



CHILD & YOUTH TRAUMA SYMPOSIUM

May 18-19 | Virtual Event

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SUMMARY

Key ideas from Margaret E. Blaustein's presentations

(Founder and Director of the Center for Trauma Training)

Engaging with the possible: Supporting developmental capacity in trauma-impacted youth.

(May 18)

Building safer nests: Relationship and attachment for clients, providers, and systems of care.

(May 19)

2021 CHILD & YOUTH TRAUMA SYMPOSIUM

" WITHOUT IMAGINATION AND DREAMS, WE LOSE MOTIVATION AND WE DON'T SEE OUR POSSIBILITIES "

What are the dreams of children and youth in care? What can they afford to dream about?

In the face of adversity and trauma, children and youth may struggle to dream and envision their futures.

Nurturing the dreams and imaginations of children and youth, and helping them to develop and maintain them should be one of the responsibilities and duties of adults.

As caregivers, we have a duty to nurture the POSSIBLE, to believe in ourselves and to create the most favorable conditions for these children and youth to believe in their potential, to see the endless possibilities, to develop a strong sense of curiosity, to explore their interests, and to seize opportunities.

"LET'S FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE POSSIBILITIES AND POTENTIAL, RATHER THAN THE DIFFICULTIES."



Emphasize what is possible over what is broken. Value their survival strategies, their internal and external resources to build their sense of safety and confidence.

Resist the pace dictated by our mandates and move at the pace of the child or youth.



In addition to helping them feel safe, young people must be encouraged to be curious and reflective in order for them to develop key developmental competencies that will enable them to be engaged in interventions as well as their own projects.

CONSIDERING THE SYSTEM, THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH IS PARAMOUNT.



It is this environment and the restorative relationships they develop that will foster their development and enable them to understand the world of relationships. It is essential to include them in interventions, to allow them to invest in relationships with caregivers with whom they feel considered and loved.



This is how they can regain the confidence to see the present as non-threatening and to have hope for the future, while having the ability to revisit their past to know themselves better.

DO NOT EXPECT CLIENTS TO ASK FOR HELP WHEN THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO TRUST ADULTS BEFORE.

Instead, they have developed skills and strategies to figure things out on their own and not have to turn to an adult. Yet, without a relationship, there can be no care and repair. We need to give young people a voice, to allow them to feel power, to feel control, and to combat powerlessness. They must have a say in their "treatment", and be valued and supported in their choices to develop autonomy and self-determination. Expressing themselves and having the possibility to choose allows them to feel considered, to feel they exist, and to be actors in their own lives. However, they often don't know what they want, as they are not looking forward to their future. They need to be supported and accompanied by caring adults who accompany them in their thinking and decision-making and evaluate the consequences of their choices with them.



By cultivating and multiplying positive experiences, it is possible to build relationships and connections that become comfortable experiences and safe, reciprocal relationships. Safety and protection are at the heart of our relationship work.

To envision, engage and implement the relationship, the opportunities offered, the environment provided and the hope held for them.

Who we are as people, including our personalities, our values and beliefs influences who we are as caregivers, in the relationships that we have with our clients, colleagues and supervisors.

Continuously examining who I am, including where I come from and what influences my perspectives supports the development of self-awareness and reflexivity. In the same way, the organization is shaped by these characteristics in terms of the quality of care and services offered, as it is based on a system of individual caregivers. The members are influenced by the system and the system is influenced by its members.

THE ATTACHMENT, REGULATION AND COMPETENCE (ARC) MODEL HAS 3 TARGETS:



Support and nurture a calming and safe environment so that caregivers and the system are regulated and so that clients can relax and no longer be on guard.



See clients as resilient survivors who had to develop survival strategies as they were not afforded the opportunity yet to develop self-regulation.



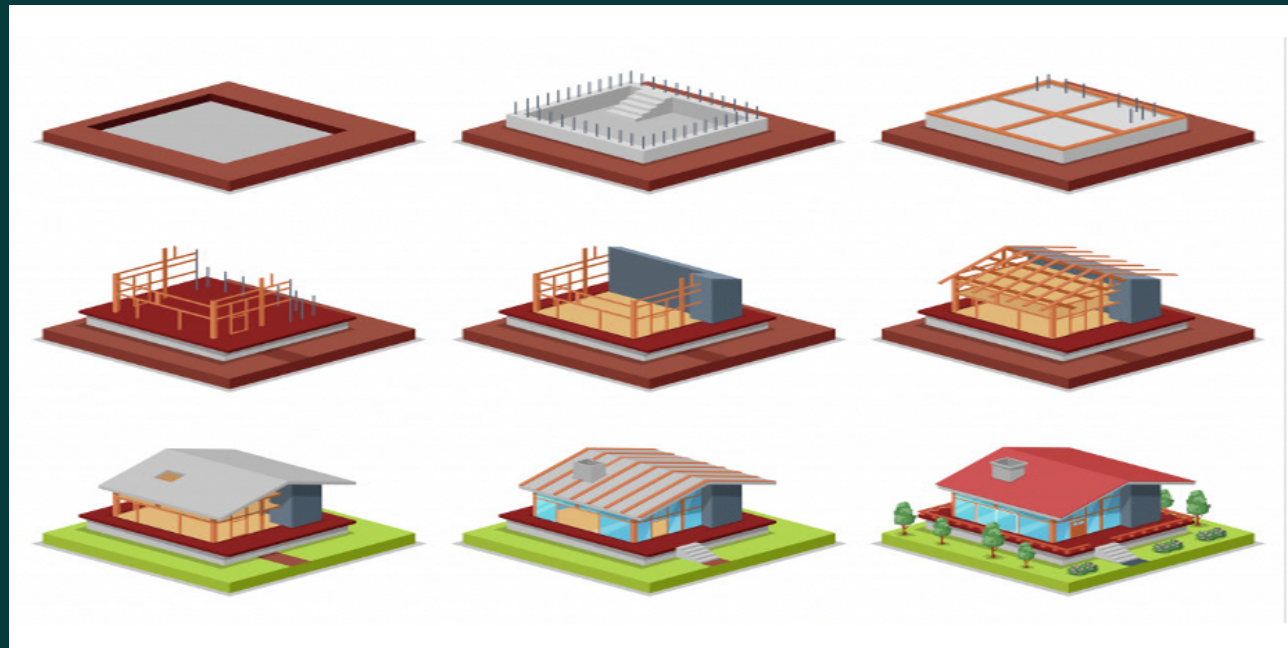
Support their developmental capacities and skills, and nurture hope.

THIS INTERVENTION MODEL IS BASED ON A FOUNDATION, LIKE THE FOUNDATION OF A HOUSE:



Commitment, nurture, rhythms and routines are the foundations that build the house.

These anchors must be strong to build and engage attachment, to support regulation, and to develop competence.



COMMITMENT AND AVAILABILITY



of the caregivers in the relational work with clients is an essential prerequisite, as is the commitment of the clients in the intervention. It is a matter of defining goals, objectives, means and highlighting successes in a transparent and egalitarian manner (not positioning oneself as an expert) for relational work that is restorative and respectful. Having compassion for the young people but also for oneself is necessary since it is very difficult and demanding work that reactivates our defense mechanisms and activates our alarm system.

EDUCATION



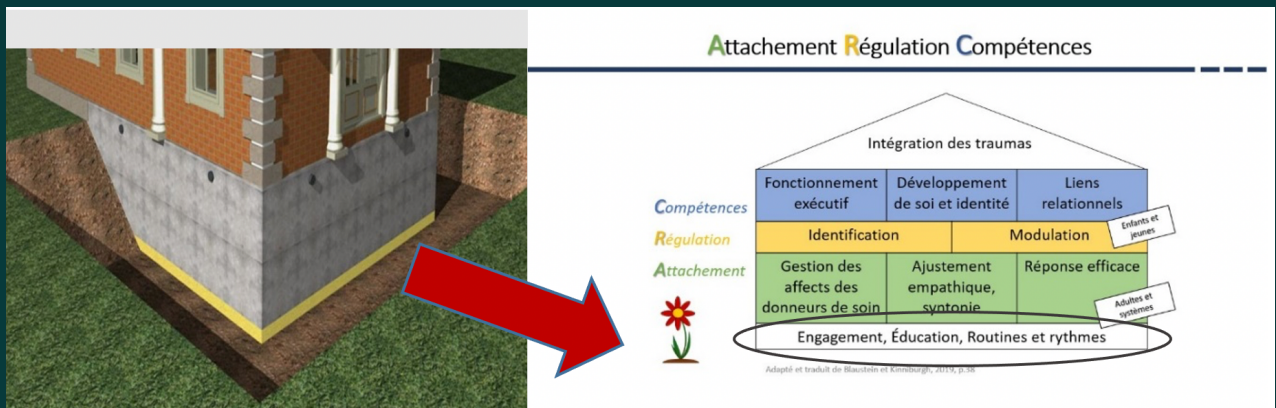
refers to the imperative to develop a holistic and empathic understanding of the clients' difficulties and strengths. It compels us to proceed with humility and compassion as we make links with the child's traumatic background as well as highlight their capacities.

ROUTINES AND RHYTHMS



that are thoughtfully planned make the environment predictable and safe for both clients and caregivers, bring consistency to the intervention, and support healing and safety by reducing unpredictability and stress.

WE MUST CONSIDER THAT EVERY YOUNG PERSON AND EVERY FAMILY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SUCCEED AND BUILD A FOUNDATION THAT WILL SUPPORT THEM.



Trauma-informed approaches also mean also mean taking care of yourself, recognizing your individual and environmental stressors, and dealing with them. Being aware...space to think, and connecting with yourself are essential!

WHAT ARE OUR TOOLS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS AND MAINTAINING OUR COMMITMENT?

What do we already have, what are we missing and how do we get it?

IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE A TOOLBOX THAT CAN ADEQUATELY RESPOND TO DIVERSE NEEDS:



01 - tools and strategies to prepare and anticipate stressful situations (prevention)



02 - tools and strategies to act immediately in case of need (grounding, de-escalation and crisis management)



03 - creating repair (celebrating successes, revisiting situations, creating transitions with personal life...)



04 - basic tools, ongoing regulation strategy (supervision, resourcing activities, support between colleagues, teamwork strengths...)

DO THE SAME THING WITH OUR CLIENTS: BUILD THEIR TOOLBOXES TO HELP THEM IN THEIR DAILY LIFE AND BUILD THEIR FUTURE.



In order for the system to be effective, it must be regulated by allowing for the expression and release of the stresses of children and youth, their caregivers, and the system as a whole. An environment that is sensitive to trauma, and creates space for compassion allows professionals to feel supported and safe, so that they in turn support and create safety for client.

The system must not be stressed or in survival mode, otherwise emotions will drive actions at the expense of the relationship and meeting the needs of each individual.