

Linked Descendants

Trauma & Encountering Our Heritage of Slavery



Linked Descendants

Trauma & Our Heritage of Slavery – A learning packet

- Video presentation
- PowerPoint deck
- Supplemental reading
- Supplemental notes from online delivery





Linked Descendants

- ❖ Review: Responses to trauma in the body
- ❖ Reflection:
 - ❖ How researching ancestral involvement in slavery creates / reminds us of trauma
 - ❖ How trauma, memories, emotions show up in **our bodies**
- ❖ Calming our memories, emotions, trauma responses



Linked Descendants

If hearing or reading about trauma becomes upsetting or disturbing, remember your options for taking care of yourself

- Breathe. Use one of the breathing exercises.
- Turn off audio. Turn off video. Walk around. Get a glass of water.
- Turn off the session, stop reading. Come back later.



Linked Descendants

***Breathing Ourselves into
the Present***



Review: Trauma is ...

Reactions of an individual or group to terrible events
Physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, relational

Trauma-producing experiences

- Threats to lives, to bodies
- Terror, feelings of helplessness
- Overwhelm ability to cope, respond
- Loss of control
- Challenge to sense of meaning, orderliness



A continuum, from distress to trauma: Trauma experiences unique to each person and group

Upset, distress

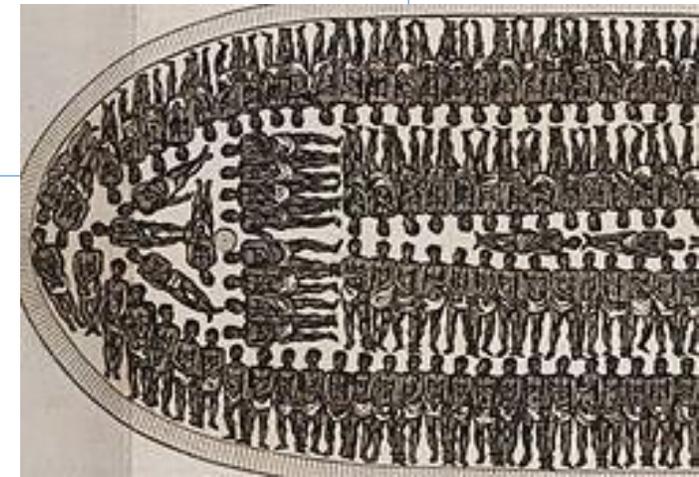
- Least severe
- Shorter duration
- Some control
- Low identity threat

Stress

- More severe
- Longer duration
- Less control
- Some identity threat

Trauma

- Extremely severe
- Ongoing
- No control
- High/total identity threat



Historical
trauma

Cumulative,
chronic
trauma

Multi-
generational
trauma

Ongoing
structural
trauma

Secondary,
vicarious
trauma

Moral
injury

Perpetration-
induced
trauma

Societal,
collective
trauma





**Late 1500's,
African
abductees**

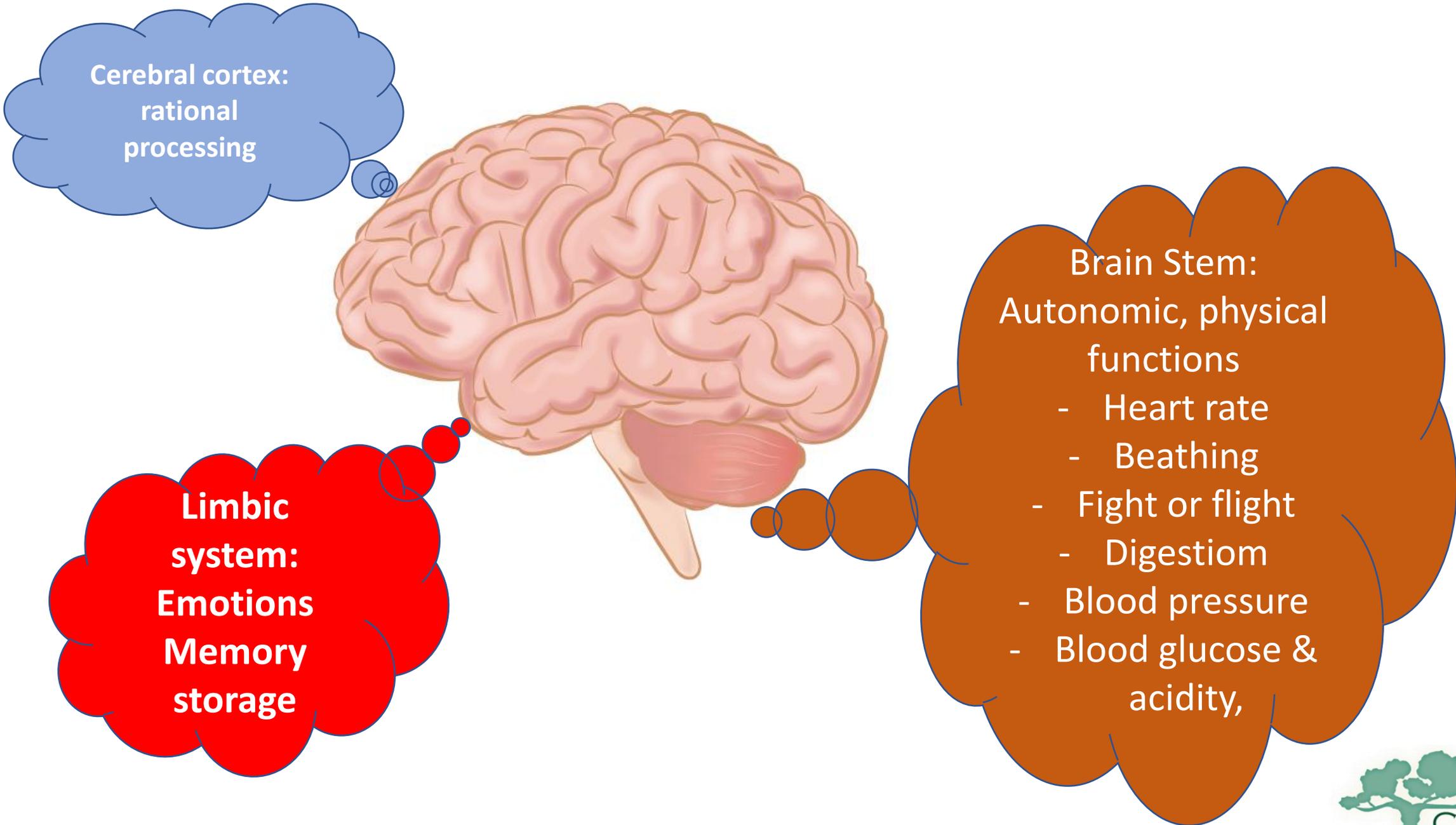
**Raids & battles | Capture & detention | Forced marches | Imprisonment, Filth, Torture, Rape, Humiliation | Loss of family | Removal from home & homeland
Foul, degrading, injurious shipboard conditions | Loss of language, culture, community bonds | Constant threat of harm, starvation, rape, terror
Stripped naked for display | Handled by strangers | Loss of language, body autonomy, privacy, culture, connections**

Objects: Enslavement, oppression, loss of freedom, loss of bodily autonomy | Rape | Loss of children, partners, parents | Beatings, whippings, torture | Lack of food, shelter, clothing | Lynching | Threat, terror, humiliation, disregard, disrespect

**Burning at the stake | Public hanging | Drawing & quartering | Torture | Pillorying | Trial by ordeal
Religious persecution | Rebellions & uprisings | Land clearances | Plagues | Debtors' prison
Famine | Urban crowding | Unemployment | Starvation | Homelessness | Forced deportations**

**Perpetrator or Witness: Enslavement | Rape | Beatings | Torture | Deprivation of food, shelter, clothing
Separation of families | Imprisonment | Hanging | Lynching | Terror, humiliation**

Medieval period onward, European/British people, colonists of North America



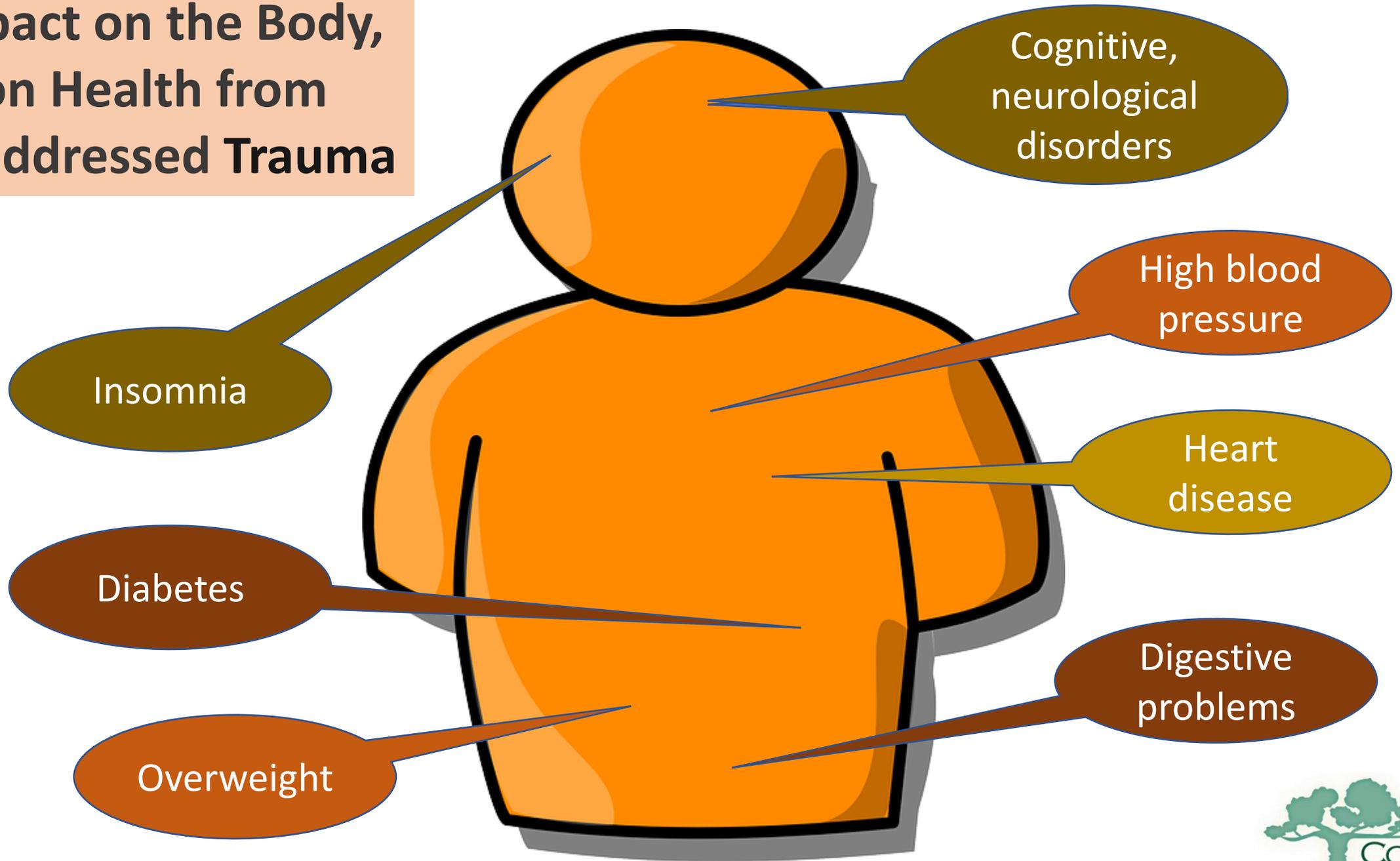
Cerebral cortex:
rational
processing

**Limbic
system:**
Emotions
Memory
storage

Brain Stem:
Autonomic, physical
functions

- Heart rate
- Beathing
- Fight or flight
- Digestiom
- Blood pressure
- Blood glucose & acidity,

Impact on the Body, on Health from Unaddressed Trauma



Symptoms of Unaddressed & Re-activated Trauma

Acting-in

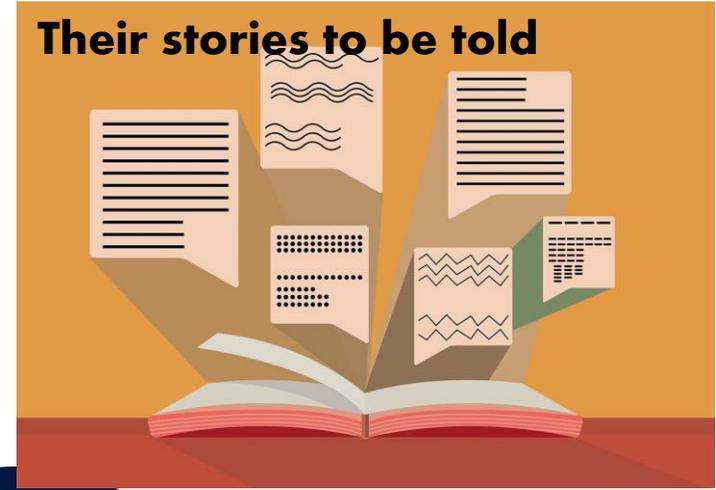
- Substance abuse
- Eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Depression
- Anxiety

Acting-out

- Abusing others
- Gang, criminal behavior
- High risk behavior

Cultural symptoms: Apathy. Lack of empathy. Intolerance. "Either/or" thinking. Distrust

Trauma Survivors Need



**Trauma survivors
need
Linked Descendants
can offer**



The Challenge for descendants of European heritage enslavers

Hold two sets
of demands in
focus, at the
center of our
consciousness,
simultaneously

FOCUS ON: The profound,
historic, multi-
generational & ongoing
structural brutality &
trauma inflicted on Black,
Indigenous & People of
Color. **Our call to action is
to truth-telling, structural
change & repairing harms**

FOCUS ON: The
unacknowledged historic
& ongoing structural
trauma & moral injury
experienced by European
heritage perpetrators,
witnesses & bystanders.
**Our call to action is to
self-knowledge &
management, so we can
learn, tell the truth, act
for change, repair harms**

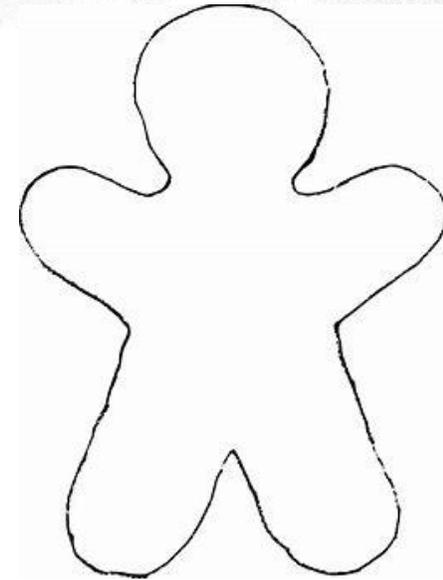
Linked Descendants

Reflection Exercise

- Get ready: Feet on the floor. Butt in the seat. Back against the chair.

BREATHE IN ... BREATHE OUT

- Remember: A time when you were learning about your family connection to slavery and you had strong feelings. How, what did you feel?
- Where **in your body** were the feelings? Mark their locations onto the outline of a human being.



Next step

Accepting. Gentle.
Affectionate. Passionate.
Trusting. Loving.

Embarrassed.
Vulnerable.
Rejecting. Insecure.
Worried. Afraid.

Threatened. Furious.
Offended. Frustrated.
Annoyed. Angry.

Resentful.
Ashamed. Bitter.
Disappointed.
Disgusted

Are there **words** for your
feelings? How would you **name**
them?
Add the names to the diagram.

Hurt. Guilty. Lonely.
Grief-stricken. Sad.
Uninterested.
Inadequate.

Startled.
Overwhelmed.
Confused. Amazed.
Shocked. Surprised.

Numb. Distant.
Disassociated.
Absent.
Apathetic.

Confident. Grateful.
Peaceful. Excited.
Playful. Happy.
Joyful.

Linked Descendants

Reflection complete? Take a moment.

BREATHE IN BREATHE OUT IN OUT LET GO