



Neufeld Institute Conference 2022 (May 12-14, 2022) *Bouncing Back: Recovering from Stress and Trauma* SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

These three keynote addresses and the three end-of day panel discussions are included with all recording packages.

ANCHOR KEYNOTE *Bouncing Back: From Stress to Strength* by Gordon Neufeld

Stress is a part of life – there is no escaping it. The same is true for our children. When stress is thought of as the enemy, we look in vain to reduce stress and if we can't, to manage it somehow. The key to bouncing back from stress, even stress that knows no end, is to first understand the wisdom of the stress response – that is, how Nature is trying to take care of us and what it needs from us in order to do so. Dr. Neufeld will reveal new understandings from the science of emotion that should help to understand how the stress we experience today can be converted into the strength we need to face our tomorrows. The focus will be on the children in our care, but the principles discussed will apply to all ages. The good news is that everyone possesses the human capacity to bounce back from stress, even when the stress refuses to go away.

KEYNOTE *Back to Nature Where We Belong* by Tamara Strijack

Once upon a time we lived in sync with the world around us. Living close to the land, we were in tune with the rhythms of the seasons and the cycles of the things living and growing in our midst. But somewhere along the way, we started to lose our connection. Where did we go wrong? And more importantly, how do we find our way back? Science has recently been affirming what was always self-evident to intuitive cultures, artists, poets, naturalists ... that the earth, the forest, the sea, the birds, the animals, the garden all have the potential to naturally foster LEARNING, HEALING and GROWTH. How do we tap into this? What gets in the way? And what is our role in the process as caregivers, educators and helping professionals? Join city-born Tamara on an exploration of these wilderness wonderings, as we find our way back to nature together.

KEYNOTE *Back to Nurturing through Food* by Deborah MacNamara

Doesn't all food nurture? Is there something that we've lost that we need to go back to? It should be common sense that feeding and eating need to be infused with relationship, but we seem to have lost our way. What is required to bring our loved ones to rest in our care? Is it as simple as making sure we have sit-down meals or is there something more that leads to feeling nurtured through food? This presentation will address some of the key themes and findings based on Dr. Deborah MacNamara's upcoming book titled *Nourish(ed)*.

END-OF-DAY PANELS with Gordon Neufeld, Deborah MacNamara & Tamara Strijack

Keynote presenters close each conference day with a dialogue about the keynote and address questions from participants.

Read on for descriptions of Sessions A, B, C, D, E, F.



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SESSIONS

A1 Helping Children on the Autistic Spectrum “Bounce Back” by Jule Epp

Our children on the spectrum have hypersensitive brains that are flooded with more input than their brains can manage. That is the case on the best of days. What happens for our hypersensitive kids on the bad days? What happens when there are a lot of bad days? Or what happens when the hypersensitive child is confronted with a specific experience that is simply way over the top for them? When these things happen, we begin to see behaviours in our autistic children that are very painful to watch: regressions in development, increased retreat from attachments, general emotional shut-downs or extreme elevations in agitation, even sudden, intense flashbacks where the child seems to be re-living the experience from the past. What we are seeing at these times are classic trauma responses. In this seminar we will discuss why our children on the spectrum seem to fall into these places more quickly than others and how we can help them recover.

A2 Sibling Rivalry by Colleen Drobot and Patti Drobot

Conflict between siblings can be a natural occurrence, but one that often drives parents crazy. Competition between siblings close in age can be exasperating. Witnessing one child verbally or physically attack their sibling can be very challenging and often leaves parents at a loss as to what to do. Sisters Colleen and Patti Drobot will help make sense of the roots of aggression and impulsivity in children and why sibling conflict is so prevalent. They will offer suggestions about handling incidences as well as cultivating caring behaviour between siblings to help foster long-term positive relationships. They will provide examples and stories to help bring these suggestions into everyday life...and they will attempt not to fight during the presentation.

A3 How Minds Bounce Back: The Neuroscience of Resilience by Eva de Gosztanyi

Sometimes finding out what is going on inside of our brain and our body helps us to better understand and accept our somewhat messy psychological processes. This session will introduce participants to the neuroscience of resilience and adaptation. Why must the brain move us from Mad to Sad? How does the brain do this? What role do bio-chemicals play in whether we become defended or truly resilient? In this session we will look at how we can create the space in our interactions with our children so that we can help them to become more deeply resilient. When we support the work of the brain, it can do the work it was meant to do.

A4 Reflections on the Recovery of Happiness by Gordon Neufeld

There is a growing movement in psychology dedicated to the pursuit of happiness as a way of bouncing back from our troubles and even from being troubled. Which one of us would not wish happiness upon our loved ones, or want it ourselves? Does putting a smile on our face really work to change the insides? Most of us know that happiness cannot be pursued directly, so is perspective the answer, or success, or fulfillment perhaps? Can we get to happy feelings by having happy thoughts? What happens when this wish is imposed too directly upon our children, or when, in the pursuit of their happiness, we become afraid of upsetting them or disappointing them? Dr. Neufeld sheds light on this universal wish and paradoxically, the trouble it causes us. He will help us to walk the maze of feelings in such a way that the capacity for happiness is preserved, or even recovered if it has been lost – for ourselves and our loved ones.



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A5 Reclaiming Our Students by Hannah Beach

Children are more anxious, aggressive, and shut-down than ever. We were seeing these increases before the pandemic, and for many children and youth, this has only intensified. In order to create lasting change, we need to look deeper into the emotional roots of the behavioural challenges we see. Children need a place to feel safe and a safe place to feel. Based on the book *Reclaiming Our Students* (co-authored with Tamara Strijack), Hannah will explore trauma-sensitive strategies we can use to create the emotional safety children need to learn and grow. Let's reimagine resilience and discover practical ways we can support our students and learning communities on their path towards emotional health and discovery.

A6 Hebrew Language Presentation by Shoshana Hayman

(In Hebrew language only) The theme of this presentation is bouncing back through play.

A7 Considerations When Working Directly with Children in Therapy by Tamara Strijack

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) Sometimes it's hard to know when it would be helpful to work directly with a child or adolescent. We will walk around some of the things we might want to consider when working in a therapeutic context: including issues of vulnerability, confidentiality, as well as interactions with and impact on family members. We will also explore indirect approaches that set the stage for natural healing and growth.

B1 Indigenous Ways of Healing by Denise Findlay & Marla Klyne Kolomaya

Denise and Marla will explore the fascinating intersections between Indigenous healing traditions and the science of resilience. Indigenous wisdom traditions have long supported the restorative journey of sadness and tears. In this session Denise and Marla will explore the specific ways in which relationship, culture, and ritual support the unfolding of our human potential in a hopeful new paradigm informed by Indigenous ancient-wisdom and modern scientific knowledge.

B2 Softening the Defenses: Helping Children Face Vulnerability and Gain Resilience by Colleen Drobot

Dr. Neufeld and faculty often speak of the need for a child's heart to remain soft, for emotions to be felt and expressed, and for tears of futility to be shed to foster development and maturity. For anyone raising (or teaching) a child who is very sensitive, softening the defenses the brain has erected for protection can be a daunting task that sometimes seems almost impossible. In this presentation, Colleen will focus on ways to soften a child's heart so that access to sadness can be restored, levels of frustration and anxiety lowered, and resilience cultivated. As a family therapist, educator, and mother of sensitive children, Colleen will share stories and examples of how to restore the ability for a child to feel, attend, grieve and attach.

B3 Creating the Needed Rituals and Routines

Panel Discussion with Tamara Strijack, Jodi Bergman, Lisa Weiner & Tracy Azevedo

In today's fast-paced, fragmented and pressurized world, slowing down rarely feels like an option. Most of us find ourselves without the built-in opportunities for processing our world that intact culture used to provide. This means we are left on our own to figure out what we need and what our families need, in order to create our own pockets of rest. This rest is essential for our feelings to catch up with us; it has the power to suspend our alarm, lower our defenses and allow us to move through the disappointments of daily life,



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as well as the heartbreak of bigger losses. Despite how important rest is, it rarely feels urgent enough to make it a priority. Join Tamara, Jodi, Lisa and Tracy as they share ways they have found to make space and set the stage for rest through personal rituals and family routines.

B4 Sliding into Sleep by Deborah MacNamara

The end of the day can be a most daunting time - we are exhausted and yet our children need us the most. How can we help our kids shift gears into the rest mode to set the stage for sleep? What are the keys to preserving contact and closeness and avoiding the angst that bedtime brings? How do we avoid the pitfalls and plethora of advice that focus on sleep training and letting a child “cry it out”? In this presentation, we will tap into age-old wisdom that can make bedtime easier and bring relief to the adults responsible for getting kids to sleep.

B5 My Teenager is Stuck in the Basement! by Robin Brooks-Sherriff

Some teens gravitate to the corners of our homes in search of solitude, sleep, and space to figure life out (while listening to strange music). Never have there been so many fears and distractions to keep them there. Many of our teens are anxious, seeking endless distraction and feeling isolated and disconnected, especially after two years of being told to avoid real human contact. As parents, grandparents, and teachers, we are increasingly alarmed. We entice, cajole, bribe, shout, and still, they won't emerge from their caves. We are fearful that they will not unfold into thoughtful productive adults; will they remain odd little basement dwellers forever? Join Robin for a look at what is going on in these teenage brains and what we can do to unlock these common parent-teen dynamics. What will help them bounce back from stresses (pandemic and otherwise) and mature into emotionally healthy adults?

B6 French Language Presentation by Catherine Korah & Charles Lefebvre

(In French language only) The theme of this presentation is helping students bounce back.

B7 Q&A Follow-Up to Anchor Keynote by Gordon Neufeld

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) This Q&A session was for Intensive II alumni.

C1 Trauma-Informed Care through the Neufeld Lens by Gordon Neufeld

Trauma-informed care has become a new catch word in forward thinking treatment and educational circles. There seems to be a genuine new appreciation of the long-term impacts of adverse experiences, especially early ones that cannot be remembered. So how do we take trauma into consideration? How do we recognize trauma when the traumatic event(s) are long past? What is the wisdom of trauma and how do we best honour it? And most importantly, how can we reverse the effects of trauma, even when they have become entrenched? Dr. Neufeld will discuss a three-pronged approach to parenting, teaching and caring for those who manifest the signs of trauma. Although the focus will be on the children in our care, the dynamics and implications apply to all, including ourselves.



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C2 Helping Children Bounce Back from Divorce

Panel Discussion with Tamara Strijack, Jodi Bergman, & Michele Maurer

Join Jodi, Michele and Tamara as they walk around some of the challenges that come in the wake of separation and divorce. We will look at what we can do as parents and caregivers to support our children. How can we make room for all the emotions stirred up as they face new living arrangements, changing routines and new people in their lives? And above all, how can we help them to hold on when apart?

C3 Working with Tears & Frustration in Young Children

by Laina Clugston & Eva de Gosztanyi

Young children and frustration go hand-in-hand, often resulting in uncontrollable eruptions. Today's parents face increasing pressure to keep their children in check, even our infants and toddlers. There is little room for feeling upset. What can be missed is the transformative power of a child facing the futilities of life, the things they cannot change. In this presentation, we discuss how to help a young child through these distressing experiences. By providing comfort in the face of futility, we help children bounce back from the inevitable disappointments in their lives.

C4 Adventures in Faith, Family and the Developmental Paradigm by Susan Lukey

Join Susan Lukey, author of the newly released book, *Adventures in Faith and Family*, for a time of exploring how the Neufeld Paradigm can integrate with and inform the faith journeys we embrace as families. While Susan is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, she recognizes that one's spiritual path may be rooted in another faith tradition or in no particular faith tradition. Come join the adventure of exploring faith in family life, as informed by the developmental paradigm.

C5 The Alarm Spectrum: Anxiety, Attention Problems and more by Deborah MacNamara

Alarm-based problems such as anxiety, phobias, obsessions, attention disorders, and adrenaline-seeking behaviour will be addressed by focusing on the root emotion and dynamics that drive them. Using the lens of attachment, vulnerability, and maturation, we will examine how defendedness creates a continuum of alarm symptomology. We will explore how current approaches to treating alarm problems can exacerbate the issues, as well as offer a way forward based in new understandings of the brain through the lens of developmental science.

C6 German Language Presentation by Jule Epp

(In German language only) The theme of this presentation is "the generous invitation".

C7 Tuning In: To the Natural World and To Ourselves by Joanna Bylinka-Stoch

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) As with any relationship, even the one with the natural world can be out of sync. We can walk on the ground, breathe, experience the sun on our skin and still be detached. It is similar with our bodies - on one hand, it's a part of us, always connected, on the other hand, communication with the signals flowing from the soma is not inevitable. We can wake up and go to sleep without being aware of most body signals worth listening to. Joanna will discuss the challenges of tuning in to nature in three ways: to the natural world around us, to our human nature, and to the unique nature of ourselves.



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D1 *Bouncing Back from Conflict in the Classroom: How to Manage Counterwill with Dignity and Grace* by Eva de Gosztanyi and Adrienne Wood Conflict in the classroom is an inevitable but unenviable part of every teacher's working life. Yet if a warm teacher-student relationship is vital to learning, how does one navigate persistent pushback? Eva and Adrienne will discuss how to help students feel cared for even when emotions run high. Adrienne will draw on her experience as a High School teacher in New Zealand, and Eva on her extensive experience as a School Psychologist in Canada. There will be time after the presentation for interaction and questions around applying these ideas to your classroom context.

D2 *Reflections on Grandparenting* by Joy Neufeld, Nancy Keeler & Tracy Azevedo Joy, Nancy, and Tracy share stories and reflections around the joys and challenges of grandparenting. The focus is on finding the dance with your own grandchild while still supporting the parent in your own child.

D3 *Helping Adolescents with Anxiety* by Sandy Hitchens Anxiety has been increasing in our youth over recent years, and is particularly prevalent in our adolescents. The world in which we live can create many challenges for teens, including school pressures, peer interactions, family interactions, and now a pandemic. Sandy will address this increasing problem of our times and help parents and professionals make sense of the root of anxiety. She will provide practical suggestions on how to help our teens find the resilience they need to live in an anxiety-ridden world.

D4 *Sowing Seeds of Resilience in a Sensitive Child* by Lori Abramowitz Raising children in a wounding world requires that our inherently fragile children develop the resilience required to weather the inevitable storms that will come their way. Even when we understand how resilience is grown, it can be particularly challenging to cultivate this fruit with our more tender seedlings who often require some extra special care and attention. It is not unusual for us to react by trying to force maturity, or alternatively, to become over-protective with our concern. Drawing from her own personal experience raising a highly sensitive child and insights from her work as a child and adolescent therapist, Lori will explore the common challenges involved in caring for a sensitive child, including how to provide some 'greenhouse care' when needed, without rendering the child too tender for the real world. Lori will delve deeper into the rich emotional world of sensitive children, using stories to help make sense of them from inside out and examples that will illustrate how to harness the incredible power of Nature to transform inherent fragility into inner strength.

D5 *Rethink Play: Bouncing Back through Emotional Playgrounds* by Tamara Strijack & Hannah Beach Play has been deeply misunderstood, and even more so, undervalued. Yet play has given us a natural way to heal from trauma, to recover emotional health, and to take in and digest the world around us. How can we preserve play and intentionally bring it into our family's lives, our learning environments, and our communities? Play is kind of like sleep. You can't push it or force it to happen – you can only make it easy to fall into. Join Hannah and Tamara as we explore the power of emotional playgrounds and how we can use these accessible mediums to allow our emotions to move and bring us closer to our feelings.

D6 *Spanish Language Presentation* by Marcela Escalera
(In Spanish language only) The theme of this presentation is play and emotion.



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D7 Bouncing into Graceland: reflections on stumbling heavenward by Gordon Neufeld

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) I couldn't resist this memorable phrase from one of Paul Simon's songs. I imagine some of you will be thinking about *national guitars* and *human trampolines* at this point. I thought this was a great segue into the subject of guilt. Just as one can't find one's capacity for courage unless going into the territory of alarm, or one's capacity to forgive without going into the territory of anger, one certainly cannot find grace without going into the territory of guilt. But guilt is typically considered a negative feeling, certainly bad for our emotional health and well-being. However, in running away from guilt, we actually run into trouble emotionally. In this session, we talk about the guilt that comes with alpha caring as well as with knowing better, and how this guilt can be transformed into a bitter-sweet experience of grace.

E1 Bouncing Back as Students by Elana Strobinsky

Many teachers today are finding their students dealing with “post-covid-symptoms”. While some children have had a boost in both their scholastic and emotional development during the past two years and are back at school with renewed motivation, many others have suffered a blow. Anxiety, depression, aggression and suicide ideation are on a rise, as well as the percentage of hidden and actual student dropout. Teachers find themselves rushed to help their students catch up on material missed, but frustrated when students just don't seem to cooperate. Why are some students affected more than others? What are the antecedents to learning? What can teachers do to help their students “bounce back” from the pandemic? And how can a school become a place that puts the pieces back together, in a world coming undone?

E2 Caring for Children with Extra Support Needs by Jule Epp & Karen Bollman

A child with extra support needs can open up new ways of looking at the world for us as adults. We see things from new perspectives and uncover new depths within ourselves. But this is something we often lose touch with in daily life. The unique challenges our child brings often demand an alertness, a patience, and a persistence that can leave us frustrated and exhausted. We may find ourselves alarmed about our child's future or about our own future. We may feel left alone by society or not understood. Many strong emotions can be activated in us that can wear us down over time. In this seminar, we will explore with compassion how we can tell if we have lost our “bounce” and what we need to do to get it back.

E5 Bouncing Back Through Music by Gordon Neufeld

Plato observed that music is the medicine of the soul. Perhaps this insight was easier in an age where doctors of disorder were not prescribing pills for what ails us, or booksellers were not inundating us with an endless supply of self-help books. Of course, there was no science of music in Plato's time to test his hypothesis or to uncover the mechanisms by which it could be true. Only in the last decades has this science come to be, generating an impressive array of academic literature. Music's long-held healing secrets are best revealed however, when looking through the lenses of attachment and emotion. Dr. Neufeld will help us consider how we can harness the healing power of music for ourselves, our children, our clients and our students. Understanding the role of music in healing can inform everything from how we approach our children's music lessons, to reaching troubled kids, to guiding us in fostering musical experiences.



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E6 Swedish Language Presentation by Jonas Himmelstrand

(In Swedish language only) The theme of this presentation is Jonas' journey with the Neufeld paradigm.

E7 Nature and Mentorship by Tamara Strijack

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) Following up from the keynote *Back to Nature*, we'll dive a little deeper, looking at the interface of the natural world and mentorship through an attachment-based, developmental lens. How can we foster meaningful connections with each other and with the world around us? What is the role of "story" in this process? We'll look at these questions and more in this live and interactive advanced workshop.

F1 Bouncing Back Through Tears by Genevieve Schreier

Not all loss or traumatic experience can be avoided. Though we may wish it were different, loss is an inextricable part of life. Life demands we adjust and adapt to our losses and challenges, but how? With so much of society's attention focused on striving for happiness, a surprising key gets missed. It turns out that feeling sad is a crucial part of our developmental journey. Further expanding on the theme of Genevieve's 2021 conference presentation, *Ode to Melancholy*, this presentation will explore the role grief and sadness play in resilience, as well the importance of making the room and space to feel our lacks and losses. (Although not a prerequisite for this session, *Ode to Melancholy* can be viewed as a free resource via the Neufeld Institute website).

F2 Bouncing Back in a World Filled with Screens by Heather Ferguson

Screens are an ever-increasing and essential part of our lives. They have the potential to keep us connected and they can also leave us isolated and lonely. They can be used in service of resilience, and they can be used as escape from our emotional world. Screens are insidious! They have a way of stealing the spaces in our lives that were once filled with face-to-face connection, creativity, play, and nourishing downtime. Nowadays these precious activities seem nearly impossible to reclaim. So how do we bounce back from virtual learning, remote working, and socially distanced lives? Heather will discuss the potentials and the pitfalls of our screen-mediated world. She will offer ideas, structures, and rituals for recovering from our screen preoccupation, to reclaim more screen-free space in our lives.

F3 Bouncing Back from Early Parenthood by Michele Maurer

How do we bounce back as a twosome when we've now become a threesome? With less sleep, more expenses, little couple time, big expectations on ourselves and each other, and of course, a precious little human to care for, it's no wonder early parenthood can leave us feeling topsy-turvy. As if someone switched the soundtrack of our couple life mid-song, we often struggle to stay in sync, at times stepping on each other's toes and hurting the one adult we most want to be close to. Michele will explore Dr. Neufeld's insights and keys to navigating common missteps in this phase of couple life. This adult-focused workshop is suitable to parents, grandparents, caregivers and helping professionals.



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F4 Helping Adolescents Bounce Back from Peer-Based Trauma by Lisa Weiner

Teens are wounding each other in astounding numbers, be it through cyberbullying, date rape or betrayals in friendship and romance. In this session Lisa will reveal what is missing in our common approaches to supporting teens who have been hurt. She will focus on understanding the depth of wounding that can occur when peers matter most, and how healing approaches that are subtle and indirect can best support true recovery. Geared toward those that live with or work with adolescents, this session will shed light on peer-based wounding and hone the insights needed to help the teens in our care bounce back.

F5 Attachment Practices in Education – IDEA Centre

Panel Discussion with Tamara Strijack, Eva de Gosztonyi, Sandy Hitchens, Hannah Beach, David McFall, Kairyn Russell Janecke

Join Neufeld faculty and facilitators as they share stories of Neufeld's classic attachment practices in action. How can we help our students bounce back through collecting, bridging and matchmaking? It's easier than you think!

F6 Russian Language Presentation by Olga Pisaryk

(In Russian language only) The theme of this presentation is discipline.

F7 Insatiable: Getting Stuck in Pursuit by Deborah MacNamara

(ADVANCED- Prerequisite: Intensive II) When we get stuck in pursuit, a myriad of symptoms can appear, fuelling a quest to fill what is lacking. This presentation will reveal how fixes and fixations appear, along with alterations in the self -giving rise to depersonalized quests to be esteemed, narcissism, eating problems, and addictions. Deborah will be sharing new insights, expanding on the material presented in Intensive II.