

Table of Contents Might Include:

Prologue: Message of Appreciation

- I. **Reasons why children enter foster care**, including some myth-busting.
- II. **Why the role of police officers is so important**, especially during an international pandemic and a stay-at-home order
- III. **What mandated reporting looks like on the job**, including during a domestic violence situation; young person might be trying to protect a parent
- IV. **What to look for**, in terms of specific red flags that indicate abuse or neglect
- V. **Tips on interacting with children and teens** who have experienced trauma, especially in intense crisis situations

1.) A color-coded way to think about the brain:

Blue part of the brain, made up of the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus	Red part of brain, made up of amygdala
<i>Calm, slow, deep thinking</i>	<i>“OMG, I’m gonna die!!!”</i>
Prefrontal cortex = decision-making, abstract thought, mood regulation	Fight/flight/freeze = how to address threat to life
Hippocampus = context (time/place) of prior events	Fear memories are stored in a different part of the brain than context of events
Internal monologue to regulate your emotions; able to “talk yourself down”	Amygdala has no capacity for language, focuses on raw emotion and action

2.) Impact of Trauma:

- Damages **blue** parts of brain
- **Amygdala** becomes hyperactive and ready to take over at moments notice
- **Amygdala** suppresses the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, and takes over
- **Cortisol** = stress hormone; increases aggression; nature's built-in alarm system
- If a leopard is charging you, you don't want to think **calm, slow, deep thoughts**
- Ditto for growing up in an atmosphere of abuse
- This might make an abused child or teen seem **reactive, impulsive or hyper-vigilant**
- Their emotions can be triggered by things that remind them of that abuse
- When they get upset, it **might take longer for them to calm down**
- It takes the human body **24 hours to metabolize cortisol**
- When basic needs are threatened, our brain prioritizes them over everything else (Maslow's hierarchy of needs) and shortens our time horizon (ability to think ahead). For example, the typical time horizon for a homeless youth = 24 hours

3.) Why a Punishment-Driven Approach Doesn't Work With Abused Teens, Children and Young Adults:

- Punishment plays a big role in law enforcement and the criminal justice system
- Punishment-driven enforcement is simple: this action leads to this punishment
- It's based on the idea that the person being punished will do a rational self-analysis, and weigh what they want to do vs. consequences (speeding vs. ticket)
- But the problem with punishment is that it *isn't effective if a person has impaired rationality, a shortened time horizon, or become habituated to punishment*
- Any punishment that lasts longer than a person's time horizon has no deterrence effect (living in chaos and abuse makes it difficult to think beyond the next 24 hours)
- Abused children and teens often become habituated to punishment ("it doesn't matter what I do; I'll be abused anyway")

5.) Why an Empathy-Driven Approach Works Better:

- What does empathy driven law enforcement look like when working with traumatized children, teens and young adults?
- This approach is based on the psychology of voluntary compliance

6.) Psychology of Conflict- and How It Impacts Voluntary Compliance:

- Lowering the level of conflict increases voluntary cooperation from others
- Body language and tone of voice can make a difference
- Whoever controls the tone of the conversation controls the situation

When we are not in conflict	When we are engaged in conflict
<i>Able to engage in abstract thought</i>	<i>Binary thinking: I'm right, you're wrong</i>
<i>Able to empathize</i>	<i>Lowers ability to empathize</i>
<i>Able to problem-solve</i>	<i>Lowers ability to problem-solve</i>
<i>If we lower the level of conflict, we increase our ability to empathize and problem solve = Virtuous Cycle</i>	<i>If the conflict increases, it decreases our ability to empathize and problem-solve = Vicious Cycle</i>

7.) Psychology and Legitimacy of Authority:

- As a police officer, you have authority period. That's not in question here.
- But people are more likely to follow your rules if they perceive you as a legitimate source of authority

Respected Authorities	Sources of Fear and Distrust
<i>Predictable rules</i>	<i>Distrust of government</i>
<i>Fairly enforced</i>	<i>Feel targeted, discriminated against</i>
<i>People feel like you care</i>	<i>People feel disrespected</i>
<i>Know your goal = compliance with law, and de-escalation if possible</i>	<i>Taking this personally will make it more difficult to respond appropriately</i>
Blue tools = empathy driven	Red tools = threat/punishment driven
<i>Use blue tools first</i>	<i>Use red tools as a last result</i>