

Hurt People Hurt People Healed People Heal People Trauma and Resilience Tools



Carolyn Yoder and Elaine Zook Barge
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Why trauma-informed Mennonites?

- Our history / histories
- Our service orientation
- Our current reality

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Presentation Outline

- Why a workshop on historical harms?
- Definitions
- Examples of current and historical trauma
- The impact of trauma on the body/brain, beliefs & behaviors
- Some tools for addressing harm and building resilience
- Discussion /Q & A

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Trauma

From the Greek word "traumat," **wound**

(n.) An experience that:

- In some way affects our survival
- Is painful, distressing, shocking
- May result in lasting effects on the mind, body and spirit of an individual **or group**.

Overwhelm

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Traumatic events, one-time or ongoing



Natural Disasters



Accidents

Deliberate Harm



Dignity violations - oppressive structures, PITS

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Historical trauma (often deliberate harm)

Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding
over the lifespan and across generations
emanating from massive group trauma

Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, PhD



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Historical trauma/harms

multi-generational transmission of trauma through:

***Legacy:** beliefs, ideas, myths, prejudices and biases disseminated and then inherited about a group

***Aftermath:** institutions, laws, political and economic structures and the official narrative formed to enforce particular aspects of a legacy

Epigenetics: the study of changes in organisms caused by modification of gene expression rather than alteration of the genetic code itself: the hereditary transmission of environmental information

From *Transforming Historical Harms* by David Anderson Hooker and Amy Potter, Coming to the Table Project, Eastern Mennonite University

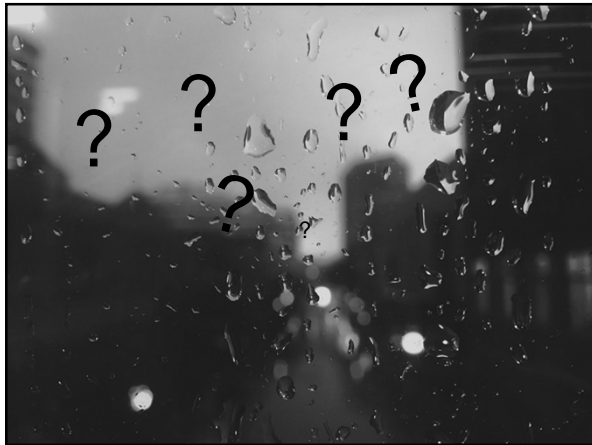
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Examples from your setting of:

- Historical trauma or harms?
- Current trauma?
- Impact?

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Trauma and the Body/Brain



Fight



Flight



Freeze



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Instinctual responses of wild animals after “freezing”

- Shaking
- Deep Breathing
- Cavorting
- Snorting



This discharges the compressed energy, completing a natural physiological process.

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If energy is not released, it stays trapped and wreaks havoc on our bodies in the form of stress or trauma reactions.

(Peter Levine)



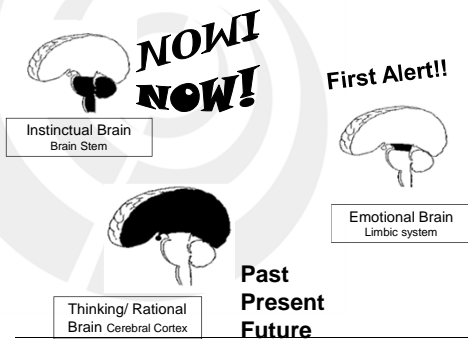
Books by Peter Levine

- *Waking the Tiger*
- *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes*
- *In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness*

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Trauma and the Body/Brain



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The middle prefrontal cortex keeps the 3 parts of the brain integrated and working together.

It enables:

- Register and regulate body sensations
- Attuned communication
- Emotional balance
- Fear extinction
- Response flexibility
- Insight
- Empathy
- Morality

Trauma *disorders* the normal functioning of the middle prefrontal cortex.
Daniel Siegel, PhD, *Handbook of Interpersonal Neurobiology*, 2012.

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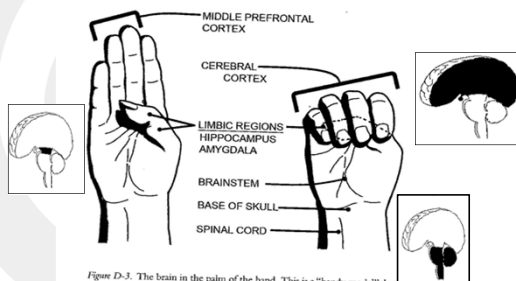


Figure D-3. The brain in the palm of the hand. This is a "handy model" that depicts the major regions of the brain: cerebral cortex in the fingers, limbic area in the thumb, and brainstem in the palm. The spinal cord is represented in the wrist. Please see text for explanation. Copyright © 2012 by Mind Your Brain, Inc. Used with permission by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., from *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* (2012).

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Finger Holds



Capacitar International – Emergency Response Kits
http://www.capacitar.org/emergency_kits.html

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Trauma and Beliefs

Human beings are meaning-making creatures

Individuals and groups assign meaning to what happened. We construct narratives about what happened and tell stories about the event(s) through art, music, drama and folklore.



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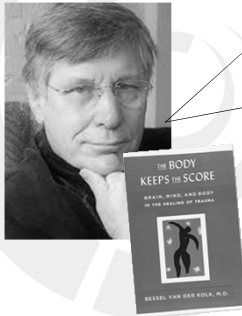
Narratives can move us forward---
or keep us stuck.



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Bessel van der Kolk

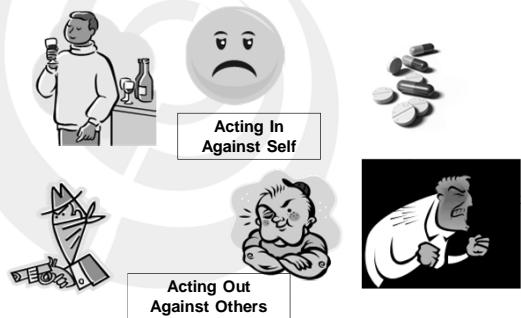


Trauma is not just an event in the past; it is the imprint that is left on the body, brain and spirit **that prevents us from being fully alive in the present.** (emphasis added)

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Trauma and Behavior



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Pain that is not transformed is transferred

Fr. Richard Rohr

Acting In

- Alcohol & drug abuse
- Increased focus on work
- Eating disorders
- Depression (sadness, withdrawal)
- Feelings of numbness, anxiety, self blame, shame
- Physical symptoms (pain, headaches, digestive problems)
- Self-injuring behaviors
- Suicide

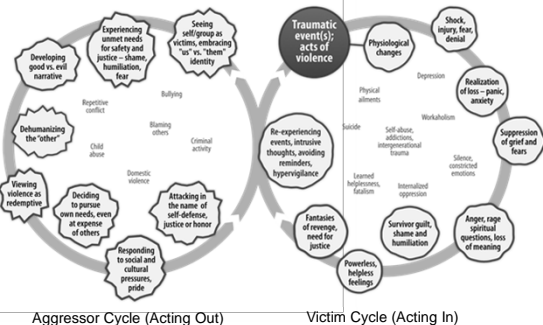
Acting Out

- Visible depression (blaming, aggressiveness, irritability)
- Getting in trouble with the law
- Inability to be flexible or tolerant
- Inability to show empathy to others
- High risk behaviors such as substance abuse or inappropriate sexual activity
- Bullying
- Repetitive conflicts
- Murder

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Cycles of Violence



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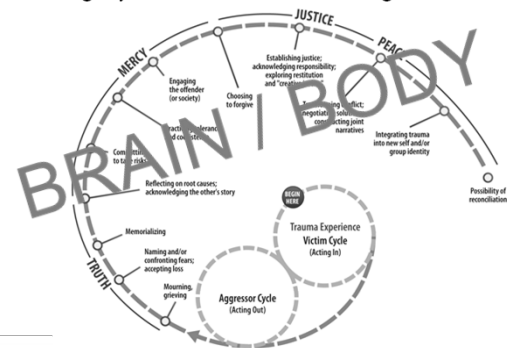
"The role of a peacemaker is to interrupt the transmission of woundedness"

O' Dea, James. *Cultivating Peace*. Shift Books, 2012.

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Breaking Cycles of Violence • Building Resilience



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