Central Issue

Troubled kids are distinguished by their regrettable ability to elicit from others exactly the opposite of what they really need.

( L. Tobin )
The central challenge facing adults working with children with significant adverse childhood experiences...

Is dealing with their primary pain without inflicting secondary pain through punitive or controlling reactions.

- James Anglin
What is Your Conflict Style?

Self-Assessment Inventory
Emotions are Contagious

Kids (people) in stress create in adults their feelings and, if not trained, the adults will mirror their behavior. (Long & Fecser, 2000)
Our Brain - Downshifts Under Perceived Threat
“Faced with a range of challenging behaviors caregivers have a tendency to deal with their frustration by retaliating in ways that often uncannily repeat the children’s early trauma.”

Bessel van der Kolk
Hyper or Hypo Aroused

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE- TRAUMA/ANXIETY RELATED RESPONSES:
Widening the Comfort Zone for Increased Flexibility

- ANXIETY
  - OVERWHELMED
  - CHAOTIC RESPONSES
  - OUTBURSTS (EMOTIONAL OR AGGRESSIVE)
  - ANGER/ AGGRESSION/ RAGE

- RIGIDNESS
  - OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR OR THOUGHTS
  - OVER-EATING/RESTRICTING
  - ADDICTIONS
  - IMPULSIVITY

HYPER- AROUSED

Fight/Flight Response

COMPARTMENT ZONE
EMOTIONALLY REGULATED

Calm, Cool, Collected, Connected

ABILITY TO SELF-SOOTHE
ABILITY TO REGULATE EMOTIONAL STATE

Staying within the window allows for better relationship interactions

TO STAY IN THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE:
• Mindfulness—Being Present, in Here-n-Now
• Grounding Exercises
• Techniques for Self-Soothing, Calming the Body & Emotional Regulation
• Deep, Slow Breathing
• Recognize Limiting Beliefs, Counter with Positive Statements About Self, New Choices

Freeze Response

- FEIGN DEATH RESPONSE
  - DISSOCIATION
  - NOT PRESENT
  - UNAVAILABLE/ SHUT DOWN
  - MEMORY LOSS

HYPO-AROUSED

- DISCONNECTED
  - AUTO PILOT
  - NO DISPLAY OF EMOTIONS/ FLAT
  - SEPARATION FROM SELF, FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

CAUSES TO GO OUT OF THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE:
• Fear of ...
  - Unconscious Thought & Bodily Feeling: Control, Unsafe, I do not exist, Abandonment, Rejection
  - Trauma-Related Core Beliefs about self are triggered: Emotional & Physiological Dysregulation occurs

Marie S. Dezelic, PhD © 2013

Trauma Treatment Healing the Whole Person © 2013
Tit for Tat Emotional Reaction (ER) Cycles

Young person reacts With PAIN-BASED BEHAVIOUR

Adult reacts With PAIN-BASED DISCIPLINE
WHY ADULTS BECOME COUNTER AGGRESSIVE

Caught in the Conflict Cycle
In a bad mood
Personal irritability
Embarrassed
Personal helplessness
Personal unfinished business
Violation of values

LSCI Institute
Mirror Neurons...

No one benefits when we mirror the behavior of children and youth that are in pain!!
BREAKING THE CONFLICT CYCLE
Calming the Lower Brain

**EMOTIONAL FIRST AIDE**

**Co-Regulation**

Be A Thermostat
Not A Thermometer!!
4 Critical Questions to Ask Yourself Before Intervening

1. What am I feeling now?

2. What does this young person, feel, need or want?

3. How is the environment affecting this young person?

4. How do I best respond?
“Without...soothing by reliable and consistent caregivers, the troubled child or adolescent is unable to regulate his or her mental state and restore emotional equilibrium”

(Mollon in Schore)
How To Co-Regulate

There are 3 broad categories of support that caregivers can provide to children, youth, and young adults that will help them to develop foundational self-regulatory skills and expand these skills to meet increasingly complex regulatory needs as they grow (Murray et al., 2015)

1- Provide a warm responsive relationship
2- Structure the environment
3. Teach & Coach self-regulation skills.
Respond Don’t React

At the core of healing presence is the ability to respond rather than react to the emotions of others.

Erik K. Laursen, Thriving, 2:6
We Lend Kids our Calm

CONNECTION CALMS
Co-Regulation vs Coercive Regulation

**Co-Regulation**

1. Awareness of own feelings
2. Focus on Child’s Feeling
3. Soothing: Assertive Tone
4. Absorbing child’s hostility
5. Meeting Support Needs
6. Goal: Helping Child to Calm

**Coercive Regulation**

1. No awareness of own feelings
2. Focus on the Child’s Behavior
3. Loud: Aggressive Tone
4. Retaliating to child’s hostility
5. Ignoring child’s needs
6. Goal: Stopping Bad Behavior
Sequence of Positive Engagement

Bruce Perry - Child Trauma Academy

1st - REGULATE

2nd - RELATE

3rd - REASON
Sensory Path & Amygdala Re-Set Area

Star Breathing

Breathe in, hold at the point, and breathe out. Follow your way around the star.
"1" Consistent Adult Connection Changes Lives

Troubled youth need more than technique; they need transformative experiences with other people. ~Erik Laursen