



TCI – Module Eleven Elements of a Potentially Violent Situation and Crisis Co-regulation

Elements of a Potentially Violent Situation

There are four elements to a potentially violent situation. It will require a quick assessment of the situation to determine which element is the best to be managed or removed to prevent an outburst from occurring.

1. The Spark

This is the trigger to the violence. It can be another adult, young person who is witnessing the situation or the adult trying to intervene. Invading someone's personal space, threatening consequences are examples of a spark that could trigger the violence to occur.

2. The Target

The target could be another young person or perhaps the adult. For some children and young people the target could also be themselves.

3. The weapon

The weapon can be anything in the environment that could cause harm and damage. A weapon could also be the young person's fist, feet or teeth.

4. The level of stress or motivation

The young person's feelings and motivations affect behaviour. The emotionally overwhelmed child or young person is interpreting events as provocative.

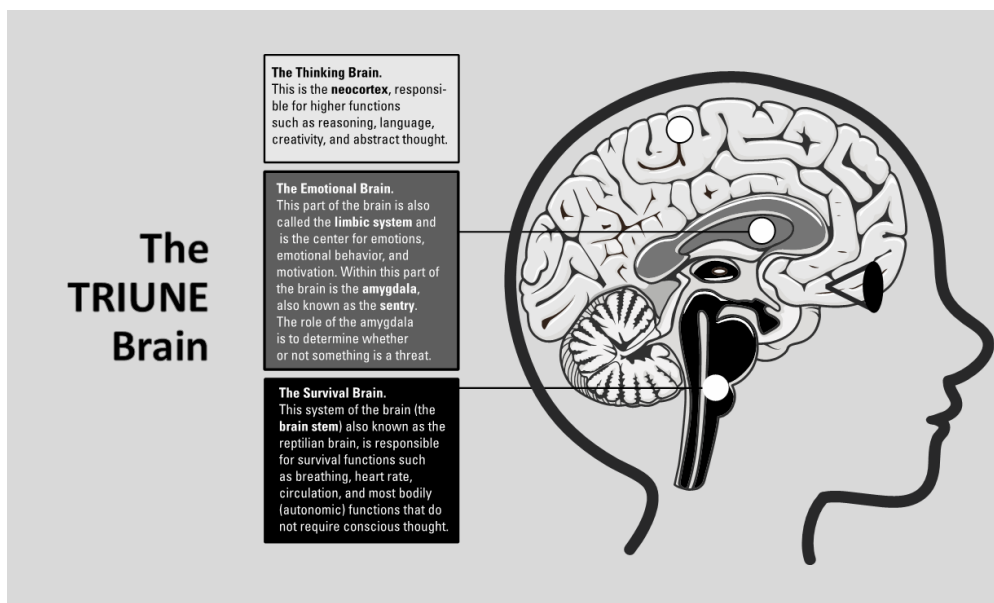
Removal of any of these four elements will reduce the likelihood of violence occurring.

Crisis Co-regulation

The goal of crisis co-regulation is to support the child or young person in a way that reduces stress and risk and increases the child or young person's sense of safety.

It is the adult's role to help the child help themselves. During a potentially violent situation we need to be in control of our own thoughts, emotions and actions. The adult's responsibility is to assist young people in their efforts to reduce their stress by helping them to co-regulate their emotions so their thinking brain can respond to the situation more rationally. The adult needs to maintain calm and use self-control and not react to what the young person is doing or saying.

Staying in control means activating and using the thinking brain. Our thinking brain helps us to stay in control, stay calm and think through how to manage the situation. This is done using knowledge of the child, our relationship and experience.



We need to ensure that we resist slipping into our emotional brain (which controls feelings) or into our survival brain (which can lead to panic) and instead utilise our thinking brain.

Asking yourself the following questions can help you to stay in your thinking brain during a power struggle or potentially violent situation.

What to think? (Self-talk):

- What am I feeling now?



- What does the child feel, need, expect or want?
- How is the environment affecting the situation?
- Use positive self-talk

What to do? (Non-verbal strategies)

- Take a deep breath and exhale slowly
- Give the young person space and time
- Use silence
- Be aware of body language and facial expressions

What to say? (Verbal strategies)

- Very little
- Speak calmly, assertively, respectfully
- Understanding responses



Details of this topic are covered in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) Student Workbook 7th Edition. Refer to Module Four pages S54 – S59.