

# ON THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

OWNING YOUR ROLE IN HEALTHIER DYNAMICS

# WHAT IS THE DRAMA TRIANGLE?

This is a tool for understanding unhealthy dynamics within a system - whether that be individual, family, or company.

**Remember:** the goal of a system is to *reduce anxiety*

- Falling into the Drama Triangle temporarily reduces the anxiety, but leads to long-term unhealthy dynamics

Persecutor

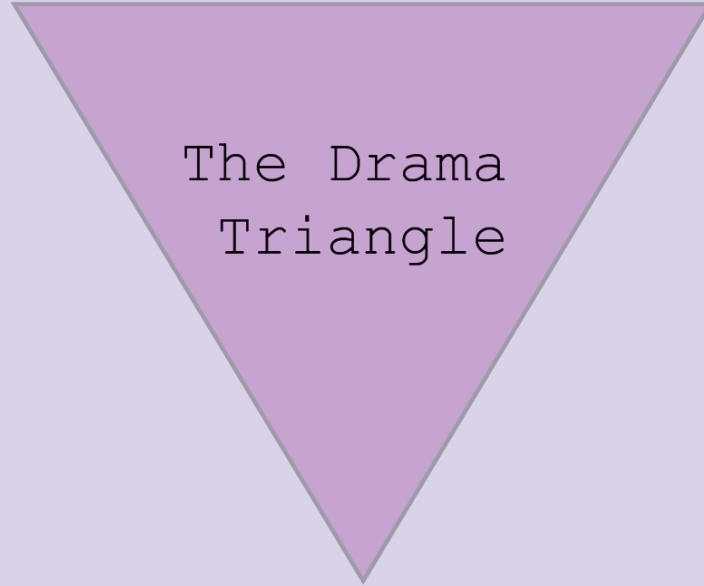
'Shame on you!'

'I can't believe you did this!'

Rescuer:  LWC THERAPIES PLLC  
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'Let me help you with that'

'You can't do this for yourself'



Victim:

'I can't do it'

'Look what you have done to me!'

# THE VICTIM

- Does not take responsibility for actions or feelings
- Uses blame and/or guilt to manipulate others into doing what they want
  - ‘Woe is me.’
  - ‘Look what you’ve done to me!’
- Places the majority of their success and/or failures onto others



# THE RESCUER (THE 'HERO' OR THE 'GOOD COP')

- Discounts ability of others to solve their own problems / makes others peoples problems their own to solve
- The Rescuer's **ANXIETY** is the motivating factor for action, **NOT** the victim's struggles
  - That is, the Rescuer cannot stand their own anxiety of seeing the Victim struggle
- The main message they communicate through their actions is 'You are inept. You are not capable of solving your own problems.'



# THE PERSECUTOR (THE 'VILLAIN' OR 'BAD COP')

- Blames, criticizes, and demeans others to set them in motion.
- Gains a sense of control through this criticism by setting themselves on a higher pedestal.
  - 'If you wouldn't do this, then you could be more like me.'

# THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE DRAMA TRIANGLE



- You can have 1-person, 2-person, 3+ person triangles.
- You can have groups of people or organizations be a part of the triangle (ie - school or work is persecuting me)
- **Triangulation** is a key part of the Drama Triangle
  - Unhealthy communication pattern that reduces frustration/anxiety WITHOUT directly addressing the issue. Leads to more entrenched Drama Triangle patterns

BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS ...

YOU CAN GET OUT OF THE DRAMA  
TRIANGLE! HOW? THE ABCDE'S





# THE ABCDE'S OF GETTING OUT OF THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

- **Attune:** “I see that you are struggling right now, and I am willing to listen to your problem without making it mine to solve.”
- **Boundaries:** “I am willing to listen for 20 minutes.”
- **Choices:** “I will listen for 20 minutes now or we can talk after dinner. Let me know what works for you.”
- **Drama:** Recognize that you are currently in the drama triangle, and are trying to break out of the unhealthy system.
- **Empower:** “I believe that you are capable of working through this. I am here for support as needed.”



# APPLYING THE DRAMA TRIANGLE TO THE REST OF THIS CLASSROOM

- Remember: *as emotions go up, your ability to think clearly goes down*
  - You are not always in the Drama Triangle.
  - You are more likely to fall into the Drama Triangle when stress and emotions are high
- The lower your emotional capacity cup, the easier it is to communicate within your values and stay out of the Drama Triangle
- Even if others fall into the Drama Triangle, **you do not have to!**

REMEMBER ...



IT IS EASIER TO AVOID THE DRAMA TRIANGLE BY MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS THAN IT IS TO 'GET OUT' OF THE DRAMA TRIANGLE AFTER YOU HAVE ALREADY FALLEN IN.



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