Trauma and traumatizing

In addition to how **overwhelmingly intense** (or **traumatic**) an experience is initially, the way the experience is **re-accessed** later has a significant impact on how **traumatizing** the experience is.

This is what differentiates a **traumatic** vs **traumatizing** event.

Even if **overwhelmingly intense** in the moments, if safety is re-established later and an environment is found which contains t**he features necessary for adaptive processing (empathy, realness, positive regard)**, than the information may be RE-accessed and RE-processed adaptively.

Traumatic (trauma)
- A **traumatic** experience is one that was **overwhelmingly intense when first experienced**. This results in the formation of **traumatic memories** requiring reprocessing later.
- Such experiences are defined in AIP as **adverse events/stressors** or **trauma**.
- These experiences have not yet become part of an independent, **maladaptive neural network**.
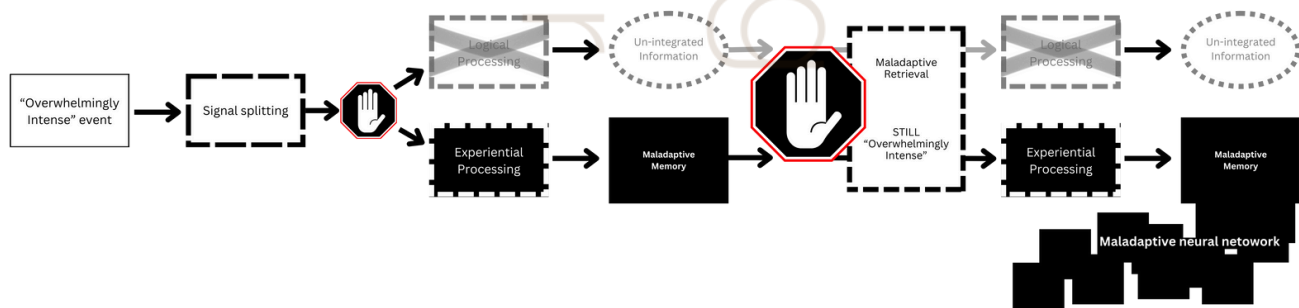
TRAUMATIC VS TRAUMATIZING

Adaptive Processing (Traumatic but NOT Traumatizing
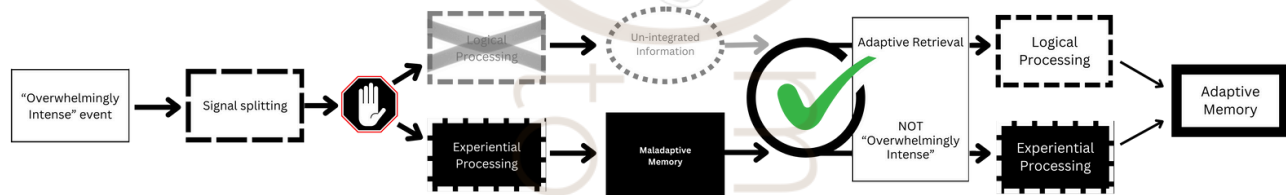
Traumatizing
- An experience that becomes **traumatizing** is **overwhelmingly intense when it is accessed later** in the future. This often involves either the connection to or the creation of a maladaptive (or **traumatizing)** neural network.
- This most often occurs due to the **lack of an appropriately nurturing environmen**t and **adaptive new experiences**, which are essential to **traumatic memories** from being **adaptively consolidated**.

Maladaptive Processing (Traumatic AND Traumatizing)

Throughout recovery, one is likely to experience numerous **traumatic experiences**, due to normal **life stressors** and the **overwhelming nature** of attempting to re-process past trauma. Understanding how these **traumatic (ie. overwhelmingly intense)** experiences can **be prevented** from being **traumatizing (ie. maladaptively stored long term)** is essential to feeling confident in working through trauma.