

The Science of Attachment:

**Using Practical Interpersonal Neurobiology
and Evidence-Based Treatment to
Reshape the Nervous System and Repair the
Hearts of Children (And Adults!!)
with Attachment Difficulties
with**

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(AABA)***

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8am-5:30pm

PRESENTATION TITLE: The Science of Attachment: Using Practical Interpersonal Neurobiology and Evidence-Based Treatment to Reshape the Nervous System and Repair the Heart of Children (And Adults!!) with Attachment Difficulties

This training relates to the field of substance abuse in that attachment problems, oppositional defiant disorder, and complex developmental trauma have been associated with and can be the result of unavailable parenting due to alcohol or drug use during gestation and/or the first three years of a child's life.

MAIN POINTS:

Attachment difficulties require powerful tools for intervening in the therapy office and in the home. Neither can be neglected, nor can either one function in a vacuum without the other. Attachment and bonding are critical junctures in relationship building, and without these, a child is at risk for mental health problems, social, educational and relationship difficulties throughout his or her life. Because the earliest attachment experiences set the brain structure that sets the tone for all future relationships, this relational material is essential to process and resolve. These early experiences also set the foundation for affect regulation or dysregulation. Daniel Seigel states “We carry the synaptic shadows of these early experiences forward”. Behavioral, cognitive, affective, sensory based and play/art based interventions through the lens of a primary relationship can impact the child's ability to regulate the self.

Effective parenting principals are the absolute fundamental structure of treating the child with an attachment disorder. Both parents and professionals must familiarize themselves with the specialized techniques and skills that are necessary to parenting this population. This workshop will provide participants with specific hands-on principles and techniques that are necessary to help a child with trauma-attachment disorders develop a healthier and more secure attachment to parents/caregivers.

Attachment disorders are different from other types of mental health issues. They also require specialized treatment that is quite different from contemporary talk-therapy. It is important to understand the differences, and why these differences are imperative to the client who is suffering from trauma-induced attachment difficulties.

This presentation will look at the integration of therapies as well as parental attitudes and competencies that will help to re-wire the brain, calm the central nervous system, improve the emotional regulation and change the core beliefs of the attachment disordered child. It will also help parents and professionals to identify actions they can take to regulate their own systems, a challenge in the best of times, but extremely difficult in the face of a child who triggers one's own beliefs and ability to maintain one's composure.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Outcomes for participants will be to 1) gain an improved understanding of how to connect with difficult-to-connect-with children using interpersonal neurobiology 2) learn specific skills in facilitation of attachment-focused parenting strategies with children who fit the new DMS-5 categories of RAD and Social Engagement Disorder 3) increase self-confidence in carrying out those strategies necessary to improve the connection between parent/caregiver and the child with one of these disorders 4) understand the importance and correlation between nutrition and attachment difficulties 5) be able to identify specific interventions that are appropriate to this population in public settings 6) understand how the latest research in neuroscience can affect brain healing and re-shape the central nervous system.

PRESENTATION FORMAT:

PowerPoint presentation, lecture, short videos, small group work, interactive experiential exercises.

RELEVANCE TO ATTENDEES:

The Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Report (2006) states that “There is increasing anecdotal evidence that...clinicians lack the training necessary to meet the needed to identify mental health problems and to serve children with these issues in their natural environments. Skills are also required to support their families and make appropriate referrals”.

Therapy for the child with an attachment disorder therapy is sometimes intense, but should always be respectful of the child and family. The therapy is family focused, with an emphasis on the parent or caregiver, *not the therapist*, attachment to the child. Parents much understand the inner workings of their particular child, learn the child’s history, understand their own attachment history, and learn specific intervention skills. It is the therapist’s job to help facilitate all of these as well as intense, therapeutic, diagnosis-specific emotional work with the affected child. The therapist who undertakes this work must be self-reliant, but with the ability to work well within a team; posses the ability to connect, but remain within therapeutic boundaries; care deeply for the child and family, but maintain a therapeutic distance. In order to do this, the professional must understand his/herself, the presentation and appropriate interventions for children with attachment disorders, and possess the ability to provide a holding environment for the entire family.

Parents and caregivers of children with attachment difficulties are often themselves struggling with a secondary post traumatic stress syndrome, anxiety or depression, at times due to their own childhood histories, other times because of the stress of raising a child who struggles so intensely with emotions, trust, intimacy and fear. This presentation is meant to provide hope, practical tools and innovative solutions.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The primary target audience for this presentation is foster/adopt parents and other caregivers of children who experience attachment disorder; therapists, case managers, and other counselors or professionals who work with children and youth who experience attachment difficulties.

Length of time:

7.0 contact hours

EQUIPMENT NEEDED;

Flip chart and screen, laptop and projector

Counselor Competencies:

FOUNDATIONS: Individuals will:

- a) increase knowledge of the new diagnostic categories of Reactive Attachment Disorder and Social Engagement Disorder in the new DSM-5
- b) gain knowledge of scientifically grounded methods for changing abusive or traumatic memories through practical neurobiology
- c) improve understanding of how mindfulness practices can increase neural connections, calm the central nervous system, and increase the ability for interpersonal connections
- d) learn the latest developmental and systems approaches to attachment

PRACTICE DIMENSIONS: Individuals will:

- a) learn how to help children look at their own trauma with new eyes
- b) identify the three parts of the trine brain and how they interact
- c) be able to utilize at least three specific interventions for improved interpersonal neurobiology
- d) be able to name at least three ways that a parent/caregiver can increase the child's attachment experience using alternatives to the word "no"
- e) will feel more confident in their own ability to maintain mental health, build their competency and capacity

Interpersonal Neurobiology and Practical Neuroscience

Neuroscience is the new buzz word in mental health, and yet most parents and clinicians are not well versed in its clinical or practical applications. Brain functioning and the central nervous system are influenced by the environment, especially the early environment of a developing child. Neuroplasticity, or the ability to change the function and structure of the brain through relationship, allows us to use what Dan Siegel describes as "interpersonal neurobiology" to heal past psychological and attachment wounds.

Learning Objectives

- 1.) Describe the importance of early relationships and attachment history in the development of structure and functioning of the brain
- 2.) Understand the importance of integration and how it contrasts with chaos and rigidity
- 3.) Describe how to help children and adults with attachment difficulties gain neurobiological integration
- 4.) Learn at least three practical interventions to increase neurobiological integration

Neural Correlates of Mindfulness Practice...and Why It Matters To You

The newest research on mindfulness implicates neuroscience as the factor in the reduction of mental health symptoms such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and attachment difficulties. Mindfulness literally creates new neuropathways in the brain, restructuring the way in which the trine brain communicates internally and expresses thoughts and feelings externally. Mindfulness is critical in not only the treatment of children with attachment difficulties, but also in adults with attachment problems and caregivers of youth with attachment problems.

Learning Objectives

- 1). Describe how the brain can be energized by regular mindfulness practices
- 2.) Identify how mindfulness can change a person's daily functioning, improve depressive and anxious symptoms, and reduce fear-based responses
- 3.) Practice at least three simple and practical mindfulness techniques that can be used with children, adults, clients, and one's self

Helping Children (and Adults) to Look at their own Trauma Through New Eyes

Trauma is an experience, not an event. The understanding, processing, and re-integration of trauma into the personal autobiographical narrative of one's life is crucial in the healing of it. Defense mechanisms, negative and positive coping skills, and key approaches to addressing trauma from a new perspective will be explored.

Learning Objectives

- 1). Learn and be able to list at least two treatment modalities that have found to be effective in processing trauma material.
- 2.) Describe in broad detail what EMDR, IFS, sensorimotor and CBT approaches to trauma reprocessing are and why they are effective
- 3.) List at least three alternative complimentary methods of trauma treatment

Nutrition and It's Implications for Healing

New research and information suggests that when a person experiences a mental health issue, they will also have a concurrent digestive illness. Our health is biochemical, and biochemical processes are affected by nutrition and nuerotransmitters. Integrating nutritional strategies with more traditional forms of therapy offers a more complete and integrative level of treatment. This workshop will provide an overview of methods for determining nutritional imbalances and ways of addressing these.

Learning Objectives

- 1). Explain the relationship between nutrition and mental health
- 2). Identify foods that harm and foods that heal
- 3). Define the correlation between amino acids and mental health
- 4.) Understand the relationship between vitamins and supplements and neurotransmitters and how this interacts with mental health

OUTLINE OF THE DAY

7.5 CEU's

Registration/Breakfast	08:30 am - 08:45 am
Wecome & Housekeeping	08:45 am - 09:00 am
Presentation	09:00 am - 11:00 am
BREAK	11:00 am - 11:15 am
Presentation/Evaluations/tests	11:15 am - 1:30 pm
LUNCH	1:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Presentation	2:00 pm - 3:45 pm
BREAK	3:45 pm - 4:00 pm
Presentation/Evaluations/tests	4:00 pm - 5:30 pm