

Research on life in foster care families in Germany

Klaus Wolf

University of Siegen, Germany

klaus.wolf@uni-siegen.de

1. The Balance between Liabilities an Resources

(Belastungs – Ressourcen - Balance)

2. Empirical studies

851
PSYCHOLOGIE DER FÜRSORGE

Herausgeber: Dr. G. Bien, Prof. Dr. Ch. Bühler, Dr. H. Hetzer

ZWEITER BAND

PFLEGEMUTTER UND PFLEGEKIND

Von

Dr. L. Danziger, Dr. H. Hetzer

H. Löw-Beer



VERLAG S. HIRZEL · LEIPZIG · 1930

Danziger, Hetzer,
Löw-Beer:
Foster Mother and
Foster Child

Blandow **Rollen-
diskrepanzen in
der Pflege-
familie**

Analyse einer
sozialpädagogischen
Institution

Juventa

Materialien

M7

Blandow:

Role Discrepancies in
the Foster Family

Hans-Dieter Heun

Pflegekinder
im
Heim



DJI
Materialien

Heun:
Foster Children in
Residential
Homes

THEORIE UND FORSCHUNG
PSYCHOLOGIE

Sabine Kötter

**Besuchskontakte
in Pflegefamilien**

S. RODERER VERLAG
REGENSBURG

Kötter:
Visits with Foster
Families

THEORIE UND FORSCHUNG
PSYCHOLOGIE

Richard Müller-Schlotmann

**Integration vernachlässigter
und misshandelter Kinder**

Eine Handreichung für Jugendämter,
Beratungsstellen und Pflegeeltern

S. RODERER VERLAG
REGENSBURG

Müller-Schlotmann:
The Integration of
Neglected and
Maltreated
Children

Brigitte Steimer

Suche nach Liebe

und Inszenierung von

Ablehnung

Lambertus

Steimer:
The Quest for
Love and the
Staging of
Rejection

Josef Faltermeier

Verwirrte Elternschaft?
Fremdunterbringung
Herkunftseltern
Neue Handlungsansätze



VOTUM 

Faltermeier: Forfeited
Parenthood? Life
Away from Home,
Birth Parents, New
Approaches to Action.



Alfred Marmann

Kleine Pädagogen

**Eine Untersuchung über „Leibliche Kinder“ in
familiären Settings öffentlicher Ersatzerziehung**



**Internationale
Gesellschaft für
erzieherische Hilfen**

IGFH-Sektion
Bundesrepublik Deutschland
der Fédération Internationale
des Communautés
Éducatives
(FICE) e.V.

**Marmann:
The Little
Pedagogues**

Zeitschrift für Sozialpädagogik

ZfSp

3
2005

Peter Hansbauer, Gertrud Oelerich
**Die Vormundschaft/Pflegschaft
als Handlungsfeld der Sozialen Arbeit**

Walter Gehres
**Jenseits von Ersatz und Ergänzung:
Die Pflegefamilie als eine andere Familie**

Gunter Neubauer
Geschlechtlichkeit zum Thema machen!

Reiner Ansen
Zur Philosophie und Ethik der Sucht

Albena Tschavdarova
**Die Sozialpädagogik in Bulgarien –
Geschichte und Gegenwart**

Buchbesprechungen

Gehres: foster
families as
„other families“

3. Problems and Tasks Confronting Foster Children



Problems and Tasks Confronting the Child:

developmental tasks

- general developmental tasks: foster children as children
 - development of autonomy as major achievement in socialization process (Hildenbrand, Gehres)
- specific developmental tasks: individual liability profile
 - violence and excessive neglect (Müller-S)
 - simultaneous withdrawal and attachment
 - realistic image of birth family (Müller-S)

liabilities before placement in foster family

- liabilities before placement in foster family
 - loss of secure attachments
 - experience of neglect, maltreatment, molestation, rejection, frequent (re-)placement, reverse of generation relationships and care
 - birth family's poverty (Textor)
 - large number of different locations (Heun)

liabilities in transition to foster family

- liabilities in transition to foster family
 - loss of relationships to parents and siblings
 - loss of relationships to other family members and to peers (Blandow)
 - adapting to unfamiliar surroundings (Danziger et al.), esp. when older children are taken in (Müller-S)
 - change of major interpretive outlooks (e.g., image of 'real family') (Müller-S)
 - loss of orientation, need for reorientation (Blandow)
 - any family experience? (only residential care) (Blandow)
 - feeling of rejection, guilt and shame, hostility, fear of the future (Blandow)
 - foster family's expectations unknown: meaning of values, norms, rules, customs unclear (Blandow)
 - suddenly taken in, but gradual development of mutual emotional ties (Müller-S)

.... in the foster family

- in the foster family
 - quest for love, staging rejection (Kötter)
 - insecurity, guilt feelings towards parents
 - inhibitions to request information about birth parents from foster parents (Textor): contact with parents taboo (Kötter)
 - having 2 mothers, 2 sets of parents (Blandow)
 - foster mother's expectations cannot be fulfilled (Danziger et al.)
 - status similar to 'normal' child, but different: situated between foster parents and parents (Blandow)
 - deviation from normal, stigmatization
 - threat of expulsion (Blandow)

.... in further transitional stages and in future

- in further transitional stages and in future
 - return to a changed family (Müller-S)
 - inhumane return? no participation in vitally important decisions
 - repeated loss of relationships, confirmation of former patterns of experience

**Problems
and
Tasks
Confronting
the Child:**

developmental tasks +

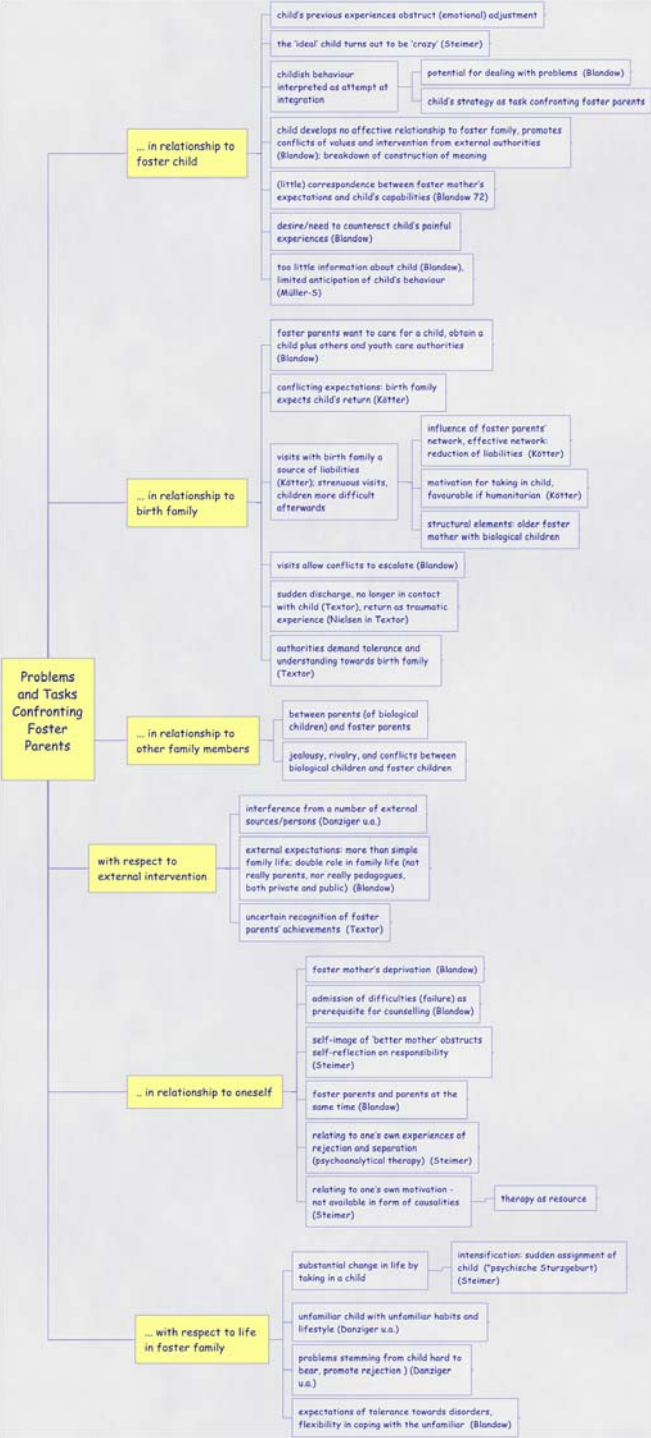
liabilities before
placement in foster
family +

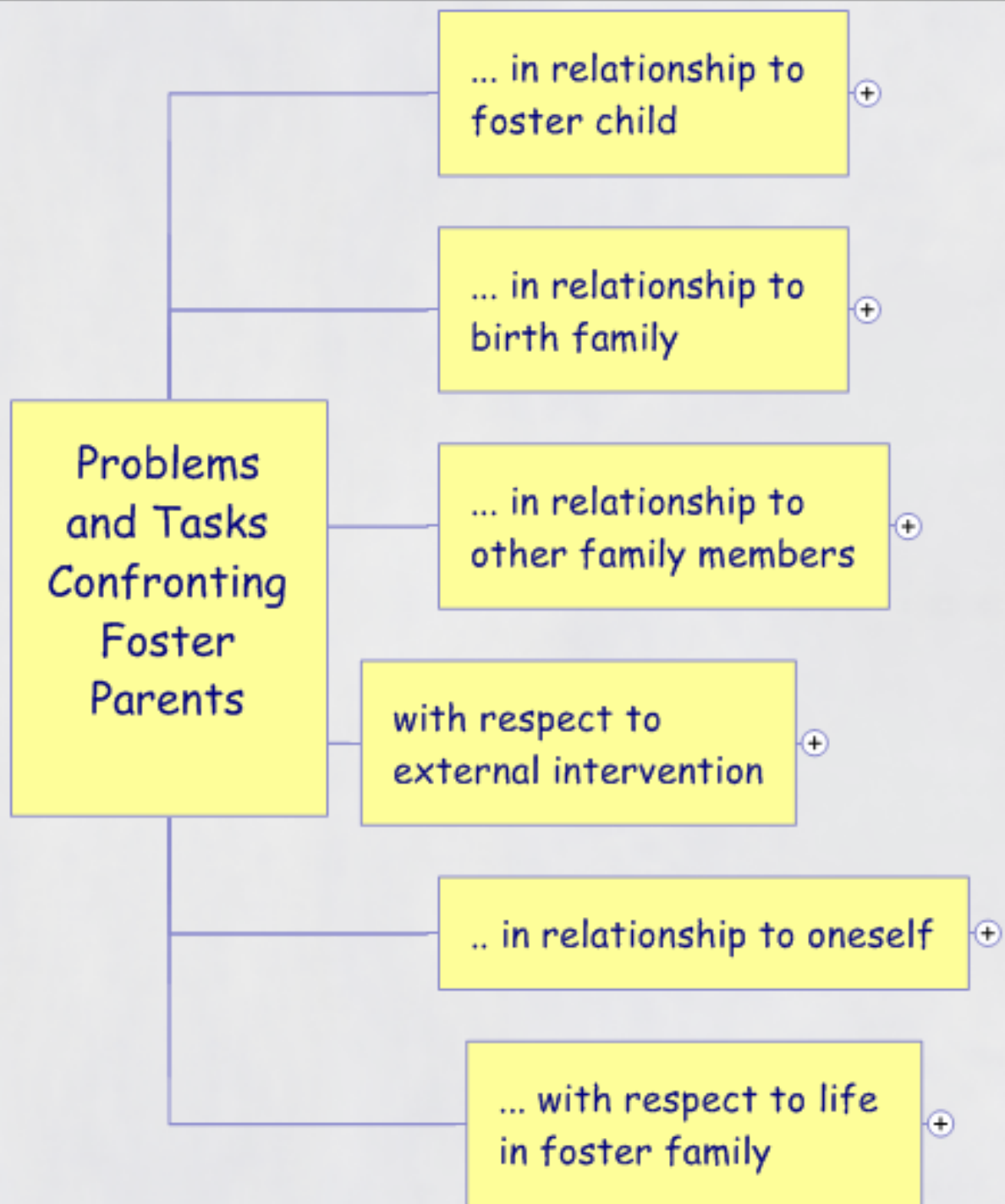
liabilities in transition
to foster family +

.... in the foster family +

.... in further transitional
stages and in future +

4. Problems and Tasks Confronting Foster Parents





Problems
and Tasks
Confronting
Foster
Parents

... in relationship to
foster child

+

... in relationship to
birth family

+

... in relationship to
other family members

+

with respect to
external intervention

+

.. in relationship to oneself

+

... with respect to life
in foster family

+

“It became apparent that there are often unconscious, psychological reasons why parents would tend to deny the difficulties they were having with the children for a while, as they were guided by the wish to finally have a ‘normal’ family. But if these conflicts can no longer be suppressed, especially in the case of children’s antisocial behavior, the usual reactions are an overemphasis of this undesirable behavior and tendencies to reject the children. So with the same group of people under study, totally different results could occur in these two phases.”

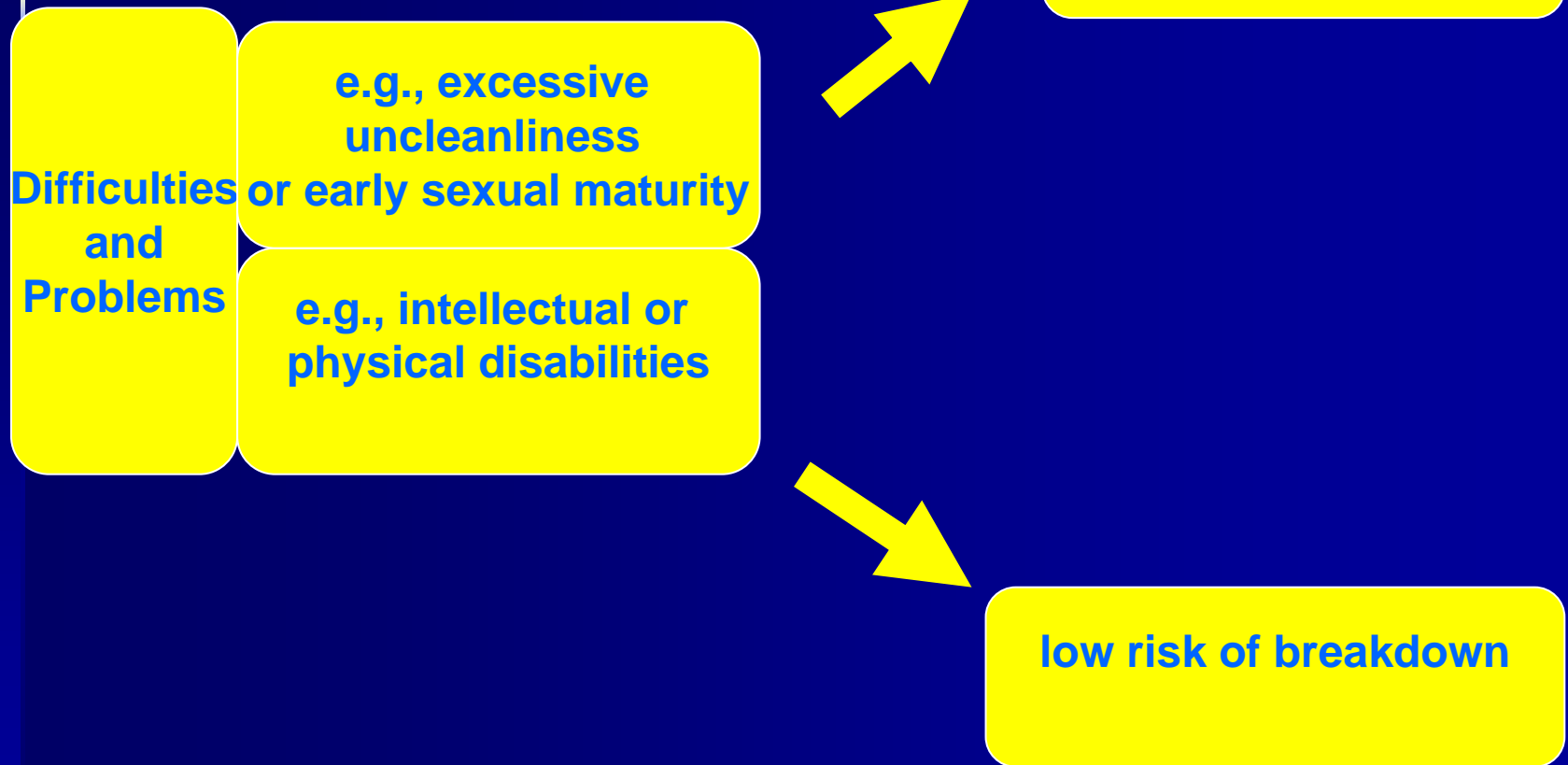
Brigitte Steimer (2000: 130-131)

**Problems related
to the child**



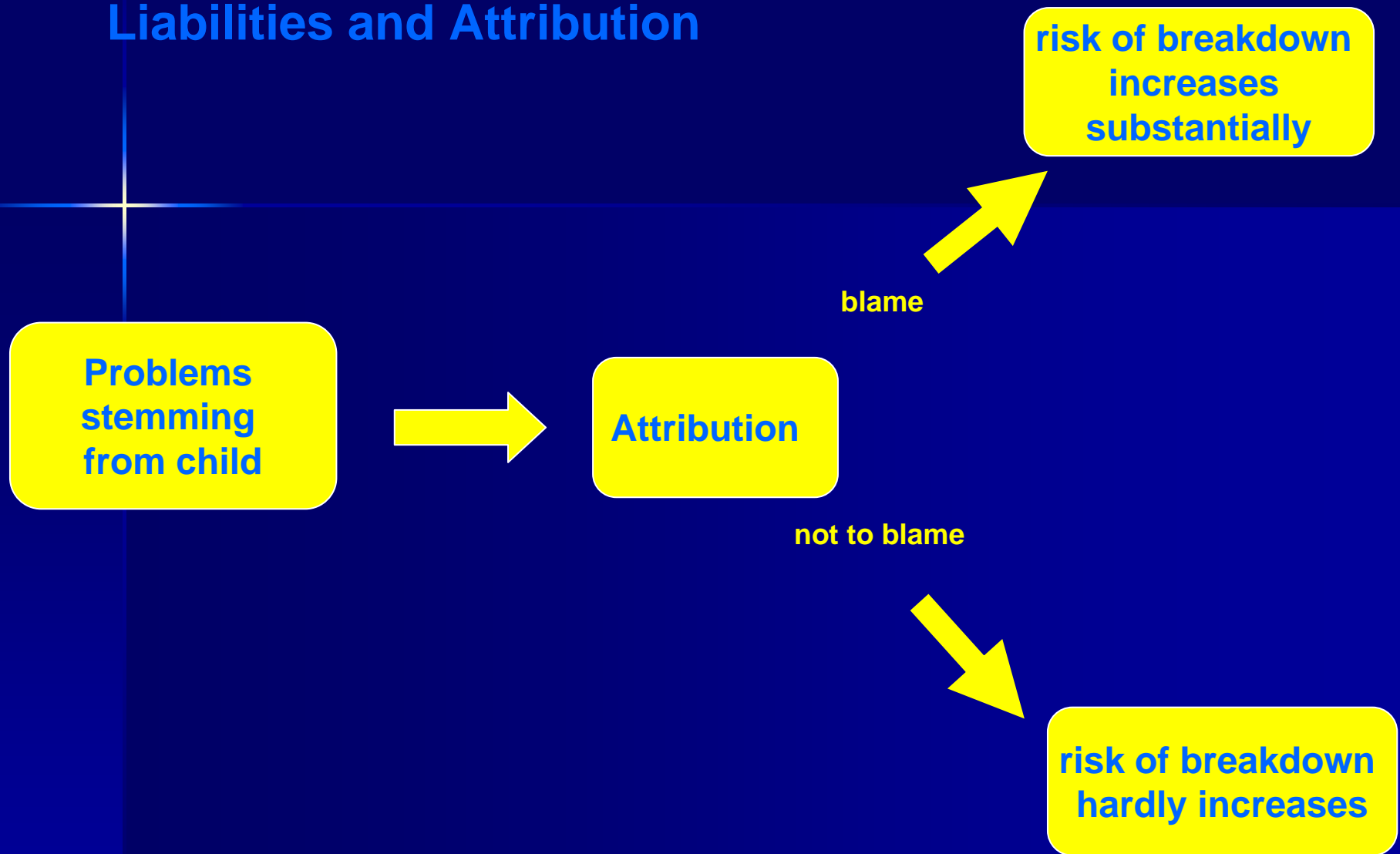
**Risk of breakdown
increases**

Liabilities and Attribution



LOTTE DANZIGER, HILDEGARD HETZER UND HELENE LOW-BEER:
PFLEGEMUTTER UND PFLEGEKIND. Leipzig (Verlag von S.Hirzel) 1930

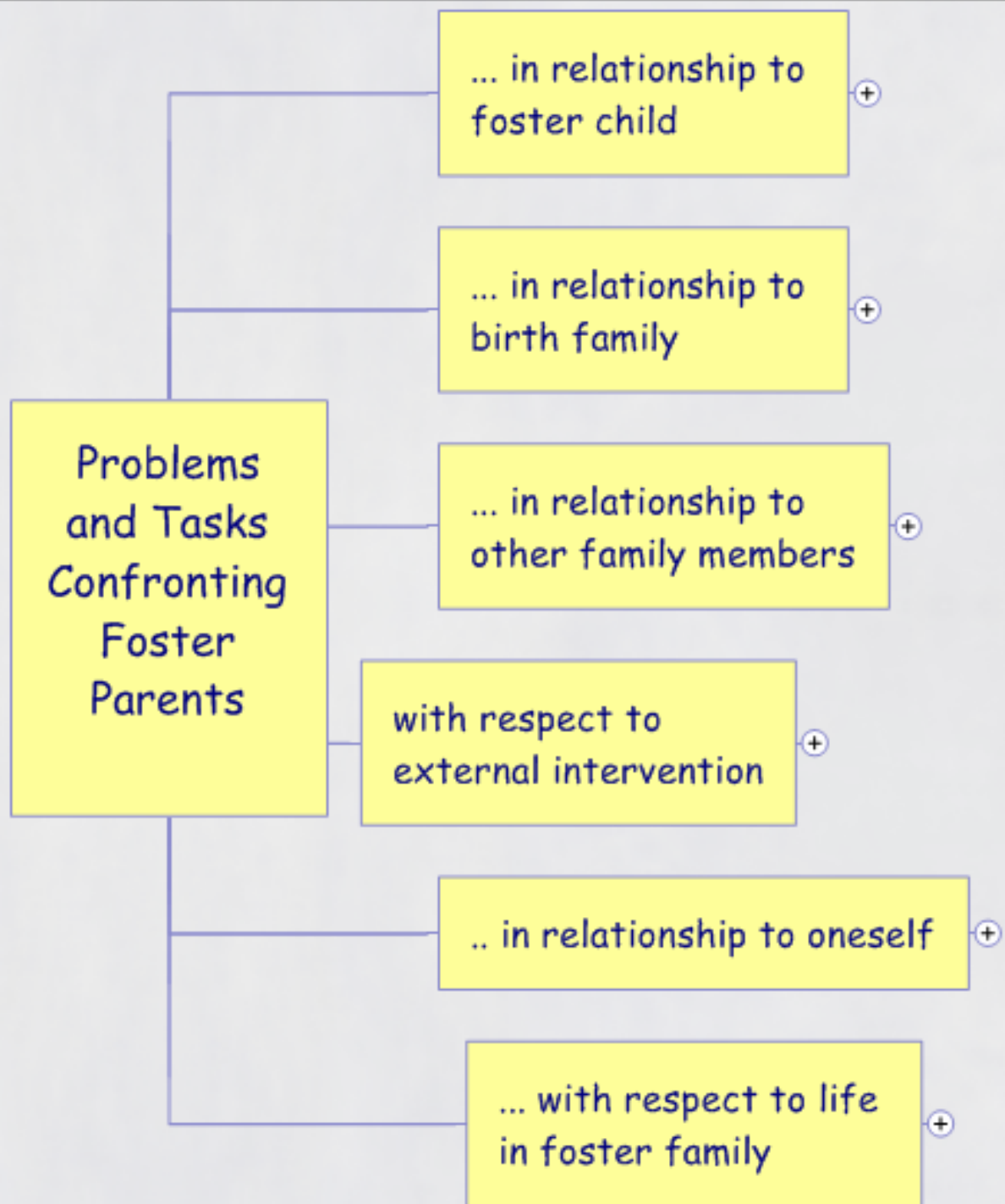
Liabilities and Attribution



LOTTE DANZIGER, HILDEGARD HETZER UND HELENE LOW-BEER:
PFLEGEMUTTER UND PFLEGEKIND. Leipzig (Verlag von S.Hirzel) 1930

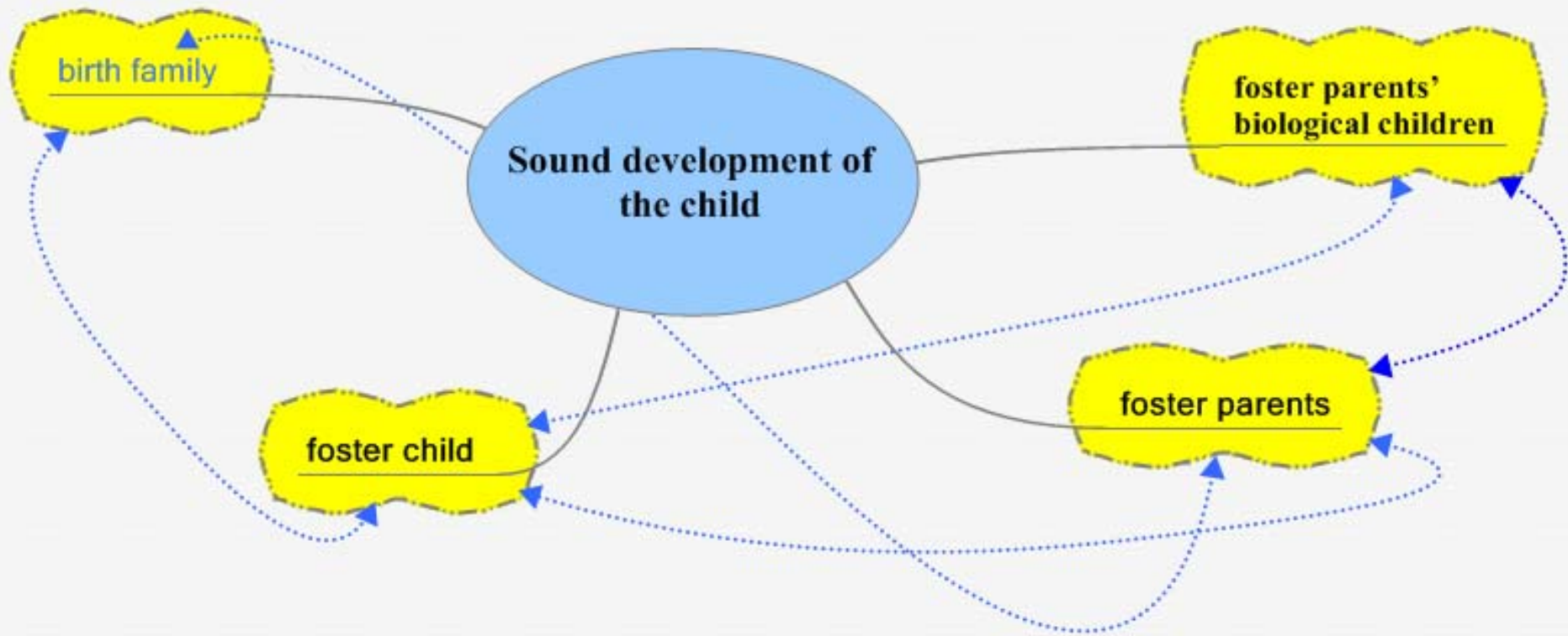
“As long as the foster mother puts no blame on the child for the effort he or she causes her, her relationship to the child remains a good one despite any burden she might feel. But if she starts to ascribe malevolence to the child, assuming that the child is ‘deliberately’ annoying her – and this sort of purposefulness is often mistakenly attributed to the child – then that will be the end of the tolerable relationship between her and the child.”

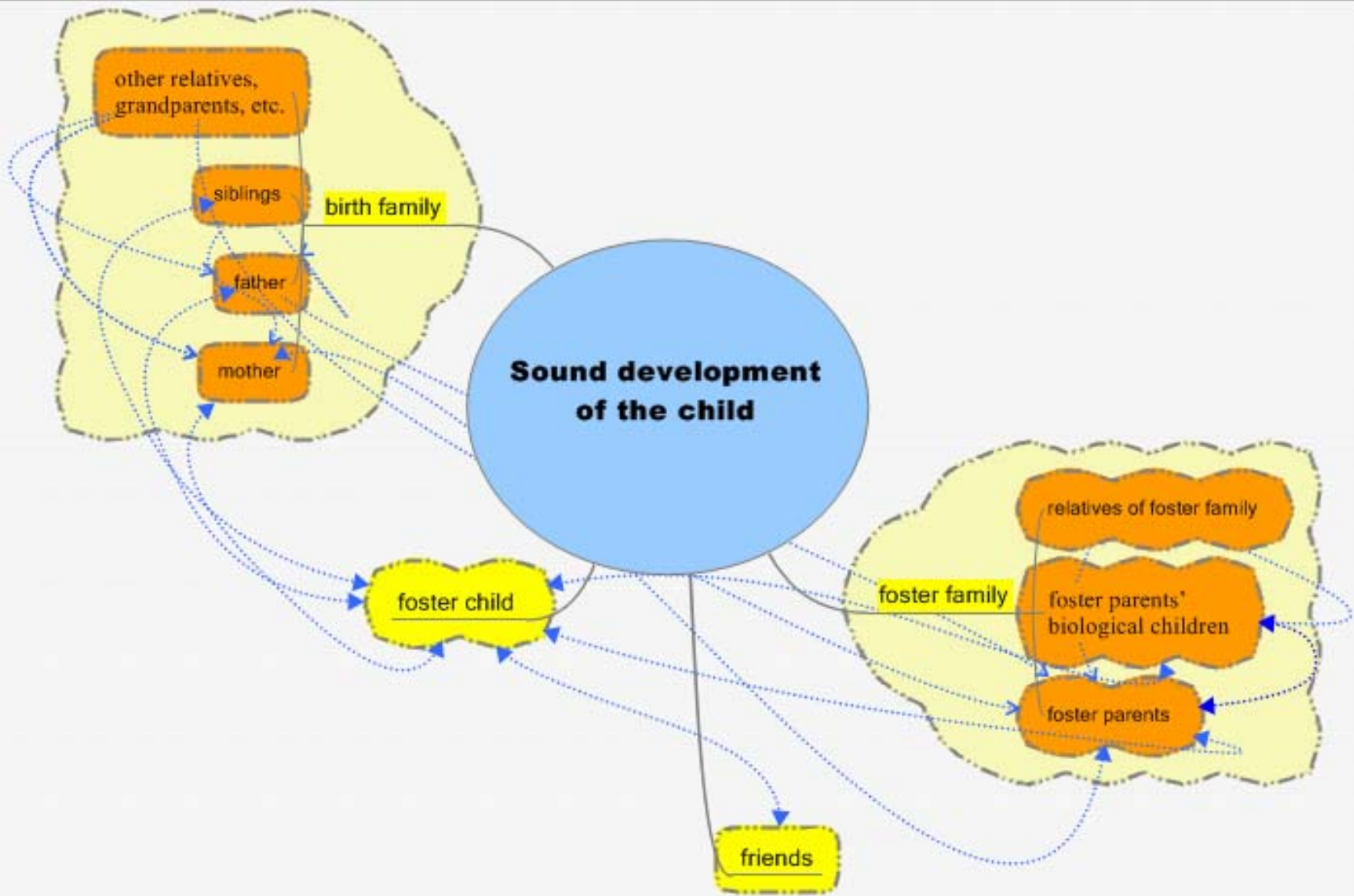
(Danziger 1930:119)



5. Children of Foster Parents

6. Problems Confronting the Birth Family





7. Πάντα ρεῖ (Everythings Flows)

We need a process model because:

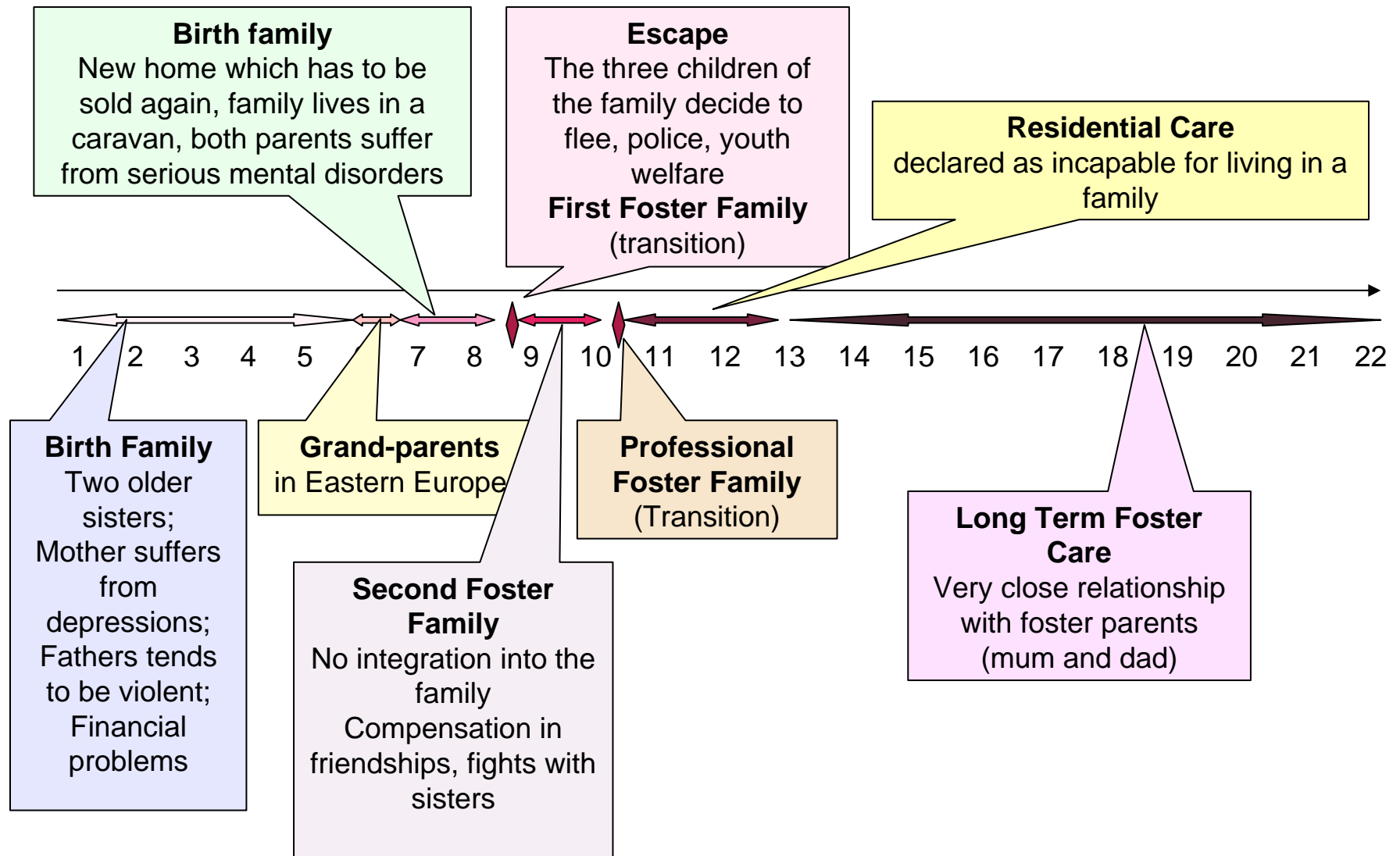
- **the socialization environment changes and should change,**
- **individual people interact with one another,**
- **the balance between liabilities and resources changes,**
- **new actors come onto the stage and others drift into the background,**
- **effects are distributed across long chains of courses of action,**
- **developments at the macro level trigger changes at the level of interaction.**

We should:

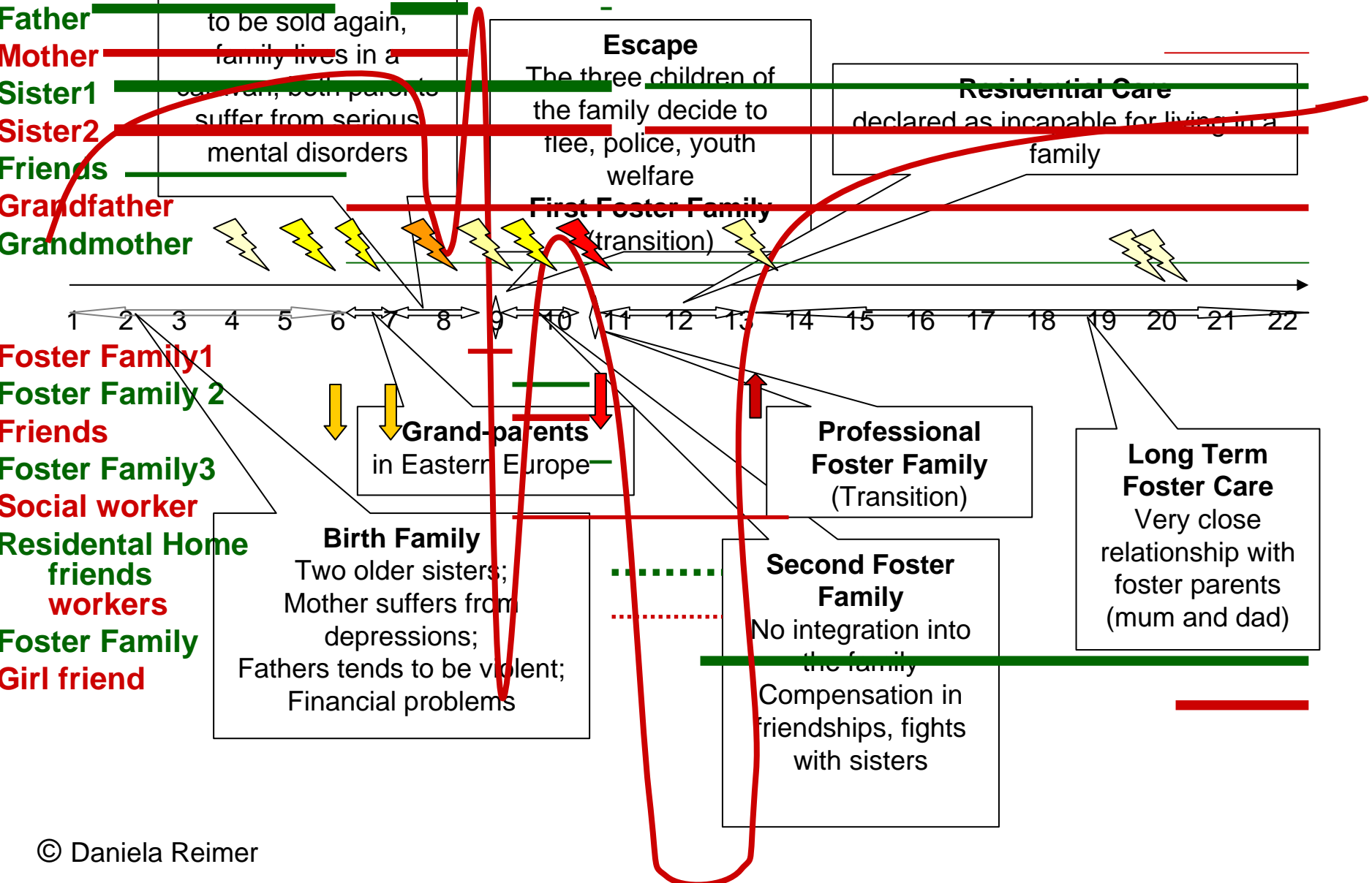
- 1. inquire into processes and interdependencies,**
- 2. take into account the constructions of meaning established by the individuals involved, that is, their experience and ways of dealing with experience, and**
- 3. take a close look at the entire development of the child, in childhood and youth, not simply in specific settings. With such a biographical perspective, we should assess which resources the children require in order to gain access to their own disparate history.**

.....and now: Daniela Reimer

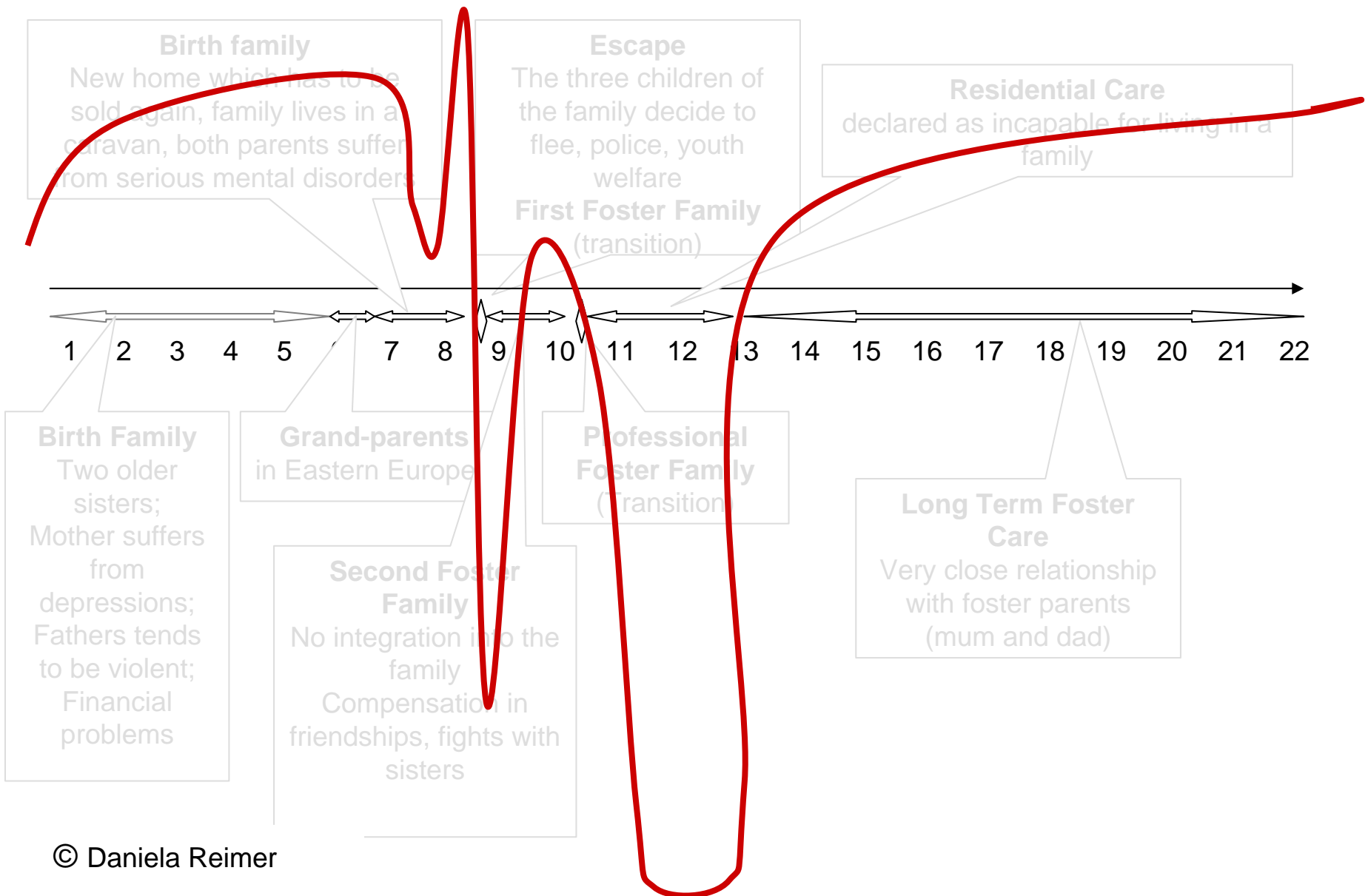
Matteo`s stages of life



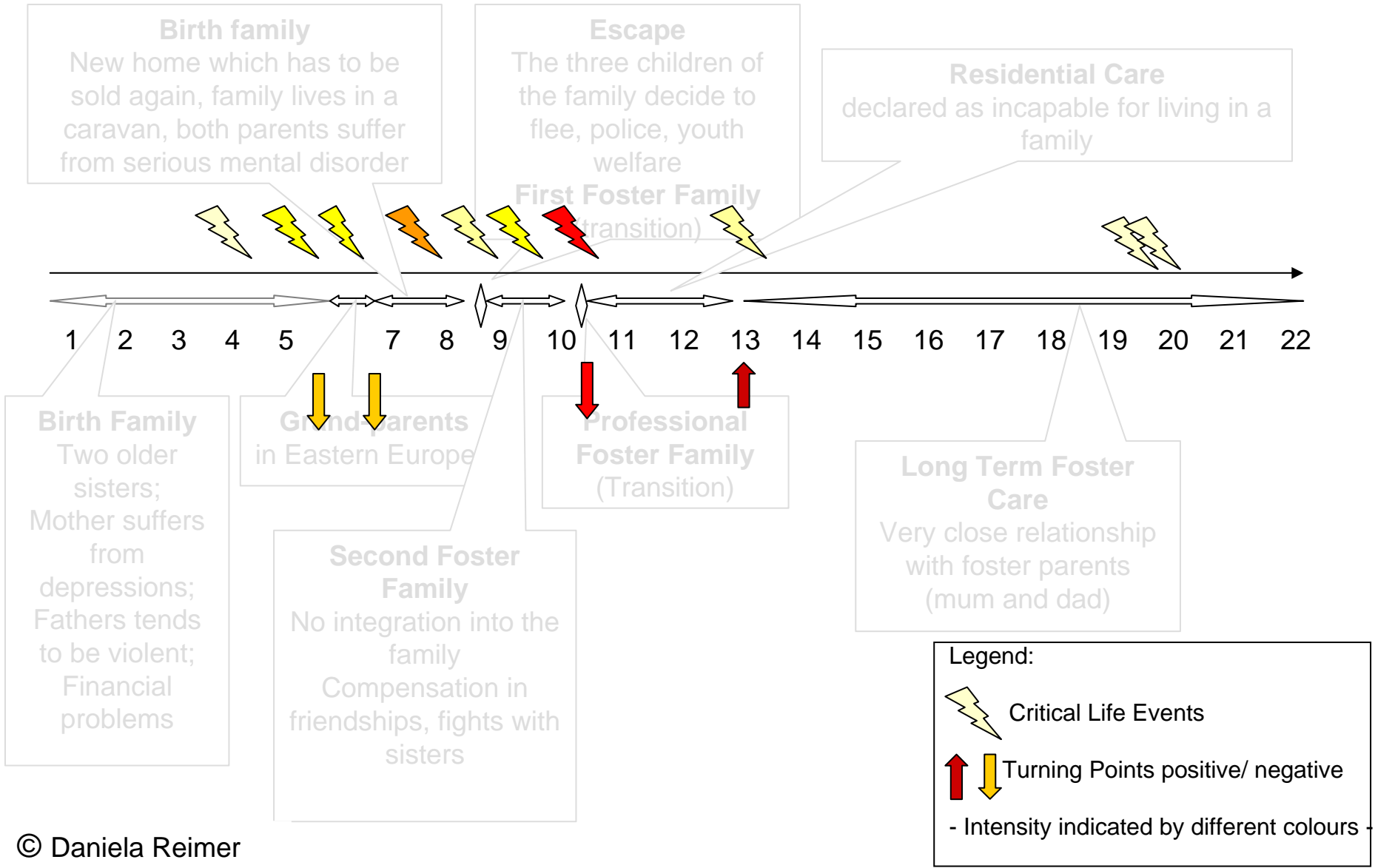
Analysis



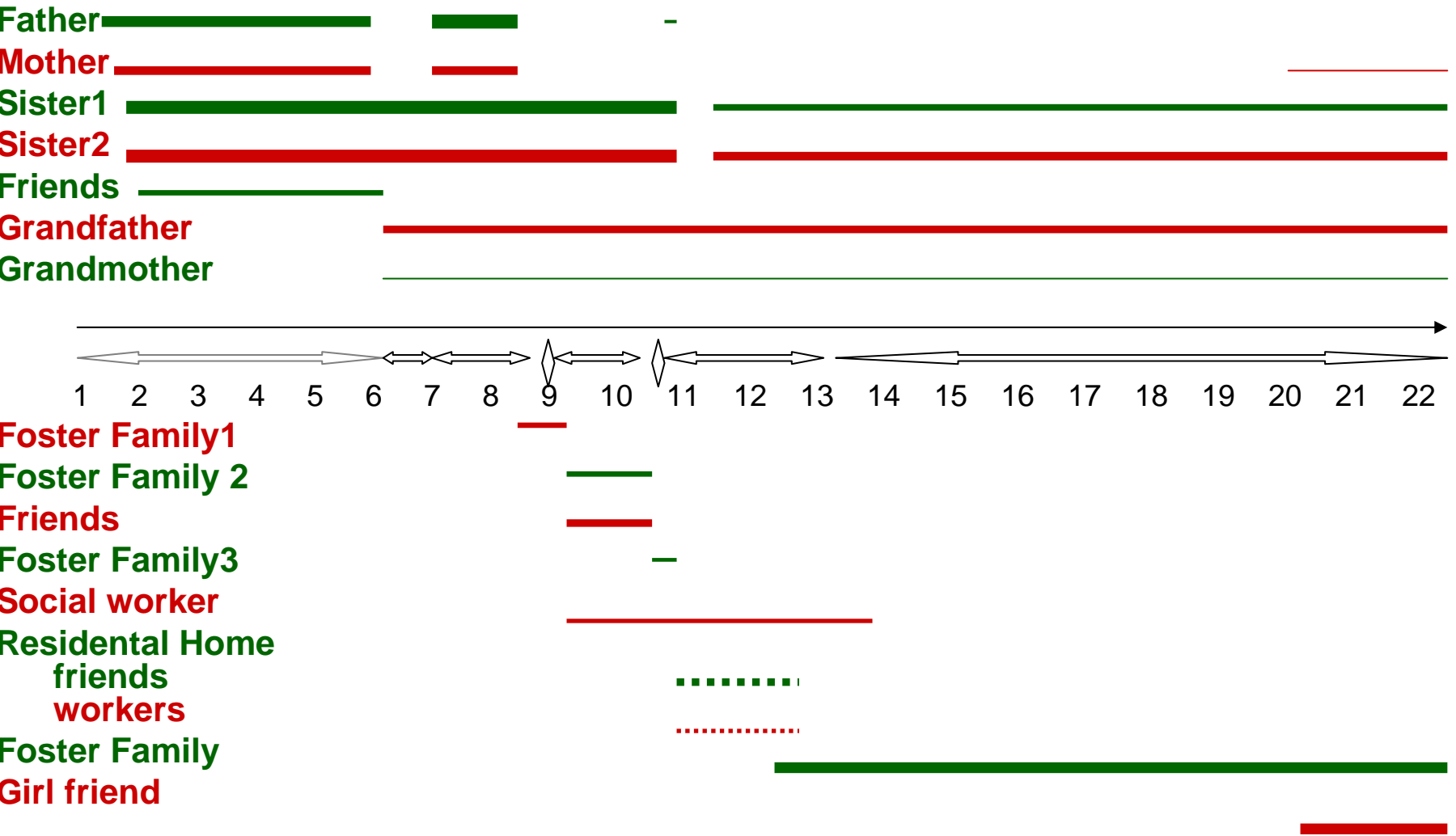
Sense of Control



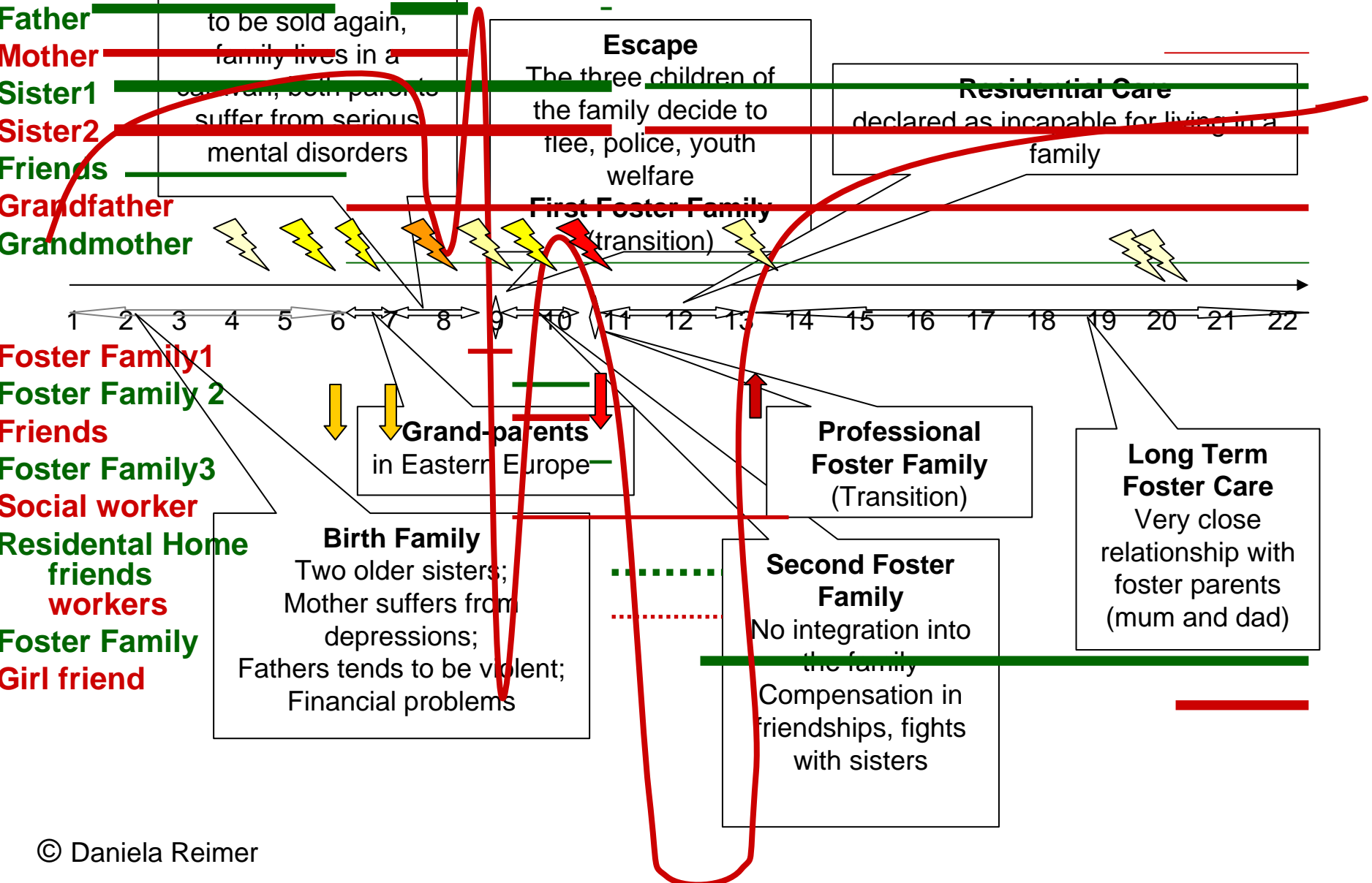
Critical Life Events & Turning Points



Network



Analysis



Prof. Dr. Klaus Wolf

Sozialpädagogik

- Telefon: 0271 / 740-2912
- FAX: 0271 / 740-2978
- E-mail: Klaus.Wolf@uni-siegen.de
- Homepage: www.uni-siegen.de/~wolf

Dipl. Soz. Arb. Daniela Reimer

- Telefon: 0271-7404167
reimer.pflegekinderwesen@uni-siegen.de