



Canadian Consortium
on **Child & Youth Trauma**

CHILD & YOUTH TRAUMA SYMPOSIUM

May 18-19 | Virtual Event

20

22

SUMMARY

Key ideas from Sandra L. Bloom's M.D. presentations
18 MAY 2022

(Introduces Creating PRESENCE)



AM

When the History and Science of Suffering Intersect
Burnout and Organizational Stress

PM

Healthy Biocratic Organizations
Using PRESENCE to Shift the Paradigm

2022

CHILD & YOUTH TRAUMA SYMPOSIUM

Summary prepared by Hunter Skahan Research Assistant at the
Centre for Research on Children and Families at McGill University

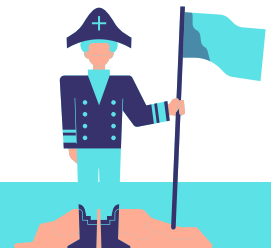
HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF SUFFERING

“WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE SUFFERING OF THE YOUNG. HOW CAN A SPECIES DO THIS TO ITS CHILDREN AND HAVE ANY HOPE AT ALL OF SURVIVING?”

Both throughout history and in the present day, white people have committed and continue to commit mass violence.

What is the reason for this?

Using a lens of cultural safety, white people must begin to examine this cycle of traumatic reenactment. Looking back, it has only been about 1% of our existence that we’ve lived the way we have. European populations once lived in large, interconnected groups, but the Roman Catholic church changed this when, many years ago, they began the process of systematically destroying these kinship networks. Instead of being loyal to their families, people were now primarily accountable to the church. The church and its many institutions (guilds, cities, universities and more) normalized social inequality, accumulation of wealth, and the subordination of women and children.



In addition to this, European people experienced the traumas of famine and disease, and later, came to North America to colonize Indigenous peoples. Europeans had suffered pain, loss and death and methodically inflicted these same horrors, and more, on the Indigenous populations of North America.

This traumatic reenactment is what our society is built on.



Our society is filled with trauma organized individuals who were mistreated as children.

Treating children as if they are inferior ultimately teaches us all how to be an oppressor, and it is a self-perpetuating cycle that we must put an end to.

PART 2

BURNOUT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

“WHAT YOU GET AS A RESULT OF ALL THIS IS A MINDLESS, UNSCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL RE-ENACTMENT, A REPETITION OF THE PAST... IT DOESN'T WORK, AND IT WON'T WORK, BUT WE STILL DO IT.”

“A HALLMARK OF TRAUMA IS FRAGMENTATION, AND WE HAVE PROFOUNDLY FRAGMENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE.”



Many of the children going through adverse childhood experiences are being cared for by adults in helping professions who are also dealing with burnout and have been through their own childhood trauma.

So many organizations themselves have experienced trauma and are now operating in a trauma organized manner.



To properly care for others, we need to start taking care of ourselves and our own organizations.

What can you do about all this?

In your organization, you can start every meeting with a Brain Regulation Skills Activity, such as creating an

Emotional
Volume Plan

What are Emotional Volume Plans?

Regardless of who we are, when we become emotionally upset, our thinking brains shut down and we may do or say things that we later regret.

To start taking responsibility for managing our own emotional volume, we can begin by asking ourselves, **which emotions cause us the most distress? What are our triggers? How do we recognize when our emotions are escalating, and what can we do to feel better?**

To care for others, we must begin by caring for and listening to ourselves.



HEALTHY BIOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS



“NO OTHER MAMMALS DELIBERATELY AND OFTEN SYSTEMATICALLY, HURT AND DO VIOLENCE TO THEIR OFFSPRING. IT’S VERY ODD BEHAVIOR.”

We need our organizations and corporations to be biocratic: we need to view our organizations, communities and society as living beings, because that is what they are. Each department in an organization is like an organ in a human body: they can be adaptable to external circumstances, and will function best when all parts communicate and act interdependently. Workplace democracy can provide social immunity to violence. People are more likely to support what they create. If our workplaces were themselves therapeutic, they could be a site of healing.

What can you do about all this?

Assess your own organizational body.

How safe is it?

What does it look like?

Does it get good food (funding)?

What is its emotional temperature?

Does it exercise (change and grow)?

Is its level of fitness (health, well-being)?

How well is the immune system functioning (boundaries, violence)?

Start by recognizing the hallmarks of trauma, and develop Universal Precautions together.



What are universal precautions?

They are techniques that assume everyone is at risk for spreading an infection and therefore risk should be minimized wherever possible, thus creating a safety culture. Safety can be defined as covering the five domains of physical, psychological, social, moral, and cultural. However, this is just a starting point. **It is key that your organization collaborates on your own definition of safety.**



Universal Precautions may include

Shared Knowledge Base:

Take a look at your organization's institutional knowledge. What does your team already know about trauma and resilience, both organizational and personal? How can you disseminate and share that knowledge within your team?

Shared Language:

Use simple language that everyone can understand. It should be straightforward and help to get everyone on the same page.

Recover Memory:

Under healthy conditions, the body heals after injury. But if the issues were long ago or traumatic, then your organization may have adapted to a debilitating situation. Precious energy may be going into suppressing the pain and not enough towards promoting growth. Assess and change this if necessary.

Redefine Social Justice:

Collective, cultural, and historical trauma have affected many people and organizational structures. Focus on having a healthy and collaborative focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Empowerment Strategies:

Build a workplace democracy. This is an antidote to the abusive use of power! Start by establishing transparency, recognizing individual achievements, forgiving failure, and encouraging input from everyone.

Wellness Plans:

Everyone needs one. Make commitments to your own well-being, in terms of body, mind, emotions, relationships, and spirit.

USING PRESENCE



“THE STUDY OF TRAUMA AND ADVERSITY IS THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NATURE AND CHANGING HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARD COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING.”

We cling to our worldviews and paradigms. This is a problem, because they are made up, they are social constructs, they are self-reinforcing, and the more we cling to them, the more we see outsiders as enemies.

However, studying trauma and having compassion for traumatized individuals can be a paradigm shift if we let it. Since so many people are acting from a traumatized place, we have come to see it as normal, when we should instead be working to change things.

What would happen, if instead of seeing organizations as predictable machines, we saw them as the complex, living systems that they are?

To do this, we need to be fully conscious and engage in deep listening: we need to be open to changing our minds and working together with a trauma-informed approach.

It is essential to collaborate as a team, have fun together, celebrate our collective wins, and laugh together.



What can you do about all this?



CREATING PRESENCE

Bloom’s organizational and clinical approach for creating trauma-responsive and trauma-resilient organizations.

P

Partnership and Power

We must learn to share responsibility and power, and democratic participatory governance is the best method we have. How can we turn the current power-based relationships in our organizations into partnerships?

R

Reverence and Restoration

Exposure to trauma, especially in childhood, can get in the way of one's sense of purpose, meaning and integrity. When are we demonstrating respect, and when are we demonstrating disrespect for our patients?

E

Emotional Wisdom and Empathy

As a species, our emotions developed as survival skills, before we had logical thought and language. We must recognize empathy as a primary and primal source of human strength. How have we become emotionally numb, and how can we work towards rediscovering our own wisdom?

S

Safety and Social Responsibility

When we feel unsafe in a culture, our brain functioning and our ability to solve problems decreases significantly. Our organizations need a safety culture, and this must be defined, agreed upon and maintained by everyone in the organization. How do we talk about this and hold everyone accountable?

E

Embodiment and Enactment

Consider the complex interactions of minds and bodies, and the idea that behaviors we call symptoms are indicators of unresolved suffering. Empathy allows us to offer mutual understanding of traumatic re-enactment behavior. How and when do we get into reenactments with each other, as well as with our patients, that get us stuck in time?

N

Nature and Nurture

Using what we know about attachment and the importance of childhood experience, we can focus on establishing the capacity for healthy attachment for everyone in the organization. How embedded are our organizations in a medical/mechanistic model, and how might this get in the way of understanding one another?

C

Culture and Complexity

We create and participate in culture everywhere we go, but we are often unaware or even in denial of this. Because of this denial, social constructs work at an unconscious level, determining what we do and feel. We must tune into what is happening, and recognize and respond to group dynamics. Pay attention to your organizational culture.

E

Emergence and Evolution

The study of evolution is the science of how living systems change. Emergence refers to the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Setting the goal of emergence helps to drive approaches. What would we like to see emerge as the result of all our efforts? What kind of organizational culture do we want to have? How will we work towards joy and resilience together?