

Welcome to the NCJA Podcast. Listen to lively discussions with a variety of guests about promising criminal justice practices and programs worth taking a closer look at. Hear interesting ideas from around the country on a variety of important and timely topics and learn how you can adjust or adapt your Byrne JAG grant program for improved success. Thanks for joining us, we hope you enjoy.

Demaxia Wray:

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to another NCJA podcast episode. Today is very special as I have two special guests here, who will explain a powerhouse approach that is being used across multiple sectors. Particularly, we will talk about Trust-Based Relational Intervention, better known as the TBRI model. I came across this model while doing research recently and I felt it was so important to call in the experts. We have two great practitioners here today, Troy McPeak and Darius Payne, who will further elaborate on the TBRI model. We hope for many to consider implementing it into their framework and daily lives. Welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for being a guest today. Would you mind briefly introducing yourselves?

Troy McPeak:

Good morning, good morning, everybody. Good morning Demaxia. Thank you for having us. My name is Troy McPeak. I am a member of the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at TCU. I've been a practitioner since 2016. I have a long history in juvenile justice and implementing this trauma-informed modality within the context of juvenile justice. So that's just me in a nutshell. I'm going to keep it the elevator version.

Darius Payne:

All right. Good morning, good morning. Super excited to be here. First thing that I love to tell people about me is I'm a follower of Jesus, husband, and a father of two precious boys. I am a social worker and a TBRI fanatic. And I would say a fun fact about me is I love eating plant-based foods.

Demaxia Wray:

Both of you guys are dads, husbands, and have so many roles, and I think that what we talk about today will have a lot to do with that. So I'm excited. Let's get into it. Before we dive into our discussion today, I thought it would be helpful to first provide a brief overview of TBRI. What is TBRI and how long has it been around? Let's start with you, Troy.

Troy McPeak:

All right, sweet. So TBRI, if I were to explain it in layman terms, it's a holistic approach in meeting the complex needs of youth that have experienced relational trauma. It is evidence based, it's based in attachment neuroscience, research, all of that good stuff. But at the heartbeat of it all, it's simply about connection and how are we, as the caregiver, showing up in relationship with those that we interact with on a day-to-day basis.

So TBRI was founded by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at TCU back in 1999 in a summer camp. Dr. Karyn Purvis... Well, before she was Dr. Karyn Purvis she was just Karyn Purvis, she was a mentee to Dr. David Cross, and they would conduct these summer camps. And so really what you

have is Dr. Purvis was the application, she was the essence, as I call her, right? She was on the floor, really doing the thing, showing up in a relationship, using all the strategies before it was even labeled as such.

And Dr. Cross literally followed her around, annotating everything that she was doing. And then they would have these very complex conversations about why. Why did you get down on the floor when that young child was becoming disruptive and dysregulated? What made you look that kid in the eye or touch him on the shoulder? So he was really the one that put words to her action.

2005, I believe it was, they officially made the KPICD at TCU. And then with a decade's worth of work, they formally created Trust-Based Relational Intervention. So it's been around literally since 1999 with the application piece. And then the collaboration of two brilliant minds, we have what's now Trust-Based Relational Intervention.

Darius Payne:

And I would just add that TBRI is the essence of humanity. It's so many humanistic principles that can be practiced with how you just treat people, let alone the children that we serve. It really is a way of life that helps you maximize relational outcomes with kids, children, families, and adults.

And when I say kids included, we think about those kids who act out, who try to manipulate to get what they want, who sometimes show aggressive behaviors. And what it really teaches caregivers is how to speak the language of those misbehaviors. What is your behavior really, really saying? And once I understand what your behavior is saying, how do I respond appropriately to what you need? And so TBRI gives you that knowledge on how to be able to understand behaviors and then properly intervene through an attachment-based and holistic approach.

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you both for that overview. That was really amazing. And you guys have all the razzle-dazzle today, and this is just the beginning, so let's get further into it. I'm curious to know, how did you both become involved in TBRI work?

Troy McPeak:

In a nutshell, I was voluntold to go to a TBRI practitioner training, right? So I moved out to Texas from California way back in 2007 and instantly started working in juvenile justice at Williamson County Juvenile Services, where I served as a JSO working deep nights and then mid-shift and then 8:00 to 4:00. So I worked the whole spectrum of each shift.

2016, our organization was introduced to Trust-Based Relational Intervention. A team from the KPICD came down and was talking about TBRI. Now, I must tell you, we were a military boot camp style. So we were very heavy-handed, I'll say, very punitive on how we managed behaviors. In my opinion, now this is just Troy's opinion, it wasn't very healthy. We weren't establishing really strong, healthy relationships with the kids, especially kids that have dysfunctional backgrounds and haven't had healthy relationships with those that are supposed to be caring for them. We were just continuing that cycle of dysfunction.

So anyhow, 2016, we were introduced. 2017, early that year, I got called to supervisor's office and they told me, "You've been selected to go to this training." And I was literally thinking to myself,

"Okay, cool. These kids is bad. I'm going to get a week off, paid for, and they're going to feed me. Awesome." But then going to TBRI practitioner training, it literally changed my life and just how I view and interpret the world around me and how I show up within relationships, even in my own household, at work, amongst our team. Just like Darius say, it's just humanity, right? It's how are we showing up in the context of relationship?

At that point, I completely embodied it, jumped in, just started doing it on the floor. At that time, I was a supervisor over our post-adjudication program and over our drill instructors. So these gentlemen that signed up to be hardcore and punitive, now we're asking them to switch that lens and how they approach their work day in and day out. There was definitely some hurdles in that. But at the end of the day, like I told my team, if they want us to do TBRI, not only are we going to do it and do it at a high level, we're going to be the premier segment within Williamson County. We're going to show everybody what this looks like in real time.

But again, when we show up and we create a culture that promotes felt safety, regulation, and connection, the byproduct is the behaviors that we desire in the first place, so your agency becomes a whole lot safer. People feel like they walking in they purpose, and we really are making a huge impact and a difference in the lives of these kids that need it the most.

Darius Payne:

Yeah. For Harris County, our agency began to realize that the old way did not work around 2018. And when I say old way, I mean that punitive approach of writing kids up, secluding them in rooms and placing them on isolation, and trying to take this forceful approach with how we manage behaviors and try to change their behaviors.

And so in 2019, I had the privilege of being promoted to TBRI specialist because the department really wanted to bring in someone who can be a champion, who can train, who can model the application of TBRI in a way that could get buy-in from staff. And after a while, we began to realize that one man just wasn't enough. And so we formed the transformation team, which was a group of credible supervisors who had worked on the floors, worked with the staff, built relationships with the kids, but at the same time still held them accountable.

And so we began to just gain buy-in slowly but surely with the staff, to be able to shift the culture and how we see these youth behaviors. And a lot of practices that we had been usually practicing within the juvenile justice system has been a pendulum shift ever since then in our agency with TBRI.

And I've been fortunate enough, just like Troy, for TBRI to enter into my home, change the way I do life. And so when it comes to work, it's not something I'm doing just because it's a job. It's literally my belief system. And it shows in the way we do day-to-day operations in our facilities. And it's been a part of a big momentum push when it comes to juvenile justice reform in Harris County.

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you both for that. Every time I do podcasts, I still take notes, even though we meet with you prior. Something that stood out to me when I asked you about how you got into it, and you said, "I was voluntold." And, "I got the letter that says you've been selected." I was like, "Oh, it's giving military." But it's a fight, like you said, it's a fight for humanity. And then for you, Darius, you mentioned just the old way, the traditional way, and just realizing with research and just trial and

error that this is what's working. So I really appreciate both of those perspectives. I know that the model is intended to be highly customizable and adaptable, but what are the key components or principles of the model?

Troy McPeak:

Yes, ma'am. So again, TBRI is rooted in neuroscience research, attachment theory, but it's also rooted in three core principles. That's connecting principles, and that's designed to meet the attachment needs of the kids. We have empowering principles to help prepare the kids for success. And then correcting principles, which I personally don't necessarily like the term correcting. I feel like we're more shaping behaviors than correcting behaviors, and giving these kids a new set of tools to pull from versus those maladaptive coping mechanisms that they've picked up. So those are the three core principles of TBRI.

And then each principle has two strategies. So within connecting principles, you have mindfulness strategies and engagement strategies. So mindfulness strategies are all about us and how we show up in the context of relationship. Being able to stay calm in a stressful situation, being intentional about closing proximity. Like I have this big booming voice, so not projecting that voice and talking down and at a kid because that could be perceived as shame. And these kids are coming from a long history of feeling shame, where they don't have a voice and they haven't built that self-efficacy or feeling that they matter. So we don't want to perpetuate that and continue to perpetuate that.

So then engagement strategies is our blueprint on being intentional about fostering healthy connection and relationship. Are we given eye contact? Are we given healthy touch? Now, I could go into a whole training series, so I'm sorry, because in our field of juvenile justice, we literally have policies that say don't touch kids. But now we're talking about healthy touch being one of those core, key components to building and fostering healthy relationships. So how do you wrap parameters around what that looks like? Because we want our staff to be trust-based and relational, not in a relationship, there's a distinct difference. So we are here to make sure that we have healthy boundaries in place.

So then empowerment principles, you have physiological and ecological. Ecological is the aesthetics, right? How are we preparing the environment for these kids to succeed and whatnot? Do we have a sensory-rich environment? So in juvenile justice, for instance, at TJJD, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, we've painted the walls. We're getting away from the grays and just the hard whites, cinder block, looked very industrial, institutional look, and painted the walls almost a tropical feel. These light blue tones make you feel like you're in The Bahamas. Getting rid of some of that hard industrial furniture and putting more sensory-rich items around. Painting murals on walls, things like that.

So ecological is how we're setting up the environment, and then physiological is how are we are helping the kids internally, setting them up for success. So drinking and eating, regulating those glucose levels of drinking water every two to three hours, things like that. Incorporating more movement. Again, setting up the environment, helping them learn how to regulate when they become dysregulated.

And then correcting principles. You have proactive strategies, which are things like nurture groups. So we immerse these kids in a fun, interactive space, where it's free of guilt, shame, humiliation. Literally work on four key elements of healthy attachment, and that's give care, receive care, know

your autonomous self, and then learning how to appropriately use your voice to get your needs met.

But we also have an element where we do an activity and we get the kids dysregulated on purpose through a fun... I like to play a game called tiger tails. So it takes partnership, it takes communication, it gets super competitive, they get dysregulated. But then we have moments where we pause and we'll do a deep breathing exercise. We'll have them learn how to start becoming mindful of their heart rate, their emotions.

So we're teaching social and emotional intelligence, giving them practical tools that they can use in order to calm their system when they are dysregulated. I like to say the greatest gift we could give any of the kids we serve is the ability to self-regulate, that means being able to control me, and then also the ability to find their voice and use it appropriately.

So outside of the proactive strategies, we have levels of response and that's what do we do when things are getting disruptive? How do we show up? And then we have a set of practical tools and strategies that we deploy in order to get favorable results and outcomes.

Darius Payne:

So just to add on to that, I had a staff one time ask me, when we were coaching on the unit, "Mr. Payne, how does one use trust to intervene with the youth?" And initially, it took me back for a second. But when I think about what are the key components to TBRI, along with the principles that Troy mentioned, I think about the idea that TBRI is true to the name. And so when we talk about key components, we can't talk about it unless we talk about how you need to understand that these kids don't trust us, they don't trust people.

And I like to say whenever there's an absence of trust, there's a presence of fear. And whenever there's a presence of fear, there's an absence of trust. And understanding that is so important when it comes to TBRI. How do we build trust with these kids? Because we can't change their behaviors if they don't trust us. We can't get them to self-regulate or receive the care we want to provide for them if they don't trust us.

And we like to define trust by being able to rest in the predictability of one's behaviors. So if I trust you, I can rest that your behaviors are predictable. And there's a lot of adults in these kids' life who their behaviors have been predictable, but they couldn't rest in them. And when we talk about building trust with these kids, we really focus on where their trust level is so that we can know where to meet them where they are.

And so a lot of our kids, through TBRI, when we talk about the components, all of the strategies and the interventions, is how can I gain that trust that someone lost from you? I like the saying that says trust is lost in buckets and gained back and drops. And when it comes to these kids, this has been the case because the person that was supposed to gain my trust, keep my trust, they lost it, they damaged it, they misused it.

And so one of the things that TBRI really does a good job is from every angle, in a holistic way, sending the message that you can trust me. I care about you, I care about your needs, you can get your needs met appropriately. And I think that that is a powerful message to send to our kids.

Demaxia Wray:



That was so powerful. Listen, they can't see me smiling and my facial expressions because this is an audio podcast, but I was like, "Okay, first of all, I want to go to The Bahamas now."

But really, on a serious note, what you just mentioned is so important. It doesn't get any more holistic than that, really, making sure that your environment is inviting. You don't want the cinder blocks if that is going to resemble a prison cell, right? You're already institutionalizing these youth before... You know what I'm saying? Give them a chance to have an environment where they could be at peace. And really, Darius, to your point about it being true to the name, it's very true to the name.

Now, Troy, I know that you are one of the first practitioners of TBRI and that you also helped implement TBRI in Williamson County, Texas. What was the implementation process like? Do you have any lessons learned when it comes to stakeholder buy-in of the model?

Troy McPeak:

Oh yeah, absolutely. So I was one of the first practitioners within juvenile justice, I just want to make that clear as well. So when it came to buy-in, really, in my role at Williamson County, I was selected because I already had established that trust that Darius is talking about with the kids, and I had that respect. Coming from where I come from, working in this arena, it just is in alignment with my why. I want to see these youngsters stay out the grave and out of the prison system period. So I always projected that towards the kids.

But I also had respect of the staff simply because of my work ethic. I like to think of myself as the ultimate team player. So when it came to gaining buy-in, I knew as I'm leading my team... So there was four of us, four practitioners. Me, myself. Ray Franklin, who was another supervisor. Our counselor, Amanda Brunson, who was amazing. And our senior supervisor, Shannon Morton. So I had my specific team of drill instructors that I was leading.

I knew that if I wasn't on the floor, in real time, dealing with behaviors... Which I was anyway, so it was just a natural transition. Now, instead of showing up and saying, "Demaxia, get your elbow off the table or we going to snatch you up out that seat." Now I'm going to show up and use these principles. Close the distance, I might get down on your level. I might ask you, "What you got going on? How was your phone call? Well, let's step outside. Let's regulate for a second."

Now, as my team is seeing these strategies being deployed and they're seeing the results, meaning the behaviors of the kids, changing for no other reason than our relationship, the preservation of our relationship, then the buy-in was just automatic. And so you had my staff then become advocates and not adversaries. Where you would really have a group of individuals that were dedicated to meeting the needs, not the wants, meeting the needs of the kids that came into our custody and our care.

So for me, gaining buy-in was really just the application and doing it. I couldn't sit behind a computer screen and say, "Demaxia, I need you to go get Resident X and take him for a walk." No, I'm going to show up. And then how am I showing up for my team? Am I stripping their power in situations that I know I can de-escalate like this? But I want them to work through it, so how am I scaffolding them as they are working through and learning these new concepts and trying to deploy these new strategies and skills? Because it was completely 180 different than what we were used to doing. If you say no, I'm going to give you a directive. And if you say no again, we're probably going to snatch you from that point. That's how fast things escalated.

But now we're asking to work through these trauma responses from the kids and look at these behaviors not as willful, disobedient acts, but as survival strategies that they've picked up over the course of a long period of time, based on their environment and their situations. At Wilco, we saw a significant decrease in suicide ideation and attempts, and grievances filed towards staff, and use of restraints, use of force, all of these things. All those metrics that people use to measure whether or not something is successful, we saw incredible gains. But we weren't focused on that. If you're focused on the results, then you're missing the whole point. We were focused on meeting the needs of these kids, and the byproduct is the results that we all want.

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you for that, Troy. Now, Darius, you're with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. Do you have anything you'd like to share regarding stakeholder buy-in? And would you mind sharing a bit about your experience in general with Harris County and TBRI?

Darius Payne:

Of course. Of course. With stakeholder buy-in, I think it's really important to ask them what's important to them. Troy mentioned a few things that's usually important to other agencies and other departments when it comes to youth isolations or violence or the reduction of recidivism. What's important to you? Because TBRI can help you be able to effectively change that.

And the stats, like Troy say, don't always show the true change in these kids' lives. But a lot of times, on a global scale, on a community-based scale, these agencies do want to see how do the numbers change? And so showing them that the proof is in the pudding. You're going to be able to see change from your staff, from your caregivers, from your agency as a whole. And whatever you're trying to do when it comes to your departmental goals, be able to open yourself up to this new way of doing things and serving these youth, right?

Karyn Purvis says one of my favorite quotes, which is, "Don't be married to the journey. Be married to the destination." There's many ways to get to whatever your goal is, and if we can open their mind up to that way of thinking, then buy-in becomes a realistic possibility, and then we can be able to get them to effectively do the work. Because if they don't really believe in it, if they don't really see this as something that can work, it's going to impact the quality aspect of how the services are provided. And that's what we don't want. We want them to really be able to see this as something that can serve their agency's will.

With Harris County and my experiences, I have tons of stories, particularly with staff and trying to get their buy-in. And I remember one staff asking me, "Mr. Payne, I think TBRI is pretty good, but it sounds like we're bargaining with the kids when we're trying to get them to behave." And so I had to be able to shift this staff's mindset on seeing how we offer choices and compromises with the youth, so that he can see them not as something we're doing to bargain with the kids, but we're teaching them how to negotiate their needs.

And any relationship that you're in, whether it's with the kids, whether it's with your significant other, you need to know how to be able to negotiate your needs. We all hear the saying that relationships are about give and take, and so why wouldn't we want to teach our kids the same thing?

And when we talk about buy-in through choices and compromises, I think about even my son. When I do bedtime routines with him, they can be a challenge. Getting him to go to sleep, he usually fights and wants to jump in the bed when we're trying to lay down. But when I say, "Do you want to read a book before we lay down?" He runs over and he gets his book, we read for 15 minutes, and then he goes straight to sleep. And one of the things I've learned about TBRI is you have to treat these kids like partners in their behavioral progress and not like prisoners. And so getting the staff to see, when you treat them like partners, it works, then the buy-in begins to come.

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you for that, Darius. How does TBRI fit in and connect with generational cycles and particularly generational trauma?

Troy McPeak:

Oh, that's a big one right there. I know Darius could probably attest to this. Working in juvenile justice for long durations of time, you start to see sibling groups come through, you might see the child of somebody that came through. So we understand that... Well, one, I always like to relate this question back to attachment. So we're 85% likely to take on the same attachment or caregiving style as our primary caregiver. That means if you grew up in dysfunction, you're probably going to project that dysfunction onto the next generation.

I like to say that I decided to be the one in my family to break that chain by adopting these new strategies. Because let's be honest, I didn't grow up in a household that provided compromises and choices. I always make a joke and say, "My lips are still swollen because my mom was popping me every time I said something I wasn't supposed to." Or I asked, "How come I can't do this?" It was, "Because I said so." So it wasn't a whole lot of back and forth negotiating going on.

But now, like Darius mentioned, his bedtime routine, I have a similar routine with my daughter where I had to learn how to allow this young lady, she's seven years old now, but she'd been negotiating her needs literally since she was about three or four years old when it comes to her use of the tablet and going to bed. And so we have a little... Well, now it's almost seamless. She'll say, "Daddy, how much more time do I have?" And I'll say, "Five minutes." "Okay." And then she knows at the end of that, brush your teeth, boom, and then we're off to bed.

But I say that to say we have to make a conscious decision on how we're going to show up. We're going to keep getting the same results if we keep doing the same things. And I've seen some kids have some incredible outcomes and really be that person within their family dynamic that breaks that cycle of just continued trauma over and over again, but go off to either the military or go off...

Now I got a young man that's working at Tesla out here in Austin, but this is a kid whose grandmother was dying of stage four cancer. Mother was in the trafficking world and on drug, literally same with the older sister, and has nobody else, Grandma had passed away. So this is a kid, literally, that came into our care, that was completely hopeless.

And we went through those steps. And I remember when I left Williamson County, he got on the mic and they did a little party deal for me. But he got on there and he just basically said, "Sir, I look at you like a father figure. I know I cussed you out when I first met you, but you never left my side."

One thing Dr. Cross always says is, "As trauma happens in relationships, healing has to happen in relationship." And no matter what sector you work in, when we intersect with the kid, a lot of times



we're meeting them at a fork in the road. And depending on how we decide the relationship with them can determine which direction they choose to go. For this young man that I'm talking about, he was on a one-way trip to those two destinations I mentioned earlier: prison or jail.

But now he's got a kid of his own, a girlfriend, a car, and he works at Tesla and they're in their own apartment. And those are powerful moments that a lot of times we won't ever even see. We don't know how this tree is going to grow and blossom sometimes when we're planting these seeds. I'm just fortunate to be good friends with his case manager who informed me of his outcome. I think just showing up and deciding that we're going to be intentional in how we show up and provide the best version of ourselves to help these kids at that fork in a road, I think, is how we break those generational cycles.

Darius Payne:

For me, TBRI is a game changer when it comes to breaking generational cycles and generational trauma. I think about a Chevy Malibu I had back when I was in college. And I remember walking to the parking lot, seeing that someone had hit my car and the bumper had fell off. And the funny thing about them hitting my car was I could still drive it even though it had been damaged, even though it had been impacted. And when I think about generational trauma, I think it's the same way because a lot of people are unaware and don't deal with the trauma because of the fact that they're still able to live or function despite the impact or the damage.

And so you hear parents or you hear caregivers or staff say things like, "I turned out okay, that wasn't a big deal." Because they haven't taken the time to really assess and repair the impact because they can still function. And so what TBRI does is it shows you what's problematic in your life, and how that's producing certain outcomes that are really negative that you may not even know.

And TBRI has brought about an awareness in me as a practitioner that I will forever be grateful for. I'll never forget the time when my wife was in the bed, crying because she had just lost her best friend to murder, and I thought it was best to just give her her space. And later she asked me, "Why didn't you comfort me? Why didn't you console me? Why didn't you show me any type of physical affection?" And I had to stop and think, why didn't I? And I started to realize I did not receive hugs, I did not receive that type of affection, as great as my parents were. And then I started to see how the repeated patterns of what has been passed down is what I begin to project in my day-to-day life.

Now, that's a very minute story, but for some of us, it's the same way with deeper level traumas, and I think TBRI fits in perfectly because it can stop that cycle because now you are aware. And I always say awareness can lead to you addressing it, and then actions and change, transformative change, to say the least.

Demaxia Wray:

My cheeks hurt from smiling. I'm sorry. Beautiful answers. I think it's so important to point out that TBRI can be used in so many different settings. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department uses a variant of TBRI, but TBRI is also used in schools, at home, as we see with both of you and your children, and in other settings. What are some misconceptions about this model?

Troy McPeak:

Yeah, absolutely. So yes, TBRI has been adapted in so many different settings, from CASA to schools to even law enforcement now. There's several law enforcement agencies out here in Texas and Mississippi and in different places in Tennessee that are using and adapting TBRI to fit their arena. So some of the misconceptions, especially in some of the tougher fields, like law enforcement, like juvenile justice, is that this is a hug-a-thug, right? And those are literally statements that some of our staff, even, when we were first introduced to TBRI, or when I go around to different juvenile justice facilities and provide training, I like to ask that, what are your initial thoughts? So all the therapists, counselors, they always say all these wonderful statements about TBRI, but there's always kind of that old school, punitive mindset lingering in audiences. So a lot of people might think this is, like I said, hug-a-thug. That it's babying and coddling, that it's permissive, soft, that it lacks accountability and that it's passive.

But I say if it's any of those things, that's because you, operationally, you are being passive. I don't let kids get away with anything. I'm going to address behaviors as come they up. All behaviors, from sagging your pants to throwing a computer across the room, I'm going to address everything as it comes up. But how I address it, and that's what people don't understand, TBRI is not that it's passive and not accountability or lack of accountability, it's how we showing up in those relationships. That's all it is.

So you have to be able to look inward. We were able to... So when you talk about stakeholder buy-in as well, just to go back a little bit, so when I go do these trainings, one, I'm now a credible messenger, meaning we've made this shift in juvenile justice and blended these concepts and married it to operations. And so that's a lot of what I talk about, is how do we take these concepts and marry it into operations so that we don't jeopardize the integrity of our program? So when it comes to implementation, we also talk about the tools, rules, or roles that are either amended, added, adjusted in order to support the implementation of TBRI.

But when it comes to misconceptions, I would just say those negative connotations that I just mentioned are what I hear a lot of people say. And until they get the education and really get the understanding on how to marry these concepts into operations, so like I said, to where safety and security isn't jeopardized, then get those aha moments, that light bulb goes off. And then at the end of trainings, people are always yearning for more.

Darius Payne:

Yeah, I totally agree with Troy. I had a staff ask me one time, "Mr. Payne, I have a question, but I don't want the TBRI answer, I want the Mr. Payne answer." And what he was implying was the TBRI answer, quote unquote, would be the answer that was therapeutic based off of what he thought therapeutic was, and without any structure or accountability or boundary setting. And I responded and I told them, "Well, there's no such thing because I'm TBRI personified." And the message that we have to send to staff and a lot of agencies is that TBRI is not void of structure. Actually, it's a part of the curriculum, it's a part of the model.

And I love the quote that Dr. Purvis says, that when you give kids nurture and they need structure, you damage the ability to grow. But when you give them structure and they need nurture, you damage the ability to trust. And so TBRI is really big on having a nurture, structure, balance, and not compromising one for the other. I don't have to choose to be accountable in this moment, and so I can't be relational. I don't have to choose to be relational, so I can't hold these kids accountable.

And so one of the misconceptions is that TBRI does not help the kids to be held accountable and take ownership of their actions, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Troy McPeak:

Just so you know, we going print T-shirts, "TBRI personified." Darius Payne.

Demaxia Wray:

I love that. And you guys, my favorite word is razzle-dazzle, they know that. But this is more than razzle-dazzle. Now I got to think of a better word for this because you guys are literally making it rain with gems. And I really hope that whoever is listening to this takes this on and they become TBRI personified. I'm taking this in. Maybe I need to go reevaluate my childhood because this is so important, what you guys are talking about. We've been talking a lot about the impact of the TBRI model throughout our discussion, but I think this is the most important part of the model and of models in general. What other kinds of success have you seen through this model, either for the kids, the staff, or even for yourselves?

Troy McPeak:

There's a lot of different ways that we can take this question, but I think one quote from one of my team members, I'm going to say his name on here, DI Kevin McClane, my guy. But he had a hard time with adjusting, coming straight out of Army into Williamson County, being a drill instructor. And then now having to switch and do a 180 turn and how we are being relational with the kids and having that balance of nurture and structure. He was very heavy-handed on the structure.

And I remember a conversation one time, he came into my office, slamming this desk. I ain't going to use profanity on your podcast, but he said, "Where in the bleep does this say in policy that I got to give this kid a redo when he tells me to go bleep myself?" And he's beet red and he's very upset. And so we had a closed door conversation, it was just that intense.

But over time, my guy became one of my strongest team members as he started to see wins and as he started to focus on the connection and being less heavy-handed. Yes, we know policy says XY, and we're not going to derail or deter way out of bounds from policy and procedure. But instead of locking this kid up for eight hours, let's have a conversation first about that phone call that they received where they found out that the grandmother just passed away. Or this young lady punched the wall. Yes, policy says we need to put her in a jail cell, room restriction, but where's the humanity in that? What are we teaching these kids?

So I always used to say, how do we use whatever negative incident is going on to help these kids grow? But in that, I had to help my staff grow. And in that, I had to grow, because again, I'm showing up completely different than my parents showed up for me. I got my butt whooping, told, "Because I said so." And that was literally the approach when we were the military boot camp. Because I said so was the message that was being conveyed. You might not have said it in those terms. So now we're, again, giving these kids power in their voice and allowing them to negotiate their own needs.

But one thing... So moving forward, I went back and I did an interview with all my drill instructors at Williamson County, about that transition. And in that interview process, on film, Kevin McClane says, "The kids' behaviors will change when our behaviors change." Simple as that, right? And to me, that just personifies what we're trying to accomplish.

And again, if we're focused on those results then we're missing the point. We need to focus on how we're showing up in the relationship because the kids don't care what you know until they know that you care, and it's as simple as that. And once they feel that you care about them, oh my goodness, we can unlock their potential and we can teach them all the skills that they need to be successful outside of our gates and our walls and our custody and care. We need to teach them those intangible tools that they need to stay out of the prison system or out of the dirt. So for me, just being able to scaffold staff and then continue to help them by showing up, being consistent in my approach, and modeling what we expect that model to look like for the kids, as a leader.

Darius Payne:

So for me, mine's is a recent story. Well, we had a staff who shared this story in training, and I asked her, "Please email me this," because it really spoke to the success that we are having with TBRI.

And so she shared the email and it said, "I wanted to share my life as a parent implementing TBRI in my household. I've been blessed with the pleasure of raising my 17-year-old son to be an amazing kid. He has never given me any problems besides the normal teenage boy chronicles like, quote unquote, girls, LOL.

I've been a tough mom due to my tough environment growing up and becoming a correctional officer at the young age of 19 years old. My son has always been very quiet and low-key. I've always spoke up for him and never really showed any battles that he fought or wanted to fight against. Whatever I said went and he never had a smart mouth behind it. He never disrespected me either.

And one day I decided to implement TBRI into my household, and I allowed for him to speak up and express himself. I was honestly blown away by the things that he told me. And I would walk away speechless and have to come back apologizing to him. At times, he made me feel rather stupid about the things I had either said or did.

TBRI has truly become one of the best things I could have ever done for myself and my family. The communication is so much clearer, and the understanding is fully respected on both ends. I never took TBRI seriously until it changed in my household."

And I love this story as a success story because when we allow TBRI to penetrate the hearts of caregivers, it can change the habits. And when we talk about the change we want to see in these kids, it won't happen until we change, as the caregivers, to be able to show up in the way that they need us to.

Troy McPeak:

Love that. That's powerful. That's powerful. Well, a few months back, I did a training at Williamson County. And so as me and one of the amazing practitioners that they have over there, Ms. Caitlin, were walking out from the training, just debriefing, how the staff received it, all the good stuff, right? We're walking out and I see two young adults down in the lobby. I look at one young lady and I recognize her, so I look her in her face. No remember, I left Williamson County in 2019, so this is one of my... Well, not my first times going back, but anyhow, 2019 she was a kid at Williamson County. She was one of the last cohorts of kids that I was involved with directly on the floor.

So now she's a young lady, so she's had kids and all of that good stuff. So I asked her, I said, "Young lady, what is your name?" And so she said, "McPeak, you don't remember me? I'm [inaudible

00:42:08]. "With her same little sassy self. And she stood up, so I gave her a hug, and I said, "Man, it is so good to see you." And then I asked her, I said, "Well, what are you doing here?" Right? Because now she's about 20 years old or so, 21 or 22. She said, "Well, I'm up here because I had to give my ID because I just got a job." So now she was a resident in Williamson County, in our post-adjudication.

And this is exactly what she said, she said, "Because of the relationship, because of how you guys treated me, I want to be able to give back to the kids that need staff the way I needed you guys and didn't even know it back then." So again, that's a testament to just the impact of relationships. And we're meeting these kids at that fork in the road, and depending on how we show up, can literally make or break how they function in the real world and community. So anyhow, I just wanted to share that story because it's so impactful.

Demaxia Wray:

Mr. Troy McPeak, Mr. Darius Payne, I'm speechless. Thank you both. Focusing on the human rather than the results, TBRI personification, repairing the impact and having that be a focus. And also re-evaluating metrics, that's okay to do as well. But also marrying the destination. You guys touched on so many different parts of trauma that go overlooked, and it's so important that you guys are bringing this into this field. I want to thank you both for the work that you're doing in the community, with our youth, and even abroad. I hope our listeners look more into this approach and can apply it in their work and daily lives. Most importantly, I'd like to thank you both again for an amazing discussion on an impactful approach. Thank you so much.

Troy McPeak:

Thank you for having us, Demaxia. We appreciate it. Really enjoyed it.