

Trauma Scene Investigation: *constructing a pathway to change*

Anke van Schooten MA



... ..

Fine Treatment Setting

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- Enthusiastic, well-equipped colleagues
- Many therapies on offer
- Many children referred to us

However...

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Conditions to start therapy

for the child/family are missing

- Every day life upside down
- Parents own problems
- Isolation peers
- Family support disturbed

A safe environment...

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- Is necessary to benefit from therapy
- Is necessary to limit secondary trauma

Family Safety Plan

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In order to:

ESTABLISH a stabilising context

&

EVALUATE safety!

Family Safety Plan 1

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- **Has the violence stopped?**
 - How do parents know?
 - How do they check if the situation remains safe?

Family Safety Plan 2

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- Map the **legal position** of caregivers and adjust to it
 - Also the distant parent
 - Position caregivers in composed families
 - Position parents that offended the crime

Family Safety Plan 3

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- Investigate **every day life direction**
 - General parental care (BBB)
 - Housekeeping/overview on household

Financial situation, Proper home, Organized home, Social support

Family Safety Plan 4

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- Investigate **parental skills**
 - Daily structure
 - Intact family hierarchy
 - Emotional stability
 - Recognition and acknowledge of feelings

Family Safety Plan 5

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- Investigate **family history of trauma & coping**
 - Regarding the present trauma
 - Regarding the parent's history
- Understand the parent's (para)medical resources

Family Safety Plan 6

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Install a **“stable third”**: a person to turn to in need

- What to do when alarm signals appear
- Parents agree
- Gives the child a sense of control

E.g. teacher, neighbour, grandparent, family guardian

As a consequence ...

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- Invest in getting everyone on the same page
- Pro-active attitude towards needs of siblings
- Offer time and advice to colleagues that are in contact with the family

Rewarding, but delicate...

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- A lot of information to put in order
- Negotiate when it's everyone's problem
- Long-term benefits regarding referrers
- Translate abstract safety into specific behavior

What's in a word: Safety?



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Theoretic base

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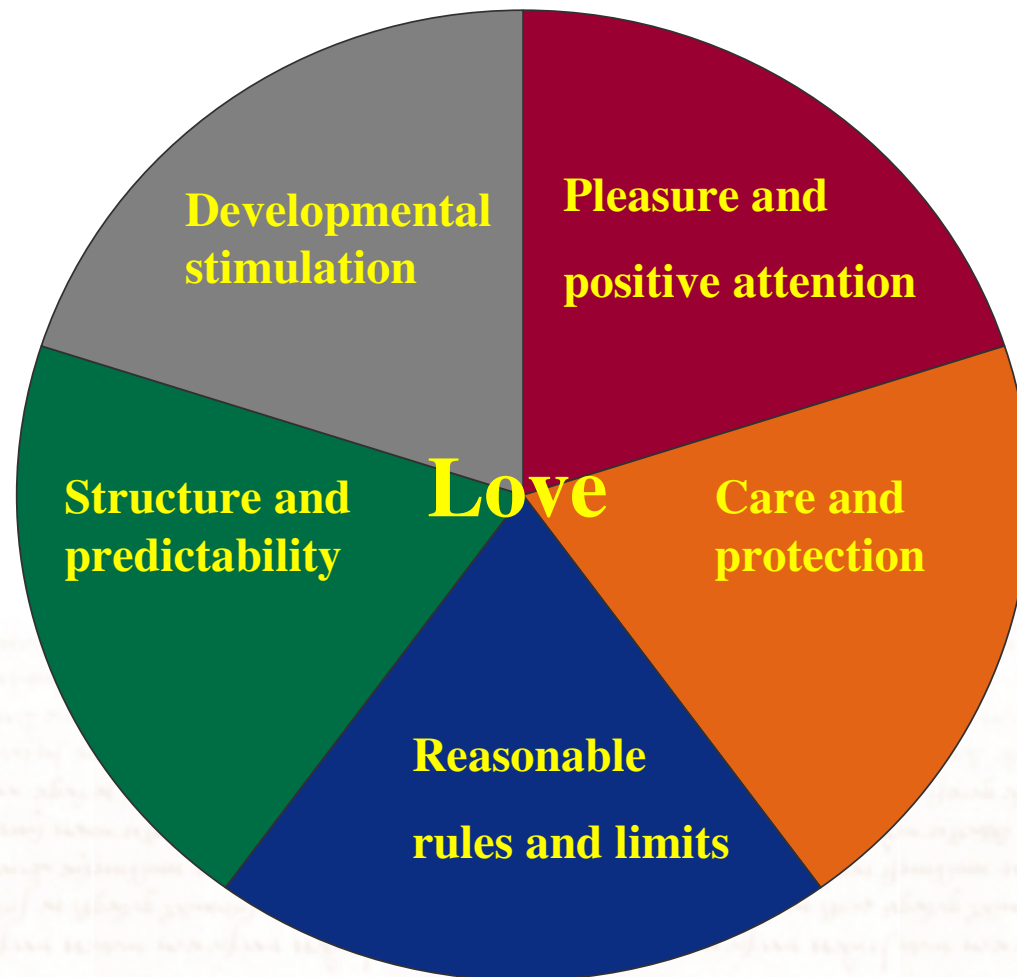
1. Signs of Safety (Andrew Turnell)
2. Circle diagram (Solution Focussed Therapy)
3. Stable third (Solution Focussed Therapy)
4. When things go wrong, I'll call you (Expertisecentrum voor Jeugd en Samenleving, Gouda, 2005)

1. Signs of safety-model

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- Balance between protecting and (possible) harming factors
- Room for practical care, individual needs and parental needs
- Puts parents/caregivers in their place/responsability
- Specific terms are crucial for parents and therapists
- Actions are distracted directly from list

2. Circle diagram of parental skills



3. Stable third

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Monitoring adult: important source nearby, but outside the direct caregiving system (e.g. teacher, grandparent, neighbour)

4. When things go wrong, I'll call ...

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- Speaking with the child about who it can turn to when it feels unhappy/unsafe ...
- Safe parent/care giver should be present to acknowledge the agreement
- Makes position of therapist/daily care givers clear to the child

References

Literature:

- Cohen, Judith A, Mannarino, Anthony P and Deblinger, Esther (2006). Treating trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents
- Greenwald, Ricky (2005). Child trauma handbook. A guide for helping trauma-exposed children and adolescents.
- Turnell, A & Edwards, S. (1997). Aspiring to partnership: the signs of safety approach to child protection. *Child Abuse Review*, 6: 179-190.
- Turnell, A. and Edwards, S. (1999). Signs of safety: A safety and solution oriented approach to child protection casework, New York: Norton.

Contact: A.van.Schooten@RvAgroep.nl

Herlaarhof is the child- en youth department of general psychological health care, named the Reinier van Arkel Group, in the city of Den Bosch and the province around.