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Navigating Traumatic Stress in Substance Use Treatment

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Disclosures



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Neither I nor my spouse/partner has a relevant financial relationship with a commercial interest to disclose.

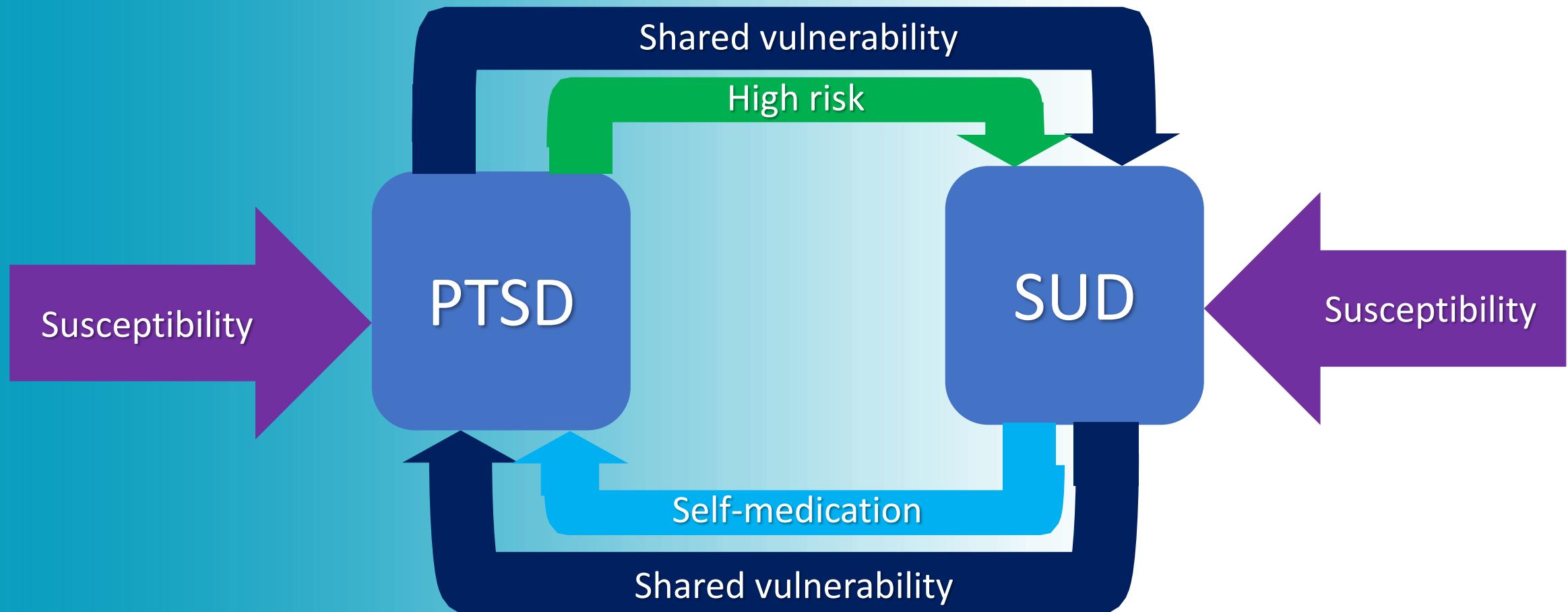


Prevalences

Traumatic stress is the norm in SUD treatment settings.

- ~70% report ≥ 1 traumatic events (Hien et al., 2009)
- 26–43% meet criteria for PTSD–SUD (McCauley et al., 2012; Reynolds et al., 2011)
- Up to 95% will be exposed to trauma in their lifetime (e.g., Dansy et al., 1995; Hien, et al. 2021; McCauley et al., 2012; Norman, et al. 2019)

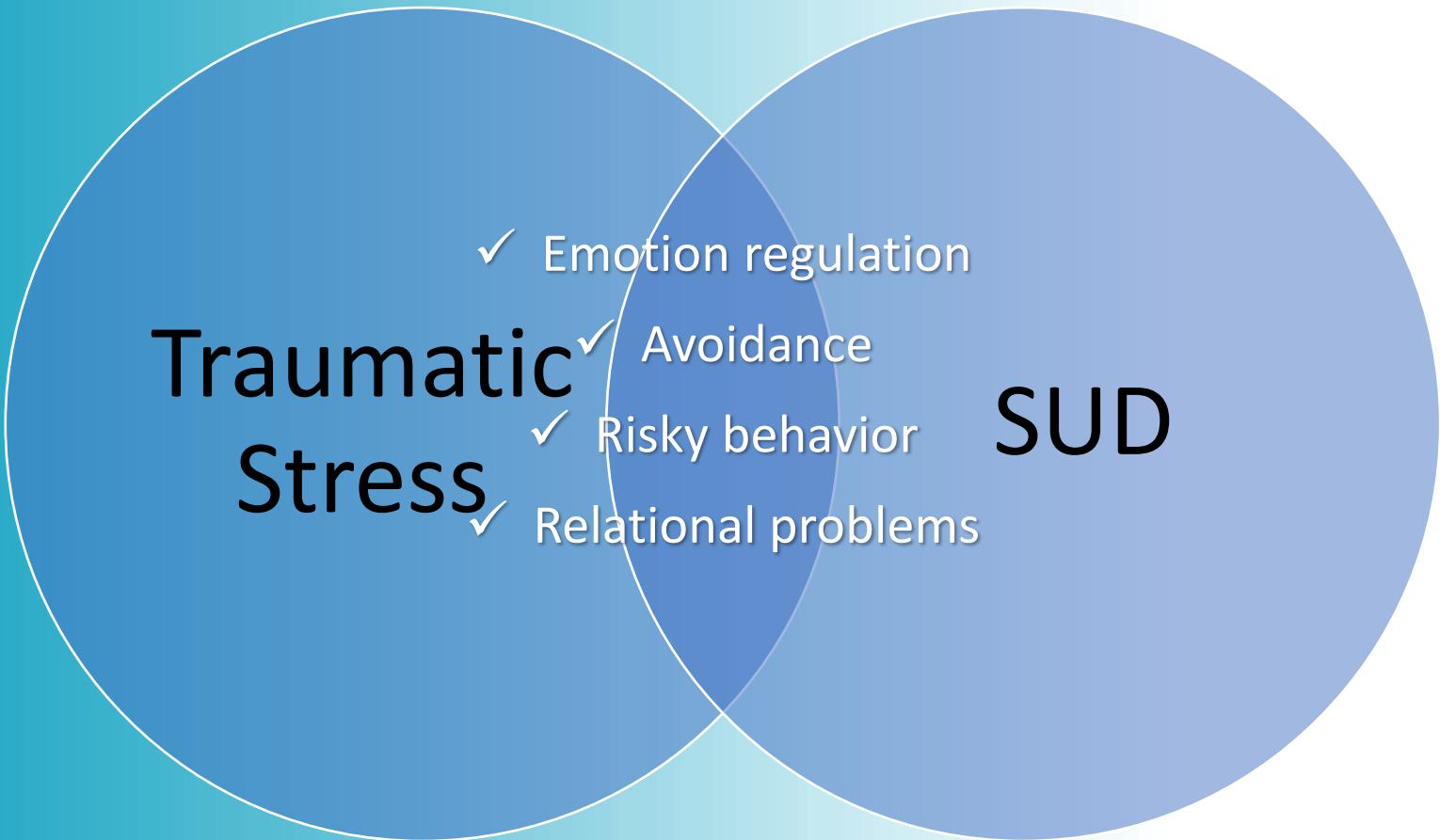
Temporal Pathways



Adapted from Hien, et al. (2021).



Symptom Picture





Screening and Measurement

- ✓ The Life Events Checklist for DSM-5 (LEC-5; Weathers et al., 2013)
- ✓ PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5; Weathers et al, 2013)
- ✓ Clinician Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5 (CAPS-5; Weathers et al., 2018)
- ✓ The Dissociative Experiences Scale-II (DES-II; Carlson & Putnam, 1993)
- ✓ Safety Behaviors Scale (Goodson, et al. 2025)

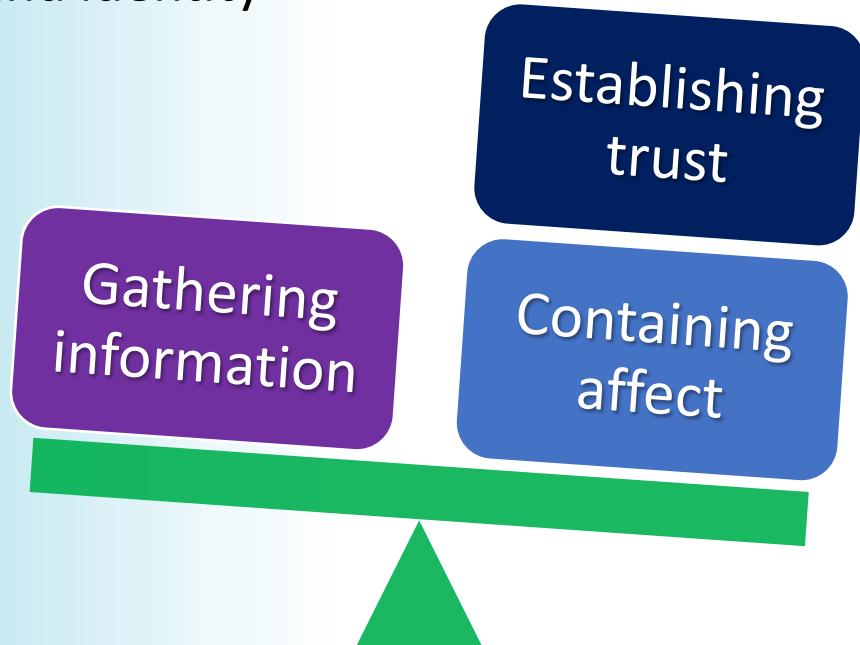
Assessment and Formulation

Key areas

- ✓ Emotion regulation capabilities
- ✓ Basic psychological needs
- ✓ Safety (e.g., self-injurious or suicidal behavior)
- ✓ Substance use and treatment history
- ✓ Social determinants of health
- ✓ Culture and identity

Assessment-as-treatment (Denning & Little, 2012)

- ✓ Compassionate Curiosity (Donnel Stern)
- ✓ Distress Tolerance and Mindfulness of Current Emotions (Linehan, 1994) and Substance Use Management (Tatarsky, 2002).





Assessment and Treatment

Co-create a treatment plan.

- ✓ "Meet them where they're at" and celebrate "any positive change (Tatarsky, 2002)."
- ✓ Consider whether to implement a consultation period and/or contingencies.
- ✓ Use the Triphasic Model (Herman, 1992).

Anticipate non-linear progress.

- ✓ Pace, Pause, Pivot (Hien & Litt, 2024)

Integrate dynamic and relational work and manualized, skills-based approaches.

Build a team and consider multiple modalities and levels of care.



The Triphasic Model

Herman (1992)

Stage 1

Safety & Stabilization

- ✓ Establish safety
- ✓ Reduce or tolerate acute symptoms

Stage 2

Remembrance & Mourning

- ✓ Revisit trauma memories
- ✓ Expand window of tolerance (Siegel, 1999)

Stage 3

Reconnection

- ✓ Re-connect with others in the community



Dynamic and Relational Work

Manage transference/ countertransference

- Recognize and respond to enactments (Davies & Frawley, 1994)
- Provide safety, structure, and support
- Offer opportunities for corrective emotional experiences

Dialogue with all “parts”.

Validate, join, and reflect.

Manualized, Skills-Based Approaches



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Evidence-Based Interventions	Stage	Temporal Focus	Integrative
Cognitive Processing Therapy (Resick et al., 2016)	2	Past	No
Concurrent Treatment of PTSD and SUD Using Prolonged exposure (COPE; Back et al., 2015)	2	Past	Yes
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Linehan, 2015)	1	Present	No
Prolonged Exposure (Foa et al., 2019)	2	Past	No
Seeking Safety (Najavits, 2002)	1	Present	Yes
Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR)	1-2	Past and Present	No



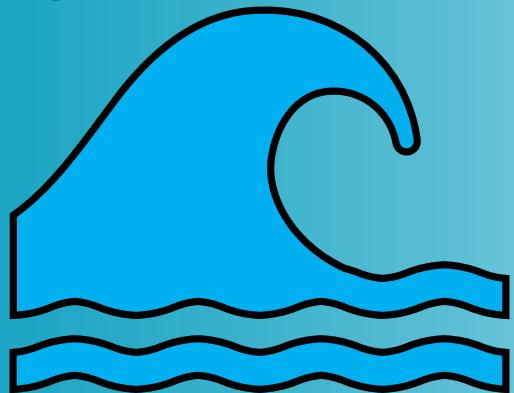
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Mindfulness Intervention

Mindfulness-Based Relapse
Prevention (Bowen, et al, 2011)

- Mindful inquiry
- Urge surfing



Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness
(Treleaven, 2018)

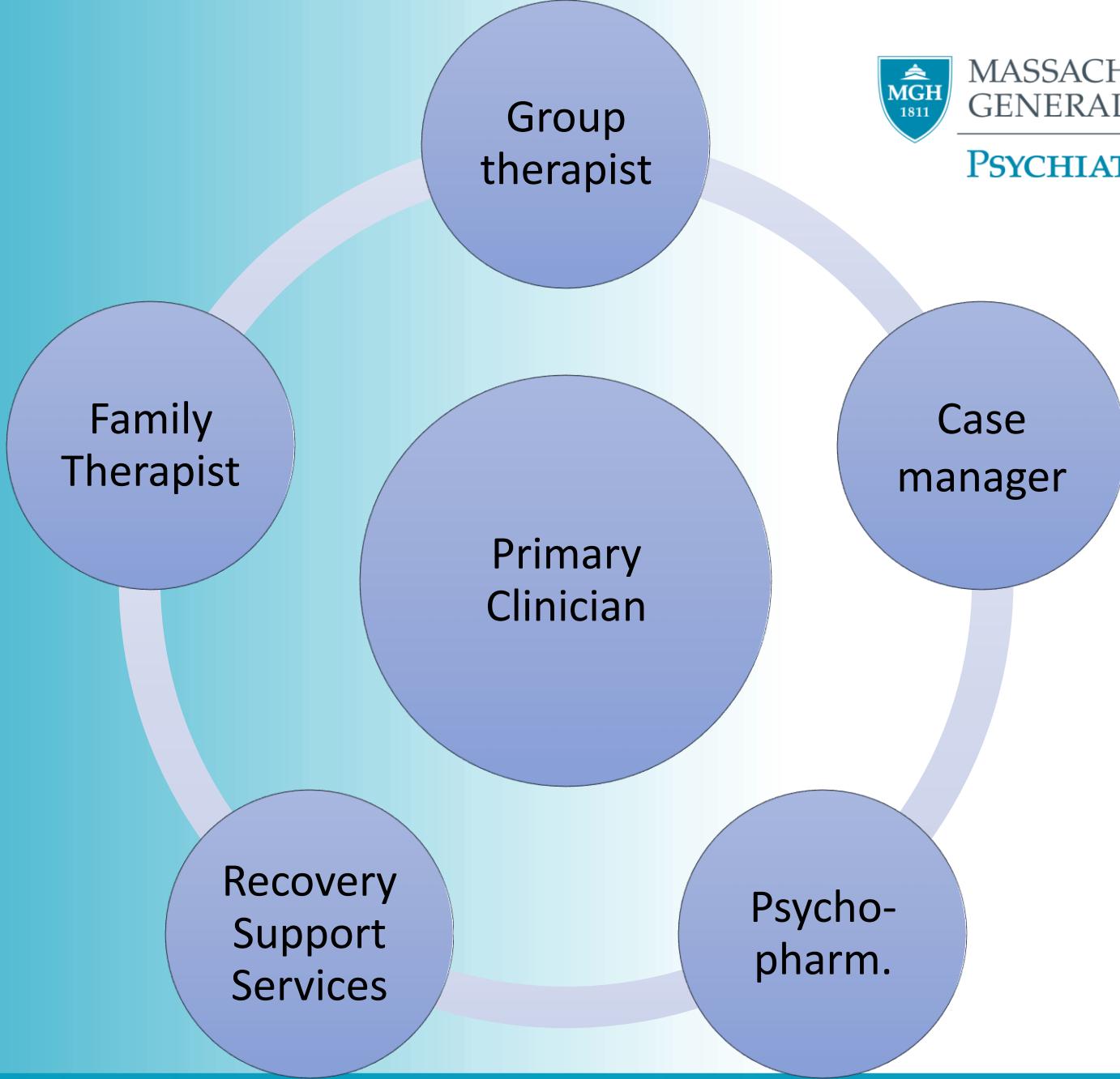
Hyper-Arousal

Window of Tolerance



Hypo-Arousal

Build a Team



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