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# MEETING THE ATTACHMENT NEEDS OF STAFF

(AND HOW THAT IMPACTS CLIENT  
CARE)

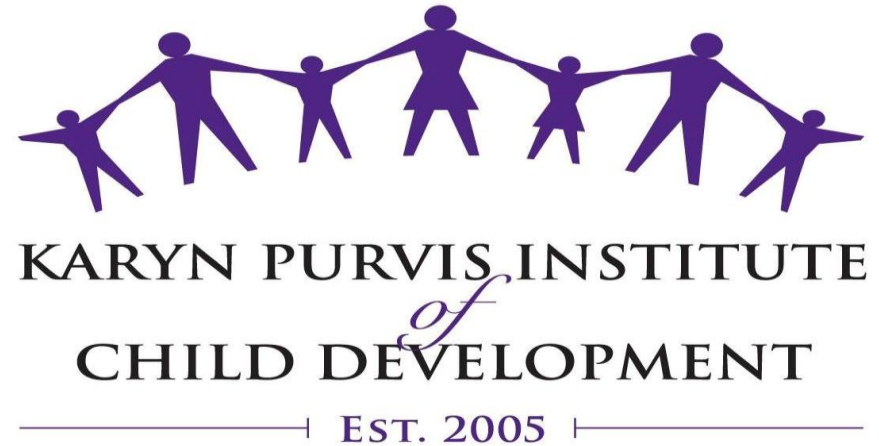
**Leah Gilliam, LCSW**

TBRI<sup>®</sup> Practitioner and Mentor

TCU/KPICD Adjunct Professor

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Some concepts in this resource are informed by or derived from an intervention called Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®), developed by TCU's Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (KPICD). For more information about TBRI® visit [child.tcu.edu](http://child.tcu.edu)



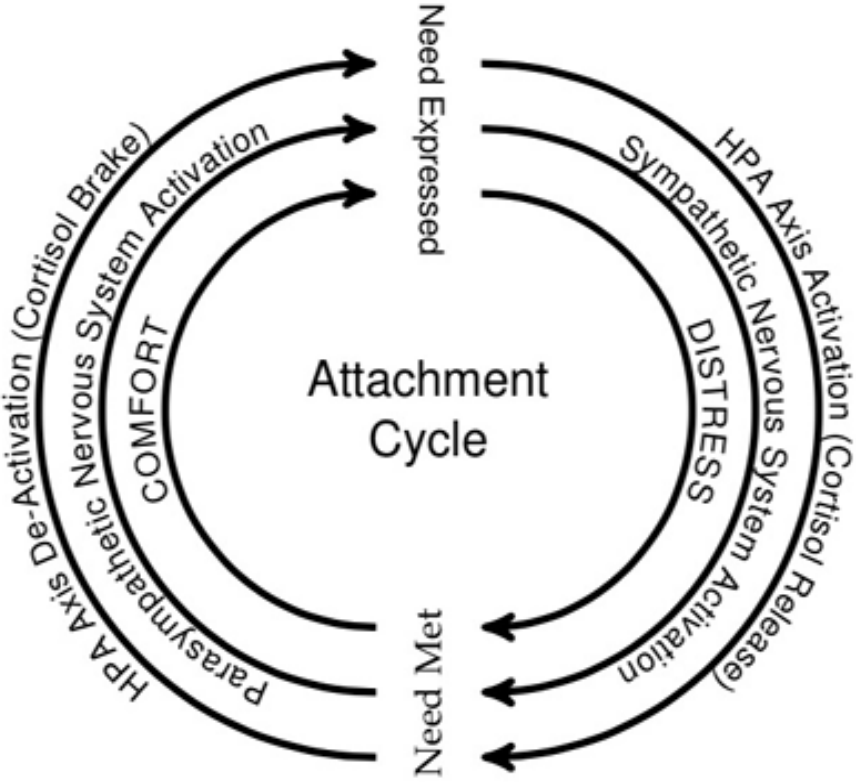
TBRI® is an evidence-based, attachment-rich, trauma-informed intervention designed to equip caregivers and professionals with the knowledge and skills to meet the complex needs of children who have experienced adversity, early harm, toxic stress, and/or trauma.

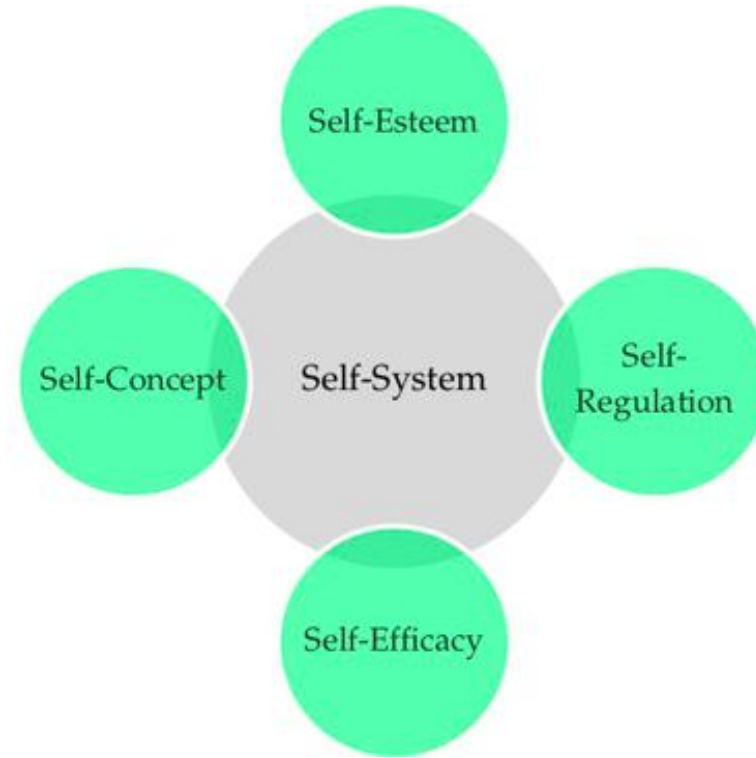
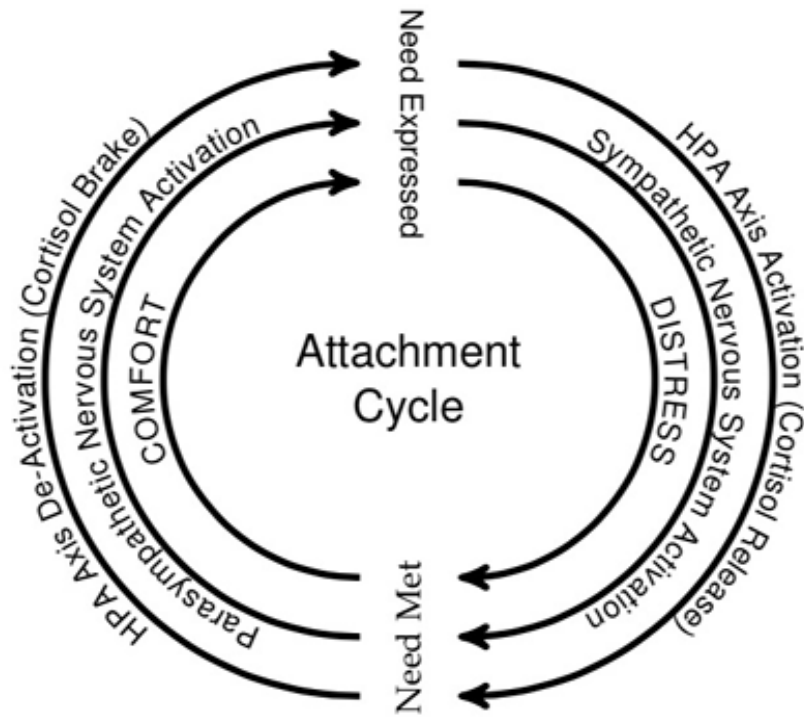


# WHERE WE STARTED

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# ATTACHMENT CYCLE






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# ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOR

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# NEEDS BEHIND ATTACHMENT STYLE: SECURE

## Stance in the Workplace

- Ability to give care, ability to receive care, can negotiate their needs and knows the autonomous self.

## Main Driving Behavior:

- No Fear – I have come home and found somebody looking for me. Focused on professional development and improvement

## Leading Secure Attachment

- Be straightforward, Share ownership, Use collaborative language

## Helpful

- Working collaboratively, Honor creativity

## Not Helpful

- Providing a power and control environment

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# NEEDS BEHIND ATTACHMENT STYLE: DISMISSIVE

Stance in the Workplace	Main Driving Behavior	Leading Dismissive Attachment	Helpful	Not Helpful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefers working alone, shows minimal emotional expression and focuses on task completion, engages in short responses, will resist meetings or collaboration and feel like it is a waste of time, gets confused and upset when others don't do their work, wants others to get "on-board"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need to protect autonomy and emotional space. ("looking for someone looking for me – let me be me")</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respect independence; Be concise; Don't force emotional disclosure or emotional conversations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written communication to keep things moving; Clear goals with outcomes; Low micromanagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over-checking on them or micromanaging; Personal probing into their lives and emotions; Assuming they can't do it; expressing doubt</li></ul>

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# NEEDS BEHIND ATTACHMENT STYLE: ENTANGLED/PRE OCCUPIED

- **Stance in the Workplace**
  - Desires frequent updates, reads tone and emotion carefully, may over-apologize or show more emotion than others, sensitive if co-workers are slow to respond, variety of strategies to get needs met so feels unpredictable
- **Main Driving Behavior**
  - Fear of rejection or failure (“looking for someone looking for me”)
- **Leading Entangled/Preoccupied Attachment**
  - Give clear expectations; Acknowledge contributions; Avoid ambiguity
- **Helpful**
  - “You’re on the right track.”; “I’ll review this by Thursday.”; “You are doing great.”
- **Not Helpful**
  - Slow to respond or not responding; Feedback that does not give reassurance or vague feedback

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# NEEDS BEHIND ATTACHMENT STYLE: UNRESOLVED

- **Stance in the Workplace**
  - Alternates between engagement and withdrawal, strong emotional reactions under stress, confusing communication patterns, variety of unhealthy behaviors to get needs met
- **Main Driving Behavior**
  - Desire for connection coupled with a deep fear of it (“looking for someone looking for me – afraid of finding someone looking for me)
- **Leading Unresolved Attachment**
  - Be predictable; Stay calm and consistent; Clarify expectations frequently
- **Helpful**
  - Giving clarity to feel secure; Giving space to regulate; Structured and calm tone
- **Not Helpful**
  - Seeing them as needy; Seeing them as disengaged; Getting upset with them

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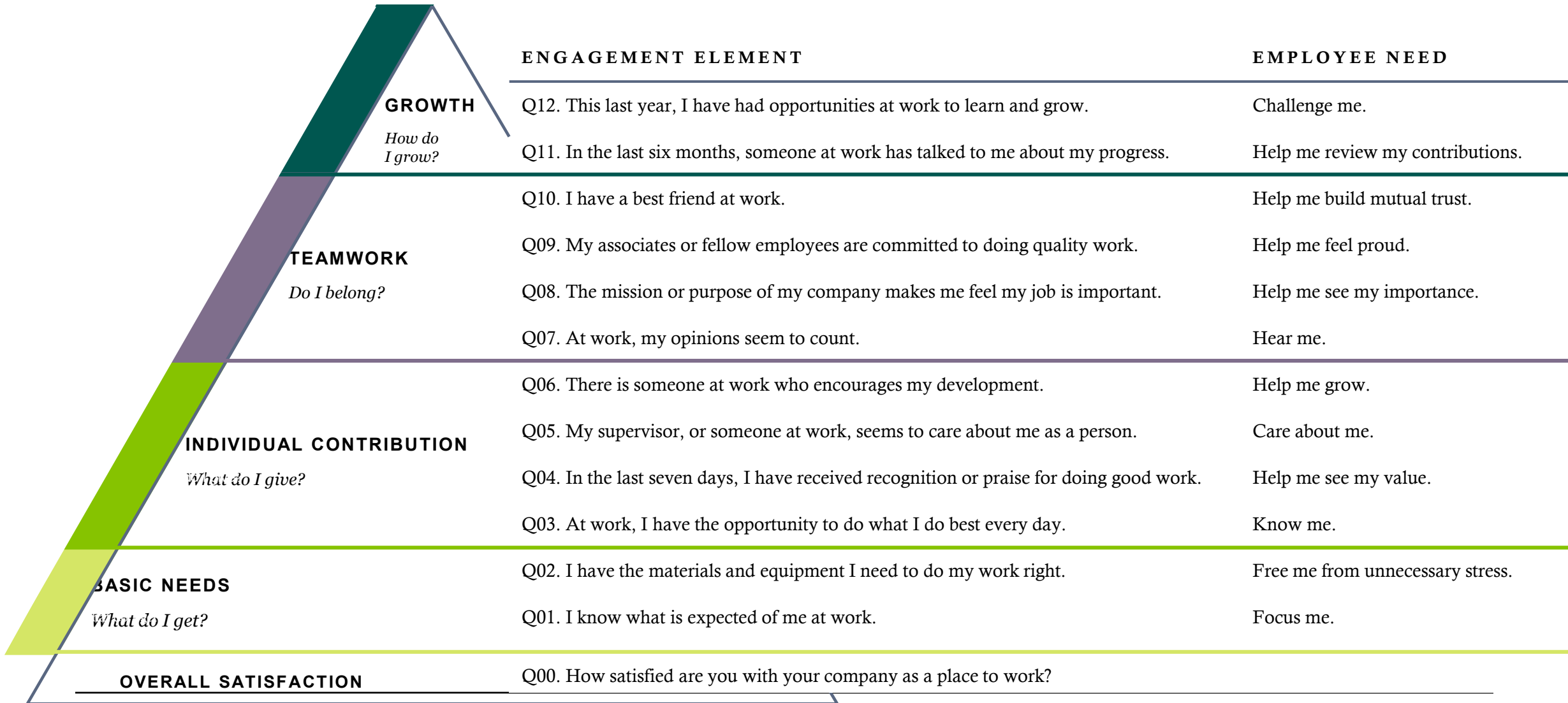
# GALLUP®

CLIFTONSTRENGTHS®



BOSS <sup>to</sup> >>> Coach

# THE ITEMS THAT MATTER FOR ENGAGEMENT — GALLUP'S Q<sup>12</sup>®



Meeting the Attachment Needs of Staff | Leah Gilliam, LCSW

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# THE THREE PILLARS OF TRAUMA WISE PRACTICE



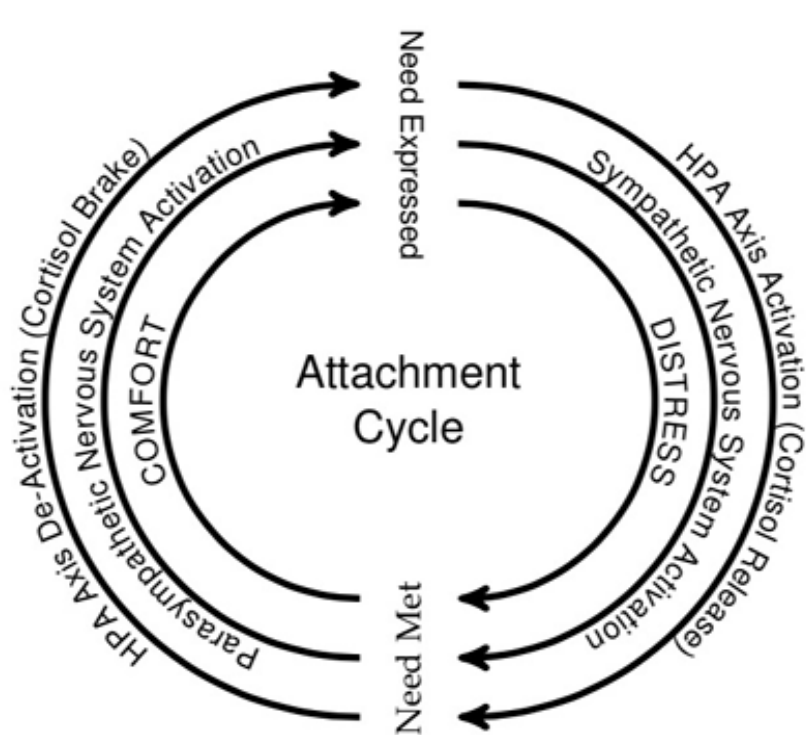
*Clear*  
*is* UNCLEAR  
IS UNKIND.  
*kind.*

~ Brené Brown



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# PILLAR DISCUSSION



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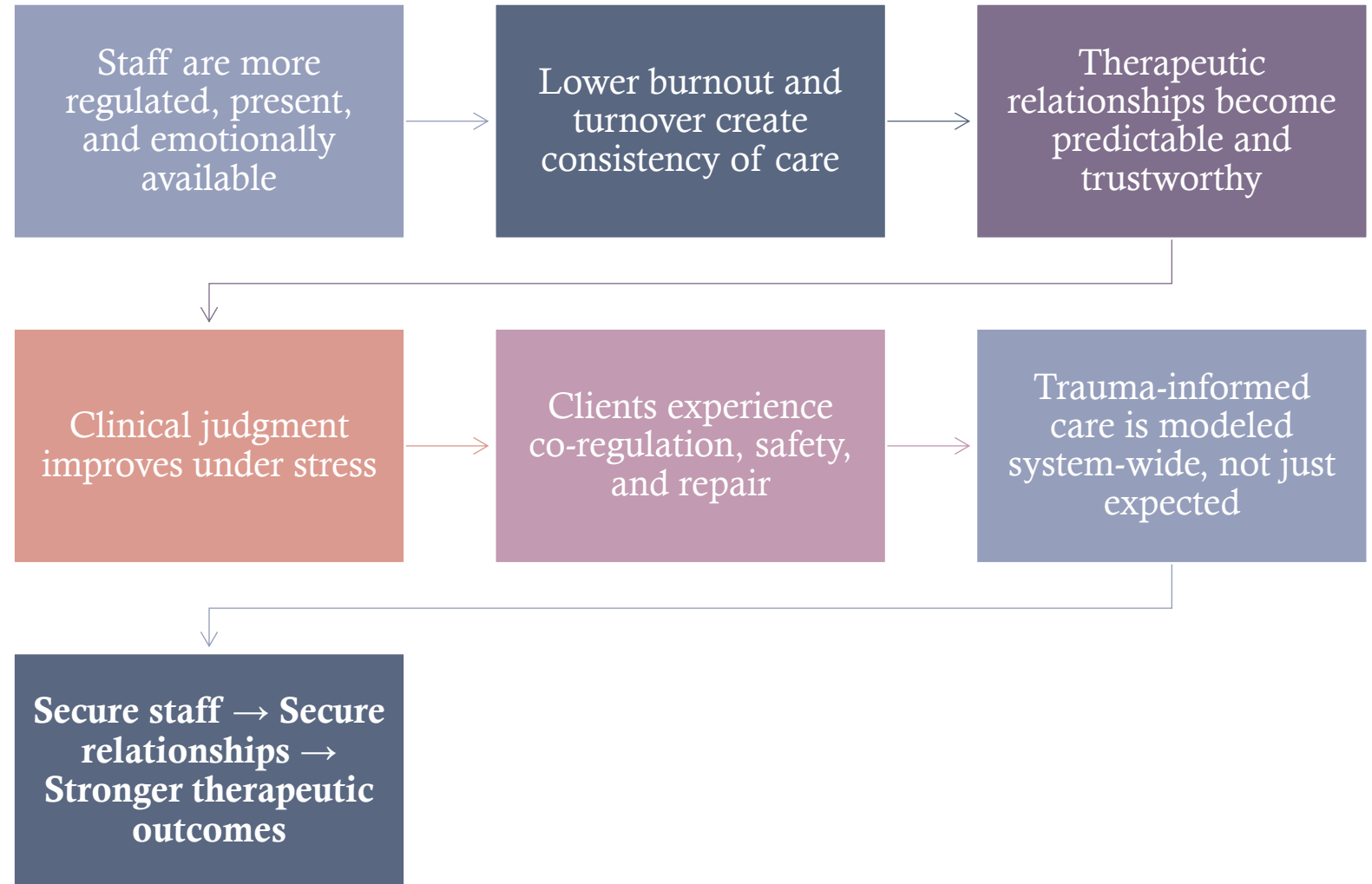
# PILLAR DISCUSSION



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# PILLAR DISCUSSION

# WHY MEETING STAFF ATTACHMENT NEEDS IMPROVES THERAPEUTIC CARE



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# PILLAR OF FELT-SAFETY

Clear expectations, roles, and processes

Predictable leadership and supervision

Consistent responses that reduce unnecessary stress

Systems that create fairness and reliability

**Safety and structure free staff to focus on therapeutic presence**

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# PILLAR OF CONNECTION

Leaders practice listening, empathy, and responsiveness

Repair is prioritized after conflict or rupture

Staff feel seen, supported, and valued

Relationships are the foundation—not the reward

**Regulated,  
connected staff  
offer regulated,  
connected care**

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# PILLAR OF REGULATION

Staff voice, choice, and strengths are honored

Feedback supports learning rather than shame

Growth opportunities are accessible and encouraged

Autonomy exists within relational support

**Empowered staff sustain healing and therapeutic excellence**

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# TBRI® & THE THREE PILLARS: MEETING ATTACHMENT NEEDS

Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) and the Three Pillars of Trauma-Wise Practice are grounded in attachment theory and emphasize safety, connection, and empowerment as essential conditions for healing and effectiveness.

When these principles are applied within organizations, staff experience the workplace as a secure base—allowing them to remain regulated, reflective, and emotionally available.

The Three Pillars translate attachment principles into practice:

- Structure & Safety provide predictability and consistency

- Connection & Attunement foster trust, responsiveness, and repair

- Empowerment & Growth honor voice, strengths, and autonomy

By meeting the attachment needs of staff, organizations strengthen the capacity of staff to meet the attachment needs of clients—resulting in stronger therapeutic relationships and more sustainable trauma-responsive care.

# Q&A

Meeting the Attachment  
Needs of Staff | Leah  
Gilliam, LCSW