
DAWN

CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION

DAWN INSTITUTE

Healing the Hidden Wounds:
Understanding and Treating Trauma in
Children and Families

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Meet your trainer

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From



Family Ties



To



the office





Discussion

What emotions or behaviors would you expect to see in a child that may have been harmed?



Signs?

- Fear
- Anger
- Sadness
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Guilt
- Confusion



Signs?

- Laughing
- Smiling
- Joking
- Calm



What is Trauma

An event of circumstance resulting in:

Physical harm

Emotional harm

Life threatening harm





Understanding Trauma

Shock Trauma

- Natural Disasters
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- DV
- Neglect
- Witnessing Crime
- Victim of Crime
- Military Actions
- Accidents/Injuries

Pervasive Stress

- Chaotic Environments
- Aggressive Environments
- Punitive Environments
- Inconsistent Parenting
- Instability in the family (financial, emotional, etc.)

Vicarious

- Caregiving for a family member with intense needs
- First responders
- Helping professions



What is Trauma?



The Hand Model of the Brain



The Hand Model of the Brain

- Brain Stem: Automatic Functions
- Emotion Center (Limbic System)
 - Smoke Detector (Amygdala)
- Rational Brain: Planning, Logic, Creativity, Curiosity, Relationships, Cause/Effect, Reasoning, Forethought



Social Engagement System (Ventral Vagal Complex)

“Somebody come help me.”

Aggressive Defense (Sympathetic Nervous System)

“Nobody is protecting me, so I need to protect myself.”

Passive Defense (Dorsal Vagal Complex)

“I can't stop this, so I'm shutting down.”



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Tonic Immobility

- Related to but different from freeze
- When threat is in close proximity
- Might be last resort if other responses fail
- Affects storage of memory
- 1/3 of adult and 1/2 of child sex assault victims

Physiological responses

- Dramatic changes in heart rate
- Lack of muscle control
- Vocal chords frozen
- Physical (bodily) sensations often lacking

Illustration of Fear State



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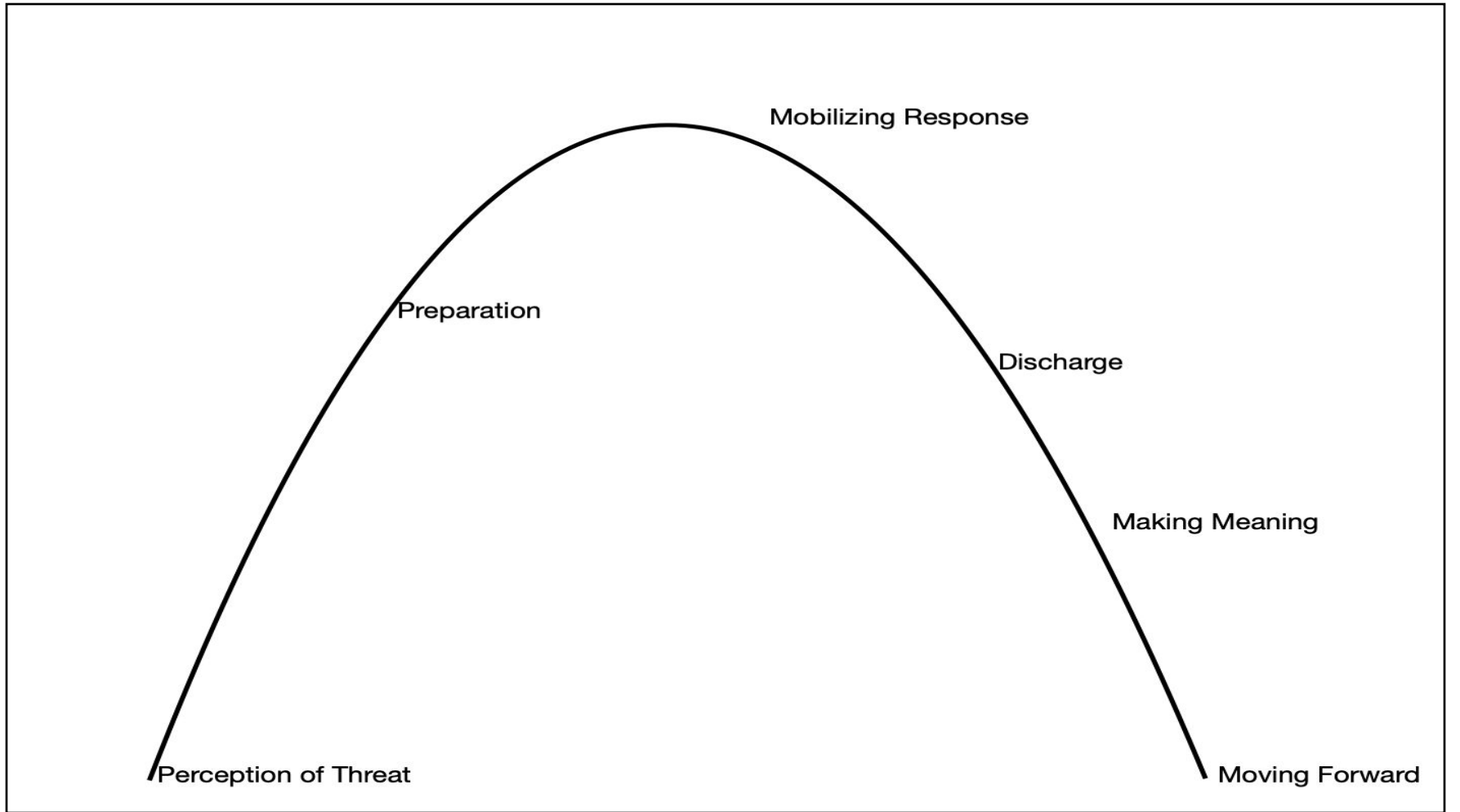
Collapsed Immobility

- Also known as: “collapse, faint, flaccid immobility, fear-induced fainting, vasovagal syncope”
- Same mechanism as previously described in Tonic Immobility
- Reduced blood flow to the brain results in a physical shut down of the body
 - This normally takes the form of fainting



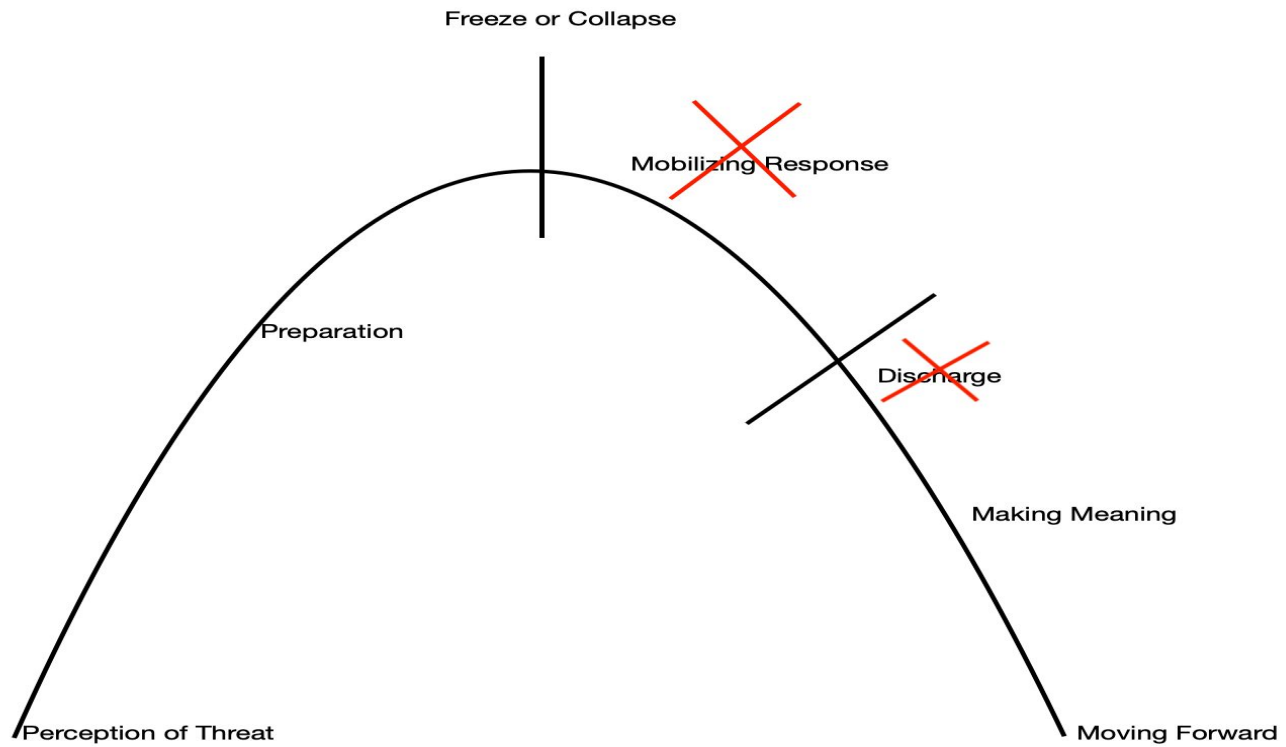
Illustration of Fear State





An Incomplete Survival Cycle





Where we get stuck...



Behavior is Communication



What is being communicated?



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The impact:

- Incomplete responses
 - Chronic self-protective response
 - Re-enactment
- Trouble time stamping
 - Trouble staying present
 - Trouble with sleep
- Difficulty soothing
- Delayed Development



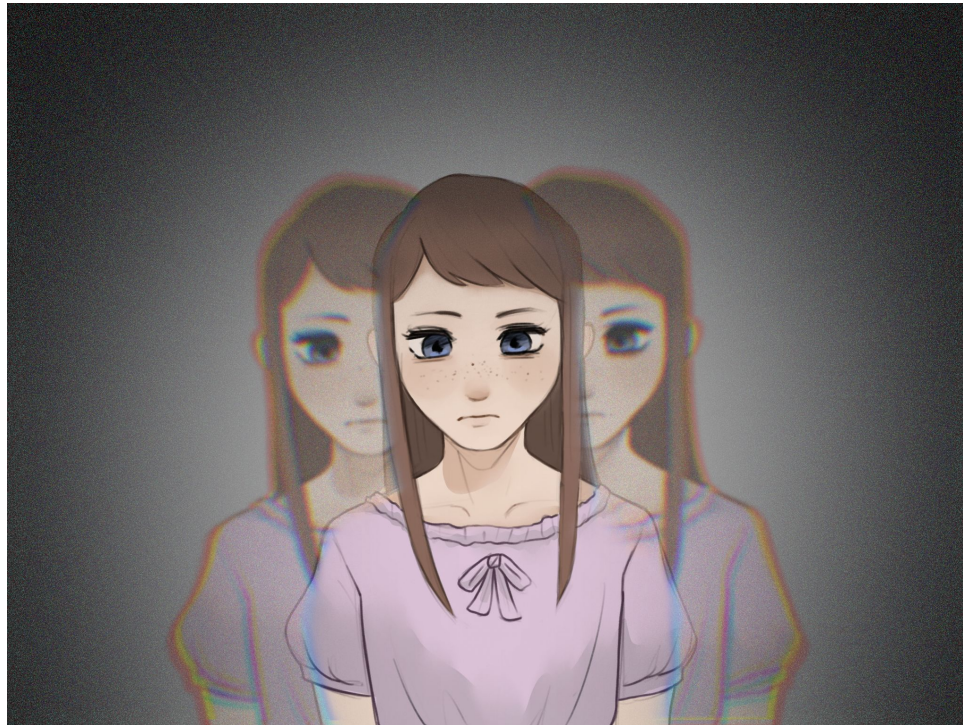
Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis/Task	What Happens at This Stage?
1	Trust vs Mistrust	If needs are dependably met, infants develop a sense of basic trust.
2	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Toddlers learn to exercise will and do things for themselves, or they doubt their abilities.
3	Initiative vs Guilt	Preschoolers learn to initiate tasks and carry out plans, or they feel guilty about efforts to be independent.
4	Industry vs Inferiority	Children learn the pleasure of applying themselves to tasks, or they feel inferior.
5	Identity vs Confusion	Teenagers work at refining a sense of self by testing roles and then integrating them to form a single identity, or they become confused about who they are.
6	Intimacy vs Isolation	Young adults struggle to form close relationships and to gain the capacity for intimate love, or they feel socially isolated.
7	Generativity vs Stagnation	The middle-aged discover a sense of contributing to the world, usually through family and work, or they may feel a lack of purpose.
8	Integrity vs Despair	When reflecting on his or her life, the older adult may feel a sense of satisfaction or failure.

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Dissociative Parts



Artwork by Remini Kinman

Impact of Trauma on the Family System



Parents

- Toxic guilt, guilt, and more guilt
- Avoidance
- Trouble navigating systems
- Overwhelm
- Grief
- Worry
- Fear



Family Roles

- Hero
- Scapegoat
- Lost Child
- Mascot



Consideration: Parental Trauma History

- Parent attachment styles and ability to provide a secure attachment
- Parental trauma response and PTSD
 - Dissociation
 - Fight/Flight Response
- Ability of parent to be introspective
- Above all else... Compassion!



Treatment





Starting Point

Child Needs

- Containment
 - Safety
- Connection
 - Security

Parent Needs

- To be heard and understood
- Patience
- Attachment healing
- Compassion

Connect & Contain



“Children can’t out heal their parents.”

Dawn Process

1. Thorough biopsychosocial history
 - a. Medical
 - b. Psychiatric/ counseling
 - c. Family history
 - d. Social history/ natural supports
 - e. Hopes for therapy
2. MIM (TheraPlay- parent child evaluation)
3. Parent feedback session
4. Treatment recommendations
5. Evaluative session with child

Treatment Recommendations

- ❖ Attachment Based Therapy
- ❖ Group Therapy
- ❖ Individual Therapy
- ❖ Parent Therapy
- ❖ Co-Parenting Therapy
- ❖ Reflective/ Feedback Sessions
- ❖ Medical Intervention
- ❖ Further Evaluation

Play Therapy

- Child-directed play
 - Puppet play
 - Art
- Sand Tray Play Therapy
- EMDR
- Somatic Experiencing



Play Therapy Considerations

- Emotional Literacy
- Resourcing
- Priming Play
- Pendulative Process
- Need of the Child
 - Direct Vs. Non-direct
- Processing vs. Attachment vs. Emotional Literacy
- SIBAM
- Experiential





Nature

Food

Home items

Vehicles



People, people, people

Spiritual: Light and dark

Cages



Animals

Animal families

Houses

Fencing

Cultural items



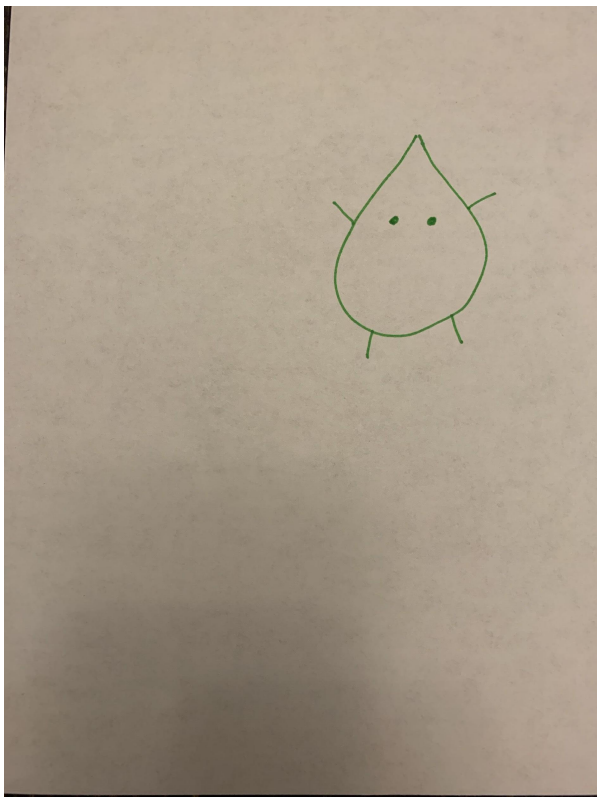


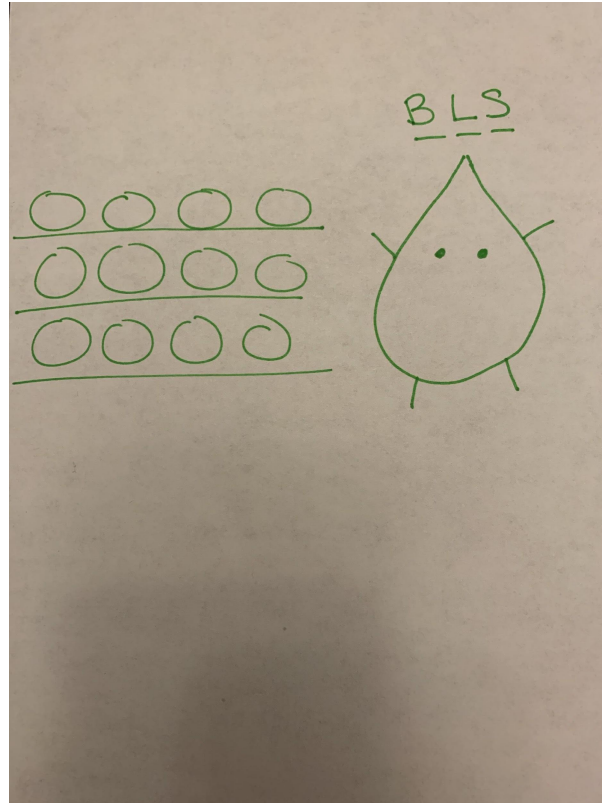
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

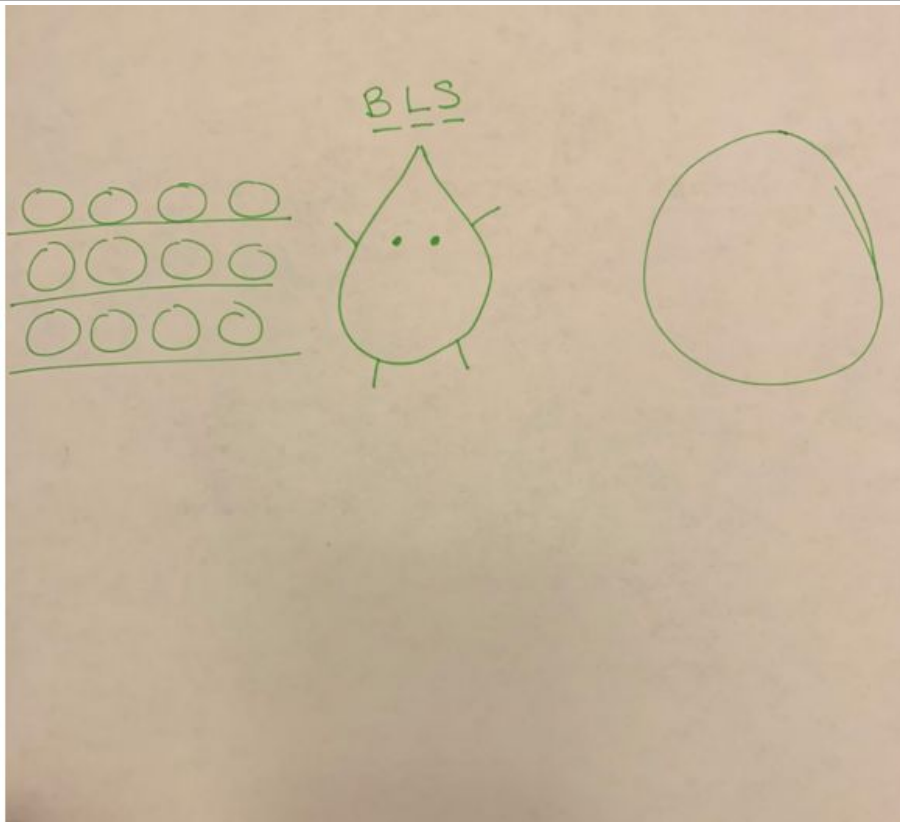
Francine Shapiro

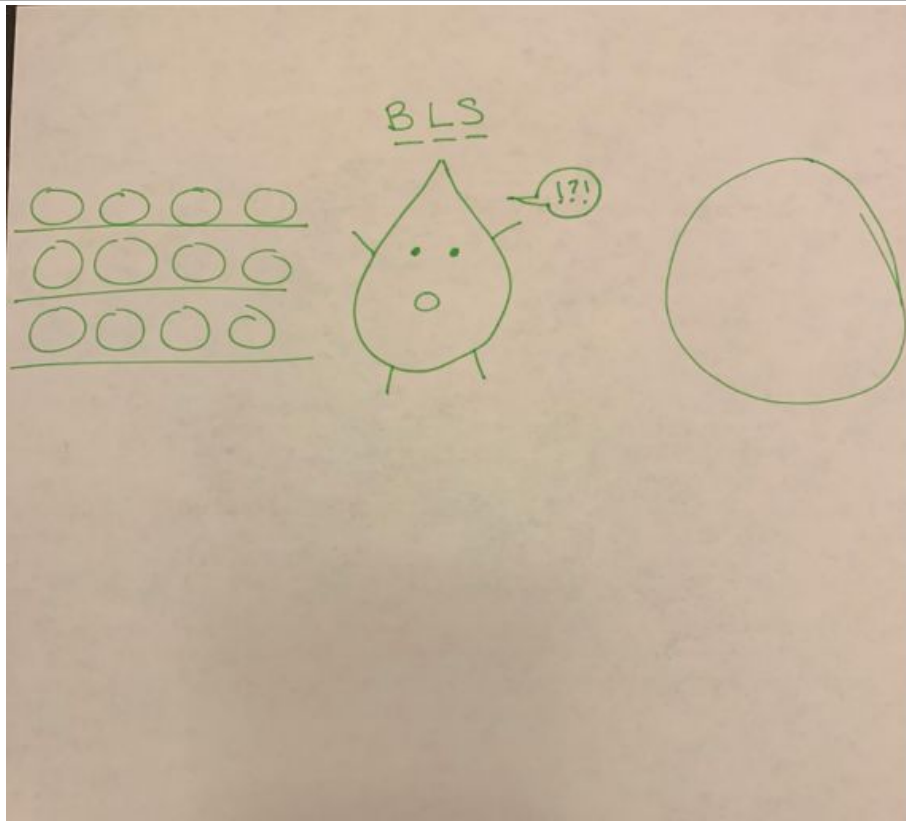
8 Interweaving Phases of EMDR

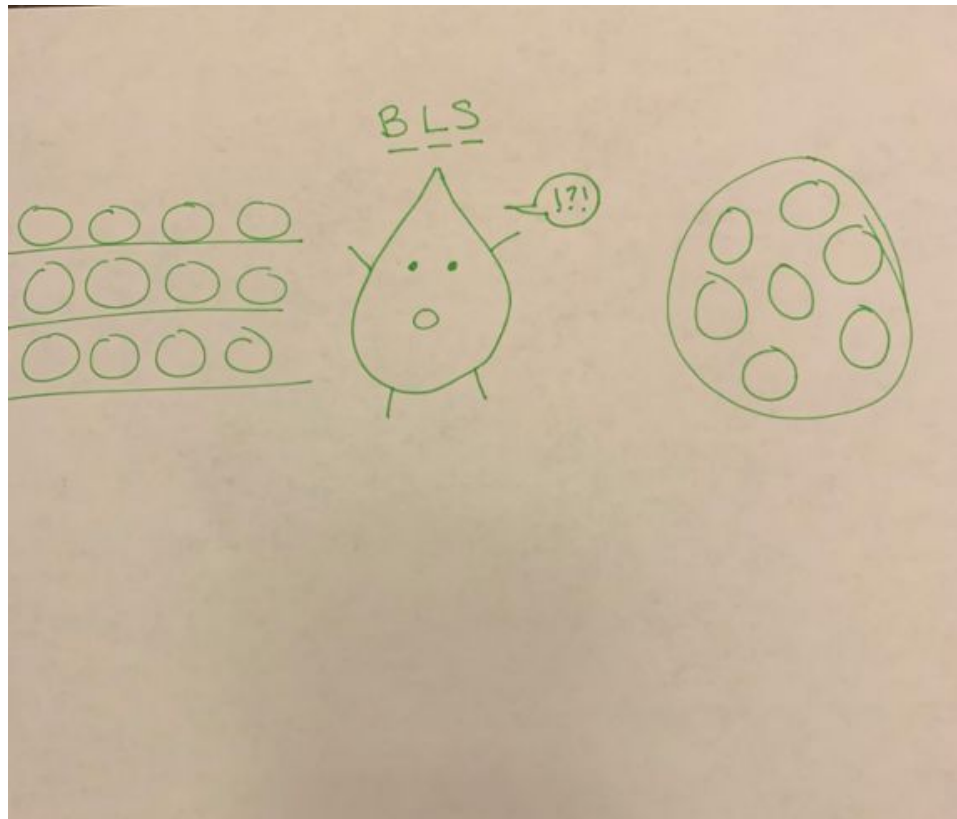


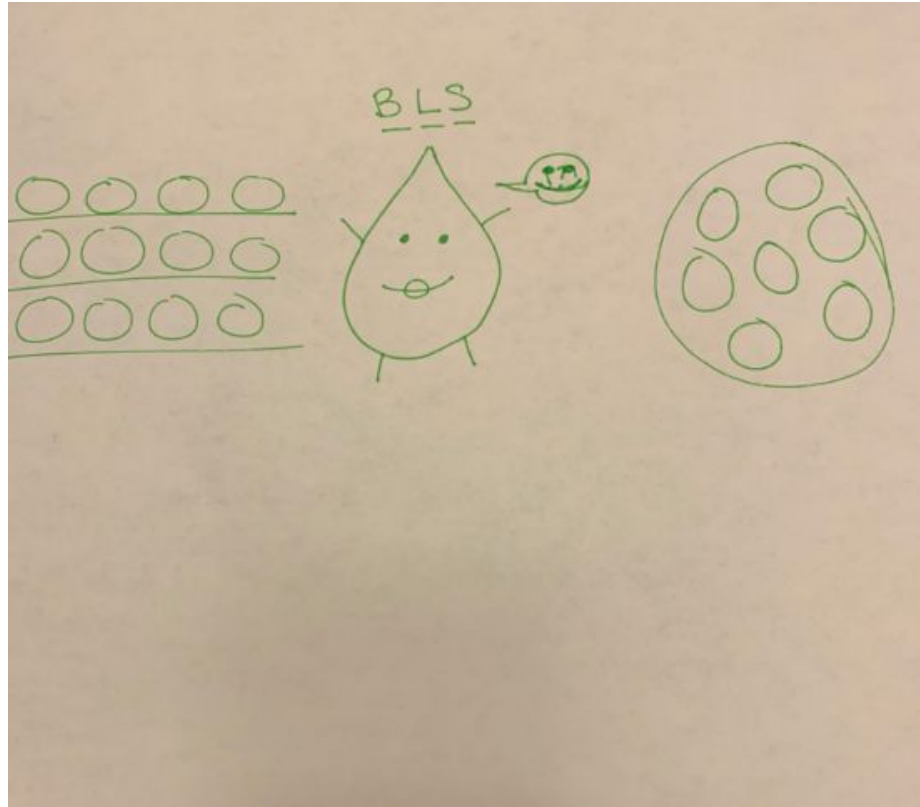












Somatic Experiencing Peter Levine

“Somatic experiencing is a form of alternative therapy aimed at relieving the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental and physical trauma-related health problems by focusing on the client's perceived body sensations.”

Wikipedia



Ears & Eyes



Curiosity

To the room

To the body

To relationships

Comparison questions

In day to day

Model Curiosity

Ask questions that encourage curiosity



Ethical considerations

- High conflict families
- Child vs. family therapy
- Considerations for parental involvement
- “No Secrets”
- Danger to self (DTS)
- Working with multiple family members



The Big Ethical Questions:

- What are regulations/ ethics?
- Am I reacting or being intentional?
- What could go wrong?
- Who could this harm?
- What is the risk of harm?
- What is the possible harm?
- Have I transparently consulted with anyone?



Resources

Dan Siegel: The Whole Brain Child/ Parenting from the Inside Out

Bessel van der Kolk: The Body Keeps the Score

Karyn Purvis: The Connected Child

Stephen Porges: Polyvagal Theory

Arizona Trauma Institute

Gabor Mate: Hold Onto Your Kids

Janina Fisher: Healing the Fragmented Self

Peter Levine: Waking the Tiger

Somatic Experiencing

Theraplay

Trauma Play

