A Trans-species Psychology - Trauma Informed - Therapeutic Approach to Mutual Connection, Healing & Growth.

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Presentation Goals

- Explore the latest science supporting the human-animal intervention field

- Understand how human-animal relationships can impact resilience by improving skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, social awareness and relationship management.

- Learn what makes it possible for other social mammals and birds to impact learning, healing, and growth

- Ways to explore the relational role animals play in the home and how to expand their role in improving resilience

- Understanding Mutual Benefit & How the Animal Assisted Intervention Field Needs to Do Better
Our Happy Accident...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yIEv6qc8xc&t=2s

It Was Supposed to Be About Horses...

Bailey & Penney Hens @ High School Busting Stress During Exam Week
One Heart
Wild Story
THE MISSION...

To promote the health, well-being and welfare of humans, animals, and nature through mutually beneficial relationships.

OUR VISION...

Create a community of care that inspires healing, kindness, and advocacy through empathic relationships with all life on earth.
One Heart Wild Programs

• **One Heart Wild Sanctuary** ~ A stable social environment where humans and animals come together to connect, learn, heal and grow

• **Animal/Equine Assisted Professional Services** ~ Self Development & Psychotherapy

• **Community Outreach** ~ Animals & Empathy Elementary Program, Teens Breathe In Nature, Wounded Warriors, Scarlet Road (sexual exploitation), Coffee Oasis (homeless teens), YWCA, Foster Families, Discovery Alternative High School

• **ROOTS Institute** ~ Animal/Equine Assisted Facilitation Certification – Mutuality in Relationship Changes the Paradigm
What is the **Human Animal Bond?**

A *mutually beneficial* and dynamic relationship between people and other animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both. This includes but is not limited to, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, other animals, and the environment.

Committee on the Human-Animal Bond in JAVMA
“Our relationship with other animals often bridges a gap between who we are, based on what we are experiencing, and our greatest hopes for ourselves. “I wouldn’t be here if not for my…, I would rather be homeless than give up my…”

Disregarding the depth and importance of the human-animal bond can widen the gap in understanding another’s experience and that can be re-traumatizing.”

Drea Bowen, ROOTS Institute

What We Do Inside Relationship Matters More Than Any Other Aspect of Human Life.”

Meg Olmert
Director of Research
Warrior Canine Connection

New Rules for the Human-Animal Bond

https://youtu.be/0ceZ6oIV9Ys?list=PLYP7tklU8Tc6E3FFGwRWoZlzYrf-Jmug
Social animal & bird brains share 7 Primary Emotion Circuits:

- Seeking (depression)
- Rage (Trauma)
- Fear (Anxiety)
- Care (Loneliness)
- Panic/Grief (PTSD, Anxiety)
- Play (Loss of Joy & Meaning)
- Lust
Genes Respond to Social Experiences

How can the human-animal bond help:

• Today we know that regulatory genes can change entire gene networks based upon social experiences.

• Being cared for and caring for can change the epigenetic markings and create different network expressions.

• Social Connectivity has powerful effects on genes. Gene networks are consistent between social mammal and bird species.

Sparky goat helped when nothing else was working for debilitating clinical depression.
Tuesdays are Senior Volunteer Days @ One Heart Wild

- Being socially isolated as children/adults is more devastating than high pressure stressed individuals with good social networks.

- Creating mutuality in relational experiences parallels relational skills needed outside of the human-animal experience.

Wounded Warrior Gets Close with Johnny Horse
Genes Change with Changes in Behavior

• **Environment impacts behavior** – we don’t see the dependence on cell phones or the reports of aggressive behaviors

• Feeling close to another (even if they are not physically present) protects the body with positive gene changes – *Many of our clients have pictures of their animal friends and we can encourage appointment compliance by letting them know what that animal has been up to since their last visit*

• **Subjective experience is the most important aspect of the environment** - Emotional arousal – what’s your number – is it comfortable – if not what do you want to do to make it better – practice presence through the senses
AROUSAL WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

The three zones of arousal:
A simple model for understanding the regulation of autonomic arousal

From Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy, by Pat Ogden, Kekuni Minton, and Clare Pain
Resiliency is the ability to overcome challenges of all kinds—trauma, tragedy, personal crises, plain ‘ole’ life problems— and bounce back stronger, wiser, and more personally powerful.

- Resiliency in Action
Animal Assisted Intervention Interfaces with Many Aspects of Improving Resilience
We are hard wired for connection!!

What is hurt in relationship must be healed in relationship.
Limbic Resonance & Regulation
What does a human body need to do to allow a guinea pig’s nervous system to remain curious and calm vs. flight?
I am not this hair
I am not this skin
I am the soul that lives within.

Rumi
Mia Gains Her Freedom & Autonomy.

She Considers Human Connection From A New Perspective... Safety, Trust, and Choice.

Mutuality in Relationship!
Rasa – Mia’s first and enduring stable relationship…
Rasa’s compassion fatigue and increasing resilience…
What’s been hurt in relationship must be healed in relationship.

Limbic (emotional) Resonance & Regulation
Peer Reviewed General Outcomes

- Increased Social Interaction Among Autistic Children (O’Haire 2013)
- Increased Social Behaviors & Reduced Dementia Agitation and Aggression (Bernabi et al., 2013)
- Reduction in Symptoms of Depression (Souter & Miller, 2007)
- Increased Emotional Well Being – Reduced Anxiety & Fear (Nimer & Lundahl, 2007)
- Reduced levels of Cortisol during, throughout the day and afternoon, and weeks after a once a week session for 12 weeks, reduction in problematic behaviors (Pendry et al., 2014)
Peer Reviewed Outcomes Intervention For PTSD

• Intrusion – Animal presence comforting reminder that danger is no longer present (Yount et al., 2013)
• Secure base for mindfulness experiences in the present (Parish-Plass, 2008)
• Emotional Numbing – Animal presence elicits positive emotion and warmth (Marr et al., 2000, O’Haire et al., 2013)
• Animals are social facilitators that connect people, Reduce loneliness, Assist Individuals to break out of isolation (Wood et al., 2005, Banks & Banks, 2002)
• Hyper Arousal – Positive interaction with nonhuman animals releases oxytocin (Beetz et al., 2012)
• Reduction in anxious arousal (Barker et al., 2003)
Stable social environment & social agency vs. specially trained actors

Ambiguous social situations are threatening and affect immune genes.
Phillip Tedeschi (17)
Graduate School of Social Work University of Denver
Executive Director of the Institute for Human Animal Connection
https://youtu.be/rqcVuJbnWZU?list=PLYP7tqkiU8Tc6E3FFGwR WoZlzYrf-Jmug
The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

— Bruce D. Perry —
Based on the Data
Stories & Important Roles Matter

• Animal Assisted effects are enhanced when the nonhuman animal is integrated into a session from the animal’s perspective and experience.

• Tell a therapeutic story about the animal – connection happens here.

• Giving the animal a role & integrated purpose rather than just an entity in or tool for the session.

• Human-Animal interaction parallels participant relationships with usual (human) social partners whether horse, dog, or other farm animal (Hamama et al., 2011; Murrow 2013).
Pumbaa’s Story – Building Bridges
What Makes Us More Alike In Relationship Than Different?

All Social Animals Need:

- To feel safe - physically, emotionally, and mentally
- To feel a sense of belonging...to be seen, felt, heard and cared for
- Time to heal, recover, adapt and understand
- To respond to our emotional states by regulating our emotions – nonhumans do this better than we do when allowed
All Social Animals Need:

- Freedom to work with and express the body’s wisdom, our body holds our trauma – Nature Based & Animal Assisted Interventions allow us to be intentional about movement and somatics in a novel context

- Community - Hope – Trust - in those around us to not hurt us – an opportunity to form attachments that heal and inspire the best version of ourselves
Gratitude to Our Friends & Partners
ROOTS Animal/Equine Assisted Facilitation Training meets or exceeds the 2016 American Counseling Association Animal Assisted Facilitation Competencies.

- Six 4-day Modules
- 12 months
- CEU Requirement to stay current
- Supervision throughout program
- Work with equines or other species
- ROOTS graduates qualify for Animal Assisted Liability Insurance
- Trauma informed, trans-species psychology based
We are More the Same Than Different
Equity in Welfare & Well Being!
One Heart Wild Education Sanctuary & ROOTS Institute

A Trans-species Psychology, Trauma Informed Animal Assisted Approach to Connection, Healing & Growth.

Together, we are changing lives one human-animal relationship at a time.
“The truth is, rarely can a response make something better, what makes something better is connection.”

Dr. Brene’ Brown