The capacity for self-regulation is probably the single most important contributor to achievement, mental health, and social success.

Lawrence Steinberg

Affect Regulation is a person’s ability to manage emotions without causing harm to self or others.

Shore, 2003
Core Components of Affect Regulation

- Thoughts (cognition)
- Feelings (affect, or emotions)
- Physiological Reactions
- Behavior
- Outcome

Key Factors for Affect Regulation
Stien & Kendall, 2004

- Safety and stabilization

- Multi-sensory activities to reduce dysregulation: exercise and body movement, healing touch, expression through art, drama, dance and music, and intellectual pursuits

- Development skill building (competency development)

Self-Regulation is the capacity to formulate a plan of one’s own and implement behavior to carry it out.

Miller & Rollnick, 2013
Life Experiences Influence Brain Development

Growing up physically, emotionally, and sexually healthy

"It is easier to raise strong children than to repair broken men"

Frederick Douglas

Elements of Optimum Child Development

National Research Council and Institute for Medicine

- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Opportunities for skill building
- Integration of family, school, and community efforts
Bad Things that Happen in Life

Trauma means bad things that have a lasting effect on your life.
How we respond to trauma is mediated by the structures of the brain and mind we have in place at the time of a traumatic experience. 

Bergemann, 2013

Multiple Domains of Impairment
3 or more ACE’s

- Neuro-Processing: cognition, attachment, anxiety, self-regulation, self-concept, social helplessness, aggression
- Physiological: cardiovascular, metabolic, and immunological disorders; addiction, eating disorders, and sexual disorders

Trauma can influence ...

- Deficits in executive functioning (working memory, analysis and synthesis, organizational skills, internal speech, emotional and behavioral regulation)
- Dysregulated arousal
- Maladaptive procedural learning
- Impaired sensory processing
- Impulsivity
- Harm to self and/or others
- Problem sexual behavior
Key Elements of a Trauma-Informed Approach
SAMHSA, 2014

• **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
• **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system
• **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
• **Seeks to actively prevent re-traumatization**

Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach
SAMHSA, 2014

• Safety
• Trustworthiness and transparency
• Peer support
• Collaboration and mutuality
• Empowerment, voice, and choice
• Cultural, historical, and gender issues

Challenges to Affect Regulation

**Arousal**
To evoke or awaken a feeling, emotion, or response
Disturbance of Arousal

An experience that tests a person’s ability to manage their feelings, or affect without causing harm.

When we get upset we have thoughts, feelings, and physiological reactions that influence our behavior.

Behavior then influences outcomes.

Dysregulation

Managing emotions in ways that cause harm to self, others, or both.

Key elements of dysregulation, like affect regulation are:

thoughts,
feelings,
physiological reactions,
behavior,
and outcomes.

Disturbance of Arousal

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorganization (Explosion):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Violent behavior, sexual assault</td>
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<td>Aggression (fight)</td>
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<td>Withdraw (flight)</td>
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<th>Regulation:</th>
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<td>Self-soothing</td>
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<td>Multi-sensory coping strategies</td>
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<th>Disorganization (Constriction):</th>
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<td>Appraisal (submission)</td>
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<td>Immobility (freezing)</td>
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<td>Inability to organize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analgesia or mental paralysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
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<th>Mobilization:</th>
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<td>Eliminating pathological patterns</td>
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<td>Future orientation</td>
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Let's see what Elmo has to say about all this...

When you understand what people value you have a key to what motivates them

Miller and Rollnick, 2013

We begin
By identifying and exploring personal values

Motivational Interviewing Values Card Sort
So Many Choices

Becoming the Person You Want to Be

Pursuing Your Dreams

IF YOUR DREAMS DON'T SCARE YOU THEY'RE NOT BIG ENOUGH
Expert Tips for Resilience
Charney & Southwick, 2012

- Develop a core set of beliefs that nothing can shake
- Try to find meaning in whatever trauma has happened
- Try to maintain a positive outlook
- Take cues from someone who is especially resilient
- Don’t run from things that scare you; face them
- Be quick to reach out for support when things go haywire
- Learn new things as often as you can
- Find an exercise workout you’ll stick to
- Don’t beat yourself up or dwell on the past
- Recognize what makes you uniquely strong and own it

Identifying a Calm and Soothing Place

The solution is to gain control over the residue of past trauma in order to experience mastery and autonomy (p.3)

The following slides come from
The Body Keeps the Score:
Mind, Brain, and Body in the Healing of Trauma
Bessel van der Kolk, 2014
We do this by...

- Allowing the body to have experiences that deeply and viscerally contradict the helplessness, rage, or collapse that result from trauma (bottom up)
- Talking, connecting with others, and mindfully observing internal experience while processing memories of trauma (top down)

Physical experiences restore a visceral sense of control (p.31)

It is enormously difficult to organize one’s traumatic experiences into a coherent account (p.43)
Being able to hover calmly and objectively over our thoughts, feelings, and emotions... and then take our time to respond... allows the executive brain to inhibit, organize, and modulate the hardwired automatic reactions preprogrammed into the emotional brain. (P.62)

Inhaling a deep breath activates the sympathetic nervous system (accelerator), which speeds up the heart and results in a burst of adrenaline.

Exhaling activates the parasympathetic nervous system (brakes) and slows down the heart and helps people to calm down. (P.77)

A kind face, or soothing tone of voice can dramatically alter the way we feel.

Focused attunement with others can shift us out of disorganized and fearful states (P.78)
It’s not important to know every detail of a person’s trauma. What is critical is that they learn to tolerate feeling what they feel and knowing what they know. (P.125)

Healing involves:

• Finding ways to become calm and focused
• Learning to maintain that calm in response to images, thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations that remind you of past trauma
• Finding ways to be fully alive in the present and engaged with the people around you
• Not having to keep secrets from yourself, including secrets about the way you managed to survive (P.201-204)

Drugs cannot cure trauma; they can only dampen the expressions of a disturbed physiology.

And they do not teach the lasting lessons of self-regulation. (P.224)
Services should focus on a client’s relationship with themselves and all of their differing parts rather than on their relationship with us. (p. 286)

If you want to give them a sense of control, you have to give them power over their destiny rather than intervene on their behalf...

You cannot help, fix, or save the young people you work with.

What you can do is work side by side with them, help them to understand their vision, and realize it with them.

By doing that you give them back control.

We’re healing trauma without anyone ever mentioning the word.

Paul Griffin (p. 342)

Developing self-regulation is the central task of adolescence

Lawrence Steinberg
Self control requires us to be calm, competent, and confident

Let’s see what Cookie Monster has to say about all this

Most promising efforts to develop self-regulation (p.155):

• activities to improve executive functioning
• mindfulness practice
• exercise
• regimens that require intense concentration
• strategies to boost self-control and strengthen the ability to delay gratification
Effective programs include activities that are:

- Sequenced
- Active
- Focused
- Stimulating
- Scaffolded (demanding, but not so much that they overwhelm capability)
- Sustained through practice (P.161)

Education **DOES NOT** equal change.
**PRACTICE DOES.**

Our brain must engage, organize, and integrate information in order to shift what we learn from working to long-term memory

Debra Christopher

Stopping harm, healing pain... changing lives

He repaired broken and wounded hearts
Neuroscience indicates that youth thrive in settings that...

- Are calm and soothing
- Promote optimal child development
- Provide a variety of stimulating, engaging, and increasingly challenging experiences with enough repetition to solidify desired outcomes
- Reward prosocial behavior
- Respond to youth’s needs with flexibility
- Allow for mistakes and poor judgment to be self-corrected with adult support and encouragement

The most important contributor to success and well-being in adolescence is strong self-control.

Lawrence Steinberg

Thank you for showing up in the lives of these children.