



# Connection: The Heart of Recovery

A Treatment Model for Sex/Love  
Addicts and Partners

**The opposite of  
addiction is . . .**

**CONNECTION**

# Connective Disorder

# What is a Connective Disorder?

- An inability to identify your emotions and needs
- An inability to meet your needs in healthy ways
- An inability to form healthy connections in your life

# Addicts

## Female

- ▶ Emotionally based
- ▶ Usually starts at puberty
- ▶ Significant break (often 10+ years) at time of marriage
- ▶ Addictive behaviors often appear to fill desires for natural relational connection (appears to be looking for support)

## Male

- ▶ Physically based
- ▶ Usually starts at puberty
- ▶ Short break (6 months-1 year), if any, from addictive behaviors at time of marriage
- ▶ Addictive behaviors often fill desires beyond natural relational interactions (looking for a high)

# Partners

## Female

- ▶ More likely to stay in relationship at time of disclosure
- ▶ Often the driving force behind therapy
- ▶ Strongest reaction to emotional acts of betrayal
- ▶ Trauma response more likely to be expressed emotionally

## Male

- ▶ More likely to end relationship at time of disclosure
- ▶ Limited willingness to attend or participate in therapy
- ▶ Strongest reaction to physical acts of betrayal (sense of ownership)
- ▶ Trauma response more likely to be expressed physically

**The deepest form of  
connection is . . .**

**Empathy**

**What is empathy?**

**Connection to your own feelings  
and to the feelings others  
experience**

# Goal for Therapy

Connect  
clients to  
themselves  
and to  
others



# Treating Connective Disorders

01

Individual  
Counseling  
(for both  
partners,  
but with  
different  
therapists)

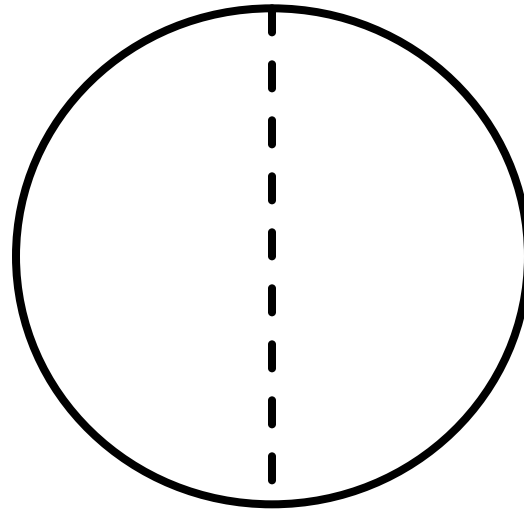
02

Couples  
Counseling  
(Co-  
therapy)

03

Group  
Counseling  
(both  
individually  
and as a  
couple)

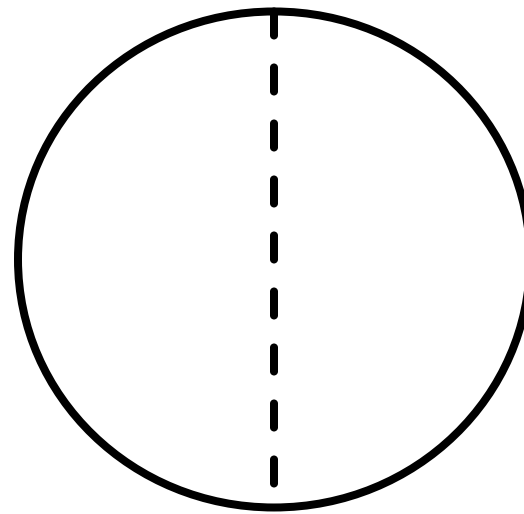
# Relationship with One Addict (no Abuse)



Dysfunction in  
Relationship



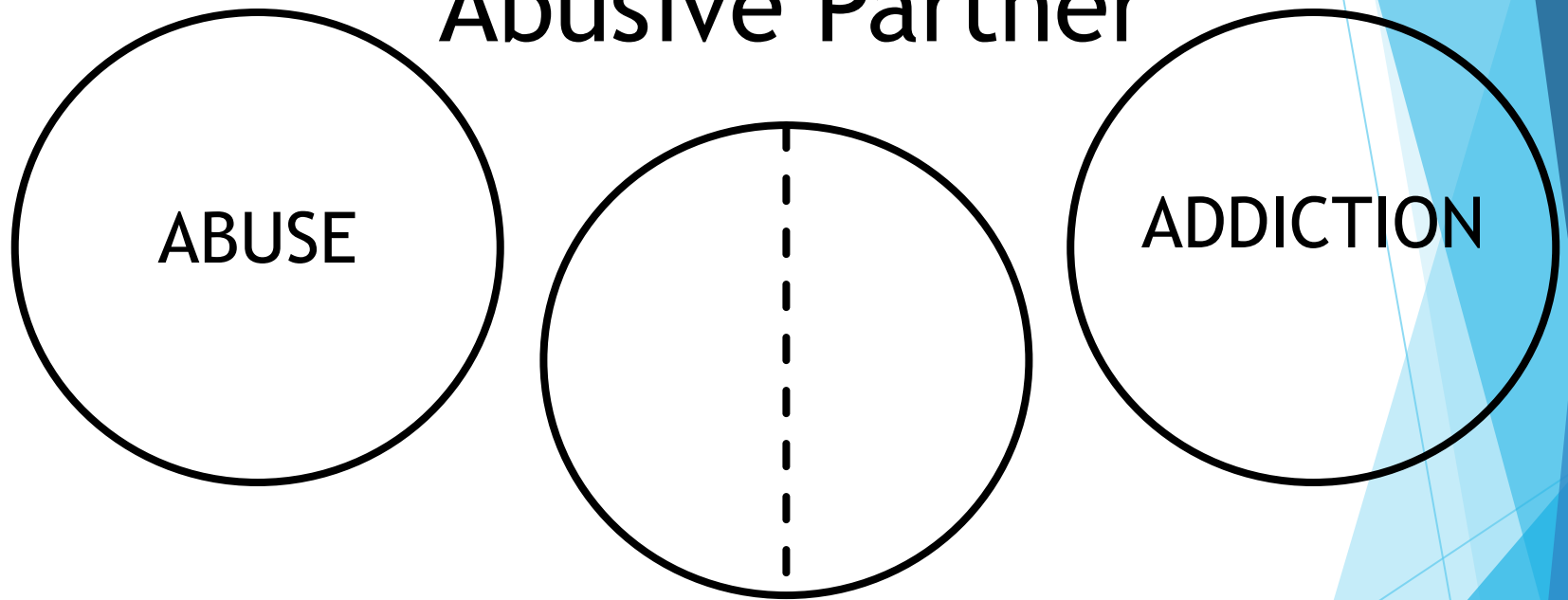
# Relationship with Abusive Addict



Dysfunction in  
Relationship

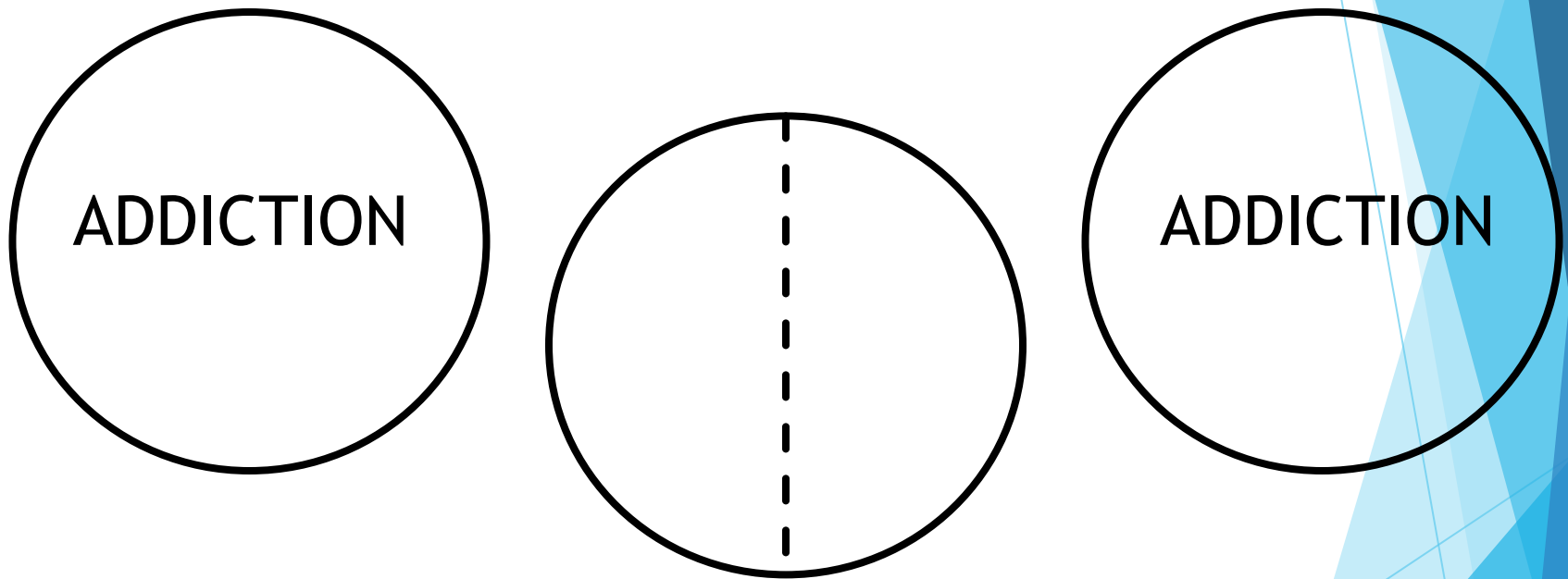


# Relationship with One Addict and Abusive Partner



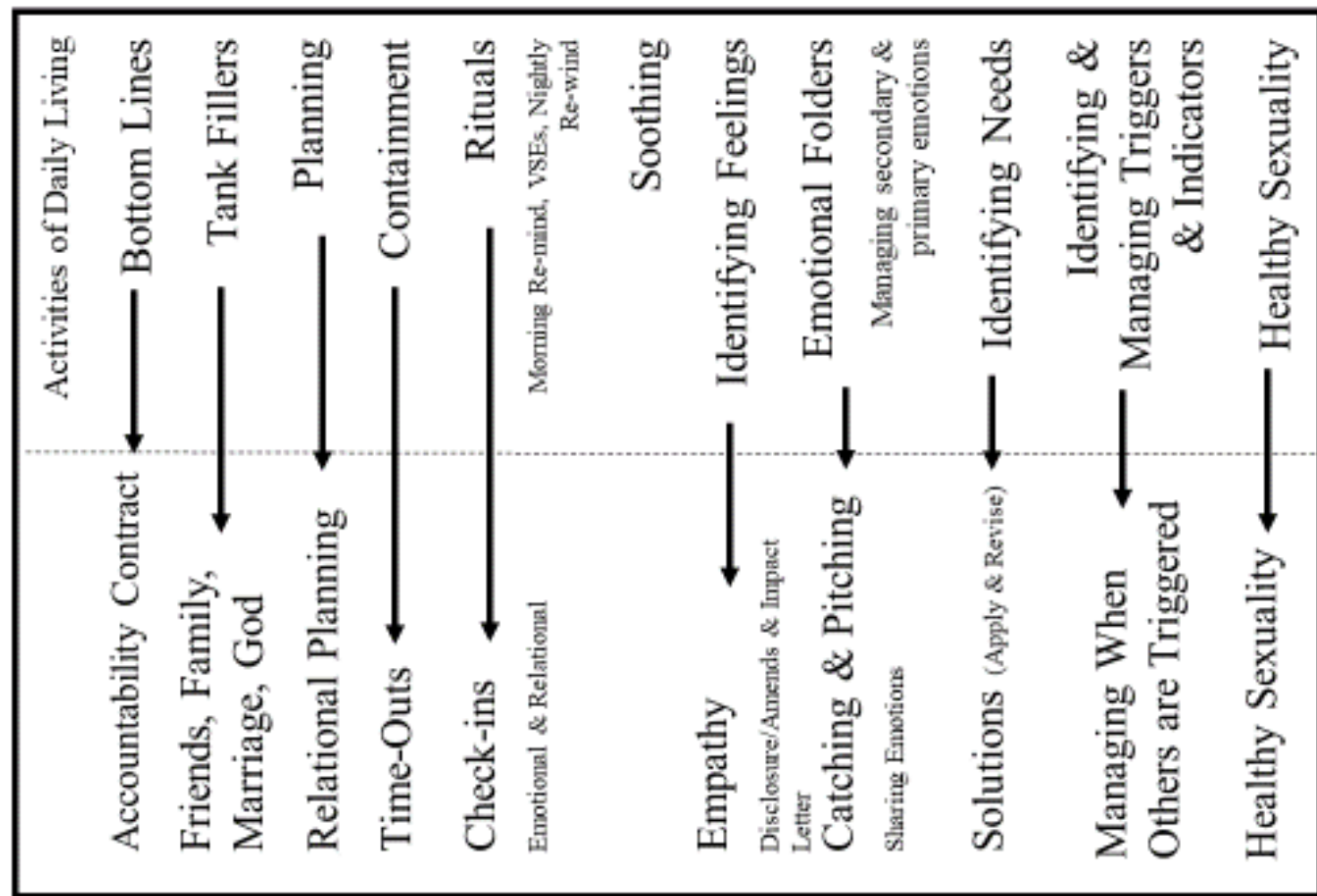
Dysfunction in  
Relationship

# Relationship with Two Addicts



Dysfunction in  
Relationship

# Self-Care/Coping Skills Umbrella



Early  
Recovery

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Emotional  
Safety

## Prevention

### Tank

Planning

Coping

### Rituals

Morning

VSE's

Night

## Recovery Hill

Emotions

### Warning Signs (Indicators & Triggers)

- 1) Emotions
- 2) Thoughts
- 3) Behaviors
- 4) Physical
- 5) People, Places, Things
- 6) Relational
- 7) Spiritual

Shore Line

## Intervention (Lapse)

Fire Drill  
Zone

Point of no return

Slip

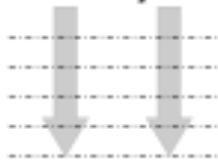
Slide

Collapse



# Trauma Cycle

## Traumas / Genetics



### Painful Emotions

Lonely  
Uncertain  
Inadequate  
Overwhelmed  
Ignored  
Empty  
Afraid  
Powerless

### Coping Skills

Identify emotions  
Identify needs  
Resolve needs

### Trauma Response

Hypervigilance  
Denial  
Avoidance  
Reactivity  
Anger (Rage)  
Withdrawal  
Shock  
Codependency  
Depression

### Emotional Consequences

#### Short-term

Work

#### Long-term

Freedom

### Emotional Consequences

#### Short-term

High/Energy

Release/Relief

Certainty

Connectedness

Powerful

Adequate

Accepted

#### Long-term

Hopelessness

Stress/Anxiety

Uncertainty

Loneliness

Powerlessness

Inadequate

Isolated

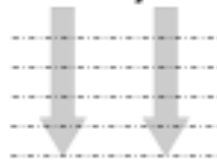
Healing  
and  
Recovery

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# Addiction Cycle

## Traumas / Genetics



### Painful Emotions

Lonely  
Bored  
Inadequate  
Overwhelmed  
Stressed  
Empty  
Fear  
Powerless

### Coping Skills

Identify emotions  
Identify needs  
Resolve needs

### Escapes

Alcohol/Drugs  
Eating Disorders  
Sexual Addiction  
Rage  
Gambling/Gaming  
Codependency  
Computer Gaming  
Shopping  
Lying

### Emotional Consequences

#### Short-term

Work

#### Long-term

Freedom

### Emotional Consequences

#### Short-term

High  
Release/Relief  
Connectedness  
Powerful  
Adequate  
Accepted

#### Long-term

Hopelessness  
Stress/Anxiety  
Isolated/Distant  
Powerlessness  
Inadequate  
Guilty

Healing  
and  
Recovery

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# Relational Recovery Hill

## Prevention

Tank

Planning

Coping Skills

Rituals

Morning

VSE's

Night Ritual

**Daily  
Emotional  
Check-ins**

**Weekly  
Recovery  
Check-ins**

Emotions

## Warning Signs (Indicators & Triggers)

- 1) Emotions
- 2) Thoughts
- 3) Behaviors
- 4) Physical
- 5) People, Places, Things
- 6) Relational
- 7) Spiritual

## Intervention (Lapse)

Fire Drill  
Zone

Point of no return

Slip

Slide

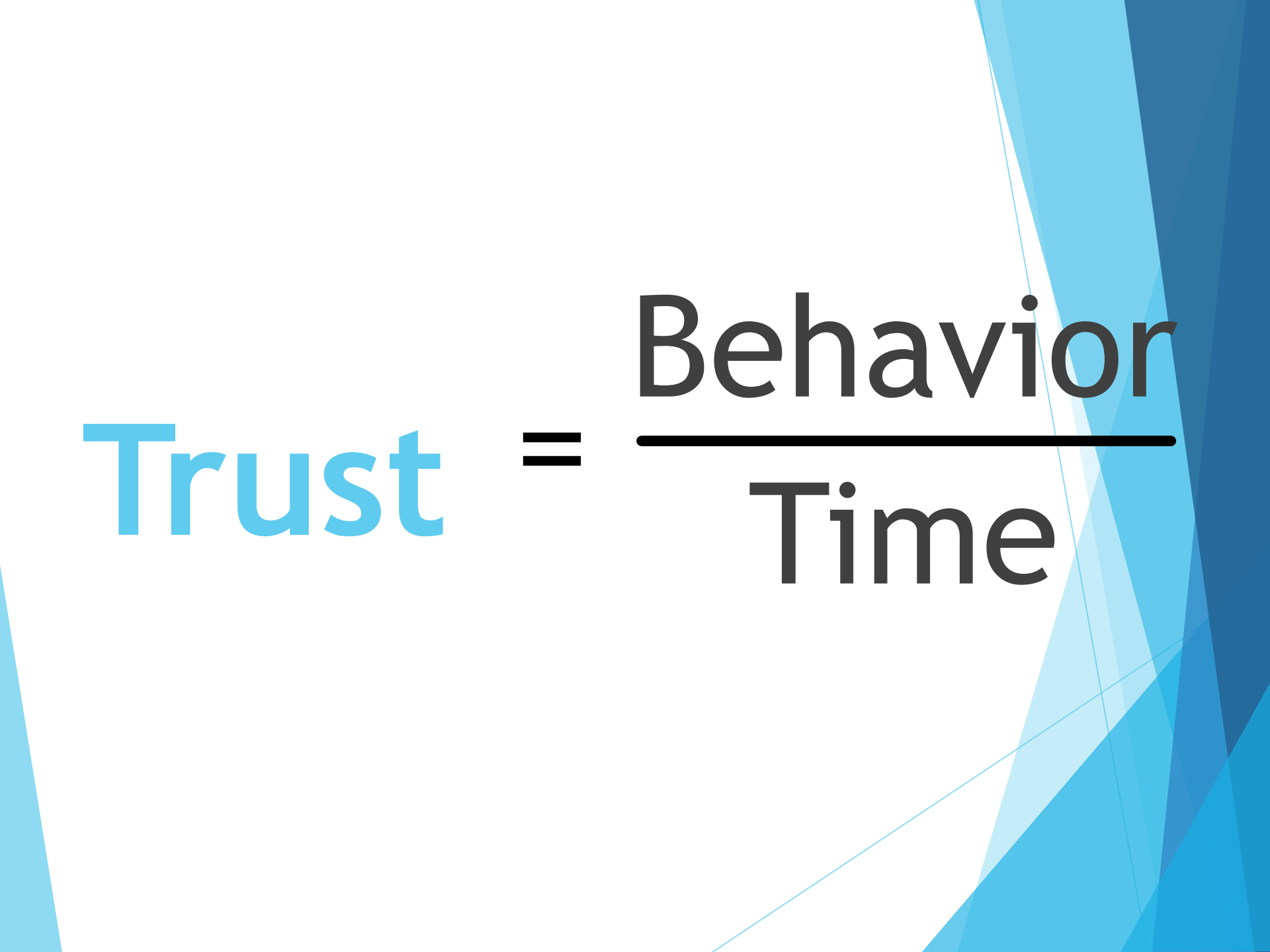
Collapse

Healing  
and  
Recovery

Shore Line

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The background features abstract, overlapping blue geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of blue, creating a modern, dynamic feel.
$$\text{Trust} = \frac{\text{Behavior}}{\text{Time}}$$

# Boundaries

- ▶ Keep relationships safe for us and others - allows us to show up in relationships
- ▶ Not selfishness or threats
- ▶ Negotiable vs. non-negotiable
- ▶ If you do A, then I do B, until you do C - Natural consequences



# Disclosure/Amends

Explores your story and takes accountability for the pain you've caused yourself and others



- ▶ DO NOT share with your partner throughout the process
- ▶ Helps you understand yourself and your story
- ▶ Includes enough detail around acting out history to give partners the information they need, but excludes non-essential details
- ▶ Includes empathy for pain your behaviors caused others
- ▶ Outlines changes you've made to prevent acting out in the future
- ▶ Identifies underlying patterns so your partner has a better understanding of “red flags”
- ▶ Reviewed by partner's therapist and shared only in a structured disclosure session with both therapists present

- ▶ DO NOT share with your partner throughout the process
- ▶ **Anger**- releases energy and reveals areas that need further processing (will be processed before sharing)
- ▶ **Grief**- allows you to understand and communicate the extent of the pain you've experienced
- ▶ **Recognize the good** - allows you to see a more complete picture
- ▶ **Acceptance** - comes when you understand yourself and your experience and have the boundaries you need to be safe

# Impact Letter

Explores your story and expresses the way your life has been affected

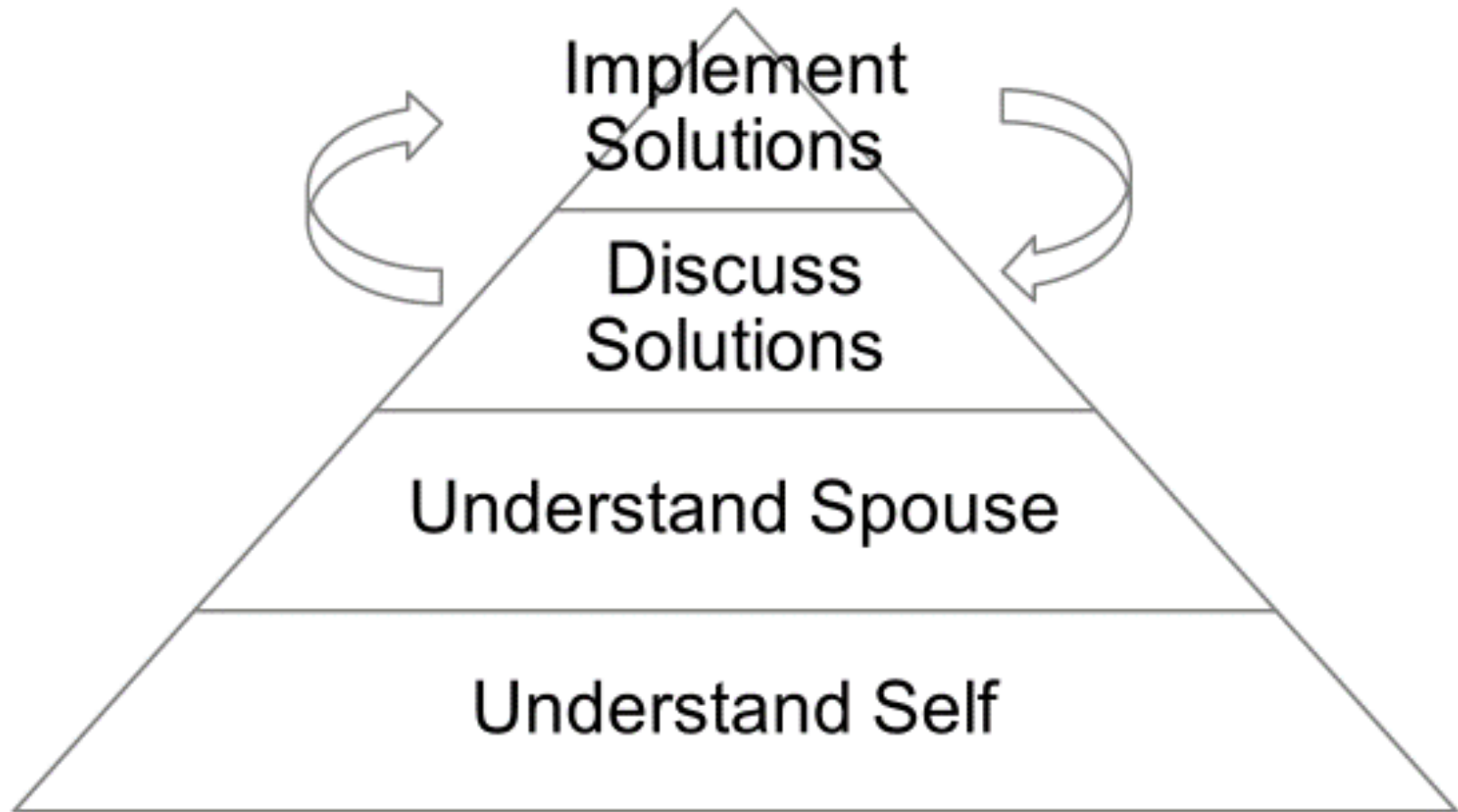


# Middle Recovery

Empathy and  
Connection



# Communication and Trust Pyramid



# Intimacy

## (In-to-me-see)

- ▶ If I want to be connected to you, I need to let you see into my world
- ▶ I must first understand myself
- ▶ Intimacy = feeling seen, connected, and valued
- ▶ I must know how to keep myself safe emotionally
- ▶ Plan B's

# Late Recovery

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Healthy  
Sexuality

# Healthy Sexuality

- ▶ Sexual intimacy is a powerful and important part of human experience and an important need
- ▶ It is about connecting, true intimacy, serving each other, and being present
- ▶ It is a choice
  - ▶ Options for connection (levels)
  - ▶ Not the domino effect
- ▶ Sensate Focus

# Self-Care/Coping Skills Umbrella

