

I'm a trauma therapist and I'm gonna tell you

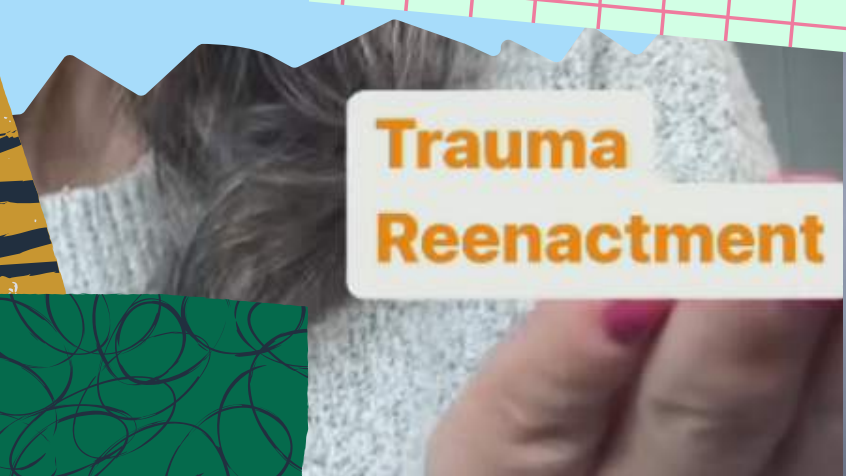
it took me a long time to understand this concept

# TRAUMA PSEUDOSCIENCE & SOCIAL MEDIA

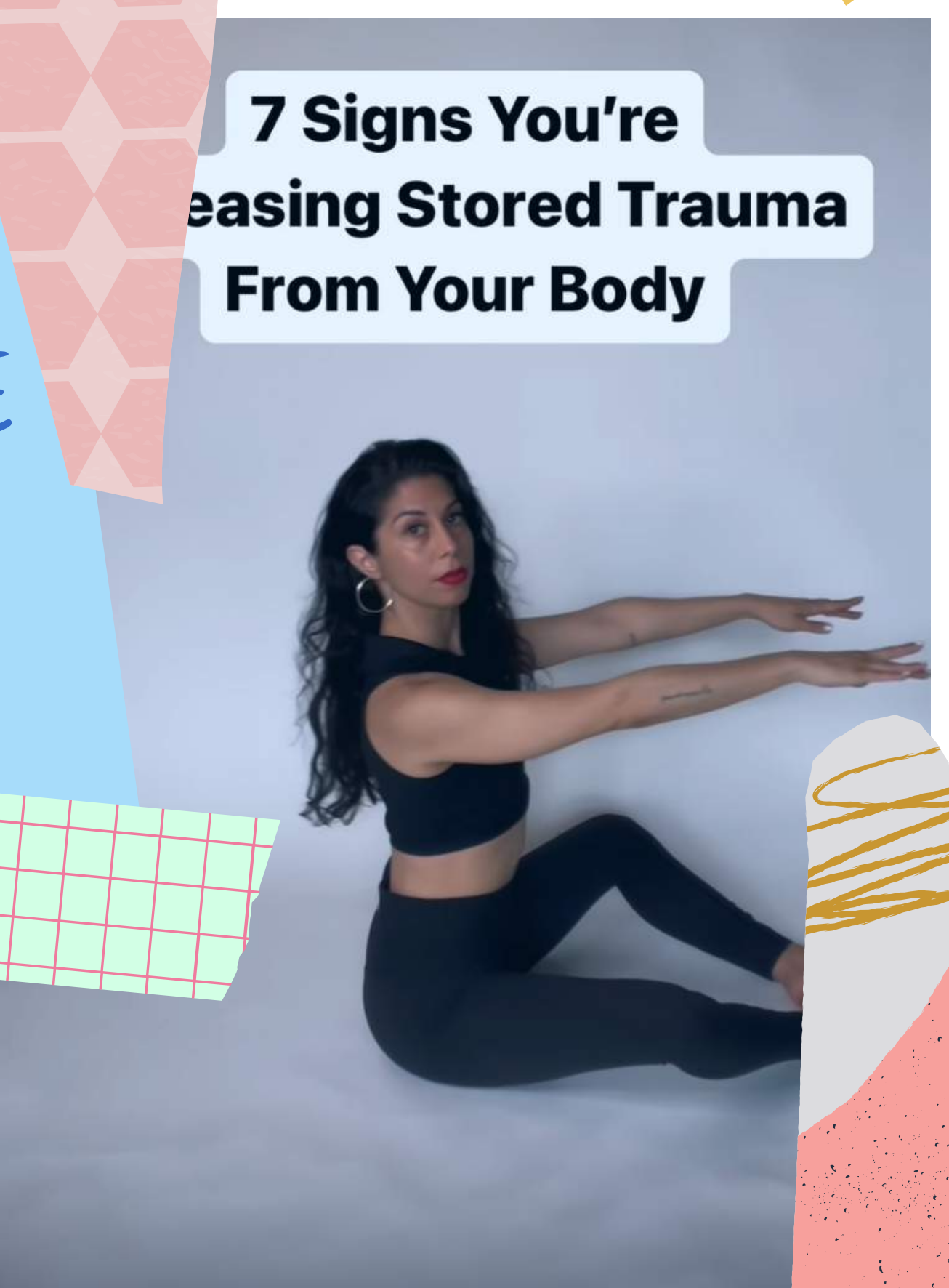
**7 Signs You're  
Releasing Stored Trauma  
From Your Body**



Overexplaining is a trauma response



**Trauma  
Reenactment**



A collage of images and text related to trauma, pseudoscience, and social media. It includes a man's face, a woman's face, a woman in athletic wear, and various text overlays. The central text reads 'TRAUMA PSEUDOSCIENCE & SOCIAL MEDIA'. Other text includes 'I'm a trauma therapist and I'm gonna tell you', 'it took me a long time to understand this concept', '7 Signs You're Releasing Stored Trauma From Your Body', 'Overexplaining is a trauma response', and 'Trauma Reenactment'. The collage is decorated with colorful geometric shapes and patterns.



# WHO AM I?

Carrie Poppy

Independent journalist  
Cohost, "Oh No, Ross and Carrie"

Writing a book about trauma

- Over 1,000 original documents
- Hundreds of scientific studies
- Dozens of trauma-informed events
- Undercover trauma therapy from three therapists
- Original research going back to late 1800s

# PSEUDOSCIENCE

"A system of theories and methods that has some resemblance to a genuine science but that cannot be considered such. Examples include astrology, numerology, and esoteric magic. Various criteria for distinguishing pseudosciences from true sciences have been proposed, one of the most influential being that of falsifiability."

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

# THE CHANGING DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The "traumatic neuroses of war"

1941

"Anything that causes harm to the psyche"

1967

"A psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience."

1980

1941: Kardiner, The Traumatic Neuroses of War.

1967: Keiser, "Freud's Concept of Trauma and a Specific Ego Function" (J of the Am Psychoanalytic Association)

1980: DSM-III, Definition of PTSD

# THE CHANGING DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

"Overwhelming life experiences."

1987

An event involving "actual or threatened death or serious injury," and a response of response involved "intense fear, helplessness, or horror."

1994

! "Actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence," with some constraints.

2013

# THE CHANGING DEFINITION OF TRAUMA

"Trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also the imprint left by that experience on mind, brain, and body. This imprint has ongoing consequences for how the human organism manages to survive in the present."

2014

"everyday trauma... describe[s] stressful events that happen suddenly and linger as thoughts and memories as well as traumatic experiences that continue day after day."

2021

"the type of emotional or physical pain that often goes unseen, yet actually changes our brain biology and psychology... As with COVID, you can't see trauma itself, you just see it at work - - silently but maliciously."

2021

2014: van der Kolk, "The Body Keeps the Score"  
2021 (yellow): Shors, "Everyday Trauma"  
2021 (blue): Conti, "Trauma: the Invisible Epidemic"

# HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Science education

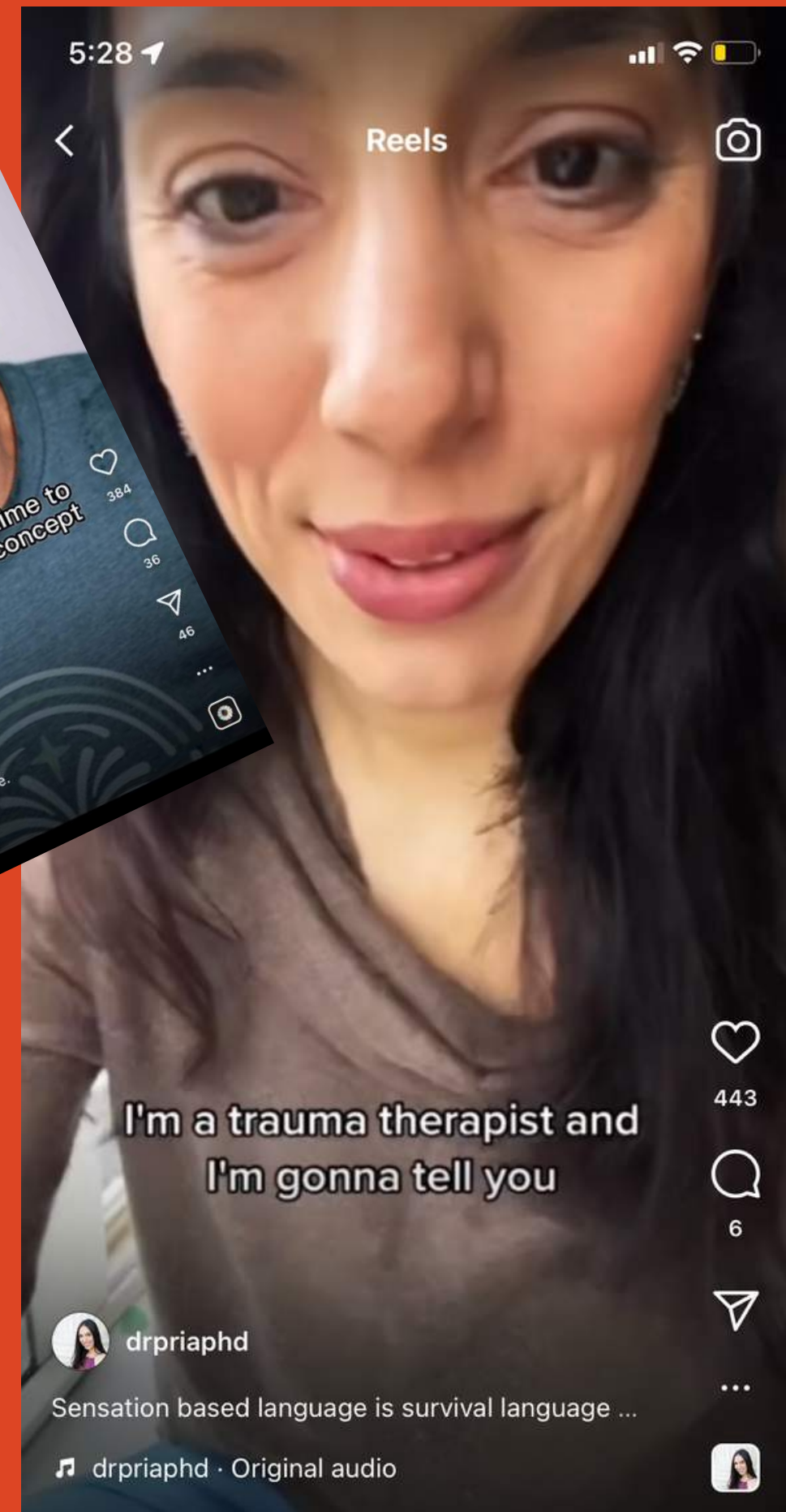
Sociopolitical  
factors

Changes in social  
media and  
publishing

I WILL SHOW YOU REAL SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FROM POPULAR ACCOUNTS.



But no need to go bother these specific people. They are examples of a problematic, much larger trend.



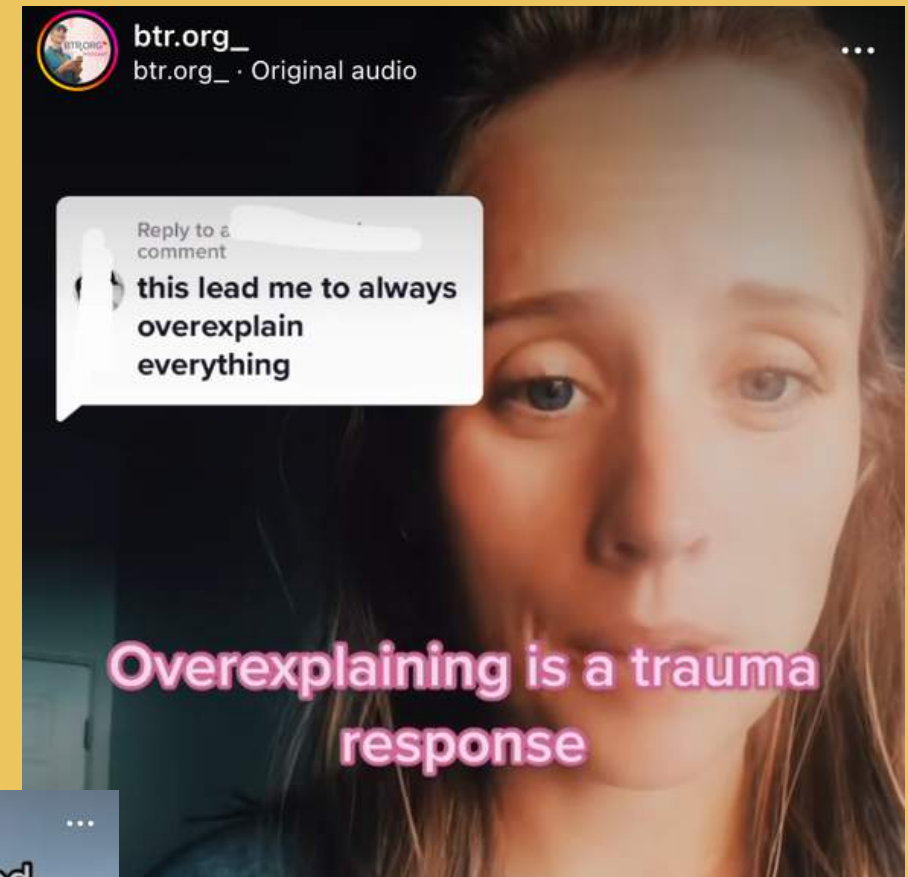


# THE TRAUMA RESPONSE

THE CLAIM:

MANY EVERYDAY BEHAVIORS ARE ACTUALLY SYMPTOMS OF PRIOR TRAUMA, WHETHER YOU THINK YOU WERE TRAUMATIZED OR NOT.

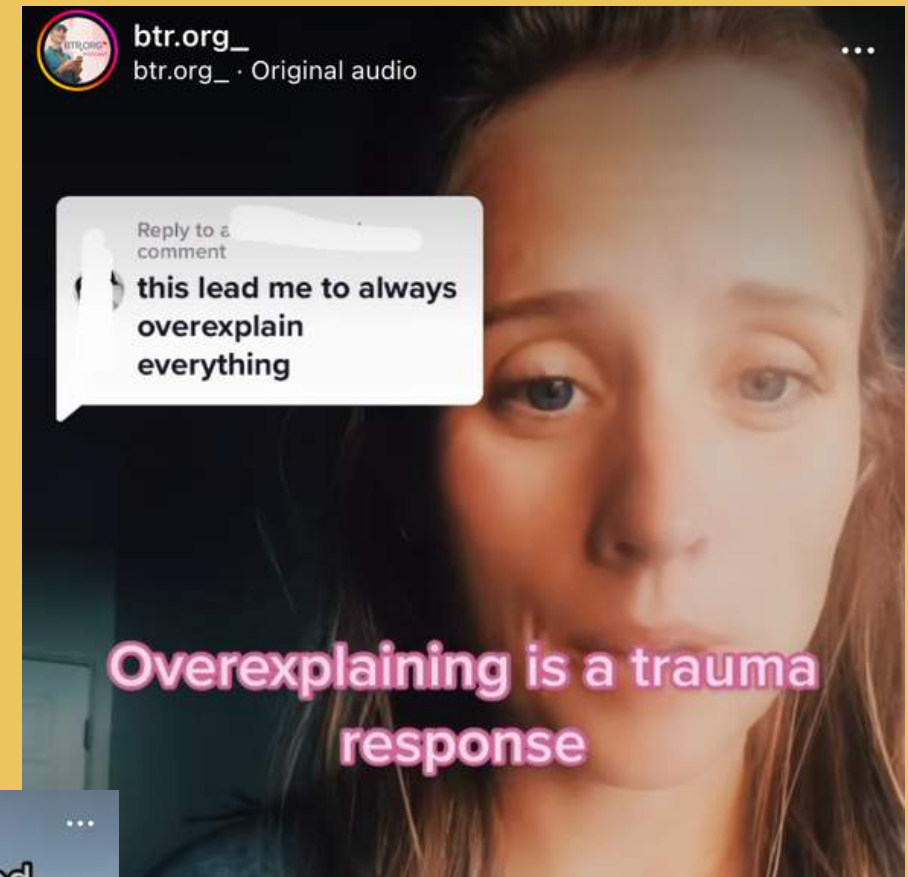
BEHAVIORS INCLUDE:  
OVEREXPLAINING, IMPULSIVITY,  
PERSUING IN RELATIONSHIPS,  
WITHDRAWING IN RELATIONSHIPS,  
POOR GROOMING, FAWNING,  
DEFENSIVENESS, INAPPROPRIATE  
ANGER, INAPPROPRIATE SADNESS,  
AND MORE.



# THE TRAUMA RESPONSE

WHERE THE IDEA PROBABLY CAME FROM:

- PAVLOV, BOWLBY, HERMAN, FREUD, AND MANY OTHERS.
- VETERANS WHO WANT TO GO BACK
- CASE STUDIES; ESPECIALLY FREUD, JANET, VAN DER KOLK
- CULT STUDIES FIELD
- A FEW PROPER STUDIES THAT HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CRITICIZED FOR POOR METHODOLOGY (AND GO AGAINST THE REST OF THE SCIENCE)
- CONFUSION ABOUT ACES STUDY



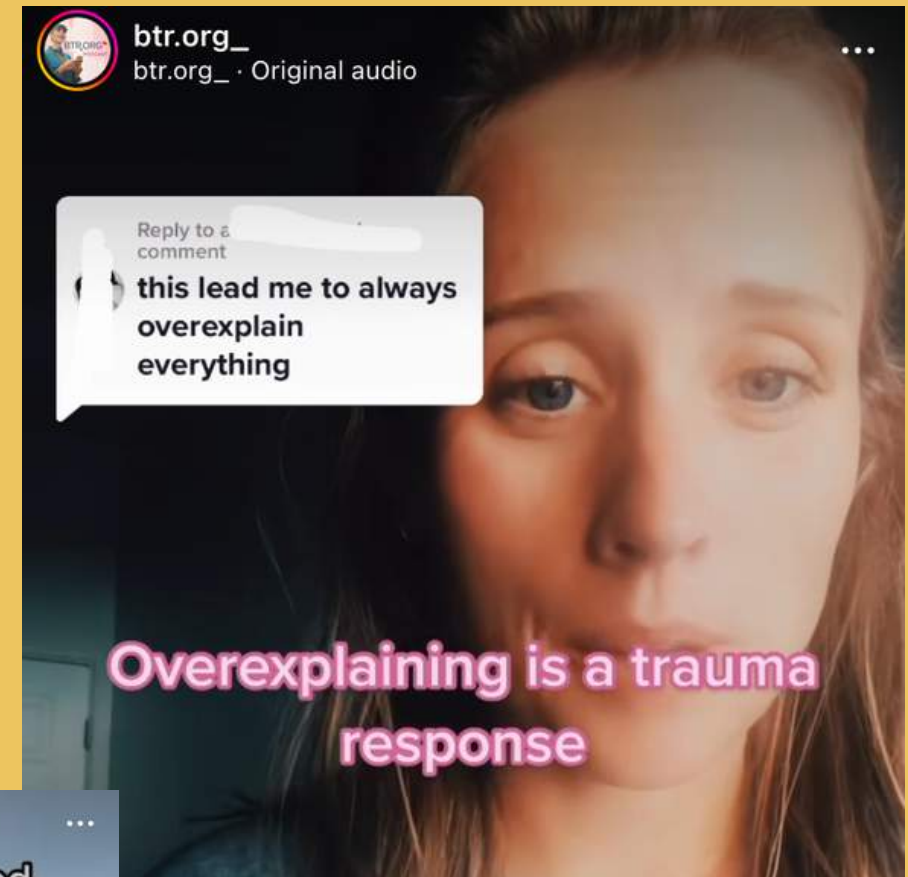
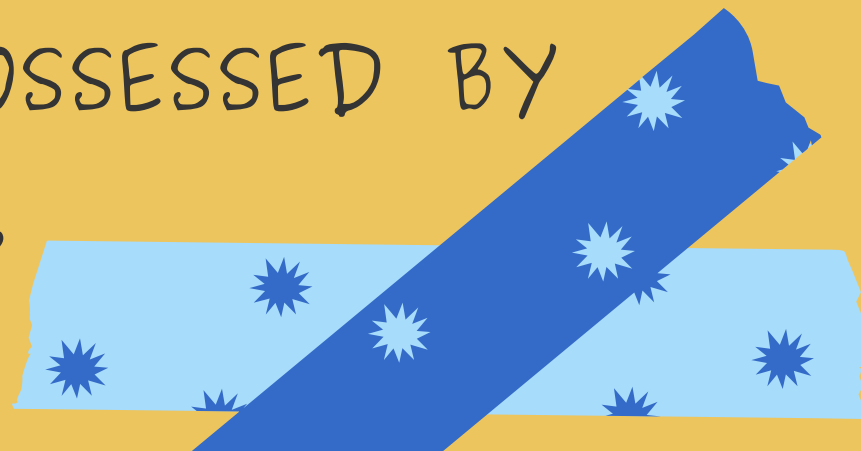
# THE TRAUMA RESPONSE

PROBLEM 1: ONCE ANYTHING CAN BE TRAUMA, ANYTHING CAN BE A TRAUMA RESPONSE.



PROBLEM 2: YOUR CURRENT MOOD DRAMATICALLY ALTERS YOUR MEMORIES. FALSE MEMORIES ARE NORMATIVE.

PROBLEM 3: PEOPLE BEGIN TO FEEL HAUNTED/POSSESSED BY THEIR BEHAVIORS.



# THE TRAUMA SYMPTOM

THE CLAIM:

MANY EVERYDAY PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS ARE ACTUALLY SYMPTOMS OF PRIOR TRAUMA.

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE: HEADACHES, CHRONIC PAIN, POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS, OVARIAN CYSTS, AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE, INATTENTION, NUMBING, DETACHMENT, AND AT LEAST 519 MORE (POPPY SPREADSHEET)



**7 Signs You're Releasing Stored Trauma From Your Body**

**HOW TO TEST IF YOU HAVE STORED TRAUMA IN YOUR BODY**

if you can't bring your knee all the way into your ribs,

you have stored trauma in your body

(do this version on your side if your pregnant or have a belly)

**when the trauma is left unresolved, the unprocessed emotions from the trauma get stored in your body**

theworkoutwitch\_ Savannah Cristina - Bad Bitch Energy

what does the ✨CRUNCH✨ mean

theworkoutwitch\_ original audio

2,878

99%

232

22

REELS



# THE TRAUMA SYMPTOM

WHERE THIS PROBABLY CAME FROM:

- ESTABLISHED CORRELATION BETWEEN BODY PAIN AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING
- ESTABLISHED CORRELATION BETWEEN LONG-TERM PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AND CHRONIC PAIN.
- CONFUSION ABOUT ACES STUDY
- RETROSPECTIVE BIAS
- CONFIRMATION BIAS
- SELECTIVE INFO ABOUT HPA AXIS

## 7 Signs You're Releasing Stored Trauma From Your Body

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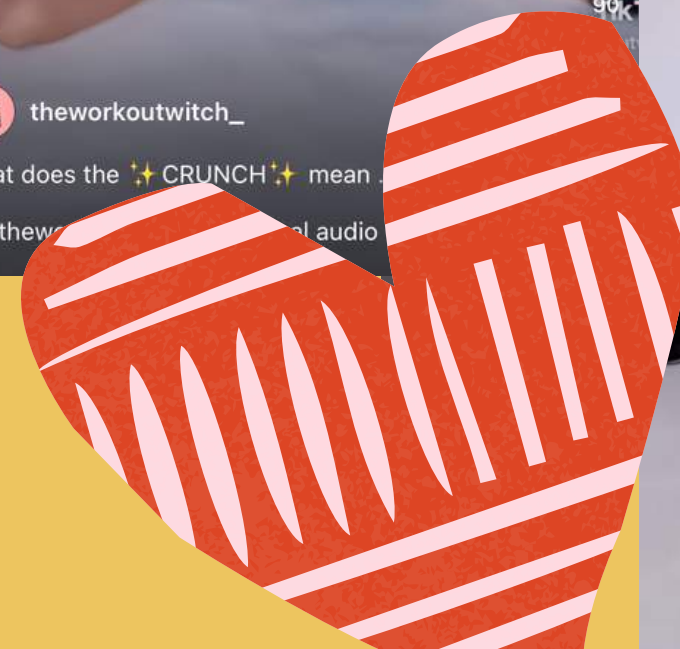


theworkoutwitch\_ what does the ✨CRUNCH✨ mean



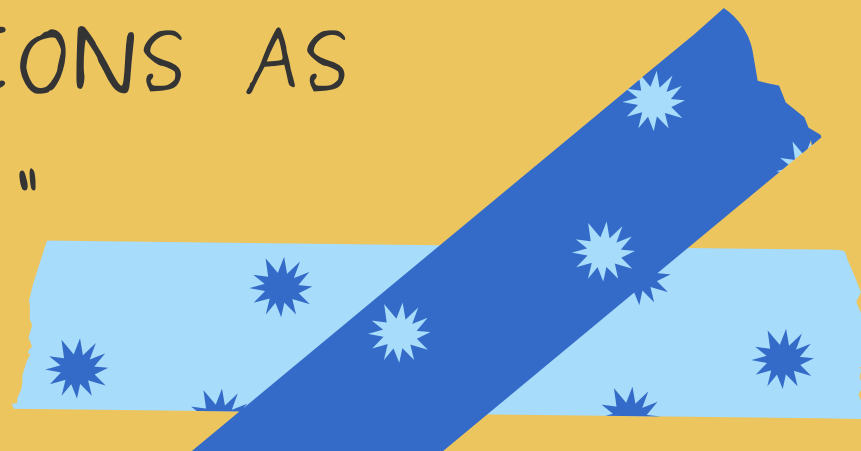
theworkoutwitch\_ Savannah Cristina - Bad Bitch Energy

when the trauma is left unresolved, the unprocessed emotions from the trauma get stored in your body



# THE TRAUMA SYMPTOM

- PROBLEM 1: ACTUAL PROBLEM MOST LIKELY GOES UNTREATED (AND THERE ARE COUNTLESS POSSIBILITIES HERE).
- PROBLEM 2: THERAPISTS UNINTENTIONALLY "PUSHING" FOR TRAUMATIC INTERPRETATIONS.
- PROBLEM 3: OVERLOOKS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION
- PROBLEM 4: PRIMES CLIENTS TO SEE MEDICAL OPINIONS AS "GASLIGHTING."



**7 Signs You're Releasing Stored Trauma From Your Body**

**HOW TO TEST IF YOU HAVE STORED TRAUMA IN YOUR BODY**

if you can't bring your knee all the way into your ribs,

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(do this version on your side if your pregnant or have a belly)

theworkoutwitch\_ Savannah Cristina - Bad Bitch Energy

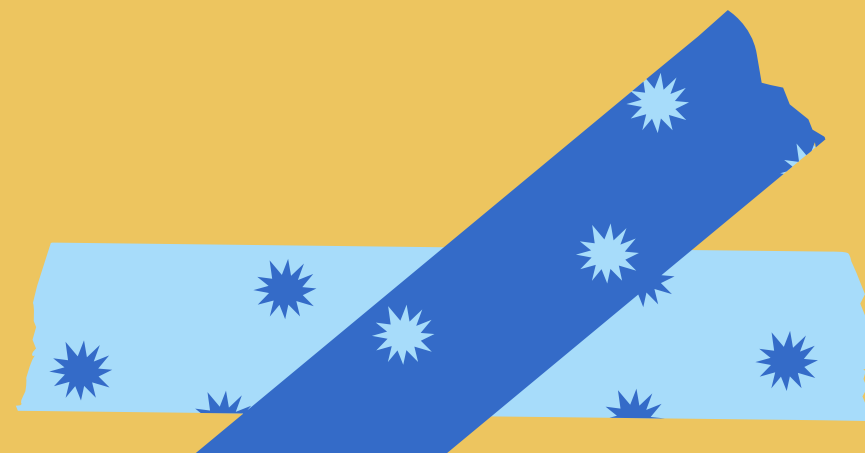
**when the trauma is left unresolved, the unprocessed emotions from the trauma get stored in your body**

theworkoutwitch\_ what does the ✨CRUNCH✨ mean

# THE TRAUMA MIRROR

## THE CLAIM:

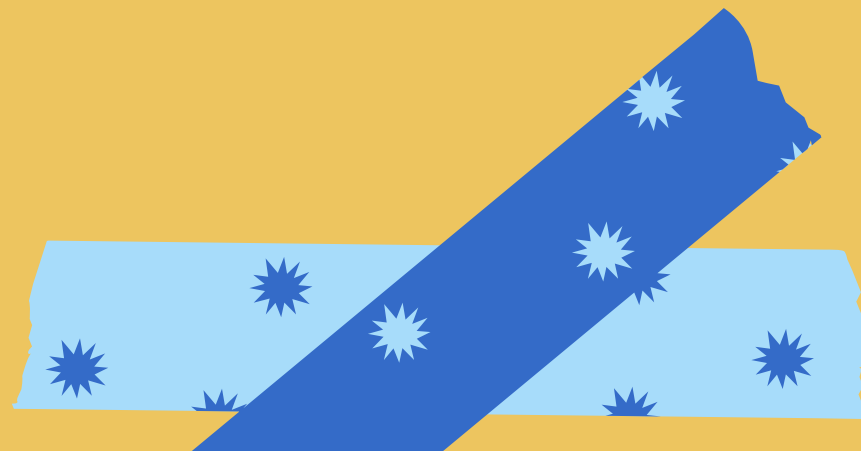
TRAUMA (ESPECIALLY REPRESSED TRAUMA) COVERTLY CAUSES US TO REPEAT UNWANTED BEHAVIORS.



# THE TRAUMA MIRROR

WHERE IT PROBABLY CAME FROM:

- PRIOR BEHAVIOR IS NEARLY ALWAYS A STRONG PREDICTOR OF FUTURE BEHAVIOR
- SOLDIERS WANTING TO GO BACK TO WAR EXPLAINED AWAY AS TRAUMA RE-ENACTORS.
- CASE STUDIES (JANET, FREUD, VAN DER KOLK)
- CULT STUDIES





# THE TRAUMA MIRROR

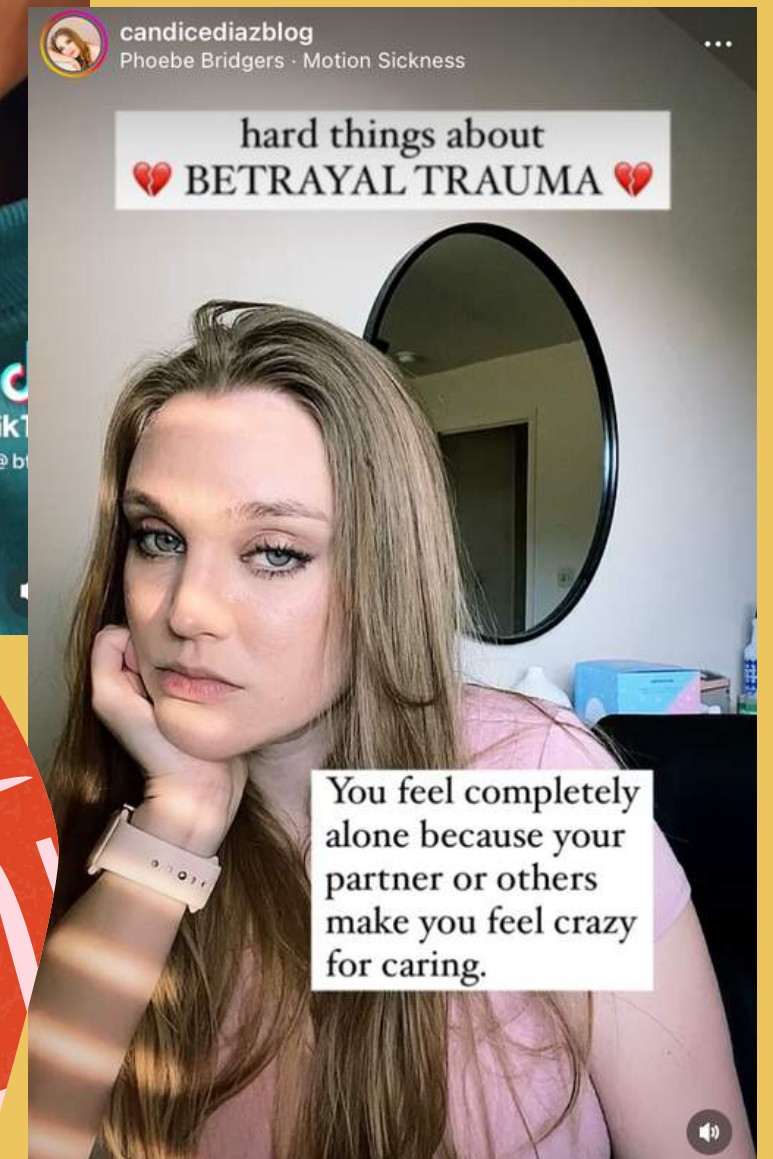
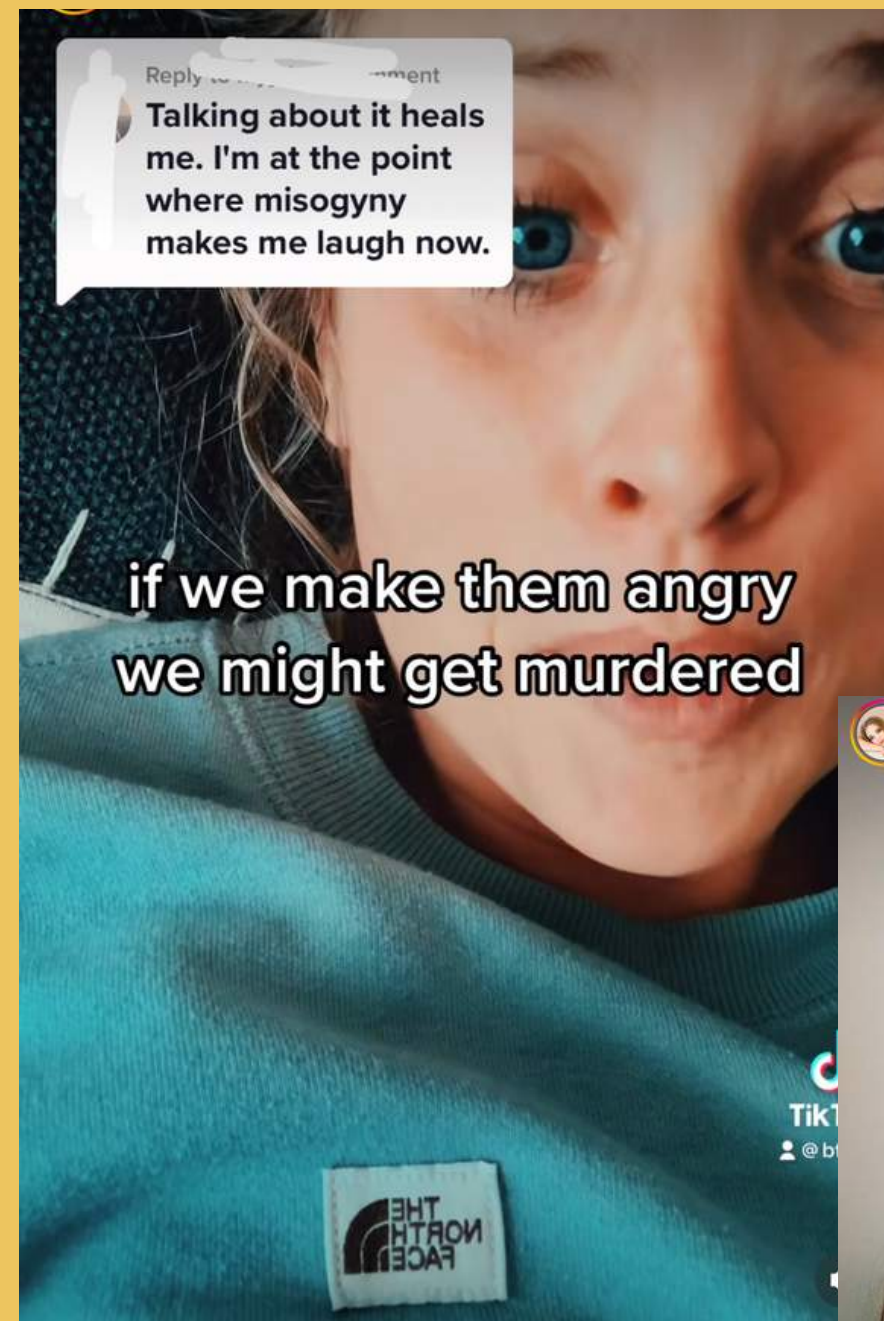
## THE PROBLEM:

- ALMOST ENTIRELY BASED ON CASE STUDIES
- VERY HARD TO TEST
- NEARLY ANY STORY CAN BE TOLD IN THIS FASHION.
- REINFORCES SEEING LIFE THROUGH TRAUMS LENS UNNECESSARILY



# BETRAYAL TRAUMA

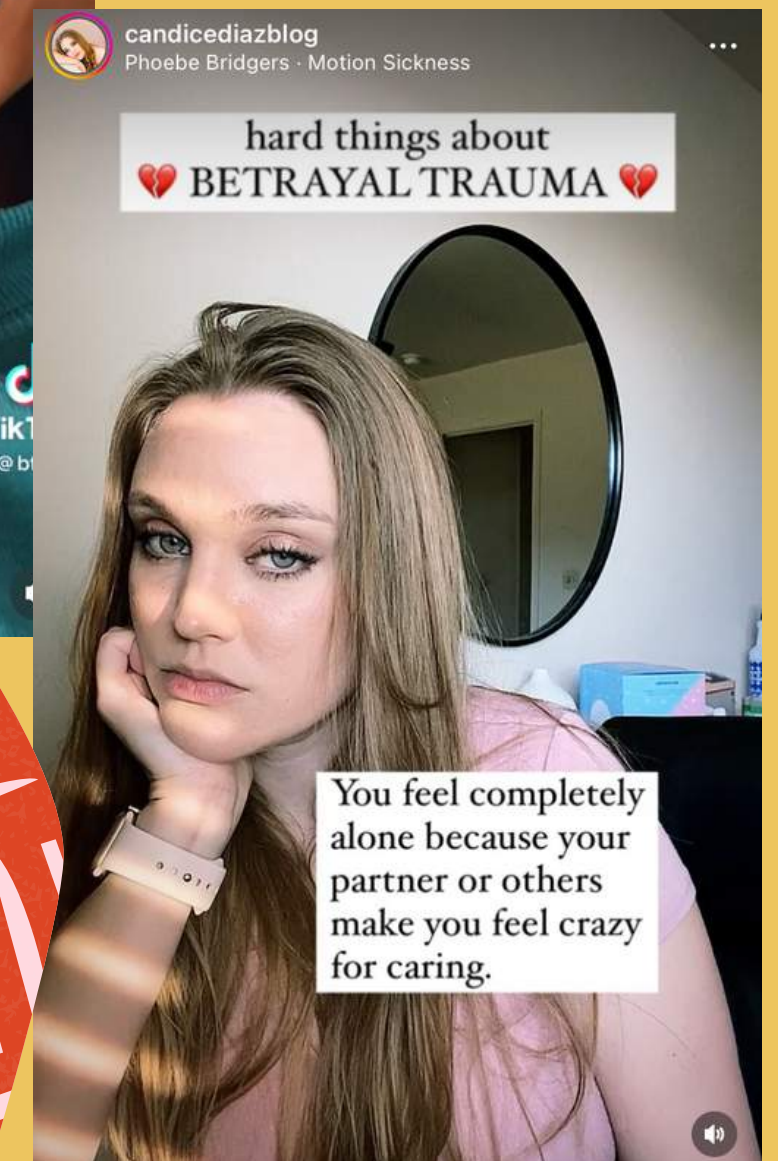
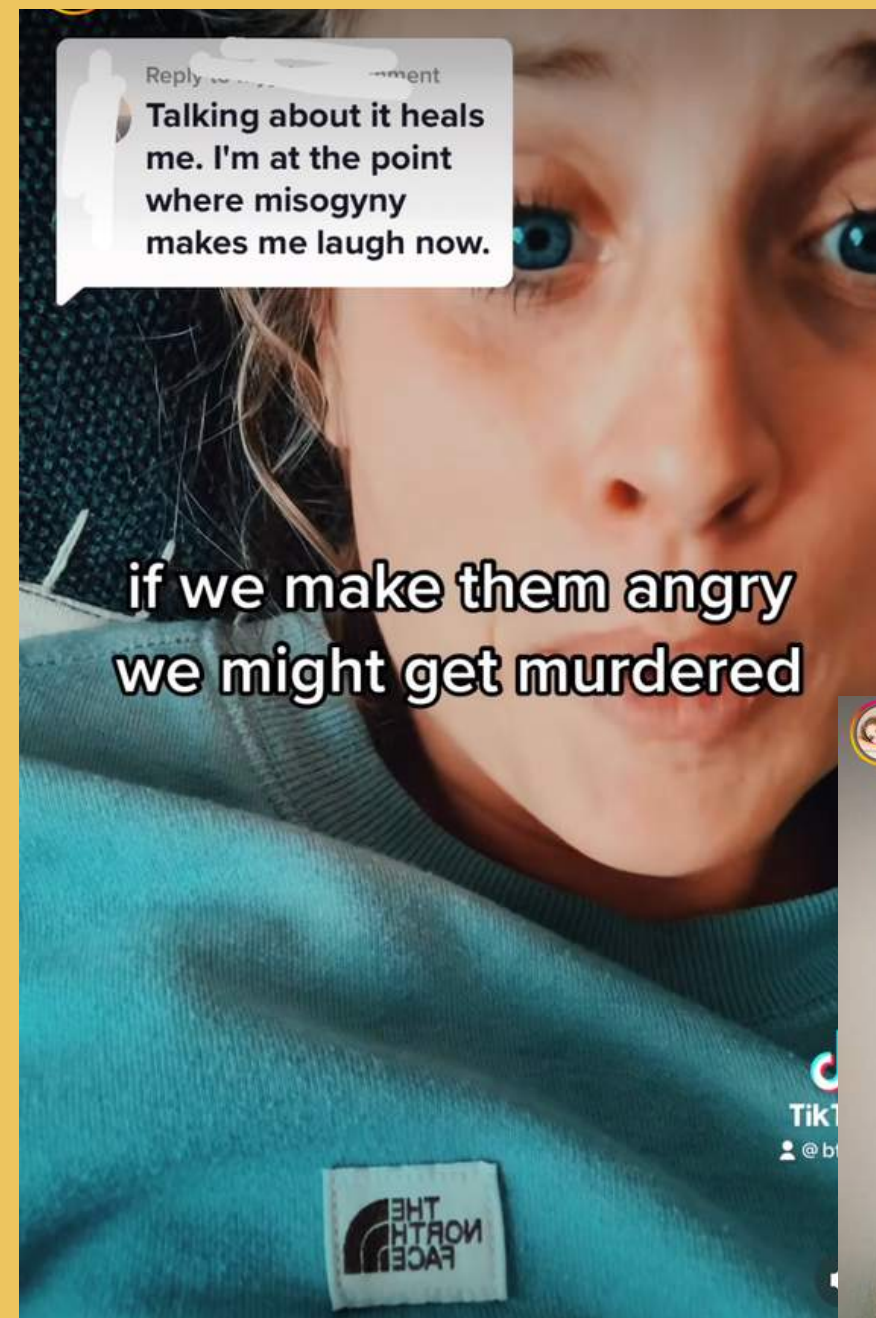
- **The claim: Being betrayed by someone on whom you depend is the worst kind of trauma, which can cause feelings of insanity, social isolation, and total amnesia for the abuse.**
- Often accuse loved ones (particularly exes and parents) of "undiagnosed narcissism" after learning of it in "the community."
- Share increasingly paranoid warnings and rants
- Often boldly anti-forgiveness.



# BETRAYAL TRAUMA

## Where it came from:

- 1980s, increased awareness of sex within the family, including sexual abuse of minor children.
- Huge jump in false memories spurred in therapy, 80s and 90s.
- **The term** comes from Jennifer Freyd and Pamela Birrell
- Tend to disbelieve in false memory and see false memory claims as an attempt to discredit the accounts of women.
- Some Influences: Lundy Bancroft, Robert Jay Lifton, Bessel van der Kolk
- Heavy use of DARVO.

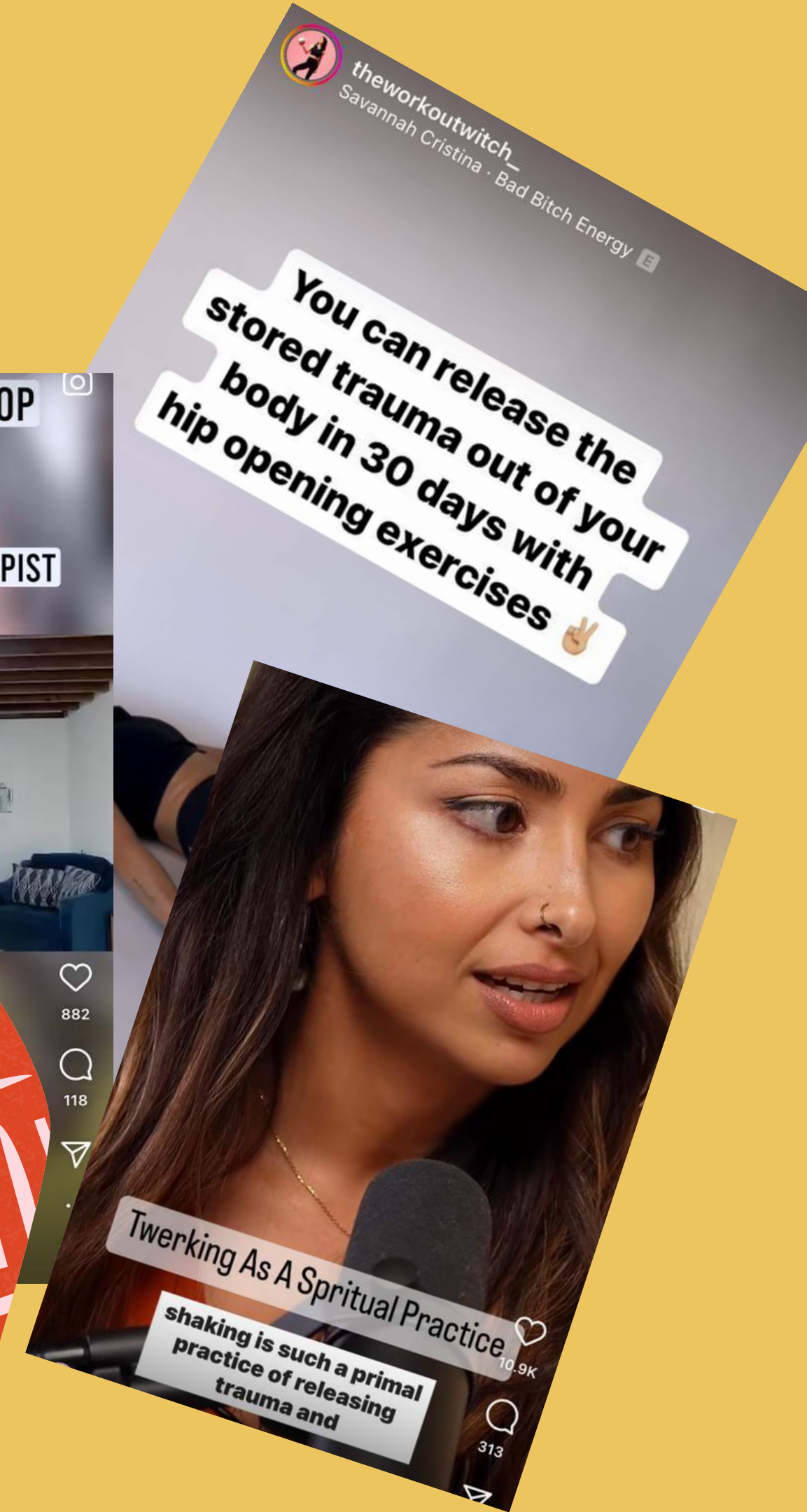
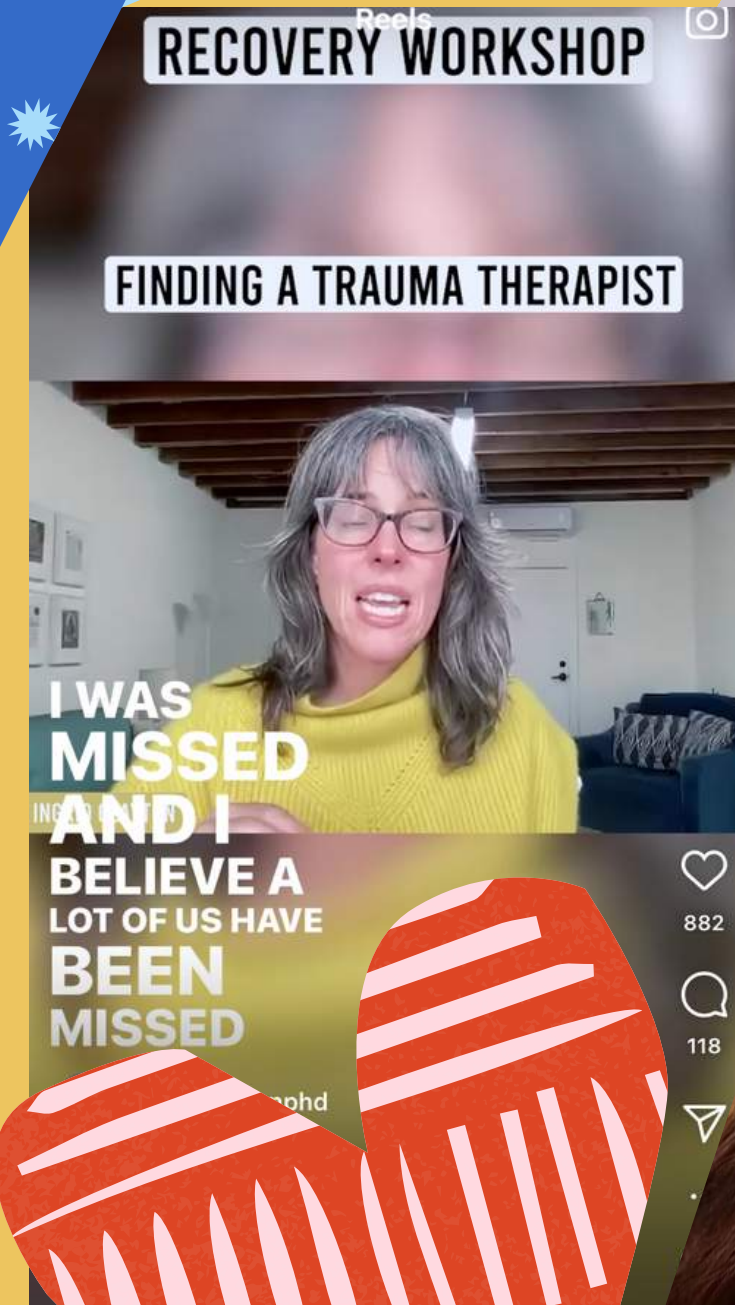


# TRAUMA TREATMENT

THE CLAIM:

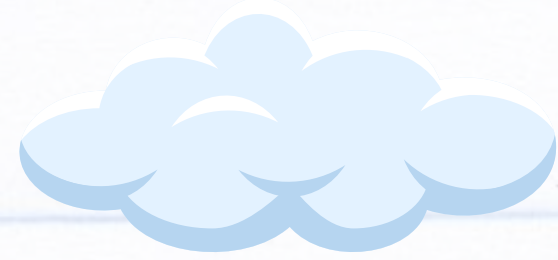
I CAN TREAT (OR HEAL) YOUR TRAUMA.

- SCIENCE BASED: COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT), COGNITIVE PROCESSING THERAPY, COGNITIVE THERAPY, PROLONGED EXPOSURE THERAPY
- MODERATE SUPPORT: EMDR, NARRATIVE EXPOSURE THERAPY, BRIEF ECLECTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY ("TALKING TO SOMEONE"), PSYCHEDELICS
- INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT: RELAXATION, INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS, FAMILY CONSTELLATION THERAPY, SOMATIC REEXPERIENCING, AND MANY MORE.





**BUT FIRST**



**YOU NEED DIFFERENTIAL  
DIAGNOSIS  
MISDIAGNOSING TRAUMA  
IS DANGEROUS**

# HOW DO I RESPOND IF I SEE THIS STUFF ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

- Be selective (don't spread your energy too thin)
- Be polite (assume they are sincere)
- Be thorough (articulate your concern clearly)
- Ask for sources

The old rules still apply for people you know:  
Comment < DM < Email < Text < Phone call



**WHY DOES BESSEL VAN DER KOLK KEEP COMING UP?  
WHAT'S UP WITH HIM?**

**Stay tuned for my book!**

**Are you a big-time  
publisher?**

**Email me!**



**ALMOST- CLOSING  
THOUGHTS**

**It is not harmless to assume  
you had trauma.**

**Everyday trauma is simply a  
new term for human  
suffering.**

**People who claim to end  
human suffering are  
making faith claims.**



## OH AND ALSO

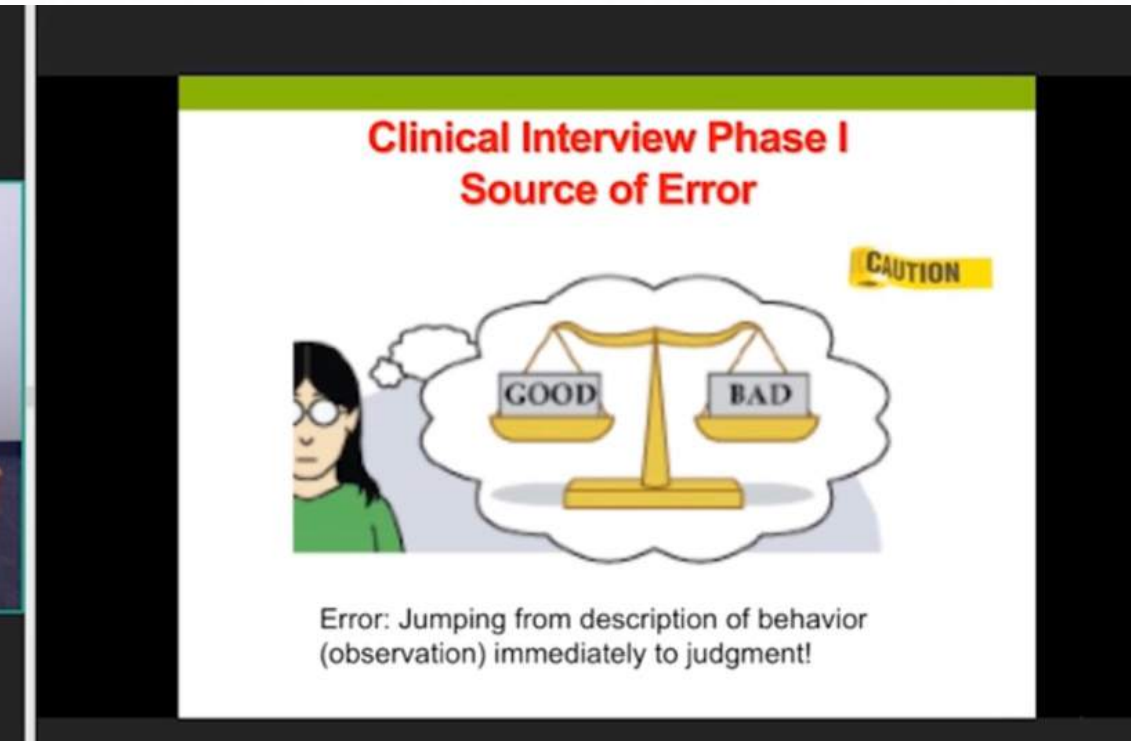
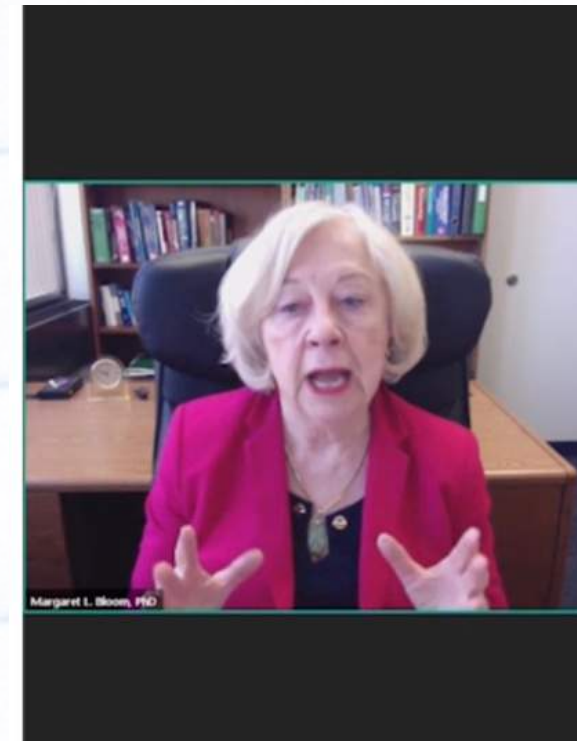
**The vast majority of people who experience a Type 1 traumatic event recover without any kind of therapy.**

**If you think you have PTSD from a specific, terrifying event,\* and you are experiencing Intrusive thoughts, panic, and startle response, exposure methods are still best.**

\*which you have always remembered

If the "everyday trauma" idea resonates with you, you may simply be suffering. Talk to your mental health pro about differential diagnosis. They should not be put off by the idea.

## FEELING LOST?



Diagnosis serves one basic purpose: to discover and organize information into a diagnostic schema that may lead to more effective methods of helping the client (Shea, 1991). As a part of counseling, diagnosis is an ongoing process that generates working hypotheses for problem identification and treatment, never a static event. It is essential that diagnosis be understood and taught as a process and as an integral part of effective counseling.

**Margaret Bloom, PhD**

Mental health differential diagnosis expert

# THE SCIENCE SAYS

**You are stronger and more resilient than you know.**

you



**OH GOOD!**

She really did it!

# RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The End of Trauma (Bonnano)

Science and Pseudoscience In Social Work Practice (Thyer, Pignotti)

Remembering Trauma (McNally)

The Memory Illusion (Shaw)

Medically Unexplained Symptoms (Baloh)

The Myth of Repressed Memory (Loftus)

My Lie (Maran)

Creating Hysteria (Acocella)

Freud: The Making of an Illusion (Crews)

The Memory Wars (Crews)

Sybil Exposed (Nathan)

What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About #MeToo (Wypijewski)

you



**OH GOOD!**

She really did it!

# RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE  
(PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH)

CRIMINOLOGICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY LAB  
(FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH)

GREY FACTION  
(ACTIVISM AGAINST PSEUDOSCIENCE IN THERAPY)

ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE THERAPIES  
(THERAPIST SEARCH)



Thank you, Dr. C.A. Meyersburg (Harvard), for informed advice on finding a science-based therapist!

# Select Sources

## Trauma Re-enactment

### Social media accounts featured:

Ali Fenwick (@modern.day.psychologist)

Betrayal Trauma Recovery (@btr.org)

Jane Hart (Facebook)

### van der Kolk:

Psychological Trauma (1987)

"The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma" (Psychiatric Clinics of N America, 1989)

The Body Keeps the Score (2014)

### Herman:

Trauma and Recovery (1992)

### ACES study:

"An Analysis of Retrospective and Repeat Prospective Reports of Adverse Childhood Experiences from the South African Birth to Twenty Plus Cohort" (Naicker, et al. PlosOne, 2017)

29th Annual International Trauma Conference (Brochure, 2018)

Janina Fisher, Trauma Research Foundation Seminar (Poppy Notes, 2022)

Thank you, Dr. Skip Pope (Harvard-McLean),  
for a thorough primer on ACES study and retrospective bias!

# Select Sources

## Trauma Symptoms

Account featured:  
@theworkoutwitch

### HPA Axis and depression:

"The HPA Axis in Major Depression"  
(Pariante, et al. Trends In Neurosciences, 2008)

### Pain and depression:

"Chronic Pain and Depression In the Quality of Life of Women with Migraine"  
(Stuginski-Barbosa, 2012)

### HPA Axis and chronic stress:

"Regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical stress response"  
(Herman et al, Comparative Physiology, 2016)

### Pain and stress:

"Chronic Pain and Chronic Stress: Two Sides of the Same Coin?"  
(Abdallah, Chronic Stress, 2017)

### Mysterious symptoms:

"It's Time to View Severe Medically Unexplained Symptoms as Red-Flag Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety"  
(Smith, J of Am Med Assoc., 2020)

### Stress versus Trauma:

"Labels Matter: Is It Stress or is It Trauma?" (Richter-Levin + Sandi, Nature, 2021)

Thank you, Dr. Shelley Carson (Harvard),  
for extensive analysis of HPA Axis dysregulation and stress or mood disturbance!

# Select Sources

## Betrayal Trauma

**Robert Jay Lifton:**

"Vietnam: Betrayal and Self-Betrayal" (Society, 1969)

**Jennifer Freyd:**

"Betrayal Trauma: Traumatic Amnesia  
as an Adaptive Response to Childhood Abuse" (J of Ethics & Behavior, 1994)

Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse (1996)

Blind to Betrayal (2013)

**DARVO:**

"Violations of Power" (Freyd, Feminism & Psychology, 1997)

Blind to Betrayal (Freyd, 2013)

"How to Spot a Pattern of Denials In the #MeToo Movement" (CBC Radio, 2018)

"Oregon Psychology Professor Talks Psychology of Sexual Harassment" (The Stanford Daily, 2018)

**Lundy Bancroft:**

Why Does He Do That? (2003)

**Dissociative amnesia:**

"Debunking Myths about Trauma and Memory" (McNally, Canadian J of Psychiatry, 2005)

Remembering Trauma (McNally, 2003)

**Bessel van der Kolk et al:**

"Clinical Significance of a Proposed Developmental Trauma Disorder Diagnosis:  
Results of an International Survey of Clinicians" (Focus on Adolescent Mental Health, 2012)

**In Media:**

**Health.com:** "Betrayal Trauma Can Have Lasting Mental Health Effects" (Gillespie, 2022)

**VeryWellMind:** "What Is Betrayal Trauma?" (Gupta, 2022)

**Wikipedia:** "Betrayal Trauma" (open-source, 2023)

Thank you, Dr. Richard McNally (Harvard), and Dr. Elizabeth Loftus (University of California - Irvine),  
for many insights into trauma and memory!



# Select Sources

## Trauma Treatment

**APA on Evidence-Based Trauma Treatments:**  
"Summary of Recommendations of the  
APA Guideline Development Panel for the Treatment of PTSD"  
(American Psychological Association, 2021)

**Therapy Success:**  
"Why Ineffective Psychotherapies Appear to Work"  
(Perspectives on Psychological Science, Ritschel et al, 2014)

**Pseudoscience in Trauma Therapy:**  
Science and Pseudoscience In Social Work Practice  
(Thyer, Pignotti, 2015)

Thank you, Dr. Cynthia Meyersburg (Harvard),  
for extensive insight into pseudoscientific therapies  
and tools used in trauma treatments.



**THANK  
YOU!**

**Find me:**

**Twitter: @CarriePoppyYes**

**Podcast: "Oh No, Ross and Carrie" (hi, Ross!)**

**Tip line: TipsForCarrie@gmail**