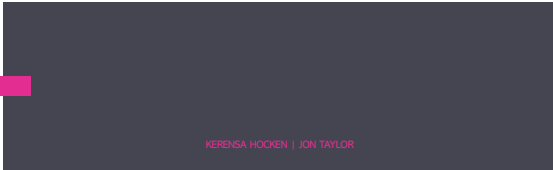


COMPASSION FOCUSED THERAPY IN FORENSIC PRACTICE

A TRAUMA SENSITIVE APPROACH TO WORKING WITH OFFENDING



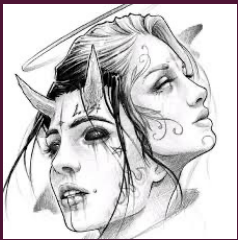
KERENSA HOCKEN | JON TAYLOR

1

TOPICS

- Human nature and human harmfulness
- Theoretical foundations
- Key aspects of the model
- Framework for forensic CFT
- Outcomes of CFT

2



COMPASSION: AN ANTIDOTE TO HUMAN HARMFULNESS?

- CFT explicitly addresses human harmfulness
- CFT aims to build compassionate motives
- CFT builds the capacity for grief, guilt and remorse
- CFT aspires to promote helpfulness not harmfulness

3



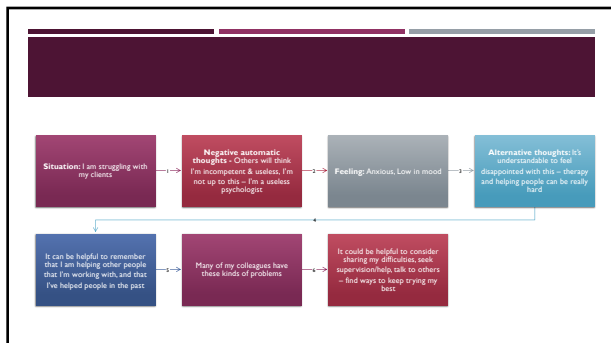
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HOW DID CFT START?

20 YEARS AGO USING CBT

- Noticing the hostility in the alternative thoughts or when engaging in 'helpful' homework
- Negative self-monitoring is constant – even in training in mindfulness – but it's the emotional tone that does the damage (Whelton & Greenberg, 2005)
- Noticing the strong fears blocks and resistances to affiliative emotions in the alternative thoughts or when engaging in helpful homework

5



6

COMPASSION FOCUSED THERAPY (GILBERT)

- Focus on building compassionate motivation
- Formulation (unintended consequences of safety seeking)
- Focus on impact of early experiences
- Focus on therapeutic alliance and experience of being "held in mind"
- Body and mind awareness (imagery, mindfulness etc), compassionate mind training

7

An integrative, process-based therapy that utilises insights and wisdoms from many of the main schools of psychotherapy.

- Motives
- Emotions
- competencies
- Behaviours

CFT aims to build psychological and physiological infrastructures for creating internal sense of safeness

8

Motives

- Motives designed to satisfy basic life strategies to survive long enough to allow us to reproduce.
- Three groups of motives based around the core life tasks that support survival and reproduction.
- Motives require us to be alert and orientated to key signals.
- We are designed to behave in certain ways in response to signals and behave in certain ways to elicit signals
- Based on algorithms
- Motives can change the way we use competencies

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Emotions

Emotions are specialized states that adjust physiology, cognition, subjective experience, facial expressions and behaviours in ways that increase the ability to meet the adaptive challenge of situations that have reoccurred over the evolutionary history of the species

Nesse (2019)

Anxiety
Signals danger and motivates a defensive reaction (move, run)

Anger
Signals a threat to us (or people we care about). Can include a block to our goals.
Motivates us to challenge others or fight

Disgust
Signals something harmful or poisonous. Motivates us to stay away of equal.

Sadness
Signals a loss or separation of some type.

Happiness
Signals that something is valued and important to us. Encourages us to pursue goals with rewarding outcomes

Shame
Signals that our behaviour may lead to rejection. Motivates us to behave in ways that promote belonging and minimize rejection

Guilt
Signals that our behaviour has brought harm to others. Motivates us to repair and prevent further harm.

Contentment
Signals safety and allows us to rest and repair

10

competencies

Competencies for engaging

Competencies for action

Skills and abilities that enable us to satisfy key life tasks.

Flavour of competency depends on motive

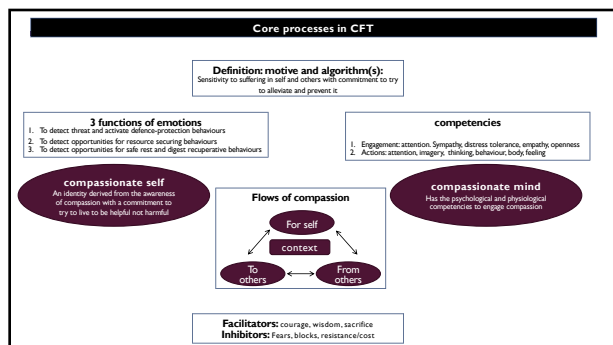
Unique human competencies

Our reasoning and planning abilities – we can think in time and plan for tomorrow, next week or next year

Empathy and mind awareness


Awareness of awareness

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12

SWITCHING MOTIVES



Competitive Mentality

Therapeutic process/journey



Caring Mentality




Down rank	Up rank	Distress sensitivity
Social comparison- inferior	Social comparisons –superior-entitled	Able to help
External shame	Humiliation	Distress tolerant
Submissive	Aggressive	Soothing-active
Striving	Striving	Joy-guilt
Angry Self- - critical	Other blaming/critical	Empathic
		Self-reassuring

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
Compassionate intent

Collaborative relationship

Socratic dialogues

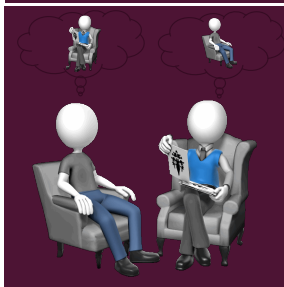




Attention to content and process

APPROACH: METHODS & TECHNIQUES | COMPASSION FOCUSED

14




EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP

- Transference
- Counter-transference
- Projection
- Shame

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SHAME, EXCLUSION & THE THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE



- 67% of adults who have experienced childhood abuse never disclose to their therapist (Burczycka 2017).
- Shame – something negative is exposed about us that invites criticism, rejection and disconnection (Lewis 1992). Implications for risk focused interventions.
- Common sources of shame include the body, fantasies, thoughts etc.
- People can conceal shameful parts and then feel shame for concealing them

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Psychoeducation: Human nature & evolved minds

Compassionate mind training

Autobiographical formulations

Adversity and trauma as facilitators of criminogenic capacities


Reconceptualising criminogenic need

Facilitating guilt & cultivating healthy lives


COMPASSION FOCUSED FORENSIC PRACTICE: KEY POINTS

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Evolution

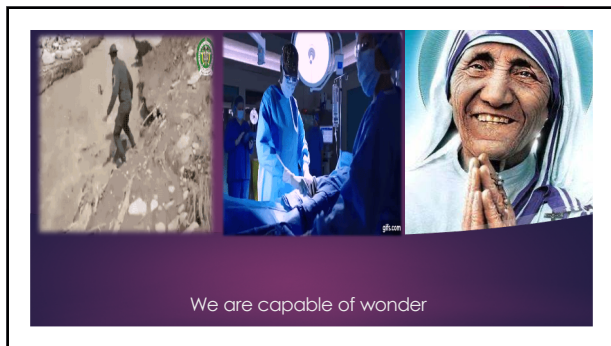


Genetics

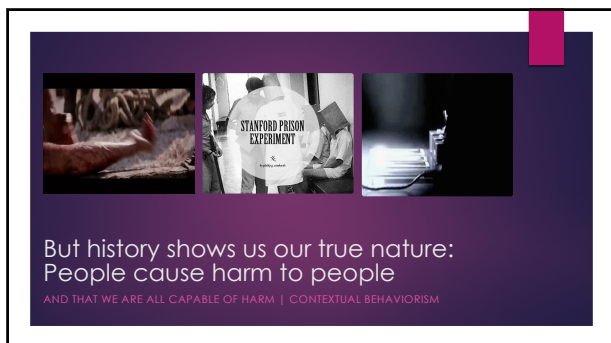


Human Nature

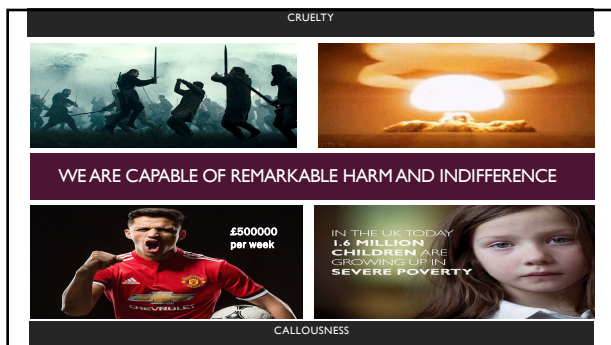
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20




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HUMAN NATURE

Children engage in prosocial behaviour from an early age. Whether children will reliably provide compassionate help to a suffering individual is unclear. To investigate this, 73 4-year-olds were presented with three novel tasks in which they and a puppet had opportunity to win stickers by completing respective versions of the same tasks. In all cases, the puppets were unable to complete their tasks. The puppets reacted by being either upset or not upset. While children ~~their willingness to do so was~~ cost them significantly diminished when it incurred a personal cost.

David, M., Wang, J. N., & Hoffman, M. (2012). The cost of helping: An exploration of compassionate responding in young children. Journal of Developmental Psychology, 52(4), 457-470.



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COMPASSION



CRUELTY

HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVES

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How can we understand our nature?



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Evolution

- ▶ Key tasks: survival and reproduction
- ▶ Our brains and bodies have evolved over millions of years
- ▶ Evolution operates slowly
- ▶ Which means there are parts of our brain that evolved for our ancestral environments
- ▶ And we have competing motivations that support us to complete differing social tasks.

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EVOLUTIONARY GIFT 1:

Satisfy key life tasks

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EVOLUTIONARY GIFT 2: A TRICKY BRAIN

old brain

Motives: harm-avoidance, food, sex, caring, status
 Emotions: anger, anxiety, sadness, joy
 Behaviours: fight, flight, shut down, courting, caring

new brain

Imagine | plan | anticipate | self-monitor | empathy | perspective-taking
 Ruminate | predict | self-consciousness
 Self-criticism | self-loathing | shame | humiliation

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EVOLUTIONARY GIFT 3:
Group affiliation & need for connection

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Evolutionary gift 4:
Brain:body connected and communicating

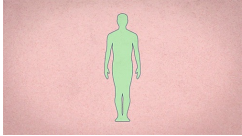
Story follows state

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- Evolution operates very slowly
- Evolution is not intentional
- Characteristics that exist now where selected for in ancient ancestral environments.
- Our brain has built on ancient architectures (old and new brain)
- Which means that we can be organised by ancient motives and drives (rank, sexual competition, resources)

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GENETICS



- We are gene built
- We do not select our genes
- We are predisposed to certain characteristics
- We are not to blame for our predispositions
- Our early experiences may shape our phenotypic expression (epigenetics)

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disadvantage

intolerance




poverty


discrimination

Inherited trauma

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CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



ADULT EXPERIENCES

LIFE :WE LEARN WHAT WE LIVE (PHENOTYPIC SHAPERS)

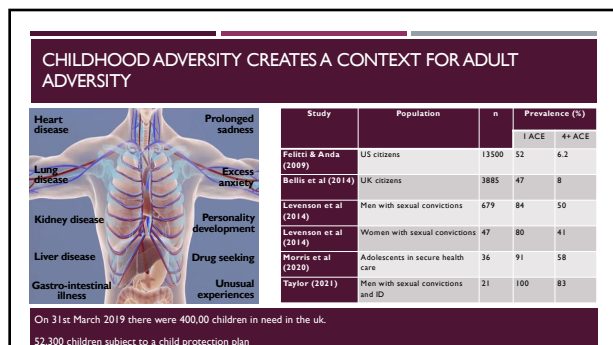
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SYNAPTIC PRUNING




- Efficient neural pathways are preserved across development
- Inefficient neural pathways are pruned away
- Efficiency depends on the environment
- The neural system that emerges is designed to be maximally efficient within the environment in which it developed.

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Adverse Adult Experiences




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Early trauma dynamics are re-enacted in a secure settings



The system responds with increased authoritarian measures and restrictions



The resident group strengthen the trauma responses and act out

Institutional trauma.

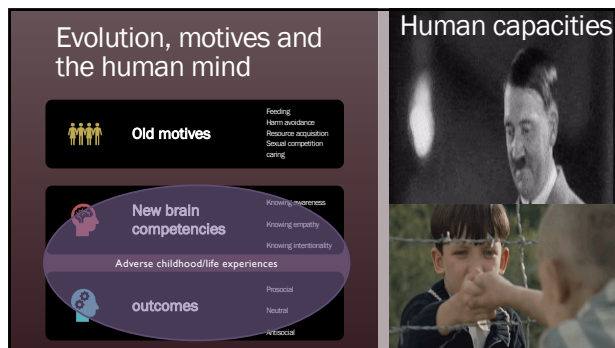
If we can't tell what is a normal response to custody, then we could misconstrue normal behaviour as offence related, challenging or symptomatic

Grief response (for liberty and family connection)

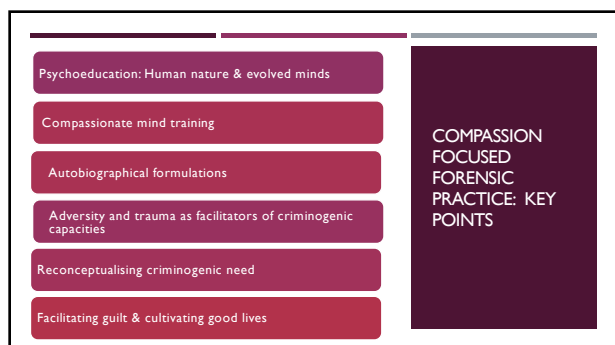
Shame response (for behavior and impact on others)

Impact on self-identity (patient, offender, challenging)

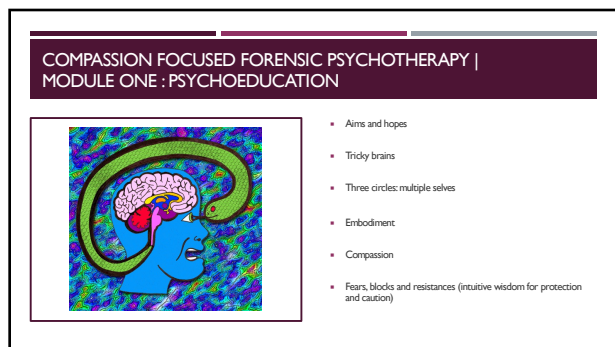
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TRICKY BRAIN

- » New brain/old brain interface
- » There's too much info out there to notice
- » Your memory isn't a recorder
- » Your mind will take shortcuts (heuristics)
- » You are biased (based on experience and biological imperative)

43

Anxiety
Signals danger and motivates a defensive reaction (move, run)

Anger
Signals a threat to us (or people we care about). Can include a block to our goals. Motivates us to challenge others or fight.

Disgust
Signals something harmful or poisonous. Motivates us to stay away of avoid.

Sadness
Signals a loss or separation of some type.

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Guilt
Signals that our behaviour has brought harm to others. Motivates us to repair and prevent further harm.

Contentment
Signals safety and allows us to rest and repair.

Evolutionary function of emotions (Irons 2019)

Emotions have evolved to help us to do things

Emotions organise our minds and our bodies to perform specific tasks to meet specific needs

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Drive
Motivates us to get things done
Fueled, confident, wanting

Soothing
Motivates us to be with others and feel better
Safe, connected, content

Compassionate Mind
Brings balance to our different motives

Threat
Motivates us to look for danger and protect ourselves
Anxious, frightened, sad

3 circles model of (e)motivational systems

45

MULTIPLE SELVES



- We have different presentations – ways of being and relating.
- These different presentations have different physiologies, different ways of organising our thinking and have different behavioural repertoires.
- Context can shift our motivational state and therefore the version of self that is most effective at meeting our needs

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GETTING TO KNOW OUR "SELVES"



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GETTING TO KNOW OUR "SELVES":

WHAT IS THE MOTIVE THAT SITS BEHIND THE SEXUAL SELF THAT CAUSED HARM



48

INTRODUCING COMPASSION TO OUR SELVES

- Focussing to nurture compassionate attention
- Cultivating a flow of compassionate thoughts
- Adopting a compassionate posture
- Using memories to feel compassion
- Imagining and rehearsing compassionate acts.

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COMPASSION AS A MOTIVATION AND NOT AN EMOTION

SENSITIVITY TO SUFFERING

1st psychology

- Non judgement
- Sympathy
- Sensitivity
- Care for well being
- Distress tolerance
- Empathy

2nd psychology

- Attention
- Imagery
- Reasoning
- Feeling
- Sensory
- behaviour

courage

wisdom

commitment

INTENTION TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING

50

Anticipation of the effect of engaging with an emotion

Unfamiliarity, confusion or lack of opportunity to experience the emotion

RESISTANCE
Consequences are too costly

FEARS | BLOCKS | RESISTANCES

(FOR SELF-COMPASSION AND FOR GUILT)

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Psychoeducation: Human nature & evolved minds

Compassionate mind training

Adversity and trauma as facilitators of criminogenic capacities

Autobiographical formulations

Reconceptualising criminogenic need

Facilitating guilt & cultivating good lives

FORENSIC CFT: COMPASSIONATE MIND TRAINING

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BUILDING COMPETENCIES FOR A COMPASSIONATE MIND

- Noticing
- Attending
- Mindful awareness
- Soothing Rhythm breathing
- Metacognition
- Acceptance
- Imagery
- Self-compassion

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FORENSIC CFT: FORMULATION

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FORENSIC CFT: UNDERSTANDING OUR PAIN

Psychoeducation | Trauma informed understanding |
 Developing sadness (facing trauma) | Re-writing scripts |
 Offence trauma

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HUMAN REACTIONS TO ADVERSITY AND TRAUMA

- Our minds seem to have certain ways that they respond to repeated traumas
- If the human mind reacts in certain predictable ways then perhaps those ways are designed to happen.
- We know that safety strategies are highly resilient (better safe than sorry)
- This means they will last over time and outside of the trauma context (resilience not resistance)

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APPROACHING TRAUMA: COLLABORATIVELY CONFRONTING DISTRESS

- Create a trauma sensitive context for work
- Work with the person to plan the best approach
- Developmental sequence (as things happened)
- Graded hierarchy
- Idiosyncratic order

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FORENSIC CFT:
CRIMINOGENIC
NEED

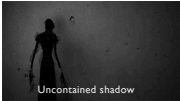
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INDIVIDUAL VARIATION & CRIMINOGENIC INFLUENCES

- Epigenetics & phenotypic expression
- How responses to adversity mature over time depends on genetic foundation and individual experience
- Some criminogenic factors operate in the short-term while others sustain an influence over a longer time
- Criminogenic factors can have interact with each other to produce the harmful outcome
- Criminogenic influence will therefore vary
- We need to understand what is criminogenic for the individual (people with harmful sexual interests don't all cause harm)




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Uncontained shadow

I'M SO
FUCKING
WORTHLESS

(ordered) trauma responses

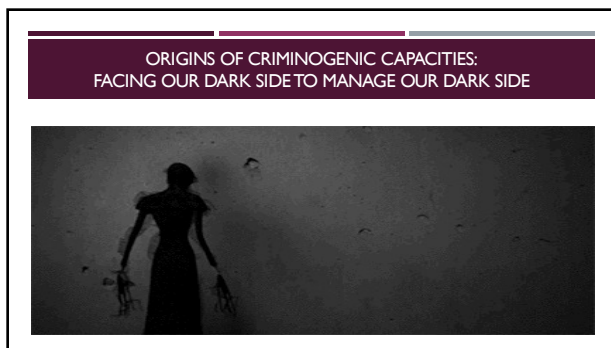


Group belonging

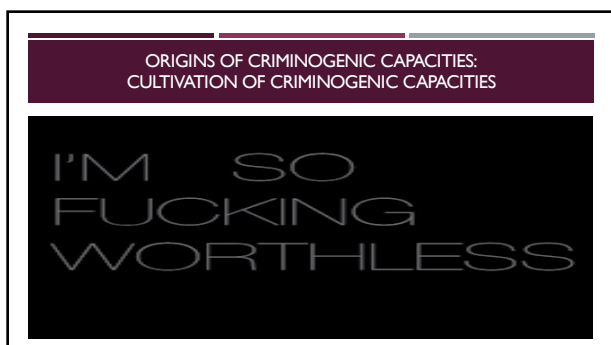
RE-CONCEPTUALISING CRIMINOGENIC NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE ORIGINS:

FUNCTIONAL RESPONDING FROM EVOLVED MINDS

60



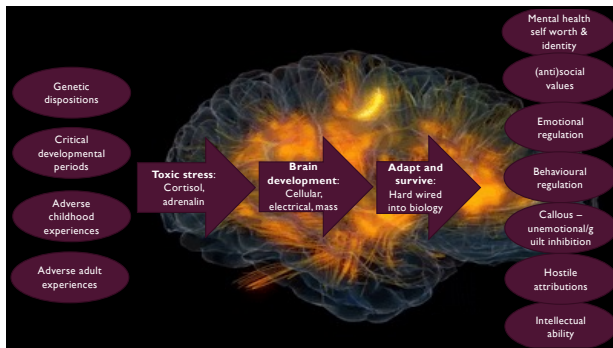
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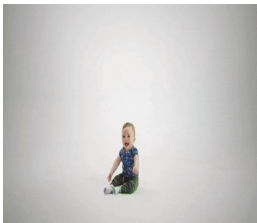
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EVOLUTION OF CRIMINOGENIC CAPACITIES OVER TIME (RECRUITING NEW COMPETENCIES TO SUPPORT MOTIVE)

- Physical size
- Testosterone
- Desensitised
- Hostile attributions
- Callous-unemotional






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ORIGINS OF CRIMINOGENIC CAPACITIES:
GROUP BELONGING, SOCIAL ATTACHMENTS AND INTIMACY






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**PAIRING : JOINING : GROUPING:
FUNDAMENTAL TO LIFE**

- » Connection is a biological necessity : an evolutionary imperative
- » The ability to self-regulate is built on ongoing experiences of co-regulation.
- » Reliable co-regulation builds resilience in the ANS that allows management of separation and distress.
- » Group membership became a survival necessity
- » Affiliative relationships with sexual partners facilitate reproductive fitness

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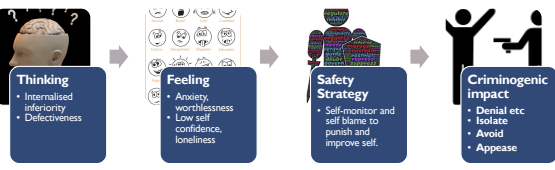




**SOCIAL
EMOTIONS TO
GUIDE SOCIAL
INTERACTIONS**

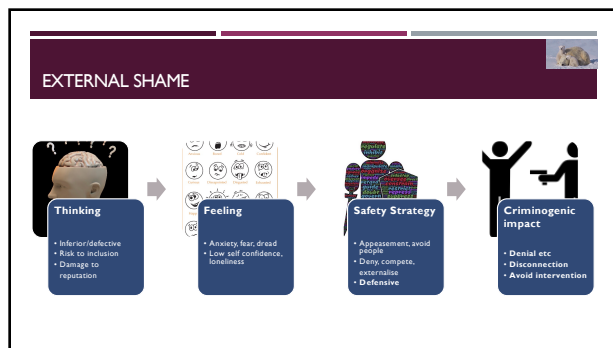
- » **Shame:** signals potential social disapproval and rejection | stimulates protection of self
- » **Humiliation:** signals the source of disclosure of transgression | stimulates attack on source
- » **Guilt:** signals harm to others | stimulates reparation and change

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INTERNAL SHAME (SELF CRITIC)



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**FORENSIC CFT:
FACILITATING
GUILT AND
CULTIVATING
HEALTHY
LIFESTYLES**

Safety check | Restoration narratives and healthy lives | Guilt, shame and humiliation | FBRs | Mentalising | Practicing guilt | Noticing consequences | Understanding harm |

73

CAREFUL

- Highly challenging work
- Stimulating distress as a result of harm caused in a context that is now connected to the experience of abuse/trauma/adversity.
- Now a felt and embodied response to harm.

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DEVELOPING MY HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:
identity: restorative commitments : healthy lifestyle

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GUILT

Thinking

- Hurt and harm **self** has caused to others
- (outward / mentalising)

Feelings

- Sadness, sorrow, remorse
- Empathy

Safety Strategy

- Reparation
- Apologetic
- Making amends
- Self-correction

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FACILITATING GUILT

Practicing Guilt	Mentalising Graded exposure (unintended : intended) Graded exposure – increasing levels of harm caused
Noticing the consequences	On my in-group (family, friends) On social rank On self
Understanding the harm I caused	Observing the harm Mentalising the consequences Restoration

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Patient Essentials

total seclusion time

seclusion episodes

number of incidents

AN EVALUATION OF A COMPASSION FOCUSED THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY FOR MEN WHO USE VIOLENCE TO MANAGE THEIR LIVES

(Taylor 2017)

- Medium Secure Service
- Young adult men (av 24) with mild/ borderline intellectual abilities.
- High levels of trauma histories, chronic adversity and multiple care placements

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FORENSIC SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP | COMPASSIONATE MIND FOUNDATION

EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP ZOOM MEETINGS, ANNUAL CPD DAY

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THE COMPASSIONATE MIND FOUNDATION
www.compassionatemind.co.uk

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ESSENTIAL READING AND RESOURCE...

The Compassionate Mind
PAUL GILBERT

The Compassionate Mind Workbook
A step-by-step guide to compassion focused therapy
PAUL GILBERT

Experiencing Compassion Focused Therapy from the Inside Out
A self-exploration of the therapeutic process
Russell L. Kolts, Michael A. Smith, Michael A. Smith, and David A. Smith

THE COMPASSIONATE MIND FOUNDATION
www.compassionatemind.co.uk

Russell Kolts – based in USA
<http://www.compassionatemind.net/>

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