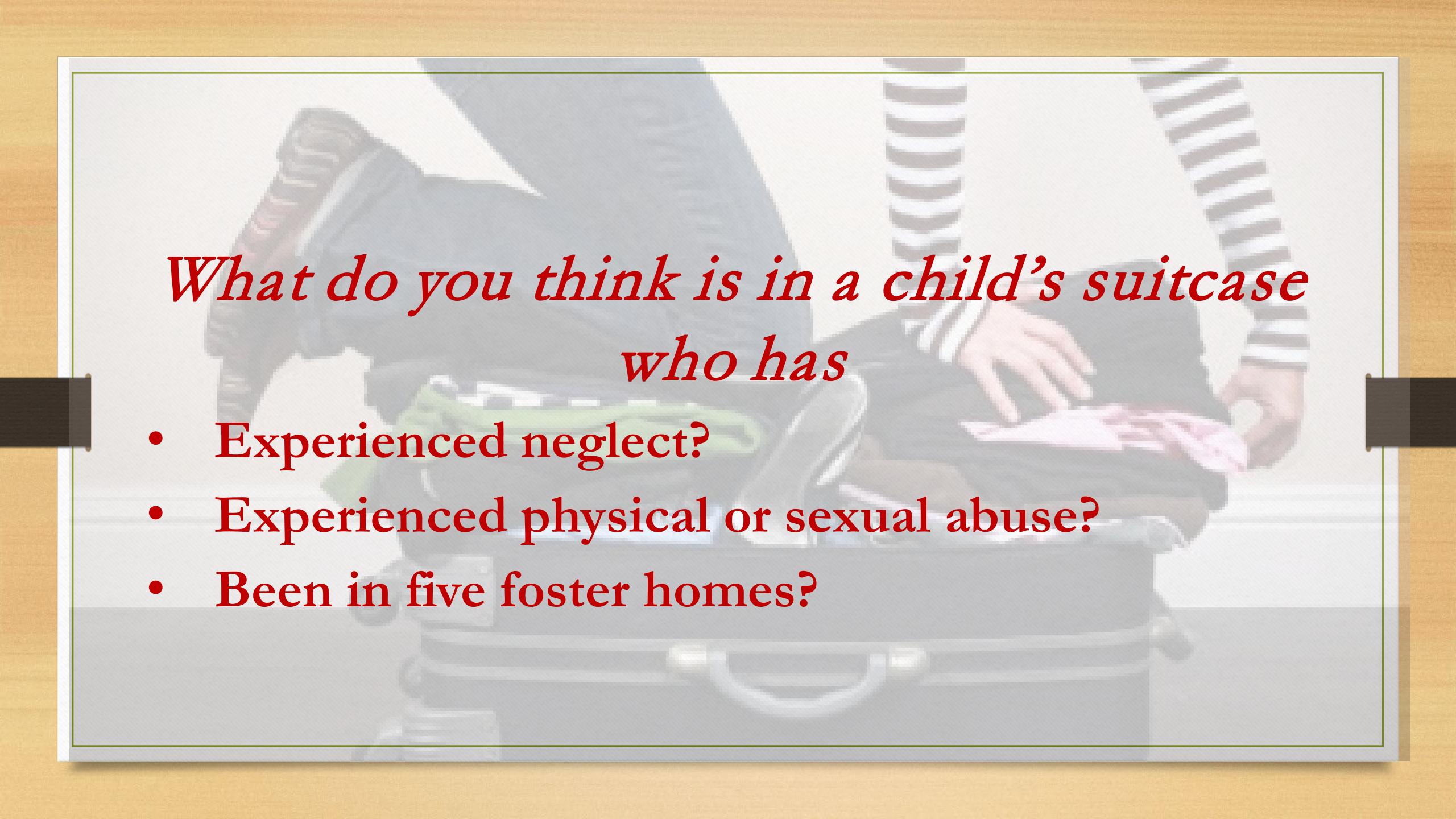


The Invisible Suitcase

Trauma shapes children's beliefs and expectations

- About themselves
- About the adults who care for them
- About the world in general



A child in a striped shirt is packing a suitcase. The suitcase is open, and the child is placing clothes inside. The background is a plain wall.

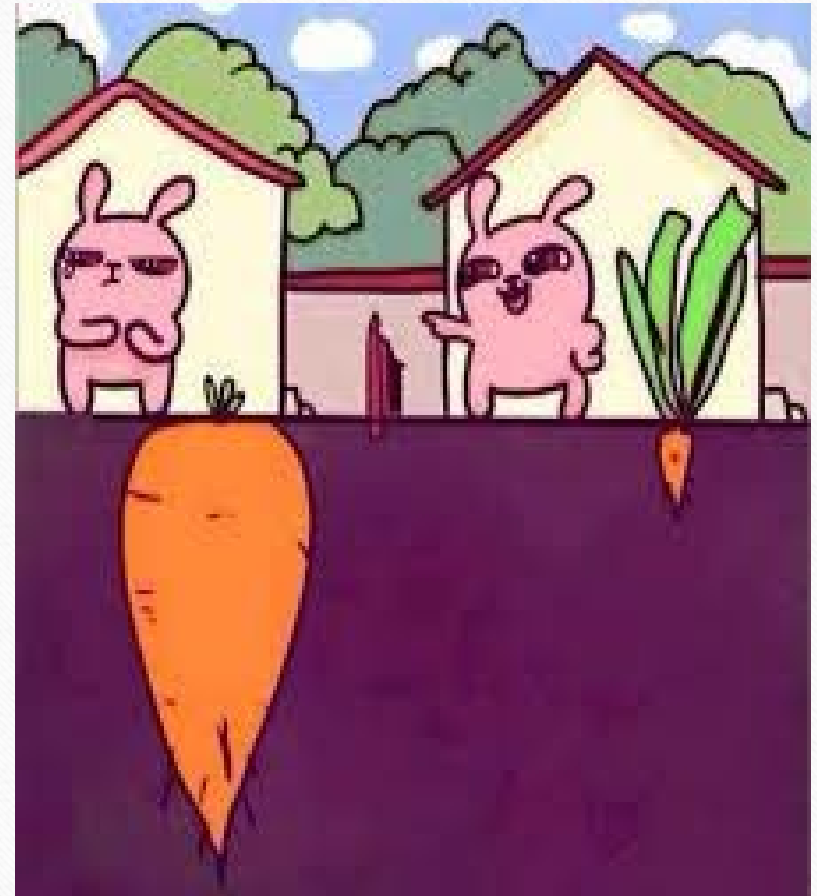
*What do you think is in a child's suitcase
who has*

- Experienced neglect?
- Experienced physical or sexual abuse?
- Been in five foster homes?

In trauma, “What you see isn’t necessarily what you get!”

When a child is experiencing danger, or trauma triggers it is difficult for them to concentrate, make decisions, and conduct simple executive tasks. This can look like the youth acting defiant, when in reality it is their trauma that has been triggered.

“Behavior is often an expression of unmet basic needs.”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OeQUwdAjE0>

REMOVED



HESSCHE PRESENTS A CHRISTINA MATANICK AND NATHANIEL MATANICK FILM "REMOVED" SABRINA CULVER JORDAN NUSS
KYRA LOCKE CO-PRODUCED BY TONY CRUZ MUSIC BY DANIEL JON KLAMEN EDITOR NATHANIEL MATANICK DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GREG PICKARD
AND TONY CRUZ WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA MATANICK DIRECTED BY NATHANIEL MATANICK

Discussion on ReMoved

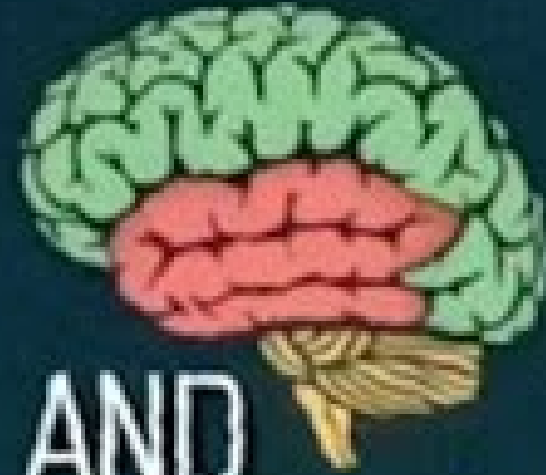
- What is your overall reaction to the film ReMoved?
- What effect did Zoe's home life have on her thinking about herself? (Think of the Invisible Suitcase)
- Why did Zoe damage property at the first foster home? What part did the foster parent have in that incident?
- How did Zoe's past trauma affect her behavior in the present?
- What do you think was going through Zoe's mind when she rejected the dress from the second foster parent?
- What effect did Zoe's separation from her brother have on her? What effect do you think it had on her brother?
- Describe your thoughts and feelings about Zoe's mother and her role in the story.



My Child #2

3. The human brain's response to trauma...

TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN

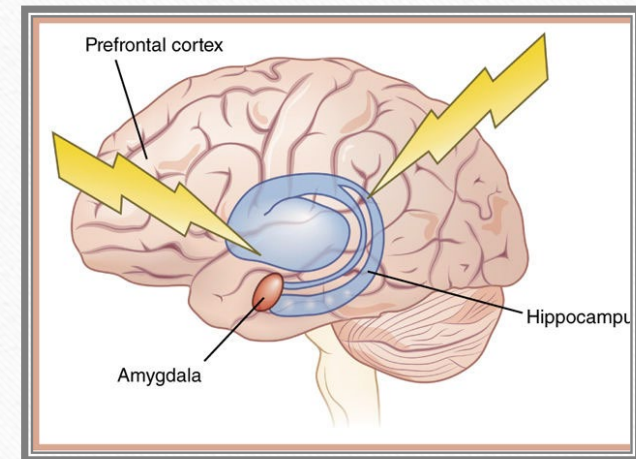


Trauma and the Brain: Here's how it works...

Key words and concepts in trauma

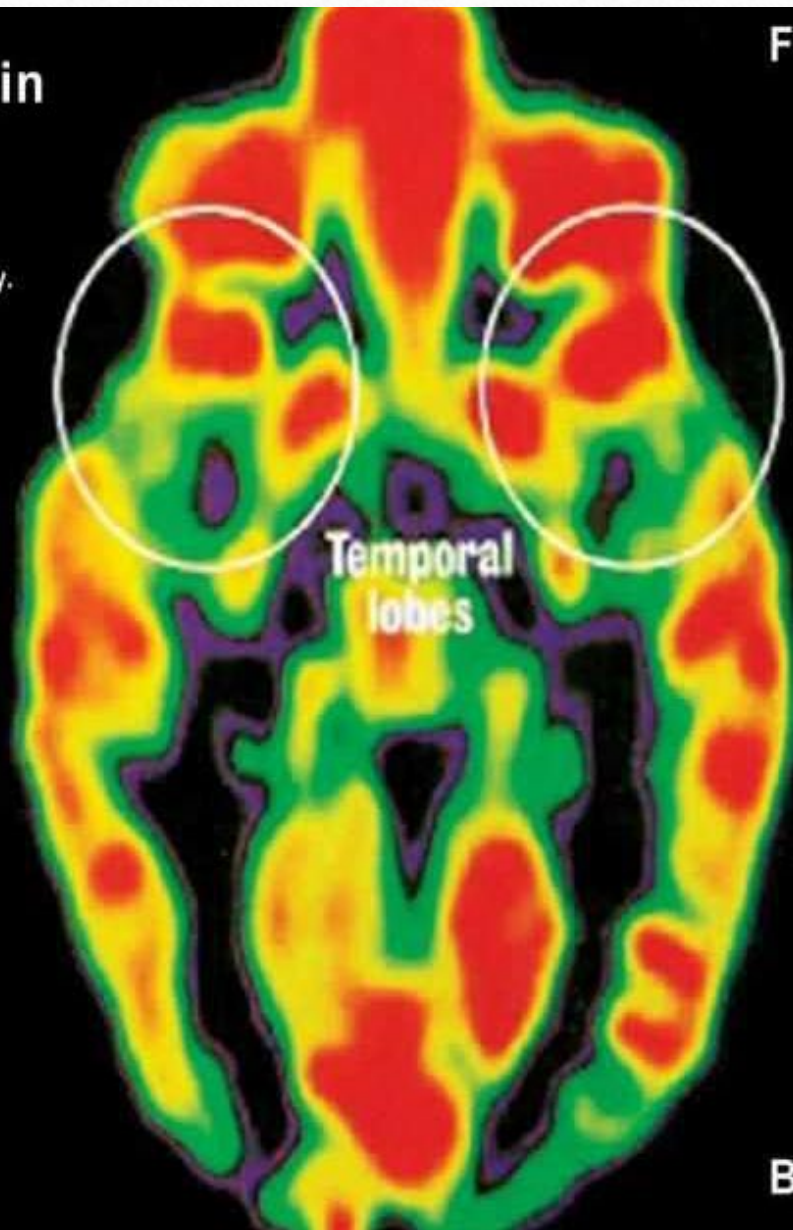
- Derailed brain development
- Survival in a dangerous world
- Stress hormones
- Constant alert
- Amygdala, Frontal Cortex, & Hippocampus
- “*Flight, fight, or freeze*”

In a nutshell, chronic trauma causes profound changes in the brain that affect the child's ability to respond effectively to stress and to function in everyday life.



Healthy Brain

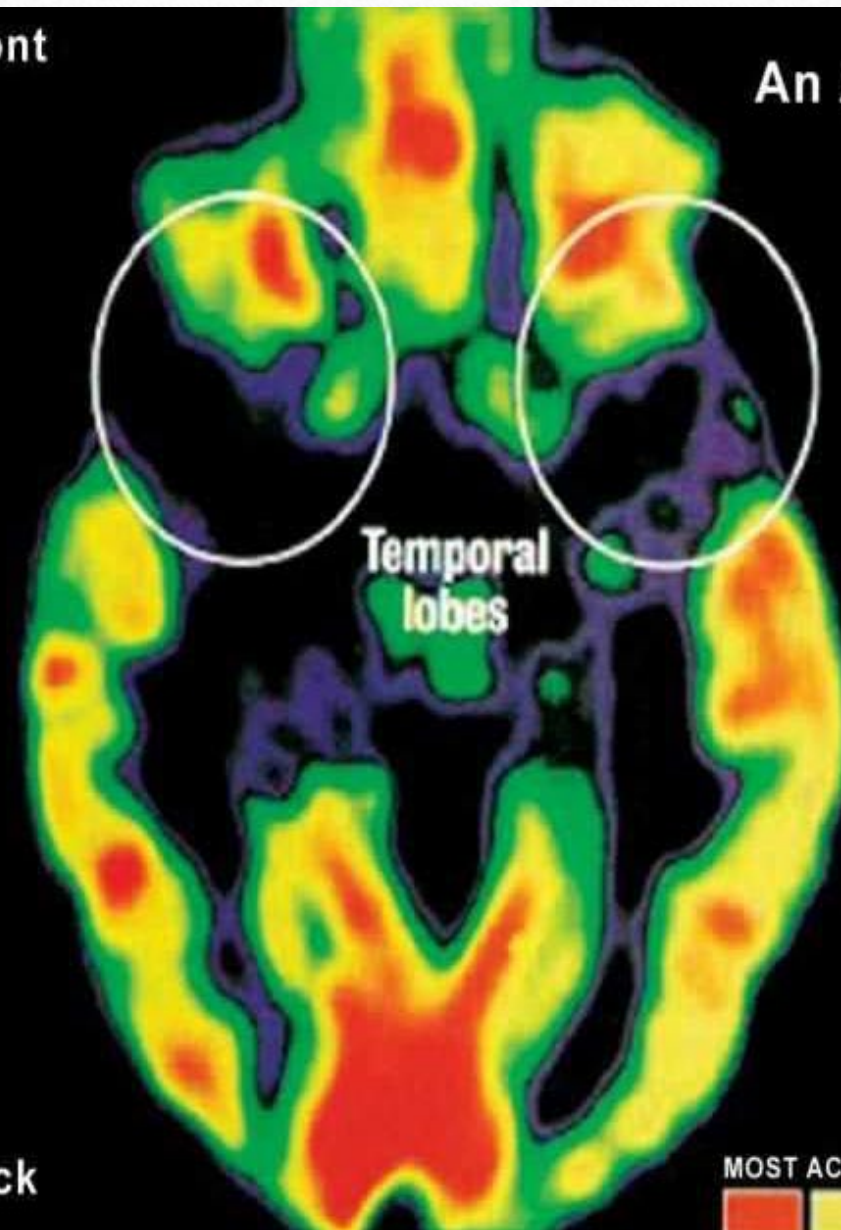
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.



Front

An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



Back



4. Trauma and a child's development



Trauma Derails Development





My Child #3

5. Trauma Reminders



Trauma Reminders

- The brain remembers and this can affect mood, behavior, and outlook
- What can the foster parent do to help?
- Trauma in the brain doesn't necessarily "keep time"
- What not to do



I woke up in a panic. I couldn't stay asleep. My foster mother came into my room. "Honey what's wrong?" I couldn't even tell her how I felt. I couldn't get the words out to say what was the matter. She said, "You're safe here, OK? If anyone tries to get through the door to hurt you, I will get them." I was glad that she was so aggressive—it made me feel like I could loosen up and let someone else protect me. I didn't have to worry anymore.

-A. M.

Wrap Up!

WELCOME
BACK

The conflict cycle, ABCs of behavior, and power struggles.



GROUP EXERCISE: HANDLING DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS—WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Read these over and we'll discuss, "What will you do?" Become aware of your initial reaction to the scenario but then we'll work with each other to develop realistic strategies to address what's happening in the scenario.

- On the first day of a 7-year-old's placement with you, the child says to your 8-year-old, "I'm going to cut your face off!"
- The foster child in your home asks your kids if they have sex with each other.
- Your 17-year-old is afraid to be in the house alone with the 9-year-old foster daughter.
- The 5-year-old in your home has verbally profane tantrums at least once a day that last up to 30 minutes
- You ask your 12-year-old foster daughter to make her bed and pick up the clothes in her room. She responds with, "You mother-f*er!!! I hate your guts. You are stupid and a terrible parent. I want to move right now. Get me outta here, NOW!"
- The very cute and charming 10-year-old boy in your home consistently steals from your bedroom and breaks items in the home on purpose.
- The 4-year-old foster daughter disappears under the kitchen table. You think that she's quietly playing down there, then you realize she is spreading her feces on the floor and under the table.

***NOTE:** These are behaviors that some children display but not all children. These examples are real and are used to help understand what may be expected and to develop some skills to deal with difficult behaviors.*

Let's Do a Little Skill Building

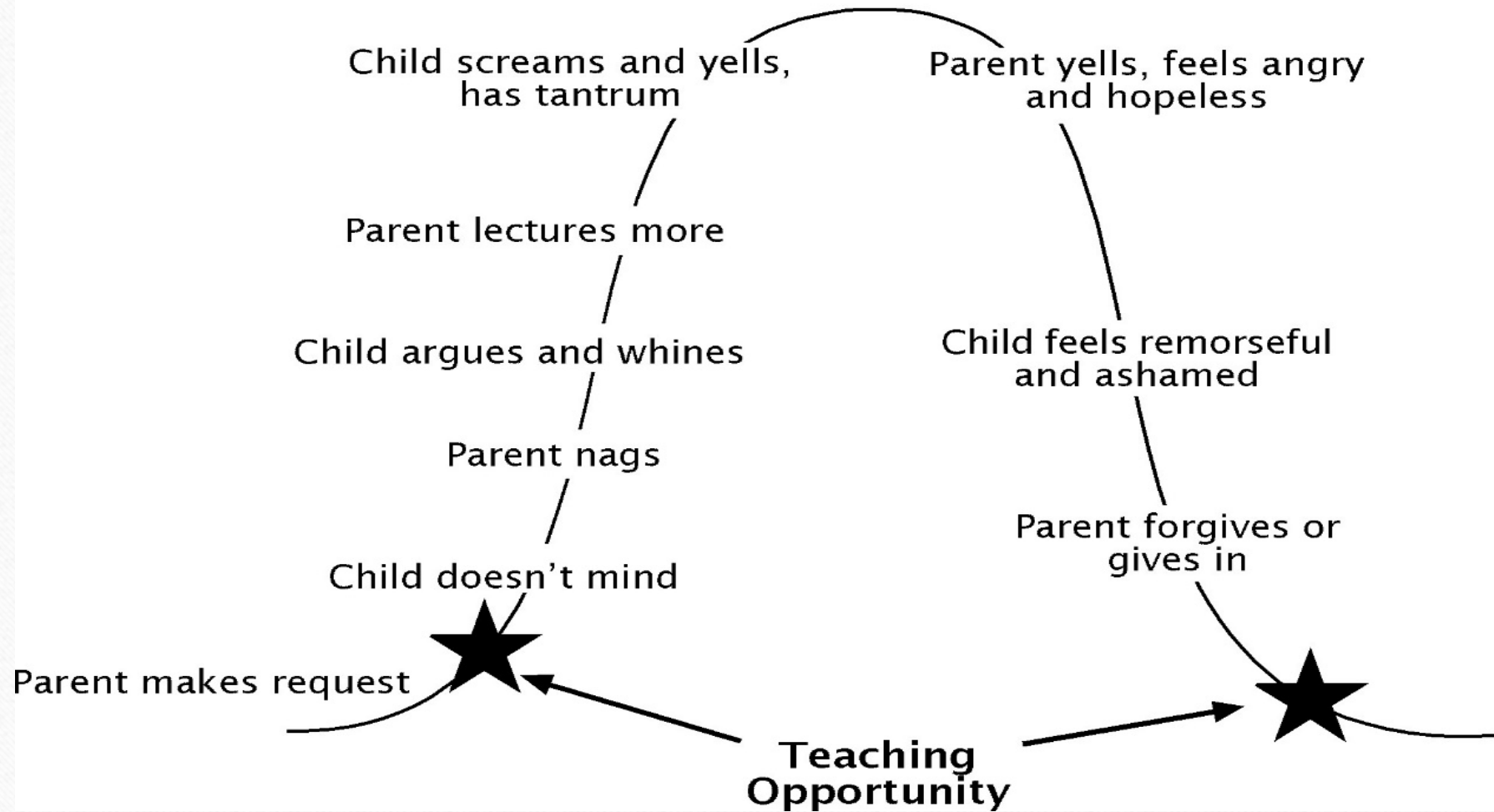
In order to help a dysregulated child to move out of crisis and gain the ability to regulate and make behavioral change, these three steps are critically necessary. Each step deals with a higher function of the brain.

- Regulate (brainstem)
- Relate and connect (limbic)
- Reason (cortex)

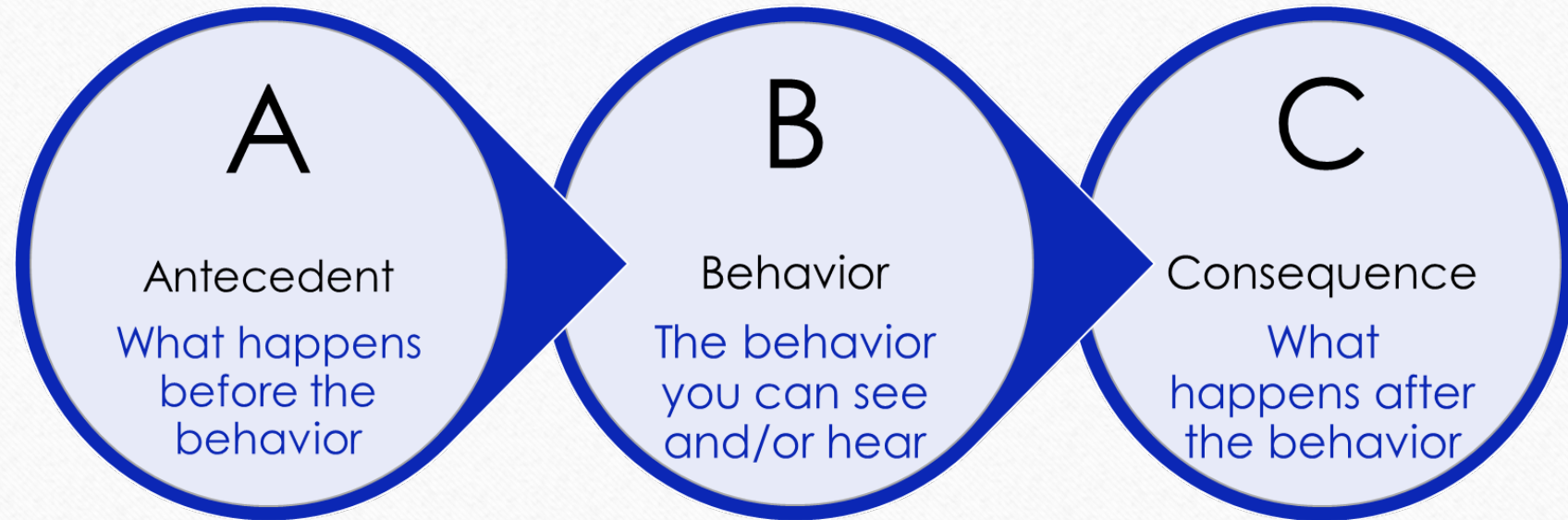
“Why can't I just start at the end?!?”



Teachable Moments



Describe a power struggle or conflict you've experienced with your child or another OR with someone you are close to.



What starts the power struggle? What does the other person do that “pushes your button?”

When your “button” is pushed, what behavior do you exhibit that maintains the power struggle?

What feelings and behaviors does the other person exhibit as a result of your behavior?

Conflict & Power Struggles

- Preventing Power Struggles
- Strategies for Re-energizing Yourself/Child (after a conflict or stressful interaction)
- Handling the bad moments





6. How to build a safe place for children who have experienced trauma.

Children who have been through trauma may:

1

Have valid fears about their own safety or the safety of loved ones

2

Have difficulty trusting adults to protect them

3

Be hyperaware of potential threats

4

Have problems controlling their reactions to perceived threats

When supper was over, I saw that there were many biscuits piled high upon the bread platter, an astonishing and unbelievable sight to me. . . .

I was afraid that somehow the biscuits might disappear during the night, while I was sleeping. I did not want to wake up in the morning, . . . feeling hungry and knowing that there was no food in the house. So, surreptitiously I took some of the biscuits from the platter and slipped them into my pocket, not to eat, but to keep as a bulwark against any possible attack of hunger. . .

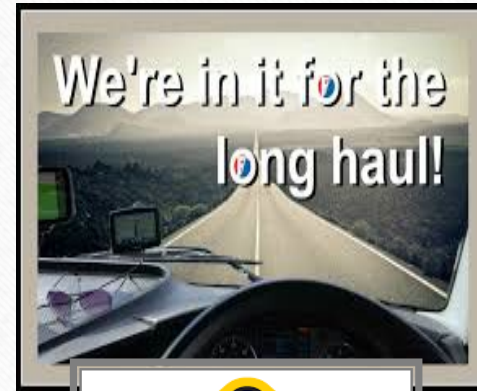
I did not break the habit of stealing and hoarding bread until my faith that food would be forthcoming at each meal had been somewhat established.



Wright, R. (1945). *Black Boy*. NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Building a Safe Place

- Ways to help a child feel safe
- Building positive attachments
- What to do in the long run
- Give a safety message

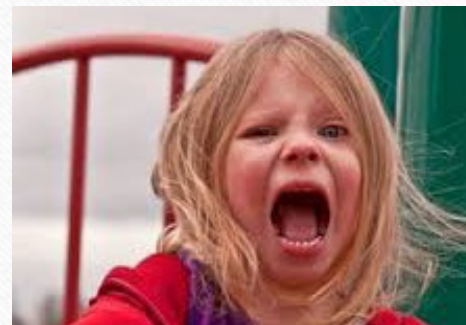


Building Positive Attachments

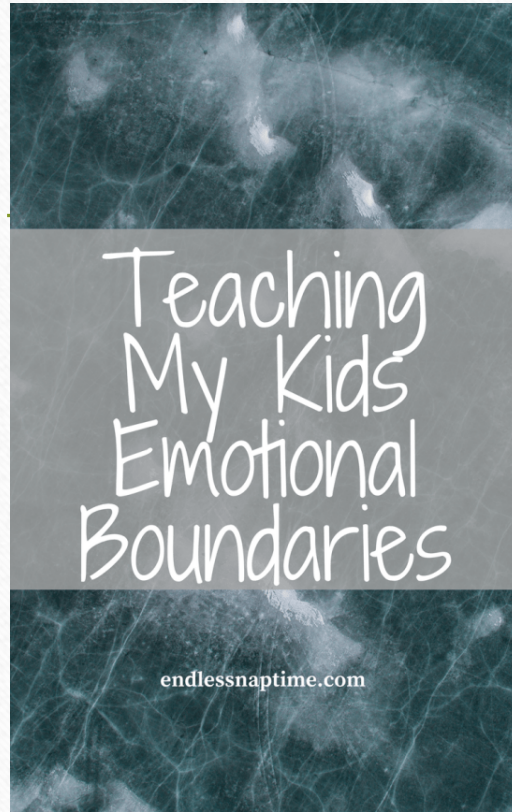
<https://usf.box.com/s/edelfic0hue2z9nwdmflnmqjifqedo5v>

Sometimes a child's behavior can be overwhelming, and it can become difficult to think of ways to build positive attachments. Sometimes the foster child purposefully exhibits poor behavior in order to ensure you and he or she don't have positive interactions.

Why would the child act in this way?



How About Emotional Boundaries?



- “Don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel”
- Family secrets
- Freedom of expression
- Sarcasm
- Emotional “space”
- And more...

Time for
a Break



My Child #4

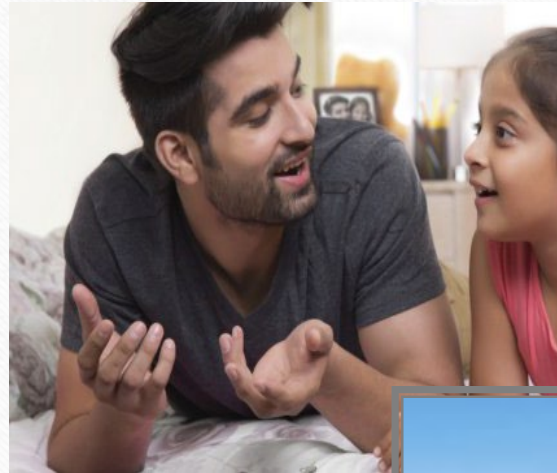
7. Healing from Trauma

Out of suffering have
emerged the strongest souls

Can the Brain Heal?

According to Dr. Perry...

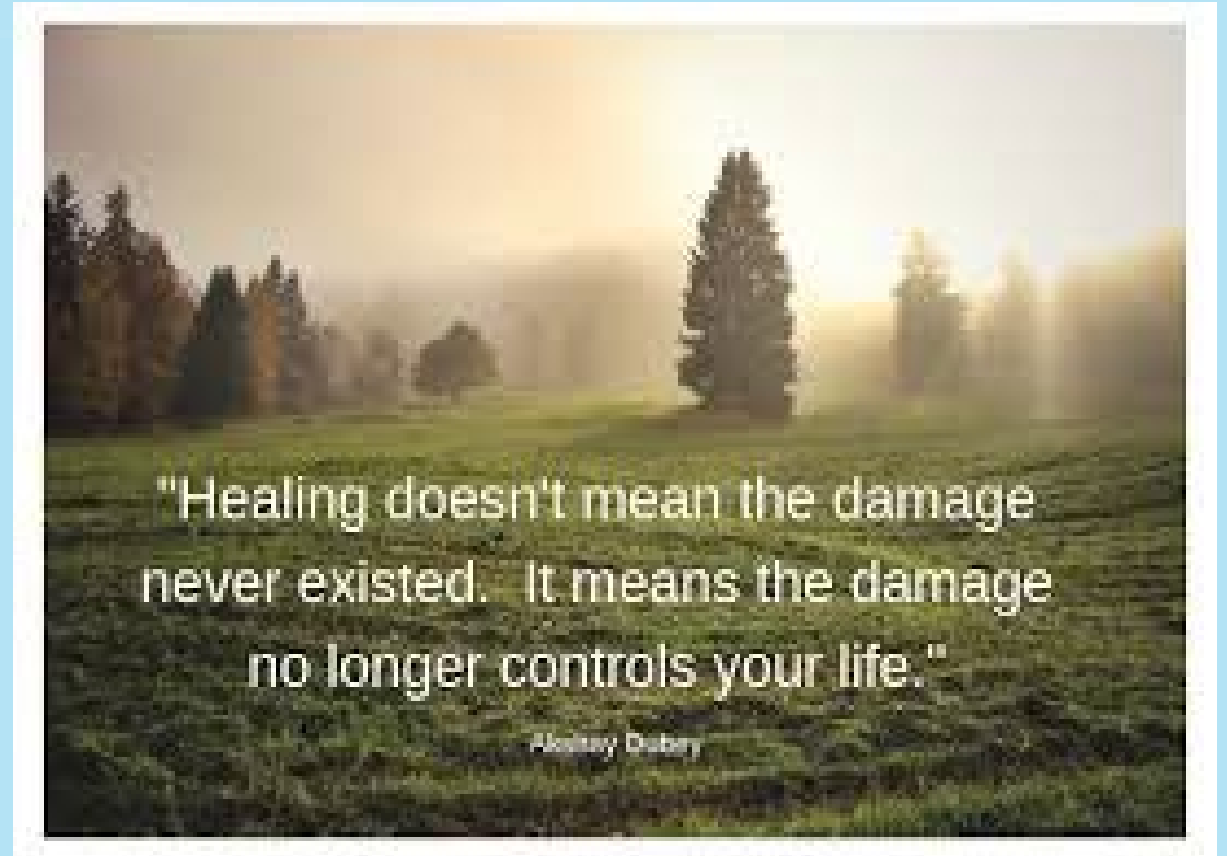
- Making it safe to talk
- The good news!
- Building new connections



Remember that no matter what the age of the child, *healing is possible*. With nurture and support, children who have been through trauma can regain trust, confidence, and hope.

By creating a structured, predictable environment, being willing to listen to the child's story at the child's pace and working with professionals trained in trauma and its treatment, *foster parents can make all the difference.*

*Did I mention that **CONNECTION** is the most important thing?*



"Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls your life."

Alonzo Dabery

Harry: *I just feel so angry all the time. . . . What if after everything I've been through, something's gone wrong inside me? What if I'm becoming bad?*

Sirius: *I want you to listen to me very carefully, Harry. You're not a bad person. You're a very good person who bad things have happened to.*

*From Harry Potter and the
Order of the Phoenix (Warner Brothers, 2007)*

8. Advocating for the child who has experienced trauma: What is the role of the child's team in healing?

The Child Advocate

I would feel like I was just being passed around and not really knowing what was going on. No one explained anything to me. I didn't even know what rights I had....if I had any. No one told me what the meaning of foster care was. No one told me why I had been taken away from my mom. I knew there were bad things going on, but no one really explained it to me.

-Luis

The Child Advocate

- Works as part of the team
- Uses *trauma informed* advocacy
- Utilizes foster parents as a crucial part of the process
- Advocates for treatment



ADVOCACY



Parent
Training



A diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities smiling together. The group includes children, young adults, and older adults, representing a wide range of backgrounds. They are posed in two rows against a plain white background. The text "My Child # 5" is overlaid in the center in a white serif font, with a thin white horizontal line underneath it. The entire image is framed by a thin white border and set against a textured gold background with dark grey bars on the left and right sides.

My Child # 5

Group Exercise on “My Child”



And finally...

9. What about self-care for the foster parent?

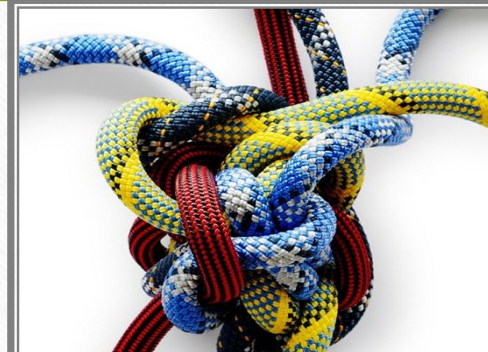


One cannot be deeply
responsive to the world
without being saddened
very often.

Erich Fromm

Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Trauma, and Self-Care

- Compassion fatigue
- Secondary trauma
- Myths about self care



Self Care Checkup

Adapted from "Caring For Children Who Have Experience Trauma" by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2010



PRACTICAL WISDOM FROM PLANTS



H.A.L.T.

REMEMBER TO STAY
HYDRATED

ALWAYS REMAIN
GROUNDED ~



Making Your Own Self-Care Plan

<https://usf.box.com/s/mpwqrw1qoz448nm2ctg1b2n9l7j1xarb>



Self-care checklist

Today I will...

- Catch up with an old friend
- Take time for myself
- Eat a healthy and nutritious meal
- Drink enough water

Find more tips at:
ruok.org.au

RUOK?
A conversation could change a life.



IN CONCLUSION-

Here's what we can do right now:

- Develop a “trauma informed lens”
- Help the child you are working with to feel and be safe
- Be aware of your own issues
- Listen and develop patience (Remember, healing is a long term process)
- Talk and work with those who can help
- Help the child you are working with to get the trauma informed help he/she needs
- Advocate!
- Last but not least, take care of yourself

“First seek to understand, then to be understood.”

Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*





Key Takeaways for Session 3

- What caught your attention?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- What is one new skill you've learned or one that you re-discovered?
- Homework

See Ya!!!