

### What Makes a Traumatic Event, Traumatic?

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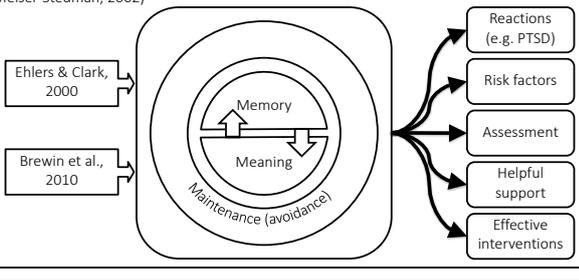
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### The Cognitive Model of PTSD

(Meiser-Stedman, 2002)



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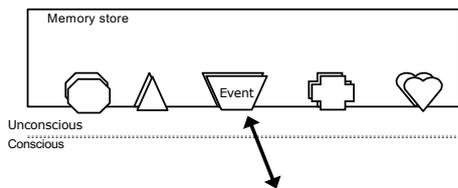
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### Memories of normal events

Contextualised representations (C-reps)



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Different Types of Memories	
Normal event memories Contextualised representations (C-reps)	Traumatic event memories Sensory-bound representations (S-reps)
Conceptual framework contains the perceptual information	Little conceptual framework to contain the perceptual information
Words and stories	Vivid sensory information
Fluid, updateable, forgettable	Static and frozen
Linked to other memories	Isolated from other memories
Historical context – there and then	No historical context – here and now
Organised into a coherent narrative	Disorganised, incoherent, fragmented
Largely under conscious control	Uncontrollable, easily triggered
Contextualised	Standalone

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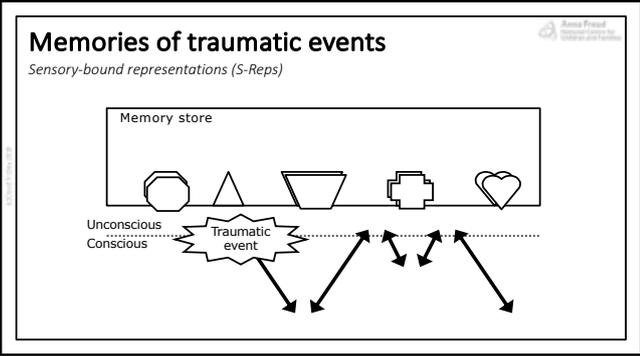
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**Pierre Janet's Description of Traumatic Memories (1889, 1906)**

- “Fixed ideas” of traumatic events, rather than usual memories
- Sufferers are “unable to make the recital which we call narrative memory and yet they remain confronted by the difficult situation”
- Continue to make efforts at adaptation

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James Priddy  
James Priddy  
James Priddy

**Trauma Memory Quality Questionnaire**  
(TMQQ; Meiser-Stedman et al., 2007)

- Assesses the number of aspects of a memory that are characteristic of traumatic memories
- Related to PTSD diagnosis
- Related to severity of PTSD symptoms

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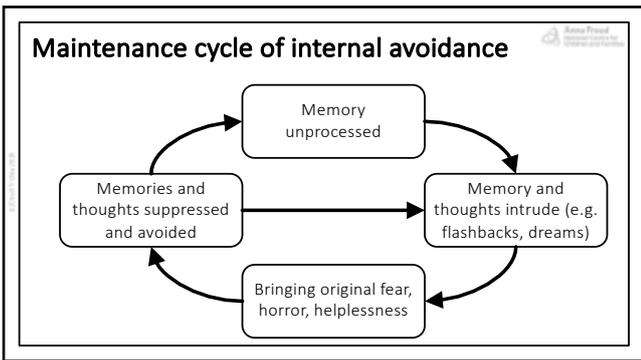
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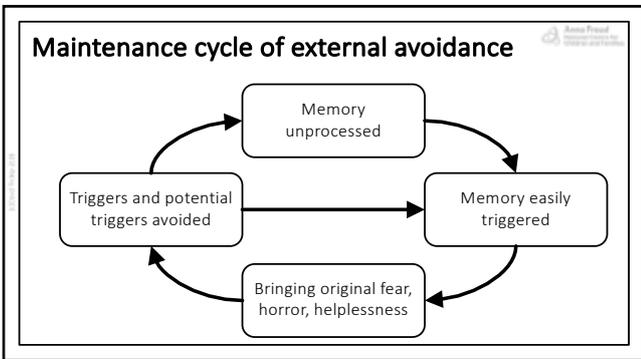
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### Memories and Brain Activity

(PET Scans; Rauch et al., 1996)

Areas activated during **trauma** memories, but **not neutral** memories

Areas activated during **neutral** memories, but **not trauma** memories

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### Evidence for Dual Memory Systems

(Holmes & Bourne, 2008)

Tap out a pattern during the film	Decrease in visuo-spatial processing	Fewer intrusions
Count backwards in 3s during the film	Decrease in verbal processing	More intrusions
Answer questions afterwards	Increase in verbal processing	Fewer intrusions
Play Tetris within 30 minutes	Decrease in visuo-spatial processing	Fewer intrusions

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### Meaning: Core Beliefs

- Domains:
  - Self (worthy, loveable)
  - World (benevolent, makes sense, safe enough)
  - Others (trustworthy, worth relating to)
- Usually unconscious, unarticulated, taken for granted
- People act as if their assumptions were truths rather than constantly re-examine them
- Often initially evident from people's actions

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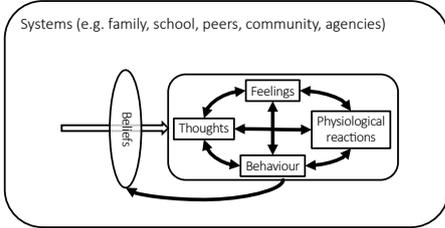
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## CBT Fundamentals




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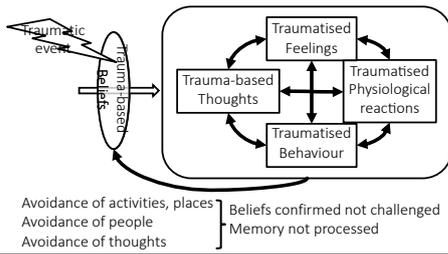
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## Impact of Traumatic Events

"The trouble is, the rules have been broken" Joe, aged 8




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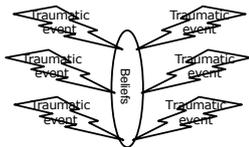


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## Impact of Multiple Events




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## Common Traumatic Misappraisals

- World
  - Everywhere is dangerous
- Self
  - I caused it
  - I asked for it
  - I'm only good for one thing
  - I should have stopped it
  - I'm damaged
- Others
  - Nobody cares about me
  - Adults are dangerous, especially those that are supposed to care for me

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## Child Post-traumatic Cognitions Inventory

(CPTCI;  
Meiser-Stedman et al., 2009,  
McKinnon et al., 2016)

- 25 statements (e.g. "Anyone could hurt me), CYP indicates the extent to which they agree or disagree
- 10 item short form has good psychometric properties
- Two subscales:
  - Fragile person in a scary world
  - Permanent and disturbing change
- Related to PTSD diagnosis
- Related to severity of PTSD symptoms
- Scores on both subscales higher if the trauma was interpersonal

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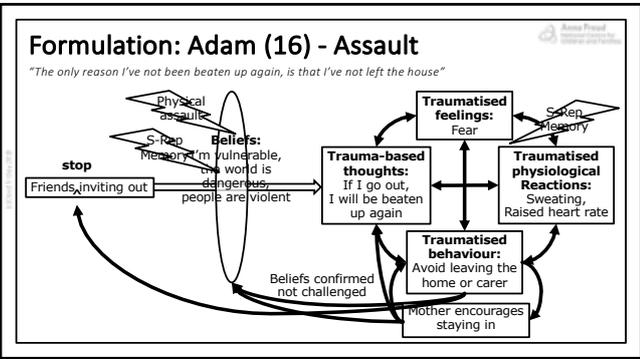
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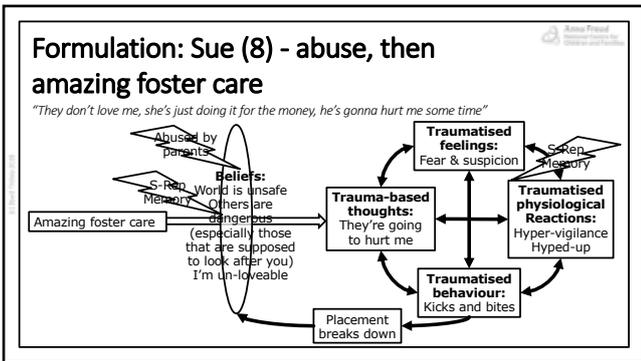
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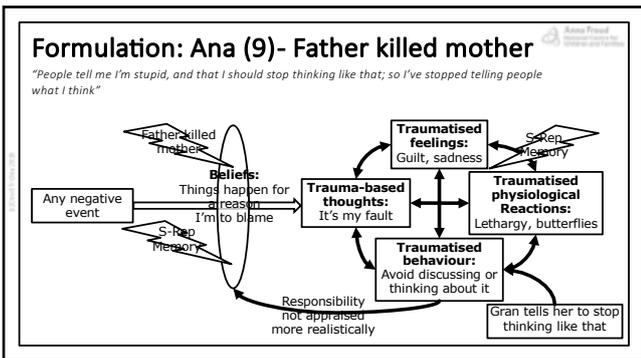
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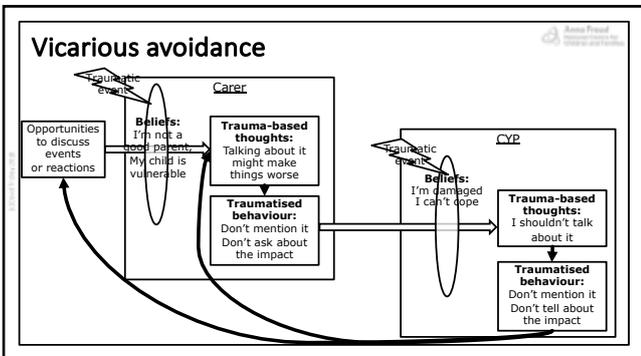
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Anna Freud  
National Centre for  
Child and Adolescent  
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**Risks of *not* telling children and young people enough information**

- They may fill in the gaps
- They may over-generalise
- They may hear it from a source that seeks to sensationalise rather than re-assure (e.g. media)
- They may wonder whom they can trust
- They may assume that it's not ok to talk about it, and so are left with whatever account they stumble across
- They won't know how to counter inaccurate accounts

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**Therapy**

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**Key components and contexts**

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**Safety and Stability**

- Ensure basic needs are met (including food, shelter, sleep)
- Safe environment (safe enough)
- Families and schools can play a crucial role in making the child feel safe

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**Psycho-Education**

- Education about traumatic reactions, and normalisation
- Education about model (memory, meaning, maintenance) and rationale for treatment
- Sharing the formulation
- Consider using handouts (e.g. Smith et al., 2010), and ask child to read, mark and discuss between sessions and bring them back to next session

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**Youtube Psycho-education Videos**



The Emotional Brain

Amygdala Hijack

The Brain on Anxiety and Stress

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**Developing individual resources**

- Enhancing social support
- Emotion regulation
  - Breathing retraining
  - Relaxation
  - Imagery
  - Grounding
  - Problem solving
  - Use of therapeutic relationship to scaffold affect regulation

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**What's so good about social support?**

- Lack of social support and social withdrawal are risk factors for PTSD in CYP (Trickey et al., 2012)
- Most people do not develop PTSD, possibly because they find a way to process the event by talking about it within their social support
- Some limited evidence that just Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) reduces PTSD (Markowitz et al., 2015)

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**Supportive Others Literally Change How You See the World**  
(Schnall et al., 2008)



- Hills are rated as less steep if you are accompanied by a friend
- The longer you've known them, the less steep the hill seems
- Hills seem less steep if you just think of a friend rather than a neutral person or someone that has betrayed you

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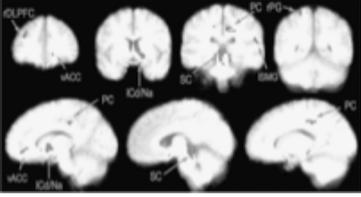
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**Support From Someone you Know, Love and Trust Changes Brain Activity**  
(Coan et al., 2006)

O = Safe X = 20% chance of an electric shock



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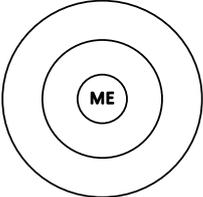
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**Social Circles**

Think about the relationships that have an impact on you at the moment (positive, negative or mixed). Put their name, initial or a picture on the diagram below to indicate how involved with them you are or how close they are to you



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**Social Circles questions to aid discussion if necessary**

- Are you surprised by anything that you notice about your circles?
- Is there any person, or group of people missing?
- Which relationships help and support you through difficult times?
- Which relationships cause some difficulties or distress?
- Which ones rely on you to make contact?
- Which ones offer you practical support?
- Which ones offer emotional support?
- Which ones are two-way, and which ones are one-sided?
- Which ones would you like to see more of?
- Which ones would you like to see less of?
- How else would you like things to be different?
- How could you begin to make those changes?

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## Relaxation

- Structured focused guided relaxation may be more useful than lots of silences and just noticing what comes up
- “Traumatized individuals tend to have difficulty tolerating unstructured meditation and do much better with an instructor whose guidance helps them maintain their focus on bodily sensation, while modulating arousal with breathing exercises” van der Kolk et al., 2014
- Be sure to seek feedback from client

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## Developing an Imaginal “Safe-Place”

- Can be used in several ways:
  - If CYP gets too upset during the work, they can signal and you can help them to bring up their safe place.
  - Can be used at the end of sessions to make sure they feel better when they leave
  - CYP can use it between sessions if something makes them feel bad

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