

# Psychotrauma and the Trauma of Love

Singapore September 2015

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# A trauma is

„ ... a vital experience of discrepancy between threatening situational factors and the individual's coping capacities, that is associated with emotions of helplessness and the lacking of any protection thus creating a permanent instability of the self concept and the conception of the world.“

(Fischer und Riedesser, 1999, S. 79)



# A life experience becomes not only stressful but traumatic

if we face a mortal risk, and are incapable of dealing with it with the help of our stress programs.

Our stress programs make the situation even worse.

Therefore we end up in a state of helplessness and agony and the stress programs have to be stopped.



A trauma is an injury of



- the physical body
- the psyche
- the social relations

# The traumatic process



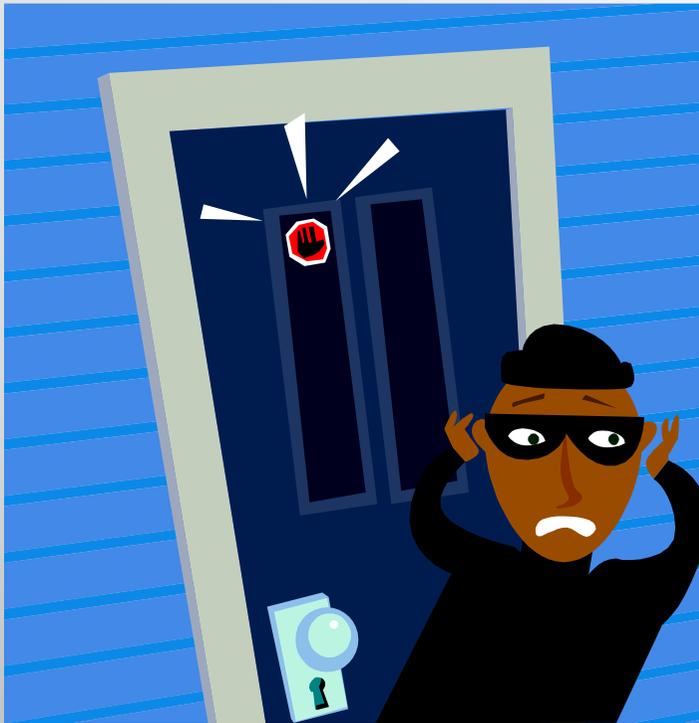
- traumatizing situation
- experiencing the trauma
- short-, medium- and longterm consequences of a trauma

# Consequences of a trauma in general



- hyperarousal and hypervigilance
- extreme anxiety and panic
- permanent feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, sadness
- numbing of all feelings
- intrusions of the traumatic situation in the mind

# Consequences of a trauma in general



- Avoidance behavior
- Feelings of unreality
- Depersonalisation
- Dissociation
- Somatization
- Hallucinations
- Losing bonding capacities
- Losing the healthy I
- Losing the healthy way of wanting and willing

The most significant consequence of a trauma is the splitting of the personality and an inability to manage bonding relations without stress.

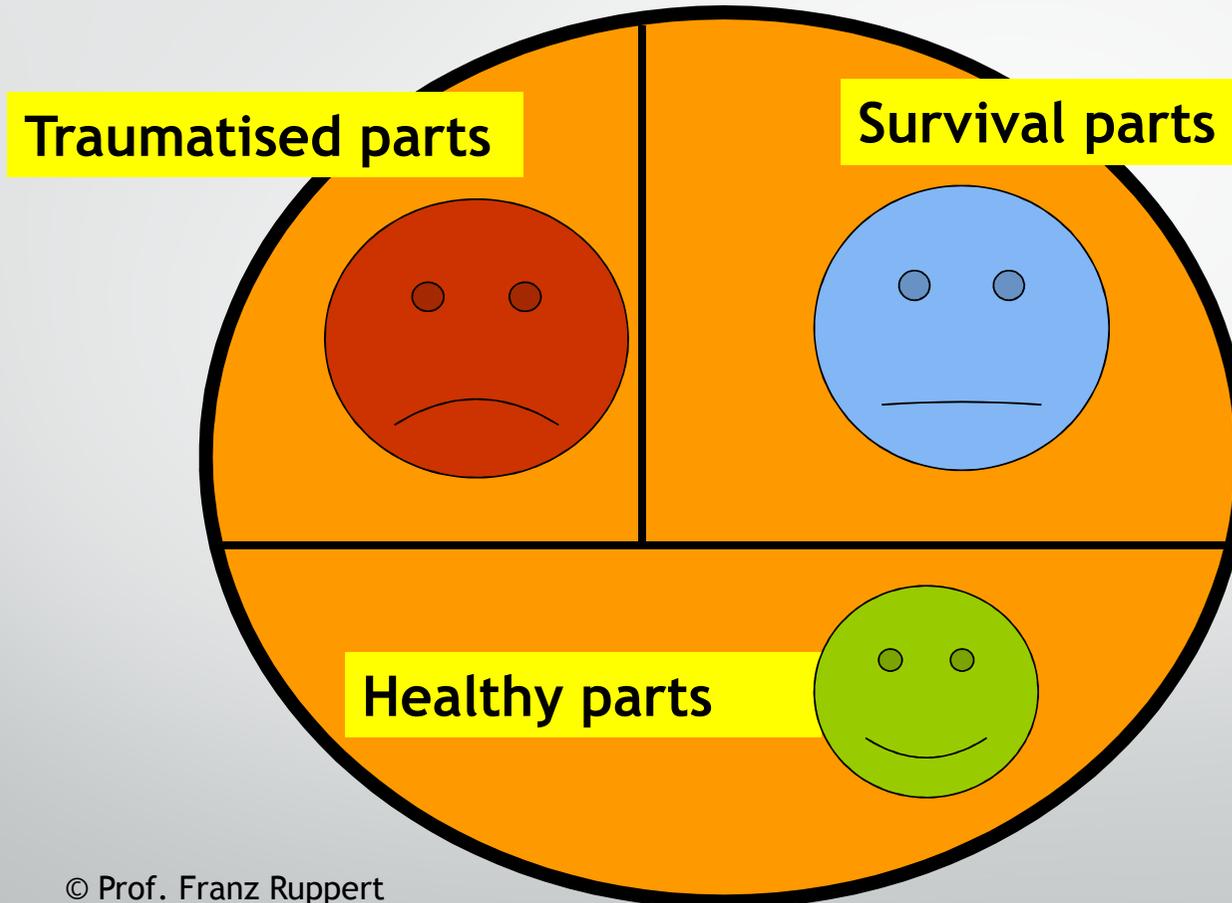


# The Trauma-emergency- mechanism consists of:

- Immobilization
- Freezing
- Dissociating
- Splitting in the psychic structure
- **It helps us to survive.**



# Splits in the personality and identity structure after a traumatic experience



# Psychotrauma as Shocking Trauma



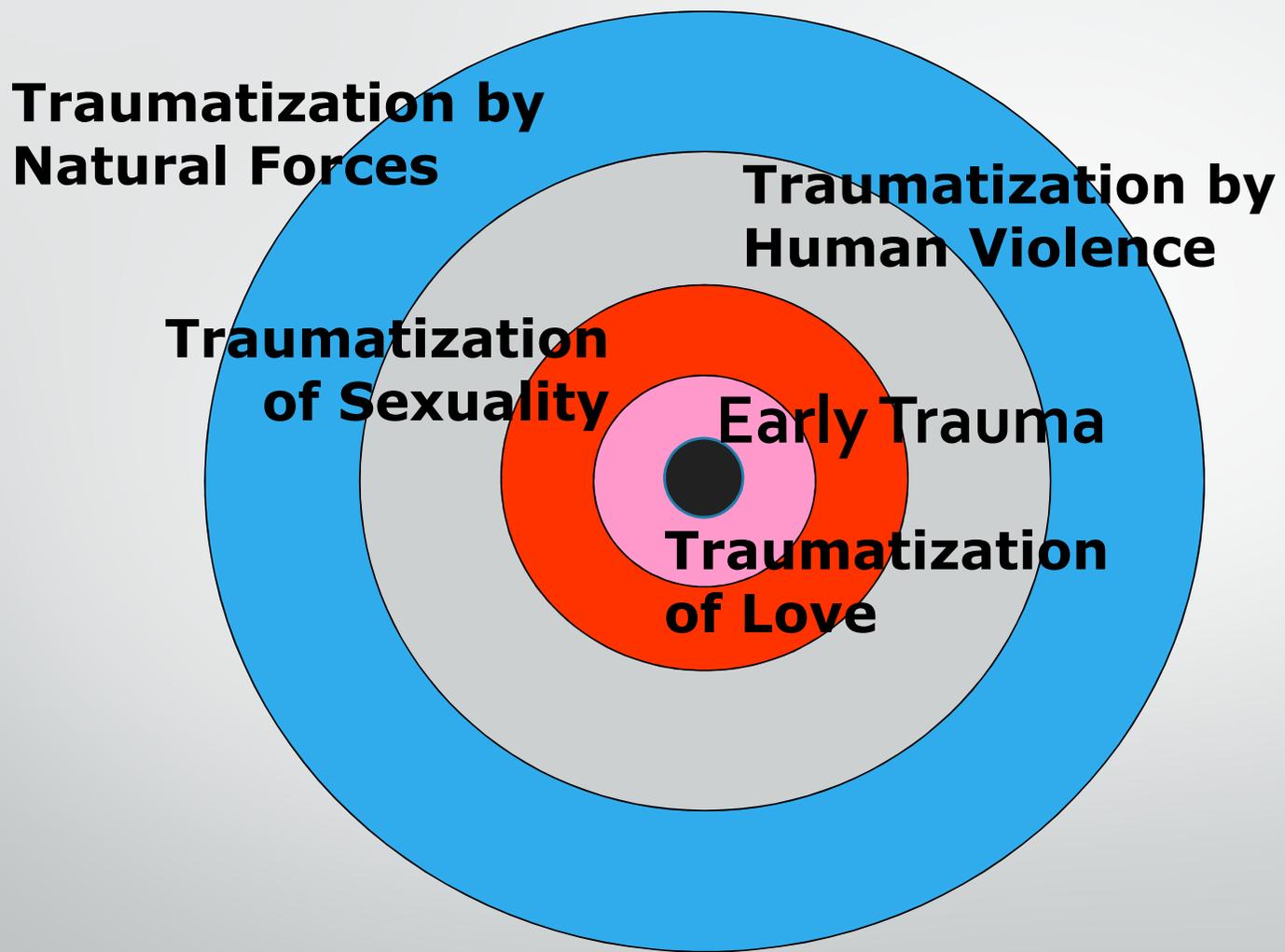
- Trauma of existential Threat (being involved in a life threatening event)
- Trauma of existential Loss (losing a person to whom one is bonded)

# Psychotrauma as a Relational-Trauma



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- Trauma of Love (being rejected by the person one needs to bond to)
- Traumatization of a bonding system (perpetrator-victim-dynamics in a bonding system caused by violence, incest or murder)





## Characteristics of the healthy parts of an adult personality

- clear and realistic perceptions
- capable of regulating all one's feelings
- good contact with oneself
- ability to make safe bonds and to dissolve bonds if necessary
- capable of true self-reflection
- self-responsibility
- love of truth
- optimism and basic confidence
- true autonomy
- strong enough to confront even the memory of past traumatic experiences



## Characteristics of the survival parts of the personality

- constructing and guarding the splits in the psyche
- denying trauma experiences
- suppressing the traumatised parts
- avoiding memories of trauma
- controlling oneself and others
- looking for compensations
- creating illusions
- producing new splits





## Characteristics of the traumatised parts

- store the **memory** of the trauma
- are always the **same age** as they were when the trauma occurred
- are still **engaged** with the traumatic experience
- can unpredictably and suddenly be **triggered**
- they want to be **released**

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Every type of trauma is combined with a  
specific set of symptoms

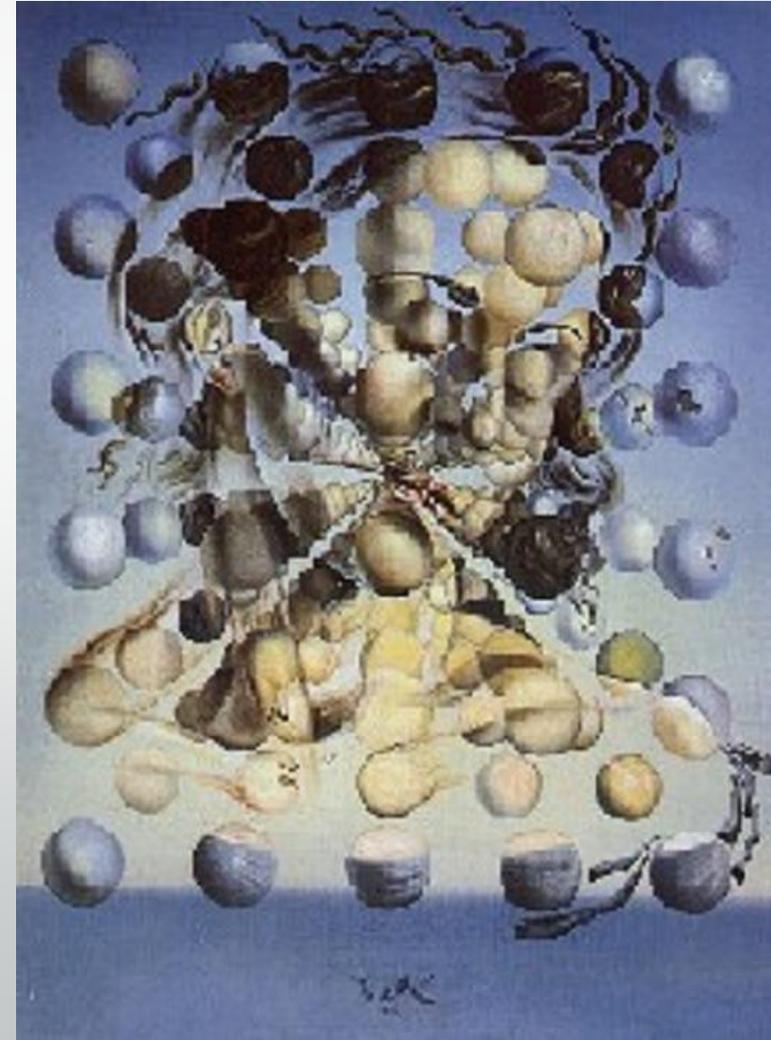
- physical
- emotional
- rational,
- social.

The different types of trauma are  
correlated with typical ways of surviving  
strategies.

# Trauma and parental love

- Traumatic experiences destroy the capability of parents to love,
- because their surviving mechanisms avoid deeper emotional contact with the child.
- Thus creating a “Trauma of Love” for their children

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# What „Love“ means

- Having desires to be loved
- Developing the capacities to love

„Love is an art to transfer emotions of love into a loving behavior without the need to give up oneself.“  
(Jesper Juul 2013, S. 76)



# Love

- Love originally is an emotion towards the mother and the father
- Can be developed to an adult form of emotional attitude towards others
- Healthy love means empathy and supportive actions for others without losing oneself
- Healthy love is different from falling in love

**The central loving process for every human is the bonding with the mother.**





**The bonding with the mother  
becomes the role-model for all other  
relations involving high emotions.  
(John Bowlby).**

# The patterns of childhood bonding experiences are repeated

- In couple relationships
- In the relation with own children
- In friendships
- In relationships at work
- In the relation between clients and therapists

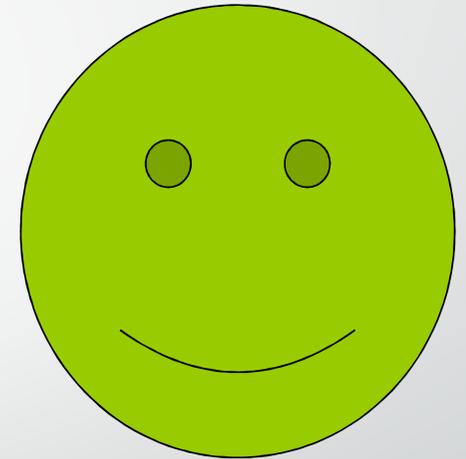
# Falling in Love

- Intense feelings of affection, intense longing for this feelings to be answered, butterflies in the belly, heartbeating, soft knees
- Obsessive thinking at the beloved person, permanent fear of being rejected, depressivness, bad dreams, low self-esteem, bad mood
- Narrowed consciousness, perceiving the loved person much more positive than she really is
- Still no trust in the other person, no openness and sincerity, no readiness to take over responsibility for the other person
- Increases the willingness to have sexual intercourse
- Increases the willingness for monogamy
- Is lasting between seven month and some years



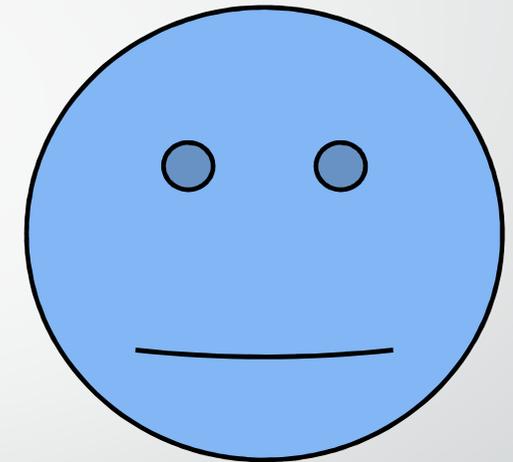
# Healthy psychic structures of a child, even there is a „Trauma of Love“

- Own life force
- Own will to live
- Healthy basic needs
- Joy to move
- Joy to play
- Joy to learn
- Openness, creativity
- ...



# Characteristics of the survival the „Trauma of love“

- Struggling with the parents to get their love
- Idealising mother and father
- Identifying with the survival strategies of the parents
- Wanting to rescue the parents
- Merging with the traumatised parts of parents or grandparents, mixing up with the trauma of the former generations
- Denying one's own trauma



Immediately stop  
to follow me!



But ..  
I love you.

# Illusions of Love

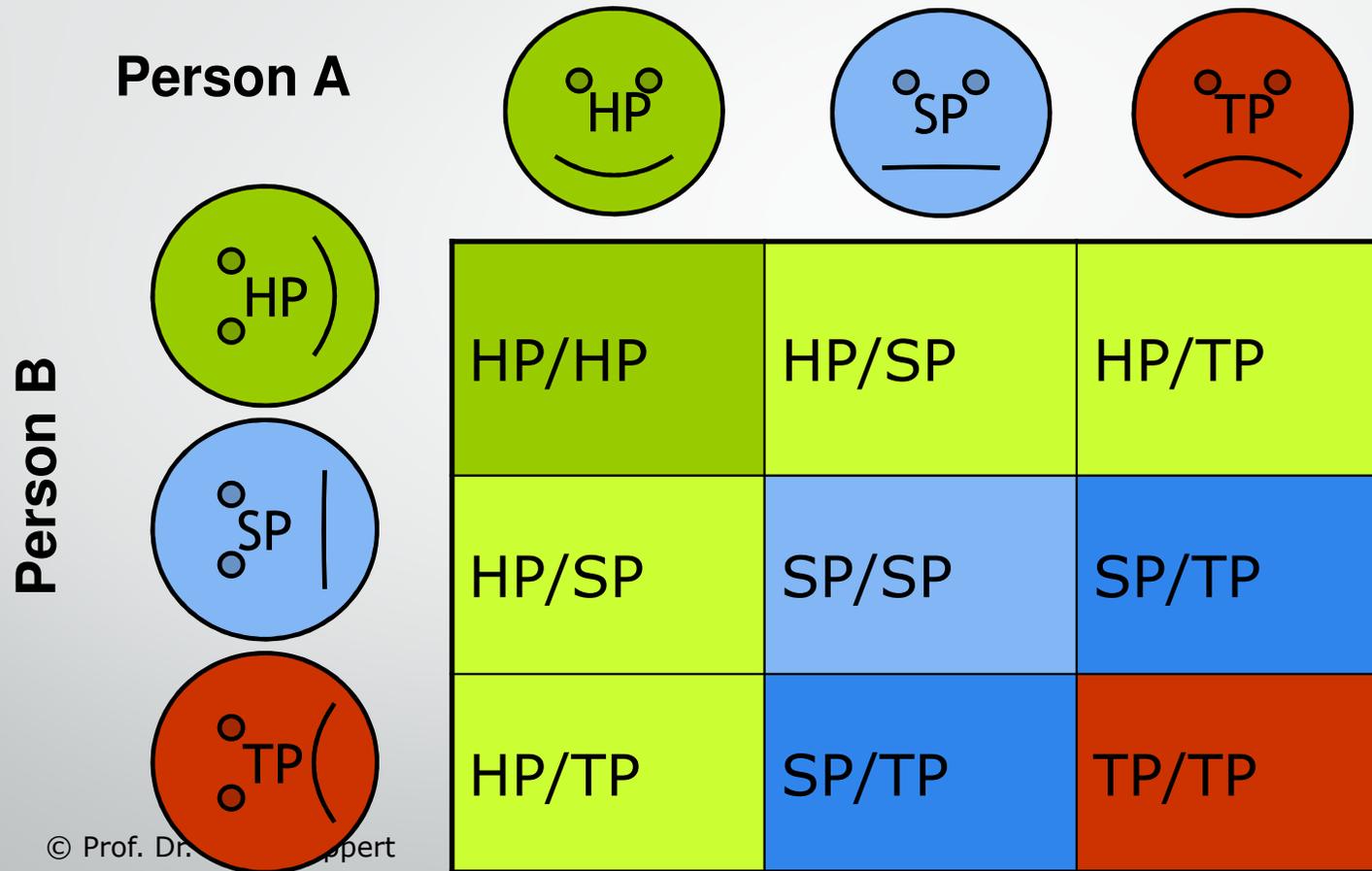
- I can love whom- and whatever I want
- If your love is strong enough, the beloved person will also love you
- All parents love their children
- Being loved can be reached by pressure or money
- One can save another person by loving him/her
- Love heals all wounds
- Love is forever
- ...

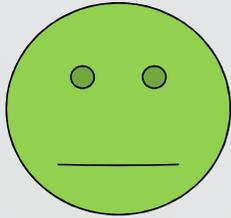
# Characteristics of the traumatised part in a „Trauma of Love“

- Desperation that there is no love from the parents
- Feeling abandoned and extremely lonely
- Terrified it has to die
- Suppressed rage
- Suppressed mourning
- Extreme withdrawal
- Tendency to give up



# Healthy or entangled relations?





## Characteristics of love in healthy parts of the adult personality

- clearly saying “Yes” or “No” in love relationships
- respecting boundaries and limits of partners
- taking responsibility for the partner only as far as necessary
- supporting the autonomy of the other
- ability to distinguish between love reality and love illusions
- willingness to free oneself from symbiotic entanglements
- sex is connected without love
- no sex with children
- no lying
- ability of loving oneself

# What can we do overcome the „Trauma of Love“ and to gain healthy relations?

- Taking our own traumas serious
- Overcoming the splits in our psyche
- Moving forward with the help of „Constellations of the Sentence of the Intention“ step by step
- Becoming fully oneself
- Investing no longer life energy in destructive relations
- Enjoying healthy love relations

# My books in English

