

Welcome to our Learning Network & Knowledge Hub Webinar

Trauma-Informed Interventions through an Indigenous Worldview Presented by Brianna Olson

Date & Time: Tuesday, June 26, 2018 from 1:00 to 2:15 PM EST

- All attendees are muted during the webinar.
- If you are experiencing issues, please type into the chat box.
- If you have a question for the webinar speakers, please type into the Q&A box and we will spend 15 mins near the end on Questions and Answers.
- There will be an evaluation link in the chat box at the end of the webinar, please fill out the form as your feedback will guide our future webinars.
- Once you complete the evaluation form, you will be directed to a website where you will be prompted to enter your full name and email address. A certificate of attendance will be generated and emailed to you.
- The webinar recording and presentation slides will be posted on our website within the next few days:

<http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/ln-kh-webinars>



Financial contribution from

Public Health Agency of Canada Agence de la santé publique du Canada

Webinar Debriefing Questions

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Ou [Ressources – Aide, support et références au Québec](#)

Trauma-Informed Interventions through an Indigenous Worldview

BRIANNA OLSON PITAWANAKWAT

WAASEZI NIIMTA NONGOOS KWE (SHINING DANCING STAR WOMAN)

WIKWEMIKONG UNCEDED FIRST NATION

ANISHINAABE, IRISH, NORWEGIAN NATIONS

ADIKOOS DODEM/ CARIBOU & REINDEER CLAN

Home: Mnidoo Mnissing; Manitoulin Island



Home: *Amiskwacîwâskahikan*



Photo: Trevor Boller

Our journey together:

- ▶ Gain a basic understanding of brain/body connection, survival responses and Indigenous philosophies of higher thought and wisdom.
- ▶ Unpack and problematize western pathology in relation to trauma responses.
- ▶ Consider approaches to supporting trauma rooted in a holistic paradigm.

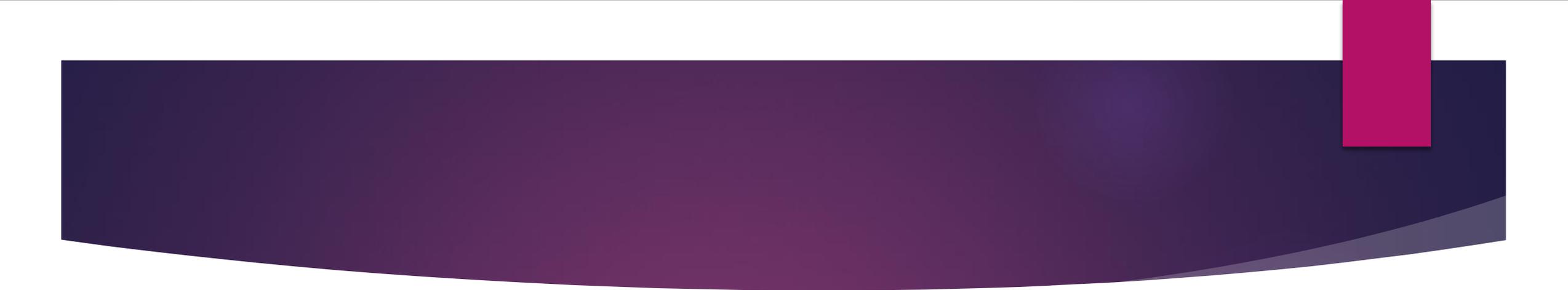
Pre-amble: Working Across Disciplines

- ▶ In keeping with a holistic view, we must not run the risk of compartmentalizing our helping work or our own competency. Learning will only foster a deeper understanding.
- ▶ Study history of Territory, history of your own Nations, and history of the current helping models.
- ▶ Study the race based legal principles that continue to impact the First Peoples of Turtle Island (doctrine of discovery, etc) , know the law that underpins your work in the community, know the inherent rights of FN people.
- ▶ Learn about the environment, climate change, resource extraction, and the ways that Indigenous peoples are impacted most by these policies.
- ▶ Know the most up to date info on health in regards to FN people, learn about the most up to date research on science and the brain, learn your Nations own healing paradigms.
- ▶ **START CONVERSATIONS; FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS**

“Through Indian Eyes” -Elder Isaac Pitawanakwat’bah

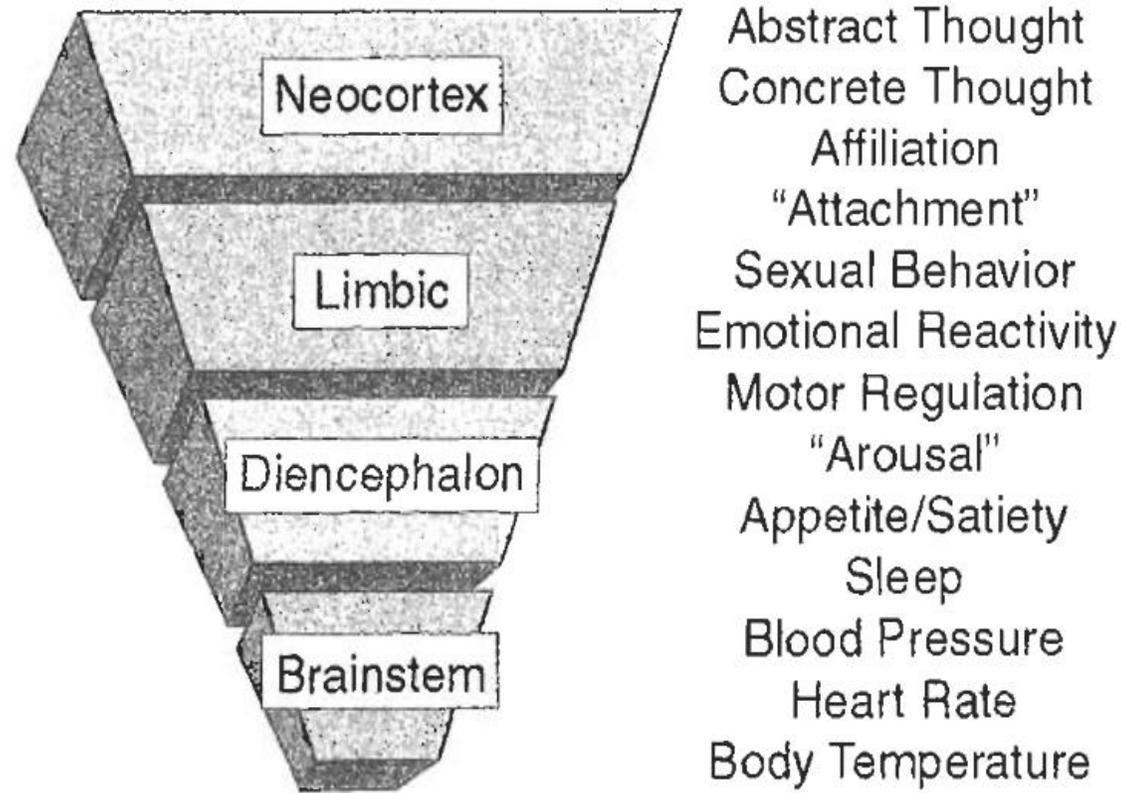


Aaron Paquette



Hand/ Brain exercise

Dr. Daniel Siegel



“Children exposed to significant threat will “reset” their baseline state of arousal, such that even at baseline- when no threats or demands are present- they will be in a psychological state of persisting alarm. As external stressors are introduced (e.g. a complicated task at school, a disagreement with a peer), the traumatized child will become more reactive, moving into a state of fear or terror even in the face of minor stressors. The child’s cognition or behavior will reflect his or her state of arousal. This increased baseline level of arousal, and increased reactivity in response to a perceived threat, play a major role in the behavior and cognitive problems exhibited by traumatized children”

-Dr. Bruce Perry, 2006



We are ALIVE

- ▶ **Trauma responses are SURVIVAL**
- ▶ **Resilience is SURVIVAL**
- ▶ **We are alive because our brain was strong, wise, and courageous enough to protect us**
- ▶ **Move away from loaded and potentially judgmental language such as “maladaptive” or “pathological”**

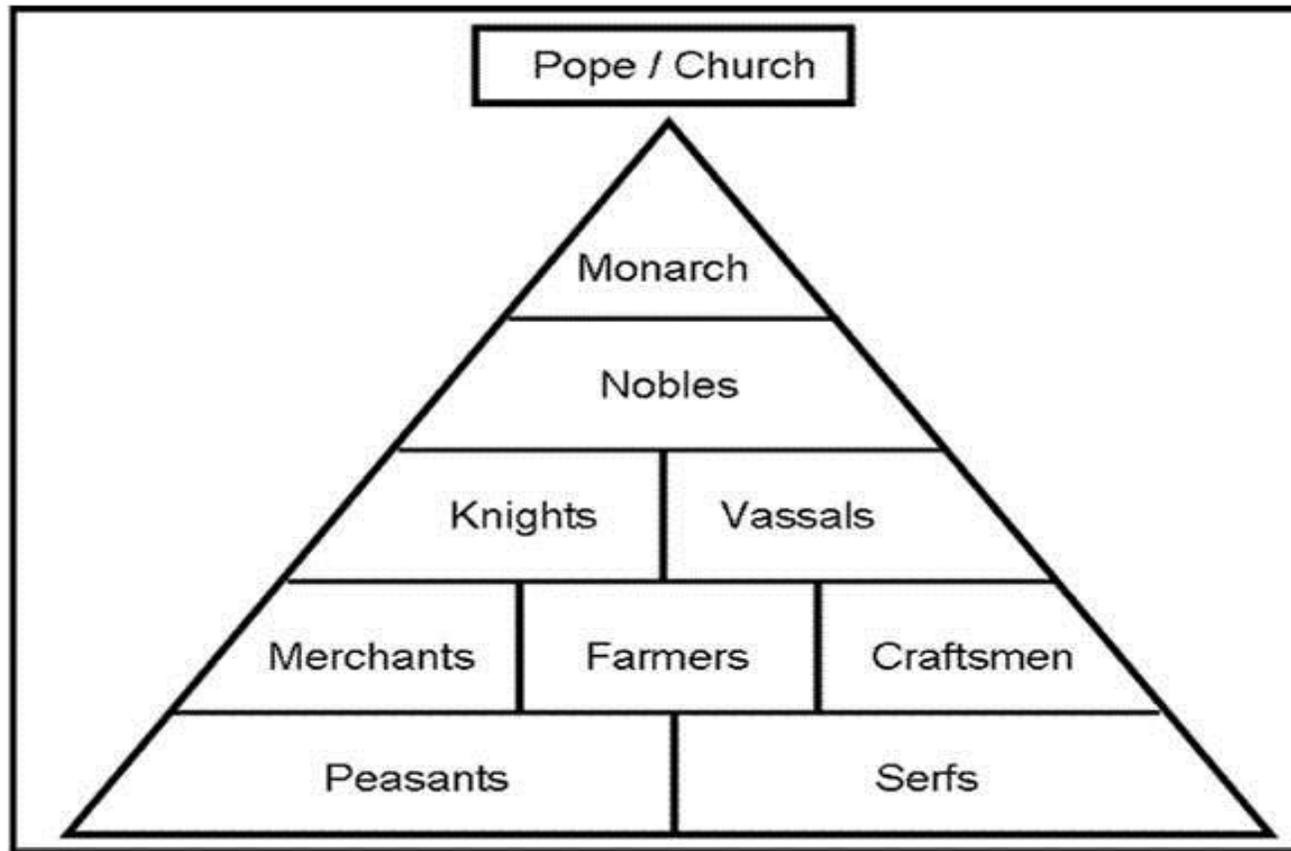
Indigenous thought

- ▶ **“Nendum” denotes a state of mind in Anishinaabemowin**
- ▶ **Self regulation; maintaining autonomy over our thought processes in order to control our bodies (Siegel, 2012).**
- ▶ **Anishinaabe Elder Isaac Pitawanakwat stated that “Anishinaabe thought denotes genius”; akin to higher brain thinking; our highest thought processes located in the frontal cortex.**

Moving towards a deeper understanding of trauma

- System often views behavior through a moral or basic psychology lens; behavior modification, reward and punishment.
- New and most groundbreaking research shows us the complexity, resilience and neuroplasticity of the human brain; the deep and lasting impacts of prolonged abuse and the bodies amazing adaptation for survival
- Look at trauma and the resulting behavior as RESILIENCE and SURVIVAL, a starting point for healing rather than pathologizing, ostracizing or criminalizing
- Recognizing that very few spaces invest the time necessary for true integrative healing of complex trauma

History



Problematizing the systems; not our people

- ▶ Western mainstream society operates from a “normative” viewpoint, what is not considered “normal”; behavior, lifestyle, race, disability, sexual orientation or identity etc you can find yourself disenfranchised or marginalized. Essentially, you are outside of the circle.
- ▶ “Othering” or pathology created the basis for many of the systems that we see today; cannot ignore the roots of capitalist economy
- ▶ “Biomedical model posits that all physical and mental illnesses are due to measurable, physiological deviations from normal, healthy functioning. The Biomedical model's exclusion of psychological and social factors as essential to mental illness has led to a number of criticisms of the model” (Strickland & Patrick, 2015)

The Reality

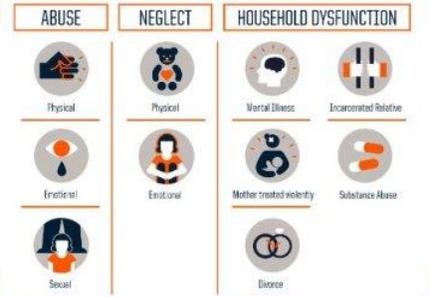
It is a sad reality that all of our best efforts—all of our governmental programs, our not-for-profits, our public and private institutions, our CPS, and our education, mental health, and juvenile justice systems—fail these highest-risk children. We recreate the chaos, fragmentation, trauma, and neglect these children have experienced in their homes. We fail maltreated children in many ways, not the least of which is an appalling lack of effective therapeutic services for these children. Most of these children have limited access to therapeutic services. Those who do get therapy get too little, too late; how can we possibly expect 45 minutes a week with a therapist to heal a child after 10 years of chaos, threat, humiliation, degradation, and terror?

THE TRUTH ABOUT ACEs

WHAT ARE THEY?

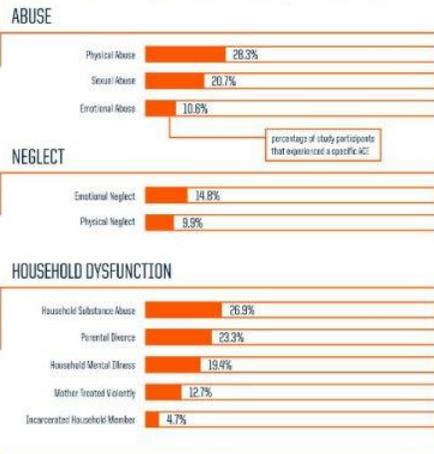
ACEs *are*
ADVERSE
CHILDHOOD
EXPERIENCES

The three types of ACEs include



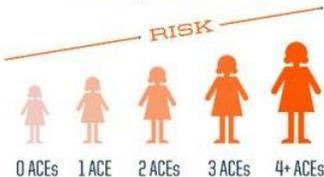
HOW PREVALENT ARE ACEs?

The ACE study* revealed the following estimates:

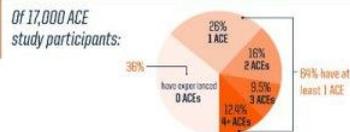
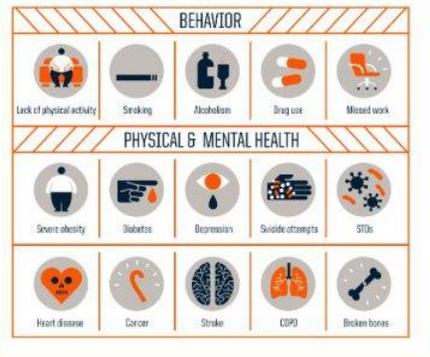


WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



Possible Risk Outcomes:



Healing through culture



© Becky Olvera-Schultz

Tradition; Because our ways have sustained us for time immemorial

In a state of flux, in state of constant motion, things never remain the same. Things are forever changing. If we stopped and thought about it about it, we live in a very narrow spectrum of ideal conditions. We in the native world, we try to renew those conditions that are ideal for our existence. The drumming, singing, the dancing is part of the renewal
(Little Bear, L.)

Integration

- ▶ Soothe
- ▶ Connect
- ▶ Redirection
- ▶ “Name it to tame it”
- ▶ It takes time and patience; acceptance and non-judgement is key

Helpers Roles

- ▶ Lifelong learning
- ▶ Find support to take care of yourself and trauma; this way you will be stronger and less triggered with the people you are helping
- ▶ Think critically, through “Indian Eyes”
- ▶ Must have capacity to “tune in” or attune to those who are disregulated using:
 - Empathy: Understanding their life and state of mind
 - Compassion: Feeling with them

Culture is Survival; not an afterthought

- Provides essential support network and pride in heritage; diminishes pervasive harmful impacts of state violence, racism and stereotypes
- Essential for integrating traumatic experiences
- Assist in whole brain thinking, higher thought & decision making (frontal cortex) and integration of left and right brain thinking through artistic expression
- Ceremonies provide soothing of the overactive limbic system and amygdala
- Relationships with other human beings are ESSENTIAL to integrating traumatic experiences
- Storytelling and healing circles akin to narrative approaches to therapy; externalizing story can have powerful effects on self actualization and empowerment
- Culture is a protective factor; numerous studies identify (Currie).

Final Thoughts



**When you rise in the morning,
give thanks for the light,
for your life, for your strength.**

Tecumseh

Baamaapii Minwa Miigwech!



Kaboni,
Wikwemkoonsing,
Mndioo Mnissing

References and resources

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- ▶ Van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. New York: Viking

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