

# The Brain on Trauma: Why Addiction Makes Sense



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# Objectives

- **Explain how substances or compulsive behaviors can temporarily relieve trauma related distress.**
- **Recognize why addictive behaviors often develop as attempts to cope with distress rather than as failures of character.**
- **Learn practical ways loved one can respond supportively without taking on unhealthy responsibility.**



# Mentimeter

- In a word or two, what comes to mind when you think of the word trauma?
- In a word or two, what comes to mind when you think of the word addiction?
- <https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/alfc6daddx9wkcdqchd5g6qpi6oyn2fq/edit?question=1nz35xy3e6yv>



Compassion improves outcomes



What is trauma?



BIG T

VS

little t



# Trauma and the Nervous System



Trauma increases sensitivity to threat



# Common Trauma Symptoms



# Why Substances Provide Relief



# Reasons you might have used Substances:

- **Relax** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Intoxicated** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Feel Better** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Decrease Boredom** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Increase Confidence** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Stay Awake** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Feel Elated/Euphoric** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Stop Worrying** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Sleep** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Forget** \_\_\_\_\_



# Examples of self -medicating

## Substance

- alcohol
- cannabis
- opioids
- stimulants
- nicotine

## Behavioral

- gambling
- gaming
- pornography
- shopping
- social media



**What can cause an addiction  
to a substance or behavior?**

**How is addiction related to  
Mental Health?**



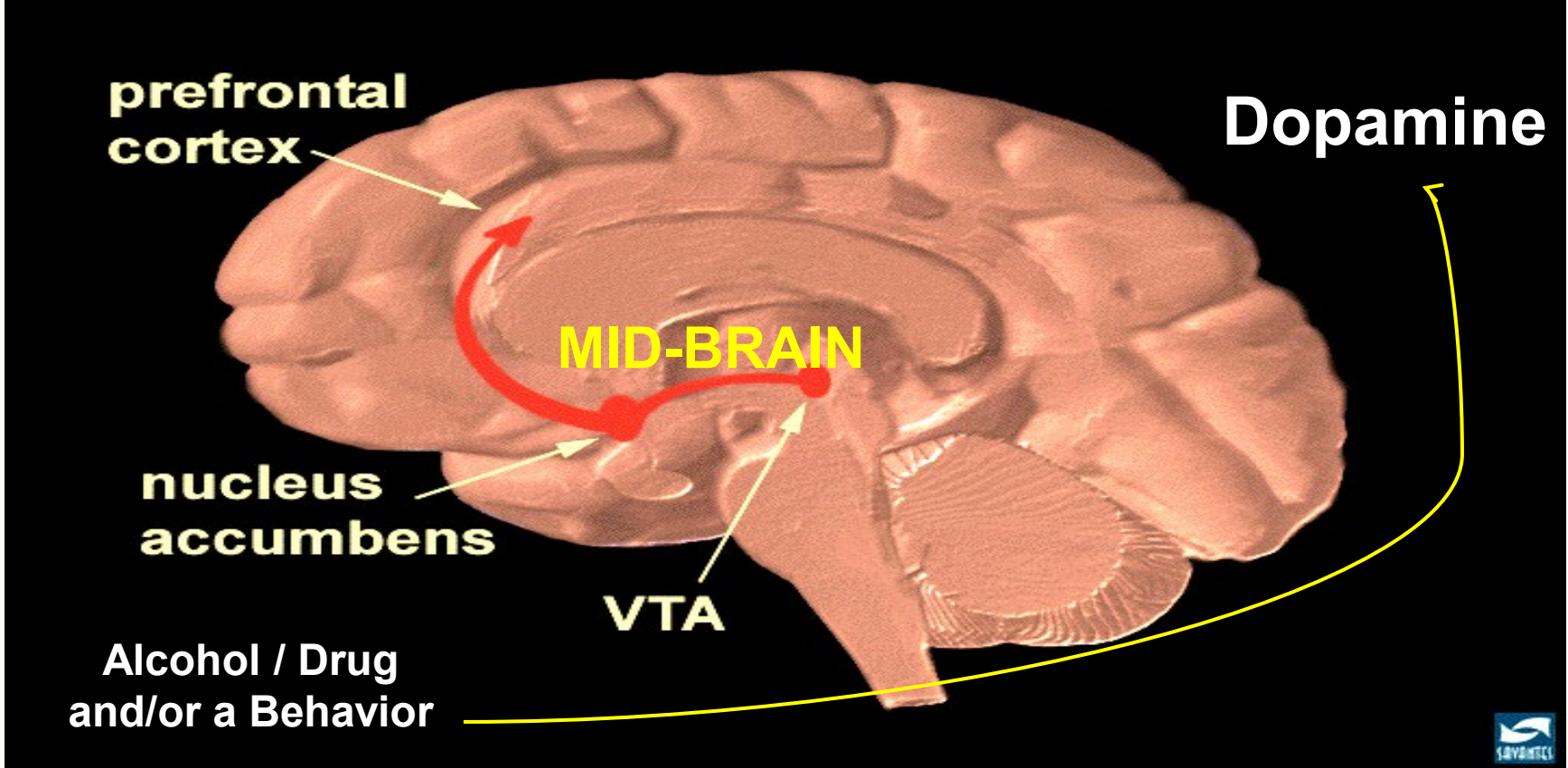
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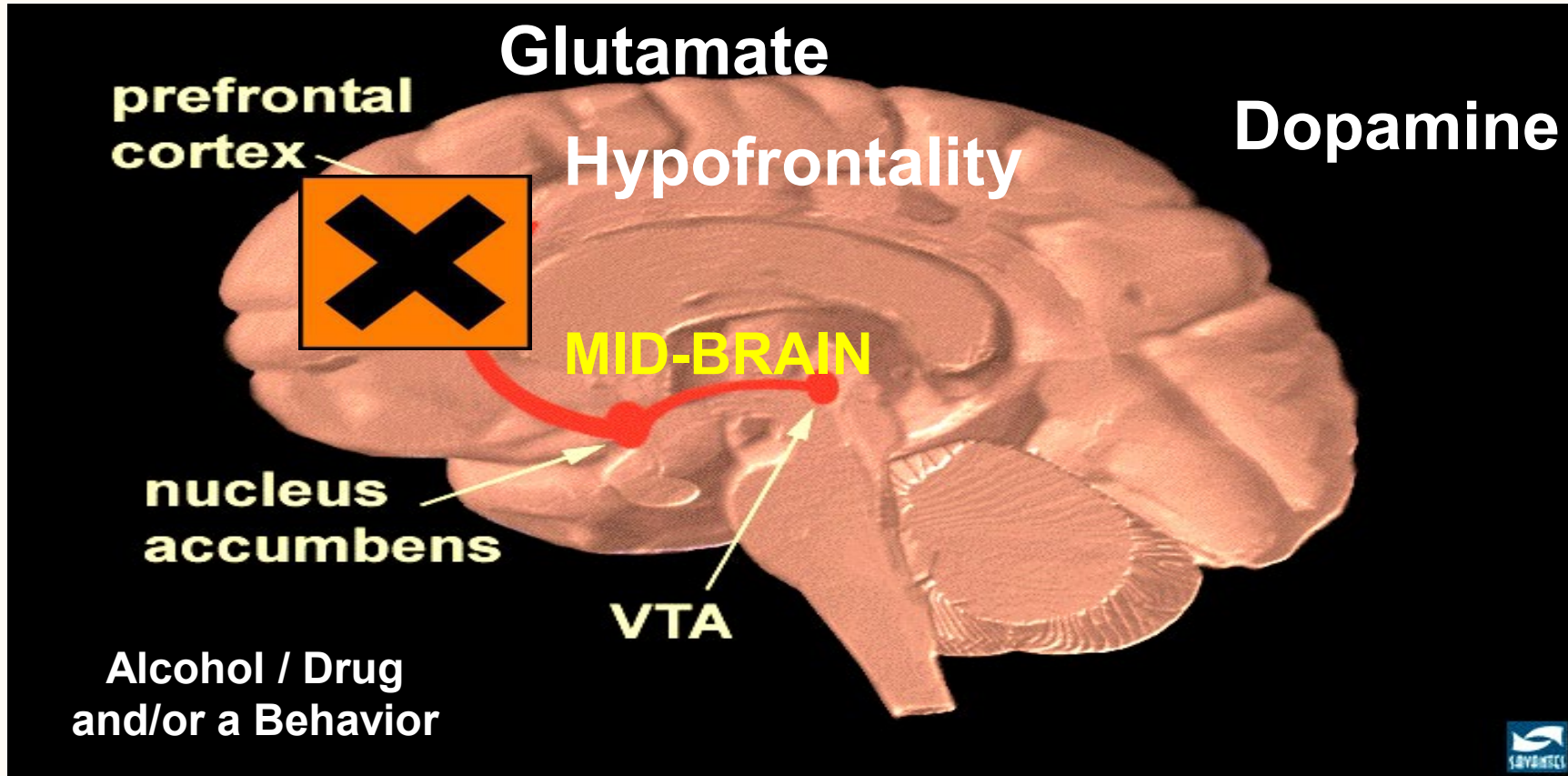


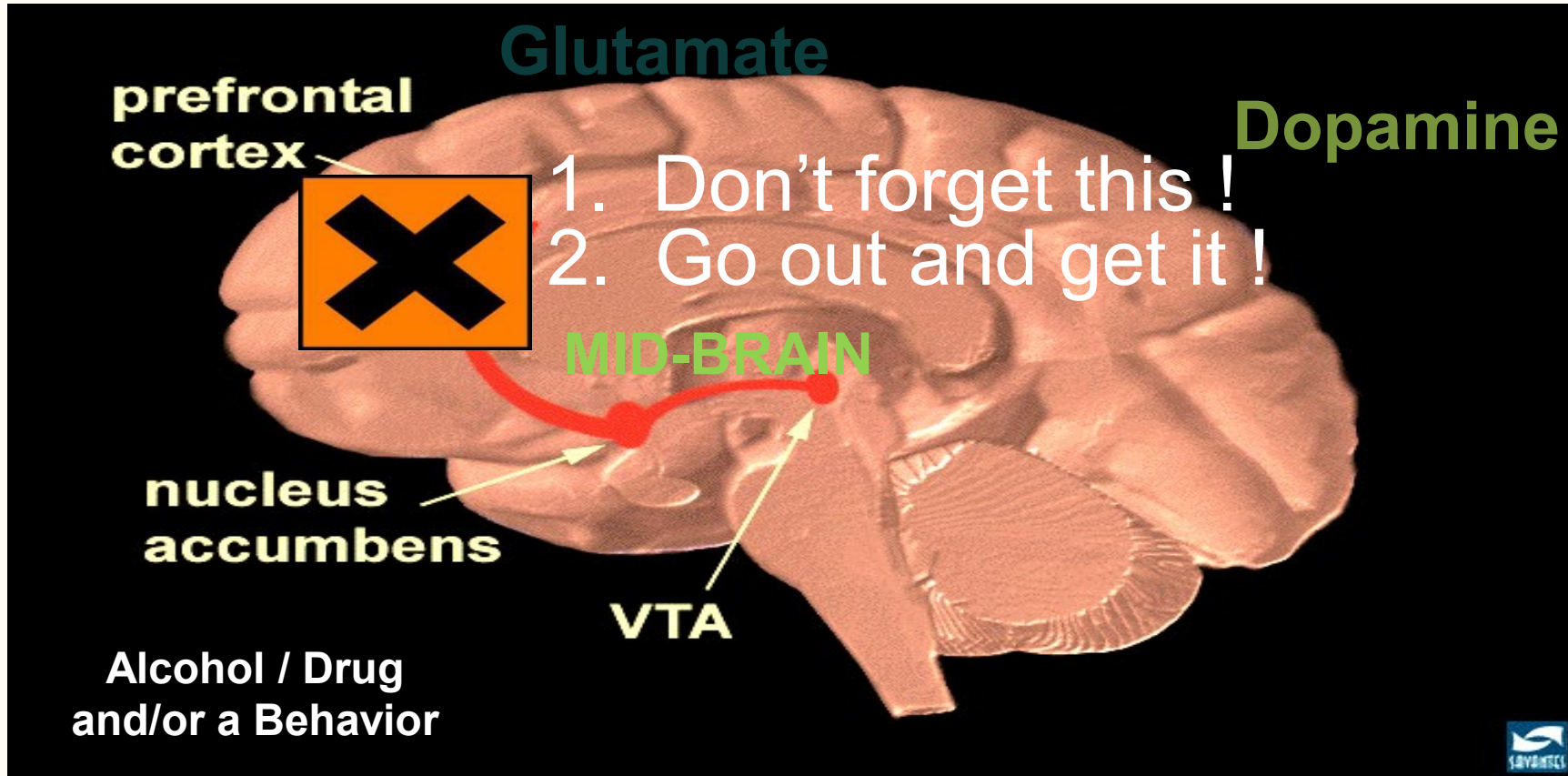
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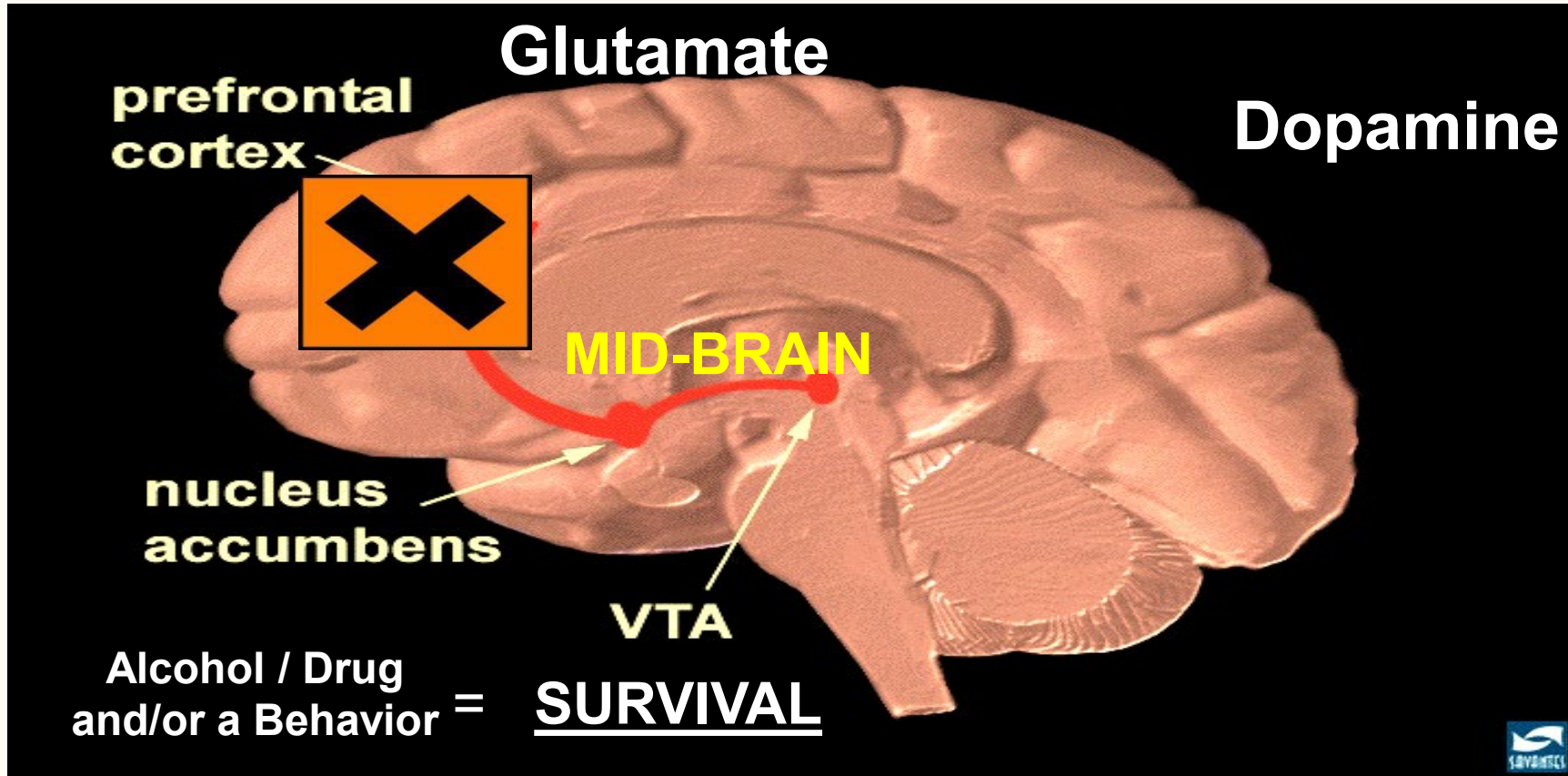
- **C**hemical
- **U**nresolved Issue(s)
- **B**elief (which is distorted)
- **I**nability to Cope
- **S**timulus-Response Relationship

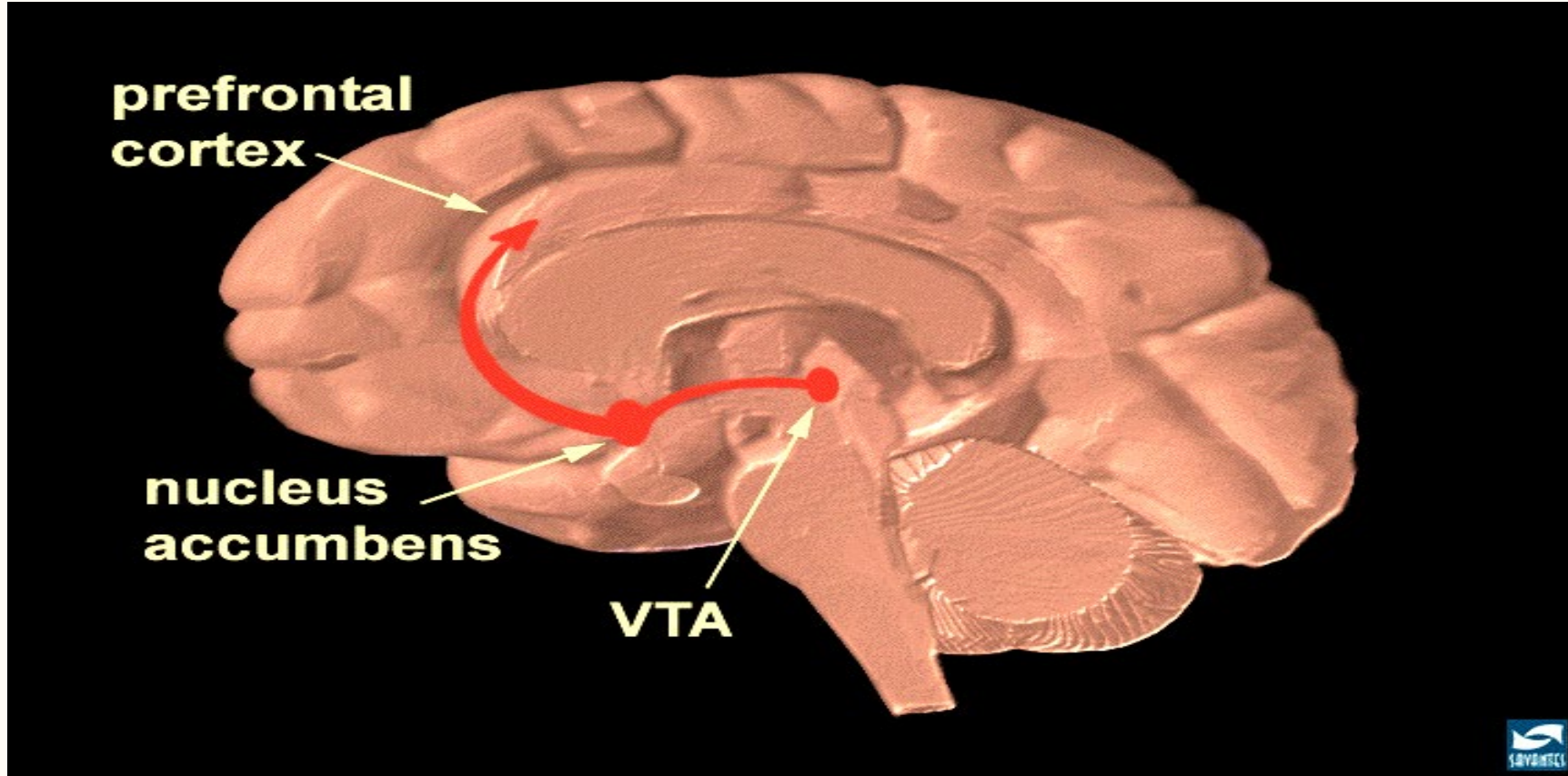












# The Trauma-Addiction Cycle



# Why People Continue Using



# Moving Beyond Moral Failure



# Impact of Shame



# How Loved Ones Can Help



# Support vs Enabling



# Hope & Recovery



# Key Takeaways

- coping behaviors serve a purpose
- trauma affects the nervous system
  - compassion improves recovery
- support requires healthy boundaries







# Lack of Connection

**Disconnection**

**Detachment**

**Separation**

**Isolation**

**Worry**

**Anxiety**

**Fear**

**Suspicion**

**Paranoia**

**Anger**

**Hatred**





# Connection



# The Analogy of the Moth



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**Thank You!**

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Thank you for  
coming!  
We'd  
appreciate  
your feedback.



Feedback Survey

