

# Beyond the Courtroom

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**LODESTAR**  
DIRECTION WHEN YOU'VE LOST YOUR TRUE NORTH  
[attorneywellnessproject.com](http://attorneywellnessproject.com)

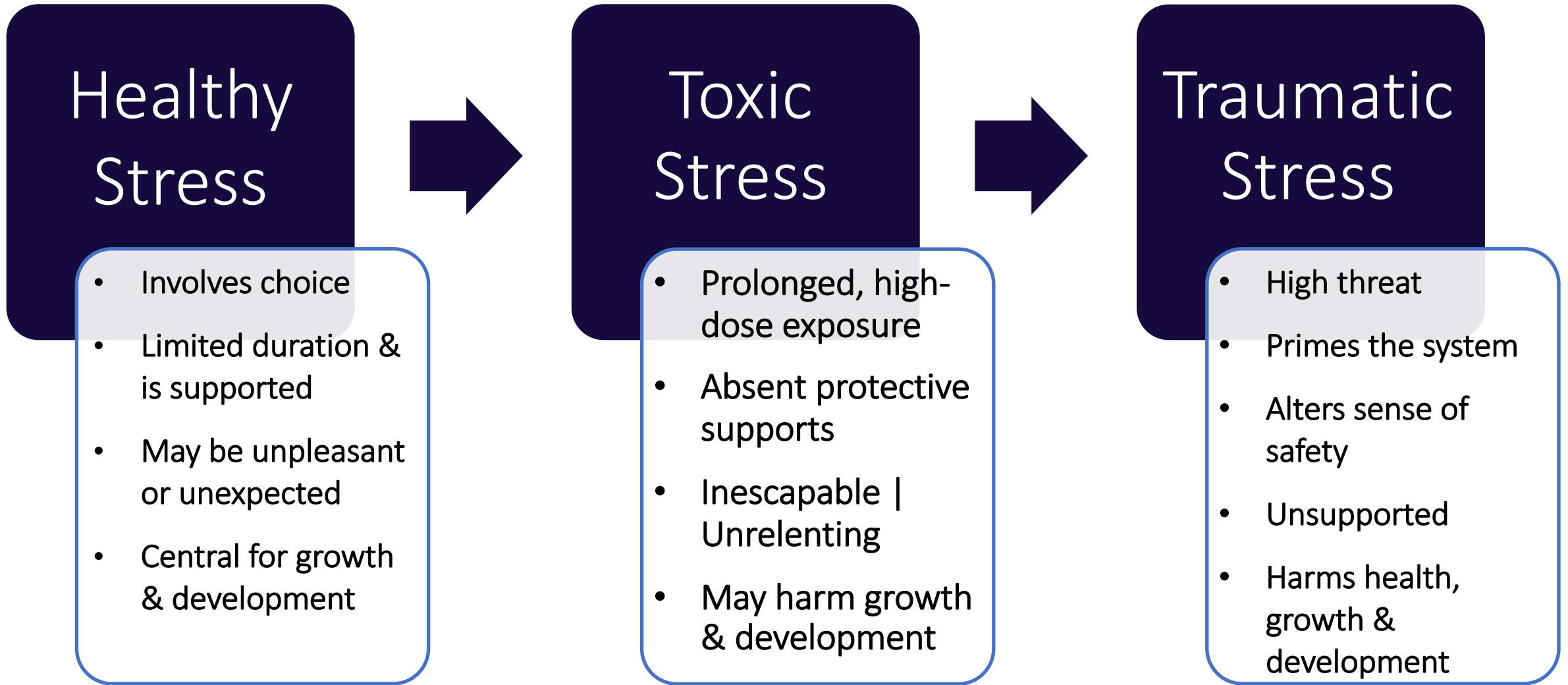
LODESTAR  
DIRECTION WHEN YOU'VE LOST YOUR TRUE NORTH

# HEALTHY Stress:

- Hardier and more adaptable
- Learn new skills
- Gain confidence
- Become less fearful
- Adopt a positive attitude towards stress
- Increases capacity to stress-mitigate

*Healthy*  
depends on

- A sense of control | agency
- Scaffolding & support
- Resourcing & access
- Learned skills & techniques
- Capacity & skill to frame stressors
- Opportunities to rest, restore, & reflect
- Previous exposure | experiences



# Stress -> Trauma Amplification

- Loss of control
- Danger | Threat: *physical and social*
- Distrust | Betrayal
- Exposure | Overwhelm
- Lack of Resources | Access
- Diminished Rest | Reflection
- Isolation, loneliness, disconnection
- ***Prolonged High Uncertainty***

# The Impact of Chronic Uncertainty

Is metabolically inefficient & taxing = exhaustion & diminished wellbeing

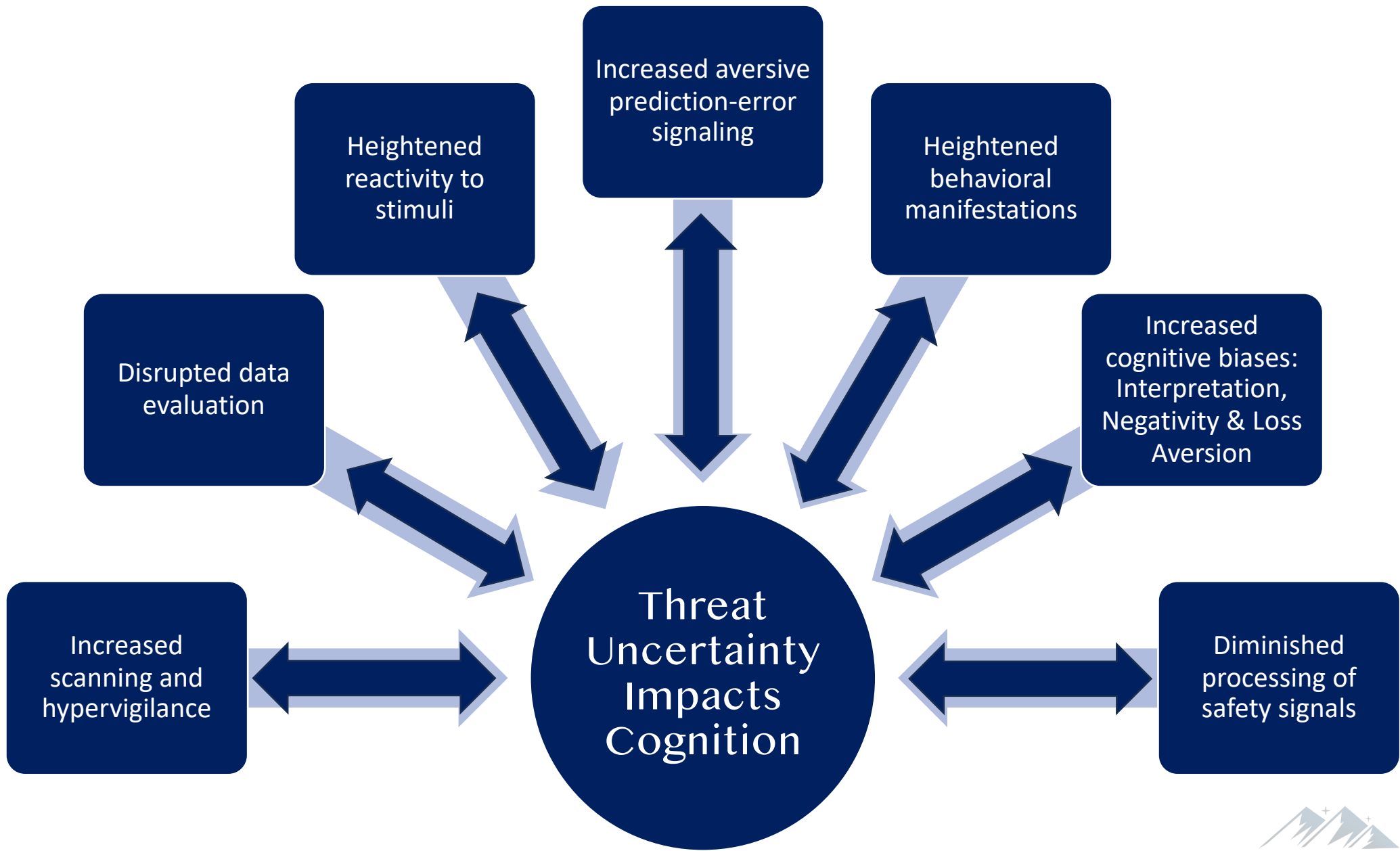
Erodes sense of safety & heightens reactivity

Disrupts autonomic process that govern routine action

Diminishes efficient & effective access to problem solving

Increases the rate and intensity of cognitive distortions & biases

Upregulates threat scanning, lowers activation threshold



# Trauma

*Exposure* to  
an *Event*  
and/or *Environments*  
that we *Experience*  
and has a lasting, negative *Effect*

# SECONDARY & VICARIOUS TRAUMATIC STRESS

- A known occupational hazard
- The result of Limbic Resonance
- Listening to stories of trauma stimulates the same area of our brains as the storyteller
- Our brains process secondary & vicarious trauma like primary trauma

# TRAUMA OF MORAL INJURY

- Distress that arises from situations that violate our conscience or integrity
- Can manifest when we experience betrayal by those in positions of authority
- May represent a relational break with SELF or what we believed about the world

# ACTIVATION:

*REACTIVITY TO REAL OR PERCEIVED THREAT OR TO PREVIOUS THREAT OR HARM*

May not make sense in the context of the situation

May be greater than the situation requires

May be difficult to interrupt or interpret

- May be frightening or confusing for all involved
- May not respond to usual interventions
- Typical responses to activation may be amplifying

## Disrupting Toxic or Traumatic Stress

- Control | Choice | Agency
- Scaffolding & Support
- Access to Resources
- Certainty | Clarity
- Trust & Transparency
- Safety: Physical & Psychological
- Opportunities to Rest & Reflect
- Supportive Connections

# Creating the Conditions

<b>Build A Container</b>	<b>Anchor in the Relational</b>	<b>Make it Safe</b>
Trust Transparency Inclusion Connection Psychological Safety Anti-Oppression Values Curiosity Power-sharing Go-Backs	Repetition Routine Pacing Storytelling Context Connection Transparency Clarity Modeling	To Experiment To Challenge To Speak the Truth To be Vulnerable To Connect To Explore To Make Mistakes To Be Creative To Take Risks



# Trauma-Responsive Engagement

- **Realize** that traumatic stress exposure and harm are universal
- **Remember** every encounter carries risk of activation
- **Recognize** expressions of activation, harm, and trauma when they occur
- **Respond** from a practiced, expanding set of skills
- Build cultures | create conditions that **Resist** re-harming
- ***Restore by Resourcing***: with agency, trust, safety, connection, belonging, clarity, compassion

# Takeaways

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**Operationalize *creating the conditions*:** Wellbeing can't sit on the margins; it belongs in infrastructure.

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**Trust is built through behavior, not messaging:** Consistency, transparency, and follow-through create safety.

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**Proximity creates protection:** The shorter the distance between leaders and staff, the stronger the system coherence.

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**Connection and readiness mitigate traumatic stress exposure:** The same principles that stabilize individuals also stabilize systems.



*Our brokenness does not  
diminish our brilliance*

*Our shadows do not  
extinguish our light*

*Our pain is not pathology*

*It is Path...*

*Dr. K*