

**Title:** Supporting neurodivergence and understanding neurodivergent ways of being (brought to PI by the Mental Health Working Group)

**Speakers:** Helen Hargreaves

**Collection/Series:** Colloquium

**Subject:** Other

**Date:** May 21, 2025 - 2:00 PM

**URL:** <https://pirsa.org/25050038>

**Abstract:**

Helen Hargreaves, MSW, RSW will present a workshop for PI Residents, providing information on the basics of Emotion Theory, how to assess ones own needs and communicate them. This presentation will particularly focus on Autistic and other neurodivergent ways of experiencing emotions and stress and how to better support neurodivergent team members in the workplace. Helen Hargreaves is a Neurodivergent Therapist with over 15 years experience workings with Neurodivergent clients. She is the Director of Rainbow Brain, a social work group practice that focuses on providing queer, trans and neurodivergent affirming therapy. Please note that this will be a 1.5 hour session with presentation and experiential components.

# Supporting neurodivergence and understanding neurodivergent ways of being

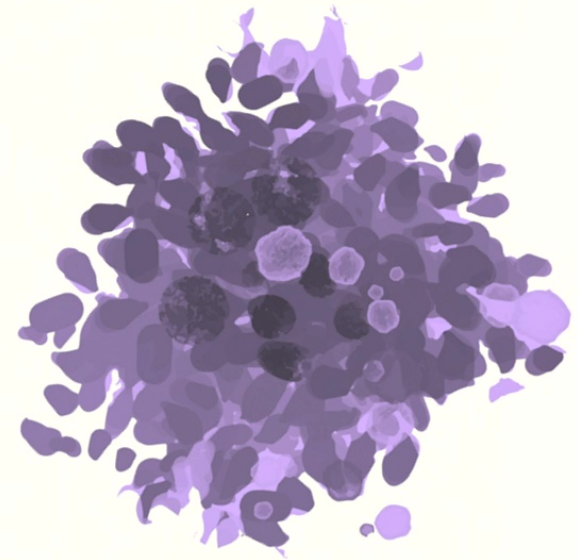
Presented by Helen Hargreaves MSW RSW  
brought to PI by the Mental Health Working  
Group

May 21, 2025



# Nervous system activation

Clench, unclench



# Language check in

- Neurodivergent
- Neurotypical
- Neurotype
- Neurodiverse

# Neurodivergent

Differing in mental or neurological function from what is considered typical or normal

(frequently used with reference to autistic spectrum disorders, ADHD, LDs)

# Neurotypical

Not displaying or characterized by autistic or other neurologically atypical patterns of thought or behavior.

Neurotypical individuals often assume that their experience of the world is either the only one or the only correct one.



# Neurodivergent

Autism

ADHD

Learning disabilities

Tourettes

Gifted

Migraines

Epilepsi

OCD

Mild intellectual disability

And more...



Autism

Migraines

ADHD

Epilepsi

Learning disabilities (LDs)

OCD

Tourettes

Mild intellectual disability

Gifted

And more...



These are examples of different **neurotypes**.

When a group has people with many different neurotypes it is **neurodiverse**.

# Your Presenter:

## Helen Hargreaves

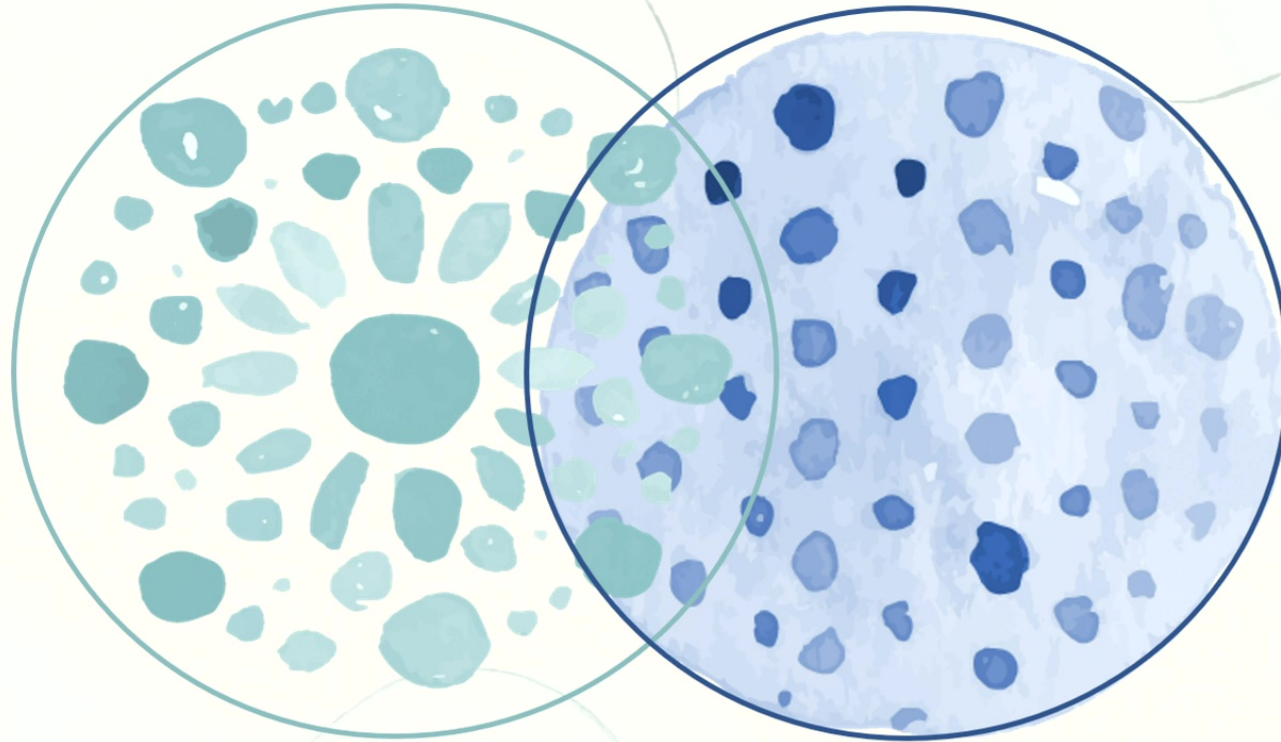
Director of Rainbow Brain

- Social Worker, practicing since 2008





# Who we serve: Neither



Neurodivergent

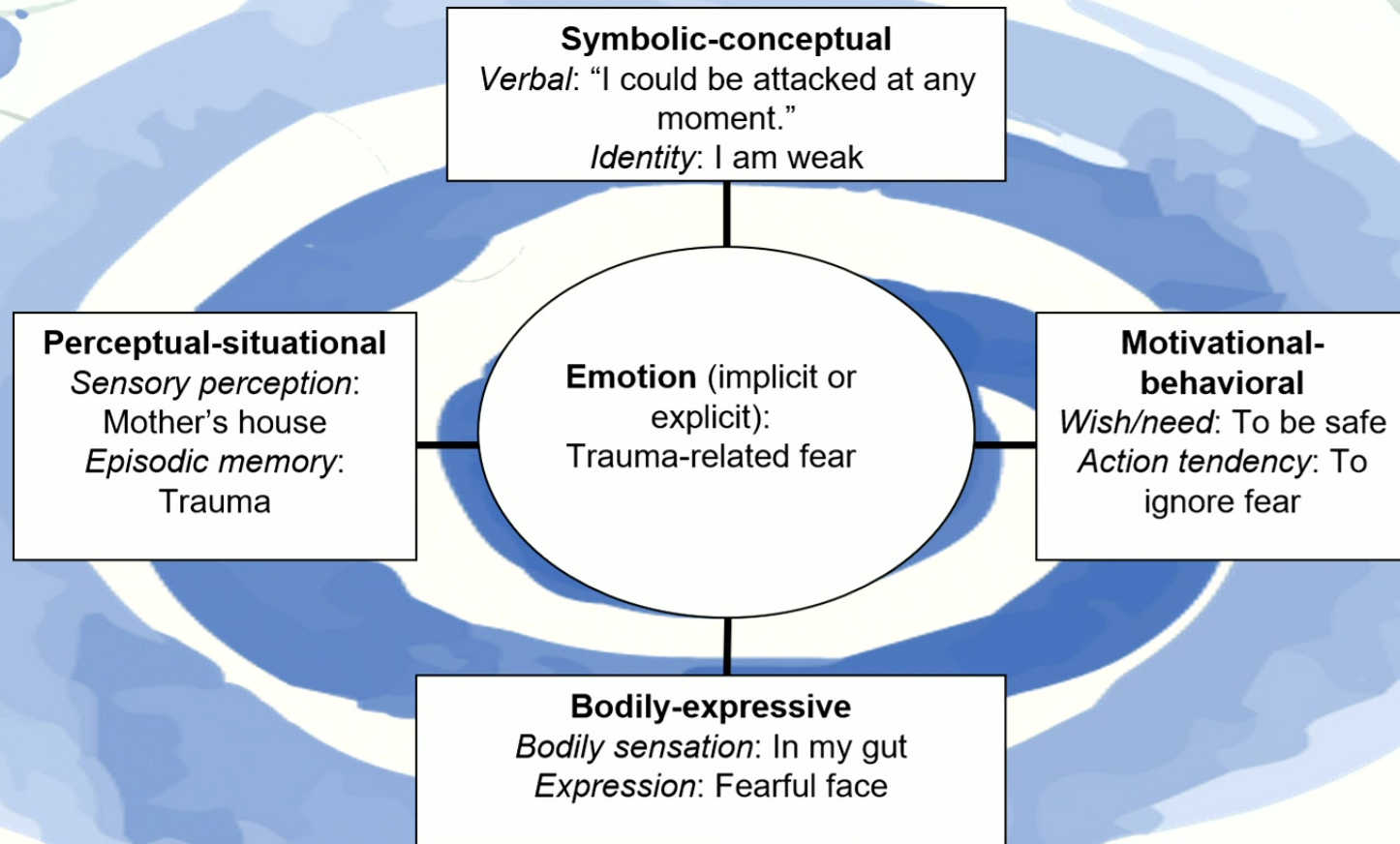


2SLGBTQIA+



# What are emotions?

# Emotion Schema





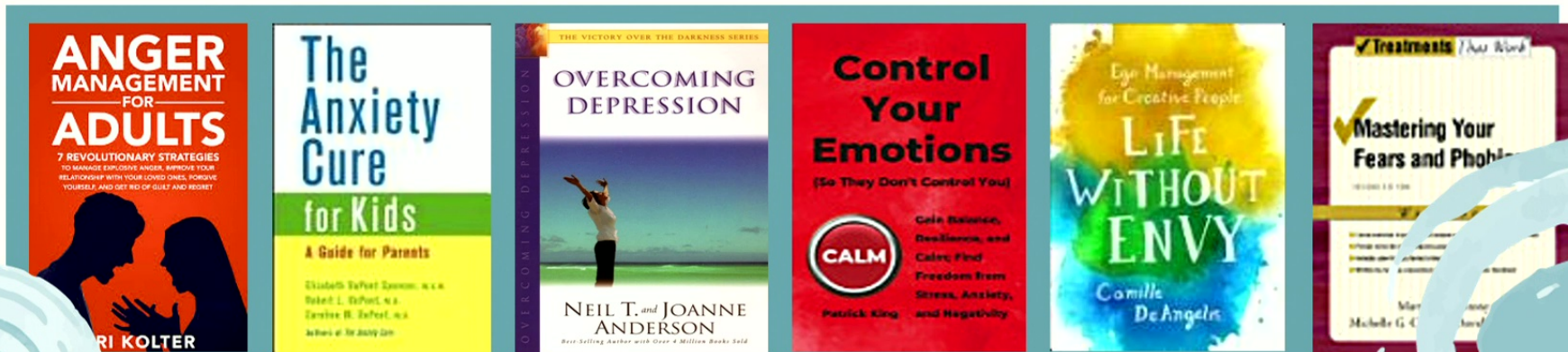
# What is the **value** of emotions?

Would we be better off without them?



# What is the **value** of emotions?

Would we be better off with out them?

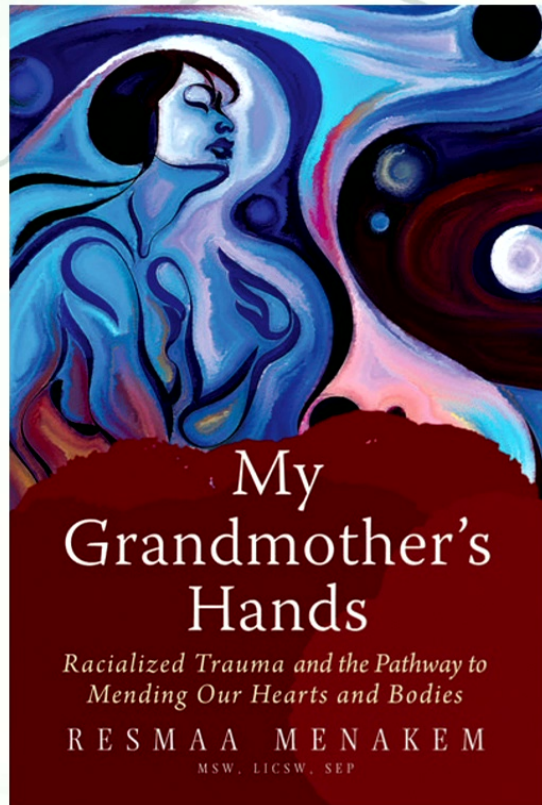


**Emotions point us  
towards what matters  
to us.**





# What is the value of processed emotions?



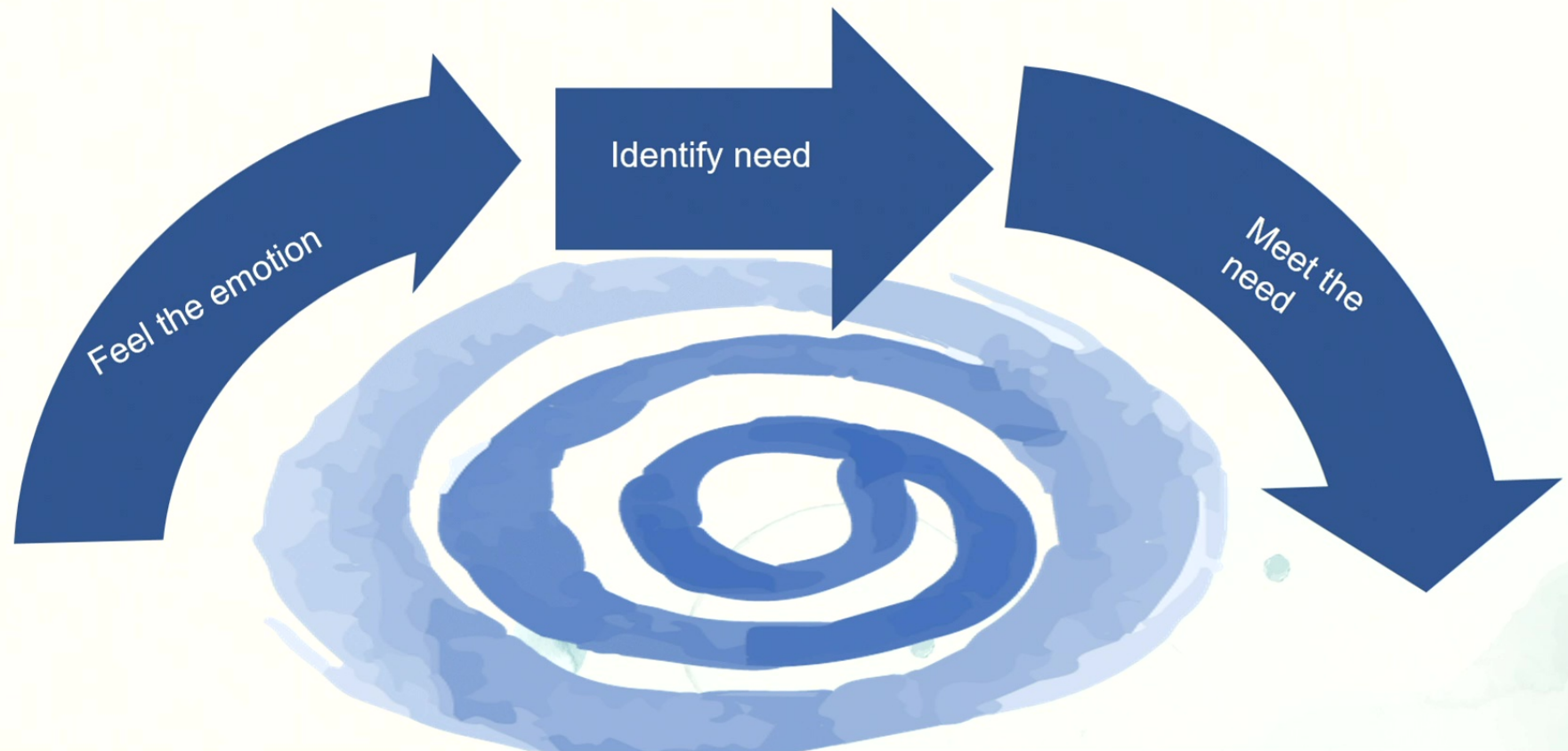
## Understand our selves

- Needs
- Values
- What is a good life

## Allow choices

- Feelings impact our actions
- Unprocessed feelings can push us away from our values

# Emotion Processing



# Skills for Emotion Processing

## Feel the Emotion



Bodily felt sensation  
(lump in my throat, pain in my stomach)  
Notice emotions,  
(sad, happy, mad)  
Vague, undifferentiated  
(not right, restless, that tonight's gonna  
be a good good night)

## Conceptualise the Emotion

## Communicate the Emotion

# Often not linear

## Feel the Emotion

## Conceptualise the Emotion

## Communicate the Emotion

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(lump in my throat, pain in my stomach)  
Notice emotions,  
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Connect to symbols, words,  
memories, metaphors

Find verbal and nonverbal ways  
of communicating this to people  
we hope will co-regulate with  
us and/or get our needs met.



# Autistic Challenges

Feel the Emotion

Interoception  
Challenges

Difficulty sensing  
internal signals from  
your body

Conceptualise the  
Emotion

Alexithymia

The inability to recognize or  
describe one's own emotions.

Communicate the  
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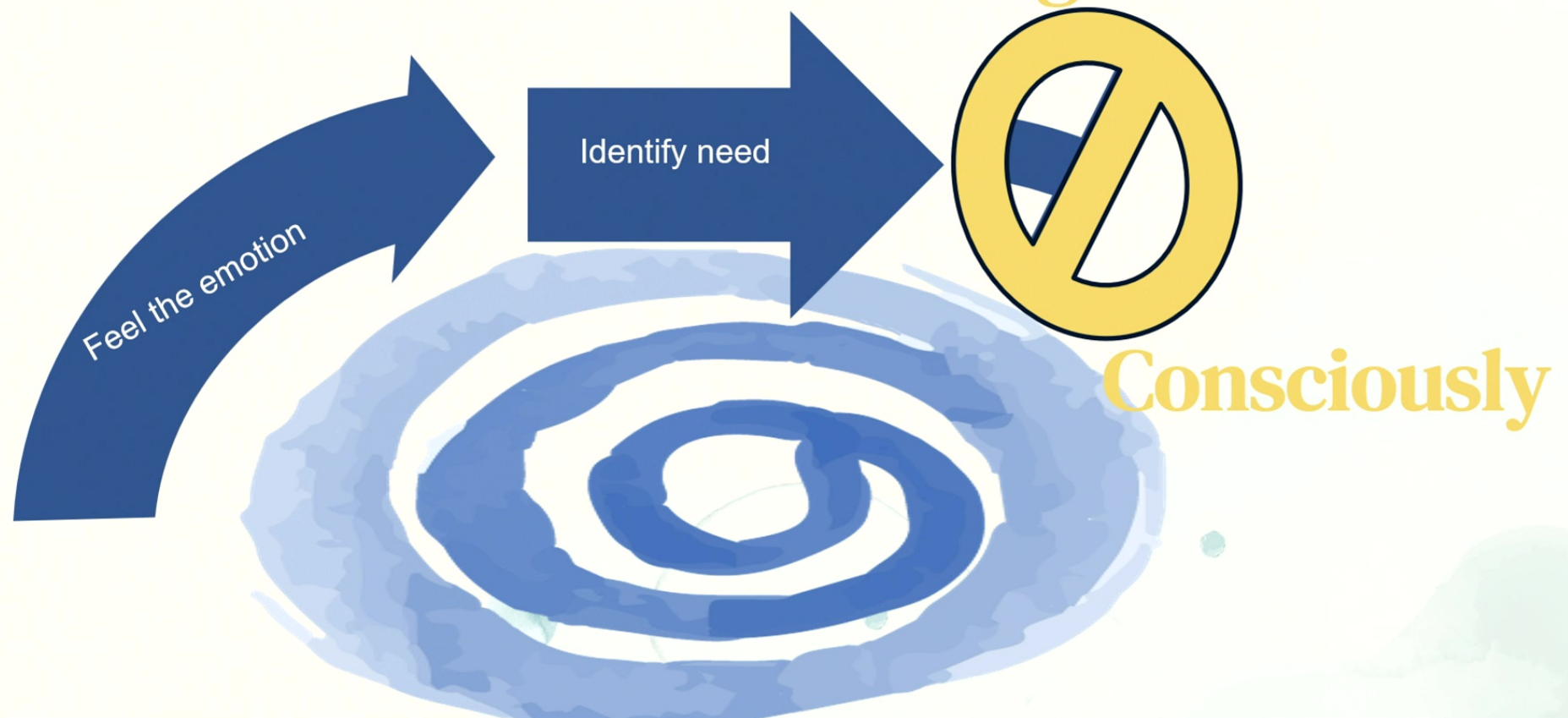
Communicate the  
Emotion

Communication  
Disability

Difficulty finding ways to share  
one's own reality with others

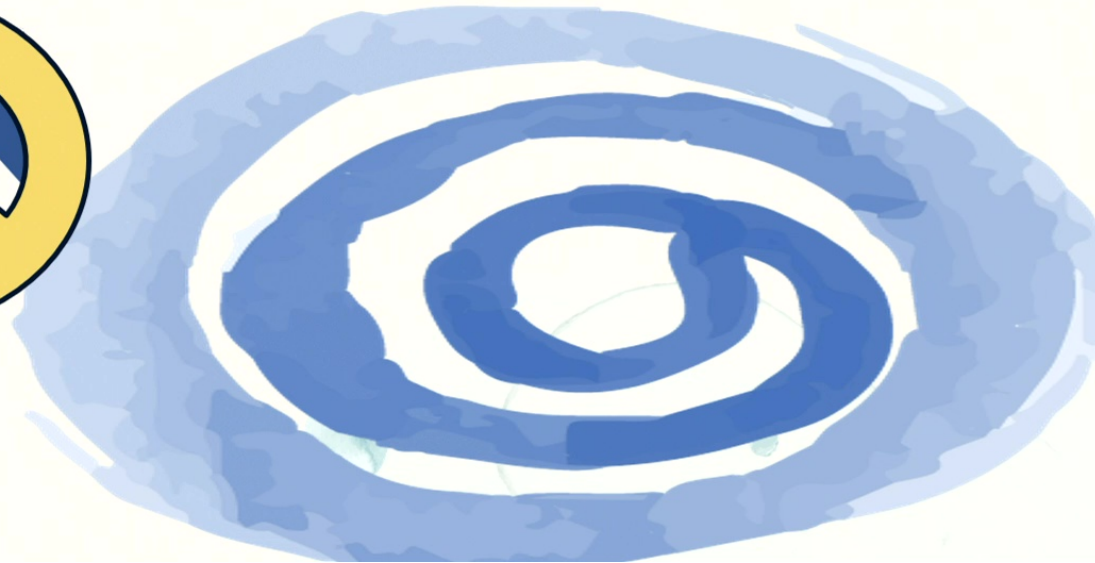


# We Often Interrupt Emotion Processing



# We Often Interrupt Emotion Processing

## Unconsciously



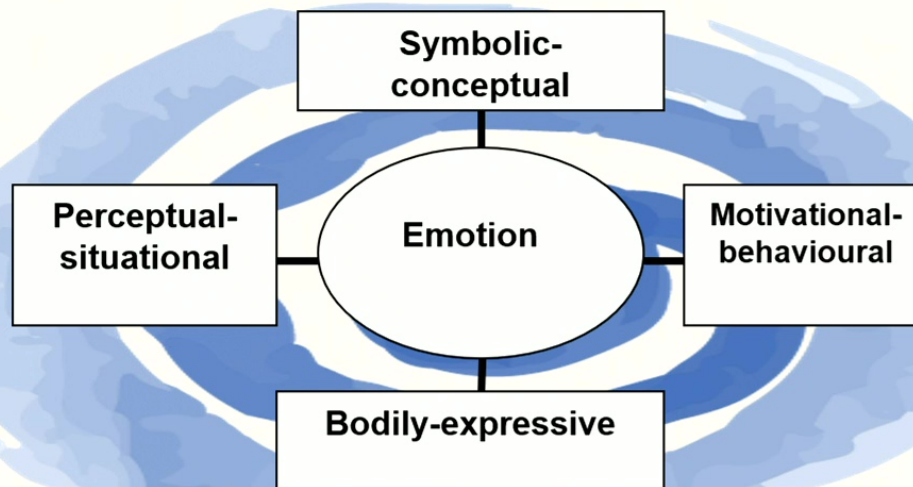


# How to improve emotional processing?

- Self Reflection
- In community
- With professional support

# Individual Reflection

Find a place where you feel safe  
Notice, with out judging what your experience is





# HUMAN NEEDS

## Physical Well Being

Clean Air  
Food, Nutrition  
Water, Hydration  
Health, Healing  
Movement  
Rest, Sleep  
Physical Safety  
Shelter, Comfort

## Significance

To Matter  
To be seen, heard  
Meaning  
Wholeness  
Unity  
Beauty  
Simplicity  
Wisdom

## Interdependence

Empathy  
Trust  
Support  
Communication  
Mutual Respect  
Consideration  
Feedback  
Nurture, Care, Love  
Understanding  
Gratitude  
Companionship  
Contribution  
Mutuality  
Touch, Connection  
Collaboration  
Recognition  
Generosity

## Vitality

Autonomy, Choice  
Learning, Growth  
Play, Fun, Laughter  
Creativity  
Stimulation, Challenge  
Explore, Discover  
Spontaneity  
Competence  
Impact, Effectiveness  
Ease, Efficiency  
Resources (\$, tools, info...)

## Authenticity

Honesty  
Integrity  
Clarity  
Humility  
Transparency

## Self Awareness

Self-Connection  
Self-Compassion  
Self-Acceptance  
Self-Responsibility  
Reflection  
Insight, Discernment

## Community

Belonging  
Inclusion  
Harmony, Peace  
Acceptance  
Solidarity  
Celebration  
Mourning  
Personal Space  
Justice (Restorative)  
Predictability

10 Well met  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5 Ok, but only just  
4  
3  
2  
1 As bad as possible





# Emotional Processing in community

What encourages you to authentically share?







# Emotion Coaching

## Step 1 - Validate

Make an effort to convey understanding of their experience (from their point of view):

- I could understand you...
- I could imagine you...

Demonstrate your effort using “because statements”

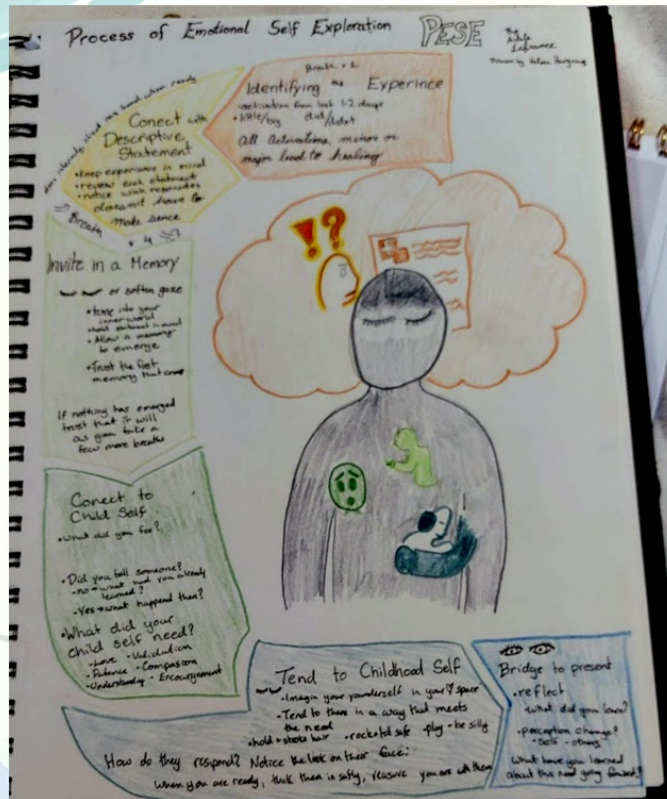
## Step 2 – Support

A: Emotional support ideas

B: Practical support ideas

**Try to offer this as much as you ask for it**

# Processing Emotions Self Enquiry



PESE is a self-guided process to work with activations to support your healing and growth. With a focus on emotions and inner-child work, the invitation is to engage with the PESE as often as is possible to evolve one's inner world, and one's relationship to life more broadly.

<https://dradelelafrance.com/pese>



# Thanks!



Do you have any questions?

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CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), including icons by [Flaticon](#) and infographics & images by [Freepik](#)

