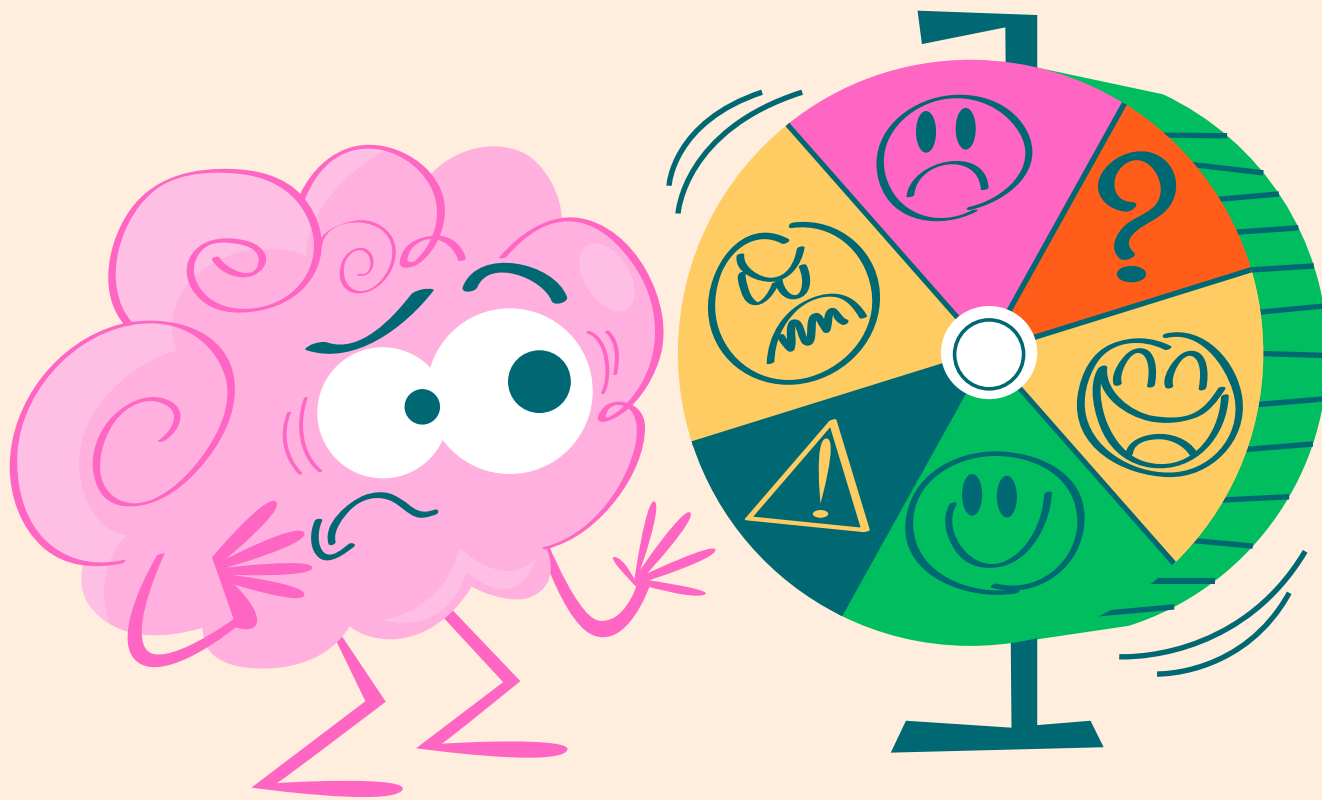


UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA



WHAT IS TRAUMA

Trauma can affect anyone. It stems from event(s) that overwhelm the mind and body's ability to cope.



WHAT IS TRAUMA

Trauma happens when an experience feels "too much, too soon, too fast," overwhelming our ability to cope. It disrupts the natural rhythm of our body, both psychologically and physiologically. Trauma isn't just about the event itself but the lasting impact it leaves on how we feel, think, and respond.



OUR BODY AND ITS ALARM SYSTEM

Trauma affects the nervous system like a smoke alarm that gets stuck on high alert. The nervous system is designed to protect us, activating “fight,” “flight,” or “freeze” responses when we sense danger. For someone who has experienced trauma, this system can become overly sensitive, reacting as if everyday situations are life-threatening—even when they're not.



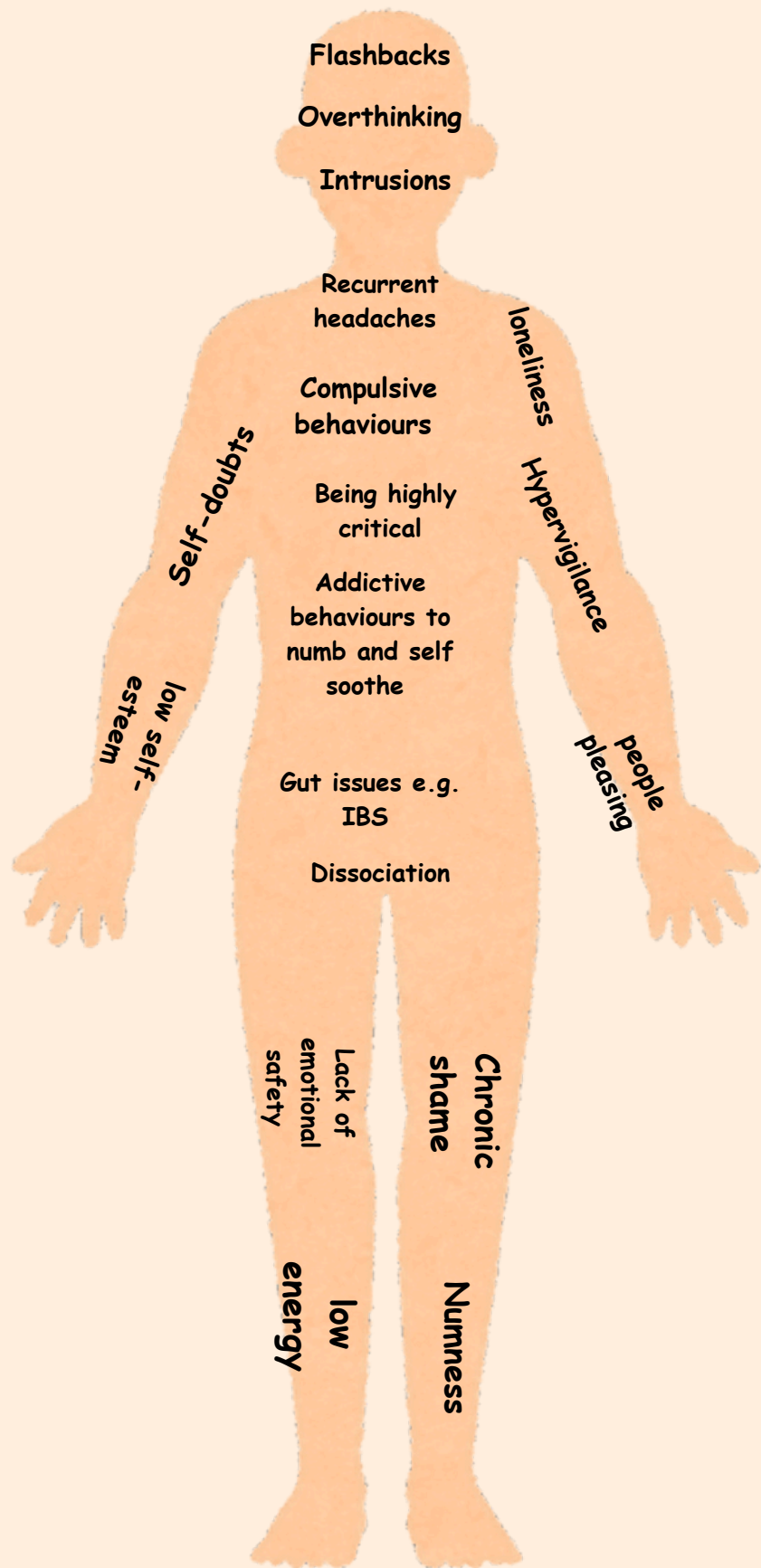
TRAUMA METAPHOR

Think of trauma like a physical injury. If you twist your ankle and never let it heal properly, it might seem fine on the surface, but even a small bump later can cause intense pain.

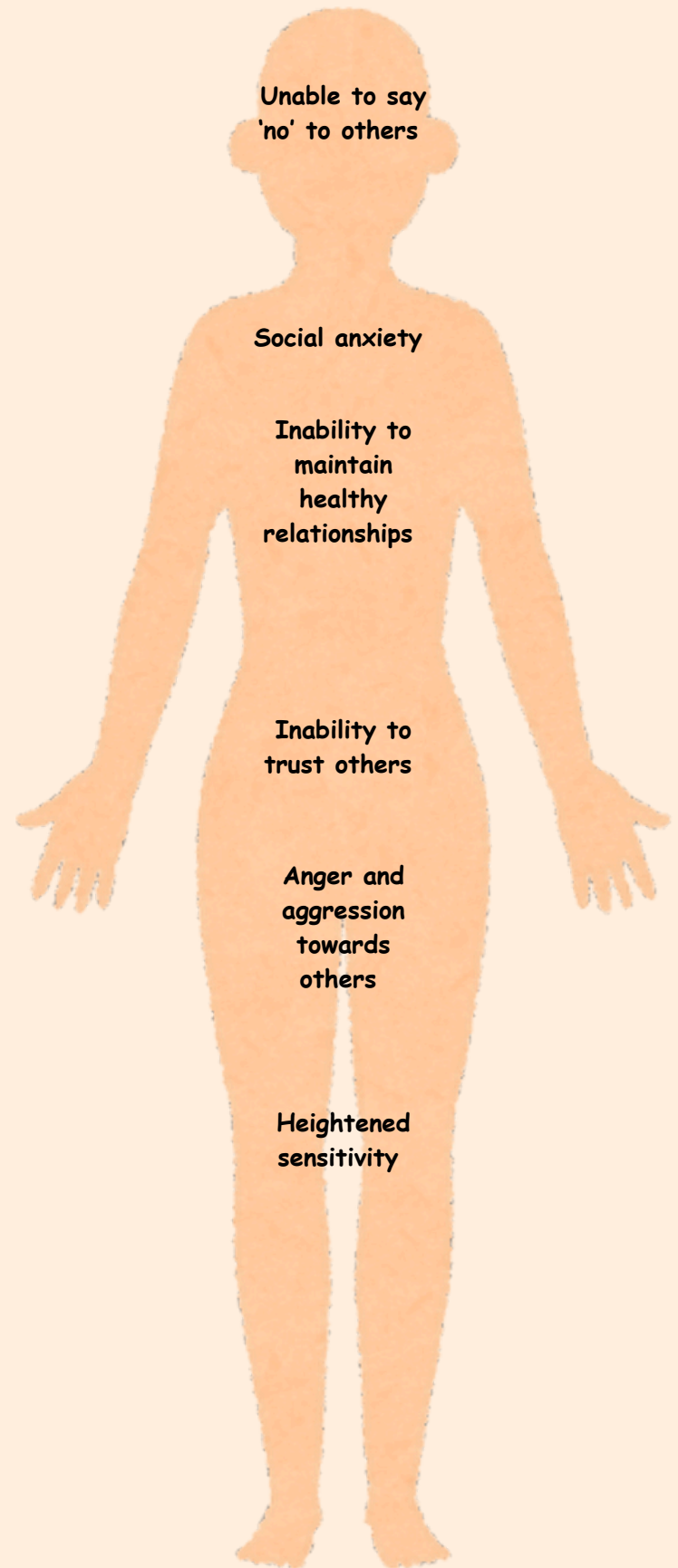
Similarly, trauma can leave emotional “bruises” that stay tender long after the initial experience, making us more reactive to stress and keeping us stuck in Fight, Flight or Freeze responses.



Experiences in the body



Experiences outside the body

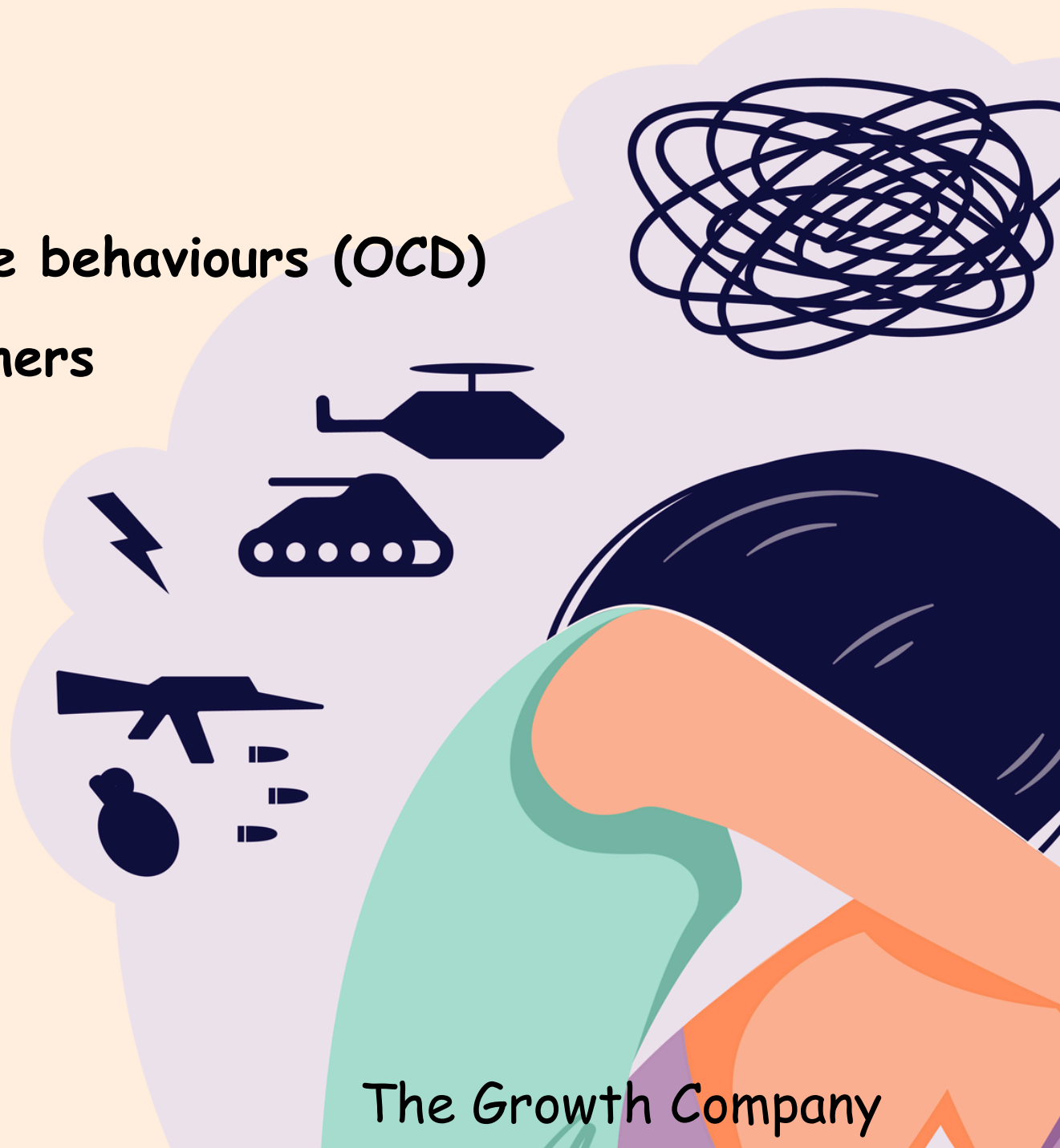




Trauma disconnects us from ourselves. It distorts how we see ourselves and the world because of the intense mental and physical responses that follow. It can make us feel unsafe in our own bodies and minds, pulling us away from a sense of control or stability.

This can lead to ongoing struggles such as:

- Depression
- Low self-worth
- Anxiety
- Hypervigilance
- Obsessive-compulsive behaviours (OCD)
- Withdrawal from others



WHEN SAFETY FEELS LIKE A DANGER



This constant state of alert makes normal activities, like social events and playful gatherings unexpectedly challenging. It can seem like we are overreacting but our body is just in survival mode.

TRAUMA AND RACISM

Racism and discrimination can also lead to trauma.

When someone experiences racism, it's not just an isolated event but often a chronic, ongoing stressor that repeatedly disrupts their sense of safety and belonging. Over time, this creates deep psychological wounds and a sense of hyper-awareness about how they're perceived and treated in the world.



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

The impact of trauma doesn't stop with one person. Trauma can be passed down through generations, as the psychological and physiological effects influence parenting, relationships, and community dynamics. For example, historical events like colonization, slavery, or systemic racism leave legacies of unresolved trauma that can still shape behaviors and experiences today.



RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA IS POSSIBLE

Understanding how trauma impacts us is the first step towards recovery. Stay tuned for more resources and support. You're not alone.

Dr Tammy Oluyori

The Growth Company



LOOKING AHEAD



On Days 2-5, we'll explore these themes more deeply, looking at the lasting effects of trauma and how we can create healing and supportive environments in workplaces and beyond.

Dr Tammy Oluyori