

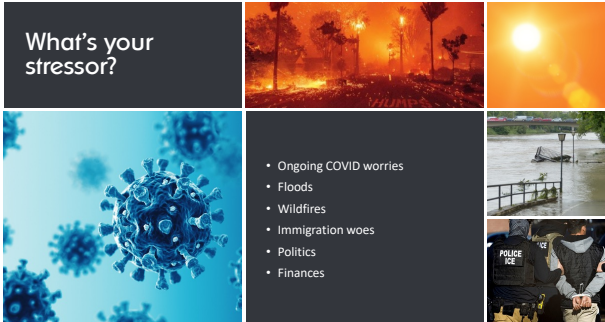
Building Caring Community in Troubled Times

with
Ruth Anne Hammond, MA
for Early Childhood Investigations
September 16, 2025



1

What's your stressor?



- Ongoing COVID worries
- Floods
- Wildfires
- Immigration woes
- Politics
- Finances

2



Creating Calm Within the Chaos

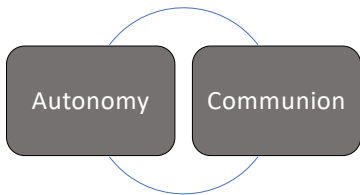
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Qualities for an Unknown Future

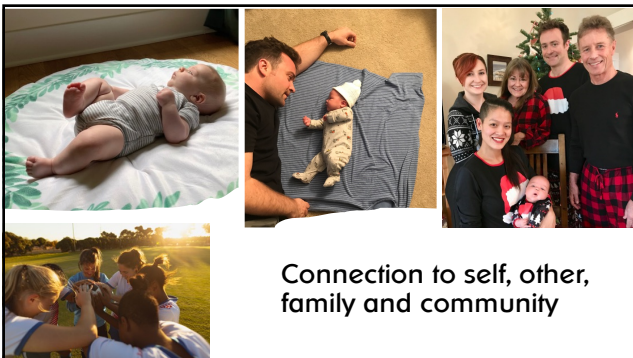


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Two Basic Psycho-spiritual Needs



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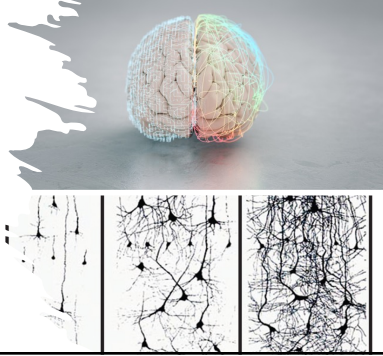


Connection to self, other,
family and community

6

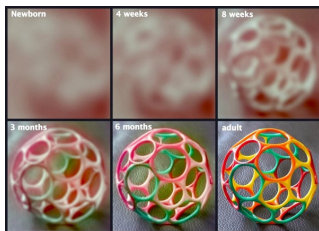
Connecting Builds Connections

- Left hemisphere is all about
 - Power, control, grasping
 - Ownership
 - Man-made objects
- Right hemisphere is all about
 - Inner self-awareness
 - Relationships
 - Connection to nature



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A metaphor



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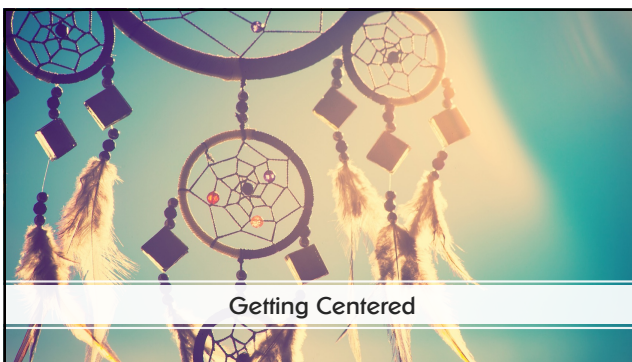


William, 13 Weeks: Quiet Alert

9



10



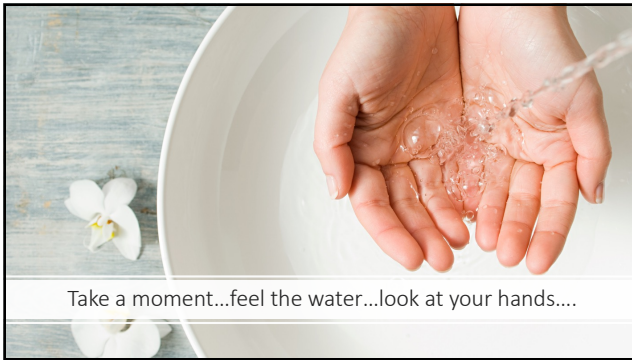
11

HRV Experiment, per Dan Siegel

- Put your hand over your heart.
- Put your other hand on your belly.
- Breathe.
- How does that feel?
- Now switch hands
- Breathe. How does that feel?
- Decide which you like better.
- Take a few breaths.
- Do you feel calmer?

Heart apex

12



13



14



15

How long is a moment?

- A flash of recognition
- A brief flush of oxytocin & dopamine
- A prolonged gaze of up to 4 seconds
- It's there when you really need it
- Ruptures of connection can be repaired
- It's our job to initiate repair after rupture



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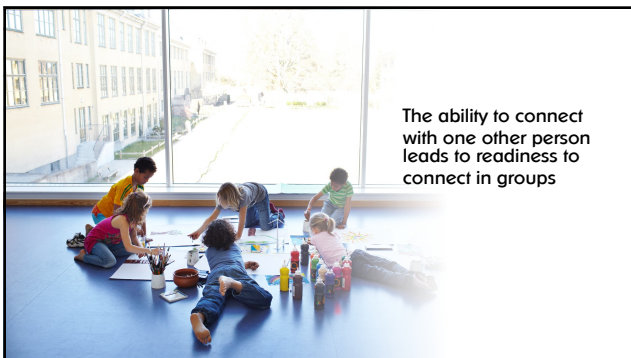
Moments Throughout the Day

- During separations at drop-off
- During body care
- During quiet observation of children's play
- During interventions
- During repair transactions
- During end of day pick-up



17

The ability to connect with one other person leads to readiness to connect in groups



18

What is a community?

- Where members really know each other
- Where each feels they belong
- Where each one can get their needs met
- Where emotional connectedness makes a sense of warmth and safety



19

Humans are not alone in our need for community.



20

We are wired to connect



21



22

ECE is a perfect hub in which to create community.



23

Finding intra- and interpersonal center



24



Gabby's Story of Connecting with Other Moms

25



Families Forward Learning Center, Pasadena, CA

26

Families Forward Learning Center, Pasadena, CA

- A multi-generational learning center that has been in existence since 1946, and for most of that time was known as Mothers' Club
- Free ECE programs for children 6 weeks to 5 years
- Many classes and other resources for the parents or other primary caregivers, including ESL classes, literacy support and psychotherapy
- Teachers are offered free therapy
- Financial assistance provided to families in crisis
- Located in the Eton fire neighborhood, is an important part of recovery for enrolled and "hub" families

27



Cathy Shapiro, Movers & Shakers Music

28



Rokina Roppo, Montessori & Me Preschool

29

We are all in
this
together..



30



31



32



33
