

SYNTAGMA

*Psychology Mediation Coaching
Supervision Training*

Psychological Impact of Child Abduction and The Voice of the Child

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Birgitte M.J. Beelen

*Clinical Psychologist Child & Adolescent Psychologist Systemic Therapist / Supervisor
EMDR-Practitioner Europe Cross Border Mediator MfN Registered Family Mediator
Sensori Motor Psychotherapist Mindfulness and Compassion Trainer*



It's easier to build
strong children
than

to repair broken men

Frederick Douglass



Case study

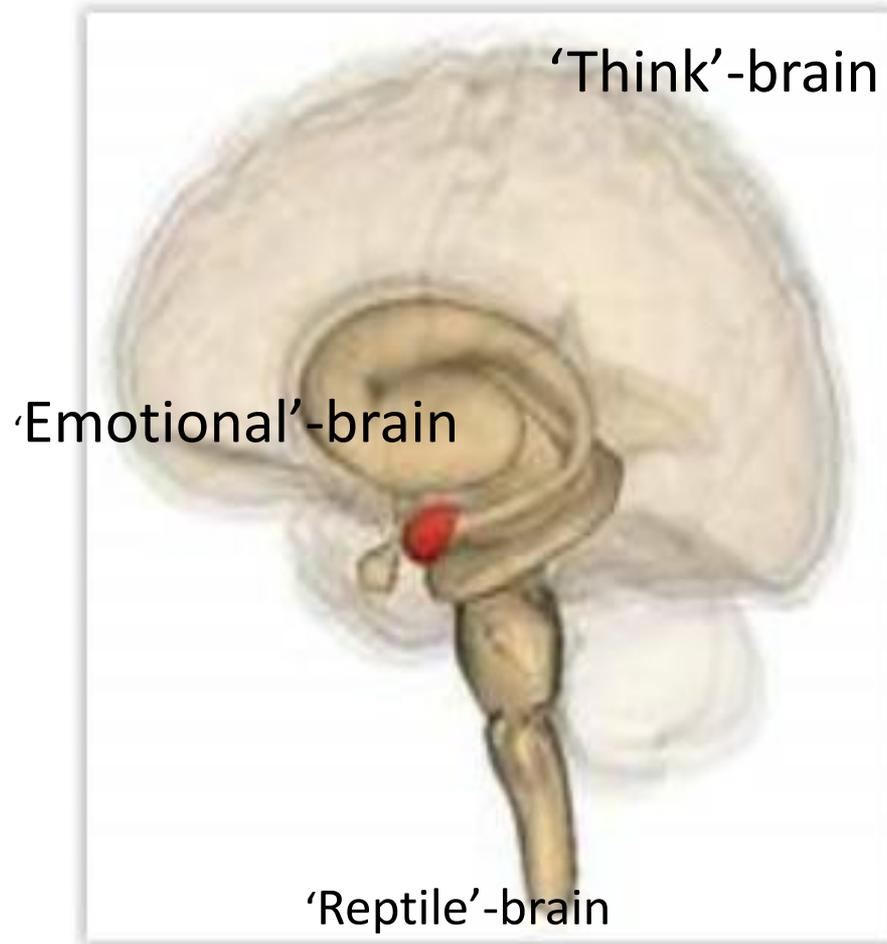
Outline

- Introduction
- Yaro
- Stress and Anxiety
- Socio-emotional Development
- Risks and trauma; Consequences
- Children's Rights and Meaningful Participation of the Child
- Conclusions and Recommendations

Stress and Anxiety

- Early brain and Child development
- Attachment

Socio-emotional Development



Consequences of Trauma (1)

Pervasive Traumatic Experience (PTE)

- A pervasive influence on the development of the child
- Affects the general functioning of the child in more or less all developmental tasks:

Onset is in early childhood and continues in adulthood

Developmental Traumatic Disorder (DTD)

- The younger the child, the broader and more long lasting its effects
- Damaging the developmental task the child is in process of mastering

Consequences of Trauma (2)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Frequent distressing recollections (flashbacks)
- Nightmares about the traumatic event
- Avoidance of reminders of it
- Exaggerated arousal in response to noises or other stimuli

- Occurs after/in a traumatic experience of being severely injured or threatened or seeing someone harmed or killed (f.i. soldiers) and rape, kidnap and torture victims



Abduction

Public Opinion: there's no risk or harm if the child is in the physical custody of one of his parents

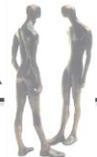
The experience of abduction can be emotionally traumatic to both children and left-behind parents.

It's particularly damaging in cases in which force is used to carry out the abduction, the child is concealed, or the child is held for a long period of time.



Abduction & Separation

- More distress
- Hostile personal relationships
- Less financial and emotional support
- A worse view of their parents as role models
- Worse health
- Less satisfaction with life



Left-behind parents

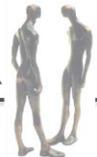
- Psychological disturbance high during the period of missing and somewhat reduced once the child had been recovered
- Stress and trauma stayed after recovering the child
- Psychological distress higher after reunification than it had been prior to the abduction
- Anxiety / concerns that their child would be reabducted
- Devastating effect upon the economic wellbeing of the left-behind parent, which in turn can increase the parent's level of anxiety (searching, trying to recover)



Abducting Parents

- Relief
- Strenght

- The event of the return to the State of habitual residence;
 - Disbelief
 - Anger
 - Vulnerable and alone
 - Isolated and impoverished
 - Terrified
 - Loss of weight
 - Stress
 - Need for medical interventions



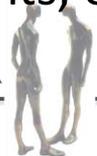
Abducted Children: Loss and Grief

Degree of trauma is related to

- The age of the child at the time of the abduction
- The treatment of the child by the abducting parent
- The abduction's duration
- The child's lifestyle during the abduction
- The length of separation from the left-behind parent has a great influence on the emotional impact on the abducted child
- The support and therapy received by the child after recovery

Symptoms (following recoveries from abductions):

- Emotionally suffering from the experience
- Grief and rage toward the left-behind parent in addition to “mental indoctrination” prepared by the abducting parent
- Emotional distress, such as anxiety, nightmares, mood swings, aggressive behaviour, guilt, distrust of authorities, fear of personal attachments, etc.



Developmental damage

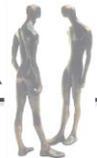
Different kinds of problems at different developmental stages & Adult symptomatology appears to be influenced by the developmental stage in which trauma occurred

Several mechanisms can be discussed when speaking about trauma:

- Traumatic sexualisation
- Betrayal
- Stigmatisation
- Powerlessness and/or preoccupation with control
- Negative self-evaluation
- Chronic perception of danger or injustice
- Dissociative control over awareness
- Impaired self-reference



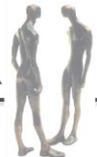
Two different brains



The Voice of the Child

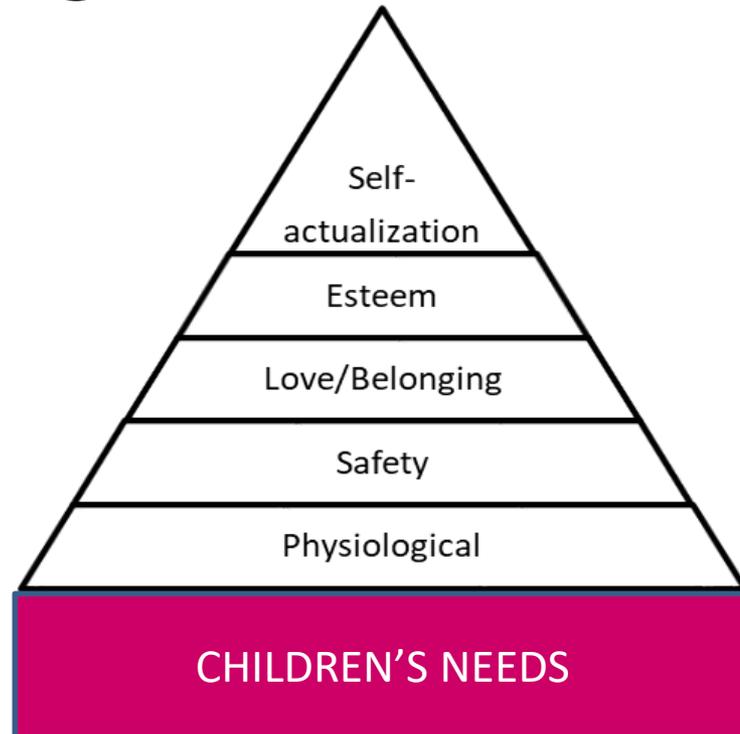
Korczak (1979)

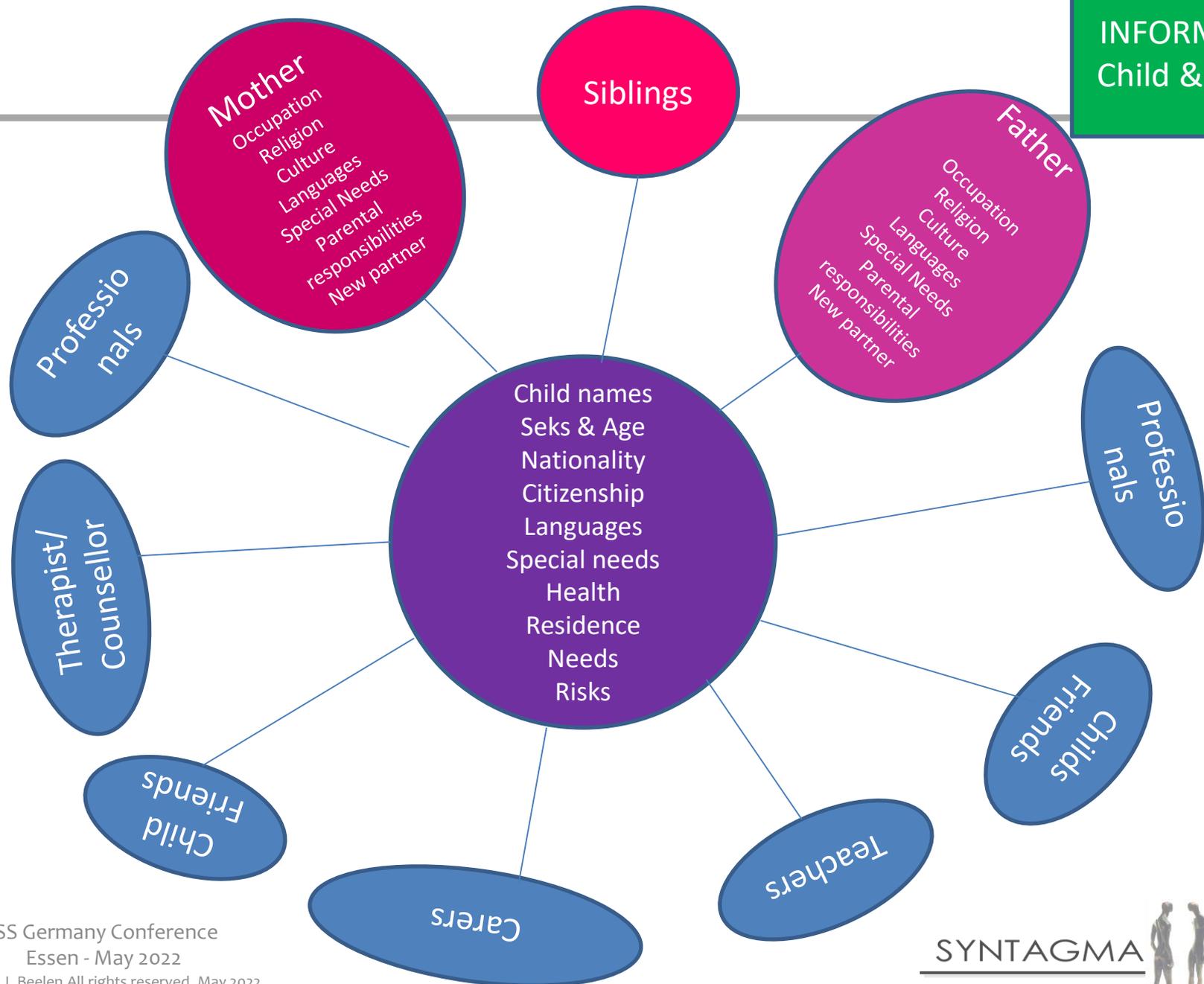
We know a lot that children do not know,
but
they know how they think and feel



Children's Rights

- Article 3 and 12 (Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Children's Right or Children's Need
- Autonomy





Participation of the Child

- Consultative Participation
- Collaborative Participation
- Child-led participation
- Arguments against participation of Children



Basic Requirements for Child Participation

1. Transparent and informative
2. Voluntary
3. Respectful
4. Relevant
5. Facilitated with friendly environments and working methods
6. Inclusive
7. Supported by training
8. Safe and sensitive to risk
9. Accountable

Conclusion & Recommendations

- Developmental consequences
- The systems involved
- Attachment
- Participation of Children
- Training and support



Thank you for your attention

*It is the child, more than anyone else,
who will have to live with what adults decide!*

Birgitte M.J. Beelen
The Netherlands

www.syntagma-pmct.nl

