

Repair Your Light! Identifying and Coping with Childhood Trauma



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What's Trauma?

- ▶ Trauma describes **injuries** resulting from an event(s) or experience(s).
 - Trauma is NOT an event or experience.
- ▶ Trauma responses persist for over a month after the event/experience.
 - Acute Stress = one month or less.
 - Symptoms occurring during and directly after the event can be signs of healthy processing.

Types of Trauma

- ▶ Single event (PTSD)
 - One experience
 - PTSD always equals trauma, but trauma does not always equal PTSD.
- ▶ Complex / Developmental / Childhood Trauma
 - Many experiences that occur during pivotal developmental stages (0–26 years old).
 - Disrupted attachment
 - Emotional neglect
 - Witnessing interpersonal (domestic) violence

Childhood Trauma Causes

- ▶ Physical or emotional neglect
- ▶ Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
- ▶ Witnessing/ exposure to violence
- ▶ Oppression/discrimination
- ▶ Disruptions Attachment:
 - Adoption
 - The child is removed from the home
 - Multiple changes in caregivers
 - Inconsistent caregivers
 - Caregiver's substance use
 - Caregiver's medical/mental illness
 - Caregiver's attachment needs
 - Caregiver's death
 - Caregiver's military deployment
 - Caregiver or child's incarceration
 - Divorce
 - Large Family



**Adverse Childhood
Experience
Questionnaire for
Adults
(ACEs)**

If trauma was water in a glass



No trauma



Single Event

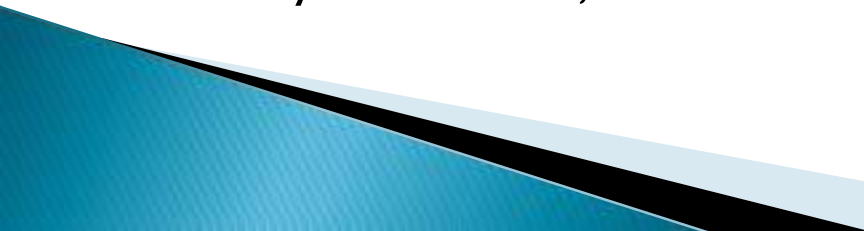


Complex/
Developmental/
Childhood

The Impact of Patriarchy

A society in which men systemically dominate women.

USA is lacking in:

- ▶ Maternal Healthcare
 - ▶ Parental leave
 - ▶ Reproductive rights
 - ▶ Pay gap: White women earn 82 cents for every dollar men earn. Black women earned 70 % and Hispanic women earn 65% as much as White men.
 - ▶ In the household: childcare, food preparation, and emotional labor.
 - ▶ In society: primary caretakers of children, aging parents, disabled family members, and community members.
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Girl/Women Trauma

- ▶ Sexual Assault
- ▶ Human Trafficking
- ▶ Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence

“Rape, battery, and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common a part of women’s lives that they can hardly be described as outside the range of ordinary experience.”

– Dr. Judith Herman



Adult Symptoms of Childhood Trauma

▶ Emotional

- Anxiety/Fear/Struggles to feel safe.
- Anger/Irritability.
- Depression/Greif.
- Disconnected/Apathy.
- Struggle to regulate emotions.
- Restricted range of emotions.
- Low self-worth/pervasive shame.

▶ Physical

- Muscle tension, GI/stomach issues, headaches, fatigue.
- More susceptible to illnesses.
- Sleep issues: Insomnia/hypersomnia/nightmares.
- Chronic pain.
- Unexplained pain.



Adult Symptoms of Childhood Trauma

▶ Cognitive

- Lack of focus/easily distracted.
- Memory issues.
- Flashbacks or intrusive thoughts.
- Self-sabotaging thoughts.
- Dissociation.

▶ Relational

- Attachment/Relationship issues.
- Fight, Flight, Freezing, Fawning interactions.
- Social isolation or constant need for much support.
- Struggles to feel safe with or to trust safe people.
- Being drawn to and trusting unsafe people.



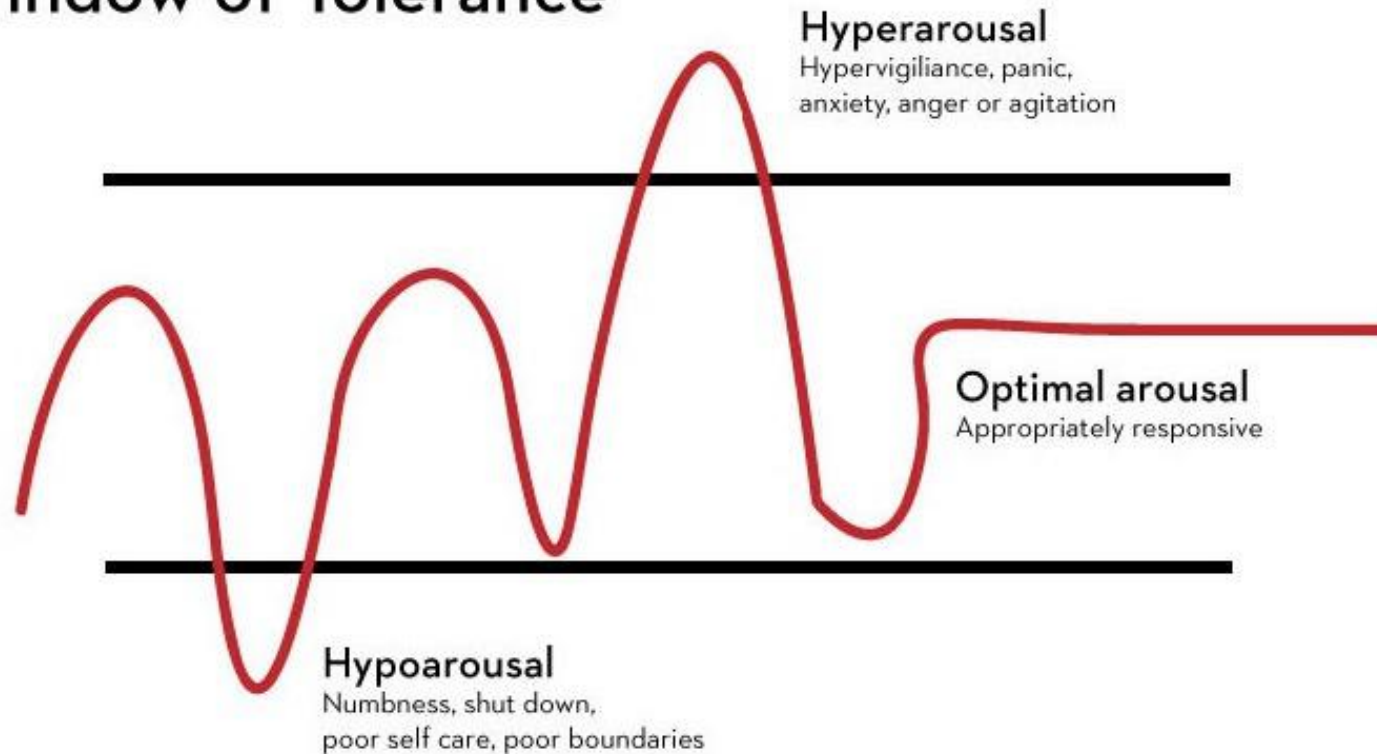
Childhood Trauma Impacts Career Performance and Growth

- ▶ Lack of concentration/attention to detail/organization.
- ▶ Procrastination/avoiding tasks.
- ▶ Decreased passion, motivation, and drive.
- ▶ Missing days/leaving early.
- ▶ Constantly working.
- ▶ Taking on too many responsibilities.
- ▶ Always high-performing.
- ▶ Not seeking or taking advantage of opportunities.
- ▶ Unable to learn additional skills or pursue continued education/training.
- ▶ Struggling to advocate for yourself.



Coping with Trauma

Window of Tolerance



To Cope With Trauma, Your Needs Must Come First



Coping Methods and Skills

- ▶ Not a fix.
- ▶ Not a “one size fits all.”
- ▶ You need multiple skills.
 - Build a toolbox.
- ▶ Does it work for you?
 - Notice how you feel during and after use.
- ▶ Practice often, even when it’s not needed.

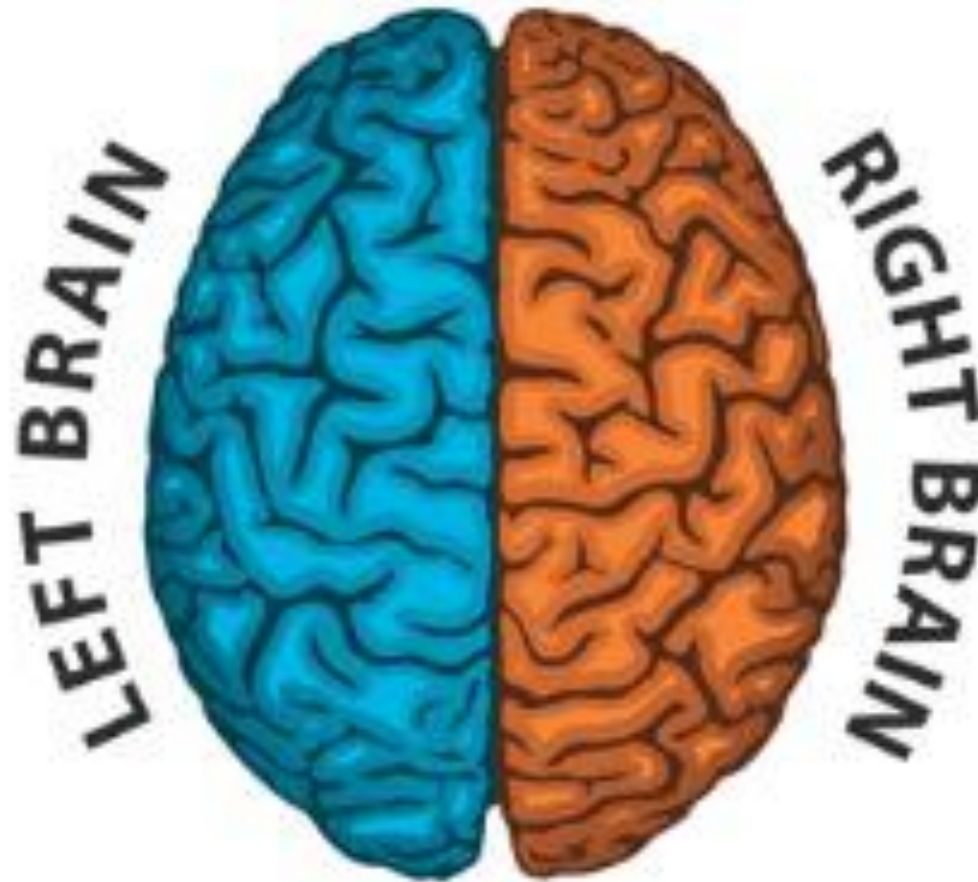


Boundaries

- ▶ Every relationship has boundaries
- ▶ Verbal and nonverbal
- ▶ Proactive or Reactive
- ▶ Boundaries are difficult because they disrupt homeostasis.

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- ▶ Common reactions to boundaries:
 - A period of adjustment/transition
 - Anger, Anxiety, Sadness, Denial, Bargaining, Relieved, Respect, Safety

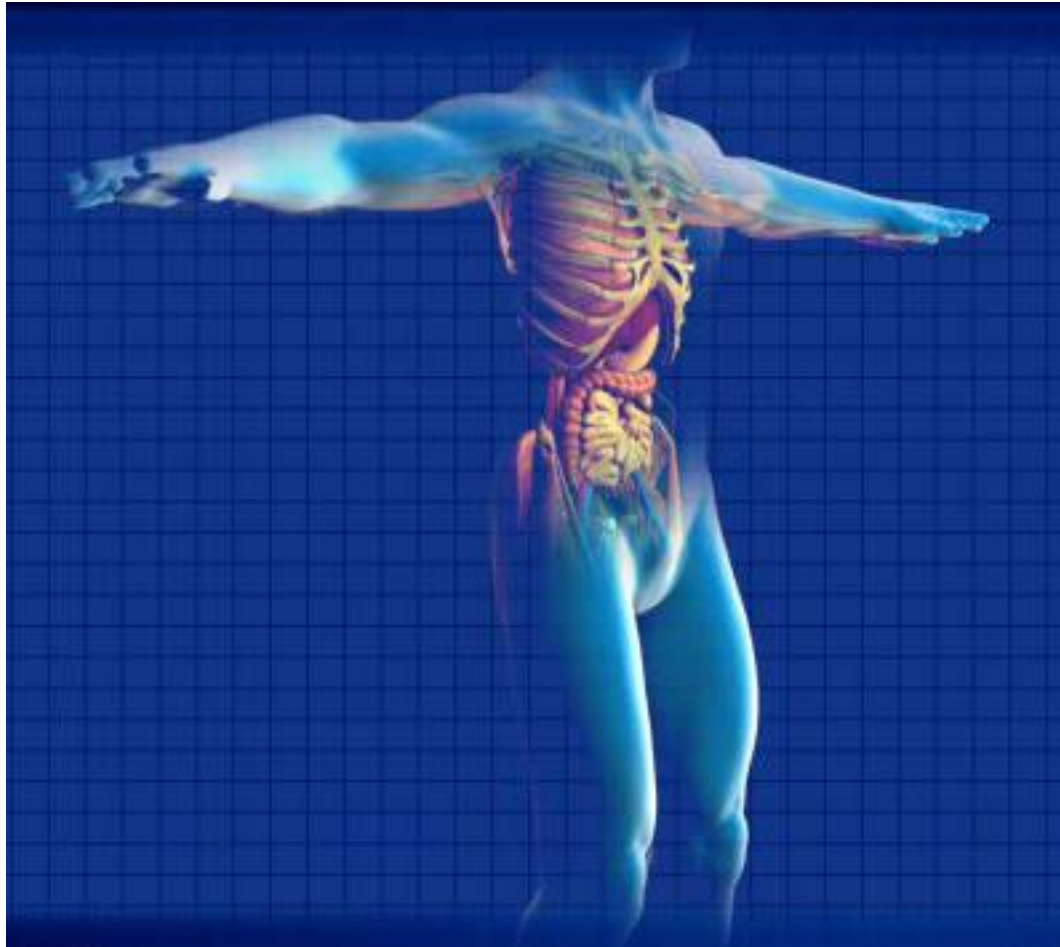
Breathing with Bilateral Stimulation



Limiting Media Exposure

- ▶ Too much media (news/social media) can fuel trauma responses
- ▶ How much exposure do you need?
 - Checking often?
 - Always the background?
- ▶ Creating Boundaries
 - Schedule it: Morning during coffee, lunch breaks
 - Frequency: 3 times a day
 - Limit outlets: 2–3 such as CNN, Facebook,

Open Posture



Open postures

- ▶ Find your open posture
 - Your body takes up space
 - Opening throat, chest, and/or stomach
 - Arms at your sides, stretched out, or above the head
 - Head straight or looking up
 - Standing postures are more intense
- ▶ Practice often
 - Allow your body to process sensations

Brain Games

Refocus your brain with cognitive recollections



Brain Games Ideas

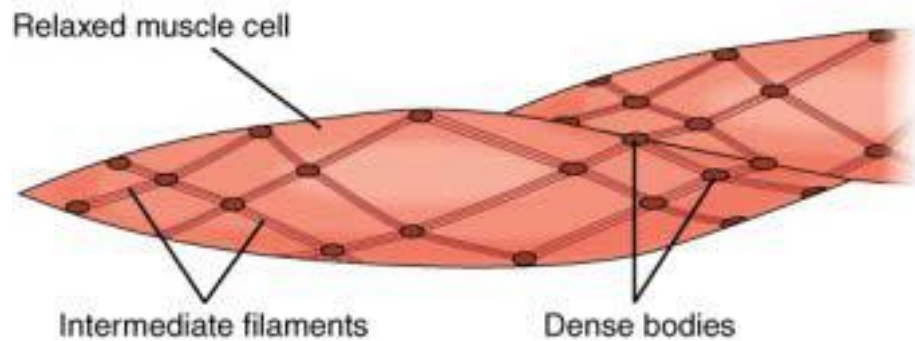
▶ ABC

- Choose a topic and name one for each alphabet
 - Examples: Kid's movies: Anastasia, Babe, Coco
 - Cities: Anchorage, Boston, Chicago, Detroit

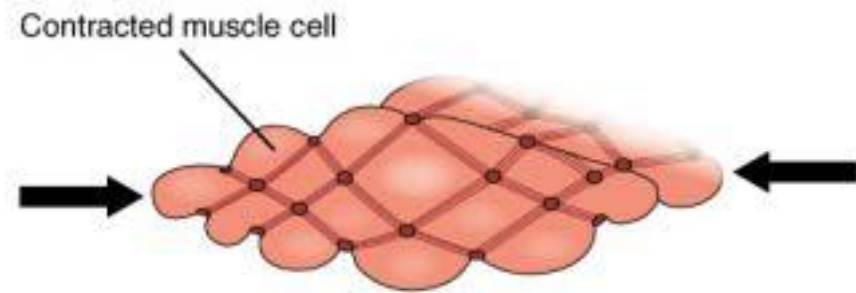
▶ Lists

- How many can you name?
 - Examples: Women authors, Countries, Beyoncé Songs

Muscle Relaxation



Relaxed



Tense

Muscle Relaxation

- 1) Tightly clench one muscle group by tensing the muscles for 10 seconds
- 2) Let go for 20 seconds
- 3) When letting go, try not to move that muscle group for 20 seconds
- 4) Repeat as needed



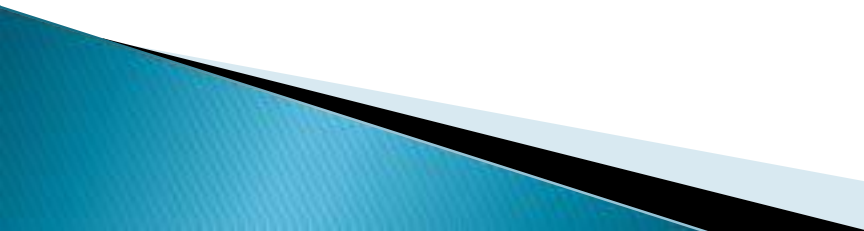
Grounding with Senses



Grounding with Senses

- ▶ Identify details that you can see around you
- ▶ Touch something near you and notice what it feels like
- ▶ Identify what you smell
- ▶ Listen carefully and identify what you hear
- ▶ Notice if you have any taste in your mouth, take a drink or eat something to create a taste

Trauma Treatment Methods

- ▶ Animal-Assisted Therapy (ATT)
 - ▶ Brainspotting
 - ▶ EMDR
 - ▶ Internal Family Systems (IFS)
 - ▶ Mindfulness Meditation
 - ▶ Neurofeedback
 - ▶ Sensorimotor Psychotherapy
 - ▶ Somatic Experiencing
 - ▶ Trauma-Sensitive Yoga
 - ▶ Attachment-based Therapy
 - ▶ Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
 - ▶ Expressive Arts Therapy
 - ▶ MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy
 - ▶ NeuroAffective Relational Model
 - ▶ Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy
 - ▶ Trauma-informed Self-defense
 - ▶ Support and Therapy Groups
 - ▶ DBT
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Free eBook

- ▶ Sign up at
 - www.AmandaAnnGregory.com
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 - info@AmandaAnnGregory.com

Sensory Grounding

There are many grounding techniques, the easiest being to use your five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Try using your senses in a systematic way to help you feel grounded and calm.

- Sight**
 - 1. Look around you and identify 5 different colors.
 - 2. Look around you and identify 5 different shapes.
 - 3. Look around you and identify 5 different textures.
 - 4. Look around you and identify 5 different smells.
 - 5. Look around you and identify 5 different tastes.
- Sound**
 - 1. Listen to the sounds around you.
 - 2. Listen to the sounds of nature.
 - 3. Listen to the sounds of your favorite music.
 - 4. Listen to the sounds of your favorite TV show.
 - 5. Listen to the sounds of your favorite podcast.
- Touch**
 - 1. Touch something soft.
 - 2. Touch something hard.
 - 3. Touch something cold.
 - 4. Touch something warm.
 - 5. Touch something rough.
- Taste**
 - 1. Taste something sweet.
 - 2. Taste something sour.
 - 3. Taste something salty.
 - 4. Taste something bitter.
 - 5. Taste something spicy.
- Smell**
 - 1. Smell something pleasant.
 - 2. Smell something unpleasant.
 - 3. Smell something familiar.
 - 4. Smell something unfamiliar.
 - 5. Smell something strong.

Need more help? 

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Muscle Relaxation

Muscle tension is a common side effect of anxiety and/or trauma. Loosening your muscles can calm your body which in turn will calm your mind. You can focus your attention on one muscle group at a time until that muscle group releases tension, or you can intentionally tighten your muscles and then release them in order to achieve a calming effect.

Follow these steps

- 1) Tightly clench one muscle group by tensing the muscles for 10 seconds.
- 2) Let go for 30 seconds.
- 3) When letting go, try not to move that muscle group for 30 seconds.
- 4) Repeat as needed and/or focus on different muscle groups.

Tips



Focus on the muscle groups that feel the tensest. If this makes you feel too fatigued, do it before bed.



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25 Anxiety & Trauma Coping Hacks

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