An increasing body of research has highlighted the neuro-developmental impact of trauma and/or the persistent exposure to a range of adverse experiences in childhood (DeBellis, 2005; Teicher, et al 2002; Perry, 2001). The exposure and adaptation to these experiences have been shown to have immediate and long-term effects across various domains of development including: biology, attachment, emotional regulation, behavioral control, cognition, and self-concept (Fishbein, et al 2009; Cook, et al 2005; Shonk and Cicchetti, 2001). Since many of the youth we treat come to us with their own histories of trauma and disrupted attachments, it is imperative that a neuro-developmental understanding of trauma helps inform our treatment interventions.

This workshop focuses on a developmental approach to treating sexual behavior problems. This approach recognizes the sequential nature of the developmental process and the need to have basic developmental skills like attunement, sensory integration, body awareness, and self-regulation in place before higher order demands like social-emotional communication and adaptive problem-solving can be met (Bergman and Creeden, 2011; Perry 2006). Interventions that focus on “bottom-up” rather than “top down” neurological processing that seek to enhance client capacities in these foundation skills in a manner that mirrors a healthy and adaptive developmental trajectory will be discussed and demonstrated.

References


