



TRANSFORMATIVE CARING IN THE NICU

Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Care

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LEARNING INTENTIONS

Upon completion of this session the learner may begin to:

- Understand the implications of ANS dysregulation
- Become the B.U.F.F.E.R.
- Discover the power of curiosity



THE BRAIN

Neocortex and Prefrontal cortex:
Executive Functioning

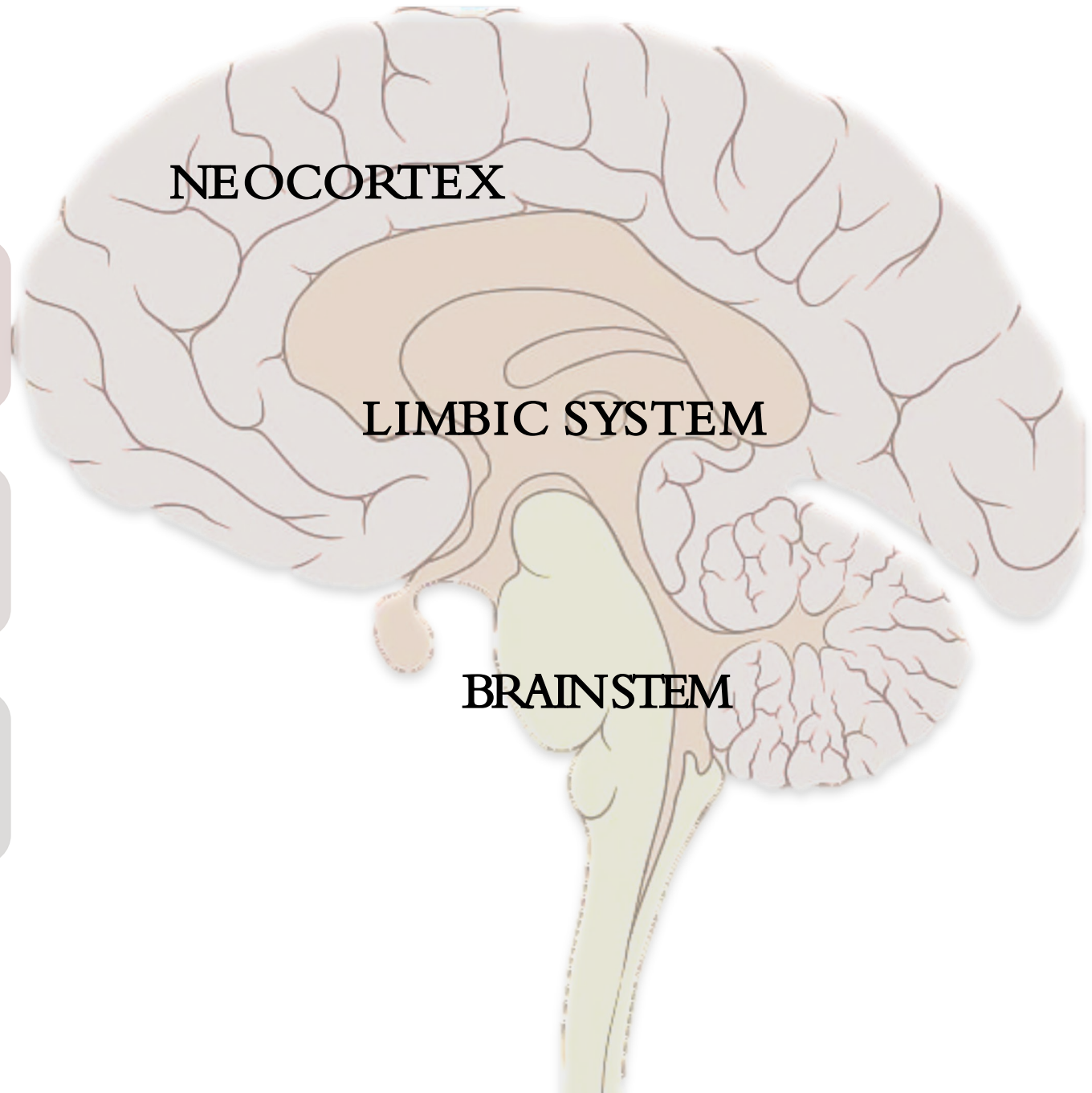
- What can I learn?

Limbic System:
Emotions and Memory

- Am I loved?

Brain stem:
Survival

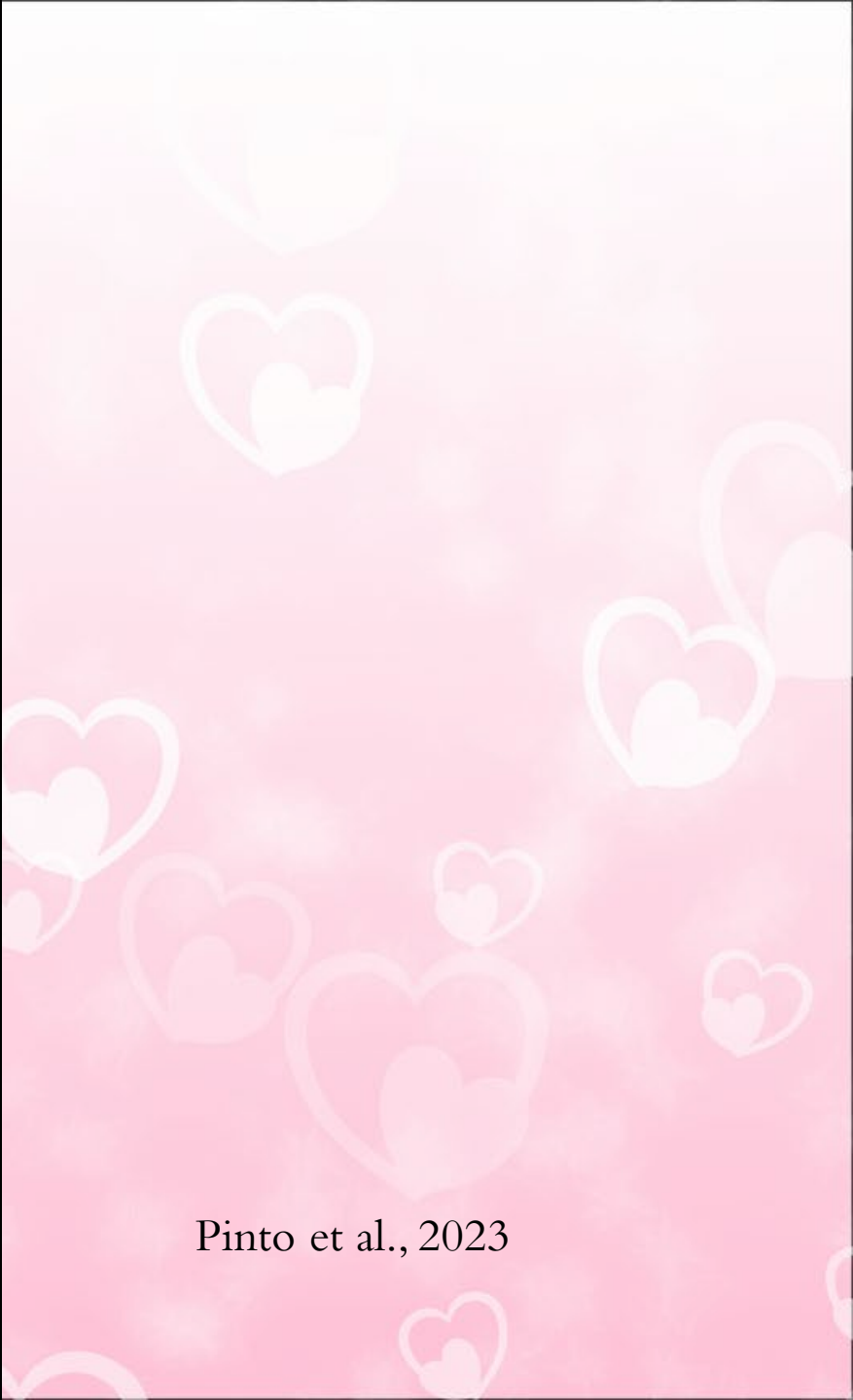
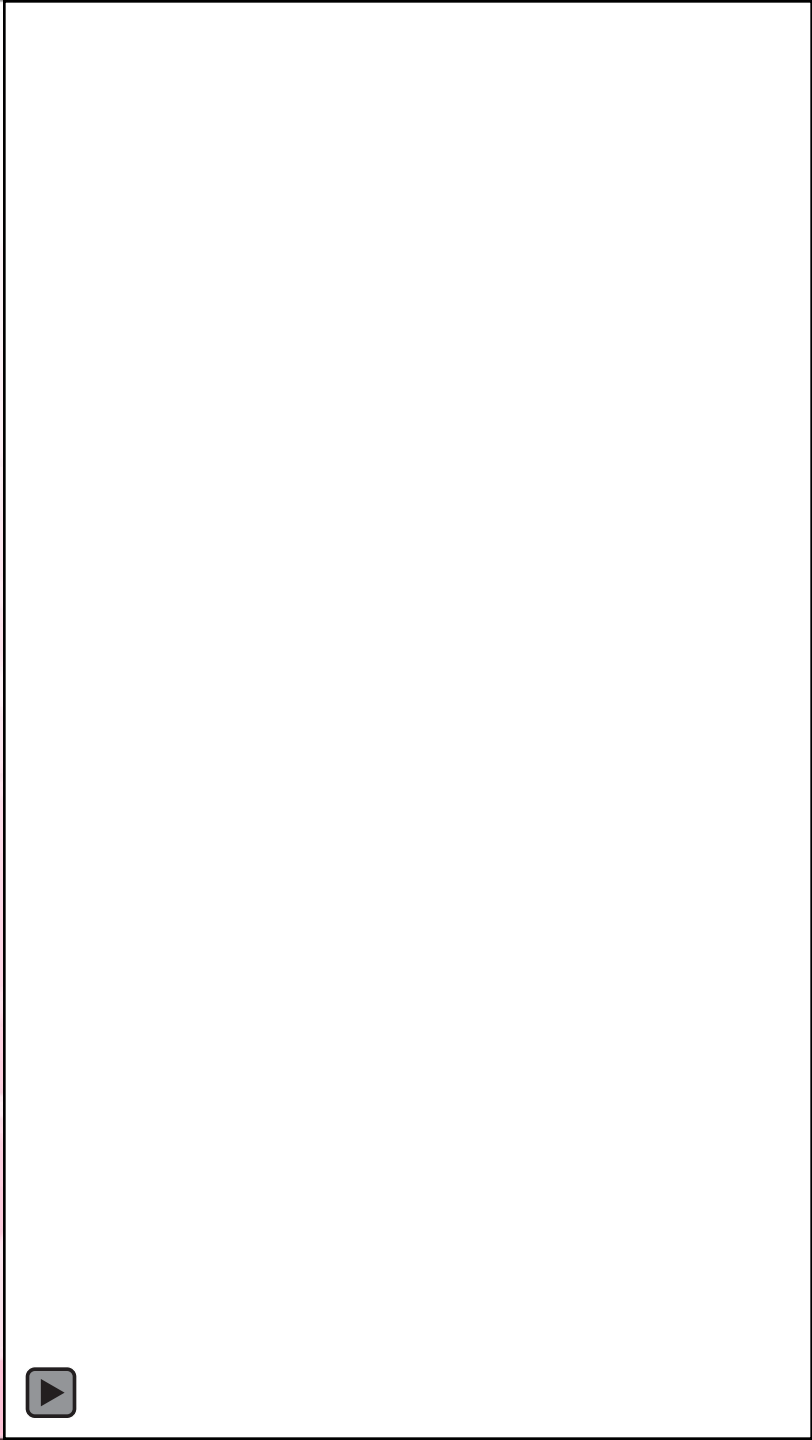
- Am I safe?





A BIOMEDICAL APPROACH TO CHILDBIRTH

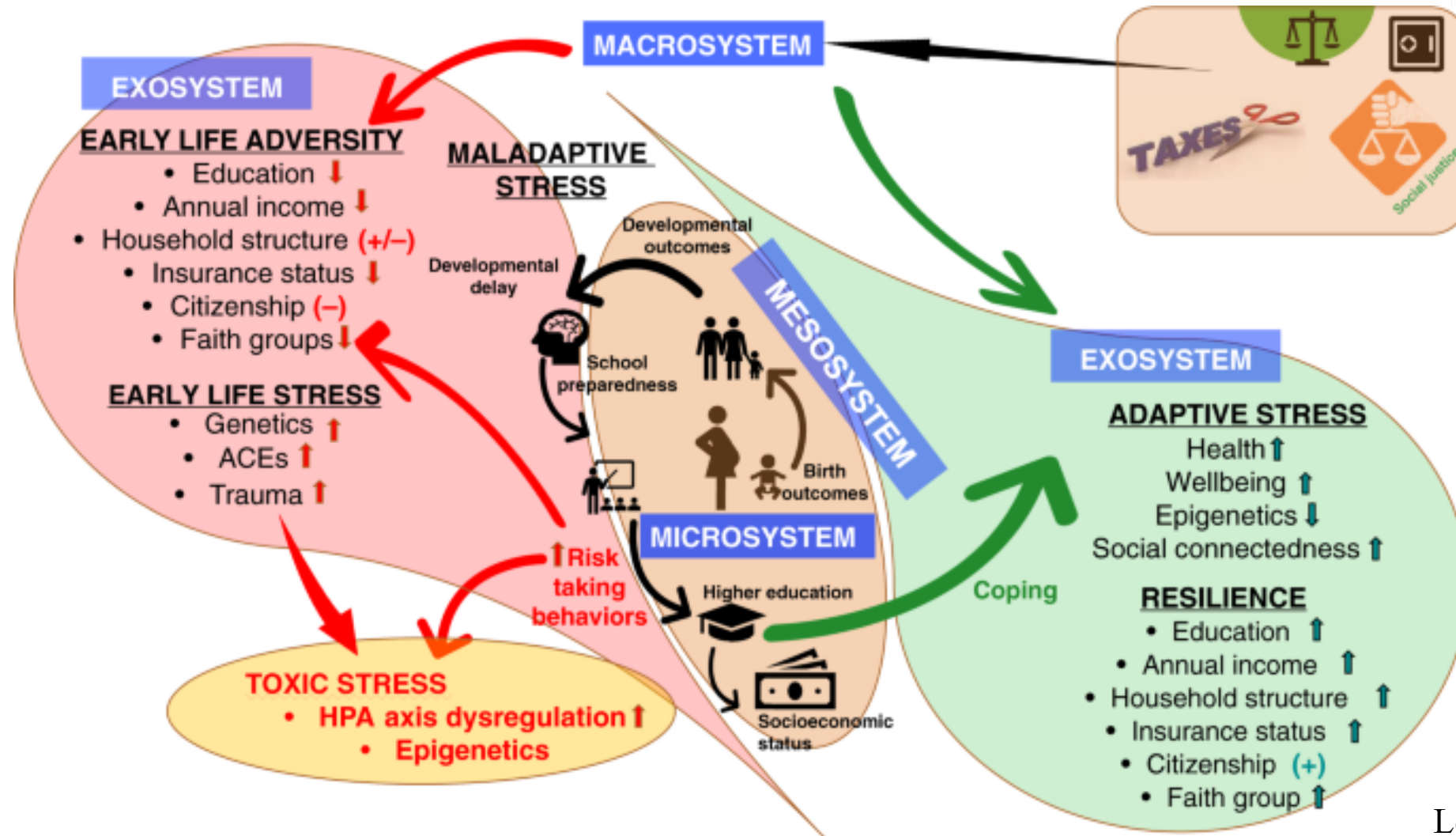
1. Treats childbirth as a pathology
2. Strips birth of its
 - Physiological character
 - Rich diverse socio-cultural significance
3. Pathologization supports a highly medicalized and interventionist approach
4. Translates into medical appropriation of women's bodies and reproductive processes



Pinto et al., 2023



SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL





LIFE HISTORY PERSPECTIVE UNDERLYING SCIENCE

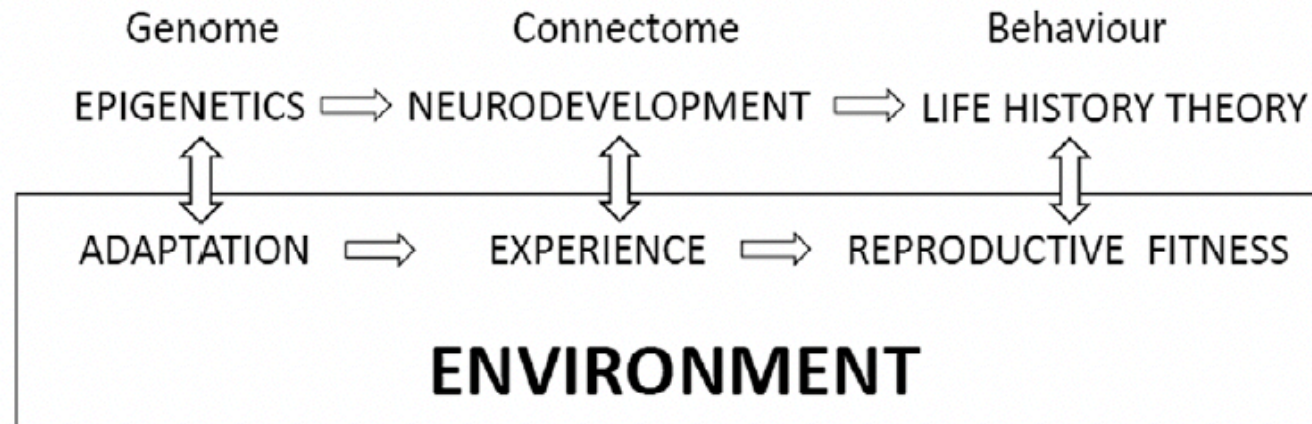
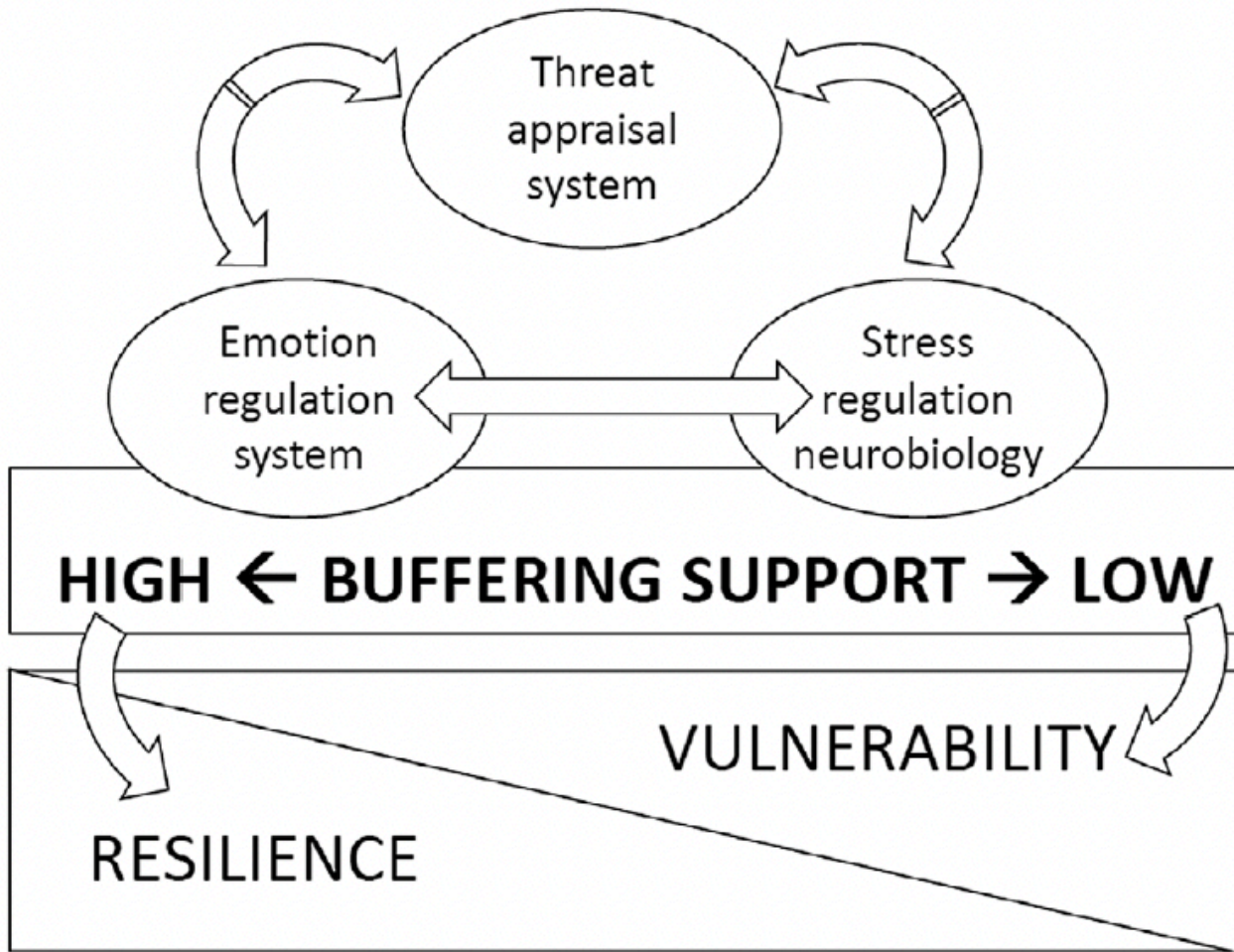


FIGURE 1 The environment is the common denominator to development. The epigene determines adaptations of gene expression adapted to the environment, the brain experiences sensory inputs firing circuits suited to the environment, and early behaviors make reproductive strategies optimized for that environment



SEPARATION PHYSIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

FIGURE 2 Toxic stress is the absence of buffering protection of adult support. Threat appraisal requires buffering, and the degree of buffering determines emotion regulation systems and stress regulation systems that determine future resilience or vulnerability



ZERO SEPARATION

Bergman, 2024

UNITARY CARING SCIENCE

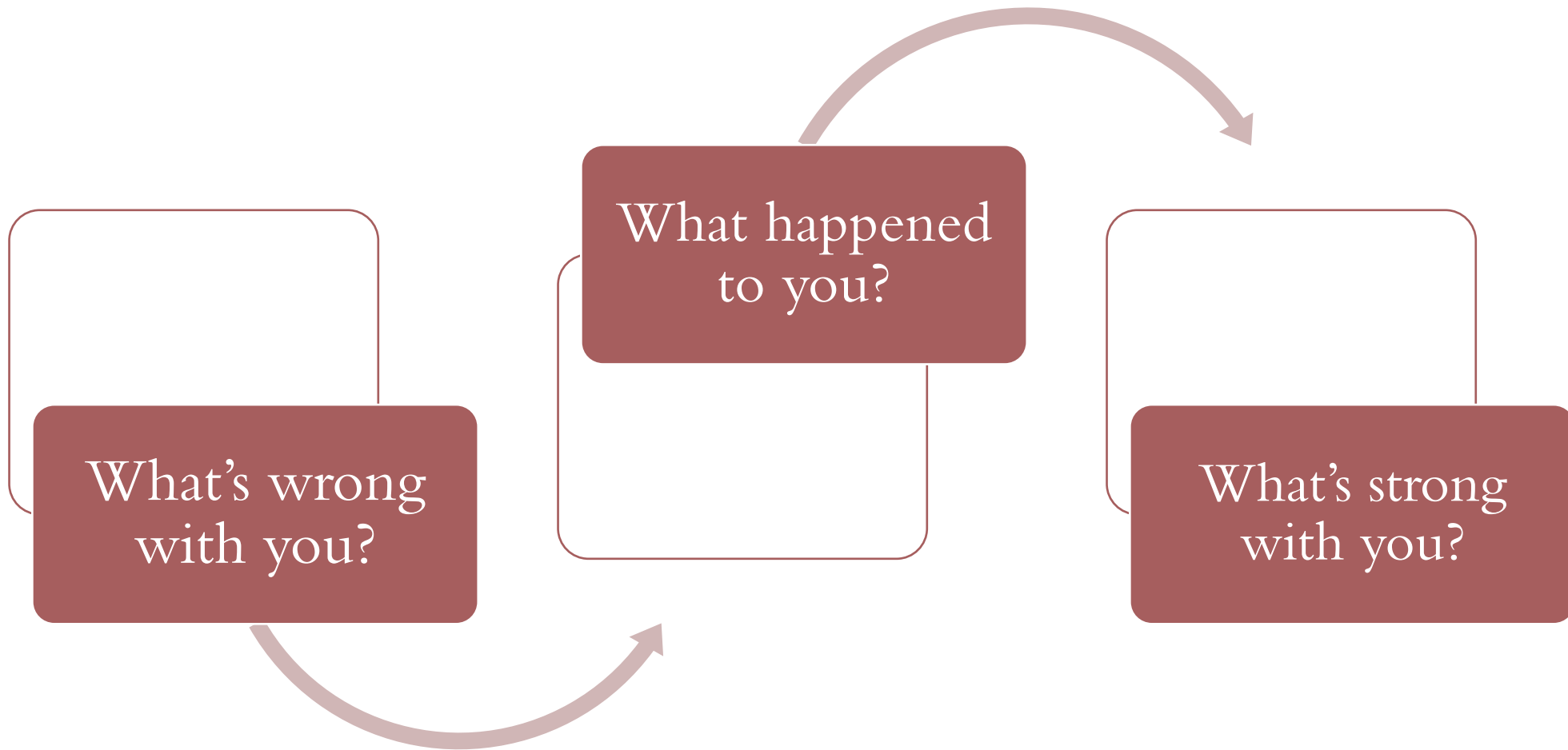
“...we learn from one another how to be human by identifying ourselves with others, finding their dilemmas in ourselves. What we all learn from it is self-knowledge. The self we learn about ...is every self. IT is universal – the human self. We learn to recognize ourselves in others... (it) keeps alive our common humanity and avoids reducing self or other to the moral status of object.”

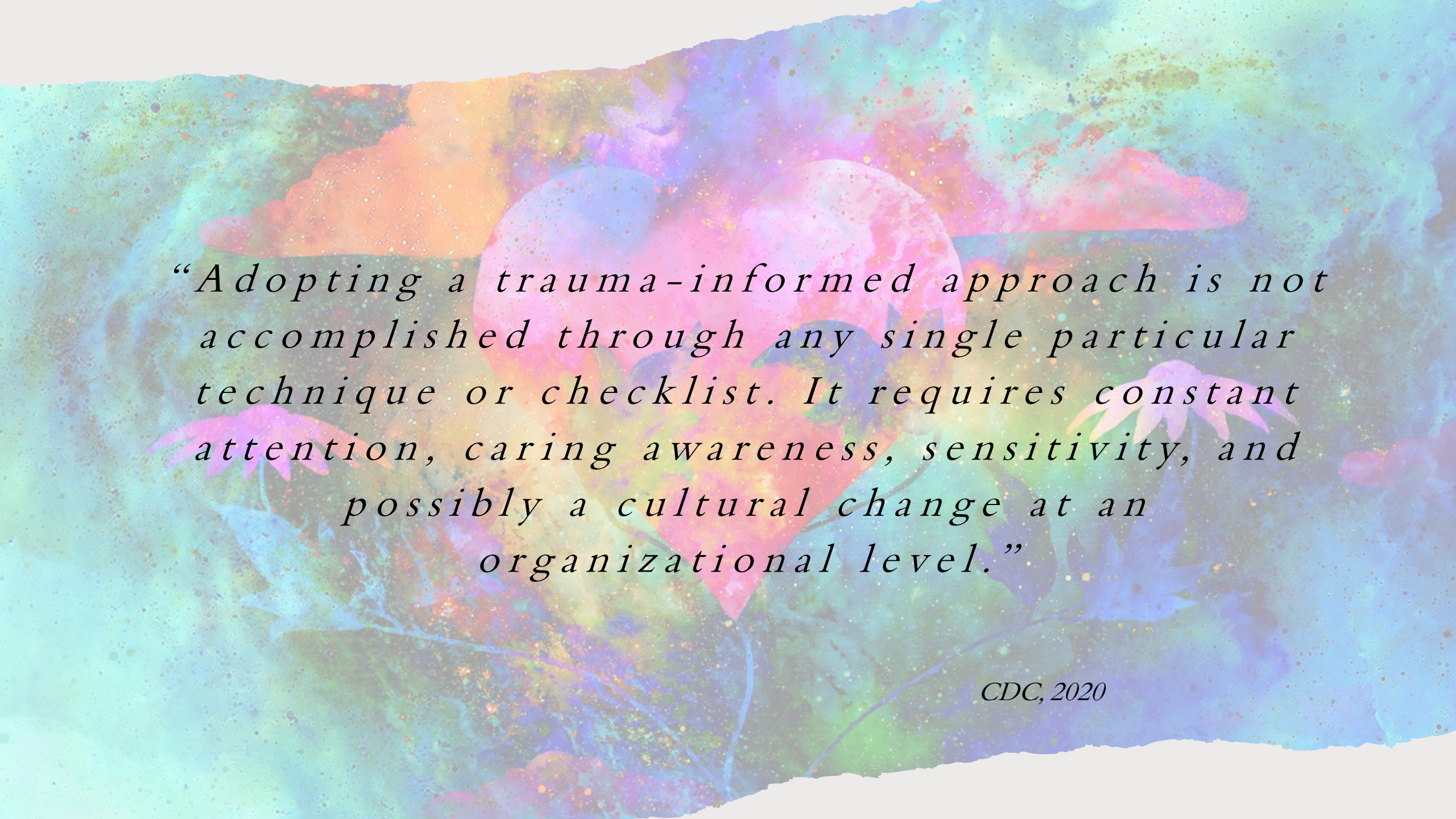
Watson, 2018



*Move away from summing
the suffering and building
the buffering.*

PARADIGM SHIFT





“Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity, and possibly a cultural change at an organizational level.”

CDC, 2020

The background of the slide features several dandelion seed heads in various stages of dispersal. Some are fully blown, showing their characteristic white, feathery structure, while others are still partially attached to their brown, seed-filled heads. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a gentle glow around the seeds. The overall color palette is a mix of light yellows, whites, and a muted teal background.

BE THE B.U.F.F.E.R.

- **B** – Belonging
- **U** – Understanding
- **F** – Frameworks
- **F** – Forgiveness
- **E** – Equanimity
- **R** – Respect

BELONGING



- Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us. Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval, which are not only hollow substitutes for belonging, but often barriers to it. Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance.

Brené Brown – Braving the Wilderness

A conceptual illustration of a tree. The top part of the tree is a small, young sapling with a few green leaves, growing out of a small mound of dark soil. The bottom part of the tree is a large, dense, and vibrant green canopy of leaves, appearing to grow downwards from the same central trunk. The trunk is a simple brown line connecting the two parts. The background is a soft, light blue and white gradient, suggesting a sky or a misty landscape.

UNDERSTANDING

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

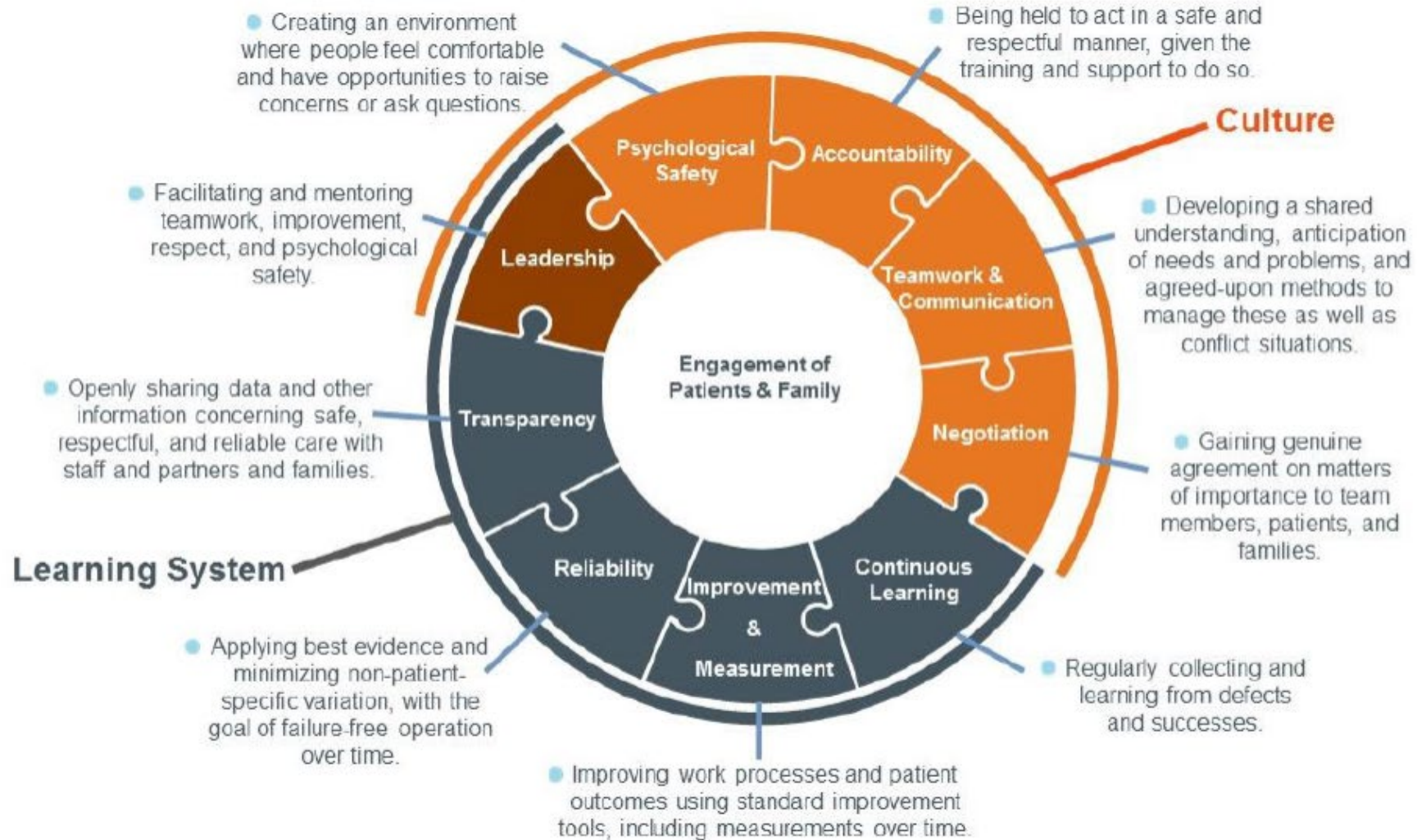
Søren Kierkegaard

FORGIVENESS

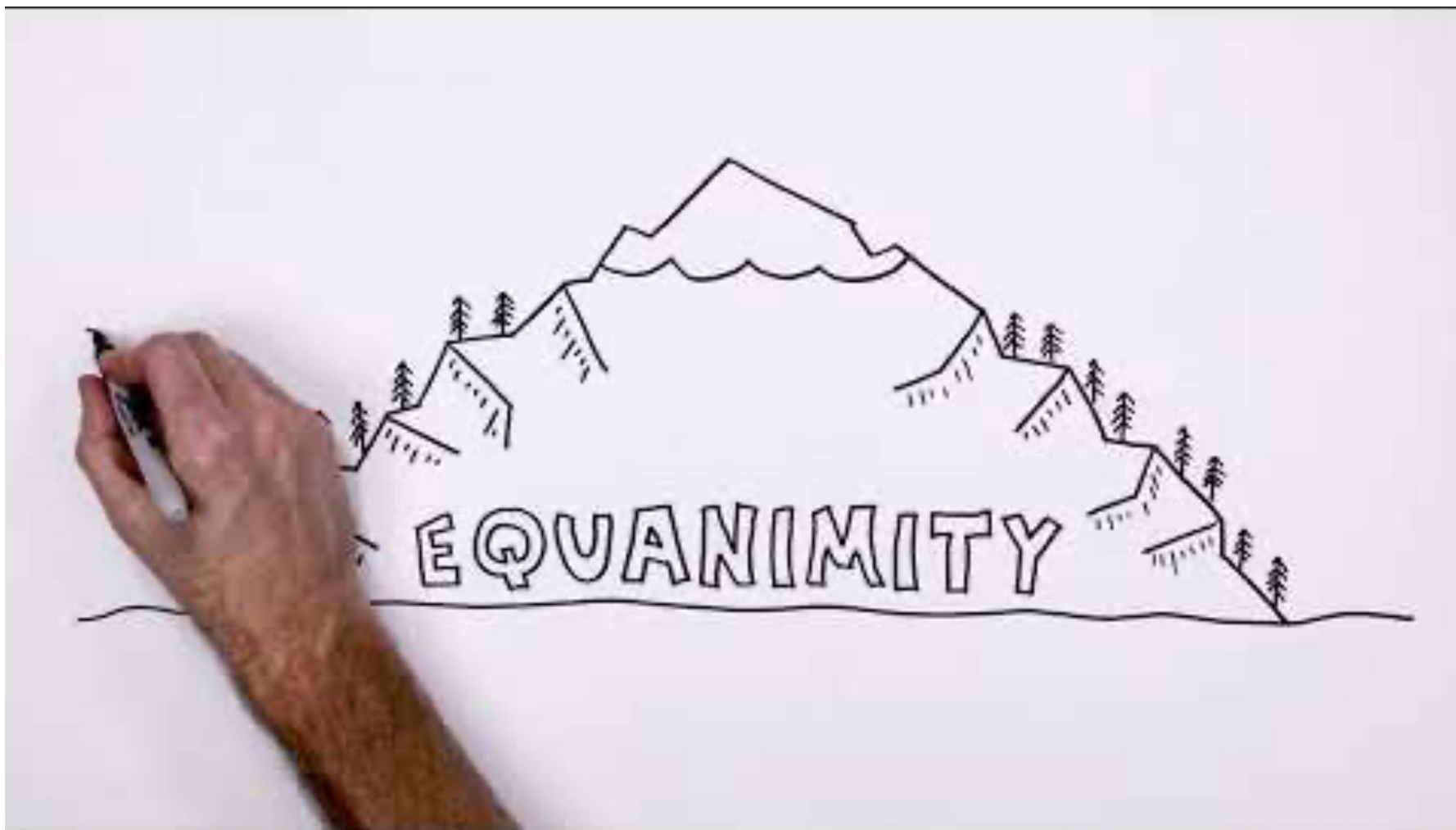
- Acknowledge the pain
- Empowerment & Agency
- Letting Go of Perfectionism
- Set Boundaries
- Self-Compassion
- Cultural & Contextual Sensitivity
- Non-judgmental Support
- Ongoing Process
- Respect Individual Choice
- Reframing Negative Self-Talk



FRAMEWORKS



EQUANIMITY



RESPECT

SPEAK

in such a way that

others love to **listen** to you

LISTEN

in such a way that

others love to **speak** to you

A person with curly hair, wearing a red and black plaid shirt, blue jeans, and black boots, stands on the edge of a layered red rock cliff. They are looking out over a vast, deep canyon with layered rock walls. The sky is filled with large, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

EDGE STATES

Halifax, 2018, 2022

EDGE STATES

Top of the Cliff

1. Altruism
2. Empathy
3. Integrity
4. Respect
5. Engagement

Bottom of the Cliff

1. Pathological Altruism
2. Empathic Distress
3. Moral Suffering
4. Toxic Disrespect
5. Burnout

ABC'S OF TIC



AWARENESS

BUFFERING

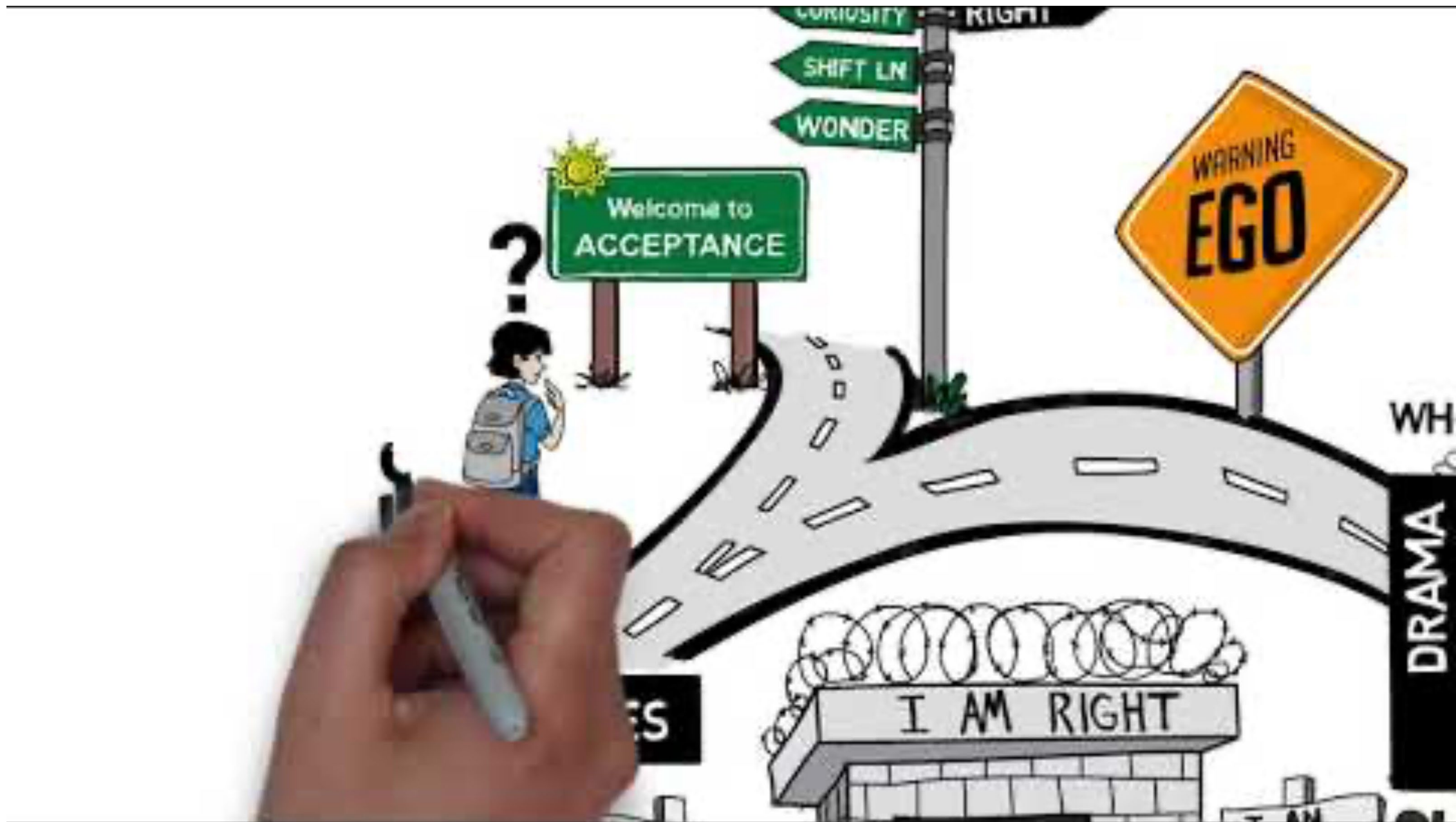
CAPACITY



INTEGRATED TIDC FRAMEWORK

INTEGRATED TRAUMA-INFORMED FRAMEWORK

Coughlin et al., 2023; Coughlin, 2021





“Children don't get traumatized because they're hurt, they get traumatized because they're alone with their hurt.” - Dr. Gabor Mate.

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THANK YOU

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Pathways Workbook