

POST CONFLICT PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

By

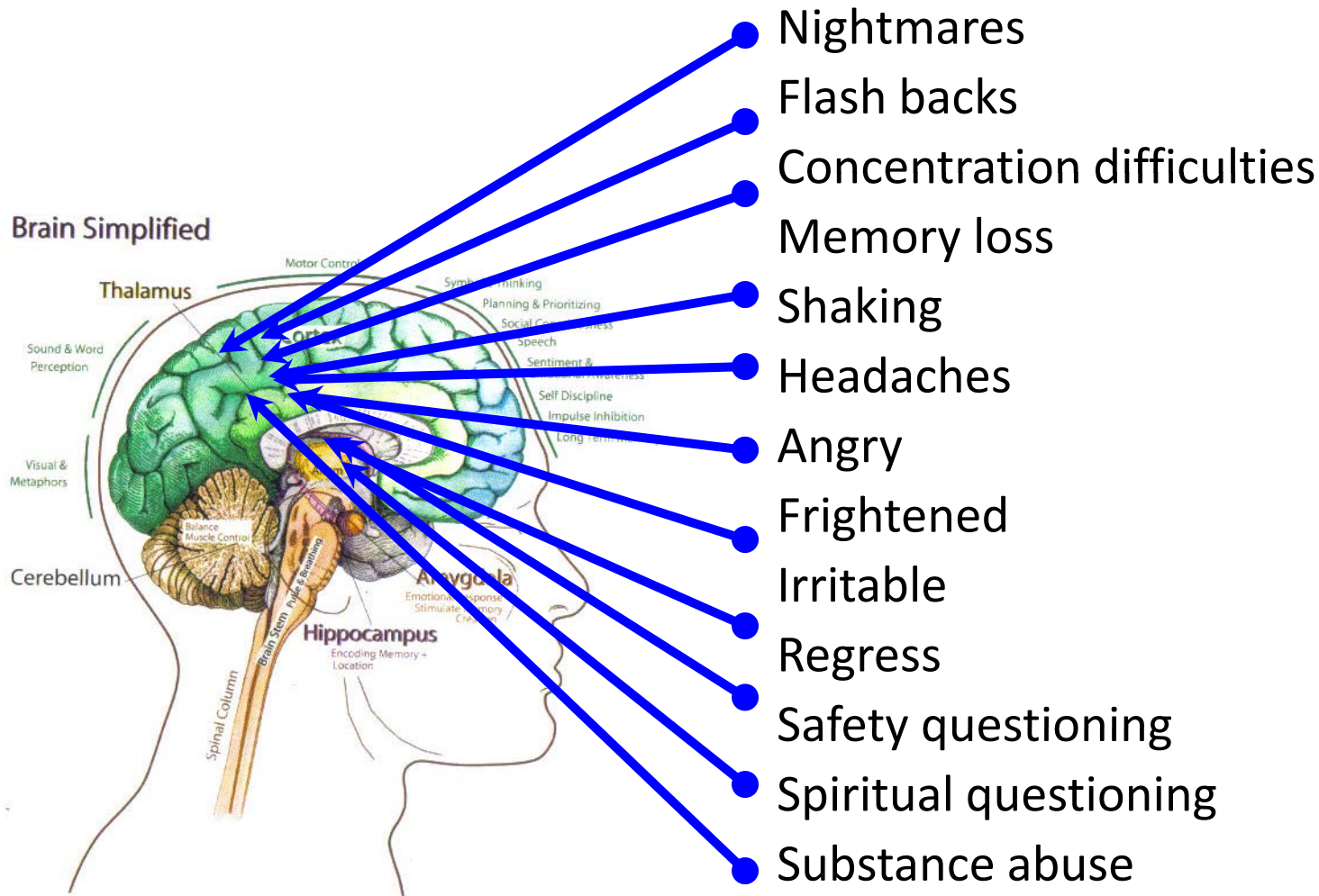
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Trauma Involves Intense Feelings

- Pain
- Fear
- Shame
- Shock
- Disturbance
- Being Upset
- Helplessness
- Horror

Impact of Trauma on an Individual



Symptoms of Re- Experiencing

- Nightmares
- Flash backs

Symptoms of Avoidance

- Emotional numbing
- Avoiding talking about the events
- Avoiding thinking about the events
- Avoiding places that might remind the experience
- Social withdrawal

Symptoms of Hyperarousal

- Difficulty sleeping or staying asleep
- Easy outburst of anger
- Exaggerated startle response – jumpy
- Constantly on the look out for danger
- Generalised anxiety
- Abdominal pains, loose stool on getting afraid

Depression

- This is an emotional disorder. It is common in traumatised children.
 - Feeling persistently sad
 - Being irritable
 - Reduced interest in normal activities
 - Poor appetite, loss of weight
 - Poor sleep
 - Thoughts of wanting to die
 - Behaviour “problems”

Anxiety Disorders

- Constant fear
- Sweatiness
- Shaky hands
- Sweaty palms
- Rapid beating of heart
- Poor sleep

Behavior Changes

- Increased activity level
- Decreased concentration and/or attention
- Withdrawal
- Anger outbursts
- Aggression
- Absenteeism

General Effects of Trauma

- Negative impact on issues of trust and perceptions of others, particularly of those that are "different"
- Repetitive thoughts and comments about death and dying



Management of Trauma in children

- Sources of Support
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Therapist
 - Community

Management of Trauma in Children

- Repair needs to happen at “age” of trauma









Guidelines

for Teachers

- Maintain a predictable class schedule and rules to provide support and consistency for the children
- Listen to and tolerate your students retelling of events, as well as playing out the events
- Schedule specific times for discussion and play during the school day to allow for opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings about the tragedy; however, set limits on scary or hurtful play

Guidelines

for Elementary School Teachers

- Encourage some distraction times, which would include doing school work that does not require high levels of new learning, as well as enjoyable activities
- Expect and understand students' regression (acting younger) and other difficult behaviors that are not typical of the students
- Maintain communication with other teachers, school personnel, and parents to monitor how the students are coping with the demands of school, home, and community activities

Guidelines

for Elementary School Teachers

- Do classroom activities that will reinforce the message that one person can make a difference to help and heal
- Activities can include drawing pictures and sending cards or class projects of collecting bottle caps or aluminum cans
- Use simple, direct terms to describe what happened. Avoid terms designed to "soften" the information, which inadvertently further confuses children
- For example, use the term "died," rather than "went to sleep"

Guidelines for Parents of Elementary School Students

- Avoid exposing your child to reminders of the trauma
- This includes limiting your child's exposure to the news and other television programs about the tragedy
- If you do choose to have your child see this information on the television, keep it brief, watch it with your child, and talk to your child after to clarify miscommunication
- Protecting the children from re-exposure includes limiting exposure to adult conversations about the events - even when you think they are not listening, they often are

What else can we do for children?

- Therapist intervention
- Parental interventions
- Care givers/guardian's intervention

DEVELOPED TOOL

Help for children

“A place to talk”



A place to talk

- This therapy-book is written in the context of animals in the jungle, struggling to find a leader; in the process they create a lot of conflict, destruction, violence and displacement.
- The Parrot is used as a symbol of talking that encourages the animals to talk about their feelings and to give and receive forgiveness.
- They finally find peace amongst themselves through talking.



A place to talk

- This book has no age limit. It is a guide to help children reflect on life's events and feelings, to enhance expression of feelings and make talking possible... as a step towards healing.
- Many animals are used as an illustration of many communities that co-exist in African cultures.

A place to talk

- Helps reinforces conscious time for children to express themselves with support from guardians
- Helps children share what they feel is traumatising without being given a label of traumatised
- Gives safe space that children can use animal example as an entry point to their inner self

A place to talk

- Children express themselves well when doing something
- The book offers room to:
 - Reading
 - Painting
 - Acting

Where the book has been tested

- 7 different schools
- a total of 100 students
- Mainly affected areas in Nairobi and Mt. Elgon
- Private used in three families

Feedbacks on the book

- Families both children and adults felt released
- One child said: “It feels like putting down the fire, that I have been holding in my hands”
- A private counsellor felt supported by using the book in dealing with trauma at the family level
- One parent reported that the book was a good entry level to talk as a family

Challenges

- Dealing with in depth mental issues like PTSD and Depression
- We are creating awareness for parents and teachers to seek professional help where they are stuck
- Translation to various languages

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