

Can Constellations help to heal trauma?

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Key Questions

- 1. What is a „psychotrauma“ and what are the consequences of experiencing a trauma for a single person?
- 2. What are the consequences of traumata for those persons who are in a bonding-relation with a person who has experienced a trauma?

Key Questions

- 3. How do traumata and their consequences for bonding systems influence society and culture e.g. social systems, health systems, politics, law, philosophy, religion?
- 4. What possibilities do we have to heal trauma on an individual level and to reduce the impact on trauma on whole societies?

„Multigenerational Psychotraumatology“ (MPT)

Bonding



Trauma

Transgenerational effects of
trauma in bonding systems

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)

Traditional Distinction between two types of trauma



- caused by unique events (e.g. accidents, rape, natural catastrophies) or
- caused by long lasting situations (e.g. sexual abuse of children and domestic violence)

The consequences of **stress**
are fight or flight,
the consequences of **trauma**
are freeze or fragment.

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

Four types of psychic trauma



- Trauma of existential Threat (being involved in a life threatening event)
- Trauma of existential Loss (losing a person to whom one is bonded)
- Trauma of Bonding (being rejected by the person one needs to bond to)
- Traumatization a bonding system (perpetrator-victim-dynamics in a bonding system caused by violence, incest or murder)

The traumatic process



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

General consequences of a trauma



- 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

General consequences of a trauma



- Avoidance behavior
- Feelings of unreality
- Depersonalisation
- Dissociation
- Somatization
- Hallucinations
- Losing bonding capacities

Social reactions reinforcing the consequences of a trauma



- Unempathic behavior
- Ignoring the trauma
- Blaming the victim
- Supporting perpetrators
- Denying the victim rights, compensations and professional help

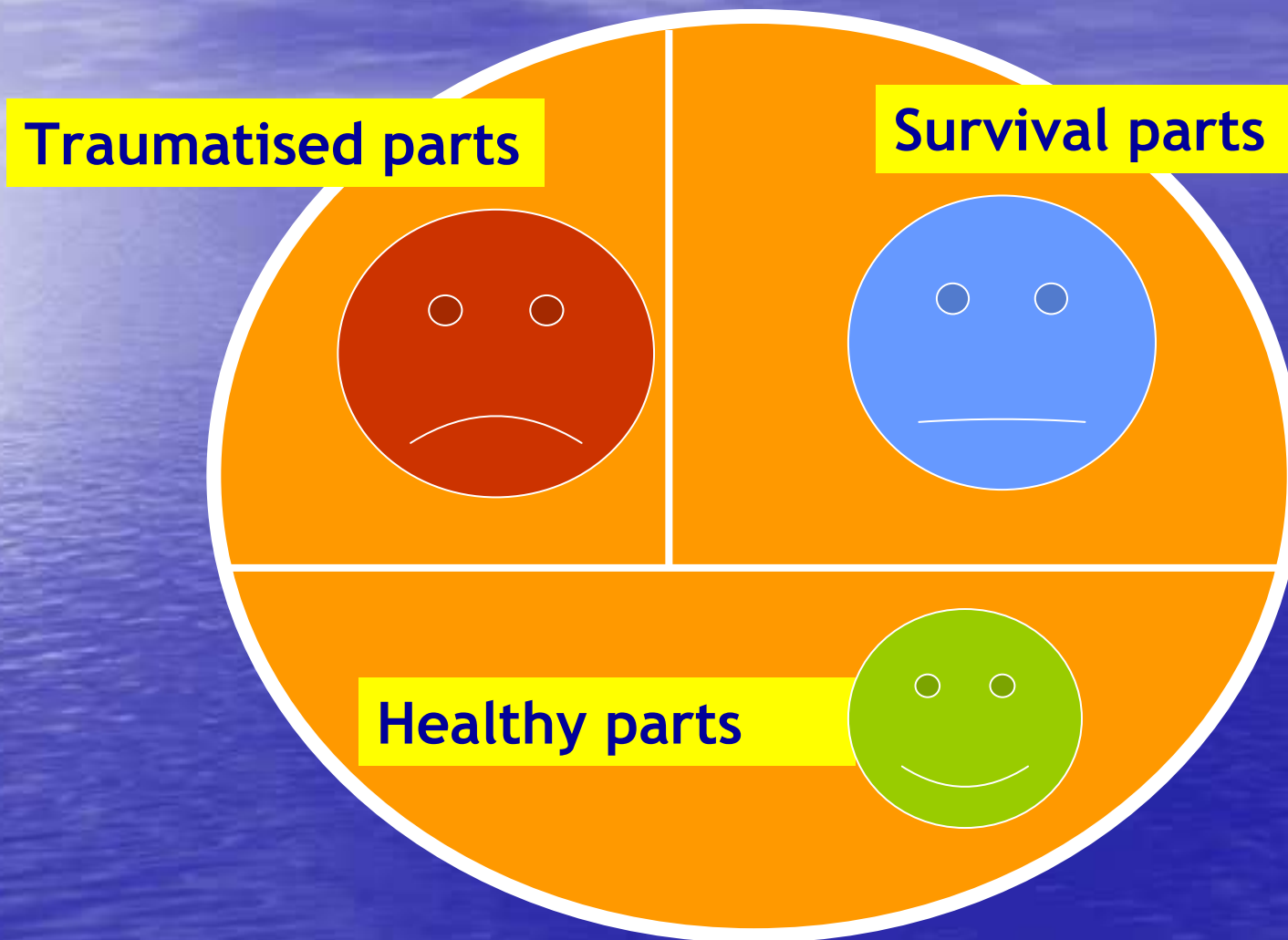
The most significant consequence of a trauma is the splitting of the personality and an inability to manage bonding relations without stress.

The Trauma-emergency- mechanism consists of:

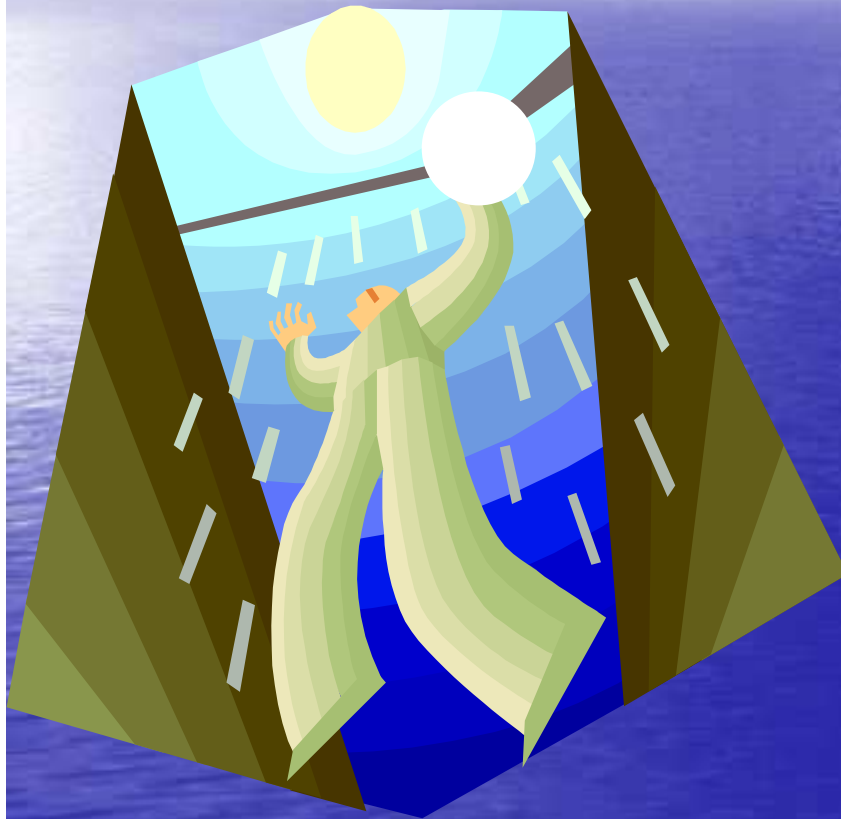
- Immobilization
- Freezing
- Dissociating
- Splitting in the psychic structure
- **It helps us to survive.**



Splits in the personality and identity structure after a traumatic experience

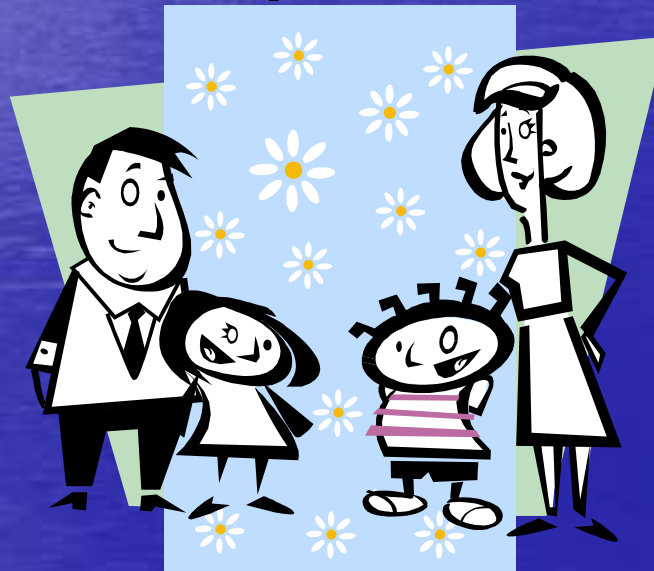


Diagnosing the trauma history of a person



- Identifying the traumata that this person himself has experienced
- Identifying traumata behind the trauma
- Identifying social reactions reinforcing the effects of traumata
- Identifying the traumata that the client's (grand)mother, (grand)father or other near relatives experienced

The constellation method shows the status of a bonding system. It mirrors the **content** and the **structure** of a person's psyche.



Used for psychotherapeutic purposes constellation work is a method to understand how traumata influence and often destroy bonding systems.

The constellation method is able to diagnose trauma related symptoms in an unique way. The representatives in a constellation are able to show the origin and the development of the symptoms.

„Mirror Neurons“ in our brain, detected by Giacomo Rizzolatti, seem to be the basis of our ability to perceive unconsciously the psyche of others.



„Constellations of the Intention“

- support the development of healthy autonomy
- show symbiotic illusions
- reduce the risk of retraumatisation
- help to integrate psychic processes
- create real love beyond symbiotic entanglements




Methodological Structure of „Constellations of the Intention“

- Client finds and formulates his intention
- Client chooses a representative for his intention
- Therapist watches and interprets the interaction between client and intention
- Therapist supplements the context of the problem by proposing to add further representatives
- Therapist intervenes in order that the client is able to gain more healthy structures in his psyche

Technics for the „Constellation of the Intention“

- Offering the client space for self-exploration
- Being aware of trauma in the client's and his family's background sometimes four generations back
- Making traumatising realities visible by further representatives
- Minimal interventions during the constellation process
- Helping the client to understand his constellation

Trauma Therapy



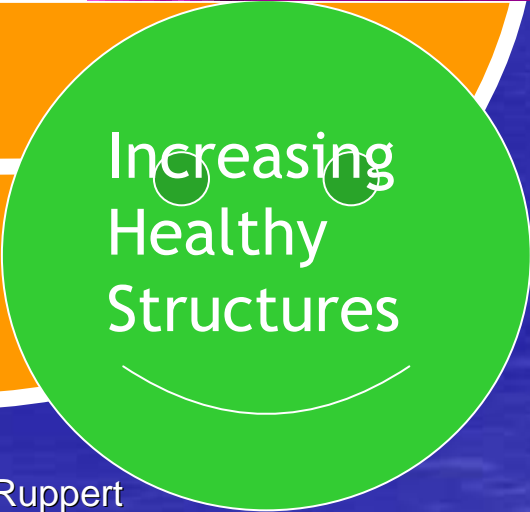
Opening the
Gates towards
trauma



Passing the
Gates of Illusions



Going through
the Gates of Freedom



Increasing
Healthy
Structures



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