



**CONNECTING WITH CAREGIVERS: USING ADLERIAN
PLAY THERAPY SKILLS TO ENHANCE CAREGIVER
CONSULTATIONS**

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A small green seedling with two leaves is growing out of a crack in the ground. The ground is dry and cracked, with large, irregular pieces of earth. The background is a blurred, cracked surface. The text "STAKE IN THE GROUND" is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters. There are decorative white circuit-like lines in the corners of the image.

STAKE IN THE GROUND

AGENDA

Introductions/Fostering Self-Care

Understanding Parents with the Brain in Mind

Understanding IPNB to Support Work with Caregivers

Engaging in Caregiver Consultations Across the AdPT Process



! CAUTION

Avoid a Reductionist View

Theoretical Intentionality

You're NOT a Brain Expert (most likely)

Be Consistent with Science, Not Constrained By It



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SUCCESS = SELF CARE

INCREASE AWARENESS

Monitor and Modify State to
Increase Receptivity to Others

Reactive vs Receptive

Focus on body sensation can
loosen up connection to
emotions

Increase body awareness to connect
messages from gut, heart, lungs, brain

“We don’t just think something, we feel
it too.”



UNDERSTANDING PARENTS



- Their experiences
- Possible triggers/boiling points
- Presentation
- Age of Child



THINK OF A CAREGIVER YOU STRUGGLE WITH

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION FIRST, THEN IN PAIRS, DISCUSS:

- a) THE CAREGIVER
- b) WHERE YOU ARE STUCK?
- c) FEELINGS THAT EMERGE WHEN YOU THINK OF THIS PERSON?
- d) CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCES?
- e) POSSIBLE TRIGGERS FOR THAT CAREGIVER?
- f) AGE OF THEIR CHILD OF FOCUS?

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

Create

- a common language

Provide

- core conditions

Model

- imperfections

Honor

- parent's knowledge



BASIC STRUCTURE OF CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS



CHECK IN



CONNECT TO PLAY THEMES



PRACTICE/TEACH CAREGIVER SOMETHING
TANGIBLE



EXAMPLE CAREGIVER CONSULTATION:

- Scenario: Child client is 9 years old and referred for peer issues (has trouble making friends/keeping friends). Client has attended 7 sessions (in AdPT Phase II – gathering information)
- Step 1: Check-in – Caregiver report of the week: consistent trouble on the playground
- Step 2: Play themes: control, safety
- Step 3: Teach something – Choice-giving for developmentally appropriate shared power

TAILORING CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS

Caregiver need

Phase of therapy

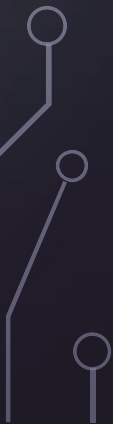
Strength of therapist-caregiver relationship

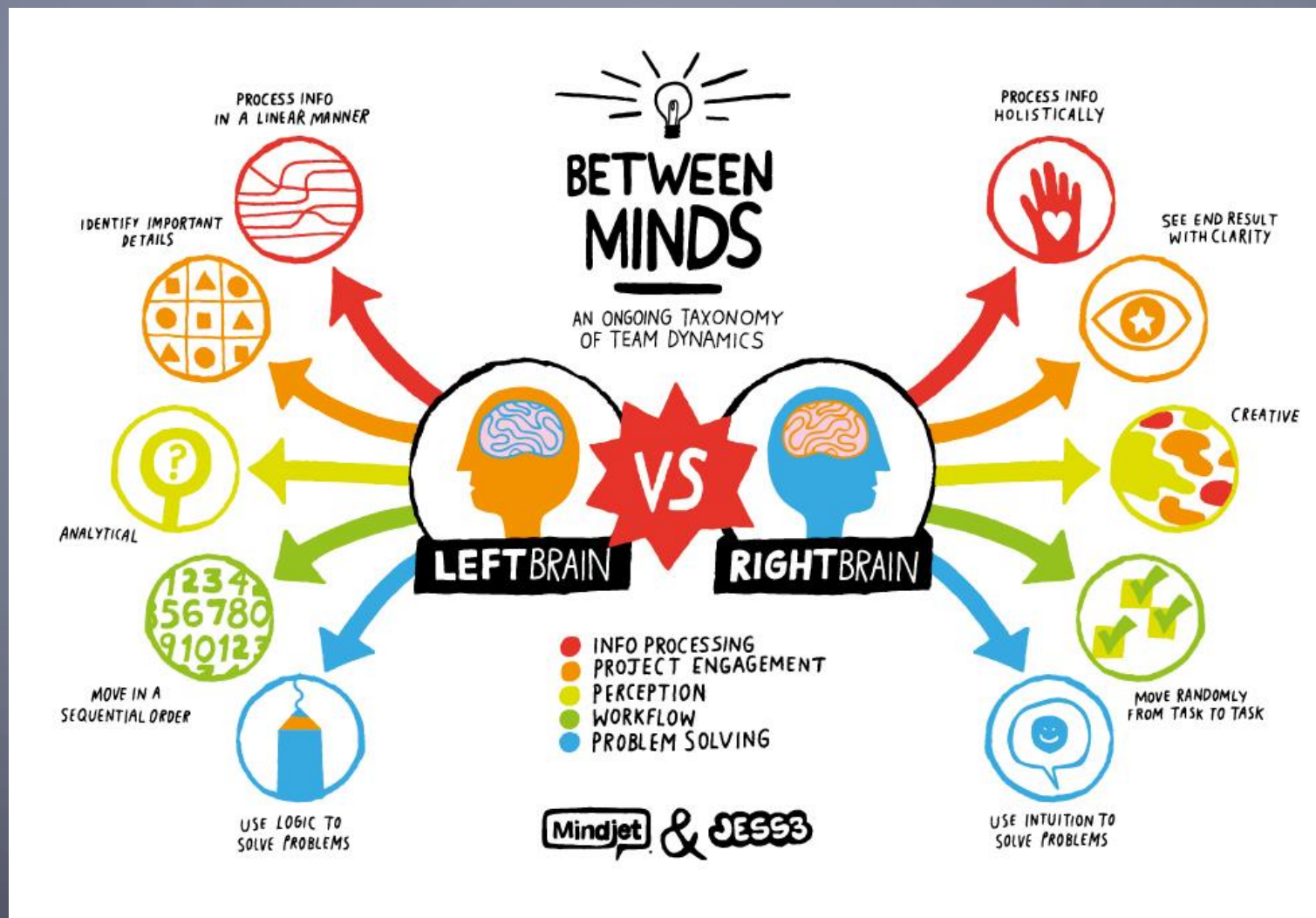
Parental awareness of own “stuff”

Age (Chronological/Developmental) of Child



BREAK



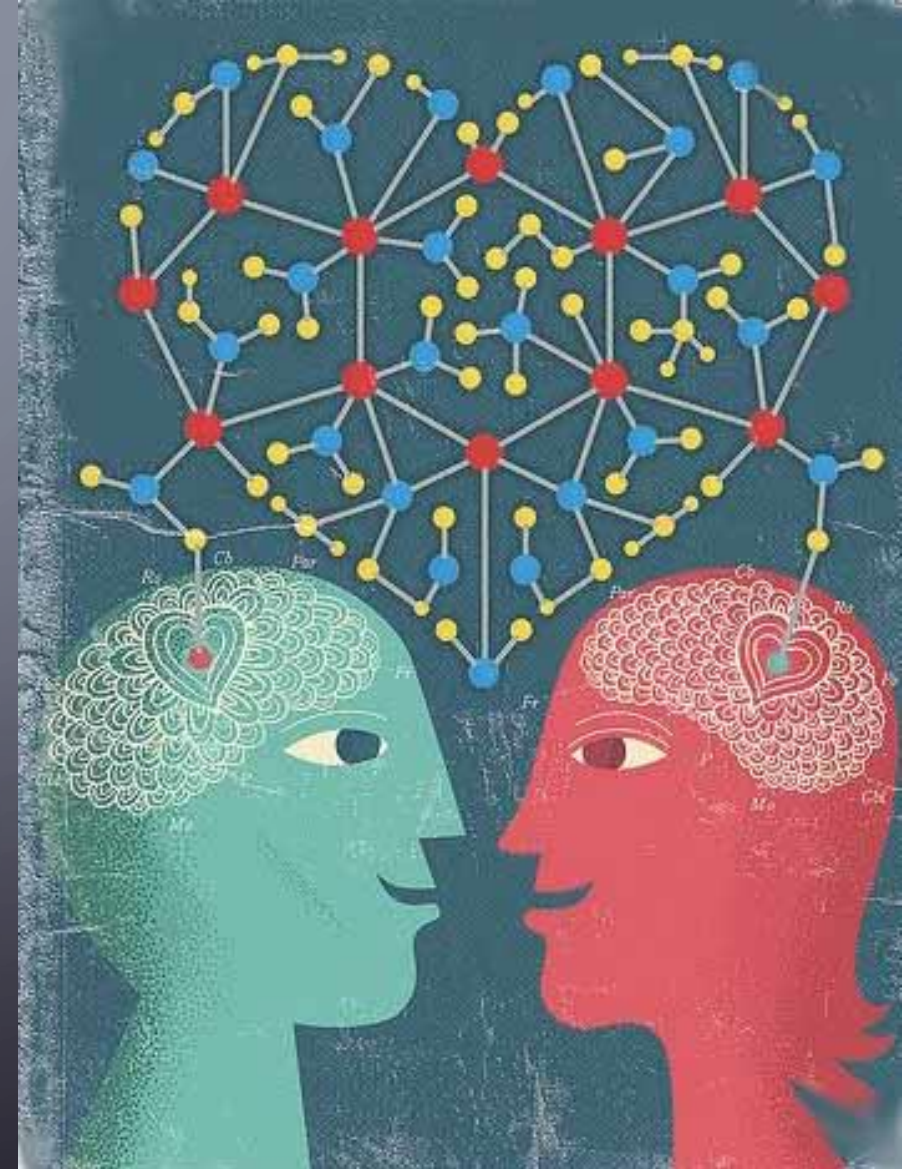


WHY CONSIDER THE BRAIN IN PARENT CONSULTATIONS?

INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY (IPNB)

Neural Integration:

- Influences health
- Can be helped or hindered through relationships
- Is a constant process of information interpretation and interaction
- Nine domains, each can be addressed in therapeutic intervention.



IPNB NINE LEVELS OF BRAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2009)

Consciousness

Vertical

Horizontal

Memory

Narrative

State

Temporal

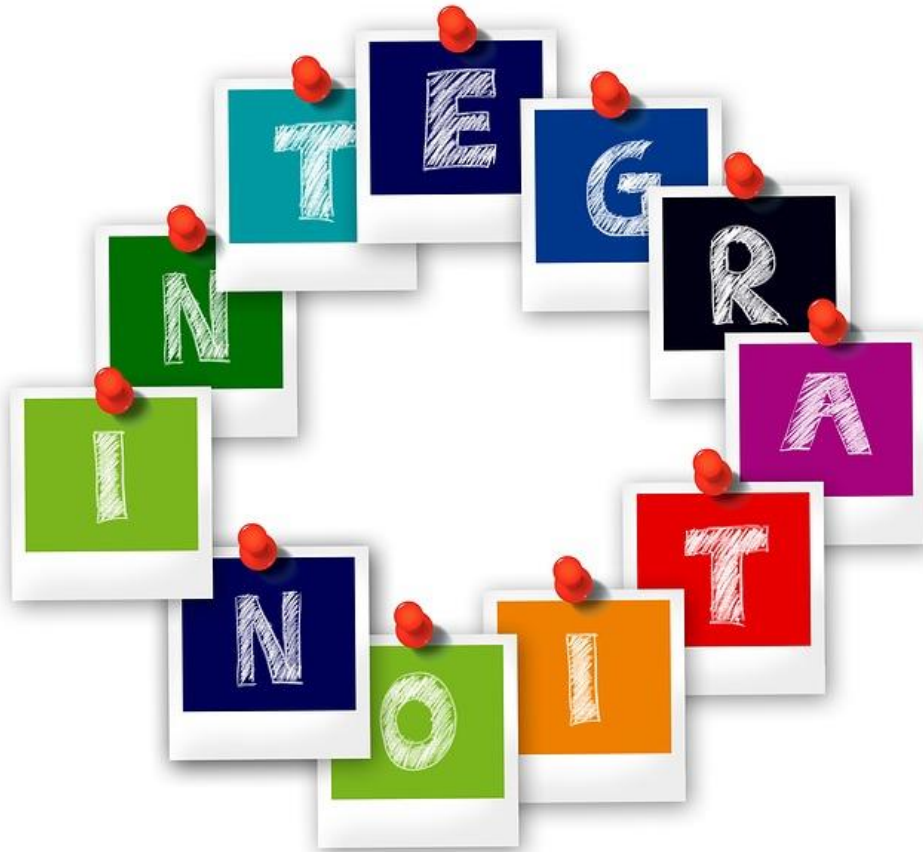
Interpersonal

Transpirational

NEURAL INTEGRATION

- Promoted by healthy minds
- Linking differentiated parts within and between
- Integration =
 - F – Flexible
 - A – Adaptive
 - C – Coherent
 - E – Energized
 - S – Stable
- Disintegration = chaos, rigidity





ADPT + IPNB

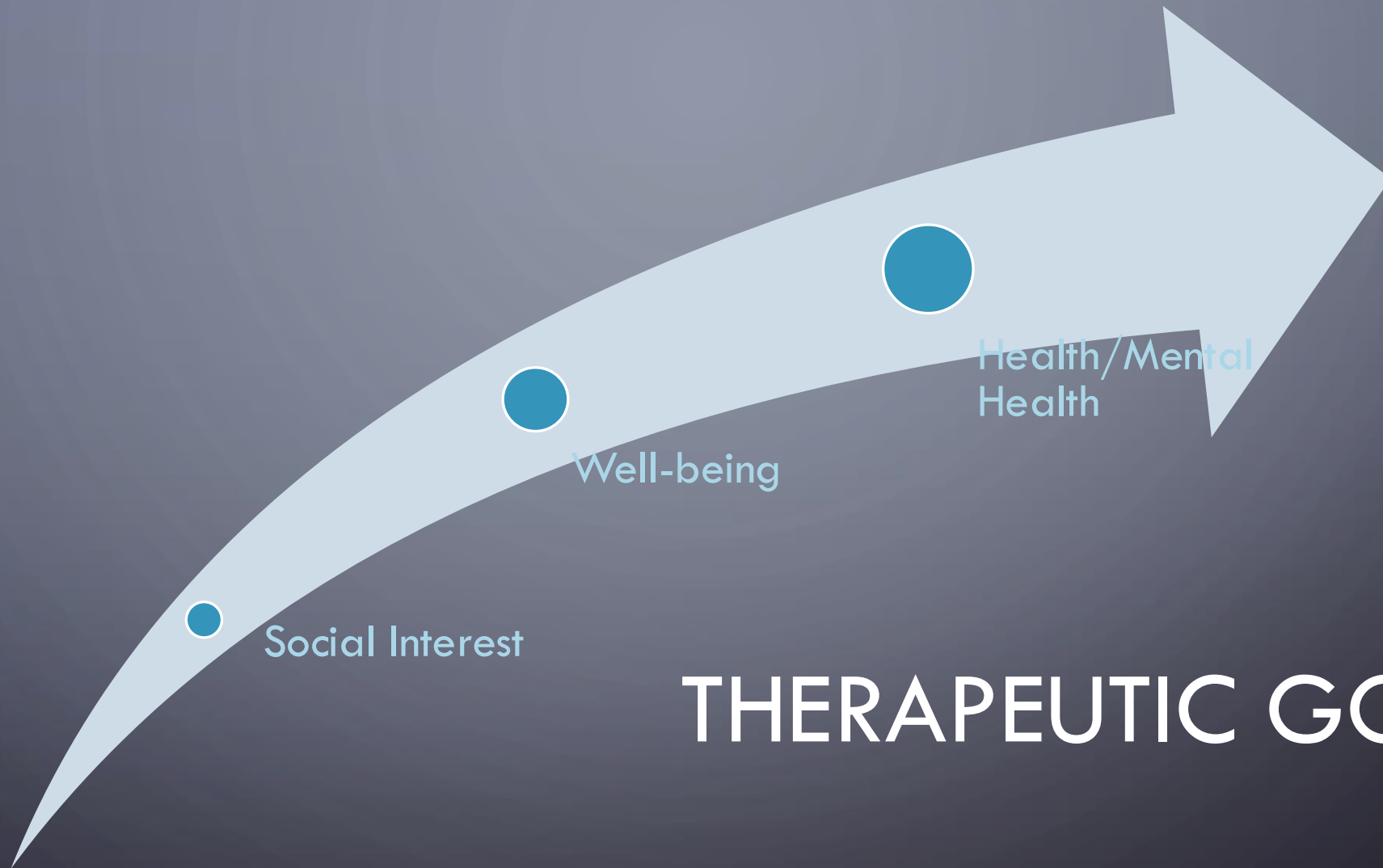
KEY ELEMENTS OF OVERLAP

- Social Embeddedness
 - Social Interest
 - Role of Early Experiences
 - Therapeutic Relationship
- Purposefulness of Behavior
 - Goal Directed Behavior
 - Development of Life style



NATURE OF PEOPLE





Social Interest

Well-being

Health/Mental
Health

THERAPEUTIC GOALS

ADAPTABILITY



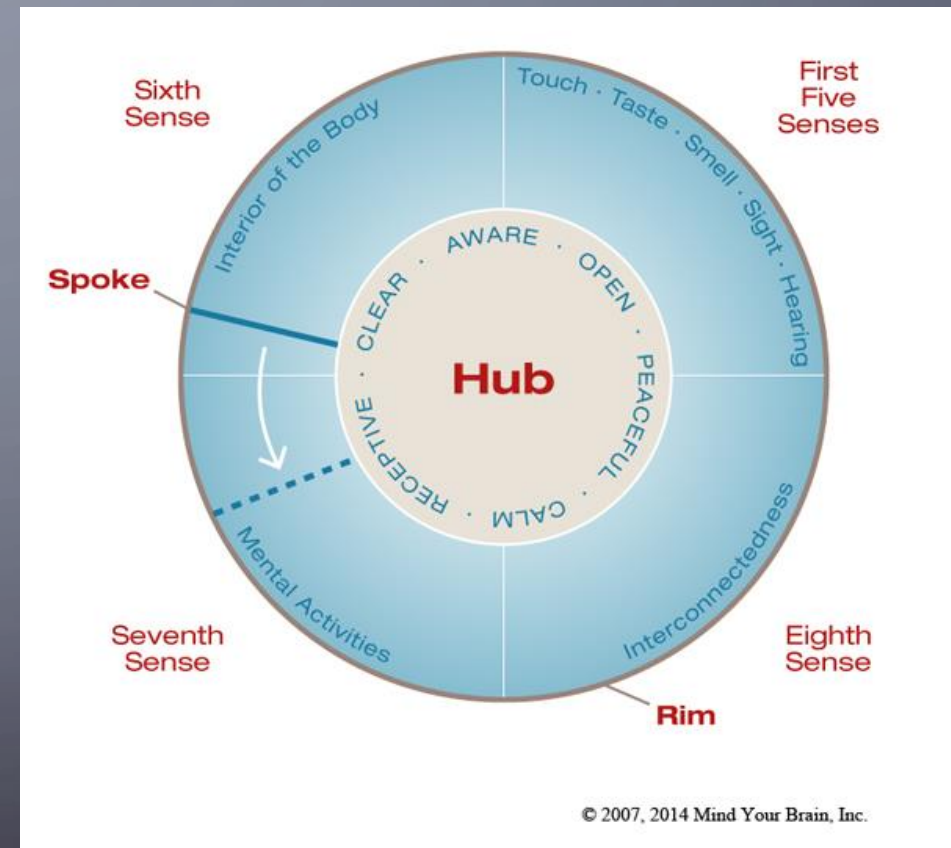
ROLE OF THE THERAPIST



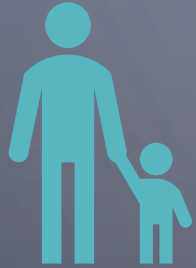
PHASE I GOAL:
BUILD
CONNECTION,
TRUST, BUY-IN

INTEGRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- Here-and-now awareness
 - Senses
 - Thoughts
 - Feelings
 - Connection to Others
- Can be practiced
- Can be taught as a skill
- Accessible when SNS is calm



CONSCIOUSNESS IN CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS



Therapist ability to respond from our center, our hub

Equal empathy for both parent and child
Assess parent-child capacity for empathy for one
another



Reflect on what is taking place in body during child's misbehaviors



INTERPERSONAL INTEGRATION

- Related to attachment style
- Conflict Repair
- Mirror Neurons
- “Kindness to others is interpersonal integration made visible.”

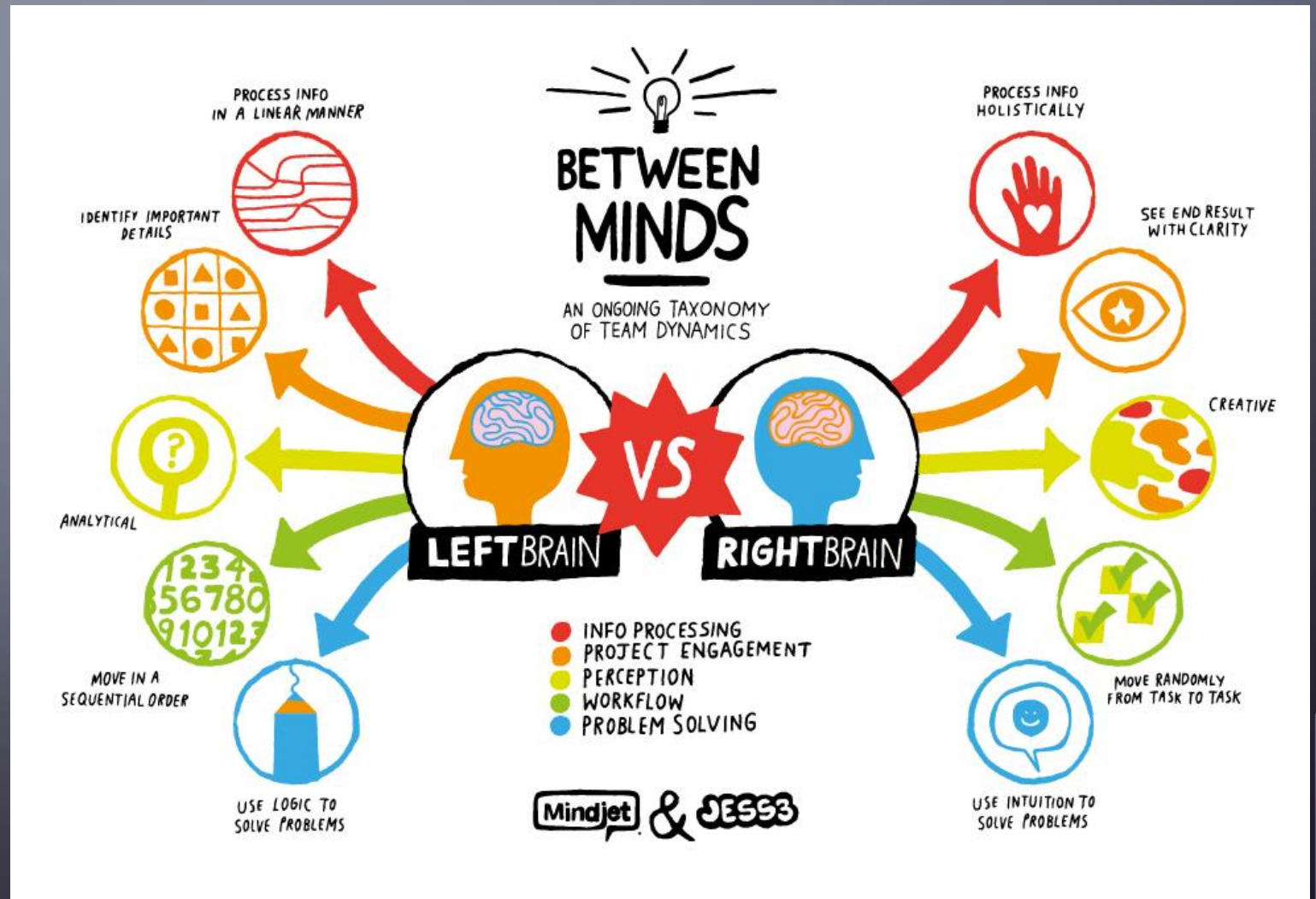


INTERPERSONAL INTEGRATION IN CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS

- Parents feel vulnerable, inadequate
 - Regulate, relate, reason
(Winfrey & Perry, 2020)
- Options in PC:
 - Encourage connection
 - Develop understand in parent's own attachment
 - Use of modeling
 - Connection/reconnection
 - Vulnerability
 - Imperfection
 - Skills


BILATERAL OR HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

Left and Right hemispheres perform similar functions; however, from a more simplistic level





AVOIDANT – LEFT- DOMINATED

- Wheel of Awareness – review 6th sense: Bodily sensations
 - http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/
 - Become aware of non-verbal signals
 - Learn to use non-verbal expressions
 - Develop your autobiographical memory (more to come on this)
 - Practice sending and receiving differing emotions
 - Increase use of context
 - Try tuning in to any inner hints (i.e., feelings, sensations)
- 



AMBIVALENCE – RIGHT- DOMINATED

Name it to Tame it

Journal Writing

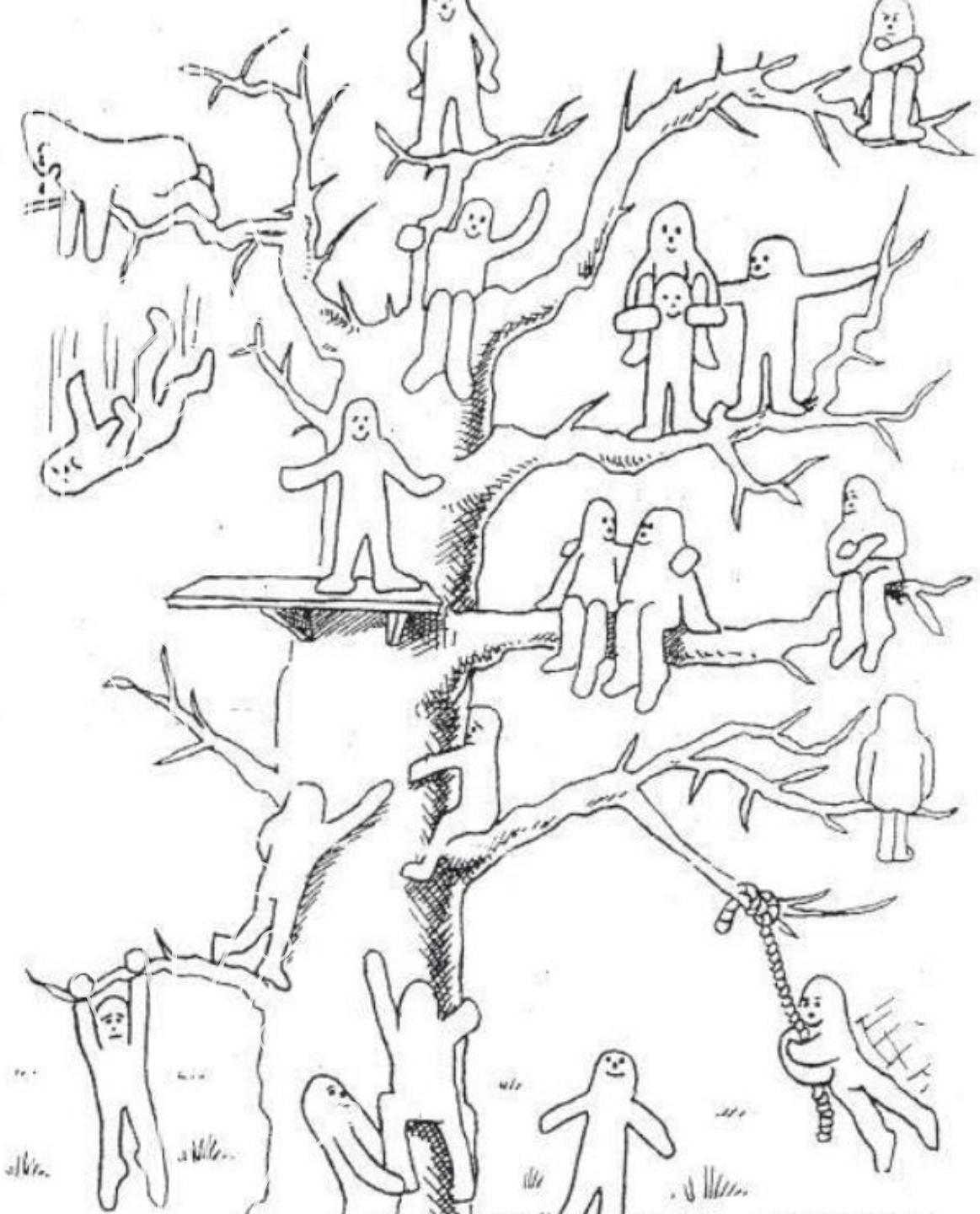
Practice Wheel of Awareness

Know your Emotions

Practice connecting in relationships that benefits all parties

Recognize feelings of insecurity and acknowledge those

Strengthen your internal observer

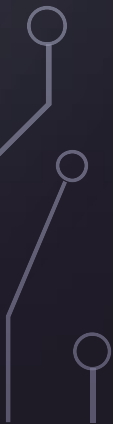


INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY: GOAL TO
CONNECT

WWW.BLOBTREE.COM



BREAK





PHASE II
GOAL:
GATHER
INFORMATION

PHASE II CONCEPTS

Family
Constellation

Family
Atmosphere

Life Tasks

Crucial Cs

Goals of
Misbehavior

Personality
Priorities

Assets/Strengths

Impact of Culture

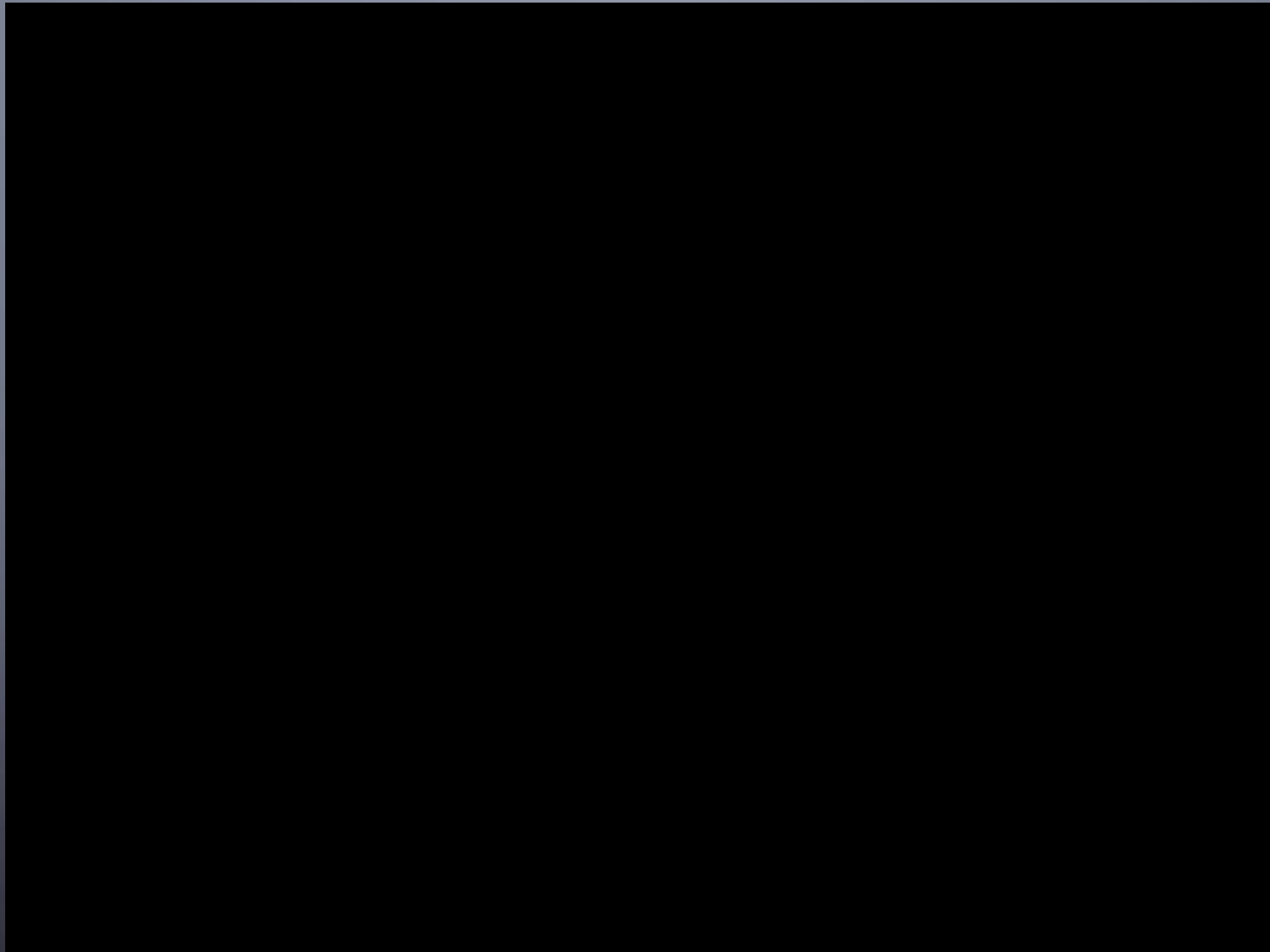
Lifestyle
convictions,
mistaken beliefs,
and private logic

MEMORY INTEGRATION

- Forgetting is an important part of remembering
- Implicit/Non-declarative Memory = unconscious
 - priming, conditioning, procedural
 - Amygdala (Fight, flight, freeze)
- Explicit/Declarative Memory = conscious;
 - episodic (events and context), semantic (general knowledge)
 - Hippocampal system



AMY AND FLO

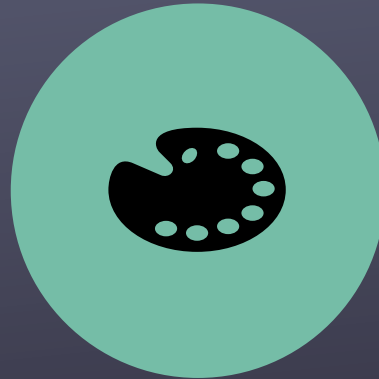


PREP, Inc. (2011).
Anger and stress:
Letting Flo drive.

MEMORY INTEGRATION AND PC



HELP PARENTS UNLOCK
MEMORIES THAT ARE STORED
EMOTIONALLY



ENGAGE IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS
WITHIN PC



ACTIVITY: FOCUSED EARLY
RECOLLECTIONS

FOCUSED EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

(AMY LEW AND BETTY LOU BETTNER)



Designed to use a single ER to gather information about a specific topic, like conflict, power, communication, money, responsibility, holidays, etc.



Give the client a specific topic the therapist wants to explore

Example: a time when the parent got in trouble for something in their own childhood



Transcribe the description as close to word-for-word as possible because there might be important nuances in the words the client/parent uses to describe the memory.



Ask the parent to draw, paint, act out the story with puppets/dolls, or use the sand to show/tell the story



FOCUSED EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

DESIGNED TO USE A SINGLE ER TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FIRST MEMORY IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

NARRATIVE INTEGRATION

- Meaning is made of our experiences through the story we keep and share
- Occur when expectations are violated
 - We have no reason to tell what we already know or expect





NARRATIVE AND PC

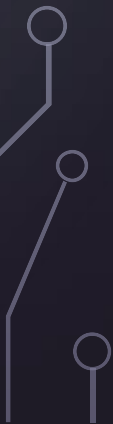
MEANING IS MADE THROUGH RETELLING OF OUR STORIES

CONNECT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES TO UNDERSTAND INFLUENCE OF THOSE EVENTS ON THEIR PARENTING

EXAMPLE FOR CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS: MY LIFE STORY PICTURE



DAY 2





QUESTIONS

CHECK IN





PHASE III GOAL: GAINING INSIGHT

VERTICAL INTEGRATION

- Upstairs functions are integrated with Downstairs functions
- Primary emotional circuits are situated in the subcortical region
- Sensory input vs Perceptual Reality
- Sequential Process



VERTICAL AND PC

- Develop understand around child's "meltdowns"
 - Flipping Lid
 - Wise Owl
 - H.A.L.T.
- Thermostat v. Thermometer
- Metaphoric Techniques





ADVANCING
INTEGRATION

Memory

- Early childhood memories
- Make Implicit Explicit

Narrative

- Schemas about self, others, and the world

DESIGNING CHANGE METAPHORS

(KOTTMAN, N.D.)


- Tend to be shorter and less elaborate than the other format for therapeutic metaphors
- Different Types of Change Metaphors:
 - Self-Image Thinking
 - Behavior
 - Affect
 - Attitude



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

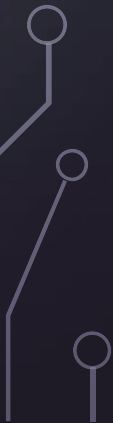
DESIGN YOUR OWN METAPHOR FOR THE CAREGIVER YOU SELECTED

SHARE WITH YOUR GROUP





BREAK





PHASE IV GOAL: FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

REORIENT/REEDUCATE

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STATE INTEGRATION

- Similar to narrative integration; our early attachment needs don't go away. "We are onions" and develop layers over time.
- State of Mind is responsible for:
 - Perceptual bias
 - Emotional tone and regulation
 - Memory processes
 - Mental models
 - Behavioral response patterns





STATE AND PC

- Increase awareness of states
- Provide neuroeducation to move past patterns of perception expressed as personality
- Teach neuroplasticity to provide/gain hope
- Work with parents to resolve conflictual parts of the self
- Teach parents simple activities to practice with their child
 - Bubbles
 - Stuffedies
 - Growing flower (Dillman Taylor & Wheeler, 2021)
 - 30 –second burst of attention



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

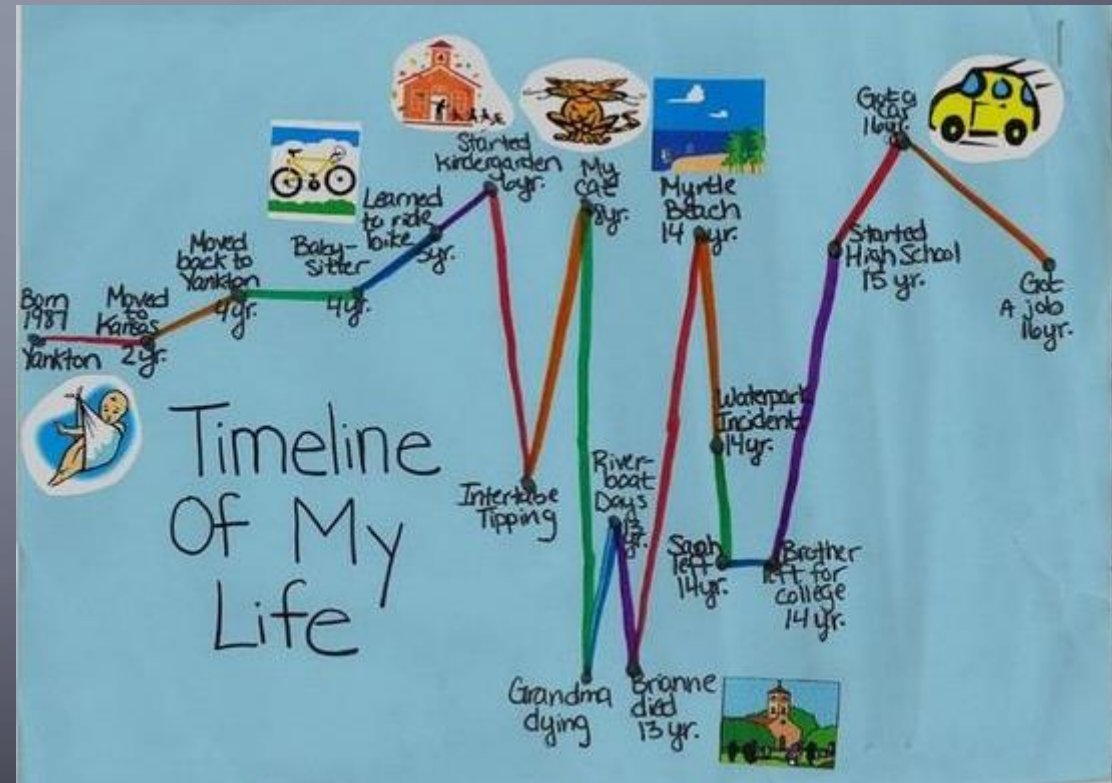
GROWING FLOWER

BUBBLES

30-SECOND BURST OF ATTENTION

TEMPORAL INTEGRATION AND PC

- Facilitative responses
- Process and integrate life events into life story
 - Example: Life Story sticker picture
- Ground parent in session
 - Breathing exercises
 - Here and now activities
- Extending work to home
 - Neuroeducation
 - Practice activities for homework



TEMPORAL INTEGRATION

- Organizing time between past, present, future
- Embracing the duality of existence and resolving tension about the human paradox

Longing For:

Certainty

Permanence

Immortality

Accepting:

Uncertainty

Transience

Mortality

- Scanning for danger, Alerting system of threats, Motivate action



REVISITING THE "CHALLENGING" PARENT

WHERE ARE THEY IN THE PROCESS?

WHAT INSIGHTS DID YOU GAIN?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO IMPLEMENT MOVING
FORWARD?



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESISTANT CAREGIVERS

WHAT THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE
BEHAVIOR?

CONSIDER CAREGIVER'S PRESENTATION STYLE

Control

Comfort

Superiority

Pleasing

CONTROL (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a control priority may seek to control self or others, including situations.

They are considered to be leaders, organized, and productive.

They are assertive in their interactions and follow rules.

Those with a control priority may feel less creative or lacking in spontaneity.

They sometimes complain of feeling distanced from others or wanting to feel closer to others.

Others may feel challenged, tense, or resistant when interacting with persons with a control priority.

COMFORT (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a comfort priority seek to avoid discomfort or stress.

They are generally considered easy-going, making few demands on others, peacemakers, and mellow.

They are fairly predictable, mind their own business and show empathy toward others.

Those with a comfort priority may feel they are not as productive as they would like to be or that they are not successfully using their talents.

Others typically like persons with a comfort personality, yet they may be irritated or bored by the comfort personality's avoidance of situations.

SUPERIORITY (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a superiority priority seek to be more competent, useful, or better than others.

They are considered to be knowledgeable, idealistic, and perfectionistic.

Those with a superiority priority may feel overburdened, over-responsible, and over-involved.

They typically complain of being overloaded and having a lack of time, as well as uncertain of their relationships with others.

Others may feel inadequate, inferior, or guilty when interacting with persons with a superiority priority.

PLEASING (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a pleasing personality priority seek to please others.

They are generally considered friendly, non-aggressive, and compromising.

They are likely to volunteer for tasks and meet others' expectations.

Those with a pleasing priority may feel that others do not respect them and possibly that they do not respect themselves.

Others typically feel pleased around persons with a pleasing priority especially at first, but may become frustrated or exasperated by constant demands for approval.



PERSONALITY PRIORITY DEBRIEF

IN PARTNERS





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