

THE ABYSS: ADDICTION, HOMELESSNESS, & TRAUMA

**“The question is never ‘Why the addiction?’
but ‘Why the pain?’” - Dr. Gabor Mate**

Matt Bennett, MBA, MA
Coldspring Center for Social & Health Innovation
coldspringcenter.org

bennett@coldspringcenter.org
coldspringcenter.org/mattsmumblings
facebook.com/coldspringcenter
twitter.com/Matts_mumblings



GOALS!

1. Understand the impact of trauma & neurobiology research on our understanding of homelessness
2. Utilize knowledge to address the biopsychosocial needs of those experiencing homelessness
3. Use expertise to address societal issues responsible for the homeless crisis

THE SERIES

1. Being Trauma Informed and Its Role in Ending Homelessness – www.nhchc.org
2. Trauma is the Public Health Issue of Our Time - www.nhchc.org
3. The Abyss: Addiction, Homelessness, and Trauma – [Today](#)
4. Hope, Transformation, and Post-Traumatic Growth – [November 2](#)

THE ABYSS: ADDICTION, HOMELESSNESS, & TRAUMA

- State the relationship between trauma and addiction
- Utilize models to help patients and staff understand the addiction cycle
- Be able to explain the science behind addiction

60 Presentation/30 Minute Questions

THE ABYSS: ADDICTION, HOMELESSNESS, & TRAUMA

**“The question is never ‘Why the addiction?’
but ‘Why the pain?’” - Dr. Gabor Mate**

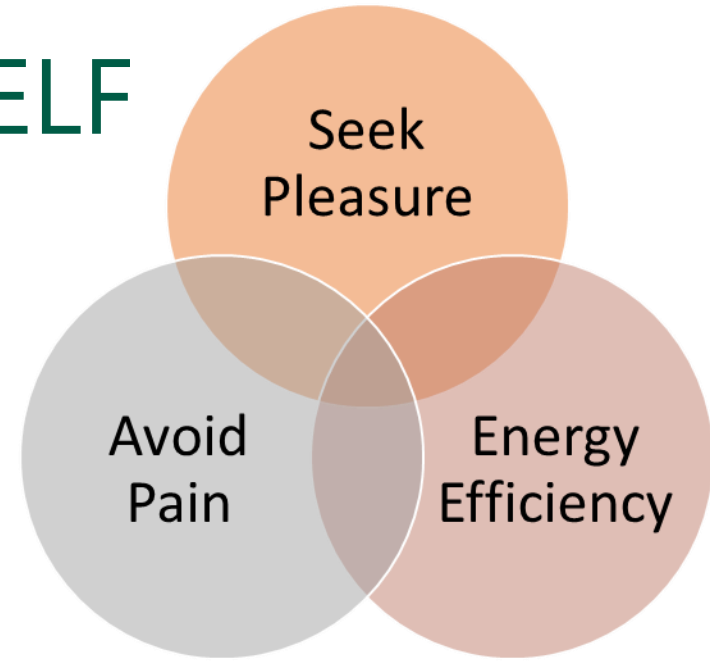
THE IMPACT OF STRESS & TRAUMA

- Attachment to Pain and Suffering
- Disconnection from self, others, and spirit
- “Invisible movement of the soul” – Phil Cousineau
 - Self
 - Relationships
 - World

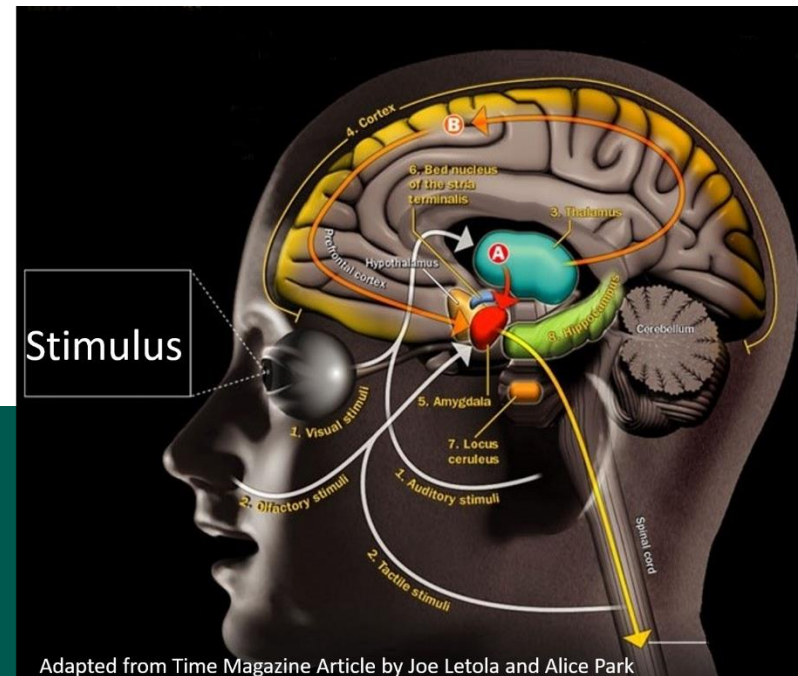


STORY OF SELF

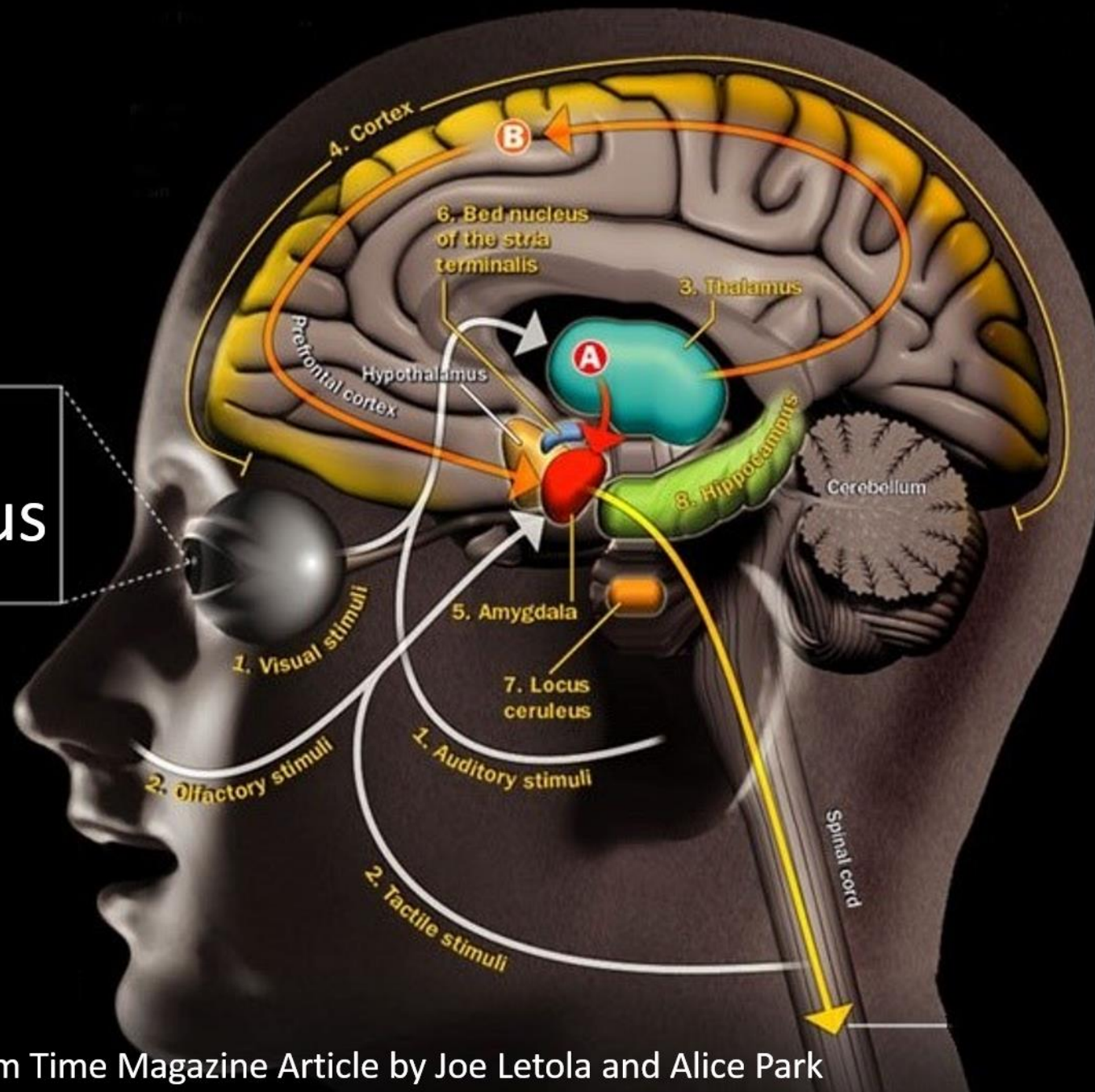
- Unworthy and shame
- Loss of autonomy



Lisle & Goldhammer, 2006



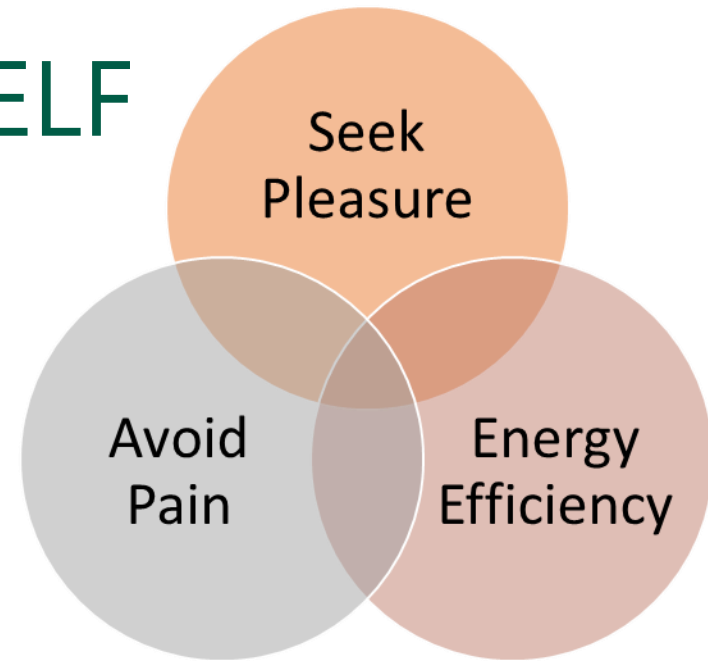
Stimulus



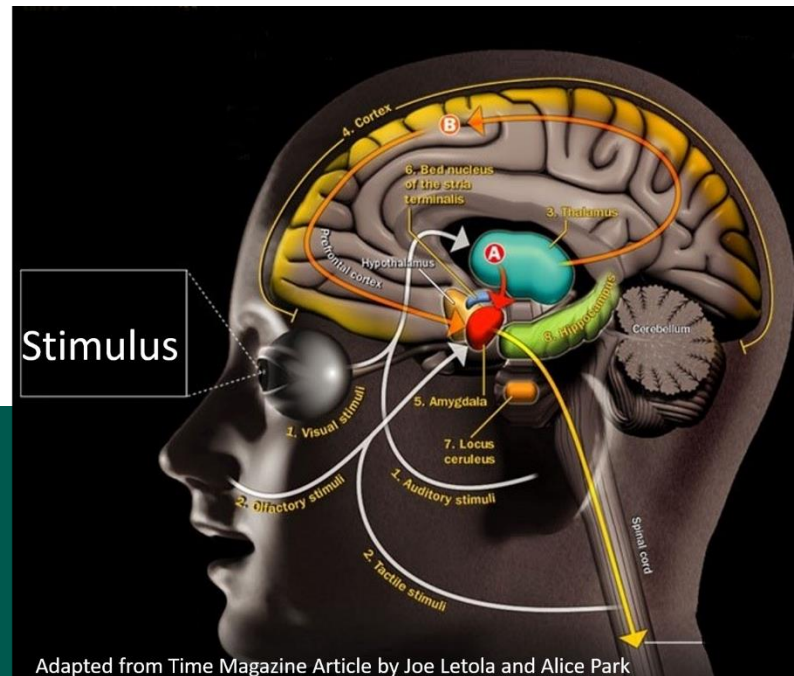
Adapted from Time Magazine Article by Joe Letola and Alice Park

STORY OF SELF

- Unworthy and shame
- Loss of autonomy
- Unsafe



Lisle & Goldhammer, 2006



Adapted from Time Magazine Article by Joe Letola and Alice Park

RELATIONSHIPS

- Relational templates: Generalization of traumatic relationships
- Survival



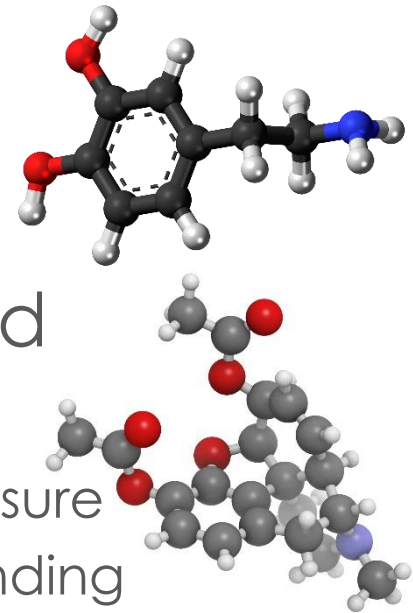
“The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others.” – Herman

WORLD: THE ABYSS

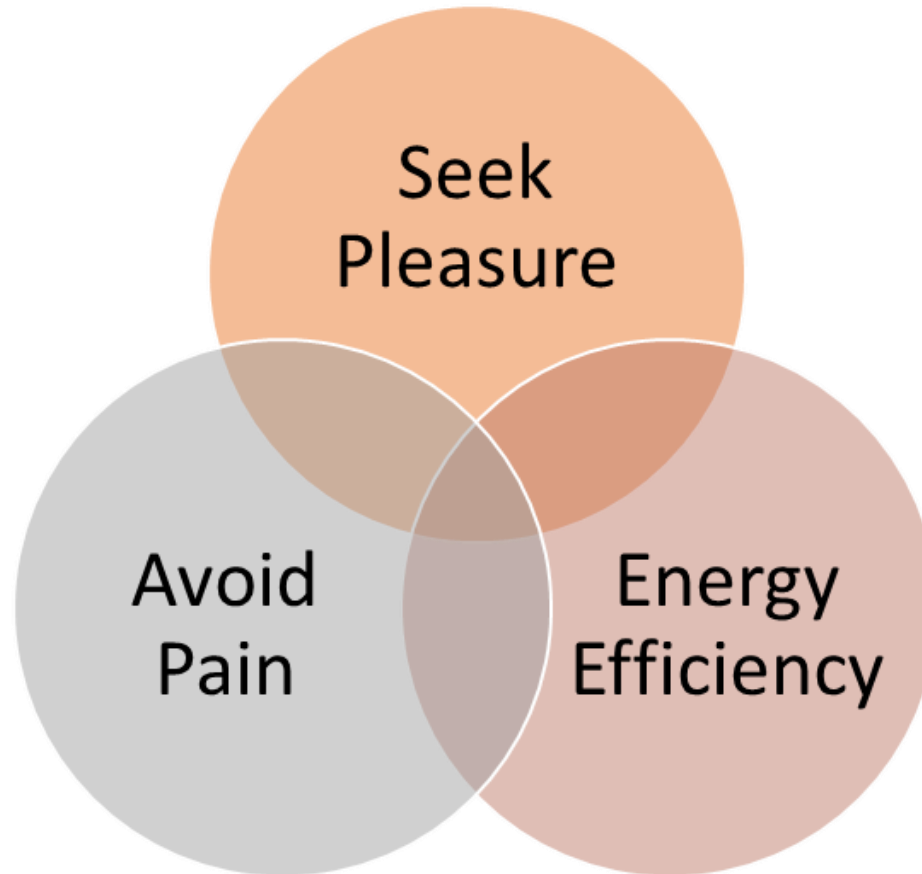
- The region of hell conceived of as a bottomless pit
- Spiritual & emotional death
- A wide or profound difference between people

BIOLOGICAL IMPACT: FOUNDATIONS OF ADDICTION

- Increased experience of physical/psychological pain
- Decrease in open of dopamine and endorphin receptors
 - Dopamine – Feeling of contentment and pleasure
 - Endorphins – Decreases pain and impacts bonding



TRIAD AND ADDICTION



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

GETTING
DRUNK &
HIGH

VS

THERAPY
MINDFULNESS
MEDICAL
EXAMINATIONS
MEETINGS
RULES
EXPECTATIONS

TRAUMA: AVOID PAIN/SEEK PLEASURE

- Self-Medicating - Attempt to relieve emotional and physical pain and experience some pleasure
- Manhattan residents surveyed 5-8 weeks after attacks:
 - 30% overall increase of substance use
 - 25% increase in alcohol intake
 - 20% reported at least one additional drink per day
 - 10% increase in tobacco use
 - A dramatic increase in sales of alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs
- Drugs increase the severity of trauma symptoms

FIND YOUR BEACH

3 FACTORS OF ADDICTION

- Susceptible organism
- A drug/behavior with addictive potential
- Stress
 - 20% of vets returning from Vietnam met the criteria for addiction while in Vietnam
 - 1% remained addicted once returning home
 - 95% remission rate

FALLING INTO ADDICTION

- Pre-use: Brain establishes a baseline to a certain dopamine/endorphin level
- Repeated use: When flooded with dopamine/endorphin from drug use, brain re-establishes baseline by reducing number of receptors
- Withdrawal: Diminished number of receptors no longer generate baseline without drugs. Results in irritability, depressed mood, alienation, and extreme fatigue
- Tolerance: Decreased receptors requires more drugs to reach baseline
- Addiction cycle: More use leads to increased loss of receptors; the fewer receptors, the more drug needed to make up for the lack of receptors....and so on and so on

IMPACT ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Brain's white matter (fatty white tissue making synaptic connections more efficient) increases with age and experience
 - Addiction limits or stops the formation of age-related white matter, resulting in:
 - Diminished ability to make new choices
 - Decreases in ability to learn
 - Difficulty adapting to change in circumstances
- Grey matter (bodies of brain cells) in the cerebral cortex and pre-frontal cortex decreases in correlation to years of use

“The question is never
‘Why the addiction?’
but ‘Why the pain?’”
- Dr. Gabor Mate

ONLY HALF OF THE STORY!!!



HOPE, TRANSFORMATION, AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

NOVEMBER 2ND 3PM EST

- Utilize the drivers of successful outcomes to build relationships and establish hope
- Be able to explain the science behind neuroplasticity and transformation
- Identify key components of services that promote post-traumatic growth

Matt Bennett, MBA, MA
Coldspring Center for Social & Health Innovation
coldspringcenter.org

bennett@coldspringcenter.org
coldspringcenter.org/mattsmumblings
facebook.com/coldspringcenter
twitter.com/Matts_mumblings

