

# Whole Child in After School

Moving from what we know to leading for what is possible

# Outline for Today's Discussion

- Moving from trauma informed to healing centered
- Co-Regulation
- ACES
- DOSE
- Seen, Safe, Soothed, Secure

While trauma-informed care offers an important lens to support young people who have been harmed and emotionally injured, it also has its limitations. I first became aware of the limitations of the term “trauma-informed care” during a healing circle I was leading with a group of African American young men. All of them had experienced some form of trauma ranging from sexual abuse, violence, homelessness, abandonment or all of the above. During one of our sessions, I explained the impact of stress and trauma on brain development and how trauma can influence emotional health. As I was explaining, one of the young men in the group named

Marcus abruptly stopped me and said,

**“I am more than what happened to me, I’m not just my trauma”.**

# ROADMAP TO HEALING

This graphic illustrates the spectrum of organization types when considering the level of trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches they currently implement.



# Healing Centered Engagement

- HCE is strength based, advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture as a central feature in well-being.
- A healing centered approach to addressing trauma requires a different question that moves beyond “what happened to you” to “what’s right with you” and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events.
- The healing centered approach comes from the idea that people are not harmed in a vacuum, and well-being comes from participating in transforming the root causes of the harm within institutions.
- Healing centered engagement also advances the move to “strengths-based” care and away from the deficit based mental health models that drives therapeutic interventions.

# Moving from trauma informed to healing centered engagement (HCE)

- Explicitly political rather than clinical
- Culturally grounded and seems as restoration of identity,
- Asset driven and focuses on the well-being we want rather than the symptoms we want to suppress
- Supports adult providers with their own healing

# Reflection

- Which of these principles resonates the most for you and why?
- Which of these principles feel the most challenging and why?

## Principle 1: HCE is explicitly political, rather than clinical.

- Communities, and individuals who experience trauma are agents in restoring their own well-being. This subtle shift suggests that healing from trauma is found in an awareness of and actions that address the conditions that created the trauma in the first place.
- Views trauma and well-being as function of the shaping environments where people live, work and play; not as deficits in individuals.
- When people advocate for policies and opportunities that address causes of trauma, such as lack of access to mental health, these activities contribute to a sense of purpose, power and control over life situations. All of these are ingredients necessary to restore well-being and healing.



## **Principle 2: HCE is culturally grounded and views healing as the restoration of identity.**

- Healing is the result of building a healthy identity and a sense of belonging.
- Uses culture as a way to ground young people in a solid sense of meaning, self-perception, and purpose.
- Highlights the intersectional nature of identity and highlights the ways in which culture offers a shared experience, community and sense of belonging.
- For youth of color, culture serves as an anchor to connect young people to a shared racial and ethnic identity that is both historically grounded and contemporarily relevant.

**Principle 3: HCE is asset driven and focuses well-being we want, rather than symptoms we want to suppress.**

- Offers an important departure from solely viewing young people through the lens of harm and focuses on asset driven strategies that highlight possibilities for well-being.
- An asset driven strategy acknowledges that young people are much more than the worst thing that happened to them, and builds upon their experiences, knowledge, skills and curiosity as positive traits to be enhanced.
- While it is important to acknowledge trauma and its influence on young people's mental health, healing centered strategies move one step beyond by focusing on what we want to achieve, rather than merely treating emotional and behavioral symptoms of trauma

## **Principle 4: HCE supports adult providers with their own healing.**

- Requires that we consider how to support adult providers in sustaining their own healing and well-being.
- Much of our training and practice is directed at young peoples' healing but rarely focuses on the healing that is required of adults to be an effective youth practitioner. Healing is an ongoing process that we all need, not just young people who experience trauma.
- Acknowledges we need to build systems and create environments that support adults' well-being so that they can provide healing centered spaces for young people

# ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

# NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

# HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently

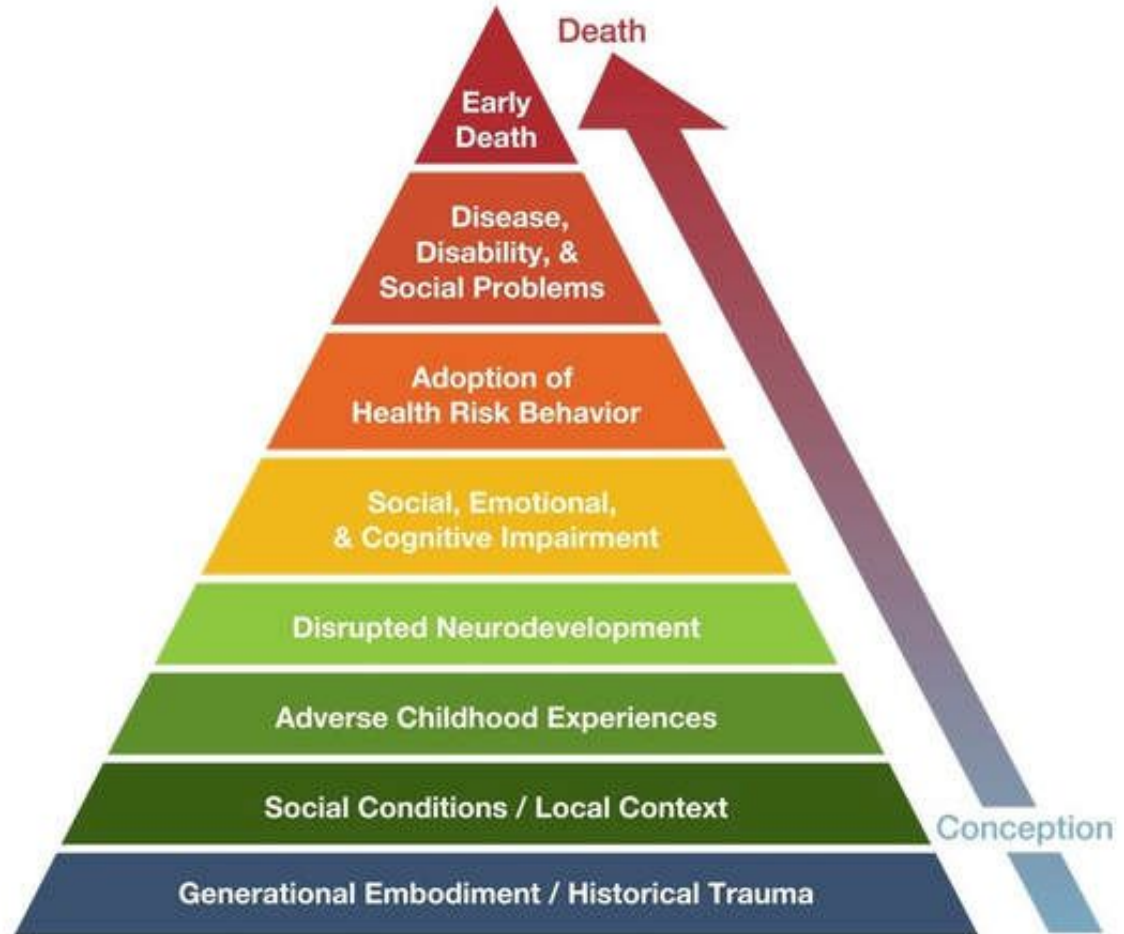


Substance Abuse



Divorce

# History & Socio-political Context Matter



# The Pair of ACEs

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal  
Depression

Physical &  
Emotional Neglect

Emotional &  
Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Substance  
Abuse

Mental Illness

Incarceration

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

## Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Violence

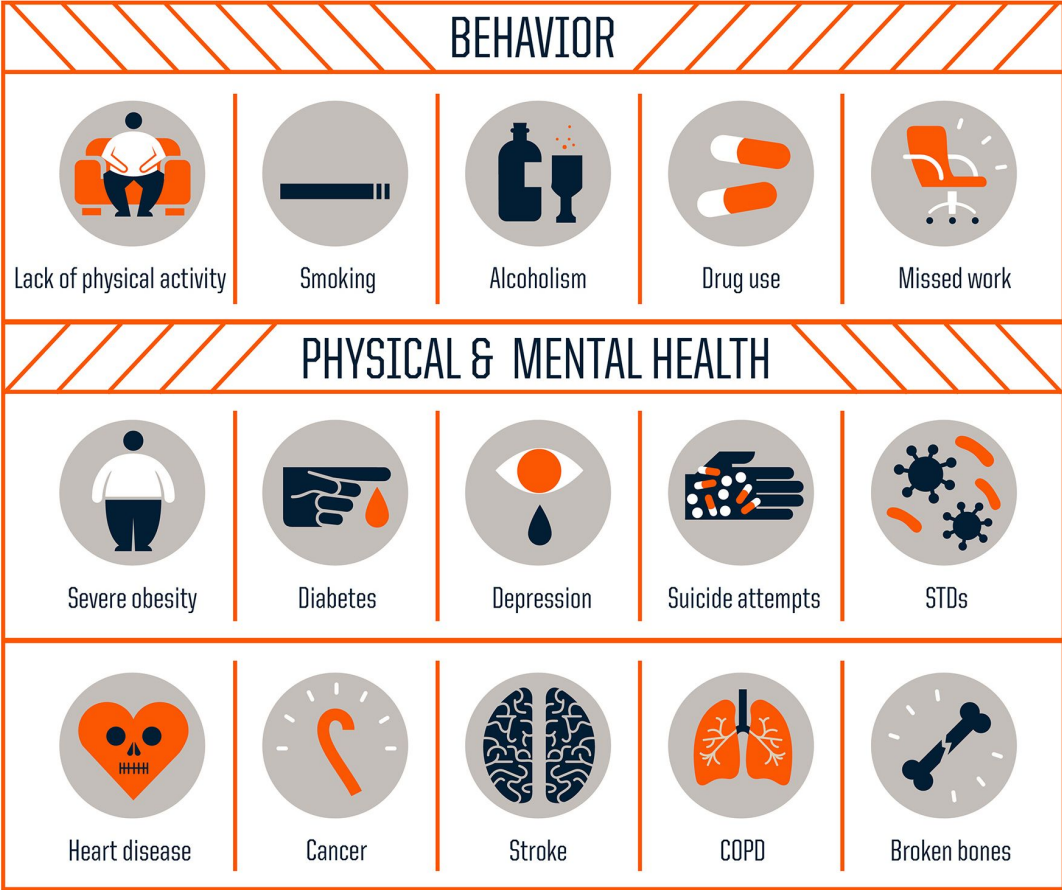
Discrimination

Poor Housing  
Quality &  
Affordability

Community  
Disruption

Lack of Opportunity, Economic  
Mobility & Social Capital

***(When Unaddressed and Unmitigated) Increase Risk For ....***



# What are Protective & Compensatory Experiences (PACEs)?

- positive experiences that can increase resilience and protect against risk for mental and physical illness.
- supportive relationships and resources make up PACEs.
- **Adults who had many PACEs in their childhood have fewer problems related to health and wellbeing even if they had a history of ACEs.**



# The Ten PACEs Include

- parent/caregiver unconditional love
  - spending time with a best friend
  - volunteering or helping others
  - being active in a social group
- having a mentor outside of the family
- living in a clean, safe home with enough food
  - having opportunities to learn
  - having a hobby
  - being active or playing sports
- having routines and fair rules at home

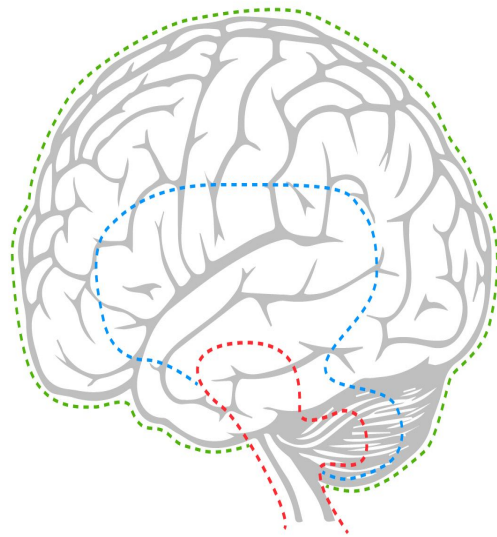
# Reflection

How can we ensure that PACES are integrated into everything young people experience in and outside of school?

“The essential function of challenging behavior is to communicate to adults that a kid doesn’t possess the skills to handle certain demands in certain situations.”

— Ross W. Greene

# Co-Regulation and the Brain



## PRIMATE LEVEL (NEOCORTEX)

Attaching to others = connection.

Thinking, language, empathy,  
planning and inhibition of impulses ●

**“We will figure this out together.” (Reason)**

## MAMMALIAN LEVEL (LIMBIC)

Approaching rewards = satisfaction.

Feelings, motivation, interaction, ●  
bonding, implicit memory.

**“I am right here with you.” (Relate)**

## REPTILIAN LEVEL (BRAIN STEM)

Avoiding harms = safety. ●

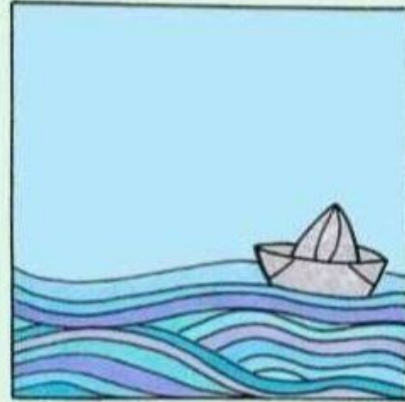
Sensation, arousal-regulation and  
initiation of movement impulses.

**“You are safe.” (Co-regulate)**

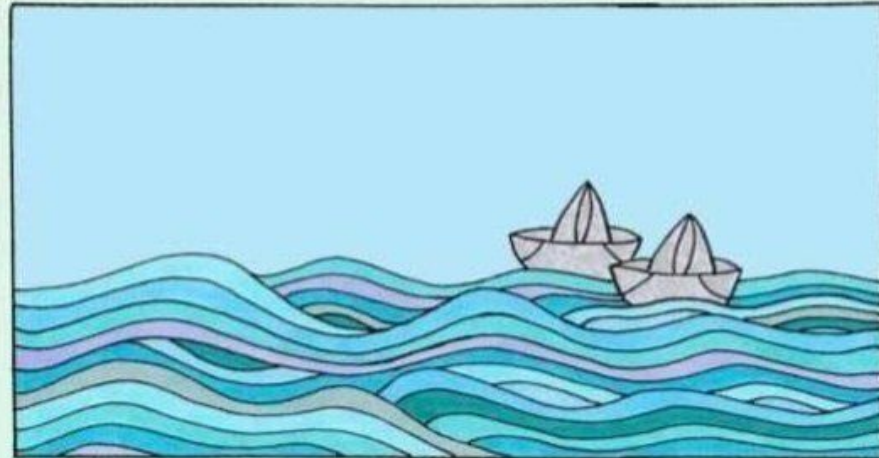
**WHEN THEIR STORM**



**MEETS OUR CALM**



**CO - REGULATION OCCURS**



# A Dozen Ways to Co-Regulate with your Child



Lower your  
Body Position



Lower your  
Voice



Soften your Facial  
Expression



Model Deep  
Breathing



Do Heavy Work  
Together



Walk Outside



Offer Deep  
Pressure



Model a preferred  
sensory activity



Move your Body  
Together



Dim the Lights



Stop Talking



Change your  
Proximity

[@coastalconnectionsot](https://www.instagram.com/coastalconnectionsot)

**15-minute focus**  
Brief Counseling  
Techniques that Work

# REGULATION AND CO-REGULATION

ACCESSIBLE NEUROSCIENCE AND  
CONNECTION STRATEGIES THAT BRING  
CALM INTO THE CLASSROOM

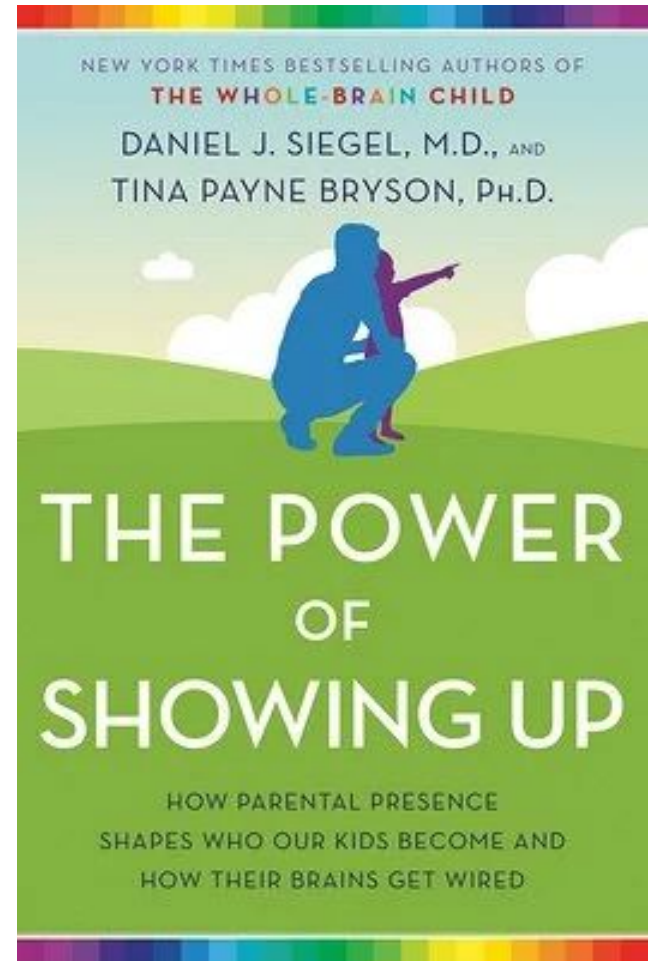
**BONUS!**  
Includes  
Downloadable  
Resources!



GINGER HEALY

# 4 S's of Attachment

- Safe
- Seen
- Soothed
- Secure





# SAFE

- Our kids need to feel and know that they are safe.
- They need to trust that we will do our best to protect them from physical harm and keep them safe emotionally and relationally.
- Co-regulation - allowing them to make use of our regulated nervous system to ground them and ultimately - with lots of repetition - internalize the ability to self-regulate
- Consistent boundaries with empathy.
- Acknowledge & Validate
- And when we inevitably make mistakes, repair, repair, repair

- **Demonstrate genuine interest** in how they are making sense of their world and emerging identities; staying attuned to who show us they are (not who we think they should be or who we imagined they would be)
- Move from reacting to behaviors → bringing **curiosity** to understanding what the behaviors are communicating; **‘chase the why’**
- **Listening and attuning to** what's going on inside of our teens and really focusing our attention on their inner feelings, thoughts, memories—whatever is happening in their minds **beneath their behaviors.**



# SOOTHED

- We want our children to feel soothed during their toughest times.
- Not about avoiding pain or discomfort, about teaching them they can ride the waves
- When children are feeling emotional - either excited or upset - they have a heightened need to be understood; during these times even benign ruptures can be especially painful
- They should know, at their core, that when they are hurting, and even when they're at their worst, we will be there.

# Applying the 4s

## From...

- Responding with **left brain** logic.
- “There is nothing to be afraid of.”
  
- “Calm down.”
- “You need to get it together.”
  
- “Don’t worry, that won’t happen.”
  
  
- Reacting from our own activation, fear, etc.

## To...

- Soothing the **right brain** feelings and sensations
- “I see you are scared. Come, let’s have a look together.”
  
  
  
- “I see you are having a hard time.”
- Do you want to tell me about it? I promise to listen and believe you.
  
  
- “That might happen and if it does, I know you will be able to manage it and I will be right here with you.”
  
  
  
- Making sense of our reactions so that we can notice, pause, and co-regulate with our child
- **“You are safe. I am right here with you. We will figure this out together.”**

# SECURE

- Feeling safe, seen, and soothed leads to the fourth S, security, which is based on predictability.
- Letting kids know that they can count on you, time and again, to show up.
- Their security will come when they believe that you'll do all you can to keep them safe, that you'll work hard to help them feel seen when they come to you, and that when things don't go their way, you'll be there to soothe them.

**The neurobiological effect of the Four S's is an integrated brain:** a nervous system that's resilient and that doesn't stay in prolonged stress.