

Adaptive Processing

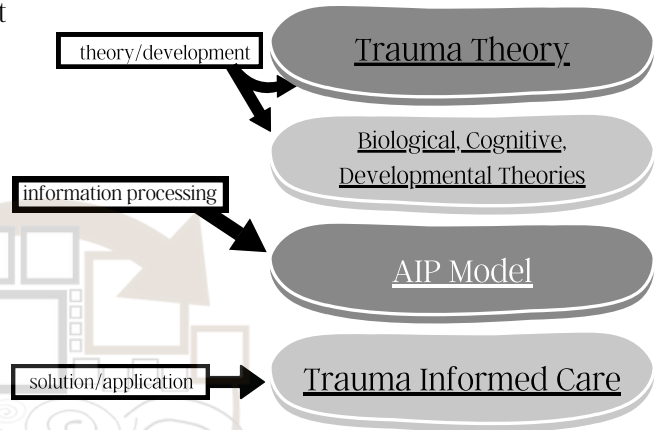
Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) is the theory of information processing that EMDR is founded on. It is an **information processing theory**, meaning it does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the nature of people, dysfunction, and healing. Therefore, it must be integrated with psychological and social theories in order to be effectively applied in a treatment setting.

- The term "Adaptive" in this context means that memories are stored as a consolidated unit with logical details and emotional experiences connected, a process that is disrupted by trauma.
- Features of adaptive memories include:
 - Become less intense with time
 - Tend to condense down to summary points (ie. a family vacation or holiday being "defined" by a single theme or unique moment)
 - May contain useful information, but are often accessed "gradually" vs "all at once"

Processing

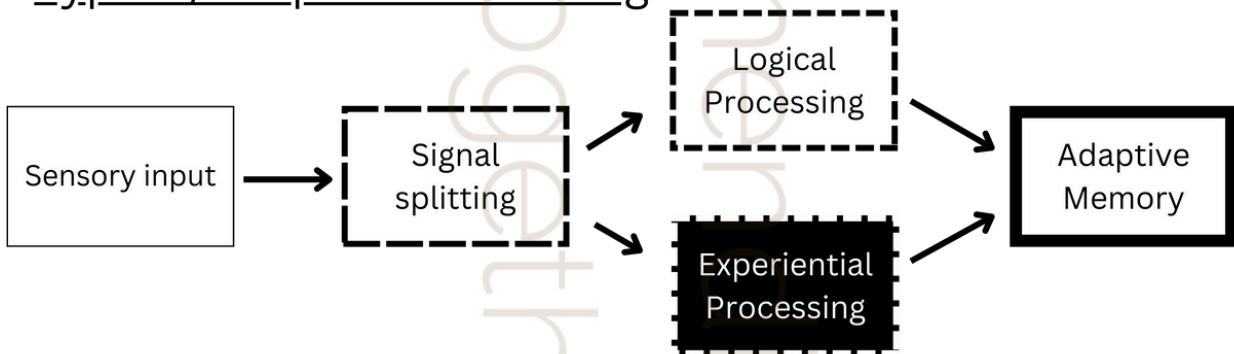


AIP bridges a gap between theories about **what** causes trauma to develop and **how** to provide effective trauma care by answering the question of **why** specific experiences are traumatic.



AIP is based on the premise that in the absence of adverse events/stressors (ie. "overwhelmingly intense experiences") AND the presence of an appropriately nurturing environment, the brain naturally processes information in an adaptive way.

Typical/Adaptive Processing



Elements necessary for adaptive processing

- Immediate (even just short term) safety and stability, both in the environment and felt by the individual
 - [MOST IMPORTANT]
 - Without physical safety, the brain and body are focused together on survival and therefore the memory storage system in the brain is fundamentally altered (discussed on the following page).

Others aspects:

[Related to the core component of the therapeutic environment]

- Realness/genuineness of the person, environment, and relationship
- Acceptance/Unconditional positive regard (which is both Real and Communicated/Received)
- Empathy/understanding communicated and received
 - [A breakdown in any one of these will cause significant issues in being able to process (or RE-process) adaptively]