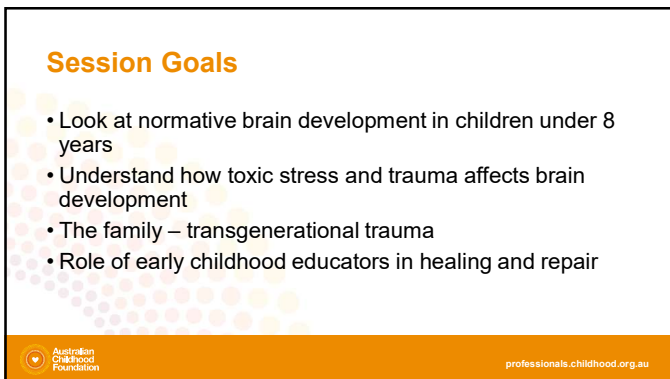




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Defining Trauma



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Trauma and Me

- *Where has trauma touched my life?*
- *What does it mean for me, to be working with children affected by relational trauma?*

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Types of stress




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POSITIVE Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

TOLERABLE Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

TOXIC Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

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Developmental Trauma

- The better integrated the different parts of the brain are the more adaptive we can be to our environment
- Developmental trauma is dis-integrative, disconnecting, and disruptive to both brain and body

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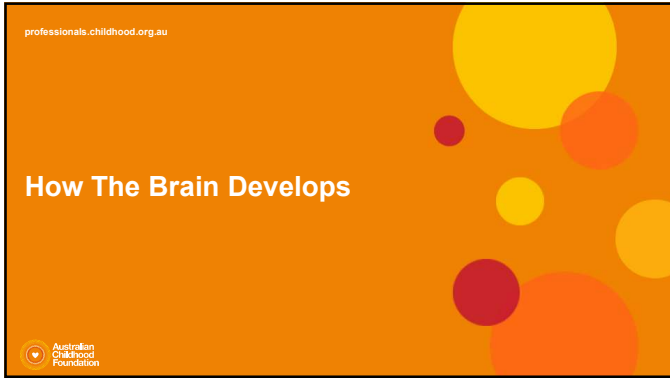
Defining Trauma

Trauma is not what happens to you, but what happens inside you.

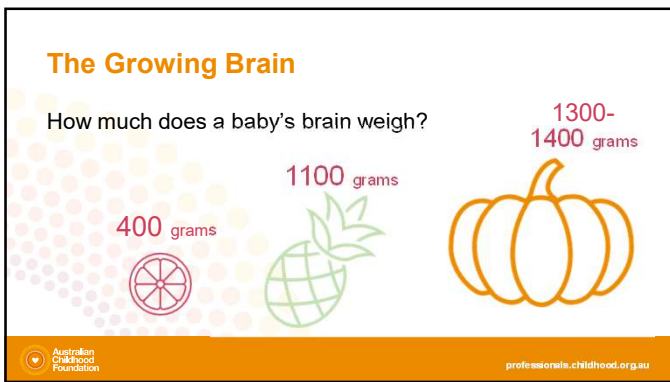
(Gabor Mate 2018)

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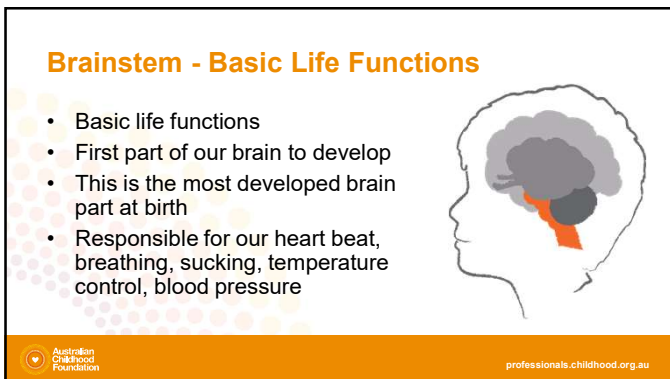
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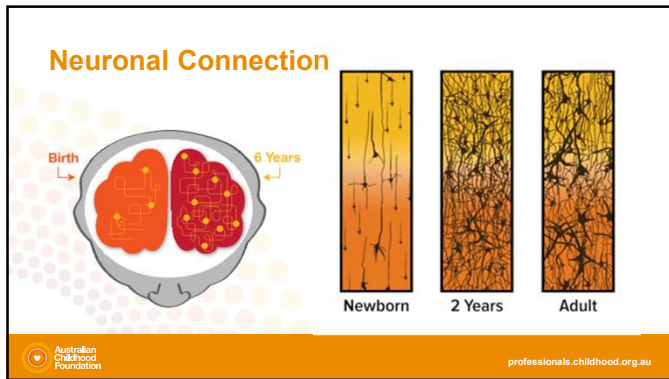
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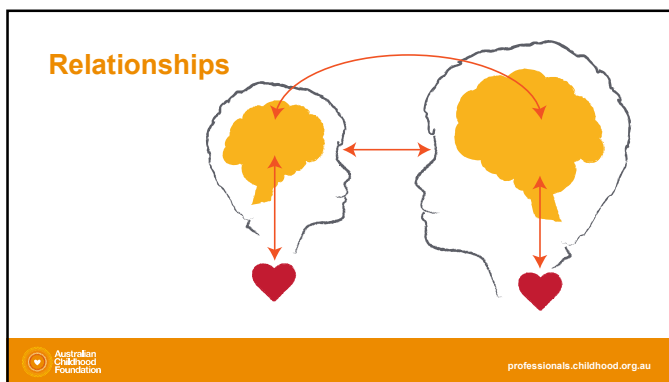
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The limbic system

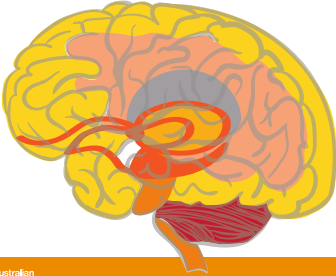
- The part of the brain that helps us attach an emotion to an experience or memory
- This part of the brain is particularly involved with the emotions of fear and anger
- Also heavily involved in attachment processes
- This area develops after birth



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Bottom-up brain development

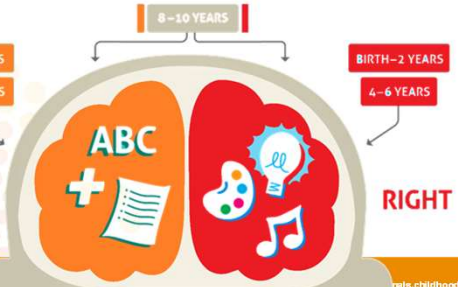


Cortex Reasoning/judging centre 3-6 years
Limbic System Emotional centre 1-4 years
Cerebellum Motor centre Birth-2 years
Brain Stem Basic survival functions Pre-birth-8 months

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Lateral brain development



2-4 YEARS	8-10 YEARS	BIRTH-2 YEARS
6-8 YEARS		4-6 YEARS
LEFT		RIGHT

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Integrating the Brain

YELLOW BLUE ORANGE
 BLACK RED GREEN
 PURPLE YELLOW RED
 ORANGE GREEN BLACK
 BLUE RED PURPLE
 GREEN BLUE ORANGE

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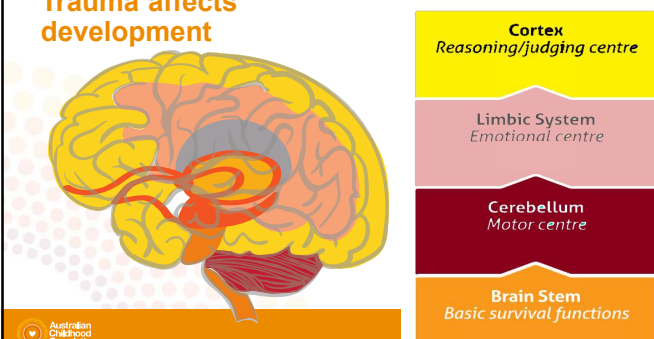
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Trauma and the Brain

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Trauma affects development



Cortex
Reasoning/judging centre

Limbic System
Emotional centre

Cerebellum
Motor centre

Brain Stem
Basic survival functions

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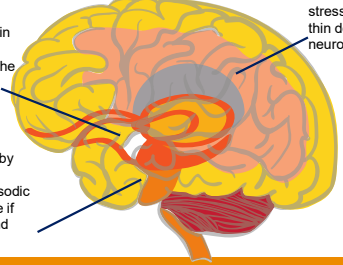
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Where trauma affects the brain

Amygdala
Survival response centre within the limbic lobe that becomes enlarged and more sensitive the more it is activated through responding to threats

Hippocampus
Consolidates memory by providing the context/ sequential data for episodic memories. Goes offline if trauma overwhelms and disrupts cortex.


Corpus Callosum
Bridge between the 2 hemispheres. Chronic stress can damage and thin down this bundle of neurons



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3 Year Old Children




Normal Extreme Neglect

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Children are very vulnerable to the effects of trauma because of their brain's developmental immaturity - their brains are malleable, so the impact of trauma is faster to manifest and leaves deeper tracks of injury.




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The infant experience

Wonder about the right-brain, sub-cortical experience of the infant




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The Family



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The Paradox of the Family

We look to it for nurture and care



It is the institution in society where the most violence occurs

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Role of Early Childhood Educators in Repair




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Attachment and the Right Brain

- Neuroimaging studies show areas of the right hemisphere lighting up in the brains of parents & infants during non-verbal interactions. (Schore, 2003)
- A secure attachment relationship facilitates right brain development and promotes efficient affect regulation.




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“Play is a neural exercise and I have never met a child who is able to resist being part of this type of exercise” – Theresa Kestley



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Neuroplasticity



<http://highexistence.com/its-all-in-your-head-how-to-take-advantage-of-neuroplasticity/>

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Supporting Each Other

- Recognise signs and symptoms in others
- Provide education about vicarious trauma
- Support and value each other
- Ensure the workplace culture acknowledges and accepts vicarious trauma as a real condition
- Encourage taking time out and taking leave

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What Do You Do to Look After Yourself?



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Prescriptions (My self-care activity)	Dose (How long?)	Frequency				
		Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Yearly
Call or visit a friend or family						
Practice breathing / muscle relaxation						
Walk, play sport or exercise						
Have a bath						
Read a book or magazine						
Have one-to-one time with your partner						
Watch a movie						
Listen or dance to music						
Write, paint or play an instrument						
Cook your favourite meal						
Go out for dinner						
Do some gardening						
See a counsellor						
Go away for a weekend						
Go on holiday						

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“It’s connection not control that cultivates cooperation, trust, love, resilience and independence. Connection is at the heart of our relationships.”
 – Kerry Spina



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Reframing our Approach

Rather than asking:
“What are you doing?”
 and
“How can I stop it?”

Ask: *“What are you trying to tell me?”*
 and
“What do you need from me?”

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Follow the Child's Lead

Anger Sadness
 Joy
 Fear Curiosity
 Shame

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Building Predictability

Savage Chickens by Doug Savage

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Neuroception of Safety: Predictability

Predictability is a metaphor for safety.

“The removal of threat is not the same as the presence of safety”
 (Porges, 2014)

Up's & Downs Cards – Innovative Resources

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Building safety and connection

Managing transitions and change is extremely difficult for traumatised children

- transitions are experienced as a threat
- they feel a lose of their sense of safety
- they may revert to survival mode

How can you help children to feel safe during TRANSITIONS?



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Transitions

List all the transitions you expect children to traverse in one ordinary day

- **How many are essential?**
- How can you provide safe passage for children through the transition?
 - ❖ Safe Person
 - ❖ Safe Activity
 - ❖ Safe Place



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Challenging & reconstructing a child's model of relationships



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Calming and regulation

- Traumatized children find it difficult to regulate their own feelings of stress/distress.
- The best way to help the extremely dysregulated child is to remain calm and regulated yourself.



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Safe harbour

'Be my anchor when I'm all at sea'
PREDICTABLE PERSON



'Ferry me to calmer waters'
SING-SONG VOICE
RHYTHMIC, REPETITIVE ACTIVITY
SENSORY INPUT



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