



**TIHC Network meeting via Zoom
December 8, 2022
Minutes**

Present: Ruth Ever, Laurie Loisel, Alice Barber (presenter) Romulo Cabrera, Ariane Krumholz, Douglas Wentworth, Kevawn Lord, Steve Jones, Jen Jarrell, Kristen Hoag, Chase Giroux, Kiera Durrett, Jenifer Urff, Debra Bercuvitz, Severiana Rodriguez, Mary Cowhey, Heather Warner, Taylor McAndrew, Sheila Murphy, Kara McLaughlin, Steve Brown, Lisa Goldsmith

Welcome by Ruth;

Mindful moment led by Chase;

Heather offered **discussion prompt** for breakout groups: what was a game or other type of play you engaged in as a very young child and what did you appreciate or love about it. Small group shares (6 min)

Presentation by Alice Barber, local child therapist in clinical practice who works with very young children. Key Points: She spoke about her experiences, addressed misconceptions about working with young children, and talked about barriers to care. There is an overwhelming need for care that isn't being met. She says trauma is something that takes away pieces of you and the healing is about reclaiming those pieces. This doesn't have to happen in intensive therapy. It's important for children to be heard, not fixed, but heard. Taking cues from them by asking the question in their play: *and then what happened?* Others commented on how much playtime and imaginative play has been lost because of focus on testing and academics, and how damaging that is for children.

Alice named several factors that get in the way of helping children:

1. "Children are resilient"--this attitude tends to shut off the individuality of children and allow for the possibility of them needing more help
2. Parent Fears--if they call for help, their children might be taken away from them and they may be judged for it.
3. Graduate schools don't tend to teach students how to work with young children
4. Assumptions are made about children's emotional experiences and the old reward and punishment models are not helpful. We don't always trust that children will talk/play/work out what they need to to process their trauma.
5. Adults tend to want to solve problems and rescue others instead of allowing for more open ended responses ("and then what happens when the child is trapped in the burning building?")

Very young children are able to participate in therapy/ treatment when it meets them where they are. This kind of intervention can be done in other ways than therapy, like play in a classroom setting. Alice has written the book *Blue Butterfly Open*, which can be purchased at Gallery of Readers Press at this link: <https://galleryofreaders.org/publications/blue-butterfly-open-by-alice-barber/>

TIHC Updates and Announcements

Funding: We have gotten a state earmark to support our work and are waiting to hear about a few grant applications.

Activities: Film series in the works, will keep everyone posted, but expect to be launched in the new year. May bring back Resilience; other possible film showings include Crazywise, Cracked Up, Stutz and a version of Wisdom of Trauma with Spanish subtitles and a post film discussion in Spanish.

Potential project: Jenifer Urff reported on the application to be part of the Child Trauma Academy through the Child Trauma Institute and Center on Child Well Being and Trauma in which teams of local people will work together and participate in learning communities together. We are planning to partner with Healthy Families, Amherst CRESS and hopefully Families with Power in this project. Our stated goal is to expand our diversity and outreach to better reflect the wider community we serve and reach parents with a more customized Resilience Roadshow, but it could change once we actually begin our work together.

Down the road: Hope to present a panel looking at various non-police or co-responder programs like CRESS, Resilience Hub and CSO's co-responders teams.

We are beginning to work on another regional conference, looking for folks to join a planning group. Please reach out to Ruth if you are interested.

Next meeting: Jan 12, at 1 pm on zoom. Presentation by Communities for Restorative Justice which is taking place in Hampshire County Courts. More details to come!