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# ***Mental Health & Wellbeing***

***WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ME?***

***DR HARRIET FRAMPTON – CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, PLATFFORM***

***CATHERINE SHEARER – PSYCHOLOGIST, SPORT WALES***

**PLATFFORM**

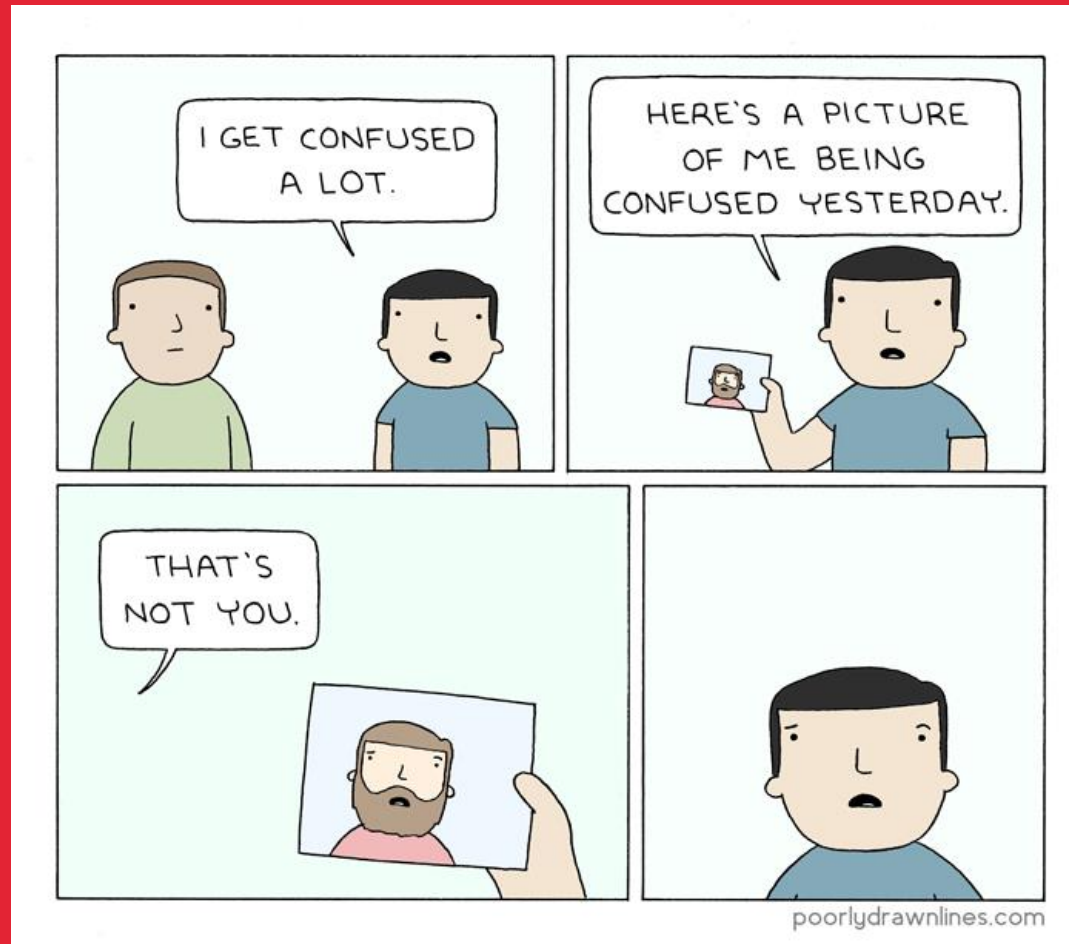
For mental health and social change  
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# Overview of the session

- *What is mental health & wellbeing – and what is it not?*
- *How do we understand distress?*
- *How can we support? The power of connections*
- *What does this mean for us in our own environments?*



# *What is mental health & wellbeing?*



# *Where have we come from?*

- **Barriers to how we are understanding Mental Health & Wellbeing**
  - *Our focus has been on finding “What’s wrong with people?” because we don’t understand.*
  - *We need to hide these people; lunatic asylums, oppressed from society*
  - *Development of classification systems (DSM, ICD) – we have seen the ‘removal’ of ‘illnesses’ such as homosexuality (1974)*
  - *The focus on chemical imbalances and genetics*
  - *Not been able to identify any ‘signs’ e.g. objective bodily characteristics which are reliably associated with these subjective complaints, and which might reasonably be thought to be causing them*

**WHERE DOES THIS FOCUS OUR ATTENTION FOR INTERVENTION?**



# UNITED NATIONS REPORT OF MENTAL HEALTH, 2017

"The urgent need for a shift in approach should prioritize policy innovation at the population level," he writes, "targeting social determinants and abandon the predominant medical model that seeks to cure individuals by targeting 'disorders.'"



*Dainius Pūras, a medical doctor with notable expertise on mental health and child's health serves as Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for the United Nations*

*"...We have been sold a myth that the best solutions for addressing mental health challenges are medications and other biomedical interventions."*

*"It's not about chemical imbalance but **POWER IMBALANCE**"*

## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

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#### MAIN FINDINGS

Certain population subgroups are at higher risk of mental disorders because of greater exposure and vulnerability to unfavourable social, economic, and environmental circumstances, interrelated with gender. Disadvantage starts before birth and accumulates throughout life. A significant body of work now exists that emphasizes the need for a life course approach to understanding and tackling mental and physical health inequalities. This approach takes into account the differential experience and impact of social determinants throughout life. A life course approach proposes actions to improve the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age.



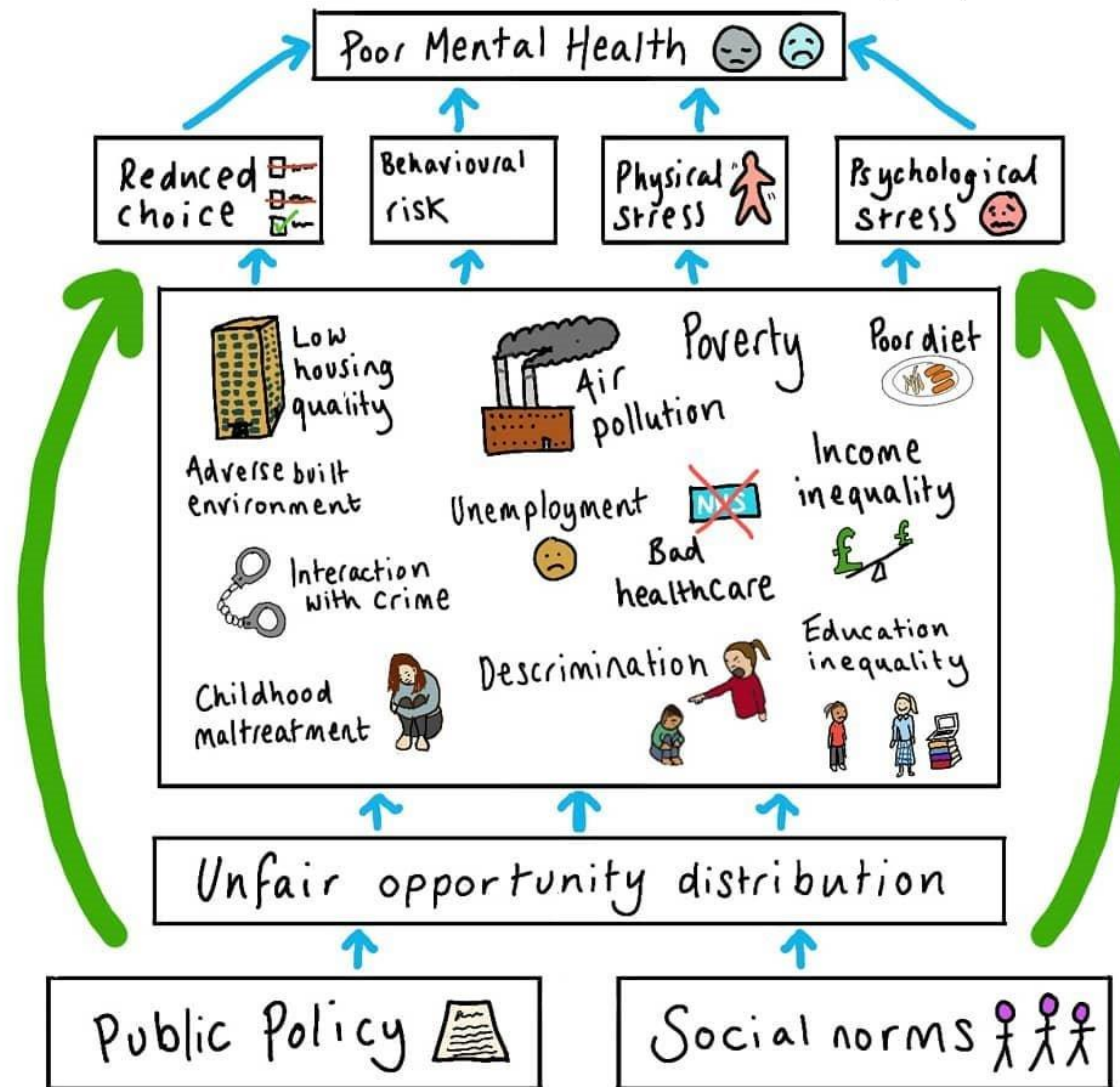
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# Social Determinants of Mental Health

(compton & Shim, 2019)



@creative.clinical.psychologist



*Our mental health is determined by the conditions in which we are born, grow, work, live, age along with the wider set of forces shaping the conditions of our daily lives.*

*It's not what's wrong with you*

*It's about **what's happened to you**,  
or didn't happen for you that should  
have...*





## Relational Health



Agency  
Security  
Connection  
Meaning  
Trust



Humiliation  
Shame Isolation  
Loneliness Fear  
Feeling Trapped  
Powerless



# *Where do we go from here?*

A new lens:

*recognising the importance of  
our environments/context in how  
we respond to the world*

We are in the position to make a  
difference



**Mental health is relational health**

# Why is sport important?



## Brandon Marshall interview: athletes struggle to identify with mental illness

The Jets receiver talks openly about his personality disorder but in the macho world of the NFL many players suffer in silence



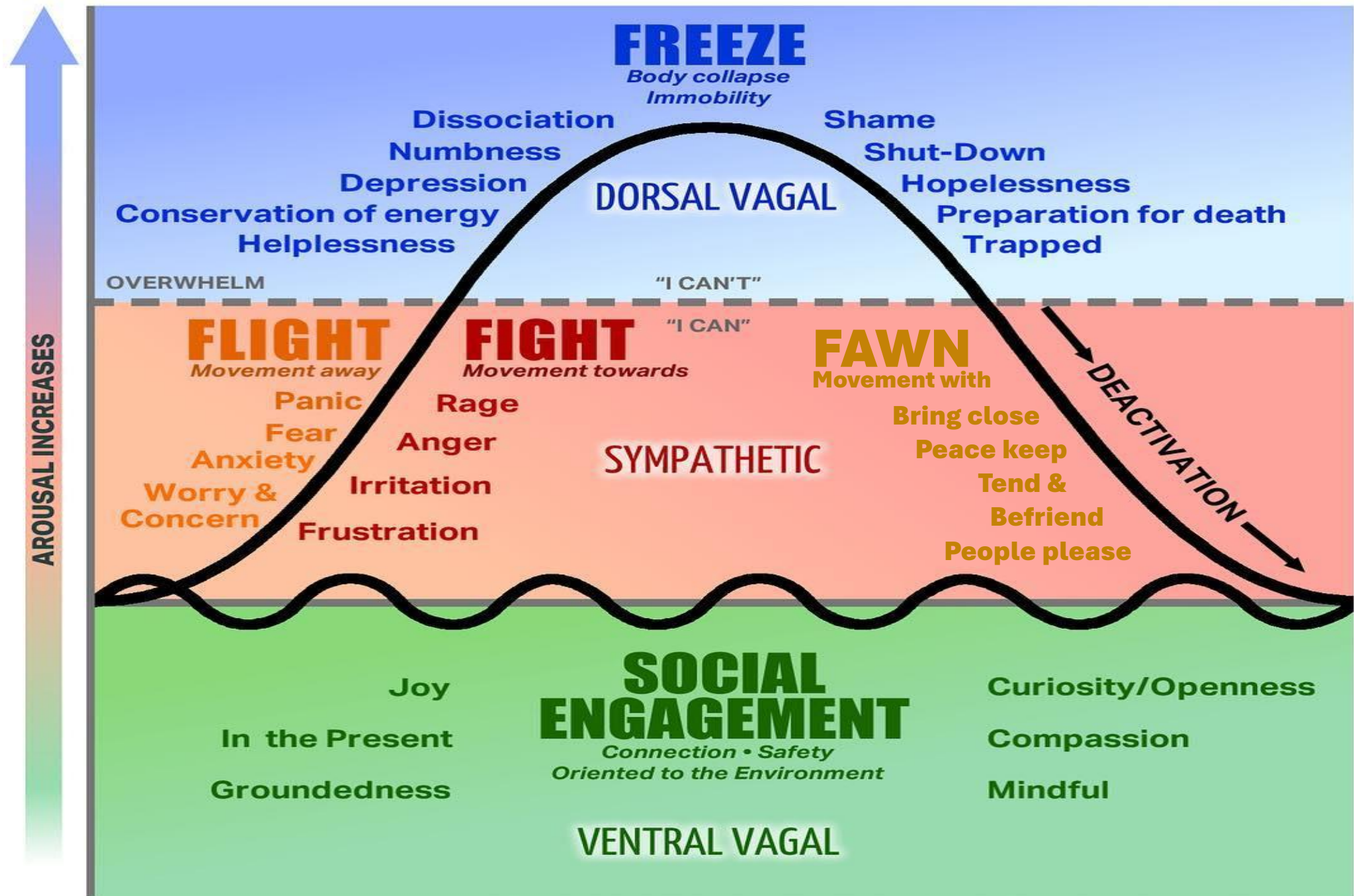
Brandon Marshall: 'If [coming forward] meant making myself vulnerable, and opening myself up for criticism, I was fine with that'. Photograph: Ed Mulholland/USA Today Sports

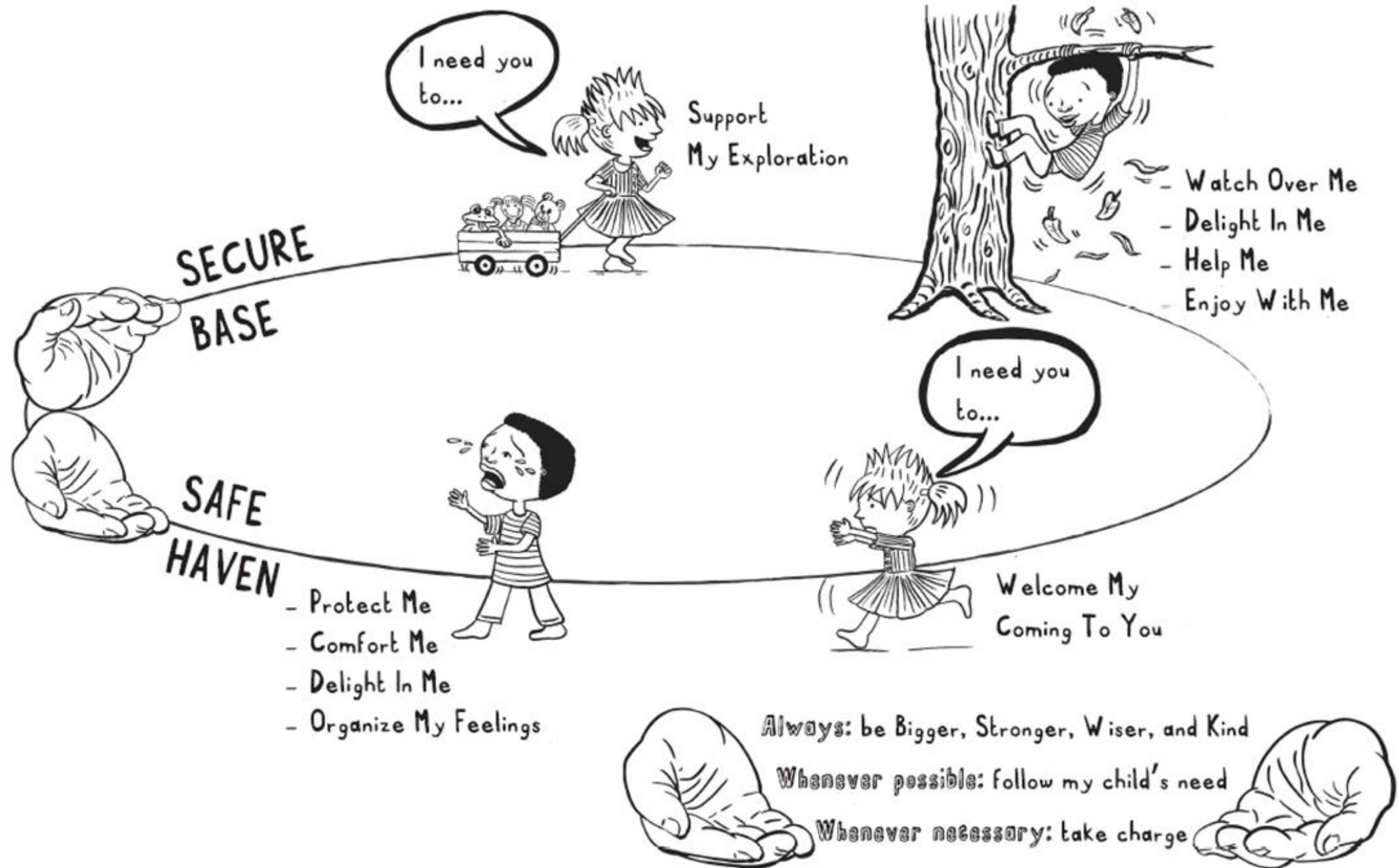
**Sport holds a powerful voice – can change norms**  
**Sport has the opportunity to influence our environment**

*What do we mean by mental health  
& wellbeing?*

Nervous system regulation +  
connection with the self,  
others + the world.









'you can only be as regulated as the people you interact with on a daily basis.' Dr. Stephen Porges



# *How can we help?*

*THE POWER OF CONNECTIONS – A RELATIONAL APPROACH*



# Sarina Wiegman

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Compassion can produce better performance – just look at the Lionesses

Cath Bishop



Mon 14 Aug 2023 19.00 BST

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Sarina Wiegman stood by Lauren James but how many elite athletes experience that depth of support in moments of crisis?



Sarina Wiegman shows compassion to her players, bringing the very best out of them when the stakes are highest. Photograph: Naomi Baker/The FA/Getty Images

If you want to see a high-performance team with compassion at its heart, there are regular 90-minute(-plus) masterclasses from the Lionesses free on UK screens at the moment. We've seen a few individual athletes start to role-model self-compassion publicly over recent times, ranging from Simone Biles to Ben Stokes. Now we are seeing the power of compassion in team performance.

Compassion has not been a traditional hallmark of sport. With its UK roots in 19th-century British public schools and universities, modern sport developed

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# *What does a trusted healthy relationship look like?*

- ✓ Predictability
- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Acceptance of the internal world of another
- ✓ Curiosity about them and their experience
- ✓ Empathy for how they may be feeling
- ✓ Repair when there are ruptures
- ✓ Support the meaning making of their experience- how do we understand together?

**"Hold on" rather than "refer on"**



# *How do we create environments that allow for connection so we can thrive?*

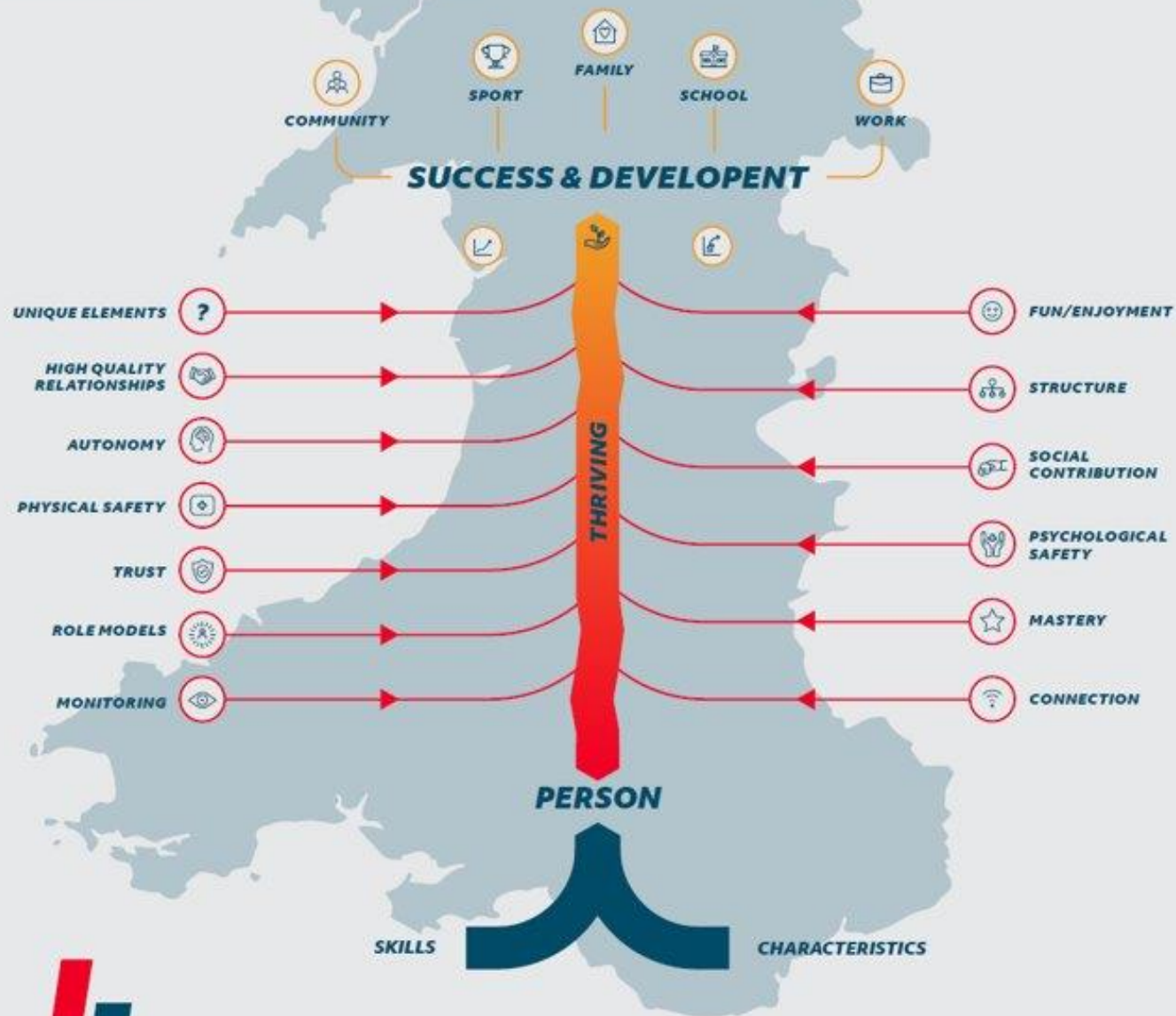
*“..... 70% OF BEHAVIOUR IS DETERMINED BY WHATEVER ENVIRONMENT YOU ARE IN.....OUR BEHAVIOUR AND MINDSET IS FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECTED BY WHATEVER ENVIRONMENT WE ARE IN.”*

*"TO NEGLECT THAT IS ABSOLUTELY CRAZY."*

*OWEN EASTWOOD AUTHOR OF 'BELONGING: THE ANCIENT CODE OF TOGETHERNESS'*

## ENABLING THRIVING ENVIRONMENTS

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# *What does this mean for us in our own environments?*

- *Discussions and interventions around mental health should be focused at a **relational level***
- *When talking about mental health our **focus needs to be on the environment, context and relationships** around an individual NOT on individual coping strategies*
- *Everything we have spoken about today **applies to you as well** – what do you need to remain within your window of tolerance and to be relational in your approach?*
- *If we are all intending to be relational in our interactions, we can impact each others experiences and make safeguarding issues much less likely to occur in the first place*



# *Safeguarding and mental health*

*You may need to refer to other services if someone is at risk of harming themselves or somebody else due to their mental health*

*This becomes a safeguarding need as priority*

*If you do not feel that you can keep someone safe, or others, then advise they go to A&E or call 999 if you're concerned*



***Thanks for having us! Any  
questions?***