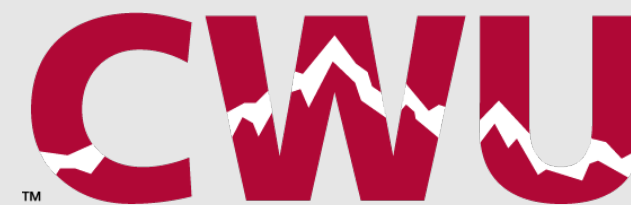



Using Attachment Theory and Research to Assess and Support Children and Parents involved in the Child Welfare System

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Child Development and Family Science
Central Washington University



Plan for Workshop



What is attachment and why is it important?

How can CASAs use attachment in their role?





Attachment Basics

Attachment

A strong emotional tie to a specific person (or persons) that promotes the young child's sense of security

Evolutionarily Adaptive

Functions

- Providing security
- Regulating affect/arousal
- Emotional expression
- Secure base



Secure Attachment Outcomes

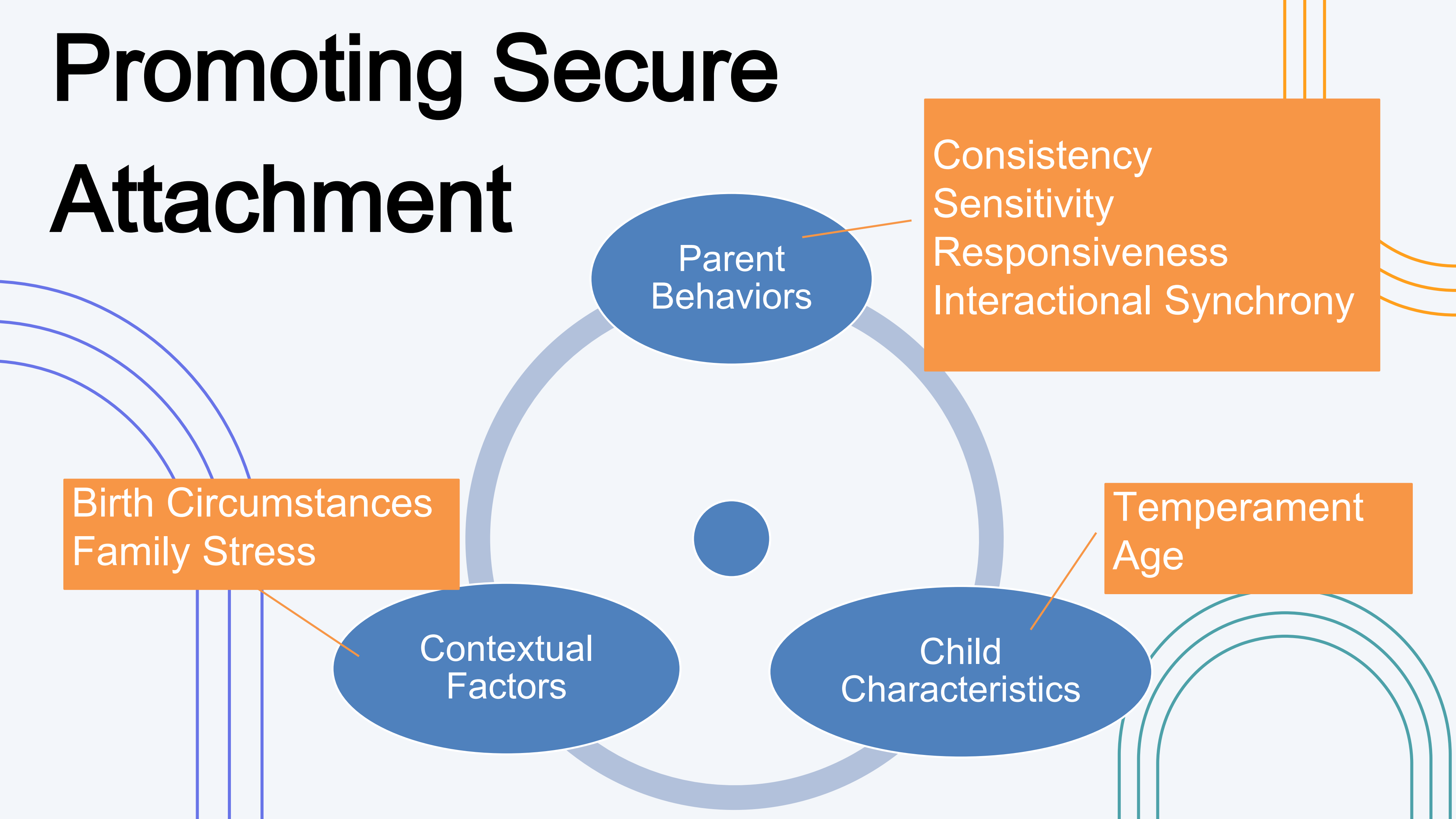
Developmental outcomes in childhood:

- Emotional intelligence and wellbeing
- Confidence
- Independence
- Social skills
- Mental health
- Language proficiency
- Executive function

Competencies later in life:

- Parenting
- Romantic relationships

Promoting Secure Attachment





Attachment

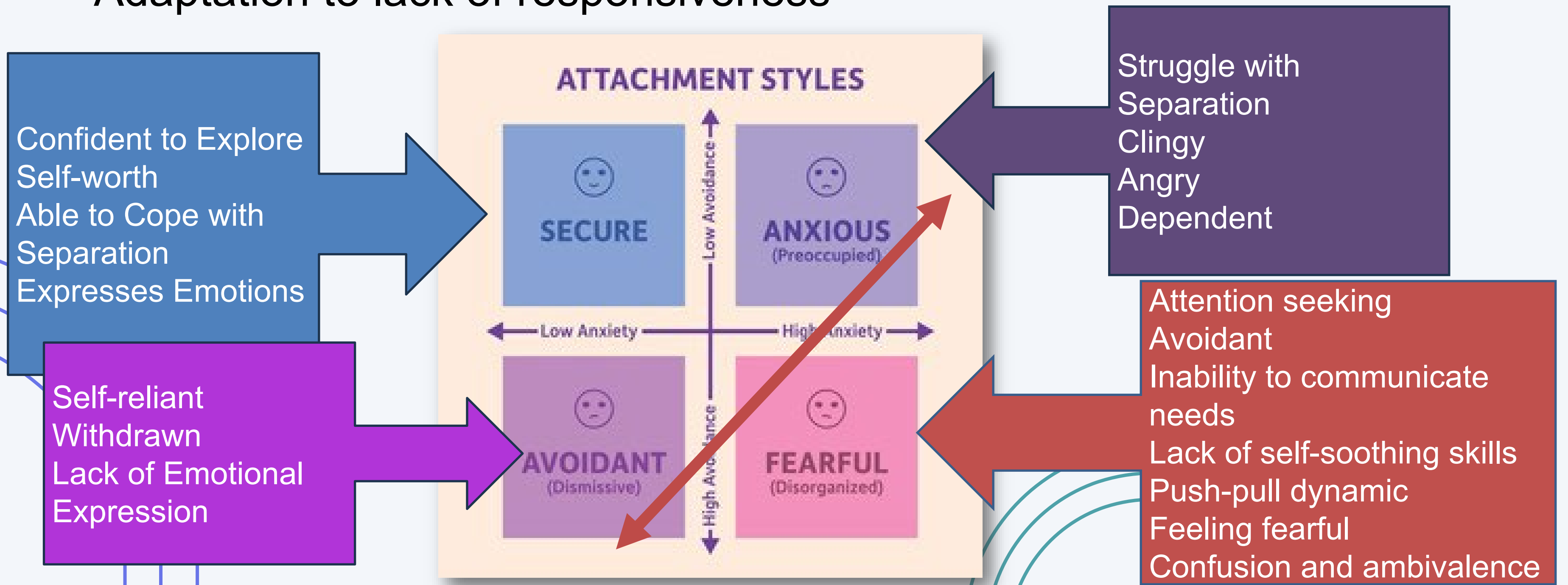


**Parents don't need to be perfect
It's okay to be good enough**



Attachment

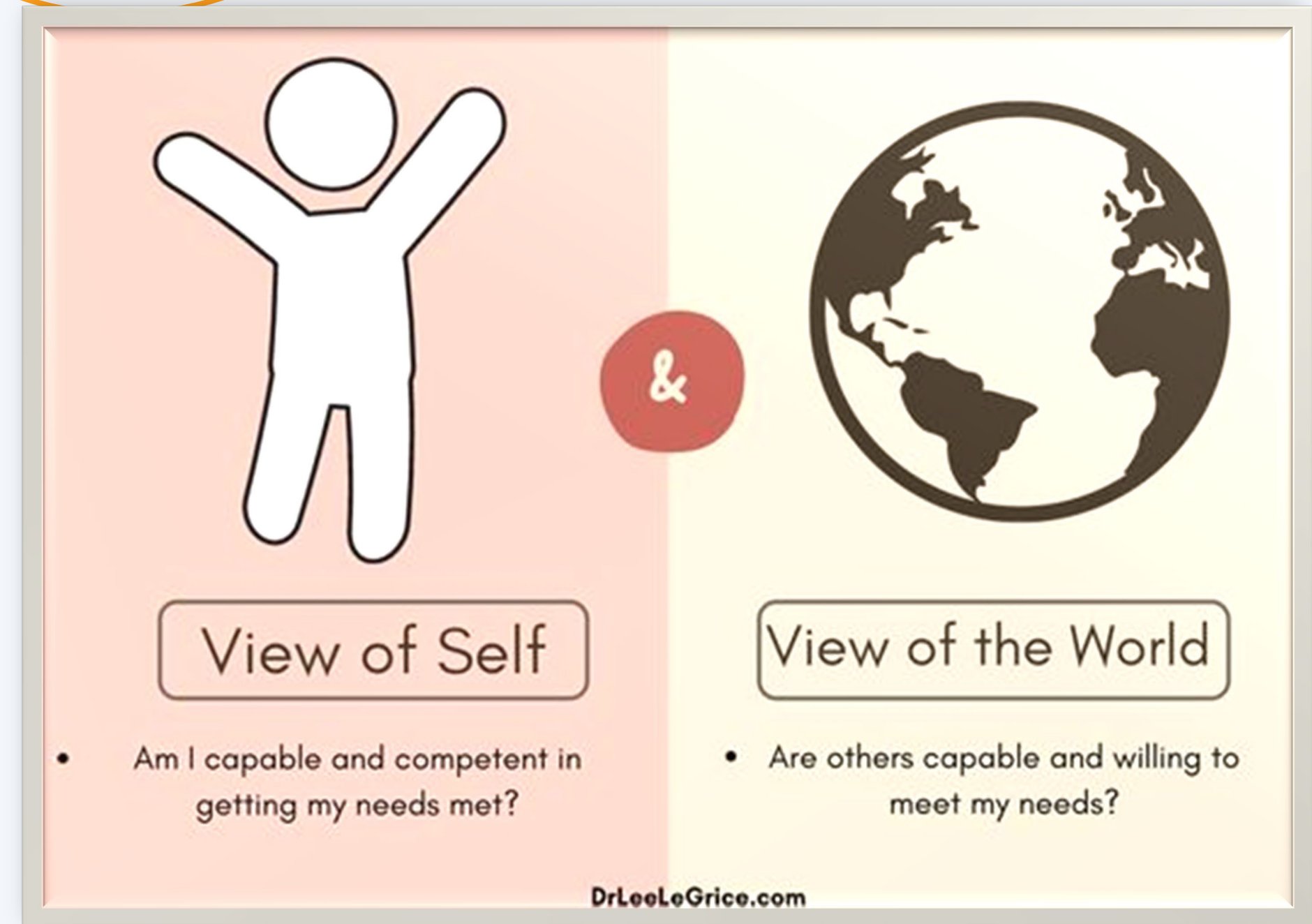
Adaptation to lack of responsiveness



Attachment

Internal Working Model

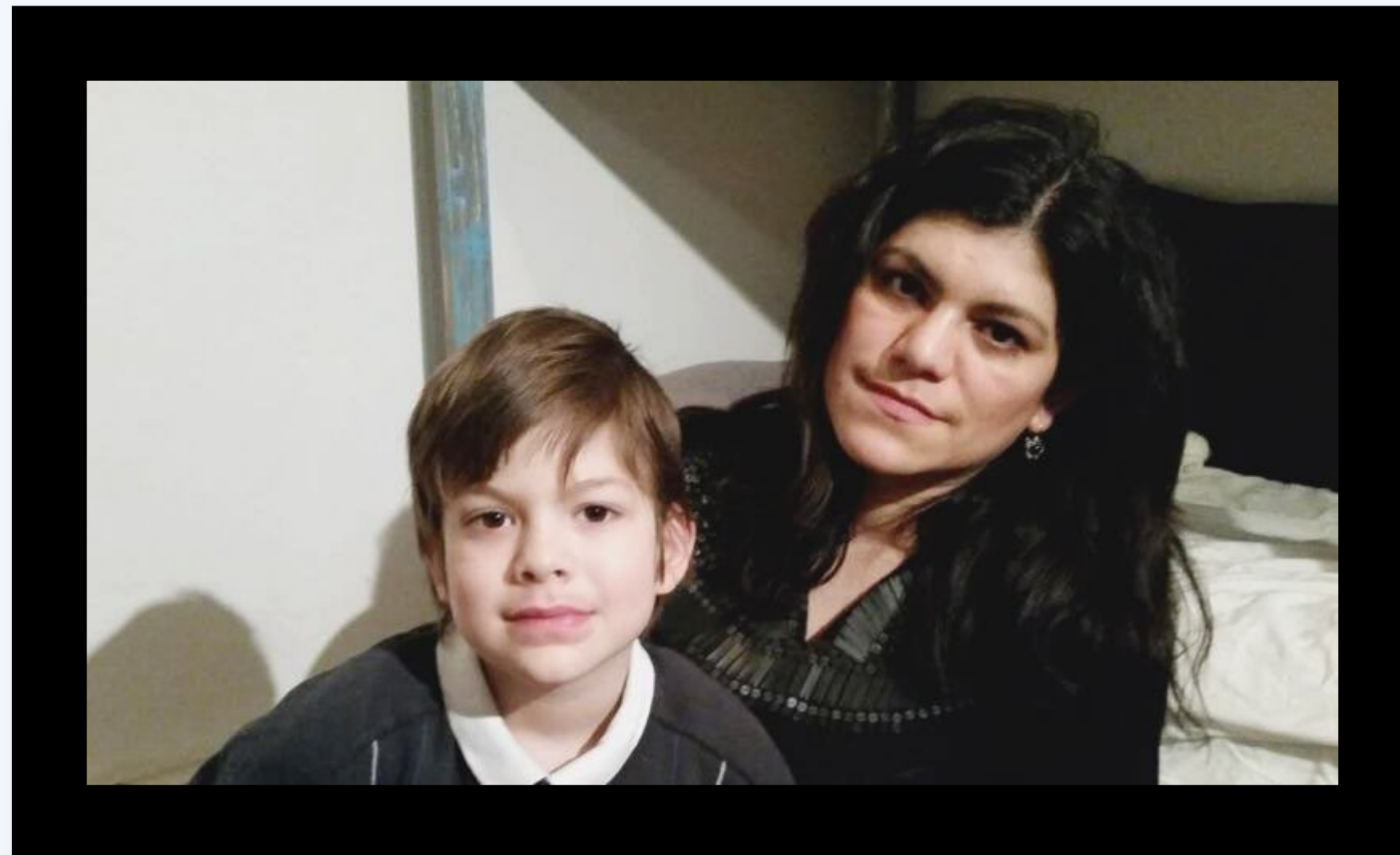
- Stability over time
- Intergenerational Transmission



Case Example Practice



Carmella and Myles





CASA Role in Attachment

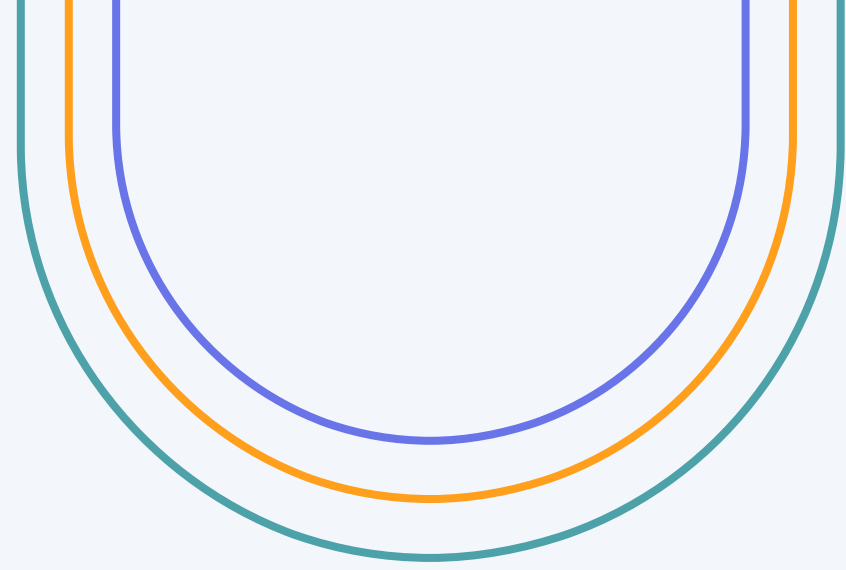
Interactions with Children

You can **interact** in ways that foster attachment

- Responsivity
- Sensitivity
- Empathy

You can **become more aware** of your own internal working model





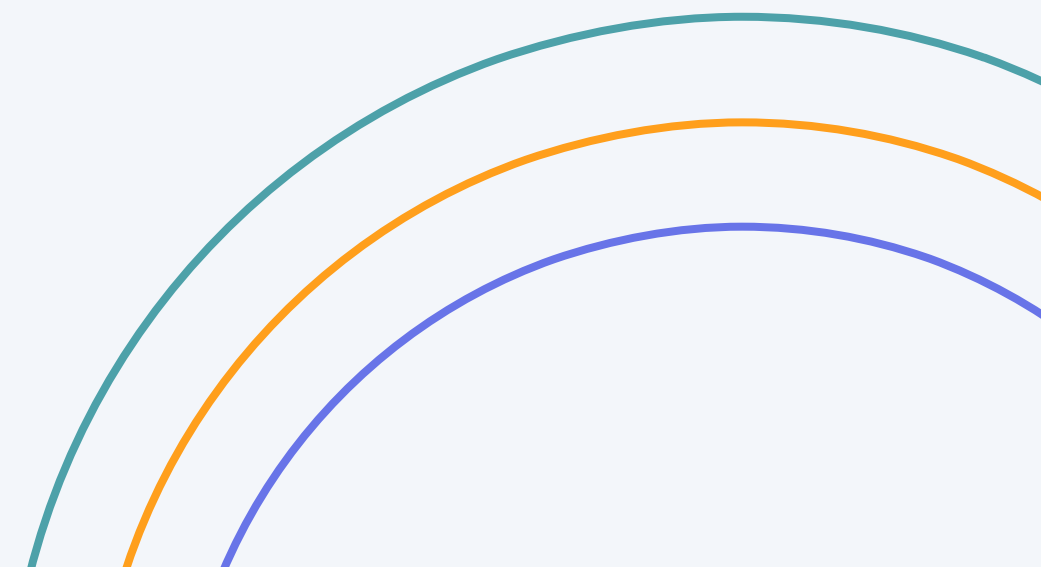
Promotion of Caregivers' Behaviors

You can **model**

Responsivity
Sensitivity
Empathy

You can **educate** about attachment

You can **advocate for** other stable,
secure relationships



Recommendations to the Court

- Reframe child's behavior in terms of attachment
- Consider development
- Promote early permanency and stability
- Encourage continued connection with parents, siblings, and other kin
- Continued post-adoption contact

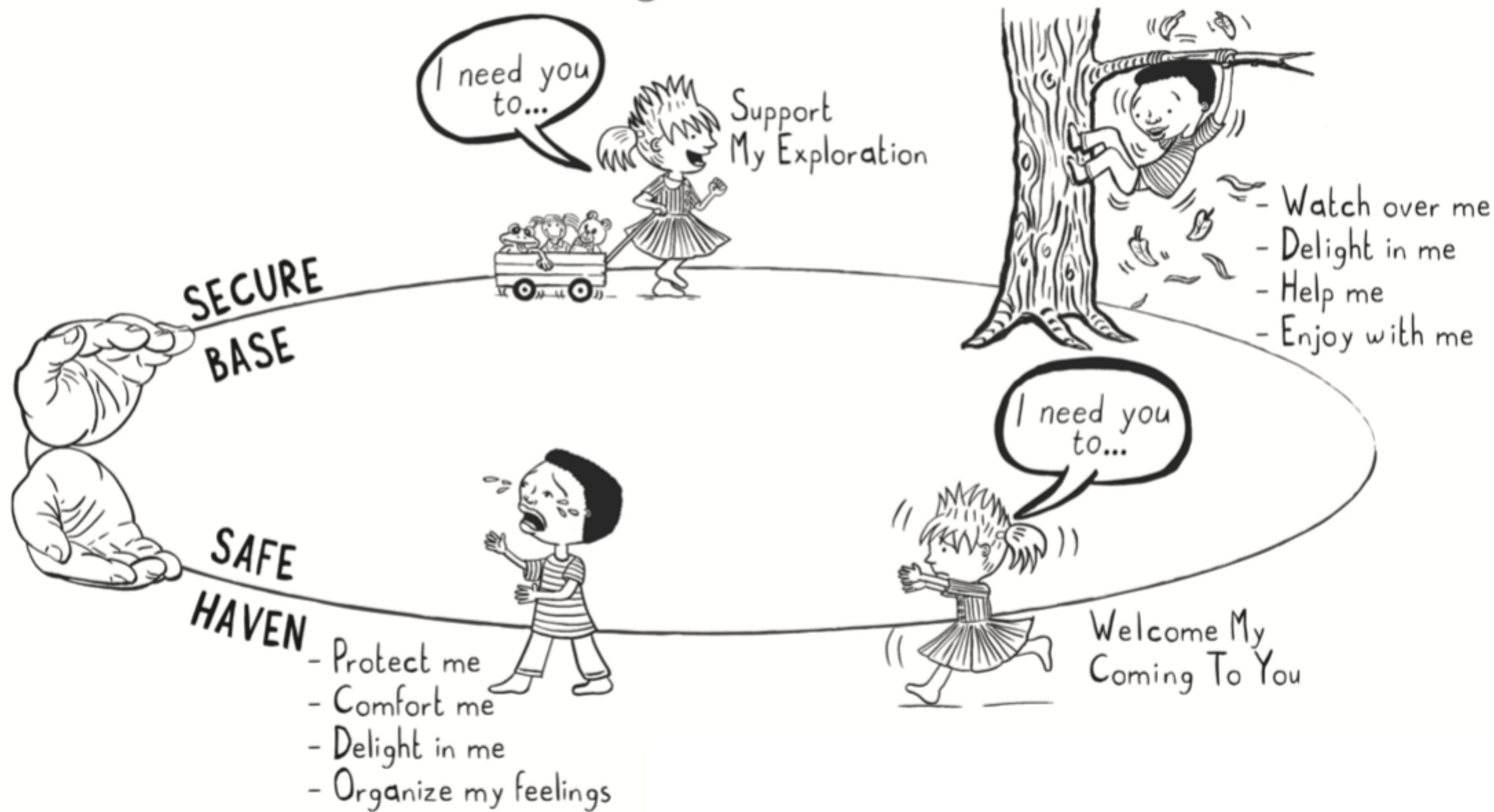
Reminder: Parents don't need to be perfect

It's okay to be good enough



One Tool: Circle of
Security Parenting

Circle of Security





Barriers to Engaging in the Circle of Security

Child's Attachment and Trauma History

Caregiver's Attachment and Trauma History

- *Shark Music*



ANGER

FEAR

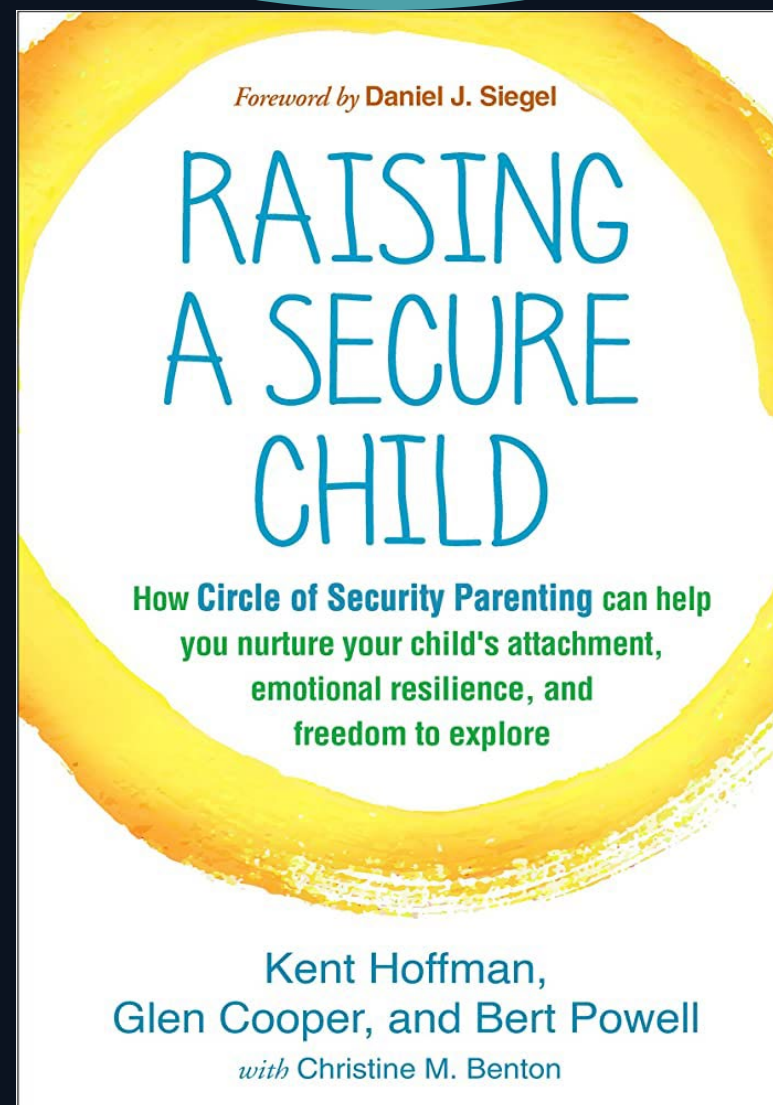


Reflection

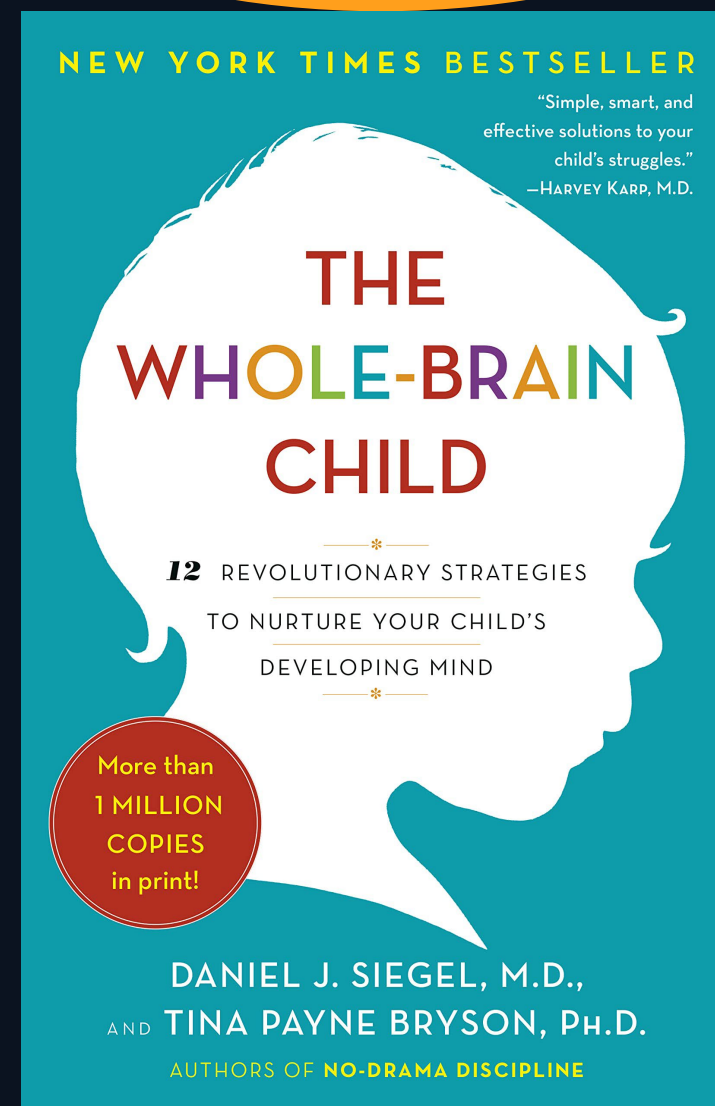
- What are your attachment experiences?
- How does your attachment history impact your CASA work?
- What sets off your shark music? i.e., What emotions did your parents struggle to help you organize?
- How does your internal working model shape your interpretations of and interactions with children and families?
- How could you use principles from the Circle of Security program or attachment theory in your work with Carmella? With families on your caseload?

Books to Learn More

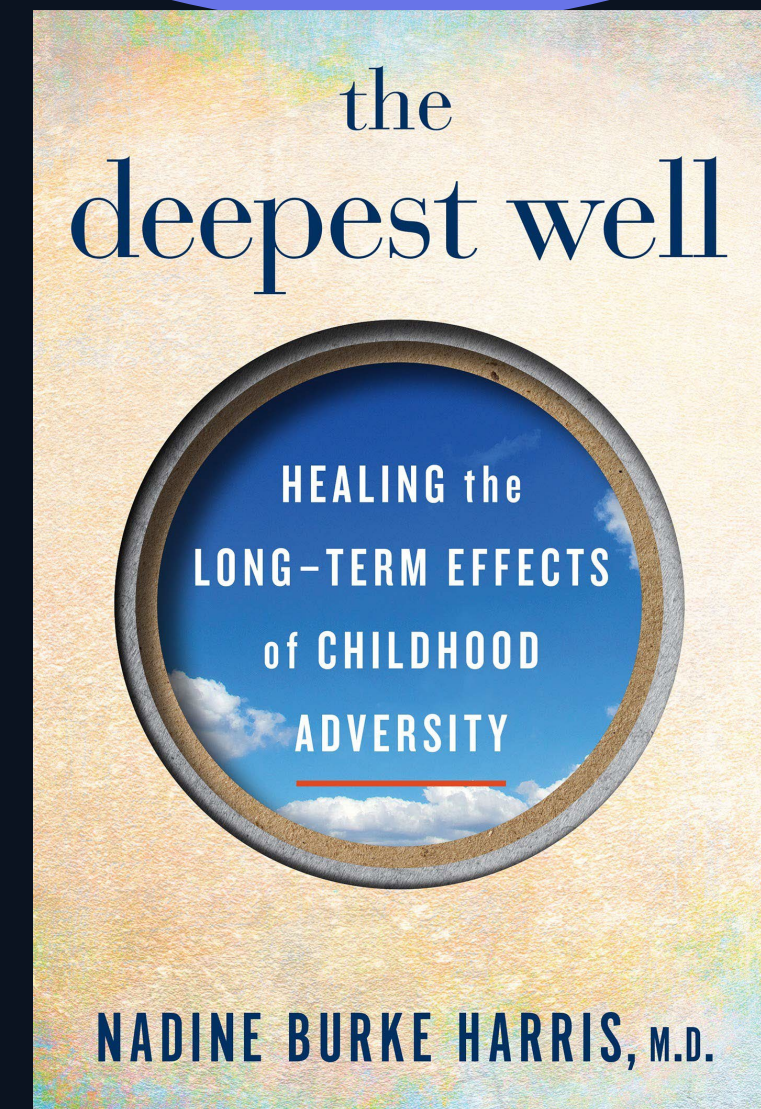
Circle of Security
Parenting



Trauma and Brain
Development in
Parenting



Understanding our
Own Trauma from
Childhood





Thank you!

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