



How Courts Can Create Trauma-Informed Spaces That Promote Accessibility and Inclusivity for All Families

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Family and Youth Justice Programs

Washington Administrative Office of the Courts

Moment for Gratitude & Appreciation

Funding and Partners Acknowledgement

This project is supported by Grant # 2020-AR-BX-K001 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice or our partner organizations.



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Why trauma and access?

Speaker Intro:

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Why trauma and access?

Trauma and Access

Learning Objectives

Learn or Review
Trauma and
Accessibility
Terminology

Understand how
healing and safety
can be developed
in court spaces:
What should we be
asking ourselves?

Introduce simple
tools and begin
to use them

Basic Types of Trauma

Trauma defined

An emotional and physiological response to a deeply distressing event or events

Chronic Trauma

Experiences or exposures occur repeatedly over time: health scares, neglect, abuse.

Acute Trauma

Generally a single traumatic incident. A car accident, violence, or fear..

ACEs – Childhood Trauma

The adverse childhood experiences study collected population data about experiences of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction, leading to complex trauma

Collective Trauma

An entire community, ethnic group, racial group, or social population is exposed to trauma: loss of life, loss of identity, loss of social cohesion

“Collective Trauma is a cataclysmic event that shatters the basic fabric of society.”
(Hirschberger 2018)

Trauma can be Inherited (epi)genetically

(Inter) Generational Trauma

Adverse
experiences
happen to
Mother



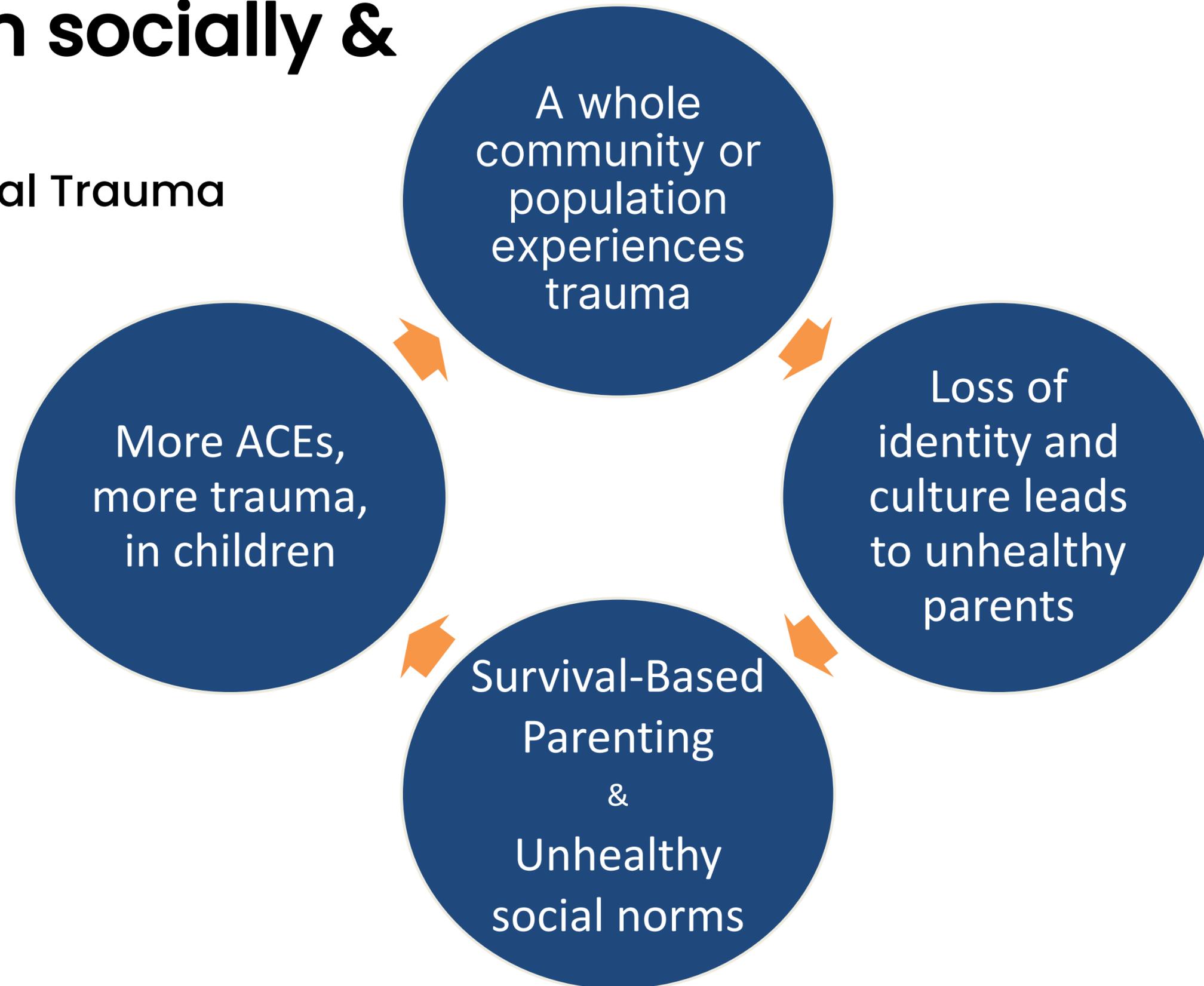
In utero changes
happen to
embryo/fetus



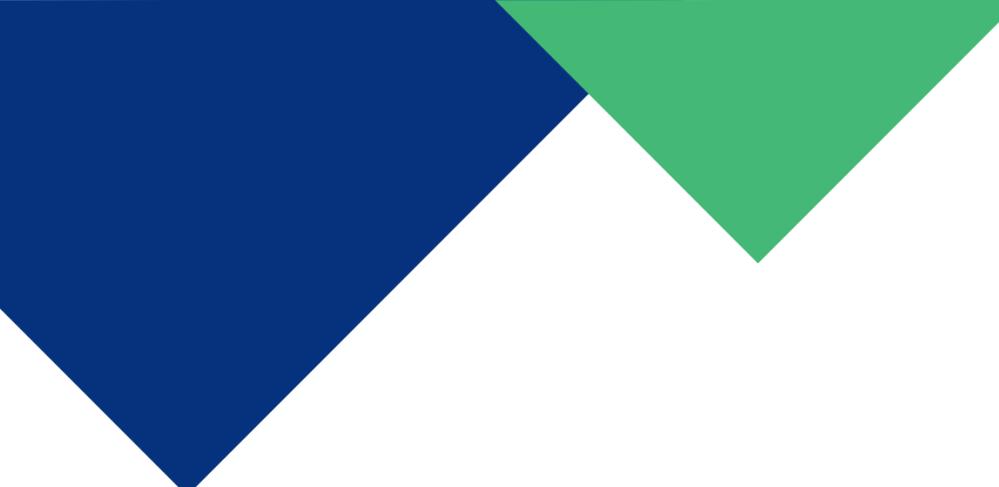
Child shows
signs of
traumatic stress

Trauma can be passed on socially & culturally

Intergenerational Trauma



Socio-ecological Model of Healing



Healing In the Courts

Meeting people where they are
without blame, without shame

Lessons from Accessibility and Universal Design

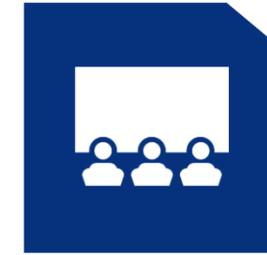
Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible

Persons with disabilities report higher ACEs

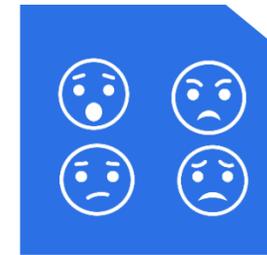
- **36.5% reported compared to 19.6% in those without disability** (Austin et al 2016)

AND

As number of ACEs increases, so does the likelihood of disability as an adult (Schüssler-Fiorenza Rose et al 2014)



How does participation change if we are in a trauma-triggered state?



Can we all use the space in a meaningful way?



Do we understand what is being said and any associated consequences?



Can we all get the information we need and retain it?

Traumatic Experiences bring out our Protective Brain

Neocortex

Thinking

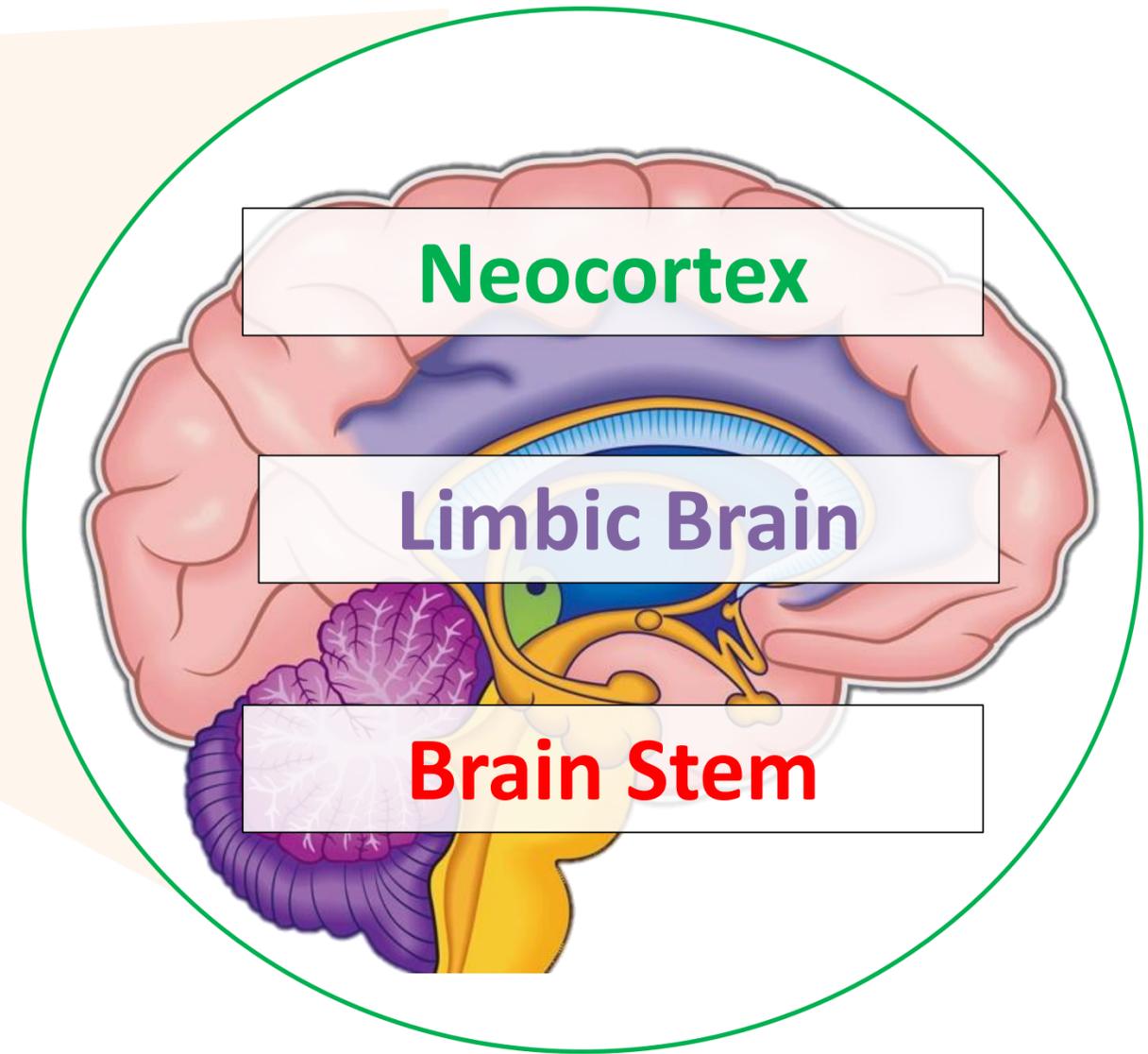
Limbic Brain

Emotions

Brain Stem

Survival

Suites of Expected Behavioral Responses



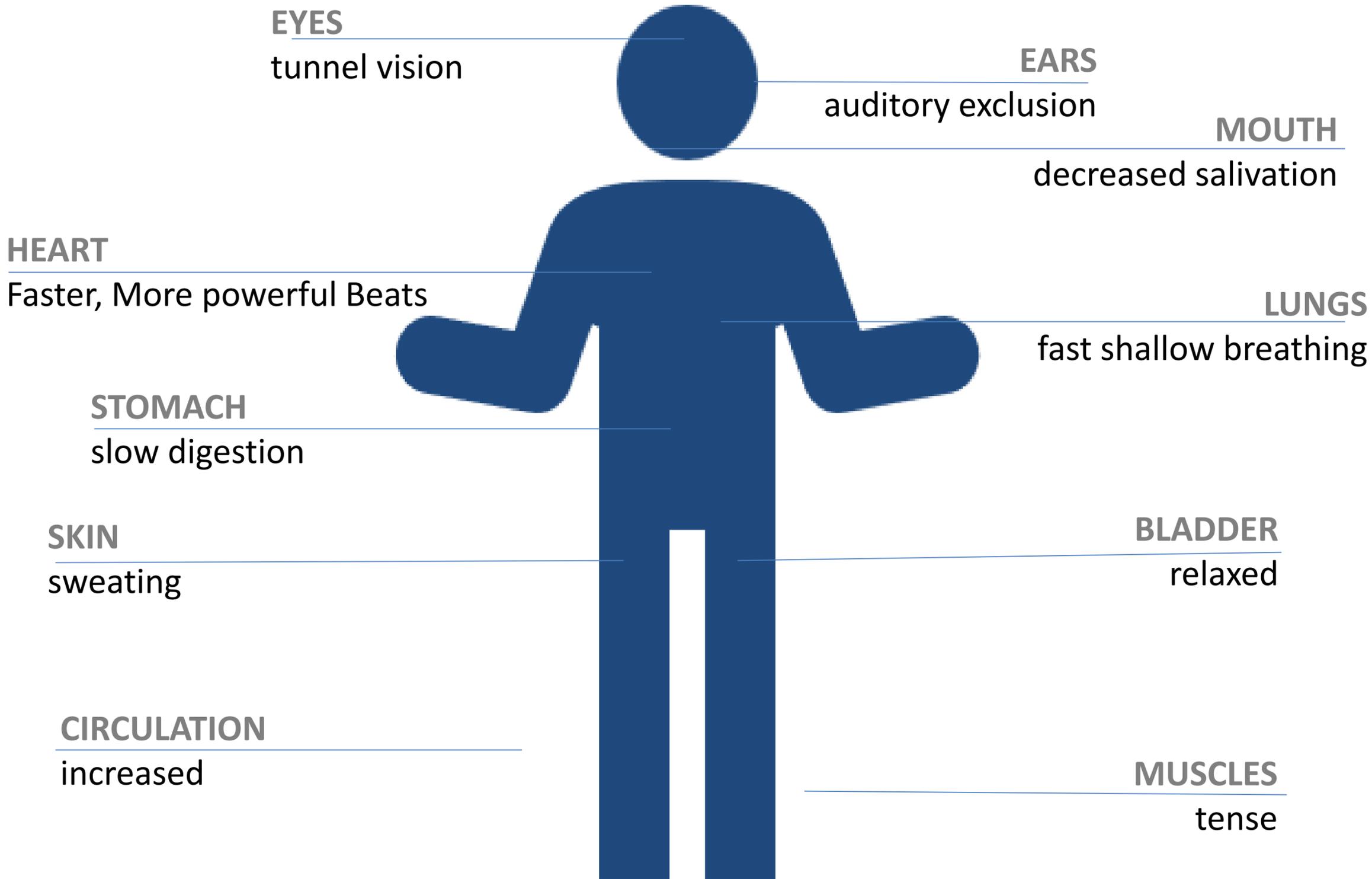
Fight

Freeze

Flight

Fawn

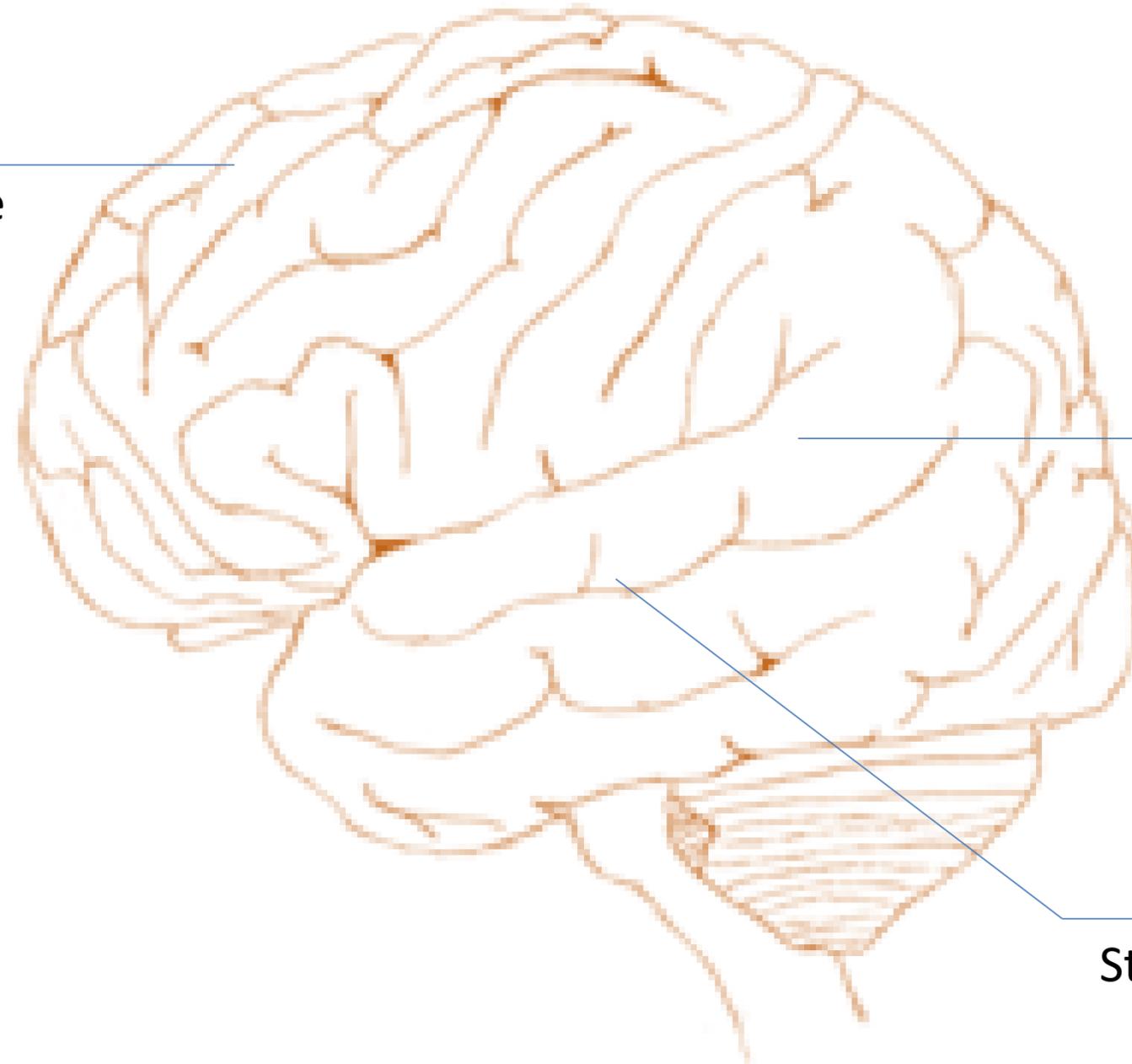
Some Physical Symptoms of Distress



Some Mental/Emotional Symptoms of Distress

PreFrontal Cortex

Decreased ability to make complex decisions
More spontaneous behavior (inhibition lowered)



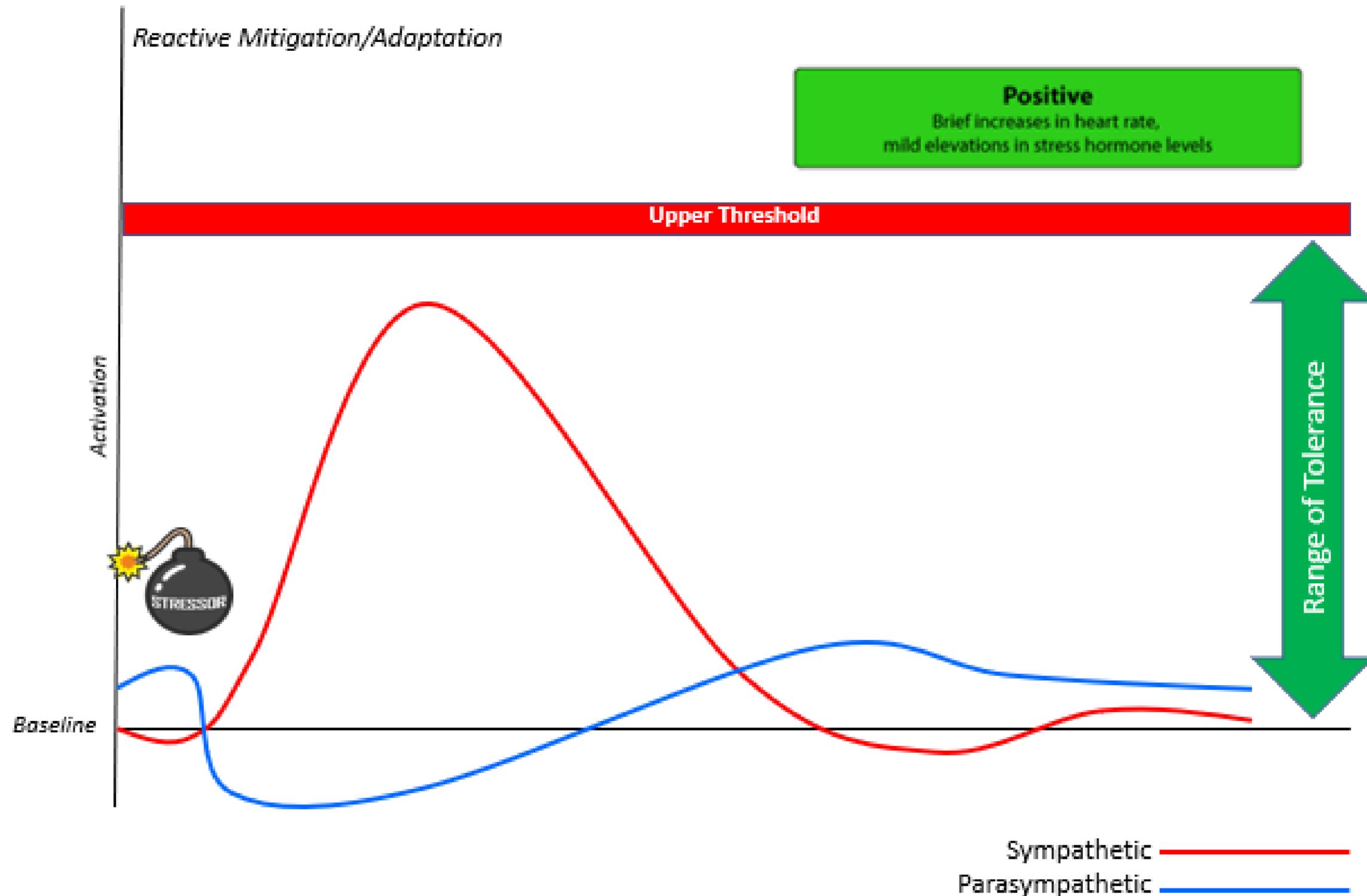
Hippocampus

Normally helps transfer information into memories, less active during stress, becomes smaller with prolonged stress

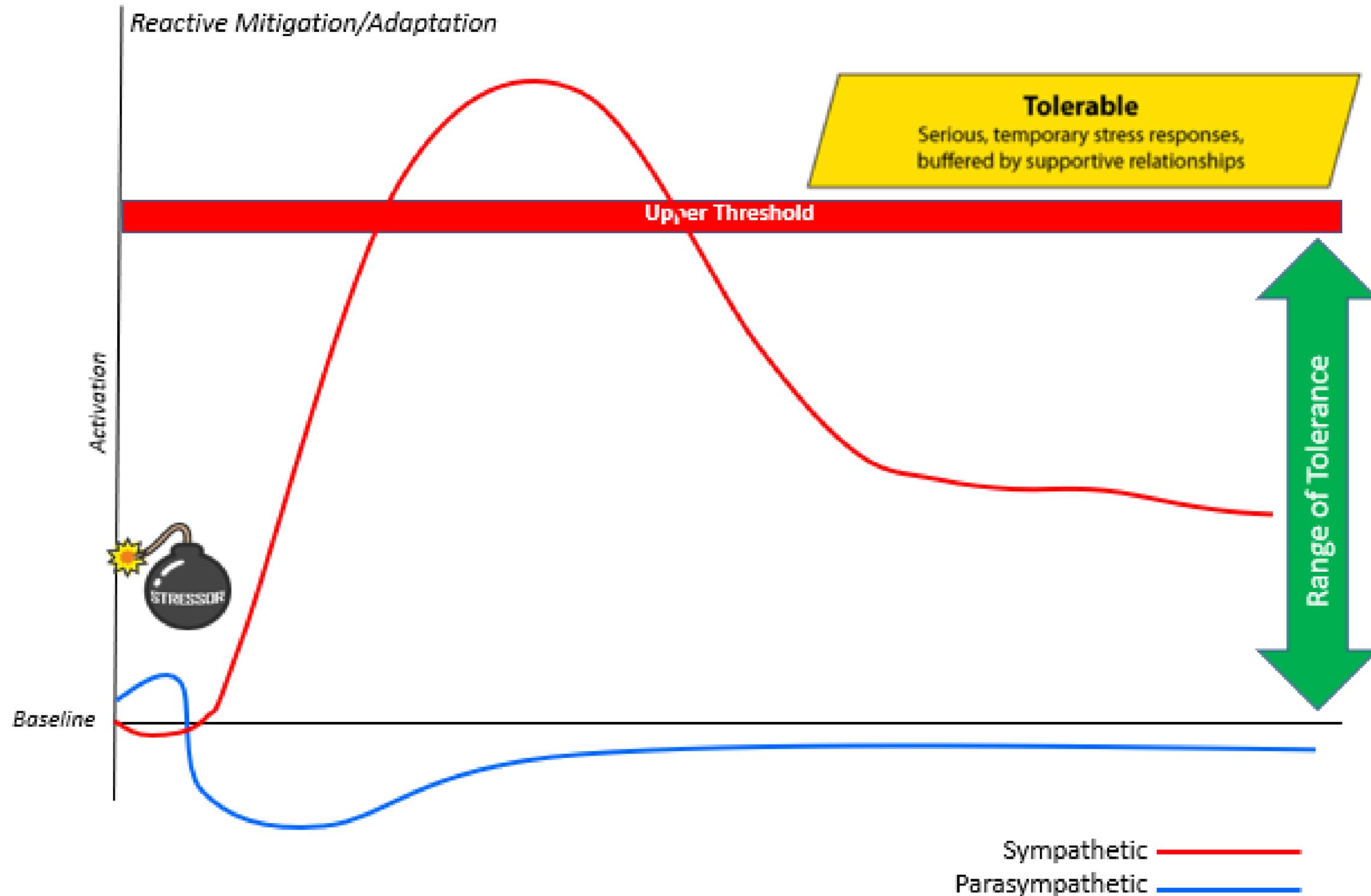
Amygdala

Starts Fight/Flight/Freeze/Fawn more easily activated

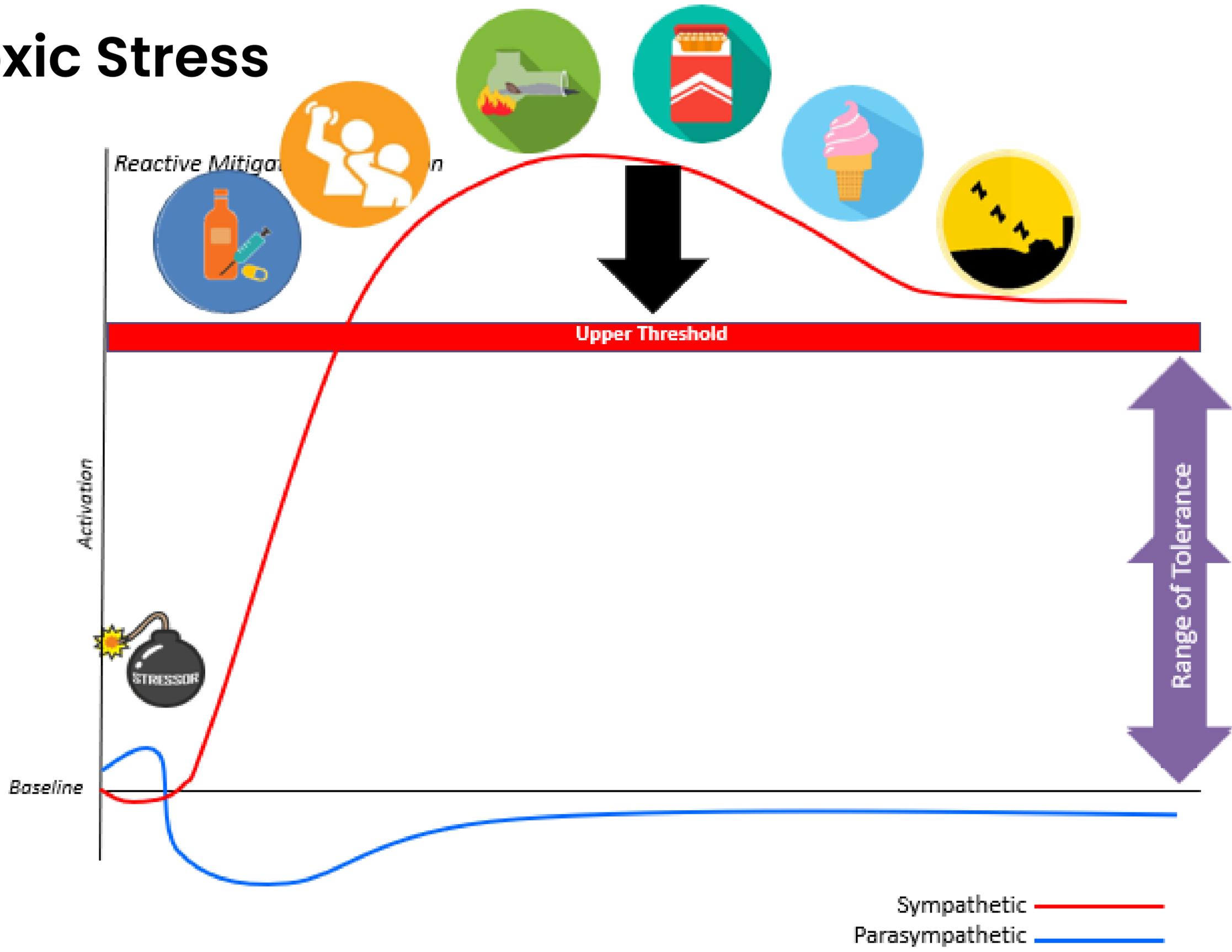
Positive Stress Response



Tolerable Stress Response



Toxic Stress

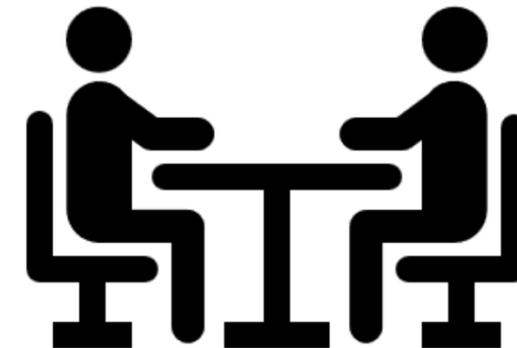


Toxic
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective factors

How **past** trauma could be impacting someone's **current** ability to safely parent their children.

Therapeutic Needs Hierarchy

Our Environment Matters



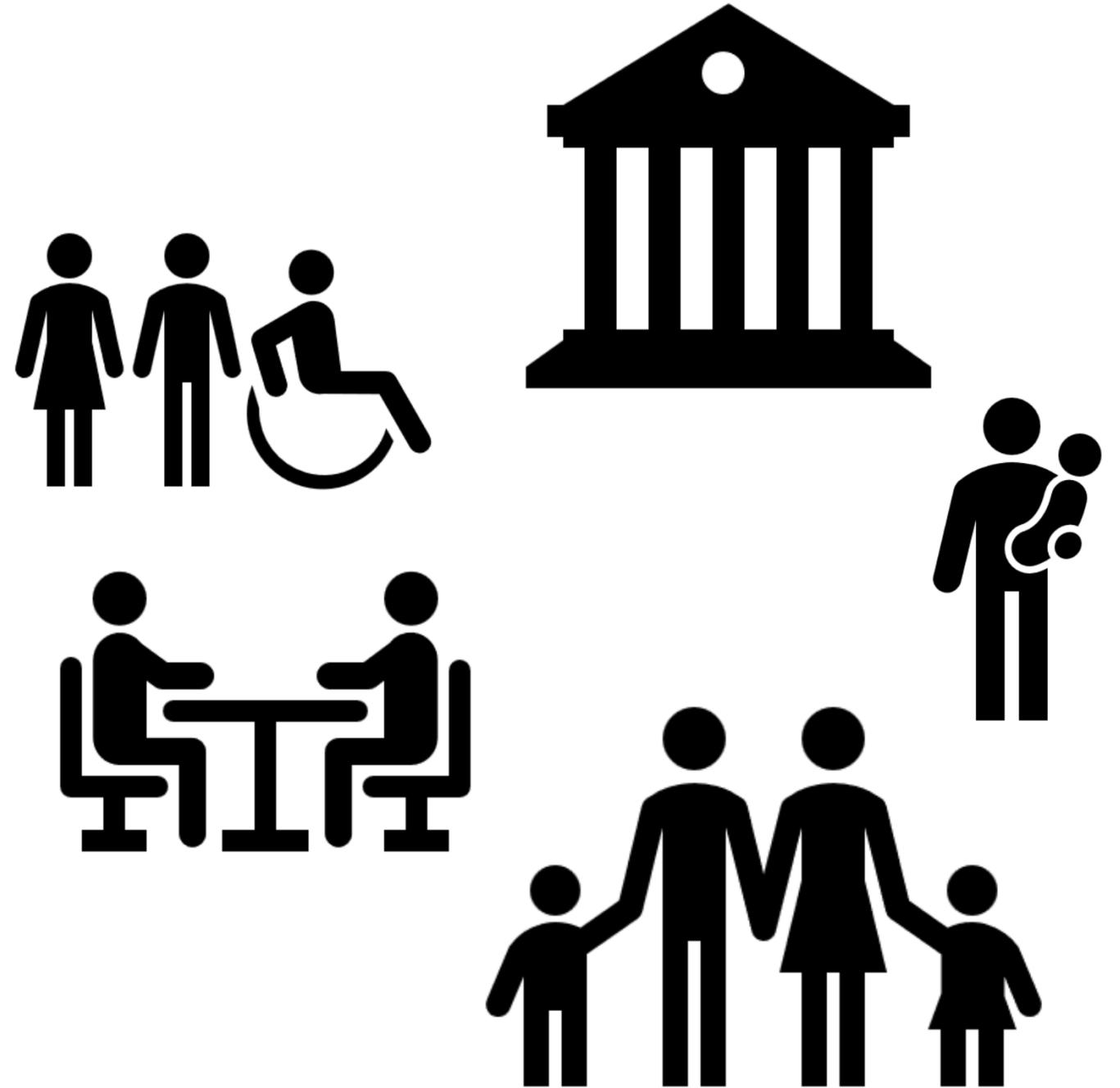
Physical Environment

Mentimeter

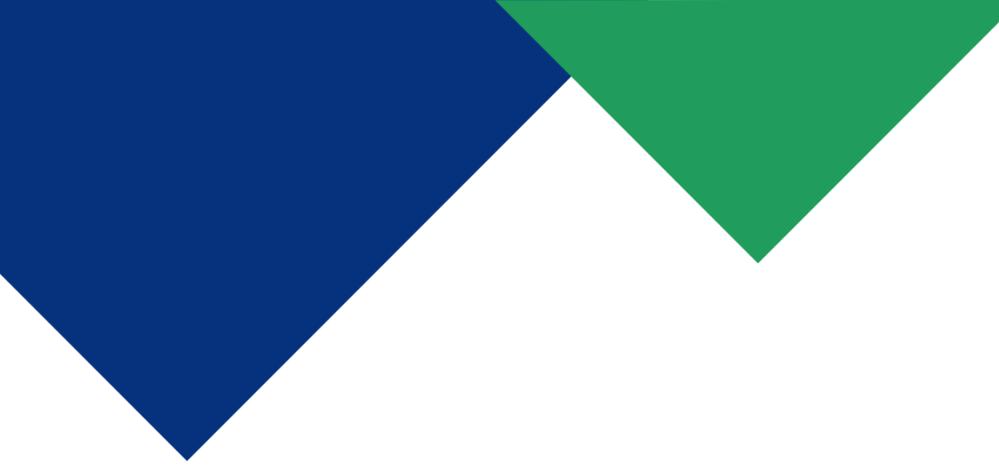
Go to www.menti.com

input code:

or use the QR code below



What about this space makes it
more difficult for you to learn?



Menti Results: Physical Environment (top 5)

Mentimeter

Go to www.menti.com

input code:

Virtual Environment

For some, a virtual environment promotes healing and safety

Safety = Clear Expectations

Emotional regulation

Behavioral Activation

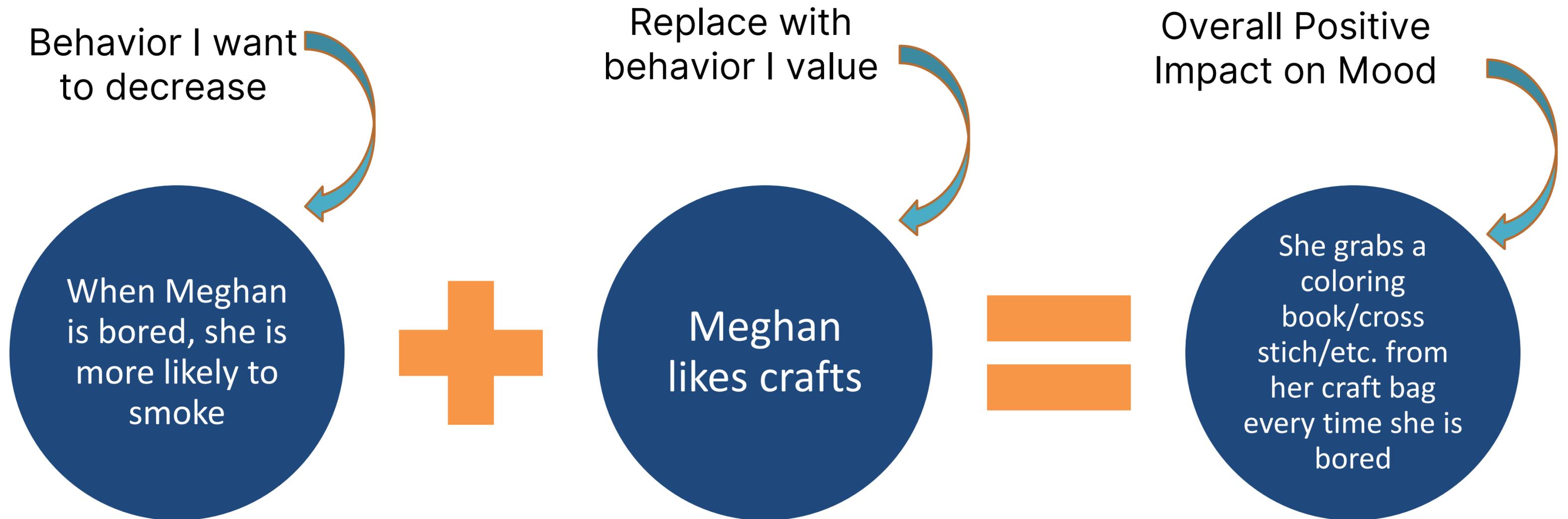
By deliberately practicing certain behaviors, we can “activate” a positive emotional state.

Example: Meghan wants to quit smoking



Why does Behavioral Activation Work?

It doesn't work on its own! In combination with learning regulation, therapy for trauma, & SUD treatment, BA can be very effective



Mindfulness is healing

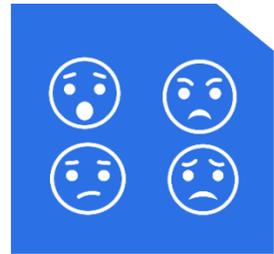
“What would it be like if I
could accept life – accept this
moment – exactly as it is?”

Tara Brach

Summary and Review



How does participation change if we are in a trauma-triggered state?



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We thank you for joining us today!

Our website has more resources
available on this topic (and many
more courts-related areas of
interest)

[https://www.wacita.org/trauma-
accessibility-resources/](https://www.wacita.org/trauma-accessibility-resources/)