



HOMELESSTRAINING
BY RYAN DOWD

HOMELESS DE-ESCALATION 101



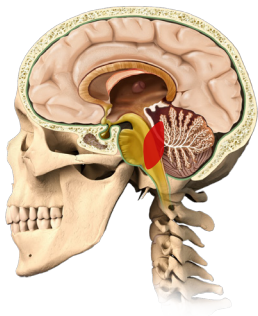
TRAUMA & THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT SECONDS OF CONFLICT

DE-ESCALATION 101

“THE GUARD DOG”

Part of the Brain:

AMYGDALA



Related Neurochemicals

Adrenaline
Cortisol



⚠ Fight/Flight

⚠ Impulsive

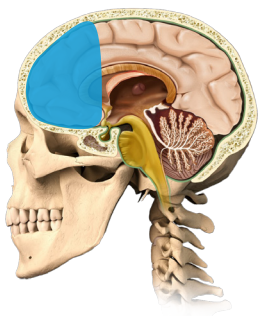
⚠ _____

⚠ Increases fear

“THE PROFESSOR”

Part of the Brain:

PREFRONTAL CORTEX



Related Neurochemicals

Serotonin
Dopamine
Oxytocin



✓ Rational decision-making

✓ _____

✓ Increases trust & empathy

✓ Reduces anger/aggression

DE-ESCALATION 101



ESCALATORS

Escalators are **things that you do** that engage “The Guard Dog” in the other person’s brain.

TWO MOST IMPORTANT TYPES

- _____
- Disrespect

Oftentimes, these are unintentional.



DE-ESCALATORS

De-Escalators are **things that you do** that engage “The Professor” in the other person’s brain.

TWO MOST IMPORTANT TYPES

- Safety
- _____

De-escalation is even more important with those struggling with homelessness because...

The **ESCALATORS** can make conflict **MUCH worse.**

The **DE-ESCALATORS** can make conflict **MUCH better.**

Why?

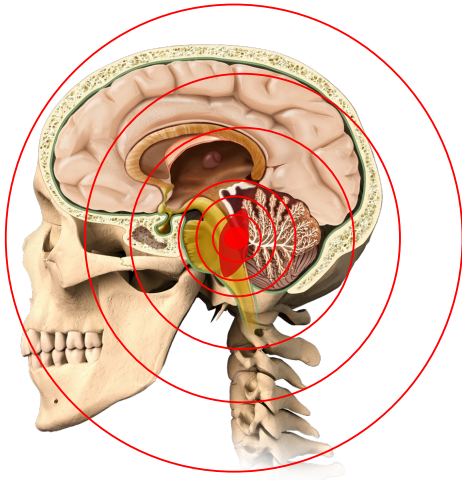
Because of the mistreatment that people face while homeless.

TRAUMA 101

Trauma reduces _____
in the **PREFRONTAL CORTEX**.

Trauma causes lesions in the
PREFRONTAL CORTEX.

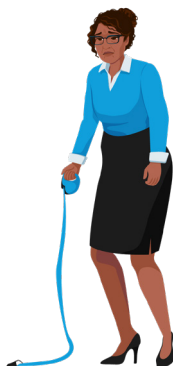
This results in
PREFRONTAL CORTEX



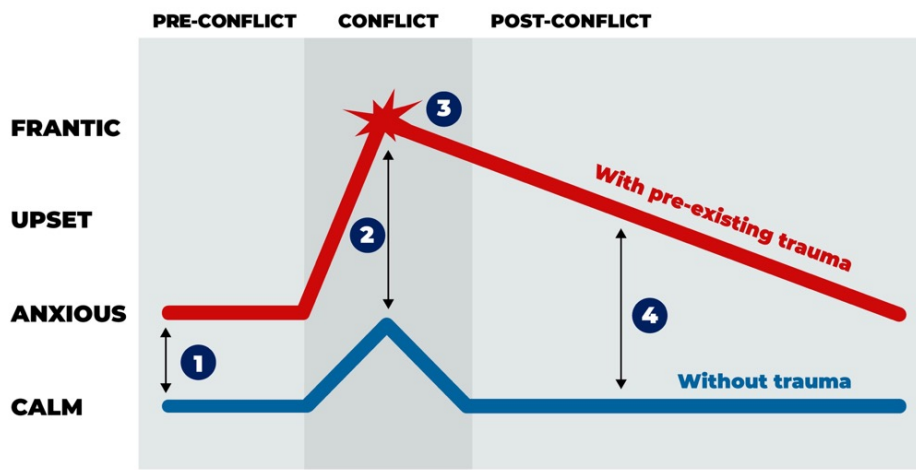
The **AMYGDALA** becomes

The connection between the **PREFRONTAL CORTEX** and
the **AMYGDALA** is weakened.

Thus, the Professor has **less control** over the Guard Dog.



IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CONFLICT



1

Already in a heightened state of tension before an issue arises.

2

MISPERCEIVING THREAT STIMULI

Becomes upset quicker, easier and with minor issues.

3

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

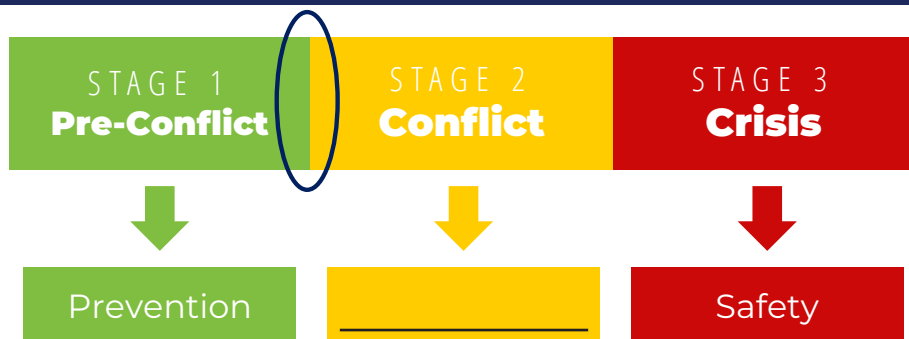
Increased anger and “_____” aggression.

4

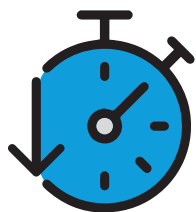
HYPERAROUSAL

Trouble calming after becoming upset.

DE-ESCALATORS FOR THE FIRST 5 SECONDS



Your **only goal** during the first 5 seconds is to use **your actions** to set the direction of conflict.



Slow Down

Do not ignore/avoid the situation or try to rush de-escalation.

“Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast.”

WHAT TO DO

Don't try to rush the person or ignore their escalated state.

It takes time to help the person's **PREFRONTAL CORTEX** engage over the _____.

If the person has experienced _____ it takes even longer.

DE-ESCALATORS FOR THE FIRST 5 SECONDS



Introduce Yourself

Give your first name.
Then ask their name.



WHAT TO DO

Ask people to call you by your _____.

Names convey **respect**. No one takes the time to learn the names of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Offer your name _____ asking someone else's.

This signals: "Conversation" -vs- "Surveillance"

Bonus: Handshake

No one shakes the hand of someone who is homeless.



Less Public

Ask the person to speak to you away from others who can hear you..

WHAT TO DO

Move conflict somewhere "less public."

Audiences _____ conflict.

"Street reputation" for toughness is important.

The conversation just needs to be somewhere out of earshot, not somewhere "private." Simply ask the person to "talk over here."

DE-ESCALATORS FOR THE FIRST 5 SECONDS



15 Degree Stance

Pivot your body 15 degrees so your shoulders do not point directly at the person.

WHAT TO DO

The way you stand can communicate “conversation” or “confrontation.”

Stand at a _____ angle to the person, not straight.

If you have a table or desk between you and the other person, you don’t need to turn at an angle.



Give Full Attention

Listen. Make eye contact.
Use “backchannel cues” (nodding, ‘uh huh,’ ‘ok,’).

WHAT TO DO

Listen (don’t interrupt).

Giving a person your attention is a signal of _____.

Make eye contact, but not constant.

Eye contact communicates a lot (and is processed in the _____!)

Use “backchannel cues” (nodding, ‘uh huh,’ ‘ok,’).

DE-ESCALATION 101



You have influence over another person's behavior because **you** have **influence** over **their** brain.

YOUR ACTIONS



ESCALATORS

Escalators are **things** **that you do** that engage "The Guard Dog" in the other person's brain.

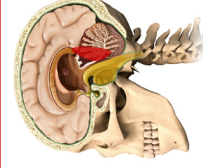


"THE GUARD DOG"

- ⚠ Fight/Flight
- ⚠ Emotional
- ⚠ Impulsive
- ⚠ Increases fear

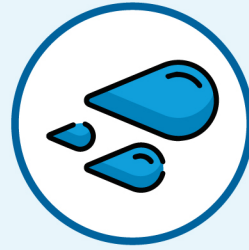
TWO MOST IMPORTANT TYPES

- Threats
- Disrespect



PART OF THE BRAIN
AMYGDALA

Related Neurochemicals
Adrenaline
Cortisol



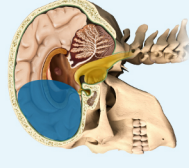
DE-ESCALATORS

De-Escalators are **things** **that you do** that engage "The Professor" in the other person's brain.



"THE PROFESSOR"

- ✓ Rational decision-making
- ✓ Self-control
- ✓ Increases trust & empathy
- ✓ Reduces anger/aggression



PART OF THE BRAIN
PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Related Neurochemicals
Serotonin
Dopamine
Oxytocin

TWO MOST IMPORTANT TYPES

- Safety
- Respect

TRAUMA 101



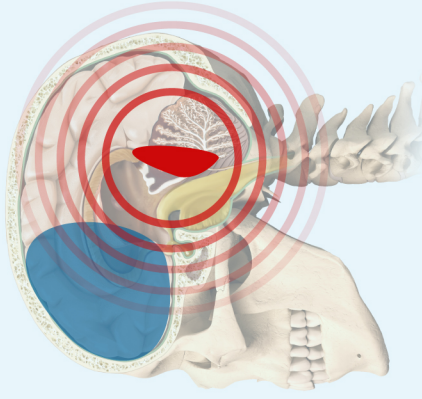
The most vulnerable can be the most challenging because trauma **changes how the brain responds** to conflict.

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON THE BRAIN

“THE GUARD DOG”



HYPERACTIVE



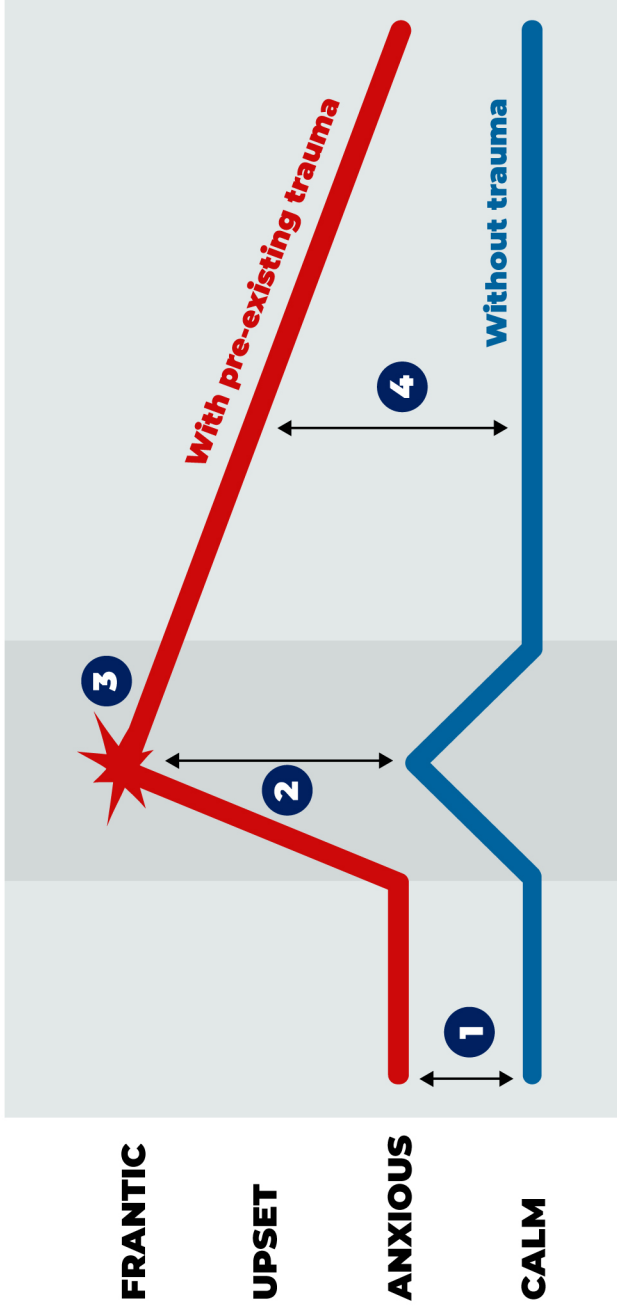
“THE PROFESSOR”



SUPPRESSED

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CONFLICT

PRE-CONFLICT CONFLICT POST-CONFLICT



1

HYPERVIGILANCE

Already in a heightened state of tension before an issue arises.

2

MISPERCEIVING THREAT STIMULI

Becomes upset quicker, easier and with minor issues.

3

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Increased anger and “reactive” aggression.

4

HYPERAROUSAL

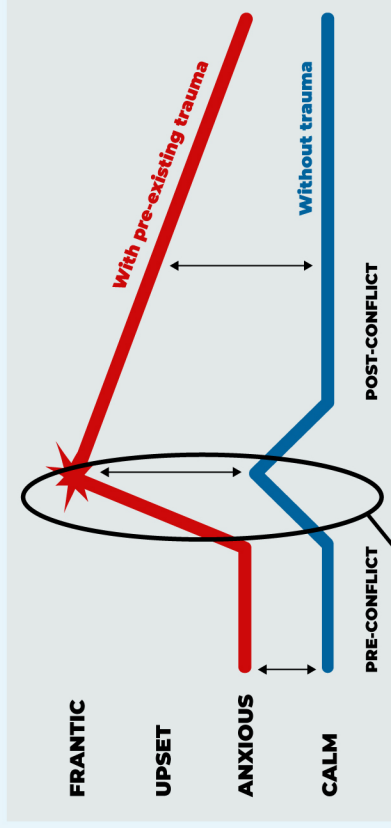
Trouble calming after becoming upset.

CONFLICT 101



If you get the **first five seconds of conflict** right, everything after is MUCH easier.

FIRST 5 SECONDS OF CONFLICT IS MOST IMPORTANT



FIRST 5 SECONDS

CONFLICT

Your only goal during the first 5 seconds is to use your actions to set the direction of conflict.



ESCALATORS engage the other person's **GUARD DOG** and make everything after harder.



DE-ESCALATORS engage the other person's **PROFESSOR** and make everything after easier.



DE-ESCALATORS FOR THE FIRST 5 SECONDS



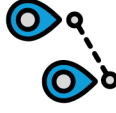
Slow Down

Do not ignore/avoid the situation or try to rush de-escalation. "Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast."



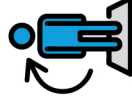
Introduce Yourself

Give your first name. Then ask their name.



Less Public

Ask the person to speak to you away from others who can hear you.



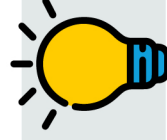
15 Degree Stance

Pivot your body 15 degrees so your shoulders do not point directly at the person.



Give FULL Attention

Listen.
Make eye contact.
Use "backchannel cues" (nodding, 'uh huh,' 'ok,').



PRO TIP

Using these de-escalators is **essential** when working with individuals who have experienced trauma.

SOURCES

- Arnsten, A. F. T., Raskind, M. A., Taylor, F. B., & Connor, D. F. (2015). The effects of stress exposure on prefrontal cortex: Translating basic research into successful treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder. *Neurobiology of Stress*, 1, 89-99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ynstr.2014.10.002>
- Baik, J.-H. (2020). Stress and the dopaminergic reward system. *Experimental & Molecular Medicine*, 52(12), 1879-1890. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s12276-020-00532-4>
- Beattie, J., Griffiths, D., Innes, K., & Morphet, J. (2019). Workplace violence perpetrated by clients of health care: A need for safety and trauma-informed care. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 28(1-2), 116-124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14683>
- Benitez, C., Howard, K. P., & Cheavens, J. S. (2022). The effect of validation and invalidation on positive and negative affective experiences. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(1), 46-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1832243>
- Binetti, N., Harrison, C., Coutrot, A., Johnston, A., & Mareschal, I. (2016). Pupil dilation as an index of preferred mutual gaze duration. *Royal Society Open Science*, 3(7), Article 160086. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.160086>
- Bjornsdottir, R. T., Alaei, R., & Rule, N. O. (2017). The perceptive proletarian: Subjective social class predicts interpersonal accuracy. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 41(2), 185-201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10919-016-0248-6>
- Burgoon, J. K., Wang, X., Chen, X., Pentland, S. J., & Dunbar, N. E. (2021). Nonverbal behaviors “speak” relational messages of dominance, trust, and composure. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 624177. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.624177>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1999). Traumatic brain injury in the United States: A report to Congress. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/pubs/tbi_report_to_congress.html
- Chang, S. W. C., & Platt, M. L. (2014). Amygdala: Eyes wide open. *Current Biology*, 24(20), R1000-R1002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2014.08.044>
- Council of Economic Advisors. (2019). The state of homelessness in America. <https://www.nhipdata.org/local/upload/file/The-State-of-Homelessness-in-America.pdf>
- Crawford, B., Muhler, N., MacDonald, G., & Lawrence, A. D. (2020). Brain structure correlates of expected social threat and reward. *Scientific Reports*, 10(1), Article 18010. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-74334-z>
- da Cunha-Bang, S., & Knudsen, G. M. (2021). The modulatory role of serotonin on human impulsive aggression. *Biological Psychiatry*, 90(7), 447-457. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2021.05.016>
- Dingman, M. (n.d.). The amygdala: Beyond fear. *Neuroscientifically Challenged*. <https://neuroscientificallychallenged.com/posts/amygdala-beyond-fear>
- Haas, B. W., Ishak, A., Anderson, I. W., & Filkowski, M. M. (2015). The tendency to trust is reflected in human brain structure. *NeuroImage*, 107, 175-181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2014.11.060>
- Hannibal, K. E., & Bishop, M. D. (2014). Chronic stress, cortisol dysfunction, and pain: A psychoneuroendocrine rationale for stress management in pain rehabilitation. *Physical Therapy*, 94(12), 1816-1825. <https://doi.org/10.2522/ptj.20130597>
- Hecker, T., Fetz, S., Ainamani, H., & Elbert, T. (2015). The cycle of violence: Associations between exposure to violence, trauma-related symptoms and aggression—Findings from Congolese refugees in Uganda. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 28(5), 448-455. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22046>
- Hyde, L. W., Shaw, D. S., Murray, L., Gard, A., Hariri, A. R., & Forbes, E. E. (2016). Dissecting the role of amygdala reactivity in antisocial behavior in a sample of young, low-income, urban men. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 4(3), 527-544. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702615614511>
- Janak, P. H., & Tye, K. M. (2015). From circuits to behaviour in the amygdala. *Nature*, 517(7534), 284-292. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature14188>
- Kimble, M., Boxwala, M., Bean, W., Maletsky, K., Halper, J., Spollen, K., & Fleming, K. (2014). The impact of hypervigilance: Evidence for a forward feedback loop. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 28(2), 241-245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2013.12.006>
- Klasen, M., Wolf, D., Eisner, P. D., Eggermann, T., Zerres, K., Zepf, F. D., Weber, R., & Mathiak, K. (2019). Serotonergic contributions to human brain aggression networks. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 13, Article 42. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2019.00042>
- Kushel, M. B., Evans, J. L., Perry, S., Robertson, M. J., & Moss, A. R. (2003). No door to lock: Victimization among homeless and marginally housed persons. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 163(20), 2492-2499. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.163.20.2492>
- Liu, W. Z., Zhang, W. H., Zheng, Z. H., Zou, J. X., Liu, X. X., Huang, S. H., You, W. J., He, Y., Zhang, J. Y., Wang, X. D., & Pan, B. X. (2020). Identification of a prefrontal cortex-to-amygdala pathway for chronic stress-induced anxiety. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), Article 2221. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-15920-7>
- Luo, L., Ma, X., Zheng, X., Zhao, W., Xu, L., Becker, B., & Kendrick, K. M. (2015). Neural systems and hormones mediating attraction to infant and child faces. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, Article 970. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00970>
- Mackelprang, J. L., Klest, B., Najmabadi, S. J., Valley-Gray, S., Gonzalez, E. A., & Cash, R. E. (G.). (2014). Betrayal trauma among homeless adults: Associations with revictimization, psychological well-being, and health. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(6), 1028-1049. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513506060>
- Mezzacappa, E. S., Katkin, E. S., & Palmer, S. N. (1999). Epinephrine, arousal, and emotion: A new look at two-factor theory. *Cognition and Emotion*, 13(2), 181-199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699399379320>
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2022). Mental illness. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. Retrieved October 7, 2022, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>
- National Institute of Mental Health. (n.d.). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. Retrieved October 7, 2022, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>
- National Institutes of Health. (2015, November 18). 10 percent of US adults have drug use disorder at some point in their lives. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/10-percent-us-adults-have-drug-use-disorder-some-point-their-lives>
- Palmieri, A., Pick, E., Grossman-Giron, A., & Tzur Bitan, D. (2021). Oxytocin as the neurobiological basis of synchronization: A research proposal in psychotherapy settings. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 628011. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.628011>
- Papasteri, C. C., Sofonea, A., Boldas, R., Poalelungi, C., Tomescu, M. I., Pistol, C. A., Vasilescu, R. I., Nedelcea, C., Podina, I. R., Berceanu, A. I., Froemke, R. C., & Carcea, I. (2020). Social feedback during sensorimotor synchronization changes salivary oxytocin and behavioral states. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, Article 531046. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.531046>
- Passamonti, L., Crockett, M. J., Apergis-Schoute, A. M., Clark, L., Rowe, J. B., Calder, A. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2012). Effects of acute tryptophan depletion on prefrontal-amygdala connectivity while viewing facial signals of aggression. *Biological Psychiatry*, 71(1), 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2011.07.033>

SOURCES

- Richmond, J. S., Berlin, J. S., Fishkind, A. B., Holloman, G. H., Jr., Zeller, S. L., Wilson, M. P., Rifai, M. A., & Ng, A. T. (2012). Verbal de-escalation of the agitated patient: Consensus statement of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry Project BETA De-escalation Workgroup. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 13(1), 17–25. <https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2011.9.6864>
- Sharma, S. R., Gonda, X., Dome, P., & Tarazi, F. I. (2020). What's love got to do with it: Role of oxytocin in trauma, attachment and resilience. *Pharmacology & Therapeutics*, 214, Article 107602. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pharmthera.2020.107602>
- Šimić, G., Tkalčić, M., Vukić, V., Mulc, D., Španić, E., Šagud, M., Olucha-Bordonau, F. E., Vukšić, M., & Hof, P. R. (2021). Understanding emotions: Origins and roles of the amygdala. *Biomolecules*, 11(6), Article 823. <https://doi.org/10.3390/biom11060823>
- Spengler, F. B., Scheele, D., Marsh, N., Kofferath, C., Flach, A., Schwarz, S., Stoffel-Wagner, B., Maier, W., & Hurlmann, R. (2017). Oxytocin facilitates reciprocity in social communication. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 12(8), 1325–1333. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsx061>
- Spielfogel, J. E., McMillen, J. C. (2017). Current use of de-escalation strategies: Similarities and differences in de-escalation across professions. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 15(3), 232–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2016.1212774>
- The Raising of America. (2017). The Amygdala-Prefrontal Cortex connection is crucial [Video]. <https://www.raisingofamerica.org/amygdala-prefrontal-cortex-connection-crucial>
- Todd, R. M., MacDonald, M. J., Sedge, P., Robertson, A., Jetly, R., Taylor, M. J., & Pang, E. W. (2015). Soldiers with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder see a world full of threat: Magnetoencephalography reveals enhanced tuning to combat-related cues. *Biological Psychiatry*, 78(12), 821–829. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0355683>
- Trumbull, D. (2008). Humiliation: The trauma of disrespect. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis & Dynamic Psychiatry*, 36(4), 643–660. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jaap.2008.36.4.643>
- Uvnäs Moberg, K., Julius, H., Handlin, L., & Petersson, M. (2022). Sensory stimulation and oxytocin: Their roles in social interaction and health promotion [Editorial]. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 929741. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.929741>

CREDITS

Researchers

Krista Reynolds
Danny Rossi

Graphic Designers

Katherine Boils
Katie Moreno

Videography

Ed Green

Actors

Carolyn Sprawka
Chris Cox
Noemi Valazquez
Ryan Dowd

Special Effects

Austin Queen

Artist

Amarzaya Batdavaa

Street Photography

Chuck Jines

Live Training & IT Support

Krissie Dowd

Consultants

Crystal Pecora
Sarajoy Pond
Carolyn Sprawka
Joe Jackson
Dr. Willie Jackson
Dr. Eric Ward

Producer/Presenter

Ryan Dowd

Fair Use Attributions

KTVU Fox 2