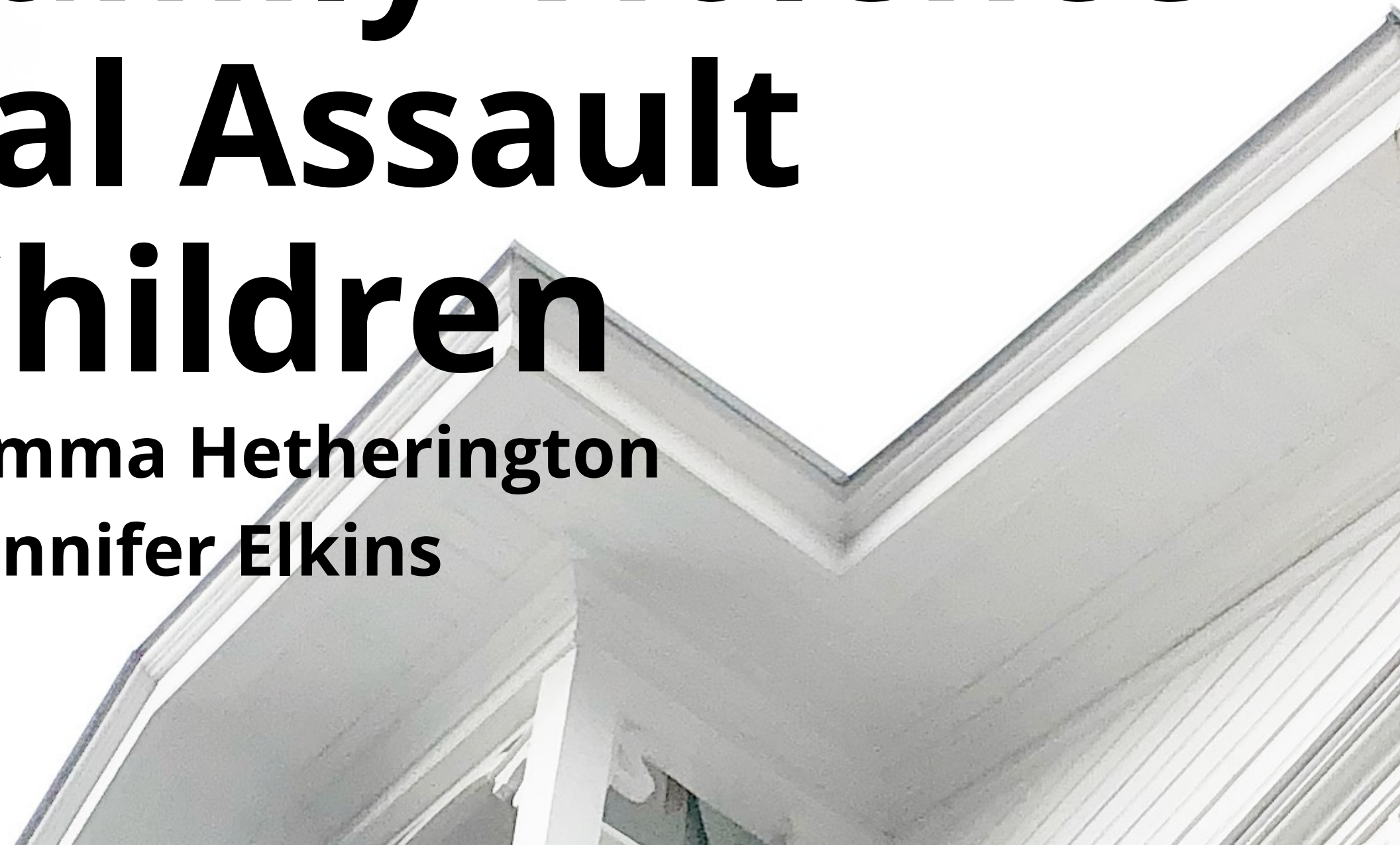


Impact of Family Violence & Sexual Assault on Children

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UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

School of Law

*Wilbanks Child Endangerment
and Sexual Exploitation Clinic*

About Us



School of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Agenda

01

Definitions

02

Impact

03

**Legal
Issues**

04

**Therapeutic
Legal Spaces**

1

**Who is in the
room?**

2

**Who are your
clients or
constituents?**

3

**How long have
you been doing
this work?**

relation or from any
point of view.

Definition [, defɪ'n

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Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence applies to any 2 parties in the same household who commit crimes of physical harm, bodily injury, or assault; creating a fear the physical harm, bodily injury, pushing, shoving, slapping, punching, kicking, or assault will happen soon; sexual assault; or stalking. A relationship where one person maintains power and control over the other person.



October is
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
awareness month

VS



Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence includes any behaviors that one intimate partner (current or former) uses over another to establish power and control. These can include physical or sexual violence, but they do not always; they can be financial, emotional, psychological, cultural, spiritual, reproductive, or other controlling behaviors.

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
TTY 1.800.787.3244
Text "START" to 88788



Child Sexual Abuse

"Child sexual abuse is any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child) in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or an observer. Sexual abuse can include both touching and non-touching behaviors. Non-touching behaviors can include voyeurism (trying to look at a child's naked body), exhibitionism, or exposing the child to pornography. Children of all ages, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds may experience sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse affects [] girls, [] boys, [transgender youth, nonbinary youth, and gender non-conforming youth] in all kinds of neighborhoods and communities.

Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children

A range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person.

Children under 18 cannot consent to being trafficked--do not need to prove force, fraud or coercion. CSEC includes survival sex where there is no particular "trafficker."





Impact

**Is witnessing
DV or IPV a
form of child
abuse?**

Yes

No

Sometimes

Not Sure

**What makes
an account
of DV, IPV, or
sexual
assault
"credible"?**

Linear account

Specifies details clearly

**Reported soon after the
incident**

**None of the above are
required**

**What is a
"typical"
trauma
response?**

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

No Response At All

Fear and Isolation

All of the Above

**I know how
to identify
trauma
responses in
clients.**

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

**What's a Trauma
Response?**

The Impact of Trauma

- Feeling
- Behaving
- Growing
- Thinking
- Relating
- Working



Impact of DV/IPV

- Direct v. Indirect
- Short-Term v. Long-Term

How Violence Affects Children



Is Witnessing DV/IPV Child Abuse or Neglect?

- **Exposure to DV/IPV is an adverse childhood experience**
- **Witnessing DV/IPV during childhood can lead to neurobiological changes, adjustment and behavioral problems, as well as increase the risk for mental illness like PTSD**
- **Exposure to DV may compromise cognitive functioning and emotional regulation**
- **Forced separation is the most significant independent predictor of risk for emotional and behavioral problems in childhood**
- **Adults who were in care ages 2-6 had greater odds of psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders than those adults who were never removed from their homes as children but experienced similar early life circumstances**



Impact of CSA

- What it means to Children
- What it means to Perpetrators
- Key Concerns of survivors

How Children Respond To Trauma:

*Traumatogenic
Factors Impacting
Outcomes*

- Age
- Relative vs. Non-Relative
- Victim-Perpetrator Relationship
- Means Used To Silence Victim
- Victim Role (active vs. passive)
- Severity/Duration/Frequency
- Caregiver Response
- Cognitive Appraisal of Abuse (responsibility, blame)
- Community & Societal Response

Non-Offending Parents:

Common Responses To CSA Disclosure

- 1 A Protective Response
- 2 A Response Reflecting Role Conflict
- 3 Overwhelmed, Denying the Abuse or its Significance
- 4 Rejecting and Unprotective

Non- Offending Parents:

*Factors that
Influence Lack
of Support*

- 1 Cognitive Issues
- 2 Cycle of Abuse
- 3 Mental Health Issues
- 4 Addictions

Non-Offending Parents and Denial



Facts

It couldn't happen in my family. It's all a misunderstanding. They would never do that.



Awareness

I never saw anything unusual. The child never told me anything.



Responsibility

I told her not to walk around without a bra. She came on to him..

Non-Offending Parents and Denial



Impact

They'll get over it. They seem to be doing okay



Need for Protection

Now that I know, I'll watch him more carefully



Treatment

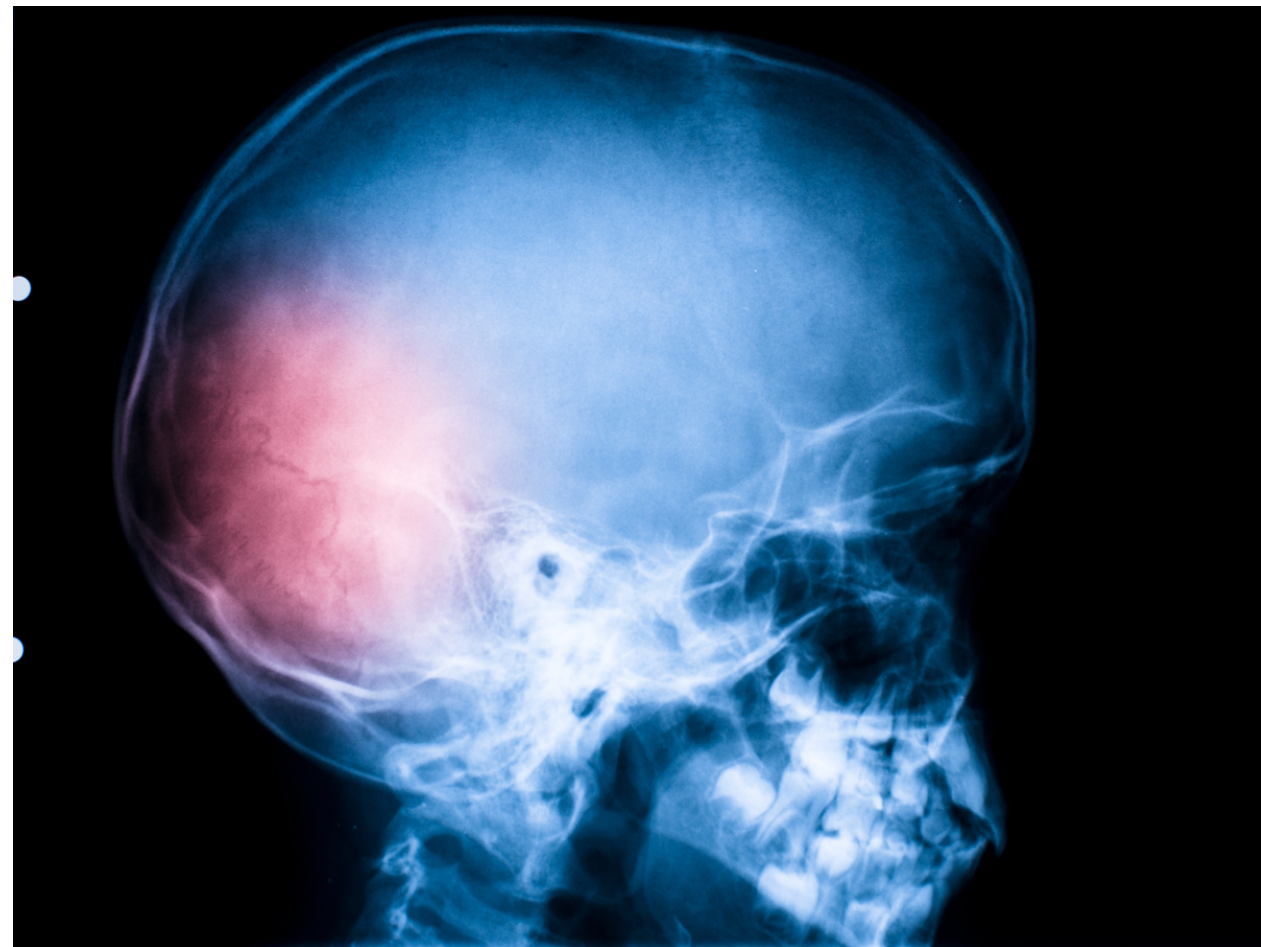
My child seems the same as always. It's better to let them forget

How to Respond to Disclosures



- Don't Make Assumptions
- Acknowledge the disclosure
- Have they told anyone before? How did that go?
- Do not try to gather all the details
- Do they relate their current difficulties to their abuse?
- Is it an issue that they need help with?

Common Trauma Reminders



- Perception of Lack of Power
- Unexpected Change
- Feeling Threatened or Attack
- Feeling Shame
- Feelings of Deprivation or Need
- Intimacy and Positive Attention



Assessment Considerations



Creating Environments Conducive to Disclosure

Creating a Safe Environment

Nonjudgmental approach,
empathy, warmth,
genuineness, compassion,
building good rapport,
being attentive

Clients expect you to act just like their families did

You have to do the
opposite

Be trustworthy, have good
boundaries, be transparent;
keep your word, own up to
mistakes made

Need to be self-aware.

Could any of your
behaviors come across as
abusive, offensive,
controlling, or make clients
feel powerless?

Ensure your interaction
makes clients feel valued,
powerful, and like they
have some control over the
process

Need to “listen louder” and “listen deeper

Legal Issues



**What legal
issues do
you see the
most?**

Need for Protective Order

Divorce/Custody

Dependency/Foster Care

Criminal



“

The most dangerous place for a woman in this country is her own home. She's most likely to be beaten or killed by a man she knows.

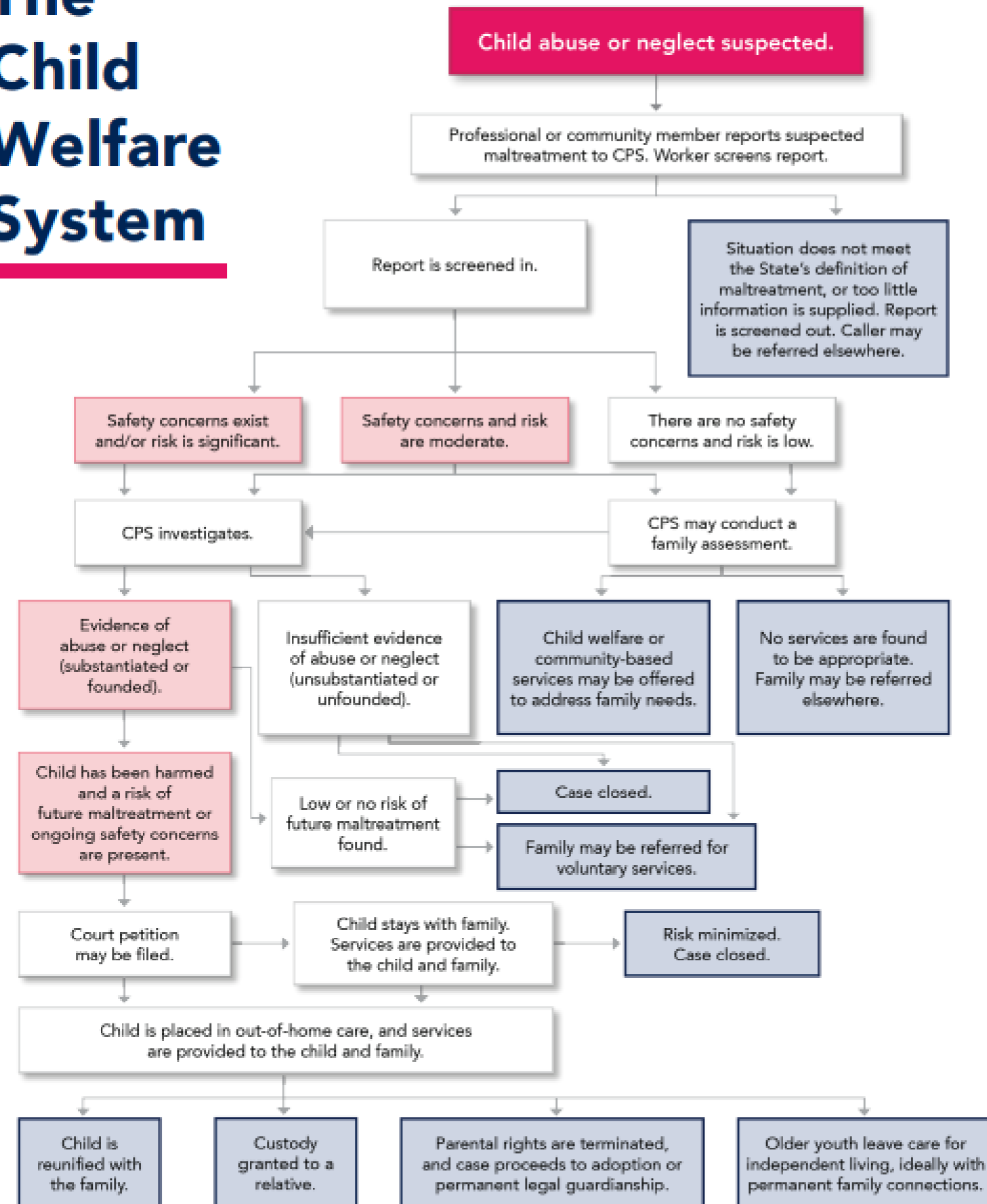
Gloria Steinem

Divorce & Custody

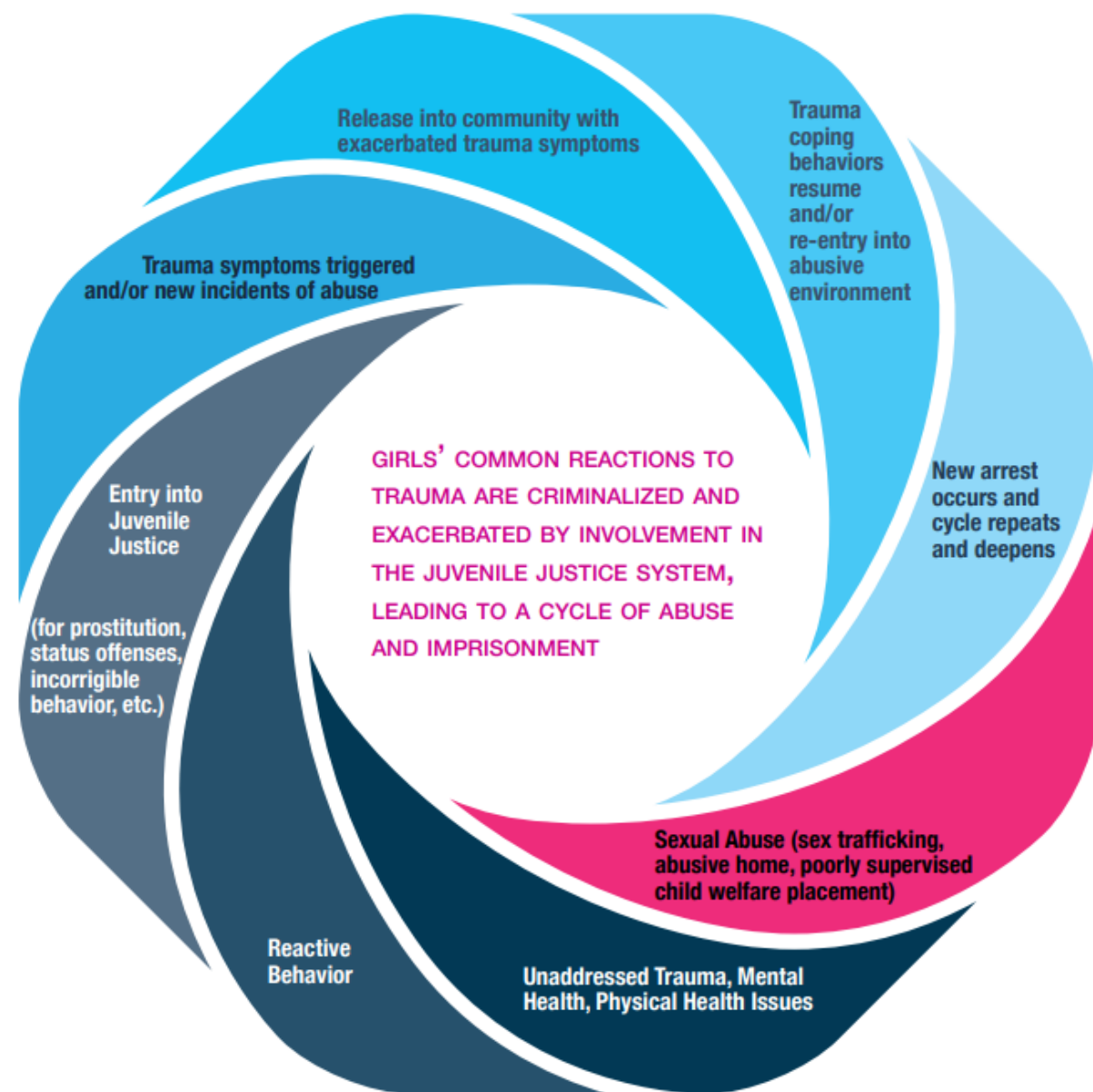
**Domestic Violence, Child Sexual
Abuse, and the Myth of "Parental
Alienation Syndrome"**



The Child Welfare System



Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline



"Findings vary, but local and regional studies show alarmingly high rates of abuse among girls in the juvenile justice system."

<https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Sexual-Abuse-To-Prison-Pipeline-The-Girls%E2%80%99-Story.pdf>, citing <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228620.pdf>

Creating Empowering & Therapeutic Legal Spaces



**Have you ever
adjusted how you
work with a client
in order to
address their
trauma or
behavioral
responses to
trauma?**

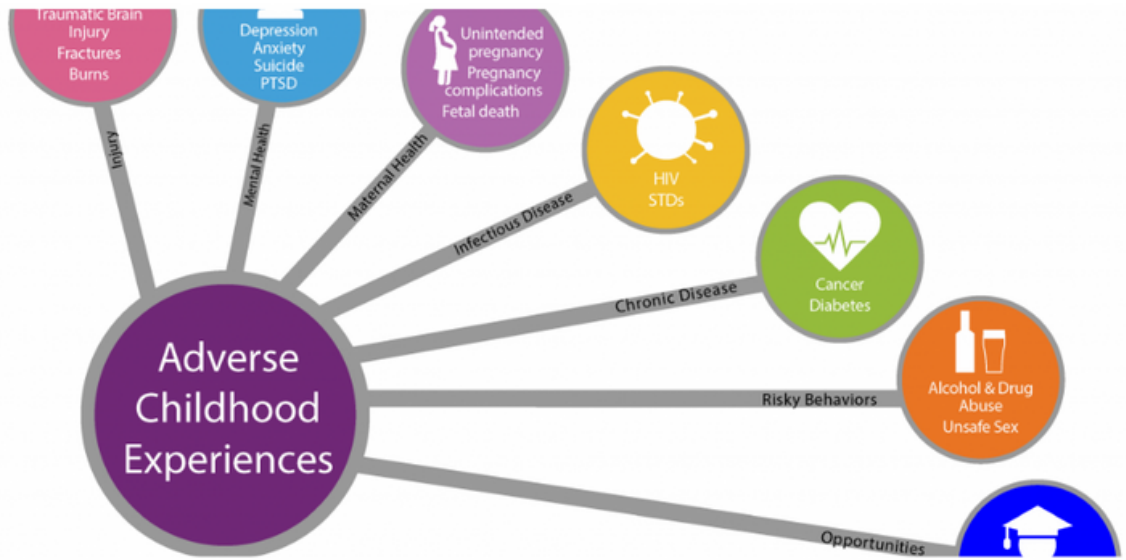
Yes, all the time

Often, but not always

Occasionally

Never

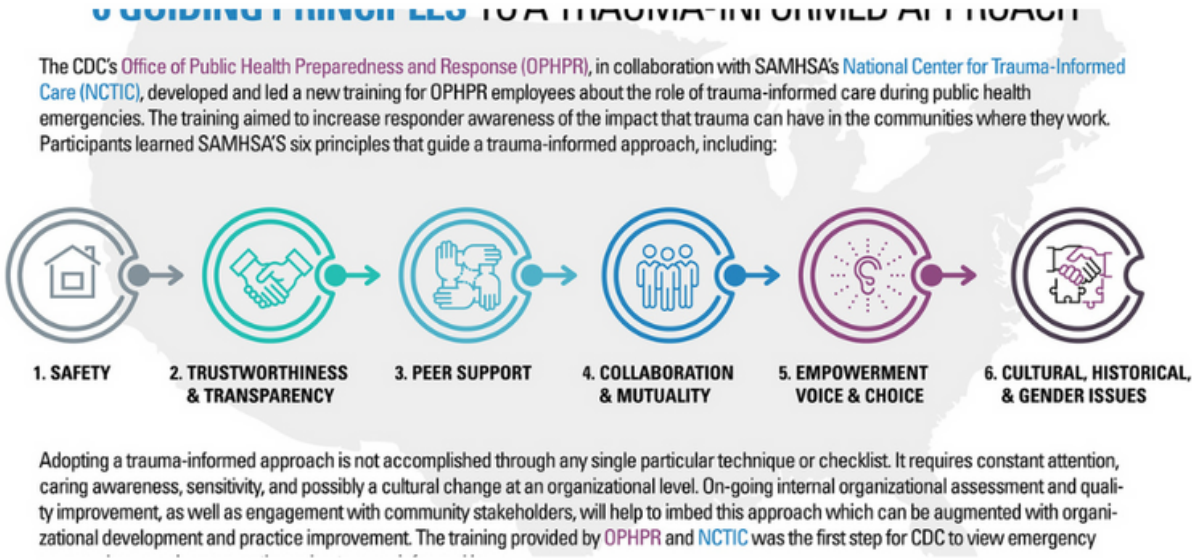
TRAUMA-INFORMED LAWYERING



1 IDENTIFY TRAUMA



3 ADAPT THE LITIGATION STRATEGY



2 ADJUST THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

"We have an obligation to our clients, as well as to ourselves, our colleagues and our loved ones, not to be damaged by the work we do."¹²

4 PREVENT SECONDARY TRAUMA

Secondary Trauma & Burnout



**How stressful
is your work?**

Very stressful

Often stressful

Occasionally stressful

Never stressful

**What is your
organization's
greatest challenge
in preventing or
combatting
burnout or
secondary
trauma?**

High caseloads

Low pay

Lack of resources

Workplace culture

**What strategies
has your
organization used
to prevent
burnout or
secondary
trauma?**

Lowering caseloads

Mental health support

**Training/Technical
Support**

None

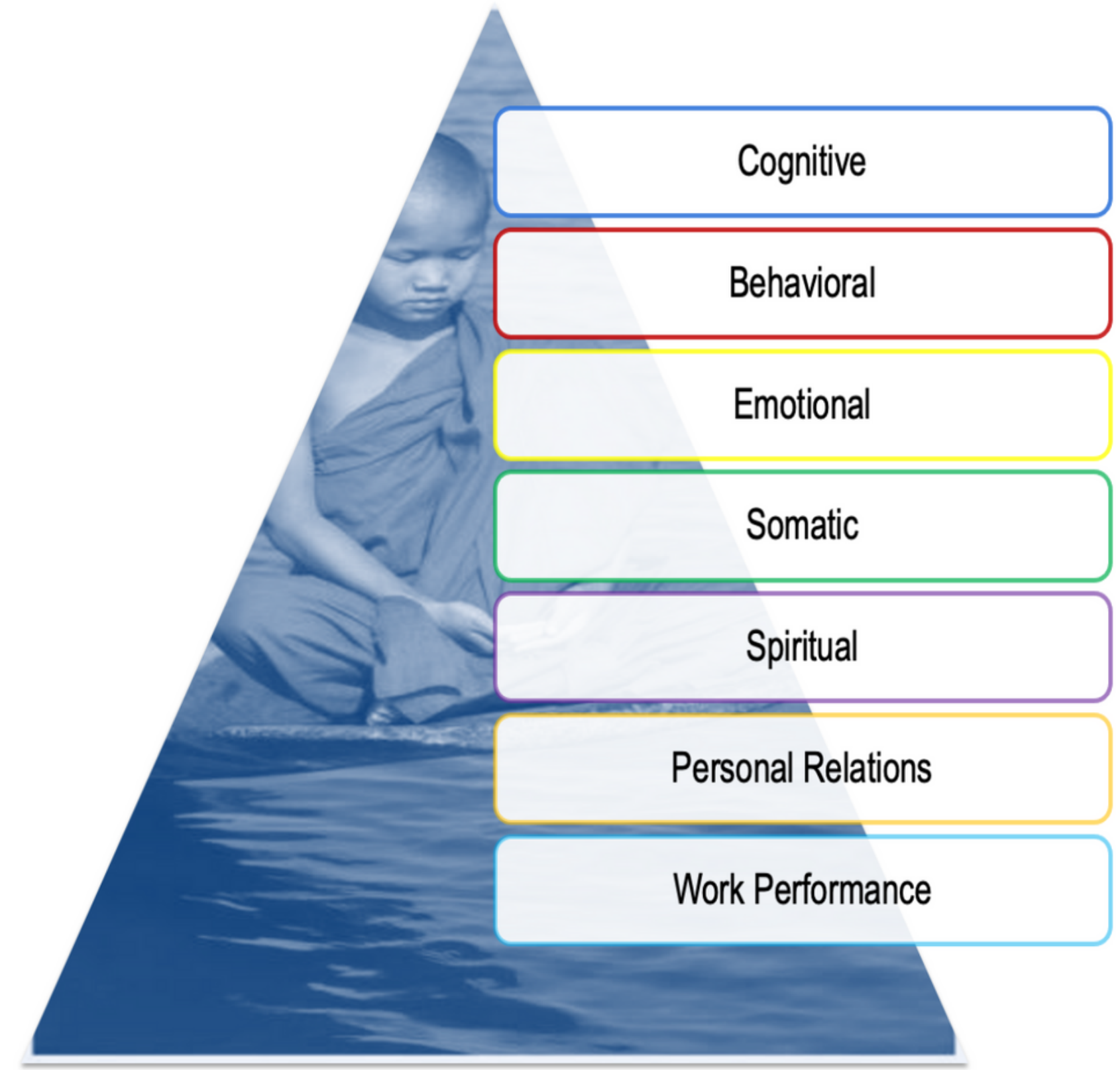


“

The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.

Rachel Remen

Impact of Secondary Trauma



Identifying Burnout & Secondary Trauma

SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT

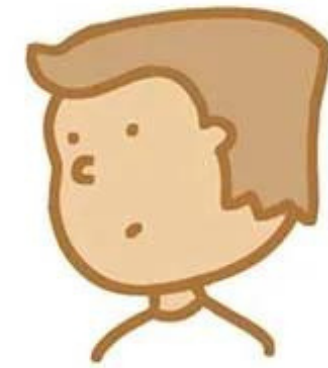
- Procrastination
- Chronic Fatigue
- Cynicism
- Chronic Lateness
- Pessimism
- Loss of imagination for the future
- Reduced happy moments
- Job dissatisfaction
- Doubting core beliefs

@LINDSAYBRAMAN



SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

- depression
- insomnia
- hyper-vigilance
- nightmares
- anxiety
- obsessive thinking @ the trauma
- PTSD symptoms



SYMPTOMS OF SECONDARY TRAUMA

- depression
- insomnia
- hyper-vigilance
- nightmares
- anxiety
- obsessive thinking @ the trauma
- PTSD symptoms

@LINDSAYBRAMAN

“

Repeated exposure to [a survivor's] traumatic experiences shift the ways in which professionals perceive themselves, others, and the world. Not surprisingly, these shifts in cognitive schemas can have devastating effects on an individual's personal and professional lives.

**Barbara Glesner Fines & Cathy Madsen,
Caring Too Little, Caring Too Much: Competence and the Family Law Attorney,
75 UMKC L. Rev. 965, 990 (Summer 2007).**

feminist **survival** **podcast**



“

[T]he cure for burnout is not self-care. Self-care is the fallout shelter you build in your basement because apparently it's your job to protect yourself from nuclear war. The cure instead is simply care. It is all of us caring for each other.

Emily and Amelia Naoski, “Episode 01: Separate the Stress from the Stressor,” The Feminist Survival Project 2020 Podcast.

feminist

survival **podcast**



“

[W]hen you think you need more grit, what you need is more help. When you think you need more discipline, you need more kindness and when you look at others and think they need more grit, what they need is more help. And when you think they need more discipline, what they need is more kindness.

Emily and Amelia Naoski, “Episode 01: Separate the Stress from the Stressor,” The Feminist Survival Project 2020 Podcast.



Evidence-Based Strategies to Address Burnout, Stress, & Trauma



Workplace Strategies to Address Burnout, Stress, & Trauma

- Balance and limit caseloads
- Create a safe space for practitioners to talk about trauma
- Encourage and set appropriate boundaries
- Encourage and practice self-care
- Incorporate secondary trauma training
- Counseling
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Clear & transparent organizational supports
- Build in fun

Self Care (or just Care)

**Working
together
requires we
take care of
ourselves**

**Working
together
requires we
take care of
ourselves**

**Re-evaluate
biases,
triggers, and
values**

**Seek
support and
increase
knowledge
base**

How do you know when you have been taking care of yourself?



Your Body

Ways in which my body reacts to stress



Your Personal Life

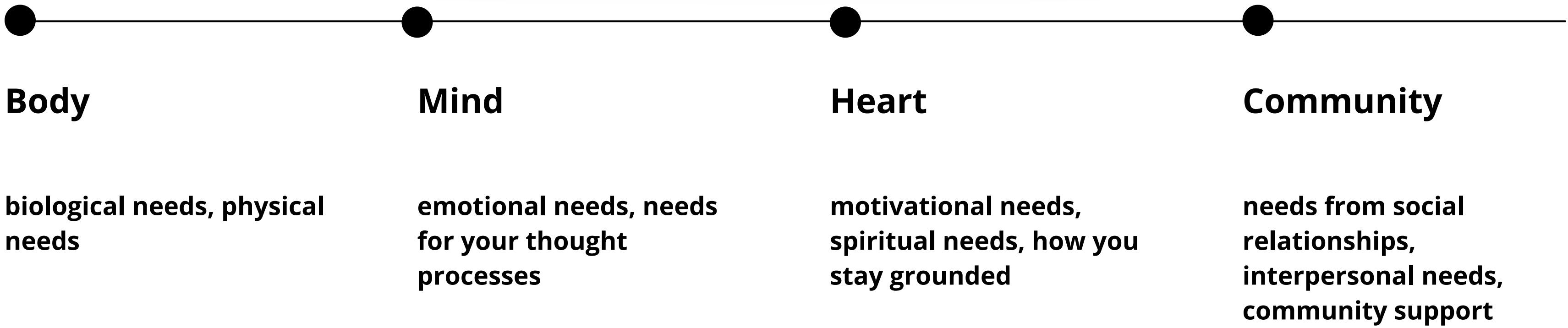
Ways in which my personal life is affected by stress



Your Professional Life

Ways in which my professional life is affected by stress

Wellness Planning



Takeaway Prevention Tips



Be Aware

Be aware of your emotional reactions & distress when confronting clients' traumatic experiences; Know what traumatic material may trigger you.



Connect

Connect with others by talking about your reactions with trusted colleagues or others who will listen.



Maintain

Maintain a balance between your professional & personal lives; Focus on self-care to prevent - and lessen the effects of - workplace stress.

“

Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change [is] trust, and trust and trust comes through forming healthy working relationships. People, not programs, change people.

Bruce D. Perry

Questions & Discussion



Thank you!

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