



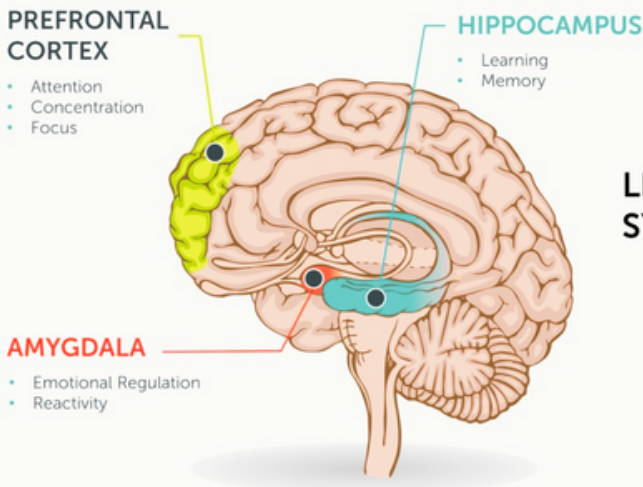
**Centra Wellness**  
NETWORK

Centra Wellness Network  
310 N. Glocheski Dr Manistee, MI 49660  
1-877-398-2013

## Trauma and the Brain

Depending on the stage of life you are in when the trauma occurs can have an impact on what exactly happens in your brain. Our brain is powerful and has the power to adapt to the environment around it. The brain is made up of neurons that form new connections and lose old ones throughout our life. These neural pathways get strengthened or weakened based on our environment. I like to think of it as a road, it starts as an unpaved path, but the more the task or experience is repeated it eventually turned into a well-worn dirt road and then eventually a paved highway—well formed.

This is one of the reasons adverse childhood experiences are so detrimental to a developing brain. If the individual is in a constant state of stress and fear their brain will go into survival mode to adapt. While this is a form of protection it leads to impaired development to certain areas of the brain—the prefrontal cortex (logical thinking), hippocampus (memory), and amygdala (emotional response). As we get older these same parts of our brain are deeply affected.



## LIMBIC SYSTEM

### Those who experience trauma may:

- Have difficulty with self regulation
- Feel unsafe in their body and in everyday experiences
- Feel unsafe in relationships, it's important to establish safety first
- Fight, flight, freeze response inhibits the ability to learn
- Have difficulty shifting from survival to safety
- Major responses to minor events
- Physical effects-headaches, stomach aches, pain
- Coping behaviors are a way of dealing with prolonged stress exposures

### Reminders:

If you missed the first volumes you can find it on the Centra Wellness Network website under “news” then “articles and information”. You can always reach out to me directly and I will happily provide you with a pdf.

As always, if you have any questions or would like more information on anything covered, please feel free to reach out!

My hopes and dreams are that we can work together to create a healthier community, recognizing and addressing the needs within the community and the reasons why those needs exist.

Thanks for reading,

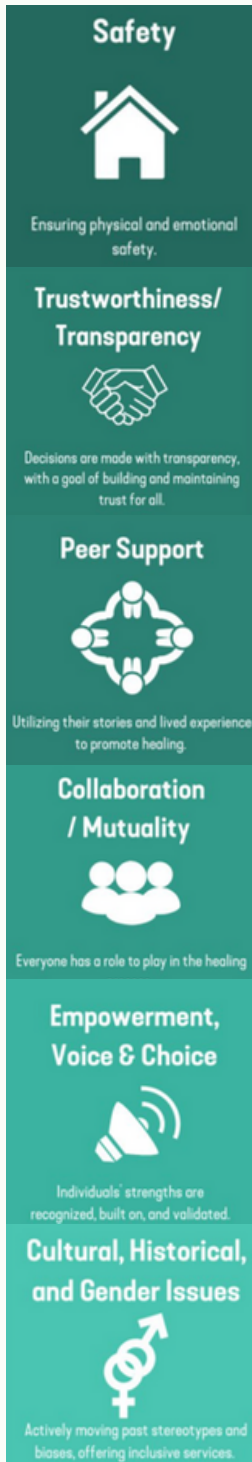
*Sarah Madsen*

Trauma Informed Practices Specialist  
smadsen@centrawellness.org

## Looking ahead:

Next months volume of the trauma newsletter will focus on resiliency. I will also cover another guiding principle of being trauma informed.

## Guiding Principles:



The focus this month will be on the trauma informed care principle of **collaboration and mutuality**. Being able to have open collaboration for important things like decision making is huge for the healing process. This is because healing happens in relationships, and everyone has a role to play here. Consider it a meaningful sharing of power and decision making.

## What does collaboration and mutuality look in an organization?

- Staff and client input is collected and reflected in decisions.
- There is clear communication about the decision-making process
- Creating a consumer advisory board where possible.
- Things are done “with” rather than “for”.
- Clients are partners in programming, plans reflect their needs and wants.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration