

Keeping Sane While Doing Crazy Work – Ceasefire Training

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Ceasefire Training – May 5, 2014
Dartmouth Oceanview Hotel, Dartmouth, NS

Who Is Robert Wright?

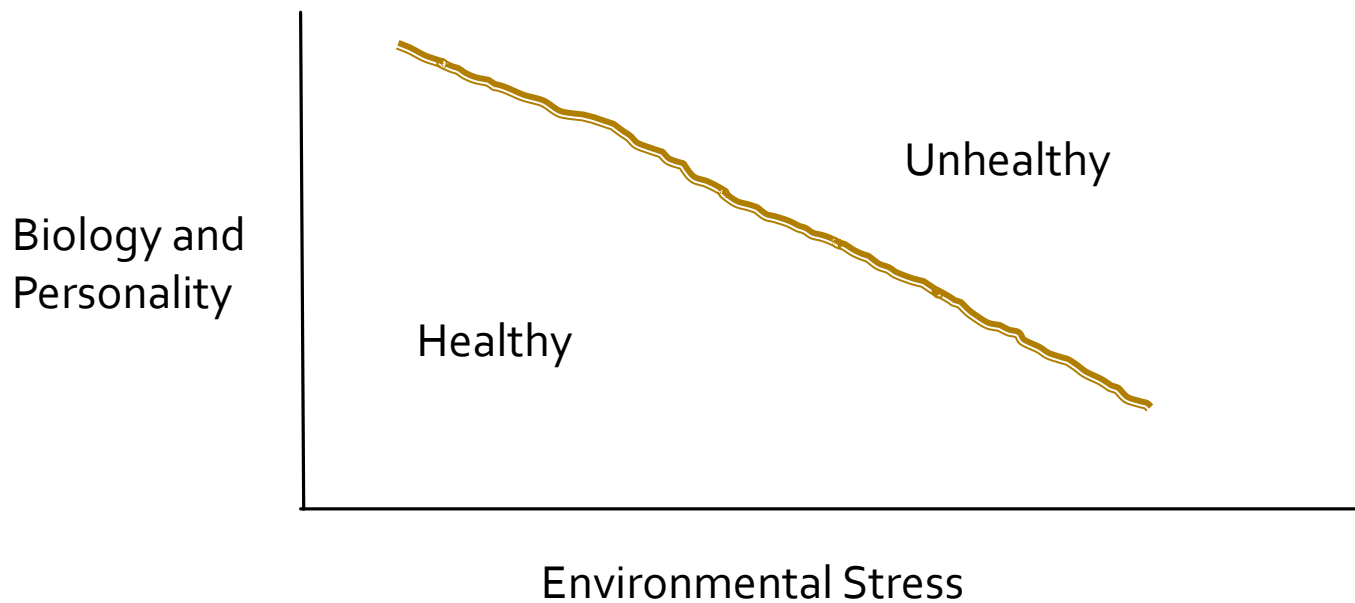
- A registered SW Private Practitioner – Endorsements in Direct Practice and Forensics
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Correctional Mental Health Worker at WSP SHU
- Former Ex. Dir. NS Child & Youth Strategy
- Former Ex. Dir. Child Welfare – Cumberland
- Consultant, therapist, writer

My Job in Ceasefire

- Being available to help you stay sane (or get sane) . . . enough!

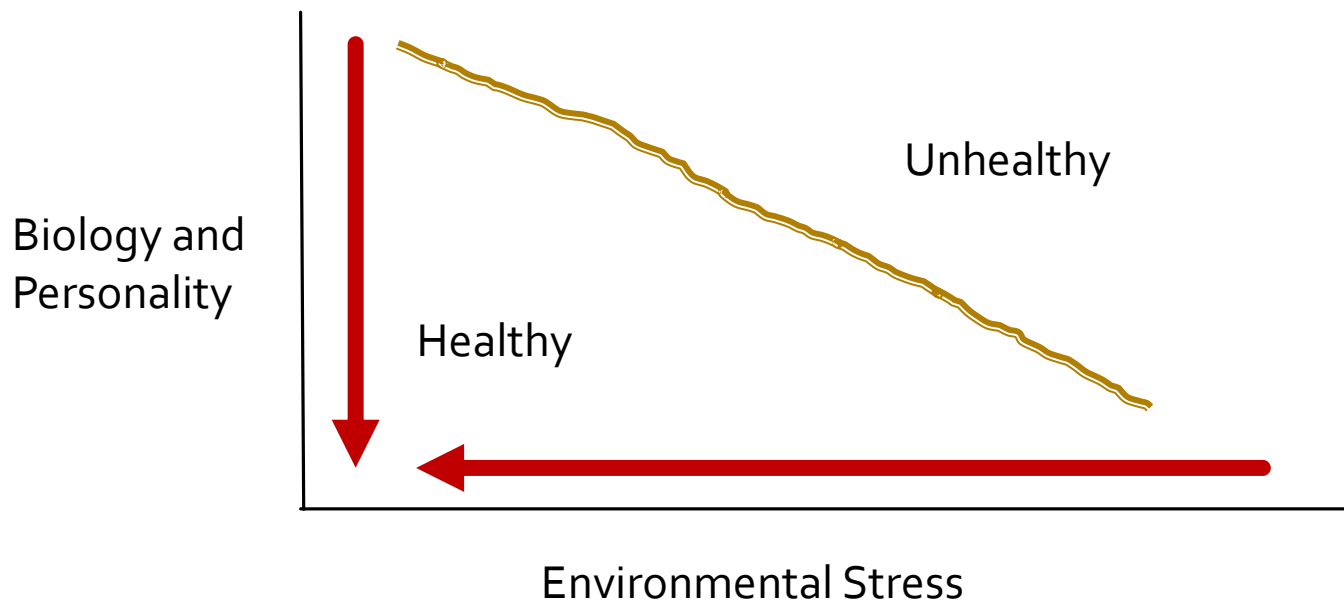
How Do People Stay Sane?

- Mental Health influenced by interaction of “biology and personality” and environmental stressors



By Managing the Two Elements

- Mental Health influenced by interaction of “biology and personality” and environmental stressors



Five Keys to Staying Sane - Ceasefire

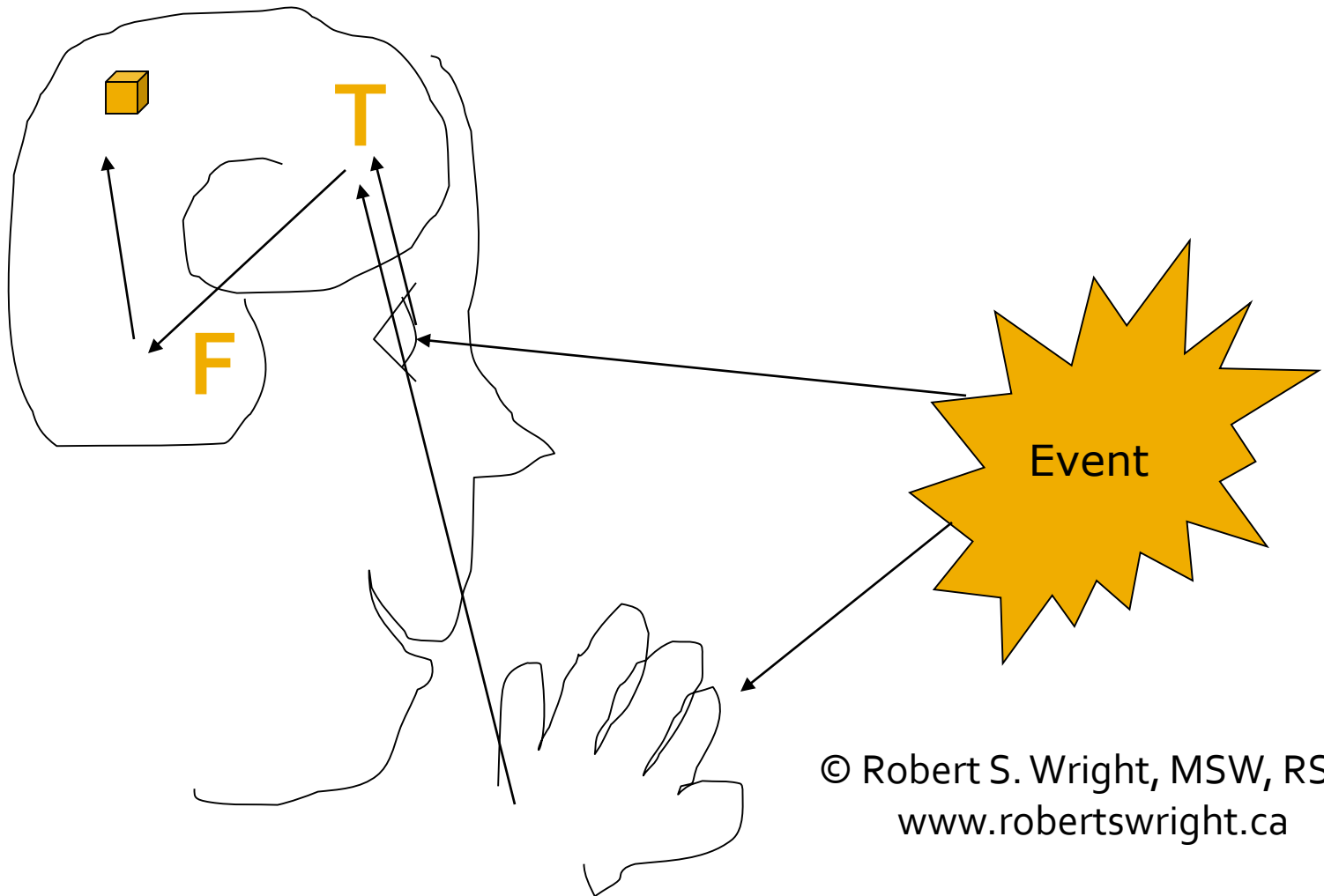
- Managing the Past
- Managing Boundaries
- Managing Racial and Other Systemic Issues
- Being Open and Honest
- Seeking Help

Managing the Past

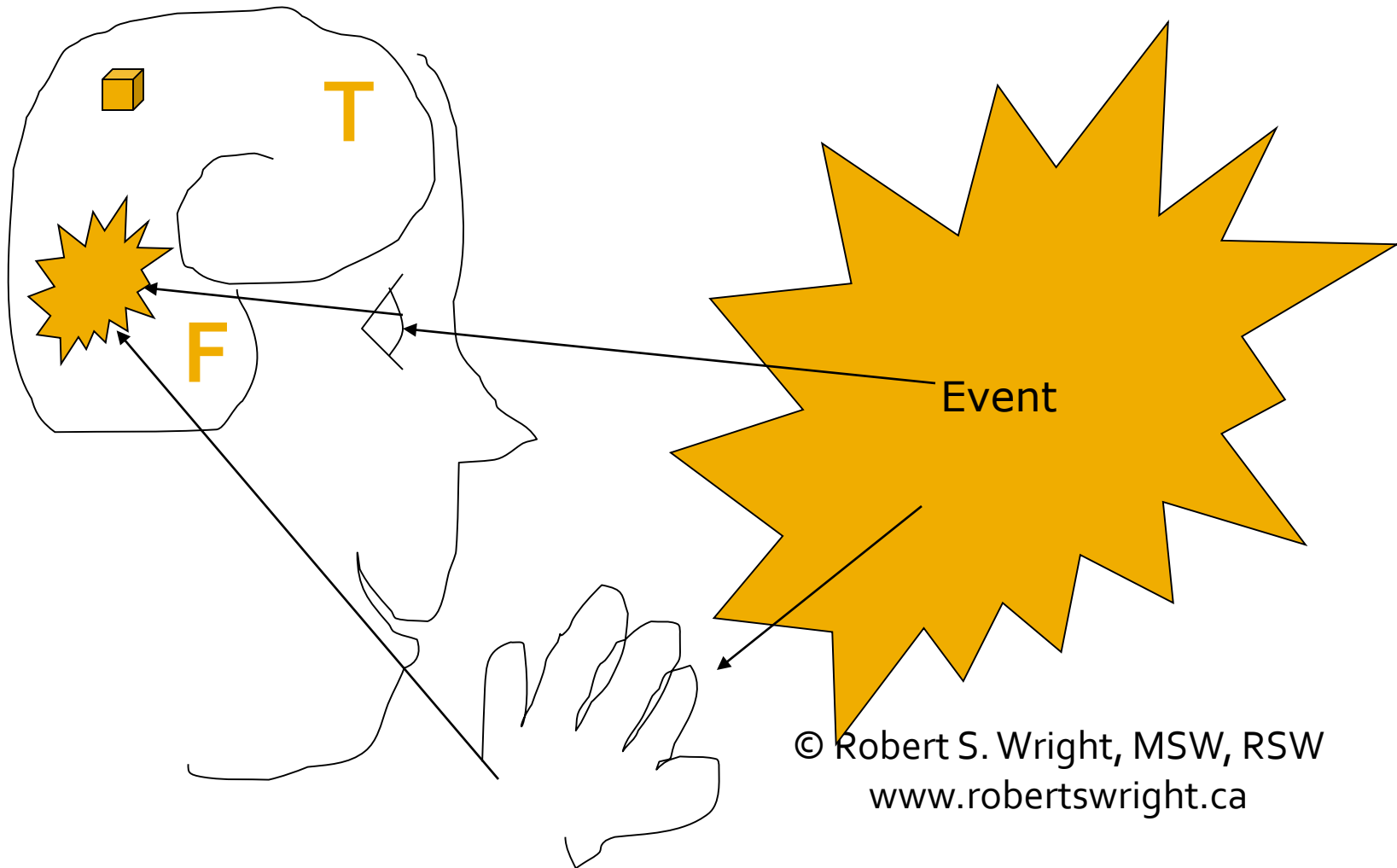
- You were hired because you are a “credible messenger” – you have a past
- Your work will trigger your past
- People will question you because of your past

- The key is to be open and honest with your team

Triggers From the Past – Trauma₁



Triggers From the Past – Trauma₂



Managing the Past - Question

- What issue(s) in your past are likely to smack you in the face while doing this work?
- Can you be open and honest with the team about those issues?
- Where can you seek help if you can't?

Managing Boundaries

- Your job is to stay on the right side of the “wall of wellness” while holding the hands of people on the other side



Managing Boundaries

- Building relationships is key to the work
- Relationships require trust, honesty, loyalty
- Your relationship with the client helps keep them well
- Your relationship with your team helps keep you well
- When your relationship with your client threatens your relationship with your team, you're crossing boundaries in an unhealthy way

Managing Boundaries - Question

- What “rules” do we need to have as a team to help us set proper boundaries with our clients?
- How do we do that in a way that doesn't diminish the “relationship power” we need in order to reach people?

Managing Racial and Other Systemic Issues

- We know that gun violence is influenced by systemic issues:
 - Racism – Segregation - Discrimination
 - Poverty – Lack of Jobs
 - Lack of Education
- Though your work must be informed by this, changing society is not your job
- Find a place to park, discuss and work on systemic issues so you can focus on your work – this might be a job for the ceasefire advisory table

Being Open and Honest

- In life and in this work you will struggle
- Keeping your struggles a secret will kill you
- The best success will come when you practice openness and honesty with your team AND with the significant people in your life
- Being open and honest is really about managing feelings of shame and guilt

Being Open and Honest - Question

- What do I need from my team so I can feel safe to be open and honest?
- What are the issues in my life that cause me the greatest shame and guilt?
- How do I begin to deal with those things so they don't start to become major issues as I begin this challenging work?

Seeking Help

- Your job is to help people change and grow
- In order for you to do that you also will change and grow – I guarantee you it will hurt
- Seek help!
 - Talk to your co-workers and team leaders
 - Talk to your significant people in your life
 - Seek outside help from doctors, counsellors, etc.
 - Call me

Seeking Help

- How can Robert help?
 - Robert is a skilled therapist who is part of the team that has helped shaped Ceasefire Halifax
 - Ceasefire has retained him to be available to help the team as a consultant
 - This allows you access to Robert as a resource when you need him

Seeking Help – Accessing Robert

- Speak to your manager – They can make the call to Robert, or
- Call Robert's office and schedule a time to meet him
 - Meeting with Robert will be strictly confidential (like all counselling)
 - Robert's will focus on helping you overcome the barriers you experience in seeking help from your team and other resources
 - **Robert is not a substitute for your team!**

Final Question



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