

# survive & thrive

moving forward from interpersonal trauma

Week 08

Understanding shame and guilt  
and developing ways of coping

# Welcome back

- Any questions from last week?
- Any feedback on the exercises?
- Any thoughts—what went well and what was hard?



# Getting Ready for the Session



# Guilt

- Guilt is a feeling that comes from feeling that you have done something wrong or that you are responsible.
- Many survivors spend a lot of time thinking 'why me' and answer this as if they are responsible.



## Shame

- This is a very difficult feeling for a lot of survivors of abuse and trauma.
- It is a feeling of painful lack of worth, embarrassment, guilt.
- It is more than a feeling of having done a bad thing, but a feeling of being bad or unworthy.



# Effects of Shame

(Nathanson, 1992)

- Withdrawal
  - Isolating your self
  - Hiding away
- Attack self
  - Self criticism
- Avoidance
  - Denial
  - Abusing drugs and alcohol
- Attack others
  - ‘Turning the tables’
  - Blaming the victim
  - Lashing out

# Common thoughts of survivors

(Ainscroft and Toon 2000, Jehu 1988)

- I must have been flirtatious
- There must be something bad in me that they could see
- I should have stopped it or told someone
- Avoidance
- I am worthless and bad
- I am inferior to people
- Anyone who knows what happened to me will not want anything to do with me



# Thoughts or facts

- In small groups look at the last slide and decide whether these are thoughts or facts?
- What would be other ways of thinking about this?



# Overcoming guilt and shame

- Put the blame where it belongs —with the abuser.
- Understand that any physical arousal during sexual abuse is a normal response and doesn't mean you wanted to be abused.
- Understand that a normal reaction to all types of abuse is secrecy. Keeping it secret doesn't mean you deserved it or wanted it to continue.
- You did the best you could at the time.

# Overcoming guilt and shame



# Overcoming Shame

(Gilbert, 2006)

- There are two elements to reducing shame
  - Reducing self attacking
  - Increasing self soothing

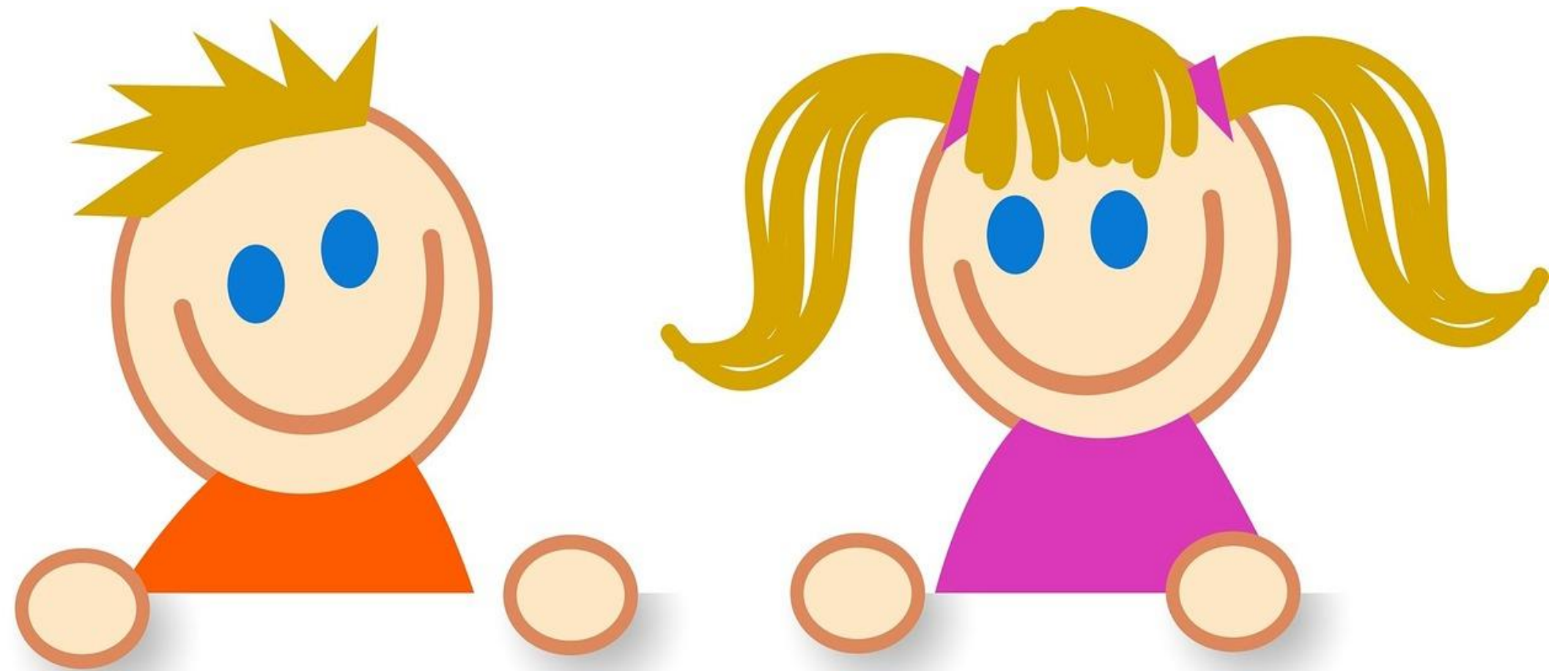
# What is compassion

- Imagine two teachers trying to help a child who is having problems. One is using ‘compassionate’ approaches the other using ‘shame’ approaches—which would you prefer?
- Which would get the better results? Which would promote confidence, enthusiasm and happiness? Which would you like to become yourself?

[www.compassionatemind.co.uk](http://www.compassionatemind.co.uk)

# Try this...

- Take a minute to try to copy this picture



# What did you notice?

- What were your thoughts about doing this?
- Were you critical and attacking yourself?
- Were you compassionate and encouraging?
- What does this tell you about yourself when you try new things?

# 10 ways to promote compassion and self-soothing

1. Moment of relaxation—breathing in warmth and contentment.
2. Half smile.
3. Imagining time when someone soothed you/you felt warmth for someone.
4. Imagine ideal compassionate person/self as ideal compassionate person.
5. Empathy for one's own distress: *“Understandable to feel disappointed—this is hard.”*



# 10 ways to promote compassion and self-soothing

6. Compassionate acceptance:  
*“I get upset very easily when someone criticises me. That’s how I have been made. It is neither good, nor bad.”*
7. Compassionate Attention:  
Recall times when successful, others helpful. Focus on what can do rather than what can’t.
8. Compassionate thinking/reasoning: what would a good friend say to you right now (with warmth)?

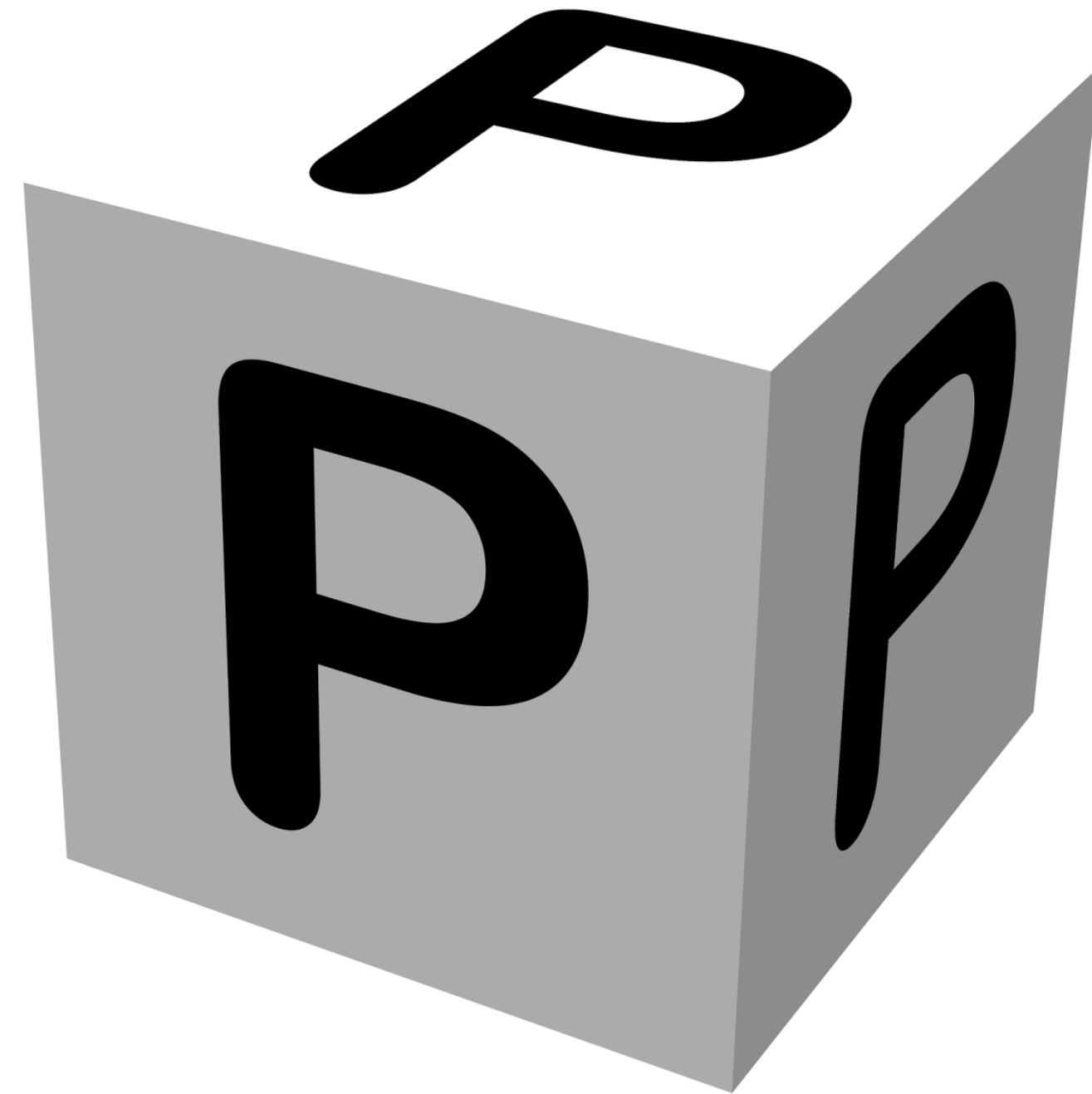
# 10 ways to promote compassion and self-soothing

9. Compassionate Behaviour:  
What would a really good friend suggest you do that would help you right now/ in the long-term (may require courage)?
10. Social Connectedness:  
Seeking out others who make you feel warm, safe, happy, accepted, part of group (may require risks to get the gains).

<http://www.netmums.com/woman/health-and-happiness/making-mums-happy/cma-exercises-to-strengthen-the-soothing-system>

# The 3 Ps

- Preparation
- Practice
- Patience



# A minute for planning

- Either do a one minute ‘mindmap’ (on paper or in your mind) of what you have learned today and what you will want to work on.

**OR**

- Have a look at the home practice exercise in your pack and make a plan to do that during the week.

# Compassionate self-soothing



# A final thought

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.”

**Dalai Lama XIV**