

# „Trauma, Bonding and Constellations“ – a new approach to understand and to deal with mental disorders

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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. What kind of influence do have those persons who have experienced a trauma, to those, who also have experienced a trauma?
- 4. How do traumata and their consequences for bonding systems influence society and culture e.g. social systems, health systems, politics, law, philosophy, religion?



# „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.



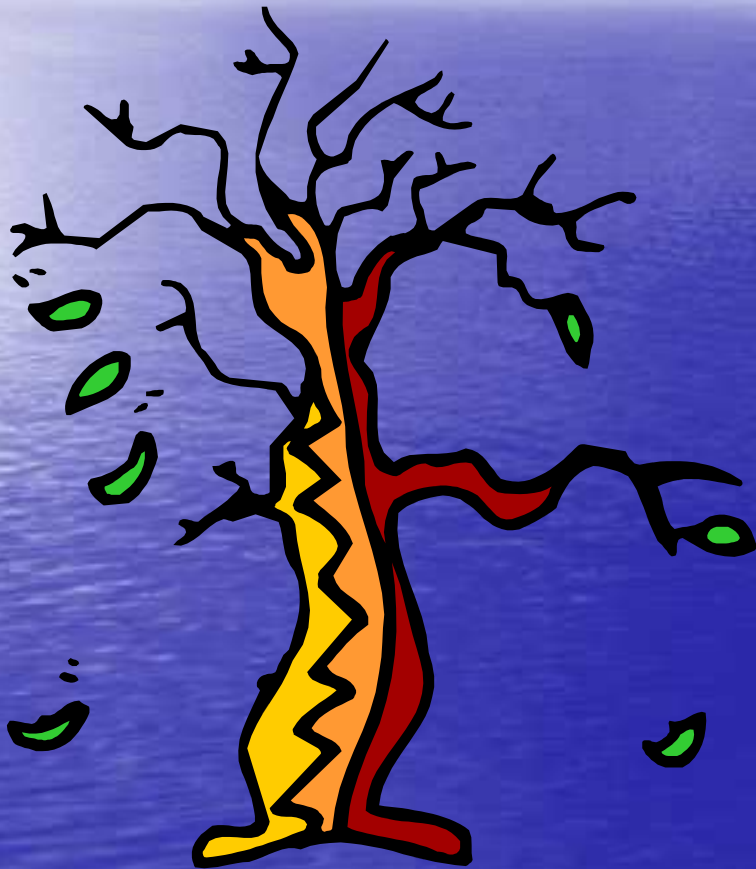
# A life experience becomes not only stressful but traumatic

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

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# 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

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# General consequences of a trauma



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

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





# The Bonding process



- is limited to certain persons
- is exclusive
- is meant to reduce fear and provide safety
- is meant to last
- is the basis for being a member in a bonding system
- is the basis for identity and individualisation

# Types of Bonding

Bowlby, Ainsworth, Maine and Hesse

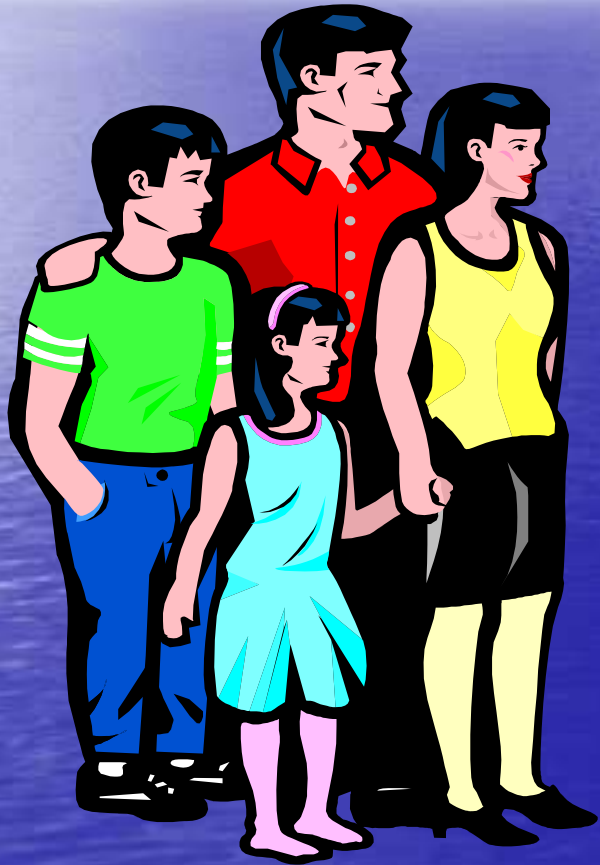


- safe bonding
- unsafe and ambivalent bonding
- unsafe and avoidant bonding
- chaotic bonding

On the psychological level every person is embedded in a complex of bonding relations that include at a minimum four generations.



# The most important bonding-relations



- mother-child
- father-child
- woman-man
- child-child
- perpetrator-victim

# Psycho-Trauma and significant correlations with symptoms of psychiatric illnesses

- Trauma of existential Threat
- Trauma of Loss
- Trauma of Bonding
- Traumatization of a bonding system

Panic Attacks

Depressions

Personality Disorders

psychosis, schizophrenia



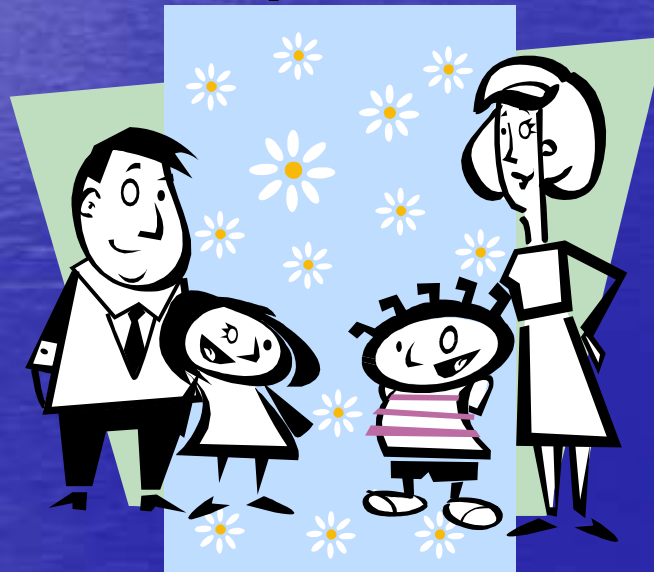
Every type of trauma is combined with a specific set of symptoms

- physical
- emotional
- rational.

The four types of trauma are also correlated with typical kinds of surviving strategies.



The constellation methods 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.

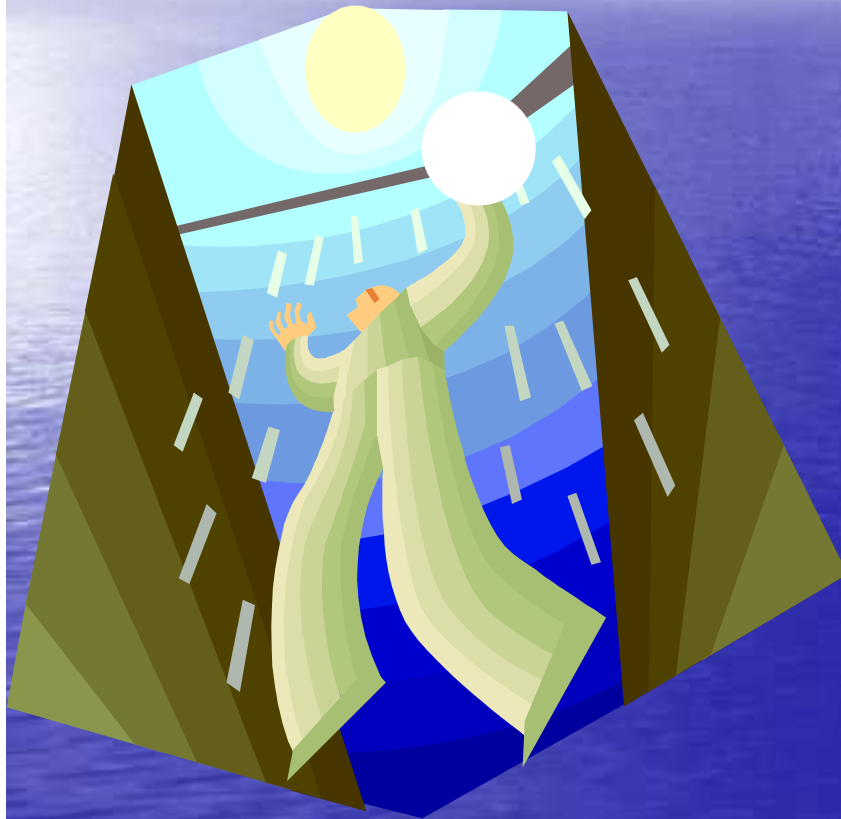
The constellation method is able to diagnose mental disorders in an unique way. The representatives in a constellation are able to show the origin and the development of the symptoms of mental disorders.



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



# Diagnosing the trauma history of a person



- Identifying the traumata that a client himself 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

# Social reactions reinforcing the consequences of a trauma



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



## Family Constellations    Constellations of the Intention

- Phenomenology, Orders of Love
- Parents of equal importance
- Finding one's own place within the family
- Reconciliation with the parents
- Temporal structural work
- Rituals
- Supporting symbiotic surviving strategies
- Spirituality
- Bonding- and Traumatheory
- Mothers do have more impact on the psyche
- Integration of split off psychological structures
- Self acceptance
- Continuous process work
- Individual processes
- Enlightenment about symbiotic illusions
- Reality