

Stress reduction

- reduction in challenging behaviours
- better basis for wellbeing



By identifying stressors and work with stress reducing strategies in families, where there are children with special needs, we support the families in reducing the conflict level and enhance wellbeing for the families



Michael Harboe Kvistgaard

Consultant in special needs

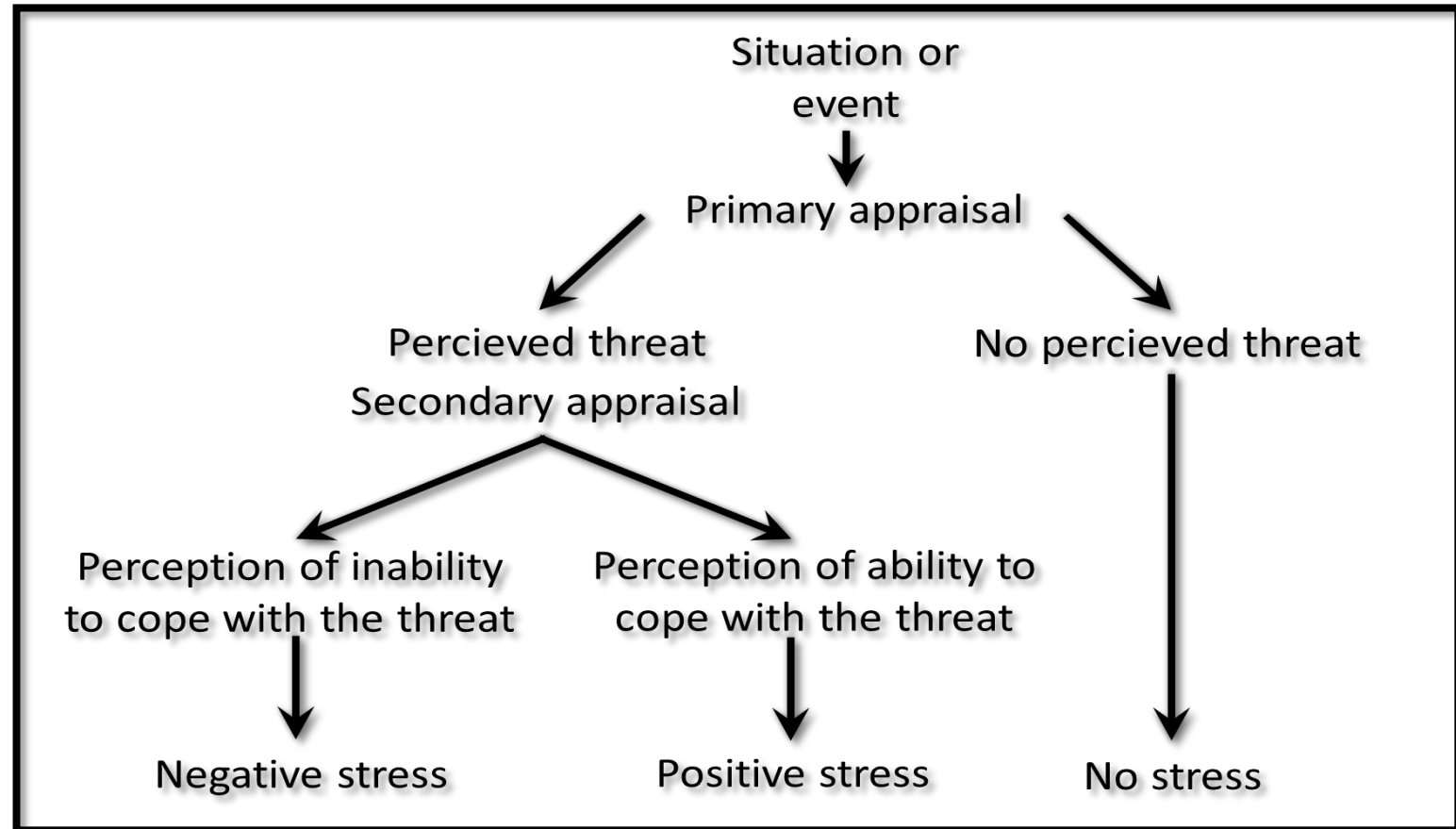
Master of Positive Psychology

Bachelor of Social Education (specialized in health & sports)

Instructor at Atlass, Studio III & EarlyBird

The transactional model of stress

All situations or events are potentially stressful

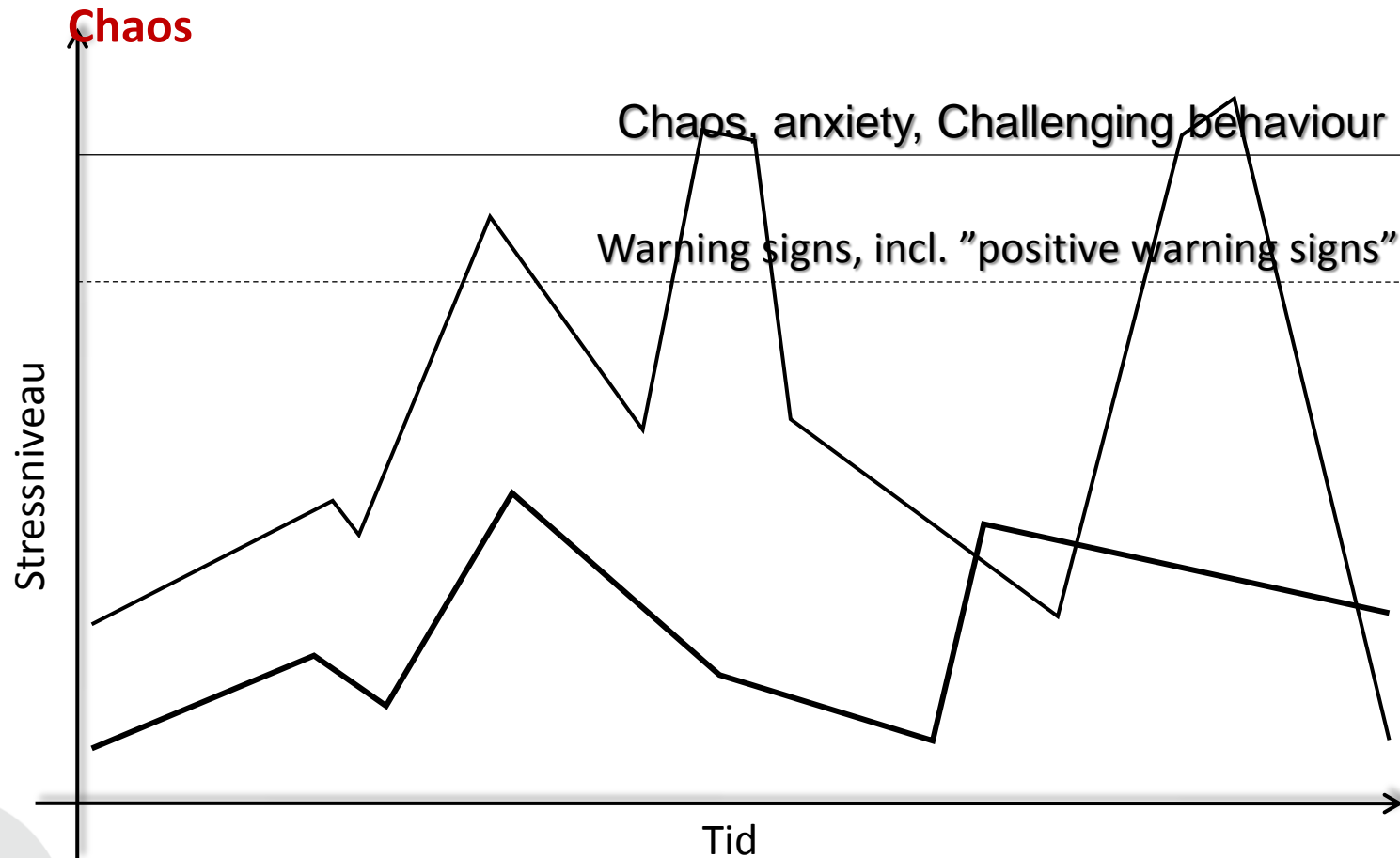


Intuitive appraisal



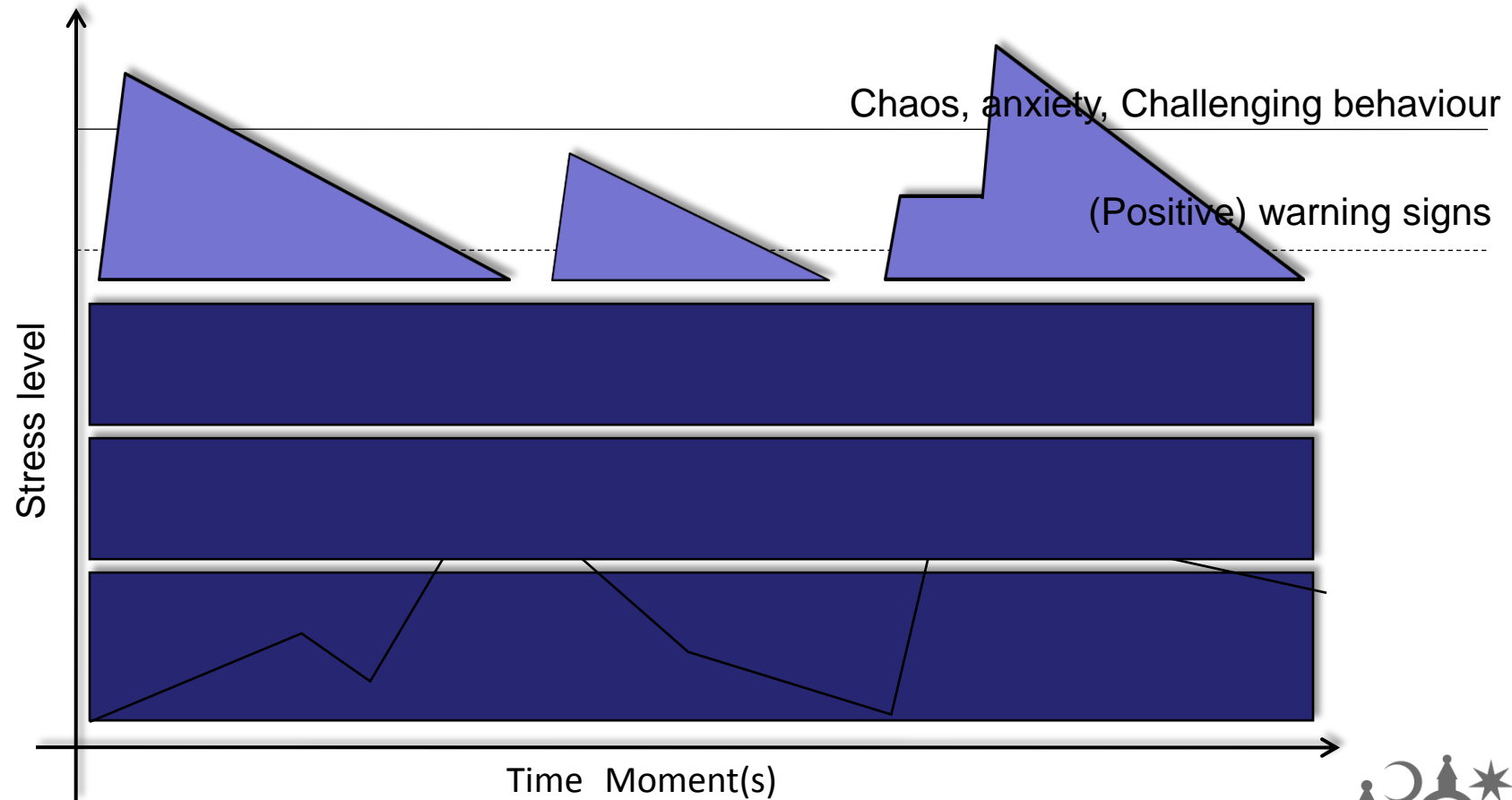
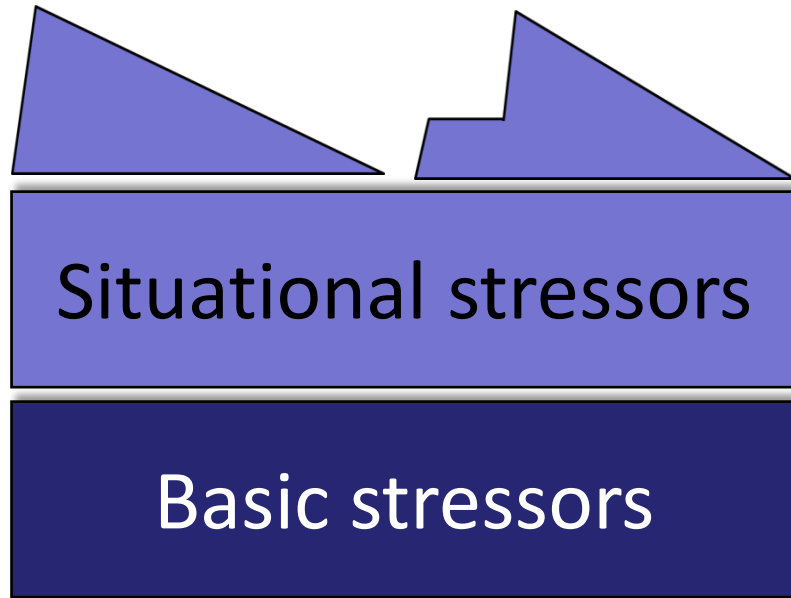
The Hejlskov Uhrskov stress model in autism

Model of stress and vulnerability



The Hejlskov Uhrskov stress model in autism

Model of stress and vulnerability

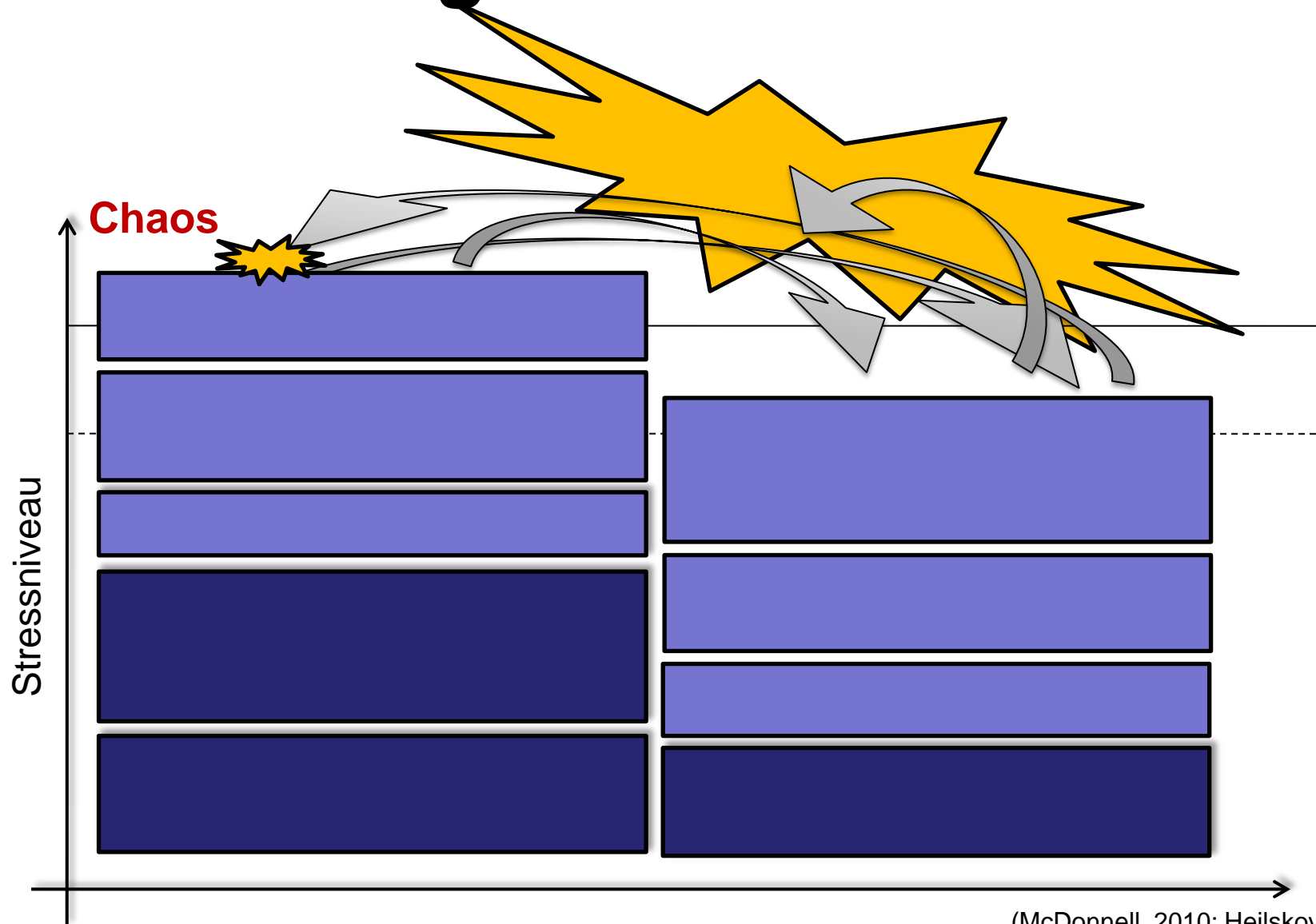


Typical symptoms of stress

<p>Behaviorally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced ability to perform• Keeping to one self• Indecision – can't complete tasks / decide• Conflicts with others• Lack of engagement• Increased substance abuse	<p>Cognitively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor concentration• Reduced short-term memory• Confusion• Excessive attention to detail• Learning disabilities
<p>Physically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Dryness in the throat and mouth• Tensions• Palpitations• Dizziness• Indigestion• Difficulty sleeping	<p>Emotionally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mood swings• Irritation• Impatience• Restlessness• Anger / aggression, cynicism• Guilt, anxiety• Lowered mood / depression



Emotional contagion



(McDonnell, 2010; Hejlskov & Uhrskov, 2007)



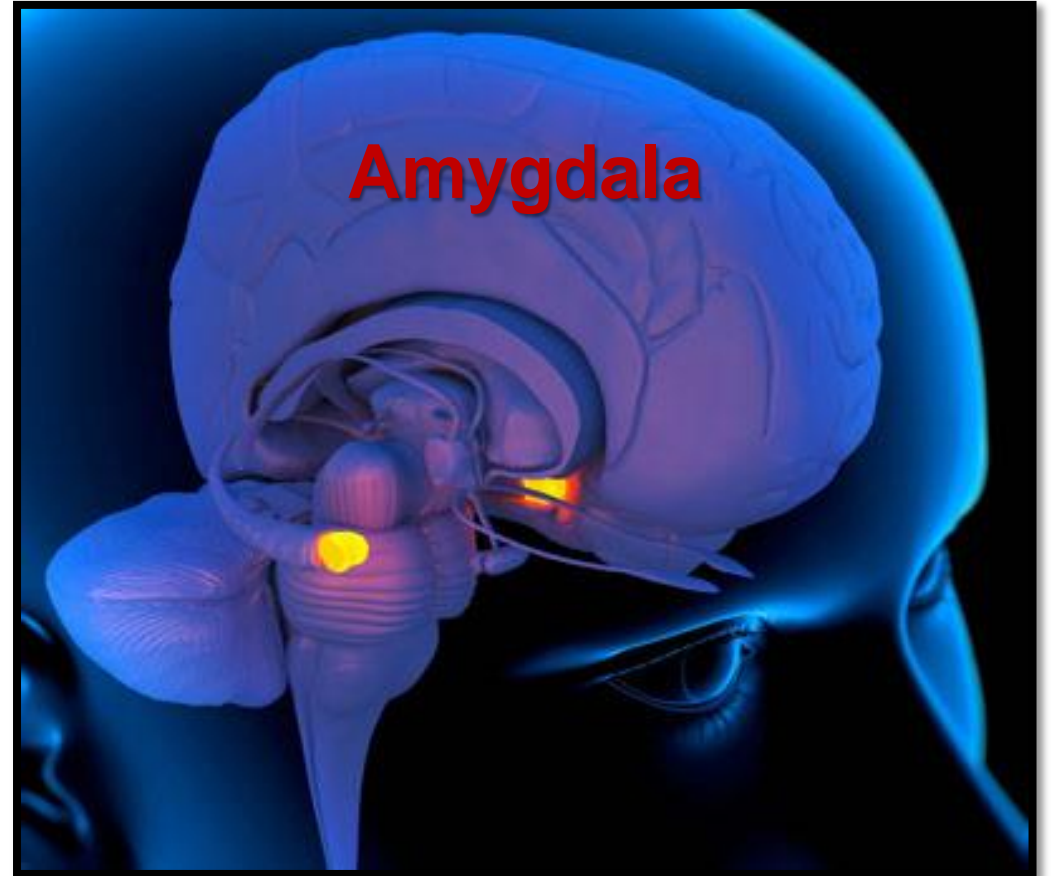
An example



Amygdala hijack

”When we feel that our interests or our social status is threatened, we are capable of reacting unconsciously to protect or defend our position before we know what we are doing. Usually this behavior compounds our problems by increasing the level of conflict.”

(Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 369)



Stressors & warning signs

Situational stressors:

- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼



Basic stressors:

- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼



Warning signs (incl. positive)

- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼
- ▼



Coping strategies & protective factors

The person's coping strategies:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶



Parents / staffs coping strategies:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶



Human/ personal protective factors:

Is stress reducing:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

Might be stress reducing:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶



Structural (incl. surroundings) protective factors:

Is stress reducing:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

Might be stress reducing:

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶



Low arousal approach

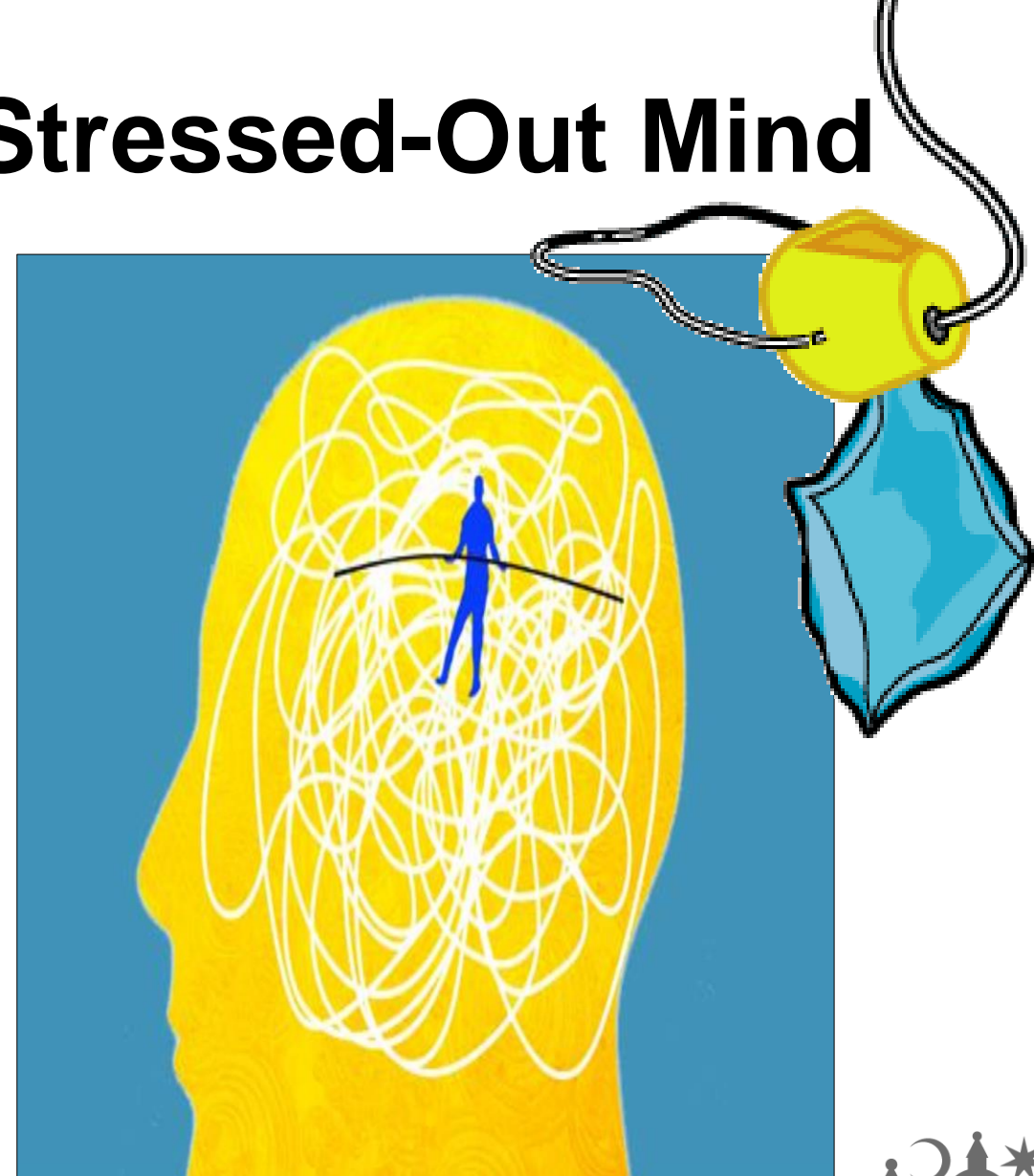


Low arousal
NB: Low arousal does not mean "doing nothing!"
→ Increased awareness: Do I need to have a problem- or emotion focused approach



4 Simple Strategies for a Stressed-Out Mind

1. Deep and slow breathing
2. Slow down
3. Soften the body
4. Be mindful of a single task

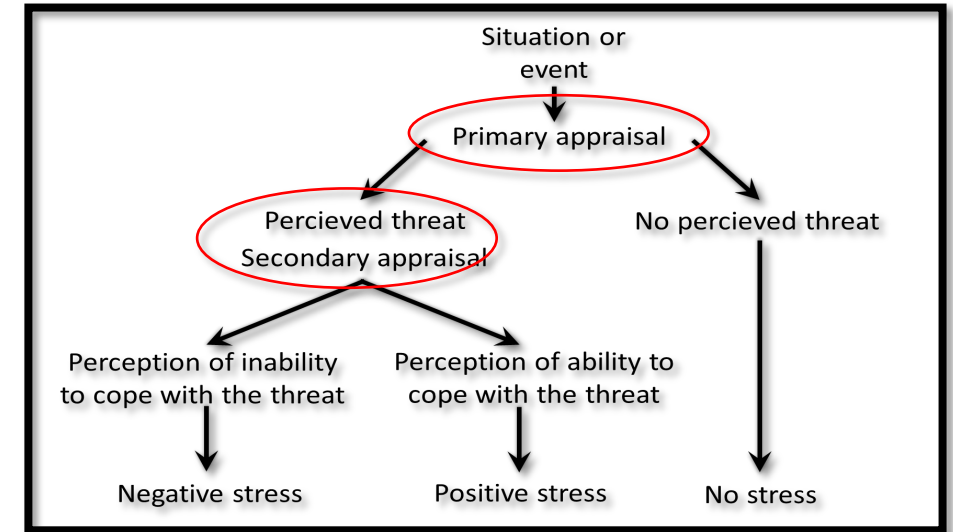


Positive Reappraisal

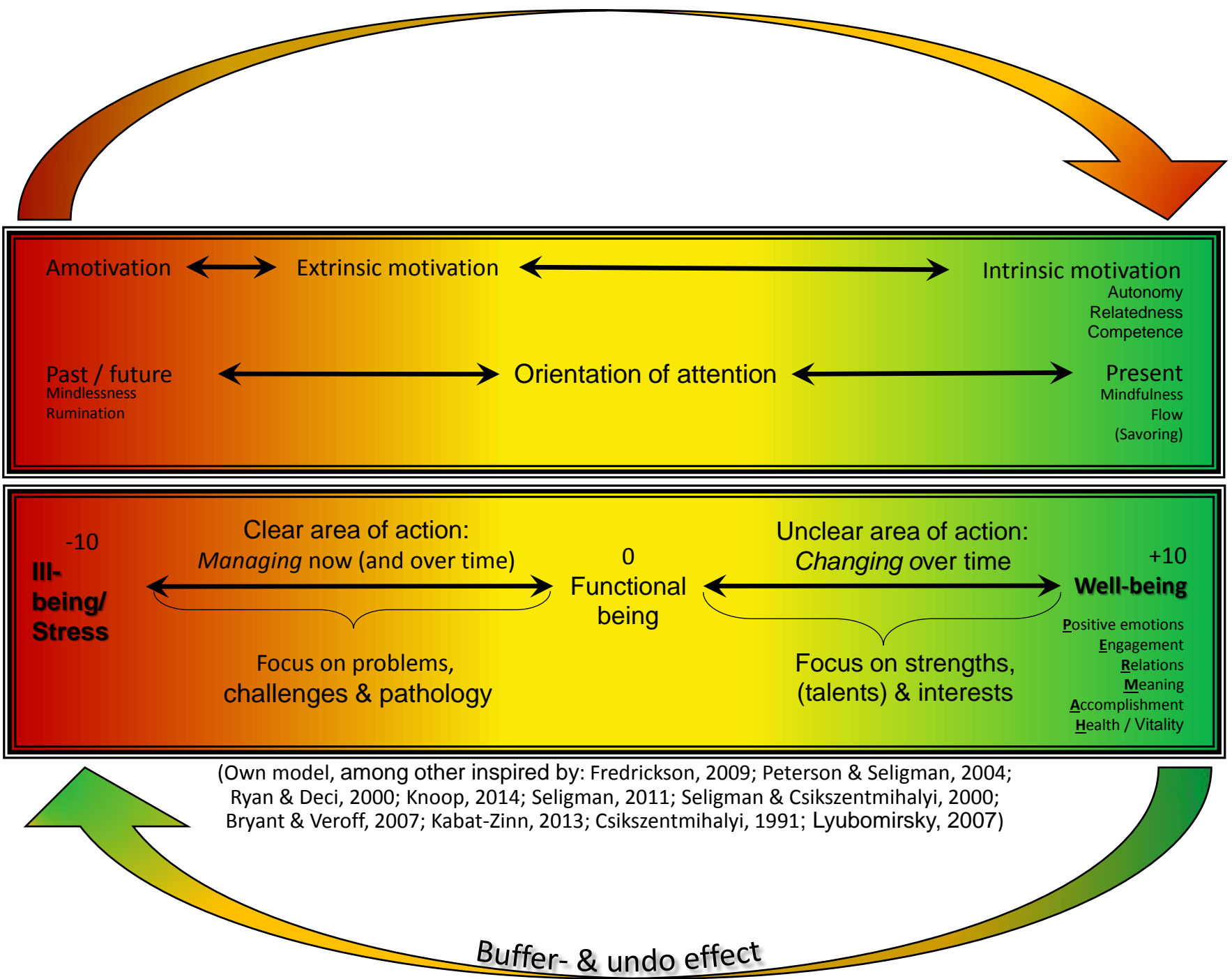
an emotion-focused coping strategy

”(...) it can be particularly helpful to keep in mind from moment to moment that it is not so much the stressors in our lives but how we see them and what we do with them that determines how much we are at their mercy. If we can change the way we see, we can change the way we respond.

(Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 241)



Reducing challenging behaviour by increasing wellbeing





Thank you for your attention

E-mail: mhk@aarhus.dk

