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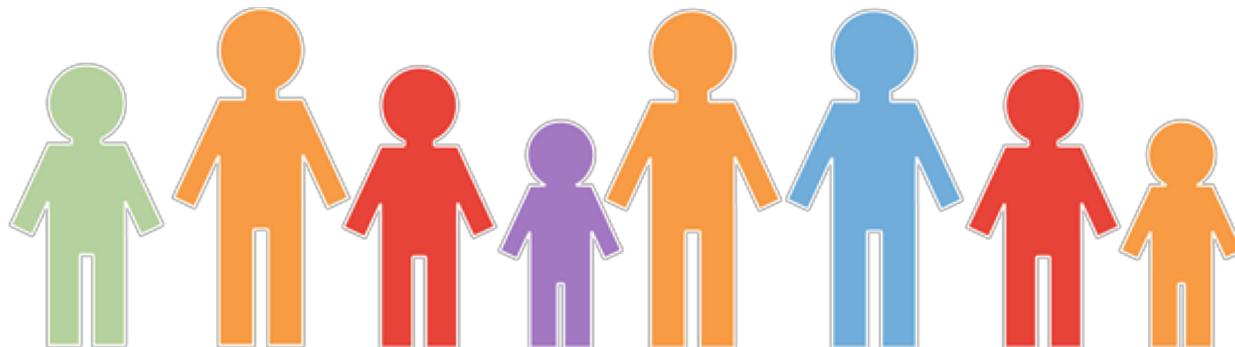
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**“It is vital that organizations create a culture where child sexual abuse is discussed, addressed and prevented.”**

*- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

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# Applying Expressive Therapies in Evidence-Based Trauma Treatment

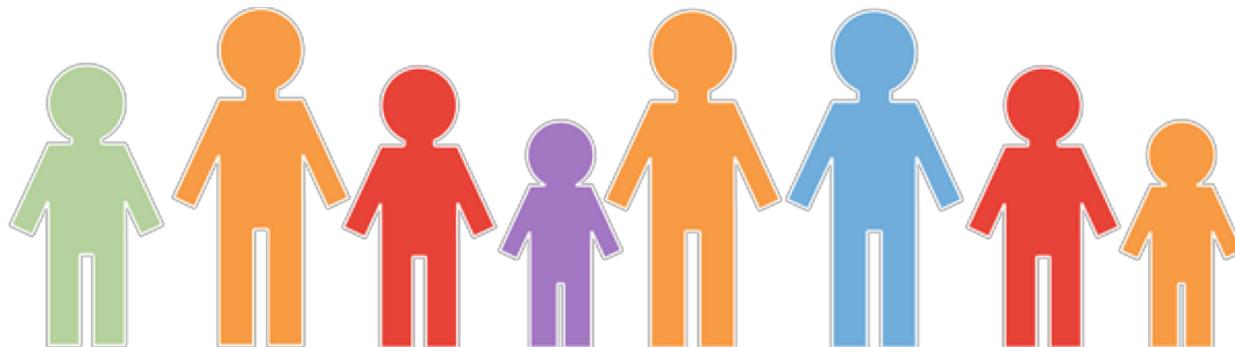


# What is our role?

**-Julia Matson, LCSW & Laura Boillot, LCPC**

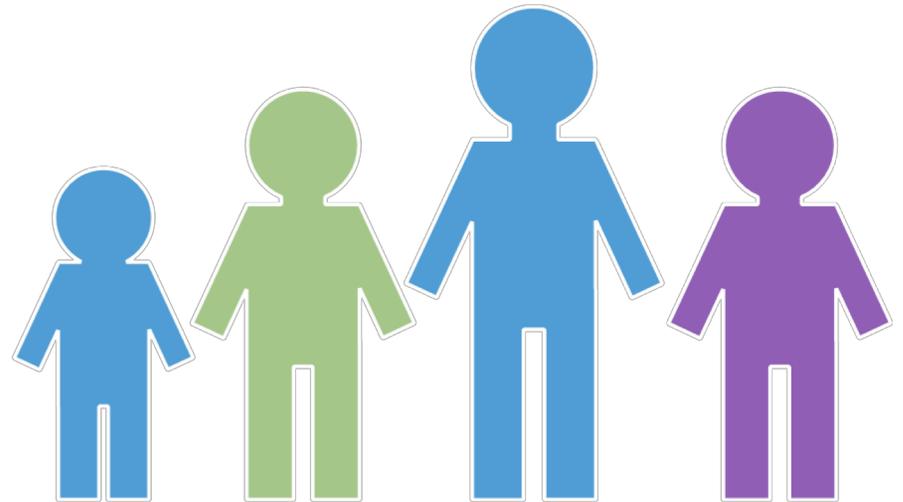
**-Backgrounds in providing trauma-informed therapeutic services for children and families, with a focus in using expressive treatment approaches in individual, family and group work**

**-We are part of the Family Hope Center team as clinical supervisors that oversee staff as well as assist in program planning and providing therapy services for our own caseload of clients**



# Today's Agenda

- Introduction to Brain development and how it is impacted by trauma
- Introduction to Expressive modalities
- Use of experiential learning in each modality
- Overview of Attachment, Regulation and Competency Model
  - Explore ways to apply expressive modalities within a framework
  - Wrap-up with questions and provide resources



# *Breathing Exercise*

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## Brain Development and Trauma

“Each brain adapts uniquely to the unique set of stimuli and experiences of each child’s world...When a child is exposed to any threat, his brain will activate a set of adaptive responses designed to help him survive. The very biological gifts that make early childhood a time of great opportunity also make children very vulnerable to negative experiences.”

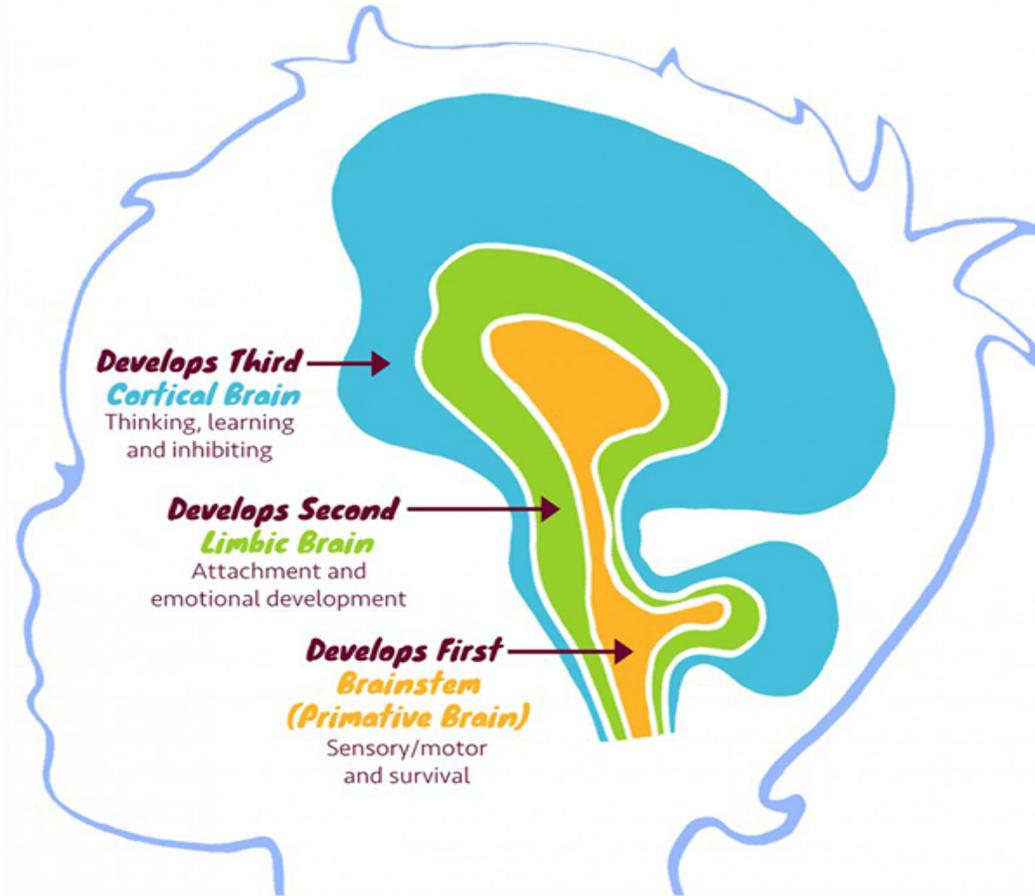
-Dr. Bruce Perry, *Maltreatment and the Developing Child: How Early Childhood Experience Shapes Child and Culture*

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# Beacon House

Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team



Children's brains develop  
from the bottom up.



© [www.beaconhouse.org.uk](http://www.beaconhouse.org.uk)



# Bottom-Up Development

- The brain begins developing in a bottom-up sequence
  - In utero through the first 4-5 years of life, the brain is organizing based on environmental input (critical periods)
  - **Brainstem (primitive brain)**-Includes sensory development, heart rate, breathing, motor skills, levels of arousal (survival input)
  - **Limbic/Midbrain**- Attachment input, states of regulation, social input
  - **Cortical/Cognitive brain**- Development of self-esteem, information processing and comprehension, verbal and language development, identity, problem solving skills

- Highlights of areas of the brain impacted by trauma: deactivation of left hemisphere, including Broca's area; diminished functioning of thalamus; increased activation of subcortical brain regions (involved in emotions) and reduced activity in frontal lobe (inhibitory capacities), ETC ETC ETC
- **“When the alarm bell of the emotional brain keeps signaling that you are in danger, no amount of insight will silence it.”** –Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*
- **“The capacity of art, music, and dance to circumvent the speechlessness that comes with terror may be one reason they are used as trauma treatments in cultures around the world.”** – Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*

# Expressive Therapies

**“If you take the image and dance it, sing it, paint it, write a poem about it, the image is integrated into your life, into your body” (Woodman, 1994)**

# Why use expressive interventions?

- Can be useful when treating trauma that has occurred at various stages of childhood development
  - Ex. Uses non-verbal, motor skills and regulatory strategies that are typically acquired during early development
- Easily used within evidence-based treatment models Ex. Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Can strengthen skills built through attachment relationships, an area often impacted by trauma
- Helps to integrate body and mind interaction and self-awareness
- Helps to externalize the internal emotional experiences





## Why Art?

- Does not require verbal communication
- Can help access, process, and integrate traumatic memories, which are often visual in nature, and which are stored in ways which may be difficult to access verbally (Terry Pifalo)
- Effective when used in conjunction with cognitive therapies like CBT (Terry Pifalo)

# Why Art?

- Can increase a client's sense of mastery and competency
- Can increase regulatory capacity
- Can help externalize internal feelings and experiences to gain new perspectives
- Can increase insight and sense of connection to the Self
- It's fun!

# Using Art to Further Therapy Goals

- Be mindful of therapy goals when choosing intervention and materials, as well as your own comfort with the materials.
- For example:
  - Assessment
  - Containment
  - Expansion
  - Exploration/Uncovering
  - Processing

# Materials

- The messier the materials, the more internal controls necessary.
- Loose Materials:
  - Paint
  - Oil and chalk pastels
  - Glitter
  - Clay/play-doh
- Controlled Materials:
  - Pencil/Pen
  - Marker/Crayon
  - Paper/Magazines
- 3-D materials (i.e. old makeup, hair, food, clothing, computer parts etc)
- 2-D material continuum:
  - Pen → pencil → marker → crayon → chalk → paint → finger paint

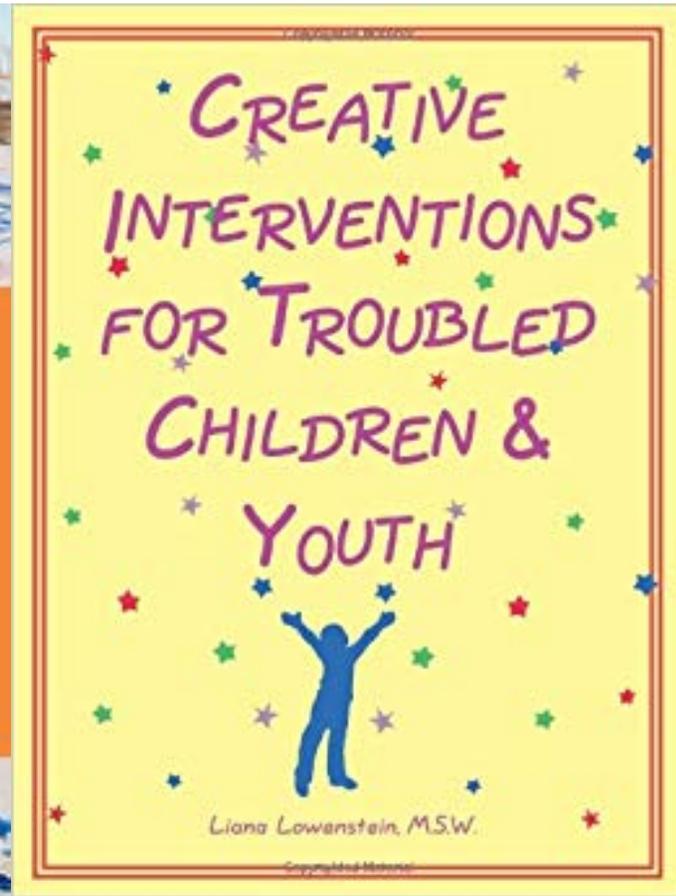
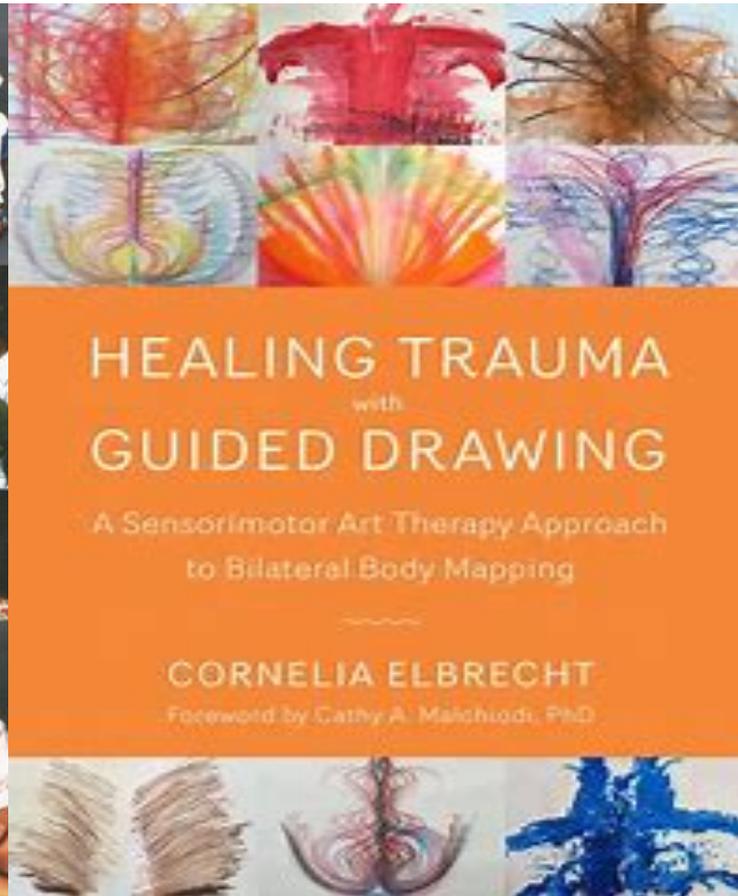
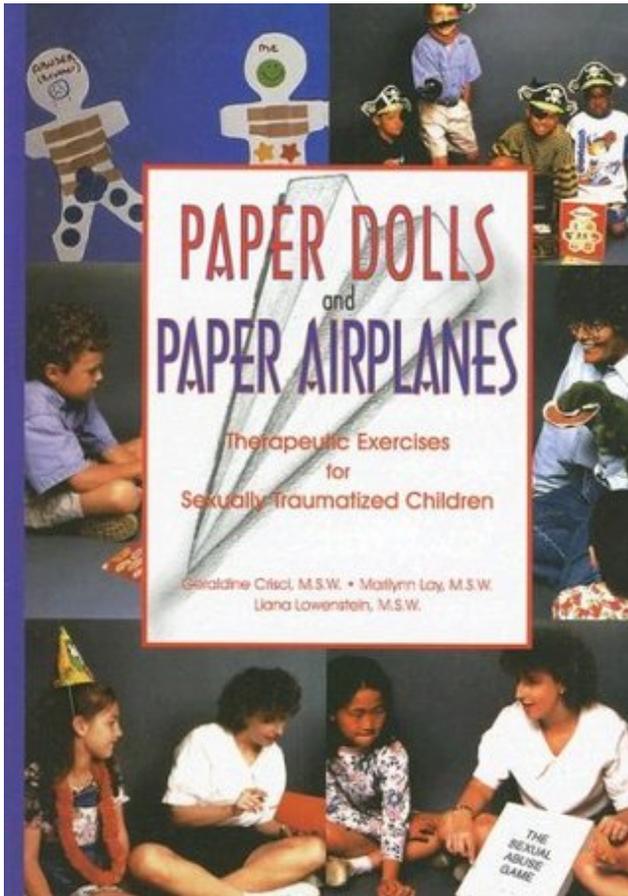
# Tips for Responding to Art

- -open-ended to encourage deeper insight and sharing, don't make assumptions
  - tell me about what you made
  - what do you see? What is happening?
  - what made you think of...
  - how does this relate to your life?
  - what is it about this picture you're not comfortable with or don't like? Is there anything you/we can try to work on it?
  - notice something – lots of lines, green, etc – observe and ACCEPT
- PROCESS vs. PRODUCT – remember to practice what you preach and model self-compassion!

# Intervention Ideas

- Person House Tree
- Picture of family
- Self-portrait
- Containers
- Collage
- Found object assemblage – making, transforming using “throwaways”, can relieve anxiety about end result and allow for more freedom.
- Draw a start button or a squiggle and go from there
- Draw “ugly”
- **Family work:** scribble, teledraw, “simon says”, mirror drawings, “lovely corpse”

# Books to Check Out



# Case Examples

- “safe” images hung on walls
- externalizing monsters/fears and deciding what to do with them (put in jail)
- externalizing safety images to use at home/school (police officer by bed)
- containers “regalos”
- Client “K” progression through rigid to loose materials mirroring verbalization in therapy

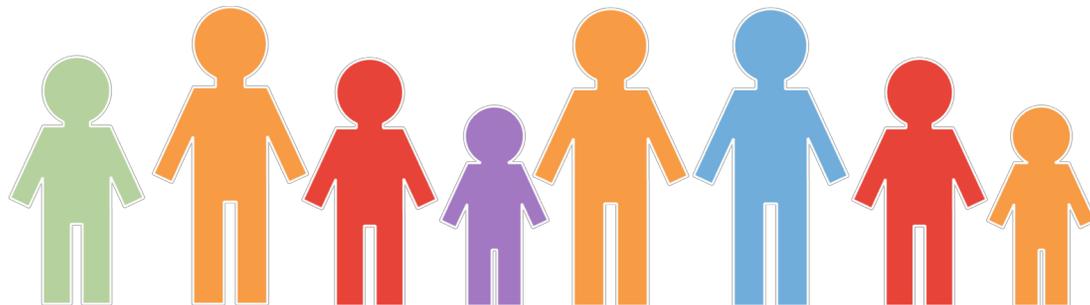
# Experiential

- Scribble drawing
  - Choose 2 crayons
  - Close your eyes and scribble with one color for 30 seconds
  - Open your eyes and try to find something in your scribble
  - Develop the image you found with the other color

# Movement/ Body-Based Intervention

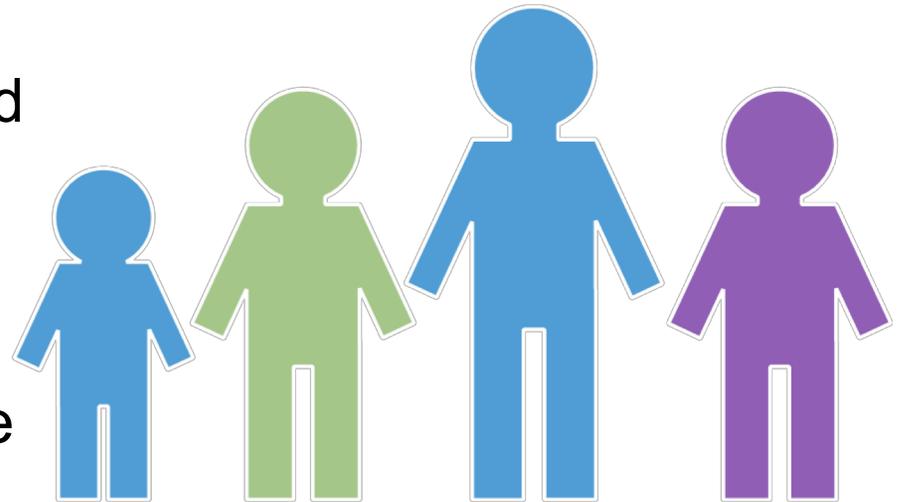
- “Simply noticing what you feel fosters emotional regulation, and it helps you to stop trying to ignore what is going on inside you...Once you start approaching your body with curiosity rather than fear, everything shifts.”

-Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*



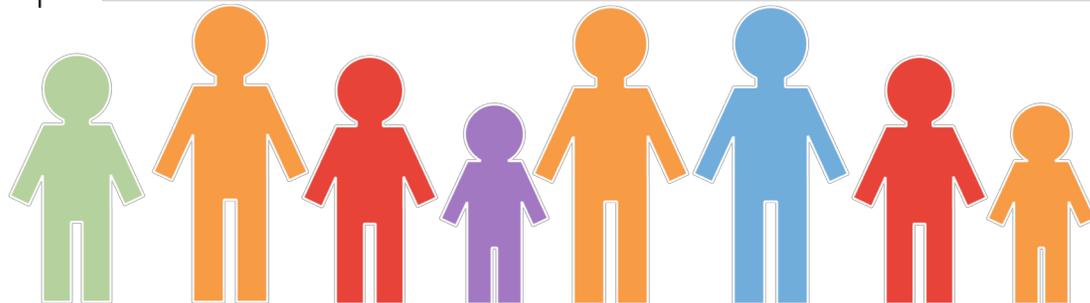
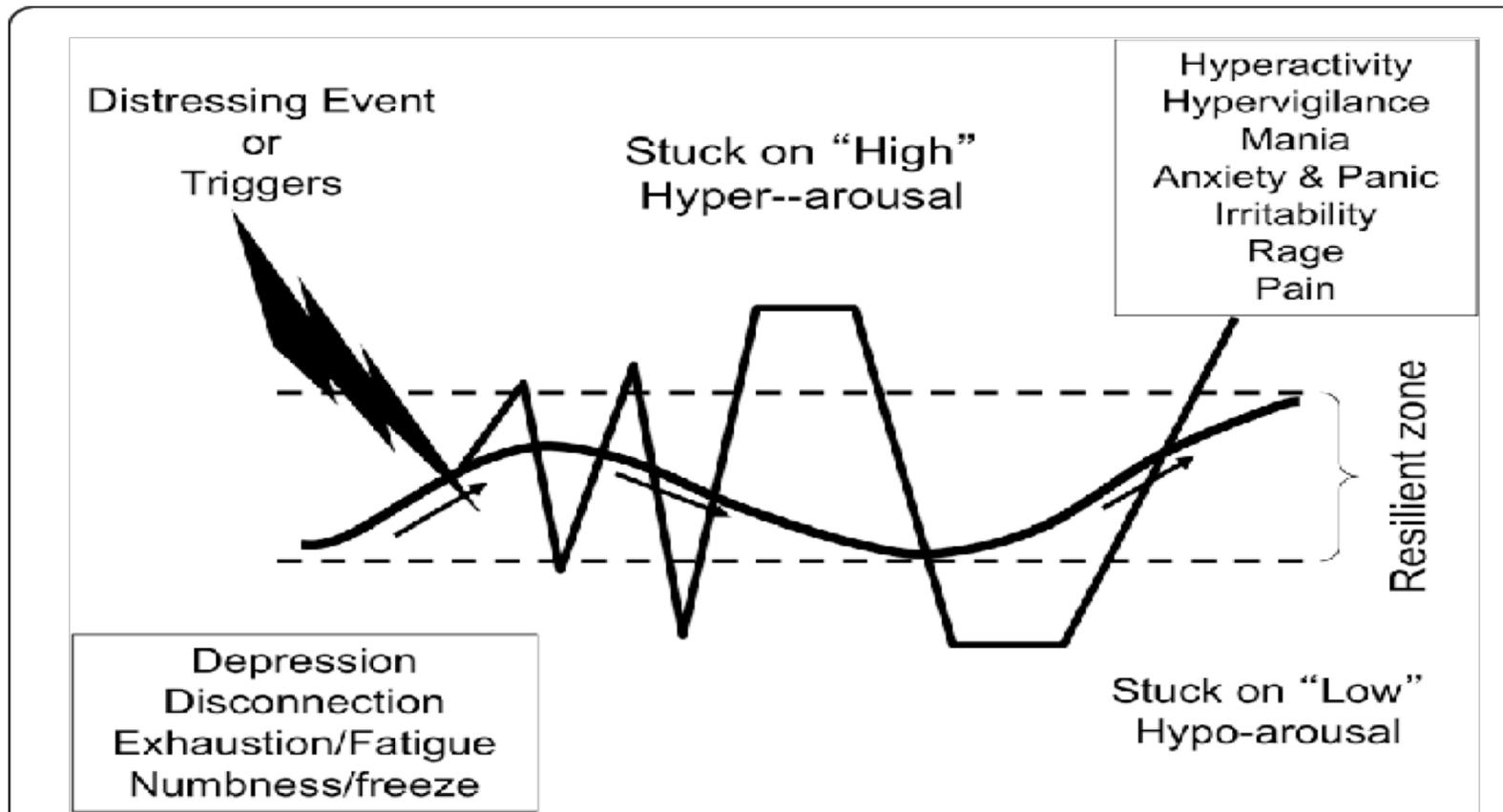
# Why use Movement/Body-Based interventions?

- Can access areas of body trauma has been stored
- Increases regulatory capacity
- Increases body-awareness and sense of control
- Can be used to supplement treatment goals
- Can decrease feelings of shame and disconnect with the body
- Can address somatic symptoms
- Can help to increase distress tolerance, physically and emotionally



# Accessing Resiliency

“We start by establishing inner “islands of safety” within the body. This means helping patients identify parts of the body, postures, or movements where they can ground themselves whenever they feel stuck, terrified or enraged.” -Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*



# Targeting treatment goals using movement:

- Build routines in session and other environments
- Practice grounding techniques targeting issues with dissociation
- Can safely titrate increased comfort in the body
- Addresses regulatory coping skills
- Increasing self-awareness and boundary development
- By being able to strengthen regulation and be in resiliency window, may help to decrease levels of anxiety, hyperarousal and manage strong responses to triggering stimuli
- Can target understanding of fight, flight, freeze responses



# Yoga and Trauma Therapy

Yoga practice can be effective in supplementing treatment goals targeting body-awareness, dissociation, strong emotional and somatic responses and development of coping/regulation

## -Benefits include:

- Release of physical tension
- Orienting to time and place
- Familiarizes with breath, can play with modulation
- Increases blood flow for better movement and coordination
- Facilitates relaxation states
- Can activate and strengthen muscles and areas of body that may be more impacted by trauma and somatic symptoms
- Soothing to the nervous system by helping to decrease hypervigilance and anxious energy
- Encourages vulnerability and building safety in therapeutic relationship and with oneself

\*\*\*Should be mindful of clinician experience and training, as well as poses or postures that might be more triggering given individual client trauma history



**“If you are not aware of what your body needs, you can’t take care of it.”**

*-Bessel Van Der Kolk, The Body Keeps the Score*

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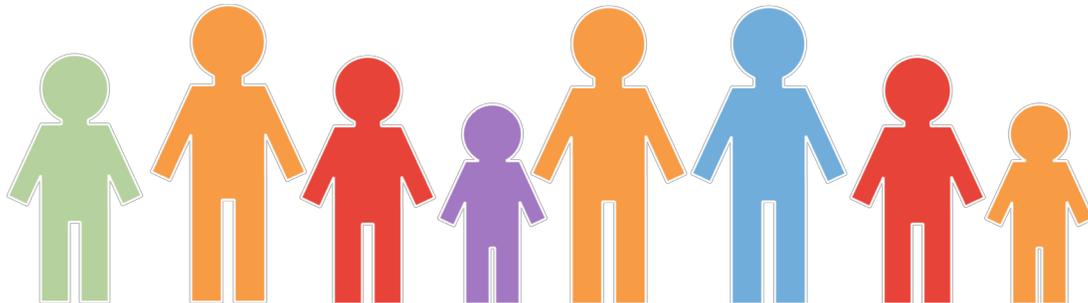
# Case Examples

- Progression of building tolerance in the body
- Targeting areas needing attention
- Joining and collaborative movement
- Joint Freeing exercises
- Using blankets, bands, chairs, etc. for restorative poses or assisting building comfort in the body
  - Ex.-Client Q adapting movement with assistance and progression of body-awareness



# Experiential

- Body Mirroring
  - Choose partner for exercise
  - Choose a leader to begin with movement standing or sitting of your choice
  - Practice movement without speaking while partner follows as though you are looking into a mirror
  - Notice changes in pace, size and affect
  - Switch leaders and practice new movement



# Music/Rhythm

- “Functional neuroimaging studies show that music can modulate activity in brain structures that are known to be crucially involved in emotion, such as the amygdala, hypothalamus, hippocampus, insula, cingulate cortex and orbitofrontal cortex. (Koelsch, 2014)



# Experiential

- Find your voice
  - Breathe in, breathe out
  - Locate the rhythm of your heartbeat
  - Begin to hum on the exhale
  - Find the vibrations of your voice
  - Locate yourself in space
  - Return to normal breathing



# Play Therapy

- Play is a biological need
- Helps to organize the midbrain
- Play is the natural way children process their inner and outer worlds

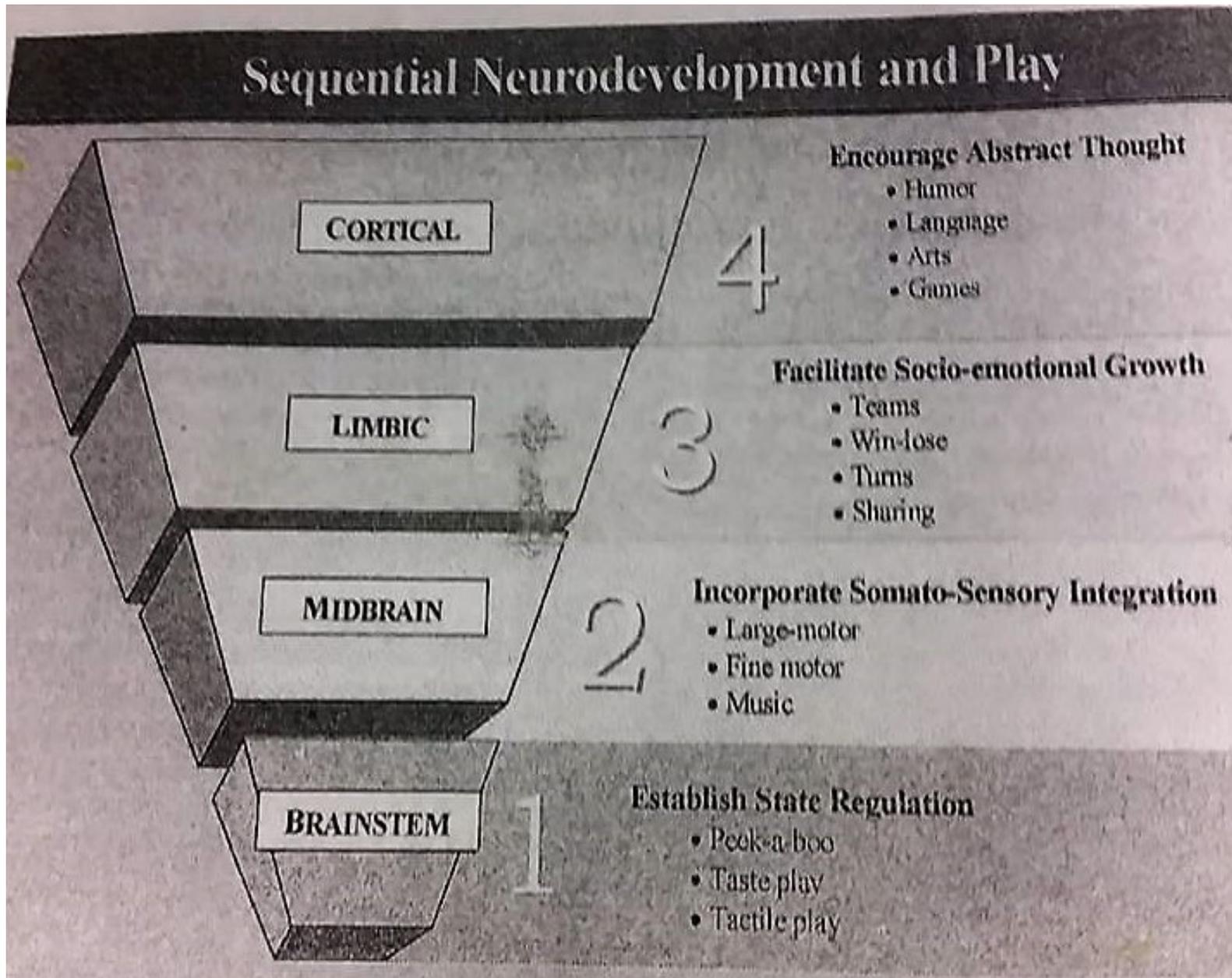


# Play Therapy

- “Play, more than any other activity, fuels healthy development of children and the continued healthy development of adults...Play opportunities for the child must be provided in an appropriate sequence and matched to the child’s level of neurodevelopment.” – Perry, Hogan, and Marlin



Taken from *Curiosity, Pleasure and Play: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective* – Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Lea Hogan, M.Ed., Sarah J. Marlin, Baylor Medical Student



# Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Addresses symptoms related to trauma, including anxiety, depression and hypervigilance

- Includes caregiving system
- Focuses on increasing understanding of trauma, triggering stimuli, building coping skills, addressing distorted thinking and behavioral issues
- Trauma narrative
  - Expressive interventions can be supplemented in treatment through finding alternative regulatory coping skills and alternatives to “talk” or using language to create narratives
  - Client may complete narrative, but continues to have symptoms due only addressing one way the trauma has been stored. This will depend on developmental stage when trauma occurred and expressive modality may access that part of the brain more effectively in treatment

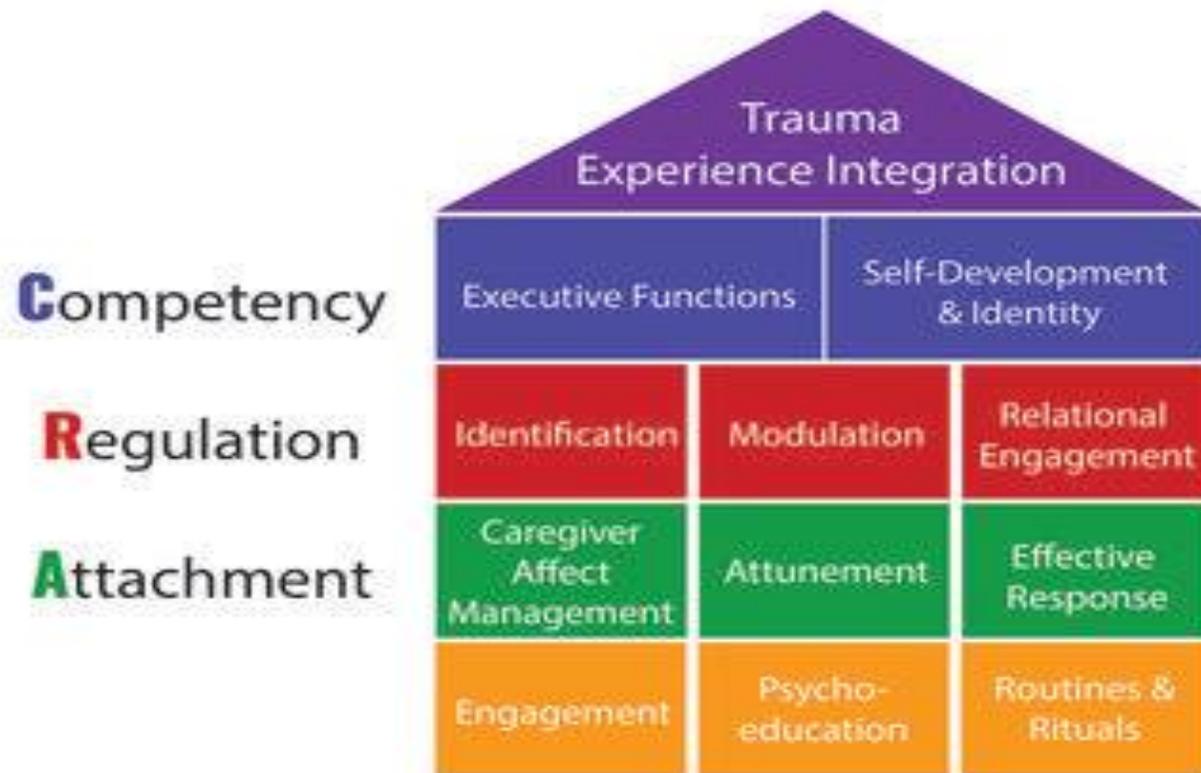
# Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma

- Addresses issue of complex trauma
  - Chronic trauma, multiple forms of abuse, variety of offenders, systemic oppression, poverty, familial mental health issues, etc.
  - Can be applied in multiple settings, assessment-driven, can be used along with other treatment approaches
    - Due to focus in complex trauma, expressive therapies may assist in appropriate pacing and staying within window of tolerance and regulation



# Attachment, Regulation, Competency Framework

## ARC Framework



# Why use building blocks?

- -Focuses on strengthening regulatory skills
- Increases toleration of distress by increasing capacity for regulation
- Identifies ways of regulating and healing through attachment
- Each block is able to build on one another to support overall integration of trauma
- Allows room for expressive modalities to target building block goals

# Routines and Rituals

Art Therapy:	Movement/Body-Based:	Music/Rhythm/Lyrical:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Draw a daily or weekly “feeling balloon” (can be found in Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes)</li><li>-Choose a color to represent how you feel/how you want to feel and create something with that color</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Body scans</li><li>-Wet/Dry noodle, body modulation</li><li>-Yoga pose of the day</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Rhythmic mirroring</li><li>-choose a song to start/end the day</li><li>-Developing handshake or beat as part of therapy routine</li></ul>

# Attunement

Art Therapy:	Movement/Body-Based:	Music/Rhythm/Lyrical:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- “Simon Says” drawing</li><li>- Joint scribble drawings (i.e. each person draws a doodle, and then the other person develops it)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Movement mirroring<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Full body or isolated body part</li></ul></li><li>-Feelings charades</li><li>-Walking meditation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Instrument follow the leader/ impulse control</li><li>-Repeat rhythm exercises</li></ul>

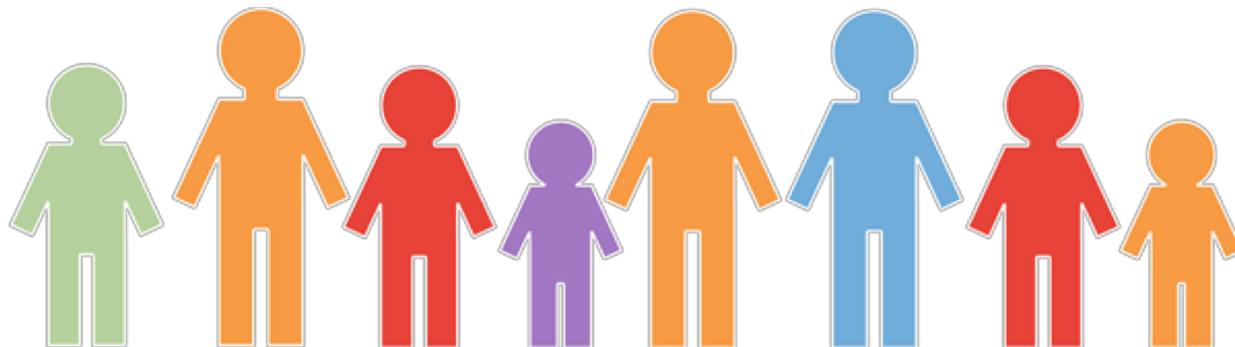
# Modulation

Art Therapy:	Movement/Body-based:	Music/Rhythm/Lyrical:
<p>-Response art, using music of varying intensity and mood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- “Feelings Balloon” drawing</li><li>- Choose a color intuitively and create abstract drawing</li></ul>	<p>-”Breath of Joy,” Running breathing, altering intensity of breath</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Muscle tension and release</li><li>-Extension vs. inversion movements or pose based on affect</li></ul>	<p>-Connecting rhythms, movements to heartbeat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Practice moving to different types of music (upbeat, calm, intense, etc)</li></ul>

# Self-Development & Identity

Art Therapy:	Movement/Body-based:	Music/Rhythm/Lyrical:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Variety of self-portraits</li><li>-Mask making</li><li>-Affirmation mirrors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Identify and practice yoga poses representing different parts of identity/needs (ex. Strength-Warrior pose, protected- Child's or assisted restorative pose, etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Create playlist reflective of integrating the self</li><li>-Create a lyric journal reflecting themes of non-integrated parts</li><li>-Use fridge word magnets to experiment with poetry</li><li>-Combine use of music with art intervention targeting identity development</li><li>-Breath modulation with personal mantra</li><li>- "I Am" poem or song writing</li></ul>

# Wrap-Up Take Aways



**Thank you for coming and please feel  
free to reach out with questions or  
inquiries for more resources!**

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# Additional Resources

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWQnTUunhuY>  
Trauma and Music Therapy: Let the Healing Begin.  
Karla Hawley
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5pe7KzRwog> Music  
Therapy and its Impact on the Brain. Elizabeth  
Stegemoller
- Perry, B. (2004). Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain  
Development, and the Next Generation. New York: W.  
W. Norton.
- Jeuland-Ware, C. Yoga and Psychotherapy. International  
Association of Yoga Therapists.





**Children are resilient.  
Healing is possible.**

