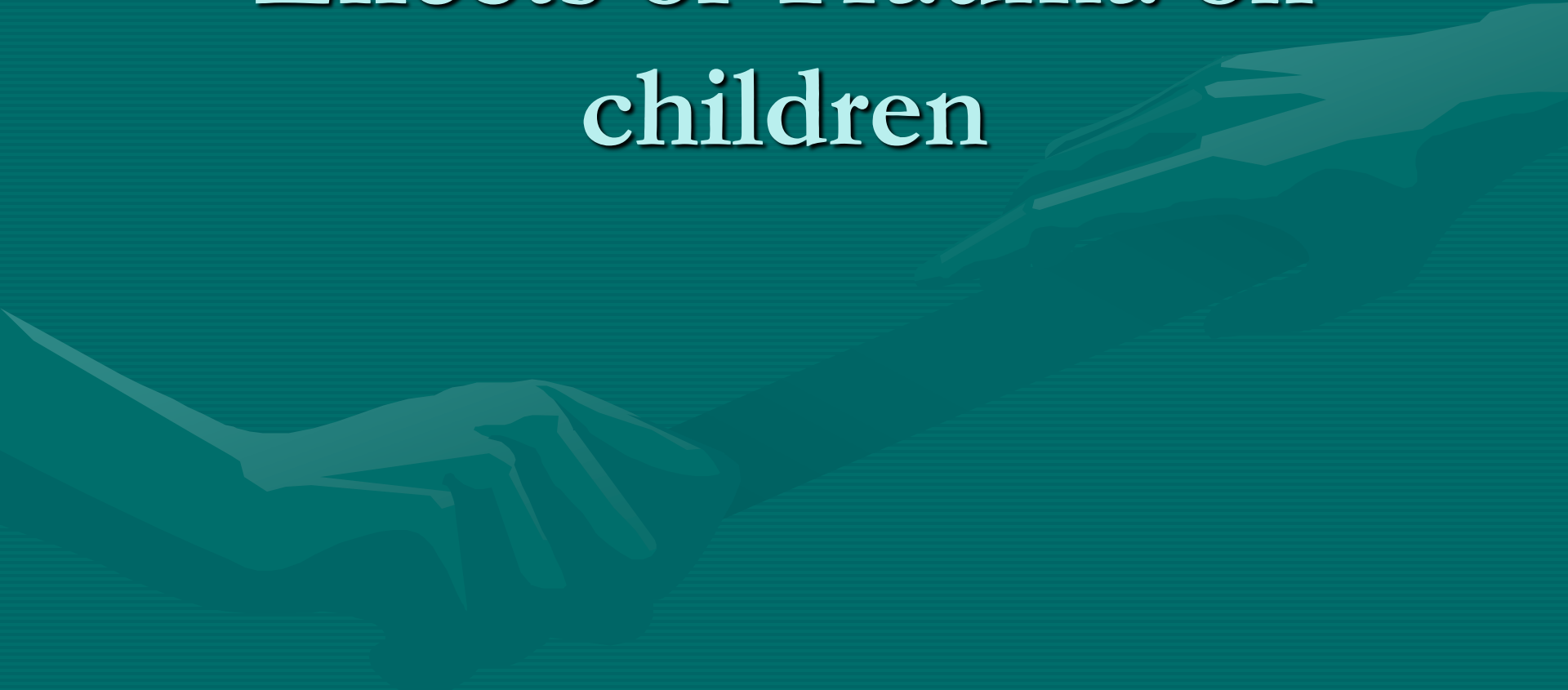


# Effects of Trauma on children



# Trauma-Definition

- A wound, hurt, or injury
- Physical stress including abuse or neglect
- Emotional/psychological neglect or abuse

# Trauma-types

- One-time incidents like accidents, natural disasters, crimes, surgeries, deaths, and other violent events.
- Chronic or repetitive experiences such as child abuse, neglect, combat, urban violence, concentration camps, battering relationships, and deprivation.
- As traumatic as single-blow traumas are, the traumatic experiences that result in the most serious mental health problems are prolonged and repeated.
- The loss of parents, siblings, relatives, friends and neighbors
- Institutionalization is a particular type of trauma.

# Simple vs. compounded

- Single—one event
- Compounded-many events
  - Problematic family life +
  - Institutional life +
  - Violence or maltreatment in the institution =

# Emotional/Psychological Effects of Trauma

- Overwhelms the individual's perceived ability to cope.
  - Daily tasks of living
  - Changes.
  - Life tasks.
- Does not allow a person to grow and develop to their maximum potential.
- A person feels emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed by life experiences.

# Effects of Trauma of Attachment Behaviors

- persistent frequent tantrums
- resistance to being held (arches back or is stiff when held)
- indiscriminately affectionate with strangers
- cruelty to animals and other vulnerable beings
- lack of empathy and remorse (no conscience)
- Prefers crib or isolation to being held or interacting with others
- Very rarely cries, too quiet... too good?
- Cries incessantly - very demanding, easily enraged

# What can we do to prevent trauma?

## System Interventions

- Preserve the biological family when ever possible—even children from multi-problem families do better than children in institutions
- When not possible, promote kinship family care
- If neither of these options can work, foster family care or adoption

# What can we do?—Child centered interventions (non medical)\*

- Family placement
- Establish safety and security
- Allow children to talk about any event
- Prepare children for a future

\* Some traumas have such a negative effect that it can cause significant mental health problems requiring medical as well as psychosocial interventions.

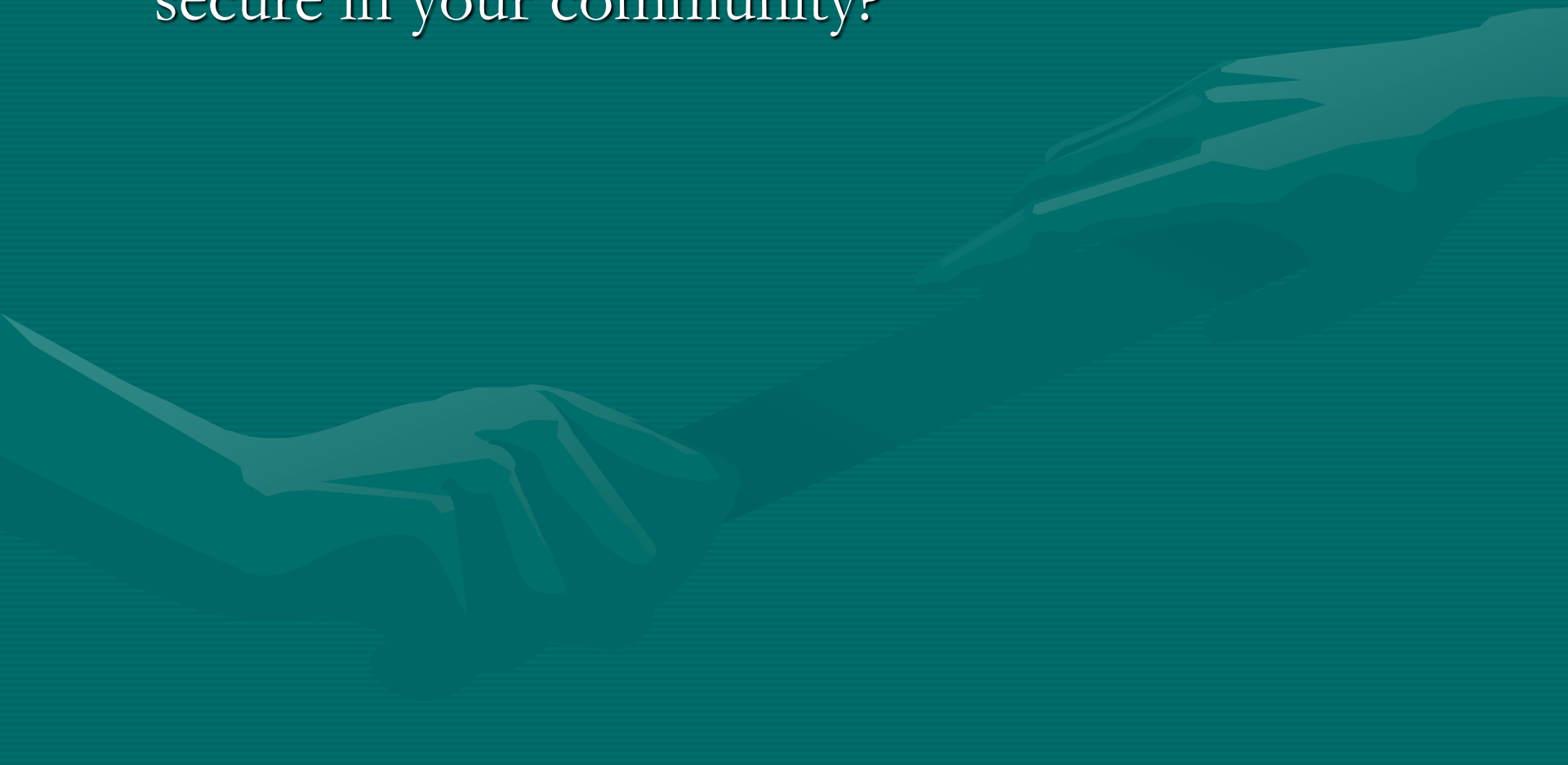


# Establish safety and security

- Respond to and provide opportunities for children to receive positive human physical contact to reaffirm needs for sensory comfort and care.
- Help children get enough sleep and nutrition.
- Provide them with physical symbols of nurturing, love, or remembrance (life books)

# Small group discussion

- What can you do to help children feel safe and secure in your community?



# Allow children to talk about any event

- Encourage them to tell or develop stories that help them explore intense reactions such as anger or fear.
- Reassure them that sadness and grief are a necessary part of surviving.
- Only works for older children with language ability; since the language of younger children is behavior, positive behavior management and therapy-based play are better interventions for young children.
- Understand grief and loss in children

# Components of Grief and Loss (not really stages)

- 1. SHOCK & DENIAL
- 2. PAIN & GUILT
- 3. ANGER & BARGAINING
- 4. DEPRESSION, REFLECTION,  
LONELINESS
- 5. ACCEPTANCE

# Small Group Discussion

- How can you help children dealing with loss and grief?

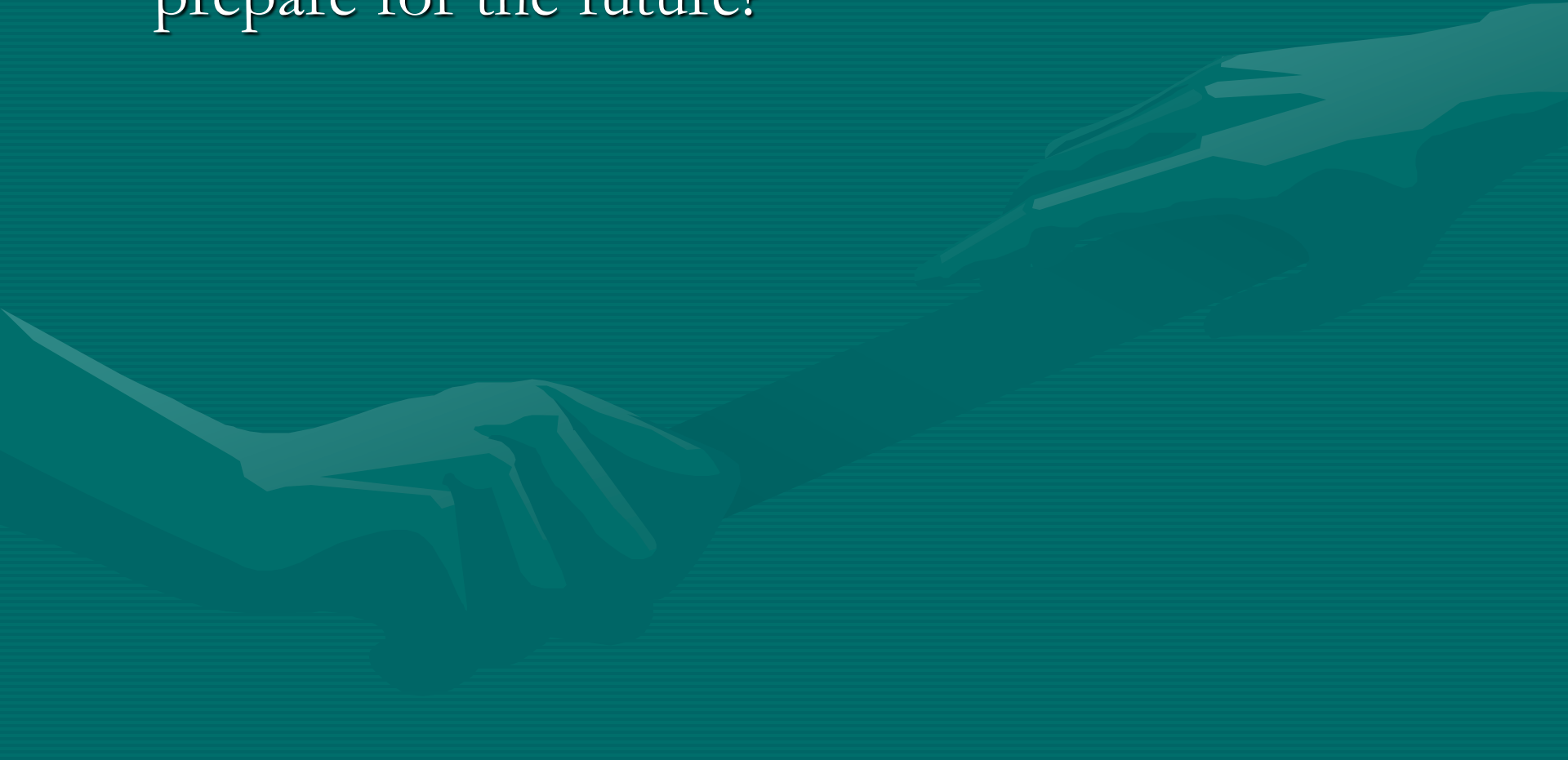


# Prepare children for the future

- Encourage the establishment of comforting routines.
- Provide them with tangible comfort items: a photograph of a loved one, a stuffed animal, or a favorite blanket.
- Help them take time to think about their future.
- Support adult caregivers in their efforts to react appropriately.
- Work to help children solve problems they face because of the trauma.

# Small group discussion

- In your community, how do you help children prepare for the future?



# Resilient Children

- Resilient children develop strategies for finding older children or adults who might help them.
- They will gravitate towards people who seem to provide stability and comfort.
- Only a few percent of children are resilient; many will need some help



# Conclusion

- The best way to deal with trauma is to develop a system and services to avoid it
- A family-based system of care is better than an institutional-based system of care.