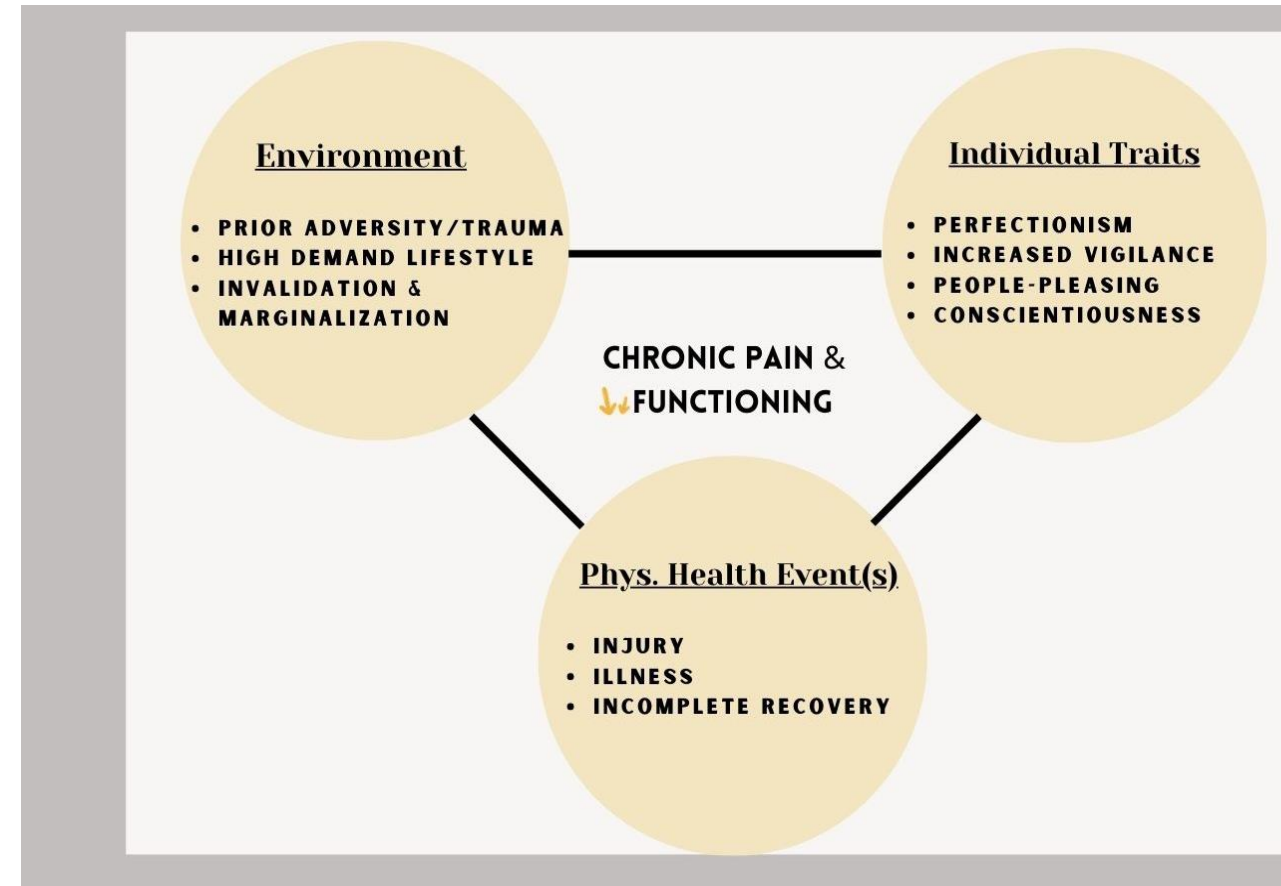


Disrupting the dynamics of chronic pain, trauma & perfectionism

Ashley Greenwell, PhD,
Psychologist



Why this talk?

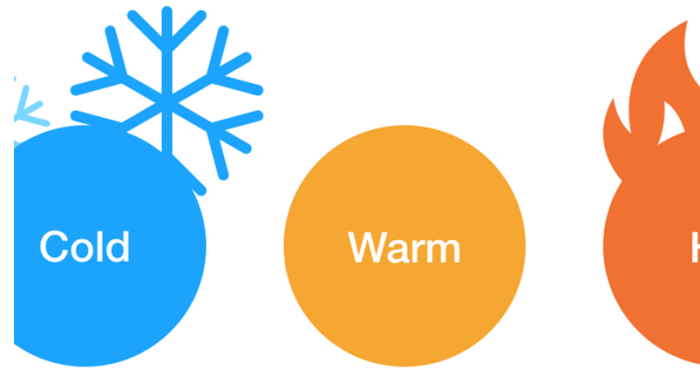
- Scope, severity, & complexity of the issue
 - Nationally 14% have multimorbidity chronic medical issues
 - 25% condition interferes work, school, or imp. activities
 - Onyeka, 2020
- Fragmented, Simplistic, & Harmful Systems
- Suicide Risk
 - Thwarted belonging, entrapment, & burdensomeness
 - Kirtley et al, 2020
- My background
- Our clients

Why Radically Open DBT (RO DBT) & Pain Reprocessing Therapy (PRT)?

- Interventions that address the threat systems in our body
 - RO DBT
 - For Embodied Psychological Safety & Social Connection
 - PRT
 - For Embodied Physical Safety

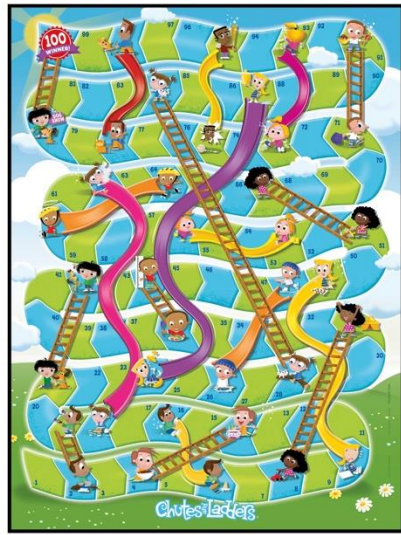
Disclaimers & Givens

- Pain is real. All pain involves the brain. People are not imagining their pain.
- Not a PRT or RO DBT therapist training or certification
- This is not your fault.
 - Even if you discover you've been doing some things that might be worsening the severity of your pain.
- I am not Pro/Anti Traditional Healthcare or Holistic Care
- I'm not giving YOU specific advice today.
- Get curious about our certitude.



Today's Areas of Focus

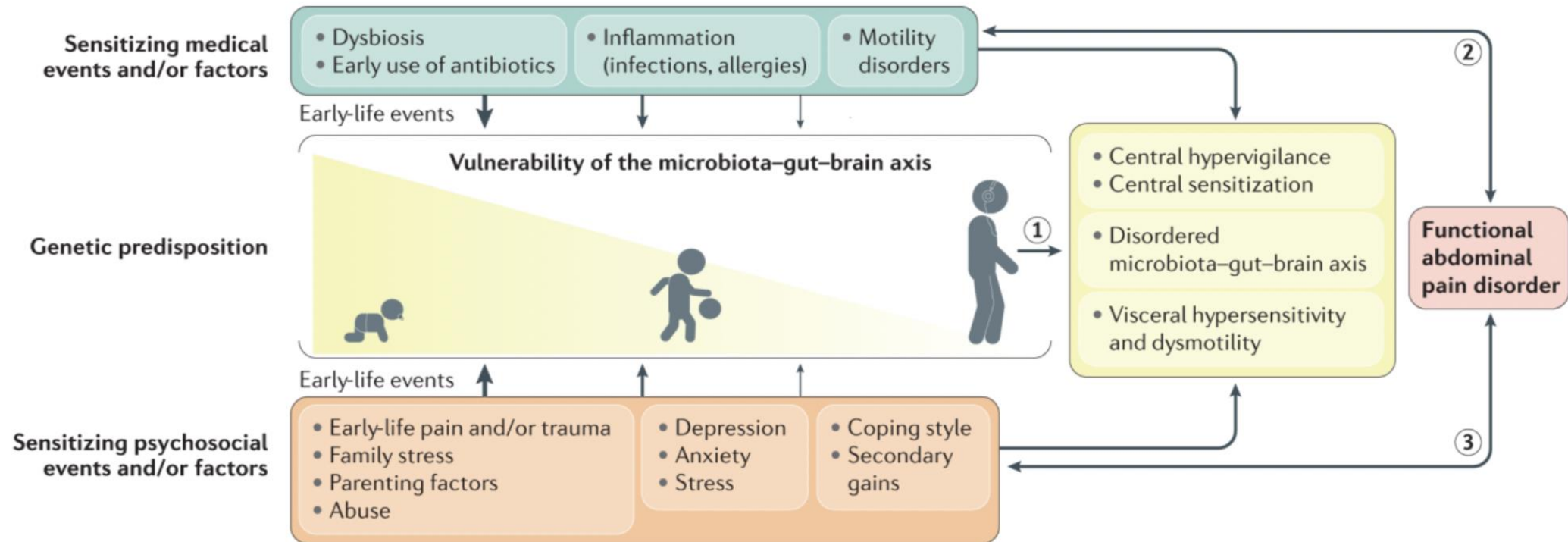
- Problematic Cycles & Systemic Limitations
- RO DBT for social & emotional threat
- What is Pain (physical & psychological)?
- PRT for physical threats
- What is the central theory behind these newer interventions?



Common Patient Traits



Developmental Pathways for Chronic Pain & Illness



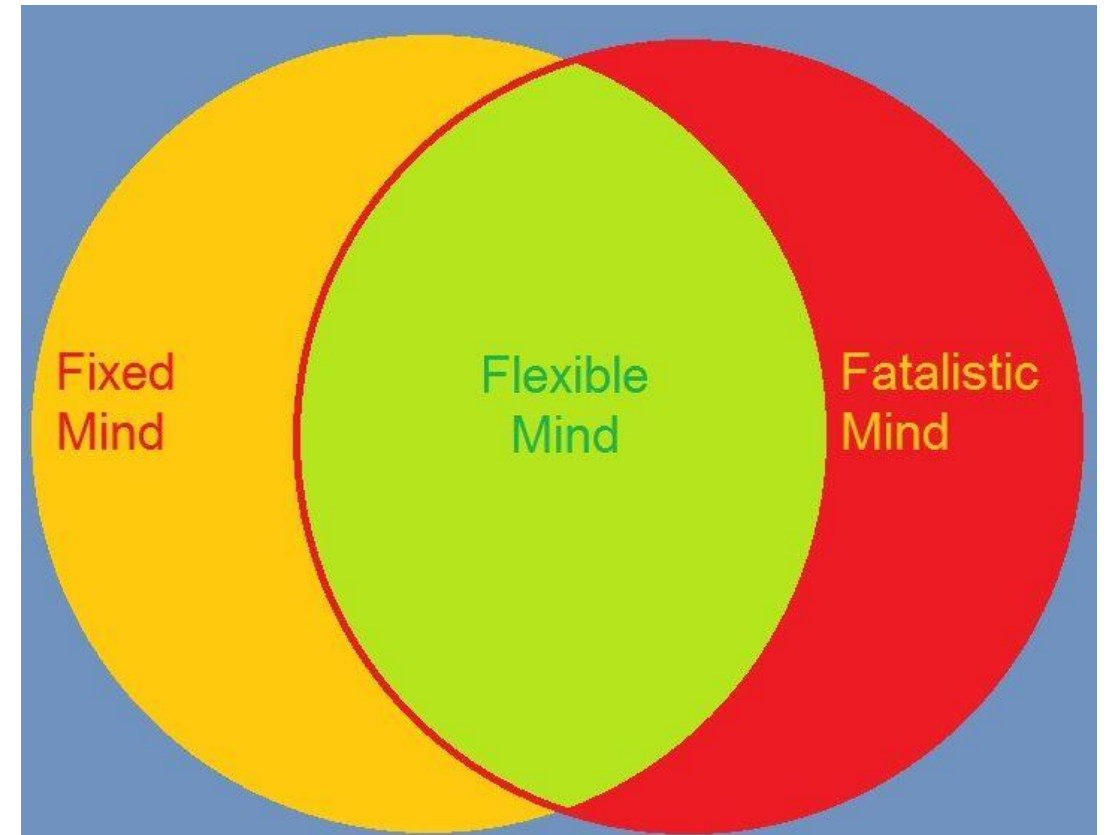
Perfectionism speeds biological wear & tear

- Neuroticism has long been linked to digestive disorders and chronic and diffuse pain conditions (& used to dismiss medical concerns.
- Sensitivity & Reactivity to daily hassles heightens risk of chronic health conditions

Piazza, 2013

- Private internal vigilance
 - *Perfectionism*
 - *Conscientiousness*
 - *People Pleasing*
 - *Health Anxiety*

Gordon, 2022



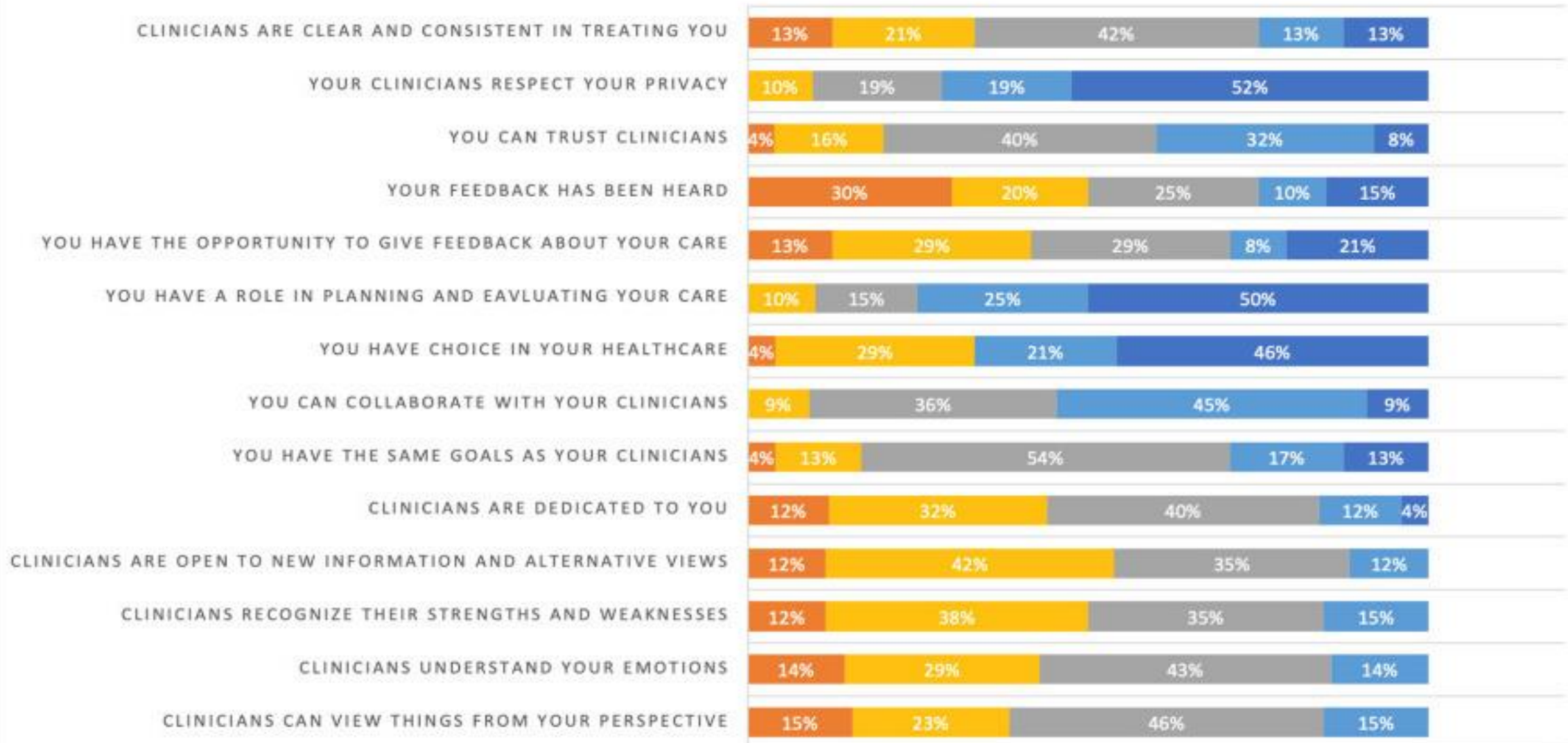
RO DBT Lynch, 2018

Toxic Environments



IMPRESSIONS OF CLINICIANS

never rarely sometimes most of the time never



One must ask themselves if an obsessive attention to symptoms or precisely optimized self-care will result in better health. The patient has to hold in mind two contradictory modes:

*Insistence on the reality of the disease (ext. threat)
and
Resistance to her own catastrophic fears (internal threat)*

-Adapted from Megan O'Rourke, 2022



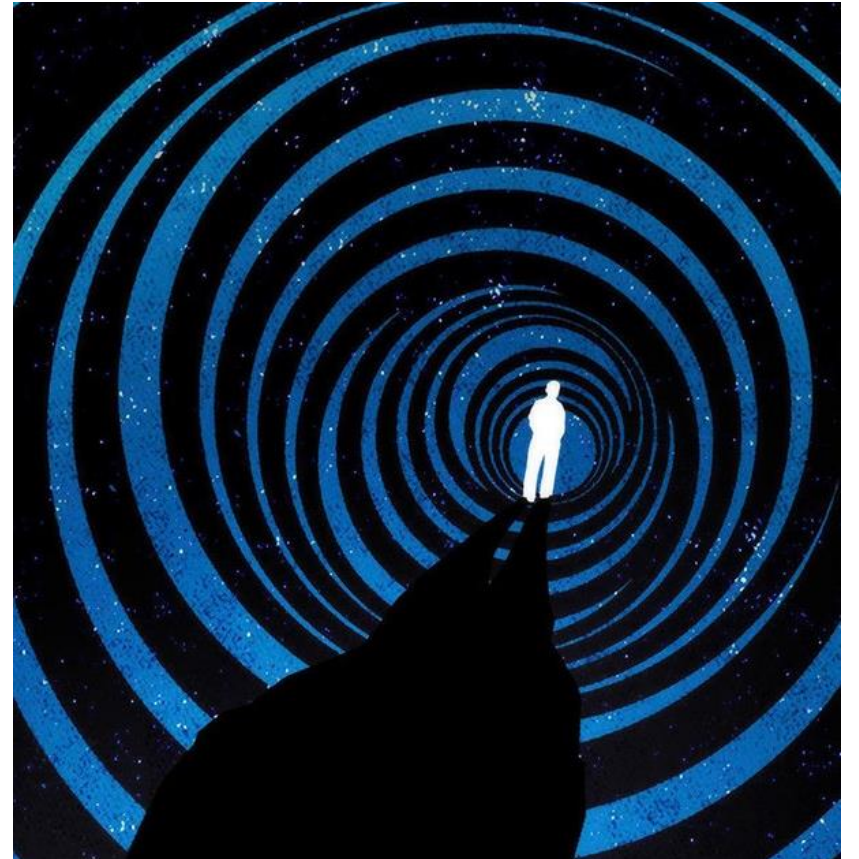
Observing Cycles

We must look dynamically at these complex interactions not via snapshots



Entrenched Cycles

- Authenticity vs. attachment dilemma
- Sense of burdensomeness, so I must be small.
- Perfectionism => Procrastination => Disappointment
- Suppression => Apparent emotionality/impulsivity
- Hope-disappointment roller coaster.
- Boom/Bust cycles
- Inefficiency => frantic rushing
- Poorly titrated exposure practice to pain



RO DBT: A Behavioral Chain Analysis

Contributing Factors	Prompting Event	Links	Problem Behavior	Consequences		
<p>Poor sleep</p> <p>Forgot my medicine</p> <p>Felt good and over-did it yesterday.</p> <p>Ate dairy and self-conscious about bloating/gas.</p> <p>Social anxiety/social guilt</p>	<p>Coffee with my friend is in a few hours.</p>	<p>Feeling of anxiety.</p> <p>Thought: can I cancel again? I don't have energy for this. No, I'm such a flake already.</p>	<p>Distraction with looking online for awhile</p> <p>Working on room projects.</p> <p>Lose track of time.</p>	<p>See a clock and panic that I'm going to be late.</p> <p>Rush to get ready.</p> <p>Feel guilt at making her wait.</p> <p>Feel frantic while driving. Angry at traffic.</p>	<p>Overly smiley, agreeable.</p> <p>So anxious my mind goes blank and I can't think of things to say.</p> <p>Work hard to make conversation.</p> <p>Start to feel ill and leave early.</p>	<p>Feel shame. Physically Drained.</p> <p>Thought: I'm a terrible friend. I humiliated myself.</p> <p>I feel lonely and hopeless.</p> <p>I stay in bed & avoid social commitments.</p>
		Solution:	Solution:	Solution:		
Name: <input type="text"/>		<p>Flexible MIND is DEEP.</p>	<p>Outing myself</p>	<p>Flexible Mind VARIES</p>		
Date: <input type="text"/>						

Strengths of many people w/ this triad

- Nature's shock absorbers
- Deeply empathic
- Precision & detail-focused processing
- Sentinels for all of us
- Strong sense of duty, integrity
- Resilient
- Early onset wisdom born through experiences of inescapable suffering.

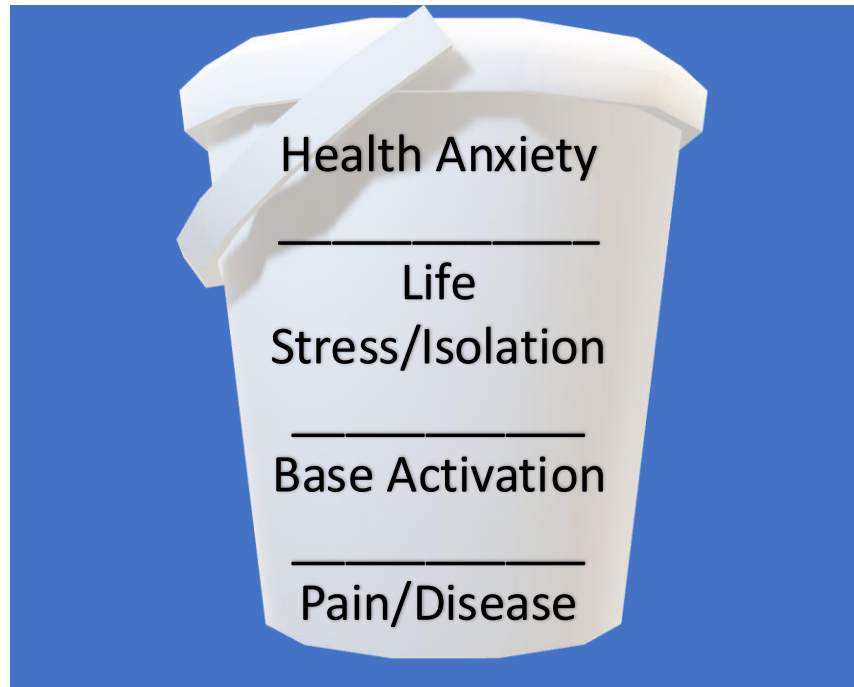


Posttraumatic Growth

“There is a razor thin line between trying to find something usefully redemptive in illness and lying to ourselves about the nature of suffering. Until we mourn what is lost and have a medical community that takes this suffering seriously, we cannot celebrate what is gained.”

-O'Rourke, 2022

What does help look like?



*Easy is
hard.*

What is RO DBT?

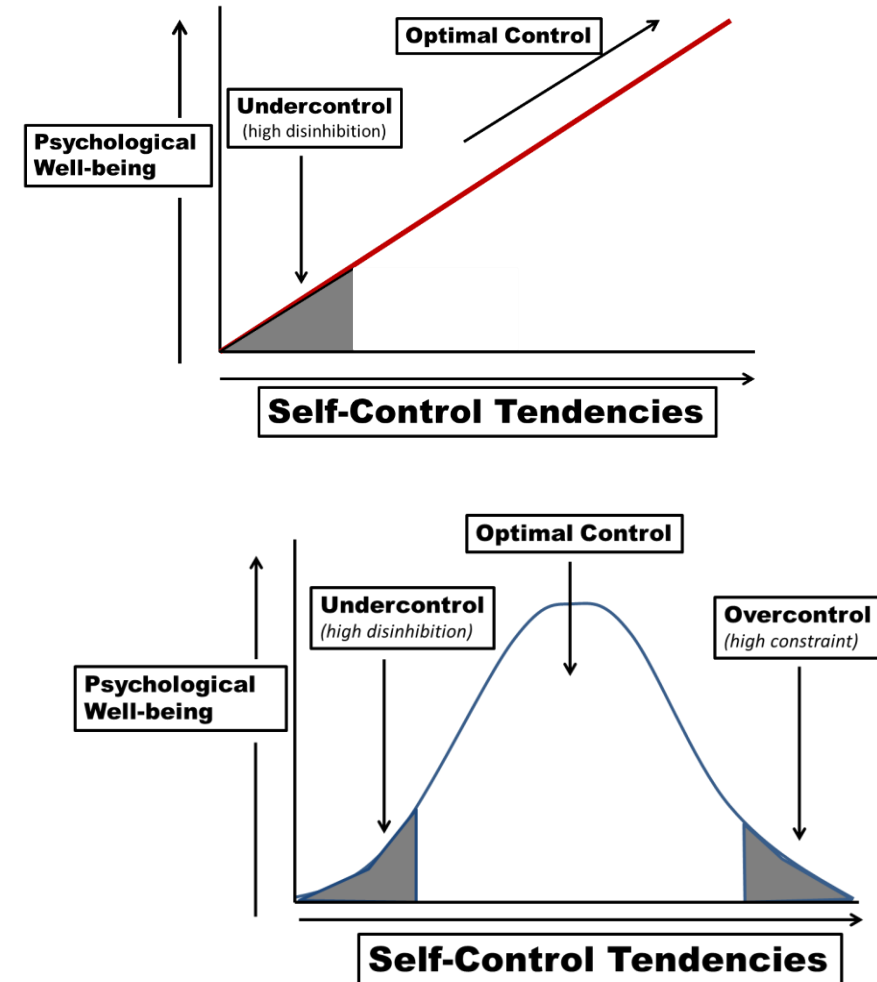
An EBT developed by Thomas Lynch, PhD targeting excessive overcontrol and its impact on loneliness, hyper-perfectionism, rigidity, risk aversion, lack of emotional expression, and other difficult to treat mental health problems such as OCPD, restrictive eating disorders, treatment-resistant anxiety, and chronic depression.

Goal: Creating a life worth sharing.



Too much of a good thing: the problem of overcontrol

- Existing research tend to see self-control as a linear construct: more is better
- However: you can have too much of a 'good thing'



Overcontrol is often not recognised

Overcontrolled people

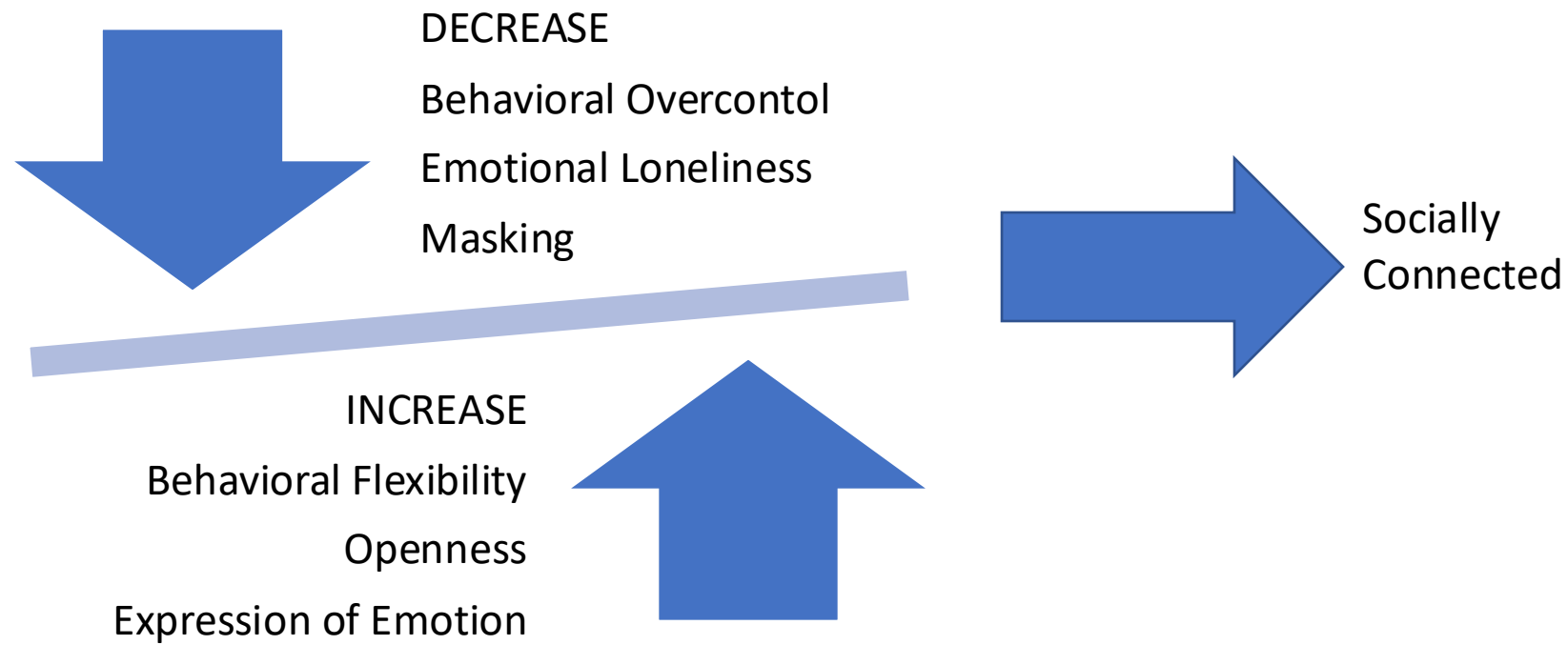
Are not roaming the streets in gangs—they are not causing riots; they are not the people you see yelling at each other from across the street

They are hyper-detail-focused perfectionists who can see ‘mistakes’ everywhere (including in themselves)

And tend to work harder than most to prevent future problems without making a big deal out of it.

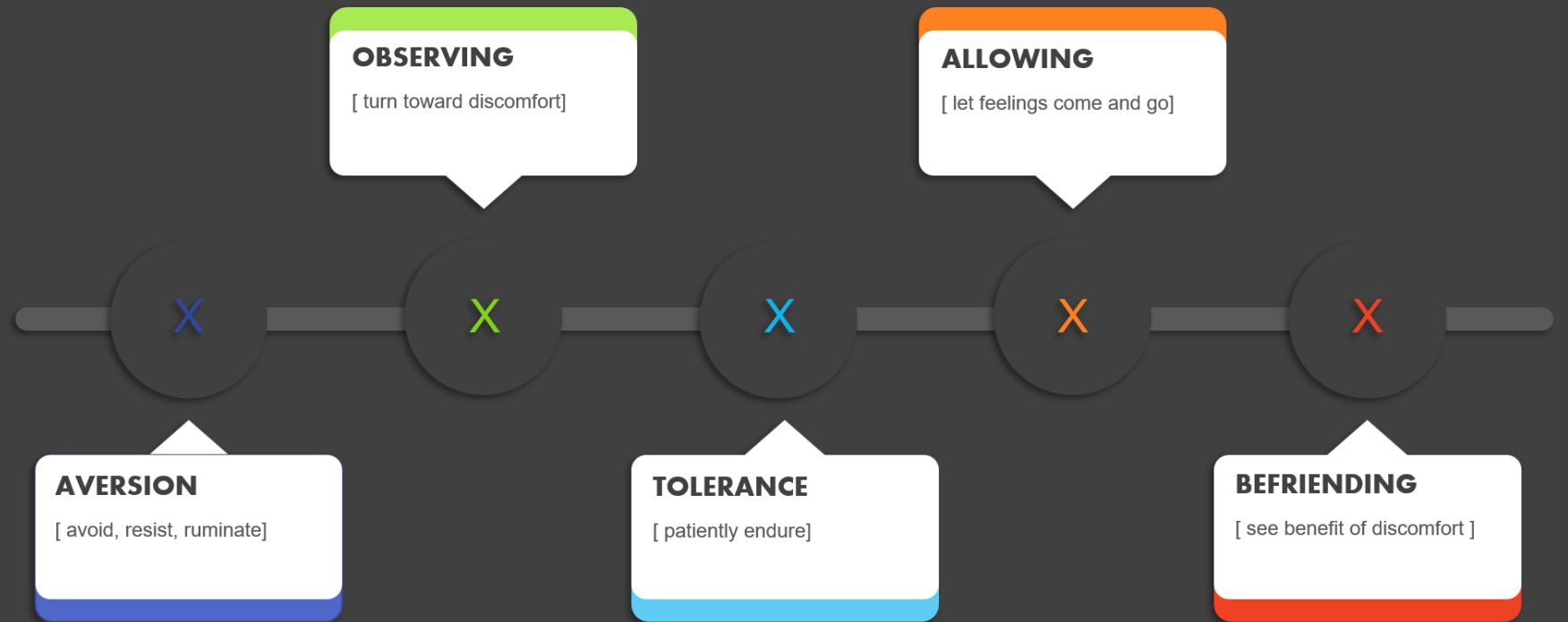
Plus, are expert at not appearing atypical on the outside (in public).

RO DBT – primary treatment targets








Why Radically Open?

Levels of acceptance for your internal experiences



* Adapted from Germer, 2006

Your Reaction to Environmental Cues

Safety	Novelty	Goal Orienting	Threatening	Overwhelming
				
Content	Curious	Reward seeking	Fearful/Irritated	Numb/non-reactive
Socialize	Orient/Observe	Pursue	Flee/Attack	Give up

RO DBT: SAGE Skill

The RO DBT Self-Conscious Emotions Rating Scale

Step 1. Identify the event, circumstance, or interaction triggering shame or other self-conscious emotions that you wish to evaluate.

Step 2. Identify the specific behavior you displayed or failed to display during the event that you believe may have caused or contributed to your shame or self-conscious emotional response.

Step 3. Use the event and specific behavior you have just identified to answer each of the questions that follow with YES or NO.

Step 4. Add up the number of YES responses, and use the scoring guidelines at the end of the handout to determine the extent to which your shame was warranted, partially warranted, or unwarranted.

1. *Did I purposefully lie, fabricate, or fail to disclose important information in order to achieve a goal or benefit myself?* YES/NO
2. *Did my behavior significantly damage an important relationship and/or result in serious injury to other tribal members or the community itself but benefit myself?* YES/NO
3. *Did my behavior result in severe physical or psychological injury to another person and/or my tribe as a result of my negligence, greed, envy, malice, or overconfidence?* YES/NO

Note: If you answered YES to any one of the three preceding questions, your shame or other self-conscious emotion IS WARRANTED. If you answered NO to all three questions, then answer the questions that follow to determine the extent to which your shame or other self-conscious emotion is likely warranted, partially warranted, or completely unwarranted.



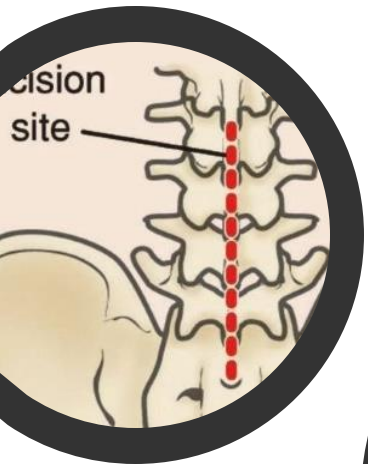
Radically Open RO-DBT Diary Card		Initials/Name		Major OC Theme this Week:		Filled out in session: Y/N		How often did you fill out this side?											
		ID #				Started Card: Date ____/____/____		<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3x <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6x <input type="checkbox"/> Once											
Circle Start Day	Urge To:	Private Behaviors—Thoughts, Sensations, Emotions						Medications		Social-Signaling or Other Overt Behaviors									
	Commit Suicide							Med as Prescribed	Other Drugs or Alcohol										
Day Of Week	0-5							Y/N	What.										
MON																			
TUE																			
WED																			
THUR																			
FRI																			
SAT																			
SUN																			
Notes/Comments/Chain Analysis::		Valued-Goals sought this week:						New Self-Enquiry Questions:											

RO: The Dreaded Diary Card

PAIN REPROCESSING THERAPY

First a primer on pain.....

OUR PAIN EXPERIENCE IS
POWERFULLY INFLUENCED
BY THE BRAIN'S
HYPOTHESIS ABOUT
DANGER



Understanding Pain

Pain related to damage of somatic or visceral tissue as a result of trauma or inflammation

NOCICEPTIVE PAIN

Pain related to damage of peripheral or central nerves

NEUROPATHIC PAIN

Pain without identifiable nerve or tissue damage thought to result from persistent neuronal dysregulation

CENTRAL SENSITISATION

PREDOMINANTLY NOCICEPTIVE

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Tendonitis, bursitis
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Gout
- Neck and back pain with structural pathology
- Tumour-related nociceptive pain
- Sickle cell disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease

NEUROPATHIC PAIN

PREDOMINANTLY NEUROPATHIC

- PHN
- pDPN
- Lumbar or cervical radiculopathy
- Stenosis
- Tumour-related neuropathy
- Chemotherapy-induced neuropathy
- Small fibre neuropathy
- Persistent postoperative pain
- Multiple sclerosis pain
- Post-stroke pain
- Pain associated with spin cord injury

NOCICEPTIVE PAIN

CENTRAL SENSITISATION

PREDOMINANTLY CENTRAL SENSITISATION

- Fibromyalgia
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Tension-type headaches
- Interstitial cystitis/pelvic pain syndrome
- Temporo-mandibular joint disorder
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Restless leg syndrome
- Neck and back pain without structural pathology

Mixed pain conditions with multiple pain pathophysiologies such as chronic low back pain

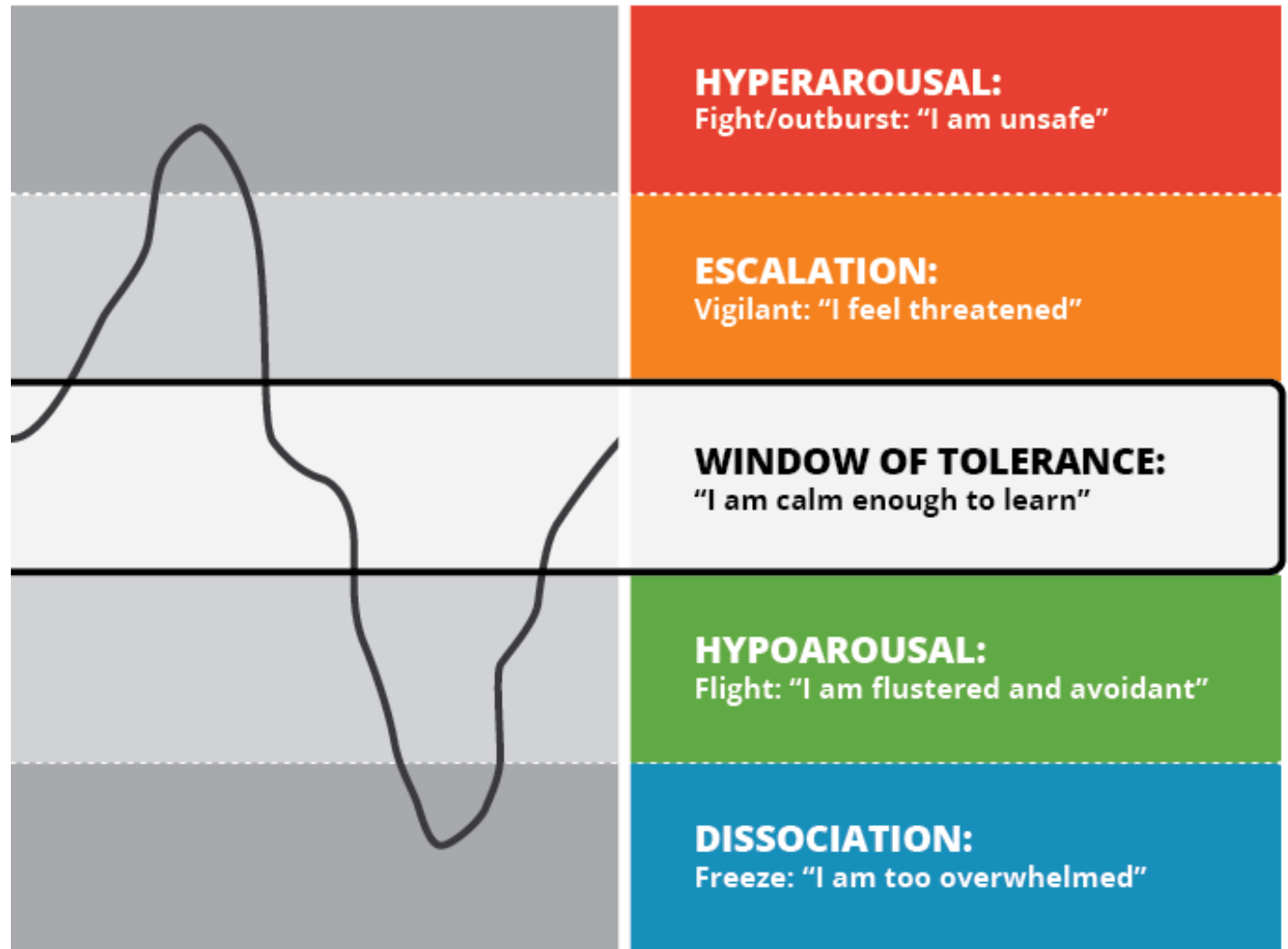
What is Pain Reprocessing Therapy?

- For Whom?
 - Designed for Neuroplastic Pain LESS focused on structural/systemic pain.
- The goal
 - We are helping you develop a sense of lightness with pain. You don't have to get rid of it or reduce the pain (no control/achievement agenda). We are outcome independent. Successful practice is letting go of some the fear, not whether the pain goes up or down.
- Evidence
 - Treatment of 8, 1-hour sessions over 4 weeks.
 - 66% near pain free after 11 years on average of chronic pain.

PRT: Indicators of the presence of neuroplastic pain

- 1) *Symptoms Originate Without Injury*
- 2) *Symptoms Begin During Time of Stress*
- 3) *Symptoms Are Inconsistent/Vary Atypically*
- 4) *Symptoms are Unexplainable by Known Structural Conditions*
- 5) *Symptoms Triggered by Factors that have nothing to Do with the Body (stress or conditioned response)*
- 6) *History of Childhood Adversity*
- 7) *Presence of Common Personality Traits*
- 8) *Co-Occurring Mental Health Conditions*
- 9) *Family History of Chronic Pain*

PRT: Somatic Tracking & Pain Management



An example of PRT



Summary

- Pain is your alarm system. Over time we can get better (not perfect) at discerning potential threats and adjusting the volume.
- We can find embodied safety through identifying key feedback loops.
- Flexible Mind opens us up to full catastrophe living to reduce our reliance on unreliable control strategies.
- None of these interventions are intuitive, easy, or quick but they are worthwhile.
- Sense of Community is a key resilience factor.

Next Steps & Resources:

- Books:
 - The Invisible Kingdom, The Way Out, RO DBT Skills Manual
- Apps
 - Reveri, RO DBT, Curable
- Consultation or Skills Group: info@greenwellpsychology.com
- National Therapist Directories
 - RadicallyOpen.net , painreprocessingtherapy.com, theROMEFoundation.org
- Local Directories
 - Womeninprivatepractice.com, utahpsych.com, LGBT guild
- Metrodora Institute, Mayo Clinic, EDS/Gastro Resource List

Citations:

- Ashar, Y. K., Gordon, A., Schubiner, H., Uipi, C., Knight, K., Anderson, Z., ... & Wager, T. D. (2022). Effect of pain reprocessing therapy vs placebo and usual care for patients with chronic back pain: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA psychiatry*, 79(1), 13-23.
- Castro, W.H., Meyer, S.J., Becke, M.E., Nentwig, C.G., Hein, M.F., Ercan, B.L., et al. (2011). No stress – no whiplash? Prevalence of ‘whiplash’ symptoms following exposure to a placebo rear end collision. *International Journal of Legal Medicine*, 114, 316-322
- Gordon, A (2022). *The Way Out: Healing Chronic Pain*.
- Halverson, C. M., Penwell, H. L., & Francomano, C. A. (2023). Clinician-associated traumatization from difficult medical encounters: Results from a qualitative interview study on the Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes. *SSM-Qualitative Research in Health*, 100237.
- Kirtley, O. J., Rodham, K., & Crane, C. (2020). Understanding suicidal ideation and behaviour in individuals with chronic pain: a review of the role of novel transdiagnostic psychological factors. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(3), 282-290.
- Lynch, T. R. (2018). *Radically open dialectical behavior therapy: Theory and practice for treating disorders of overcontrol*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Onyeka, I. N., Maguire, A., Ross, E., & O'Reilly, D. (2020). Does physical ill-health increase the risk of suicide? A census-based follow-up study of over 1 million people. *Epidemiology and psychiatric sciences*, 29, e140.
- Piazza JR, Charles ST, Sliwinski MJ, Mogle J, Almeida DM. Affective reactivity to daily stressors and long-term risk of reporting a chronic physical health condition. *Ann Behav Med*. 2013 Feb;45(1):110-20. doi: 10.1007/s12160-012-9423-0. PMID: 23080393; PMCID: PMC3626280.

Questions?



Ashley@GreenwellPsychology.com

Bonus Areas:



ILLNESS NARRATIVES

-Restitution

-Chaos

-Quest





The Patient Identity

RO DBT: Flexible Mind is DEEP

Read through the list of values and mark the ones that you notice somatically tug at you (e.g. you notice internal sensations that suggest they really matter to you). See if you can notice the distinction between slight reactions and those examples of values with more evocative power behind them. The 3-5ish that are more important to you can be benchmarks that we use to guide us in future meetings.

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be willing to question everything, including myself | <input type="checkbox"/> To be open to new experience and value the unexpected | <input type="checkbox"/> To be candid and forthcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> To acknowledge when I succeed, without arrogance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To trust myself and others | <input type="checkbox"/> To passionately participate in life | <input type="checkbox"/> To be honest and truthful | <input type="checkbox"/> To care about the well-being of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To let others know when I admire them, love them, or feel happy in their presence | <input type="checkbox"/> To be content with my life | <input type="checkbox"/> To be ethical and fair-minded | <input type="checkbox"/> To care about my own well-being |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be disciplined and orderly | <input type="checkbox"/> To appreciate knowledge, education, and learning | <input type="checkbox"/> To respect myself and others | <input type="checkbox"/> To contribute to my tribe, my family, my community, and my society, without always expecting something in return |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be undisciplined and disorderly | <input type="checkbox"/> To see all humans as equal | <input type="checkbox"/> To be taken seriously | <input type="checkbox"/> To be self-directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To think before I act | <input type="checkbox"/> To signal humility, nonarrogance and openness to those who are different from me | <input type="checkbox"/> To have an easy manner | <input type="checkbox"/> To appreciate direction from others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To act before I think | <input type="checkbox"/> To experience compassionate love toward myself and others | <input type="checkbox"/> To be kind to myself and others | <input type="checkbox"/> To take responsibility for my actions, emotions, and reactions to the world rather than blaming them on others or getting down on myself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be self-controlled when the situation calls for it | <input type="checkbox"/> To celebrate problems as opportunities for growth | <input type="checkbox"/> To treat other people as I would like to be treated | <input type="checkbox"/> To accept those things that I cannot change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To have the capacity to relinquish control | <input type="checkbox"/> To live here and now | <input type="checkbox"/> To do the right thing, even if it causes distress in others | <input type="checkbox"/> To seek change when it is within my power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To fight tyranny | <input type="checkbox"/> To be humble and nonarrogant | <input type="checkbox"/> To be seen as a loving parent, spouse, partner, or friend | <input type="checkbox"/> To stand up for what I believe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be able to stand up against powerful others, with humility, in order to prevent unwarranted harm or unethical behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> To make self-sacrifices in order to benefit the lives of others, without expecting anything in return | <input type="checkbox"/> To attend to relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> To admit when I fail but not let it stop me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be able to express vulnerability and accept help from others when I need it | <input type="checkbox"/> To challenge authority | <input type="checkbox"/> To be faithful to my vows and prior commitments | <input type="checkbox"/> To not always assume I am right |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To seek what may be uncomfortable in order to learn | <input type="checkbox"/> To respect authority | <input type="checkbox"/> To be willing to break a promise when warranted | <input type="checkbox"/> To not always assume I am wrong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid what I dislike, with awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> To be considerate of other people's feelings or way of thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> To apologize to those I have harmed and repair the damage if possible | <input type="checkbox"/> To be able to play, laugh, and relax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To cultivate healthy self-doubt | <input type="checkbox"/> To be nonreactive and calm | <input type="checkbox"/> To forgive those who have harmed me | <input type="checkbox"/> To be open-minded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To cultivate healthy self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> To be reactive and disinhibited when the situation calls for it | <input type="checkbox"/> To acknowledge fallibility without falling apart | <input type="checkbox"/> To love and be loved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To celebrate my successes without becoming arrogant | <input type="checkbox"/> To understand myself, others, and the world | <input type="checkbox"/> To value diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid harming others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To revel in the success of others without | <input type="checkbox"/> To be dutiful | <input type="checkbox"/> To do what is needed in the moment | <input type="checkbox"/> To be spiritually minded |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> To be able to question myself without falling apart | <input type="checkbox"/> To be a leader |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> To behave responsibly | <input type="checkbox"/> To be productive |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> To admit when I have been wrong or harmed someone, without expecting anything in return or resorting to harsh self-blame | <input type="checkbox"/> To be powerful and influence others |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> To express love to those I care about | <input type="checkbox"/> To contribute to society |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> To not expect others to solve my problems | <input type="checkbox"/> To achieve something important |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> To enjoy the work I do |

RO DBT: Behavioral Chain Analysis

