



# Unpacking the Problem

London Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council

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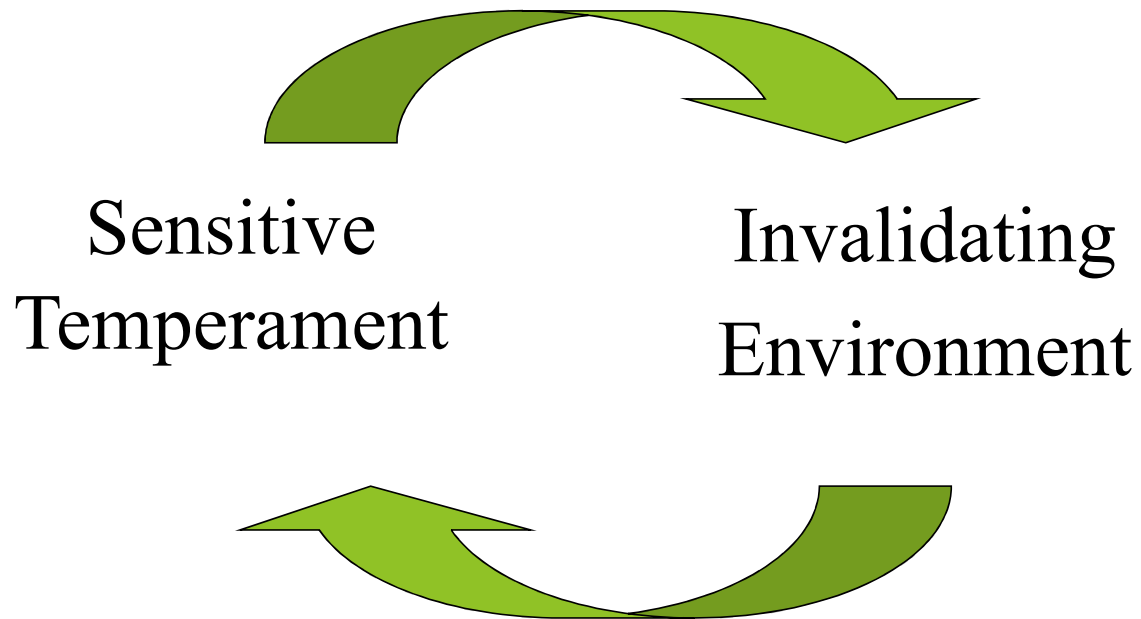
# Sabrina Andrews, CPRP

- ▶ **Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner**
- ▶ **Experience in community Mental Health - 24 years**
- ▶ **Family Support Coordinator at CMHA - last 11 years**
- ▶ **Private Counselling, Training and Consulting Practice**
- ▶ **Master Trainer in Suicide Awareness and Intervention**
- ▶ **Member of the London Middlesex Suicide Prevention Council**
- ▶ **Strong belief in recovery using a holistic approach to care**

# What IS the Problem?

- ▶ People are in crisis!
- ▶ Suicide, suicide attempts and para-suicidal behaviour are increasing
- ▶ Acting out behaviours lead to more crimes being committed
- ▶ Maladaptive coping strategies are having an impact on the community
- ▶ Increasing demand on crisis services, police services
- ▶ Communities may eventually not be able to meet the demand
- ▶ Everyone's safety is at risk

# Biosocial Theory



(Linehan, 1994)

(Crowell, Beauchaine, Linehan, 2009)

# Emotional Dysregulation

- ▶ Emotional sensitivity present then an invalidating experience occurs
- ▶ Activation of the Amygdala - brain's alarm system
- ▶ Sudden intense arousal
- ▶ Irrationality (emotion mind vs. wise mind)
- ▶ Cognition is impaired
- ▶ Inability to problem solve, make decisions
- ▶ Utilize either adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies

## FACTS:

- ▶ We all experience moments of dysregulation!
- ▶ 10% of people experience impaired functioning due to dysregulation
- ▶ 5% of people have severely impaired functioning (Axis II diagnosis)



# “No-Choice” Choices

- ▶ As humans, we are compelled to relieve our own pain
- ▶ Many lack the wisdom to effectively relieve their emotional pain
- ▶ We utilize the pain relieving methods that we know will work
- ▶ These strategies provide short-term relief with long-term consequences
- ▶ Maladaptive coping lowers self worth/raises emotional sensitivity
- ▶ Emotional distress increases the need for pain relief = **VICIOUS CYCLE**



# Is Emotional Distress on the Rise?

## ▶ YES!

- ▶ **Life is getting harder**
- ▶ The internet has made the enormity of our world difficult to manage
- ▶ We are not evolving emotionally and intellectual at the rate of technology
- ▶ Compare ourselves to “highlight reels” on social media
- ▶ Expectations of performance are much higher
- ▶ Those 30 yrs and under have had exposure to this phenomenon
- ▶ Today’s teenagers are in CRISIS



# Social Media is Making Us Sick

- ▶ YouTube:
- ▶ Steven Bartlett
- ▶ “Social Media is Making Us Sick”
- ▶ <https://youtu.be/ha73AyMRe08>



# Validation is the Key

- ▶ Validation is a universal “emotional language” that can be used to communicate with someone when they are in distress.
- ▶ It is accepting the person for who they are in the moment and it helps them feel understood, thereby decreasing distress
- ▶ There are varying levels of validation but it begins with attentive listening, being able to sit with someone in their pain and resist the urge to placate or problem-solve (this is crisis intervention)
- ▶ It's used to de-escalate situations but does NOT address the root problem!!

# Food For Thought...

- ▶ Crisis services are helpful in keeping safe but are a BAND-AID
- ▶ No one is providing long-term “suicide recovery” work (revolving door)
- ▶ Our medical model does not address emotional issues
- ▶ The mental health system is often further invalidating
- ▶ People are not taught to understand and manage their emotions
- ▶ There are few - if any - FREE or low cost options for therapy
- ▶ Young people lack the skills to manage their world

So What is the SOLUTION?

Deal with the problem,  
not the after-math!

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