

# Trauma-Informed Care: What it Means and How It Is Delivered

Toronto ABI Network Conference  
December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Beanfield Center  
By: Eden Dales, B.A., M.S.W., R.S.W.

People start to  
heal the moment  
they feel heard.



**EDEN DALES SOCIAL WORK**

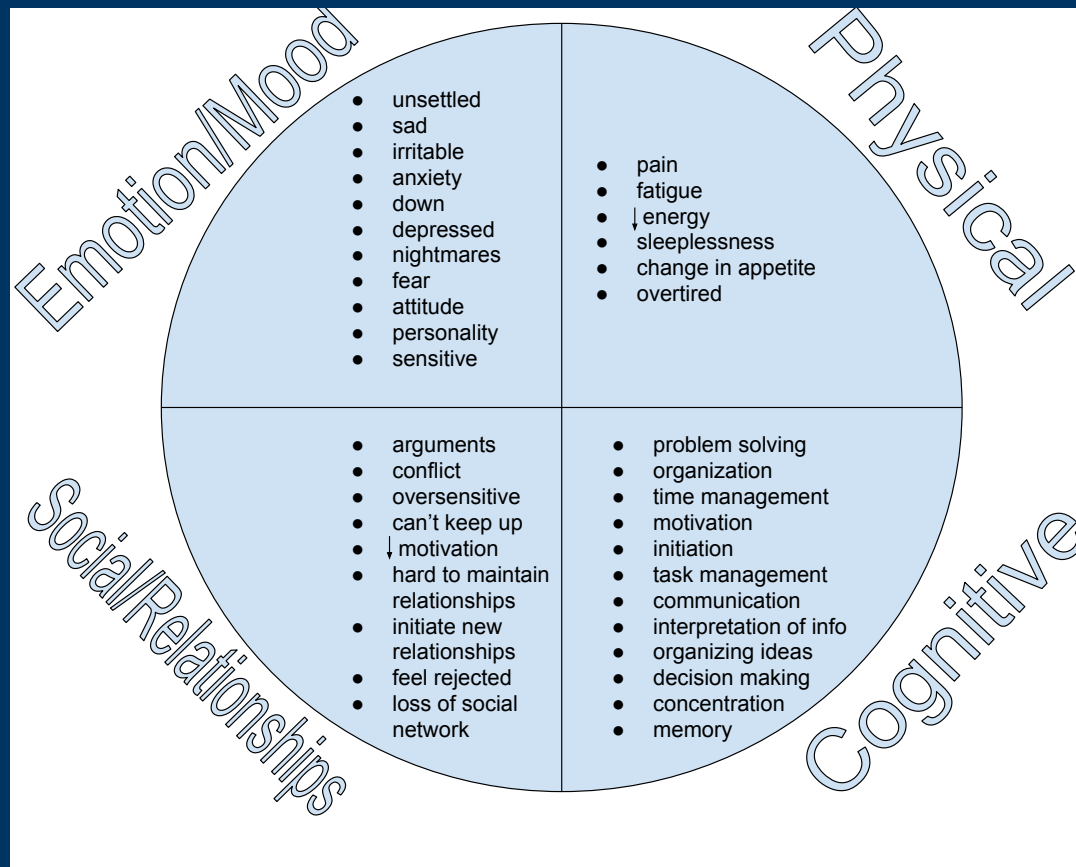
SOLUTION FOCUSED. POSITIVE CHANGE.

# Topics to Be Covered Today (Briefly)

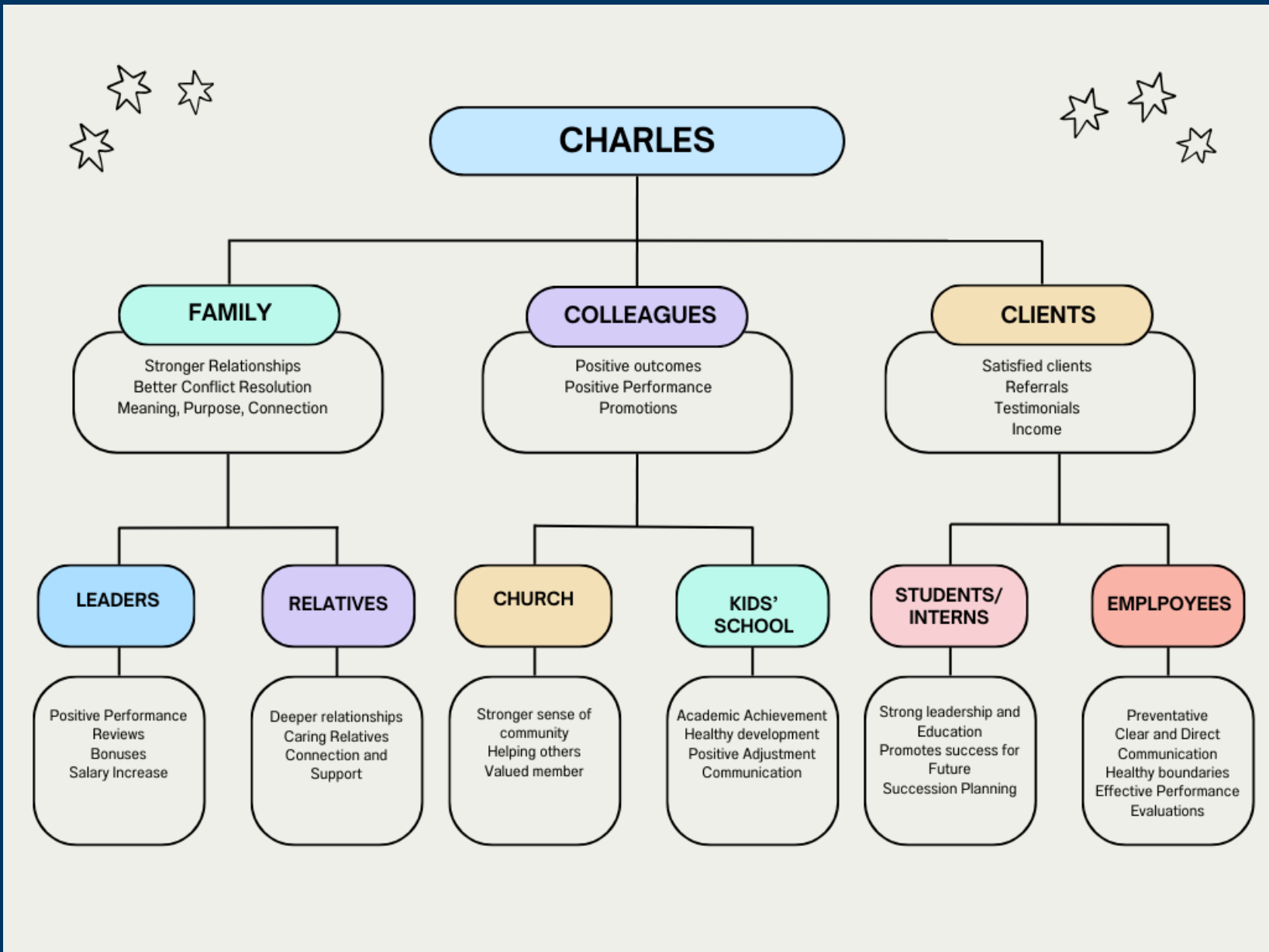
- Trauma Informed Care: Overview of its History and Core Principles
- Trauma, Defined and The neuro-biology of trauma
- Emotional Literacy & Emotional Intelligence (Feedback Process)
- The 4 R's, 3 E's and 3 R's (HUH?!)
- Safe Scripts
- How do I “DO” Trauma informed care?
- Actions you can take today to become trauma informed and change your practice

# Immediate Action: Mind your Mental Hygiene

*"Children Swim in their Parents Unconscious Like Fish Swim in The Sea. It is Good to Make Sure the Water Stays Clear."*-Gabor Mate



# The Vast Impact of Trauma Informed Care



# Trauma Informed Care: Core Principles CDC

Statistics Canada, 2022: 8% of Adults in Canada meet criteria for probable PTSD

**SHIFT: Asking “What Happened to you” Instead of asking: “What’s Wrong with You?”**

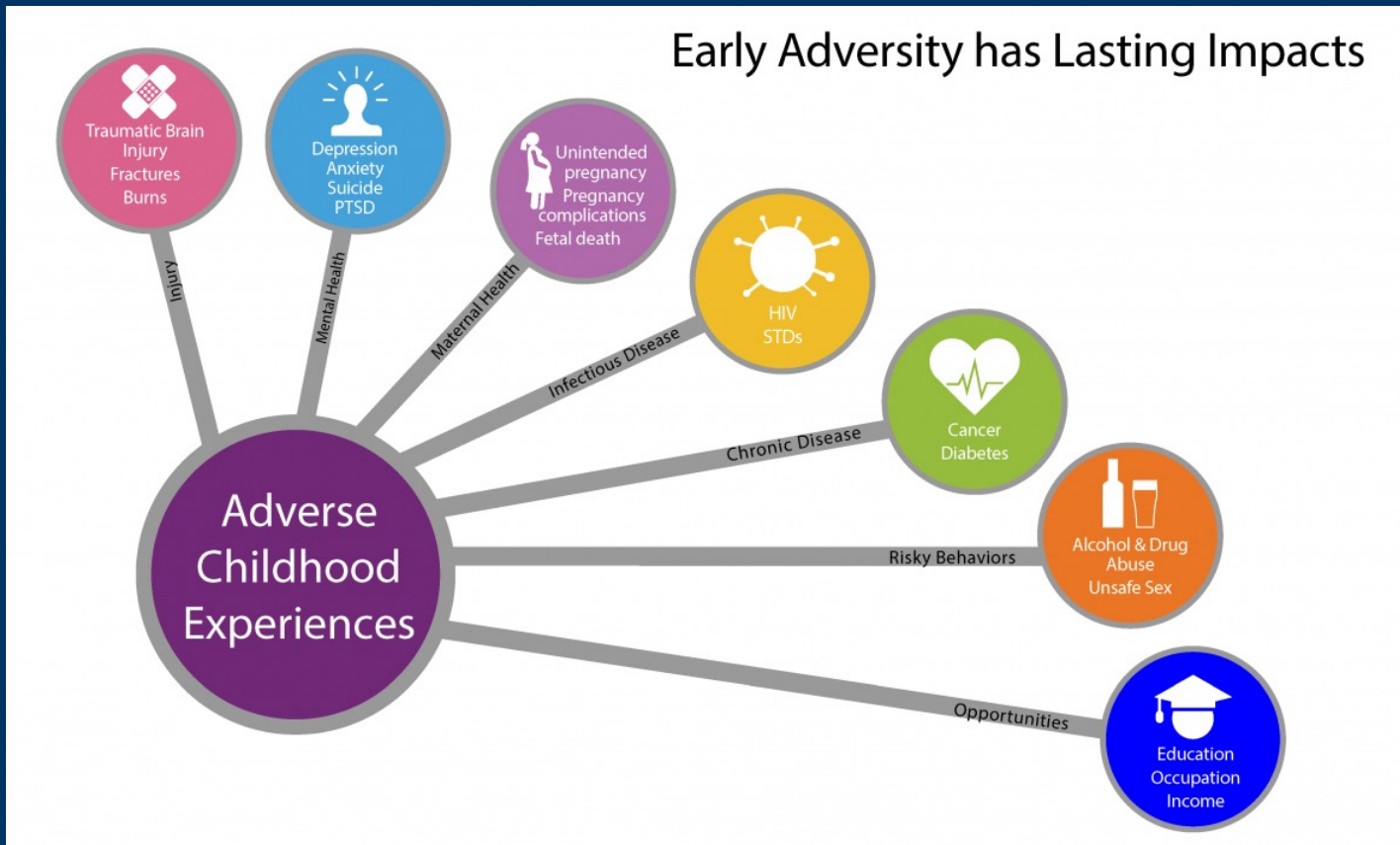
## 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

The CDC’s [Center for Preparedness and Response \(CPR\)](#), in collaboration with SAMHSA’s [National Center for Trauma-Informed Care \(NCTIC\)](#), developed and led a new training for CPR employees about the role of trauma-informed care during public health emergencies. The training aimed to increase responder awareness of the impact that trauma can have in the communities where they work.

Participants learned SAMHSA’S six principles that guide a trauma-informed approach, including:



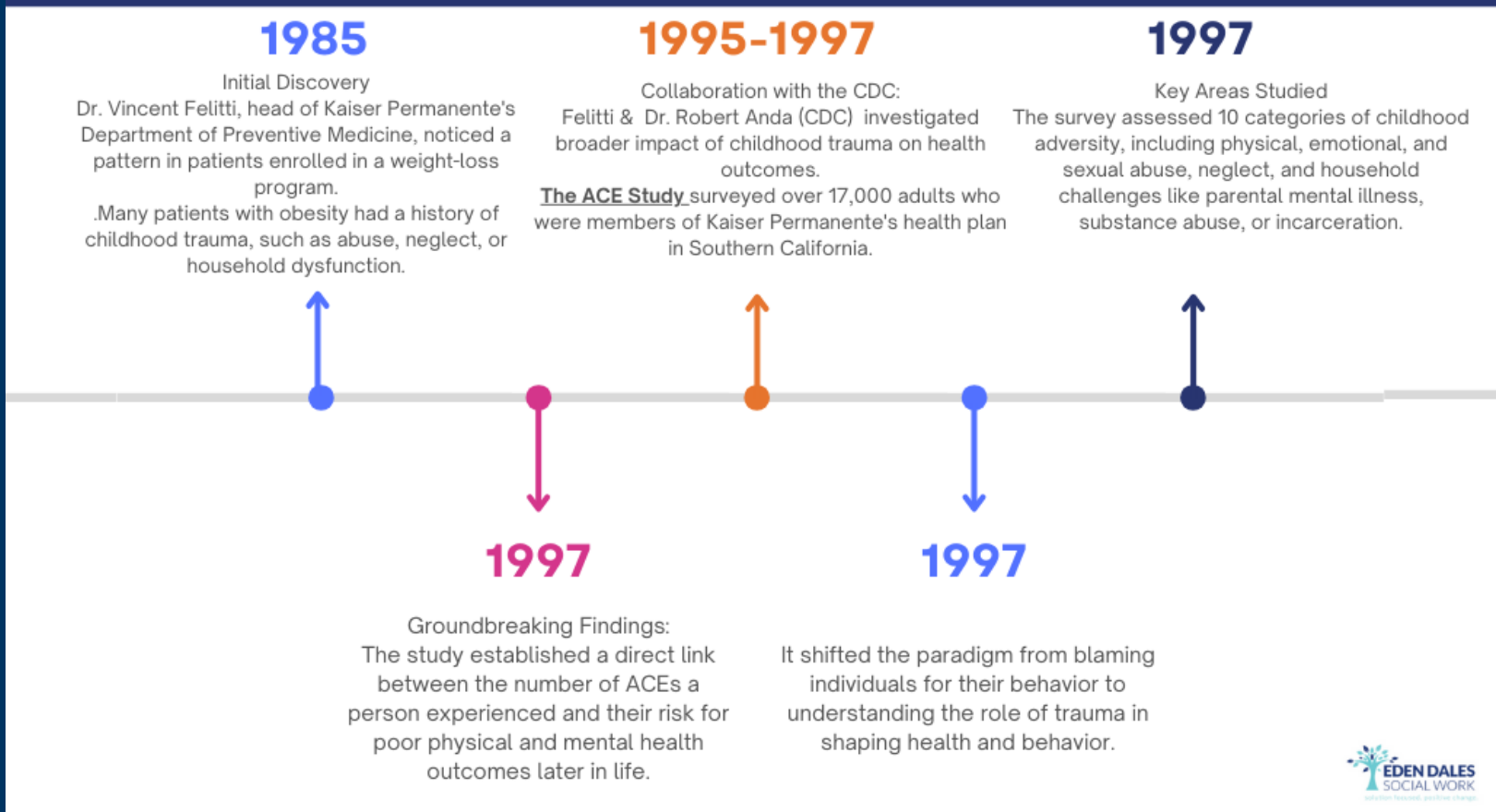
Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity, and possibly a cultural change at an organizational level. On-going internal organizational assessment and quality improvement, as well as engagement with community stakeholders, will help to imbed this approach which can be augmented with organizational development and practice improvement. The training provided by CPR and NCTIC was the first step for CDC to view emergency preparedness and response through a trauma-informed lens.



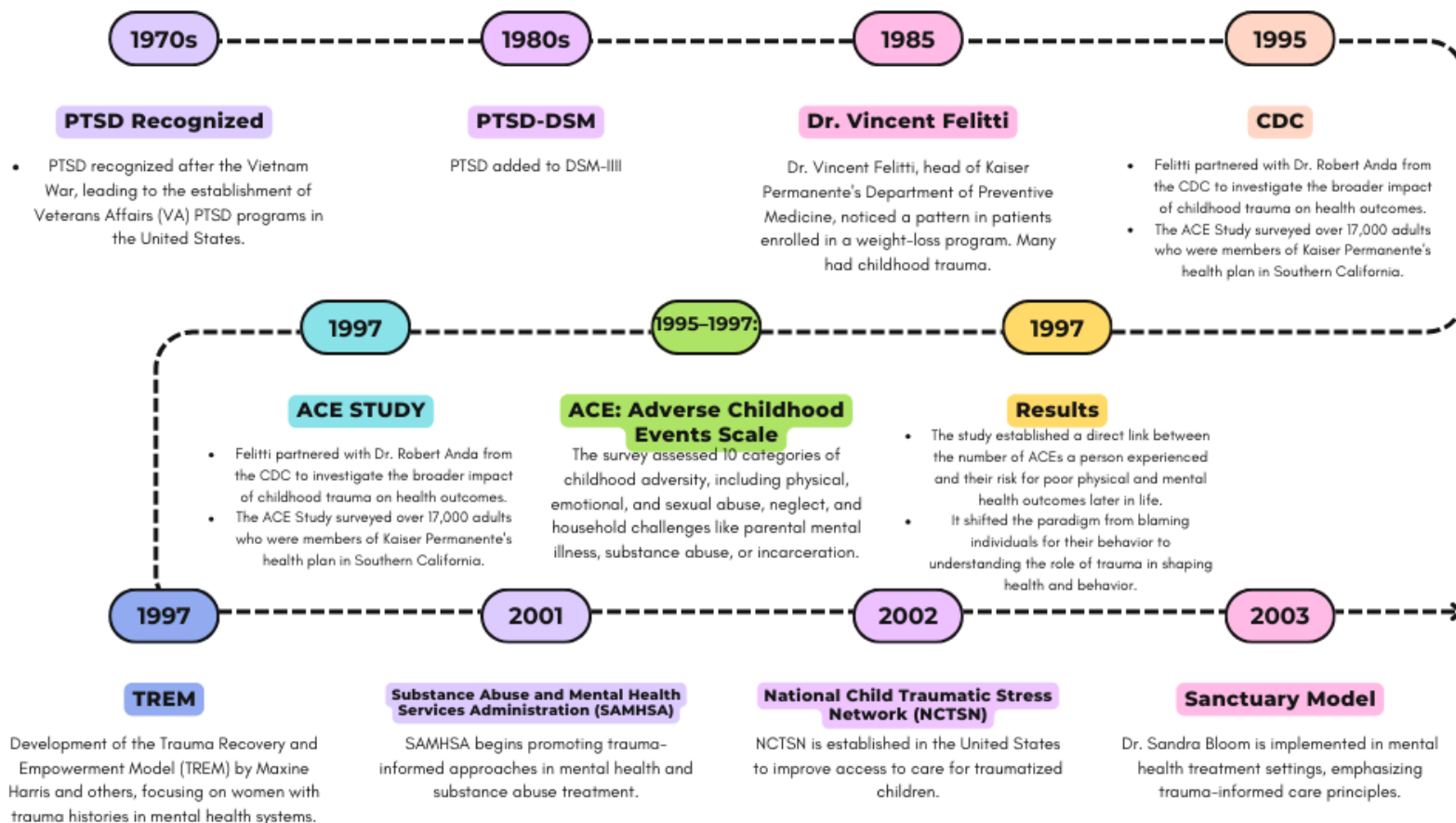
- **The ACE Study explores the link between adverse childhood experiences and long-term health outcomes.**
- **Trauma-informed care is an approach that recognizes the impact of trauma on individuals and focuses on creating safe and supportive environments.**

# THE ACE STUDY

The ACE Study explores the link between adverse childhood experiences and long-term health outcomes. Trauma-informed care is an approach that recognizes the impact of trauma on individuals and focuses on creating safe and supportive environments.

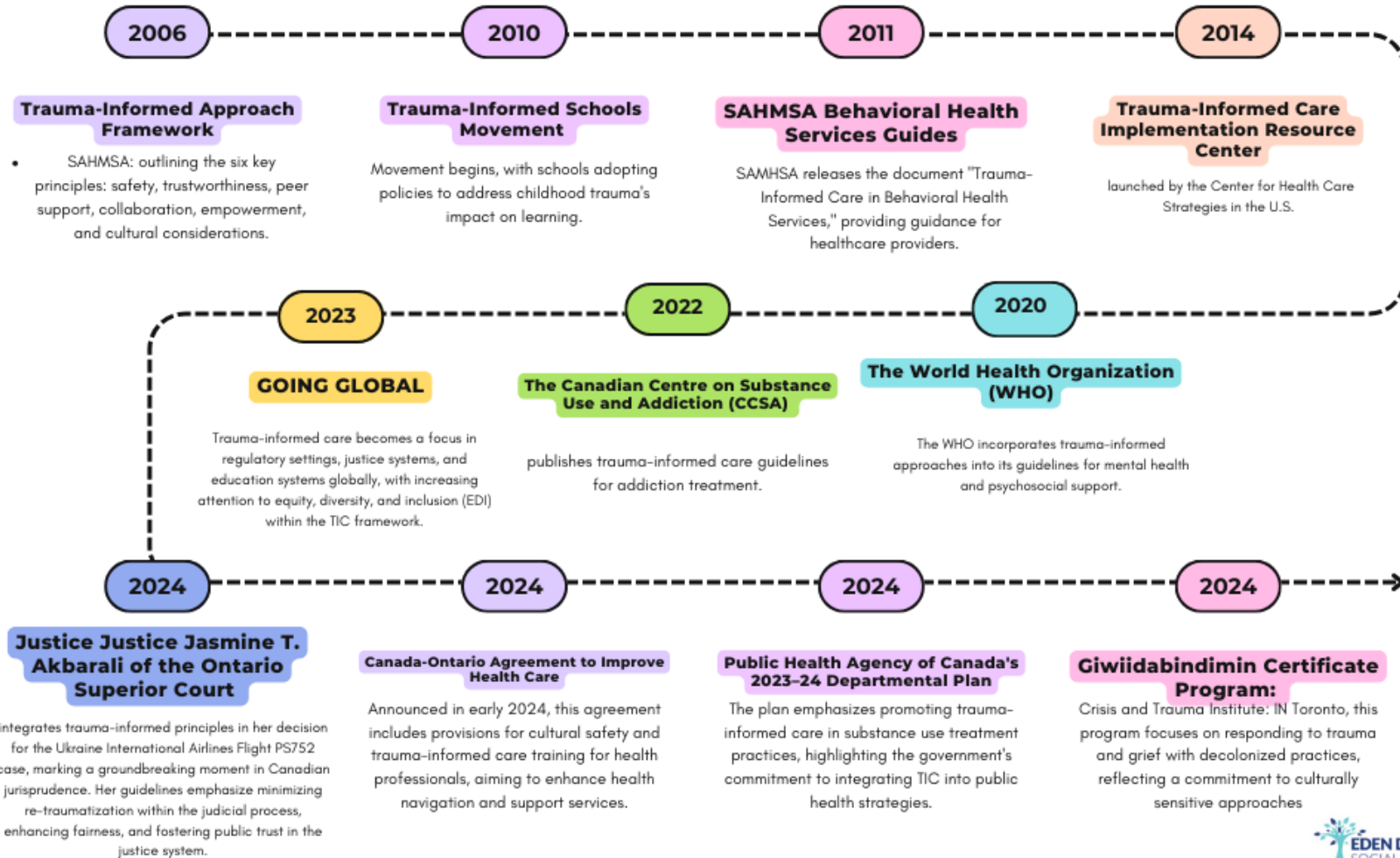


# The History of Trauma Informed Care: A Timeline





# The History of Trauma Informed Care: A Timeline



# The 4 R's of Trauma Informed Care

## The Four R's of TIC

1

### Realize

All people at all levels have a basic **realization** about trauma, and how it can affect individuals, families, and communities.

3

### Respond

Programs, organizations and communities **respond** by practicing a trauma-informed approach.

### Recognize

People within organizations are able to **recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma.

2

### Resist Re-Traumatization

Organizational practices may compound trauma unintentionally, trauma informed organizations avoid this **re-traumatization**.

4

# The 3 E's of Trauma Informed Care

## THE EVENT

The events and circumstances surrounding a trauma include the physical, emotional, and psychological threats of a traumatic experience. This may be a natural disaster, witnessing or experiencing an act of violence, an accident, an experience of neglect, or the result of chronic stress over the course of a lifetime.

## THE EXPERIENCE

In the aftermath of the event, the person's experience is the emotional response they had to the event and the meaning they assigned to the event. Two people who have endured similar events may have different long-term effects because they perceive their experiences differently.

## THE EFFECTS

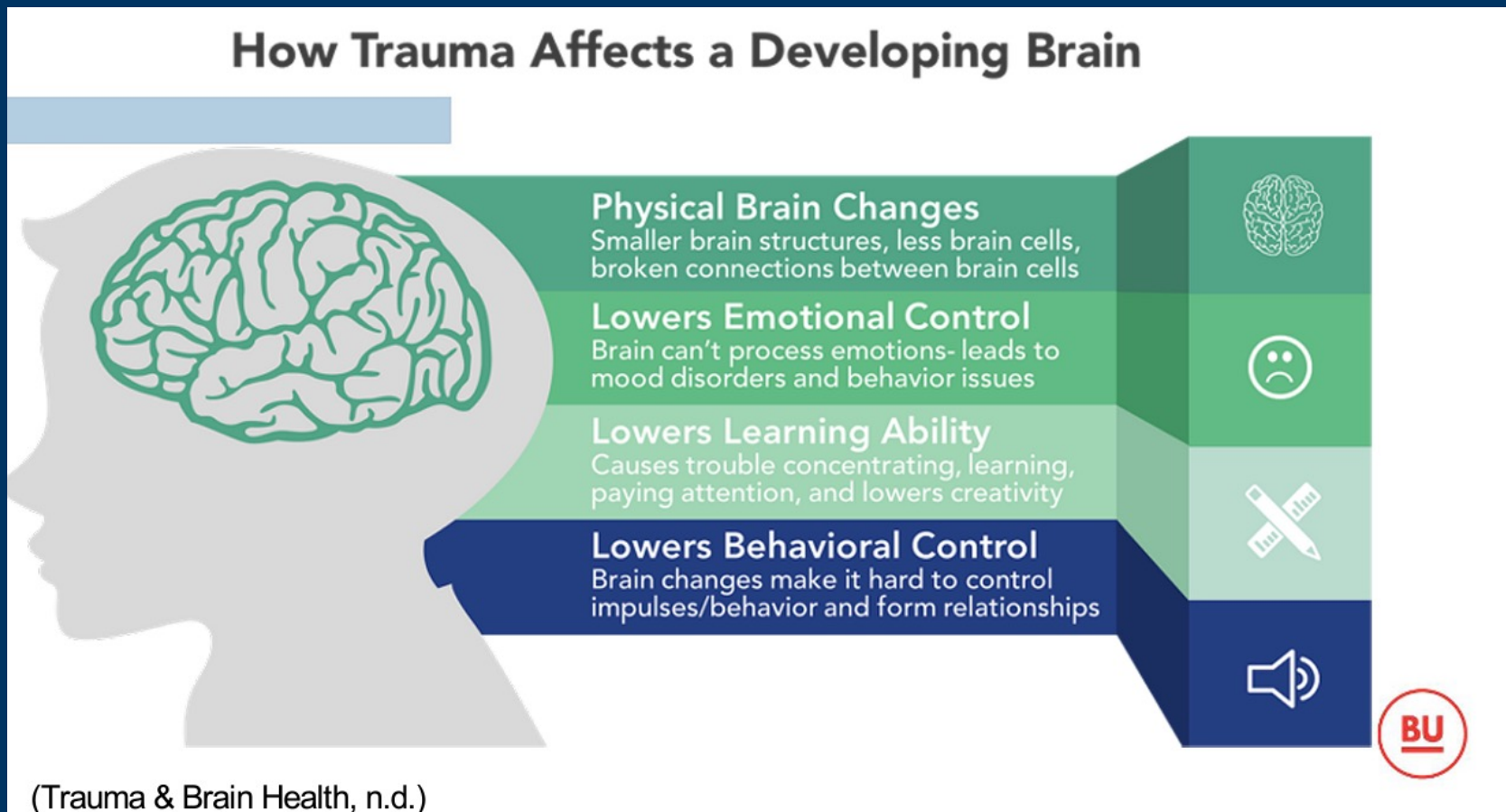
The adverse effects of traumatic events can last long past the event and may occur with delayed onset as the individual begins to process their experience. These effects may include an inability to cope with daily tasks, a lack of trust in relationships, attention problems, and sleep disturbances.

## The Three E's of Trauma:



# *Just Because You Can't See it, Does not Mean it isn't Real....*

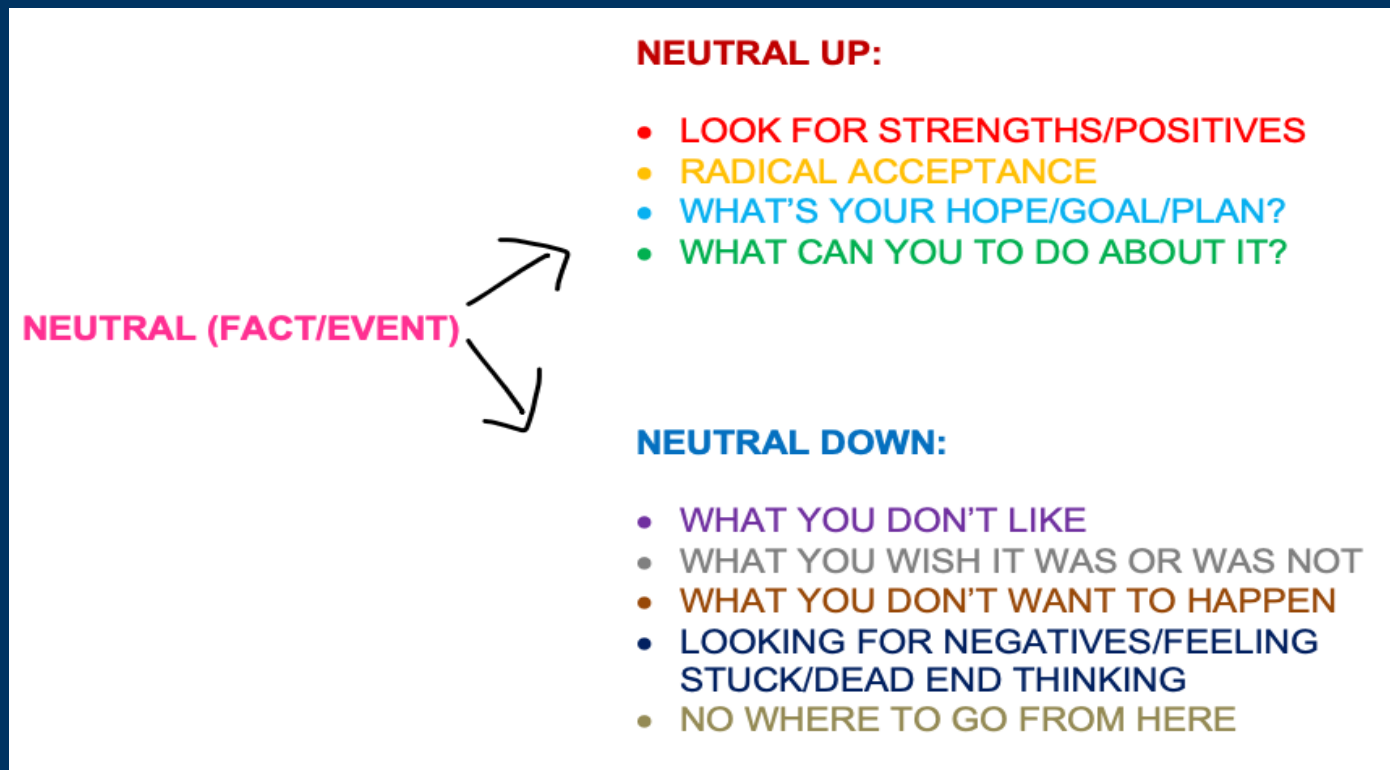
Individuals with disabilities are 30% more likely to be victims of violence or abuse



*We have no idea how someone was nurtured, loved or how attachments in early childhood were formed. Being trauma informed means never having to ask.*

# Action: Shift Reducing Negative interactions, Increasing Positive interactions

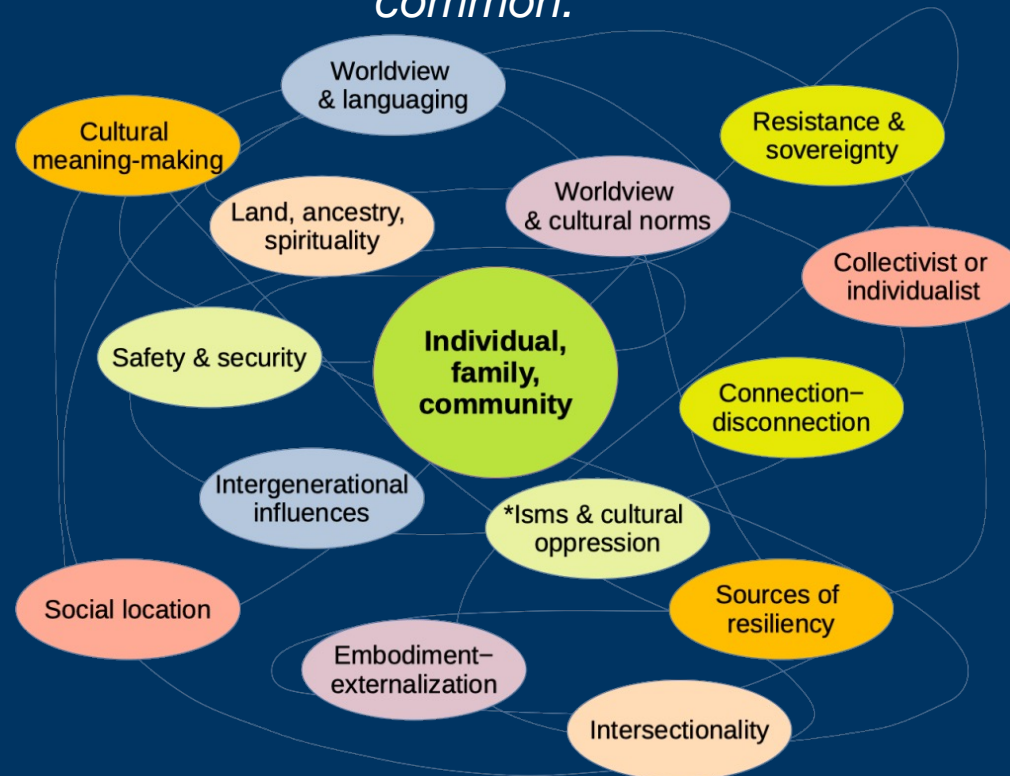
## AMPLIFY



## STRENGTHS

# Lived Experience: Who's to Say?

A recent publication by the Mental Health Commission of Canada describes peer support as a *“supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common.”*



*“The things that someone has experienced themselves, especially when these give the person a knowledge or understanding that people who have only heard about such experiences do not have” -Oxford Dictionary*

# SAFETY IN TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

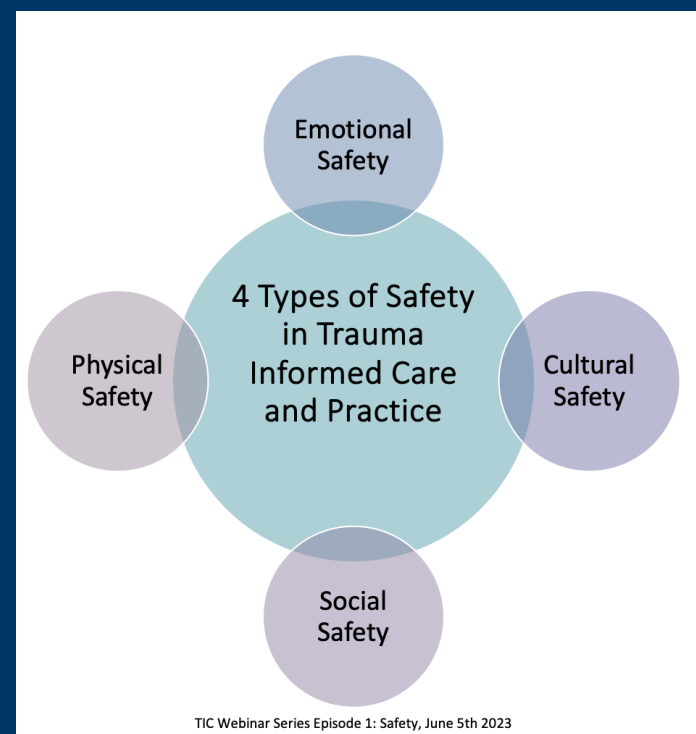
“After a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems to go onto permanent alert, as if the danger might return at any moment.” —  
Judith Lewis Herman



“

Traumatized people feel chronically unsafe inside their bodies: The past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort. Their bodies are constantly bombarded by visceral warning signs, and, in an attempt to control these processes, they often become expert at ignoring their gut feelings and in numbing awareness of what is played out inside. They learn to hide from themselves.

*Bessel van der Kolk*



TIC Webinar Series Episode 1: Safety, June 5th 2023

# Trauma Changes the Structure, Size, Function & Bio-Psycho-social/Chemical Functioning of the Brain

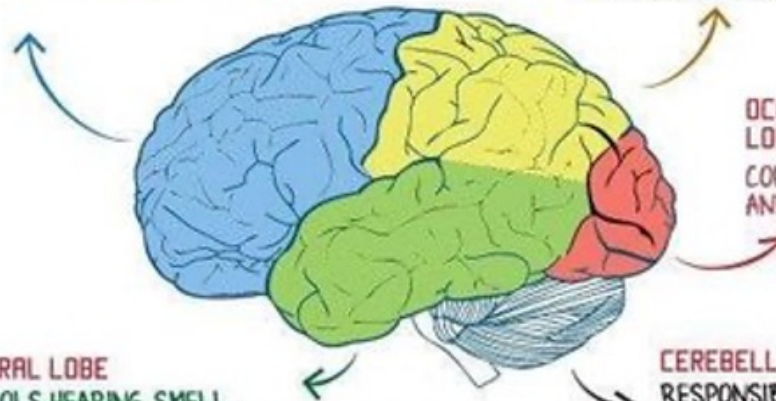
## 90% OF A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE AGE 5

### FRONTAL LOBE

HANDLES ALL THOUGHT AND VOLUNTARY BEHAVIOR  
MEMORY, GOAL FORMATION, ABSTRACT THINKING,  
PLANNING, AND IMPULSE CONTROL

### PARIETAL LOBE

ASSOCIATED WITH BODILY SENSATIONS  
LIKE HEAT, COLD, PRESSURE, AND PAIN  
CONTROLS TASTE, TOUCH, THE ABILITY  
TO RECOGNIZE OBJECTS, HAND-EYE COORDINATION



### OCCIPITAL LOBE

CONTROLS VISION  
AND VISUAL RECOGNITION

### TEMPORAL LOBE

CONTROLS HEARING, SMELL,  
LANGUAGE SKILLS, AND SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

### CEREBELLUM

RESPONSIBLE FOR BALANCE  
AND MUSCLE COORDINATION.

### SOURCES:

[HTTP://WWW.URBANCHILDINSTITUTE.ORG/WHY-0-3/BABY-AND-BRAIN](http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain)

[HTTP://WWW.BABYCENTER.COM/INSIDE-A-CHILDS-MIND-A-VISUAL-GUIDE](http://www.babycenter.com/inside-a-childs-mind-a-visual-guide)

[HTTP://WWW.CREMEDELACREME.COM/PRESCHOOL\\_TIPS/YOUR\\_CHILDS\\_BRAIN\\_DEVELOPMENT.HTM](http://www.cremedelacreme.com/preschool_tips/your_childs_brain_development.htm)

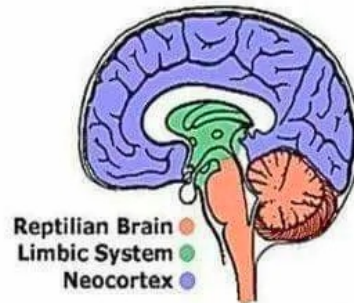
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[HTTP://BRAINMIND.COM/BRAINLECTURE7.HTML](http://brainmind.com/brainlecture7.html)

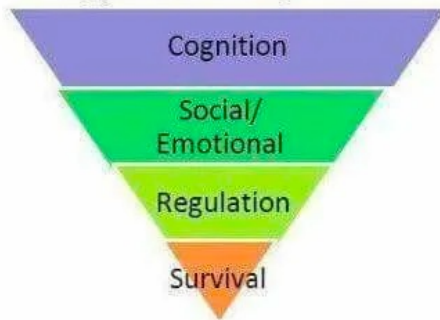


# The Neuro-Sequential Model: Dr. Bruce Perry

## Trauma & Brain Development



### Typical Development



### Developmental Trauma



Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio Dept. of Education

Reason  
↑  
Relate  
↑  
Regulate

**We Can Not Learn When We Are Stressed**

# Empathy & Emotional Intelligence: Foundational to Trauma Informed Care



## Creating Safety:

- *“You are not alone, I am here with you....would it be ok if I stay here quietly for a few minutes?”*
- *“How can I help?”*
- *“Is there anyone I can call for you?”*
- *Co-Regulation is an act of compassion*

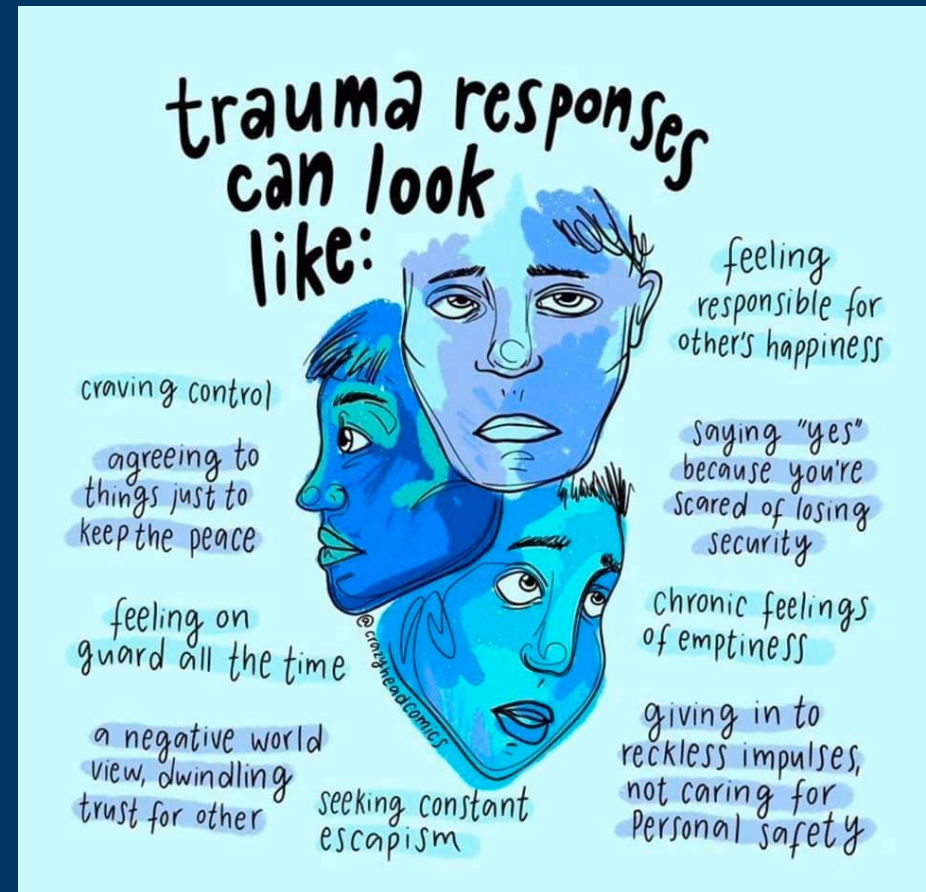
## Common Trauma Triggers (we can all stop NOW)

- Making assumptions
- Using humor to build a rapport
- Offloading tasks to others
- Identifying timelines for recovery
- Dismissing their efforts to recover
- Legal Jargon
- Minimizing client's efforts
- Using evidence to confirm accuracy
- Putting your needs above those of the client
- Inauthenticity

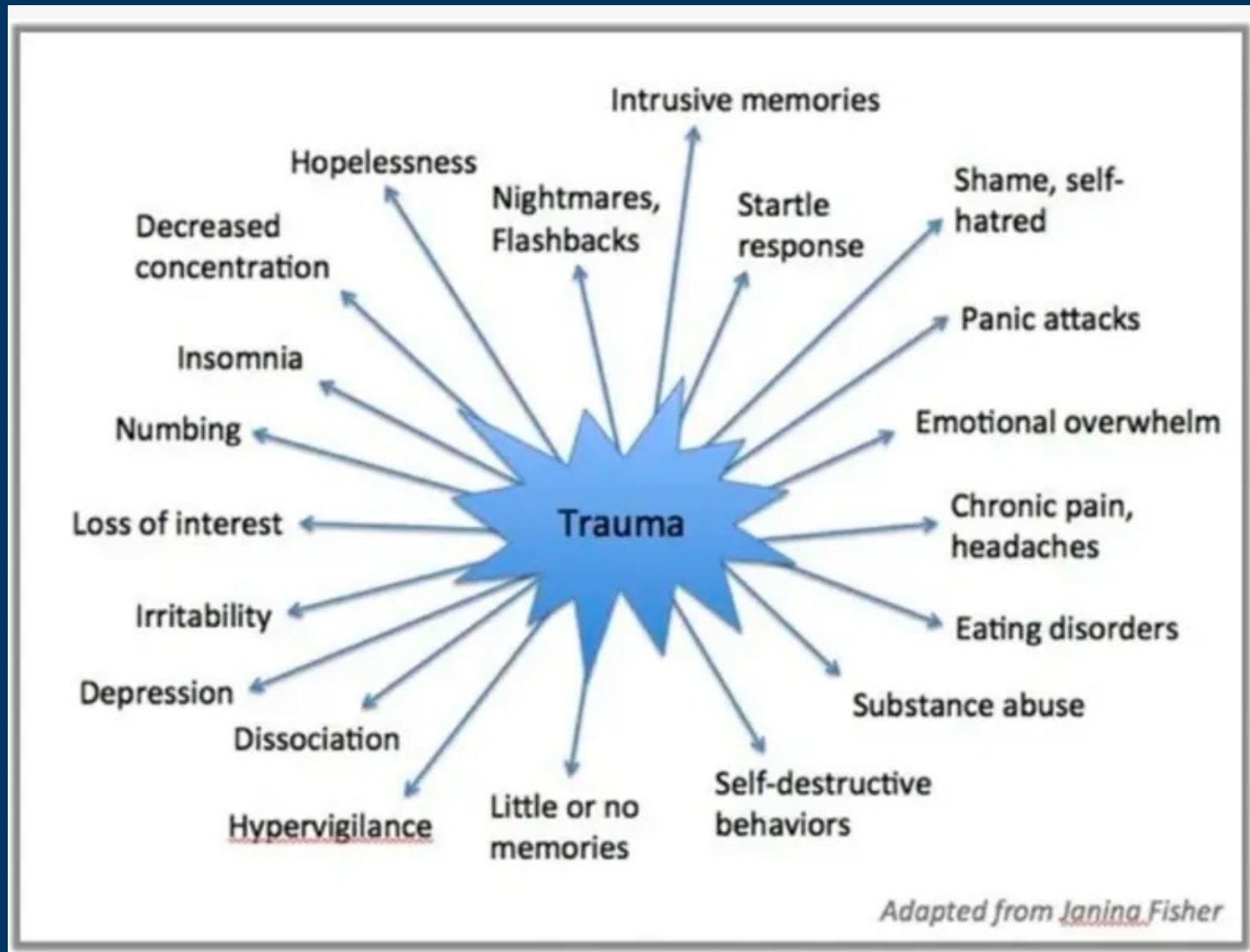


# Common Trauma Responses May Look Different from what you Expect

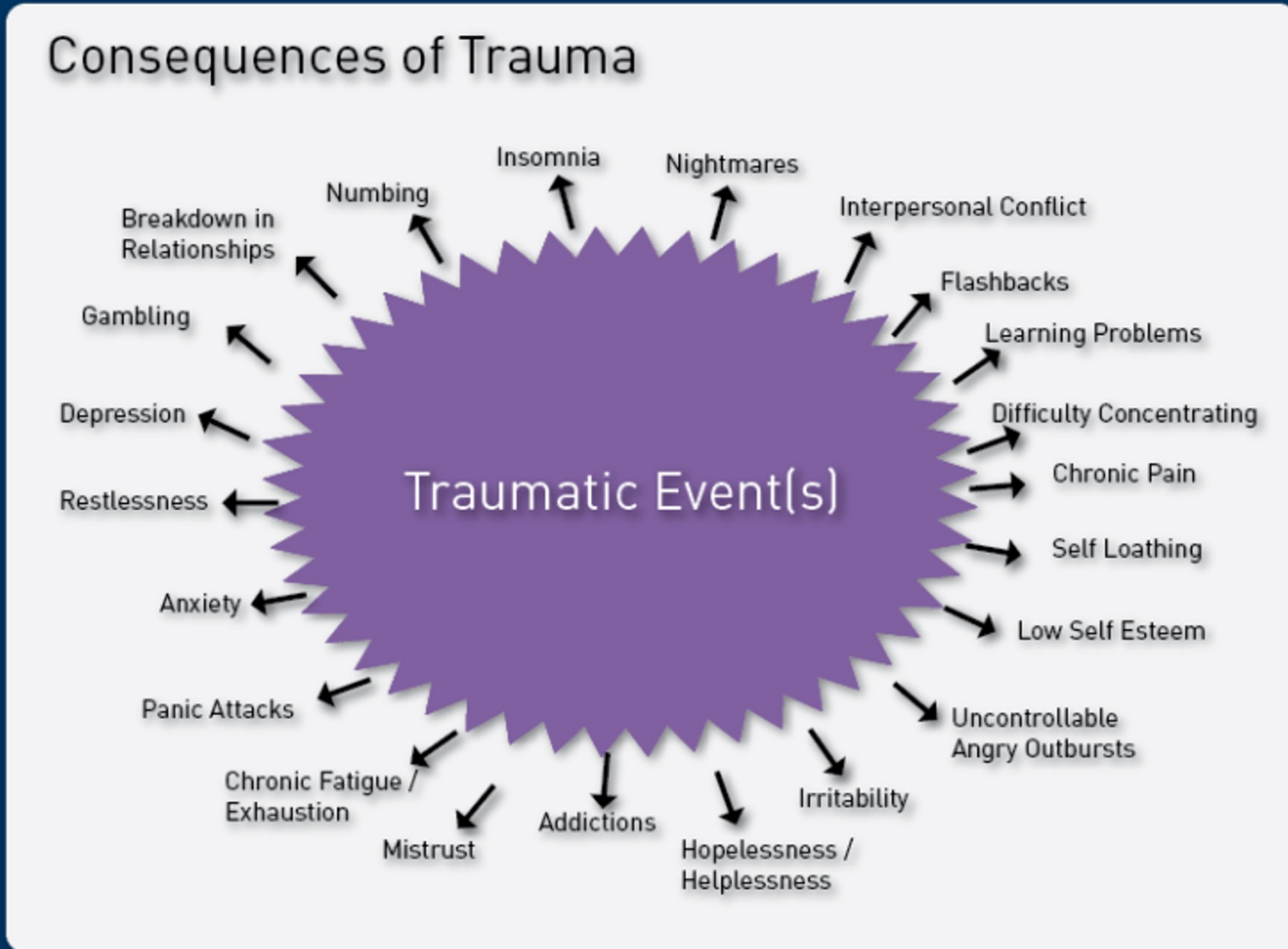
- Hyper vigilance
- Avoidance
- Emotional dysregulation
- Dissociation
- Trust Issues
- Rigidity/Perfectionism
- People-Pleasing/World View
- Anger and Retaliation



# The Reality of Unexpressed Emotion/Unhealed Trauma



# The Costs of Un-addressed Trauma (impact on self and others)



# Trustworthiness, Transparency and Support: The More, The More

<b>Introductory Questions</b>	My name is _____. My job is to _____ Today I am going to _____. Do you understand the process?
<b>Consent</b>	In order to proceed with this, I need to ask you about _____. I know it may be repetitive, but this is required for XXX
<b>Information + Planning</b>	I want to explain how today will go. Do you have someone you can call if needed?
<b>About You</b>	It will help me to understand you, and what you are experiencing so I can be sure to support you through this. I imagine this must be very tough, and I want you to know that I am thinking about how to best support you now and for the future.
<b>Future Care</b>	Can you tell me if you have someone you can trust and speak to about this? I know you were given a list of resources, but I am happy to help coordinate support for you, and check on you in a few days.



clarity



# Tools: Leaving Space for Understanding Another Person's Pace, Process and Learning Style



Be where you are.  
Not in the past, not  
in the future,  
*be right where your  
feet are planted.*

—  
ARSALAN AL HASHIMI

## **BEST TOOL: "IS THIS A GOOD TIME?"**

Maybe you think someone doesn't have a lot on their plate compared to you.

But maybe their plate is smaller than yours and doesn't have a lot of room to begin with.

Or maybe their plate is paper, and their flimsy paper plate can't hold as much as your sturdy ceramic plate can.

Amanda Lynn Burkhart

INSPIRATIONALGOODS.COM



# Trauma Informed Communication: Clear, Transparent, Direct (Protective Factors for Communication)

LANGUAGE CAN HURT OR HEAL

THE ART OF JOKING, HUMOUR IS IMPORTANT!

SARCASM CAN RE-TRAUMATIZE

EYE CONTACT, SOFTENING TONE CAN HEAL

FRUSTRATION CAN RE-TRAUMATIZE, CHECKING IN CAN HEAL

LEARN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS AND INSIGHT

EMOTIONAL MATURITY HEALS

EMOTIONAL IMMATURITY HURTS

# THE RISKS OF NON-TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION



## EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

Confusion & stress- ++ anxiety, fear, anger, withdrawal, misinformation or lack of information can lead to false narratives/beliefs



## LOSS OF TRUST

Inaccuracies erode trust, bond broken, in need of repair



## SENSE OF HELPLESSNESS

Shame, embarrassment, powerlessness, loss of control, possible avoidance and disengagement



## SECONDARY TRAUMA

Trusted Advisor Abuse leads to re-traumatization, re-experiencing of trauma symptoms



## ISOLATION

Misinformation or lack of information can lead to isolation, psychological distress, alienation



**EDEN DALES SOCIAL WORK**

SOLUTION FOCUSED. POSTIVE CHANGE.

## Safe Script For Interpersonal Effectiveness By Eden Dales



### Listen without Responding

I am listening to you, and reflecting on what you are telling me. Thank you for telling me. Is there anything I can do? (let them get it wrong)



### Stay Out of the Weeds

Stay above the words, imagine the emotions name the emotions, yours and theirs. commit to no-defending or arguing details



### Respect

Is this a good time? Do you want the door open or closed? Is it ok if I sit here? I want to be sure I fully understand you.



### Acknowledge, Commit to Change

"I am glad you are telling me this, I was not aware, but I do not want to make you feel this way so I will be mindful of this going forward"



### Pushover or Skilled Distancing?

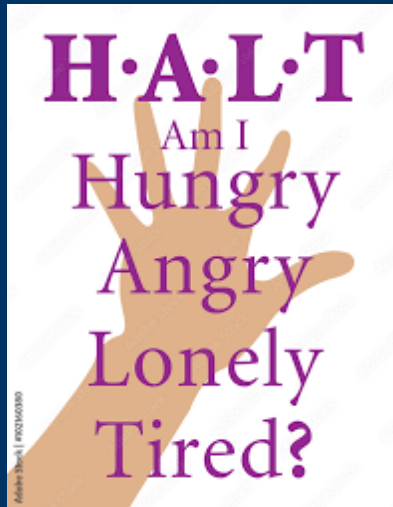
Choosing not to argue over details is a skill. An act of self-respect. and respect for other to not escalate. Meet harshness with softness.

**MODEL THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN OTHERS**

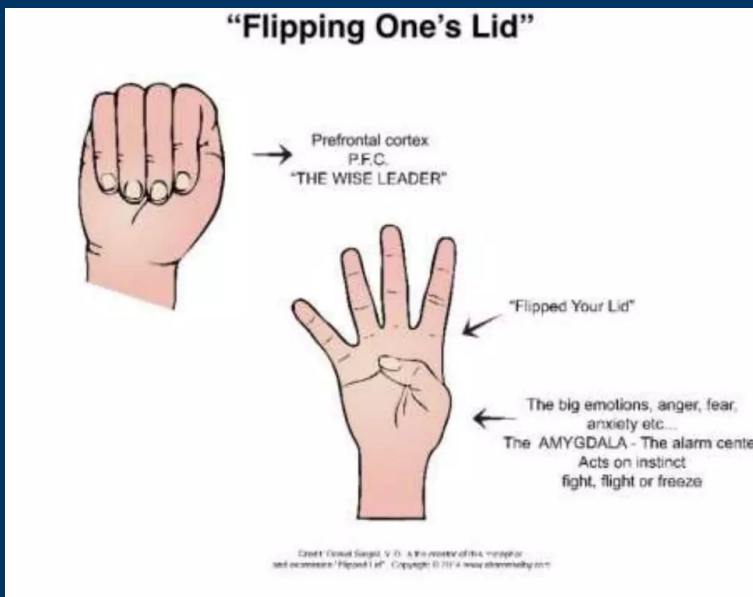
## Trauma Informed Phrases:

1. "Name It, Tame It" (Daniel Siegel)
2. "Yes, And" (validates, builds)
3. "Inside-Out" (internal work before external changes)
4. Connection before Correction
5. Attention seeking is attachment seeking
6. How are you feeling **TODAY?**
7. What's strong in **YOU?**
8. Stay: Warm, Clear, Succinct, informative

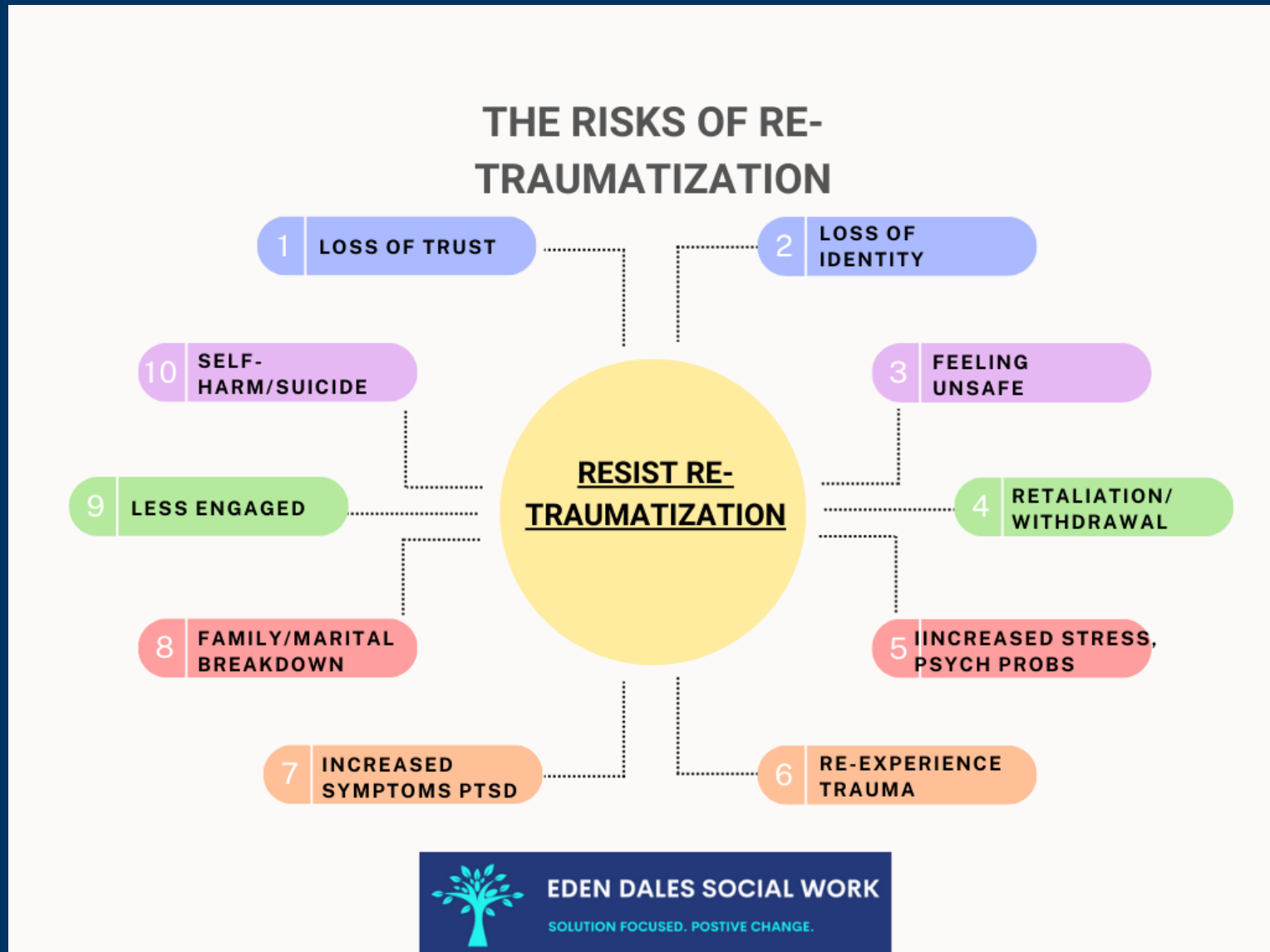
# Grounding/Regulating Skills to Help Others to Feel Safe



- Avoid sudden movements
- Quiet Space
- Amplify Strengths
- Slow Down, Calm Down, Sit Down
- *"You are not alone"*



# Resisting Re-Traumatization: Trauma Is Relational



# Emotional Intelligence Creates Psychological Safety

## PILLARS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (DANIEL GOLEMAN)

### SELF-AWARENESS

1

Recognize your own Emotions  
Understand how they influence your actions

### EMPATHY

2

Understanding another's perspectives as their own  
Different from Sympathy

### SELF-REGULATION

3

Manage emotions in a healthy way  
Adapt to changes, be flexible

### SOCIAL SKILLS

4

Build and Maintain Relationships  
Effective, clear communication

# Worldview: A Lens Through Which one Sees the World

*(Including judgements, assumptions, and implicit biases)*

*“A worldview is a way of viewing or interpreting all of reality. It is an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life and the world.” (Norman Geisler and William Watkins)*

*“Trauma is the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event.”*

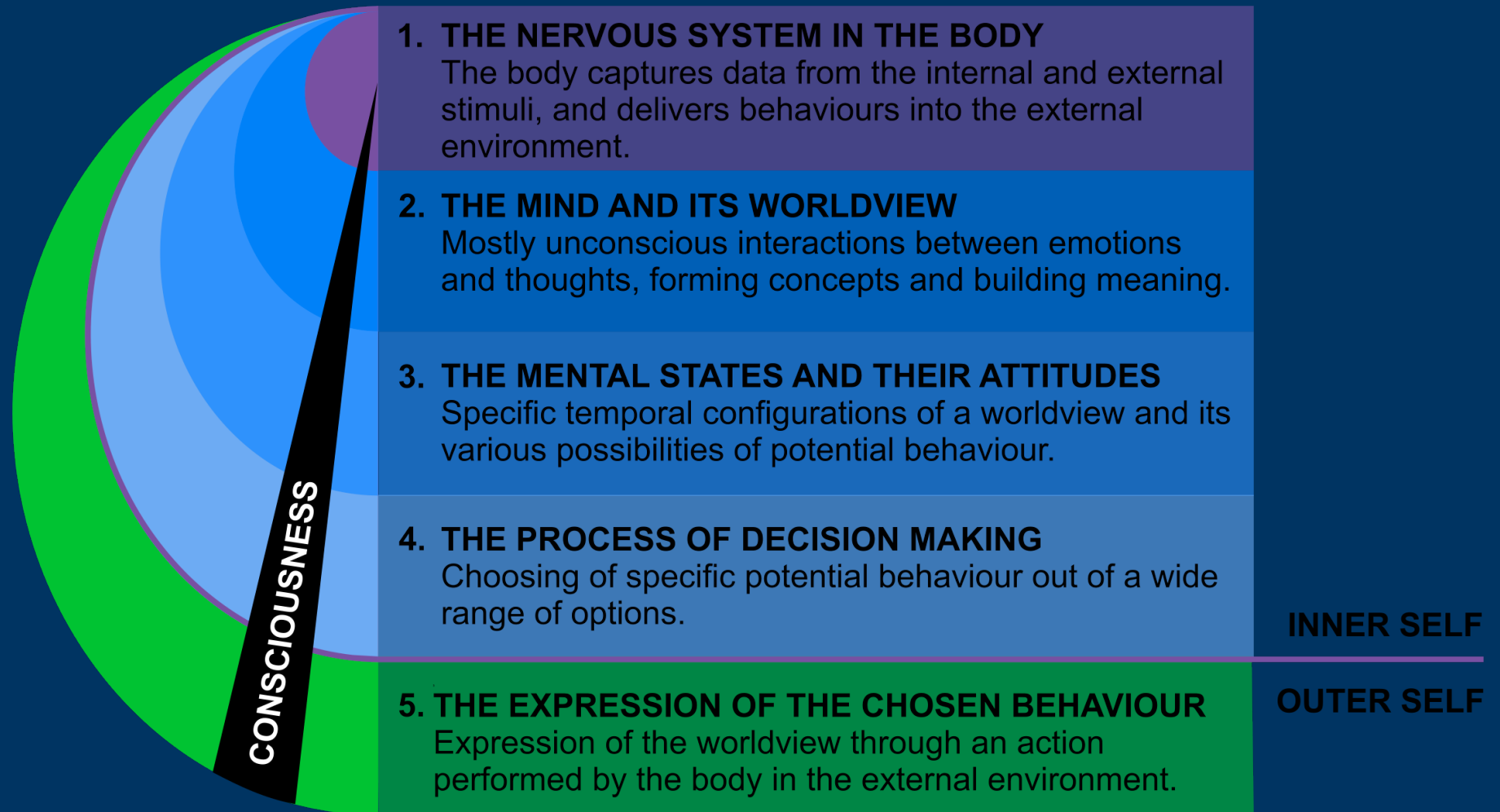


*Our past experiences lay the groundwork for making meaning from the information that comes our way....It is impossible to remove our past experiences from the way we currently see the world.*

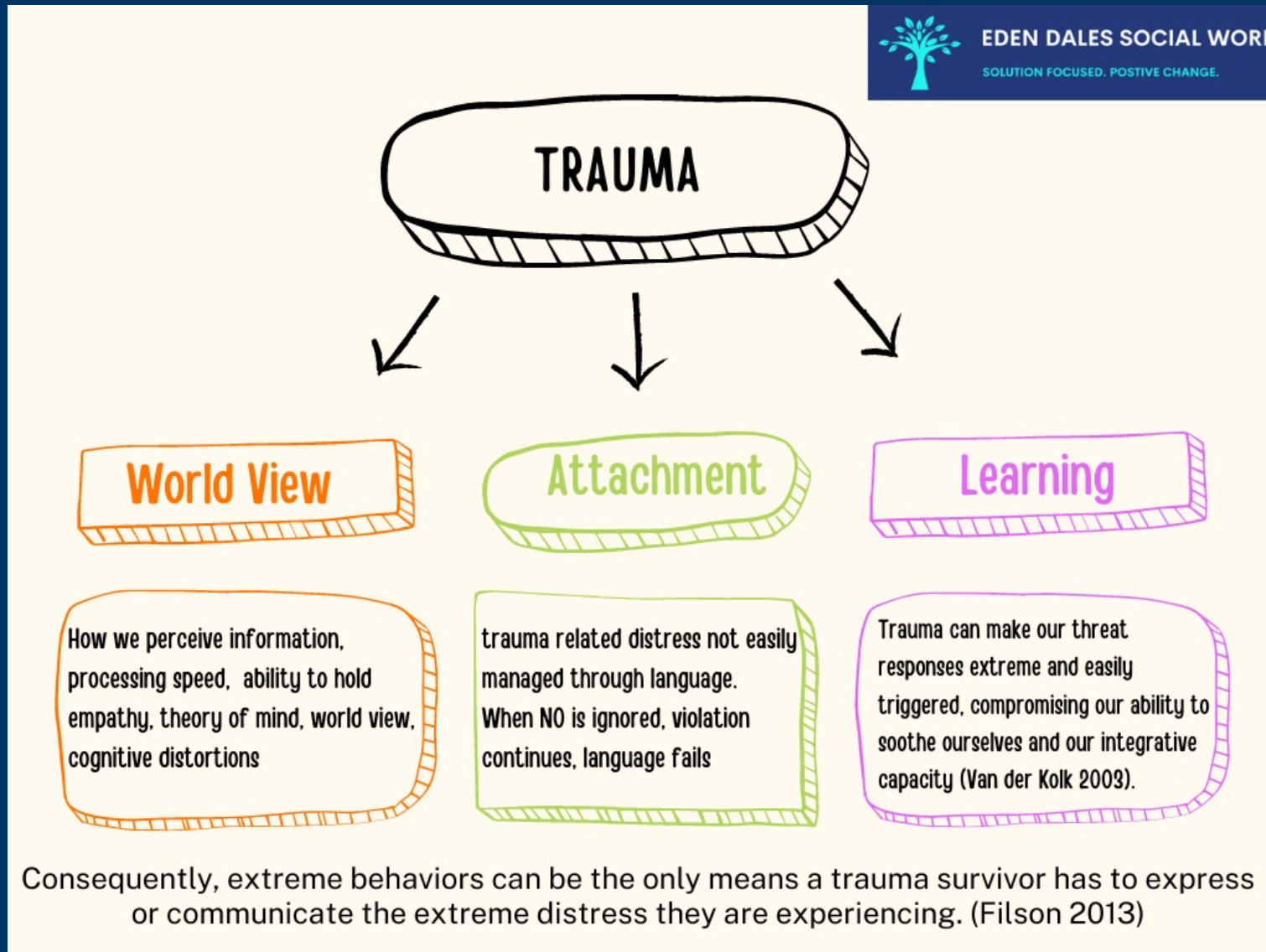
***The meanings we create become our automatic reactions***

# Trauma Lives in the Body and in the Unconscious...

## To Think about how little we are aware of and how little control we really have...



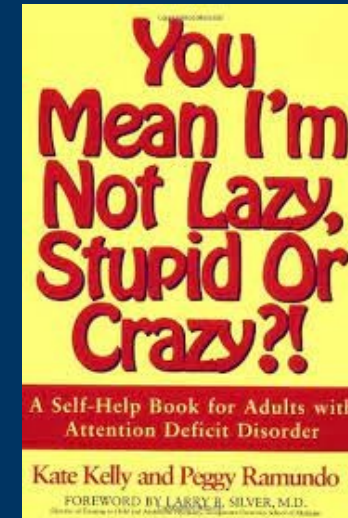




*\*A recent article by [Raine \(2023\)](#) encourages us to consider that a lot of attachment theory is based on Eurocentric views of parenting. As pr*

# Truths from 23+ Years of Clinical Social Work Experience...

- Nobody wants Problems
- Those who behave in the most unlikable ways are in need of the most support
- It is not functional not to function and thrive....something is blocking them from moving forward, we can judge, assume, or support
- No human being is immune to experiencing basic human emotions
- Soft and gentle work every single time
- Join their truth, speak in their language and their values
- When we sit in judgment of others, we forget our own humanness
- Moments of distress are not teaching moments



CENTRE FOR ADHD AWARENESS, CANADA  
CSTC - Centre de sensibilisation au TDAH Canada



Never Assume Anything

Tension

Empathy



Acute Stress

Naming Emotions



Mirror Neurons

Chronic Stress

Isolation

Gentle

Repeated Stress

Tender

Attachment

Emotional Illiteracy

Responding Vs. Reacting

## Practical Tips to Make Assessments Safer and Trauma Informed:

**Mindful**



**Caring**

- Be Transparent, be impeccable with your work, review docs, know their story, take yourself and your client seriously
- Manage Expectations (break times, end times, number of tests)
- Allow breaks, notify ahead of time, encourage grounding and movement (jointly)
- Offer Choice-Autonomy (even slight and minor) helps build trust and fosters healing
- Ensure physical, cognitive, emotional and social safety, check in at beginning, throughout and review at end
- Model self-advocacy
- Validate emotions, use strengths-based approach
- Use appropriate assessments, use critical thinking when choosing ax's
- Amplify consent and confidentiality in intake (who should be interviewed, present, no assumptions)
- Expand narratives (from what's wrong with you to what happened to you...who are you?)

## *We Are Merely But A Witness to Their Pain.....A Witness that Will Observe and Listen*

Behavior is the language of trauma. Children will show you before they tell you that they are in distress.

ATTUNED  
speech

What if I told you trauma-informed care was more than just a method, but a return to our humanistic roots?

---

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”

*Beneath the surface of the protective parts of trauma survivors there exists an undamaged essence, a Self that is confident, curious, and calm, a Self that has been sheltered from destruction by the various protectors that have emerged in their efforts to ensure survival.*

## Check Yourself Before You....Hurt Somebody

BELIEF	Where did it come from?	Is it true? How do you know?	How does it negatively impact your life?	What would you like to change it to?
Failure means:				
Experiencing challenges means:				
Other people are:				
Money is:				
Work is:				
A career should be:				
The future is:				
Education is:				
Emotions are:				
Being a parent means:				
Being a child means:				
Being a man means:				
Being a woman means:				
Being single means:				
Being married means:				
Friendship means:				
Health means:				

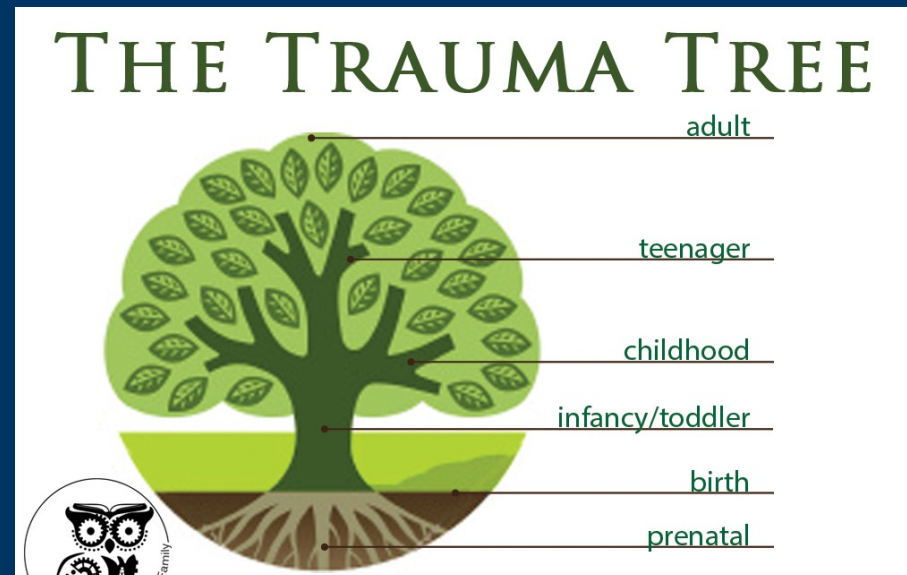
Being Trauma Informed Means Never Saying Things Like...

*"But, That was so Long Ago....." or "Well They are Young Enough They Wont Remember this Thankfully...."*



*"An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior."*

@thephilosoph // Victor Frankl



*If you're brought up in conditions of chaos and unpredictability, you end up with a conditioned response to it. The abnormal becomes normal, the unacceptable becomes acceptable...*

**You Normalize Dysfunction**

# Examples of Promoting Safety in TIC

Reflective  
Listening

Providing Context  
and Options

Building Trust

Communicate  
Regularly

Explaining the  
Process

Ensure Safety

Checking In,  
Slowing Down

Validate Emotions

Appropriate Self-  
Disclosure,  
Demonstrating  
Compassion

Setting Realistic  
Expectations

Be honest and use  
clear language

Use a non-  
judgmental  
approach



## Next Steps

- **Continue to learn about trauma and its effects**
- **Review current policies, procedures, methods and consider if trauma informed**
- **Review areas for growth to become more trauma informed, micro and macro practice focused**
- **Commit to making one change starting now to make your practice trauma-informed**
- **Join a peer group to review trauma informed awareness, practices**
- **Commit to continued change, growth and review**
- **Help colleagues change their mindset and behavior towards clients affected by trauma**
- **Consider limiting beliefs about self and others that could be re-learned**

# Reframing: A Powerful Action You Can Take NOW

## How to Help: Culturally-Sensitive Trauma-Informed Care

...TIPS FOR PROVIDERS...

### Families may attribute distress to culturally specific beliefs.

- Consider somatic/behavioral presentations of distress.
- Listen for and use the family's own terms.
- Attend to distress in the way the family defines it.

### Families may have distinct traditions for decision-making and communication.

- Ask about decision-making practices in advance.
- Respect parents' wishes regarding what their child should know.
- Be open to involving other healing professionals and customs.

### Families may be reluctant to seek help outside their cultural community.

- Connect families with community resources they trust.
- Be sensitive to the family's fear about immigration and legal status.
- Show respect by working within and through the family structure.

### Trauma glasses off

"Manipulative"

"Lazy"

"Resistant"

"Unmotivated"

"Disrespectful"

"Attention seeking"

### Trauma glasses on

Getting needs met in ways that have worked in the past. Doing whatever is necessary to survive.

Overwhelmed. Lacking the skills to make decisions about what to do first or to organise.

Mistrustful due to history of being hurt by others. Scared to make progress then lose everything.

Depressed. Fearful. Overwhelmed. Frozen.

Feeling threatened, unsafe, out of control.

Feels disconnected, alone, or unheard by others. Looking for connection.

# Thank You for Listening!

Eden Dales, B.A., M.S.W., R.S.W.

Practice Director, Eden Dales Social Work

[eden@edendales.com](mailto:eden@edendales.com)



# References

[7 Tools for Managing Traumatic Stress](#)

[6 Rs Amazing Behavioral Help Talking Doesn't Work](#)

[RSA Short: Empathy - Brené Brown](#)

[Infographic: 6 Guiding Principles To A Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

[Setting Limits: Solutions Beyond Words](#)

[Glossary of Terms Related to Trauma-Informed, Integrated Healthcare](#)

[Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale \(SEIS\)](#)

[The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test \(SSEIT\)](#)

[Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Self Assessment](#)

[Assessing Your Emotional Intelligence: 4 Tools We Love](#)

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[Indigenous Emotional Intelligence Scale: Development and Validation](#)

[The Resilience Approach - Connecting People to the Tools They Need to Bounce Back From Trauma](#)

[How Trauma and EMDR Therapy Benefit Neurodivergent Individuals](#)

[Unsafe, Unheard & Misunderstood: Trauma & Neurodiversity](#)

[Using the HALT model in an exploratory quality improvement initiative to reduce medication errors](#)

[Trauma-Informed Website Resources](#)

[Whole-System Change Model to Trauma-Informed Care](#)

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[Ten Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Approaches](#)

[Building a Trauma-Informed Workforce](#)

[Emotional Intelligence as a Primary Goal of Education](#)

[How Grief and Loss Impacts Your Relationships](#)

[How Grief and Loss Impacts Your Brain](#)

[Mirror Neurons: How We Reflect on Behavior](#)

[Improving the mental health of women intimate partner violence survivors](#)

[Why Emotional Intelligence is Important in Leadership](#)

[The Effects of Complex Trauma](#)

## Trauma Timeline Worksheet

Name:		Date:	
<p><b>Instructions:</b> Use this worksheet to help you identify and process significant traumatic events that you have experienced throughout your life. Write down the event(s), date(s) and your emotional and physical reactions to each event. This can help you gain insight into how these events have impacted you and begin to heal from them.</p>			
Event	Date	Emotional reaction/s	Physical reaction/s
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

<https://www.carepatron.com/>

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## Trauma Worksheet

Name		Date	
<p>Being triggered by something means being involuntarily reminded of a traumatic experience as a result of coming across something that is a trauma trigger for you. There is a diverse range of reactions to being triggered, from feeling scared, anxious, or having trouble breathing, to increased anger, sensory sensitivity, or feelings of disconnection from your current time/place. <b>What warning signs or body signals do you get to let you know you're being triggered?</b></p>			
<p>There's an equally wide range of responses to being triggered, some helpful and some less helpful. These could include leaving the triggering situation, lashing out, practicing grounding exercises, or trying to distract yourself. <b>How have you handled being triggered in the past?</b></p>			
<p>A trauma trigger can be anything, a person, place, thing, smell, or feeling, that takes you back to a traumatic experience. <b>From each of the below categories, think about some things that are trauma triggers for you, and list them in the space provided.</b></p>			
Thoughts			
Emotions			
Physical Feelings			
People			
Places			
Things			
Activities / Situations			
Sounds			
Smells			
<p><b>Identify the 5 biggest triggers from the above list and fill out the table below for each.</b></p>			
Trigger	Can I avoid, reduce the exposure to, or overcome this trigger? If so, how?	What coping skills can I use if I can't avoid this trigger?	

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