

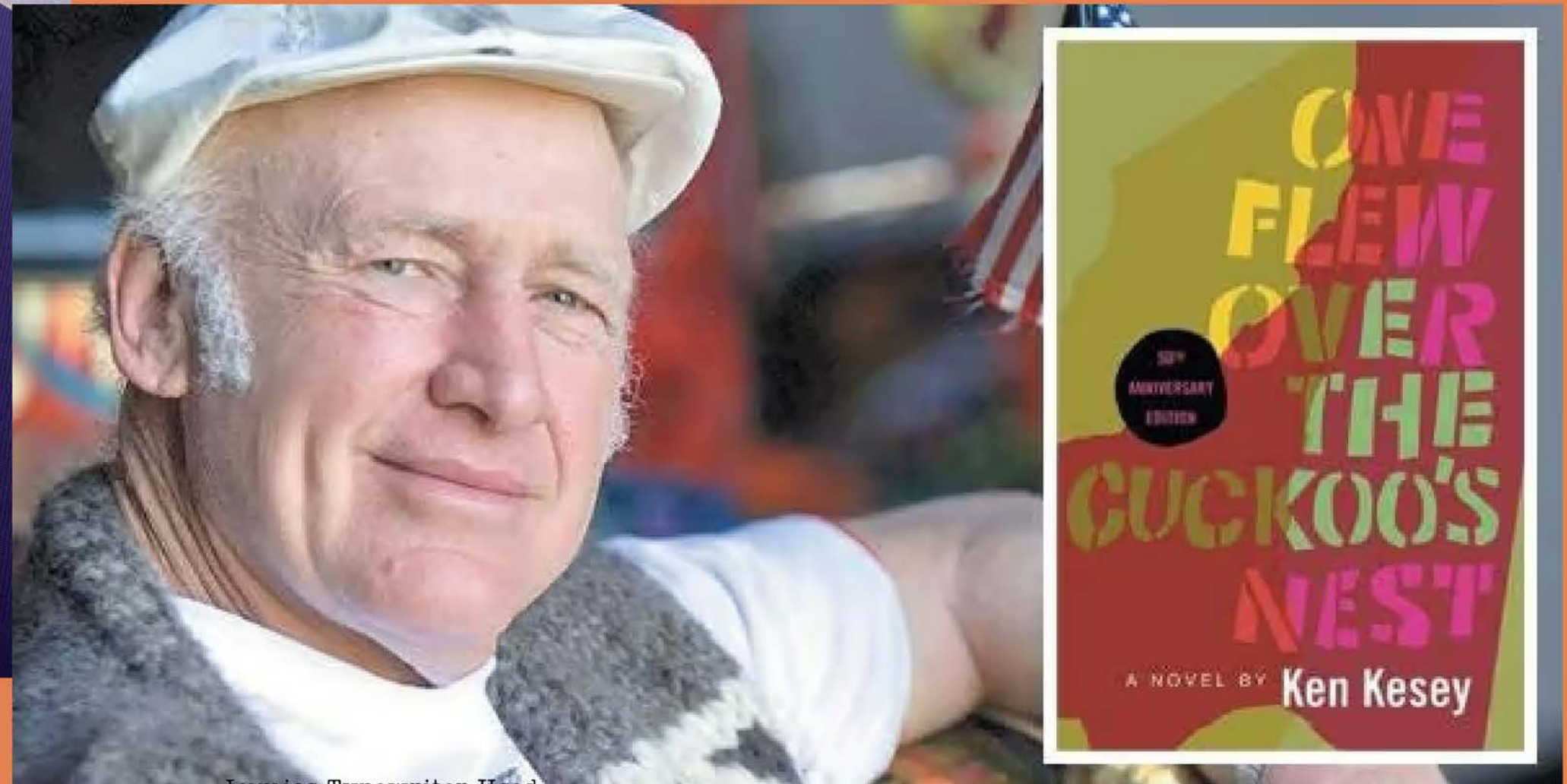


Dr. Clare Fowler

The Floor is Lava

Helping our brains heal and grow

Dr. Clare Fowler, VP of Mediate.com
peer mediation in 3rd grade
father is an author
phenomenological study of workplace mediation



Trauma

**SHAPES OUR
BRAIN**

BUT WE CAN SHAPE IT TOO

1. *What trauma looks like*
2. *floor is lava - brain avoids*
3. *brain does thunder (fight), turtle (freeze), turn (flight)*
4. *amygdala v prefrontal*
5. *approach trauma - in book this exhibits as a behavior*
6. *acknowledge, clarity, plan, and hope*
7. *(note - this exactly addresses the threats to mental health: confusion, dismissing, and discourage)*
8. *Window of Tolerance*
9. *Dendrites Form*
10. *vent, validate, plan*
11. *Floor is now hope*



“Girls aren’t athletes”



Trauma

- Singular, memorable event
- A seed planted when you were forming
- Low-grade, consistent

Affects behaviors, identity, world-view.



Our Brain Avoids Lava - it hurts!

Avoidance Techniques:

- Thunder
- Turtle
- Turn



**Window of
Tolerance**

pain

Brain Response



Prefrontal Cortex

Connected to memory and future. Long-term decisions



Coordinating

Ideally, the two are working together.



Amygdala

Protects you from immediate threat. Short-term decisions.

Amygdala Response

**Thunder
(Fight)**

**Turtle
(Freeze)**

**Turn
(Flight)**


These all respond to conflict differently - with different speeds and different behaviors.

How Fast Does A Thought Travel?



Share



Watch on  YouTube

Amygdala Behaviors

**Thunder
(Fight)**

Thinking fast -
200meters per
second

**Turtle
(Freeze)**

2 m/s

**Turn
(Flight)**

150 m/s



Prefrontal Cortex

Remembers

Imagines

**Cognitive
comparison
- ROI**



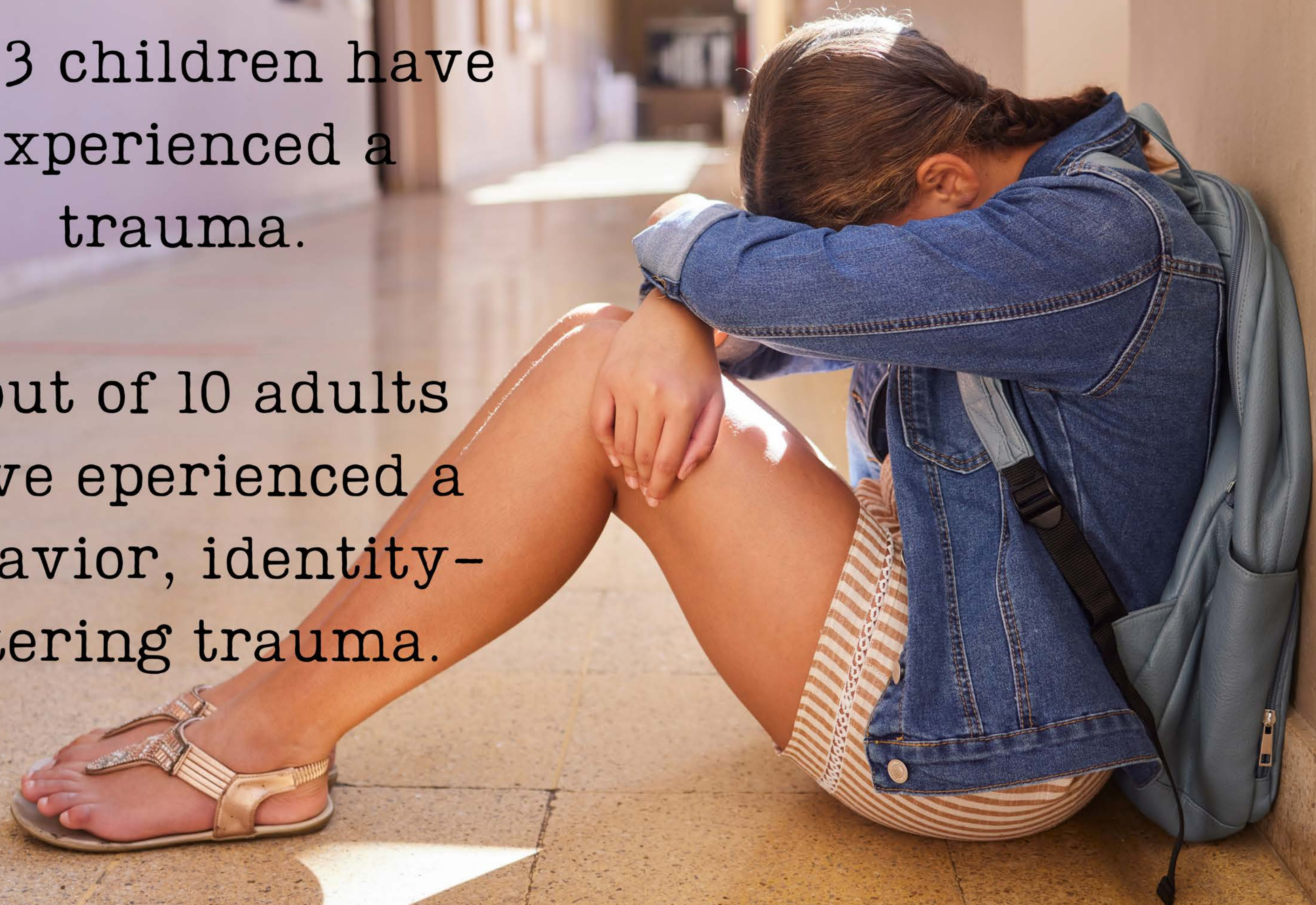
Trauma

When trauma occurs, amygdala protects in the short-term.

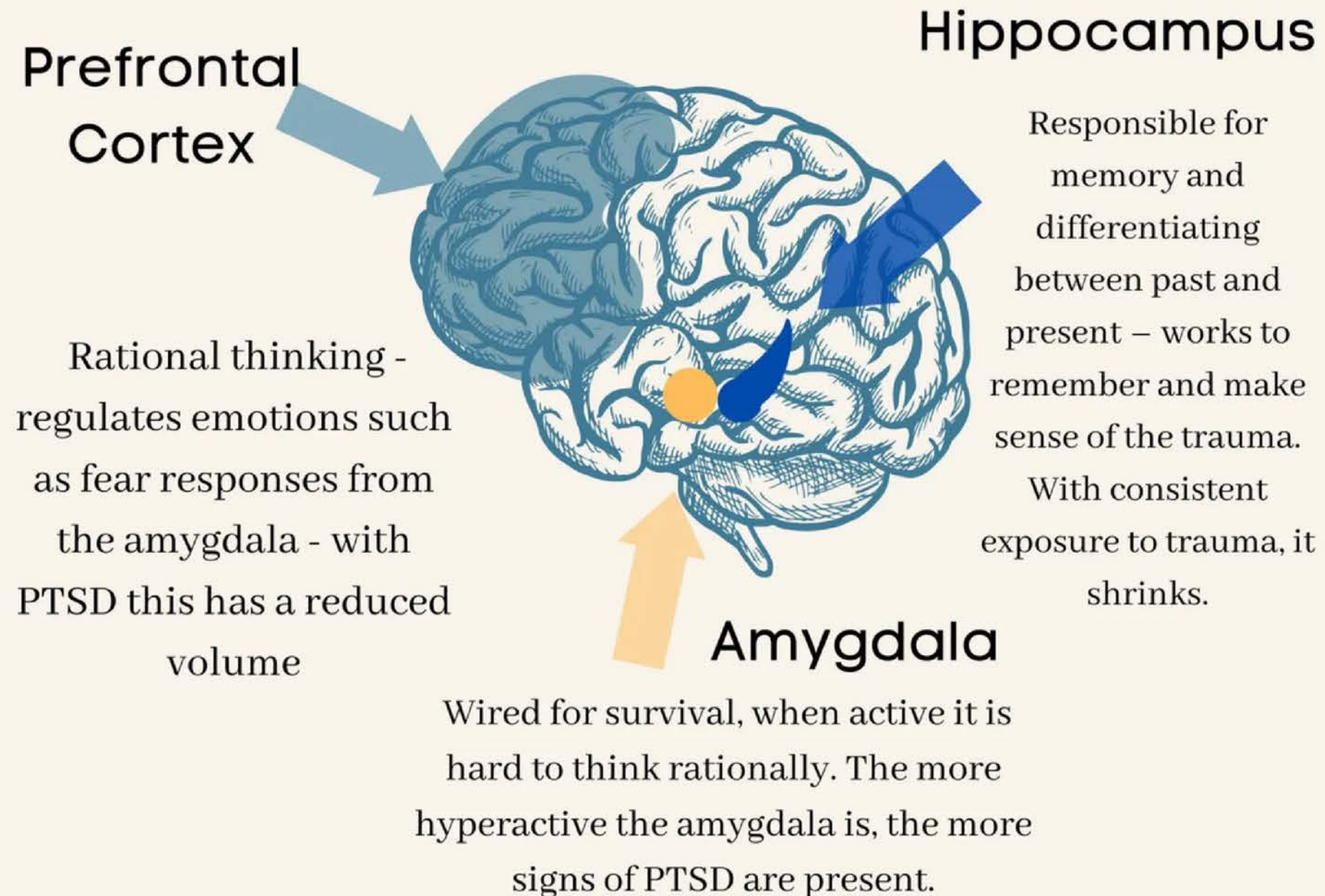
Prefrontal cortex protects long-term, and brain chemistry begins to change.

1 in 3 children have
experienced a
trauma.

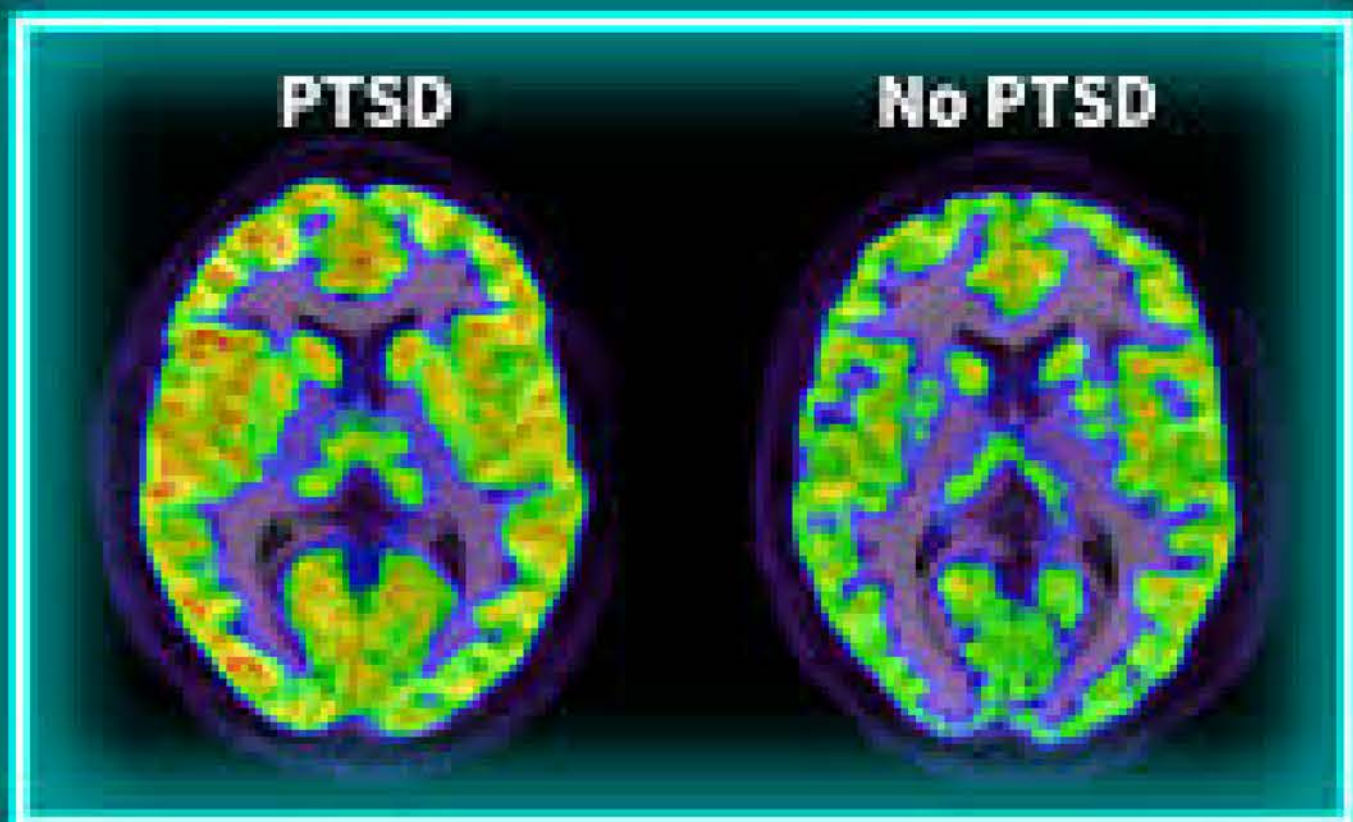
7 out of 10 adults
have experienced a
behavior, identity-
altering trauma.



HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS THE BRAIN



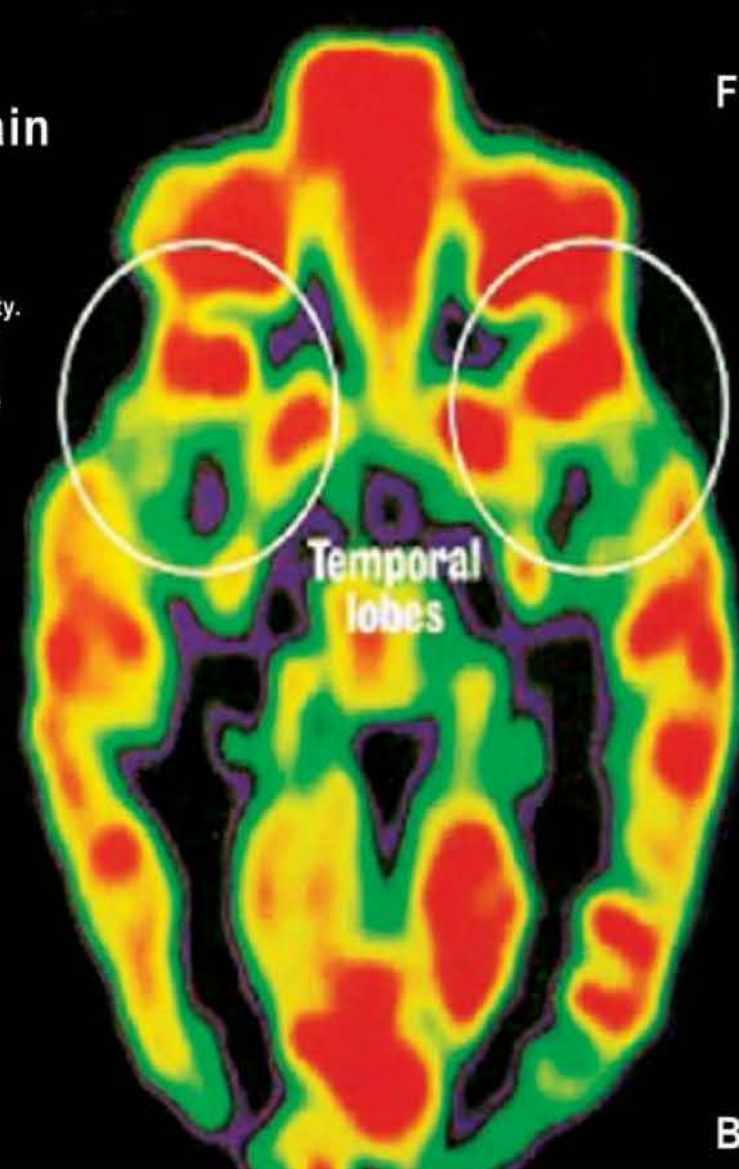
PTSD physiologically changes your brain.



This is why someone can't just 'get over it' or 'move on with their life' after a experiencing a traumatic event. This is also why their symptoms can be life-changing and both mental and physical too.

Healthy Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

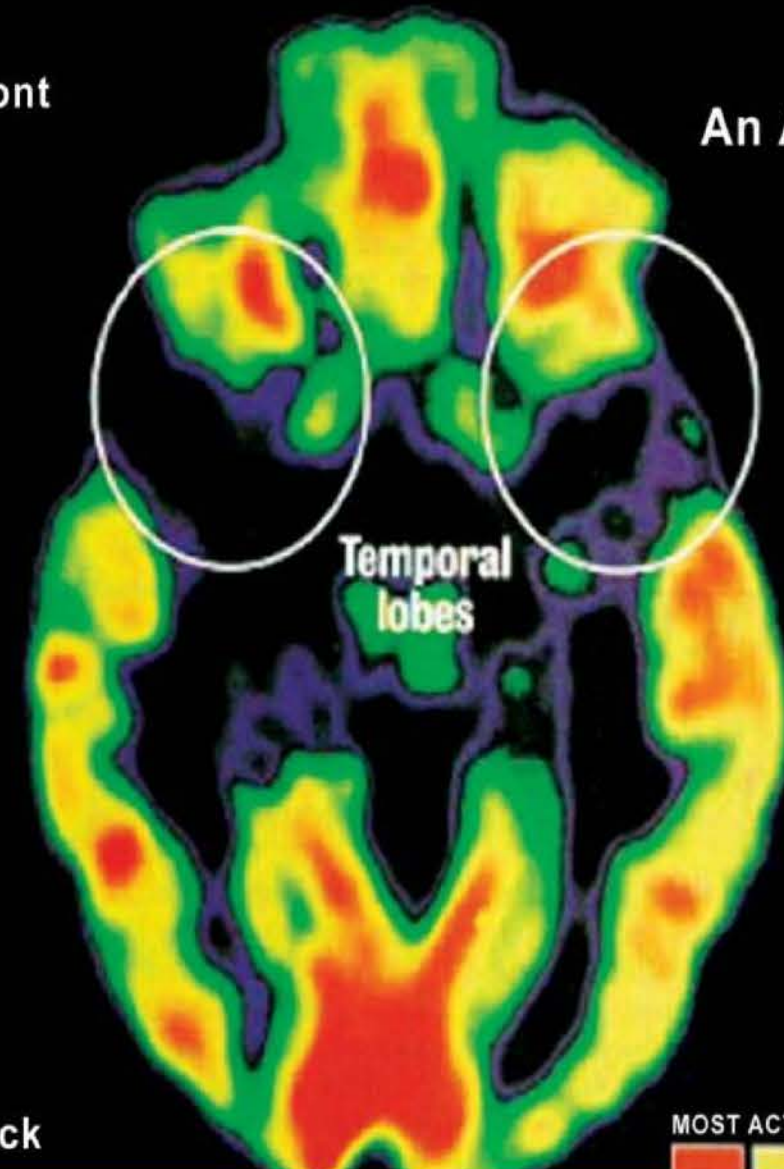


Front

Back

An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was instutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



MOST ACTIVE LEAST ACTIVE

A sunlit forest with tall trees and a mossy ground. The sun is shining through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The ground is covered in a thick layer of green moss. The trees are tall and thin, with some showing signs of autumn. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

How does trauma present at the mediation table?

Book identifies 20 behaviors, such as micromanaging, people-pleasing, Hulk, Bad Brad, Snappy Sal.

As we know, this typically doesn't mean the person is awful. It means they have been through something awful and don't know how to process it.

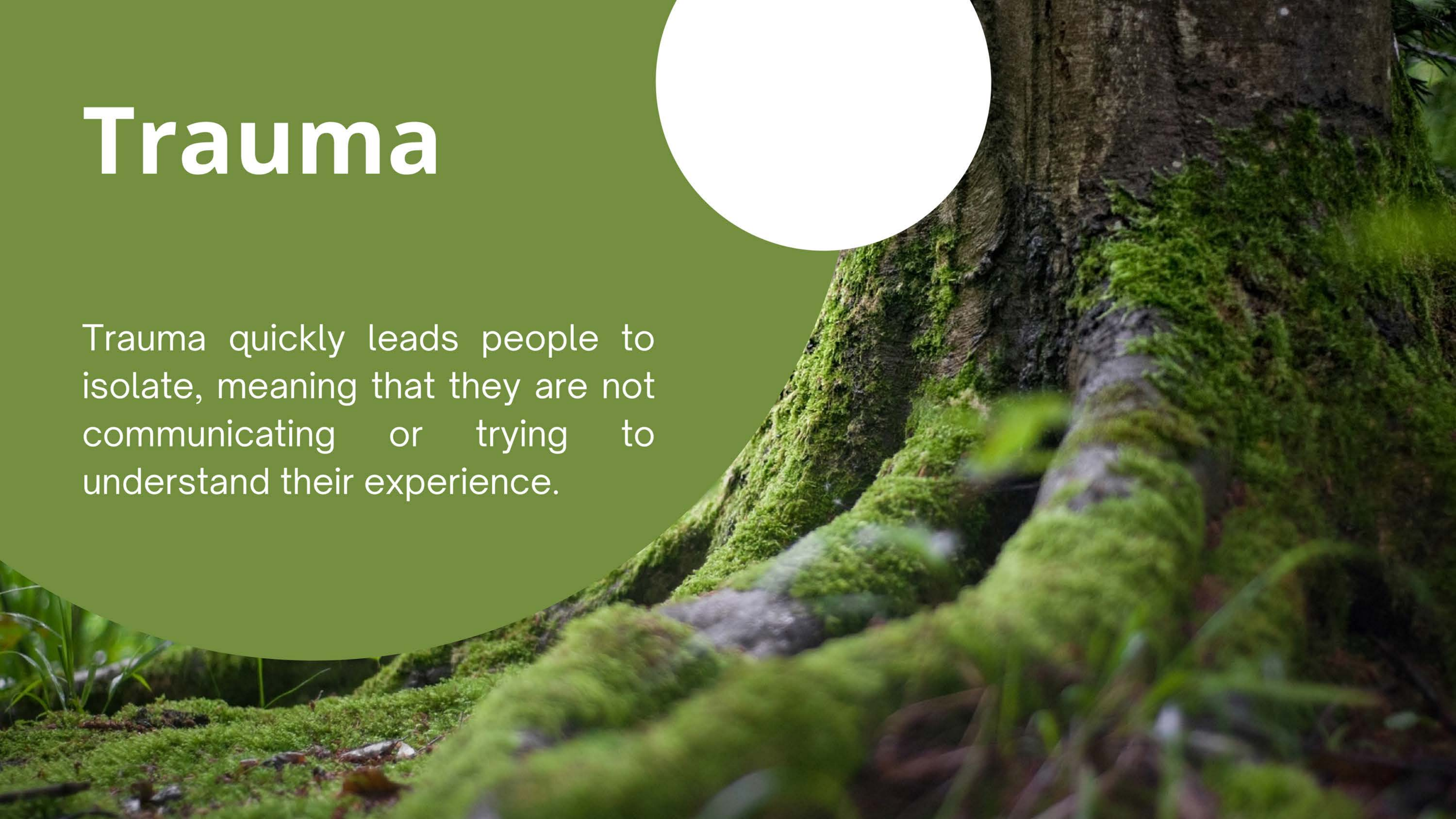
Trauma

**NORMAL
RESPONSE**

TO AN ABNORMAL SITUATION

Trauma

Trauma quickly leads people to isolate, meaning that they are not communicating or trying to understand their experience.



The U.S. Surgeon General released an advisory alerting the public at large that **loneliness has become an epidemic and represents an urgent public health concern.**



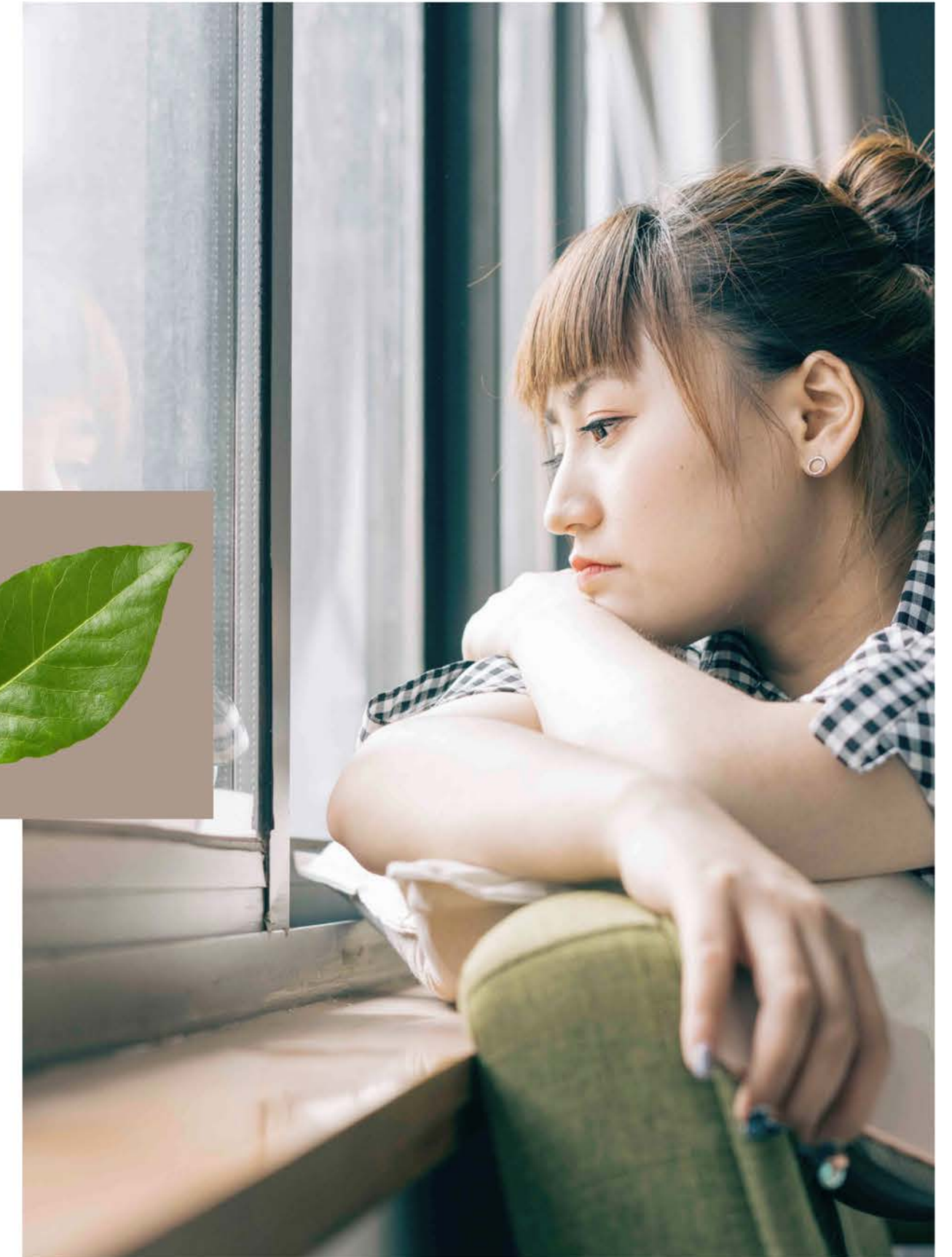
Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29% respectively



Lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.



Loneliness is associated with increased risk for anxiety, depression, and dementia.



Mental Health Threats

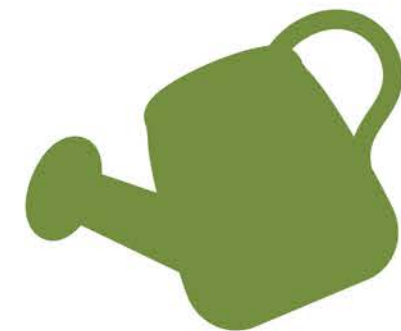


1) Confusion: Lack of clarity prevents someone from understanding it.

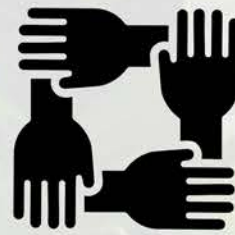
2) Stall: Lack of a plan makes people feel as though things will never get better.



3) Hopeless. Brain becomes discouraged.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



clarity

The first step is being able to identify the problem. This might be as simple as validating or reframing.



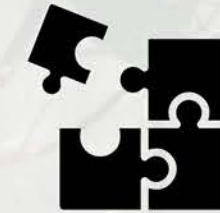
plan

Deciding on next steps. Moving through the plan.



hope

As you complete a plan successfully - even if it is just in your mind - your brain begins to feel hope. Crucial for strong mental health.



prepared

This process helps people know what to do next time. For these steps to work in the workplace? Communication.

Sounds lovely. What does it mean?

To help people who have been traumatized or who are exhibiting avoidant or aggressive behaviors, help them talk about it.

Provide the safe space for them to find clarity.

**Window of
Tolerance**

pain

**Window of
Tolerance**

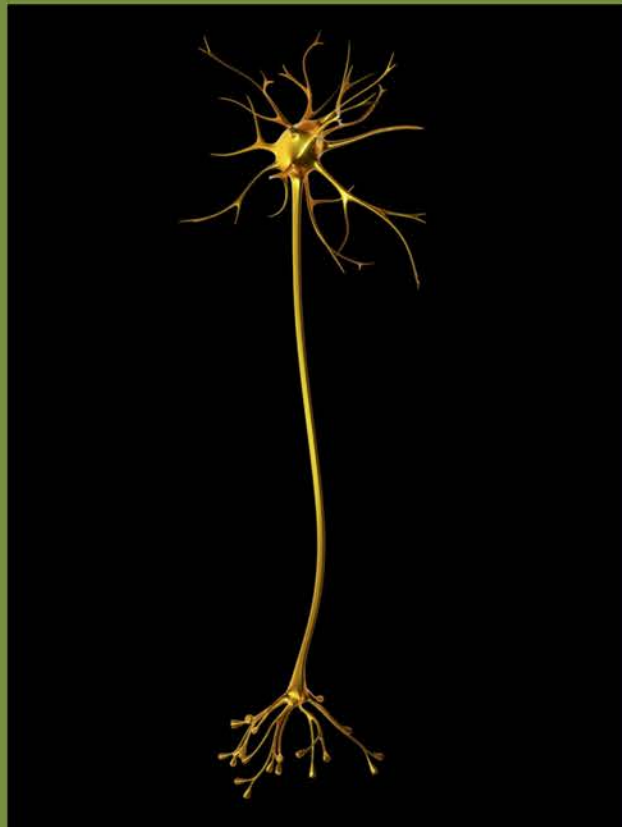
pain

Talking about it and envisioning getting through it expands our window of tolerance. In other words, our prefrontal cortex stays in control.

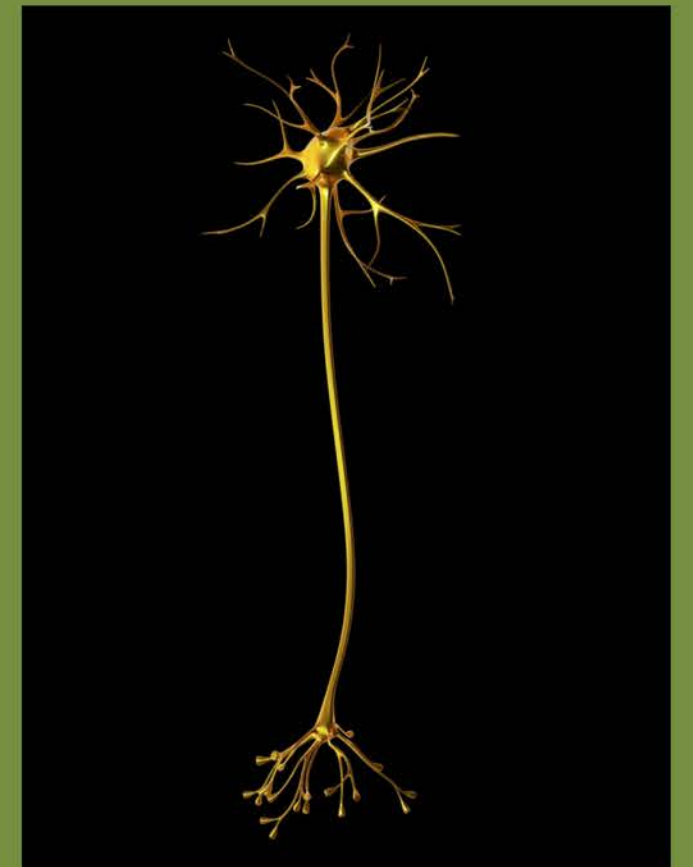
Neuroplasticity:

When your brain forms a new thought.

Someone can
be a good
athlete



Someone can
be a girl



What your brain cells look like when you learn something NEW #shorts



#neuroscience #neuroplasticity

What your brain cells look like when you learn something NEW 🧠 🌱



MEDspiration



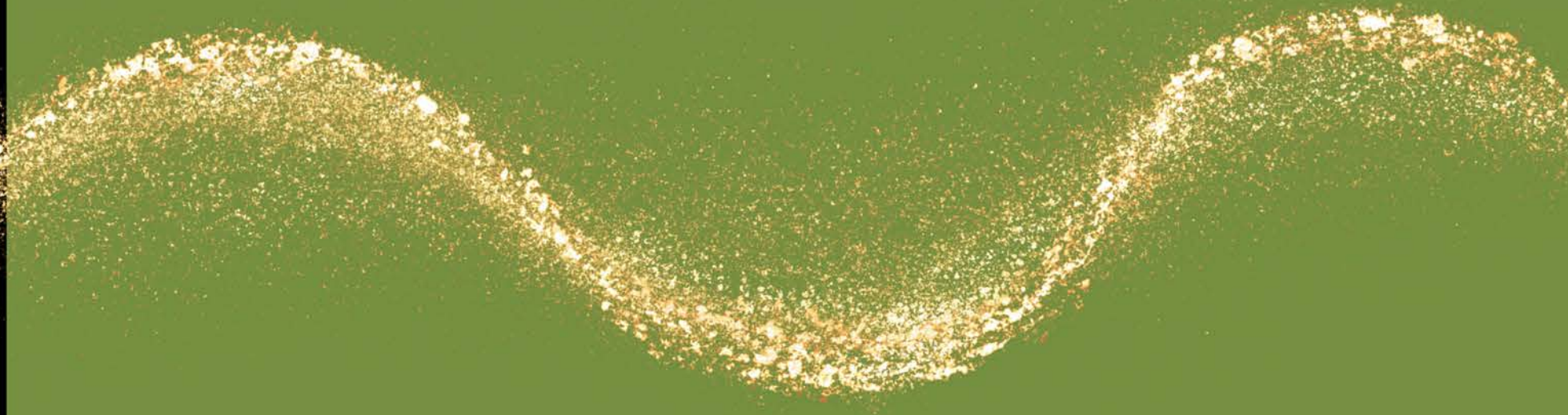
Neurons involved in the learning episode grow new projections & form new connections

Neuroplasticity:
When your brain forms a new thought.

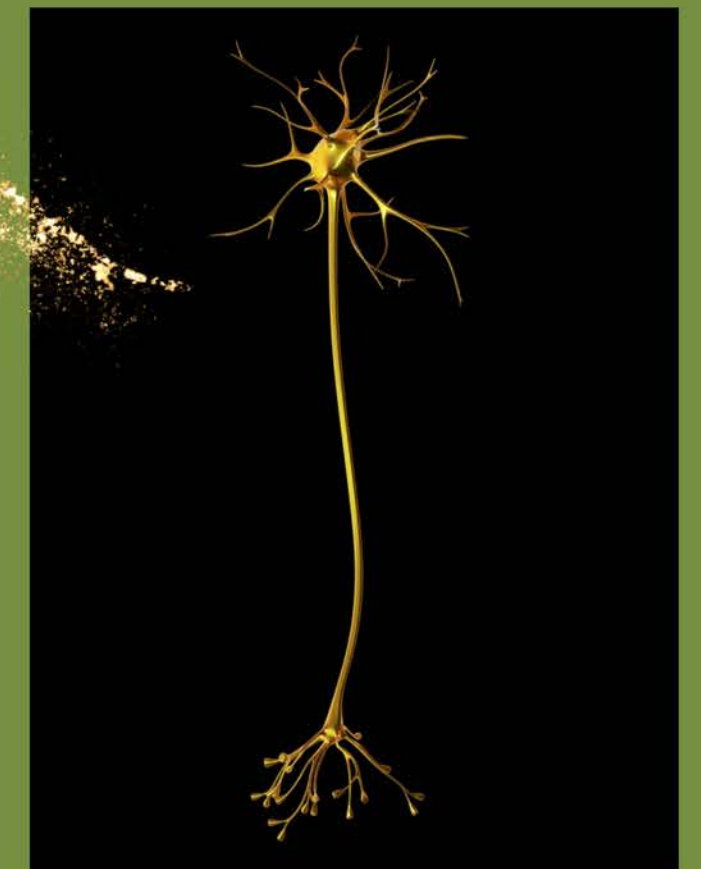
Someone can
be a good
athlete



Girls can be good athletes.



Someone can
be a girl



Communication

Providing a safe space to discuss difficult things, allows 2 neurons to form new connections. “Bill was mean.” AND “I can forgive Bill and work around him.”



MYOKINES





Neuroplasticity

Requires pressure, time, new path.



Changes



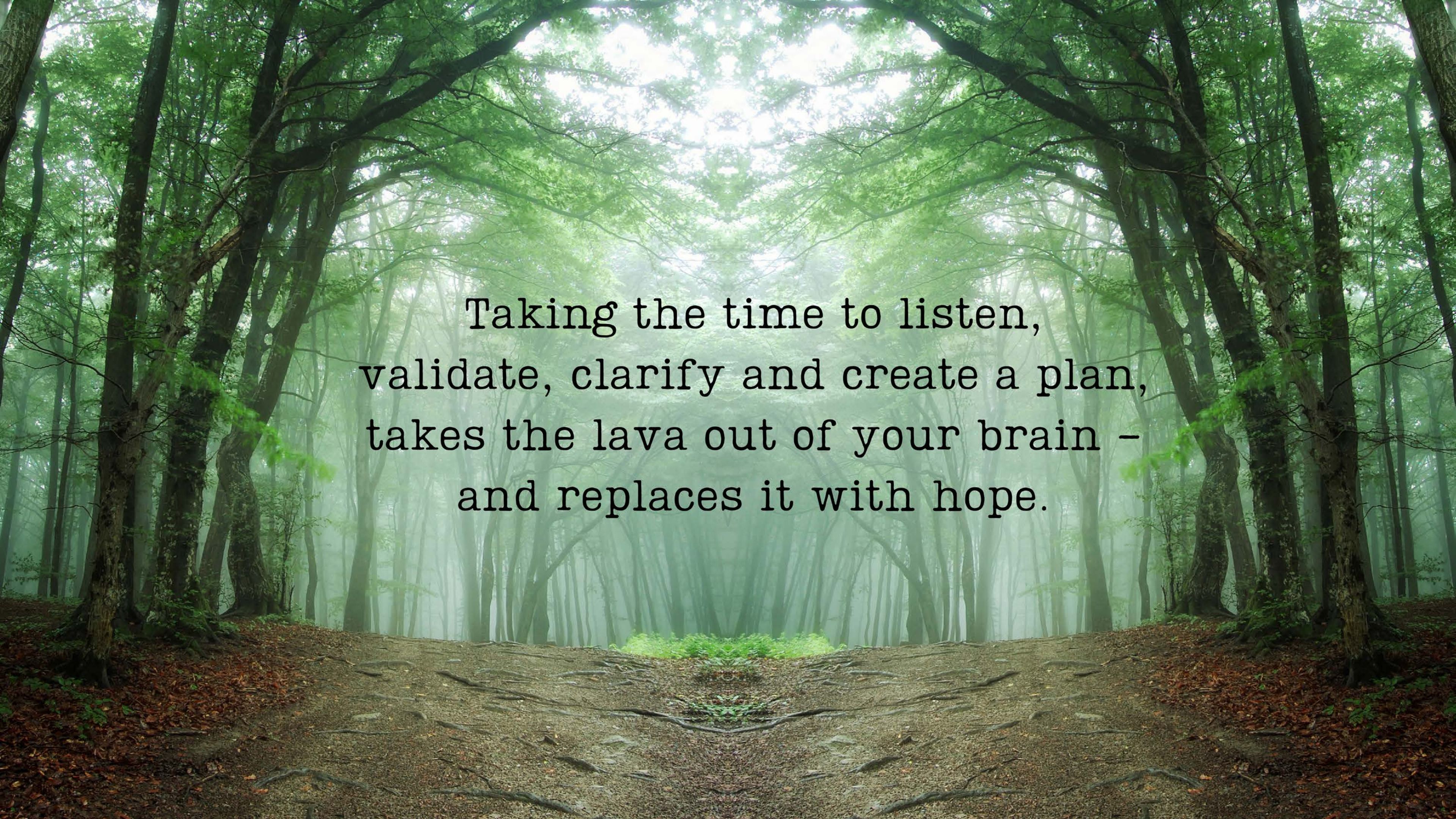
Vent



Validate



Plan

A misty forest scene with a dirt path and exposed tree roots. The path is covered in brown leaves and has several large, gnarled tree roots protruding from the ground. The trees are tall and thin, with a dense canopy of green leaves. The mist is thick, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

Taking the time to listen,
validate, clarify and create a plan,
takes the lava out of your brain -
and replaces it with hope.

Thank You!

"Life is short. It's time to tell your brain how you want it to look."



Dr. Clare Fowler

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Let's connect!

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