



**Building Individual Resilience:
Self Care, Emotional Intelligence,
Mindfulness and More!**

Chris Pommerenke and Becky Dale
Minnesota Communities Caring for Children
and Prevent Child Abuse MN



Overview

Interactive

- Please participate! (mic's, questions box)
- best if you can participate from a quiet place where you also have the ability to move

Trauma and the Brain

Wellness and the Brain

Exercises for building individual resilience

Understanding Our Brain



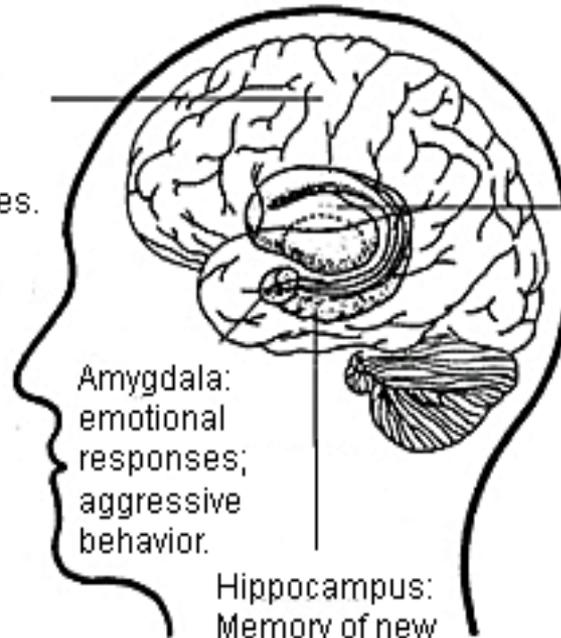
- Adapts to our Environment
- Is interactive – Serve and Return
- Uses a lot of energy to build a new pathway
- Conserves energy by wiring automatic responses

Our Brain and Trauma

We are wired for Fear and Survival

- Fight, Flight, Freeze, Faint
- Cortisol and Adrenaline increase strength, stamina, speed, reaction time and focus; decrease thinking capacity
- When exposed to repeated trauma our brain becomes hyper-vigilant and quick to respond to perceived danger.

Neocortex: higher mental functions, general movement, perception, and behavioral responses.

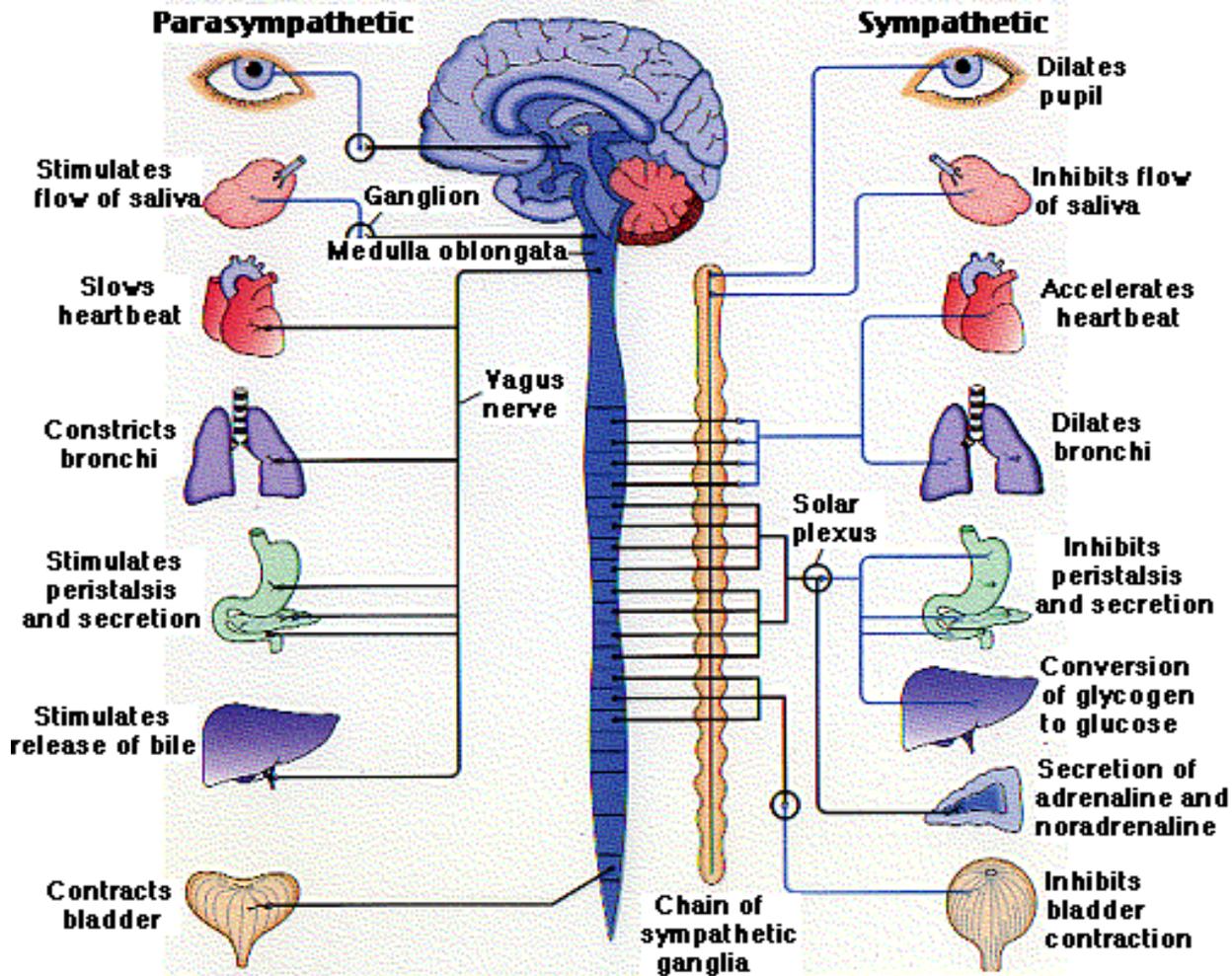


Amygdala: emotional responses; aggressive behavior.

Hippocampus: Memory of new information and recent events.

Corpus Striatum (formerly basal ganglia): connection between cerebral cortex and cerebellum; helps regulate automatic movement.

Stress: Neurological, hormonal and immune connections



Rest,
Digest

Fight,
Flight,
Freeze

Relaxation



Techniques to Stimulate the Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Progressive relaxation
- Visualization
- Deep breathing techniques
- Meditation
- Music
- Yoga
- Tai chi/qi gong
- Creative Exercises
- Biofeedback
- Hypnosis
- Massage

Just as trauma manifests itself in the body, so too does relaxation



Six Dimensions of Wellness

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Intellectual
4. Interpersonal
5. Spiritual
6. Environmental

Examples of Positive Stress Management Strategies

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Social Support/Communication
- Spiritual Connections
- Journaling
- Time Management
- Relaxation Training
- Counseling/Support Groups
- Creative Outlets
- Body Work
- Meditation

Our Brain and Movement



What Happens in the Brain when we do Physical Activities?

Physical movement - results in:

- “Parasympathetic rebound,” boosts the immune system;
- Acts as a moderator to stress resulting in improved brain function and learning;
- Balances insulin;
- Elevates mood by producing more dopamine receptors in the reward center of the brain;
- Decreases distraction; and
- Increase’s the body’s resilience to stress and decreases the likelihood of relapse during stressful life events.

Resource: BeFit on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/BeFit>

“Freedom is the Ability to Pause between stimulus and response, and in the pause, to choose” – Rollo May



***Self awareness* is the first step in creating the PAUSE**

Knowing and owning triggers

***Self management* creates space for the pause, resulting in having CHOICES on how to react**

Emotional Intelligence



Practicing Self Awareness and Self Management



- Notice and Ease Tool (www.heartmath.com)
 - Notice and admit what you are feeling
 - Try to name the feeling
 - Tell yourself to ease as you gently focus on your heart and breathe
 - Practice Notice and Ease Tool for one minute several times a day
- Self-management Life Hack: Power poses (Amy Cuddy – check out her YouTube videos by searching her name at www.youtube.com)
 - open and expansive
 - Increases testosterone, reduces cortisol = Calm and Confident
 - Fake it ‘til you make it

Yoga Practice: Movement and Mindfulness



- Sun Breaths
- Seated Neck Rolls
- Shoulder Circles
- Chair
- Cat/Cow

Additional Resources:

www.DoYogaWithMe.Com

<https://www.facebook.com/OvercomingTraumaThroughYoga>

Qigong on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lee+holden

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=qigong+for+beginners

Hardwiring Happiness

Our Brain is sticky for the negative and Teflon for the positive
– but practicing noticing the positive helps make it stickier for the positive.



H – Have a Positive Experience

E – Expand it

A – Absorb it

L – Link it to a habit you are trying to change

(note: new brain pathways often form along existing ones)

From *Hardwiring Happiness* by Rick Hanson

Brainstorming Physical Activity



American College of Sports Medicine – Types of Activity

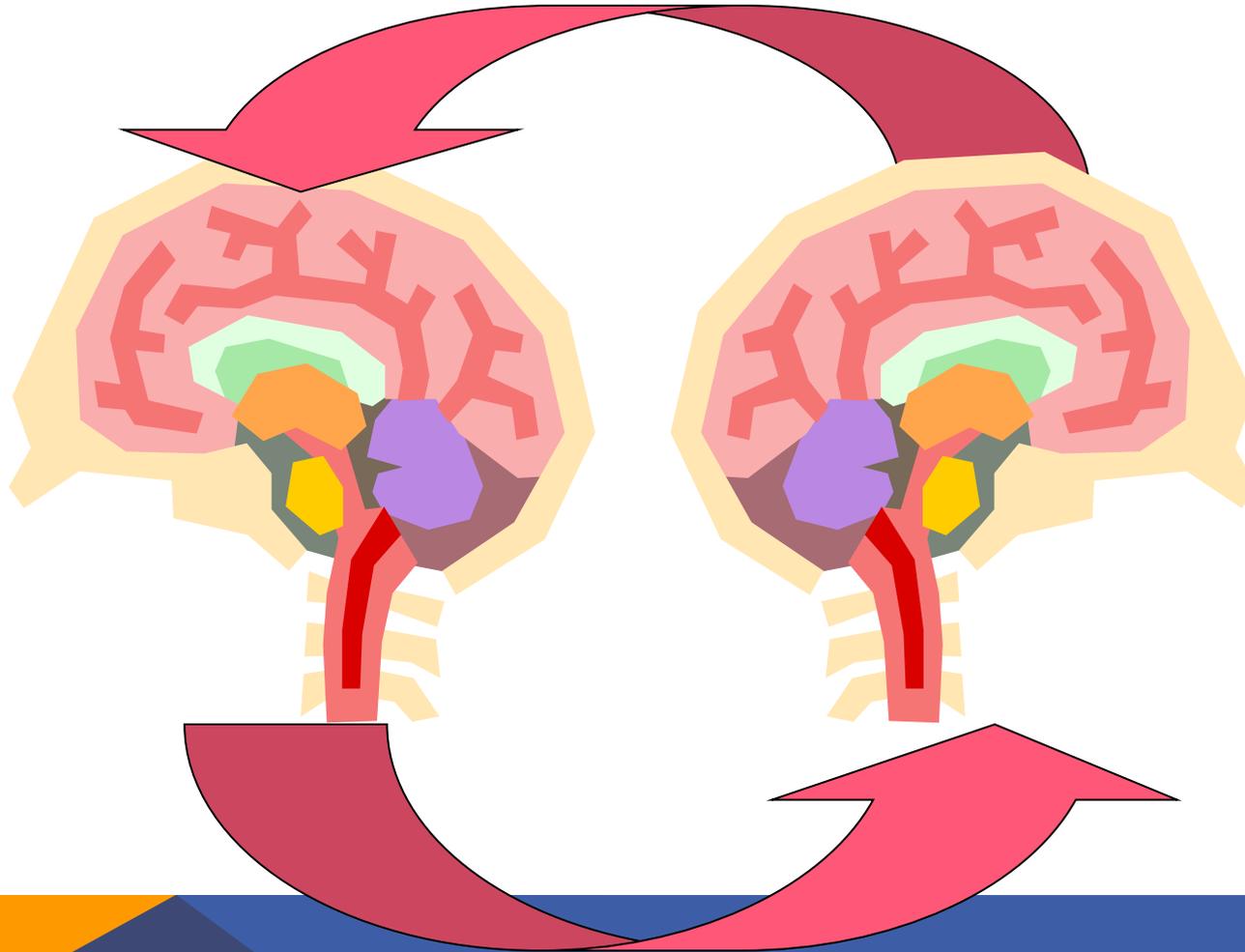
- Cardiorespiratory
- Strength Training
- Neuromotor exercise involving balance, agility, and coordination
- Flexibility

What kinds of movement can easily be added to your daily routine? Link to Article:

Link to Article:

[http://journals.lww.com/acsm-
msse/Fulltext/2011/07000/Quantity_and_Quality_of_Exercise_for_Developing.26.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2011/07000/Quantity_and_Quality_of_Exercise_for_Developing.26.aspx)

Open Loop System of the Brain



The Power of Connection: Support



- Our biology attunes to the people we are with
- Amygdala acts as a relay station in the emotional “open loop” between people
- “Limbic Resonance” is when our limbic states converge
- Studies show emotions are contagious, even when there is no verbal communications
- Studies show support has a positive impact on mental and physical health as well as behavioral change
- Recent data from Washington State: having at least two people who will come help you when in need reduces the likelihood of health and social problems linked with Adverse Childhood Experiences



Just Like Me

To build empathy and connection:
Throughout your day, with everyone you meet, think to yourself: “Just like me, they want to be happy; Just like me they want to be free from suffering; May they be well”

Source: *Search Inside Yourself* by Chad-Meng Tan

Guided Meditation: Quieting the Mind



Settle into a quiet space, sitting in a comfortable position.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.innerhealthstudio.com>

<http://www.fragrantheart.com/cms/free-audio-meditations> (free classes and audio meditations)

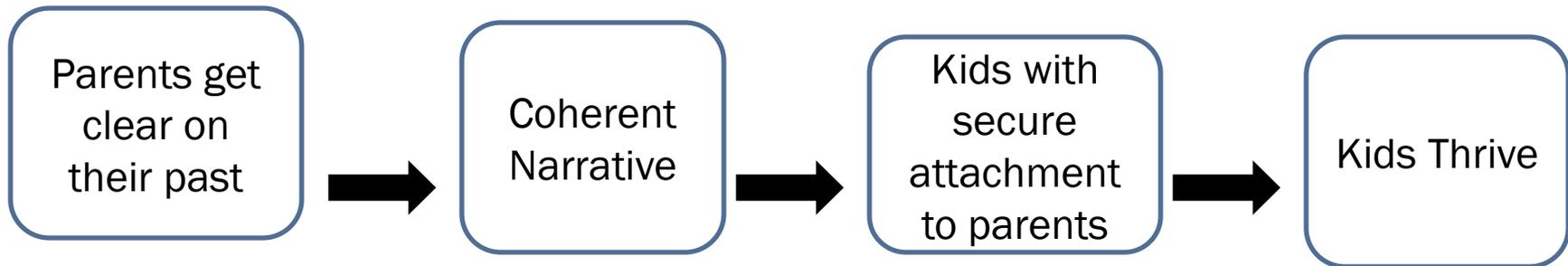
<http://www.tarabrach.com/audioarchives-guided-meditations.html>

<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/meditation-instruction>

Building a Coherent Narrative: What Happened to You?



“[E]arly experience is not fate. By making sense of your past you can free yourself from what might otherwise be a cross-generational legacy of pain and insecure attachment, and instead create an inheritance of nurturance and love for your children.”



“It’s never too late to begin working on your coherent life narrative, and as you do, your children will reap the rewards.”

From Dan Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson,
*The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary
Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Growing Mind.*



What will you Practice?



Thank you!

Chris Pommerenke and Becky Dale
Minnesota Communities Caring for Children
Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
cpommerenke@pcamn.org
bdale@pcamn.org
www.pcamn.org
651-523-0099