Restoring the Urban Gang Member
A Right Brain Approach

"Keeping The Brain and Body In Mind"
Carlos Alvarez MA
Today’s Intentions...

• Be fully presents
• Be curious with your judgments
• Be truthful with yourself
Turn to your partner.....

- Have you ever worked with this dynamic?
- Describe one of your most difficult students
“The right hemisphere, by contrast, yields a world of individual, changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, incarnate, living beings within the context of the lived world, but in nature things are never fully graspable, always imperfectly known-and to this world it exist in a relationship of care” -Schore
Right Brain Restorative Practices (RBRP) is an implicit-self centered modality which evolved through elements of social-emotional learning, humanistic psychology, and regulation theory. Right Brain Restorative Practices, premise is to help an individual build the container necessary to internalize remorse, gain insight, and empathically develop accountability and restoration.
The Adolescent Psyche

Implicit self-esteem refers to a person's disposition to evaluate themselves in a spontaneous, automatic, or unconscious manner *(who we really are)*.

Explicit self-esteem - which entails more conscious and reflective self-evaluation, can be manipulated *(who we think we are)*.

Implicit Cognition - refers to unconscious influences such as knowledge, perception, or memory, that influence a person's behavior, even though they themselves have no conscious awareness whatsoever of those influences. *(Memory as it associate to the body)*.

Developmental Pathways

Increased susceptibility to peer pressure as a means of maintaining group identity

Gang Embedded

- 4-6 years of activity
- Engaging in Maladaptive behavior
- Retaliatory activity

Heightened conflict pathways

Compromised Support System(s)

Comprised Attachment
(Heaven of safety—has been broken)

“Magnetism”
Specific qualities that attracts other alpha males “Heavy gang member”
“If you have the heart”
Gang Dynamics

The quality of the gang will take on the morals, or lack of morals, of the most active and deviant members (Five Percenter/ Gang embedded) often engorging in that lack of morals. This behavior often manifests itself in most or all of the gang's members, especially when they are together. This behavior can be explained as 'group dynamics,' which is essentially the way individuals behave when they are part of a group.

When a youth becomes gang embedded he or she is immersed into a world where there is no regression.

At-risk conversion- before joining a gang youth engage in minor crimes such as status offenses which include graffiti and or petty crime. Anti-social conduct exacerbates and is encouraged after the youth’s initiation process is complete. This process leads to a higher level of violent behavior and serious crime, far beyond their nature and expectation.

(Anderson, 1998; Elijah, 1999)
Emotional Processing Domains

- Trust becomes tangible
- How much does this person care about me?
- How can this person care about me when I am defective/ or bad?

Emotional response that is poorly modulated, and does not fall within the accepted range of emotional response.

Core Belief
- “I am rotten”
- “I am bad”

- Individuals always at the ready.
- Emotional Ambivalence
- Somatic reactions override Cognitive reactions
- The body is subordinate to the CNS

- Protection (from pain)
- Transition to health is frightening
- Relapse (is expected)

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Restorative Continuum

- **Connection**
  - Establishing a Right brain bond/ Epigenetic social experience
  - Engagement/ Introduction
    - Reading beneath the words
    - WALKING with the individual
    - Titration of connection

- **Relationship**
  - Accountability
    - Practitioner becomes the external regulator

- **Sustainability**
  - Trust/ Bond/ Relationship
  - Consistency

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REPARING HARM

“if you dig a pit for others to fall into you will fall into it yourself.

-Rumi
**Initial Connection**
- Home Visit
- Introduction by certified outreach worker
- Right Brain process begins

**Pre-Conference Phase**
- Deconstruct event
- Bifurcate the event
- Narrative Restorative Justice

**Agreements**
- Must be within capacity and reach
- Meaningful for all parties
- Mindful of restriction
- Short term

**4-6 hour Follow up conversation**
- Check in
- Climate check
- Self-Regulation

**Priming Phase**
- Cognitive Priming
- Emotional Priming
- What to expect
- Somatic manifestation
- Impulsivity

**RESTORATIVE CONFERENCE**

**Forensic Case Management**
- Referrals
- System Navigation
- Walking with the individual

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Pre Conversations are:
- Are explorative
- Social emotional template
- Focusing on building a container/Capacity
- Epi-genetic exposure (Leaning into the discomfort)
- Process conflict
- Normalize and process feelings

Practitioner needs to be mindful of his or her:
Auditory Prosody - Emotional Prosody
Tempo of movement - How are you coming in and out of the conversation
Incipient Action - Setting the foundation
Second Phase

• Intensive Consultation with all key participants (Community Buy-in)

• Conversations revolve around two variables (Safety and Outcome)
Initial Contact
• Building Rapport
• Credential/ Street credibility “LTO”
• Priming

Pre-Conference Phase
• System Validation
• Social Emotional Experience
• Epigenetic Experience
• Building Capacity

Follow-up phase
• Emotional Stamina
• Process Somatic Manifestations
• Conflict Resolution
• Safe and Predictable
Neutral Location
a) Gang Intervention
b) Constant communication with all parties
c) Away from hot spots (Secure buildings) NEVER IN PARKS OR REC CENTERS

Transportation
a) How will they get to the location safely--- You are liable at this point
b) Strategic arrival/ not arriving at the same time

Debrief with each party (titrate the event)
a) Discrediting phase
b) Acknowledgment period

Support System
a) Gang Intervention
b) Family or surrogate figure
Developing Agreements

- Need help complying with agreement(s) – Limited mobility and healthy peer support
- Forensic Case Management
- Cognitively relevant
- Social emotional awareness- Building capacity
- Tangible points
- Restrictions and Limitations- High retaliation
- Consider safety when referring out
Case Managers are individuals who are trained forensic psychologists or individuals who have extensive experience in related social sciences with a B.A. or B.S. degree or higher. All individuals have extensive experience with the heavily criminally embedded population.

LAIRP Forensic Case Managers are paraprofessionals who understand and have acquired the required knowledge to navigate the juvenile, adult criminal justice, and mental health systems.

**Expertise:**

- Re-entry/ Diversion
- LTO (License to Operate)
- Forensic Mental Health Clients
- Court adjudication
Wraparound Services

- Outreach workers
- Non-profit agencies
- Faith Based Institutions

- Rogerian Approach
- Social Services
- Supportive Services

“You’ve always been my rock. That’s why I take you for granite.”
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Areas of focus  
• Gang membership  
• Violence Interruption  
• Forensic Psychology  
• Behavioral epigenetics  
• Positive Behavior Intervention Supports PBIS  
• School discipline  
• Professional developments/ Trainings