

Working with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health Concerns

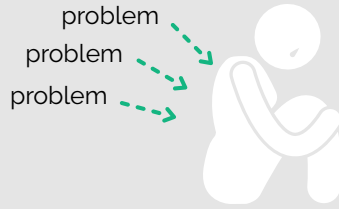
It is important to remember that there is no single approach to working with a more vulnerable population. Individuals bring their own uniqueness to the table and thus we must be flexible in the framework we use.

Adjusting the way we view the umbrella of disabilities



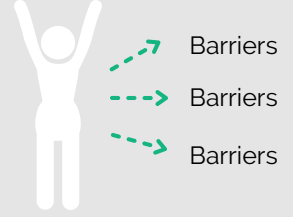
We must keep in mind that if there are barriers to meeting an individual's own basic needs, it will be difficult or impossible for them to live up to the expectations we may impose on them.

Medical Model of Disability



The individual is the problem; Centred around "curing" conditions.

Social Model of Disability



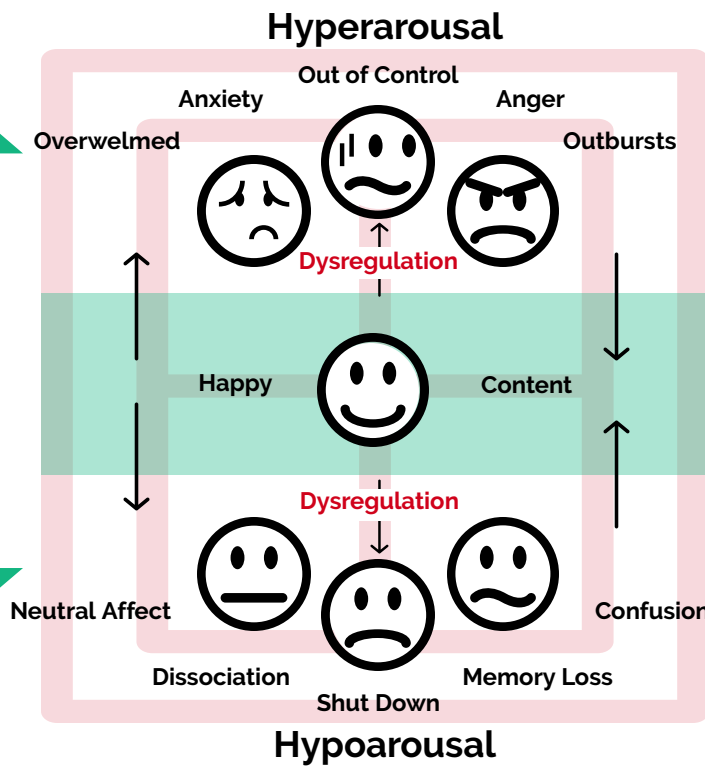
Society poses various barriers; Focus is on removing barriers in society.



It's all about connecting with the individuals we serve on a human basis first and attuning ourselves to their needs.

A helpful concept to keep in mind when working with individuals who have experienced trauma:

The Window of Tolerance by Dan Siegel



Useful tools to use...



1 Dave Hingsburger's "Cognitive Ramping"

Accessible communication to address language barriers for individuals with intellectual disabilities

- Start at the beginning;** Organize and prepare what you want to cover and what your objectives are. **Do not skip steps.**
 - Take things a step at a time;** Be careful to avoid discussing multiple ideas at one time.
 - Use **repetition** when discussing complex concepts.
 - Use plain language;** Avoid using complicated jargon.
 - Avoid acronyms;** Always use full concept titles.
 - Use pictures and imagery** to help convey meaning.
 - Adapt and be creative** with the tools you use, no matter how bizarre a strategy may seem.
- ~ Hingsburger, (2013)

2 P.A.R.T.

- Be **PRESENT** and accepting when meeting with people.
 - ATTUNE** yourself to what the individual is feeling and experiencing.
 - Connect with the individual by **RESONATING** or shaping your internal state to theirs.
 - Build **TRUST** within your relationship with others by practicing these concepts.
- ~ Siegel (2014)

3 Pendulation

Pendulation allows individuals to safely experience activation and explore their trauma. ~ Levine 2015

Pendulation is based on the idea that when an individual is triggered, there is activation that causes them to re-experience their trauma. This activation then further triggers more and more distress. Pairing activation with a resource, such as grounding or movement, helps to break the cycle of re-experiencing trauma.

Trigger/Trauma



Activation



Trigger/Trauma



Activation

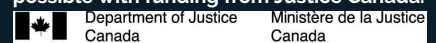
RESOURCE

Hingsburger, D. (2013). Cognitive Ramping; Principles of Plain Language and Accessible Communication. *The Direct Support Workers Newsletter*. 2(10).

Payne P, Levine PA and Crane-Godreau MA (2015) Somatic experiencing: using interoception and proprioception as core elements of trauma therapy. *Front. Psychol.* 6:93. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00093

Siegel, D. J. (2014, August 20). No Drama Discipline. *Huffington Post*.

The development of this resource was made possible with funding from Justice Canada.



For more information about this project, visit: <http://www.tricountywomenscentre.org/>