Our path for today

• The voice of “Not enough”.

• Our need for connection
  – Shame Resilience, Vulnerability, & Courage

• Am I safe? Do I belong?
  – Your Brain – focus on Limbic System (e-motions) and PFC

• Fostering and building Shame Resilience
  – Naming and reframing
  – The empathy bridge

• Next steps for you
  – How does this relate to the work you are doing?
Human Nature

• Connection, belonging, love, safety

• Shame / Emotions

• Resilience

• Attachment pattern

• Window of tolerance and triggers

• Holds for MEN and WOMEN
Shame

What will people think?

• ...is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.

• Knowingly or unknowingly attaching your self-worth to how your “product or art” is received. (If they love it you’re worthy; if they don’t, you’re worthless.)

• Correlated with addiction, violence, aggression, depression, eating disorders, and bullying

• I AM NOT ENOUGH.

Vulnerability

I am enough.

• Based on mutuality
• Requires boundaries and trust
• About sharing your feeling and experiences with people who have earned the right to hear them.

• Sounds like truth and feelings like courage
• Uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure
• Birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity
• Source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity

Source: Daring Greatly, Brené Brown.
Shame triggers for Men & Women

- Appearance and body image
- Money and work
- Motherhood/fatherhood
- Family
- Parenting
- Mental and physical health
- Addiction
- Sex
- Aging
- Religion
- Surviving trauma
- Being stereotyped or labeled.

Source: Daring Greatly, Brené Brown.
Shame Resilience

• Shame resilience is the ability to say, “This hurts. This is disappointing, maybe even devastating. But success and recognition and approval are not the values that drive me. My value is courage and I was just courageous. You can move on, shame.” (Brown, p. 67)

• Acknowledging and naming what is
• Vulnerability
• Self-worth
• Moving from shame to empathy (“the antidote”)
  – Directed at self or from another
• A practice/way of being
• Requires cognition
Connecting with Shame in your body

• “grip” of shame
• “When our reach is not caught, there is neurophyisciologiical collapse into our unregulated right hemisphere.” (Payton)
• Potential for state of resourceslessness.
• Shame
  – shuts us down (brakes). – Vagal nerve
  – At the same time we are called to action (gas)
MIDDLE PREFONTAL CORTEX

Limbic Regions:
Hippocampus
Amygdala

CEREBRAL CORTEX

Middle Part of the Prefontal Cortex
Brain Stem
Spinal Cord

Place your thumb in the middle of your palm as in this figure.

Now fold your fingers over your thumb as the cortex is folded over the limbic areas of the brain.
PFC – Prefrontal Cortex

Left Prefrontal Cortex (to do lists, executive function) ↔ Right Prefrontal Cortex (compassionate self witness, sense of self)

Left Amygdala

(threats we know about, irritants, annoyances, small griefs and losses)

Right Amygdala

(our intensity, passion, chaos, rage, terror, grief, suffering, shame, humiliation)

Our Hippocampi file and track our factual and autobiographical memories until they have migrated to the cortex.

C. Hajnal, August 2013

Thank you to Sarah Peyton for the image. www.empathybrain.com
Functional PFC

- Regulation of body systems
- Attuned communication
- Emotional balance
- Calming the amygdala (modulating fear)
- Response flexibility
- Empathy
- Intuition
- Morality
Triggered / Threats / Noise

• Constantly on the look out for threats
• Bad is stronger than good (threat $\leftrightarrow$ reward)
• “Your ideas are crazy.”
  – as activating to your brain as a physical threat
• Activation of limbic system influences deactivation of PFC
• Little bit of threat creates lots of noise in the brain
  – insight does not happen when our brain is noisy – impact on problem solving/creativity
• Regulation – a key to controlling “noise”

Source: David Rock
Cognitive Change Strategies

• Labeling
  – Define an emotional state in a word or two

• Reappraisal
  – Reframing/recontextualizing
  – Changing the entire interpretation of an event

• The more you understand your brain, the more you can reappraise.
What can we do with this?

• Regulate emotions:
  – Expression
    • Helpful but can be maladaptive depending on the context
  – Suppression
    • Limbic system stays as aroused or gets worse, memory gets worse
  – Cognitive Change
    • Less arousal, no change in memory
    • Requires very thing we’re losing fast when aroused - PFC
How NVC can help
(Non-Violent / Compassionate Communication)

• Labeling
  – Get in your body
  – Have the words to use (feelings)
  – Pain, Pain, Pain chant (Brown)

• Reappraisal
  – What’s behind the “story”? (needs)
  – Self-Empathy
  – “If you own this story, you get to write the ending.” (Brown)

• What applies to you, applies to the person you are looking at too
  – What are they experiencing?
  – Empathy for others
“Listening”

- “Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. Often, instead of offering empathy, we have a strong urge to give advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling. Empathy, however, calls upon us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being.” - Marshall B. Rosenberg

- Empathy
  “Are you feeling anxious because you are needing clarity around the next steps?”

- Advising
  “I think you should…” “Why don’t you….”

- One-upping
  “That’s nothing, listen to what happened to me!”

- Educating
  “If you looked at the situation this way…..”

- Consoling
  “I know you are doing the best you can.”

- Story-telling
  “That reminds me of the project last year when we…”

- Sympathizing
  “Oh, you poor thing!”

- Explaining
  “The reason the project is taking so long is because…”

- Correcting
  “You haven’t spent 5 weeks on that project!”

- Interrogating
  “Why did you say you’d do it? What....;When....;Where.... “How come you didn’t__________”

- Changing the Topic
  “Let’s go shopping.”

C. HAJNAL, August 2013
My thanks to... 

• Brené Brown
• Sarah Peyton
• David Rock
• Marshall Rosenberg
• Daniel Siegel

• ...for their body of work that has contributed to my understanding and evolution.

• For links to some of my favourite resources of theirs see:
  – http://www.catherinehajnal.com/resources/brain/
  – http://www.catherinehajnal.com/resources/people-books/
Exploring Vulnerability and Shame

What is the scariest thing you could imagine yourself doing? Eating something creepy crawly? Suspending yourself on a wire, in a harness? How about speaking your truth or inviting connection? For many, if not all of us, those moments when we find ourselves vulnerable – when we’ve exposed something of our inner self, when we’ve reached out and invited being seen and heard – those are the scariest things we can do. And the paradox – while we long for connection and an empowered sense of self – we often hold ourselves back. We hide in an effort to avoid the hurt and shame that can arise when our expressions of self and invitations for connection are not acknowledged and valued. In this workshop we’ll take a look at vulnerability and shame. What are they? What’s happening in the body? In the mind? Why might we/our clients be triggered? And then we’ll explore ways to expand capabilities for vulnerability utilizing strategies and tools from Non-Violent Communication, Interpersonal Neurobiology, Empathy/Attunement, Attachment theory, and Wholehearted Living.