



Compassion Focused Therapy: A Promising Treatment Approach To Prevent First Time Sexual Offending

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Prevention

Pre offence



Post offence



The needs...

Fear

"I need help coping with a life of loneliness with no companion, no one to love, no one to cherish"

Stigma

"There is probably no one else hating me more than myself"

Media fuelled hatred

Shame

trauma experiences

Sexual interest

"From me, the urge to have sex with a child is driven by self hatred, and inability to accept the attractions".

Mental ill health

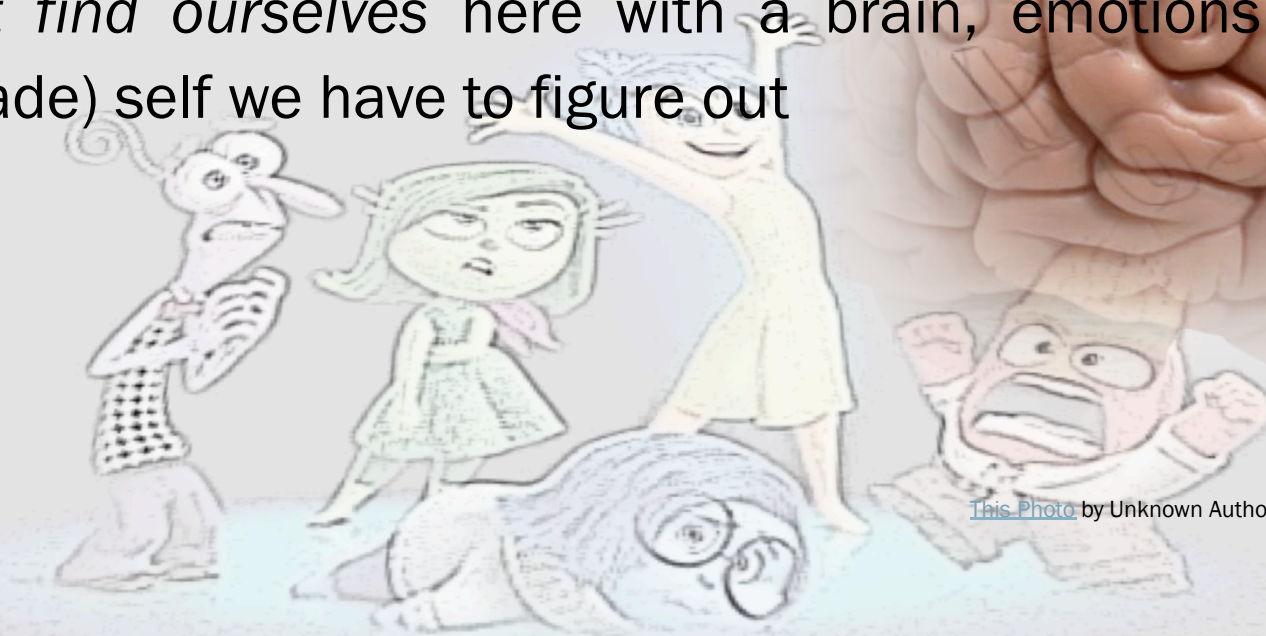
"I need support in dealing with problems that come from being a part of such a hated minority"

social and emotional isolation



life can be tough...

We all *just find ourselves* here with a brain, emotions and sense of (socially made) self we have to figure out



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life can be tough...

Life involves dealing with tragedies and trauma (threats, losses, inequality, diseases, decay, death) and we do the best we can

And we don't choose any of these...the brain that we inherit or the socially constructed sense of self



Indeed...we are but one version of our self:

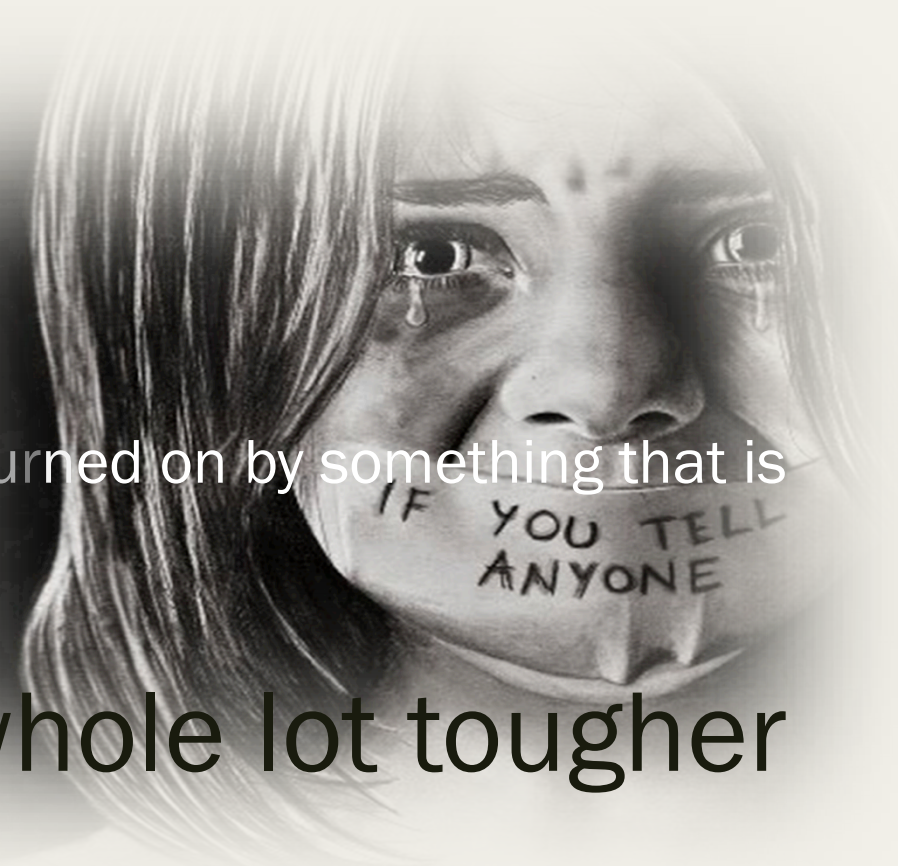


And if things had been different then so could we...

- And then we may discover that we get turned on by something that is unacceptable or harmful to others

...so life just got a whole lot tougher

- Through no fault of our own....we have to be asexual... or sexual and harmful



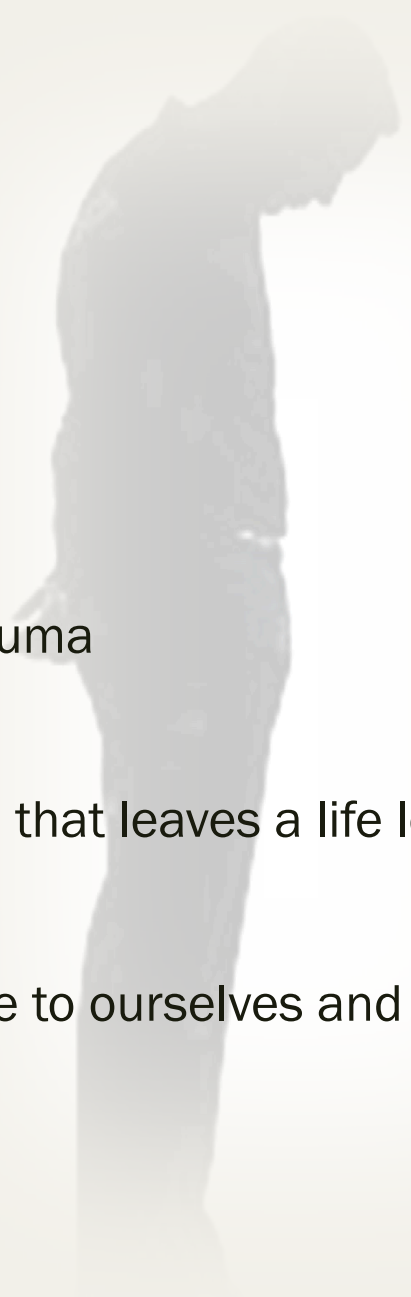
Who do you tell...?



How do you get help?

So

- So life is already tough
- Then some of us experience trauma
- And some of us are dealt a card that leaves a life long legacy (like sexual interests)
- This can effect the way we relate to ourselves and effect the way we relate to others



Yet we offer no help...

The unoffered chair

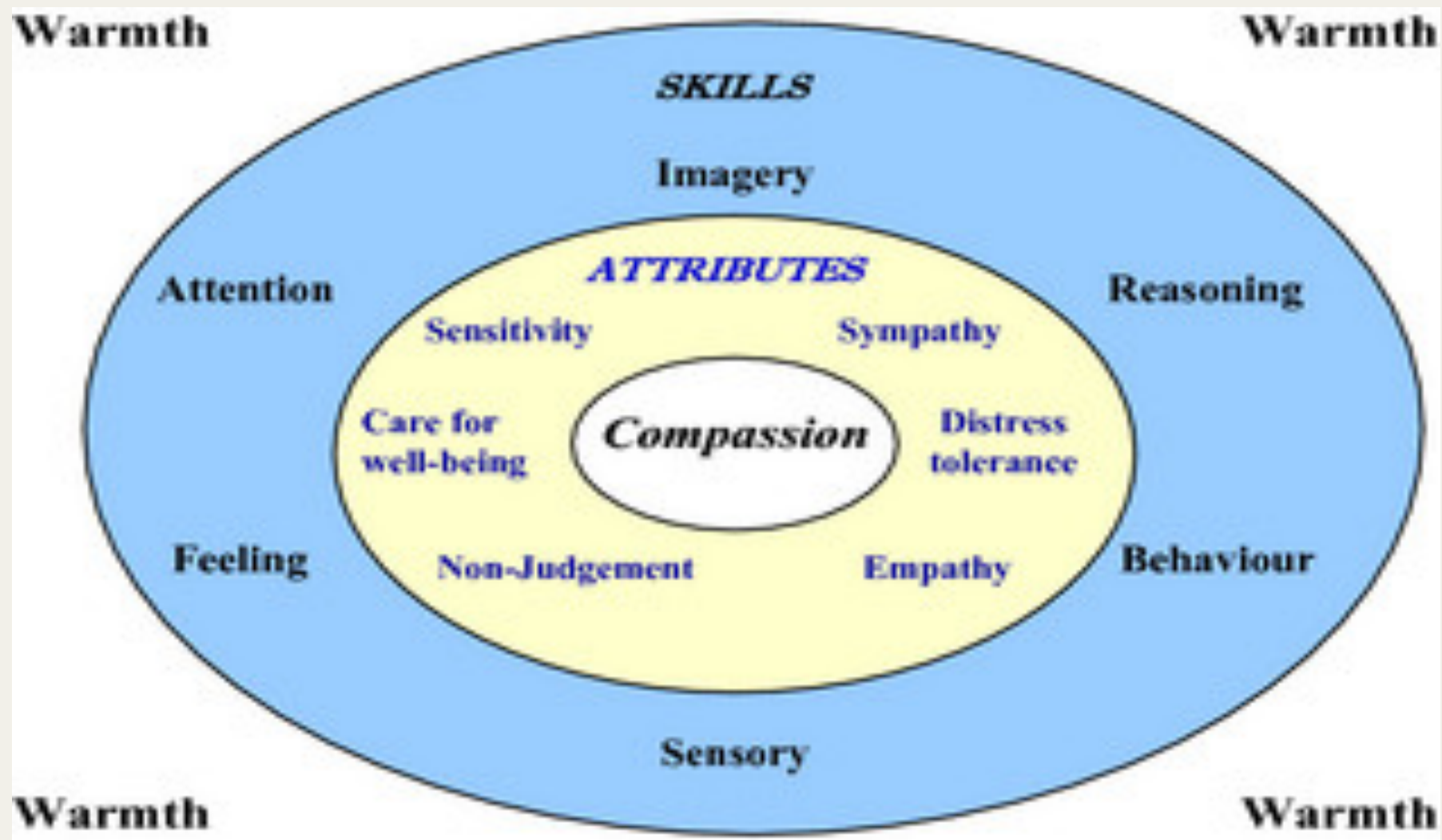


Or we offer help without compassion



Compassion is the courage to descend into the reality of human experience





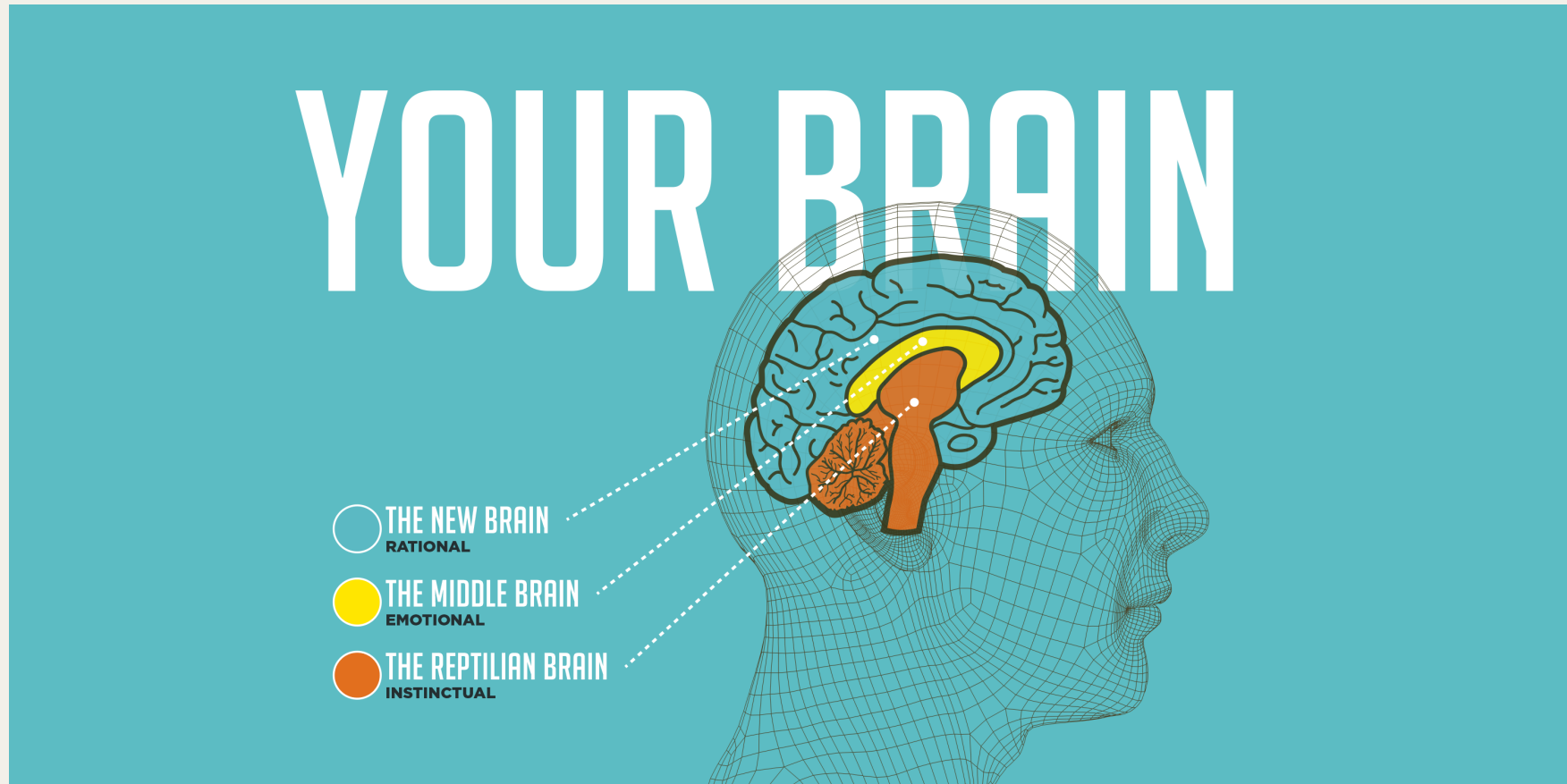
Compassion Focussed Therapy

- CFT is a motivation focused therapy that utilises a range of other evidence-based interventions.
- CFT helps people develop the motivation and competencies for compassion.
- Compassion provides the antidote for the dark side.

So some critical aspects for compassion focussed work

- Evolutionary aspects of our mind/brain
- Attachment theory and social mentalities
- Emotional processing
- Soothing, warmth and compassion

The Evolutionary bit: Brain Design



Our new brain doesn't always get on with our old brain

Getting Primitive: Old Brain Competencies



Motives (harm-avoidance, food, sex, caring, status)

Emotions (anger, anxiety, sadness, joy)

Behaviours (fight, flight, shut down, courting, caring)

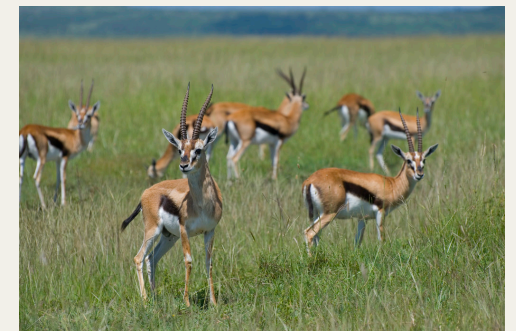
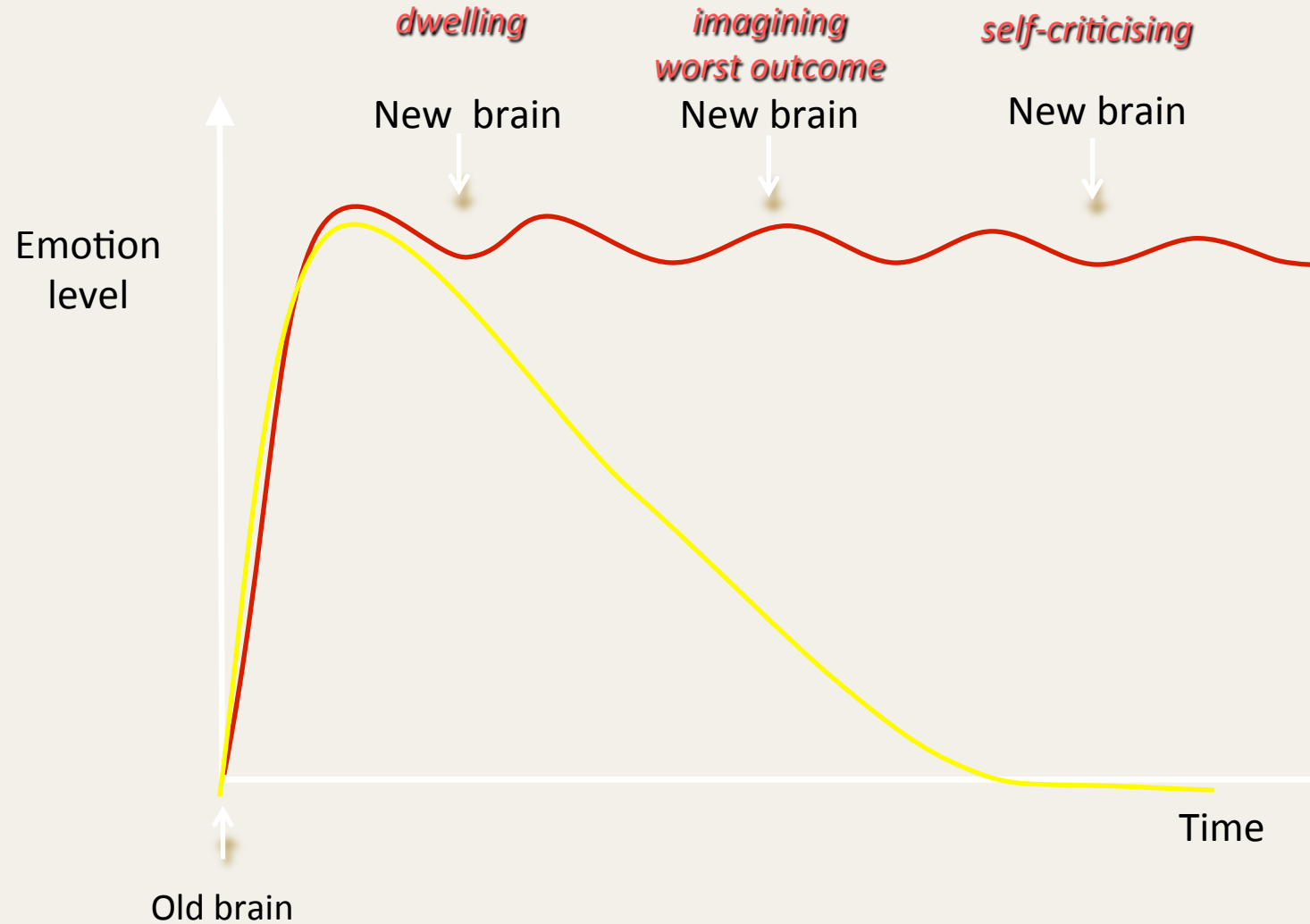


Getting Smart: New Brain Competencies





Getting tricked: New Brain Competencies



The Evolutionary bit: Brain Design

So

Our brains evolved over millions of years and have a range of complex desires, emotions and needs.

We did not choose these but just find ourselves here

So much of what goes on in our mind and brains is **not our fault**.

The kind of genes we inherit, and the backgrounds we come from shape our brains, our beliefs and values.

The Emotional processing bit



Emotions that *fire* together *wire* together

The Three Circles Model

Drive, Excite, Vitality

Content, Safe, Soothed



emotivating

- Emotions motivate us to act
- Threat: Anger (fight): Anxiety (flight): Depression (freeze)
- Fight: sex as a weapon | Fight: sex as an escape | Freeze: sex to neutralise
- If we shame people who have a sexual preference that they didn't choose...

emotivating

- Emotions motivate us to act
- Drive: pursue pleasure goals (sex)
- Drive: pursue control goals (sex)
- If we shame people who have a sexual preference that they didn't choose...

Emotivating: Building compassion

- Self soothing (using sex to settle us)
- Sex as love and connection

The relationship: basis for therapeutic technique

- Focus on the process
- Notice the patterns that emerge in the room
- Model responsibility and nurturing authority
- Know yourself...(personal therapy)

Therapeutic techniques

- Mindfulness; for attention – mindfully notice distress, tune in to automatic response and awareness of it
- Soothing breathing rhythm
- Developing compassion (imagery, voice tone, facial expression)
- Reasoning – mentalizing and theory of mind, see things in a more balanced way, ‘its not my fault’
- Feeling – cultivate positive affect to help distress tolerance
- Behavioural – behavioural experiments such as doing one kind thing for themselves each day,
- Imagery- stimulate and alleviate stress.
- Sensory – noticing body posture, voice tone, breathing, body orientated therapies.

Situation: I am struggling with my clients

Negative automatic thoughts - Others will think I'm incompetent/useless, I'm not up to this – I'm a crap therapist

Feeling: Anxious, Low in mood

Alternative thoughts: It's understandable to feel disappointed – helping people can be really hard

It can be helpful to remember that I am helping other people that I'm working with, and that I've helped people in the past

Psychologists often have these kinds of problems

It could be helpful to consider sharing my difficulties, seek supervision/help, talk to others – find ways to keep trying my best

Thanks to Chris Irons at the Compassionate Mind Foundation for permission to use this slide

Concluding thoughts

- Prevention must take a compassionate stance
- CFT builds motivation and capability for change
- Given some clients may have a fixed interest, an orientation, acceptance based therapies are more realistic

And...recognise that it is not the fault of the person who has asked for help to manage a harmful sexual interest.