

Mind-Body Bridging for Professional Self-Care: Preventing and Treating Secondary Trauma

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Overview

- In this workshop domestic violence professionals will learn a few of the basic evidence-based Mind-Body Bridging (MBB) skills and practices for professional self-care to prevent and treat secondary trauma.
- MBB skills provide space for personal safety, voice and choice, while empowering professionals to alleviate psychological distress, and to strengthen and increase psychological flexibility, enhance resilience, and improve productivity and well-being.

Objectives

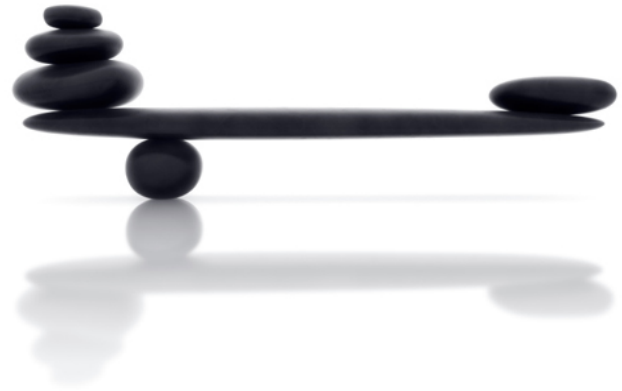
- **Objective 1:** Utilize Mind-Body Bridging (MBB) skills and practice for professional self-care to prevent and treat secondary trauma.
- **Objective 2:** Apply MBB skills during and after traumatic or stressful life events to achieve and maintain optimal functioning.
- **Objective 3:** Utilize MBB skills to provide space for personal safety, voice and choice, to empower the professional to alleviate psychological distress, and to strengthen and increase psychological flexibility, resilience, productivity, and well-being.



Mind-Body Bridging

I-System Interventions

All I-System Interventions (i.e., I-System Analysis, Mind-Body Bridging Therapy, Resilient Mind, Productive Mind) are informed by the I-System Model, which is based on the hypothesis that an overactive I-System is a common psychological mechanism underlying many emotional and behavioral disorders (Block, 2018).

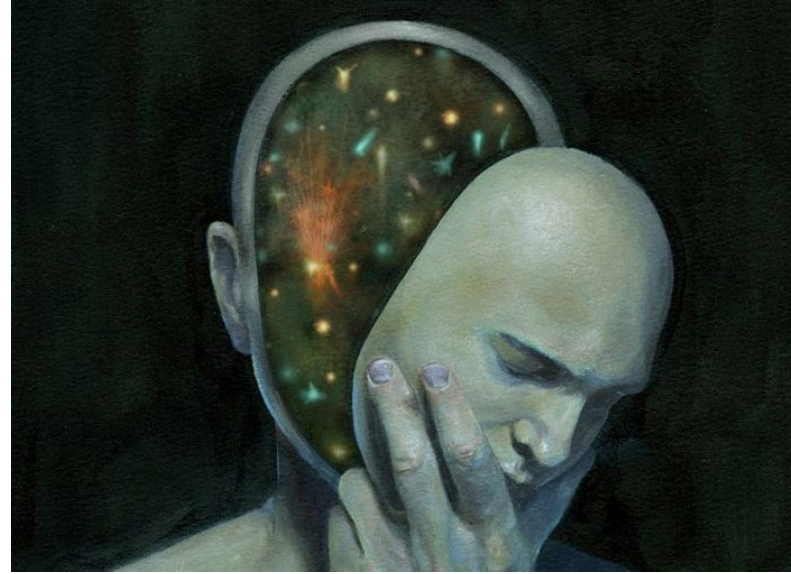


- Mind-body bridging (MBB) is a psychological intervention that applies metacognitive and awareness-based strategies to increase psychological flexibility and resilience.
- MBB practice consists of various skills for cultivating present-focused awareness of one's body, thoughts, and emotions, and developing an understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind maladaptive mind-body states and behavior.

- MBB skills helps one to recognize and rest an overactive I-System, thereby removing the hindrance to the **innate resilience** of the '**true self**' (natural functioning).
- In a state of natural functioning adaptive skills and **resilience** emerge (Du Plessis, Webb & Tollefson, 2019).

- Karen Horney (1950) described alienation from the **‘real’** or **‘true self’** as the origin of most psychic distress and described the “real self” as “the **‘original’** force toward individual growth and fulfillment” (p. 158).
- According to Horney (1950), this real self is an “**intrinsic potentiality**” or “**central inner force**, common to all human beings” that is the core source of development (p. 17).

- MBB Skills focuses on unleashing the inherent resilience of the **true self**.

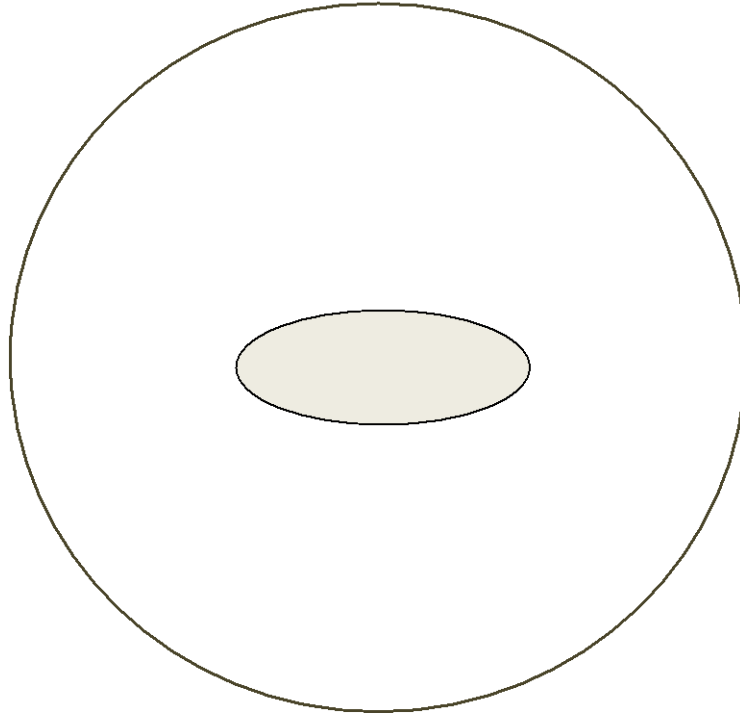


- MBB practice, therefore, aims at restoring the “motivational force or tendency” of the **true self**, and thereby unleashing its **inherent resilience** and “**health-promoting force**” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 62).



Mind-Body Mapping

SITUATION MAP

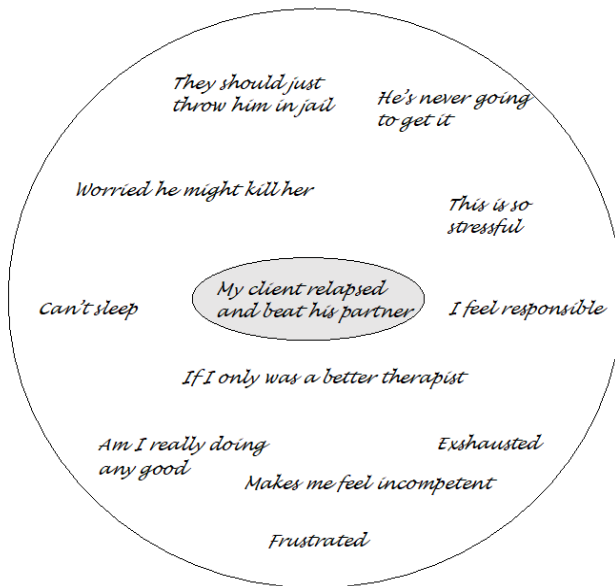


Your body: ☐ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: _____

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☐ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? _____

EXAMPLE OF SITUATION MAP

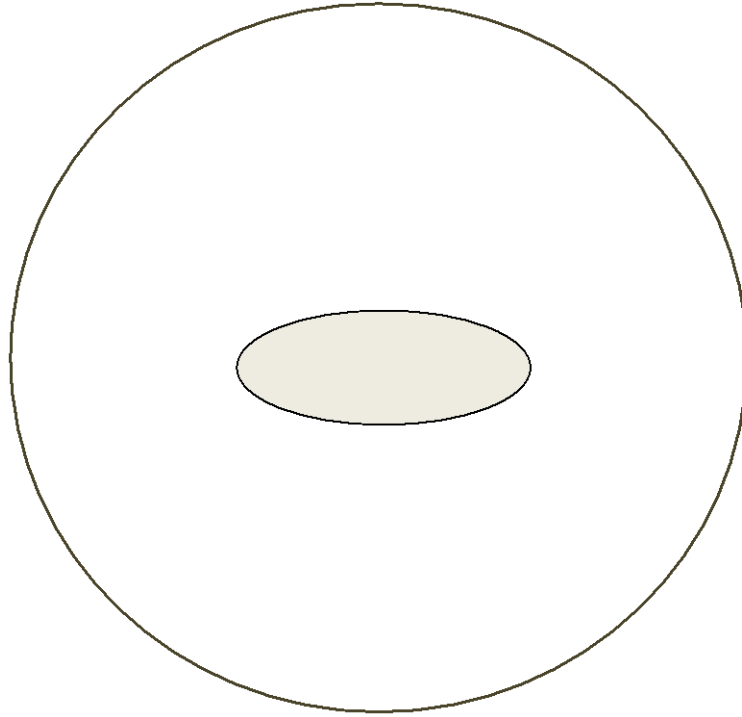


Your body: ☒ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: *Jaws, Shoulders, back*

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☒ CLUTTERED

How do client act in this state? *Angry, isolate, loss of motivation*

SITUATION MAP WITH BRIDGING

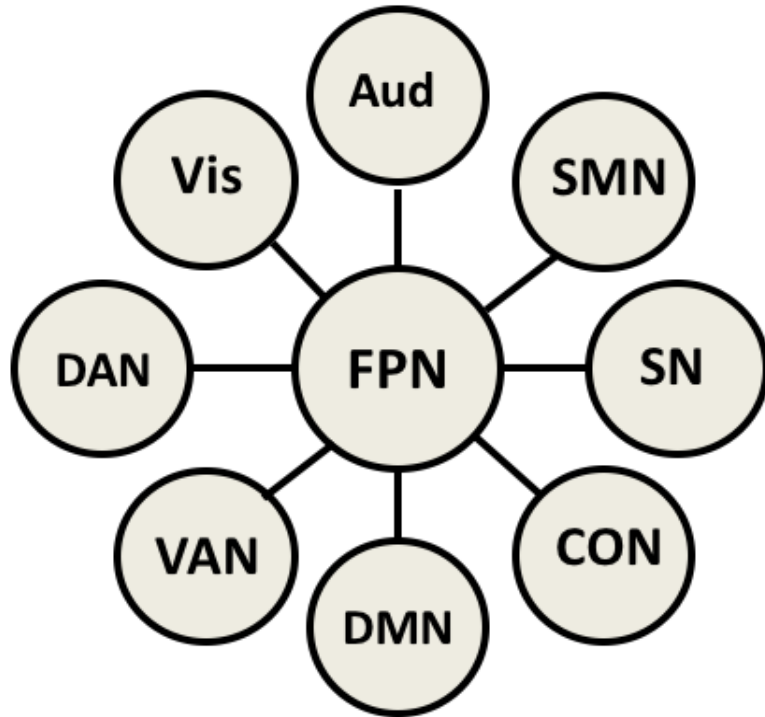


Your body: ☐ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: _____

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☐ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? _____

Natural Functioning



Body-based processing

SMN: Somatosensory-motor network

Aud: Auditory

Vis: Visual

Psychosocial Salience Processing

DMN: Default-mode network

CON: Cingulate-operculum network

SN: Salience Network

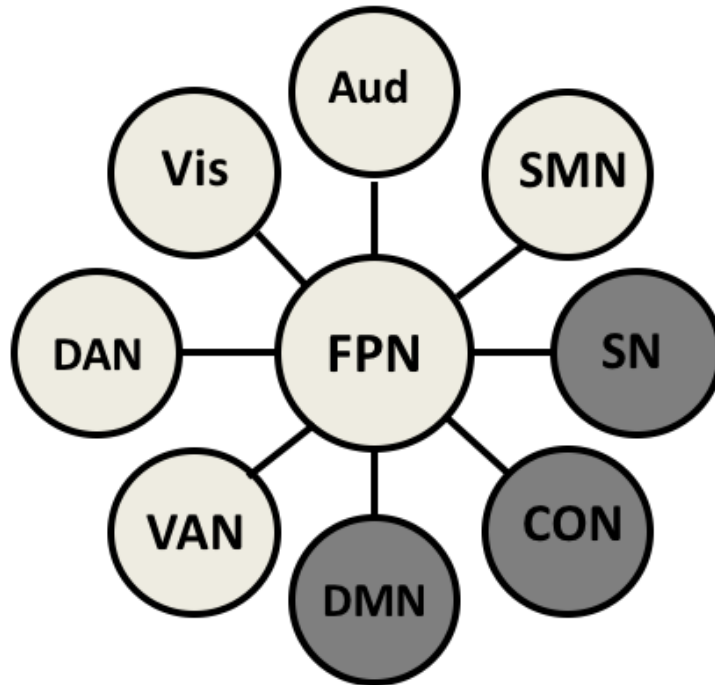
Central Executive Functioning

FPN: Frontoparietal network

DAN: Dorsal attention network

VAN: Ventral attention network

I-System Functioning



Body-based processing

SMN: Somatosensory-motor network

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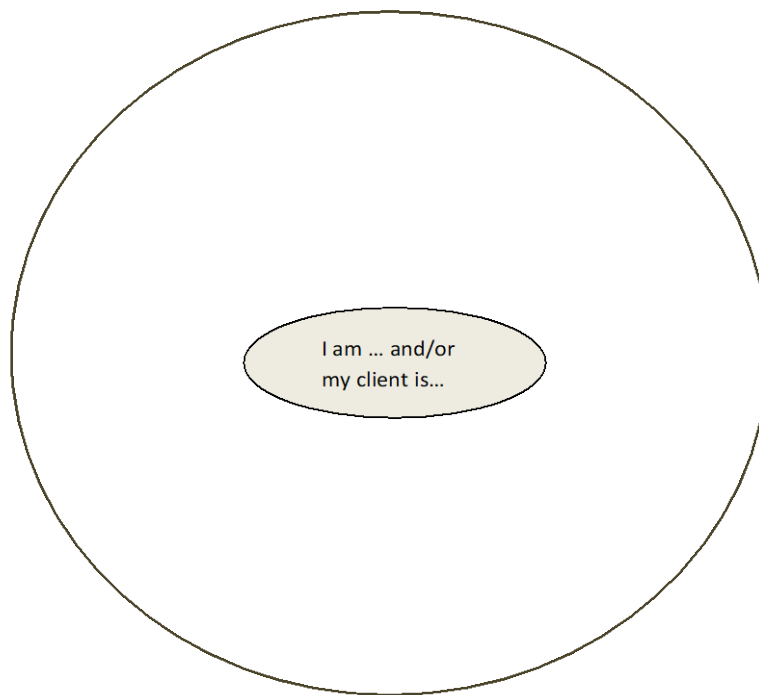
DAN: Dorsal attention network

VAN: Ventral attention network



Mapping Negative Thoughts and Storylines

NEGATIVE SELF TALK MAP



Your body: ☐ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: _____

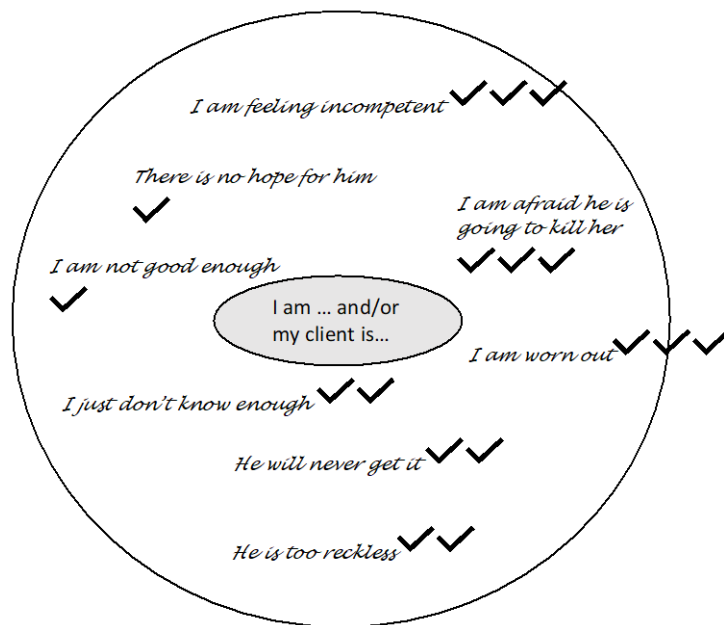
Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☐ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? _____

How active is your I-System?



EXAMPLE OF NEGATIVE SELF TALK MAP



Your body: ☒ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: *Tension in neck*

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☒ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? *Overeat and isolate myself*

How active is your I-System?



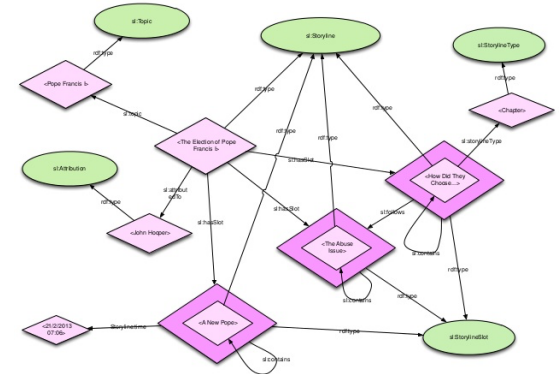
Depressor/Fixer Subsystems

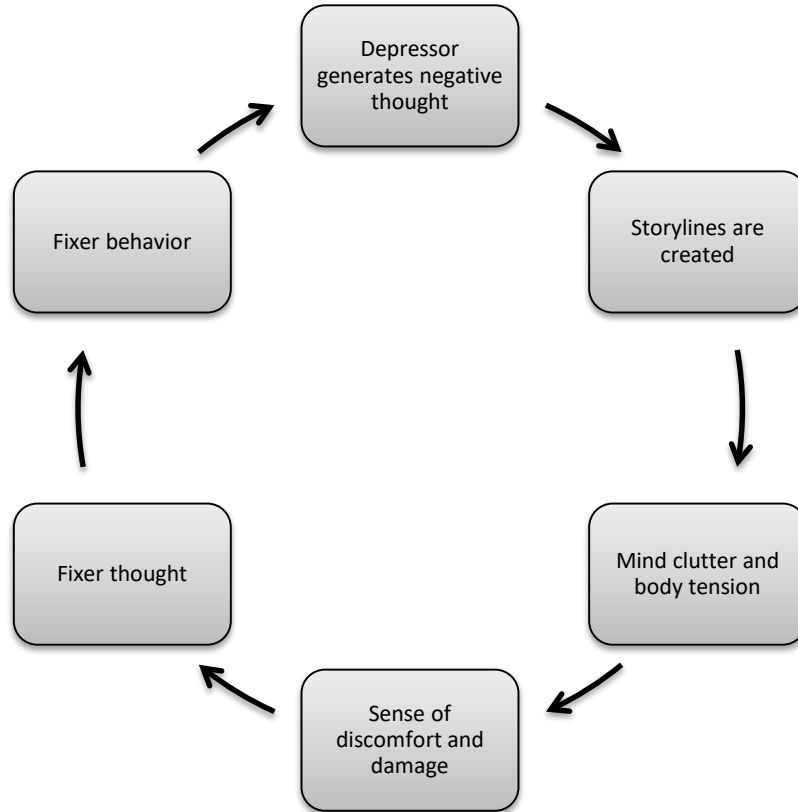
The I-System has two psychobiological subsystems:

- the **depressor** which gives rise to the experience of **narcissistic mortification/shame**,
- and the **fixer** which gives rise to **energizing/euphoric narcissistic fantasy**.

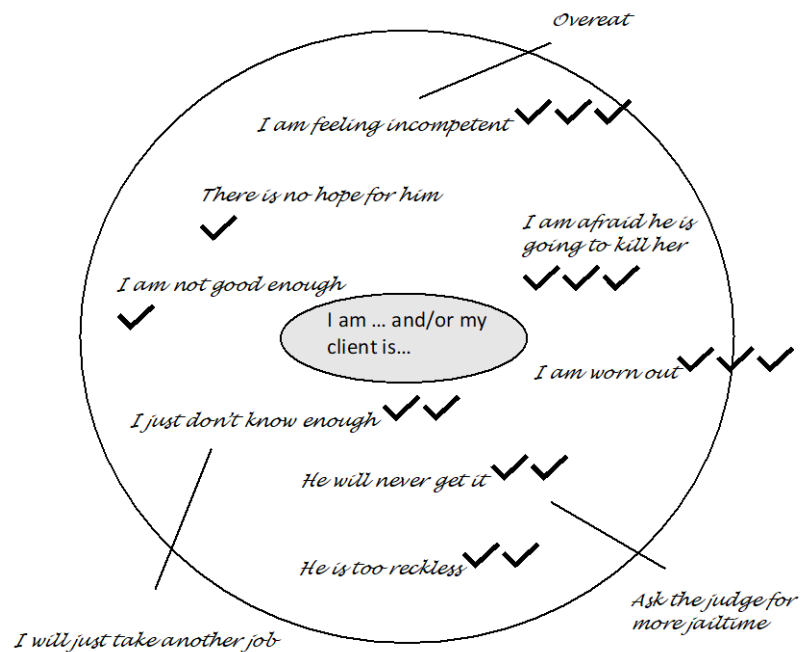
Depressor/Fixer Storylines

- **Depressor storylines** are the thoughts generated by the depressor which revolve around the beliefs of not being 'good enough' and being 'damaged'. Consequently, depressor storylines will point to what needs to be improved or 'fixed'.
- **Fixer storylines** are elaborate 'schemas' and 'action plans' regarding how this 'improvement' or 'damage repair' will happen. **Fixer behavior** is the implementation of these schemas or plans.





EXAMPLE OF NEGATIVE SELF TALK MAP



Your body: ☒ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: *Tension in neck*

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☒ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? *Overeat and isolate myself*

How active is your I-System?



Recognize and Defuse Your Depressor

- The first step is to **Recognize** that your Depressor has generated a negative thought and spun it into a story.
- The Depressor has generated negative thoughts due to a **Requirement** being unmet.

- When you become aware that a negative thought is generated by your Depressor and you **label** them as “Depressor thoughts”, you defuse the Depressor.
- These thoughts become **less powerful**, preventing them from cluttering your mind and creating body tension.

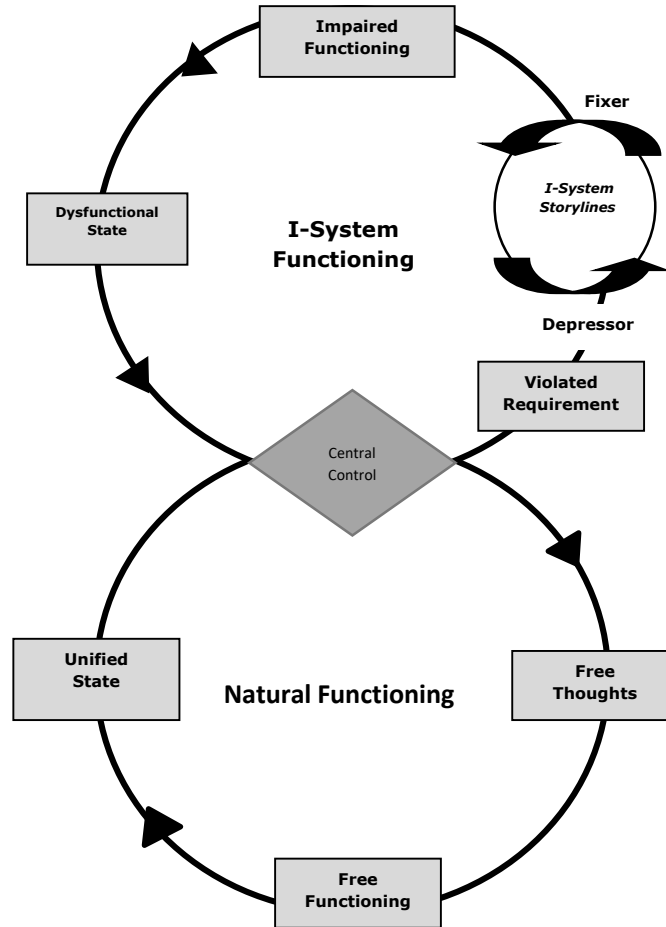
- **Labeling a Depressor Thought** is a MBB skill used to defuse the activity of the Depressor.
- This can be done by saying: *I'm having a thought that _____; it's just a Depressor thought.* We don't blow off or neglect the content of the thought, we are just preventing the Depressor from spinning the negative thought into a story.

Recognizing Storylines

- The Depressor generates a negative thought and spins it into a **Storyline**. Storylines may play in our minds many times throughout the day, creating mental lapses, errors, misperceptions, misjudgments, procrastination, body tension, etc. Storylines pull you away from what you are doing in the moment.
- All it takes to **Interrupt the Storyline** is to recognize that you are storytelling, use Bridging Awareness skills to rest your I-System, and return to what you were doing.

Interrupting Storylines

- All it takes to Interrupt the Storyline is to recognize that you are storytelling, use **Bridging Awareness** skills to rest your I-System, and return to what you were doing.



In **I-System Functioning** the Central Control has significant I-System activity that impairs its ability to optimally maintain system functioning and results in dysfunction in that system and other systems.

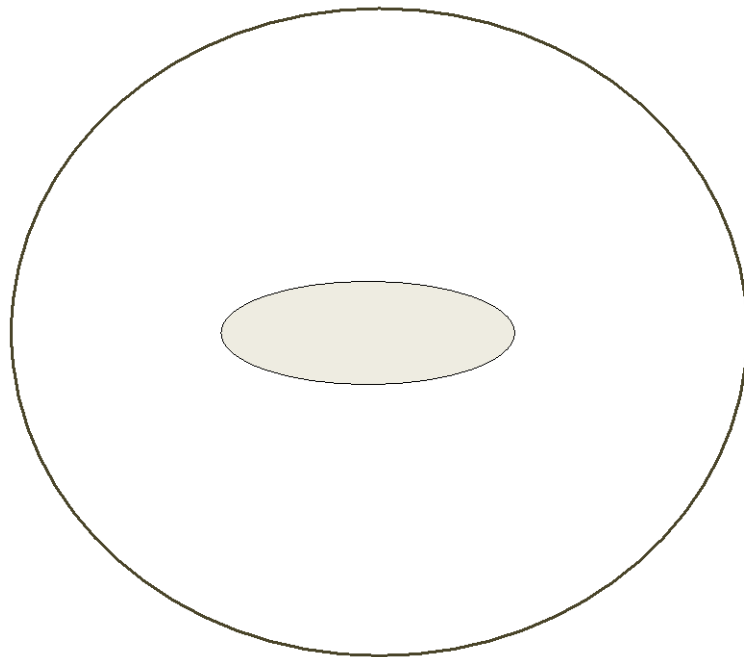
In **Natural Functioning** the Central Control has limited I-System activity (limited active Requirements in the representational world) and functions to keep the system within its optimal parameters.



Secondary Trauma Mapping

SECONDARY TRAUMA MAP

Traumatic Situation: _____



Your body: ☐ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: _____

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☐ CLUTTERED

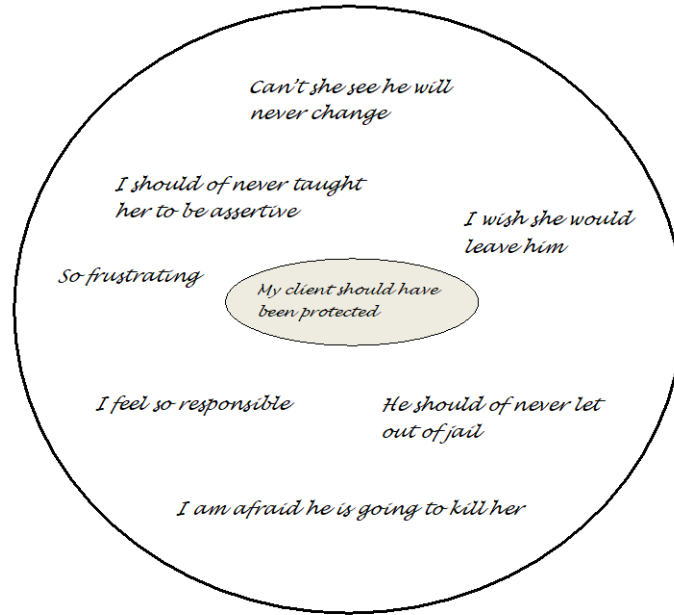
How do you act in this state? _____

How active is your I-System?



EXAMPLE OF SECONDARY TRAUMA MAP

Traumatic situation: *My client got beat and ended up in the hospital*



Your body: ☒ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: *Pain in my head*

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☒ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? *Argue and shout*

How active is your I-System?



Do you attribute your ongoing distress to the traumatic situation?

- In the heat of the moment during a troubling experience it is part of Natural Functioning to experience distress or pain. However, your I-System can **additional distress** to an already distressing situation.
- The human experience includes various degrees of suffering, distress and trauma. This is unavoidable. However, a significant portion of ongoing distress and suffering is due to the **Requirements** people have of how others and the world should be. The I-System can either cause ongoing and **unnecessary** distress and suffering to an already distressing situation.

I-System Requirements

The I-System becomes overactive when our sense of self or identity is threatened, which happens when certain 'being-conditions' (requirements) related to our identity are violated (Block, 2018; Du Plessis, Webb & Tollefson, 2018).

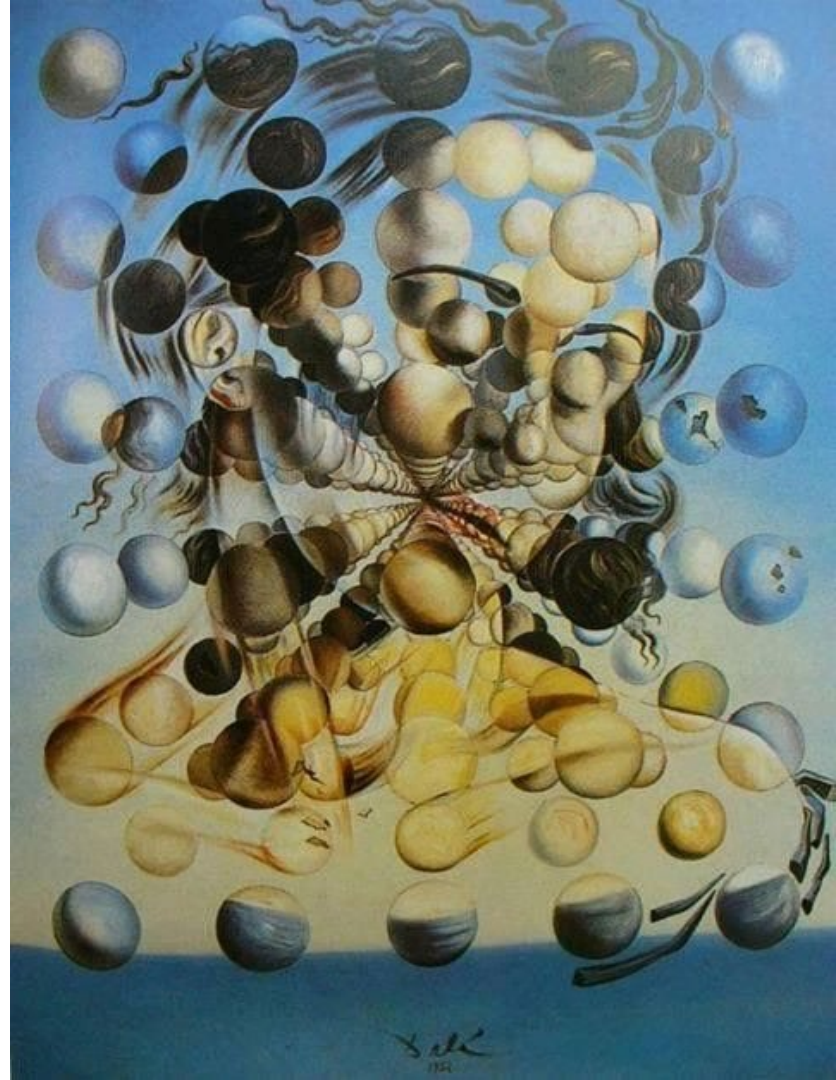
These **Requirements** can be understood as inflexible expectations we have of ourselves, others and the world.





In essence, I-System **Requirements** are dysfunctional mental rules about how we as individuals, others, events, and the world around me should be.

- From a psychodynamic perspective one of the central aims of the I-System is to **maintain coherence of the self** and to prevent **fragmentation** and **annihilation** of the self (Du Plessis, Webb & Tollefson, 2018).
- Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977) stated that the **threat of fragmentation** is ever-present as a potential - even in relatively healthy personalities - ever ready to invade the self when a self-object organization is about to be given up.



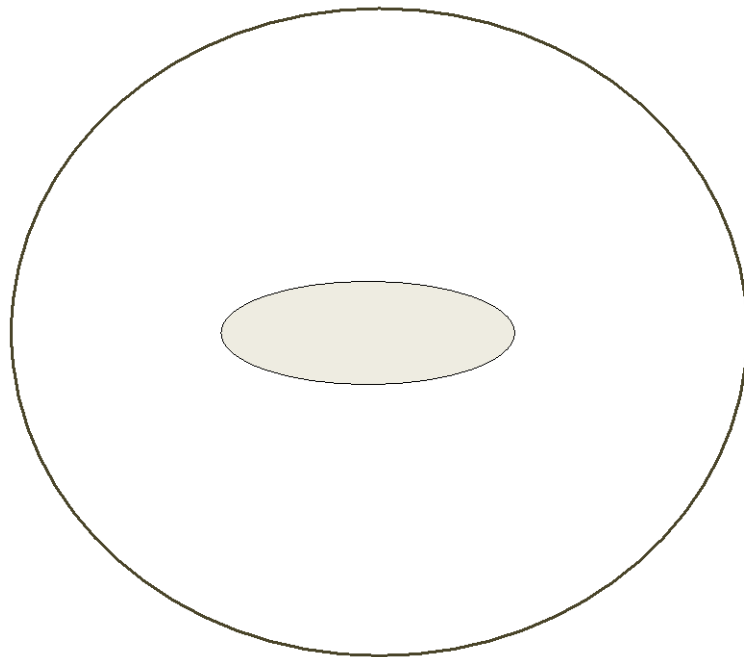
- There is a threat of fragmentation/annihilation of the self when an individual's **requirements** (rules that maintain certain self-object organizations) are violated.
- Simply put, requirements are **idealized** standards of self, others, and the world that aim to maintain **coherence** of the **idealized self**, which at the same time cause an **unrealistic** and **perfectionistic** sense of identity.
- The I-System's job is to counter-act perceived threats of **fragmentation/annihilation** of the self in effort to maintain **bio-psychic homeostasis** (Du Plessis, Webb & Tollefson, 2018).



By **Recognizing and Defusing your Requirement** about the external situation your ongoing distress will either melt away or be reduced and your Natural Functioning will dictate how you deal with the situation.

SECONDARY TRAUMA MAP WITH BRIDGING

Traumatic Situation: _____



Your body: ☐ TENSE ☐ RELAXED Location of body tension: _____

Your mind: ☐ CLEAR ☐ CLUTTERED

How do you act in this state? _____

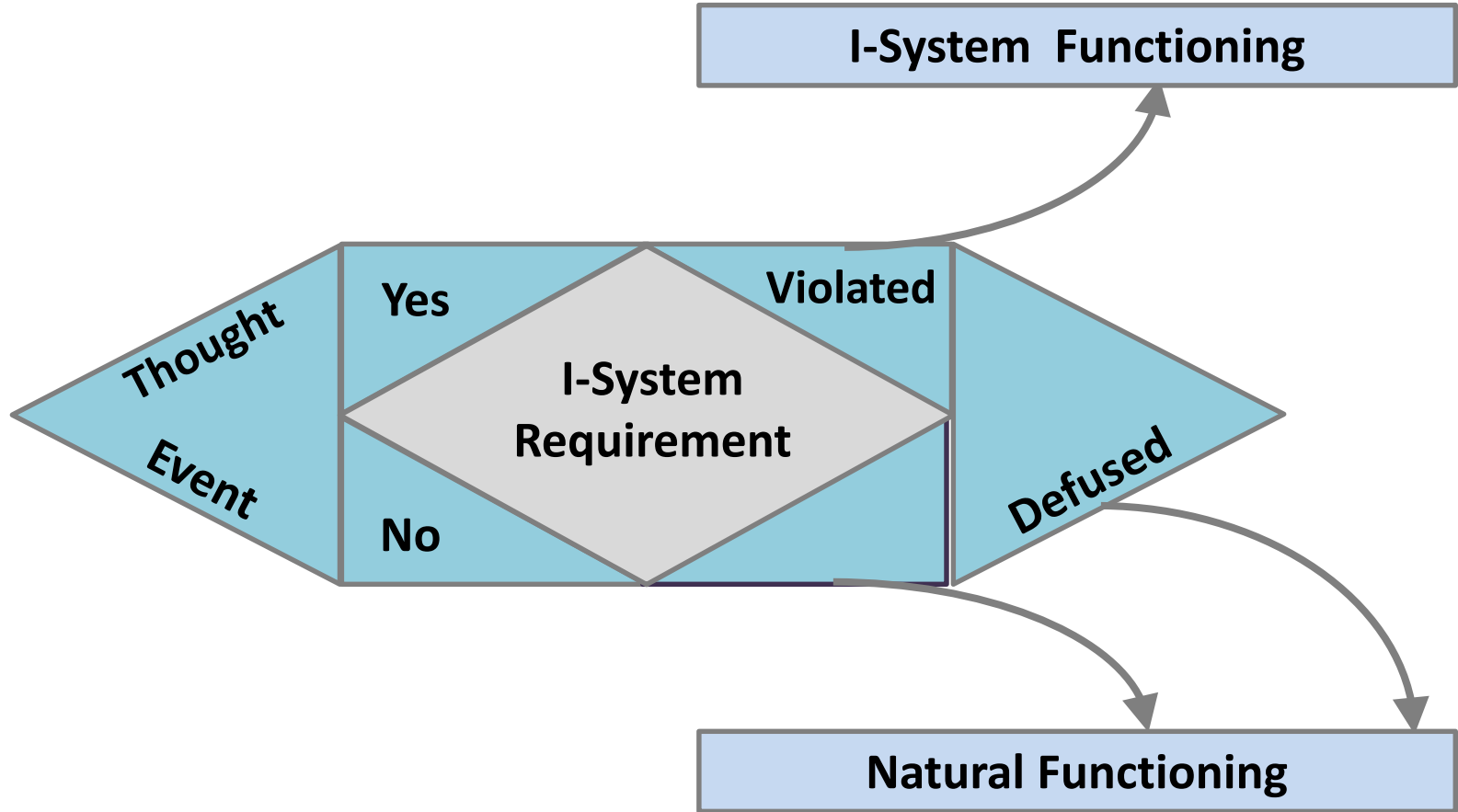
How active is your I-System? _____



Recognize and Defuse Requirements

- Each Requirement (Should/Must) has an inherent **logical fallacy**, because it imposes expectations on us, others, and the world that are not logically and factually correct, in short unrealistic.
- For example, the Requirement *“People should be nice to me”* implies that you can always expect people to be nice to you, which is obviously not an accurate view of reality.
- Whereas, *“I would like people to be nice to me”* expresses a **personal preference** that is not a logical fallacy. The logical version of this statement is then, “Sometimes people are nice to me and sometimes people are not nice to me. I prefer them to be nice”. This is sound logic because it is realistic.

- You can **Defuse a Requirement** by **restating it as a personal preference**, which has less power to activate the I-System.
- Defusing a Requirement allows you to deal with a troubling or distressing situation in Natural Functioning.
- It does not mean that you won't be upset when a personal preference is violated, but it won't be made worse by trying to deal with it with an active I-System.





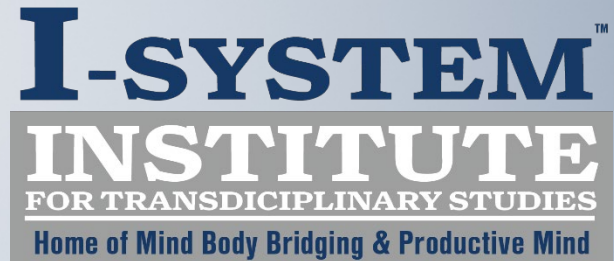
Questions and Discussion



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