



Amy Keslinke

Do's & Don'ts for Supporting Mental Health when Working with Families



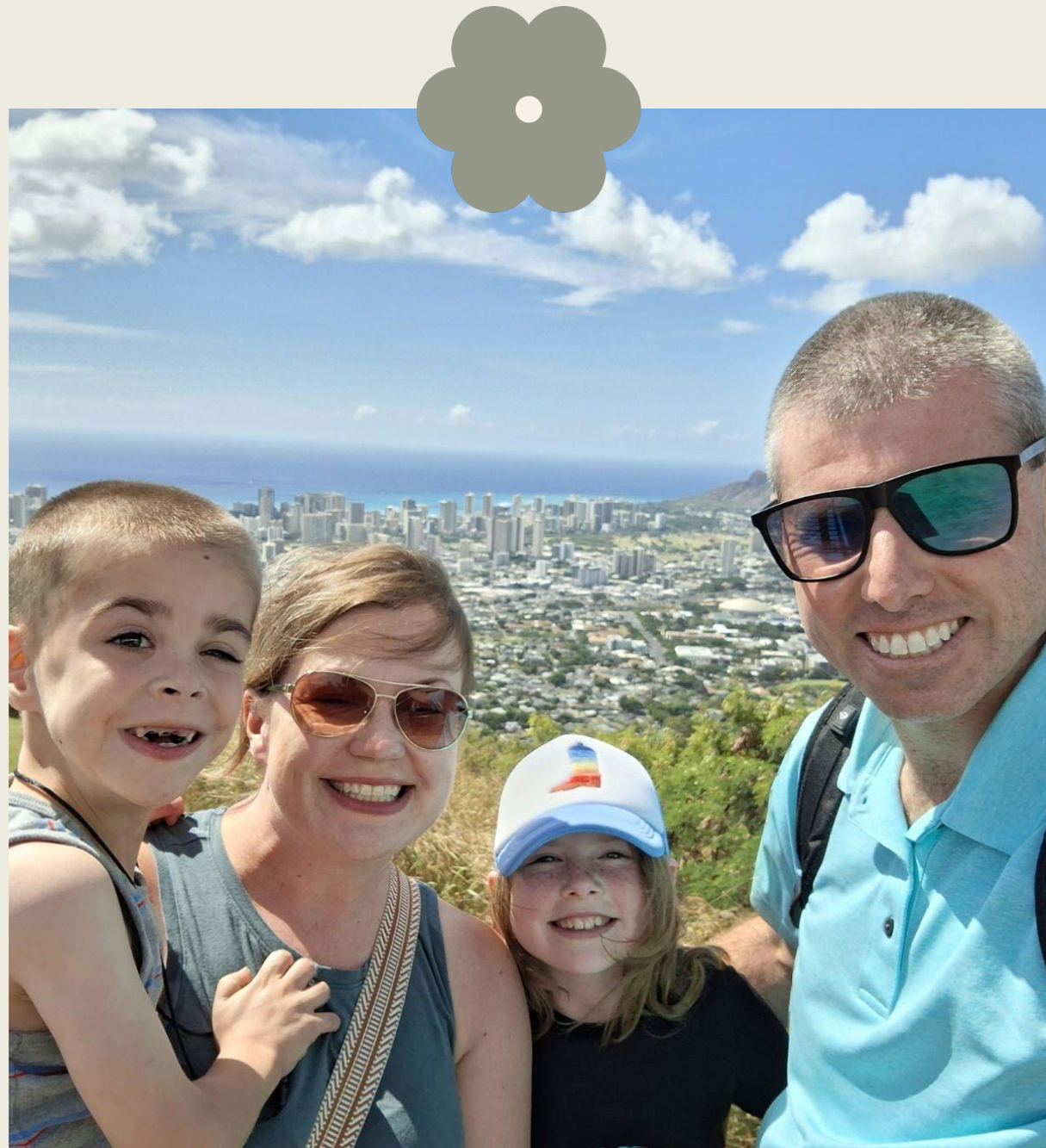
Objectives

Recognize the connection between caregiver mental health and DHH child development.

Identify factors impacting the mental health of DHH children and their caregivers.

Select clear strategies to promote the mental health of the entire family unit when working with DHH children in their own practice.

About Amy

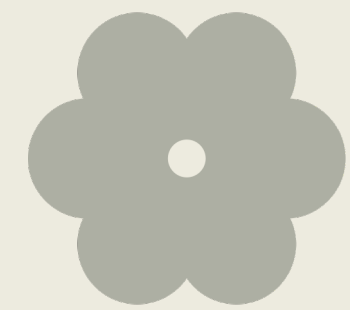


Parent of a DeafBlind+ child

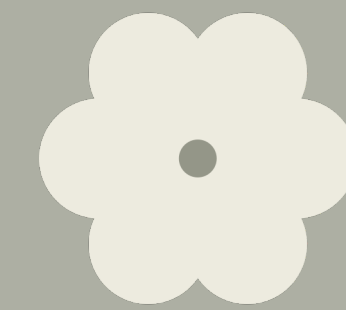
President of Illinois Hands & Voices

Educator with experience from third grade to adult education

Masters of Social Work student



Parental Stress



Certain factors impact all parents (and people) as they exist in their environments:

- Socioeconomic status
- Systemic oppression
- Grief/Loss
- Job stress
- Health/Medical problems

Parents of DHH children are shown to have **elevated overall stress levels** (additional workload, lack of familiarity with needs, etc.)

This stress level tends to increase as the child gets older (Chang et al., 2022).

Even the **perception of stress or lack of resources** can create a stress response..

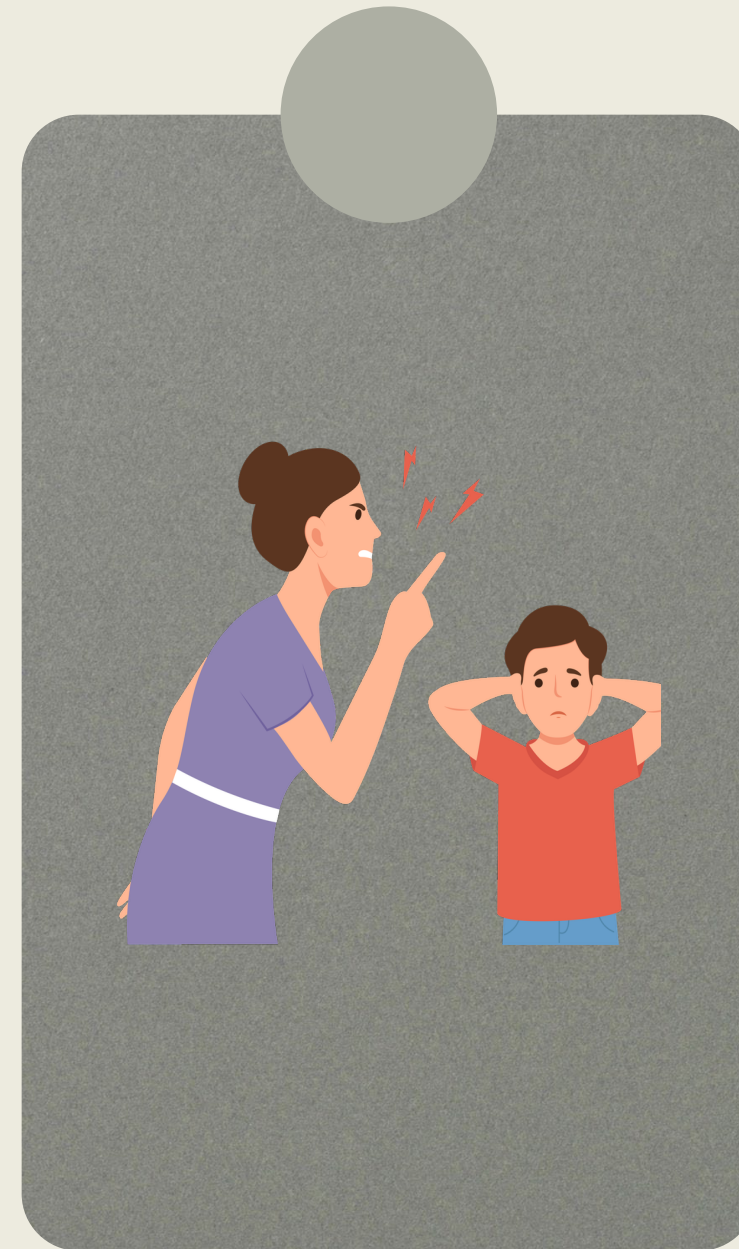
Impact of Chronic Stress

Parenting Style

Parents of DHH kids tend to be either authoritarian or dismissive, possibly due to the impact of self-blame & guilt.



AUTHORITATIVE

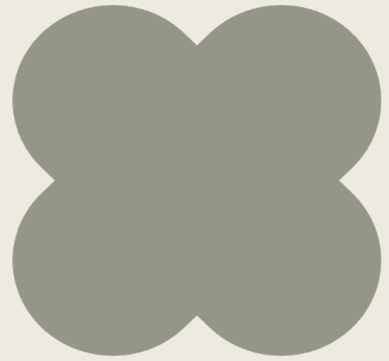


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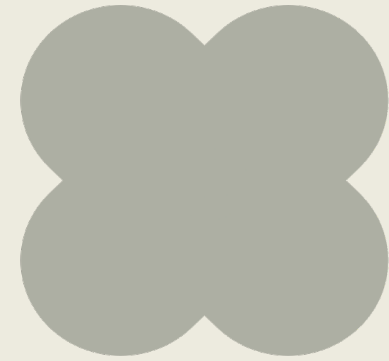


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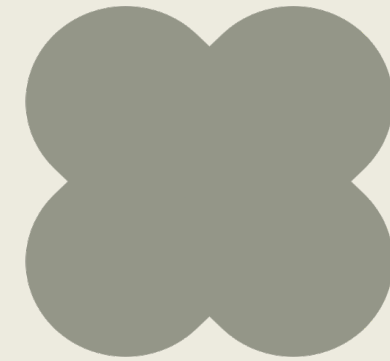
Impact of Chronic Stress



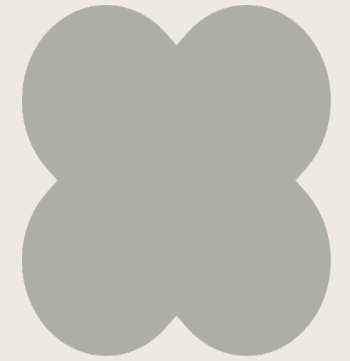
Association between **authoritative parenting** and **reduced mental health problems** in DHH kids



Mental health of the parent can impact the child from the **moment of diagnosis**



Chronic stress can impede **ability to parent effectively**, which can impact **child mental health and overall development**



Tendency to put the **needs of the child first** can impact **parental quality of life**

“Big T” Trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences
(ACEs)

- Witnessing or experiencing abuse/violence
- Neglect
- Death of a family member
- Parental incarceration
- War/natural disaster

“Little t” trauma

Unprocessed scary, upsetting
moment

Individual experience

Diagnosis as potential trauma

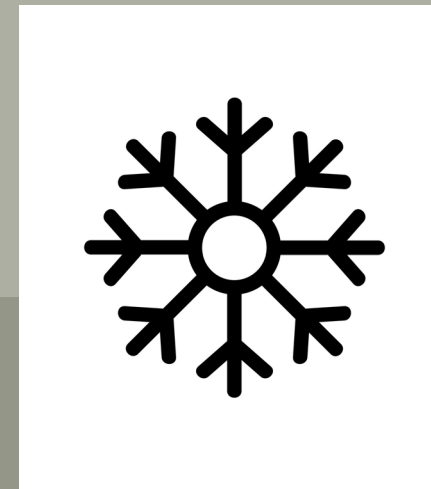
Trauma/Trigger Responses



Fight



Flight



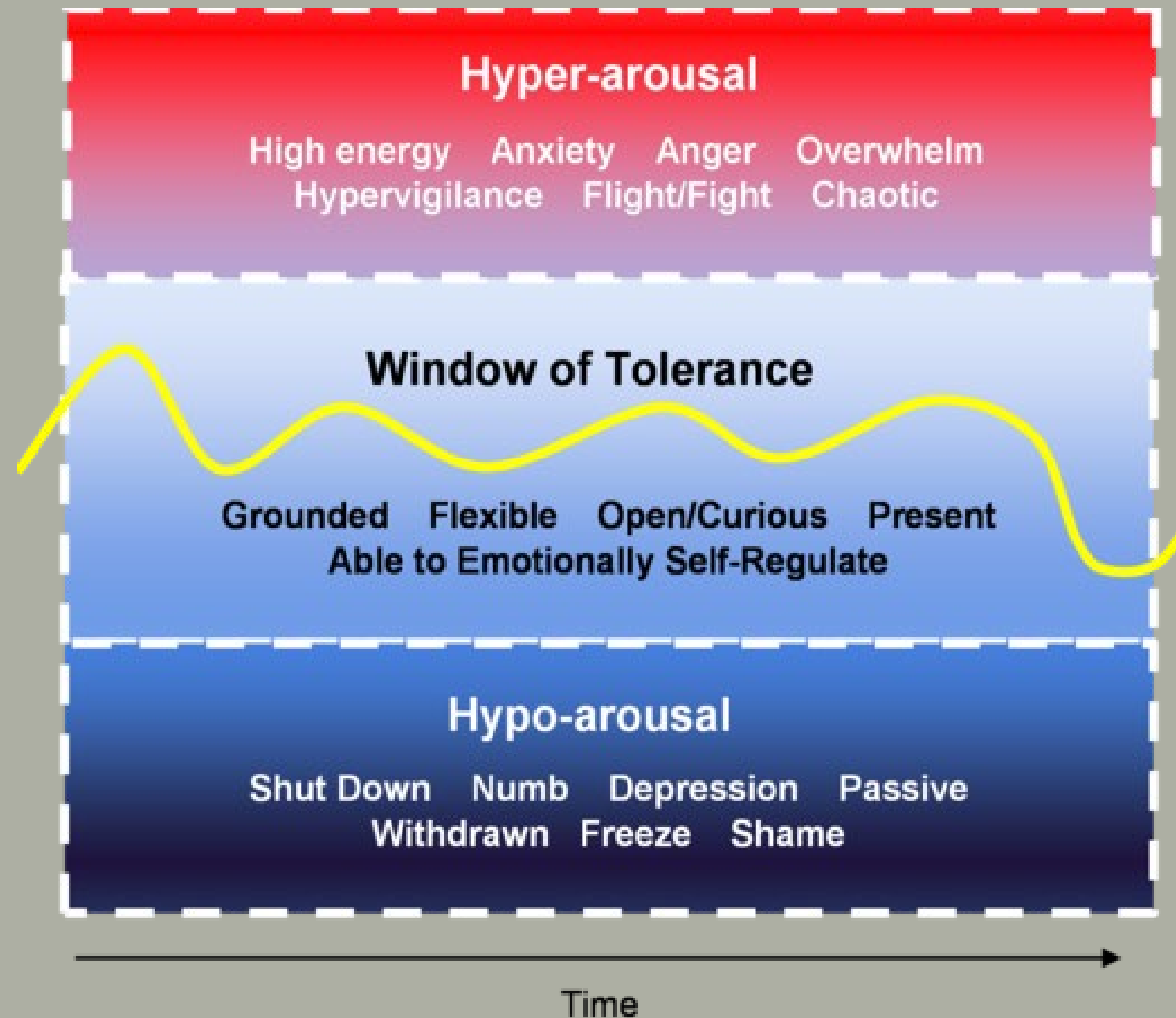
Freeze



Fawn/Fain

tFlock

(Cole, 2020)



Window of Tolerance

What might you see?

Anger

“Helicoptering”

Aggression

Accusing

Fidgeting

Threats

Overprotection

Urgency/rushing

Disengagement

Tears

Inability to make a
decision

Inability to process
information

People-pleasing

Denial





Strategies



Start with strengths



Make it a family affair

**Minimize
added stress**





Ask families what they need



Empower them with information



**Share a
variety of
resources**

Conflict Management

**Listen
first**

**Take a
break**

**Don't take
it
personally**

**Self-
care**

Thank you!

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Pexels & Pixabay

for the photos

Slides Carnival

for the presentation template

References

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