

Creating a Context for Healing: The Three Pillars of *Transforming Care*

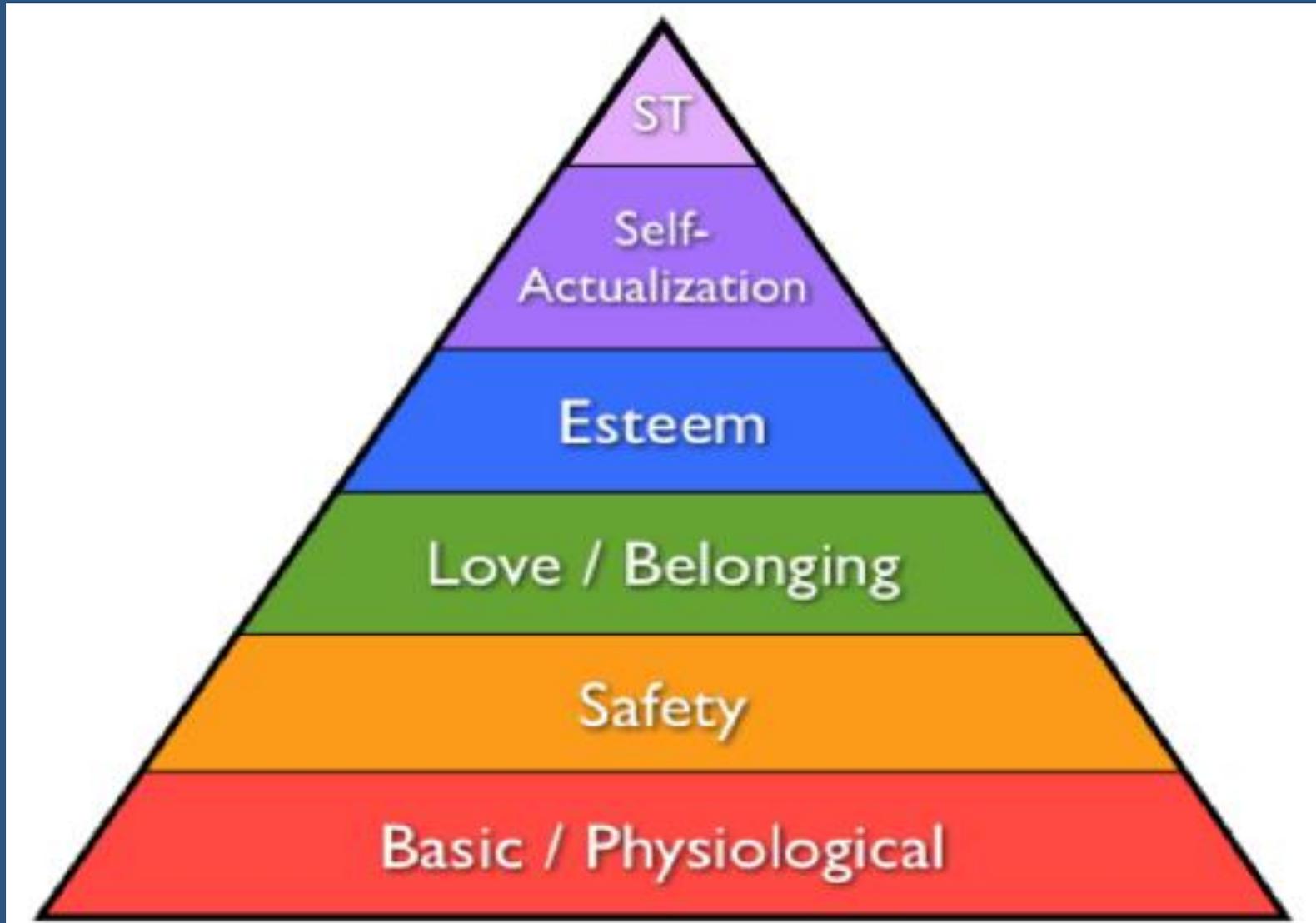
Mark Freado

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The Three Pillars Framework

- the central research findings and propositions of the trauma framework
- the *core* needs that result from traumatic exposure, and
- the implications for direct practice in the life space of young people

Maslow's Revised Hierarchy of Human Needs



*Traumatized children
reset their normal level of
arousal. Even when no
external threats exist,
they are in a persistent
state of alarm.*

Bruce Perry





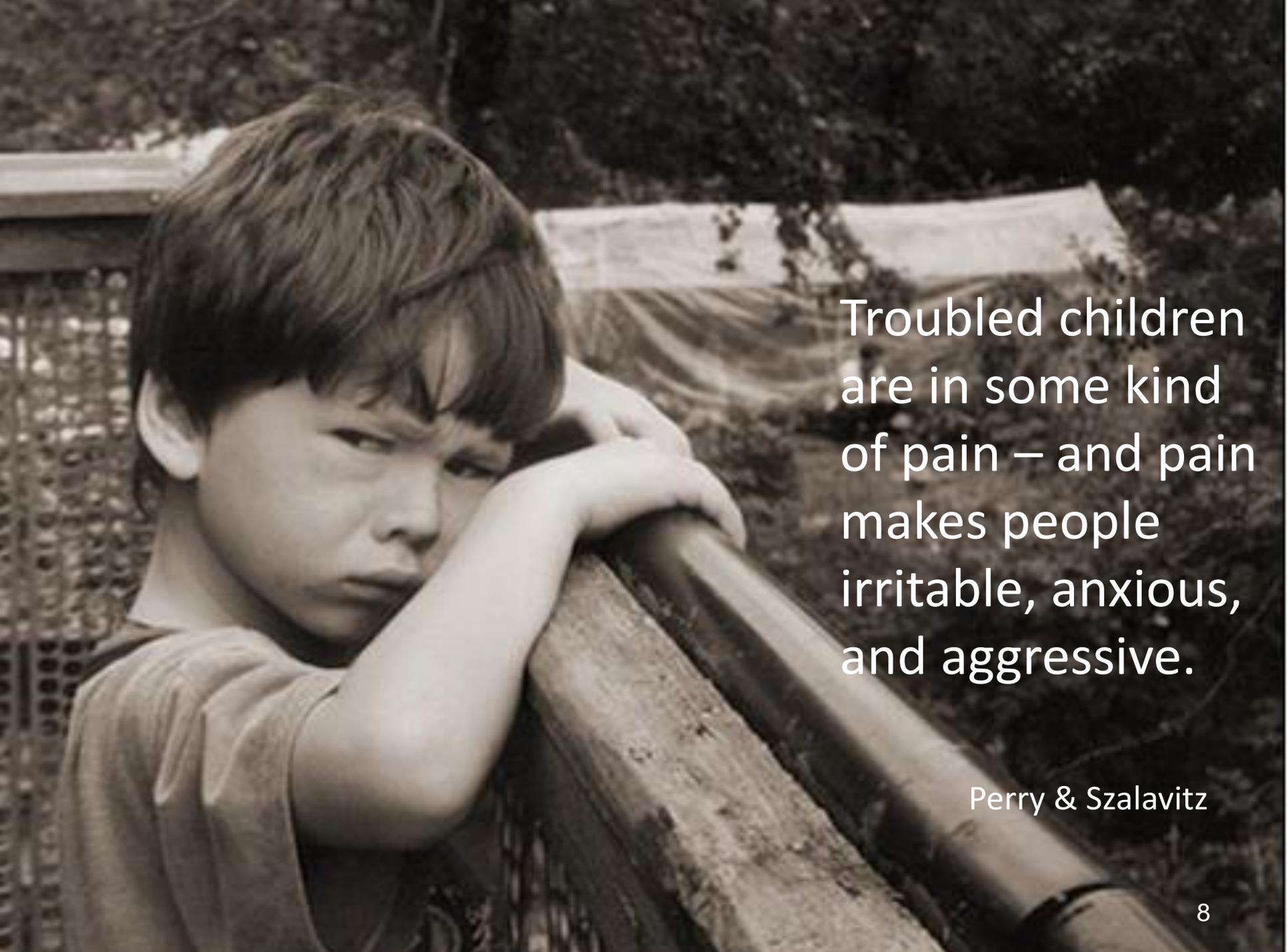
SAFETY

Physical
Emotional
Social/relational
Cultural

Being emotionally safe is knowing that your feelings, thoughts and perceptions – your inner world, is acknowledged, respected, and taken into account by adult care givers.



Safety involves kindness, consistency, honesty, reliability, inclusion, knowledge, appropriate power.

A black and white photograph of a young child with a sad expression, leaning their head on a wooden railing. The child has dark, wavy hair and is looking down and to the side. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees or a fence.

Troubled children
are in some kind
of pain – and pain
makes people
irritable, anxious,
and aggressive.

Perry & Szalavitz

Pain Based Behavior



Challenging problems often reflect psychoemotional pain.

Pain Based Emotions



- *grief at loss and abandonment*
- *anxiety about self and life circumstances*
- *fear or terror about a hopeless future*
- *depression at a lack of purpose in life*
- *numbness and withdrawal*

James Anglin



Seldom did care workers acknowledge or respond sensitively to the inner world of the child.

Instead they would react with controlling demands and warn of possible consequences.



Faced with challenging behaviors, caregivers deal with their frustration by retaliating in ways that often uncannily repeat the children's early trauma

Bessel van der Kolk

Why we resort to pain-based responses

- **Cultural Learning**

Family practices, values, professional training

- **Brain Programs**

Fight/Flight reactions, mirror neuron systems, tit-for-tat

**The *Central Challenge* for all
who interact with traumatised children:**

*Dealing with primary pain
without unnecessarily inflicting
secondary pain through
punitive or controlling reactions*

James Anglin

*Being able to
feel safe
with other people is
the single most
important aspect of
mental health*

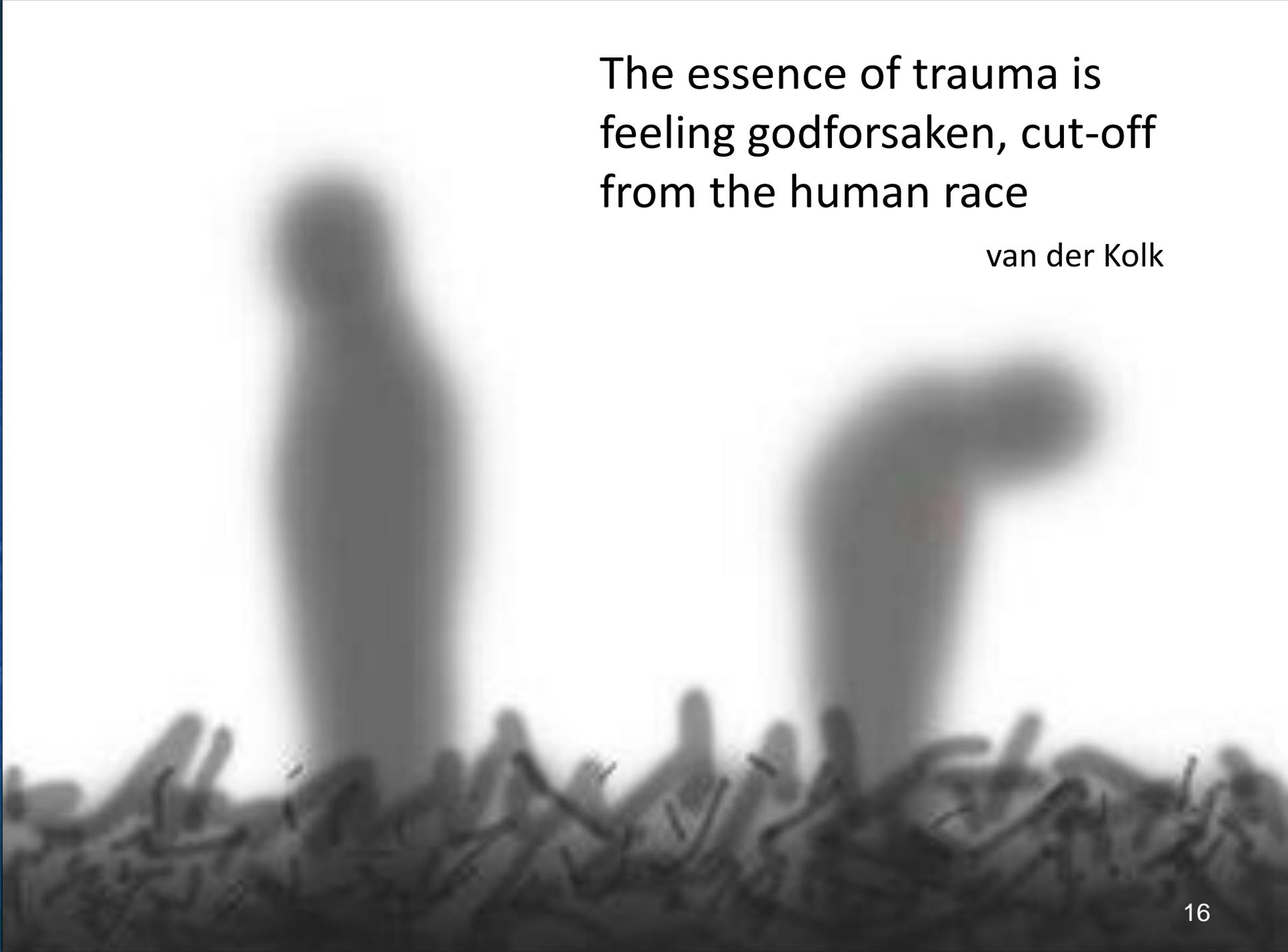
van der Kolk

THE BODY
KEEPS
THE SCORE



*Mind, Brain
and Body in the
Transformation
of Trauma*

BESSEL VAN DER KOLK



The essence of trauma is
feeling godforsaken, cut-off
from the human race

van der Kolk

I always felt I was different. Not good different; not unique-in-a-positive-way different; not proud different as in marching to my own drum; but shameful different. I felt as if I was somehow less in nearly every way than my peers.

Young adult formerly in care

Rhythmicity ~ In Synch

Have you noticed that when people jog, dance or throw a Frisbee in rhythm with each other, they seem to experience momentary bonding and a sense of unity?

At these and other moments of joint rhythmic engagement they discover an attraction for each other regardless whether there has been a previous sense of caring. In fact, it is almost impossible to dislike a person while being rhythmically in 'sync'.

Henry Maier



Trauma affects ...

- attachment
- social skills
- physical health
- control of emotions and impulses
- control of behaviours
- thinking skills
- self-concept, shame and guilt
- hopes for the future



The most significant consequence of early relational trauma is the child's failure to develop the capacity to self-regulate the intensity and duration of emotional states.

Allan Schore

At the core of traumatic stress is a breakdown in the capacity to regulate internal states.

Bessel van der Kolk

The traumatised child is 'drowning in a sea of fragmented and overwhelming emotions, sensations, and frightening thoughts'

Louis Cozolino, 2016

Coping

The things we call 'symptoms' or 'behavioural problems' are the best solutions our clients have been able to come up with to help them manage **unendurable feelings**

Whatever they are doing, it is, or at least it originally was, **a useful coping skill** that, over time and with overuse, became maladaptive and then became a habit

Many of our most intractable public health problems are the result of compensatory behaviours such as smoking, overeating, and alcohol and drug use, which provide partial relief from the emotional problems caused by traumatic childhood experiences.

Felitti & Anda, 2010

The challenge (in dealing with the impact of trauma) is not so much learning to accept the terrible things that have happened but **learning** how to gain mastery over one's internal sensations and emotions

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Coercive Control versus Co-Regulation

Coercive Control	Co-Regulation
One-way reaction	Two-way engagement
No awareness of own feelings	Awareness of own feelings
Focus on child's behaviours	Focus on child's emotions
Harsh, aggressive tone	Soothing, assertive tone
Retaliating to child's hostility	Absorbing child's hostility
Ignoring support needs	Meeting support needs



The primary function of parents can be thought of as teaching their children skills that will help them manage their emotional arousal.

van der Kolk

What then is the primary function of care workers and other mentors in out of home care programs?

The Three Core *Trauma-related* Needs

The need to **feel safe**

The need for **healthy connections** with carers, the normative community and culture

The need for **adaptive coping strategies** for managing turbulent thoughts and emotions

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