



THE CHILD PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

CULTIVATING HOPE IN AN AGE OF GLOBAL THREATS

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Child, Educational and Community Psychologist



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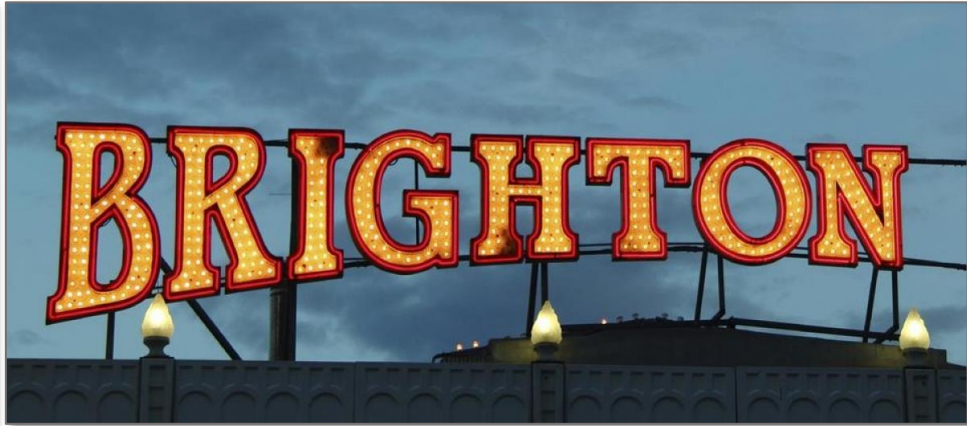
Child, Educational and
Community Psychologist

Background

- Director of Psychological Services – **The Child Psychology Service**
- Clinical Director- **New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing & Resilience**
- Consultant Psychologist and Presenter - **SchoolTV**
- Practice Leader IWS – **Ministry of Education**
- Educational Psychologist – **Brighton and Hove City Council**
- Drug Intervention Program Coordinator – **London Borough of Redbridge**
- 15 + Social Worker – **London Borough of Waltham Forest**
- Leaving Care Social Worker – **London Borough of Haringey**

Recent research and writing

- Woodward, E. (2018). Developing a Therapeutic Process for the Use of Character Strengths When Working with Older Children and Adolescents Presenting with Anxiety. (Awaiting publication)





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WHY HOPE?

Context

- Why is this important?

Process

- What can we do?
- How can we do it?



WHAT FUTURE DO YOU PICTURE FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

What do you imagine the world and their lives will look like in 10, 15 or 20 years time?

The future is an open question, we are so far beyond what we have experienced before.

Are we unconsciously preparing children for their future based on our experiences of our past?





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WHY?

The Perfect Storm





THE PERFECT STORM

- Covid 19
- Tech and AI
- Modern Life
- War
- Climate Change



WHICH CAN TRIGGER BIG FEELINGS

- Anxiety, fear, confusion and vulnerability – normal!
- Greed/resource scarcity/competition
- Overwhelm and demoralisation
- Denial and de-prioritisation of action





YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ALREADY REPORTING FEELINGS OF...

- Grief
- Helplessness
- Overwhelm
- Resentment
- Fear/anxiety
- Demoralised
- Anger
- Desperation
- Vulnerability





LOCALLY WE KNOW THAT:



- New Zealand students have the second-highest rate of bullying in the OECD
- The highest rates of family violence in the developed world
- New Zealand's youth suicide rate - teenagers between 15 and 19 - to be the highest out of OECD and EU Countries



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DEVELOPING BRAINS, STRESS AND TRAUMA

The younger generations
have never lived in a time
without global threats





BRAINS AND NERVOUS SYSTEMS

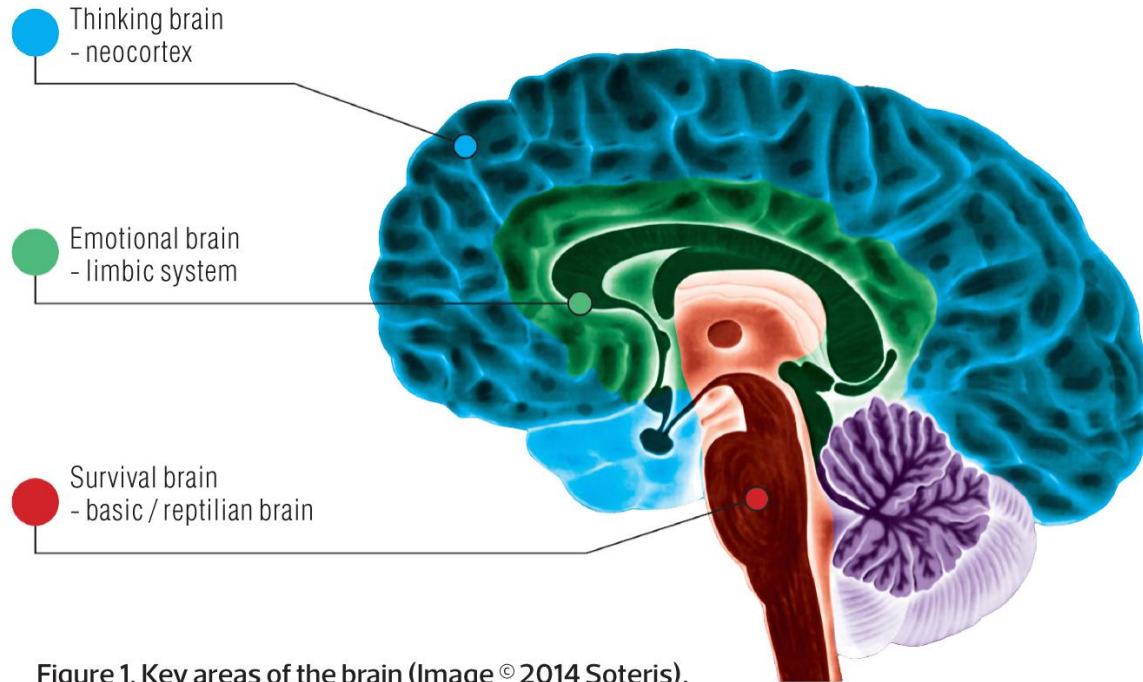
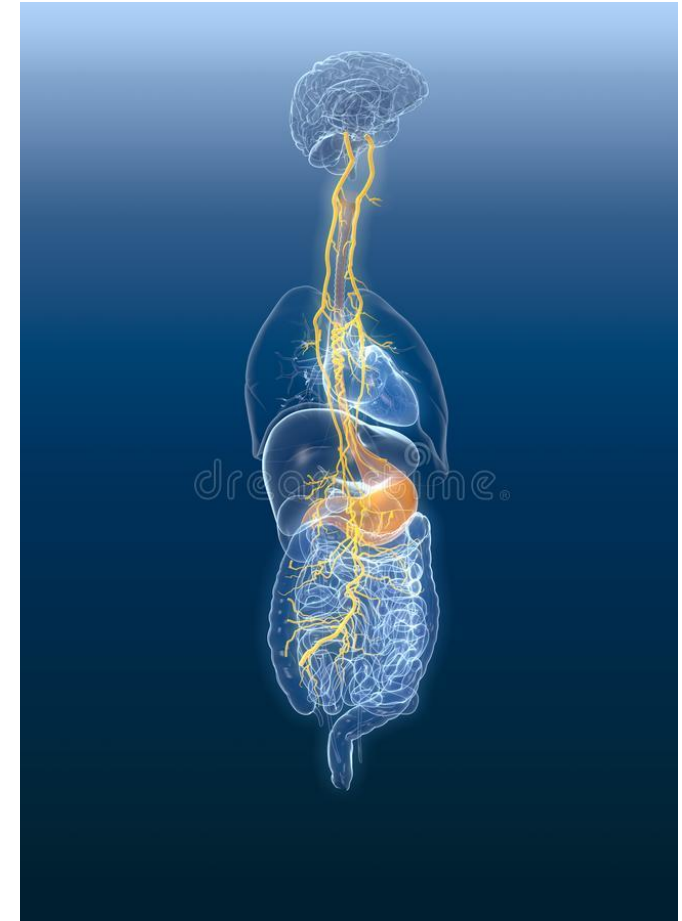
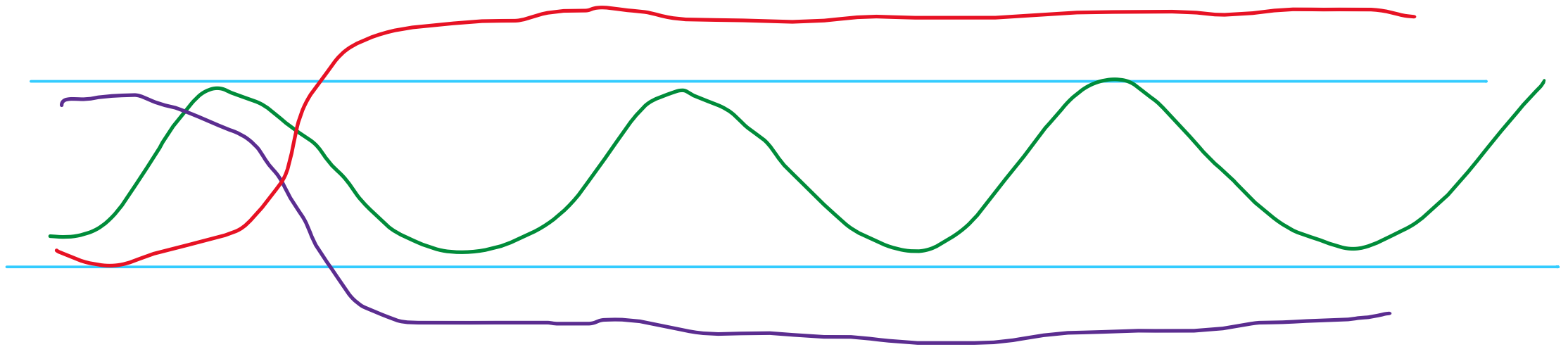


Figure 1. Key areas of the brain (Image © 2014 Soteris).





NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION



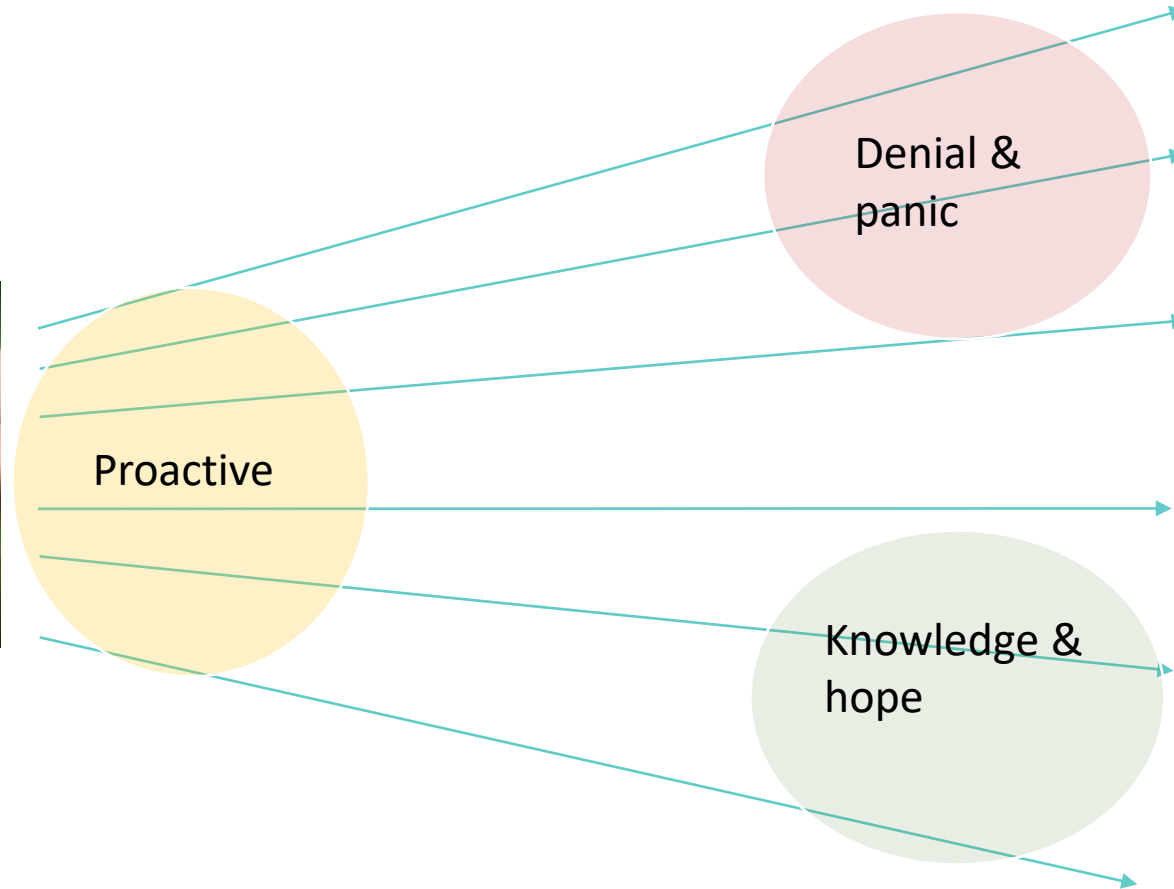
Typical emotional regulation – health oscillation between parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system

Anxiety – future focused negativity

Depression – hopelessness, worthlessness, meaningless



WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING NOW...



Poor
Outcomes

Resilient
Outcomes



WHILST I'VE BEEN TALKING...



- What has come up for you?
- What links have you made to your own knowledge?
- Any actions?
- Feel free to share your thoughts in the chat



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HOPE

“Hope is like a vaccine that can inoculate humans from the pain and adversity they will inevitably experience in their lifetime”



**HOPE IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND
LIFE**

Hope is NOT Optimism

**'an optimistic attitude of mind
based on an expectation that you
can influence positive outcomes'**



HOPE ACTS AS A BUFFER



Anxiety – fearful and uncertain about the future

Depression – purposeless, meaningless

Hope – meaning, purpose, agency, direction



CULTIVATING HOPE

“Hope is defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways”

Pathways – Learn how to regulate and plan for the future

Agency – Learn the skills and self-belief needed to reach goals

Community – build and sustain positive relationships

Snyder, R – Rainbows in the mind (2002)



HOPE FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

Goal:	To live a meaningful life (a life worth living)
Pathway:	Knowing what this is and having the skills
Agency:	Having the self belief and motivation to do it
Community:	Building connections with others



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THE FORMULA FOR CULTIVATING HOPE?

What can we do?

5 pointers to cultivate hope to
build wellbeing and facilitate
action



THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS?

We need to cultivate a sense of hope that a solution can be found, enough doubt that it will not be found without action, and some direction about which action to take!

*FORMULA
FOR
SUCCESS*



ROLE OF TEACHERS IN CULTIVATING HOPE

Hope in the Face of Climate Change: Associations With Environmental Engagement and Student Perceptions of Teachers' Emotion Communication Style and Future Orientation

Maria Ojala

False Hope based on denial of reality – unrealistic optimism and inaction -emotionally unavailable and pessimistic

Constructive hope based on acceptance of reality– environmental engagement - emotionally available and solutions focused



1. CULTIVATE A SENSE OF WONDER AND AWE AS WELL AS THE ISSUES WE FACE

In nature, the arts, knowledge, science, humanity,
spirituality...

‘We are motivated to act when we learn the
seriousness of threat to the things that we
cherish’

Give facts about the issues as much as we know

Gratitude
IS THE BEST
attitude

A graphic with the text 'Gratitude IS THE BEST attitude' in a mix of black script and serif fonts. It is decorated with two orange leaves on the sides and a wavy orange line at the bottom.



2. TEACH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS



Intellect, success and academic prowess
means nothing if we can't back it up with,
resilience, grit, kindness, empathy and
hope...



3. DEVELOP EMOTIONAL REGULATION SKILLS





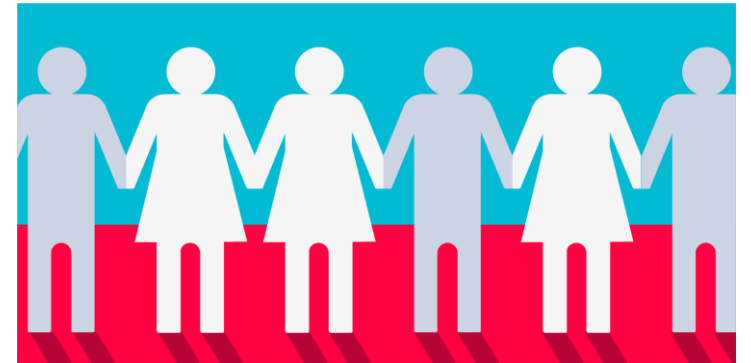
4. DEVELOP AGENCY AND PATHWAYS THINKING – COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

‘Take what you have and make what you want...’”

Thinking is taught NOT Caught

Solution-focused mindset says:

- I possess the skills, talents, and resources to discover the solution
- There is a solution to this problem or situation, and ways to reach my goal
- I will devise a workable plan and make it work
- Where can I go when I need support, help and joy in my life?





To do daily

- [illegible]



5. DEVELOP VALUES-LED ACTION

“We may not be able to change everything we want to about the world but we can choose how we show up in relation to it”

- Good moral agents – teach ‘what are your values?’
- Close the values-action gap
- Challenge the status quo
- MODEL THIS!!!



Bring it on. Dissent is
central to any
democracy.

Harry Belafonte





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HOW?

Thinking about what has
just been discussed...



YOU ARE THE EXPERTS IN YOUR OWN CONTEXT

1. Cultivate a Sense of Wonder and Awe
2. Teach 21st century skills
3. Explicitly teach emotional regulation skills
4. Develop agency and pathways thinking and build community
5. Develop values-led action

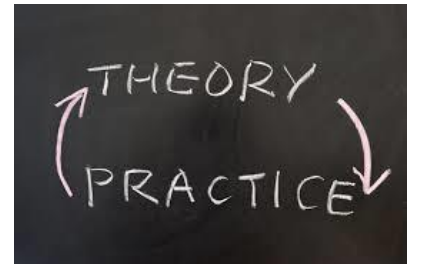
Nominate a spokesperson and then discuss:

What is your role and where is your influence?

What do you already do and how can you do this more intentionally?

What would be the risk and benefits of this?

What will you take away from today?





SHARE YOUR TAKE AWAY POINTS





TAKE AWAY POINTS

- Stress and its flow on effect, anxiety is potentially higher because of the environment that we live in today.
- We are not (and should not be) alone, reach out and build communities.
- There are skills we can learn, teach, and practice that will help our kids to flourish.
- Society has changed and, will continue to change – we need to build a society that develops and values the skills that facilitate human flourishing.
- None of this matters unless we have hope.





RADICAL HOPE

“If we can justifiably hope that something good will come of all the upheavals in store, and in particular that the world we are creating will not be utterly hostile to human flourishing, that hope will necessarily be radical. Fortunately, the hope itself can cause us to turn our energies aggressively to bringing about the outcome.

This is not just because those with hope tend to generate effective routes to their goals and are good at seeing their way through or around impediments. It is also because finding a way to flourish in the teeth of the climate crisis requires working for meaningful political change, acting in newly courageous ways, and looking hard for alternative models of sustainable living.

If we can summon the intelligence, moral seriousness and humility needed to do these things we have a chance of succeeding. Hopefully”

Byron Williston



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