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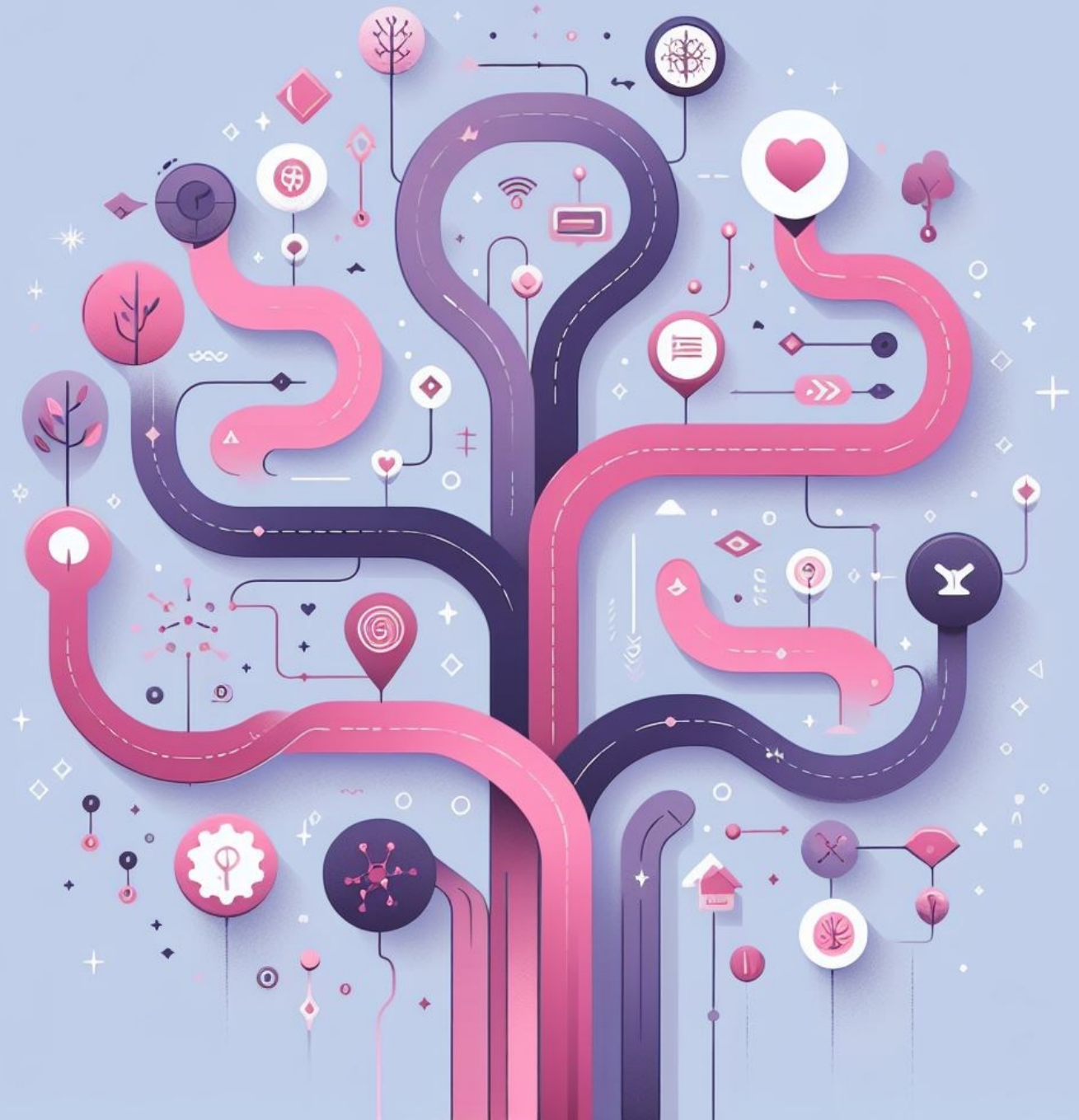
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# Unhealthy Choices

## Presenter

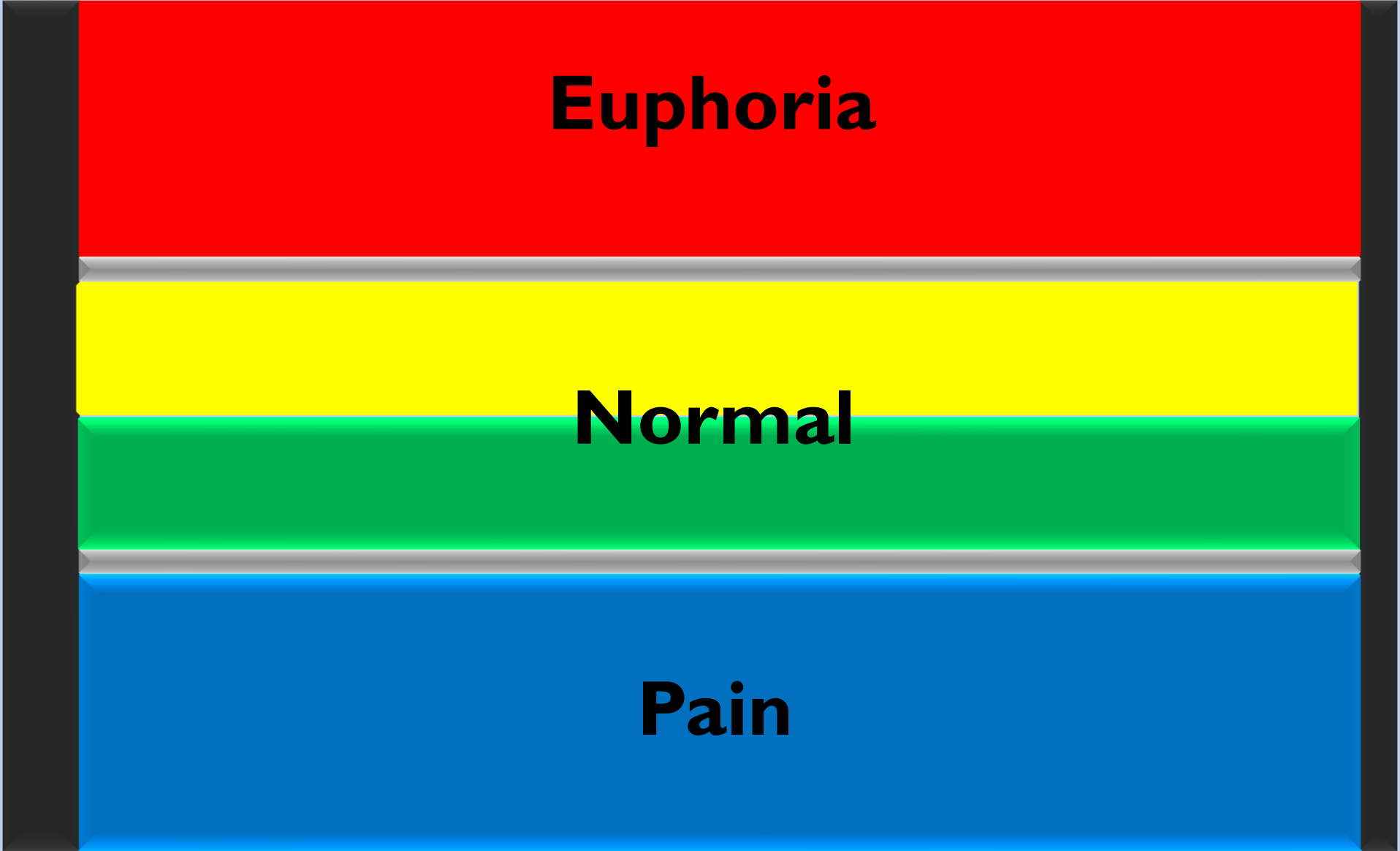
# Jath van der Westhuizen



# UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

- Emotional Eating
- Avoidance Coping
- Distraction
- Numbing
- Multitasking
- Ineffective goalsetting
- Impulsive decisions
- Self-harm
- Excessive Spending
- Codependency
- Substance Abuse
- Excessive craving for validation
- Sleeping too much
- Venting
- Perfectionism
- Not exercising
- Procrastination
- Isolation
- Ruminating
- Overwork

# HOW PEOPLE MAKE UNHEALTHY CHOICES



**Euphoria**

**Normal**

**Pain**



A piece of light brown, textured cardboard is shown with a large, irregular tear. A white rectangular label is pasted onto the cardboard, partially covering the tear. The label contains the text "Uncover your unmet needs" in a bold, orange-brown font. The background is a solid, light blue-grey color.

**Uncover your unmet needs**

# ROOTS OF UNMET NEEDS

**Affection and  
Love vs  
Rejection**

**Sense of  
Belonging vs  
Sense of  
Abandonment**

**Validation vs  
Disapproval –  
fear of not  
being accepted**

**Independence:  
Autonomy vs  
Domination**

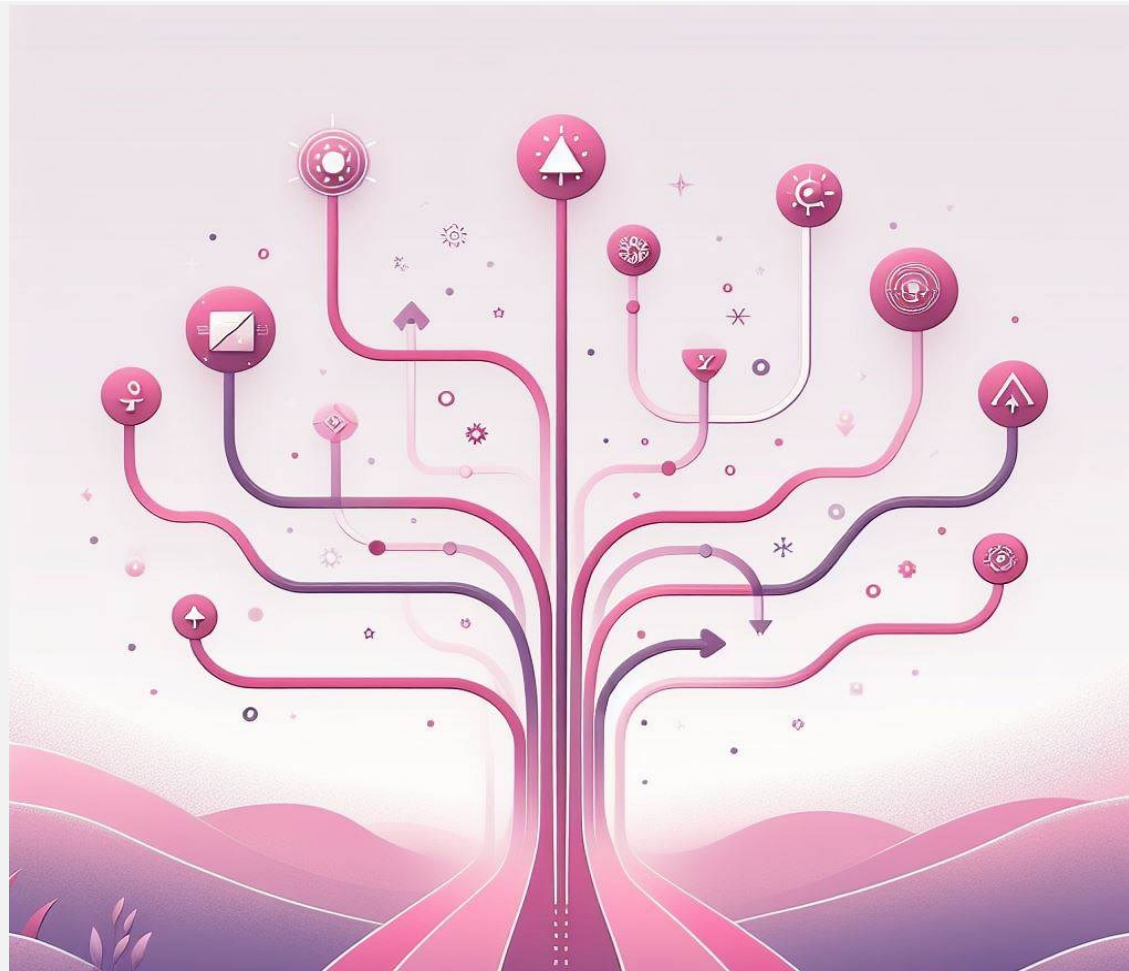
**Security vs  
Feeling unsafe  
undermining  
confidence**

**Connection vs  
Disconnection**

**Competence  
and  
achievement**

**Stimulation**

| Unmet Need | Unhealthy pattern | Coping Skill |
|------------|-------------------|--------------|
|            |                   |              |



# Avoidance: Ignoring or distancing oneself from challenging emotions.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Security and Stability

*Explanation:* Avoidance may stem from a fear of confronting difficult emotions, seeking a sense of security by steering clear of potential emotional upheaval.

*Coping Skills:*

**1.Emotional Regulation:** Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Developing strategies to manage challenging emotions effectively, seeking support, and practicing self-care. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.

**2.Grounding Techniques:** Engaging the senses to stay present in the moment.

# Self-Harm: Engaging in deliberate self-injury to cope.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Affection and Love, Acceptance and Approval

*Explanation:* Self-harm can be an expression of seeking love, acceptance, or approval, often driven by feelings of inadequacy.

*Coping Skills:*

- 1. Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.
- 2. Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Finding healthier ways to cope with emotions and building positive relationships. Assertiveness Skills: Applicable to setting boundaries, and self-advocacy. Expressing thoughts, feelings, and needs in a direct and respectful manner.
- 3. Problem-solving:** Creative Expression: Applicable to: Emotional release, self-discovery, and coping. Using art, writing, or other forms of expression to process emotions.

# Substance Abuse: Using drugs or alcohol to numb emotional pain.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Safety and Security, Affection and Love

*Explanation:* Substance abuse might be an attempt to find a false sense of security or numb emotional pain arising from a lack of affection and love.

*Coping Skills:*

- 1. Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.
- 2. Distress Tolerance:** Biofeedback: Using technology to monitor and control physiological responses to stress. Developing healthy ways to manage emotional pain and building a support system. Engaging in grounding techniques during moments of emotional distress. Breathing Exercises: Utilizing controlled breathing patterns during moments of distress. Engaging in activities that induce a state of relaxation. Visualization: Creating positive mental images to promote relaxation and positive thinking. Radical Acceptance: Embracing thoughts and feelings while committing to values-based actions. Systematic tensing and relaxing of muscle groups for relaxation. Play and Leisure Activities: Applicable to: Stress reduction, enhancing mood, and promoting balance. Engaging in enjoyable and light-hearted activities for relaxation.
- 3. Problem-solving:** Creative Expression: Applicable to: Emotional release, self-discovery, and coping. Using art, writing, or other forms of expression to process emotions.

## Emotional Eating: Consuming excessive food in response to emotions.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Affection and Love, Security and Stability

*Explanation:* Emotional eating may be an attempt to fill the emotional void, seeking comfort and security through food.

*Coping Skills:*

- 1. Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.
- 2. Distress Tolerance:** Biofeedback: Using technology to monitor and control physiological responses to stress. Developing alternative ways to soothe emotions, cultivating a healthy relationship with food, and seeking support. Engaging in grounding techniques during moments of emotional distress. Breathing Exercises: Utilizing controlled breathing patterns during moments of distress. Visualization: Creating positive mental images to promote relaxation and positive thinking. Radical Acceptance: Embracing thoughts and feelings while committing to values-based actions. Systematic tensing and relaxing of muscle groups for relaxation. Play and Leisure Activities: Applicable to: Stress reduction, enhancing mood, and promoting balance. Engaging in enjoyable and light-hearted activities for relaxation.
- 3. Problem-solving:** Creative Expression: Applicable to: Emotional release, self-discovery, and coping. Using art, writing, or other forms of expression to process emotions.

# Perfectionism: Setting unrealistic standards and fearing failure.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Competence and Achievement

*Explanation:* Perfectionism may arise from a need for recognition and achievement, with the fear of failure linked to unmet competence needs.

*Coping Skills:*

- 1. Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.
- 2. Problem Solving:** Recognizing intrinsic value, setting realistic goals, and addressing the fear of failure. Journaling: Emotional processing, self-reflection, and problem-solving. Writing thoughts and feelings to gain insight and clarity. Setting realistic and achievable goals: Motivation, a sense of accomplishment, and personal growth.

**Fear of Rejection and Other People's Opinion: Allowing the fear of disapproval to dictate actions and decisions, often leading to conformity or avoidance of authentic self-expression.**

*Connected Unmet Need: Affirmation and Encouragement, Connection and Belonging*  
*Coping Skills:*

- **Emotional Regulation:** Managing the fear of rejection and negative opinions.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Building self-confidence and expressing oneself authentically.
- **Assertiveness Skills:** Expressing thoughts, feelings, and needs in a direct and respectful manner.
- **Self-Compassion Practices:** Developing self-compassion and reducing self-criticism.
- **Social Support Networks:** Seeking and maintaining connections with supportive individuals.
- **Cognitive Restructuring:** Challenging and changing negative thought patterns related to fear of rejection.

# Ruminating: Overthinking and dwelling on negative thoughts.

*Connected Unmet Need:* Safety and Security

*Explanation:* Ruminating may serve as a form of mental control, attempting to create a sense of security by constantly analysing potential threats.

*Coping Skills:*

- 1. Emotional Regulation:** Mindfulness and Meditation, Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns. Self-Compassion Practices: Treating oneself with kindness and understanding.
- 2. Distress Tolerance:** Biofeedback: Using technology to monitor and control physiological responses to stress. Developing skills to manage negative thoughts, seeking support, and creating a sense of safety. Engaging in grounding techniques during moments of emotional distress. Breathing Exercises: Utilizing controlled breathing patterns during moments of distress. Finding humour in situations to lighten the emotional load. Visualization: Creating positive mental images to promote relaxation and positive thinking. Radical Acceptance: Embracing thoughts and feelings while committing to values-based actions. Systematic tensing and relaxing of muscle groups for relaxation. Play and Leisure Activities: Applicable to: Stress reduction, enhancing mood, and promoting balance. Engaging in enjoyable and light-hearted activities for relaxation.

# RECOVERY & COPING SKILLS

## **Anchor**

- Mindfulness skills (Grounding, creative & Relaxation Skills)

## **Avoid**

- Strategies to avoid triggers and unnecessary conflict

## **Alter**

- Boundary & Distraction skills & Self-care

## **Accept**

- Practicing radical acceptance

## **Adapt**

- Change of perception skillset, thinking skills

## **Abolish**

- Termination Skillset

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