

“The Pathway of Trauma: From Offender to Officer”

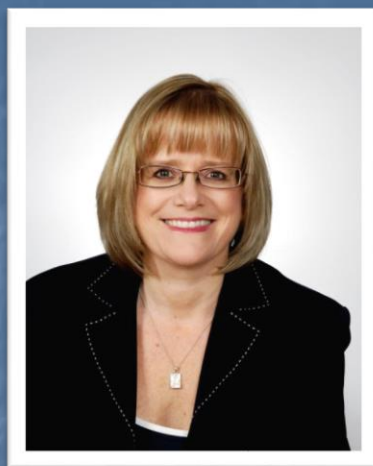
Part One: PTSD Toolkit

**Integrating Research & Best Practice to
Effectively Treat Offenders in the Community**

Second World Congress on Community Corrections

Los Angeles, California USA

Cleveland, Ohio July 14 to 16,2015



Heather Kerr, MSW, RSW

Executive Director
Stonehenge Therapeutic Community
(519) 837-1470 ext. 230
hkerr@stonehengetc.com

Private Practice – Training and Workshops

STONEHENGE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY



Addiction Treatment Specializing in Community Corrections
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

www.stonehengetc.com

PTSD Example

Step into a survivor's shoes:

What you can't see in the people you work with

<http://youtu.be/NkWwZ9ZtPEI>

Prison Triggers Trauma



The experience of incarceration can parallel the experience of sexual and physical abuse

(Dr. Julie Darke – Queen's University)

Prison Triggers Trauma



- Searches
- Restraint
- Segregation
- Urinalysis
- Power imbalances

Challenges of Hyper-Vigilance

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Childhood abuse/domestic violence
- Survival skill: hyper-vigilant at reading others
- Can block intake of new information (i.e. cognitive programming) and impact relationships (boundary testing, boundary crossings and boundary violations)
- Consciously or unconsciously

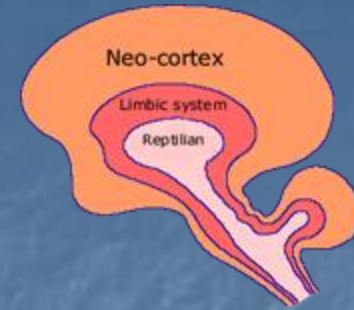
Interpreting Crisis Behaviours in the Context of PTSD & Redirecting for Healthy Coping

Unwrapping the Onion Skin

- Emotions under emotions (two sides of every story)



Reptilian Brain



- Neurological processes involved in storing memory provide information about why trauma impacts us the way it does
- The human brain contains three distinct parts that developed in this order:
 - the reptilian brain,
 - the mammalian brain,
 - and the cortex (or neo-cortex)
- Higher level functions, such as planning, developed later than the more primitive capacities, such as aggression.

The reptilian brain

- The oldest and most primitive part of the brain. Primary task is survival. Controls breathing, balance, and temperature regulation. Acts out of instinct.

The mammalian brain

- Includes the limbic system, which is the emotional center of the brain. Involved in the control and expression of emotion, the body's response to danger, and the processing of short term memory. Primary focus is also survival.

The cortex (or neo-cortex)

- The most recent area to develop within the brain. Allows for higher level thinking, analysis, logic, and intellectual pursuits. Cortex is always overridden by reptilian and mammalian brains.

The Trauma Response

- Despite how humans have evolved, the primary task of the brain remains self-preservation and propagation of the species.
- The functions of the reptilian and mammalian brains will always override the neo-cortex, as our very survival is dependent upon this.
- The brain receives data from the outside world through the five senses. That is why containment work is effective.
- When data is received the limbic system (mammalian brain) attempts to match the data against information that has been stored from past experience. If the data matches and a threat is perceived, the alarm response of the brain is activated.
- This matching happens like a pass-fail function. If a tiger was attacking, the brain couldn't wait for the cortex to process in detail so it goes to the mammalian brain and is fast
- The brain kicks in the fight, flight or freeze response.

Memory Storage

- Due to heavy activity in the limbic system (mammalian brain) during a trauma, traumatic memories get stuck in the lower parts of the brain
- The information is not analysed by the cortex in detail
- Hormones supercharge the memory
- http://website.lineone.net/~bryn_evans/Triune_Brain/triune_brain.htm

Neuroplasticity



Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity, also known as brain plasticity, refers to changes in neural pathways and synapses due to changes in behavior, environment, neural processes, thinking, emotions, as well as changes resulting from bodily injury.

Practical Intervention Tools

Contain Trauma & Build Safety

Intervention 1:

Grounding with a Containment Box

- A photograph
- A picture
- A colour
- A word
- An object

Practical Intervention Tools

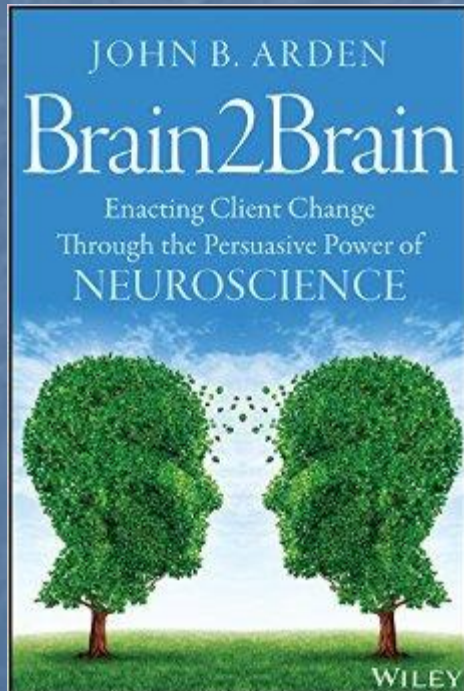
Contain Trauma & Build Safety

Interventions 2 & 3

Grounding through the Body

- The senses (tools)
- Grounding stone (tools)
- Clothing

For Further Reference



Brain2Brain: Enacting Client Change Through the Persuasive Power of Neuroscience

By John B. Arden

**“Hope This Wasn’t Too Hard
To Swallow”**

