



# 2024 Annual Conference 'Working Together'

**#PDFConf24**



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THE PROFESSIONAL  
DEPUTIES FORUM





## Finding Your Song

### Defence Mechanisms, Triggers and Communications with Families

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# What or Who decides The Song?

- Trauma profile, where are your clients on their journey What's their regular sound track?
- What is the song of the day for you and or them. Are we Inside or Outside the 'Window of Tolerance'?
- Is the sound track stuck on repeat. '*The Drama Triangle*' are we Victim, Persecutor, or Rescuer.
- What's the lyrics telling us? Is this the 'Grief Cycle' and or are they stuck in the 'Liminal Space'.
- Emotional Drivers versus Injunction – What's the message. How's it being filtered?
- Relational versus Transactional – Me versus You. 'Rage Against The Machine'. The use of emotional defence mechanisms.
- Problem or Solution – It's me, I'm the problem it's me'.

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# What is the regular sound track being played to you by your clients and or their Families

## **Fight Song by Rachel Platten**

This is my fight song

Take back my life song.

Prove I'm alright Song

My powers turned on

Starting right now I'll be strong

I'll play my fight song

And I don't really care if nobody else believes

Cause I've still got a lot of fight still left in me

**OR**

## **Bad Life by Sigrid**

Ooh, it's hard to get up out of bed when  
everything is on its head

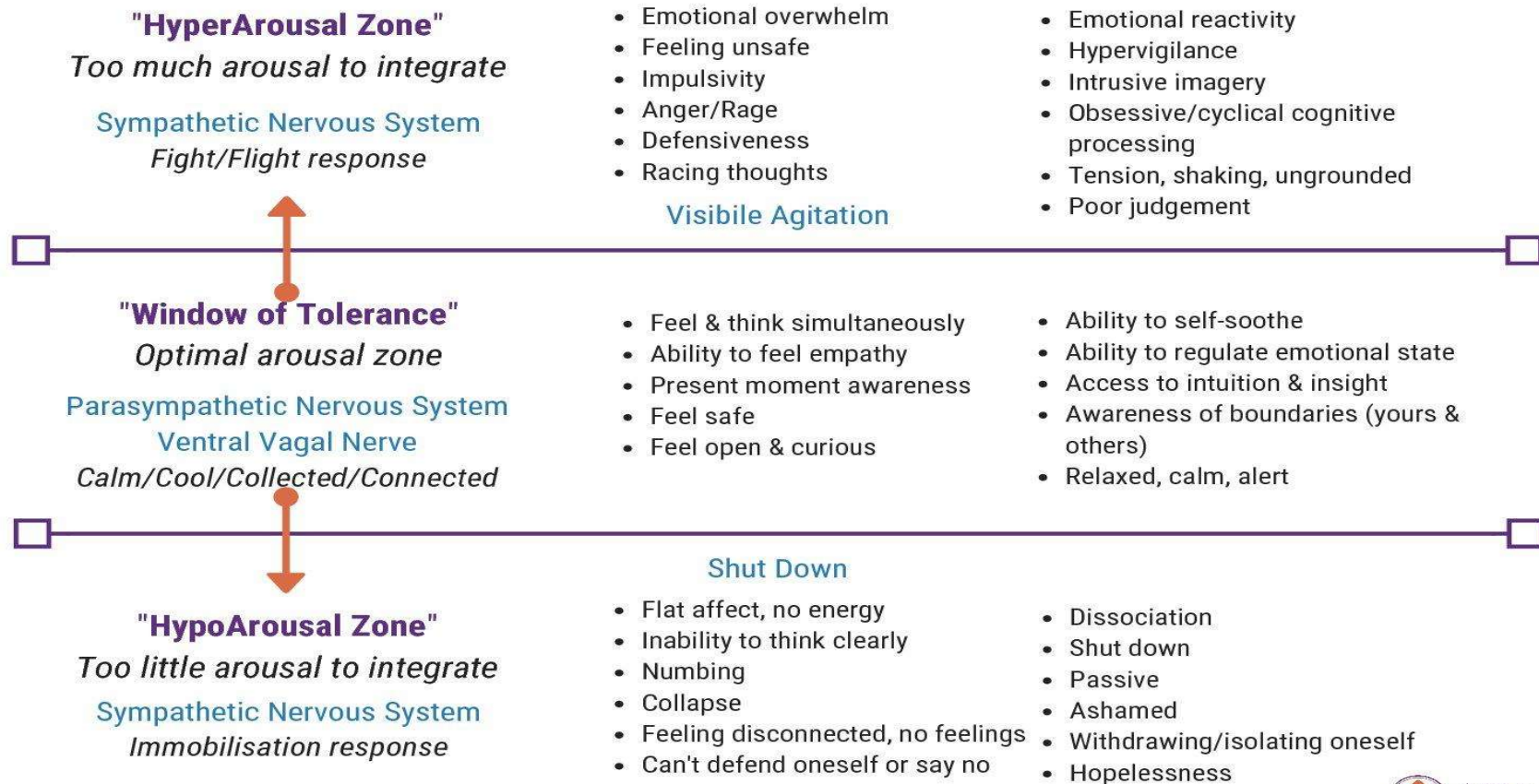
And nothing seems to make any sense

Like a Band-Aid on a bleeding heart

I fake a smile and fall apart

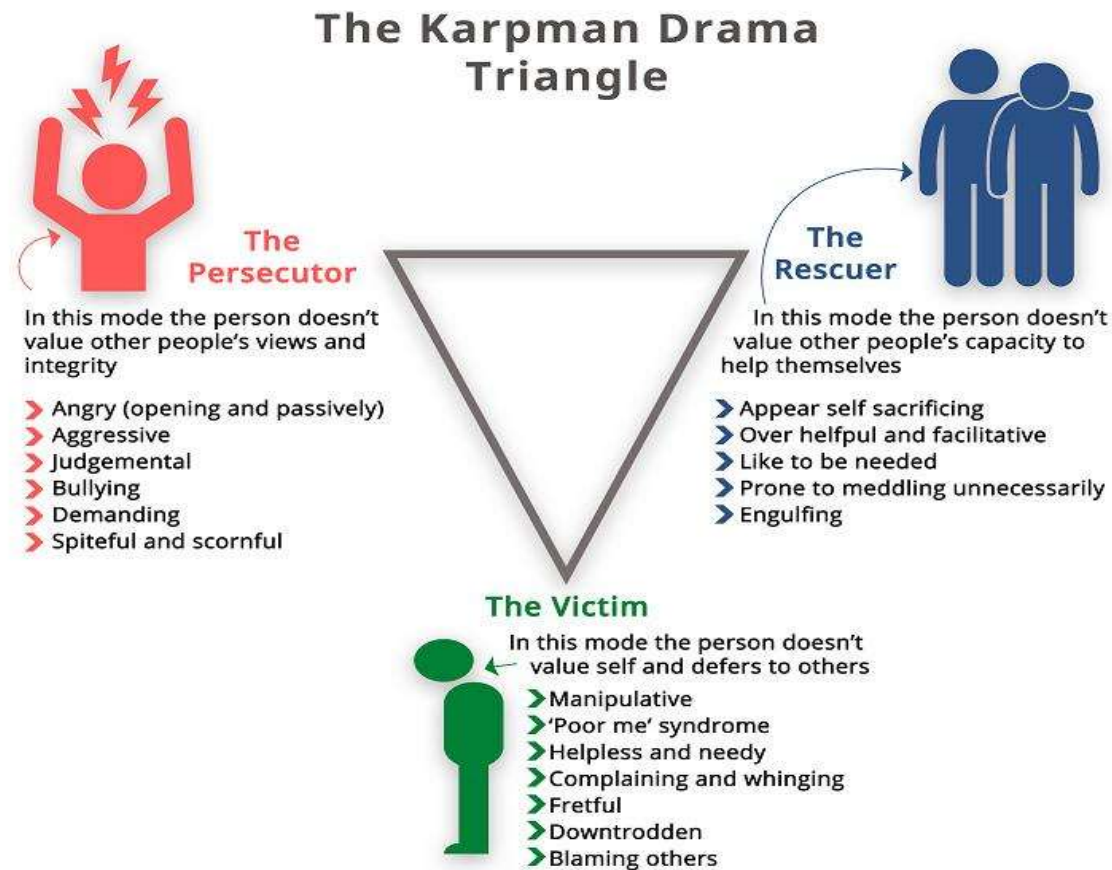
And no one ever knows I'm a wreck

# Window of Tolerance – Assess the barriers to communication



(Adapted from Ogden, Minton and Pain 2006:27)

# What or Who decides The Song?



# How to change The Song?



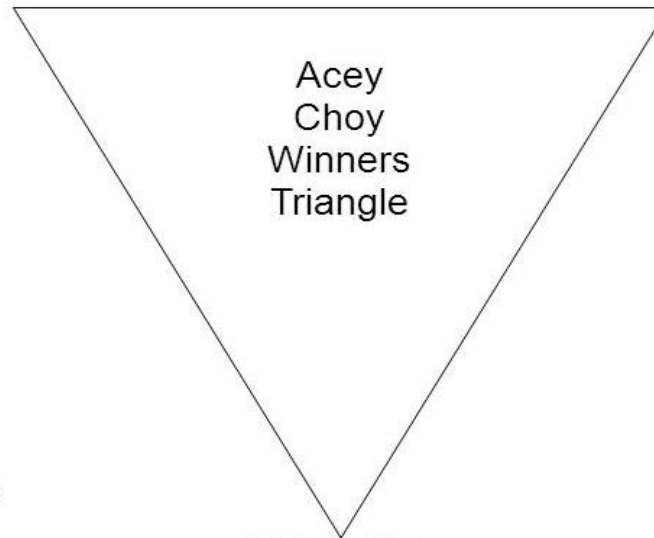
## Resourceful

### Caring

- Does not take over unless asked or wants to
- Do their share only
- Does not do the thinking for the person
- Feels genuine concern, not fear or seeking to meet their own needs

### Skills needed

Self awareness and listening skills



## Vulnerable

- Use feelings as information or data about self
- Acts from adult ego state
- Problem solver

### Skills needed

- Problem solver
- Self awareness



## Powerful

### Assertive

- Asks for what they want, no mind reading required
- No sulking or punishing behavior
- Says "no"
- Makes changes to get their needs met

### Skills needed

- Self awareness
- Ability to express needs without overpowering person



# Grief Cycle – What's Driving The Title Track





# Liminality Model – What's the Song Lyric's Telling Us

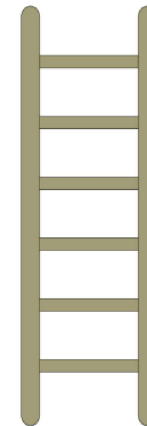
## LOSS



- Loss of hopes, dreams, aspirations and expectations
- Loss of life and work plan
- Family roles changed loss of personal power
- Placement in society altered
- Function to dysfunction
- Emotional lability
- Financial insecurity
- Vocational possibilities lost
- Loss of independence and control
- Loss of dignity, and choice
- Loss of spontaneity
- Loss of connection to self
- Problem focussed



**P**URPOSE  
**I**DENTITY  
**T**ASK  
**S**UPPORT



## ADJUSTMENT

- New purpose – confidence
- New sense of self – clearer thinking
- New skills developed and able to adapt
- New knowledge = Power
- New direction, new possibilities
- Solution focussed CBT approach
- Thriving not just surviving
- Social groupings may have changed but now engaged
- Making meaning out of madness
- Restructuring of roles and embracing change



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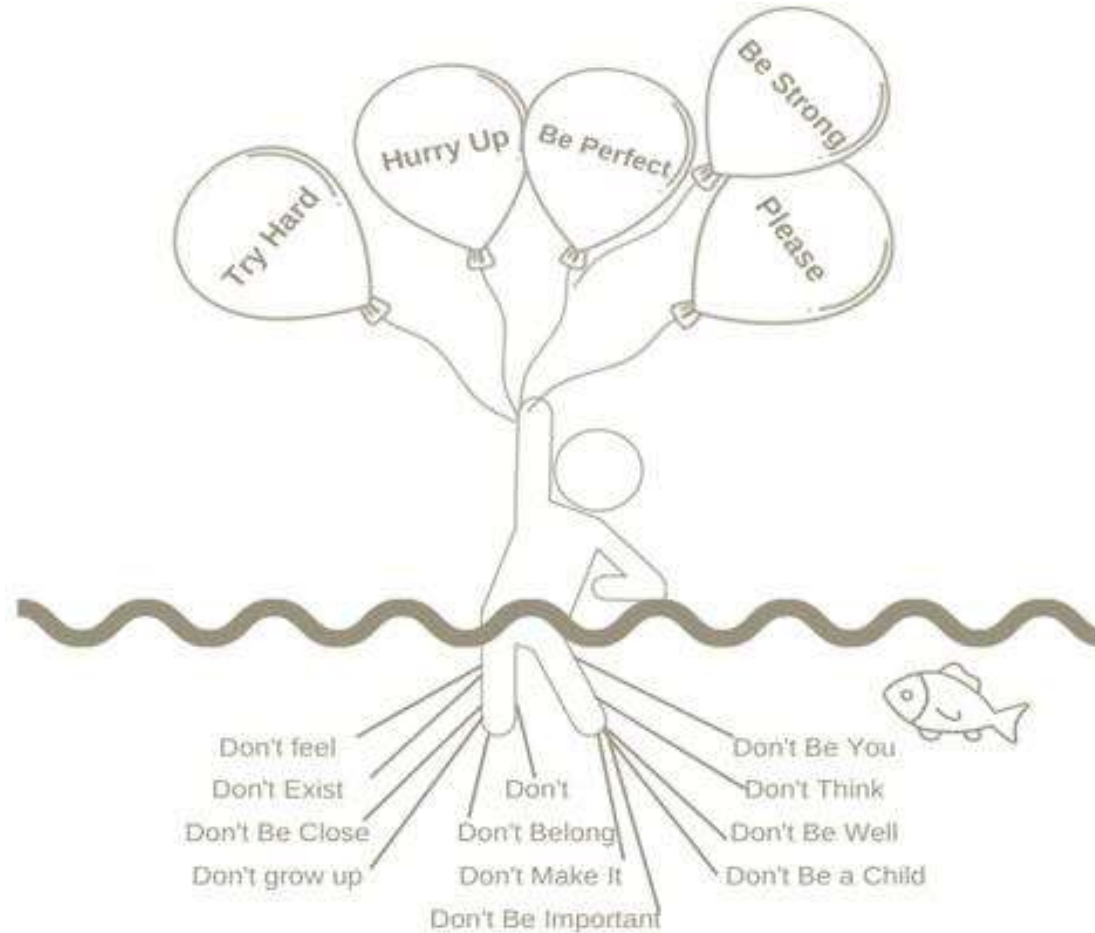
# Psychological Defence Mechanisms

*Defence mechanisms are psychological strategies used by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny, or distort reality to protect the mind /self /ego to defend against feelings of anxiety and personally unacceptable impulses or stimuli. Anna Freud defined defence mechanisms as "unconscious resources used by the ego" to decrease internal stress ultimately.*

- **Denial** is a refusal to accept reality, thus blocking external events from awareness. If a situation is just too much to handle, the person may respond by refusing to perceive it or by denying that it exists.
- **Projection** is a form of defence in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person, where they then appear as a threat from the external world. A common form of projection occurs when an individual, threatened by his own angry feelings, accuses another of harbouring hostile thoughts.
- **Repression** is an unconscious defence mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious.
- **Displacement** is the redirection of an impulse (usually aggression) onto a powerless substitute target. The target can be a person or an object that can serve as a symbolic substitute. (scapegoating)
- **Regression** is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud whereby the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development usually in response to stressful situations.
- Rationalization is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud involving a cognitive distortion of "the facts" to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses.

Freud, A. (1937). *The Ego and the mechanisms of defence*, London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

# The Drowning Person – Emotional drivers and injunctions and the impact they have re expectations and on communication



# Berne's OK Coral – lets change the tempo of the song

You are Okay with me

I am Not Okay with me	<b>I am not OK</b> <b>You are OK</b> <i>one down position</i>  Get away from Helpless	<b>I am OK</b> <b>You are OK</b> <i>healthy position</i>  Get on with Happy	I am Okay with me
	<b>I am not OK</b> <b>You are not OK</b> <i>hopeless position</i>  Get nowhere with Hopeless	<b>I am OK</b> <b>You are not OK</b> <i>one-up position</i>  Get rid of Angry	

You are Not Okay with me

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# How Does The Song End

- **Contact before Contract** – Notice what song is being played. This uses a relational approach rather than a transactional one
- **Validate feelings** – this shows you really hear someone and understand why they feel the way they do. It is not about correcting.
- **Advanced empathy** - Actively listen to the song 'Seek first to understand before being understood' Covey, (1990) supports staying attuned and present with clients and or their families.
- **Psycho Education / training** – What's the meaning behind the song? Knowing, empowers, up skills, and enables all those supporting the clients, and their families to bring awareness and change. (Feeney & Ylvisaker, 1995, 2003, 2006; Ylvisaker, 2003; Ylvisaker & Feeney, 1998; Ylvisaker et al.,2001).
- **Parallel Processes, Re enactments and Vicarious Trauma** – be aware, be kind, be vigilant, be honest, don't' become a victim, stay in the winners triangle. Look for the solution rather than focussing on the problem.

# How Does The Song End

- **Work towards** the I'M OK, You're OK position
- **Work with the parents / clients strengths**, focusing on what they are doing well – work towards the 'Winners Triangle'.
- **Support Self efficacy** - refers to an individuals belief in their capacity to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour and social environment (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997)
- **Ask for help** - Supervision / reviews to reflect but also to celebrate successes, stroke the behaviours you want not the behaviours you don't. Sing your best song.
- **Acceptance** - recognise there are multiple factors affecting communication. That what is being said, may not necessarily be what is being heard. So check it out ' can you tell me what you have heard me say so I can be sure I have communicated correctly'.
- **Mistakes will be made**, they happen to us all. Learn from them, grow from them be shaped not defined by them.
- **Self Care** – What's your sound track?



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## Important to Remember

*“People will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did, but  
people will never forget how you made  
them feel” – Maya Angelou*

*“Done is better  
than perfect” –  
Sheryl Sandberg*

*“Vulnerability is the birthplace of  
innovation, creativity, and change” –  
Brene Brown*

*“If you change the way  
you look at things; the  
things you look at  
change” – Dr Wayne Dyer*

*“The meeting of two personalities is  
like the contact of two chemical  
substances; if there is any reaction  
both are transformed” – Carl Jung*

*“Unless someone like you cares  
an awful lot, nothing is going to  
get better. It’s not” – Dr Seuss*

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Thank you  
Any questions?





**Thankyou!**

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