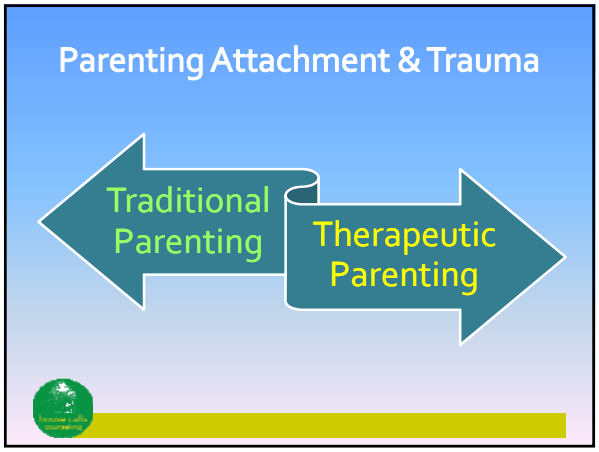
SPACE

The Universe of Therapeutic Parenting



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Therapeutic Parenting

- What is it?
- Why should I do it?
- How do I do it?

What is therapeutic parenting

Goals of Therapeutic Parenting

- Establish a sense of safety
- Regulate the expression of emotion
- Reestablish attachment
- Enhance the brain's executive functions
- Reframe and integrate traumatic experiences

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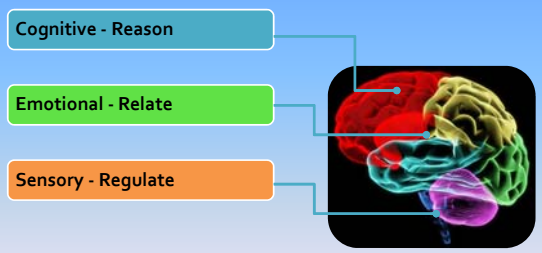
Why Be a Therapeutic Parent

The Brain

- How Memories Form:

The Brain



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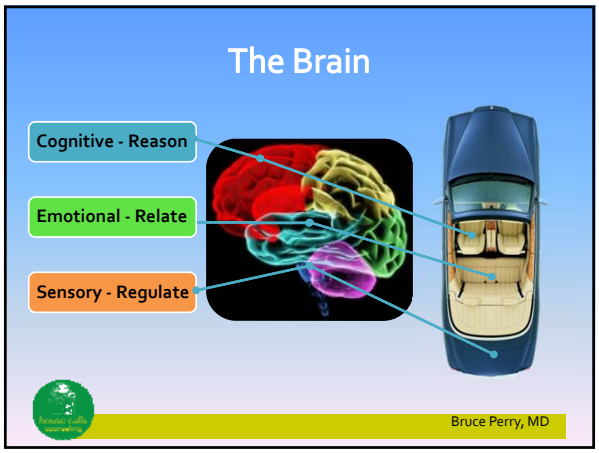

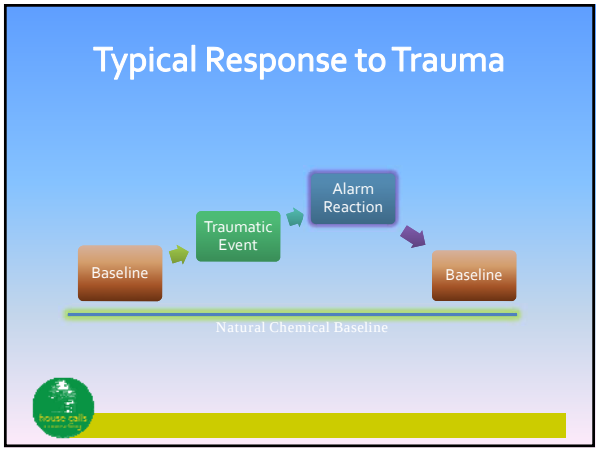

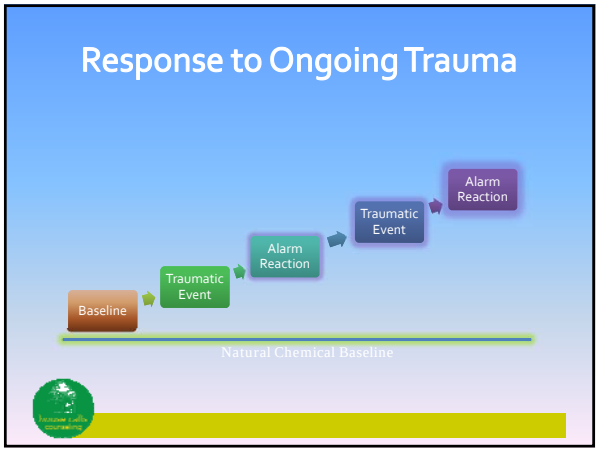

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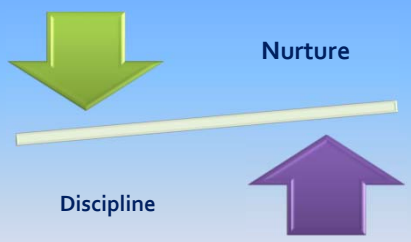
Parents as the "Magic Pill"

- We believe:
  - You've been doing the best you can
  - You've given it everything you've got
  - Only YOU can be the Magic Pill that brings healing to your kid

Becoming the "Magic Pill"

- Explore and make sense of your own attachment history
  - "Physician heal thy self."
  - Kids are experts at finding your Achilles Heal(s) and using them to resist connecting

Healing with Balance



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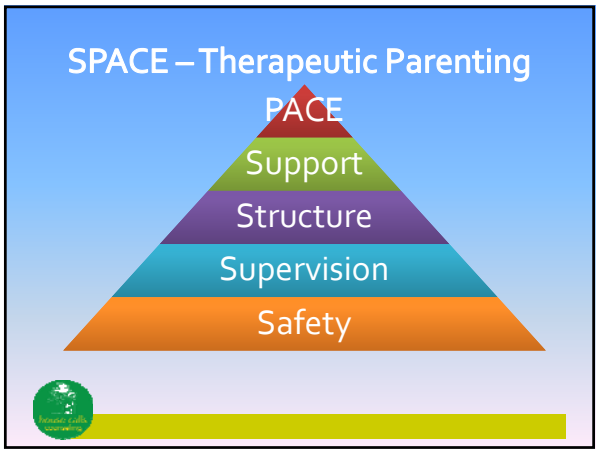

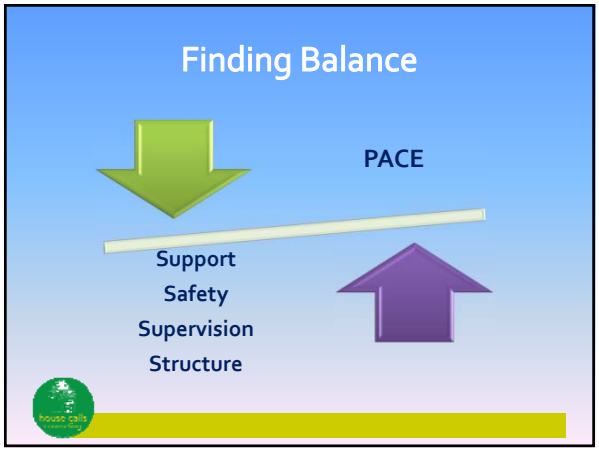

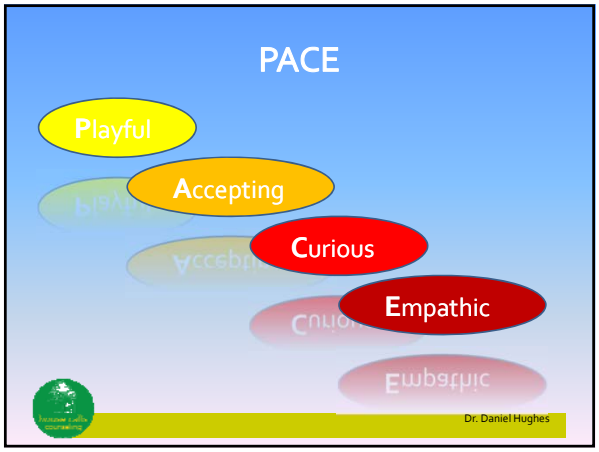

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The Universe of Therapeutic Parenting

Playful

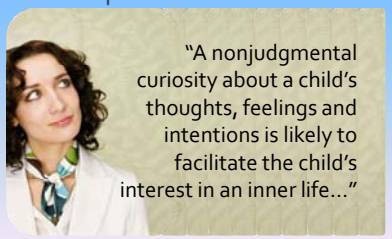
- Everyone needs to have fun
- Helpful as transition out of intense time
- Useful to decrease power struggles
- Not: sarcastic or at their expense

Accepting

- Not the behaviors, but the emotional content underneath the behaviors
- Start with accepting, then move to natural and logical repair (consequences)
  - Developmental Age
  - Time/Duration
- Accepting their actual abilities, not wished-for

Curious

- A deep and passionate effort to understand
- Emphasizes experience over events



"A nonjudgmental curiosity about a child's thoughts, feelings and intentions is likely to facilitate the child's interest in an inner life…"

– adapted from Dr. Daniel Hughes

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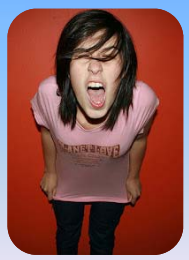
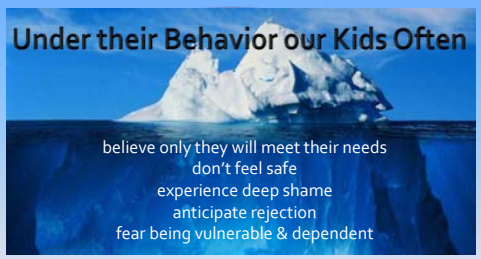
Curious

- When our kids are at their worst they are doing the best they can to express themselves
- Since all behavior has meaning, our work is to help our kids understand and express the full meaning of their behavior

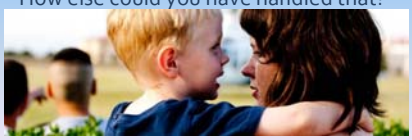


Curious



Curious

- Good Questions
  - What was it like for you when…?
  - What does it mean that…?
  - How did you handle that?
  - How else could you have handled that?



Adapted from Daniel Hughes, *Attachment-focused Family Therapy*

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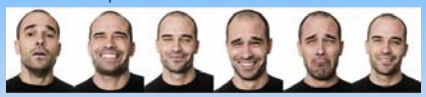
Empathic

- Empathy is
  - Helping the other person to feel felt.
  - Seeing > Guessing > Reflecting
- A basic reflection: "It seems to me you're feeling _____ because _____."

Hard to do when you have intense, negative feelings about your kid… you deserve to feel felt, too!

Empathic

- 70% or more of communication is non-verbal (face, tone & body posture)
  - Facial expressions & tone of voice



  - Matching the energy of their affect (not emotions)
  - Imitation is primary mode of toddler learning

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Safety

- Safety is the foundation for healing Trauma
- Perceived Safety – perceived threats
- Attachment Security
  - a physical and psychological safety
  - created through closeness with a parent who
    - is available, sensitive, and responsive to the child's self-expressions, and
    - repairs any relationship breaks that might threaten the felt sense of safety."

— Adapted from Dan Hughes

Supervision

- Physical Proximity
  - Protective boundaries
  - Opportunities to widen
  - Resisting impulse to tighten
  - Technology
- Knowing your kid

Structure

"Structure is not about control, but rather about conveying a comforting sense that someone bigger and more capable can make the world safe and predictable."

– Booth & Jernberg, Theraplay®

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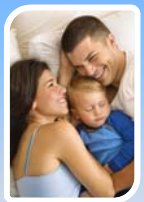
Structure

- Structure is a demonstration of love!!!
- Discipline
  - Oriented to the future
  - Teaching desired behavior
  - Predictability, Routines & Rituals
  - Flexibility and Spontaneity
- Repair
  - Oriented to the past
  - Not the same as punishment
    - Parents to anger and judgement
  - "Consequence" for undesired behavior
- Time-in or Time-out?
- "Free time" can mean stress time!!



Support

- You
  - With list-servs, groups, conferences
  - EMDR?
- Your marriage
  - Can't put it on hold, must put energy in
  - Meeting of the minds
- Your child
  - At school, after-school programs, camp, etc.s!

Therapeutic Parenting

- Kids Aren't Bad, They're Hurt
- Kids Connect by Hurting
- How Old Is Your Kid?
- Manage Shame
- Separate Events from Experience
- Turn Negatives into Positives
- Try Reverse Psychology

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Therapeutic Parenting

- All behavior has meaning
- This is a test, this is only a test
- Look who's watching
- Basic skills of humanity
  - Connecting Experiences to Words Emotions and Thoughts
  - Expressing Emotions and Thoughts
  - Reading Emotions & Thoughts of Others
  - Touch

Why is it so hard to do?

- It takes time
- It takes practice
- And you have to mess up - A LOT
- We get stuck in our own experiences

Learn More:

HouseCallsCounseling.com

christineparentcoaching.com

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