

# Complex Developmental Trauma Summary & Resources

Jayne Hodgkins, RN  
Wholistic Healing Specialist  
Original Design Connections  
JayneHodgkins@gmail.com  
303-883-6109

## 10 Risk Factors for Trauma

1. Prenatal Exposure (ie. To Cortisol stress hormones or drugs/alcohol)
2. Birth Time (length of birth and/or trauma)
3. Medical Trauma such as early hospitalization
4. Abuse
5. Neglect (as harmful to brain development as abuse)
6. Disasters (natural/man made)
7. Incarceration of Family Member
8. Mental Illness of Family Member
9. Substance abuse of Family Member
10. Highly Sensitive Nervous System

## Results:

As a result of any of these risk factors children develop Complex Developmental Trauma that result in developmental exhibition of  $\frac{1}{2}$  their chronological age. Here are just a few of the results:

1. Physical Growth stunted
2. Language Development stunted
3. Sensory Integration Issues
4. Trauma response becomes hardwired and children live in fight/flight/freeze preventing them from accessing rational part of the brain such as learning

5. Cognitive development such as short term recall and self-regulation. Research shows that the hippocampus (responsible for memory) shrinks
6. Chronic cortisol levels that are elevated result in imbalances in neurotransmitters which can present like depression/anxiety/aggression/impulsivity etc.
7. Inhibits left/right brain integration which directly effects learning and emotional control
8. May present like ADHD or aggression but it is their maladaptive coping strategies.

### Goal of Secure attachment to be able to:

- 1) Give love
- 2) Receive love;
- 3) Be autonomous
- 4) Negotiate own needs

### EMPOWER:

1. Work on “Felt Safety” with student. Even if they are now in a loving safe home, they may not “feel safe” due to early trauma and its impact on their brain and cognitive functioning.
2. Offer predictable routines and ease transitions
3. Safe touch is important to decrease cortisol and increase other healthy hormones and neurotransmitters (NTs). Ie. Hugs with permission, hand on shoulder etc.
4. Appropriate hydration to decrease excito NTs. Protein and complex carb snack every 2 hours. Protein is needed for NTs and children from hard places go through them quickly.
5. Physical Activity regularly along with sensory input. Ie. Make the child into a “pillow sandwich” and let them tell you what and how to put the items on their back. Offer them some control. Other

sensory input ideas: tunnels, swings, exercise balls, fidgets, chewelry, breathe, push wall, head phones, weighted blankets, rhythmic sound machine.

6. Don't over verbalize or "demand" respect when your child's engine is running high.
7. Supplements for brain function: D3, Omega 3, Probiotics, look at diet needs such as Gluten or Dairy or Dye-free which may impact behaviors such as focus and irritability.
8. Consider Neurotransmitter Urine testing and cortisol salivary testing with targeted Amino Acid therapy.
9. Consider using counselors that are trauma informed. See resources or me for referral.
10. Be an advocate for your student at school and a partner with the school system. Let them know 3 strategies you are working on so the school system is not overwhelmed.

### CONNECT:

1. Be in tune to your student's stress levels using eye contact and close proximity.
2. Ask yourself "what is the child's behavior telling me about what they need?"
3. Offer playful engagement to offset their fear reaction. Watch that you are offering nurturing, not just physical interactions that are bound to connect the child.
4. Be aware of your own past and hurts. Recognize when student triggers your own fear response. Response shows that parents and people working with this population frequently come from their own pain. Taking care of yourself will ensure the student's needs are met.
5. Playing with your child 15 minutes per day (where they direct play) has shown to disarm fear and produce attachment behaviors as well as change brain chemistry.
6. Give them "yes" as much as possible. Ie. "Yes you may have that snack with dinner, go place it by your plate to eat at dinner".
7. Connect and redirect

## CORRECT: Proactive and Redirective Strategies

1. Teach emotional regulation and life skills when student is calm using fun and play
2. Offer choices such as “would you like to go to the sensory room before your homework or after your homework?” (not, would you like to go to the principal or do your homework?)
3. Use IDEAL strategies from TBRI (based on research):
  1. Immediate: Respond to the behavior quickly for maximum effect
  2. Directly: Respond directly by getting close/on their level and have eye contact
  3. Efficient: Use appropriate levels of response to their behavior. The goal is to stay at lowest level possible :
    1. Level One: Playful Engagement. For mild behavior, playful responses can change the moment.
    2. Level Two: Structured Engagement. For moderate behavior such as disrespect, offer choices such as “you have two choices, you may ask with respect or you may do the homework problem yourself”.
    3. Level Three: Calming Engagement
    4. For Verbal Aggression: Offer Time Ins vs. Time Outs to engage and offer connection. Have student sit until “ready” to talk or go to a preset place that meets their sensory needs. Stay close by either physically or symbolically (I’ll be downstairs ready to talk when you are ready). Offer Redo’s playfully. Offer compromises where they get to respectfully ask for a compromise.
    5. Level Four: Protective Engagement
      1. For Physical Aggression: Contain the child according to the law and safety. There is formal training offered.

## Resources:

1. Trust-Based Relationship Intervention (TBRI) TCU . Karyn Purvis and David R. Cross. Website: <http://www.child.tcu.edu/>
2. Attend ECT (Empowered to Connect) Parenting Conference locally or have student attend a Hope Connection Camp (all ages offered).
3. DVDs from TCU Institute of Child Development:
4. Attachment Why it Matters
5. Children From Hard places and the Brain
6. A., Van Der Kolk Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York: Viking, 2014. Print.
7. Kranowitz, Carol Stock. *The Out-of-sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder*. New York: Skylight Book/ A Perigee Book, 2005. Print.
8. Purvis, Karyn Brand, David R. Cross and Wendy Lyons Sunshine. *The Connected Child. For Parents who Have Welcomed Children...* New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2007. ISBN: 13:978-0-07-147500-6.
9. Siegel, Daniel J. *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. t.
10. Siegel, Daniel J. *No-drama Discipline. the Whole-brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. New York: Bantam, 2014.
11. Siegel, Daniel J., and Mary Hartzell. *Parenting from the inside Out: How a Deeper Self-understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive*. New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2003.
12. [EmergeFamilyConnections.com](http://emergefamilyconnections.com) Amanda Purvis and Jill Crewes offer counseling and trauma informed training for families, schools, churches etc.

For more resources or information contact Jaynee Hodgkins at  
[JMHodgkins@msn.com](mailto:JMHodgkins@msn.com)  
303-883-6109. Website: [BrainTrainingbyJaynee.com](http://BrainTrainingbyJaynee.com)

\*Information from TBRI at TCU by Karyn B. Purvis and David R  
Cross. See Bibliography  
Eff. 3/19