

Week 2 Notes KEY

It is well known that psychological trauma of any sort can have a lasting, damaging effect on human beings.

Long Term Psychological Effects

Children who have had traumatic births are more likely to be **anxious** or **aggressive** than their easy-birth counterparts. Of course genetics and many other factors come into the equation too, but, if all else was equal, the child who was traumatised at birth would be more **vulnerable** to psychological problems.

Separation from the mother at birth, as well as the mother's own post-trauma stress response, can affect the early bonding between the mother and child, which is another major factor in the child's psychological development.

That is the experience and sensation that is imprinted onto the traumatised neonate's untainted mind. A newborn's immature nervous system is like a blank sheet on which is printed the first experiences. And this **imprint** becomes the **blueprint** on which the child's life and future experiences are fashioned.

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As a clinician,(Lorri Craig) whenever I am presented with a highly anxious, angry, or oppositional child, I always ask the parents about the child's trauma history, including their birth experience. Actually I do this with my adult clients too. And very often the links are obvious.

However, the most significant traumas that affect us all to a greater or lesser extent, are those that occur in the earliest stages of our life – throughout our time in the **womb**, during the **birth process** and in the **early years** of childhood.

Babies are far more conscious and **aware**, even as newborns than we realise. Unlike adults, babies do not have the option of **fighting or fleeing** as a response to threatening or overwhelming circumstances. As a result, the only option left available to them in these circumstances is to **freeze**. This makes them much more **vulnerable** to the effects of overwhelm and traumatisation than adults, or even older children.

Babies have a biological imperative to birth themselves using their own impulse (together with help from the uterine contractions and mum's

pushing) and then to connect immediately with Mum in order to begin to bond. Anything that gets in the way of this natural impulse can be perceived by the baby as threatening and therefore becomes a source of possible [overwhelm](#) and [traumatisation](#).

Natural vagina birth.

This allows the baby to define the [physical boundaries](#). You are able to experience a natural process of being squeezed stimulating all necessary areas on your body and organs.

Vaginally born babies have more diversified microbiomes, less allergies, less risk of obesity, asthma, and diabetes in childhood and later.

Babies receive protective bacteria from the birth canal that helps build their [immune system](#).

The Physical effects of birthing - involve the compression, twisting and tensing of the baby's head, neck and body in very specific ways. Whilst a lot of this compression can slowly work its way out of the system after birth, the baby that has experienced overwhelm may actually keep these patterns [locked](#) up in the body potentially creating specific health and developmental problems later on.

Emotional patterns that have their origins in the birth process, include how we relate to pressure, stress and time, decision making, and our ability to initiate and complete projects.

How each of these plays out in our own lives may depend on the specific nature of our birth

If a baby is in genuine distress and unable to complete its birth journey on its own, it may perceive the [interventions](#) as a potential [life-saver](#), rescuing them in a time of crisis. If, however, the baby perceives that it is doing ok on its own, then it may perceive the intervention as [invasive](#), intrusive and interfering with its natural impulse.

Both of these scenarios can set up a long-term dynamic about needing to be rescued, or feeling intruded upon, particularly in times of stress.

This may, over time lead to an avoidance, or even rejection of touch and/or intimacy.

Anaesthetics -During this time you may have been unable to feel and find comfort or security from your mother during the birth. You may feel [disconnected](#) from your feelings, environment or relationships. You may feel incompetent or inadequate or numb towards others in life.

Epidurals - The baby finds it challenging to relate to others and their emotions as they mature.

Work on the baby feeling frustrated and confused. The child may feel as if the mother has given up on them. It may Cause the baby to feel numb.

Caesarean. Children find it challenging to **connect** to fully experience their emotions, this may be as a result of the drugs that were used during the caesarean process.

There is often a need for them to prove to everyone that they can do it on their own. These children / adults find it hard to ask for support. They don't always succeed in completing tasks that they started. They often sabotage their progress. This is connected to the birth process that was interfered with.

Forceps / vacuum birth

When forceps are applied to the sides of a baby's head, the baby may perceive this as something cold and hostile and try to withdraw away from them.

Unfortunately, the baby can't get away and, as a result many babies **freeze** and can become traumatised.

This child / adult often feel **overwhelmed** very quickly in day-to-day life. They may feel like they are being pulled in all directions at once, & may sabotage progress. They may suffer from headaches.

Incubator babies

May feel isolated and abandoned – maybe **disconnected** from their source of nurturing and safety.

Due to lack of touch at this time you may fear that you don't get enough love attention or acknowledgement. - this can lead to being an over achiever (searching for love and acknowledgement).

ADHD may be related to spending time in an incubator.

Induced labour

Your life maybe driven by fear and fear based actions. You often need approval and validation from others to make sure you're heading in the right direction. You may have poor personal **boundaries**

A baby whose birth was influenced by pethidine or other drugs can re-experience a birth, free of the effects of the drugs – using FEFT (or other techniques).

A baby born by elective C-section can learn to initiate the timing of its own birth and to find its own way out, free of any interference

encouraging a baby born by forceps to be able to birth itself on its own rather than to always need assistance;

Inductions generally have the result of creating more intense uterine contractions and have the potential to produce more pronounced shock and cranial/body moulding patterns.

Babies learn how to respond to the world around them by the way those in their environment were acting. (the stories of Mohamed and Sheila)

We learn we are not safe from the chemicals we experience through our mother. And if those surrounding us have a heightened sense of fear about our safety, we may also absorb that fear. We enter the world with a high level of [adrenalin](#) and other fear based chemicals in our blood stream, misperceiving the world we have arrived in to be one that is [hostile](#). In turn, our brains begin to shape and form to accommodate our 'hostile' environment. Neural connections are formed in the brain that support our perception of a hostile world, and we begin to respond to it accordingly.

FEFT isn't just telling ourselves a different story about our birth. It is changing the way we experienced the birth through our senses and perception, so that we no longer hold the old experience on a subconscious level. Whatever you learned in those vital first hours as you entered the world, may still be with you today.

Cingulate Gyrus

An important part of the limbic system

The cingulate gyrus helps regulate emotions and pain. The cingulate gyrus is thought to directly drive the body's conscious response to unpleasant experiences. In addition, it is involved in fear and the prediction (and avoidance) of negative consequences and can help orient the body away from negative stimuli. Learning to avoid negative consequences is an important feature of memory

It reminds me of a bridge between the conscious / unconscious minds – making us less reactive.

After birth, the bonding instinct awakens the cingulate gyrus in the baby. This is part of the limbic system and is involved with [emotional](#) formation and the control of [aggressive](#) behaviour.

A number of things awaken and nurture the Cingulate Gyrus, such as breastfeeding, being held, eye contact with the mother and hearing the mother's voice.

However there is a small window of time for this to happen naturally after birth

Its never too late to do the bonding process. If you give eye to eye contact, physical holding and sweet sounds, even with an adopted baby, as nature keeps this brain part open (Joseph Chilton Pearce)

Some -ve experiences in the womb

Mother or father not wanting the baby

Baby is the wrong sex

Parents experiencing Fear, Worry, Anger, Hate, Anxiety, Grief throughout pregnancy

Being separated from the Mother at birth

Adoption

Loss of twin due to death or separation at birth

Previous loss of child in the womb

Leading to patterns of

Depression

Substance abuse

Eating disorders

Childhood and adult suicide

Aggression and violence

Skin problems such as eczema (Meta medicine - separation anxiety)

General feeling of disconnection and separation

Mental health issues

High anxiety / worry

Negative Emotions and Beliefs Caused by [Separation](#) at Birth

The world's not a safe place

I'm not wanted - rejection

Isolation

Abandonment

Anger, Shame. Fear

I'm not good enough

I'm unloved / unlovable

I'm unworthy

I'm worthless

I don't want to be here