



Practical interventions for communicating with teens whose lives have been impacted by trauma—a brain-to-brain perspective.

By
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Survival Meditations for Parents of Teens

OXYTOCIN

A naturally occurring hormone which stimulates feelings of bonding and trust and reduces fear and anxiety

It is produced deep in midbrain.

Unlike Cortisol which is the FIGHT or FLIGHT or FREEZE Hormone

Oxytocin helps us be CALM and CONNECTED.

Sympathetic Nervous System Response for Teens Who Have Experienced Trauma

- If trauma too severe, long or triggered too often catecholamines (epinephrine, flight/fight hormones) are chronically increased, damage to memory, rational thought, hypervigilance, inability to distinguish danger signals, higher resting pulse rate
- Reduced immune functioning
- Opioid level increase. Oxytocin increase-memory impaired

All Adolescent Brains

- Single most amount of growth in life time
- Areas like communication expanding fast
- Use it or Lose it Theory
- Teens like learning about their brains
- Trauma programs brain to be on high alert with constant firing of neurons—social and developmental lags are real but can be changed

Teens that Come from Trauma and Neglect



What does it look like?
How do we heal it?
Give them tools to recognize and cope with and
hopefully change their brain and body's stress
response

Neurobiological Changes in Children with PTSD

- DeBellis 1999. Abused children excreted greater amounts of cortisol and catecholamines than non-abused kids
- Abused kids had 7-8% less cerebral volumes, impairing memory and dysregulating arousal
- In PTSD kids the corpus callosum did not grow (myelination which coats the nervous system and determines brain size) in comparison with non abused kids

NEURONS THAT WIRE TOGETHER



FIRE TOGETHER

YOU CAN WIRE YOUR BRAIN TO UNDERSTAND COMPLEX
CONCEPTS, CONTROL YOUR IMPULSES, AND LAY
A NEURAL FOUNDATION THAT
WILL HELP YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES

*Connection with one adult + emotional regulation techniques =
WIRE BRAIN FOR SUCCESS*

COMMUNICATION

**WE PROCESS INFORMATION MUCH BETTER
WHEN WE
ARE FEELING**

CALM AND CONNECTED....

Wiring emotional responses

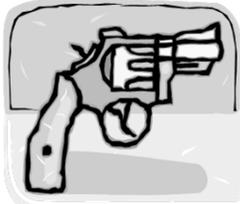
- Creating neural pathways that are successful and positive can help our teens.
- Disrupting behavior: "I CAN learn how to keep myself and my body calm even when I'm feeling upset." Cognitive Behavioral therapy means our thoughts control/determine how we are feeling-- NOT the other way around. IF we can change how we think, we can also change our behavior, but we also have to re-program our body's stress response

The boy who was raised as a dog

- “There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship”—Bruce Perry
- Oxytocin and vasopressin are linked to bonding and relationships characterized by strong attachments.
- Positive attachments directly re-wire and help mediate emotional response
- YOU can be part of that attachment process

Challenging Teens

- What are teen behaviors that you view as a challenge?
- Where do you get stuck?
- Go with the resistance
- Don't shoot the messenger:
Tips for delivering news to kids in care.



Communication Exercise

- How do you like to hear information that is hard to talk about?
- Generate a list of topics that we might have to talk to with our teens in care
- Divide into groups. Each group select one topic and generate the words that will be used to tell child this news.
- Process each group responses

More Tools



- Don't try to FIX it or offer solutions
- Ask direct questions
- Don't be afraid to hear their pain and empathize "That sucks. That makes me angry for you."
- If they ask you a question, it may be a question they would like you to ask them
- Comment positively on ways they are claiming their identity. "I like that sweater on you. It really makes your eyes stand out. What does that music mean to you?" EXAMPLE OF BOY'S RAP GROUP
- Timing is everything. Have I come at a bad time?

Search for Strengths

- Who are their friends? What do they like to do? What are their favorite classes at school? Sports? Music? Dance? Writing? Who do they like spending time with? What do they picture themselves doing when they grow up? Who are their boyfriends/girlfriends. Movies/Youtube, etc. What are their views on foster care/the system/anything?

Six Stages of Attachment FOR EVERY TEEN

- 1. Proximity (you have to see them)
- 2. Sameness (find something in common)
- 3. Belonging or Loyalty (Have their "back")
- 4. Significance (Why are they special)
- 5. Love (Go the extra mile)
- 6. Being Known (want to confide in you)

3-5-7 Model
by Darla Henry

Three tasks:

- Clarification engages children and youth that give meaning to their lives and many losses
- Integration helps to identify significant attachments and relationships
- Actualization is the vision of permanency, the sense of feeling safe with another, claiming an identity with a family

3-5-7 Model
by Darla Henry
5 Conceptual Questions

- Who am I
- What happened to me
- Where am I going
- How will I get there
- When will I know I belong?

3-5-7 Model
By Darla Henry
7 Elements

Elements needed by workers
to help children and families:

- 1.Engagement
- 2.Recognize Painful feelings
- 3.Listen to and be present for feelings
- 4.Affirm the pain
- 5.Provide opportunities for them to do the work
6. A safe space
7. Brief responses

Beginnings



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