

Traumatic stress and its imprints on body, mind and society

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DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

actual or threatened death

serious injury or

sexual violation

The exposure must result from one or more of the following scenarios, in which the individual

- directly experiences the traumatic event
- witnesses the traumatic event in person
- learns that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend
- experiences first-hand repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event

Traumatic stress results
from overwhelming life threatening situations
that lead to great **loss of:**

SAFETY

COHERENCE AND INNER SELF

CONTROL

**AND OFTEN LOSS OF
SOLIDARITY AND COMFORT**

The sense of coherence

Aaron Antonovsky, 1979

COMPREHENSIBILITY

MANAGEABILITY

MEANINGFULNESS

„Positive health outcomes and salutogenesis depend on experiencing a strong sense of coherence.“

Trauma imprints are of high
vulnerability and not
of various symptoms

Recovery involves
feeling safe and connected
and finding meaning in life again

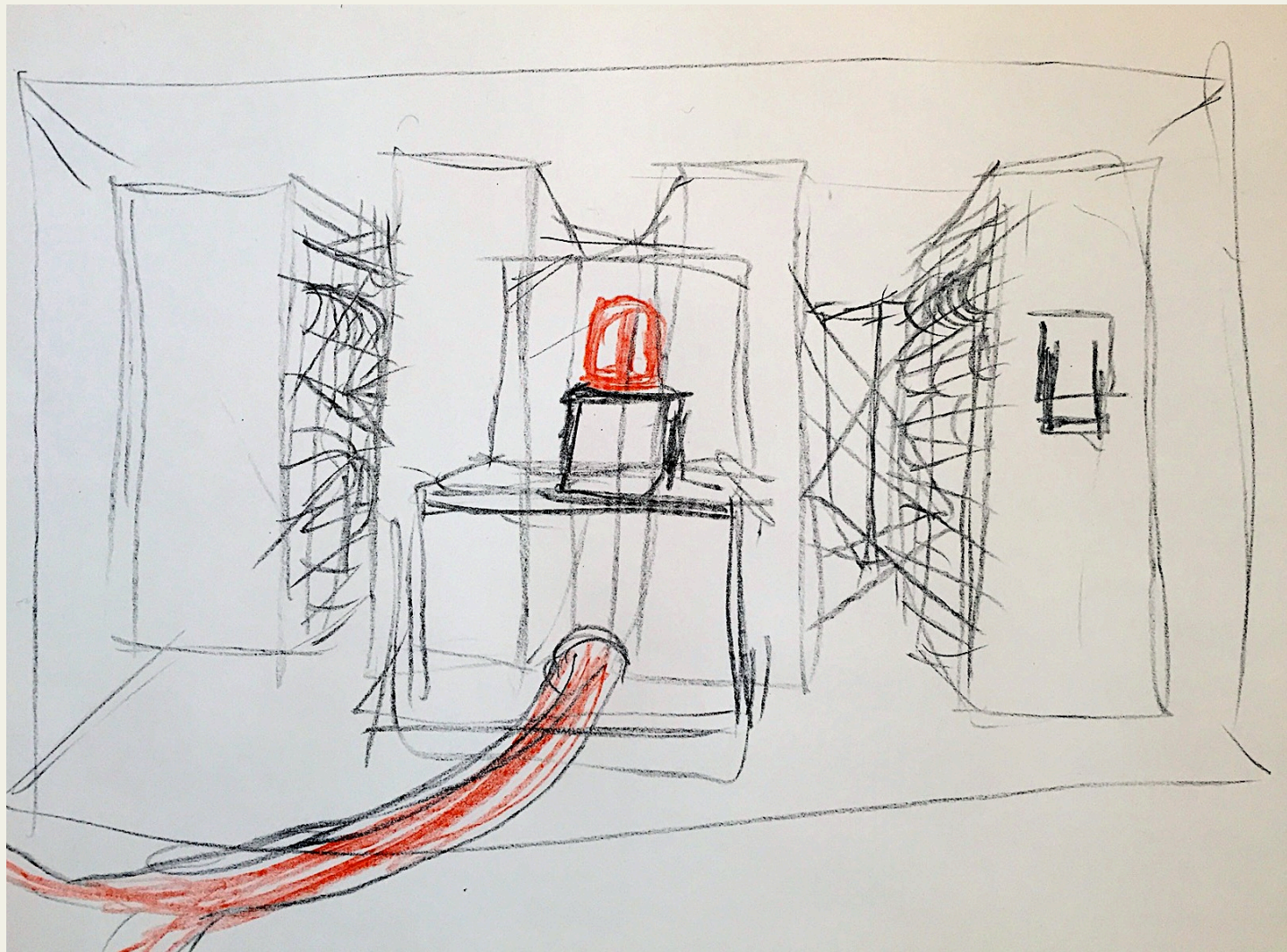
„Expressive movements are physical acts which take place because of their inner correspondence with the state of mind of the person who performs them.

The human organism always functions as a whole, physically and psychically.“

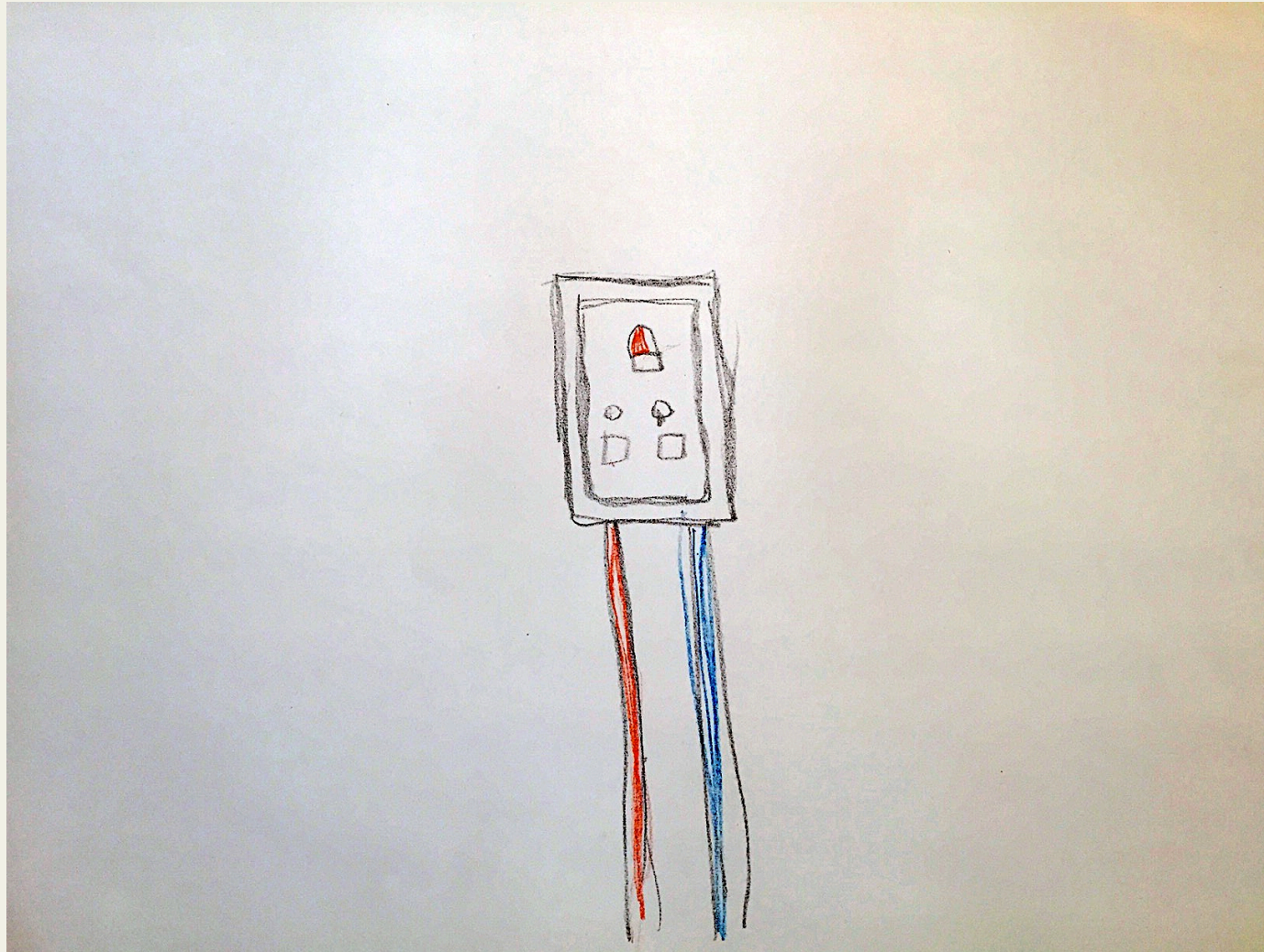
Rudolf Arnheim, The Gestalt theory of expression, 1949

„There are wholes, the behaviour of which
is not determined by that of their
individual elements,
but where the part-processes are
themselves determined by the intrinsic
nature of the whole.“

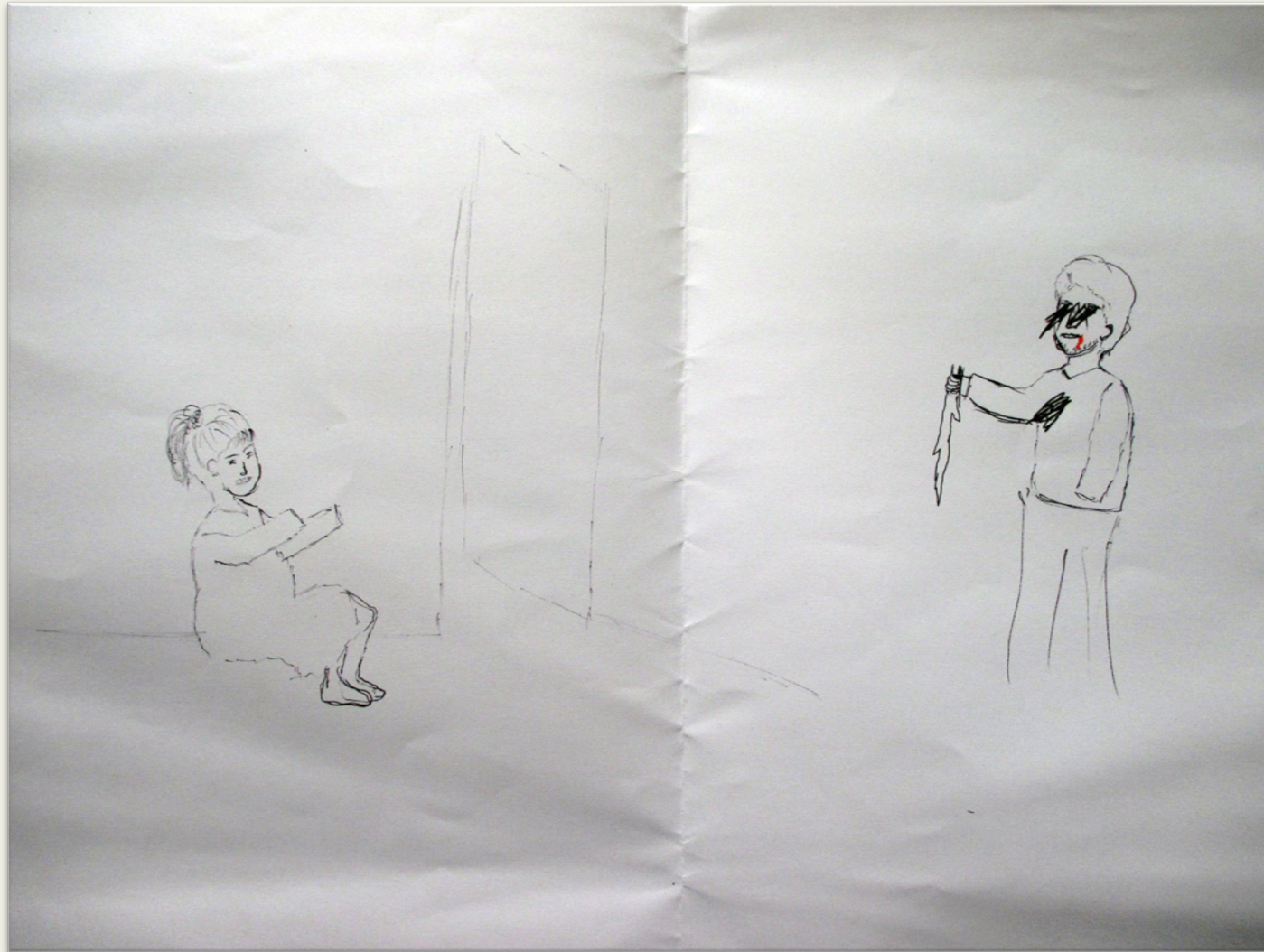
Max Wertheimer on Gestalt theory, 1924



“The alarm” shows a drawing by one of my clients which expresses his experience of traumatic stress.



“The tablet” symbolizes new coping strategies. The blue lines represent information coming in from the environment in the present moment.



“The dream” shows a traumatic event during the Yugoslav war. Working with that scene and changing it allowed my client to come out of her torpor.

What helps?

Understanding the inner state of mind

Integrating trauma fragments
into the life history

Sense of coherence, self-efficacy

Awareness, being present

What helps?

Comfort, trust, compassion, encouragement

Hope for the future and perspectives

A sense of control

Reliable and safe relationships

Recovery from trauma involves
re-establishing a connection to oneself,
to one's sensations and feelings,
and to other people.

And most of all it involves finding
meaning in life again.