

# When Crisis Comes to Your Workplace or Community



Keystone Crisis Intervention Team  
2015 Criminal Justice Advisory Board Conference  
March 25, 2015

# Trainer

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  - KCIT Certified Trainer
  - KCIT Team Member since 2005
  - Supervisor of Direct Services, Survivors, Inc. Gettysburg, PA
  - Victims' Services Professional with 17 years experience

# Objectives

## **Attendees will be able to:**

- Identify and access resources available in the aftermath of a critical incident
- Describe the physical, emotional and behavioral crisis reactions of staff in the aftermath of a critical incident
- Describe how trauma responses can impact the workplace and/or community

# KCIT Mission Statement

KCIT empowers local communities to support crime victims in their recovery from traumatic incidents by assessing the impact of the event on the community; developing an intervention plan; and providing crisis intervention by trained volunteer teams.

# Keystone Crisis Intervention Team



- Responding to communities in the aftermath of criminal incidents since 2000
- 24 hour Hotline: 1-855-SOS-KCIT
- [www.kcitpa.org](http://www.kcitpa.org)

# Criminal Incidents can include:

- Acts of terrorism
- Crimes affecting children (i.e. school shootings)
- Workplace shootings
- Arson
- Homicide
- Domestic Violence Related Homicide
- Robbery

# Levels of Intervention

- Technical Assistance
- Needs Assessment
- Intervention Plan Development
- Individual and Group Crisis Intervention
- Training and Capacity Building

# KCIT Services

- Assistance in connecting with local crisis services
- Assessment of impact of trauma
- Individual and group crisis interventions
- Emotional support for planned events
- Companionship
- Crisis training for local providers

# Requesting KCIT Services

- Call the 24 hour hotline:  
1-855-SOS-KCIT (767-5248)
- Requests should be made by an individual with authority to request intervention services.



# Trauma

“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”

-Judith Herman,

*Trauma and Recovery*, 1993

# Trauma

## Individual Trauma:

A “blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such force that one cannot respond effectively.”

- Kai Erickson, *In the Wake of a Flood*, 1979

## Collective Trauma:

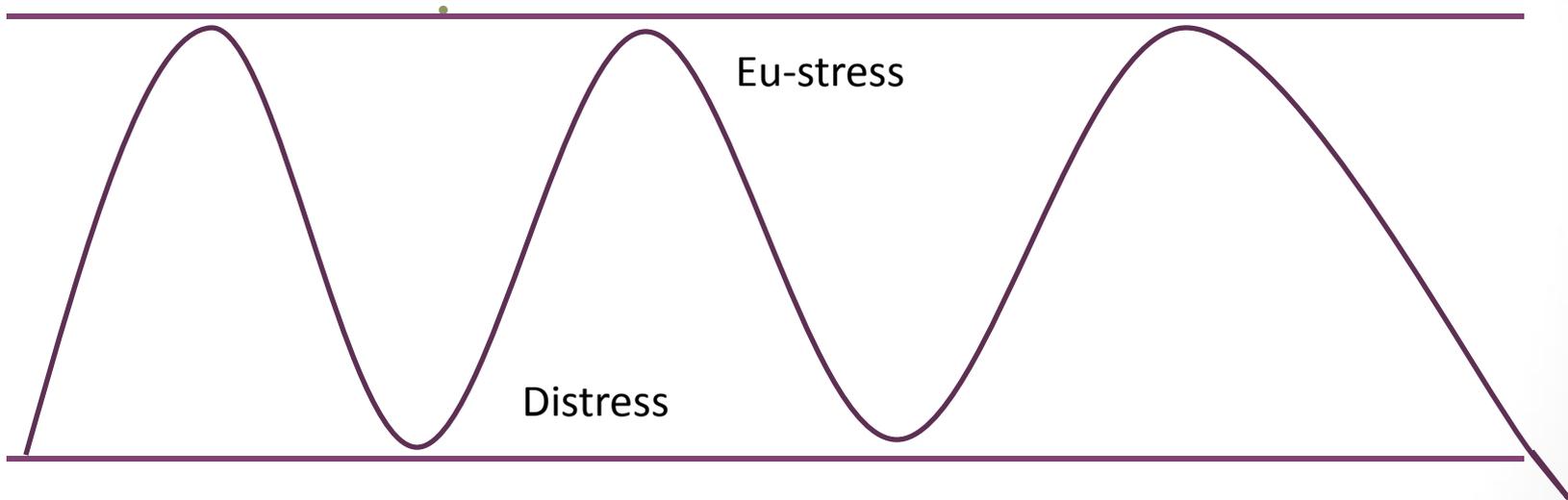
A “blow to the tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together.”

- Kai Erickson, *In the Wake of a Flood*, 1979

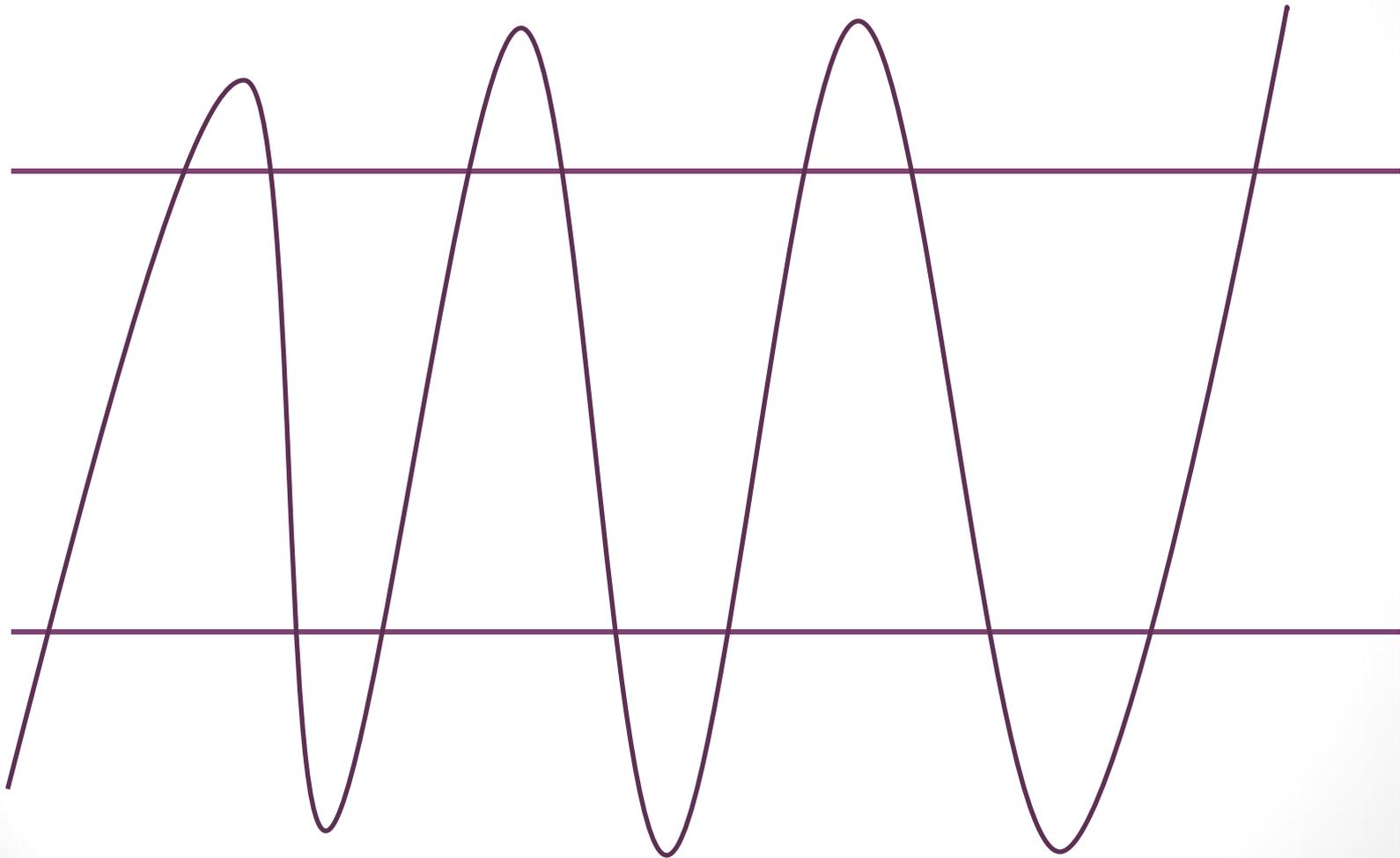
Trauma is any event that leaves a person feeling hopeless, helpless, fearing for their life and/or their safety.

# Fluctuating Equilibrium

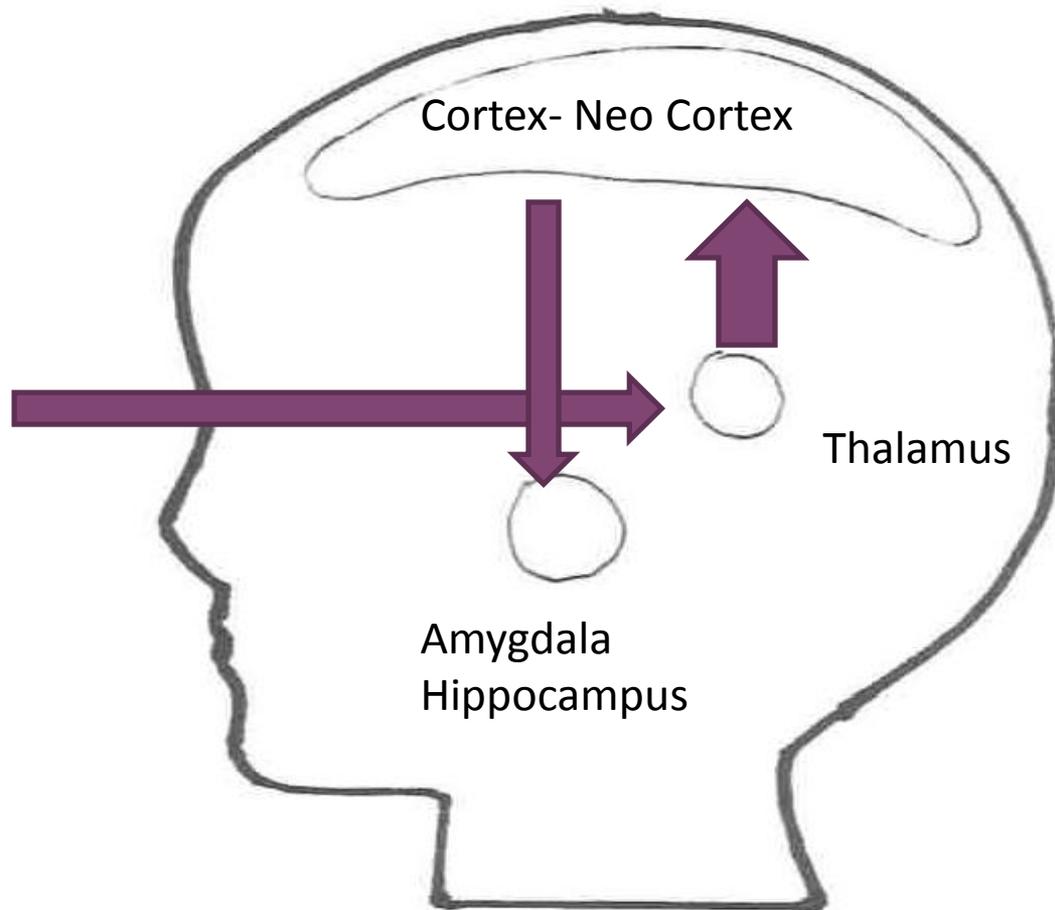
## Normal Stress



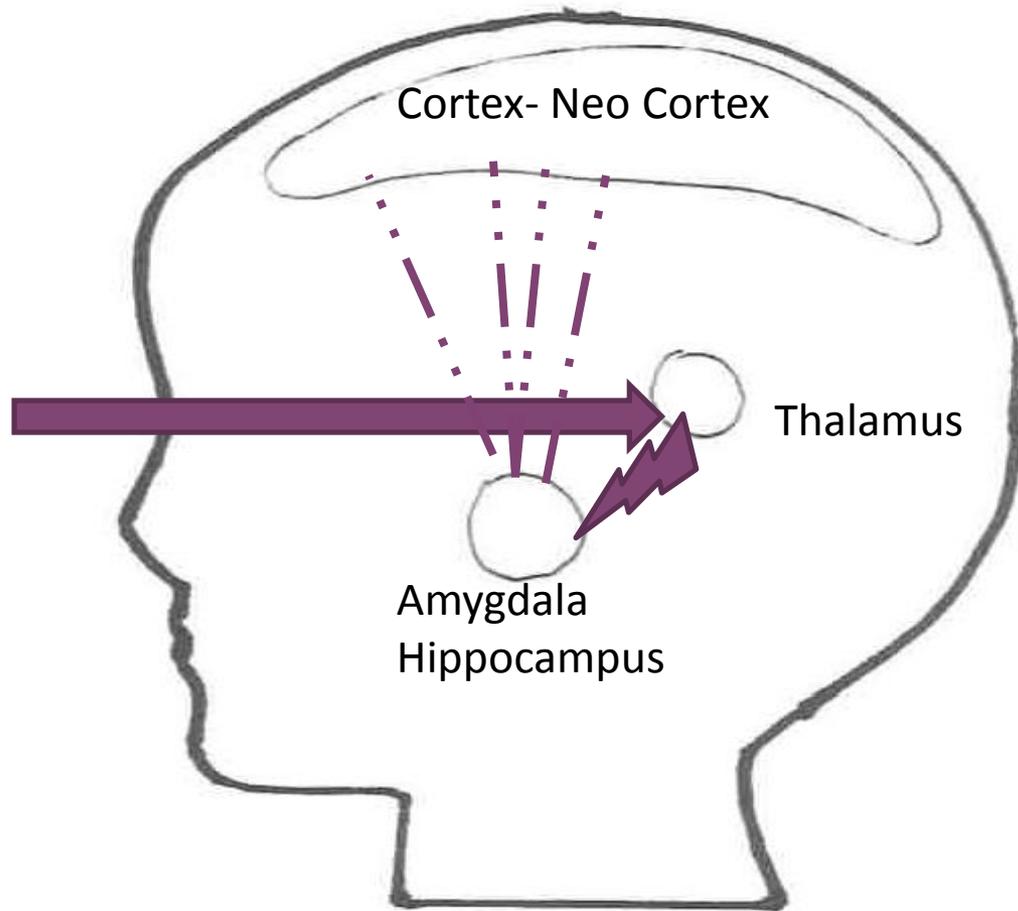
# Impact of Trauma on Equilibrium



# Sensory Path in the Non-Traumatized Brain



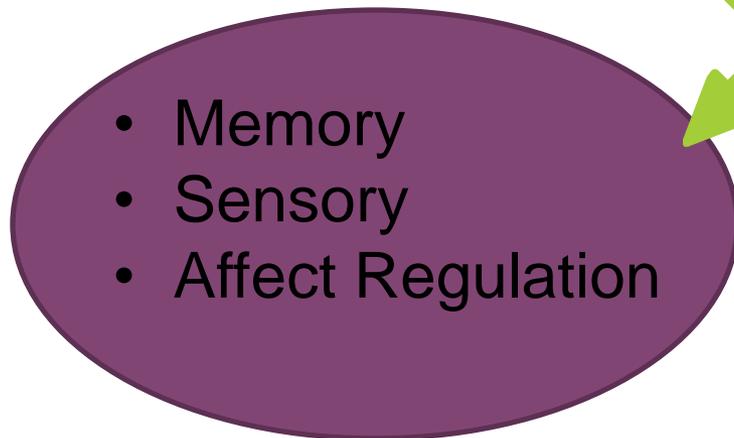
# Sensory Path in the Traumatized Brain



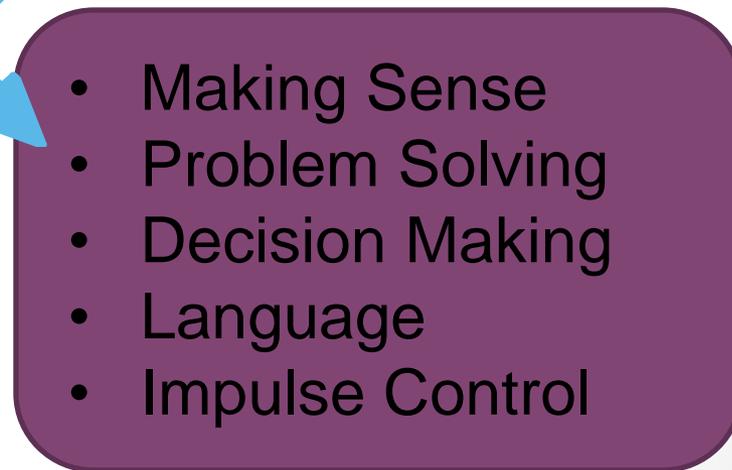
# During a Traumatic Event

The pathways between the right and left brain experience a disconnect.

- Right Brain

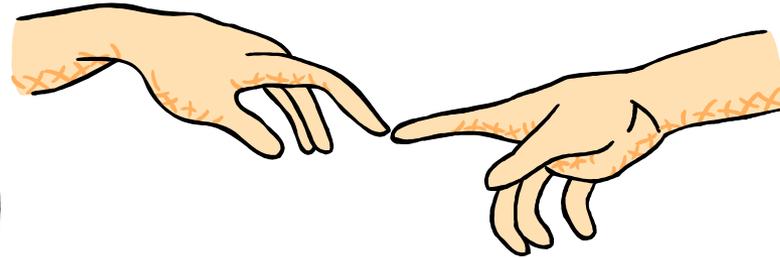


## Left Brain



# Remember...

- Trauma is a sensory experience



- It is not cognitive!

# Fight, Flight, or Freeze?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39i89NJNCRO>

# Crisis Reactions

## PHYSICAL

### **Frozen Fright**

Numbness  
Deer in the Headlights  
Disorientation  
Confusion

## EMOTIONAL

### **Shock – Disbelief – Denial**

Can't believe this is happening  
Feeling helpless  
Questioning  
Loss of control

## BEHAVIORAL

### **Withdrawal**

Inability to move  
Inability to make decisions  
Staring into space  
Inability to speak  
Time slows or stops  
Problem communicating thoughts  
Unresponsive to others

# Crisis Reactions

## PHYSICAL

### **Fight, Flight or Adapt**

Heart rate increases  
Senses more acute  
Adrenalin rush  
Urination  
Defecation  
Regurgitation  
Tunnel vision  
Muffled hearing  
Autonomic System takes over

## EMOTIONAL

### **Cataclysm of Emotions**

Not Linear – Mixed  
  
Fear/Terror  
Anger/Rage  
Confusion/Frustration  
Guilt/Self Blame  
Grief/Sorrow

## BEHAVIORAL

### ***Ready to Fight or Run***

Survival behaviors  
Decisions not moral or values based  
Regression in some learned behaviors  
Somatic complaints  
Poor problem solving  
Overly sensitive  
Emotional outbursts  
Disassociation  
Controlling  
Loss of appetite  
Exaggerated startle response

# Crisis Reactions

## PHYSICAL

### *Exhaustion*

**Yesterday-Today-  
Tomorrow**

**Past-Present-Future**

Exhaustion sets in  
Creating more adrenalin  
Under activity

## EMOTIONAL

### *Reconstruction*

Time begins anew as they  
start life after the traumatic  
event

Possible long term  
reactions  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Numbing  
Less trusting  
Disassociation

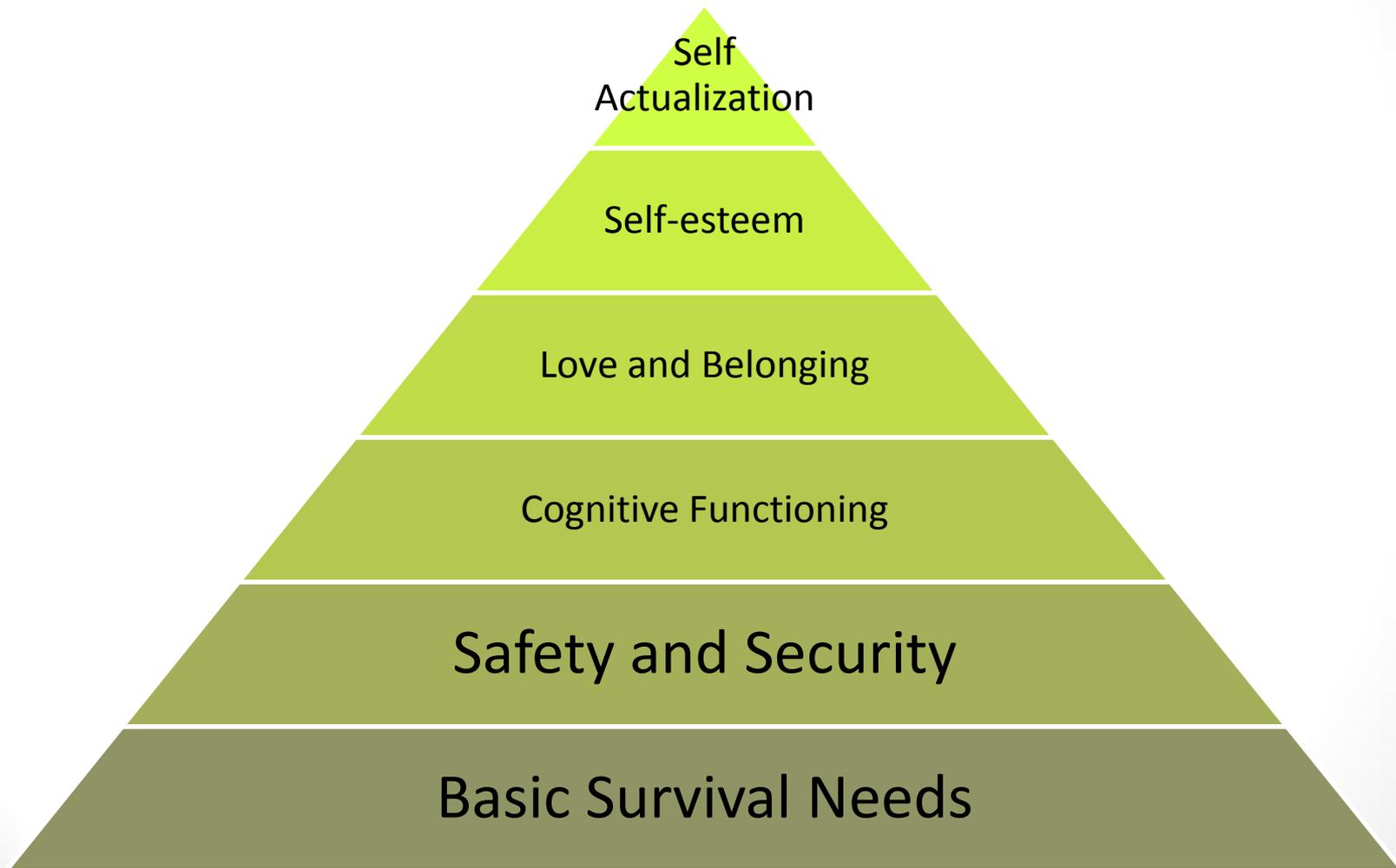
## BEHAVIORAL

### *Surviving or Coping*

Getting back to a new  
state of equilibrium

Insomnia  
Irritability  
Poor problem solving  
Drug or Alcohol  
Eating disturbance  
Sexual dysfunction  
Obsessive  
Compulsive  
Behaviors

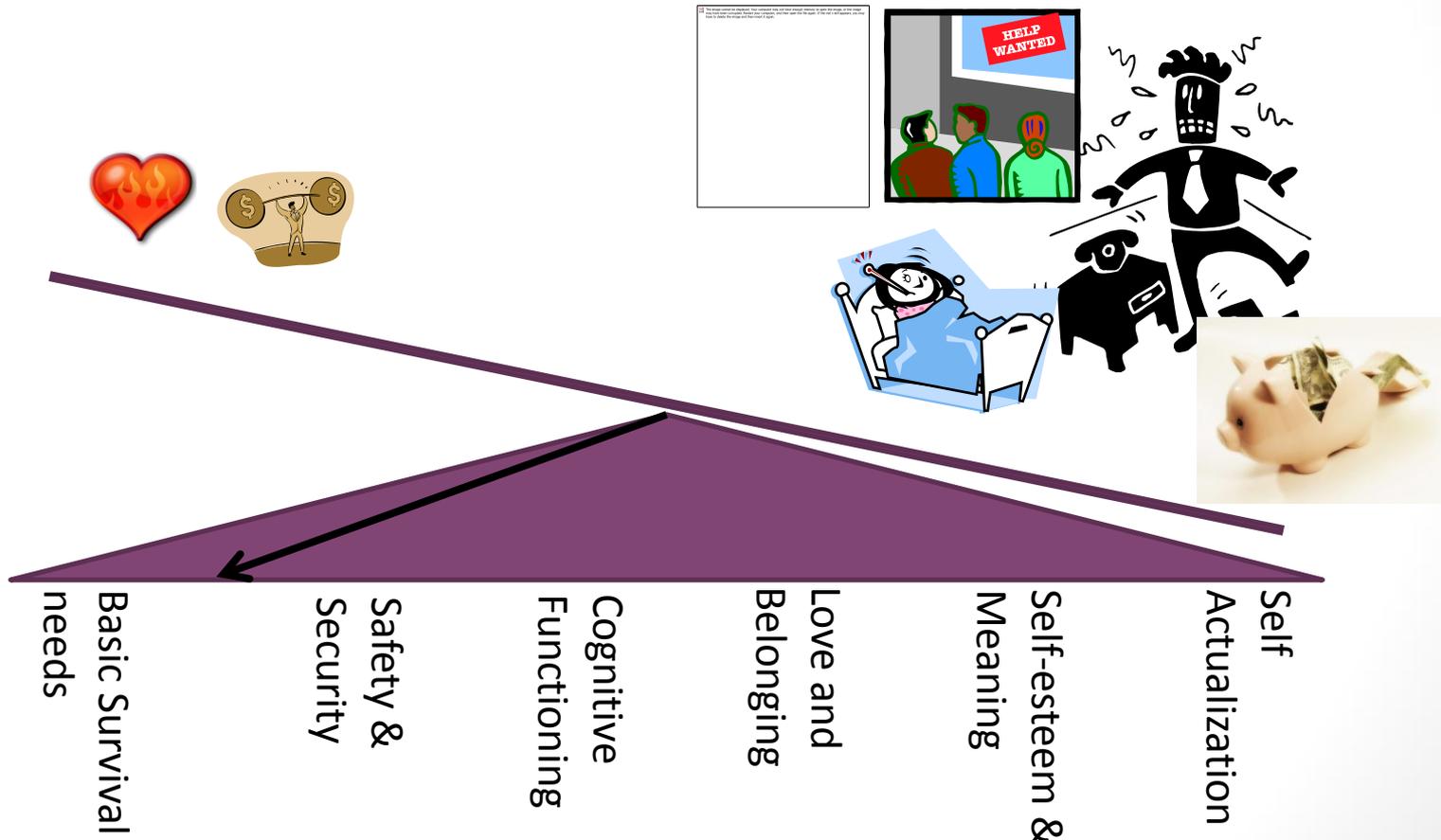
# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# Loss of Equilibrium in Trauma

Adaptive Capacities

Stressors



# Stressors: Good and Bad



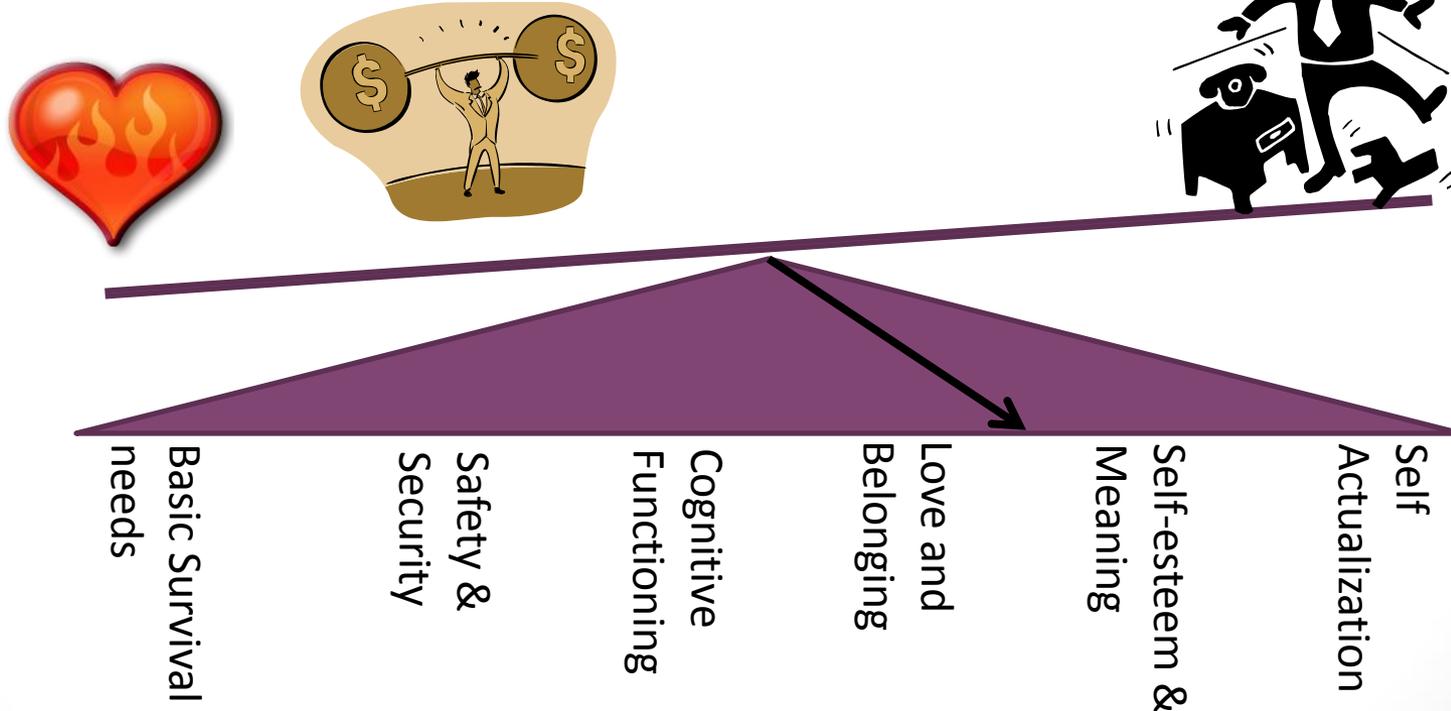
# Adaptive Capacities

- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Cognitive abilities
- Education/ experiences
- Financial means
- Spiritual connection
- Self-esteem

# Maintaining Equilibrium

Adaptive Capacities

Stressors

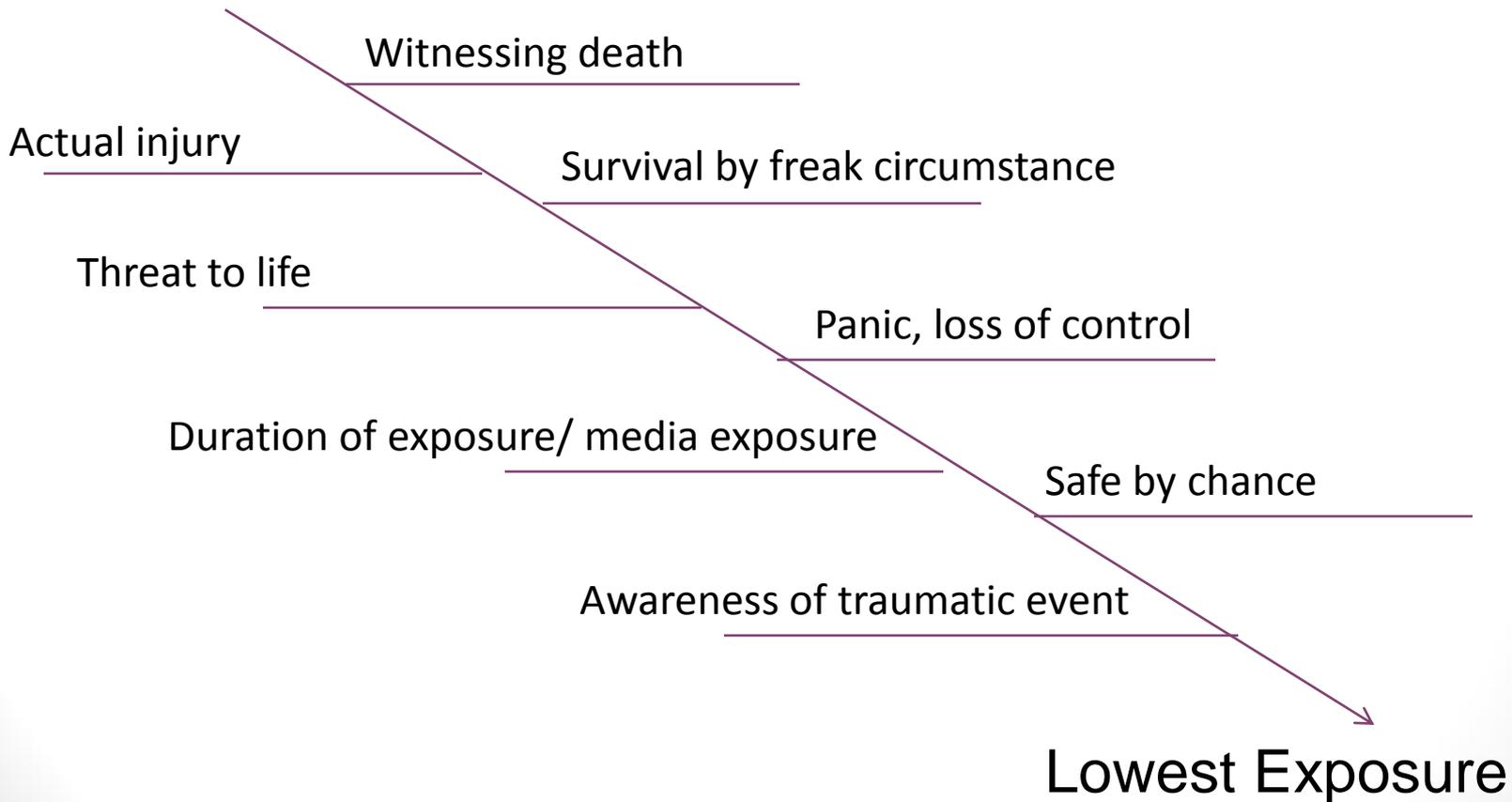


# Dimensions of Trauma

- The impact of trauma is no different whether actual or perceived
- Potential for reoccurrence
- Extent of social disruption
- Potential of recurrence
- Magnitude of number of people affected
- Extent of community harm

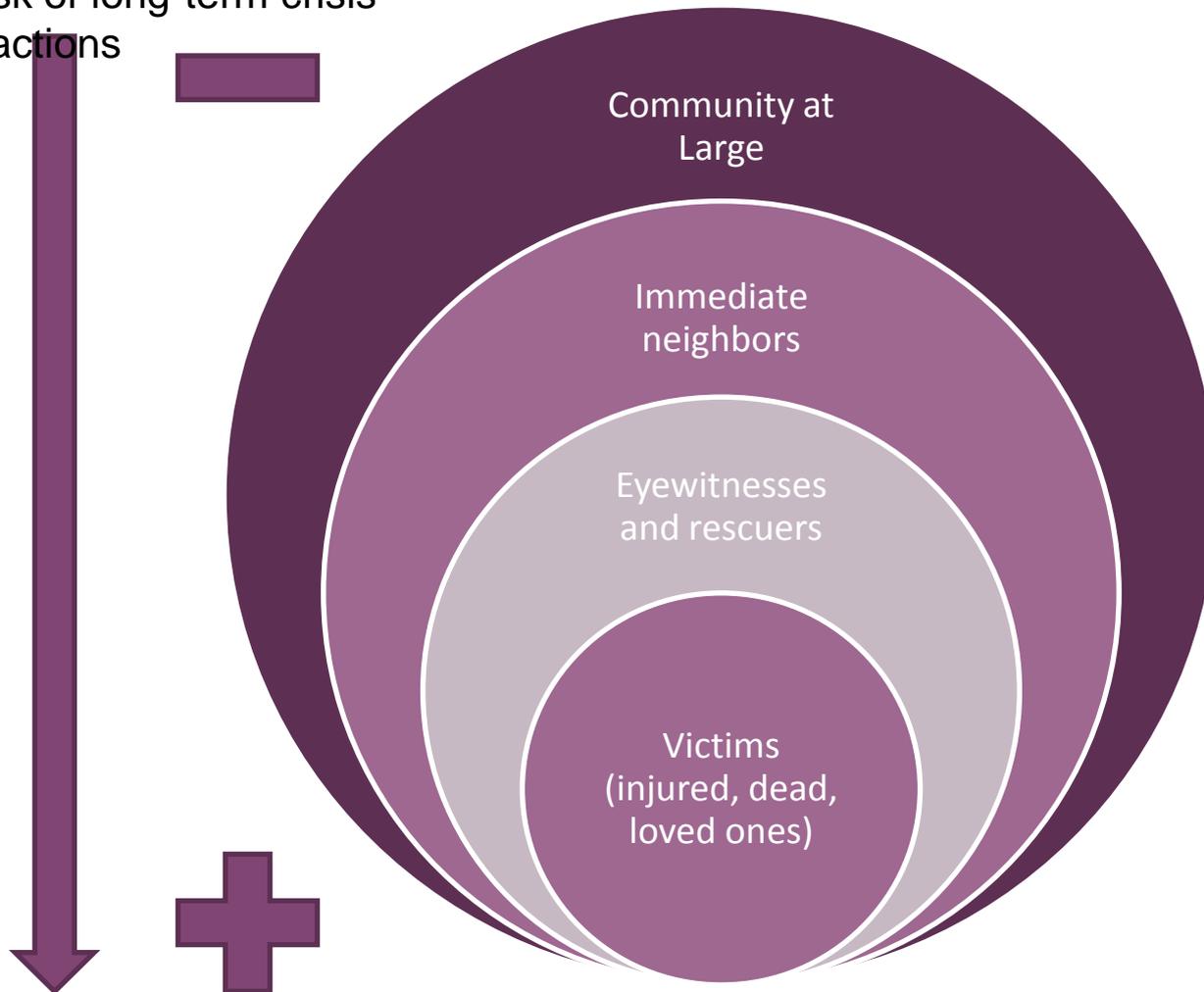
# Impact of Exposure to Trauma

- Highest Exposure



# Proximity Effects

Risk of long-term crisis  
reactions



# Goals of Crisis Intervention

- To lower emotional arousal so that cognitive process can take place
- To reduce stress and to build adaptive capacities
- To assist in establishing a narrative of the event
- To assist individuals with interpreting the event in order to derive and create meaning
- To help individuals in the integration of traumatic events into their “life story”

# Basics of Crisis Intervention

- Establish sense of safety
- Promote a sense of control
- Assist victims establish a linear narrative
  - Past
  - Present
  - Future
- Normalize common crisis reactions
- Provide possible solutions to practical issues
- Inform victims of local resources
- Identify coping strategies

# Elements of Crisis Intervention

- **S**afety and **S**ecurity
- **V**entilation and **V**alidation
- **P**rediction and **P**reparedness

Applies to individuals, programs/agencies and communities

# Safety and Security

- Safety - “physical” issue:
  - Physical safety and medical needs
  - Survival needs (food, clothing, sleep, etc.)
- Security - “emotional’ issue:
  - Privacy
  - Confidentiality
  - Need for information and communication
  - Sense of control

# Establish Safety & Security

- Ensure the workplace is safe for staff
- Provide factual information in a timely manner
- Quiet rooms/spaces
- Flexible/alternate staff schedules
- Designate support people
- On-going staff check-ins to assess their needs/concerns
- Facilitate connection

# Ventilation and Validation

- Ventilation - identifying appropriate words to express experiences, reactions, responses
  - Compassionate presence
  - Speaking style
  - Effective words and listening style
- Validation - helps survivors understand that most reactions are not uncommon
  - Content specific
  - Reflective listening
  - Careful choice of words

# Establish Opportunities for Ventilation & Validation

- Slow down
- Just being there or having someone there
- Provide opportunities for staff to talk about the incident
- Normalize common crisis responses
- Provide education about crisis reactions
- It's about them and their experience

# Prediction and Preparation

- Prediction - Identify future practical issues and concerns
  - What happens next?
  - Problems in next few days/months
  - Concrete information
- Preparation - Problem solve and plan practical solutions
  - Provide information
  - Answer practical concerns
  - Referrals

# Establish Prediction & Preparation

- Impact on family and community
- Employment and financial concerns
- Criminal Justice System
- Identify coping strategies
- Long term stress reactions
- Provide information about local counseling resources
- Schedule regular supervision times
- Model self care
- Instill hope

# Signs of Trauma Reactions in the Workplace

- How does trauma impact staff in the workplace?
  - What signs/symptoms might present?
- How does trauma impact Agency function?
  - What signs/symptoms might present?
- What does it look like when staff are overwhelmed?
- How does the work day look different during times of stress?

# Assessment Tool

- Injuries/Fatalities/Witnesses/Groups
- Cultural Considerations
- Spiritual Issues
- Sensorial Issues
- Typology
- Conceptual Issues
- Duration Issues
- Proximity Issues
- Convergence Issues

# Possible Pitfalls Following a Critical Incident

- Assuming staff will respond in a prescribed or uniform manner
- Assuming staff will re-establish equilibrium in the same time frame
- Avoidance of addressing emotional impact on staff

# More Pitfalls

- Just “not dealing with it”
- Discounting the “trauma history” of staff individually or collectively
- Discounting the impact of the cumulative stress from everyday job responsibilities
- Assuming supervisors are “handling it”

# A Crisis Response Plan is Vital

- Decision making and communication during and after a critical incident
- Decrease additional trauma
- Available resources: short- and long-term
- Increase on-the-job productivity and decrease down time
- Liability issues

# Do's & Don't's

- Communication
- Crisis Intervention
- Staff Support
- Operations

Community cohesion is the most important asset during recovery after a critical incident.

# Resiliency & Coping

## Resiliency:

A person's inherent capacity to moderate and recover from a traumatic experience.

# Resiliency & Coping

## Coping:

When a person constantly changes cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific extern/internal demands that are taxing or exceeding the resources of that individual.

# Resiliency & Coping

**Biological Vulnerabilities**

**+ Perceived Stressors**

**– Coping**

**= Severity of Impact**

# Resiliency & Coping

**MOTIVATION**

**PERMISSION**

**EDUCATION**

**COURAGE**

**HOPE**

# Resiliency & Coping

- When faced with a problem, people:
  - Define the problem
  - Try to solve the problem
  - Try to live with the problem
  - Try to hide from the problem
  - Quit trying all together

# Resources

- Keystone Crisis Intervention Team [www.kcitpa.org](http://www.kcitpa.org)
- Office of Victims of Crime [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)
- Holly Hart Consulting [www.hollyhartconsulting.com](http://www.hollyhartconsulting.com)
- Psychological First Aid  
[www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid](http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid)
- OMHSAS, A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions
- USDOJ, FBI, Office for Victim Assistance, Crisis Response Training Manual
- PCADV: When Crisis Strikes: A Toolkit for Critical Incidence Response and Management  
[www.pcadv.org/Crisis/](http://www.pcadv.org/Crisis/)

# Contact Information

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