

The Family Room **Live!**



Facing Crisis in Israel: Talking with Our Grandchildren about Difficult Times



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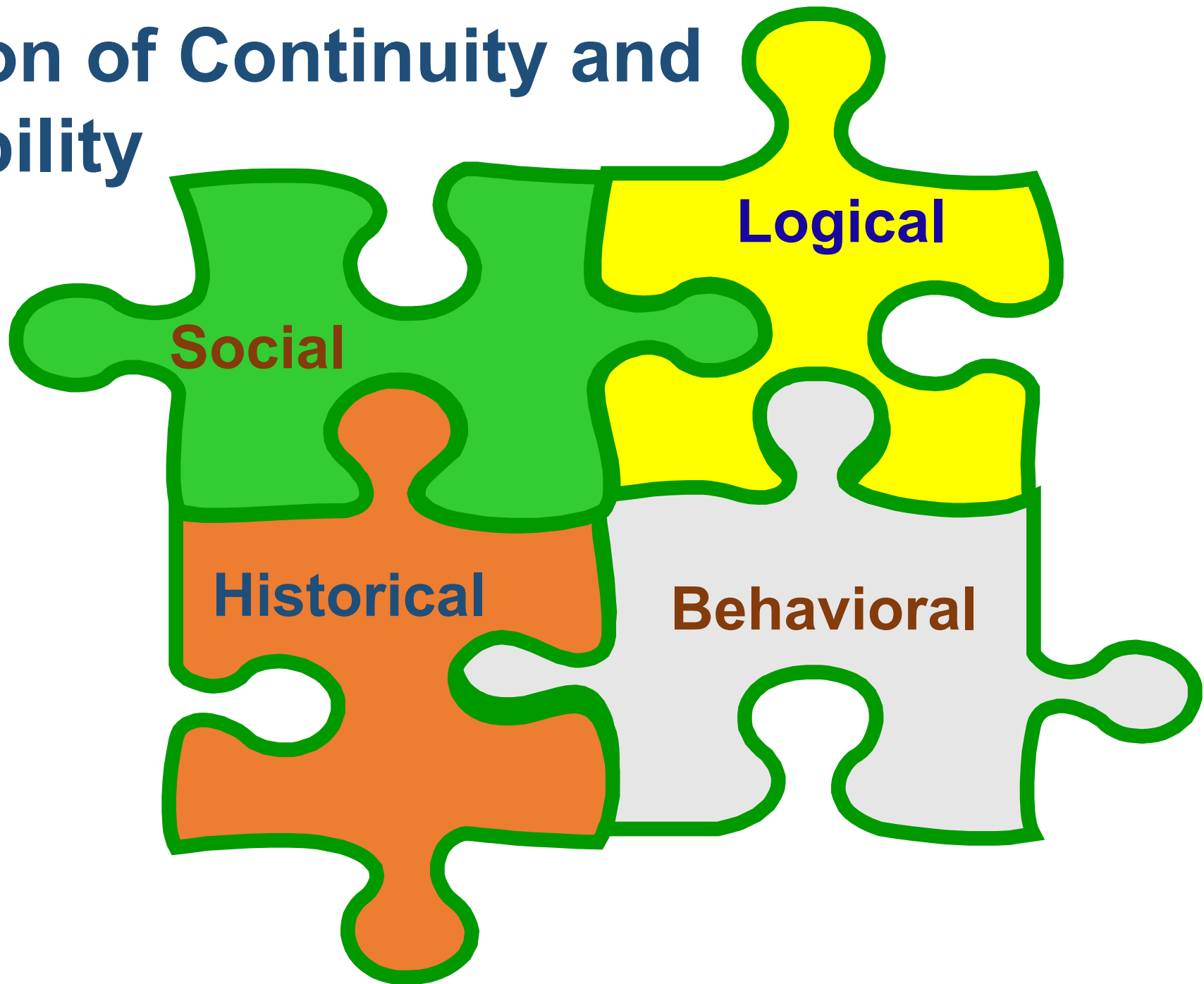
Experiencing Crisis

Crisis - Definition

- An overwhelming, external dramatic and sudden event that threatens one's sense of stability and ability to cope.
- Crisis can be caused by physical threats and by threats to one's vital interests.
- The threats and associated responses can result from direct experiences of perceived harm or danger, or indirect exposure to events.
- In a time of crisis one may experience
 - Anxiety and stress reactions
 - Physical danger
 - Difficulties in coping
 - Feelings of helplessness



Disruption of Continuity and Predictability



Stress Responses we all experience

Fight – Flight- Freeze



Freeze



Flight



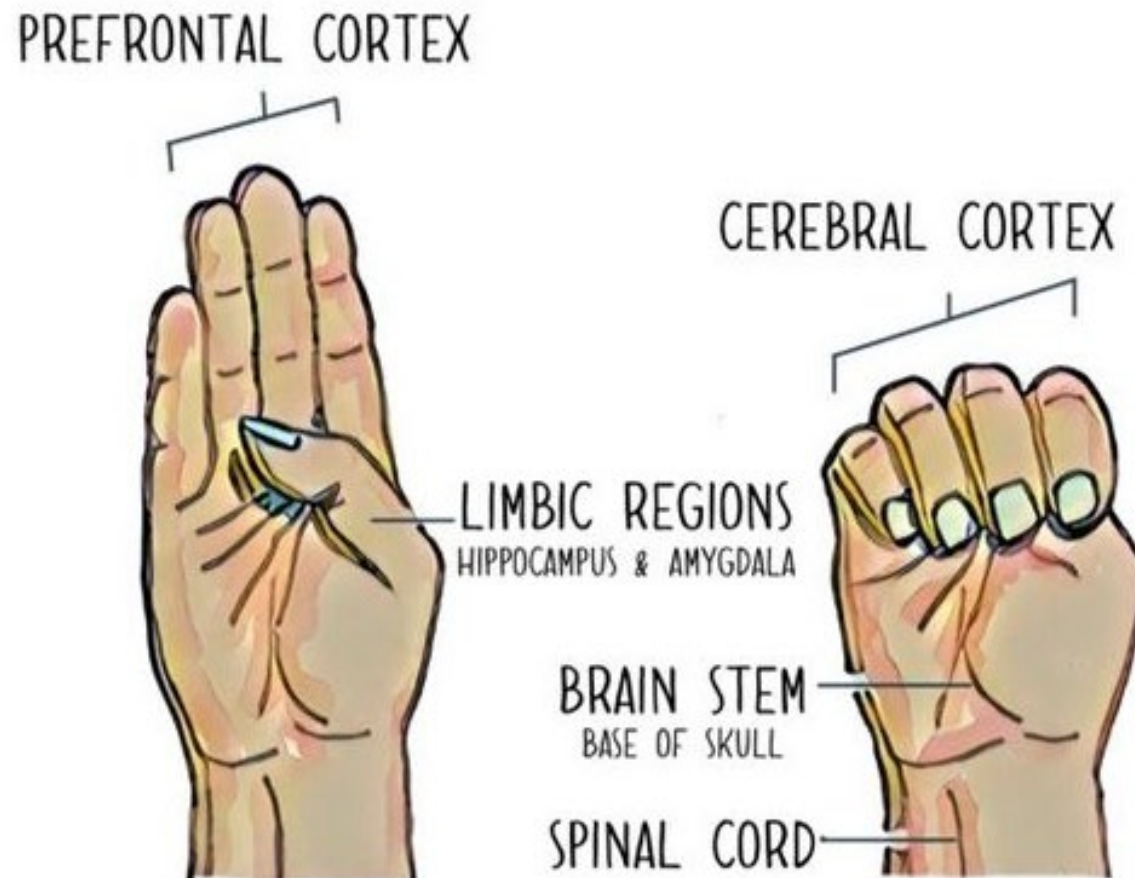
Fight



Effective
Coping

Acute Stress Responses – Normal behavior in Abnormal Situations!

Children's experiences of crisis



D. Siegel, 2010

How can we/should we talk with our grandchildren about what's happening here?

Step 1:

Self awareness and monitoring our own crisis response.

Children use sensitive antennae to read emotional responses



Caring for our selves and our grandchildren

Normalize

- Acceptance of responses as normal in abnormal circumstances. Each has different styles of reacting.

Validate

- Acknowledge feelings and thoughts (Anger, fear, confusion)

Hope

- Provide experiences of belonging, hope. Look ahead, emphasize doing and positive thoughts.

Piglet's response to Pooh when he's scared

"I'm just so scared," blurted out Pooh.

Piglet was thoughtful and listened. "I hear you, Pooh. And I'm here."

"But... aren't you going to tell me not to be so silly?"

"I can't change the world," continued Piglet. "And I am not going to patronise you with platitudes about how everything will be okay, because I don't know that."

"What I can do, though, Pooh, is that I can make sure that you know that I am here. I will always be here, to listen; and to support you; and for you to know that you are heard."



Listening and Talking



Listening:

- Ask Questions to try to understand what your grandchildren know and how they understand the situation.
- Suspend judgement, especially when older ones express opinions and ideas. Ask about personal views, not generalizations.
- Listen to the little ones by observing their play and behavior.

Talking **WITH** them:

- Share ideas that are different with honesty [Plant them] but without trying to debate and win them over (especially with teens).
- Acknowledge and empathize with their feelings and concerns.

Importance of **Activities** with our Grandchildren

- Have a conversation with little ones using puppets, dolls, while playing.
- With the older ones – find activities the grandchildren enjoy that you can do together and converse while engaged. Building things, baking, going out.
- Drawing and creative activities.
- When you and your grandchildren are upset – use stress relief exercise to encourage resilience.
 - Breathing and meditation exercises that are fun
 - Distraction and avoidance of difficult scenes on media
 - Encourage logical descriptions of frightening situations children experienced.
 - Talk about strengths – what helps you cope and what helps them? Use of Mantras – Am Yisrael Chai!
 - **HUGGING AND STAYING CLOSE**

Thank you