

Two Sides to the Story

Trauma Informed Schools

20 minutes earlier...

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What is Trauma?



Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening, and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning affecting mental, physical social, emotional and/ or spiritual well-being and **safety**.

Trauma is an event or events that involves an actual or perceived threat to a person's psychological, emotional, or physical wellbeing. Trauma can overwhelm a person's ordinary coping mechanisms. It can interfere with their memory, their trust in the world around them, and even their sense of self.

Types of Trauma

- Developmental Trauma
- Shock Trauma
- Secondary Trauma
- Vicarious Trauma
- Relational Trauma
- Sustained, community based traumatic stress
- Intergenerational/ Historic Trauma
 - Biological proof/ DNA research
 - Nature/ Nurture in terms of learned skills passed through generations
- Collective Trauma (Covid-19, Social injustices, Wars etc.)





*Anything the mind is unable to process. Or
finds anxiety in overcoming*

Traumatic Events

- Accidents
- Child abuse & neglect
- Natural disasters
- Violence
- Harassment & intimidation
- Bullying
- Medical illness
- Social & environmental factors
- Parent/ Caregiver death
- Inconsistent parenting/ support (mental illness/ substance use/ poverty/ absence etc.)
- War/ Terrorism
- Immigration/ refugee experiences

Trauma Can be:

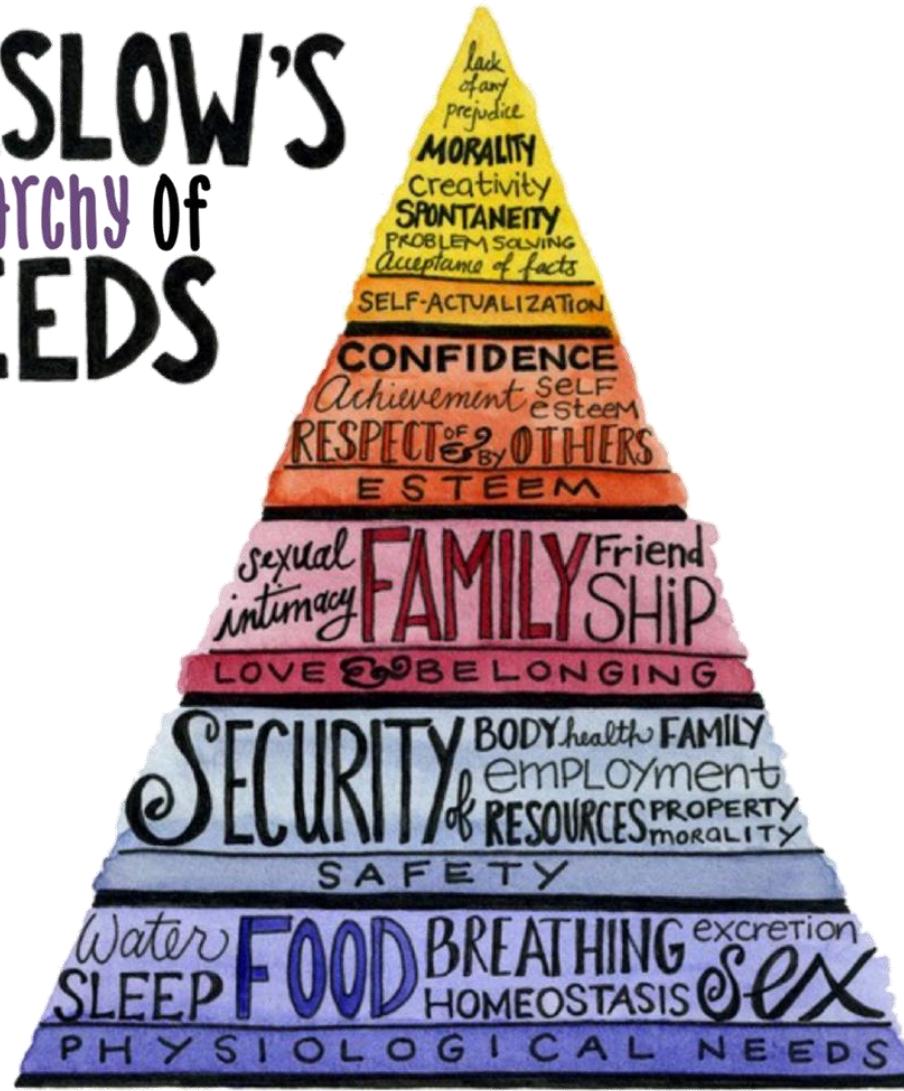
Acute (Single incident)	Chronic (Repeated & prolonged)	Complex (compounding, varied and multiple events)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Car accident• Death or loss• Natural Disaster• Assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domestic Violence• Poverty• Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than one trauma at a time• More than one type of trauma• Compounding

Things that Impact Traumatic Effect:

- How
- When
- Where
- How Often?
 - What happened next?
 - How was this individual responded to? Supported? Ignored?
- Individual Resiliency
- Support Systems
- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors



MASLOW'S Hierarchy of NEEDS



The 7 Cs of Resilience

Competence

Ability to handle a situation effectively

Confidence

Believing in personal abilities

Connection

Creating a sense of belonging

Character

Having a solid set of morals and values

Contribution

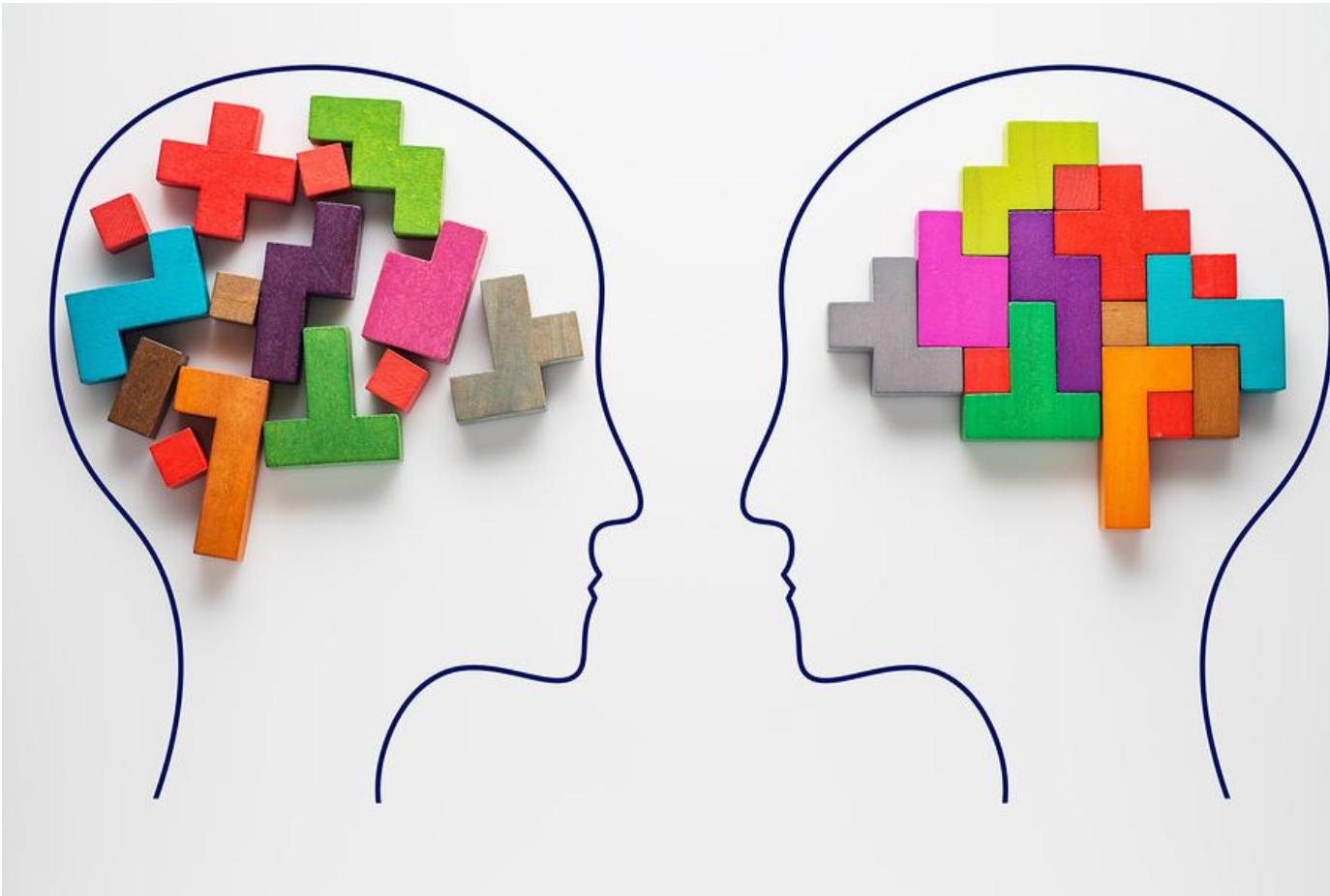
Ability to make a difference

Coping

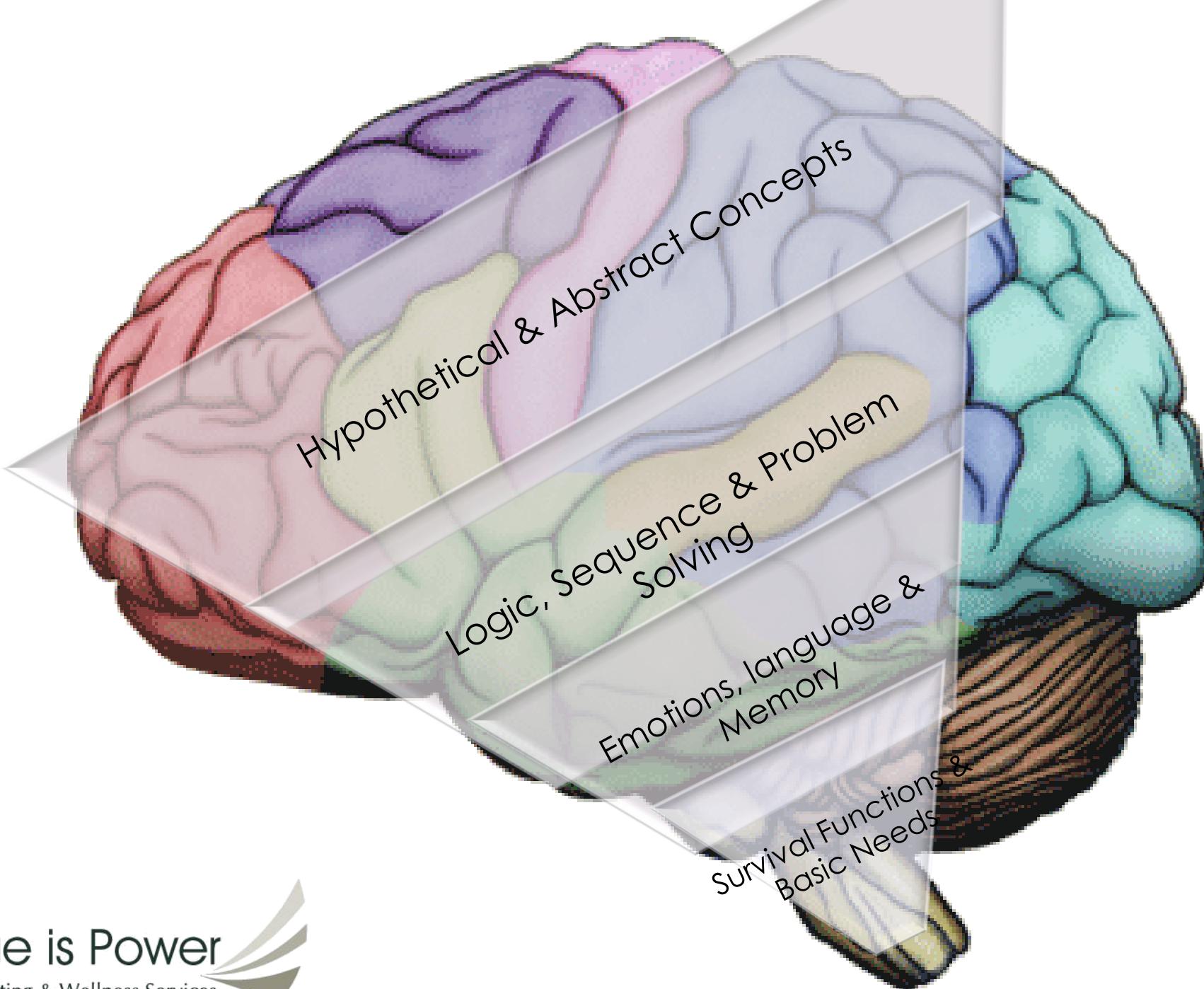
Ability to handle stress appropriately

Control

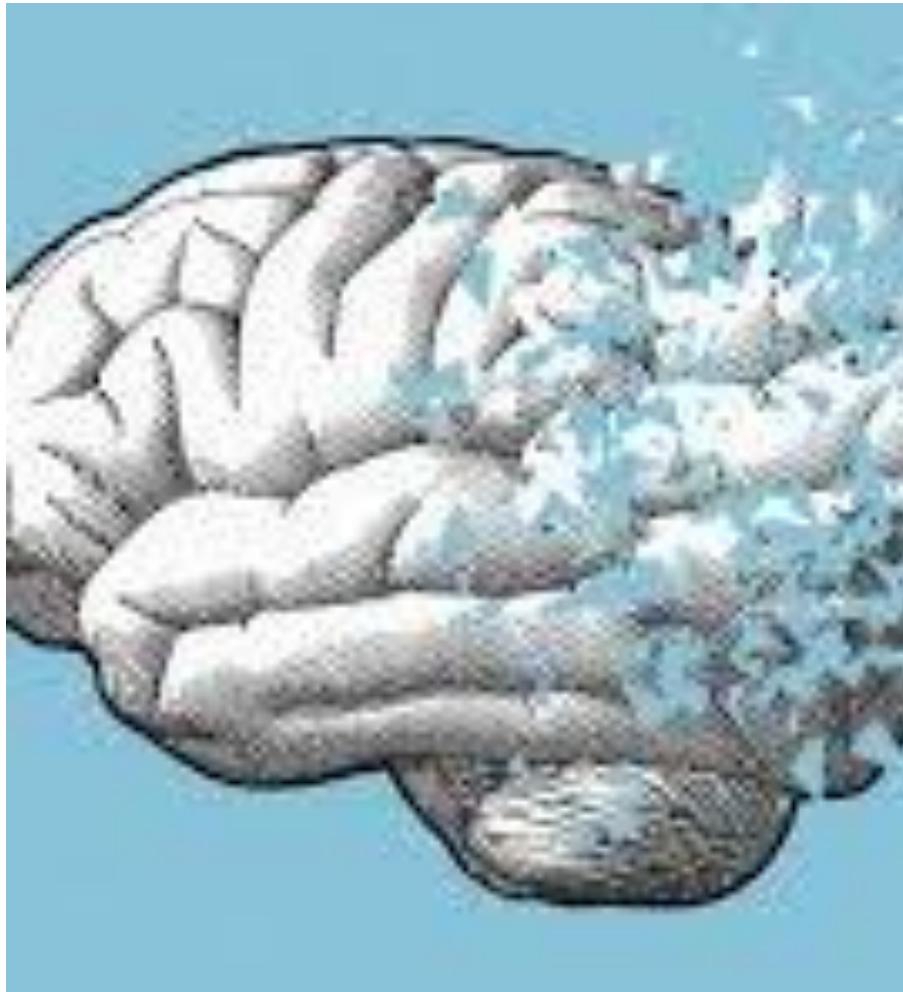
Knowledge and ability to effect an outcome



How trauma impacts learning & brain function



Neurological impacts of trauma



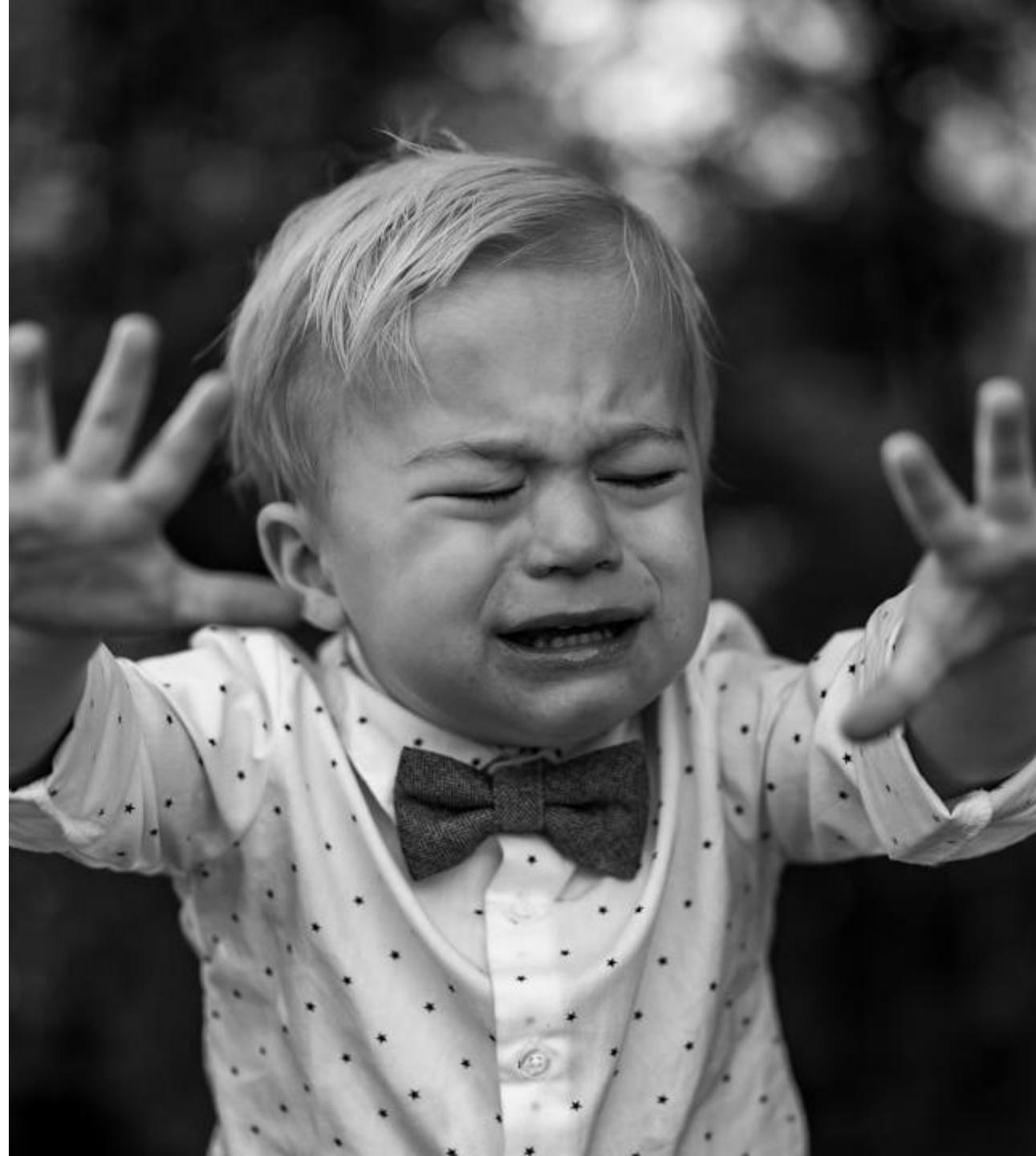
- Increased cortisol and norepinephrine responses to subsequent stressors
- Change in growth and development of brain
- Reduced size of hippocampus
- Changes in pre-frontal cortex
- Functional changes to brain processes & priorities

Learning brain vs. Survival brain



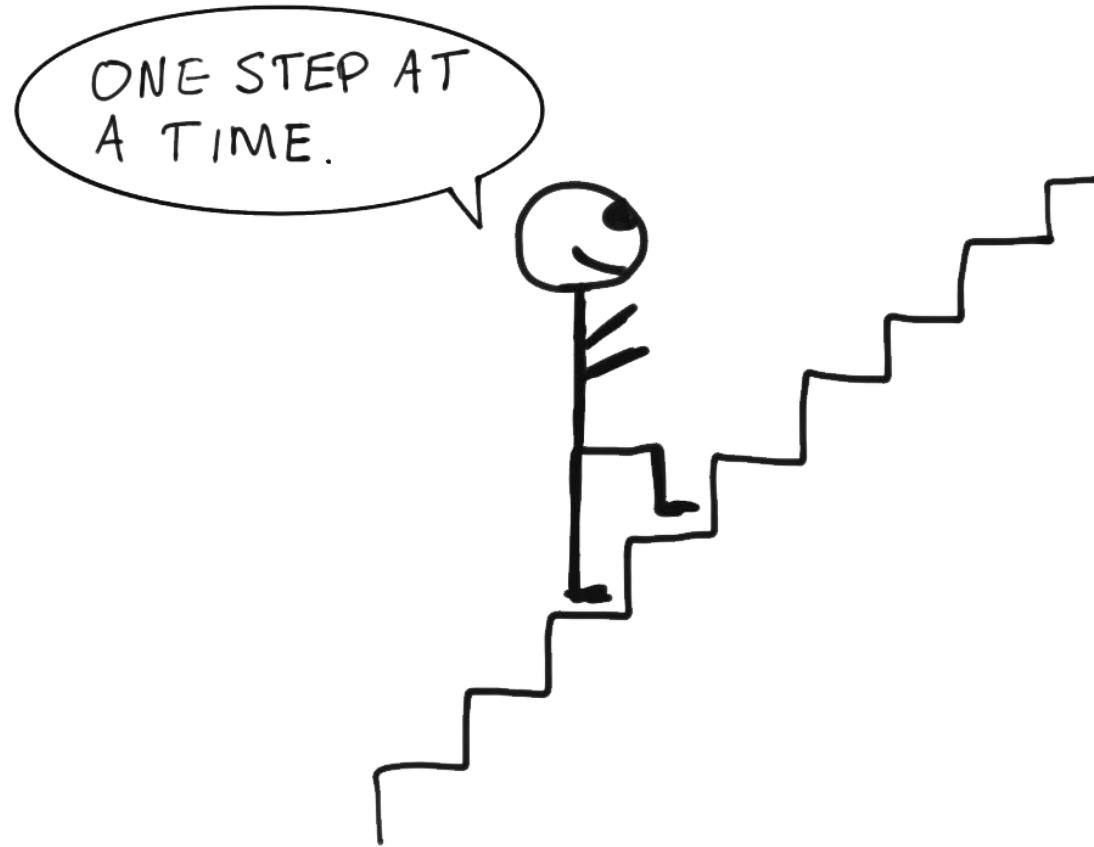
The Effects (symptoms & behaviours) of Trauma (survival brain)

- Cognitive: inability to concentrate/ fidgeting/ poor memory/ zooming out/ struggle with executive functioning/ absence (stress/ trauma response/ adhd/ anxiety diagnosis? Or trauma response?)
- Physical impacts: somatic complaints (headache/ aches/ fatigue – stress response)/ hyper alert/ startle response/ sensitivity to sound, smells, touch (triggers). Trauma is stored & processed in the body.
- Emotional (Mood dysregulation/ depression & anxiety/ low self-esteem/ lack of trust/ difficulty with relationships). Anger, dear, sadness, shame. Feeling too much or too little
- Behaviour: impulsivity/ hyperactive/ irritability/ self-harming/ struggling to connect/ withdrawal or disorganized attachment/ desire to please others (perfectionism)





How do
you create
a trauma
informed
school/
classroom?



Step 1: Understanding what trauma is, and understanding how it affects learning & behaviour (top brain)

Step 2: Having empathy for those who've experienced trauma and wanting to help create a safe and supportive learning environment for them (bottom brain). Shifting from “what's wrong with you” to “what's happened to you?”

Step 3: Looking at practice/ making changes based on our understanding and our “understanding.”

*You can't fix
what's broken,
but you can build
something new*



Trauma Informed Principles

A trauma informed school is a school in which all students and staff feel safe, welcomed and supported and where the impact of trauma on teaching and learning is honoured and addressed at the centre of the educational mission.

1. Promote Awareness and understanding
2. Shift Attitudes
3. Foster safety & climate of support/ healthy relationships
4. Provide choice for learners
5. Highlight Strengths & Resiliencies



Individually

Check our privilege

Check our bias

Check our own traumatic history/ triggers

Check our role

Regulate ourselves

Find Empathy & Understanding

Classroom

Relationships/
Connections/
Communication

Consistency./
structure/
routine

Visual schedule

Lighting and
sound
considerations

Calming
materials/
spaces

Breaks (trusted
adult/ walk/
brain breaks)

Voice and choice
(empowerment)
• We all like control

Staff & System- wide

Promote Awareness/ Educate Staff & Partners

Mission and Values

Foster Safety

Build Positive & Empathetic Culture

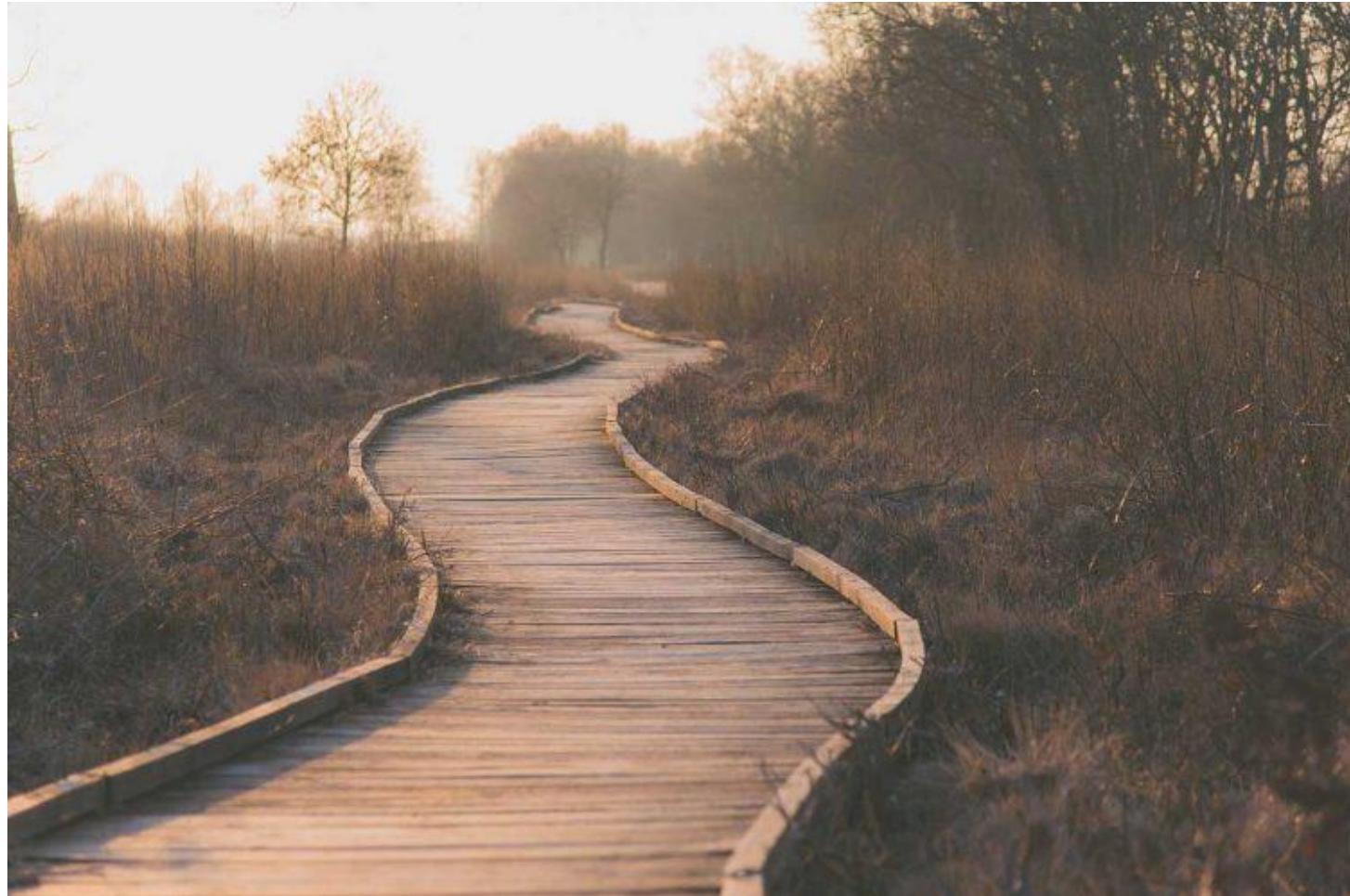
Create Connections/ Relationships

Celebrate Successes

Review & Reflect Regularly

Trauma Informed Supports

- All
 - School wide teaching of coping skills and self regulation
 - Safe climate/ culture
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Expressive opportunities
 - Voice & Choice
- Some
 - Small groups
 - Safe zones
 - Counselling for skills/ support
- Few
 - De-escalation and crisis intervention
 - Specific protocols and plans
 - Go-to people, places and things
 - Therapy

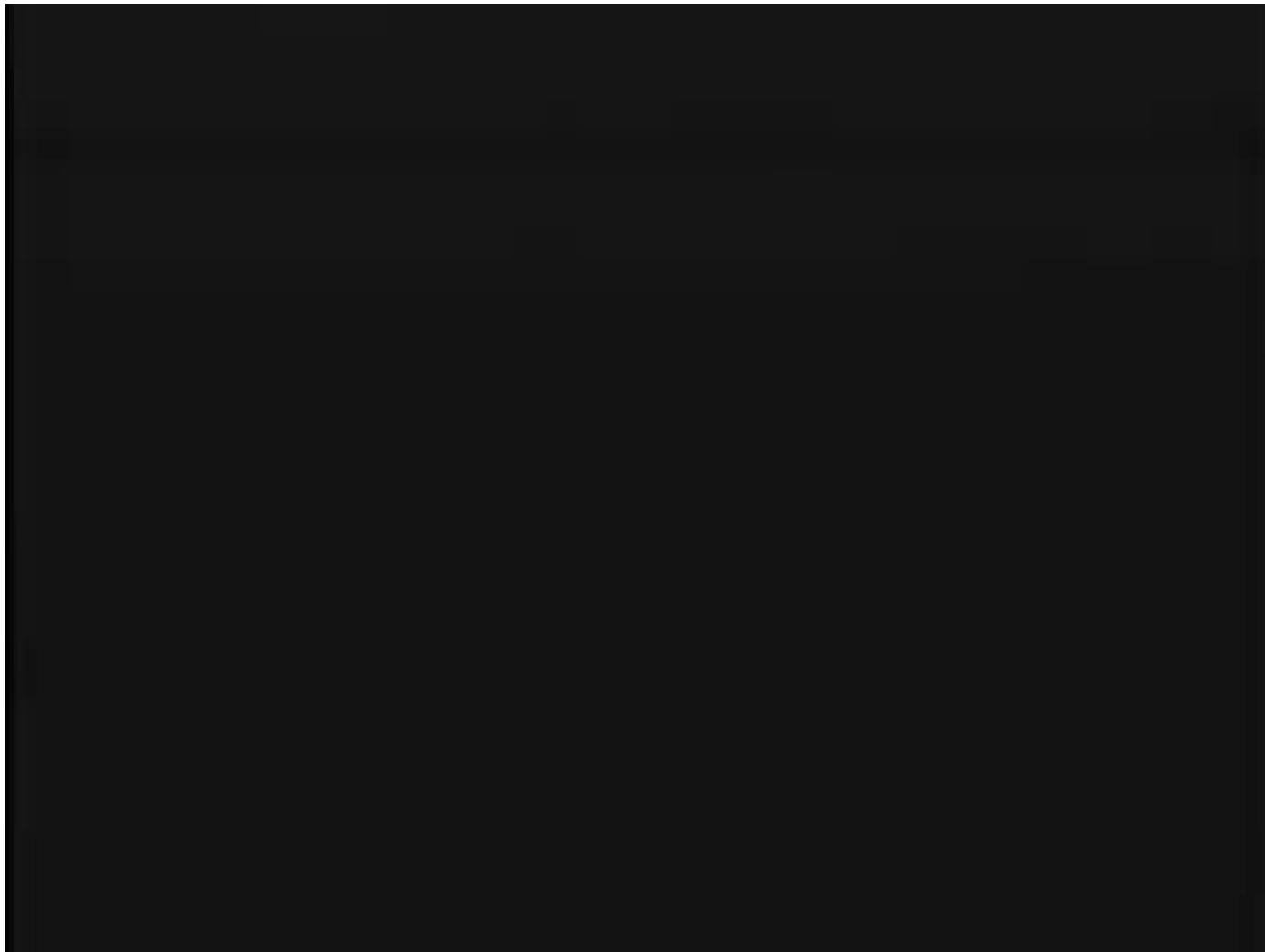


Some things to consider...

- There is a difference between being safe and feeling safe
- Trust is important. Following through and being authentic matter.
- Whenever possible, consistency, routine and predictability will calm the system
- Consult widely (don't make assumptions/ do ask "minority" voices)
- Regulated adults are key (this is why the self-care thing comes up over and over again!)
- Voice & choice go a long way
- Find success wherever you can
- *You can't fix what's broken, but you can build something new*



Facing the Giants



Thank You



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Consulting & Wellness Services



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