



# Trauma Informed Care

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# AIMS

## To gain an understanding of:

- What is trauma?
- Impacts and effects of trauma
- Trauma informed care
- Trauma-informed frameworks for practice
- Self-care

# Self-care and group agreement

- If you need to take a break, feel free.
- If you need to talk to someone:
  - Chat with a trusted person from church
  - Contact the Presbyterian Counselling Services (Jericho Road) 1800 818 133 OR
  - Lifeline 13 11 14
- Respect and listen to others

# Why is trauma-informed care important?

- We want ministry-places to be safe
  - first
- It makes interactions more effective
- Avoid unintentional re-traumatizing



# A note about the language of trauma-informed

*When I first heard the term 'trauma-informed, I thought "Why would I want trauma to inform my care? I want the Bible to inform my care!" And rightly so. We need to keep the Bible at the centre...Scripture's view on human suffering, sin and redemption should shape how we understand traumatic experiences...at the same time there is tremendous value in being trauma-informed...research helps us see the impacts that are not immediately apparent.*

*- Darby Strickland, Trauma: Caring for Survivors*

An estimated **57%** to **75%** of Australians  
will experience a potentially traumatic  
event in their lifetime.

# What is trauma?

“Traumatic events...overwhelm the  
ordinary adaptations to life”

Herman, 1992

# Types of Trauma

## Acute Trauma

- Single incident of high distress
- Natural disaster
- Time bound
  - E.g. sudden death, car accident, injury

## Complex Trauma

- Accumulative/repetitive
- Often involve trusting relationships
- No end/resolution
  - E.g. child sexual abuse, domestic violence, chronic health

# Factors which can affect our experience of trauma

Past history

Age & life-stage

Personality

Supports

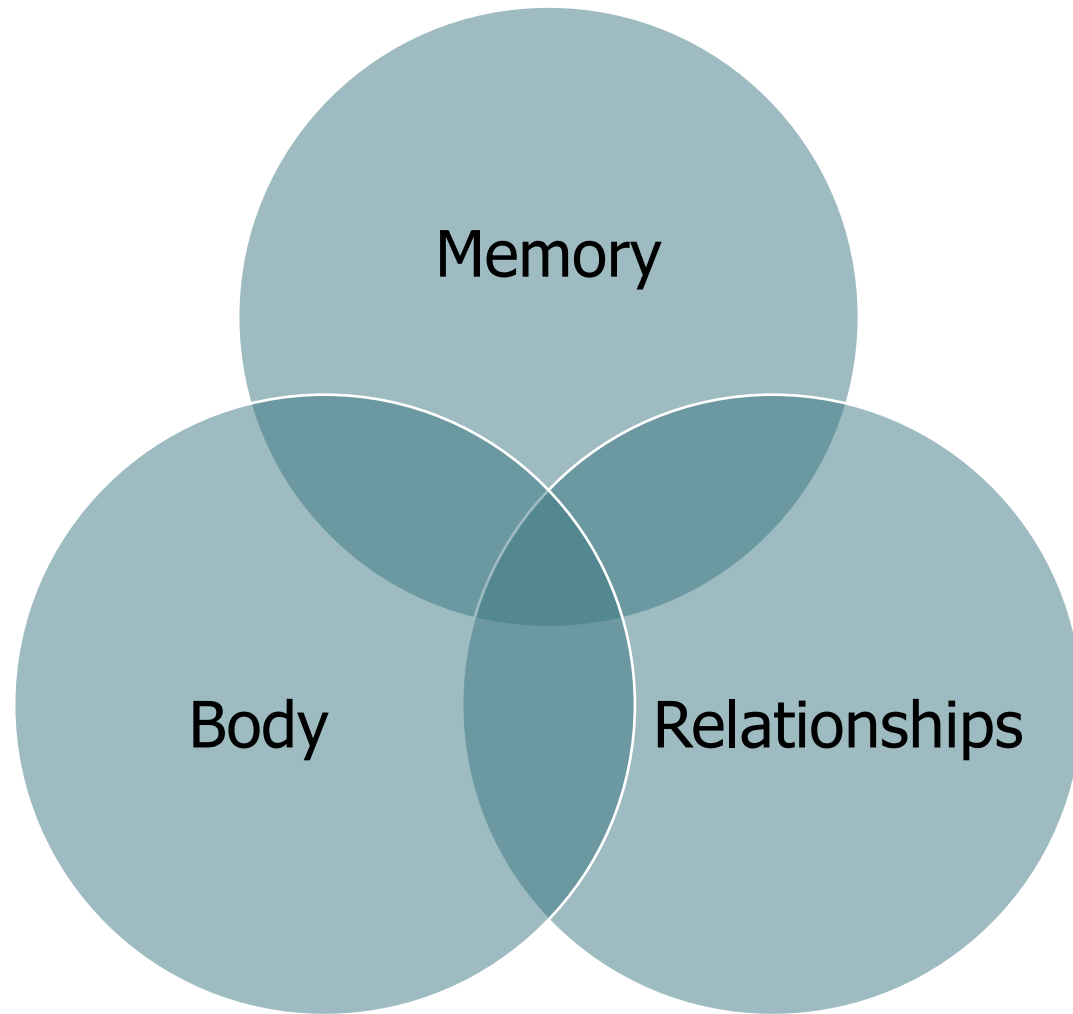
The event itself

Spiritual beliefs

Culture

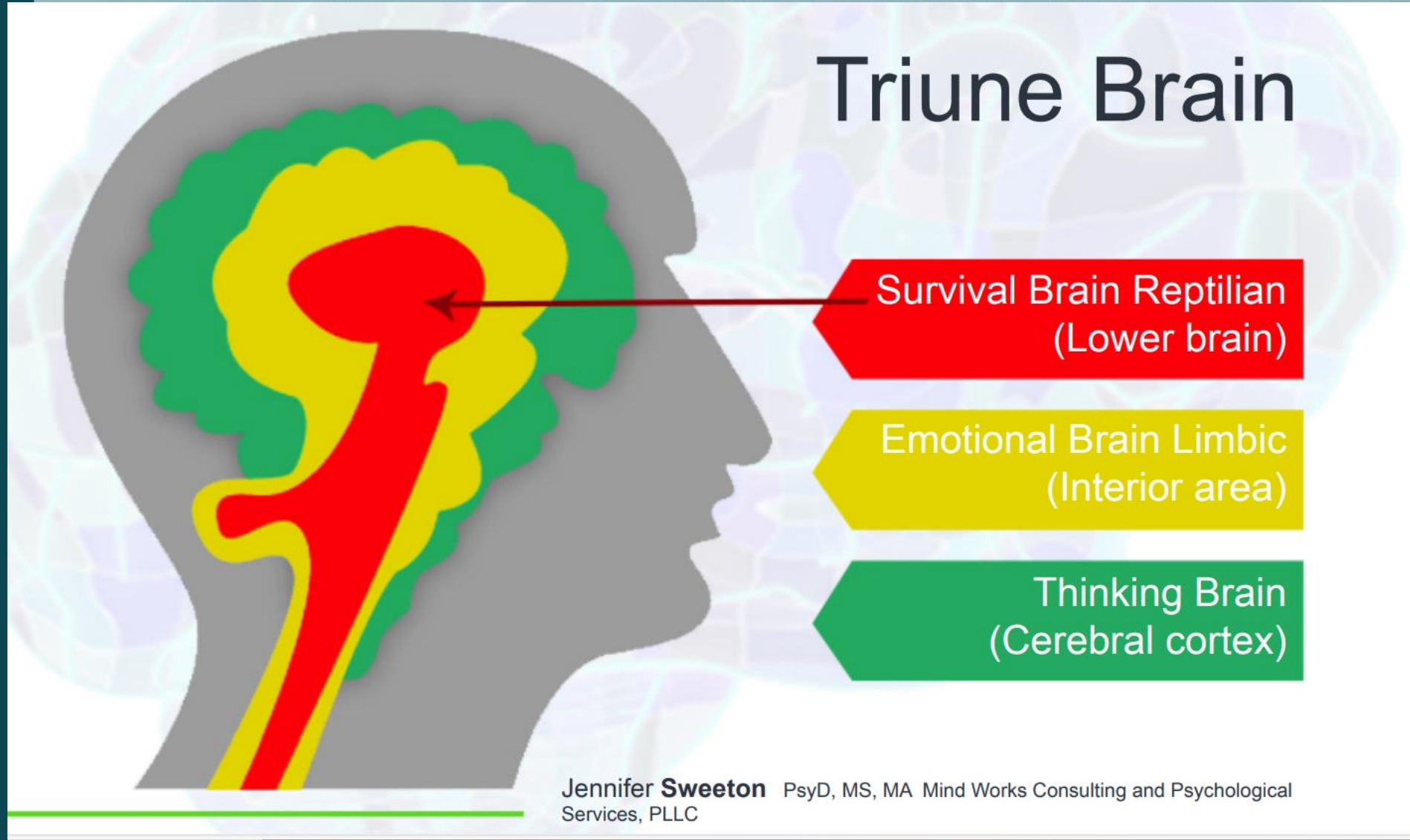
Community response

# How trauma can affect response



# The brain and stress

## Triune Brain



# Trauma and Relationships

- Isolation
- Helplessness
- Loss of trust
- Crisis of faith
- Shame



# Trauma and Relationships

- “This guy is out of control!”
- “Why does she overreact to everything?”
- “What he’s saying doesn’t make any sense!”
- “She doesn’t remember anything I tell her!”
- “Things go in one ear and out the other!”
- “How can they think God has forgotten them?”



# Stress Response



freeze



fight



flight

# Hand model of the brain – Dan Siegel





chronic pain

intrusive memories

feeling numb

overwhelm

hypervigilance

feeling 'out of body'

poor concentration

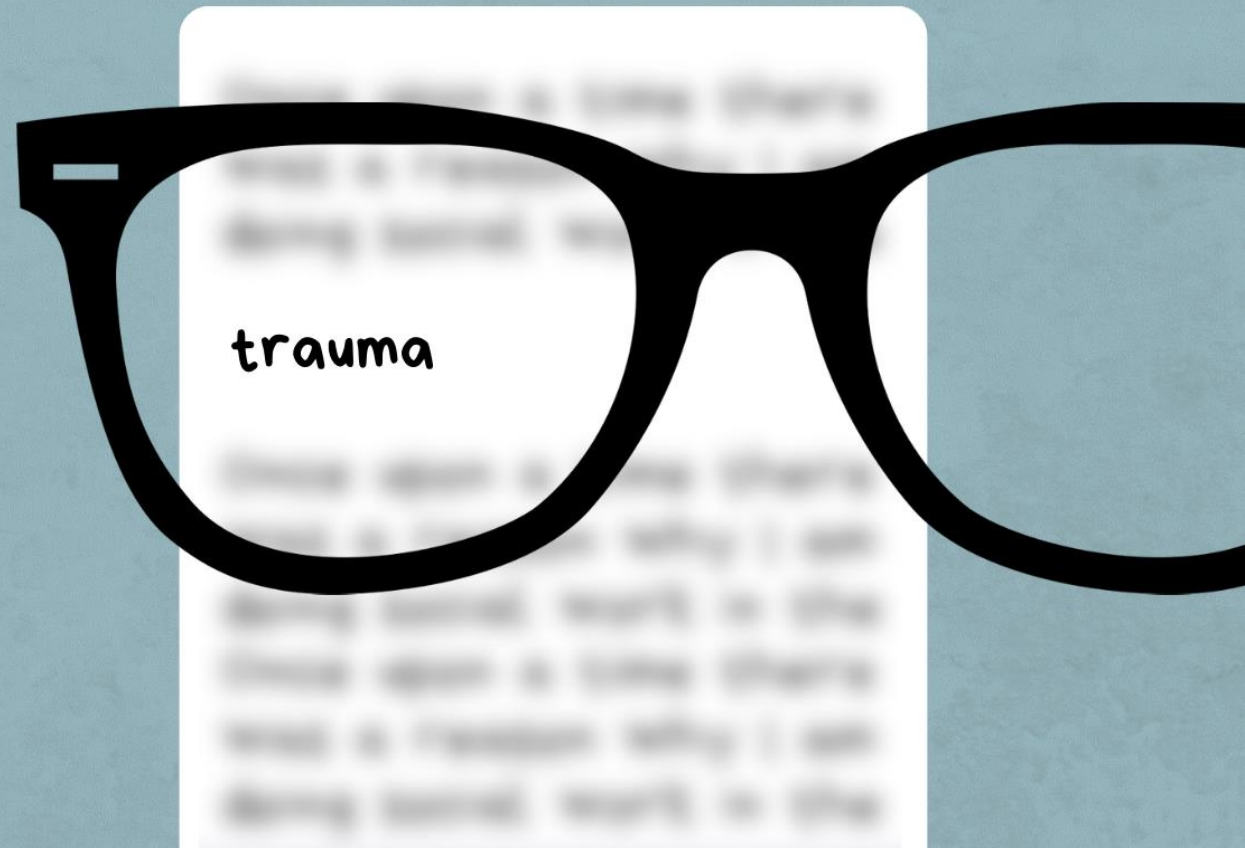
self-destructive behaviours

insomnia

shame

# What is trauma-informed care?

- Mindset/lens
- It is an approach to ALL people, not just those who we know are experiencing trauma



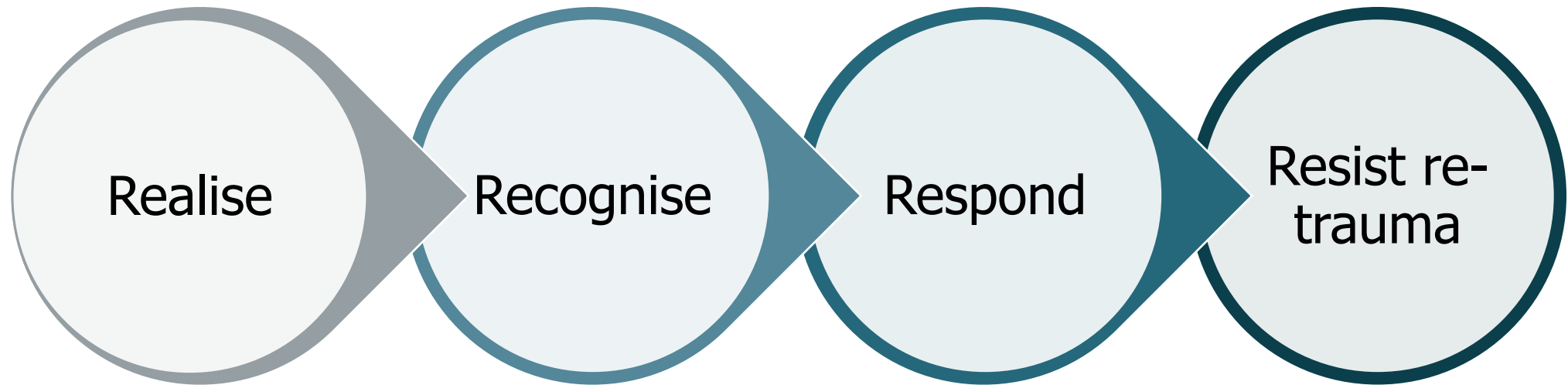
What is wrong  
with you?



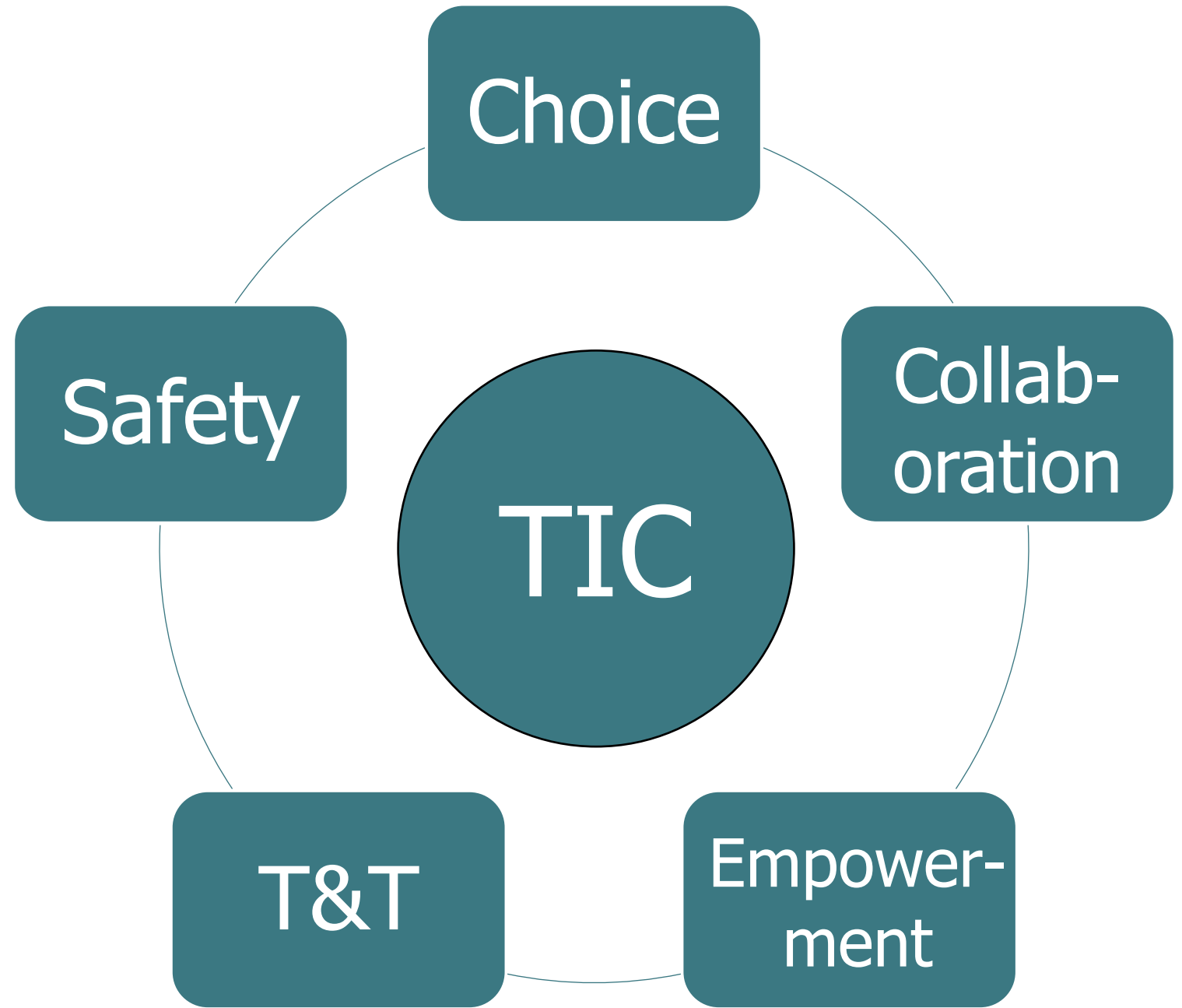
What might  
have **HAPPENED**  
to you?



# The Four Rs of Trauma-Informed Care




# The Five Principles of Trauma-Informed Care



# 1. SAFETY

- Build a sense of safety both physical and psychological
- Keep the person informed
- Do what you say you will do
- Confidentiality



**"What do you need  
to feel safe?"**

## 2. CHOICE

- Listen
- Offer choices where possible
- Explain
- Validate concerns



# 3. COLLABORATION

- Ask what others need
- Be clear about what others can input
- How is partnership developed?



# 4. TRANSPARENCY & TRUSTWORTHINESS

- How does Session and CoM communicate plans and decisions with the congregation?
- Is there a goal of building and maintaining trust?



# 5. EMPOWERMENT & VOICE

- Validate people's feelings
- Listen to what they need
- Don't take over
- Recognise strengths



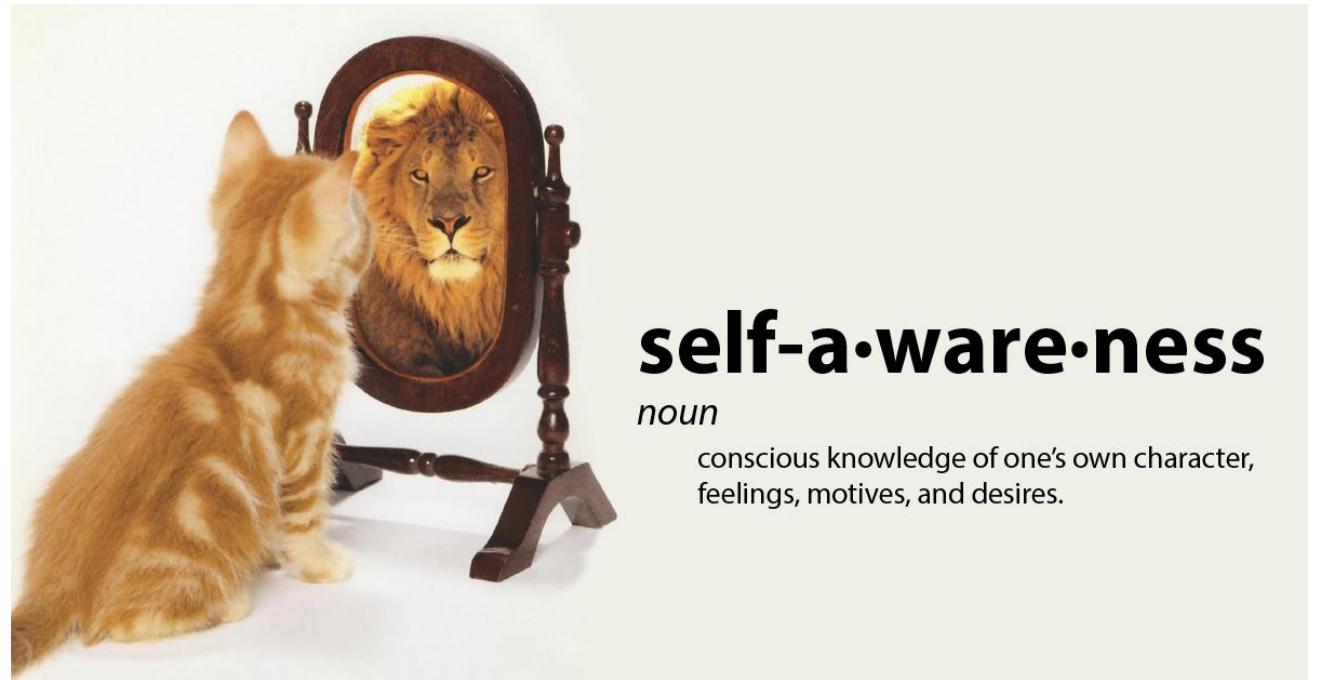
# Trauma Informed practices

- Physical environment
- Team relationships
- Organisational communication
- Organisational structures
- Decision-making processes
- What is the culture of the workspace?



# Self - Awareness

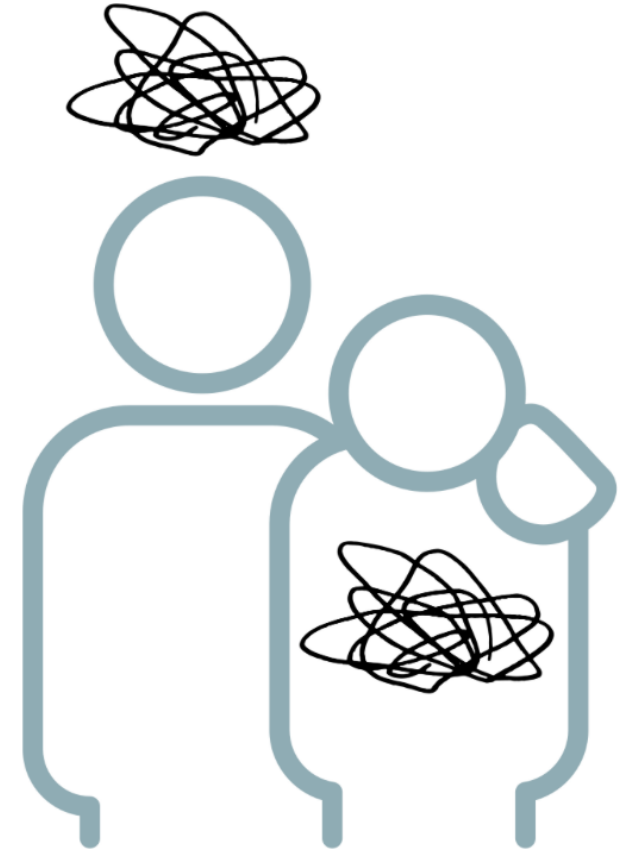
- Personality, values & strengths
- Our own trauma & triggers
- Our conflict management style



# Vicarious Trauma

Watch out for:

- Cynicism
- Intrusive thoughts
- Chronic fatigue
- Emotional exhaustion
- Anger, shame
- Feeling disconnected
- Physical illness and absenteeism



# Self - Care



## SOCIAL

activities that help  
nurture your relationships with others

## PHYSICAL

activities that  
improve your  
physical health



## MENTAL

activities that  
stimulate your  
mind



## PRACTICAL

tasks that help  
prevent future  
stress



## EMOTIONAL

activities that help  
you connect  
and reflect



## SPIRITUAL

activities that  
nurture your  
spirit



Where to from here...

The key question

it's about doing church care better

Your ministry spaces

Looking after yourself

The redemption story...



# Resources

- Dr Stephen Midgley *"Understanding Trauma: A Biblical Introduction for Church Care"*
- [www.mentalhealthinstitute.org.au](http://www.mentalhealthinstitute.org.au)

