I love you, my killer

“Invisible” attachment trauma resulting in adult traumatic bonding and healing strategies.
“The experience of fear and the search for safety and comfort in relationships are core human experiences.”

(”Terror within and without” Judy Yellin, Orit Badouk Epstein.)
“I’m afraid to be loved!
I’m afraid to feel love!
I don’t want to surrender to love for a lifetime.
I’m afraid to be hurt again.
The fact that I can escape brings me peace and rest.
I can’t change this.
But that doesn’t mean that I’m not trying to do my best as best I can.”
Outline

• Invisible Attachment Trauma
• Traumatic bonding
• Disorganized attachment
  – Internal working model/ Drama Triangle
  – Dissociation
• Treatment strategies
Invisible Attachment Trauma
Why broadening our vision on the definition of Attachment trauma?

- Because of the definition of trauma
  - PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder)
    - Criterion A: (traumatic event)
- Because of the importance of the attachment relationship on child’s development necessary for:
  - Survival/Affect/stressregulation/IWM/Core self
- Because of the importance of quality of parenting
- Our knowledge about neurobiology
  - secure attachment ➔ development right brain (A. Schore)
The Quality of Parenting

We are hardwired to be held in the mind and heart of another.
The Quality of Parenting

Sensitive responsiveness
The Quality of Parenting
Reflective functioning

Theory of Mind

needs
feels
purposes
reasons
desires
The quality of parenting

Mentalization
The quality of parenting
Containment

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
The quality of parenting
External regulation
The Quality of Parenting

Play / Shared pleasure
“Invisible attachment trauma”

• Regulation theory (Schore, 1994, 2003)
• Developmental psychology
• Neuroscience
• Stress mechanism
• Developmental psychobiology of the ANS
“Invisible attachment trauma”

• First four stages of development:
  – Prenatal trauma/ attachment
  – Birth trauma
  – Perinatal trauma
  – Attachment trauma
“Invisible attachment trauma”

Experiences of threat

include the threat of

separation

having little response to

from the caregiver

the signals of distress.
“Invisible attachment trauma”

In the interaction between child and caregiver

Not an obvious event

Caregiver’s unavailability

modulate the affective dysregulation

Caregiver’s inability to

emotional/ psychological abandonment
“Invisible attachment trauma” and Bowlby

• Bowlby (1950s)
• “…a second potential pathway to disorganization was a safe haven ambiguity.”
• Highly ambiguous signals about safe haven availability have the potential to be disorganising and such ambiguity could occur even where the caregiver is not threatening, is present and there has been no major separation. (Reisz, Duschinsky, Siegel, 2018)
“Invisible attachment trauma” and Atypical maternal behavior

- Atypical Maternal Behavior Instrument for Assessment and Classification (AMBIANCE) Lyons Ruth
- Frequencies for five dimensions of disrupted communications
  - Negative-Intrusive behavior
e.g. Mocks or teases infant.
  - Role Confusion
e.g. Draws attention to self when infant is in need.
  - Contradictory Affective Communication
e.g. talks in inviting voice but physically blocks infant’s access.
  - Disorientation
e.g. shows confused, frightened, or odd affect with infant.
  - Withdrawal
e.g. interacts from a distance; interacts silently; walks around infant.
“Invisible attachment trauma” and disconnection

• Babies require a constant stream of “emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical inputs” (Mary Jo Barrett)
• left without this input stream
• Child learns:
  – that its own hard-wired needs are terrifying.
  – The emotional pain and terror are so intense
  – the child will do anything to distract itself from those needs.
  – only comfort himself in ways that are maladaptive

  – it doesn’t matter what I’m feeling

• Child becomes disconnected
  • not only from other people
  • from my own internal bodily self.
“Invisible attachment trauma” and consequences

• Bruce Perry
  – Babies hard-wired to be flooded with stress chemicals when those needs are not met
  – And the flood can go on for decades
“Invisible attachment trauma” and consequences

- The psychological injuries (trauma)
- Caused by emotional abandonment
- Are often invisible and unacknowledged.
- This may leave these children/adults feeling confused.
- Assuming that their traumatic experience are not justified
- Minimalizing
- Turn to blaming and shaming themselves.
Severity of “Invisible Attachment Trauma”

• EAT and the overlap with complex trauma
  – Interpersonal stressor
  – Multiple
  – Repeated
  – Cumulative
  – Developmentally vulnerable times

• Early stage:
  – The impact on the brain
  – Developmentally
    • Margret Mahler: Individuation – separation model
Consequences of “Invisible attachment Trauma”

Disorganized attachment

Internal working model ↔ Dissociation

Drama Triangle
Traumatic bonding
Traumatic bonding

• The diagnostic criteria of traumatic bonding, terror bonding, or Stockholm syndrome are not listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V).

• As such, there is no official consensus on the definition of traumatic bonding.
Traumatic bonding

• a powerful and destructive bond
• one member of the bonded pair intermittently victimizes or traumatizes the other person
• more generally to describe strong emotional ties that may form between victims and their oppressors across a range of relationships and types of abuse
• Attachment theory has also been applied to explain traumatic bonding as an unresolved form of insecure attachment (Saunders and Edelson 1999)
Trauma bond

• James (1994) describes this relationship between child and perpetrator as a subcategory of a disorganised attachment: a trauma bond.
The difference between a trauma bond and a secure attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secure attachment</th>
<th>Trauma bond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes time</td>
<td>Instantaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal and caring</td>
<td>Domination and fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person is needed for survival</td>
<td>Person is needed for survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity = safety</td>
<td>Proximity = fear/alarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate independent person</td>
<td>Not separate person – extension of other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mastery</td>
<td>Mastery by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy and individuation</td>
<td>Obedient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation is managed</td>
<td>Separation intensifies the bond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( James, 1994)
Stockholm syndrome

• Graham (1995) developed the Stockholm syndrome theory
  – four precursors:
    • perceived threat to survival
    • perceived kindness
    • Isolation
    • the perceived inability to escape
  – a defense mechanism
  – including cognitive and perceptual distortions
Stockholm syndrome

• Graham developed a 49-item scale to measure Stockholm syndrome in relationships
• the items were largely represented by three factors:

  1. core Stockholm syndrome:
     • cognitive distortions
       – Rationalizing/ minimizing a violent partner’s behaviour, self-blame, and reporting love in the context of fear.
     • interpersonal trauma.
Stockholm syndrome

2. Psychological damage
   - Depression
   - low self-esteem, and other interpersonal difficulties.

3. Love dependency
   - a strong belief that one’s very survival depended on a partner’s love
   - extreme idolization
   - and the belief that without one’s partner there would be nothing for which to live
Traumatic bonding
Neurobiology of traumatic bonding

(Van der Kolk)

The disruption of attachment

Negatively influencing physiological systems

The child’s brain organizes around a stress response

May even be neurologically addictive

Activating production of endogenous opioids

Alleviate stress

Then intensify the trauma bond
Traumatic bonding and stress regulation

(Felicity de Zulueta)

• Trauma bond
• Internalized product of repeated experiences
• Felt both terrified
• Desperately in need of their caregiver
• Traumatic states of helplessness
• 'an inward flight' or dissociative response
Traumatic bonding and stress regulation

• Autonomic nervous system (ANS)
  – It regulate the autonomic, somatic aspects of the stress responses
  – Specific behavior and physiological responses
  – ANS: = system of balance
    • Sympathetic = “accelerator” = fight/flight
    • Parasympathetic = “brakes” = rest/digest
Traumatic bonding and stress regulation

• Stephen Porges (2001)
  – The Polyvagal Theory:
    • ANS = hierarchical system that responds to environmental challenges
    • Three different subsystems
      – Parasympathetic ventral vagal (Social engagement system)
      – Sympathetic arousal (fight/flight)
      – Parasympathetic dorsal vagal (freeze responses)
Traumatic bonding and stress regulation

Porges’ View of the ANS
The metaphor of safety

Environment: outside and inside the body

Nervous System

Safety
- Optimal arousal level
- Rest and digest
- Parasympathetic ventral vagal system
- “Social Engagement System”
- Eye contact, facial expression, vocalization

Danger
- Hyperarousal
- Increased Heart Rate
- Sympathetic System
- Mobilization – “fight-flight”
- Dissociated rage, panic

Life threat
- Hypoarousal
- Decreased Heart Rate
- Parasympathetic dorsal vagal system
- Immobilization – “freeze”
- Dissociated collapse

Wheatley-Crosbie, adapted from Porges, 2006

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
Traumatic bonding: features

• Dutton and Painter (1993)
  – two specific features of abusive relationships:
    • power imbalances
    • intermittent good-bad treatment.

• Ambivalence
  – The ambivalence fueling this destructive cycle is fear.
    • Fear of intimacy
    • Fear of abandonment
Traumatic bonding: features

The hero’s journey

• **Compulsive reenactment** (Allan Schore)
  – complication of unresolved trauma
    • narrative reenactment of the trauma
• **The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma** (Bessel A. van der Kolk, 1989, 1994)
  • Repetitive reenactment of unresolved trauma
  • Dissociated attachment trauma
  • Repeated exposure to fear without solution
  • The desire to recreate a familiar relationship pattern
  • Felt security
Disorganized attachment and traumatic bonding
Invisible attachment

trauma ➔ Disorganized attachment

- Care-seeking or attachment system
- “From the cradle to the grave”
- “Unresolved” parents”
- “The source and the solution”
- Psychobiological reactions
- The simultaneity of approach and avoidance ➔ lack of organization
- Disorganization = Collapse of the integrative functions of consciousness

© Traumacentrum Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
“Fright without solution “

- (Hesse & Main, 1990,2006; Lyons-Ruth, Bronfman, & Parsons, 1999)
  - the central experience of the disorganized infant
  - interaction with a:
    - frightening parent (directly frightening behaviors)
    - frightened parent (frightened behaviors)
    - extremely insensitive parent
      - the absence of regulation of fearful arousal
      - withdraw from the infant–parent interaction when the child expresses attachment needs
    - dissociated behaviors

© Traumacenter Belgium - www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
“Fright without solution “

– the attachment system ➔ protection against danger ➔ inextricably linked with the fear system.

– the attachment figure ➔ provide safety ➔ provides cues to danger ➔ the infant conflicting behavior of approach and withdrawal.

– Subtypes of disorganization
  • “frightened” group
  • “not frightened” group
Internal Working Model

– Internal working model (IWM)
  • Memories of attachment interactions → accessibility
  • Mental representations of self/others
  • Cognitive structure
  • Typical emotions
  • Implicit memory
  • Open to modification
“Drama triangle”

• Karpman (1968)
• identifying the basic structure both of fairy tales and of tragic plays in classic theater.
• This metaphor construing both the attachment figure and the self according to the three basic positions of the drama triangle
Disorganized attachment ➔ Drama triangle

• Internal Working Models (IWM)
Drama triangle ➔ Traumatic bonding

• Dance between the past and the here and now
  – Invisible attachment trauma
  – Disorganized attachment
  – Drama triangle
  – No coherent self
  – Shifting internal states
  – No feeling of connection between the internal states
  – No affectregulation possibilities

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
Dance between the past and the here and now

- “I want him” (EP)
  - Attachment system
- “I hate him”
  - Actual situation with associated emotions
  - Inadequate affectregulation
  - Triangle of conflict
  - Rejection
“Abuse dichotomy”

• Either
  – I am bad or the parent is bad.
• It is for my own good because I have been bad.
  – It is my fault I’m being hurt
  – I must deserve this.
  – I ‘m as bad as whatever is done to me
  – How deeply I’m hurt how more bad I am
• This belief can then permeate all future relationships (Laing, 1970).
Defensive belief

dying for love/journal of trauma and dissociation

• Fairbairn, 1952
• Child’s coping mechanism are immature
• Survival strategy and defense = “I’m bad”
• Making the attachment figure (externally and internally) “good”
• Sense of future
Identification and introjection

dying for love/journal of trauma and dissociation

• Identifying with the agressor (Freud, 1936)
• Defense against the helplessness of the victim
• Splitting
• Victim- perpetrator states
Dissociation and traumatic bonding
Dissociative disorder = Attachment disorder?

• Peter Barach (1991)

• “invisible attachment trauma”
  – Quality of the attachment relationship
  – Availability of the caregiver
  – Disruptions of the bond/ Separation

• Disorganized attachment

• Survival strategy
Dissociative disorder = Attachment disorder?

• PDD (protest – dispair – detachment)
• Detachment:
  – Deactivation of the attachment system
  – Excluding from awareness
• Detachment = dissociation
The neurobiology of dissociation

• Dissociative phenomena:
  ➔ Sympathetic energy- expanding Hyper- arousal
    ➣ Flashbacks/Full immersion in the experience

  ➔ Parasympathetic energy- conserving Hypo- arousal
    ➣ Freeze/Detachment from the experience/ depersonalisation/ derealization
Adult attachment

- Hazan & Shaver, 1987
- Romantic love is an attachment process
- person‘s attachment style, determined by infant- parent relationship
- following features:
  - both feel safe when the other is nearby and responsive
  - both engage in close, intimate, bodily contact
  - both feel insecure when the other is inaccessible
  - both share discoveries with one another
  - both engage in "baby talk"
Adult attachment

- Secure: It's OK to be dependent or get close. I'm not afraid of being alone. It's fine if you don't like me! I value our relationship. Love is easy! Non-defensive.
- Preoccupied: I have an issue with my past/parents. Why do you run away from me? "Come to me!" Emotional, expressive, impulsive, I need you!
- Anxious-Ambivalent: Secure.
- Decisive: I like to be independent! Love doesn't matter to me. Avoidance. You not-OK.
- Fearful: I want love, but if you come too close, you might hurt me. I have mixed feelings... I don't trust you. I lost something in the past.

(c) Cezar Danilevici

© Traumacenter Belgium- www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe 60
Adults with an unresolved (disorganized) state of mind
Adults with an unresolved (disorganized) state of mind

- They cannot maintain affective continuity in their inner worlds.
- Confused messages about who is in control, who should care for whom or whether to approach or not.
- Development either a helpless or hostile/controlling state of mind.
- Lack of resolution and mourning with respect to early loss and trauma.
- Dissociated affects, memories and thoughts.
- Projection, externalization, or dissociation of thoughts and feelings.
- Negative and distorted parental attributions (Lieberman, 2000).
- Parental projective identification and self-fulfilling prophecies.
- No self-regulation capacities.
Therapy

• **Goals:**
  – Regain self-esteem, control, set boundaries
  – Being self-determining/ be self-reliant
  – Empowerment
  – Lovingly heal yourself
  – Building relationships based on love, respect and trust, not fear.
Therapy

• The therapeutic relationship
• Self –discovery
  – Self -awareness
  – Affectregulation
  – Emotional needs
• Exit the drama triangle = Traumatic bonding
  – From rescuer to coach
  – From victim to creator
  – From persecutor to challenger
  – Reclaim your projections.
  – Expression
The Therapeutic Relationship
Therapist is working in the stabilization phase

- We are wired to connect and we are wired to care. (Siegel. 1999)
- Experience shapes the brain
- Therapist is
  - Present emotionally
  - Sensitive
  - Available
  - Resonate empathically
  - Attuned
  - Containment
  - Client ”feel felt”
The therapeutic relationship as a secure base

“You are not alone”

Share  Regulate  Explore
Therapist as secure base

• (Bowlby, 1977). The therapist as an attachment figure
• assist the client in exploring past and present attachment relationships
• understanding how such relationships contribute to current internal working models and his or her difficulties.
• Through such exploration, client can revise internal working models and develop adaptive views of self and other.
Treatment and the drama triangle

• Whenever there is a hint that a disorganized IWM is guiding the patient’s way of construing the therapeutic relationship, the correction of such a model should become a primary aim of the treatment.

• striving for safety and alliance within the therapeutic relationship

• Phase-oriented treatments in which stabilization of the therapeutic relationship precedes trauma work
“It takes two to tango”
“It takes two to tango”

• Therapist being aware of his own trauma- and attachment history.
• Become conscious of the various roles and use that awareness to ensure we don’t act out the roles in the therapy room.
• Which position do you take in the triangle?
• Notice which positions you take more often.
• Do you take different positions with different people?
• How does your drama triangle position connect with your experiences in childhood?
“It takes two to tango”

• Karpman suggests the rescuer role is ultimately a way to fulfill one's own (ego) needs (to look important, competent, feel superior)

• Therapists are particularly vulnerable to the rescuer role.
Exit the drama triangle

**DDT: THE DREADED DRAMA TRIANGLE™**
(KARPMAN DRAMA TRIANGLE)

- **Persecutor**
  - The Problem
  - Dominates, Blames
  - Tears Down

- **Victim**
  - Poor Me, Feels Powerless
  - Dream Lost or Denied

- **Rescuer**
  - Poor You
  - Pain Reliever
  - Fears Not Being Needed

© 2013 The Power of TED™ & David Emerald. All Rights Reserved.
www.PowerOFTED.com

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle: The empowerment dynamic

David Emerald’s TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic) triangle provides an alternative to the Karpman Drama Triangle

- Creator
- Challenger
- Persecutor
- Coach
- Rescuer
- Victim

TED*

*The Empowerment Dynamic

Dreaded Drama Triangle
(Karpman’s Drama Triangle)

Anxiety-Based Problem-Focused

Passion-Based Outcome-Focused

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle

TED* (*THE EMPOWERMENT DYNAMIC)™

Creator

Owns Power to Choose & Respond
Focusses on Outcomes
“I Can Do It”

Challenger

Calls Forth Learning & Growth
Provokes/Evokes Action
Conscious/Constructive
Unconscious/Deconstructive
“You can do it!”

Coach

Supports & Assists
Facilitates Clarity by Asking Questions
“How will you do it?”

© Traumacenter Belgium-
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
“It takes two to tango”

• **Rescuer becomes Coach**
  – It is a fine line between empathy and sympathy.
  – we need to empower clients
  – trust and help to find their abilities
  – encourage them to develop, grow and become self reliant.
  – Don’t thrive on being needed
“It takes two to tango”

- **Victim becomes Creator**
  - remain orientated to the client’s desired outcome.
  - Remain hopeful, inspired and energised
  - take responsibility for the choices and interventions
  - Stay resilient and creative

- **Persecutor becomes Challenger**
  - take the persecutor role as a helper when we think we know best/ criticize our client or become frustrated with them
  - we need to trust the therapeutic process.
  - Create an environment where things can unfold at their own pace
  - the right balance of challenge and support
Self-discovery
Self-discovery

• Increasing self-awareness
Characteristics of disorganized attachment.

• There are two hallmark traits:
  
  – An inability to self-regulate and self-soothe intense emotions.
  
  – The second is a lack of self-awareness about their own emotional needs.
Affectregulation
Affectregulation

• Affect recognition
  – Affect diary (work backward)
  – Awareness of the feeling
Affectregulation

• Name it to tame it!
  – Lists of emotions
• Up or down-regulation
Down regulation

- Emotional toolbox
- Perceive bodily signals (interoceptive sensitivity)
- Use reappraisal
- Name the emotion
- Increase the opposite feeling
- Changing our bodies (rest)
Up-regulation

- Focus on humor
- Think about a positive experience
- Focus on a certain aspect of the situation
- Express positive feelings
- Share your feeling with others
- Build on positive experiences
- Increase the number of pleasant things
- Focus on goals
- Build a life worth living
- Changing our appraisals of a situation.
- Modulating our responses in the situation.
Affectregulation

• Expression
• Creating a safe space where people can express authentic feelings
• Not using emotions to manipulate or control others
Triangle of conflict

MALAN’s TRIANGLES

(Reference – Malan D (1979) Individual Psychotherapy & the Science of Psychodynamics – Butterworth)

Defence  Anxiety
(D)       (A)

Hidden Feelings (H)
( Often an impulse & from early age )
Triangle of conflict
Self-awareness about their own emotional needs.

- Invisible attachment trauma
- Disorganized attachment
- Survival adaptation
- Foreclosure of the self to maintain the attachment relationship
- Negation of the core needs
Self-awareness about their own emotional needs.

• Connection
  – Disconnect from the body and social engagement.
  – give up their very sense of existence, become invisible.
• Attunement
  – Foreclosing the awareness and expression of personal needs
  – give up their own needs in order to focus on the needs of others
• Trust
  – Foreclosing trust and healthy interdependence.
  – give up their authenticity in order to be who the parents want them to be: best friend, sport star, confidante…
• Autonomy
  – Foreclosing authentic expression
  – give up their direct expressions of independence
• Love- sexuality
  – Foreclosing love and heart connection.
  – perfecting themselves
Self-awareness about their own emotional needs.

- Maslow’s hierarchy of needs
Self-awareness about their own emotional needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Human Emotional Needs</th>
<th>Top 10 Emotional Needs of Children &amp; Most Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accepted</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledged</td>
<td>fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admired</td>
<td>heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciated</td>
<td>helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approved of</td>
<td>helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believed in</td>
<td>important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capable</td>
<td>in control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cared about</td>
<td>included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenged</td>
<td>listened to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear (not confused)</td>
<td>loved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competent</td>
<td>needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td>noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgiven</td>
<td>powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>productive / useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reassured</td>
<td>recognized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respected</td>
<td>safe / secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supported</td>
<td>treated fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trusted</td>
<td>understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worthy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Traumacentrum Belgium
www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
Meet the unmet needs

• Commit to getting your needs met
  – become visible:
    • by asking directly for what you want
    • Express your personal needs
    • Connect with the body
    • Connect with others
    • Love and heart connection
    • Development of core self
If you experience relationship drama

Ask yourself:

Do I want to repair, or be right?

David Emerald

www.powerofted.com
Exit the drama triangle
Exit the drama triangle = traumatic bonding

- From rescuer to coach
- From victim to creator
- From persecutor to challenger
- Reclaim your projections.
- Expression
- Second phase of the treatment:
  - Healing invisible trauma
  - Traumaconfrontation
Exit the drama triangle: From rescuer to coach
The rescuer role

• Feels obligated to rescue
• Does things for others that they don’t ask for and are able to do for themselves.
• Feels guilty if they don’t help others.
• Acts and sounds like an Authoritative Parent, keeping the Victim dependent and helpless with their Rescuing.
• Supports the Victim’s perception of being weak and a failure.
• Expects to fail in his or her own attempt to Rescue the Victim.
• Avoids conflict and drama
• Comes from an I’m okay/good, you’re bad/not okay position.
Exit the drama triangle: from rescuer to coach

Thoughts: I must save others from harm
- If I do good, it will be "worthy"
- I feel sorry for them (Victim)

Feelings: Fears not being needed
- Feels persecuted when
- Victim doesn’t accept their help
- Feels "superior" to Victim

Behaviors: Jumps in to save the day
- Fosters dependency & indispensability
- May sacrifice the truth to protect others

Thoughts: People are resourceful and creative
- I trust others and their abilities

Feelings: Compassionate and engaged
- Fulfilled and reflective
- Supportive and "non-attached"

Behaviors: Uses inquiry to help others and self to
develop their own clarity and vision
- Empowers and develops others
- Encourages and provides positive reinforcement

© Traumacenter Belgium- www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle: From victim to creator
The victim role

- Feels victimized, oppressed, helpless, hopeless, powerless and ashamed.
- Looks for a Rescuer to help perpetuate negative self-beliefs.
- Uses the Victim role to avoid making decisions, solving problems and taking responsibility.
- Uses conflict situations to play Victim.
- Embraces or creates conflict situations.
- Operates from an I’m not okay/bad, you’re okay/good position.
Exit the drama triangle: from victim to creator

Exiting Victim Consciousness/Behavior

External locus of control → internal locus of control
Exit the drama triangle: from victim to creator

exiting Victim Consciousness/ Behavior

Hypervigilance in the presence of others ➔ window of tolerance

Window of Tolerance

- Activation ➔ Settling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somatic Signs</th>
<th>Mental-Emotional Signs</th>
<th>Behavioral Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair and clean up</td>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>Completion of tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease</td>
<td>Playful</td>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded/settled</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Empathy is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain symptoms lower</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Creativity emerges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bandwidth can be very narrow – our goal is to expand it, but first we have to be in it.

© Traumacenter Belgium- www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle: from victim to creator

exiting Victim Consciousness/ Behavior

negative intentions of other people ➔ safety work

• Safety work:
  – Physical safety:
    • Means that you are not in danger.
  – Mental safety:
    • Means that you are able to choose belief systems
    • Patterns of thinking
    • Awareness that get you where you want or need to go.
Exit the drama triangle: from victim to creator

Exiting Victim Consciousness/Behavior
- other people are more fortunate ➔ gratitude
- Self-pity ➔ traumahealing
Exit the drama triangle: From victim to creator

• exiting Victim Consciousness
  – Invisible attachment trauma ➔ good- bad splitting
  – I’m Not OK, You’re OK
  – Identification and introjection

• Changing IWM

• Up regulating positive feelings

• Up regulate positive attitude
Restructuring the internal working model

• Corrective relational experiences:
  – Therapeutic relationship
  – Traumatic bonding

• Affect regulation
  – IWM have a high emotional load
Restructuring the internal working model: Dis-identification
Restructuring the internal working model: Resource development

- Resource-focused interventions can be conceptualized as including a wide range of methods:
  - Physical well-being
  - Spiritual well-being (meditation, prayer…)
  - Creativity (creative arts, movement and music therapies…)
  - Ego resources (assertiveness training, mentalization, self-care, empowerment techniques…)
  - Self-capacities (self-regulation skills, such as relaxation training…)

© Traumacenter Belgium - www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D'Hoooghe
Restructuring the internal working model: Inner child work

- Gestalt therapy: “Empty chair”
- John Bradshaw ("Homecoming")
- Inner child writing
- Imagine your inner child
Exit the drama triangle: From victim to creator

- The victim ➔ regulating powerlessness
- The "Laws" of Personal Power (Steven Stosny, 2010)
  - Ownership
    - We are powerless over what we do not own.
    - perceive their emotions as products of their environment
    - try to control, manipulate, or seduce.
    - Empowered people believe that their environment triggers emotions ➔ they regulate the triggered emotions
  - Focus.
    - focus on what they cannot do/ they can't control
    - Empowered people focus on how to improve their situation or their experience of it
- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
Exit the drama triangle: From victim to creator
Exit the drama triangle: From persecutor to challenger
The Persecutor role

• Sets unnecessarily restrictive rules and limits.
• Blames others for whatever happens.
• Criticizes all actions of others.
• Keeps the Victim oppressed.
• Expresses justified and righteous anger.
• Uses guilt and shame to put another person down.
• Provokes conflict and drama.
• Takes a rigid, authoritative stance.
• Acts and sounds like a Critical Parent.
• Comes from an I’m okay/good, you’re not okay/bad position.
Exit the drama triangle: From persecutor to challenger

**Persecutor**
- **Thoughts:** I must win
  - Dominating others will get me ahead
  - I know best
- **Feelings:** Defensive, on guard
  - Protective
  - Self-righteous
- **Behaviors:** Dominates and controls
  - Critical and blames
  - Exerts covert/overt power over others
  - Manipulative

**Challenger**
- **Thoughts:** Things unfold at their own pace
  - “You” can do it
  - Trust the process
- **Feelings:** Self awareness
  - Empowered through living their values
  - Confident, direct and clear
- **Behaviors:** Provokes or evokes themselves and others to take action
  - Focuses on improvement and growth
  - Holds self and others accountable

Shifting from putting down to building up

© Traumacenter Belgium- www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle: From persecutor to challenger

• “…every persecutor was once a victim.”
  (Alice Miller)
  – Traumahealing
• clear expectations and can set goals for the relationship.
• express needs
• use “I feel” statements
• Set boundaries
Exit the drama triangle: Reclaim your projections.
Exit the drama triangle: Reclaim your projections.

• Features:
  – we almost always personalize the other person’s behavior.
  – We see what they are doing as a personal insult
  – They are doing it to us just to irritate us

• You know you or someone else is projecting when:
  – You have a fifty-cent reaction to a ten-cent event
  – It brings up unwanted feelings and you feel uncomfortable
  – You blame your unwanted feelings on other people
  – You say, “You made me feel …
  – You personalize what other people do and say
  – Believe they are doing it to deliberately hurt you or upset you.
Exit the drama triangle: Reclaim your projections.

• If you had your needs met as a child
• not need to use projections to defend against attacks.
• If the needs are not met ➔ split-off parts.

• Be aware and realize that you are projecting.
• Reintegrate these split-off parts
• Access deeper feelings
• More passionate and compassionate about life
• More spontaneous, health conscious and spiritual.
Exit the drama triangle: Reclaim your projections.

- IWM : 4 domains
  - Self-esteem:
    - I’m bad
    - I’m worthless
  - Competence
    - I’m a failure
    - I can not
  - Safety
    - I’m in danger
    - I will die
  - Responsibility
    - It is my fault
    - I am guilty

© Traumacentrum Belgium- www.traumacentrum.be - Doris D’Hooghe
Exit the drama triangle: Expression

- Learn to express your internal world
- Identifying what you are feeling
- Daniel Siegel’s “name it to tame it” strategy
- Expressing that responsibly.
- Responsibly means taking ownership of your feelings
- This requires a willingness to be vulnerable.
- Do it authentically in the moment
The tree story
Growing roots
Therapy

• The therapeutic relationship
• Self –discovery
  – Self- awareness
  – Affectregulation
  – Emotional needs
• Exit the drama triangle = Traumatic bonding
  – From rescuer to coach
  – From victim to creator
  – From persecutor to challenger
  – Reclaim your projections.
  – Expression
And they lived happily ever after