

Attachment-Based Family Therapy: Repairing the Secure Base



Conflicts of Interest Disclosure

Dr. Guy Diamond has received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, royalties from *Attachment-Based Family Therapy* (ABFT; 2014) book sales and honoraria for ABFT trainings and supervision. He derives some salary from the revenue from the training center.



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

College of

Nursing and

Health Professions

The Center for Family Intervention Science

Center for Family Intervention Science

ABFT Training Program

- Guy Diamond, Ph.D., Director
 - Associate Professor, College of Nursing and Health Professionals, Drexel University
- Gary Diamond Ph.D.,
 - Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology, Ben Gurion University, Israel
- Suzanne Levy, Ph.D., Training Director
 - ABFT Training Program, Drexel University, College of Nursing and Health Professions (slevy@drexel.edu)
- Websites:
 - www.ABFTtraining.com
 - www.facebook.com/Attachment.Based.Family.Therapy
 - Gary Diamond's Research:
<http://www.bgupsychotherapyresearch.org/>
 - Follow us on Twitter @ABFTtraining and Youtube
 - ABFT Belgium Training Center: <https://ppw.kuleuven.be/ogop/abft>

Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Depressed Adolescents

GUY S. DIAMOND
GARY M. DIAMOND
SUZANNE A. LEVY

Overview of ABFT

Brief Treatment

Transdiagnostic: treats the family context of any disorder.

5 distinct, yet interrelated tasks

A scaffold for doing depth therapy in short span of time.

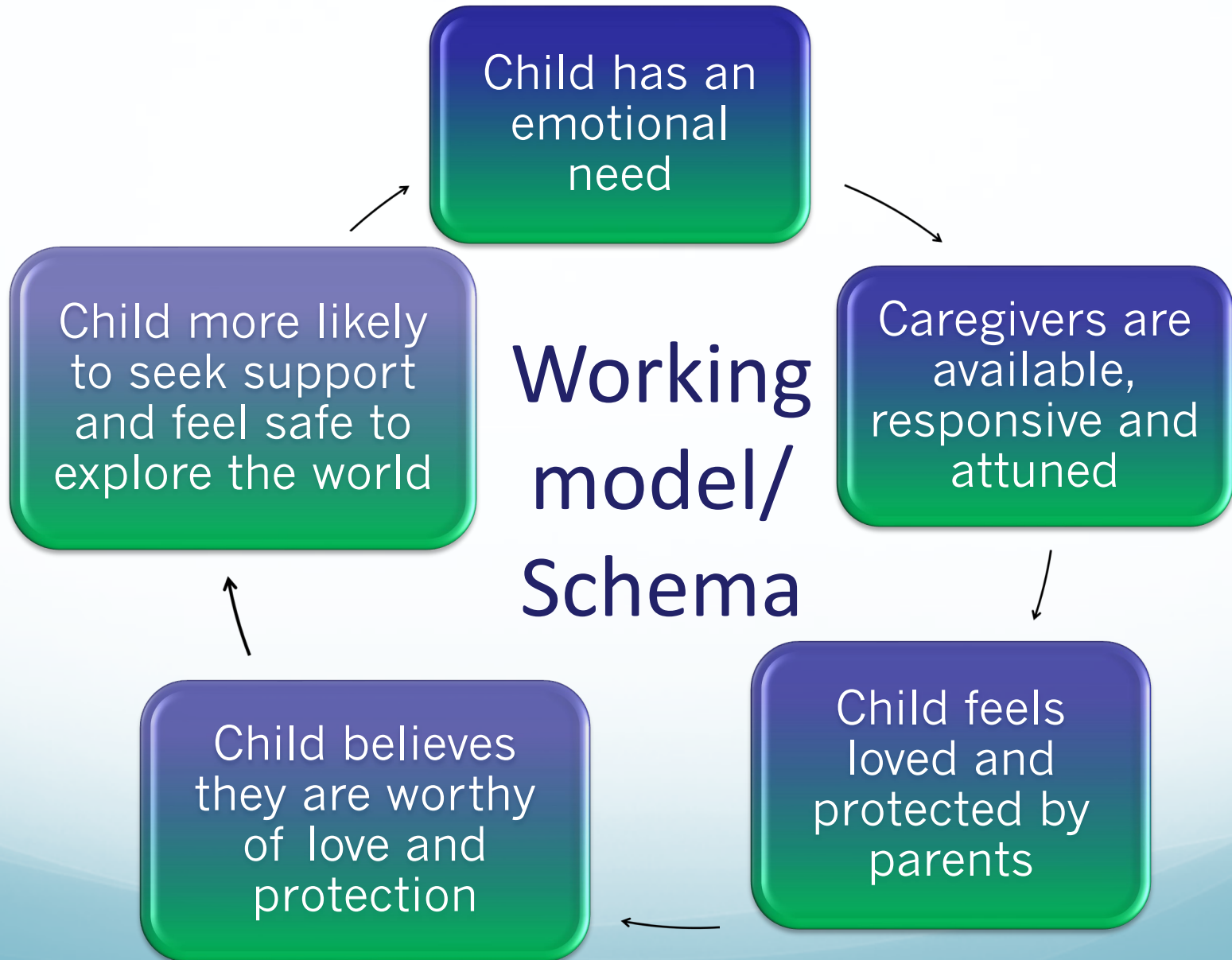
Based on: Attachment Theory and Structural Therapy

Listed on International and National Registries

Theory of Healthy Functioning



Secure Attachment

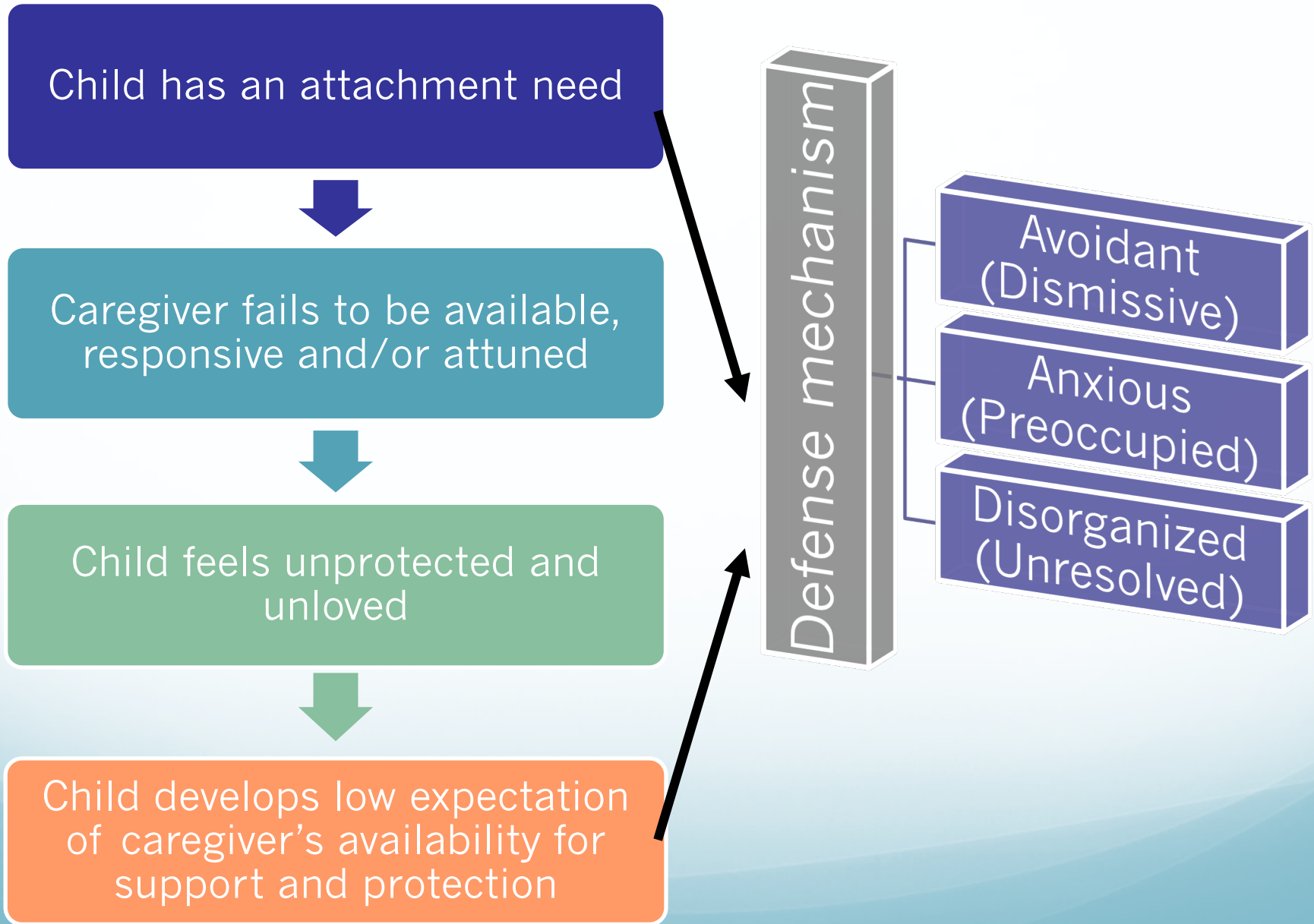


Theory of Pathology

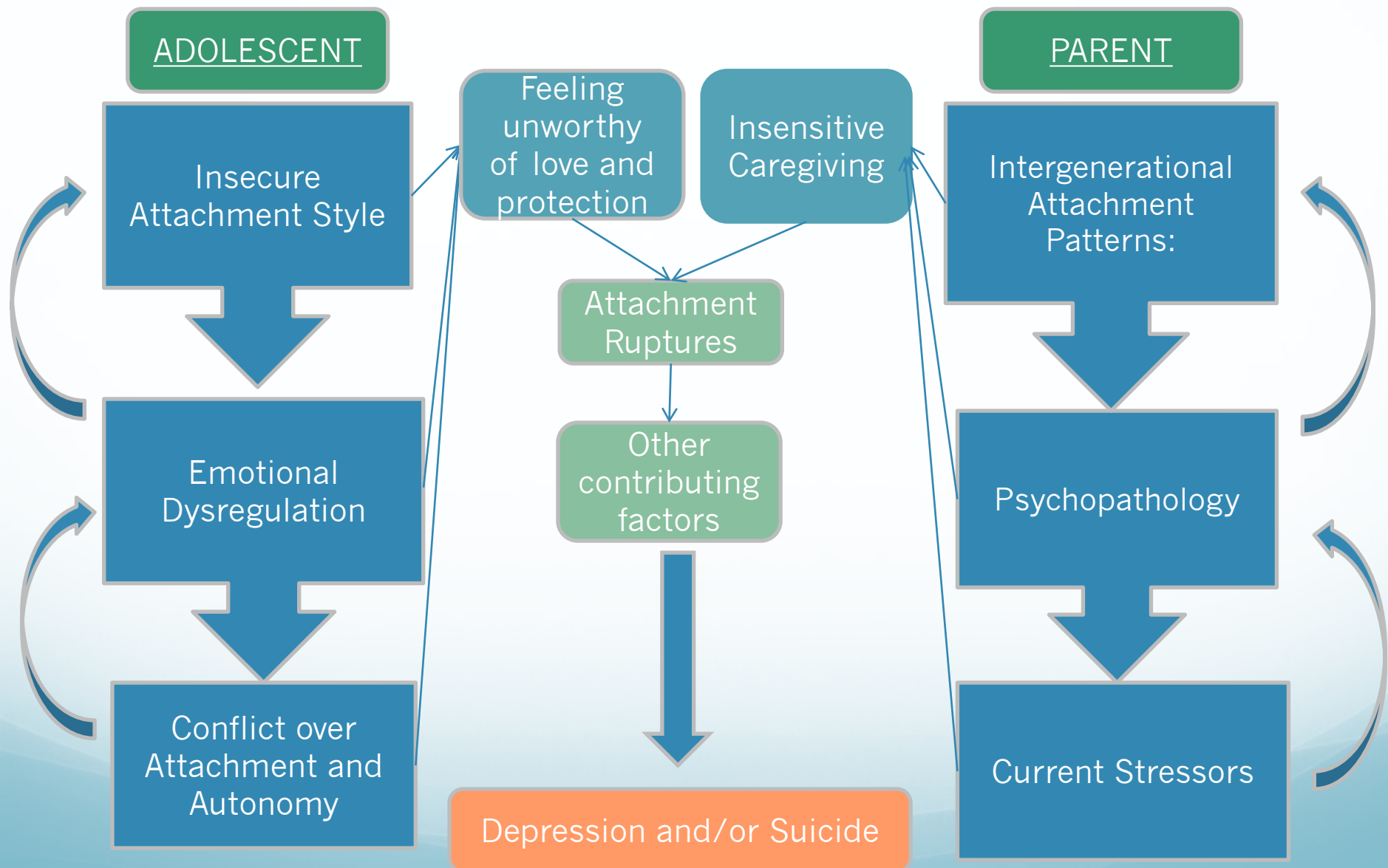


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Insecure Attachment



Attachment-Based Theory: Adolescent Depression and/or Suicide



Repairing Attachment: Earned Security

(Main & Goldwyn, 1988)

*Psychological
working through*

*Coming to
terms*

*Gaining
perspective*



*Forgiving
process*

Family as Safety Net



Strengthening families

Empirical Support

ABFT has shown to be effective with depressed and/or suicidal adolescents in 6 studies



Promising Practices Network:
Proven practice

NREPP: Effective for depression and
suicidal ideation

Dissemination Efforts

Internationally in:	Nationally in:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australia• Belgium• Canada• Croatia• England• Germany• Iceland• India• Ireland• Israel• Italy• Norway• Sweden• Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arkansas• California• Colorado• Connecticut• Delaware• Georgia• Illinois• Indiana• Kansas• Maine• Maryland• Massachusetts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minnesota• Missouri• Nebraska• New Jersey• New York• North Carolina• Oregon• Pennsylvania• Texas• Utah• Virginia• Washington D.C

Why is ABFT good for residential

- Offers clear clinical framework:
 - Identify and repair attachment ruptures.
 - “parents on behavioral management holiday”
- Offers clear structure
 - Task framework organizes clinical processes
- Attachment repair goals can be modified to fit a wide range of families.
- Structure helps get to core family conflicts quickly
- Improves foundation of love and trust

Trans diagnostic and age

- Children 8 to 12
- Adolescent 12 to 18
- Young adults 19 to 25 and up

- Depression and Suicide
- Eating disorders
- Exposure to violence
- LGBTQ minority stress

Transdiagnostic

- Family processes
 - can exacerbate problems
 - Or buffer against them

ABFT treats the family context around the symptoms

Family therapy part of a multimodal continuum of interventions including individual therapies, group, medication, expressive arts, milieu, etc.

Newport Health Academy

- Training and certifying all family therapy staff with ABFT
- Unified family framework across the organization
- Expose all staff to ABFT so they can support family treatment efforts
- Newport outpatient programs also trained in ABFT so treatment has some continuity

ABFT4Teams

- A milieu training model
- All staff trained in attachment theory and basic elements of ABFT.
- Unit becomes more therapeutically focused rather than behavior management focused.
- ABFT family therapy uses more of the milieu for family centered therapy goals

Clinical Model



ABFT Treatment manual

Principle Based



Goal-driven but flexible



Intentionality



Person-of-the-therapist



Five Treatment Tasks

Relational Reframe

Adolescent Alliance

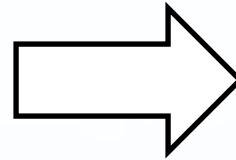
Parent Alliance

Attachment

Promoting Competency

Task 1: Relational Reframe

Goal



Shift from patient as the problem to family relationships as the solution

Task 1: Relational Reframe



Highlight: ruptures and consequences

- *“When you are feeling so sad or afraid, why don’t you go to your mom or dad for support?”*
- *“What’s the impact of dealing with issues all alone?”*

Responsibility of change on all family members

Task 1: Relational Reframe

Task



Establish a treatment contract: Relationship repair

Task 2: Alliance with Adolescent

Bond

Meet alone with the adolescent

Alliance with adolescent



Examples of Ruptures

Traumatic events

- *“My mom didn’t protect me when dad was abusing us. How can I trust her now?”*



Examples of Ruptures

Negative family interactions

- *“My dad does not accept me.”*
- *“My mom is critical and controlling.”*
- *“My parents don’t understand me and try to solve my problems.”*



Examples of Ruptures

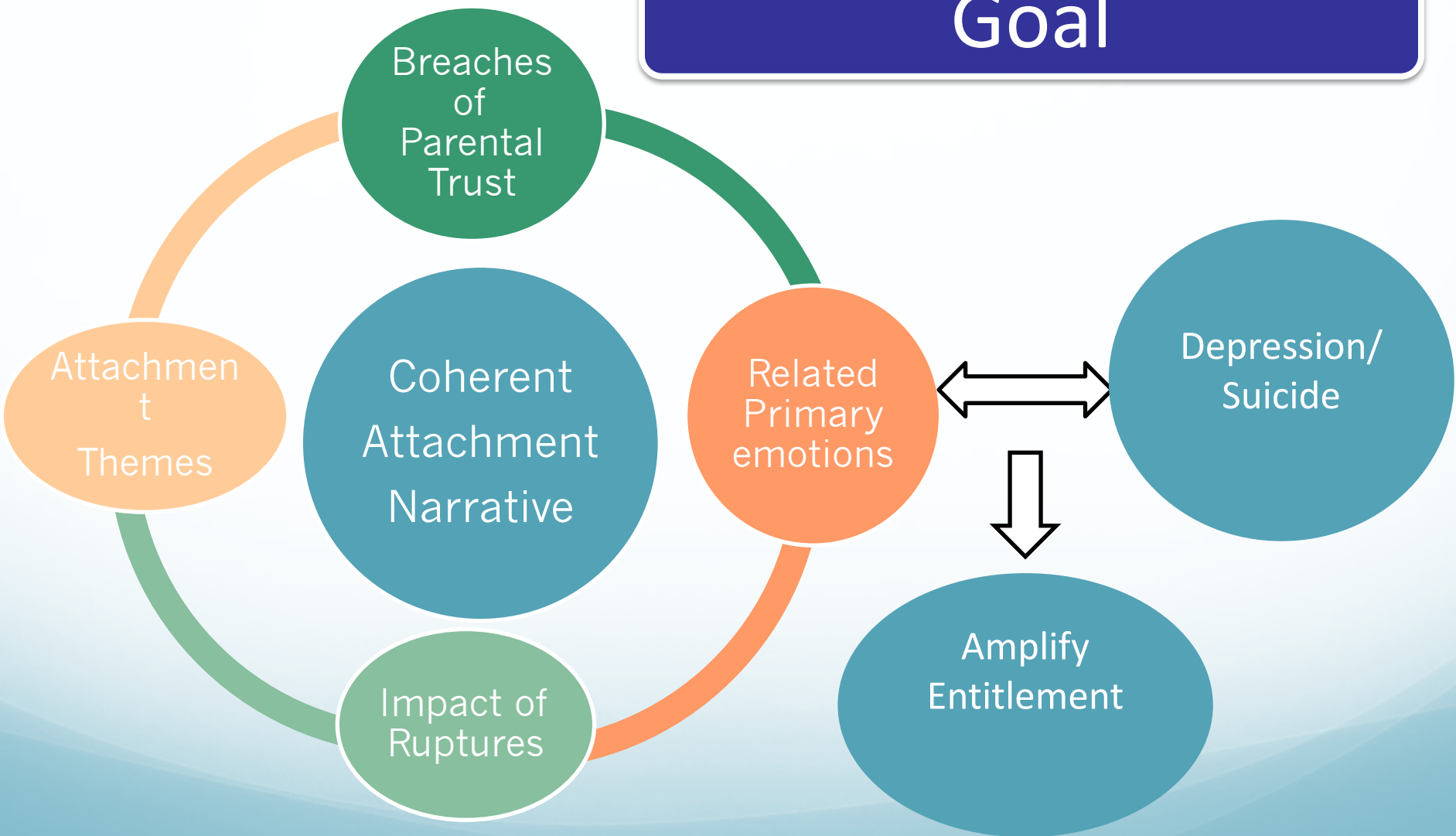
Parental psychopathology

- *“My mom freaks out (anxious) when I tell her my problems.”*
- *“I don’t want to burden my mom, she has enough on her plate.”*



Task 2: Alliance with Adolescent

Goal



Task 2: Alliance with Adolescent



Prepare adolescent for attachment task

Task 3: Alliance with Caregiver

Current stressors

Parental teamwork

Intergenerational
Attachment Legacy



Linking exploration to parenting



“It must be hard raising an adolescent, let alone a depressed one when you are juggling so much.”

“Nobody was there for you when you were growing up, and now you don’t know how to be there for your son”

Task 3: Preparing parents for attachment task



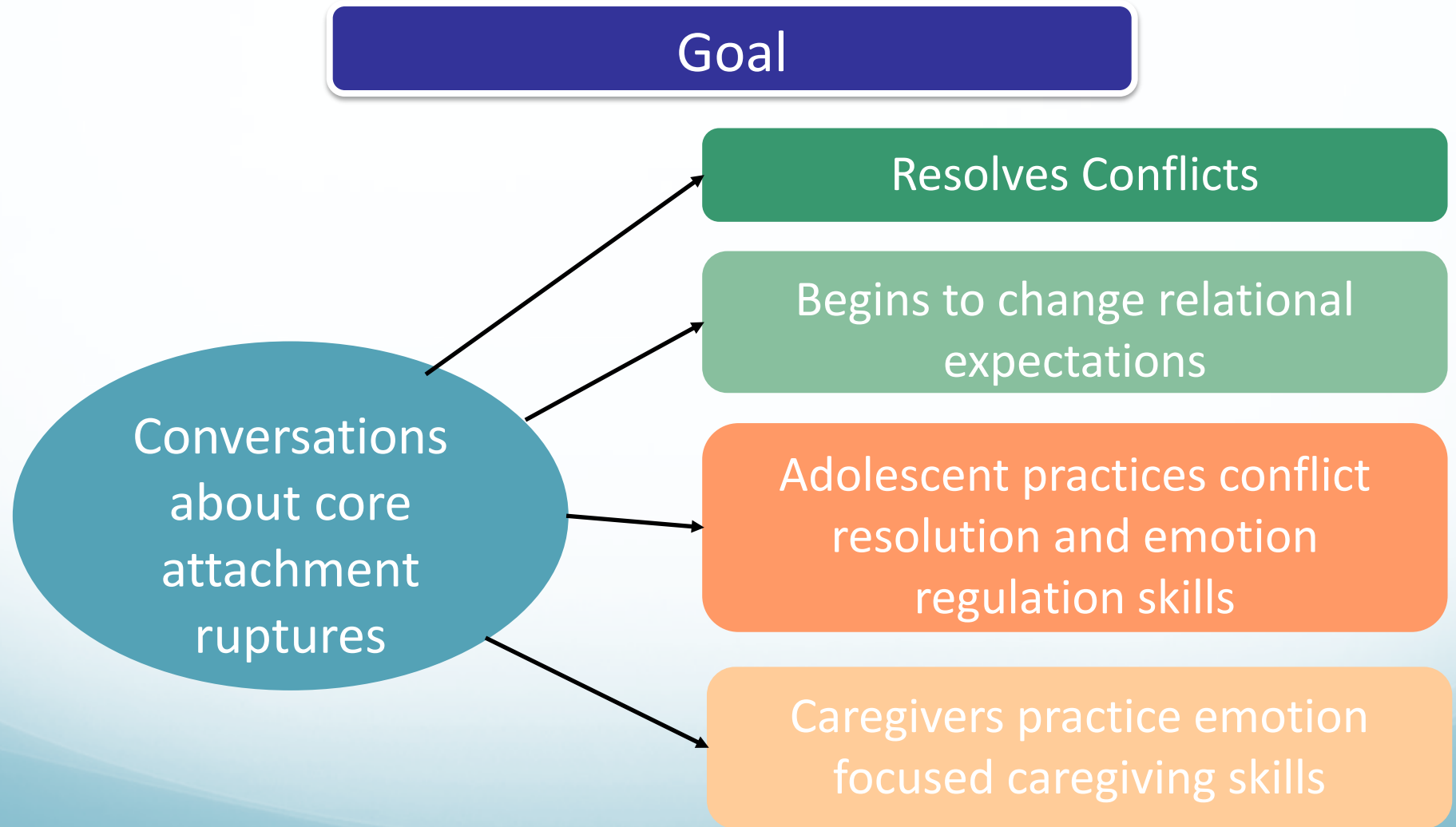
Emotion coaching skills:
listening, be curious, don't defend

Task 4: Attachment Task

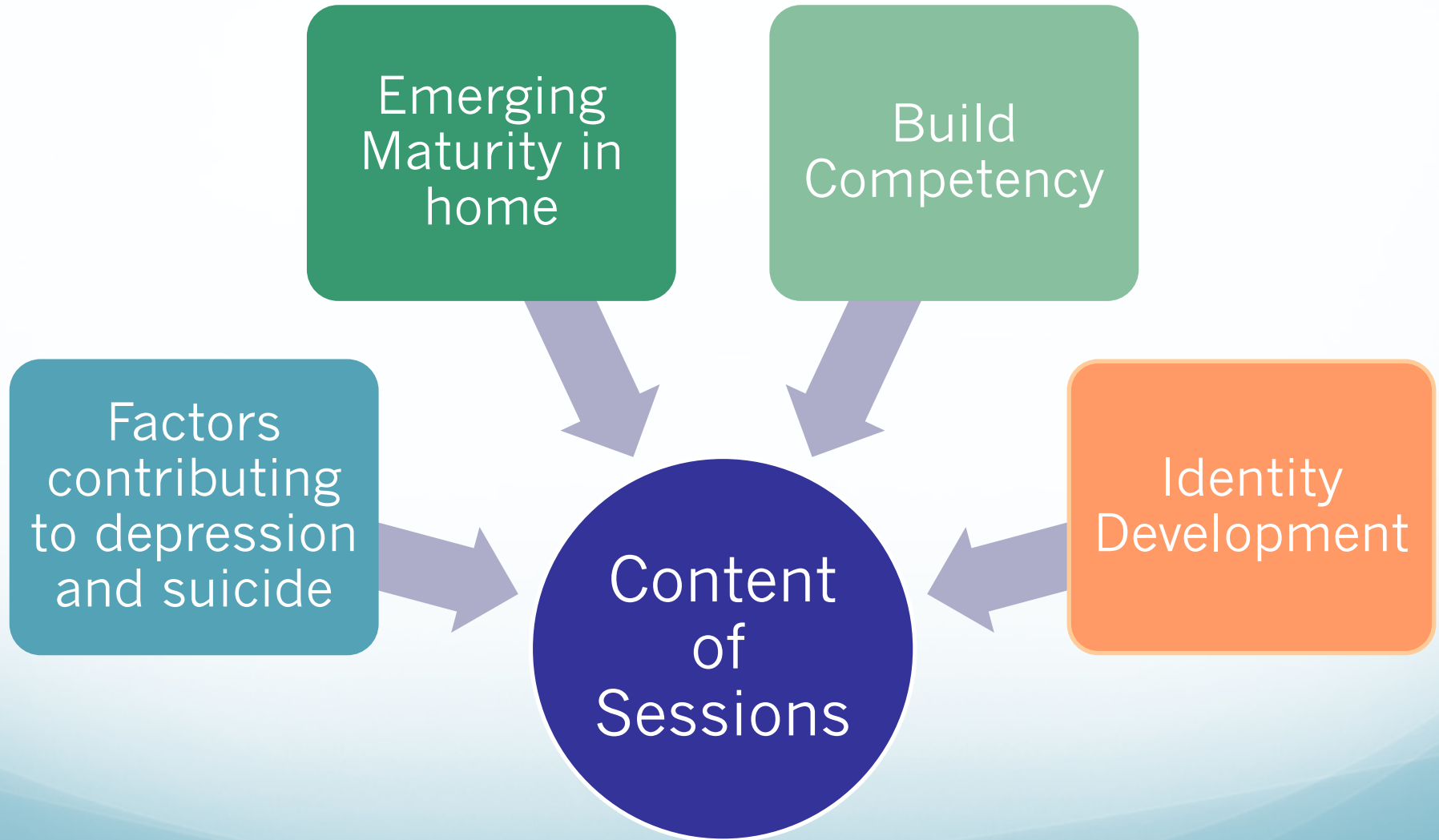
Process



Task 4: Attachment Task



Task 3. Autonomy Promoting Task



Task 5: Autonomy Promoting Task

Goal

Revitalize a goal corrected partnership

Cooperation
from desire
for
connection

Caregivers
viewed as
secure base



Asynchronous learning

Live online training

Individuals and groups

On going case consultation and video review

Certification (intensive tape review)

Contact: Suzanne Levy, Ph.D.

ABFT.mail@gmail.com

Closing Statements



ABFT is all about relationship building!

Focusing conversations on the relationship is more engaging for the family

You can have a structure, theory, a model and apply it with great artistry.

For more information:

- For more information on ABFT trainings, please contact

Suzanne Levy at slevy@drexel.edu