

*My Deepest Gratitude and Thanksgiving to ...*



*Drs. Sarche, Emde, and Sparrow  
and the whole committee  
for your confidence in bringing me ...  
it's a deep honor and privilege for me to bring  
Reflective Supervision as Staff Wellness here !*

# **Reflective Supervision IS Staff Wellness**

## **What it Is, How it Works, & Something to Take with You**

*Native Children's Research Exchange*

*NCRE*

*Aurora, Colorado, 30 September 2016*

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*Relationships for Growth & Learning*

New School for Social Research

New York City

*I am (trying to) learn to listen deeply, but I am asked to speak ...*



## A Blessing

Candace Fleming

Today we have gathered and see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with one another and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and gratitude to each other as people.

Now our minds are one.

# Our Agenda Today

- Define Reflective Supervision
  - In terms of research, R S is where “relationship” was 35-ish years ago
- Basics of reflective, relational supervision and of developmental processes
- Parallel Process – What children need, adults also need all our lives
- History of Reflective Supervision (probably not)
- Consider the next frontier for R S – Bridging Reflective Supervision into existing systems (probably not) and
- Integrating Mindful practice into Early Childhood and Reflective Supervision



.



- The two sessions today may promote
  - Discussion about current systemic supervisory needs.
- Creating space and time for Reflective Practice
  - Bottom up:
    - Focus on tools that may shift a meeting towards reflection
    - Transformation – how to make time where there appears to be none
  - Top down:
    - Consider setting up a body to figure out how to truly move Reflective Supervision into the core of your services **with research at the center.**

# Reflective Supervision is a RELATIONSHIP for Learning

The partnership nurtures a process of remembering, reviewing, and thinking out loud about a specific child, the people who surround that child, and what happens (or doesn't) between them...It could be said that reflective supervision enhances vision, clarifying what is seen and even what is see-able. In a real sense, the effect of reflective supervision is that it

nourishes

*“super vision”*

– the ability to see further, deeper and more.”

... Shahmoon-Shanok, 2006, p.343



# This is what we DO: Phases of a Reflective Supervision Meeting

- Preparation
- Greet - (Re)Connect
- Open the dialogue - Co-Construct the agenda
- Tell the story – Find the details
- Understand perspectives – Generate hypotheses
- Consider next steps
- Post supervision reflection

Shanok, R. S., Gilkerson, L. Eggbeer, L. & Fenichel, E. , (1995)



But *how*  
does  
Reflective  
Supervision  
enhance vision?



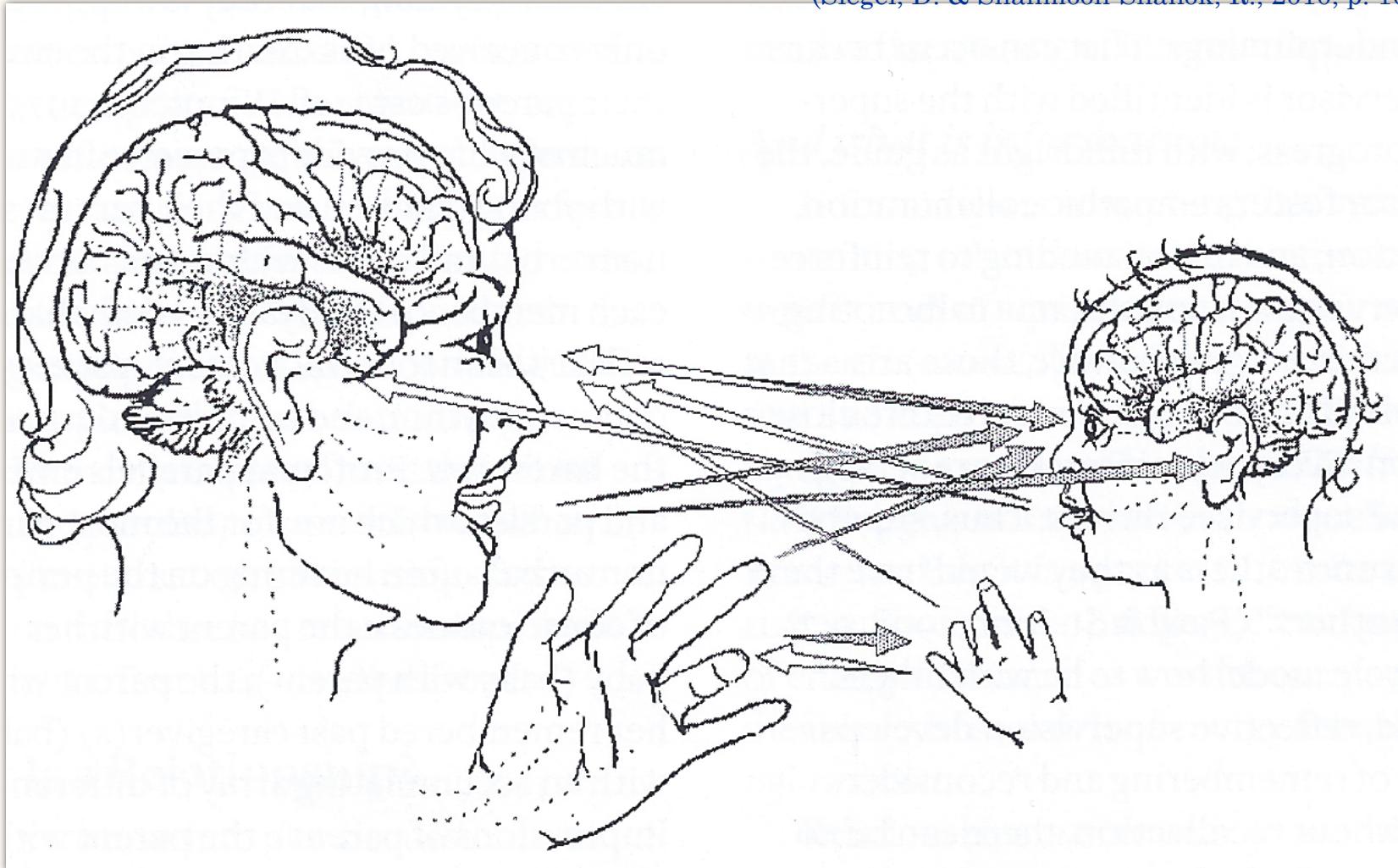
As in early development,  
within Reflective Supervision  
Contents of Mind Become  
*Shared Attention and Experience*

(It's a Blessing: Now Our Minds Are One)

# Modalities of Mother-Infant Bidirectional Exchange

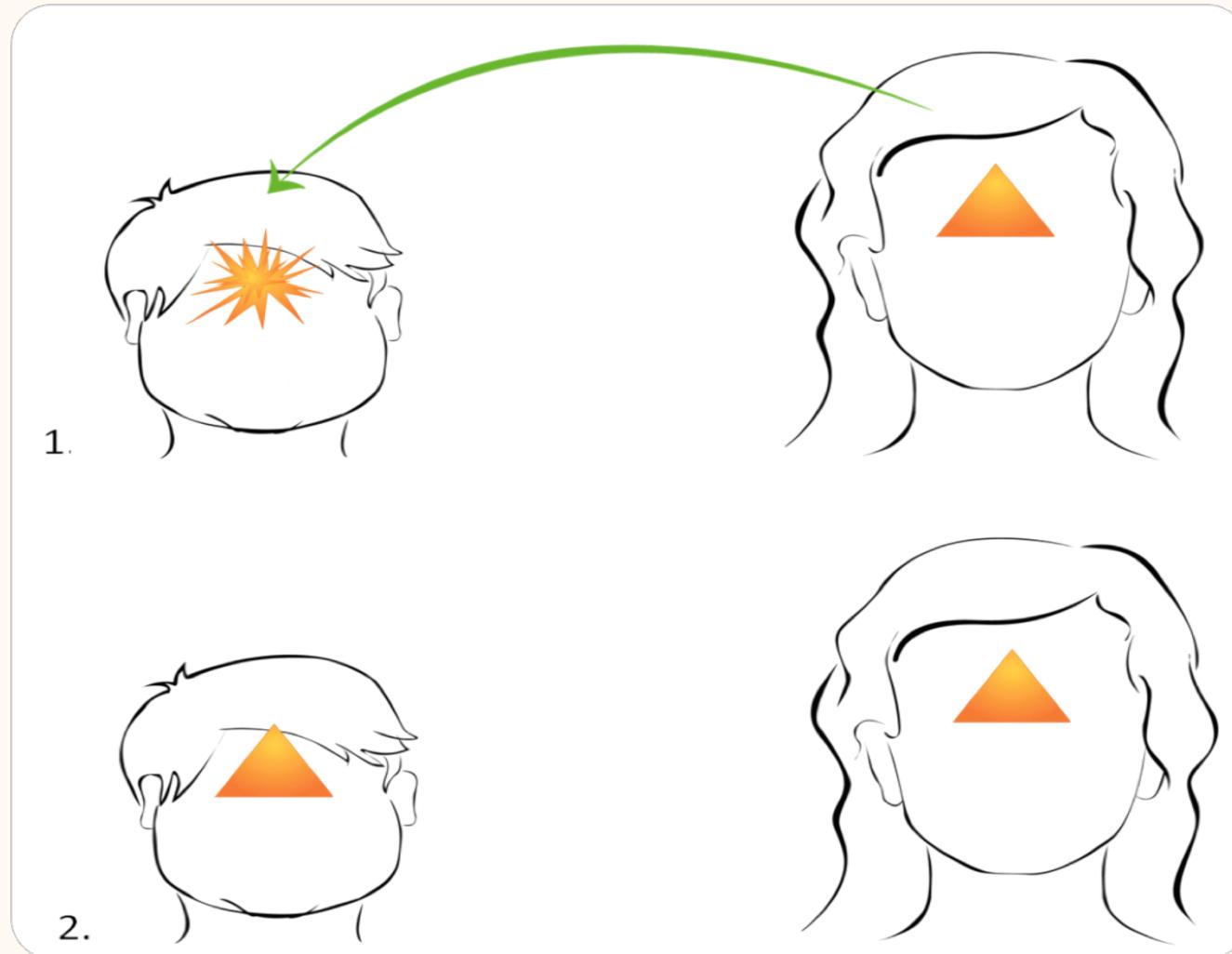
Relationships are created by the sharing of energy and information flow.

(Siegel, D. & Shahmoon-Shanok, R., 2010, p. 10)



Mirror neurons → Imitation → Communication → Modeling →  
Empathy → Mismatches → Negotiations → Repairs

# Relationships Help a Supervisee, Parent, or Child Identify and (Co)Regulate Self-Emotional States



# Reflection is an Emotional and a Cognitive Process



- Involves exploration and support in making new connections between experiences and knowledge
- Involves challenges from self or other to consider different perspectives
- In MIECHV, in childcare, and in other systems, we (hope to) address Physical Health, Developmental Health and Relational Health (plus Spiritual, Community, and Public Health)
- There are Parallels between taking care of children, taking care of parents, and taking care of ourselves

# What does Reflection Look Like in Action?



- Respect
- Active Listening
- Open Body Language
- Open-ended Questions
- “Wait Time”
- Inviting and Containing
- Gentle Tentative Interpretation/Validating Feelings
- Asking Follow-up Questions
- Sharing power
- Being WITH the supervisee



**Reflective functioning,** a scientific term for reflection (which can be measured), is the capacity for attunement to the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others and ourselves— which allows us to attend to the complex relationships in our work.

# Reflective function is



- The capacity to **recognize “mental states”** – feelings, thoughts, intentions – in yourself and others:
  - *I'm feeling anxious about this home visit ...*
- The capacity to **link mental states to behavior**:
  - *I wonder if that mom is “no showing” because she is worried that I will judge her.*
- A necessary skill for **all human service providers**:
  - *Skilled reflective supervisors infuse reflective practice/functioning into all aspects of their supervision and help the staff they supervise infuse it into their work.*



*“...it is not possible to work on behalf of human beings to try to help them without having powerful feelings aroused in oneself*

... Jeree Pawl

Reflective supervision provides a respectful, thoughtful atmosphere for exchange of information, thoughts and feelings about the things that arise in and around one's work.

# Applying Reflection within Supervision



- **Look** - What do you know and what can you learn about this supervisee?
- **Listen** – What is *her* perspective? What emotions does s/he embody now and in the past?
- **Learn** – Develop your “best guess” as to what’s going on. Identify your intention for the next step and what response from you would best support her work … a question, silence, acknowledgement, a murmured “mm-mm-hmm”. Stay close to her or his process.

Adapted from Parlakian, 2001

# When it is going well, reflective supervision is



*... a holding environment, a place to feel secure enough to expose insecurities, mistakes, questions, and differences. Supervision parallels good work with families, the place for parents and children to feel safe enough to recognize the worst and best of their feelings and capabilities with a partner who helps them get when they need to go.*

*Rebecca Shahmoon-Shanok, 1991*

*Yesterday Sarah Watamura said that many people who are good at caring for others are not good at caring for themselves*

# Self-Compassion



“Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings—after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?”

Dr. Kristin Neff

# The Three Elements of Self-Compassion

- Self-kindness vs. Self-judgment
  - Accept imperfections and difficulties as inevitable
  - Denial leads to stress and frustration
- Common Humanity vs. Isolation
  - Everyone suffers and makes mistakes
  - Feeling inadequate is a shared human experience
- Mindfulness vs. Over-identification
  - Balance between suppression and exaggeration of emotions



# Attachment Equals Safety

It is an affectionate bond between an individual and an attachment figure, usually a caregiver. Between a child and caregiver, these bonds are based on the **child's need for safety, security and protection,** which are fundamental in infancy and childhood.

John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth

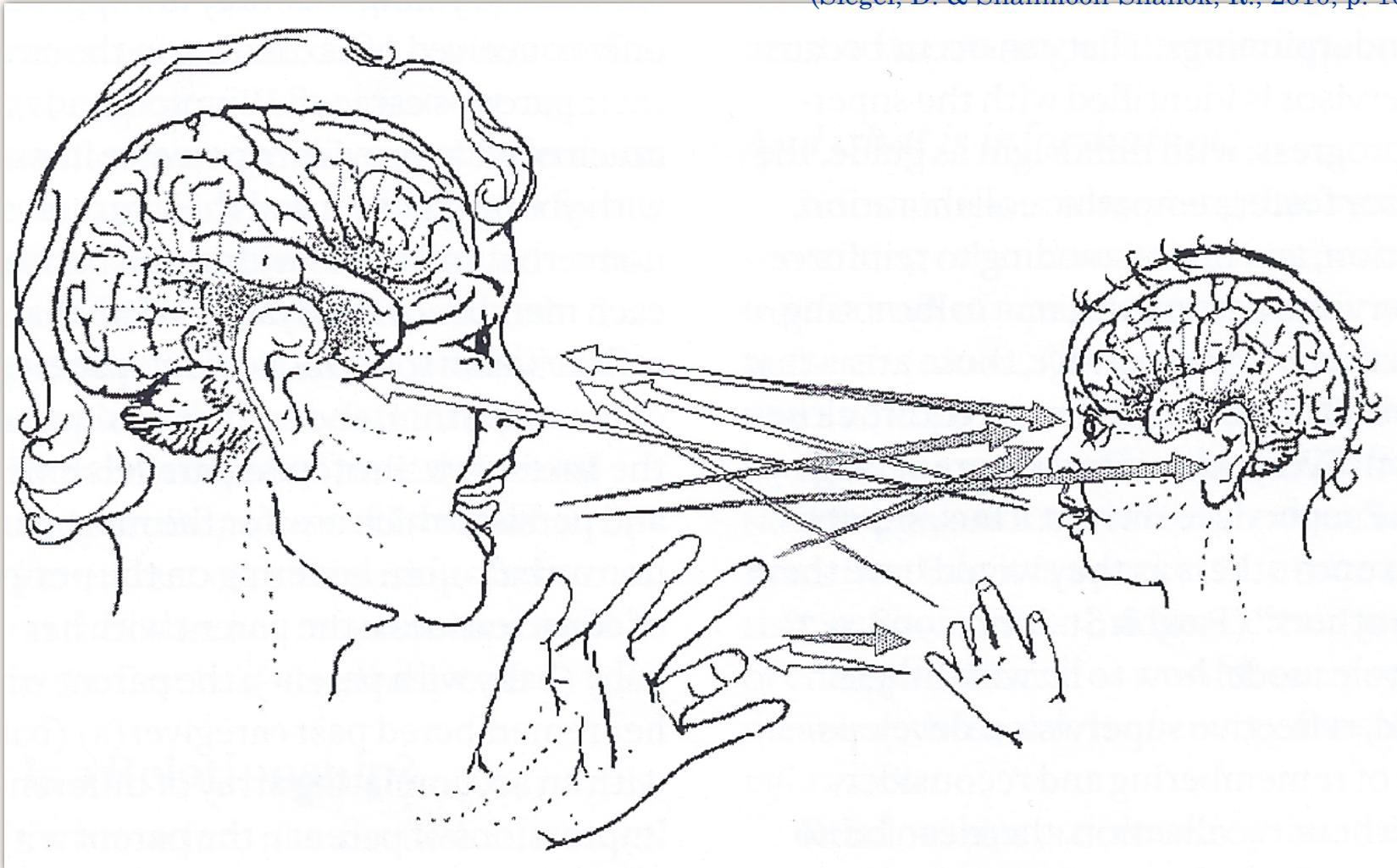
What is true in childhood is true forever.  
We all need a relationship that is a safe haven,  
the steady place from which we can venture out  
to explore.



# Modalities of Mother-Infant Bidirectional Exchange

Relationships are created by the sharing of energy and information flow.

(Siegel, D. & Shahmoon-Shanok, R., 2010, p. 10)



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# Interpersonal Neurobiology and Mutual Regulation



The drawing suggests lively engagement of all sensory-perceptual domains in and by both the child and the caregiver. The impact upon brain development is suggested, particularly in the younger, more vulnerable partner.

Each prompts an effect upon the other, whether the pair is a parent and child, as suggested in this drawing, or two adults, like two of us, or a group, or a provider--- any of us --- and a child and parent(s) who need(s) help.

# Parallel Process



... the ripple feature of relationships, especially ... hierarchical ones (like an adult with a child), (are) called “parallel process” — that is,

what happens in one set of relationships

has an impact on

other key relationships ...

*(Siegel & Shahmoon-Shanok, 2010, p.8).*

# PARALLEL PROCESS

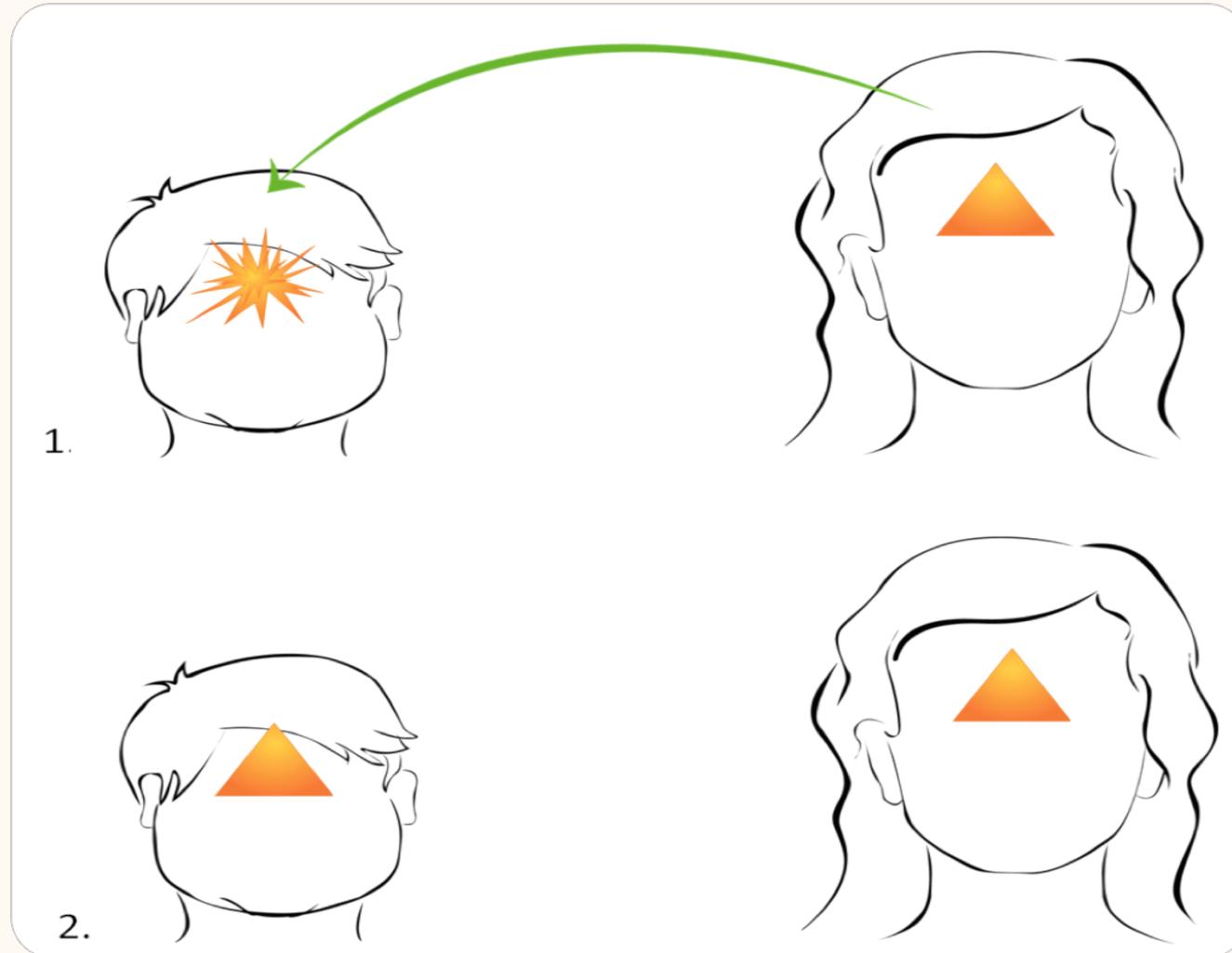
- Based on mirror neurons?
- It's the pass-it-on feeling from one to another
- Emotions are catchy

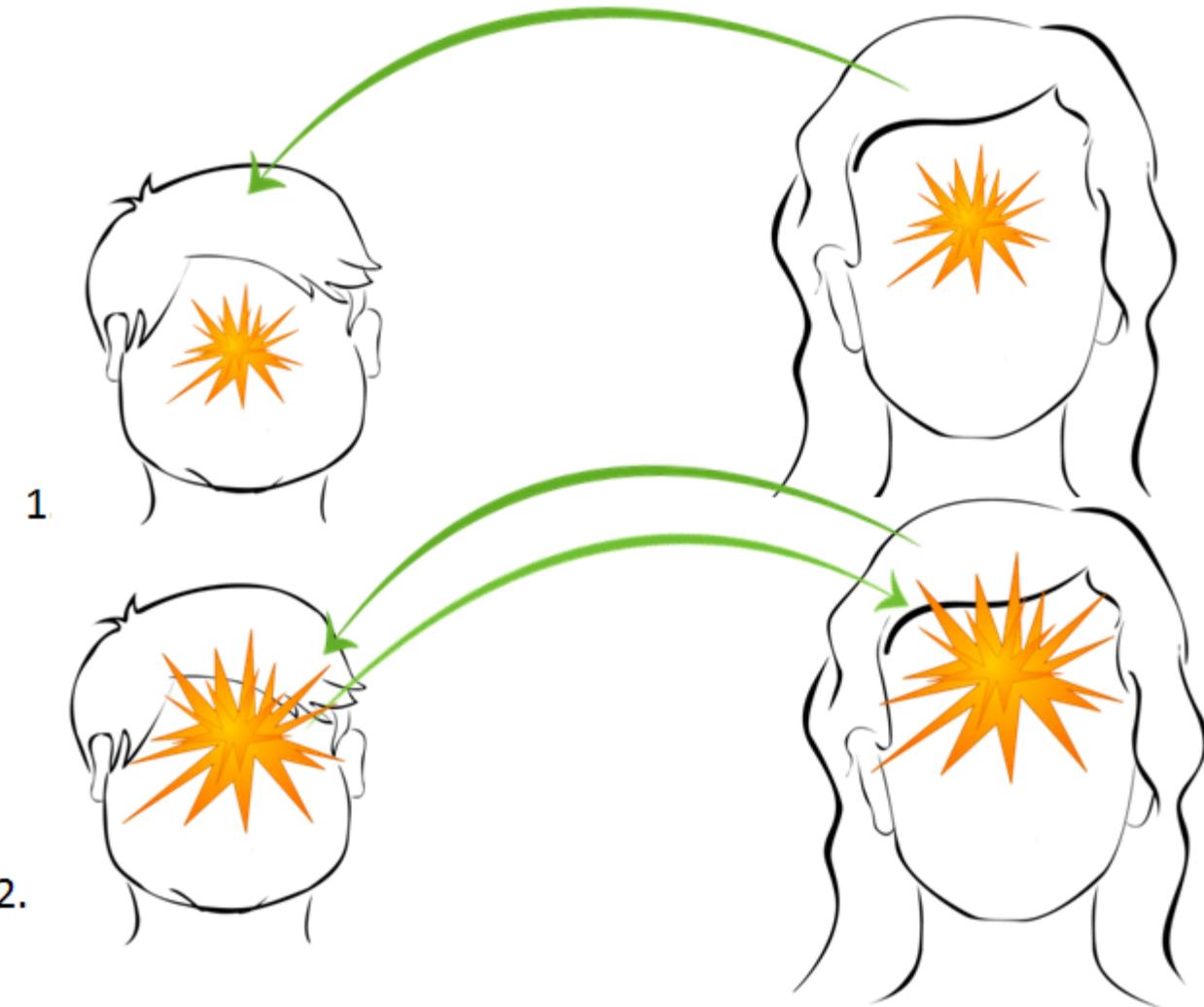




Become aware of  
**STATE**  
(Like a rushing Waterfall)

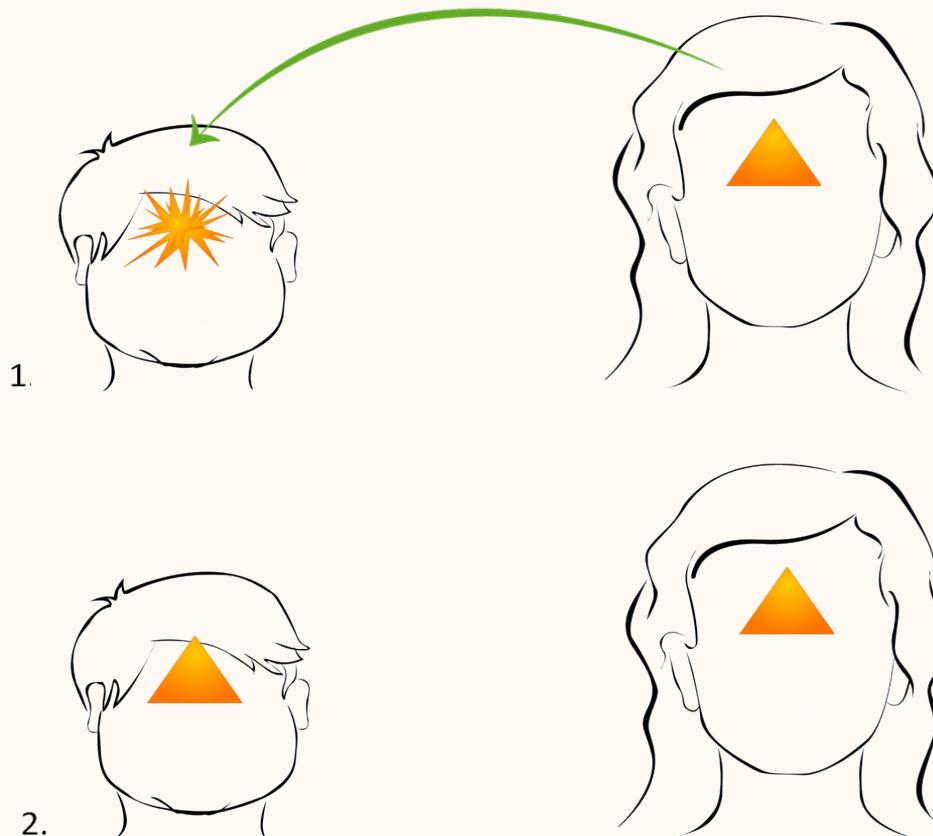
# Relationships Help a Supervisee, Parent, or Child Identify and (Co)Regulate Self-Emotional States





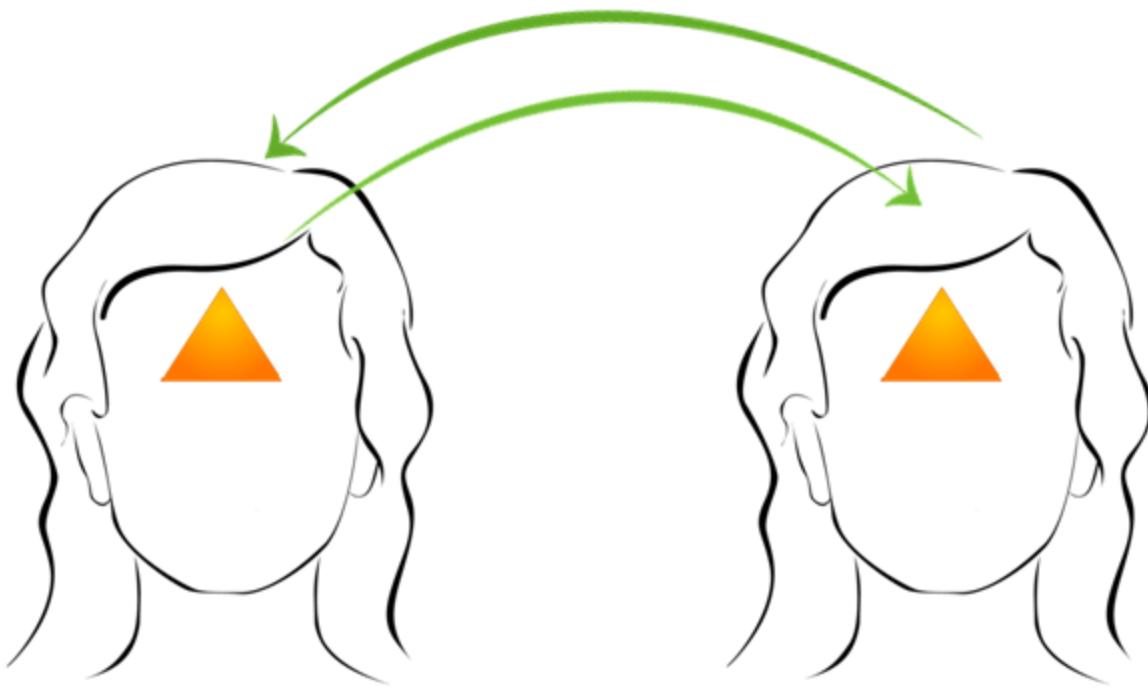
# Disorganizing States

(Bekar & Shahmoon-Shanok, 2012)



**Figure 1. How Relationships Help a Child Identify and Regulate Self-Emotional States**

This figure suggests an observant adult who accurately selects the child's probable emotional state and mirrors it to the child. In this process called mentalization, the child feels understood, calms and receives emotion-definition from the empathizing parent. With a secure parent, this typically occurs many times a day. Mentalization refers to the awareness and understanding of "mental" states of one's self and of others, as well as making accurate connections between them and observable actions (Allen, 2006; Sharp & Fonagy, 2007). Other terms for the ability to conceive of our own and others' minds include intersubjectivity, mind-mindedness, theory of mind, reflective function and Siegel's "mindsight." These are related theoretical constructs as well as observable, evidence-based capacities associated with the development of secure attachment in the first two or three years of life (Fonagy et al, 1991; Steele & Steele, 2008). The facility helps children think about their feelings rather than becoming overwhelmed.



# Organizing States

(Bekar & Shahmoon-Shanok, 2012)

# Transformational Leadership

is a style of leadership where a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group.



# Transformational Leadership

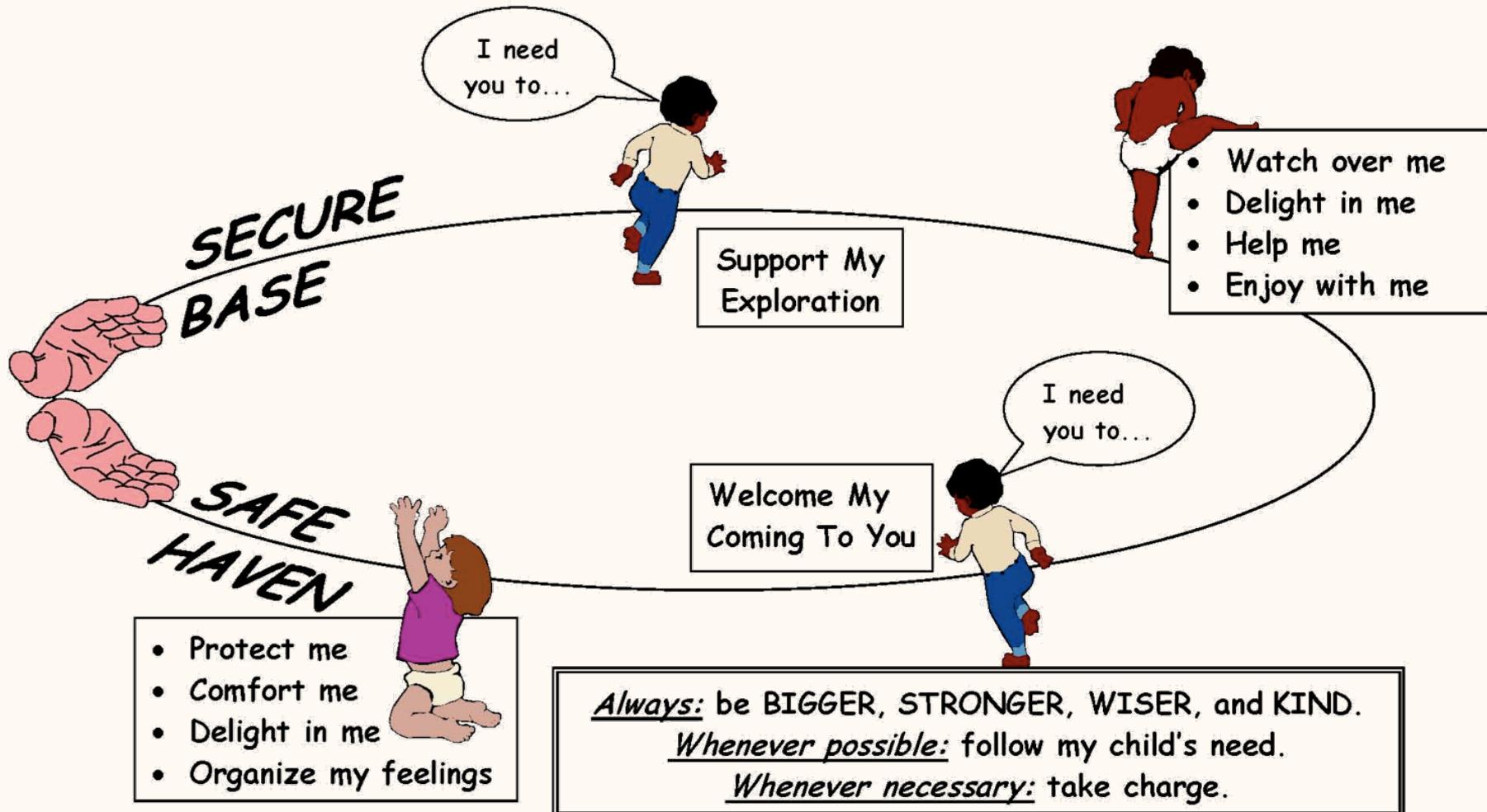
Mind tools > Leadership Skills

- Bass defined

Transformational Leadership as a process where *“leaders and their followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.”* --Bernard M. Bass

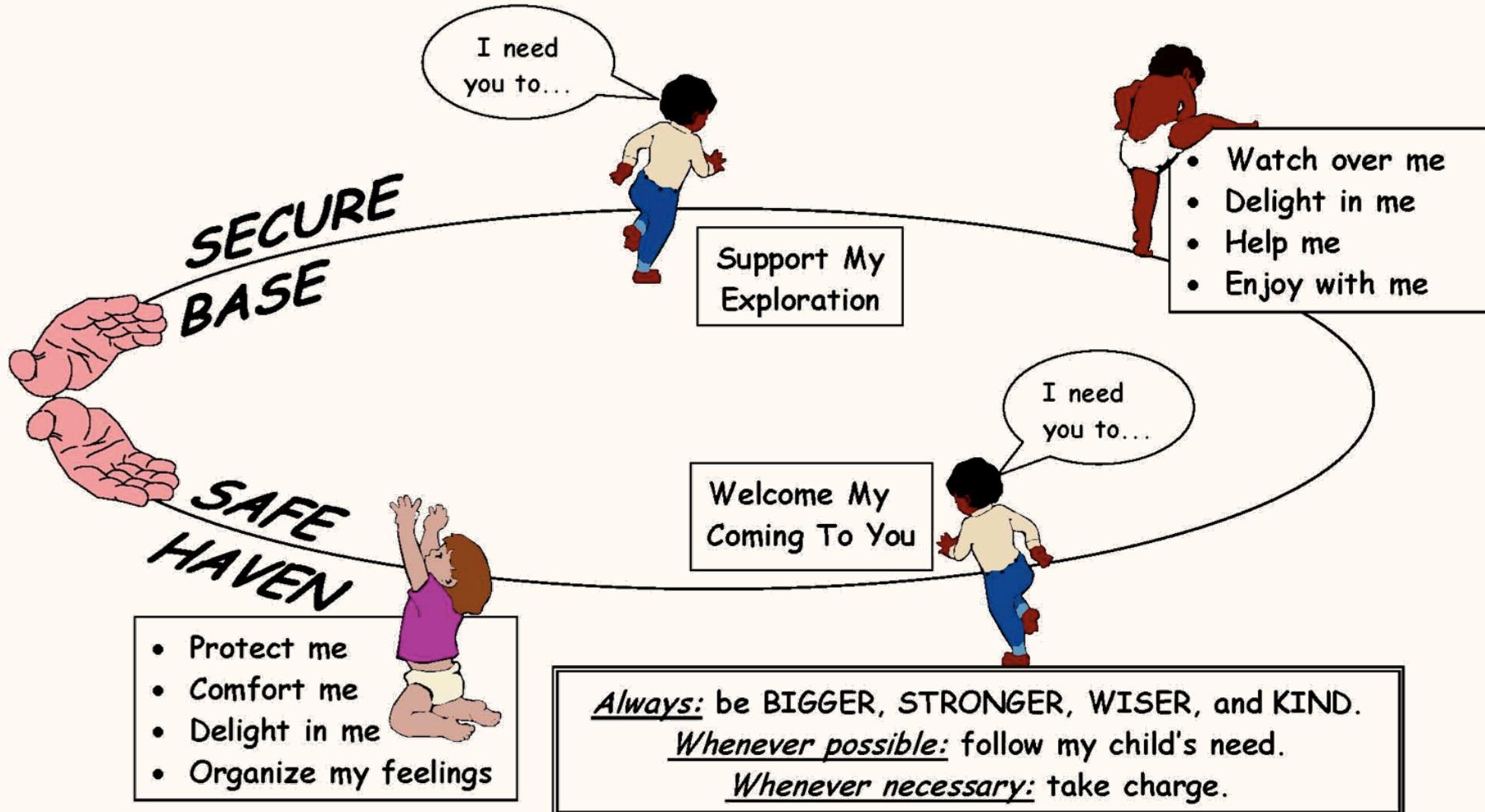
# Circle of Security

Parent attending to the child's needs.



# Circle of Security

Reflective supervisor  
attending to the supervisee's needs.





# Implementing Reflective Supervision

- Try to be regular, predictable, have ample time, with each session 45 to 60 minutes
- If only monthly, try for be 90 minutes (so it may as well occur bi-weekly)
- Group or individual supervision? Or both?!



Reflective Supervision promotes collaborative, collegial interactions among staff. But how do we ...

- Help people identify and work on their areas for growth?
- Do what they have to do, like record-keeping and other, often changing and onerous, demands?

**How do we evaluate, monitor  
levels of service and also keep  
supervisees feeling  
safe?**

**By being on supervisees' side  
and sharing power with them.**

How do we say what we mean in a way that the other person can *hear* what we say?

- Be clear about the message, AND
  - Be with the receiver, hear through their ears
  - Activate your compassion, create Safety
  - Care for their career, care for them
  - Identify with their goals
  - Self- and mutual-regulation
  - Support strengths, Partner vulnerabilities
  - *What does the person before you think is her-his “growing edge”?*

# Finding Time



- How do we “make” time?
- From where do we take the time?
- To what do we give it?
- *Taking time makes time!*

# Investment in reflective time leads to

- Building team members' knowledge of one another, streamlining negotiations
- Supervisors having increased confidence in the abilities of their staff
- Staff having increased confidence in their own competence
- Freeing supervisors from “micromanaging” mini-crises throughout the day
- STAFF WELLNESS



# Self-Care



- Self care is any intentional actions you take to care for your physical, mental, and emotional health.
- Self care is a viable option, but is it a “cop-out” by employers (and society)?
- Our work is stress-filled: underpaid, undervalued, long hours, too many kids, too many traumatized parents ... what else?

# Self Care and Our Work

- Employers could offer something that is caring, patient and calms people down.
- And WE can offer it to ourselves and one another ...
- Since the late 1970s, research has demonstrated both physical and (develop)mental health benefits of turning inward for some time each day.
- This can be done individually or in a group.
  - Story of a childcare center with a screaming teacher

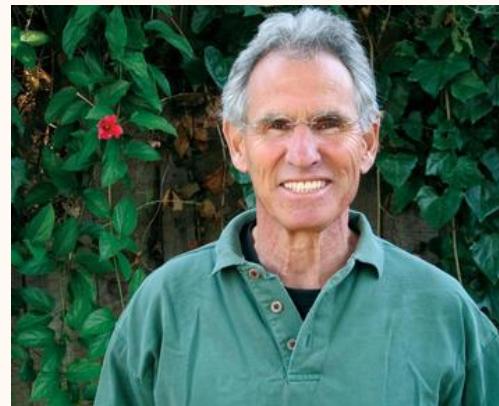


Jon Kabat-Zinn developed a stress reduction approach called

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)  
within the

University of Massachusetts Medical School

1979.



# **Enormous Number of Studies: Mindfulness Reduces Stress and Improves Physical Health & Emotional Well-Being**

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR, Kabat-Zinn, 2003) is beneficial for physical health lowering blood pressure, preventing recurrence of cardiovascular disease, increasing the immune system, helping curb addictions, and much else in physical and mental health.
- Mindfulness meditation has been shown to ease emotional stress, increase equanimity and enhance compassion.

# MBSR or Meditation

=

Self-Care + *Employer Care*

=

# Staff Wellness

# We Live with Awe, Joy and Gratitude

With abundant appreciation for my own  
precious teachers,

Rachel Cowan, Nancy Napier, Kurt  
Hoelting, Yael Levy, Susie Kessler,  
Daniel Siegel and Marcelo Bronstein.

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- Stock Images by Dreamstime.com; yellow flowers by R.Shahmoon-Shanok, BJ Meditation Retreat, Costa Rica 1/2013.

# Loving-Kindness Meditation

Sit comfortably and at ease with your eyes closed. Feel your breath breathing naturally...bring kind attention to yourself and repeat 3 times

- “*May I be safe and protected*”
- “*May I be peaceful and joyful*”
- “*May I live with kindness and with ease*”
  
- May my loved one be safe and protected be ....
- May someone I am having difficulty with be ...
  
- *May beings everywhere...far and near, different and same, young and old ... be held in great loving-kindness ... may they be safe and protected. May they be peaceful and joyful. May they live with kindness and with ease.*

Sharon Salzberg (2011) *Real Happiness*

# Resources for Reflective Supervision

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# Resources for Mindfulness

- Simple Books:
  - *How to Sit* – Thich Nhat Hanh
  - *Arriving at Your Own Door* – Jon Kabat-Zinn  
(Quotations from his book *Coming to Our Senses*)
- Book for Parents with Their Child
  - *Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents)* - Eline Snel
- Website:
  - GreaterGood – UC Berkeley
- Apps:
  - InsightTimer
  - Headspace
  - Buddhify

*Deepest Gratitude and Thanksgiving to ...*



*... each of you for the daily work you do.  
Unsung, it is hero work.*