



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

Trauma and Stress Response

1

Stop and breathe

Stop what you are doing, breathe deeply with intention and purpose.



2

Neutralise the situation

Humour is also a great tool to help neutralise a situation with hijack potential.



3

Remember the 6-second rule

It takes the chemicals that are released during an amygdala hijacking about 6 seconds to dissipate.



4

Count your blessings

It is hard to be in two emotional states at the same time, and gratitude counters an amygdala hijack.



5

Reflect



Recognising our triggers allow us to avoid them in the future.



6

Mindfulness training

Practices such as meditation also reduce the likelihood of an amygdala hijack.



Trauma is any stressful event that is prolonged, overwhelming or unpredictable. When you do not have an opportunity to process trauma, to talk about it, cry about it, yell about it, talk about it more and finally make sense of it, what might have been a short-term stressful event becomes a long-term, potentially life and brain altering traumatic event.

When having a stress reaction, thinking becomes confused and distorted, and short-term memory is suppressed. Stress does three things: it causes us to react from the past, takes us out of the present and causes us to obsess about the future. You

are not here in this moment, you are in a place that has already occurred (angry, for instance, about the slow drivers that made you late) or in a place that has not even happened (worried that you'll miss something because you are going to be late). You are essentially living in a stress-driven state and it's powerful because it may be connected to an unconscious memory in your brain. This is a trauma memory and it is, in its essence, the root of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Adoption at any age is a stressful and most likely traumatic event and whether remembered or not, can impact behavior at any age. Just the separation from the biological parents leaves an imprint upon a newborn's cellular experience and this is to say nothing of experiences such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse, abandonment, alcohol and drug exposure that children may also have experienced.

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**Orchards
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*For more information
on the Post Adoption
Resource Center
please contact us at
313-530-9746*

*Or visit our website at
PARC-orchards.org*



Trauma and Stress Response (continued)

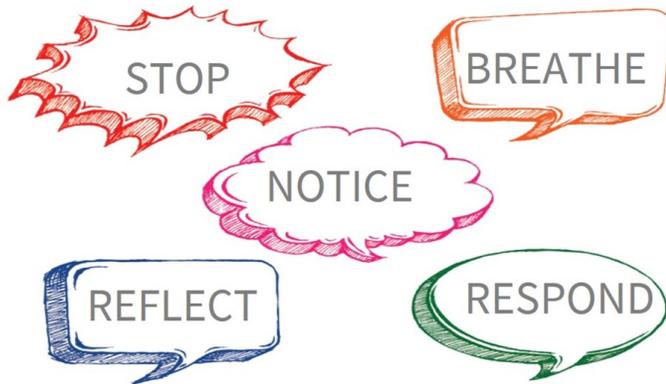
These traumatic events may have happened in the past, but they're still there in the brainstem, our brain's hard drive; they're like files that never get fully deleted. These files, these traumas, are stored away, just waiting to be accidentally opened by various triggers, revealing a past experience of fear and pain.

When triggered, the brain releases a flood of stress hormones and prepares the body for fight or flight. In a brain that has experienced trauma, there is an immediate and overwhelming emotional reaction disproportionate to the stimulus because it triggers a deeper emotional threat. The release of oxytocin (happy hormones) to calm the brain is a learned response of the brain, therefore, a child birthed in conditions of stress and cortisol (i.e. trauma), has a poorly developed oxytocin response, making it difficult to soothe the triggered brain.

During times of stress we revert to our developmental zones of comfort. In other words, when we stress, we regress and then act out according to our emotional age (the age at which our emotional trauma occurred). Every negative experience and sensation connected to the emotional age becomes activated and changes the lens through which we see.

Unfortunately, we spend 90% of our time focused on children's behavior rather than working to understand children's reactions and stress levels. Additionally, when we are focused on their behaviors, we are not mindful of our own stress and trauma-driven reactions. If/when parents' or professionals primary focus is on changing, controlling or suppressing unwanted behaviors, they are operating from a place of stress and fear that generally is not going to be useful in helping children accomplish positive changes.

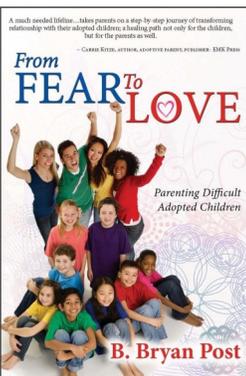
Every behavior challenge you encounter is a gift to see differently. Take a fresh perspective. Seek to understand. The greatest opportunity for healing occurs during the behavioral episode because that is when those old files get opened. It is in these moments that you have the greatest opportunity to



respond with oxytocin rather than more cortisol thus planting a seed in your child's brain that slowly begins the work of reorganizing the trauma that occurred at an earlier stage of development. Being able to soothe and support your child requires one and only one very important thing...you must stay in the present moment. Now. Right now. Settle your own fear, turn on oxytocin and help your child calm their fear and learn how to turn on oxytocin for themselves. This is how you go from fear to love. Let love do the healing.

**Information expanded from: Bryan Post - Understanding Trauma & Behavior in Adopted Children*

Suggested Read



From Fear To Love Bryan Post

This book provides new and highly effective techniques for parents dealing with behavioral challenges with their children.

Bryan Post speaks to parents about the challenges they face when dealing with behaviors that are often present for adopted children. He helps parents understand the impact of early life trauma and the impact of interruptions in the attachment process. In his compassion for parents and children he offers hope and solutions for the challenges families face. Bryan's straightforward, clear-cut approach has created peace and healing for hundreds of families; families who once operated in fear, are now experiencing love.

Spring Activities



Kindness Rainbow

- Depending on your child's age and ability you can cut out different colored rainbows or draw rainbows on construction paper and have your child cut them out.
- Have your child glue their rainbows on to each other making a sizeable layered rainbow and glue the clouds onto the bottom of each side.
- Talk about kindness have the children tell you what they can do to be kind or what kindness is and write the words on the raindrops.
- Glue or tape the string to the clouds and the raindrops on to the other end of the string and proudly display your kindness rainbow!

Cereal Bird Feeder

- Form a pipe cleaner into a heart shape. The 2 ends will meet at the bottom of the heart, but don't twist them closed yet.
- Put the cereal pieces onto the heart pipe cleaners until they are tightly pressed together, and there is about a half inch of pipe cleaner showing at the two open ends.
- Twist the two ends of the pipe cleaner together and add a string to hang outside.



PARC in the Community

PARC sends a huge *THANK YOU* to the **Jockey Being Family** program that continues to support our family activities.



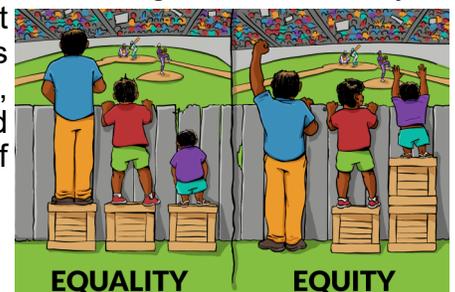
JOCKEY
BEING FAMILY.

Did you know that not only does the Jockey Being Family program support our PARC program it also provides training opportunities for adoptive and foster families. Check out their website at: creatingafamily.org to register for many free trainings and sign up to receive their newsletter.



PARC continues to hold several monthly activities including two different adoptive-parent-led support groups, "Art You Powerful" and trauma informed yoga for the kids and teens.

In January and February, Dan Dubovsky joined us for a two-weekend parent conference to discuss "interventions and understanding, when all that you have been taught isn't working". Dan left us so much information, many new ideas, and this powerful image of equality vs equity.



Upcoming Meetings, Trainings & Events

Art You Powerful

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month
January 17th - June 6th

Time: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Children under 12: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Children 12+: 6:45 - 7:45 p.m.

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 600, Southfield, MI 48075

Facilitator: Antonio Hervey



ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

OR via Zoom – **Meeting ID:** 847 9379 5161 **Passcode:** Nw5gP6

Facilitators: Meet our new facilitators, Betsy and Dana, starting in October!



KIDS TRAUMA INFORMED YOGA

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month **Time:** 5:30-6:00pm (Dinner).

Children under 10: 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Children 11+: 6:45 - 7:15 p.m.

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 600, Southfield, MI 48075

Facilitator: Carly Cenit



MACOMB COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: Last Wednesday of the month

Time: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: New Life Presbyterian Church

11300 19 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48314

Facilitator: Mikki Boury

Dinner and childcare are provided



TWO-DAY TRAINING WITH REBECCA ROZEMA

When: Saturday, April 15, 2023 & Saturday, May 20, 2023

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

OR via Zoom: **Meeting ID:** 825 2604 6703 **Passcode:** 7uWqi3

Day 1: When the Going Gets Hard: Building Attachment and Bonding while Preventing Disruption and Dissolution

Day 2: TBRI Overview and Introduction



★ We are continuously working on adding trainings and activities, (and always have a few things in the works!) Please keep an eye out for updates via email and social media! Connect with PARC at:

Website: parc-orchards.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter

Email: parcocs@orchards.org