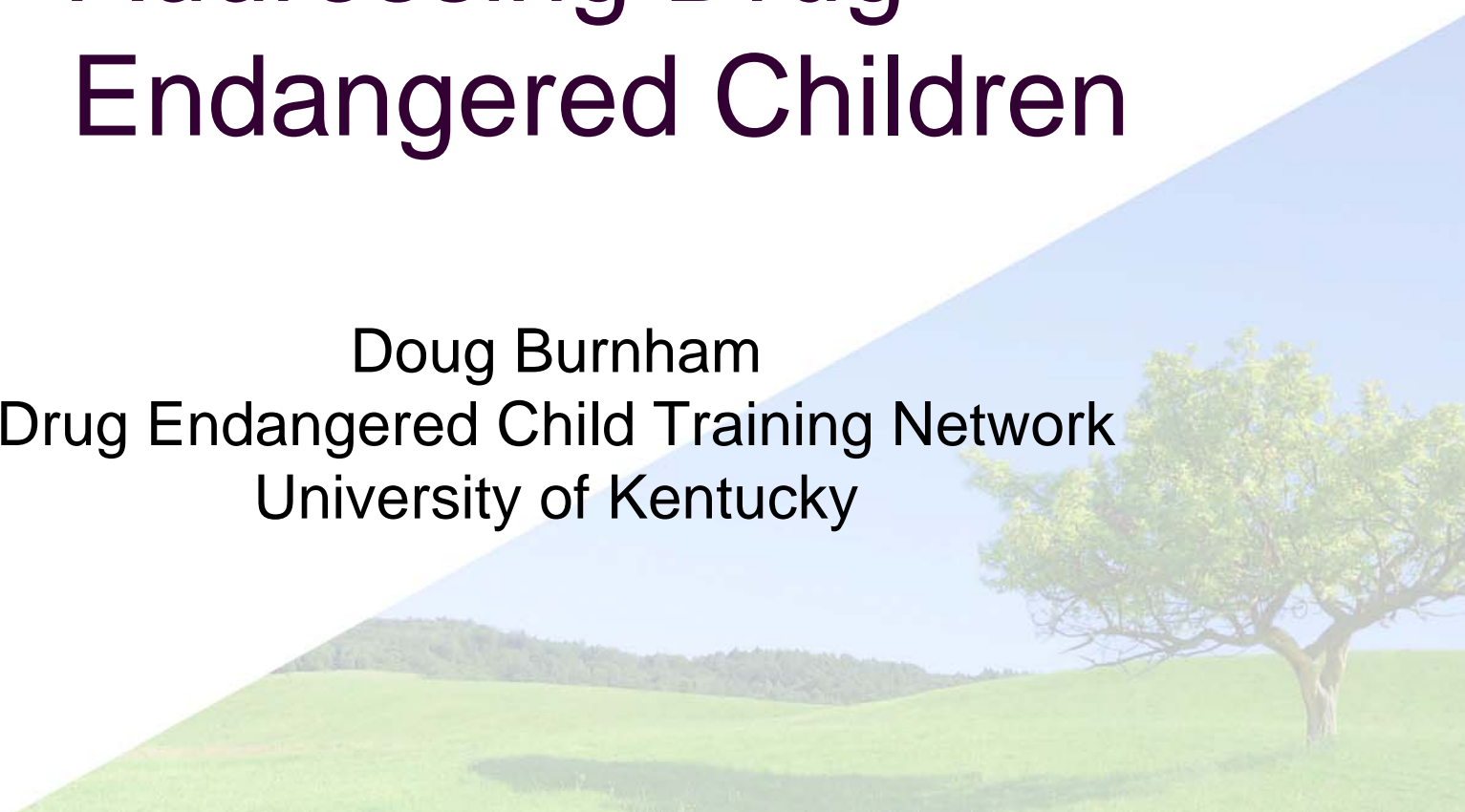


# Rural Communities Initiative Academy: Addressing Drug Endangered Children

Doug Burnham  
Drug Endangered Child Training Network  
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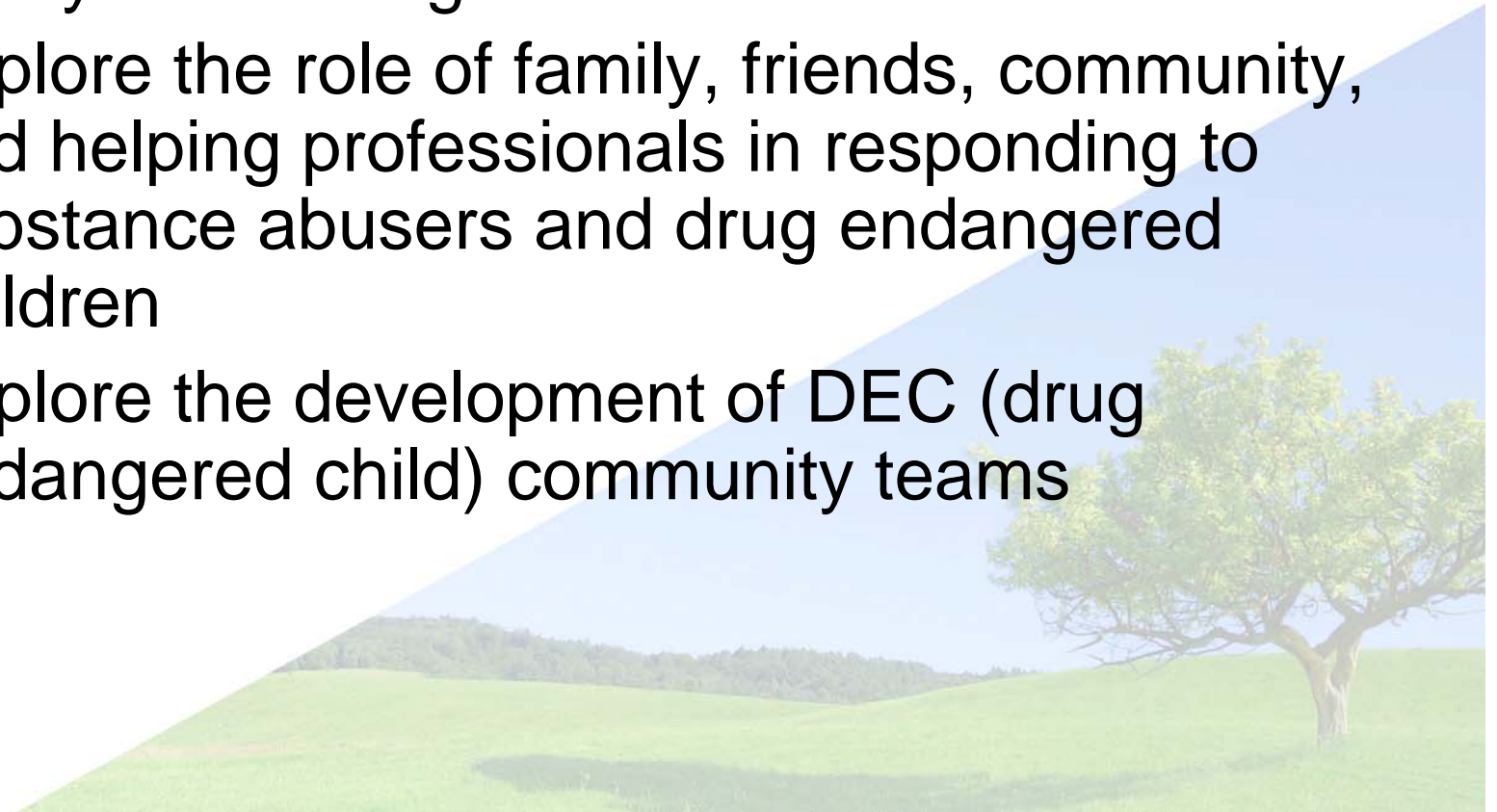
# Objectives

Identify drug endangered children

Explore the impact of substance abuse on family functioning

Explore the role of family, friends, community, and helping professionals in responding to substance abusers and drug endangered children

Explore the development of DEC (drug endangered child) community teams



# Who are drug endangered children?

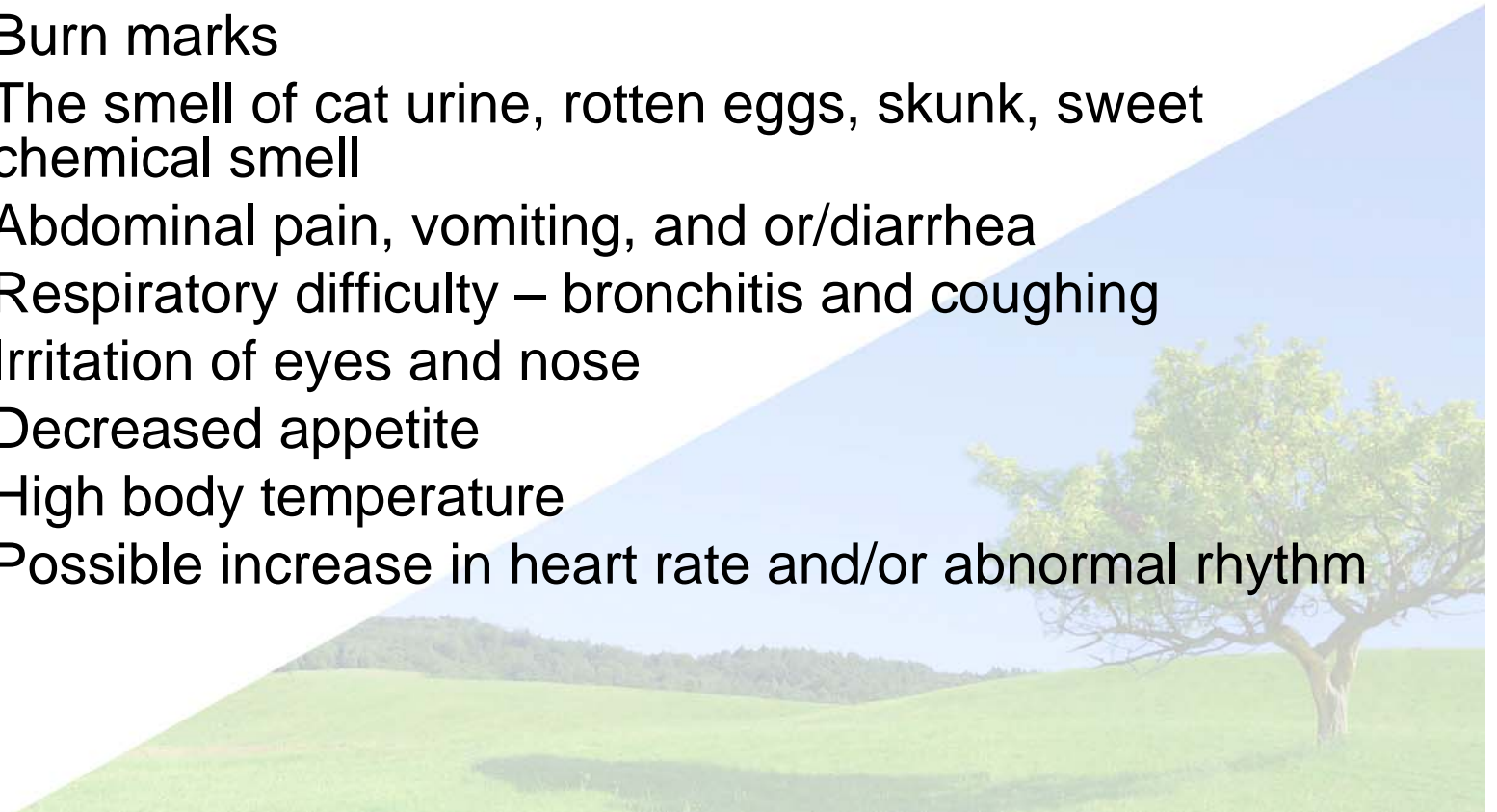
- Prenatal exposure
- Environmental exposure
- Drug affected



# Some Characteristics of Drug Endangered Children

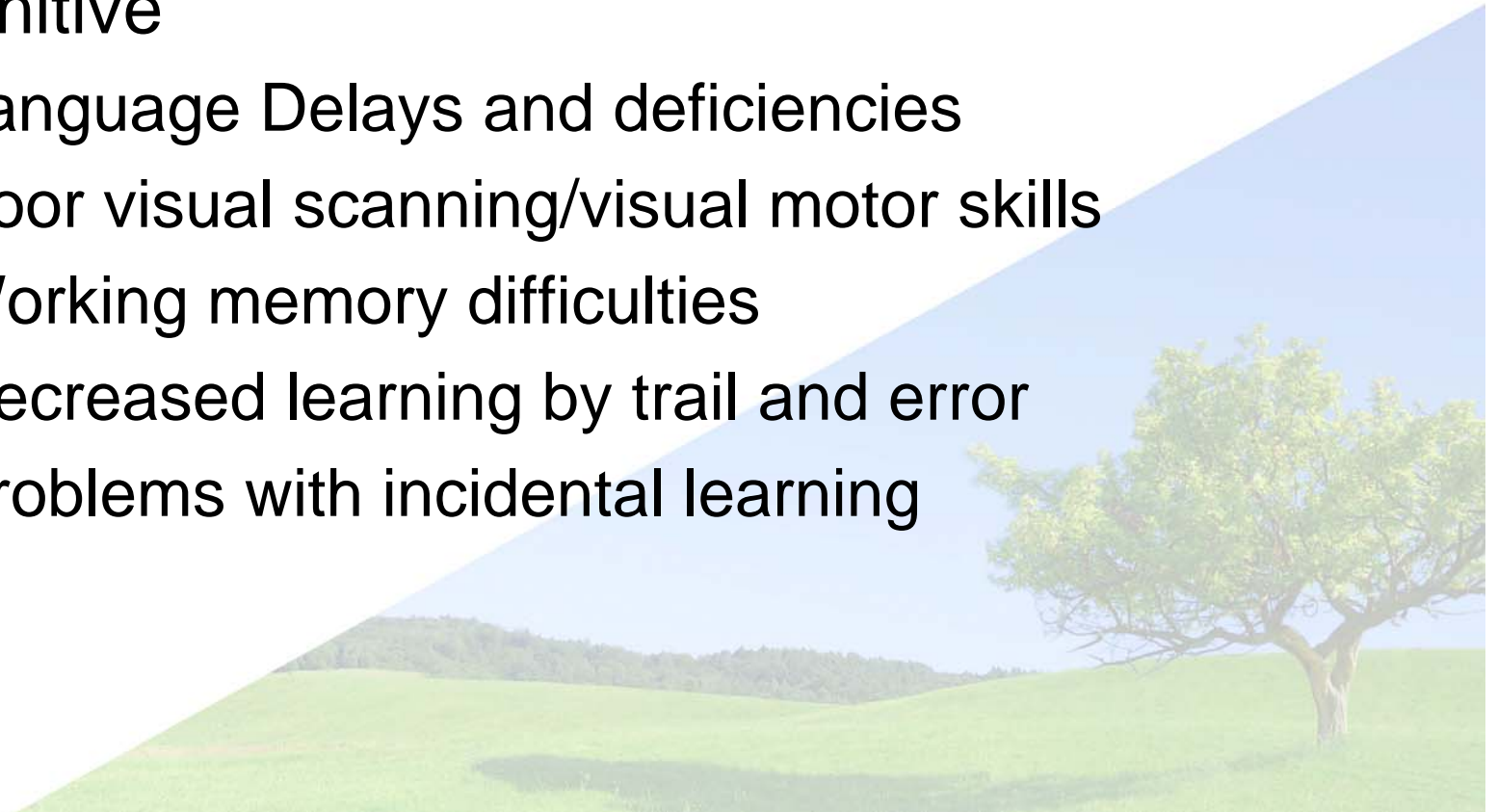
## ■ Physical

- Rashes on arms, legs, and face
- Burn marks
- The smell of cat urine, rotten eggs, skunk, sweet chemical smell
- Abdominal pain, vomiting, and or/diarrhea
- Respiratory difficulty – bronchitis and coughing
- Irritation of eyes and nose
- Decreased appetite
- High body temperature
- Possible increase in heart rate and/or abnormal rhythm



# Some Characteristics of Drug Endangered Children

- Cognitive
  - Language Delays and deficiencies
  - Poor visual scanning/visual motor skills
  - Working memory difficulties
  - Decreased learning by trail and error
  - Problems with incidental learning

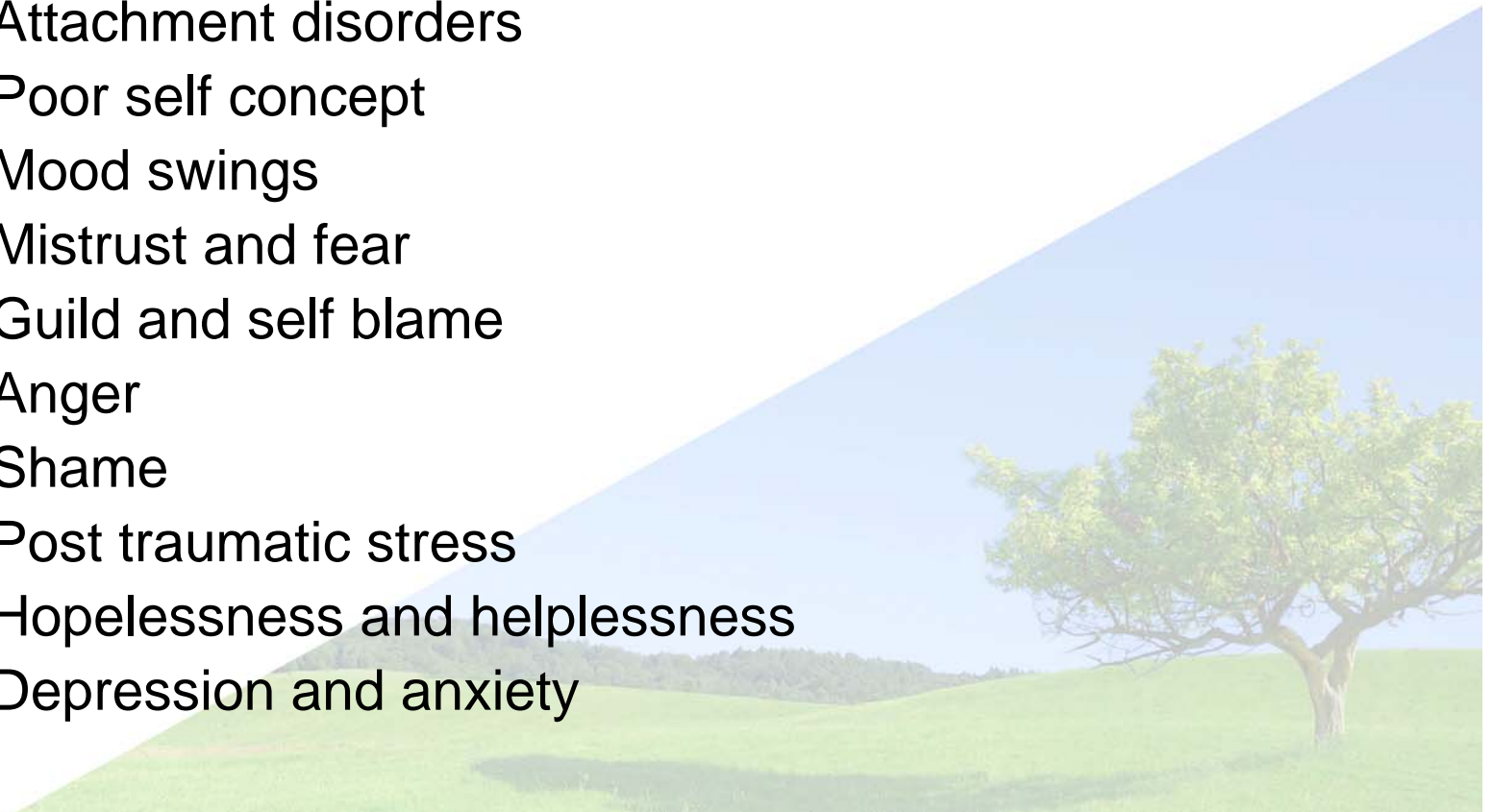




# Some characteristics of drug endangered children

## ■ Emotional

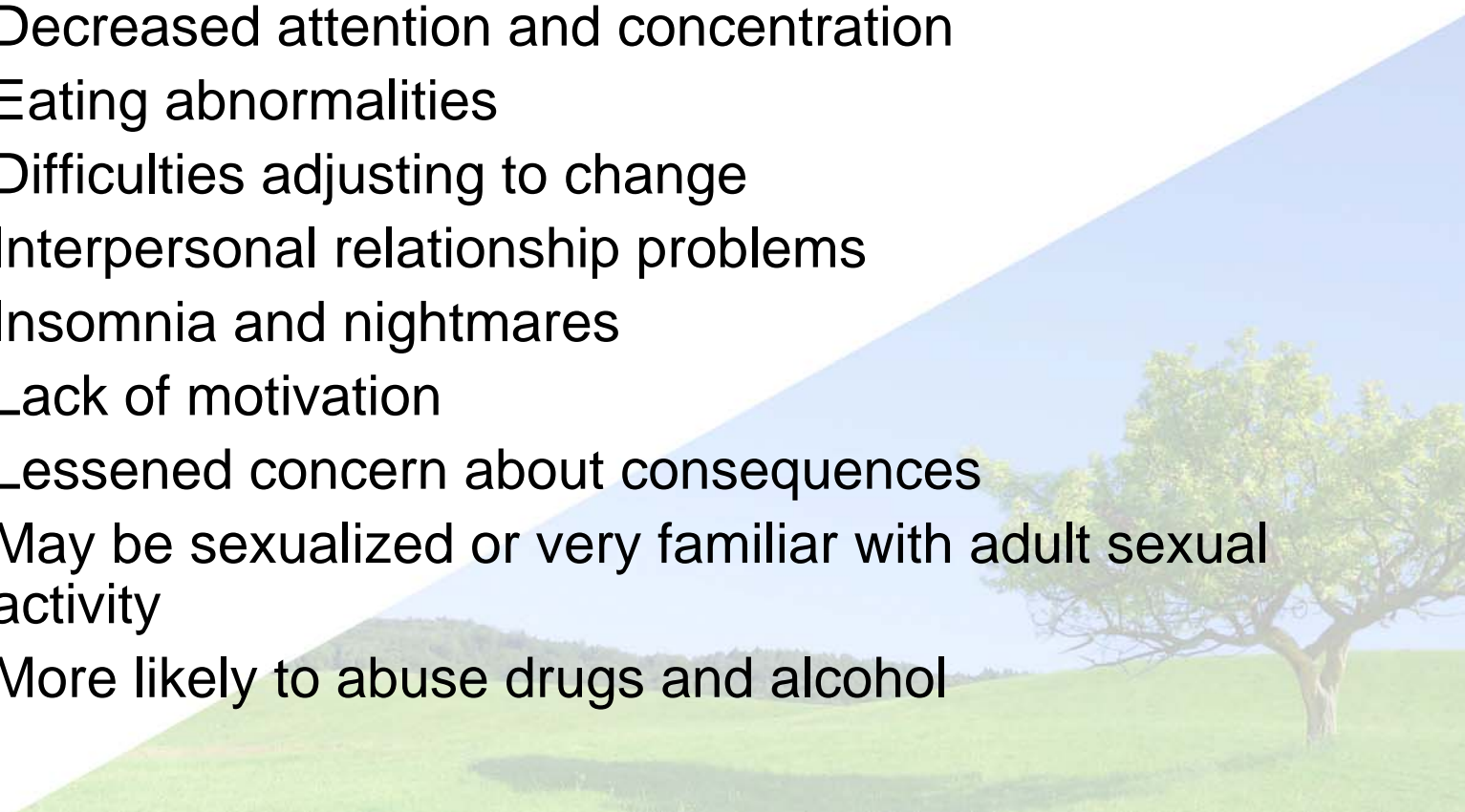
- Attachment disorders
- Poor self concept
- Mood swings
- Mistrust and fear
- Guilt and self blame
- Anger
- Shame
- Post traumatic stress
- Hopelessness and helplessness
- Depression and anxiety



# Some Characteristics of Drug Exposed Children

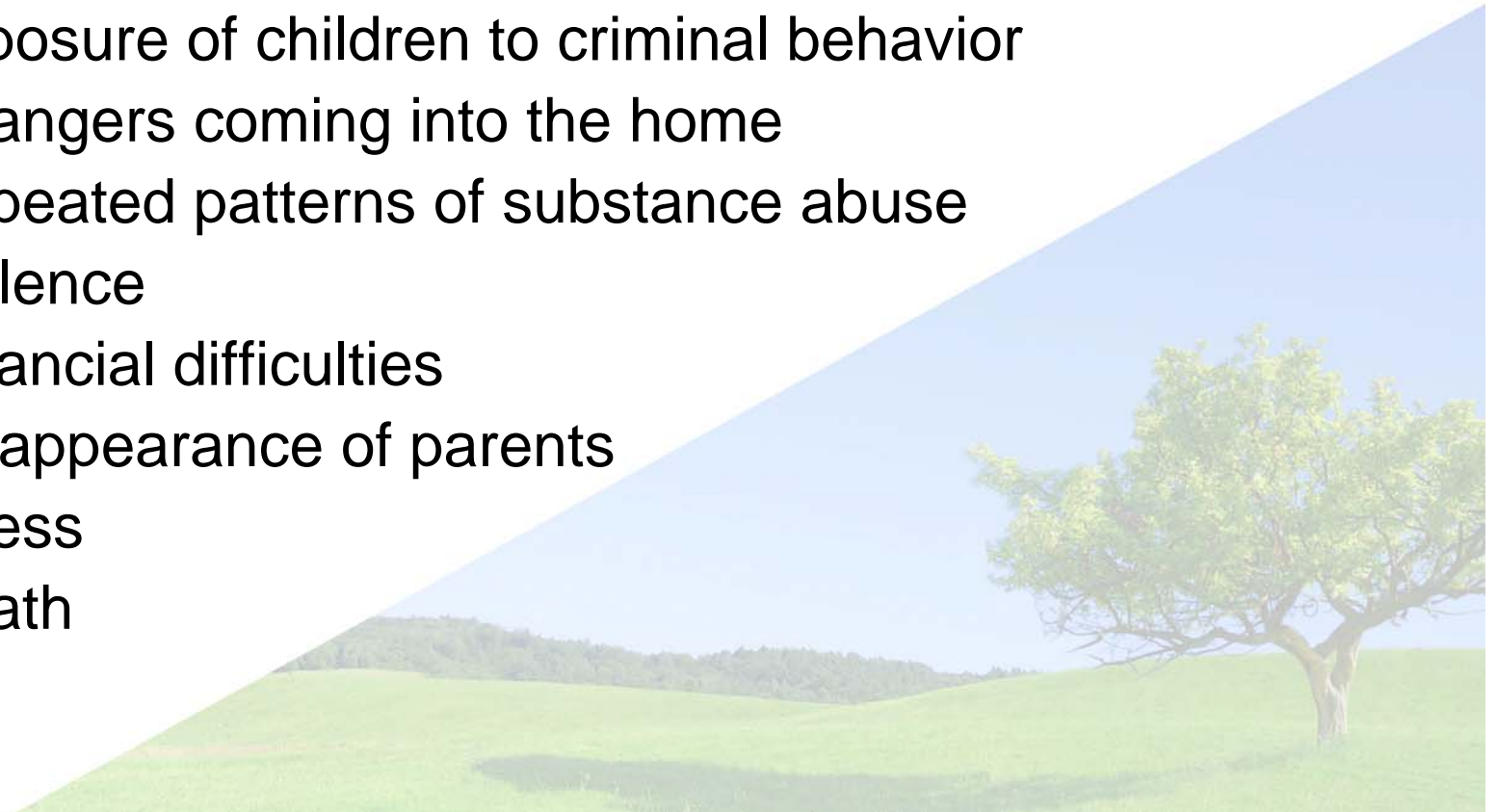
## ■ Behavioral

- Decreased attention and concentration
- Eating abnormalities
- Difficulties adjusting to change
- Interpersonal relationship problems
- Insomnia and nightmares
- Lack of motivation
- Lessened concern about consequences
- May be sexualized or very familiar with adult sexual activity
- More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol



# Substance Abusing Household

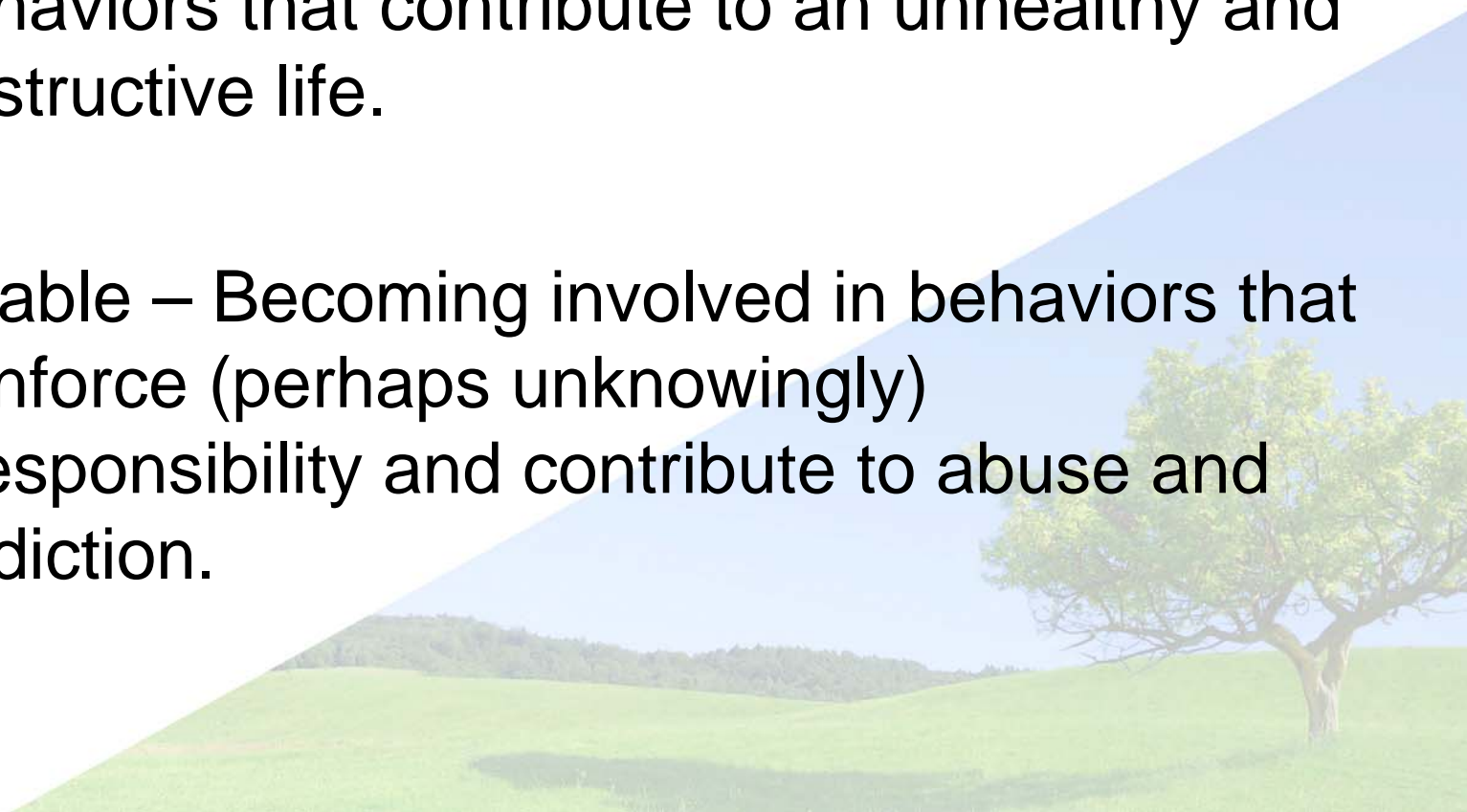
- Chaotic existence
- Lack of supervision of children
- Lack of empathy for children
- Exposure of children to criminal behavior
- Strangers coming into the home
- Repeated patterns of substance abuse
- Violence
- Financial difficulties
- Disappearance of parents
- Illness
- Death





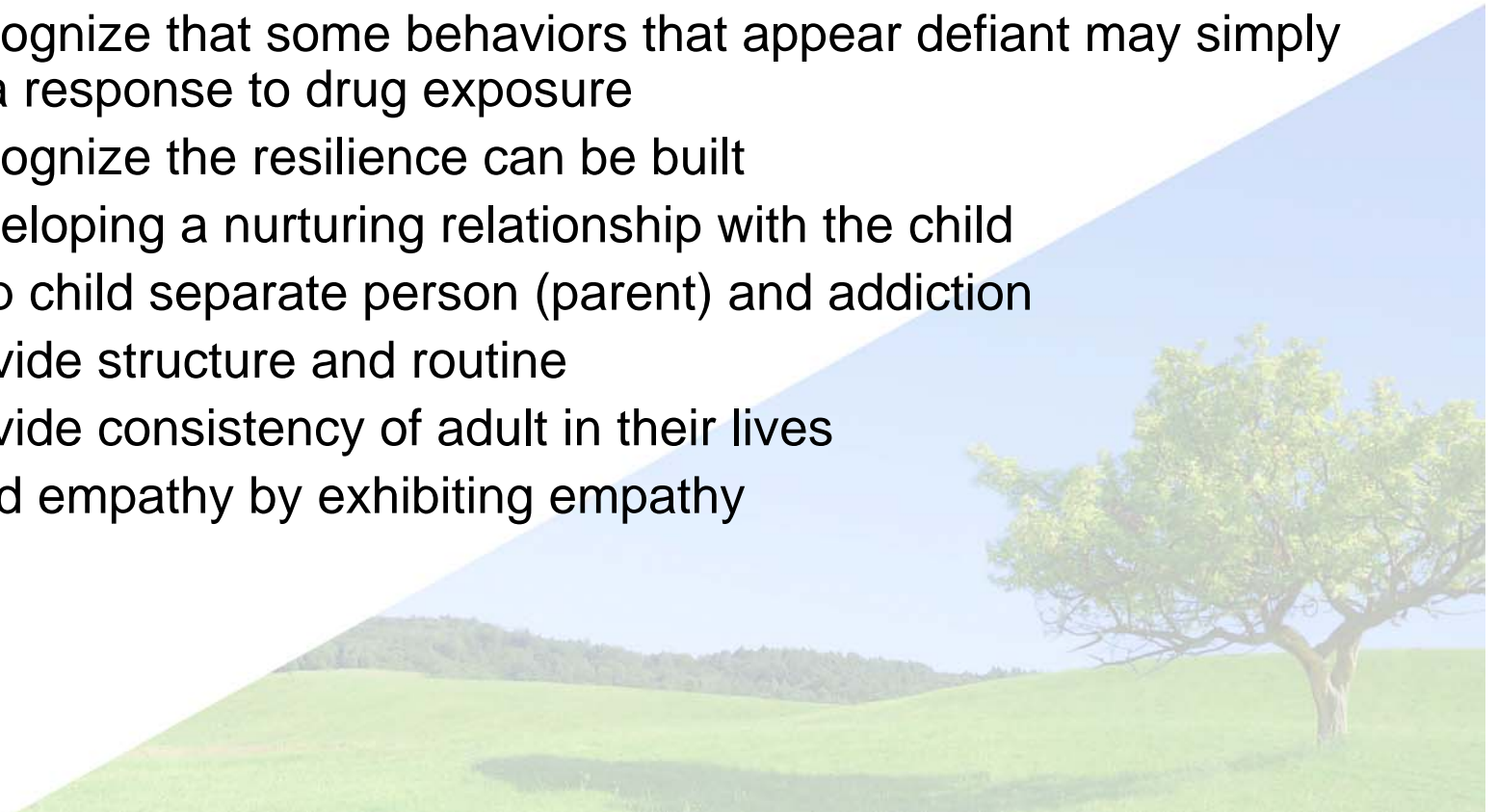
# Responding to the Substance Abuser

- Support – Refusing to become involved in behaviors that contribute to an unhealthy and destructive life.
- Enable – Becoming involved in behaviors that reinforce (perhaps unknowingly) irresponsibility and contribute to abuse and addiction.



# Responding to Drug Endangered Children

- Make sure they are safe
- Extreme caution about labeling
- Recognize that some behaviors that appear defiant may simply be a response to drug exposure
- Recognize the resilience can be built
- Developing a nurturing relationship with the child
- Help child separate person (parent) and addiction
- Provide structure and routine
- Provide consistency of adult in their lives
- Build empathy by exhibiting empathy



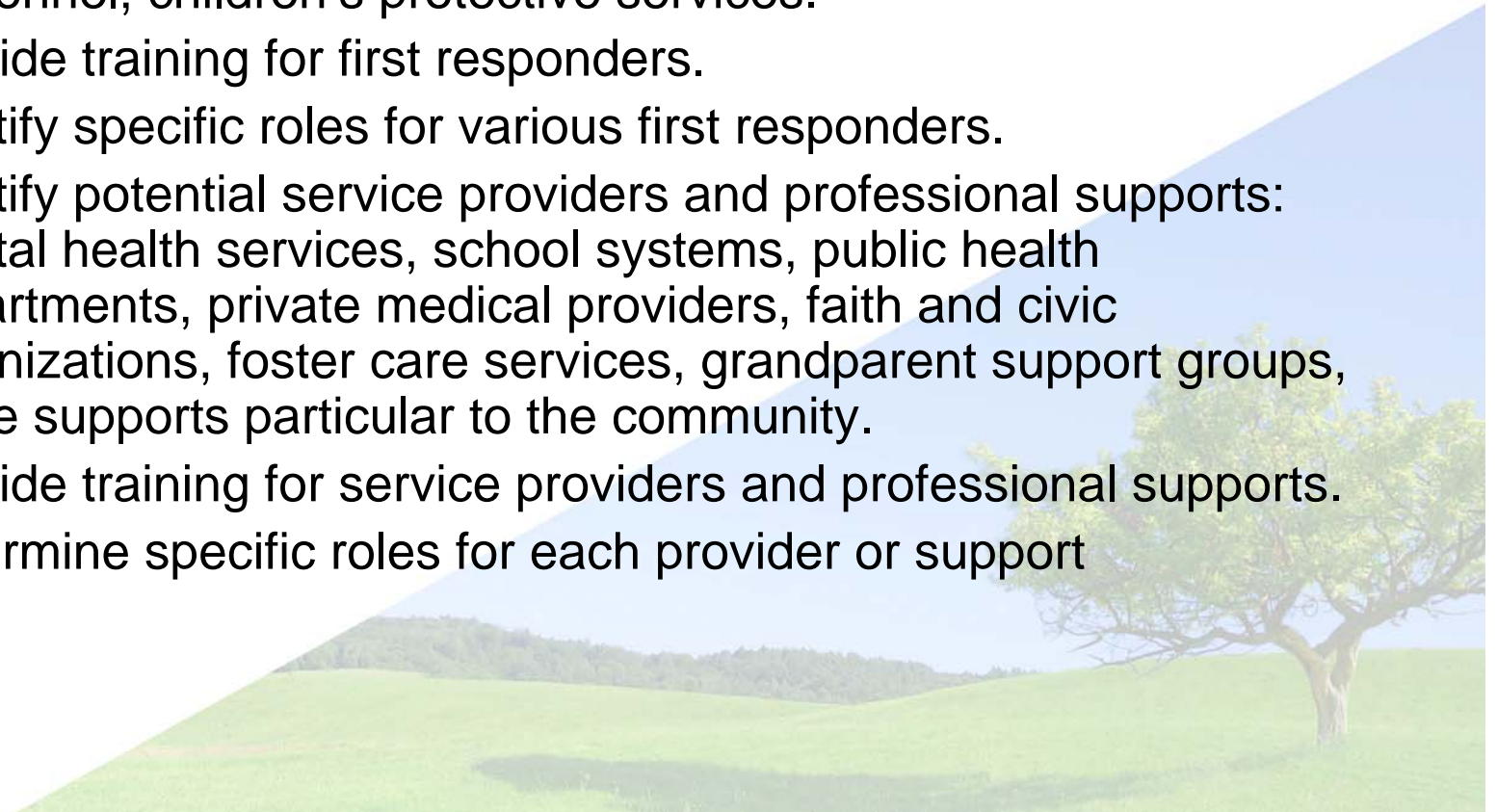
## Responding to Endangered and Affected Children

- Make sure child has complete assessment – physical, developmental, social functioning.
- Work cooperatively with local agencies and organizations
- Insist on positive institutional responses
- Enhance local community commitment to the welfare of children



# Building Community Drug Endangered Child Terms

- Identify first responders: law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, hospital emergency room personnel, children's protective services.
- Provide training for first responders.
- Identify specific roles for various first responders.
- Identify potential service providers and professional supports: mental health services, school systems, public health departments, private medical providers, faith and civic organizations, foster care services, grandparent support groups, those supports particular to the community.
- Provide training for service providers and professional supports.
- Determine specific roles for each provider or support



## References

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