



Ethical Boundaries in Specialty Work

**Navigating Competency in Divorce,
Stepfamily, Adoption, and Foster Care
Family Systems**

Understanding Complex Family Culture

So Many Experts

Stepfamily Expert Council

Francesca Adler-Baeder, Ph.D.

Anne Bernstein, Ph.D

Christy Borgeld

Dawn O. Braithwaite, Ph.D.

James H. Bray, Ph.D., Director

Scott Browning, Ph.D

Dora Capelluto, MA

Marilyn Coleman, Ph.D

Ron L. Deal, M.MFT

Elizabeth Einstein, MA/MFT

Margorie Engel, MBA, PhD.

Larry Ganong, Ph.D

Brian Higginbotham, Ph.D.

Mary Ann Mason, J.D., Ph.D.

Patricia Papernow, EdD

Kay Pasley, Ed.D.

Dave Schramm, Ph.D, CFLE

<https://www.stepfamilies.info/about/>

Boundaries & Ethics in Session



- Mission for Therapeutic Relationship that is Ethical and has identified/expressed Boundaries
- Do you have the competency?



- Cultural Awareness of how these families are different than biologically attached families
- You have considered transference risks – Self Disclosure

- You have considered your risks of countertransference and recognize when you are triggered
- Aware of the possibility you need to do your own work and seek support if need be



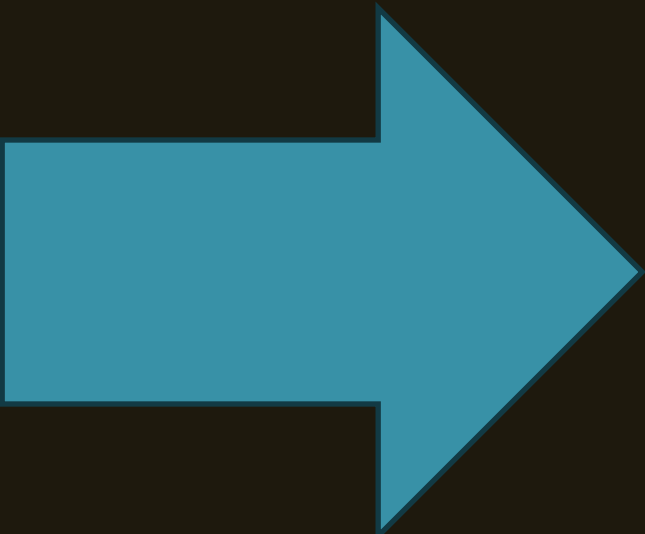
Boundaries in Competency





In Crisis Our Behavior Looks Like Survival Us

Why Are They In Your Office?



50-55% of Stepfamilies navigate without counseling

20-25% of Stepfamilies struggle to merge systems and move into hyper or hypo arousal- The whole system is a chain reaction of too much change too fast

20-25% Remain in a state of hypo/hyper arousal after 3 years and become High Conflict Families



The Attachment Journey

**Foundational Difference
How Attachment Happens**

The Biological Nuclear Family

January 1, 2005

Growing Up Together

January 1, 2023

Accepting the Good, the Bad, the Ugly!



BIOLOGICAL ATTACHMENTS START IN THE WOMB

Bonding with your baby begins in pregnancy. From 5 months of pregnancy, your baby can hear you when you sing, read and talk. These are nice ways to connect with your baby. Both parents can bond with the baby during this time.



DAILY WEATHER FORECAST



Consistent

Hi - 10

Low - 0



ISOLATION



Creating Common Language For This Family

What Do You Call The Emotion
That Feels Like This?



Building a Contemporary Family

January 1, 2020

I NEED it MY Way!

January 1, 2023

New Ways Feel Wrong!



ONGOING CONFLICT RUINS ATTACHMENTS

Conflict is normal part of healthy relationships. It is the repair that mends the conflict. How effective and efficient we become at repair will increase our trust in our relationships.



DAILY WEATHER FORECAST



The Body Requires More Time to Adjust to New Things

Slow Down the Change, Too Much Too Soon Causes the Body to Overwhelm.

All Sensories Are Learning What the New Normal is.

TIP: We know how to help kids Transition between 2 homes!!!

The Body Does That Faster in Side by Side, Short Periods of Time and Safe Environments or Commonly Known Things to That Body.

How Does **DESTINATION UNKNOWN**, Social Connection and

**How Does Hope for New Beginnings
End Up Here at the Counseling Office?**

**CURRENT CHALLENGES
THEY DIDN'T TEACH US THIS IN SCHOOL**

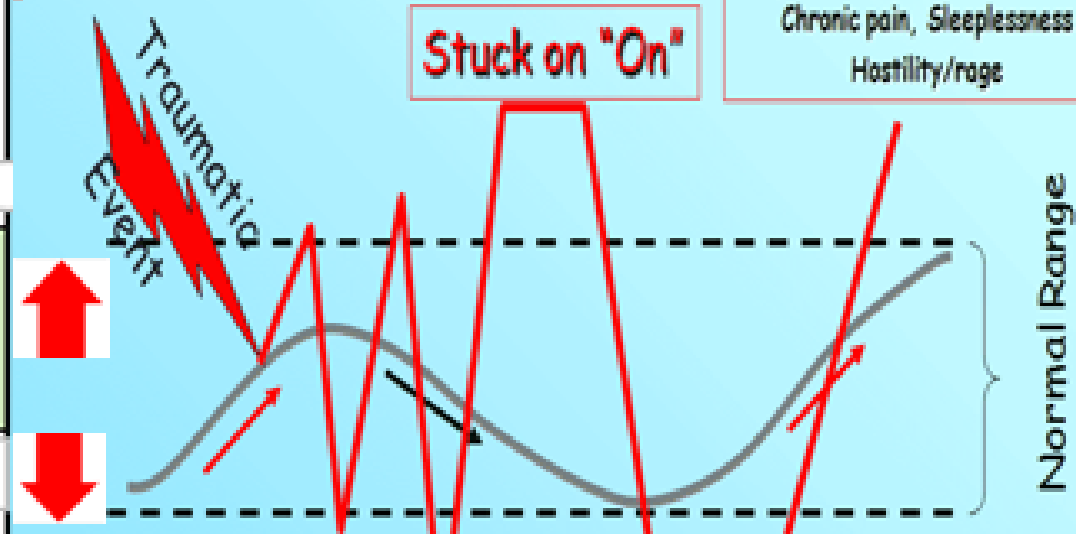
**ATTACHMENT FEARS BECOME EMBEDDED IN
WHOLE BODY FUNCTION**

**LITTLE TO NO UNDERSTANDING OF
EMOTIONAL/SENSORY TRIGGERS**

**NO NEW WORDS FOR ATTACHMENT FEELINGS
THAT DEFINE PAST/TODAY/FUTURE**

Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress

- Anxiety, Panic, Hyperactivity
- Exaggerated Startle
- Inability to relax, Restlessness
- Hyper-vigilance, Digestive problems
- Emotional flooding
- Chronic pain, Sleeplessness
- Hostility/rage



- Depression, Flat affect
- Lethargy, Deadness
- Exhaustion, Chronic Fatigue
- Disorientation
- Disconnection, Dissociation
- Complex syndromes, Pain
- Low Blood Pressure
- Poor digestion

(Levine, Ogden, Siegel)

10	Fight-Flight-Freeze
9	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
8	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
7	↑ HyperArousal
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5	Wisdom Both Cognitive & Emotional Brain
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1	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
0	Fight-Flight-Freeze

StephSternes.com LMFT, LCPC, NCC



The Attachment Journey

Research Backs Attachment Outcomes Based On:

Conflict: Level of tension between parents.

Healing: How parents adjust to divorce.

Secondary Trauma: Information children are given regarding the divorce.

Attunement: Level of support available to child.

Individuality: Child's personality.

Thermostat: Child's ability to deal with stress.

Neuro Equipment: Age and developmental level of children.

The Contemporary Family Journey

Counseling People in Non-Traditional Family Systems

A yellow diamond-shaped sign with a black border and two silver screws at the top and bottom. The sign is mounted on a grey post. The background of the sign is yellow, and the text is in bold black font. The sign is positioned on the right side of a two-lane asphalt road with double yellow lines. The road stretches into the distance under a cloudy sky, flanked by green grass and a line of trees on the left.

**The GOOD
News!
You Got This!**

Road Maps Ahead

Turns Out Most Humans Attach in the Same Ways!



FamilyLife
Blended.

RON L. DEAL

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**Wait! More
GOOD News!
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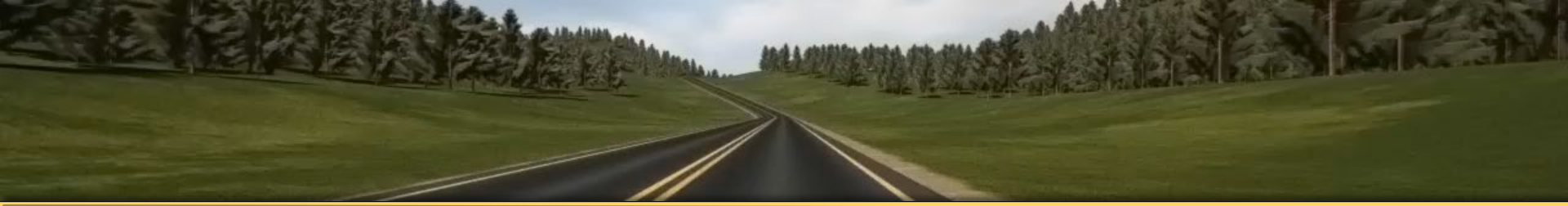
Experts Ahead

Turns Out You Can Be An Expert in Contemporary Family Systems!



Boundaries in Competency





Meet the Experts in the Room

You!

YOUR Theoretical Lens

How you spread the good news



Where Does A Counselor Start?

Myself as a Therapist and Counselor

- Strengths Focused
- Family Systems
- Brainspotting
- Dr. Papernow
- Deal
- Dr. Glasser
- Gottman
- Attachment Theories
- Solution Focused
- Neurocounseling
- 0-5 Infant DC-5

Your ways as a Therapist/Counselor

- Base Working Theory
- Working Trauma Lens
- Some background in Family Systems/Groups and how they function
- Open mind to Not Wrong, Not Right Just Different
- **Be highly aware of your own Counter-transference and possible triggers**
- **Learn MORE about what works and what doesn't for these families.**

Turns Out You Can Be An Expert in Contemporary Family Systems!

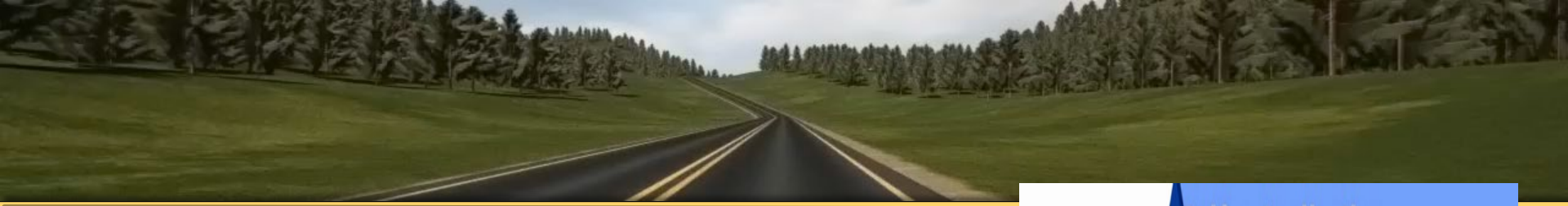


YOUR Theoretical Lens!

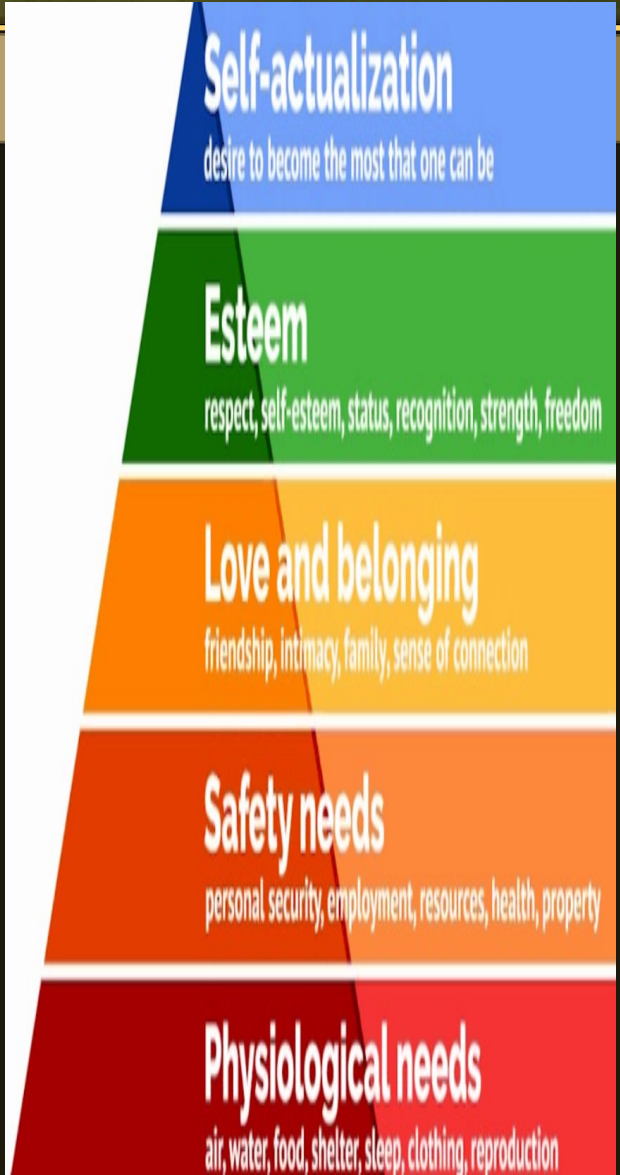
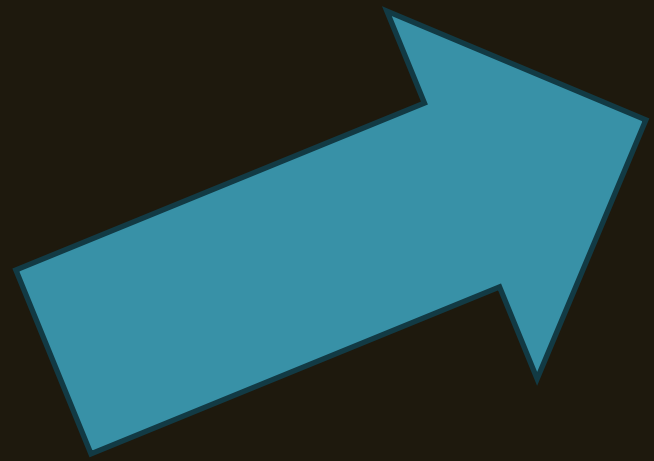
- _____
- _____
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- _____
- _____
- _____

Your ways as a Therapist/Counselor

- Base Working Theory
- **Working Trauma Lens**
- Some background in Family Systems/Groups and how they function –GENOGRAM/MAPPING
- Open mind to Not Wrong, Not Right Just Different
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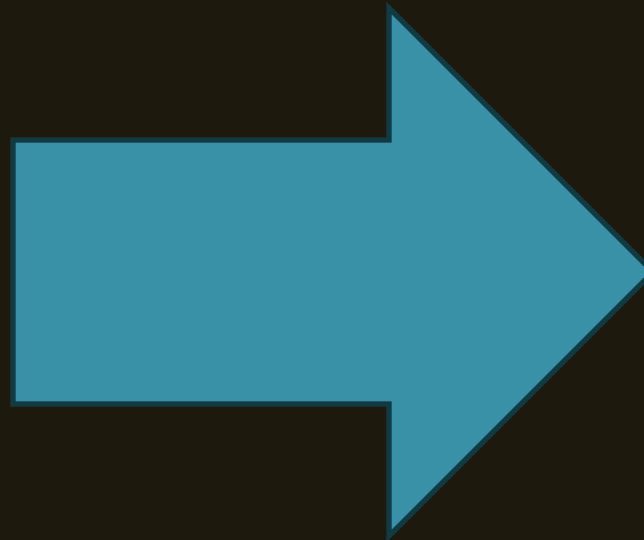
Why Are They In Your Office?





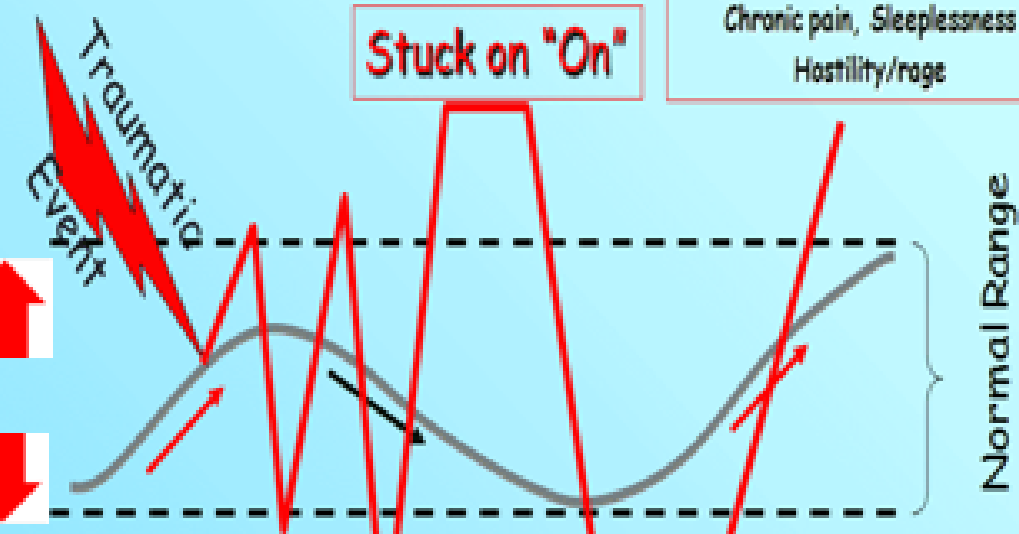


Why Are They In Your Office?



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- Exaggerated Startle
- Inability to relax, Restlessness
- Hyper-vigilance, Digestive problems
- Emotional flooding
- Chronic pain, Sleeplessness
- Hostility/rage



- Depression, Flat affect
- Lethargy, Deadness
- Exhaustion, Chronic Fatigue
- Disorientation
- Disconnection, Dissociation
- Complex syndromes, Pain
- Low Blood Pressure
- Poor digestion

(Levine, Ogden, Siegel)

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Safety

"Build Up"



Controlling



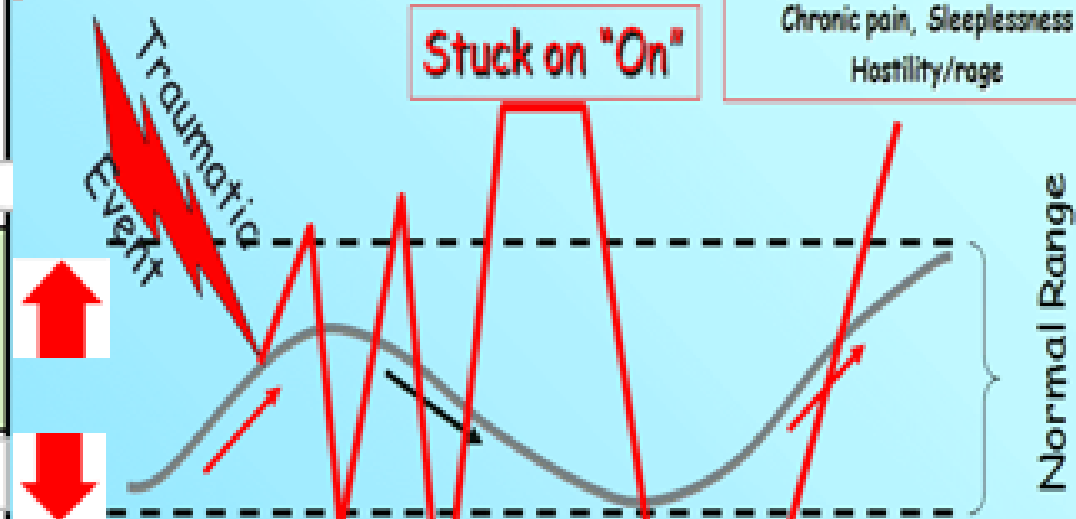
Idaho

"Build Your World"



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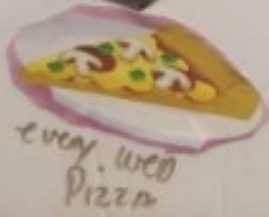
Go to Bed
Early except
on Fridays
Goods We eat
Hard: Sister of
to get her to listen
Play Junk food
on Fridays



Play Barbies
First Action



Stop Playing Games
w/ Kelly + Bradley
at night time



every wed
Pizza



No Kitten's
in the room



Go to Bed
7:08
- No sleep
overs on
School night
- Sat we have
Sleep over
HARD: Grand horse
She is a



Watch tv



No watching movies
except weekends

No throwing
toys in the
sky
No clixo doors
unless changing



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**Wait! More
GOOD News!
You Got This!**

Experts Ahead

Turns Out You Can Be An Expert in Contemporary Family Systems!



SUMMARY OF OUR WORK
EXPERTS- PAPERNOW, DEAL, CHAPMAN, &
FOUNDATIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCE

Counselor Tools

3 Levels for Counselors to work from – Psychoed (normalizing), Relational, Individual Interpsychic work (Psyche, mind, personality, past, present, values)

Treatment Goals to Overcome

The BIG 5 CHALLENGES – Insider/Outsider, Children, Parenting Tasks Polarized, Creating New Culture, Ex’s Part of the Family

Interventions

Interventions to help reduce tension in the process of change

Assessments

INDIVIDUAL –Experiences, Personality, Family Traditions, Culture

Normal Developmental Stages of New Family System – (for now-think forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning) There are formal stages to learn for stepfamily development.

Normal Lifespan Developmental – child, adolescent, teen, young adult, adult

Normal Developmental –Maslow, Erickson, Piaget, Bowlby, Bandura

Foundation of Grief and Loss Work **Start Here**



An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is above the water, and the much larger part is submerged. The word "ASSESSMENT" is written on the tip, while "INDIVIDUAL CLIENT" is written on the submerged part. Sunlight rays penetrate the water from the left.

ASSESSMENT

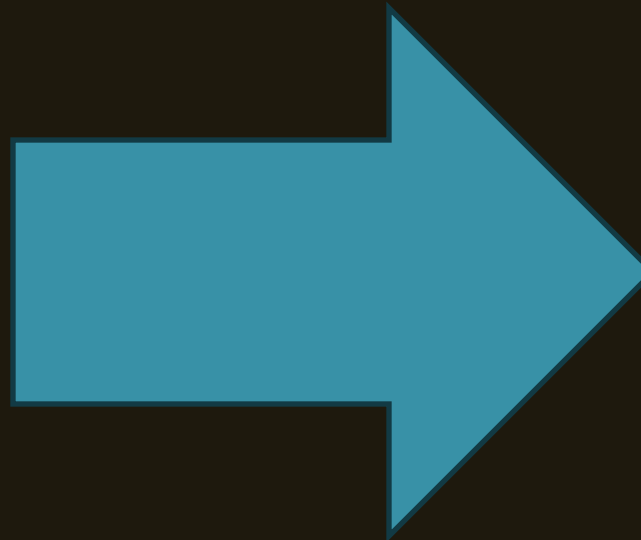
INDIVIDUAL

CLIENT

split



Why Are They In Your Office?





**Escalated
Behaviors**



**Avoidant
Withdrawing
Behaviors**



**Placating
Behaviors**

Individuals with an anxious attachment style may be more prone to "fight," avoidant individuals might lean towards "flight," and disorganized attachment styles often manifest as "freeze" responses when faced with perceived threats in relationships.



In Crisis We Move To More Directive Resourcing and Safety Plans

We install hope in the first session by using

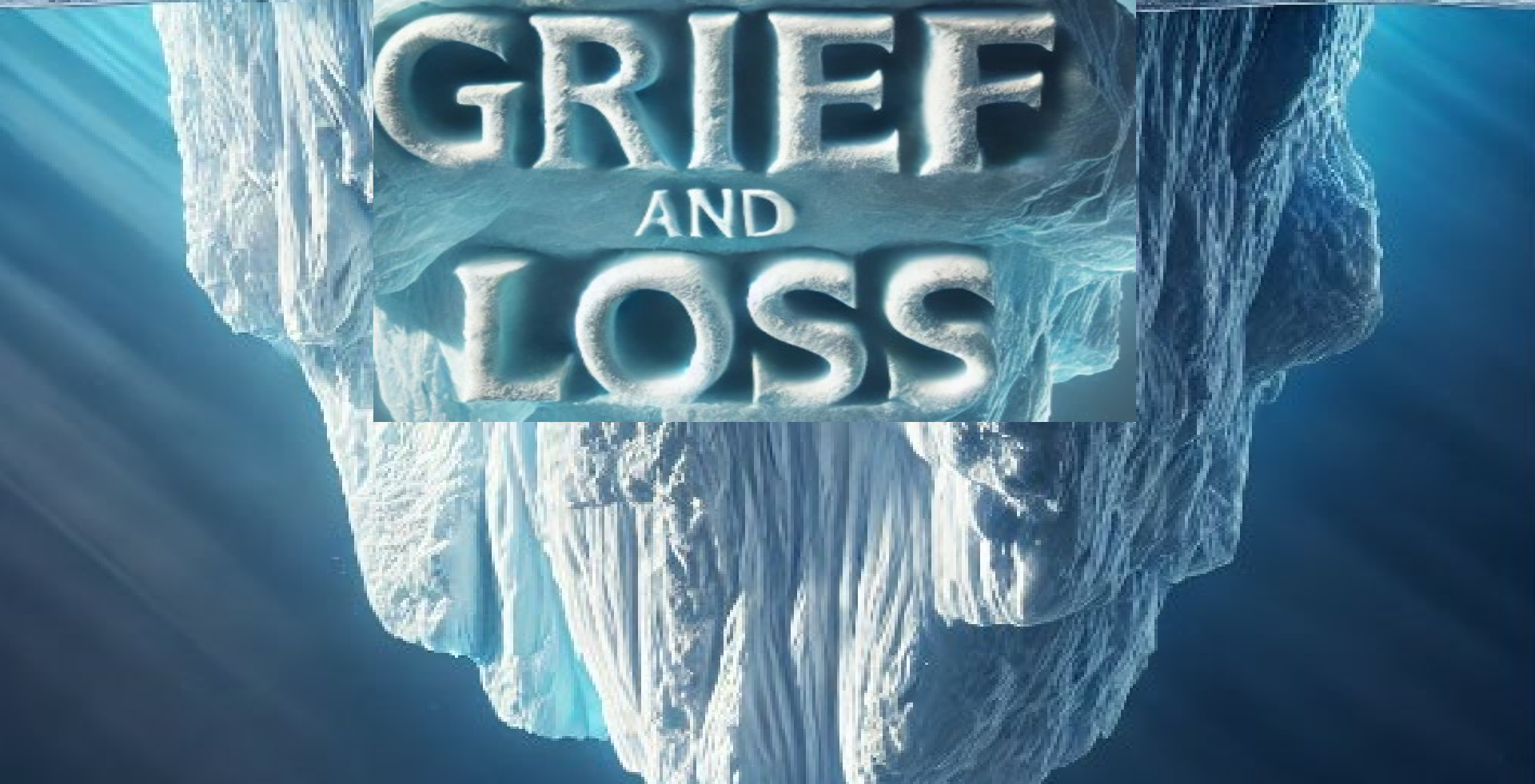
*Psycho Ed about expectations

*Normalizing

Severe Adjustment Disorder
Symptoms



GRIEF
AND
LOSS





NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

A System in Crisis
Makes Normal
Developmental Stages
LOOK MUCH BIGGER!



ERIKSON

PIAGET

KOHLBERG

**BOWLBY
BANDURA**

**GRIEF
AND
LOSS**

Don't forget what our long-standing developmental training taught us about **NORMAL x 100 in Crisis!**

Be careful! People acting from their survival systems in crisis get labeled with all kinds of diagnosis that are **NOT** true of them when they are healthy!



NORMAL

DEVELOPMENT

CHILD YOUNG ADULT

TEEN

ADULT

LIFESPAN

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

ERIKSON

PIAGET BOWLBY

KOHLBERG BANDURA

GRIEF

AND

LOSS



NORMA
DEVELOPMENTAL
STAGES

STEPFAMILY SYSTEMS

NORMAL
DEVELOPMENTAL
CHILD YOUNG ADU
TEEN ADULT

LIFESPAN

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT
ERIKSON
PIAGET BOWLBY
KOHLEBERG BANDURA

GRIEF
AND
LOSS

See Handouts!

NORMAL
DEVELOPMENTAL
STAGE

FAMILY
SYSTEMS

NORMAL
DEVELOPMENTAL
CHILD YOUNG
TEEN ADULT

LIFESPAN

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT
ERIKSSON
PIAGET BOWLBY
KOHLEBERG BANDURA

GRIEF
LOSS

For Today Think Groups

Groups

FORMING

STORMING

NORMING

PERFORMING

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg, which is visible above the water, contains the main title and a list of concepts. The much larger part of the iceberg, which is submerged below the water, contains a list of names and terms. The water is blue and the sky is light blue with some clouds.

INDIVIDUAL
- EXPERIENCES
PERSONALITY
FAMILY TRADITIONS
CULTURE

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT
CHILD YOUNG ADULT
TEEN ADULT

SYSTEMS
LIFESPAN

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT
ERIKSSON
PIAGET **BOWLBY**
KOHLBERG **BANDURA**

GRIEF
AND
LOSS



INDIVIDUAL
EXPERIENCES
PERSONALITY
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GRIEF
AND
LOSS



NORMALIZE

ASSESSMENT

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg, which is visible above the water, is inscribed with the word "ASSESSMENT" in large, bold, black letters. The much larger part of the iceberg, which is submerged below the water, is inscribed with the words "CO-PARENTING STYLES" in large, 3D, carved letters. The submerged part also features a snowflake and a paisley-like decorative pattern. Sunlight rays penetrate the water from the left, illuminating the submerged portion of the iceberg.

CO
PARENTING
STYLES

Navigating the Spectrum of Childhood Outcomes:

Co-Parent Self Assessment For Each Bio-Parent

Co-Parenting

Parallel Parenting

Oppositional Parenting

Abuse

<p>Co-Parenting – Best Outcome Low Conflict – Mutual Respect/Acceptance (Similar Parenting Values, Positive Communication, Better Healing from Divorce)</p>  <p>Ron Deal, director of Family Life Blended: "Healthy co-parenting is separating what's personal from what's parental."</p> <p>Child Focused, Friendly, Respectful Parenting even when they don't agree; they work for win, win compromises. They are concerned with parenting a healthy, loving environment for their child and their relationships. The Child Belongs to Both Parents.</p>	<p>Parallel Parenting – Best Outcome Low/Moderate Conflict - More Complexity (Opposing Parenting Values/Acceptance - Respectful of Other Parents Right to Parent - Better Healing from Divorce)</p>  <p>When Parents don't agree but express difference not right or wrong. They encourage their children to embrace being loved by more people in these complex systems. IE: Steps, Values, Preferences, Parenting Boundaries</p> <p>Child Focused, Friendly, Respectful Parenting even when they don't agree; they work for win, win compromises. They are concerned with parenting a healthy, loving environment for their child and their relationships.</p>	<p>Oppositional Interplay Parenting - Poor Child Outcomes More Complexity – High Tension – Competitive – Rigid (Possible Root: Opposing Parenting Values – Mental Health Comorbidity – Unresolved Bitterness, Grief, Loss from Divorce, Fear)</p>  <p>Survival System Coping Skills</p> <p>When Parents compete and conflict with each other. The child is used to pass covert and/or overt messages to the other parent. Demands restricted relationships and activates in the other home. They encourage their children to embrace hate, one sided loyalty, criticism of the other home. IE: Bio-Parent, Step-Parent, Family Members, Values, Preferences, Parenting.</p> <p>Parent Focused War - Child in the Middle of Conflict, Restrictive, Controlling Parenting covert or overt; they work for winning over the other parent. They are concerned with minimizing and limiting relationships of their child.</p>	<p>Abuse – A Legal Term for Counselors (Possible Root: Actual Abuse, Oppositional Interplay Parenting, Polarized Values/Beliefs , Conflict, Mental Health Comorbidity, Unresolved Parent Conflict, Fear, Parenting, 2nd Hand Stories)</p>  <p>Child Abuse: Child abuse is an act or failure to act on the part of a parent, guardian or caretaker. It can result in sexual abuse, exploitation, serious physical and/or emotional harm, risk of serious harm, or death of the child.</p> <p>https://www.cityofnampa.us/898/Child-Abuse</p>
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No

Low

Moderate

High CONFLICT

Fostering Resilient, Happy Children

Cultivating Vulnerable, At-Risk Children

CoParenting Structure

Over two to three years after divorce:

- Cooperative Coparenting is achieved by 20 to 25% of parents
- Parallel Coparenting is achieved by majority of parents at 50 to 55% of parents
- High Conflict Oppositional Coparenting at 20 to 25% of parenting

Best outcomes for children are related to #1 Low Conflict and #2 quality parenting (Authoritarian- Warm and Firm Boundaries)

The Co-Parenting Structure Impacts

Who You Agree is the Best Client

The Informed Consent and Collection of Paperwork

Who is in the Room and Who isn't

The Interventions

Your Notes

The Treatment Plan

Your Risk of Going To Court

Your Risk of Having Records Requested

Additional Resources, Referrals. and Best Practice

FAMILY GROUPS

Is Your Stepfamily One of These 3 Common Types?

“NEOTRADITIONAL” stepfamilies, the most common type, function and resemble a traditional nuclear family. In these families, stepparents eventually come to share parenting tasks. However, they also openly acknowledge that this is a subsequent marriage, with additional challenges. They understand it will take time to gel together.

“MATRIARCHAL” stepfamilies, a strong female figure leads the family. Although the children often have a positive relationship with their stepfather, he may function more as a mentor or friend, and does not participate much in daily parenting. In these families, the stepfather is seen more as the wife’s companion than as the “dad.”

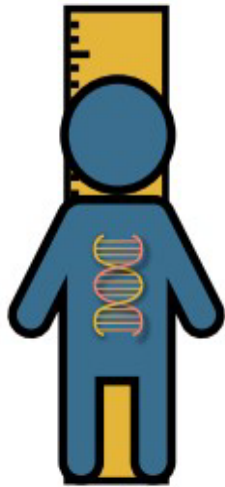
This model also often works well. However, it may prove challenging if the stepfather decides to take on more parenting roles, or if the wife wants him to. The birth of a child into the second marriage may also change the roles and cause disruption.

“ROMANTIC” stepfamilies, men and women expect an “instant bliss” “Brady Bunch” experience, where two families meld into one right away. The stepfamily may also be expected to “make up for” the problems of the first marriage...which some family members may want to forget ever happened.

In “romantic” stepfamilies, stepparents may be pressured to take over parenting roles too quickly and without much discussion. An idealization of the new relationship often prevents the couple and children from talking honestly about problems or figuring out new guidelines. These stepfamilies are at the highest risk of falling apart.

OTHER TYPES INSPIRED BY FOO, FEAR FROM PAST –THE PAIN CYCLE, ETC.

EPIGENETICS EXPLAINS HOW EARLY EXPERIENCES CAN HAVE LIFELONG IMPACTS.



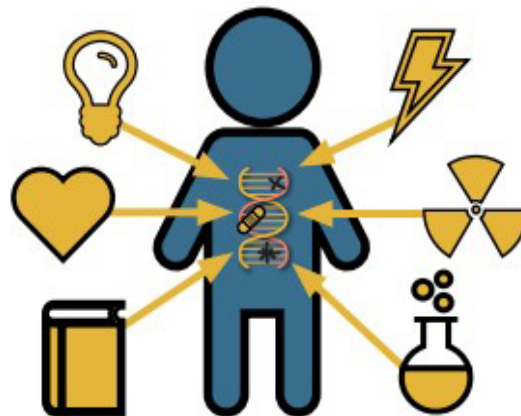
The genes children inherit from their biological parents provide information that guides their development. For example, how tall they could eventually become or the kind of temperament they could have.



When **EXPERIENCES** during development rearrange the epigenetic marks that govern gene expression, they can change whether and how genes release the information they carry.



Thus, the epigenome can be affected by positive experiences, such as supportive relationships and opportunities for learning...



... or negative influences, such as environmental toxins or stressful life circumstances ...

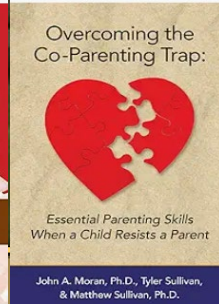
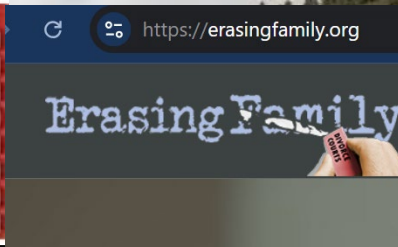
... which leave a unique epigenetic “signature” on the genes. These signatures can be temporary or permanent and both types affect how easily the genes are switched on or off. Recent research demonstrates that there may be ways to reverse certain negative changes and restore healthy functioning. But the very best

How High Conflict Parenting Delivers POOR OUTCOMES FOR CHILDHOOD

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
Workgroup on Complex Trauma (High, On-Going Conflict)

Identify 7 domains of impairment in children exposed to complex trauma:

- 1) Attachment**
- 2) Biology: Somatic and Epigenetics**
- 3) Affect (Emotional) regulation**
- 4) Dissociation**
- 5) Behavior Control**
- 6) Cognitive Process**
- 7) Self Concept**



Dr. Papernow's

Psycho ed for Parents: When the Other Parent Does Something Toxic

1-Keep your COOL- If you can't stay calm-bite your tongue until you can

2-Calmly check facts (from kids) with the ex (kids perception is not always accurate in the details)

3-Kids complaints from other house (Soft/Hard/Shift Tool)- Soft part of the sandwich-" Daddy has lots of great qualities" "Mom loves you a lot"

AND

4-Accknowledge unacceptable behavior with simple, factual statement- The hard part of the sandwich IE: " your Dad does get drunk" "You're Mom does say bad things about me sometimes"

5- Immediately shift from the problem to the child's emotions/feelings - Children need adults to validate their feelings- it must be confusing, it must be scary, it must be tense inside you

6-If Client believes that safety for children is a serious issue-make a safety plan, empower the child with behaviors he/she can do in times of fear.

7-Use "language of parts" Part of you feels this way and part of you feels that way.....Kids have complex feelings like adults, and we can talk about that as normal.

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5 Major Challenges

- 1) INSIDER/OUTSIDER Positions- Feeling left out or stuck in the middle. This is hard and stays for a long time.
- 2) Children- Loss, Transitions, Loyalty Binds, Big T Truth of Different Stages Between Parents and Children Subsets
- 3) Parenting Tasks Polarize the Parents- Norms, Correction Before Connection, Big T Truths About What Works
- 4) Creating New Family Culture – Traditions are High Emotional Connections, They Create Our Big T Truths
- 5) Ex Spouses Part of the Family- Divorce Doesn't End Relationships, It Just Reorganize it and Adds New Conflicting Big T Truths



**FEELING
LEFT OUT
OR
STUCK
IN THE
MIDDLE**

Challenge #1

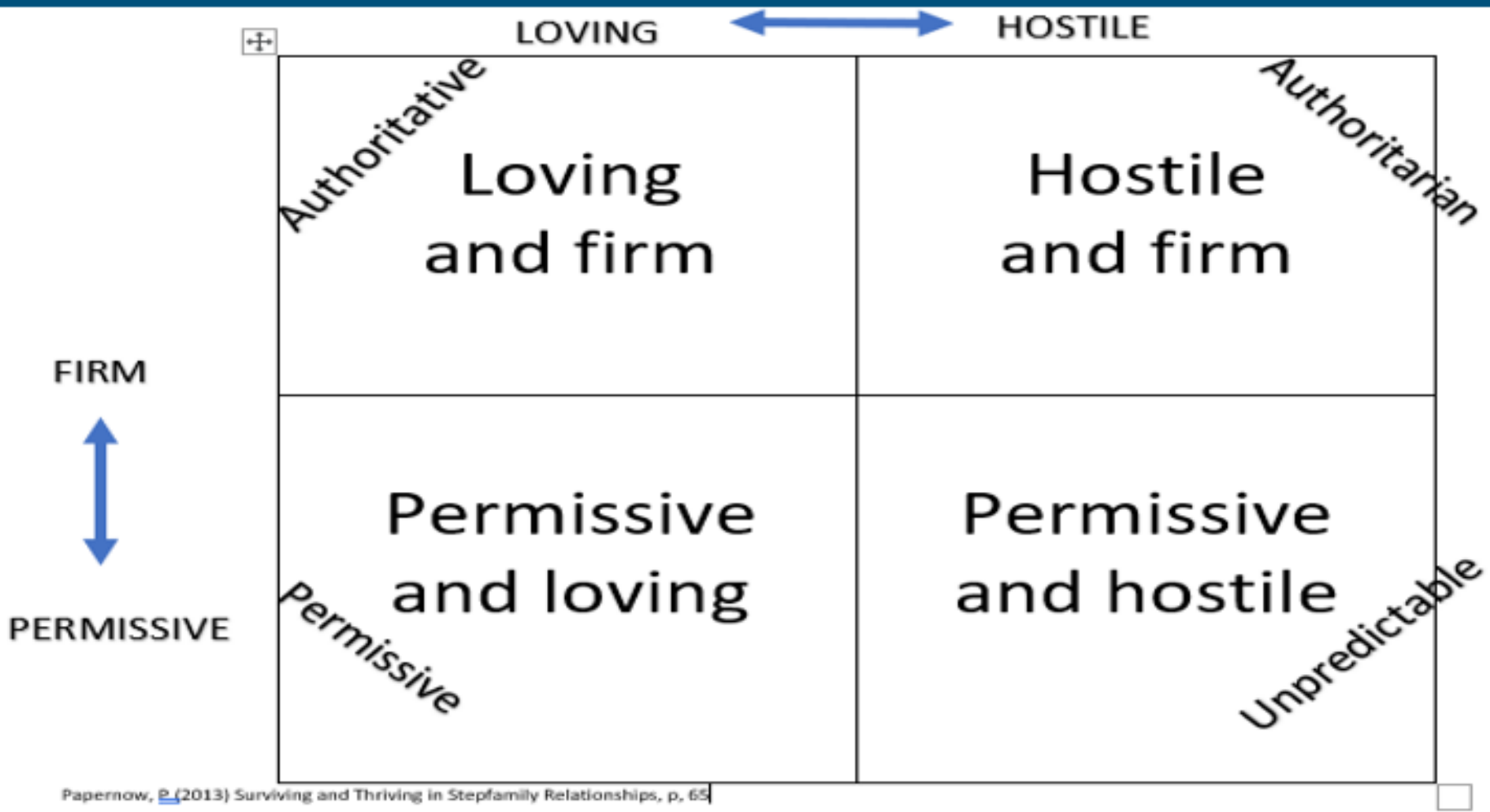
Insider/Outsider Positions



**HELP YOUR KIDS
FEEL UNDERSTOOD**

Challenge #2

Children in Contemporary Family Systems



Challenge #3

Parenting Tasks Polarize the Adults

ITALIANS EATING WITH CHOPSTICKS?



Challenge #4

Creating a New Family Culture

CO-PARENTING WITH YOUR EX





**New Storm
Systems
Ahead**
You Got This!

Stormy Road Ahead

3 Counselor Tools To Help Navigate the Challenges

Skilled Counselors Move From 1 Level to Another

Level 1 – PSYCHO ED

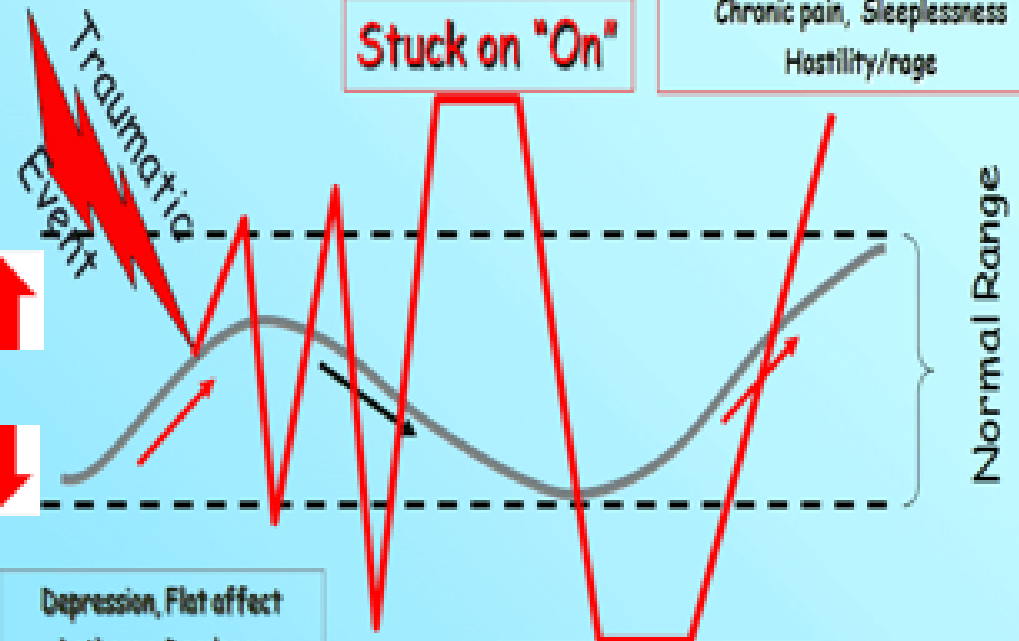
Psychoeducation
Teaching Skills



Psycho Ed, Normalizing 5 Big Challenges!

Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress

- Anxiety, Panic, Hyperactivity
- Exaggerated Startle
- Inability to relax, Restlessness
- Hyper-vigilance, Digestive problems
- Emotional flooding
- Chronic pain, Sleeplessness
- Hostility/rage



- Depression, Flat affect
- Lethargy, Deadness
- Exhaustion, Chronic Fatigue
- Disorientation
- Disconnection, Dissociation
- Complex syndromes, Pain
- Low Blood Pressure
- Poor digestion

(Levine, Ogden, Siegel)

10	Fight-Flight-Freeze
9	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
8	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
7	↑ HyperArousal
6	
5	Wisdom Both Cognitive & Emotional Brain
4	↓ HypoArousal
3	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
2	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
1	Moving Towards Less Cognitive More Emotional Reactions
0	Fight-Flight-Freeze

StephSternes.com LMFT, LCPC, NCC

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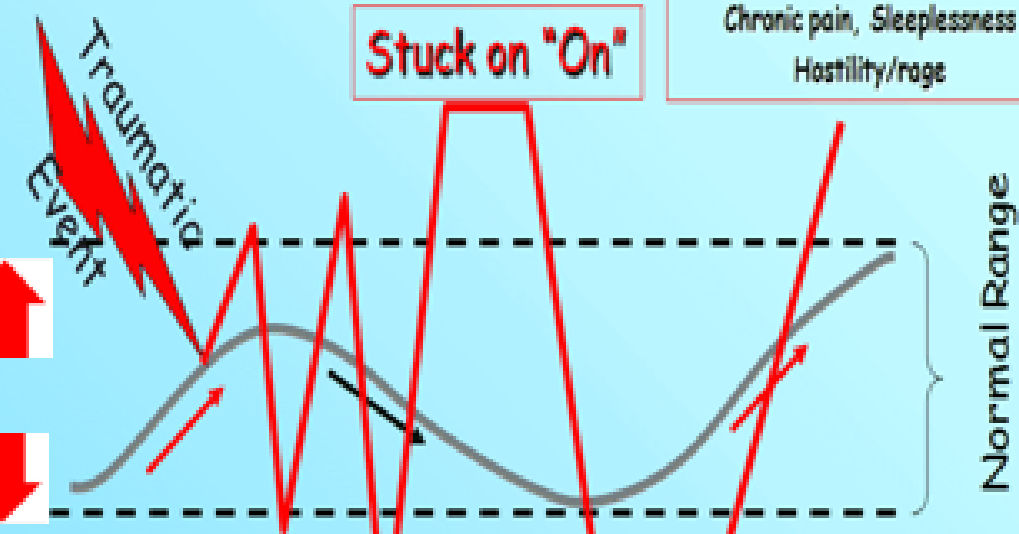
Level 2 - ATTUNEMENT

Interpersonal Skills
Relational Skills

Basic Joining skills such as **empathy (NOT AGREEMENT)**, active listening, emotional intelligence, validation, and normalization.
Counselor Awareness of Parallel Process.

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Level 3 - BRUISES

Intrapsychic Issues
Trauma Lens

Some typical examples of intrapsychic issues (occurring within the psyche, mind) is Papernow's "bruise" or Triggers, anxiety, trauma, grief, fear, attachment issues and or wounds.

*When do you shift? Spinning and stuck - BRUISES

*Bruises for outsider stepparents-FOO

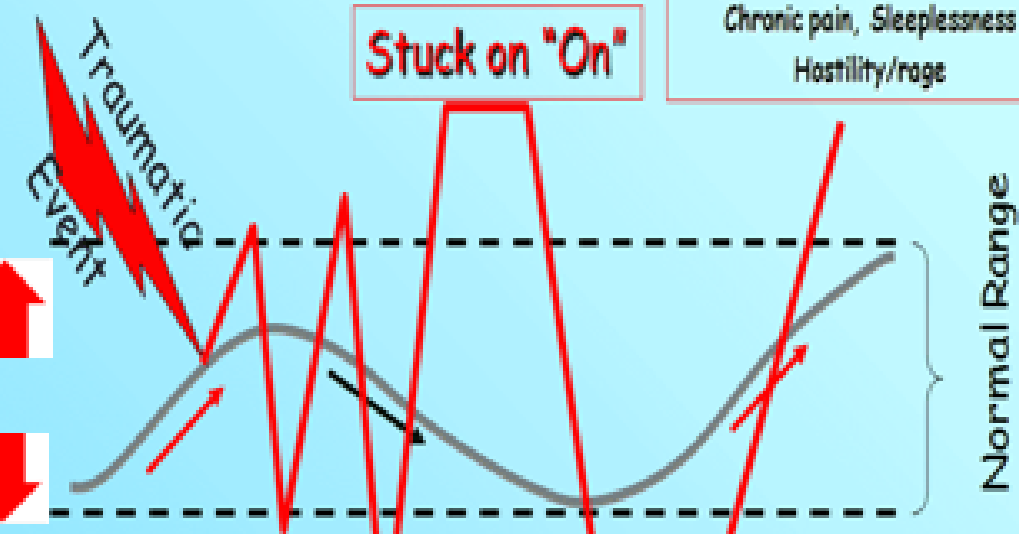
–Rejection/Unprotected

*Bruises for parents-FOO-Never learned co-regulation

*Turn INSIDE-"What happens inside when you...?"

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Stuck on "On"

Stuck on "Off"

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YOU GOT THIS!!! – All Roads Lead to Low Reactivity!



They Can't learn
new skills if
LOSS/GRIEF
TRAUMA
TRANSITION
TIME
needs aren't
tended to.



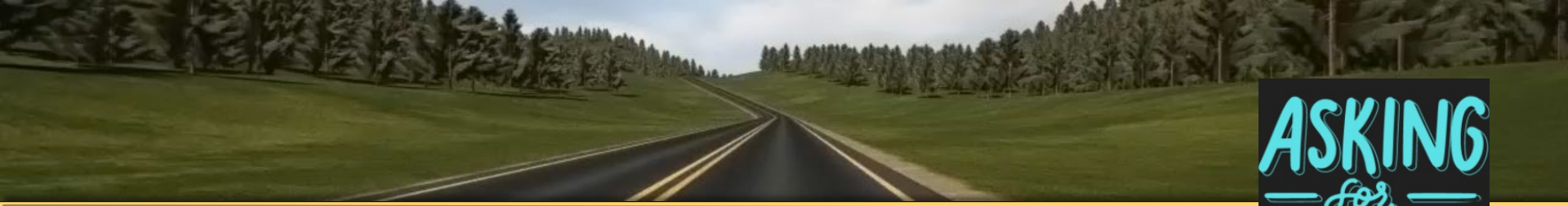
Communication
and Language
Skills are the
key to
successful
family journeys.



They Can't
Normalize it if
they don't
know it's
normal!

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help@StephSternes.com

ASKING
— for —
HELP
is OK



stephsternes.com



**New
Language
Ahead**

Stormy Road Ahead

Experts Need To Know The Language

Identified Patient, Triangulation, Enmeshed, Polarized, **Loyalty Binds** - Normal, Transition Routines, Attunement, Conflict Rupture/Repair, **Compassion Traps**, 5/1 Ratio, Pace Matters, U-Turns, Turn Inside, **Bruises, Insiders, Outsiders**, Look Back, **Honeymoon Last**, Not Wrong, Not Right, Just Different, Critical Thinking Skills for Communicating Hard Stuff, Secondary Divorce Trauma, Role Modeling Emotional Lessons, **Stuck Positions**, Pain Trumps Empathy, Stuck Positions, **Crockpot not Blender, Loss for Kids- Gain for Couple, No Brady Bunch Culture Norms**, Hierarchy of Family System, Rashomon Effect- Multiple Sides to Each Story, NORMALIZE, One on One Time, Daily Intimate Connection for Couples, Shift Don't Blend, Step Parents Need A Break, Spinning or Stuck, Step-Siblings are not biological and experiment-Require Bathrobes,

Divorce Doesn't End Relationships- It just Reorganizes it.

Yours, Mine, and Ours, Boys/Girls, Under 9 years old, Relationships Change Over Time, Process Matters More Than Structure, High Conflict Predicts Poor Outcomes, **BIO Parent-Child Relationship Central to Child's Well-Being**. Putting Couple OVER Kids, Blaming Child, Finances Can Be Tricky, **Family Time Tense-Keep it Short**, Loosen Loyalty Binds, Connecting and Disconnecting, Require Civility Not Love, Common Language for Loss, PLACE (Playful, loving, accepting, curious, empathetic) CALM on the INSIDE-meet Kids energy by half, Couples Stay Connected When Kids are Struggling, **The Clothes War**, No Home Just Moving From One To The Other With Stuff, **Polarized Parenting Styles**, Step-Parent/Step-Child Relationships are Key, Wrong Turns-Dads Putting Stepmoms in Charge To Soon. FOO Shoulds, Correction Before Connection, **BIO Remain Disciplinarians**, Stepparent enforces "House Rules", Extended Family, Holidays, Food, Mess, Noise, Personal Bubbles, Things, Routines, Legislating New Family Culture, Stranger in a Strange Land. Comparison Traps, Expand Lens Horizontally and Vertically, Parallel Parenting, Co parenting, **The legacy of Divorce.**

Stormy Road Ahead –

A Foreign Language For the Untrained Counselor