

Healing
Anxious
Kids and
Anxious
Families





**How Big is the
Problem?**



#1- Why do Anxiety Disorders Travel in Families?



#2-How do Parents Overaccommodate? [psychoeducation]



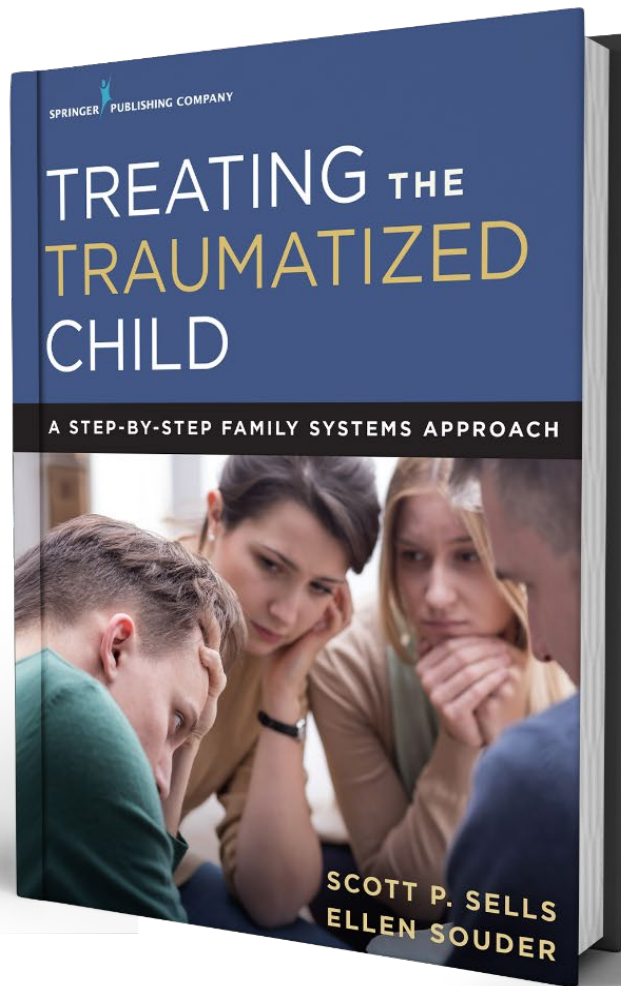
#3-Undercurrents and FST Feedback Loops as a First Step [psychoeducation + application]

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AAMFT Approved
Supervisor**



Family Trauma Institute

TRAINING PROFESSIONALS TO
BECOME FAMILY TRAUMA EXPERTS



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Family Systems Trauma Model

A Step-by-Step Family Systems Approach

12 Core Techniques

FST | Family Systems Trauma Model

1. Structural-Strategic Theory
2. Motivational Phone Call
3. Stress Chart
4. Seed/Tree Diagram
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Family Trauma Institute

Training Mental Health Professionals to become
Family Trauma Experts
through the
Family Systems Trauma Model (FST)

Monthly Free Webinar

How to Motivate Parents to Show Up and Engage:
Family Trauma Solutions

March 8, 2023
12 -1 pm ET

[Learn More](#)

How to Become a Family Trauma Expert



Step 1: FST Monthly Webinar

Attend free monthly webinars live or on demand to learn how FST Techniques engage the entire traumatized family.



Step 2: FST Advanced Training

Offered twice a year, this self-paced course teaches professionals the 12 Core Techniques of the FST model.

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Step 3: FST Certification

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How Big is the Problem?

Anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric condition in children.

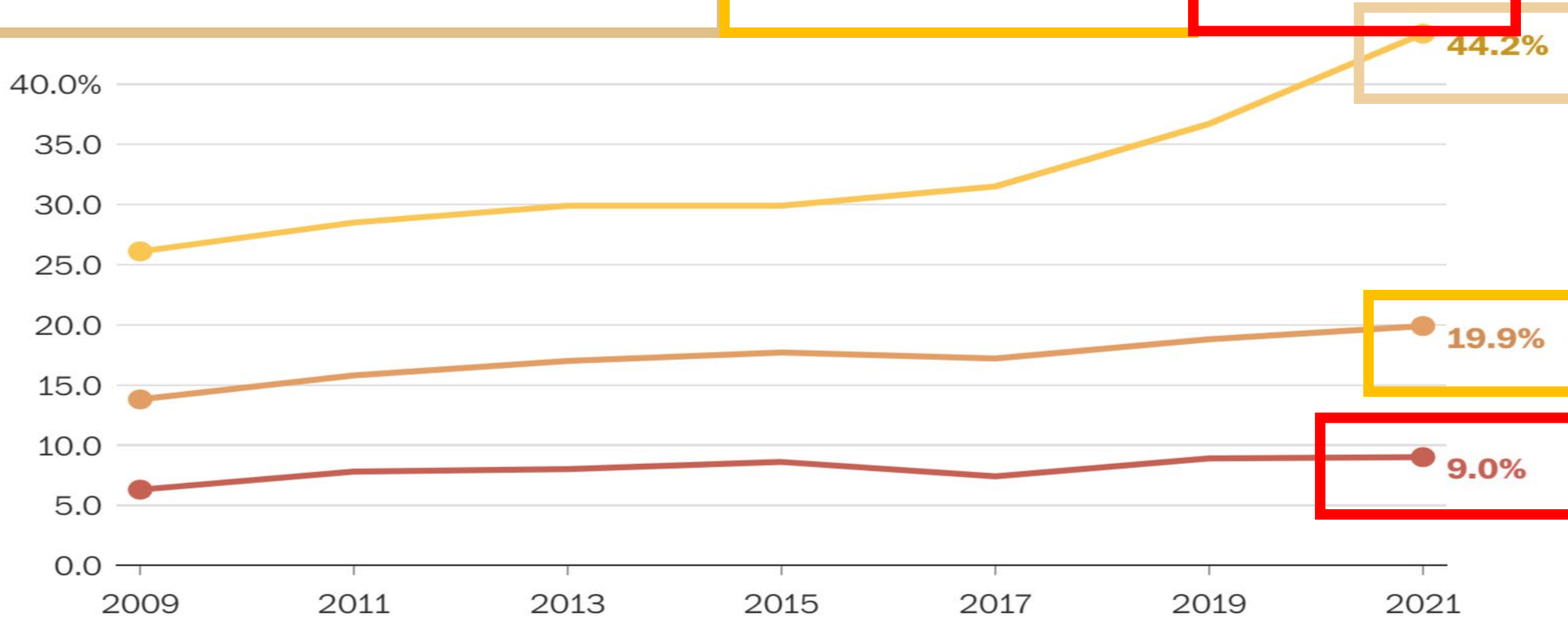
Affect nearly a third (33%) of adolescents ages 13 to 18 with average age of onset at age 11



High school students' reports of poor mental health

Self-reported incidents in Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey

— Persistent feelings of sadness/hopelessness — Seriously considered suicide — Attempted suicide



Good News...

Most Childhood Anxiety Will Go Away On Their Own

Bad News...



Anxiety will often not go away
with “*overaccommodation*”
and can branch out to pick up
other problems such as
depression

Anxiety Disorders

Are anxiety disorders some of your toughest cases to treat?

One Reason Why?



#1- Why do Anxiety Disorders Travel in Families?

Anxiety travels in families

More than half (50%) of children who live with an anxious parent

End up meeting the criteria for an anxiety disorder themselves.





Anxiety is not something to stop.

We need it to respond to stress and uncertainty.

Yet, parents today are often doing the opposite.

Insulating children from distress and discomfort **entirely**.

A person is silhouetted against a night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. The galaxy's core is visible as a bright, pinkish-purple band of light, transitioning to a yellowish glow near the horizon. The rest of the sky is dark with scattered stars. The person stands on a dark, rocky outcrop in the foreground.

Use a FST| Family Systems Trauma Lens

Think and Treat Anxiety



Quick Poll

CBT or TF-CBT is your primary treatment model for anxiety disorders

A- Yes

B- No



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) works:

After a 12-week course, 60% of children with anxiety disorders were

“very much improved”
or *“much improved”*



Bad News:

But it wasn't
a permanent cure

CBT results tended to
fade over time

CBT focused on child's role in their anxiety disorder

But often neglected the parents' responses to that anxiety [underline added]

***Overaccommodation
feedback loops***



Even when the parent(s)
participated in the therapy,

The emphasis remained on
what the child was doing not
the parent.

Source: May 2020 The Atlantic





#2-How do Parents Overaccommodate?

**[trauma-informed
psychoeducation]**

“Overaccommodation”



**CHILDHOOD ANXIETY IS NOT
ONLY A CHILD PROBLEM**

**IT IS A CHILD
AND PARENT PROBLEM**

Overaccommodation Definition

Parents change their **behavior and/or lifestyle** to help their child avoid or lessen their feelings of anxiety *when there is no eminent present danger.*

This **prevents coping skills** from developing.

Two Types:

#1- Active Participation Overaccommodation

#2- Lifestyle Overaccommodation



Active Participation Overaccommodation

Parent **changes their behavior** *to actively participate in* helping their child avoid or reduce their anxiety.

- Parent turns off lights on and off three times because child is compulsive (**I will actively help you maintain OCD**)
- Parents always order for their child at dinner because child will not answer the waiter (**I will actively help maintain social anxiety**)



Lifestyle Overaccommodation

Parents **change their lifestyle or daily life** *to actively* help their child avoid or reduce their anxiety.

- Stops inviting guests to the house when child is home because of social anxiety (**I will change my lifestyle to accommodate you**)
- Parents stop going out on dates because of their child's separation anxiety





Other Overaccommodation Examples

- ✓ Driving a child to school because the child is frightened of the bus
- ✓ Allowing a child to sleep in the parents' bed every night
- ✓ Making sure the child is distracted and entertained by technology 24/7 so they won't have discomfort or discomfort.
- ✓ Refusing to go out of the house or getting a job and always "hovering".

**First Step:
Trauma-Informed
(Psychoeducation)**

**Second Step:
Trauma-Responsive (Application)**



First Step: Trauma-Informed (Psychoeducation)



Types of Anxiety Disorders and Family Overaccommodation

Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle Accommodations
Separation Anxiety	Child afraid to be alone at night	Mom lies with child every night until they fall asleep or allowed to sleep with parents. It's her choice.	Active Participation.
Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle Accommodations
Social Anxiety	Child afraid to meet new friends or talk to them	Siblings required to play with sister anytime she asks and cancel plans	Lifestyle Participation

Types of Anxiety Disorders and Family Overaccommodation

Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle/Daily Life Accommodations
Generalized Anxiety	Child is constantly worried that parents will die at work	Both parents will text child when they get to work and every hour while at work	Active Participation
Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle Accommodations
Obsessive-Compulsive	Child afraid not clean enough after pooping and keeps using toilet paper	Mom buys \$150 dollars in toilet paper each month and pays Plumber to unclog pipes	Active Participation

Types of Anxieties and Family Overaccommodation

Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle Accommodations
Phobia of Tall Buildings	Child afraid of any tall buildings	Parents will pre-plan driving to avoid any tall buildings even if it adds extra hours to driving time	Active Participation

Poll #2

How many of you are seeing more clearly that anxiety can be a child-parent interactional dance that is fueled by overaccommodation...

A- Yes

B- No

C- Maybe

**PARENTS MAY NOT CAUSE ANXIETY
BUT THEY CAN FUEL OR ENABLE IT BY
OVERACCOMMODATION
THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION
OR LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION**



#3-Undercurrents and FST Feedback Loops as a First Step

**[trauma-informed
psychoeducation
+ trauma responsive
application]**

Second Step: Trauma-Responsive (Application)



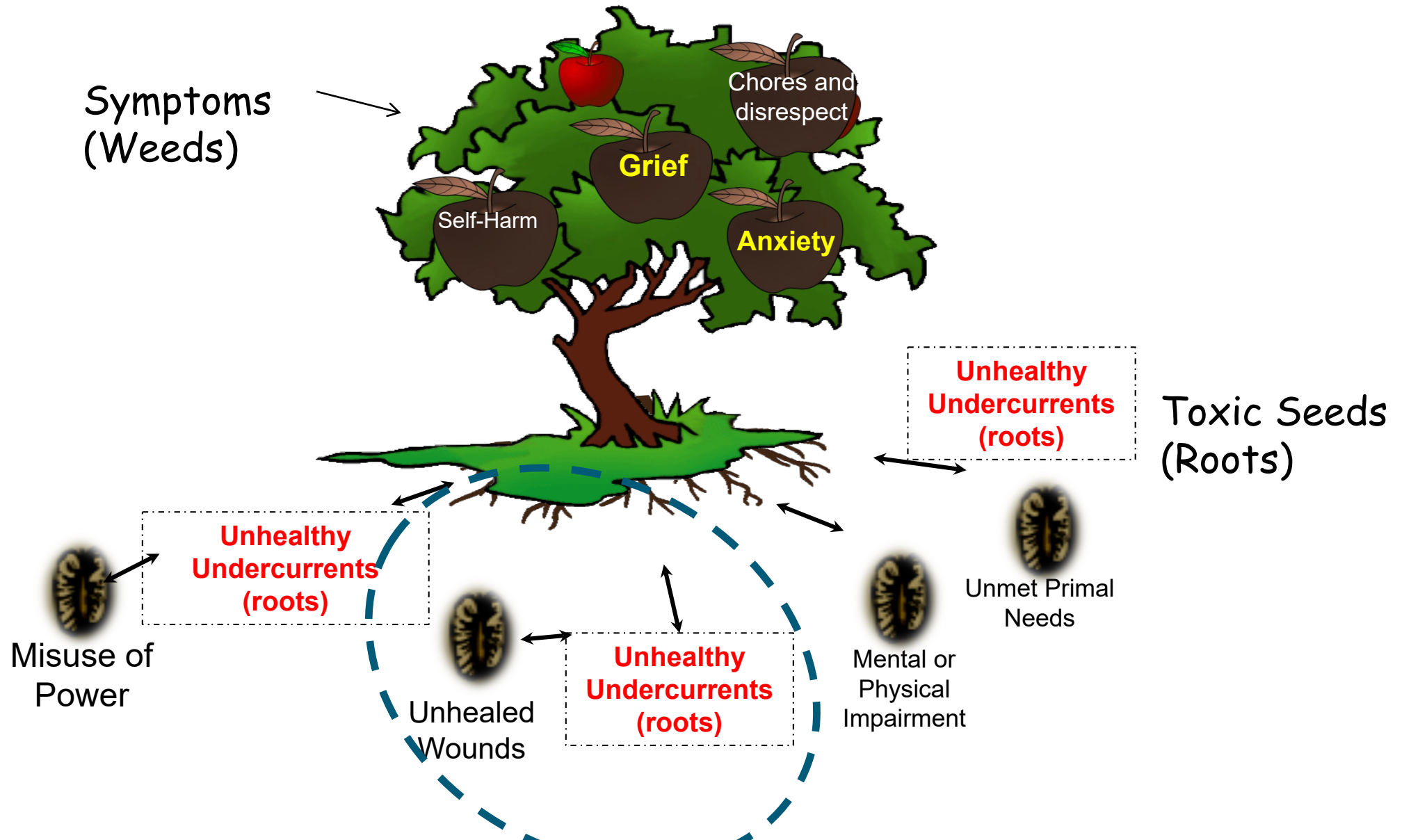


Story of Kaylee, Joshua
and their Family

Types of Anxiety Disorders and Family Overaccommodation

Child Anxiety Problem	Symptom Example	Family Overaccommodations	Active Participation or Lifestyle/Daily Life Accommodations
Generalized Anxiety	Children are constantly worried that mom will self-harm or get worse	Both kids will watch mom like a hawk and not move on developmentally	Lifestyle Participation

FST Seed/Tree Diagram Technique



Unhealed Wounds Undercurrents

Unhealthy Undercurrents

Healthy Undercurrents

Unresolved Grief or Loss

→ Grief Education and Resolution

Betrayal or Abandonment

→ Security, Forgiveness, Unconditional Love

Family Secrets

→ Reveal Secrets/Safety

Physical or Mental Abuse

→ Support, Courage to Leave, Forgive

Lack of Forgiveness/Bitterness

→ Forgiveness

Lack of Consistent Nurturance

→ Unconditional Love, Consistent Nurturance

High Anxiety

→ Safety or Security
Relaxation or Diversionary Tactics

Types of Anxiety Disorders and Family Overaccommodation

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Generalized Anxiety	Children are constantly worried that mom will self-harm or get worse	Both kids will watch mom like a hawk and not more on developmentally	Lifestyle Participation

Summarize My Finding into a Summary Table

FST Therapist's Undercurrent Picks Causing Client's Symptoms

0

Child's Problem Symptom(s) in Question	Top 2 or 3 Unhealthy Undercurrents Directly Causing This Symptoms	Healthy Undercurrents Counterparts
Grief, Anxiety, Disrespect	<input type="checkbox"/> UN-resolved Grief <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiveness to Self	✓ Grief Resolution ✓ Forgiveness

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"BEFORE" FEEDBACK LOOP

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THE BEFORE: "What is Happening Now?"

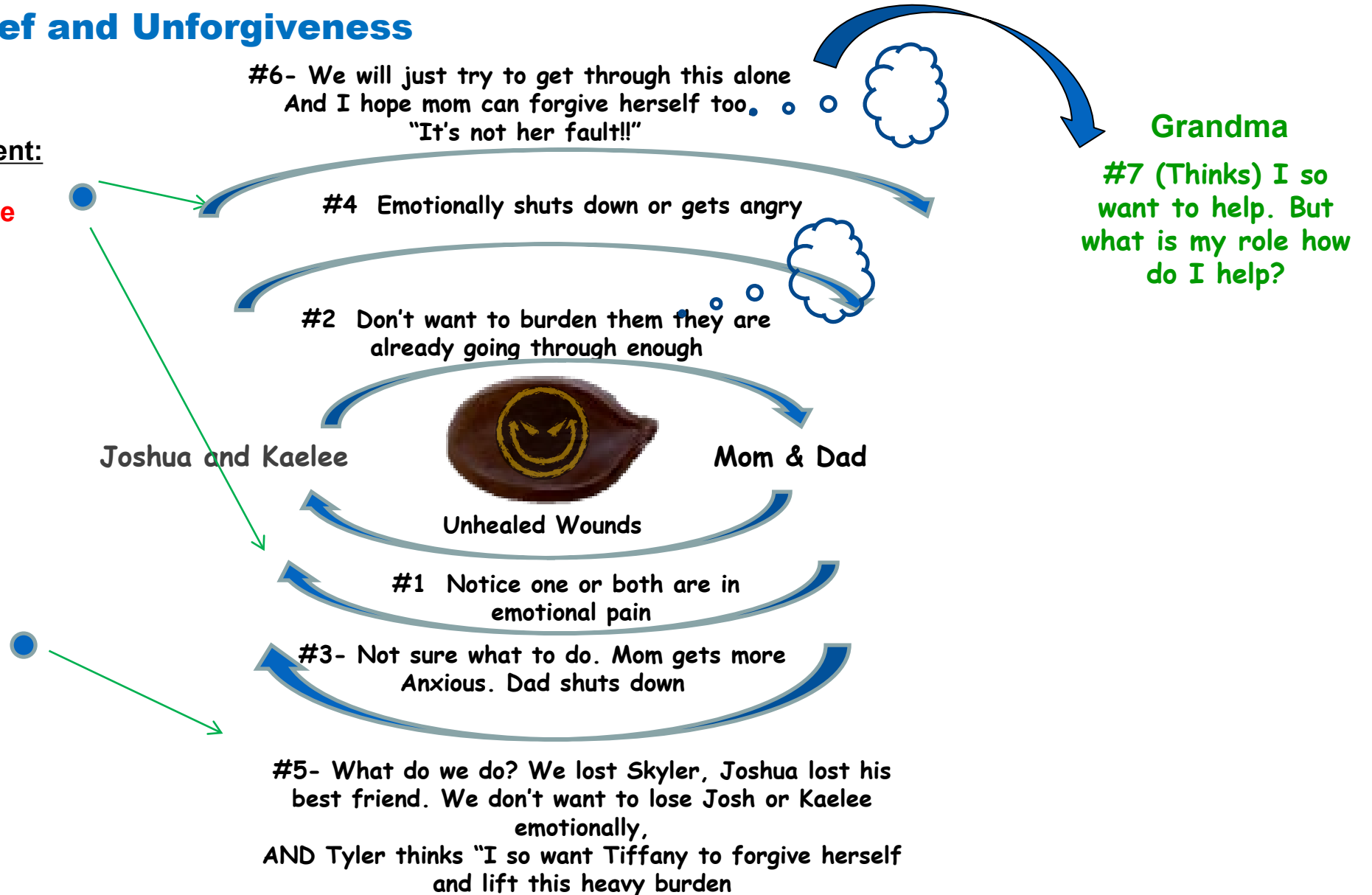
Problem: Unhealed Grief and Unforgiveness

Unhealthy Undercurrent:

Not sure how to grieve

Unhealthy Undercurrent:

Unforgiveness



Summarize My Finding into a Summary Table

FST Therapist's Undercurrent Picks Causing Client's Symptoms

"AFTER" FEEDBACK LOOP

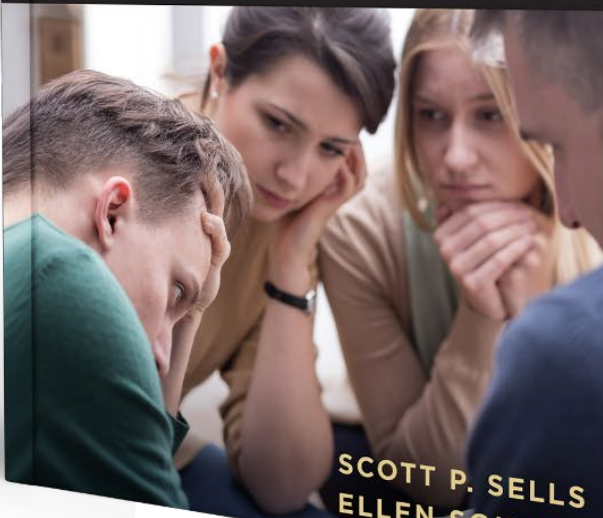
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TREATING THE TRAUMATIZED CHILD

A STEP-BY-STEP FAMILY SYSTEMS APPROACH



SCOTT P. SELLS
ELLEN SOUDER

RECOMMENDED TECHNIQUES TO HEAL THE UNHEALED WOUND SEED

TABLE 8.1 Sample Strategic Directives for Unhealed Wounds

Unhealthy Undercurrents	Healthy Undercurrents	Techniques to Inject Healthy Undercurrent
Unhealed grief and loss	Grief education and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Balloon Letters of Goodbye <input type="checkbox"/> Running the Race in Grandpa's Memory <input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbook of Memories <input type="checkbox"/> Opening to the Future/Reclaiming the Past <input type="checkbox"/> Healing the Family Land & Heart <input type="checkbox"/> Creating a Memorial
Betrayal or abandonment	Security, forgiveness, unconditional love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fostering a Pet <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening Family Connections <input type="checkbox"/> Helping Others to Heal our Family Heart <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Fresh Prince of Bel Air</i> clip
Family secrets	Reveal secrets/safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A message from the movie <i>Ordinary People</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Externalizing the Secret—the Garbage Bag <input type="checkbox"/> Love and Protection Watch <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult Conversations <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Frozen</i> movie clip
Physical or mental abuse	Support, courage to leave, forgive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Heart Transplant <input type="checkbox"/> The Nonviolence Pledge <input type="checkbox"/> The Empty Chair <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Matilda</i> movie clip

Our Family Playbook to Help Heal Our Wounds of Grief Intervention: Building a Memorial for Skyler

We want to always keep Skyler's memory with us. And we are not alone and together we are better and stronger. And with God's help we can help one another to heal our hurt.

Who: *List the names of everyone who is involved*

- Dad
- Mom
- Joshua and Kaelee
- Grandmother – Terri
- Who else?

What:

- Our Memorial for Skyler

When:

- TBD (To be Determined) or
- Date and Day of the Week
- Time or Times

Where:

- TBD (To be Determined) or
- Specific location (home, at grandparents' house, outside home, etc.)

How - Clarity of Everyone's Roles:

Details of everyone's role and what they will be doing.

- ✓ Dad - Description of what they will be doing
- ✓ Mom- Description of what they will be doing
- ✓ Joshua and Kaelee
- ✓ Grandmother
- ✓ Others who will help

THE AFTER: What Can Happen in Our Families Future

Healing Grief and Forgiveness

Healthy Undercurrent:

Learning how to grieve together



Healthy Undercurrent:

Forgiveness

#6- We don't have to emotionally shut down or be alone. We are healing as a family and as mom forgives herself the weight of the world is lifted

#4 Skyler and Joshua's best friend "Cheering you on- You can do this thank you!!" (from heaven)

#2 We are curious what is this all about •

Joshua and Kaelee

Mom & Dad

Unhealed Wounds

#1 Together let's honor both Skyler and Joshua's best friend

#3- Let's meet at the kitchen table and Brainstorm ways to honor Skyler

#5- Tiffany, this is helping me forgive myself. Tyler so proud of my wonderful wife!

Grandma

#7 (Thinks) This is so awesome. My burdens are starting to lift and I hope I can help too!



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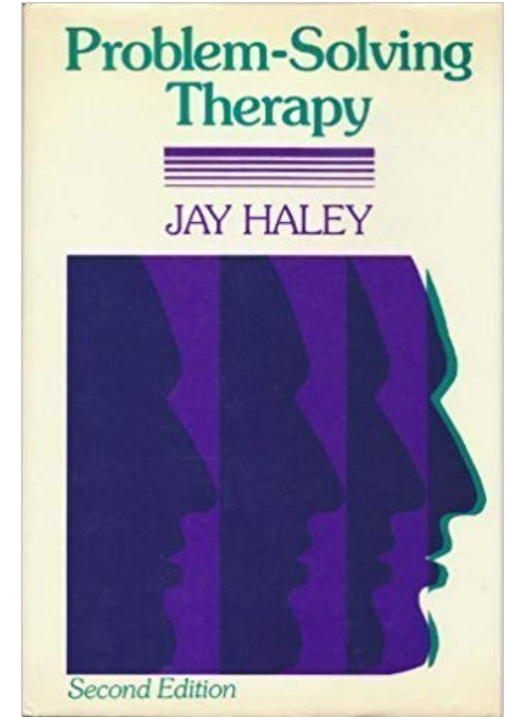
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- “Perturb” the system’s stuck interactions by injecting the missing healthy undercurrents
- When the directives (antibiotics) work, your clients will have a *simultaneous shift in emotions, insight, and behavior.*





A person is silhouetted against a night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. The galaxy's core is visible as a bright, colorful band of light, transitioning from yellow and orange at the bottom to purple and blue at the top. The person stands on a dark, silhouetted landscape, looking up at the vastness of the universe.

Using a FST| Family Systems Trauma Lens

Think Differently About Anxiety



#1- Why do Anxiety Disorders Travel in Families?



#2-How do Parents Overaccommodate? [psychoeducation]



#3-Undercurrents and FST Feedback Loops as a First Step [psychoeducation + application]



**Next Step
Go Deeper
In FST**

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FST Advanced
Training Course
Starts March 3rd





Learn 12 Techniques to Effectively Treat Traumatized Families

The FST Advanced Training is a self-paced course with step-by-step techniques for mental health professionals looking for the tools and confidence to treat the entire traumatized family. You will receive:

- Trauma resource downloads
- Coaching thru Weekly Office Hours
- More Confidence in Family Trauma
- Become a Family Trauma Specialist in Your Community
- Go from Trauma-Informed to Trauma-Responsive
- Get 12 CE Units from ASWB and NBCC

Enroll Now

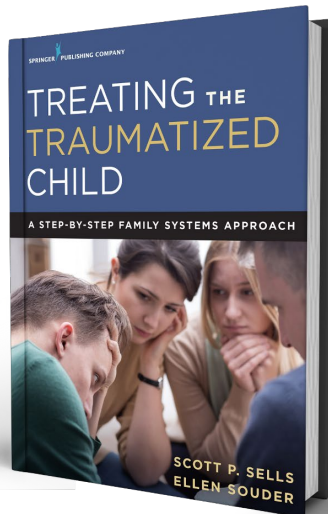


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What You Will Experience Inside the Course



What's Included



- ✓ **Live Weekly Coaching Session with Dr. Sells**
- ✓ **3 Video Lessons and Handouts for all 12 FST Techniques**
- ✓ **24/7 Access to the Course and Facebook**
- ✓ **Only 12 weeks to learn Family Trauma with confidence- clinician or a non-clinician**
- ✓ **After graduation eligible for FST Certification**
- ✓ **Course Book Included**

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**Lunch and
Learn**

**Learning
the Zen of
Parent
Resistance**

**The FST
Motivational
Technique**



Any Questions or Comments?

Open Mic