



# Echo Approach to Supporting Parent and Child Survivors of Trauma



Louise Godbold

WHO  
AM I?

WHO  
ARE  
YOU?

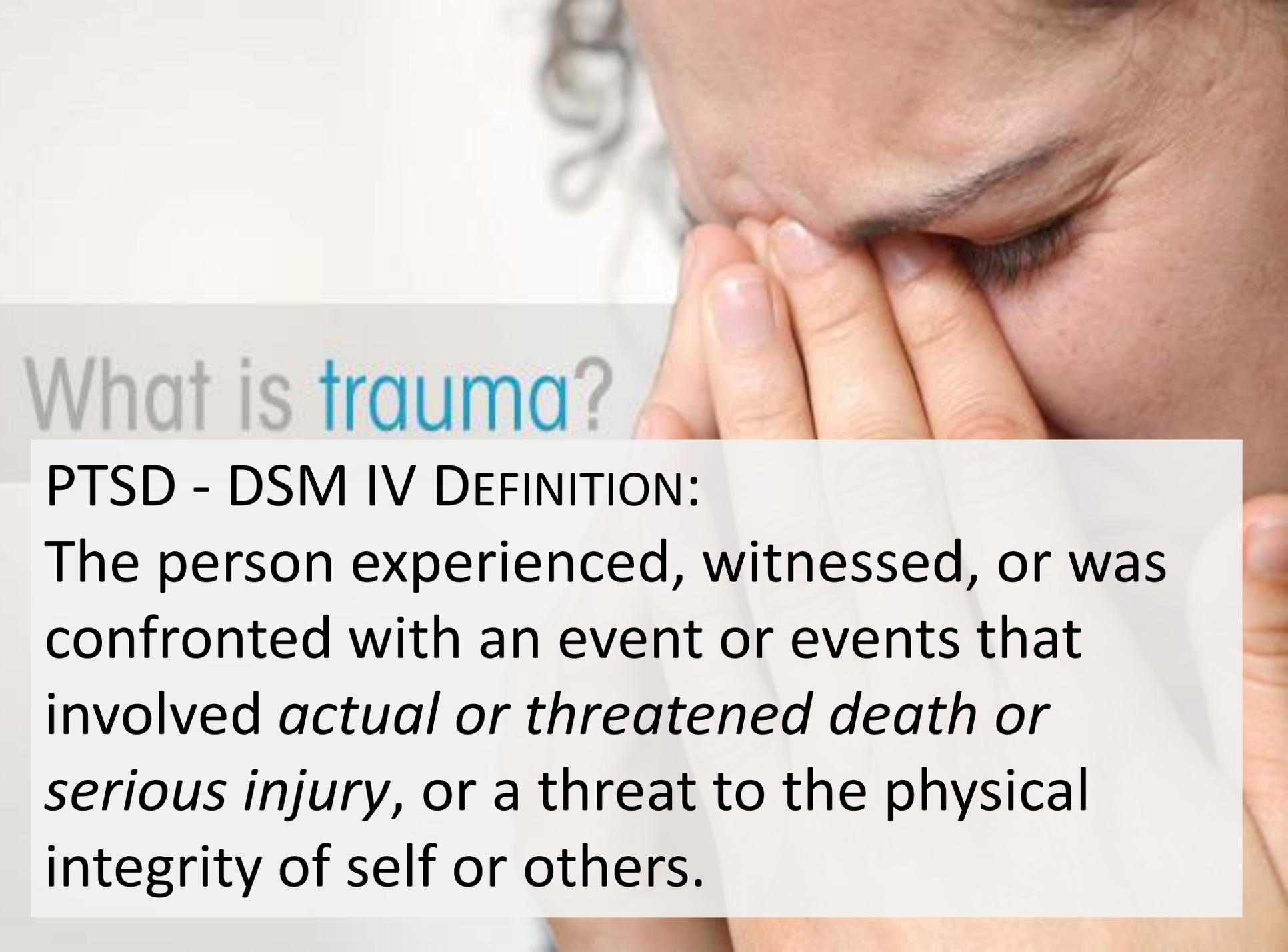


What is **trauma**?

# 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)

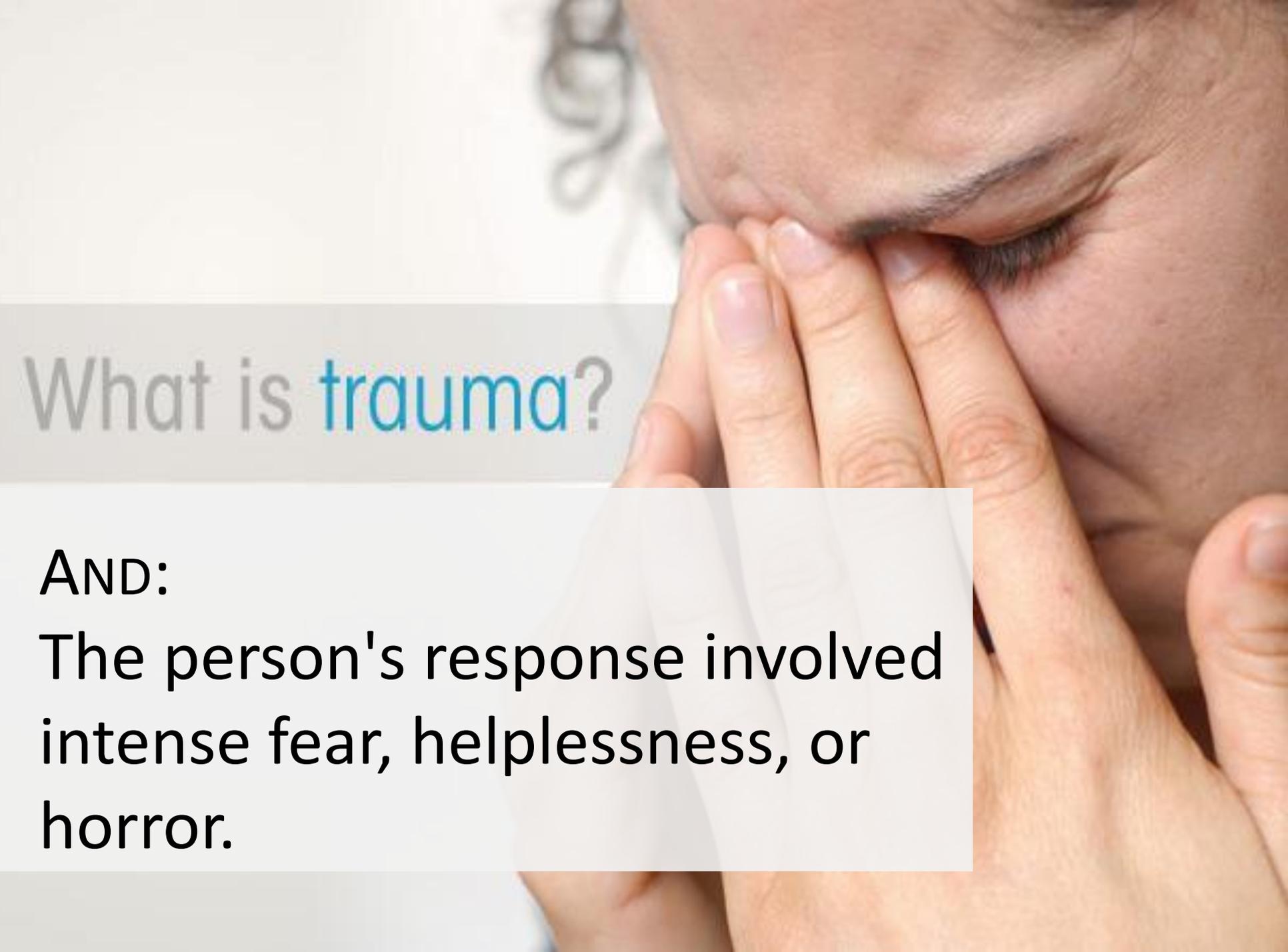
*Or witnessing the above*



## What is **trauma**?

**PTSD - DSM IV DEFINITION:**

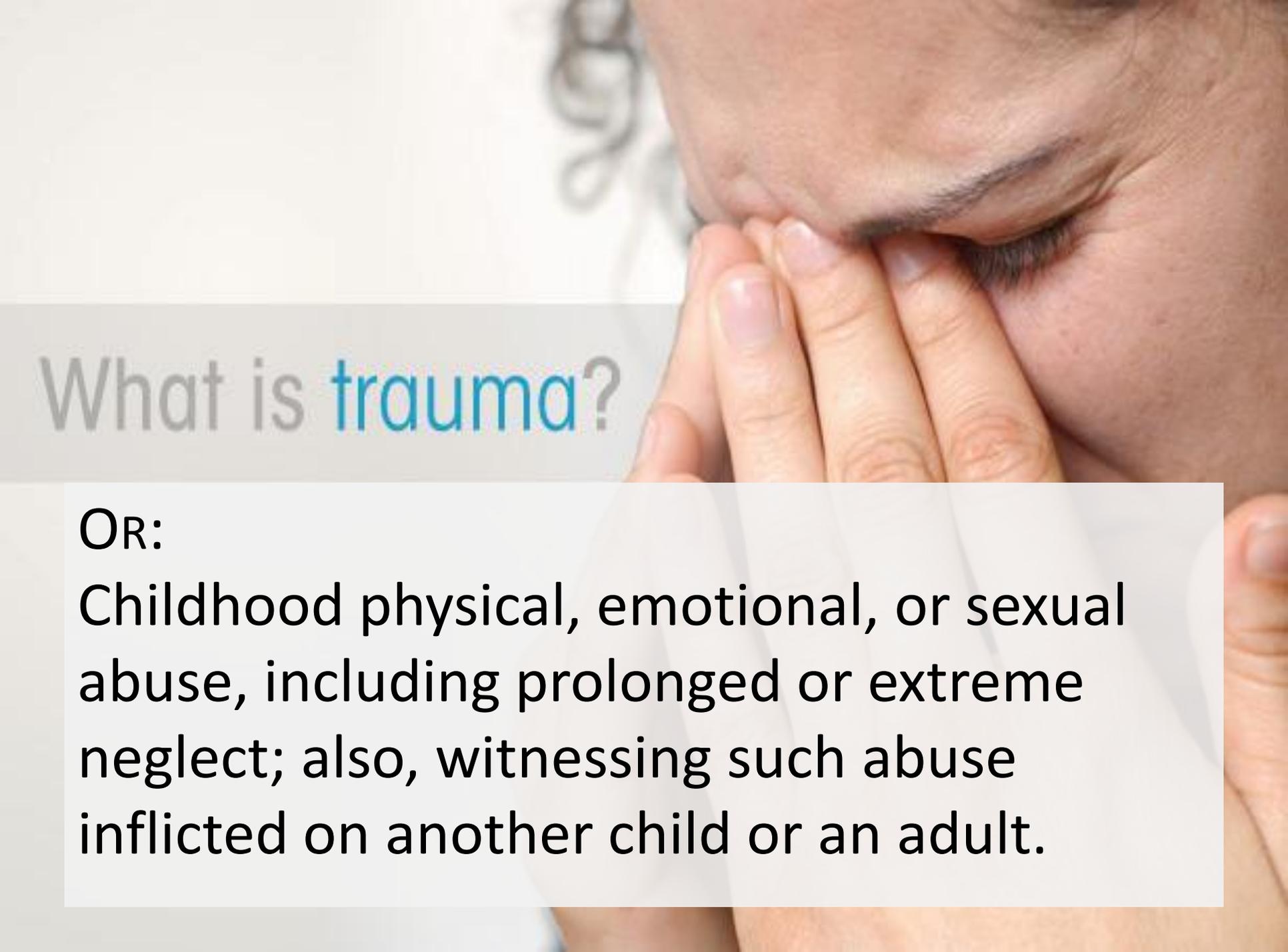
The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved *actual or threatened death or serious injury*, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.



What is **trauma**?

**AND:**

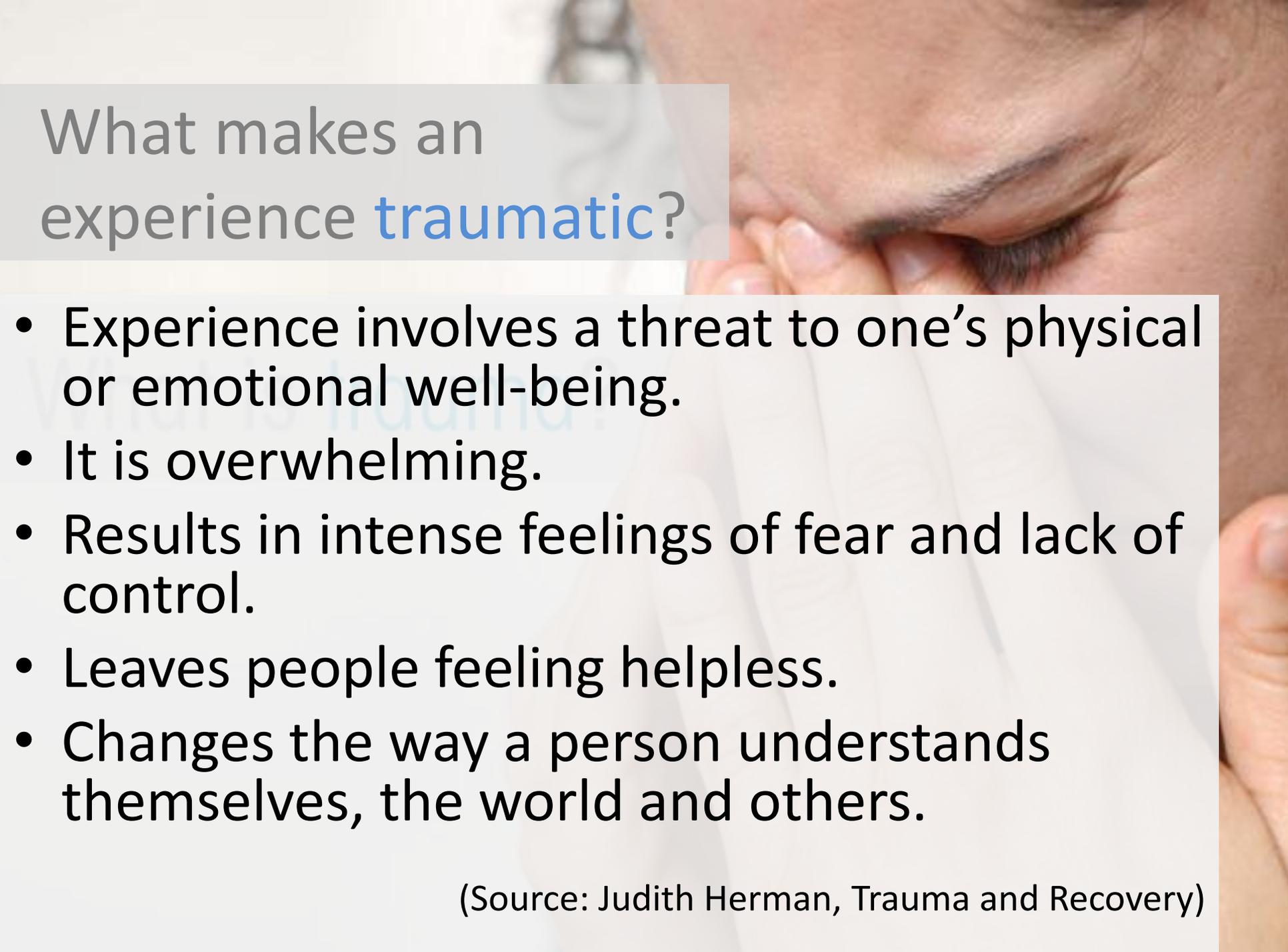
The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.



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**?

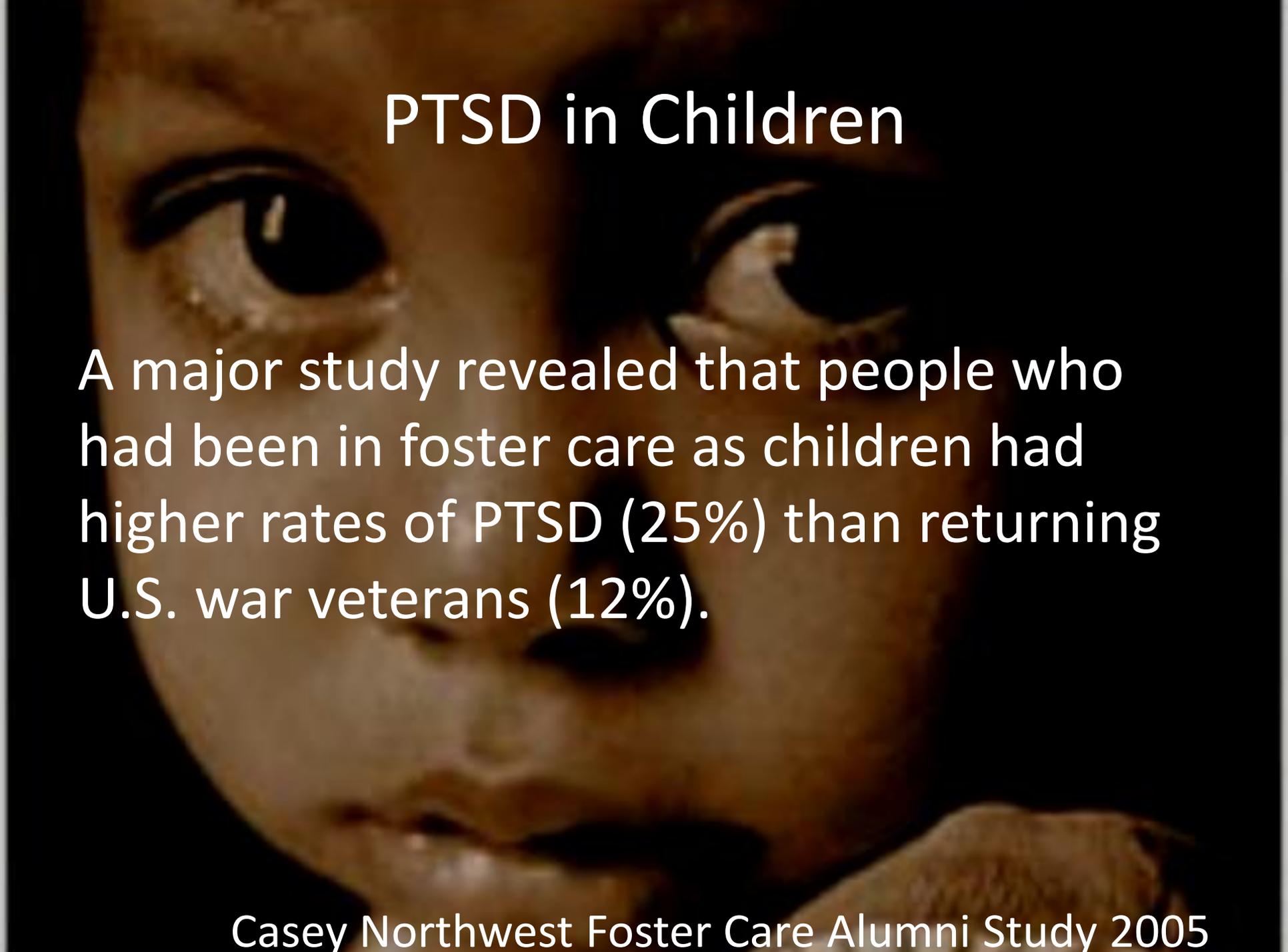
- Experience involves a threat to one's physical or emotional well-being.
- It is overwhelming.
- Results in intense feelings of fear and lack of control.
- Leaves people feeling helpless.
- Changes the way a person understands themselves, the world and others.

(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 photograph of a young child's face, showing their eyes and mouth. The child has a somber or sad expression, looking slightly to the side. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of their skin and the intensity of their gaze.

# 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

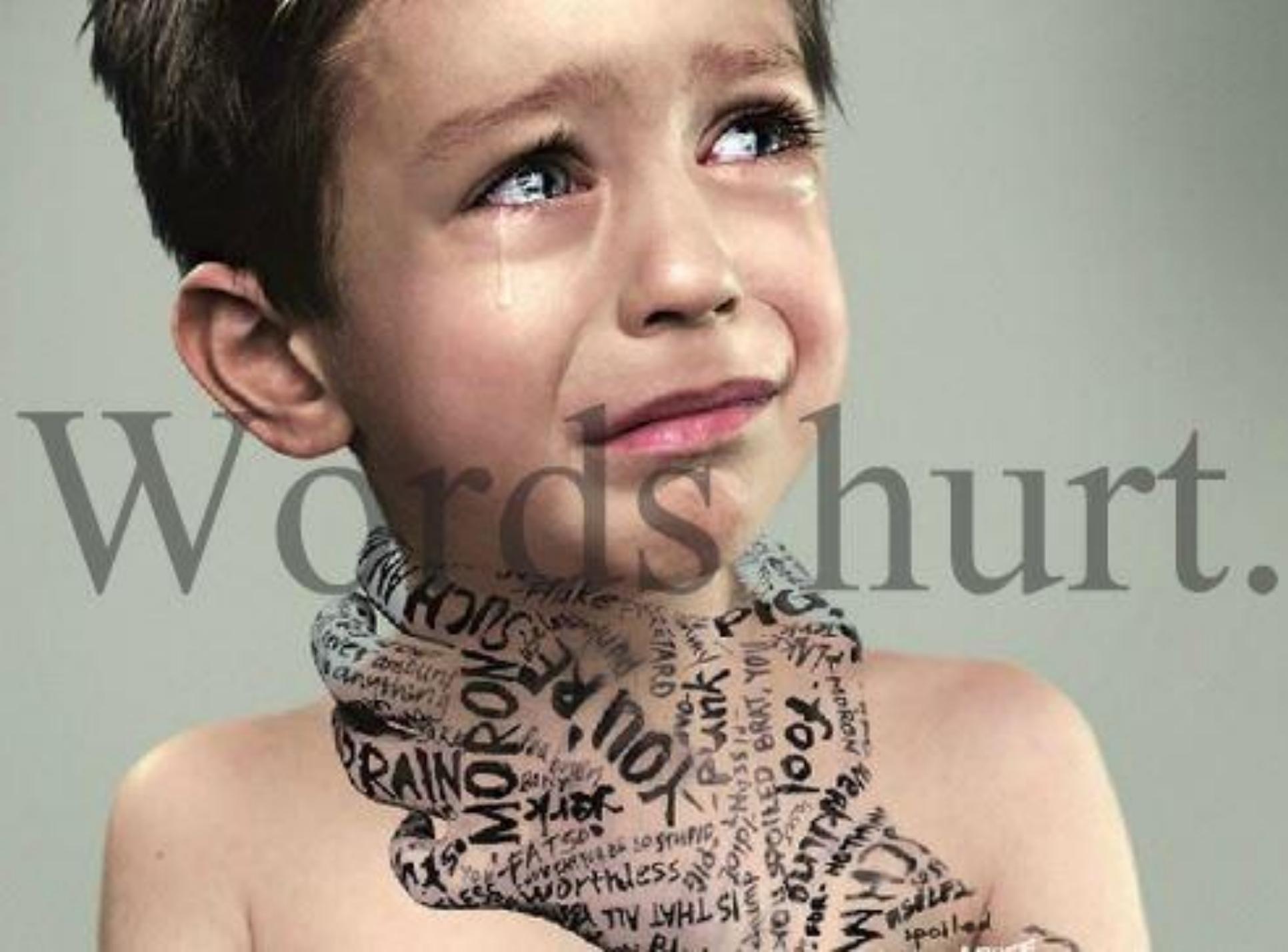
(CDC)

# 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

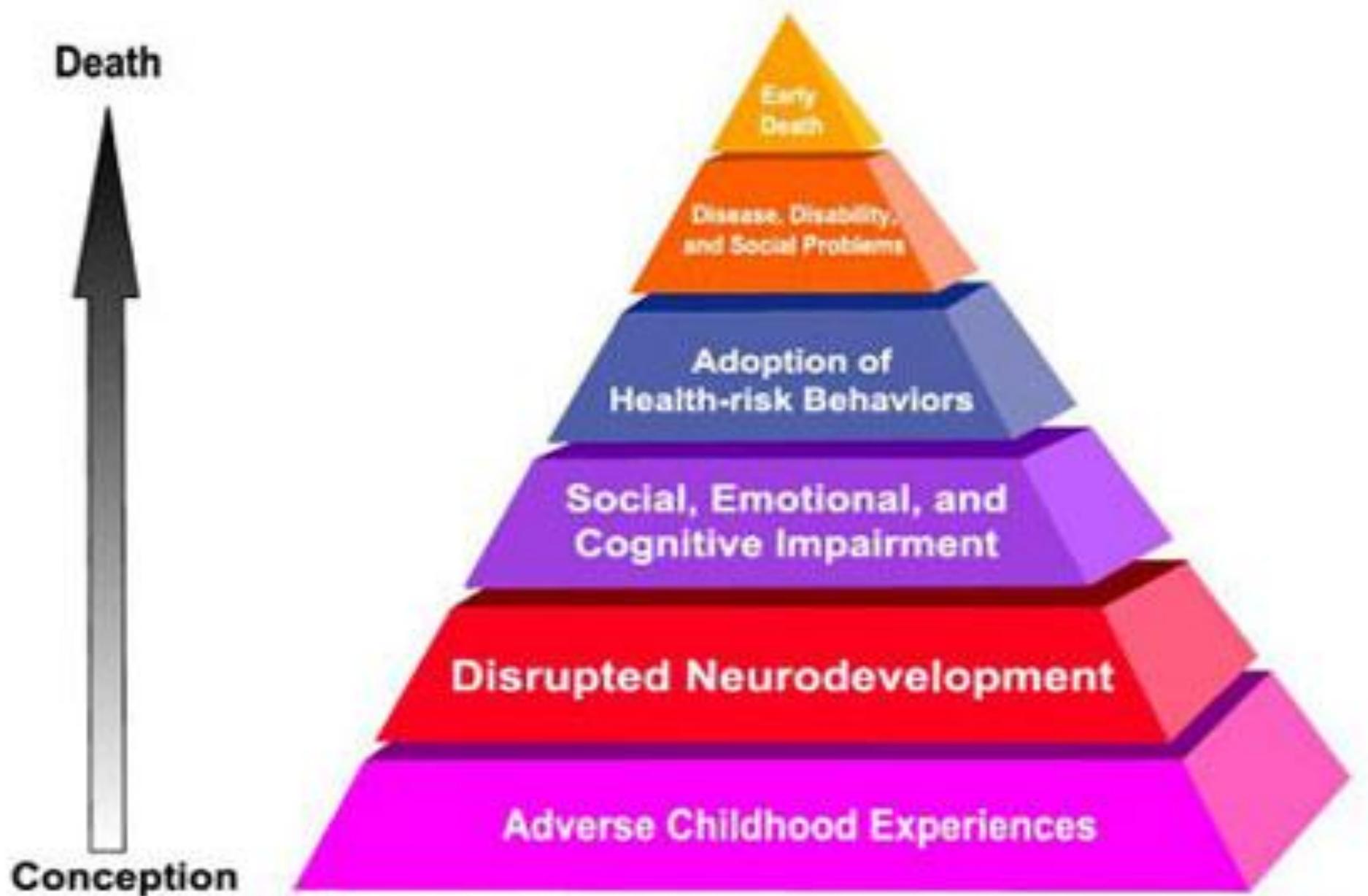


# Adverse Childhood Experiences

- 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

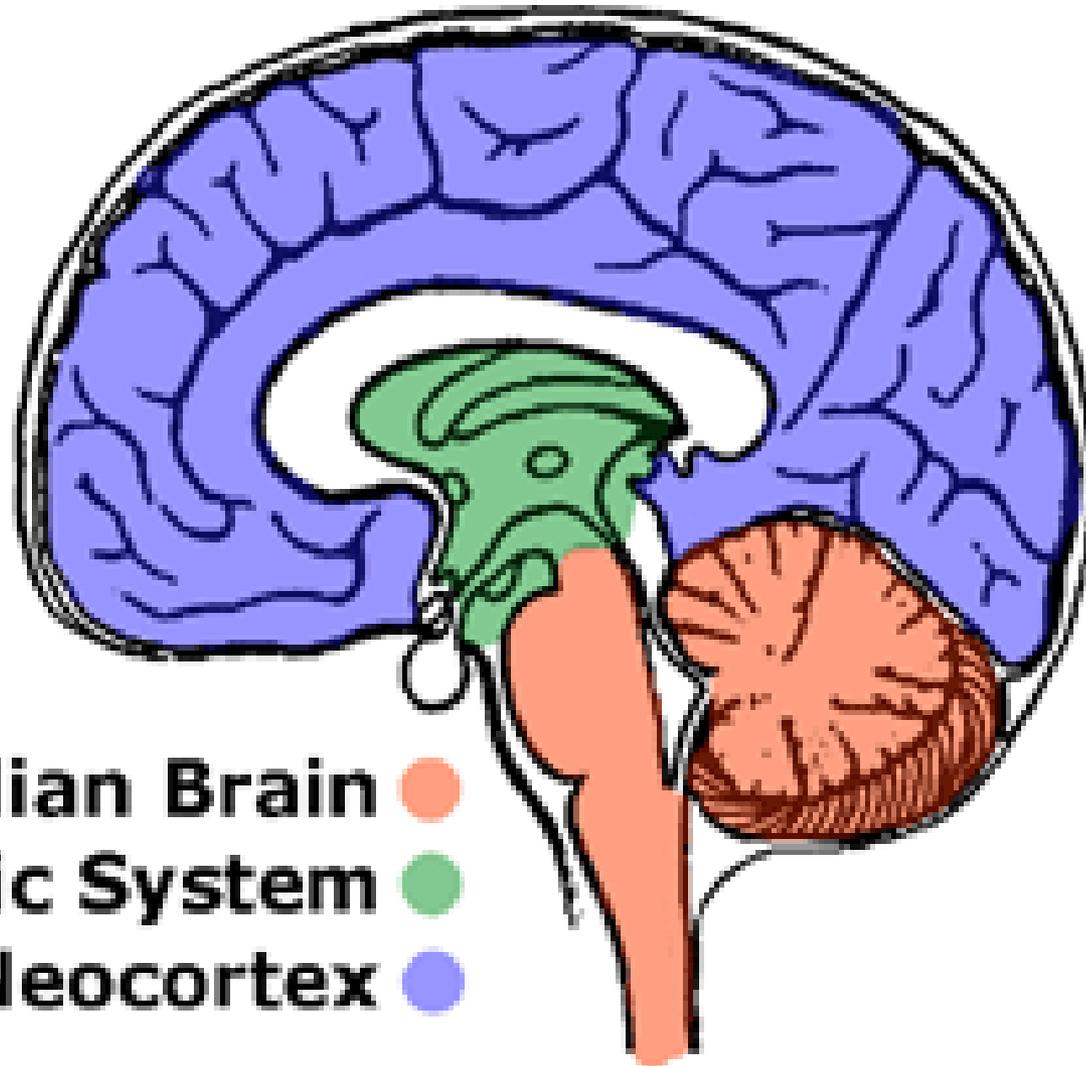




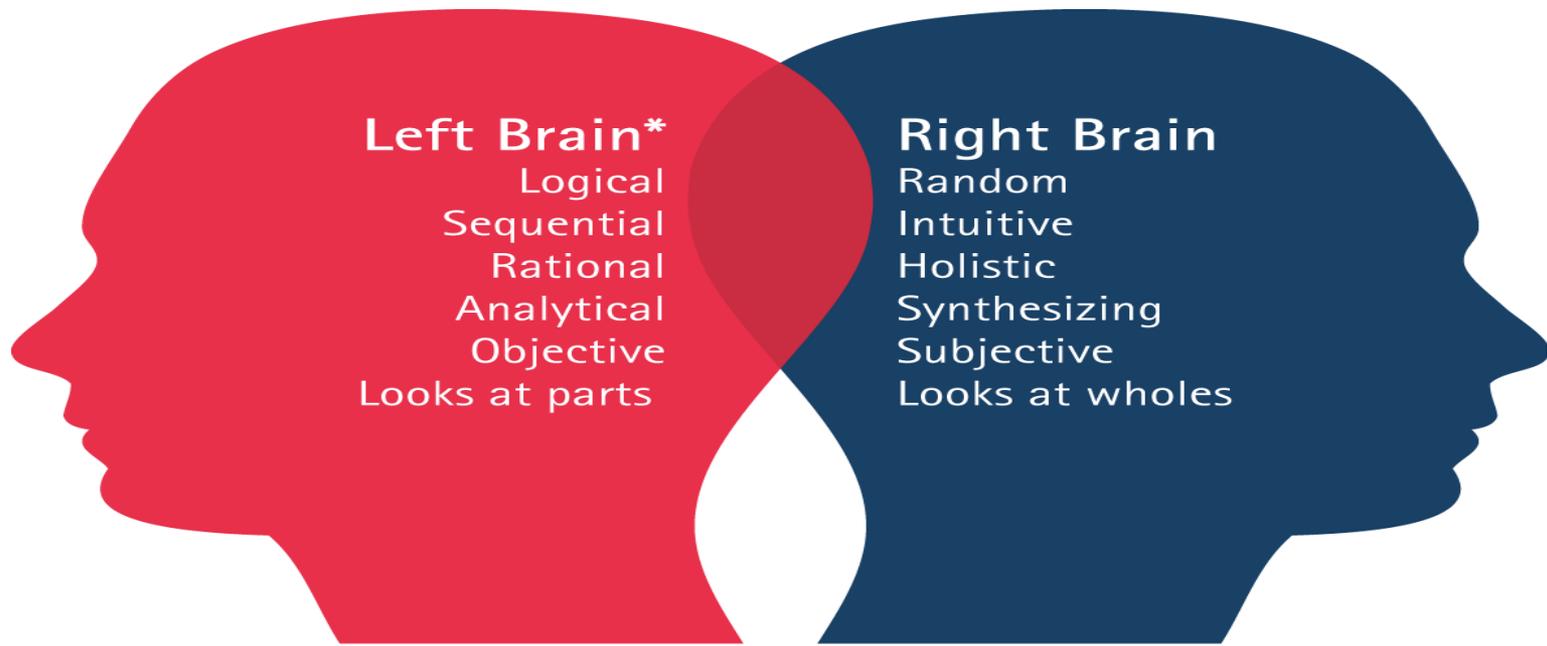


**Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan**

# The Evolution-Designed Brain



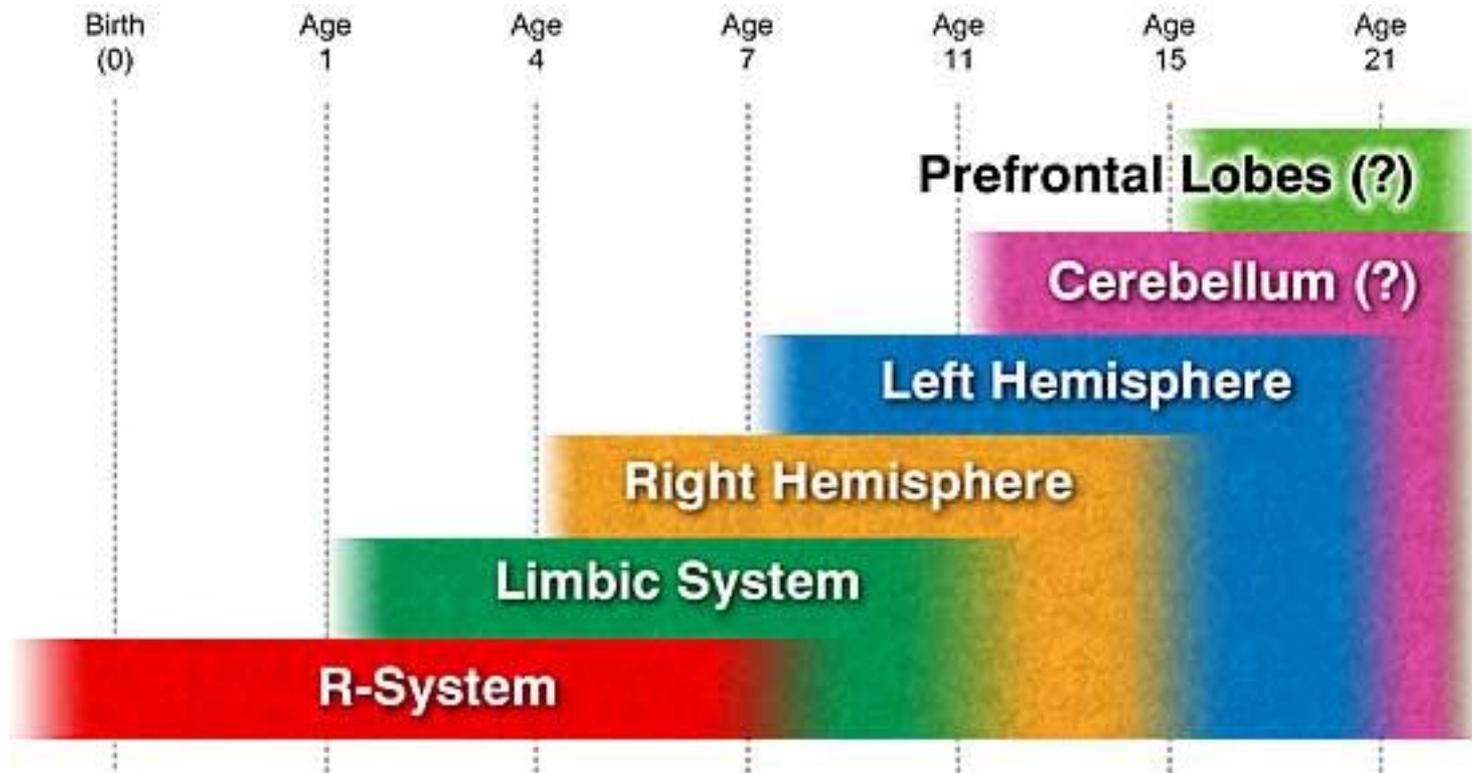
- Reptilian Brain ●
- Limbic System ●
- Neocortex ●



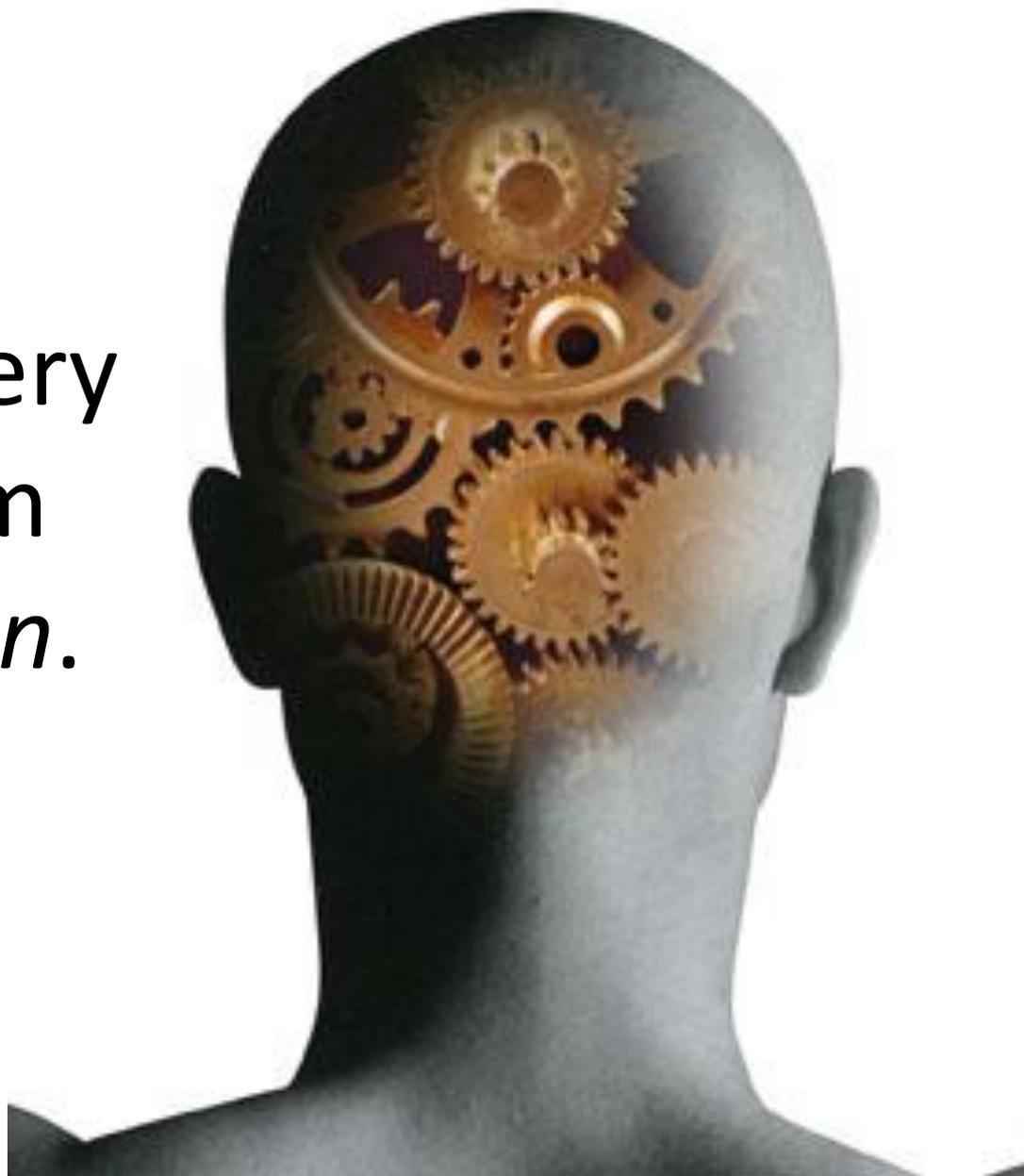
Trauma in childhood damages the corpus callosum, which connects the left brain with the right brain.

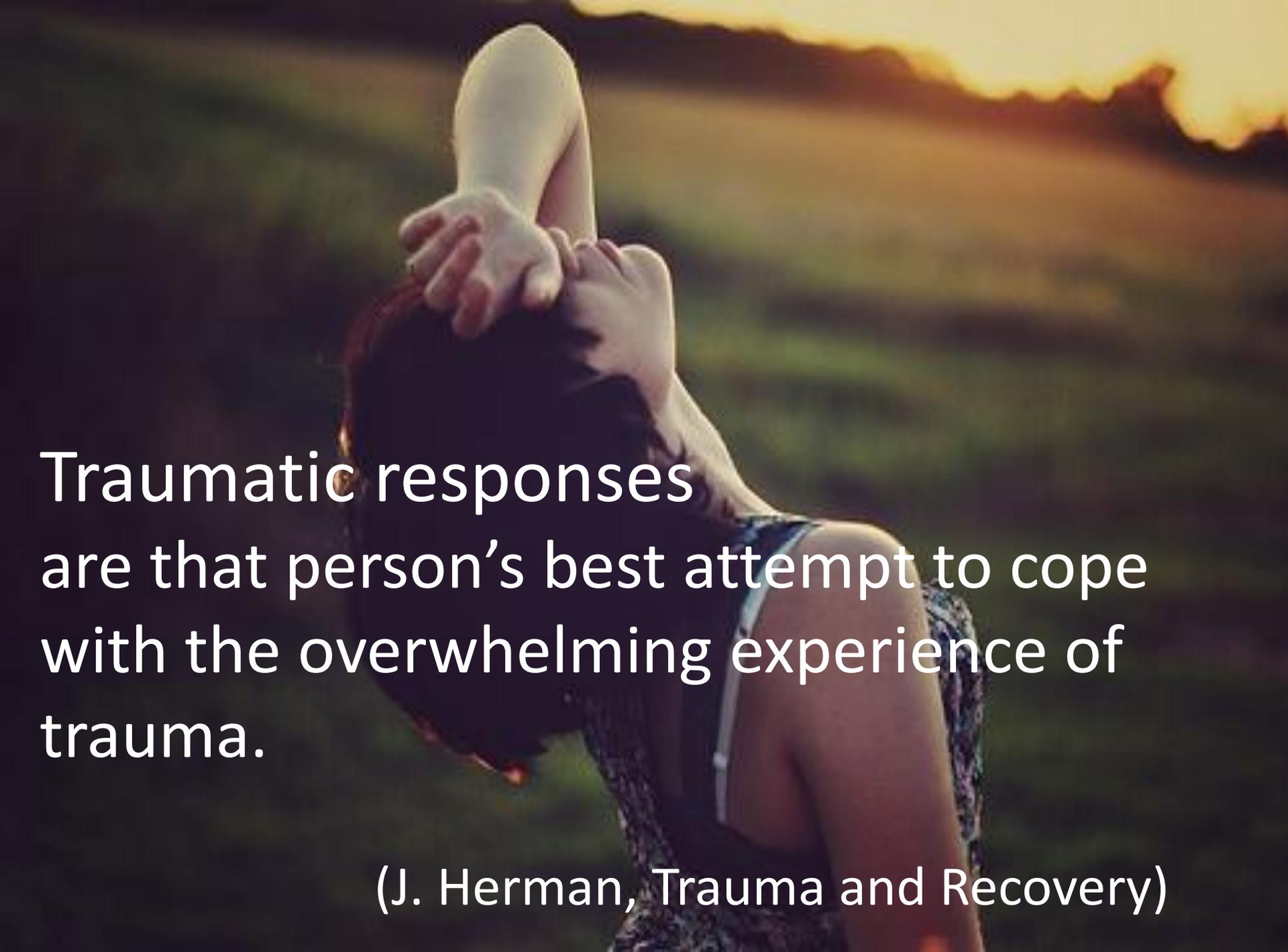
Results in cognitive inflexibility, impaired memory, learning and planning, reactionary emotional states, depression and anxiety disorders.

# Brain Development



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



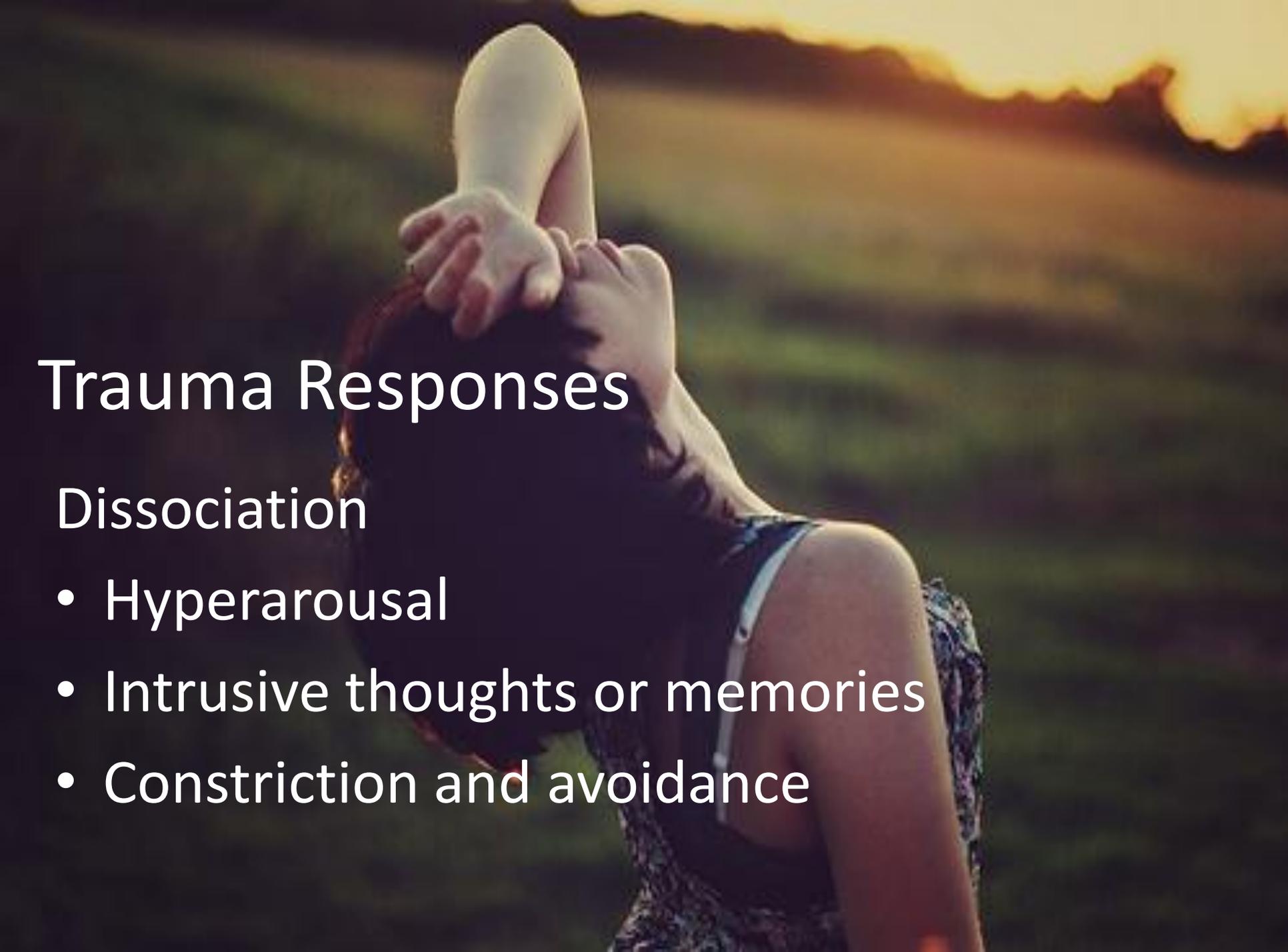
A person is shown from the back, with their head buried in their hands, suggesting a state of distress or trauma. The background is a soft, golden sunset over a field.

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

(J. Herman, Trauma and Recovery)

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark, patterned dress, is seen from behind. She has her hands clasped behind her head, and her head is tilted slightly forward. The background is a blurred field of green grass under a warm, golden sunset sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

These are NORMAL  
responses to ABNORMAL  
events

A person is shown from the back, with their head buried in their hands, suggesting a state of distress or trauma. The background is a soft, golden sunset over a field.

# 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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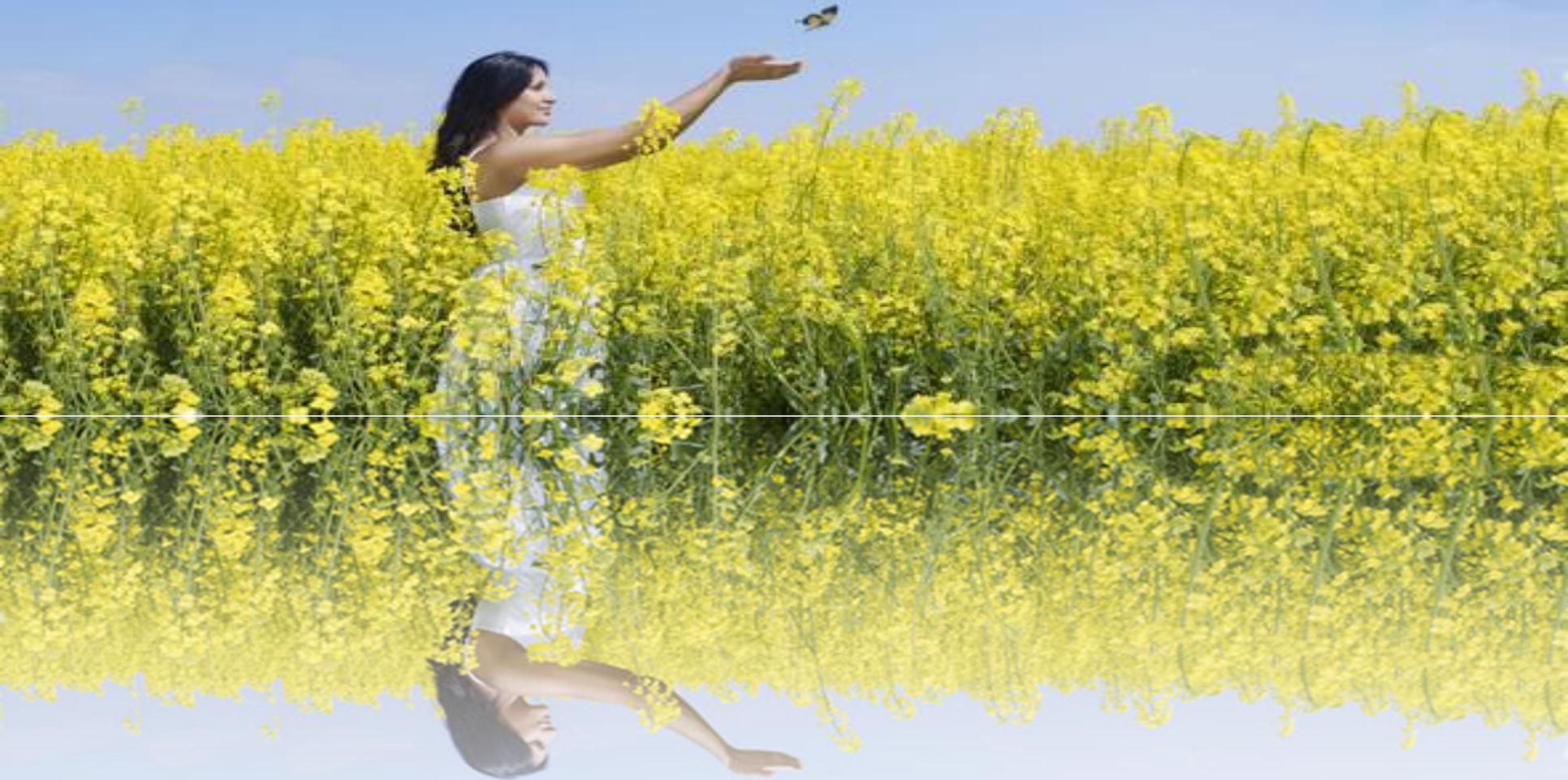
Trauma Informed Care

**Power WITH**



**not Power OVER**

**“What happened to you?”**



**“What’s wrong with you?”**

**“It makes sense.”**



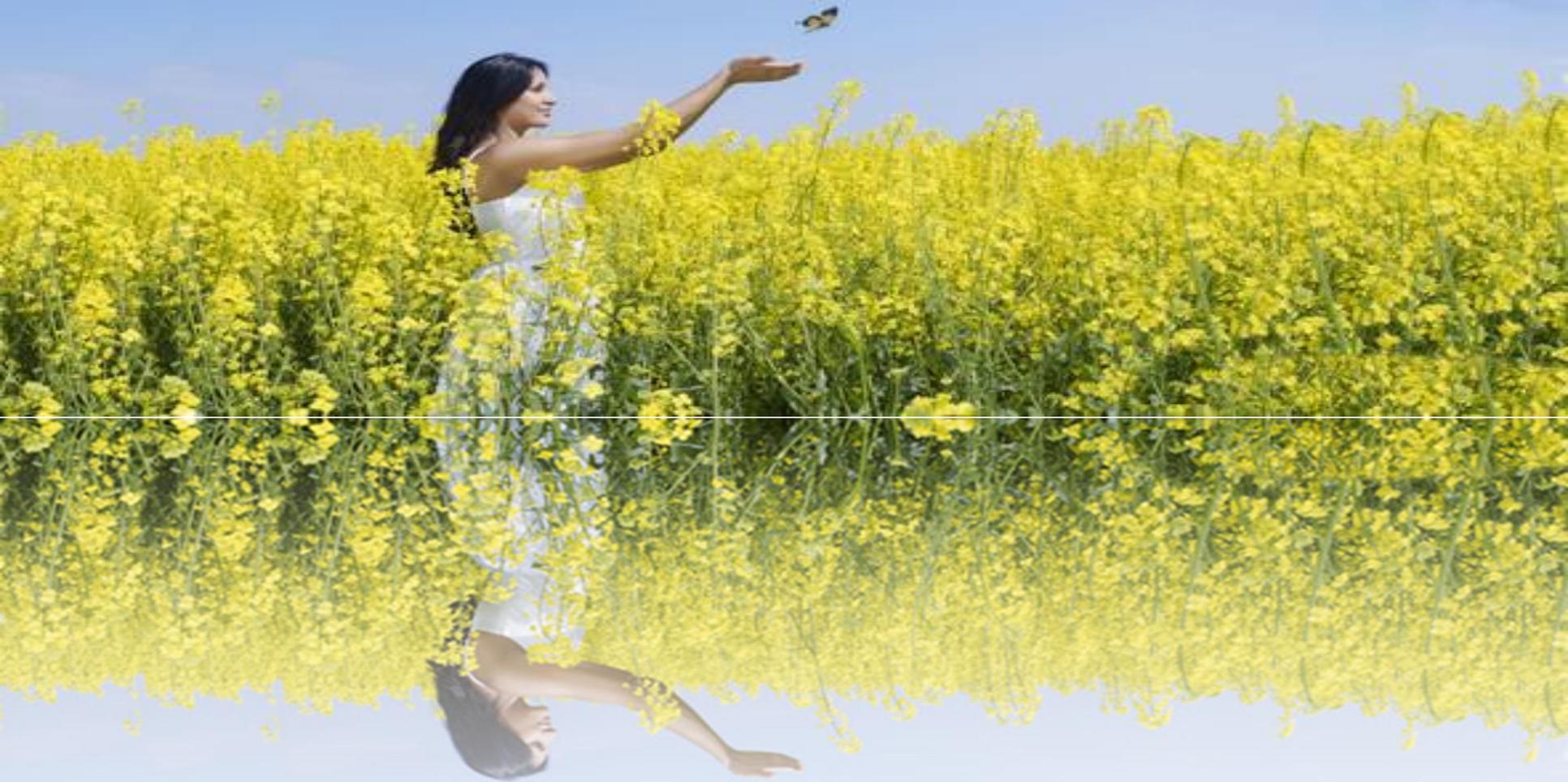
**“Something’s wrong with you.”**

# 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*

A grayscale image of a human head in profile, facing right. Inside the head, there are several interlocking gears. One gear in the center is highlighted in a bright red color, while the others are in shades of gray. The background is a light, neutral color.

- 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)

