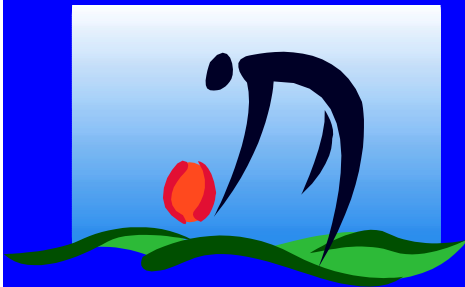


“Trauma, Bonding and Family Constellations” - a new approach to understanding and managing mental disorders



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Four basic questions for a better understanding of the causes for human suffering

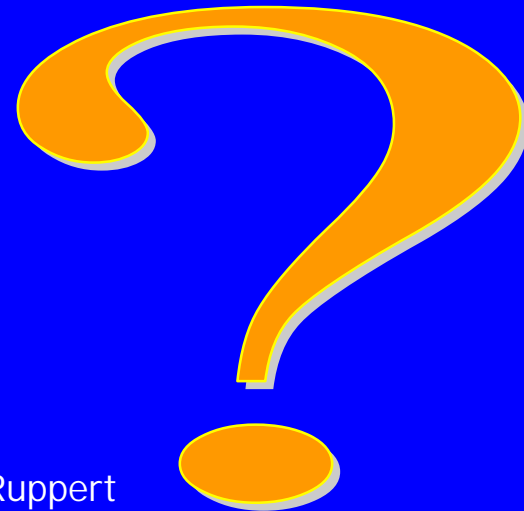


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1. What is a "trauma" and what are the consequences of a trauma for an individual person



2. What are the consequences for human beings who are in a bonding relationship with a person who is suffering from a trauma



3. How do traumatized people
interact and entangle
with each other



4. How do traumas and their consequences for bonding systems influence society and culture
(e.g. social systems, health systems, politics, law, philosophy, religion)



“Multigenerational Psychotraumatology” (MP)

Bonding



Trauma

Transgenerational effects of
traumas in bonding systems

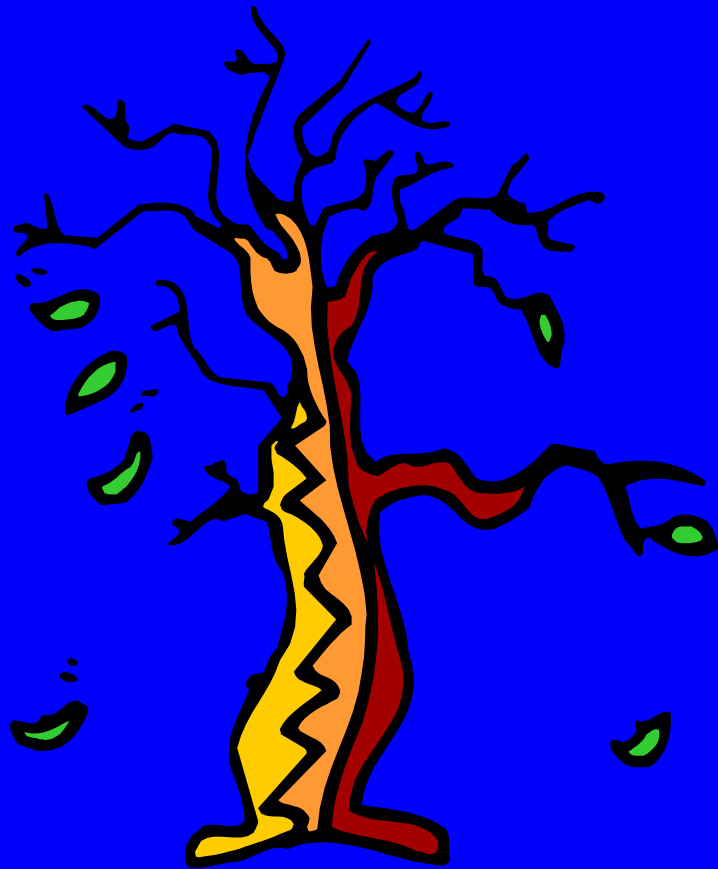
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A trauma is

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

(Fischer und Riedesser, 1999, S. 79)

A trauma is an injury of



- the physical body,
- the psyche and soul and
- social relations.

General Distinction between two types of trauma



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

The traumatic process



- traumatising situation
- experiencing the trauma
- short- and longterm consequences of a trauma

Important distinction:

Stress means
fight or flight.

Trauma means
freeze or fragment.

General consequences of a trauma



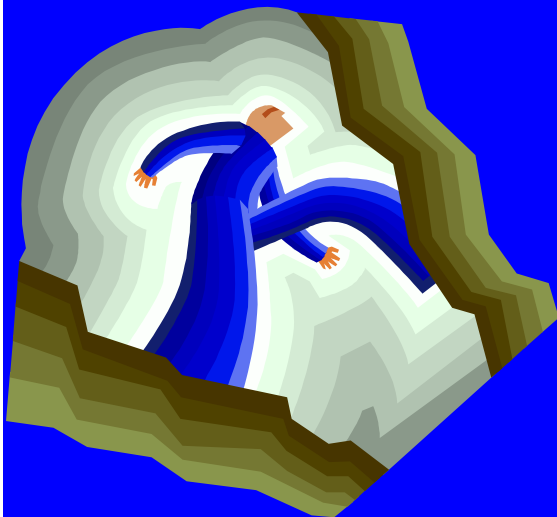
- hyperarousal and hypervigilance
- extreme anxiety and panic reactions
- hopelessness, sadness
- numbing of all feelings
- intrusions of the traumatic situation into the mind

General consequences of a trauma



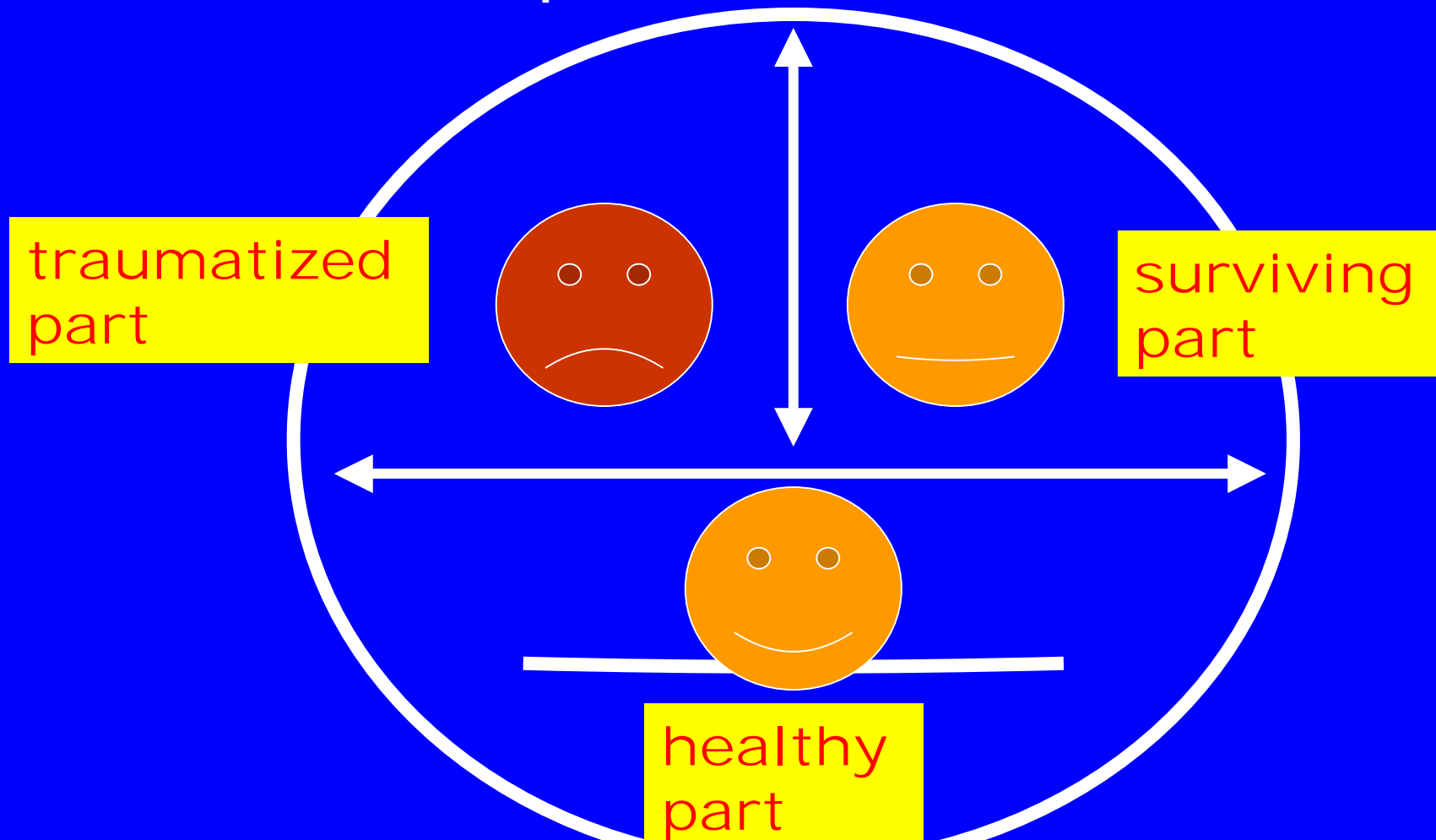
- avoidance behaviour
- feelings of unreality
- depersonalisation
- dissociation
- chronic illnesses
- hallucinations
- losing bonding capacities

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



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Split of personality as consequence of a trauma



Characteristics of the healthy parts of our soul

- openminded
- capable to regulate feelings
- basic confidence
- empathie
- ability to safe bonding
- good memory
- self reflection
- responsibility
- love for truth
- realism
- optimism

Characteristics of the traumatized parts

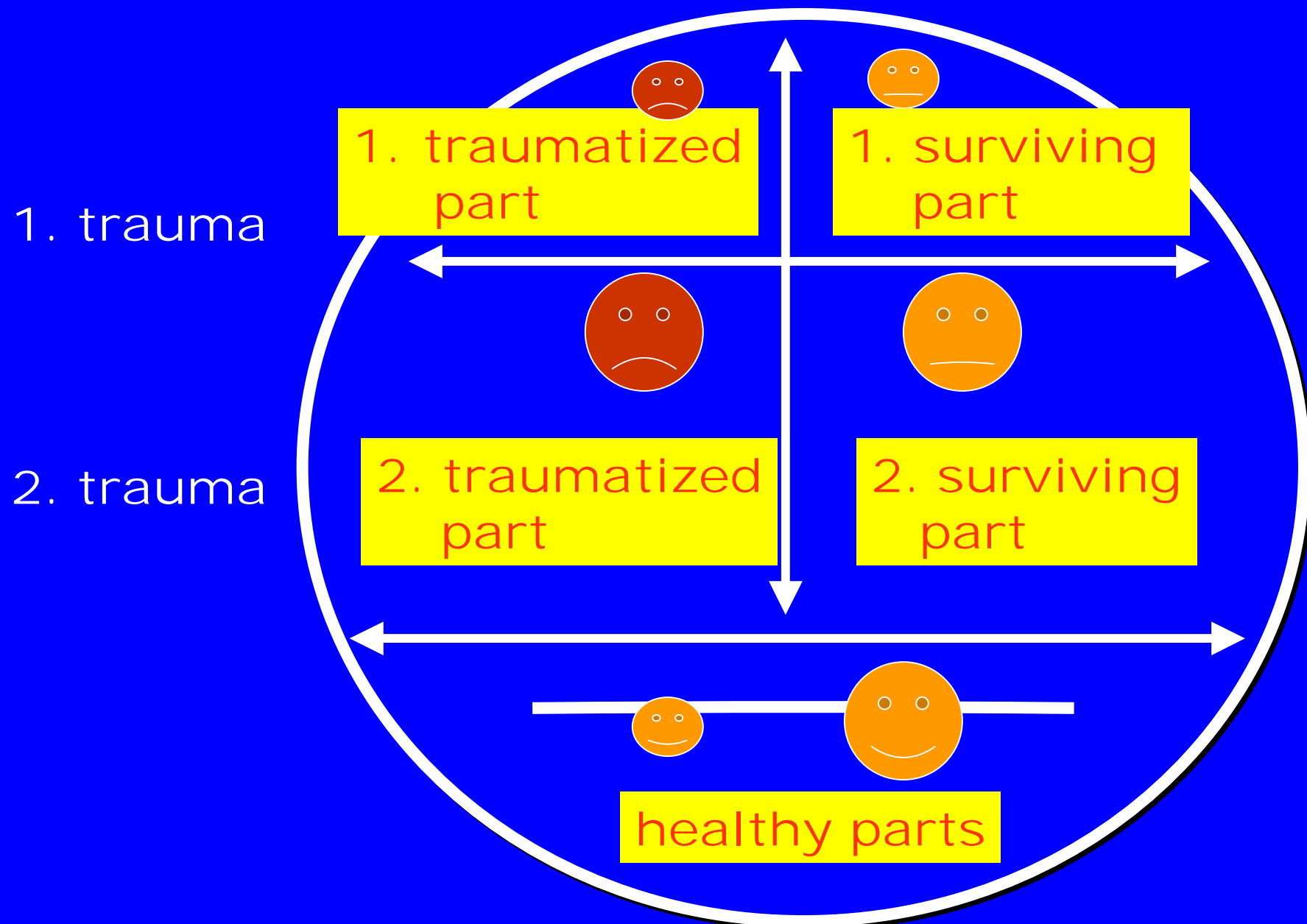
- store the memory of the trauma
- are always in the same age as they were, when the trauma occurred
- are all the time still engaged with the traumatic experience
- can unpredictably and suddenly be triggered

Characteristics of the surviving-parts

- denying and suppressing the trauma
- constructing and guarding the split
- avoiding
- controlling
- compensating
- producing illusions

Surviving parts are
the mirrors
of the traumatized parts.

The more extreme the
trauma experience, the more
extreme develop the
surviving parts.



1. trauma

2. trauma

1. traumatized part

1. surviving part

2. traumatized part

2. surviving part

healthy parts

horizontal splits

voice

breast, hart

belly

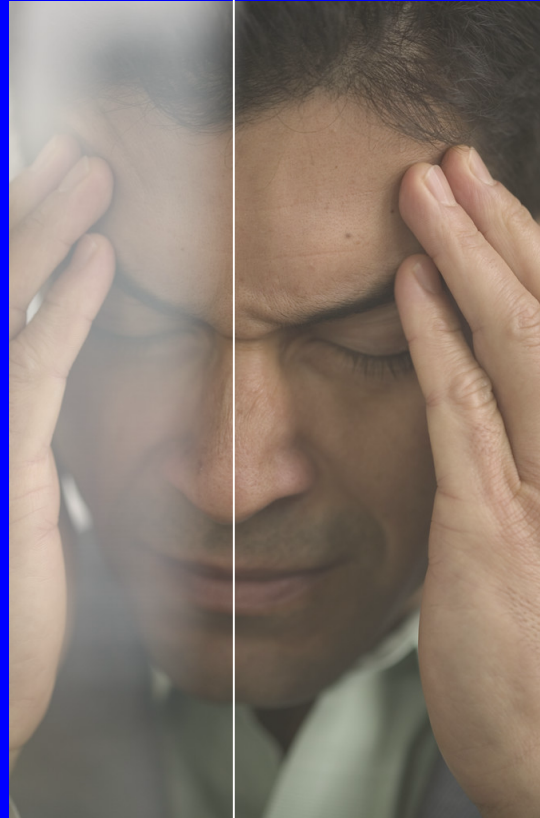
sexuality



vertical splits

right hemisphere

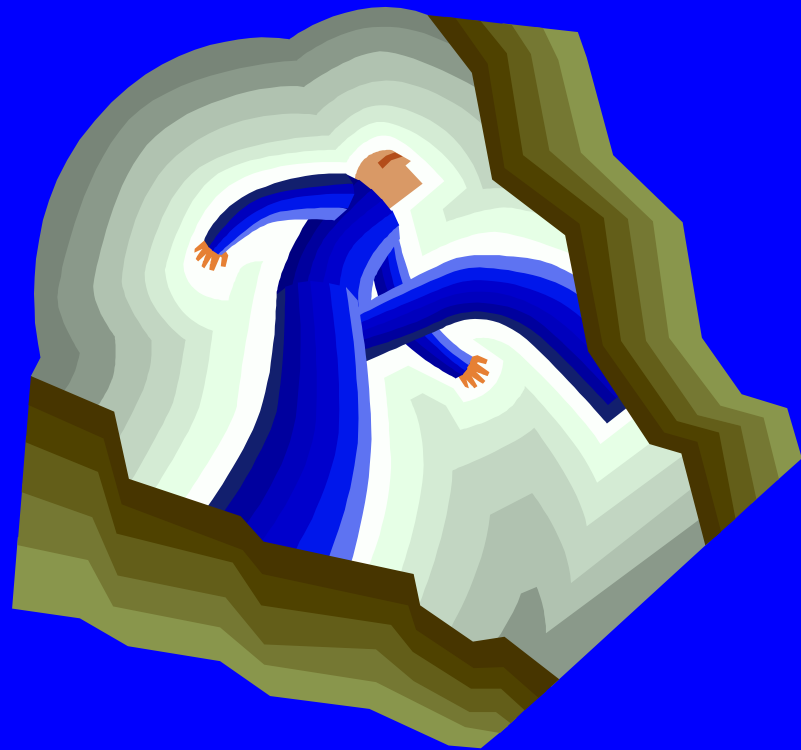
pictures
assoziations
unconsciousness



left hemisphere

language
logic
consciousness

Social reactions reinforcing the consequences of a trauma



- unempathetic behaviour
- denying or ignoring the trauma
- blaming the victim
- denying the victims rights for compensation and professional help
- supporting perpetrators

The bonding process



- is focused to limited people,
- is exclusive,
- is based on emotions,
- is meant to last,
- is the basis for being a member in a bonding system,
- is the basis for group identity and individualisation

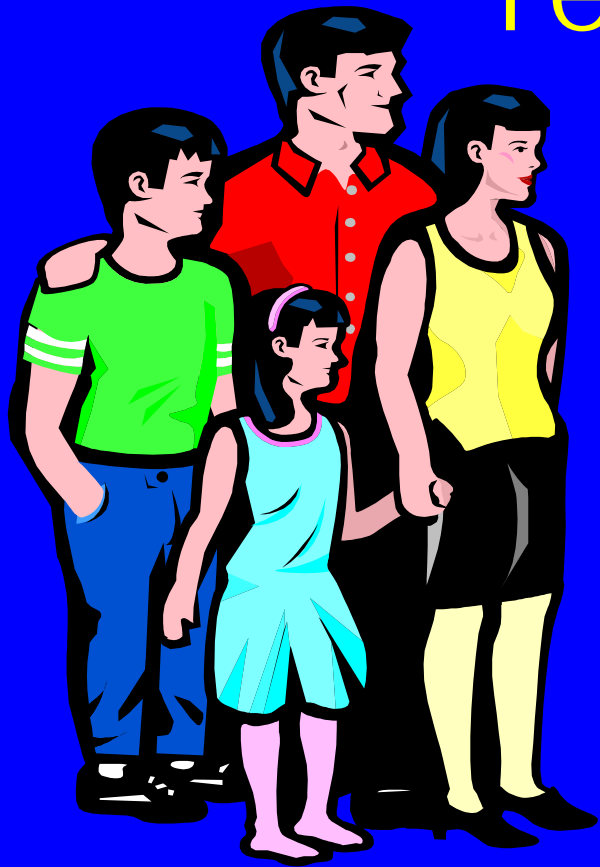
Bonding on the soul level ...

- is a sense that perceives relevant informations about other persons, values them emotionally, interprets them cognitively and stores them in memory.
- is the starting point for all essential human feelings: love, hope, fear, rage, despair, sadness, shame, guilt, pride, joy.
- Oxytocin is an essential neurotransmitter supporting the ability of bonding.

Bonding

- starts in the moment of fathering/conceiving a child,
- develops during pregnancy,
- is imprinted by the birth process,
- gets its special quality during the first three years of life.

The most important bonding relations



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

The central bonding process
for everybody is the bonding
to the mother.



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

Types of Bonding

Bowlby, Ainsworth, Main and Hesse



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

Reactions to the loss of a bonding figure



- fear and panic
- protest and rage
- grief and resignation
- suffering illnesses

Personal autonomy
is the result, when the
symbiotic needs for
warmth, hold, love and
support are fairly satisfied
during early childhood.

Safe bonding is the basis



- for autonomy
- confidence in human relations
- mental health.

Unsafe bonding leads to

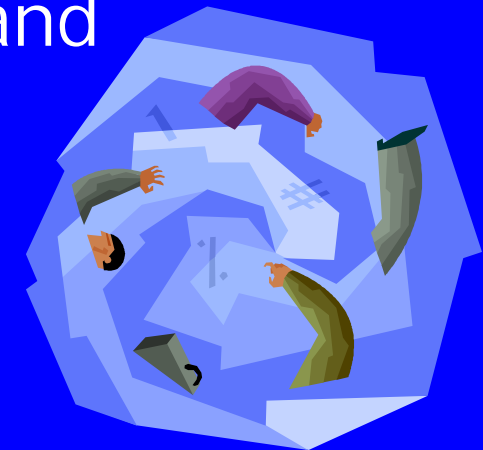
- clinging
- hating
- lamenting
- distrusting
- drug abuse
- mental illnesses



The longing for a safe bonding to the mother remains for the whole life.

Severe bonding problems of children are caused by

- parents being in a state of shock
- parents suffering from a loss
- parents who are aggressiv and brutal
- parents who are confused and mental ill



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

Four types of traumas of the soul

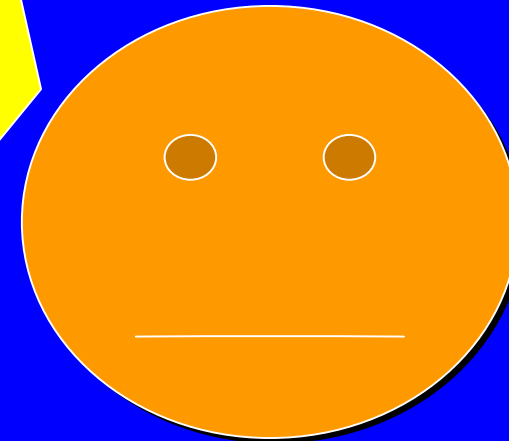
- Trauma of existential threat (being involved in a life threatening event)
- Trauma of existential loss (losing a person to whom one is bonded)
- Trauma of bonding (being rejected by the person one needs to bond to)
- Trauma of confusion in a bonding system (confusion in a bonding system caused by severe guilt or extreme shame)



Trauma of existential Thread

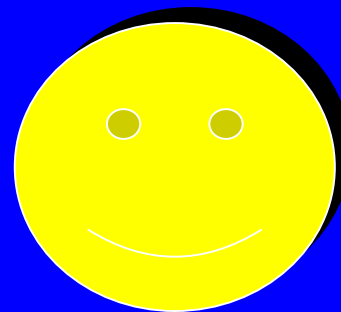
traumatized
part

panic



surviving part

Blindness for real
risks

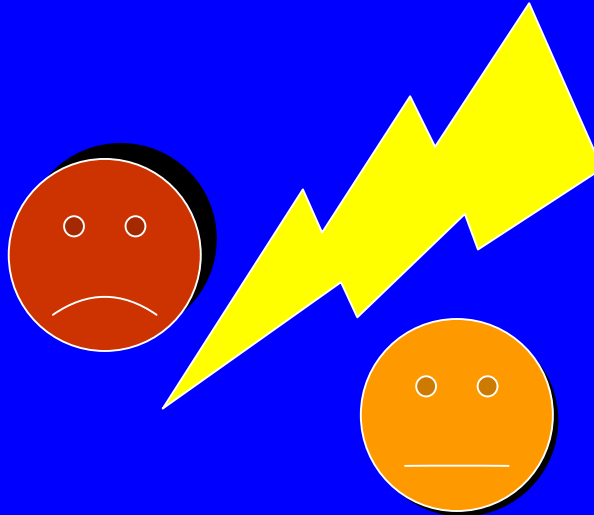


healthy part

Trauma of Loss

traumatized
part

Love, pain
and grief



surviving part

Brooding for the
meaning of life

healthy part

Bonding Trauma

traumatized parts
of the child

pain

sadness

shame

anxiety

rage

love
illusions

guilt

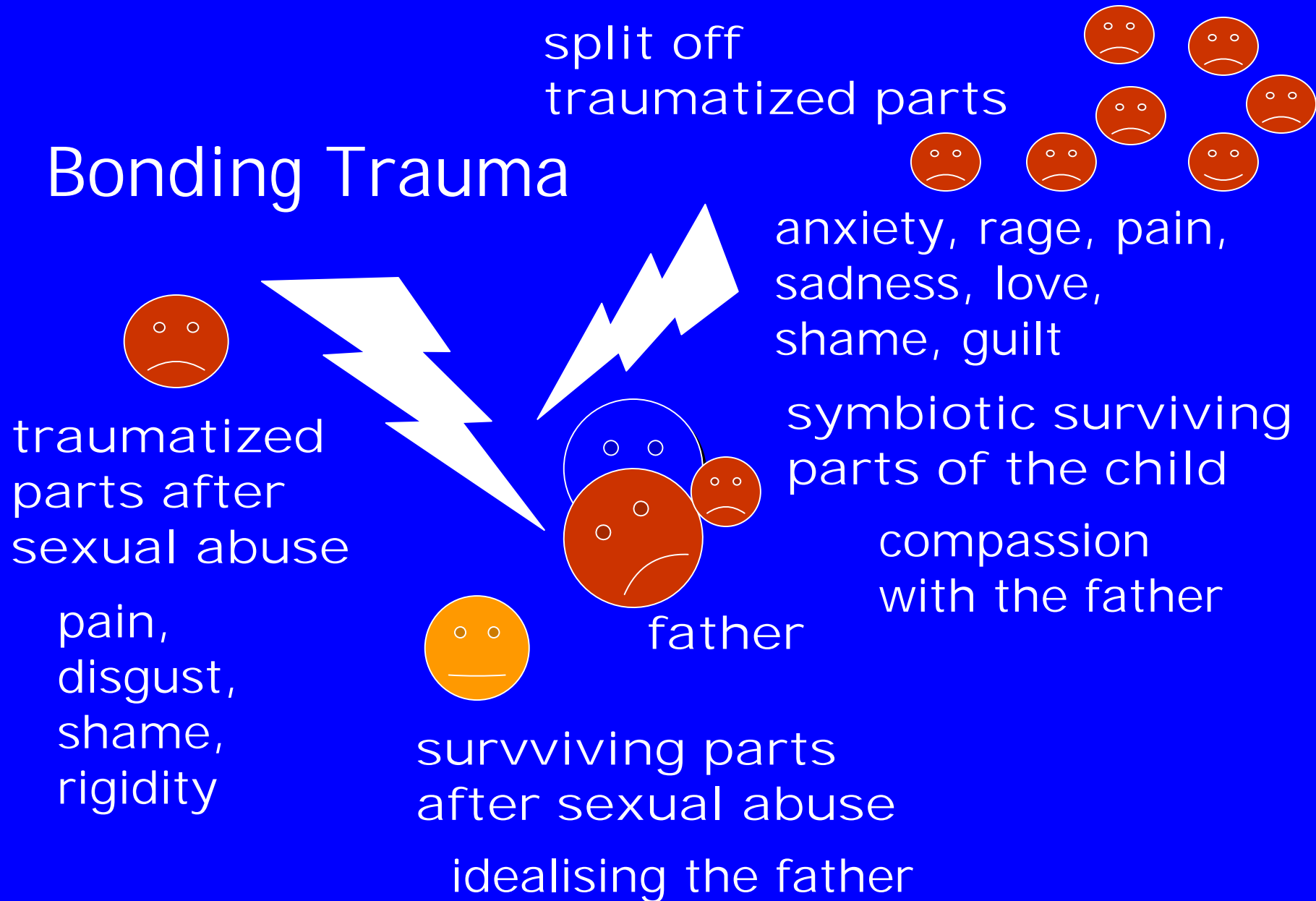
traumatized
parts
of the mother

symbiotic surviving parts
of the child

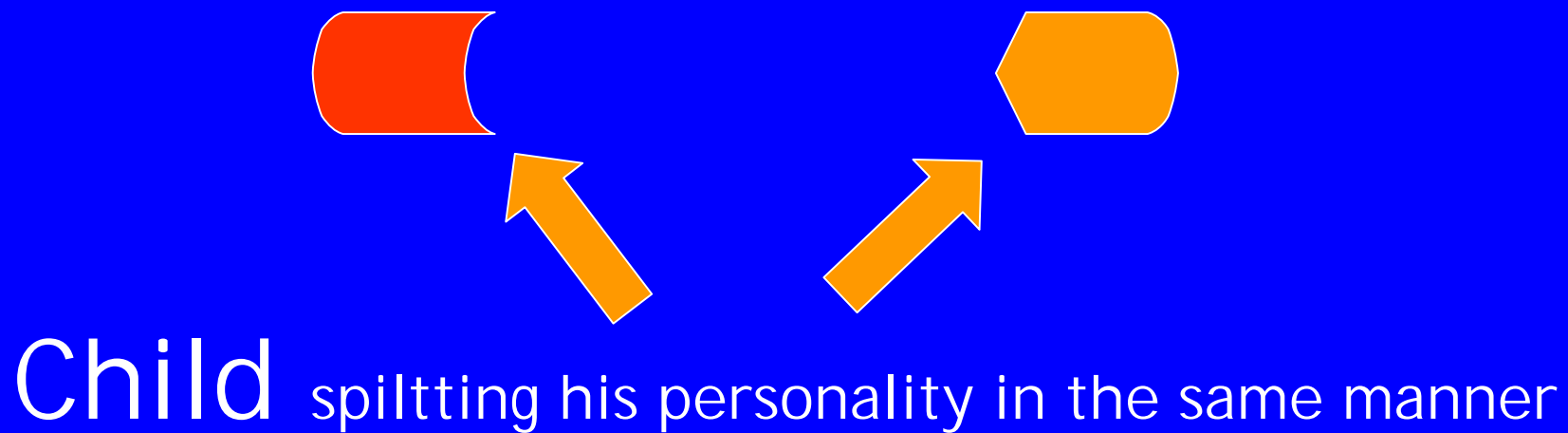
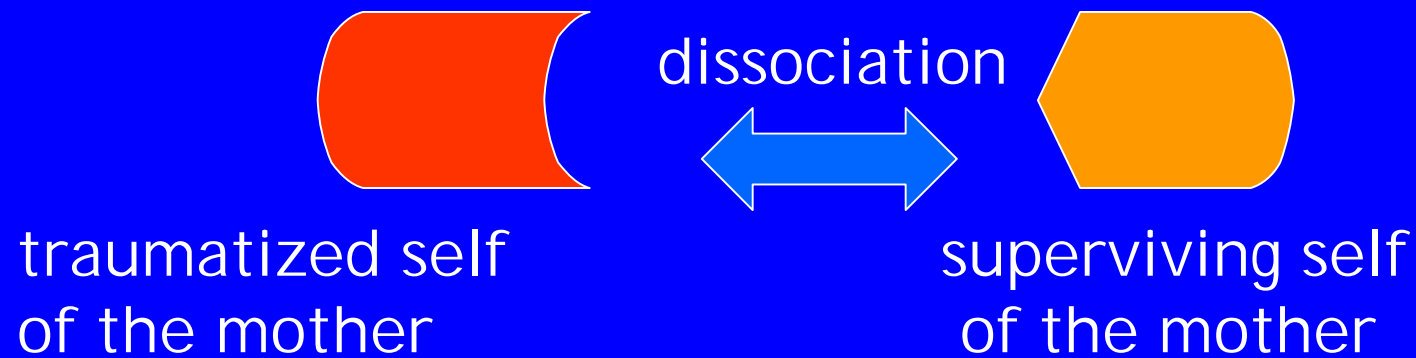
adaption to the mother's needs
Compassion with the mother

surviving parts
of the mother

Bonding Trauma



Mother with a split personality after a traumatic experience



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

- physical
- emotional
- rational.

Traumata of the Soul and significant correlations with symptoms of psychiatric illnesses

- Trauma of existential Threat

panic attacks



- Trauma of Loss

deep depression

- Trauma of Bonding

personality disorders

- Trauma of Confusion of a bonding system

psychosis, schizophrenia

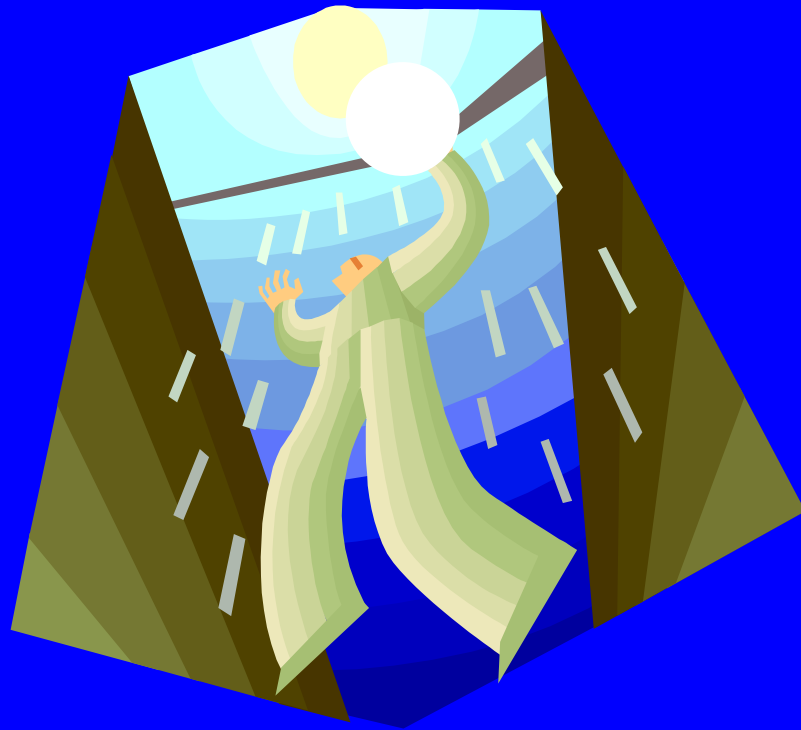
The four types of trauma are correlated with typical kinds of addiction and suicide.

Transgenerational effects of traumas

- Children of traumatized parents live in an environment of trauma.
- Children bond to the traumatized parts of their parents, especially their mothers.
- They cannot distinct between their own feelings and those of their parents.
- Symptoms of mental illnesses are often the expressions of traumatizations of former generations.



Diagnosing the trauma history of a patient means ...



- To identify the traumas that a patient himself has experienced
- To identify the traumas that the patient's (grand)mother, (grand)father may have experienced
- To identify social reactions reinforcing the effects of traumas

Different methods of therapy to deal with traumas

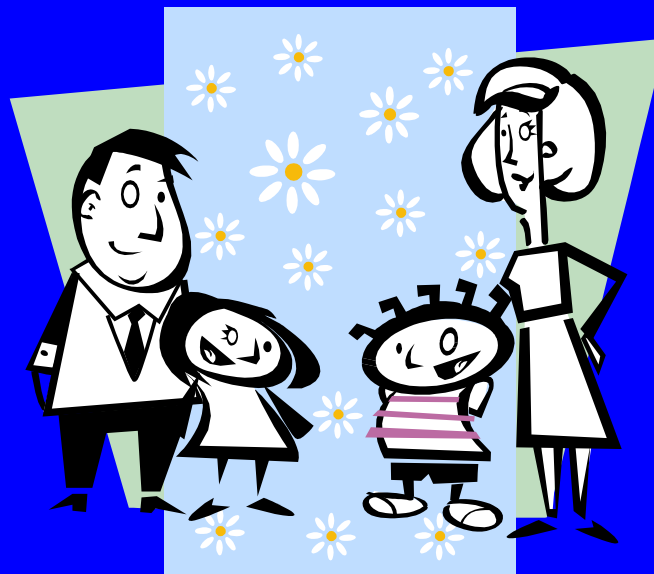
- EMDR („eye movements“) (Shapiro)
- Somatic experiencing (Levine)
- Imaginations of resources (Reddemann)
- Trauma constellations (Ruppert)

(Family) Constellations



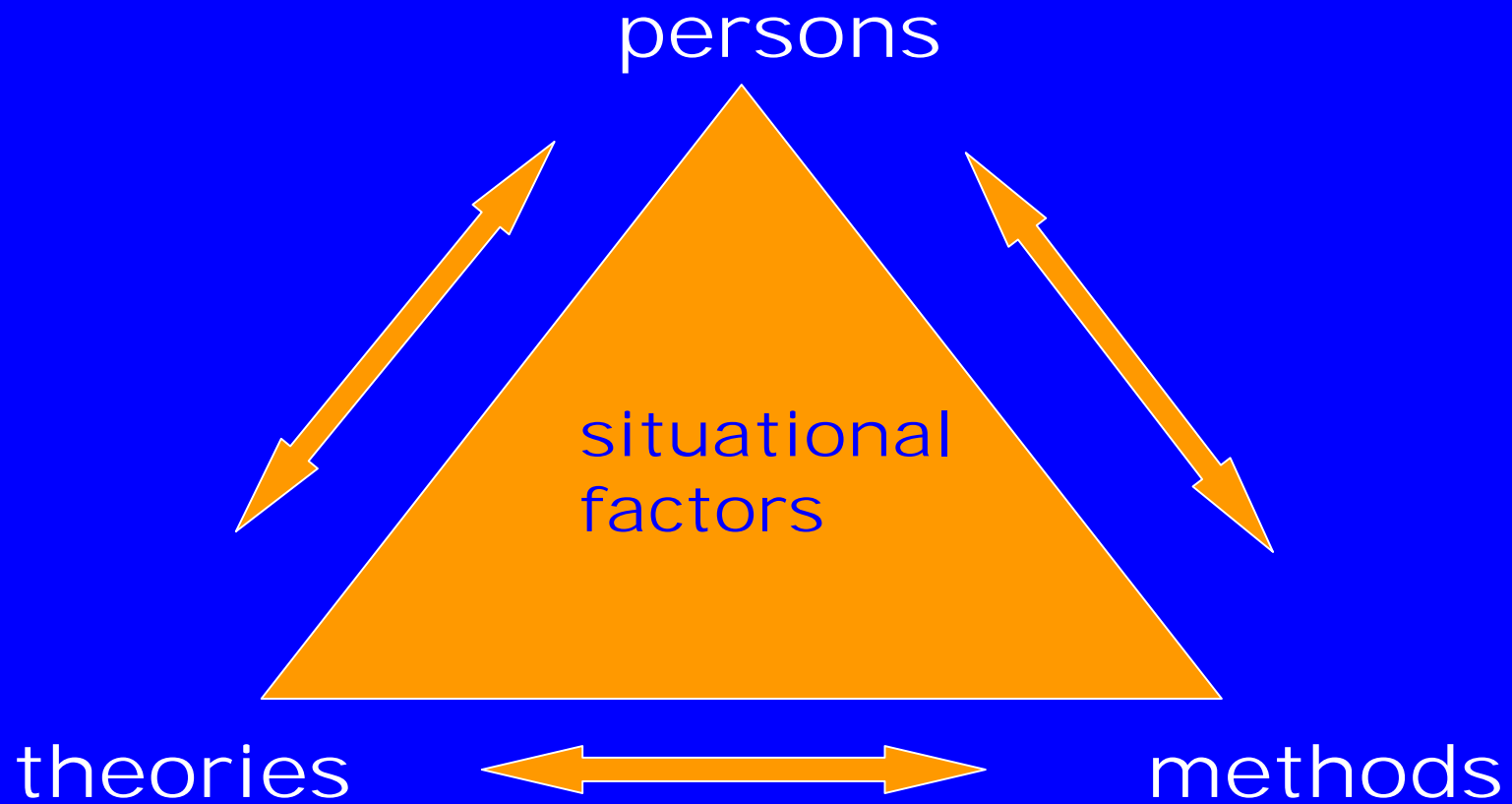
- Lively pictures of a group of persons (family, business organization, political system) represented by non-group members
- Representing inner realities of a person by the help of other persons

The constellations method
shows the status of a bonding
system.
It mirrors the soul of a person.



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On a methodological level there are interrelations between ...



Design of our research study

- Sample: 71 interviewed persons
- Questionnaire with 54 items
- Date of research: May 2005 – March 2006
- 9 different interviewers

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Three main questions

1. How do clients experience their own constellation?
2. How reliable are representatives in mirroring the clients inner states and outer relations?
3. How can new information gained through a constellation be further processed?

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Sample

- 50 women, 21 men
- Average age: 46 (21-78 years)
- Av. since 6 years in contact with constellations (1-25 years)
- Av. 6 own constellations (1-10)
- Av. 50-100 roles as representatives (1-200)



Awareness of being in a role

- sudden body sensations
- extraordinary states of emotions
- unusual behaviour
- obtrusive pictures
- unusual experiences of relations
- energetic experiences
- impulses to move

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Strategies of representatives to distinct „own“ and „not-own“

- feeling the differences
- sensations of parallels
- consensus with other representatives
- waiting until it gets clear
- ability to switch
- basic certainty

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Types of revealed new information

- sexual abuse (34%)
- uncertain fatherhood (22%)
- murder of children in the family(18%)



Acceptance of the new information by the client (n=50)

- yes: 82%
- partially: 12 %
- no: 6 %



“Mirror Neurons” in our brain, first detected by Giacomo Rizzolatti, seem to be the basis of our ability to perceive the soul of others.



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Responsability of the faciliator:
Optimizing the conditions for
mirroring

Client's responsibility:
Allowing the process of
resonance to happen

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The constellations method is suitable to diagnose mental disorders in a unique way.

The representatives in a constellation are able to show the origins and the development of the symptoms of mental disorders.

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Used for psychotherapeutic purposes, constellations work is a helpful method for understanding how traumas influence and often disturb bonding systems.



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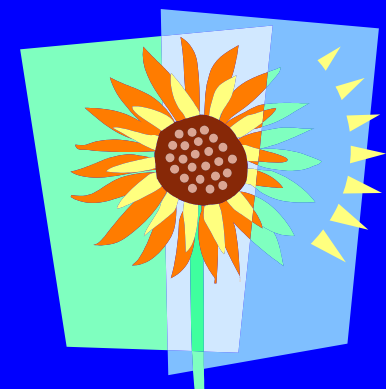
Four different ways to look for healing

- changing the outside world
- fighting against symptoms
- strengthening surviving abilities
- integrating the split off parts of the personality structure

The Process of Inner Healing

- recognizing the splits in the soul
- understanding the traumas behind
- reassuring the surviving parts
- going with healthy parts into contact with traumatized parts
- freeing the traumatized parts and integrating them in the whole personality

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An integrated personality



from outside



from inside