

A gravel path leads from the foreground towards a stone wall and a building in the background. The path is marked with a yellow line on the left and the words "SANTIAPO" are painted in white on the gravel. The text "Trust The Path: Healing Ourselves to Lead Others" is overlaid in large white letters.

# **“Trust The Path: Healing Ourselves to Lead Others”**

**Dr. Dawn Emerick**





# The Forming







# The Norming





# The Deconstruction







# The Rebuilding





**Trauma is a fact of life. It is inescapable.**

About **70% of adults in the U.S.** have experienced at least one traumatic event in their lives





**Developmental trauma is often more damaging than one-time events.**

Repeated relational trauma (such as neglect or emotional abuse in childhood) has **deeper impacts on brain development and emotional regulation than isolated traumatic events.**





**Trauma literally reshapes both body and brain.**

**The amygdala becomes **hyperactive**, the prefrontal cortex **shuts down**, and the hippocampus **shrinks**—leading to long-term challenges in emotional regulation, memory, and decision-making.**





**Being traumatized means continuing to organize your life as if the trauma were still going on.**

This shows up in our workplaces—through **hypervigilance**, disassociation, **conflict avoidance**, **burnout**, perfectionism, and control issues.





# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

The seminal **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)** study links childhood trauma to lifelong mental health issues—such as poor stress regulation and aggression—which can **manifest as being loud, critical, or blaming in work settings**







# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

**Trauma Effect:** **Feeling Unsafe or Powerless**

Many trauma survivors, shaped by emotionally unsafe childhoods, may seek control in adulthood—often talking over others, dominating agendas, or rejecting feedback—believing it's the only way to avoid humiliation or being ignored.

**Behavior:** Talking over others, trying to control agendas, **rejecting feedback.**

**Underlying belief:** “If I don’t take control, I’ll be humiliated or ignored.”







# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

**Trauma Effect:** **Fear of Abandonment / Rejection**

People with attachment trauma may fear abandonment, leading them to **dominate or undermine others** in meetings to feel secure or important.

**Behavior:** Constant interruptions, spotlight-seeking, undermining colleagues.

**Root cause:** Early experiences of emotional neglect or conditional love.







# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

Trauma Effect: **Shame → Blame**

People who carry deep shame from childhood often **can't tolerate feeling "wrong" or "not good enough."** To protect their fragile self-image, they shift blame to others

**Behavior:** Pointing fingers, scapegoating, deflecting responsibility

**Trauma root:** Criticized harshly or punished unfairly as children.







# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

**Trauma Effect: Hypervigilance and Emotional Reactivity**

Those with childhood trauma often live in chronic fight-or-flight, where even minor disagreements in meetings **can trigger loud or defensive reactions.**

**Behavior:** Explosive reactions to criticism, overreacting to dissent

**Why:** Their nervous system is conditioned to perceive danger where none exists.







# How Childhood Trauma Shapes Adult Behavior at Work

Trauma Effect: **Low Self-Worth Hidden by Grandiosity**

If someone's worth was undermined in childhood, they may create a false self to mask vulnerability often appearing as arrogance or a need to be the **“smartest in the room.”**



**Behavior:** Dismissing others, always needing to be right, dominating conversations.

**Psychological defense:** Protecting the wounded child inside who felt invisible or inadequate





# ACE Category Prevalence for Gen Z

(adults age 13–28)

Emotional abuse:	34.0%
Physical abuse:	23.3%
Sexual abuse:	12.6%
Witnessing intimate partner violence:	17.2%
Household substance abuse:	26.5%
Household mental illness:	17.3%
Parental separation/divorce:	28.4%
Incarcerated household member:	8.6%
Neglect overall:	~11.3%





# Trauma: Event + Experience = Effects









**JANUARY 20, 2020**





Dawn Emerick is in Big Sur, California.

January 20 · 🧑



Carmel and Big Sur are simply beautiful



👍👍👍 Tasha Williams Janice Jackson and 44 others

13 Comments

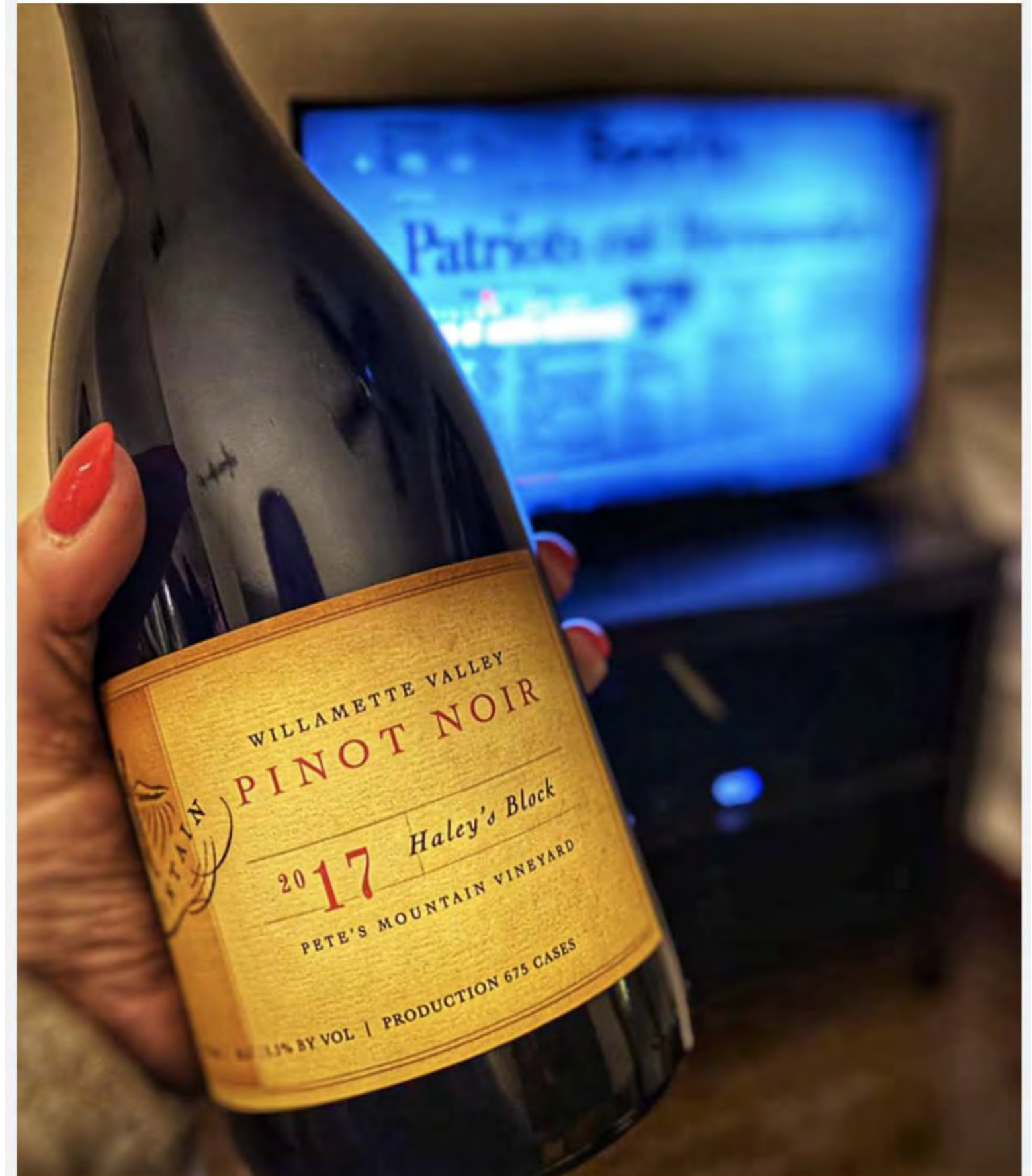


Dawn Emerick

January 23 · 🧑



What better way to honor my time in Oregon and to celebrate the first night of a new and exciting phase in my life than with a bottle of my favorite Oregon pinot noir, with my big helper [Dylan](#) [#callingmyownshots](#) [#girlboss](#) [#rising](#)





**JANUARY 27, 2020**



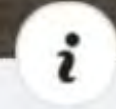


**Dawn Emerick**

February 15 · 🧑🏻‍🤝‍🧑🏻



San Antonio's welcome party just amped up a notch. The plane with evacuated passengers will land at Travis Air Force Base in California, with some passengers continuing to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. 🔥💪👏😊❤️

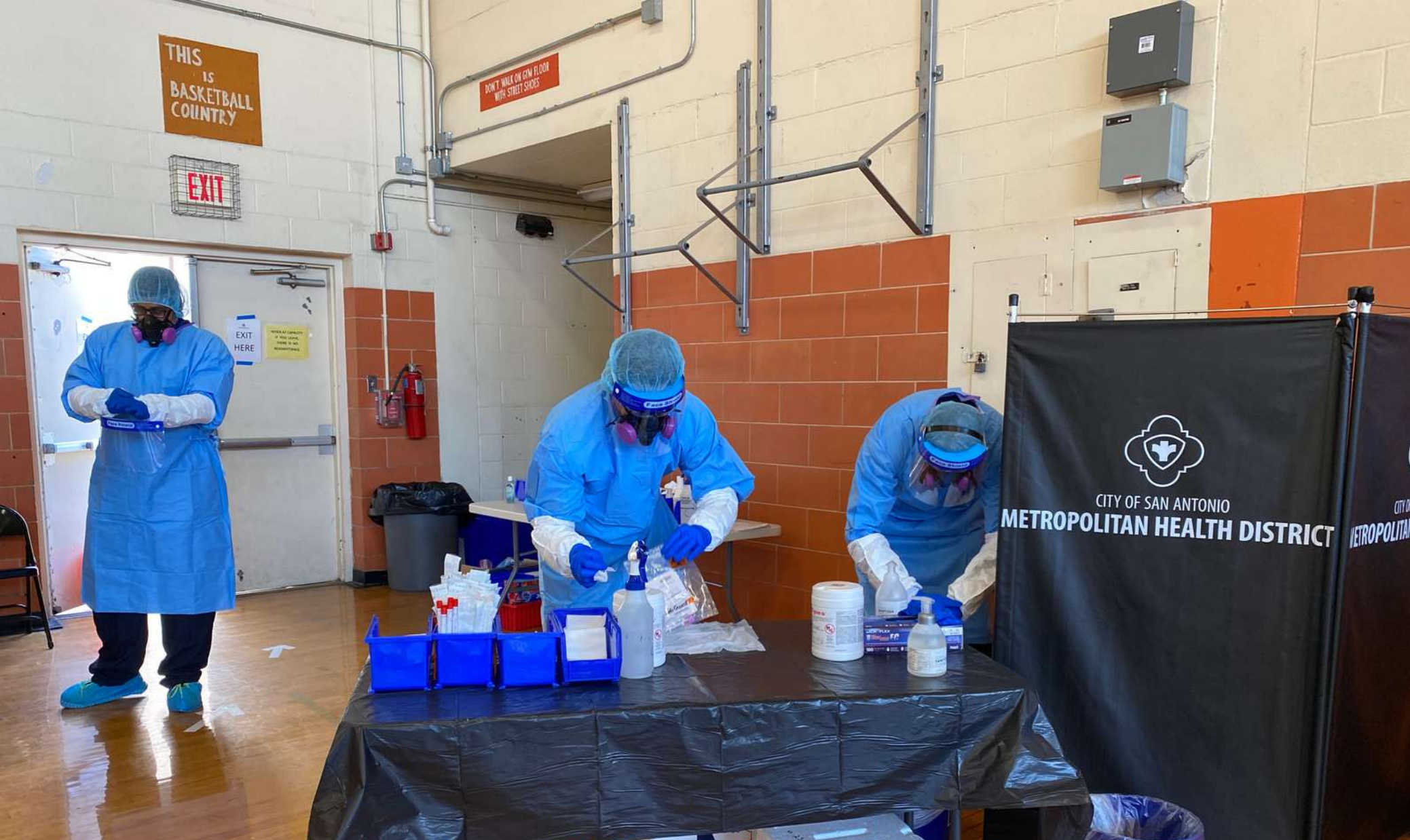


ABCNEWS.GO.COM

**US to evacuate Americans quarantined on cruise ship due to coronavirus**

Europe's first coronavirus-related death outside was reported Saturday as Americans stu...







NEWS // LOCAL

## Metro Health director came to San Antonio just ahead of the coronavirus

By **Brian Chasnoff**, Staff writer

Updated May 16, 2020 11:00 a.m.







**Dawn Emerick**

April 3 · 🧑🏻



Of course my awesome son couldn't help notice and kid about how tired I looked. ❤️  
Good interview regardless. [#pbs](#)



VIDEO.KLRN.ORG

**On the Record | April 2, 2020 | San Antonio's battle with COVID-19 | Season 3**

Dr. Dawn Emerick provides vital information about San Antonio's battle with COVID-19



Freeman  
Admin

Wrap around

Task Force  
convoing managing

Messaging } ?? Community Questions

Canvassing Prevention  
memo partners

EOC

Unified Command

State requirements  
new platform

Equity Task Force  
M4  
D of E

STRAC  
Pre  
MIA

CMD tasks  
Enk colleen



Budgets  
F120/21  
grants  
CAEE  
Rag  
GE

STAFF  
all staff etc...  
- morale  
- Professional dev

COVID-19 Health Transition Guidance

City Council Commissioner's Court  
pressure expectations directives

Transition Back to Normal  
New Normal

ITSA  
Tech innovation

COVID-19 Testing/Contact tracing Plan  
Testing  
Contact tracing  
Managing

Indicators  
M4  
STRAC

Complaints

Meto Health Leadership  
Direction  
Strategy  
Support



**Letting you unplug but  
wanted to let you know I think  
you are awesome! It's so great  
seeing a woman lead a huge  
initiative for the City and your  
energy and positive attitude  
make it fun in the midst of  
chaos!**





9 3 20



1



Replying to @DawnEmerickEdD and @BrianCCastrucci

In San Antonio, we've got our health and medical experts' backs because they have ours. And we also @MarchForScience.

7:24 PM · Jun 12, 2020 · Twitter Web App

2 Retweets 12 Likes

1

12:59

LTE

63

2 People

Text Message  
Today 12:27 PM

+1 (404) 822-6800

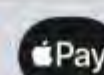
Good Morning Dr. Dawn Emerick,  
CNN's Jim Sciutto and Poppy Harlow would like to have you as a live guest via Cisco (like SKYPE) on Monday June 15th at 9:30am EST 1030am EST (830am CT or 9:30 CT) about the Spike in Covid 19 Cases in San Antonio. Please let me if this day and times works for you. The live interview will last between 5 and 7 mins.  
Thanks so much,  
Lori Daniel  
CNN

[404-822-6800](tel:404-822-6800)

Hi. Thx. Yes. Let me connect you with our PIO



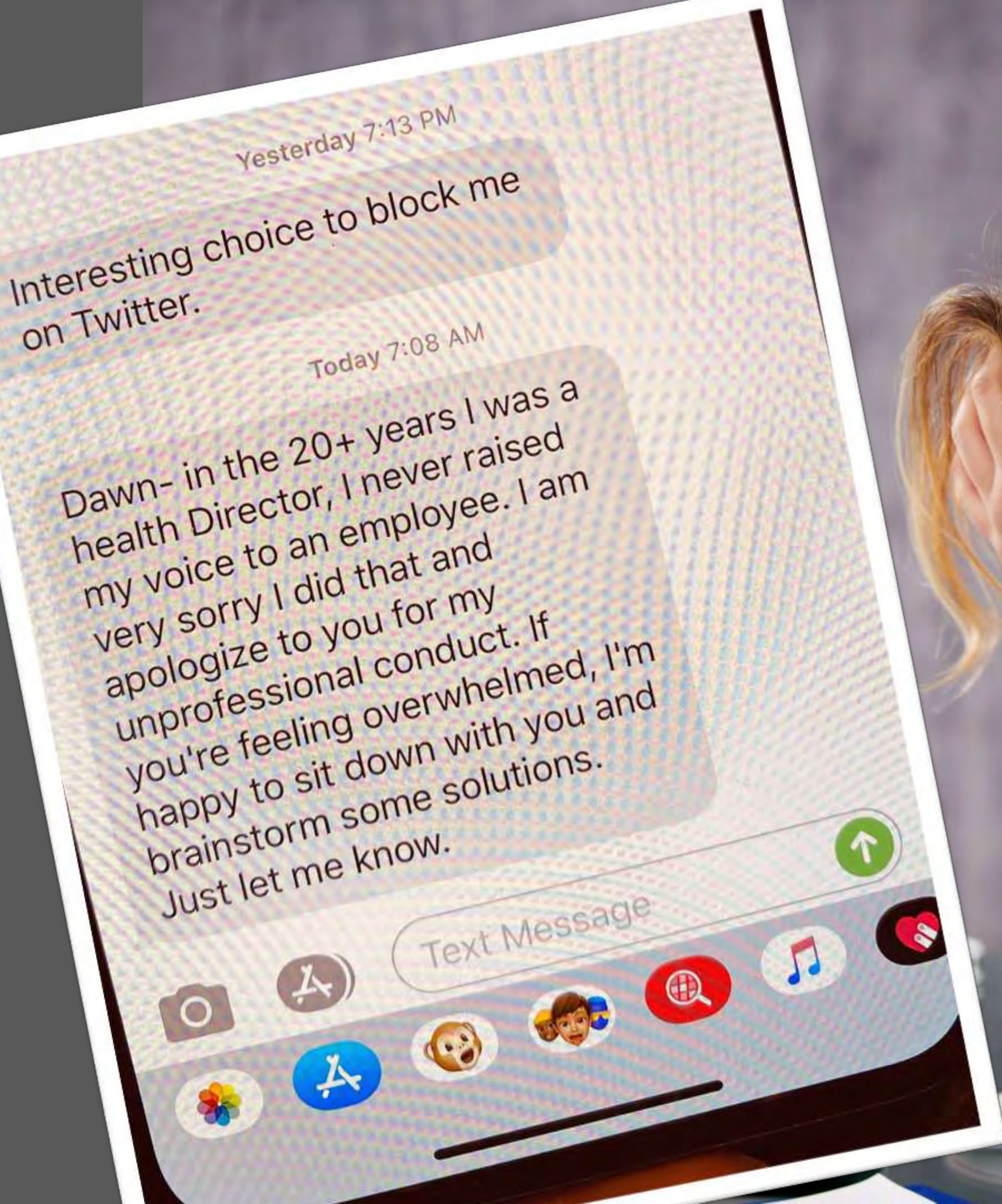
Text Message



Emerick shares and exp

number





Freeze

Fawn

Fight

Flee



**JUNE 26, 2020**



Dawn Emerick resigns as  
COVID-19 cases surge

“Emails detail feud between former  
director, assistant city manager  
before resignation”

“Emails from top officials highlight strained  
relationship that led to resignation”

“PODCAST Exclusive:  
Dawn Emerick explains resigning  
during pandemic”

“It`s against the backdrop of that worst-case  
scenario that the top health official abruptly  
resigned late last week. She`s only been on the  
job, like, five months, but she`s quitting in the  
middle of all of this. Her last day is this  
Friday” - **MSNBC`s Rachel Maddow**







February 28, 2021



February 28, 2021 at 11:22 AM

**"The despair is unimaginable and accentuates the existing gaps in my resiliency. I have started to contact those I have hurt in some way, not for me— but for them"**

**"no amount of mental health services or resilience repairing can fix the root causes of despair. These coping mechanisms only soften the pain and clouds a person's realities just long enough to give them a moment of peace and hope"**

**"I have led a good life. An inspirational one actually. A blueprint for other poor young woman. If my life were a book, I'd advise the reader to earmark chapter 26. The chapter about loving yourself"**



**October 23, 2021**





**TED<sup>x</sup>** Jacksonville





# LEADERSHIP UNCENSORED





No Status ▾



Share



uploaded

(no description)



0 Comments

File Info

Timecode ▾

Pause [K]



1x



00:08 / 00:32 ▾

1080p HD



It's quiet in here. S  
leaving th



**May 2-31, 2023**





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NCIAL



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ANTIAGO

DE



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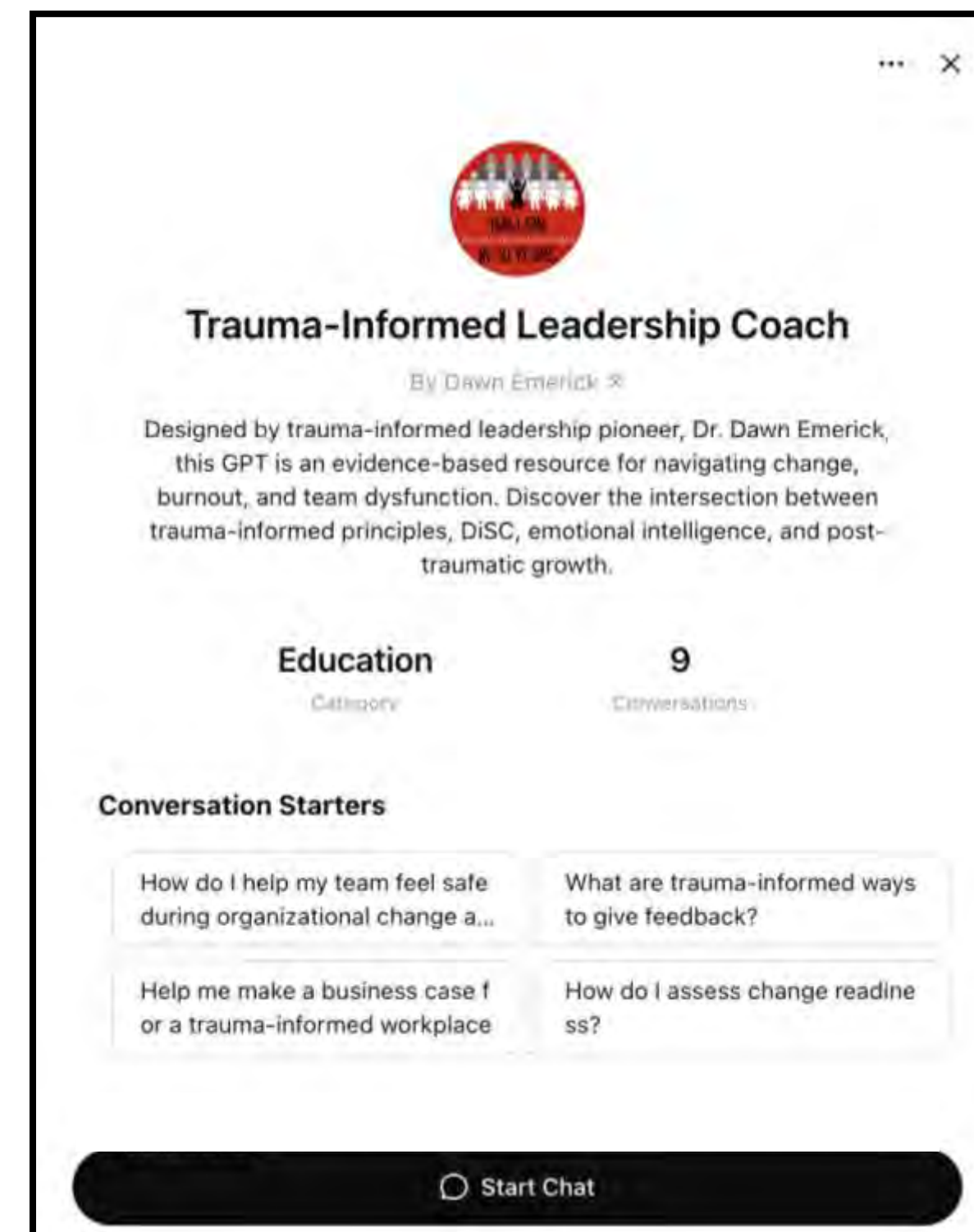
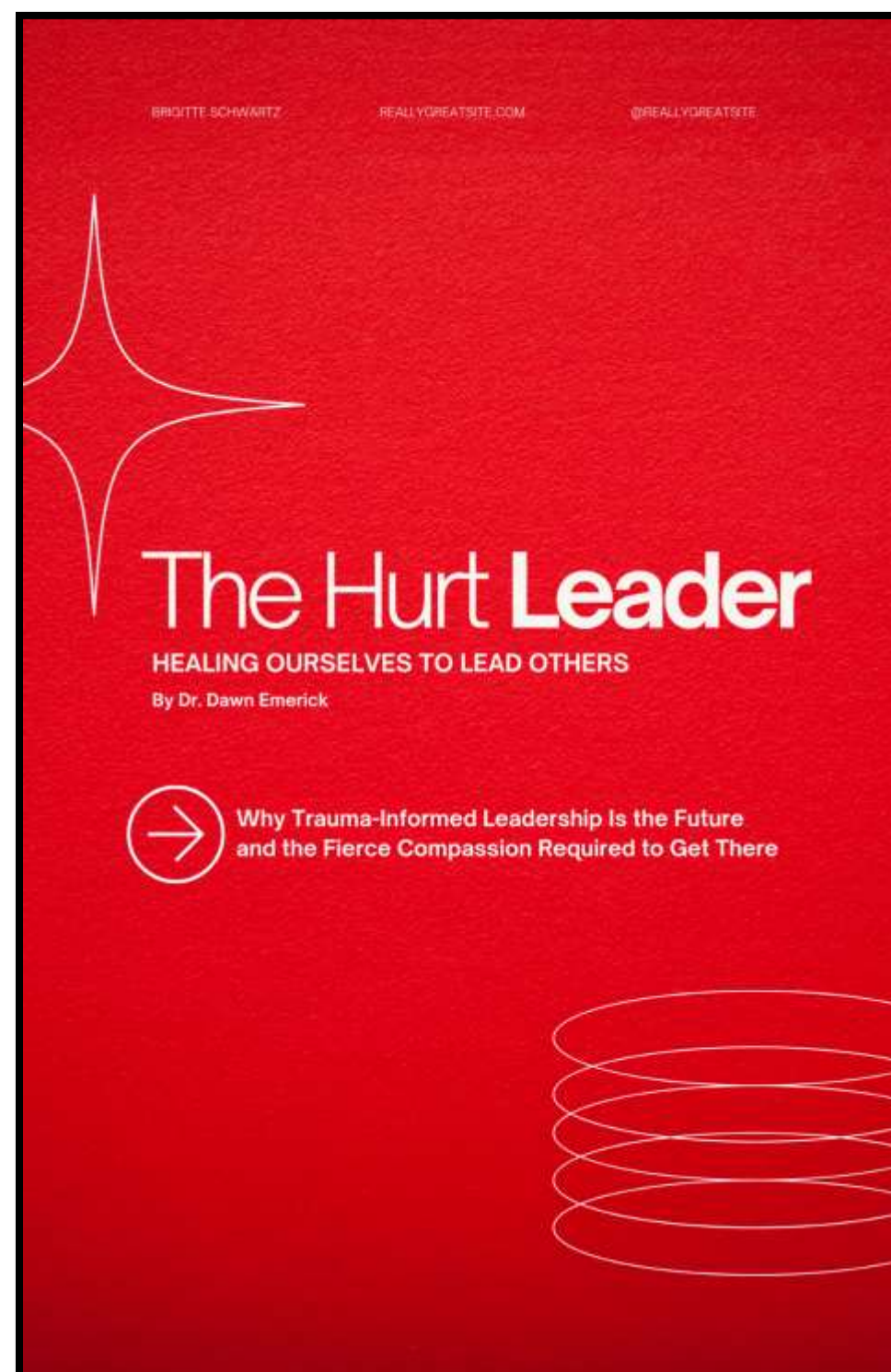






Today...







ORGANIZATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT

DO NO

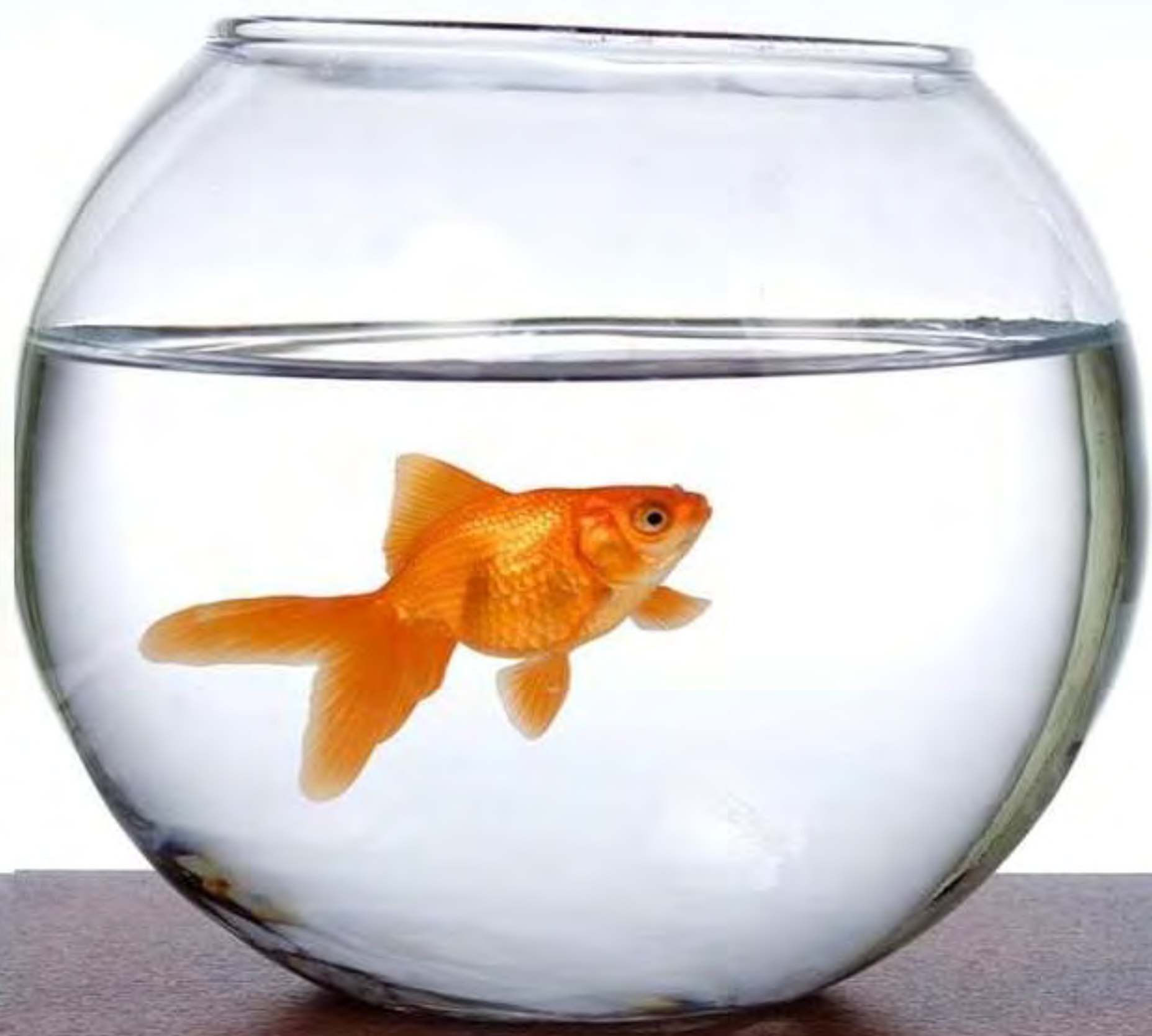
HARM



TRAUMA-INFORMED  
LEADERSHIP

TRAUMA-INFORMED  
SYSTEMS







# STYLES OF EMOTIONAL LEADERSHIP

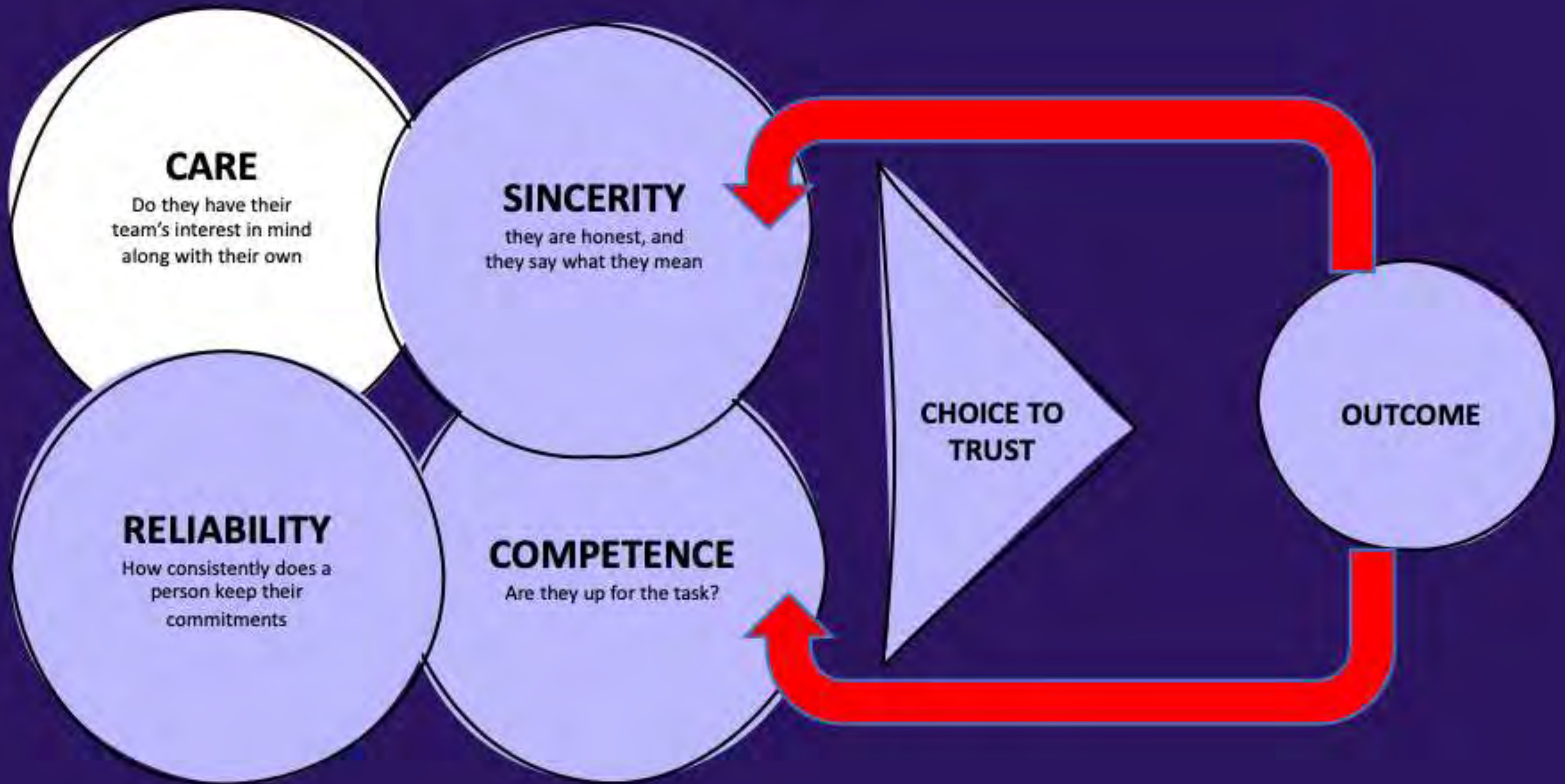


DAN GOLEMAN

DO NO  
HARM

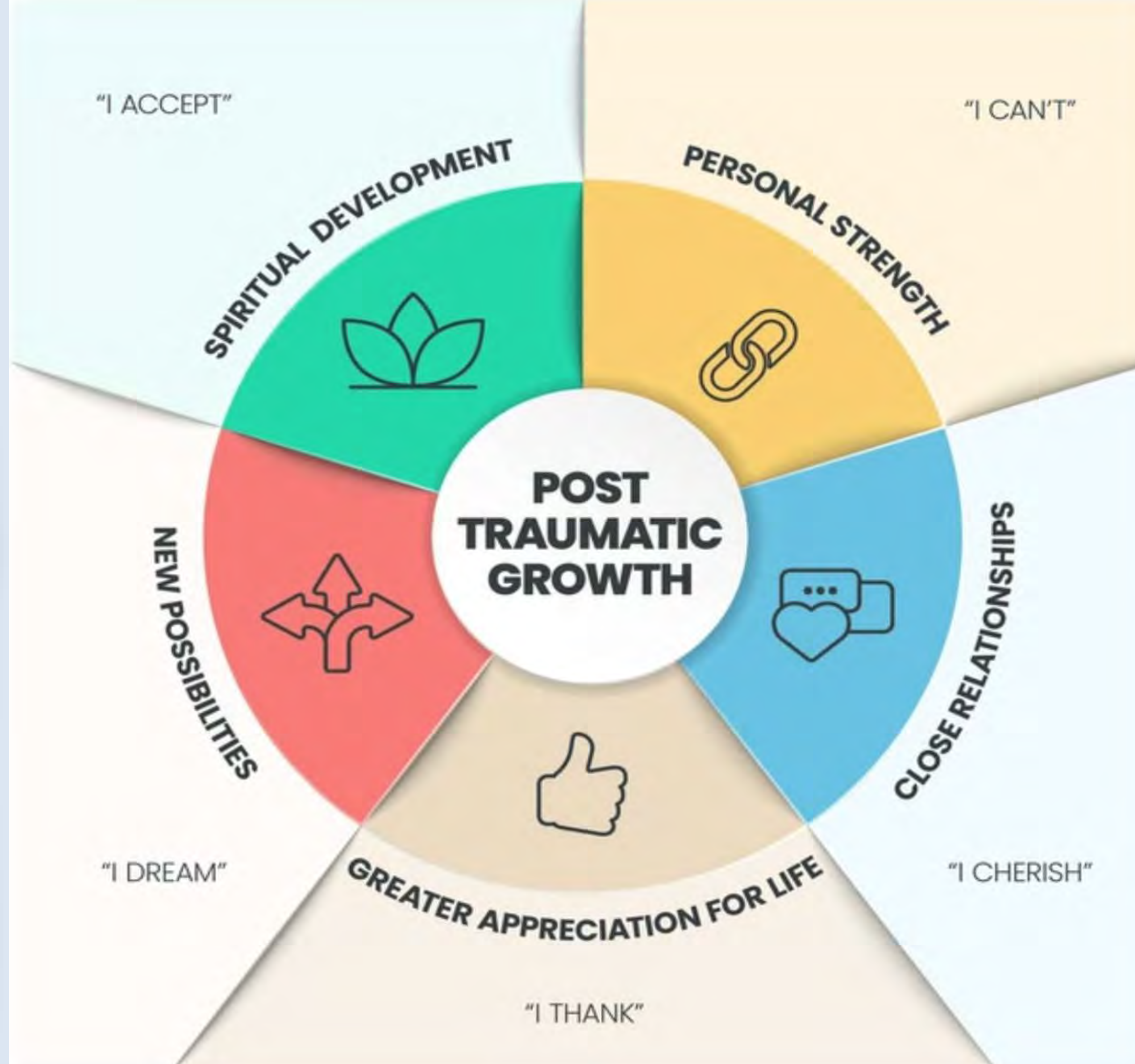


# TRUST

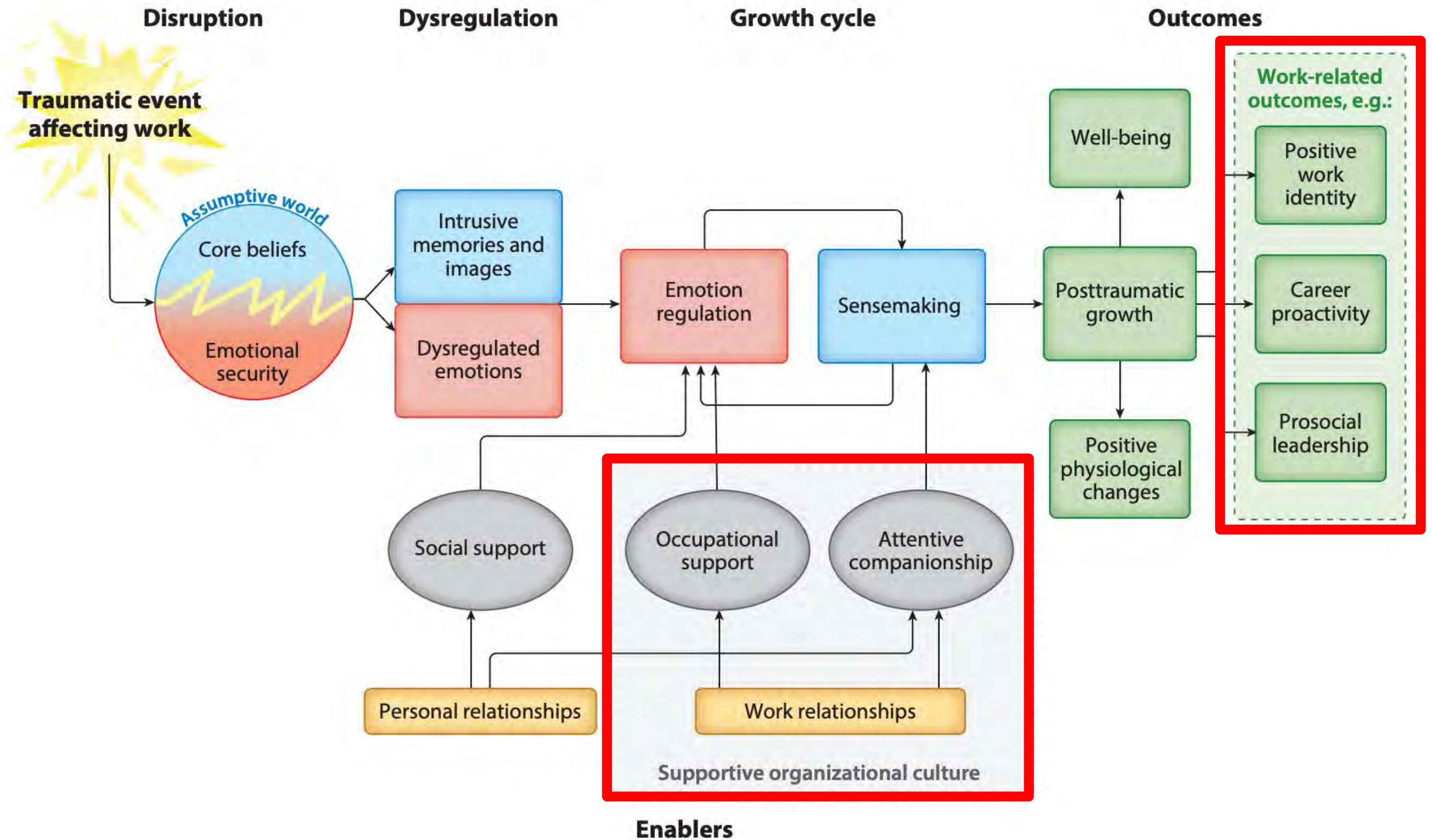




# Post Traumatic Growth

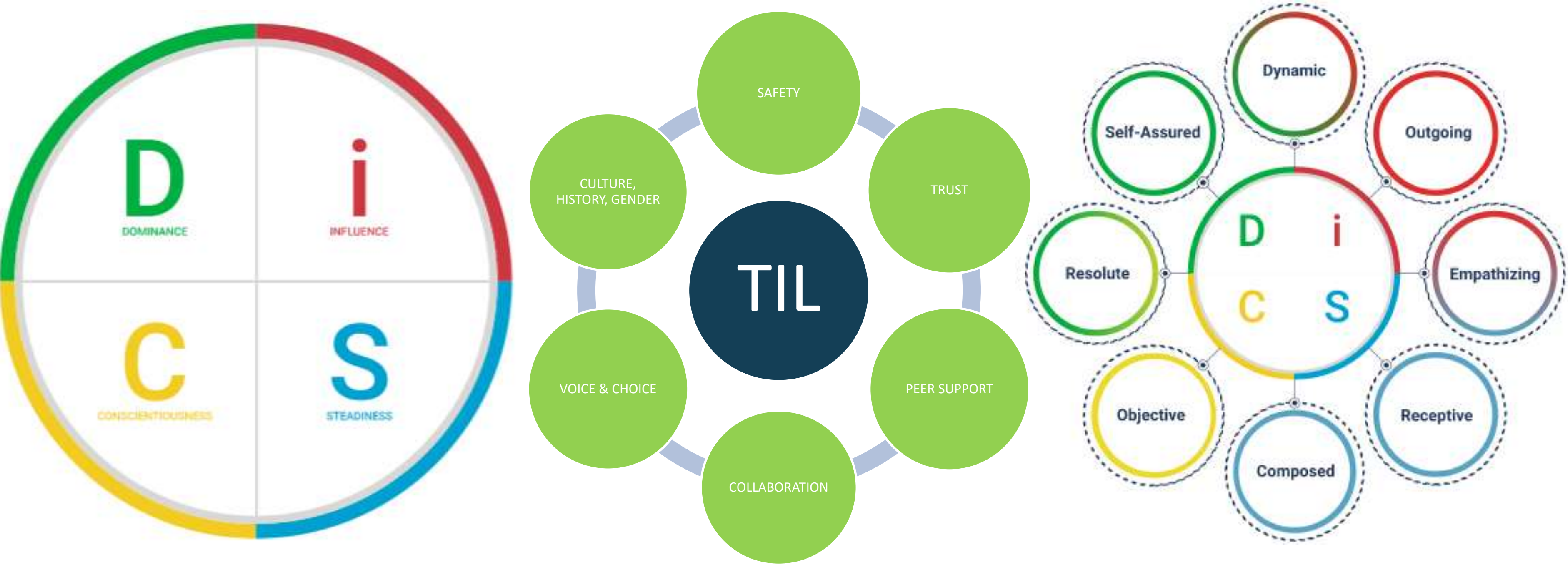




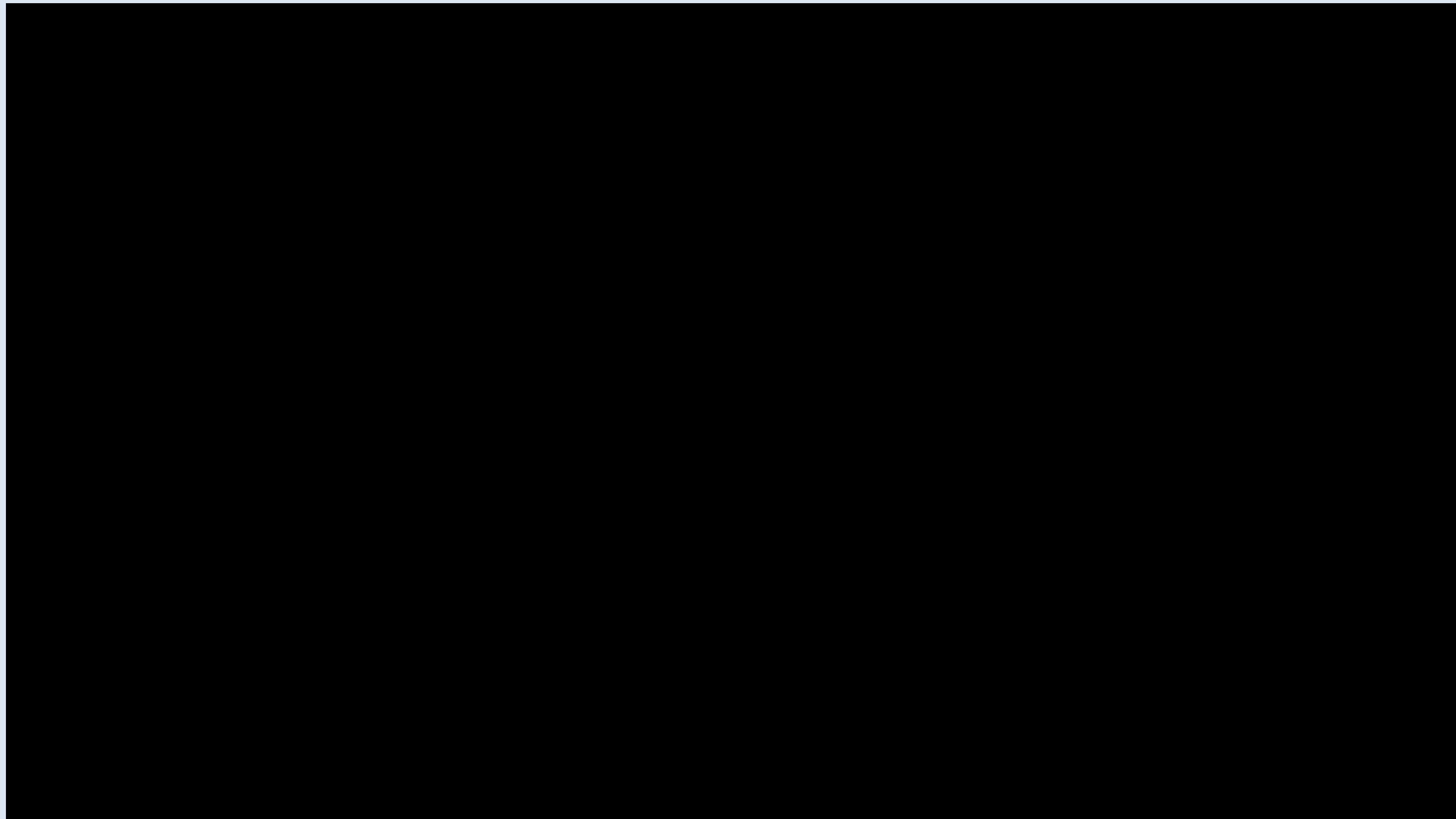




# The DiSC<sup>®</sup> Model, EQ, & Trauma-Informed Leadership Integration









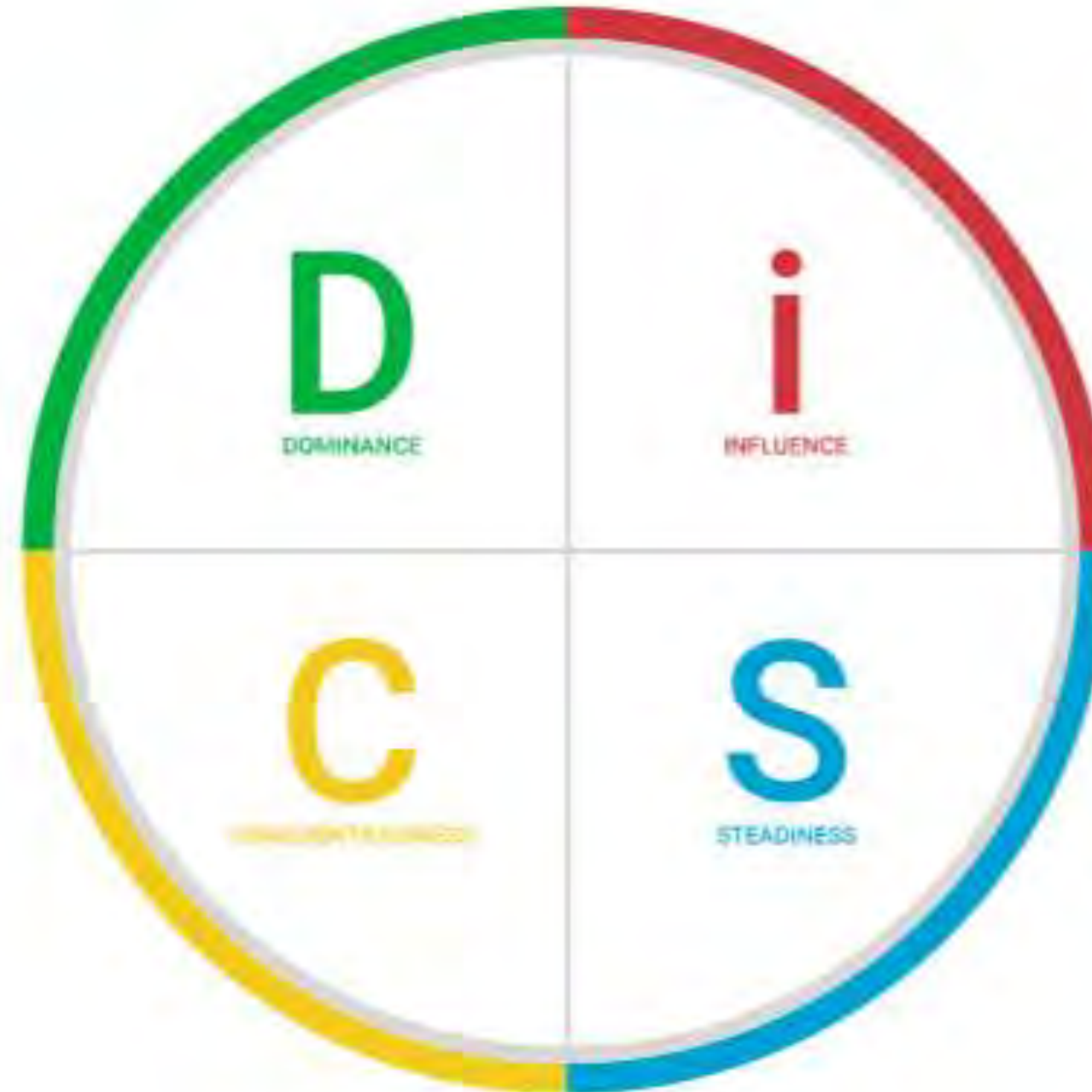
# The DiSC<sup>®</sup> Model

## DOMINANCE

- Direct
- Firm
- Strong-willed
- Forceful
- Results-oriented

## CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

- Analytical
- Reserved
- Precise
- Private
- Systematic



## INFLUENCE

- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Optimistic
- High-spirited
- Lively

## STEADINESS

- Even-tempered
- Accommodating
- Patient
- Humble
- Tactful



# 6 PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA-INFORMED LEADERSHIP





# Mindsets



**Self-Assured:** projecting confidence and taking charge

**Dynamic:** influencing others and taking action on new ideas

**Outgoing:** building up relationships and expressing unfiltered thoughts

**Empathizing:** understanding others and reaching out to be supportive

**Receptive:** keeping an open mind and considering other perspectives

**Composed:** remaining calm and diplomatic

**Objective:** thinking rationally and clearly

**Resolute:** resisting pressure to cave in



# The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and ACEs

EI COMPETENCY	IMPACT OF ACE'S	TRAUMA INFORMED SUPPORT
SELF AWARENESS	Trauma may disrupt the ability to understand one's emotions and sense of self	Practices like mindfulness and journaling promote emotional insight
SELF REGULATION	ACEs can lead to difficulty managing stress and emotional responses	Grounding techniques help in calming the nervous system
SOCIAL AWARENESS	Early adversity might impair empathy and recognition of other's emotions	Empathy building exercises develop interpersonal understanding
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT	Trust issues and challenges in forming healthy relationships may arise	Establish safe, supportive environments that foster connections



A photograph of a field with tall, golden-brown grass and numerous small, vibrant blue flowers. In the background, there are dark green evergreen trees against a clear, light blue sky. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing text.

**Having a low EQ score just means  
your BS radar is on point.**





**“I have a clear glass right now”**

**“I have a cloudy glass”**

**“I have a red glass”**



# TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEMS

**GOVERNANCE**



**POLICY**



**PHYSICAL  
ENVIRONMENT**



**CHANGE  
MANAGEMENT**



**QUALITY**



**IMPROVEMENT**

**FINANCE**



**TALENT ACQUISITION  
& DEVELOPMENT**

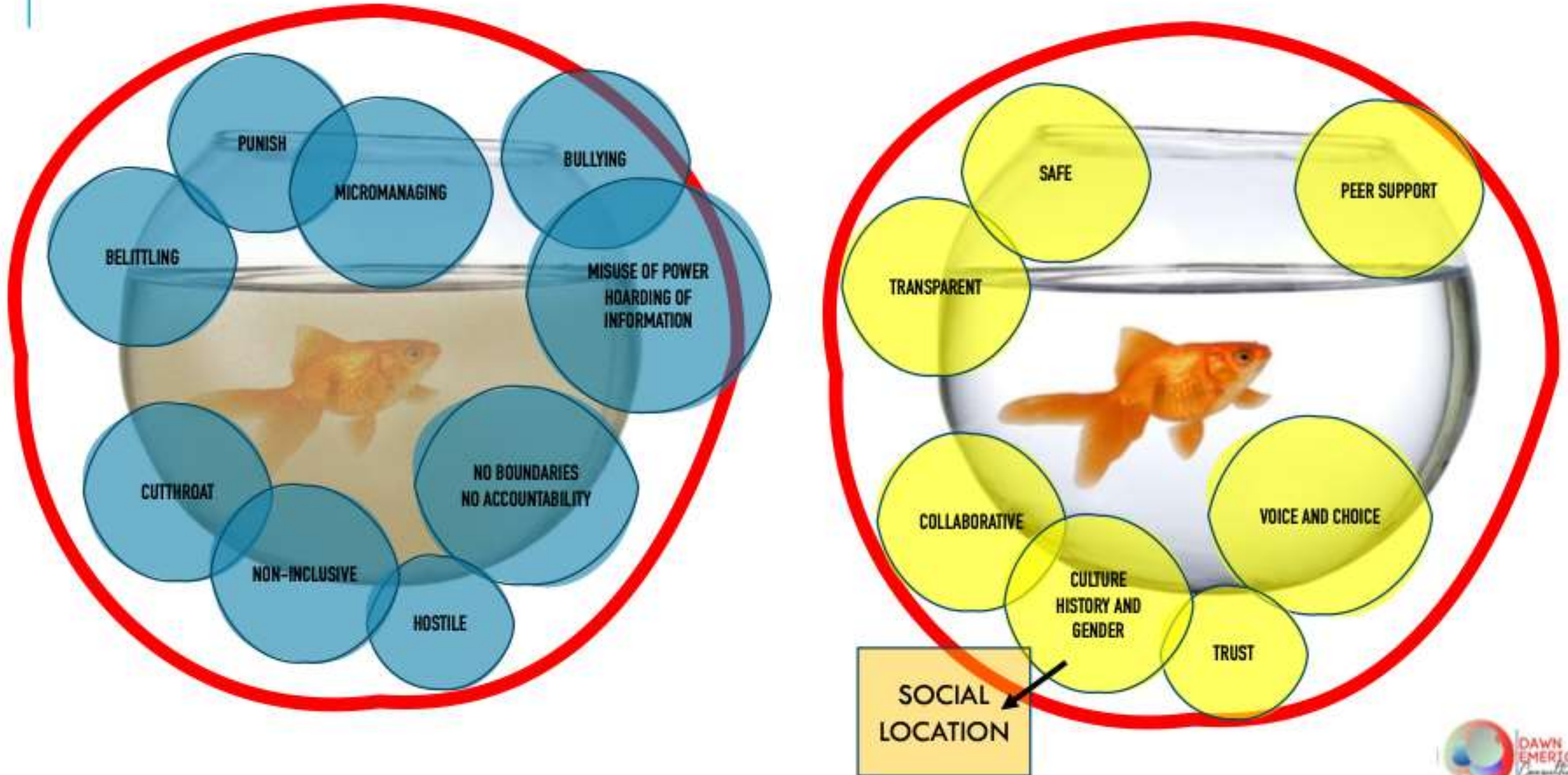


**METRICS**










# TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEMS





# CHANGE MANAGEMENT

		<b>AWARENESS</b> I fully understand the reasons for the change	<b>DESIRE</b> I have chosen to support and participate in this change	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> I have the knowledge I need of how to change and see successful in this change	<b>ABILITY</b> I have the ability to implement the change and perform the required skills and behaviors successfully	<b>REINFORCEMENT</b> Meaningful reinforcements are in place that will help me continue and sustain the change
<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	5					
<b>AGREE</b>	4					
<b>NEUTRAL</b>	3					<b>Barrier Point</b>
<b>DISAGREE</b>	2					
<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	1					



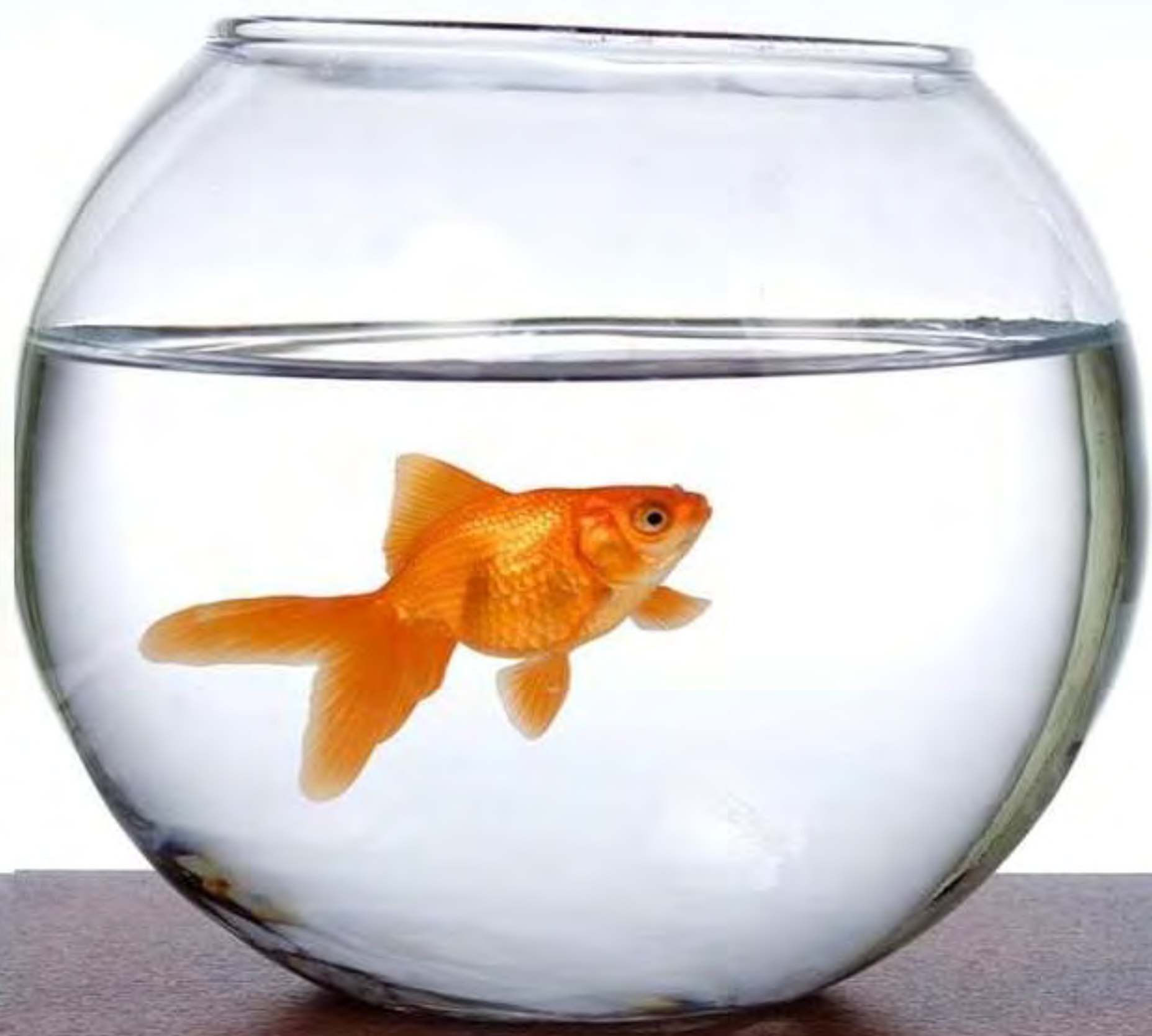
# CHANGE AMBASSADORS

Occupational support such as an attentive companion play a powerful role in helping trauma survivors manage their distress at work and regulate the difficult emotions that follow a traumatic experience.

- BRING PATIENCE, EMPATHY, AND THE CAPACITY TO LISTEN
- THEY ARE ATTENTIVE COMPANIONS, RATHER THAN EXPERT COMPANIONS
- TRAINED IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AND HARM REDUCTION
- ANTI-STIGMA WORK
- PROVIDES ACCESS TO RESOURCES
- COACHES PEERS / STAFF THROUGH CHANGE INITIATIVES









# Post Traumatic Growth





A piece of light blue, textured paper is torn at the top and bottom edges, creating a jagged, deckle-like border. The paper is set against a dark teal, textured background. The text "Everyone has a story..." is written in a black, typewriter-style font across the center of the white paper.

Everyone has a story...



















A black rectangular box, likely a ballot box, is mounted on a wooden wall. The box has a slot on its top surface for inserting ballots. The name "Santo António" is printed in white on the front face of the box.

Santo  
António





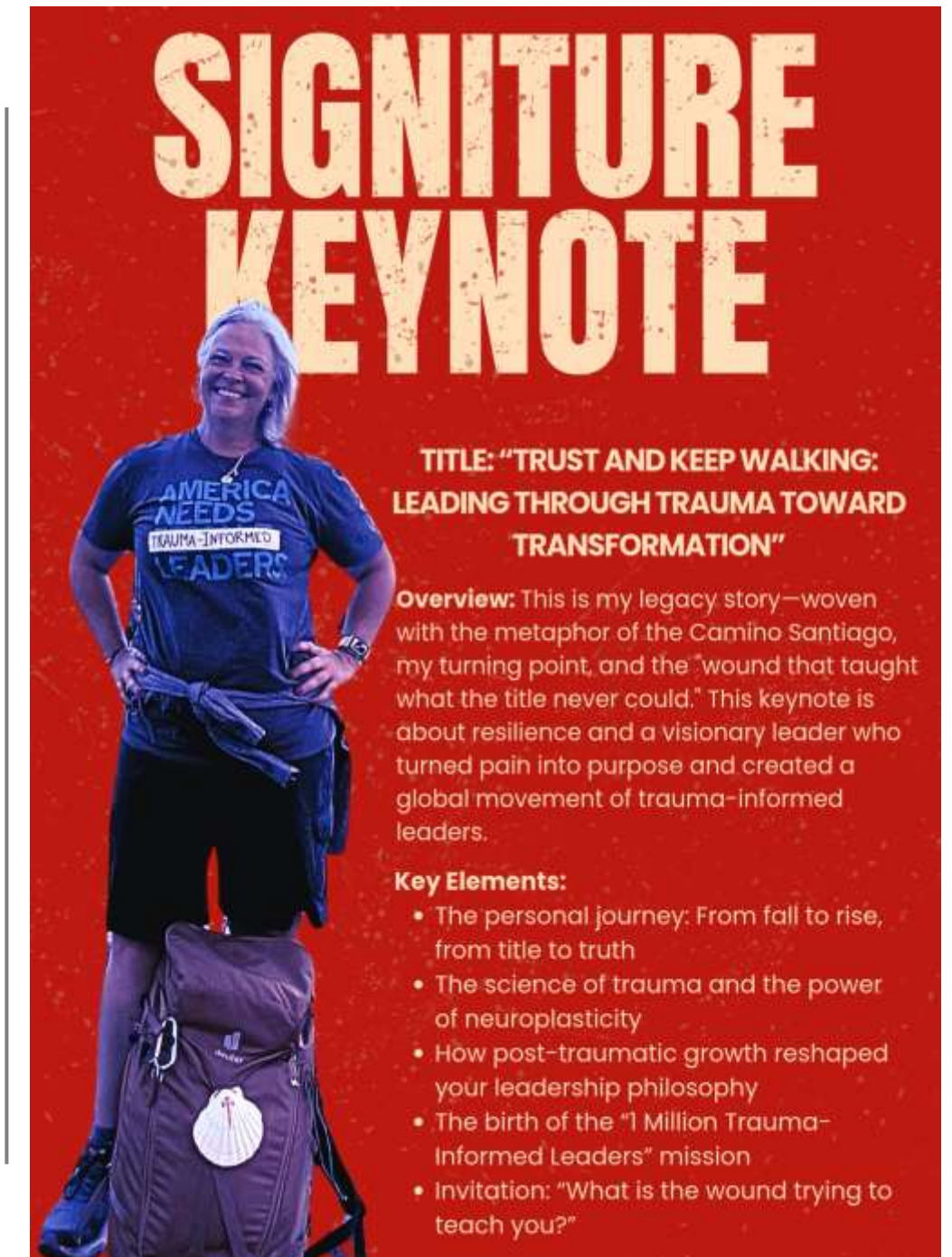
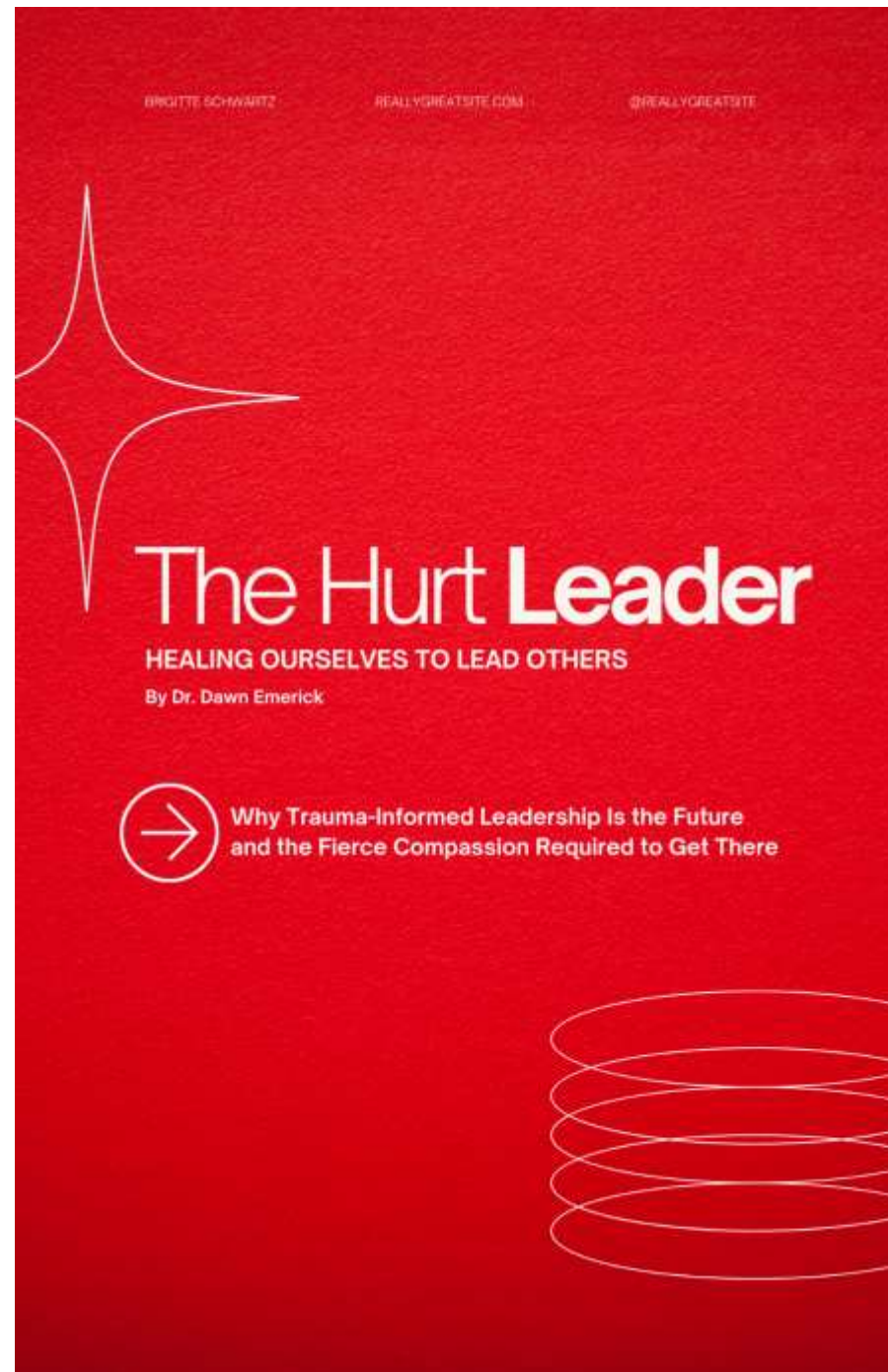


# Trust The Path And Keep Walking





# Thank You!



Dawn Emerick, EdD  
904-233-7212