

SELF-CARE

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Aims of session

Recognise and understand compassion fatigue

Psychological models that help us to understand our own stress responses

Holding onto compassion in our work

Strategies to increase calm to our regulatory systems

5 minute my space

Setting the Scene

Emotionally demanding

Distressing stories

Patients & families in state of high stress

Complexity, uncertainty, anxieties

Disease trajectory

Demands frequently outstrip our capacity

Patients and families often at different stages of adjustment to diagnosis

Compassion

*'Deep awareness
of the suffering of
another and desire
to relieve it'*

Compassion is
really difficult to
maintain- it's
exhausting!

High levels of
wellbeing needed
to offer & sustain
compassion

Compassion
towards ourselves
and others

Compassion Fatigue

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet” (Remen, 1996)

‘Running on empty’.

Compassion fatigue has been described as the “cost of caring” for others in emotional and physical pain (Figley, 1982).

Physical and emotional exhaustion and a reduction in ability to feel empathy for patients, loved ones and colleagues.

Attacks the very core of what brought us into this work: our empathy and compassion for others.



Emotional Labour (Brotheridge & Lee)

The effort needed to maintain a professional façade

Invisible part of the job

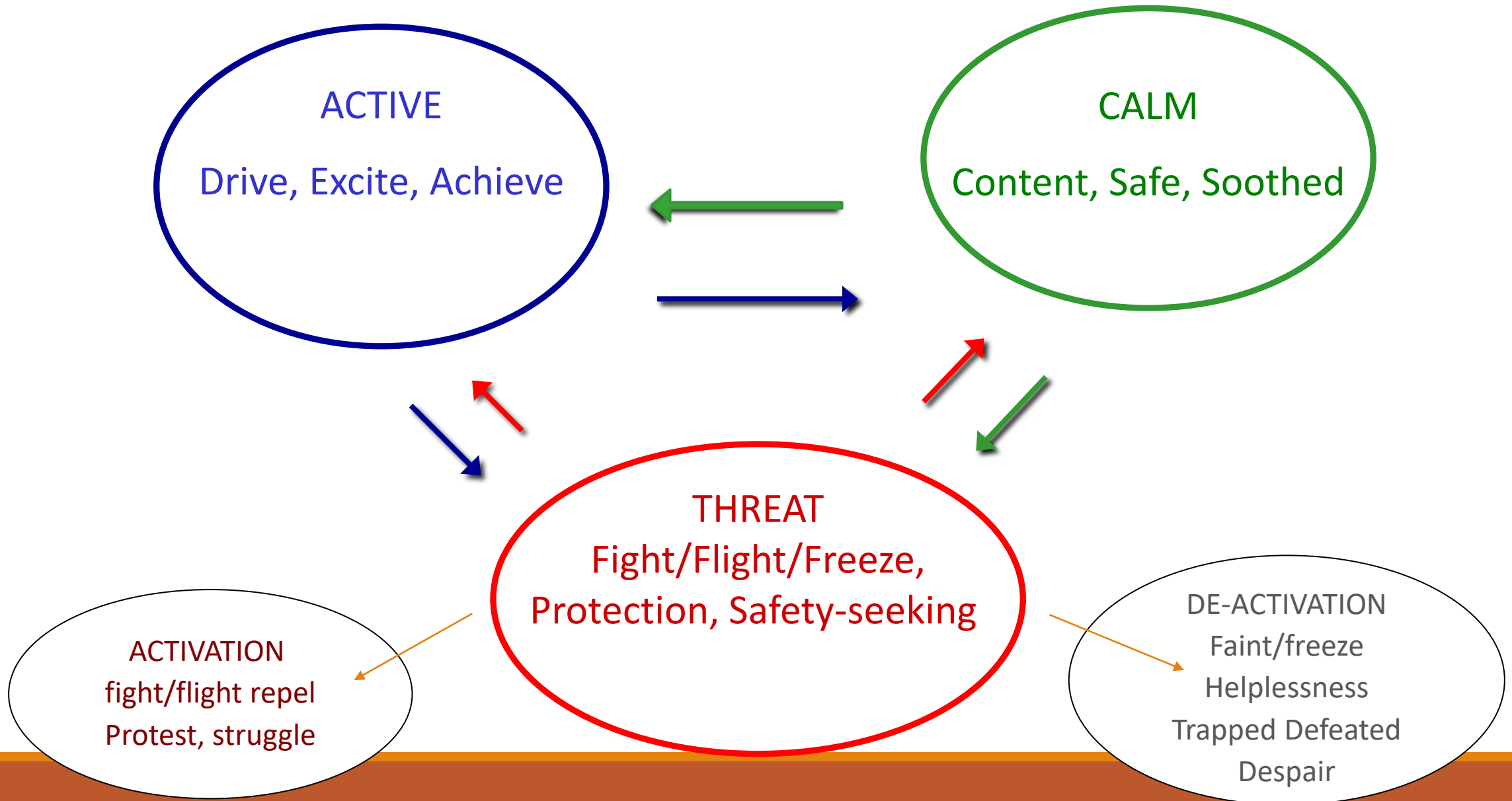
The effort it takes to manage your real feelings, while presenting the emotions that are required by your role

In professional health care emotional load is high

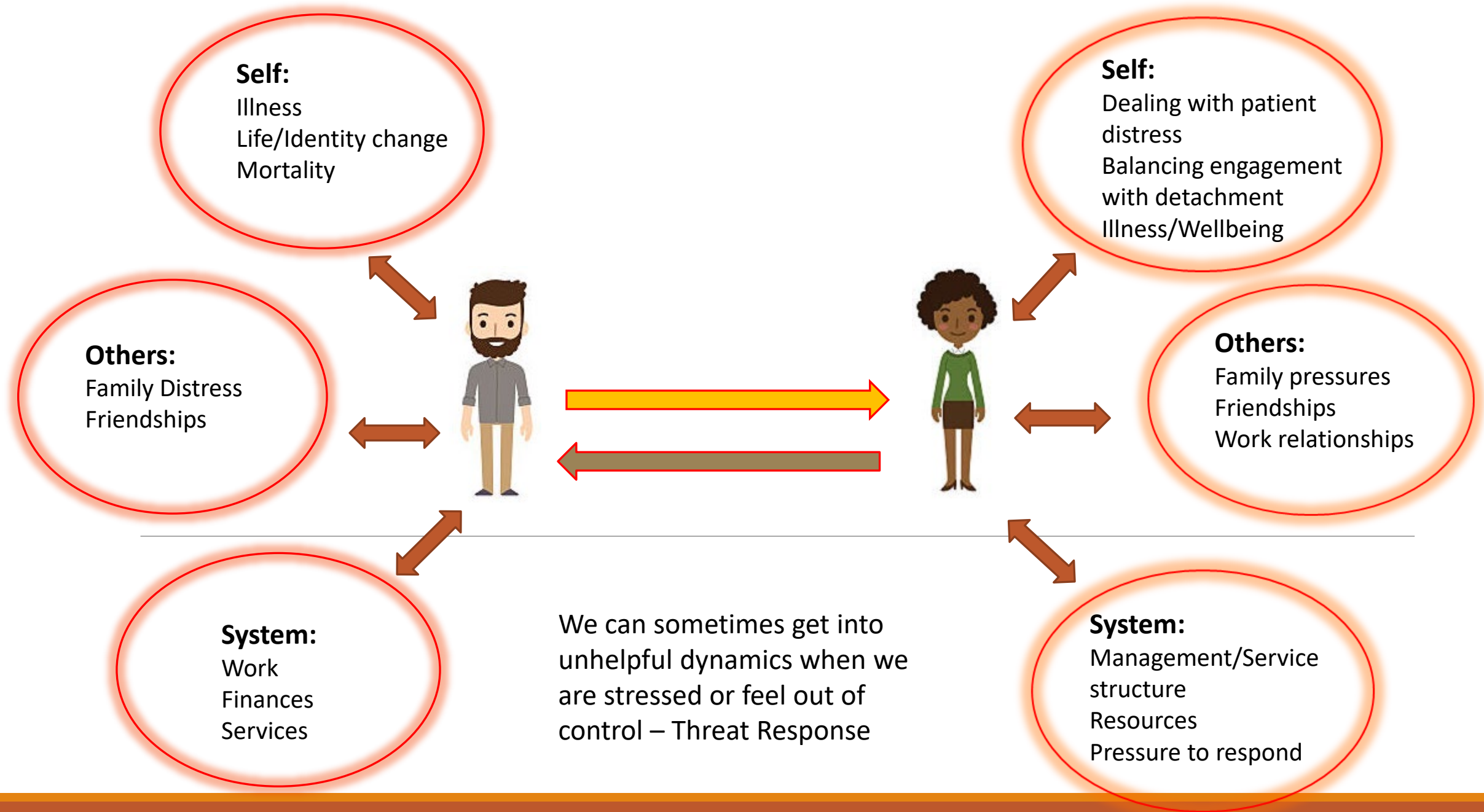
Requires huge effort to sustain

What systems are in place for us to cope with this?

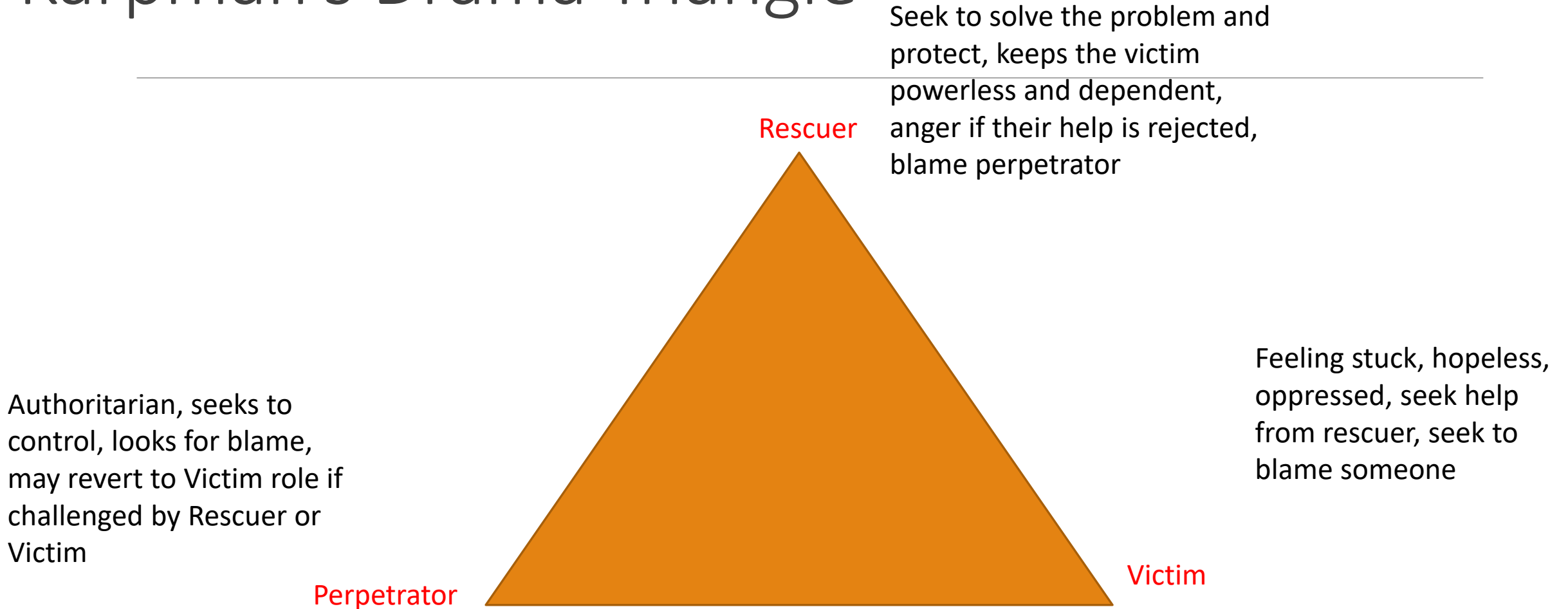
Affect Regulator Systems (CFT)







Karpman's Drama Triangle



When responding to distress, each player/person is engaged in meeting their own needs rather than the problem/dysfunction as a whole (these can be learnt or habitual roles)

Strategies to Increase Calm Regulatory System

- Understanding yourself (triggers, beliefs, unhelpful patterns of behaviour/thoughts, roles) and relationship dynamics
- Notice your affect (Threat, Drive, Calm)
- Rescuer: Be a 'Coach' –encourage the Victim to develop independent solutions, remembering you are part of a team, not on your own
- Victim: Be a 'Creator' – solution focus rather than problem focus, resist dependency on others to solve the problem, to see perpetrator as person who is in experiencing threat
- Perpetrator: Be a 'Challenger' –encourage discussion of views & ideas, notice your own emotional reaction to frustration/anger
- Mindfulness/Here & Now (breathing, awareness of body, awareness of thoughts and beliefs)



Strategies to Increase Calm Regulatory System

- Acceptance/Thought Defusion (learning to disconnect what your MIND is doing and what is YOU, learning to hold difficult feelings and emotions – acknowledging their presence without judging or acting on them automatically)

(13) Defusion - I'm noticing I'm having the thought... - YouTube



- Commitment (understanding what is important to you in life and doing more of it, understanding your values)

(13) Demystifying ACT - Committed Action - YouTube



Exercise 6-minute Me Space

Round 1: ***“What does caring for yourself mean to you?”*** (4 mins- 2 mins each)

Take a turn to be the ‘thinker’ and the ‘listener’. In this scenario we advise that you time your thinking turn, so that you each get equal time. Decide who will listen first and who will think first. If using #5minMeSpace by yourself, you can successfully act as both thinker and listener.

Round 2: ***“To be wise, kind and compassionate towards myself I will...”*** [2 mins- 1 minute each]

When you have finished answering the first question, we invite you to move on to a self-care intention. Remember, that some of the most compassionate people put others first and themselves last. Thinking about caring for ourselves often takes practice

Resources

[Free meditations from Mindfulness - Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World | Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World](#)

[Free Videos | ACT Mindfully](#)

[60-Minute Compassion Circles | Compassion Practices](#)