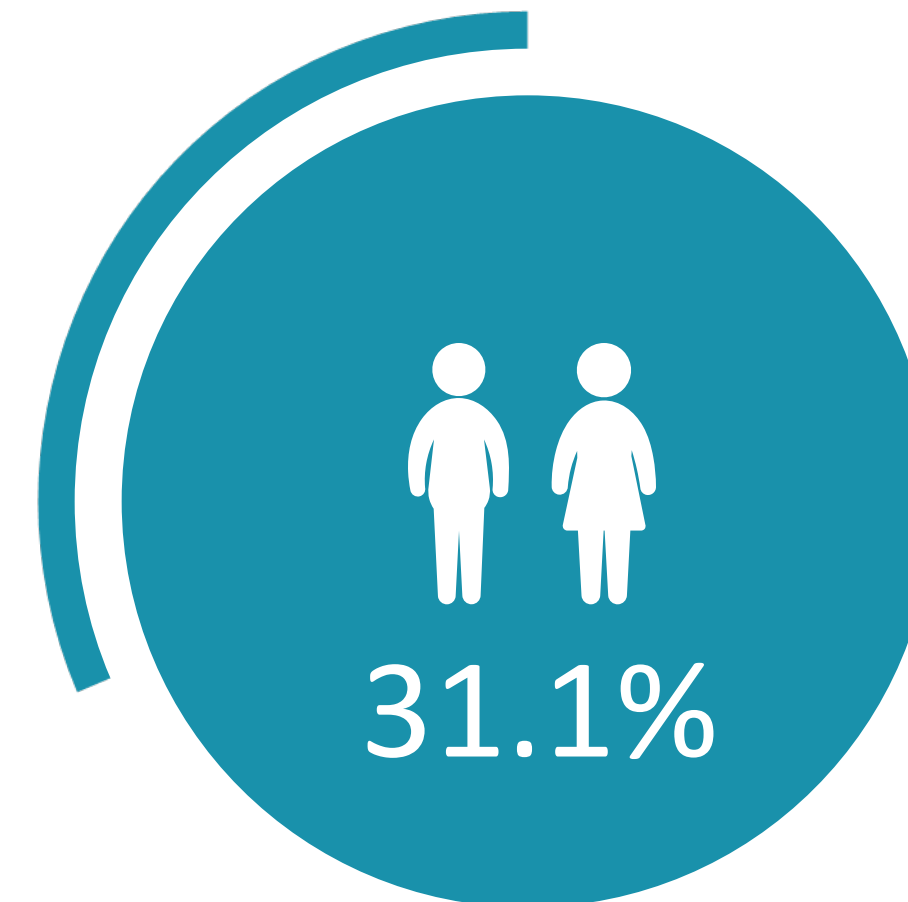


Tennessee Youth in Custody Less than 12 months

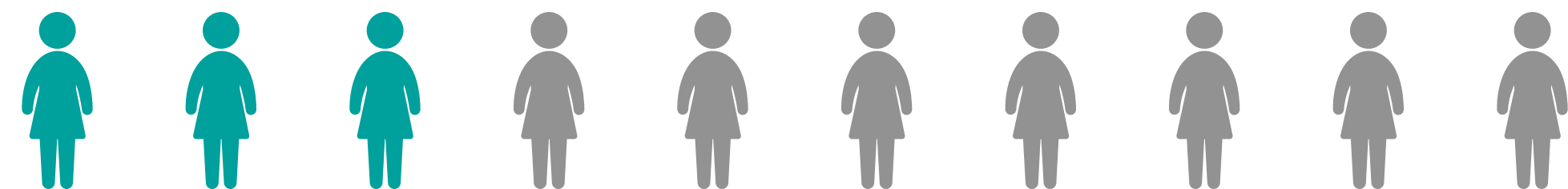
**One or Two
Placements**



**Three or More
Placements**

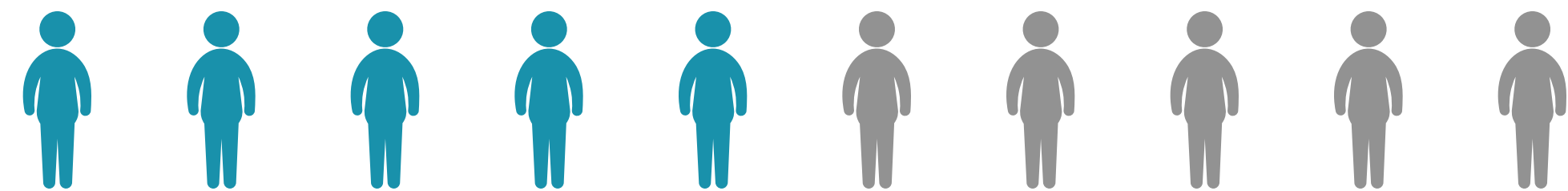
2019 Data by Custody Length

Youth in custody
<12 months



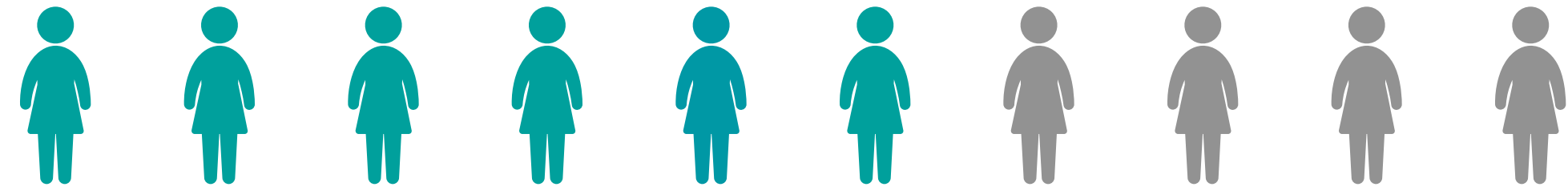
31% have experienced
3+ moves

Youth in custody
12-24 months



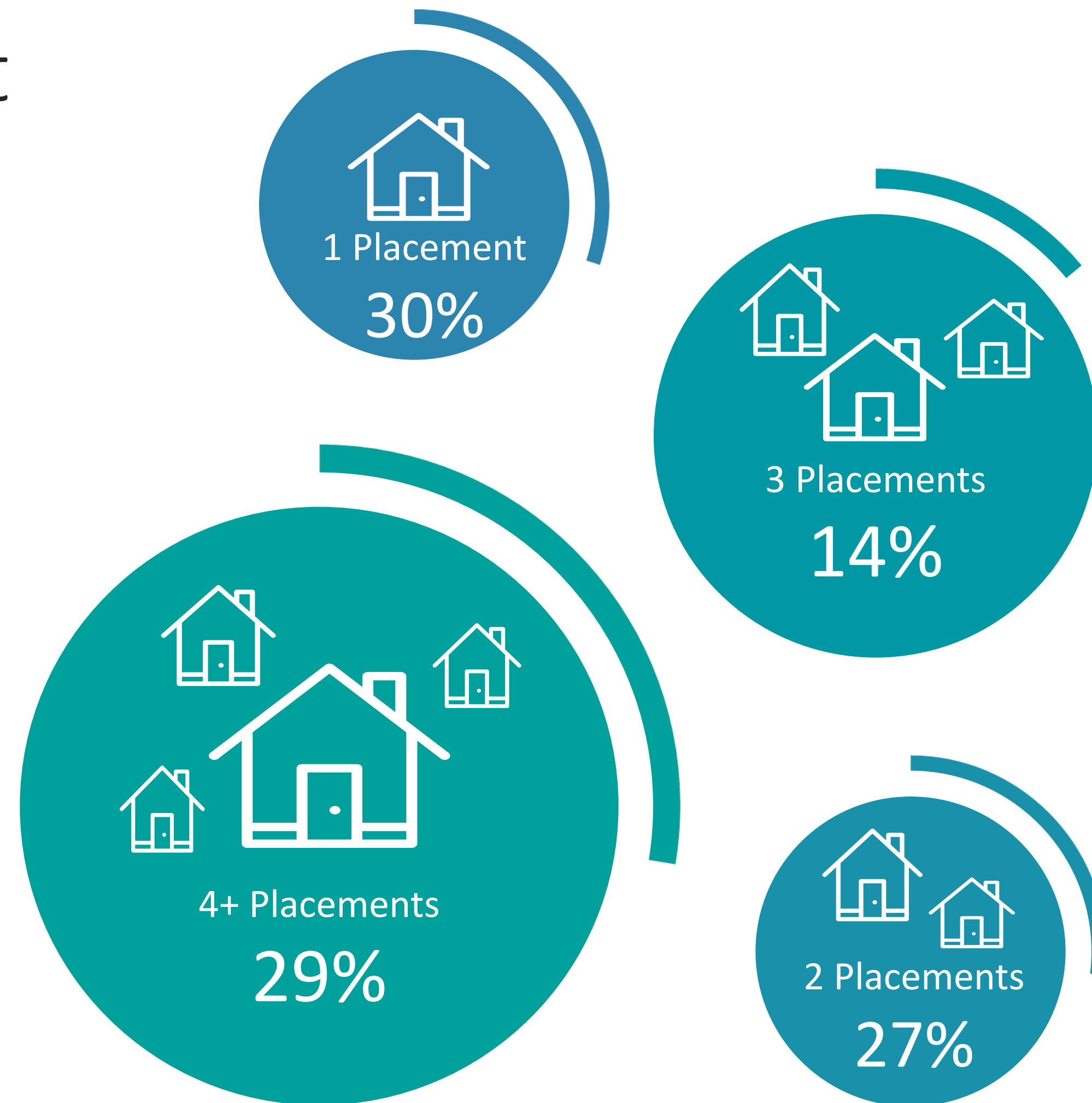
49.8% have
experienced 3+ moves

Youth in custody
> 24 months



64.7% have
experienced 3+ moves

2020 Snapshot





MANY MOVES ARE POSITIVE

- ✓ Return Home
- ✓ Reunification with Siblings
- ✓ Move to pre-adoptive placement



ALL MOVES ENTAIL LOSS

“The strongest theme was the memory of placement moves as a time of experiencing profound losses”

The Experience of Moving

((

you lose friends easy
because in foster care
**you just kind of drift
away**

Carmen
22-year-old
32 placements
0 returns home

((


I felt like **I was a piece of
luggage or a piece of
property**, it's like you are
getting picked up like
somebody's luggage
when your caseworker
comes out... you're a
burden and I'm just going
to pick you up and drop
you off at this place.

Henry
24-year-old
33 placement moves
1 return home

((

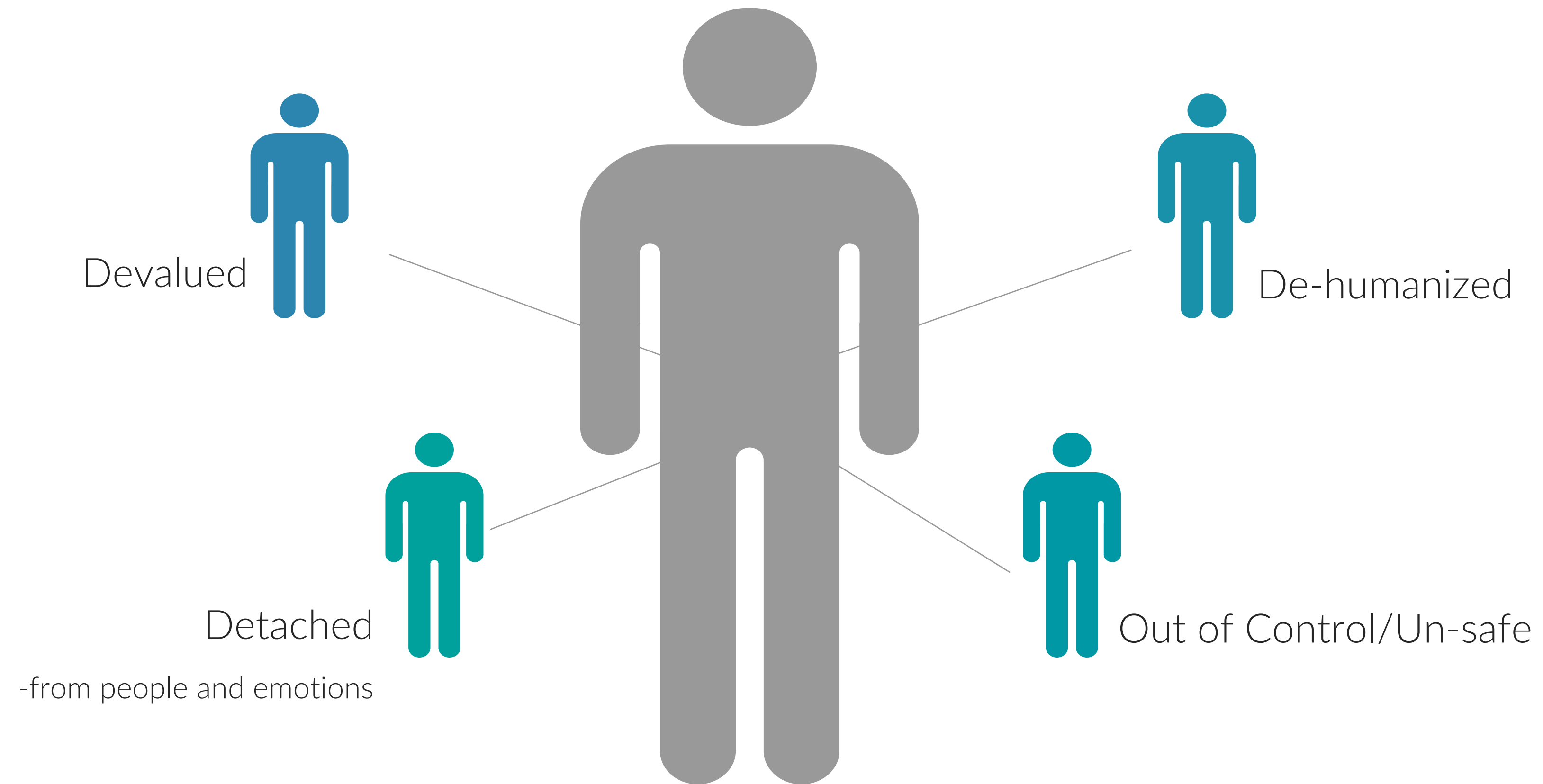
I really wanted to stay in
a place **and they didn't
tell me** why they were
moving me, they just
came in my school and
took me out. That
bothered me a lot.

Ana
22-year-old
32 placements
0 returns to family

A person is walking away from the camera on a paved road that stretches into the distance. The person is wearing dark shorts, white socks, and dark sneakers. They have a large, colorful tattoo on their left calf. They are pulling a black rolling suitcase with their right hand. The background shows a hazy, overcast sky and some vegetation on the sides of the road.

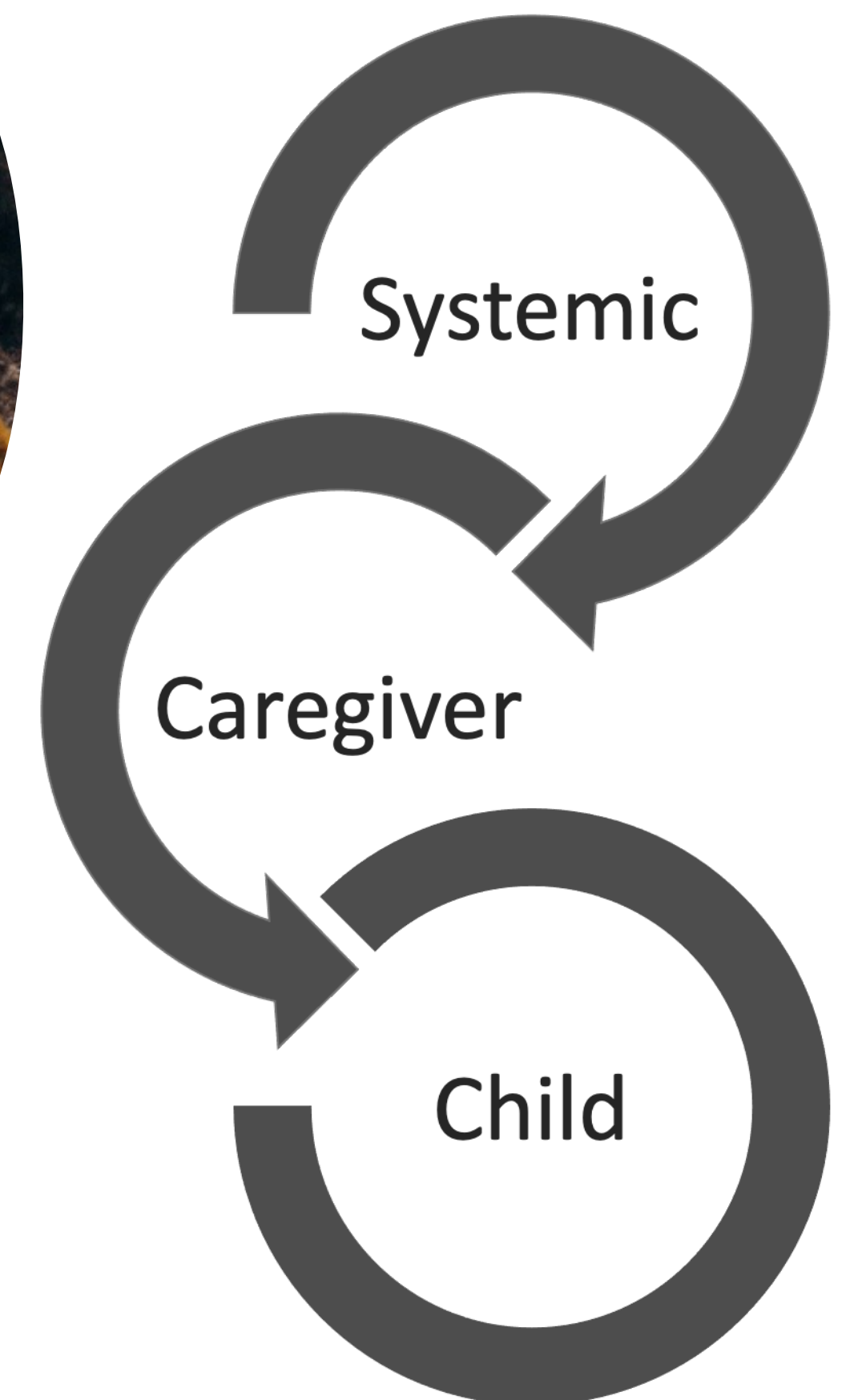
“Moving during their adolescence taught them that **relationships will not last, people are untrustworthy, and becoming close to someone is emotionally risky.** As a result, these participants described lacking close, trusting relationships in adulthood, including with family members, friends, and romantic partners.”

Felt Effects of Moves

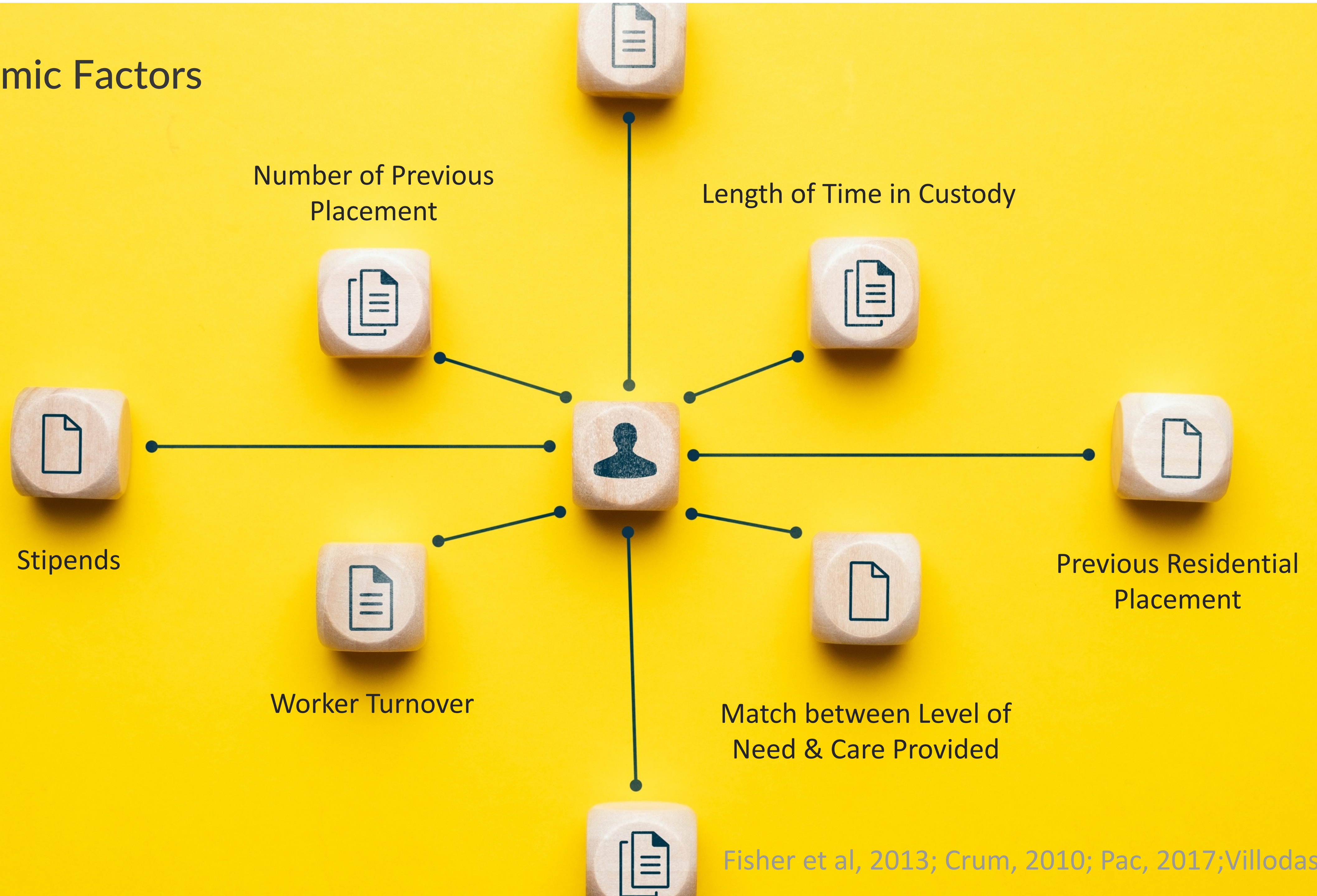




Factors Contributing to Moves



Systemic Factors



Caregiver Factors

Commitment to Child's
Permanency

Number of Children

Parenting Style

Feel able to handle
behavioral/emotional ups
& downs

Family Stressors



Child Factors

Externalizing Behaviors

School Difficulties

Age

ACEs

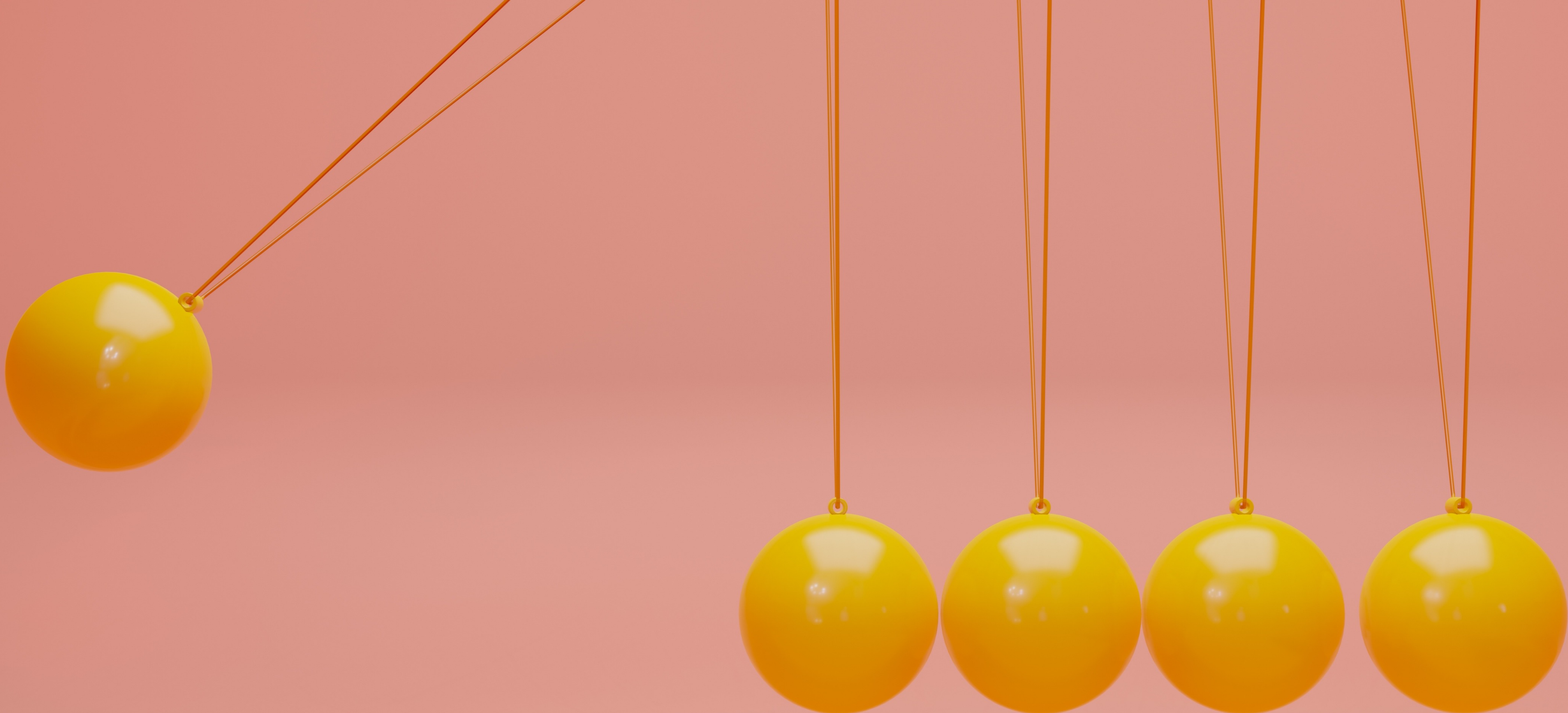
Severity of PTS
symptoms

Abuse History

Gender

Perception of
Relationship with
Caregivers





Disruption Prevention



System Factors

Reduce Worker Turnover

Promptly Assess & Commensurately Place

Increase Foster Parent Network

Prioritize Kinship & Committed Placements



Caregiver Factors

Trauma & Evidence-Informed Training & Parenting Programs

Access to Support Network

Perceived Competency with reducing risk behaviors

Limiting Family Transitions



Child Factors

Increase Access to Specialized Behavioral Health Services

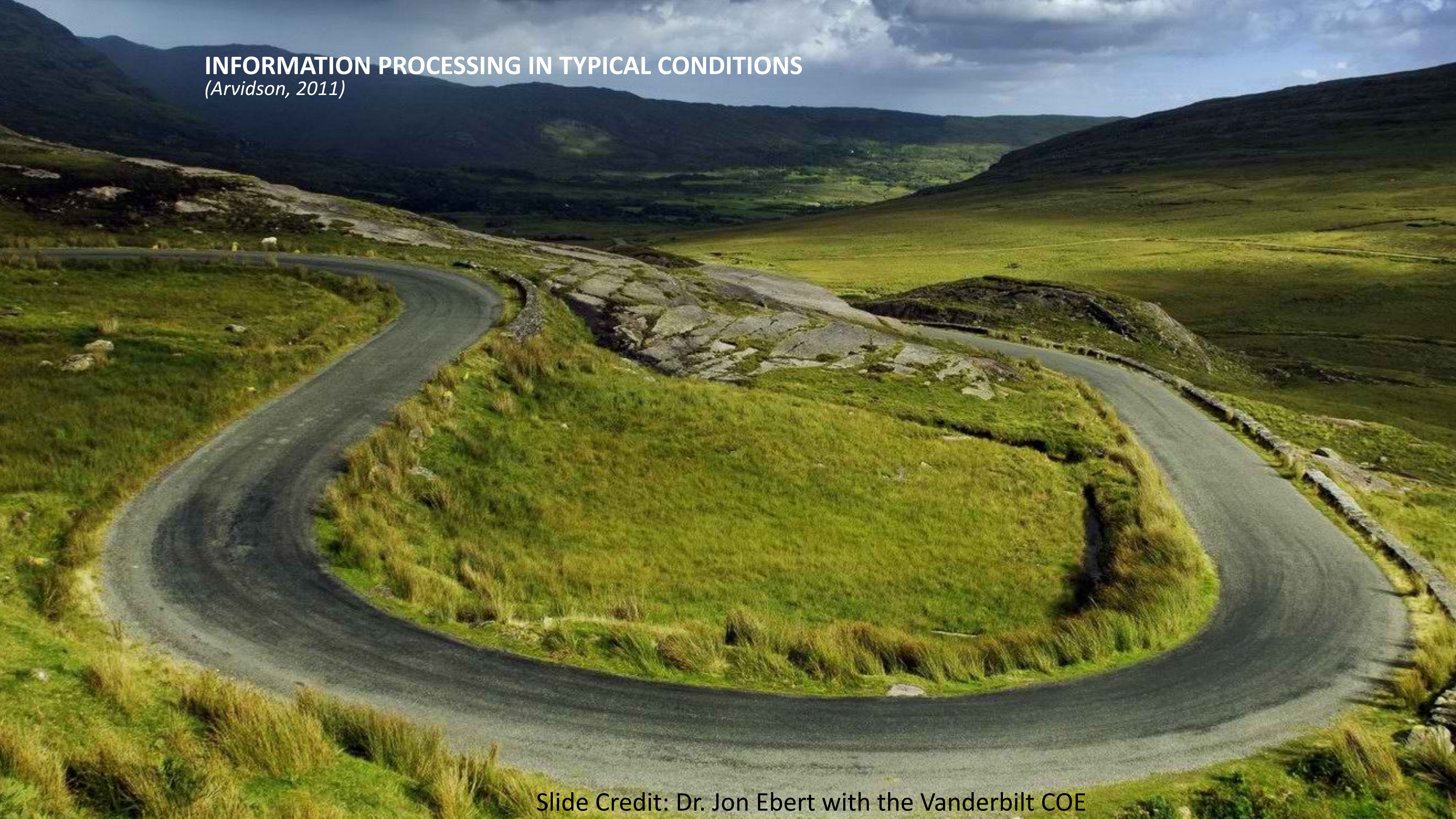
Trauma-Informed School Supports to Build Competencies

Engagement in Activities



INFORMATION PROCESSING IN TYPICAL CONDITIONS

(Arvidson, 2011)



Slide Credit: Dr. Jon Ebert with the Vanderbilt COE

INFORMATION PROCESSING IN TYPICAL CONDITIONS

(Arvidson, 2011)

ACT

OBSERVE

INPUT

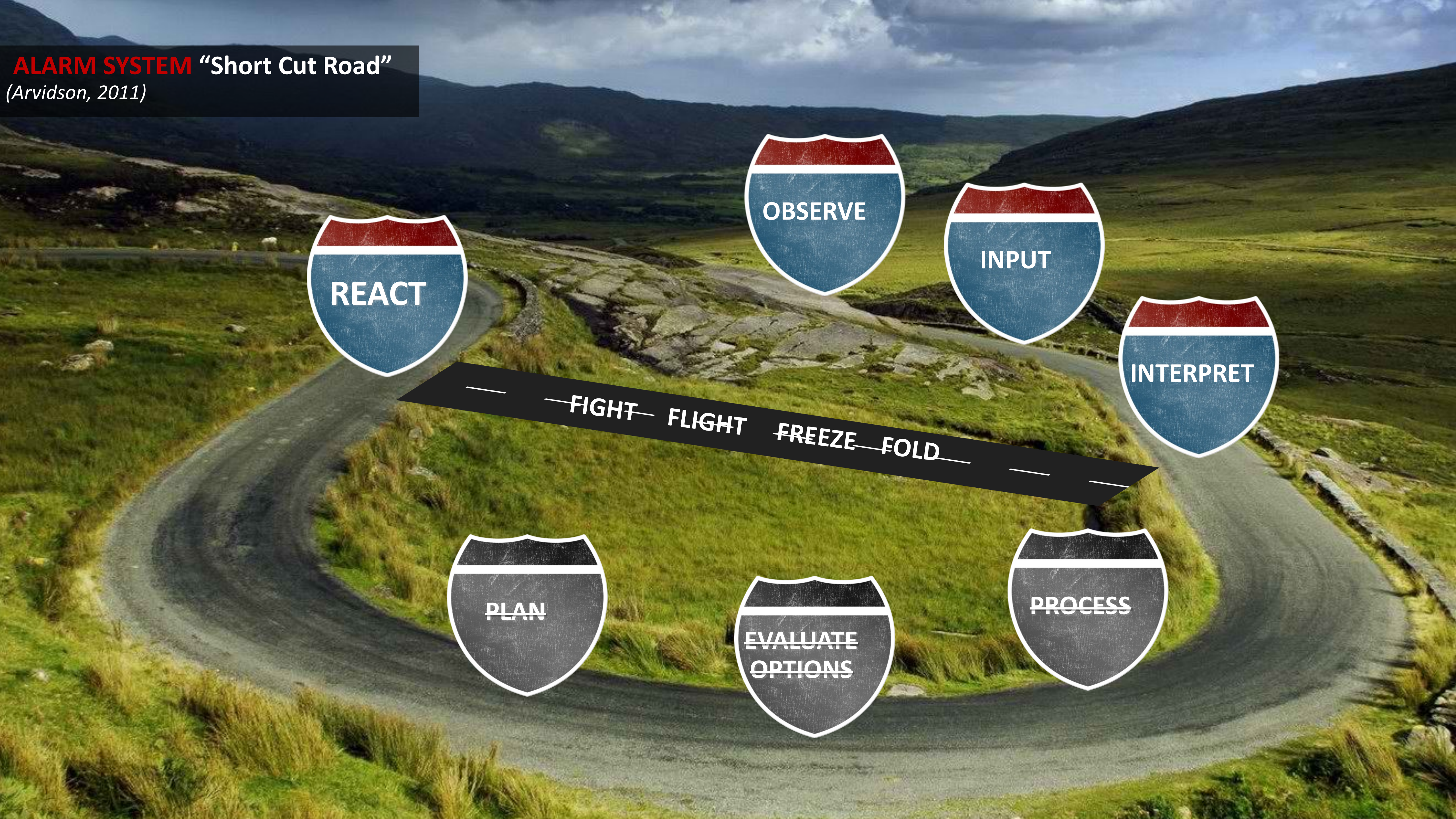
INTERPRET

PLAN

EVALUATE
OPTIONS

PROCESS

ALARM SYSTEM “Short Cut Road”
(Arvidson, 2011)



REACT

OBSERVE

INPUT

INTERPRET

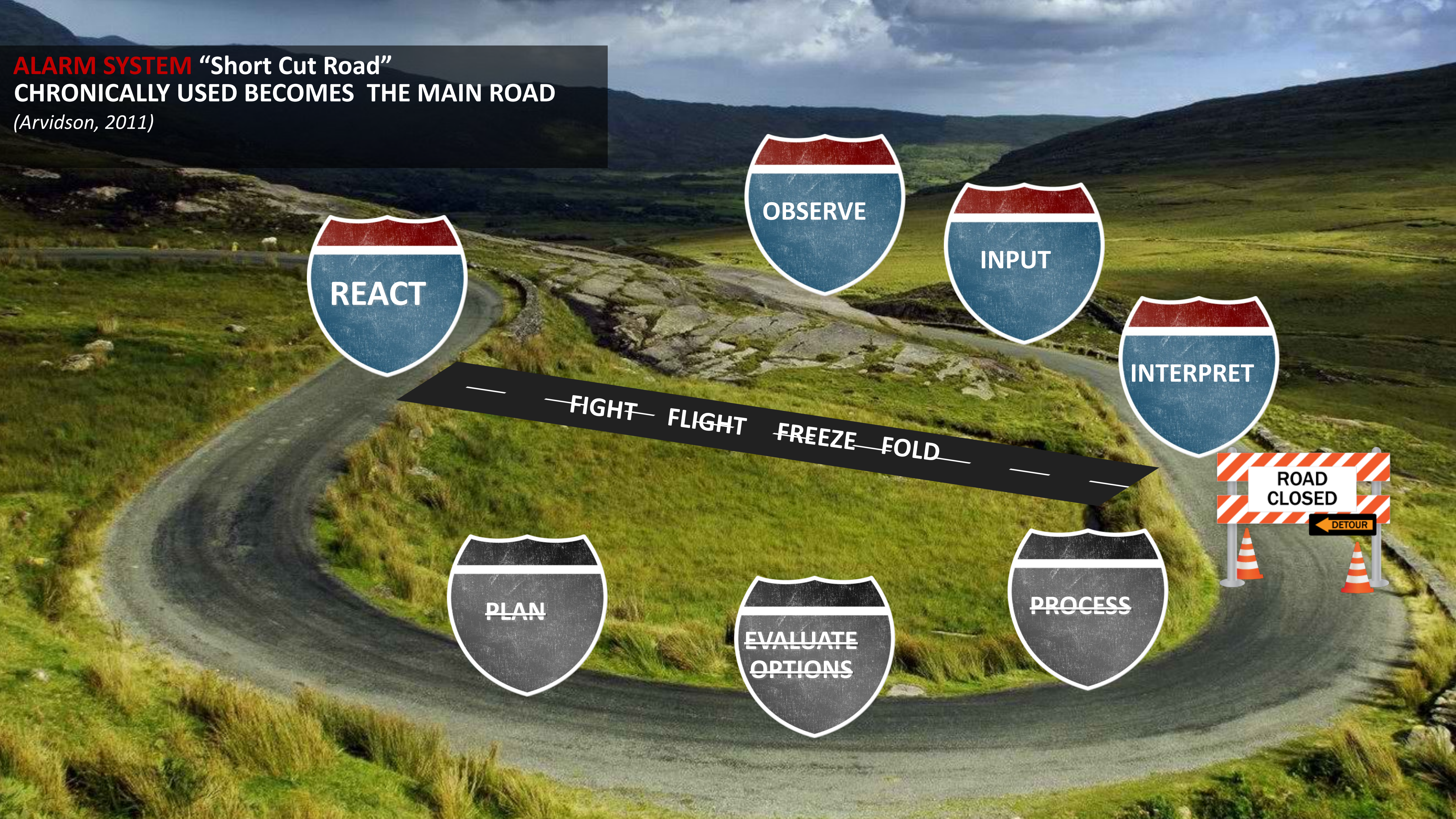
— FIGHT — FLIGHT — FREEZE — FOLD —

PLAN

EVALUATE
OPTIONS

PROCESS

ALARM SYSTEM “Short Cut Road”
CHRONICALLY USED BECOMES THE MAIN ROAD
(Arvidson, 2011)



ALARM SYSTEM “Short Cut Road”
CHRONICALLY USED BECOMES THE MAIN ROAD
(Arvidson, 2011)



Holding the Child in Mind



INFORMATION PROCESSING IN TYPICAL CONDITIONS

(Arvidson, 2011)

ACT

OBSERVE

INPUT

INTERPRET

PLAN

EVALUATE
OPTIONS

PROCESS

Trauma-Informed Principles to Guide Placement Disruptions

Safety

Regulation

Relationships

Empowerment





Safety

- Specify the safety concerns (if any)
- Plan for what supports the youth will need to remain safe in the process.
- Develop safety plan if needed.
- Pull in professionals as needed
- Consider how the child will/will not feel safe





Regulation

The goal of regulation in disruptions is not to prevent emotion and avoid the child's big emotions.

The goal is to ensure the child has supports for the big emotions they will feel.

Children regulate through relationships, rhythm, and routines. Without intentionality, they can lose access to all these resources overnight.

Regulation through Routines

What does this child's typical day look like?

How are sensory or trauma sensitivities addressed?

In which times of day/situations does this child do best?

What are her bedtime/naptime routines?

Consider how changes will impact routines:

- School
- Daily Home Life
- Neighborhood
- Morning/Bed Time

Reduce surprises and the unexpected





Regulation Supports

- Assess available internal and external coping resources.
- Address barriers to ensure child has access to known regulation strategies (music, walks, bouncing, art, talking to a friend, therapist).
- Ensure child has frequent and regular contact with the person or people they can talk to for support.
- Ensure caregivers know child's dysregulation cues & strategies to co-regulate.
- Monitor sleep and eating concerns.

A woman and a young girl are shown in profile, facing each other. The woman is on the left, with her head slightly tilted down. The girl is on the right, looking up at the woman. They are both smiling gently. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting foliage. The overall mood is warm and intimate.

Relationships

Each relationship with a caregiver teaches children about who they are and how to relate to others.

How we say goodbye to a child sets to groundwork for how that child will connect to the next caregiver.



Each relationship, even one that ends, has the opportunity to grow a child's capacity to:

- Trust
- Connect
- Develop positive self-concept



Relationships: “I can trust adults”

- Tell children about moves in advance. Don't surprise them.
- Clearly communicate what the child can expect in developmentally appropriate language.
- When possible, gradually transition through warm introductions/hand-offs.
- Increase connections to continued supports before and after the move (e.g. family, siblings, child and family team, mentor)
- Be present and supportive.



Relationships: “I am known”

- Listen to their thoughts and feelings. Help them process through emotion identification and reflection. Communicate understanding, not correction.
- Help build the child’s narrative understanding of their experiences.
- Name strengths in goodbyes and transitions.
- Communicate strengths, needs, preferences to next caregiver.

Relationships: “I am valued”

- Incorporate teachers, neighbors, school friends, church members, and family members.
- Provide pictures, photo books, mementos, and letters
- Communicate what will be missed about the child
- Write a letter describing their time in the placement (dates, school, interests, activities, developmental milestones)





Empowerment

- Ask who is important for them to see before they leave
- Support them in writing or saying goodbye to the people they identify.
- Discuss what they think is important for their new caregiver to know about them.
- Plan what they can do when they feel sad or scared.

Timing





Trauma-Informed Responses to: Fear of Youth's Reactions

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Reminder: The goal is not to prevent emotions, but support the child in their emotions.

Big reactions are understandable.

TIPS:

- ✎ Plan for the “what-if” scenarios
- ✎ Consult with therapist
- ✎ Give time to process in familiar environment
- ✎ Develop safety plan (if necessary)
- ✎ Focus on support vs. avoidance

Trauma-Informed Responses to: **Avoidance and Minimization**

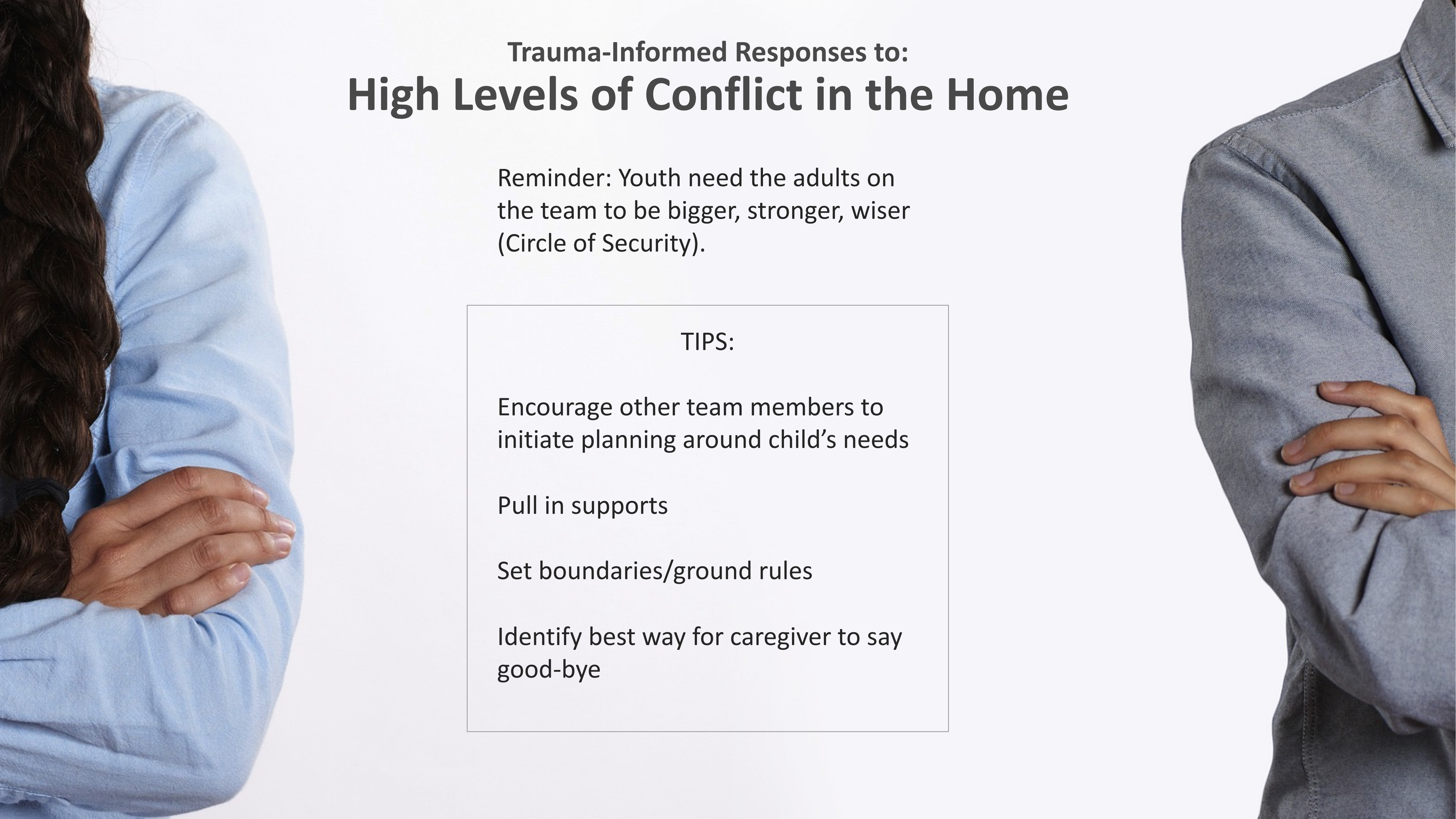
38

Reminder: Moves matter at all ages.
Perceived indifference often belies
internal experience of pain and loss.

TIPS:

- ✎ Name & explore the avoidance
- ✎ Get curious with caregiver, FSW, child
- ✎ Provide guidance
- ✎ Be intentional to communicate value and offer connection points.





Trauma-Informed Responses to: High Levels of Conflict in the Home

Reminder: Youth need the adults on the team to be bigger, stronger, wiser (Circle of Security).

TIPS:

Encourage other team members to initiate planning around child's needs

Pull in supports





Set boundaries/ground rules

Identify best way for caregiver to say good-bye

Trauma-Informed Responses to: **Unclear Plans**

Some information is better than surprise removals unless high safety risk

TIPS:

-  Set a deadline date for when you will talk to youth about move, regardless of known information.
-  Determine appropriate information
-  Consult therapy provider(s)
-  Communicate what you do know, what you expect, and who will be with child through it.



Trauma-Informed Responses to: Emergency/Already-Occurred Disruptions

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TIPS:

- ✎ Contact school to see if letters can be sent
- ✎ Pursue opportunities for ongoing relationships & good-byes (virtual, letters, in-person)
- ✎ Support processing of what happened
- ✎ Plan for what will happen next time
- ✎ Providers send letter, treatment summary, call, and/or schedule last session after move

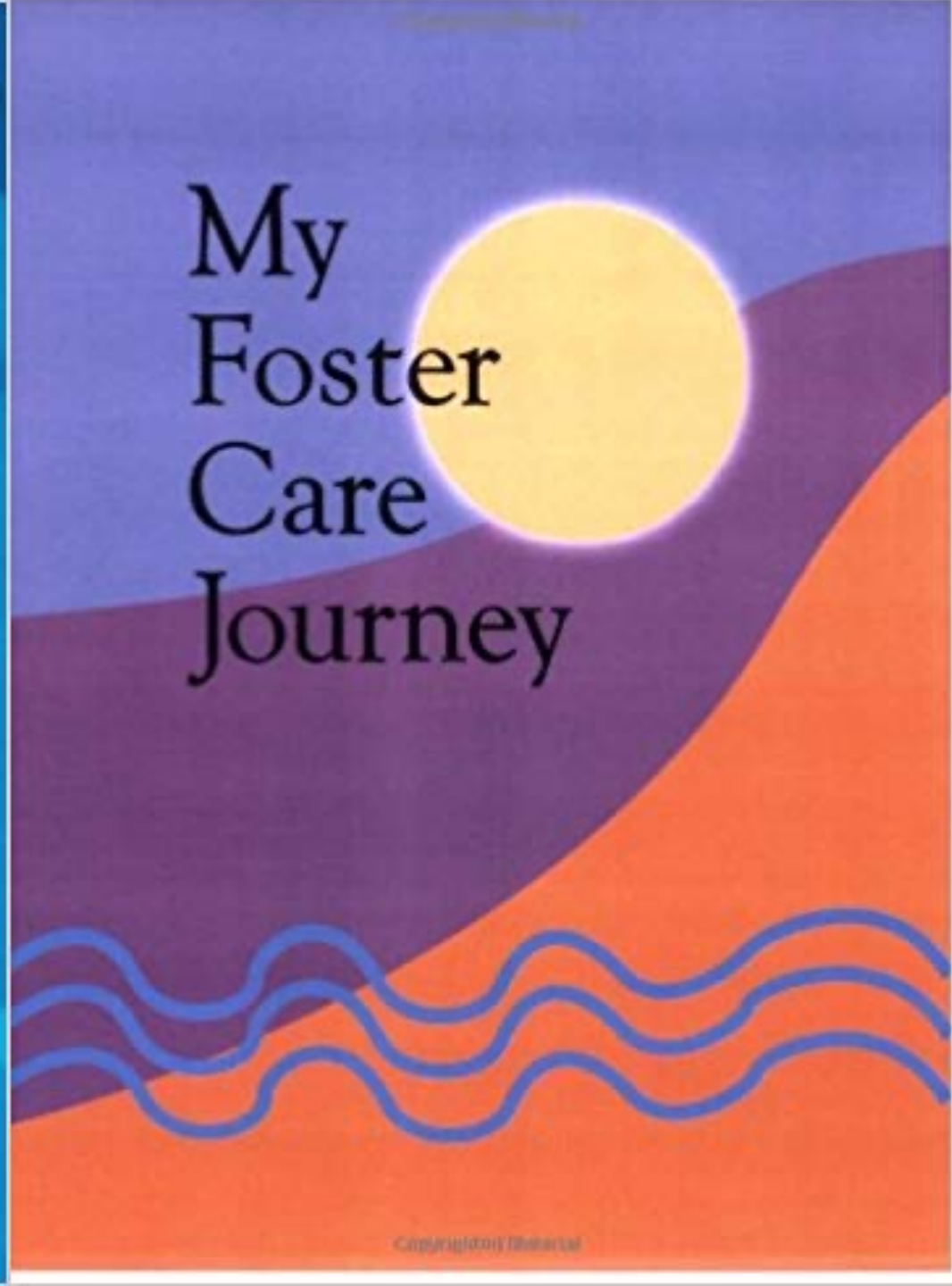
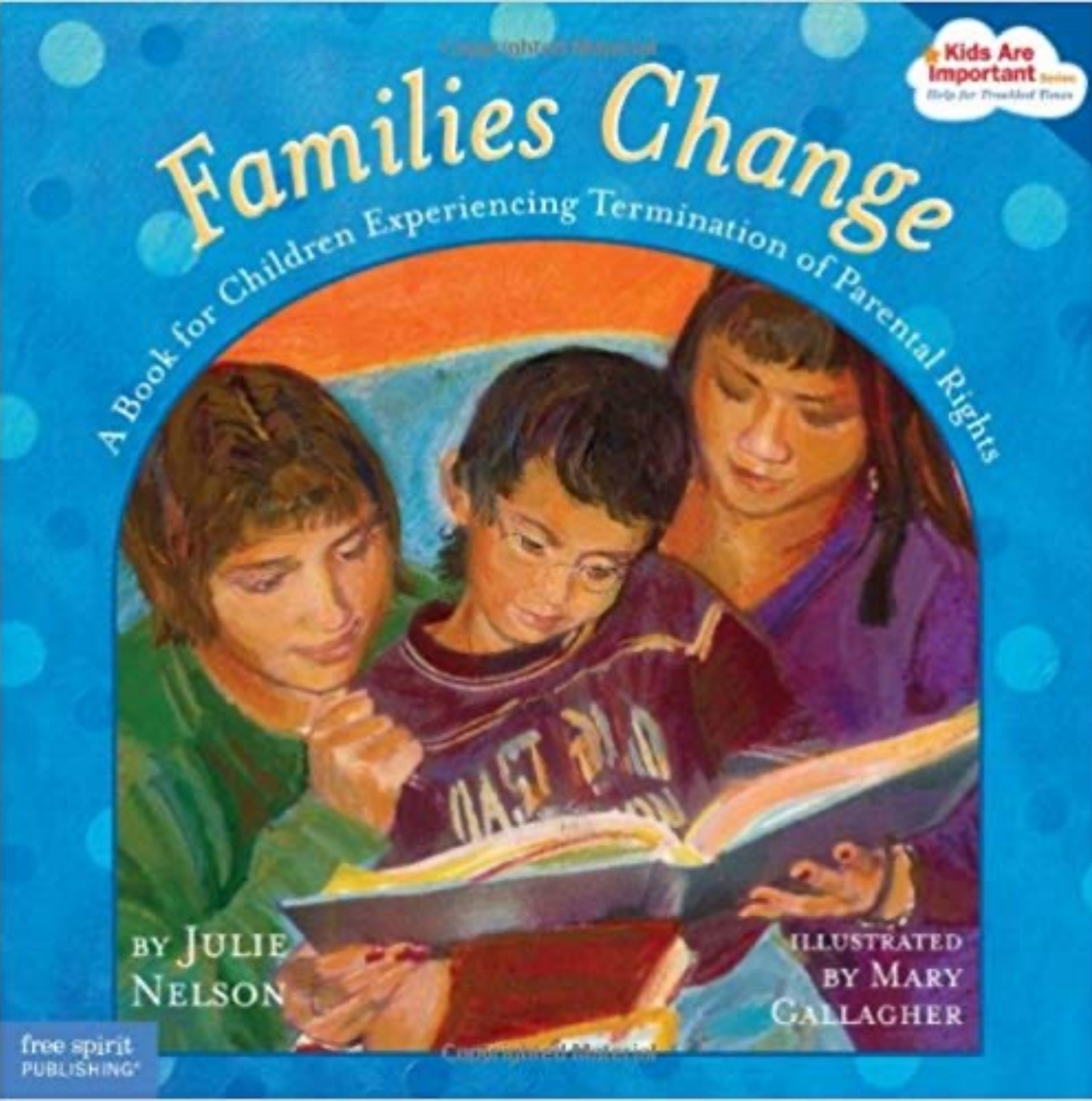
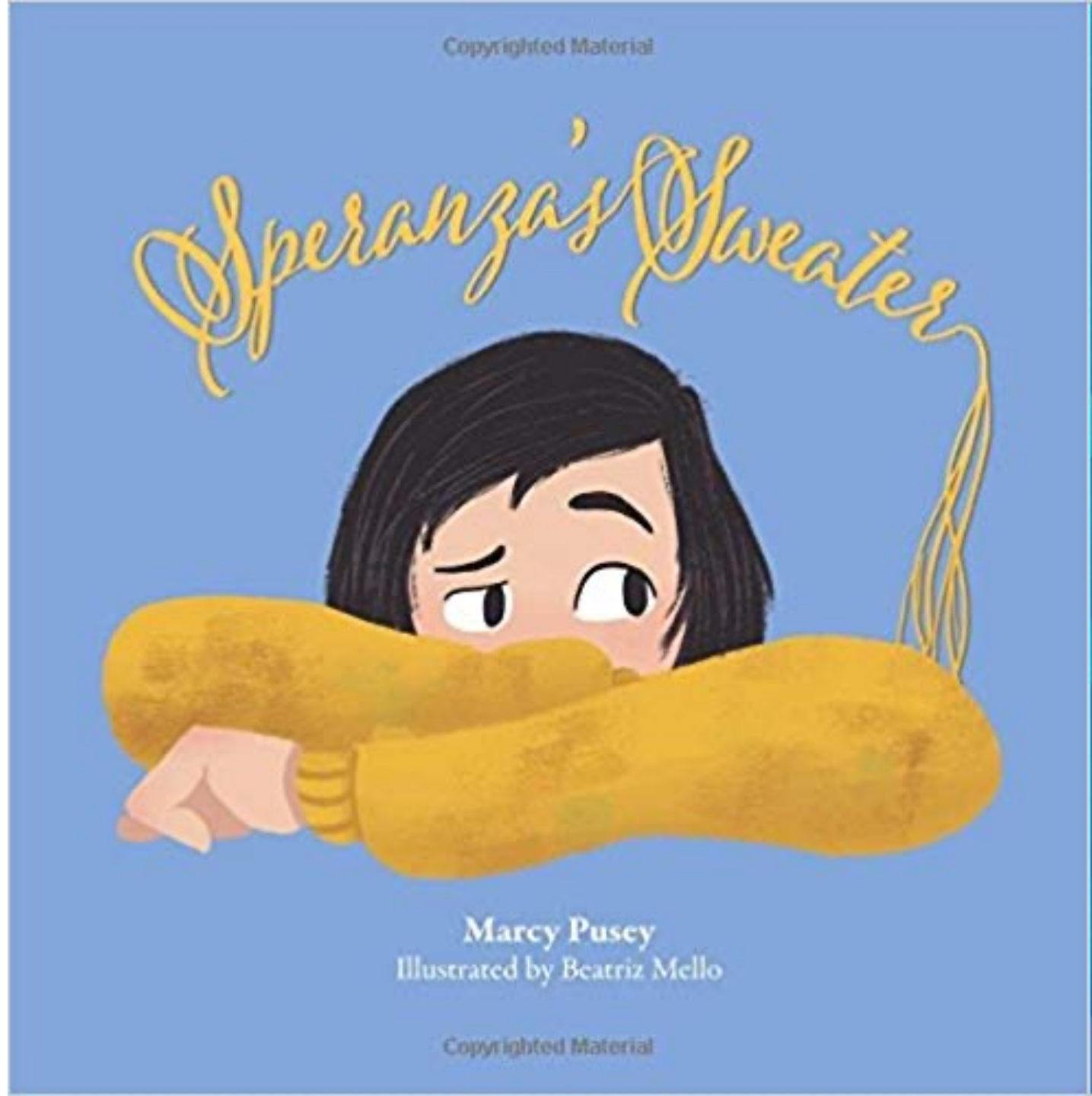
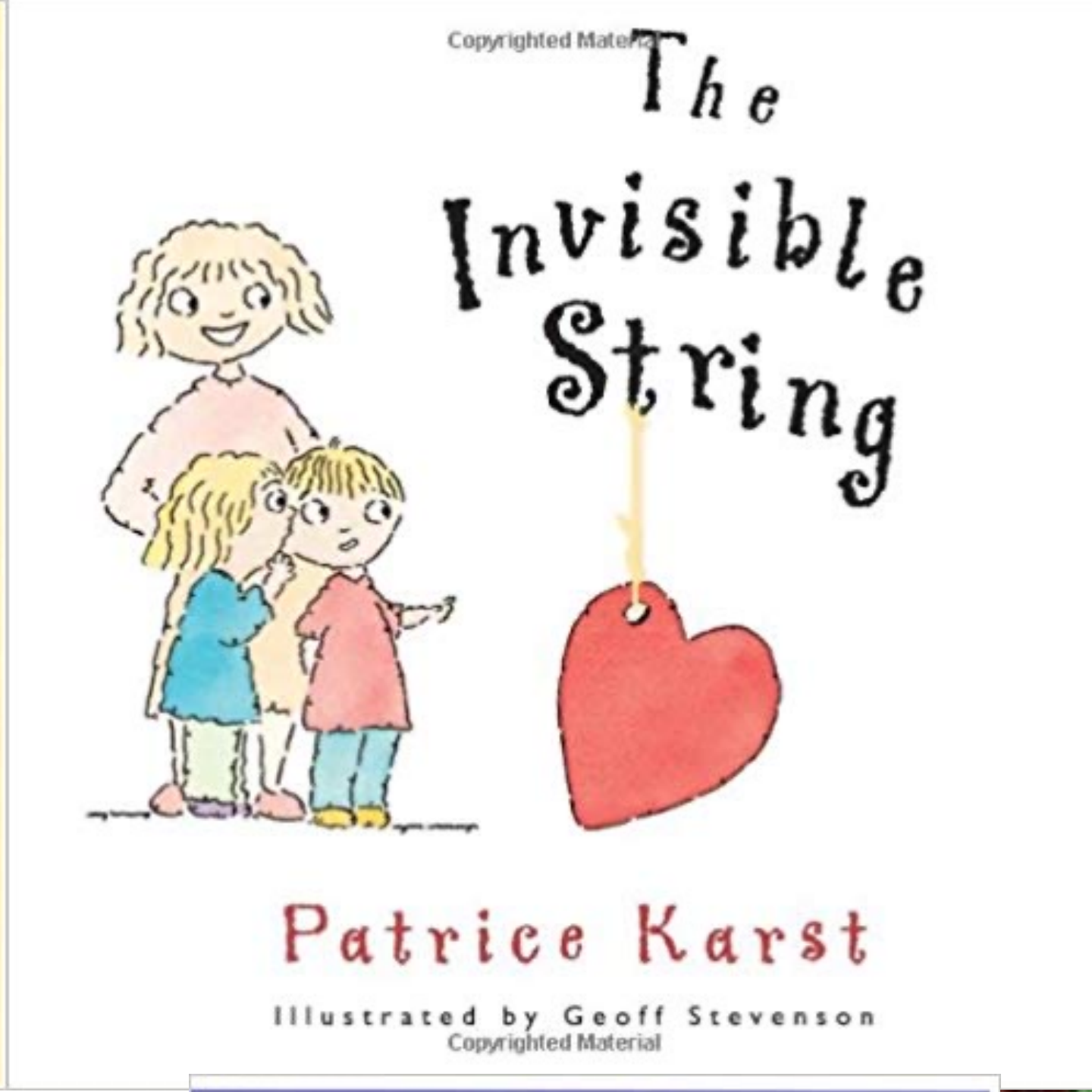
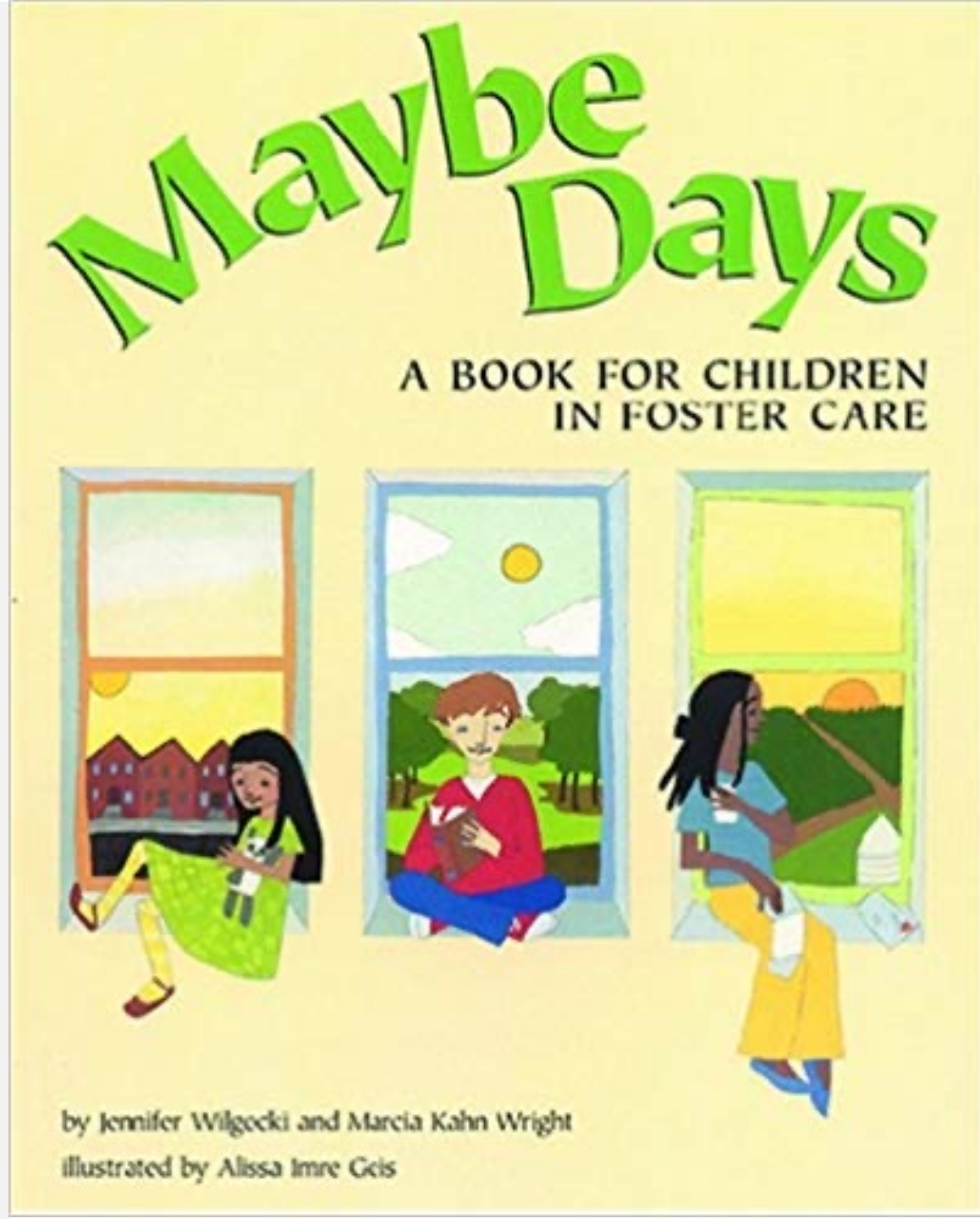
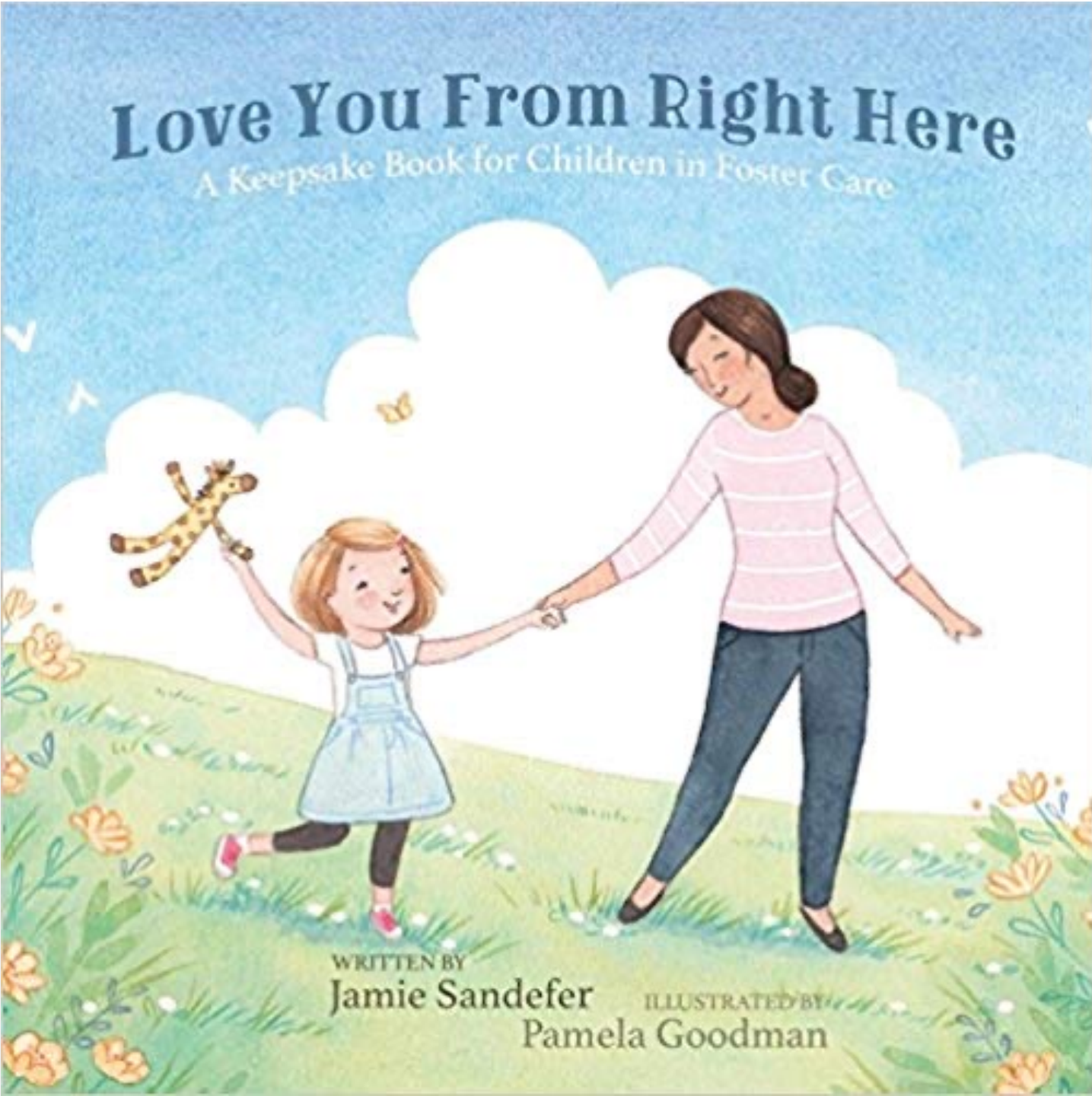
Your role in supporting
children through disruptions



Disruption Planning

Child's Age:	Number of Previous Moves:
Grade:	Diagnoses:
Why is this disruption occurring?	
When is it happening?	

Routines
What does their typical day look like now?
Describe sleep routine (include times, preferred items)
Describe morning routine
Describe after school/ child care routine
What supports does this child need to complete these tasks?
Describe typical eating habits/preferences



RESOURCES

Schedule a consultation with
the COE

www.vumc.org/coe

Email karisa.j.smith@vumc.org
for worksheets or additional
information



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