



Quarterly Newsletter

THE CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING IN RISK

Newsletter 2020

Theme - Trauma

Trauma - The Body Keeps the Score

A substantial body of research indicates that trauma is embodied and 'stored' physically, psychically and emotionally. Van der Kolk in *The Body Keeps the Score* (2014, Penguin) documents how trauma is embodied and not just a neuroscientific, brain-centric issue. Indeed, if one thinks of the human person as an embodied mind (Fuchs (2018) *Ecology of the Brain*; Varela et.al., (1993) *The Embodied Mind*; Noe (2010) *Out of Our Heads*; Caxton (2016) *Intelligence in the Flesh*; Raaven (2013) *The Self Beyond Itself*, not just a computer on a carcass, then one can better tackle the affects of trauma, PTSD and experiences of abuse. Mental Health is a socialpsychological issue just as much as it is a brain issue.



The more we frame the challenges of trauma as a brain-cognition problem, the more we won't tackle trauma in a holistic way or see that trauma is at its foundation not an individual issue but a societal/community issue. The more we position trauma as a cognitive-brain issue the more we look to blame the individual for not being resilient and seek cognitive-behavioural solutions.

The scars of trauma are not posited in the brain but in every sinew of the body. Trauma is not just about pain in the brain but a complete bruising of body memory and associated endocrine, nervous and immune systems. This is why any response to the marks of trauma must be holistic, social and communal.

The biological affects of childhood and youth trauma have been well documents and I have experienced this when I founded Galilee Youth At-Risk Education. Every young person who was in trouble with the police, had been incarcerated in detention, a client of child protection, in foster care, committed acts of violence and self harm and dropped out of school had been abused in earlier life. So much of dysfunctionality in adult life has connections to trauma and abuse at a younger age (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3968319/>).

Once trauma has been stored in the body, later stimulus that tests feelings of trust, security, safety and love triggers a host of behaviours that surface in violence, hate, self harm and dissociation. Many of these behaviours are NOT thought about or contemplated cognitively but are instantaneous reactions because the body remembers the past. The nervous impulse the lash out or self-harm is often shocking.

When I worked in Galilee we had a young girl called Lisa who had been sexually abused at the age of 6 by her older brother for several years and by 10 was in out of home care where she was sexually abused again. Lisa, despite hating the abuse used to seek out sexual abuse through excessively promiscuous behaviour. By the time she came to Galilee at the age of 16 she was the play thing of a bikie gang (signified by a special tattoo-brand on her ankle). Lisa would be passed about the gang and multiply raped each night in return for heroin and a place to sleep.

Trauma and abuse changes peoples perception and imagination of themselves and others. They don't see the world as a place of care but of pleasure and pain and in some cases get addicted to further trauma. They learn to seek refuge in what is familiar and this provides comfort even though it is abusive. Unfortunately, the assumptions of behaviourism-cognitivism that dominate medical-political approaches to this abuse result in a spiral down of pharmacological solutions that create ongoing dual-diagnosis and drug co-dependence. This leads to the building of an anatomy of survival against the expectation of terror.

Van der Kolk calls this the 'hidden epidemic' (p.151). Waterford (<https://johnmenadue.com/jack-waterford-most-sex-abuse-occurs-in-the-home/>) names it as one of the most critical issues for our society stating:

'Canadian figures suggest that about 20 per cent of women and between five and ten per cent of men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children. Generally, they reported the abuse as occurring between the ages of seven to 13. In about half the cases, with either boys or girls, the abuse involved sexual penetration. It seems that more than 90 per cent of the perpetrators were men, and that the perpetrator was known to the victim about 90 per cent of the time'.

The recent and horrific murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-24/hannah-clarke-parliament-system-failed/11994838>) amplified the 'wicked' nature of the problem of domestic violence in Australia. At least one woman per week is killed by her partner or ex-partner in this country. This is not to mention the thousands of cases of abuse and violence perpetrated each week on vulnerable children and women. The problem is cyclic, social and complex not helped by attitudes like those of a Prime Minister who responded by saying: 'if I thought someone was abusing a child somewhere, I'd kick the door down, I'd go and try to rescue that child'. Great, let's simplify the problem and invoke the hero.

Until we move ideas about trauma and resilience to the social-psychological field and frame problems as societal and communal problems, we will continue to demonize the brain of the person committing the act as 'wrong-headedness' or as 'mental health' as brain health. Then society looks to behaviourist-cognitivist solutions in incarceration and pharmacology.

The extent of this problem makes the statistics of risk and safety injuries pale into insignificance, especially when one considers how trauma reveals itself in the workplace where bullying and abuse are both subtle and insidious and serve as triggers for deeply scared people.

Workshops and Training Schedule April, May, July 2020

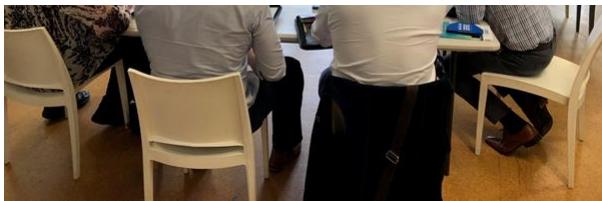


SPoR Introductory Workshop Series April 2020 Canberra

20,21 April

Introduction to Semiotics and Risk

<https://cllr.com.au/product/semiotics-and-the-social-psychology-of-risk-unit-3/>



22,23 April

The Social Amplification of Risk

<https://cllr.com.au/product/social-amplification-risk-unit-8/>

24 April

Whole Day Semiotic Walk

International Workshops May/July 2020 Canberra

10,11 May 2020

An Ethic of Risk Workshop

<https://cllr.com.au/product/an-ethic-of-risk-unit-17/>

6,7 July 2020

MiProfile Workshop

<https://cllr.com.au/product/miprofile-master-class-diagnostics-in-social-psychology-of-risk-unit-9/>

8,9 July 2020

Advanced Semiotics Workshop

<https://cllr.com.au/product/advanced-semiotics-masterclass-module-19/>

10 July

Whole Day Semiotic Walk

Some of these workshops are well booked and others have plenty of room for more participants. Please get in early so venue arrangements can be finalised.

If you are not sure and want more information please contact rob@cllr.com.au

Holistic Responses to Trauma, Resilience and Well-Being

One of the truths of trauma and abuse is that they are pre-verbal and engage the pre-rational mind. The rational mind can't tell the emotional mind to extract from its own reality. The conscious can't override the unconscious by some wishful act of will. It is because trauma and abuse is embodied that everything about us such as: sleep, appetite, touch, thirst, digestion, posture, heartbeat, skin tone, nerves, breathing, the mouth, thinking, relationships and perception are affected by the imprint of harm in our bodies. Any random trigger (iCue) can then bring on tears automatically or emotions beyond rational control.



We sometimes use poetic language to describe the dilemmas of abuse and trauma in our bodies as we search for ways to explain how we feel and what is inexpressibly trapped inside. We speak about 'inner demons' (<https://genius.com/Julia-brennan-inner-demons-lyrics>) when we seek language to explain the inexplicable pain and suffering 'inside'. We speak about this 'inside' because we know and feel the entrapment of abuse and trauma in our person.

Van Der Kolk (pp.208ff) makes clear that responses to trauma and strategies for resilience must be holistic including:

- **Befriending the Emotional Mind (Person)**
 - o Understanding consciousness and the Collective Unconscious
- **Dealing With Hyper-arousal**

- o Understanding the iCues (triggers) that surface emotions and feelings
 - [Practicing Mindfulness](#)
- o Understanding the body in a yoga/Buddhist-type way
 - [Focusing on Relationships](#)
- o Knowing that human connection is essential
 - [Connecting with Professional Helping](#)
- o Knowing that expertise is essential in recovery
 - [Connecting with Communal Rhythms and Synchronicities](#)
- o Joining social groups and activities are all therapeutic
 - [Getting in Touch](#)
- o Nothing is more important than human touch for healing
 - [Taking Action](#)
- o Take the first step, call or contact – helplessness and withdrawal are destructive

If your mental health strategy doesn't include any of these then it is not likely to be much more than an individualistic brain-as-computer failure.

Free Book Downloads

Dr Long has now released another book in the series on risk for free download. The most highly successful book *Risk Makes Sense, Human Decision Making and Risk* is now yours for free download. You can get all four books being offered here: <https://www.humandimensions.com/shop/>

Free Videos and Podcasts

Don't forget you can get free videos and podcasts here:

<https://vimeo.com/humandimensions>

<https://vimeo.com/cllr>

<https://spor.com.au/podcasts/>

including the highly acclaimed series *Risky Conversations*, *The Law Social Psychology and Risk* with Greg Smith both as podcast and video series: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/3938199>

Free Posters and Papers

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/posters/>

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/papers/>

Free Videos on Semiotics

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/semiotics/>

Free Newsletter Archive

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/newsletter-archive/>

Online Learning Options in SPoR

Most of the CLLR modules can be studied online and are managed by Hayden Collins



(<http://www.humandymensions.com/our-people/hayden-collins-senior-consultant-manufacturing/>). You can see all modules here: <https://cllr.com.au/register-to-study/>



OnLine Learning

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A typical course of study involves: watching videos, skype chatting, readings and end of module evaluation

All modules and certification is offered through CLLR.

If you wish to study via online learning contact rob@cllr.com.au

News - Mondi Group Rolls Out SPoR Strategies/Tools



A number of International companies in Europe and Canada utilise the tools and thinking of SPoR. One of these is Mondi Group, their GM HSE is Brian Darlington who has completed his Master of SPoR face-to-face with Dr Long and the CLLR team over the past 3 years. Recently Brian interviewed Dr Long about Mondi's use of SPoR Engagement Boards across the group <https://vimeo.com/390609359>

Other companies are using the new iCue HSE Audit tool as a needs assessment for where they might go next in their journey in understanding and enacting a Social Psychology of Risk Strategy in their business and workplaces.

If you are interested in the education and learning program of SPoR, tools and strategies please contact rob@cllr.com.au

You can see a list of organisations that utilise SPoR tools and training here: <https://www.humandymensions.com/about-us/client-portfolio/>

Reading Group

CLLR operates an informal reading group where people come together on line, agree to read a book and then every second month skype together and chat about the challenges and learnings from the book.

The book for this month is Claxton, G., (2015) *Intelligence in the Flesh*. Yale University Press, New York.



There are currently 12 people in the group but if this interests you please contact rob@cllr.com.au to join.

CLLR facebook Group

For those who have studied SPoR and wish to find support and conversation with others on the journey we have a closed facebook group that offers research and encouragement for those who might appreciate it: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/405049469878070/>

Research Links on Trauma, Recovery and Embodiment

http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/Peaceful_Embodiment_Through_Yoga_R0002.pdf

https://www.academia.edu/9060323/Trauma_Embodiment_and_Narrative

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268878799_Embodiment_and_self_in_reorientation_to_everyday_life_following_severe_traumatic_brain_injury

<https://traumahealing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/engaging-touch-and-movement-in-se-trama-resolution-approach-dissertation-bySoniaGomes-2014.pdf>

<https://connect.springerpub.com/content/sgremdr/13/3/233>

https://trauma-informed.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Trauma-informed_Toolkit.pdf

<http://www.bioenergetics.org.nz/index.php/resources/articles/item/338-embodiment-trauma-and-spirituality>

Postponed Tours of Europe and Canada



In last newsletter you were advised of public workshops being proposed for Europe (Austria) in May and there were also proposed workshops being proposed for Calgary and Edmonton in the pipeline.

For the moment due to the coronavirus these workshops have been postponed. You will be notified by this newsletter and on the <https://safetyrisk.net/> blog on the of new proposed workshop dates.

The Language You Speak Influences Where Your Attention Goes

This is the title of a recent article in The Scientific American Mind (March 2020) by Viorica Marian. Research in Psycholinguistics shows that language influences eye movement. We tend to look for the words we want to see also from the sounds we hear. In this way we become alert or hypersensitive to triggers and indicators we are looking for. I guess its like when we buy a red car and drive out of the showroom and see more red cars. There is a degree of sunk cost in this too.



The sounds of particular words too and their repetition can also be associated with emotions and feelings and the ways in which those words are spoken. In the case of people suffering from trauma and abuse, certain words that assault us psychologically-verbally and the way they are delivered have a profound affect on the emotions and trigger feelings often hidden to the speaker.

The old saying 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me' is simply not true. Psychological harm and trauma can be hidden for years as we have seen in the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>). Sometimes abuse and harm can be held for 30 years or more only to surface after unexplained triggers and prompts from lived experience

provoke a person to speak out.

Competition for Free SPoR Handbook



What would the newsletter be without yet another competition for a chance at a free copy of the *Social Psychology of Risk Handbook, i-thou?*

If you have already won a book in the past perhaps you might like to give others a chance on this one

There is a snow leopard in the picture above, when you spot it (sorry for the pun) send your entry and snail mail address to rob@cllr.com.au and the first correct 5 entries will receive a free copy.

Contact Details and Websites

rob@cllr.com.au

www.cllr.com.au

www.spor.com.au

www.humandymensions.com

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