

Module Three Training Notes



Attachment



5. Attachment

Dynamic Maturation Model (DMM) developed by Dr. Patricia Crittenden



Dr. Patricia McKinsey Crittenden

www.patcrittenden.com

**Book: Raising Parents:
Attachment, Representation,
and Treatment (2015)**



"Attachment is not the problem, danger is the problem, attachment is the solution."

Dr. Patricia Crittenden

5. Attachment

The attachment strategies developed early on are **life saving**

Attachment strategies develop and become more **sophisticated and complex**

The problem is the danger, **not** their attachment strategies



Prioritise intervention
that **reduces** danger

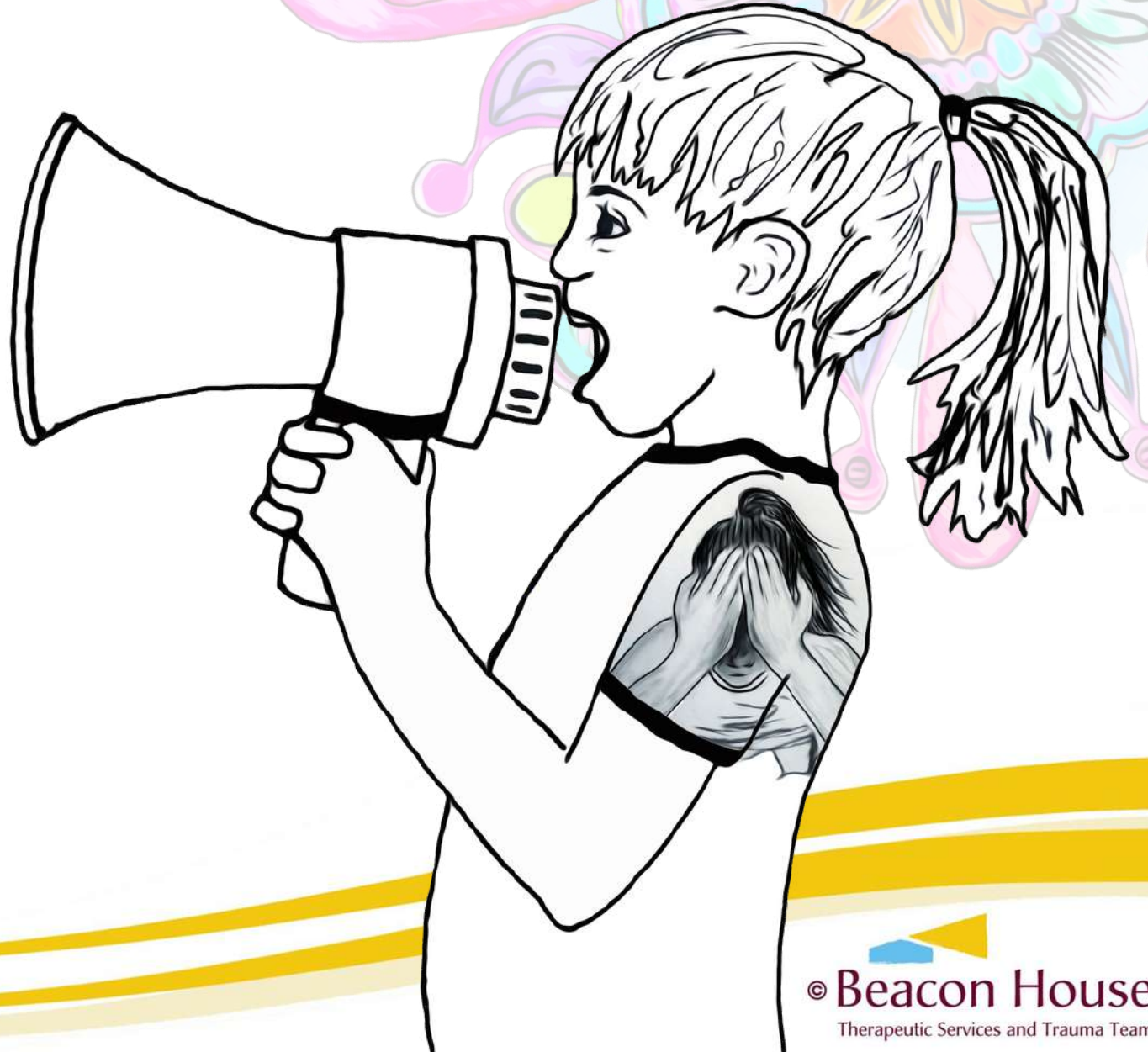




A child **will not and should not** relinquish attachment strategies if they continue to **face danger** at home or school

5. Attachment

Celebrate and respect
the attachment
strategies that a child is
using, seeing them as
attachment survival
strategies

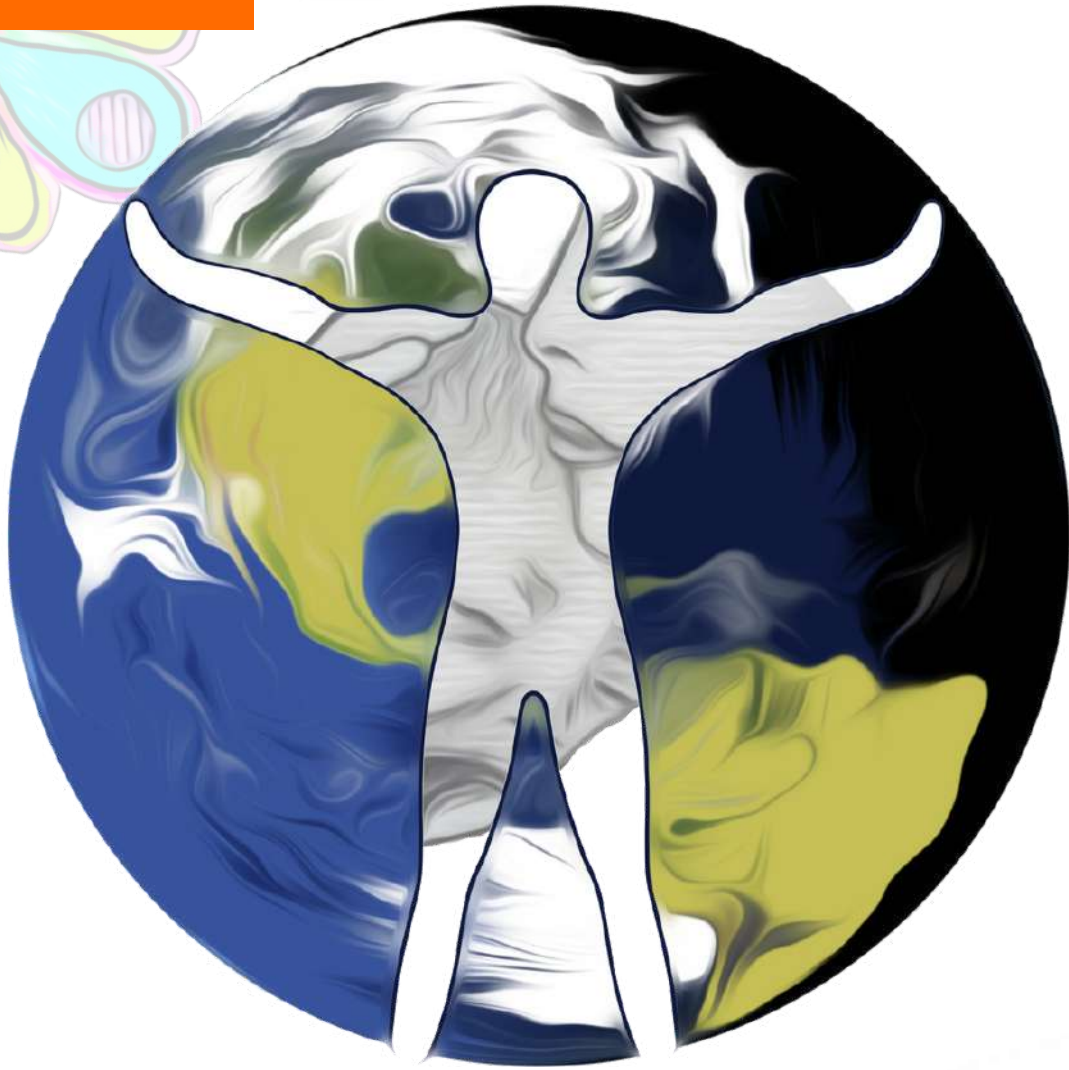


5. Attachment

In the **first 2 months**, infants show early signs and indications that they are **developing** a particular way of relating to the adults around them



5. Attachment



The way the parent or carer responds to the baby influences the way they **relate to themselves, others and the world**

5. Attachment

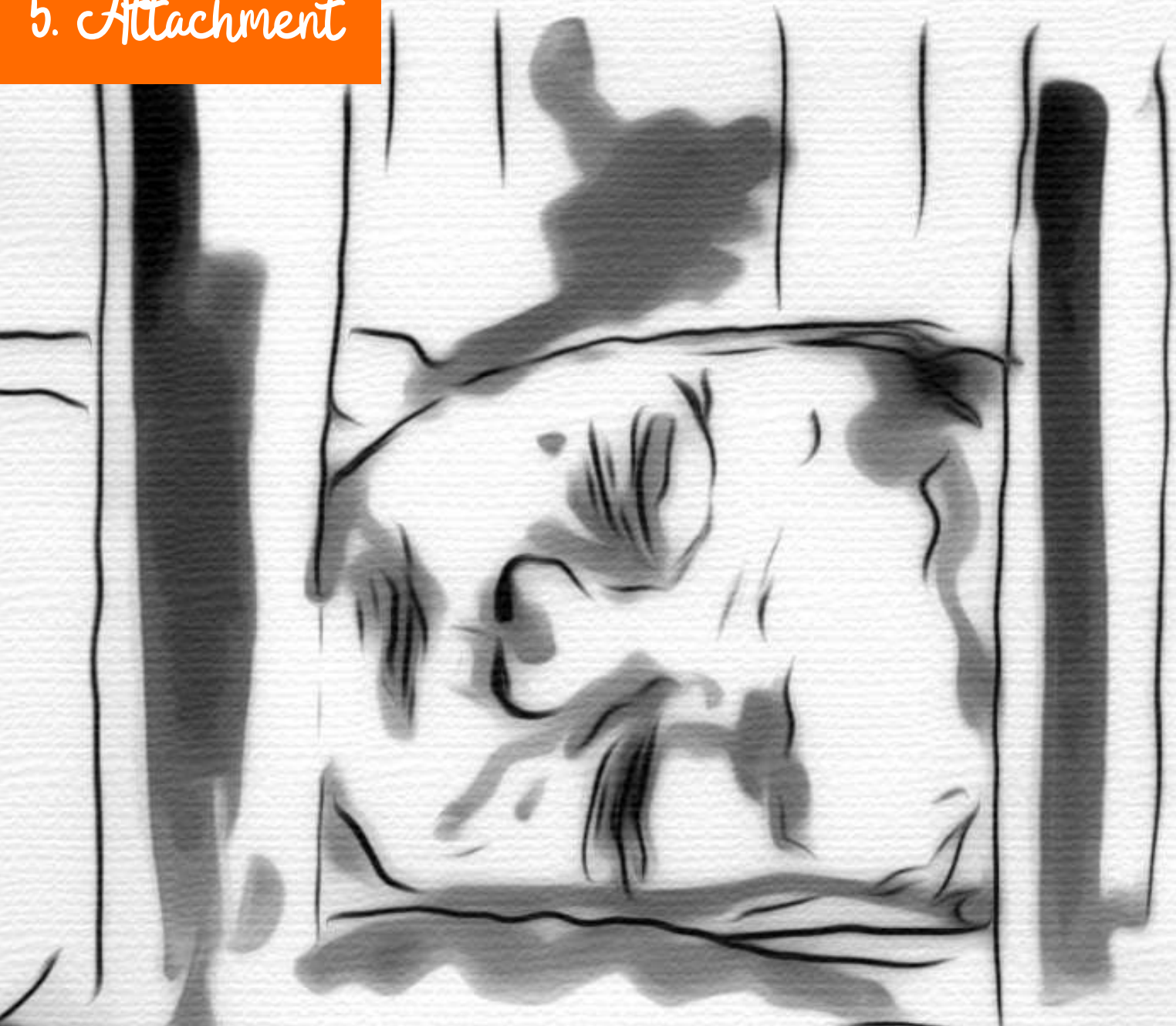
I am loveable and worth caring for
My feelings are manageable and won't kill me
My feelings come and go

Someone cares for me
Others are safe and can be trusted
My needs don't push others away

The world is safe and predictable
The world is an okay place to be
I am safe in the world I live in



5. Attachment



I am not loveable or protected
I am dangerous
My feelings push others away

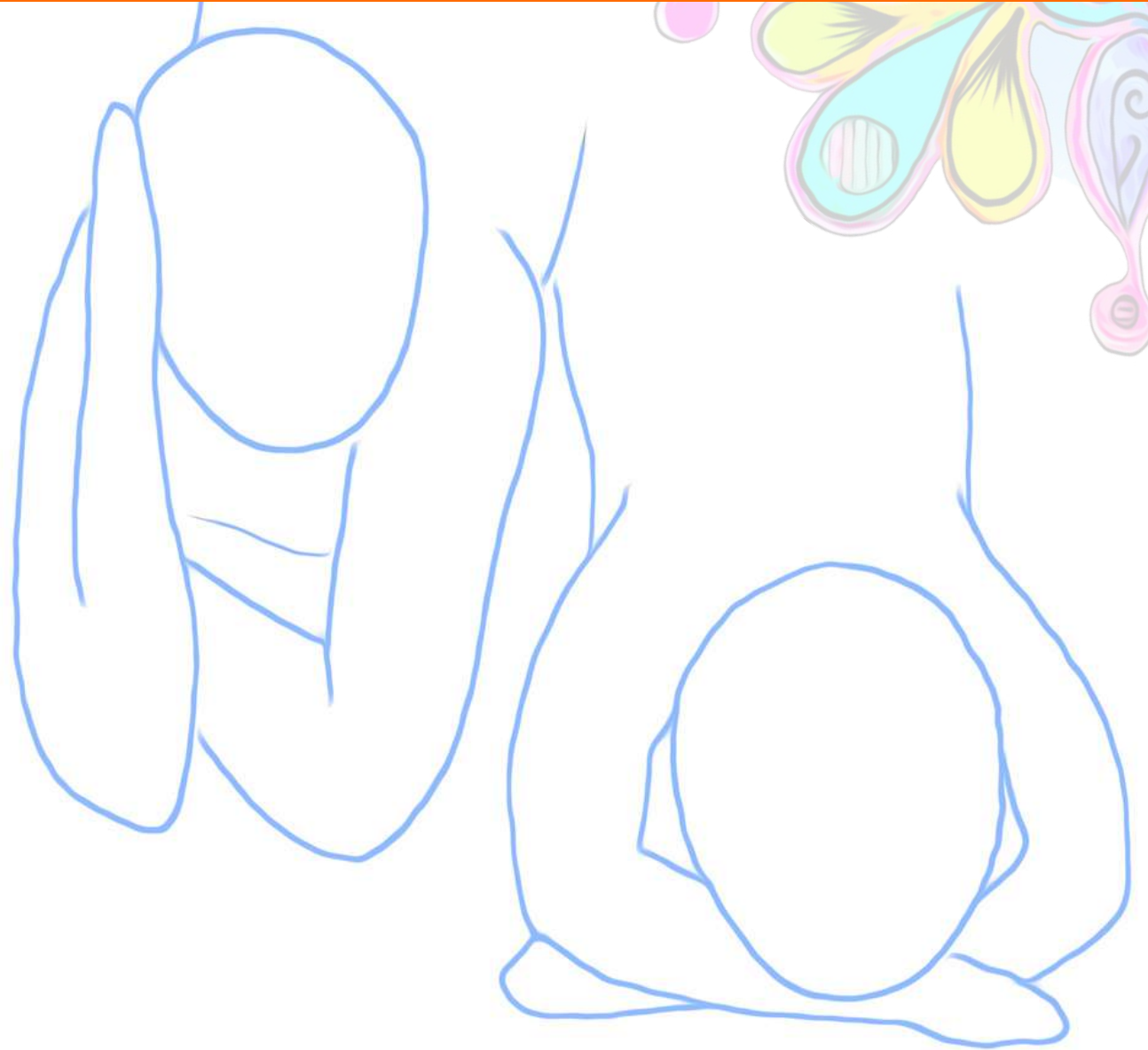
Others are unreliable
Others are hurt by my needs
Others are dangerous

The world is unpredictable
The world needs to be survived
The world is unsafe

CO-REGULATION

The caregivers' ability to **regulate** their **own emotions**; and help the child to **regulate their emotions** through verbal and non-verbal gestures.

A child's capacity to manage their feelings is dependant on their **early experiences** of co-regulation



MENTALIZATION:

The caregivers' ability to **see** themselves from the **outside in**; and their child from the **inside out**.

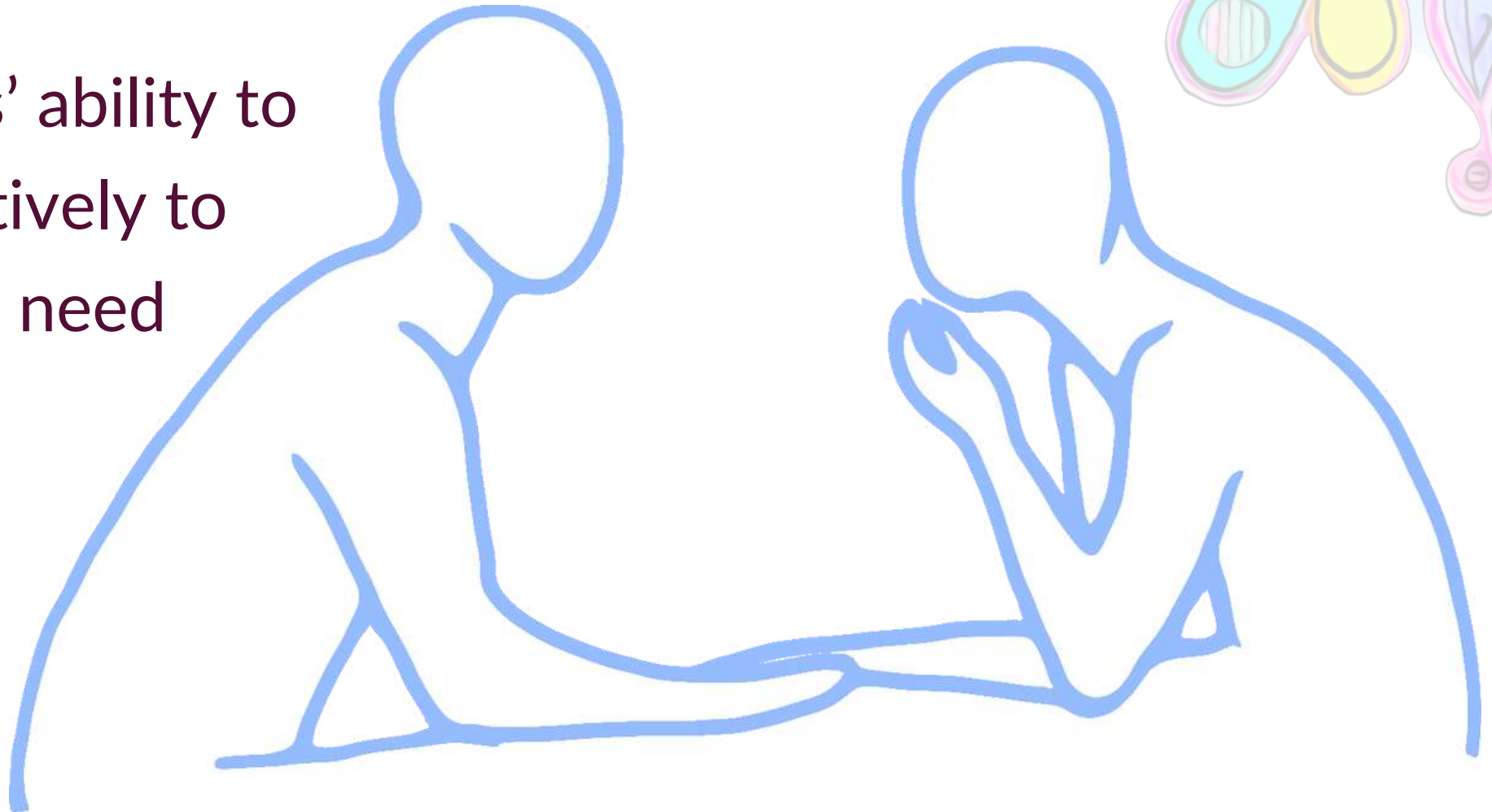
The ability to **read** the child's **underlying** feelings, wishes, desires, intentions and needs.

Knowing they are **separate**; they have their own separate needs and desires.



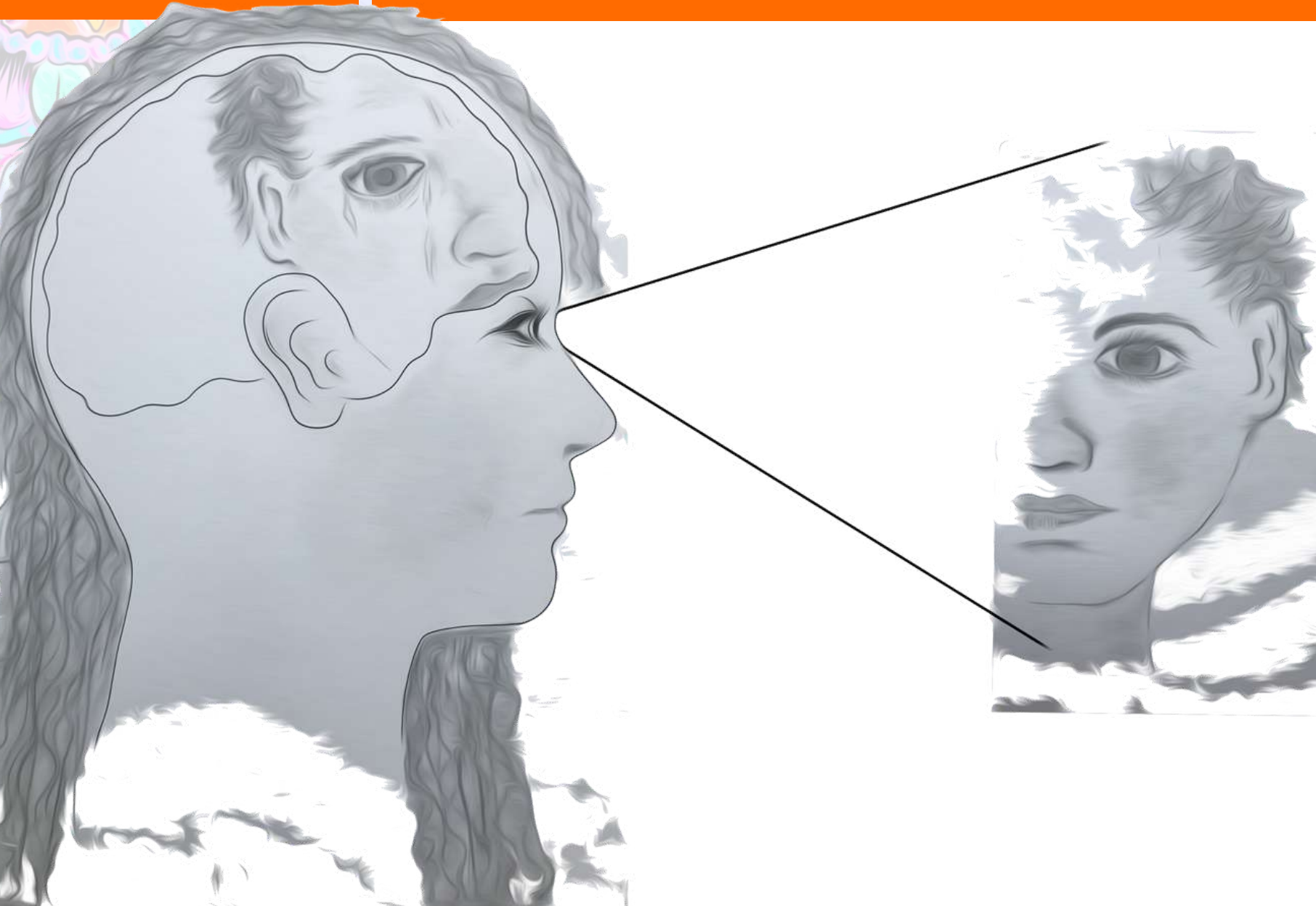
Attunement

The caregivers' ability to **respond** sensitively to the underlying need that they have recognised.



5. Attachment

Interpersonal concepts: How secure or insecure a child feels



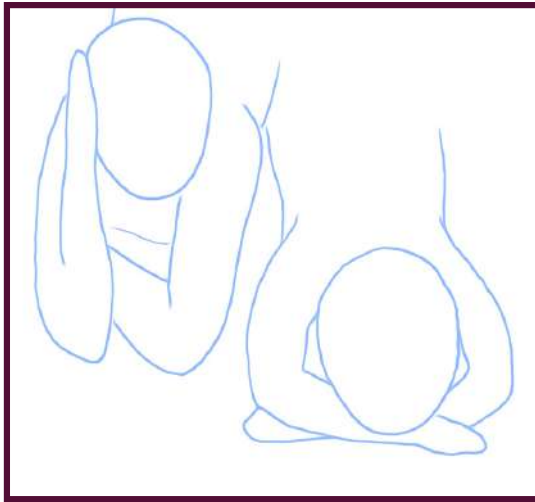
Contingency

The caregivers' ability to notice and respond to the child's underlying need **at the time the need is present.**

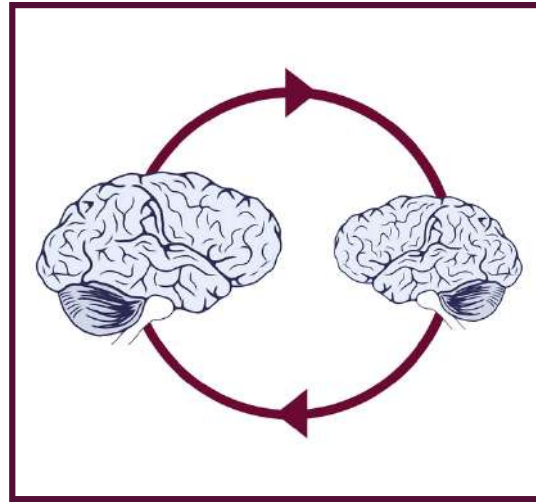
5. Attachment

Interpersonal concepts: How secure or insecure a child feels

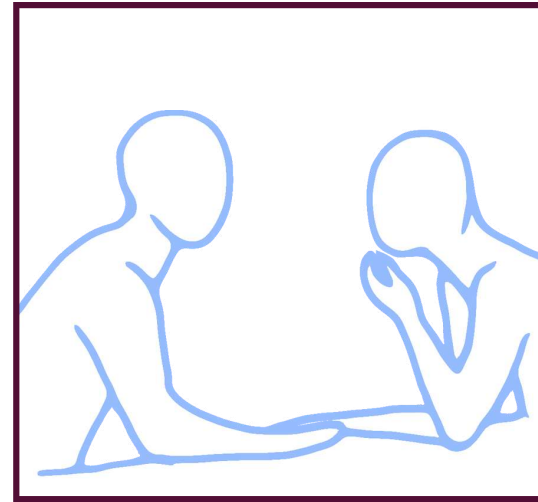
When working with traumatised children, our **own professional responses** need to be filled with these qualities. This will be **critical** in the **repair** of their early trauma.



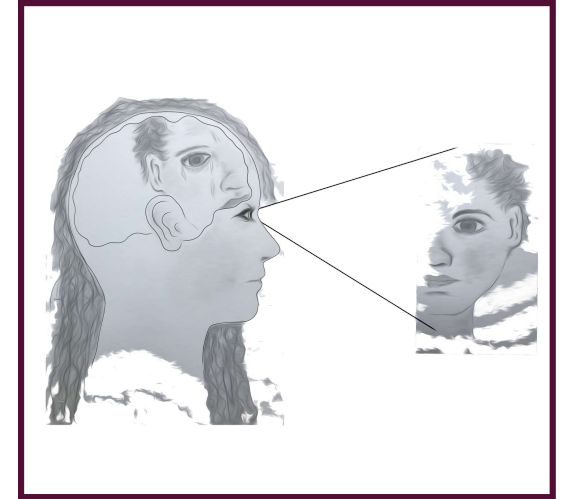
Co-regulation



Mentalization

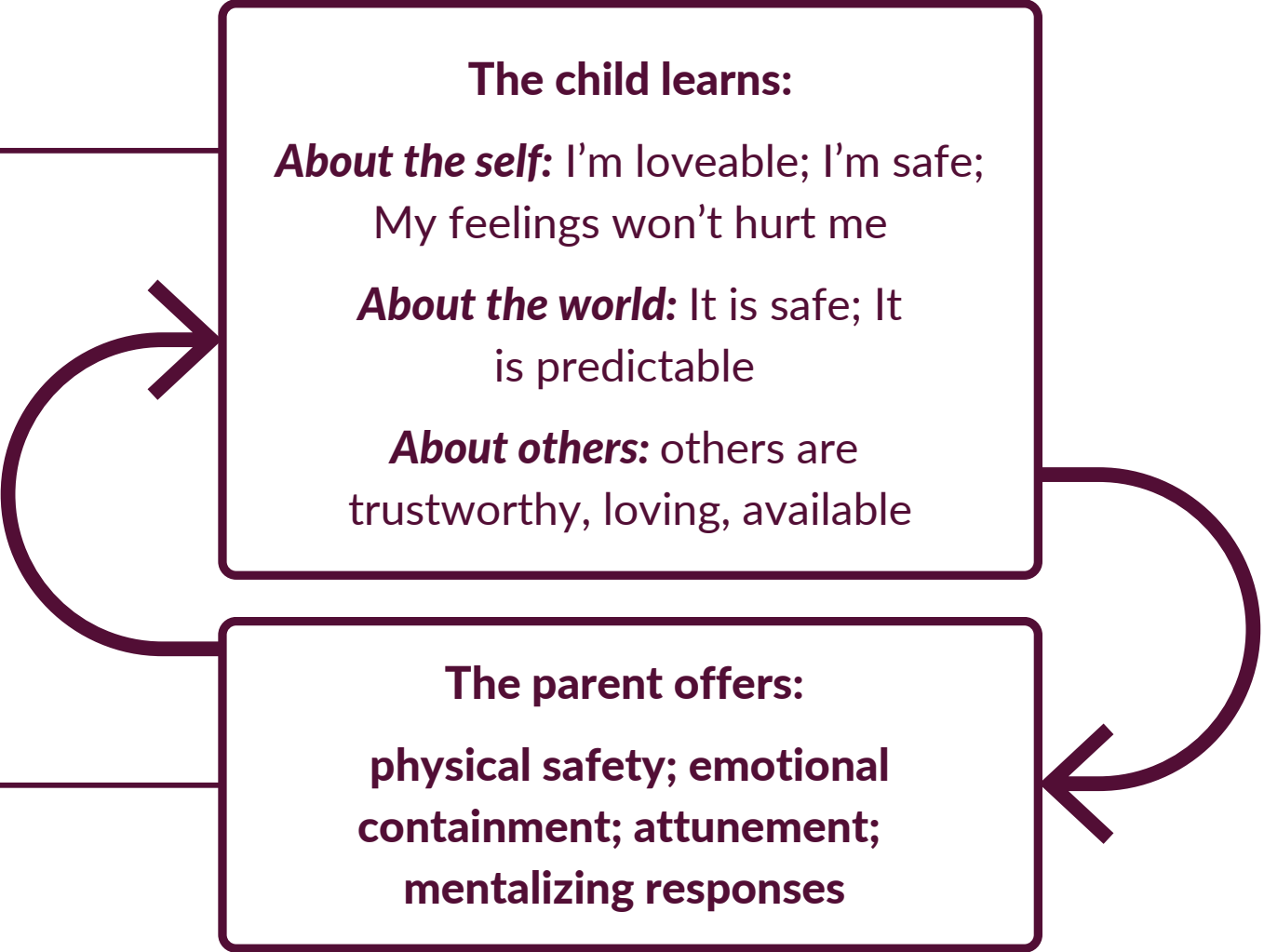
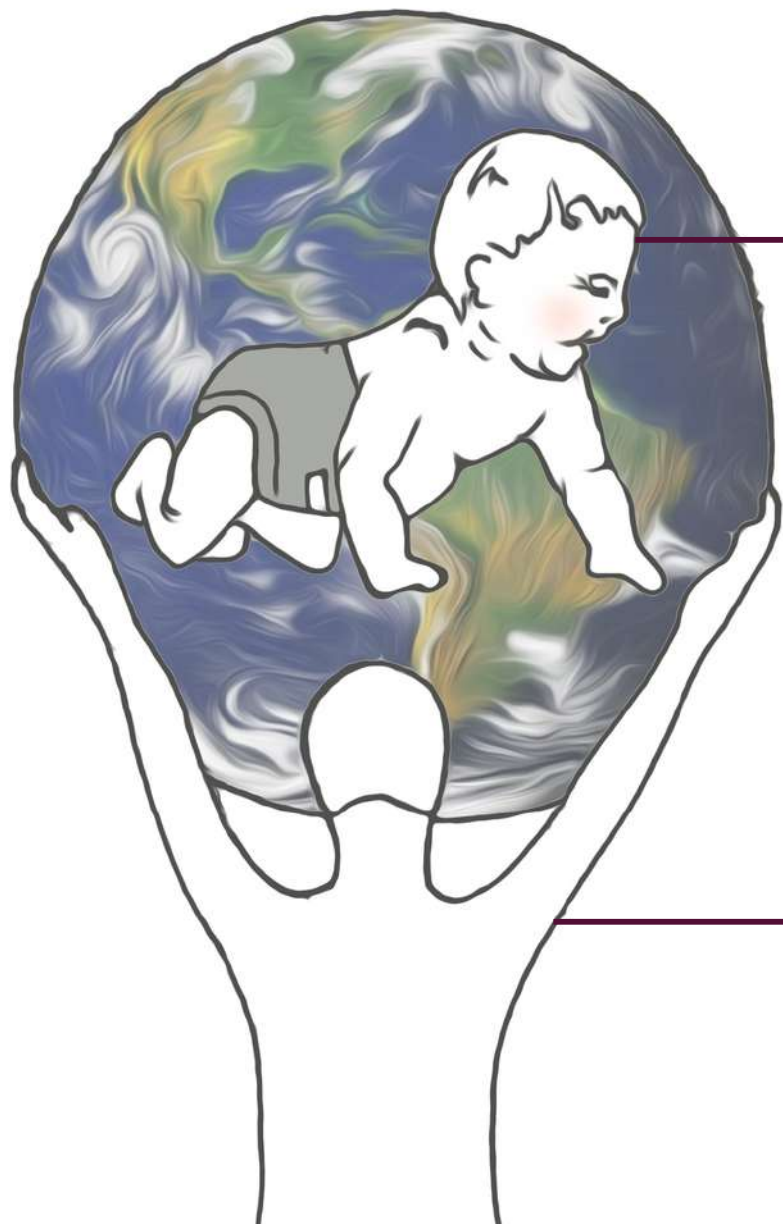


Attunement



Contingency

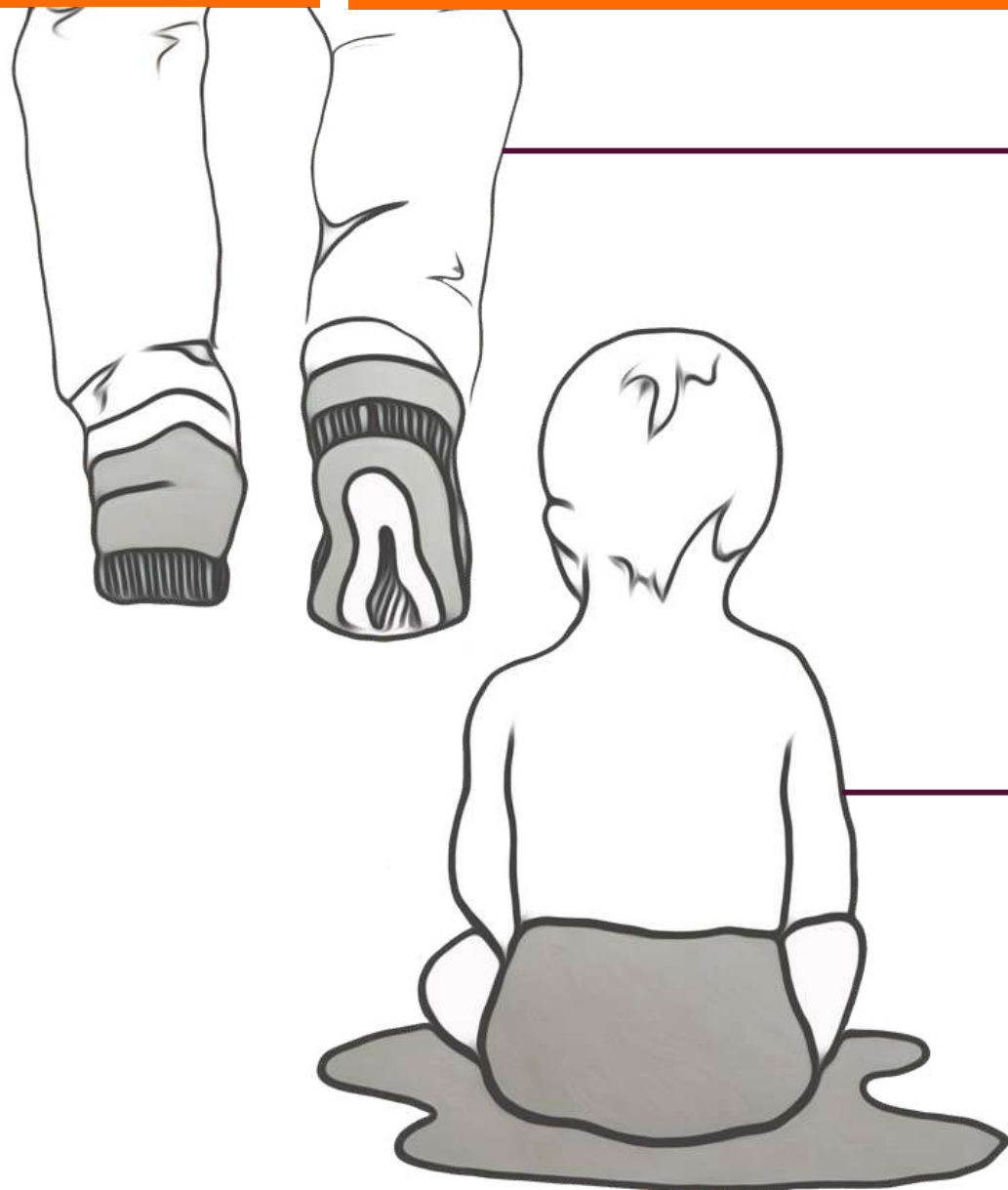
Healthy Early Care Experiences





Good enough: a sensitive, attuned response **50% of the time** is enough for the child to develop a secure attachment.

Harmful Early Care Experiences

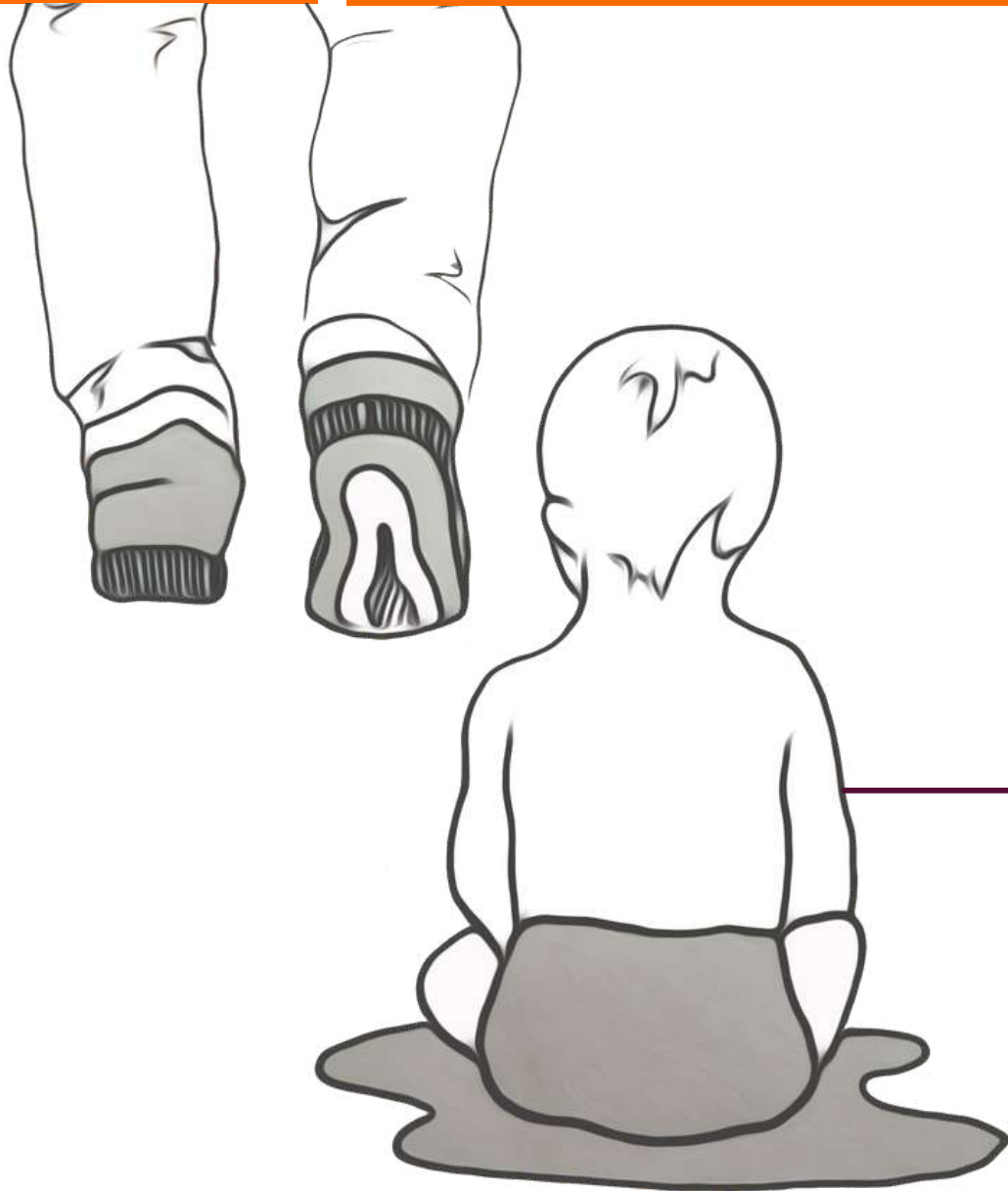


The parent is:
frightened, frightening, inconsistent,
unavailable, harmful.

The child learns:

- About the self:** I'm unlovable; my feelings are dangerous; I'm bad
- About the world:** It is dangerous, unpredictable
- About others:** others are dangerous, they cannot be trusted, they are unpredictable

Harmful Early Care Experiences



"My strategies help me cope with the lessons I've learnt from my harmful early care"

5. Attachment

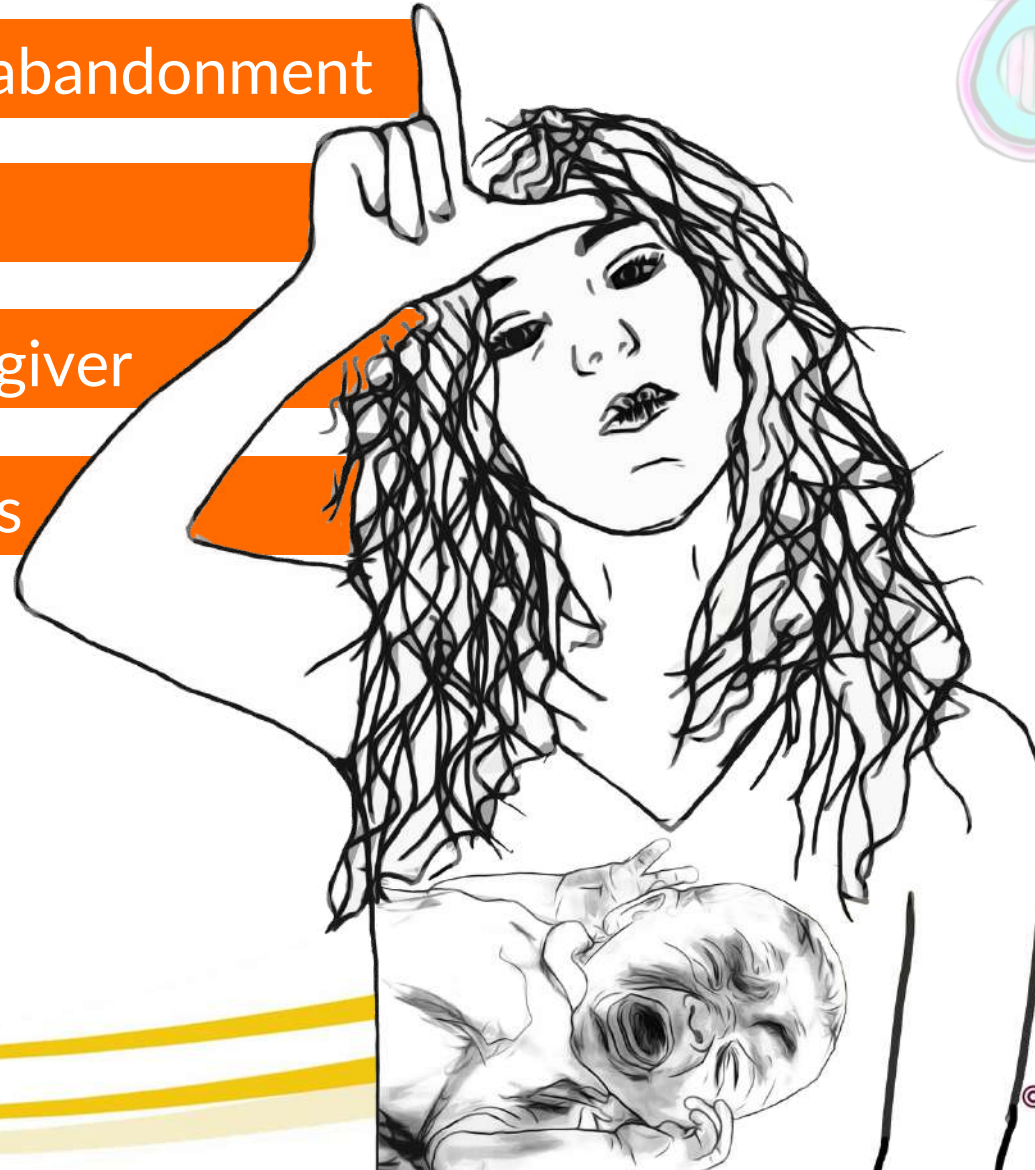
Function of Attachment Strategies

Reduce the likelihood of danger or abandonment

Elicit comfort and care

Establish **safe proximity** to the caregiver

Create **predictability** in relationships



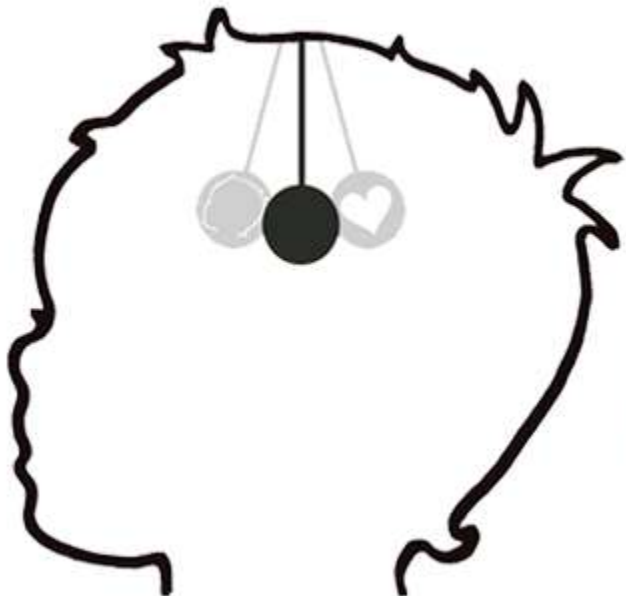
5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies

Secure

Attachment Pattern

Insecure Attachment Pattern



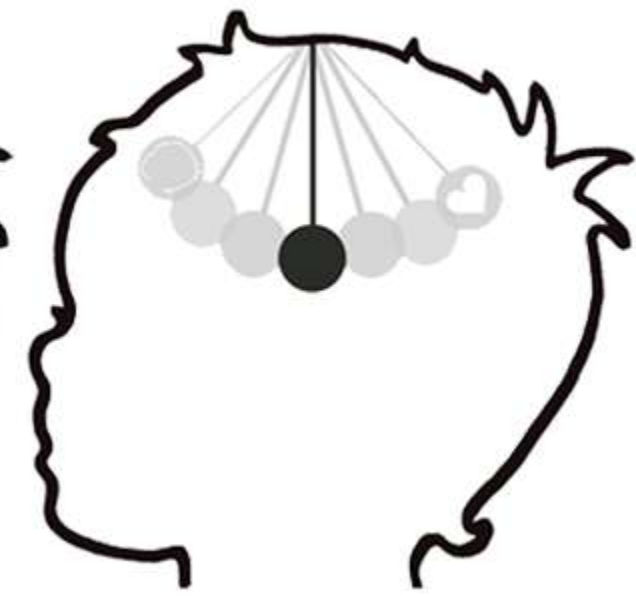
Secure B Strategy



A Strategy
(Avoidant)



C Strategy
(Coercive Preoccupied)



Mixed Strategy
(Mixture of A&C)

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies

Develop a primary attachment strategy and the capacity to use different strategies in different relationships and different contexts depending on which strategy is going to be **most effective in reducing harm and increasing proximity**



Avoidant at Home

Coercive Preoccupied at School



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies

Attachment can change over time:

- An individual can shift from an insecure to secure attachment pattern
- The severity and level of dysfunction of the attachment pattern can reduce over time
- An individual may learn the skills to act as if they have a B strategy (secure attachment)

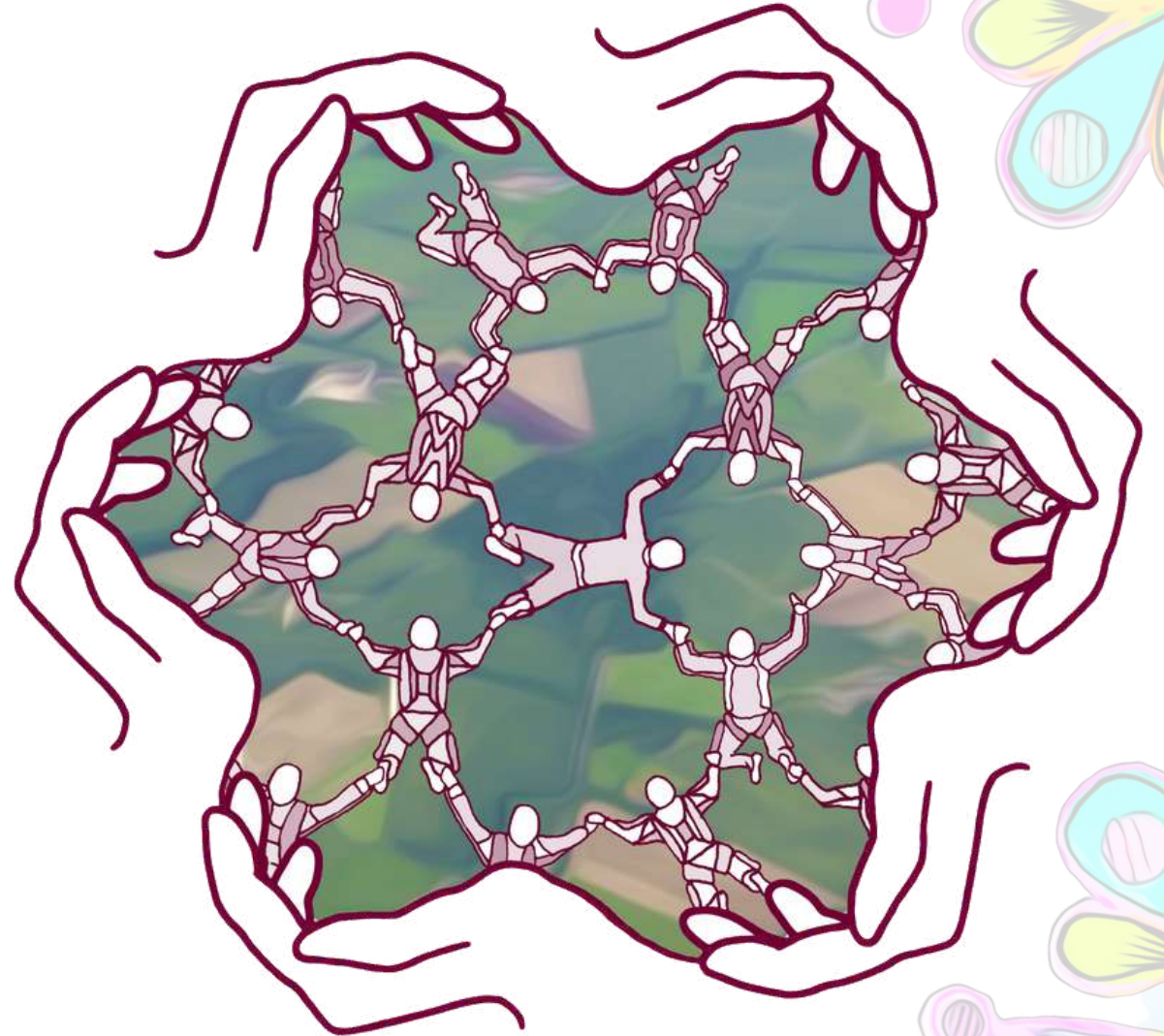


5. Attachment

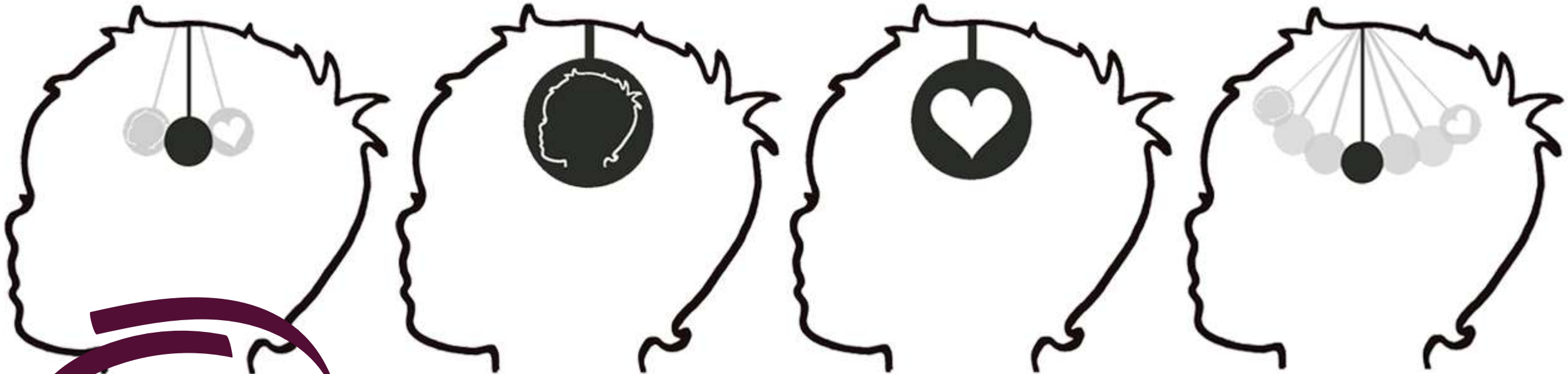
Attachment Strategies

Two primary experiences which enable these transitions to take place:

- Reparative relationships: Day to day positive, attuned, sensitive, contingent responses in all their relationships over a number of years
- Deep therapeutic process that enables attachment patterns to be understood and processed



B is not for best



Secure B Strategy

A Strategy
(Avoidant)

C Strategy
(Coercive Preoccupied)

Mixed Strategy
(Mixture of A&C)

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies

Having insecure attachment strategies is an adaptive response to particular environments:

To what extent does this child need to hold on to these insecure attachment strategies given the nature of the parenting they are still receiving, the school environment they are in and any other potential threats and dangers that are present for this child?



Secure B Strategy

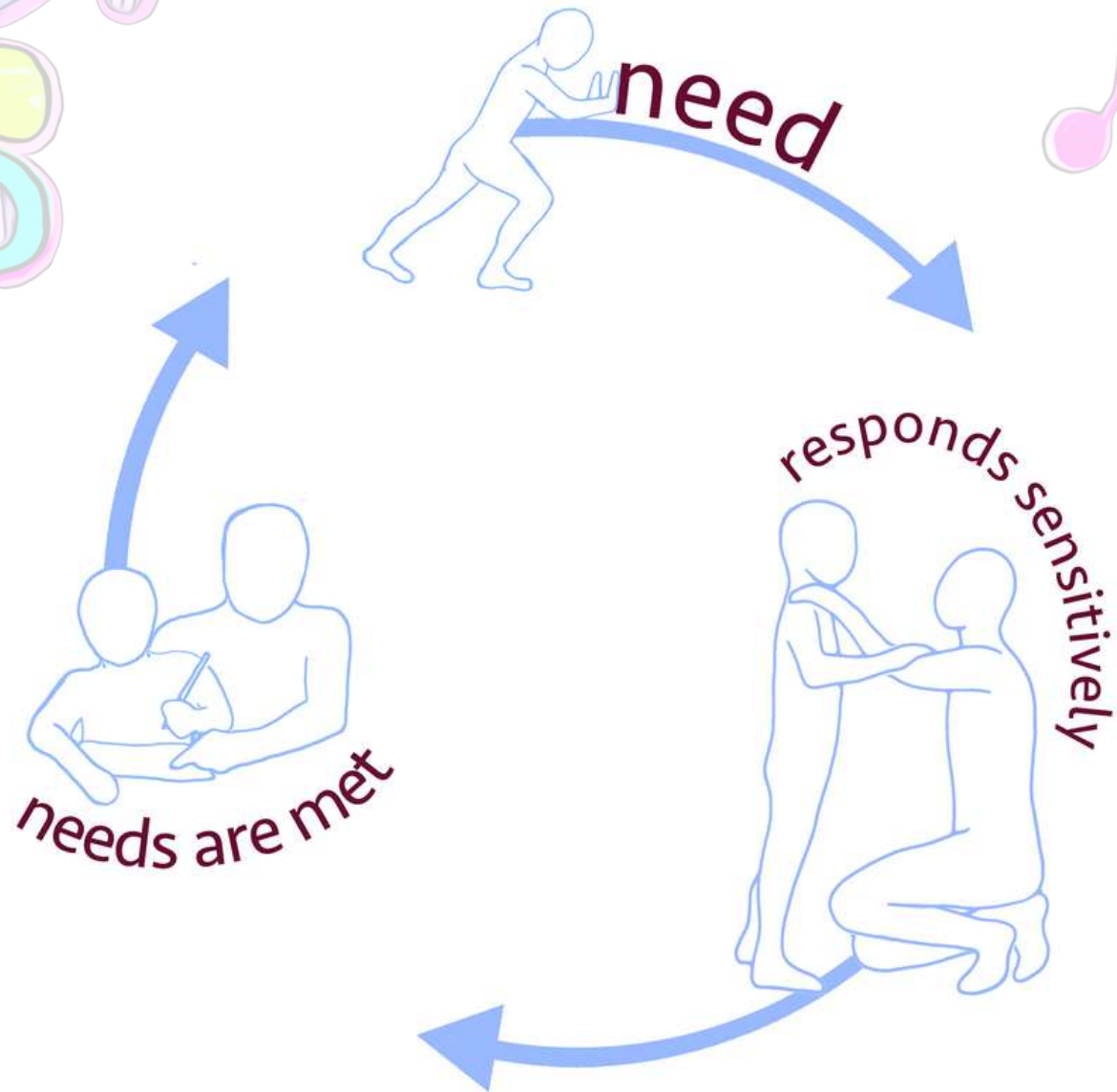
**A Strategy
(Avoidant)**

**C Strategy
(Coercive Preoccupied)**

**Mixed Strategy
(Mixture of A&C)**

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: Secure Attachment



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)

Caregiver qualities:

- Predictably unattuned
- Controlling
- Hostile – aversive responses
- Emotionally cold
- Incongruent to the child



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)



The child develops a way of relating that **reduces** the likelihood of harm and **increases** the likelihood of proximity and **elicits** care and comfort and creates predictability

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)



When I feel bad
no-body helps

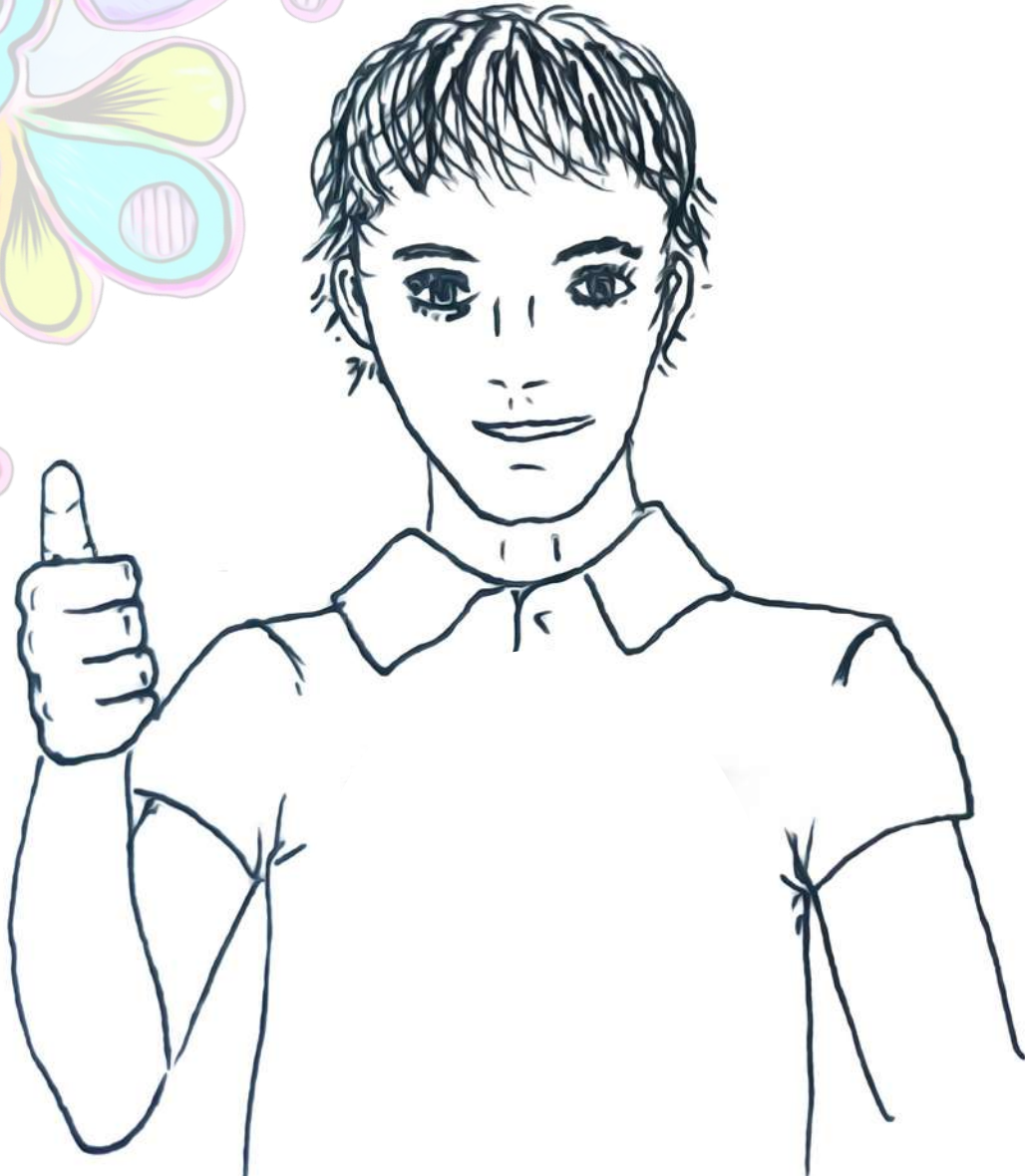
When I cry,
I feel worse

I push others
away

Feelings are
dangerous

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)



On the outside:

Happy

Bright and chirpy

Clown of the class

Bubbly

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)



On the inside:

Fear

Terror

Shame

Anxiety

Self-doubt

Distress and upset

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)



Babies:

- Frozen baby
- Perfect, no trouble at all
- Never crying
- Brilliant sleeper

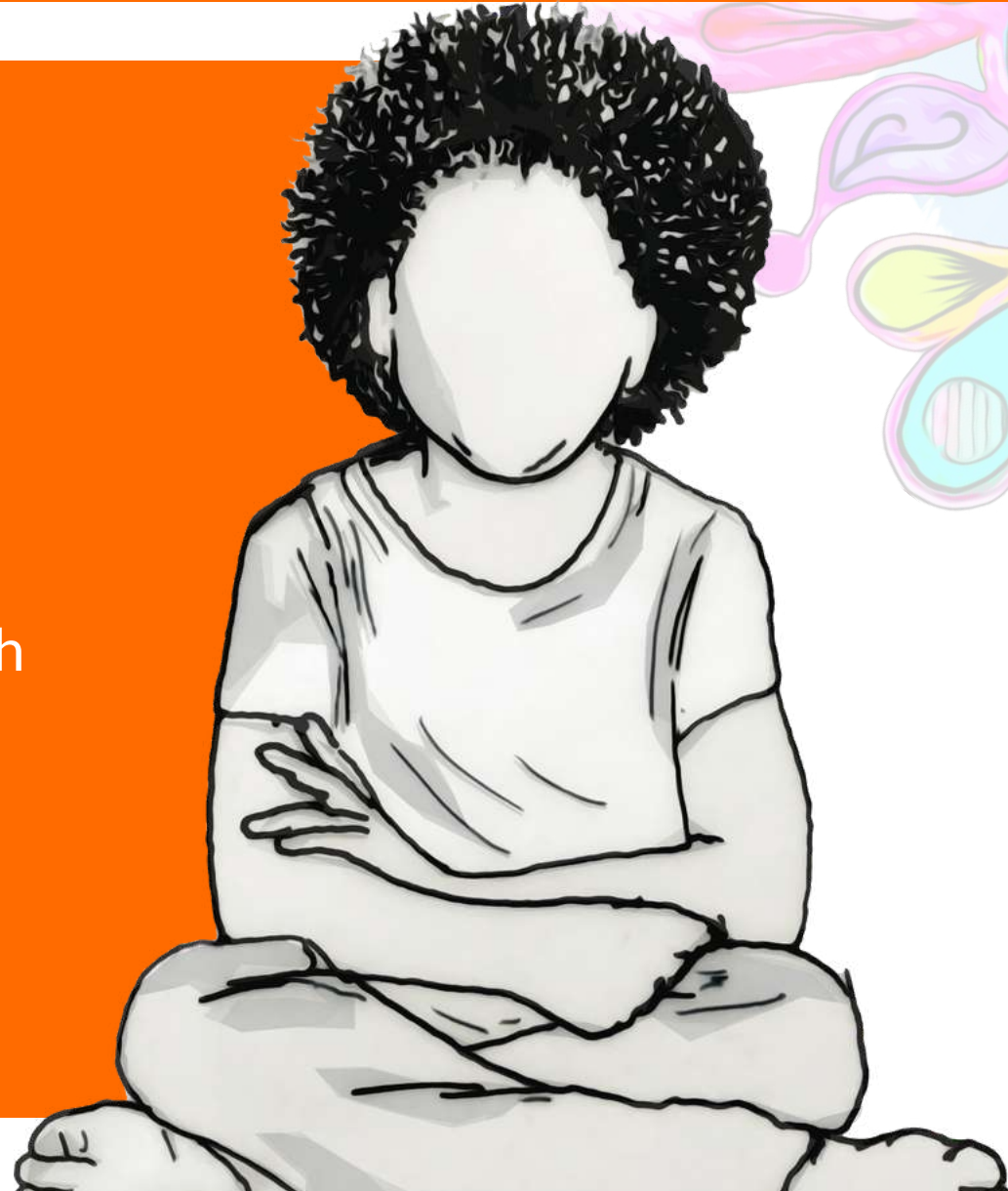


5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A Strategy (Avoidant)

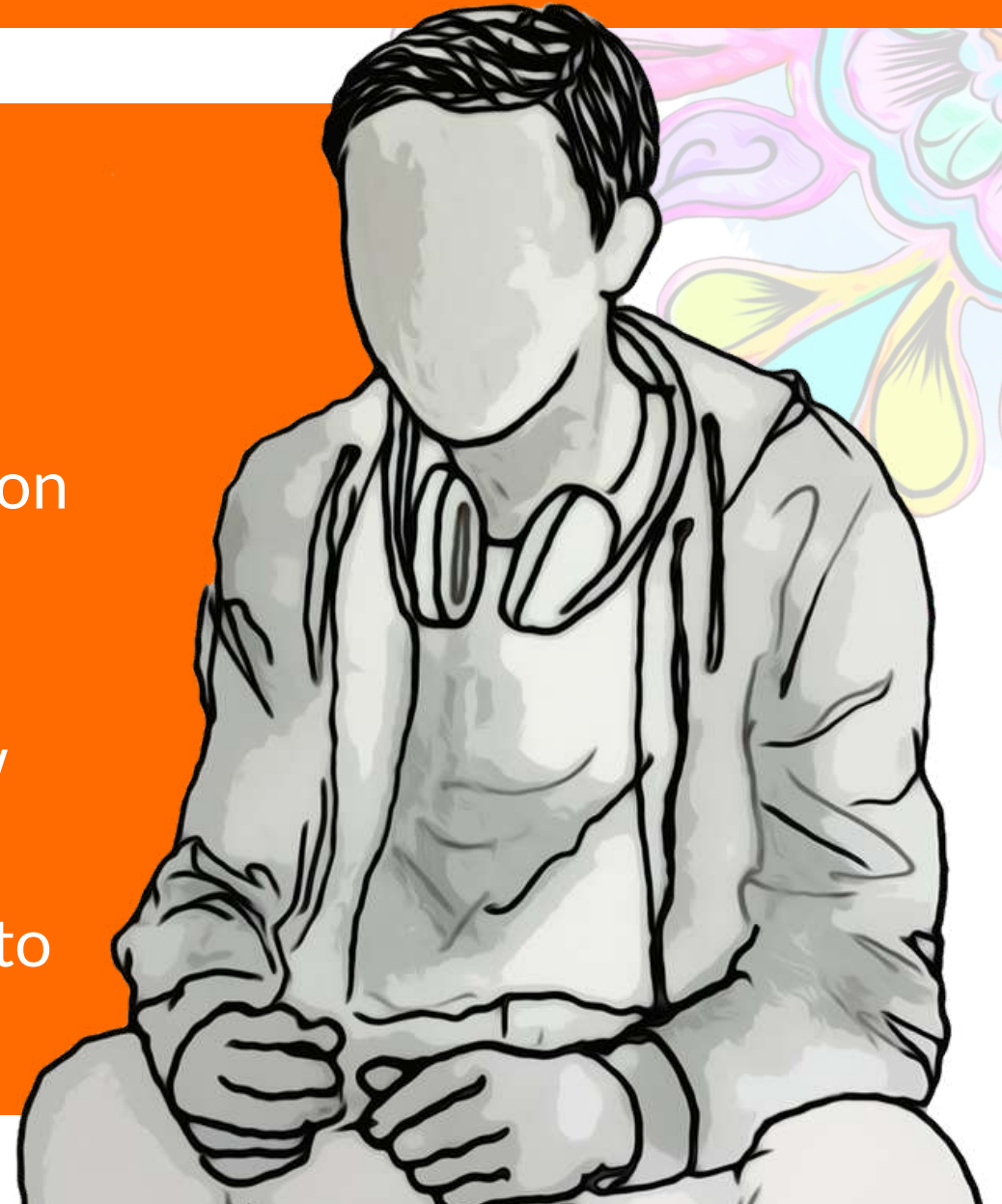
Young childhood:

- Extreme self-reliance
- Aloof
- Isolated
- Emotionally alienated
- Rule driven and inflexible
- Dependence on others for their self worth
- Exceptionally compliant
- Compulsive caregiving
- Poor mentalizing capacity
- Remain under the radar
- Explosions of rage from no-where



Adolescence:

- Avoid intimacy and connection
- Minimise problems
- Lack emotion but over sensitive to rejection and criticism
- Emotionally withdrawn
- Vulnerable to anxiety, depression and low self esteem
- Health symptoms - emotions displaced into the body



Caregiver qualities:

- Unpredictable
- Inconsistently attuned
- Chronically over or under involved



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



They cannot **predict** the parental response so instead become **preoccupied** with their own feelings of agitation, anxiety and fear. This becomes the **focus** of their needs.

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



If I exaggerate my emotions my parent is more likely to notice me

I'm going to make my feelings so big and when I have her attention I am not going to let her go

Once I have her, I'm going to hang onto her as long as possible

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



On the outside:

Rageful

Angry

Aggressive

Harming others

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



On the inside:

Fear

Shame

Terror

Feelings of
vulnerability

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



Child has exaggerated
emotions of hostility



Adult responds to the emotion



Child expresses vulnerability



Adult is disarmed and moves
into 'rescuing' the child

5. Attachment

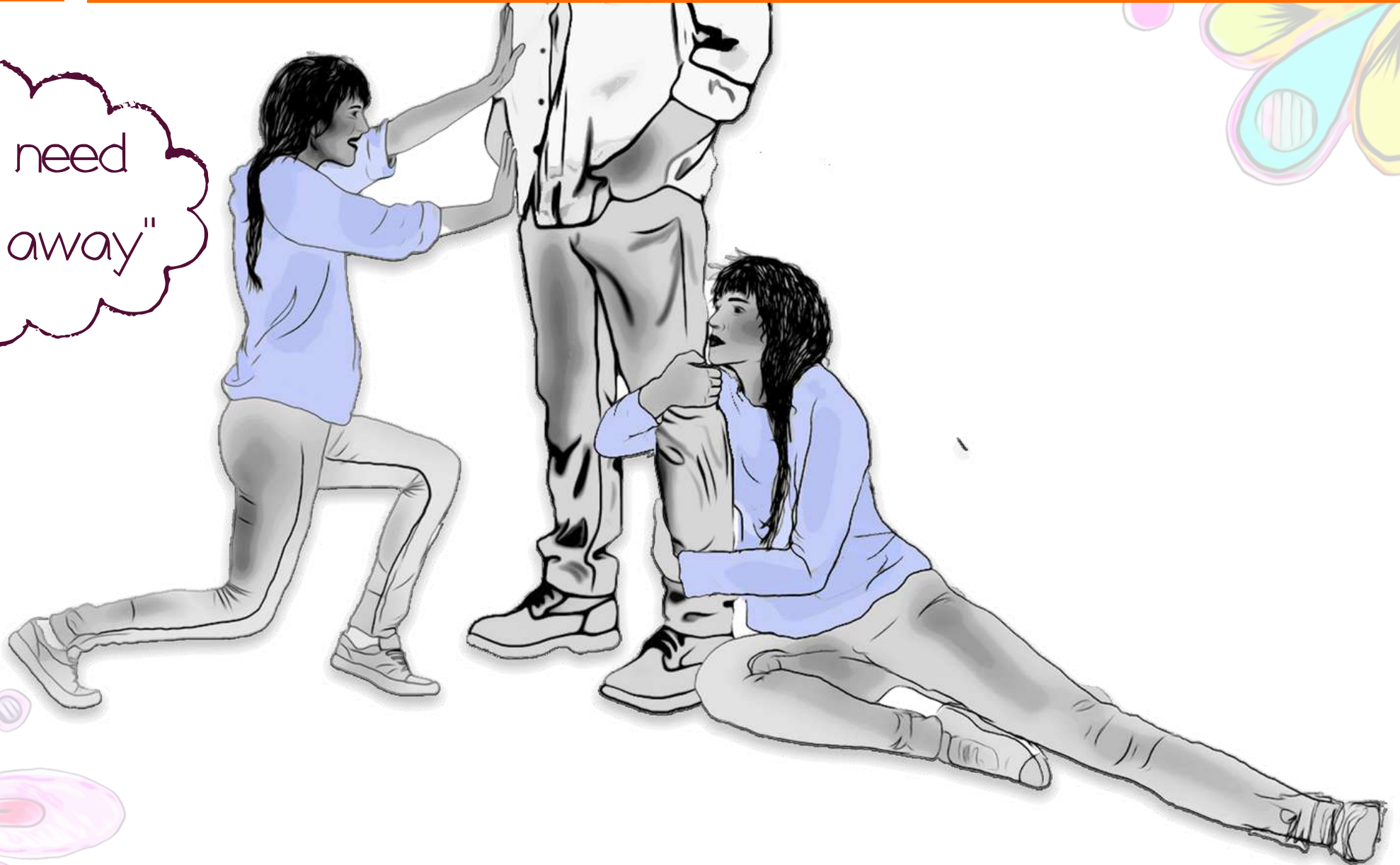
Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



5. Attachment

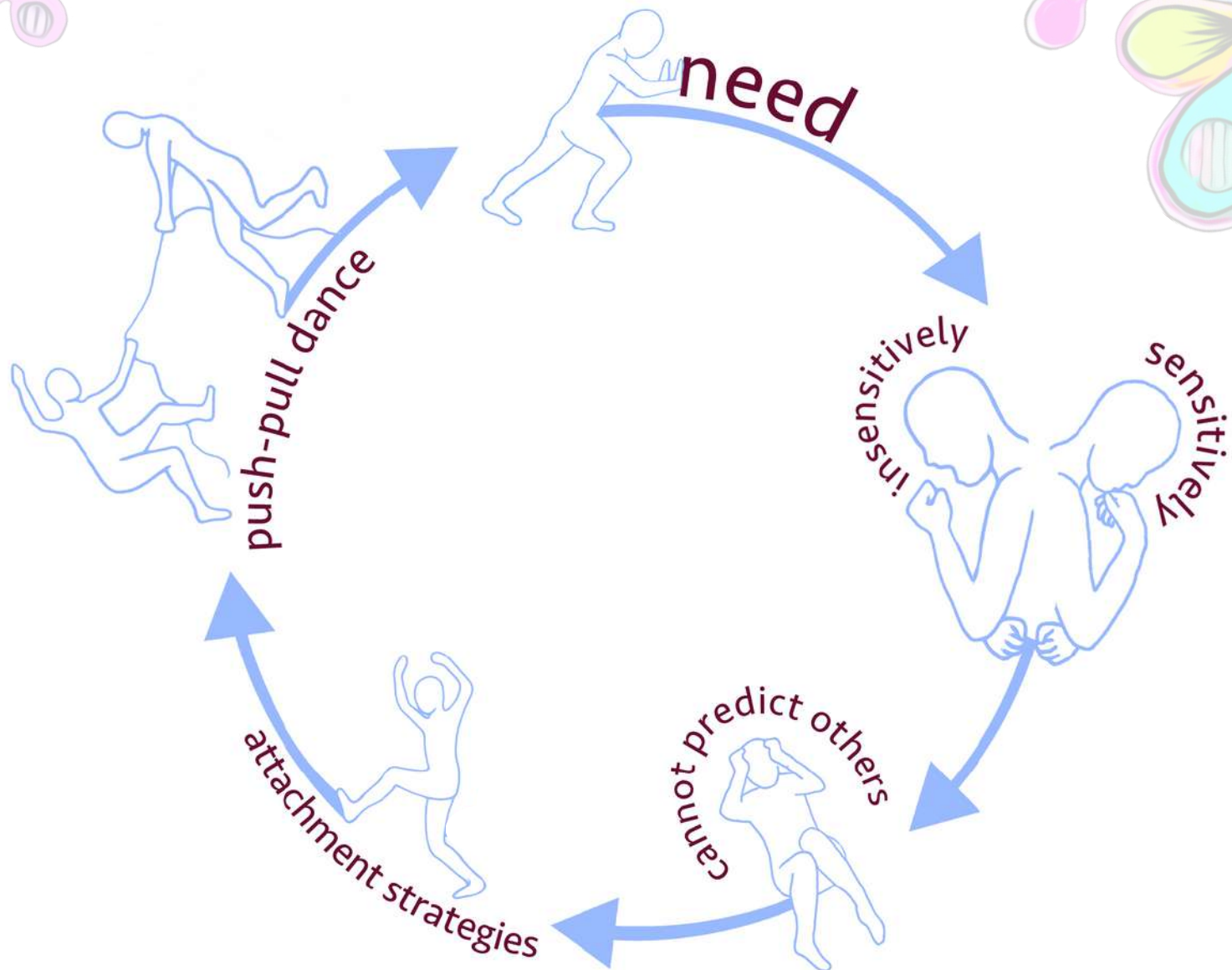
Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)

"I don't need you, go away"



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: C Strategy (Coercive Preoccupied)



Young childhood:

- Attention seeking
- Controlling
- Coercive
- Jealous
- Dramatic, exaggerated reactions



Adolescence:

- Labelled 'Drama Queen'
- Jump from crisis to crisis
- Volatile turbulent relationships
- Romantic relationships are on and off again
- Depression, anxiety
- Chronic low self esteem
- Emotions are problems and unmanageable
- Over dependance on others
- Caught in a trap: behaviours push others away - they feel dependant on others.
- Highly vulnerable to being influenced by peer groups
- Leave adults feeling exhausted, helpless, hopeless and deskilled



5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: The Ultimate Goal



How to **reduce danger** and how to **influence the proximity** of important adults so they are neither **too close nor too far** away

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A shift in your language

What we say...

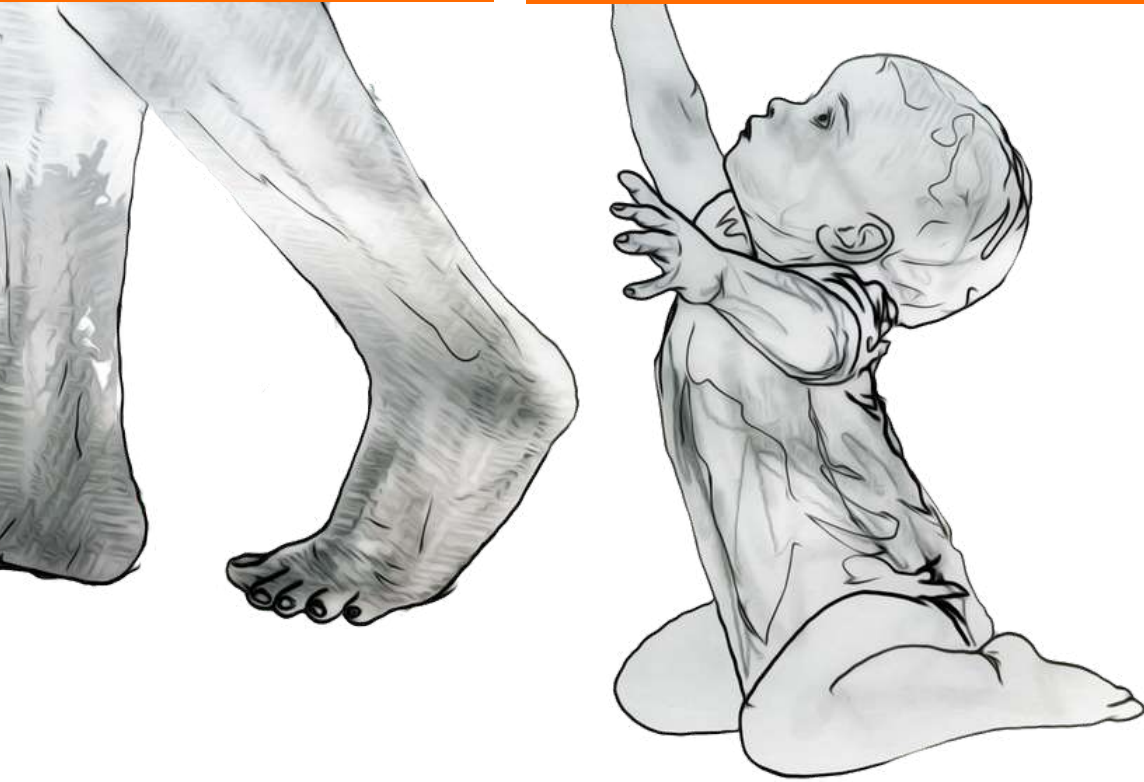
“Attention Seeking”

What’s really going on...

“Attachment Seeking”

5. Attachment

Attachment Strategies: A shift in your thinking



Ask yourself: What is the **function** of this behaviour for **this child's attachment relationships?**



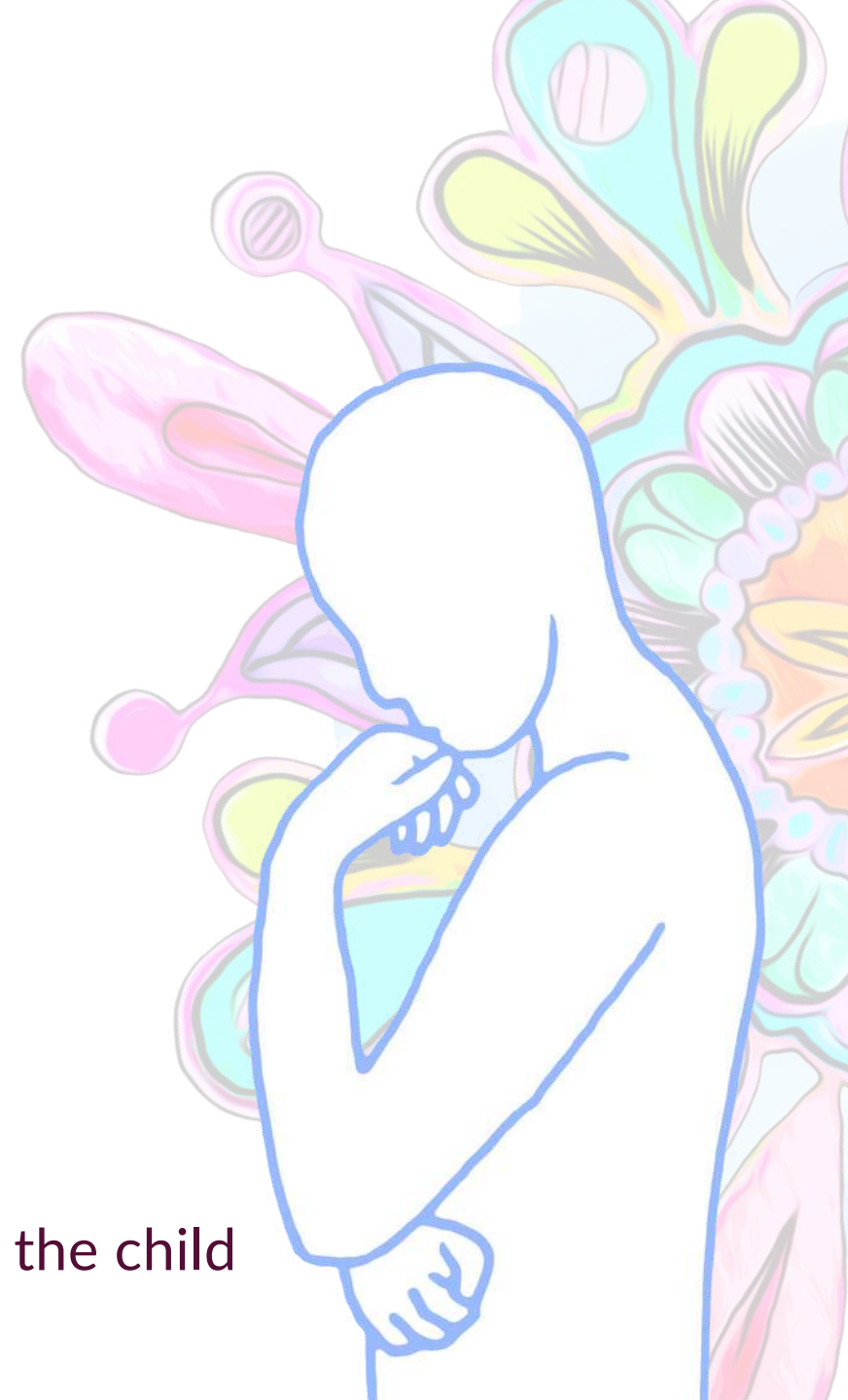
General Implications For Practice

The importance of recognising behaviour problems might be an outward manifestation of an attachment strategy which has a purpose and a function that need be understood by all the adults around the child

Respond to attachment behaviours with co-regulatory responses rather than consequences or punitive responses

Importance of remembering that danger is the problem and attachment is the solution, ongoing threat or danger needs to be addressed as a first intervention

Creating safety and predictability in the environment around the child



6. Cognitive Functioning

Primarily experiences deprivation (omission)

Primarily experiences overt threat and danger (commission)

6. Cognitive Functioning

Primarily experiences deprivation (omission)

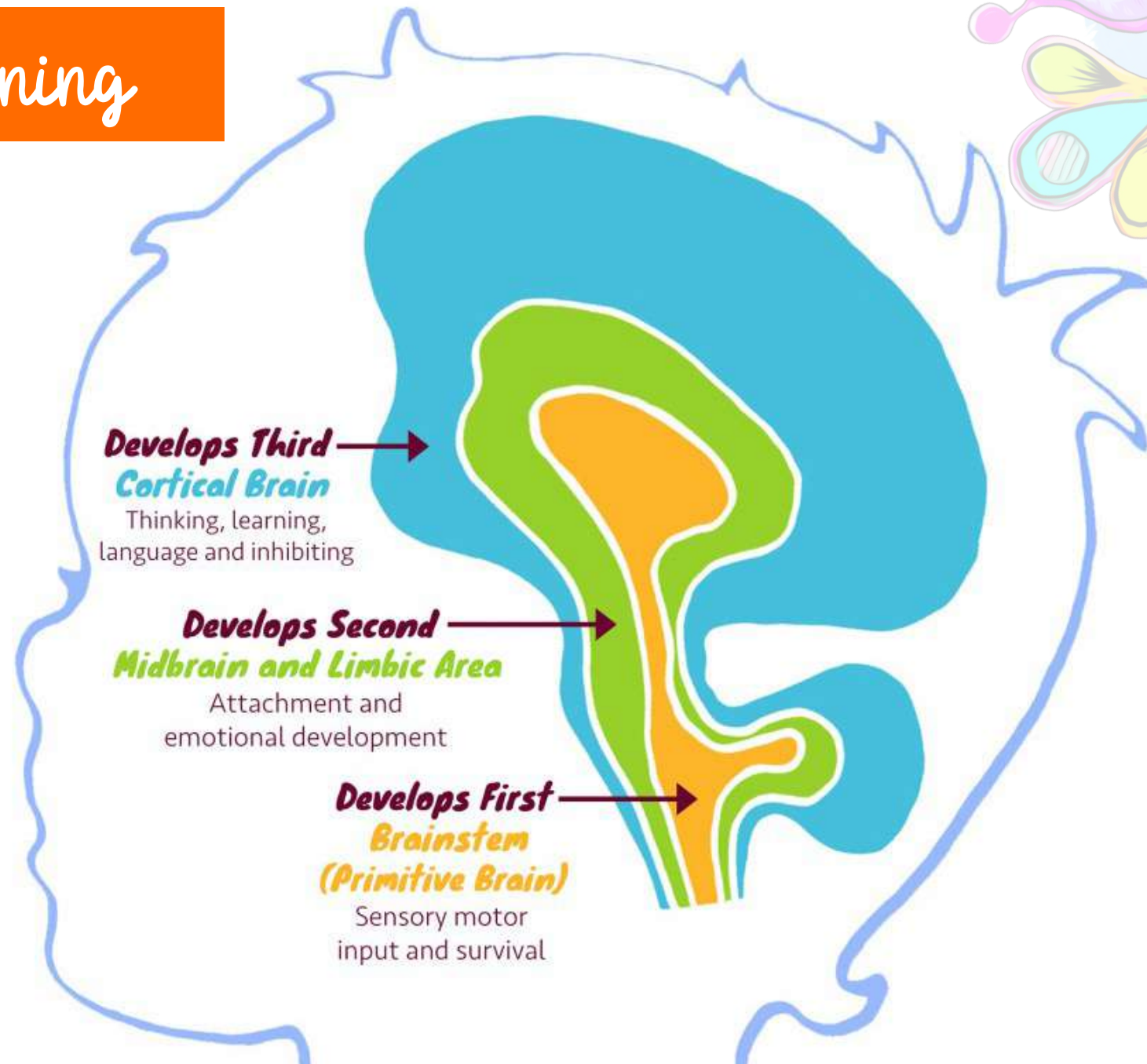
Global developmental delay

Primarily experiences overt threat and danger (commission)

Disintegration of cognitive skills

Different interventions are needed for each

6. Cognitive Functioning



**Develops Third
Cortical Brain**
Thinking, learning,
language and inhibiting

**Develops Second
Midbrain and Limbic Area**
Attachment and
emotional development

**Develops First
Brainstem
(Primitive Brain)**
Sensory motor
input and survival

6. Cognitive Functioning

Working Memory

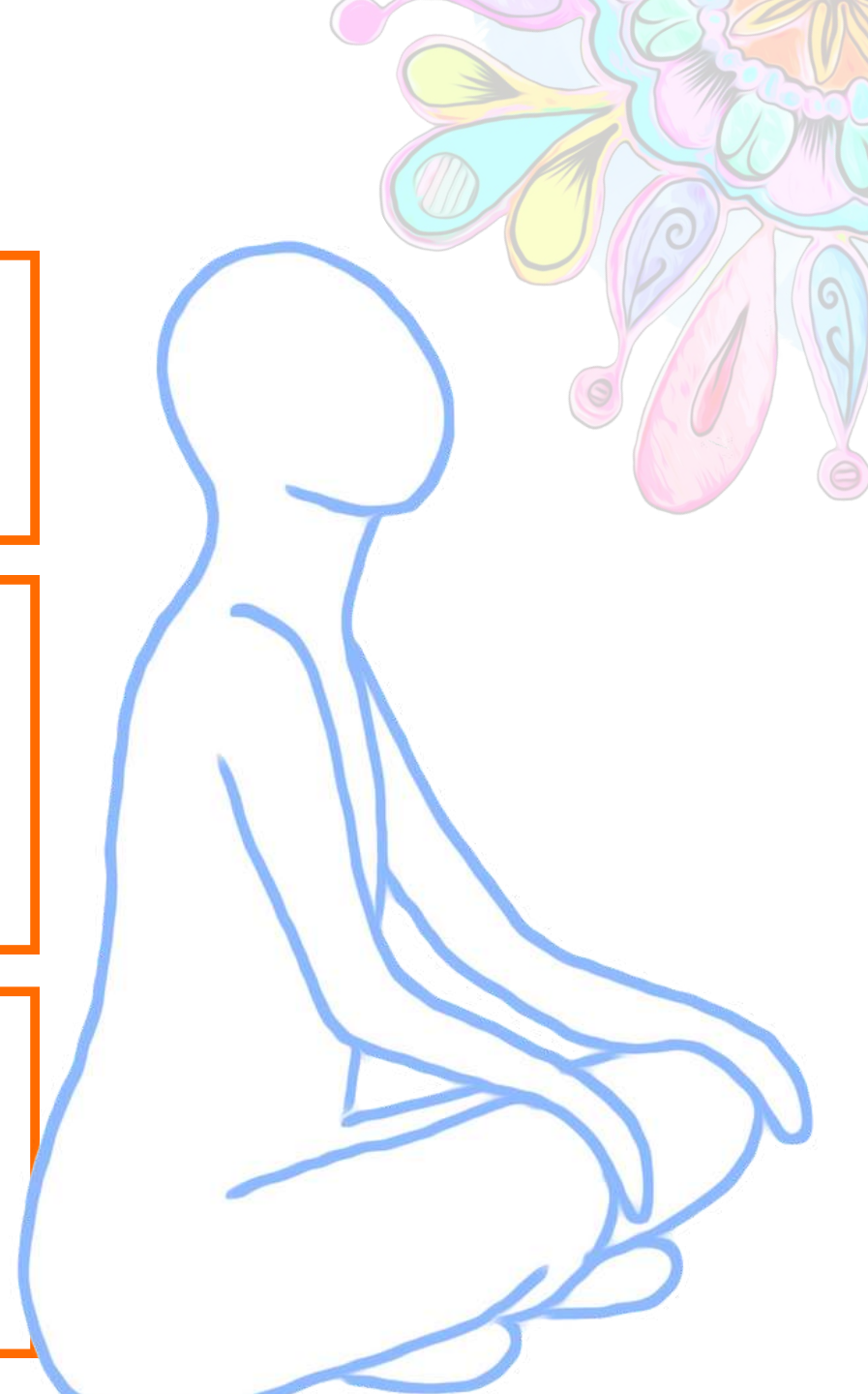
- Paying Attention
- Concentrating
- Remember and recall

Cognitive Flexibility

- Organise themselves
- Plan ahead
- Starting and stopping
- Perspective taking

Inhibitory Control

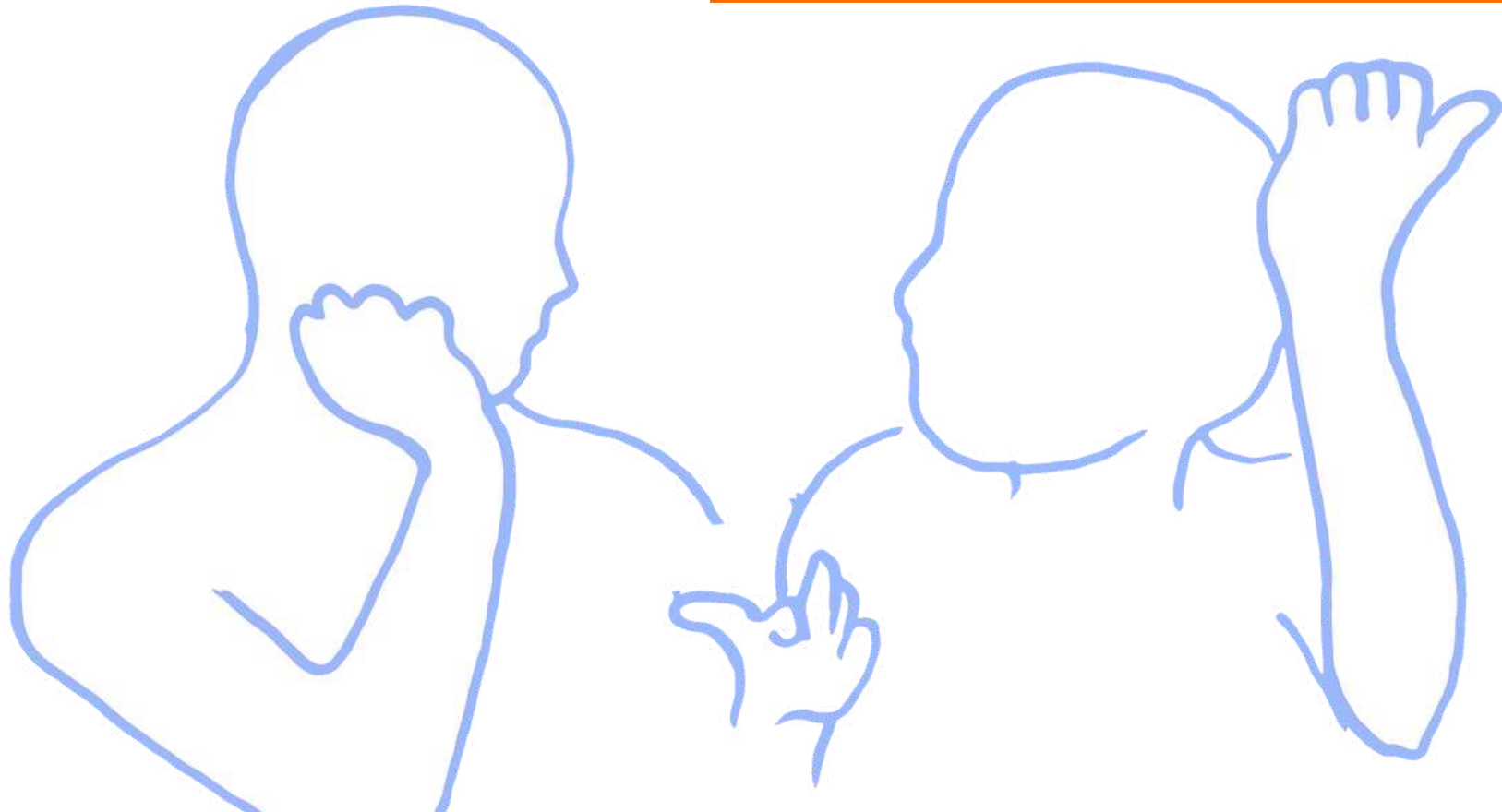
- Regulate emotions
- Inhibit emotional and behavioural impulses and urges
- Self monitoring



6. Cognitive Functioning

Language

- Language development
- Child is unable to access language when stuck in the brainstem



6. Cognitive Functioning



Dr Nadine Burke Harris

The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity, 2018

6. Cognitive Functioning

- **Excel** academically
- **Highly driven**
- **Focussed** on academic competency
- **Bright and able** to learn

Believe that praise, acceptance and love is **dependant** on being academically competent

A way of avoiding emotional intimacy and literacy

- Struggle to articulate emotions
- Make decisions that are good for them

A false sense of security

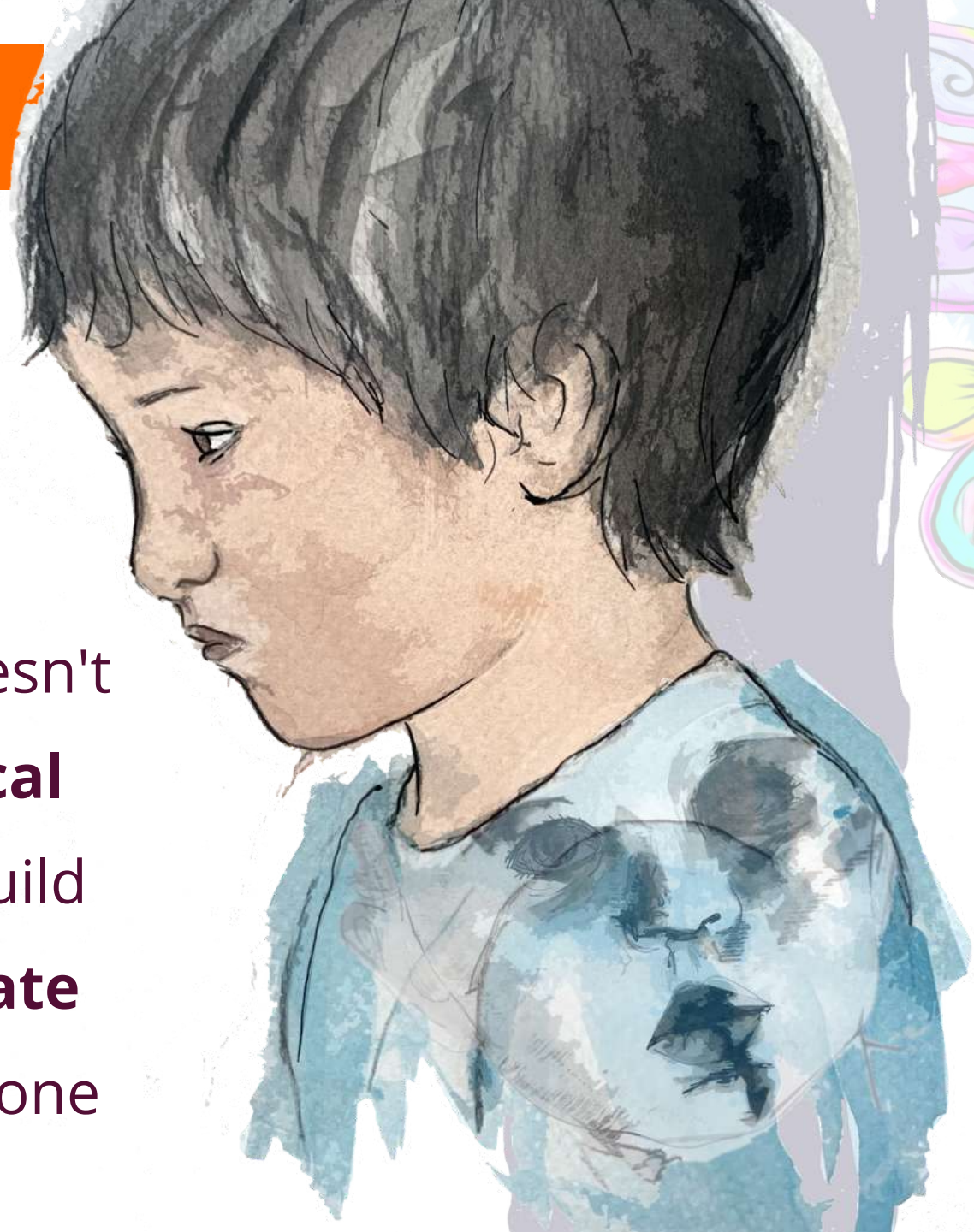


Children with
Developmental
Trauma show a
gap in learning
compared with
their peers **that**
gets greater
over time



Cognitive Functioning

A brain **impacted** by Developmental Trauma doesn't have a **secure neurological foundation** on which to build the skills needed to **navigate** each developmental milestone



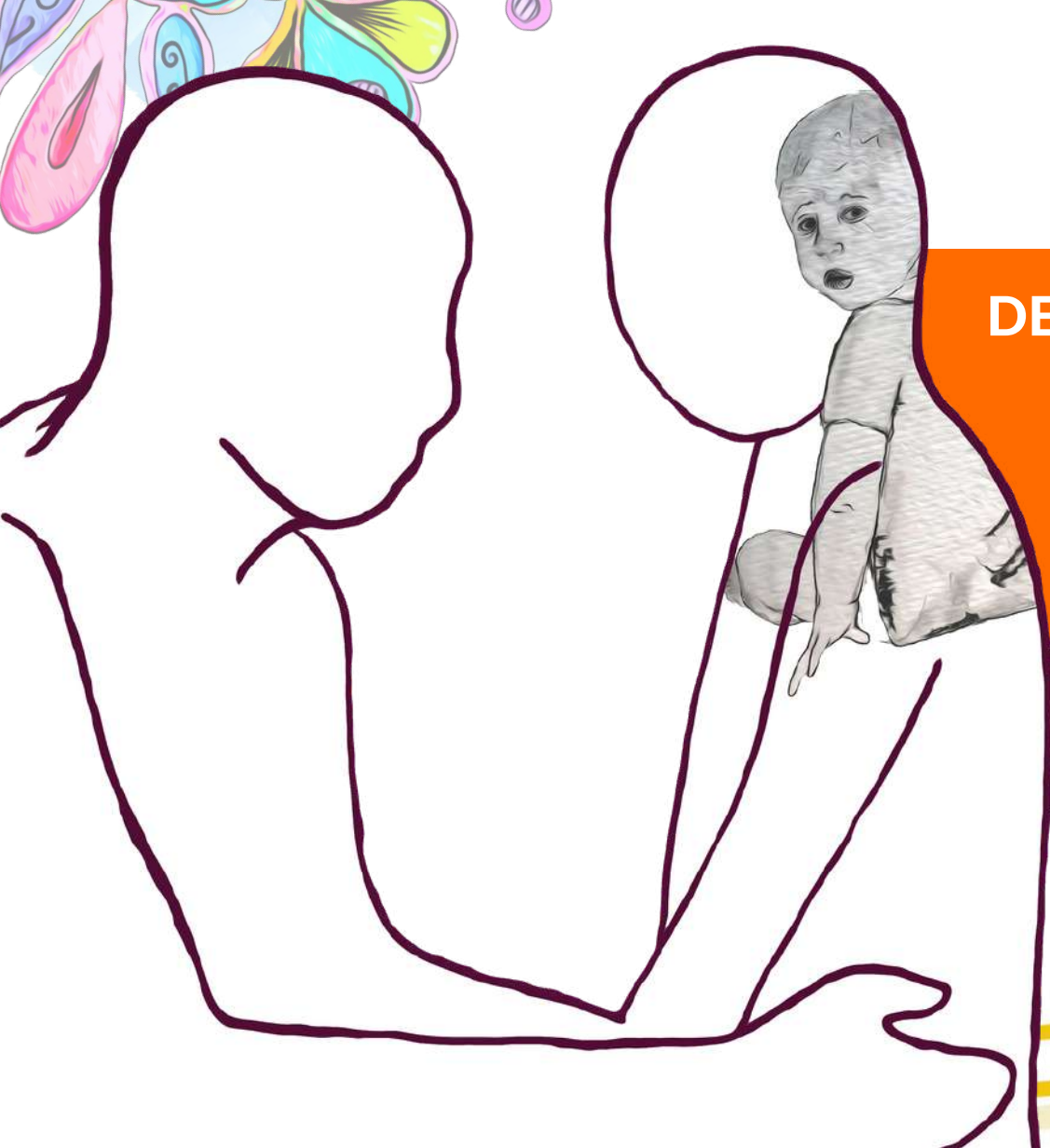
6. Cognitive Functioning

At Home

- **Difficulties** getting out of the house on time
- Struggle to **reflect and learn** from mistakes
- **Ego-centric thinking**: rigid, everything is black and white
- **Meeting** age related independence milestones



6. Cognitive Functioning



DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS

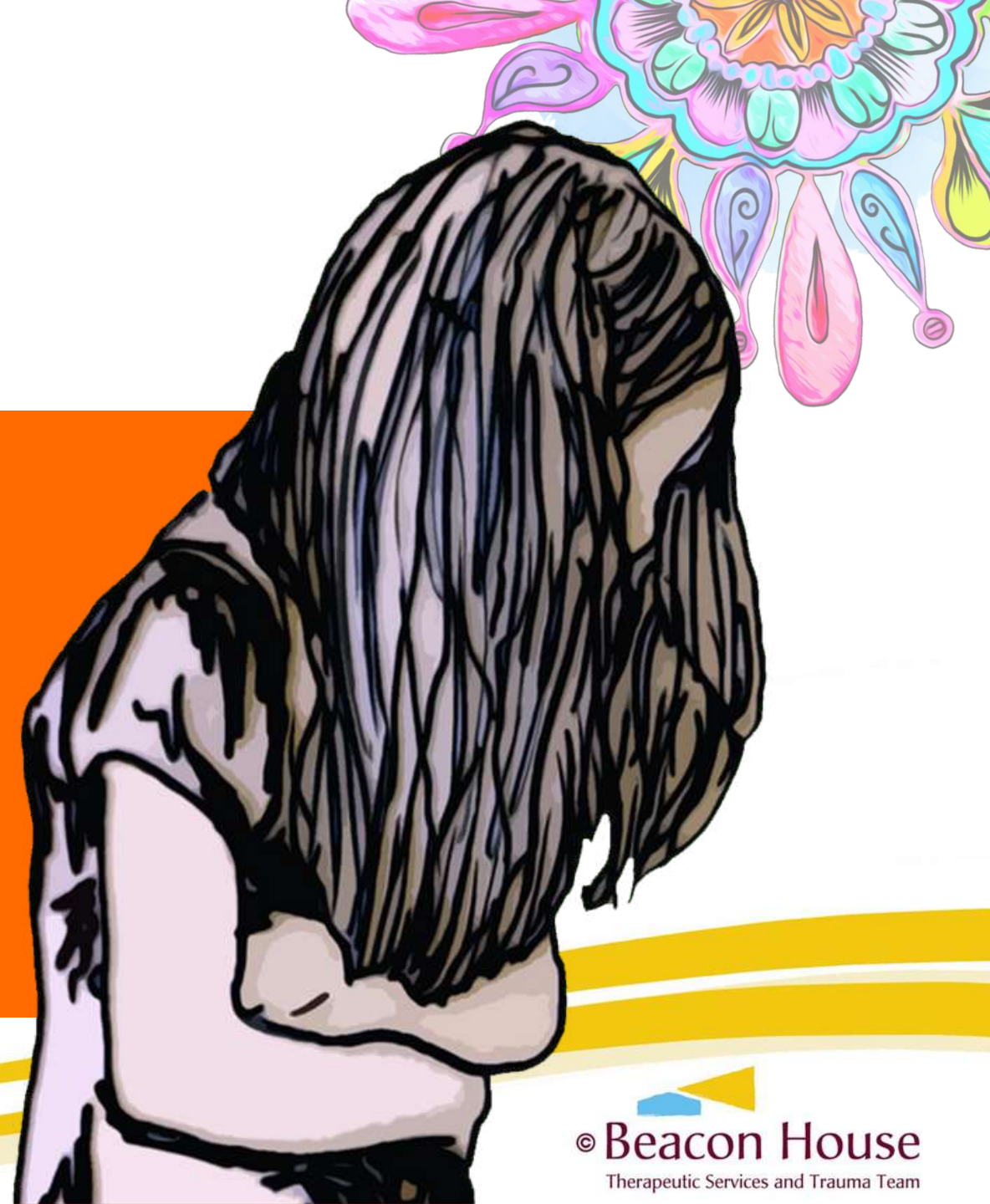
Where are they **functioning** in their development?

What are they able to **achieve** given their **level of functioning**?

6. Cognitive Functioning

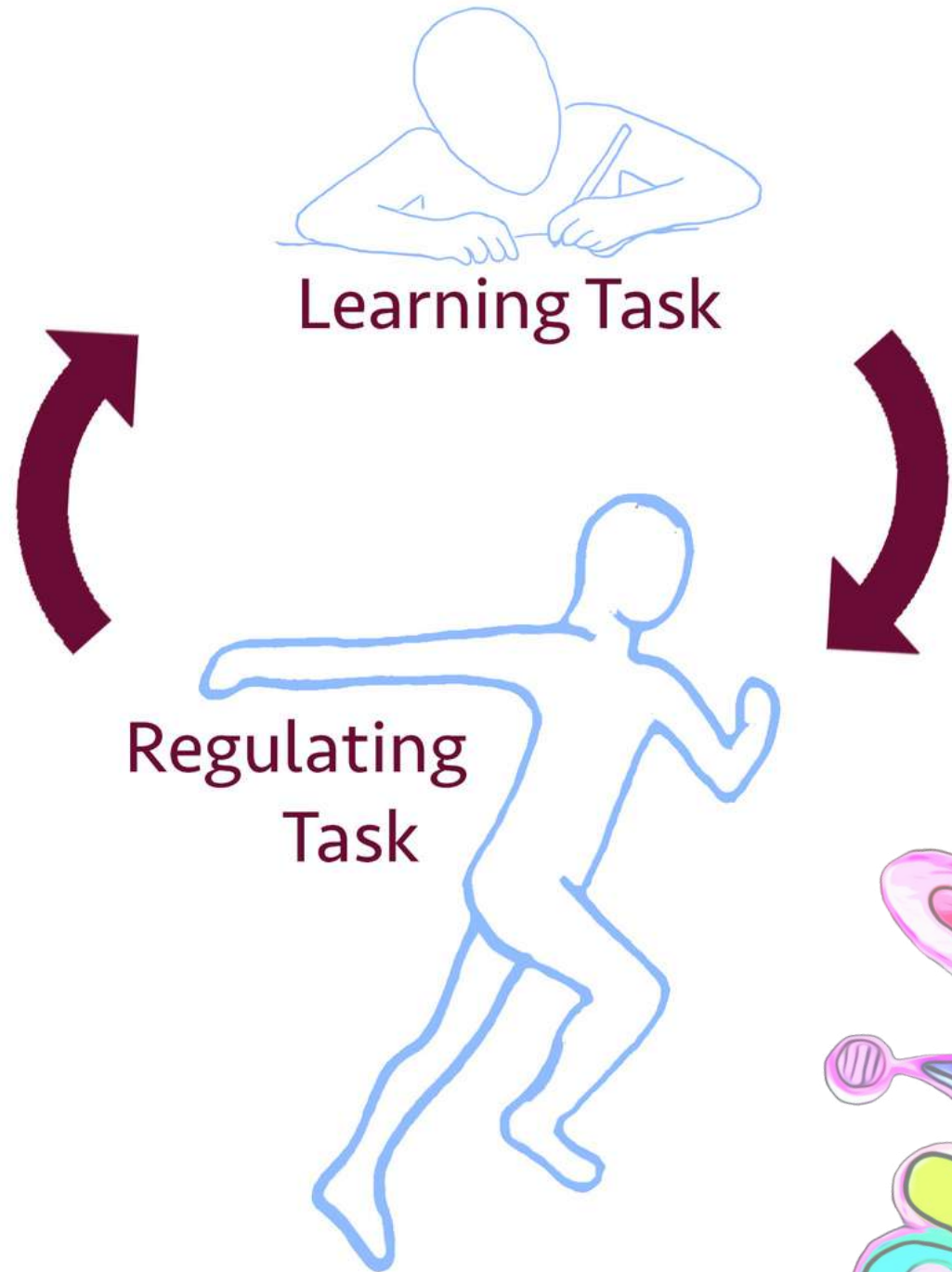
At School

- Struggle to **organise** belongings and work
- **Problem solving** - appear to be less independent than peers
- Difficulties in **starting and switching** from task to task
- Struggle to **recall** information and instructions
- **Inability** to read social cues



6. Cognitive Functioning

The frequency and nature of the regulation break will be dependant on the child's individual needs



6. Cognitive Functioning

Additional Scaffolding

Checklists / Visual Timetables

Create a simple checklist showing the step by step sequence of actions and behaviours

Step by Step

Break down an activity step by step, set time limits and expectations. To support this to be successful interweave learning and regulation breaks

Thinking Brains

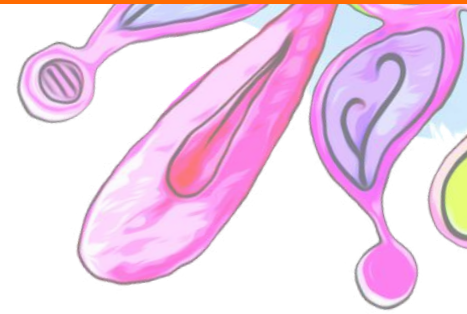
Provide a narrative for their thinking brain; scaffolding the thinking, planning and organising

Supervision

Greater supervision from an attuned adult who scaffolds, structures and outlines next steps

Understanding the Developmental Age

Expectations should be adjusted to match the developmental age as opposed to their chronological age. Children need to develop dependence before they can develop independence



7. Identity & Self Esteem

Early traumatic experiences impact their self esteem:

How they view themselves and how they think others view them



7. Identity & Self Esteem



Early traumatic experiences impact their sense of identity

7. Identity & Self Esteem

Positive Self Esteem

- **Feels** accepted, loveable and likeable
- Has the **capacity** to bounce back after knock-backs
- Able to **steer** through difficulties using their head **AND** their heart (age dependant)
- Able to **tolerate** distress



7. Identity & Self Esteem

Low Self Esteem

- **Avoidant:** Led by the head, cut off from feelings, predict and control the world
- **Coercive:** Led by the heart, driven by overwhelming emotions
- Hold **core belief** that they are bad, damaged, incompetent, unloveable and unlikeable
- **Limited capacity** to bounce back from challenges
- **Interpret** neutral or positive experiences in a negative way



7. Identity & Self Esteem

Behaviours

- Difficulties in **asserting** what they think, feel and need
- Hard to try **new and difficult** things
- Challenging to **reflect** and **make changes** after mistakes
- Quick to enter a **distressed** state: shame, blame and guilt
- Difficulty in carrying out **self care, compassion & kindness**



7. Identity & Self Esteem

Identity & Loss

Fragmented sense of self:
Struggle to know who they are, how they are, what they want and what they think

Scaffold these questions and **normalise** the experience of not knowing the answers



What food do you like?

What do you want to do when you're older?

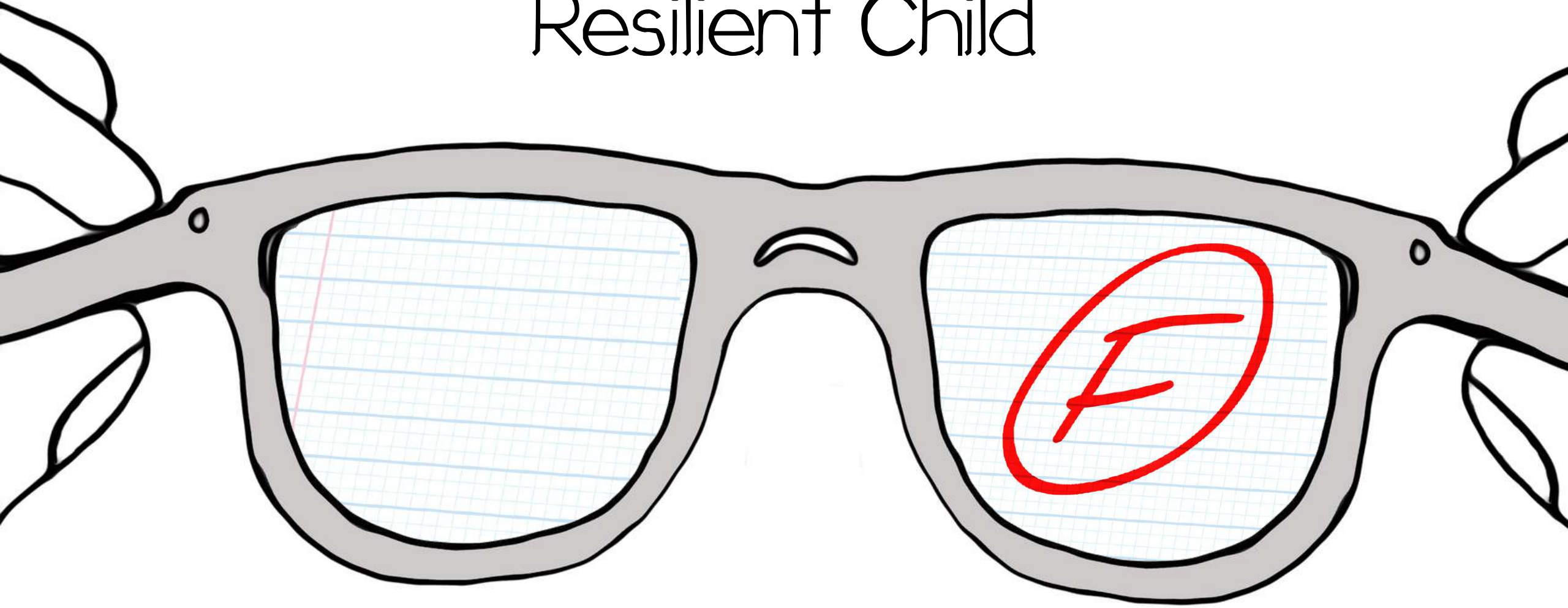
What's your favourite film?

What do you enjoy doing?

Who do you like hanging out with?

What's your favourite animal?

Resilient Child



Bounce back and keep doing the best they can

Resilient Child



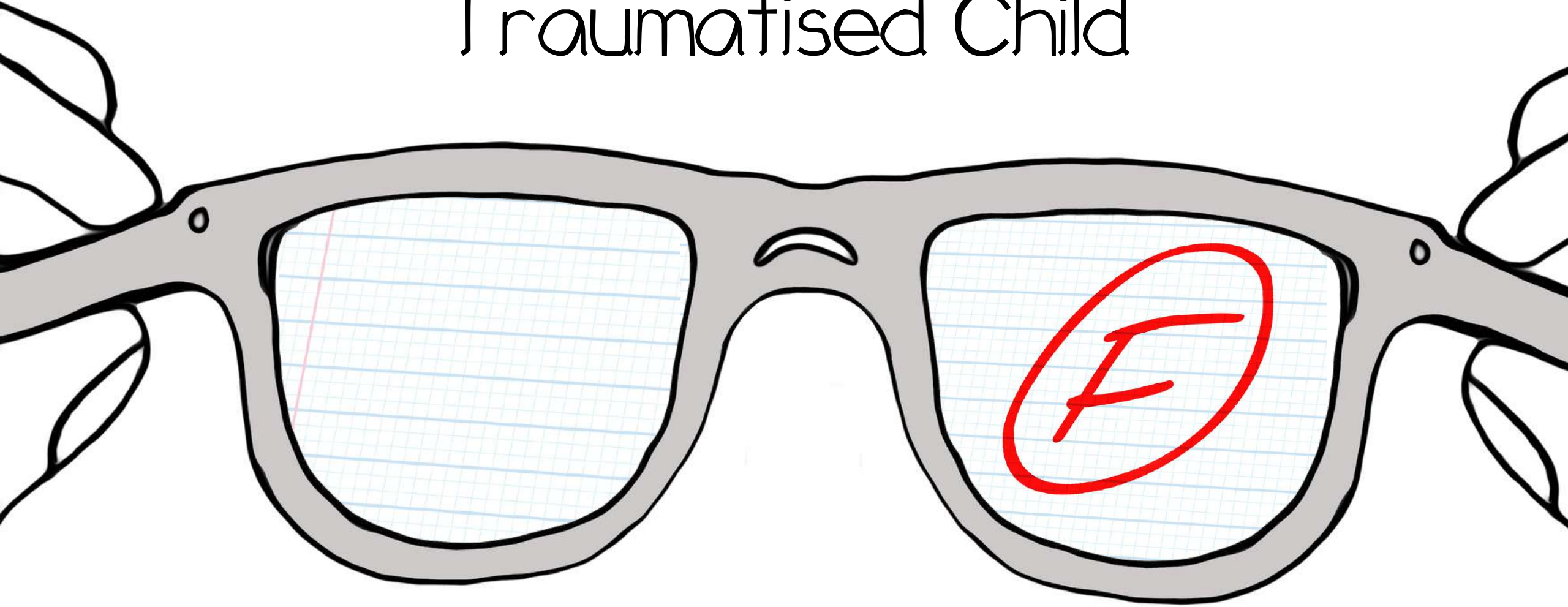
Open to the love and offer love back

Traumatised Child



Highly threatening & dysregulating

Traumatised Child



Unlovable, unlikeable and a failure

Traumatised Child



Unable to receive and return the love

