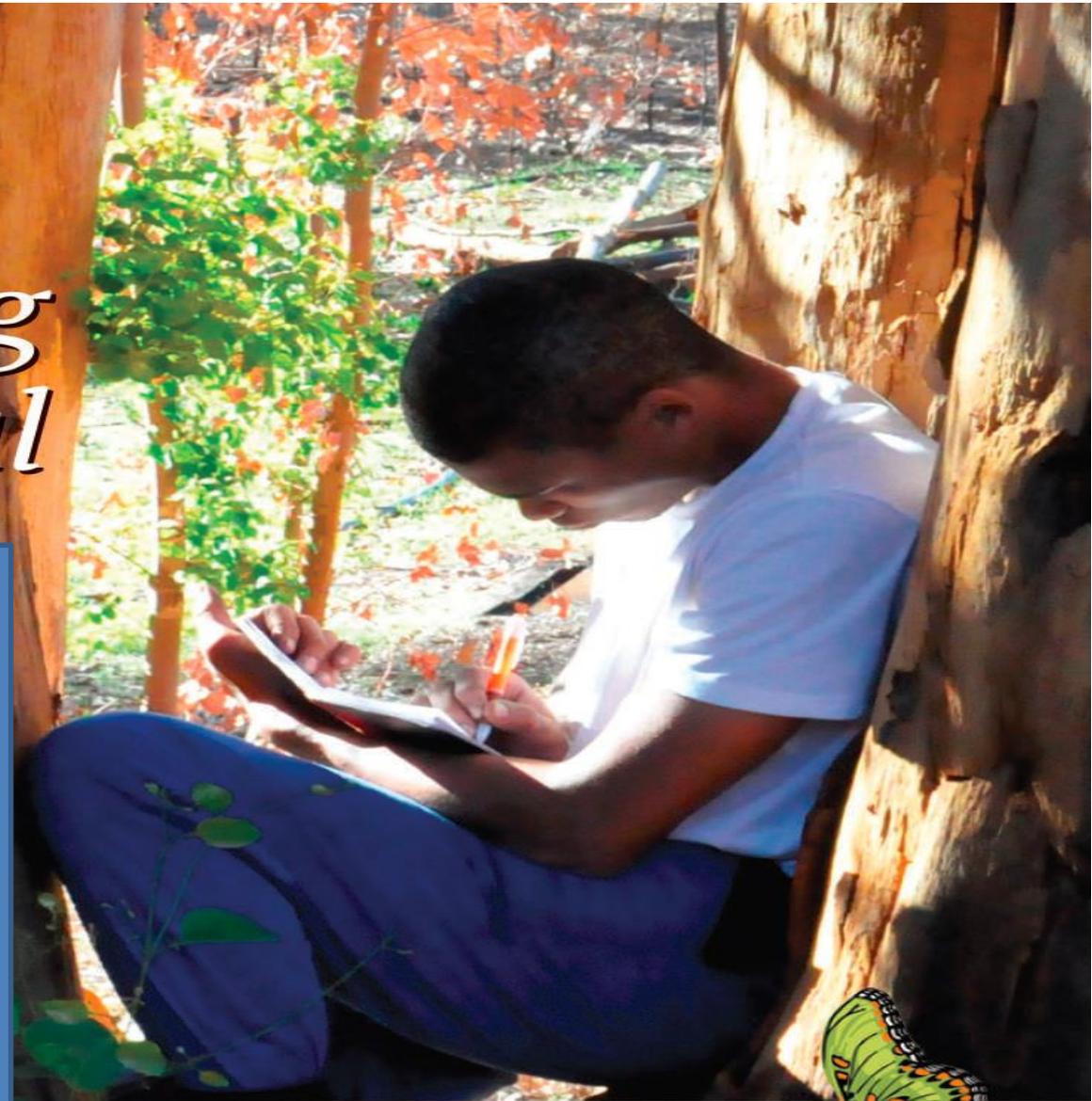


Unleashing Potential

PRESENTATION TO THE SAFER
WESTERN CAPE CONFERENCE
13-14 NOVEMBER 2018

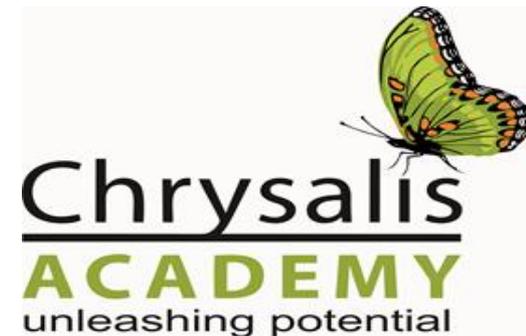
Some reflections from the Chrysalis
Academy on Youth Development
through a Holistic approach:
Disrupting disconnection,
disengagement, exclusion and
violence.



Chrysalis
ACADEMY

An attempt to understand

- Reflection and insights based on the CA's legacy of 18 years with over 9000 youth, and my personal experiences of over 7 and a half years working directly with 3931 young people across the Western Cape, who are largely Black, from urban and rural communities characterised by high crime rates, violence and poverty, generally described as NEET
- These reflections are an attempt to comprehend from below, *under-stand* and use *ground-up knowledge*
(Bulhan, 2015, Malotane Henkeman, 2017)



Framing the question

What happens to young people who are subjected to ongoing structural, psychological, symbolic and physical violence and more importantly what can be done to disrupt the trauma/violence

(Weis & Fine, 2001; Malotane Henkeman, 2018)



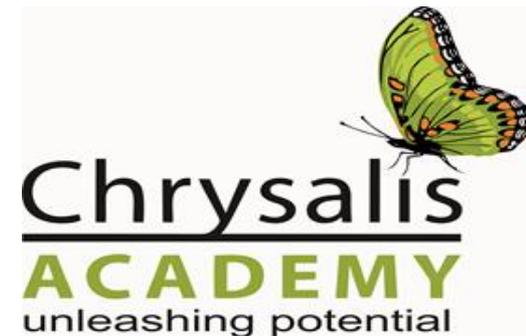
What has happened to our youth?

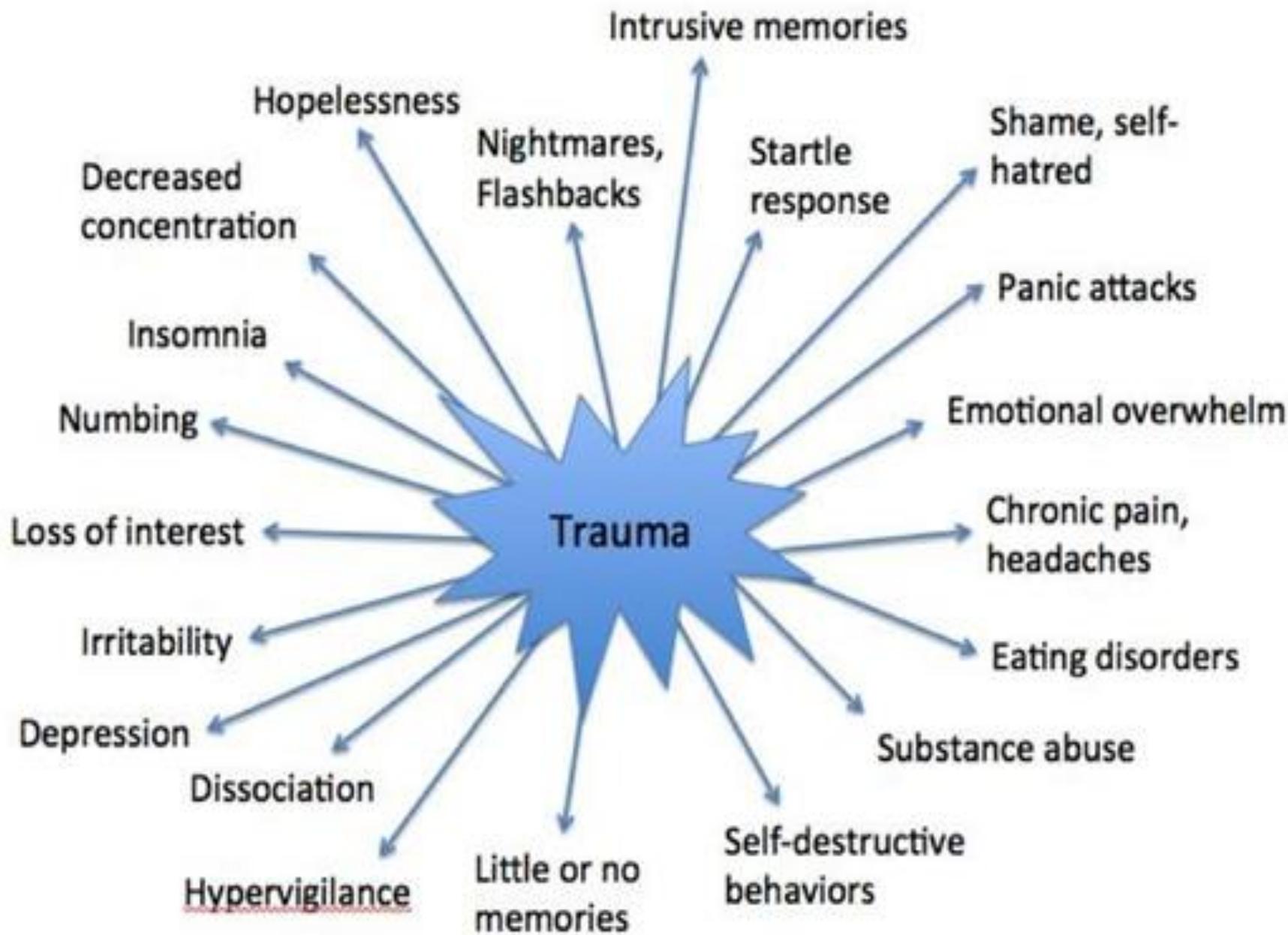
- Continuum of risks as opposed to a continuum of assets (Rios, 2011; Garbarino, 2015; Pinnock, 2016)
- Continuum: Poverty; neglect; absent fathers; alcoholism; violence; unemployment; subjected to a low quality education system; low levels of literacy and numeracy
- Trauma is how you respond to what happens to you
- A careful examination shows: Trauma is complex, historical, trans-historical and multi-layered (Van der Kolk, 2014; Wolynn, 2016)



HOW DO YOUTH TURN UP AT THE ACADEMY?

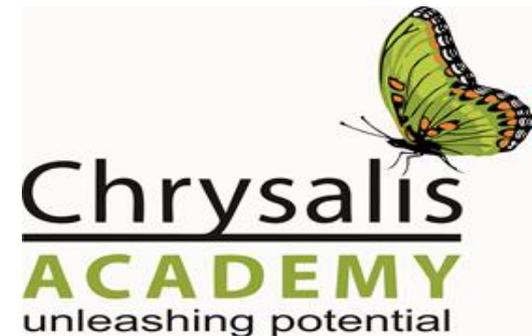
- Disconnection from self; disconnection from others; disengaged; little hope
- Deep sense of powerlessness which is at the heart of traumatisation
- **Males:** Un-metabolised anger, behaviour that is very externalised; drugs, sex, alcohol, gangs
- **Women:** Low self-esteem; low confidence; shame; struggling to find voice; turning inward; self-harm, self-hatred, drugs, sex
- Nervous system that is wired for fight/flight





Working with Trauma

- How do we work with trauma so that it is a catalyst for change, that it propels us forward?
- How do we make visible the link between individual trauma and the social, political and economic structures of society?
- What are the pedagogical, ethical, programmatic, human resource implications of working with trauma?
- How does a young person move from a traumatised state to healing; How do we understand the nature of personal transformation
- CA: Imprints (Think of the hose pipe: Knot, no flow, crystallises into an imprint)
(Mansoor, 2009)





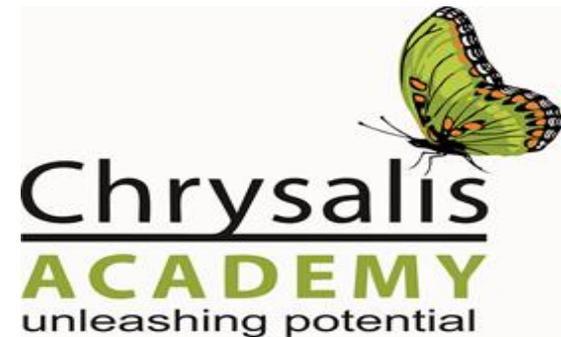
What is Chrysalis and how is it a container to disrupt trauma?

- Youth development organisation now in its 18th year of operation, based in Tokai, WC
- Provides a 3 month residential programme for youth across WC aged 18-25
- Programme is holistic: ranging from “life skills” to wilderness work, technical and vocational training
- The 3 months is augmented with a year internship and a 5 year aftercare
- Participation is voluntary & competitive
- 3 cohorts per year: 180 and 200 youth



How do we disrupt Trauma: First step
in disruption

RECOGNISE AND NAME
EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE
DEALING WITH: “WHAT IS THE
MISCHIEF WE ARE TRYING TO
CURE”



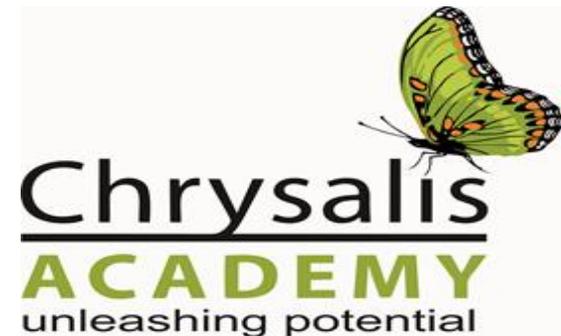
Cont. How do we Disrupt Trauma?

- An orchestrated approach: Deliberate and intentional
- Aimed at cultivating personal mastery and deepening resilience
- Continuum of care and support: 3 months, 12 months internship and an aftercare, **not a focus on numbers** rooted in an approach of abundance as opposed to deficit (Whole, potential, more than one thing)



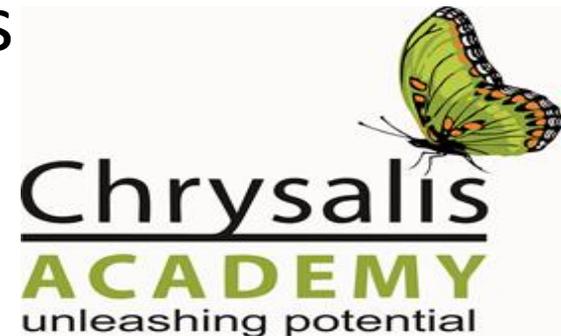
- Holistic approach within a holistic field: Work on the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual dimensions (nothing is excluded, we embrace everything)
- What is the holistic field?

Structured and regimented approach:
Physical and psychological safety;
sense of belonging;



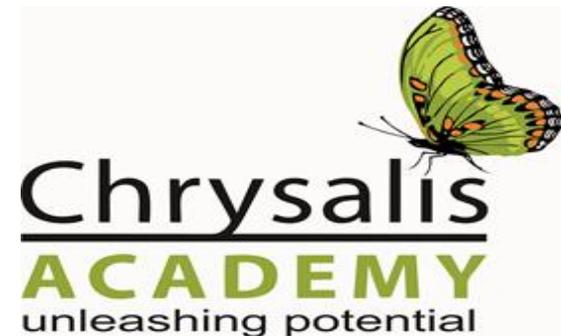
Cont. How do we Disrupt Trauma?

- Resonates with Powell's views that people need institutional, political, social and conceptual space for the emergence of new relationships and a new way of being that exists beyond isolation and separation (Powell, 2005)
- Rhythm and predictability soothes the nervous system

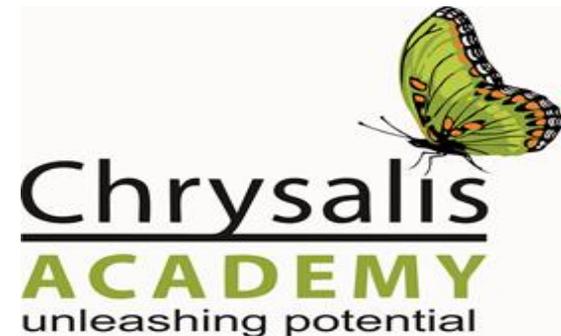


Cont. How do we Disrupt Trauma?

- Extrication: A beautiful space away from home; 3 months
- Experiential learning: Practising new way of being
- Language of Belonging, Possibility and Love

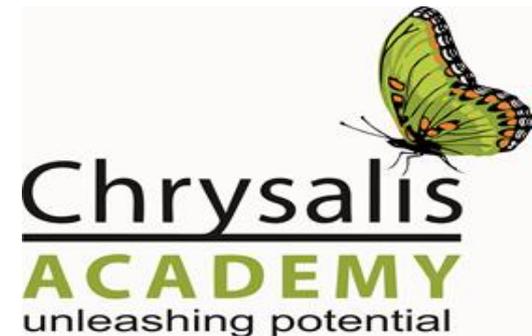


- Code of conduct that spell our collective agreements (Transparency and expectations)
- Experienced and passionate staff: Knowledge of the developing adolescent brain
- Architecture and Andragogy: (Debrief sessions to cultivate reflection and allowing youth to be **SEEN, HEARD and LOVED**)



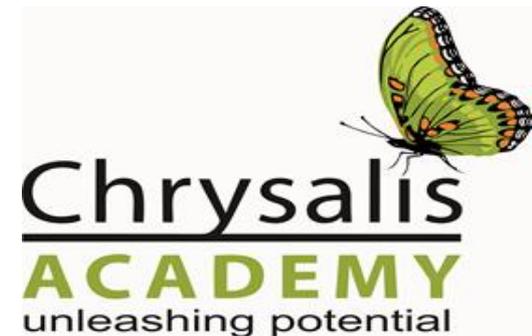
Cont. How do we Disrupt Trauma?

- Moves them from Limbic system to the pre-frontal cortex
- Skilful work not re-traumatisation
- Specific Body-based modalities and mindfulness tools/ practices
Council methodology (equality); deep compassionate listening;
- Body-based modalities: Disrupt trauma and develop somatic intelligence
- Involvement of the whole ecosystem: Families

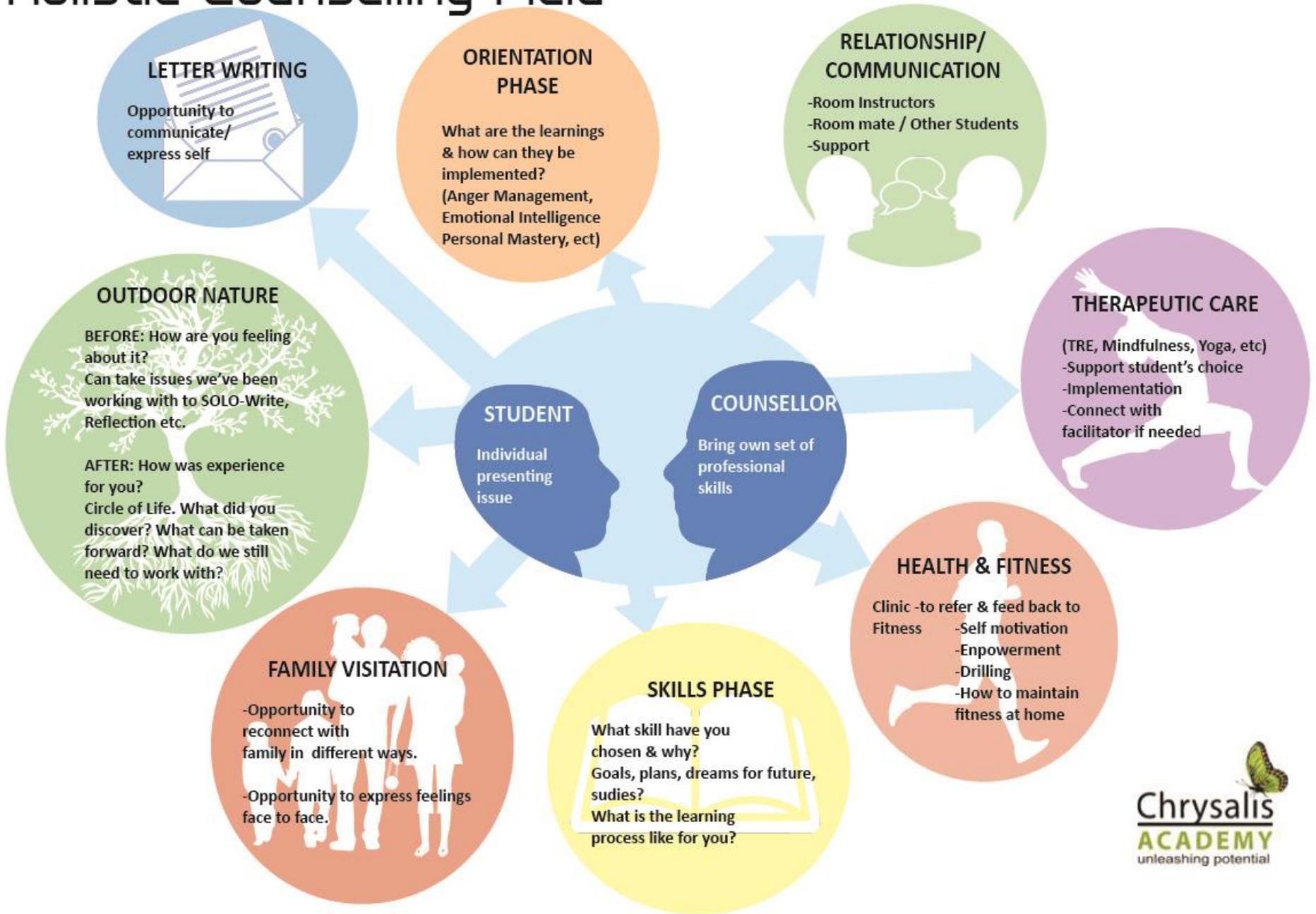


Cont. How do we Disrupt Trauma?

- Use of wilderness work and silence: Mirrors transformation and accelerates growth & allows youth to break their “silence” on issues
- Counselling and therapeutic work
- Peer support through Youth instructors
- Ongoing and continuous role-modelling (How will they know what love is?)
- Cultivate active citizenship through service and mobilising for systemic changes



Holistic Counselling Field



**INNOVATIVE
PEER SUPPORT**
Group work &
Chrysalis

Room

Block

Hostel

Orientation

Outdoor

Skills

Community
Service

Fitness

Therapeutic
Care

Graduation

Clubs

Learning
through
belonging

I see you; You
see me



Implications for schools?

- Re-look at what happens in the classroom and in schools generally
- Re-look at curriculum and incorporate the holistic approach as a model (identify pilot schools)
- Youth Peer model at schools and in communities
- Move away from punitive measures to building belonging, connection and showing what Love is.
- Buy-in and contracting with families
- Community as a driver of change: Gifts, Generosity and Possibility (Block, 2011)
- Change the narrative about youth: they are more than drug users and gangsters

