



BACP CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2018

A REPARATIVE RELATIONSHIP

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM AN ATTACHMENT
AND EARLY TRAUMA PERSPECTIVE

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WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

- You will be able to recognise the impact of adverse childhood experiences on young people from the care system
- You will have a better understanding of how early attachment experiences and subsequent trauma affect the development of the self and the how all subsequent relationships are affected
- You will be able to create a reparative relationship with your young client in which they can experience and co-create a new sense of self

EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY (OURS AND CLIENT'S)

- Desire to help
- Use own experiences
- Put something back
- Work with Young People
- Give them hope
- Make a difference
- Frustrated and disillusioned
- Over/under identification
- Experience need to control
- Loss of self esteem
- One step forward/ten back
- Feelings of worthlessness



CLIENT EXPECTATIONS

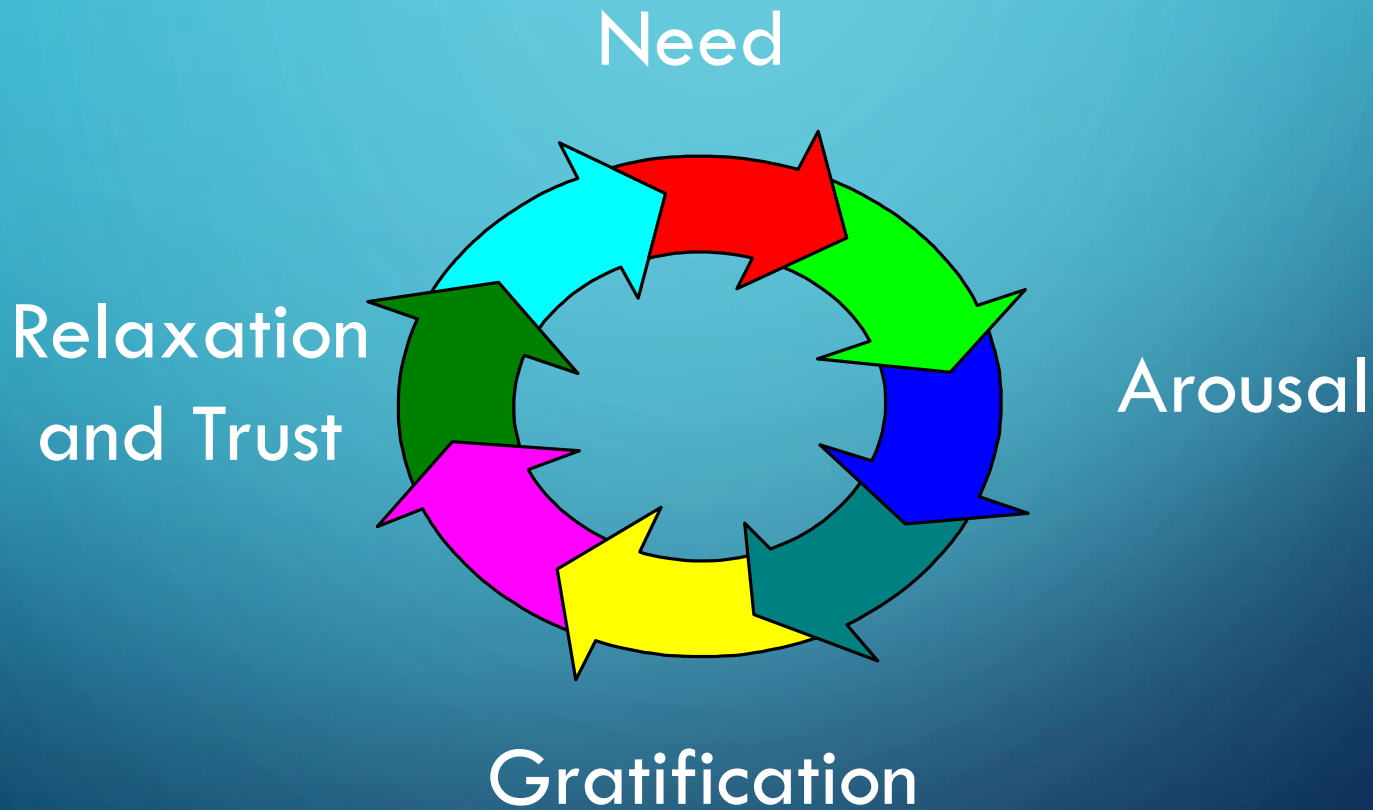
“The hardest is knowing
that there is nothing
unique about me
that would cause one person
to experience me as a gift”
(Hughes, D. 2012)



WHAT IS ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOUR?

- Need for connection with others
- Hardwired before birth
- Need for safety through being close to someone
- Get basic needs met
- Provides a secure base from which to explore safely
- Beginning of development of sense of self – through eyes of the other

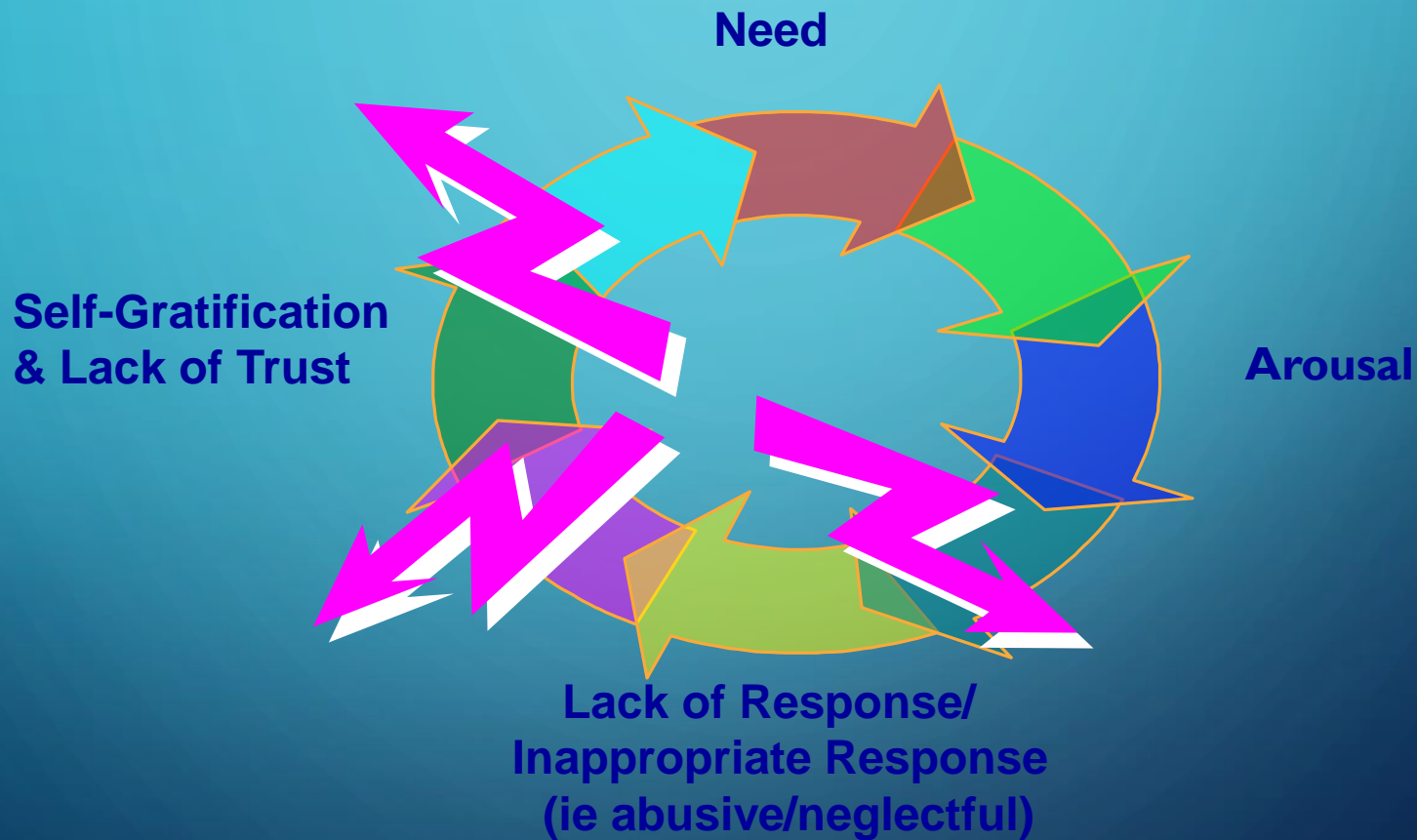
SECURE ATTACHMENT



WHAT THIS DOES TO A CHILD?

- Can self-soothe
- Can have good feelings about self
- Can recognise and manage feelings/impulses
- Can try out new experiences without fear
- Can cope with further trauma
- Can understand feelings of others
- Can make good relationships and see others as part of solutions
- Can develop appropriately and become independent
- Can learn
- Can be resilient at times of stress and stay level headed

INSECURE/DISRUPTED ATTACHMENT



WHAT THIS DOES TO A CHILD

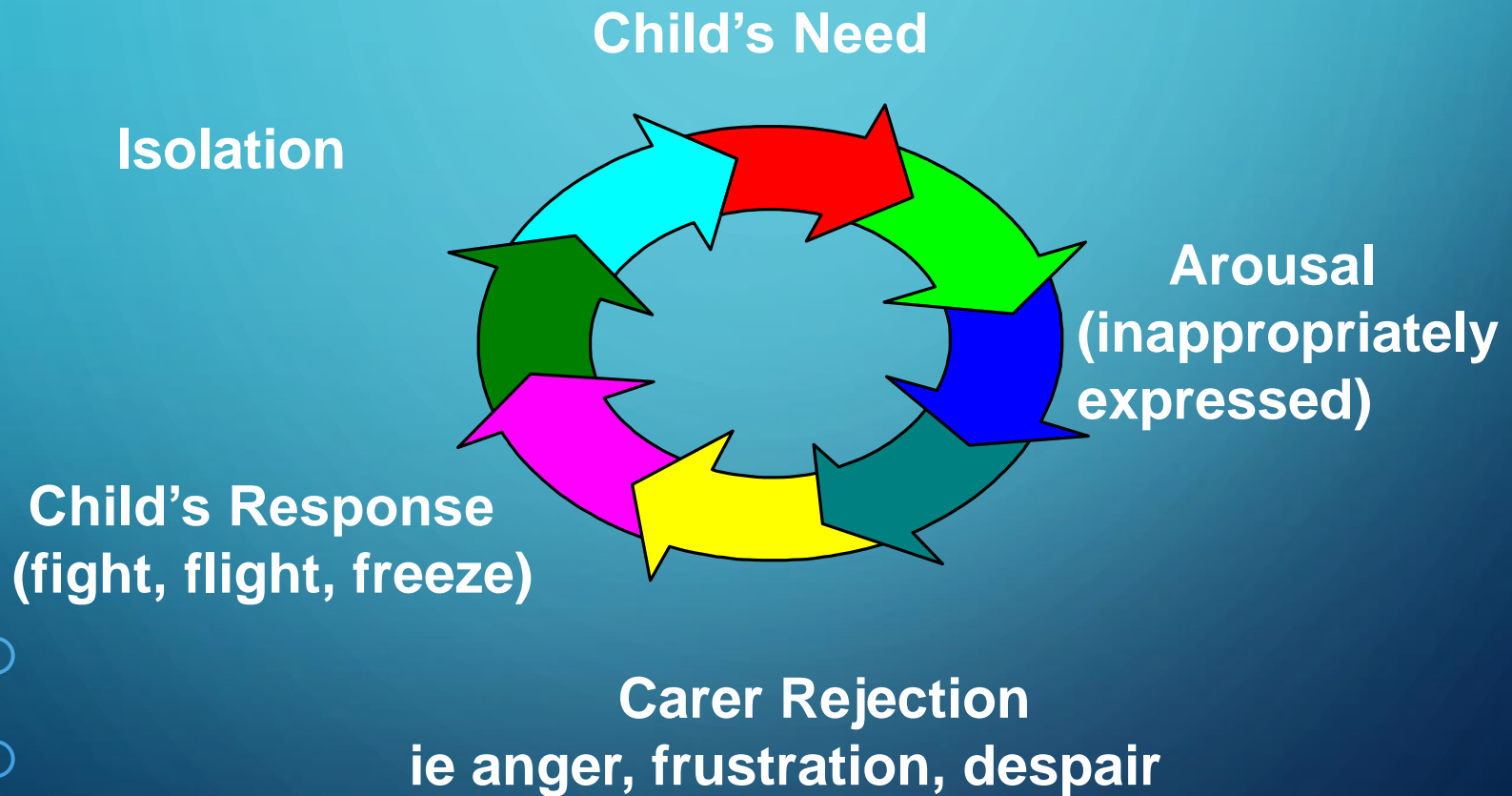
- Cannot soothe self
- Cannot receive comfort or demands it constantly
- Has very low self esteem or is 'superkid'
- Has to be in control
- Cannot cope with further trauma
- Cannot recognise/control feelings and impulses
- Cannot understand others' feelings/form relationships
- Has little or no conscience
- Cannot learn



WHAT THIS DOES TO A CHILD



RECREATING THE CYCLE



ADOLESCENTS INSECURE/AVOIDANT

- Tend to leave family prematurely
- Withdraw when in trouble/use own resources
- Respond aggressively with little thought of consequences
- Don't like groups and lack emotional commitment
- Use groups to achieve personal goals, not emotional support
- Can be academically successful
- Difficulties in relationships when partners need closeness and support

ADOLESCENTS INSECURE/AMBIVALENT

- Switch between need for security of family and need to detach
- Try to join a peer group many times but ridiculed for dependency on family
- Can accuse family or peers of hindering progress
- May be successful in school but often fail to live up to expectations as dependent on emotional support from family
- Look forward to/apprehensive about times away
- Fail to make best friends

ADOLESCENTS DISORGANISED

- Fluctuate between desire for closeness and feeling stifled
- Never enough support – leads to sudden rage, withdrawal, whining, crying or threats of suicide
- Unpredictability leads to isolation and ‘splitting’ in friends, teachers, carers
- Friends must constantly prove allegiance
- More concerned with imminent rejection than with learning
- Frequent changes of caregiver/seeking of an attachment figure
- Early signs of borderline personality disorder

INHIBITION/DISINHIBITION

Disinhibition

- Seek out closeness from anyone – promiscuity
- Leave caregivers prematurely
- Superficial relationships – trade sex for attachment, security and protection

Inhibition

- No trust and unable to accept help in anxiety-provoking situations/ rarely seek help
- Expect only criticism from friends and teachers

LOSS AND IDENTITY?

Guided visualisation

Being Taken Away



LOSS AND IDENTITY?

Belonging

- **Family – Parents (fantasy)**
- **Family – Siblings**
- **Family – extended**
- **Friends**
- **Local culture**

Identity

- **History – photos, information, medical, ways of being**
- **Pets**
- **House**
- **Belongings and clothes**

WHAT IS TRAUMA - SMELLPOTS



WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Caused by :

Pre-Birth Stress

Separation/Loss/

Absence

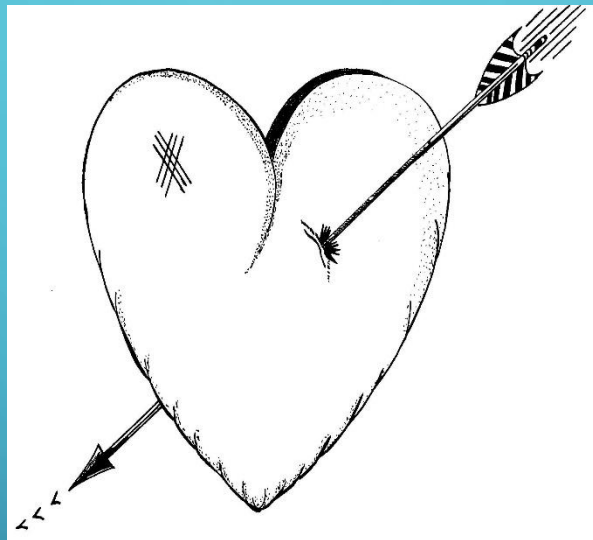
Chronic Unrelieved Pain

Neglect and Abuse

Non-Availability

Unpredictability

Poverty



Abandonment, Terror and Shame

Increased by:

Further Moves

Medical Examinations/
Interventions

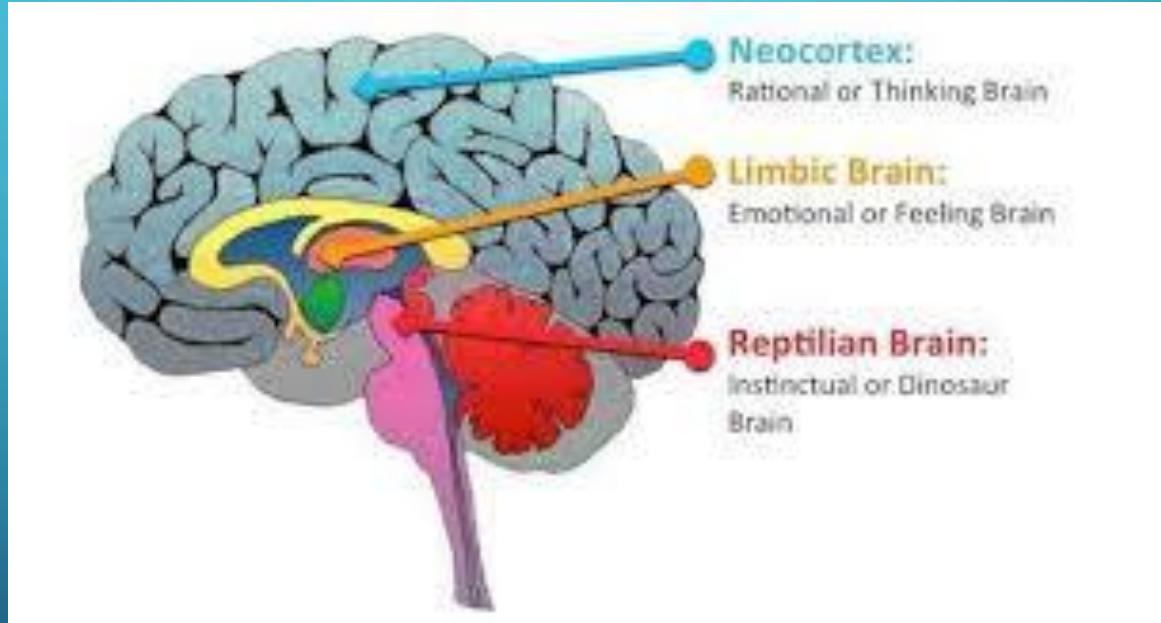
Adolescence

Leaving Home

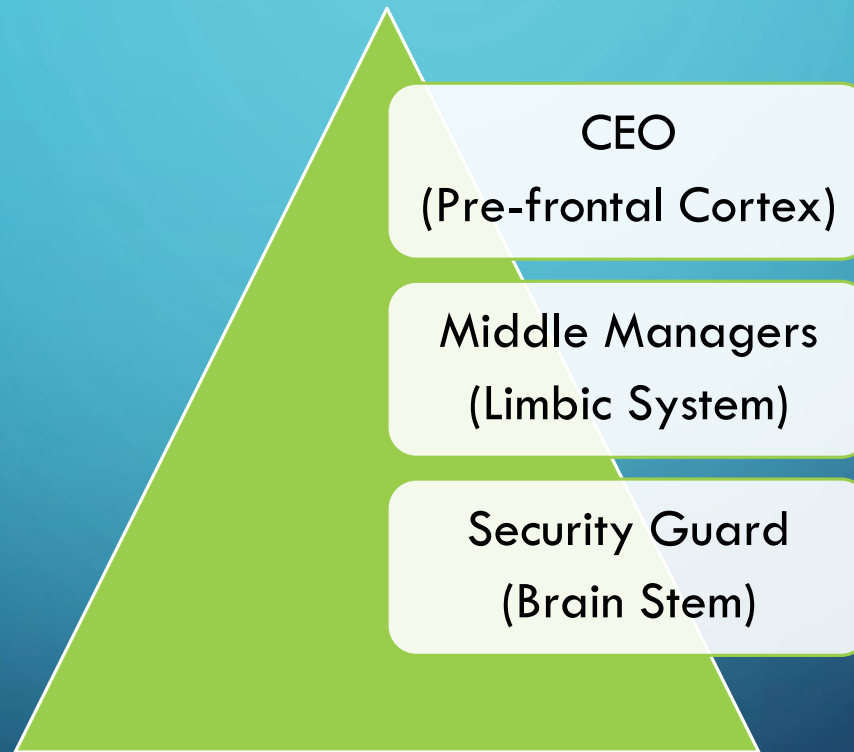
New child

Others' responses

CROCODILE, MONKEY AND HUMAN BRAIN – WHICH PART IS IN CHARGE?



BRAIN FUNCTIONS



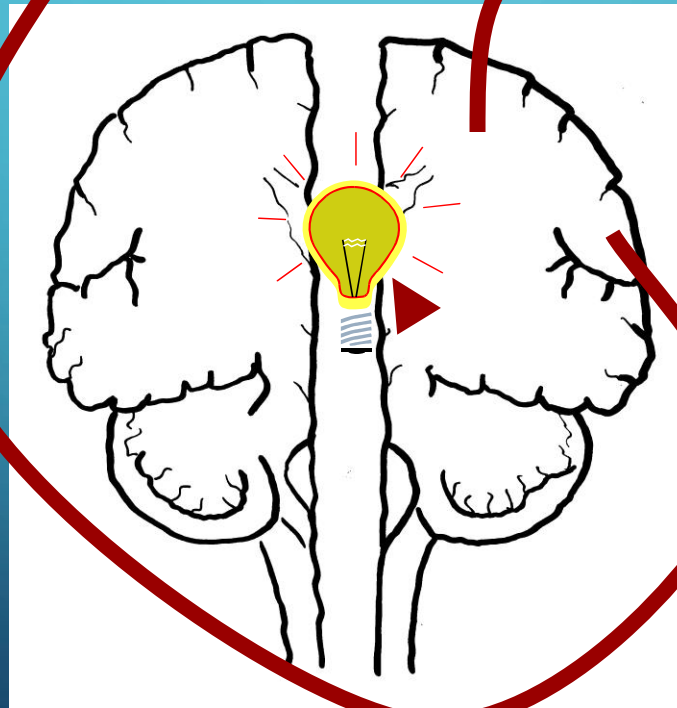
ALARM RESPONSE

Sensory input travels faster and by-Passes **Pre-Frontal Cortex**



Reptilian Brain triggered
Disconnected Response

Fight
Flight
Freeze



Limbic System triggered
(hippocampus/amygdala)

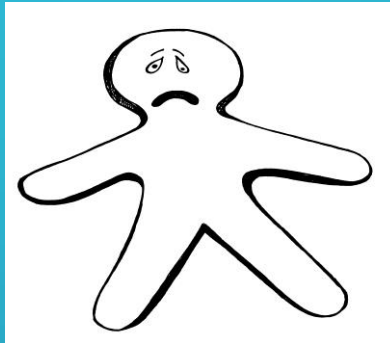
Terror/Shame
(overwhelming/irrational)

DISCONNECTED RESPONSES



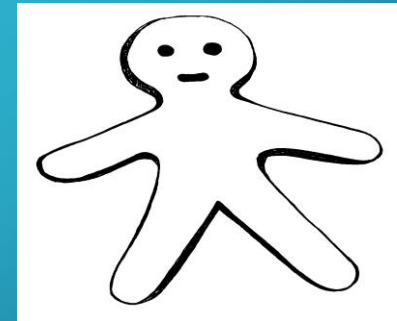
FIGHT (protest)

Crying/Tantrums
Self Importance/Manipulation
Verbal Abuse/Destruction
Fire Setting/Hyperactivity



FLIGHT

Running Away
Withdrawal/Sleep/Fantasy
Substance Abuse/Alcohol
Bingeing/Self Harm



FREEZE (despair)

Oppositional Defiance
Avoidance of Contact
Non-Compliance
Lack of Response

REPTILIAN BRAIN (BRAIN STEM)

- Pre-birth to 8 months: controls survival states: waking, sleeping, breathing, arousal, relaxation
- Fight, flight, freeze responses
- Over use compromises growth of pre-frontal cortex
- Primed for proximity and safety
- Harlow's monkeys

MAMMALIAN BRAIN (LIMBIC SYSTEM)

- Limbic system
- Regulates emotional reactions
- Developed through interactions with mother and eye contact
- Produces feel good hormone (oxytocin)
- Neglect reduces ability to produce hormones vital to bonding and intimacy
- Abuse, abandonment - high levels of cortisol - leads to hyper-vigilance/aggression

HUMAN BRAIN (PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX)

- Last to develop
- Needed for logic, reasoning, cause and effect and empathy
- Needed for learning
- Sensory neglect leads to smaller brain
- Dramatic pruning in adolescence if neural pathways between parts of brain not used
- BUT brain is adaptable and can learn new pathways!

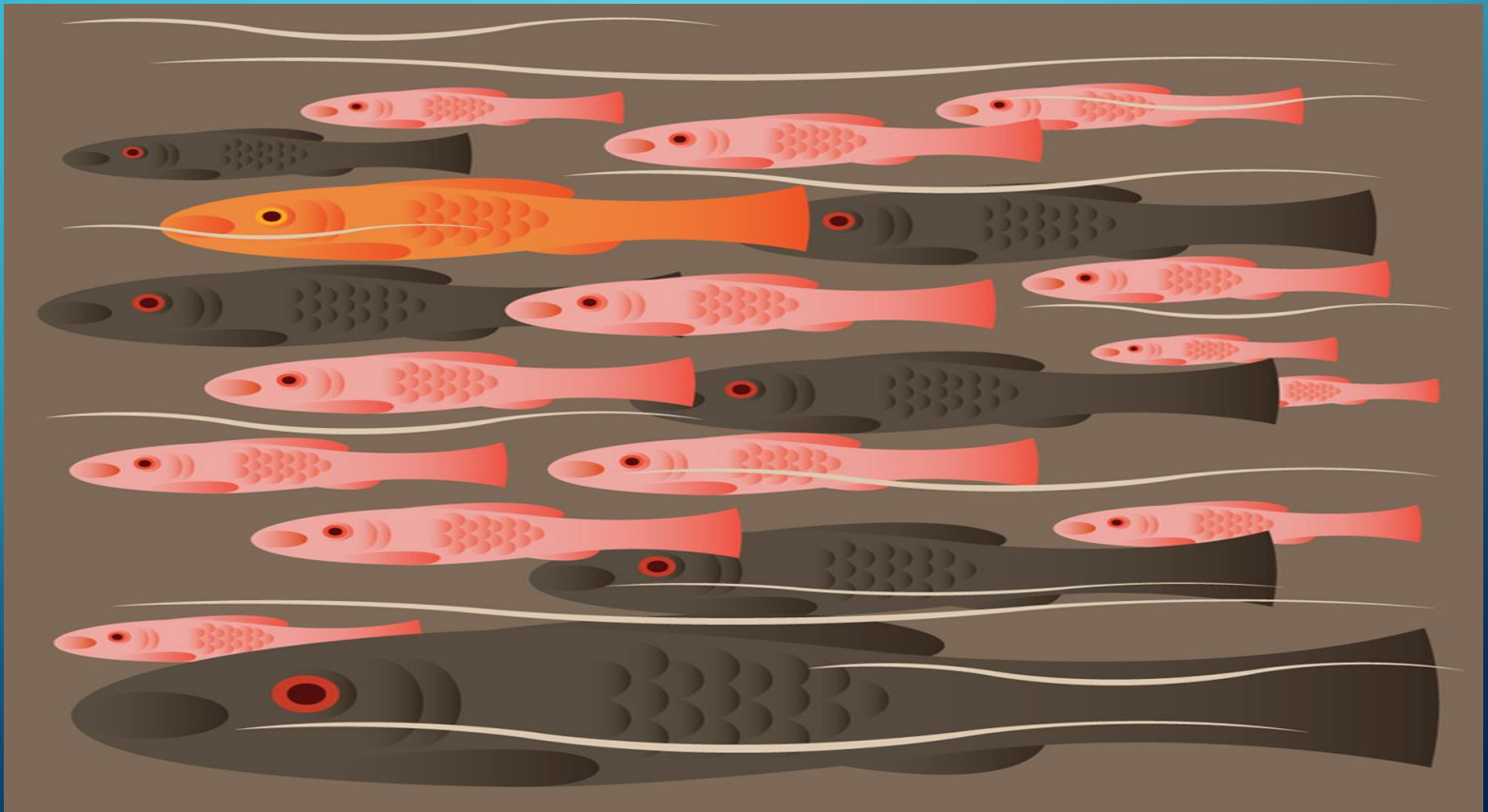
REWIRING

- Remember that all behaviours are messages including wanting you to spend time with them! If ignore the message or 'cure' the behaviour, child will find new way of expressing it
- Need to let them know you have received the message (ie acknowledgment)then don't need behaviour anymore
- If form any connection with traumatised child, part of them will give you a hard time as part of brain is trying to protect them from enjoying your company: to enjoy is to lose = belief system

BRINGING OURSELVES

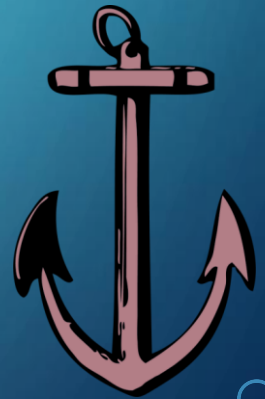


REPARATIVE RELATIONSHIP



SECURE BASE (THINK TODDLER)

- Establish therapy room as a safe base: consistent time, place of things in room, choice of seating, easy retrieval of own material and access to the familiar
- Prepare for any transitions/changes
- Use frequent 'check-ins' during session and during therapy (ie reviews)
- Use fun, humour and warmth
- Do proper endings wherever possible and from start
- Establish boundaries and manage expectations of relationship



“When you speak to the heart of the other

And the other’s heart is touched

Hi soul speaks to your soul

When you talk only to his brain

Your words float away forgotten

Even as they are recorded

His soul remains silent

And your souls do not meet

When you help a child

To discover the words

For his life’s story

His heart –

And yours –

Beat together

With clarity and joy”

(Hughes, D. 2012)

ATTUNEMENT

- Match voice tone, body language, posture, level of affect
- Observe and acknowledge physical and affective change
- Use sensory experience to explore trauma triggers and self soothing
- Help to match needs with appropriate comfort
- Encourage use of 'I' statements – owning feelings
- Plug developmental gaps
- Reciprocity

PLUGGING DEVELOPMENTAL GAPS

- Separation and individuation: transitional objects, role play how feels
- Nurturing: provide drink/biscuit, feed soul, use lotions and potions
- Self-soothing: encourage diaries, journals, headphones, fleecy blankets etc.
- Messy food stage: dough, gloop, sand, water, facepaints, hand and footprints, body maps, wall art
- Object constancy: transitional objects:
- Sleep problems: paper and pen by bed, white noise, relaxation techniques

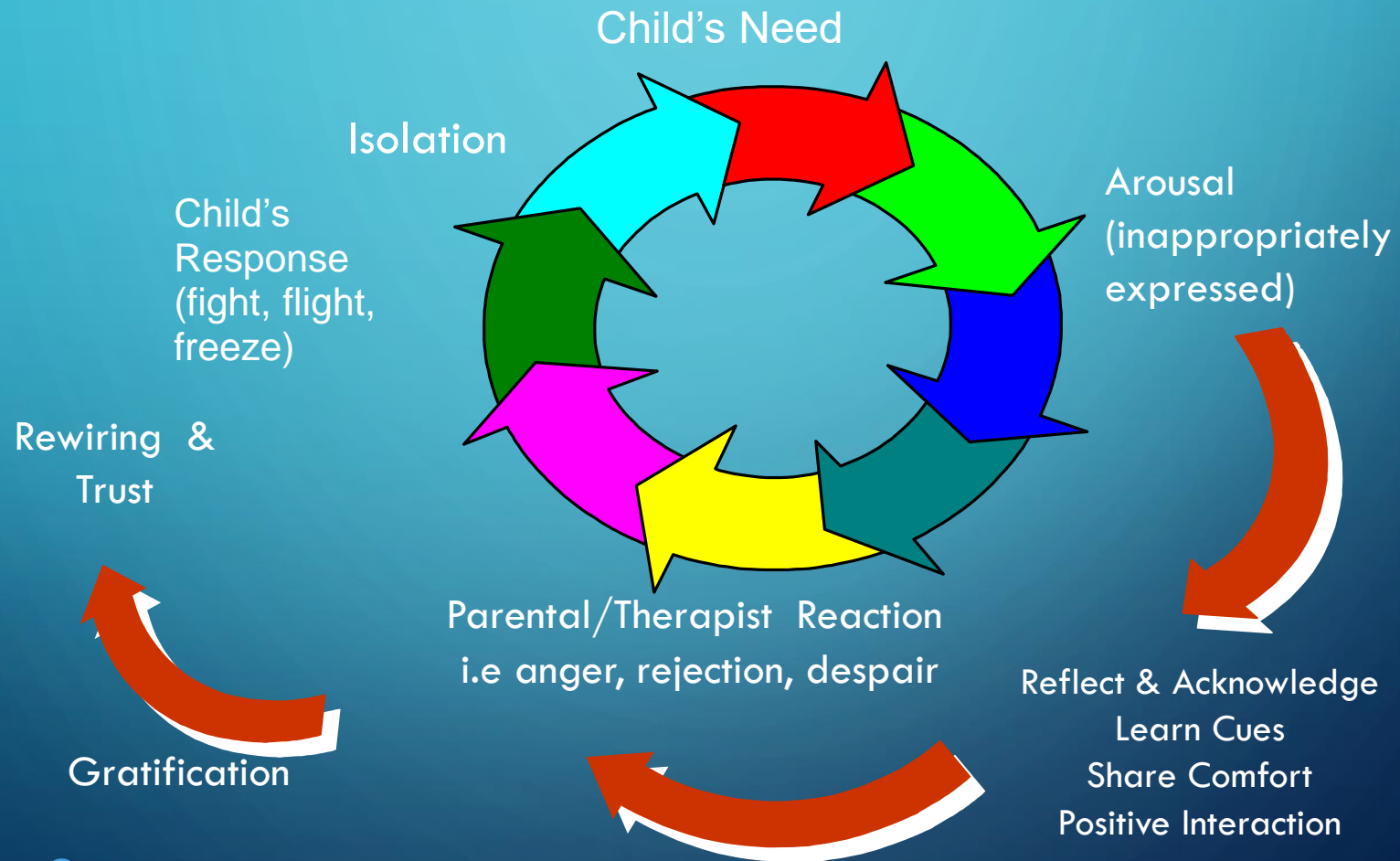
RECIPROCITY

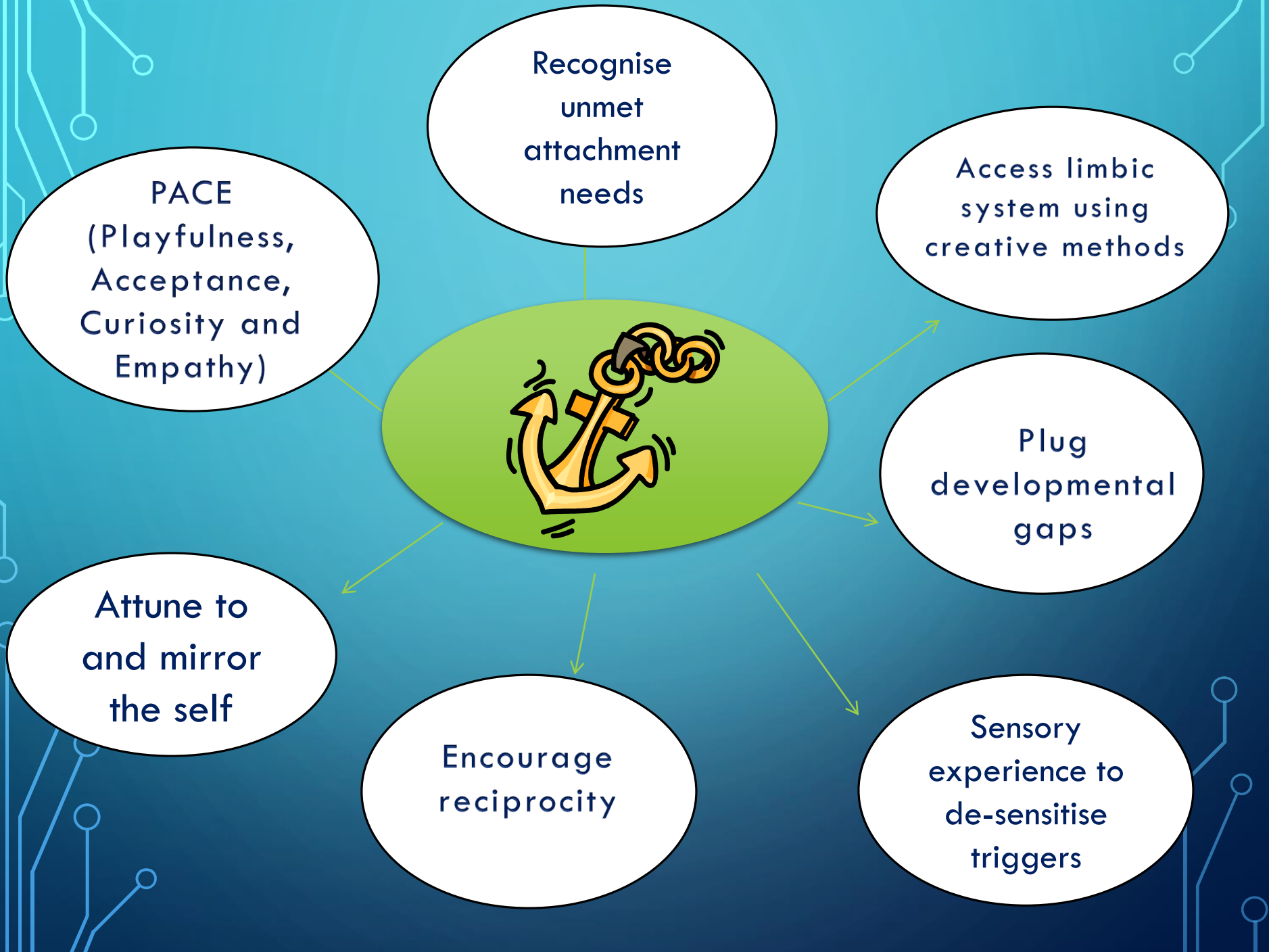
- Sense of belonging/ownership
- Greetings and leavetaking/endings
- Shared responsibility/tasks
- Games (Totika, shared activities, board games, joint sandtray)
- Unconditional fun

REWIRING THE HARDWIRED

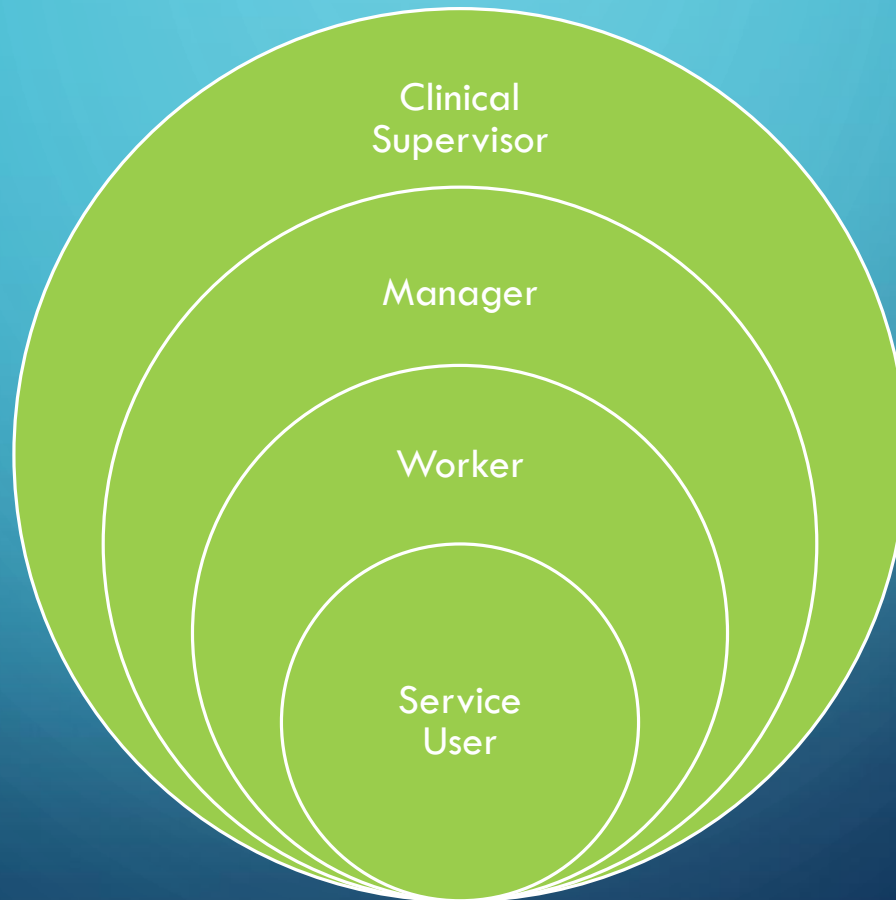
- Shock, Surprise and Challenge
- Overreact Back
- Using the Unexpected
- Make the Undesirable Desirable
- Unconditional Glee

MAKING CONNECTIONS





“SUPERVISION PROVIDES A CONTAINER THAT HOLDS THE
HELPING RELATIONSHIP”
(HAWKINS AND SHOHEIT, 2010)



SUPERVISOR AS ATTACHMENT FIGURE

- Supervisee exhibits transference feelings: crying, dismissing, minimizing, blaming, shoving; learned helplessness; overly sycophantic
- Supervisor mirrors attachment experience and offers 'safe base' and bounded space to de-activate behaviours
- Attunes to supervisee's affect and acts as mirror
- Provides reparative relationship to encourage exploration of shame based feelings

CONTACT

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ONLINE RESOURCE

<https://washburn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WCCDevRepair-revised.pdf>

Developmental Repair: A training Manual

Washburn Centre for Children

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