

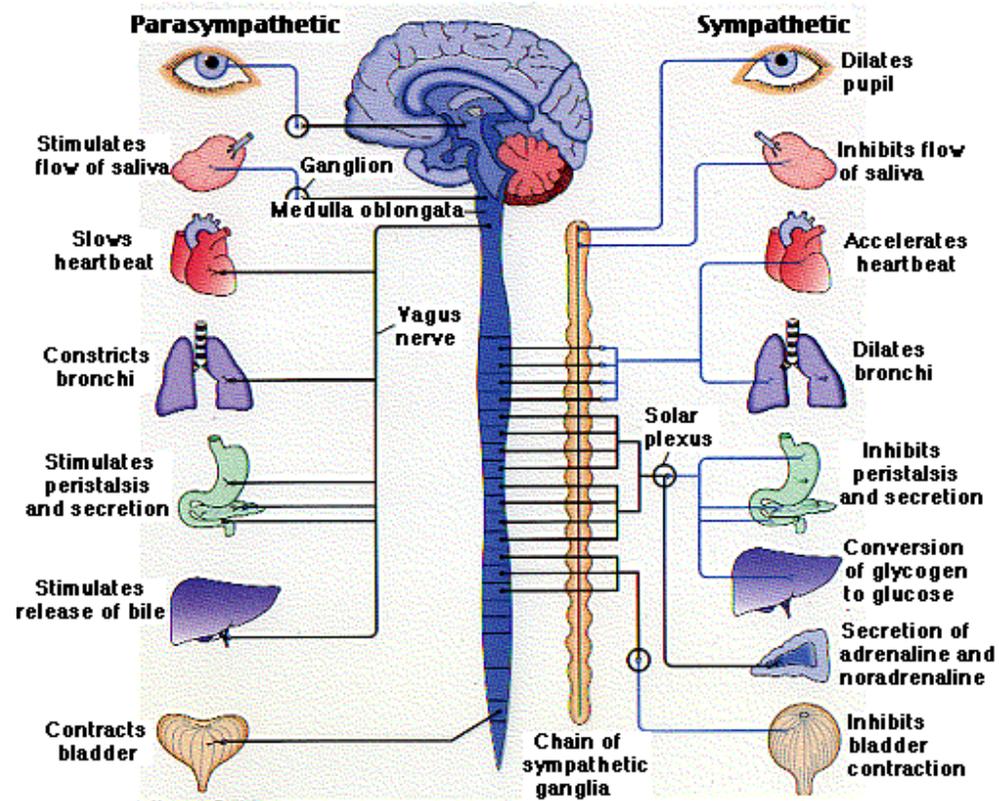
Understanding and Treating Anxiety in Youth and Adults

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What is Anxiety and How Does it Affect the Brain and Body?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. **Anxiety is a normal autonomic response to a perceived threat or uncertain situation.**

An **Anxiety Disorder** is a nervous disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks.



The Autonomic Nervous System

When we sense threat, our bodies and minds enter the **first stage** of arousal. Our muscles tense, and we begin to search for the source of possible danger. If we locate the source and perceive it to be a real threat, then we enter the **second stage**. Our bodies and minds begin to produce adrenaline and cortisol, the two primary chemicals that energize us to fight or flee.

In the **third stage**, we discharge this energy by completing the appropriate defensive actions (fighting, fleeing, freezing or collapsing). The **fourth and final stage** ensues when the nervous system, no longer aroused, returns to a state of equilibrium.

It is impossible to complete the arousal cycle if one cannot move!



Alternating Bilateral Stimulation Exercises (ABS)

- ▶ All of the following exercises are done in conjunction with deep diaphragm breathing for optimal results.
- ▶ 1. Marching in place
- ▶ 2. Balancing on one foot; switching to other foot
- ▶ 3. Tapping on arms
- ▶ 4. Tapping on Legs

Co-regulation with the youth is critical. Do this with them!

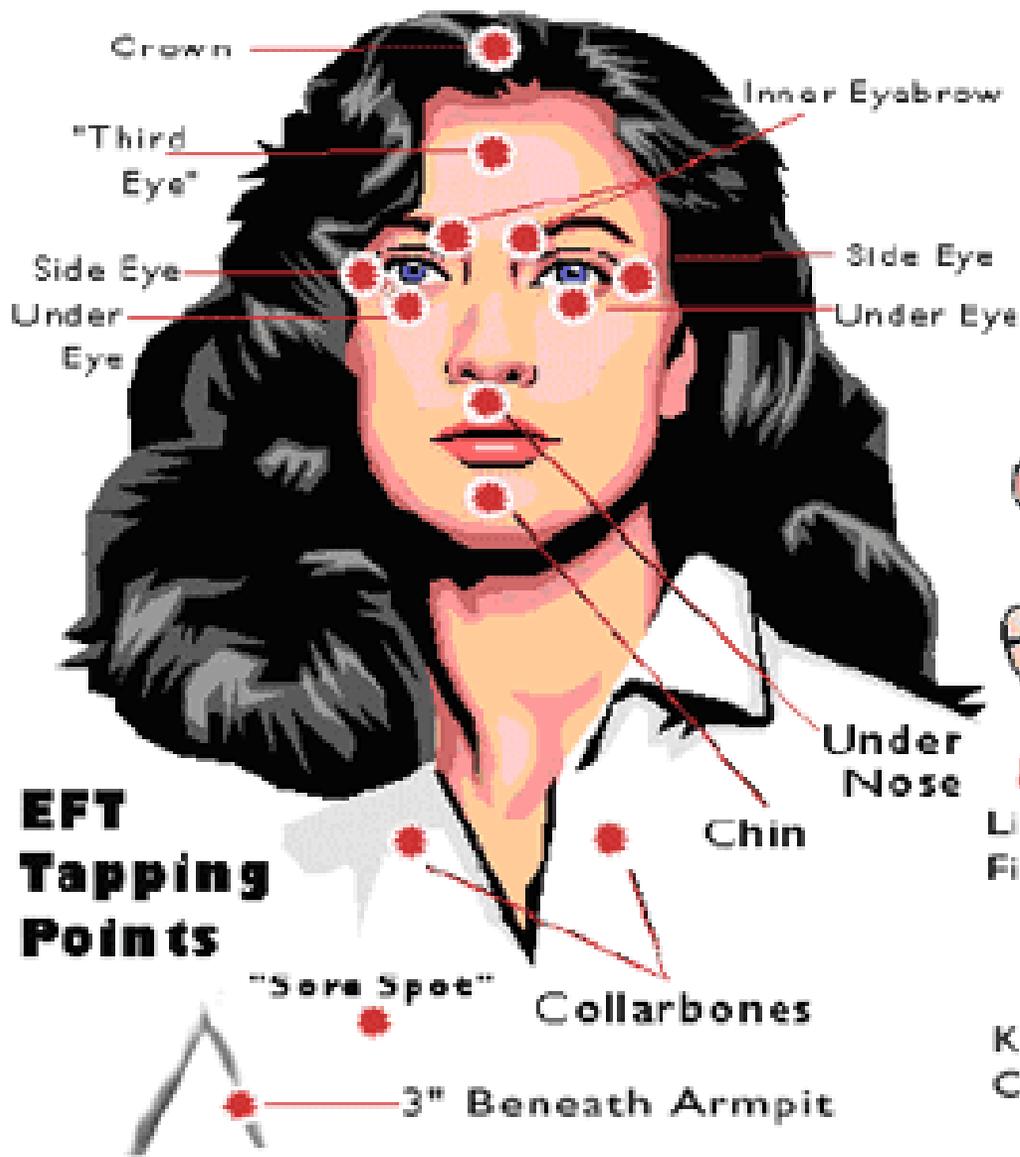
Emotion Regulation must happen prior to using Cognitive Strategies

- ▶ Youth (and adults) who are agitated and emotionally dysregulated are using their amygdala part of their brains. In humans and other animals, this subcortical brain structure is linked to both fear responses and pleasure. One must calm the brain before being able to think rationally using the frontal lobe or cortex of the brain.

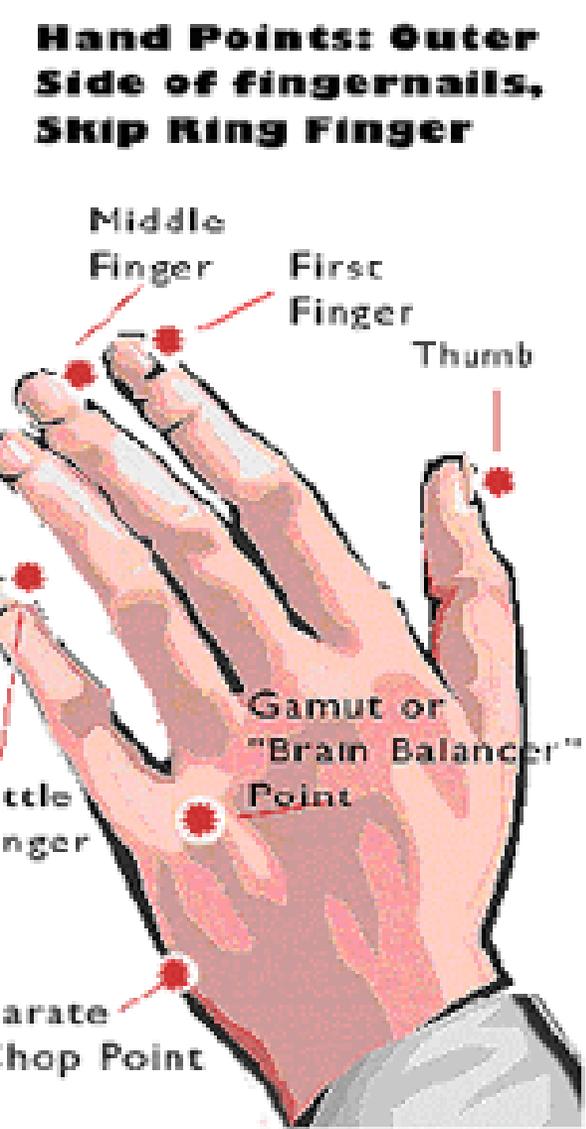


Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Tapping on Meridian Points

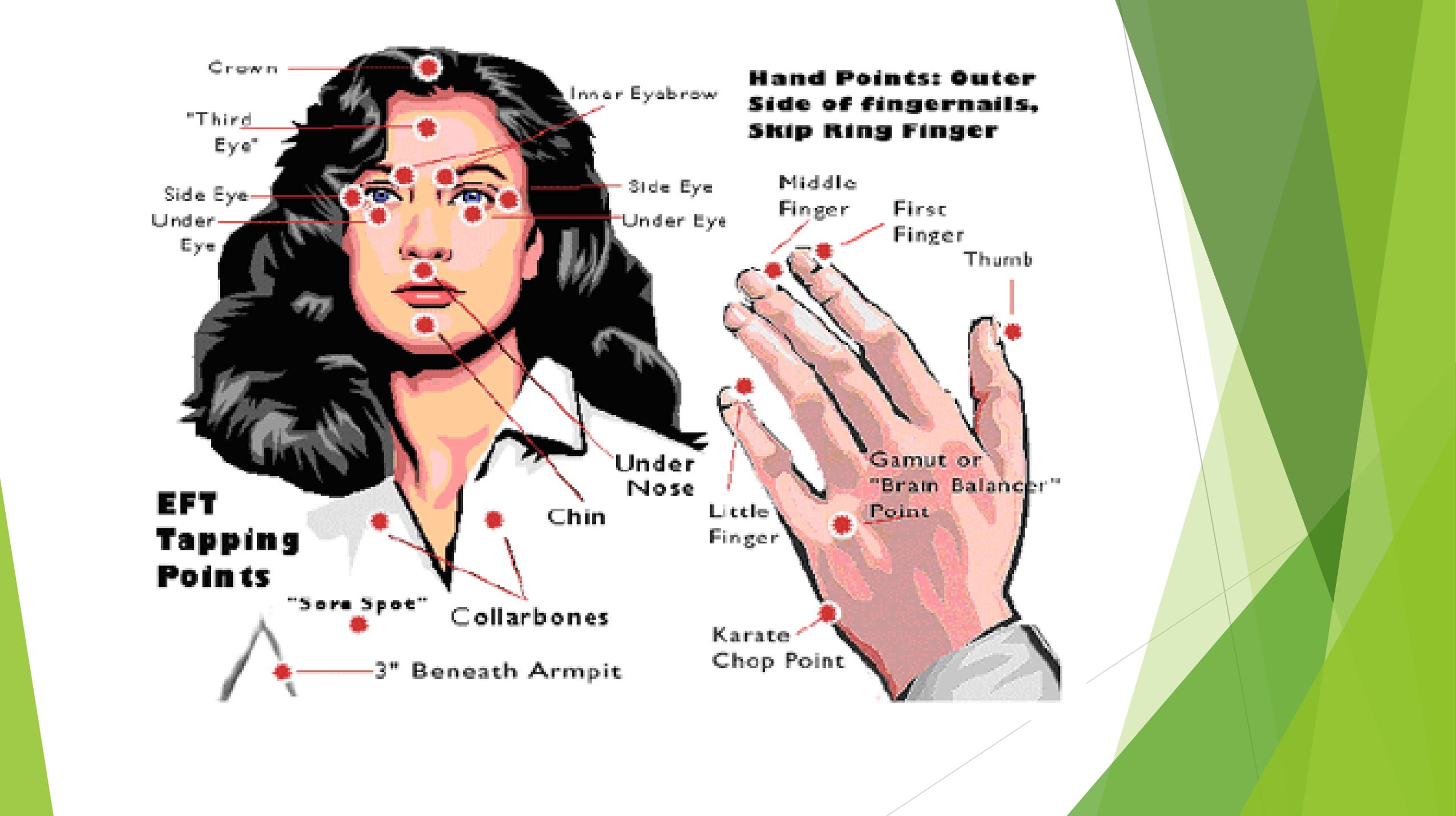
- ▶ It appears that the physical, rhythmic stimulation has a calming and soothing effect on people who are agitated or anxious. This is most likely produced by the reciprocal inhibitory relaxation response of the parasympathetic nervous system's reducing the effects of the hyperactivated sympathetic nervous system. (Carbonell and Figley, 1995).
- ▶ EFT provides a concrete stimulus drawing attention back to the “Here and Now”, which helps anchor people in the present moment



EFT Tapping Points



Hand Points: Outer Side of fingernails, Skip Ring Finger



Common Types of Anxiety Disorders found in Children and Adolescents

- ▶ Again, to be classified as a “Disorder”, there must be a developmentally inappropriate and excessive fear or anxiety that interferes with the child’s ability to function and complete developmentally normal tasks.
- ▶ 1. Separation Anxiety Disorder
- ▶ 2. Specific Phobia (e.g. animals, heights, receiving an injection)
- ▶ 3. Social Anxiety Disorder **Note:** In children, the anxiety must occur in peer settings and not just during interactions with adults.
- ▶ 4. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Bedtime Issues - How Do I Get the Kids to Have a Good Night's Sleep?

- ▶ Often for youth in care, night time was a scary time that was unpredictable. A predictable routine is extremely important. The following is a list of helpful tips.
- ▶ 1. Take a warm shower or bath about an hour before bedtime.
- ▶ 2. Do a relaxing activity at least a half hour prior to wanting to fall asleep
- ▶ 3. Go to bed at about the same time every night.
- ▶ 4. While laying in bed, practice tensing and relaxing with nice deep and even diaphragm breaths.
- ▶ 5. Tell yourself positive thoughts and picture yourself in a favorite, comfortable place.
- ▶ 6. Stay away from electronic devices and have cell phones turned on silent.

What is Helpful for Anxieties and Works??

- ▶ **Systematic Desensitization - Also Known as Graduated Exposure**

- ▶ **3 Steps of Desensitization**

- ▶ 1. Identify the item(s) or situations that are causing anxiety. Then create a list, ranking the item(s) from least to greatest anxiety provoking.
 - ▶ 2. Learn coping mechanism(s) - examples: Deep diaphragm breathing, tensing and relaxing muscles)
 - ▶ 3. Connect the anxiety item(s) to the coping method(s) through conditioning, starting from lowest to highest and practicing the coping strategy.

Co-Regulation - The Goal is for Emotion Identification and Self Regulation of both Child and Staff (or Parent)

- ▶ It starts with our mindset as adults:
- ▶ What happened to you? vs. What is wrong with you?
- ▶ Validate the experience
- ▶ Active listening with an undertone of Empathy
- ▶ Respond in ways that are healing vs. alienating or coercive.
- ▶ High level of boundaries/limits with a high level of support.

CALM

Neocortex

ABSTRACT
Reflective

Limbic

Diencephalon

Brainstem

4

Children and Trauma

What is Trauma?

According to Peter Levine, PhD psychologist.... "Trauma is perhaps the most avoided, ignored, belittled, denied, misunderstood, and untreated cause of human suffering... "If we are overwhelmed by the threat and are unable to successfully defend ourselves, we can become stuck in survival mode. ...This highly aroused state is designed solely to enable short-term defensive actions; but left untreated over time, it begins to form the symptoms of trauma. These symptoms can invade every aspect of our lives....".

According to Kathy, Trauma is Not Drama

When we work with youth and young adults, we must differentiate between these two. Trauma is stored in the body and limbic system, creating physical and psychological symptoms. These symptoms include:

1. Affect Dysregulation
2. Dissociation
3. Body Memories
4. Flashbacks

Psychological Trauma

A type of damage to the mind that occurs as a result of a severely distressing event. Trauma is often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope, or integrate the emotions involved in that experience.

- ▶ Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral therapy (TFCBT) and
- ▶ Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Disorder (EMDR) are effective treatments for psychological trauma.

Anxiety Disorders that *May Develop as a Result of Trauma*

- ▶ Reactive Attachment Disorder
- ▶ Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder
- ▶ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- ▶ Acute Stress Disorder

You Tube Video

- ▶ Body-Oriented Trauma Therapy I

Resources

Dr. Bruce Perry's Seven Slide Series

Peter Levine, PhD Psychologist: [Waking the Tiger book.](#)

EMDR made simple by Dr. Jamie Marich

EMDR in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy by Ricky Greenwald

The Highly Sensitive Person by Elaine Aron

Website: <http://www.childtrauma.com/>