

TOGETHER WE CAN ADDRESS  
MENTAL HEALTH &  
PERSONAL TRAUMA

# Healthy Church

# Psychospiritual Therapy

---

DR. DENIZELA R. DORSEY  
AUTHOR, PASTOR, PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
2024



# HEALING OUR BRAINS

---

Our brain is our most impressive feature. We only get ONE brain for the entirety of our lives. Dr. Dorsey

# BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF The Human Brain @ Consciousness

---

Consciousness (God's Personality) sensuous & mental

---

Genesis 1:26

---

Conscious Awareness Roman 12:2 @ 1 Peter 1:13

---

PSALMS 139:23-24 (Mind, Thoughts, perceptions, motives) unconscious

---

PROVERBS 3:5

---

Matthew 22:37. (Love the Lord with your mind)

# TRAUAMA PSYCHOLOGICAL NEUROSIS

---

HEALING (THERAPEU)

---

TRAUMA (WOUND)

---

BRAIN (CONSCIOUSNESS) HEART (MIND, WILL, EMOTIONS)

# THE BRAIN IS IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE BODY

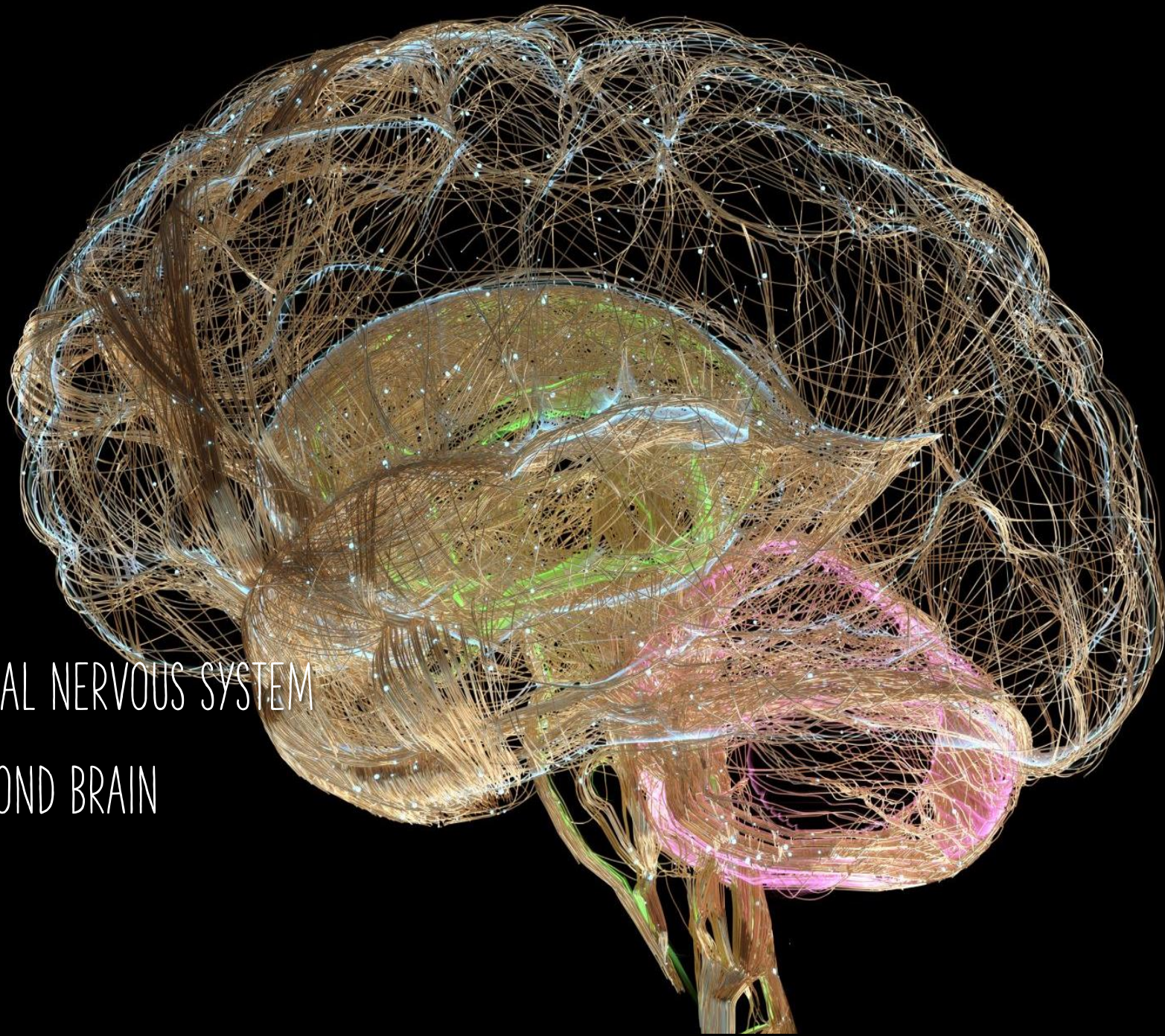
---

The Brain is sometimes a complicated organ that is still being explored.



BRAIN & CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

GUT IS THE SECOND BRAIN



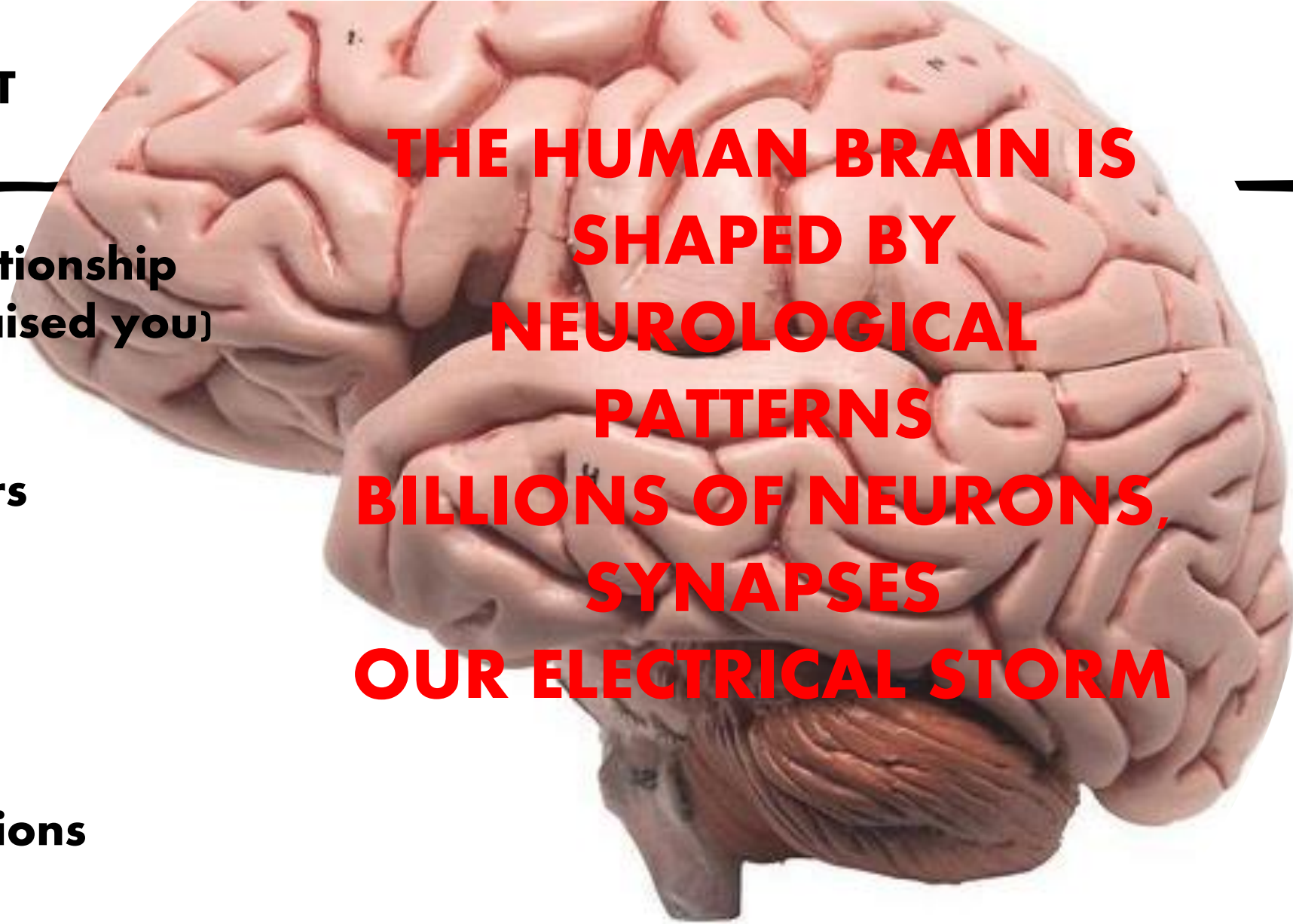
## ENVIRONMENT

- Primitive Relationship
- (Those who raised you)

- Genetic Factors

- Experiences

- Social Connections



**THE HUMAN BRAIN IS  
SHAPED BY  
NEUROLOGICAL  
PATTERNS  
BILLIONS OF NEURONS,  
SYNAPSES  
OUR ELECTRICAL STORM**



# Natural Chemical of the Brain

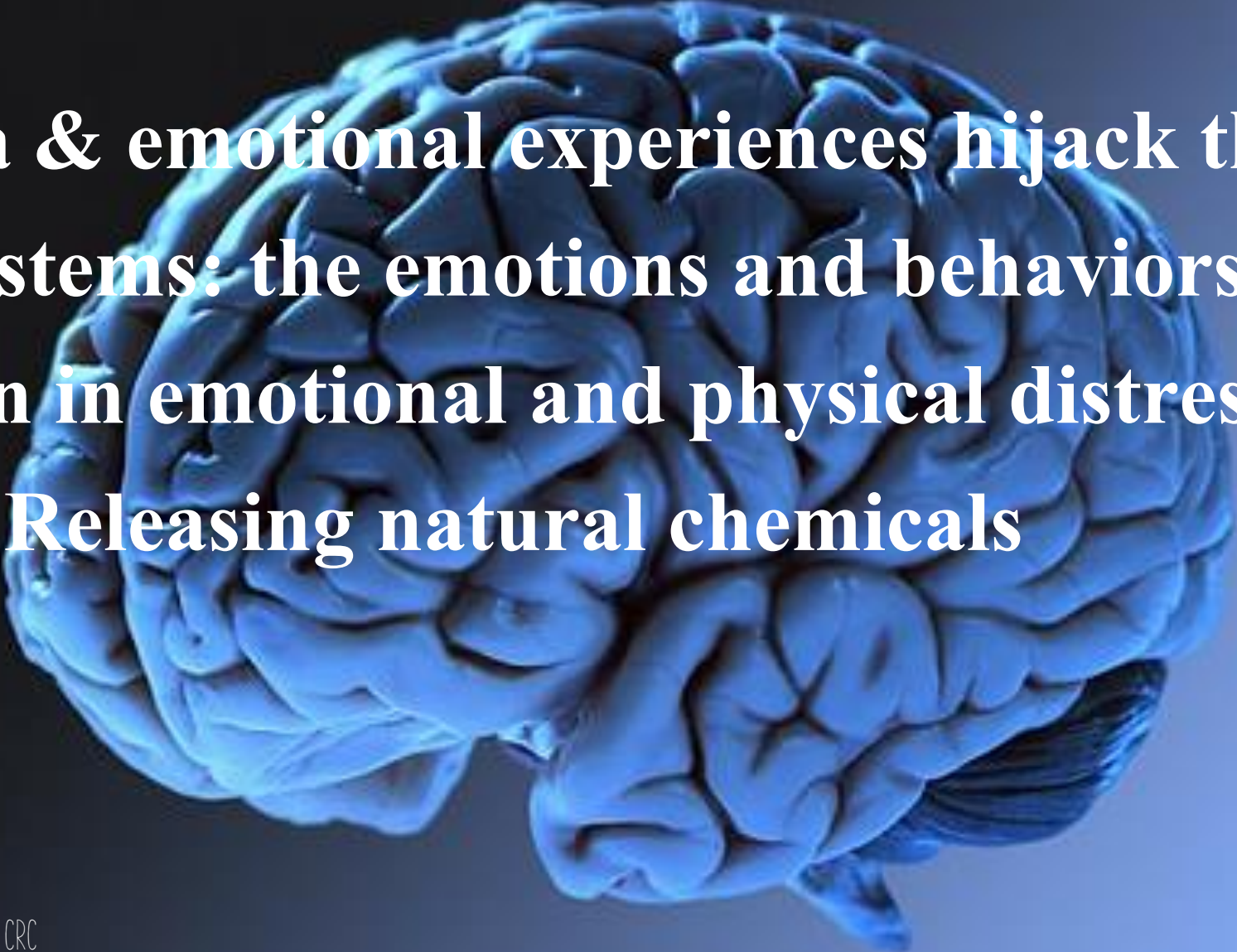
---

- Dopamine (Mood Chemical)
- Serotone. (Mood Chemical)
- Oxytocin ((Mood Chemical)
- Endorphins ((Mood Chemical)
- Norepinephrine (stress transmitters)
- Cortisol (Stress Hormone)
- Adrenaline (Stress Hormone)
- Epinephrine (Stress transmitters)
- GABA (slows the brain down)
- Histamine (regulates body)

# Trauma is never Clean- MESSY WORK

---

- Bad News
- Disappointments
- Serious Heart Ache
- Loss & Grief
- Major Tragedy
- More than I can bear
- Spouse Dies- Children Die
- Infertility
- Chronic Illness
- House Fire
- Legal Problems
- Murder
- War
- Fatal diagnosis
- Friend dies
- Divorce
- Moved Unexpected
- Near Death Experience
- Loss of Status
- Loss a Job
- Unfaithful Spouse
- Abuse (Drug, Physical, Emotional etc)
- Medical Bills
- Financial Trauma
- Natural Disaster
- Church Wounds
- Social Rejection or Isolation
- Life Transitions



**Trauma & emotional experiences hijack the brain's systems: the emotions and behaviors put a person in emotional and physical distress.**

**Releasing natural chemicals**

# Cortisol and Adrenalin: STRESS HORMONES

---

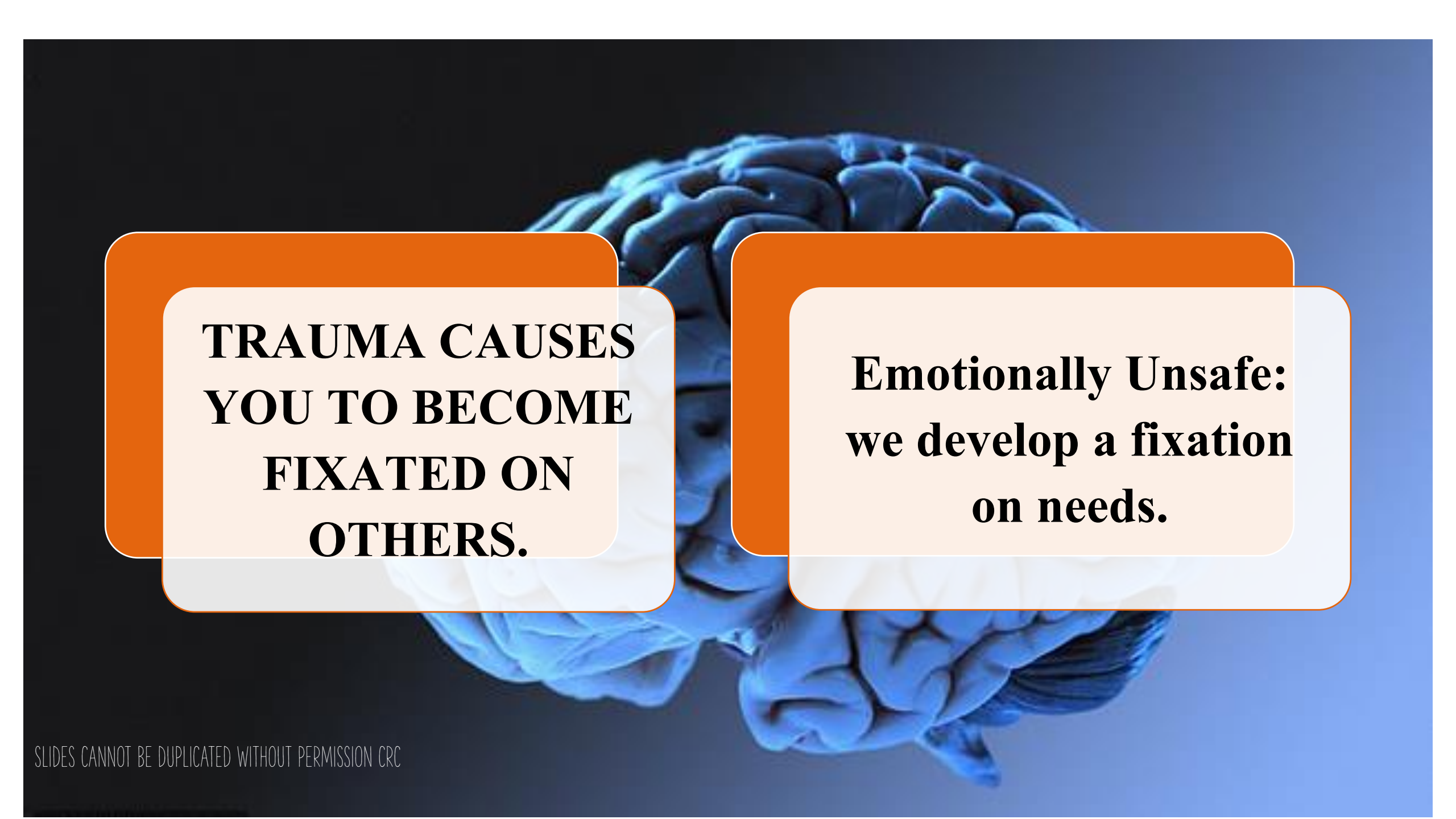
- Cortisol, the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol also curbs functions that would be nonessential or detrimental in a fight-or-flight
- Cortisol is released in response to fear or stress by the adrenal glands as part of the fight-or-flight mechanism. This causes heightened levels of breathing and an increased heart rate.
- Too much cortisol can produce— a fatty hump between your shoulders, result in high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

Emotional Pain &  
STRESS WILL DRIVE  
YOU CRAZY OR MAKE  
YOU CRAZY



**CONDITIONS OF THE BRAIN are  
CONDITIONS OF THE BODY. (MIND,  
BODY, SPIRIT)**

**WE TAKE OUR BRAIN EVERYWHERE  
WE GO.**



**TRAUMA CAUSES  
YOU TO BECOME  
FIXATED ON  
OTHERS.**

**Emotionally Unsafe:  
we develop a fixation  
on needs.**

**The Subconscious brains needs  
reprogramming-**

**Trauma causes the brain to battle.**

**Trauma leaves the brain underdeveloped,  
bruised, and deficient**

**-Dr. Dorsey**



TRAUMA LEADS TO  
DAMAGING PATTERNS:

Conscious & Unconscious

---



HOW ARE YOU WIRED?

YOUR Primitive  
Relationships? How  
were they wired?

# Understanding Childhood Losses

---

- **ABANDONMENT ISSUES: JEALOUSY, DEFENSIVENESS, VALIDATION, DETACHMENT, UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENTS**
- **FEAR: FEELING INSECURE, LECTURING**
- **ESTRANGE RELATIONSHIPS: TROUBLE TRUSTING**
- **NEEDING TO CONTROL: OR BE CONTROLLED BY PARTNER**
- **OVERLY SPIRITUAL: USING THE BIBLE TO SUPPORT TOXIC BEHAVIOR**
- **TOO MUCH TOO FAST, OVERLY EAGER. (DOPHAMINE EFFECT)**

# **Growing up with a Caregiver with Untreated Trauma**

- Be more prone to PTSD (STRESS)**
- Not reaching what you need socially and emotionally**
- Struggle to repair after Conflict**
- Struggle with relationships**
- Unintentionally bring out neg. Behaviors in others.**
- Emotionally Detached**
- Prone to disconnect, self-sabotage, dissociate**

**This can become a cycle. Develop a healthy self**

**-Dr. Dorsey**

**The human brain reacts to rejection, hurt, sadness, and loss the same way it reacts to physical pain. It takes the brain about 30 days to recover from a traumatic event. It takes the brain longer for some events before the emotional sensors operate in the New Normal.**

**Dorsey**

**GRIEVING IS.....**  
**EVERY TRANSITION HAS A**  

---

**PROCESS.**

- **NORMAL**
- **NECESSARY**
- **NATURAL**

When individuals are wounded mentally, no matter how physically healthy they are, the person will operate from a wounded place. Triggered, unstable, emotionally detached, or blinded



ALL Children and  
Babies are expecting  
and needing an adult  
to care for them?

# Understanding ABANDONMENT- BETRAYAL- REJECTION

---

- YOU EASILY MAKE NEG. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING
- INABILITY TO FORM HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
- IRRATIONAL EMOTIONS
- SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

# UNCONSCIOUS BEHAVIORS THAT PROTECTS

---

- BASELINE BEHAVIORS: ALL BEHAVIORS COME FROM SOMEWHERE
  - UNNATURAL RESPONSES
  - The Subconscious has control over our physical functions.
  - Conscious: DECISION MAKING–COMMUNICATIONS: LANGUAGE & SKILLS OF ORGANIZATION ARE CONTROLLED.
  - What are the historical and psychological origins of the behavior?
  - What are the environmental elements that sustain the behaviors?
  - How is what you seeing play out in the rest of the environment?
  - Are these triggered behaviors?

**Failure to recover** from an emotional wound causes the brain to operate in threat or survival mode, unable to executive process information.

Making unhealthy and faulty decisions.

# Why Anger Can Become an Addiction

## anger & fear our secondary emotion

---

- The crucial role of the subcortical brain and how it affects reactivity. We need to know how anger leaves traps in the nervous system and why it suffers from the same powerful neural linking as addiction.
- Disappointment
- Frustration
- Judgement
- Rejection
- Fear

Understanding Childhood  
& It's more significant  
impact on your  
personality

1 and 3 mental health conditions are related to childhood trauma

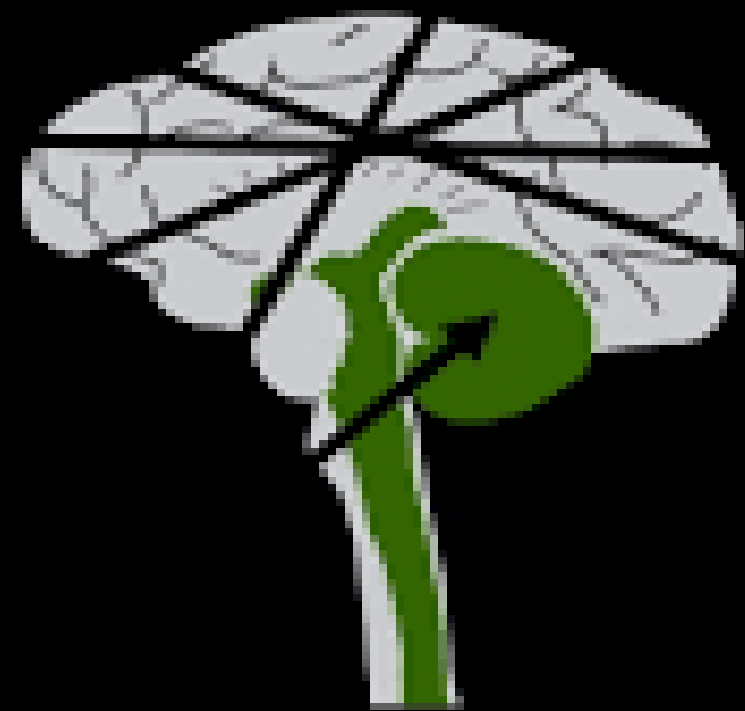
---



# The Reptilian Brain

## Survival brain Characteristics

- *Fight, flight or freeze*
- Focused on “small picture”
- Resistant to change
- Retreat to the familiar
- Needs structure and repetition
- Governs **FEAR AND ANGER**
- Gives energy/drains energy
- Can shut down the rest of the Brain—**“emotional hijacking”**





# Animal SURVIVAL RESPONSES: The Hinds Brain Thinks It Protecting You

---

- Hypervigilance: tending to over-correct people, tend to overvalue, have an increased alertness of all situations—extremely sensitive—erect emotional walls, tend to be on alert to any hidden dangers, whether from other people or the environment. Hypervigilance can be overly spiritual.
- Tiger Approach (Survival Brain) Anger—Irritable—Outburst—Verbally Aggressive—Physical
- Turtle Approach—Emotionally Detached—Slow to respond—Flight—Freeze—Defensive—Avoidance
- Snake—Belittling using Emotional Abuse (64 Signs of Emotional Abuse)
- Ostrich Trap—Disappearing (Flight Response) Exaggerated Startle Response

# Unresolved Issues Embedded

---

- Unresolved Issues are embedded into your psyche (unconscious and subconscious), so all your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions can be outside your awareness, pushing things off into two brain states. When the brain manipulates, it pushes things outside of your consciousness, which can cause long-term problems. Don't let your brain suppress, regress, or distract you. Deal with and uncover every issue or problem.

## IMPOSTER SYNDROME

- SUPERHUMAN
- PERFECTIONIST
  - GENIUS
  - SOLOIST

# STRESS INDUCED SYMPTOMS- PTSD/DISSOCIATIVE PERSONALITY

---

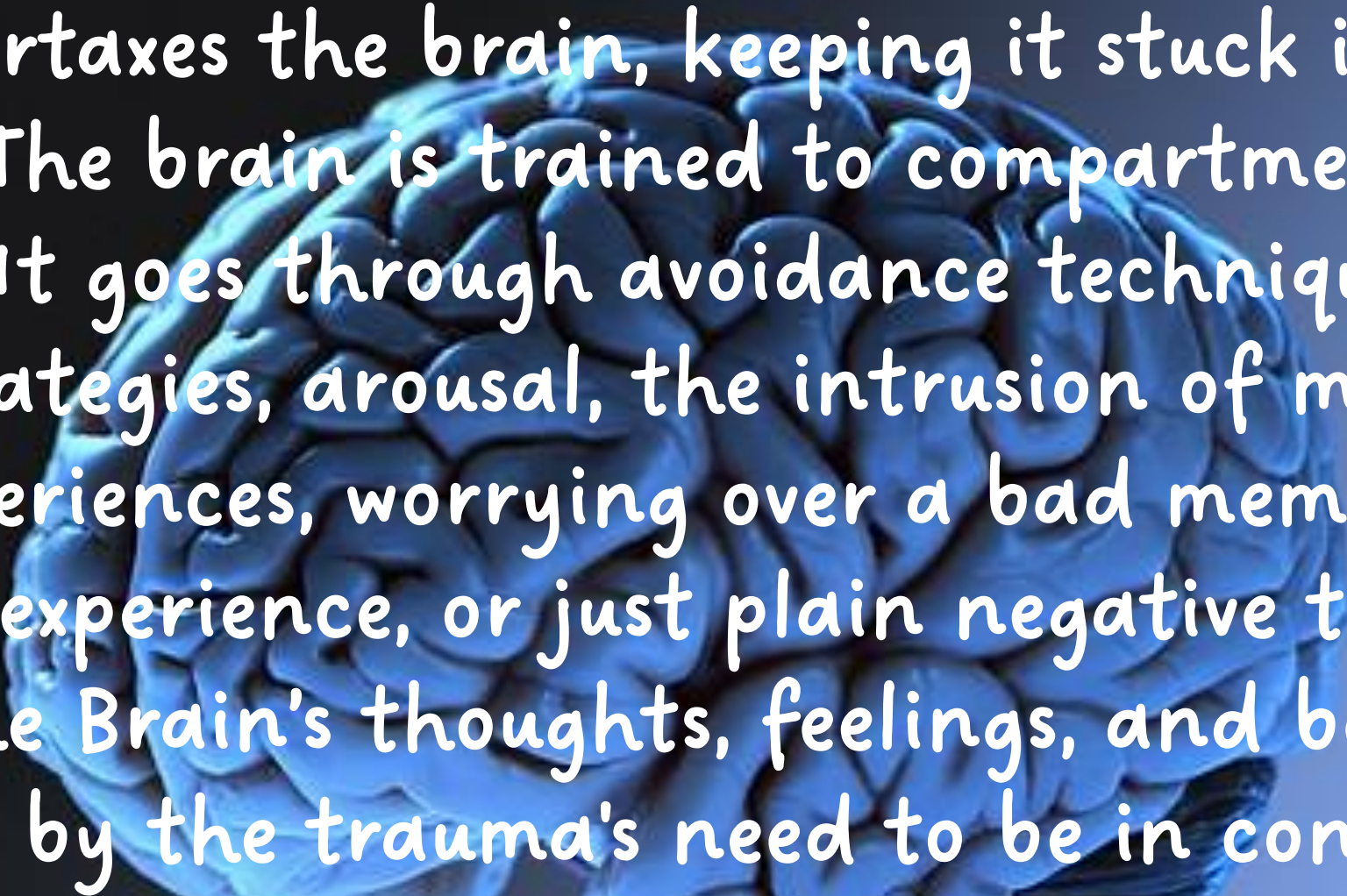
- Lack of interest
- Inability to experience positive emotions inability to express or experience happiness and loving feelings
- Reckless and Self-destructive
- Problems with concentration- Sleep disturbance
- EFFORTS TO AVOID -OR DETACH
- FANTASY THINKING-SEE'S A WORLD THAT IS UNREAL
- BLACKOUTS

# ADDICTIVE PERSONALITY & ATTACHMENTS

---

# PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE TRAUMA EXHIBIT THESE BEHAVIORS

- GOVERN BY FEAR
- UNABLE TO TRUST OTHERS
- WILL MAKE UP STORIES
- RESISTANT TO CHANGE
- RETREAT TO FAMILIAR
- WORRY
- MISPLACED EMOTIONS
- ANGER
- EPISODES OF SADNESS
- ALONE
- FEELING ALONE AND APART FROM OTHERS
- FEELING AS THOUGH PEOPLE ARE LOOKING DOWN ON THEM
- LOW SELF-WORTH
- **INCREASED Aggression**
- **SELF-HARM**
- **ATTACH TO THINGS THAT NO LONGER SERVE THEM.**
- **DEFIANCE and UNWILLING to comply with a simple request**
- **RISKY and INAPPROPRIATE Behavior**
- **Addictive Behaviors**



Trauma overtaxes the brain, keeping it stuck in the same story. The brain is trained to compartmentalize to cope. It goes through avoidance techniques, adaptive strategies, arousal, the intrusion of multiple other experiences, worrying over a bad memory, reliving the experience, or just plain negative trauma responses. The Brain's thoughts, feelings, and behavior are driven by the trauma's need to be in control.

# BEWARE of GRANDIOSE or INFLATED SELF (FANTASY BRAIN)

---

- MANIPULATIVE TACTICS
- CONTROLLING SCHEMES
- EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION
- TRIANGULATIONS
- GASLIGHTING
- HOOVERING
- SILENT TREATMENT
- SCAPE GOATING
- PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

EVERY HUMAN DESIRES

SOMETHING!



(LOVE)CONNECTION



Grieving IS APART  
OF LOVE



**GRIEVING IS.....**

**EVERY TRANSITION HAS A**

**PROCESS. ATTACHMENT &**

• NORMAL

**TIME**

• NECESSARY

• NATURAL

# THE BRAIN @ THE GRIEF PROCESS

Understanding the emotions you may feel: COMPLICATED GRIEVING PROCESS

1. **DENIAL SHOCK STAGE (30 days -UP 1 YEAR)**: Receiving the News, Still Processing, the action of living as if something is untrue:

A. refusing to talk about it, B. justification, C. blaming others

Avoid thinking or feeling about the situation. detachment

2. **ANGER**— can be a substitute emotion to pain, and assumptions, combined with triggered thoughts

3. **BARGAINING**—back forth with the brain, the act of negotiation

4. Persistent emotional state marked by low feelings, guilt, and inability to enjoy life

5. **ACCEPTANCE (Reframing Hope)**—Frame and identify what you are feeling.

# MOOD RELATED DISORDERS

---

- Temper outburst -rages-aggression 3X week
- Mood elevation
- Low frustration-irritability-diminished interest in pleasure
- Weight loss or gains, fatigue, insomnia
- Inability to concentrate-indecisiveness
- Recurrent thought about death
- Mixed mood

**Fear CAN BECOME  
YOUR BODIES  
GREATEST THREAT**

---

FEAR RESPONSES

Trauma is locked into our emotional memory.

# Special Days: Life Skill

- ❑ HOME can be a safe place—remember you may feel sadness if a relative brings it up.
- ❑ CREATE a space or time to remember and share memories: Give yourself permission:  
Memory Box
- ❑ Special days can be more challenging
- ❑ Understand Grief is accompanied by guilt
- ❑ You don't have to explain your grief it's okay to decline or not attend an event.
- ❑ Protecting self may be your biggest challenge
- ❑ What are you asking of yourself on this day?

# CHECKING YOUR PATTERNS

---

- DEPENDENCY
- CO-DEPENDENCY
- PARASITE FOR SURVIVAL
- PASSIVE DEPENDENT PEOPLE
- INNER EMPTINESS
- IMPULSE
- SHALLOW IN RELATIONSHIPS
- CLINGING TO OTHERS
- OVER FUNCTION IN RELATIONSHIPS

# CHANGES AFTER A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL TRAUMA

- EMOTIONAL CHANGES—MOOD SWINGS, PERSONALITY CHANGES, JUDGEMENT, INSIGHT IMPAIRMENT
- FAMILY RELATIONSHIP CHANGES— AVOIDING FAMILY MEMBERS, ADDICTIVE PATTERNS
- RELATIONSHIP ISSUES—DETERIORATES, VIOLENCE, ANGER, EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- SOCIAL CHANGES—BREAK PROMISES, NO INTEREST,
- LEGAL PROBLEM—INAPPROPRIATE & ERRATIC BEHAVIOR



# RELATIONSHIP NO NOS:

---

- TRYING TO CONTROL
- RISK AND AT-RISK BEHAVIOR
- TRYING TO CHANGE THE PERSON
- NO RESPECT- RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION-RESPECT RELATIONSHIP
- CROSSING BOUNDARIES
- NOT FEELING HEARD-AFRAID TO TRULY BE HONEST
- YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE OR HAPPY AROUND YOUR PERSON
- DISAGREEMENTS & DISCUSSIONS DON'T GO ANYWHERE
- DO NOT ENCOURAGE EACH OTHERS PASSION
- DO NOT ACCEPT EACH OTHER FLAWS
- NEGATIVITY & CRITICISM

# HIPPOCAMPUS: STORES Memory

---

- Hippocampus stores memories and experienced information consolidated from short term to long term. The hippocampus often becoming smaller during adverse and traumatic experiences creating episodic flashback while causing the stress hormone to be released. The hippocampus is often smaller in people with PTSD or Acute toxic stress and those experiencing trauma and violence. The person becomes hypervigilance or hyperaroused stuck in a state of fear. Creating an inability to make healthy decisions.
- Good news, the brain can adapt and become better!

# Thank you for our SACRED SPACE

---

Author, CBT Therapist, Pastor

University of Southern Mississippi (BS, Neuro clinical Psychology & Education)

Minor Criminal Justice

University of Kansas, Kansas (Masters Clinical Social Work)

Saint Paul School of Theology, Missouri (Masters of Divinity)

United Theological School, Ohio (PHD)



# THANK YOU

---

- Our Broken Brains: the Human Condition: A Social Emotional Guide to Heal Trauma, Release September 2022
- Emotional Intelligence for Everyday Children, A Social-Emotional Guide for Educators & Parents, Release August 2020
- One Love, One Church: A New Voice on Cross-Racial Congregational Growth & Race Relations from a Womanist Perspective, Release Nov. 2014
- Happy Death Day: The Lives and Death of UGK's Smoke D and Underground King Original (Memoir) Release August 2017
- Two Turntables and a Mixer: Behind the Sounds of UGK's DJ Bird (Memoir), Release October 2018