



# Echo Approach to Supporting Parent and Child Survivors of Trauma



Louise Godbold

WHO  
AM I?

WHO  
ARE  
YOU?



What is **trauma**?

# PTSD – DSM IV

- a serious accident
- medical complications
- violent physical assaults (including torture)
- sexual assault or rape
- warfare, policing and other occupations exposed to violence or disaster
- violent, life threatening, natural disasters
- imprisonment
- human trafficking (for labor or sex)

*Or witnessing the above*





## What is **trauma**?

PTSD - DSM IV DEFINITION:

The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved *actual or threatened death or serious injury*, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.



What is **trauma**?

AND:

The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

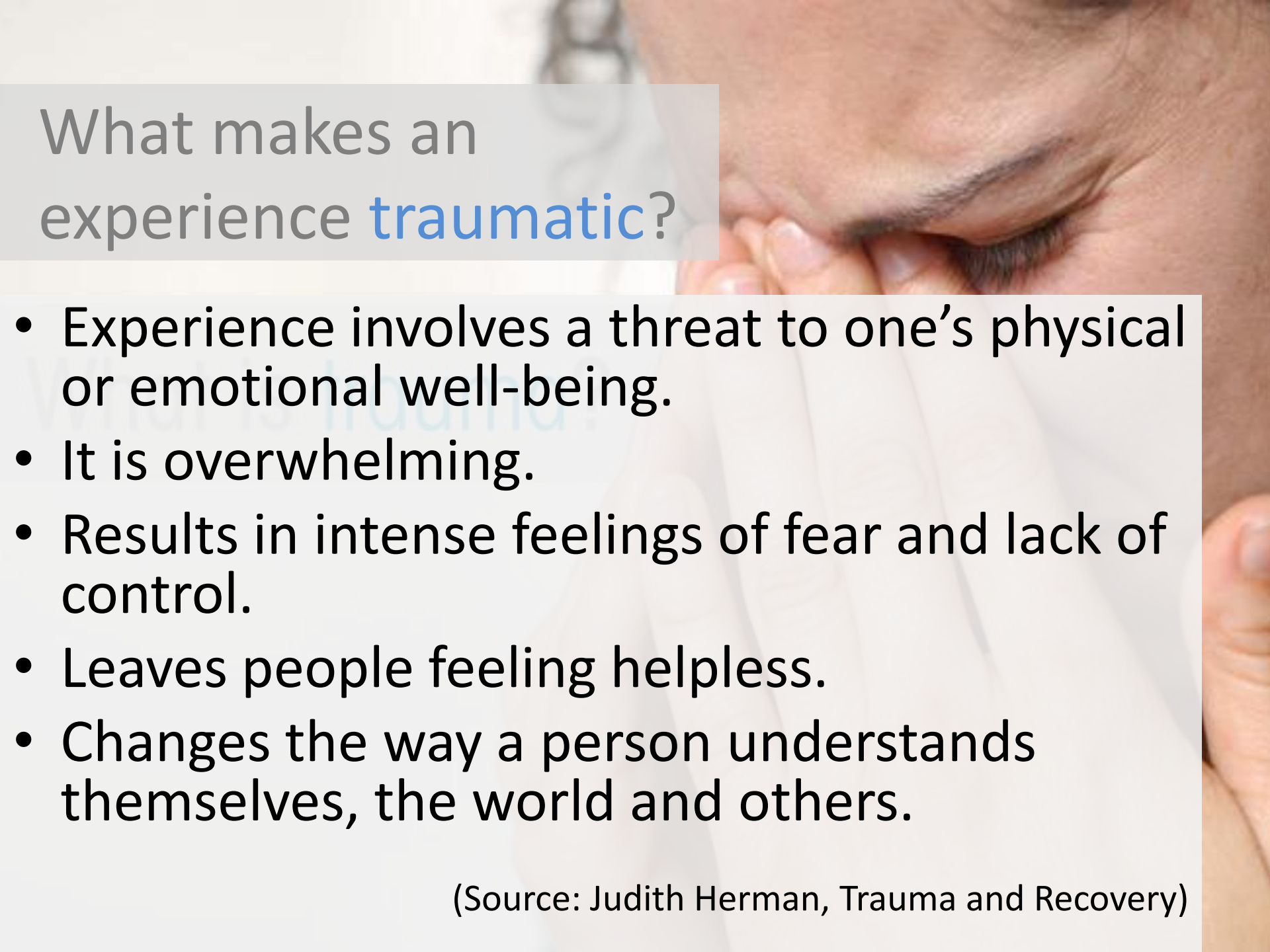




What is **trauma**?

OR:

Childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, including prolonged or extreme neglect; also, witnessing such abuse inflicted on another child or an adult.



# What makes an experience **traumatic**?

- Experience involves a threat to one's physical or emotional well-being.
- It is overwhelming.
- Results in intense feelings of fear and lack of control.
- Leaves people feeling helpless.
- Changes the way a person understands themselves, the world and others.

(Source: Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery)

# Intergenerational Trauma

- Slavery and colonization
- Holocaust/genocide survivors
- Survivors of catastrophic natural disasters
- Imprisonment
- Forced displacement
- Trafficking
- Domestic violence
- Physical, emotional and sexual abuse



A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a young child's face. The child has dark, large eyes and a somber or sad expression. The lighting is soft, and the background is dark, making the child's face the central focus of the image.

# PTSD in Children

A major study revealed that people who had been in foster care as children had higher rates of PTSD (25%) than returning U.S. war veterans (12%).



# Complex or Developmental Trauma

Psychological maltreatment, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, or witnessing domestic violence, impacting a child's ongoing development. It is:

- Chronic
- Begins in early childhood, and
- Occurs within the child's primary caregiving system and/or social environment



# Complex or Developmental Trauma (cont.)

- Results in emotional dysregulation
- Loss of safety and direction
- Ability to detect or respond to danger cues
- Impacts a child's development
- Leads to subsequent or repeated trauma in adolescence and adulthood

*Unless given supports* that might buffer the negative effects.

(Adapted from Blumenfeld, et al, 2010)

A safe, stable, and nurturing relationship  
with a caring adult




can help children overcome trauma

(CDC)

# Help for Parents Training for Professionals





At Echo Parenting & Education we  
define violence as anything that hurts  
the body, mind or emotions of a child.



Words hurt.





So does shaming,  
blaming and  
manipulation



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

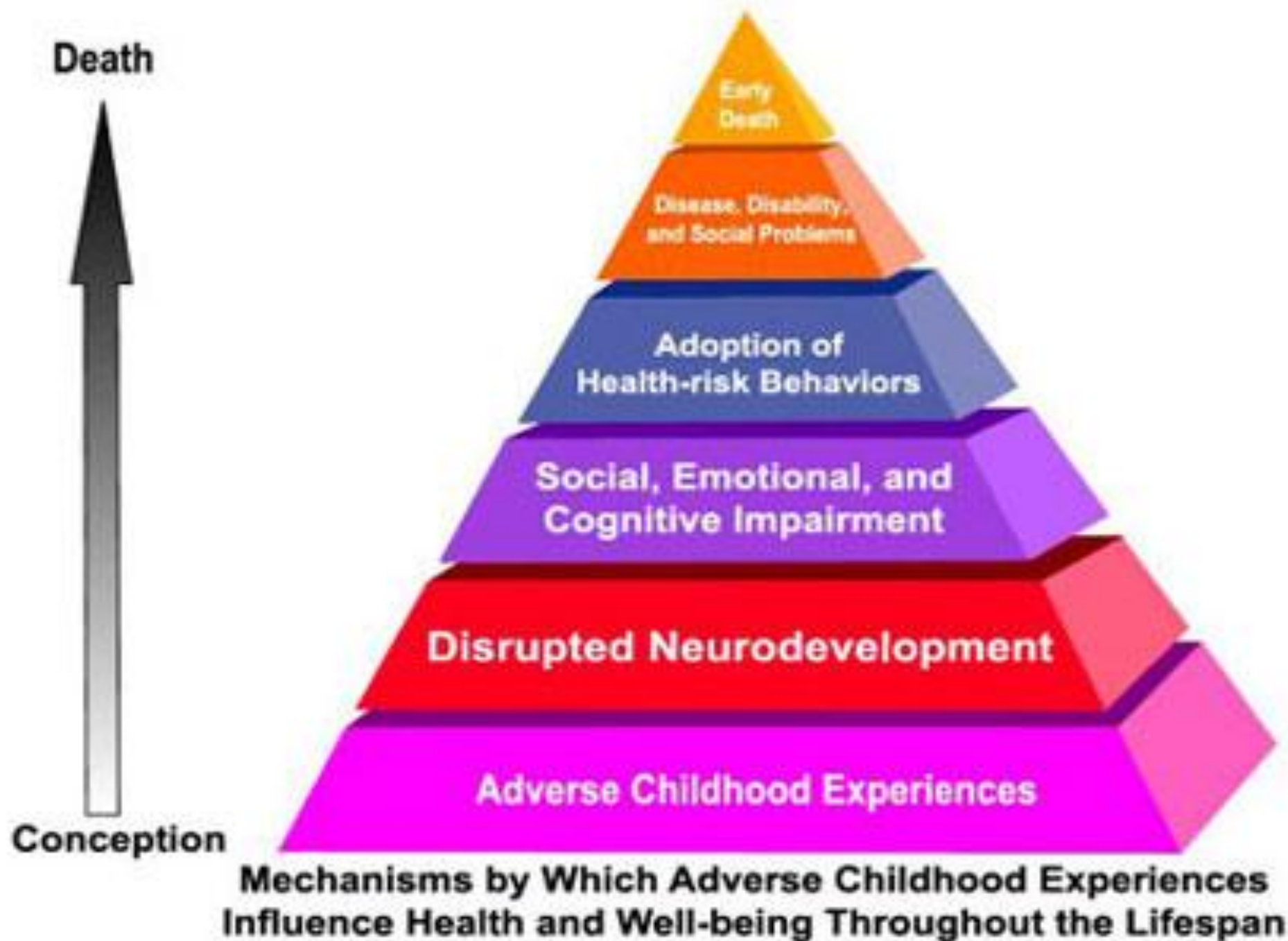


# Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother is treated violently
- One or no parents
- Emotional or physical neglect

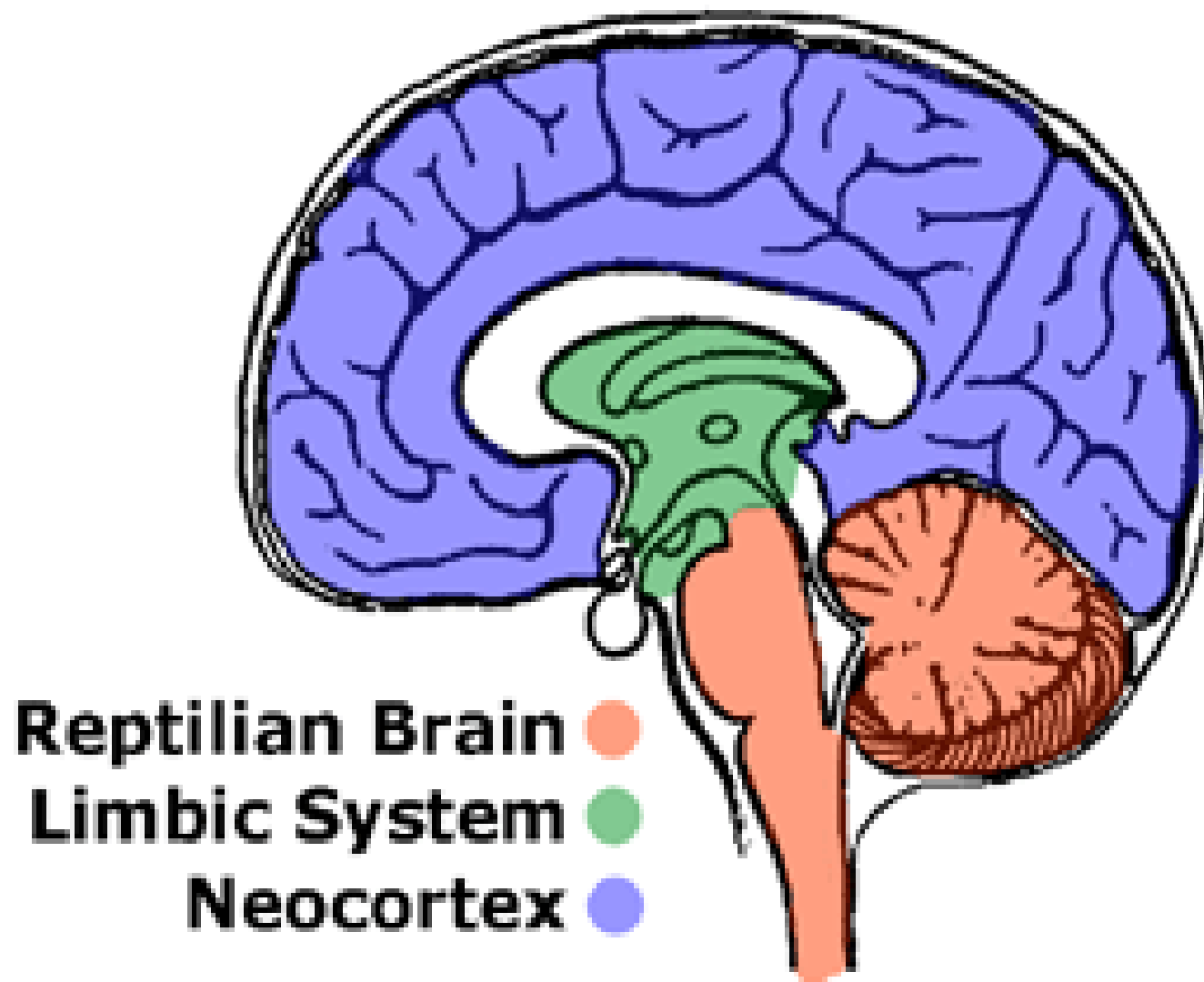


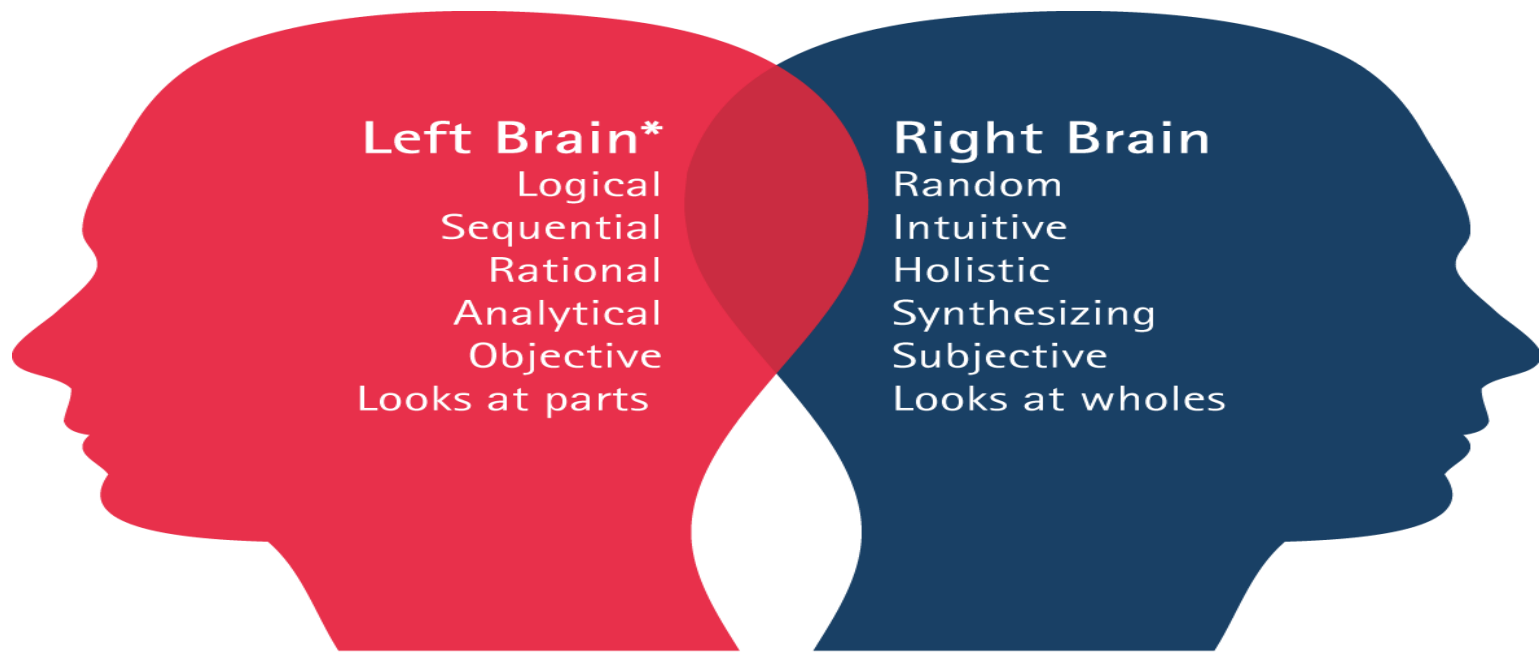






# The Evolution-Designed Brain

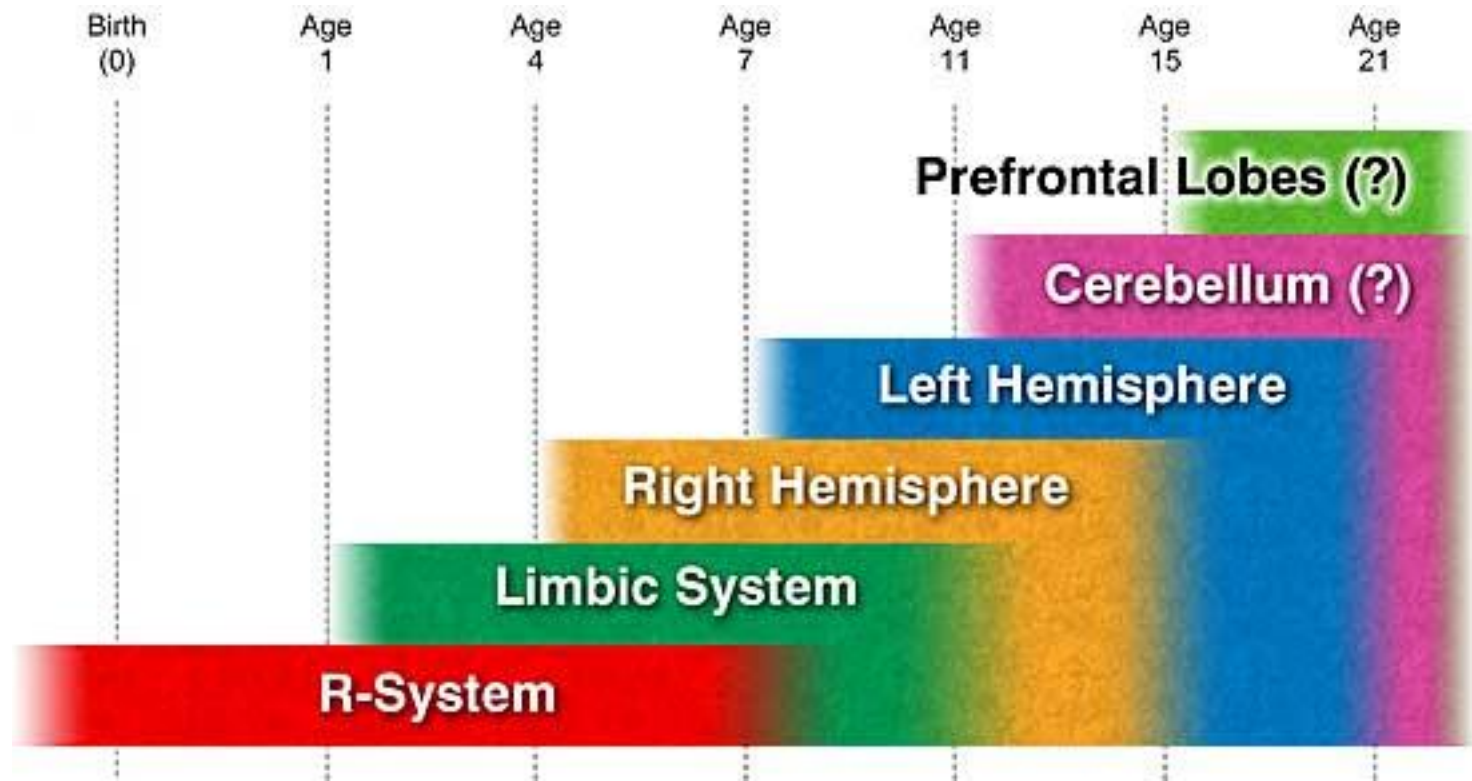




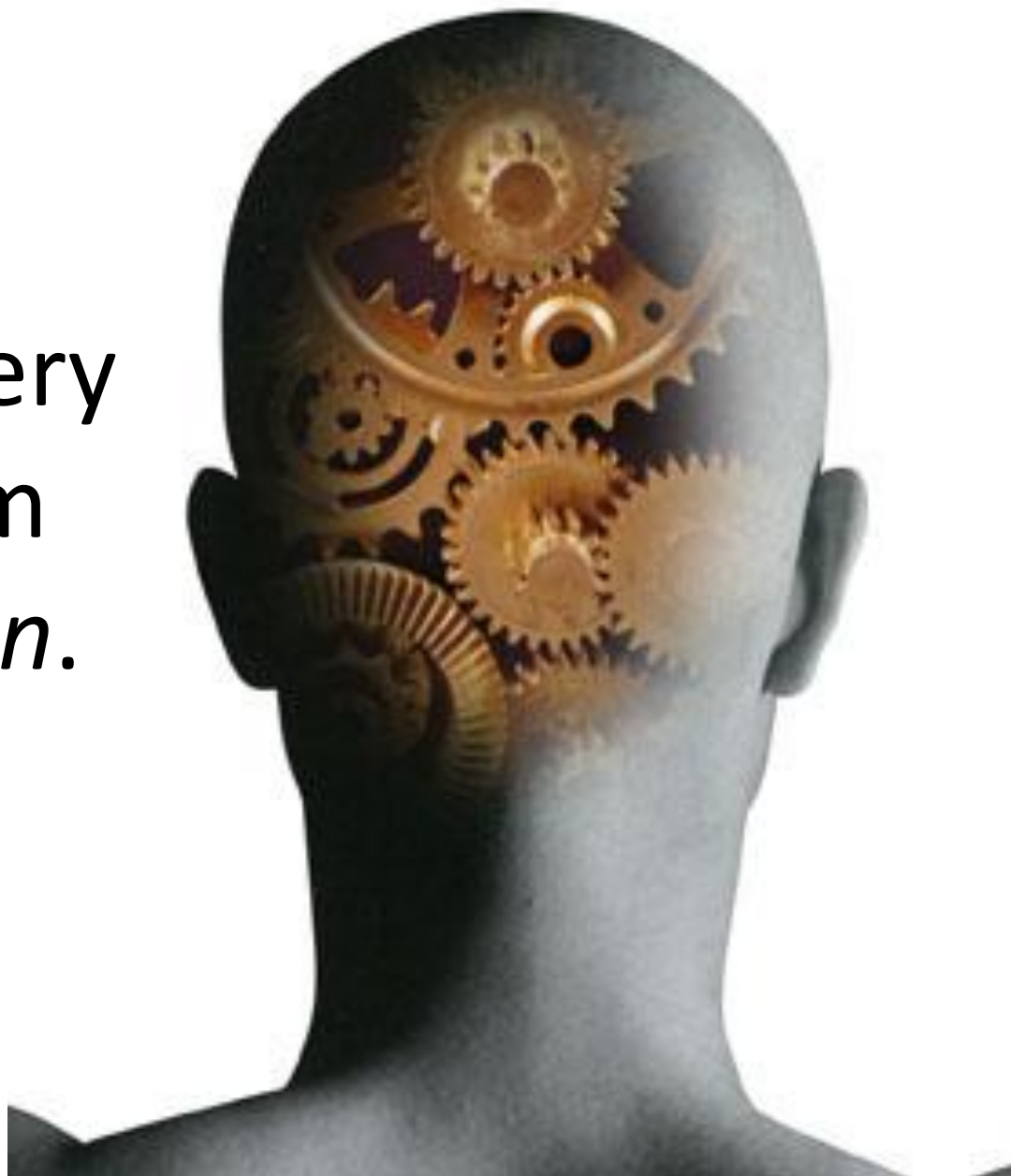
Trauma in childhood damages the corpus callosum, which connects the left brain with the right brain.

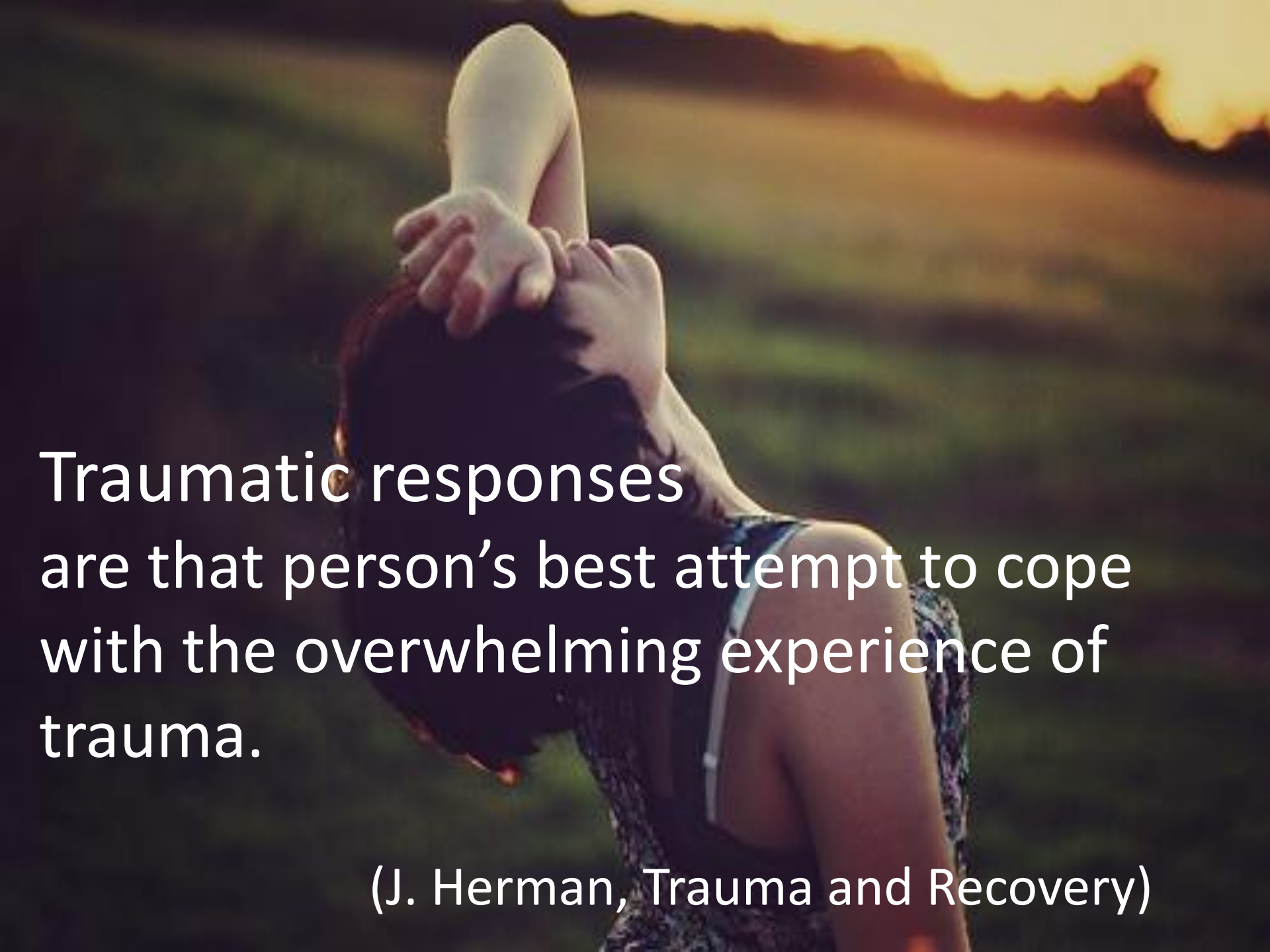
Results in cognitive inflexibility, impaired memory, learning and planning, reactionary emotional states, depression and anxiety disorders.

# Brain Development



The goal of  
trauma recovery  
is not exorcism  
but *integration*.




A person is seen from behind, standing in a grassy field at sunset. They are holding their head in their hands, with their arms raised and hands clasped over their head. The person is wearing a dark, patterned top. The background is a soft-focus landscape with a bright, low sun creating a warm, golden glow over the horizon. The overall mood is one of distress or contemplation.

Traumatic responses  
are that person's best attempt to cope  
with the overwhelming experience of  
trauma.

(J. Herman, Trauma and Recovery)



A person with dark hair is seen from behind, standing in a grassy field at sunset. Their arms are raised, and their hands are clasped behind their head. The background shows a bright orange and yellow sky over a dark horizon. The text "These are NORMAL responses to ABNORMAL events" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

These are NORMAL  
responses to ABNORMAL  
events

A person is seen from the back, standing in a grassy field at sunset. Their hands are clasped behind their head, and they are looking up towards the bright, low sun. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, with the sun partially obscured by clouds on the horizon.

# Trauma Responses

## Dissociation

- Hyperarousal
- Intrusive thoughts or memories
- Constriction and avoidance

# Children's Response to Trauma

- Regressive behavior
- Fear of separation from parent
- Repetitive play
- Withdrawn
- Aggressive
- Spaced out
- Night terrors



*Providers may be under the impression that abuse experiences are an additional problem for their clients, rather than the central problem...every major diagnostic category in the...DSM-IV can sometimes be related to trauma.*

National Technical Assistance Center for Mental Health  
Planning and the National Association of State Mental Health  
Program Directors



# Tools for Practice



Trauma Informed Care



# Goals of TIC:

- Avoid retraumatization
- Empowerment
- Recovery



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Trauma Informed Care

# 5 Principles of TIC

- Safety
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Trustworthiness

Roger D. Fallot Ph.D.  
Maxine Harris, Ph.D.

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# Trauma Informed Care

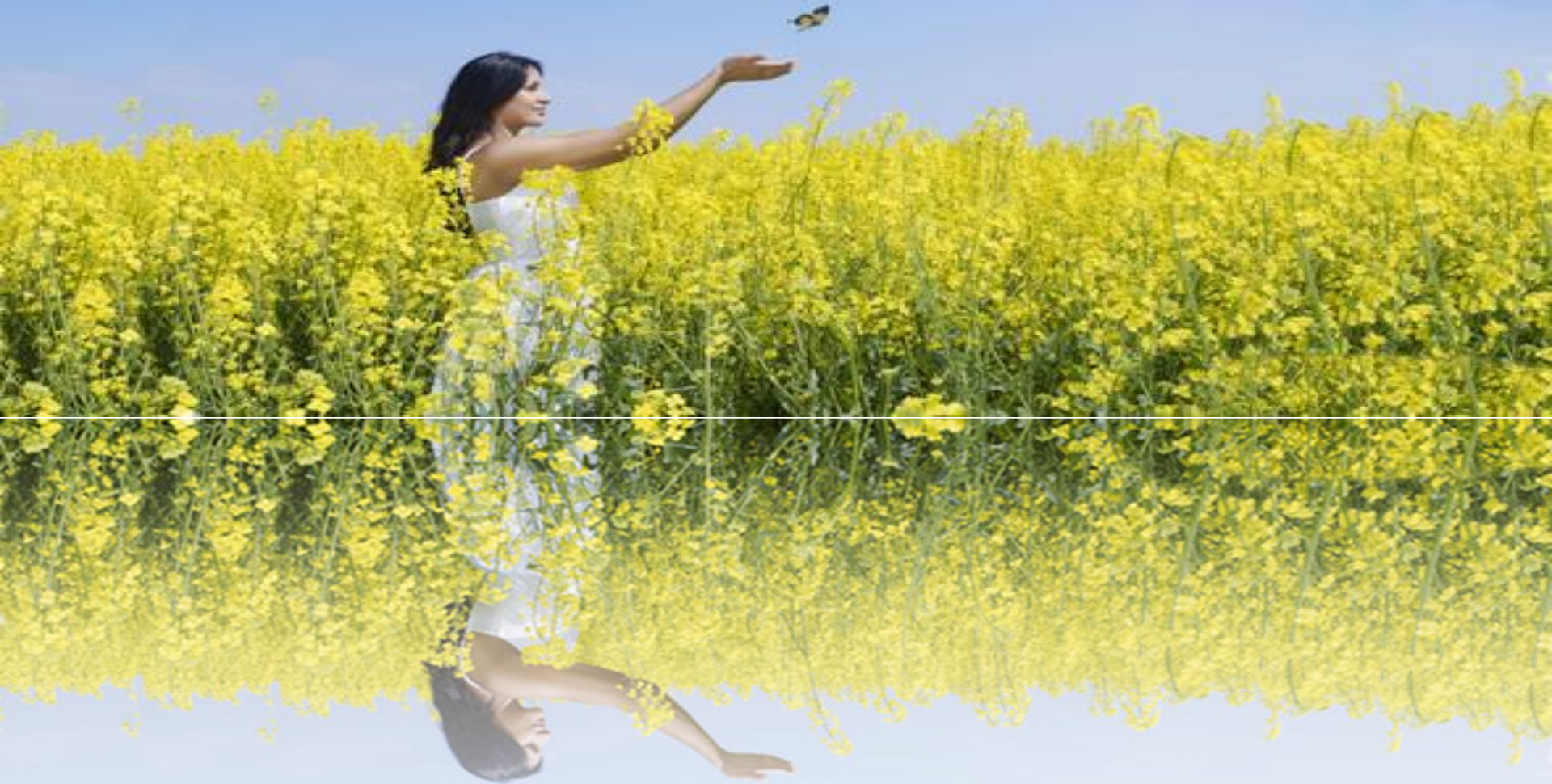
**Power WITH**



**not Power OVER**



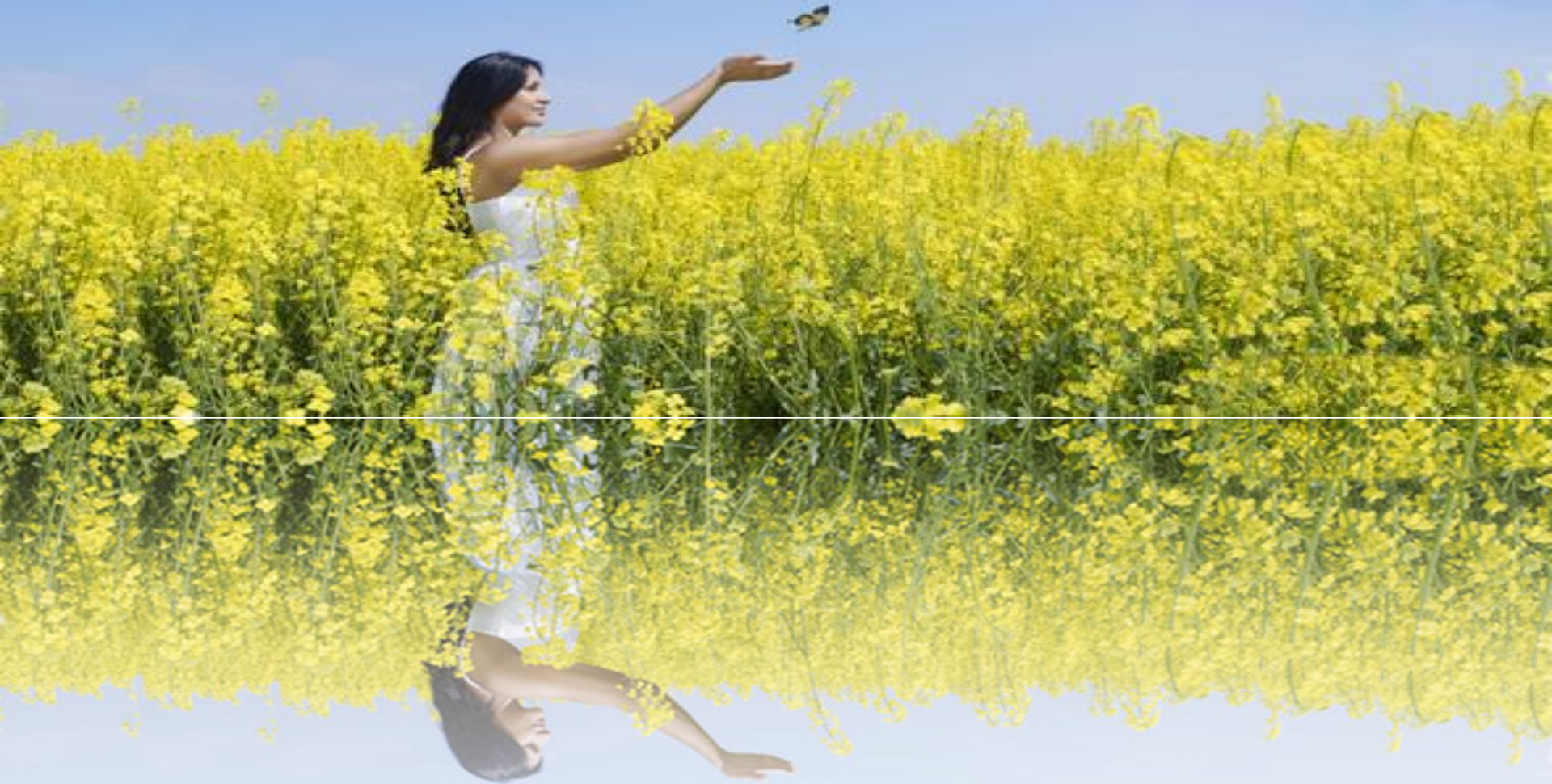
**“What happened to you?”**



**“What’s wrong with you?”**



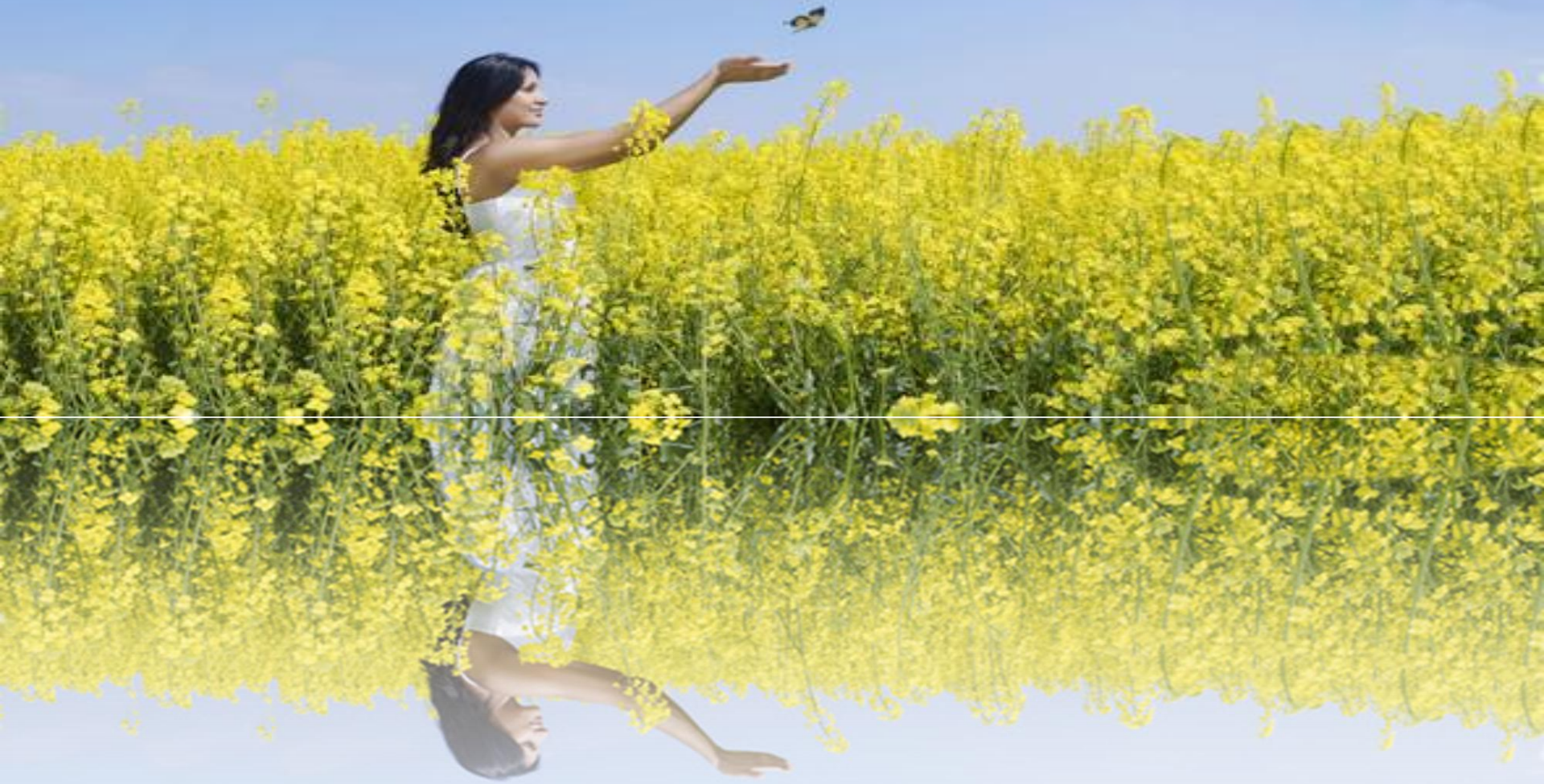
**“It makes sense.”**



**“Something’s wrong with you.”**



# Compassionate Witness



# Expert



**Support healing**



**I'm here to fix you**

“As a defense against the unbearable feeling of helplessness, the practitioner may try to assume the role of rescuer.”



“The practitioner may take on more and more of an advocacy role for the client. By so doing she implies the client is not capable of acting for herself.”





“The more helpless,  
dependent and  
incompetent the client  
feels, the worse her  
symptoms become.”

J. Herman, Trauma and  
Recovery





# Relationships



- Safe
- Collaborative
- Predictable
- Consistent
- Non-judgmental
- Respectful

# Environment

- Warm
- Clear
- Predictable
- Consistent
- Living things (plants)
- Limit florescent or CFL bulbs
- Child-friendly



# *Triggers*



- Sounds
- Smells
- Colors
- Movements
- Objects
- Anniversaries... anything that reminds a survivor of the original trauma

# WARNING!

- Agitation
- Tightness in chest
- Sweating
- Clenching teeth
- Wringing hands
- Bouncing legs
- Shaking
- Crying
- Giggling
- Pacing
- Breathing hard
- Shortness of breath
- Clenching fists
- Loud voice
- Swearing
- Restlessness



# Self-Regulation

- Counting objects
- Breathing
- Sipping water
- Clay modeling





# Self-Regulation for Children

- **Breathing**  
(blowing bubbles or windmills)
- **Clay modeling**
- **Rocking**



# Compassionate Witnesses



# DSM V

- Actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation was:
  - Experienced
  - Witnessed
- A close relative or friend experienced actual or threatened violent or accidental death.
- *Experienced repeated exposure to distressing details (such as a police officer taking details of child sexual abuse)*



# Signs of Vicarious Trauma

- Hyperarousal
- Invasive thoughts or images
- Feeling numb
- Feeling unable to tolerate strong emotions
- Increased sensitivity to violence
- Cynicism
- Generalized despair/hopelessness, loss of idealism
- Guilt regarding your own survival or pleasure
- Anger, disgust and fear

(Source: Headington Institute)

# Effects of Vicarious Trauma

- Become skeptical of client's story
- Minimize or rationalize the abuse
- Feel revulsion and disgust at client's behavior
- Become judgmental or censorious when client does not behave like a 'good' victim
- Feel contempt for the client's helplessness
- Paranoid fear of client's vindictive rage.

(J. Herman, Trauma and Recovery)

“What we cannot own up to, we  
may have to reject in others.”

(Henry Krystal)



Compassionate action is *working with* rather than *struggling against*. Work with your own unacceptable stuff, then when the unacceptable and unwanted appears out there, you relate to it based on having worked with loving-kindness for yourself.





This nondualist approach is true to the heart because it is based on our kinship with each other...



We know what to say without  
condescension to someone else who is  
suffering, because we have experienced  
closing down, shutting off, being angry,  
hurt or rebellious, and have made a  
relationship with those  
things in ourselves.



# “Comfortable with Uncertainty” Pema Chodron



# Resources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- National Center for Trauma Informed Care (SAMSHA)
- ACES – CDC  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ace>
- ACEs Too High  
<http://acestoohigh.com>





# Resources

- Child Trauma Academy  
[www.childtraumaacademy.com](http://www.childtraumaacademy.com)
- Center on the Developing Child  
– Harvard University, “Science of Early Childhood” (Toxic Stress)
- Trauma and Recovery, Judith Herman
- Women Who Hurt Themselves, Dusty Miller



# Thank you!



[lgodbold@echoparenting.org](mailto:lgodbold@echoparenting.org)

