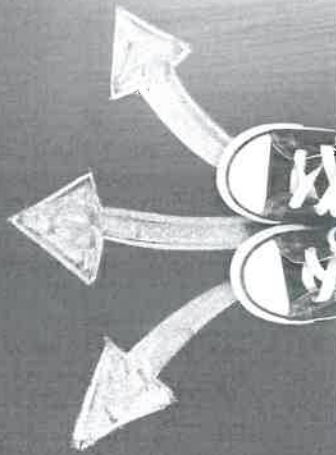


Working Together

Supporting
Parents in
Advocating for
their Child

James Freeman, MA, CYC-P
November 30, 2017



What is an advocate?

ad "to" + *vocare* "to call"
[as used in vocal, voice, vocation,
vocabulary]

From Latin *advocatus*, one called
to aid another; a pleader (on one's
behalf)

Also in Middle English as "one who
intercedes for another," and
"protector, champion, patron."
Feminine forms *advocatess*,
advocatrice were in use in 15c.;
advocatrix is from 17c.



What is an advocate?

To **empower** someone by
making their voice heard
or speaking up for them



Youth, Trauma & Hope

Youth on the Edge

- Multiple disrupted living situations & relationships
- Significant trauma & loss
- Transitions to/ from more restrictive settings
- Multiple system traumas



Barrier Behaviors

Overwhelming behaviors create barriers to positive & lasting relationships:

- Distrust of adults
- Self-injury
- Running away
- Assault
- Property damage
- Suicide attempts
- Substance abuse





Created for Connection

“Human beings are social creatures. From the moment of our birth we are seeking connection with others. This is one of our strengths and the source of our greatest vulnerability.”

(Emond, Steckley & Roesch-Marsh, 2016, p. 61)



Adverse Childhood Experiences



- Landmark 1990s study & various replications
- Elevated childhood trauma as public health issue
- Exposed link between childhood trauma & lifelong health



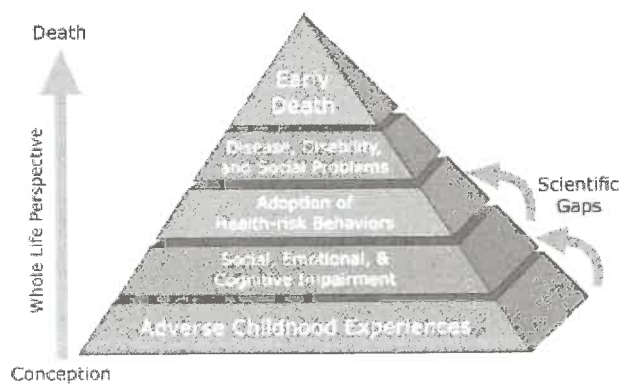
Original 'ACEs'

Interpersonal trauma

- Emotional, physical & sexual abuse
- Emotional & physical neglect

Stress in the home

- Separated or divorced parents
- Violence toward mother
- Substance abuse
- Depression/mental illness/suicide attempt
- Incarceration



The Problem with ACEs



- Lack of racial & cultural diversity
- Middle class & college educated
- Absence of community stressors

Philadelphia Expanded ACEs

Stress in the community

- Witnessing violence
- Living in foster care
- Bullying
- Experiencing racism or discrimination
- Feeling unsafe in neighborhood



Effect of Stress on the Brain

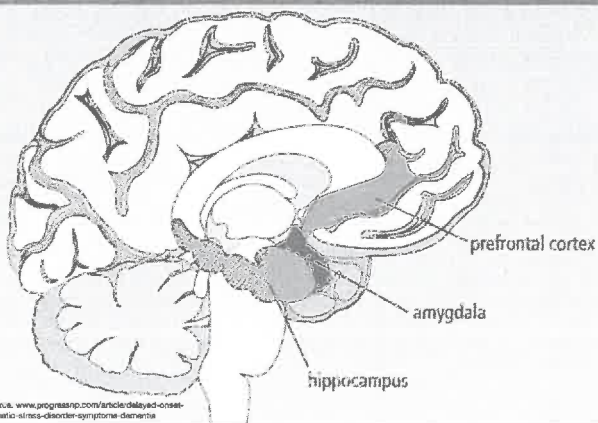


Image source: www.progressnp.com/articles/delayed-onset-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-symptoms-dementia

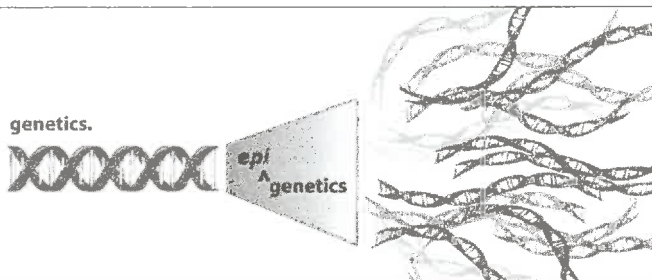
Neuroplasticity



The human brain is able to make lasting change throughout the lifespan

Epigenetics

“...the brain is literally sculpted by the environment... more so than any other organ in the body, and over much longer periods of time.” (Solms & Turnbull)



Youth, Trauma & Hope

For discussion

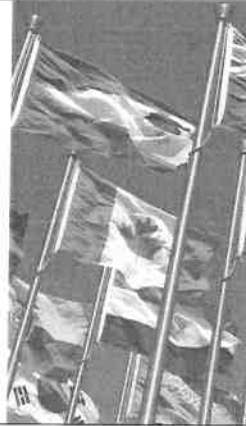
(1) How does an understanding of trauma and stress change the way you engage and interact with family members?

Rights-Based Advocacy

Child Rights

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

- Updated Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by League of Nations (1924) & United Nations (1959)
- Most comprehensive & accepted human rights treaty in history
- Aims to protect children & strengthen families around the world



Child Rights

- Summarizes civil, political, economic, social & cultural rights
- Optional protocols
 - Restrict involvement of children in military conflict (2002)
 - Prohibit child prostitution & pornography (2002)
 - Provide process for filing complaints of violation of rights (2014)



Child Rights

- Ratified by every UN member country except USA
- Signed by US Secretary of State in 1995
- US Supreme Court recognizes as universal law
- US Presidents & Senate failed to ratify based on beliefs of national sovereignty



Child Rights

- US ranks one of the lowest in education outcomes & child poverty rates
- Only high-income country to not grant paid parental leave
- Only country that sentences offenders under the age of 18 to life in prison without parole



Four Themes of UNCRC

Survival

- Access to health care
- Sanitary water & nutrition
- Disease prevention & environmental health



Four Themes of UNCRC

Development

- Parental guidance & care
- Early learning & stimulation
- Education, leisure & cultural activities



Four Themes of UNCRC

Protection

- Protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation & discrimination
- Unlawful interference with privacy, family & home



Four Themes of UNCRC

Participation

- Access to information & involvement in decisions
- Freedom of expression & right to be heard



Four Themes of UNCRC

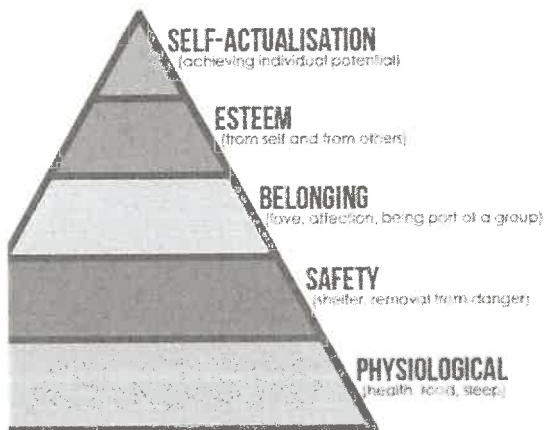
For discussion

(1) Share a current advocacy-related challenge among your group.

(2) How might you reframe or describe this challenge using one or more of the four UNCRC themes?

- Survival
- Development
- Protection
- Participation

Needs-Based Advocacy



SURVIVAL

Safety, warmth,
nutrition, rest,
relaxation,
comfort

**LOVE &
BELONGING**

Being close &
connected,
experiencing
community,
collaboration

POWER

Being heard,
recognized &
respected,
achieving,
accomplishing

FREEDOM

Making choices,
being
independent,
freedom from/to,
self expression

FUN

Enjoying the
pleasures of life,
recreation,
learning,
laughing, playing

Reimbursements

Experiential Opportunities that support development & personal agency

Relational Social connections with safety, trust & bonding

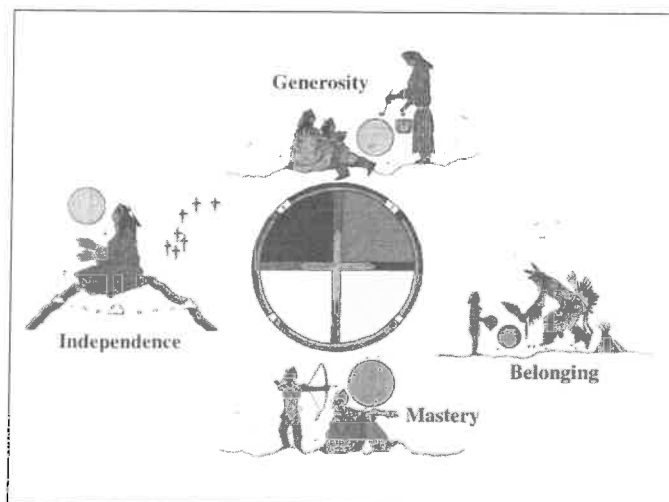
Eco-Cultural Connections with unique traditions & values

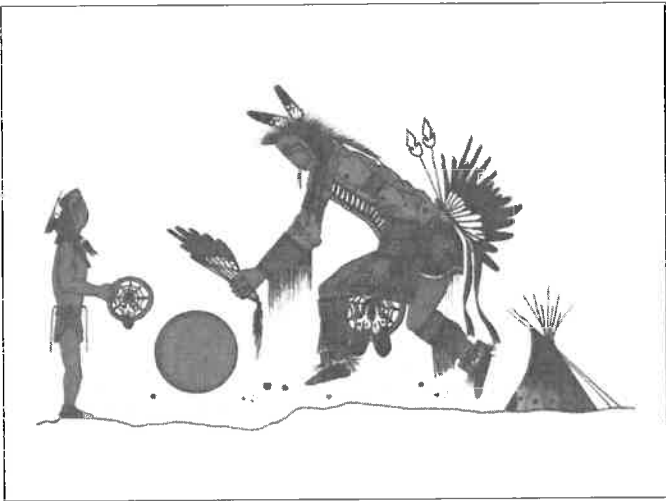
Regulatory Skills to manage emotions, make decisions & resolve problems

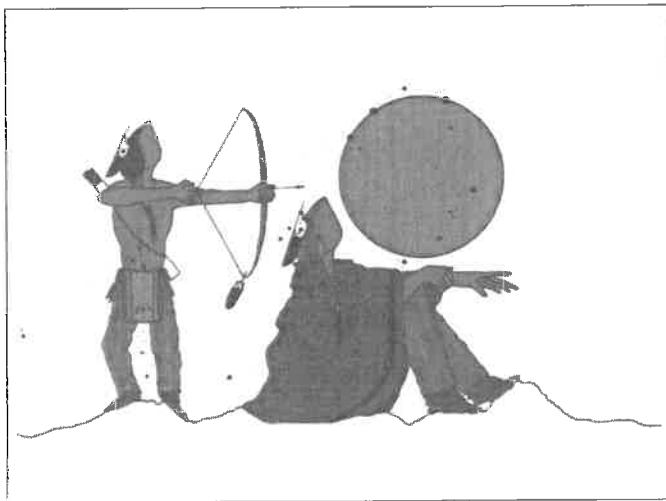
Biological Basic health & safety (e.g., shelter, nutrition, rest, recreation)

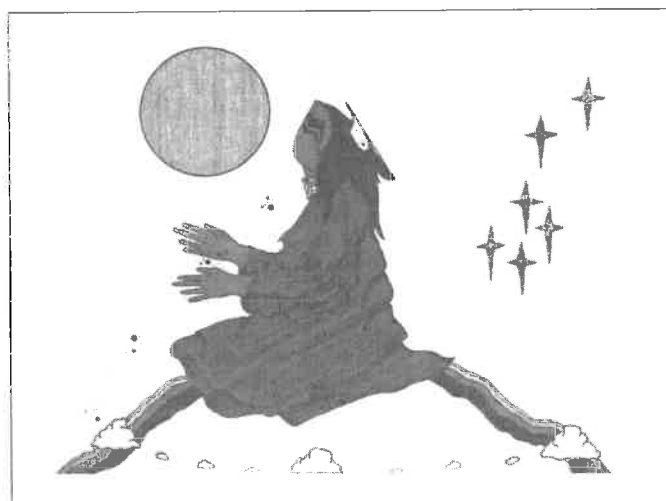
Academic Learning supports to fill gaps & positive learning environment

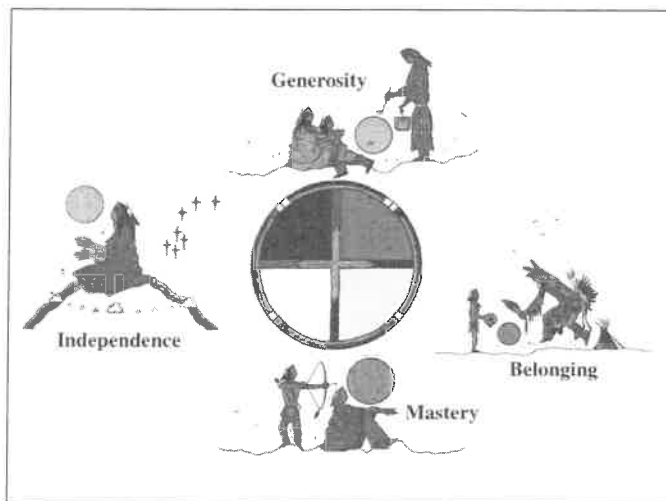
Baker, P. & White-McMahon. (2014). *The Hopeful Brain: NeuroRelational Repair for Disconnected Children and Youth*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu Publishing.











Needs-Based Advocacy

What parents and family members need

Belonging

to be included in the process

Mastery

to be valued as an expert on their family

Independence

to be allowed to make mistakes & grow

Generosity

to share their story & what they learn

Needs-Based Advocacy

For discussion

- (1) Share some of the most common needs you find families experience challenges in meeting.
- (2) How might you help families you serve better understand and meet the needs of their child and other family members?
- (3) Make a list of practical strategies

Breaking Cycles of Conflict

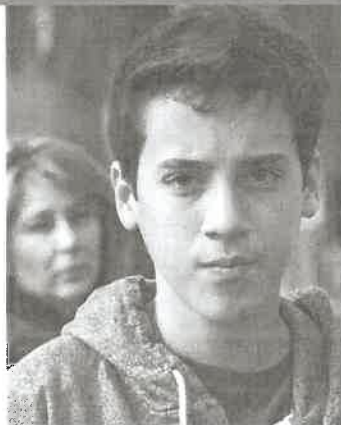
Elements of Conflict Cycles

Preconditioning

- Self-Concept
- Worldview
- Values

Primary

- Stress
- Thoughts & Feelings
- Behavior
- Responses



Breaking Cycles of Conflict



Breaking Cycles of Conflict

For discussion

- (1) How might you teach the conflict cycle to parents? When is good timing? What language will you use?
- (2) What type of problems do you anticipate it might help with?

Reflection

Reflection & Journaling Exercise

Describe a specific example in which you advocated for a young person (or helped them advocate for their own rights).

What contributed to a successful outcome?

What did you learn from the experience?

Reflection

Things I learned, was reminded of, or
were especially meaningful

Specific action steps I plan to implement

Mental Health Services Tips for Access

1

Outpatient
Individual, Group
and Family
Therapy

2

Intensive
outpatient or
Partial
Hospitalization

3

In home
Intensive
Services
(Wraparound,
TBS, Intensive In-
home services)

4

Residential

5

Crisis
Stabilization Unit
Psychiatric
Hospital

