

Making Sense of Fragmented Lives... Therapeutic Life Story Work

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That truth is that monsters are real, and ghosts are real, too. They live inside us, and sometimes they win”



King, S (1977) The Shining

“A major aspect of direct work is listening for the child’s perceptions. Until we do this, we won’t know if we are to expand their information or correct their misperceptions”

Fahlberg 2015

‘The value and power of the life story approach to reconstructing and reconnecting a child using personal narrative cannot be underestimated’.

Perry, B (2012) Life Story Therapy with Traumatized Children

Aims and Objectives

- To utilise the Life Story Approach to provide a healing process to traumatised children
- To give the children an opportunity to explore and engage in direct work around their history/current difficulties
- To give carers and other professionals the opportunity to consider, reflect and contribute to the identity task

Your Life Story



What happens before we start?

Before we begin Life Story, your Life Story worker will talk to people to find out a little about your life.

Some people may have a different story, but that's okay, because everyone is different, and everyone will have different things that they remember. Your Life Story worker will also have a chance to say things to make sure that they understand the stories that they have.

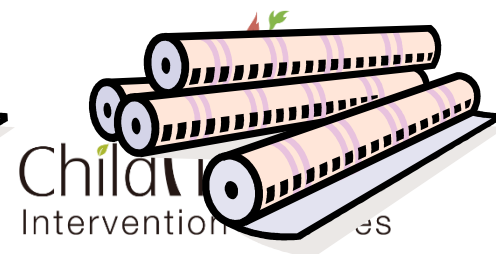
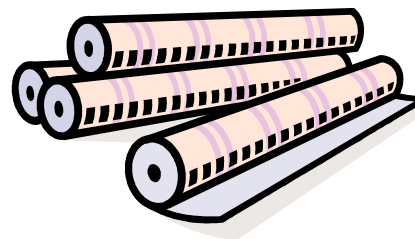
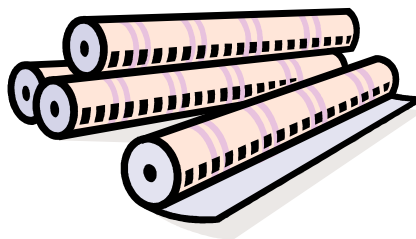
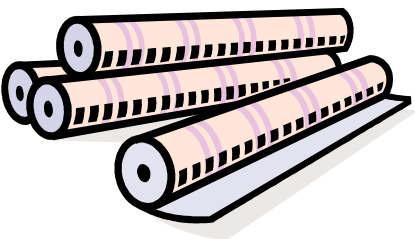


How do we work together?

We won't start Life Story straight away, as we need to get to know each other, that means we can play some games and begin to think about the feelings we have and how we can talk about them.

When we start Life Story, we can meet every other week with your main carer. We will meet on the same day at the same time, in the same place so that we can become confident that the meetings will happen.

In Life Story we can work on wallpaper, this can be rolled out for every session and rolled away at the end. We also have lots of art materials that can be used to help tell your story on the wallpaper.

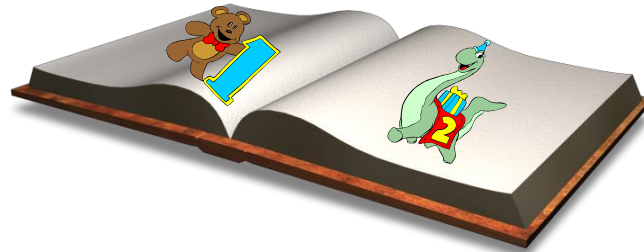
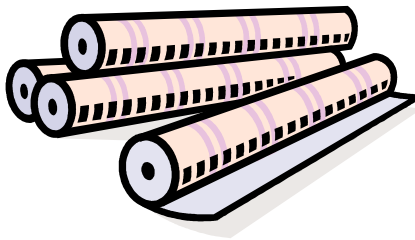


Working on Wallpaper

As well as working on the wallpaper we will be able to think about the work going into a book, that you will be able to take away with you.

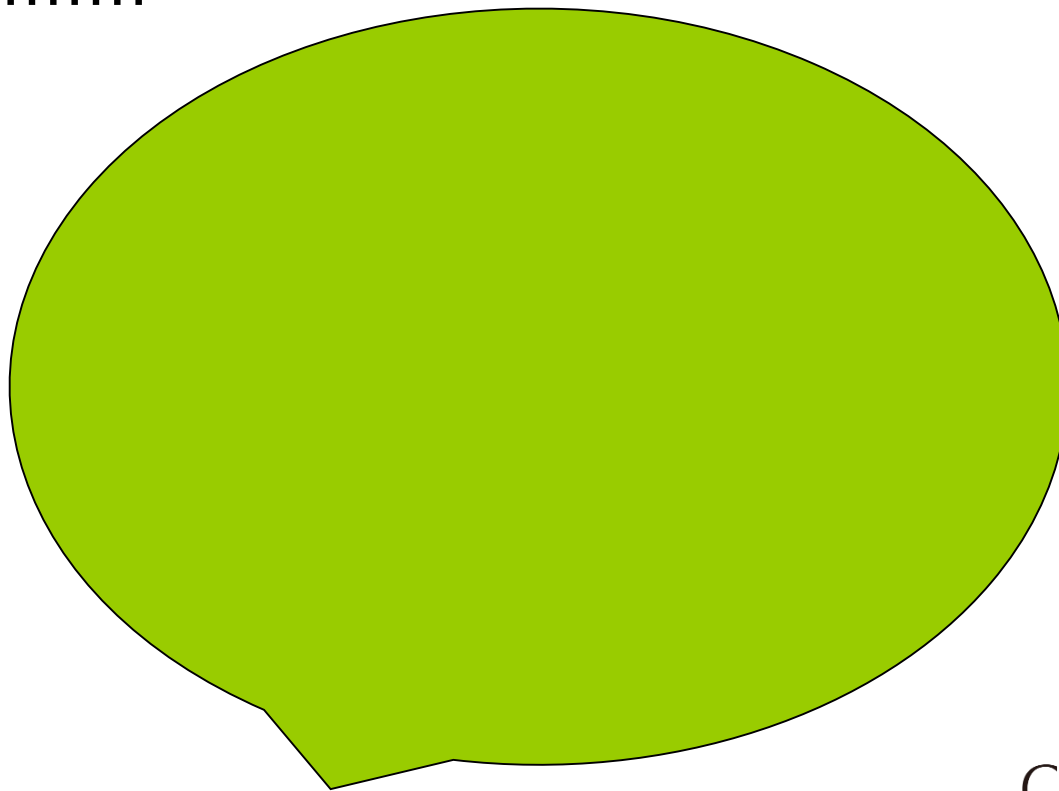
Your book will have all the work that you thought about that is on the wallpaper.

You can use your book to help you remember things about you and if you want, you can share it with those who you think should know about you.

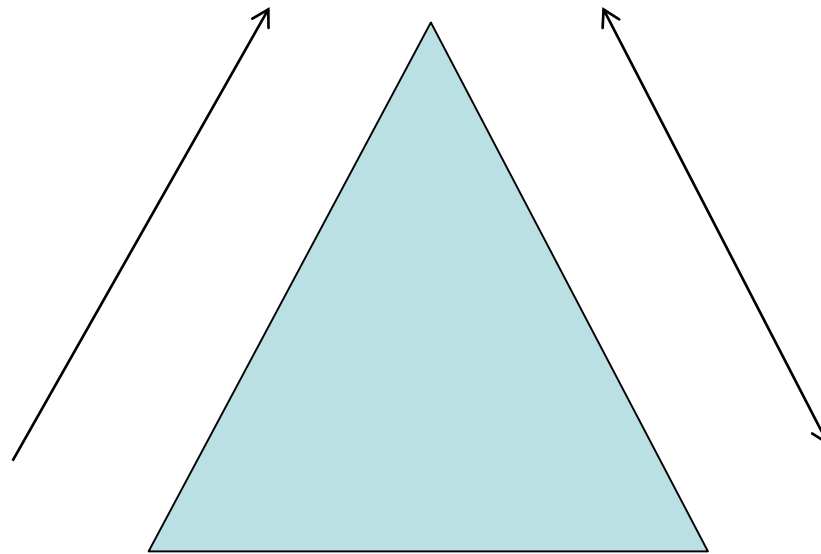


Questions

Please write down any questions you may have here.....



Child/Young
Person/Adult



Life Story
Practitioner

Therapeutic
Parents

Life Story Work is dependent on us understanding our own life, values, ethics and morals. It also requires us to consider unconditional positive regard and the need for us to become narrators and facilitators and avoid the concept of judgement.

Once upon a time, there was a woman named Abigail who was in love with a man named Fred. Every day she would cross the river, which was filled with Piranhas, by a footbridge to see Fred. One night a storm came up and the bridge was washed away. So Abigail decided to ask her neighbour Sinbad for help. Sinbad told Abigail he would help her by taking her across the river in his boat, but only on one condition....that she sleep with him. Now Abigail didn't know what to do. If she tried to swim the river she would be eaten alive, and yet she did not want to sleep with Sinbad. She went to her mother for advice on this, and her mother told her, "Abigail, I reared you to make your own decisions on matters such as this, and I won't tell you what you should or should not do." Abigail desperately wanted to see her lover, so she gave in to Sinbad's conditions.

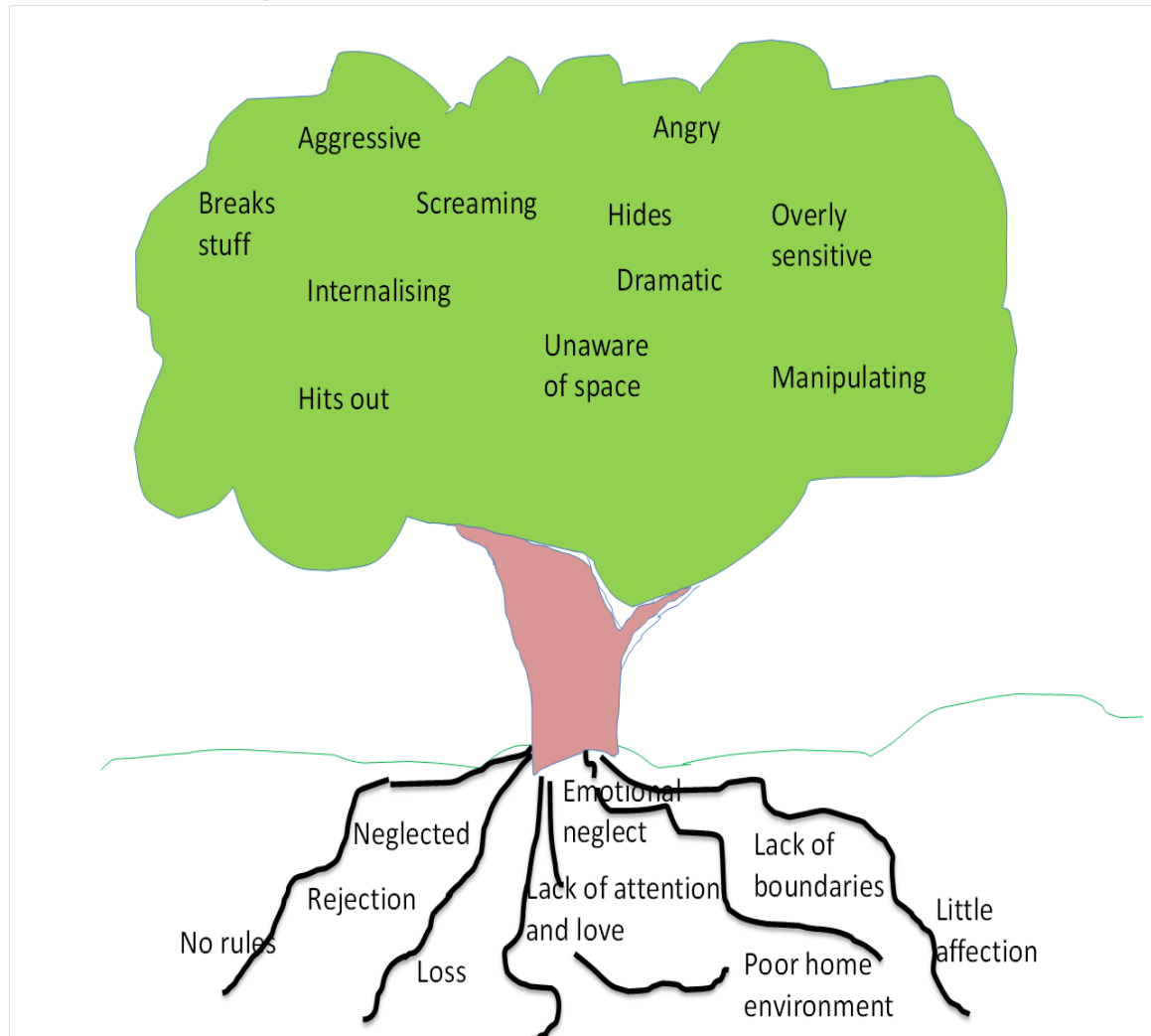
Once she got across the river to Fred's, she felt so guilty she told Fred what she had done. Fred got furious and threw her out of the house. Abigail was crushed and didn't know what to do until she remembered Fred's neighbour Slug. Upon hearing Abigail's story, Slug got furious with Fred for the way he had treated Abigail. He ran up to Fred's house and beat him up. When he got home, he told Abigail he had always loved her and asked her to marry him. She accepted.

All behaviour is Communication

Understanding the roots of the presented behaviour and reflecting what is being communicated verbally and non-verbally will empower the child to refine and reframe their communication process so as to be more effective in achieving their best interests.

Rose 2012

Communication through behaviour and feelings – Understanding what we see and why we see it

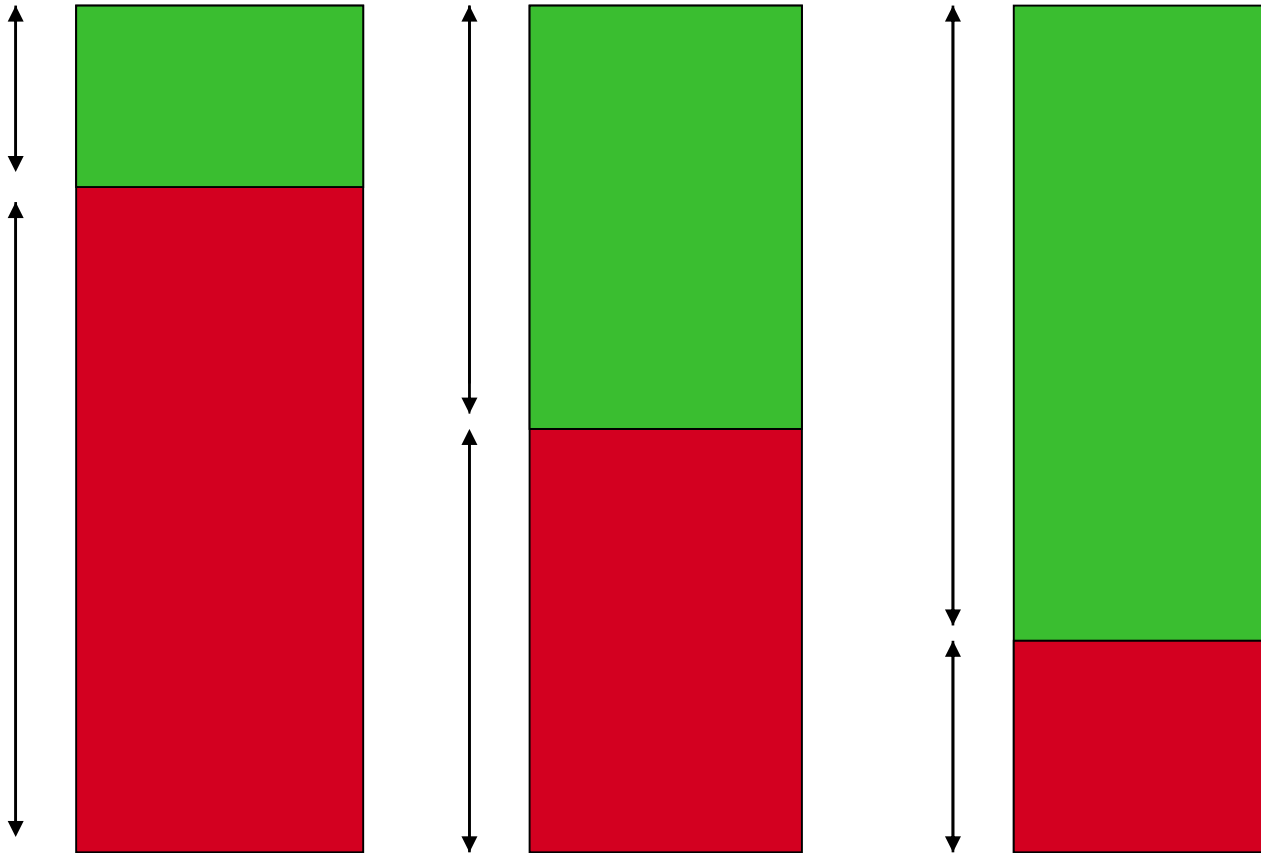


Recovery Process

‘Like taking the tender seedling and replanting it in a place where it has a better chance of growing. This is an enormously difficult task – attention to detail in their everyday life is vital in bringing about this rehabilitation’ .

Lanyado, M (2003)

Pre-occupation



Prolonged exposure to stress and a child's continued use of coping strategies may result in behavior patterns that are difficult to change if the child perceives the strategy as being effective (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Stansbury & Harris, 2000).

Children who grow up in families that spend time talking about emotions are more academically successful, have better friendships, fewer infectious diseases and can handle difficult social situations, (such as getting teased) more effectively than children whose families do not talk about feelings.

Gottman and DeClaire 1997

Communication Through Play

Play is our first language, and can be said to be the natural language of children. By using the safety of play with toys, puppets, symbolic and representational play, as well as creative and expressive arts we can gain insights into the child's inner world.

West 1996

Communication and Complex Needs

Working with children with complex needs, particularly when they are experiencing turmoil and distress, demands a facilitative, enabling and empowering technique, and a high level of skill, sensitivity and self-awareness.'

M. Brandon et al, 1998

- Jenga
- Squiggles
- Boxes
- Feeling Themes
 - Air Balloon
 - All About Me
 - Family Tree x 2
- Movement Snake
- Memory Boxes

The Power of Play

Play is how children learn about their world. Play is essential for healthy development and so Play needs to be accepted as a serious, purposeful business through which children develop mentally, physically and socially.

Oaklander 1989

Sharing our Stories

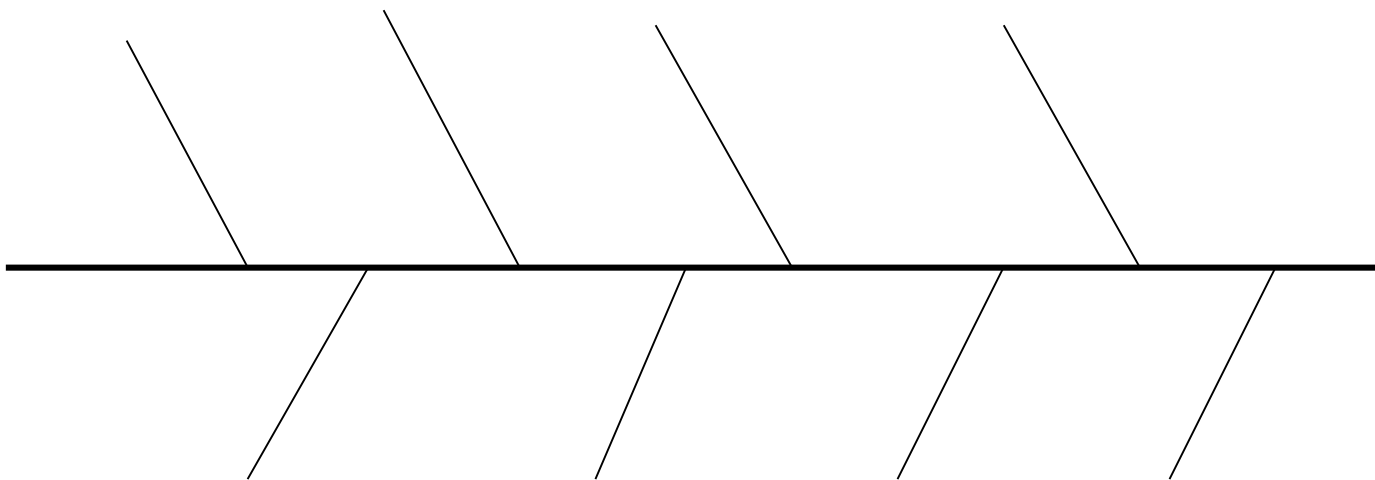
Telling family stories - sharing our stories of the past helps bring adults and children closer and creates a wonderful opportunity for intimacy and relationship building.

Stone 1987

Problem Solving and Feelings

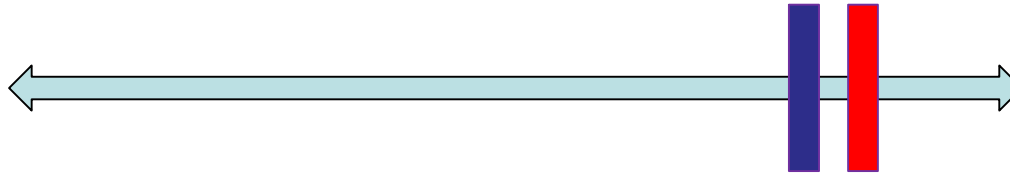
- Ishikawa
 - Animal Game
- Cause and Effect Thinking
 - Internal Working Model
 - Thinking Cycle
 - Keeping Safe
 - FFFH

here



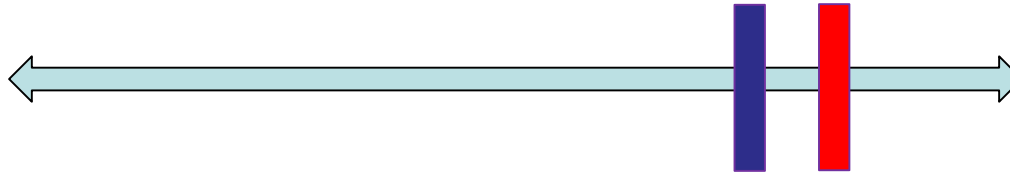
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Most Worthy,
Competent,
Most Lovable



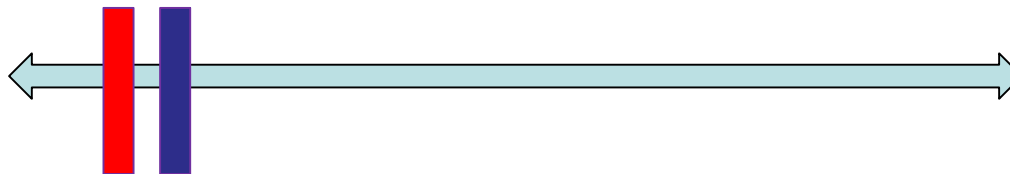
Least Worthy, Most
Incompetent and Most
Unlovable

Best Carer in the
World, Most Loving,
Most Nurturing and
Safest Carer



Worst Carer in the
World, Most Unloving,
Most Dangerous and
Scary Carer

Most Welcoming,
Safest and
Fulfilling World



Scary and Most
Unwelcoming Place

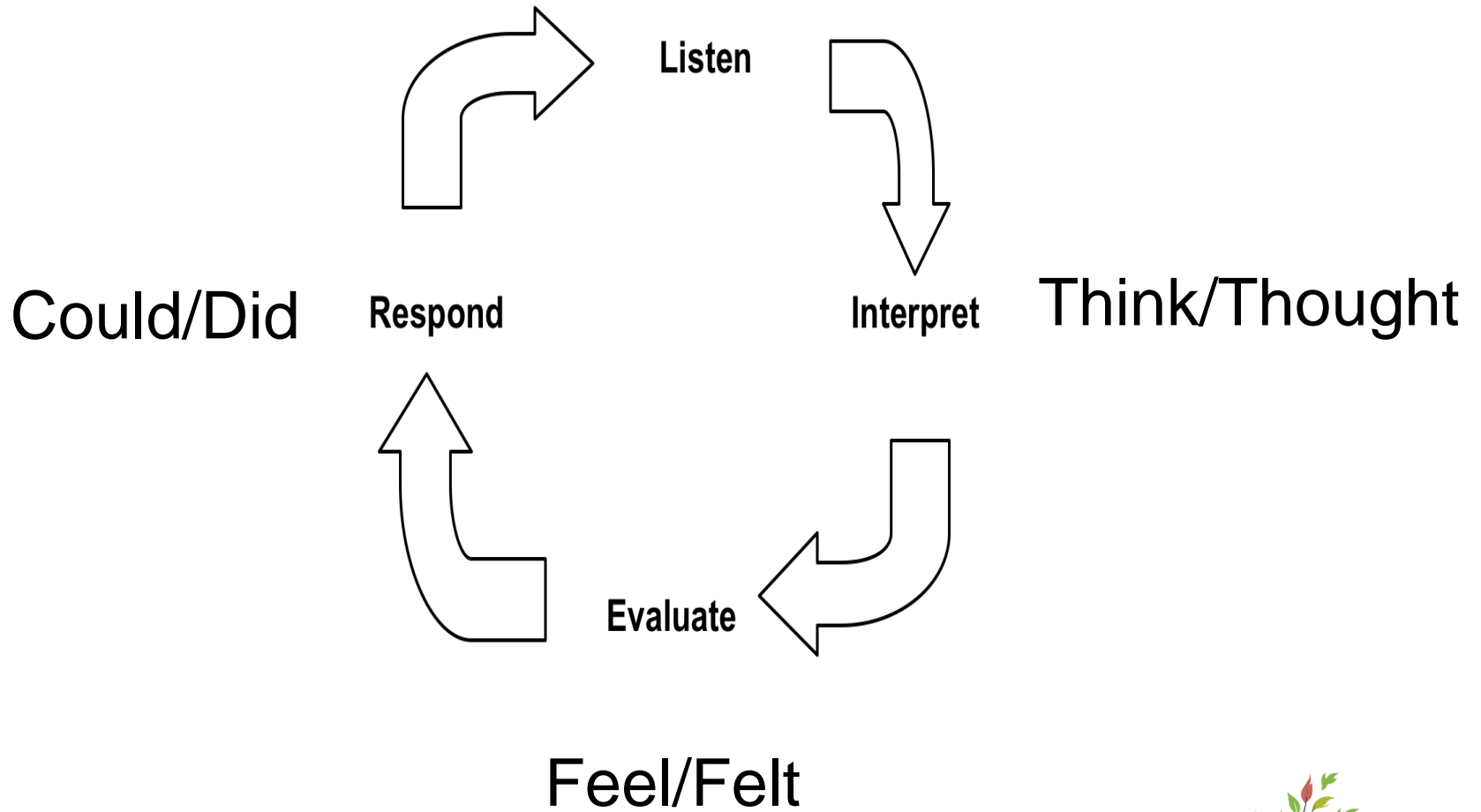
ATTACHMENT (LOVE RELATIONSHIP)

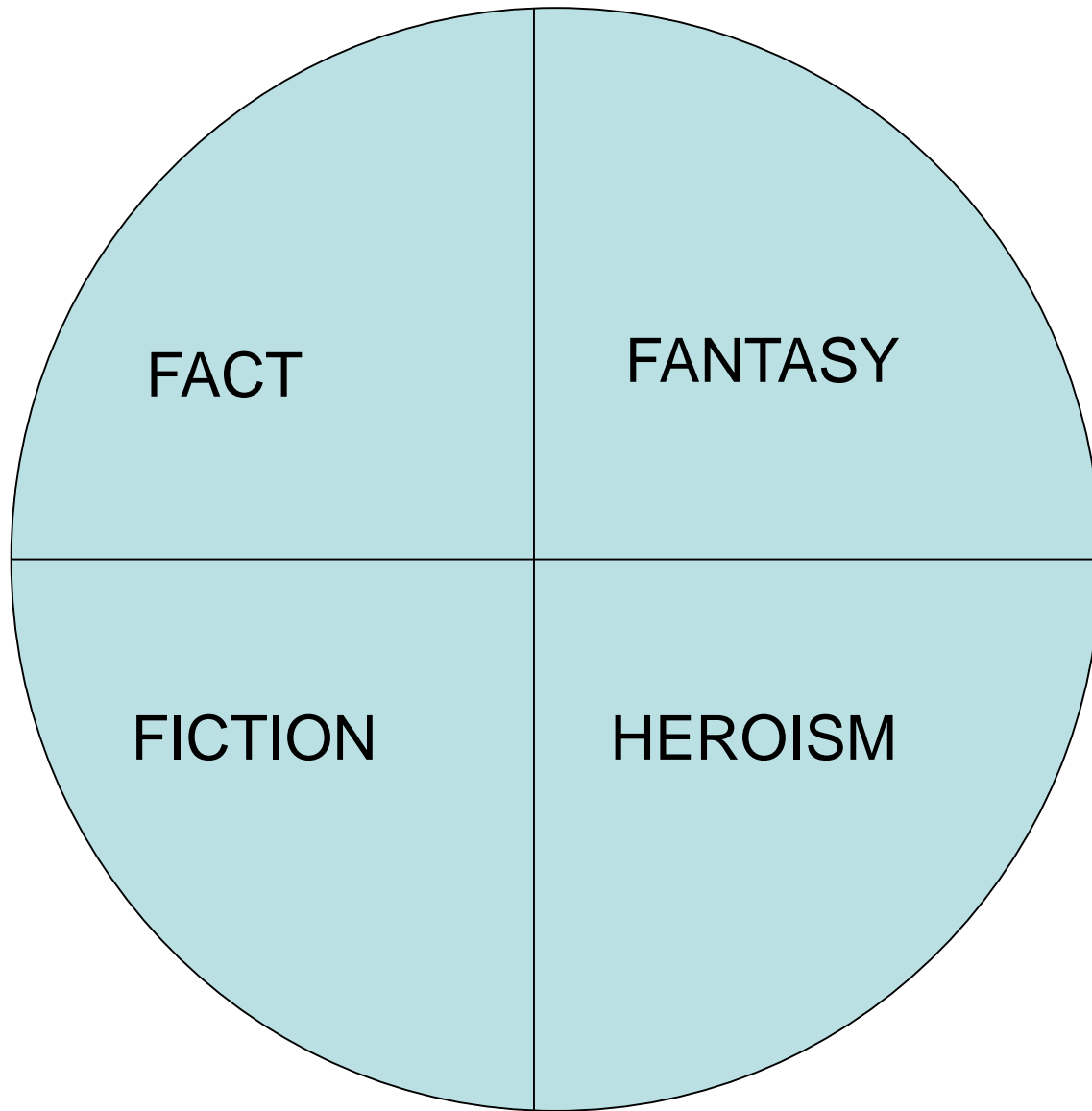
- ~ Attunement for pleasure and security
- ~ Focus on own wellbeing
- ~ Obedience with some protest and resistance
- ~ Exploration of environment with periodic "checking in"
- ~ Full range of expression of own feelings
- ~ Age appropriate functioning in all areas
- ~ Cohesive and competent self-concept

TRAUMA BOND (SLAVE RELATIONSHIP)

- ~ Attunement for survival
- ~ Focus on other's needs, wants, emotional state
- ~ Spontaneous unwavering obedience
- ~ Stay close to anticipate needs of other, or stay at a distance to avoid notice of other
- ~ Exaggerated expression of feelings that reflect other's need-state
- ~ Inhibition in all areas of cognitive, emotional, physical, social and spiritual functioning
- ~ Fragmented and limited self-concept

BEVERLEY JAMES





Creating Therapeutic Environments

Children learn best from repeatedly seeing and hearing actions or ways of thinking that we would like them to emulate or “model”

Our role therefore must be to portray positive models for what we want children to **do** (such as being generous, fair, honest, caring and responsible) to reinforce positive action and thought.

Wishes and Feelings Work

‘Children tell us they value workers who listen, are non-judgemental, are open, honest and who can be trusted. For many children, having their wishes and feelings ascertained, and their needs assessed by a skilful practitioner can be empowering rather than a stressful event.’

A. Bannister, 2001

Listening

We rarely have anyone's total attention. The children we come across in our work may never have had an adult's total benign attention – to get this is in itself a healing experience.

Therapeutic Communication

Therapeutic communication is about sending out the right messages so that children, who may previously have internalised a sense of worthlessness, come to see themselves as worthy, capable and valuable individuals.

In our interactions with children, our main tool is ourselves.

Mirror

Race Track

You first/Me second

Therapeutic Contact

Barriers to communication

We need to be patient, empathic, imaginative, respectful and tactful in order to help troubled children and young people communicate. In helping children to make sense of their world, we can explore their thinking, their emotional self and their internal view and then help shape their external presentation to achieve all they can be.

Rose 2012