

Treating the Traumatized Family and Child: 3 Essential Family Trauma Tools

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Family Trauma Institute

TRAINING PROFESSIONALS TO
BECOME FAMILY TRAUMA EXPERTS

www.familytrauma.com



28th

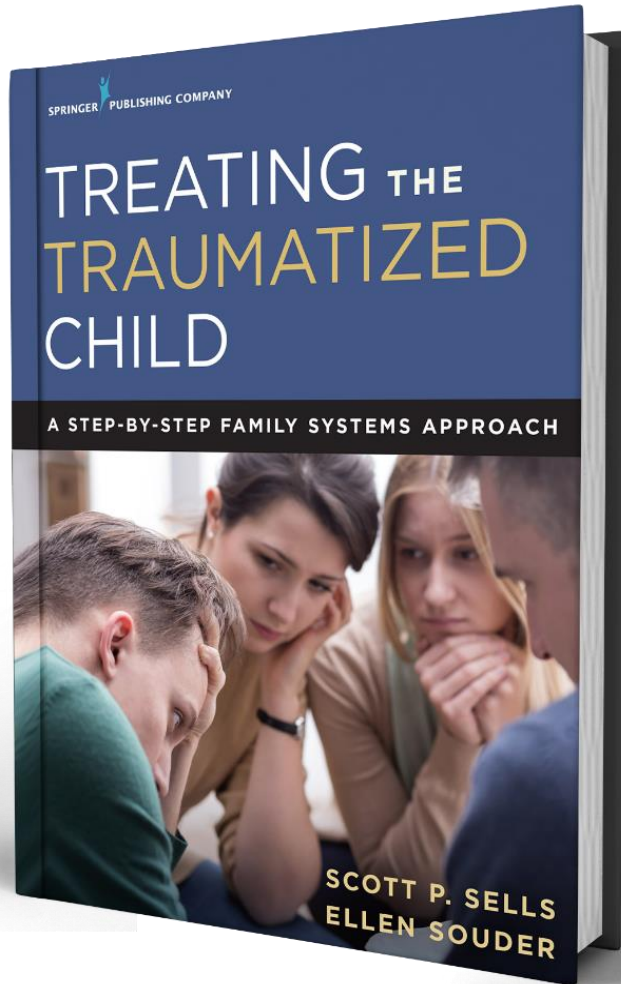
CHILDREN'S

JUSTICE CONFERENCE

SHINING THE LIGHT ON CHILDREN

April 18-19, 2023

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Family Trauma Institute

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Family Systems Trauma Model

A Step-by-Step Family Systems Approach

Train Professionals to Become a Family Trauma Experts

12 Core Techniques

FST | Family Systems Trauma Model

1. Structural-Strategic Theory
2. Motivational Phone Call
3. Stress Chart
4. Seed/Tree Diagram
5. Stabilization vs. Active Trauma
6. Engaging the Extended Family
7. Safety First Contracts
8. Nutrition and Trauma
9. Feedback Loops & Undercurrents
10. Trauma Playbooks
11. Troubleshooting & Dress Rehearsals
12. Relapse Prevention

Parenting With Love and Limits®

Mental Health Programs
and Services

In-home Parent Skill-based
Programs and Services

★★ Supported

Parenting with Love and Limits® (PLL) is a family-focused intervention for teenagers (ages 10-18) with severe emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder). The program is designed to help families re-establish adult authority through setting consistent limits and reclaiming loving relationships. PLL consists of both multifamily group therapy sessions and individual family therapy coaching sessions.

Multifamily group sessions are led by two facilitators, including one PLL Coach and one co-facilitator. Group session topics include reasons for teenager misbehavior, button-pushing, behavior contracts, positive feedback, and approaches for restoring nurturing relationships. Each group session is conducted in two parts. During the first half of each session, all parents and teenagers meet in one group to learn skills related to addressing behavioral problems. The second half of each session is split into one group of parents and one group of teenagers. During these breakout groups, the group facilitator validates concerns and leads solution-focused discussions.

Families also attend individual family therapy coaching sessions with PLL Coaches. These sessions are intended to complement the group sessions and follow four phases of treatment. The first phase sets the terms of the therapy. The second and third phases focus on developing a behavioral contract and role-playing skills learned in group sessions. The fourth and final phase focuses on evaluating and maintaining progress and preventing relapse. After initial work to stabilize the family system, PLL Coaches also address trauma in the family system, as needed.

Parenting with Love and Limits is rated as a supported practice because at least one study carried out in a usual care or practice setting achieved a rating of moderate or high on design and execution and demonstrated a sustained favorable effect of at least 6 months beyond the end of treatment on at least one target outcome.

Date Research Evidence Last Reviewed: Oct 2021

PLL-FST is also rated as evidence-based and supported or well-supported by these clearinghouses:

- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (CEBC)
- Casey Family Programs Interventions for FFPSA
- Child Trends
- Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities
- OJJDP Model Programs Guide
- Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)

A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, stands in a lush green field of tall grass and wildflowers. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background features rolling hills and mountains covered in dense evergreen forests under a clear sky.

MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #1

✓ FST Motivational Technique

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MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #2

✓ FST STRESS CHART


A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, stands in a lush green field with yellow wildflowers. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains covered in green grass and scattered evergreen trees under a clear sky.

MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #3

✓ FST SEED TREE DIAGRAM
with UNDERCURRENTS

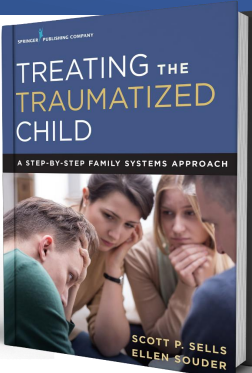
Going From Trauma-Informed to Trauma-Responsive



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FAMILY SYSTEMS TRAUMA HANDOUTS

- ✓ **FST Model**
- ✓ **FST Villain Victim Hero**
- ✓ **FST MI Script**
- ✓ **FST Trauma Undercurrent
(Unhealed Wounds)**



FST Digital Advanced Training Course with Dr. Scott Sells

FST MODULE FLOWCHART

Structural-Strategic Theory and the FST Model – **Module 1**

- Structural Mapping
- Three Simple Steps: Toxic Seeds, Undercurrents, and FST Playbooks
- Different Roles: Stage Director, Co-Author, and Enactments



The Motivational Phone Call – **Module 2**

- Step 1:** Why are FST Motivational Phone Calls Important?
- Step 2:** The SPIN Theory behind the FST Motivational Phone Call
- Step 3:** The FST Motivational Phone Call Scripts
- Step 4:** The Stick and Move Technique
- Step 5:** The Use of Effective Closing Remarks



Phase I: Identify Symptoms (Stressors) & Set the Goals for Therapy

- Step 1:** The Symptom/Stress Chart – **Module 3**
- Step 2:** The Seed/Tree Diagram – **Module 4**
- Step 3:** The Top Seed and Symptom Selections – **Module 5**
- Step 4:** The Choice between Stabilization or Direct Trauma Work First – **Module 5**
- Step 5:** Setting the Goals of Therapy – **Module 5**
- Step 6:** Consolidate Gains Using Ethnographic Interviews

Behaviors
& Safety
Stabilization
First

Wounds and Safety First

FST-
Family
Systems
Trauma
Model

Handout



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Family Trauma Experts
through the
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Monthly Free Webinar

Healing Anxious Families:

Family Trauma Solutions

May 10, 2023

12 -1 pm ET

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MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #1

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12 Core Techniques of FST

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Sobering Statistics

Why is The FST Motivational Phone Call Technique So Important?

NO SHOWS

Poor pre-session preparation results in high

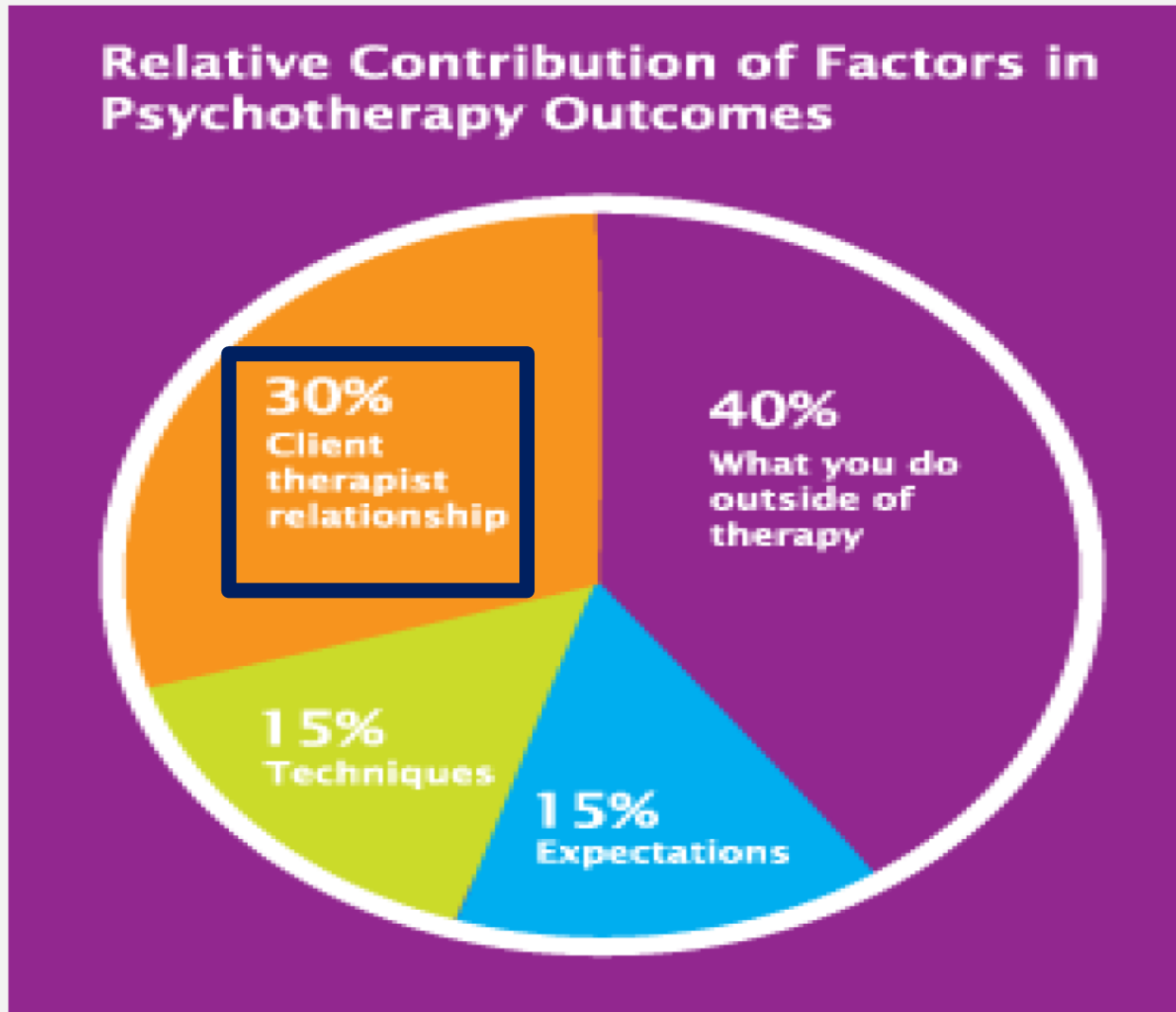
29–42%

of clients fail to begin treatment

15–50%

of clients do not return for a second appointment

Common Factors of Change



How do the Common Factors influence your work as a trainer and supervisor?

Question

What is a top barrier or challenge that you experience when trying to engage parents?

Top Challenges We Often Face

1. Parent's mindset of *"just fix my kids"*
2. Can't see their role in the child's problem
3. Generational Trauma
4. Outsiders the enemy- Isolate themselves

What Jay Haley said to me...



“Scott, you are the problem, *not* your parents.

Your parent’s so-called resistance
[no show rates, stop coming, etc.]

Are the best way they know how to tell you that *what you are doing* is not working.

If you don’t believe me, ask them yourself!”

Harsh vs. Soft Start Up to Treatment

A Light Bulb Revelation Moment

HARSH

**Traditional start-up
is not soft**

**Phone call to simply
schedule the next
appointment or meeting**

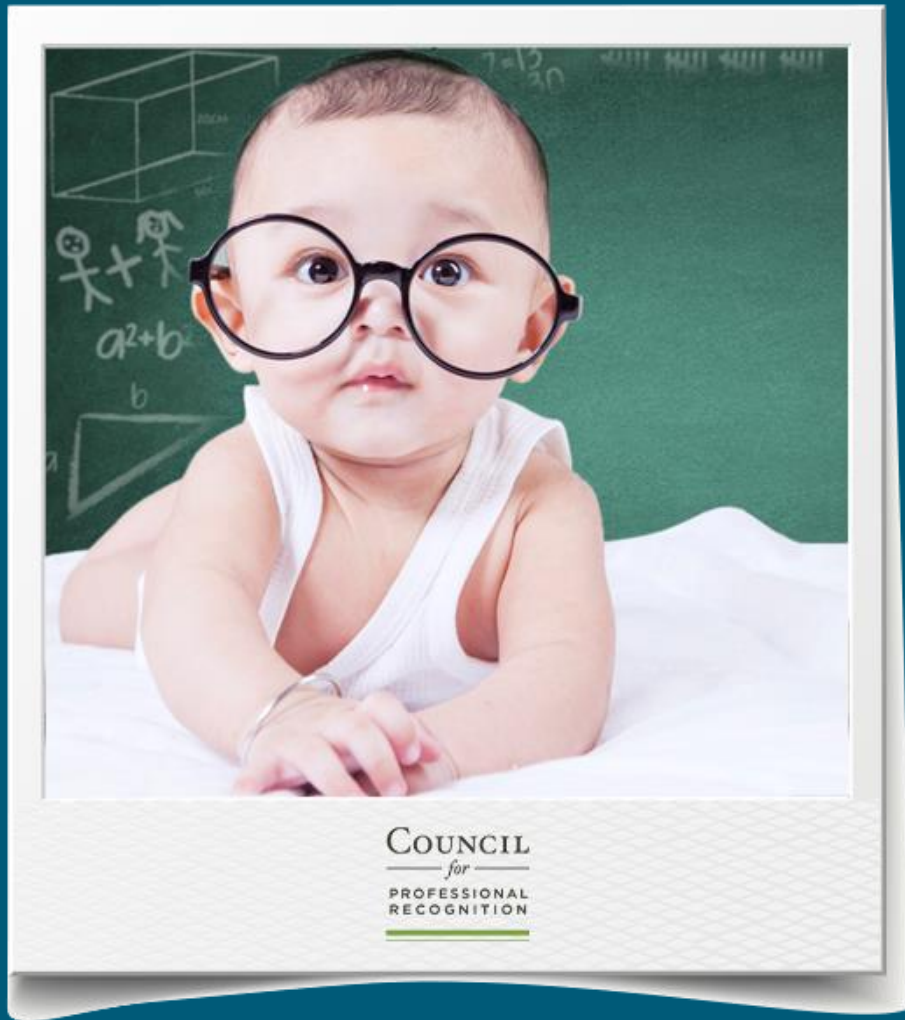
No Relationship

SOFT

Parent or Caregiver comes in:

- ✓ More Relaxed
- ✓ More Rapport-Building
- ✓ More Trusting
- ✓ More Receptive to You and Any Treatment You Offer

A Relationship is Born



Parents are not
“Resistant”

“Competency is
quiet...”

It tends to be
overlooked in the
noise and clatter
of problems”

Parents, Kids, and Families
WILL DO WELL IF THEY CAN

PARENTING

101

But They Lack the
Tools and Skills
to Do So



The Perfect Storm

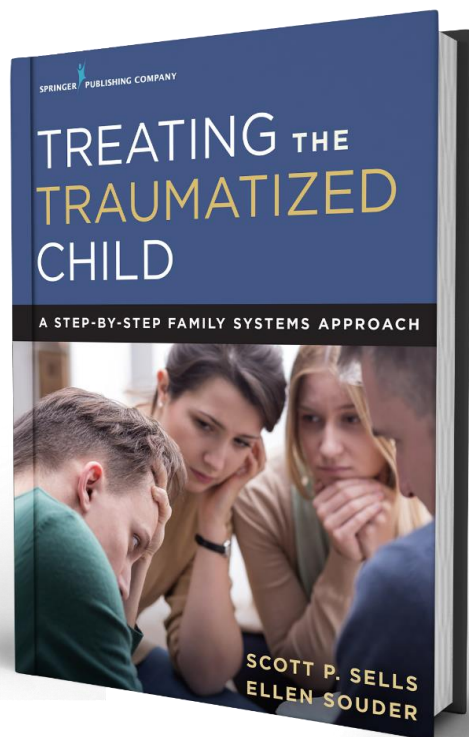
No Engagement (soft start-up)

+ No Tools



Watch What Happens: Mom is Not Engaged + No Tools





IT| INTERACTIONAL TRAUMA

TWO MAIN TYPES OF TRAUMA

#1 Event-Based Trauma

- Basic needs are not met over a long period of time, domestic violence, your father unable to show love, loss of a loved one without the ability to grieve properly, abandonment, sexual abuse, etc.

INTERACTIONAL TRAUMA - IT

Interactional Trauma

- Constant Arguing and Fighting
- Drama = Trauma
- What Are the Treatment Implications When
**FST| Family Systems Trauma is Left Out of
Healing Extreme Disrespect**



1. Did Mom Have Soft-Start Up to Treatment and engaged?

#2- What skills deficits did mom show that prevented her from doing well if she could?

What Tools Did This Mom and Family Lack?

- ✓ Mom had no tools or intensive role play practice prior to child's re-integration from foster care
- ✓ No incorporation of the village
- ✓ No written playbook with clarity of roles
- ✓ No traumatized or IT family systems focus
- ✓ No Safety Plan

Mom Has These Delivery Skills Deficits?

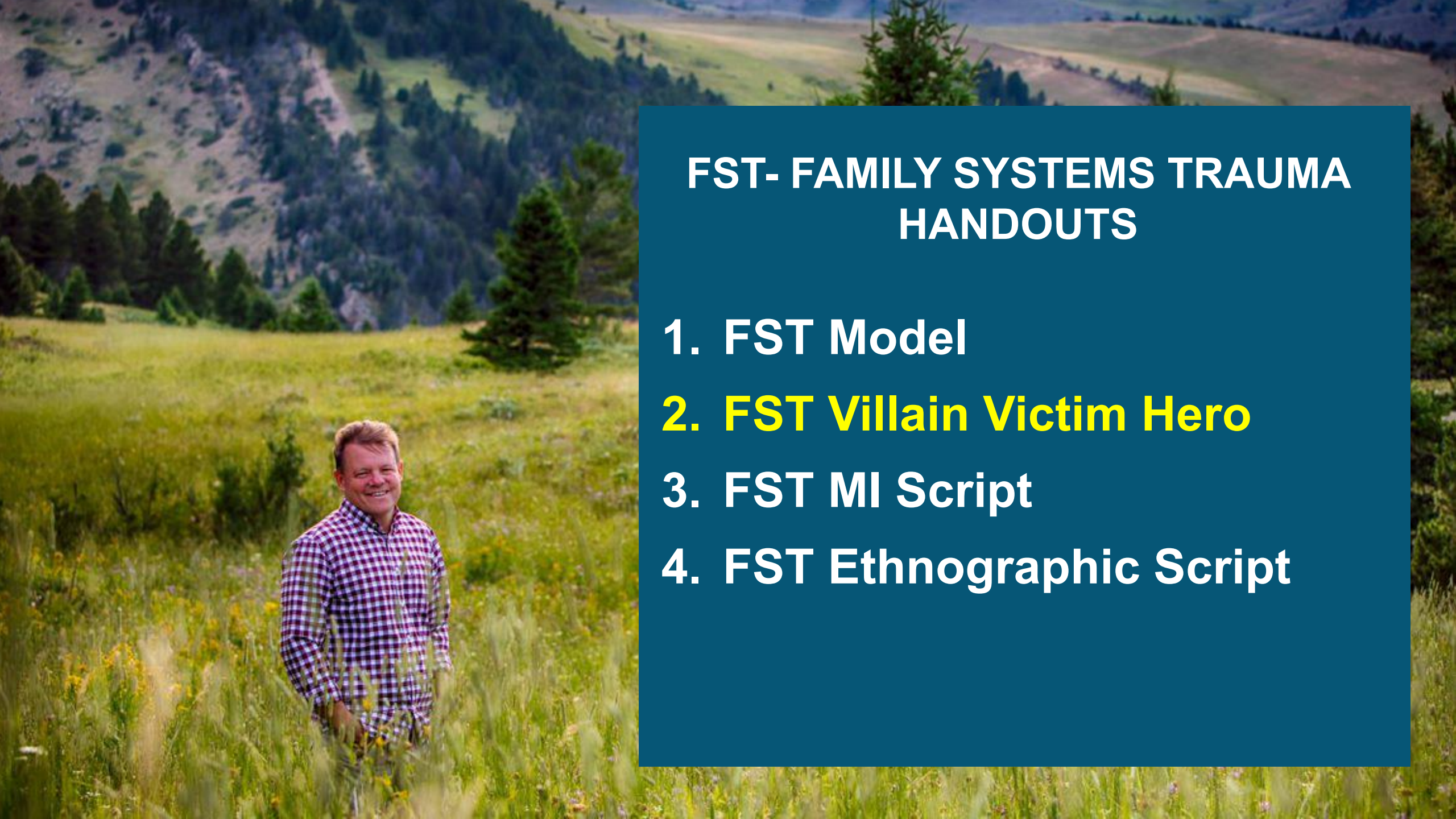
- ✓ **Skill Deficits in Problem Solving**
- ✓ **Skill Deficits in Timing**
- ✓ **Skill Deficits in Delivery**
- ✓ **Skill Deficits in Nurturance**



The Perfect Storm

No Engagement (Soft-Start Up)
+
Skills Deficits (unknown to Mom)



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FST- FAMILY SYSTEMS TRAUMA HANDOUTS

1. FST Model
2. **FST Villain Victim Hero**
3. FST MI Script
4. FST Ethnographic Script



HANDOUT #1: VILLAIN, VICTIM, HERO

Action Steps for Success

- Next time you have a stuck client, or they push your buttons with transference or countertransference, fill in this table
- Your goal is “balance”. Find an equal number of characteristics in each column. If you do not, you are out of balance.
- If you cannot find the Hero in your client- Ask hero questions such as:
 - “What keeps you from throwing in the towel?” OR
 - “When I get to know you better what qualities and strengths would I come to admire about you as a (person, parent, spouse, etc.)?”

Villain	Victim	Hero
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

A new mindset or paradigm shift

Villain | Victim | **Hero**

Villain

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Victim

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Hero

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

0

The Perfect Storm

No Engagement (Soft-Start Up)
+
Skills Deficits (unknown to Mom)





#2- A new script and a new operating system

HANDOUT: THE FST MOTIVATIONAL CALL SCRIPT

TABLE 1: THE FST MOTIVATIONAL SCRIPT

Question #1	What are some of the difficult experiences that you have had to suffer in the last year because of the problems you have been having with your child or teenager? <i>[Estimated time of completion = 5 minutes]</i>
Question #2	When I get to know you better, what qualities and strengths will I come to admire about you as a [person, parent, spouse, etc.]? <i>[Estimated time of completion = 3-5 minutes]</i>

HARSH

Traditional start-up
is not soft

SOFT

Parents come more:

- ✓ Relaxed
- ✓ Trusting
- ✓ More Receptive
- ✓ To You and Your treatment

FST Motivational Script


Question #1 “What are some of the difficult experiences that you have had to suffer in the last year as the result of these problems?”

Question #2 “When I get to know you better what qualities and strengths would I come to admire about you as a (person, parent, spouse, etc.)?”

Question #3 “What do you think will happen to _____ (you child, marriage, or you personally) if the problems you described earlier remain unfixed in the next three months, six month, or even year from now?”

Question #4 “Have you have seen a counselor for any of these problems before?”
If “yes”: “What have other counselors missed with you? The reason I ask is that I don’t want to make the same mistakes twice.”

Question #5 “Do you want the problems you listed [list them] fixed fast, medium, or slow?”

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's face, showing their eyes, nose, and mouth. The person has a distressed or sad expression, with their eyes looking down and slightly to the side. The lighting is soft, and the background is dark and out of focus.

Lucy's Story

- **16 years old**
- **Symptoms: Self-harming (cutting), depression, aggression.**

The FST Motivational Script

Question #2 (Transformational)

“When I get to know you better what qualities and strengths would I come to admire about you as a (person, parent, spouse, etc.)?”

Learning Touch Points –(Imagine if Your Client)

“What qualities and strengths would I come to admire about your daughter Lucy?”

- Mom starts out strong...
- “Strong Willed”- **Don’t take the bait**
- Fan the Flames of Hope Talk- “When You Say Creative...?”
- **Utilization**- “Are Proud of Her?”- Give example



TAKEAWAYS FROM the FST Motivational Technique

- ✓ **Motivate your toughest parents to show up and cooperate**
- ✓ **A 5-question Motivational script to start and end treatment**
- ✓ **Move beyond the “just fix my kid” parent mindset with inspiration**
- ✓ ***Audio Case example***





Family Systems Trauma Model

A Step-by-Step Family Systems Approach

Villain, Victim, and Hero **AND**
the FST Motivational Phone Call Technique

Try it Out to See for Yourself

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MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #2

✓ FST STRESS CHART

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Story of Kaylee, Joshua and their Family

The FST Stress Chart Technique

Box 5.1 Symptom/Stress Chart Template

Stress Chart

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

0% =

100% =

No Stress

Maximum Stress



Pg. 2

The Motivational Phone Call – **Module 2**

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Behaviors
& Safety
Stabilization
First

Wounds and Safety First

Stress Chart

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

_____ Top Three Stressors

1...

2..

3...

_____ Top Three Stressors

1...

2...

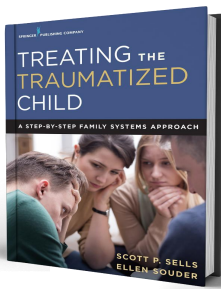
3...

_____ Top Three Stressors

1...

2..

3...



After the template is revealed, the FST therapist will ask the following questions that were first presented in Chapter 3:

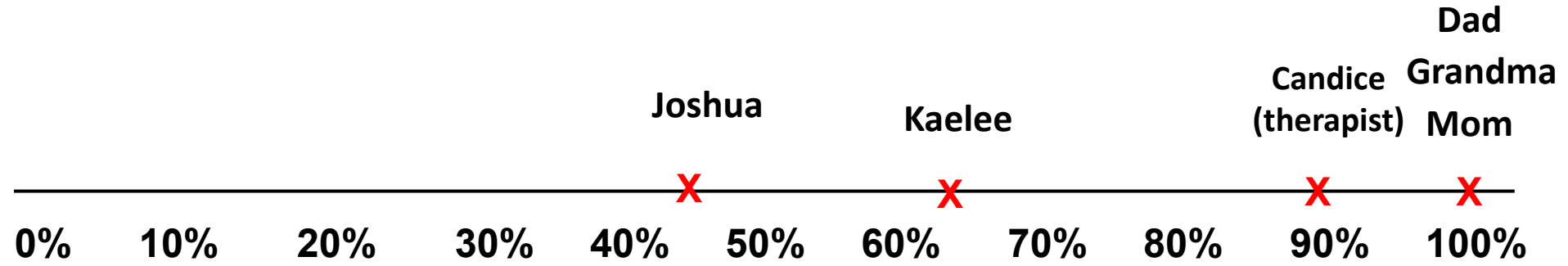
Looking at this chart, on a bad week, how much stress do you experience regarding your worry or concern for _____ [name of identified problem child] in your household (not at work or school) out of 0% to 100%? What is the first answer that comes to mind if 0% represents no stress and 100% maximum stress?

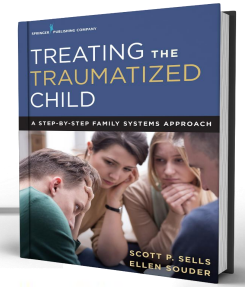
This question is modified for the villagers who do not live in the immediate household as follows:

I realize you do not live inside the house. But from the outside looking in, how much stress are you under watching what goes on with _____ [name of identified problem child] and _____ [names of parents or caregivers] and knowing what you know, if 0% represents no stress and 100% maximum stress?

Please never forget this point. The parents or caregivers are there for one reason: **For you, the therapist, to fix their kid without having to fix themselves.** Therefore, initially, the focus must

FST Stress Chart Technique



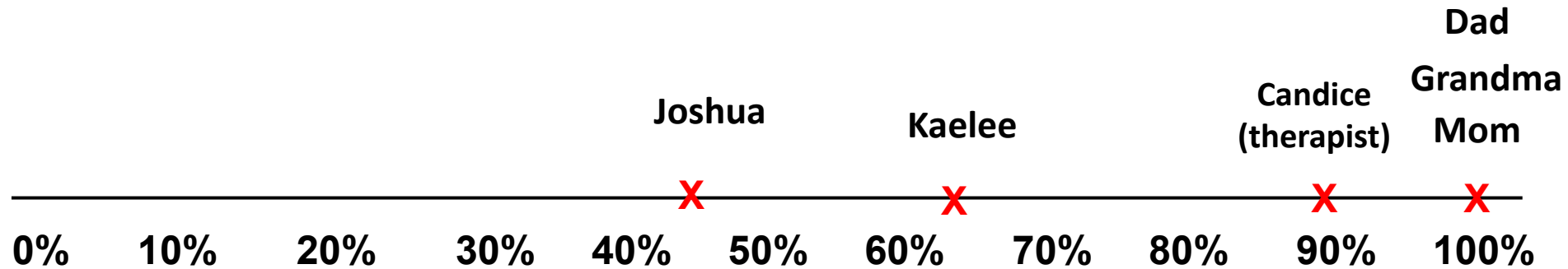


#3 Convert Overall Stress Into the Top Three Problems

After obtaining the family's overall stress, the FST therapist asks each family member, starting with the identified problem child or adolescent, to identify the top three things that make up their overall stress.

“Now that I know your overall stress let me circle back around and ask each of you what are the top three things that make up the overall stress you just gave? Let me start with you first [child or adolescent with problem] and then go around the room.”

FST Stress Chart Technique



Dad's Top Three Stressors

1. "Financial" (No Employment and Income)
2. "Miscommunication" (Disrespected)

Mom's Top Three Stressors

1. "Skyler" (Unresolved Grief)
2. "Not Heard or Seen" (Anxiety)
3. "Righteous Anger" (Soft or Nurturing)

Grandma's Top Three Stressors

1. "Her Daughter" (Anxiety)
2. "Kids" (Nurturance)

Joshua's Top Three Stressors

1. "Chores" (Chores)
2. "No Vision" (Clear Life Goals)
3. "Growing" (??)

Kaelee's Top Three Stressors

1. "Chores" (Chores)
2. "Stress" (Grief and Finances)

Option 1: Guess at the category

- “When you say _____ [insert their quote here] (i.e., “Won’t listen to me”) Could another way of saying it is that it’s a form of _____ [insert your category guess] (i.e., disrespect). Am I close or way off? Can I put this in parentheses next to what you said?” See example:

Mom’s Top 3 Stressors that Cause 100% Stress

1. “*Won’t Listen to Me*” (***Disrespect***)

Option 2: Seek More Clarification and/or Get Concrete Example and Then Guess

- “If I was a fly on the wall at your house watching _____ [insert their quote here] (i.e., “you being sad and overwhelmed”), what would that look like? Wait for their answer. Then guess the category.

Could another way of saying it is that it’s a form of _____ [insert your category guess] (i.e., depression). Can I put this in parentheses next to what you said? See example.

CONVERTING COMPLAINTS INTO CONCRETE CATEGORIES

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEM CATEGORIES – With trauma, the surface symptoms are often in the form of extreme or out-of-control behaviors, especially with older children. And they are often more behavioral than emotional. Hence, the conversion of these types of common complaints into a “behavioral category”

Common Complaints	Behavioral Category
“doesn’t listen”; “won’t mind”; “lies all the time; “won’t do as he/she is told”; “swears”; “defiant”; “angry; “picks on his brother or sister”; “temper tantrums”	Disrespect
“won’t pick up his/her stuff or room,”; “won’t listen when I ask to help out,”; “won’t help me around the house,”; “he or she is lazy”	Chores
“gets in my face”; “throws things”; “won’t back down”; “hurts me or others”; “he/she explosive or angry”	Aggression
“failing grades,” won’t listen to the teachers”; “won’t go to school,”; “won’t do homework”	School Performance or Truancy
“won’t come home”; “stays out all night”; “don’t know where he/she is”; “leaves home”	Curfew or Leave Home Without Permission
“gets high”; “parties”; “drinks too much”; “out with friend all night”; “in-room doing stuff”; doing things in secret”	Drugs or Alcohol
“on a cellphone, all the time,” “won’t get off computer or gaming,”; “always-on video games”; “nonstop texting”	Technology Problems or Addiction
“looking at stuff shouldn’t be,”; “sending messages and pictures to people that he/she shouldn’t be”	Sexting, Pornography
“getting threatening messages on social media”; “not liked at school”; “don’t feel safe there”; “no one understands me”; “scared to go,”; “I hate it there”	Bullying

EMOTIONAL PROBLEM CATEGORIES – These concrete categories are more “emotional or mental health-related”. Often, at the onset of treatment, the parent and/or child may be more reluctant to openly discuss these emotional categories within their stress chart. However, the safety stressor questionnaire handout will help you bring these out.

Common Complaints	Emotional Category
“Hurts self”; “just want to find a release”; “it’s like having a good cry”; “I cut or scratch myself”	Self-Harm
“my parent never around”; “mom left us in foster care”; “he or she just checked out”; “Just not there”	Abandonment (Emotional or physical)
“I just want to end it”; “No one cares if I’m here.”; “You’ll be better off when I’m gone.”; “I am so mad, I want to hurt myself.”; “I wish I were dead” or “I wish I hadn’t been born”	Suicidal threats, acts, and/or ideation
“I miss him/her so much”; “the pain is too great”; “I feel the loss”; “I miss my grandfather or other family member”	Grief
“We are not connected”; “had to get close”; “pushes me away”; “I do not like him/her, or hate them”	Attachment or Lack of Nurturance
“he/she so anxious”; I can’t bear it”; “I can’t rest or feel comfortable”; “I feel nervous or jumpy”	Anxiety
“I’m exhausted”; “Other people don’t care about me”; “I don’t have the energy to do anything”; “I just don’t care anymore”	Depression

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MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #3

✓ FST SEED TREE DIAGRAM
with UNDERCURRENTS



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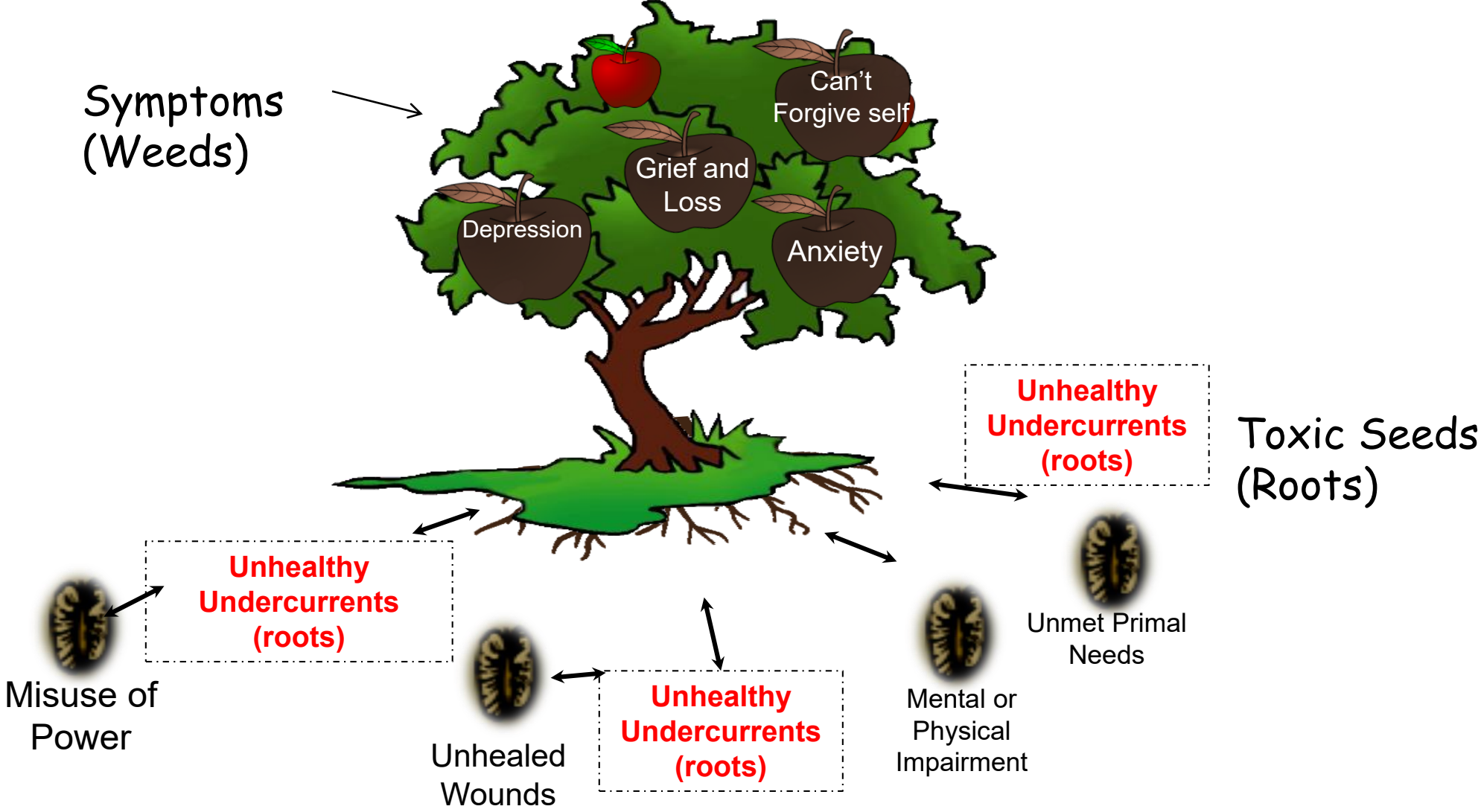
Wounds and Safety First

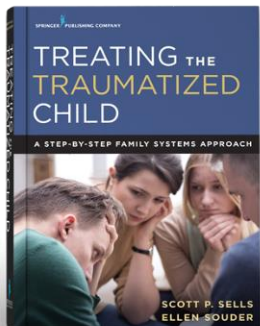


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Apple Tree, Seeds, and Undercurrents





Transition Statement to Move to Into the FST Seed/Tree Diagram Technique

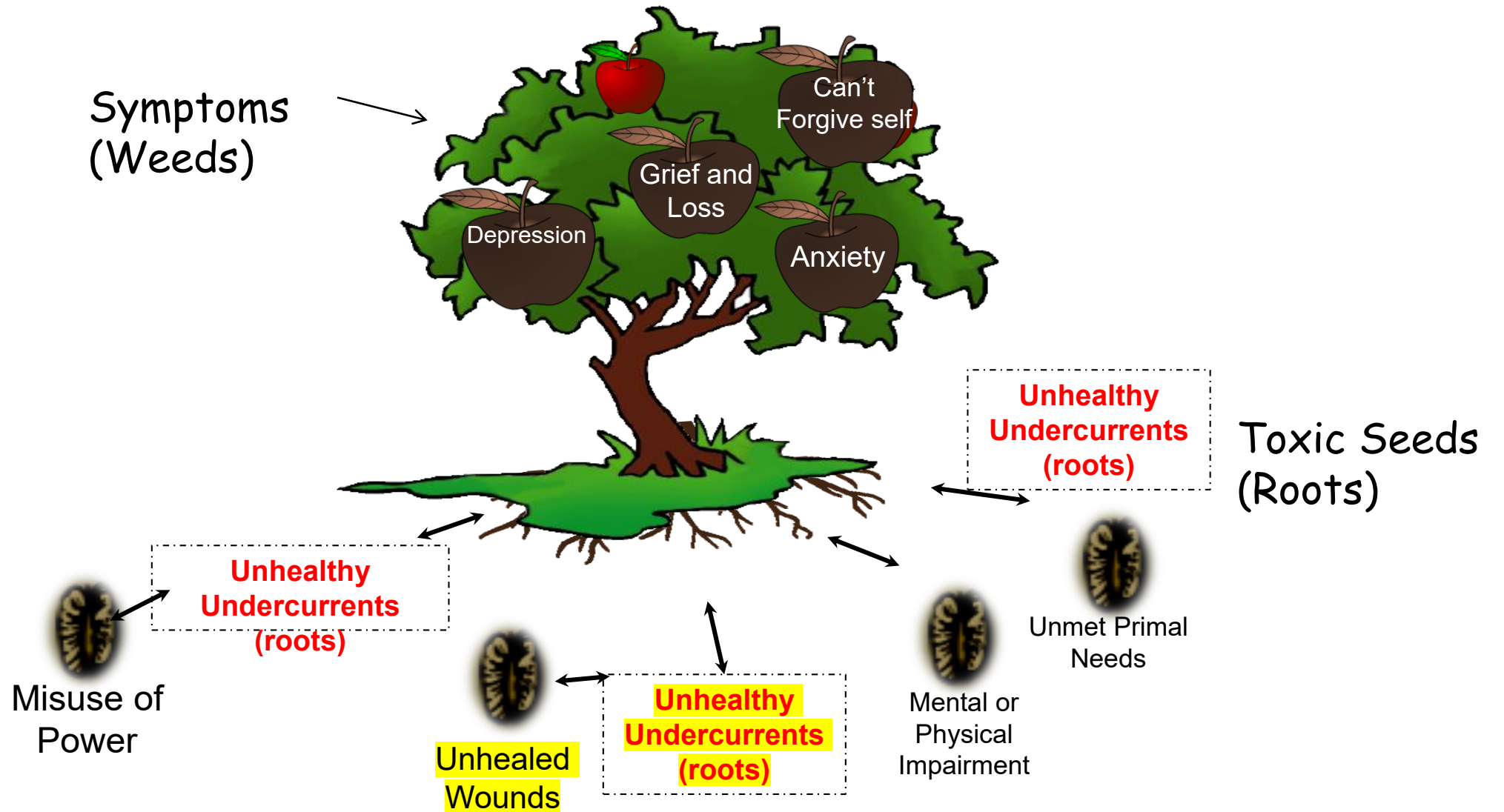
Using the following **transition statement**:

Now that we know your problems (Top 3 stressors) let find out what is causing these problems.

To do this, I will draw an apple tree and together we will discover why these problems that represent the fruit or apples are happening

By locating together as CO-DETECTIVES the reasons why through what are called your toxic seeds and undercurrents.


Apple Tree, Seeds, and Undercurrents





HANDOUT #1: UNHEALED WOUNDS AND UNDERCURRENTS



UNHEALED WOUNDS OR TRAUMA	
<p>Unhealed Wounds / Painful and Unhealed Life Experience</p> 	<p>Unhealed Wounds or Trauma usually occur in one of two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A traumatic or painful life event that simply does not heal on its own, over time. <i>(Examples include: divorce, emotional or physical abandonment by a trusted figure, death of someone you really loved, physical, emotional or sexual abuse)</i><input type="checkbox"/> Drama=Trauma: Constant tension, disrespect or arguing between parents and children. This reduces feelings of closeness and nurturance. As these warm feelings leave, bitterness and lack of forgiveness creep in and trauma kicks in.
<p>Question</p>	<p>Are any of the problems or stressors that you listed on your chart caused by unhealed wounds?</p> <p>___ Yes ___ No</p>

(Check all
that apply)

These Undercurrents Cause Your Unhealed Wounds

- Unhealed Grief or Loss
- Betrayal or Abandonment
- Family Secrets
- Abuse: Physical Mental Emotional Sexual
- Lack of Forgiveness/Bitterness
- Lack of Consistent Nurturance
- High Anxiety (lack of safety or security)
- High Stress (inability to relax, too much going on)

Fill in the “Missing” Healthy Undercurrents

Unhealed Wound Seed	
Unhealthy Undercurrents	“Missing” Healthy Undercurrents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unresolved Grief or Loss	Grief Healing and Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/> Betrayal or Abandonment	Forgiveness, Unconditional Love
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Secrets	Reveal Secrets/Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical or Mental Abuse	Support, Courage to Leave, Forgive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of Forgiveness/Bitterness	Forgiveness
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Consistent Nurturance	Show Consistent Nurturance

A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, stands in a lush green field of tall grass and wildflowers. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background features rolling hills and mountains covered in dense evergreen forests under a clear sky.

MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #1

✓ **FST Motivational Technique**

A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, stands in a lush green field of tall grass and wildflowers. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background features rolling green hills and a mountain range under a clear sky.

MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #2

✓ FST STRESS CHART

A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, stands in a lush green field with yellow wildflowers. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains covered in green grass and evergreen trees under a clear sky.

MUST HAVE FAMILY TRAUMA TOOL #3

✓ FST SEED TREE DIAGRAM
with UNDERCURRENTS

Going From Trauma-Informed to Trauma-Responsive



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Core Techniques: FST | Family Systems Trauma Model

1. Structural-Strategic Theory
2. Motivational Phone Call
3. Stress Chart
4. Seed/Tree Diagram
5. Stabilization vs. Active Trauma
6. Engaging the Extended Family
7. Safety First Contracts
8. Nutrition and Trauma
9. Feedback Loops & Undercurrents
10. Trauma Playbooks
11. Troubleshooting & Dress Rehearsals
12. Relapse Prevention

Module 2: The Motivational Phone Call



Overview

Welcome to Module 2, The FST Motivational Phone Call technique. Here is a brief overview of what'...



Lesson 1: Recognize a Harsh vs. Soft Start Up and Apply it to Your Practice

In this lesson, I will show you why the FST Motivational Technique is so important for your pract...



Lesson 2: The FST Motivational Script

Are you ready to see your parent or client engagement rates skyrocket? In this lesson, I will sho...



Lesson 3: Delivery of the FST Motivational Script

In this lesson, I will highlight the important differences between process vs. content and how to...



BONUS LESSON: MI Interview Podcast

Listen to a mom's perspective on why the FST Motivational Phone Call works.

Model Developer of FST | Family Systems Trauma Model

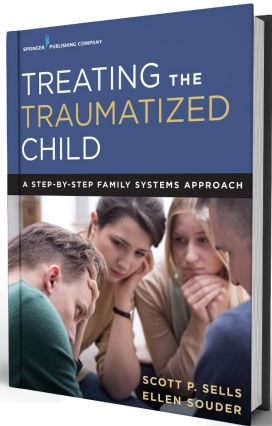


Scott P. Sells, Ph.D., LCSW, LMFT

Scott holds a Ph.D. in both Marriage and Family Therapy and Social Work from Florida State University. He has over 20 publications and has authored three books. He also founded the evidence-based Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) model that is being used across the US and Europe.

Office Hours:

Friday: 12 pm – 1 pm EDT/EST



✓ FST Advanced Trained



✓ FST Certification





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- ✓ More Confidence in Family Trauma
- ✓ Become the First Family Trauma Specialist in Your Community
- ✓ Go from Trauma-Informed to Trauma-Responsive
- ✓ Get 12 CE Units from ASWB and NBCC

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What You Will Experience Inside the Course



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