

The background of the slide features a dark, semi-transparent overlay. On the right side, there is a close-up portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, looking directly at the camera. On the left side, there is a stack of books, with the top one being a 'PHANTOM' brand book. The overall color palette is dark, with a purple/blue tint.

BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE

NEW FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Early Intervention with Young Parents to Improve the
First 1000 Days of a Child's Life

Bettina McFadyen and Hannah Richards

BYS is a Youth Service that supports young people from the age of 12-25 and their accompanying children who are primarily homeless or classified as 'vulnerable'. We assist young people to find and maintain appropriate housing, address physical and mental issues and establish successful relationships and support networks



Multiple areas of service delivery across the organisation

- Homelessness and Housing- including BYS Hub, sustaining tenancies project, housing support workers, Swish/Mars Program
- **Young Families (Centre for Young Families)**
- Women's only Service (Centre for Young Women)
- Health Team- including Drug and alcohol intervention, doctors, nurse, dual diagnosis program, mental health program including Day to Day Living Program, Pop up dental program
- Under 18's support
- Residential Care services including Phoenix House, Windsor House and Sandgate House

- Centre for Young Families is a specialised service within BYS that works with at risk young families; parents aged 12-25 and their accompanying children.
- The two main areas of intervention are to provide housing support in order to assist families to obtain and sustain their tenancies and to enhance the parent-child relationship to enable child(ren) to remain safe in their home.
- CFYF uses the overarching framework of BYS organisation (strengths based, trauma informed & harm minimisation) alongside our specialised framework which includes attachment based, relationship based, Infant mental health and trauma informed practice that underpins our models of intervention.
- Intervention is provided through one on one support and group work

- What is normal development for young people?
 - Increase in risk taking behaviours and experimentation
 - Natural separation from parents
 - Growing independence
 - Intense Friendships and Romantic relationships
 - Thinking for themselves
 - Self absorption
 - Anger

Strong Bonds 2006



- Young people will look for any way to alleviate their feelings and are more likely to repeat a behaviour that brings them relief- positive or negative
- Difficulty in forming and maintaining healthy relationships
- Aggression manifested as acting out, destructive or criminal behaviour
- Trouble regulating emotions
- Difficulty in setting healthy limits and boundaries, saying 'no' when appropriate
- Forming inappropriate relationships with others to one's own detriment
- Confusion, difficulty making decisions
- Consistent difficulty with some aspect of a task: intention, preparation, action, follow through or integration.
- Difficulty in establishing an effective support systems ie isolation

- What we observe
 - Truncated launching into parenthood
 - Difficulties in Parenting including a limited template and understanding of child development
 - Struggles to build a healthy attachment relationship with their child
 - Living in chaos and limited structure
 - Limited support networks
 - Struggles in accepting support
 - Difficult to engage

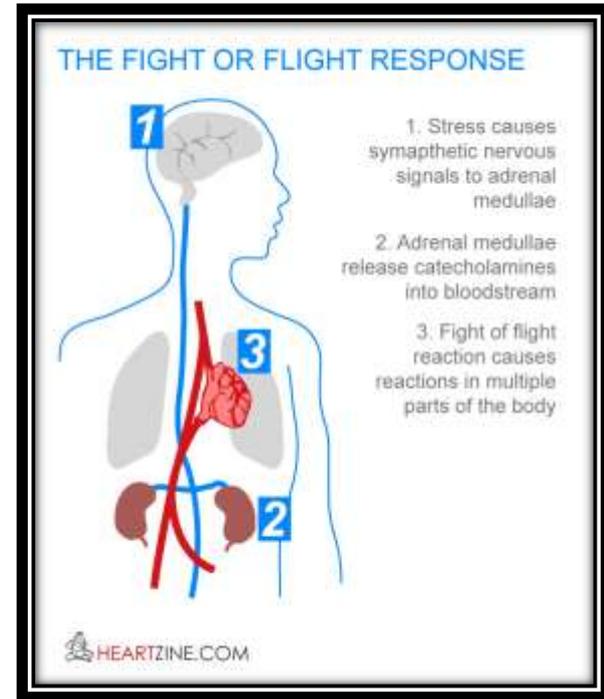


Trauma: Chronic disruption of connectedness

- Distorts social awareness
- Displaces social engagement behaviours with defensive reactions
 - fight/flight
 - immobilization (dissociation)
- Interferes with healthful reciprocal “co-regulation” of state

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Impact of Trauma

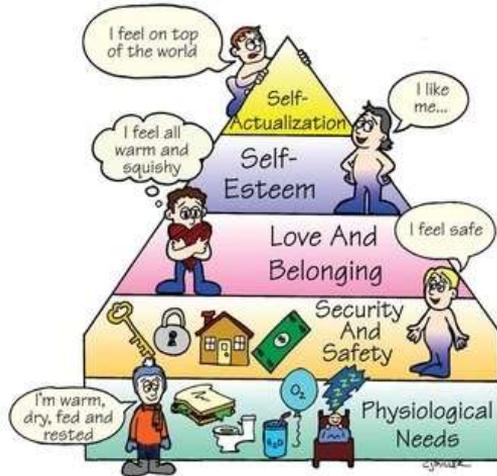


- Trauma
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Homelessness
- Domestic Violence and volatile relationships
- Intergenerational dysfunction of family structure

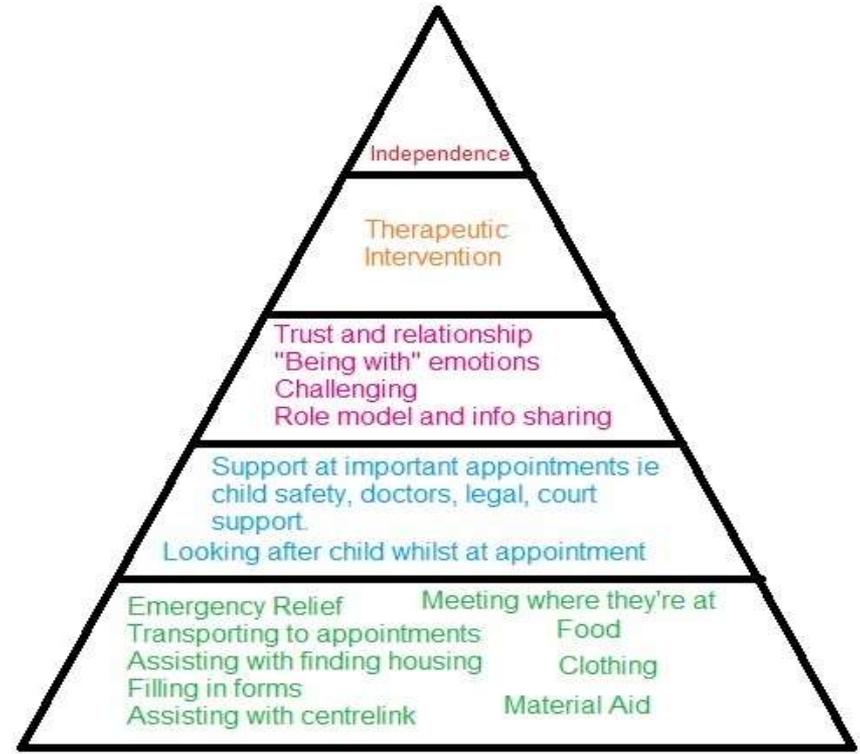
- Don't answer phone calls or keep appointments
- Difficulty trusting workers
- Constant chaos and need for crisis driven intervention
- Lack of family support and unhealthy connections
- Mistrust of systems

By not addressing these needs there is a high risk of statutory intervention

MASLOW'S HIEARCHY OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS



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Parents:

- Providing Practical support to address their immediate needs such as housing, financial support, mental health support, substance abuse
- Building a stronger parental capacity before the child is born

Child:

- Child will be born into a stable home
- Child's basic needs will be met

But what about the parent/child relationship?

We know that trauma can threaten the emotional and psychological security of a child. When a young parent is unable to meet the attachment and developmental needs of their child, alongside early deprivation of appropriate enrichment and stimulation, this can lead to delays in development.



- It's all about the relationship!
- The first three tiers we consider early intervention. Not only are they practical but (for many) for the first time in their life they are receiving a positive relationship
- Once the first three tiers are formed it then enables opportunity for ongoing learning and therapeutic intervention around parenting
- In each tier we constantly work from a trauma informed, non judgmental and attachment framework



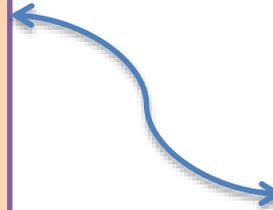
- By building the capacity of the young parents in the first 1000 days we are preventing the cycle of intergenerational trauma
- When a vulnerable young parent experiences a positive relationship (one that they haven't experienced before) it will increase their ability to have a positive relationship with their child
- This positive relationship will have significant impact on the infant's neural pathways, secure attachment, resilience and provide confidence to explore the world- Allan Schore 2015



[Positive relationship] “It really is tuning in to the child’s emotion and inner state—being open and receptive to the child’s emotional communications, and then helping them—through your own empathic responses--to regulate their emotional world.”

Allan Schore 2015

This in turn will have a major impact on the child’s infant mental health and wellbeing



“Being With”



Being With and supporting the young parent where they are, at that particular moment in time

Circle of Security (Bert Powell, Glen Cooper, Kent Hoffman & Bob Marvin 2014) Concept where we are the hands in the relationship and often have to be Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind.

- Therapeutic Intervention:
 - Attachment based programs such as Circle of Security, You make the Difference, Bringing up Great Kids, 123 Magic
 - One to one counselling support and psychoeducation
 - Therapeutic Group Work



Therapeutic Intervention and Independence



We may not necessarily see the final tier in our time of engagement, but occasionally we hear later down the track of their success story.

- Some families may only want the practical support in the first two tiers and that's ok
- Some families alternate between the different tiers so support is tailored for each family
- Our work is often planting the seed, role modelling and giving them an experience of a positive and meaningful relationship through each tier.
- Outcomes can be both practical and therapeutic for both the parent and the child



We as workers need to be resilient and flexible, taking one step at a time when working with young, vulnerable parents and their children.





Thankyou

Any Questions?