


  
 Transforming trauma through food and body stories  
**Pathways linking trauma and ill health**  
[www.lucyaphramor.com](http://www.lucyaphramor.com)  
 Talk given at: "Trauma Informed Services – What Next?: Trauma resulting from Gender Based Violence - Putting Theory Into Practice. 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018, Highland Council, Inverness  
 By Lucy Aphramor RD PhD  



  
**Health, Health Behaviours and Trauma**


- Lifestyle change
  - Diet and exercise
  - Fatness and thinness
- Resilience
- Social determinants: ACEs, trauma
- Moral response?




  
**Physiology and After-Effects of Trauma**

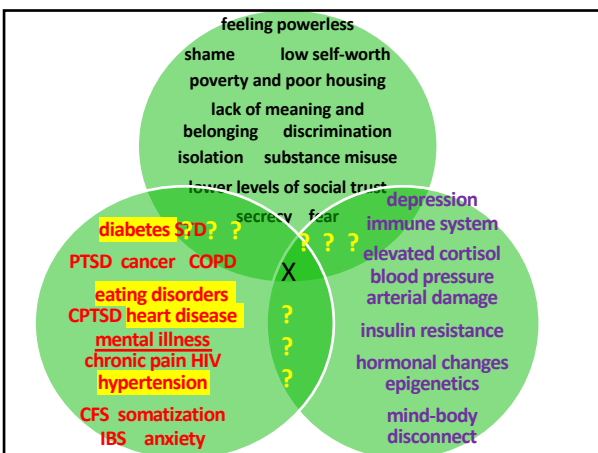
- Difficulty forming growth-enhancing relationships
- Shame and lack of self-worth
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Abnormal pain perception
- Disturbed eating patterns
- Altered endocrine cycles
- Alienation from the body
- Substance abuse
- Self-harm
- Genito-urinary problems
- Avoids medical examinations





- Chronic pelvic pain
- Difficulty decision-making
- Gastrointestinal illness
- Dental problems
- Chronic fatigue
- Sexual and reproductive problems
- Headache and migraine
- Chronic pain
- Somatization
- High risk behaviour
- Increased risk of violence and violation













Well Now

Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

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PUBLICATION - PUBLICATION

## A healthier future: Scotland's diet and healthy weight delivery plan

Published: 2 Jul 2018  
 Directorate: [Health and Social Care Integration Directorate](#)  
 Part of: [Health and social care](#)  
 ISBN: 9781787810556

Sets out how we will work with partners in the public and private sector to help people make healthier choices about food.

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1.1%

In a crowd of 100 people with the same risk factors as me, 1 is likely to have a heart attack or stroke within the next 10 years.

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Well Now

### My weight doubles

1.1%

In a crowd of 100 people with the same risk factors as me, 1 is likely to have a heart attack or stroke within the next 10 years.

### I move house

1.7%

In a crowd of 100 people with the same risk factors as me, 2 are likely to have a heart attack or stroke within the next 10 years.

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Well Now

“Traditional explanations focus on genetic and lifestyle causes, but increasing evidence is coming to support the view that **type 2 diabetes is primarily a disease of material and social deprivation associated with poverty and marginalization.**”

Raphael D et al. Type 2 Diabetes: Poverty, Priorities and Policy. The Social Determinants of the Incidence and Management of Type 2 Diabetes. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management and School of Nursing, 2010

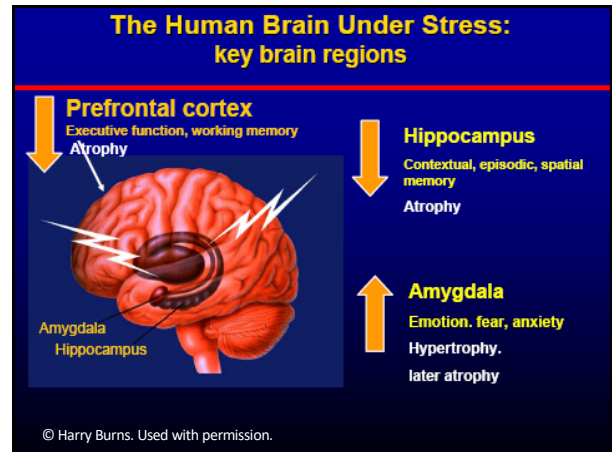
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- Well Now
- ## Trauma - a social determinant of health
- SDH are misconstrued as the socially distributed ability to eat well and be active
  - Erases the impact of power on bodies and minds and relationships
- PoetLucy



Lifestyle behaviour change models :

- Do not and cannot accommodate trauma
- Reinforce and hide trauma and inequity
- Prevent appropriate care being received
- Block progress and transformation
- Ignore vast amounts of data
- Enable the continuation of toxic power
- Shame and oppress



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Targeted core messages

The development of core messages around healthy weight, type 2 diabetes and wider determinants on health can be very useful in ensuring that across a variety of organisations, settings and media, people are provided with consistent and accurate messages.



Biochemistry of Discrimination

- Activation of SNS and HPA axis
- ↑cortisol + inhibition of sex steroids + GH  
→ insulin resistance
- ↑ cortisol = ↑ cholesterol
- ? Disrupt balance of leptin and neuropeptideY
- HT from parallel activation of SNS/insulin



Internalized racism, body fat distribution, and abnormal fasting glucose among African-Caribbean women in Dominica, West Indies.

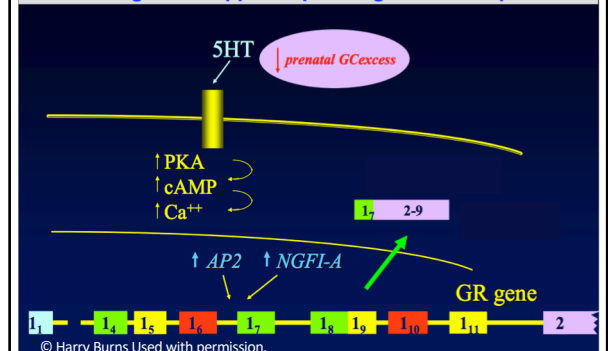
J Natl Med Assoc 2002 94(3):143-8


- High IR → larger waist circumference, =BMI
- Significant relationship between IR and abnormal [fasting glucose]



The molecular biology of a cuddle

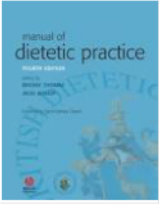
5HT regulates hippocampal GR gene transcription







*“Much of the world’s disease burden results from a few largely preventable risk factors, most of which are related to diet and lifestyle’ (p.2)*

*“Mortality and morbidity from chronic diseases are greatest in those who are least advantaged, much of it attributable to adverse diet and lifestyle influences’ (p.4)*






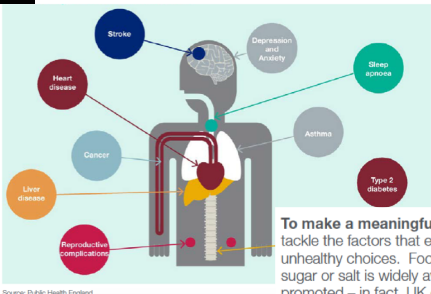


- ... there is a simple confusion that tends to arise whenever we are presented with a complex array of new facts and perceptions
- However, when the mind is trying to escape the awareness of conflict, there is a very different kind of *self-sustaining confusion*, in which one’s deep intention is really to avoid perceiving the fact, rather than to sort it out and make it clear.

David Bohm, *On Creativity*. P.21



by Harms Health




**To make a meaningful impact**, we need to tackle the factors that encourage us to make unhealthy choices. Food and drink high in fat, sugar or salt is widely available, and heavily promoted – in fact, UK consumer expenditure on price promotions is the highest in Europe.<sup>14</sup> Evidence suggests that, overall, the food and drink provided out of home is skewed towards less healthy options.<sup>15</sup>

**It’s clear our plans to tackle the Scottish diet need to be ambitious and decisive.**

Source: Public Health England

In Scotland’s Diet & Healthy Weight Delivery Plan: A Healthier Future







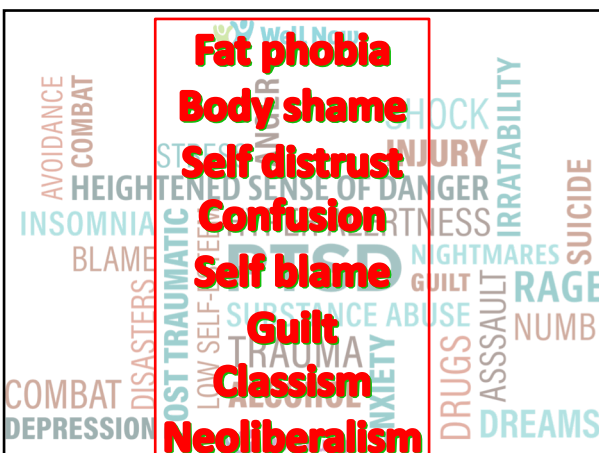
**Be thin :**  
Eat less  
Move more

**Be resilient.**  
Take personal responsibility


**Good citizens are thin.** Fat people are a drain on society

**Act as if trauma does not exist and/or is not your concern**







**Fat phobia**  
**Body shame**  
**Self distrust**  
**Confusion**  
**Self blame**  
**Guilt**  
**Classism**  
**Neoliberalism**




- In the end she said, well, if you’re not going to cooperate, there’s no point in coming, and I just felt that she was part of Big Brother, everybody was on my case and, you know, and I just thought, well, if that’s how you feel, stuff it. I didn’t want to come, anyway, you know.
- I used to think I was nobody because I was fat.




 **RCT Evidence on Dieting**


Mann et al 2007 Am Psyc Vol. 62, No. 3, 220–233

“ the studies do not provide consistent evidence that dieting results in significant health improvements, regardless of weight change...**The benefits of dieting are simply too small and the potential harms of dieting are too large for it to be recommended as a safe and effective treatment ...**






“Although these were the best studies available according to the principles of evidence based medicine, many did not fulfil its requirements.... These flaws bias the results and can exaggerate the effects..... **Rather than showing what does work ... research to date shows us clearly what does not** (Jain BMJ 2006)





- “ **Weight cycling is a common condition** as only a minority of people who lose weight through weight management interventions are able to maintain their weight loss.<sup>115,116</sup> . . . **Weight cycling is a risk factor for all-cause mortality and cardiovascular mortality (hazard ratio (HR) approximately 1.8 for both).**<sup>118,119</sup>








When someone explains health outcomes as being primarily a result of ‘lifestyle behaviours’ and/or weight they are calspaining.

Among other problems, calspaining is inherently racist and sexist as its deep assumptions are that experiences of gendered and racialised injustice do not count as relevant in the health conversation.

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 **What I have learnt, is that**

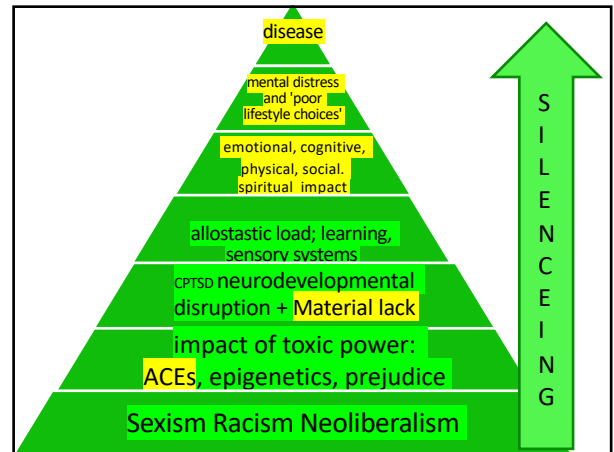
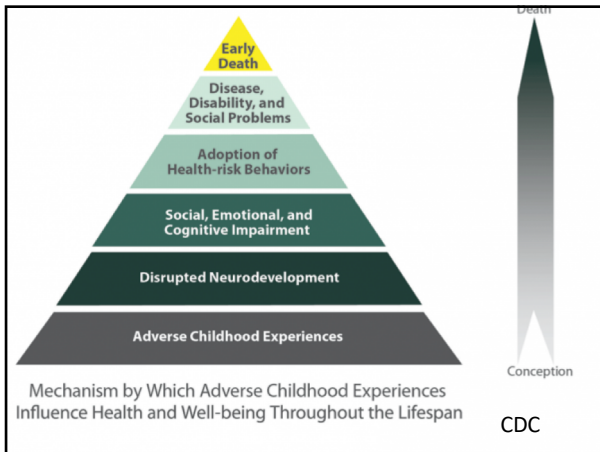
 **When should I use an approach, like attempted weight conversion, that ignores trauma?**



 **When should I use an approach that shames and oppresses?**








**Well Now**

- Health requires a fair and safe (and comprehensible) world
- The goal of **evidence-based practice** stands in the way of this
- **Praxis-based action**, which necessarily engages with all types of relevant evidence, is needed instead



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**Well Now** www.lucyphramor.com

**Well Now Ethics of Repair and Care**

Harm has been done.

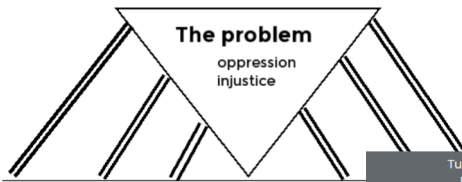
- What happened?
- What needs to happen now?
- Why did this happen?
- What will stop it from happening again?

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**Well Now**

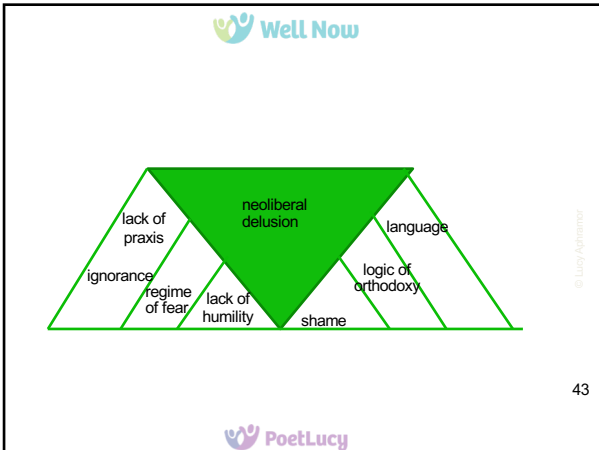
**The problem**  
oppression  
injustice



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Ampowerment refers to a meaningful sense of one's power-from-within. Lifestyle change falls under the rubric of ampowerment, which relates to self-care. Becoming aware of how stigma, trauma and structural factors shape lives (consciousness raising) can help people make sense of their experiences and increase feelings of ampowerment.

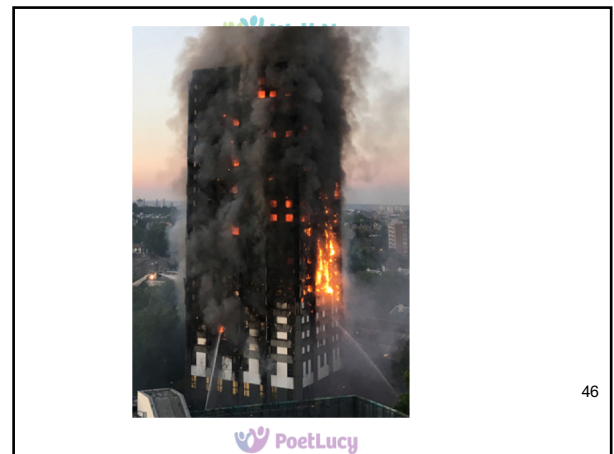
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**Empowerment**

- a process that involves systemic social change and communal healing, with action preceded by collective consciousness raising. It does not stop at self-esteem. It is not about compliance or coercion or tokenistic engagement.
- Ampowerment fosters empowerment through links with a critical awareness of power-over, healing, and increased capacity to engage in and influence power-with relationships.

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Well Now

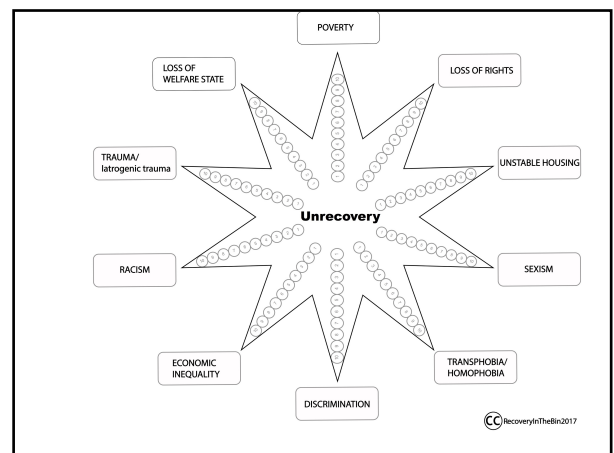
We can best help you to prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods.

*Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas*

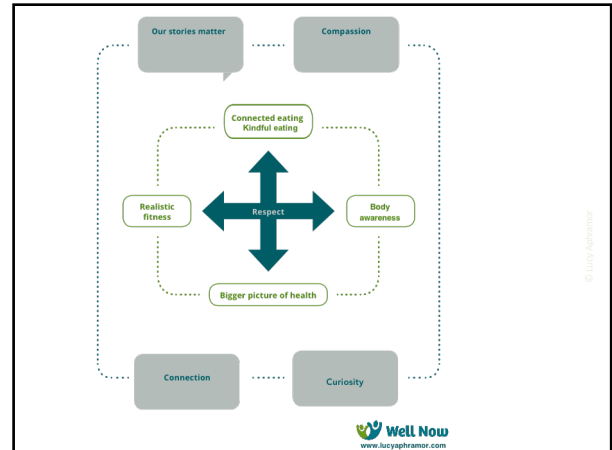
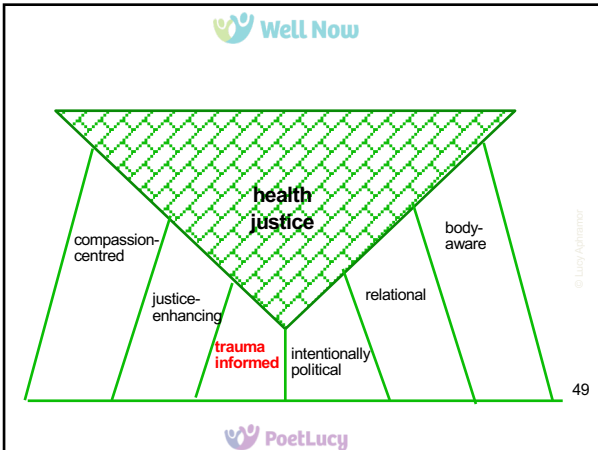
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*Relevant? Remember, it is oppression that is morally wrong, not your bodies response to it.*

**Strengthening the Compassion Muscle**

→ Choose 1 from:

- this is a moment of suffering
- this sucks
- this is really tough for me
- I am having a hard time right now

→ Choose 1 from:

- Other people feel like this - and everyone matters
- I am not alone with these feelings
- It's human to feel this way

→ Choose any number from:

- May I find peace. May everyone find peace.
- I love myself. I love others.

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- Well Now
- Well Now promotes health-gain (health-justice) and body respect for all.
  - It does this by fostering **compassionate self-care**, integrating the **bigger picture of health**, and using a **teaching style** that enhances deep change.
- PoetLucy

**What next for Well Now?**  
A group based Weight Management intervention which prioritises health gain over weight loss.

**NHS Highland**

- I think it's amazing in the way that it's made me more confident, made me love myself, yes it has. Alright, I'm not that intelligent in the way of reading but I do have good points and things I can do.
- Nobody had ever done that [listened without judging] before and that was a relief such as almost made me cry really

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Well Now

"It is a grave responsibility not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe"

*Audre Lorde*

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Kimberly Dark



Deb Burgard



Quakers

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