

# Psychological Support for First Responder Partners & Families Webinar Two

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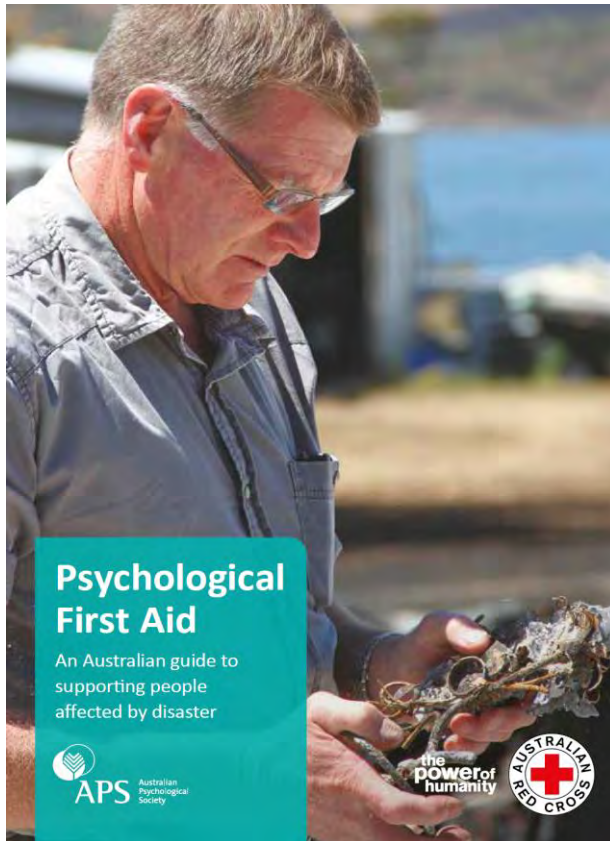
## Webinar Tips

### *Virtual Communication:*

- Use chat room to share ideas, encourage support and highlight topics
- Ask questions in Q&A
- We will take time to answer questions and discuss topics in the chat room.
- Make notes for yourself
- We will record the Webinar

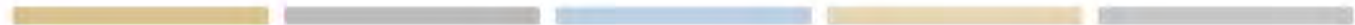
# Family Psychological First Aid

Include your family in any Psychological First Aid



## Purpose of Psychological First Aid

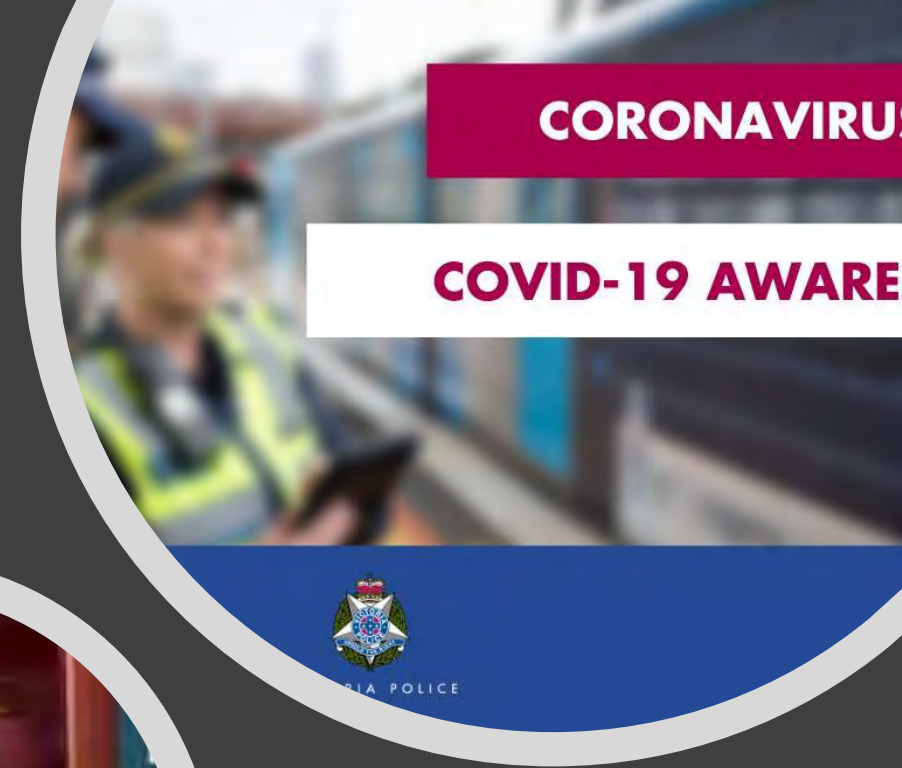
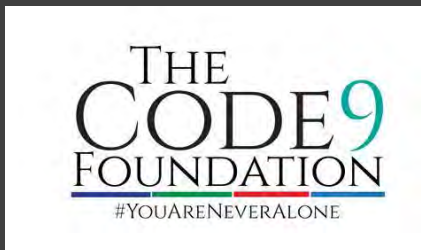
Can be applied to First Responders, Families and Children





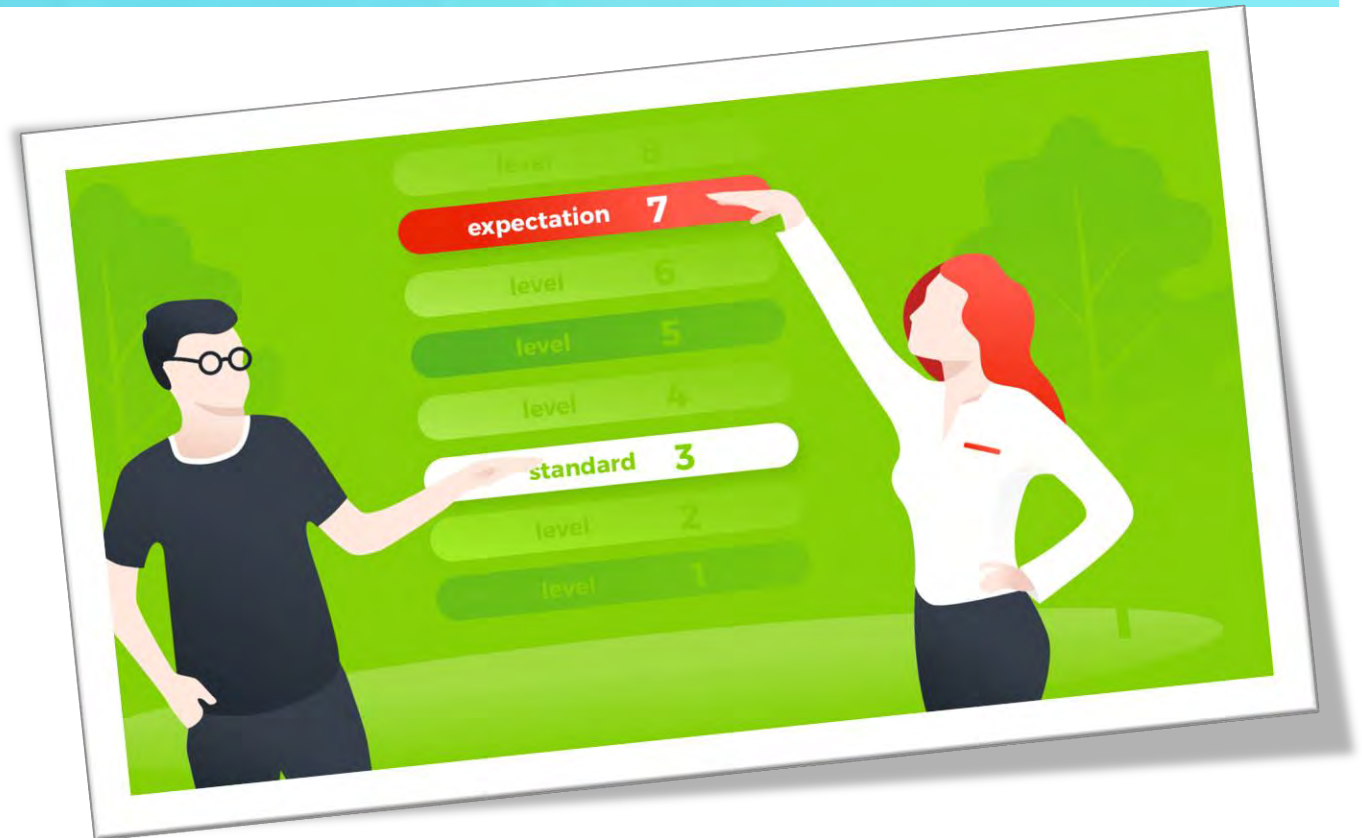
# Our Goals - Webinar Two

- Psychological support for first responder partners and family
- Talking about mental health at home
- Self care for families
- Professional Therapy options
- E-Help and ongoing support from Code 9



Psychological support for first responder partners and family

# EXPECTATIONS & GOALS



**WHAT  
DO  
YOU  
EXPECT**





# IT'S NOT ALL "IN THE MIND"

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

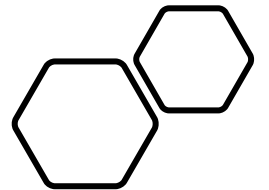
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

WORKPLACE STIGMA

## First Responders Mental Health Issues & PTSD

Beyond Blue 2018; Black Dog Institute senate submission reports, 2018)

- 10% suffer from PTSD compared to 4% of the general population
- Suicidal thoughts over two times higher than adults in the general population
- A fifth of emergency service workers have high levels of psychological stress — (almost three times the national average).
- 1 in 4 former employees experience probable PTSD



# Symptoms to look for...

- Diminished communication quality and frequency (family, relationship, friendship)
- Increased substance use (alcohol, drugs, prescription or over the counter medication)
- Sleep disturbance
- Can't or won't talk about experience/or is fixated and unable to leave a topic
- Preoccupied/not present- off in space
- Heightened fatigue
- Poor diet choices- comfort food or a loss of appetite and food restriction
- Emotional detachment/robotic state or uncharacteristic uncontained emotion
- Indicators of burnout/compassion fatigue
- Cynicism
- Reduced capacity for decision making, even on minor choices
- Considering significant change to lifestyle, direction, sense of self
- Excessive vigilance around vulnerabilities/perceived threats
- Flatness and disregard for activities that usually derive pleasure
- Increased anger/outbursts- very restricted level of tolerance and short fused
- Suicidality/planning/desire to escape
- Stuck' in a particular emotion (guilt, remorse, regret, sadness, anxiety, worry, confusion, fear, anger, etc.)
- Any significant change in typically predictable patterns of behaviour and preferences



<https://fortemaustralia.org.au/article/identifiers-of-deterioration-and-detachment/>



## Family of First Responders

Support includes:

- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of loved ones who may be struggling with their mental health
- Having conversations with loved ones about these struggles
- Help your partner engage in practices that will keep them healthy
- Understanding what resources are available to you and your family





Be prepared  
for the  
possibility of  
a family  
crisis



## Psych-Education for family helps

- Teach the family stress-management skills.
- Develop effective coping skills & resilience.
- Family discussions on how the traumatized person and family members want to address the event with people outside the family.
- Helping the family to understand that *everyone* is impacted by the event, even if that is not apparent at first.

(American Psychology Association, 2008)



## Family Inclusion in prevention & treatment...

The benefits of family involvement in the prevention & support of a person with a mental health problem can include:

- Improved family wellbeing;
- Reduced stress;
- Reduced burden of care; and
- Improved understanding of mental illness, treatments and services

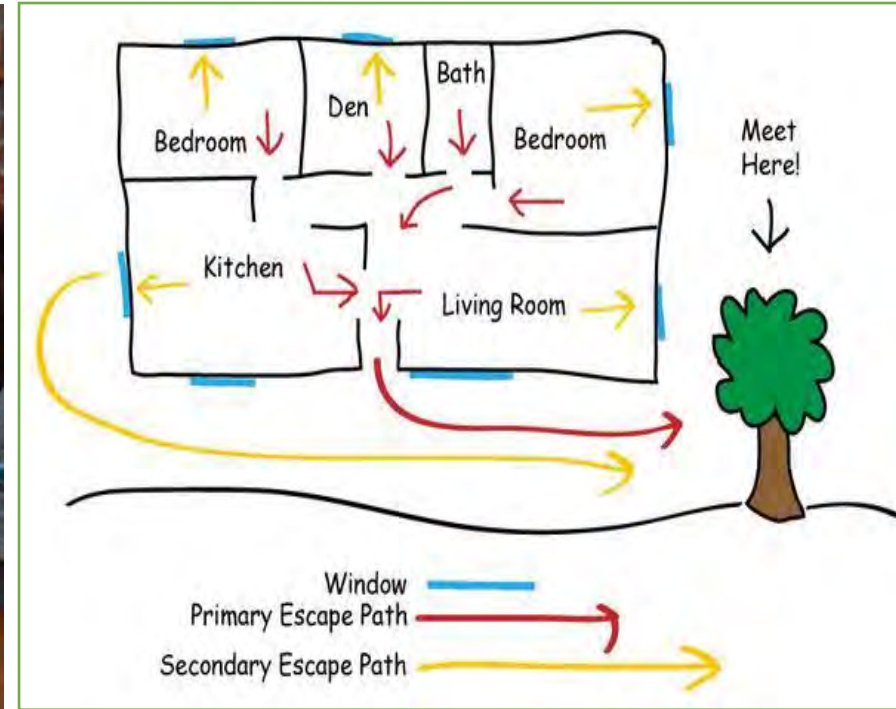
(Headspace, Position Paper, 2012)



# FIRST RESPONDER FAMILY SUPPORT RESPONSE PLAN



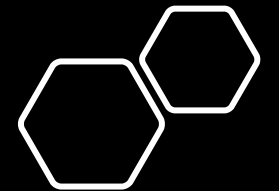
STAY PREPARED | STAY TOGETHER | STAY SAFE



## First Responder Family Support & Emergency Response Plan

### Have a family meeting and discuss:

- What to do in case of emergency/trauma event
- Teach them how to plan and respond in an emergency/trauma event
- Build up the family's confidence & skills to cope in an emergency/trauma event



# Family Emergency Contact Plan

Family Doctor

Family Support person/s

Hospital

Friendship Network

Mental Health Centre

School support Services

Child & Youth mental health services

Psychologist/Psychiatrist

# Family Meeting Ground Rules

- Everyone gets a chance to talk
- One person talks at a time and does not get interrupted
- Okay to say what you feel
- No one has to talk
- Everyone has to listen
- No one puts anyone else down



Encourage family meetings & set some ground rules in the house...



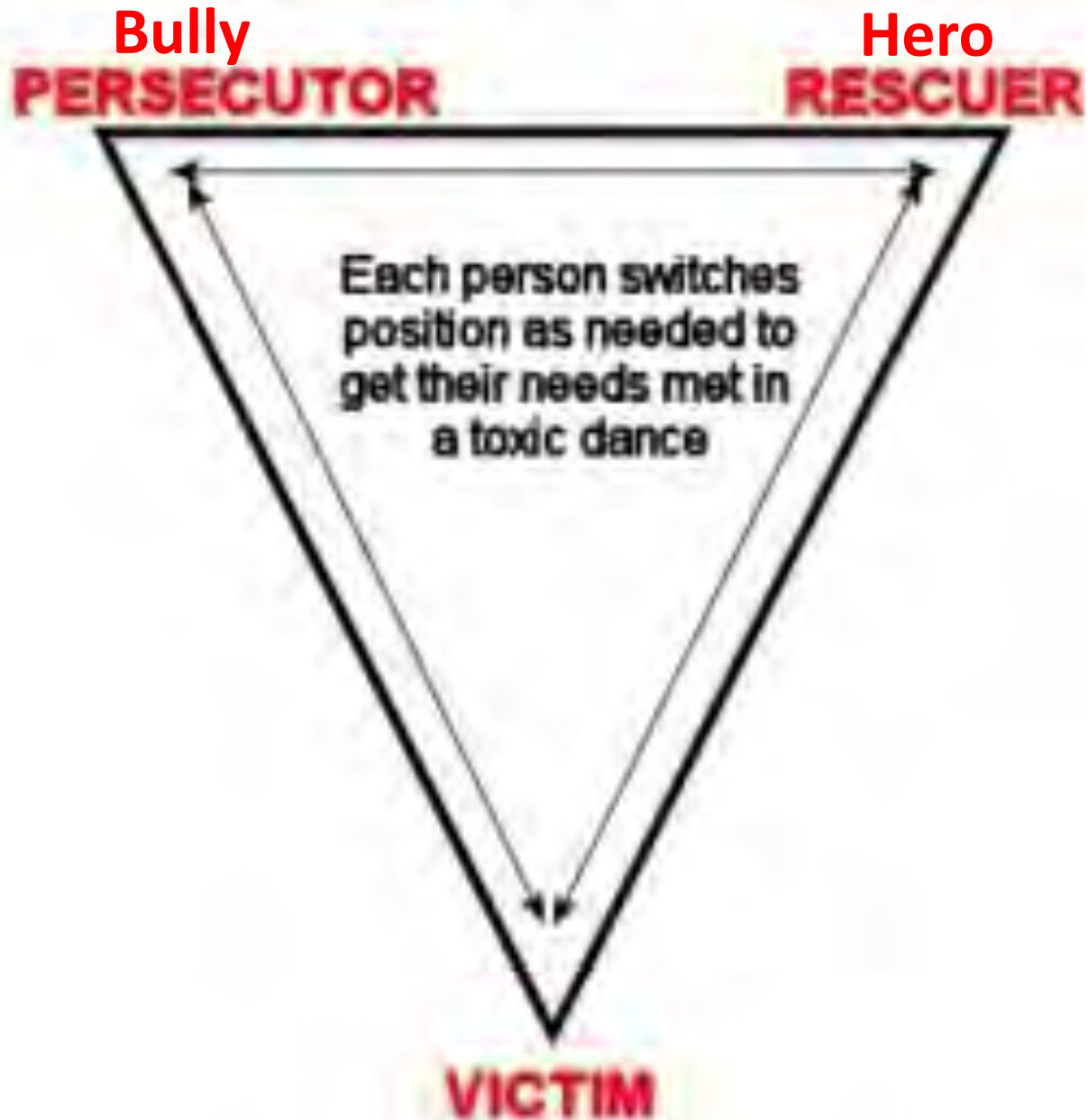


## What's PTSD & what's not in relationship problems

### Pre PTSD behaviour Vs after

- Personality traits (introvert/extravert)
- Impulse control (self regulation)
- Emotional intelligence
- Parenting skills/principles
- Unconscious Bias & prejudices
- Relationship commitment/attitude
- Financial and planning skills
- Bully or violence (psychological or physical)

# Karpman's Drama Triangle



# The Drama Triangle

Toxic relationships may develop due to mental health issues - PTSD

(Karpman, 1968)



# Conflict Ladder

1. Stop the conflict before it gets personal...

2. Ask open questions...  
I see we disagree.. Or  
Let's agree we disagree..

"what can we do to fix this?"  
"What solutions will work for us..?"  
"What will work better for us?"





Start Gate ...having a conversation about PTSD with your partner..



**Situation**

Anchor time  
and place



**Behavior**

Observable  
action

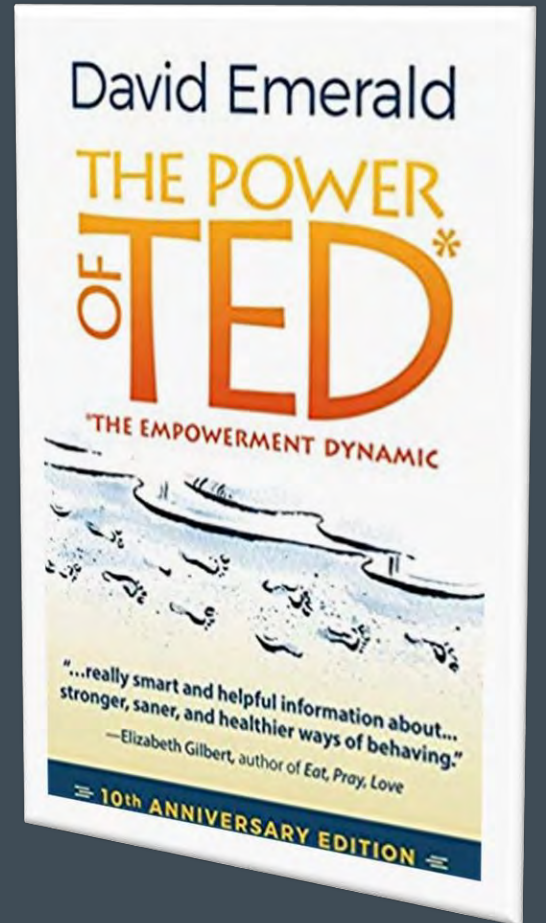
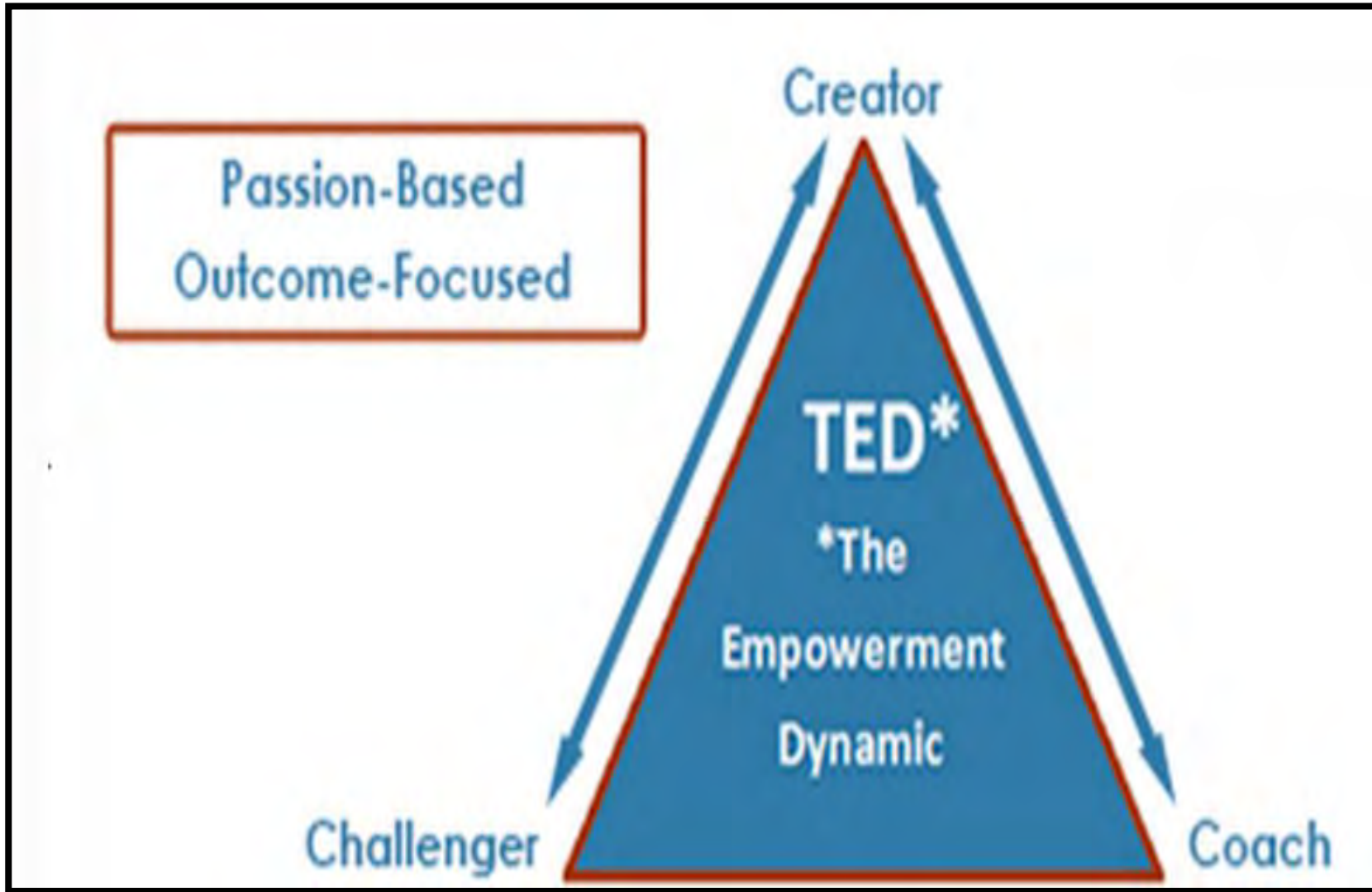


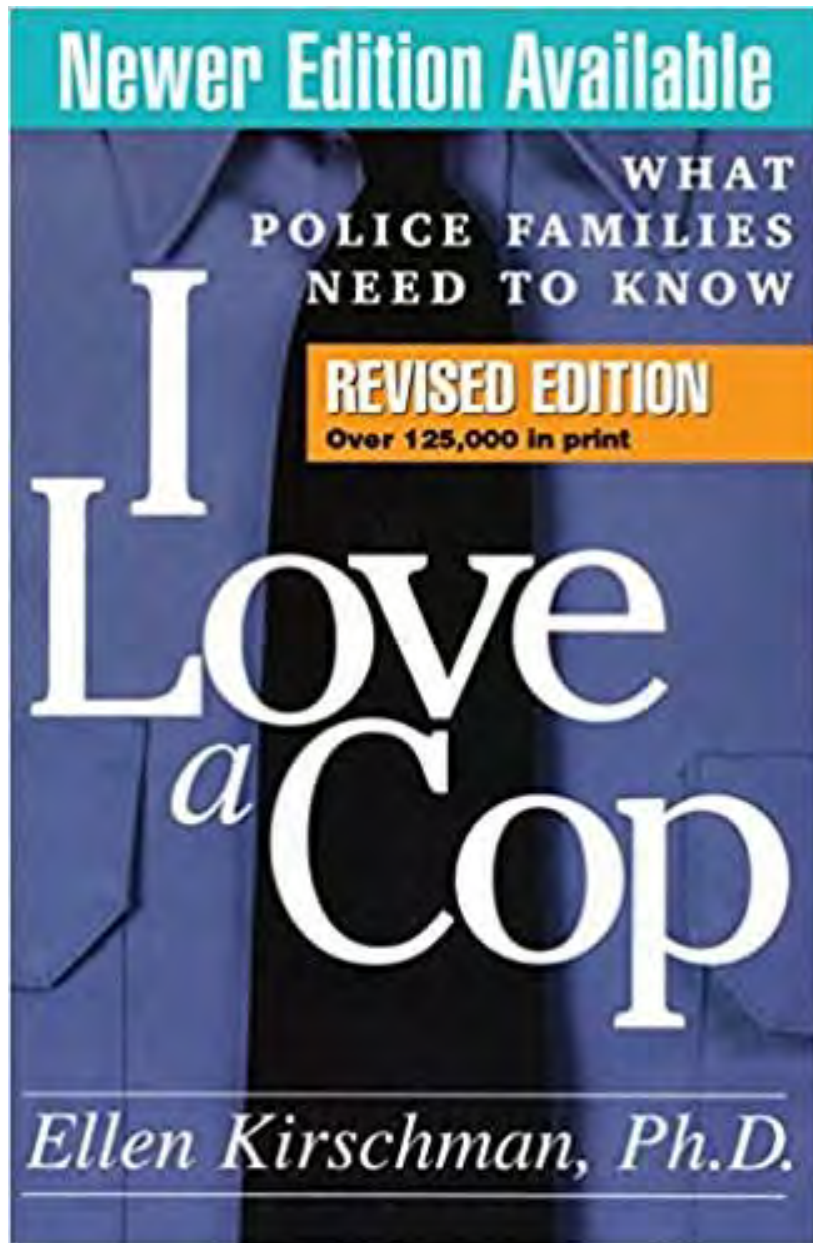
**Impact**

What I felt/  
thought/  
experienced

- Start gate (mindset – I want to understand, I’m concerned)
- State intent – “I want to check if all ok and to understand..”)
- Use the SBI model:
  - “This evening when you came home...” (**situation**)
  - “And you didn’t say hello to the children or myself..” (**Behaviour**)
  - “I saw our Billie was upset and I felt something must be wrong, I am concerned and want to understand..” (**Impact**)

# Positive Triangle

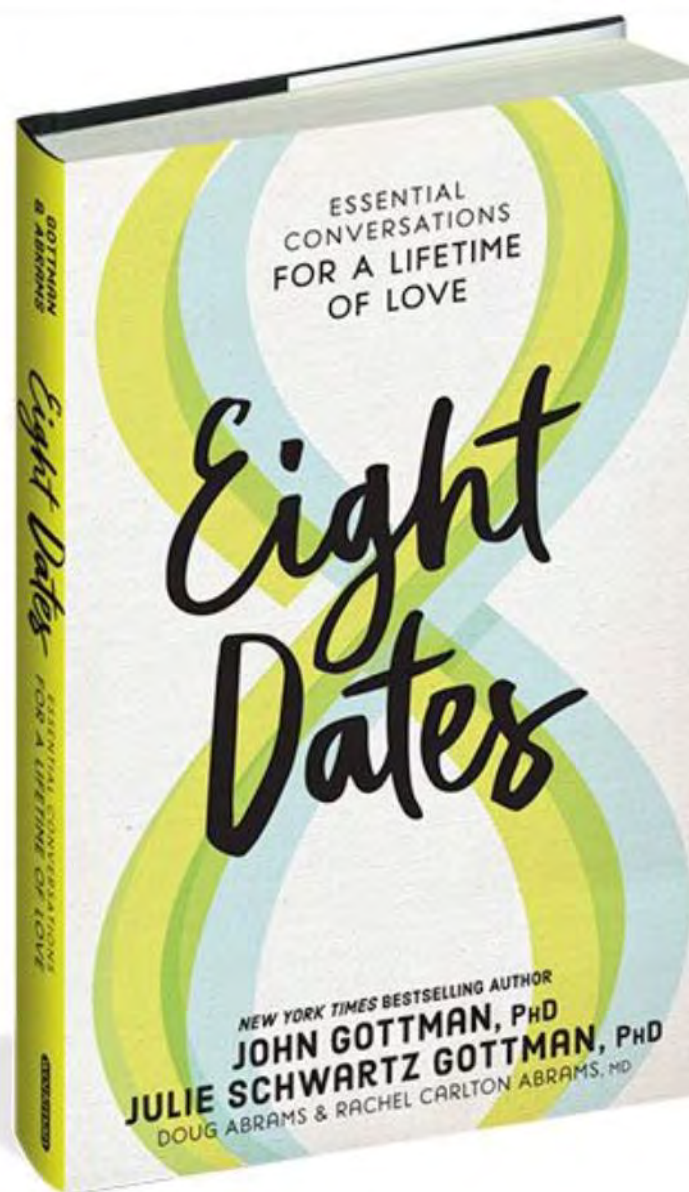




# Love relationships with First Responders

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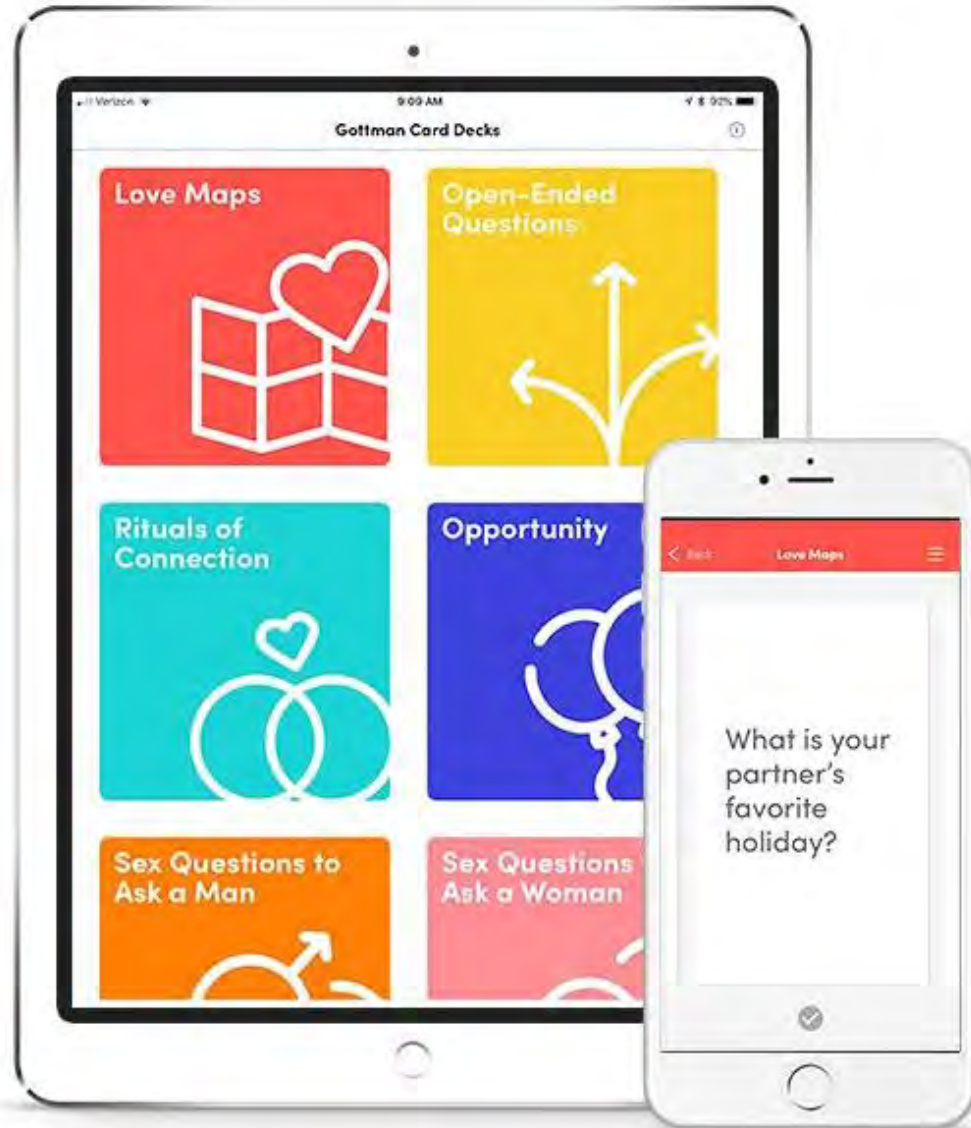




Every strong relationship is a result of a never-ending conversation between partners.

### **Eight relationship conversations**

1. Trust and Commitment.
2. Conflict.
3. Sex and Intimacy.
4. Work and Money.
5. Family.
6. Fun and Adventure.
7. Growth and Spirituality.
8. Dreams.



# Communicating with your partner

- ✓ Love maps
- ✓ Open ended questions technique
- ✓ Rituals of connections ( date nights)
- ✓ Expressing needs
- ✓ Expressing empathy
- ✓ Great listening techniques
- ✓ Salsa time...

<https://www.gottman.com/couples/apps/>





# Tips on happy relationships

- Agree on family values
- Commit to fairness and equity in the relationship
- Agree on rules of the house
- Know each others strengths and weaknesses
- Share your feelings – what's working – what's not
- Respect personal space and shared space
- Be independent and not co-dependent





# MIRROR NEURONS



## Impact on Children

- Withdrawal; Feeling physically sick, weak or in pain; Thought problems; Delinquent and aggressive behaviour
- Anxiety/depression; Attention deficit; Problems in social relations; Internalization
- Anxiety, Distress, Depression, mental health issues



Talk to your children about PTSD

- Explain mental health & Check in with them: R U OK
- Look for similar symptoms in your children
- Share how you are managing PTSD
  
- As parents discuss MEDS with your children...
  - Mindfulness,
  - Exercise,
  - Sleep and
  - Diet





# Doing exercise together can energise a family

Share Fitness Goals

Fun runs, cycling, treks

Build energy together

Challenge each other





# Mindfulness activities with your children







# Family Eating Time

Happy Family experiences can help overcome the trauma....



## Family Sleep Strategies

- After School/Work Routine
- Dinner routine
- Relax - Wind down time
- Prep for bed
- Nightmare routine
- Night wake up
- Morning routine
- Power naps







## Individual Parent Role

- The attachment/bond with your child is so important
- They need to know it is not their fault, not about them
- They need to feel they can be safe, can talk.
- They need to have life experiences with you – quality time
- They need to see you as a person, and they see you as someone that loves them...



# Connect with others

- Peer Support - Code 9
- Family support
- Group counselling support
- Women's groups
- Men's group
- Social events







# Techniques for family Support

- ✓ Date night
- ✓ Family support [resources plan](#)
- ✓ Mental health scale on the wall
- ✓ Family meetings
- ✓ Use the SBI method of conversation
- ✓ Apply the TED relationship triangle (stop the drama triangle)
- ✓ Gottman app – 8 date conversations
- ✓ Talk to your children
- ✓ Teach them and join them in M.E.D.S.
- ✓ Quality time with your children
- ✓ Connect with others – develop your own support network





**1800RESPECT**  
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC  
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE



women's legal  
service victoria

Seek help:  
Support services



THE  
**CODE9**  
FOUNDATION  
#YOUARENEVERALONE

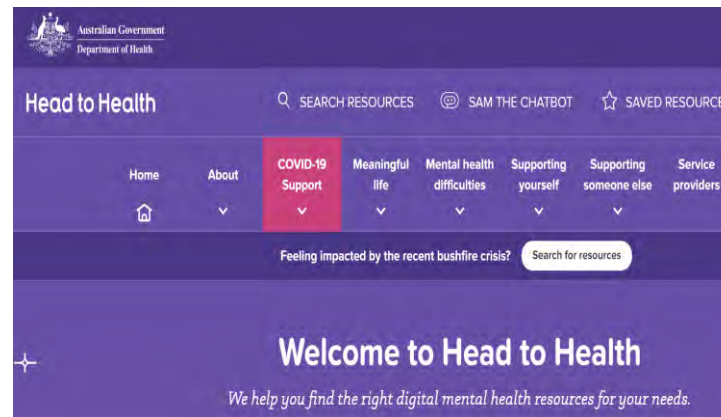


## E-Help

- Online websites and apps
- Code 9 education app: Edapp



**Black Dog  
Institute**



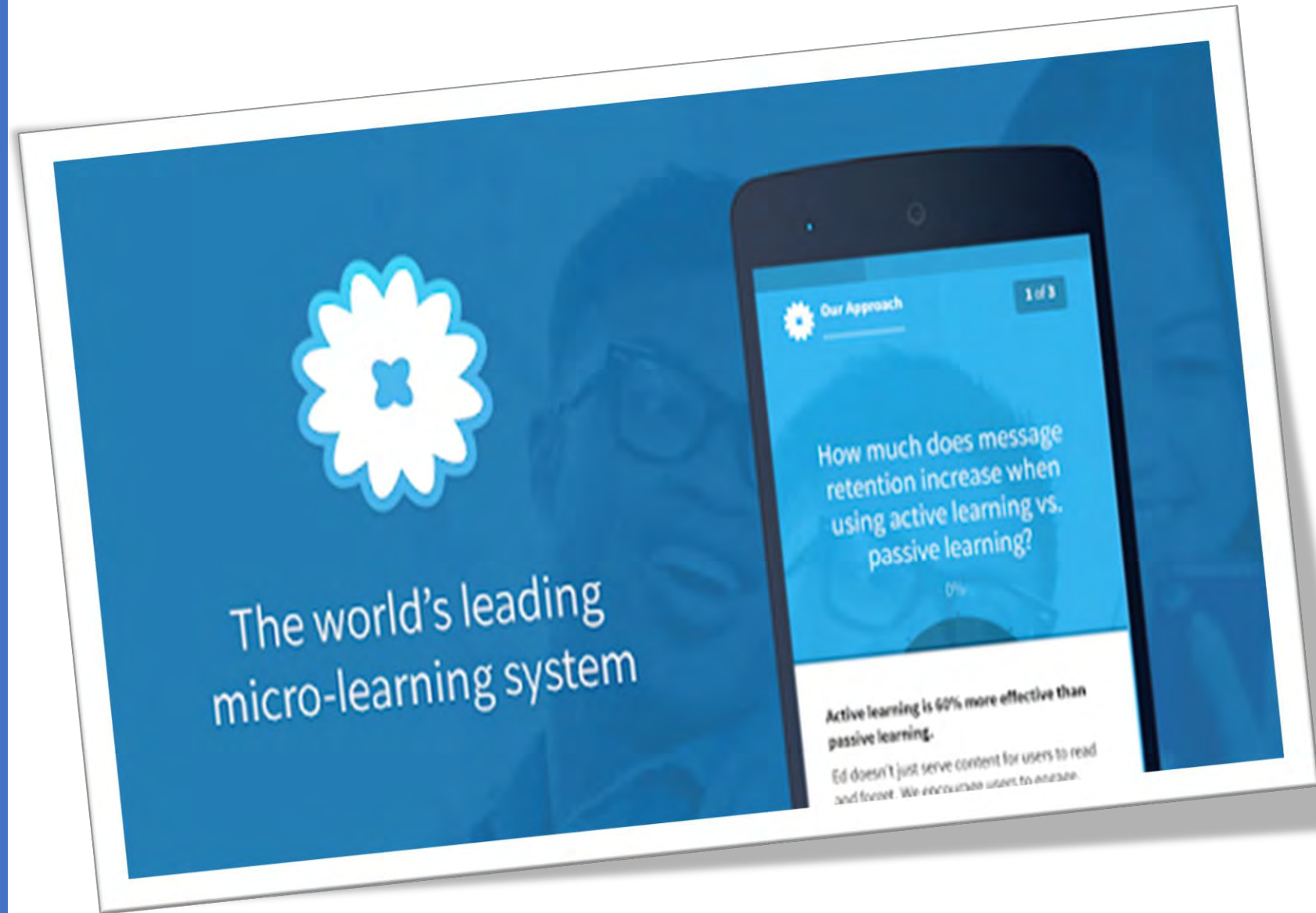
If you need help call  
the 24 hours  
helplines & contact  
your GP

# Code 9 -Edapp

Micro-lessons and discussion group.

Aim:

- To learn
- To remind yourself
- To share ideas with each other in a learning environment
- To refresh your memory





# Access your demo content

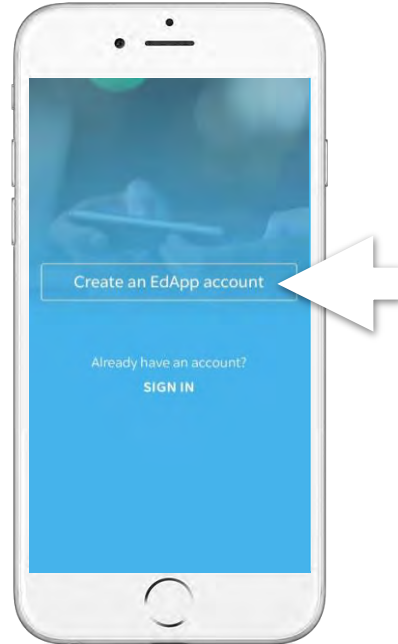
## Step 1. Install the App



- Search for '**ED LMS**' in the App Store/Play Store on your device.
- Install the App

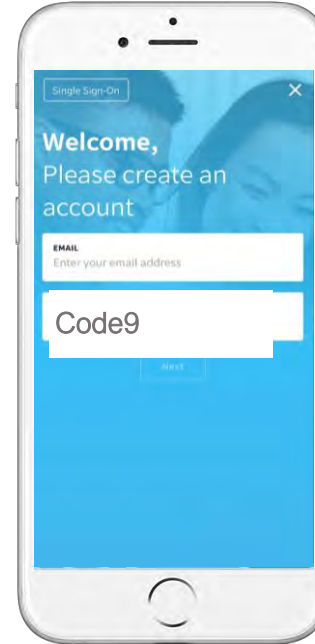


## Step 2. Create an Account



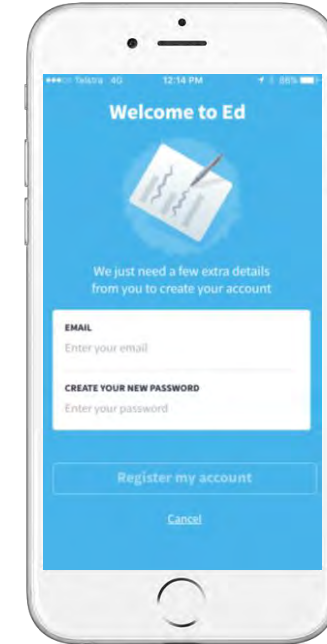
- Open the App and swipe through the introduction screens then tap 'OK' to enable notifications.
- Tap '**Create an Account**'

## Step 3. Enter invite code



- Enter the invite code provided. (Lower or upper case is accepted)
- Then tap '**Go**'

## Step 4. Enter details and setup is complete!



- Enter your email and create a password then select '**Register my account**'.
- Setup complete!

Q & A





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