

# The effects of trauma on children's development and learning abilities

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# Trauma manifests differently in each individual

- ❖ Because exposure to danger differs by age as well as by person, family, and cultural group, individuals' patterns of attachment will reflect:
- ❖ Individual developmental history;
- ❖ Family organization of self-protective strategies;
- ❖ Cultural experience with persistent local dangers.
- ❖ Developmental Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation DMM  
[www.familyrelationsinstitute.org](http://www.familyrelationsinstitute.org)

# Trauma manifests differently in each individual

- ❖ AFFECT
- ❖ Distractibility and poor concentration
- ❖ Vulnerability and poor self esteem
- ❖ Labile emotions - 'trauma bubble'
- ❖ Aggression or passive aggression - correlation of victim to perpetrator

# Trauma manifests differently in each individual

## ❖ COGNITION

- ❖ Preoccupation thus cannot apply to the task at hand
- ❖ Developmental regression - milestones and perceptual abilities

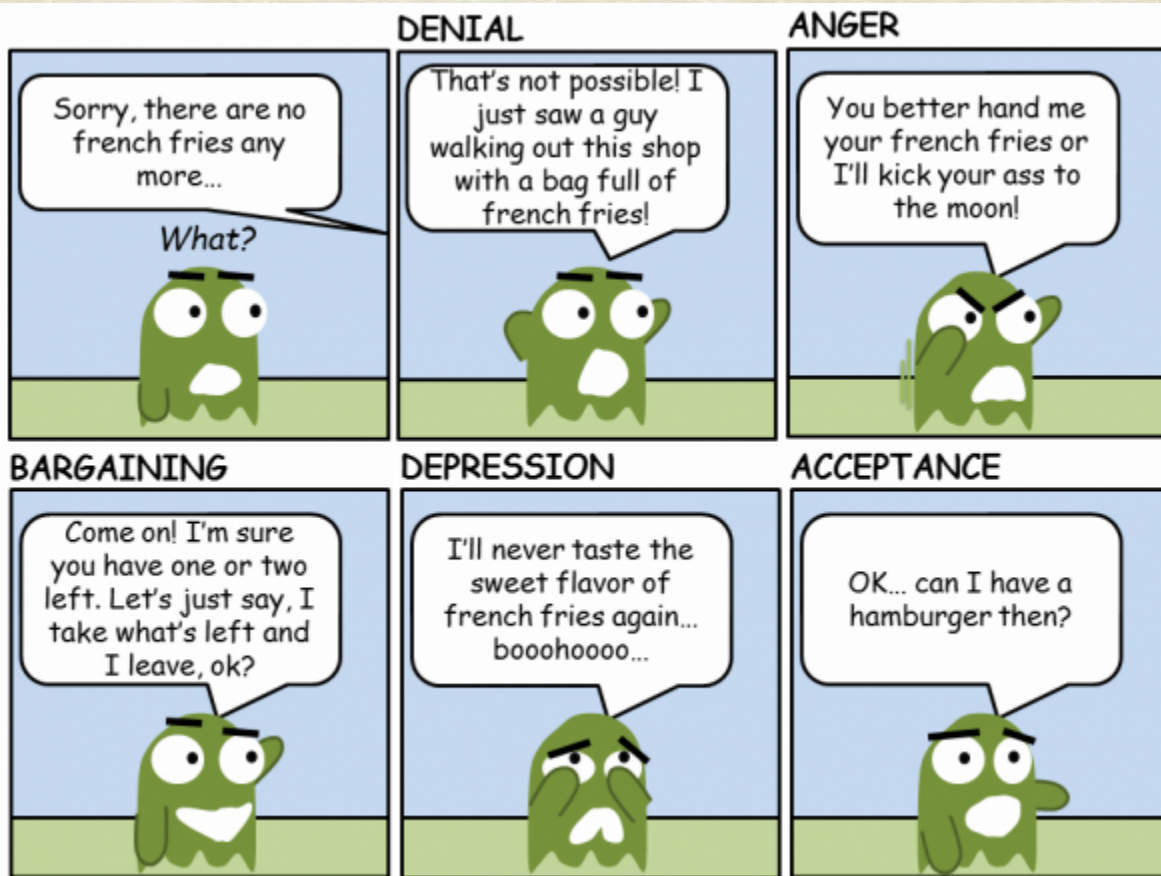
# Trauma manifests differently in each individual

- ❖ RELATIONSHIPS
- ❖ Relationships deteriorate or change
- ❖ Tactile defensiveness and over arousal
- ❖ Apathy or hyperactivity
- ❖ Withdrawal and under arousal
  - shut down
- ❖ Behaviour - acting out or withdrawal

# Trauma manifests differently in each individual

## ❖ OTHER ASPECTS

- ❖ One incident or repeated incidents
- ❖ Support structures
- ❖ Cultural considerations
- ❖ Developmental Maturation Model of Attachment and Adaptation DMM  
[www.familyrelationsinstitute.org](http://www.familyrelationsinstitute.org)
- ❖ Khubler Ross's change curve



# Safety and Containment

Physical safety / emotional safety

Environmental safety

Confidentiality - state overtly

Written Consent

Physical containment

Emotional containment

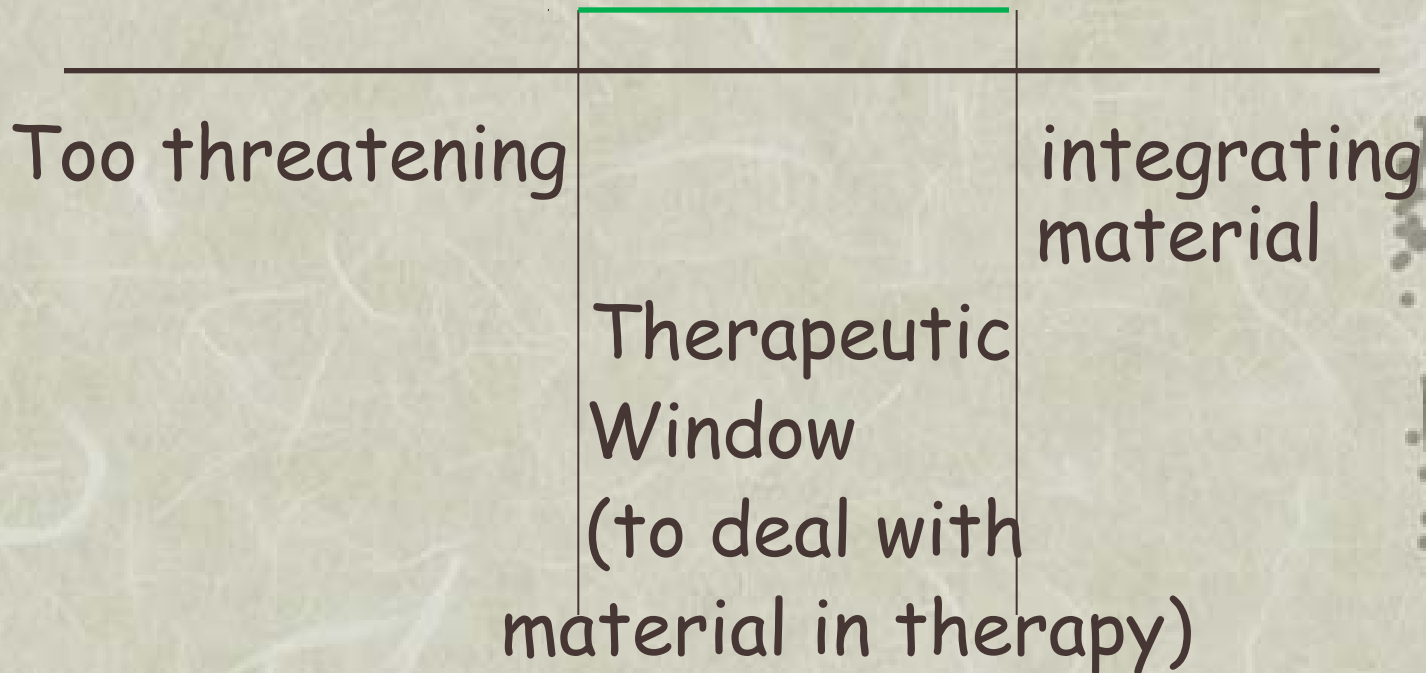
Womb Space / quiet





# Safety and Containment

## Confronting vs. Containing



# Safety and Containment

## ❖ Confront too much

- When therapeutic relationship is not established
- Poor timing



## ❖ Re-traumatisation

## ❖ Support too much



## ❖ Avoidance of issues that need to be addressed

# Safety and Containment

- ❖ Be concrete and verbally explicit
- ❖ Use scarves, soft toys for strengths
- ❖ Separate behaviour from self concept
  - Therapeutic content and process
  - Address distortions in self image
- ❖ Story telling
  - Take fragmented memories to make a narrative story
  - Explore fantasies hopes and wishes

# Earning trust from a traumatised child is like approaching a wild buck

- ❖ Do not be afraid to talk about the incident
  - use distraction when emotions increase
  - Move onto the 'end' or 'safe part'
- ❖ Be nurturing, comforting and affectionate in appropriate contexts
- ❖ Model a secure adult figure for secure attachment style
- ❖ Demonstrate the child's strengths



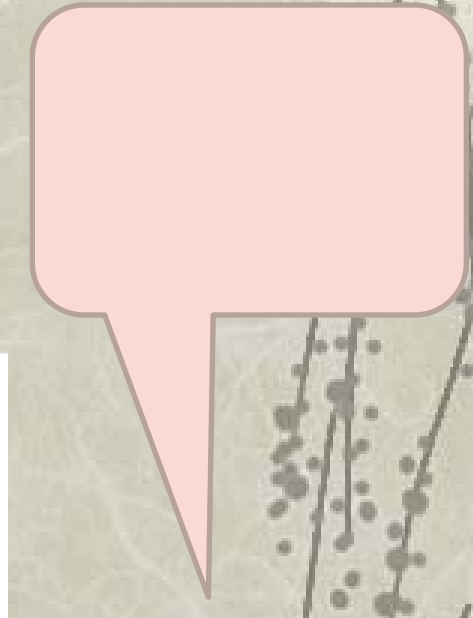
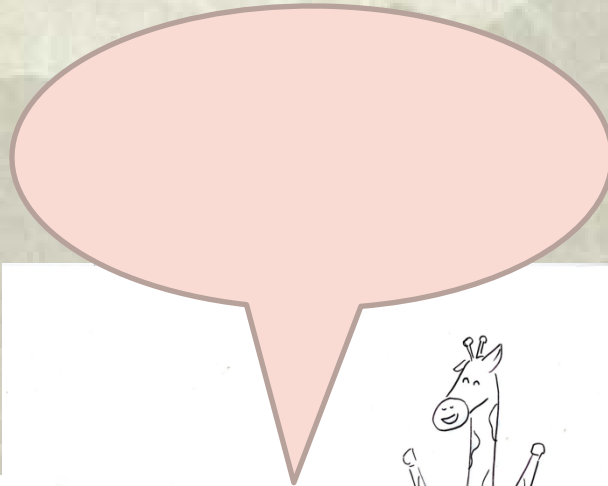
Earning trust from a traumatised child is like approaching a wild buck

- ❖ Provide predictable consistent patterns for the day
  - Explicit rules and consequences /boundaries
  - Provide age appropriate information
  - Be alert for trauma symptomatology (re-enactment, avoidance, arousal)
  - Protect child from distressing activities and triggers
  - Referral where needed

# Regulate Affect

- ❖ Sensory aspects - child/therapist in calm alert state - (in synch)
- ❖ Consider transference and counter-transference
- ❖ Breathing exercises - blowing bubbles
- ❖ Rhythm - heart beat
- ❖ Normalise and manage symptoms
- ❖ Discussion of how to control triggers
  - How does your engine run

# Using pictures to express feelings with animal pictures and call outs



# Regulate Cognition

- ❖ Children may blame themselves
- ❖ Magical thinking may make incidents related
- ❖ Acting out violently - victim to perpetrator
- ❖ Compulsive and repetitive eating or behaviour
- ❖ Self degeneration
  - I am bad
  - I am damaged



# Regulate Relationships

- ❖ Model relationships
  - child-therapist
- ❖ Confidentiality and safety
  - Allow to talk about truth and sensitive issues
- ❖ Consistent boundaries
- ❖ Family relationships

# Therapeutic Spiral Model

## Soul Portrait - TSIRA

- ❖ Prescriptive roles
  - self, interpersonal, transpersonal strengths
  - observing ego
- ❖ Trauma based roles
- ❖ Transformative roles



# Ideas for Trauma Survivors and Bereavement

- ❖ Memory/treasure box/album
- ❖ Planting something at home
- ❖ Poems
- ❖ Life size drawing - where does it hurt
- ❖ Observing ego - fly on the wall
- ❖ Tok-Tok = Talk-Talk
- ❖ Cake box - inside me /outside me
- ❖ Narrative story - consciously change the ending to be positive (own story or fairy tale)
- ❖ Encourage attendance of funeral for closure