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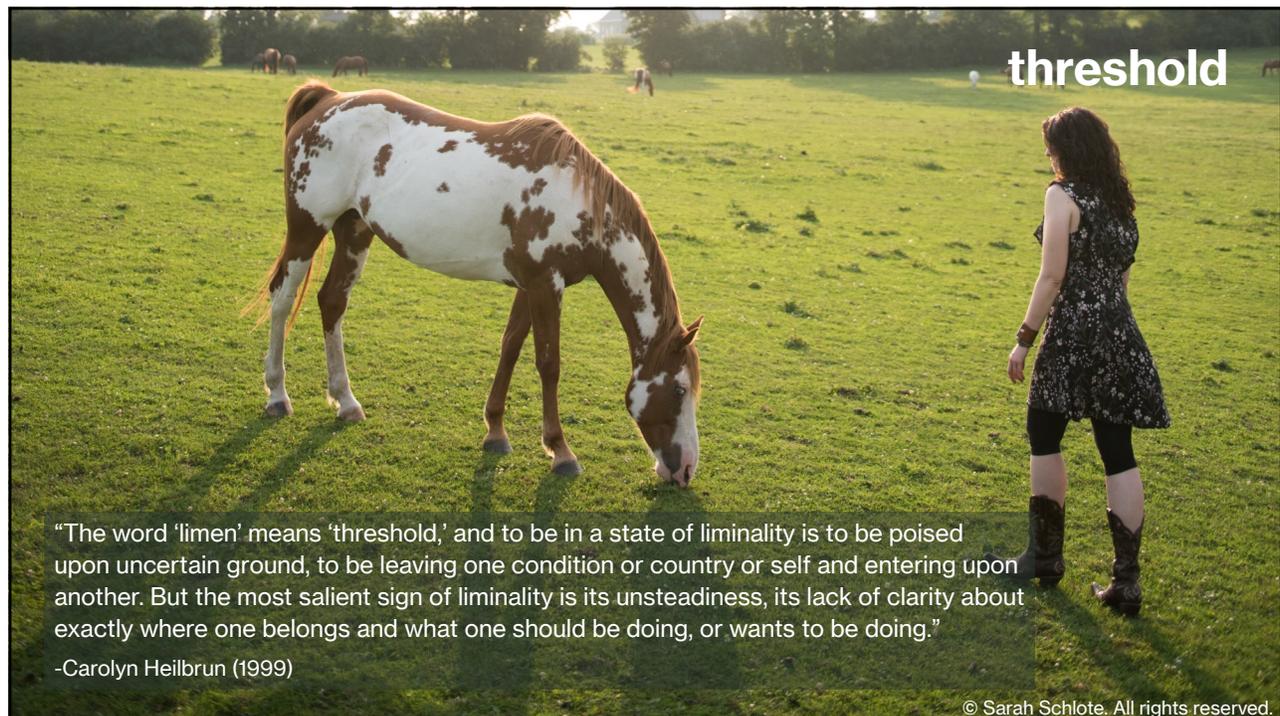
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## overview

Consent culture supports the deconstruction of power dynamics and emphasizes choice, voice, and secure relationality. Animal-assisted services (AAS) involve inter-species relational dynamics where these themes can emerge, which can either result in subtle re-enactments of harm or yield powerful opportunities for renegotiation for human and animal participants. Drawing from various approaches, including phenomenology, somatics, parts work, and psychodynamics, this webinar will review concepts and frameworks to consider when looking at interspecies relational and boundary rupture and repair, and will introduce some skills to include in the practice of AAS.

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## animal-assisted services (Schlote, 2019, 2020, 2023a, 2023b)

- May involve...
  - Animals and humans that may have histories of adversity, trauma, and unmet needs
    - Humans and animals that may have trauma in relation to one another (e.g., falls, kick/bite, impacts of head and bodily injuries, boundary and relational ruptures)
  - Humans who may turn to animals as surrogate attachment figures
  - Wonderful intentions
  - Settings and perspectives that are anthropocentric that may or may not fully meet the needs of humans and/or other species
  - A greater risk for re-enactments of familiar patterns, dynamics, and misattunements

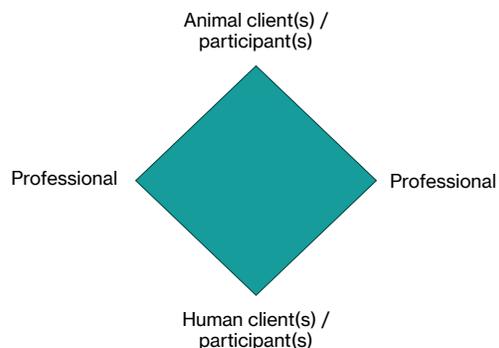
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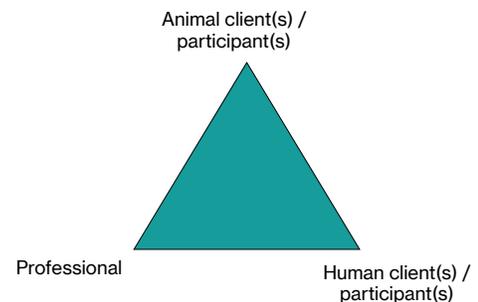
## service models (Brooks, 2006)

*...lots can show up in the space between*

**Diamond Model:** Co-facilitated by two professionals with complementary or identical scopes of practice

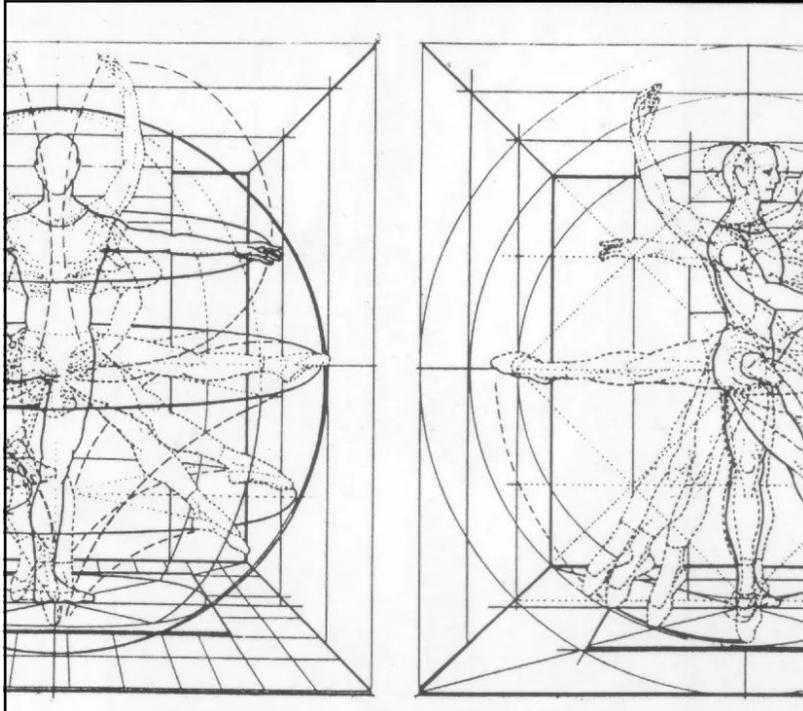


**Triangle Model:** The solo professional has appropriate training in human and animal scopes of practice



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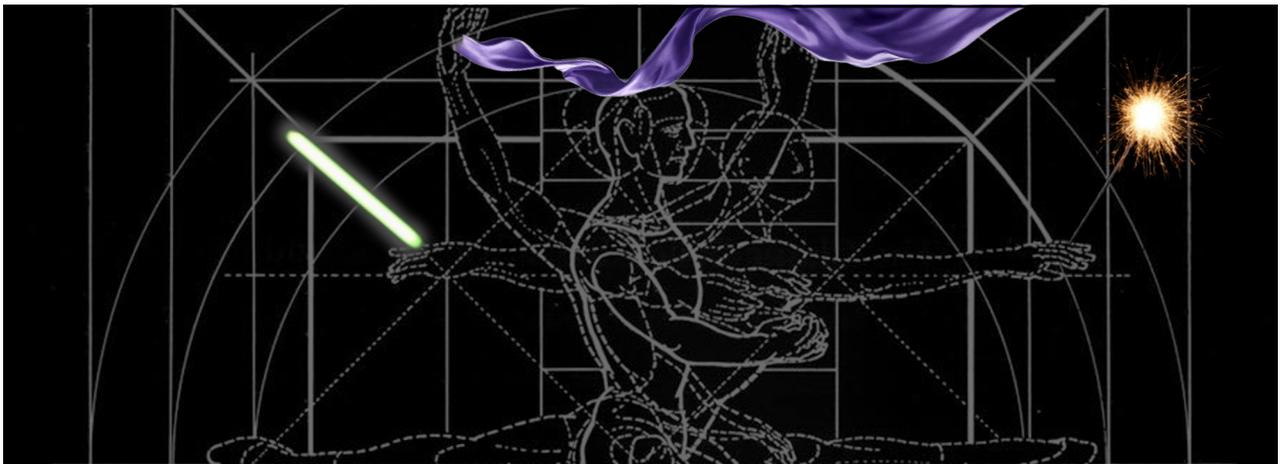
## kinesphere

“the space around the body whose periphery can be reached by easily extended limbs from that place which is our support or stance”

-Rudolf Laban (1966)

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## kinesphere

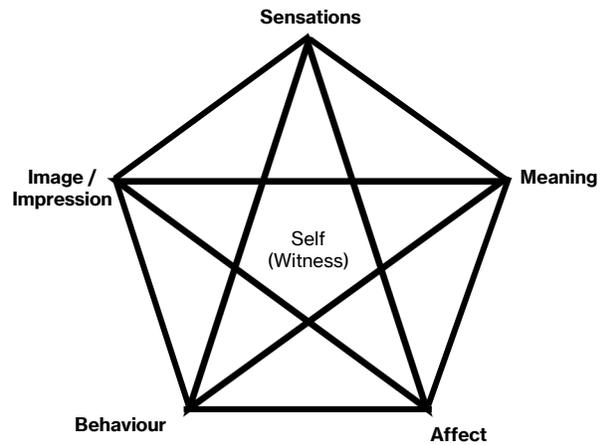
Imagine that you are holding sparklers, glow sticks, or scarves in your hands. Without taking a step, notice what happens as you explore the space around your body, extending your limbs and “painting” the space as you move in different directions. Notice the impression of this space and your internal response to it (SIBAM).

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# SIBAM (Levine, 1997, 2010)

- **S – Sensations**
- **I – Image** (Sensory Impression)
- **B – Behaviour**
- **A – Affect** (Emotion)
- **M – Meaning** (Cognition)

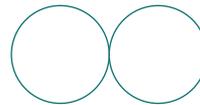


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# coupling and relational dynamics (Somatic Experiencing®; FHE, 2007)

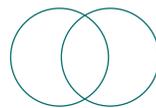
**Joining**  
(curious presence)



**Disconnection**  
(under-coupling)



**Merging**  
(over-coupling)



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# dissociation

Brown & Katcher (1997, 2001) found that college and veterinary technician students who rated the strongest in attachment towards their pets also tended to score higher on the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES).

Proposed that dissociation was a stronger predictor of pet attachment than personality traits.

22% of the vet tech students had DES scores within a clinically diagnosable range.

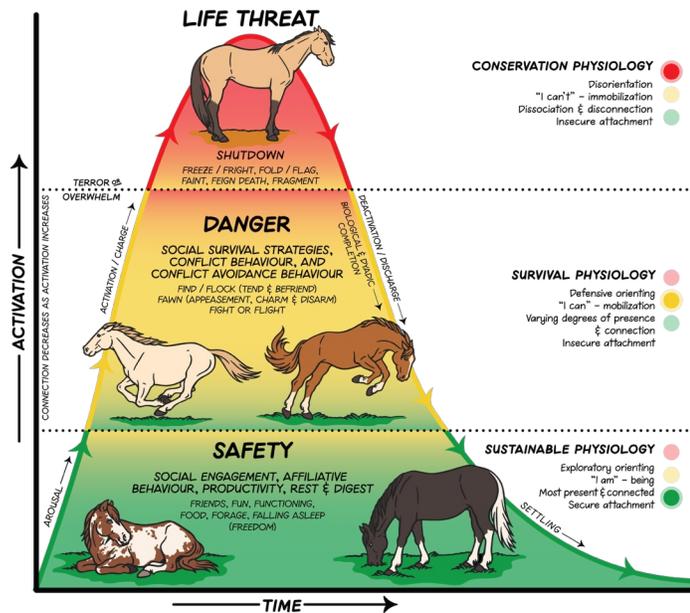
*“Some people with high pet attachment and high dissociation may seek reparative relationships with companion animals as a safe substitute for people. Companion animals offer a more stable and trusting relationship for people with histories of trauma. Relationships with companion animals may provide a safe way to learn to trust another living being, thereby providing a bridge toward human contact. This would be consistent with attachment theory” (2001, p. 28).*

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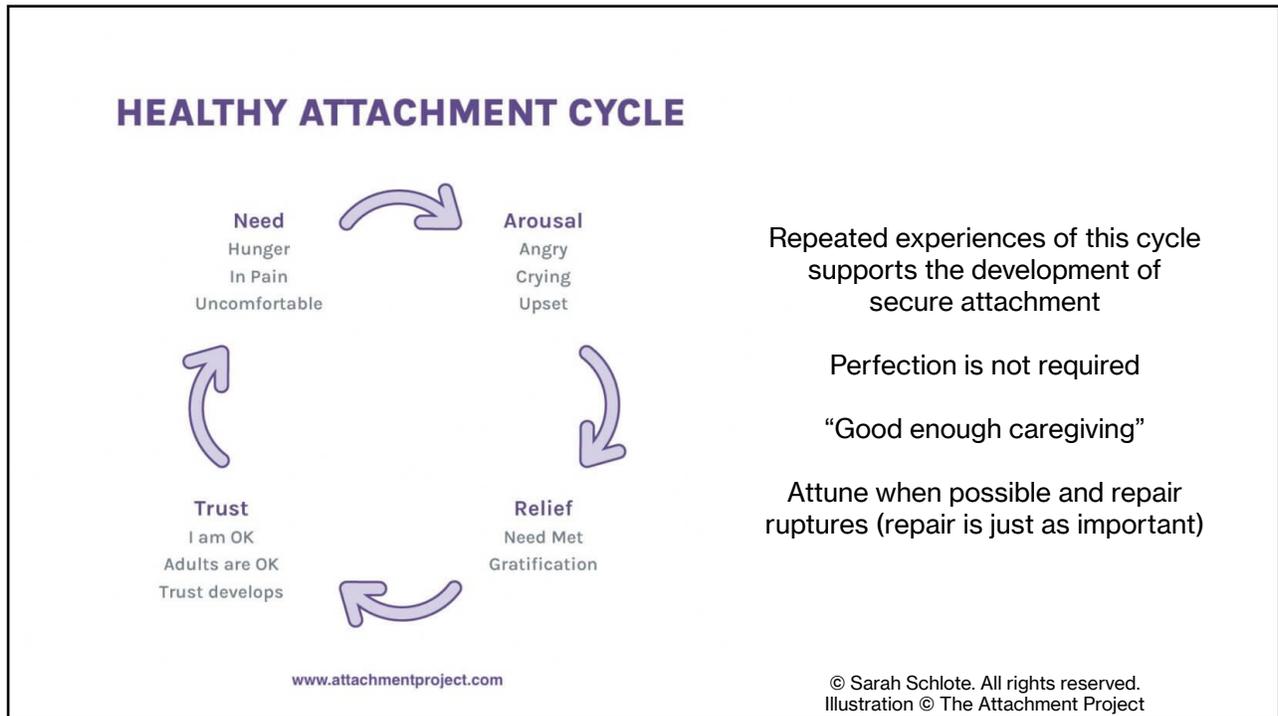
# activation cycle

- Safety
- Startle / arrest / preparatory orienting (or the felt sense of discomfort or a need)
- Defensive or relational orienting
- Social survival responses
  - Find, fawn/appeasement
- Active defenses or need meeting (mobilization)
  - Fight, flight, flow
- Passive defenses (immobilization)
  - Evidence of thwarted responses
- Biological/dyadic completion
- Exploratory orienting and social engagement

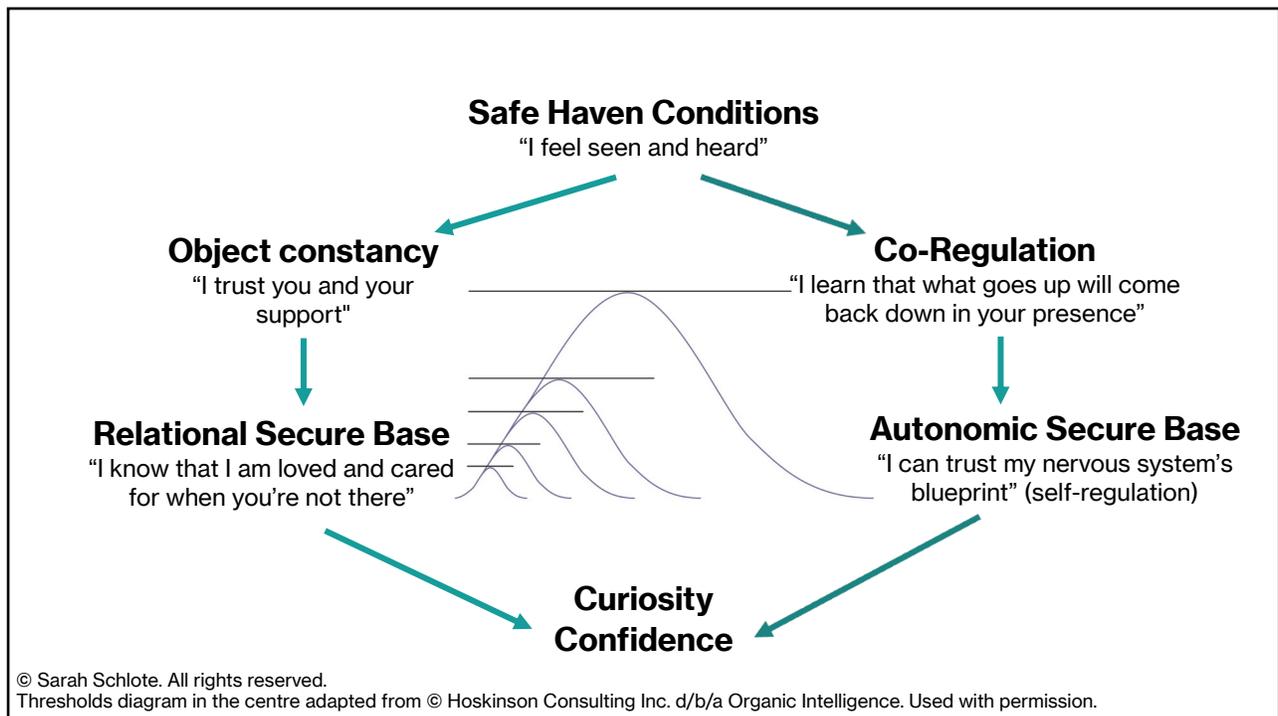


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 References: Baldwin (2013); Berger & Kain (2007); Bracha (2004); Fanselow et al. (1988); Gilbert (1993); Johnson & Ndefo (2021); Kellner et al. (1997); Kozłowska et al. (2015); Levine (1997, 2010); Mobbs et al. (2009, 2015); Payne, Levine, & Crane-Godreau (2015); Porges (2011); Rees (2017); Riordan, Blakelee & Levine (2019); Schauer & Elbert (2010); Taylor et al. (2010); Walker (2003, 2013).

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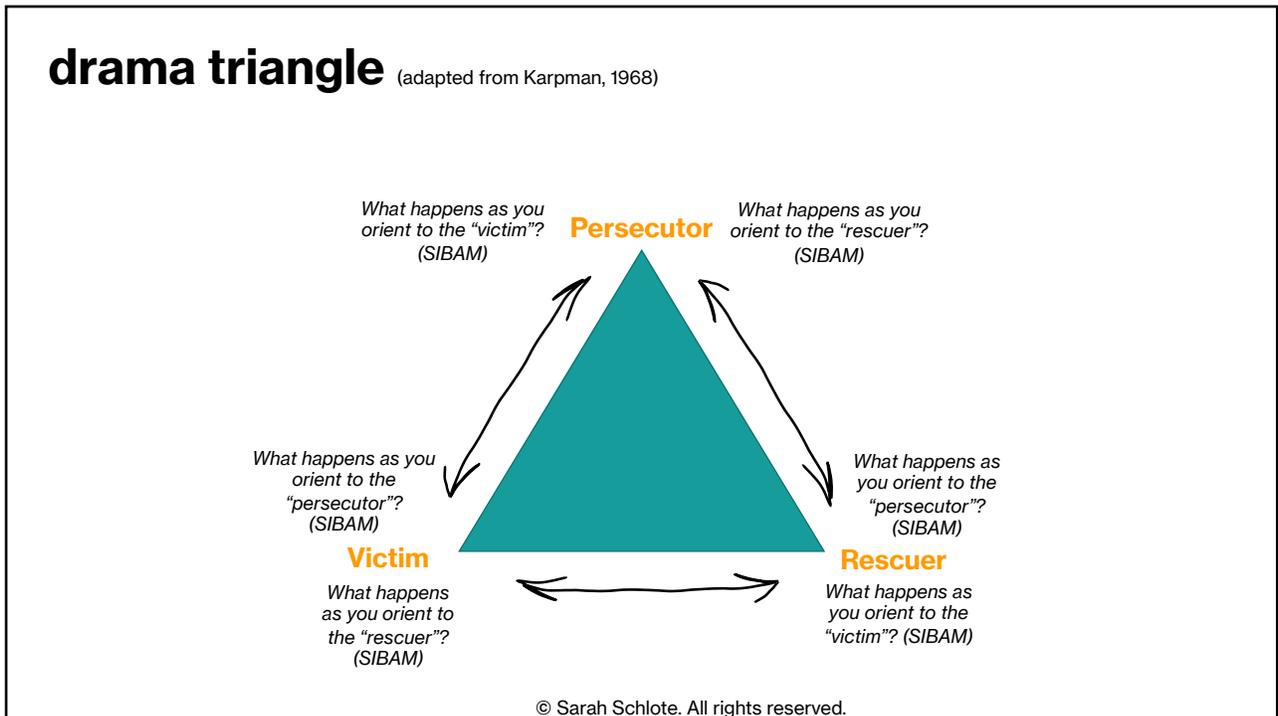
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## risks and re-enactments

### Projection, splitting, repression, suppression

- Animal as “perfect caregiver” / “healer” / meet-er of needs
  - Objectification of the animal as a magic unicorn without needs
  - Polarization (idealization / devaluing; who needs humans?)
  - Wounding during developmental phase of healthy narcissism (Federn, Kohut)
    - External vs. internal locus of control
- Shame about early thwarted impulses and unmet needs
- Thwarted find - examples:
  - Impulse to reach for face or “other” while disconnected from needs of self and other
  - Wanting something (e.g., attunement) but not being able to notice or let it in when it’s available
- Co-facilitator dynamics reflecting caregiver or family of origin dynamics
  - Expectations, roles, conflicts (e.g., good cop / bad cop)
  - Variations of splitting

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## risks and re-enactments

### Double standards, distancing

- Anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism
- Inspiration porn of AAS (complicit consumption)
- Professional as rescuer to human “victim” of another human “perpetrator” (where is animal?)
  - Animal as “victim” of human “perpetrators” of unconscious patterns and dynamics
- Polarization (win-lose, good-bad, all-nothing) vs. “I’m ok and you’re ok” (Berne)
- Self-other co-existing (intersubjectivity; object relations) and capacity for mid-range (Levine) and dialectics (Linehan)

### Parallel processes

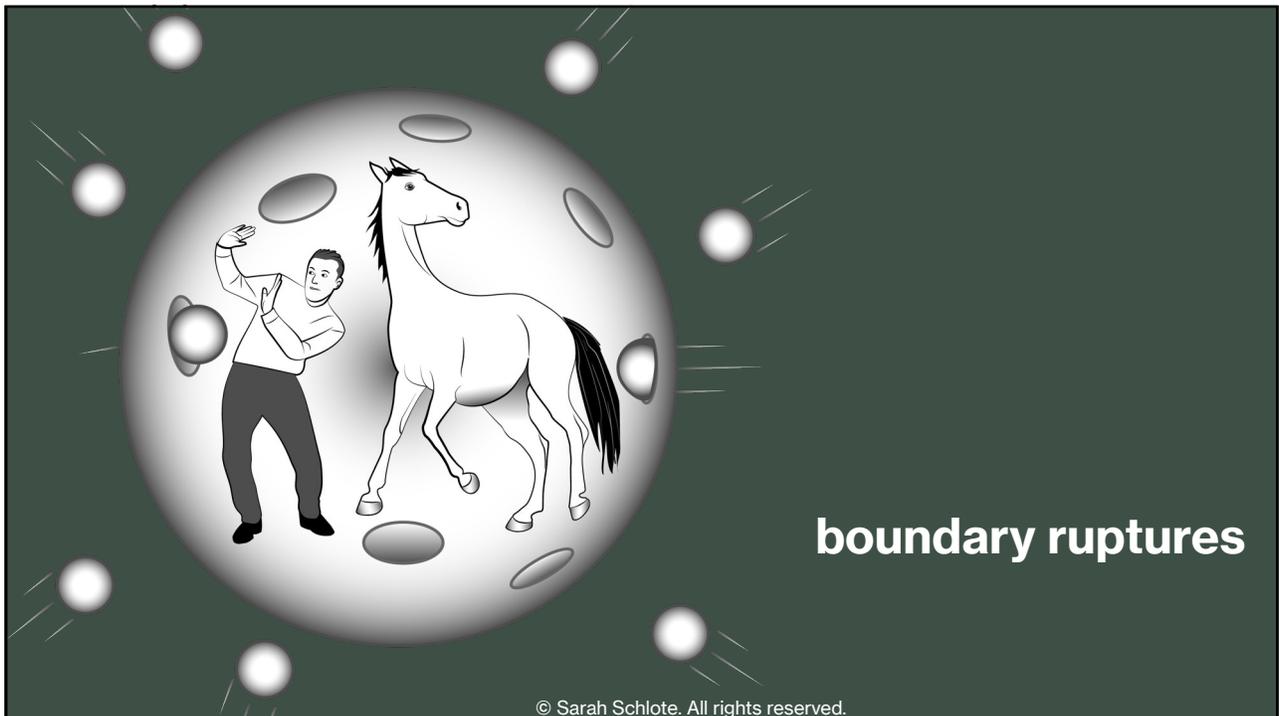
- Repeating or experiencing familiar or similar somatic sequences, patterns, or themes
  - Self-fulfilling prophecies, confirmation bias → “see, I’m not safe / my needs won’t get met”

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## attachment injuries = attunement injuries

- Relational ruptures = “disorganized relational input”
  - Can occur from conception, gestation, and birth onwards
  - Can be impacted by intergenerational patterns and experiences
  - Usually unintentional / innocent; sometimes intentional / malicious
- Result in a neuroception of danger or life threat in the relational field
- Can lead to insecure attachment patterns:
  - Anxious attachment
  - Avoidant attachment
  - Disorganized attachment

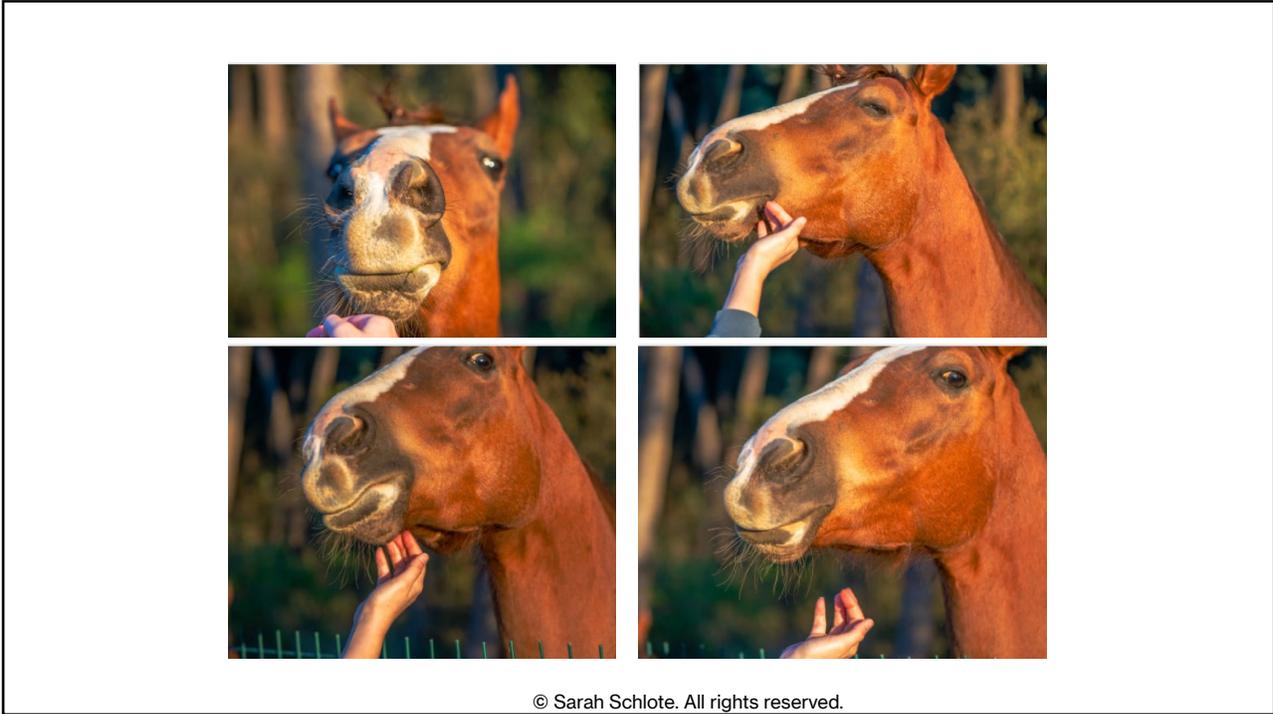
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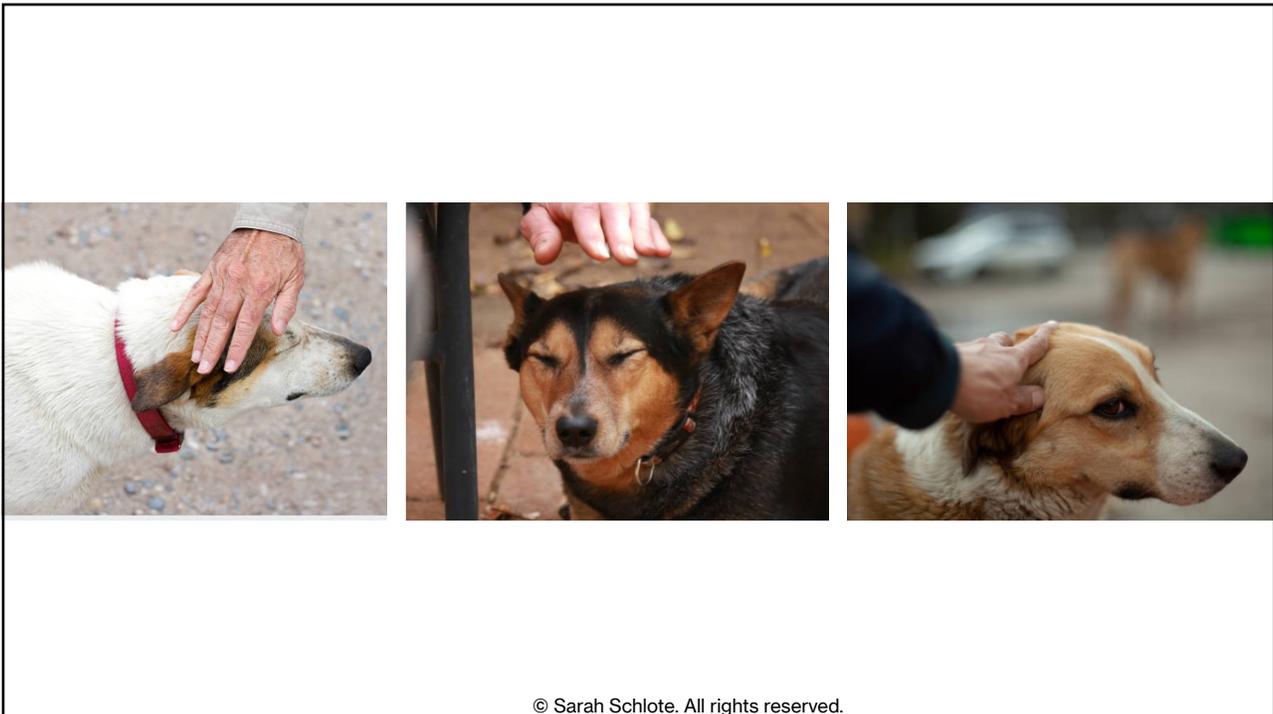
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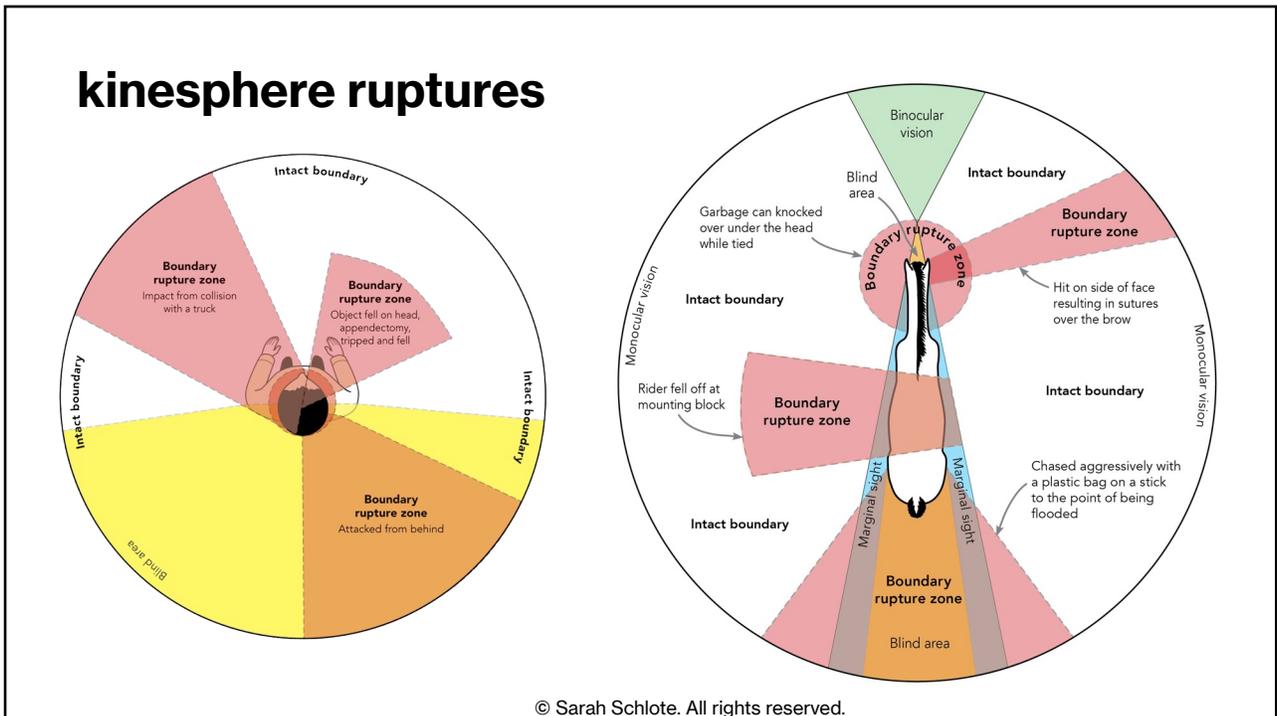


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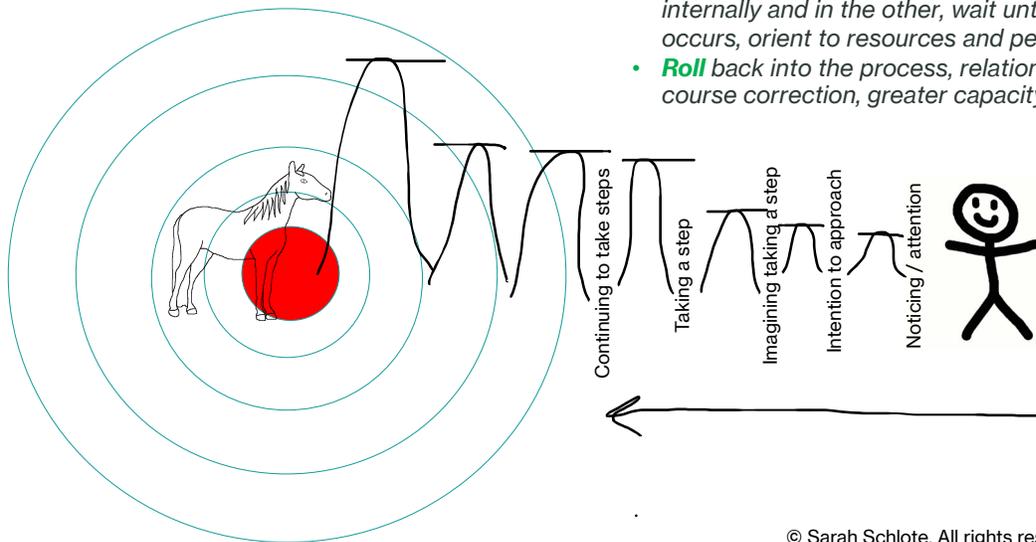
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## repair and renegotiation

- **Stop:** Pause when noticing signs of activation, no, or maybe
- **Drop** into yourself; track what is happening internally and in the other, wait until deactivation occurs, orient to resources and pendulate
- **Roll** back into the process, relationship, etc. with a course correction, greater capacity, or a yes



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Adapted from Rector (2005), Levine (2010), FHE (2007)

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## invitations

### Sensing SIBAM of self and other:

- What do you notice? How do you know?
- What SIBAM channels are you most aware of in yourself? Others?
- What are you curious about paying attention to more?
- Where are you, the human client(s), and the animal(s) in the activation cycle?
- What is the SIBAM of a relational or boundary rupture or misattunement?
- What is happening in your and their kinespheres?
  - Where is the edge where your and their (A) body and (B) kinesphere end and begin?
  - What is the SIBAM as you approach or move away from that edge?
- Have you or they merged and/or disconnected internally and/or externally? How do you know?
- What supports you to:
  - (Re)join with yourself and others? Offer repair and reattune?

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## renegotiation and repair for all

Supporting a vision for a world  
where all beings can experience  
**enough...**

Feeling safe enough  
Supported enough  
Good enough attunement  
Enough needs being met

...regardless of species, social  
status, or identity group

...regardless of who is the  
"identified" client in a service setting

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