

A brown horse is captured in motion, running across a grassy field. The horse is seen from the side, with its mane and tail flowing. A rider is visible on its back, though the details are somewhat obscured by the horse's movement and the text overlay. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and foliage, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall lighting is warm, with a golden glow, possibly from the sun being low in the sky.

The crocodile, the rider and the horse, a
contextual approach of safe places and
self regulation

EAMHID sept 23 Helsinki

Unsafe Living in a wilderness of pain:

on understanding trauma, stress, (professional behaviour) and Ethics of Care in special education and
(forensic)care for people with MID

Prof. Dr GHP (Peer)van der Helm & prof. Dr. G.J.J.M. Stams (UvA)

What went before: Sarah

- I was asked by the management of a secure facility to look into the case of an extremely **dangerous** girl (18) with an IQ < 60 (diagnostic overshadowing?)
- She had been brought in by the police and immediately attacked staff, set fire to her room and tried to hang herself several times a day and wounded herself with whatever was available.
- I asked her permission to speak with her and it was ok by her.
- When I went there staff made it clear that they did not agree my being there because she was too dangerous and they insisted on overhearing the conversation.
- To be continued

What characterizes behaviour?

Simple answer: a safe place

Further:

- Bio-Psycho-Social influences (Engel, 1977) but not medically determined. Engel: *“The abnormality may be present, yet the patient not be ill”*. Multifactorial gene-environment interactions but also social transactional processes (Sameroff, 2009).
- With difficult behaviour we now have one central answer: Trauma and ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences).
- It can be trauma with a big ‘T’ (neglect, abuse and maltreatment)
- Or trauma with a small ‘t’ (repeated microtrauma).
- Result: no safe place and pain based behavior (Anglin 2003)
- Polyvagal theory on self regulation (Porges, 2011)
- But not every child is affected, some are more resilient than others (see ‘history’)

MID: always lagging behind others

- ACES (Jessica Vervoort Koraal, Netherlands)
- Trauma
- Micro trauma often starting at an early age and continuing throughout the lifespan
- Often lack of relatedness, competence and autonomy (Self Determination Theory, Ryan & Decy, 20215; also in institutions: Van der Helm, Kuiper & Stams, 2018)
- **Result: enduring stress and often unrecognised PTSD result in changes in the brain:** Holz, N., Zabihi, M., Kia, S.M., Monninger, M., Aggensteiner, P-M., Siehl, S., Floris, D., Bokde, A., Desrivières, S., Flor, H., Grigis, A. , Garavan, H. , Gowland, P. , Heinz, A., Brühl, R., Paillère-Martinot, J.L., Marie-Laure Papadopoulos O.D. & Paus, T., Marquand, A. (2023). A stable and replicable neural signature of lifespan adversity in the adult brain. Nature Neuroscience. 26. 1-10. 10.1038/s41593-023-01410-8.

Antisocial behavior: moving away or against or resignation solutions (Karen Horney 2021)

Social exclusion promotes antisocial behavior

Chwaszcz J, Bartczuk RP, Niewiadomska I, Sławska-Jaroszewska P (2022) Quality of life and prosocial or antisocial coping with resource deprivation: A cross-sectional study of people at risk of social exclusion. PLoS ONE 17(9): e0275234. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.027523>

Suicide as
antisocial
behavior
(moving away,
Bering 2018),
why we kill
ourselves

- Approximately 43% genetic/57% environment (trauma)
- Often not wishing to die but not living like this, stress
- DSM not good enough explanation, not a psychosis but coping mechanism for pain
- Shame important contextual observation, competitive society instead of collaborative (Baumeister, escape theory) and social isolation/bullying
- Cognitive deconstruction with simplifying thoughts, tolerance for pain and lack of emotional and cognitive self regulation and contrafactual thinking (tunnel metaphor) crocodile behavior
- Self-Blame and low self worth, lack of relatedness
- Percieved liminal time slowing and hyper alertness
- Negative Social information processing (SIPS Crick & Dodge)
- A secure environment as an ideal place for suicide!



Social Media augment social isolation and social competition in real time

- Preference for negative content on Tik-Tok Facebook and Instagram (more hits): Beyens, I., Pouwels, J. L., van Driel, I. I., Keijsers, L., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2020). The effect of social media on well-being differs from adolescent to adolescent. *Scientific Reports*, 10(1), [10763]. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-67727-7>
- Public shaming new: gossip girl
- Negative social comparison Deri, Davidai & Gilovich 2017; Zuboff, 2019
- Competition about toxic diet culture (Minadeo M, Pope L (2022) Weight-normative messaging predominates on TikTok—A qualitative content analysis. *PLoS ONE* 17(11): e0267997. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267997>)
- Deadly Slut shaming Amanda Todd, 15
- 25% of adolescents experience negative effects on their mental health

Do we need more Interventions? Cochrane Library

Many recent meta-analyses, umbrella analyses and meta-reviews point into one direction (Weisz 2017; Howick, 2022; Moncrieff 2022)

1. Interventions are mostly not evidence based (because context does matter).
2. Howick: only 5% effective
3. Van der Helm 2022 follow up Howick study focusing on mental health interventions: also 5% effective
4. Pills do not work as they should (because context does matter)

- [https://www.jclinepi.com/article/S0895-4356\(22\)00100-7/fulltext](https://www.jclinepi.com/article/S0895-4356(22)00100-7/fulltext)
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41380-022-01661-0>
- Van der Helm, G.H.P (2022). Effective interventions in mental health and youthcare.

What Cochrane mental health interventions were effective (van der Helm, 2022)?

Lack of compulsion, ambulant better than residential and short stay better than long stay

Psycho education

Peer support

Counseling

Social climate and debt reduction

Small effects: EMDR, CBT, NET exposure

Out of home placement better with relatives

Collaborative transdiagnostic treatment better than single treatment

Identifying effective moderators of cognitive behavioural trauma treatment with caregiver involvement for youth with PTSD: a meta-analysis

Katalin Somers¹ · Anouk Spruit² · Geert Jan Stams³ · Stijn Vandeveldel⁴ · Ramon Lindauer^{5,6} · Mark Assink³

European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Table 3 Moderator analyses of CBTT with caregiver involvement for traumatized children

	<i>k</i>	# <i>ES</i>	<i>B</i> ₀ / <i>d</i>	<i>t</i> ₀	<i>B</i> ₁	<i>t</i> ₁	<i>F</i> (<i>df</i> ₁ , <i>df</i> ₂)
<i>Child characteristics</i>							
Outcomes							<i>F</i> (5, 326)= 12.926 ***
PTSD	22	94	0.70	3.145**			
Externalizing problems	13	43	0.43	1.905+	-0.27	-5.324***	
Internalizing problems	18	105	0.48	2.164*	-0.22	-5.973***	
Social problems	8	15	0.35	1.492	-0.35	-4.599***	
Cognitive problems	3	16	0.41	1.810+	-0.29	-4.714***	
Total problems	13	37	0.44	1.943+	-0.26	-5.431***	



Katalin Somers

A Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of EMDR and TF-CBT in Reducing Trauma Symptoms and Externalizing Behavior Problems in Adolescents




Larissa M. Hoogsteder¹ , Lotte ten Thije² ,
Eveline E. Schippers¹ , and Geert Jan J. M. Stams²

Table 2. Moderator Analyses Effects of Trauma Treatment on Trauma Symptoms and Externalizing Behavioral Problems.


Moderator variables	k	#ES	B ₀ /d	t ₀	B ₁	t ₁	F(df ₁ , df ₂)
Intervention characteristics							
Treatment outcome							F(1,73) = 15.92***
Trauma symptoms	8	47	1.123	5.768***			
Externalizing problems	8	28	0.666	3.394**	-0.464	-3.898***	



Larissa Hoogsteder

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the white background. Inside this circle, the text 'NB: trauma therapy 36% effective' is written in white, sans-serif font.

NB: trauma
therapy 36%
effective

- John-Baptiste Bastien R, Jongsma HE, Kabadayi M, Billings J. The effectiveness of psychological interventions for post-traumatic stress disorder in children, adolescents and young adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychol Med.* 2020 Jul;50(10):1598-1612. doi: 10.1017/S0033291720002007. Epub 2020 Jun 22. PMID: 32624017.
- 
- A decorative yellow dashed line is located in the bottom right corner of the slide, consisting of several short, curved segments.

Do we need more pills?

The brain disease paradigm

70 years ago we thought a shortage of serotonin caused depression and anxiety (development of TCA and SSRI's in the 90 ties but recent umbrella review: prolonged use of TCA and SSRI's deplete serotonin and cause flattened core affect!). To compensate for flattened affect sometimes clients take more risks.

But now we know trauma is dominant even in schizophrenia (Marsman 2018), eating disorders (Van der Helm, 2022) and in forensic treatment (Billen, 2022)

We need to incorporate contextual factors: the social climate



Moncrieff, J., Cooper, R.E., Stockmann, T. *et al.* The serotonin theory of depression: a systematic umbrella review of the evidence. *Mol Psychiatry* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-022-01661-0>

Why is this important?

Mental health is dependent on the context of a safe place.

Why adolescents? They orient on their peers.

Why girls? More environmental sensitivity.

A safe place for Sarah?

- Sarah was very clear and could reflect on her situation. But she also had a nasty burn on her face. Before she started to tell me her story I said I was no police, no judge, no youth safety board, not a treatment person and could not make any decisions. She was not obliged to tell me everything and it was ok for her to lie to me. This because I already suspected sexual trauma and 'self silencing' is usual.
- She had been placed into secure care since she was 14 because she would run away with older men and used drugs. In 3 years she had been transferred to 9 facilities (nowhere to "place her"), she got almost no treatment and did not go to school. She was often placed in separation units for weeks.
- To be continued

Environmental Sensitivity +/- (Pluess, 2015)

- Different theories based on evolution and neurosensitivity, about 20-30% of the population is considered advantageous for survival
 - Aron 1996 Sensory sensitivity (personality)
 - Belsky 2012 Differential Susceptibility Theory (pre-postnatal see Wesselius et al, 2019 for eating disorders and peri-natal Chloride shift, Schulte ea., 2018)
 - Boyce & Ellis Biological Sensitivity tot Context (social climate!)
 - Pluess & Belsy Vantage Sensitivity (positive aspects!)
- Wolf, M., van Doorn, G. S., & Weissing, F. J. (2008). Evolutionary emergence of responsive and unresponsive personalities. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105, 15825–15830. doi:10.1073/pnas.0805473105
- Howard LM, Khalifeh H. Perinatal mental health: a review of progress and challenges. *World Psychiatry*. 2020 Oct;19(3):313-327. doi: 10.1002/wps.20769. PMID: 32931106; PMCID: PMC7491613.

Environmental sensitivity for MID

- Lagging behind not only in cognitive but also in social emotional development making relatedness complicated in a competitive society (HBSC report 2022)
- Not only much more Aces (Vervoort, 2020) but more micro trauma complicate co regulation and the tendency to relate to similar peers
- lagging behind in personality development means social isolation
- And less control over the environment (lack of autonomy)



New findings on
repeated
microtrauma:
(racial)
discrimination and
stigma damages
the brain

- A new study shows that the experience of racial discrimination affects the microstructure of the brain, as well as increasing the risk for health disorders.
- The authors hypothesize that the burden of trauma and racial discrimination may affect brain matter integrity through the stress system. The affected tracts are involved in emotional regulation and cognitive processes, which may in turn lead to behavioral changes, such as increased consumption of drugs or foods, that increase risk for health conditions.
- Onyebuchi Okeke, Aziz Elbasheir, Sierra Carter, Abigail Powers, Yara Mekawi, Charles F. Gillespie, Ann Schwartz, Bekh Bradley, Negar Fani. **Indirect Effects of Racial Discrimination on Health Outcomes Through Prefrontal Cortical White Matter Integrity.** *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, 2022; DOI: [10.1016/j.bpsc.2022.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2022.05.004)

Is this new? Harlow experiments. Social isolation damages developing brain

- Harlow H. F., Dodsworth R. O., & Harlow M. K. (1965). Total social isolation in monkeys. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC285801/pdf/pnas00159-0105.pdf>
- See also Noreena Herz (2020): *The Lonely Century*



But also:

Differential
susceptibility to
(toxic)stress &
protective factors
(hiding places)

Intergenerational
transmission

Peri-natal problems
(peri-natal chloride shift
Schulte ea 2018)

Cognitive, social-
emotional and
personality
development (Biesta)

And the environment,
climate & culture: co-
regulators!

History: an experiment in group upbringing

May 45 liberation of the concentration camp
Theresienstadt: a barn was found with 6 young children

They could not talk (only utter some German curses)

Were extremely afraid of dogs

Protected each other fiercely (biting adults)

August 45: all 300 orphans of Theresienstadt were transported to Camp Windermere (GB) to be placed in Jewish orphan families.



In our times

- They would have been diagnosed with an intellectual disability
- And/or: ADD/ADHD/Anxiety disorder/DCD/Depression/Learning disorders and NLD/Epilepsy/Attachment disorder/MCDD/ODD/Intermittent explosive disorder (IED)/Autism, PDDNOS/Asperger etcetera (medical model).

The children of Bulldogs bank

The 6 could not be separated due to extreme violent reactions when staff (Red Cross) tried to separate them

October 45: An army truck unloaded the 6 children at Bulldogs Bank (Sussex) under supervision of Anna Freud and Sophie Dann (their assistant was John Bowlby)

They destroyed their cuddles and spit and bit the staff

Ate ferociously



Co-regulation & a safe place

- Gradually they stopped destroying their toys & cuddles
- They learned to communicate and eventually read and write (they started themselves)
- Found books in the library
- And got interested in their worst fear: the passer-by with the dog
- 1987: reunion of 5 children, they lived ordinary lives

Where does co-regulation comes from? Morality and the brain

Morality and co-regulation as a way of cooperation in hunter gatherer societies (7 million years-300.000 years)

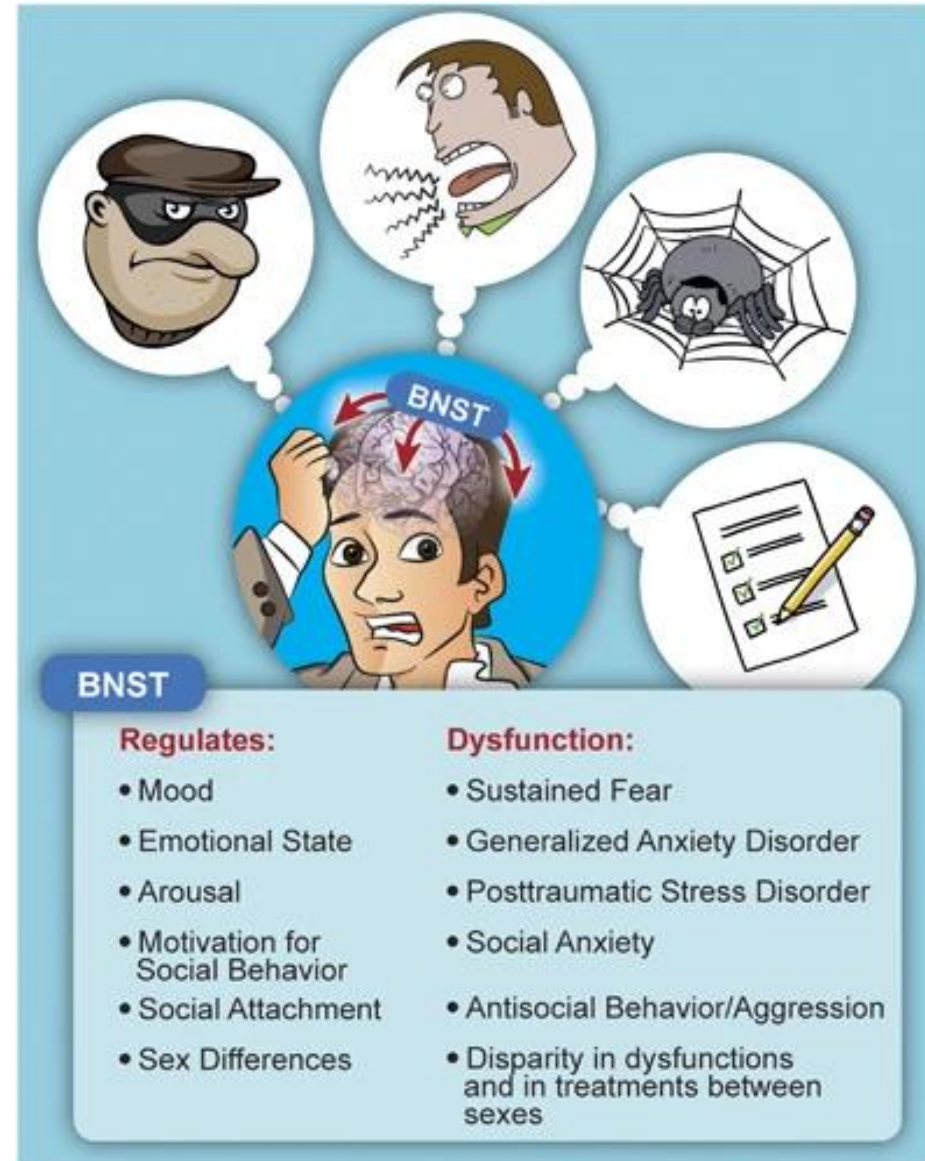
Goal oriented behavior (Sherman 2018 the Moral Arc): to survive and to flourish (exploration, broaden and build)

Without cooperation and co-regulation no survival and no flourishing

And the BNST the emergency (snap!) centre of our brain

- bed nucleus of the stria terminalis (BNST), fear, anxiety, toxic stress, PTSD
- stress response and in adaptive and maladaptive anxiety and addiction.
- Rodent studies provide compelling evidence that the BNST plays a central role in sustained threat monitoring, a form of adaptive anxiety, and in the withdrawal and relapse stages of addiction
- And sex
- Lebow, M., Chen, A. Overshadowed by the amygdala: the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis emerges as key to psychiatric disorders. *Mol Psychiatry* **21**, 450–463 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1038/mp.2016.1>
- Avery, S., Clauss, J. & Blackford, J. The Human BNST: Functional Role in Anxiety and Addiction. *Neuropsychopharmacol* **41**, 126–141 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1038/npp.2015.185>

- Avery, S., Clauss, J. & Blackford, J. The Human BNST: Functional Role in Anxiety and Addiction. *Neuropsychopharmacol* **41**, 126–141 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1038/npp.2015.185>



Trauma and Abuse history-PTSD, some literature

- Creating the perception of an unsafe environment in general (BNST)
- See also: Crick & Dodge on Social information processing: van der Helm ea, 2012, on negative social information processing in secure care. 'I stabbed him because he looked mean at me'.
- Van der Helm, 2021 in: Jolliffe & Farrington (Empathy and Offending, chapter 5 Contextual correlates of Empathy)
(https://books.google.nl/books?id=SFsXEAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=empathy+and+offending+Jolliffe&hl=nl&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=empathy%20and%20offending%20Jolliffe&f=false)
- E. Billen (2022). *Improving the Understanding of Self-Regulation – Perspectives for Forensic Research and Practice*. Dissertation Tilburg University
- Dale LP, Carroll LE, Galen G, Hayes JA, Webb KW, Porges SW. Abuse history is related to autonomic regulation to mild exercise and psychological wellbeing. *Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback*. 2009 Dec;34(4):299-308. doi: 10.1007/s10484-009-9111-4. Epub 2009 Aug 26. PMID: 19707870.

Adaptive in unsafe situations?

- A compromised BNST and social engagement system (myelinated vagus, N. Ambiguus) fosters mobilisation of SNS and DVC: fight and flight or freeze. Explanantion for borderline? (Austin MA, Riniolo TC, Porges SW. Borderline personality disorder and emotion regulation: insights from the Polyvagal Theory. Brain Cogn. 2007 Oct;65(1):69-76. doi: 10.1016/j.bandc.2006.05.007. Epub 2007 Jul 30. PMID: 17659821; PMCID: PMC2082054.)
- Assessment of risk (neuroception-limbic-unconscious) and safety (inhibition): Social climate!
- Adaptive in a repressive climate but costly (allostatic load)!
- See for instance Smykes study (2002) and Zeannah (2000) on Romanian Orphaned children.
- <https://www.studysmarter.us/explanations/psychology/basic-psychology/romanian-orphan-studies/>

Our internal crocodile (nucleus accumbens)

- Behavioral self regulation evolutionary older system
- Stress induced (sympathic): fight, flight or freeze (self silencing or pairing off with those who abuse you)
- Fixed fast reactions to survive: 'snap'! Unable to prevent snap!
- Snap! Is the result of ready made scripts (testosterone): Ingroup vs. Outgroup (dual strategy esp. men! Women use 'tend and befriend more')



Our internal crocodile (nucleus accumbens)

- Conditioning effects as means of survival (food!)
- No time to think (thinking fast Kahnemann, 2012), therefore subject to thinking errors such as WYSIATI: what you see is all there is and hostility bias-survival)
- The crocodile = wanting/craving/obsessive-compulsive



Wanting
(crocodile) vs
liking (horse)
or goal
oriented
behaviour
(cognition-
rider)



Wanting is for the crocodile 'must have' and 'must do' (snap!) even if it is detrimental to the crocodile's survival



Craving and/or obsessive and compulsive



Agression and anti social behavior is 'hot' in the spur of the moment

Wanting (crocodile) vs liking (horse) or goal oriented behaviour (cognition-rider)



It is often a moral mistake (counter transference) of teachers or care workers to mislabel fighting or 'snap!' as manipulative (cognition related or 'cold' aggression) or declare a client 'mentally incompetent'



Often no pleasure or 'liking' (emotions) in the act (pain based behavior-Anglin)



In most cases afterwards regret (cognitive) and shame (negative emotionality) confirming low self-worth, creating a selffulfilling prophecy with teachers and care workers

On the advantage of being a crocodile

- Illicits external regulation (saves energy)
- Dampens pain (alexithymia)
- Simplification and dependence (no need for cognitive self-regulation)
- Felitti : “if you mistake someone’s solution for a problem to be eliminated, not only are they likely to fail treatment, as often happens in addiction programs, but other problems may emerge”.
- Staff: professional helplessness, countertransference and repression (De Valk, 2018) fit the crocodile
- Ethics of Care versus Moral Ethics (Boehm: the moral ‘finger’ in your head)
- But remember Koetsveld, Korczak and Anna Freud



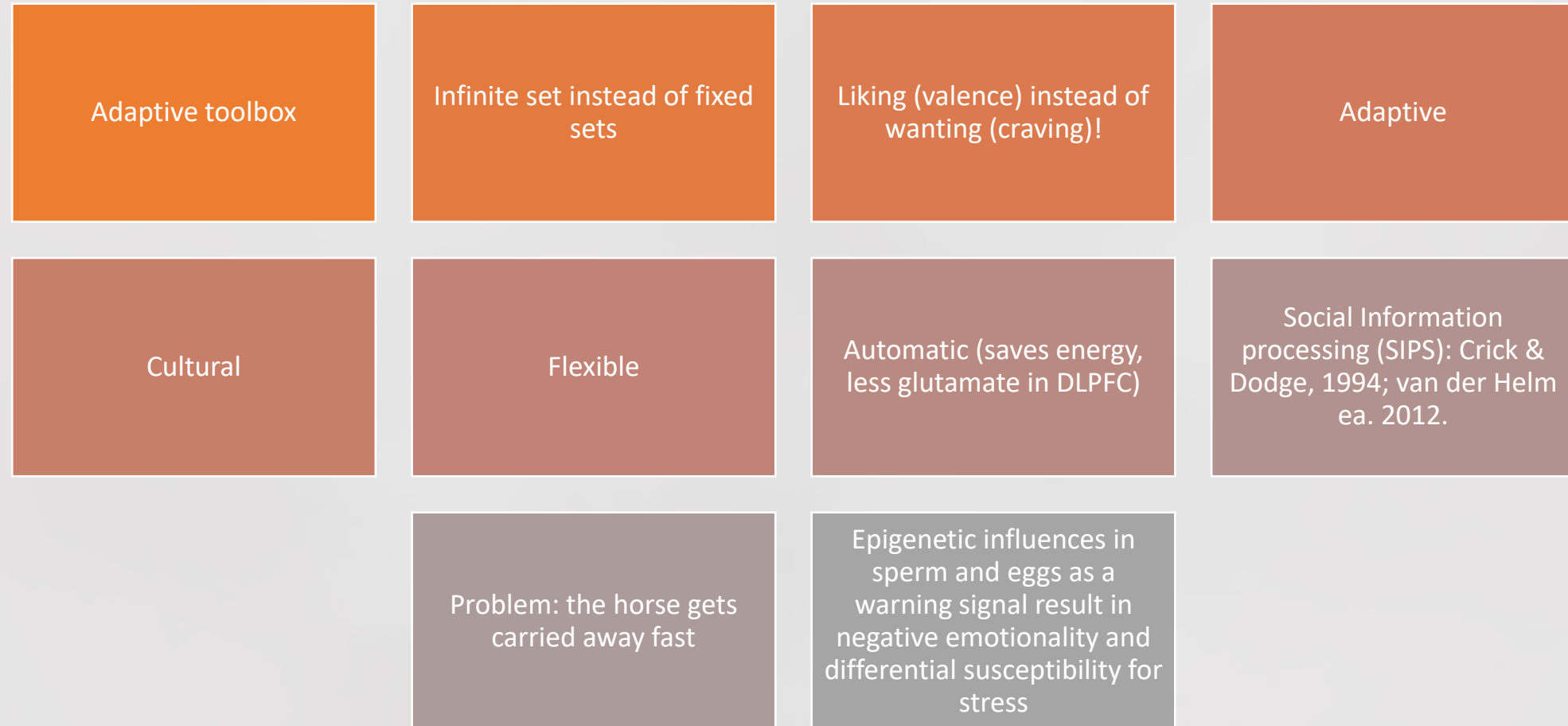
An example: the crocodile in aggression, eating disorders, self harm and suicide

- (Peri-natal) Trauma in combination with susceptibility for toxic stress stimulates the crocodile: loss of control and negative emotionality (Wesselius et al, 2019 Schulte 2018 on chloride shift)
- Regaining control through stopping eating (snap!) can be very easily conditioned (1 trial), a powerful coping mechanism!
- Resulting Alexithymia dampens pain
- Agency detection (dissonance reduction) results in wanting ("having to") to be thin and cognitive distortions as well as obsessive-compulsive behavior and self-serving bias
- Other crocodile controls are excessive hyperactivity, self-harm, self-destructive behavior, rage and violence (often dissociative).

Evolutionary adaptations to our internal crocodile: emotions and cognition

- Emotions (flexible fast and cheap heuristics): liking instead of wanting, implicit knowledge & intuition
- Cognition (slow and energy consuming): incorporating consequences and reality testing, explicit knowledge
- Emotions and cognitions are intertwined in our brain and together comprise self regulation as an adaptive feature in order to survive and to flourish. Gu et al (2018) propose a neurobiological model of creativity, linking cognition to emotion. The links between cognition and emotion are well established (Feldman- Barrett 2017, Mlodinow, 2022). Mlodinow as well as Gu et al, propose a 'core affect' (central emotional state) that prepares for action when coping with difficult situations or challenges, consisting of value and novelty, governed by hedonic value (dopamine + and serotonin -) and arousal (norepinephrine) which can result in creativity.

Emotions: emotional self-regulation (the horse)



Why we need Emotions (Limbic area's and Ventral Vagus complex but also Amygdalae) help decision making but often compromised with MID

- Brain research: with difficult decision making (many variables) the emotions are a necessary guide with implicit knowledge for cognition to optimize decisions (Swaab, 2012: communication-orientation model)
- Emotions to help with bounded rationality (Gigerenzer on bounded rationality: the adaptive toolbox 2001): *take the best* heuristic and *recognition* heuristic and signal-noise detection see also: "Noise" by Kahnemann 2021)
- Disadvantage: core affect influences our decisions
- Swaab, R. I., Galinsky, A. D., Medvec, V., & Diermeier, D. A. (2012). The communication orientation model: Explaining the diverse effects of sight, sound, and synchronicity on negotiation and group decision-making outcomes. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 16(1), 25–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868311417186>
- https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_2102373/component/file_2102372/content

Disadvantages of emotions

Based on earlier experiences (learning and conditioning) & recognition

Can be misleading through learning or conditioning (by the crocodile or the rider): wanting is confused with liking

Little potential for creativity

Liking: depression, fear, anxiety, greed cloud our emotions therefore we need cognition

Negative emotionality (dysregulation of emotions-BNST-, Losel 2001 & vagal tone dysregulation) Transdiagnostic

- Reaction to ACES, stress (HPA-axis) and (micro)trauma
- Reaction to repeated failure
- Differential susceptibility to stress and excitability, vulnerable lack of resilience often confused with autism (lack of peri-natal chloride shift, Schulte et al. 2018) see also: Wesselius et al, 2019.
- Nearly 100 % of violent boys and girls (Wolf & Baglivio 2018)
- Low self worth and shame. Depressive and self hate, loneliness away from people instead of towards
- Unleashed crocodile: anxiety, impulsivity, irritability, hyperactivity and hypervigilance and distrust (hostile social information processing, Sato, 2009), sensation seeking, and risk taking
- Criminal behavior, aggression, panic attacks, eating disorders, OCD, addiction
- Victimization and revictimization (nightmares, dissociation and PTSD)



Cognitive self-regulation

- Explicit knowledge helps to regulate behaviour (e.g. goal oriented behavior & consequences)
- Core affect (emotion) as primary driver for cognition
- To flourish and to explore (broaden and build) reward system
- Motivation and goal oriented
- Creativity and awe
- Play
- Goal oriented
- Overruling the crocodile tough costs energy: Blain, B., Schmit, C., Aubry, A., Hauswirth, C., Le Meur, Y., and Pessiglione, M. (2019). Neuro-computational impact of physical training overload on economic decision-making. *Curr. Biol.* 29, 3289–3297.e4.)
- SDT (Ryan & Deci 2017): relatedness, competence and autonomy

Dopamine as precursor for motivation and meaning instead of self harming (endorphins)



Dopamine: from movement to creativity, motivation and learning (autonomy)



Reward and punishment reinforcement



Optimism bias (dopamine causes Associative Prediction Error)



Result: intermittent reinforcement!

But stress exhausts frontal cortex LPFC (2022) and cognitive self regulation (an IQ test is not very useful), Why?



WIEHLER EA 2022:
COGNITIVE WORK
LEADS TO
GLUTAMATE
ACCUMULATION IN
LPFC



COGNITIVE SELF-
REGULATION IS
AFFECTED BY
STRESS



REDUCTION OF
DECISION MAKING
CONTROL



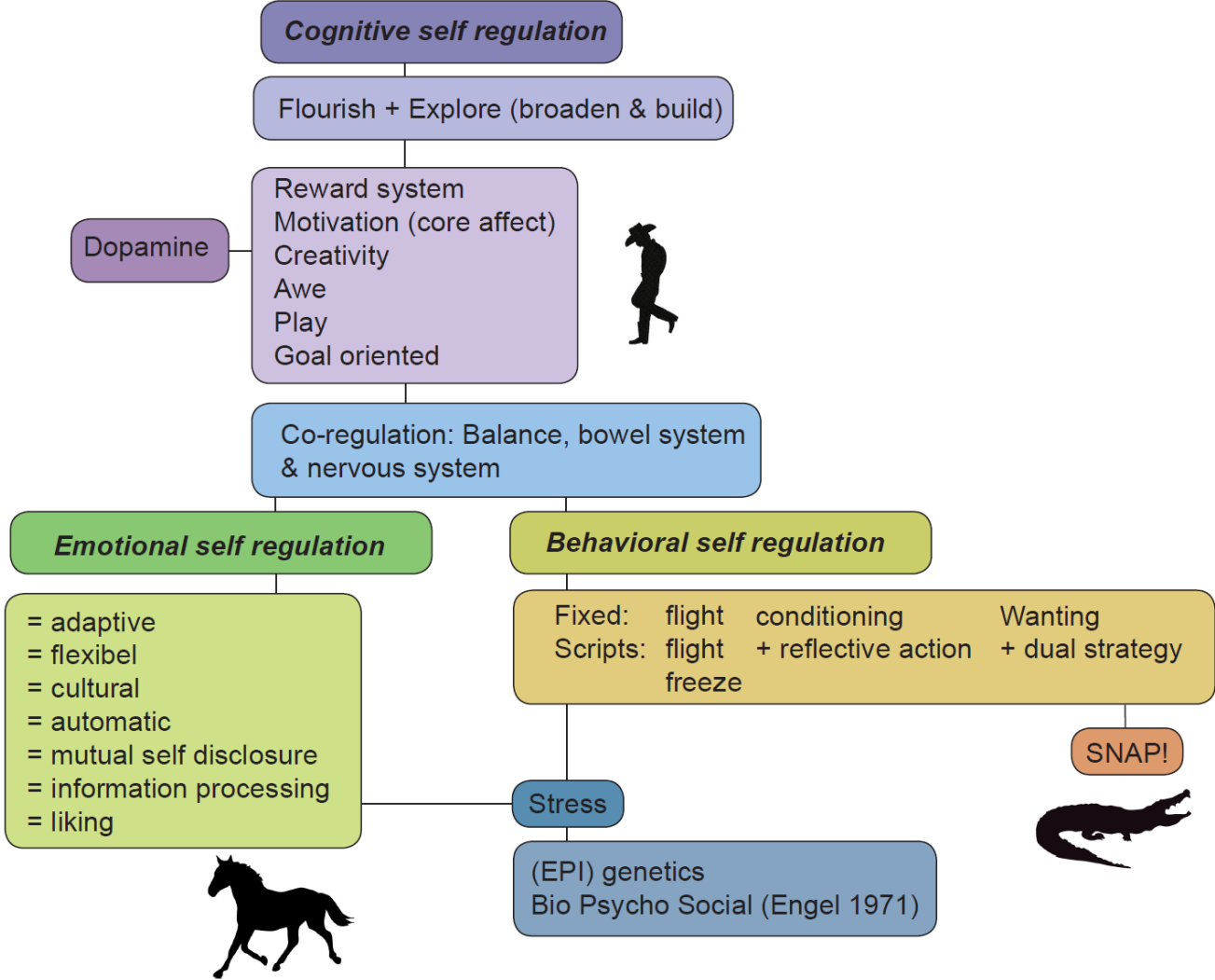
FAVORING THE
CROCODILE: LOW
EFFORT ACTION
AND SHORT TERM
REWARDS



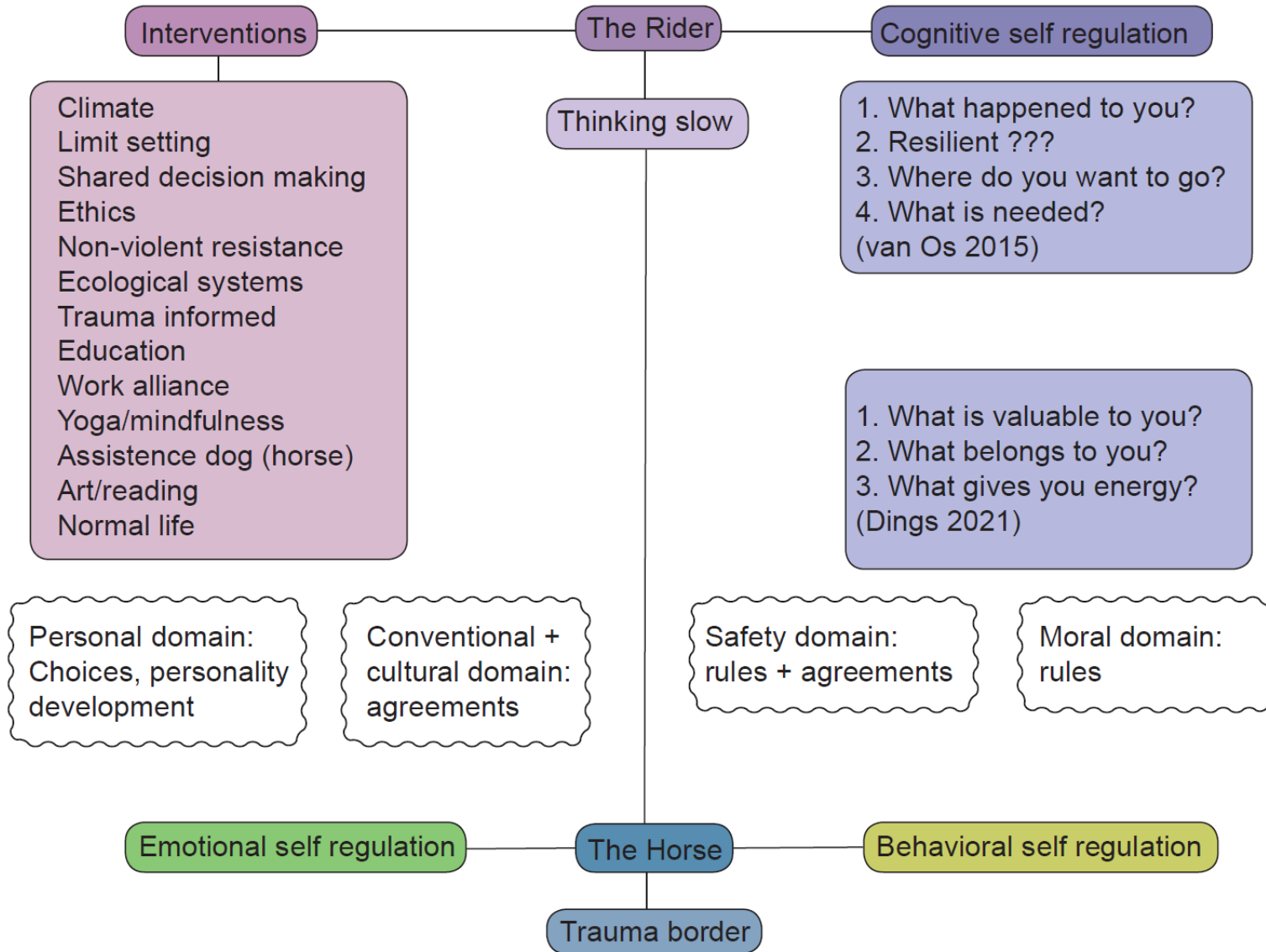
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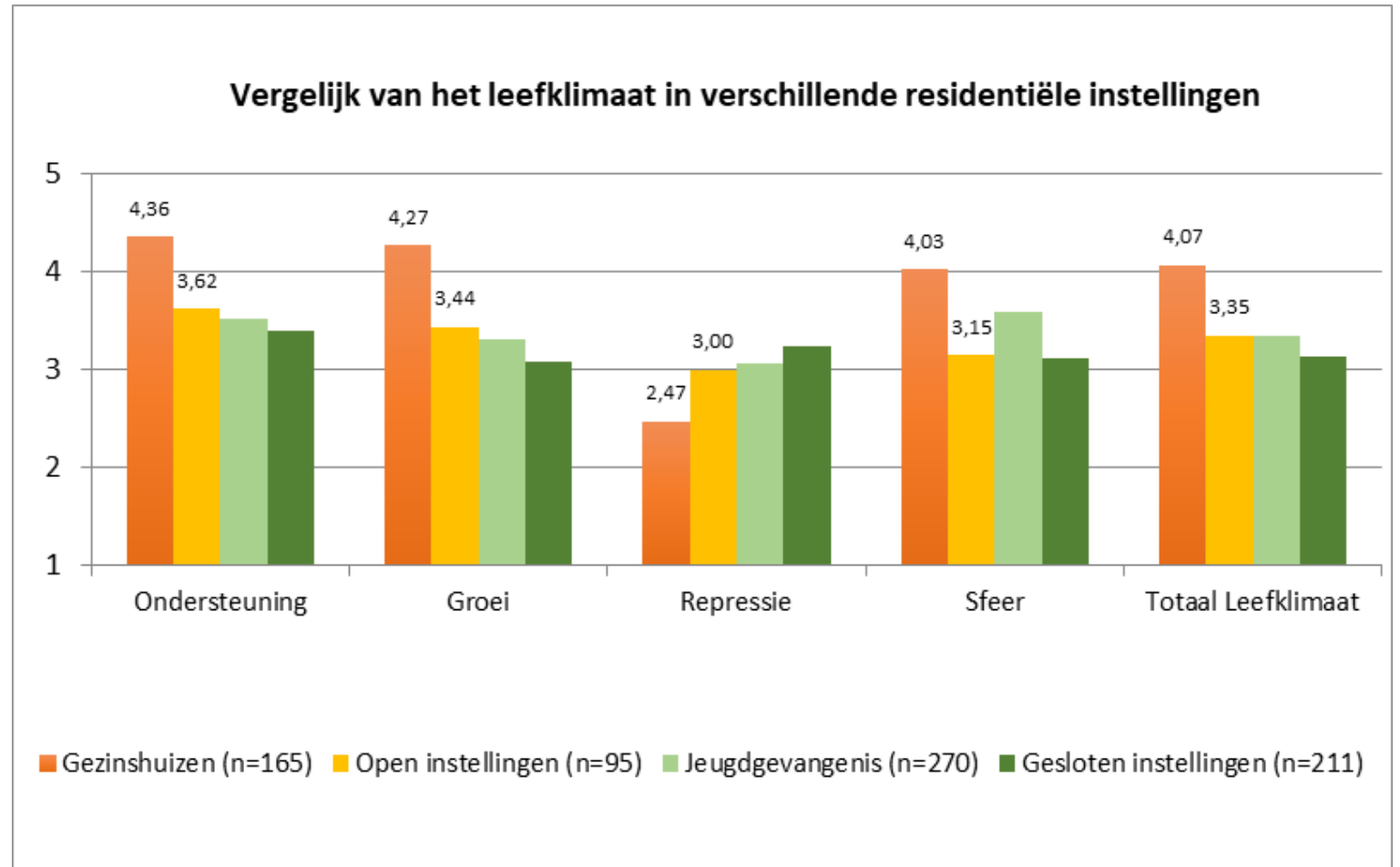
The Rider, the Horse and the Crocodile: 1 - The brain and self regulation




The Rider and the Horse: 3 - Interventions



Improving the social climate creates safety; comparing family style homes (orange) with open residential care and youth prison and secure residential care



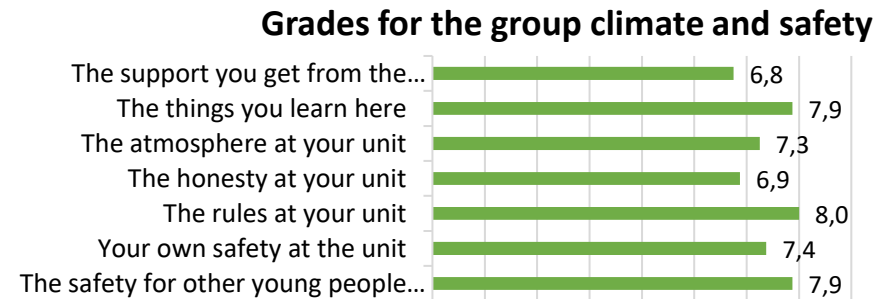
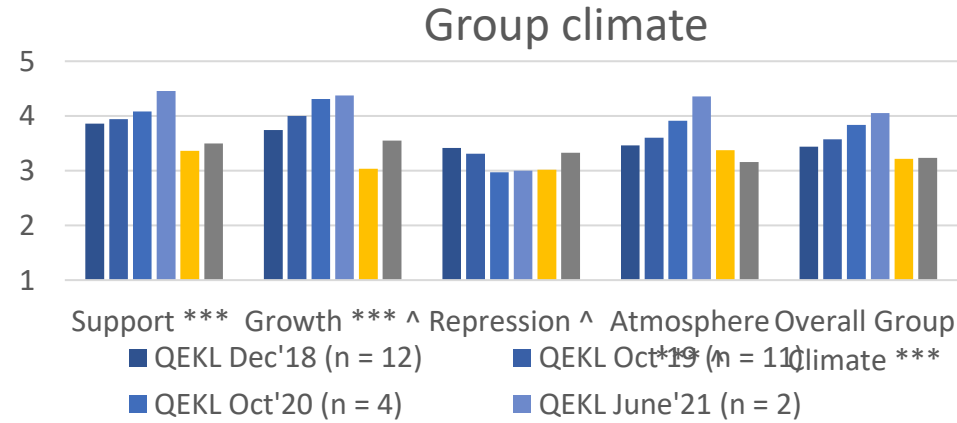


Example: Improving the rider educational climate in Kosovo youth prison (nearly 80 % MID)

Currently: Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Australia, Spain, Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia

Measuring climate, providing feedback with advice and psycho-education to teachers and staff and measuring again.

Results - Group climate of young people in QEKL



RESULTS QUESTIONNAIRES:

In comparison to the previous measurement the young people of QEKL seem to experience the total group climate much less positive. They experience less support by the YJ workers. The item analysis shows that the youngsters feel that there is mostly someone they can turn to when there is a problem, but they also think to a lesser extent that the workers stimulate them to try new things and that they pay somewhat less attention to them and treat them with respect. In comparison to the previous measurement, they experience low levels of growth during their stay. They experience that life is not that meaningful here and they don't think that they learn how to live outside. The young people experience similar levels of repression. They don't think there is nothing to do here, but they do feel that they have to ask permission for everything and that they are wasting their time here. The atmosphere at the unit is also perceived as far less positive. The youngsters think that the atmosphere is good but they don't feel fine here and they don't think they can trust everybody.

In comparison to the reference group they experience the overall group climate the same. The youngsters experience the support the same, a bit less growth, a bit less repression and somewhat better atmosphere.

The average grades the young people have assigned to the group climate factors and safety show that they are quite positive. They are most positive about the rules, the things they learn and safety. There is however one youngster who says there is no safety if you are not careful. They are less positive about the support they get from the workers and the honesty at their unit.

'There is limited strong evidence that these interventions work'

Dickens GL, Johnson A, Steel K, Everett B, Tonkin M. Interventions to Improve Social Climate in Acute Mental Health Inpatient Settings: Systematic Review of Content and Outcomes. *SAGE Open Nursing*. 2022;8.

doi:[10.1177/23779608221124291](https://doi.org/10.1177/23779608221124291)

Deviation from the previous measurement, expressed in Cohen's *d* (effect size)

* = small to medium difference ** = medium to large difference *** = large to very large difference

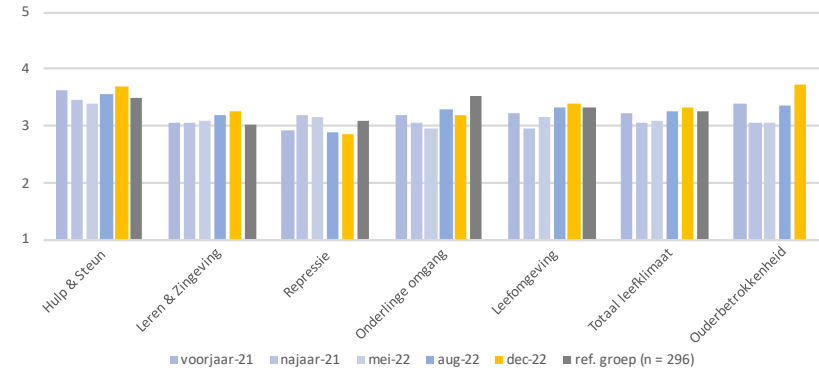
Deviation from the Dutch reference group, expressed in Cohen's *d* (effect size)

^ = small to medium difference ^^ = medium to large difference ^^ = large to very large difference

See appendix for tables with results and comments

And the Schakenbosch example: opening the gate (autonomy)!

Managementsamenvatting



Respons jongeren

56%

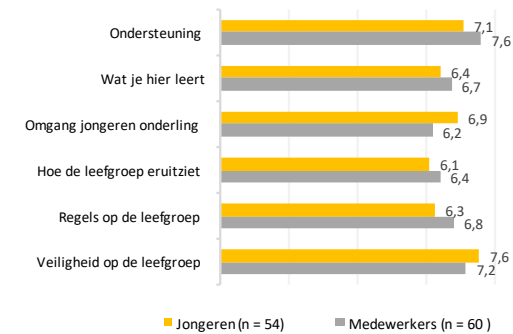
■ Deelgenomen (0) ■ Niet deelgenomen (0)

Respons medewerkers

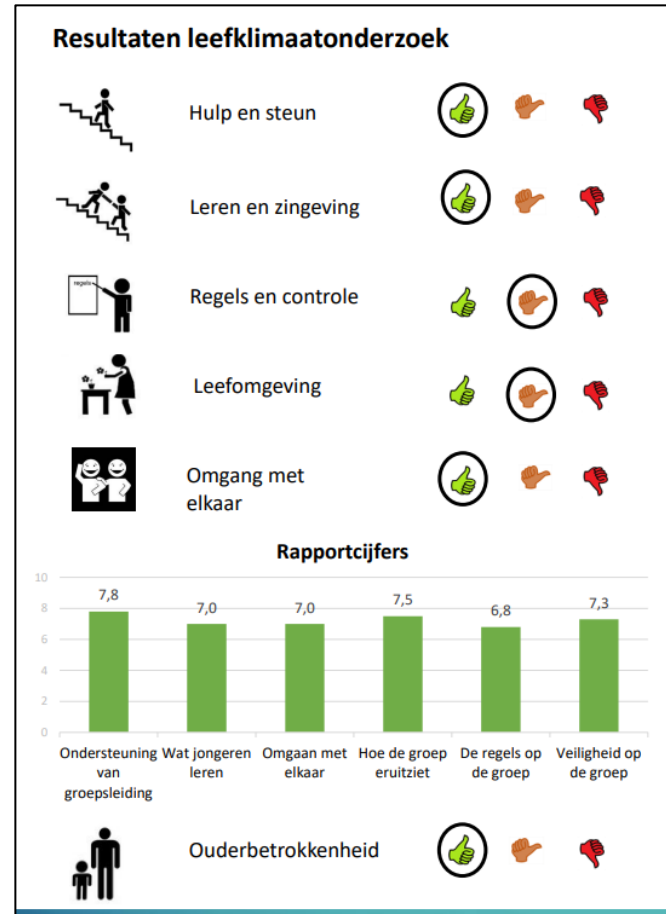
72%

■ Deelgenomen(65) ■ Niet deelgenomen (25)

Rapportcijfers



Not the research but the dialogue



And training for staff

Training for staff is necessary to dampen their own crocodile. Not individual training but team coaching has the best results (Van der Helm 2023).

Aims:

- to listen and not to judge (difficult!)
- To endure behavior (Non Violent Resistance)
- Show compassion
- Do not look for what cannot but what can
- And built social consensus

Sarah no monster

- In our conversation she told me she liked animals (dogs, cats) because they did not judge her, but not insects and cows.
- She also could draw very well and liked working with computers
- She also wanted to go to school
- I promised she could read and correct my notes.
- After my visit her father was allowed to bring her drawing gear.
- Why drawing: liking (the horse & autonomy) and goal oriented & creativity (the rider dopamine system)

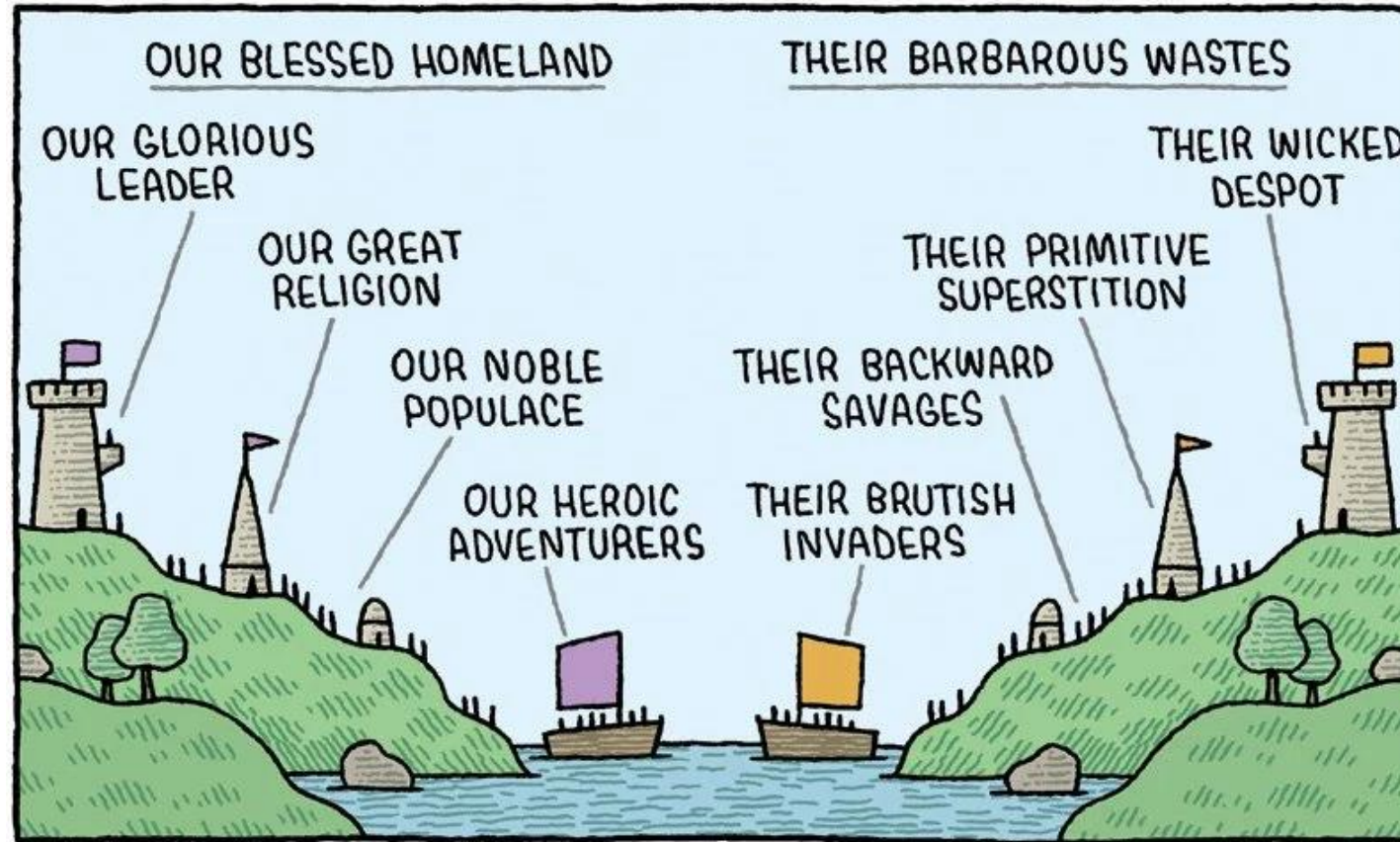
Towards integration: Action and Ethics of Care

To prevent the internal crocodile but also the internal moral finger, preventing creating an outgroup by staff

And distinguish between task conflicts (for the better of the client) and conflicts of interest (ourselves/our organization)

Every child can learn something in order to flourish

The client (patient) as the outgroup: incurable badness



TOM GAULD

Action (Hannah Ahrendt) and Ethics of Care (Gilligan & Tronto) versus labor, work and Moral Ethics (Boehm)

- Hannah Ahrendt (1958) poses three categories of human activities that can be incorporated into education & care processes: Labor (survival, feeding), Work (programs, intervention, protocols) and Action.
- Action concerns autonomy and voice (cognitive and emotional self-regulation). Repression and subsequent loss of the rider in cognitive self regulation (prevent flourish) and the horse on emotional self regulation (prevent liking) and results in behavioral (dis)regulation and wanting/must have; obsessive compulsive behavior: the crocodile (Billen, 2022).

Action is related to Ethics of Care (EOC)

- Other ethics, our hard wired moral finger from hunter-gatherer times (Boehm 2012):
 - Consequentialism (otherwise they die or murder) with the risk of alienating clients and cloaking professional indifference and repression
 - Deontology (transgression of rules-utilitarianism). General moral (or hidden ideological) principles about justice and duties. Deontological ethics can promote a misguided moral finger and thereby miss a focus on recovery with all ups-and-downs including relapses and ruptures in the working alliance (Jesse Roest, 2022) which are part of a recovery process and should not be punished!

EOC as a framework for ethics in order to balance flexibility and control

Ethics of Care (Gilligan) is about interpersonal relations, dependence and interdependence, vulnerabilities and situational characteristics (the living climate).

Difference between men (dual strategy Christian Keyzers in the empathic brain) and women (tend and befriend)



Tronto's qualities of EOC: practical advice and integration

- Attentiveness and compassion give relatedness (the horse)
- Responsibility (Combining flexibility and control, the rider)
- Competence and meaning (SDT)
- Responsiveness and respect for autonomy (not mandatory-counter transference and over structuring sessions-Fjermestad 2016 and Roest 2022 on working alliance)
- Plurality/communication/trust/respect and solidarity

- Baart: theory of presence
- Van der Helm & Klapwijk (2019): listening without judging

Education and care:

Anna Freud and Sophie Dann had patience: no quick fix

Endured their aggression

And listened to the children

A small scale family home with enough motivated staff

We can learn from history, if we want to...

Remember also the teachings Janusz Korczak (shared decision making before WW2) and Koetsveld (every child can learn something)

Do not fight. Chaim Omer on Non Violent Resistance

Staff SDT need safe places too (Van Miert 2022 in preparation)

Safety

Motivation and meaning

Team functioning

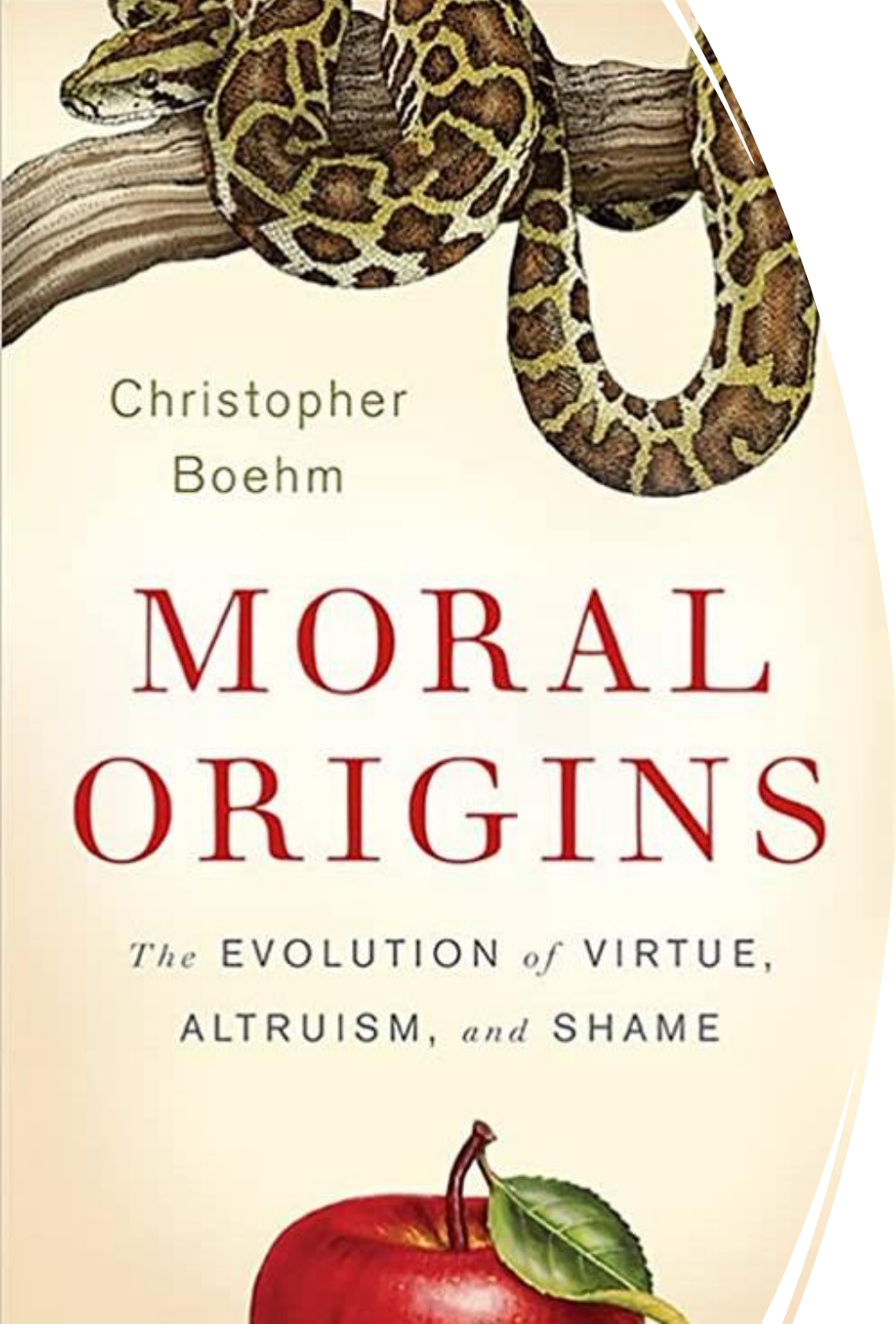
Shared vision and goals

Transformational leadership

Otherwise negative personality changes in staff: 'prison changed me and I just work there'

Sarah continued: a multidisciplinary meeting followed

- Almost no files were found of the past, youth protection denied this, but when asked to produce files, they could not. In the existing files opinions were voiced (negative) but no substantiation and no positive comments.
- The psychiatrist and psychologist (both certified): very dangerous, should be locked away for a long time in a high security unit, no cure possible. Punishment as behavioral regulation. Even administration of pain as a way of shaping. Negative group think was shaping the meeting.
- Then the group worker said that since she got her drawing gear she became very cooperative and communicative. No self harm and no suicide. They even started to like her.
- But her future looks bleak in several other institutes.....

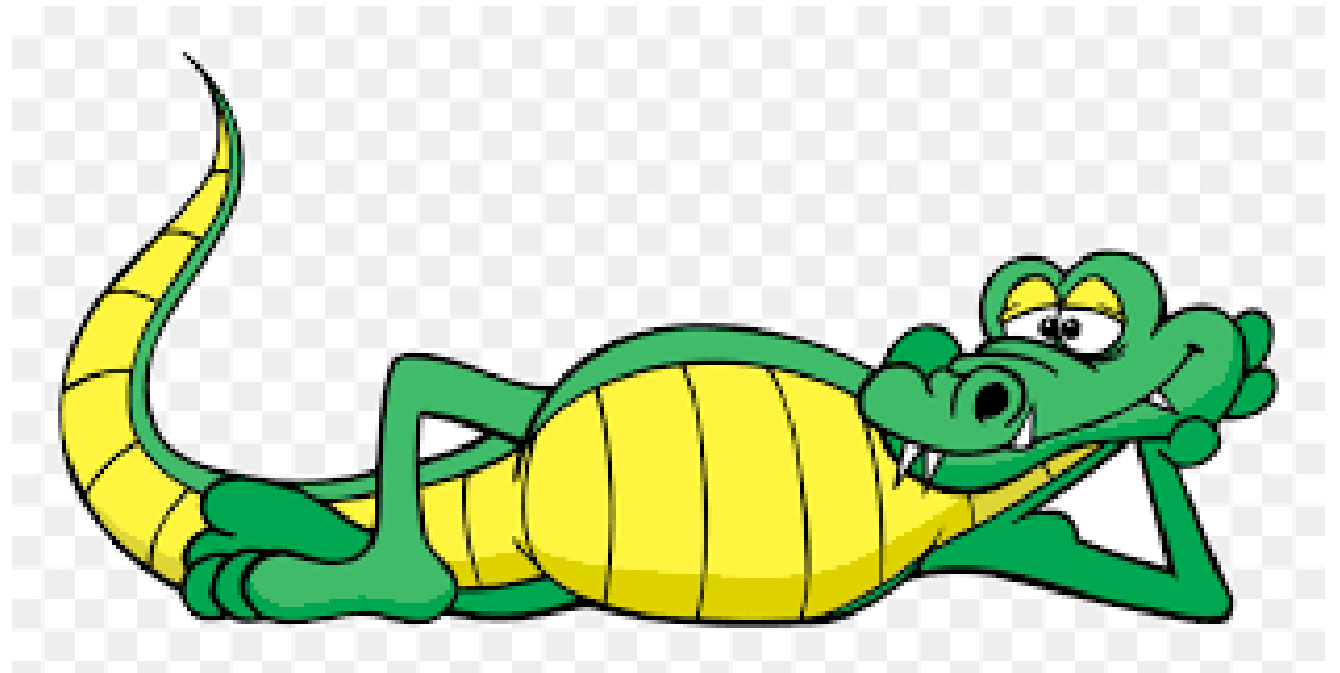


What is preventing professional behavior: our moral origins

- We like to be moral beings but our actions are based on our own crocodile: we hate to admit to be wrong
- Ellemers & De Gilder (2022): integrity paradox, our wish to do good clashes with organizational reality, this creates dissonance reduction, unethical behavior and thinking errors
- In order to convince others we believe in these errors and cling to them (Robert Trivers, 2007, the logic of deceit and self deception)

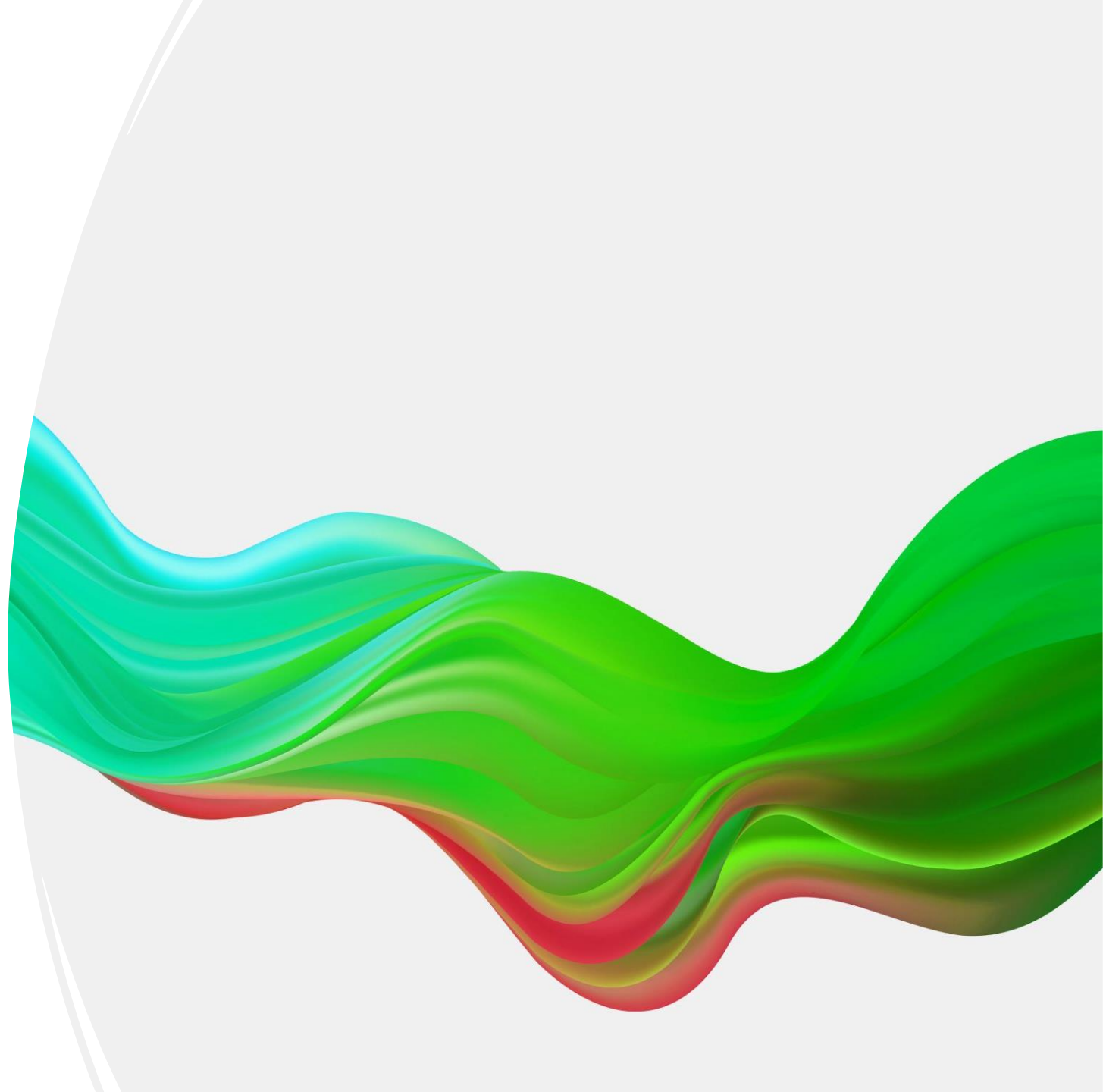
Therefore Psycho-education and continuous feedback necessary for staff

- And instruct our teachers and care workers to understand behaviour and create a better climate in our special education classrooms and (forensic)institutions
- Help them with their own cognitive and emotional self regulation.
- Contain our 'moral finger'
- And free them from toxic counter transference and moral stress: prevent snap!



Path dependent behavior

-
- Massimo Egidi, Alessandro Narduzzo,
 - The emergence of path-dependent behaviors in cooperative contexts,
 - International Journal of Industrial Organization,
 - Volume 15, Issue 6,
 - 1997,
 - Pages 677-709,
 - ISSN 0167-7187,
 - [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-7187\(97\)00007-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-7187(97)00007-6).



Wrapping it up: unsafe places

See documentary Anna Dobber 'forgotten girls' on youtube (also translated in English):

<https://youtu.be/cu4laiEpJy4>
on sexual abuse

The steps on the stairs to my room. My sister phoned me to warn it was now not safe to come home, so I walked around.

Trauma's (mostly sexual) have been more or less resolved by trauma therapy but not (micro)trauma in institutions

Verstegen, Peters-Scheffer, Didden, Nijman & de Vogel (2022) Patient Experiences of Victimization during Mandatory Psychiatric Treatment: A Qualitative Study, Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and practice : [10.1080/24732850.2022.2051662](https://doi.org/10.1080/24732850.2022.2051662)

But living in fear in institutions, sometimes caused by other clients could not resolve this, how hard they tried

The locked door and tap with the keys on my door, the banging and shouting and peering through the peep-hole makes my cell an unsafe place

To have to ask for a toilet roll (repression, de Valk, 2019)

The screaming when somebody is fixated and put in isolation makes my unit an unsafe place

The barking of the hounds and teargas when the police comes in makes this place an unsafe place

I wake up at home in the night drenched in sweat and relive my past for the rest of my life and I wake up during the day and, cut myself or drink or use drugs to calm down or punish myself with abusive men and gang rapes



THE LONELY CENTURY

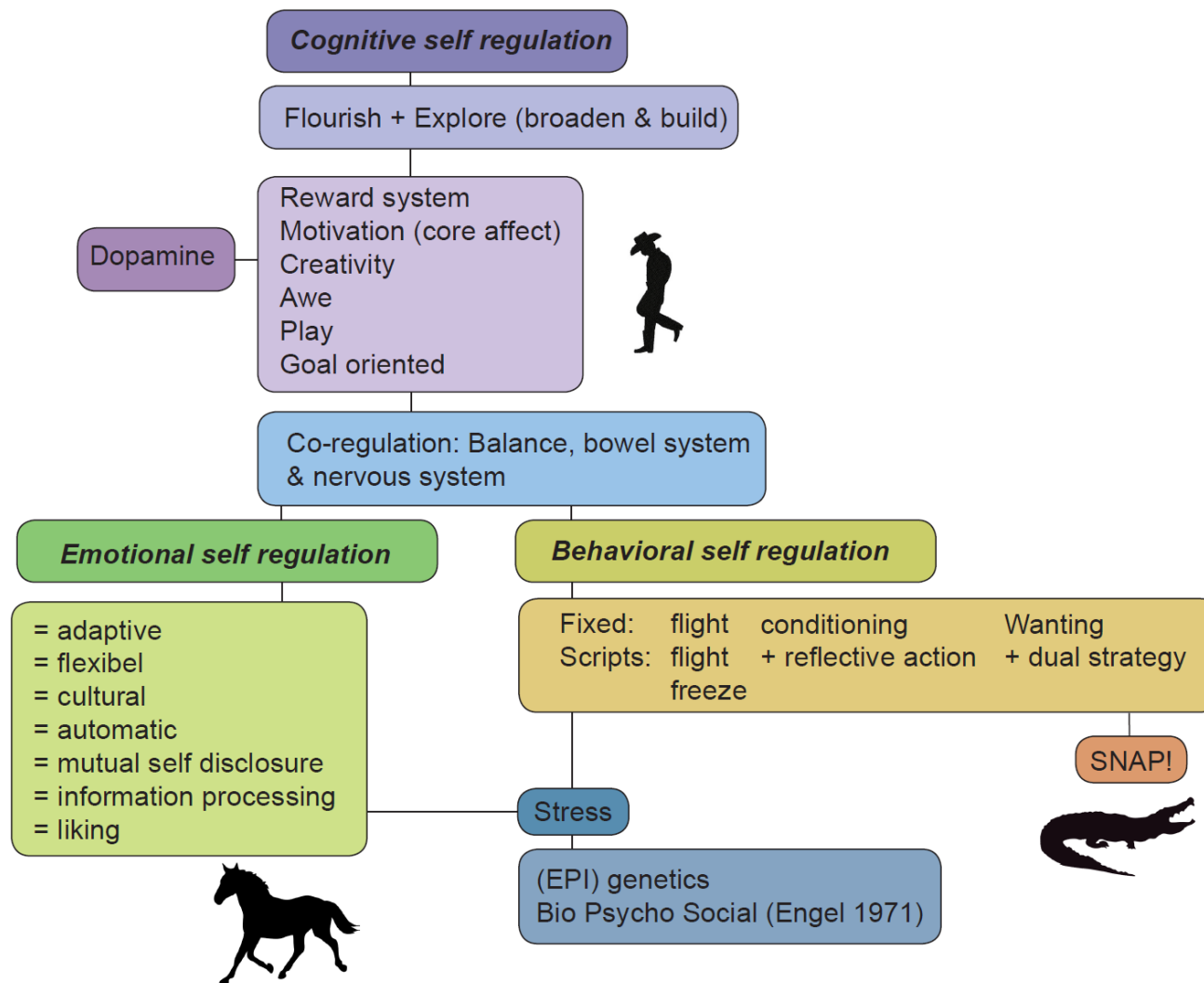
How to Restore Human Connection
in a World that's Pulling Apart

NOREENA HERTZ

Kindness: The surprising power of weak ties for professionals

- And micro-interactions, an act of kindness and compassion, even a random act of kindness could have enormous impact on lonely and distressed people
 - Social (therapeutic) distancing in care is augmenting loneliness and hopelessness
 - But also negative micro-interactions when you cannot avoid them in institutions or at work, create a negative atmosphere.
-
- Verstegen, Peters-Scheffer, Didden, Nijman & de Vogel (2022) Patient Experiences of Victimization during Mandatory Psychiatric Treatment: A Qualitative Study, Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and practice. DOI:[10.1080/24732850.2022.2051662](https://doi.org/10.1080/24732850.2022.2051662)
 - Sandstrom, 2013:
https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0074024?source=post_page-

The Rider, the Horse and the Crocodile: 1 - The brain and self regulation



Sarah's drawing in an isolation unit

- I did not know what was happening to me, but if there had been one person that had put an arm around me and said it was going to be ok, things would have been different



creating safe places
Relatedness, competence and
autonomy
to explore: broaden and build,
creativity, curiosity and
meaning
can lead to hope: to survive
and to flourish

Thank you for joining us

