

When Fathers Wound



Deep Release Online
Professional Training for Counsellors

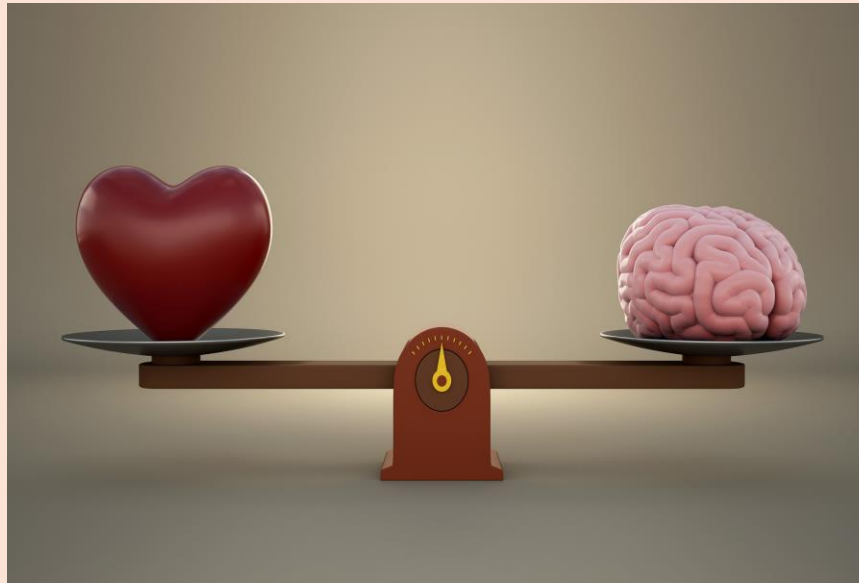
The Effect on our Mental Health and Relationships

Having a healthy and happy parent-child relationship

Good social skills



Emotional Regulation



Self-esteem and Confidence





The
physically
absent father

The
emotionally
absent father

The critical
father

The over-
controlling
father

The abusive
father

The over-
indulgent
father

The
neglectful
father

The
ineffective
father

The needy
father

The addictive
father

My relationship with my father affects...

My Self-Esteem



Do I matter?

My Self-Worth



Am I loveable?



**How we love
How we trust**

My Sense of Being



What am I here for?

My Sense of Wellbeing



Am I content?

Disconnection

“Connection is why we’re here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives... [We] fear that something we have done or failed to do, something about who we are or where we come from, has made us unlovable and unworthy of connection.”

Brené Brown, “Braving the Wilderness”



ABSENT FATHERS



- The father who worked long hours to provide for the family
- The father whose business took him away on frequent trips to keep his job
- The father who was away with the armed forces to fight for his country



ABSENT FATHERS

The father
who left



The father who
formed a new family



The father who
died



ABSENT FATHERS



**The father you
never had**



ABSENT FATHERS



“They don’t know exactly what they’ve lost, but they feel the pain and the yearning.”

Paul Raeburn, “Do Fathers Matter?”

The Effect on our Mental Health and Relationships

Having an Absent Father

Fear of Abandonment



Fear of Rejection



Fear of Partner Leaving



The Survey: CHILDHOOD



My father when I was growing up survey



64 counsellors surveyed

Effect of my father in my childhood

“I wanted to do everything perfectly and sought his approval and his pride in me at every decision I made.”

“He wasn't really there, and when he was, he was usually asleep or hungover. I remember always having to be quiet so as not to disturb or anger him.”

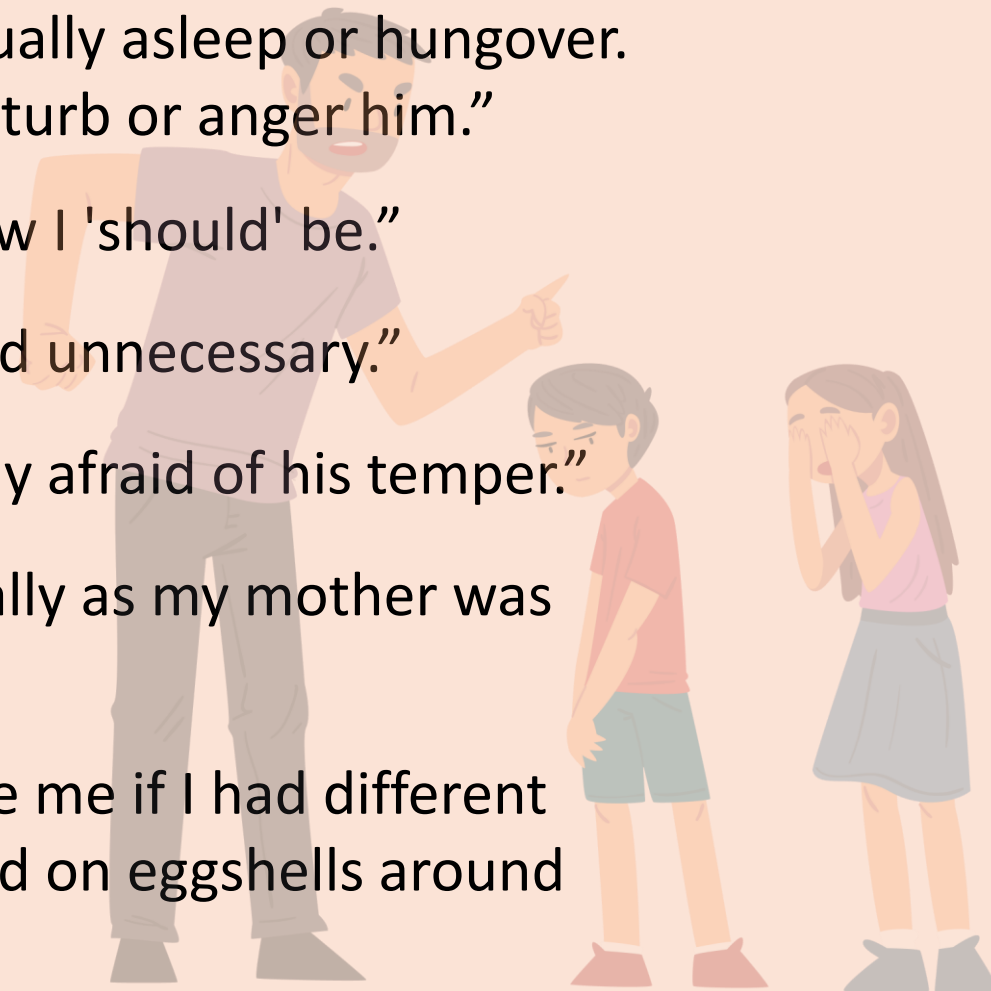
“My relationship was built on fear, I conformed to how I 'should' be.”

“I learnt that emotions were to be avoided, messy and unnecessary.”

“On the one hand (I) loved him very much, but equally afraid of his temper.”

“His absence left a huge gap in my childhood, especially as my mother was abusive towards me.”

“I was anxious around him. He'd monologue or berate me if I had different thoughts about a subject than he did. I'd have to tread on eggshells around him.”





Victoria's Story

Buddy Group Discussion Ideas

- Share your own personal experiences, as much as feels safe
- How much have you worked with clients with a father wound?
Share as appropriate
- How did you react to Victoria's testimony?

15 minutes



A top-down view of a desk with a light brown background. In the upper left is a white mug with a teal handle, filled with dark coffee. To its right are three round, golden-brown biscuits with a geometric pattern. In the upper right are four colored pencils (green, orange, blue, and pink). In the lower left are three yellow pencils with red erasers. In the lower right is a black pencil sharpener. In the center is a white, crumpled piece of paper with the text 'TAKE A BREAK!' written in large, bold, black, hand-drawn letters. Below this text, '5 minutes' is written in a smaller, orange, sans-serif font.

**TAKE A
BREAK!**

5 minutes

SECURE ATTACHMENT: THE CIRCLE OF BELONGING

You can learn
– and it's ok
to make
mistakes!



Structuring Parent

You are
loved and
you are ok!



Nurturing Parent

I understand
the rules,
I am
empathic



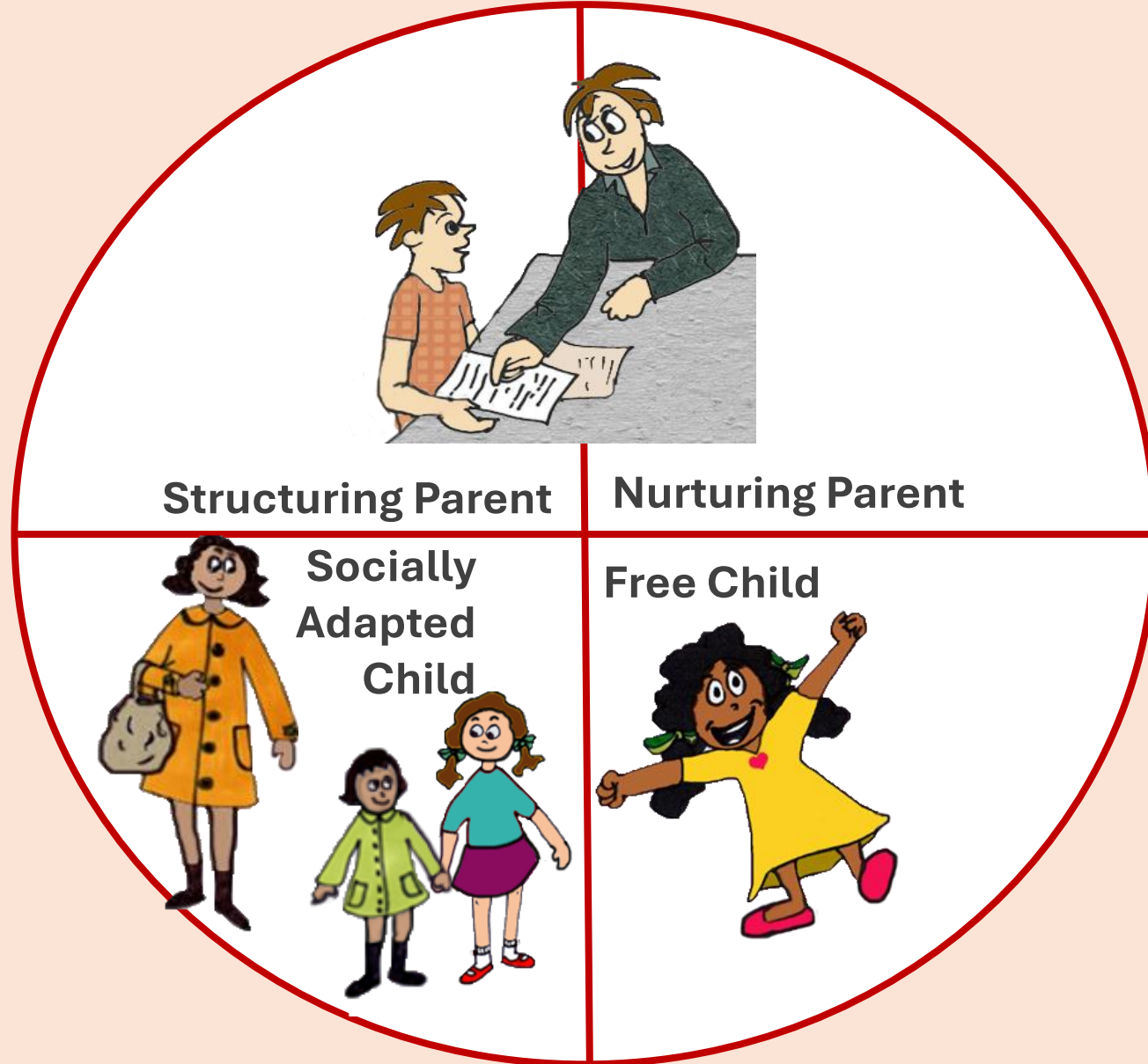
Socially
Adapted
Child

I am worthy
of love, just
as I am!



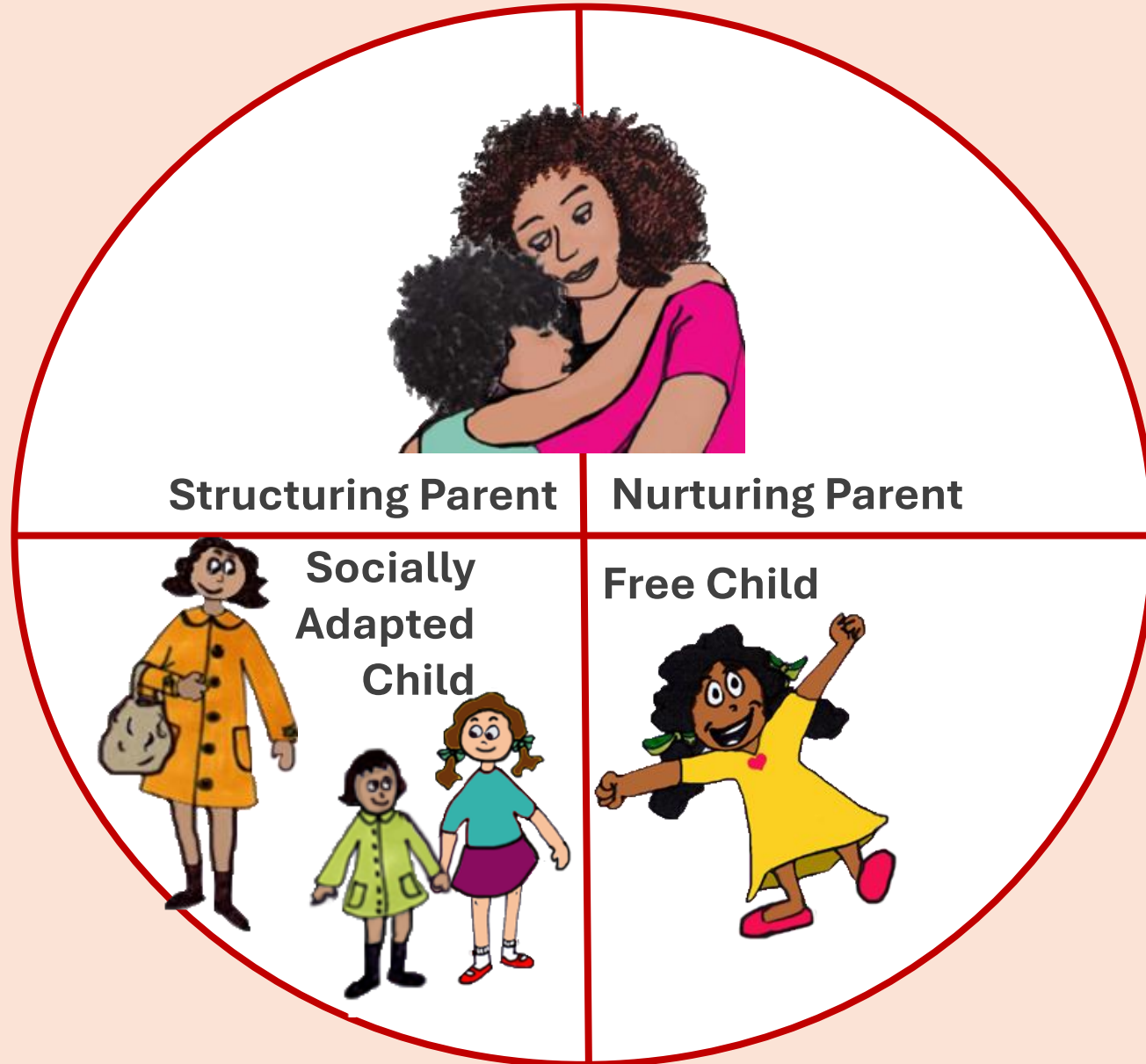
Free Child

ABSENT PARENT





ABSENT PARENT





Chris's Story

THE ABUSIVE PARENT



Critical, Controlling Parent



Nurturing Parent



Socially Adapted Child

Free Child



**Protective Parent?
Passive Parent?
Invisible Parent?**



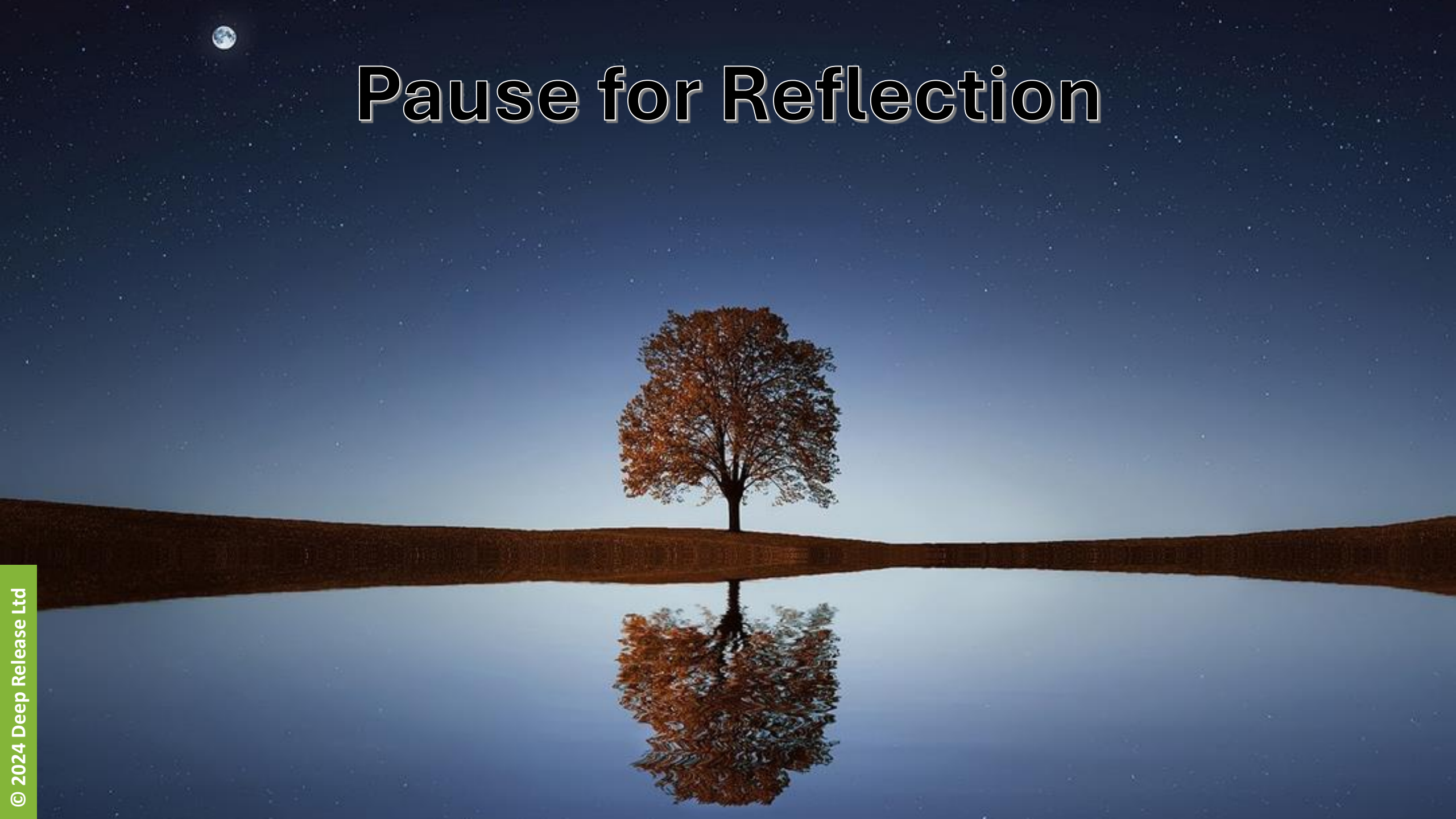
Hurt – Shame – Anger – Rebellion

**Adapted
Conforming
Child**



**Hurt
Child**

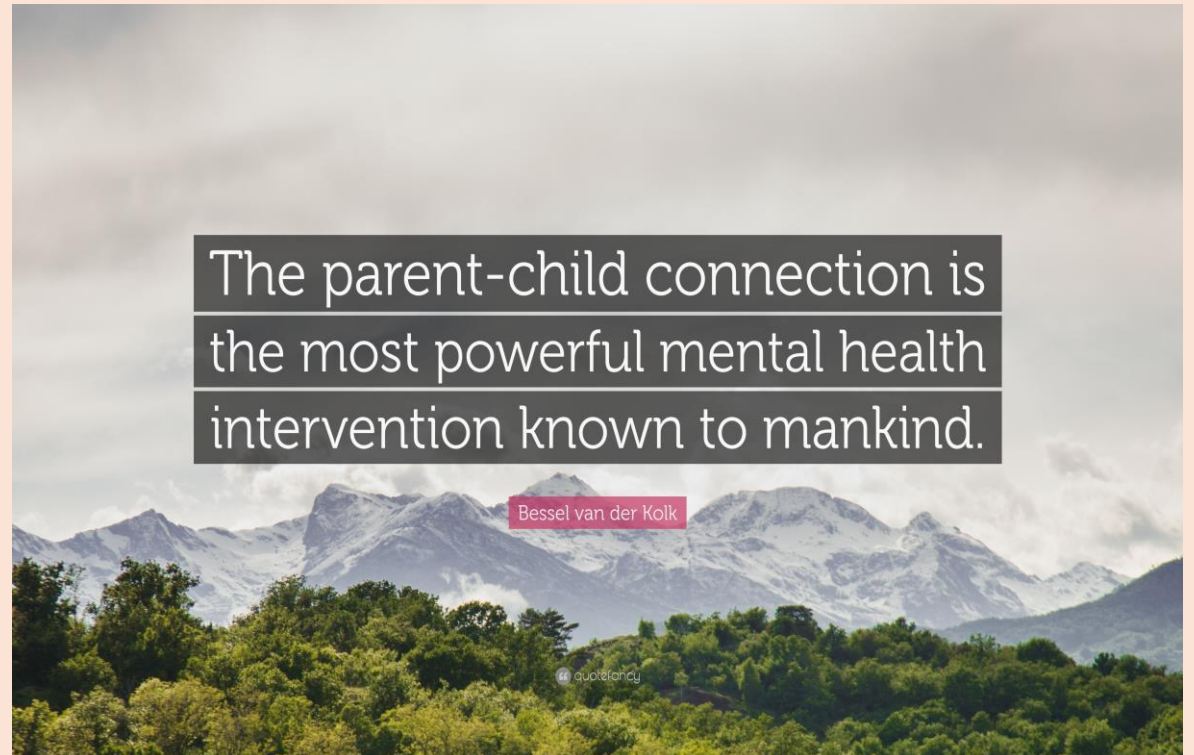
Pause for Reflection



Unfinished Business REENACTMENTS

Specific actions, behaviours or relationship patterns associated with a person's history of trauma that are repeated in subsequent situations or relationships

Dr Bessel van der Kolk



Adapted from: alivecounselling.com/counselling-resources/how-our-family-relationships-impacts-us-the-father-wound/

Reenacting the Father Wound

- **SELF-BLAME** : we continue to blame ourselves when difficult things happen
- **LOW SELF-WORTH** : our highly developed Inner Critic tells us we don't deserve good things
- **ENVY** : we observe other people's wonderful fathers, with deep pain
- **ANXIETY** : a constant in our lives, covering feelings of loss, anger, shame and sadness
- **DEPRESSION** : internalised anger has imploded within us



Reenacting the Father Wound

- **AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT** : we have built high defensive walls around us against vulnerability, including forming relationships with unavailable people
- **AMBIVALENT ATTACHMENT** : we are people-pleasers and stressful about doing something that will send loved ones away
- **DEPENDENT ATTACHMENT** : we seek out father figures and are prone to inappropriate over-investment in relationships
- **PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT** : we still crave our father's love and want him to change
- **PARENTING PATTERNS** : we struggle to be available to our own children, as old wounds are triggered



Reenacting the Father Wound

SECONDARY NARCISSISM

- *My father was a Narcissist – it was all about him; he syphoned the life out of me.*
- *I'm going to be the important one now, I'll be the one who is 'right'*
- *I was robbed of emotional support, my selfhood - I have to be top dog now, and not let anyone put me down again*
- *I have to prove myself ... have a big house, smart car... I need the world to know how important I am*
- *Inside there is a huge emotional void*



Buddy Group Discussion Ideas

- Share, as much as feels safe, how you are aware of reenactments in your own life
- How do you feel when clients share stories about their own fathers? What do you find most difficult?

15 minutes



A top-down view of a desk with a light brown background. In the upper left is a white mug with a teal handle, filled with dark coffee. To its right are three round, golden-brown biscuits with a geometric pattern. In the upper right are four colored pencils (green, orange, blue, and pink). In the lower left are three yellow pencils and a black pencil sharpener. In the center is a white rectangular piece of paper with the text 'TAKE A BREAK!' written in large, bold, black, hand-drawn letters. Below this text, '10 minutes' is written in a smaller, orange, sans-serif font.

**TAKE A
BREAK!**

10 minutes

Comments and Questions





WORKING FOR MY FATHER'S LOVE

**BE
PERFECT**



**TRY
HARDER**



**BE
STRONG**



**HURRY
UP**



**PLEASE
ALWAYS**





How do you
respond
to this picture?

The Effect on our Mental Health and Relationships

Having an Abusive Father

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another.

It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse.

(Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents>



Vicarious Traumatism
anxiety ... fear ... shame ... anger ...
dissociation

The Effect on our Mental Health and Relationships

Having an Abusive Father

TRUST



- What will you do with what I tell you?
- Will you believe what I hardly believe myself?
- Will you stay with me while I work this through?

SHAME



- Will you see me differently?
- Will you be disgusted?
- Will I be too much for you?
- Will you think I'm making a fuss over nothing?

FEAR

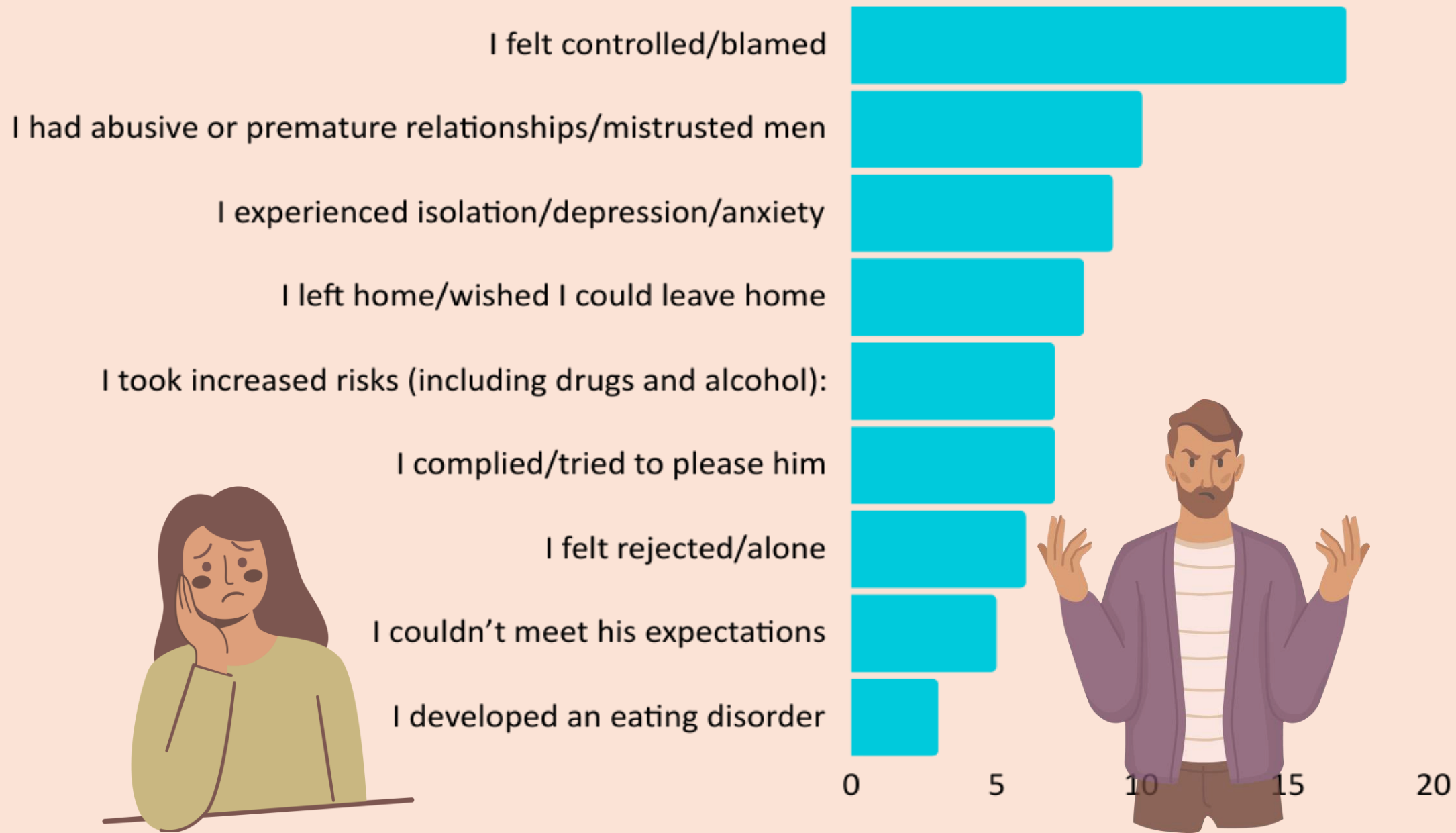


- What will I discover?
- What if I can't handle it?
- What if you can't handle it?
- Will you abuse me too?

The Survey: ADOLESCENCE



Effect of my father in my adolescence



Effect of my father in my adolescence

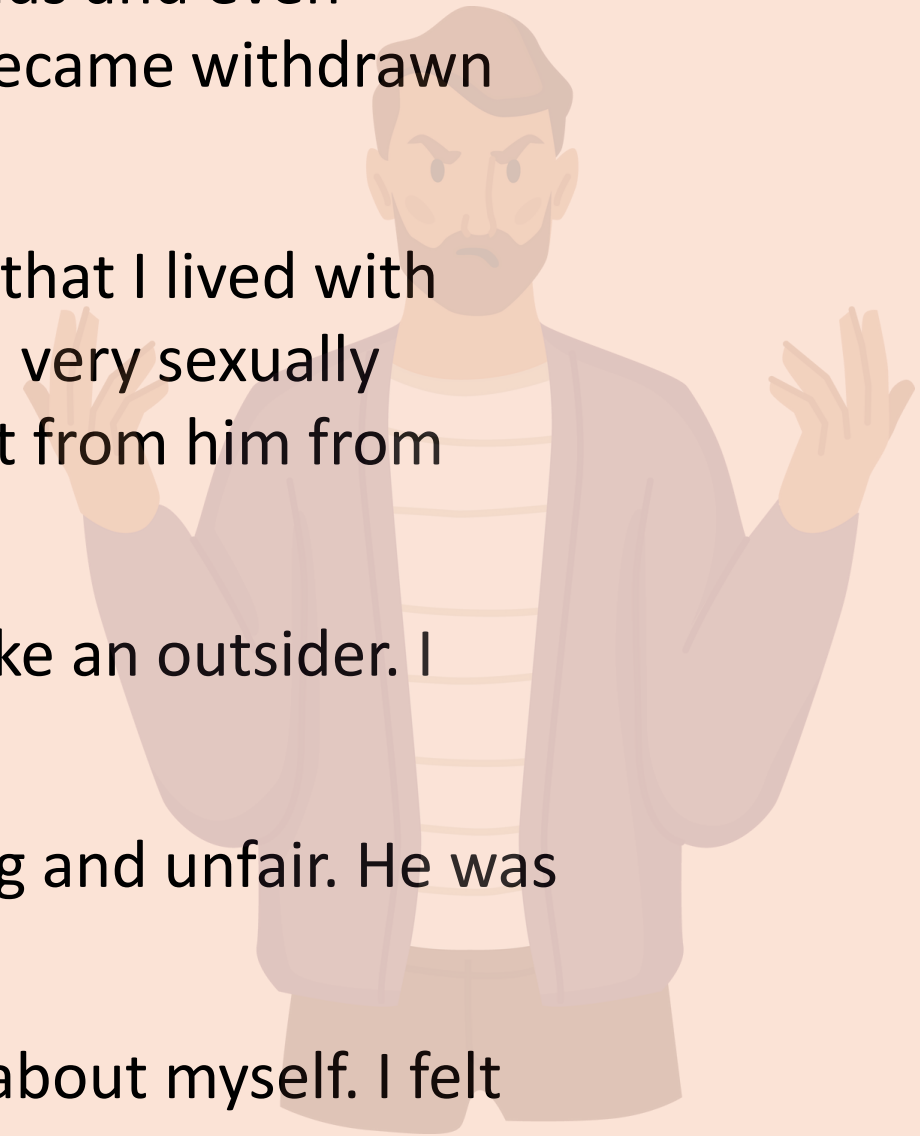
“He became more controlling and jealous of boyfriends and even friends. I became isolated and cried a lot at night. I became withdrawn and unsure of myself.”

“He ended up giving me an eating disorder around 8 that I lived with until I was 23. I was hateful of men as a teenager and very sexually inappropriate, searching for the validation I didn't get from him from men online.”

“I rebelled against everything, low self-esteem, felt like an outsider. I hated my father.”

“I looked to leave home ASAP. He was very controlling and unfair. He was verbally and physically abusive to me.”

“I kept to my room and started drinking to feel okay about myself. I felt quite anxious and depressed.”



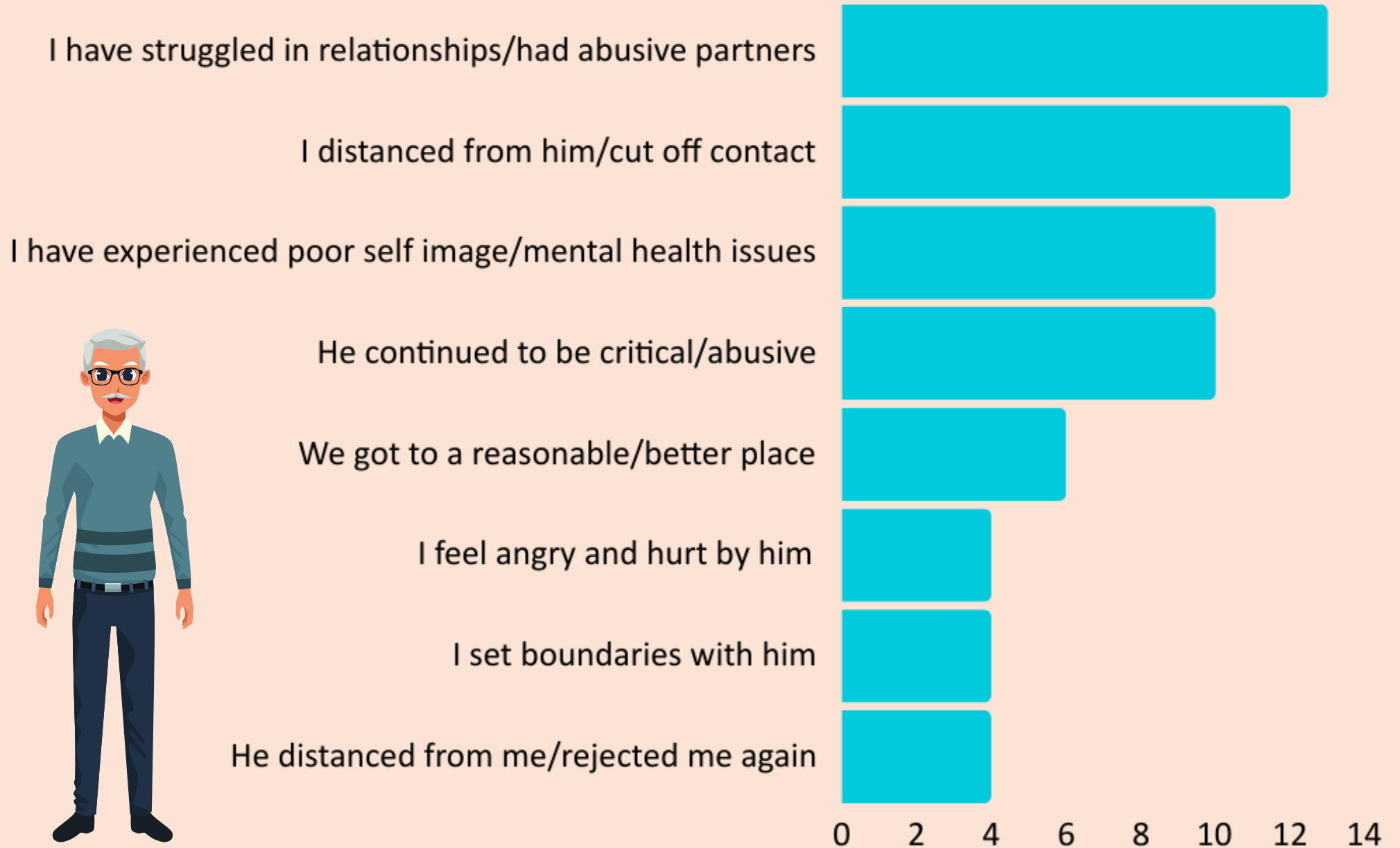


Natalie's Story

The Survey: ADULTHOOD



Effect of my father in my adulthood



Effect of my father in my adulthood

“...he is missing out on my children, but a lot of therapy made me realise it is not my fault and I am not the one in the wrong.”

“I set boundaries and called him out.”

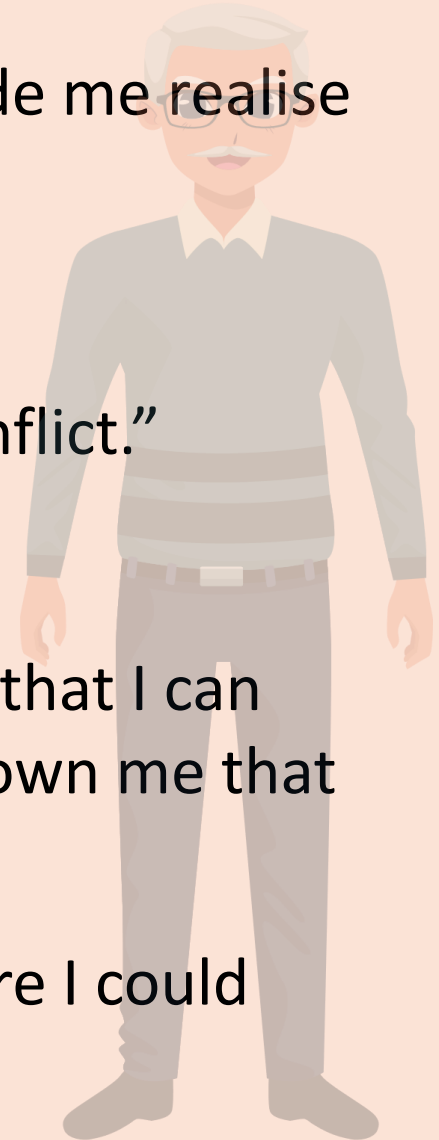
“I am emotionally distant and struggle with dealing with conflict.”

“...distrusting of men, find relationships difficult.”

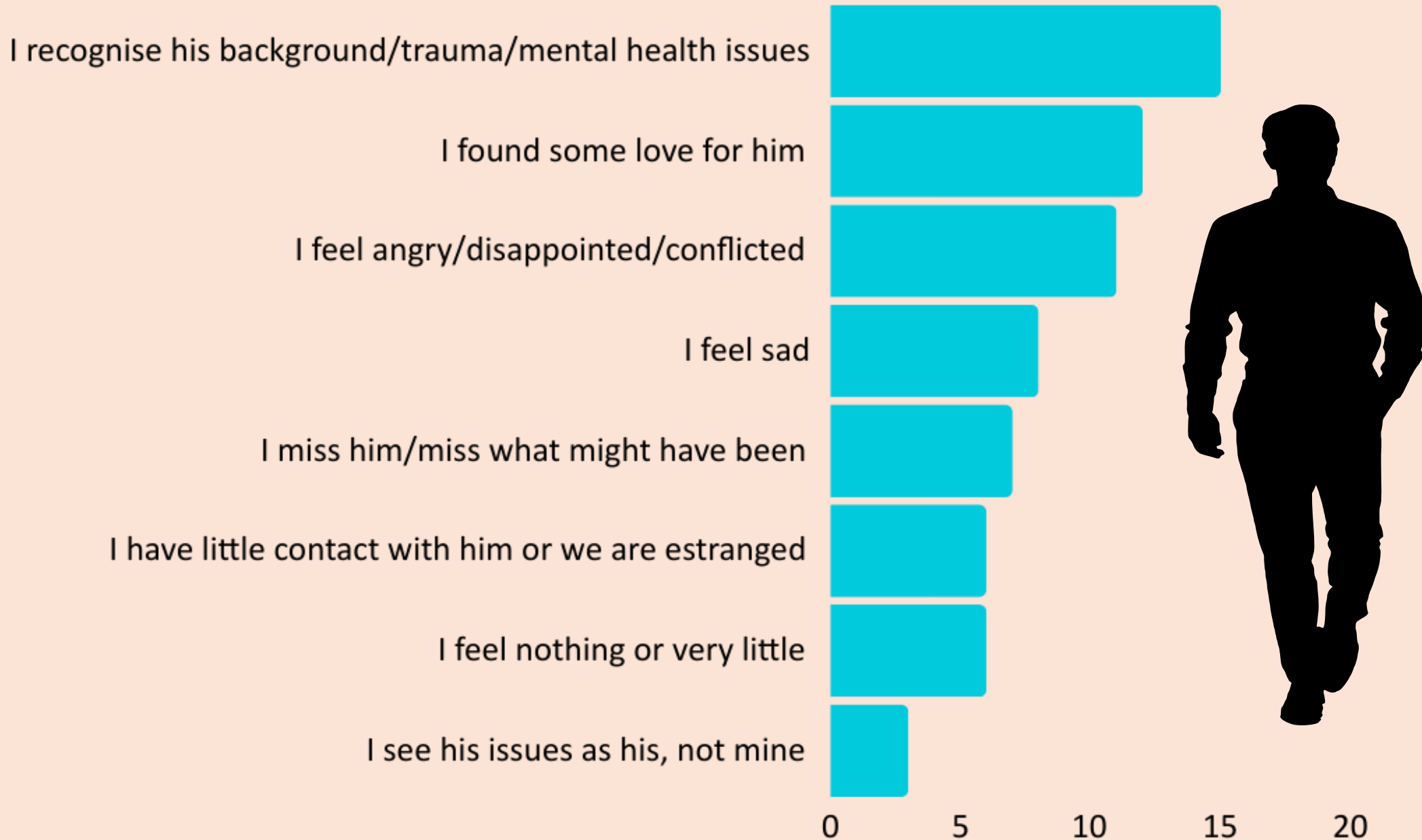
“It affects my marriage sometimes in that I struggle to trust that I can depend on my husband...even though he has never ever shown me that I can't trust him.”

“I went through a long period of PTSD and dissociation where I could barely speak with him...”

“I was left craving the love I had once experienced and not receiving it.”



How I feel about my father now



How I feel about my father now

“I love him, but his NPD makes it hard to like or respect him”

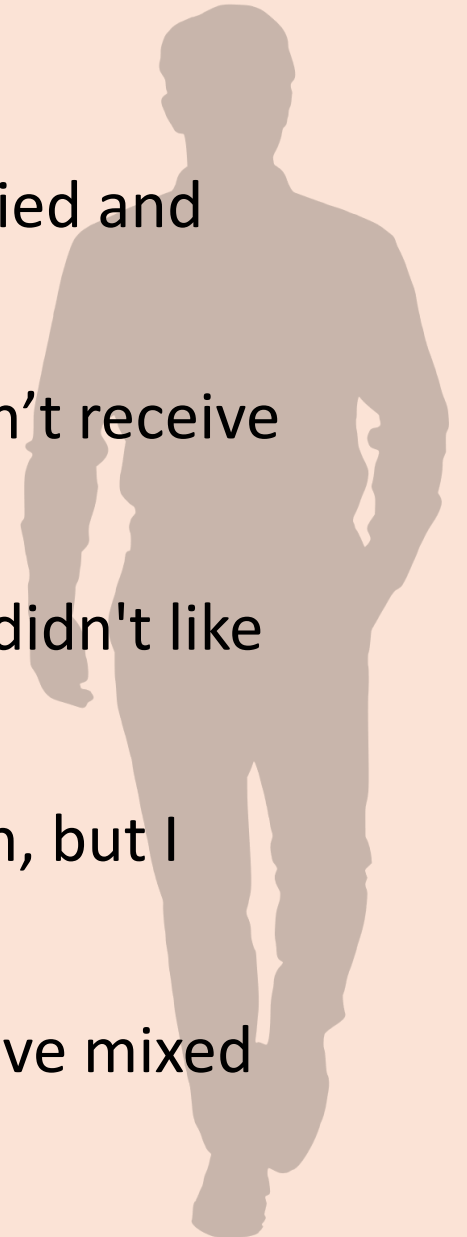
“I feel a mixture of sadness and anger. I now have a very boundaried and distant relationship with him...”

“Still a bit angry at the lack of loving care but I understand he didn’t receive any so didn’t know how.”

“I have stood up to him and told him what he did was wrong. He didn't like it, but it gave me relief.”

“He died 14 years ago. I miss the idea of what he might have been, but I realise this is probably fantasy.”

“He committed suicide two years ago as a final act of control. I have mixed emotions. I love and miss him. But it’s took years of therapy...”



Buddy Group Discussion Ideas

- Share your own personal experiences, as much as feels safe
- Share your client work, as is appropriate
- How did you react to Natalie's testimony?

15 minutes



A top-down view of a desk with a light brown background. In the upper left is a white mug with a teal handle, filled with dark coffee. To its right are three round, golden-brown biscuits with a geometric pattern. In the upper right are four colored pencils (green, orange, blue, and pink). In the lower left are three yellow pencils with red erasers. In the lower right is a black pencil sharpener. In the center is a white, textured rectangular card with the text 'TAKE A BREAK!' in large, bold, black, hand-drawn letters, and '5 minutes' in smaller, orange, sans-serif letters below it.

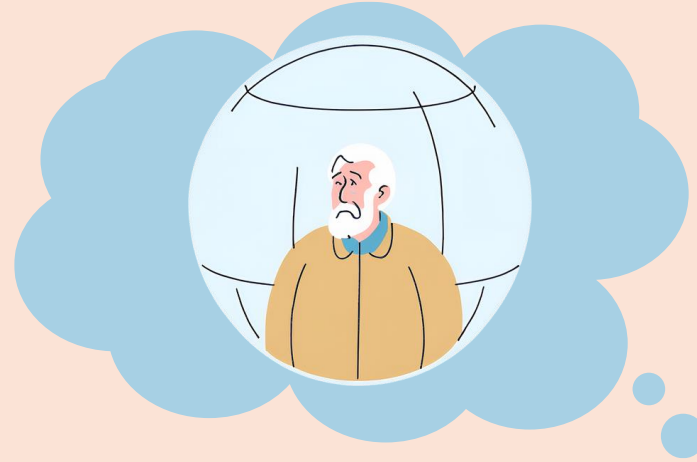
**TAKE A
BREAK!**

5 minutes

The Survey: Taking it to Therapy



76%
said they had
looked at their
relationship with
their father in
counselling

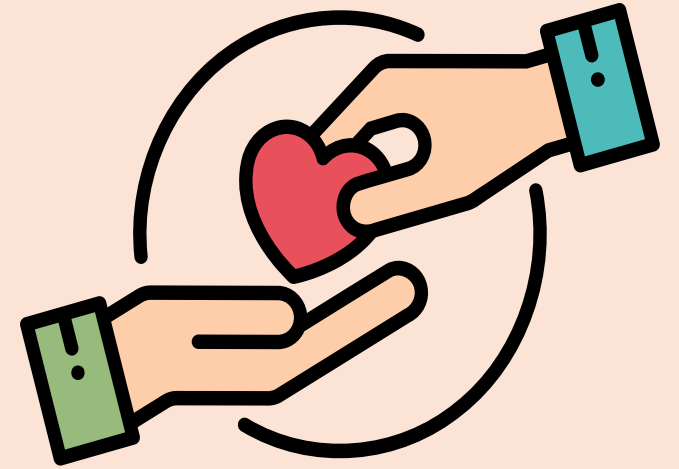


What helped: Interventions

- Sand tray work
- Inner child work
- EMDR
- Letter writing
- Creative tools
- Animal figures
- Metaphor
- Chair work
- Understanding:
 - TA injunctions and drivers
 - Parent-Adult-Child concepts
 - Attachment theory
 - Narcissism
 - Family dynamics
 - Trauma

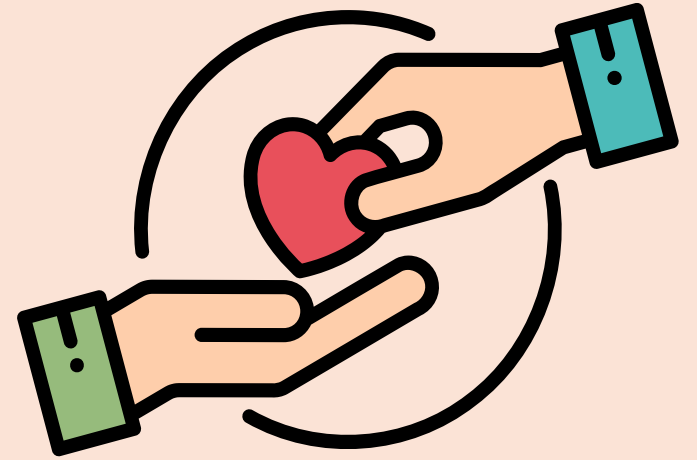
What didn't help: Therapist attitudes

- X It didn't help when the counsellor mentioned that I was possibly molested
- X My counsellor led me to believe I'd been abused – I hadn't been
- X It was unhelpful to be encouraged to forgive, see him more or share my feelings with him
- X The therapist wouldn't allow me to explore the relationship – even after consulting supervisor!



What helped: Therapist attitudes

- Not being rushed (slow is fast)
- Getting to know me, allowing space
- Validation of abuse and family dynamics
- Letting me go over it again and again
- Empathy and acceptance of me
- Counsellor voicing “that was awful”
- Validating my feelings and opinions without judgement
- Being taken seriously
- Letting me tell the story with all its twists and turns



How counselling helped

- Learning to recognise how the trauma has affected me and made me stronger
- I was able to set boundaries
- Realised it's not my job to fix him
- Understanding why he was as he was
- Seeing that he was human
- I acknowledged the loss
- I learnt to accept my anger
- I noticed my responses more
- Helped me understand my relationship choices better



How counselling helped

- Helped me understand my parents and how to move on and build stronger relationships
- I learnt he likely had a personality disorder and it's not my fault
- Therapist helped me understand and challenge my reasons for staying
- Looking at the transference I had with male tutors was really helpful
- It helped me grieve what he did to me and the grief of not having a relationship
- I was able to explore the impact his absence had on me
- Understanding his trauma helped me feel less abandoned



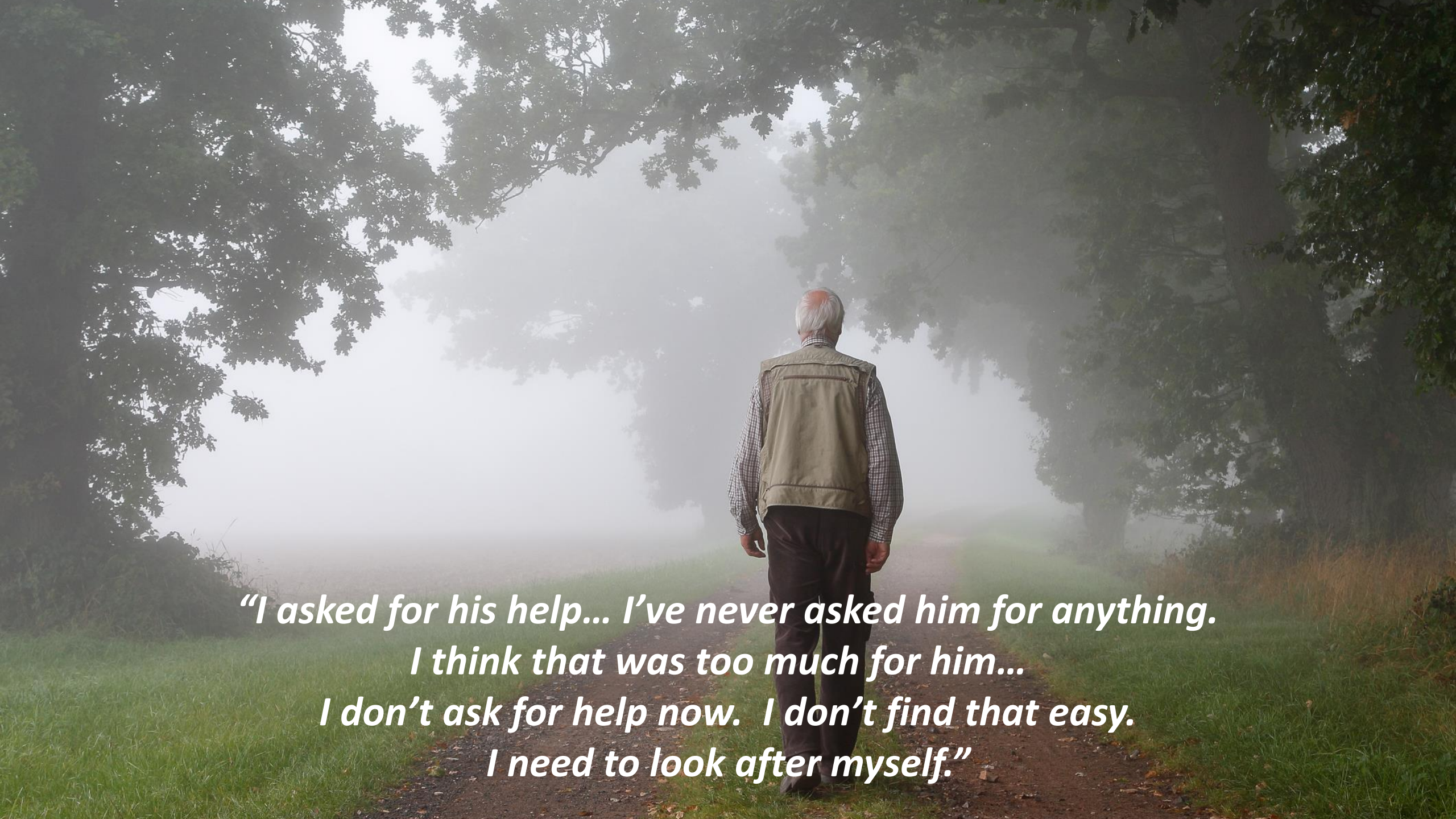
Understanding the Back Story



Poor blankets



In WWI being a "Fire Watcher" entailed spells of duty on the roof of buildings to smother any incendiary bomb with sandbags or, if a fire had already started, to drench it with water using a stirrup pump and a bucket of water until the fire brigade took over.

A man with white hair, wearing a plaid shirt and a tan vest, is walking away from the camera down a dirt path. The path is surrounded by lush green grass and large, leafy trees. A thick fog or mist hangs in the air, obscuring the path ahead and creating a somber, reflective atmosphere. The lighting is soft and diffused, typical of an overcast day.

*"I asked for his help... I've never asked him for anything.
I think that was too much for him...
I don't ask for help now. I don't find that easy.
I need to look after myself."*




Holding on... Letting go



You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

C. S. Lewis

quote fancy



Step out of the history that is holding you back. Step into the new story you are willing to create.

Oprah Winfrey

GroundedAfrican.com

Comments and Questions



Final Buddy Group

- Say goodbye
- Share details if you wish to

5 minutes



Caroline Foster

NARCISSISTIC FATHERS



How to Deal with a Toxic Father
and Complex PTSD



Do Fathers Matter? What Science Is Telling Us About the Parent We've Overlooked Paul Raeburn

"I gained more from Raeburn's work than all the daddy lit
put together." —KENT BLACK, *The Boston Globe*

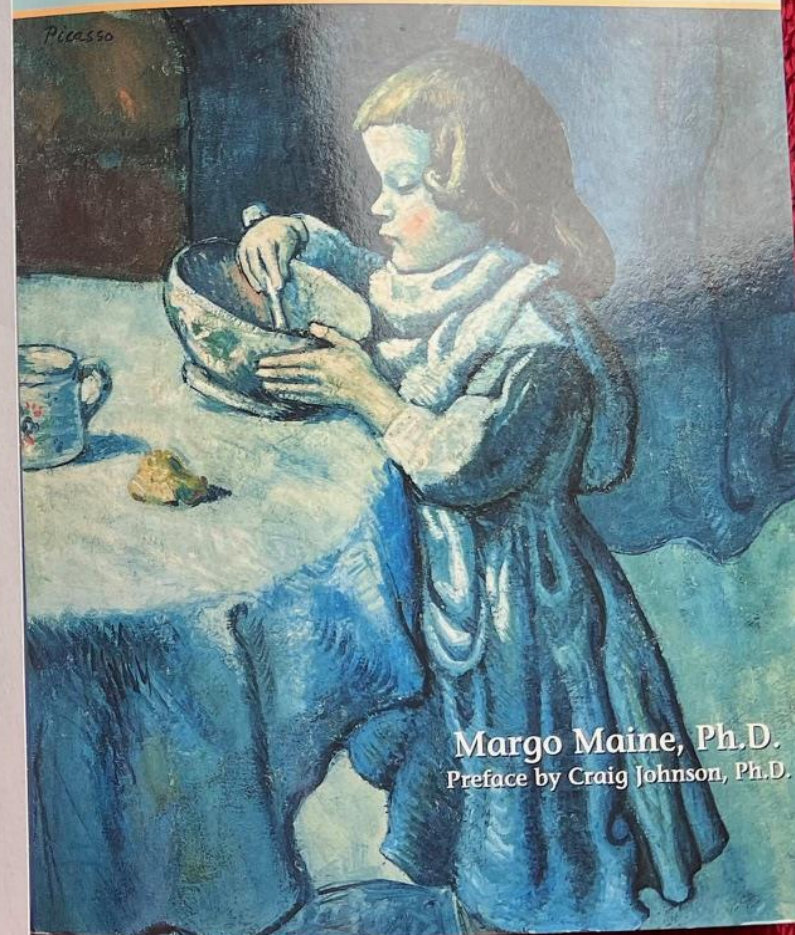
A MOM'S
CHOICE AWARDS
GOLD MEDAL
WINNER



SECOND EDITION

FATHER HUNGER

Fathers, Daughters,
and the Pursuit of Thinness



Margo Maine, Ph.D.
Preface by Craig Johnson, Ph.D.



Resources

PACT-RESOURCES.CO.UK

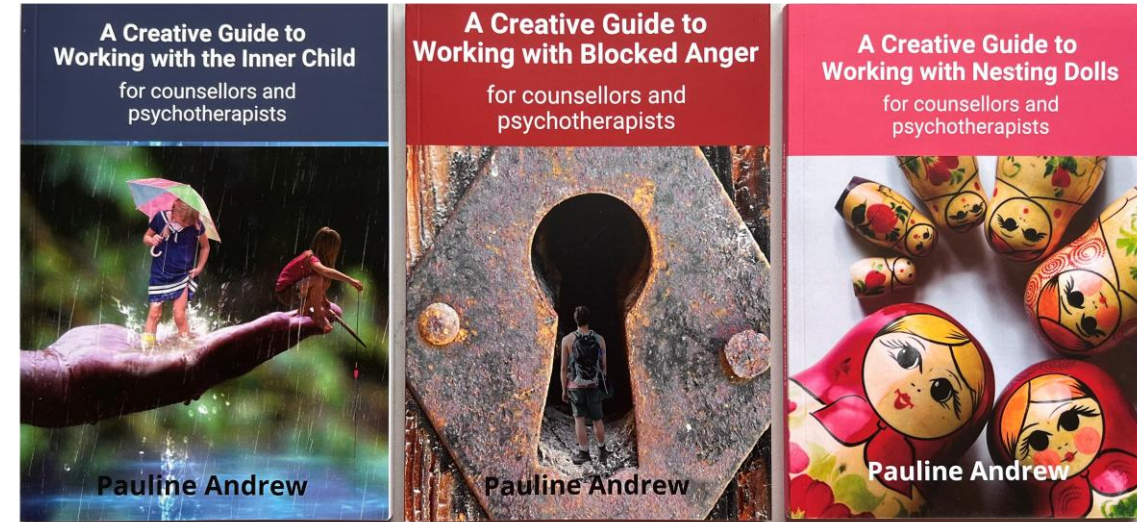
ORIGINAL & CREATIVE
COUNSELLING RESOURCES

Cards



Roles Played in Families
Extra Set A

Books



£11.50 each

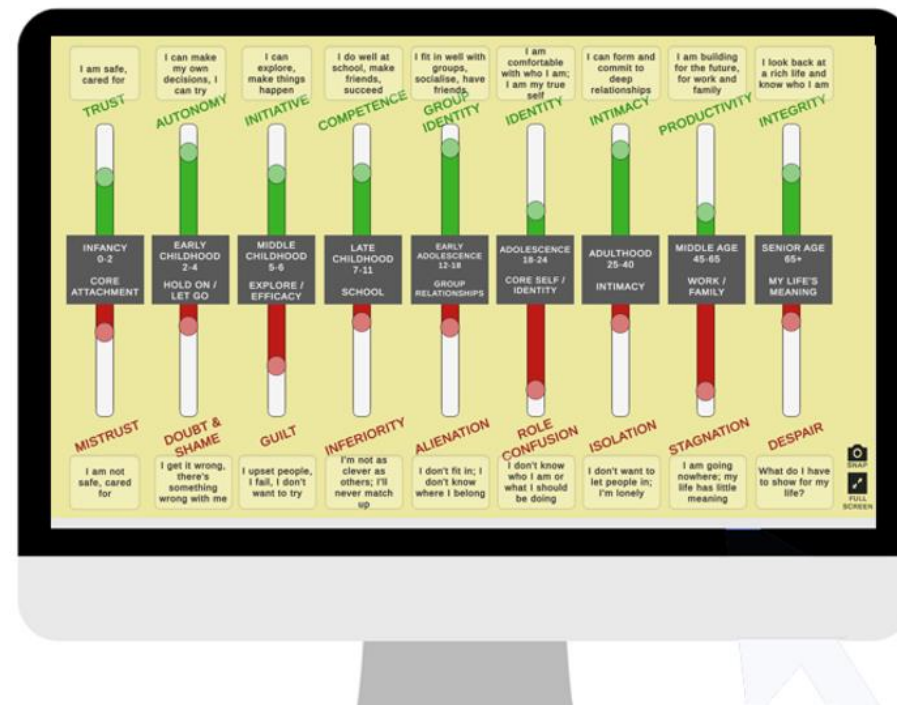
3 for £32 (save £2.50)

Also available on Kindle

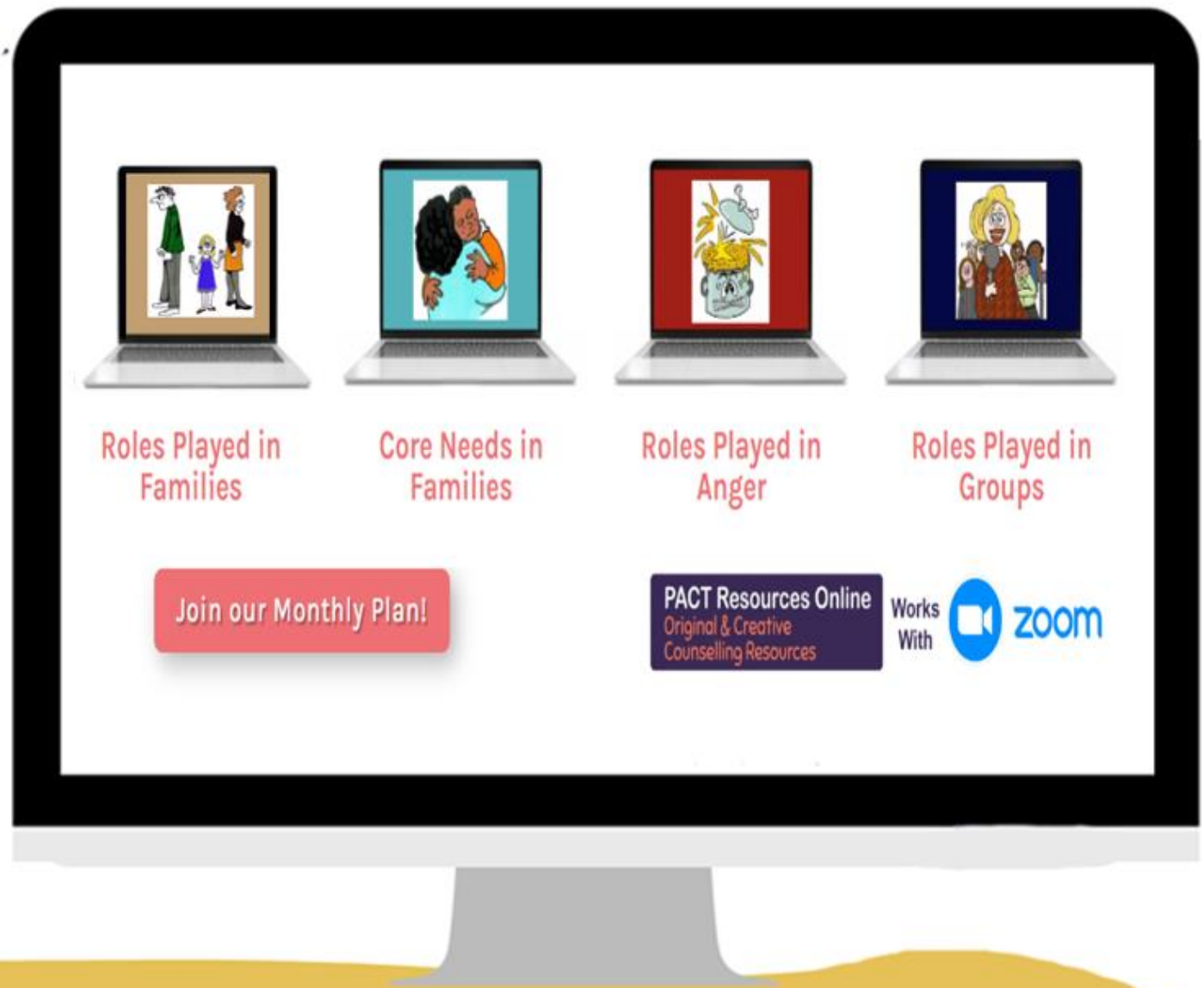
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The Wheel of Life and Erikson's Life Stages

FREE Web Apps!



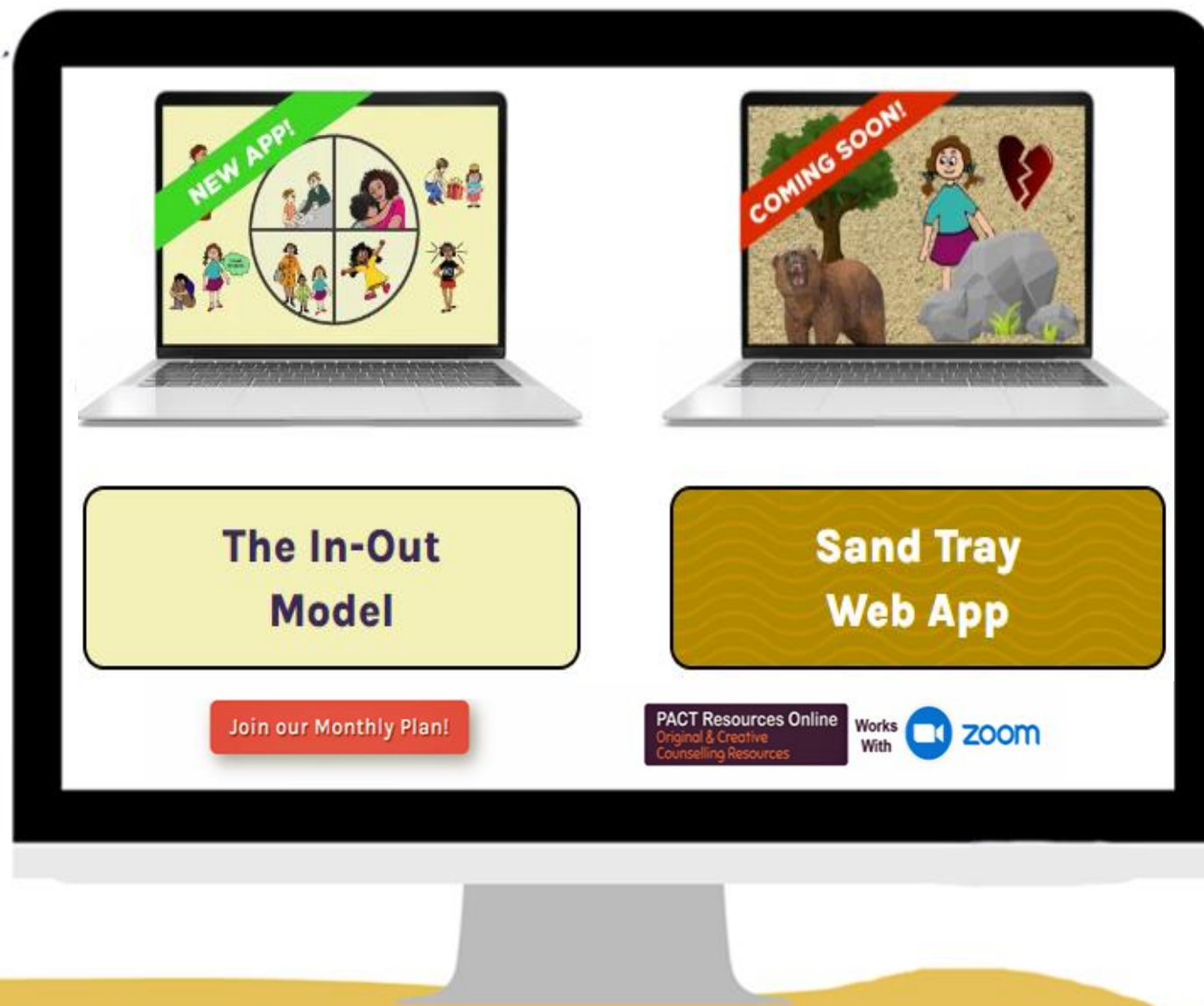
The 4 sets of cards
are available as Web
Apps by paid
subscription.
Other apps to
follow!



pact-resources-online.co.uk

The 'In-Out' Model web app is now including in your paid subscription!

'Therapeutic Sandscapes' soon to follow!



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e-Resources



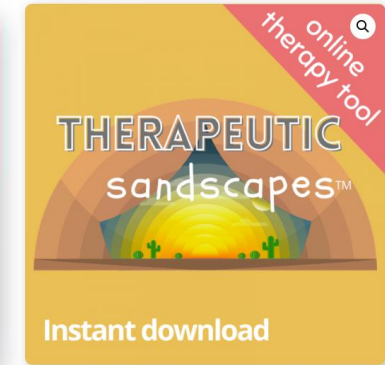
Erikson's Life Stages
£3.50



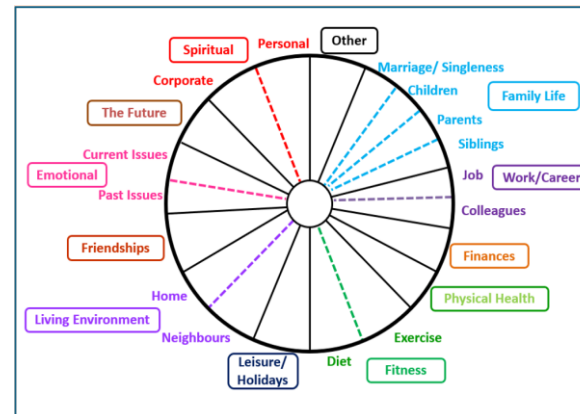
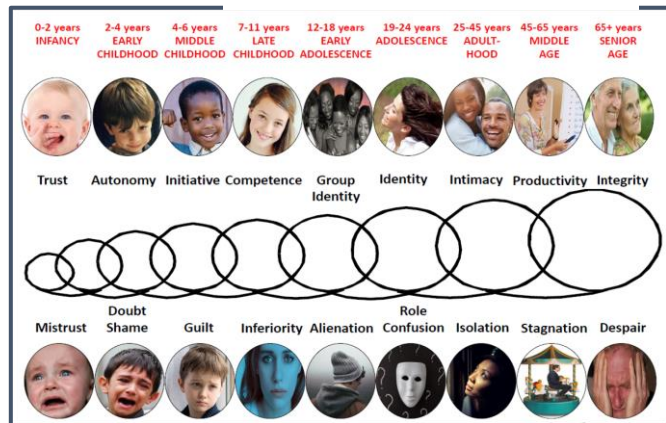
Wheel of Life
£3.50 – £5.00



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Figures Online Pack



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Use PowerPoint

Web Apps in progress!

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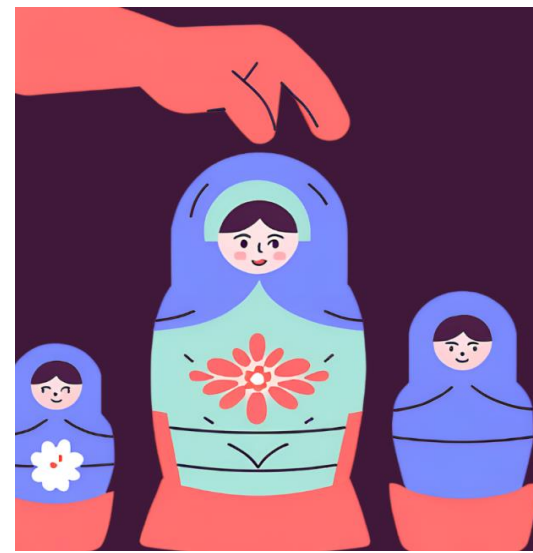
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Fri 12th July



Working Creatively
with Nesting Dolls
Tues 16th July

9.30am – 1.00pm

Prices £10 (limited Bursary places), £20 or £30

Catch up video link with all bookings

£10 or £20: 7-day link

£30: lifetime link



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2024 Annual Counsellors Conference, Residential



Friday 27-Sunday 29 September 2024

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- Please answer the joining questions!



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Thank you

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