

Patient Education & Family Day

Keeping our Emotions Balanced

Poul Hansen Family Centre for Depression

April 15, 2023

Agenda

1. Exploring our Emotion Regulation Systems
2. Threat System
3. Drive System
4. Soothing System
5. Mindfulness Practice
6. How the systems interact
7. Questions

Psychotherapy Team



Cristina Barrios,
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Team Lead & Mental
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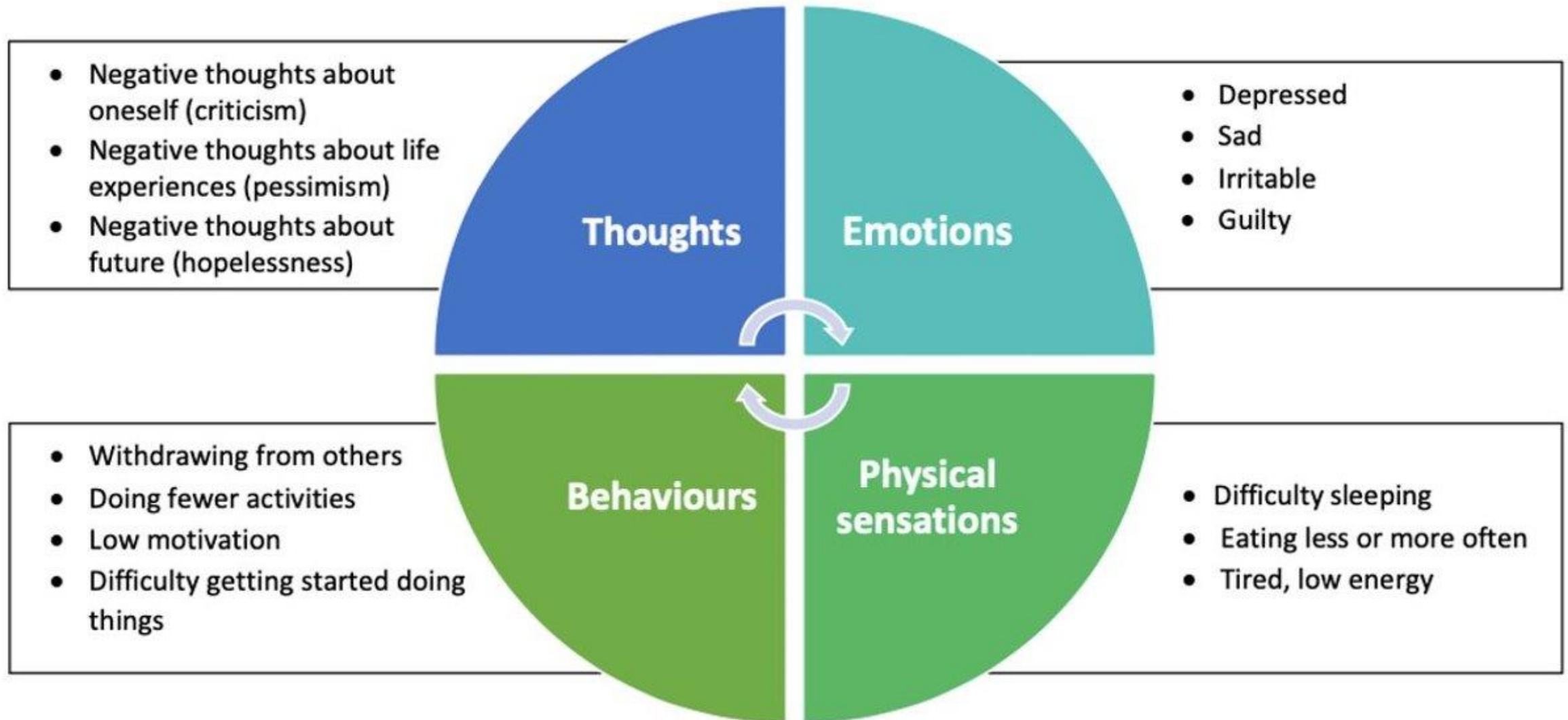


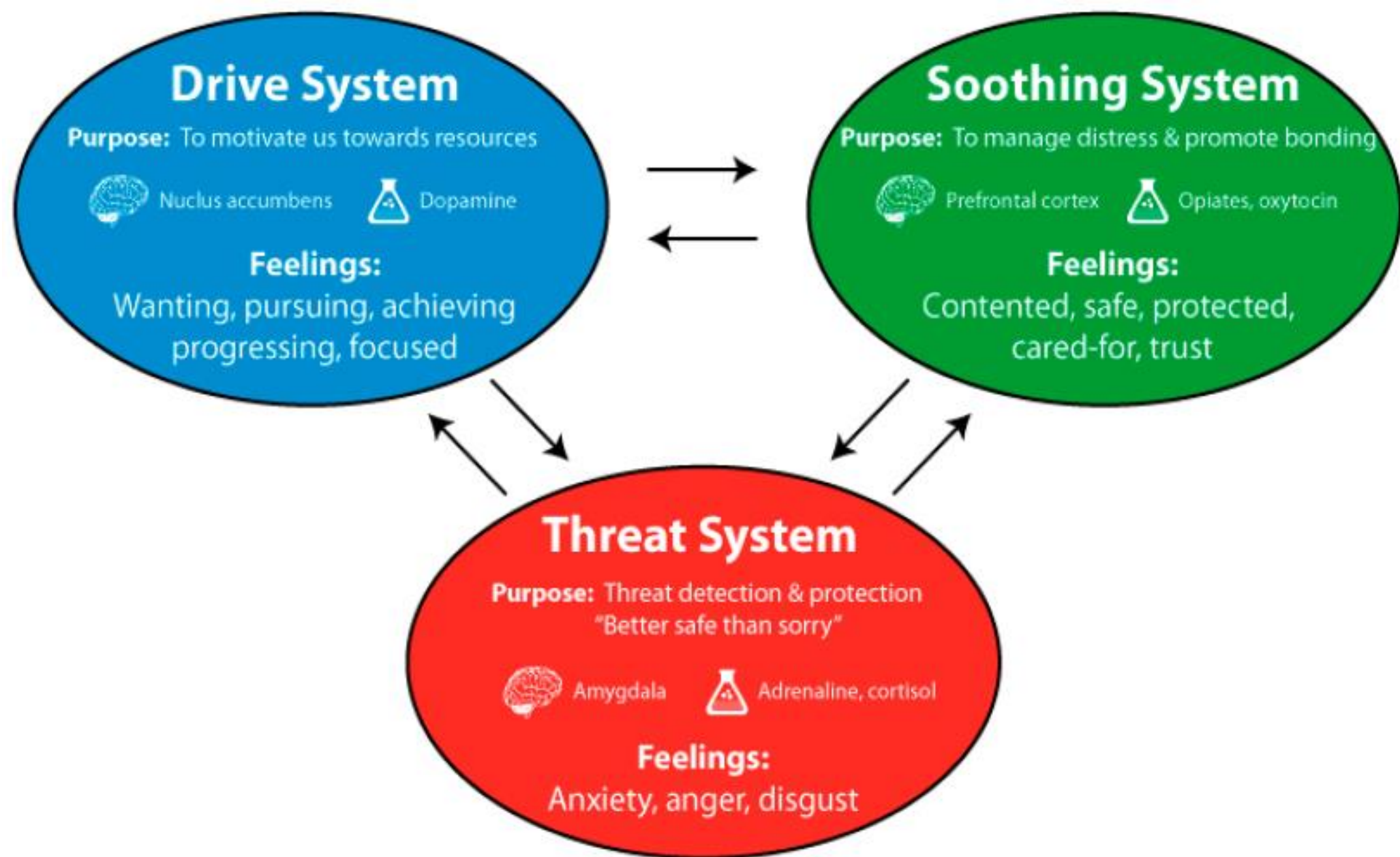
Lauren Carrique,
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OT Reg. (Ont)
Mental Health Clinician

Profile of Depression Symptoms





Our Emotional Regulation Systems

Take a moment and reflect on your three systems.

Draw each circle based on which system you think is most dominant right now, slightly less dominant, and least dominant.

- **Example:** if your threat system is most active you would draw that circle larger than the other circles

What do you think about these emotion regulation systems – how they change our body in different ways and prepare us for different types of actions?

Threat System

PROTECTION SYSTEM: Attend, process and respond to threats
Negativity bias - "better safe than sorry"

RESPONSE: fight (*anger*), flight (*anxiety, fear*), freeze (*depression, numbness*)

ACTIVATED BY: real or perceived threats



Threat System

The way that we talk to ourselves and perceive situations can activate threat system

Unhelpful	Helpful
<p>Negative Filter Only paying attention to negative evidence around you.</p> <p><i>I can never get anything right when supporting my partner.</i></p>	<p>Notice the positives Look at all the facts, including the positive ones.</p> <p><i>There has been times where my partner has been receptive of the support I provide to them.</i></p>
<p>Mind reading Making assumptions about what others are thinking</p> <p><i>No one cares about me.</i></p>	<p>Face the Facts List all objective evidence, not your interpretation</p> <p><i>Recently friends and family have reached out to check-in on how I'm doing.</i></p>
<p>Labelling Attaching a negative label to yourself or to someone else, <i>If make a mistake, it means I'm stupid</i></p>	<p>Detaching from Labels or Categories Labelling yourself or others can limit the way you look at yourself and others</p>

Drive System

MOTIVATING SYSTEM: Helps us move towards what we want and need

Activates our reward system to make us feel good when we achieve goals that help us to flourish in our environment and to build positive relationships

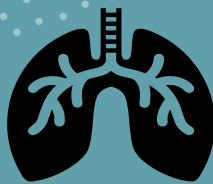
When feeling low, we can activate the Drive System by using Behavioural Activation



Behavioural Activation

- Using behaviour to influence our emotional state
- The more that we activate, the more situations we find ourselves in that have potential to give positive experiences or meaning
 - Monitoring our daily activities and building an upward spiral through engaging in activities that bring pleasure or mastery
 - Identification of goals and values
 - Activity Scheduling
 - Problem solving around potential barriers

BACE Diary



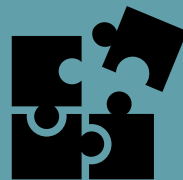
B = Body Care



A = Achievement



C = Connection



E = Enjoyment

Creating SMART Goals

S	Specific	The goal should be well-defined. What, specifically, are you going to do?
M	Measurable	How will you know when you reach your goal?
A	Attainable	Don't set goals that are too far out of reach.
R	Realistic	The goal should be realistic, and in line with your abilities and current energy levels.
T	Timely	Set a time-frame for the goal. Have a clear target to work toward.

Soothing System

Contentment: "rest & digest"

Connection: space and energy
for relationships and attachment

"Safeness": resting, being open to
exploration



Activating the Soothing System



Soothing Rhythm Breathing



Connection: to pets, other people, yourself, to nature



Visualization

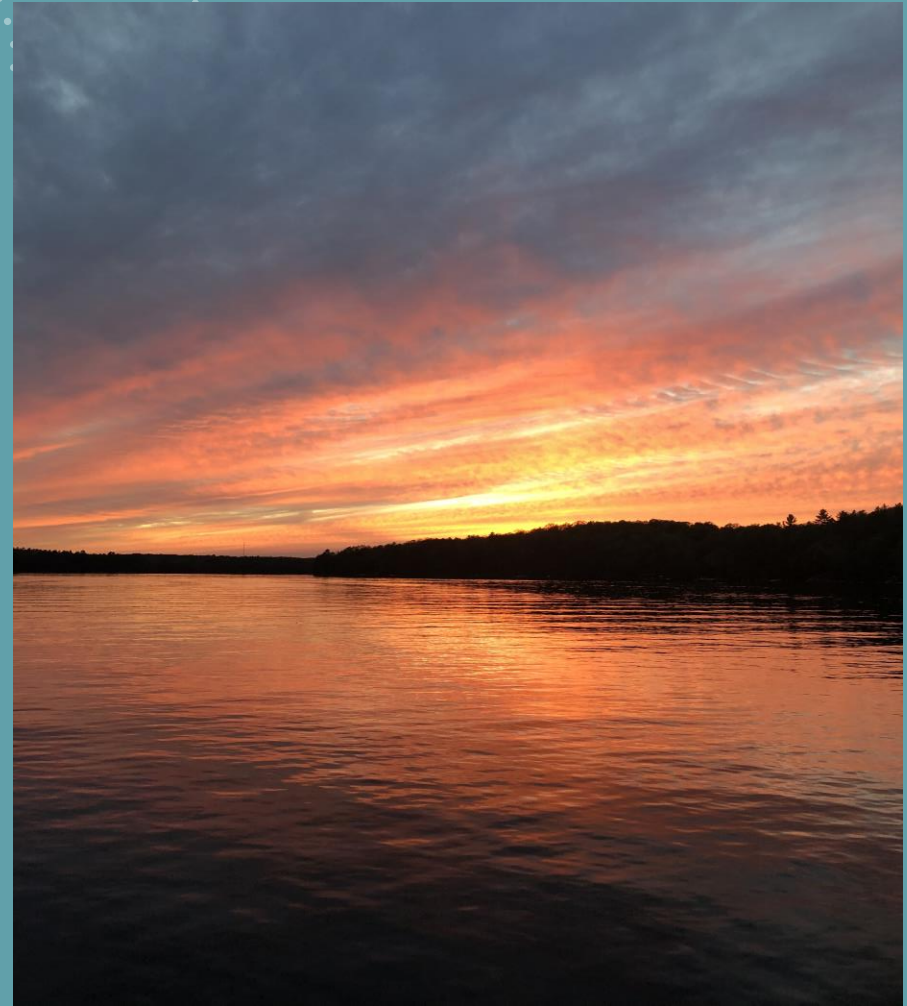


Grounding

Soothing System

What makes you feel content, safe and connected?

How do you know when your soothing system is activated?



Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness Practice

1. What aspects did you find helpful or challenging?
2. What feelings did you experience? Did you notice any body sensations?
3. How did this practice activate/change your emotional regulation systems?
4. How/when might this practice be helpful for you?

Relationship between the Systems

How are the Drive, Threat and Soothing system connected? How do they interact with each other?

- For some people, feeling safe can activate the threat system. A safe relationship may have harmed you, distorting your Soothing system
- For others, feeling threatened propels them into the Drive system

Any Questions?

