

The neurobiology of trauma and domestic violence

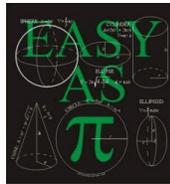
What you need to know and why

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Overview of today's talk

- Brain science & trauma
- The brain during/after trauma
- Integrating IT dynamics & neurobiology of trauma



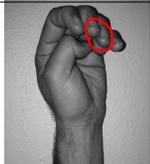
Exposure to trauma =



Aftermath



Impaired functioning



Exposure to trauma over time = A hyper-sensitive “Danger Will Robinson”



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We learn by generalizing...



5

And then differentiating...



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Extinction is possible because we can differentiate...



TRAUMA blocks differentiation!



Consistently assess for safety



Involves:

- Eyes, ears, nose, etc.
- Your amygdala (DANGER!)

Our level of vigilance depends on the environment AND OUR HISTORY OF TRAUMA!

Exposure to trauma over time =

- When the amygdala fires intensely, the hippocampus is impaired!

Map of threat?

ACCESS DENIED

Map of safety?

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More science behind the experience



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More science behind the experience



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More science behind the experience

13

The photos are...



14

True Story!



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Exposure to trauma =

Hippocampus not functioning optimally...

When is a bang more than
just a loud noise?



Exposure to trauma =

Hippocampus not functioning optimally...

When is a bang more than
just a loud noise?

*When you can't
put it in context!*



So you're saying



**I can't express
myself**
*When you get triggered, you can't
just "notice you're safe" without
some help or until you crash*

Mindfulness



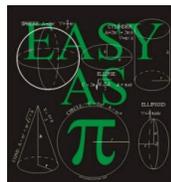
- It's non a religious practice – it's a human practice!
- Think of it as brain training
- Davidson (2012) has shown that being mindful **soothes the sub-cortical regions of your brain** that get activated by trauma!

Grounding



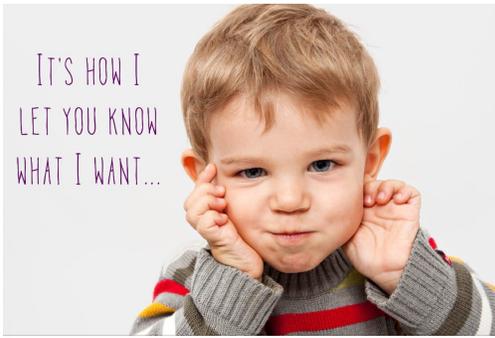
- Grounding someone soothes the amygdala and “jumpstarts” the hippocampus
- Can you count the tiles in the ceiling for me?
- Can you count the pencils on the desk for me?
- Can you feel your feet in your shoes?
- Can you notice your breath?

Overview of today's talk



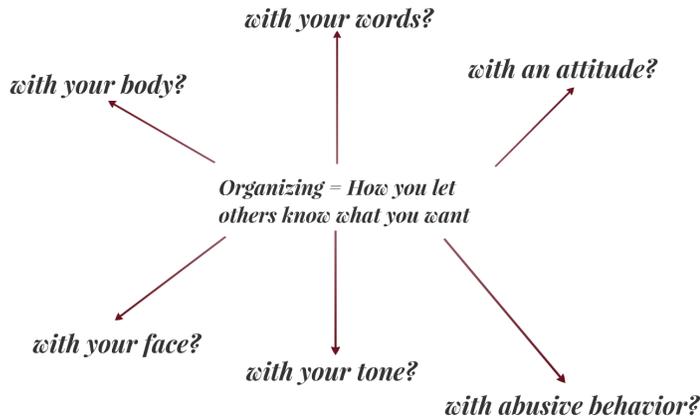
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A few Intimate Terrorism basics



It all starts with **organizing**

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A few Intimate Terrorism basics

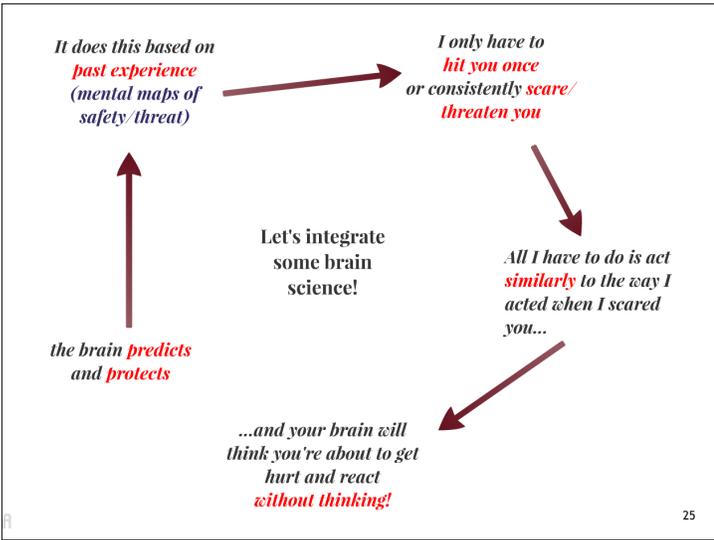
We all organize

It can be very, very subtle

Add fear and it's a very powerful way to influence



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the brain predicts and protects



It does this based on past experience (mental maps of safety/threat)



This is about how we learn



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Trauma blocks the ability to differentiate!



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*I only have to
hit you once
or consistently **scare/**
threaten you*



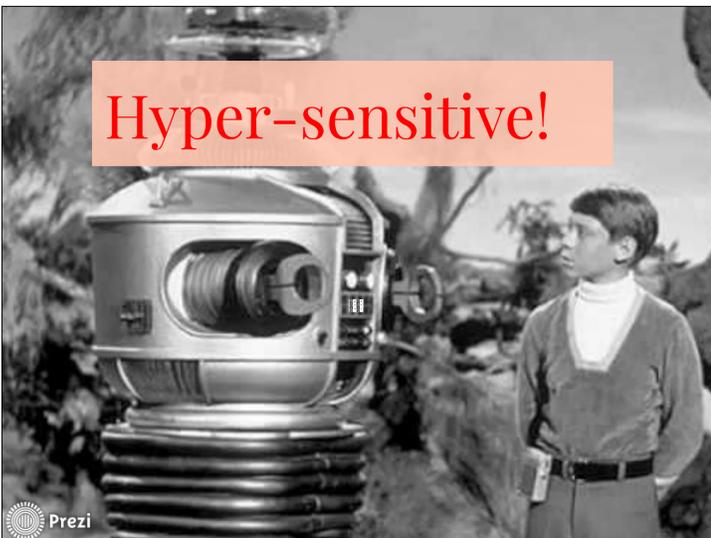
*All I have to do is act **similarly** to the way I acted when I scared you...*



*...and your brain will think you're about to get hurt and react **without thinking!***



Hyper-sensitive!





This creates a
fear based
neural network



This creates a
fear based
neural network

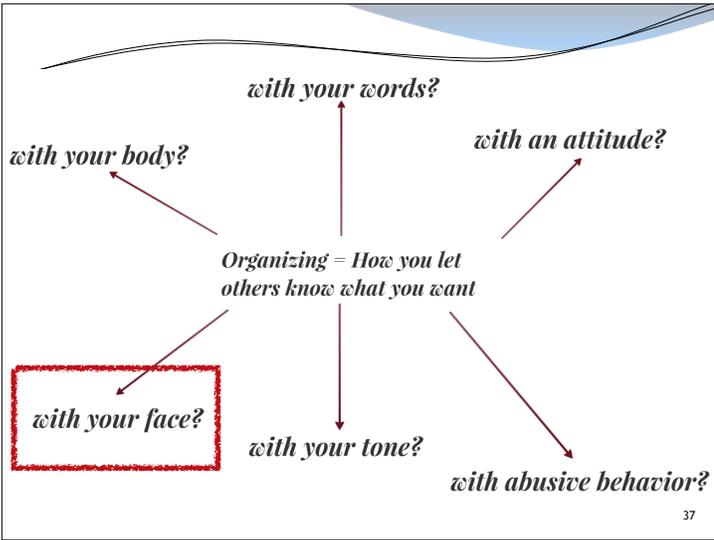
IT'S ACTIVE EVERY DAY!

Organizing

IT'S HOW I
LET YOU KNOW
WHAT I WANT...

It can be so
subtle...

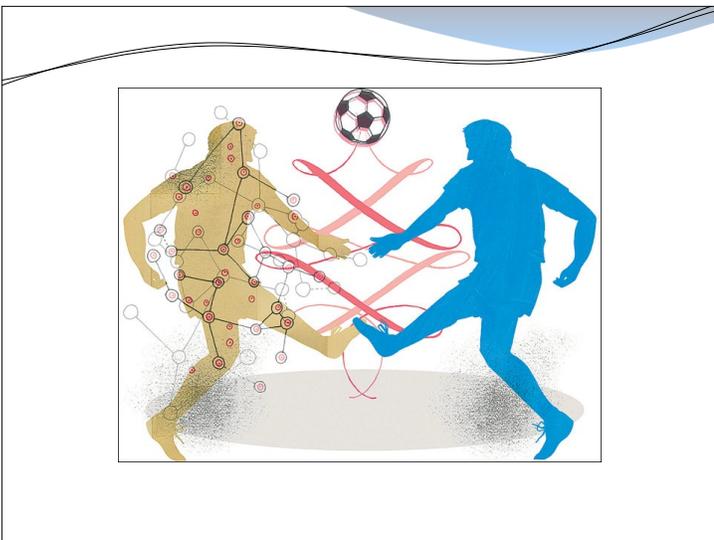




The science of mirror neurons



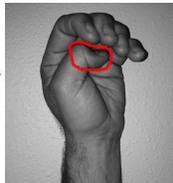
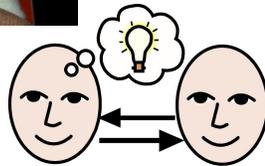
- Monkey see...monkey do...
- Monkey see...monkey's brain fires like he's doing... but he's not doing!
- What the WHAT???



Ever played golf?



Ever practiced yoga?



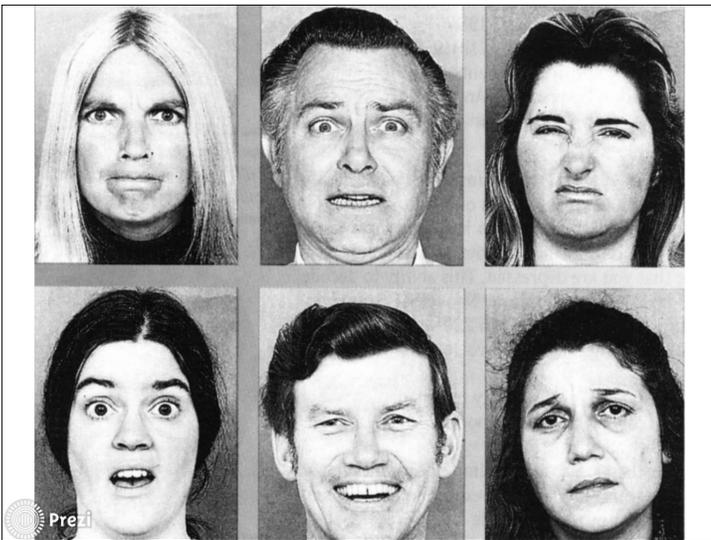
Mirror neurons allow for emotional resonance...



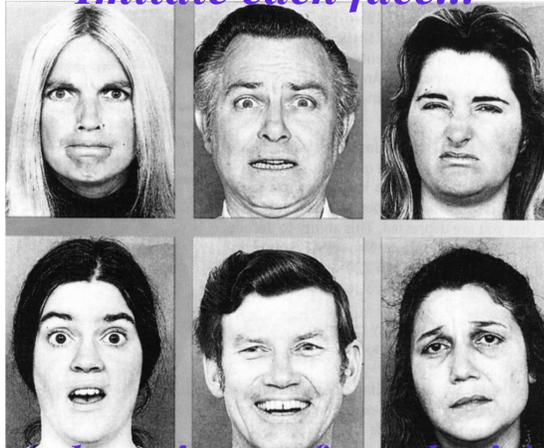
Remember the MRI machine?



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Imitate each face...

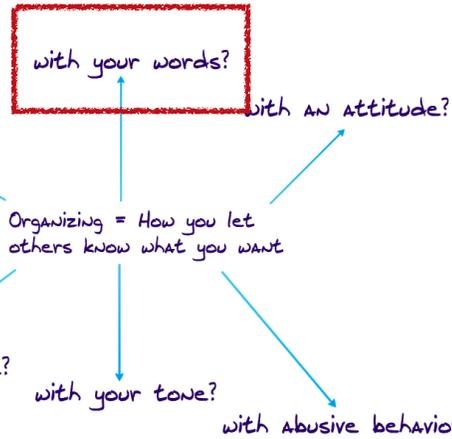


(take a picture of your brain)

Oh the many ways we manipulate...

withhold your agenda
flat out lie about your agenda
act without asking when you know the answer is no
deceive/deny
etc...

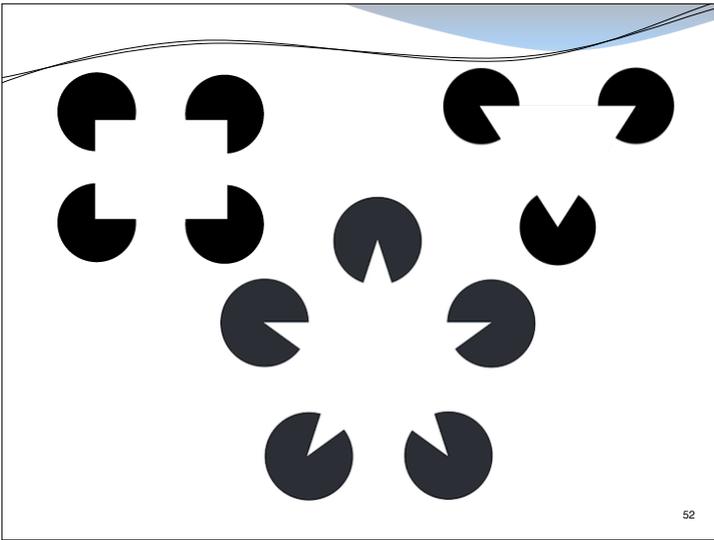




Organizing



- “Why do you even talk to your family, they hate me!”
- “Quit making shit up, you never asked me to pick up.”
- “Why don’t you respect me and my family?”
- “I swear it’ll never happen again, I love you.”



The Left-prefrontal Cortex

Combines:

Subjective logic

Language

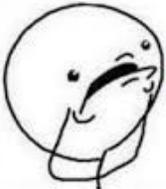
to create the story of your life



WHAT MATTERS MOST IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.

We are who we tell ourselves we are...

That awkward moment when someone asks you to tell more about yourself, and you're like:



OH GOD, WHO AM I?







threats

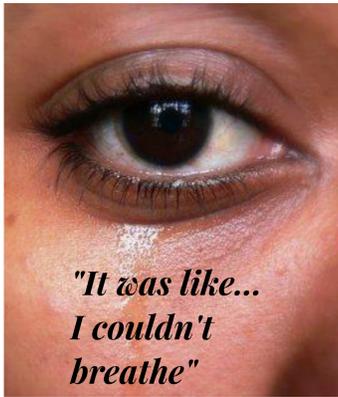
put downs

5th degree

isolation

demands

questioning



*"It was like...
I couldn't
breathe"*

It feels constant...
because the organizing is!

You'd stay too...



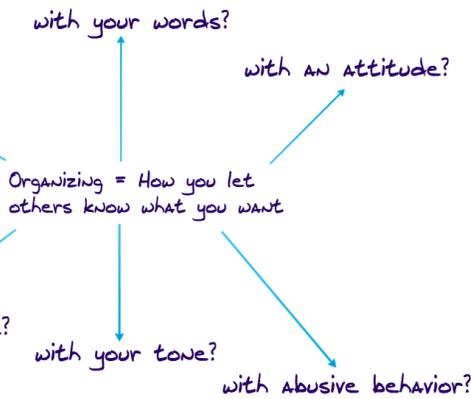
*It can be so subtle,
she may not even
think of herself as a
victim!*

Organizing

IT'S HOW I
LET YOU KNOW
WHAT I WANT...

We all do it!





Organizing



How is a survivor sometimes organized by family and friends?

Do they really want to know what happened?

Or be told what they want to hear?

Organizing



“Are you sure we’re talking about the same person?”

“Well, I’m sure s/he didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“Hey, every couple argues.”

“Wait, so s/he didn’t hit you? Just yelled at you? Okay. Well...what was your part in it?”

You’d stay too...



We have neural networks of attachment that represent hope!

You’d stay too...

*Both statistically and intuitively a victim/survivor is at **GREATER DANGER** when leaving or just after leaving, then when still in the relationship*



You'd stay too...

Would you leave your children behind?

*If you really could find a safe place,
what would it look like for your kids?*



"He kept asking me when we were going home to see daddy"

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You'd stay too...



OR



at&t	
Monthly Statement	
Bill At-A-Glance	AT&T Benefits
Amount Due: \$26.00	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Amount Received (11.00) From: My Account	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account: 1234567890	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Name: John Doe	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Address: 1234 Main St, Anytown, CA 90210	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Phone: (555) 123-4567	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Email: john.doe@atandt.com	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Status: Active	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Type: Residential	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Start Date: 01/01/2010	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account End Date: 12/31/2010	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Manager: Jane Smith	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account Notes: Please call 1-800-AT&T for more information.	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account ID: 1234567890	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account ID2: 0987654321	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account ID3: 1122334455	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account ID4: 6677889900	AT&T Mobile Assurance
Account ID5: 1010101010	AT&T Mobile Assurance
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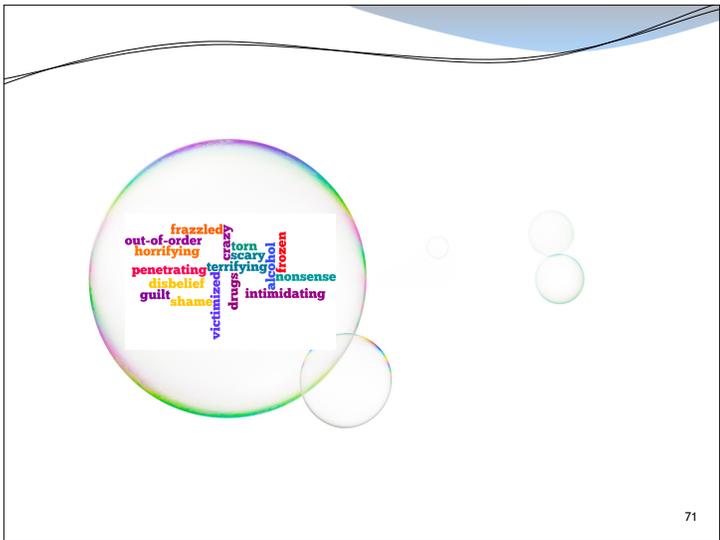
You'd stay too...



*And remember...your pre-frontal cortex
is likely not functioning very well*

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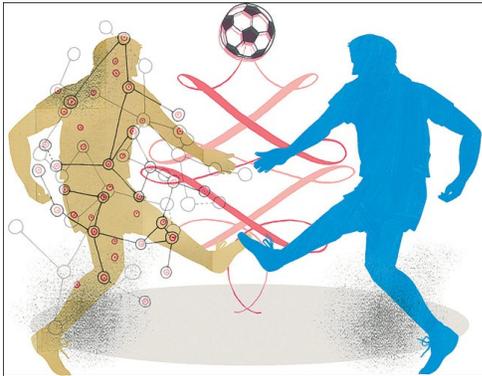
To be given access to a victim/
survivor's experience
you need the password...

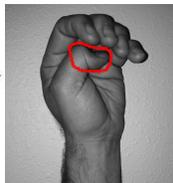
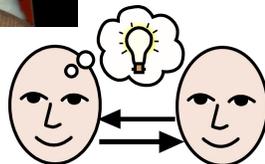
A red, distressed-style stamp with a white horizontal bar on the left side, resembling a password field. To the right of the bar, the words "PASSWORD" and "REQUIRED" are printed in bold, red, uppercase letters, stacked vertically.

Remember mirror neurons?



- Monkey see...monkey do...
- Monkey see...monkey's brain fires like he's doing...but he's not doing!
- What the WHAT???





So what yer sayin' is...

- The victims you interview will mirror YOUR facial expressions...and have a sense of what you are experiencing...
- Remember where is the limbic system is? It's not conscious on their part.



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When status is threatened
threat networks get
activated!



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So the password is...

Soft eyes!

**Soft eyes = I honor your
experience and humanity**

**Hard eyes = I have a job to do/
investigation to run**

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Questions? Comments?

Please feel free to contact me:
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Thank you to Jim Hopper, Ph.D. for his multiple contributions to this training and use of several of his slides.
