

# Sharpening Your Narration Skills: Trauma Narration Set Up, Construction and Implementation after PRAC, Part 1 and 2

Michael Gomez, Ph.D.

Nationally Certified TF-CBT Trainer

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Former  
Steering Committee Member

Nationally Certified CE-CERT Trainer

NCTSN Co-Founder Trauma and IDD Workgroup

Licensed Psychologist

Snyder Book Collecting Contest, Silver Medal, 2008

I, Michael Gomez, have  
no relevant financial  
relationship with any  
ineligible companies.

# Short version

If you don't know your triangle cold (or if your supervisees don't) you're completely dead in the water.

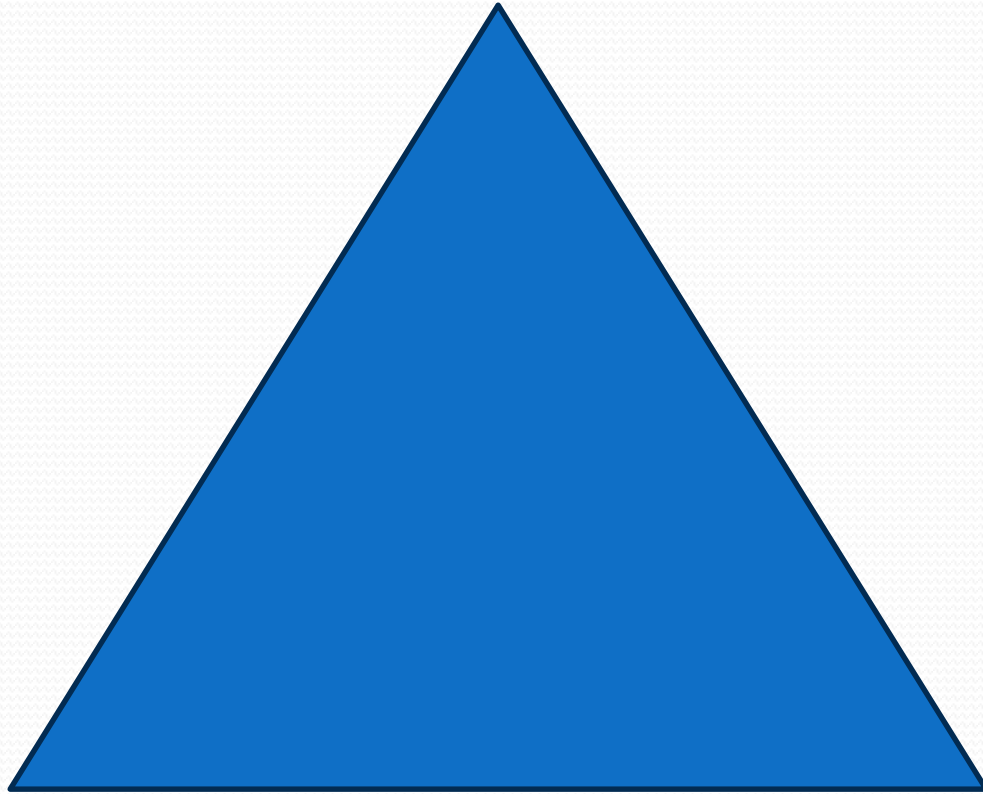
# If I could change ONE thing about how CBT is taught

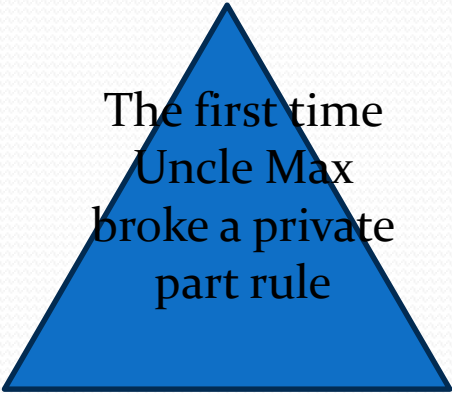
- I would throw out the terms “cognitive restructuring”, “cognitive reframing”, “cognitive processing”, etc
- And I’d replace them with “***COGNITIVE COMPREHENSION***”
- Dr. G Rule: No Intervention Without Comprehension (at least TRY to comprehend before you intervene)



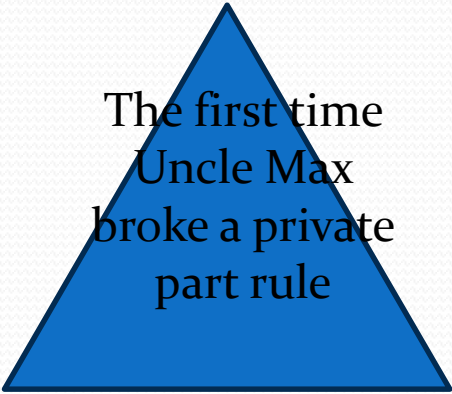
At the end of the day here is all a  
Trauma Narrative is

That's it





The first time  
Uncle Max  
broke a private  
part rule

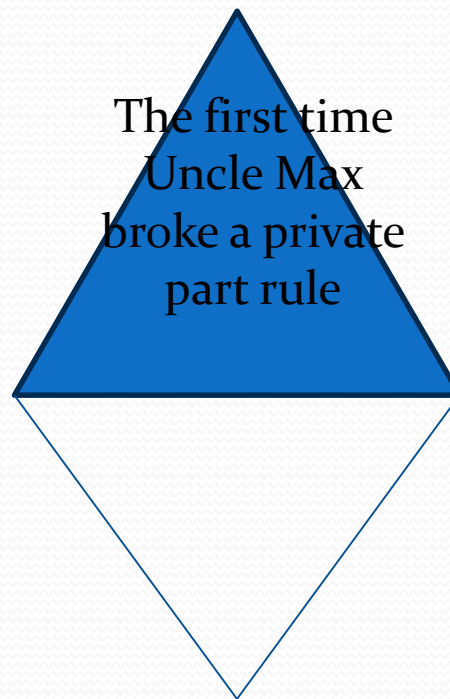


The first time  
Uncle Max  
broke a private  
part rule

ACTION: “What happened  
Janie?”

- Uncle Max came in my room.  
He pulled my pants down.  
He raped me.

# I tend to use the Cognitive Diamond, by the way

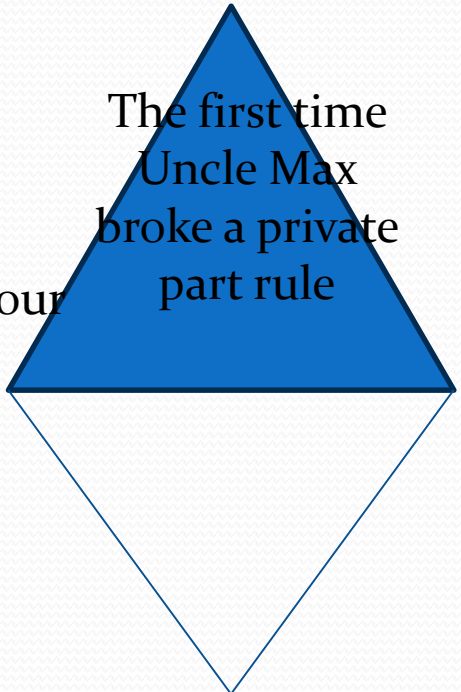


ACTION: “What happened  
Janie?”

- Uncle Max came in my room.  
He pulled my pants down.  
He raped me.

SENSORY: “How did your body feel?”

- Cold



The first time  
Uncle Max  
broke a private  
part rule

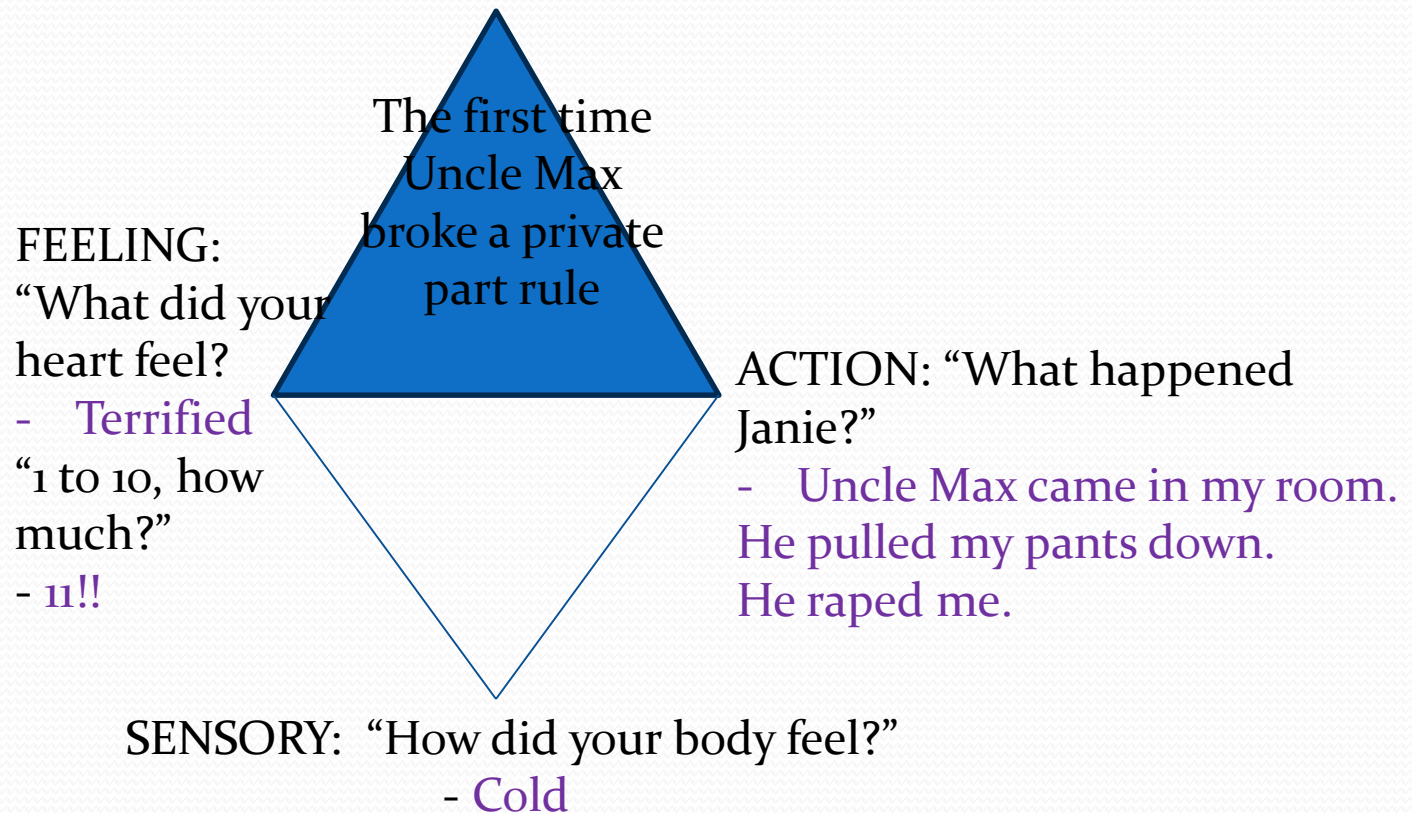
FEELING:  
“What did your  
heart feel?”  
- Terrified  
“1 to 10, how  
much?”  
- 11!!

ACTION: “What happened  
Janie?”  
- Uncle Max came in my room.  
He pulled my pants down.  
He raped me.

SENSORY: “How did your body feel?”  
- Cold

THOUGHT: “Give me at least one thought that goes with ‘terrified’, Janie?”

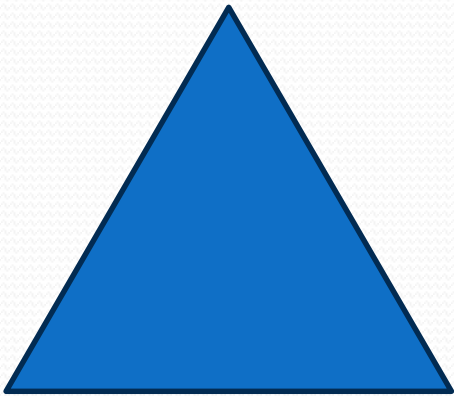
- I thought I was gonna die and never see my mom again



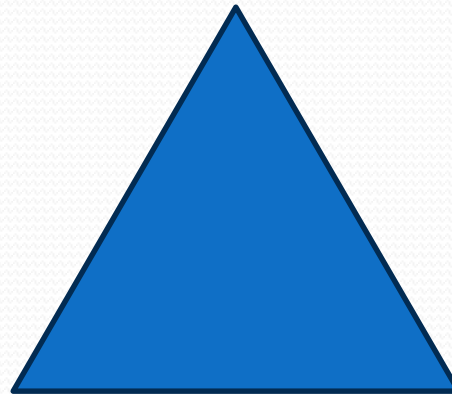
# YOU DID IT!!! YOU GOT A TN!!!

- And it's spread across 3 time frames for memories

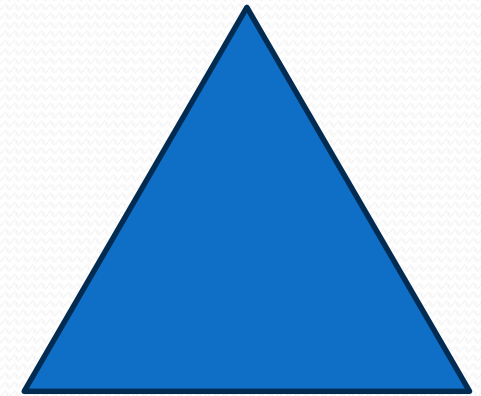
BEFORE



DURING



AFTER



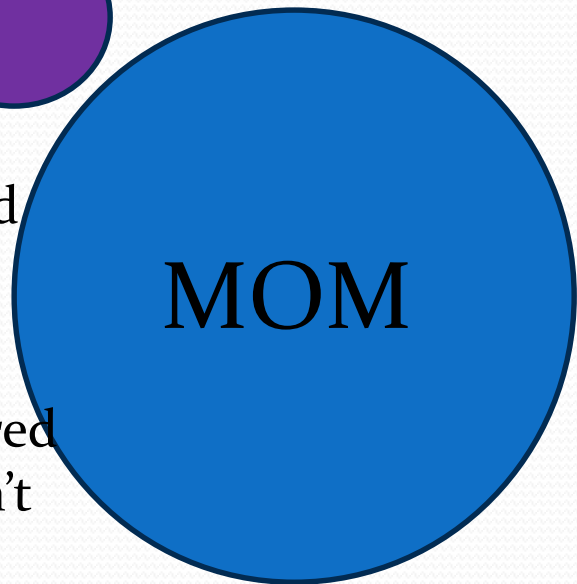
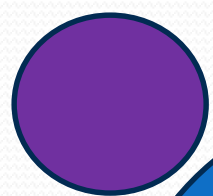
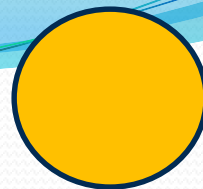
But, really that's it. That's the nucleus.

# Practice!!

- 10 y.o. Bruce Wayne, do what I just showed you

# Thematic TN – Planets and Moons

- You can thank one of my CT ASD kids for this one
- Take the event/person/absence and put it as the Planet
  - Front side has the event/person/absence
- Then use as many “moons” orbiting that planet
  - Front side has event/absence
  - Back side has thoughts and feelings
  - Tiny triangles
- Like this



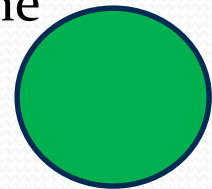
Front side: Mom never showed up to court [for TPR]

Back side: Sad 10  
Thought: She doesn't care enough to even try. (100%)

Front side: I asked mom to stop using drugs (8 y.o.) and she laughed in my face.

Back side: Devastated 10  
Thought: I thought she cared about me . . . But she doesn't (100%)

Front side: Mom left me at my aunts house and never came back.



Back side: Worthless 10  
Thought: If I was a good kid she would have come back. (100%)



# The 3 Goals of Trauma Narration (And we do them IN ORDER)

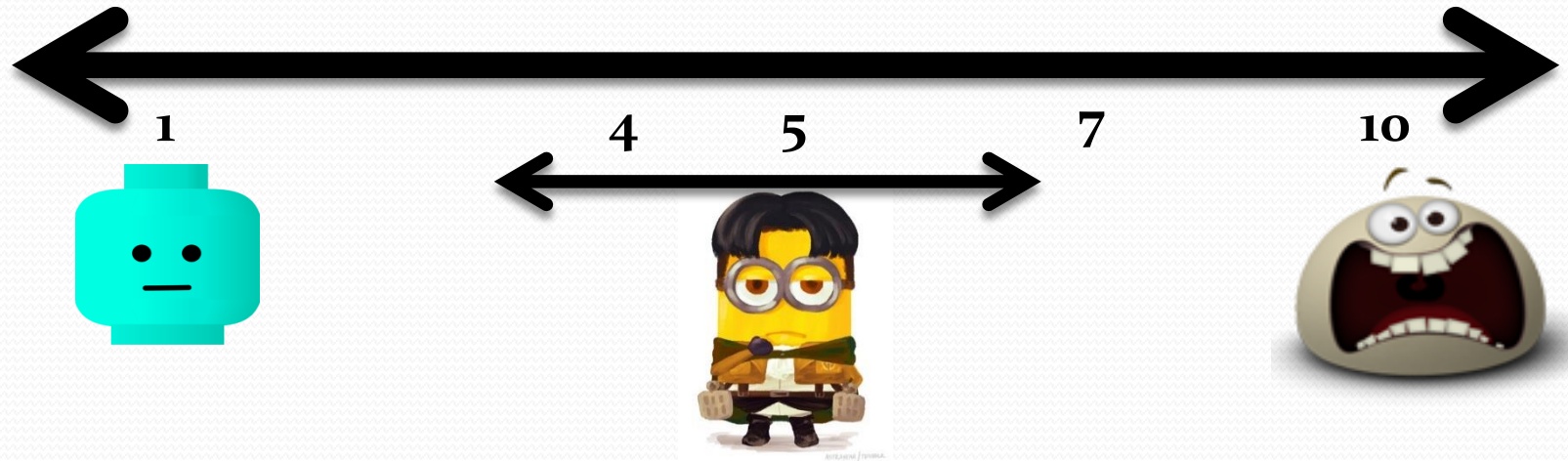
# Goal 1 of Trauma Narration

- Desensitize the child to traumatic reminders – “Take the heat out”
  - Unpair thoughts, reminders, or discussions of the traumatic event from overwhelming negative emotions such as terror, horror, extreme helplessness, shame, or rage
    - *Thereby decreasing avoidance and hyperarousal symptoms*
  - It is the MEMORY that is fueling the PTSD symptoms, the EMOTION surrounding that memory



**GRADUAL  
EXPOSURE IS THE  
HEART OF TF-CBT**

# Trauma Narration Endgame



- **Goal = DESENSITIZE**
  - You CAN talk about this even if it is uncomfortable (ergo → 4-7 range)
  - We also call this “taking the heat out”
- 10 is too much
- 1 is too little (either no problem or disconnected)

# Goal 2 of Trauma Narration

- Red Flag Cognitive Distortions (BUT DO NOT PROCESS YET)
  - You do not process a cognition while actively in TN for the same reason you do not try to rebuild a house as it is actively on fire
  - Put out the fire, THEN begin restructuring
  - What you are allowed to do is this:
    - *“Billy that’s a really heavy thought you wrote there. I want to make sure you have a chance to talk about it. Can I make a mark here and I promise we’ll come back to it later?”*
- Some children have had “desensitization by the system”
  - This is NOT the same as Trauma Narration

# Goal 3 of Trauma Narration

- Meaning Making → Contextualize traumatic experiences (Arguably the most important)
  - Implicit in TF-CBT is that it is not creating a story that is important but finding a more healing interpretation/MEANING of that story
  - If you took a Lit class you can do this
    - Ex: "What's the meaning of 'Moby Dick'?"
  - Usually you know you're here by default (e.g., my 16-year-old girl)
    - How you see your trauma changes when you're 16, 26, 36, etc
  - Difference b/t Cog Processing and Meaning Making
  - Final chapter is where you do this the most directly
    - But the child, themselves, will tend to do it spontaneously during a TN (let them, it's pretty cool)

# The Two Cornerstones of Good

## TN's

- **SPECIFICITY** Who, What, When, Where
  - Bad specificity: “I was beat and saw my mom hit a bunch and oh ya there was that one time I saw a guy shot.”
  - GOOD specificity: “It was last summer when I was 10. It was after school. I walked in and shut the door and could hear yelling. I went in the living room and saw my dad with his hands on my mom’s neck. She was gagging.”
- **COHERENCY** Beginning, Middle, End
  - Bad coherency: “When the police showed up they had like vests on. And my foster mom ended up being nice but my mom went to jail and my mom was cooking meth. The cops kicked the door and it was scary but I got to go to a nice home so it’s okay.”
  - GOOD coherency: “The first thing I heard was the police yelling. They said, ‘come out now’. They didn’t wait cause they broke the door with like a big battering ram. My mom grabbed a gun, started shooting when the door broke.”

# How Dr. G Finishes A Chapter

- I always add in the following questions at the end of TN (especially for complex trauma)
  1. What was the hardest part about this memory?
  2. What part do you think about the most now?
  3. What part did you think you would never tell anyone?
- For Complex Trauma: What does this all mean . . .
  1. About you
  2. The world/other people
  3. Your future
- The reason is you're looking for the toughest spots of that memory or theme

# Dr. Gomez will make your life easier right now

1

## Telling My Story

Memories are like TV shows that play in our minds. With normal memories, we can choose which “shows” we play and when we play them. It’s like we are in charge of the remote control to our memories and we can recall what we want when we want.

After going through scary or upsetting events, it can feel like someone else has the remote control to our memories. They choose which “shows” we watch and when we watch them. We may do our best to avoid upsetting memories, but they keep replaying out of our control.

The good news is that we can take back the remote control to our memories. To do this, we use our new coping skills to go back and watch the upsetting memories again – but in a safe way. By doing this, we take back control to the story of our life.

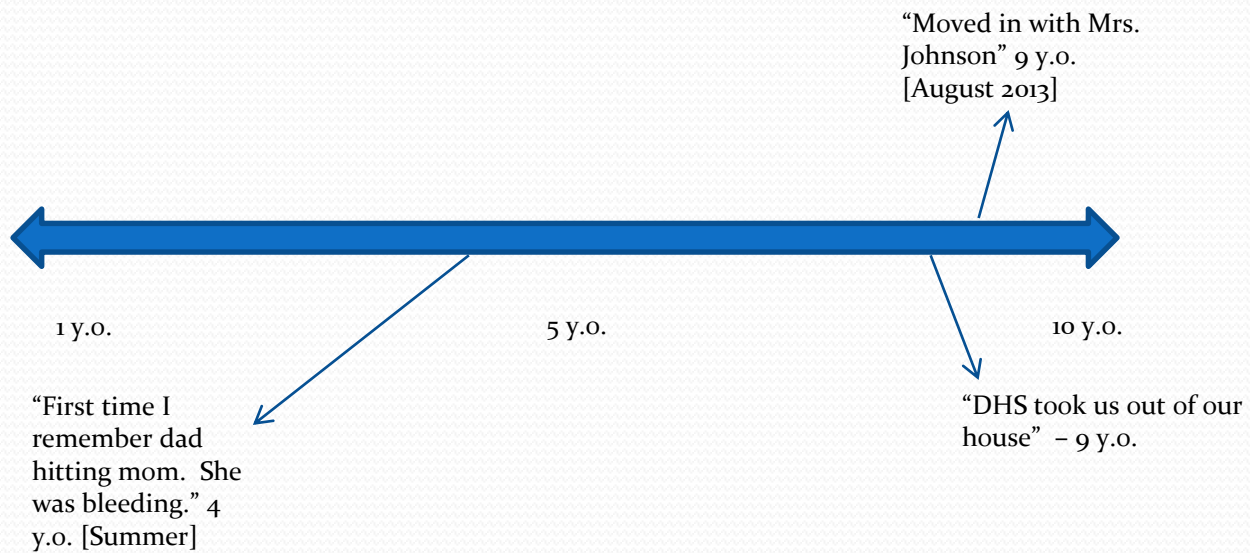
You’ve worked hard to earn the right to tell your life story. Everyone’s life story includes favorite “light” memories and upsetting “heavy” memories. We can learn and grow stronger from our light and heavy memories. Your therapist will help you pick which memories should be part of your life story.

# The Oklahoma Method of TN

1. Rationale
2. In session safety plan
3. Create Gradual Exposure Hierarchy (aka “Timeline”)
  - **HIGHLY** advise a “Rolling Timeline” for your polytrauma kids
    - You start this session 2 and so you just skip to step 4
4. Rank (Bronze/Silver/Gold) the Timeline
5. Neutral/Happy Chapter
6. Bronze/Heavy Chapter
7. Silver/Heavier Chapter
8. Gold/Heaviest Chapter
9. *(And for bonus points a “Final Chapter” like “What I’ve learned” or something like that)*

# Happy Memories

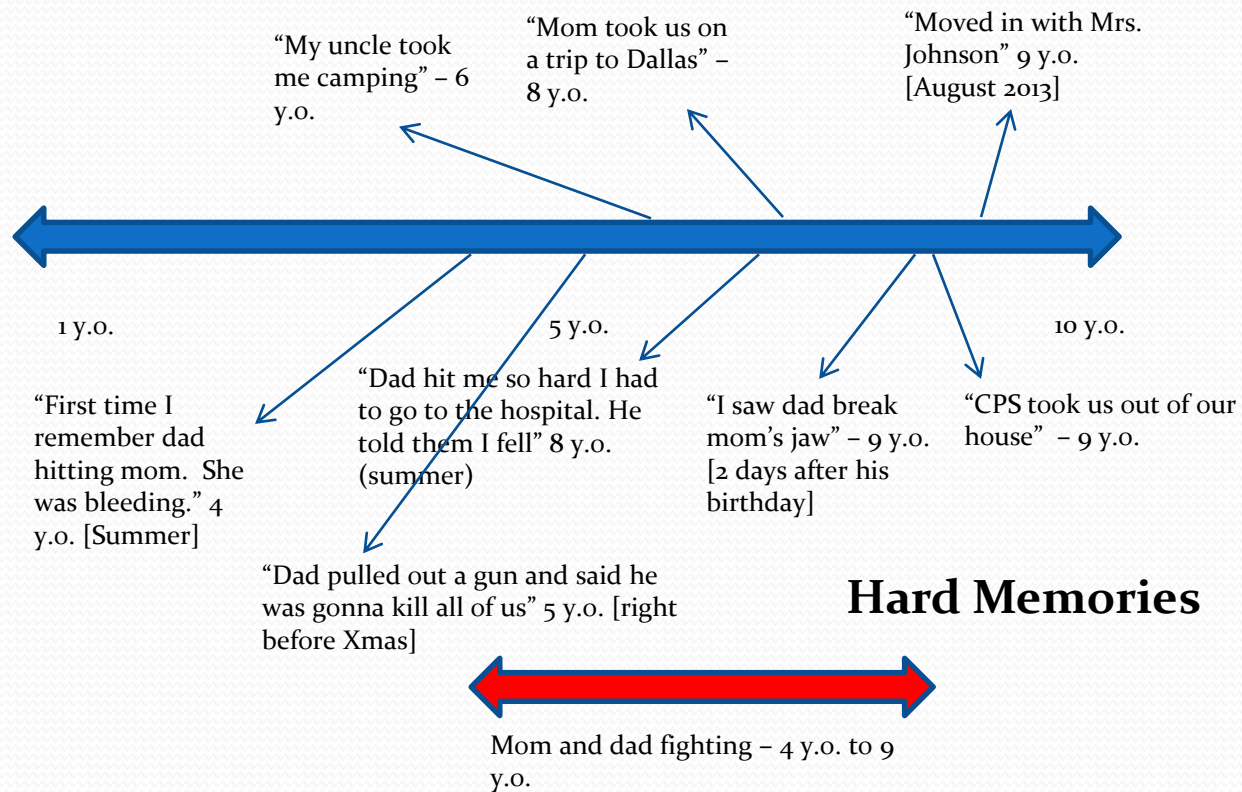
# PTSD



# Hard Memories

# PTSD

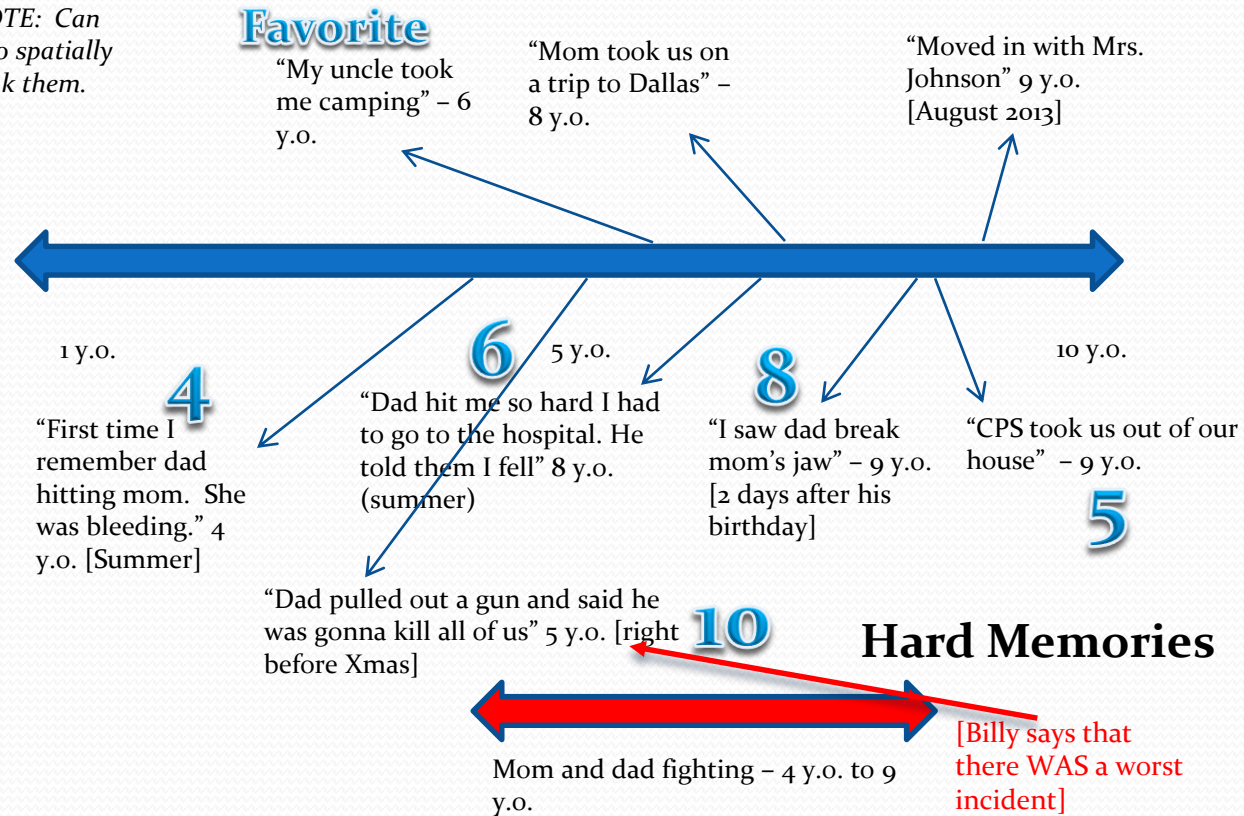
## Happy Memories



# PTSD

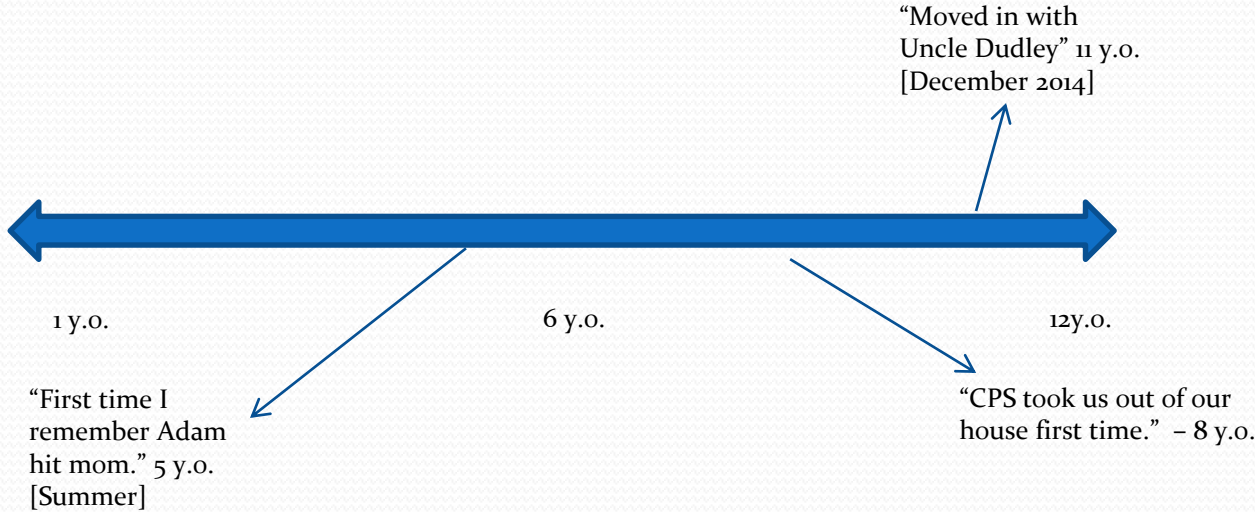
## Happy Memories

NOTE: Can also spatially rank them.



# COMPLEX PTSD

## Happy Memories

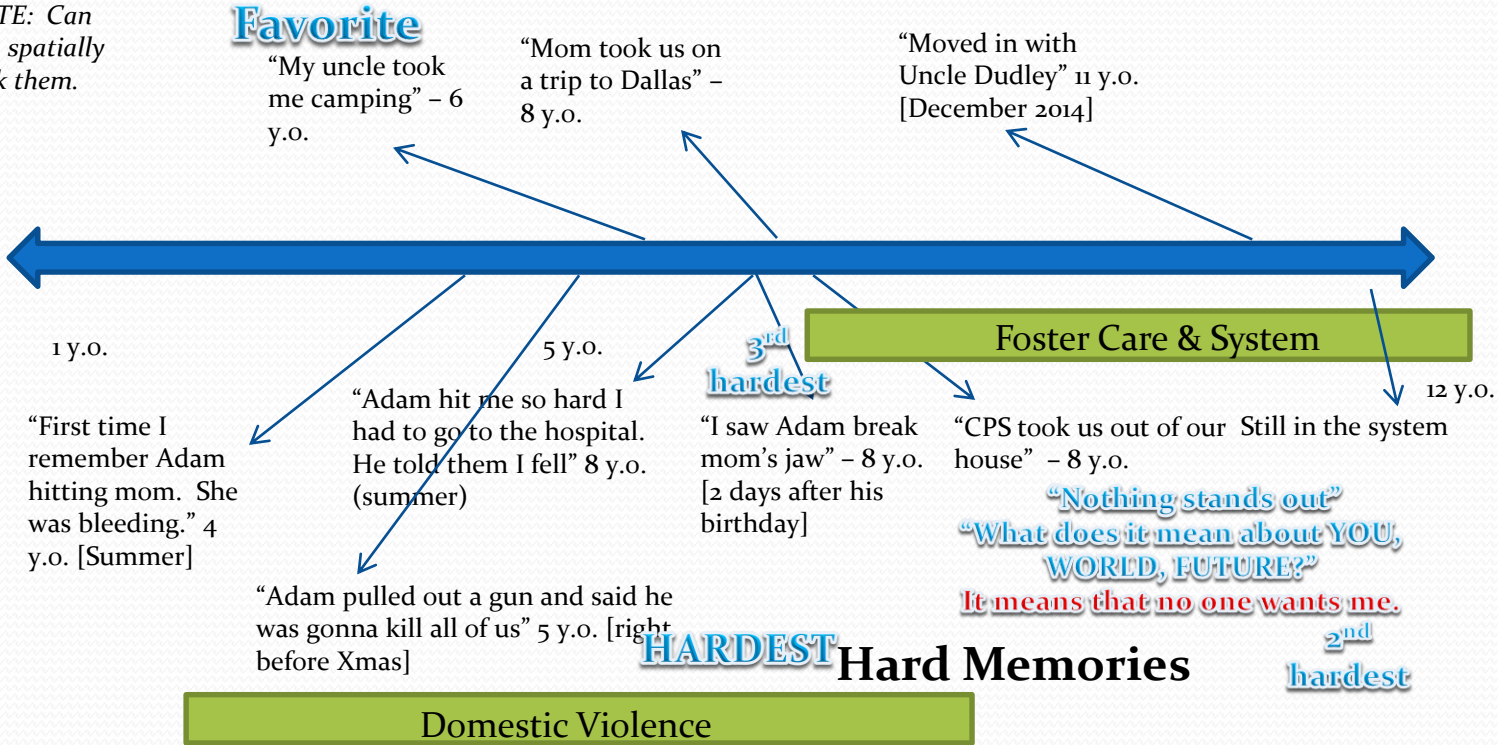


## Hard Memories

# COMPLEX PTSD

## Happy Memories

NOTE: Can also spatially rank them.



# The Timeline Decision Tree (for Step 3)

- Focal Narrative (“Was there a worst time?”)
  - This is the one we will train on today
  - When in doubt between the three, default to this one
- “Day in the life of” Narrative (“Was every day kind of the same?”), originally created for CSEC
  - 24 hour day becomes a “trunk” and the incidents become “branches” (each branch is a triangle)
- Thematic Narrative (“Does this say something about yourself, your world, or your future?”)
  - We’ll get to this one a little later
  - CPT “Big 5” are useful here

# Timeline Practice!!!



# Here are your options

- Bruce Wayne at 12
- Peter Parker at 16
- Luna Lovegood at 11
- Selina Kyle at 17
  
- Or you can pick a client you have de-identified

# What do I say when we start?

- You've learned a lot so far about upsetting/confusing events, feelings, coping, relaxation, and thoughts. Congratulations! These are all important things that will help you as you begin to tell about the upsetting/confusing event(s) that happened to you. You get to decide where you want to start and how you would like to tell your story. If you start feeling strongly upset, you can stop, and I will help remind you of ways to manage your feelings. You're in charge!
  - I straight stole this from the TF-CBT workbook
- You said that the third hardest thing that happened was when your mom and dad got in a fight last Christmas. Start at the beginning and tell me so I can see it through your eyes. I'll start writing when you start talking.
- I've also used "I wasn't there so help me to see it as if I was right there beside you"

# Draft 1- Billy

I was at home with Mary and we were watching TV. We always have to watch TV because mom can't afford a babysitter. I was eating Teddy Grams and telling Mary to be quiet because mom and Adam were fighting in the next room because their TV was loud. Then the door opened and mom ran out. Mom ran fast. Adam ran too. I told Mary to hide under the bed and I ran too. I saw mom on the floor and Adam was on top of her. I ran at Adam and he hit me. He hit me hard but I should have still gotten up. Then the police showed up and took Adam and mom away. Mary and me went to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Vasquez for a little while then we went to live with Uncle Dudley.



Where do you want to go with  
Draft 2?

# Draft 2-3 - Billy

I was at home with Mary and we were watching TV. [Q-Where were you at home?] *We were in our bedroom and were having lunch. It was a Saturday cause we didn't have school.* [Q-"What were you watching?"] *I was watching Justice League because I like superheroes and I'm a superhero too.* We always have to watch TV because mom can't afford a babysitter. I was eating Teddy Grams and telling Mary to be quiet because mom and Adam were fighting in the next room because their TV was loud. [Q-Tell me more about that] *Whenever mom and Adam have the TV really loud it means they're fighting or gonna fight. They always do that.* Then the door opened and mom ran out. [Q-Feeling and Thought] *I felt scared at a 8. I was thinking "Something really really bad is gonna happen," and "Mary might get hurt. I have to protect Mary cause Captain Marvel would protect his sister."* Mom ran fast. Adam ran too. [Q-Feelings and Thoughts] *I was really really mad at a 10. My head was saying "Adam shouldn't be hurting my mom and I'm not going to let him. It's my job to fight bad guys and he's a bad guy."*

# Draft 2-3 – Billy (cont.)

I told Mary to hide under the bed and I ran too. [Q-Feelings and Thoughts] *I was scared at a 10 because if Mary got hurt it would be my fault. I was also mad at a 10 too because I knew I was going to have to fight Adam. I thought “Adam’s a bad guy and I’m a good guy. I won’t let him hurt people anymore.”* I saw mom on the floor and Adam was on top of her. [Q-Tell me more about that.] *He had his hands around her throat. I got really scared when I saw that and couldn’t move for a little while. [Q-I-10] I was scared at 10. I know that’s bad cause Captain Marvel wouldn’t be so scared he couldn’t move. I could hear mom making a sound cause she was trying to breathe and Adam wouldn’t let her. She was trying to scratch his face but he didn’t move. He looked really really mad.* I ran at Adam and he hit me. [Q-He hit you?] *Ya, he hit me with his fist in the mouth. I started bleeding cause he busted my lip. I didn’t like how my blood tasted so I spit at him. Then he hit me again with his fist and I couldn’t get up. He went back to choking my mom after that.*

# Draft 2-3 – Billy (cont.)

He hit me hard but I should have still gotten up. [Q-Feelings and Thoughts] *I felt stupid at a 10 cause I couldn't stop him and I guess I also felt mad at a 10 too cause I couldn't stop him. I thought, "I hate you!!!" and "I'm going to kill you!!!"* [Q-What happened next?] *I saw Adam's phone near the table. I think it fell out when he and my mom were fighting. I picked it up and crawled under the kitchen sink and called 911. Adam couldn't see me. [Q-Feelings and Thoughts] I was scared at a 10 and sad at a 8. I was thinking "I think my mom is dead." But I called the police because I promised Mary if Adam hurt mom again I'd call them.* Then the police showed up and took Adam and mom away. Mary and me went to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Vasquez for a little while then we went to live with Uncle Dudley.

# Question

- Would it have been okay to cry hearing that narrative?

# The 3 Reasons Ashley Will Cut You

- If you do not CHECK SUD's
- If you do not WRITE DOWN (or in some way document)
- If you PROCESS

Then this is the last thing you will see



# Time to Practice – TN Group Practice



# Time to Practice – TN Dyad Practice





**Special Case Scenario!!!  
Pictorial Narratives!!!**



**HOZON**

April 3 at 4:54 AM

What's your ZOMBIE Killing name?

# YOUR ZOMBIE KILLING NAME

## FIRST NAME INITIAL

- A- KING
- B- THE WIZARD
- C- SHADOW
- D- CRACK
- E- DOUBLE
- F- THE DARK
- G- THE BLACK
- H- ATOMIC
- I- THE BRUTAL
- J- STORM
- K- PHANTOM
- L- THE BIG
- M- THE MAD
- N- DOCTOR
- O- GIANT
- P- PISTOL
- Q- MASTER
- R- CAPTAIN
- S- GENERAL
- T- CHEF
- U- HACK
- V- LORD
- W- SUPER
- X- INCREDIBLE
- Y- THE RED
- Z- PROFESSOR

## LAST NAME INITIAL

- A- KILLER
- B- BLADE
- C- KNIGHT
- D- KILL
- E- CLOWN
- F- NINJA
- G- DOUBLE TAP
- H- SLICE
- I- DEVIL
- J- CRAZY
- K- FREAK
- L- DADDY
- M- KNIFE
- N- SLAYER
- O- BEAR CLAW
- P- RAZOR
- Q- BULLET
- R- DEATH
- S- MACHETTE
- T- BULLET
- U- DICE
- V- GHOST
- W- BEAST
- X- KONG
- Y- SILENT
- Z- EVIL

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# THANK YOU!

**Michael Gomez, Ph.D.**

[drmichaelgomezbt@gmail.com](mailto:drmichaelgomezbt@gmail.com)