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# Coupled Recovery™

## Connecting Individual and Relational Recovery

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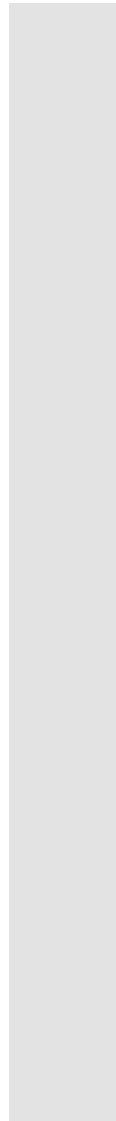
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# Disclaimer

- Laney and Brian are co-owners of NorthStar Relational Consulting, which helped to sponsor their presentation and attendance at this conference
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# What is Coupled Recovery™?

- Uses similarities between the trauma cycle and the addiction cycle to build a foundation for connection and provide a common language for addicts and partners
- Incorporates individual recovery with relational recovery for both addicts and partners (regardless of gender and relational status) while addressing attachment issues and trauma for both
- Connects models from IITAP, APSATS, SASH, AASECT, AASAT, and others
- Meant to be used by those already trained in at least one of the above models

# 3 Phases of Coupled Recovery™

(Adapted from Gottman and  
Caudill & Drake)

Phase 1

Atone –  
Establishing Truth & Emotional  
Safety

Phase 2

Attune –  
Building Empathy & Connection

Phase 3

Attach –  
Healing Sexuality

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Pyramid of Intimacy



Caudill & Drake (2020)

Included with permission

# Five Principles of Coupled Recovery™



Education



Honesty



Boundaries



Communication



Connection



# 3 Phases of Coupled Recovery™

(Adapted from Gottman and Caudill & Drake)

**Phase 1: Atone –  
Establishing  
Truth & Safety**

## Steps 1-5

1. Trauma & Addiction
2. Disclosure/Amends and Defining Self
3. Accountability
4. Time-Outs
5. Check-ins

**Phase 2: Attune –  
Building Empathy  
& Connection**

## Steps 6-10

6. Emotions, Needs, & Triggers
7. Owning & Processing Your Emotions
8. Sharing Your Emotions
9. Call & Respond
10. Developing & Expressing Empathy

**Phase 3: Attach –  
Healing Sexuality**

## Steps 11-15

11. Defining Healthy Sexuality
12. Owning & Processing Your Sexual Trauma
13. Creating Structure & Redefining Language
14. Self-Exploration
15. Sexual Connection

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## Phase 1:

### Atone – Establishing Truth & Emotional Safety

1. Education – Trauma & Addiction Responses
2. Honesty – Disclosure/Amends Process and Defining Self
3. Boundaries – Accountability
4. Communication – Time Outs
5. Connection – Check Ins

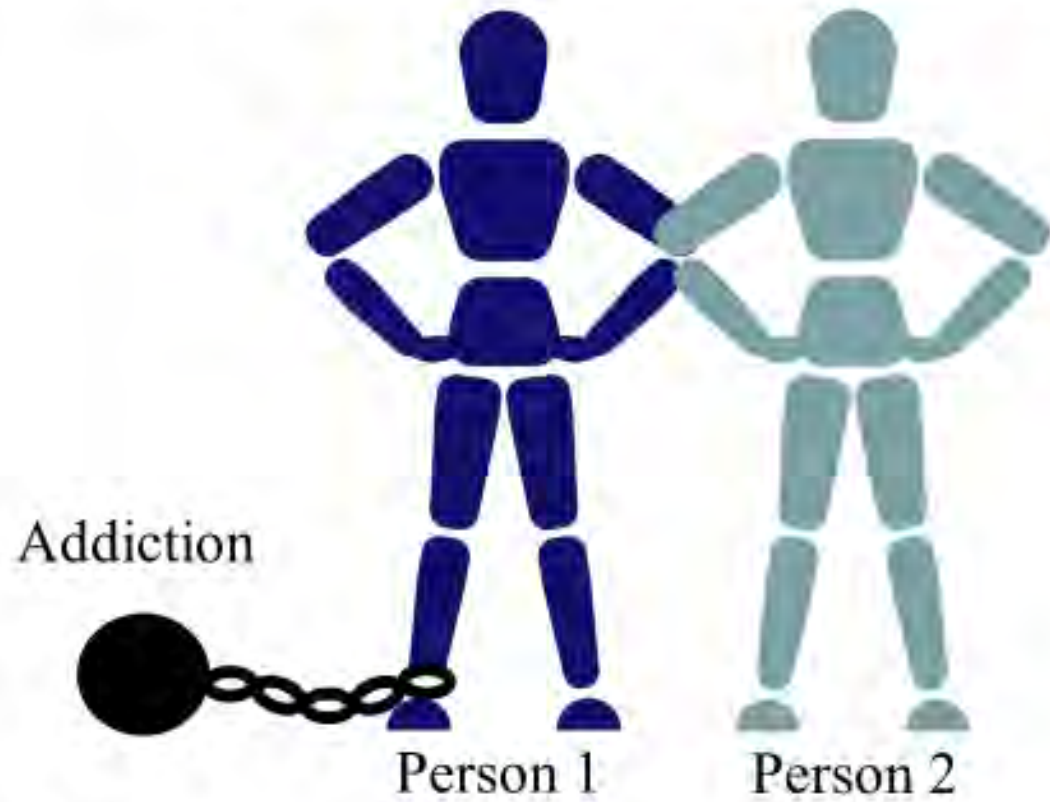
# Relationship



Person 1

Person 2

# Relationship with One Addict

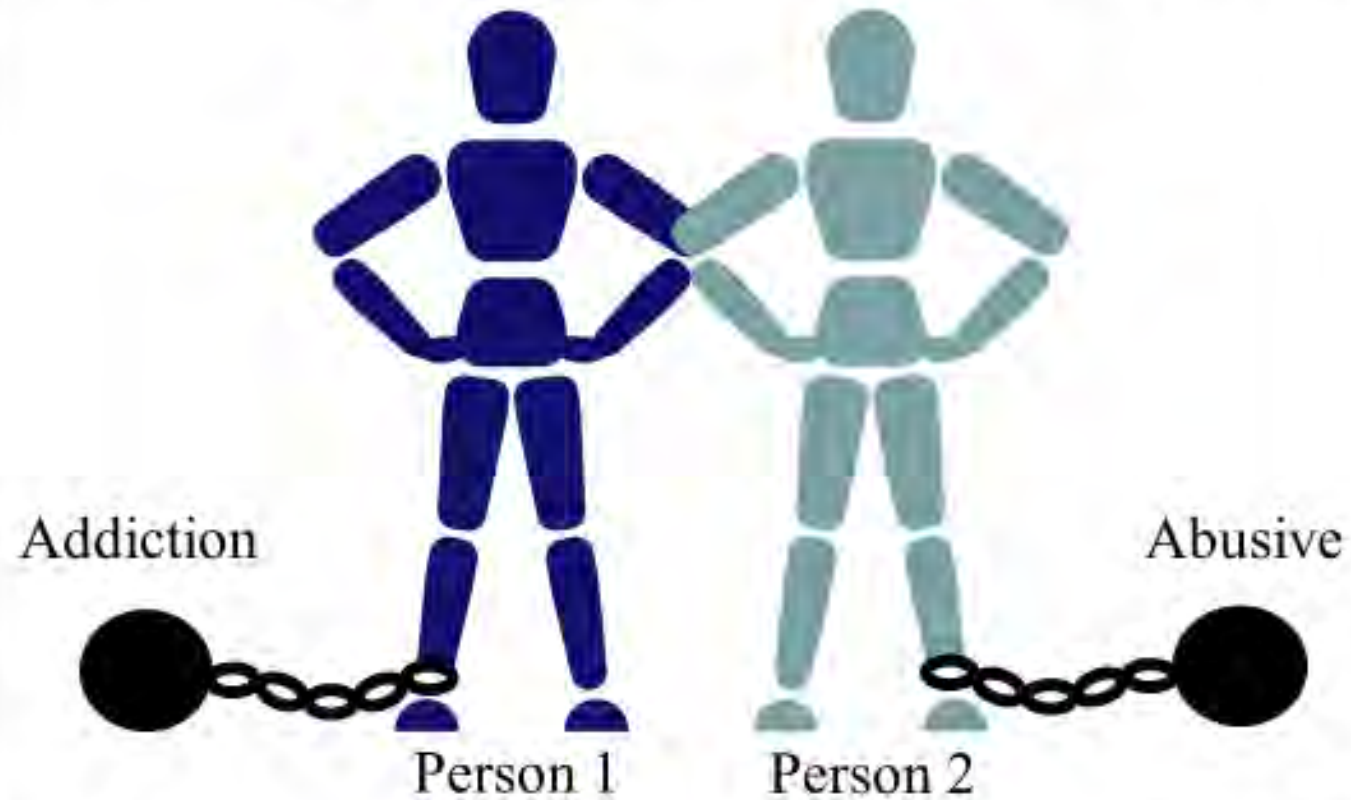


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## Relationship with One Addict and Abusive Partner

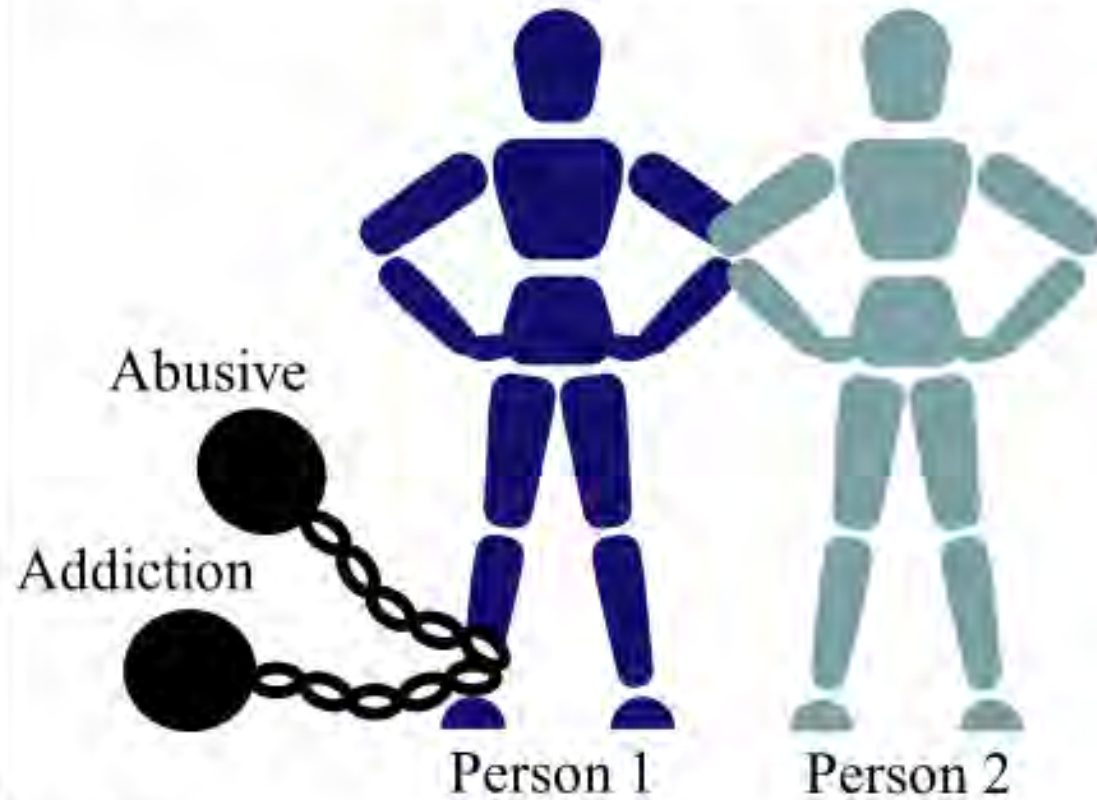


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## Relationship with Abusive Addict

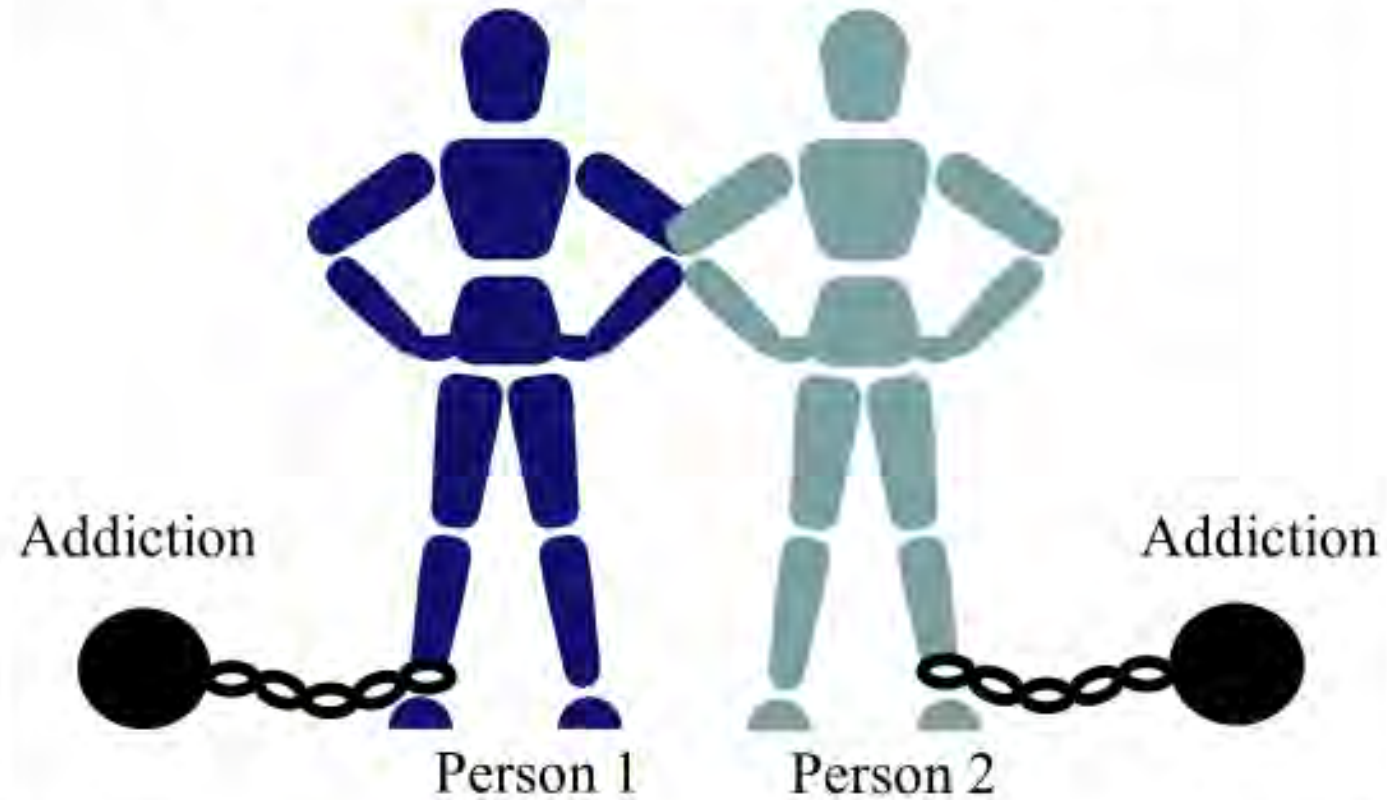


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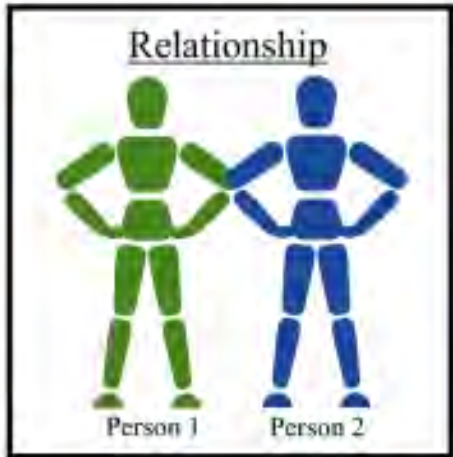
## Relationship with Two Addicts



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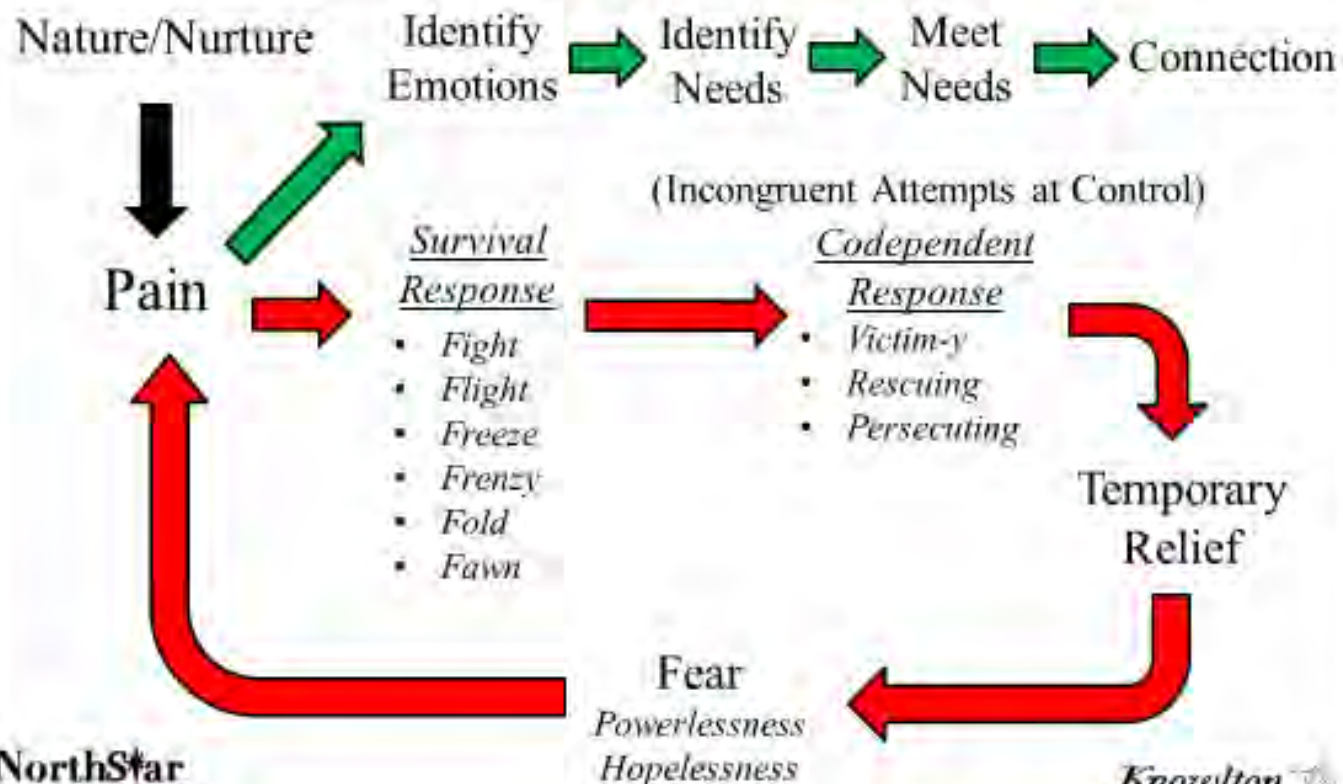
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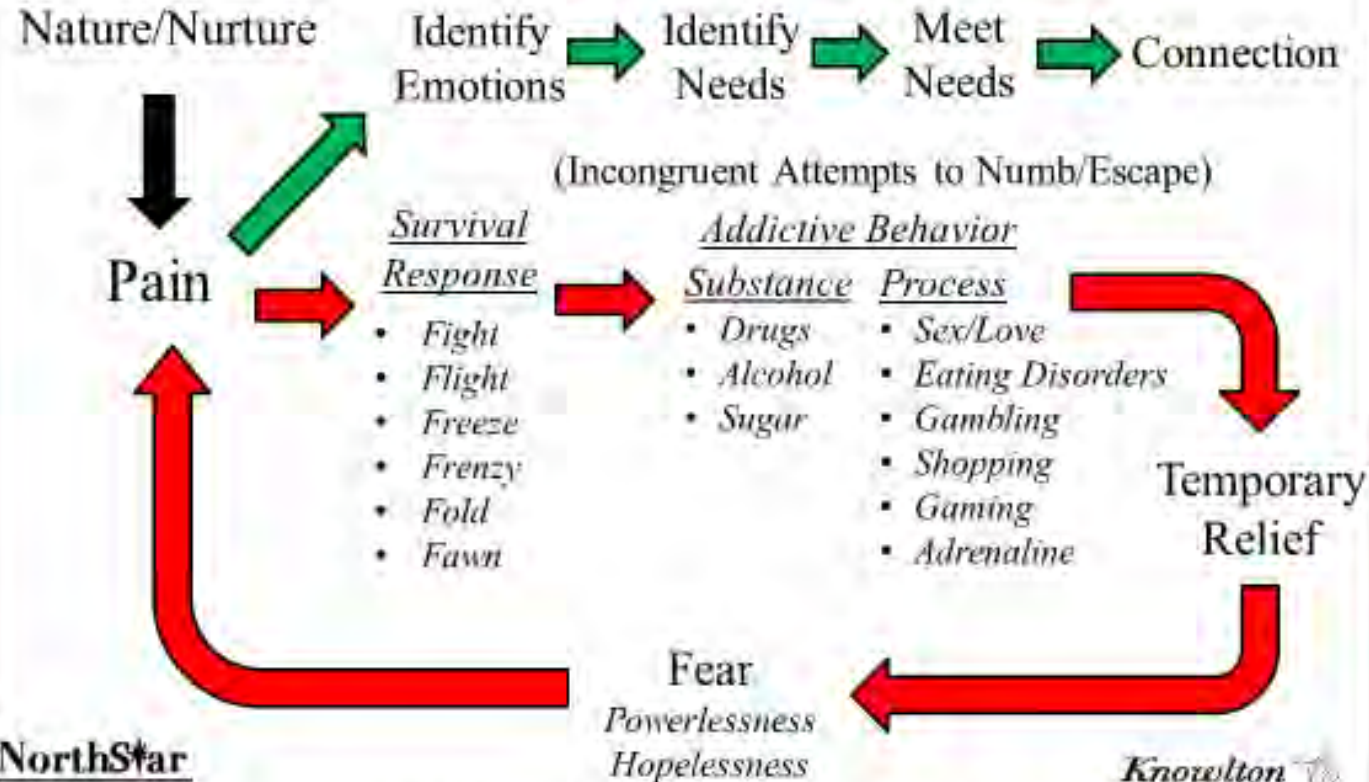




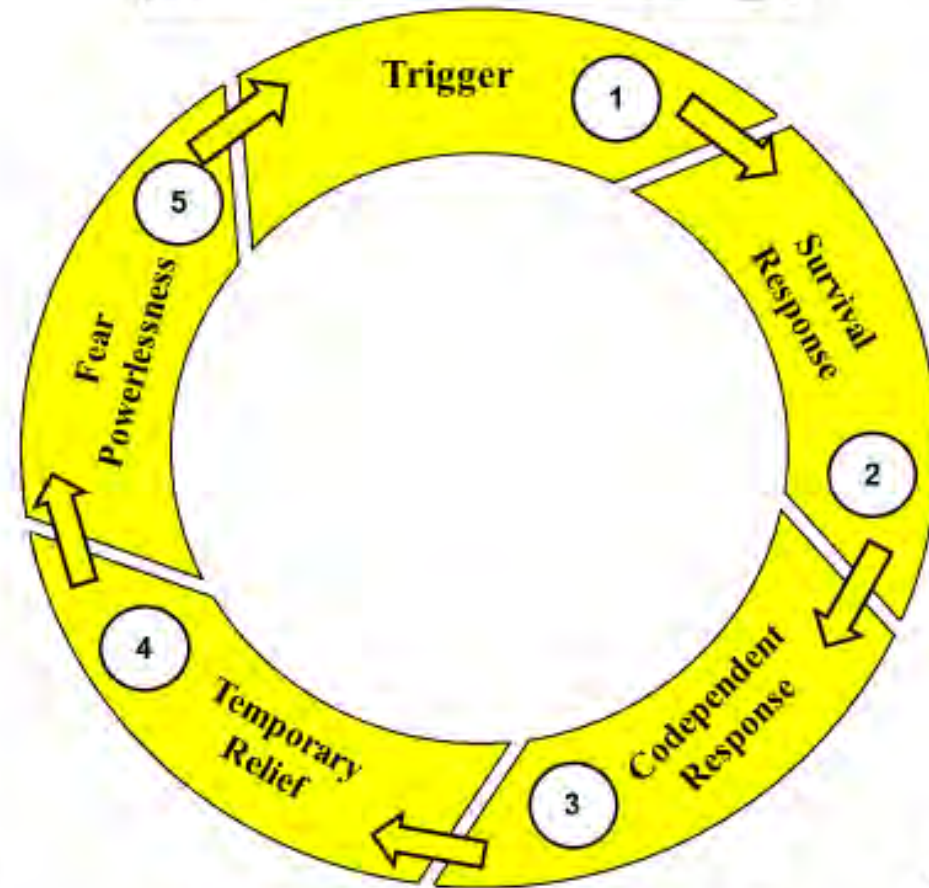
# Trauma Cycle



# Addiction Cycle



# Trauma Loop

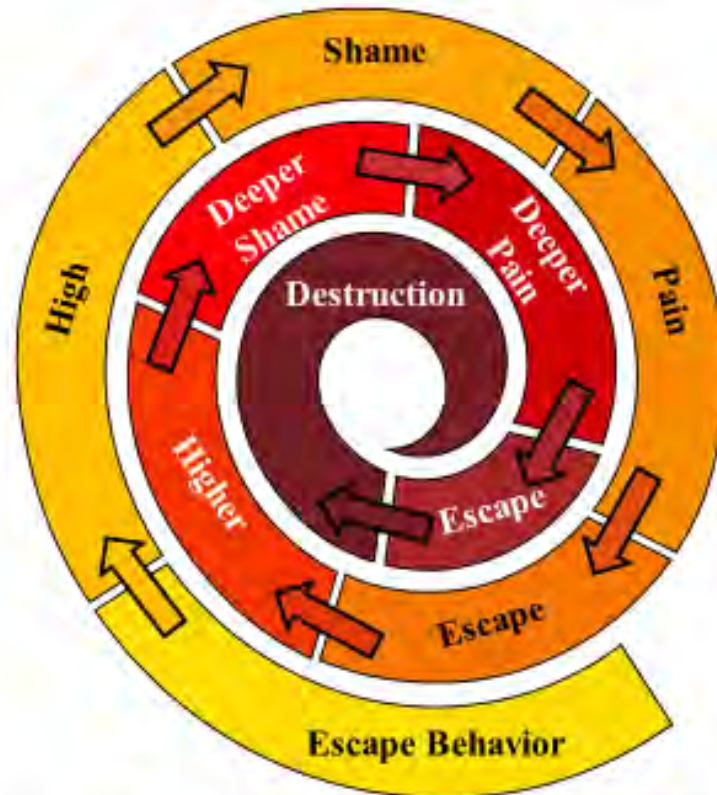


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# Addiction Spiral

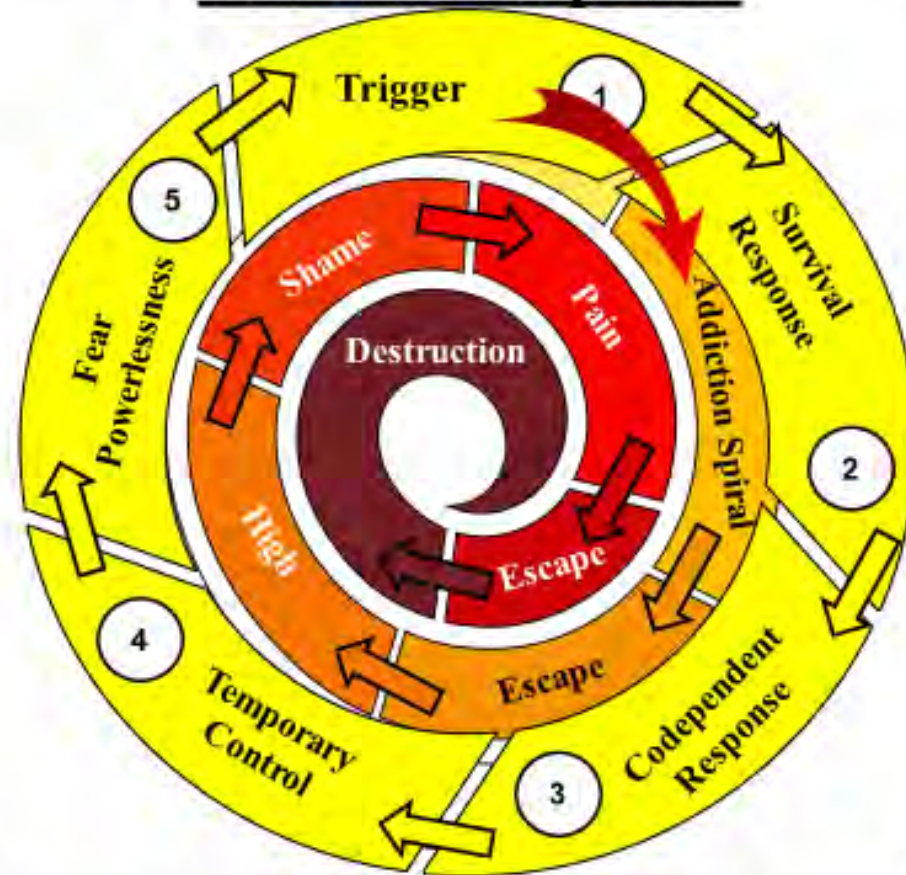


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## Connection Between Trauma and Addiction Responses

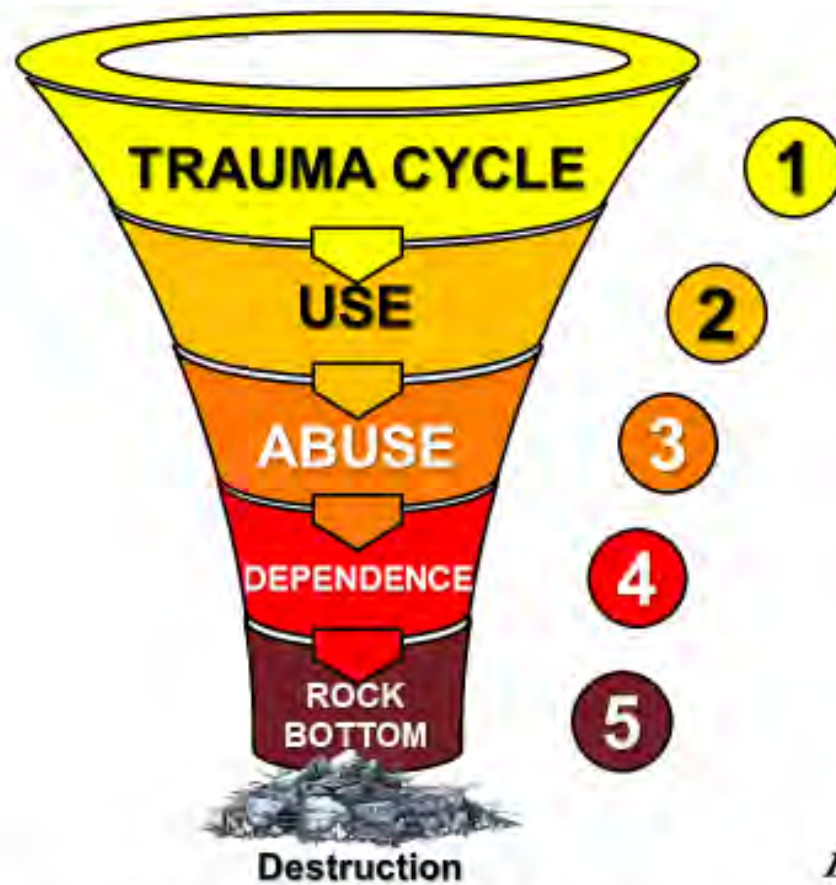


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# Addiction Vortex



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## Effect of Trauma Responses

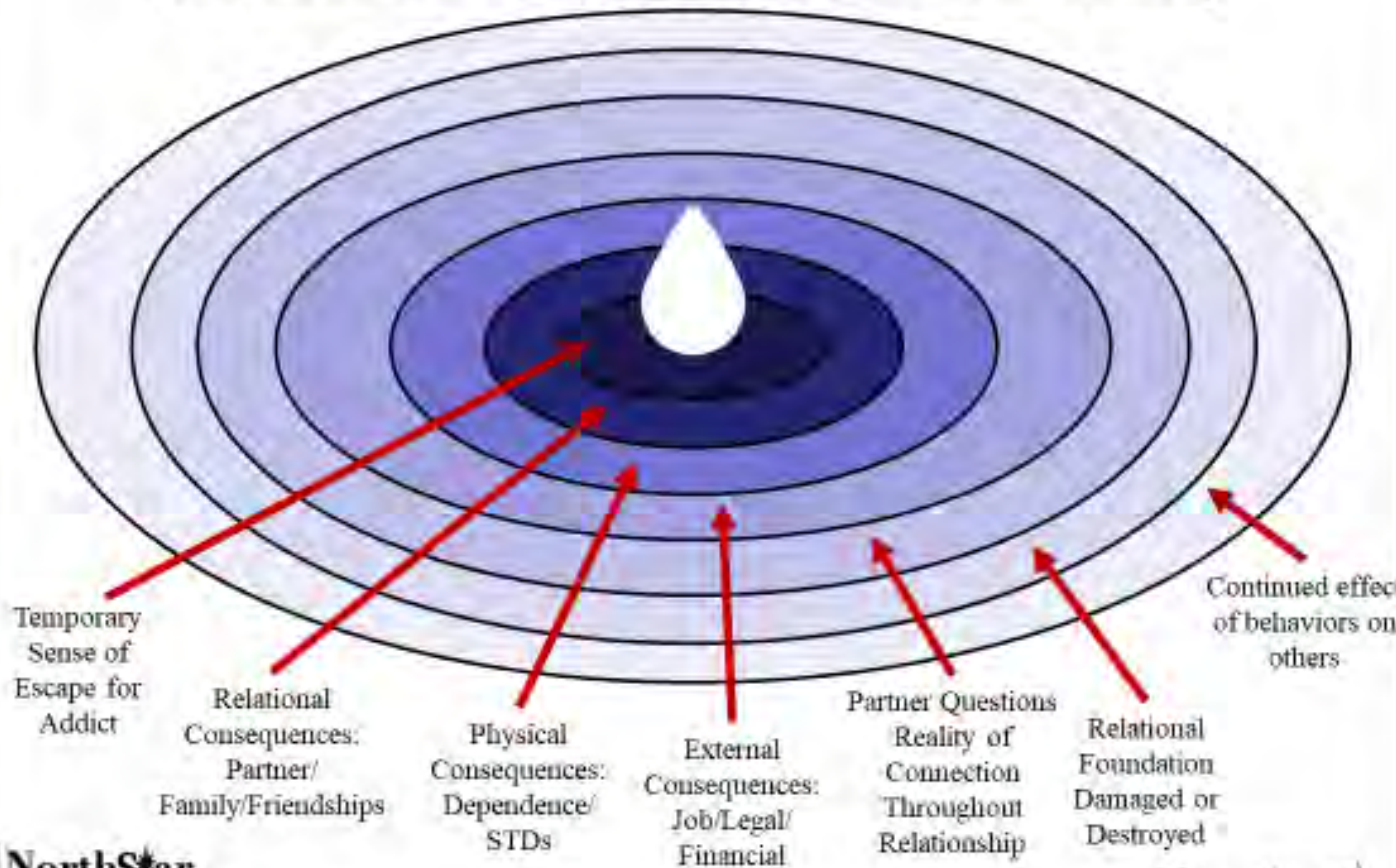


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# Effect of Addiction & Deception



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# Survival Responses



Fight



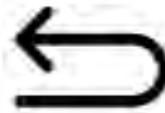
Flight



Freeze



Frenzy



Fold

*Give up and give in*



Fawn

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# Dependency Continuum

(Adapted from Pia Mellody)

Needless/Wantless

Antidependence

Interdependence

Codependence

Love Addiction



- Doesn't recognize needs or wants
- Doesn't feel hunger or exhaustion or need for touch
- Dissociated

- Doesn't let anyone in
- Completely self-sufficient (internally focused)
- Knows needs and wants exist, but can't ask for help
- Believes it can only be done right by them

- Self-sufficient
- Connected to self
- Can help others when they really need it
- Can ask for help when needed
- Recognizes the right to say no to even reasonable requests

- Believes worth is based on connection to others
- Happiness, success, and safety depends on others
- Enmeshed

- Believes they are worth less than others
- Believes they need to be in a relationship to exist
- Looks for intensity rather than vulnerability in connection

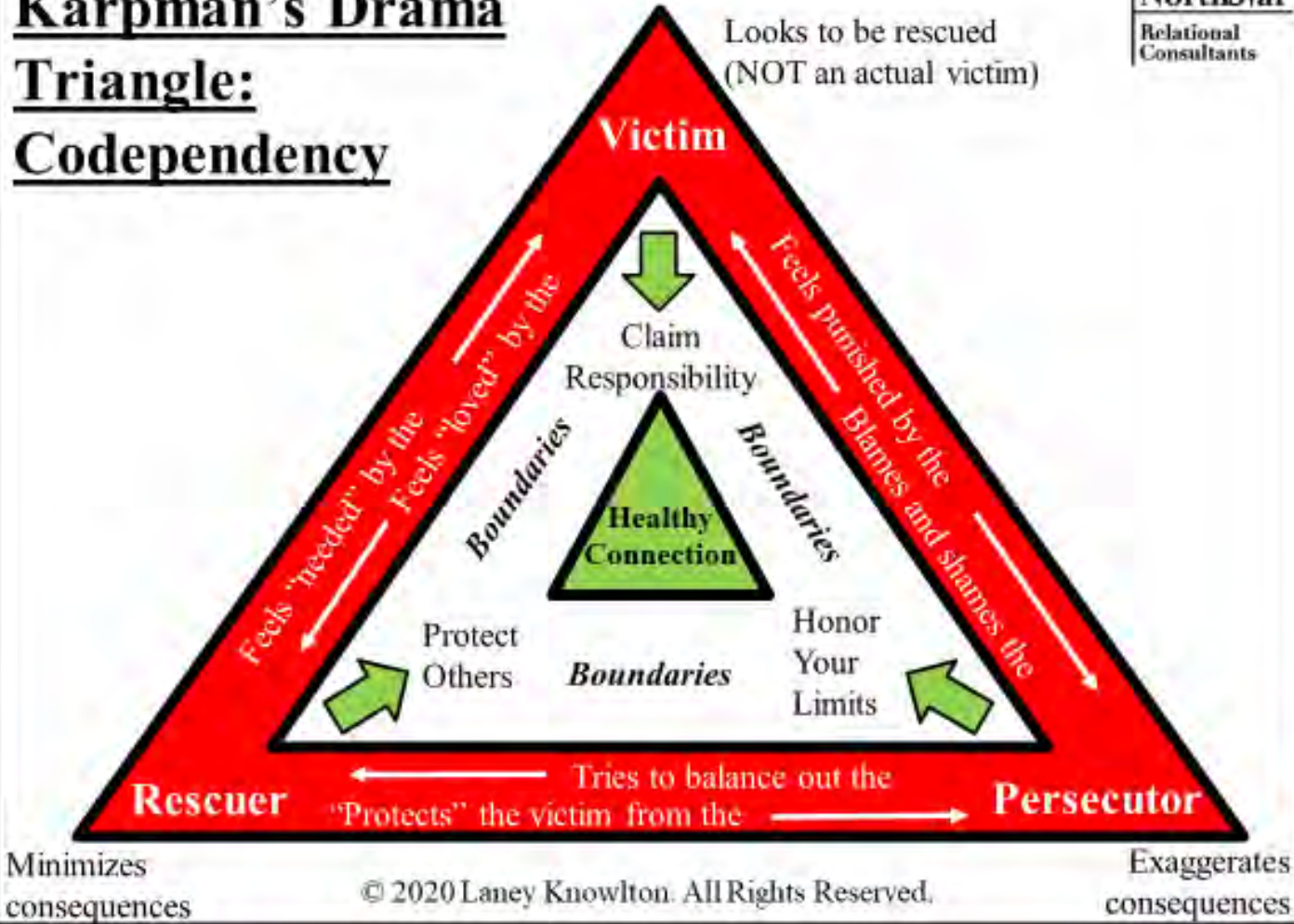
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**Karpman's Drama Triangle:**  
**Codependency**

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# Disclosure

## Full Disclosure Process

*Disclosure Letter, Impact Letter, & Amends Statement*

- Janice Caudill and Dan Drake's *Full Disclosure* Books (most complete and detailed model available)
- CSAT Disclosure Model
- Mari Lee's Disclosure Model

May need to be preceded by an accountability statement when partner's health or safety is compromised

## Coupled Recovery Model

*What, Why, Impact, & Amends Letters*

"What" = Step 1 of 12 steps

"Why" = Step 4 of 12 steps

"Amends" = Step 9 of 12 steps

Can be altered when partners request an expedited process

- Transfers from other clinicians
- Minimal acting out
- Previous incomplete or inadequate disclosure process

# Defining Self

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Resentment Inventory (AA Big Book)

---

Fear Inventory (AA Big Book)

---

Deception Timeline Exercise

---

Shame

---

Faulty Core Beliefs (Carnes, Earle & Crow, Steffens & Manning)

---

Strengths, Accomplishments, Abilities, and Potential

---

Personal Compass Exercise

## Shame – The Emotional Parasite

Guilt	Inadequacy	Anger
I made a mistake	I can't do this alone	I'm not safe
I need to take steps to repair something	I need additional skills	Something is hurting me or others
I need to change so I won't repeat it	I need help	Something needs to change

### **With Shame**

Guilt	Inadequacy	Anger
I am a mistake	I'm worthless	I'm too much
I'll never be able to fix this	I'm not smart enough	This will never be fixed
I'm broken beyond repair	I'll never be good enough	I'm a monster

# Faulty Core Beliefs

## Addicts

1. I am basically a bad, unworthy person
2. No one will love me as I am
3. My needs will never be met if I rely on others to meet them
4. Sex is my most important need
5. I'm broken and cannot create connection with others

(Carnes, 1992, Earle & Crow, 1989)

## Partners

1. I am now unlovable
2. I am broken beyond repair
3. If I was enough, my spouse would not have betrayed me
4. I can never trust anyone
5. I am either too much or I am not enough
6. I cannot trust myself

(Steffens, Manning,  
Personal Communication 2019)

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# Personal Compass

(Adapted from *My Personal Compass* by Janice Caudill)



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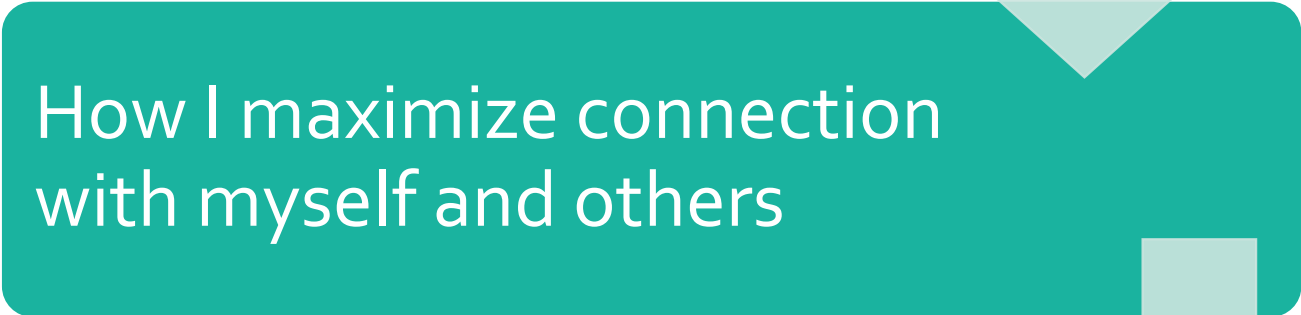
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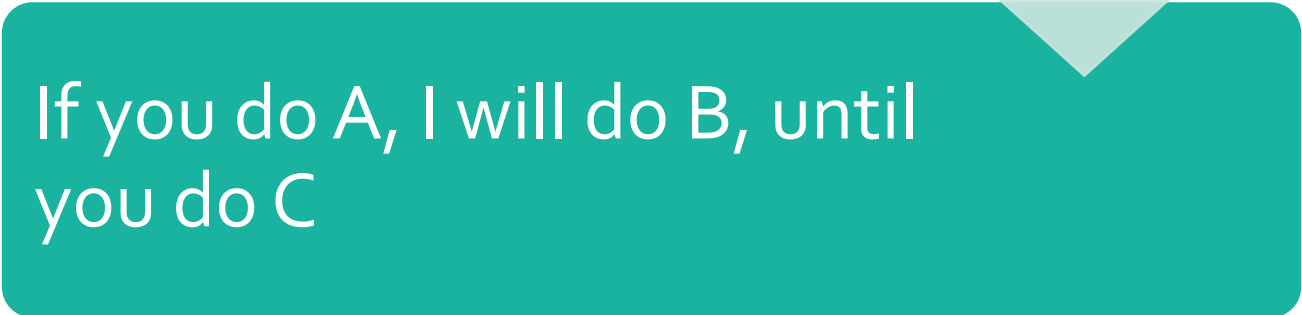
How I protect myself and others



How I maximize connection with myself and others



If you do A, I will do B, until you do C



**Boundaries:  
Protect &  
Connect**



# Communicating Boundaries

(John Townsend)

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1. Love – “I’m having this conversation because I love you and want to be connected to you”

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2. Truth – “I’m not ok with \_\_\_\_\_”

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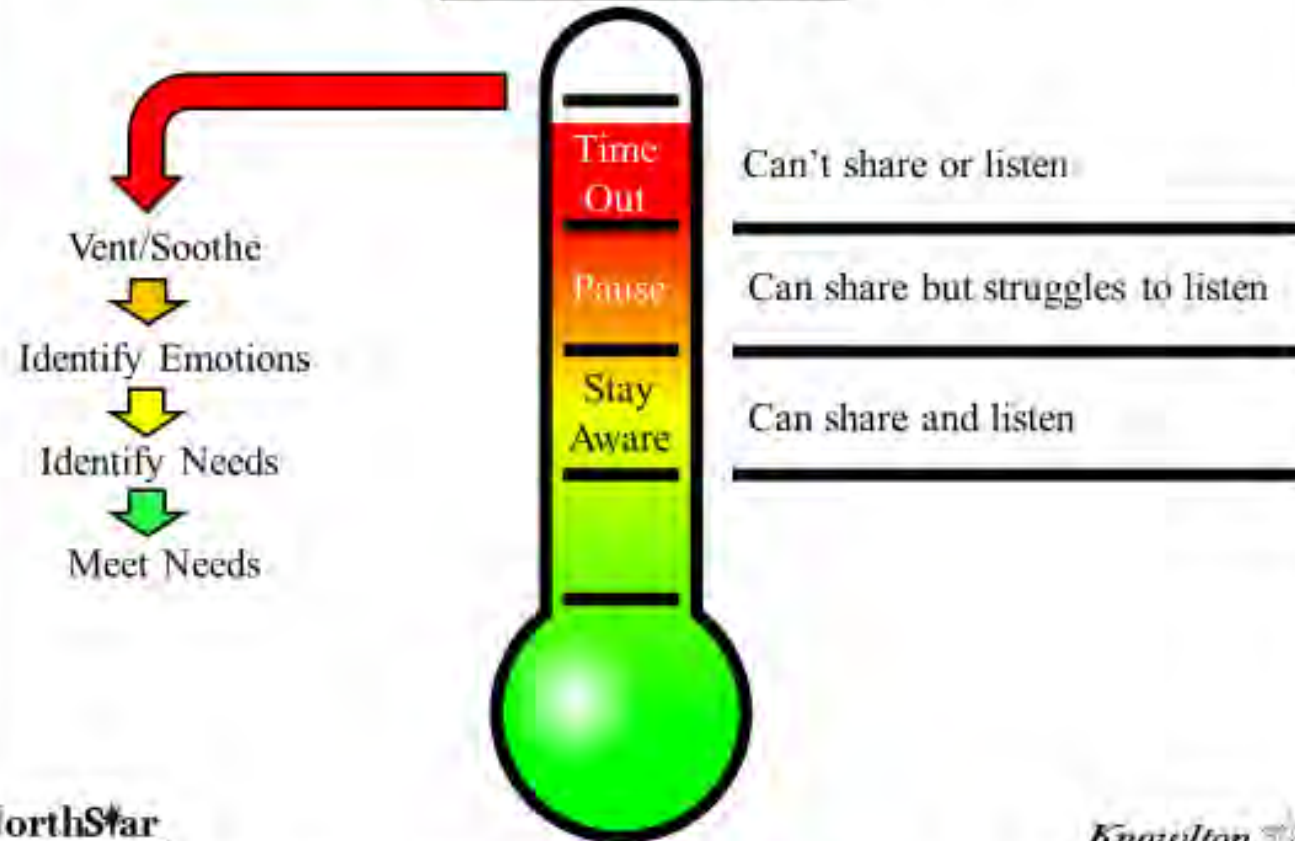
3. Freedom – “You have the freedom to choose to \_\_\_\_\_”

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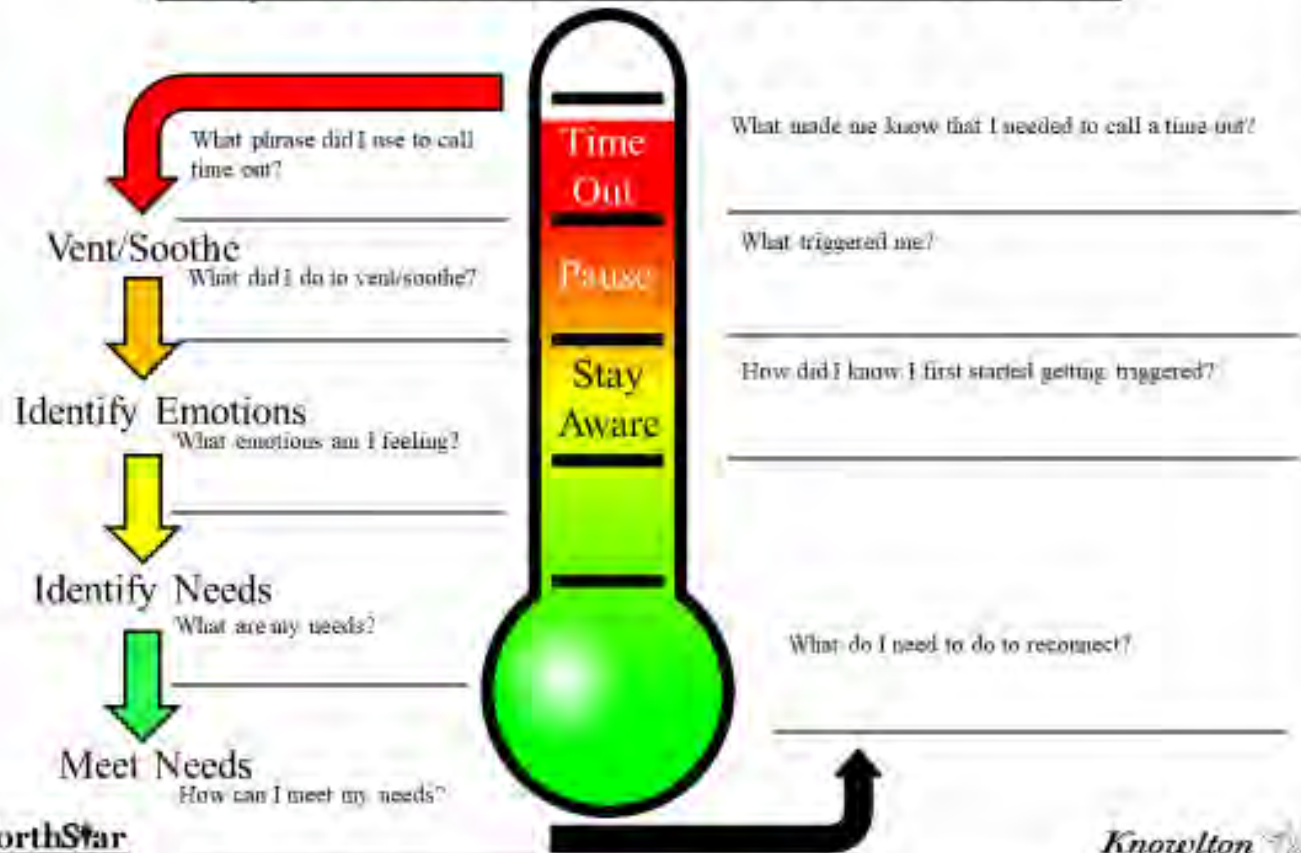
4. Reality – “If you choose to \_\_\_\_\_, then I will \_\_\_\_\_”

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# Time Outs



# My Time Out Worksheet



# Check-Ins

## Relapse

- Inform about acting out behaviors
- Within 24 hours of acting out or before sex (whichever happens first)
- As needed

## Recovery

- Share steps taken and insights
- Usually weekly
- Scheduled

## Relational

- Share emotions and experiences
- Usually daily
- Scheduled



## Phase 2:

### Attune – Building Empathy & Connection

1. Education – Emotions, Needs, & Triggers
2. Honesty – Owning & Processing Your Emotions
3. Boundaries – Sharing Your Emotions
4. Communication – Call & Respond
5. Connection – Developing & Expressing Empathy

# Recovery Hill

(Adapted from "the Slippery Slope" by Mark Butler)



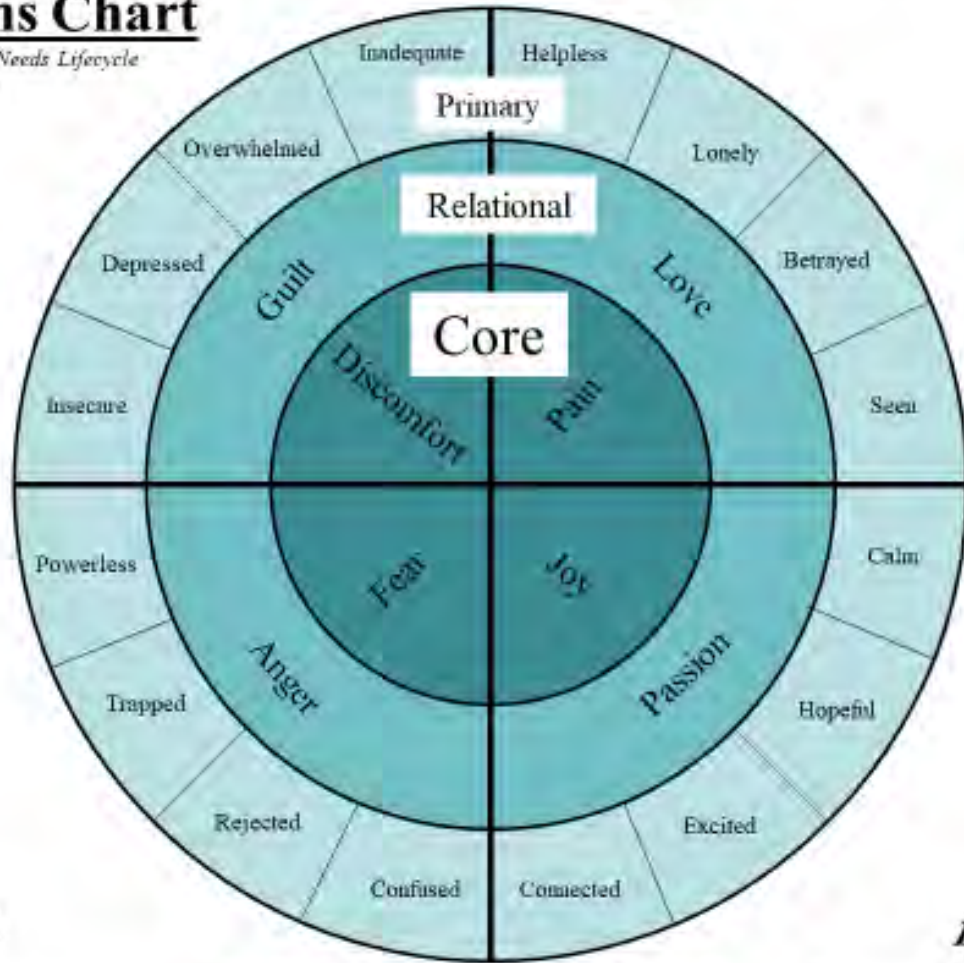
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# Emotions Chart

Adapted from *Wants/Needs Lifecycle*  
Gene Klassen (2021)



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## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# Emotional Bucket

**Excitement, Creativity,  
Relaxation, Connection**

## Drains

- *Painful Emotions*
- *Lack of sleep*
- *Triggers*
- *Hunger*
- *Anger*
- *Illness*
- *Stress*



50%  
Connection to Self

At Least 5 Things

- *Meditation*
- *Exercise*
- *Music*
- *Art*
- *Etc.*

50%  
Connection to Others

At Least 5 People

- *Significant other*
- *Family*
- *Friends*
- *Social*
- *Etc.*

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# Communication: Call and Respond

*Based on Erickson's (1981) model*

Write Your Song  
*Understand yourself*



Repeat as needed



Call  
*Explain self to the other person*



& Respond  
*Understand the other person (reflect)*



Try  
Solutions



Brainstorm  
Solutions



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# Hula Hoops

(Adapted from *Hula Hoop Health* by Laaser & Laaser)

Unhealthy Coping  
Behaviors  
(Trauma responses or  
addictive behaviors)

## Mine

- Beliefs & Values
- Experience
- Recovery
- Emotions
- Needs

## Yours

- Beliefs & Values
- Experience
- Recovery
- Emotions
- Needs

Unhealthy Coping  
Behaviors  
(Trauma responses or  
addictive behaviors)

## Ours

- Common Interests
- Shared Beliefs
- Mutual  
Interdependency

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# Motivational Boxes

It is not safe to be connected

**Compliant**

Fear  
(created by others)  
&  
Blind Trust  
(given to others)



You are fighting for safety and connection

**Defiant**

Protest  
(disagreement)  
&  
Resistance  
(action)



You have created safety and built connection

**Authentic**

Acceptance  
(understanding)  
&  
Boundaries  
(safety)

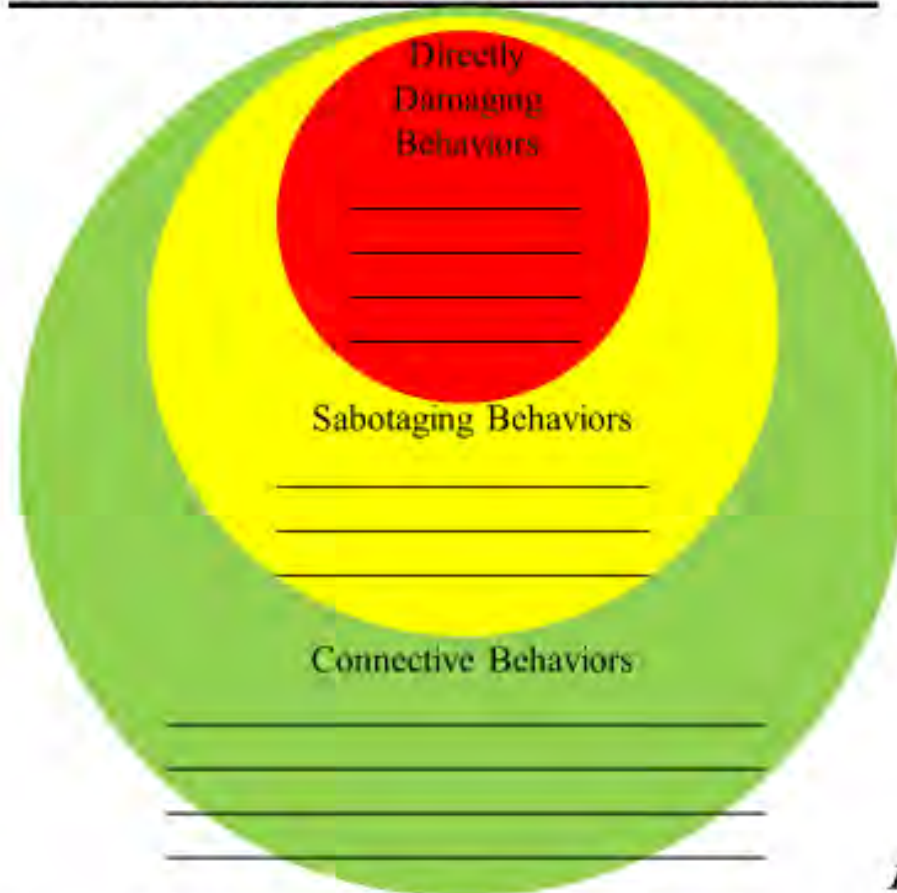
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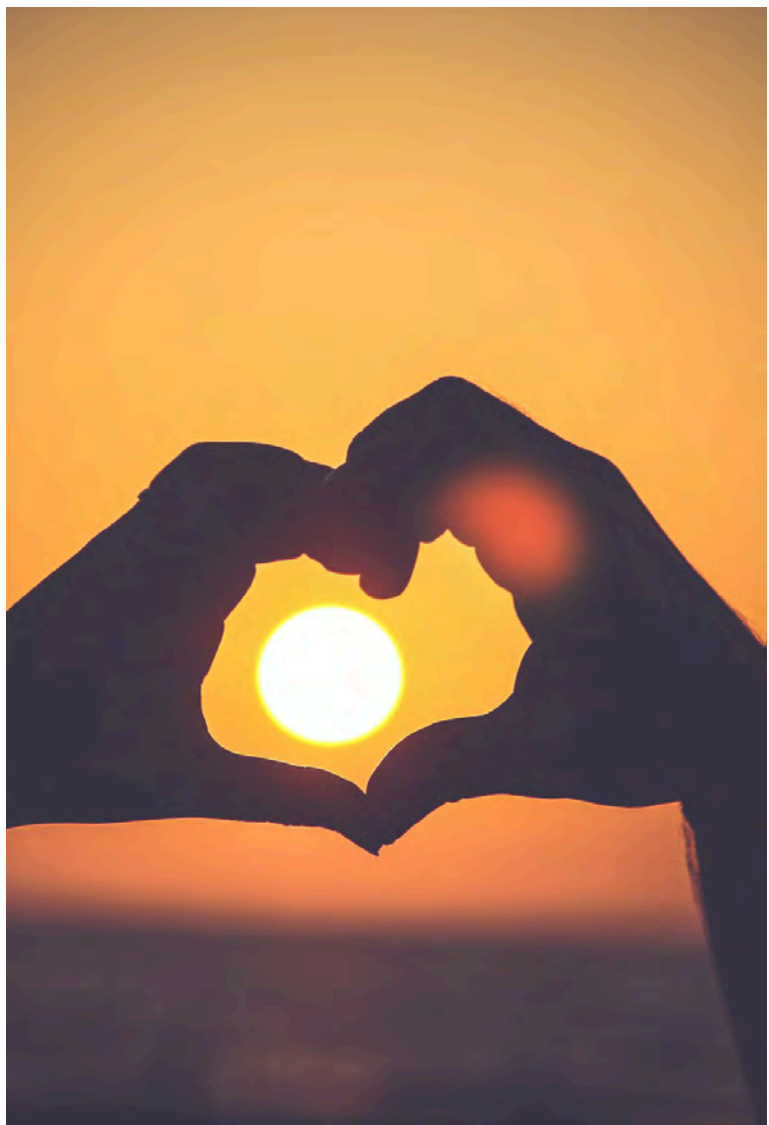
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## Our Relational Three Circles





## Phase 3: Attach – Healing Sexuality

1. Education – Defining Healthy Sexuality
2. Honesty – Owning & Processing Your Sexual Trauma
3. Boundaries – Creating Structure & Redefining Language
4. Communication – Self-Exploration
5. Connection – Sexual Intimacy

## Healthy Sexuality Is...

Connection to yourself and your body

The ability to share that connection with others in ways that allow each person to connect to themselves and to each other within their moral and relational standards when sharing is relationally safe

An individual and relational process that looks different for each person and couple



Each person's body  
belongs to that person

(Emily Nagoski, 2020)

YOU ARE  
NORMAL

“Whatever you’re experiencing in your sexuality . . . is the result of your sexual response mechanism functioning appropriately . . . in an inappropriate world.”  
(Emily Nagoski, 2015, p. 9)

Sex Is  
Often  
Used to  
Meet  
Three  
Different  
Needs

---

Sexual Release

---

Physical Touch

---

Emotional Connection

---

Accelerator – thoughts, feelings, sensory information that sends you messages to “turn on”

Brake – thoughts, feelings, sensory information that sends you messages to “turn off”

Accelerator  
and Brakes  
(Janssen &  
Bancroft, 2007)

**Be aware of the trauma  
they bring into the session –  
the denial of that trauma is  
retraumatizing**

(Jasmine Johnson & King Noire, 2021)

Listen to their experience without  
interjecting yourself or your experience

Don't minimize their experience or pain

Sexual Abuse  
Includes (but is not  
limited to):

- Touching you or making you touch yourself or someone else without your consent (note – children do not have the ability to give consent to adults or individuals who are significantly older than they are)
- Making you watch sexual acts
- Making you listen to or read sexual comments (aimed at you or others)
- Exposing you to sexual material without your consent (note – exposing children to sexually explicit material is abuse; they cannot consent)
- Breaching privacy boundaries with or without your knowledge (i.e., watching, photographing, or filming you without your permission, sharing sexual photos of you as a minor or without your permission)
- NOTE – not all child abuse comes from adults or even older children – children can abuse other children

Sexual Abuse in  
Relationships  
Includes (but is not  
limited to):

- Manipulation to participate in sexual activities
- Using threats to force participation in sexual activity
- Not honoring or allowing boundaries, sexually or physically
- Groping or touching without permission
- Refusal to stop sexual interactions (rape)
- Forced sexual interactions (up to and including rape)
- Breaching boundaries with or without the other person's knowledge (i.e., filming sexual interactions without permission, sharing sexual photos with others without permission)

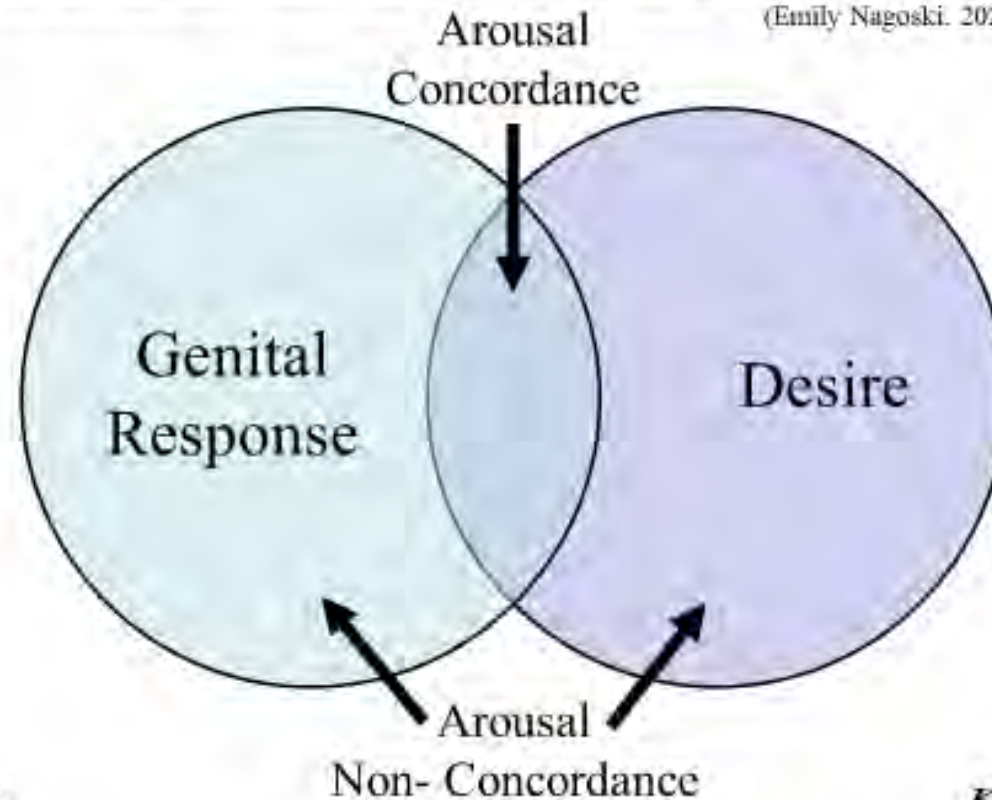
- Connects shame to sexual responses – victims of sexual abuse often “carry” the shame of their abusers (Pia Mellody)
- Shame and guilt over our own physical and emotional responses to our abuse
- Early exposure to sex – our brain can’t make sense of the physical and emotional sensations
- Teaches us that emotional vulnerability is not safe
- Teaches us that the only way to “connect” or feel loved is sex – that we will never be valued or loved as ourselves
- Teaches us that sex is the only thing about us that others want and the only way to get attention – the only way we know how to maintain any type of connection with others
- Teaches us that sex is about control rather than connection (being controlled by or controlling others)

## Effect of Abuse on Sexuality



# Arousal Non-Concordance

(Emily Nagoski, 2020)



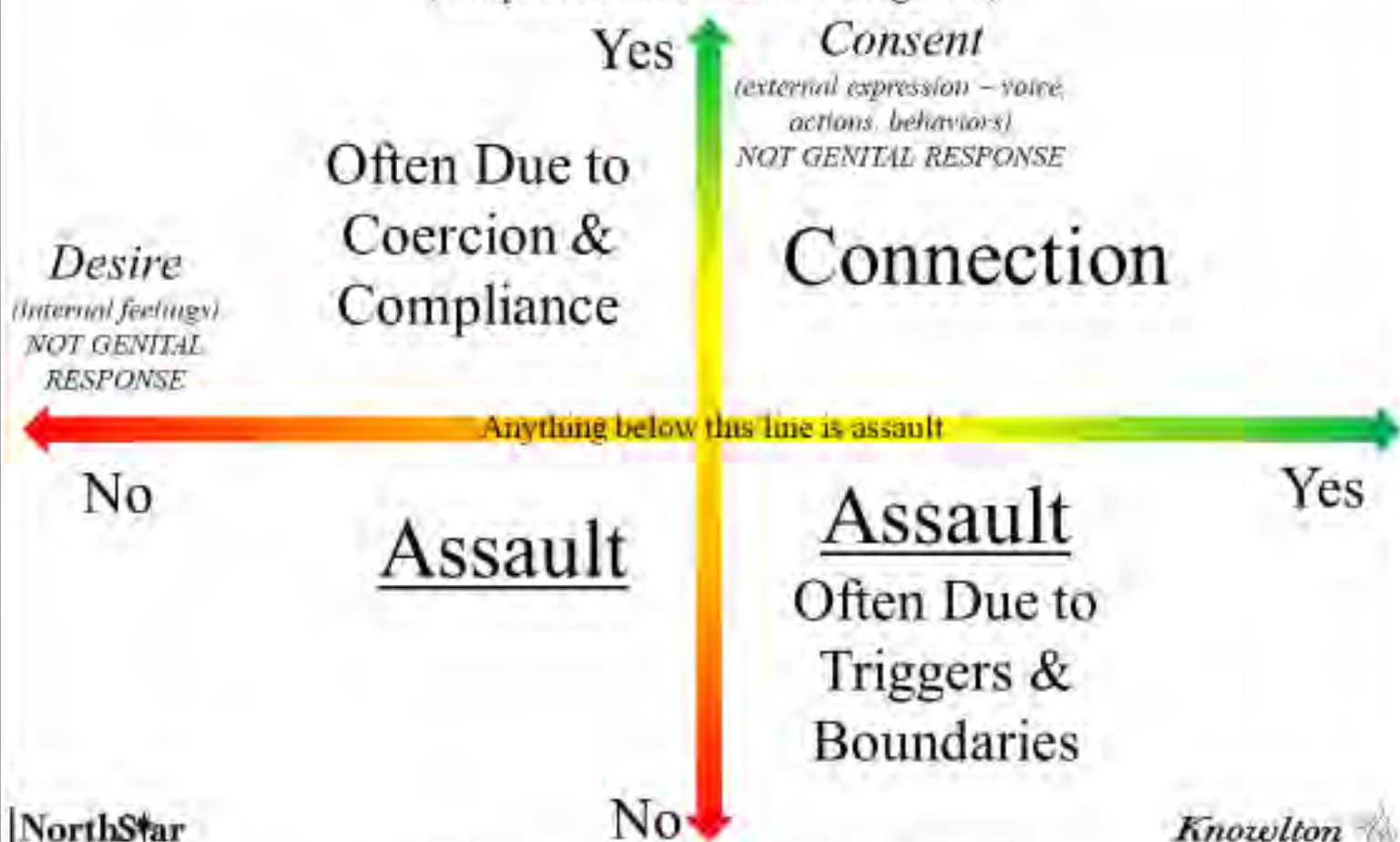
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# Consent Matrix

(Adapted from Dr. Zhana Vrangalova)



# Consent

(Tiana GlittersaurusRex, 2021)

All parties are aware of risks,  
benefits, and consequences

No level of coercion

No impaired judgment

Can be revoked **AT ANY TIME**

Includes empathy for past experiences  
(including intergenerational)

Given freely and enthusiastically (absence  
of “no” is NOT “yes”)

# “Can I trust you?”

(Brittle, the Gottman Institute, 2014)

## Definition of Betrayal

Destroying trust  
(vocabulary.com)

Failure to keep or honor a  
promise (dictionary.com)

Violation of a person's  
trust or confidence  
(Merriam-Webster.com)

# Effect of Betrayal on Sexuality

- Gaslighting makes betrayed partners question their own sexual reality (whether the partner knows about the betrayal or not) – taught that their view of sexuality is wrong and what they need, like, or want is wrong
- Betrayed partners are often ignored, mocked, or rejected when sexual needs or desires are expressed – taught they will never be loved or valued for themselves and will never be good enough
- Betrayed partners are often blamed for the betrayal – they, their partner, and social pressure often believe betrayal is caused by partners not meeting the betrayer's needs
- Betrayed partners are often sexual abused or harassed – groping, no boundaries allowed or honored, refusal to stop (rape), manipulation, forced sexual interactions (up to and including rape), threats of betrayal used to perpetuate behaviors



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## Owning (Acknowledging and Understanding) the Trauma

- Childhood, adolescence, and primary relationship (all three or any combination)
- Gaslighting
- Manipulation
- Objectification by others and self (particularly related to the addiction)
- Sexual abuse and/or harassment
- Domino effect
- Punishment for boundaries



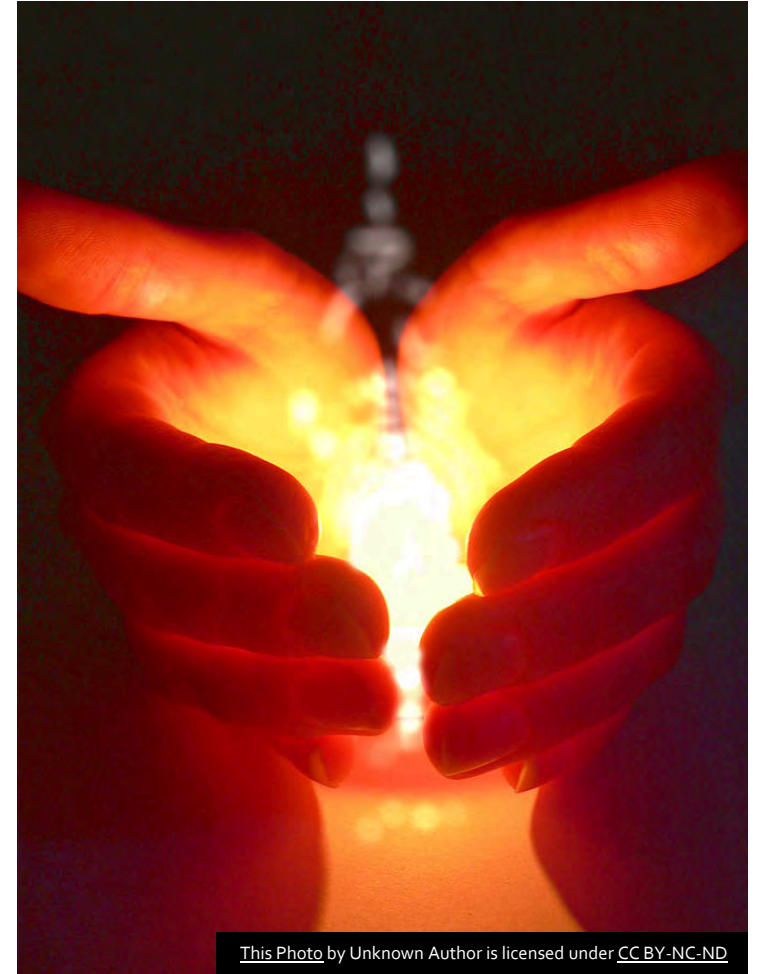
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# Objectification

# Healing the Trauma

- Sexual Trauma Impact Letter
- Sexual Trauma Egg
- Sexual Trauma Timeline
- Trauma Treatment - EMDR, SE, Brainspotting, Psychodrama
- Parts Work (IFS)



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# Self-Image

“It’s bigger than body image”

(Emily Nagoski, 2021)

It’s not just what we see – it’s what we need and want

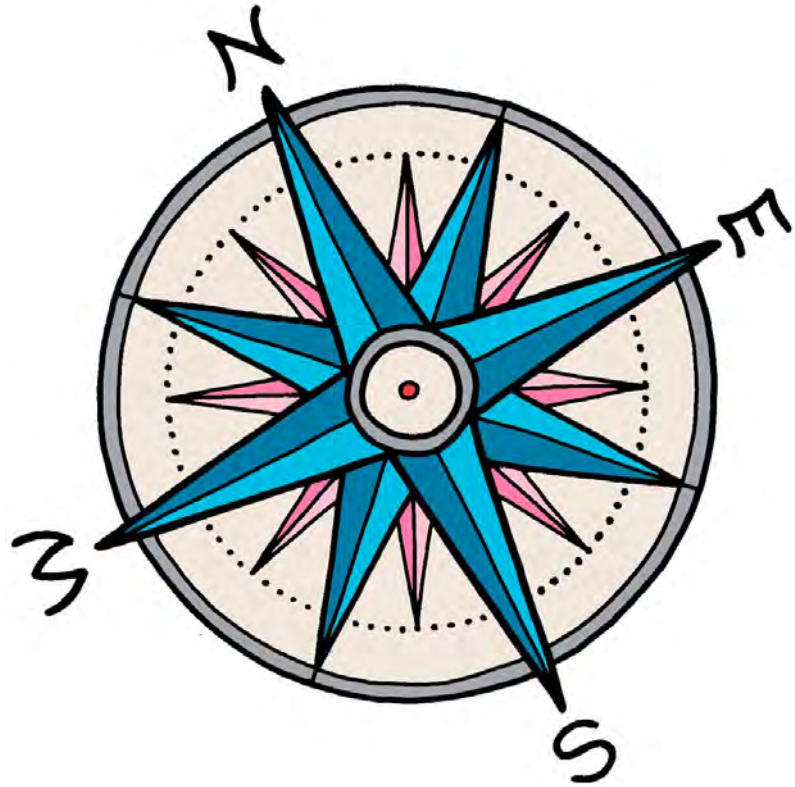
Love what’s true – outside, inside, limitations,  
strengths

Believe your internal experience

# The Body Is a Protector

(Sheri Keffer – CPTT Mod 1)





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# Self-Exploration

- Self-Exploration DOES NOT MEAN FORCED MASTURBATION
- Taking the steps to get to know your body
- Figure out what is safe for you – boundaries are essential
- Connect to yourself – what feels good to you emotionally and physically

## **Emotionally** **Safe Sex**

(MSTI Class Feedback, 2021)

Each Person is Respected

Each Person is Heard/Seen

Interactions are Equal/Balanced

Each Person has Limits/Boundaries

Interactive Communication

No Judgement (DOES NOT mean automatic compliance)

Trust

Each Person's Vulnerability is Honored

# Defining Sexual Success



- Building/strengthening connection to self and partner
- Each person having control over their body and what they choose to do with it
- Communicating boundaries and needs throughout the experience
- Staying congruent with self
- Maintaining emotional safety throughout the process

# 3 Phases of Coupled Recovery™

(Adapted from Gottman and Caudill & Drake)

**Phase 1: Atone –  
Establishing  
Truth & Safety**

## Steps 1-5

1. Trauma & Addiction
2. Moral Inventory or Disclosure/Amends
3. Accountability
4. Time-Outs
5. Check-ins

**Phase 2: Attune –  
Building Empathy  
& Connection**

## Steps 6-10

6. Emotions, Needs, & Triggers
7. Owning & Processing Your Emotions
8. Sharing Your Emotions
9. Call & Respond
10. Developing & Expressing Empathy

**Phase 3: Attach –  
Healing Sexuality**

## Steps 11-15

11. Defining Healthy Sexuality
12. Owning & Processing Your Sexual Trauma
13. Creating Structure & Redefining Language
14. Self-Exploration
15. Sexual Connection

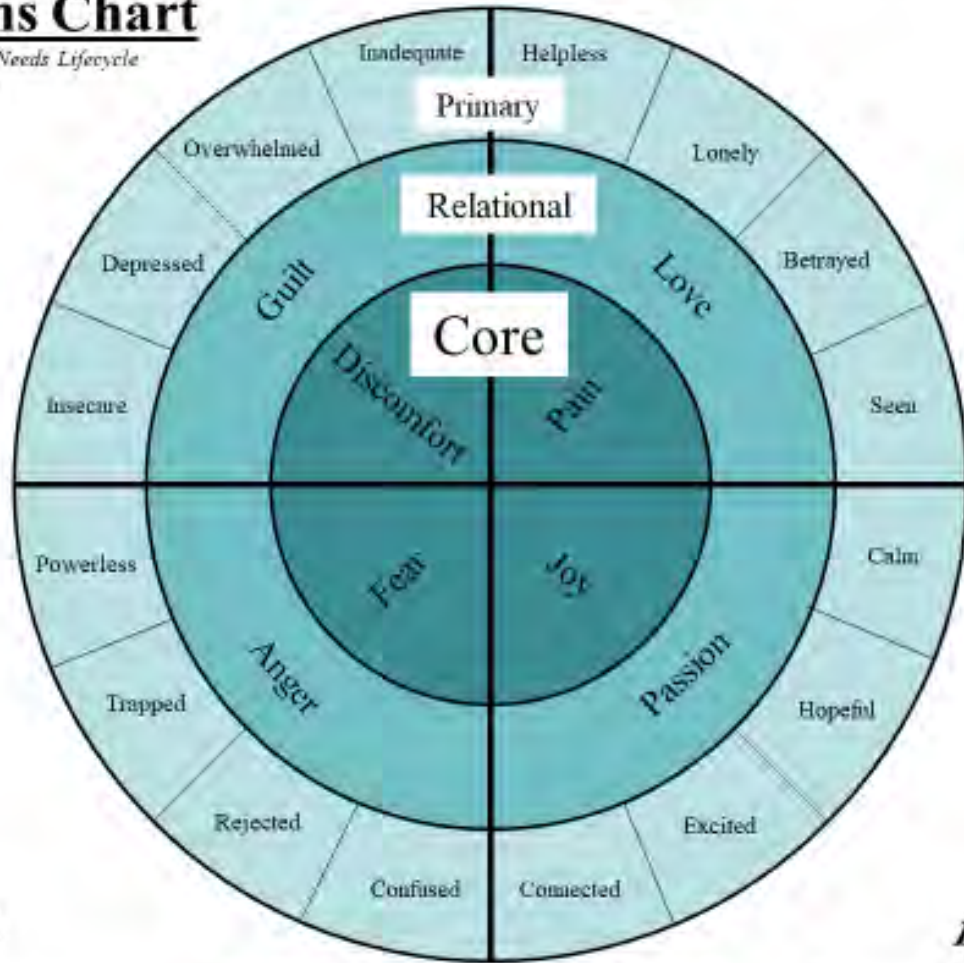
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# Emotions Chart

Adapted from *Wants/Needs Lifecycle*  
Gene Klassen (2021)



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The PowerPoint from this presentation and materials included in it are available at [www.NorthStarRC.com](http://www.NorthStarRC.com)

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