

Building Resiliency Through Co-Regulation in the Face of Human Fragility

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Disclaimer

I have no financial interests to disclose.

The views I express in this presentation are solely mine and do not necessarily represent the views of any agency.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the neurochemistry origins of behavior and emotional reactivity
- Understand the utility of co-regulation in the development of self-regulation and resilience

Home Visiting Competencies

- Family Health and Well-being
- Human Growth and Development
- Social Emotional Well-being

Infant Mental Health Endorsement Core Competencies

- Pregnancy and Early Parenthood
- Relationship-Focused Practice

Agenda

- Physical and Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy
- Fetal Programming
- Neurochemistry of Brain Development
- Building Parenting Capacity
- Resilience

Physical and Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

- Transition
- Transformation
- Reorganization
- Inherently disruptive of body & brain
 - Physical
 - Hormonal
 - Neurochemical
 - Relationships

Zeanah 2009

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

Activation of internal representation of self, others
 & relationships

• Self

- Renegotiation of identity
- Heightened reflection
- Resurfacing of suppressed emotions
- Increased need for supports
- Hope, ideals, fears

Foley & Hochman 2006 Zeanah 2009

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy	
 1st Trimester Hormonal shifts Rapid fetal development High fetal vulnerability to teratogens 	Foley & Hochman 2006

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

- 2nd Trimester
 - Hormonal stabilization
 - Physical evidence of growing fetus ("showing")
 - Quickening
 - Maternal psychological orientation inward
 - Shift toward role as mother

Foley & Hochman 2006 Zeanah 2009

Zeanah 2009

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

• 3rd Trimester

- Physical discomfort
- Increased oxytocin—triggering maternal behavior
- "primary maternal preoccupation"
- "nesting"
- Focus on baby's arrival
- Intense & ambivalent emotions about childbirth

Foley & Hochman 2006 Zeanah 2009

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

Child birth

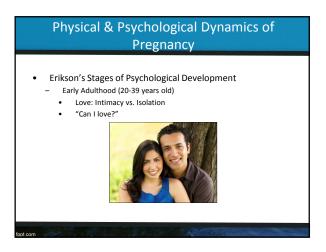
- Oxytocin & cortisol—reduced anxiety, increased calmness
- Loss of bodily control
- Mortality
- High potential for retraumatization

Foley & Hochman 2006 Zeanah 2009

Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

"A mother's ability to adapt to the challenges and changes of pregnancy has been shown to affect children's outcomes."

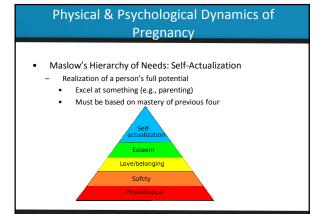
Smaling et al. 2015



Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

- Erikson's Stages of Psychological Development
 - Early Adulthood (20-39 years old)
 - Love: Intimacy vs. Isolation
 - "Can I love?"
 - Adolescence (13-19 years old)
 - Fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion
 - "Who am I?"
 - "What can I do?"

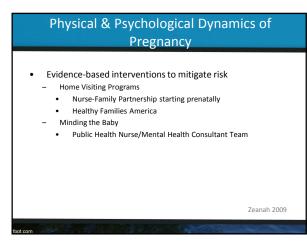




Physical & Psychological Dynamics of Pregnancy

- Risk factors—Healthy Adaption to Parenthood
 - Prior or current psychiatric disturbance
 - Substance abuse
 - Early or ongoing trauma or DV
 - Prior pregnancy loss
 - Absence of relational, familial or social supports
 - Teen pregnancy
 - Unplanned or unwanted pregnancy
 - Poverty
 - Single parenthood
 - Transgenerational adversities & epigenetics

Zeanah 2009

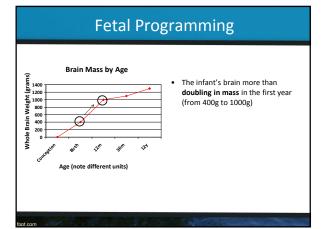


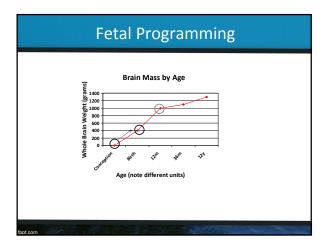


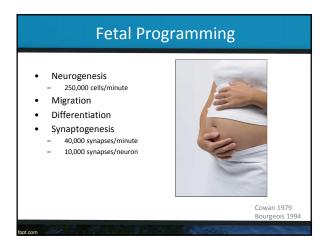
Fetal Programming

"Human development is shaped by a dynamic and continuous interaction between biology and experience."

> Perry B 2002 National Research Council & IOM 2000







Fetal Programming

Fetal Programming: Definition

The result of the influences of environment on the developing brain's architecture during gestation that creates persistent consequences of health & disease risk

Prepares the developing fetus for the environment they are going to be born in

 Survival
 Increased maternal stress → high vigilant hypersensitive infant

Fetal Programming

Normal pregnancy

- Maternal cortisol levels rise 2-5 fold from 1st to 3rd trimester
- By 3rd trimester maternal cortisol levels reach equivalent to stress response in nonpregnant woman

Glover et al. 2014

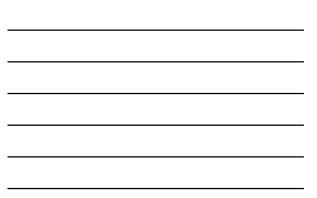
Glover et al. 2014

Fetal Programming

The placenta

- Controls what passes from mother to fetus (and vice versa)
- Protects developing fetus from high levels of circulating cortisol
 in mother
- An enzyme in the placenta that breaks down maternal cortisol before it reaches the fetus
- Plays a role in regulating pregnancy
- Maturing fetus
 Determining timing of delivery





Fetal Programming

The placenta

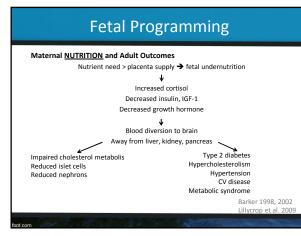
- Changes filtering capacity in response to maternal chemical signals
- Maternal anxiety may increase cortisol permeability of
- placenta by altering enzyme function
 Prenatal stress levels shorten gestation (premature)
- Prenatal stress levels shorten gestation (premature birth) and stunts fetal growth (SGA)

Glover et al. 2014

Fetal Programming

Outcomes

- Fetuses who experienced high maternal stress
 - Higher cortisol reaction to heel stick (Davis et al. 2011)
 - More fearful & more reactive to novelty as infants and young children (Blair et al. 2011)
 - Showed increased child stress & emotional reactivity (Buss et al. 2012, Davis et al. 2013)
- Higher levels of cortisol in amniotic fluid associated with cognitive delay (Bergman et al. 2010, Davis & Sandman 2010)





Pregnancy Anxiety

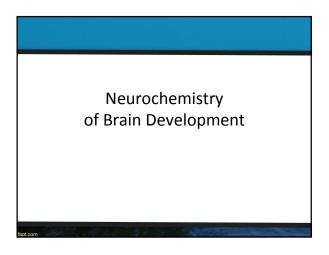
A negative emotional state tied to worries about the health and wellbeing of one's baby, the impending childbirth, of hospital and healthcare experiences, birth and postpartum, parenting or maternal role (Guardino & Schetter et al. 2014)

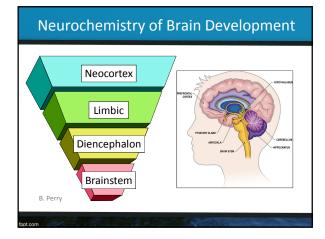
Fetal Programming

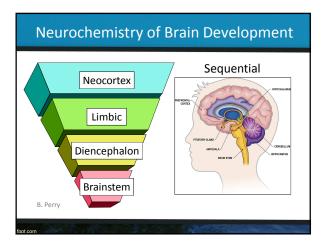
Pregnancy Anxiety

- Linked to preterm birth (Rini et al. 1999, Roesch et al. 2004, Kramer et al. 2009)
- Infant attention regulation at 3-8 months after birth (Huizink et al 2002)
- Cognitive & motor delay at 8 months (Huizink et al. 2003)
- Reduced gray matter volume at 6-9 yo (Buss et al. 2010)

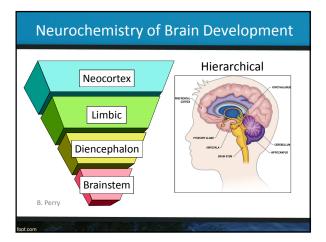




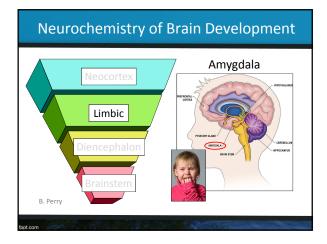




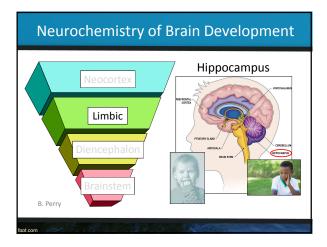




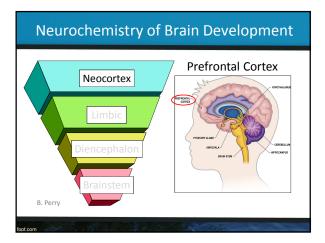




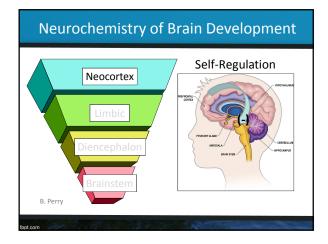




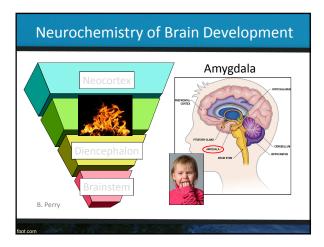




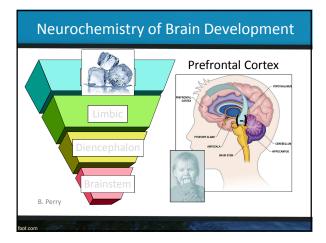




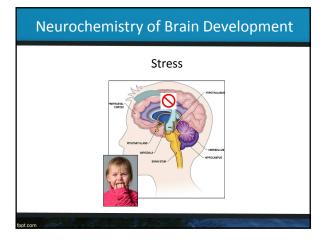






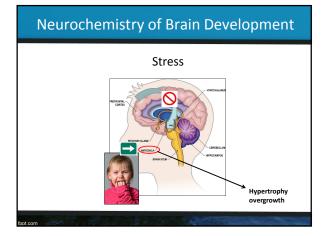




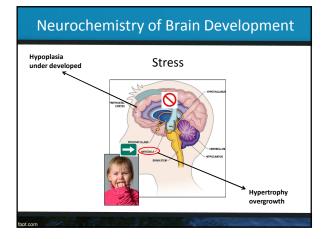












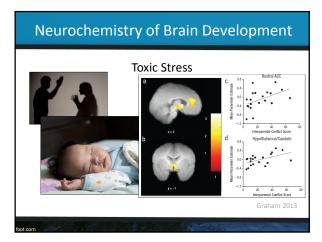


Neurochemistry of Brain Development

Toxic Stress

- « What Sleeping Babies Hear »
- Interparental conflict correlates with heightened brain activity in sleeping babies exposed to very angry tone of voice
- Rostral anterior cingulate cortex
- Subcortical regions (caudate, thalamus and hypothalamus)
 Rostral ACC implicated in emotional processing & regulation

Graham 2013



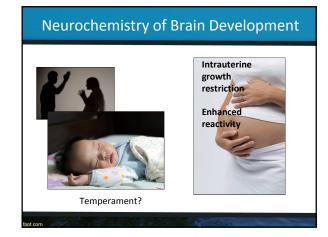


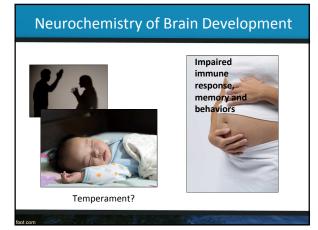


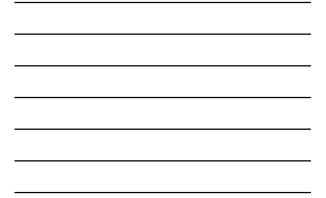


Neurochemistry of Brain Development





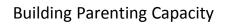




Neurochemistry of Brain Development







Mirror Neurons

- Motor cortex & posterior parietal cortex are activated not only during the action execution but also when observing the action
- Other's behaviors, emotions and sensations are mapped into our internal motor representation creating a direct communication between self & others



Ammaniti & Ferrari 2013

Building Parenting Capacity

Mirror Neurons

- Code not only the WHAT of an action but the WHY or underlying intent
- Allow the capacity to anticipate, predict and prepare the body for interaction
- Allow for sharing goals and intentions



Internal Working Model

- Internalization of sense of self—beginning ~6 months, established by 1 yr
- I am an autonomous person
- I am the author of my own actions
- My actions affect others
- Others are individuals with feelings and intentions different from my own



Ammaniti & Ferrari 2013

Building Parenting Capacity

Reflective Functioning: Definition

Mother's ability to think about herself as a parent, her child and the relationship with her child in terms of mental states and to use this understanding to guide her responses to the child



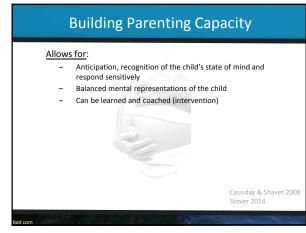
Smaling et al. 2015 Zeanah 2009

Building Parenting Capacity

During pregnancy

- Allows the mother to imagine the baby as having a mind of his or her own, coherent and knowable, both in her mind and after he or she is born
- Allows the mother to retain a sense of herself as coherent and knowable in the face of turmoil of pregnancy
- Both maternal-fetal attachment and the quality of prenatal
- representation have been linked to later infant security

Smaling et al. 2015 Zeanah 2009



Being able to recognize the child's state of mind and verbalize it

- expresses respect for the child as an individual,
- moves the feelings from the right to the left brain
- while staying engaged and regulated, carrying the child to a more regulated state



Building Parenting Capacity

Protective:

- More predictive of infant security than adult attachment classification
- Protective in instances of trauma
- Mothers with substance abuse issues with RF skills have decreased likelihood of relapse and foster care placement of child



Cassiday & Shaver 2008 Stover 2014 Pajulo 2012

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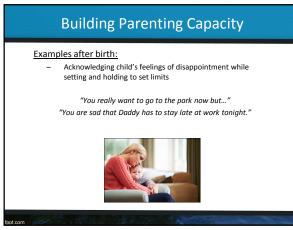
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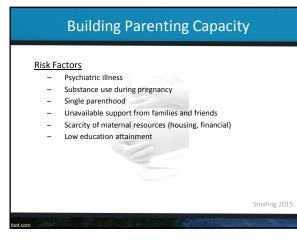
Prenatally

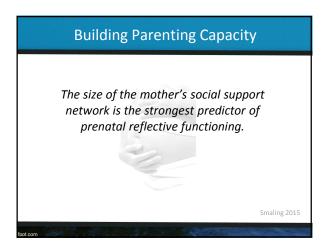
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- Hopes
 Fears
- Attributes given to fetal movement
- Sleep/wake patterns
- Talking about unborn child's ability to see, hear, feel
- Wondering Giving voice to the unborn child

Building Parenting Capacity Examples Prenatally: • Giving voice to the baby "Mommy, I love when you talk softly to me." "Mommy, I get frustrated, too, when I get the hiccups!"







REWARD CIRCUIT

A dopaminergic (& GABA & opiates) communication involving a collection of brain structures that attempts to regulate and control behavior by inducing pleasurable effects



- Mesocorticolimbic DA pathways
- Involves ventral tegmental area, nucleus accumbens, PFC, amygdala, hippocampus
- Neural activation in the reward circuit facilitates maternal motivation to provide sensitive care for her infant

foot com

REWARD CIRCUIT



- Early postpartum period involves normative biological changes supportive of adaptation of parenthood including:

 Reduced stress reactivity
- Reduced stress reactivity
 Increased sensitivity to the infant
- Increased neural activity in the reward circuit is positively associated with maternal
 - sensitivity:
 - Positive emotion
 - Affective touch
 - Direct gaze
 - Positive perceptions of infant
 Kim 2011

Building Parenting Capacity

REWARD CIRCUIT



- Early postpartum period involves normative biological changes supportive of adaptation of parenthood including:

 Reduced stress reactivity
 - Increased sensitivity to the infant
- Increased neural activity in the reward circuit is positively associated with maternal sensitivity;
 - Positive emotion
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 - Positive perceptions of infant Kim 2011

Building Parenting Capacity

Positive Feedback Loop

 Positive maternal feelings about her infant and her <u>parenting</u> <u>experience</u> play a critical role in activation of the reward circuit
 Mother-infant interactions enhance reward circuit activation and foster maintenence of positive parental behaviors and attentiveness and sensitive caregiving

Building Parenting Capacity function and maternal motivation sensitivity Lack of maternal sensitivity increases the infant's stress level and emotional dysregulation Parental disengagement results in insecure attachment

Chronic stress and poverty negatively impact reward circuit activation &

- Higher maternal negative reactivity to her infant's cry impedes her responsiveness and adversely impacts

- Challenges with comforting, feeding, sleep jeopardize parental confidence & self-efficacy

Tavlor et al. 200

Building Parenting Capacity

By 3-4 months post-partum, infants are more socially interactive and parents increasingly engage in reciprocal positive interactions

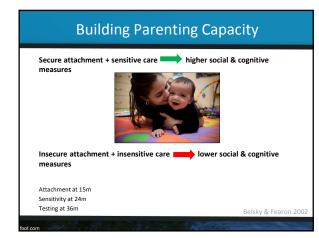


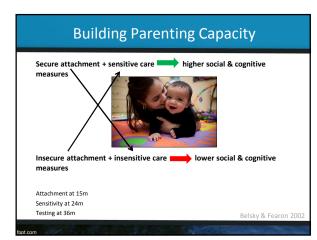
Building Parenting Capacity

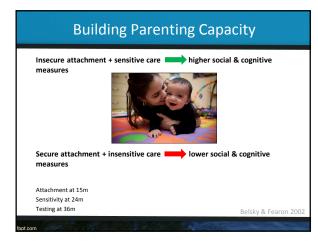
Following challenge (at 33 mo.) maternal sensitivity in infancy

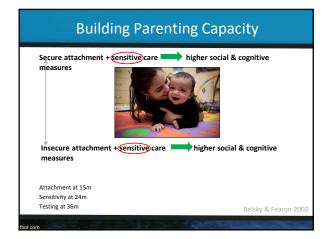
- better effortful emotional control and
- shorter time to emotional recovery to positive state following challenge at 33m.

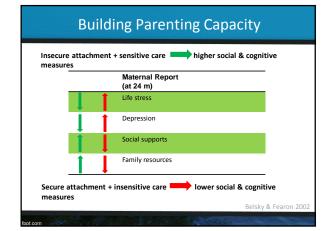




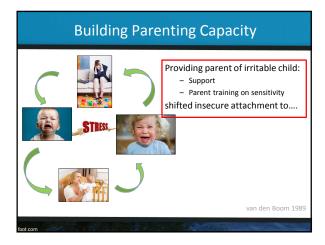






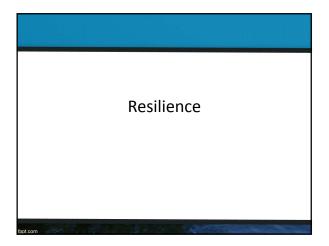










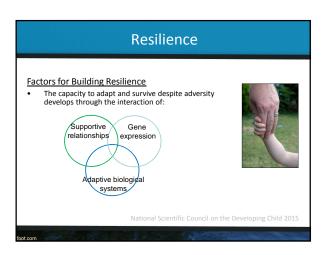


Resilience

Resilience

- The set of skills needed to respond to adversity and thrive ٠
- Situation-specific
- Developmental process ٠
- Results from the dynamic interaction between internal predispositions and external experiences •





Resilience

Factors for Building Resilience

- 1960's: Head Start, school readiness
 1980's: Home Visiting, parent-child relationships
- 1990's: Early Intervention, earlier intervention as prevention
 2010's: Quality Childcare, enriched environments



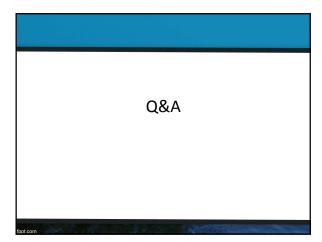
Resilience

Means of Building Resilience

- Providing basic physiological needs (food, housing) ٠
- Financial stability •
- Social supports
- Addressing MH and substance abuse issues
- Parenting education
- Early intervention/home visiting beginning prenatally
- Minimization of retraumatization ٠
- Opportunities for repair •
- Trauma informed workplace

Summary

- Healthy pregnancy includes physical, psychological and social adaptive changes.
- Adaptation to parenthood is founded on basic physiological needs being met.
- Human development is shaped by a continuous interaction between biology and environment beginning during pregnancy.
- Chronic stress adversely affects brain architecture and neurochemical reactions to environment that are evident as early as at birth.
- Prenatal representations of the developing child by the mother and perinatal biological changes are linked to secure attachment and parent sensitivity.
- Addressing risk factors for unhealthy pregnancy and child outcomes builds resilience.
- Resilience-building begins in the workplace.





Face of Human Fragility Sherri L. Alderman, MD, MPH, IMH-E, FAAP Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician CDC Act Early Ambassador for Oregon AAP Oregon Chapter Child Care Contact

Thank you!

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