

# Understanding and Communicating with Families in "HOT STATES"

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**“An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field.”**

Niels Bohr

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A Different Kind of Day for the Family



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A Different Kind of Day for You



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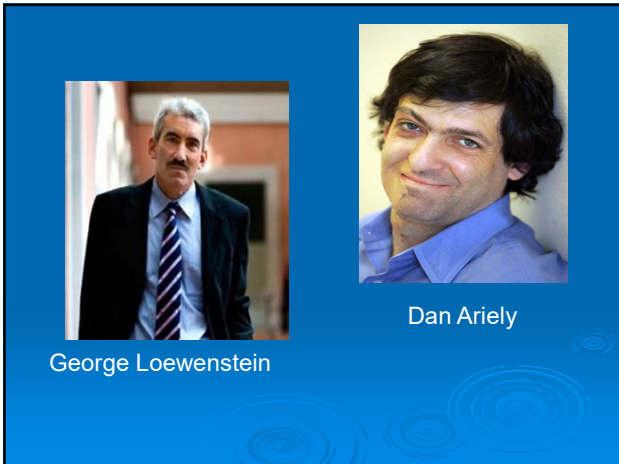
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# What to Expect from People in Hot States?

## Difficulty with:

- Thinking
- Decision Making
- Problem Solving
- Concentrating
- Hearing
- Remembering
- Attention Span




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*"This is this family's 9/11. They are being terrorized by the events of this day."*

Ed Eckenrod

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When holding your breath is safer than breathing



The ocean is wild and over your head and the boat beneath you is sinking

Imagine yourself in a building, up in flames, being told to stand still

When pain is all that they offer, like the kiss from the lips of a monster

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**Brain/Body  
Danger Cocktail**

**Cortisol  
Epinephrine  
Norepinephrine  
Glucocorticoids  
Testosterone**

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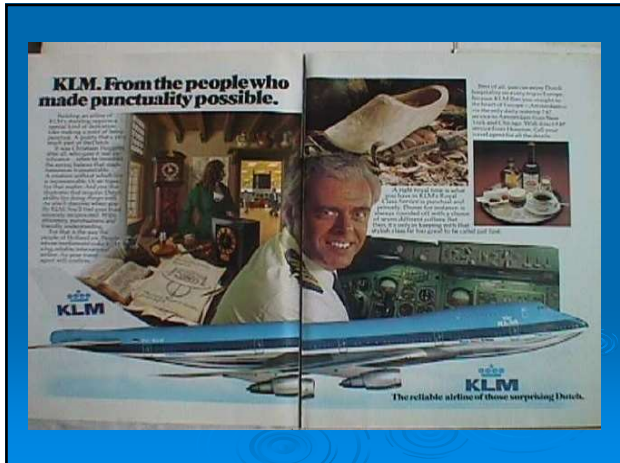
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# The Science of Safety

Patterns of Connection  
Patterns of Protection

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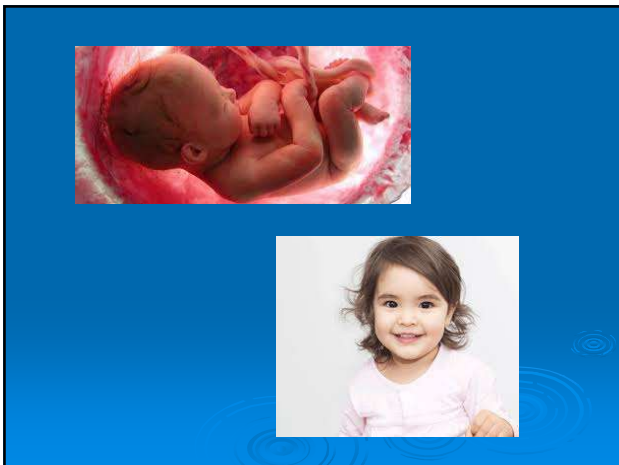
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- Human connection is all about right brain communication.
- The right brain is dominant for emotional communication.
- All our non-verbal communication is what matters to create safety.

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
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**“I believe the essential difference between the right and left hemisphere is that the right hemisphere pays attention to the OTHER. It is deeply attracted to and given life by the relationship, the betweenness that exists with the other. By contrast, the left hemisphere pays attention to the virtual, the non-real, the non-personal world it has created.”**

Iain McGilchrist 

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**75% of us are left brain leaning**



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*Human Connection*

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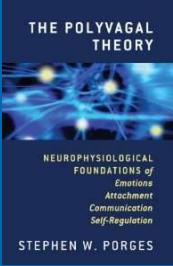
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**Stephen W. Porges Ph.D**



**The Polyvagal Theory**  
Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, Self-Regulation

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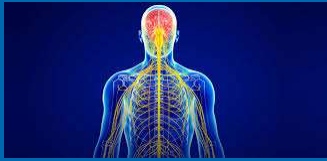
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# Our Nervous Systems

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**Without some degree of regulation, it is difficult to connect with another person, and without connection, there is minimal reasoning. REGULATE, RELATE – then REASON. Trying to reason with someone before they are regulated won't work and will only increase frustration (dysregulation) for both of you.**

***Bruce Perry, MD***  
**What Happened to You?**

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# “Getting to WE”

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# Relationship before Task

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“We have to understand that these defensive behaviors are physiological events triggered by specific neural circuits and we need to figure out how to recruit the neural circuits that promote social behavior. That’s the important part of the research – we can actually recruit these neural circuits through a variety of techniques; intonation, reducing the amount of stimulation in the environment, listening and presenting familiar faces and familiar people.”

Stephen Porges

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## Human Connection and Co-Regulation

- Eye contact
- Modulating soft voice and tone
- Using our facial muscles
- Reassuring looks
- Quiet place without loud noises

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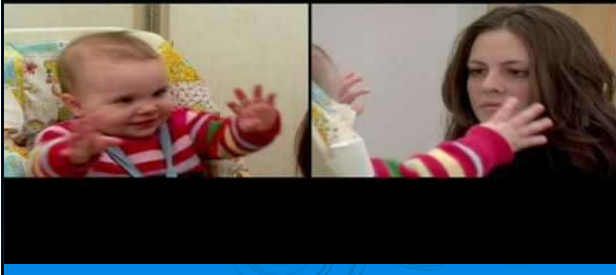
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# The Meme



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Who you bring  
into that room?

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Neuroception

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**DANGER**

**Habituated  
&  
Desensitized**

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Daniel Siegel, MD

Presence  
Attunement  
Resonance  
=  
Trust

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Again  
IT'S  
*Cocktail*  
TIME!



**Trust Cocktail**

**Acetylcholine  
Dopamine  
Serotonin  
Oxytocin**

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“Supportive engagement makes us feel safe, as the oxytocin we release during such conversations enhances our feeling of bonding, and dopamine and serotonin contribute to feelings of well-being. These neurotransmitters tamp down the defensive role of the amygdala, freeing the prefrontal cortex – the more recently evolved part of the human brain – to allow new insights, and wisdom to emerge.”

Judith E. Glaser

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What you do in that room?

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**Every word you speak has a feeling tone and image attached to it**

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**“To speak with a real listener is to be seduced by an “inverse charisma”, a sense of being listened to with such intensity that you become your most honest and best self. This is the magnetic quality of a great listener, this “Inverse Charisma”. Listening like this makes people feel valuable and valued. It’s the most precious gift you can give them.”**

Think Again by Adam Grant

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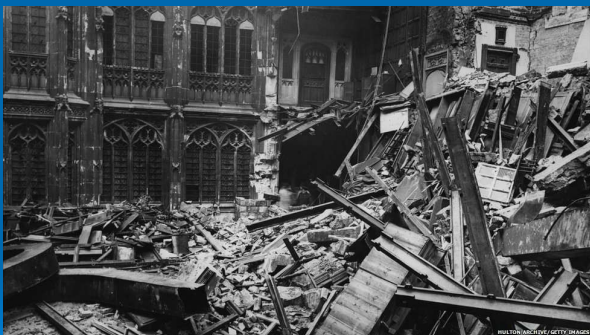
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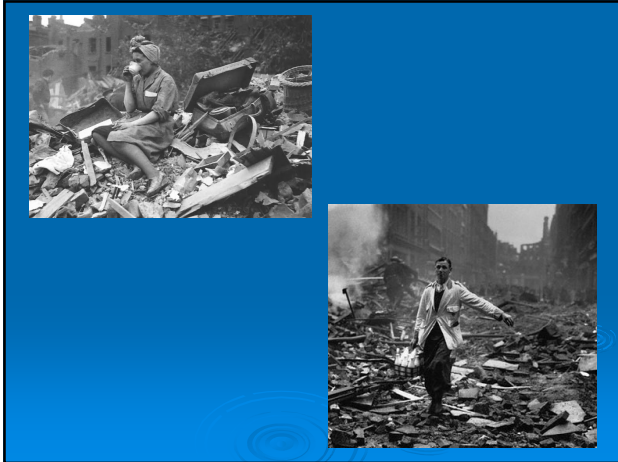
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**What Makes People Feel Safe?**

- Predictability
- Familiarity
- Sense of Control
- Support Systems
- Giving Them a Voice

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**A few final thoughts on Communication in Hot States**

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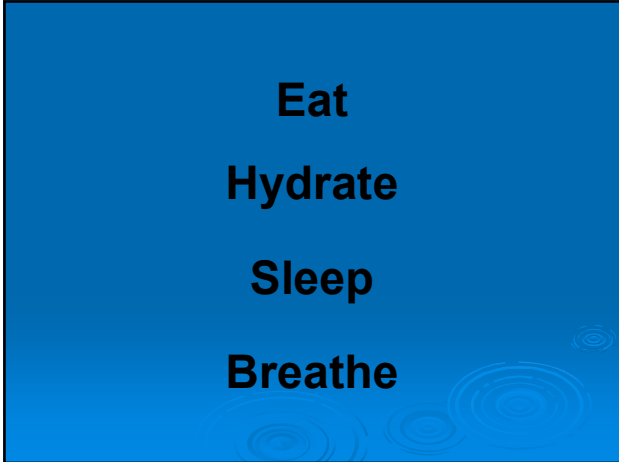
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When pain is all that they offer, like the kiss from the lips of a monster

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Be the light in the dark of this danger till the sun comes up

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[Emotional Intelligence](#) by Daniel Goleman

[Predictably Irrational](#) by Dan Ariely

[How We Decide](#) by Jonah Lehrer

[Fear Itself](#) by Rush W. Dozier

[How to Deal with Emotionally Explosive People](#) by Albert J. Bernstein

[Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers](#) by Robert M. Sapolsky

[The Polyvagal Theory](#) by Stephen W. Porges

[The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy](#) by Deb Dana

[The Emotional Brain](#) by Joseph LeDoux

[The Emotional Life of Your Brain](#) by Richard Davidson

[Polyvagal Theory in Therapy](#) by Deb Dana

[The Practical Guide to Cultivating Therapeutic Presence](#) by Shari M. Keller

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