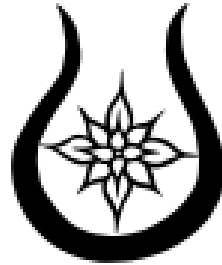


# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA



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# THE ROOT OF TRAUMA

## COLONIZATION

Relocation and Reserves

Criminalization of Culture and Theft of Rights

Indian Residential School

Social Services



## COMMUNITY TRAUMA



## FAMILY TRAUMA



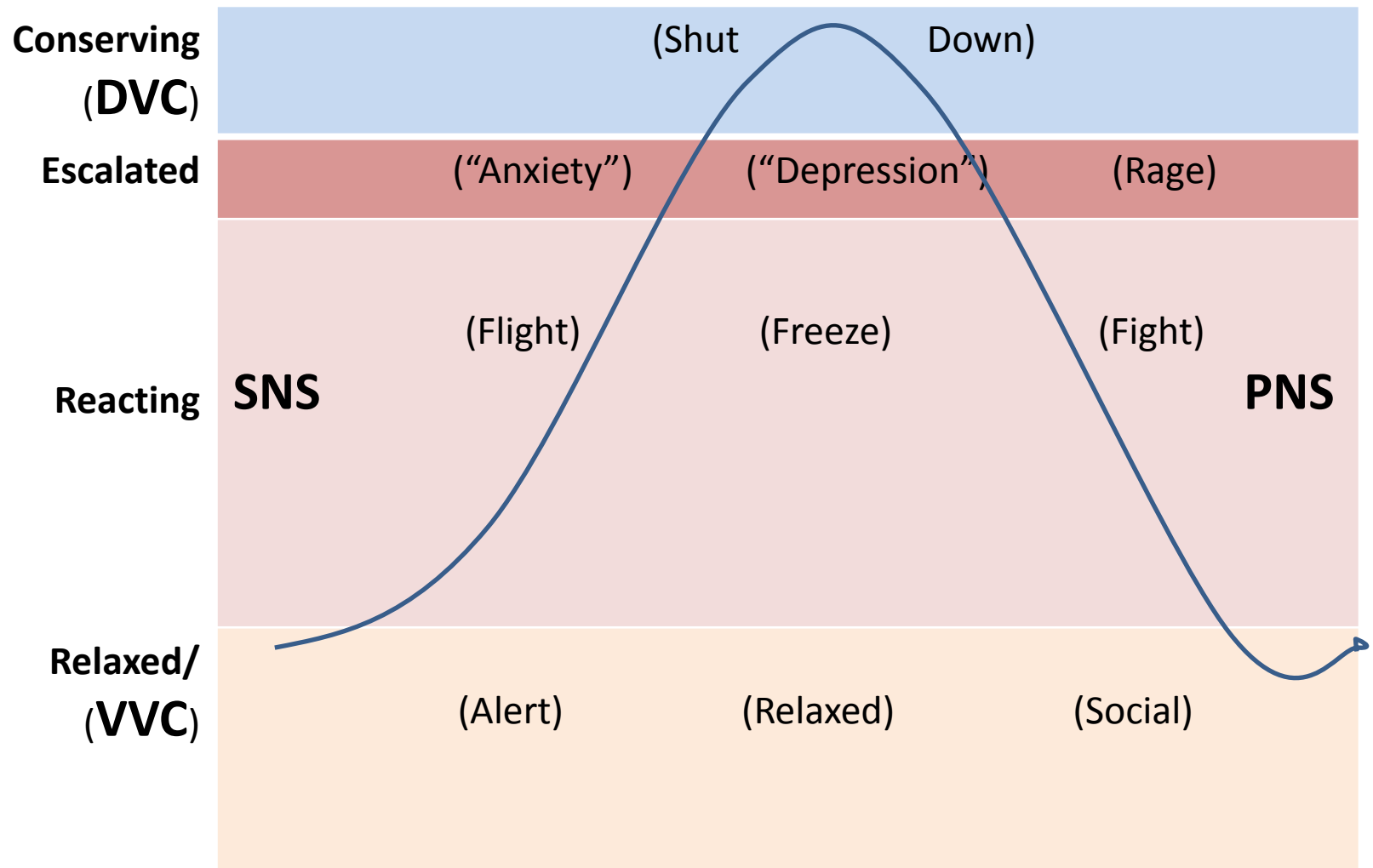
## PERSONAL TRAUMA

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

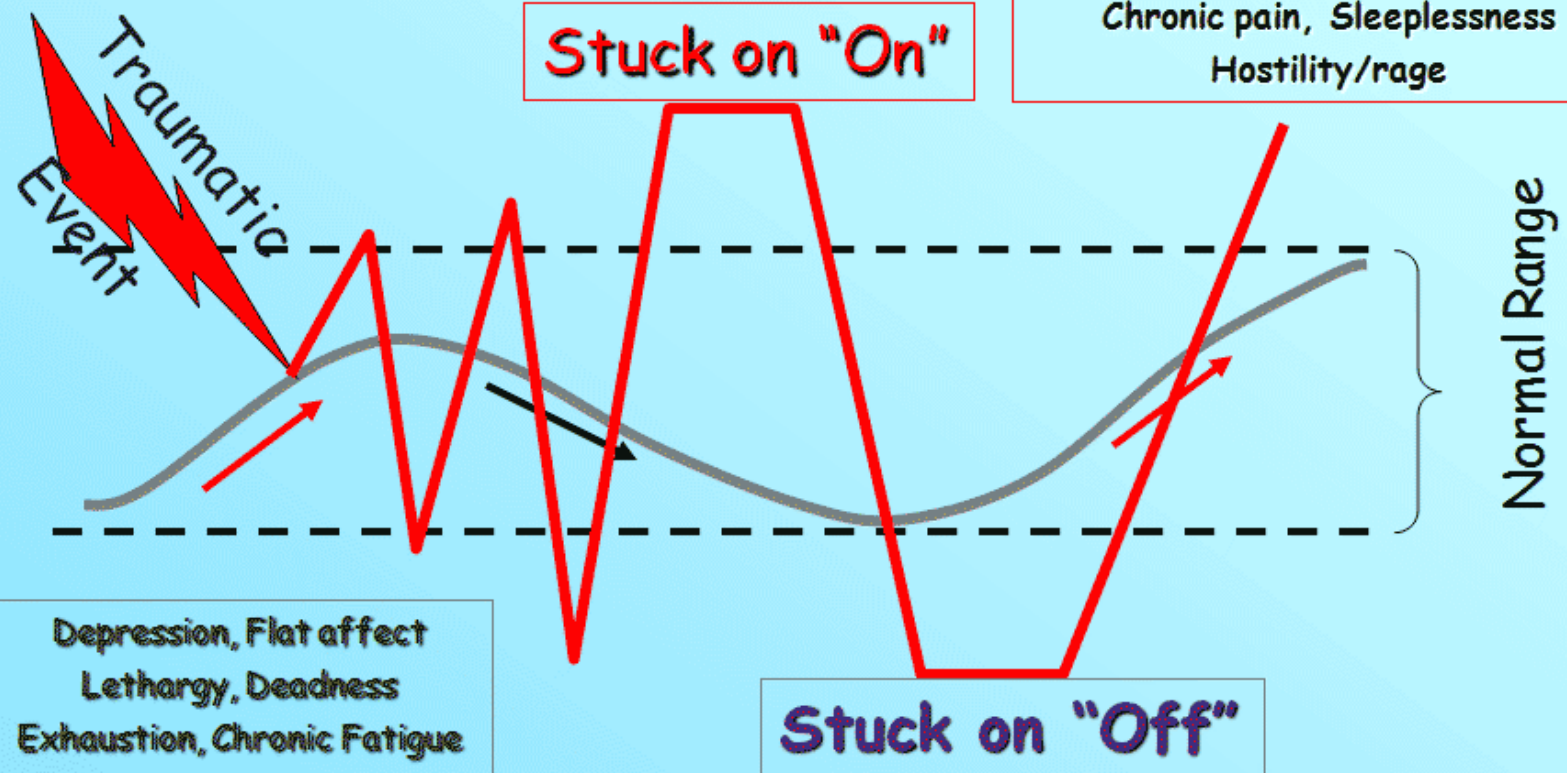
## SYMPTOM CLUSTERS

- **Re-experiencing**
  - nightmares, intrusive thoughts, “flashbacks”
- **Avoiding**
  - avoiding anything related to the trauma, places, people, and activities that remind them of what happened to them, and suppressing feelings or thoughts about the trauma
- **Heightened Arousal**
  - heightened physiological arousal and increased reactivity to stress and trauma. May be jittery and are startled easily. They often have problems with concentration because they’re constantly alert and looking for danger. Hyperarousal often leads to irritability and trouble sleeping.
- **Changes in thoughts, feelings and beliefs**
  - feeling sad, anxious, or afraid most of the time, becoming emotionally numb, losing interest in activities and relationships, thinking of themselves as a bad or guilty person, believing that the world is a scary, dangerous place and people can’t be trusted

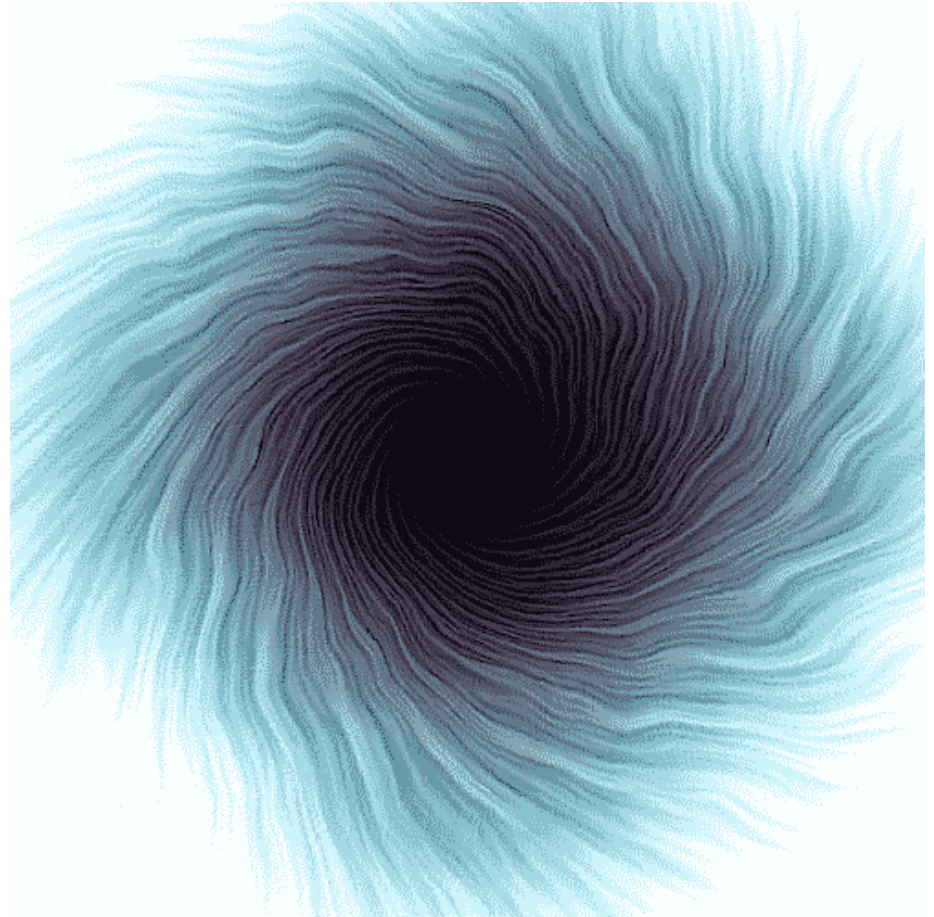
# TRAUMA & THE NERVOUS SYSTEM



# Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress



# TRAUMA AS A TORNADO



# TRAUMA BRAID

## Traumatic Event

### Instinct

FLIGHT

FREEZE

FIGHT



### Trauma

“ANXIETY” “DEPRESSION” “RAGE”



### Colonization

“ADDICTION”

SUICIDE

VIOLENCE

# 3 Ways PTSD Affects the Brain

- The threat perception system is enhanced – brain becomes a fear driven brain
- The ability to distinguish between what stimuli is relevant and what can be dismissed is challenged
- The self sensing part of the brain becomes blunted



# Trauma - Brain Changes

	Normal Function	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
<i>Amygdala</i>	Sets off fight or flight in response to danger	Sets off fight or flight in response to memories or thoughts about danger
<i>Hippocampus</i>	Transfers and stores information into memories	Stores memories incorrectly and affects memory retrieval
<i>Prefrontal cortex</i>	Complex thinking, decision making and appropriate behavior	Dysfunctional thought processes and decision making; inappropriate responses to situations
<i>Hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis</i>	Releases hormones like cortisol to help manage and direct efforts to stressor	Overactive, which leads to imbalances in hormone levels and increases stress and anxiety

# TRAUMA IMPACTS

FOCUS	IMPACTS
EMOTIONAL	Affect Dysregulation Suppression Relational Ambivalence/Instability
MENTAL	Black and White Thinking Idealize or Demonize Others Poor Problem Solving Personalization
PHYSICAL	Self Mutilation “Addictive” Behaviours Somatic Complaints
SPIRITUAL	Dissociation Shame Disconnection from Spirit/Cultural Tradition

# INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY TRAUMA

- Intergenerational Trauma
  - How does it happen?
    - Direct (learned)
    - Indirect (environment)
    - Epigenetic (“blood memory”)

# Key Points In Working with Trauma

- Hold the perspective that we have an innate capacity to heal and transform trauma; given the right environment our systems can find their way back home.
- Creating a felt sense of SAFETY and connection is essential. You must become a “safe haven”.
- Work with building resources and strengths. Highlight strengths already present – Wellness Model
- Trauma impacts the physiology, therefore it is necessary to include working SOMATICALLY (with the body) in the healing of trauma.

“Trauma can be hell on earth, but when transformed, it is a divine gift.”

~ Dr. Peter Levine