

Cruse Golden Jubilee Conference
Warwick University
16th July 2009

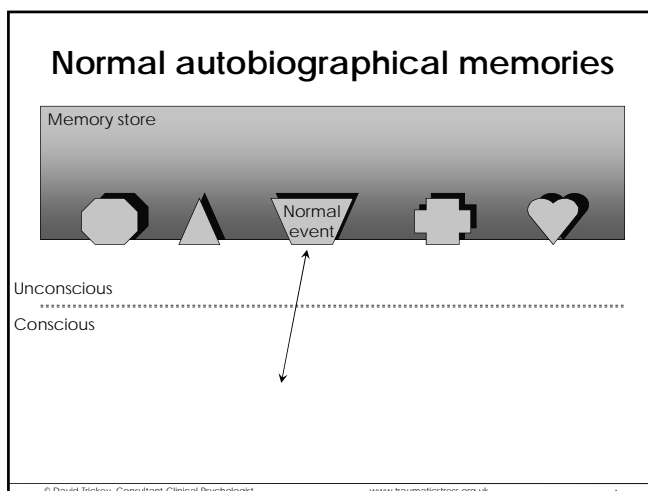
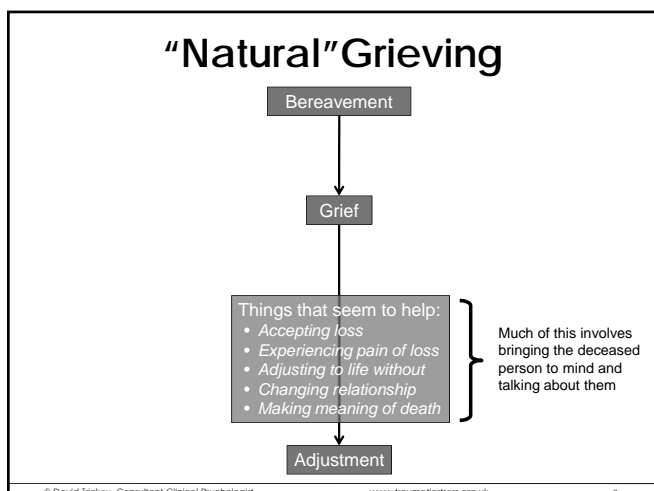
Restoring Hope in Traumatically Bereaved Children & Young People

David Trickey
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
mail@davidtrickey.com

Overview

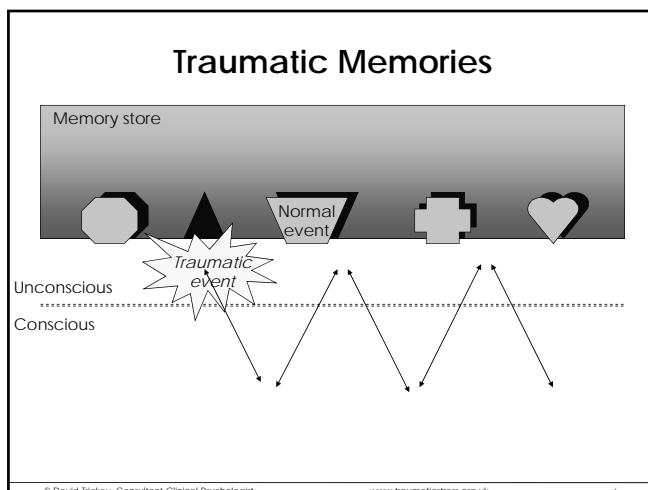
- Effect of traumatic events
- How that *obstructs* natural grieving
- How to make a straight path (secondary prevention)
- What can be done if Child Traumatic Grief persists (tertiary intervention)

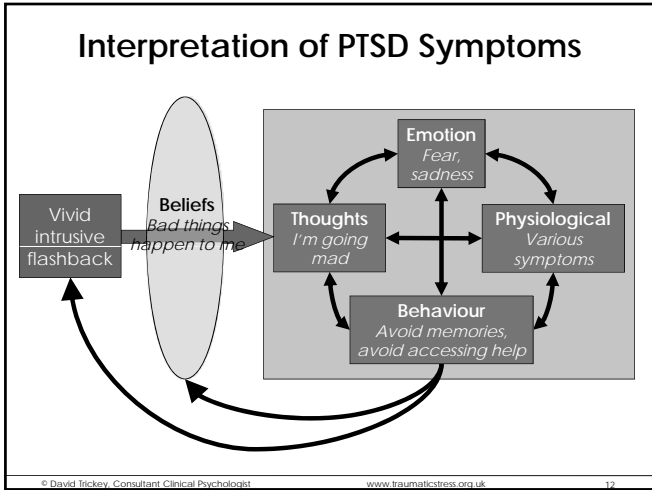
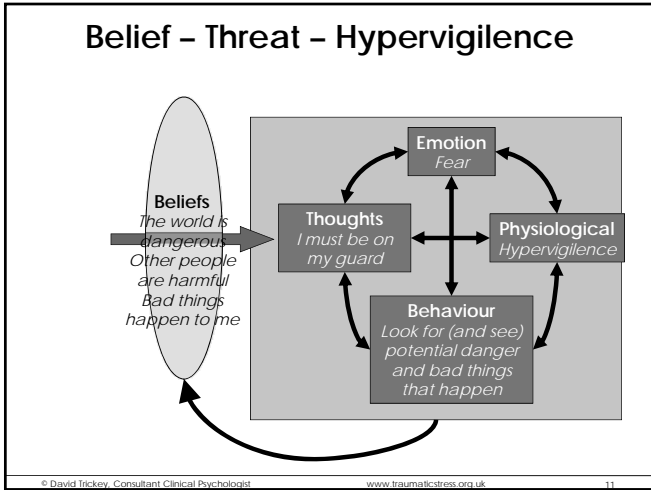
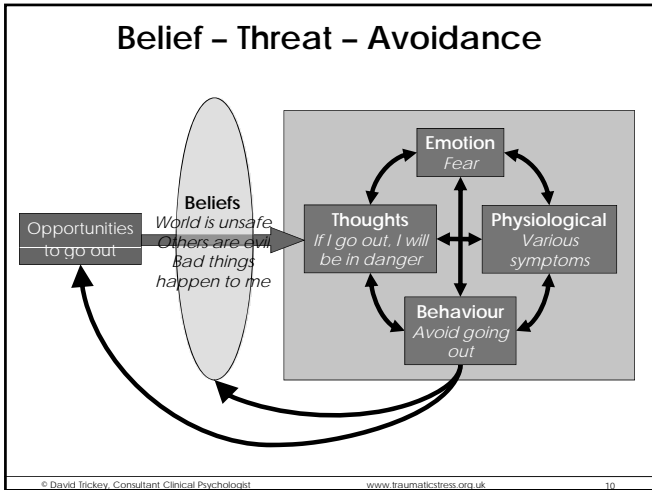
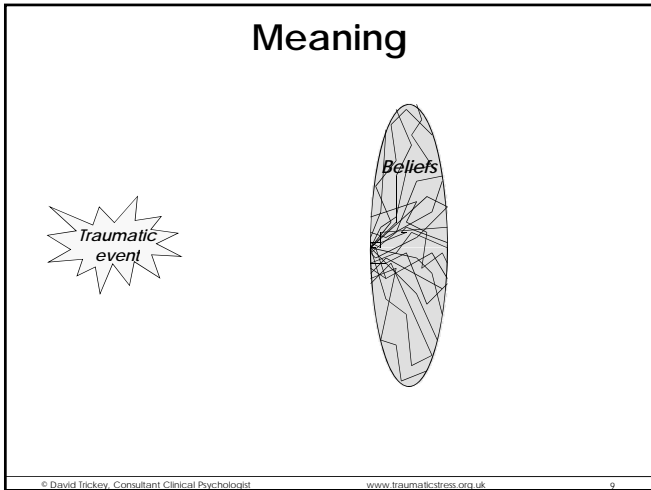
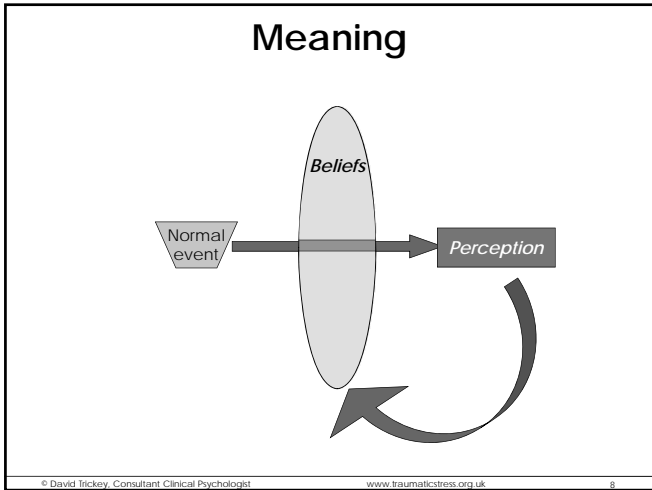
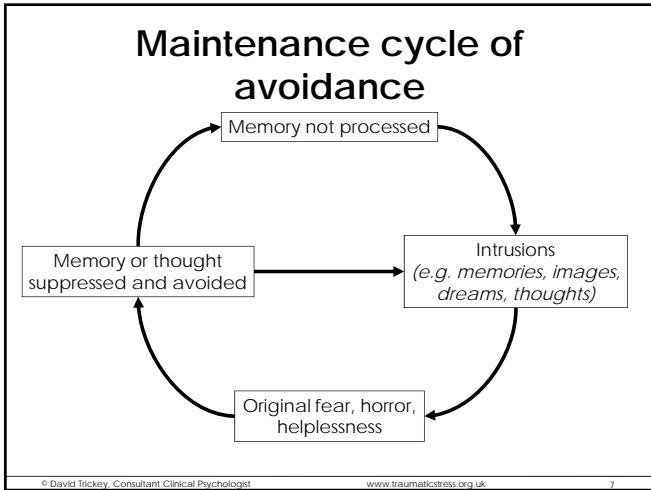
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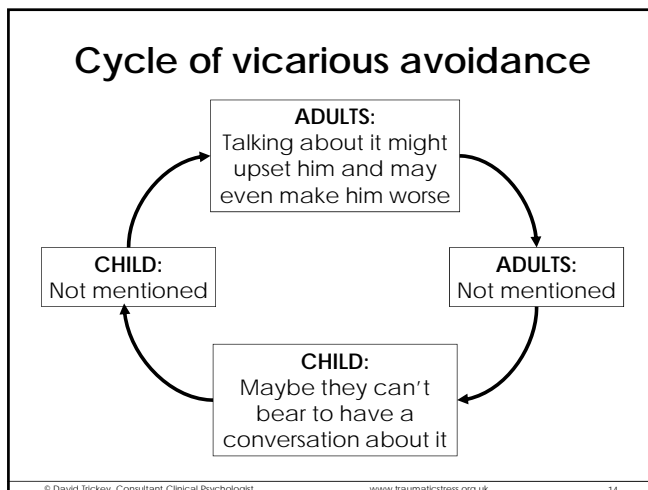
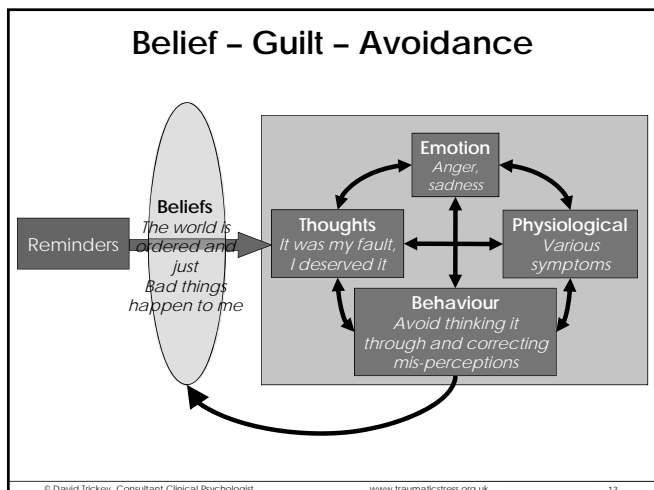


Normal autobiographical Memories	Traumatic Memories
• Words & stories	• Vivid sensory information
• Fluid, updateable	• Static, frozen
• Linked to other memories, placed in historical context	• Isolated, stand alone
• "There and then"	• "Here and now"
• Organised into a coherent story	• Disorganised, fragmented, incoherent

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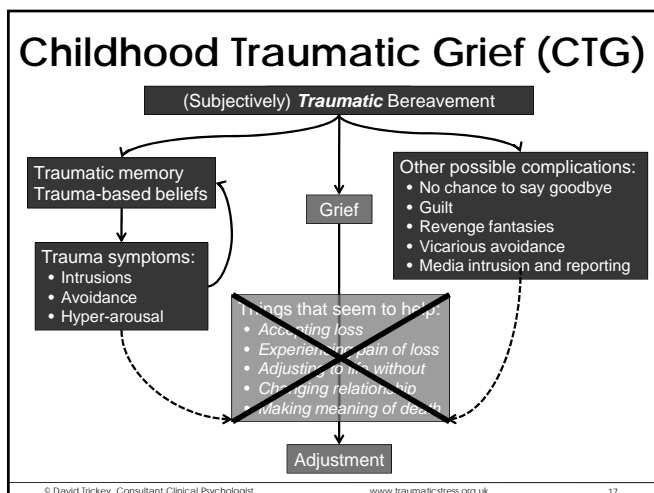




- ### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- **Re-experiencing**
 - Intrusive memories
 - Nightmares
 - Flashbacks
 - Re-enactment
 - Repetitive play
 - **Over-arousal**
 - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
 - Irritability or outbursts of anger
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Always on the look out
 - More jumpy
 - **Avoidance & numbing**
 - Avoidance of anything associated with event
 - Memory loss
 - Loss of interest in activities
 - Feeling different from others
 - Loss of feelings
 - Sense of fore-shortened future
 - **Duration > 1 months**
 - **Clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning**
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Grief	Trauma
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrusive images/thoughts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soft - Of the person - Sad - Yearned for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrusive images/thoughts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharp - Of the trauma - Frightening, horrific - Avoided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-experiences presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-experiences threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to seek out (reminders, opportunities to talk and others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance (of reminders, talking and people) is central
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper-arousal rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper-arousal common
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper-vigilant to find reminders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper-vigilant to avoid threats

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- ### Making a straight path
- Helping the child to say goodbye
 - Making it talkable about
 - Giving information
 - Encouraging questions
 - And then answering them
 - Correcting misperceptions
 - Helping parents
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Information denied

- In an understandable attempt to protect people (particularly children) from distress, they are often not told the whole truth. But what if:
 - What they are told does not tally with what they saw or overhear
 - They fill in the gaps with a fantasy that is worse than the reality
 - They find out the truth in an unhelpful way (e.g. playground, t.v., 30 years later)
 - They ask “awkward” questions
 - Different adults have different views on what should be said
 - It gets *harder* not *easier* to tell them the truth

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19

Information supplied

- What and how have to come before why or why me, so an adequate account is needed to enable some sort of meaning-making
- Giving people (particularly children) information about the death is a *process* not an *event*:
 - Accurate
 - Appropriate
 - Repeated
 - Elaborated as they get older
- Slightly *less bad* coming from someone they already know, trust and love, rather than strangers or peers
- Site visits and body viewing may be really helpful

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20

Shattered Lives: What helps children?

Video available from Child Bereavement Charity



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21

Signs of CTG

- PTSD symptoms:
 - Intrusions, avoidance, hyper-arousal
- Impinge on grieving:
 - Reminiscing leads to fearful anxious distress rather than sadness
 - Reminders of the person, the loss or the changes, trigger memories of the death
 - Memories of the death, obstruct memories of the person
 - Avoidance of talking or thinking about deceased
 - Avoidance of places, things or activities that remind of the deceased
 - Avoidance of considering similarities

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Intervention

- *Standard* interventions for *uncomplicated* grief may not work
 - Intervention may trigger traumatic memories
 - Young person may drop out because of their avoidance
- Traumatic memory and meaning of the death must be processed before natural grieving can proceed

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Trauma-focussed sessions

- Psychoeducation
- Feeling identification, affective modulation, relaxation
- Cognitive triad (Thoughts – Feelings – Behaviour)
- Rationale for creating trauma narrative
 - Wardrobe
 - Factory
 - Waste paper bin
- Creation of trauma narrative and cognitive processing

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28

Grief-focussed sessions

- Grief psycho-education
- Creating and preserving memories of the deceased
- Converting relationship from interaction to memory
- Recommitting to current relationships
- Making meaning of the loss

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32

Evidence

- Layne et al 2001
 - 55 x 15-19 yr olds, from Bosnia
 - Decrease in symptoms of depression, PTSD and CTG
- Saltzman et al 2001
 - 26 x 11-14 yr olds with PTSD symptoms following community violence, 7 had been bereaved of a loved one
 - Decrease in symptoms of PTSD and CTG
- Cohen et al 2006
 - 39 x 6-17 yr olds with CTG
 - Parents included in parallel sessions
 - Uncontrolled
 - Decrease in:
 - Children's PTSD (only during trauma focussed module)
 - Children's depression
 - Children's anxiety
 - Children's behavioural problems
 - CTG
 - Parental PTSD

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Endings

- Predict & prepare
- Graduation

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34

References and Further Reading

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36