

Putting Your Mask on First Skill-Building Session

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MP3 Health Group & SquareRoot Stories





ATC
Consulting, LLC

Putting Your Mask on First



ABOUT ME



**Licensed Professional Counselor
and Educational Psychologist**

**20+ Years in Community
Behavioral Health and Human
Services**

**Wife, Parent, Family Member,
Friend and Community Leader**

LEARNING GOALS



1

Describe potential caregiver concerns

2

Explain how caregivers concerns impact the quality of parenting and lifing

3

Identify strategies for addressing caregivers concerns





WHAT IS TRAUMA?



SAMHSA, 2018

An *event*, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION, 2010

Trauma is the emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experience of threat, violence and life changing events

AACAP, 2018

A more overwhelming event than a person would ordinarily be expected to encounter

LONELINESS



“Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences.”



GENOCIDES



PANDEMICS



PROHIBITION/DESTRUCTION OF
CULTURAL PRACTICES



FORCED RELOCATION



SLAVERY



MASSACRES



DISCRIMINATION/
PREJUDICE SYSTEMIC

<https://extension.umn.edu/mental-health/historical-trauma-and-cultural-healing>

EPIGENETICS

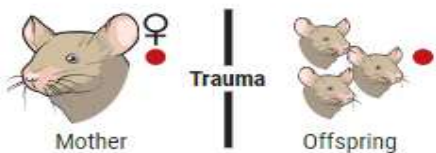


Troubled offspring

To explore how trauma affects generations of mice, researchers stressed mother mice. Their pups then exhibited both molecular and behavioral changes, such as taking more risks on an elevated maze. These changes persisted for up to five generations.

- Trauma experienced
- Behavioral changes
- Epigenetic changes, such as methylation of DNA and alteration of RNA

Mother separated from pups and traumatized. Mother often ignores pups.



Three-month-old male offspring mated with untraumatized females.



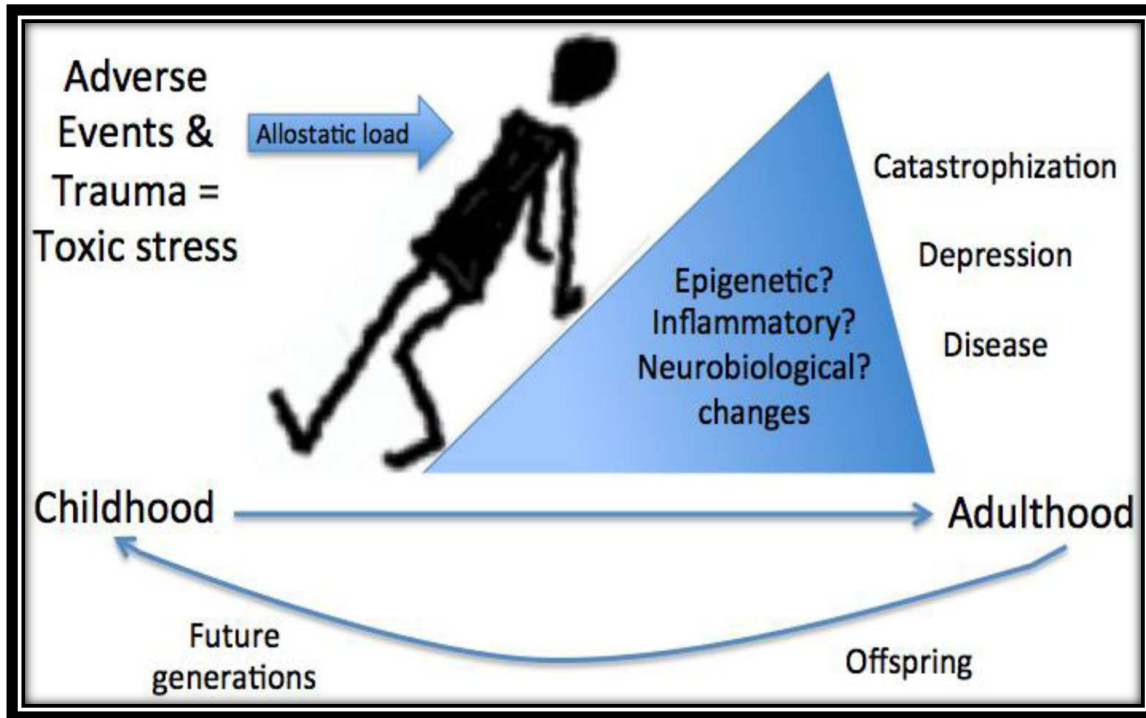
Offspring show epigenetic and behavioral changes without having experienced trauma.

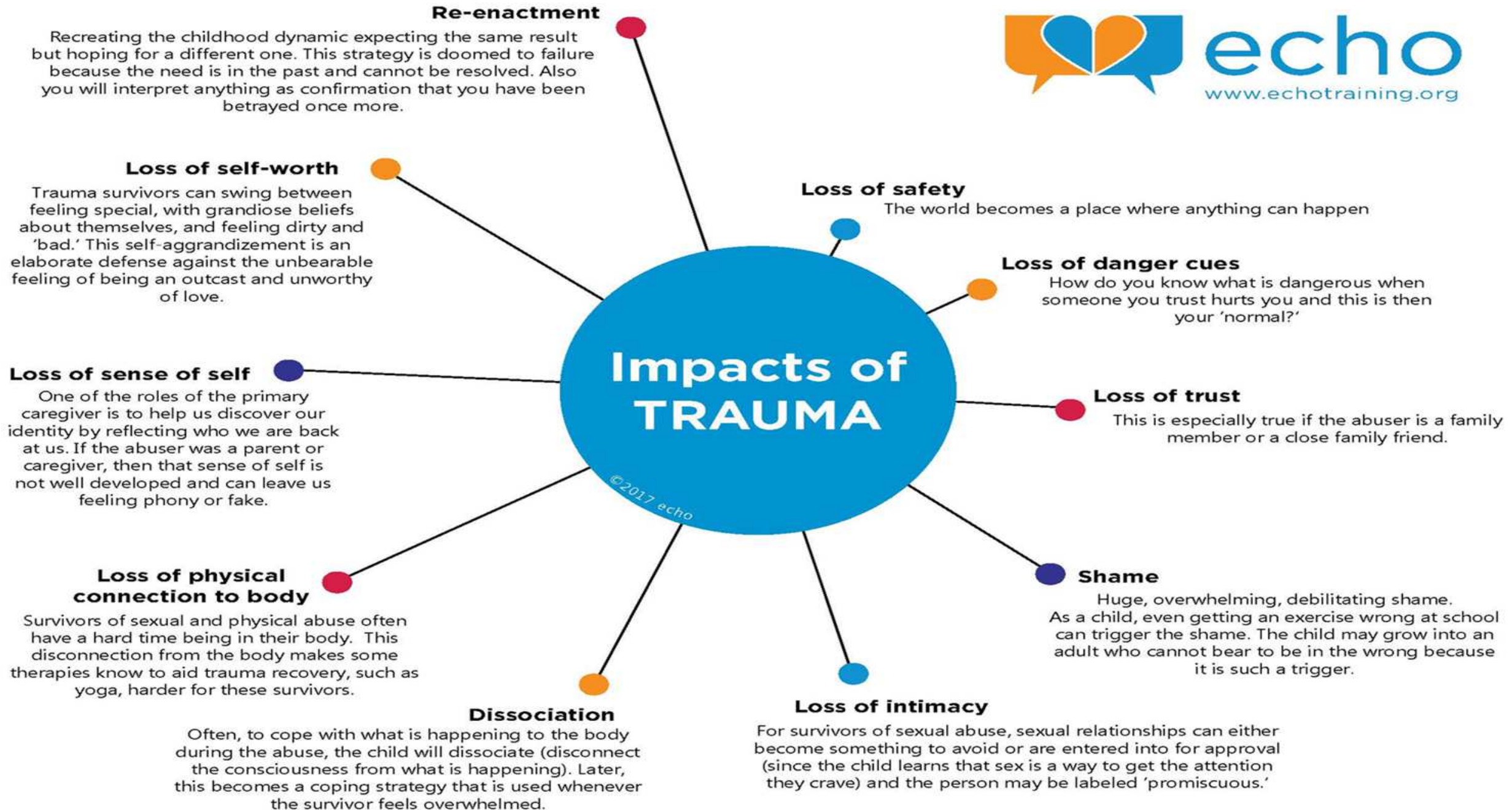


Breeding carried out for six generations.

(...)

V. ALTOUNIAN/SCIENCE





SURVIVAL MODE RESPONSE



FIGHT

- Feelings of irritability
- More ready to engage in arguments
- Yelling, Screaming, Using mean words
- Hitting, kicking, biting, aggressive behavior
- Demanding, Controlling, defiant
- Blaming, deflecting responsibility
- Defensive



FLIGHT

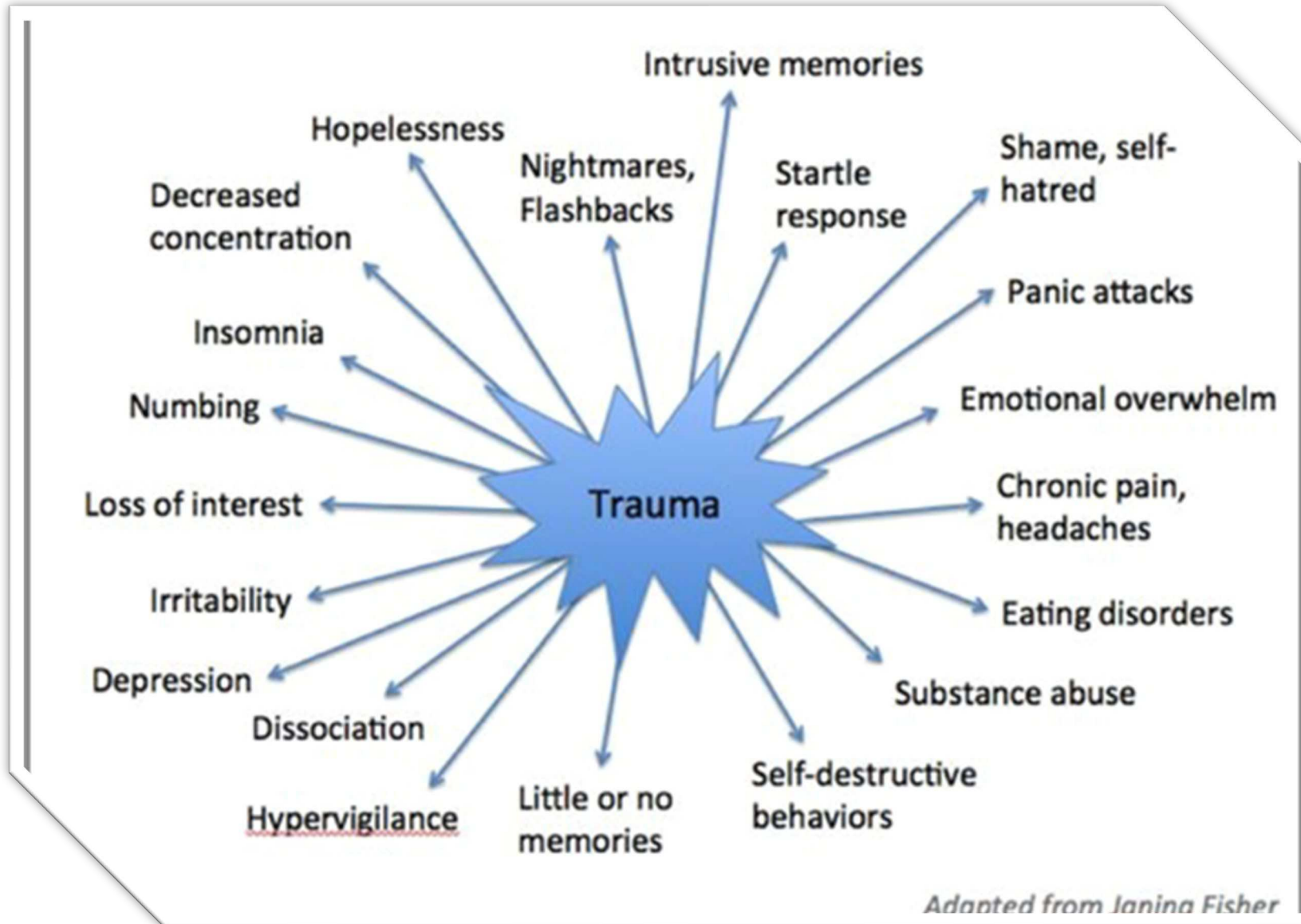
- Hiding out – reluctance or refusal to engage in activities
- Wanting to escape or run away
- Passive communication styles or people pleasing in order to avoid conflict or confrontation
- Fidgeting, restlessness, hard to pay attention
- Anxious, scared, worried, overwhelmed



FREEZE

- Numbing behaviors – Bored, depressed, helpless, apathetic
- Urge to hide or isolate
- Verbally unresponsive – says “I don’t know” a lot
- Zoned out, Daydreaming
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Unable to move – feeling stuck

WHAT WE SEE AS A RESULT OF TRAUMA:



CAREGIVER CONCERNS

- **Compassion Fatigue** – profound emotional and physical wearing down that happens when helpers are unable to rest and refuel
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress** – mirrors the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder
- **Burnout** – physical and emotional exhaustion experienced when a caregiver feels powerless and overwhelmed





WHAT WE HOPE FOR ALL CAREGIVERS

Compassion Resilience

The ability to maintain our physical, emotional and mental well-being while responding compassionately to people who are suffering

Compassion Satisfaction

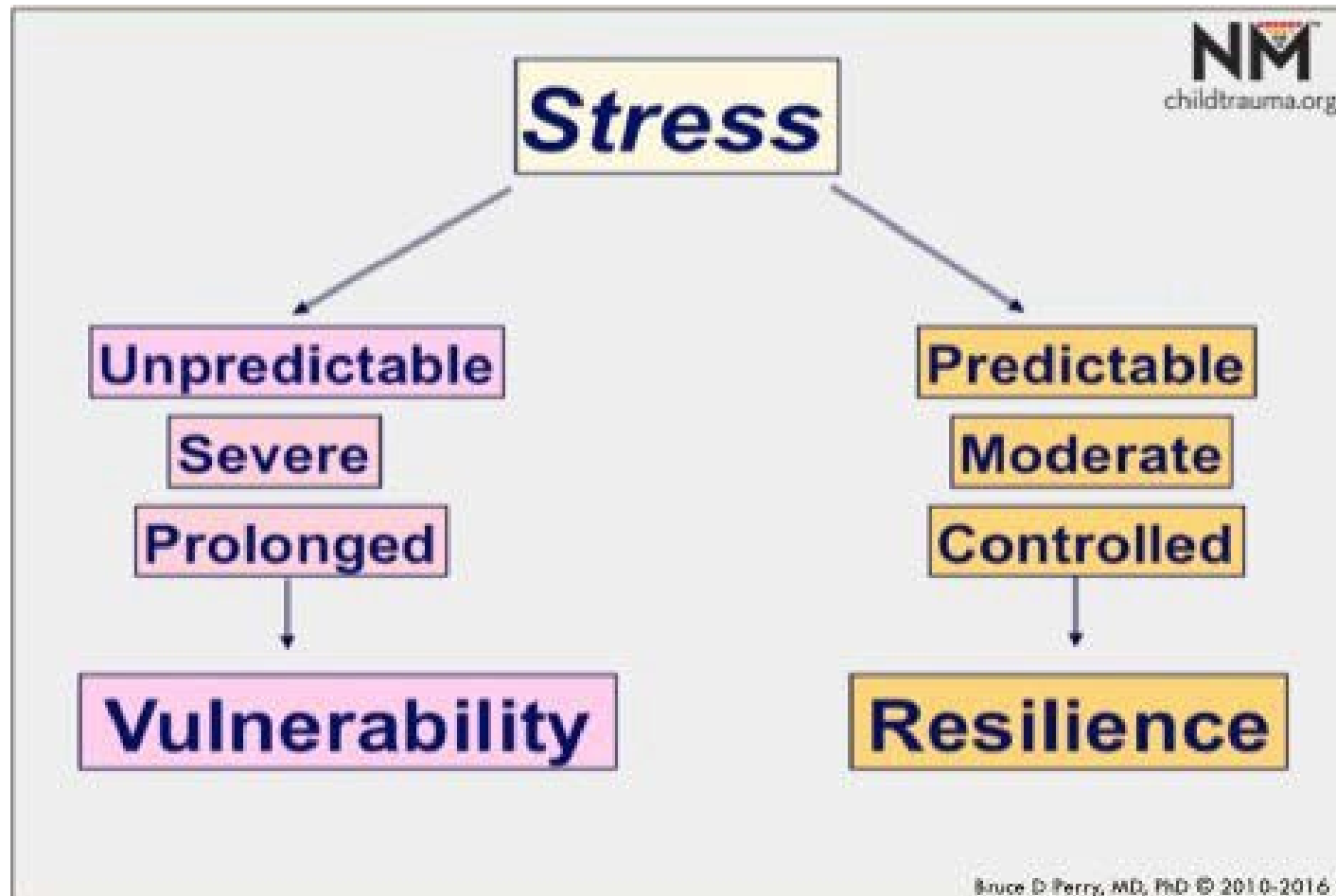
The ability to experience pleasure from doing the work of caregiving



CONTINUUM OF STRESS



DON'T BE AFRAID OF ALL STRESS





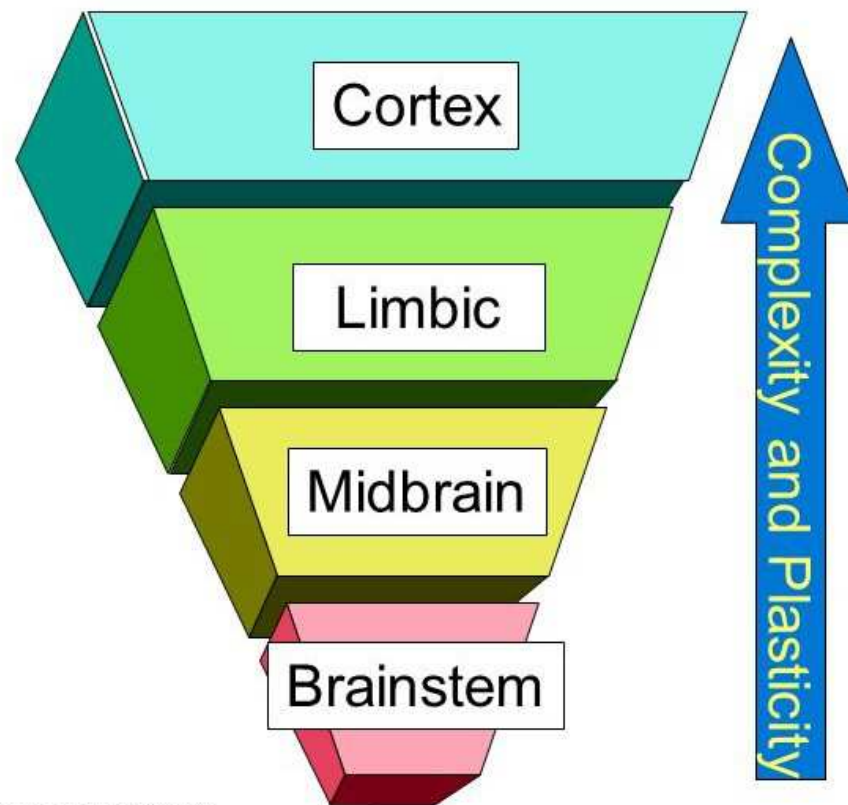
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Calm/Alert

Alarm

Fear

Terror

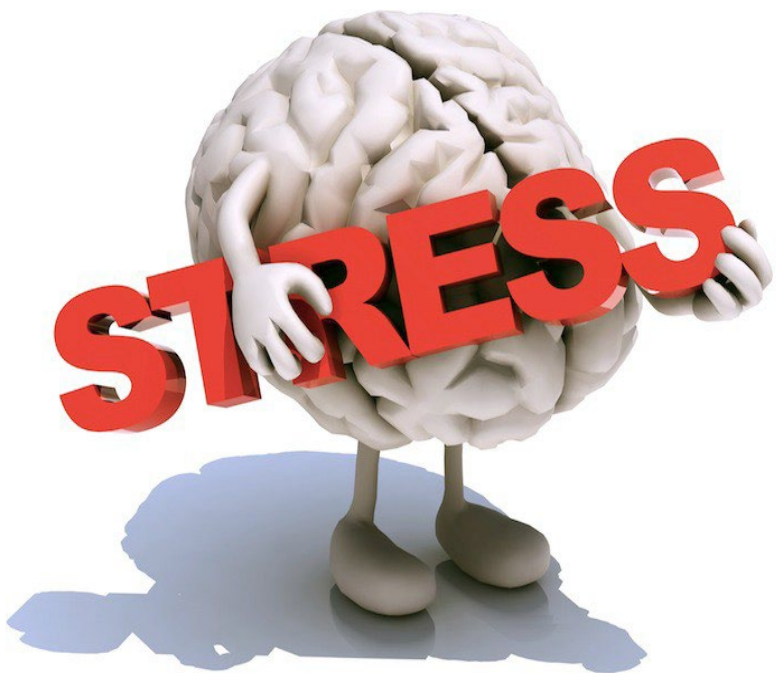


Abstract Thought
Concrete Thought
Affiliation
"Attachment"
Sexual Behavior
Emotional Reactivity
Motor Regulation
"Arousal"
Appetite/Satiety
Sleep
Blood Pressure
Heart Rate
Temperature

Bruce Perry, 2002



SURVIVAL MODE RESPONSE



Inability to

- Respond
- Learn
- Process



Wellness and Resilience Strategies: Strength

Section 10

Activity: Listening and Responding to Your Body's Stress Alarm

The human body is amazing and often recognizes that it is undergoing stress before you do mentally and it will give you signs. For example, you may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or low energy. Everybody responds to stress differently, and becoming aware of the signs your body gives is one of the steps in becoming stress resilient. Take time to reflect on what your body is signaling to you in times of stress.

1. How does your body let you know that you are getting out of balance, heading into stress?

Often we adjust our habits related to caring for our body in response to stress. What patterns do you notice in the following three areas of your health habits?

2. What do you notice about your eating habits when you are stressed?

3. What do you notice about your physical exercise habits when you are stressed?

4. How about your sleep pattern?

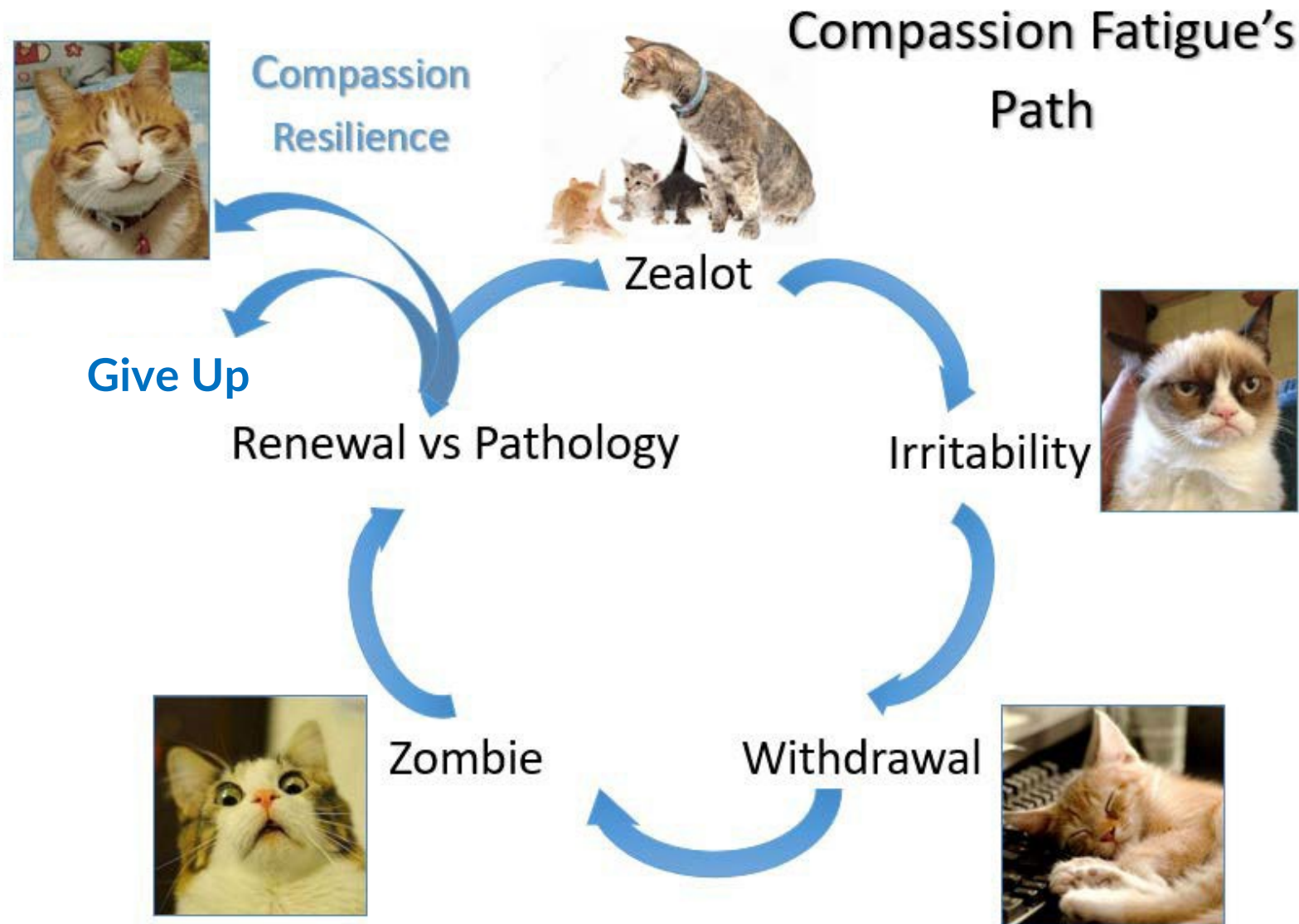
As you review your answers, identify:



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COMPASSION FATIGUE'S PATH



SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS WARNING SIGNS

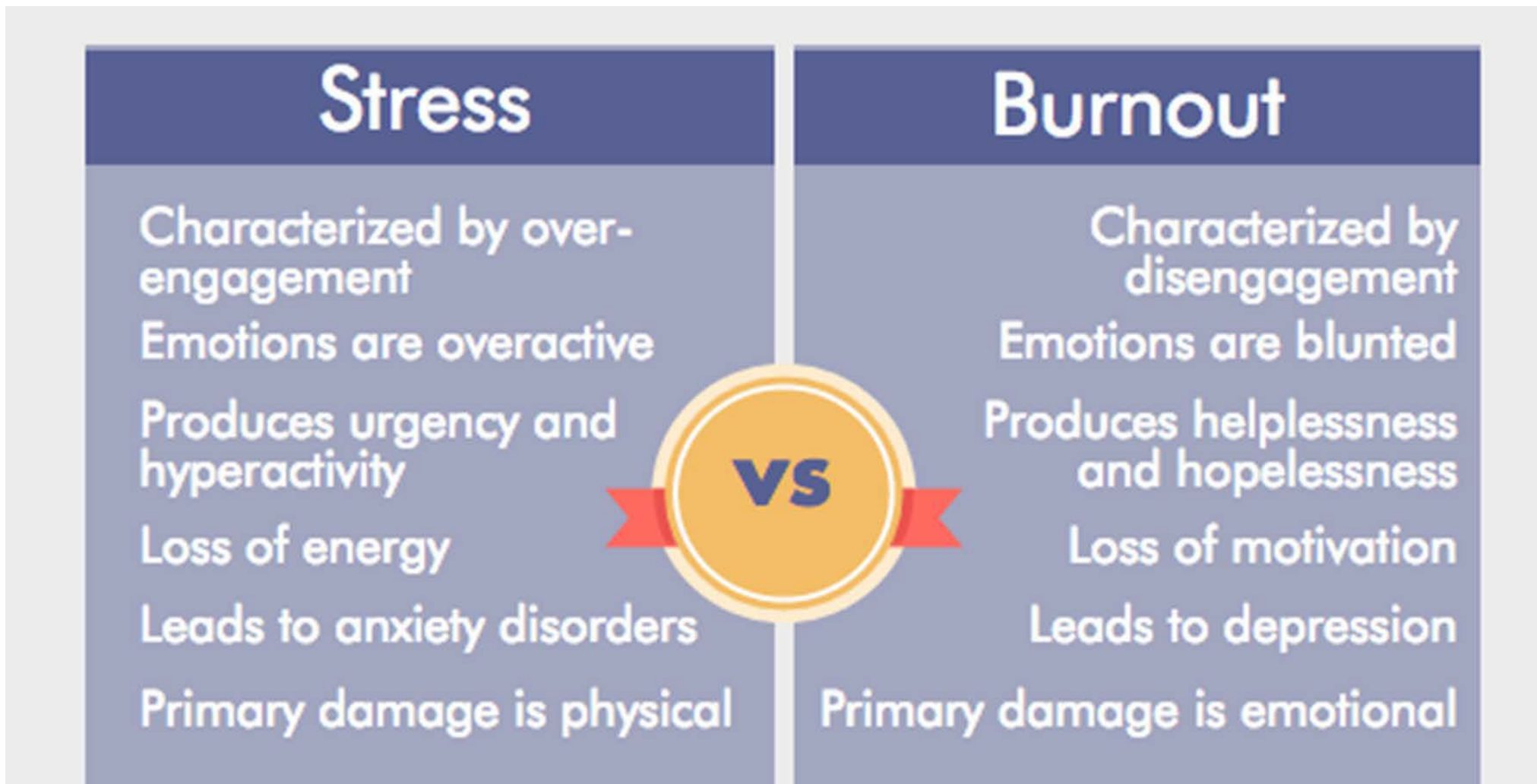


- Thinking the worst in every situation
- Reacting disproportionately
- Never taking a vacation or participating in self-care
- Forgetting why you do what you do
- Decreased performance Constantly not getting enough sleep
- Increased arguments with your family and friends
- Decreased social life






STRESS VS. BURNOUT



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY REFLECTION



Wellness and Resilience Strategies Section 8



Appreciative Inquiry Reflection Sheet

Taking time to recognize and honor our strengths is a helpful strategy in building our compassion resilience. Take a moment to reflect on your strengths as it relates to parenting and caregiving.

1. Considering your entire time as a parent/caregiver, recall when you feel most alive, most involved, or most excited about your role as a parent/caregiver?
2. Using the example you wrote down for question one, answer the following questions.
 - a. What makes it an exciting experience? What gives it energy?



REGULATE: IMPACT THE LOWER BRAIN

Rhythmic

Respectful

Rewarding



Repetitive

Relational

Relevant

SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES

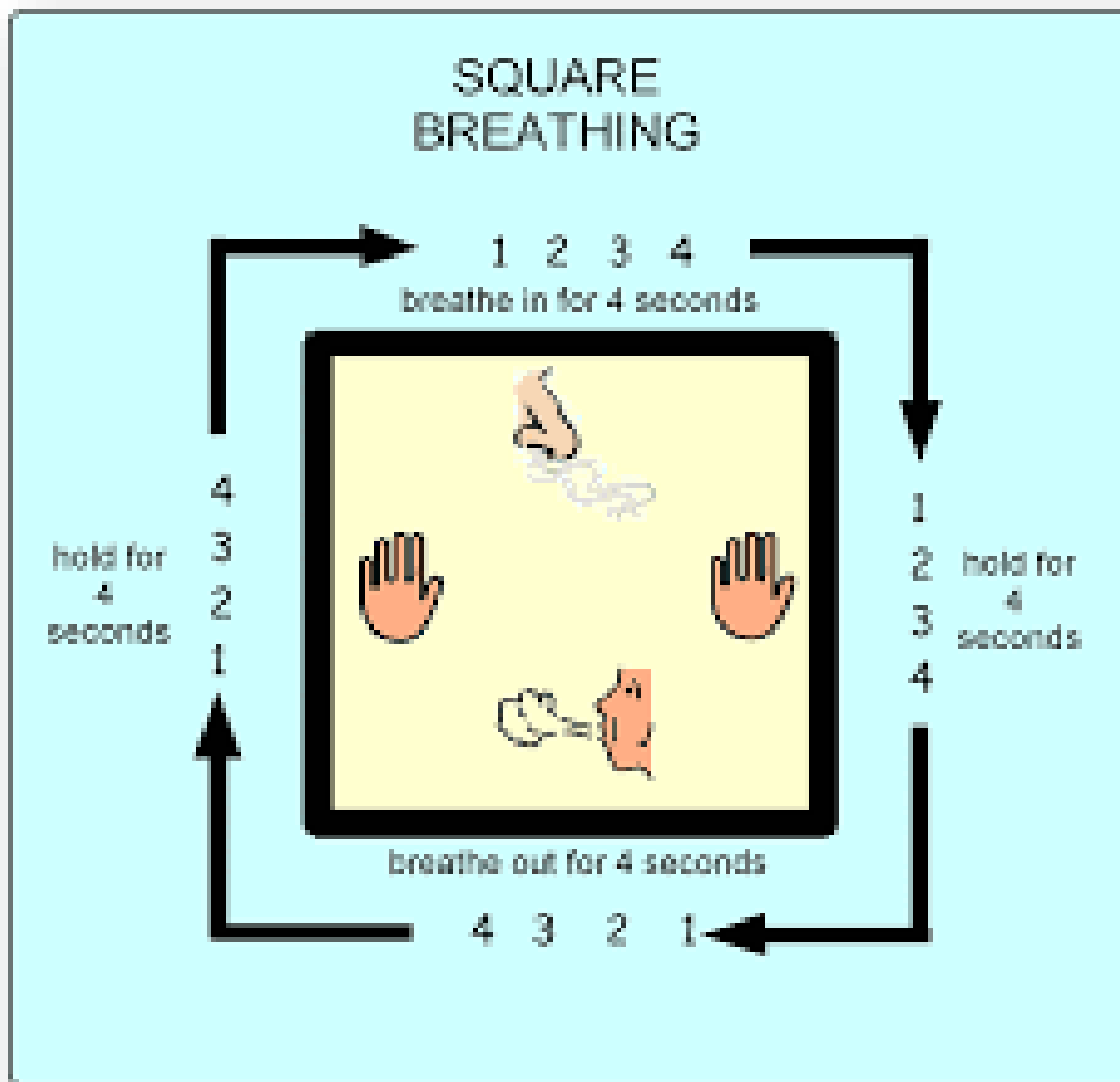


- Breathing Movement
- Walk & Talk
- Trigger identification
- Take a break/safe spot
- Mindfulness
- Yoga techniques
- Music
- Sensory breaks
- Grounding techniques
- Progressive muscle relaxation





BREATHING



GROUNDING TECHNIQUES



Place a cool cloth on your face or hold something cold



Listen to Soothing music



Put feet firmly on the ground

54321

5-4-3-2-1
Game





Activity: Developing an Emotional Regulation Plan

We all experience times when we feel overwhelmed and allow our feelings to control our actions. But to successfully cope with stressful events, we must learn to inhibit some responses while employing other, more positive ones. The ability to identify and name emotions, assess internal strategies and external supports, and act to make our environment safer are key to regulating negative, reactive emotions.

Answer the following questions to lay out what your own emotional regulation plan would look like:

1. When stressful events occur, what emotion(s) do I show that may be of concern or that I wish I had more control over? (e.g., fear, anger, jealousy, sadness, shame, etc.)
2. What do you see as your primary triggers and warning signs of stress? (e.g., not having a say or not being listened to, feeling lonely, feeling pressured, etc.)
3. What might other people notice me doing if I begin to lose control or my emotions? (e.g., pacing, becoming very quiet, being rude, isolating, etc.)
4. What strategies can you (or do you) use to increase your ability to calm down and regulate your emotions? (e.g., time to myself, humor, listening to music, talking to others, breathing, etc.)
5. What external social supports are available to you that may help?
6. What things do NOT help you keep calm or regulate your emotions? (e.g., being alone, being around people, not being listened to, etc.)

Additional Strategies for Emotional Regulation:

One way of regulating our emotions is to manage our self-talk. By asking ourselves new questions we can come up with options when upset. Here's what a balanced conversation may sound like...

- What am I reacting to? What is it that's really pushing my buttons here?
- Am I jumping to conclusions?
- Is there another way of dealing with this?
- Is it fact or opinion?
- Is there a different point of view to see the situation through? Think bigger picture.
- What meaning am I giving this situation?



When feeling particularly overwhelmed or when dealing with intense emotions, try the STOPP technique to help you regulate your emotions and stay calm:

- **Stop.** Don't act immediately—pause for a moment.
- **Take a deep breath.** Notice your breathing as you breathe in and out.
- **Observe.** What am I thinking right now? What is your focus of attention? What are you reacting to? What sensations do you notice in your body?
- **Pull back.** Zoom out. Put in some perspective and ask yourself what is the bigger picture? Is this thought a fact or opinion? What is another way of looking at this situation and how does it make you feel? How important



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EMBRACE EMPATHY



Empathy is...

seeing with the **eyes** of another,
listening with the **ears** of another,
and **feeling** with the **heart** of another.



Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another

I feel with you, I am with you

Sympathy

I feel for you.

I see you over there and that sucks, so I am glad I'm over here.

Brown, B. (2018).





SHAME VS. GUILT

I am bad I am
unworthy of love
and connection

I am a
mistake



I did
something bad
I made a
mistake





STEPS TO SHAME RESILIENCE



- Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers
- Identifying external factors
- Connecting with Others
- Speaking with Others

AFFIRMATION WORKSHEET



Expectations from Self and Others

Section 5



Developing Positive Affirmations

This exercise is designed to help identify unrealistic self-expectations and transform them into positive affirmations.

Step 1: List some of your unrealistic self-expectations related to parenting. These often contain words such as always, never, must, should, no one.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Take each unrealistic self-expectation and change it into an alternative belief that feels right to you. These affirmations should be positive, short yet specific, stated as if it already exists, and be only about you. See the table on page 2 for examples.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Dr. Kristen Neff: 3 Elements of Self-Compassion

Self-Kindness:

Understanding,
not punishment

Sense of Common Humanity:

Everybody
goes through
this

Mindfulness:

Neither
ignoring nor
exaggerating
feelings of
failure



SELF-COMPASSION SCALE



Activity: Self-Compassion Scale

Used in this toolkit with permission from Dr. Kristin Neff

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner. You can also [take this self-scale online](#) with automatic scoring.

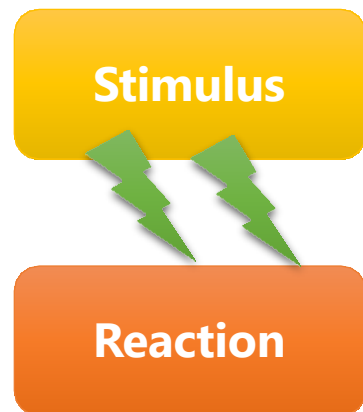
	Almost never			Almost always	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. _____					
2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong. _____					
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through. _____					
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world. _____					
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain. _____					
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy. _____					
7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am. _____					
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself. _____					
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance. _____					
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people. _____					
11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. _____					
12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need. _____					
13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am. _____					
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation. _____					
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition. _____					
16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself. _____					
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective. _____					
18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it. _____					
19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering. _____					



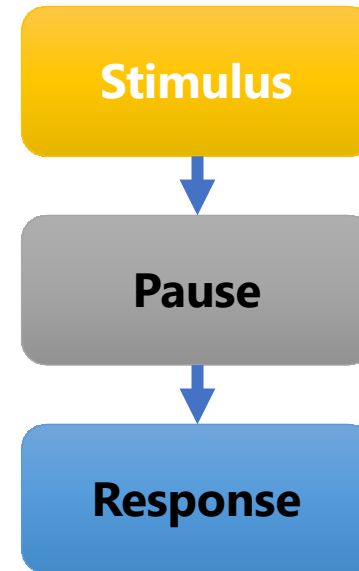
MINDFUL BEHAVIOR

Being Mindful creates space to pause...
Replacing impulsive reactions with thoughtful responses.

Autopilot/Reactive Behavior



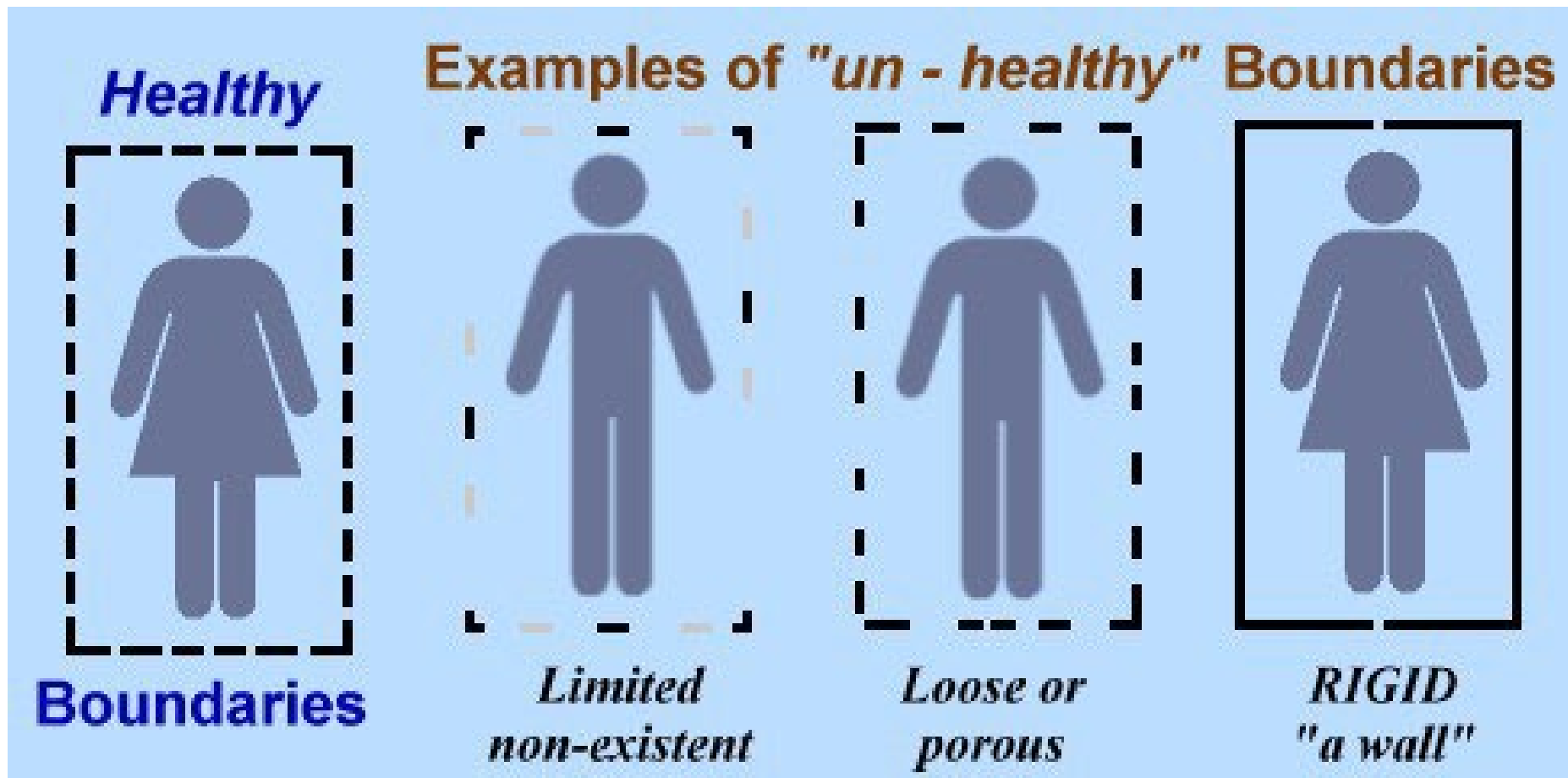
Mindful Behavior



ASKING FOR HELP



Be **smart** enough to
know when you
need help and **brave**
enough to ask for it.





Take
away

Expectations from Self and Others

Section 5



Caregiver Bill of Rights

I have the right . . .

- to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my relative.
- to seek help from others even though my relatives may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- to maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- to get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- to reject any attempts by my relative (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt and/or depression.
- to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance from my loved one for what I do, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- to take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my relative.
- to protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my relative no longer needs my full-time help.
- to expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

Source: [A Place for Mom](#)



COMPASS MODEL OF WELLNESS

Heart

Relationships
Emotions



Spirit

Core Values
Rest and play



Mind

School/work
Organization




Strength

Stress resilience
Care for the body



COMPASSION RESILIENCE REFLECTION



Compassion Fatigue



The Wellness Compass Practices Assessment

"Self-care is not an indulgence. Self-care is a discipline. It requires tough-mindedness, a deep and personal understanding of your priorities, and a respect for both yourself and the people you choose to spend your life with." – Tami Forman


The following worksheet for assessing wellness practices is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days. When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

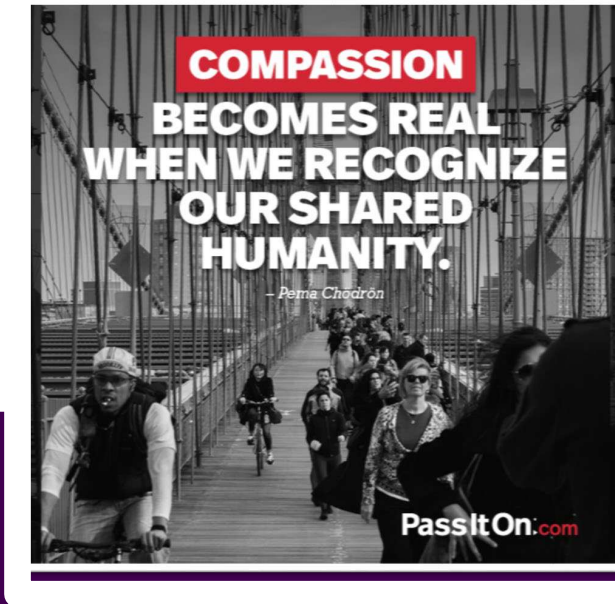
Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)	0 = I never do this
2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)	? = This never occurred to me. I might be interested
1 = I barely or rarely do this	N/A = doesn't apply or it's not of interest to me

HEART


Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with others whose company I enjoy <input type="checkbox"/> Stay in contact with important people in my life <input type="checkbox"/> Make time to reply to personal emails/letters; send holiday cards <input type="checkbox"/> Allow others to do things for me <input type="checkbox"/> Enlarge my social circle <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help when I need it <input type="checkbox"/> Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust <input type="checkbox"/> Resolve a conflict with people in a productive way <input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, spend time with my companion animals <input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse <input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, schedule regular activities with my children <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> Give myself affirmations, praise myself <input type="checkbox"/> Practice self-compassion <input type="checkbox"/> Practice being mindfully present <input type="checkbox"/> Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out comforting activities, objects, people, and places <input type="checkbox"/> Allow myself to cry <input type="checkbox"/> Find things that make me laugh <input type="checkbox"/> Notice my inner experience – my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests <input type="checkbox"/> Use emotional regulation strategies





We're all just trying to survive

We frequently observe misplaced Coping Strategies

We are all part of the problem therefore we can all be part of the Solution

GET IN TOUCH WITH ME!!!



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Thank You

FOR YOUR ATTENTION !!!