



HARUV USA
at OU - Tulsa



Northwestern
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Exploring the Intersection between Infant Mental Health and Child Maltreatment

APRIL 22, 2024; 1:00-4:00PM

WOODWARD CONVENTION CENTER

PRESENTER: ASHLEIGH KRAFT, LPC-S, IECMH-E®



When you think of the phrase
“Infant Mental Health”, what
comes to mind?



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Definition of Infant Mental Health

The developing capacity of the infant and toddler to ...

- ▶ Form close and secure relationships.
- ▶ Experience, regulate, and express a full range of emotions.
- ▶ Explore the environment and learn.

...all in the context of the family, community, and cultural expectations for young children.

(Zero to Three)





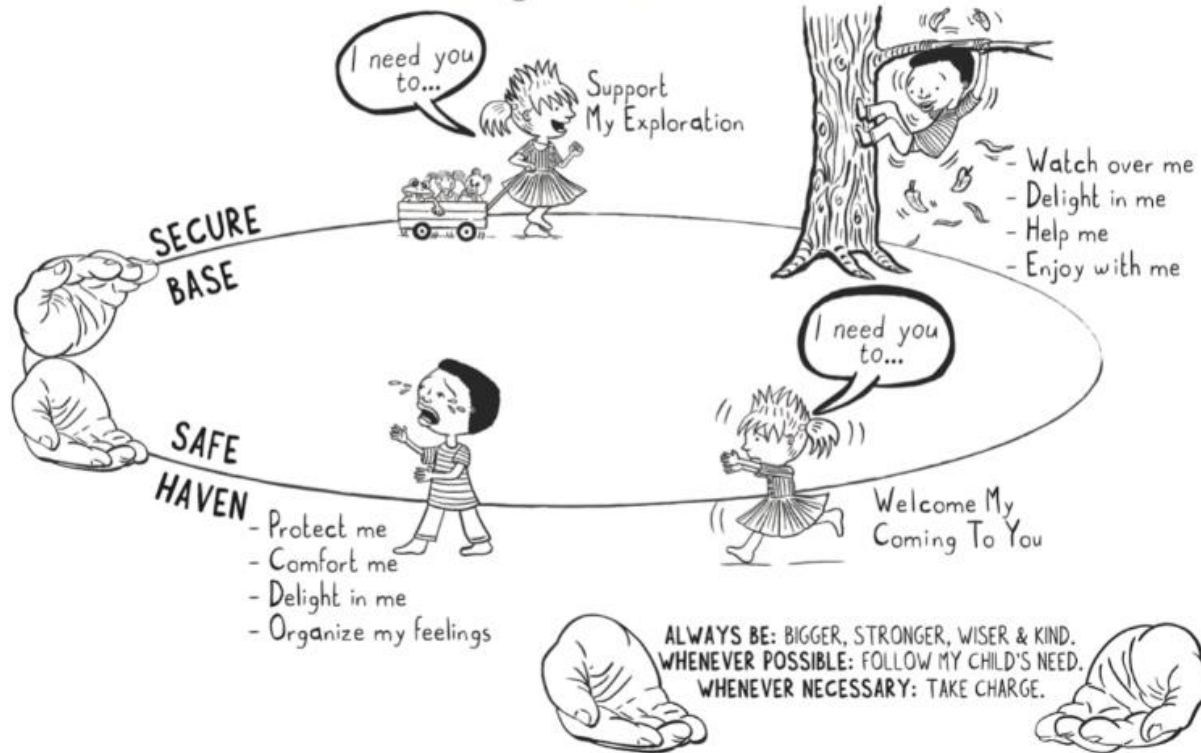
Experiences
Build Brain
Architecture



Serve &
Return
Interaction
Shapes Brain
Circuitry

Circle of Security[®]

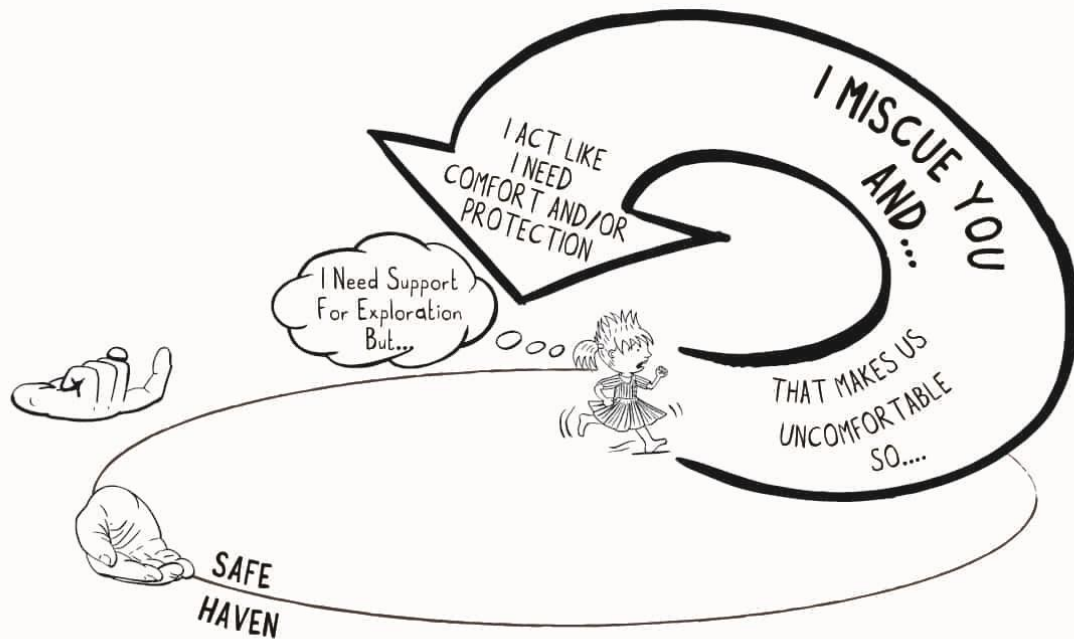
Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



Secure Attachment

Insecure Attachment

Anxious/Ambivalent



Circle of Limited Security®

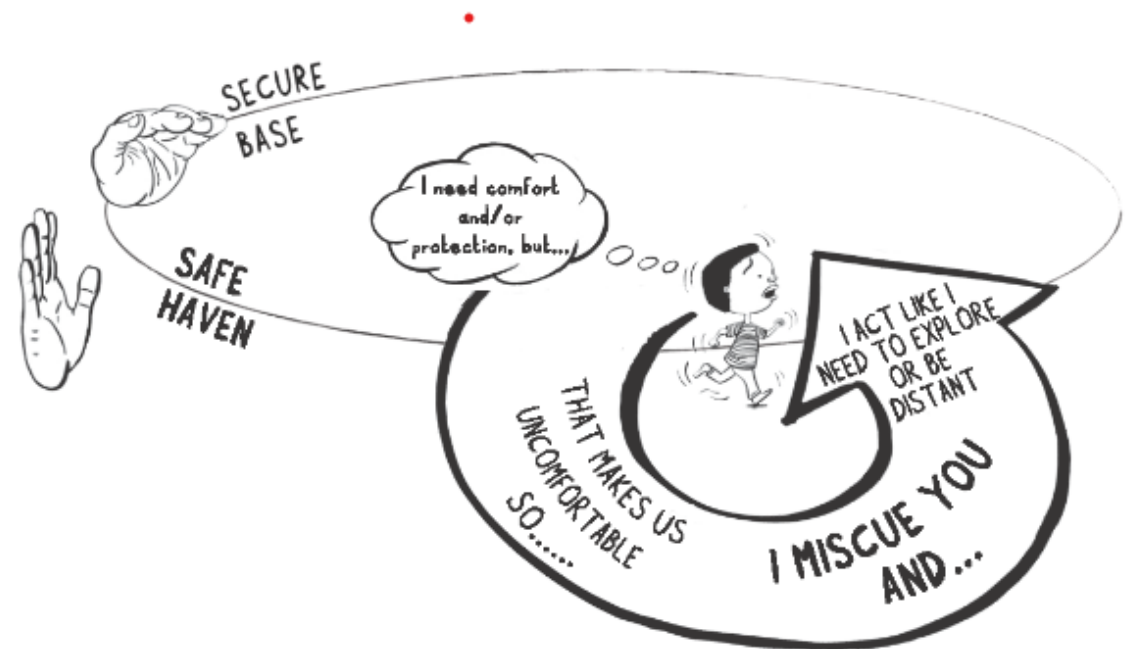
Child Miscuing: Responding To Parent's Needs

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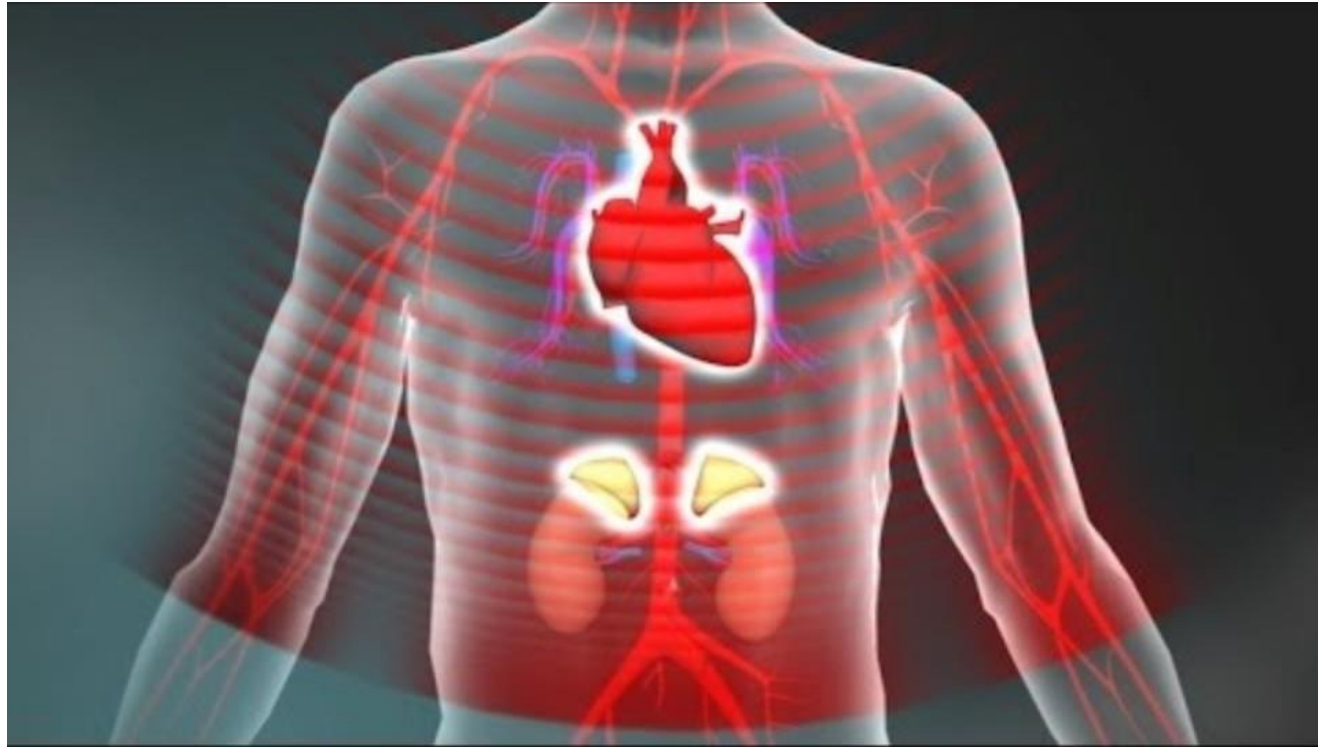
Avoidant

Circle of Limited Security II

Child Responding To Parent's Needs



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Toxic Stress
Derails Healthy
Development



Child Maltreatment

The Science of Neglect



Disorganized Attachment

- ▶ Unpredictable pattern of responses from the caregiver
- ▶ Scary or harmful, absent, clingy, needing the child to meet the parent's needs
- ▶ The child can't dependably use the caregiver for secure base or safe haven
- ▶ Feels unpredictable and out of the child's control



Oklahoma Children (2022)

- ▶ 15,839 children the subject of a child welfare investigation and 13,921 substantiated cases of abuse
- ▶ In Woodward County, 390 reports and 161 investigations (43%)
 - ▶ 53 children determined to have been abused/neglected
- ▶ Abuse is reported in 3 categories-Sexual Abuse, Abuse, Neglect
 - ▶ Which type of abuse do you think is most common?
 - ▶ What percentage of child abuse cases in Oklahoma are due to neglect?
- ▶ Age of children
 - ▶ What percentage of children abused in Oklahoma were under the age of 7?

Break

Kyan

- ▶ Four police officers serve a warrant at a home in the early evening
- ▶ When they make entry to the home, they discover 5 adults in the home, drugs and weapons
- ▶ Officers secure the house, call additional officers and a supervisor to the scene
- ▶ The supervisor arrives and observes officers walking around the home. Some are interviewing people and some are collecting evidence.
- ▶ In the middle of the living room is an infant strapped into a car seat, crying.
- ▶ The supervisor extricates the child from the carseat and holds him and works to sooth him. Another officer walks by and says "thank goodness he is so young, he won't remember this"



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Table Discussion

What does typical development look like for a 10 month old?

Think about Kyan's senses-what has he just experienced through his sensory system (sight, sound, visual, tactile, smell)?

Childhood Traumatic Stress

When violent or dangerous events overwhelm a child's ability to cope

Generate a list of the coping skills a 10 month old child might use.
How might that be different from the things a 5 year old would do to cope?

Regulation Break



How does trauma impact young children?

- ▶ Developmental delays or regression common
- ▶ Repetitive play about the event
- ▶ Nightmares
- ▶ Sleep disturbance
- ▶ Avoiding things that remind them of the event
- ▶ Impacts their sense of whether or not the world is a safe place
- ▶ Helps shape working models of relationships



Kyan

- ▶ How might Kyan's world change as a result of what just happened in his home?
 - ▶ People
 - ▶ Routines
 - ▶ Objects
 - ▶ Sensory Experiences





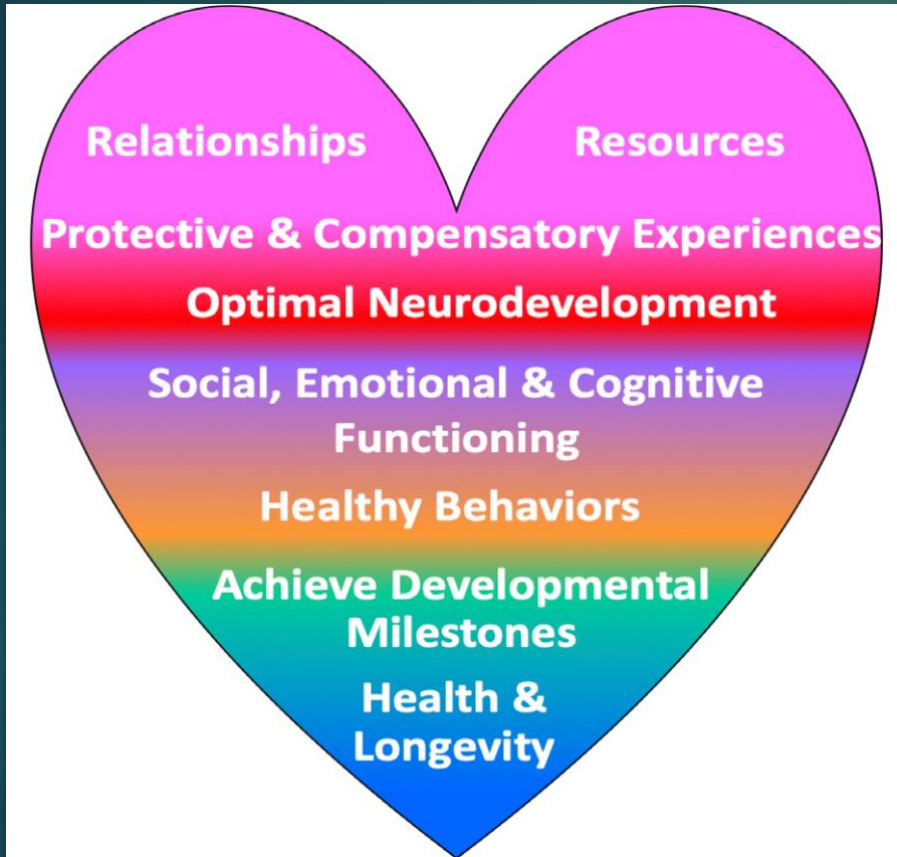
What will he
remember?

What is he
learning?

Minimizing Distress for Young Children in Care

- ▶ Responsive, attuned caregiving (secure base and safe haven)
- ▶ Early intervention-for delays, relationship struggles
- ▶ Fewer placements
- ▶ Adults help keep track of their story
- ▶ Maintaining connection to loved ones, pets, other caregivers (childcare, extended family, neighbors, etc)
- ▶ Similar language, culture
- ▶ Frequent opportunity to spend time with parent
- ▶ Minimizing conflict between caregivers
- ▶ Temporary caregiver willing to be psychological parent-not a place holder/holding pattern

PACE's-Protective and Compensatory Experiences



- ▶ Parent/caregiver unconditional love
- ▶ Spending time with a best friend
- ▶ Volunteering or helping others
- ▶ Being active in a social group
- ▶ Having a mentor outside the family
- ▶ Living in a clean, safe home with enough food
- ▶ Having opportunities to learn
- ▶ Having a hobby
- ▶ Being active of playing sports
- ▶ Having routines and fair rules at home



Healing



What is the youngest age a child can be referred for therapy?

Treat the Relationship

- ▶ The younger the child, the more important it is to work with the child and caregiver(s) together
- ▶ Each primary caregiving relationship
- ▶ For relationships where there has been maltreatment
 - ▶ Child needs acknowledgement of what happened, an apology and assurance backed up by action that they will be protected in future
 - ▶ Do not wait until other services have been completed-refer early
 - ▶ Both foster parents/guardians and bio parents should participate (separately)



Models/Services

Therapeutic Models

- ▶ Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- ▶ Attachment and Biobehavioral Catchup (ABC)
- ▶ Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- ▶ Preschool TF-CBT

Other Helpful Services

Home Based Prevention/Intervention

- ▶ SafeCare
- ▶ Parents As Teachers

Group for Parents

- ▶ Circle of Security

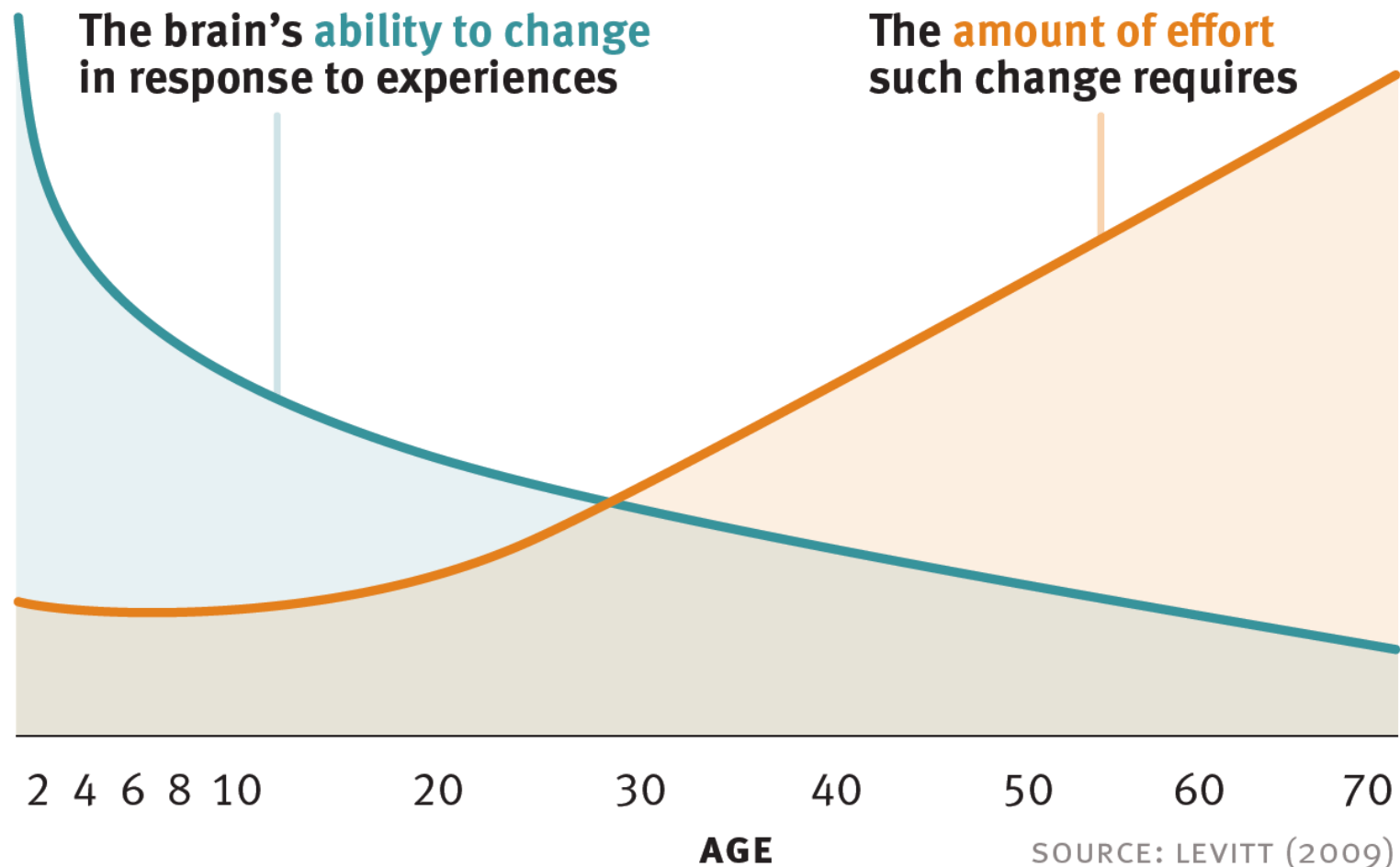
Medical Therapy to Address Development

- ▶ Occupational Therapy
- ▶ Speech Therapy
- ▶ Physical Therapy



Importance of Time Together

- ▶ Frequent contact essential for young children to remain connected
- ▶ Involve parents in doctor's visits as well as speech, PT, OT
- ▶ Be cautious about using the loss of parenting time as a consequence
- ▶ Parenting time-be intentional
 - ▶ Who is supervising and what is their role
 - ▶ Support parents in planning this time thoughtfully



All Behavior Has Meaning

- ▶ Co-regulation vs. self-regulation
- ▶ Behaviors are expressions of unmet needs
- ▶ Preverbal children can't tell us with words
- ▶ Don't seek to change that which you don't yet understand.



Kyan

- ▶ After the night the police came to his home, Kyan went to live with his paternal aunt, because both of his parents were taken to jail and a DHS report was made.
- ▶ DHS Child Welfare investigated and found Kyan to have been neglected while in the care of his parents.
- ▶ His parents were each given Individualized Service Plans to complete in order to be reunified with Kyan
- ▶ Kyan's dad was convicted of 2 felonies as a result of the drugs and firearms found in the home. He is taking a parenting class in jail.
- ▶ Kyan's mom is in drug rehab and has been sober for 60 days.

Kyan

- ▶ Has a speech delay and is receiving speech therapy.
- ▶ Was not pulling up to stand, crawling is uncoordinated and he was not able to feed himself at all. He is receiving OT.
- ▶ Transitioned well to his grandmother's house as he was familiar with him and would often stay at her house overnight.
- ▶ Difficulty going to sleep and wakes several times during the night.
- ▶ Cries when he sees his mother and cries when he returns from spending time with her.
- ▶ Recently heard a police radio while at a convenience store and began crying inconsolably.
- ▶ Is starting CPP with his mother and with his grandmother. He is now 13 months old.

Child Parent Psychotherapy

- ▶ Increase/restore hope
- ▶ Empathic Relationship with Family
- ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Physical
 - ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Stabilization
 - ▶ Safety and Consistency in Therapy
 - ▶ Perceived Safety
 - ▶ Within Caregiver-Child Relationships
- ▶ Strengthen Family Relationships
- ▶ Coordinate Care
- ▶ Strengthen Dyadic Affect Regulation Capacities
- ▶ Strengthen Dyadic Body-Based Regulation
- ▶ Support Child's Relationship with Other Caregiver(s)
- ▶ Enhance Understanding of Meaning of Behavior
- ▶ Support Child in Returning to Normal Developmental Trajectory
- ▶ Normalize Traumatic Response
- ▶ Support Dyad in Acknowledging the Impact of Trauma
- ▶ Help Dyad Differentiate Between Then and Now
- ▶ Help Dyad Put the Traumatic Experience in Perspective

Connecting Emotion to Experience

When we connect emotion to experience it protects against repeating the cycle of trauma across generations

Triangle of Explanations

Kyan's Triangle might be something like this:

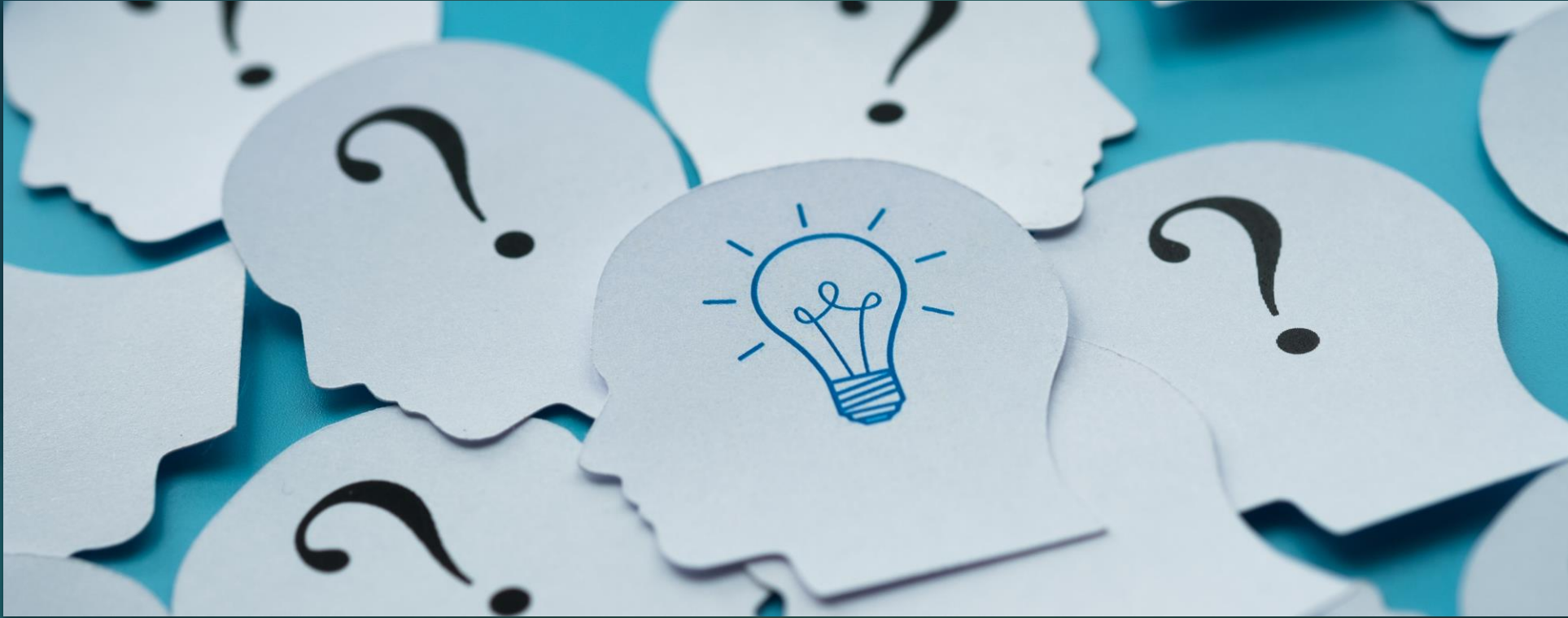
Experience-When you were younger, the police came to your house and it was loud and scary. You were alone in your carseat and mommy and daddy couldn't come get you.

Feelings and Behaviors-Now you miss mommy and daddy and you get scared when things remind you of that scary time. You have a hard time relaxing and feeling safe at night.

Why coming to treatment-You and mommy are coming here so that she can learn how to keep you safe and to comfort you when you are scared and you can talk and play about the things you think and feel in your body.

What is one thing you have learned today that you will share with someone who is not here today?

What is one way today's presentation will change your work?



Questions