

Window of Tolerance

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What is your
stress level?



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How will
understanding
trauma help
clients...and
us??



All behavior is communication



Normal reactions



Not an excuse for bad
behavior

But a way to learn to be
present, to understand
emotional responses, and to
aid in understanding
relationship dynamics.



Can block goals and dreams

Disclaimer:

Explaining trauma informed care/education/ community engagement to self and others.



A quick search to define “Trauma Informed”

“Recognizing that many people have trauma.”

“Excellent....but what do we do with that? How do we recognize and support?”



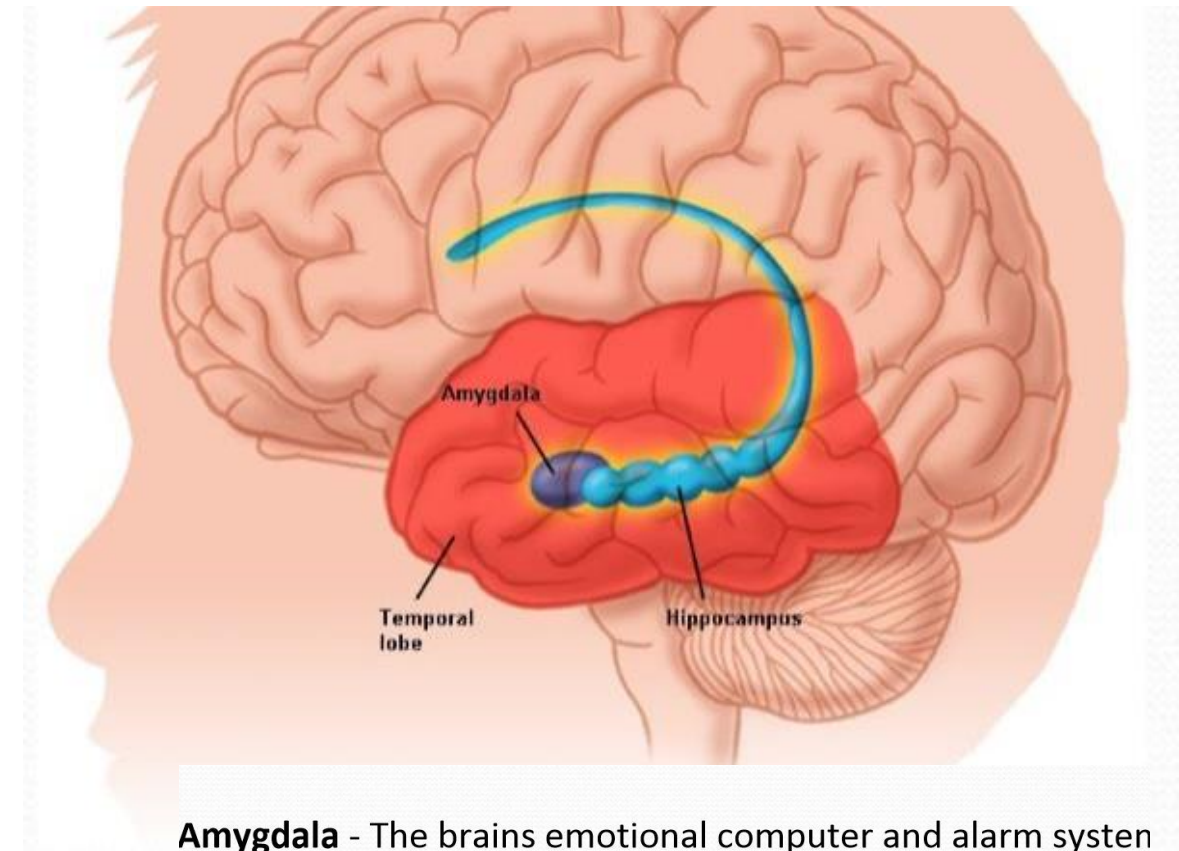
This is NOT a presentation that will help you pass your next exam. It’s about looking at concepts differently in order to make them more approachable and applicable.

Window of Tolerance

- A concept created by Dr. Dan Siegel (1999) to describe the 'optimal arousal zone' of human beings.
- The capacity to manage emotions when under stress, at any given moment.

- “Humans are designed for connection. After trauma, the brain and body can prioritize protection over connection.”
 - Bessel Van der Kolk
- *Now add a pandemic that further breaks connection..*

The brain response

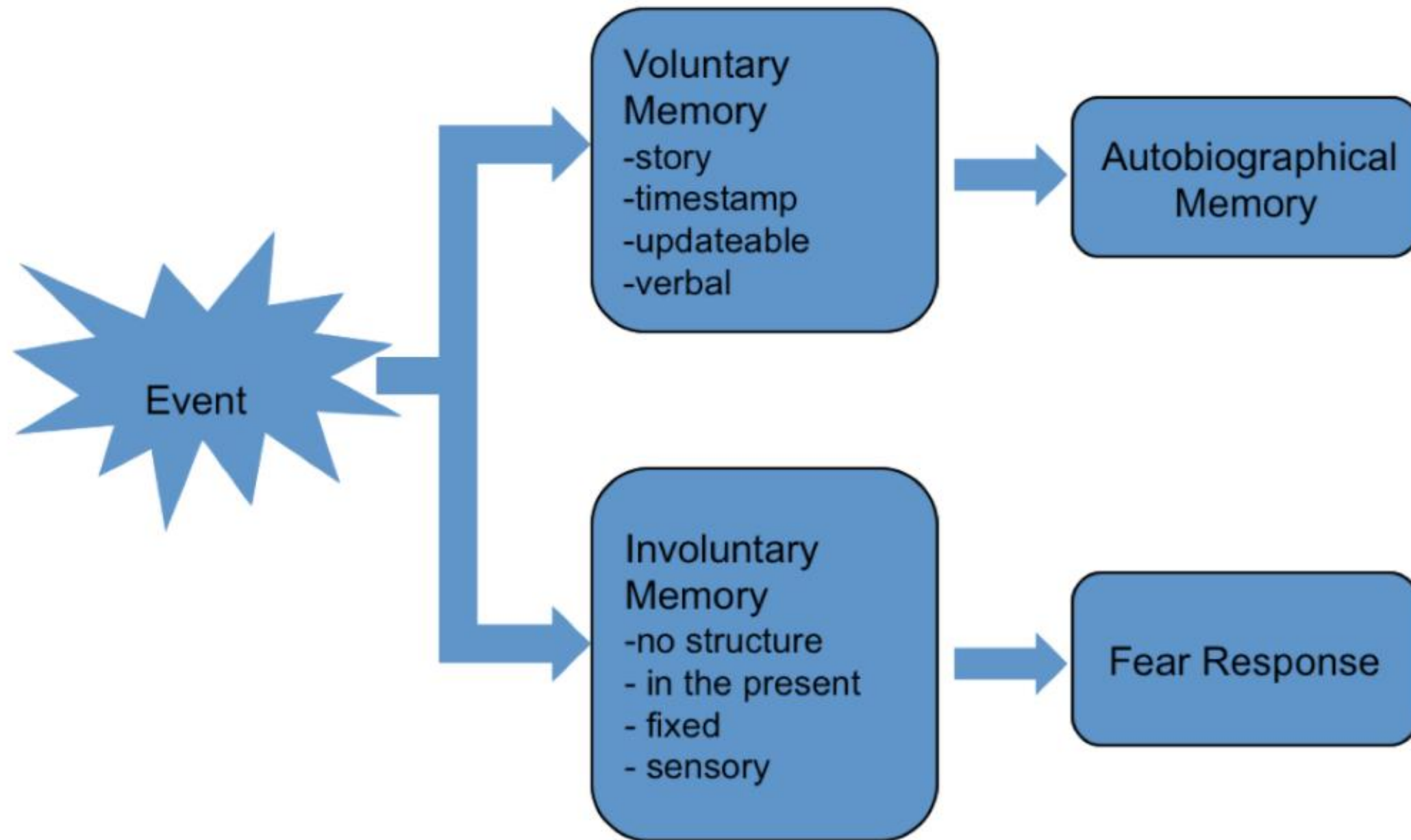


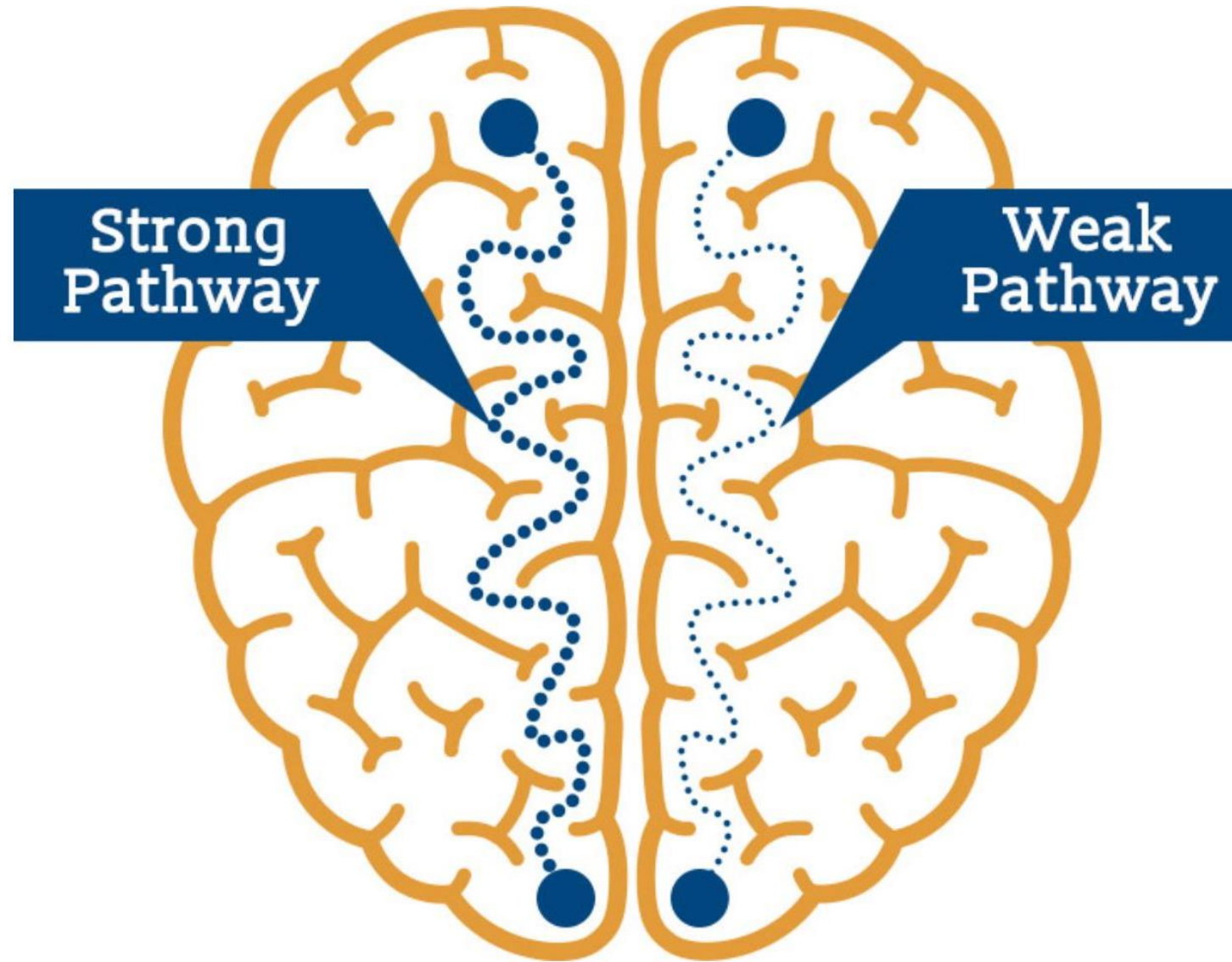
Amygdala - The brains emotional computer and alarm system

Hippocampus - Brains storage for our most recent conscious memories

Thalamus - Translates sights, sounds, smells into the language of the brain

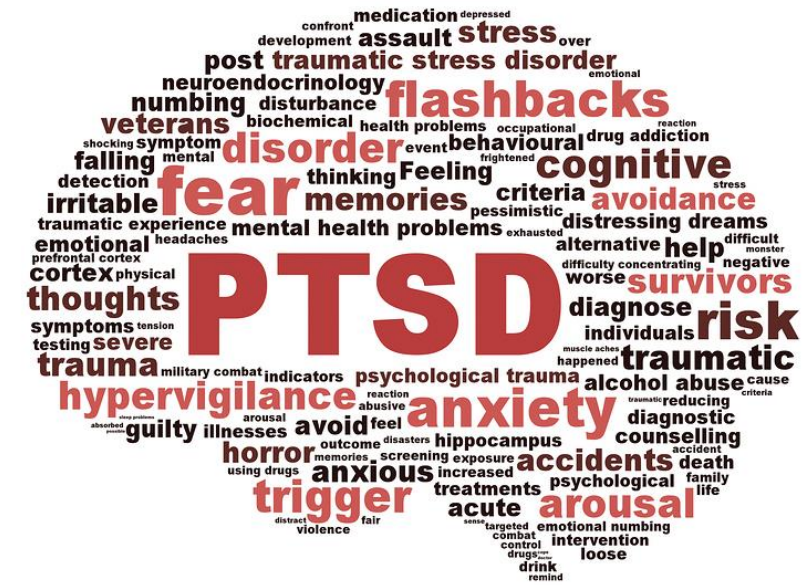
Prefrontal Cortex - Processes information by cross-referencing and making various associations between experiences





What we may notice
after trauma:

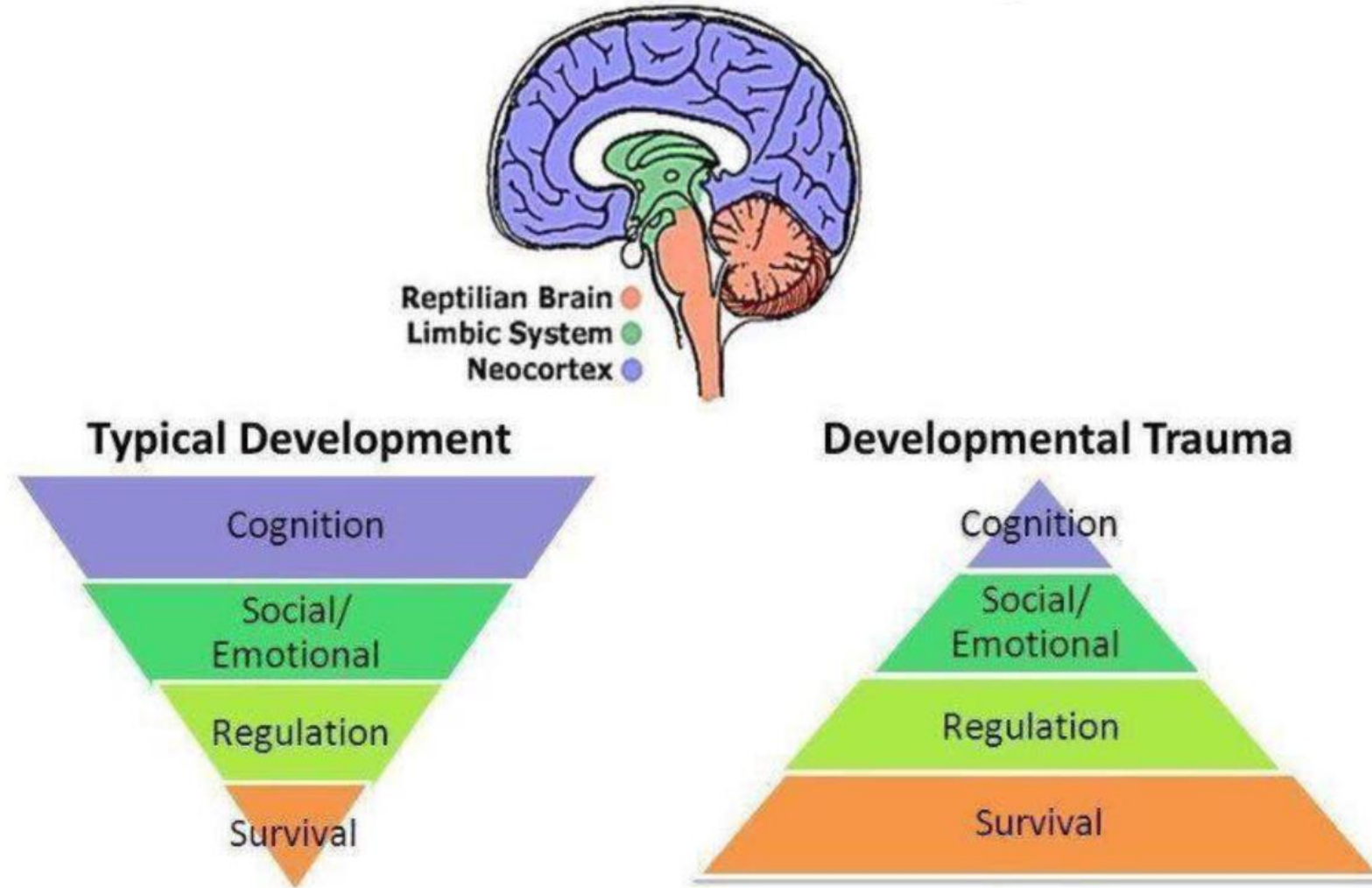
- Anger
- Guilt/Survivors guilt
- Withdrawal/ isolation
- Increased substance use or abuse
- Hypervigilance
- Lack of trust
- Overall sense of numbing of emotions
- Increased desire to control everyday experiences



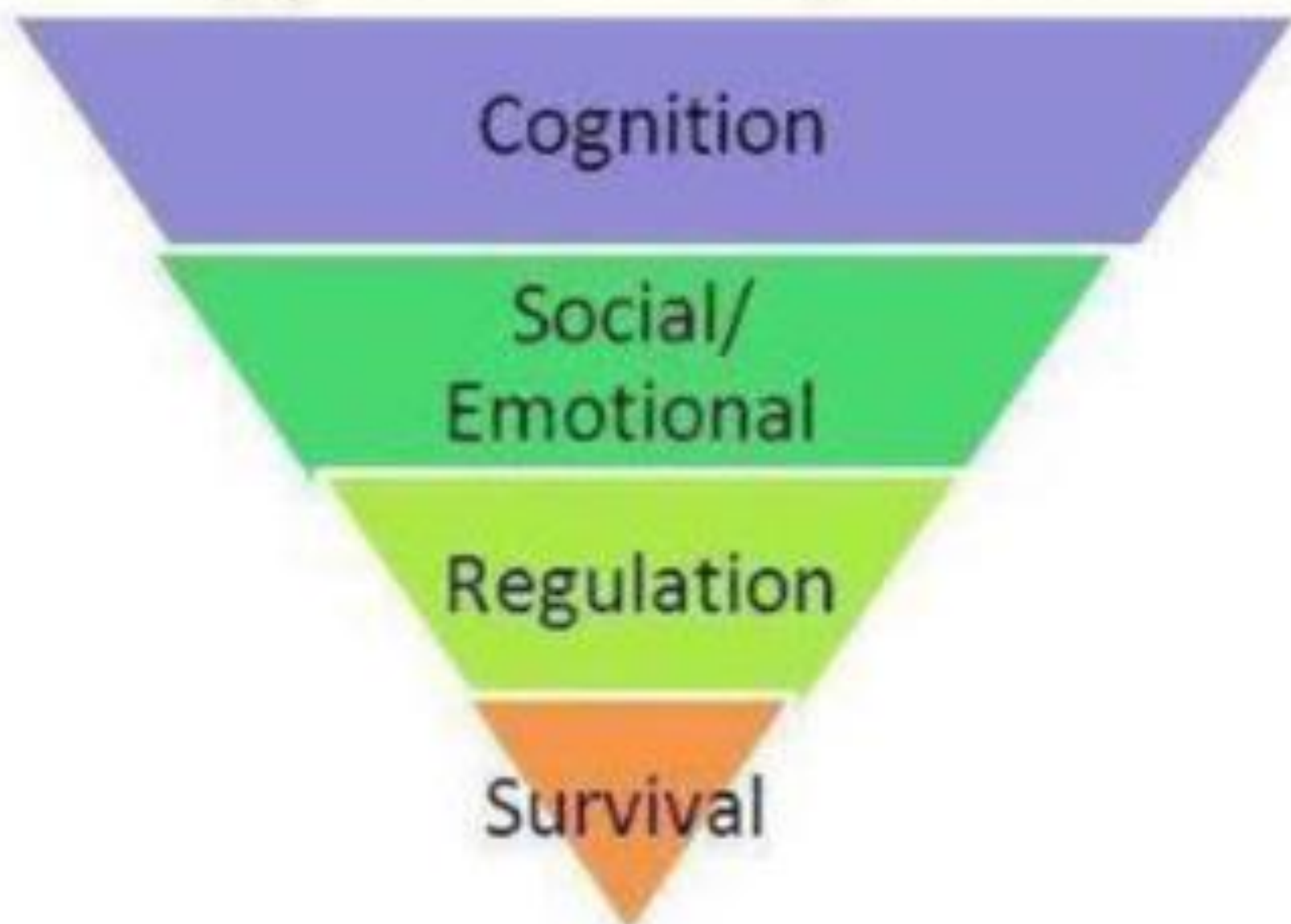
Physical
symptoms we
may
experience
after stress/
trauma:

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Fatigue
- Being startled easily
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing heartbeat
- Edginess and agitation
- Aches and pains
- Muscle tension

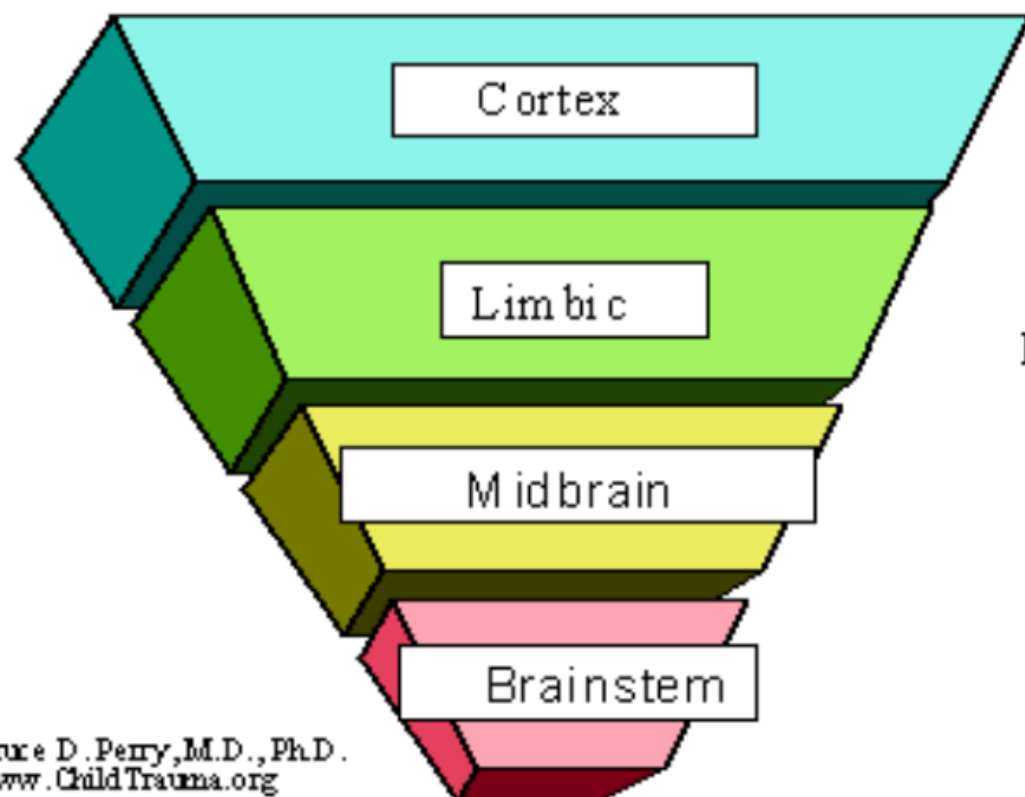
Trauma & Brain Development



Adapted from Holt & Jordan, Ohio Dept. of Education



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

Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.
www.ChildTrauma.org

Developmental Trauma

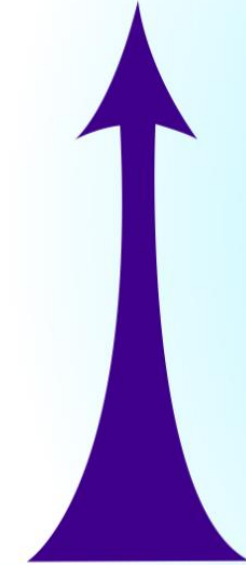


Trauma memory is
held in the body

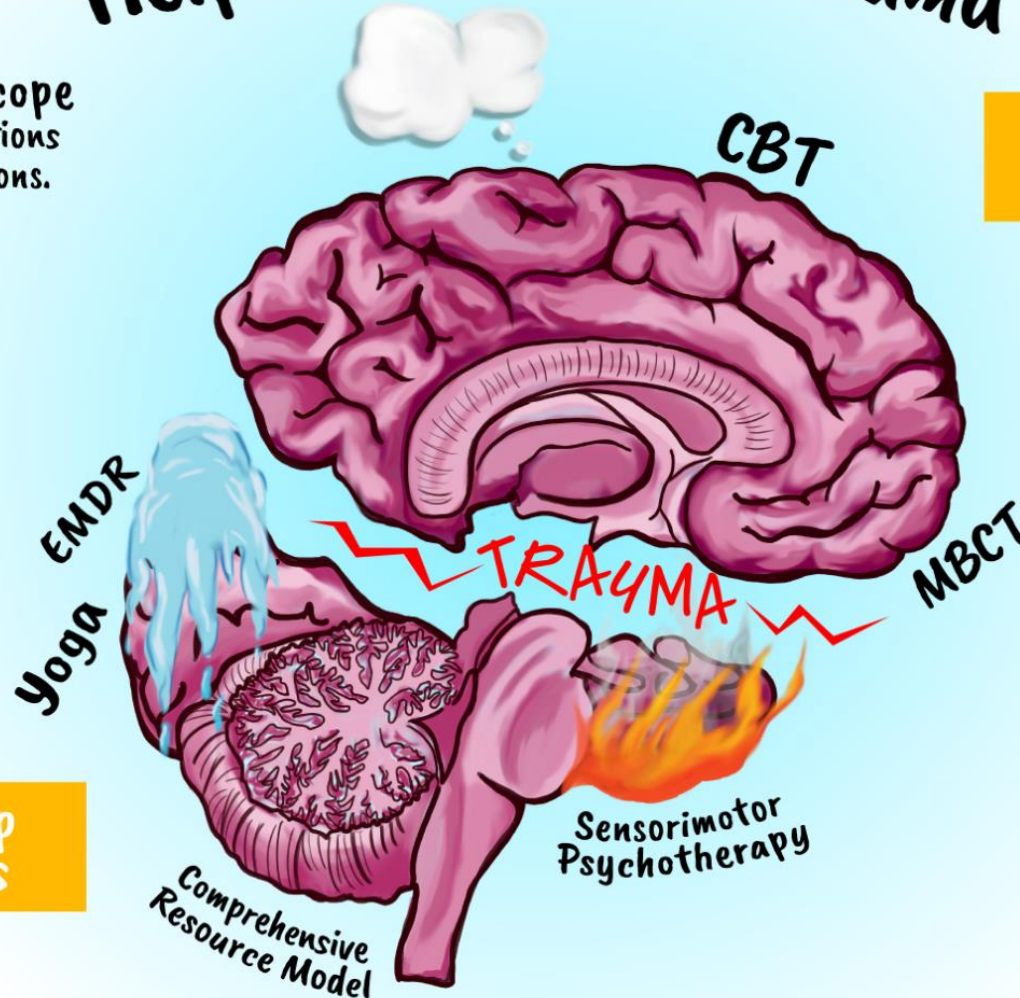
- “The purpose of trauma treatment is to help a person feel safe in his or her own body.” Bessel Van De Kolk

Brain-Based Approaches to Help Clients After Trauma

How to help clients cope with their raw emotions and defense reactions.



Bottom - Up Approaches



Top-Down Approaches



How to help clients think differently.

nicabm
www.nicabm.com

“Don’t tell me to go meditate/take a
bath/ go jogging!”

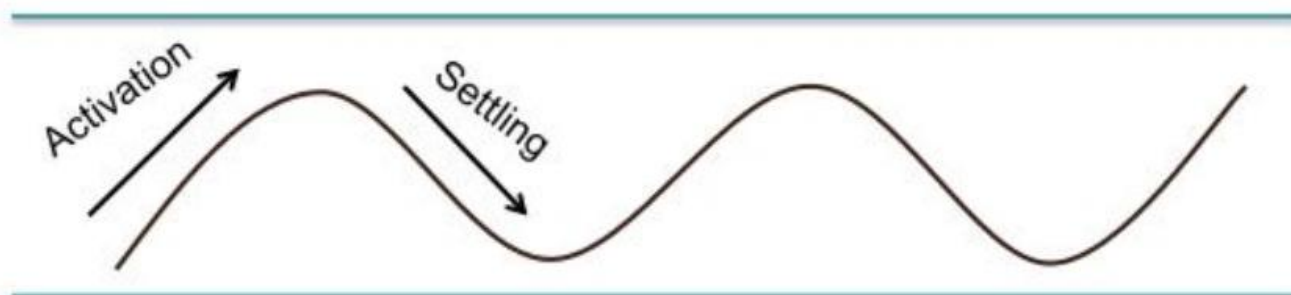
Treating the problem or the symptom?

“If you can’t measure it, does it exist?”

Brene’ Brown

- Subjective Units of Distress
- 0-10
- 0 no distress, 10 the worst distress

Window of Tolerance



Somatic Signs

Regulation
Repair and clean up
Ease
Grounded/settled
Pain symptoms lower

Mental-Emotional Signs

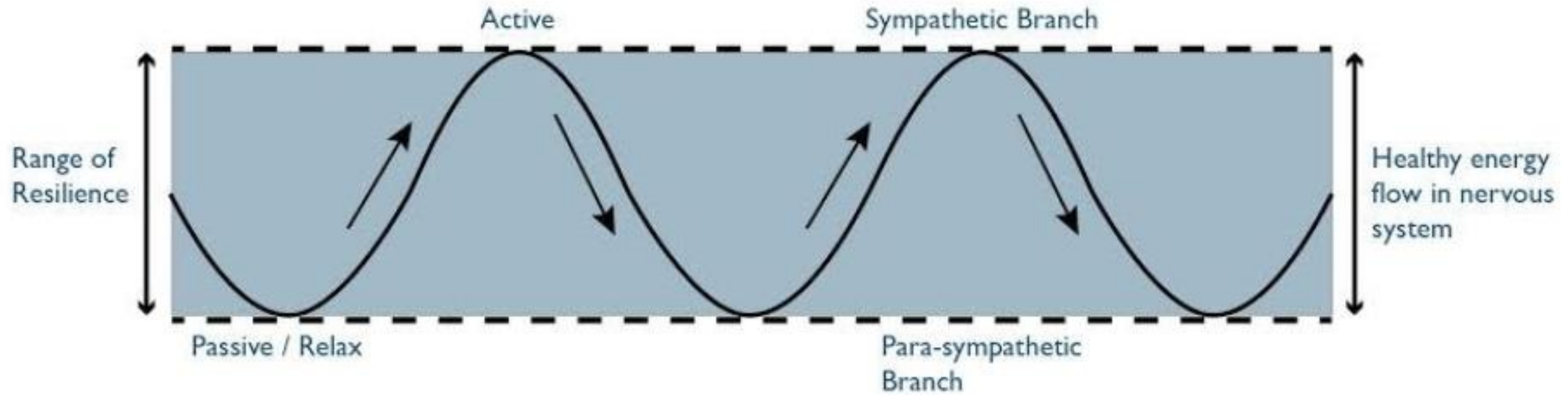
Calm
Curious
Playful
Relaxed
Relational

Behavioral Signs

Cooperation
Completion of tasks
Spontaneity
Empathy is available
Creativity emerges

Bandwidth can be very narrow – our goal is to expand it, but first
we have to be in it!

This represents a healthy nervous system:



Levine, Ogden, Siegel

Hyperarousal

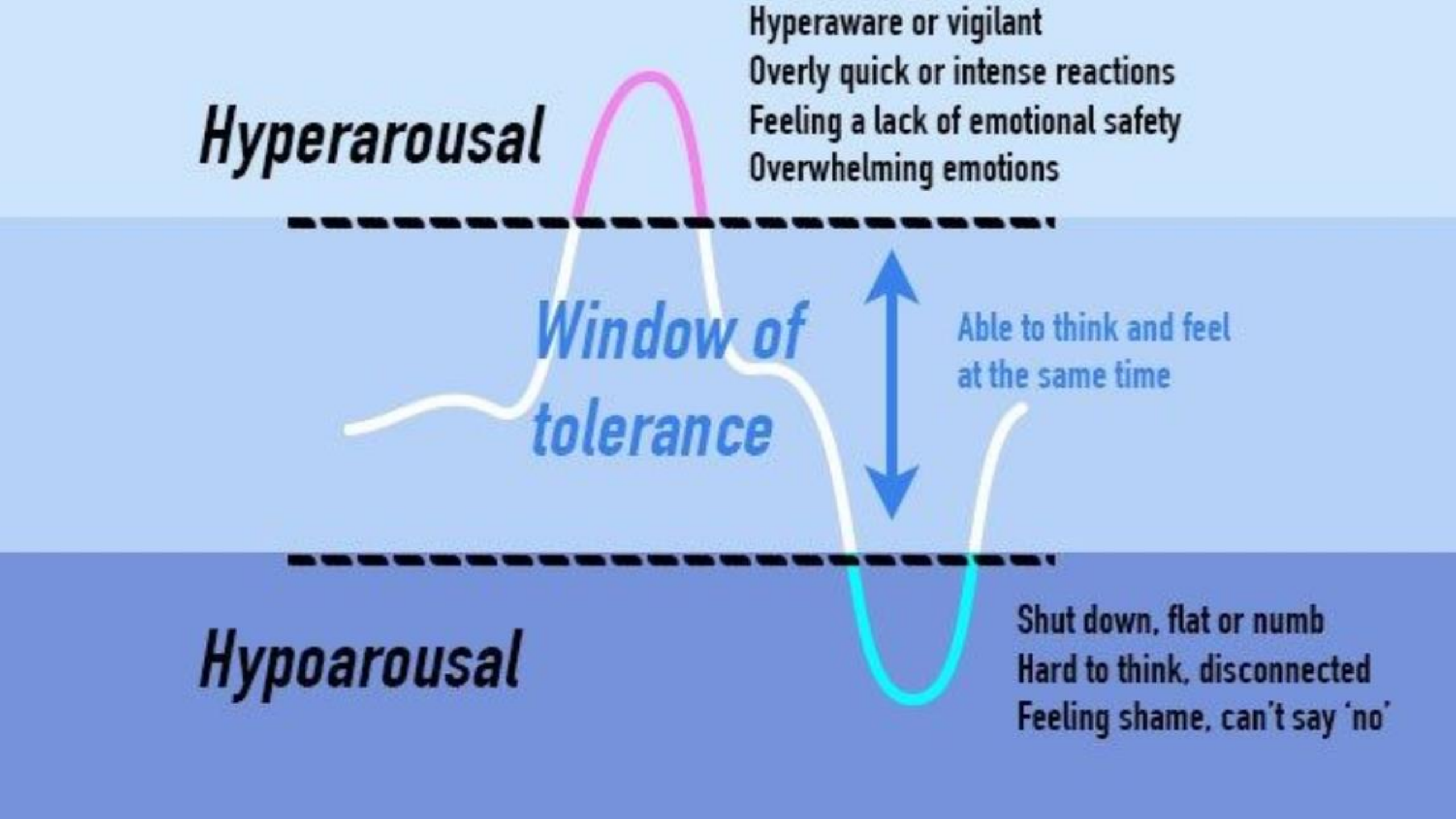
Hyperaware or vigilant
Overly quick or intense reactions
Feeling a lack of emotional safety
Overwhelming emotions

***Window of
tolerance***

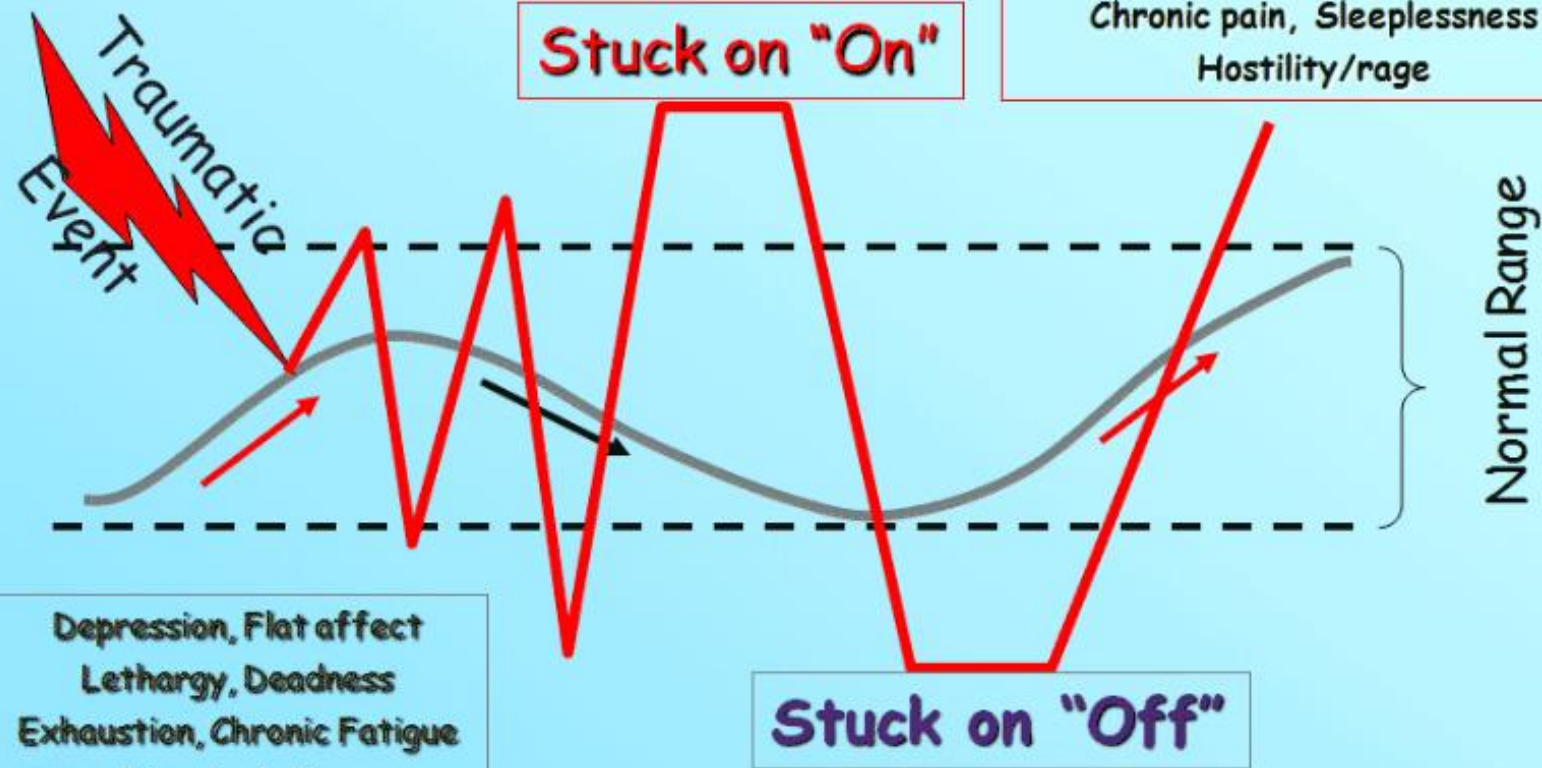
Able to think and feel
at the same time

Hypoarousal

Shut down, flat or numb
Hard to think, disconnected
Feeling shame, can't say 'no'

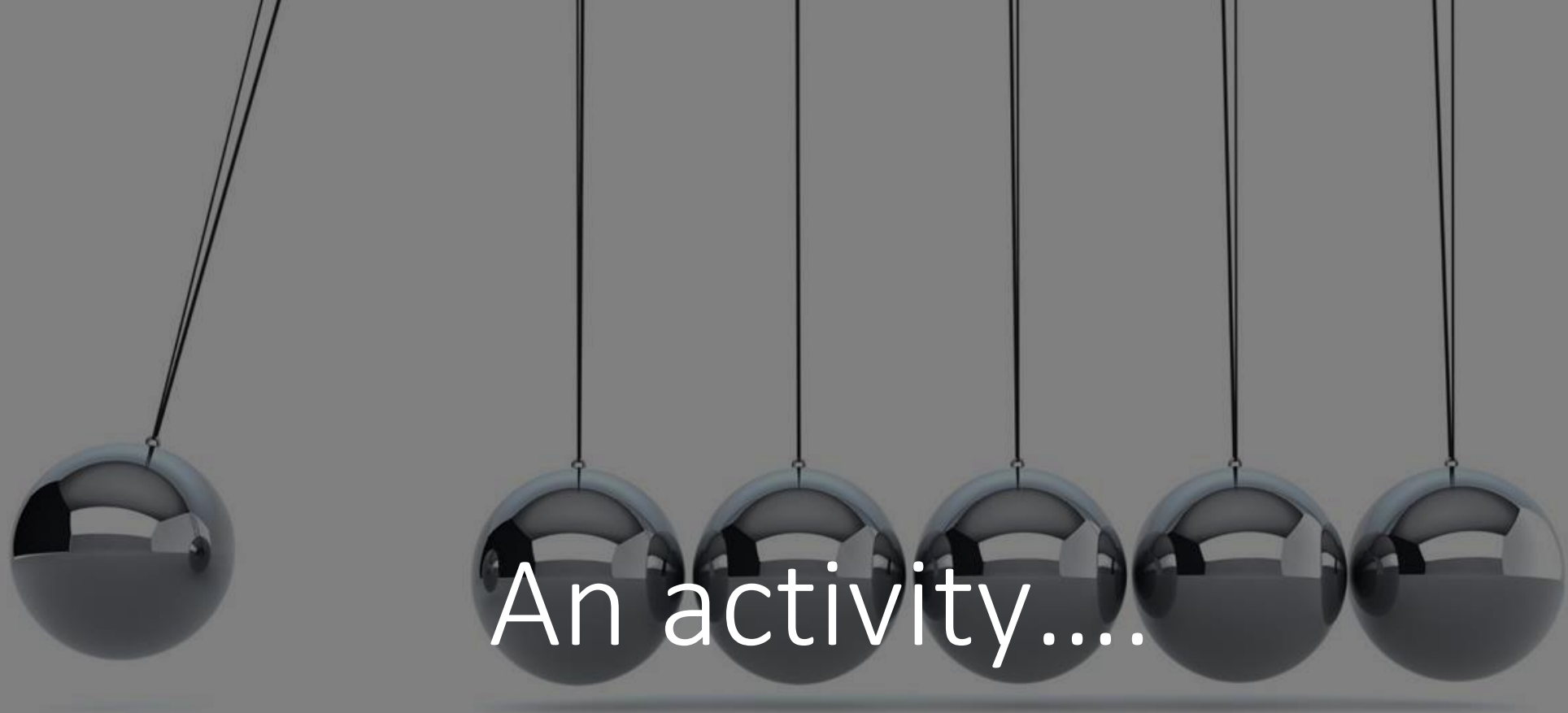


Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress



Anxiety, Panic, Hyperactivity
Exaggerated Startle
Inability to relax, Restlessness
Hyper-vigilance, Digestive problems
Emotional flooding
Chronic pain, Sleeplessness
Hostility/rage

Depression, Flat affect
Lethargy, Deadness
Exhaustion, Chronic Fatigue
Disorientation
Disconnection, Dissociation
Complex syndromes, Pain
Low Blood Pressure
Poor digestion



An activity....

Protocol for trauma recovery....

- Stabilize
- Stabilize
- Stabilize
- Skill building/ resource development for self regulation
- Cognitive restructuring for self regulation
 - Change the automatic negative thoughts
- Understand your behaviors as they relate to past experiences
 - Perspective taking
- Recognizing blocking
 - Intellectualizing, anger, etc (Defenses)
- Reprocessing
- Reintegration

Coping skills and self care

1. Where are you in your window of tolerance?
2. Mindfulness. **Stay in the** here and now. ...
3. Butterfly Hugs
4. Tapping
5. Breathing.
 1. Square breathing
 2. Deep breathing from **your** belly can help ground you and bring you back to yourself if you feel you're being triggered. ...
6. Physical activity. ... Get moving...
7. Soothe **your** senses. ...
8. Challenge **your** thoughts. ...
9. Write things down.

- **Staying grounded.** To feel in the present and more grounded, sit in your chair. Feel your feet on the ground and your back against the chair. Look around you and pick six objects that have red or blue in them. Notice how your breathing gets deeper and calmer.

What is your stress level?

- Where are you in your Window of Tolerance?



Questions?

