

# How and Why to Focus on Adult Wellness When Caring For and Living With Trauma(Abridged Version)

**Jane Evans**

**[www.thejaneevans.com](http://www.thejaneevans.com)**

# Humans born ready to communicate and attach



# What is traumatic stress?

- Overwhelming experience
- Involves a threat
- Results in vulnerability and loss of control
- Leaves people feeling helpless and fearful
- Interferes with relationships and beliefs

Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery. New York Basic Books.

Is anyone safe?  
Do I matter?



# Living with threat...

When a child's body and brain develop in an environment of possible

**THREAT**

Their body & brain become wired to expect

**FEAR**

**ISOLATION**

This causes them ongoing

**TOXIC STRESS**

# Stress in normal...

## Types of stress responses

### POSITIVE



A normal and essential part of healthy development

#### EXAMPLES

*getting a vaccine,  
first day of school*

### TOLERABLE



Response to a more severe stressor, limited in duration

#### EXAMPLES

*loss of a loved one,  
a broken bone*

### TOXIC



Experiencing strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity

#### EXAMPLES

*physical or emotional abuse,  
exposure to violence*

# HOW **STRESS** AFFECTS THE BODY

## **BRAIN**

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

## **CARDIOVASCULAR**

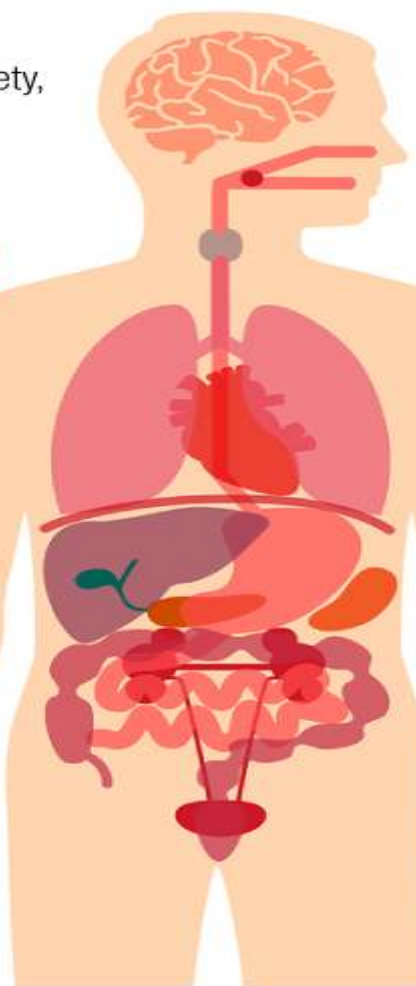
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

## **JOINTS AND MUSCLES**

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

## **IMMUNE SYSTEM**

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time



## **SKIN**

hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

## **GUT**

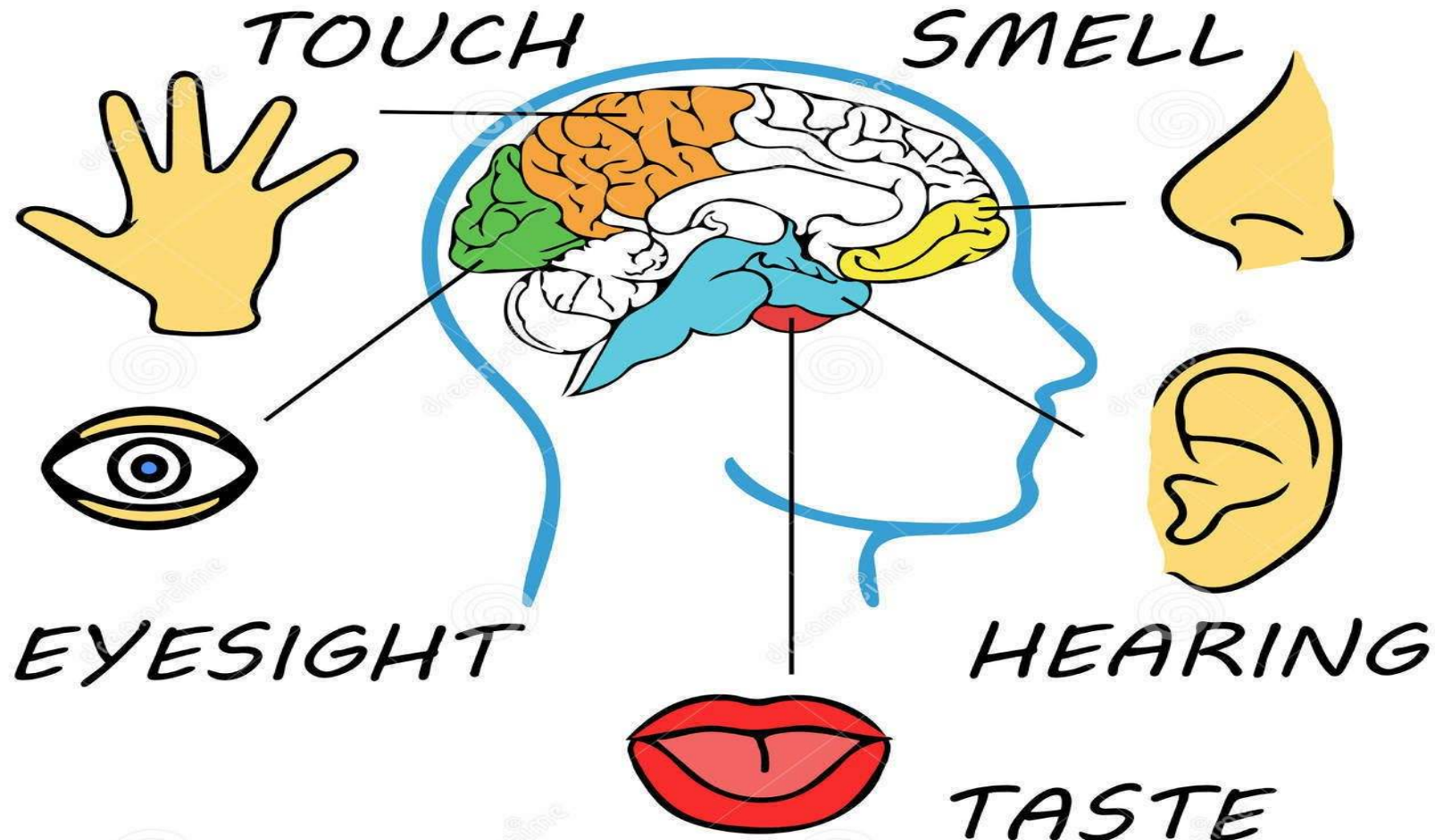
nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

## **REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms



# Trauma is a sensory experience





# Scared bodies need safe bodies

The single most important issue for  
traumatized people is to find a  
sense of safety in their own bodies,

— Bessel van der Kolk —

# Stephen Porges Polyvagal Theory

“Only when we are in a calm physiological state can we convey states of safety to another.

These opportunities to connect and co-regulate determine the success of relationships, whether describing mother-child, father-child, or other relationships.”

# The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

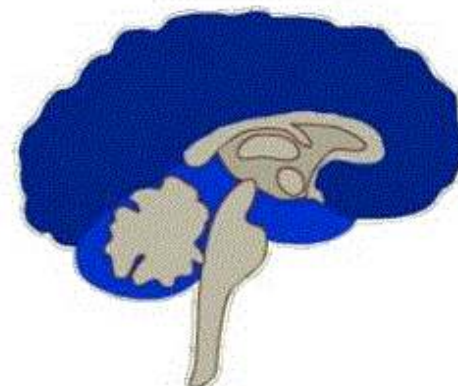
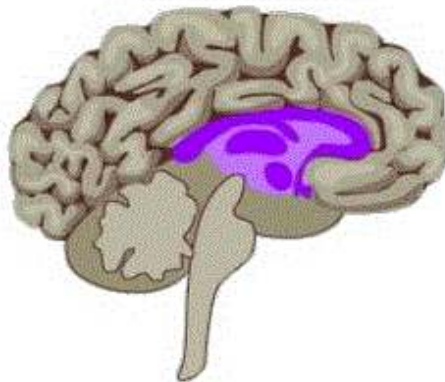
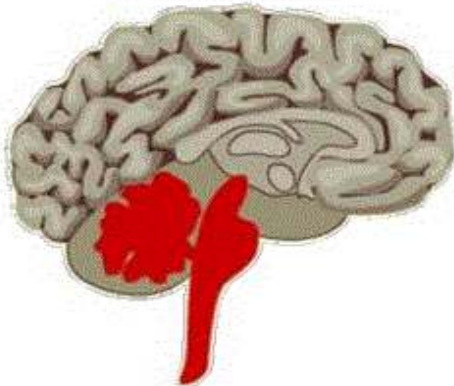
..reveals a powerful relationship between our emotional experiences as children and our physical and mental health as adults, as well as the major causes of mortality

The study makes it clear that time does not heal some of the adverse experiences

Felitti, J (2002)

# Triune Brain Theory

Lizard Brain	Mammal Brain	Human Brain
Brain stem & cerebellum	Limbic System	Neocortex
Fight or flight	Emotions, memories, habits	Language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness
Autopilot	Decisions	Reasons, rationalizes



The Triune Brain in Evolution, Paul MacLean, 1960

Reptilian Brain  
Limbic Brain  
Neo-cortex

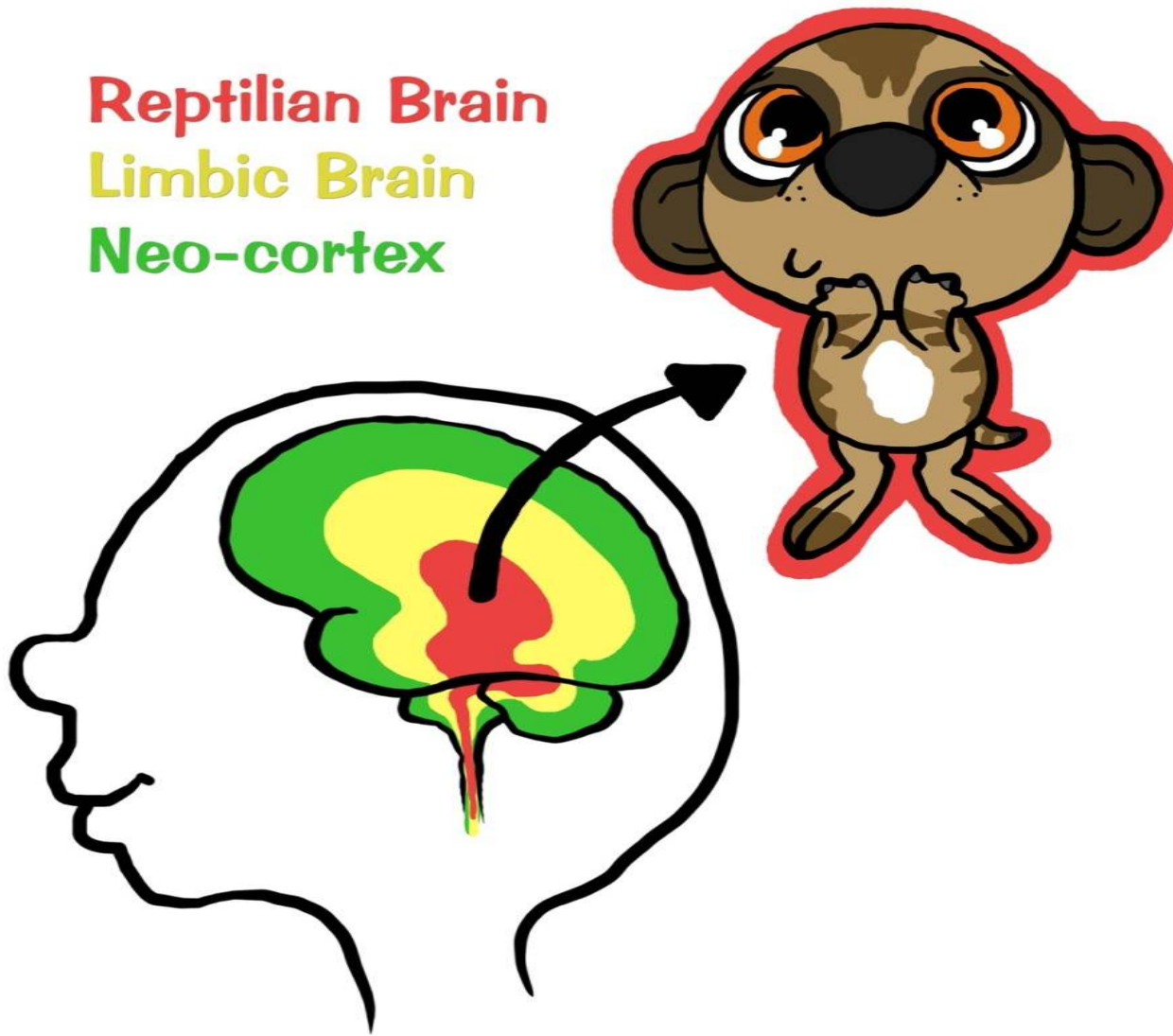


Illustration by Izzy Bean – Little Meerkat's Big Panic, Jessica Kingsley Publishers

**Reptilian Brain**  
**Limbic Brain**  
**Neo-cortex**

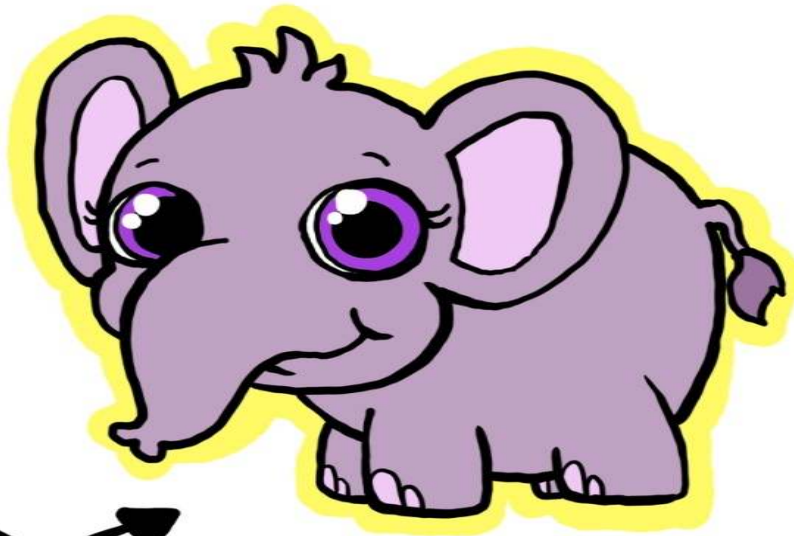


Illustration by Izzy Bean – Little Meerkat's Big Panic, Jessica  
Kingsley Publishers



**Reptilian Brain**

**Limbic Brain**

**Neo-cortex**

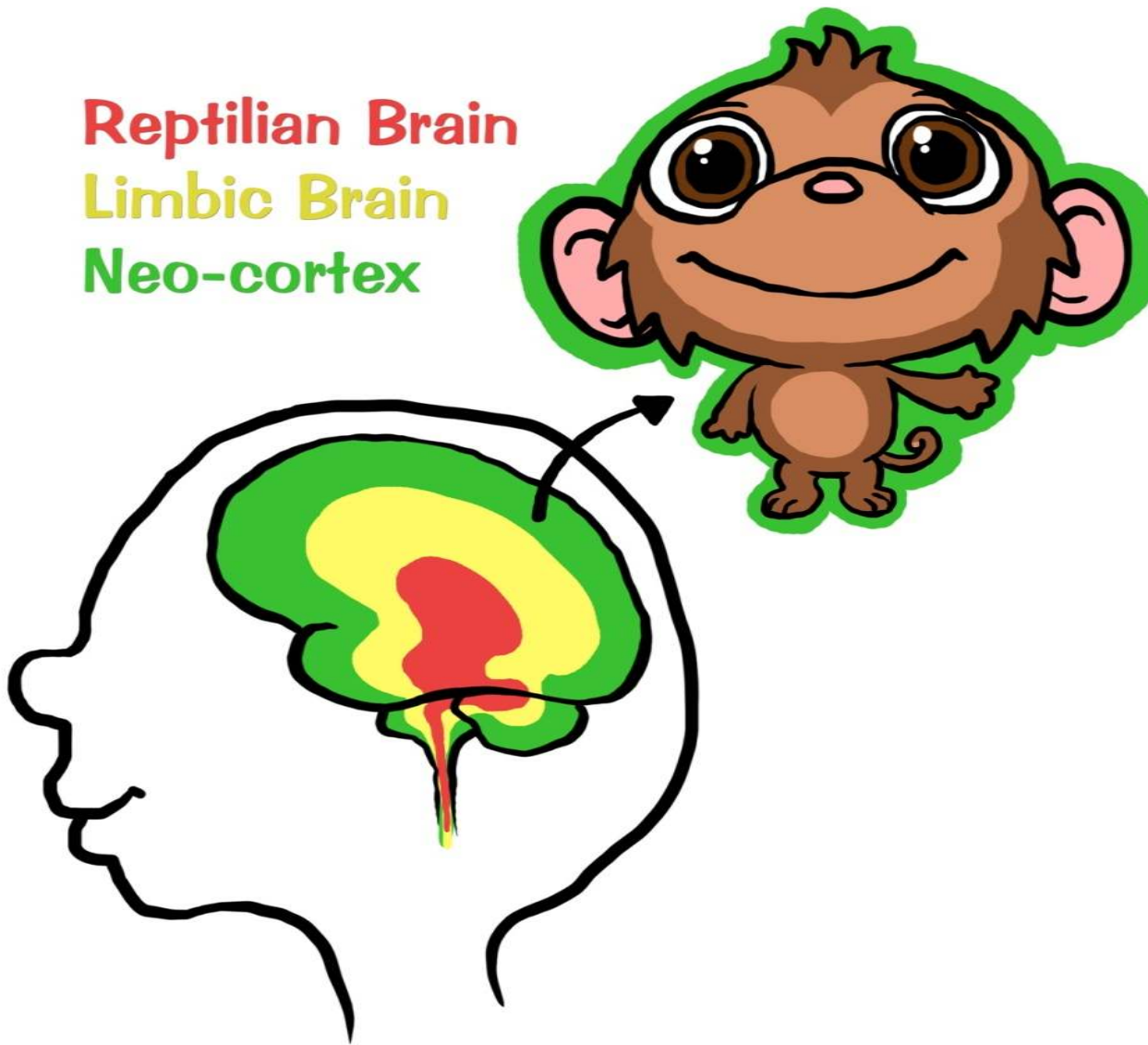
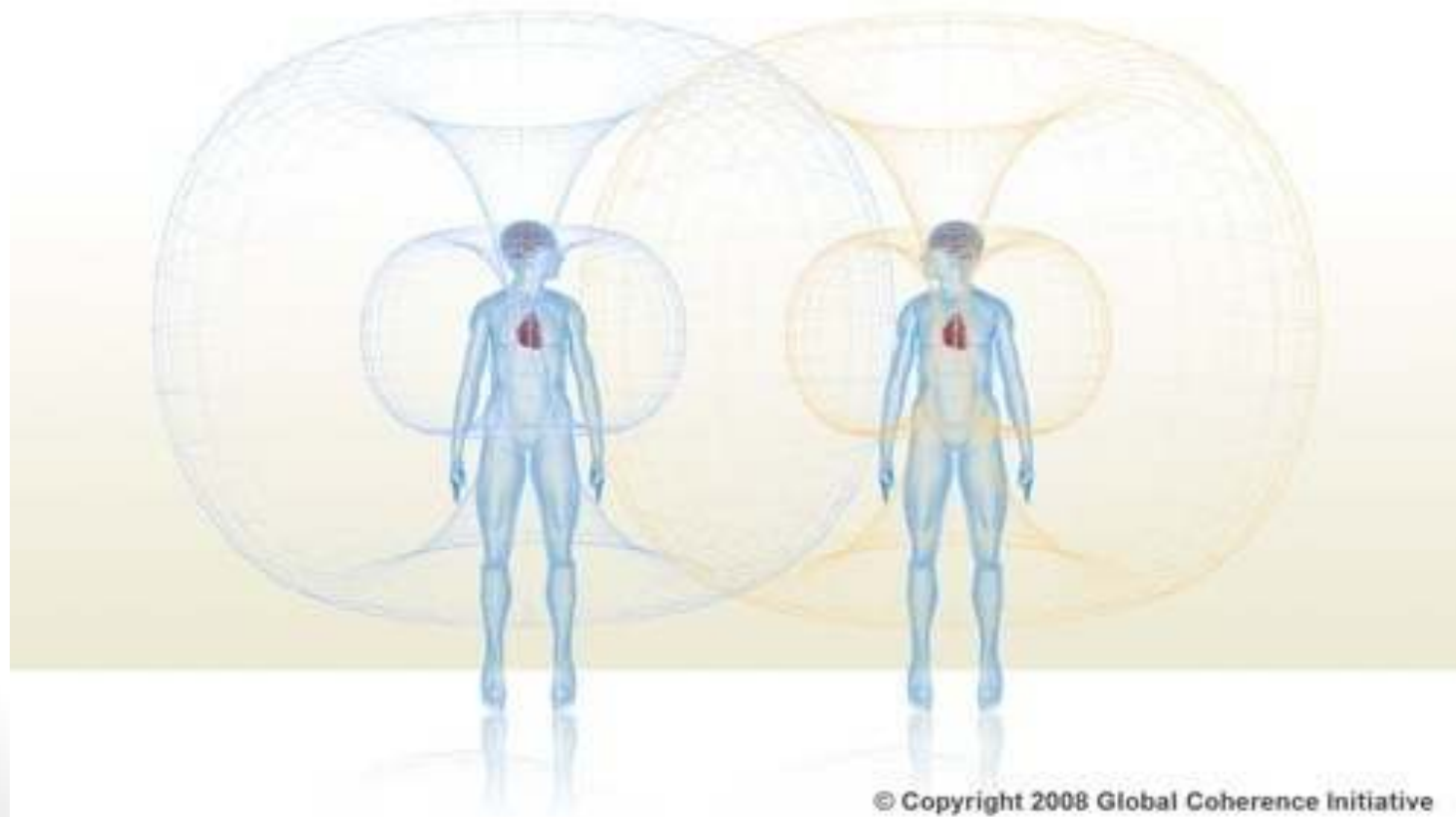


Illustration by Izzy Bean – Little Meerkat's Big Panic, Jessica Kingsley Publishers

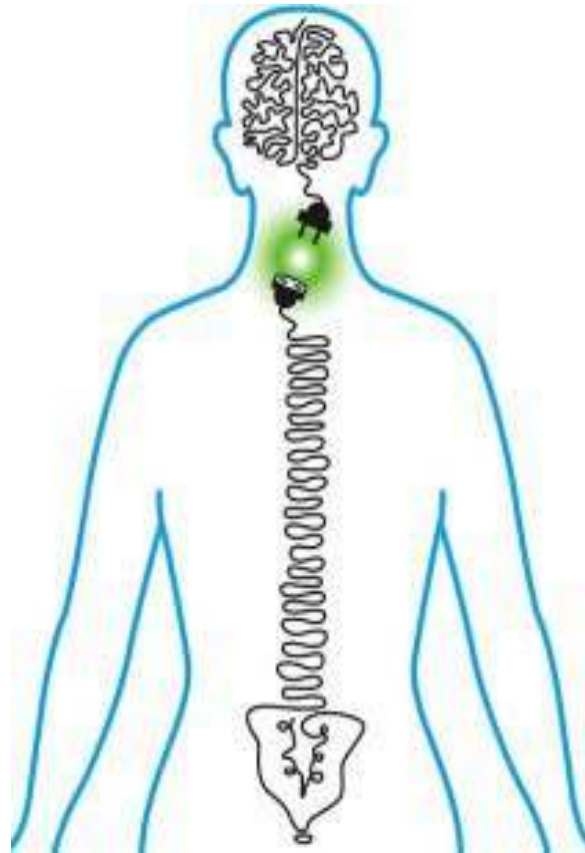
# Working with trauma – bodies read bodies

The heart radiates an electromagnetic field affecting each others' moods, attitudes and feelings - whether we are conscious of it or not.



© Copyright 2008 Global Coherence Initiative

# Regulation lies in body-brain connection



# Access to Calm Adult Meerkats

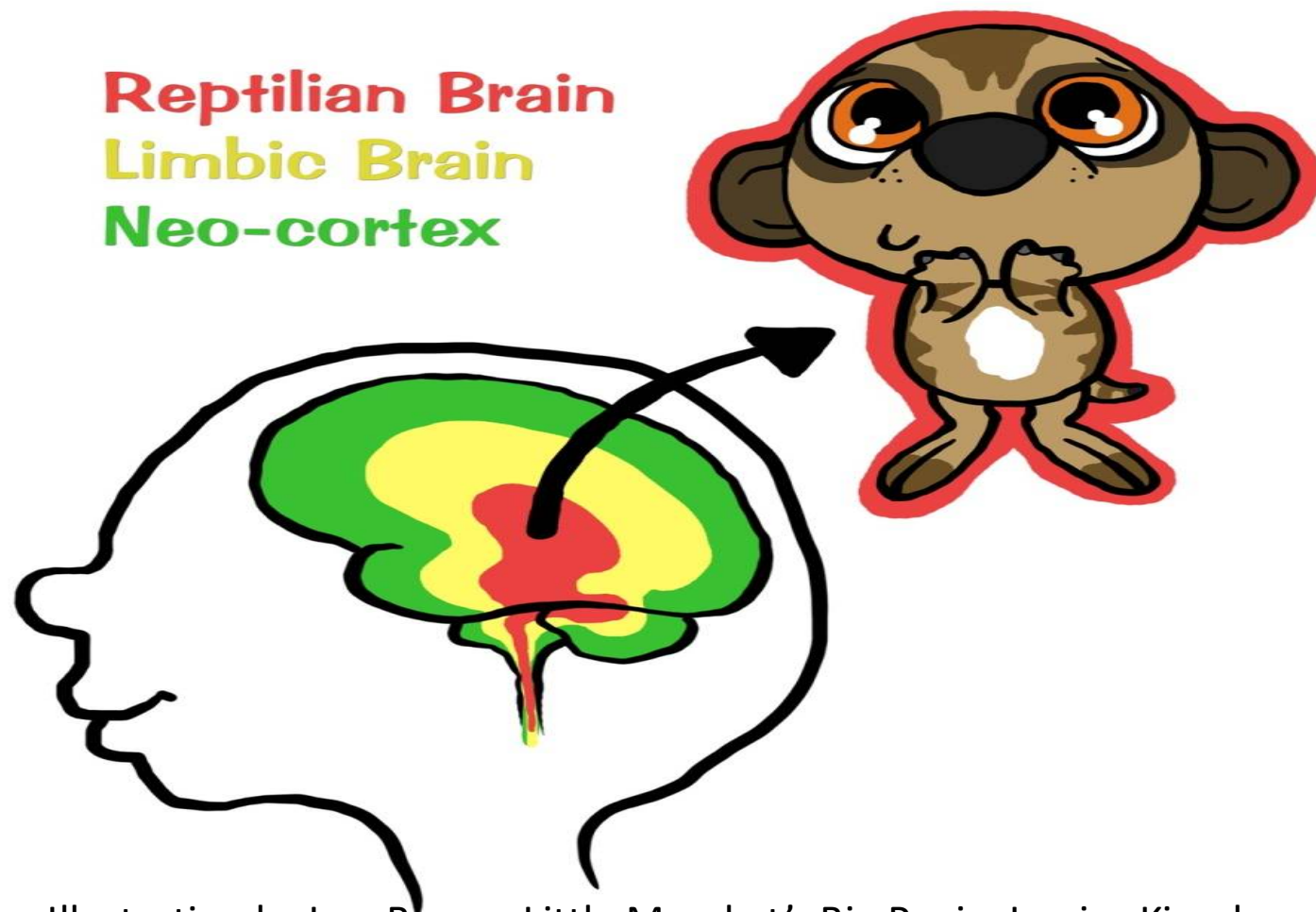
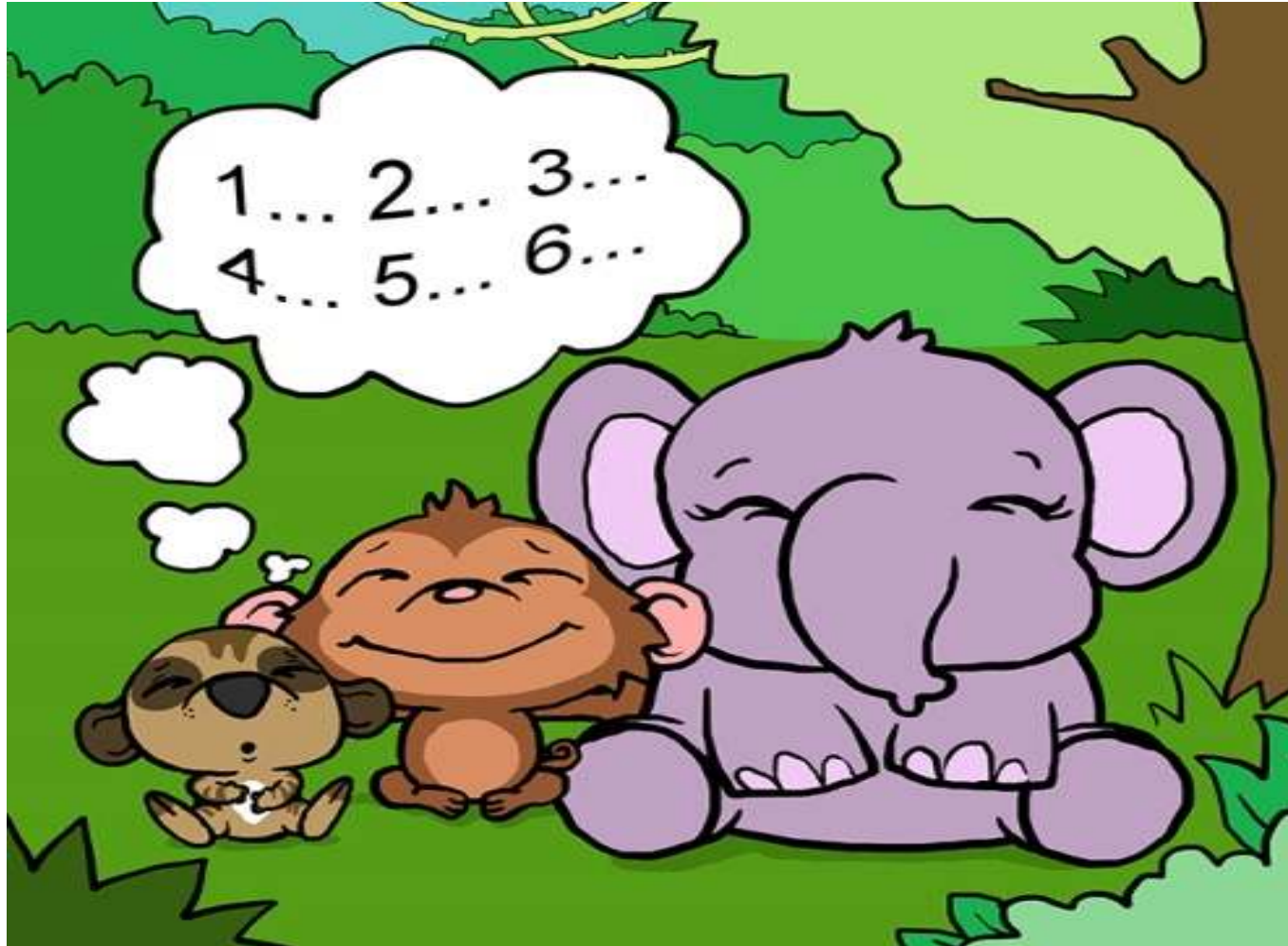


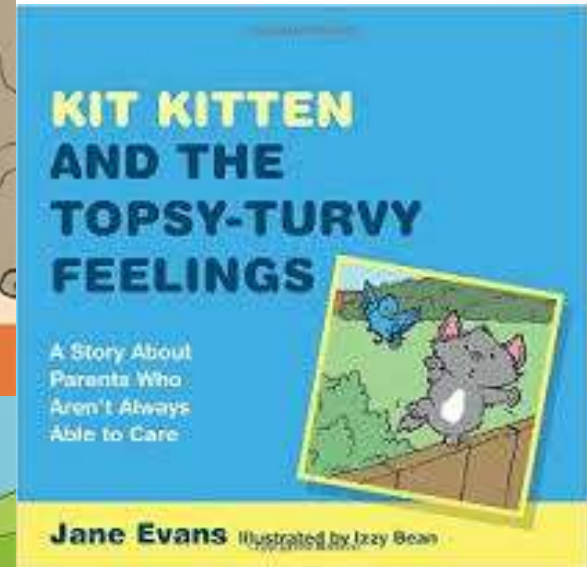
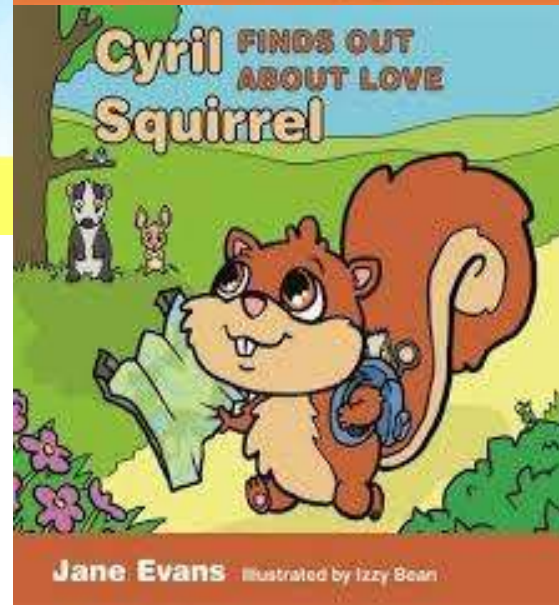
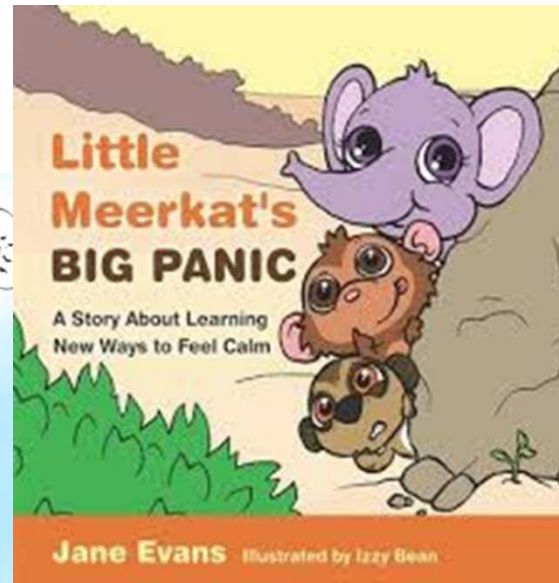
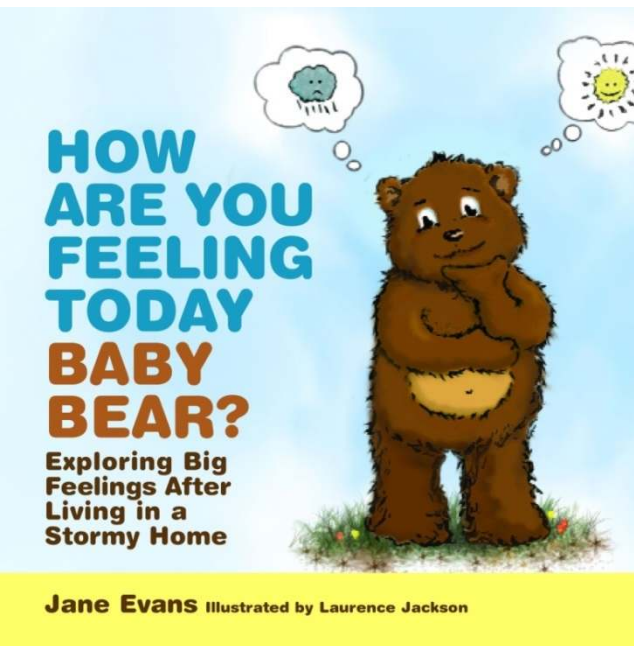
Illustration by Izzy Bean – Little Meerkat's Big Panic, Jessica Kingsley Publishers

# Breathe – Relax - Be





# My books to support children





# Parenting Impacted by Trauma



# Taming & Tending Your Meerkat Brain - TEDxBristol



# Jane Evans



**Childhood Anxiety & Trauma Parenting  
Expert  
Wellness & Resilience Coach**

**Speaker-Trainer -Coach- Consultant -Author**

**[www.thejaneevans.com](http://www.thejaneevans.com)**

**Twitter: @janeparenting2**