

Islington Parent and Baby Psychology Service COMPASSION-FOCUSED THERAPY GROUP



Compassion Focused Therapy

- Breathing practice
- What is CFT?
- Why CFT with parents and babies?
- CFT group- what it involved
- Feedback and outcomes
- Questions

Breathe



Parent & baby psychology service

Service context

Why CFT as an approach?

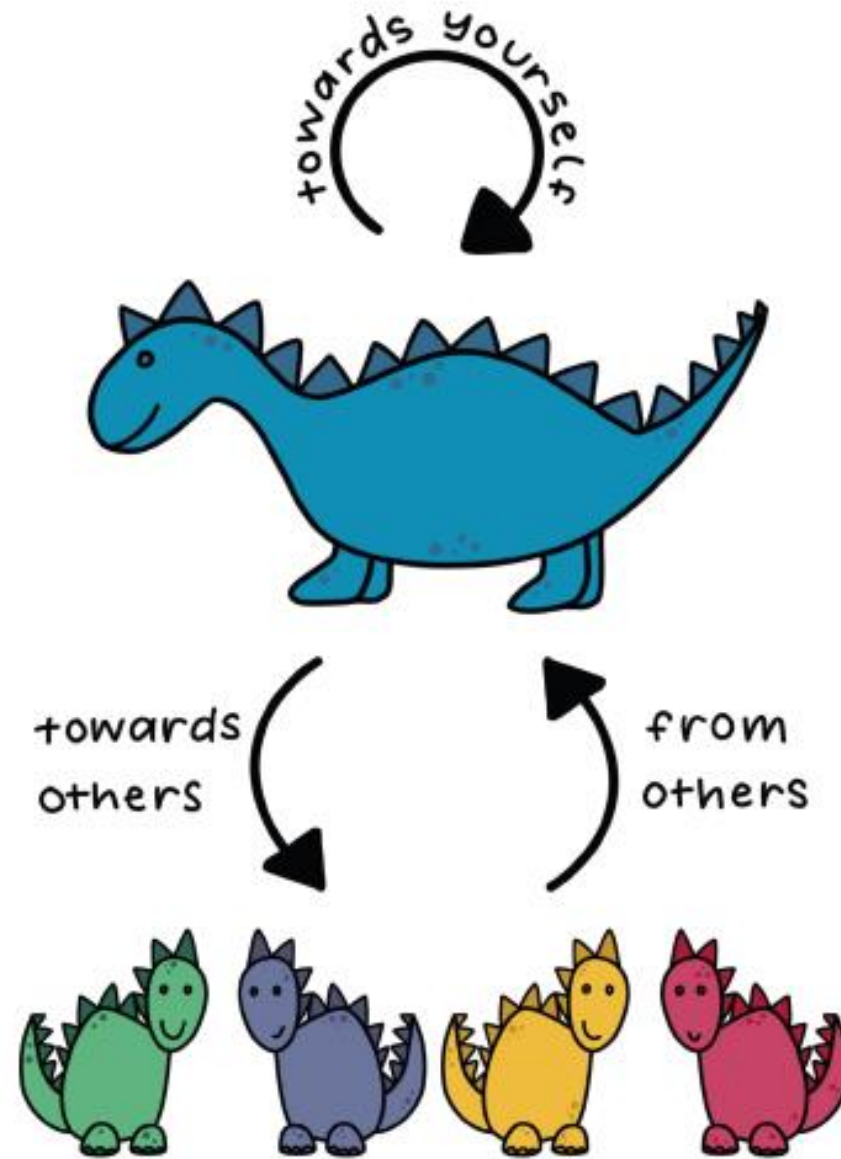
Why a group?

CFT

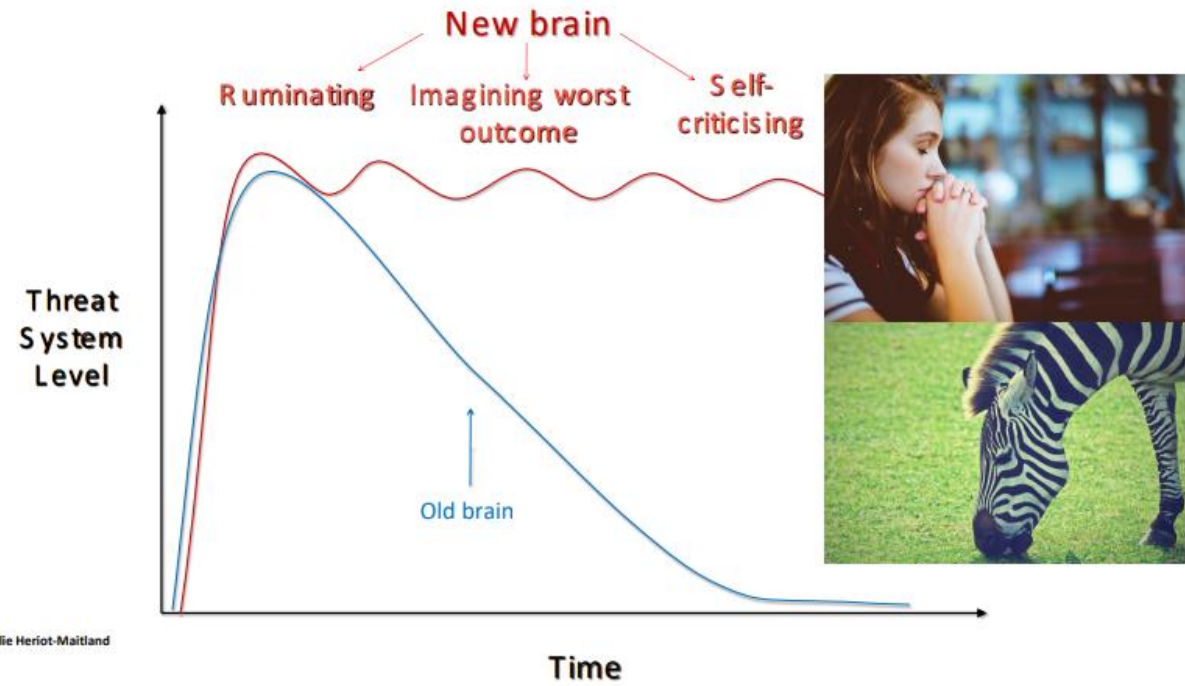
COMPASSION

a sensitivity to suffering
in self and others
with a commitment
to try to alleviate and prevent it

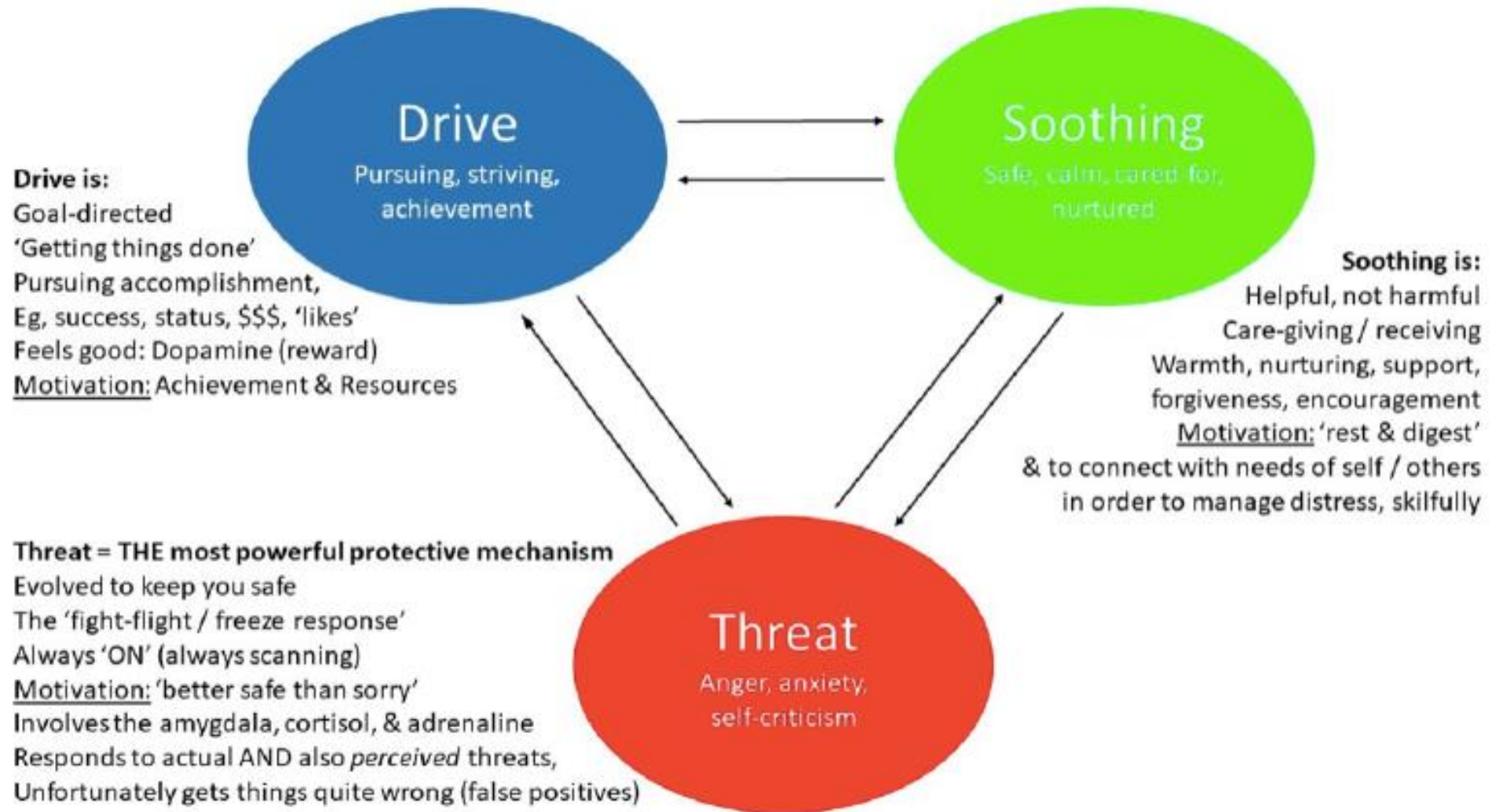
Flows of



The New Brain keeps the threat going even after the argument is over



With thanks to Charlie Heriot-Maitland

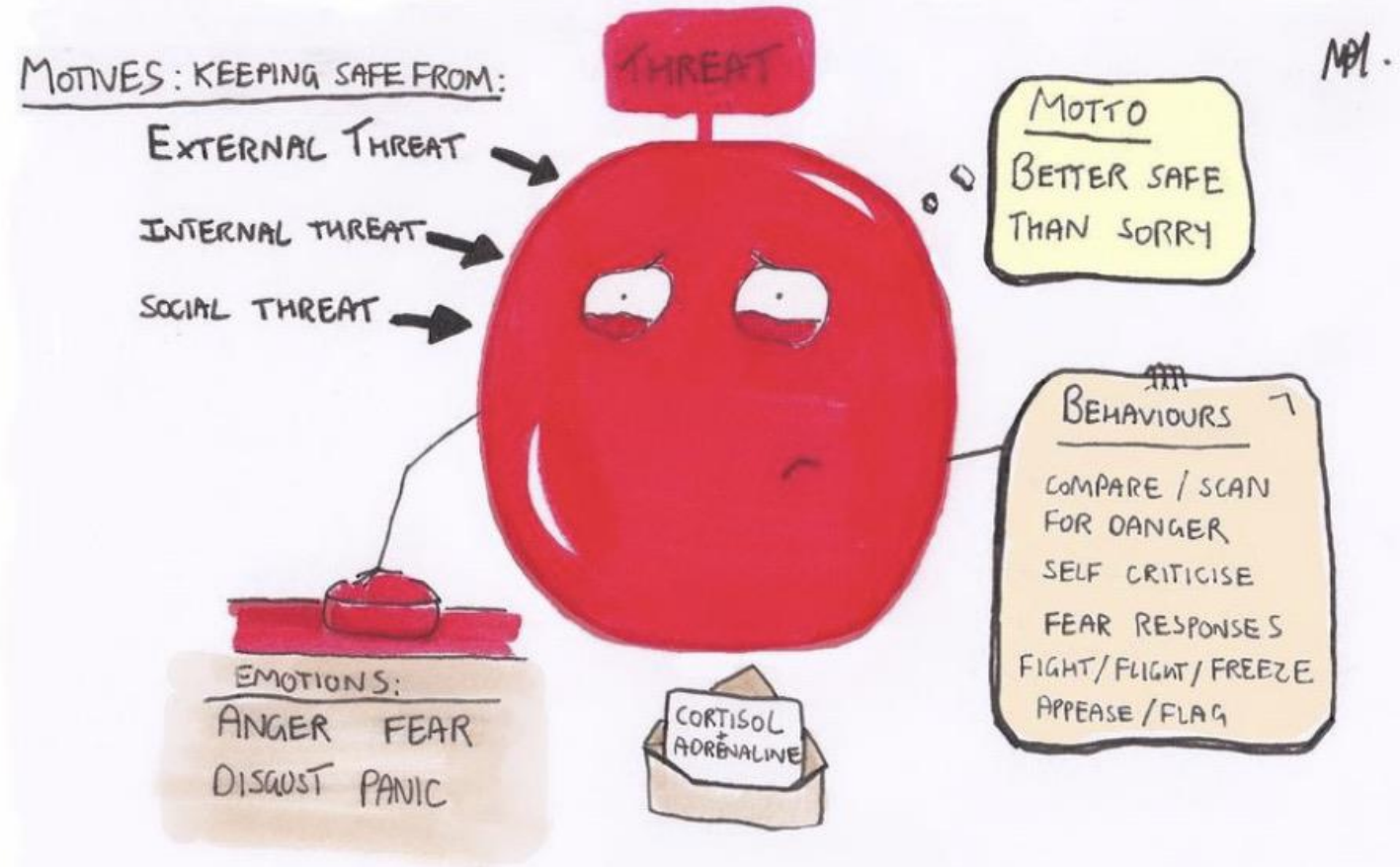


Adapted from Gilbert, P (ed) (2005). *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Threat



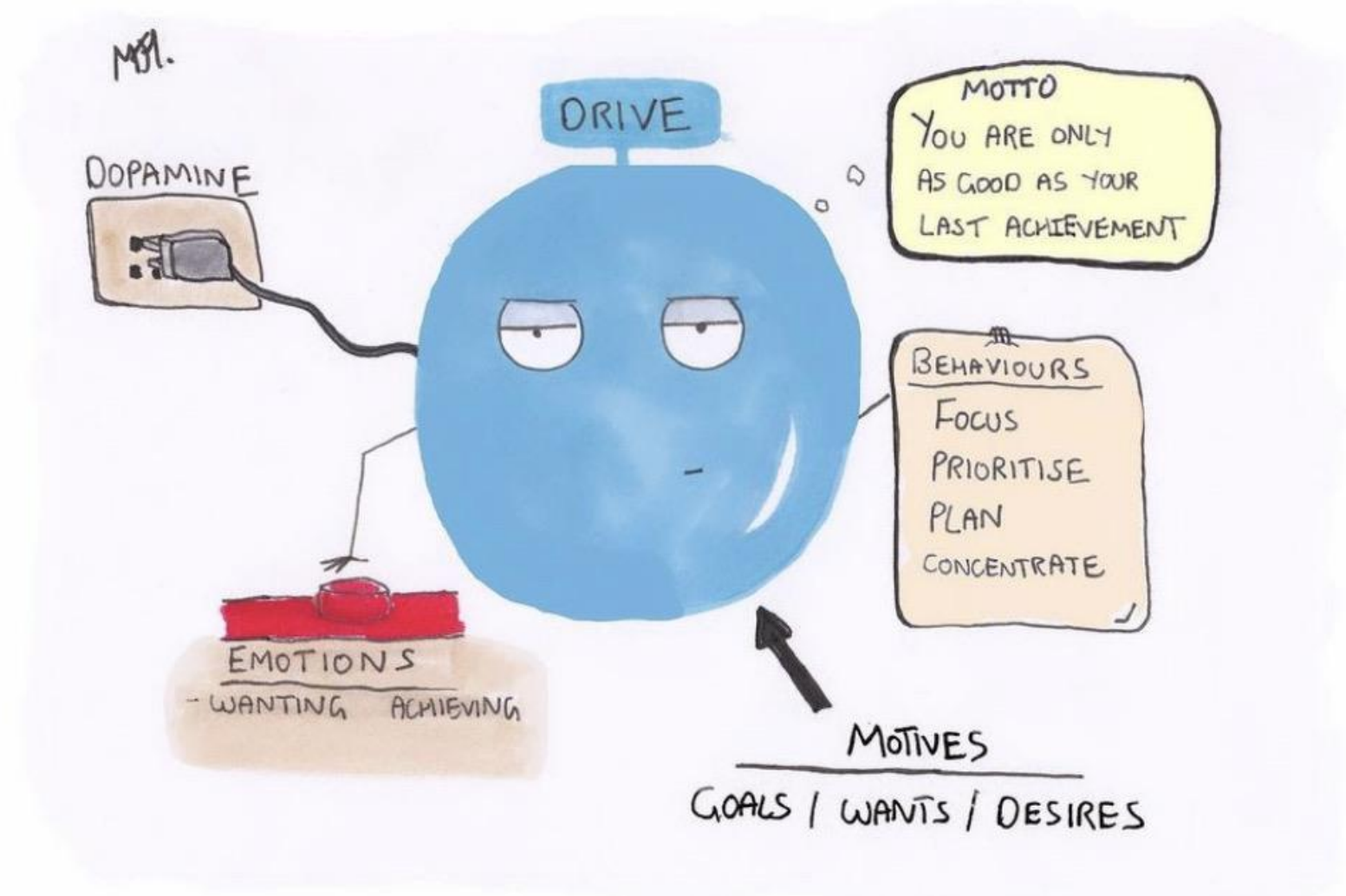
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Drive



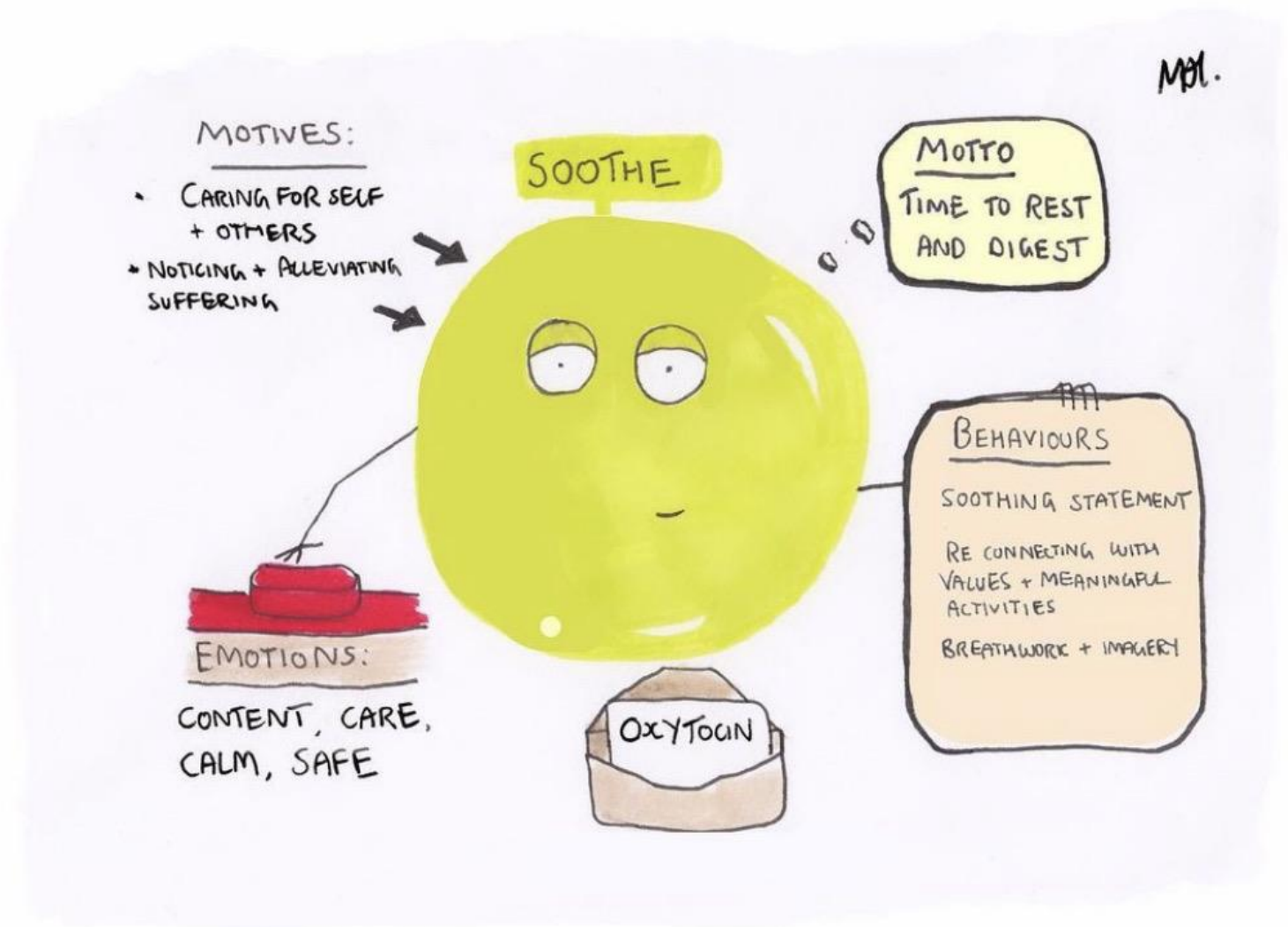
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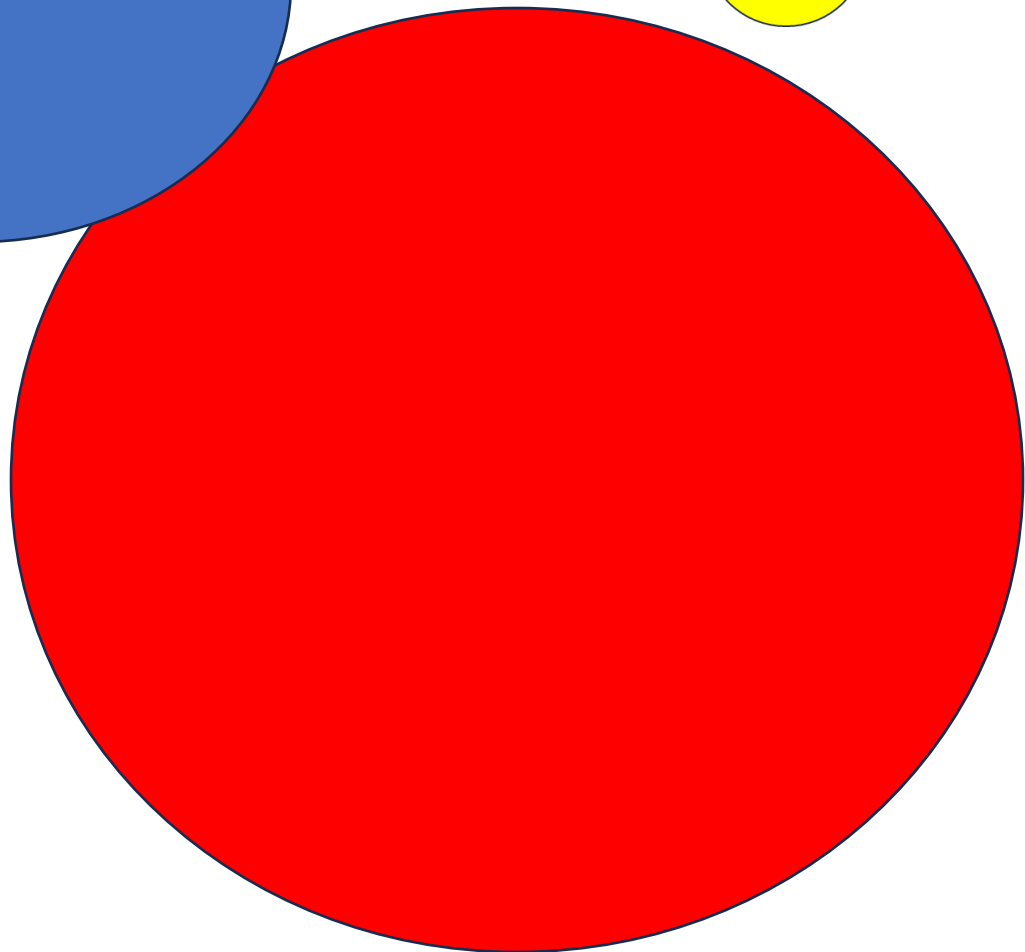
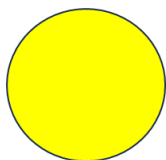
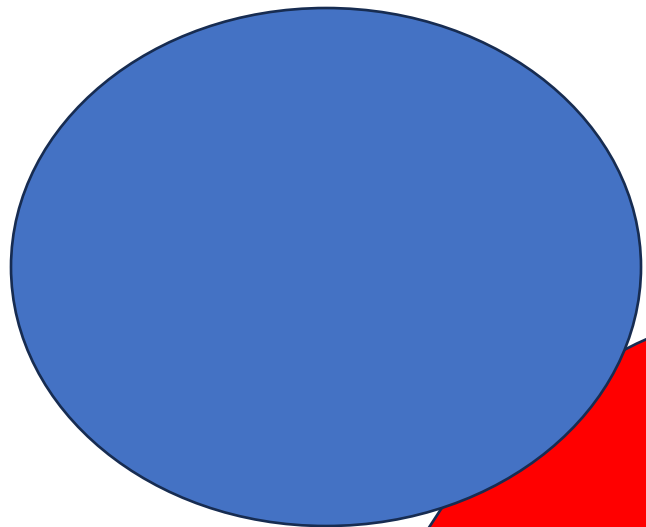


Soothe



myndoodles





PBPS CFT Group – Adaptations with babies



Week	Topic
1	Introductions and 'Tricky Brain'
2	3 circles of emotion regulation
3	Threat system
4	Mindful awareness
5	Recap
6	What is compassion?
7	Self criticism & inner critic
8	Blocks to self compassion
9	Formulation
10	Compassionate kit bag
11	Imagery
12	Endings

Impact > Quantitative

CORE (adult mental health, wellbeing and functioning) > Overall wellbeing scores showed reliable improvement

Mother Object Relations Scale > increase in warmth and reduction in invasion scores. Overall threshold moved from 'high' to 'moderate concern'

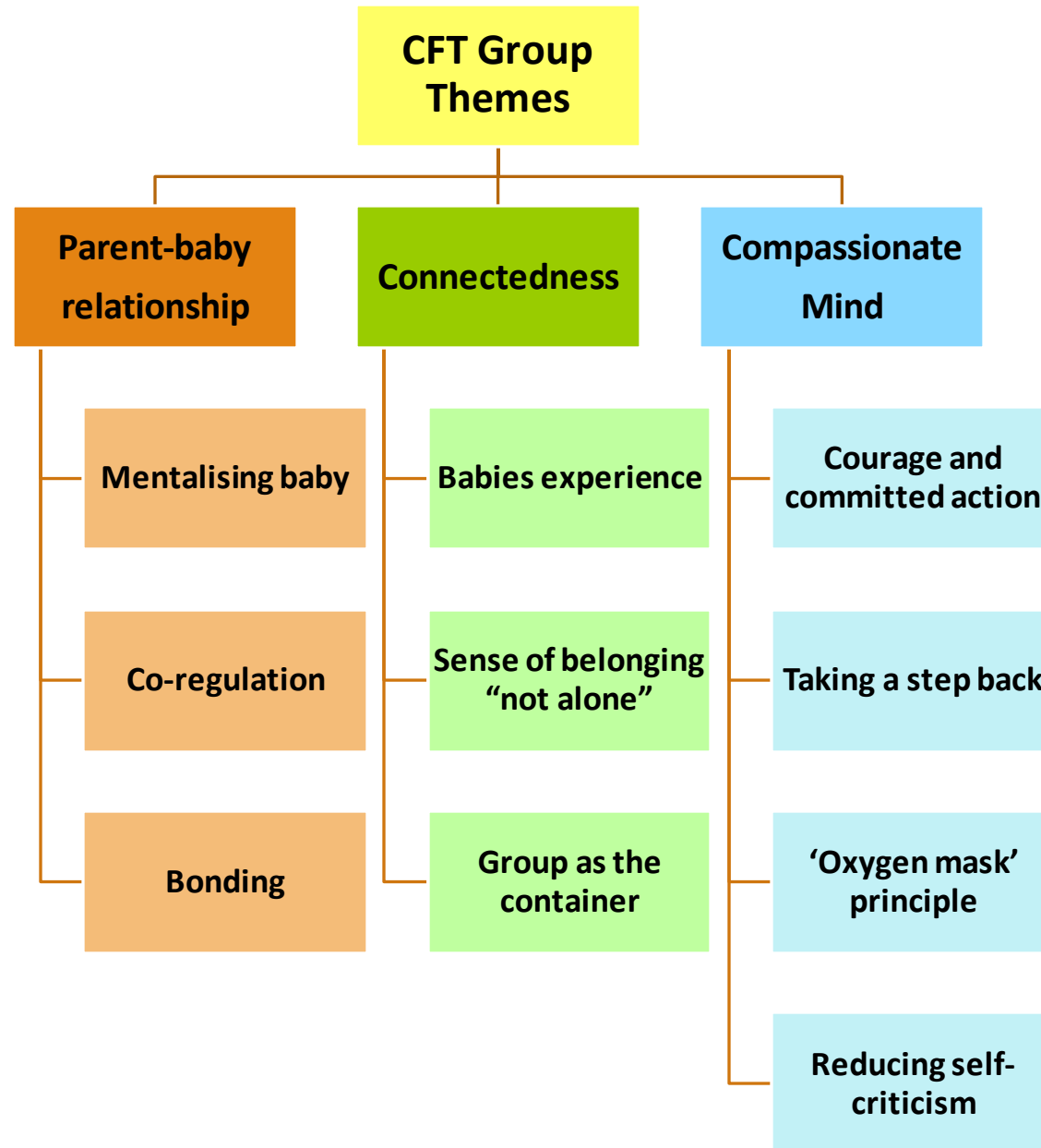
Postpartum Bonding Scale > 'Infant focused anxiety' almost halved and 'impaired bonding' reduced

Forms of Self Criticising and Self Reassuring Scale (more of a CFT specific measure) > 'Hated self' almost halved

Goals

Goal	Pre Score	Post Score	Score difference
To feel more resilient to managing anxiety, find ways of coping and feel more confident	3.5	5	+1.5
For baby to feel secure and not transfer my anxiety onto him	3.5	5	+1.5
To reduce the impact of my anxiety and stress on my relationship with partner	3.5	5	+1.5
To improve my mental health			
a. Feel less anxious – physical symptoms like tense jaw, tight shoulders			
b. Feel less low – more motivation, feeling happier, enjoying life more	5.5	8	+2.5
To enjoy being a mum more, feel more connected with baby and less annoyed/frustrated when she's crying	6	6	0
To be less hard on myself	4	6	+2
To look after myself and prioritise my wellbeing	5	7	+2
To be kinder to myself	3	6	+3
To be less reactive to others when I feel let down	2	5	+3
To feel more able to cope with baby's dependency on me and feel less overwhelmed	5	7	+2

Qualitative Analysis: Thematic Analysis



Parent-baby relationship theme

“I think it's like helped me to see my baby as a person and like that even though he's only five months old now like he's still is a human being and he's like really interesting to be around”

““Feel a bit more curious about my baby and... think ohh, what's he feeling right now? What's he experiencing? Which maybe I wouldn't have done like before joining the group”

Parent-baby relationship theme

“I think especially during the breathing exercise and visualisation. It's funny we could always see the baby picking up on us”

“They can tell when you are in a calmer environment. Yeah, baby just knows when I'm speaking and it's more of a relaxed environment, I'm different”

“My worries about bonding were definitely appeased, and I have less anxiety about that”

Connectedness

Babies' experience:

“he'd be quite interested in the other babies and sort of make eye contact with them and we'll try and reach out and sort of touch them or hold hands”

Sense of belonging – “you are not alone”

“I think there was quite a bit of like camaraderie between the mums”

“No matter what it was in that group they had each other's backs, we always had each other's back. It was like, girl we've got you”

“We could reassure each other and show compassion towards each other and show actually you are not alone or going crazy and I think that was really nice

“For me, having a sort of a group or a shared space where I could go every week with other mums was really helpful and feeling less alone and feeling quite supported”

Connectedness

Sense of belonging – “you are not alone”

“It was super helpful because you can attend individual therapy and you can be told like ohh. You're not the only one kind of, but to like experience, the fact that you're not the only one is quite different.”

Group as the container

“the space in this group did feel very safe and it felt very contained and I think it was really good that there was, it was quite small group”

“I found I felt like supported by them even when they weren't even when we weren't in the group.”

“when I go back to my home I did have like my own internal thoughts, and I thought okay it's not just me, there are other mums going through the same”

Compassionate Mind

Courage and committed action

“just think like rather than kind of worrying about it and hope it goes away. Just being more proactive. Like how am I going to deal with this?”

“I think I have had a really, really good week, just from last Tuesday. I have took a big brave turn and made a change at home, which I hope is for the best.”

: Taking a step back

“...I think that like these constant reminders to kind of you know. What am I doing for myself? What am I? What like mode Am I in? And like just noticing that helped me to take a step back and get out of it. And I think that like that it really also improved my relationship with my baby.”

“I could just sit at home and twiddle my thumbs, feeling sorry for myself. But actually coming to the group, talking about a different discussion every week. Speaking to mums...it made me like take a step back and go yeah, for my mental health yeah.”

“in the end he will fall asleep when he need to sleep and he will eat when he needs to eat. And like if he doesn't follow a particular schedule, then like the world is not going to end”

“I was kind of trying to bring myself back to reality and reminding myself that the way I'm feeling is temporary”

Compassionate Mind

'Oxygen mask' principle

"I think because, when I'm even learning to meditate, that was my first time where I have done again, I was so happy when baby woke up. I was in a different state of mind, just to focus 10 minutes on myself, if I keep doing these things, like going out for a coffee or a run, it will definitely benefit her in the long run."

"There are things I'm doing even outside of the group (like reading the book), like I have learnt to also do things for myself I have learnt to also do things for myself and I feel like that has brought me closer to her in a nice way. Because it's not all eat, sleep, repeat, nappy, and everything like that. It's, when I got on a 15 minute jog I miss her, and think about what she is up to, it does play on my mind"

Reducing self criticism

"like what we were going through was, like, literally like a physiological thing, and not like a sign of our own like my own weakness"

"I realised that I was actually being extremely self critical and so we touched on things like inner critic and just the way that we speak to ourselves as new mums. I think that was helpful"

"do you know how refreshing that was because, this self critic that we all have and learnt a lot about (the old brain, the new brain). I have even bought the book!"

"it did help me feel like less of a failure"

What we did next...

- ❖ We are now running our second group. Responding to feedback we have increased the length of this group to 20 sessions.
- ❖ Learning sessions for health visiting
- ❖ Working on publication
- ❖ Integrating CFT into PBPS more widely

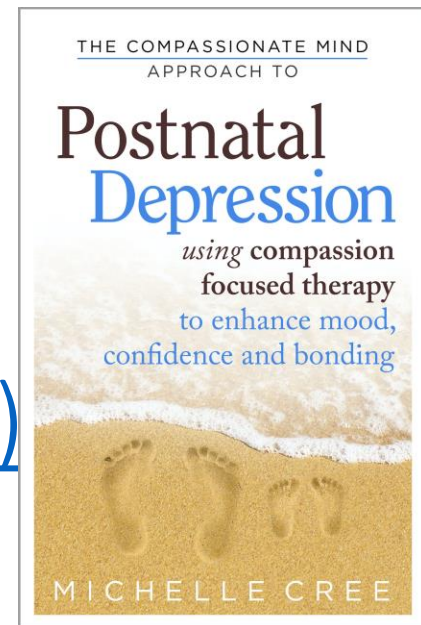
Recommendations:

[Compassionate Mind Foundation](#)

Dr Kate Lucre CFT for groups training and supervision

Dr Michelle Cree book – Compassionate mind approach to postnatal depression

[#1 Compassion Focused Therapy & Self-Compassion Resources \(balancedminds.com\)](#)



Questions?

Please feel free to connect with us

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