

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC ABUSE

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BEFORE WE START – LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF TODAY:

Domestic abuse is a topic which can evoke strong emotions

Some of the material you may well find distressing and evocative of previous experiences in your own or others' lives.

Please remember that these reactions are quite natural and that it is important to take care of yourself.

If you need to please switch off your camera, mute your microphone or take a break.

Sometimes it will be necessary to talk it over with someone or to seek support. This might come from friends or family.

You may wish to contact specialist organisations offering support and information in your local area.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

The nature, extent and impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

Some good practice principles for working with children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and their non-abusing parent.



May 4th

HAPPY STAR WARS
DAY!

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!



CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

He hid her from us. He'd beaten her that badly she couldnae see out of her eyes... we sneaked in to see her. She just put her heid out the covers, she went "you need to go!" and eventually they took her away to hospital'.

I was about six and I remember my Mum coming out of the bathroom with blood pouring down her face when he broke her jaw... `.

I was seven when my Dad smashed my Mum's head against the cooker... knocked her out you see, unconscious and then left the house. My Mum ...didnae like mess and I'd get beaten up for messing things up and no' daen things right so I'm trying to clean the blood....Seven and I'm trying to clean the blood up...

INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The European Convention on Human Rights 1953;

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1990, grants all children and young people aged 17 and under a comprehensive set of rights.

Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) 2008

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (sometimes known as the Istanbul Convention) 2011;

United Nations General Assembly Resolution , ' Promotion and protection of the rights of children' 2019

WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Physical Abuse

Assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

Acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will.

Mental and emotional abuse

Threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends.

* in some communities, other family members connected to a woman through marriage may be involved in, or may participate in the abuse of the woman.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

It is **NOT** an isolated incident or a 'one-off'

It is **NOT** women's fault

It is **NOT** a fight or an argument between two people who are in an equal relationship

Fear is **NOT** just a by-product, but a central tactic used by the perpetrator.

It does **NOT** happen only in poor or working class families

It **DOES** happen to women in every country in the world

It **DOES** happen in young' people' dating relationships as well as between cohabiting and married couples.

It **IS** a pattern of surveillance and domination by one partner over the other,

It **IS** both a cause and consequence of women's inequality

DOMESTIC ABUSE: A GENDERED ANALYSIS

- ▶ arises from gender inequality and cannot be understood, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.
- ▶ precludes neither the abuse of boys and men, same sex abuse nor female perpetration of such abuse.
- ▶ can also include abuse by other family members, so-called 'honour-based' crimes and harmful practices.
- ▶ (Donaldson et al (2018), Equally Safe in Higher Education Toolkit Guidance)

Kelly's Continuum of Sexual Violence

'The concept of a continuum highlights that sexual violence exists in most women's lives, whilst the form it takes, how women define events and its impact on them at the time and over time varies.'

The continuum recognises that VAW affects women in private life, across social space and public life and can be perpetrated by men they know as well as strangers.'



THE GLOBAL EXTENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABUSE

Globally, an estimated 736 million women—almost one in three—have been subjected to intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30 per cent of women aged 15 and older)

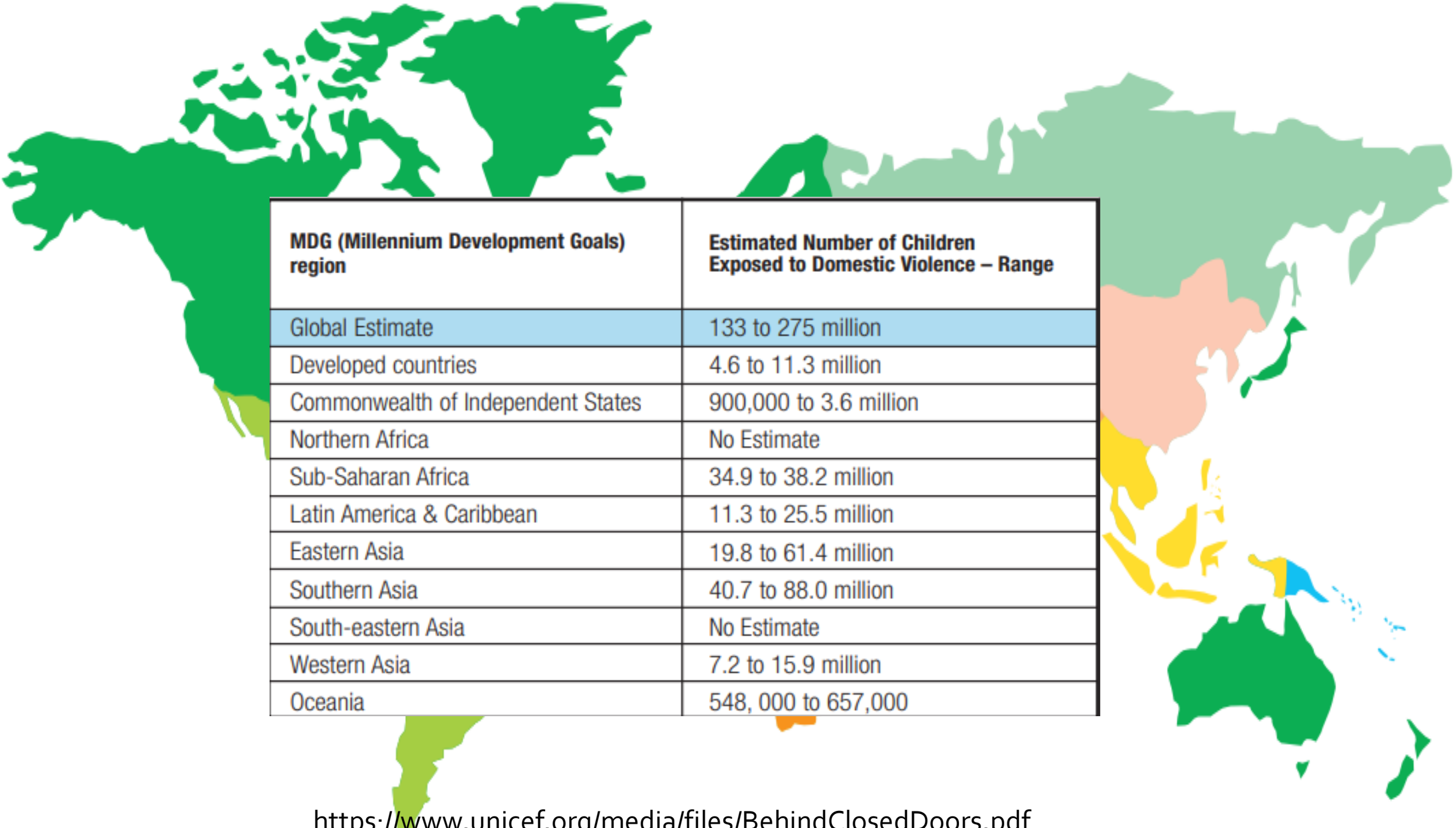
Most violence against women is perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners. More than 640 million women aged 15 and older have been subjected to intimate partner violence (26 per cent of women aged 15 and older).

In 2018, an estimated one in seven women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband in the past 12 months (13 per cent of women aged 15 to 49)

One hundred thirty-seven women are killed by a member of their family every day.

UNICEF estimates that globally between 133 – 275 million children are exposed to domestic violence.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>



MDG (Millennium Development Goals) region	Estimated Number of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence – Range
Global Estimate	133 to 275 million
Developed countries	4.6 to 11.3 million
Commonwealth of Independent States	900,000 to 3.6 million
Northern Africa	No Estimate
Sub-Saharan Africa	34.9 to 38.2 million
Latin America & Caribbean	11.3 to 25.5 million
Eastern Asia	19.8 to 61.4 million
Southern Asia	40.7 to 88.0 million
South-eastern Asia	No Estimate
Western Asia	7.2 to 15.9 million
Oceania	548, 000 to 657,000

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN SCOTLAND

One in four Scottish women experience domestic abuse.

It is one of the most common reasons for children being placed on the child protection register.

Domestic abuse is present in almost two-thirds of significant case reviews.

Domestic abuse has links to offending, homelessness, mental health and substance use.

Children living with domestic abuse are more likely to be physically or sexually abused.

Some groups of children are particularly vulnerable, for example those with learning disabilities.

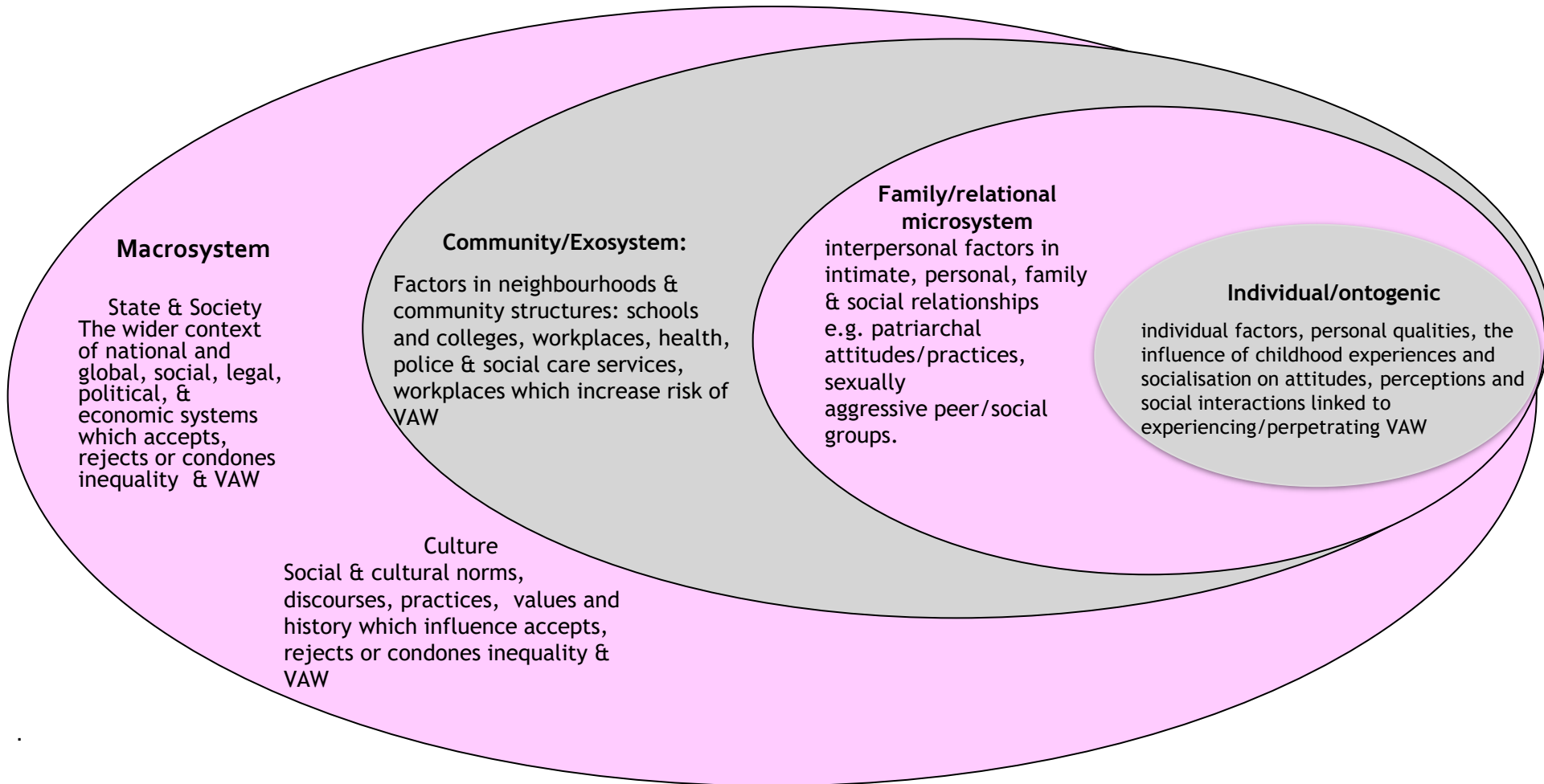
https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/Domestic%20Abuse%20and%20Child%20Welfare_o.pdf

AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL

A means of reconciling theories which attempt to explain the complex interaction of family, community and social factors which influence individual behaviour and violence causation.

(Source: U. Bronfenbrenner(1989), Ecological System Theory)

The Social Ecology of Risk: VAW & Domestic Abuse



Heise, L. L. (1998). "Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework." Violence Against Women 4(3): 262-290.

DOMESTIC ABUSE: AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE HELPS US

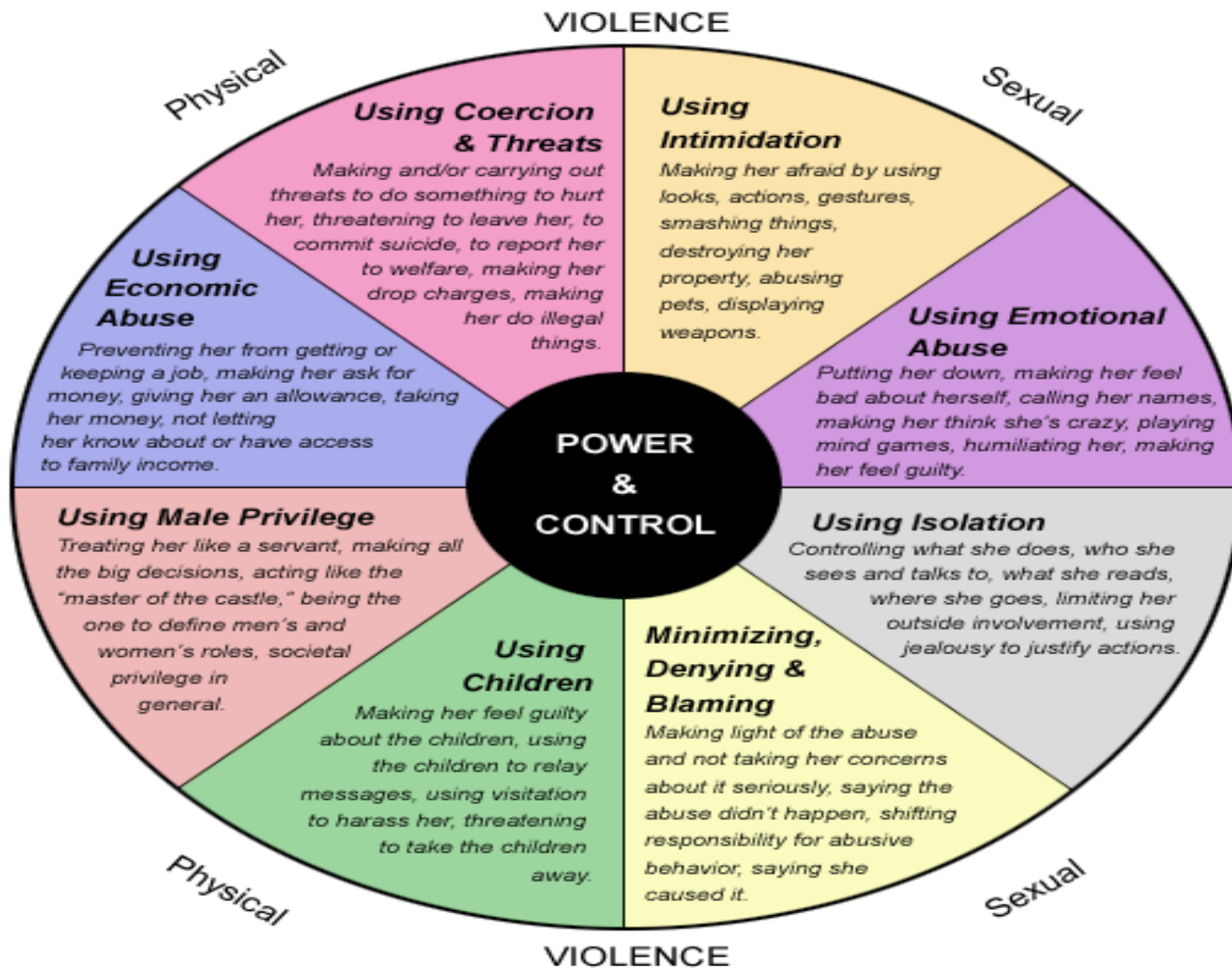
Understand why domestic abuse happens

Understand its impact on individual women, children and young people,

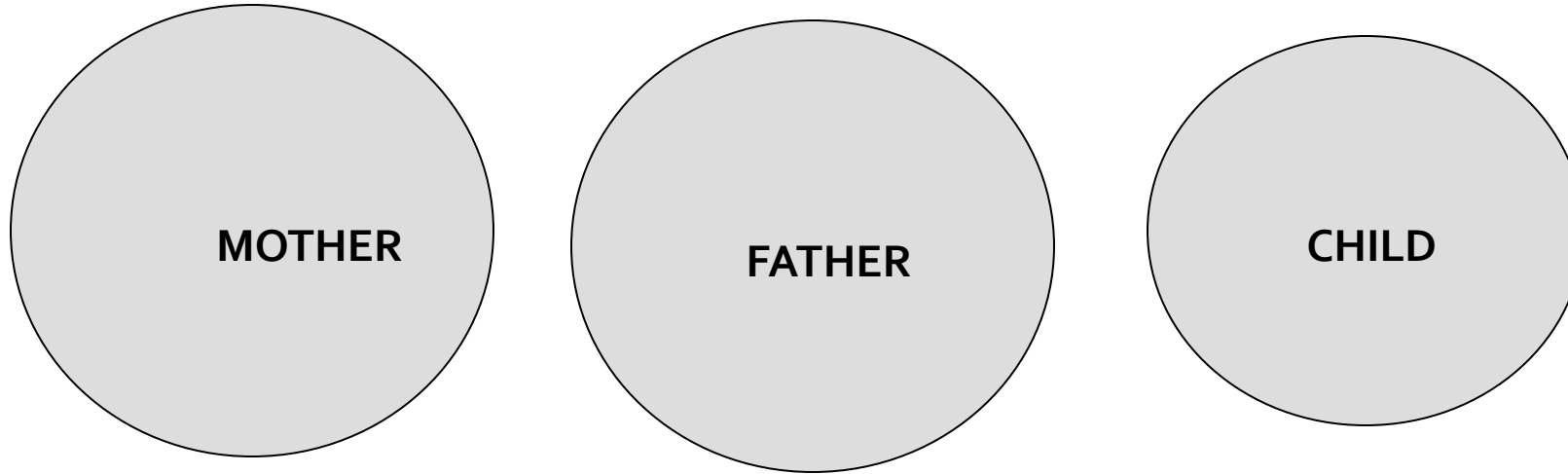
Assess risk from perpetrators

Design social and community prevention and early interventions strategies

Highlight the impact and cost to wider society of domestic abuse

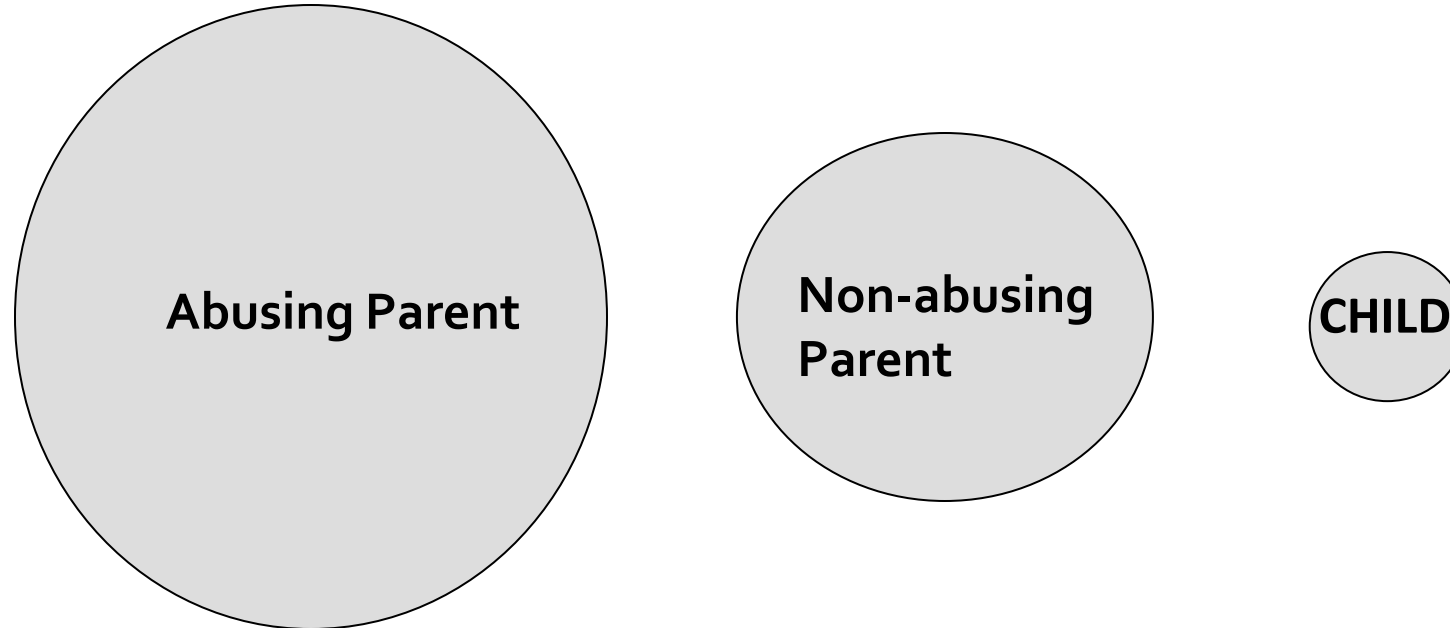


HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY IN THE FAMILY:



- Women and men's rights are equal.
- Each has the right to have their opinions and desires respected,
- Each adult entitled to a 50% say in decision-making.
- Their children's rights are somewhat smaller but substantial
- Children's voices should be heard on all issues that concern them.
- Everyone has the right to live free from verbal abuse and physical harm.

INEQUALITY WITHIN THE FAMILY: DOMESTIC ABUSE AT WORK



- The rights of non-abusing partner and any children are diminished - (many examples where all rights are removed)
- Abuser's rights are greatly inflated.
- Control extends outwith the home and across social space
- Restricts liberty and autonomy across the life span

PRIVATE INEQUALITY: UNEQUAL 'ENTITLEMENTS'

- To special status and deference
- Autonomy in decision making
- To exclusive rights and privileges that do not apply to their non-abusing partner or any children.
- To domestic and sexual services.



IN WHAT WAYS ARE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE USED IN THE ABUSE OF THEIR MOTHERS?

being pulled out of bed to watch the abuse

being made to watch

being asked to confirm that the abuse is justified

being forced to take part - hitting their mother or putting her down verbally

being blamed as the cause of the abuse

being threatened with harm to control their mother's behaviour

being abducted or held as hostage to force a reconciliation

being killed by father murder/suicide

MOTHERING THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE – THE RISKS

- Risk of exposure to threats or acts of violence towards mother
- Exposure to post-separation threats or assaults on mother
- Risk of undermining mother-child relationships
- Risk of physical or sexual abuse of the child by abuser
- Risk to children of abuser as a role model
- Risk of rigid, authoritarian parenting
- Risk of neglectful or irresponsible parenting
- Risk of psychological abuse and manipulation
- Risk of abduction
- Risk of exposure to violence in their father's new relationships.
- (Source Bancroft and Silverman (2002), Assessing risk to children from batterers)



RISK: OUTMODED ATTITUDES ABOUT WOMEN'S ROLE AS NON-ABUSING PARENT CREATES

Unrealistic expectations about what abused women are able to do in the context of domestic abuse

Underestimations of what to expect of an abusive father

SAFE CONTACT

Children and young people are affected in many ways by domestic abuse

Their mother leaving is not always the end

Children can be abused through contact with their father after the relationship has ended.

POST SEPARATION ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Father disappears all together or there is inconsistent, erratic contact

Uses children to punish or pressurise

ex- partner

Asking children for information about their mum

Children returned in a distressed state

Undermining parenting by mother

Threats to abduct, harm or kill the children

Seeking custody or increased contact

Insisting on contact then leaves them with someone else

DANGEROUS FATHERS – SMALL CHILDREN

My father was never somebody I ever felt comfortable with or could trust. He always had a sort of like terror over me'

It was as if he was punishing me even more, showing me this is what I can do to your Mum, you know. And I'd be lying there, you know, trying to stop them you know ...so...when I say trying to stop them I just remember curling up and crying I couldnae do much.

He was bad to her and it didn't allow her to be able to parent. She couldn't do anything for fear....
[Stepfather] was a binge drinker and my mother was never without a black eye. We all lived in fear of him.

I loved my dolls, he chewed all the heads off my dolls...ripped all my drawings up, destroyed everything that was in my bedroom, destroyed everything.

He battered my wee brother and the wean ran away ...and it took the polis two days tae find him....He threatened to kill the wean's rabbit. And we found him and ...he's like "Mammy don't let him kill ma rabbit".

What I think about what domestic abuse is

by B

I think it is when your dad
bosses your mum and things like
hurting her shouting and she gets scared
and so do we and i think its not right
when your dad is that kind of dad



"It was the worst part of my life, constantly being shouted at, frightened, living in fear. You never know what it is like, thinking everyday could be your last day."

Yasmin (15)

my dad is olways in a bad mood with us



"He used to say I'm going to kill you at night-time when you are all asleep.

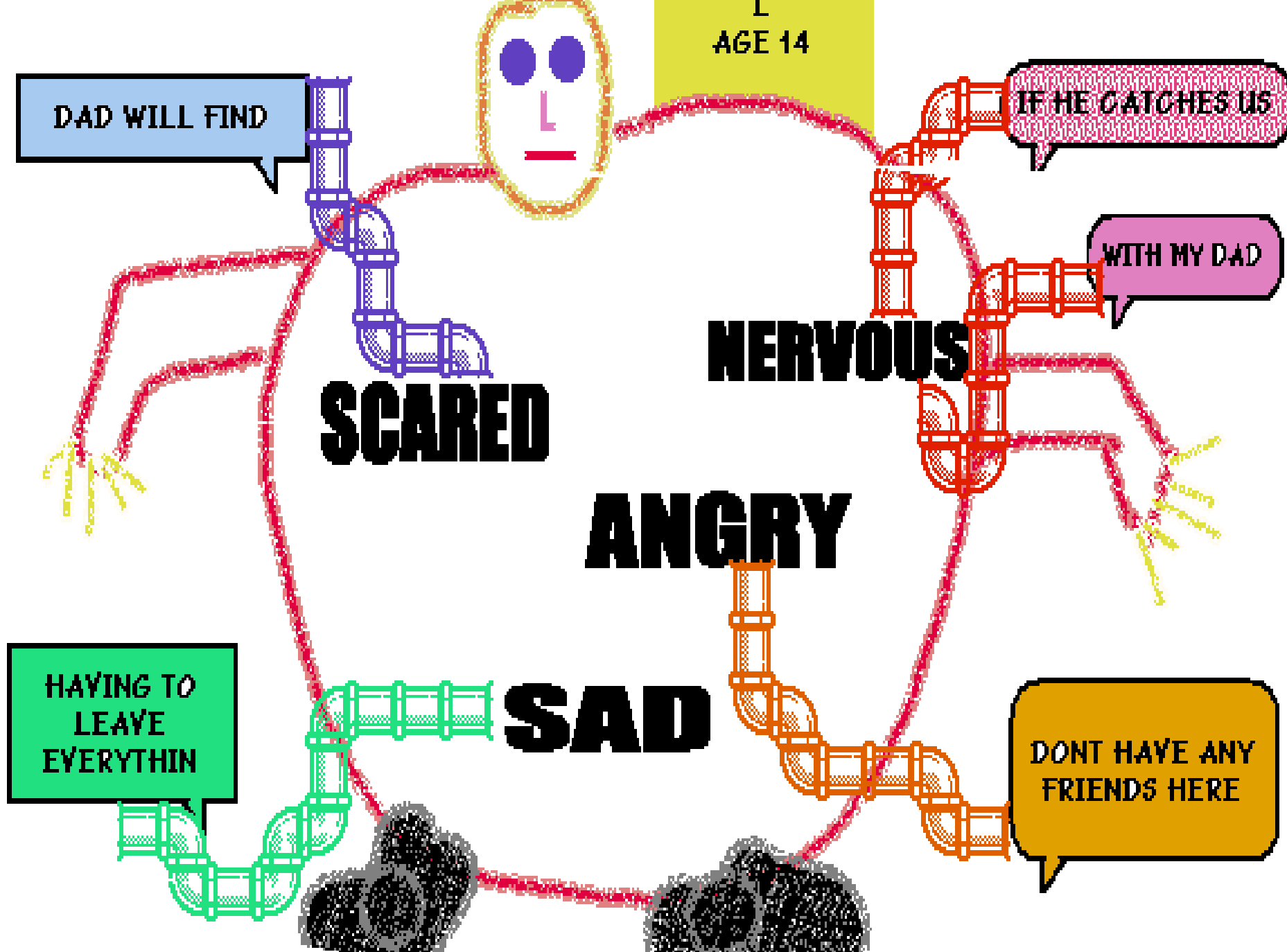
He used to come with an axe."

Mona (8)

I was scared; I would never leave the house. I felt as if he had all his freedom and we were the ones who were stuck in the house, we were the ones who were suffering.

I didn't tell anyone...I told my mum everything.

Lisa (12)



IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Children living with domestic abuse have much higher rates of depression and anxiety (McCloskey et al)
 - Higher rates of trauma symptoms (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky)
 - Higher rates of behavioural and cognitive problems (O'Keefe)
-than children and young people not living with these issues.

Hopes & Fears...the building blocks of Domestic Abuse

Stop eating	Truant	Try not to sleep	Run away	Make fuss	Keep mouth shut
Tread on eggshells	Become Withdrawn clingy	Disrupt the class	Poor concentration	Cry easily	Tell lies
What if he kills her?	If it goes on Like this she'll die	I need to stop us getting it	I don't want this to happen	What did I do?	I'm jealous I want to go too
I'll kill him	I'll get him back	Stop it	Why does he do this?	How will I face my pals?	What will I say happened?
embarrassed	scared	humiliated	Feeling dead	anxious	fear
terror	trapped	shock	rejection	worried	guilty

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Research shows little difference between witnessing domestic abuse and experiencing domestic abuse directly.

Children are affected whether or not they actually witness domestic abuse

They don't have to be in the same room or even in the house to be affected

Children can be traumatised by their experiences of domestic abuse

HOW DOMESTIC ABUSE AFFECTS A MUM'S ATTACHMENT TO HER CHILD

The effects of domestic abuse in all its forms can significantly undermine women's relationships with their children

- Anxiety and depression affect ability to care for children
- Being preoccupied with trying to control domestic environment and being forced to put partner's needs before the children's
- Long or short term disability
- Belittling and insulting her in front of her children
- Sexual abuse and assaults being carried out in front of the children
- How a pregnant mother feels about her baby may be negatively affected

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Type 1 trauma: Single unanticipated traumatic event
e.g. car accident, single assault, natural disaster

Type 2 trauma: Repeated exposure to extreme external
events; domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, neglect

trauma is never-ending

Victims protect themselves psychologically

Denial, repression, dissociation, traumatic bonding,
aggression against self and/or others

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND TYPE II TRAUMA

Domestic abuse creates the conditions for the development of Type 2 trauma

The impact of living with domestic abuse is traumatic for those experiencing or witnessing the abuse

TRAUMATIC BONDING

Can affect healthy attachment to the non abusing parent

Is disorganised attachment

Is a survival mechanism

Maintains loyalty to the abuser

Is not rational

Regards anyone intervening as a threat i.e. YOU

Alternates favours with threats and abuse

Gives power of life and death to the abuser

IMPACT OF TRAUMA

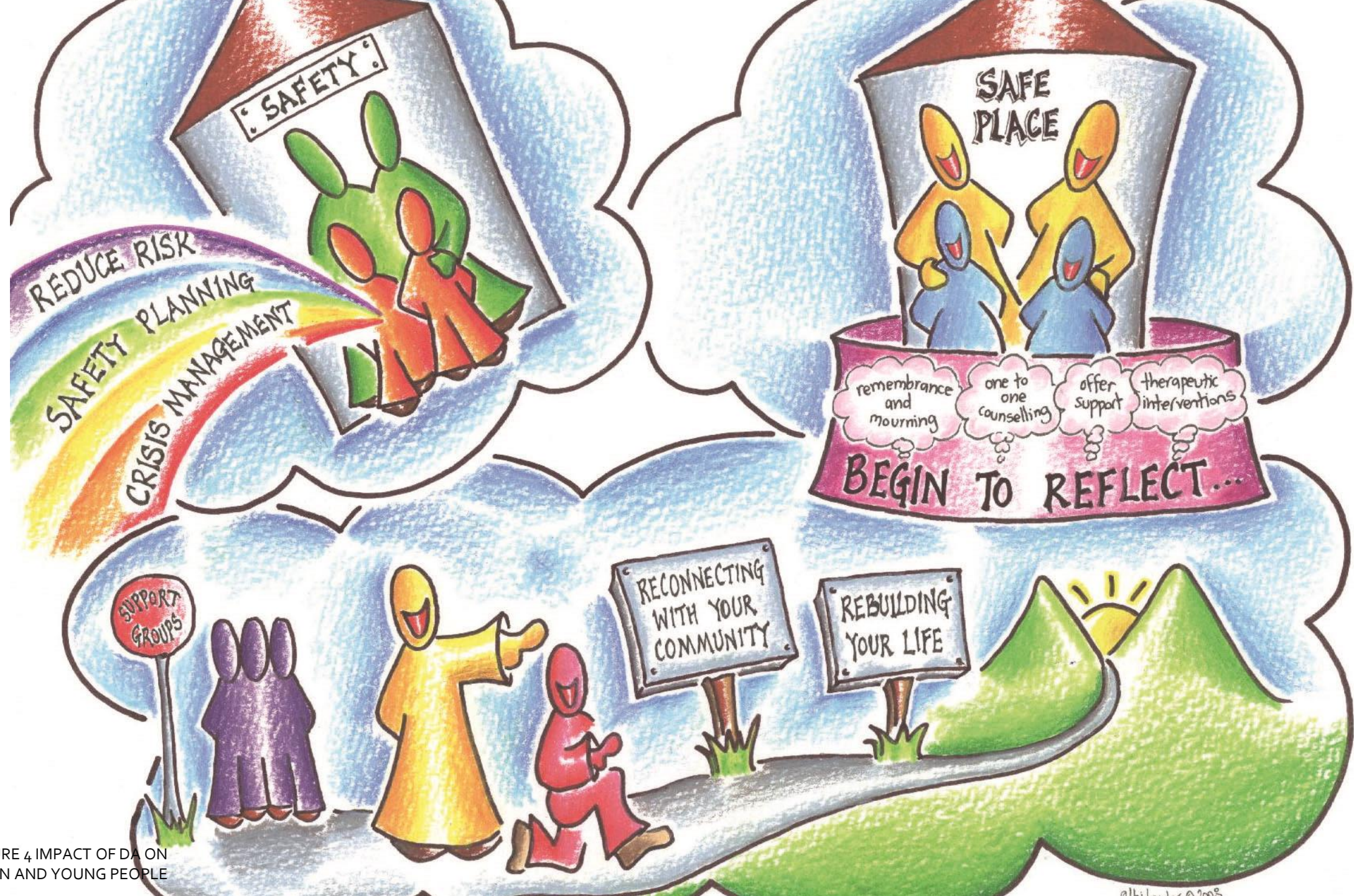
Shatters your view that the world is safe

Creates guilt and shame

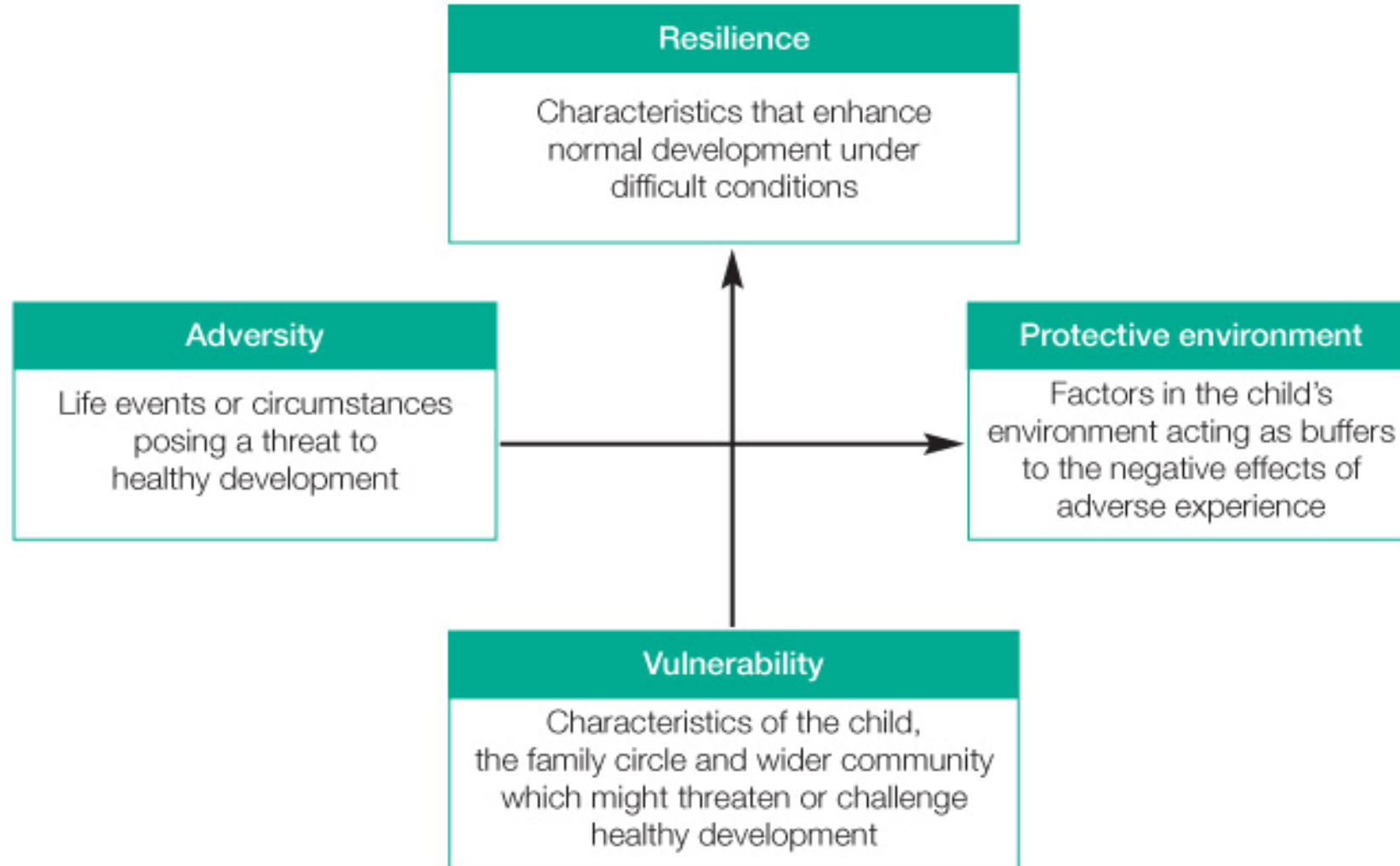
You take responsibility and blame yourself

You do all this to help maintain your view that the world is still safe

You are afraid to tell anyone because of the guilt



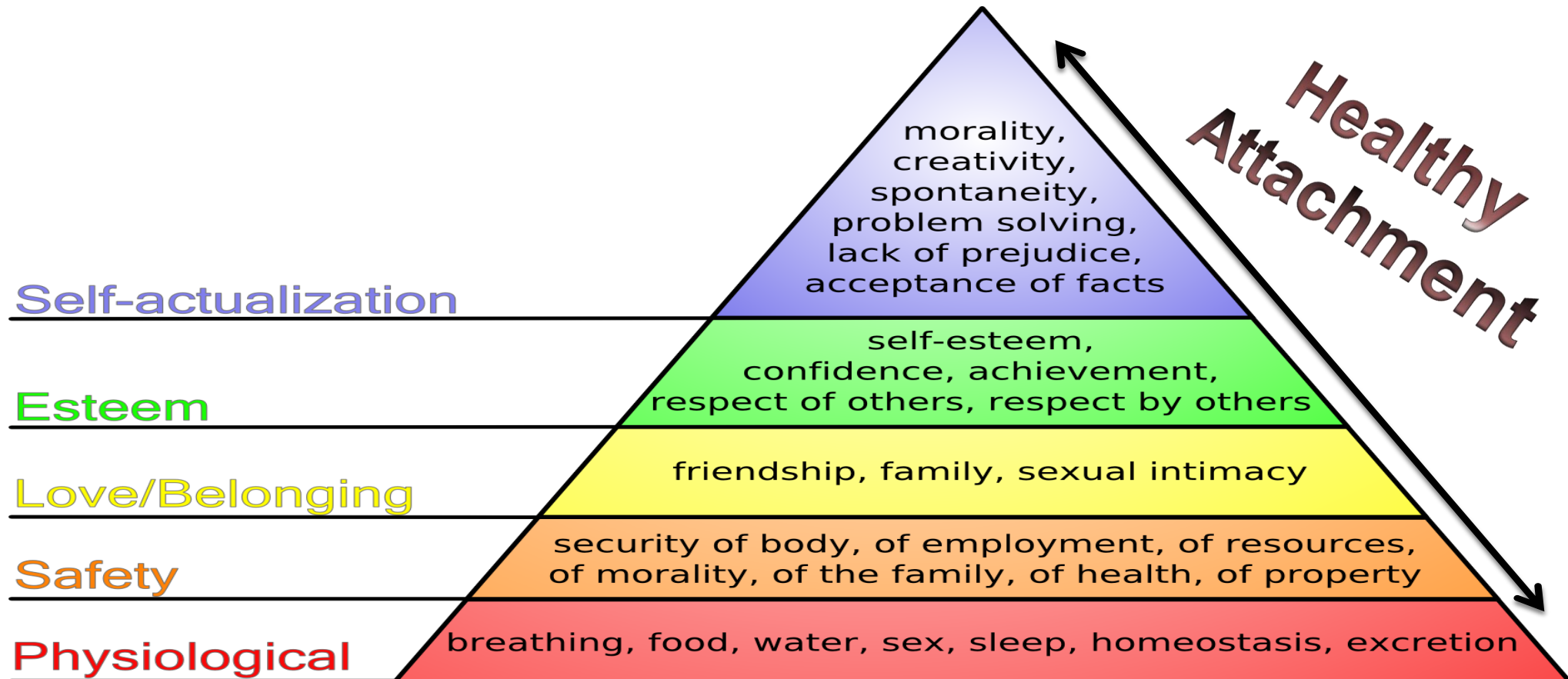
RESILIENCE MATRIX



Adapted from Daniel, B., Wassell, S. and Gilligan, R. (1999) *Child Development for Child Care and Protection Workers*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd., London and Philadelphia and Daniel, B. and Wassell, S. (2002) *Assessing and Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd., London and Philadelphia.
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What children need most...

- A strong bond with their non-abusing parent
- Safety in their home and environment



WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO RECOVER

Sense of physical and emotional safety in their current surroundings

Structure, limits and predictability

A strong bond with the non-abusing parent

Not to feel responsible for taking care of adults

Strong bond to their siblings

GOOD PRACTICE

Domestic abuse involves both an adult and a child victim.

The impact of domestic abuse on a child should be understood as a consequence of the perpetrator choosing to abuse rather than of the non-abusing parent's/carer's failure to protect.

Every effort should be made to work with the non-abusing parent/carer to ensure adequate and appropriate support and protection is in place to enable them to make choices that are safe for them and the child.

At the same time, staff should be maintaining a focus on the perpetrator and monitoring any risk resulting from ongoing abuse.

PERPETRATOR PATTERN – BASED APPROACH TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN

Domestic violence perpetrators, in the context of the child welfare system, are parents and/or caregivers who engage in a pattern of abuse/coercive control against one or more intimate partners. This pattern of behaviour may continue after the end of a relationship, or when the couple no longer lives together. The perpetrator's actions often directly involve, target and impact any children in the family.

Domestic abuse is a parenting choice.

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<https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/>

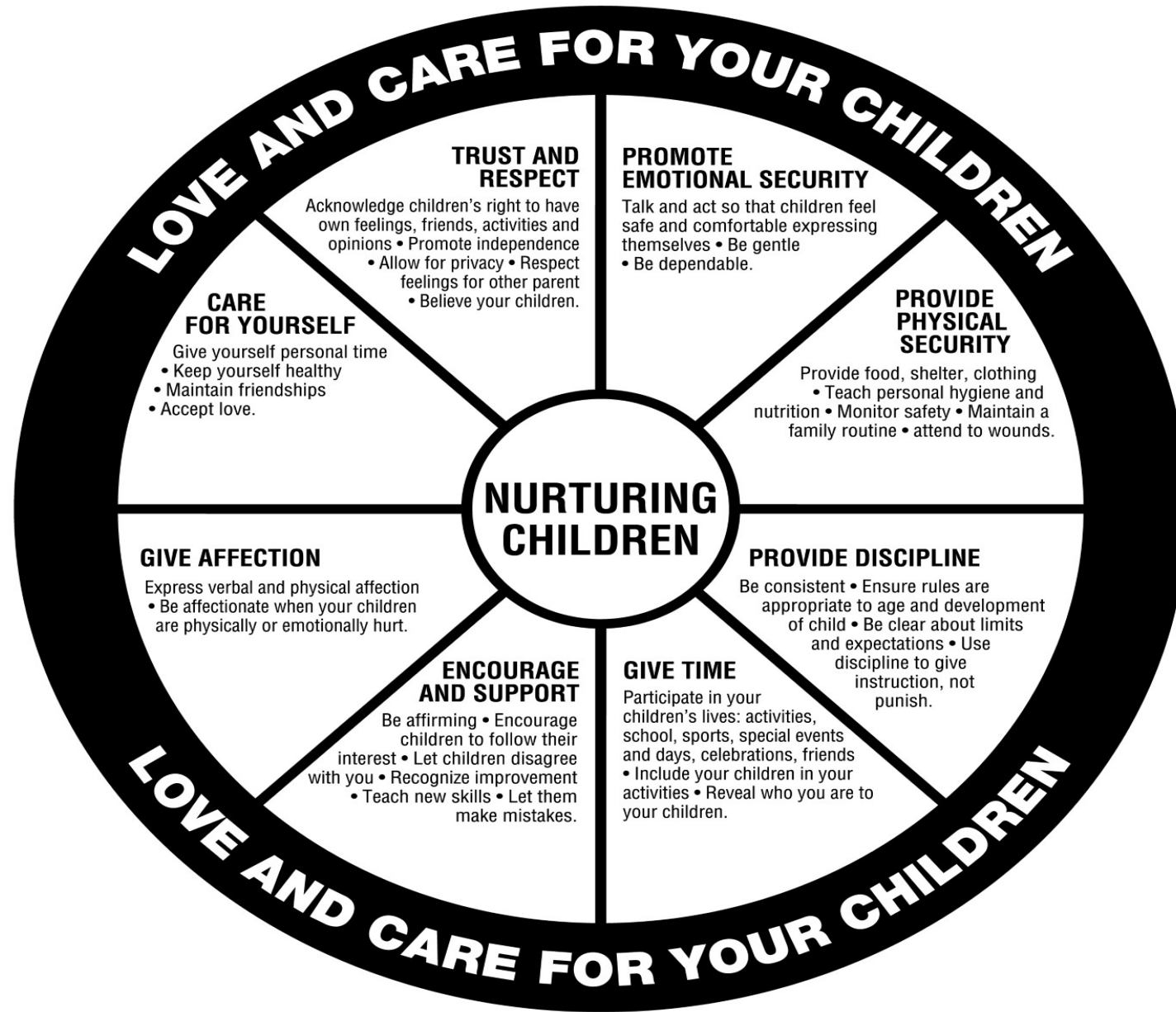
KEY MESSAGES FOR WORKERS:

- Give children the chance to express their feelings.
- Talk about safety
- Give extra support and reassurance.
- Spend time with them.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Be a good role model for handling conflict
- Help them control their behaviour
- Get help with problems.
- Don't tell children not to be angry but how to be angry
- Remember that children and young people learn more from **HOW** you behave than from how you tell them to behave

COORDINATING COMMUNITY RESPONSES

- Partnership working and coordination
- Information sharing:
- Third sector, health, social work, police, courts
- Specialist domestic abuse/violence against women sector

Keep women and children's safety at the heart of your interventions.



THANK YOU!

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