

A Trauma Informed View of Child to Parent Abuse

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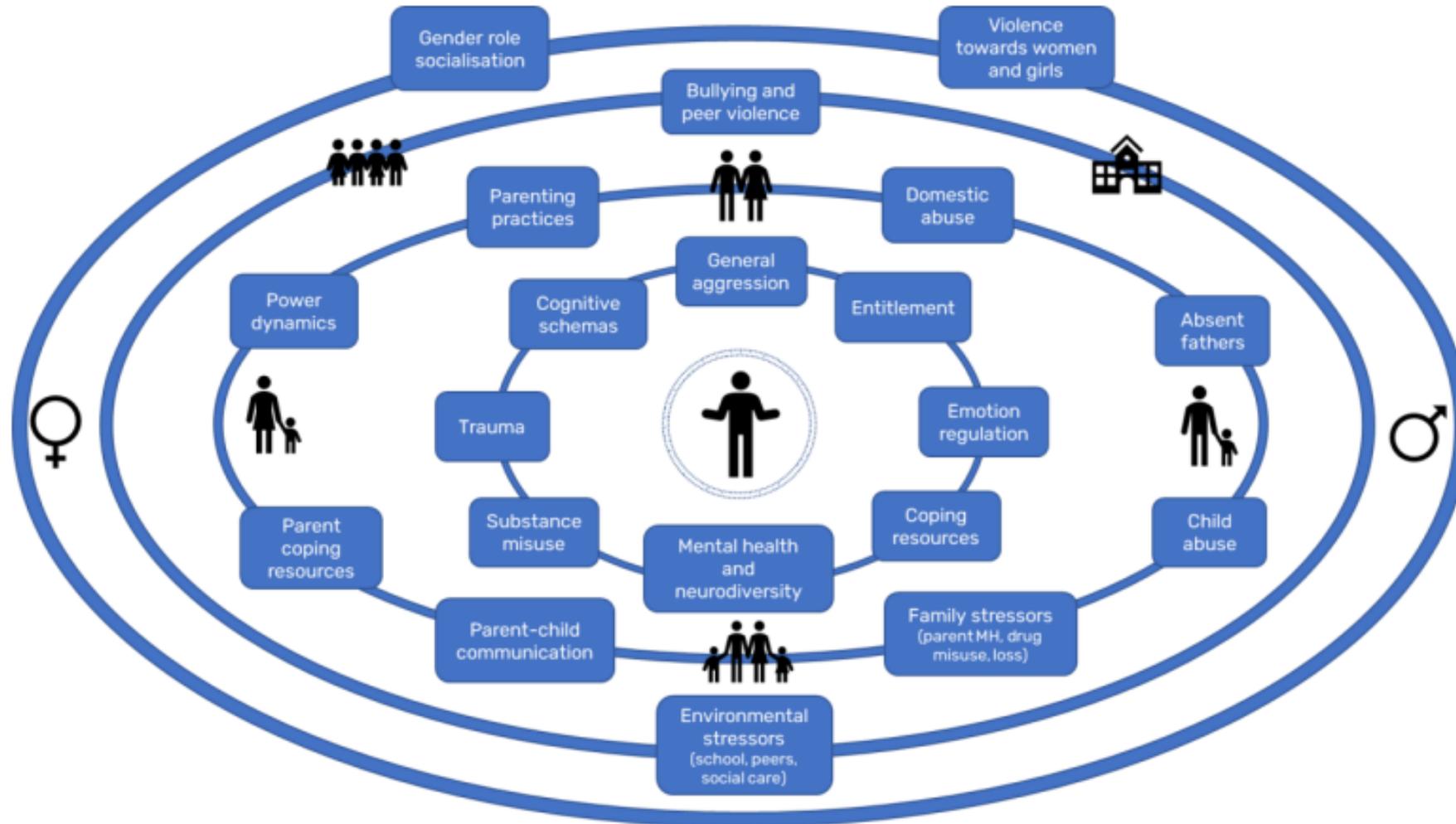


Additional Vulnerabilities

While there is no clear pathway to a child using abusive behaviour - do other issues potentially impact on their behaviour?

- 3 children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental disorder (Youngminds, 2018)
- One in 7 teens experience neglect (Children's Society, 2016)
- One in 5 children experience domestic abuse (NSPCC, 2018)
- One child in every class is bereaved (Child Bereavement UK, 2019)
- Up to one in 4 children are living in kinship care (Selwyn, 2011)

Key influencing factors within an ecological model



Mis-Direction?

'A slow and steady erosion of you as their mum....then suddenly they are in control' (Parent on group)

- Focus on “mental illness”
- Focus on age, gender, and other socio-demographic patterns in offending and victimisation
- Focus on “dysfunctional families”
- Focus on the “cycle of abuse”
- Focus on ACE's

All of these ignore the **impact of trauma** as both a cause and a consequence of CPV

We need to adopt a more trauma informed approach which allows for context, resilience, choice, support....

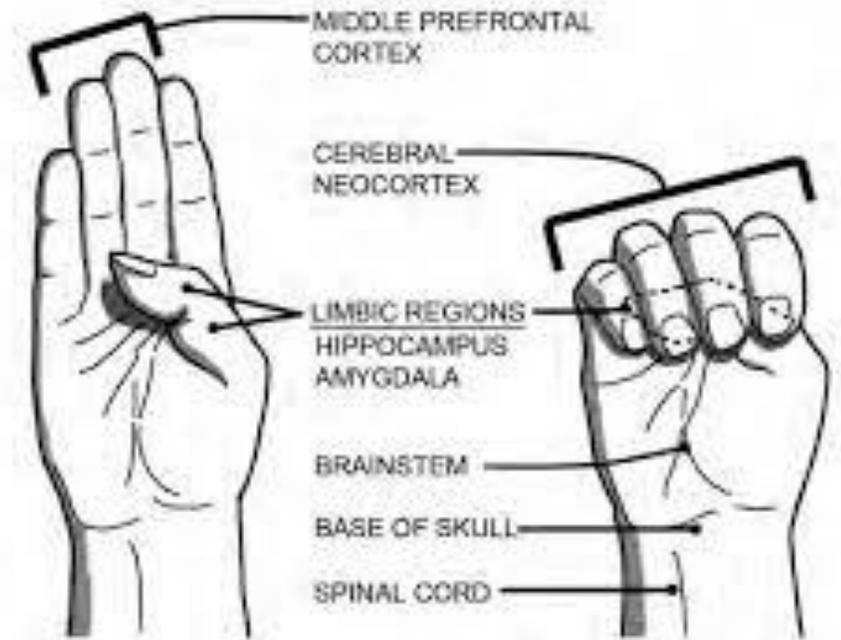


The Neurobiology of Trauma

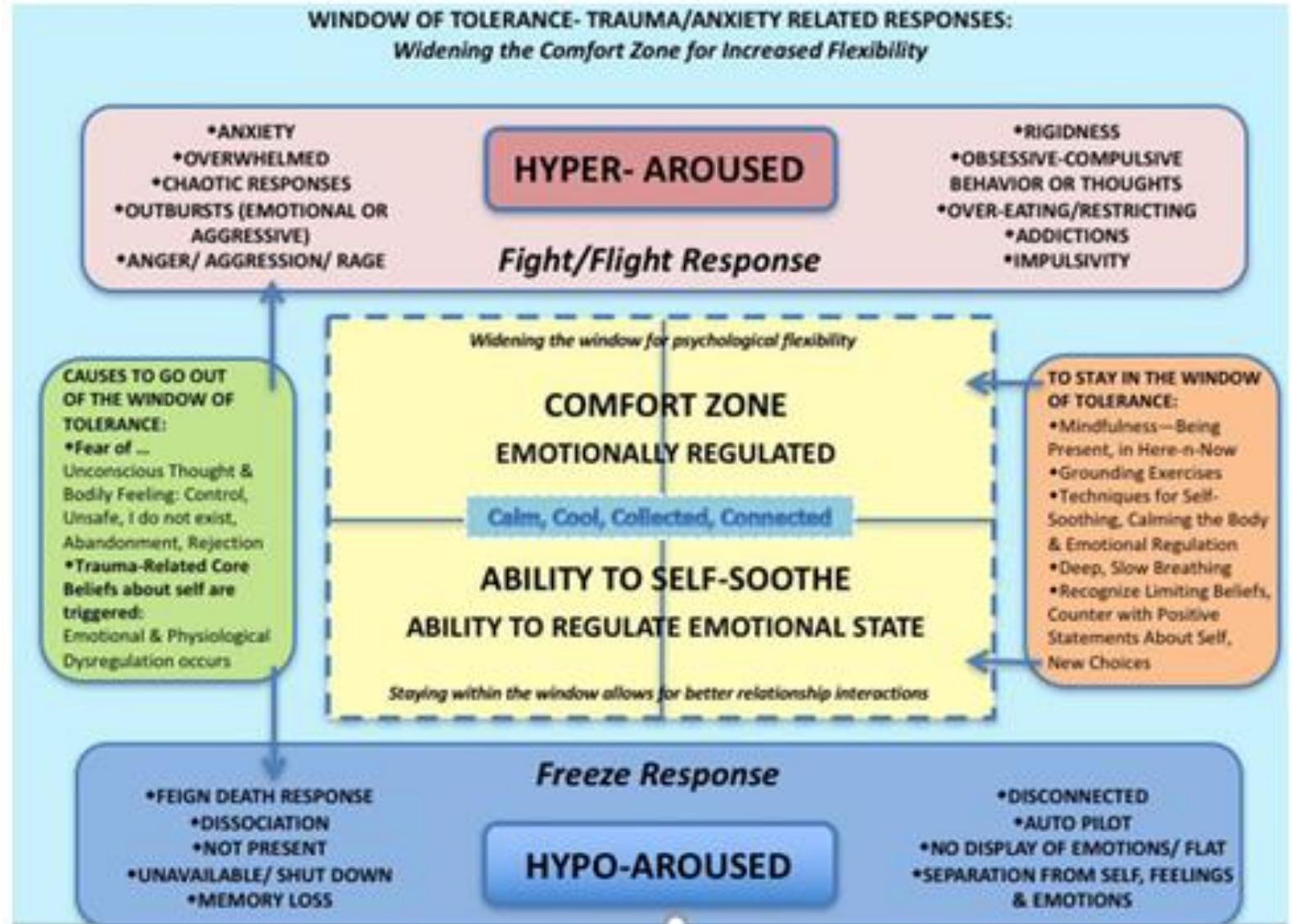
The Brain in The Palm of Your Hand

Daniel Siegel

- Threat detected
- Immediate reflective response
- Critical decisions for immediate safety
- Non-verbal, illogical, unconscious
- Lower brain can take over
- Resources normally devoted to development are used instead for survival



The Window of Tolerance



Adolescent brain development

Key points

- Adolescents who use family violence require a differentiated response to that of adults.
- Maturity and development of adolescents varies significantly particularly if impacted by trauma
- Critical periods during brain development continue until mid-20s
- Prefrontal cortex develops last and is associated with the integration of key areas of functioning such as controlling impulses, initiating appropriate behaviour, making decisions, problem solving etc

Young people's behaviour is often **the solution** to the problem, not the problem.

Often we treat the behaviour this taking away a **coping mechanism** and ignoring the problem.

Are they **AT** risk or **A** risk?

Trauma And Emotion Regulation

(Ref: PhD Thesis – Victoria Baker)

- Developmental trauma – serious implications which can ‘hamper the body’s ability to regulate its response to stress which, in some, can mean higher cortisol levels and a ‘primed’ system that will respond acutely to further stressors or traumatic reminders’
- This could even extend to ‘fearful, enraged, or avoidant emotional reactions to minor stimuli that would have no impact on secure children’ (van der Kolk, 2005, p. 10)

I get stressed over the most tiniest of things. Like... if I thought my phone was on charge and it's not been, because the plug's came out, I'll end up gettin' dead stressed like, I'll end up screamin' me head off just at myself, like 'Orrrrr!'. Know what I mean? I'd probably end up tryin' to throw the phone... "I can't stop myself from doin' it. It just happens and I'm like... I want to stop but my brain's gone". (Jenn, female, 14, YOS)



Comment from a parent...

I agree it's limbic brain. I now see a tantrum as a release of negative emotion, and sometimes the trigger is relevant and sometimes it could be anything... The emotion seems to need to discharge. Don't know if this makes sense but that is how it feels. I agree that sometimes it needs to do a full cycle before you can go up again and I agree that until the emotional discharge is complete, the reasoning/language part can't have a place.

Brainstem Calmers *(Beacon House)*

Brainstem calming activities need to be:

- Relational (offered by a safe adult)
- Relevant (developmentally-matched to the child rather than matched to their actual age)
- Repetitive (patterned)
- Rewarding (pleasurable)
- Rhythmic (resonant with neural patterns)
- Respectful (of the child and family)

- Music
- Dance
- Water and sand
- Clay
- Throwing and catching
- Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Blowing bubbles

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