




# SVRI Knowledge Exchange

Healing from Sexual Violence:  
Body-focused mental health  
approaches





“I was looking for the key and I think I found it. I no longer feel the same weight, or the same emotion, the same guilt. I feel completely calm, relaxed, safe. There is something that happened, and now I can see it... Yes, I think the yoga has had a lot to do with my healing process, because if not, it wouldn't have been possible for me to connect with myself or understand others, because I feel like everything was shut down, everything was deafened, because you're so stuck in the pain...”

*CSA survivor “Juanita”*



## *What motivated this KE?*

1. Ongoing impacts of sexual violence: symptoms that go beyond PTSD
2. New insights about neural processing of trauma
3. Processes of recovery: limitations of talk therapy
4. The mind-body connection in healing
5. Positive outcomes



## *Ongoing impacts of sexual violence: different conceptualizations*

- PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (APA, 1980)
- Complex Trauma (Herman, 1992)

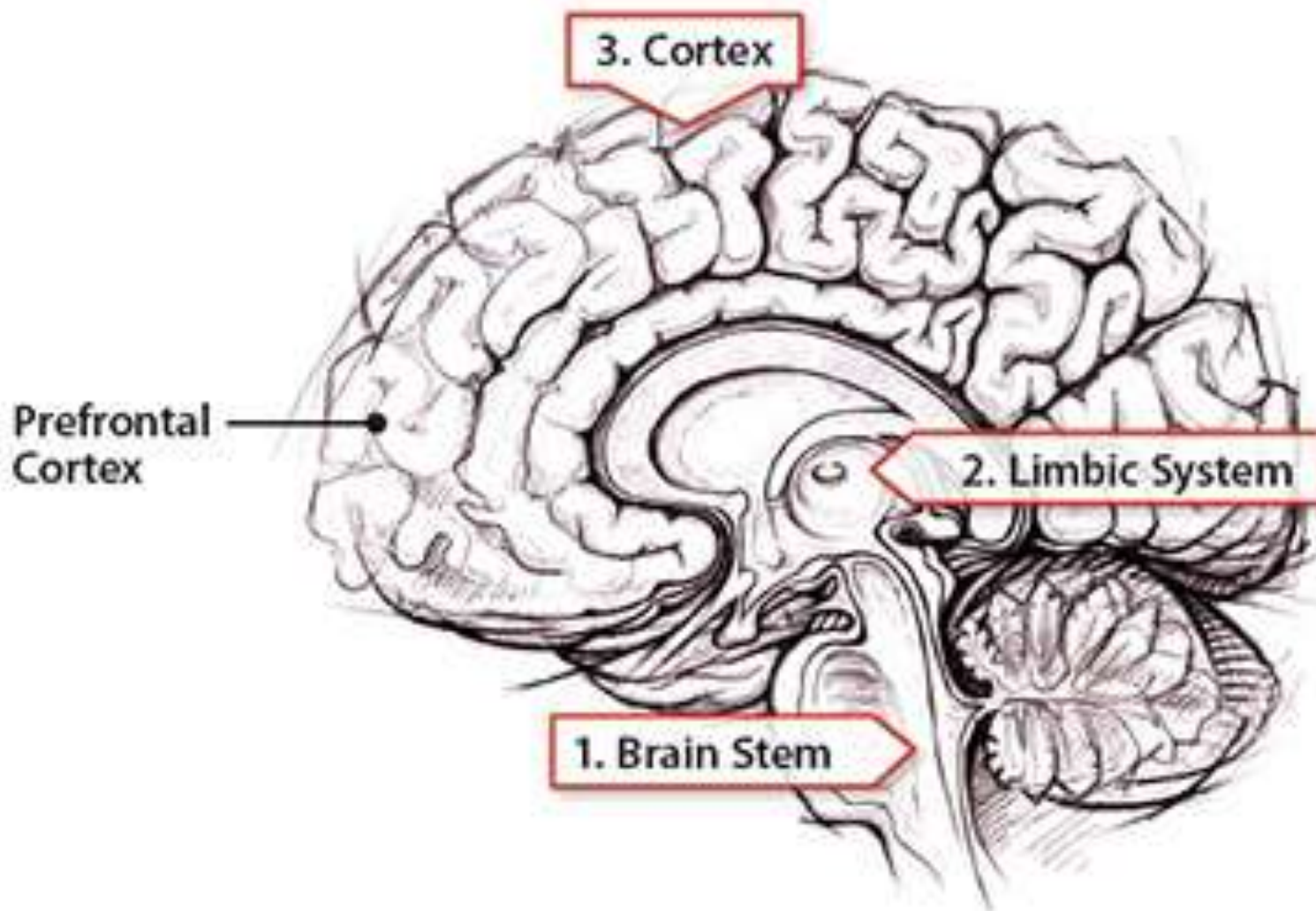


# *New insights: trauma and the brain*





# *How we process traumatic experiences*





## *The body-mind connection*

Being traumatized, whether due to exposure to war, torture or sexual violence, means people can find themselves out of sync with their own bodies and what is going on around them. Trauma can get locked in the body, leaving many victims feeling immobilized and helpless, or in a continuous state of alert, never able to calm.



# *Healing from trauma: body-focused approaches*







# *Trauma Informed Yoga*





# *A yoga experience in Nicaragua*







Thank you!