



# TRAFFIR: Trauma Awareness For First Responders

Addressing skills gaps in critical incident stress and trauma  
intervention.

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## Helping those who help us:

*supporting first responders and the general public  
in disaster situations*

DomSpain – SPAIN

Nikanor – Bulgaria



## Helping parents and children under COVID-19 pandemic

- **Surviving in the past and in the present times**
- **Emotional and physical needs in crisis**
- **How to help and support**

Nikanor

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Surviving in  
times of crisis  
and disaster –  
historical  
preview





## Surviving in the fast information era

Large amount of information is what we call “information overload”. In one of his works, George Armitage Miller says that under overload conditions, people become confused and are likely to make poorer decisions based on the information they have received as opposed to making informed ones.

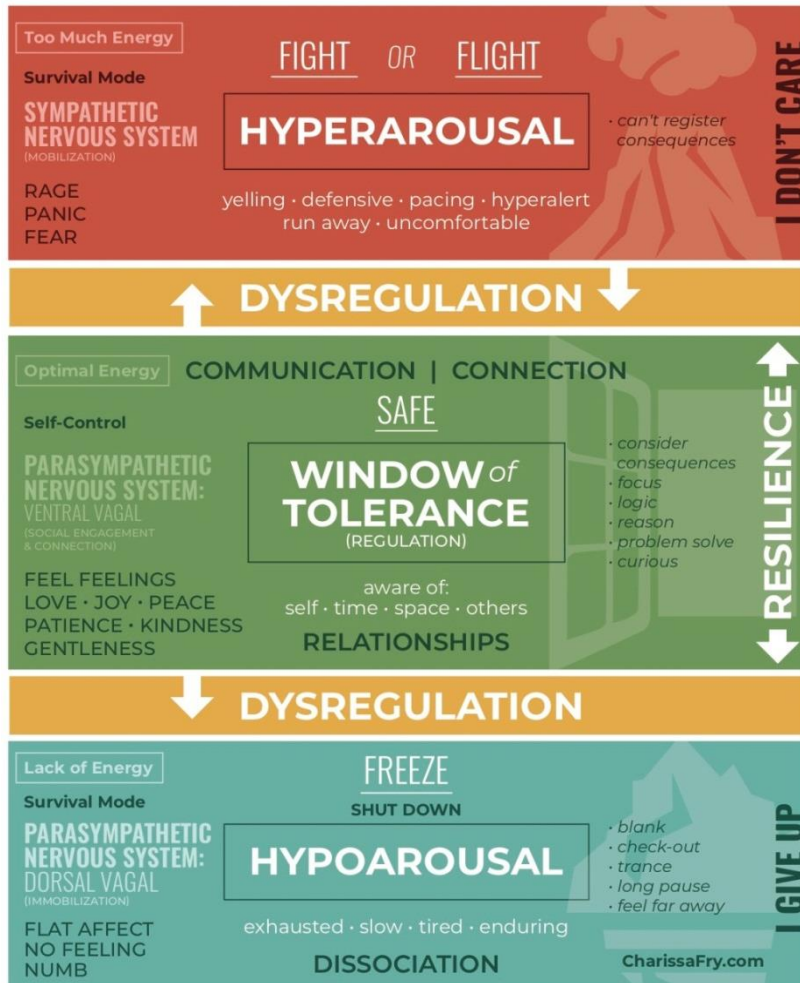
People who are more prone to information anxiety could be: PTSD patients, people with mental health difficulties etc.

How to cope:

- Do a brain dump - This means that a person should clear their mind by writing down their thoughts on paper and then prioritize them into categories and determine whether the tasks can be completed.
- Follow the two-minute rule. A technique where people time-task themselves.
- Don't multitask.
- Eat the frog first thing in the morning



# POLYVAGAL THEORY



In order to maintain homeostasis, the central nervous system responds constantly, via neural feedback, to environmental cues. Stressful events disrupt the rhythmic structure of autonomic states, and subsequently, behaviors.

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## Reactions in adults in times of disaster

- Insecurity
- Frustration
- Anger
- Depression
- Helplessness
- Sleep disturbances
- Returning to old coping mechanisms such as nicotine, alcohol and drug use
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Disordered eating
- Forgetting to take care of oneself

## Reactions in children in times of disaster

- Delays
- Depression or sadness
- Anger
- Sleeping disturbances
- Disordered eating – food refusal, food preferences
- Returning to older habits such as: nail biting, thumb sucking etc.
- Throwing unexplainable tantrums





## How to address those reactions?

- Finding support or be a helping hand when needed
- Good nutrition
- Incorporate some kind of care for oneself such as massage, breathing exercises, MFR, movement (dancing, yoga, weight lifting), meditation etc.
- Don't forget to stimulate the Vagus
- Playing with the kids or having some family activity
- Respect boundaries
- Take care of one another
- Seek help if needed



**Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives. – Dr. Bessel A. van der Kolk**





Families are defined by relationships—parent to parent, parent to child, and sibling to sibling in immediate families and through even more combinations in extended families. Families are characterized by their structure, roles, and boundaries; emotional bonds and responsiveness; cohesiveness; flexibility, adaptability, and coping; communication; and decision making and problem solving (**Moos & Moos, 1976**). Families support, nurture, and protect children. This is at no time more essential than in the context of disasters.



Parents, as opposed to adults without children, have the physical, economic, and emotional responsibility of caring for their children and they may experience distress associated with concern for their children. Often times there is a greater distress in parents than in adults without children.



# Supporting one another and feeling more secure in times of uncertainty



## Do's

- **Look for one another**
- **Listen without judging**
- **Engage into a tactile contact if possible – hold hand or hug**
- **Respect**



## Don'ts

- **Judge**
- **Dismiss emotions and feelings**
- **Shame**
- **Try to give distractions**



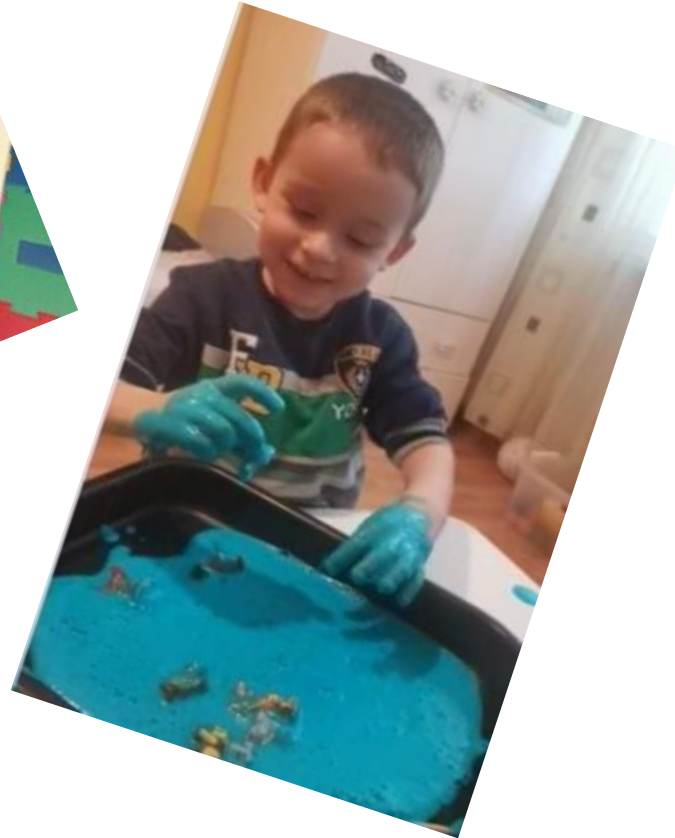
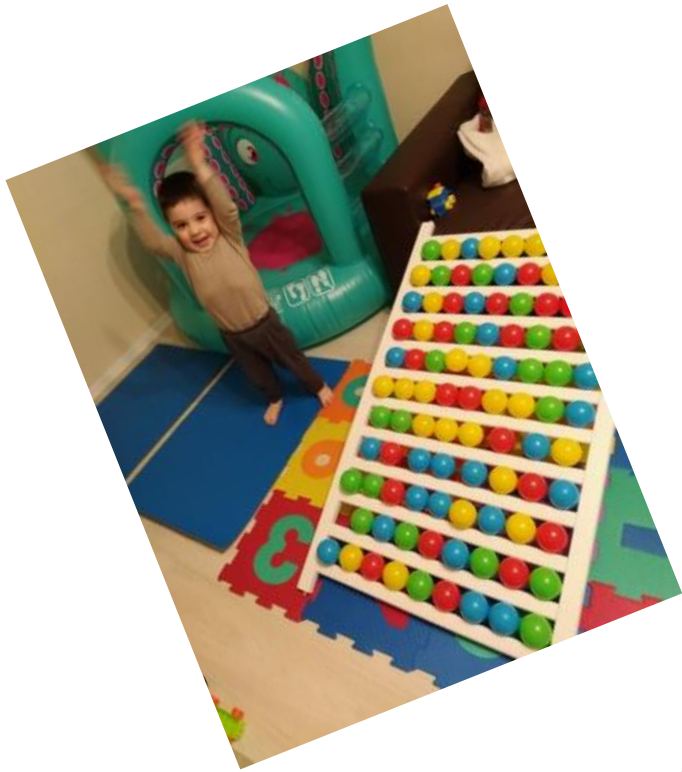
# What about the kids?



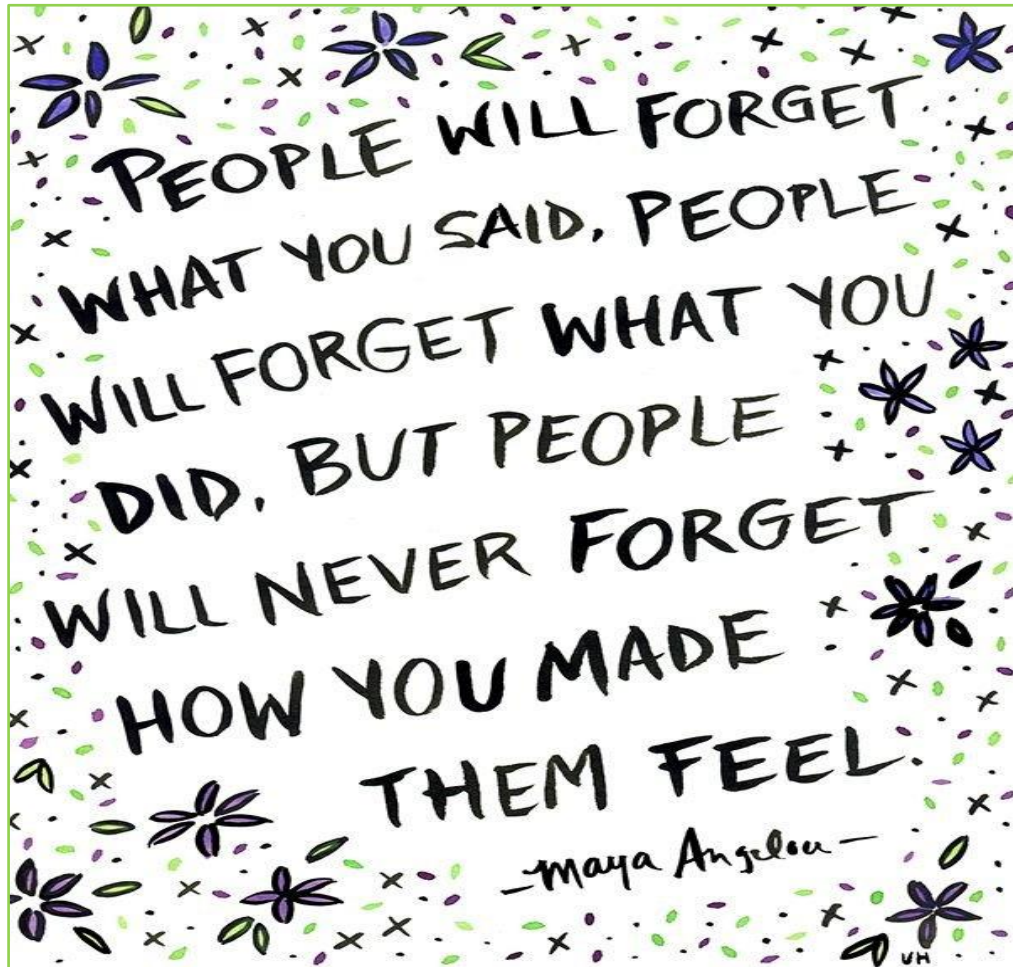
**Children may be especially vulnerable to the effects of a crisis. They may be frightened by what they do not understand, and their misperceptions may lead to inaccurate interpretations and attributions.**



“Fun is the child’s word for sensory integration” – Carol Stock Kranowitz



**Engaging in activities with the child is helping build stronger connections, feel calm and secure, boosting speech and language development and interaction with others.**



**Don't forget to listen to others, take care and remember that this too shall pass!**

**Thank you!**