

2025 Kinsman Bioethics Conference  
2025 Kinsman Bioethics Conference  
2025 Kinsman Bioethics Conference



# Trauma Informed Strategies for Regulating and De-escalating

---

PRESENTED BY: Rana Halabi Najjar, PhD, RN, CPNP  
DATE: April 17 – 18, 2025  
2025 Kinsman Bioethics Conference

# Trauma-Informed Embodied



**WHAT DISRUPTIVE OR  
DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS  
YOU ENCOUNTER  
REGULARLY?**

# Goals

1. Define trauma, trauma informed approaches, and the impact of trauma on the brain
1. Discuss trauma- producing vs trauma-informed through the parallel process
2. Describe strategies for supporting non-violent communication through listening, understanding, empathy, and compassion

## My Goals



**Trauma & impact on brain**



**4R's of Trauma Informed Approaches**

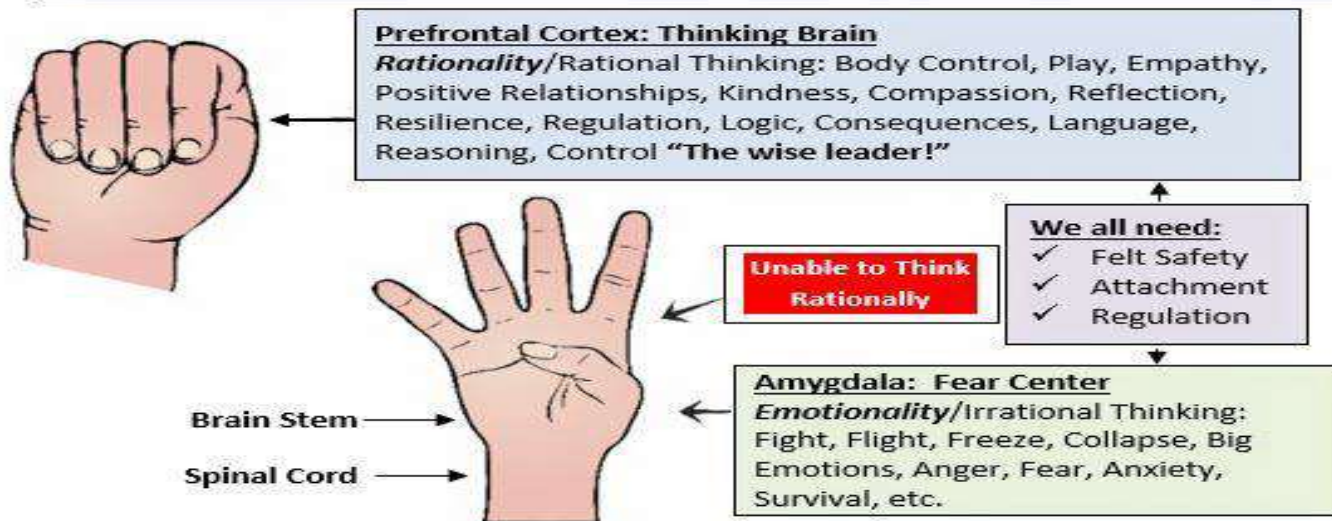


**Parallel Process**



**Non-Violent Communication**

## Dan Siegel's Hand Brain Model



Credit: Daniel Siegel, M.D., is the creator of this metaphor and expression "Flipped 180". Copyright © 2014 www.emotionally.com

**The Amygdala sends waves to the Hypothalamus (command center) which activates the Autonomic Nervous System:**

- ✓ Sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze, collapse)
- ✓ Parasympathetic (rest & digest)

Mel ROBBINS



TikTok  
@user447456624


## What Trauma Really Means (with Gabor Maté)

@melrobbins

Dr. Gabor Maté, MD  
Trauma Expert







**“Trauma** is an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person’s capacity to cope”

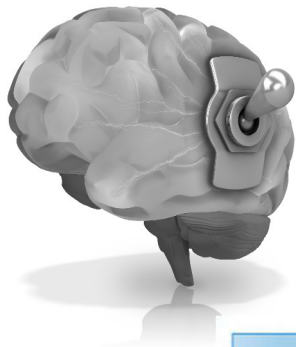
“...the experience doesn’t have to be life-threatening to trigger a trauma response”

Chronic stress or adversity often mimic a trauma response



# Physiological Responses & Behaviors

Hyperactive amygdala => Stress Hormones => Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn



What does  
Flipping the lid  
look like (AKA  
Amygdala  
Hijack?)

Fight	Flight	Freeze	Fawn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Acting silly</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Exhibiting defiance</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hyperactive</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Arguing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Screaming/yelling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Skipping class/Avoiding others</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionist</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Overthinker</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety/panic</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Daydreaming/Seeming to sleep</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Disassociation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Disengaged</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Refusing to answer/get needs met</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Stuck/difficulty making decisions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Giving a blank look</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling unable to move or act</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of boundaries/Co-dependent/</li></ul>

## The 4 Rs

- ✓ The organization or system has a basic *realization* about trauma and understand how trauma can affect families, groups, organizations, and communities as well as individuals
  - ✓ People in the organization or system are also able to *recognize* the signs of trauma
- ✓ The program, organization, or system *responds* by applying the principles of a trauma-informed approach to all areas of functioning
  - ✓ A trauma-informed approach seeks to *resist re-traumatization* of clients as well as staff

# Parallel Process

“...often occur between traumatized clients, stressed staff, frustrated administrators and pressured organizations that result in service delivery that often recapitulates the very experiences that have proven to be so toxic for the people we are supposed to treat”

Bloom, 2010, p. 297

# Parallel Process

The complex and largely unconscious interactive process of two or more systems (individuals, groups, or organizations) who have significant relationships with one another develop similar thoughts, feelings, and behaviors

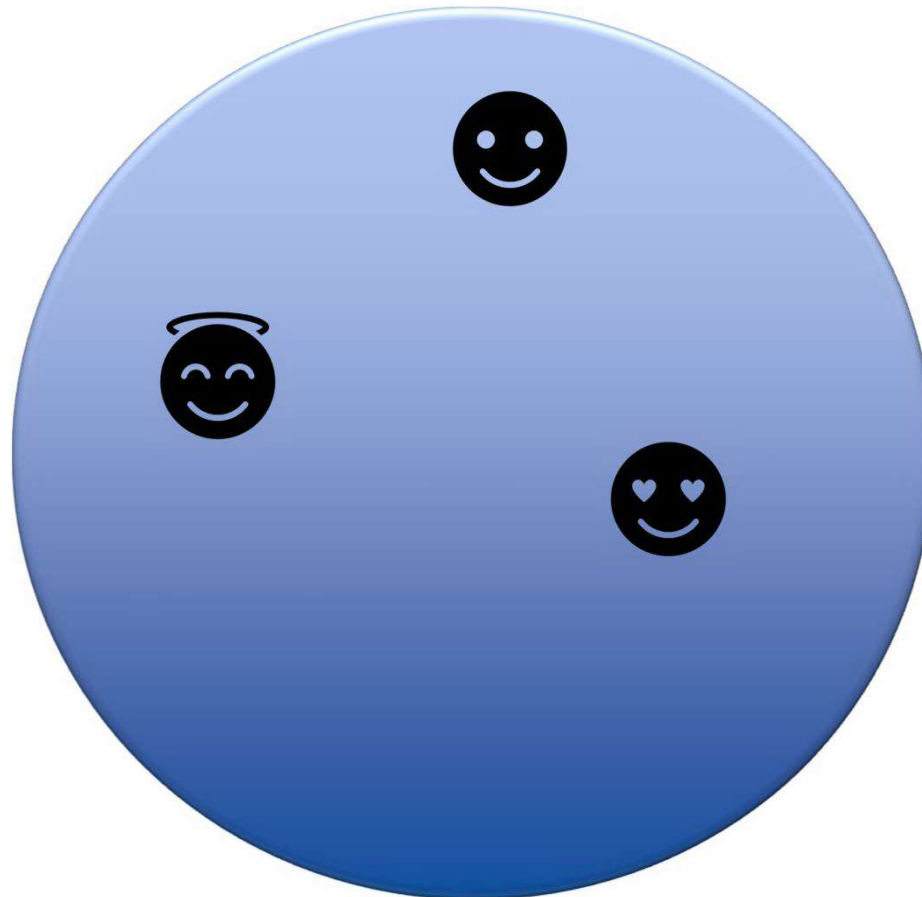
Occurs through policies and procedures and becomes embedded in the norms and culture of the organization

# Parallel Process – Trauma Producing

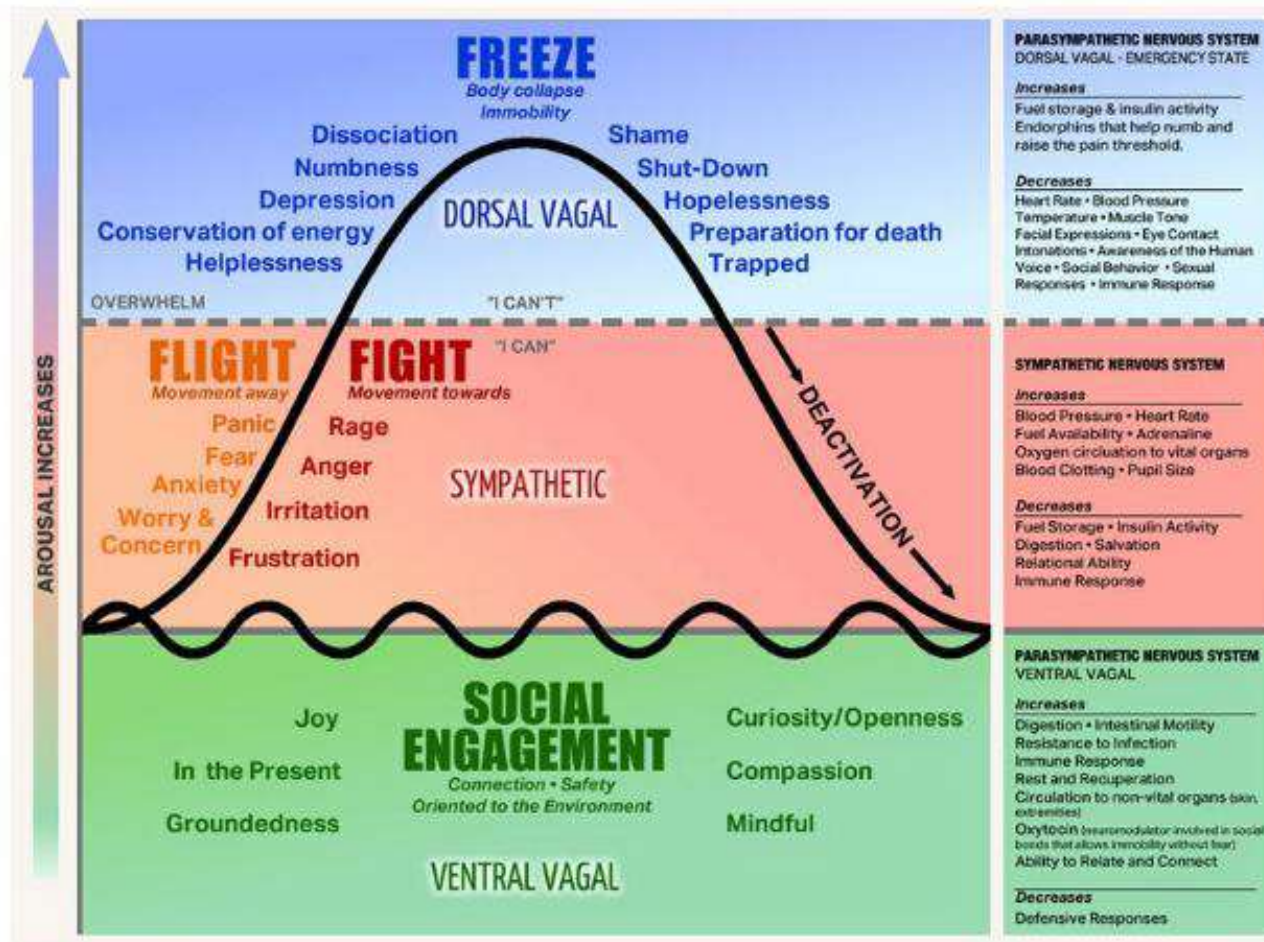


# Parallel Process – Trauma Informed

Organization







Immobilization

Activation

Safety

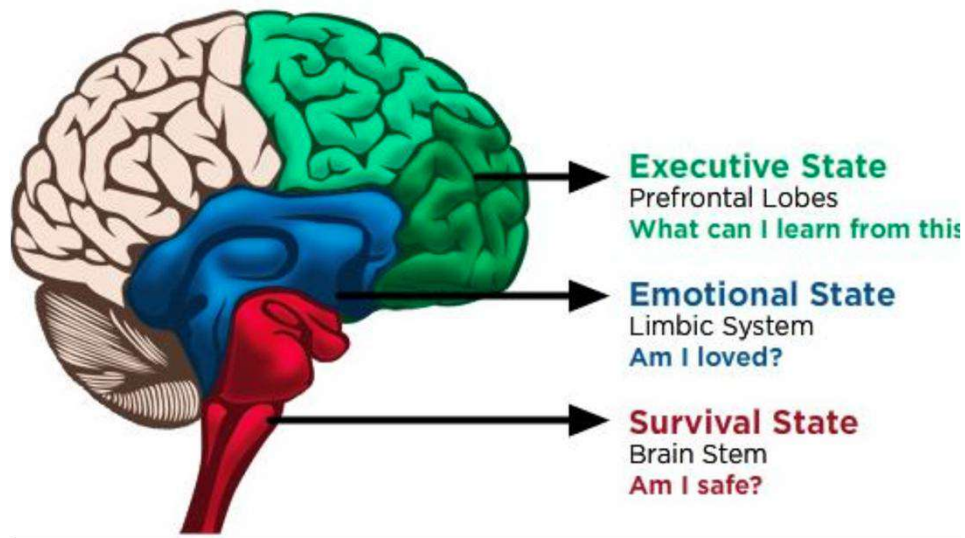
Dr. Stephen Porges – Polyvagal Theory

Porges, 2011

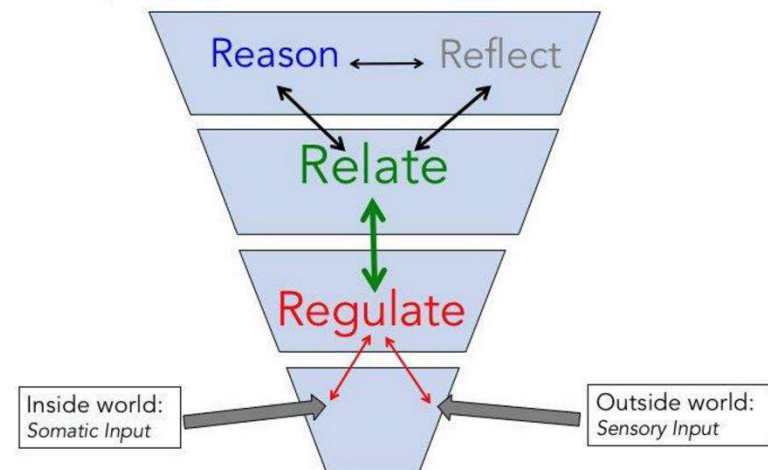




# Sequential Model



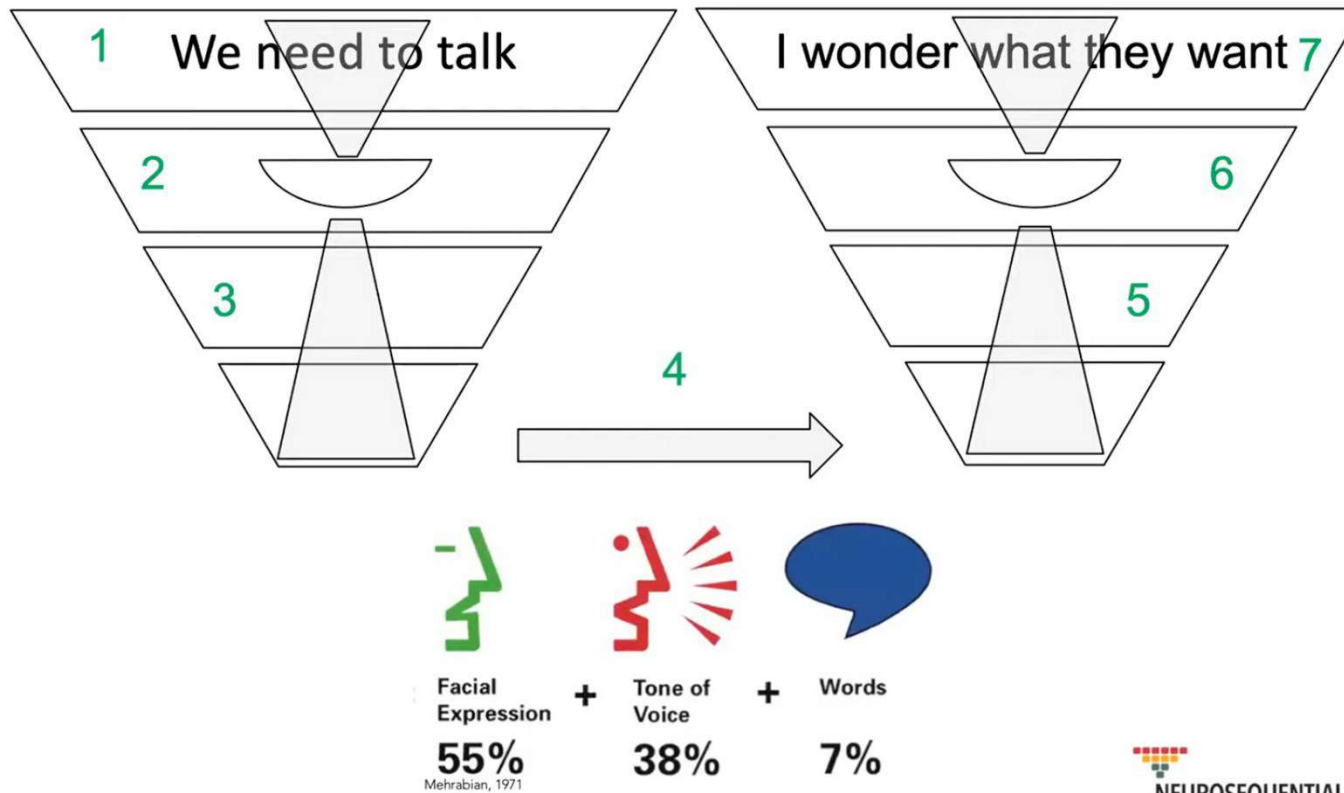
## Sequential Engagement & Processing



All rights reserved © 2007-2017 Bruce D. Perry

# Complexities of Communication

## From Cortex to Cortex



All rights reserved © 2002-2020 Bruce D. Perry

NEUROSEQUENTIAL  
NETWORK™



# Nonviolent Communication

## THE TWO SYMBOLS



**THE JACKAL**

**Judgment • Criticism • Aggression**

Represents the "ordinary" violence often encountered in communication situations.



**THE GIRAFFE**

**Heart • Compassion • Benevolence**

Represents the person who masters the art of Nonviolent Communication.

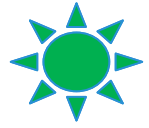
**The idea is to move from "jackal" communication to "giraffe" communication.**

# Trauma informed is...



a mindset; an acceptance of diversity, including background, knowledge, skills, and life experiences; and an understanding that some of those life experiences may include trauma and that our responses to trauma are varied

an approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma on individuals and integrates this understanding into policies, practices, and interactions



## In times of stress...

- Provided empathy, compassion, and understanding
- Created space for processing and coping
- Communicated quickly and clearly
- Addressed immediate concerns

## The 4 Rs

- ✓ The organization or system has a basic *realization* about trauma and understand how trauma can affect families, groups, organizations, and communities as well as individuals
  - ✓ People in the organization or system are also able to *recognize* the signs of trauma
- ✓ The program, organization, or system *responds* by applying the principles of a trauma-informed approach to all areas of functioning
  - ✓ A trauma-informed approach seeks to *resist re-traumatization* of clients as well as staff



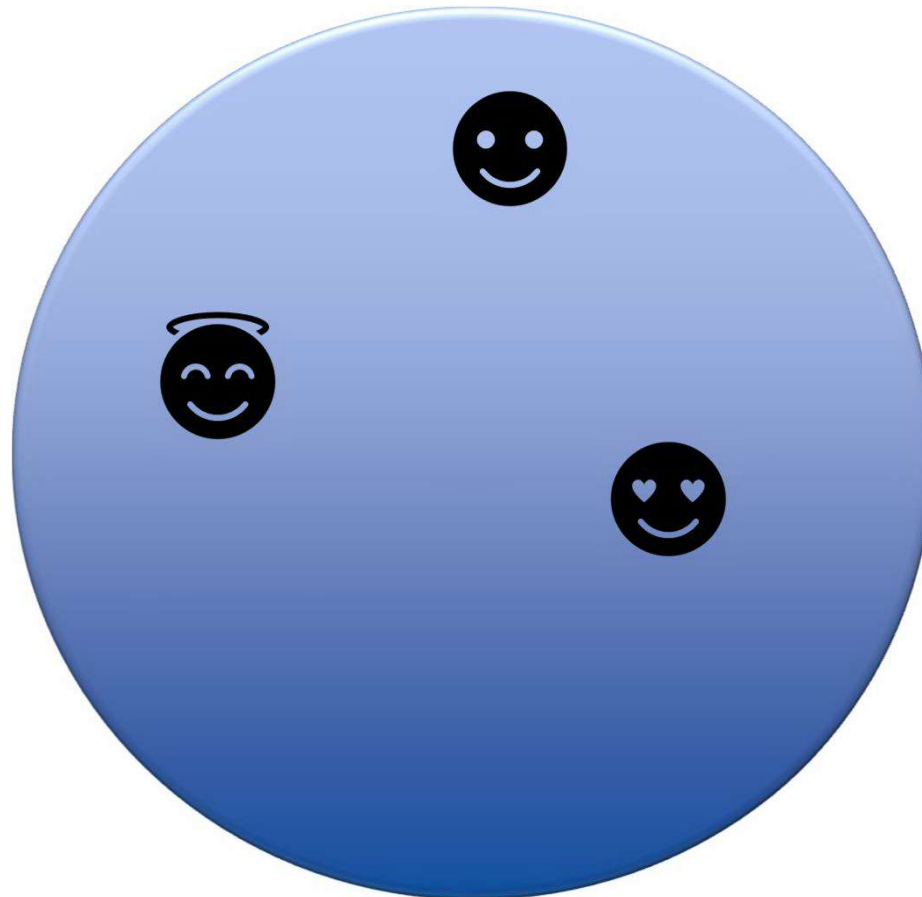
# Parallel Process – Trauma Producing





# Parallel Process – Trauma Informed

Organization



Awareness  
& Anchoring



[Home](#) / [Well-Being](#)

<a href="#">Collaborative</a>
<a href="#">Leadership</a>
<a href="#">Our Approach</a>
<a href="#">Programs and Resources</a>
<a href="#">Spark Program</a>

## Well-Being



### Welcome!

OHSU Well-Being connects you to the resources and programs that y teams need to thrive at OHSU. We are committed to supporting welin members of the OHSU community. Your well-being matters. We want heard, valued, and well.

Together, every day, it is our people who make a tremendous impact or Oregonians, and together, every day, we must celebrate, support and c another.



### Spark: A wellness program to spark your health into action

Through the Spark wellness program, OHSU empowers you for you to get healthy, live well and earn fun rewards as yo place where you feel both engaged in work that's meaning!

- Physical health
- Emotional resilience
- Work-life wellness and
- Financial security

#### To learn more of what Spark offers you:

- Start at: [o2.ohsu.edu/spark](https://o2.ohsu.edu/spark)
- Watch *OHSU Now* blog posts on Wellness Wednesdays fo including challenges, opportunity to earn rewards and n Spark offers:

[Home](#) / [Well-Being](#) / [Employee Assistance Program Counseling and Peer Support](#)

<a href="#">Collaborative</a>
<a href="#">Leadership</a>
<a href="#">Our Approach</a>
<a href="#">Programs and Resources</a>
<a href="#">Spark Program</a>

## Employee Assistance Program Counseling and Peer Support

### Employee Assistance Program: Confidential help when you need it

- Canopy, OHSU's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) vendor, provides all benefits-eligible employees up to three free sessions per unrelated incident for each employee/family unit.
- Counseling is with a master's or doctorate level counselor.
- The counselor you get placed with will be in-network with the Moda PPO, meaning you can continue working with them after the three sessions, without a copay.
- If your counselor is in the Community Care (Tier 2) network the plan pays 100% after \$40 copay for employees enrolled in the PPO plan.
- If you are enrolled in the EPO plan the plan pays 70% after the deductible is met.

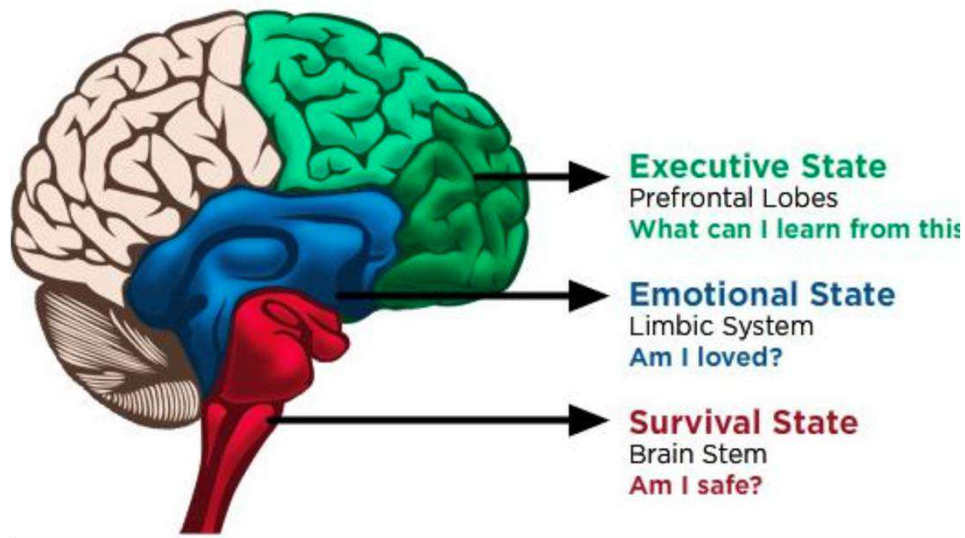
This service is **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** and available 24/7.

You and/or your family members can get help with any personal problems, large or small. Access support via:

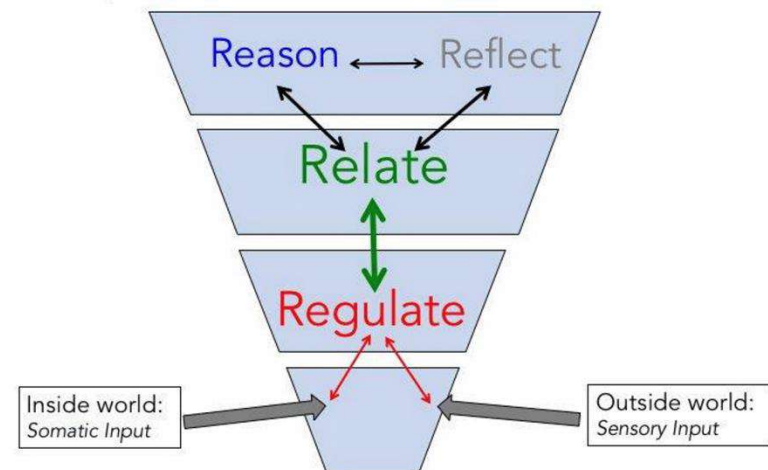
- face to face;
- phone sessions; or
- live video chat.



# Sequential Model



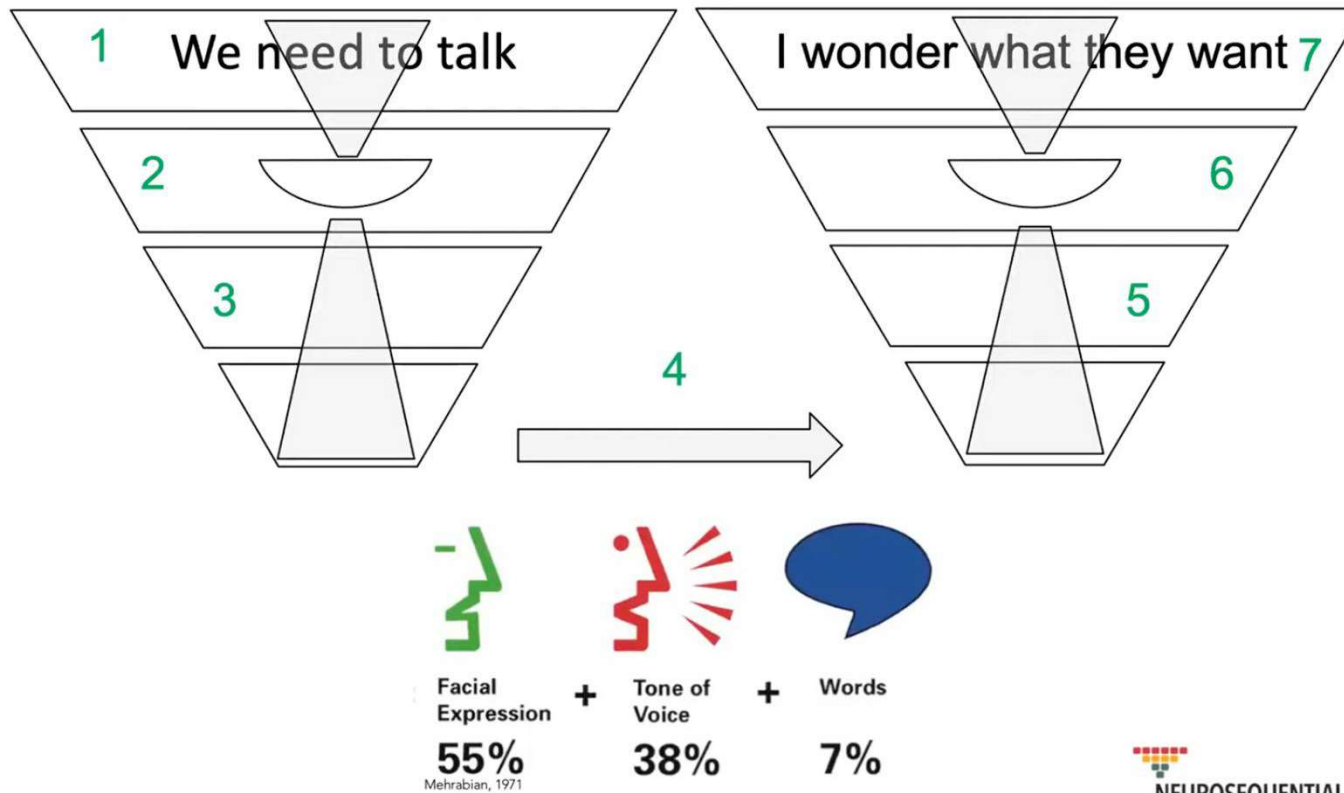
## Sequential Engagement & Processing



All rights reserved © 2007-2017 Bruce D. Perry

# Complexities of Communication

## From Cortex to Cortex

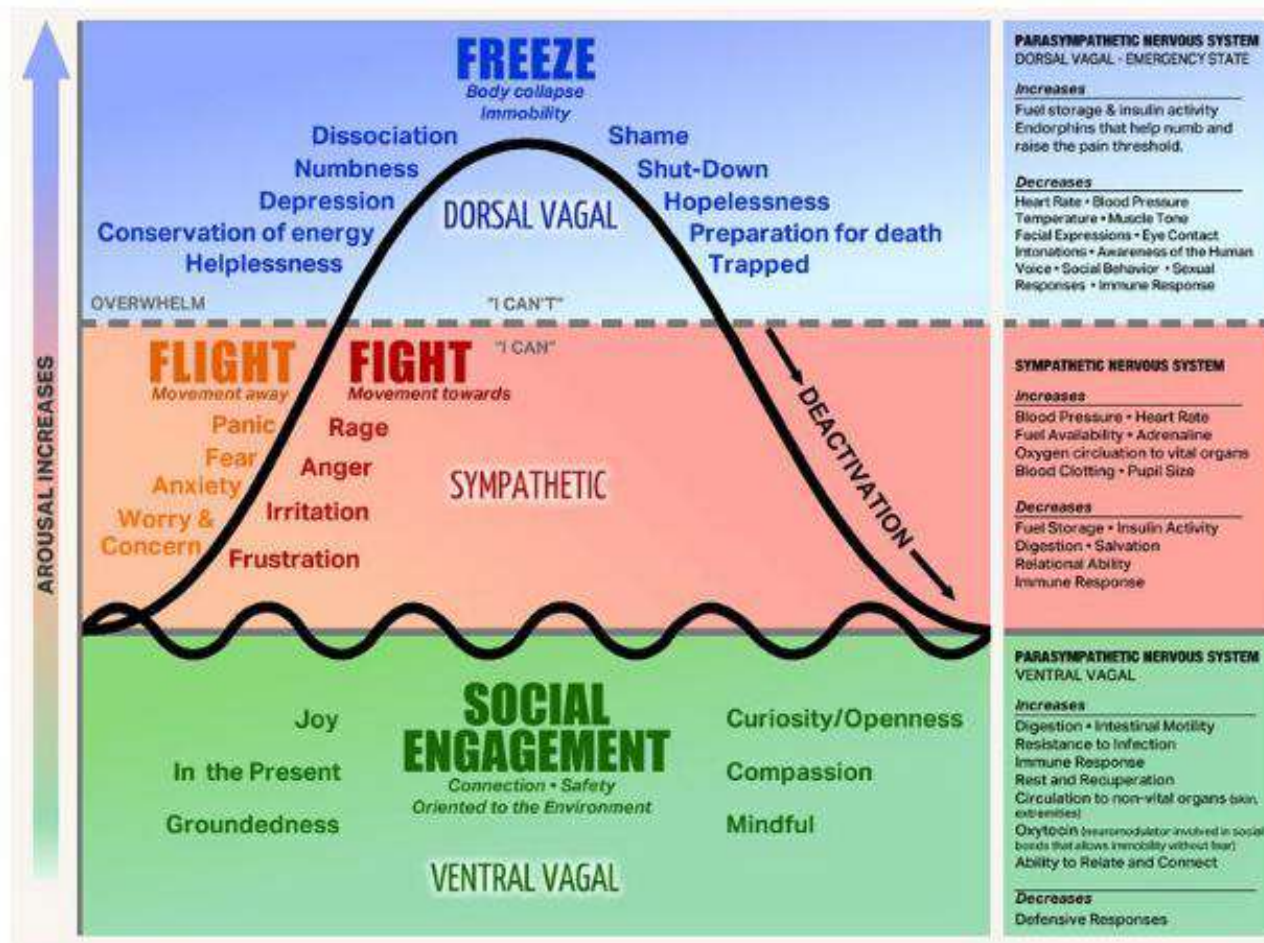


All rights reserved © 2002-2020 Bruce D. Perry

NEUROSEQUENTIAL  
NETWORK™







Immobilization

Activation

Safety

Dr. Stephen Porges – Polyvagal Theory

Porges, 2011

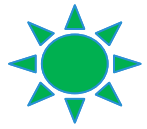


happy

0:01 / 2:44

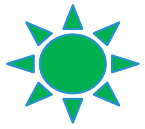






# Trauma Informed Practices – Responding to Dysregulation/Triggers

1. Breathe > Pause
2. Get curious – keeps us out of judgment
3. Slow words down, soften tone and facial expressions
4. Be clear and direct
5. Delay response and avoid offering advice

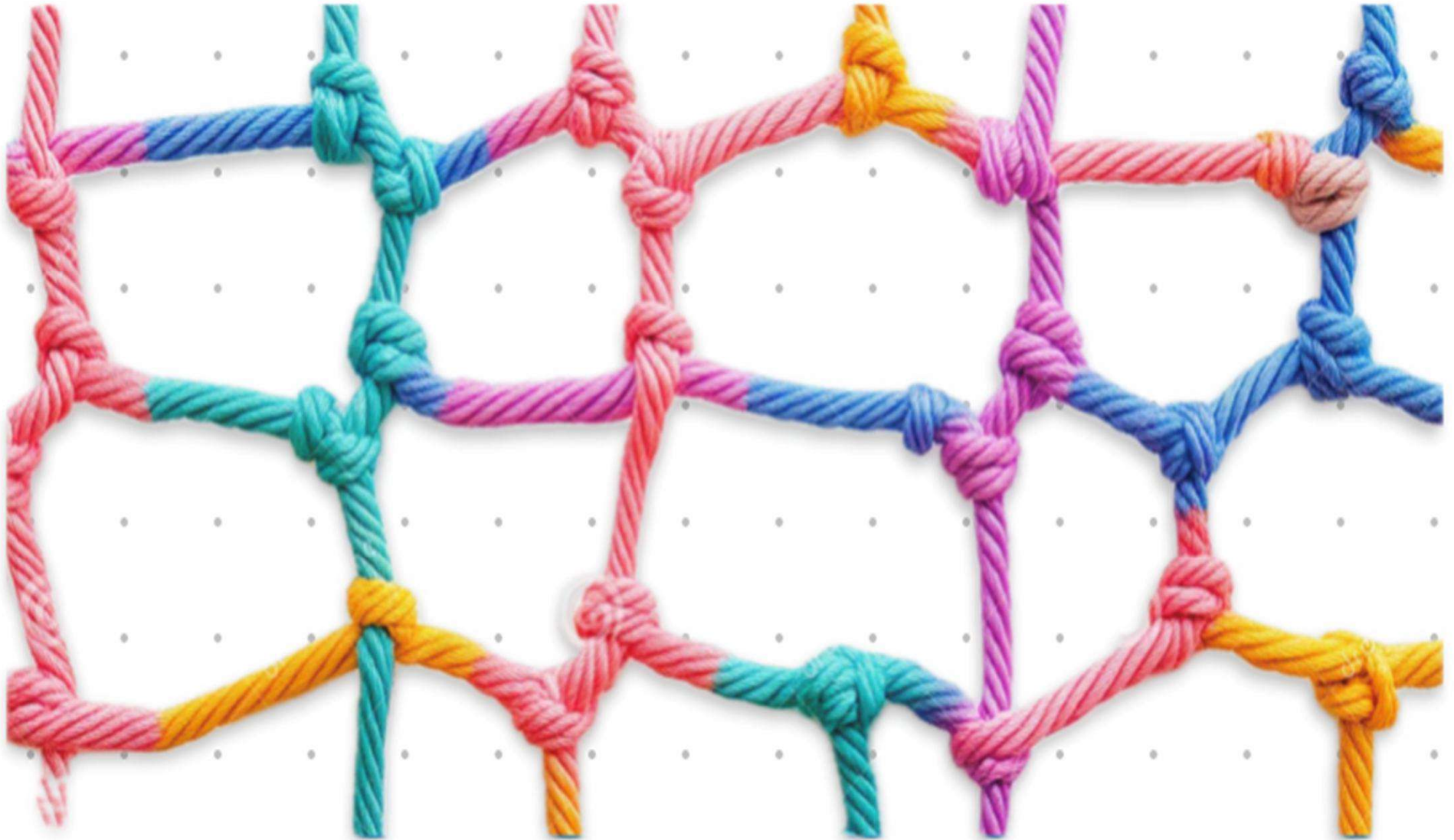


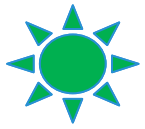
## Delay response and avoid offering advice



Goodman et al., 2020; Price et al., 2024; Saunders et al., 2023

# Focus on the Knot





# Trauma Informed Practices – Having a Crucial Conversation

1. Increase awareness of mind & body
2. Slow words down, soften tone and facial expressions
3. Start with strengths > ‘I see you’
4. Get curious – keeps us out of judgment
  - a. What am I missing?
  - b. What’s happened? “I’m not trying to solve anything, I just want to do better”
5. Apologize rarely, provide gratitude instead
6. Express the goal of the conversation
7. Remember dysregulation techniques

# Why Mindfulness, Meditation & Grounding?

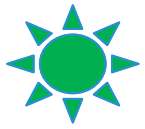
“Between stimulus and response there is a space.  
In that space is our power to choose our response.  
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor E. Frankl

Inspire  
Empower  
Enlighten

VectorStock® vectorstock.com/22548574





# Trauma Informed Practices – Responses to Disrespectful/Offensive Language

1. Take 5 – 7 second pause
2. Ask the person to repeat what they said
3. Listen intently
4. Avoid escalating by ‘roasting’ or giving an excuse
5. Articulate your perception/feelings
6. Ask them what they are feeling
7. Other options: Walk away, understand their perspective, be kind (even when others are not)

Sometimes in winning an  
argument we have lost  
the relationship





# Systems Considerations

- Advocate for a TI workplace
- Accept the ebbs and flows of work
- Practice and use self-awareness & self/co-regulation



#### The 4 Rs

- ✓ The organization or system has a basic *realization* about trauma and understand how trauma can affect families, groups, organizations, and communities as well as individuals
- ✓ People in the organization or system are also able to *recognize* the signs of trauma
- ✓ The program, organization, or system *responds* by applying the principles of a trauma-informed approach to all areas of functioning
- ✓ A trauma-informed approach seeks to *resist re-traumatization* of clients as well as staff



# Collective Trauma

- Recognizing trauma in ourselves, other people, and the systems around us can open up new pathways to solving social problems
- Brazilian author Paulo Coelho writes, “You drown not by falling into a river but by staying submerged in it.”
- Unless we acknowledge trauma, engage with it, and find ways to support individual and collective healing, our systems will stay stuck.

# Collective Healing & Liberation

- Rooted in the power of relationships
- Supports individuals, teams, and organizations within a system to identify and repair harm done to them and by them to others
- Challenges and disrupts the destructive energy left by trauma
- Utilizes awareness, compassion, and learning to find new and more innovative ways to change the behavior of the system

*Cultivating body awareness, developing emotional self-regulation, and fostering social connections are integral components to TI spaces*



Thank You



# NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

---



## OBSERVATION

When I see that \_\_\_\_\_



## FEELINGS

I feel \_\_\_\_\_



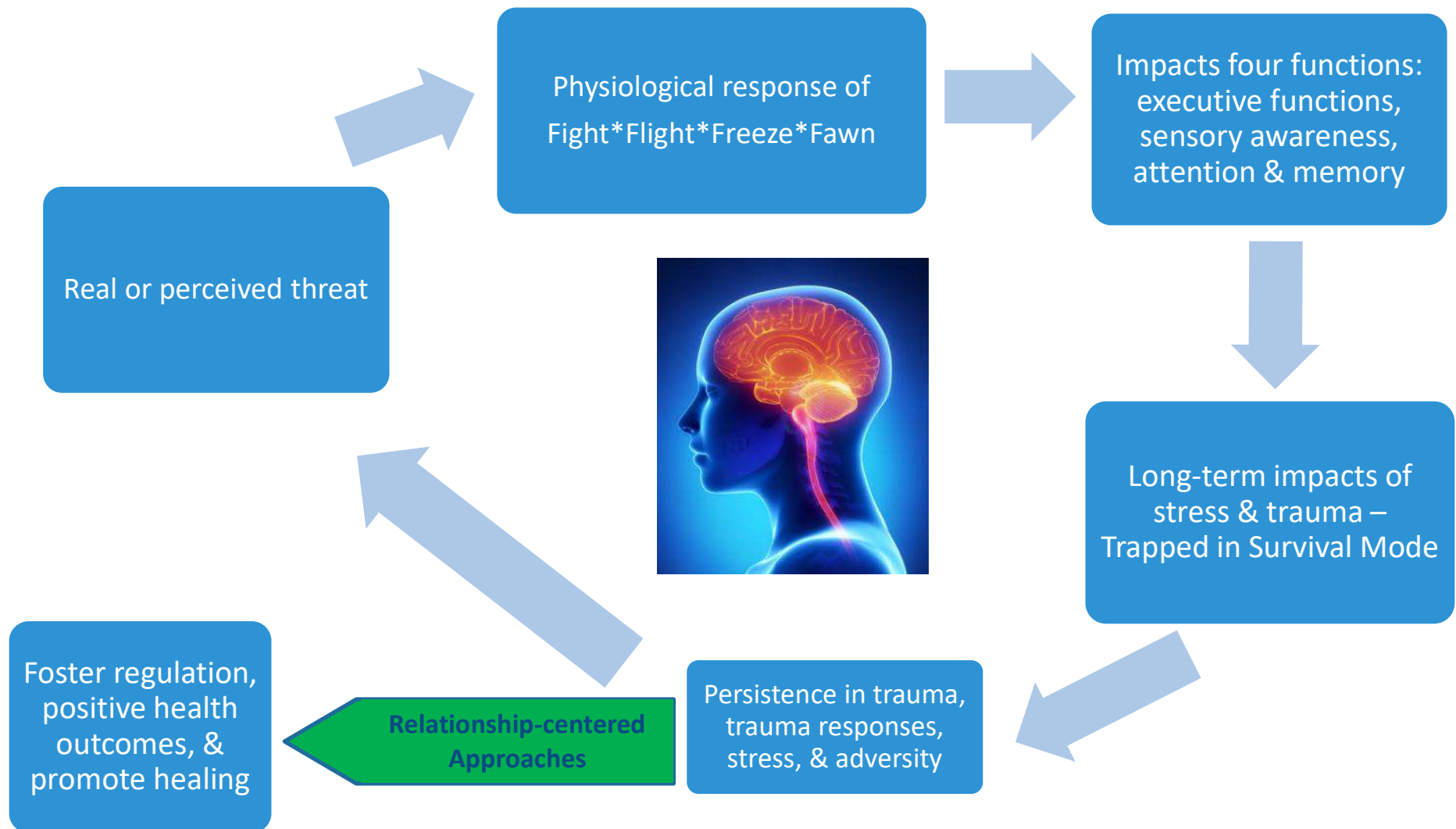
## NEEDS

because my need for \_\_\_\_\_  
is/is not met.



## REQUEST

Would you be willing to \_\_\_\_\_?



We do not just “get over it”  
We cannot “pick ourselves by the bootstraps”

**WE NEED AN INTERVENTION**



***Neuroplasticity can  
rewire the brain  
forming  
connections and  
strengthening over  
time***

# **The antidote to trauma is human connection**

- 1) Relationships and connection are critical for well-being and give us the capacity to destroy one another (exclusion) or heal one another (inclusion)
- 2) Language is healing and provides others with words to describe their feeling and emotions
- 3) Awareness helps regulate emotions and responses
- 4) We have the ability to create an environment where individuals feel safe and can thrive



