

# HISTORICAL TRAUMA AMONG NATIVE AMERICANS

Presented by:

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# Traumatic Brain Injury: TBI

- TBI usually results from a violent blow or jolt to the head or body.
- TBI symptoms can occur immediately or may be delayed.
- Mild TBI may affect your brain cells temporarily. Moderate to Severe TBI can result in long-term complications.
- TBI can effect functioning in a wide range of areas:
  - Physical (e.g. seizures, headaches, dizziness, paralysis)
  - Cognitive (e.g. memory, learning, reasoning, judgement, executive functioning, communication, social skills)
  - Emotional (e.g. mood swings, anger, insomnia)
  - Behavioral (e.g. aggressive or risky behavior, loss of self control)
  - Sensory (e.g. balance, coordination, taste, smell, touch, hearing, vision)

# What is Trauma?

- Definition: A response to a negative event(s) that exceeds the individual's ability to cope
- 6 primary risk factors:
  1. Prenatal Stress
  2. Prenatal Substance Exposure (80% of foster children)
  3. Birth Trauma/Early Hospitalization
  4. Abuse (sexual, physical, emotional)
  5. Neglect
  6. Traumatic Incidents (violence, disaster, separations, multiple placements, etc.)

# What is Trauma?

- Big “T”
- Little “t”
- Complex Developmental
  - Relational
  - Historical
- Transgenerational/Intergenerational

# Historical & Transgenerational

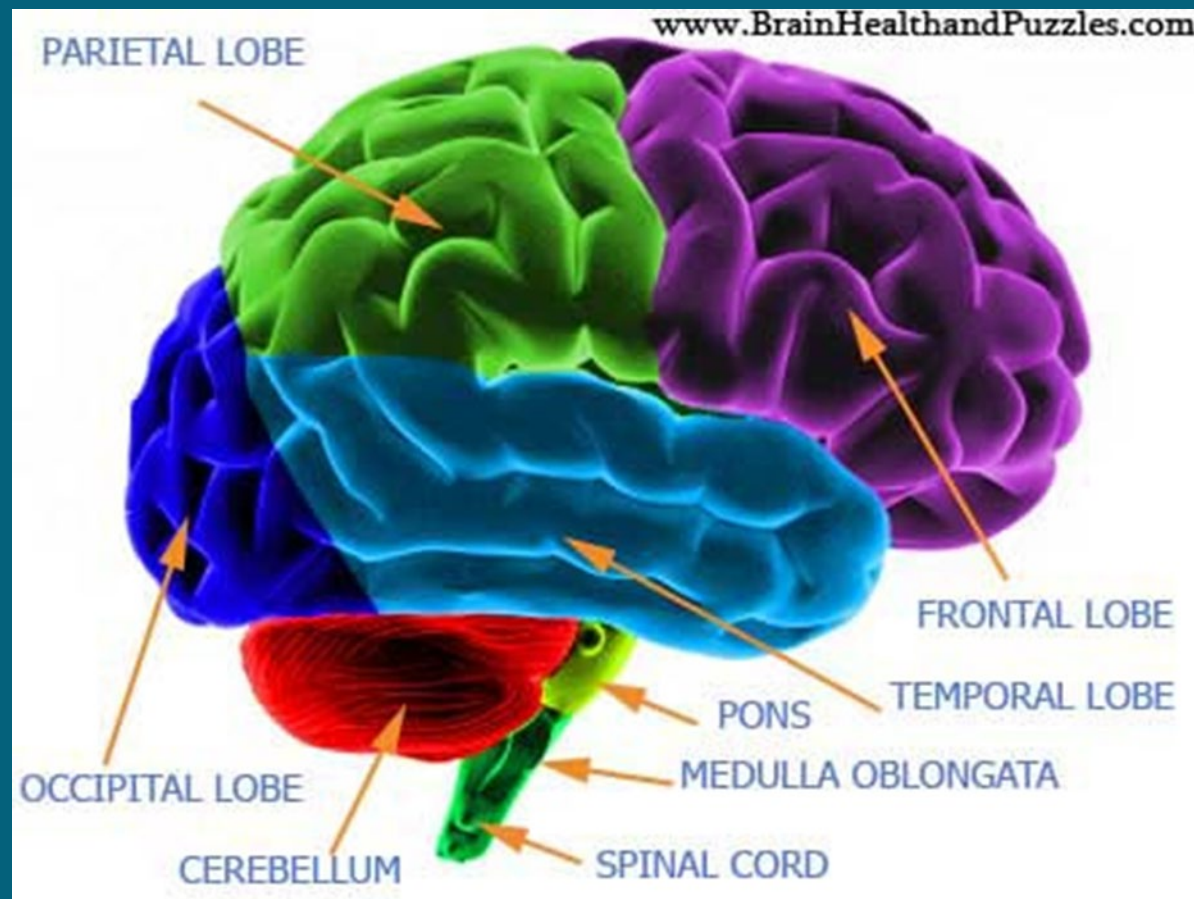
## Historical Trauma

- Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding shared by a group of people as a result of colonialism, dislocation, oppression, genocide, etc.

## Transgenerational Trauma

- The actions of abuse/trauma manifested across generations

# The Human Brain



# Neuroplasticity

- Neuroplasticity has a clear age-dependent determinant
  - Although plasticity occurs over an individual's lifetime, different types of plasticity dominate during certain periods of one's life and are less prevalent during other periods.
    - In other words, there are “windows of opportunity” for full acquisition of skill to occur
- The environment plays a key role in influencing plasticity.
  - The brain is shaped by the characteristics of a person's environment and by the actions of that person

# Brain Development

- ▣ Bottom Up – from primitive to most complex
- ▣ Brain development is sequential. More complex systems are dependent on development of less complex systems.
- ▣ For normal brain development to occur there must be specific patterns of activity at specific times during development = *sensitive periods*
- ▣ Experiences (positive or negative) during sensitive periods organizes brain systems.
- ▣ Therefore, trauma during early childhood can effect all future functional capabilities!



# Activity Across Brain Regions

Brain Region	Functions	Critical Period	Experiences needed	Functional Maturity
Cortex	Thinking, Planning, Reasoning, Creativity, & Sensory Integration	3 - 6 years	Complex conversations, social interactions, exploration, safe, fed, secure	Adult
Limbic	Emotion, Attachment Memory, & Sensory Integration	1 - 4 years	Complex movement, social experience, narrative	Puberty
Diencephalon	Sensory Motor & Sensory Processing	6 months - 2 years	Complex rhythmic movement, simple narrative, affection	Childhood
Brain Stem	State Regulation & Sensory Processing	In utero - 9 months	Rhythmic, patterned input, engaged caregiving	Infancy

# Trauma Leads to Problems with Sensory Integration

- The more effective our brain is at processing sensory input, the more effective our behavioral output will be.
- 90% of children with trauma have sensory difficulties.

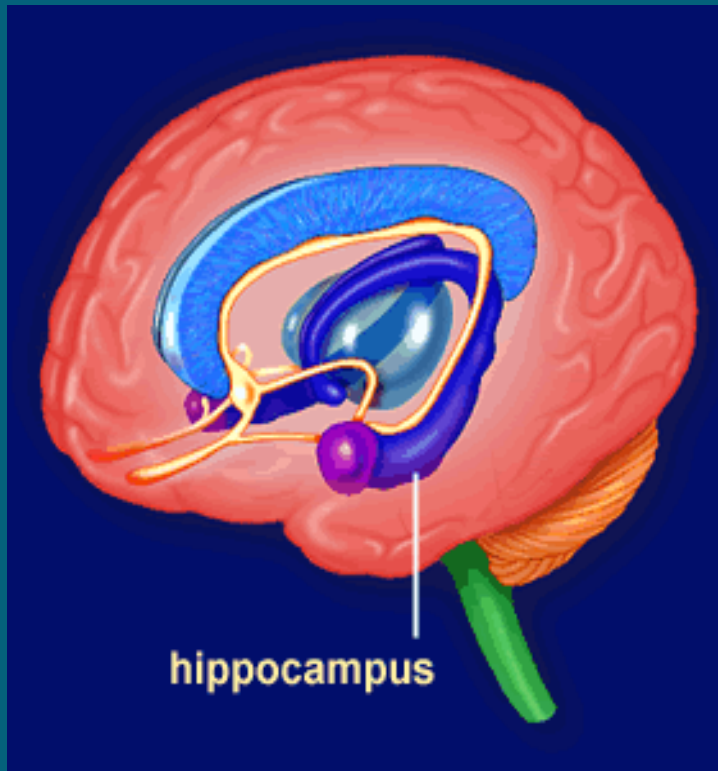
# Trauma Leads to Problems with Attachment

- Attachment is a system in the brain that that develops to ensure infant safety and survival
- The comfort, pleasure, and calm and balanced attuned interaction between the infant and caregiver creates a sense of safety within the infant
- Forms the basis for:
  - all future relationships
  - sense of self-worth
  - resilience to stress
  - ability to regulate own emotions
  - make sense of life
  - create meaningful connections with others

# Mirror Neurons

- In Normal Youth:
  - the brain mirrors what is being projected by the caregiver
- In Traumatized Youth:
  - The mirror becomes inaccurate
  - Hypersensitive and highly reactive to negative nonverbal cues
  - Over-perceive negative behavior to mean presence of threats
  - Inability to recognize feelings
  - Difficulty with empathy

# Hippocampus



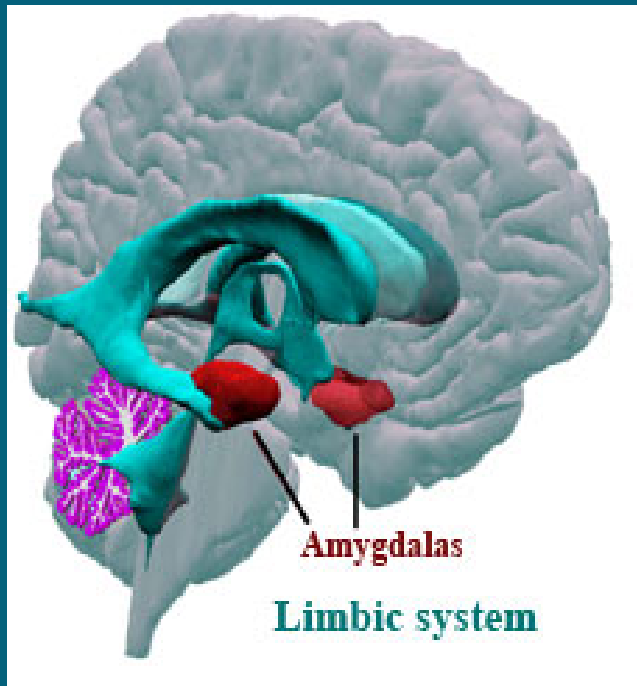
- Part of the limbic system
- Fully mature by age 3
- Primary role is short-term and long-term memory
- Also plays important role in spatial navigation

# Trauma & Left-Right Brain



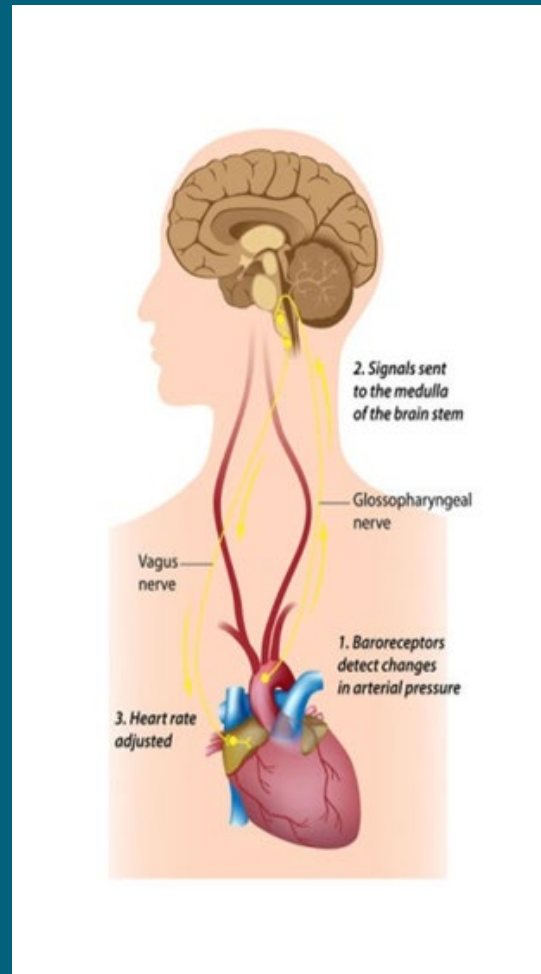
- Left side rational brain
  - Facts
  - Statistics
  - Sequence
- Right side emotional brain
  - Sensory experiences
  - Nonverbal signals

# Amygdala



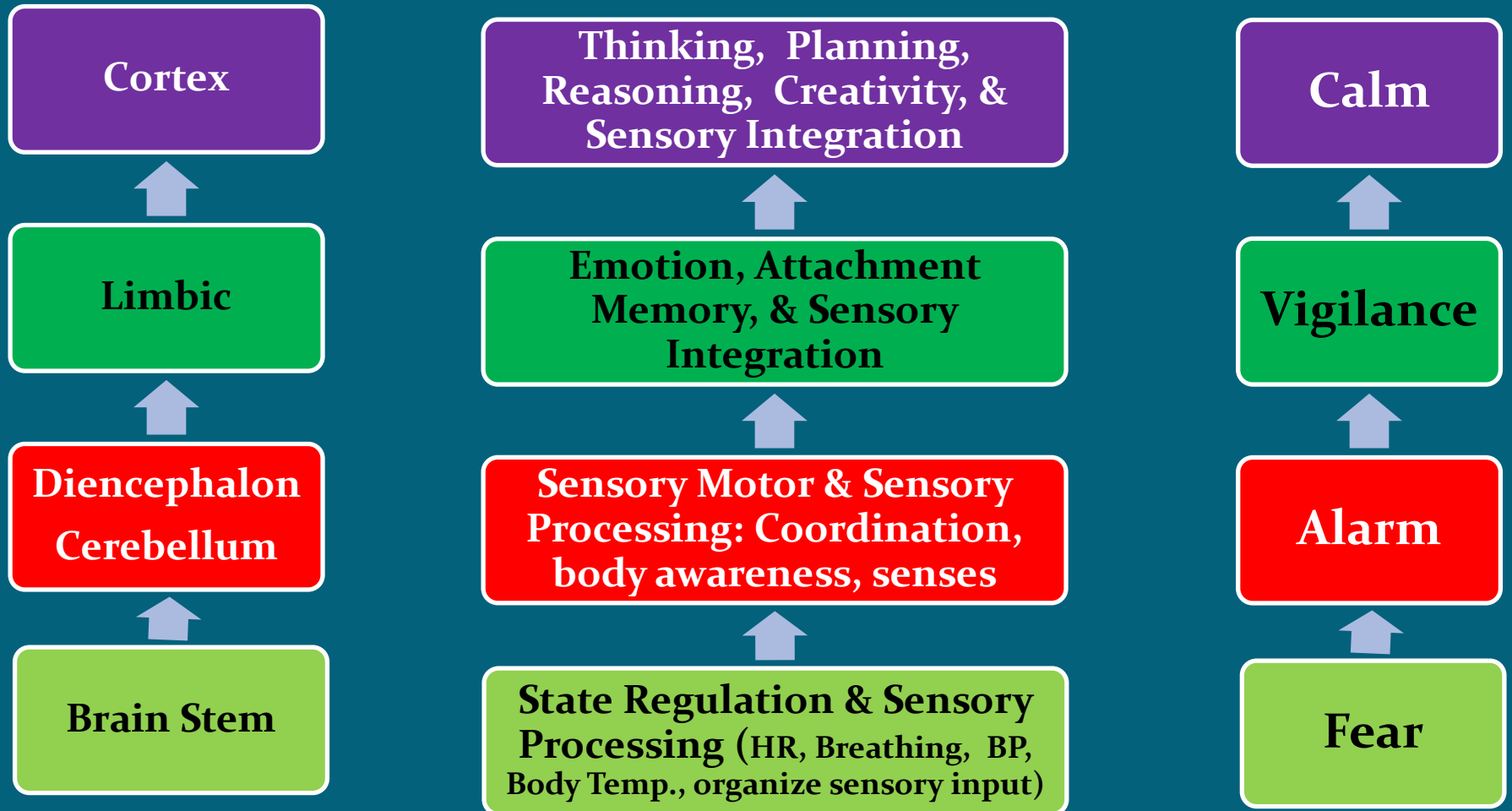
- Part of the limbic system
- Limbic system is active in-utero. Therefore infant is born with feelings!
- Primary role is processing of memory, decision-making and emotional reactions
- Important role in expression and modulation of aggression
- Survival based
- “Boss” of the limbic system

# Trauma & Visceral Feelings

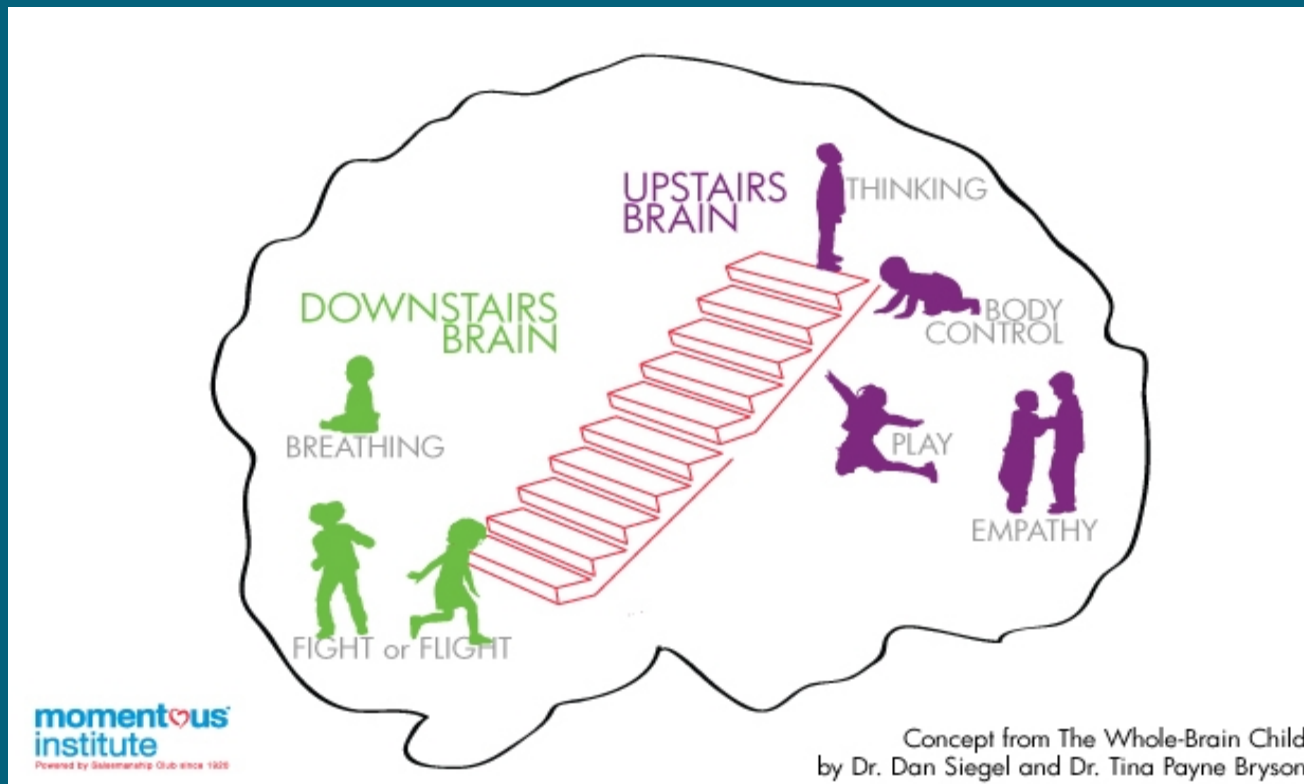


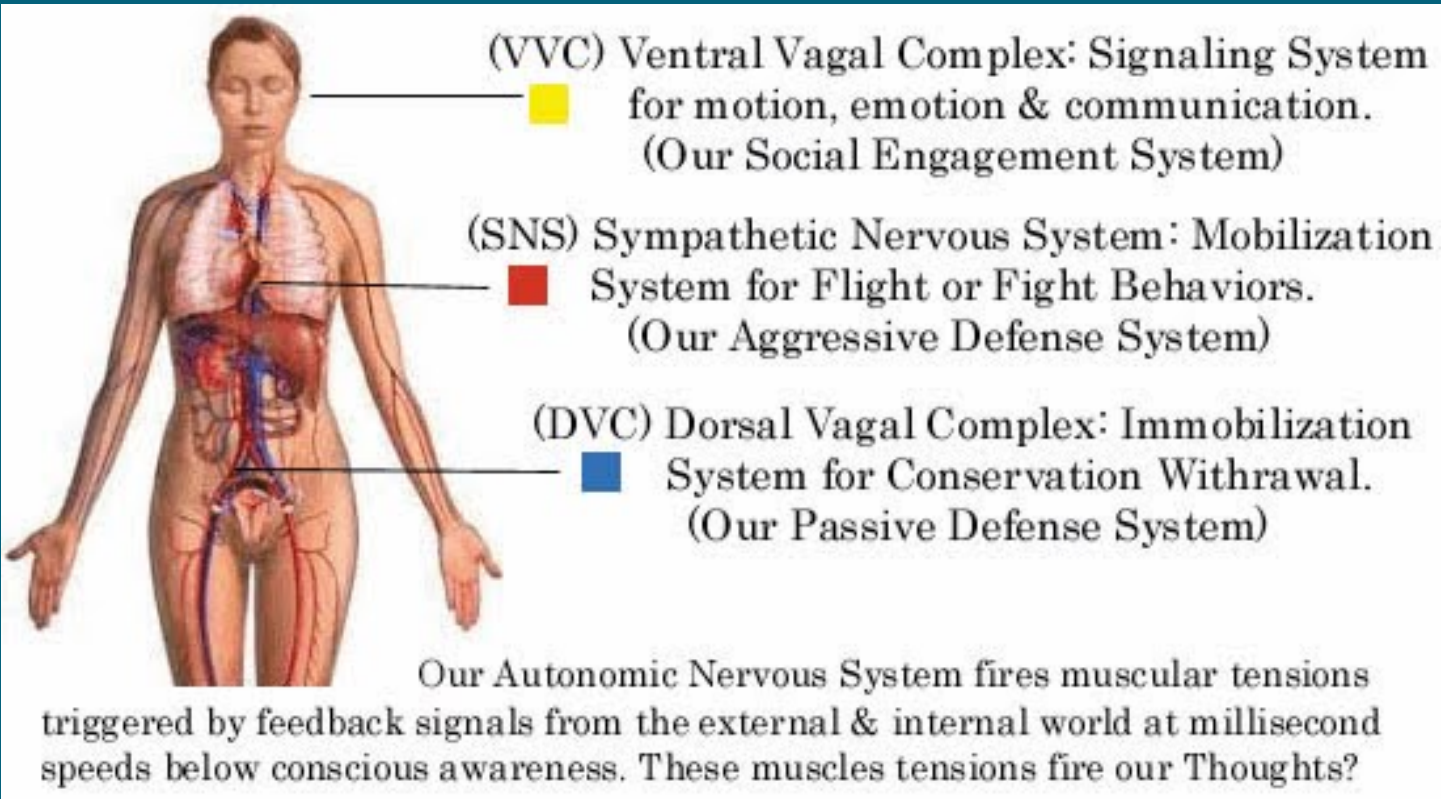


# Fight, Flight, or Freeze



# Trauma & The Brain



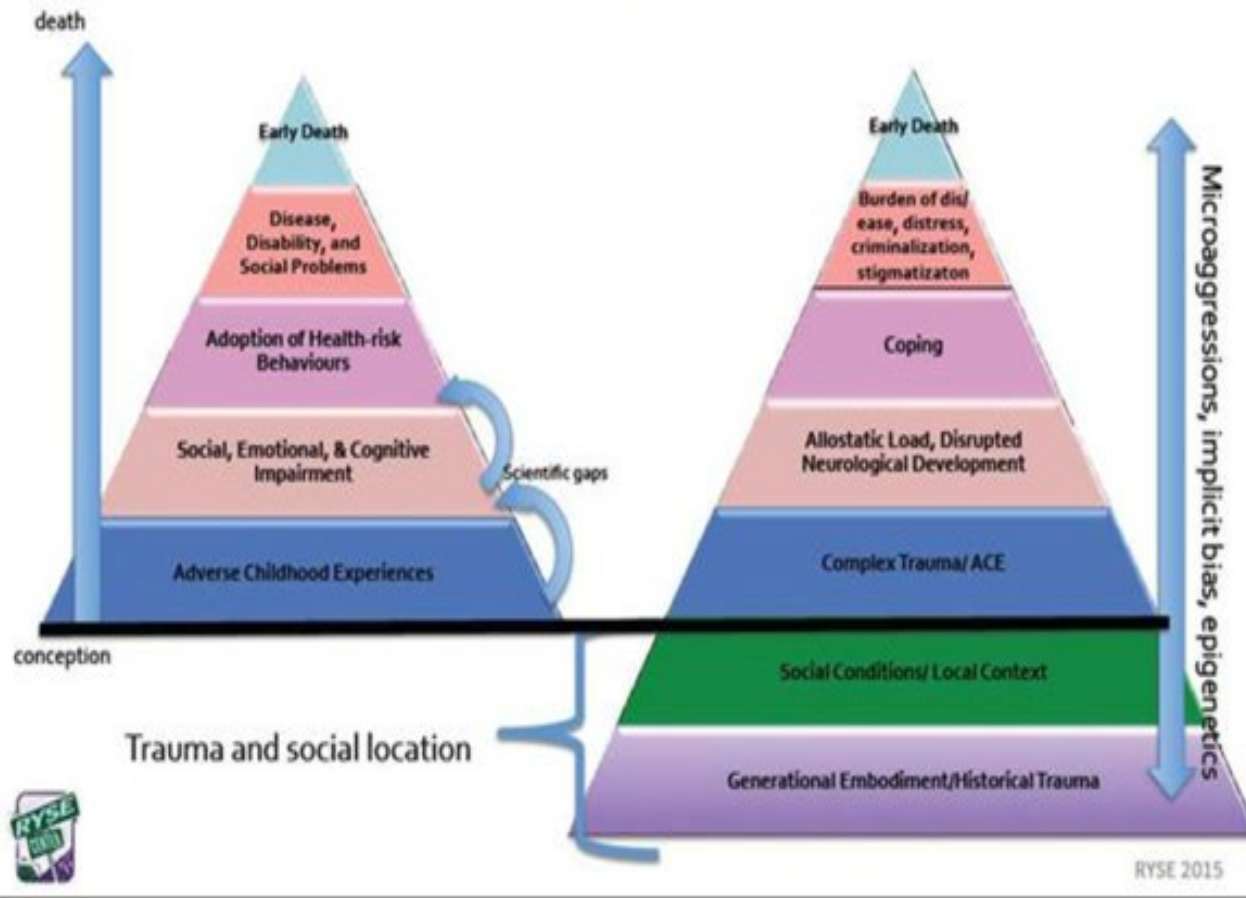


# Trauma and Social Location Graphic

## Trauma and Social Location

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Historical Trauma/Embodiment



People be like "Sept 11th, never forget!"



To the genocide of 100 million  
Native peoples they say "Get over it!"

# The Indian Boarding School



# How Does Trauma Impact Relationships?

- Attachment problems arise from repeated experiences of failed emotional connection
  - Abuse; neglect; trauma; prolonged separation; multiple caregivers; maternal depression and/or substance addiction; lack of harmony between child and parent; inexperience mother with poor parenting skills
- Attachment problems are passed on from one generation to the next unless repair occurs



# Treatment Must Be Broad

## Traumatic Brain Injury

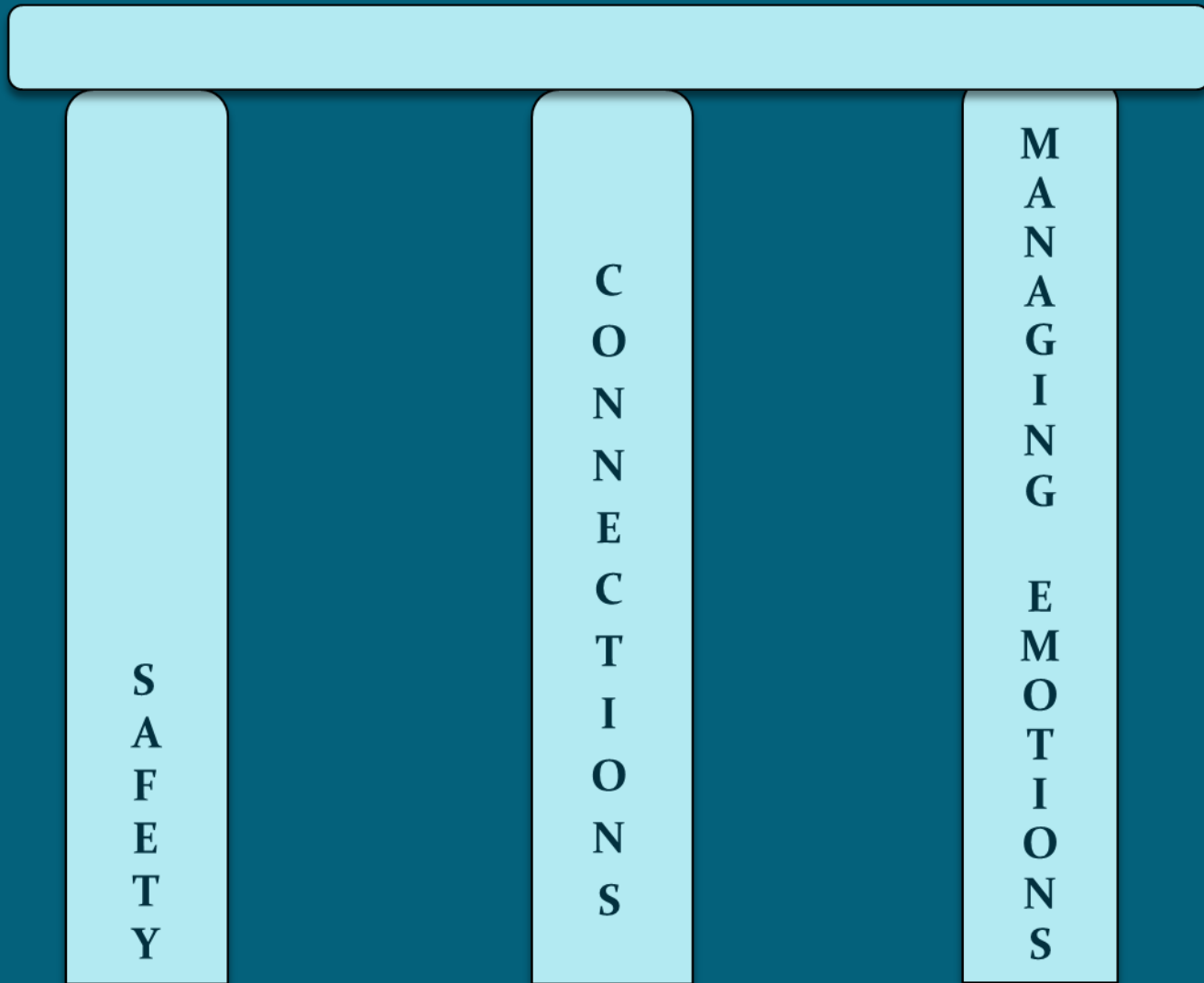
- Kinesiotherapist
- Massage Therapist
- Neurologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Physical Therapist
- Primary Care Provider
- Rehabilitation Nurse
- Rehabilitation Psychologist
- Recreational Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Social Worker

## Psychological Trauma

- Somatic Therapist
- Naturopathic medicine
- Neurologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Physical Therapist
- Primary Care Provider
- Counselor
- Psychologist
- School Counselor
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Social Worker



# 3 Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care



# Healing Trauma

## Support the Body

- Mindfulness
- Movement
- Rhythm
  - Food
  - Water
  - Sleep

# Empowering



# Healing Trauma

## Support the Person

- Connections
- Share Power
- Give Voice

# Connecting



# Giving Voice



# Trust-Based Relational Intervention

- Support the Body
  - Physiological



- Support the Person
  - Safe Connections



- Learning Occurs



Calms Amygdala  
Activates Prefrontal Cortex

# Strategies for Trauma-Informed Practice

- Continuous consent
- Personal Agency
- “How” matters as much as “What”
- Express concern
- Indicate their worth
- Use less negative language
- Emphasize strengths
- Provide a clear explanation
- Memory support – reminders, notes, etc.



# Strategies for Trauma-Informed Practice

- Ask Trauma-Informed Questions:
  - Has the person experienced a traumatic event?
    - Does the person have a history of foster placement?
    - Have there been multiple or prolonged exposures to trauma?
  - What is their intervention history and outcomes?
    - Multiple placements; multiple addiction treatments; poor progress?
  - Who is the caregiver(s) and what is their role?
    - Does the caregiver help the child feel safe/unsafe?
    - Is the caregiver consistently/inconsistently present?
    - Is the caregiver suffering from their own trauma?
      - Substance Abuse?

# Strategies for Trauma-Informed Practice

- Ask Trauma-Informed Questions:
  - Is the person displaying trauma-related behaviors?
    - Extremely passive; incongruent or inappropriate affect; easily angered; extreme emotions; non-responsiveness.
    - Do they appear regulated or dysregulated?
  - Is the person able to understand and participate in the discussion?
    - Delays in development, cognition, sensory processing issues, etc.
  - Is there anything that I can do as a provider to help this person feel safe, connected and in control?
    - Enhance participation
    - Improve outcomes