



TRAUMA

INFORMED, RESPONSIVE, PREVENTATIVE

JENNIFER FRASER, FOUNDER

OF THE BULLIED BRAIN

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO CHANGE?

- Education – Trauma-Informed
- Neuroscience – Trauma-Responsive
- Pedagogy – Trauma-Preventative
- Legal Change – Psychological Safety (Institutional Accountability)

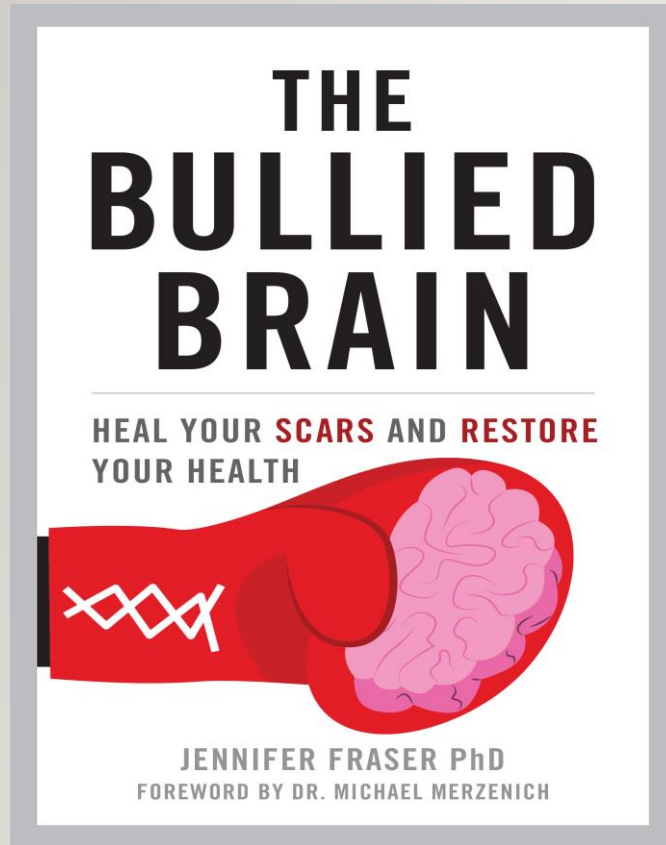
WHAT ARE THE HURDLES?

- ACES – we’ve known about them since for over twenty years. We are “trauma-informed.”
- What are the hurdles you see and face in implementing this knowledge, making this change?

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY IN THE HOME?

- What happens when the adversity is at church, school, in sports or arts?
- Even bullying by peers (in childhood) is shown in research to do significant harm to brains...

WHY DID I WRITE A BOOK ABOUT UNSAFE WORKPLACES?



Because my boss told me that the abuse being done to students was “old school coaching.”

I turned to the experts and discovered he was wrong.

WHY DID I CHOOSE TO TAKE THE WHISTLEBLOWER PATH?



Because my boss tried to blame the victims rather than hold the perpetrators accountable. Then the government participated in the coverup.

NEUROSCIENCE

- Brain science shifts us from trauma-informed to trauma-responsive
- The research documents that the brain is innately wired to repair and recover
- There is a lack of understanding and motivation unless we can SEE the harm done to the brain

NON-INVASIVE TECHNOLOGY



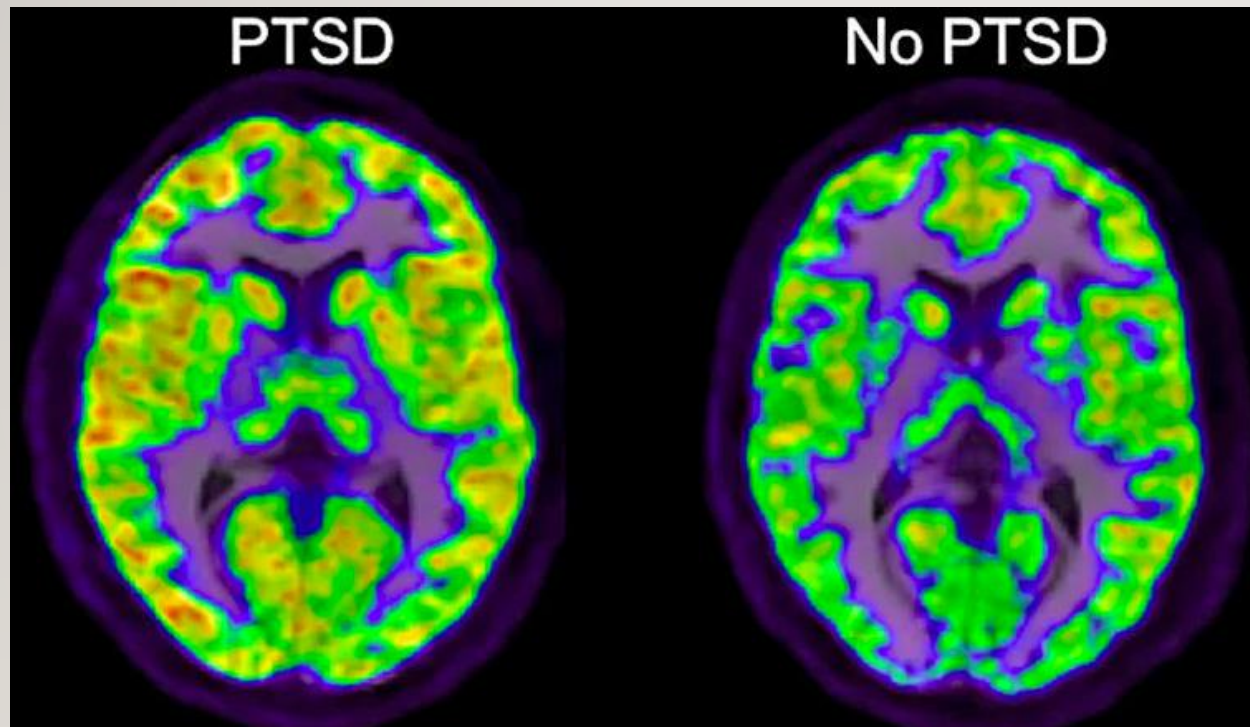
We now know: psychological safety also means brain safety.

Abused / Bullied brains show “neurological scars” when studied on brain scans.

WHAT MAKES A BRAIN UNSAFE?

- *ALL* forms of bullying, harassing, abuse (physical & sexual) AND
- Yelling, berating, shaming, ignoring, refusing feedback, isolating, ostracizing, manipulating, lying, gaslighting, treating unfairly, privileging some while punishing others, stealing someone's ideas or work, threatening, blocking opportunities, overwork, dehumanizing conditions and treatment, emotional neglect etc.

WHAT DO BULLYING AND ABUSE DO TO BRAINS?



Amygdala
Hippocampus
Corpus Callosum
Nervous System

ALL FORMS OF BULLYING & ABUSE

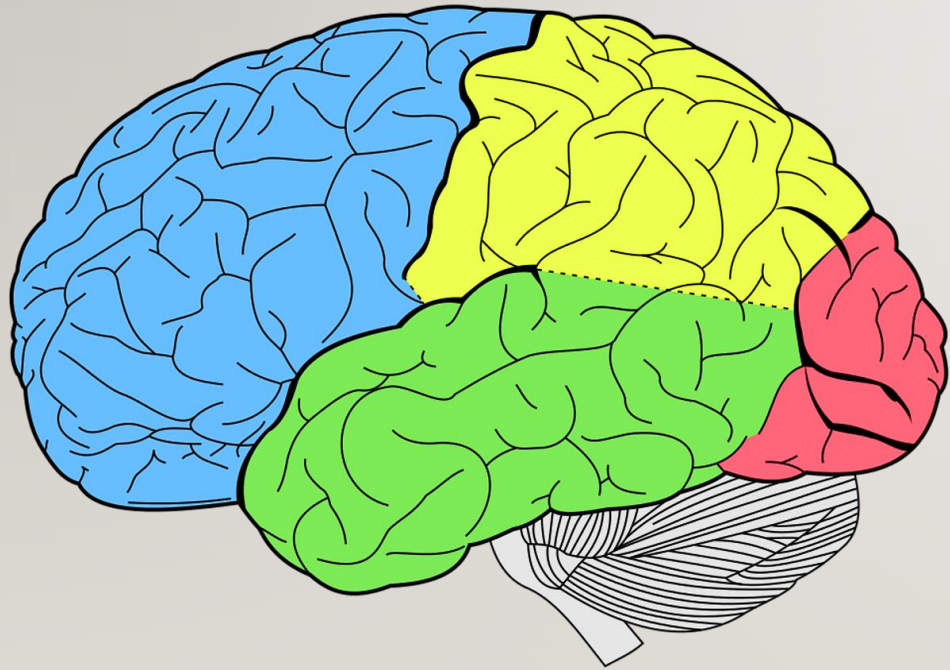
- Can do physical harm to brain architecture and function
- The damage is visible on brain scans
- There is extensive, peer-reviewed, replicated research that documents the negative impact *ALL* forms of bullying and abuse have on brains

WHAT INVISIBLE HARM DO BULLYING & ABUSE DO TO BODIES?



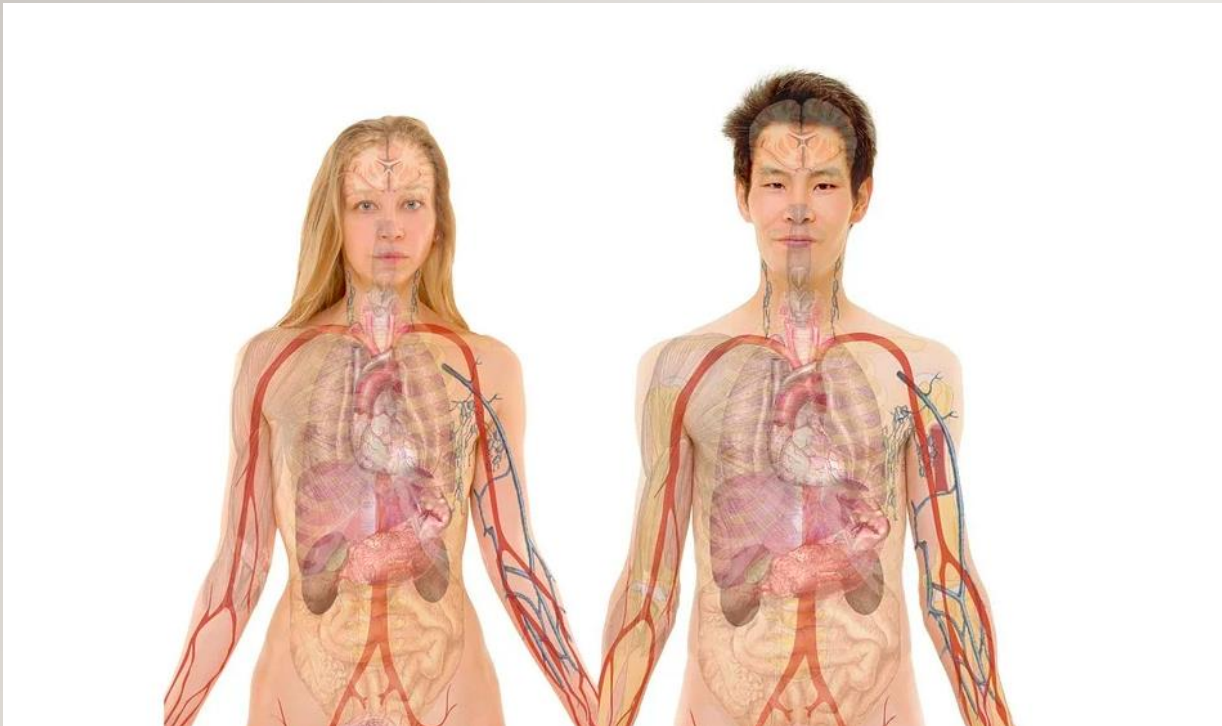
Brain and body are inextricably entwined. They are always communicating & when one suffers so does the other.

WHY AREN'T WE CHANGING?



“If 20 million people were infected by a virus that caused anxiety, impulsivity, aggression, sleep problems, depression, respiratory and heart problems, vulnerability to substance abuse, antisocial and criminal behavior . . . and school failure, we would consider it an urgent public health crisis.”

WHY DO WE STILL TALK ABOUT “MENTAL ILLNESS” BUT NOT “INJURY TO THE BRAIN”



Even when individuals manifest mental illness, specialists may not check and see what is going on at the brain level. The advent of non-invasive technology allows us to scan brains, measure activity, and also conduct a battery of tests to see how well the brain operates in terms of processing speed, focus, working memory and so on.

WHAT BRAIN SCIENCE CHANGES

- Brain science has taught us “psychological safety” is ALSO
- **Brain safety** aka Neurological safety
- Safety is the driving force behind the nervous system so psychological safety is ALSO
- **Physiological safety** (our bodily organs – heart, lungs, gut)

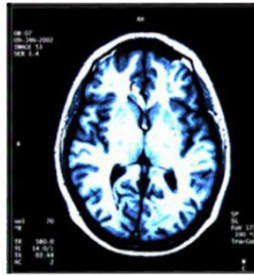
WHAT ARE THE HURDLES...

- Why are we not moving from trauma-informed to trauma-informed by brain science?
- What holds us back from being trauma-responsive when we know brains can repair?

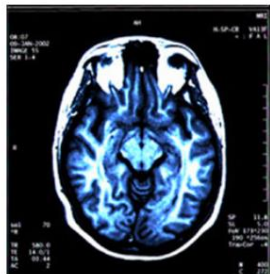
PARADIGM SHIFT?

- What would happen if we treated bullying / abuse as a medical issue (not just a moral issue)?
- Would this help us overcome hurdles or increase them? Think on these questions as we go through the next slides.

HELPING KIDS WITH TRAUMATIZED BRAINS



Healthy brain



Brain affected by trauma

Look at the difference between the above healthy brain and the brain below which has been dismantled by trauma.

When we see the distressing scan of the brain affected by trauma, the critical question is: what can we do to help them?!

RETURNING BRAINS TO THEIR GOLDEN POTENTIAL



Remember our inquiry into whether or not behaviour is a choice. The child in this picture looks aggressive. He might be categorized as a "bully" at school, but if so, he's likely traumatized. If he comes from an environment that is unstable, threatening, dangerous even, his brain has learned to be aggressive as a survival strategy. He is not choosing his behaviour. It's reactive.

ABUSE CYCLE

- If we remain in the **moral** framework:
- Abusers / bullies are BAD
- Victims / targets are GOOD
- In the **medical** framework, ALL are on a trauma-spectrum
- ALL are under threat and reacting

BULLY / ABUSER GOES INTO FIGHT MODE



ONE: FIGHT
(AGGRESSIVE,
ABRASIVE,
BULLYING,
THREATENING,
HARASSING)

ABUSED DOG PREDICTS THREAT



Abused, bullied, traumatized humans may also become hypervigilant, defensive, and reactive (ACES).

HOW ELSE DO BRAINS REACT TO THREAT?

- **2 FLIGHT** (ABSENTEEISM, PROCRASTINATION, DISTRACTED, NON-PRODUCTIVE, IRRESPONSIBLE, UNCOMMITTED, UNMOTIVATED)
- **3 FREEZE** (QUIET, WITHDRAWN, ILLNESSES, DISABILITY LEAVE, QUILTS, DISSOCIATION, DISENGAGED, PARALYZED)
- **4 FAWNING / APPEASEMENT** (EYES DOWN, BYSTANDER, LEARNED HELPLESSNESS, PERCEPTION OF INESCAPABILITY, SOCIABILITY, SUPPORT & CARING FOR PERPETRATOR)

FLIGHT



- ABSENTEEISM
- PROCRASTINATION
- DISTRACTED
- NON-PRODUCTIVE
- IRRESPONSIBLE
- UNCOMMITTED
- UNMOTIVATED

FREEZE



- ILLNESSES
- DISABILITY LEAVE
- WITHDRAWN
- QUILTS
- DISSOCIATION
- DISENGAGED
- PARALYZED
- BURNOUT

FAWNING & APPEASEMENT



- EYES DOWN
- LOOKS THE OTHER WAY WHEN ABUSE OCCURS
- SUPPORTS BULLY / ABUSER / INSTITUTION
- BYSTANDER

FAWNING & APPEASEMENT



- LEARNED HELPLESSNESS
- PERCEPTION OF INESCAPABILITY
- SOCIABILITY “YES MAN”
- DEFENDS PERPETRATOR
- SEES PERPETRATOR AS “VICTIM”
- *BLIND TO BETRAYAL*

WHAT ARE THE HURDLES?

- Would it help overcome hurdles or make them worse if we taught FIGHT (bullying / abuse) FLIGHT, FREEZE, FAWNING as **Medical Issues** (not just moral issues)
- Pedagogy – Would it be Trauma-Responsive?

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?



If it's against the law to hurt an employee's body at work, why is it **legal** to harm their brain & body via the nervous system? Is it because the damage is invisible?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY = BRAIN/BODY SAFETY

“The impact of trauma is not isolated to our brains, but stretches through our nervous system to virtually every part of our body, changing how our senses sense, how our organs operate, and just about every aspect of our physical and mental health.”

---Dr. Steven Porges

WAITING FOR LEGAL CHANGE...

- Legal Change – Psychological Safety (Institutional Accountability)
- What are the hurdles to...being trauma preventative / responsive
- Aerobic Fitness
- Mindfulness and Empathy
- Brain-Training (aka Brain-Fitness)
- Singing, dancing, drumming, yoga, acting (co-regulating)

AEROBIC FITNESS REVOLUTION



Time for a Brain Fitness Revolution

Let's get people into the Brain Gym

Why? Health, Happiness & High-
Performance!

AEROBICS TOOK OFF BECAUSE IT WAS FUN!

- The swear jar is fun
- The brain's **NEED** for safety can be made into an educational game where mistakes are penalized in a fun way
- Getting leaders, managers, employees to talk about what threatens their safety (we have unique brains & histories) can open the door to **CO-REGULATION**

MINDFULNESS

- Brain science often confirms what we know
- For 2000 years, Eastern cultures have known **mindfulness** / meditation are healthy
- Brain science confirms that mindfulness is an excellent practice to calm the nervous system & to feel safe
- Educating leaders, managers, and employees adds to **SAFETY**

HOW DOES MINDFULNESS AFFECT THE BRAIN?



- Slow breathing tells the brain/body it's safe
- Reduces depression-past and anxiety-future
- Allows the mind to observe the brain

EMPATHIC LISTENING

- Training leaders, managers, employees in

EMPATHIC LISTENING

- Can be used to facilitate disagreements, conflicts, misunderstandings
- Empathy circuit is the opposite of the bullying impulse

EMPATHY

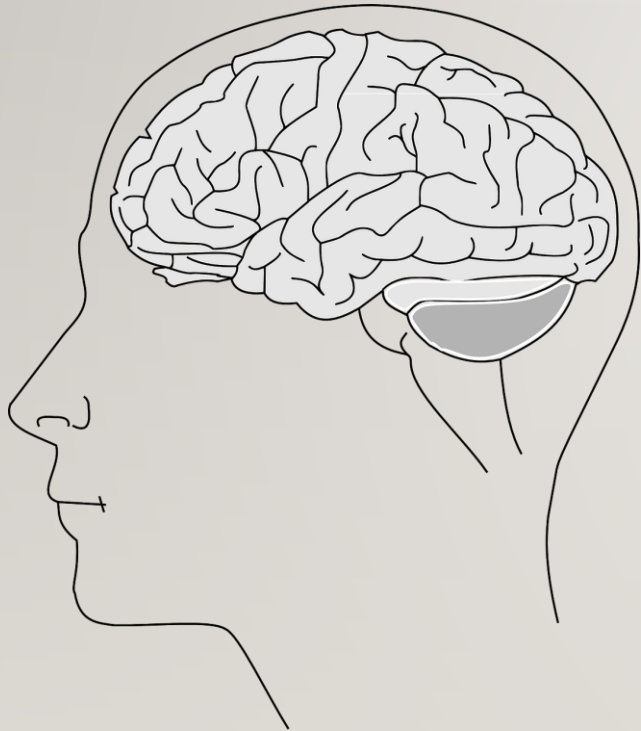


Critical to understand there are two kinds of empathy:

Cognitive and Affective

Perspective Taking is Key

BRAIN-TRAINING (BRAINHQ.COM)



Working memory governs our ability to retain and manipulate distinct pieces of information over short periods of time.

Cognitive flexibility helps us to sustain or shift attention in response to different demands or to apply different rules in different settings.

Self-regulation enables us to set priorities and resist impulsive actions or responses.

Along with Executive Function skills, **fast processing speed** is also a core function of a healthy brains.

HEALING TRAUMA TO BRAINS

Dr. Michael Merzenich's 30 years of research into neuroplasticity has revealed that while brains can become terribly harmed, injured, and disordered, neuroscientists and the insights they've developed *can* retrain them back to health. They can even take traumatized brains and make them *stronger* than they were before.

TOM BRADY'S "TBI2" METHOD



Brady began using Merzenich's brain exercises (BrainHQ) and realized it needed to be a core part of his training. Since then, Brady has led the Patriots to four of five Super Bowls and now the Buccaneers to this year's win.

BRAIN-TRAINING AND SAFETY ALLOW FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

- Learning
- Problem-solving
- Creative thinking
- Social-emotional connection and community
- Brain resources go to productivity and profits, not hypervigilant threat assessment

STRIVING FOR CHANGE

- Juvenile Justice system (diversion program)
- School-to-Prison? School-to-Career!
- Teacher Burnout
- Human Resources
- Public Health

CO-CREATE

- Finally, what are your ideas for **overcoming** hurdles that stop us from addressing fully and eradicating so much preventable trauma to brain and body?
- If we know what obstacles are, how can we see them as challenges to meet and overcome?

CULTURE CHANGE

- The brain learns by **REPETITION** at timed intervals SO
- Repeat to remember; remember to repeat
- Policies & Procedures on brain, body, health and safety need to be **LIVING DOCUMENTS** that daily shape culture in the form of education and quick response to mistakes / breaches
- The brain learns by making **MISTAKES**

THANK YOU!



**Exit the cage of
learned helplessness.**

BRING YOUR ORGANIZATION INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

BULLIEDBRAIN.COM

