GROUP RATES

Group rates that include mix and match in-person with live-streaming enrollees

$100 off per person
for groups of 15 or more

$75 off per person
for groups of 8-15

$50 off per person
for groups of 3 -7

Live stream enrollees can view course within 1 month after the event date.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Education and Clinical Professionals: All education and mental health or healthcare professionals who work with children or youth including, but not limited to K–12 Classroom Teachers, School Counsellors, Learning Assistance/Resource Teachers, School Administrators, School Paraprofessionals including Special Education Assistants, Classroom Assistants and Childcare Workers • All other professionals who support behavioural challenges and complex learning needs including but not limited to: Nurses, Social Workers, Psychologists, Clinical Counsellors, Family Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Addiction Counsellors, Youth Workers, Mental Health Workers, Probation Officers and Community Police Officers.

LIVE STREAM FROM HOME

Workshops will be live streaming from Halifax, NS to online participants on April 28–30, 2025. Please allow 3–5 business days after the conference has ended for recorded footage to become available.

Live stream registration: www.webinars.jackhirose.com

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LIVE IN-PERSON & LIVE STREAMED

THE HALIFAX CONFERENCE ON

Behavioural, Developmental & Emotional Challenges with Children & Adolescents

HALIFAX, NS

Dalhousie University | 6136 University Ave
Student Union Building (McInnes Room)

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
June 2, 2025	June 3, 2025	June 4, 2025
8:30am - 11:45am	8:30am - 11:45am	8:30am - 11:45am
Fostering Social-Emotional Learning Skills for Academic Success Using Brain-Behaviour Relationships	**Executive Skill Dysfunction** Understanding and Assessing Challenges in Children, Adolescents and Young Adults	**Oppositional, Defiant & Explosive Behaviours** Transforming Challenges for Long Term Success
12:45pm - 4:00pm	12:45pm - 4:00pm	12:45pm - 4:00pm
Reading and Writing Disorders Brain-Based Interventions for Students	**Improving Executive Skills** Intervention and Coaching Strategies	**Anxiety Solutions** Practical Strategies for Resilience, Confidence and Coping Skills in Children and Youth
PRESENTED BY	PRESENTED BY	PRESENTED BY
Steven G. Feifer D.Ed., ABSNP	**Peg Dawson** Ed.D., NCSP	**Caroline Buzanko** Ph.D., R. Psych

THE HALIFAX CONFERENCE ON BEHAVIOURAL, DEVELOPMENTAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES WITH CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Presented by Jack Hirose & Associates. Sponsored by Sunshine Coast Health Centre and Georgia Strait Women's Clinic

If you have any questions, please contact your on-site coordinator.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

• Wear your name badge every day.

• Turn off your cell phone.

• If you have pre-purchased lunch your tickets are in your name badge, please treat your tickets like cash.

EVALUATION FORM:

• Complete your evaluation form each day using the QR code below.

SCHEDULE:

This schedule may vary depending on the flow of the presentation and participant questions

7:30am – 8:30am	Sign-In
8:30am – 10:00am	Morning Workshops Begin
10:00am – 10:15am	Mid-Morning Break (Refreshments Provided)
10:15am – 11:45pm	Workshop in Session
11:45pm – 12:45pm	Lunch Break
	Sign-In (CPA Members Only)
12:45pm – 2:15pm	Afternoon Sessions Begin
2:15pm – 2:30pm	Mid-Afternoon Break (Refreshments Provided)
2:45pm – 4:00pm	Workshop in Session
4:00pm	Complete Evaluation Forms (Use QR Code Above) & Sign-Out (CPA Members Only)

CERTIFICATES:

• Digital certificates are available for download on the final day for multi-day attendees at: http://registration.jackhirose.com/certificates

CPA MEMBERS

• A new policy requires you to request a form from your on-site coordinator, which must be submitted directly to the association.

• Please sign in after lunch and sign out at the end of the day. Early departures result in the loss of CPA credits.

• Certificates will be updated with CPA credits after form verification (allow 2-4 weeks).

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1 **DAY ONE**

2 **DAY TWO**

3 **DAY THREE**

Fostering Social-Emotional Learning Skills for Academic Success Using Brain-Behavior Relationships

Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., ABPdN
feifer@comcast.net
www.schoolneuropsychpress.com

THE HALIFAX CONFERENCE ON BEHAVIOURAL, DEVELOPMENTAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES WITH CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

HALIFAX, NS | JUNE 2–4, 2025   SUPER EARLY BIRD SAVE $40!   MARCH 2, 2025
Presented By: *Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., Peg Dawson, Ed.D., Caroline Buzanko, Ph.D., R. Psych*

1

Dr. Feifer's Journey 1992 – present

- Nationally certified **school psychologist** 20+ years
- Board certified in **school** and **pediatric** neuropsychology
- 2008 *Maryland School Psychologist of the Year*
- 2009 *National School Psychologist of the Year*
- Author: **8 books** on learning and emotional disorders
- Test Author: **FAR & FAM & FAW & FACT**
- Currently in private practice in Frederick, Maryland
  www.schoolneuropsychpress.com

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

▪**Defining Trauma**

▪Trauma and Mental Health

▪Trauma and the Brain

▪Trauma and Academic Functioning

▪Strategies to Address School Anxiety

▪5 Pillars of a Trauma Informed School

3

PREVALENCE OF TRAUMA

- **26%** of children will have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event by their **4th** birthday, and **2/3rd's** of children report one traumatic event by age 16 (SAMHSA, 2020).

* A traumatic event is defined by APA as a direct or **perceived** threat rendering a child feeling over-whelmed and fearful of their safety.

* Traumatic stress reactions in children often lead to difficulty self-regulating emotions, heightened aggression, lack of trust, and poor **school performance** (Diamanduros et al, 2018).

Washington DC: " *March for our lives*"
March 24th, 2018

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SUBTYPES OF TRAUMA
(NCTSN, 2021)

Bullying (peer victimization) - a deliberate attempt to inflict social, emotional, physical, and/or psychological harm to someone perceived as being less powerful. Bullying can be physical (hitting, tripping, kicking, etc.), verbal (teasing, taunting, threatening, sexual comments), social (spreading rumors, embarrassing someone in public) or include cyberbullying through social media.

Community Trauma - exposure to intentional acts of interpersonal violence committed in public areas including homicides, sexual assaults, robberies, shootings, gang related violence and weapons attacks.

Complex trauma - exposure to multiple traumatic events often of an invasive and interpersonal nature, such as abuse, sexual abuse, or profound neglect. The trauma often occurs early and often in life, and can disrupt the ability to form secure attachments.

Early childhood trauma - traumatic experiences that occur in children aged 0-6. Examples include physical or sexual abuse, natural disasters, accidents, or war. Young children also may experience trauma in response to painful medical procedures or the sudden loss of a parent/caregiver.

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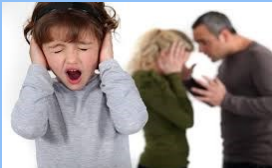
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SUBTYPES OF TRAUMA
(NCTSN, 2021)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) - occurs when an individual purposely causes harm to a partner or spouse. Tactics used in IPV can be physical, sexual, financial, verbal, or emotional in nature and can also include stalking, terrorizing, humiliation, and intentional isolation from social supports and family.

Pediatric medical trauma - refers to a set of psychological and physiological responses of children and their families to pain, injury, serious illness, medical procedures, and invasive or frightening treatment experiences.

Physical abuse - one of the most common forms of child maltreatment that results in physical injury to a child such as red marks, cuts, welts, bruises, muscle sprains, or broken bones, even if the injury was unintentional

Sexual abuse - any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or an observer.

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WHAT IS CHILDHOOD TRAUMA?

WHAT CAN CHILDHOOD TRAUMA LOOK LIKE IN ADULTS?

(Reliving unwanted memories as flashbacks; Problems with sleep, irritability & anxiety; Feeling numb & cut off from others; Substance abuse & addiction; Difficulty trusting others; Depression; Difficulty forming relationships; Poor self esteem)

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1. **Physiological -** Trauma is not necessarily a particular event but rather the culmination of events that **sensitizes** the nervous system to fear.

2. **Psychological** – a fear of **both** the event and the fear itself. We fear of not being in control of our body and therefore not being in control of our emotions. This leads to **stress.**

3. **Mental Health** – trauma leads to poor self-esteem, **anxiety,** depression, mood instability erodes trusting relationships, and poor school performance.

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SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

Physiological Symptoms (anxiety disorder?)	Behavioral Symptoms (withdrawal/depression?)	Psychological/Cognitive Symptoms (ADHD)
Shallow Breathing	Work Refusal	Inconsistent attention
Facial Flushing	School Refusal	Irritability
Excessive Sweating	Avoiding unstructured areas	Mind goes blank during tests
Hand Tremors	Sensitivity to loud sounds	Loses train of thought
Dizziness	Rarely volunteers in class	Poor organization
Dilated Pupils	Speaks in a hushed voice	Easily angered
Fatigue	Does not initiate peers	Poor emotional self-regulation
Muscle Tension	Avoids cafeteria	Distrusts authority figures
Chest pains	Often visits school nurse	Irrational fears

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

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WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

Warning signs of a mental health issue?

Percent of parents who would be concerned about their adolescent if they noticed the following signs

Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2022

Frequent comments about being worried or anxious	65%
Moodiness	64%
Decreased interaction with family	63%
Drop in grades	61%
Change in sleep	53%
Change in eating patterns	49%

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SUBTYPES OF STRESS & ANXIETY

POSITIVE — Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

TOLERABLE — Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

TOXIC — Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

1. **Positive –** normal and essential part of healthy development. Key to building **resiliency** to overcome adversity!

2. **Tolerable –** more severe and longer lasting. Examples might be loss of a loved one, divorce, or a frightening injury. Key is to have healthy **relationships** and support at home.

3. **Toxic–** chronic and often severe such as physical or emotional neglect and abuse, exposure to violence, etc. There is prolonged activation of the stress response system with little adult support to buffer the stressful situation. Needs a **therapeutic** intervention.
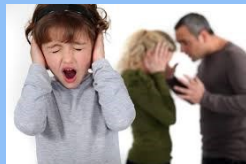
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DEFINING TOXIC STRESS
(US NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE, 2019)

➢ Prolonged and **dysregulated** activation of the stress response system that disrupts the development of the **brain** and increases the risk for **psychological** impairment.

➢ The **toxic stress response** can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or economic hardship—without adequate adult support.

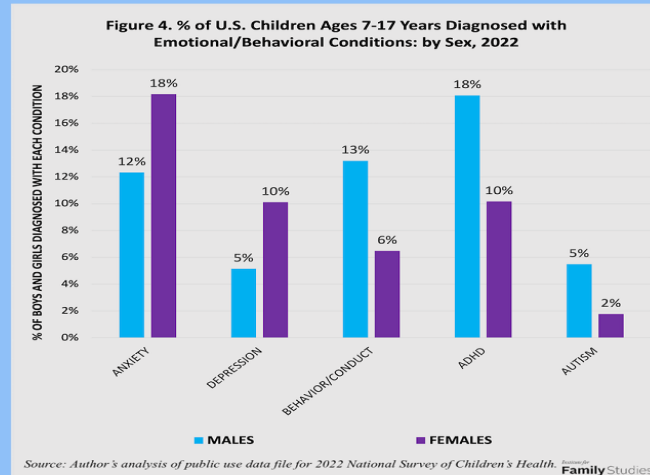➢ Toxic stress increases the lifelong risk for **physical** and **mental health** disorders.

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FAST FACTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Figure 4. % of U.S. Children Ages 7-17 Years Diagnosed with Emotional/Behavioral Conditions: by Sex, 2022

Source: Author's analysis of public use data file for 2022 National Survey of Children's Health. **Family** Studies

- Childhood trauma often leads to emotional dysregulation and the precursor for many emotional conditions (Herringa, 2017).
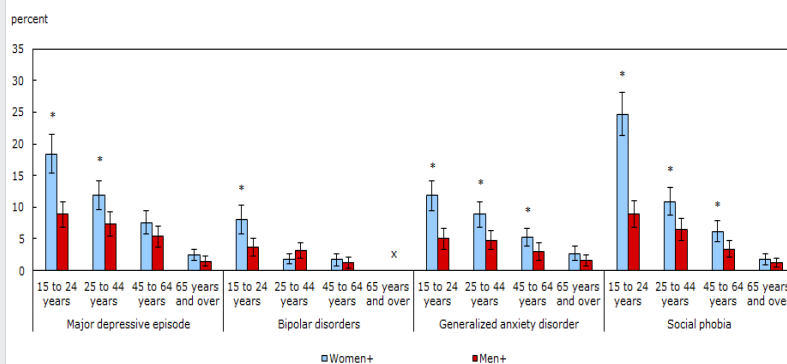- Among **children in poverty**, more than **1 in 5 (22%)** have a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.

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Fast Facts about Canadian Mental Health

12-month prevalence of selected mood and anxiety disorders, by age and gender, 2022

percent

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
* significant difference (p <0.05) between men and women in the same age group
Notes: Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval of the prevalence estimates. The category "women+" includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons. The category "men+" includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons.
Source: Statistics Canada, Mental Health and Access to Care Survey, 2022.

➢ Findings from the Mental Health and Access to Care Survey suggest in 2022, there were more than **5 million** people in Canada who were experiencing significant symptoms of mental illness.

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Fast Facts about Canadian Mental Health

Key statistics from the *State of Mental Health in Canada 2024*

•Provinces are only spending an average of **6.3%** of their overall health budgets on mental health. They should be spending closer to **12%.**

•**2.5** million people with mental health needs in Canada reported that they weren't getting adequate care.

•Canadians report having **"poor"** or **"fair"** mental health three times more often than before the pandemic (**26%** in 2021 vs. **8.9%** in 2019).

•Approximately **38%** of Indigenous Peoples reported their mental health was "poor" or "fair".

•**Fifty-seven percent** (57%) of young people (aged 18-24) who had early signs of a mental illness said that cost was an obstacle to getting mental health services.

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SUMMARY: Canadian Mental Health
Statistics Canada, 2024

➤ The percentage of Canadians aged 15 years and older who met the diagnostic criteria for a mental health condition *(i.e. major depressive episode, bipolar disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder, etc..)* has **increased in the past 10 years**, whereas the prevalence of alcohol use disorders has **decreased**.

➤ Youth (ages 15-24), especially women, were most likely to have met diagnostic criteria for a **mood or anxiety disorder** based on their symptoms.

➤ Only half of the people who met diagnostic criteria for a mood, anxiety, or substance use disorder talked to a health professional about their mental health in the past **12 months** before the survey.

➤ Unmet needs for counseling or psychotherapy were **higher** than unmet needs for medication or information about mental health.

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Fast Facts about Canadian Mental Health
Statistics Canada, 2024

Barriers to Counseling and Therapy:

➢ Shortage of mental health workers

➢ Long wait times for community
     mental health workers

➢ Affordability

➢ Desire for a quicker fix to problems

➢ Stigma of admitting help

➢ Additional thoughts??

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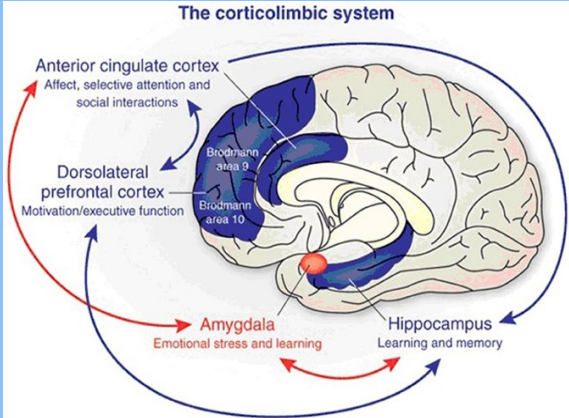## PRESENTATION OUTLINE

DEVELOPING
TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS

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CORTICOLIMBIC SYSTEM AND TRAUMA

1. Amygdala – responds to **unfamiliar** and **unexpected** events (Kagan, 2007). …Trauma alters our **threat perceptions,** and interprets benign situations as dangerous.
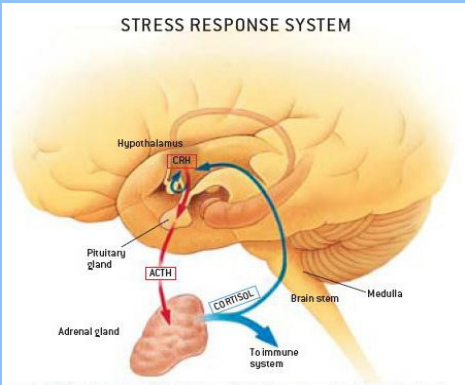
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STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

Cortisol – a glucocorticoid (glucose-cortex-steroid) that regulates the metabolism of glucose in the brain. A homeostasis of cortisol is needed for optimal brain functioning and efficient mobilization. Too much *(Cushing's Syndrome)*…too little *(Addison's Disease)*.

- Stress impacts body by lowering **immune system**, and also by reducing sleep.
- Stress alters amygdala to PFC connections leading to impairments in **executive functioning** (Berens et al., 2017).
- Anxiety impacts cognition and learning by way of **working**[20] **memory** (Dowker et al., 2015).

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CORTICOLIMBIC SYSTEM AND TRAUMA

The corticolimbic system

Anterior cingulate cortex
Affect, selective attention and
social interactions

Dorsolateral
prefrontal cortex
Motivation/executive function

Brodmann
area 9

Brodmann
area 10

Amygdala
Emotional stress and learning

Hippocampus
Learning and memory

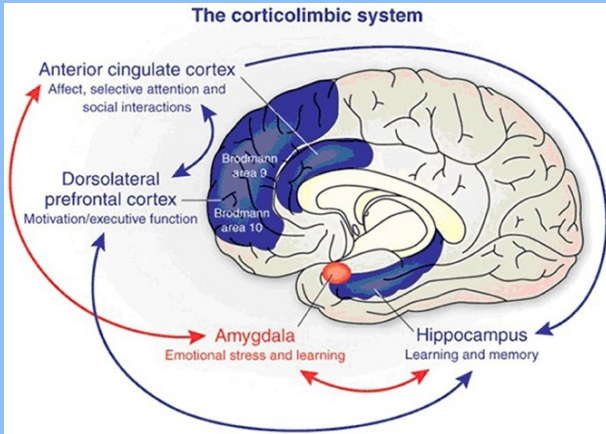**2. Hippocampus** - A key **memory center** and more sensitive to cognitive than emotional memories.   Helps to inhibit amygdala.   **Chronic stress** from abuse or neglect releases cortisol which can reduce hippocampal volume. (Johnston & Olson, 2015).
* Neurogenesis can occur in dentate gyrus.   21
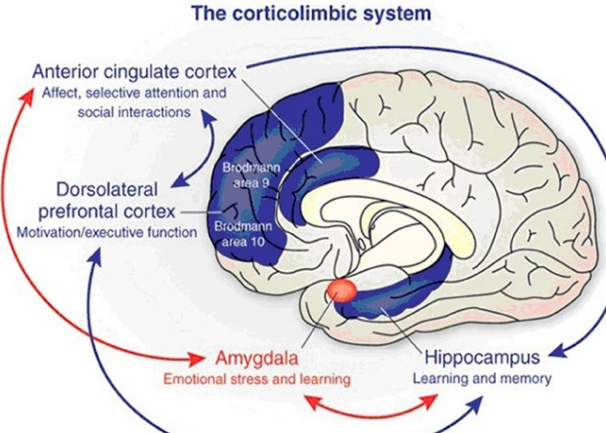
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CORTICOLIMBIC SYSTEM AND TRAUMA

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Dorsolateral
prefrontal cortex
Motivation/executive function

Brodmann
area 9

Brodmann
area 10

Amygdala
Emotional stress and learning

Hippocampus
Learning and memory

3. Anterior Cingulate Cortex   - Directs our **attention inward** toward becoming overly aware of nervous system fluctuations and visceral responses *(i.e. heart rate increases, breathing rate, perspiration, etc.).* ***Trauma is felt in the body!** 22

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FRONTAL LOBE AND TRAUMA: DORSAL ANTERIOR CINGULATE

- Dorsal anterior cingulate helps regulate emotional functioning and supervises fear-based system.

- Helps interpret and regulate our emotional experiences with **language.**

- **Alexithymia** - emotional intensity of an experience impacts the ability to identify, label, and verbally communicate one's emotional state.

- 85% of PTSD patients experience alexithymia... brain imaging studies showing greater cortical thickness in dorsal anterior cingulate (Demers et al., 2015).

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ORBITAL FRONTAL CORTEX

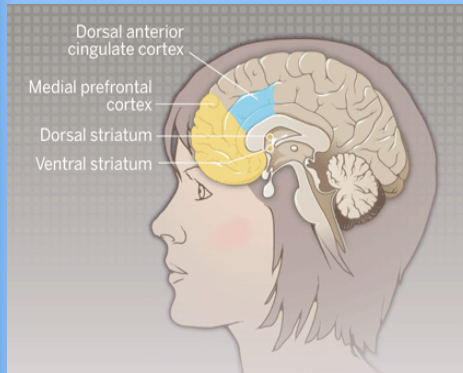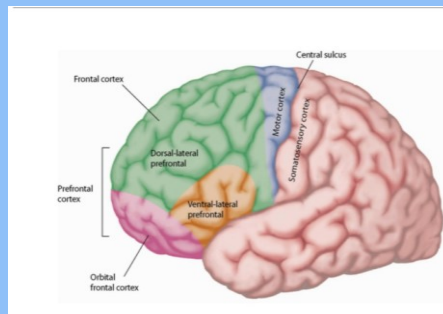*** Self-regulation of social skills functioning –** children who have been abused or neglected often experience tremendous challenges developing **trust with others** and establishing stable interpersonal relationships.

4. Orbital-frontal Cortex - children with trauma have difficulty accurately identifying their own emotions, and the emotional states of others.
- **Social Dyslexia –** misread social cues, highly reactive to mis-perceived slights, and inability to comprehend how behavior may disrupt the learning environment.
- **Reward Sensitivity**–neuro-imaging studies show deficits in reward sensitivity as trauma blunts positive rewards and leads to oversensitivity to negative rewards (Herzberg & Gunnar, 2019).

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SUMMARY OF STRESS REACTIONS

- The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) system controls the endocrine system and how we respond to stress.
- Research shows abuse and neglect are associated with both increased (overarousal) and decreased (under-arousal) of HPA system.
- If exposure to stress is chronic, the body shifts to an **ongoing stress response**, even when the threat is long gone.
- Stress in utero impacts the developing brain.

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

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Trauma and Academic Functioning

* Trauma and anxiety impacts academic functioning in 3 primary ways:

1) Trusting authority figures.

2) Attention and engagement in the classroom.

3) Trauma leads to **working memory** and **executive functioning** deficits directly impacting:
   a) Listening and reading comprehension
   b) Written language production
   c) Mathematical computation

* Trauma impacts **frontal lobe functioning!**

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Trauma and Reading Comprehension

Nonimpaired   Dyslexic

➢ Dyslexic students have difficulty with automatic word recognition….leading to comprehension difficulties.

➢ Anxiety, stress, and trauma impact reading comprehension skills though automatic word recognition remains **in-tact.**

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DO'S AND DON'TS FOR ANXIOUS READERS

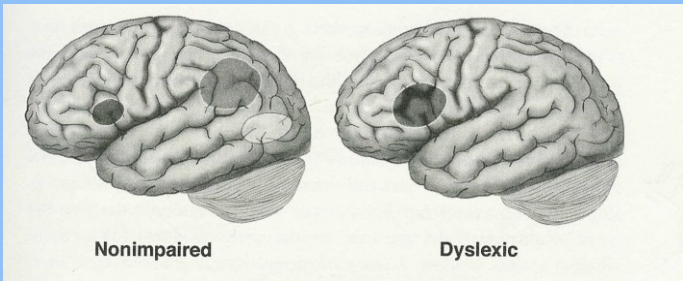| Do's	Don'ts
Praise the effort more than the outcome.	Force the student to read aloud in class.
Provide alternative ways to show mastery of reading without reading in front of others.	Call on a student without their hand raised.
Validate a student's fears by being empathetic while also reassuring them.	Draw attention to a student who shows signs of physical anxiety (i.e., blushing, sweating, hand tremors, voice cracking)
Take relaxation breaks and remind the student to practice breathing.	Embarrass the student in front of peers.
Share successes with caregivers	Downgrade them for being anxious rather than not know material.
Smile more and use humor to lighten the mood.	Draw undue attention to a student.
Gradually and systemically reward incremental attempts to read in front of others, starting with the least stressful situation.	Be judgmental and overly critical.
Collaborate with other pertinent school staff so all teachers approach the situation similarly.	Tell students in advance they will be reading out loud in class. It only heightens their anticipatory anxiety.

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Executive Dysfunction & Written Language

Executive Function
(1) Initiating

Writing Dysfunction
* Poor idea generation
* Poor independence

(2) Sustaining
* Lose track of thoughts
* Difficulty finishing
* Sentences disjointed

(3) Inhibiting
* Impulsive/Distractible

(4) Shifting
* Perseverations
* "Stuck" on topic

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Executive Dysfunction & Written Language

Executive Function	Writing Dysfunction
(5) Organization	* Frequent erasers * Forget main idea * Disjointed content
(6) Planning	* Poor flow of ideas * Lack of cohesive ties
(7) Word Retrieval	*Limited word choice * Simplistic sentences
(8) Self Monitor	* Careless miscues * Sloppy work

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Executive Functioning and Mathematics

EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION	BRAIN REGION	MATH SKILL
• *Selective Attention*	• *Anterior Cingulate/* • *Subcortical structures*	• Poor attention to math operational signs • Place value mis-aligned
• *Planning Skills*	• *Dorsal-lateral PFC*	• Selection of math process impaired • Difficulty determining salient information in word problems

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Executive Functioning and Mathematics

EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION	BRAIN REGION	MATH SKILL
• *Organization Skills*	• *Dorsal-lateral PFC*	• Inconsistent lining up math equations • Frequent erasers • Difficulty setting up problems
• *Self-Monitoring*	• *Dorsal-lateral PFC*	• Limited double-checking of work • Unaware of plausibility to a response.
• *Cues Pattern Recognition*	• *Dorsal-lateral PFC*	• Symbolic reasoning • Timed subtests compromised

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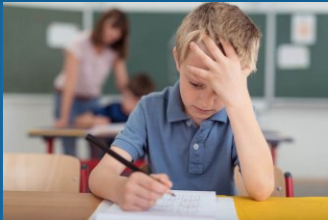
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Is Anxiety Normal?

ANXIETY

A normal reaction to stress or difficult times..

Triggered by a specific stressor.

Has a start and ending point.

Can be helpful or motivational.

Lessens significantly or disappears away from stressful situations.

Relaxing often helps you feel better.

A response to toxic situations.

BlessingManifesting

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Often comes out of nowhere.

Intense or disproportionate emotional response.
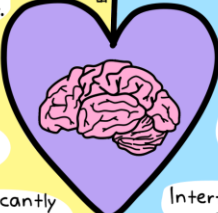
Ongoing and lasts weeks or months.

Interferes with day-to-day life.

Physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, lightheadedness, racing heart.

Feels impossible to control or manage.

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Main Subtypes of Pediatric Anxiety Disorders

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder – most common, and characterized by excessive **worry,** restlessness, and difficulty concentrating.

2. Separation Anxiety – excessive fear and anxiety from being separated from caregiver.

3. Social Anxiety – fear of being embarrassed or humiliated in a **social** or **performance** situation. Often related to fearing physiological symptoms of anxiety being visible in public *(i.e. sweating, trembling, blushing, etc..)*

4. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder – ritualistic thoughts or behaviors used to alleviate anxiety.

5. Phobia – irrational fears leading to avoidance of object or situation.

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SOURCES OF SCHOOL ANXIETY
(RESEARCH.COM, 2024)

Sources of Student Pressure Among Teens

Source	Value
Get good grades	~61
Look good	~29
Fit in socially	~28
Get involved in extra-curricular activities	~21
Be good at sports	~21

Source: Pew Social Trends

Designed by Research.com

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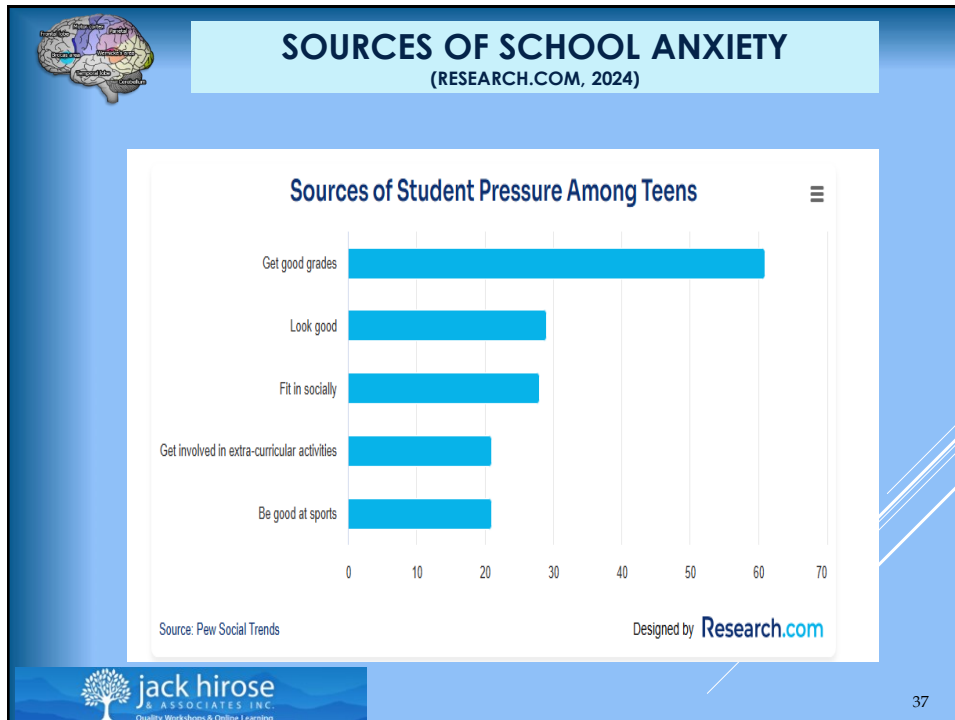
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SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ANXIETY

1. Allow extra time on tests, quizzes, and assignments.

2. Refrain from calling on a student unless hand is raised.

3. Provide alternative ways to demonstrate subject mastery so school is not just the memory Olympics (e.g., projects, papers, independent study).

4. Provide preferential seating in class.

5. Allow the student to use a **crisis pass** when feeling stressed or overwhelmed in class.

6. Create a ***"calm corner"*** in the classroom that students can use to self-calm as needed.

7. **Structure and Routine:** picture schedules for younger children and write class routine on board for older children.

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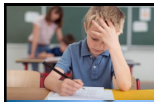
SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ANXIETY

8. Notify the student in advance when there will be a substitute teacher or emergency drill.

9. Provide access to lecture notes and assignments online.

10. Structure more challenging classes in the morning rather than at the end of the day.

11. Allow students to retake one test each marking period to demonstrate mastery.

12. Teachers should try to modulate tone of voice, rate of speech, and positive comments made each date.

13. Incorporate more **humor** into class lessons!!

14. Grade assignments positively and not punitively.

*15. Build a **relationship** with the student outside of class!

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DEVELOPING RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN
HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=JJVGATBGJXM

5 PILLARS OF RESILIENCE

1. Foster hope
2. Establish a relationship
3. Environmental Warmth
4. Movement activities
5. Sleep + Diet + Exercise = Energy

40

40
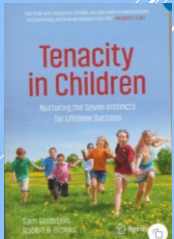
BUILDING RESILIENT CHILDREN
SAM GOLDSTEIN & ROBERT BROOKS

KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. Focus and build upon a child's **island of competence.**
2. Surround the child with caring adults to build **internal motivation**, not over-rely on behavior plans and external rewards.
3. Model **empathy** & compassion
4. Create a **purpose** for success
5. Create **hope** and an **optimistic** not pessimistic view of the future.
6. Foster resilience by **teaching** emotional problem-solving and not restraining!!
7. Add structure and **routine.**

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Tenacity in Children

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

DEVELOPING
TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS

- Defining Trauma

- Trauma and Mental Health

- Trauma and the Brain

- Trauma and Academic Functioning

- Strategies to Address School Anxiety

➡ **5 Pillars of a Trauma Informed School**

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5 PILLARS OF A *"TRAUMA INFORMED"* SCHOOL
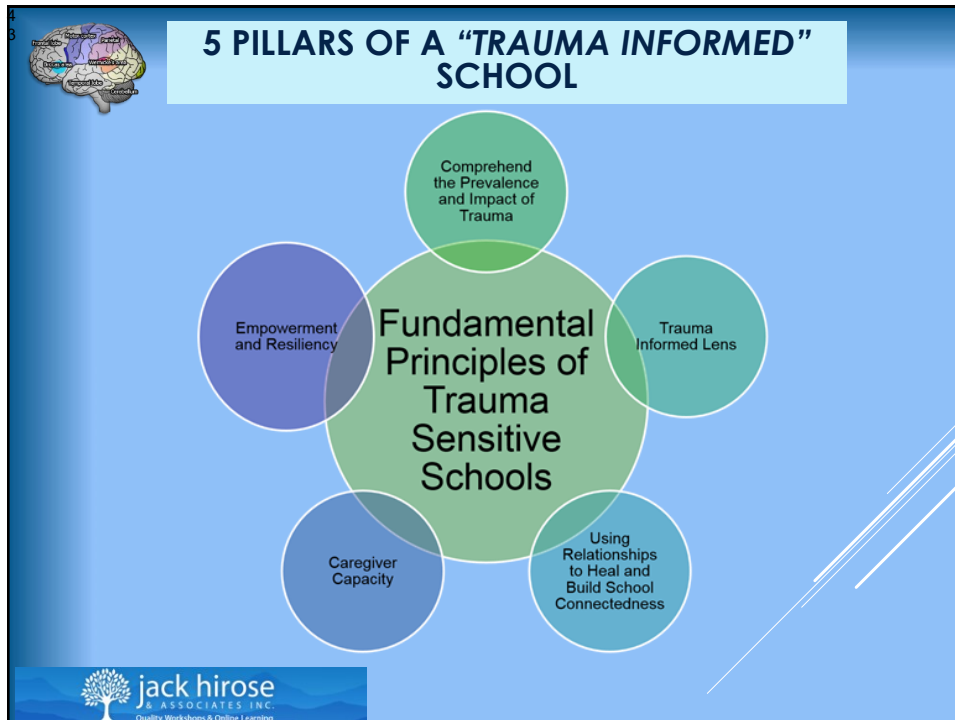
43

1. UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S TRAUMATIC STRESS RESPONSES
(NCTSN, 2012)

1. Traumatic experiences are inherently complex: (*There is no signature emotional reaction that all children exhibit.*)
2. Danger and safety are core concerns in the lives of traumatized children.
3. Trauma underlies many emotional disorders seen in children including **anxiety**, which impacts many aspects of academic and social-emotional functioning.
4. Anxiety is often the by-product of a hyper-vigilant brain fueled by maladaptive thoughts.

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2. FEIFER ASSESSMENT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA (FACT)

- Parent, Teacher and Self-Report forms students 4-18.

- Digitally administered and scored on PIC

- Approximately 10 minutes to complete (65 questions)

- Gender and age-based norms

- Total Trauma Index Score:
  - a) **4 Clinical Scale Scores** (Physiological, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic)
  - b) **4 Supplemental Cluster Scores** (Resilience, Inattention, Depression, Anxiety)
- Over 100 **504 Recommendations (**PAR-Iconnect)

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2. QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE FACT

- **FACT #1:** The scale is noninvasive and designed to measure the **implications** of trauma in a school based setting and **NOT** the direct source or type of trauma.

- **FACT #2:** The scale can be used to generate 504 recommendations and classroom accommodations for "*at-risk*" students.

- ❖ **FACT #3:** The most prudent use of the scale may be to include in the *Background Information* section of reports to provide a social-emotional context to interpret a student's cognitive profile.

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3. CAREGIVER CAPACITY AND RESILIENCY
(TRAUB AND BOYNTON-JARRETT, 2017)

1. Positive appraisal style impacts executive functioning skills and facilitates cognitive restructuring.

2. Following trauma exposure, caregivers play a critical role influencing a child's overall social-emotional response and adaptation (McLeod et al., 2007).
   a) Neglectful
   b) Democratic
   c) Authoritative
   d) Authoritarian

3. Maternal mental health most influences coping
   *(*16 million children live with a depressed parent)*

4. Family routines foster resilience.

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4. CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

- Designated "**check-in**" with trusted school staff
- Structure and **routine** *(i.e. schedules and emotive responses)*
- Use a **"health app"** to monitor breathing and heart rate.
- Access to **lecture notes** when needed.
- Use of **noise cancellation** headphones if needed.
- Frequent breaks as needed.
- Use **restorative** and collaborative problem-solving instead of punishment
- Avoid more than **one** examination per day
- Allow for **test re-takes** to demonstrate subject mastery.
- Provide **alternative areas** for lunch, restroom breaks, change clothes for P.E. , etc.. as needed.
- Scheduling more challenging subjects in **morning**.
- Allow the student to leave class a few minutes early when **transitioning** to next class.
- Allow use of a **weighted backpack** in class.
- Provide access to **on-line** learning as needed.
- Access to **school counselor** as needed

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5. TEACHING RESILIENCY: MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness – focus on breathing from the diaphragm, not the chest, and exhaling on longer slower breaths.

- Strive for 6 -8 breaths per minute.
- Practice breathing techniques when visualizing an anxiety provoking situation.
- Enhances parasympathetic nervous system.

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5. TEACHING RESILIENCY: YOGA

Yoga – assumes the footprint of trauma is in the body and tissues.
- We cannot talk it out, and fear our own bodily sensations (Van Der Kolk, 2012).
- Pain, headaches, muscle tension, tics, panic attacks
- Some research (Albracht-Schulte & Robert-McComb, 2018) suggests Yoga can reduce anxiety and heart rate variability following a stressor, though the induced calmness wears off after 30-40 minutes.

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5. TAKE TARGETED APP BREAKS

Square Breathing :
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFdZXwE6fRE

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5. CANINE ASSISTED THERAPY

- Provide unconditional warmth and positive emotions.

- Animals do not try to give sage advice, but provide an emotional pathway to heal.

- Presence of a therapeutic animal promotes oxytocin secretion (bond), lower heart rate and blood pressure, and calmness (Beetz et al., 2012).

- Reduces social isolation and promotes sense of connectedness (O'Haire et al., 2015).

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SOCIAL EMOTIONAL ACADEMIC LEARNING

Mental health and the schools

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LET'S STAY CONNECTED

Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., ABPdN

Licensed Psychologist

Workshops: feifer@comcast.net

Books: www.schoolneuropsychpress.com

Trauma Links: *https://www.nasponline.org/
*https://www.parentcenterhub.org/national-child-traumatic-stress-network/
*https://news.isst-d.org/animal-assisted-therapy-for-trauma/
*https://www.mindful.org/the-science-of-trauma-mindfulness-ptsd/
*https://www.wiley.com/enus/Essentials+of+Trauma+Informed+Assessment+and+Intervention+in
+School+and+Community+Settings-p-9781119274612
*https://www.amazon.com/Trauma-Sensitive-Classroom-Building-Resilience-
Compassionate/dp/0393711862

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Reading and Writing Disorders: Brain Based Interventions for Students

The lobes of the cerebral cortex in the left cerebral hemisphere, shown in lateral view

Central sulcus
Precentral gyrus
Postcentral gyrus
Frontal lobe
Parietal lobe
Lateral sulcus
Occipital lobe
Temporal lobe
Cerebellum
Pons
Medulla oblongata

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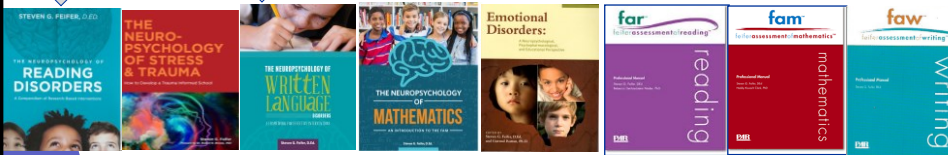
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Dr. Feifer's Journey 1992-present
www.schoolneuropsychpress.com

➤Nationally certified school psychologist 20+ years
➤Diplomate in **pediatric** and **school** neuropsychology
➤2008 **Maryland School Psychologist of the Year**
➤2009 **National School Psychologist of the Year**
➤Author: **8 books** on learning and emotional disorders
➤Test Author: **FAR-FAM-FAW-FACT**
➤Currently in private practice at Monocacy
　　Neurodevelopmental Center in Maryland.

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Presentation Outline

➡ **Why Literacy Matters**
   Defining Dyslexia
   Four Universal Truths of Reading
   Subtypes of Reading Disorders & Interventions
   Defining Dysgraphia
   Cognitive Constructs and Writing
   3 Subtypes of Written Language Disorders
   Strategies for Success

3

Literacy in Canada: Post Pandemic
Program for International Student Assessment (2022)

Table 3.16

Canadian and provincial average scores in reading over time, 2018–2022

	2018		2022	
	Average score	Standard error	Average score	Standard error
Newfoundland and Labrador	512	(4.3)	478*	(7.2)
Prince Edward Island	503	(8.3)	496	(10.4)
Nova Scotia	516	(3.9)	489*	(6.4)
New Brunswick	489	(3.5)	469*	(4.3)
Quebec	519	(3.5)	501*	(4.9)
Ontario	524	(3.5)	512*	(4.1)
Manitoba	494	(3.4)	486	(4.1)
Saskatchewan	499	(3.0)	484*	(4.3)
Alberta	532	(4.3)	525	(6.4)
British Columbia	519	(4.5)	511	(6.0)
Canada	**520**	**(1.8)**	**507***	**(2.5)**

- Reading scores in Canada **(507)** declined **13** points.
- Average decline among 81 countries **10** points (**476** avg/**U.S. 504**).
- Newfoundland and Nova Scotia biggest decline.
- More than 23,000 students in Canada from 850 schools participated.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

4

Literacy in Canada
Program for International Student Assessment (2018)

Percentage of students by time spent reading for enjoyment

Region	I do not read for enjoyment	30 minutes or less a day	More than 30 minutes to less than 60 minutes a day	1 to 2 hours a day	More than 2 hours a day
Newfoundland and Labrador	49	21	15	10	5
Prince Edward Island	47	26	15	7	5
Nova Scotia	47	26	14	8	5
New Brunswick	46	26	15	7	6
Quebec	44	29	14	8	4
Ontario	39	26	17	11	7
Manitoba	41	29	15	9	6
Saskatchewan	43	29	14	9	5
Alberta	37	26	19	11	7
British Columbia	37	28	19	10	6
Canada	40	27	17	10	6
OECD	42	24	17	11	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

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Why Literacy Matters in Canada

- **Civic Engagement:** People's belief that they can engage in, understand and influence political affairs rises with increased education and skills. Among Canadians with less than a high school diploma, just **32%** report this belief, compared to **60%** of people who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

- **Economy:** High literacy in Canada helps build an educated and skilled workforce which contributes to the country's economic growth.

- **Work:** Canadians with low literacy skills are twice as likely to be unemployed than those with higher level literacy skills.

- **Health:** Canadians with the lowest levels of literacy are more than **twice** as likely to be in poor health compared to Canadians with higher literacy skills.

- **Poverty**: In Canada, **46%** of adults at the lowest literacy levels live in low income households, compared with **8%** of adults at the highest literacy levels.

- **Family:** Reading to children before they start school helps develop their language skills and interest in reading and learning. Children of parents with higher education levels have higher literacy levels.

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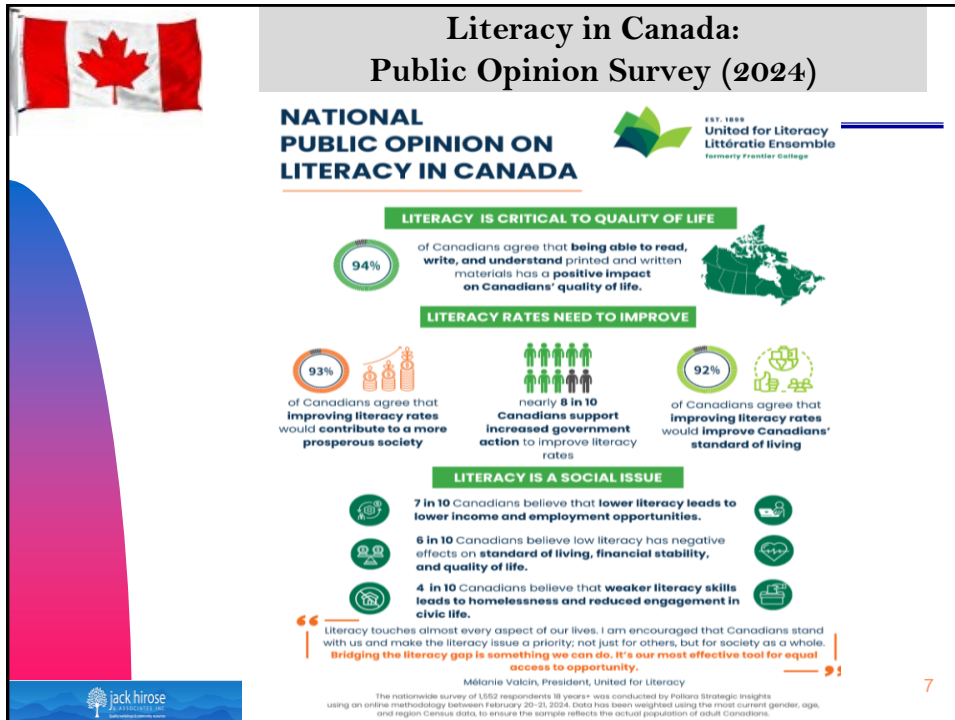
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Literacy in Canada:
Public Opinion Survey (2024)

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Presentation Outline

Why Literacy Matters
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Defining Dyslexia

> *"Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with __accurate__ and / or **fluent** word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the p**honological component** of language that is often <u>unexpected</u> in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. **Secondary consequences** may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."*

>   **-** International Dyslexia Association

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Developmental Dyslexia

Learning Disabilities

Reading Disorders

Dyslexias

Subtypes

10

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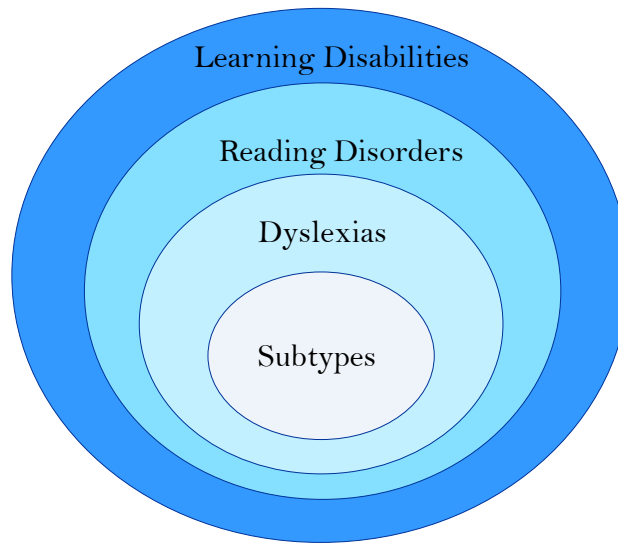
What is a Learning Disability?

LEARNING DISABILITY (Grades 1–12: Code 54)

This is the official definition adopted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) on January 30, 2002.

"Learning Disabilities" refer to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency.

Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These include, but are not limited to: language processing; phonological processing; visual spatial processing; processing speed; memory and attention; and executive functions (e.g., planning and decision-making).

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:
- oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- reading (e.g. decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- written language (e.g., spelling and written expression)
- mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving).

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Strategies for Success

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Four Universal Truths of Reading

1. In all word languages studied to date, children with developmental reading disorders (dyslexia) primarily have difficulties in identifying, recognizing, categorizing, and/or manipulating phonological units at all linguistic levels (Goswami, 2007).

Screening for Success (Hulme & Snowling, 2016)

1. Phonological awareness skills.
2. Ability to link sounds with letters.
*3. Rapid letter-naming skills?
   a) Rapid naming of letters better than objects (Kilpatrick, 2015)
   b) Rapid naming of letters is moderately correlated with
      reading performance (.28-.57%) and explains some
      of the reading variance independent of
      phonological awareness (Truong et al., 2019).

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Four Universal Truths of Reading

2. The English language *is not* a purely phonological!

- 1 letter grapheme: c a t. The sounds /**k**/ is represented by the letter **'c'.**
- 2 letter grapheme: l ea f. The sound /**ee**/ is represented by by the letters **'e a'.**
- 3 letter grapheme: n igh t. The sound /**ie**/ is represented by the letters **'i g h'.**
- 4 letter grapheme: th r ough. The sound /**oo**/ is represented by the letters **'o u g h'.**

➤ The English language includes over **300** ways of representing **44 sounds** using a series of different letter combinations (Uhry & Clark, 2005). In Italian there is no such ambiguity as just **33** graphemes are sufficient to represent the **25** phonemes.

➤ Therefore, **25%** of words are phonologically irregular
   (i.e. "debt", "yacht", "onion", etc..) or have one spelling but
   multiple meanings –*homonyms*– (i.e. "tear", "bass", "wind", etc.)

Summary: We need to develop **orthography!!**

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The Reading Brain: How Words are Assembled

3. Specific neuroimaging techniques have demonstrated that **phonological** processing and **orthographic** processing are a by-product of the functional integrity of the *temporal-parietal* junctures in the left hemisphere of the brain (Paz-Alonso et al., 2018; Glezer et al., 2016;Sandak et al., 2004; McCandliss & Noble, 2003).

Supramarginal Gyrus (Decoding)

Inferior Frontal Gyrus (Inner Articulation System)

Angular Gyrus (Orthography)

Superior Temporal Gyrus (Phonics)

Heschl's Gyrus (Phonemic Awareness)

Primary Visual Cortex (Striatum or Calcerine Fissure)

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Four Universal Truths of Reading

4. **Structured literacy** based on the science of reading should drive all intervention practices.

5 Big Ideas

COMPREHENSION (EF)

LANGUAGE (vocabulary)

FLUENCY (prosody)

PHONICS (synthesis & analysis)

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

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Subtypes of Dyslexia

1. **Dysphonetic Subtype –** great difficulty using phonological route in reading, so visual route to lexicon is used. These readers do not rely in letter to sound conversions, but rather over-rely on visual cues to determine meaning from print.

   Neuropsychological Significance: Left temporal-parietal gradient *(supramarginal gyrus)*.

Target Word:	Read As:
cat	*couch*
balloon	*ball*
jump	*gym*
ghost	*goat*

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Remediation Strategies for Dysphonetic Dyslexia

Over Age 12:   **Wilson Reading System**
     SRA Corrective Reading & REACH System
(Top- Down)   **Read 180**
     HOSTS
     Kaplan Spell/Read
     LEXIA Strategies for Older Students

Ages 7 - 12:   **ASDEC Language Foundations (Orton-Gillingham)**
     SRA Corrective Reading
     Earobics II
     LiPS
     LEXIA Primary Reading
(Bottom-Up)   **Horizons**

Under Age 7:   **Fast Forword II(Tallal)**
     Earobics I
     Phono-Graphix
     Saxon Phonics Program
     Success for All
     Ladders to Literacy
     Fundations
     Road to the Code
     SIPPS

     Scott Foresman Early Intervention Reading

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The Morphological Connection ("Top-Down")

Morpheme– the smallest meaningful component of a word that still conveys meaning. Examples include:

> **Prefixes:** *ante, extra, mis, para, pre, retro, super*
> **Suffixes:** *able, tion, ment, ness, ship, tude, ward, ible*
> **Latin Roots:** *cent, extra, hemi, meta, therm, ultra*

- Research suggests that children learn to <u>anticipate</u> words through a

combination of phonological, orthographic, and morphological strategies (Senechal & Kearnan, 2007).

- Knowledge about **morphological awareness** contributes to individual differences in reading and spelling that cannot be entirely attributed to orthographic and phonological processing.

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Subtypes of Dyslexia

2. **Surface dyslexia –** an over-reliance on sound symbol relationships as the process of reading never becomes automatic. These children break every word down to its phonological base, and read slowly due to poor **orthographic** perception and processing.

WORD		READ AS
island	→	izland
grind	→	grinned
listen	→	liston
begin	→	beggin
lace	→	lake

- Extreme difficulty reading words where phonemes and graphemes are not in 1 to 1 correspondence: **yacht**
                                                                debt

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Remediation of Surface Dyslexia

Over Age 12:   Academy of Reading
                    Wilson Reading System
                    Laubauch Reading Series
                    Read 180

Ages 7 – 12:   **Read Naturally**
                    Great Leaps Reading
                    Quick Read
                    RAVE-O
                    Fast Track Reading

Under Age 7:   Destination Reading
                    Reading Recovery
                    Early Success
                    Fluency Formula

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Subtypes of Dyslexia

3. <u>Mixed Dyslexia</u> **-** severely impaired readers with characteristics of both **phonological** deficits, as well as **orthographical** deficits. These readers have no usable key to unlocking the reading and spelling code. Very bizarre error patterns observed.

<u>WORD</u>	<u>READ AS:</u>
Advice	Exvices
Correct	Corex
Violin	Vilen
Museum	Musune
Possession	Persessive
Material	Mitear

* Multiple breakdowns along many reading pathways. 23

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4 Remediation Strategies for Mixed Dyslexia

(1) **Multiple Programs** - An eclectic and approach capitalizing on the particular strengths of the child. Consider using a multi-sensory type of **Orton-Gillingham** program, coupled with a fluency model such as **Read Naturally,** and the computerized models of **Read 180**.

(2) **Top Down Strategies** – Often atypical development mapping individual sounds to the visual word form association areas.

(3) **Socioeconomic Status -** is a very strong predictor of reading skills due primarily to the home literacy environment. Therefore, schools need to provide more reading opportunities.

(4) **Motivation and Confidence** –Great Leaps, Read Naturally, etc. tend to give immediate feedback.

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4 Components of Reading Comprehension

1. **Content Affinity** - attitude and interest toward specific material.

2. **Working Memory** - the ability to temporarily suspend information while simultaneously learning new information. The amount of memory needed to execute a cognitive task.

3. **Executive Functioning** - the ability to self-organize verbal information to facilitate recall.

4. **Language Foundation** – vocabulary knowledge is vital for passage comprehension.

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Reading Comprehension Interventions

1. **Stop & Start Technique** – student reads a passage out loud and every 30 seconds "stop" to ask questions.
2. **Directional Questions** – ask questions at the beginning of the text instead of the end.

3. **Read Aloud** – reading out loud allows student to hear their own voices and facilitates working memory.

4. **Story Maps** – pre-reading activity where graphic organizers are used to outline and organize the information.
5. **Active Engagement** – encourage active, not passive reading, by having children take notes or putting an asterisk next to important information. Also, multiple colors for highlighting.

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Slide 27

far — feiferassessmentofreading™

Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., ABPdN

- A **neurodevelopmental** assessment of reading
- Pre-K to College (Ages 4-21)
- Normative sample included 1,074 students
- 15 subtests in complete battery
- Diagnoses **4 subtypes** of reading disorders
- Includes the FAR-S dyslexia **screening** battery
- Total Far index score and 4 Reading index scores

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Slide 28

far — feiferassessmentofreading™

Index	Subtest	Grade range	Approximate administration time in minutes
Phonological Index (PI)	**Phonemic Awareness (PA)**	PK to college	5 to 10
	Nonsense Word Decoding (NWD)	Grade 2 to college	2
	Isolated Word Reading Fluency (ISO)	K to college	1
	Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	K to college	2 to 3
	Positioning Sounds (PS)	PK to college	3 to 4
Fluency Index (FI)	**Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN)**	PK to college	2
	Verbal Fluency (VF)	PK to college	2
	Visual Perception (VP)	PK to college	1
	Orthographical Processing (OP)	K to college	8
	Irregular Word Reading Fluency (IRR)	Grade 2 to college	1
Comprehension Index (CI)	**Semantic Concepts (SC)**	PK to college	5 to 8
	Word Recall (WR)	PK to college	4
	Print Knowledge (PK)	PK to Grade 1	4
	Morphological Processing (MP)	Grade 2 to college	7
	Silent Reading Fluency (SRF)	Grade 2 to college	8

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What is Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a broad-based term that refers to a specific learning disability in written expression. The term can include problems with letter formation, legibility, letter spacing, spelling, fine motor coordination, rate of writing, grammar and overall sentence production (Chung et al., 2020).

Developmental Dysgraphia refers to difficulty acquiring writing skills despite adequate learning opportunities and cognitive skills.

▪ Younger children tend to have deficits with the motoric aspects of the written stroke, whereas older children struggle with more cognitive-linguistic elements of writing (Biotteau et al., 2019).

Acquired Dysgraphia refers to a learned skill (writing) being disrupted by a specific injury or degenerative condition.

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Warning Signs of Developmental Dysgraphia

Age Group	Signs of Dysgraphia
Preschool aged children	• Awkward pencil grasp • Lack of hand dominance • Fatigues quickly when writing • Letters poorly formed or inversed • Difficulty writing within margins • Overflow motor movements • Does not anchor paper with opposite hand.
Elementary aged students	• Illegible or messy handwriting • Letter transpositions • Mirror writing • Switching between cursive and print • Slower paced writing • Poor spelling impacts legibility. • Frequent erasures
Secondary school students	• Poor planning and organizational skills. • Discrepancy between verbal output and • written output. • Difficulty keeping pace when note-taking. • Does not separate ideas by paragraph. • Paragraphs do not flow from general to • specific. • Grammar impacts legibility.

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Types of Writing Genres

- **Persuasive** – change the reader's point of view in order to affect the reader's action.
- **Expository**– explaining objective information to enhance the reader's overall understanding.
- **Experiential** – to describe a personal experience or narrative to others.
- **Prosaic** – to convey a particular sentiment or emotion from a personal experience. Often written in a metaphoric style inclusive of poem, lyric, or sonnet.
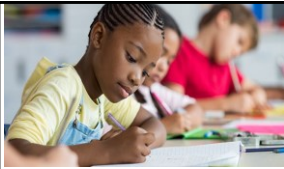- **Analytical** – heavily structured style of writing where scientific scrutiny involved.

32

32

Presentation Outline

Why Literacy Matters
Defining Dyslexia
Four Universal Truths of Reading
Subtypes of Reading Disorders & Interventions
Defining Dysgraphia
➡ **Cognitive Constructs and Writing**
3 Subtypes of Written Language Disorders
Strategies for Success

33

Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Attention: (Selective & Sustained)

- Poor planning
- Uneven tempo
- Erratic legibility
- Inconsistent spelling
- Poor self monitoring
- Impersistence

Executive Attention
Cingulate Gyrus
Visual Orienting
Visual Features
Space   Words
Working Memory

BRAIN REGION - **Anterior Cingulate Gyrus**
Effort control and top-down attention
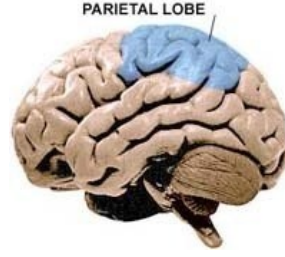
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Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Spatial Production

- Poor spatial production
- Poor visualization
- Poor margination
- Organization problems
- Uneven spacing
- Poor use of lines

PARIETAL LOBE

BRAIN REGION –Right Parietal Lobe

35
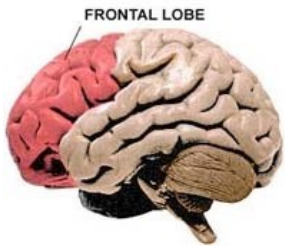
35

Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Sequential Production

- Poor connected writing
- Letter reversals
- Organizational deficits
- Lack of cohesive ties
- Deficits in working memory, especially with ADHD kids, leads to sequential dysfunction.

FRONTAL LOBE

BRAIN REGION – Left Prefrontal Cortex

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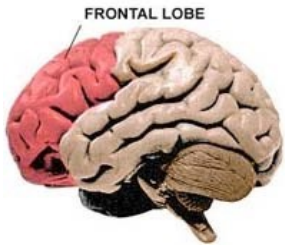
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Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Working Memory Skills

- Poor *word retrieval* skills
- Poor spelling
- Poor grammar rules
- Loss of train of thought
- Deterioration of continuous writing
- Poor elaboration of ideas
- Cortical mapping of language is *distributed* throughout brain *(i.e. nouns vs. verbs)*

FRONTAL LOBE

> **BRAIN REGION – Semantic memories stored in temporal lobes. Retrieved by frontal lobes**

jack hirose

37
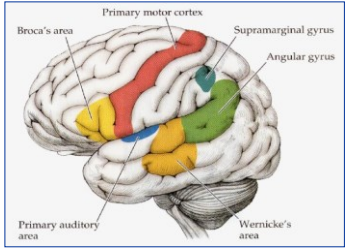
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Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Language:

- Poor vocabulary
- Lack of cohesive ties
- Poor grammar
- Simplistic sentence structure
- Left hemisphere stores language by converging words into semantic baskets; right hemisphere excels in more divergent linguistic skills (simile and metaphor).
- Writing genre impacts retrieval!

Primary motor cortex
Broca's area
Supramarginal gyrus
Angular gyrus
Primary auditory area
Wernicke's area

> **BRAIN REGION – Temporal Lobes**

jack hirose

38
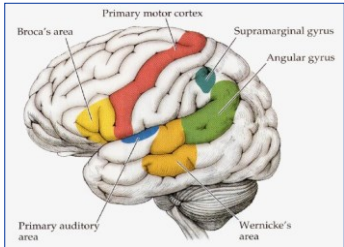
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Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Intelligence

- Concrete ideation
- Poor development of ideas
- Poor audience awareness
- Weak opinion development
- Simplistic sentence structure

BRAIN REGION – Inferior Parietal Lobes

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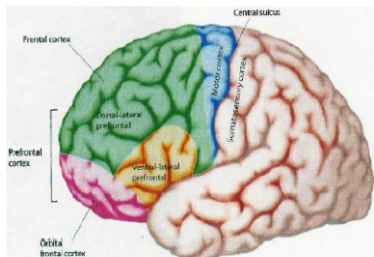
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Cognitive Constructs and Written Language

Executive Functioning

- Organize and plan ideas
- Self monitor
- Task initiation
- Sustain attention to task
- Difficulty making cognitive shifts from one topical area to another.

BRAIN REGION – Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex

40

40

Cognitive Constructs and Written Language: Motor Output Speed (Pollock et al, 2009)

Grade Levels	Handwriting Speed
Grade 1	15 - 32 letters per minute
Grade 2	20 - 35 letters per minute
Grade 3	25 - 47 letters per minute
Grade 4	34 - 70 letters per minute
Grade 5	38 - 83 letters per minute
Grade 6	46 - 91 letters per minute

BRAIN REGION – Basal Ganglia

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Presentation Outline

Why Literacy Matters
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Defining Dysgraphia
Cognitive Constructs and Writing
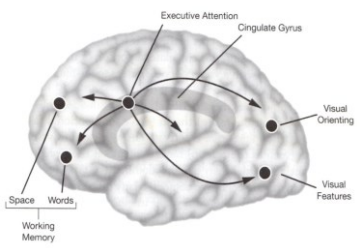➡ *3* **Subtypes of Written Language Disorders**
Strategies for Success

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42

3 Subtypes of Written Language Disorders

(1) Graphomotor Dysgraphia - apraxia refers to a wide variety of motor skill deficits in which the voluntary execution of a skilled motor movement is impaired.

a) **Premotor cortex -** plans the execution of a motor response.

b) **Supplementary motor area –** guides motor movement.

c) **Cerebellum -** physical act of sequencing fine motor movements becomes less effortful and more reflexive.

d) **Basal Ganglia –** procedural memory and automaticity of handwriting and gross motor movements.

43

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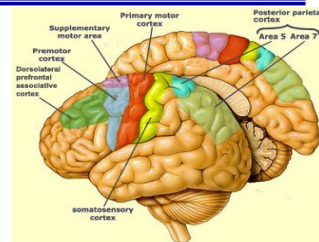
3 Subtypes of Written Language Disorders

(2) Dyslexic Dysgraphias: (Spelling Miscues)

a) **Dysphonetic dysgraphia –** the hallmark feature of this disorder is an inability to spell by *sound* due to poor *phonological* skills. There is often an over-reliance on the visual features of words when spelling *(i.e " sommr" for "summer")* .

b) **Surface dysgraphia -** a breakdown in the *orthographic* representation of words. Miscues made primarily on phonologically irregular words *(i.e. "laf" for "laugh"; "juse" for "juice"; "mite" for "mighty")*.

c) **Mixed Dysgraphia -** characterized by a combination of both *phonological* errors and *orthographical* errors depicting faulty arrangement of letters and words *(i.e "ceshinte" for "kitchen")* .

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3 Subtypes of Written Language Disorders

(3) Executive Dysgraphia - an inability to master the implicit rules for grammar which dictate how words and phrases can be combined. Deficits in *working memory* and *executive functioning* in frontal lobes hinders output.

- Word omissions
- Word ordering errors
- Incorrect verb usage
- Word ending errors
- Poor punctuation
- Lack of capitalization
- Oral vs. written language discrepancy

45

45

Features of Executive Dysgraphia

a) **Verbal Retrieval Skills** – the frontal lobes are critical in retrieving words stored throughout the cortex, often stored by semantic categories.

b) **Working Memory Skills** – helps to recall spelling rules and boundaries, grammar rules, punctuation, and maintaining information in mind long enough for motoric output.

c) **Organization & Planning –** syntactical arrangement of thought needed to sequence mental representations.

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Presentation Outline

Why Literacy Matters
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➡ **Strategies for Success**

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10 Research Based Strategies (Graham & Perin, 2007)

(1) Writing Strategies *(effect size .82)*

(2) Summarization *(effect size .82)*

(3) Collaborative Writing *(effect size .75)*

(4) Specific Product Goals *(effect size .70)*

(5) Word Processing *(effect size .55)*

(6) Sentence Combining *(effect size .50)*

(7) Prewriting *(effect size .32)*

(8) Inquiry activities *(effect size .32)*

(9) Process Writing Approach *(effect size .32)*

(10) Study of Models *(effect size .25)*

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Graphic Organizers

Graphic Organizers – this involves a pre-writing activity whereby the student simply lists a word or phrase pertaining to the topic. An example may include a brainstorming a web:

CITIES

BUSINESS

SPORTS

Maryland

POLITICS

CROPS

49

49
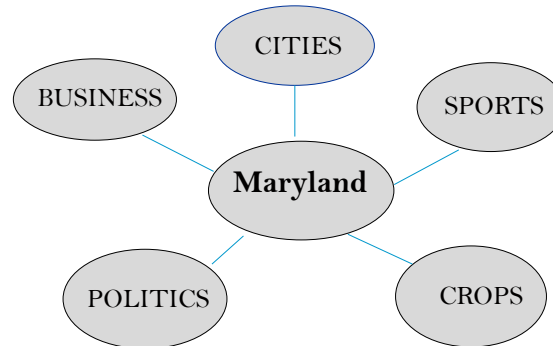
Self Monitoring Strategies

COPS strategy – a directional proof-reading strategy where the student re-reads a passage four times prior to completion.

1) **C**apitalize the first word of each sentence.

2) **O**rganize the information by reviewing topic sentences and double check paragraph breaks.

3) **P**unctuation miscues must be reviewed.

4) **S**pelling miscues must be reviewed.

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Strategies for Secondary Students
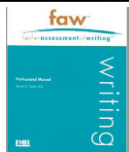
- **Inspirations –** teaches how to craft concept maps, idea maps, and other visual webbing techniques to assist in planning, organizing, and outlining. Very effective word predictive software.

- **Kurzweil Technology -** adaptive technology to further practice grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Voice activated software also an option.

- **Journal or Diary –** can be a fun and effortless way to practice writing on a daily basis.

- **Keyboarding -** speed up output to reduce pressure from working memory skills to retain information over longer periods of time.

- **Livescribe -** a *"smart"* pen which would both record lecture information in the class, as well as transcribe notes to a computer screen. Smart pens allow students to better organize their notes.

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5 Steps for Executive Dysgraphia (Ray, 2001)

(1) **Prewriting -** use graphic organizers.
(2) **Drafting –** use model to take notes and model how to organize in a text form using topic sentences.
(3) **Revising –** second draft emphasizing content, and elaboration of ideas and making connections.
(4) **Editing –** re-read for capitalization and punctuation errors.
(5) **Publishing –** peer assisted strategies and teaching students to give and receive feedback base upon a writing rubric.

52

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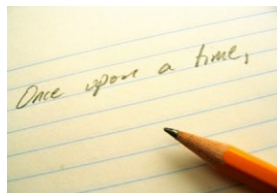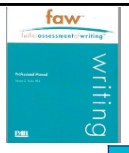
Feifer Assessment of Writing (FAW)

- A neurodevelopmental assessment of written language disorders.
- Pre-K to College (Ages 4-21)
- 12 subtests in complete battery/10 subtests core
- Diagnoses <u>3 subtypes</u> of writing disorders:
  - **1) Graphomotor Dysgraphia**
  - **2) Dyslexic-Dysgraphia**
  - **3) Executive Dysgraphia**
- Includes the FAW-S dysgraphia screening battery
- Yields a Compositional Writing Index (CWI)

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Feifer Assessment of Writing (FAW)

Index	Subtest	Grade range	Approximate administration time in minutes
Graphomotor Index (GI)	Alphabet Tracing Fluency (ATF)	PK to college	1 – 2
	Motor Sequencing (MS)	PK to college	3 – 4
	Copying Speed (CS)	K to college	3 – 4
	Motor Planning (MP)	PK to college	2 – 3
Dyslexic Index (DI)	Homophone Spelling (HS)	K to college	3 – 4
	Isolated Spelling (IS)	PK to college	4 – 6
Executive Index (EI)	Executive Working Memory (EWM)	Grade 2 to college	10 – 12
	Sentence Scaffolding (SS)	Grade 2 to college	13 – 16
	Retrieval Fluency (RF)	PK to college	7 – 8
	Expository Writing (EW)	Grade 2 to college	6
Compositional Writing Index (CWI) *(optional)*	Expository Writing (EW)	Grade 2 to college	6
	Copy Editing (CE) *(optional)*	Grade 2 to college	4
	Story Mapping (SM) *(optional)*	Grade 2 to college	6

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54

27

Let's Stay Connected

Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., ABPdN
Licensed Psychologist

Workshops: feifer@comcast.net

Books: www.schoolneuropsychpress.com
@schoolneuropsychpress

far
feifer**assessment**of**reading**™

fam
feifer**assessment**of**mathematics**™

faw
feifer**assessment**of**writing**™

Scan the QR code to learn
more about each test

SCAN ME

55

55

Executive Skill Dysfunction: Understanding and Assessing Challenges in Children, Adolescents and Young Adults

Peg Dawson, Ed.D., NCSP

dawson.peg@gmail.com

https://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com

1

Complete the Executive Skills Questionnaire

2

ACTIVITY

Choose one of your executive skill strengths (higher score). Talk about how that helps you do your job.

Choose one of your executive skill challenges (lower score). Talk about how that affects your work.

3

What's Executive Function—and Why Does It Matter?

The skills that make up executive function are better predictors of success than test scores, IQ, or socioeconomic status.

August 15, 2019

Edutopia

4

Introduction to the Field

Not a lot of consensus
- The name: executive functions vs. executive skills
- How many skills we're talking about:
- range = 1 – 33
- What the specific skills are

3 Key Concepts about Executive Skills

- What they are: brain-based skills that take a minimum of 25 years to reach full maturation.
- Until these skills are fully mature, it's the job of parents and teachers (and adults who work with kids) to act as surrogate frontal lobes.
- It is also the job of parents, teachers, etc. to ensure that kids grow their own executive skills.

7

What can the 13-year-old brain do?
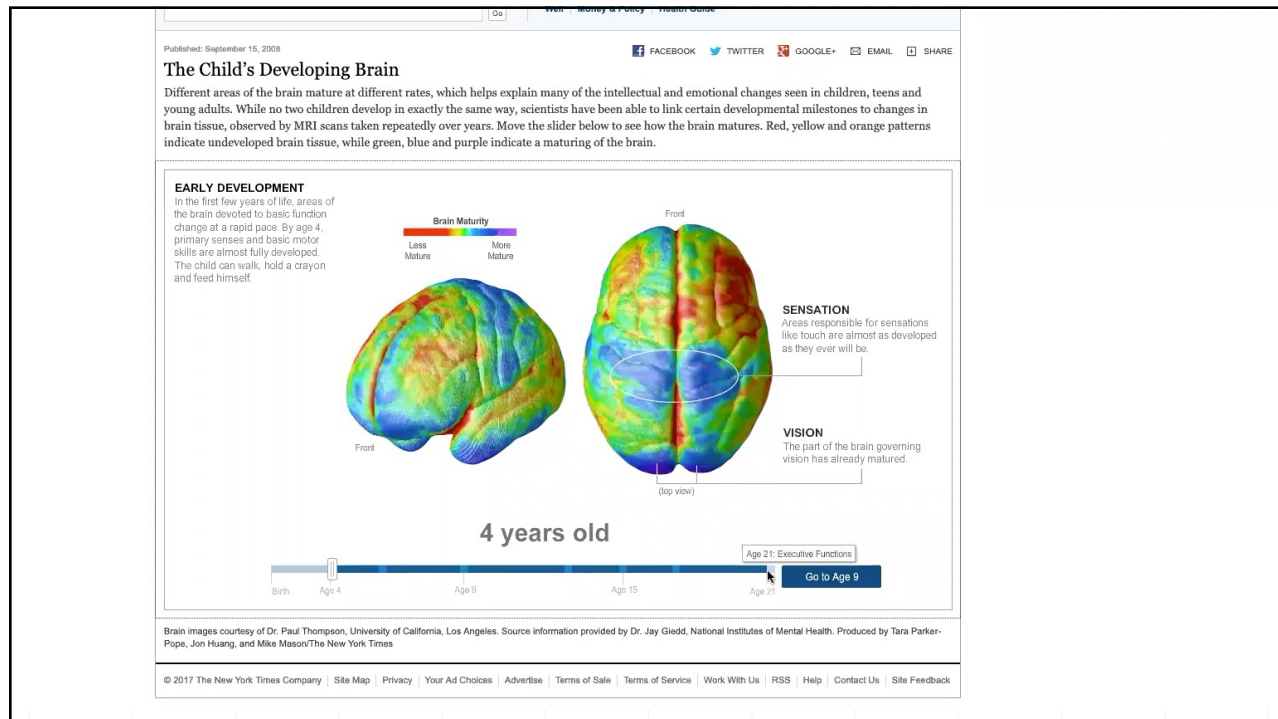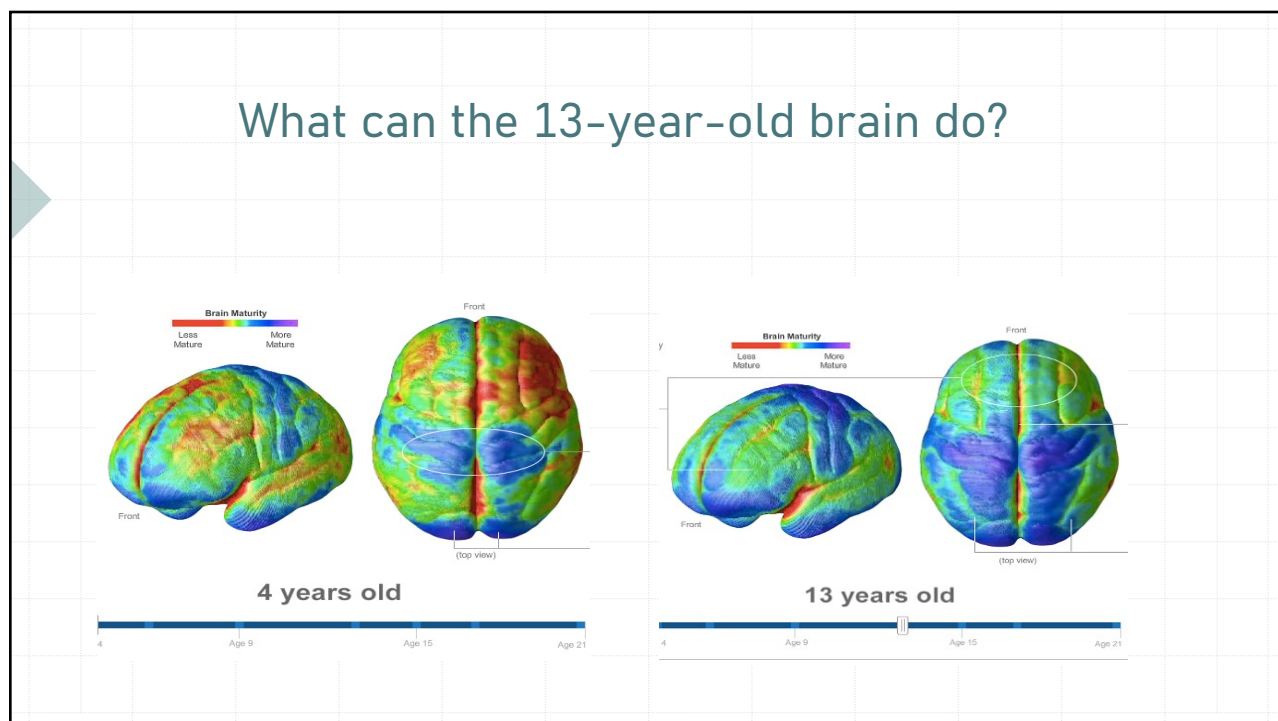
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What can the 13-year-old brain do?

13 years old

21 years old
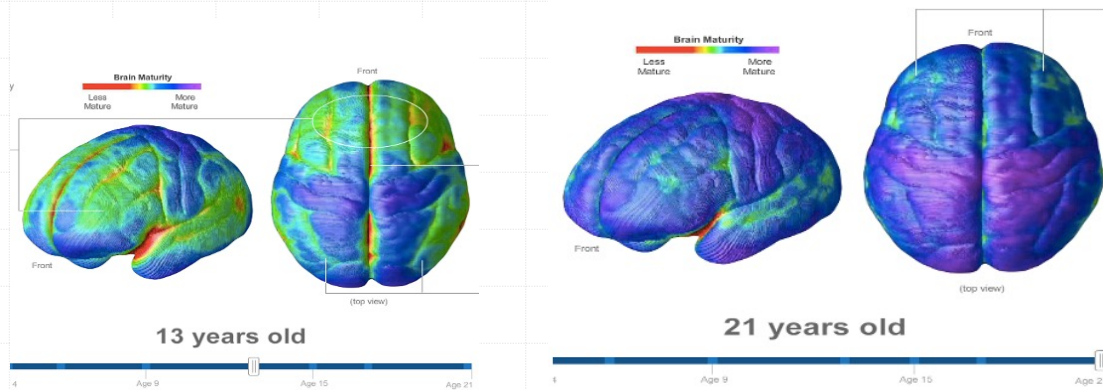
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Executive Skills that Underlie
School Success

Foundational Skills

- Response Inhibition
- Working Memory
- Emotional Control
- Flexibility
- Sustained Attention
- Task Initiation

Advanced Skills

- Planning/Prioritizing
- Organization
- Time Management
- Goal-Directed Persistence
- Metacognition

10

Strategies for Specific Executive Skill Challenges

11

Response inhibition

The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PnbKL3wuH4

12

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PnbKL3wuH4

13

Working Memory

The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.

14

Working Memory

- Do NOT rely on verbal instructions only—pair verbal instructions with visual cues whenever possible
- Talk with students about the strategies they use to remember things (explain offloading)
- When you do use verbal instructions,
  - ask a random student to repeat the instructions
  - cue students to write down their own reminders if they think they won't remember

15

Supports for students with weak working memory

16

8

Emotional Control

The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

17

Ask Kids What They're Feeling
(or identify their feelings for them)

Putting Feelings Into Words Produces Therapeutic Effects In The Brain

Date: June 22, 2007

Source: University of California - Los Angeles

Summary: A new brain imaging study by psychologists reveals why verbalizing our feelings makes our sadness, anger and pain less intense. A second study combines modern neuroscience with ancient Buddhist teachings to provide the first neural evidence for why "mindfulness" -- the ability to live in the present moment, without distraction -- seems to produce a variety of health benefits.

18

19

Consider this…

Marin encounters frequent homework challenges, particularly with math. She often forgets the instructions and gets angry when her mother suggests a process that doesn't match the one she was taught at school.

- What executive skills might be challenging for Marin?
- If you were working with Marin, what suggestions might you make to her mother or teacher?

20

Flexibility

The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

21

Sustained Attention

The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

22

Sustained Attention

- Movement breaks

23

Stamping Station

EASILY DISTRACTED

3. If this is a student with extra energy, set up a stamping station (stamp and stamp pad). Give the student an egg timer. He or she works as many problems as he or she can until the sands run out of the egg timer. Then the student gets up, walks over to the stamping station with his/her assignment, he/she stamps the assignment next to the last problem that he/she finished. Then goes back to desk, turns over egg timer and begins working again. When time runs out, goes to stamping station, stamps last problem that he/she completed, goes back to desk and continues this until he/she completes the assignment. To modify this, you can tell them they need to turn over the egg timer once or twice before they stamp it or you can use a different type of timer to give a longer work period. This is a great documentation tool.

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Sustained Attention

- Movement breaks

- Ask students to set incremental goals

25

Improving the Achievement, Motivation, and Engagement of Students With ADHD: The Role of Personal Best Goals and Other Growth-Based Approaches

Andrew J. Martin
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Australia Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 2013

Andrew J. Martin

Appendix A
Personal Best (PB) Goal Work Sheet
(Reproduced with permission from Lifelong Achievement Group — visit www. lifelongachievement.com to download)

A PB is where you aim to match or better a previous best performance. It can be a mark you're aiming for or you can aim to do your schoolwork or study in a way that is an improvement on last time or the way you usually do it.

A. My PB is a mark in_____What mark are you aiming for?_____

OR

B. My PB is a better way of doing my schoolwork or study in_____

The better way of doing things is:_____

Is this PB maintaining a previous best or improving on a previous best?   YES / NO
If NO, you need to develop a PB that does.

Do you believe you can reach this PB?   YES / NO
If NO, you need to develop a PB that you believe you can reach.

When do you plan to achieve this PB?_____

Describe the steps involved in reaching your PB	√ when achieved
1. First, I will	
2. Next, I will	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

☐ I believe I reached my PB   Evidence _____
☐ I think I just missed out   Because _____
☐ I didn't get close to my PB   Because _____
My next PB is: _____

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13

Sustained Attention

- Movement breaks

- Ask students to set incremental goals

- Talk to students about the strategies they use to help them screen out distractions or stick with tasks long enough to get them done

- Teach students to monitor whether they're paying attention

27

Attention Self-Monitoring
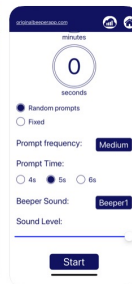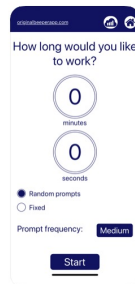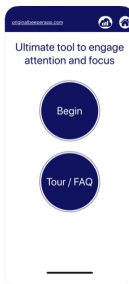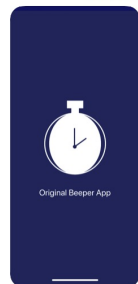
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Another hi-tech option: iConnect

- https://iconnect.ku.edu
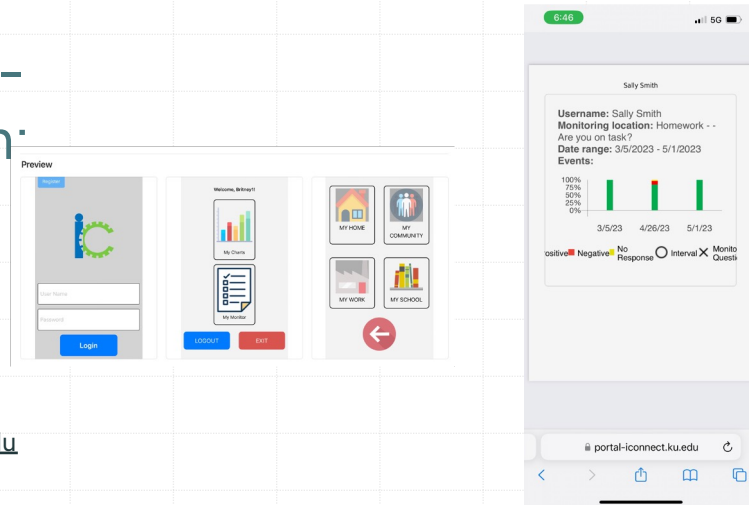
29

Efficacy of Attention Self-Monitoring

Rosenbloom, R., Wills, H. P., Mason, R., Huffman, J. M., & Mason, B. A. (2019). The effects of a technology-based self-monitoring intervention on on-task, disruptive, and task-completion behaviors for adolescents with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10 019-04209-4
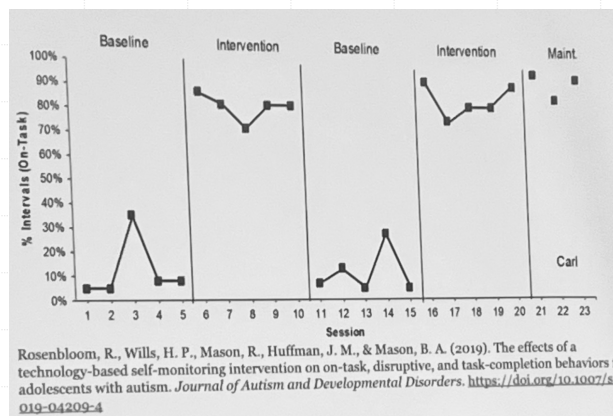
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Attention Self–Monitoring
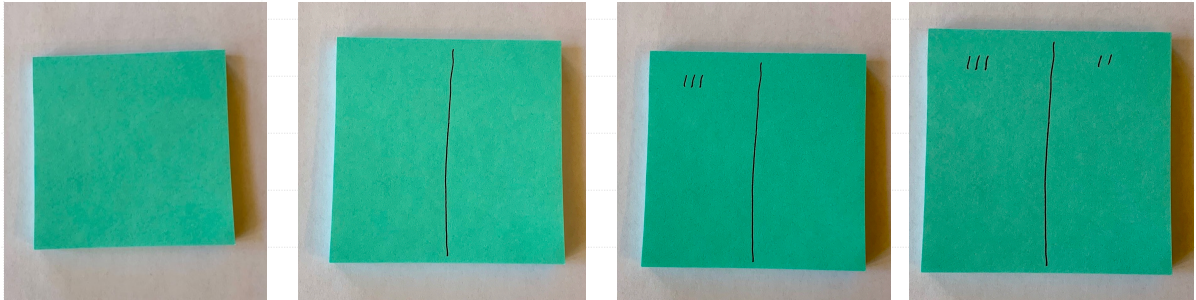
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Attention Self–Monitoring
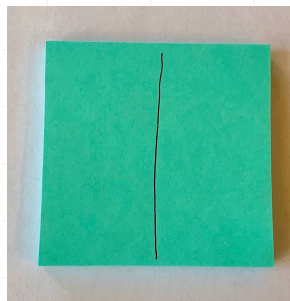
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Attention Self–Monitoring
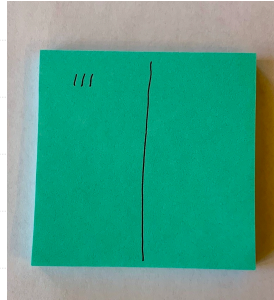
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Attention Self–Monitoring
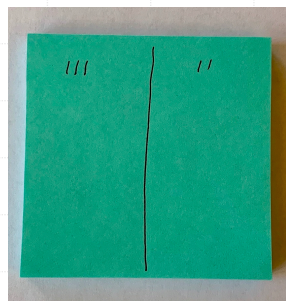
34

Task Initiation

The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

Task Initiation

- Teach kids to make a plan with a start time
- Keep the teaching task brief.
- Talk to students about the strategies they use to make themselves get started on things they don't want to do
- Help students figure out why they're procrastinating and come up with a strategy to overcome the barrier

Solving the Procrastination Problem

Task: _____   Date:_____

Obstacle	Strategy
I don't understand the assignment.	
I can't think of how to start the assignment.	
I could probably do the assignment but it will take a lot of work and just the thought of that hurts my brain.	
The task is way too boring for me even to contemplate doing it.	
This assignment is pointless. I would get nothing out of doing it.	
The conditions for working aren't perfect—when they are, I'll get started.	
I have way too many things to do and don't know how to prioritize my time.	
It's going to take way too long and I don't want to commit that amount of time.	
There are other things I'd rather be doing that are more fun or more important to me.	
Wait, what assignment? When I leave school at the end of the day I put school behind me (i.e., the cues that remind me to do schoolwork are missing).	
The assignment isn't going to affect my grade so why bother	
Perfectionism—I'm not going to start because I know I won't be able to do work that meets my (impossibly) high standard.	
I'm stressed out about other things (either internal or external) and can't focus because of these preoccupations. I'll do better if I wait until my life calms down.	
I'm too tired. I don't have the energy to do this now.	
I don't *think* I can do it—because I've always failed in the past—so why should I try?	
I'm so far behind now, I'll never catch up!	
I don't want to do this because if I accomplish this, I'm scared of what comes next.	

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Consider this…

Scott has trouble getting seatwork done in the time he is given. Writing assignments are particularly challenging. He stares at his paper for a long time, and even after the teacher prompts him to get to work, he still struggles. When the writing period is over, he's lucky if he's got two sentences on his paper, when the rest of the class seem to write two paragraphs easily.

- What executive skills might be challenging for Scott?
- If you were working with Scott's teacher, what suggestions might you make?

38

Planning/Prioritizing

The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.

39

A Template for Planning Long-term Projects

40

A Template for Studying for Tests

Studying for Tests

Test date: _____ Subject: _____

Check off the strategies you will use.

Passive strategies (use sparingly)	Active strategies (better)	Active strategies with feedback (best)
❑ 1. Reread text	❑ 7. Make study guide	❑ 13. Quiz myself with Quizlet/ study guide/flash cards
❑ 2. Reread notes	❑ 8. Make flashcards/Quizlet	❑ 14. Take practice test (check answers)
❑ 3. Highlight notes/text	❑ 9. Make concept maps	
❑ 4. Read study guide	❑ 10. Organize notes	❑ 15. Redo old tests or homework (check answers)
❑ 5. Rewrite notes	❑ 11. Complete review packet (no answers)	❑ 16. Have someone else quiz me
❑ 6. Read/watch Spark Notes, Kahn Academy, etc.	❑ 12. Attend review session or study group	❑ 17. Complete review packet (check answers)
		❑ 18. Meet 1:1 with teacher

❑ 19. Other: _____

Study Plan

Date	Day	Which strategies will I use? (Write number)	How much time for each strategy?
	4 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
	3 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

From The Work-Smart Academic Planner, Revised Edition. Copyright 2017 by The Guilford Press.

Studying for Tests (cont.)

Date	Day	Which strategies will I use? (Write number)	How much time for each strategy?
	2 days before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
	1 day before test	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

Posttest Evaluation

How did your studying work out? Answer the following questions:

1. What strategies worked best?

2. What strategies were not so helpful?

3. Did you spend enough time studying? Yes No

4. If no, what more should you have done?

5. What will you do differently the next time?

41

Organization

The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

42

Organization

- Create systems of organization (notebooks, desk, classroom)
- Explicitly teach those systems
- Supervise students to make sure they use those systems

43

Time Management

The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

44

What do I need to do?	How long do I think it will take?	Check when done.	How long did it take?
Step 1 Decide your position (for or against being a Loyalist)	7.5 minutes		
Step 2 Plan (complete your organizer)	60 minutes (1.5 writing classes)		
Step 3 Write your introduction	20 minutes		
Step 4 Body Paragraphs (3--2 argument/1counter-argument)	80 minutes		
Step 5 Conclusion	20 minutes		
Step 6 Edit (peer edit/self -edit) and make corrections	40 minutes		
Step 7 Print and turn in	5 minutes		

Assignment Name:_____ Due Date: May 2, 2018
(6 writing blocks)

Developed by Lisa Berthiaume

45

Consider this…

Julie attends a middle school committed to project–based learning. She loves being able to explore topics of interest to her, but she invariably scrambles to meet deadlines. She has great ideas but has trouble translating those ideas into a product that meets the teacher's expectations. The night before the project is due features meltdowns that put the whole family on edge.

- What executive skills might be challenging for Julie?
- If you were working with Julie, what suggestions might you make?

46

Goal-Directed Persistence

The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.

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Classroom example: Focusing on goal-directed persistence

One teacher's experience with a challenging class:

- This class had multiple failures at the end of Semester 1, the lowest percentage of work turned in, and was consistently 1 day behind my other 5 classes. This class was off task constantly and my other class management strategies that work beautifully with everyone else completely fail for this group of students.

- Before you introduced me to goal-directed persistence, I was having a conversation with a team member on what to do with this class and that I had to do something but didn't know what. I felt like a lost puppy thirsty for water while walking in the desert.

48

- It has now been 9 weeks since you introduced me to the idea of goal-directed persistence. The results I have seen in this class are phenomenal. They are now the most on-task class with the highest percentage work completion rate and 90% of the students consistently come to class prepared. For Quarter 3, I had no failing grades in this class and 85% of that class achieved their grade goal on their summative.

- Some of the things I am doing consistently to keep them aware of their behaviors and how they impact reaching or not reaching their goal, is I have them write their grade goal on their desk with dry erase marker. It serves as a consistent reminder throughout our 1 hour 35-minute class period of what choices they need to make to achieve their goals. We also talk about things that could hinder them from reaching their goal and how they can overcome those things. This has made a difference for these students; not only their learning environment, but their confidence in their own ability to succeed!

~Sandy Moldanado

6th grade teacher, Imagine International Academy of North Texas

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End of year follow-up

- Students completed a short end of year reflection and one question I asked them was what learning strategy was the most helpful in achieving their goals, the response I received the most was writing their grade goal on their desk daily. How fantastic for educators to have a seemingly small task that makes such a positive impact!

  I had 1 out of 22 students fail for this second semester, and it was because he didn't turn in work (he passed the first semester), and I had no repeat failures from the first semester. The first semester I had 4 out of 22 fail my class. One of my students that received a 50 in the first semester was able to achieve his grade goal of an 87 in second semester!!!! This is one of my students that has ADHD and dyslexia!! He tested at a 3.5 reading level first semester and brought it up to a 5.5 by our last benchmark. Whoo Hoo!!!

50

Metacognition

The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?").

51

What happens when you ask students to annotate if their metacognitive skills are not well developed?

52

Slide 53

What happens when you ask students to annotate if their metacognitive skills are not well developed?

53

Slide 54

What happens when you ask students to annotate if their metacognitive skills are not well developed?

54

Use Self–Reflections to Encourage Metacognition

Weekly Sustained Attention Work Report

Week 1:

Task:	Effort Rating (1- easiest task, 10- hardest task):	Sustained Attention Rating (1- very distracted, 10- totally focused):

If you were distracted during this task, what could you have done better to maintain focus?

If you were totally focused during this task, what did you do or why do you think you were so focused?

55

Consider this…

Mark is an 8th grader who is always in danger of failing at least one class each marking period (and the class may change from term to term). He plans to go to college but when his parents get on his case, his typical answer is, "8th grade doesn't count. I'll work harder next year when it matters." His parents feel like they have to micro–manage him just to make sure he passes all his classes.

- What executive skills might be challenging for Mark?

- If you were working with Mark, what suggestions might you make to his parents—or how might you address this with Mark?

56

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- Parent and teacher interviews

- Behavior rating scales

- Formal assessment

- Behavior observations

- Informal assessment

57

ASSESSMENT OF EXECUTIVE SKILLS

Behavior Rating Scales

- Child Behavior Checklist/Teacher Report Form. (ASEBA.org)

- Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function–2 (BRIEF–2). Available from PAR (parinc.com).

- ADHD Rating Scales–V. (guilford.com)

- Brown ADD/Executive Function Scales.(pearsonclinical.com)

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ASSESSING EXECUTIVE SKILLS

Informal Measures

- Parent interview (look for specific examples of problems in areas likely to be affected by executive skill deficits, including problems with homework, chores, following directions, social interactions, organizational skills, etc.).
- Teacher interviews (again, look for specificity of examples in relevant areas, e.g., following complex directions, task initiation, handling long-term assignments, response to open-ended tasks, social interactions, responses to classroom/school rules, etc.).

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| Name: _____ | Person(s) Interviewed: _____ |

PRESENTING CONCERNS:

- **Possible tests**

SCHOOL HISTORY:

Academic—
Behavioral/Social—
Previous evals/teacher concerns—
Special Ed or 504—
How does the child feel about school?

HOME ISSUES:

HOMEWORK/EXECUTIVE SKILLS:

Daily routines (morning, bedtime, etc.)—
Chores—
Mood/behavior/fears/anxieties—
Sleep issues—
Sensory issues (appetite, clothing, stimulation)—
Medical issues—
Siblings—
Friends—
Spare time—
Any organized activities—
Family history of related problems?
Other family issues (conflicts, significant events)—
Previous/current counseling—

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Limitations of Formal Assessment

Feature	Executive skill affected
Examiner cues child to begin	Task initiation
Tasks are brief	Sustained attention
Examiner's presence communicates that performance is being monitored	Task initiation, sustained attention, goal-directed persistence
Most standardized tests involve closed-ended tasks (i.e., 1 correct answer)	Flexibility, metacognition

Limitations of Formal Assessment

The most complex cognitive task within any psychologist's repertoire is less complex than real world demands on executive skills, and there is no way of determining with any certainty how well these tests map on to the real world.

Thus, in the parlance of neuropsychologists, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

We can impose executive
skill instruction and
strategies on kids

OR

we can help students figure out
how to grow their own
executive skills—we call this a
student–centered intervention

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For interventions, research shows that ones thought up by adults to help adolescents often don't work. Young people should have the space to develop new ideas and put them in practice themselves. That is something I have also learned over time — if adolescents can invent their own approach, it is much more likely to work.

Evelyn Crone,
Developmental Neuroscientist
Leiden University,
The Netherlands

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How to implement a
student–centered intervention

1. Start by identifying the student's strengths/interests..
2. Describe the problem behavior or the problem situation.
3. Identify the executive skill(s) that might be contributing to the problem.
4. Determine the setting in which the behavior is most likely to occur.
5. Decide what to address first. In other words, select one setting or activity or change one small part of the student's behavior that, if successful, would lead you to say, "This is better."

65

How to implement a
student–centered intervention

6. Obtain buy-in from the student:
   - Describe the problem in a non–judgmental way.
   - Talk about why it's a problem and what positive effect might come from trying to change the behavior.
   - You might ask the student to observe another student in the class who handles the situation successful and then have them share their observations with you.
   - Ask the student if they're willing to work with you to come up with a strategy to solve the problem.

66

How to implement a
student-centered intervention

7. With the student, brainstorm possible strategies for handling the problem.
   - Think about environmental modifications that might work.
   - Talk about whether there's an incentive that might make it easier to work on improving the skill.
   - Consider ways to briefly practice the skill.
   - If the student can't come up with ideas on their own, make a few suggestions and see if they're willing to choose one to try.

8. Decide on a way to measure progress (e.g., chart, graph, checklist, behavior count, rating scale, tracking grades on tests or assignments).

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How to implement a
student-centered intervention

9. Come up with a game plan for implementing the intervention
   - Walk through the steps from start to finish (mentally, verbally or physically rehearse it).
   - Check in with the student just before the target situation.
   - Prompt during the target situation if necessary.
   - Debrief afterwards (always find something to praise).

10. Continue as long as necessary; trouble-shoot when problems arise; change strategies if necessary.

68

Let's Practice

- Sarah is a social child with lots of friends. During whole-class discussion, she's engaged and frequently raises her hand to participate. She also does well with group activities, but she has the hardest time getting her seatwork done. When the teacher assigns a task, she seems to spend a great deal of time getting organized or she might start it right away, but she becomes quickly distracted. She might get up and sharpen her pencil, go to the bathroom, or talk to the other students sitting at her table. Sometimes she might overhear a conversation at the next table and feel like she has to participate in that discussion. The teacher feels like she's spending a lot of time cueing Sarah to get back to work or asking her how far along she is in her assignment. Even when she does cue her, the next thing she knows, Sarah is rummaging in her desk for something or has started talking to the girl who sits behind her.

69

RESOURCES

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/whlg4tmcusb1fle/AACpXFuquCJZwkD2PjptABb9a?dl=0
(ES Supplementary Materials)

70

Improving Executive Skills: Intervention and Coaching Strategies

Peg Dawson, Ed.D., NCSP

dawson.peg@gmail.com

https://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com

1

Where do these skills come from?

Are we born with them?

If not, how do we acquire them?

Are we taught them? By whom?

2

Where do these skills come from?

Do they just emerge gradually over time (the way vision does in infants)?

Are they learned through practice (the way infants learn to walk)?

Are they learned through modeling and shaping (the way language is learned)?

Or are they explicitly taught (the way reading is learned)?

3

Executive Skills that Underlie School Success

Foundational Skills

- Response Inhibition
- Working Memory
- Emotional Control
- Flexibility
- Sustained Attention
- Task Initiation

Advanced Skills

- Planning/Prioritizing
- Organization
- Time Management
- Goal-Directed Persistence
- Metacognition

4

5 Steps for Embedding Executive Skills into Classroom Lessons and Throughout the School Day

5

Steps to Follow

1. Familiarize yourself with what executive skills are and how they impact learning.

6

Steps to Follow

2. Learn to apply the executive skill terminology to student learning and behavior.

7

How we used to describe these kids...

Does this pupil have any illness or disability (either physical or mental)? ☐ No ☐ Yes— please describe:

What concerns you most about this pupil?
That he is lazy and not working to his potential.

Please describe the best things about this pupil:
He is sweet and has a good sense of humor.

8

Instead of calling students this:	Describe them as having challenges in this:
• Lazy	• Task initiation
• Unmotivated	• Sustained attention
• Not working to potential	• Response inhibition
• Disruptive	• Emotional control
• Oppositional	• Flexibility
• Messy	• Organization
• Tardy	• Time management
• Forgetful	• Working memory
• Absent-minded	• Goal-directed persistence
• Lacking a work ethic	

9

Steps to Follow

3. Introduce to students the vocabulary and concepts of executive skills.
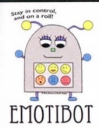
- Use "superheroes" (http://efs2therescue.com) or weekly lessons (Train Your Brain folder in Dropbox)
- www.efintheclassroom.net (Mountain View)
- My YouTube channel (Rachael Ramsey)
- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4kId0327lZdb3NBaWlrSkxxejQ?resourceke
y=0-AsEWT4RrqkD9LgAkr8i_jw&usp=sharing
    (Bedford ES materials)

10

Montcrest School
Key Elements

- Started with a small study group
- Whole school participation in design and implementation
- Use of "super heroes" to introduce each skill (available at http://efs2therescue.com)
- Emphasis on strategies, with options posted in classroom
- Included in report card, with self-assessment for older students

11

12

In your presentation, you mentioned the characters from EFs 2 the Rescue. I purchased *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents* to learn more about them and have visited the EFs website as well. I have been using those characters with my students ever since–they bring so much meaning to the definitions of the functions. I have overheard students saying comments like "You should have used Plan Man" when homework wasn't completed or "I had to use Flexi Lexi when my mom had told me I could play video games right after school, but then she stopped by the store first."
~Nicki Winter
www.brilliantstrengths.com

13

14

5/29/25

15

16

8
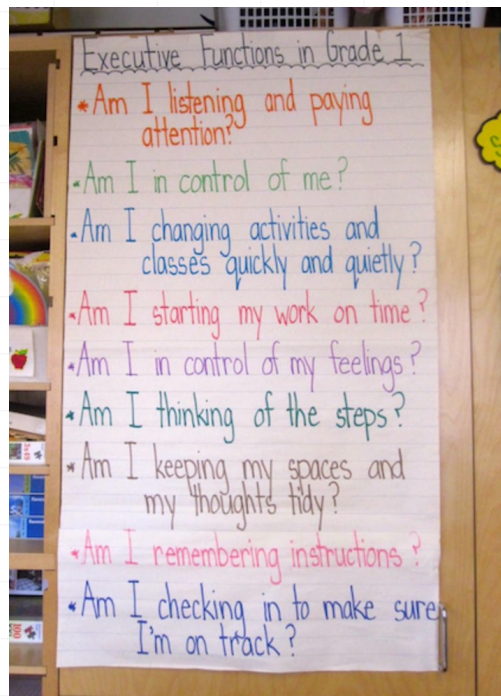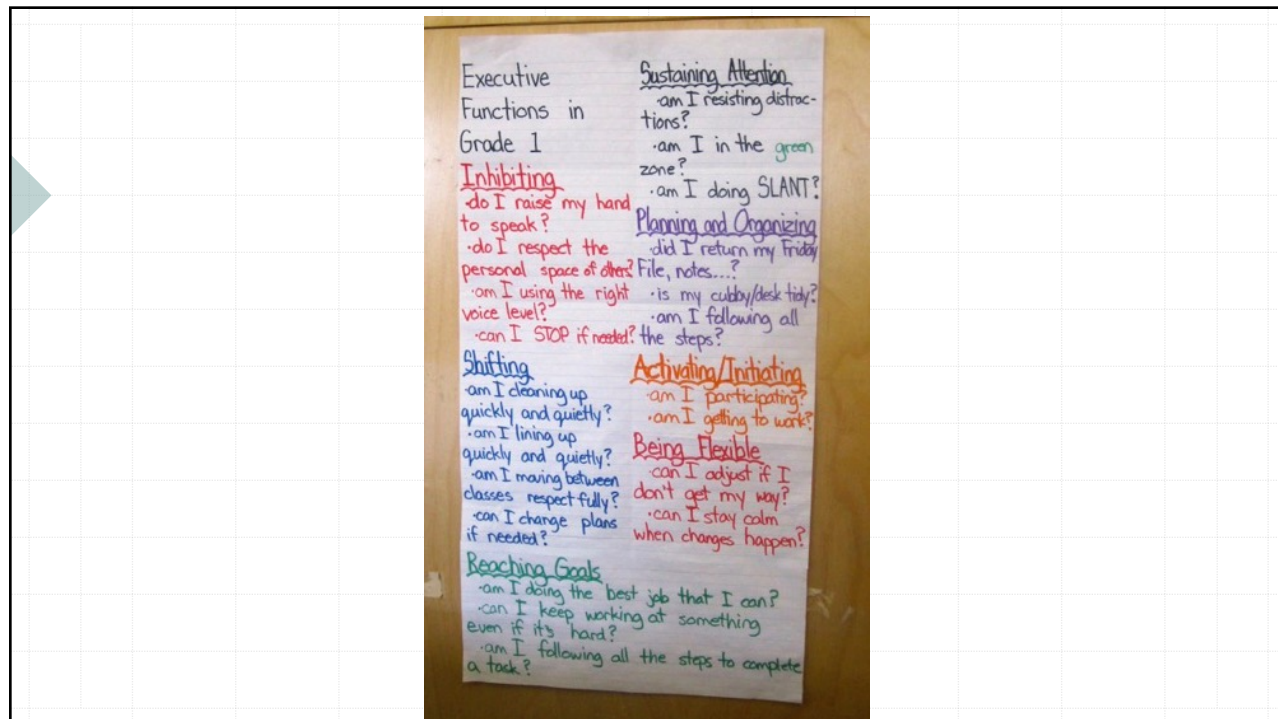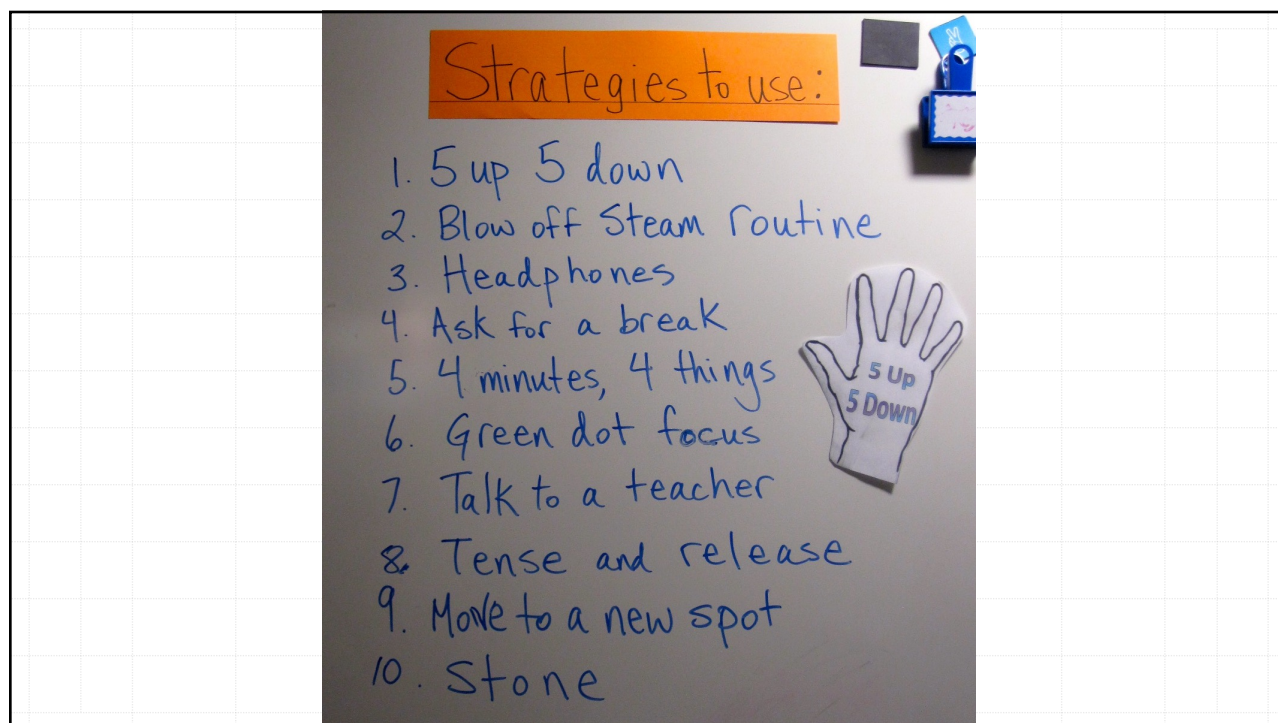
Mountain View School
Key Elements

- Started with a small study group
- Piloted with small group of teachers
- Thirty-minute mini-lesson on Monday
- Focus for the week*
- Friday re-visit
- 12/13 weeks for all lessons
- Within 3 years, adopted by the entire school

17

Ways to Give Students the Terminology and Concepts of Executive Skills: Classroom Posters

Walter Fitzgerald School, Fairfield CT
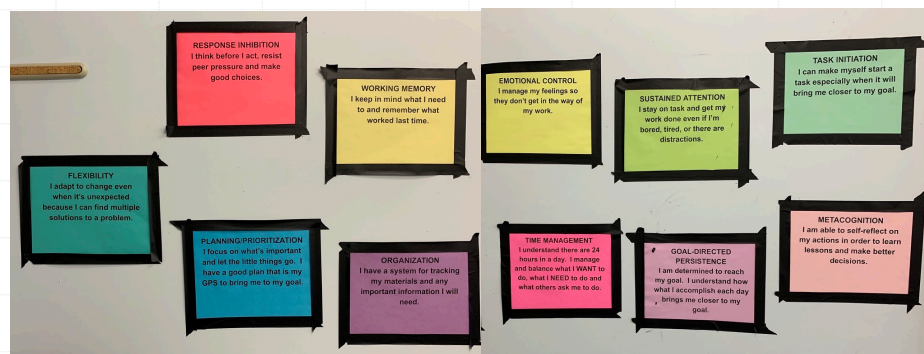
18

Posters can spark conversations

19

Desktop Strips with Terms and Definitions

- Source: Laurie Faith
- http://activatedlearning.org

20

Steps to Follow

4. Find ways to illuminate where in a student's life at home and at school executive skills present themselves and give students the opportunity to make these connections on their own.
   - Classroom lessons
   - Independent seatwork
   - In the cafeteria
   - In the hallways
   - On the school bus
   - Playing sports
   - With friends
   - After-school or summer jobs
   - Doing homework
   - Other situations at home (e.g., chores, getting along with parents or siblings)

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Steps to Follow

5. Incorporate executive skills into daily routines, lessons, classwork, and homework assignments. Be explicit with students about how the skill contributes to mastery of content and how they can identify strategies to overcome obstacles that may get in the way of using those skills effectively.

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Embed Executive Skills in Classroom Lessons

Describe	Identify	Identify	Decide on
Describe the lesson being taught.	Identify the executive skills the lesson requires students to use.	Identify potential obstacles that might prevent the student from using those skills effectively.	With the student, decide on a strategy to use to overcome the obstacle.
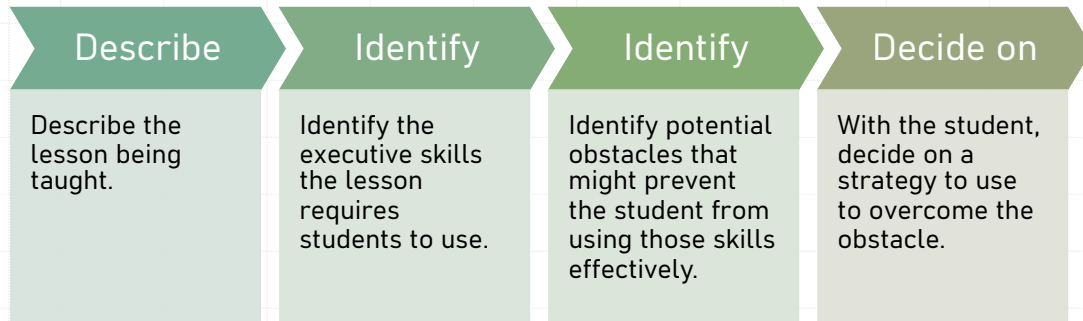
23

Examples

Lesson/ **Assignment**	Executive **Skill(s)**	Obstacle	Strategy
Math Subtraction with Regrouping	• Organization • Working Memory	• Poor spacing/messy handwriting • Forgetting steps	• Use large grid graph paper • Use checklist with each step numbered or color-coded
English Learning Vocabulary Words	• Working Memory • Metacognition	• Difficulty retaining meanings (ineffective study habits)	• Make up "silly sentences" for each word • Use flash cards– word on side 1, definition with cartoon drawing on side 2

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Clinical/Behavioral Examples

Problem Situation	Executive Skill(s)	Obstacle	Strategy
Fighting with older brother	• Emotional control • Response inhibition	• Brother "pushes her buttons"	
Plays video games instead of doing homework	• Response inhibition • Task initiation	• Can't say no when friends ask him to play • Can't stop once he's started playing	

25

One More Strategy: Barriers/Strategies Protocol

Created by Laurie Faith

http://activatedlearning.org

Problem situation:	
Barriers	Strategies

Here's our plan:

26

Using the Barriers/Strategies Form

- Identify a problem situation that the class is dealing with (e.g., arguments at recess, kids not doing homework, not transitioning smoothly between activities).

- Tell the class, "We have a problem we need to solve. I could suggest a solution, but I think it would work better if you helped me with this, because you might understand the problem better than I do, or you might have better ideas than I have for how to solve the problem."

- Briefly describe the problem and write it in the Problem Situation section of the chart.

Problem situation:	
Barriers	Strategies

Here's our plan:

27

Using the Barriers/Strategies Form

- Ask kids to suggest what's getting in the way or why the problem keeps coming up. List all their answers on the Barriers side of the chart. If you want to credit individual students with their ideas, you can write their initials after you write each barrier down.

- Now ask kids to suggest solutions to overcoming the barriers. Write these down on Strategies side, again crediting individuals with their ideas if you want to.

- Look over all the proposed solutions and decide on which one(s) you want to try. Write down the plan for implementing the solution in the bottom box of the chart.

Problem situation:	
Barriers	Strategies

Here's our plan:

28

14

Using the Barriers/Strategies Form

This same approach can be used with individual students or with parents and kids to address an issue that's a source of conflict (e.g., homework schedules or when parents and kids don't agree on privileges or responsibilities).

Problem situation:	
Barriers	Strategies

Here's our plan:

29

Examples of Problem Situations

- Being distracted during math work
- Not hearing or remembering instructions
- Forgetting homework
- Being late for school
- Not remembering to bring needed materials to class
- Slow to get ready for the class to begin

Problem situation:	
Barriers	Strategies

Here's our plan:

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Embed Executive Skills in Classroom Routines: 3 examples

Making homework plans

Bringing home necessary materials at the end of the day

Remembering to hand in homework

31

Teaching children to make homework plans

STUDY PLAN

Date: _____

Task	How long will it take?	When will you start?	Where will you work?	Actual start/stop times	Done (√)

32

If this is more than you want to do, try this

Ask kids to write down what time they're going to do the homework assignment and where they will do it...

On the assignment itself, or

In their assignment book, or

As an alarm in their smart phone

33

Embed Executive Skills in Classroom Routines

Problem situation	Executive Skill(s)	Routine	Estimated time required
Students forgetting to bring home homework materials	Working memory

Organization | List items on board that students need to bring home; pair them off so each student makes sure their partner has everything they need | 5–10 minutes |

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Embedding Executive Skills in Classroom Routines

Problem situation	Executive Skill(s)	Routine	Est. time required
Students forgetting to hand in homework	Working memory	Stand by door at end of class and accept completed homework.	3-5 minutes

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Peg's Take on the "Perfect" Intervention for Executive Skills

The perfect intervention to support executive skill development is one

- that takes no more than 5-10 minutes a day

- and that you're willing to do forever (or as long as it takes).

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EXAMPLE: Post outside the classroom what kids will need for the class that day
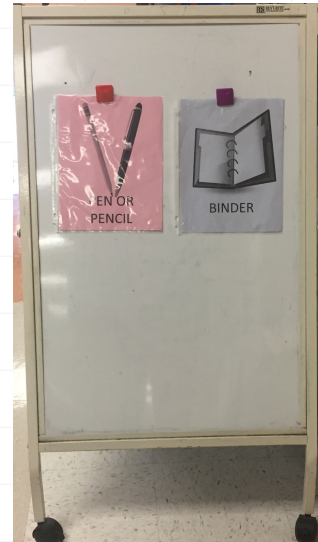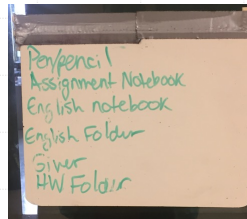
37

Additional Examples of Classroom Routines

- End class 5 minutes before the end of the period or day and make sure students write down homework assignments and put necessary materials in backpacks

  EXECUTIVE SKILLS: working memory, organization, planning

- Begin the school day with a class check-in (How are you feeling on a scale of 1 to 5?)

  EXECUTIVE SKILL: emotional control

- Have a homework collection routine

  EXECUTIVE SKILLS: working memory, organization

  - Write grade goal on desk with dry erase marker

  EXECUTIVE SKILL: goal-directed persistence

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Additional Examples of Classroom Routines

- Ask students to make a homework plan (what are you going to do, how long will each task take, where will you work?)

  EXECUTIVE SKILLS: working memory, task initiation, planning, time management

  - Ask students to make a "mini-plan" for what they will accomplish in class that day

  EXECUTIVE SKILLS: task initiation, sustained attention, planning, time management, goal-directed persistence

  - Ask students to evaluate how well they did on a test or assignment (what went well, what didn't go so well, what will they do differently the next time)

  EXECUTIVE SKILLS: goal-directed persistence, metacognition

39

COACHING: A VERSATILE STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING EXECUTIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

40

Our coaching philosophy

"Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them."

~Ted Wachtel

International Institute for

Restorative Practices

41

COACHING

An intervention strategy in which a coach (either an adult or a peer) works with a student (or group of students) to set goals (long-term, short-term, or daily) designed to enhance executive skills and lead to improved self-regulation.

42

Key components of coaching

- Motivational Interviewing
- Correspondence training
- Goal-setting
- Daily coaching sessions to make daily plans to achieve goals
- Teaching students self-management strategies

43

43

Key Communication Strategies

The communication skills that are integral to Motivational Interviewing work very well in the coaching process as well.

Reference:

Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2013). Motivational interviewing: Helping people change. New York: The Guilford Press.

44

OARS

- Open-ended questions
  - Affirmations
    - Reflections
    - Summarizing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3MCJZ7OGRk&t=18s

45

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Repeat in different words what you heard the student say or was trying to say. "The essence of a reflective listening response is that it makes a guess about what the person means." (Miller & Rollnick, p. 52).

Examples

- Student: "I can't stand that class."
- MI response: "You really don't enjoy being in that class."

- Student: "Homework is pointless. There are other things I'd rather be doing."
- MI response: "You don't feel you get anything out of doing homework and it keeps you from doing things that are important to you."

46

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

Questions that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no."

Examples

- How are things going in your classes?
- What do you think gets in the way of you doing your homework?
- Tell me about how you feel about your science grade.

HINT: Use reflections more than open-ended questions. Follow each open-ended question with 2-4 reflections.

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AFFIRMATIONS

Pointing out the student's strengths, efforts, achievements, and good qualities.

Examples

- "You are really insightful—your comments during class discussion always seem to move the conversation forward."
- "I love the way you can 'think outside the box!'"
- "The amount of time you spent studying for that test really paid off."

48

SUMMARIES

Focusing on the key points of a student's comments during a conversation. Summaries are an opportunity to periodically capture the essential features of the student's discussion, to connect these features and present them back to the student.

Example

- "You've told me that you think a lot of the homework is pointless and there are other things you'd rather spend your time doing. But you're also not happy with your grade or with the fact that your parents are on your back all the time."

49

Best Intro to Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing for School Counselors

by Reagan North

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

REAGAN A. NORTH
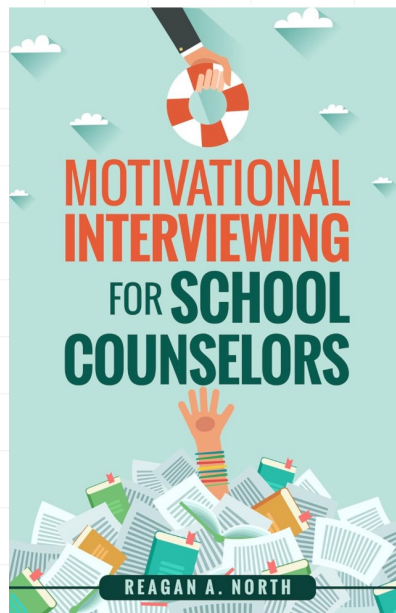
50

Correspondence training

Correspondence training is based on the notion (well-documented in research) that when individuals make a verbal commitment to engage in a behavior at some later point, this increases the likelihood that they will actually carry out the behavior.

51

51

Goal-setting

Extensive empirical research has documented the value of goal-setting in promoting high levels of performance—in both adults and children.

52

52

Coaching Ground Rules

- Must be voluntary with teenagers (exceptions may apply to younger students)
- Coaching sessions can be brief but ideally occur daily in the beginning
- Provide lots of support up front; fade gradually with success
- Build in ways to verify student reports

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Coaching Steps

- Step 1: Gather Background Information
- Step 2: Define the Long-Term Goal
- Step 3: Discuss Obstacles to Achieving Long-Term Goals
- Step 4: Develop Ways to Overcome the Obstacles
- Step 5: Begin to Develop SMART goal and Action Plan
- Step 6: Conduct Daily Coaching Sessions to Support the Action Plan
- Step 7: Collect progress monitoring data

54

Goal-Planning Template *(page 2 of 3)*

What are some of the potential obstacles that might prevent you from reaching your goal? How can those obstacles be overcome or avoided?

Potential obstacle	Ways to overcome the obstacle
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

What help do you need to achieve your goal? This might include classroom modifications, assistance from teachers, parents, or a "coach," or additional help in the resource room or from a tutor.

55

Creating a SMART Goal

SMART Goal Planner		
Specific	What EXACTLY do you want to happen?	
Measurable	I will know I have reached my goal when . . .	
Attainable	Can I reach my goal by the deadline?	How confident am I that I can reach my goal? 1 2 3 4 5 Not very So-so Very!
Relevant	Is this goal important to me?	How important is it to me to reach my goal? 1 2 3 4 5 Not very So-so Very!
Time-bound	I will reach my goal by:	

(continued)

56

Goal-Planning Template *(page 3 of 3)*

Action Plan for Achieving SMART Goal

Steps to follow to complete goal	Target completion date	Done!
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Action Plan Follow-Up

Did you follow the plan?	☐ Yes	☐ Partially	☐ No
What worked well?			
What didn't work so well?			
What's the next step?	☐ Continue plan	☐ Revise plan	☐ Make new SMART goal

57

RESOURCES

(ES Supplementary Materials)

58

Executive Skills Questionnaire —
Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

Step I: Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the Key on page 2 to determine your executive skill strengths (2-3 highest scores) and weaknesses (2-3 lowest scores).

Strongly disagree	1	Tend to agree	5
Disagree	2	Agree	6
Tend to disagree	3	Strongly agree	7
Neutral	4		

Item   **Your score**

1. I don't jump to conclusions   _____
2. I think before I speak.   _____
3. I don't take action without having all the facts.   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.   _____
5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.   _____
6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

7. My emotions seldom get in the way when performing on the job.   _____
8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.   _____
9. I can defer my personal feelings until after a task has been completed   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

10. I take unexpected events in stride.   _____
11. I easily adjust to changes in plans and priorities.   _____
12. I consider myself to be flexible and adaptive to change.   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

13. I find it easy to stay focused on my work.   _____
14. Once I start an assignment, I work diligently until it's completed.   _____
15   Even when interrupted, I find it easy to get back and complete the job at hand.   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

16. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon
      as possible.
17. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.   _____
18. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

19. When I plan out my day, I identify priorities and stick to them   _____
20. When I have a lot to do, I can easily focus on the most important things   .   _____
21. I typically break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines.   _____

                                                          YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

Strongly disagree	1	Tend to agree	5
Disagree	2	Agree	6
Tend to disagree	3	Strongly agree	7
Neutral	4		

Item   **Your score**

22. I am an organized person.   _____

23. It is natural for me to keep my work area neat and organized.   _____

24. I am good at maintaining systems for organizing my work.   _____

                                                    YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

25. At the end of the day, I've usually finished what I set out to do.   _____

26. I am good at estimating how long it takes to do something.   _____

27. I am usually on time for appointments and activities.   _____

                                                    YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

28. I routinely evaluate my performance and devise methods for
     personal improvement.   _____

29. I am able to step back from a situation in order to make objective
     decisions.   _____

30. I "read" situations well and can adjust my behavior based on the reactions of others.   _____

                                                      YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

31. I think of myself as being driven to meet my goals.   _____

32. I easily give up immediate pleasures to work on long-term goals.   _____

33. I believe in setting and achieving high levels of performance.   _____

                                                    YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

34. I enjoy working in a highly demanding, fast-paced environment.   _____

35. A certain amount of pressure helps me to perform at my best.   _____

36. Jobs that include a fair degree of unpredictability appeal to me.   _____

                                                    YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

KEY			
Items	**Executive Skill**	**Items**	**Executive Skill**
1 - 3	**Response Inhibition**	**4 - 6**	**Working Memory**
7 - 9	**Emotional Control**	**10 - 12**	**Flexibility**
13 - 15	**Sustained Attention**	**16 - 18**	**Task Initiation**
19 - 21	**Planning/Prioritizing**	**22 - 24**	**Organization**
25 - 27	**Time Management**	**28 - 30**	**Metacognition**
31 - 33	**Goal-Directed Persistence**	**34-36**	**Stress tolerance**

Strongest Skills   **Weakest Skills**

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Executive Skill Definitions

- **Response Inhibition:** The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it. In the young child, waiting for a short period without being disruptive is an example of response inhibition while in the adolescent it would be demonstrated by accepting a referee's call without an argument.

- **Working Memory:** The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future. A young child, for example can hold in mind and follow 1-2 step directions while the middle school child can remember the expectations of multiple teachers.

- **Emotional Control:** The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior. A young child with this skill is able to recover from a disappointment in a short time. A teenager is able to manage the anxiety of a game or test and still perform.

- **Flexibility:** The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions. A young child can adjust to a change in plans without major distress. A high school student can accept an alternative such as a different job when the first choice is not available.

- **Sustained Attention:** The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom. Completing a 5-minute chore with occasional supervision is an example of sustained attention in the younger child. The teenager is able to attend to homework, with short breaks, for one to two hours.

- **Task Initiation:** The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion. A young child is able to start a chore or assignment right after instructions are given. A high school student does not wait until the last minute to begin a project.

- **Planning/Prioritization:** The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important. A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.

- **Organization:** The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials. A young child can, with a reminder, put toys in a designated place. An adolescent can organize and locate sports equipment.

- **Time Management:** The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important. A young child can complete a short job within a time limit set by an adult. A high school student can establish a schedule to meet task deadlines.

- **Goal-directed persistence:** The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests. A first grader can complete a job in order to get to recess. A teenager can earn and save money over time to buy something of importance.

- **Metacognition:** The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?"). A young child can change behavior is response to feedback from an adult. A teenager can monitor and critique her performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.

- **Stress Tolerance:** the ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands. At the high school level, students who are strong in stress tolerance handle academic pressures more easily than those who are low in stress tolerance.

Practice Example

Sarah is a social child with lots of friends. During whole-class discussion, she's engaged and frequently raises her hand to participate. She also does well with group activities, but she has the hardest time getting her seatwork done. When the teacher assigns a task, she seems to spend a great deal of time getting organized or she might start it right away, but she becomes quickly distracted. She might get up and sharpen her pencil, go to the bathroom, or talk to the other students sitting at her table. Sometimes she might overhear a conversation at the next table and feel like she has to participate in that discussion. The teacher feels like she's spending a lot of time cueing Sarah to get back to work or asking her how far along she is in her assignment. Even when she does cue her, the next thing she knows, Sarah is rummaging in her desk for something or has started talking to the girl who sits behind her.

Intervention Planning Form

Student Strengths: Identify a few of the student's strengths or positive traits, particularly noting any executive skill strengths the student may have.	
Problem Description: Which problem behavior should be targeted?	
Executive Skill(s): What skills do you think might be involved?	
Setting: Where, when, or under what circumstances does the behavior usually occur?	All day long in every setting
Where to Start—If you could select one setting or activity or change one small part of the student's behavior that would lead you to say, "This is better," what would that be?	Math seatwork
Possible Strategies student might use. Think about environmental modifications, cues, visual imagery, checklists, smart phone apps, self-talk, mental rehearsal, etc. Examples of environmental modifications: • Change physical or social environment (e.g., add physical barriers, reduce distractions, provide organizational structures, visual cues, etc.) • Modify the task (e.g., make shorter, build in breaks, give something to look forward to, create a schedule, build in choice, make the task more fun, etc.) • Change the way adults interact with the student (e.g., rehearsal, prompts, reminders, coaching, praise, debriefing, feedback)	
Possible Motivator—What would help the student be more likely to try? Can you use a simple reward system? Alternate between preferred and non-preferred activities? Have student identify something to look forward to doing when the task (or a piece of the task) is done Other ideas?	
Visual to Show Progress—What visual feedback can you give the student so he/she can clearly see that progress is being made? Graph? Checklist? Behavior counts? Tracking grades on tests? Other ideas?	

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Visual to Show Progress—What visual feedback can you give the student so he/she can clearly see that progress is being made? Graph? Checklist? Behavior counts? Tracking grades on tests? Other ideas?	

PERSONAL GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLANNING

GOAL-SETTING. Start by thinking of a goal you'd like to work on. It could be a task you've been putting off, or a project you want to start or a behavior you want to change. If you can, identify more than one, so that you have a few to choose from.

Possible goals
1.
2.
3.

Select one of the goals and place an asterisk next to it. Now think about some of the potential obstacles that might prevent you from reaching your goal. How can those obstacles be overcome or avoided?

Potential obstacle	Ways to overcome the obstacle
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Creating a SMART Goal (See Unit 3 Secondary for More Information About This)

SMART Goal Planner		
Specific	What EXACTLY do you want to happen?	
Measurable	I will know I have reached my goal when . . .	
Attainable	Can I reach my goal by the deadline?	How confident am I that I can reach my goal? 1............2............3............4............5 Not very So-so Very!
Relevant	Is this goal important to me?	How important is it to me to reach my goal? 1............2............3............4............5 Not very So-so Very!
Time-bound	I will reach my goal by:	

Action Plan for Achieving SMART Goal

Steps to Follow or Tasks to Accomplish to Complete Goal	Target Completion Date	Done!
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Oppositional, Defiant and Explosive Behaviours: Transforming Challenges for Long-Term Success

Dr. Caroline Buzanko
drcarolinebuzanko.com
caroline@korupsychology.ca

KORU
FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY

PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY

https://rebrand.ly/parentinganxietypresurvey

KORU
FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY

PILOT STUDY!

parents of the year

OVERPOWERING EMOTIONS
with Dr. Caroline Buzanko

https://parentsoftheyear.buzzsprout.com/

rebrand.ly/OverpoweringEmotionsPodcast

Developing a personal action plan

What traps do I need to get out of?	How can I improve my approach for effective communication?	What can I do proactively?	What can I start collaboratively problem-solving?	What I can do to strengthen our relationship?

You have 5000 days to transform a life

Every interaction you have with a student goes into this mosaic

Laying the Foundation

- Strengths-based
- Collaborative
- Prevention focused
- Holistic

Developmentally Appropriate Behaviours

Preschoolers	Grade school	Early Adolescence	Teens
• Argue • Demanding • Independence • Say "No!" • Test limits • Act babyish • Some tantrum • Minor aggression • Jealousy, worries • Know-it-all	• Want more freedom but need help • Struggle with failure • Support to manage big emotions • Poor verbal impulse control • Test limits • Tantrums • Dramatic • Complaining	• Attitude • Mild opposition • Social skills trouble • Don't think of consequences of actions • Argumentative • Push against/argue about rules • Disrespectful • Blame others	• Experimenting • Minor rebellion • Control for autonomy • Resistance to authority • Moody • Noncompliant, Defiant • Emotionally distant • Impulsive and risk taking • Dismissive • Misread social cues

---

Warning! 100% obedience comes at a great cost

Importance of acting out
- Essential for development & learning
- Learn about themselves & the world
- Boosts independent thinking
- Helps form identity
- Boosts emotional regulation
- Empowering
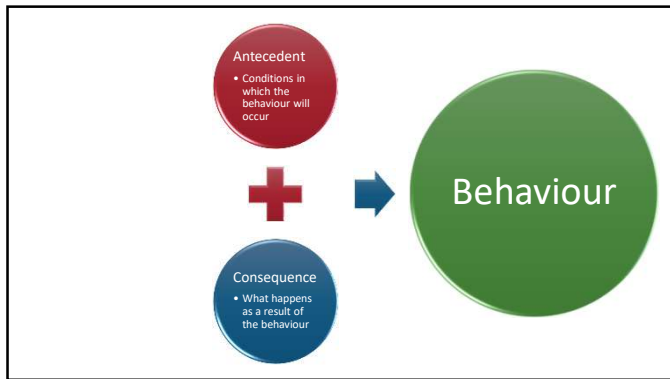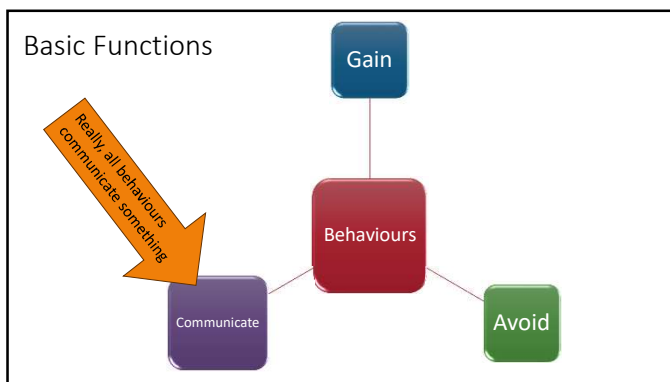- Stand up for themselves

---

Warning! 100% obedience comes at a great cost

Problem with compliance
- Stifles development
- Creates followers
- Don't think for themselves
- Leads to anxiety, vulnerability, and lack of self-identity
- Limits individuality
- Easily manipulated
- Erodes sense of self
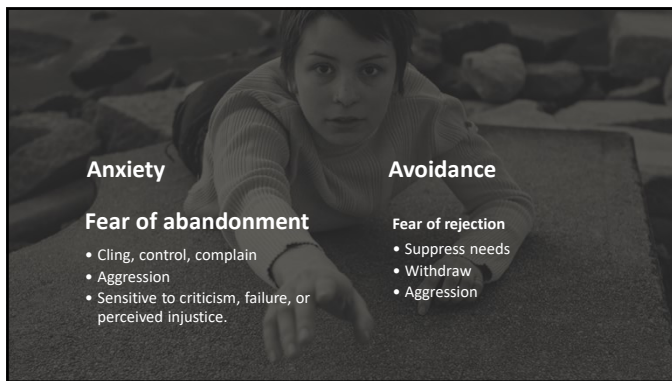
Basic Functions

Really, all behaviours communicate something

Gain

Behaviours

Communicate

Avoid

Emotions Lead to Behavioural Responses

Anger → Assert, defend

Fear → Fight, Flee, freeze

Joy → Connect, engage

Shame → Avoid

Sadness → Support, withdrawal

Excitement → Attend, explore
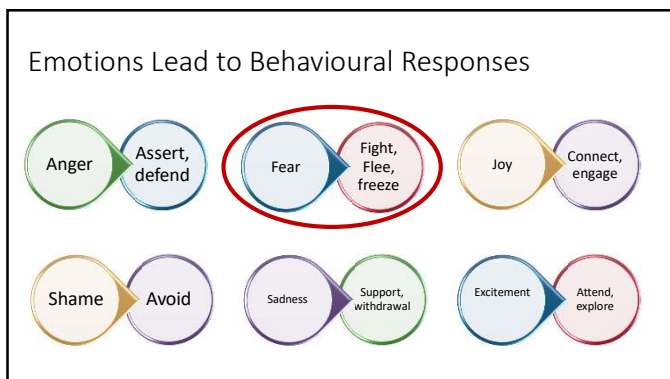
Anxiety

Fear of abandonment
- Cling, control, complain
- Aggression
- Sensitive to criticism, failure, or perceived injustice.

Avoidance

Fear of rejection
- Suppress needs
- Withdraw
- Aggression

Feeling like they don't belong = Stress = Danger! = Threat response

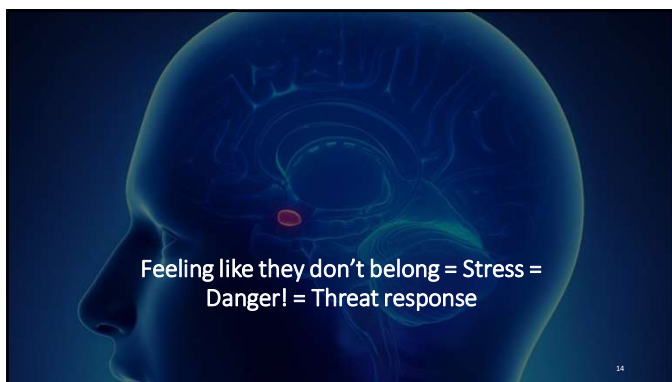ODD vs. Anxiety?

ODD or Trauma?

- Changes in brain development
  - Disrupt emotional regulation and executive functioning, heightened stress responses
    - Hypervigilance or overreacting to perceived threats
    - Emotional outbursts or withdrawal
    - Increased likelihood of behaviours as coping mechanisms

- Difficulty with trust and forming secure relationships.
  - Difficulty following rules or responding to authority.

Trauma Related Behaviours

Predictable outcome = Safety for the nervous system

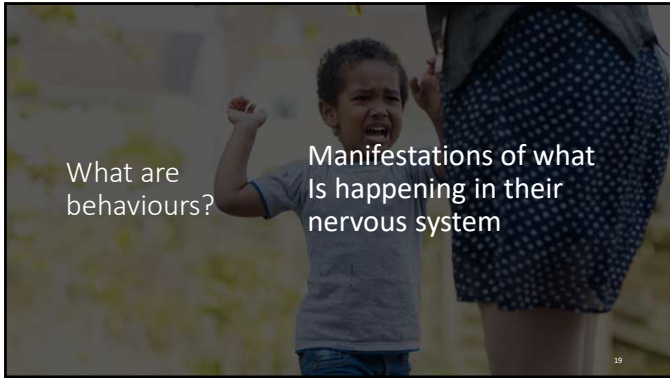- Relationships are unpredictable!
- Getting close is vulnerable & uncomfortable
  - Easier to disrupt the relationship
- Distracts from uncomfortable feelings
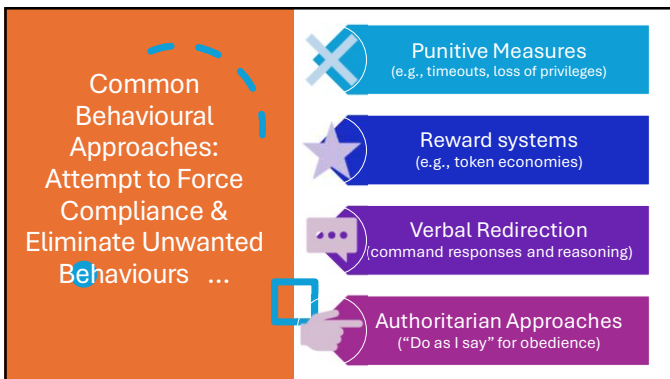- Less vulnerable

Behaviours adaptive for them

They learned to be <u>tough</u>

- To get love, a need met, or support ... because they don't know how to get it any other way
- To protect themselves from *perceived* lack of safety

What are behaviours?

Manifestations of what Is happening in their nervous system

19

Can Only Change Behaviour if They/their Nervous System is Feeling Safe

Common Behavioural Approaches: Attempt to Force Compliance & Eliminate Unwanted Behaviours ...

Punitive Measures
(e.g., timeouts, loss of privileges)

Reward systems
(e.g., token economies)

Verbal Redirection
(command responses and reasoning)

Authoritarian Approaches
("Do as I say" for obedience)

Slide 1

....Without understanding WHY the behaviours are happening in the first place

- Do not address the underlying emotional needs or skill deficits.
- May increase power struggles and escalate behaviours.
- Can damage the relationship and lead to mistrust.
- Reinforce negative behaviours
- Lack long-term effectiveness
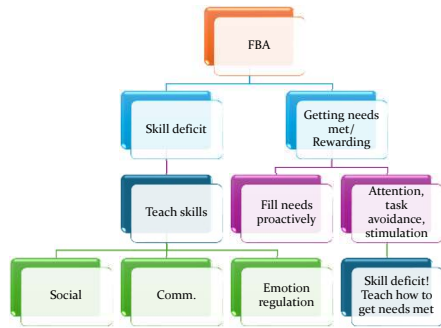- Impacts self-esteem

Slide 2

Unfortunately,

When we take behaviours at face value, we miss the source.

We often escalate the behaviour if we're only giving the child attention when there is a problem behaviour

Slide 3

Behaviours:
A puzzle to be solved
vs.
a problem to eliminate

No bad kids!!! *What are they defending?*

```
                    FBA
         ┌───────────┴───────────┐
    Skill deficit          Getting needs
                             met/
                           Rewarding
         │              ┌──────┴──────┐
    Teach skills    Fill needs     Attention,
                    proactively      task
                                   avoidance,
                                  stimulation
    ┌────┬────┴────┐        │          │
  Social  Comm.  Emotion          Skill deficit!
               regulation         Teach how to
                                  get needs met
```

Brain in high stress state = amygdala kicks in and becomes a stop sign for Information

➢ Intense emotions
➢ Behavioural and emotional outbursts
➢ Impulsivity
➢ Rigidity
➢ No self-reflection
➢ Unable to take perspectives
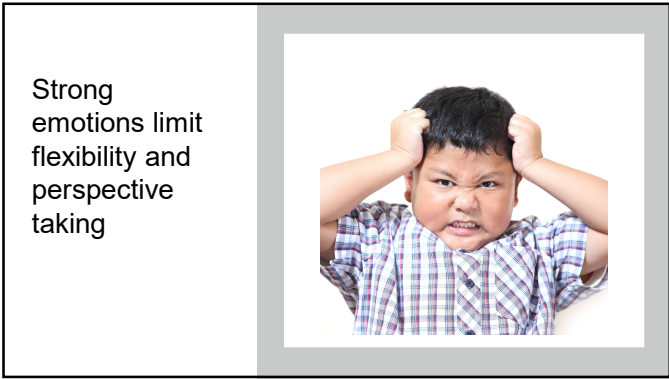➢ Disengagement

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Misbehaviour

- Aware of behaviour and rules
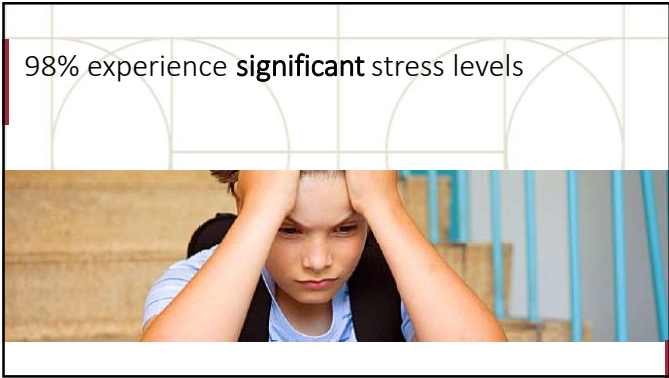- Within their capacity to act differently

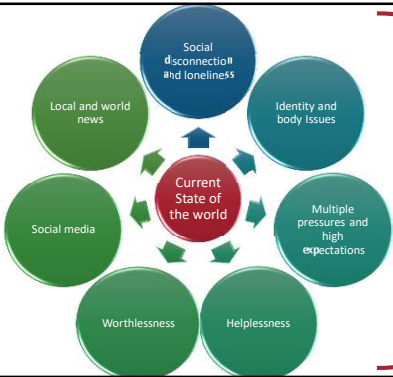**Stress behaviour**

- None of these capacities

Strong emotions limit flexibility and perspective taking

98% experience **significant** stress levels

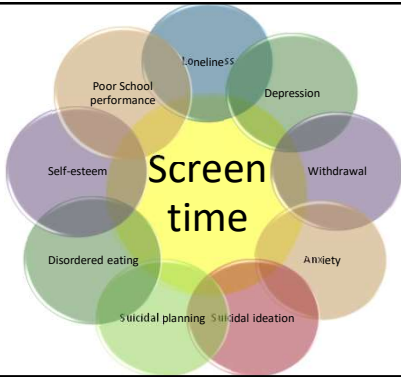Behavioural & Emotional Disorders are on the Rise...

Far more:
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-harm
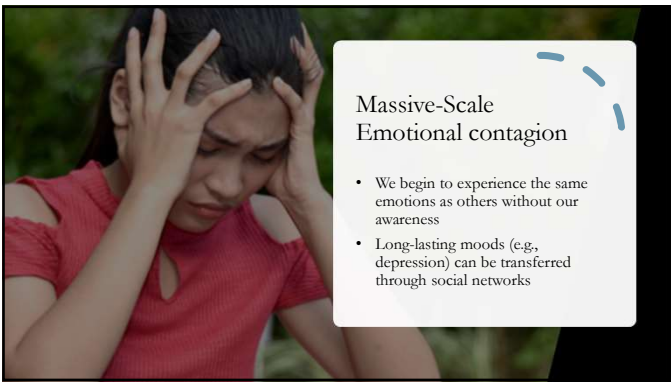- Suicide
- Disruptive Behaviours

Than any other generation

Major Psychological Risk Factor

- Impairs resilience
- Contributes to everything we worry about as parents

Screen time

Loneliness
Depression
Withdrawal
Anxiety
Suicidal ideation
Suicidal planning
Disordered eating
Self-esteem
Poor School performance

Disrupts connections. **Especially** family connections.

Massive-Scale Emotional contagion

- We begin to experience the same emotions as others without our awareness
- Long-lasting moods (e.g., depression) can be transferred through social networks

Bullying doesn't happen privately anymore

- Sending unsolicited and/or threatening e-mail.
- Encouraging others to send e-mail or to overwhelm the victim
- Posting/spreading rumours.
- Making defamatory comments online
- Sending negative messages
- Sexual remarks
- Posting the victim's personal information
- Hate speech
- Impersonating the victim online
- Harassing the victim
- Leaving abusive messages online, including social media sites
- Sending the victim pornography or other graphic material that is knowingly offensive
- Creating online content that depicts the victim in negative ways
- Trolling
- Cyberstalking
- Hate raids

Poor self-regulation because resources used up

- Poor emotion regulation
- Increased emotional reactivity
- Proactive aggression
- Anti-social behaviours

Digital Immigrants vs. Digital Natives

- Hard to detach = chronic stress
- Shame & stigma If not connected
- No issue big enough to risk being disconnected

No exceptions:
ALL screen time is linked to less happiness.

- More screen time =
 - School struggles
 - Loneliness
  - Depression
  - Suicidal thinking

Recommended Guidelines

<2	2-5	Elementary	High school
NO screen time	30-60 min.	1 hour (<2 at most)	<2 hours
Turn screens off completely!	Co-watch	Co-watch	Still co-watch!

Australian Department of Health; Canadian Paediatric Society, Public Health Agency of Canada, American Academy of Pediatrics

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Not just about reducing screens! Creating Balance
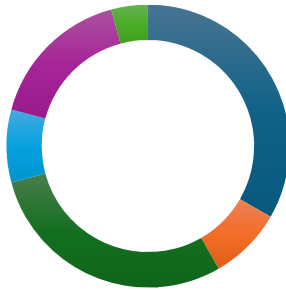
Legend: ■ Sleep ■ Exercise ■ School ■ Face-to-face connection ■ Daily developmental tasks ■ Gaming

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Adult Traps
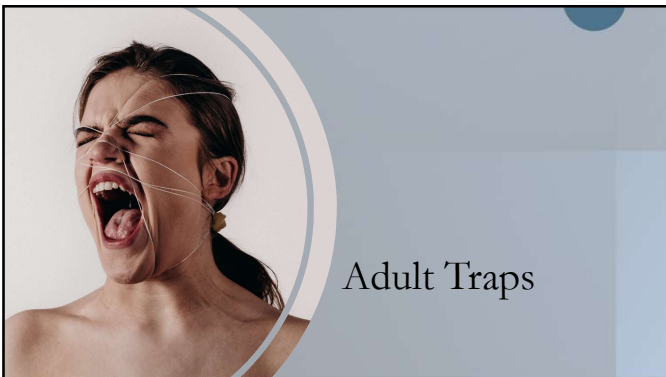
Whole Body Listening

Whole Body Listening = compliance-based one-size-fits-all listening expectations.
- Marginalizes neurodivergent behaviours
- Increases anxiety, shame, and dysregulation for children who listen differently.
- Fails to recognize that many children focus best when moving or engaging differently.

Over-Nagging and Unrealistic Demands

- We place more demands on children than adults
- Constant correction and nagging can erode relationships and discourage autonomy
- Would we treat our coworkers or friends the same way?

How much feedback would you give this new dad if he was a student?

The things that often frustrate others

Are actually some of their greatest strengths.

Fixing	Correcting	Controlling	Reminding
Persuading	Pushing	Punishing	Directing
Lecturing	Arguing	Confronting	Threatening
	Talking	Labelling	

They hear "You are a failure."

They don't hear "*I love you, and I'm trying to help.*"

"There's a reason why western kids are so bad"

- Fixing
- Persuading and pushing
- Punishing
- Directing
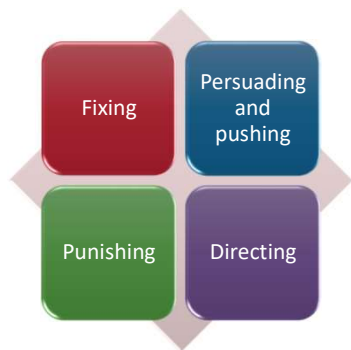
We Punish A Lot

Limited effectiveness in behaviour change

- Increased aggression, avoidance, delinquent behaviours, and school dropout
- Higher re-offense rates
- Negative impact on academic achievement & social success
- Does not teach skills
- Damage to adult-child relationships
- Contributes to long-term negative consequences

Unhelpful Interactions can Create Loneliness

- Adding stress
- Failing to meet their needs
- Unwittingly responding in punishing ways, even when trying to be supportive

Adult emotion-related behaviours

Adaptive child emotion outcomes ↑

Safe environment	Criticizing
Supports	Minimizing
Validates	Punishing
Perspective taking	**Own emotion dysregulation**
Own emotion regulation	

Child emotion dysregulation ↓

Warning!

AVOID TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Not always only the child's problem or behaviour that needs to be solved

Numerous factors influence the ability to cope

Child
• Coping & Self-regulation
• Self-confidence
• Social Skills

Family
• Parenting
• Relationships
• Connections

Community
• Connections with peers
• Educational settings
• Healthy risk-taking opportunities

Society
• Policies
• Values
• Legislation

The best interventions are the ones that you implement before behaviours happen – at the level of relationship and environment. You're already there!

Relationship

Environment

Avoid Counterproductive Approaches!

Lecturing	• Proactively establish expectations & calmly remind them
Power struggles	• Pre-established expectations, active listening, choices • Privacy!
Arguing	• Stay calm and assertive
Confrontation	• Wait until calm & offer invitation • Establish regular meeting times

Avoid Counterproductive Approaches!

Threatening	• Clear, concise, consistent logical/natural consequences proactively established
Unhelpful communication	• Validate their feelings • Active listening & collaboration
Inconsistency & Snap decisions	• Consistently enforce rules and apply consequences
Labelling	• Focus most on adaptive behaviours • Focus on behaviour not the child

CHALLENGE!
No corrective feedback for a week!

SEE THE CHANGES

NOTICE

IDENTIFY YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES

Self-regulation Pyramid

- Individual factors
- Opportunities
- Social connection
- **Supportive adult relationship**

It Takes Work…
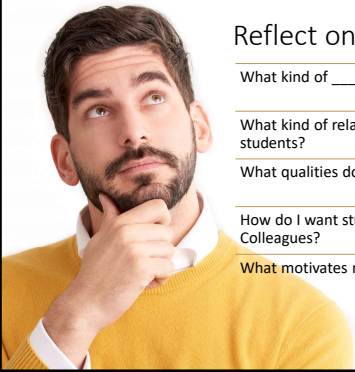
Values Discovery

- Identify own values in your role
- Goals in your role
- Hopes for students' futures
- Mission Statement

Reflect on your incentives

What kind of _____ do I want to be?

What kind of relationships do I want to have with students?

What qualities do I want students to see in me?

How do I want students to remember me? Parents? Colleagues?

What motivates me?

From Ideas to Reality

- List concrete, observable behaviours you can start doing today
  - Identify child's strengths and positive behaviours more frequently
  - Listen actively more often
  - Engage in collaborative problem solving whenever a conflict arises
  - Show more appreciation
  - Do daily acts of kindness
  - Reduce corrective feedback

Adult Emotion Regulation

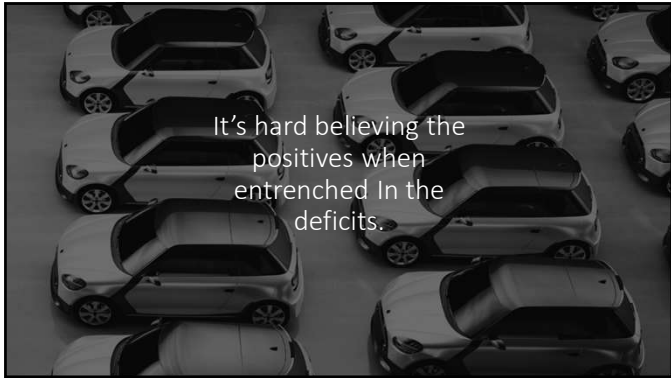- Avoid passing own stress on to students!!!

Stress = Danger
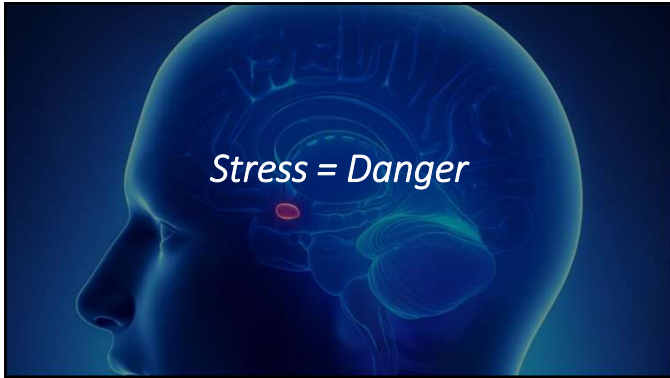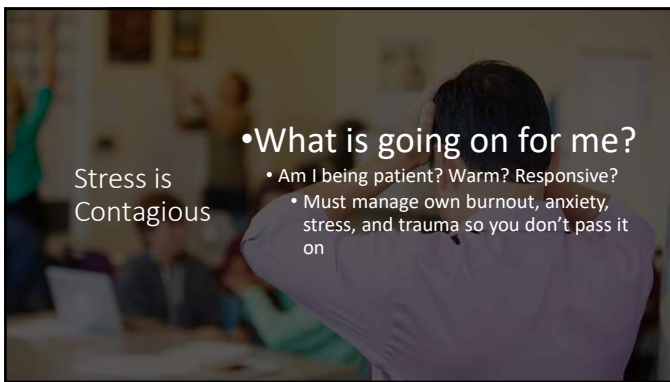
Stress is Contagious

•What is going on for me?
• Am I being patient? Warm? Responsive?
• Must manage own burnout, anxiety, stress, and trauma so you don't pass it on

Notice! & Experiment

Racing Heart	Tense muscles	Overwhelmed Mentally	Freeze
Slow breathing	Shake	Brain dump	Anchor feet
Weight	Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Problem-solve	

It's hard believing the positives when entrenched In the deficits.

Interpersonal Expectancy Effects

Positive teacher expectations can significantly enhance student performance and intellectual growth

Positive expectations beyond the classroom

Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966

Caught in stress and lack and deficits

Disruptive

Characte... distrac... impulsi... restless... hypera...

Aggressive

Talks excessively, disrupts the class.

Impul... behavio... cause susp... and peer con...

Poor social awareness. Limited conflict resolution skills.

Focusing on what is wrong can be very impairing for students.
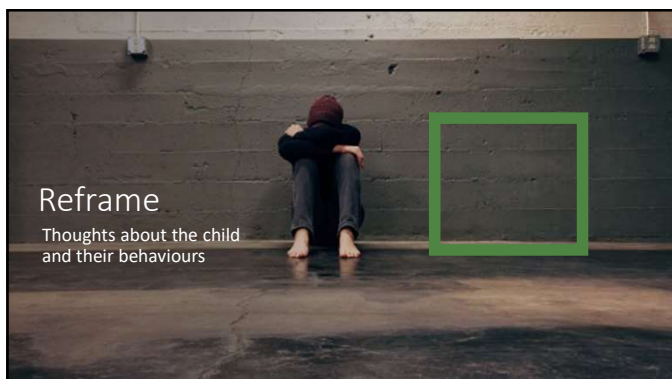

Behaviours Related to Identity

- Identity and self-concept are co-created!
- Self-evaluation is based on their experiences and others' appraisals
- What are the consistent, repeated cues they receive over time?

Greatest predictor of ODD: Adult stress + negative perceptions of the child

---

Reframe
Thoughts about the child and their behaviours

Bossiness	• LEADER
Aggressiveness	• ASSERTIVE (knows and gets what she needs)
Argumentative	• Strong conflict resolver and negotiator
Stubborn	• Persistent
Easily upset	• Emotionally expressive (easier to help and quicker to recover!)

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Always Starts with Us!

- **Understanding the Student:**
  - What might be going on for this student now? What might this student be feeling?
  - What external factors (e.g., home environment, peer relationships, personal struggles) might be influencing their behavior?
  - Does the student feel heard and respected during this interaction?
  - Have I considered the student's context/developmental needs in interpreting their behavior?
  - What unmet needs (e.g., safety, belonging, competence) might be driving this behavior?

Strengths-Based Reframing of Behaviours

- Signals of unmet needs or skills to be developed
- Opportunity to teach new skills (e.g., problem-solving, self-regulation)
- Focus on their strengths to guide positive changes

Consider Skills to Develop *vs. Problem*

Instead of:	Might be difficulties:	Reframe:
Oppositional	Flexibility	Working on...
Only if wants to	Know what is important	Learning to...
Narcissistic	Theory of mind	Still developing...
No empathy	Subtle social cues	
Lazy	Initiation	
Sloppy	Fine motor skills	
Loner	Social understanding	
Doesn't prioritize	Seeing big picture	

"Won't" (Behavioural Misinterpretation)	"Can't" (Skill Deficit)
"Oppositional, Stubborn"	Cognitive inflexibility, Protective effort to avoid being overwhelmed
"Can do it if he wants to"	Difficulty shifting
"Doesn't try"	Poor initiation, Impaired planning & generativity
"Won't put good ideas on paper"	Poor fine motor skills, Disorganization
"Sloppy, erratic" / "Careless errors"	Poor self-monitoring, Impulsive, Overloaded
"No self-control"	Overload, Disinhibition
"Not listening"	Poor attention or working memory
"Pushy, interrupts constantly"	Impulsive disinhibited

### *Reframe Problem Behaviours as* **Opportunities for Growth**

Refusal to Do Schoolwork

• Potential Need:

• Potential Strengths:
  •

• Ideas to do:
  •

Strengths-Based Reframing
Signals of strengths to develop proactively

Stubborn	Persistent	Use in meaningful tasks
Defiant	Independent	Opportunities for autonomy
Attention-seeking	Connection seeking	Proactive attention and connection

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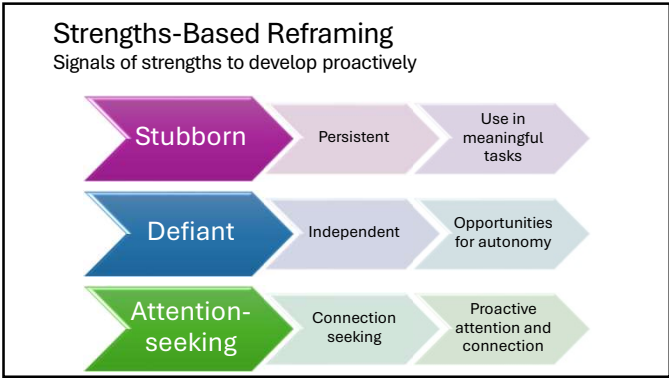
Collaborate with Kids

- How can we keep the good part of the behaviour that is helping you while getting rid all the unhelpful parts of the behaviour?

Expectations

↓

Self-fulfilling prophecy

"Begin with the end In mind"
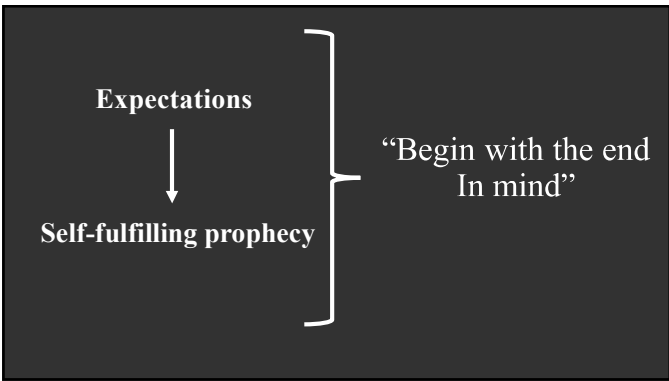
Be a gardener

Gardener's job is to nurture the seed and allow it to become what it is supposed to be to its full potential.

The only real behaviour (and emotion regulation) management you need…. Strong Relationship

No interventions will work without a relationship

Connection Essential for Regulation

To tolerate and regulate emotional responses & cope with stress

4/8/2025

Relationship Major Protector Factor

- Positive physical and mental health
- Motivation
- Academic outcomes
- Academic self-efficacy
- Reduces risk outcomes
  - Violent behaviour, School failure, Substance abuse, Depression and other mental health challenges, Suicidal ideation, Unwanted pregnancy
- Major predictor of long-term happiness

Board Members

Name	School issues	Friend issues	Parent issues	Sibling issues	Getting in trouble	Emotional	Health
Mr. Frank	X						
Dr. Simms						X	X
Susan	X	X	X				
Mom				X	X	X	
Jeff			X	X	X	X	X
Brendan		X					X
Marie			X	X	X	X	X

Relationship:
How do you show up?

One small change in your interactions can be a gamechanger.

- Stand just in/outside the door or go around the room
- Greet each student positively
- Say their name
- Have a short positive interaction
- Follow student's lead
- Handshake, fist bump, high five, pinkie shake
- Direct them to the first activity
- Specific praise to reinforce desired behaviours

You have less than 6 minutes

- Kids need to feel liked and respected
- What can you DO to strengthen your relationship with your students every day?


Always Starts with Us!

- **Improving the Relationship**
  - What is one action I can take to improve the dynamic?
  - What steps can I take to repair trust with this student?
  - What can I do to help this student feel seen and valued?
  - Have I built a strong enough relationship with this student to understand their triggers and motivators?
  - Am I focusing on the student's strengths as much as addressing their challenges?
  - How can I create a safe space for the student to express themselves without fear of judgment or punishment?
  - Have I provided opportunities for the student to share their perspective on this conflict?

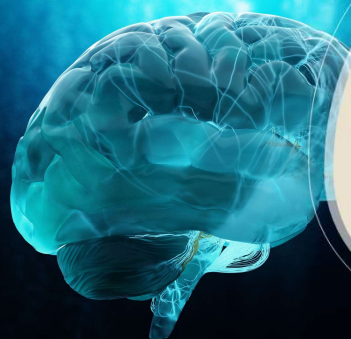drcarolinebuzanko.com

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Emotion Coach

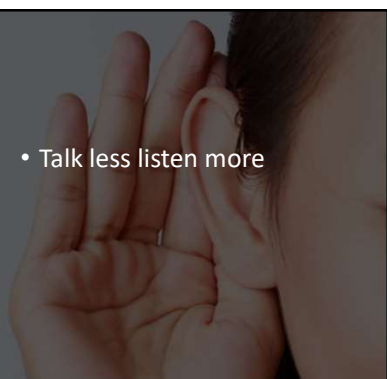Adults don't tend to understand children's experiences and needs
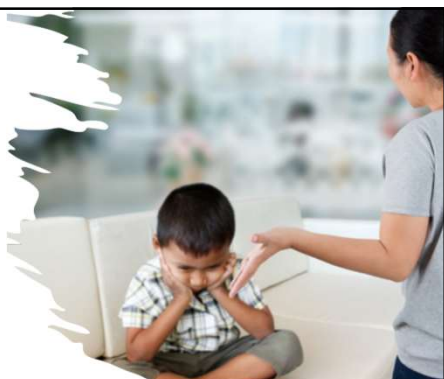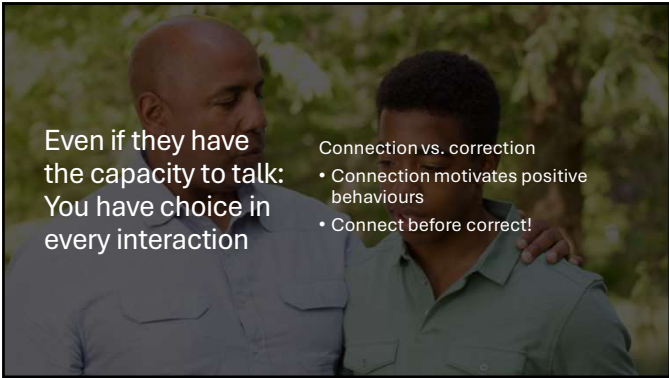
Understanding Perspectives
- We use different parts of our brain and will perceive situations
  - Must understand their viewpoint to provide effective support
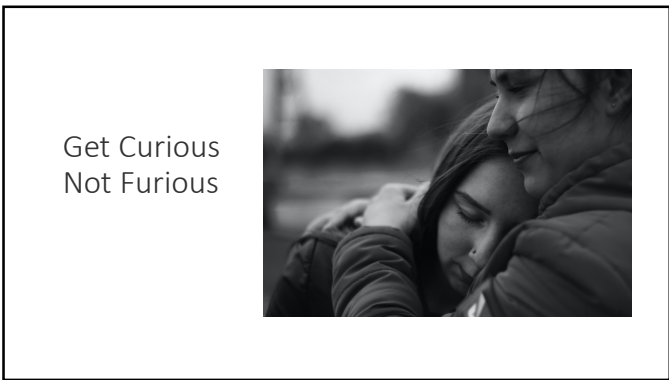
Effective Communication:
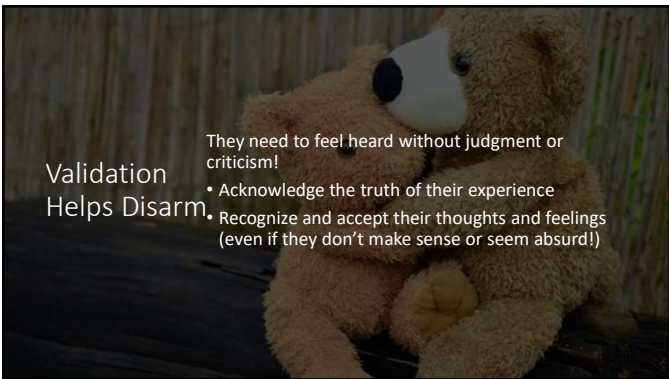Become a Master Listener
- Talk less listen more

Even if they have the capacity to talk: You have choice in every interaction

Connection vs. correction
- Connection motivates positive behaviours
- Connect before correct!

Get Curious Not Furious

Validation Helps Disarm

They need to feel heard without judgment or criticism!
- Acknowledge the truth of their experience
- Recognize and accept their thoughts and feelings (even if they don't make sense or seem absurd!)

OR, even better... ADJECTIVE!

Let me see if I got that. You said...

Did I get it?

Is there more?

How we talk is important

Replace negativity with curiosity

Separate Consequence Discussions from Emotional Validation

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

When Big Emotions show up...

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Give space for regulation

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Always Remember:
Many have worries
about abandonment.

Even if they
challenge, we
still have to
work hard

RESPECTFUL   POSITIVE   ASSERTIVE   NON-AGGRESSIVE

CARING   Accepting & non-threatening   Disarming

Validate and empathize

They need to feel they belong

A child's greatest need is to feel accepted and valued just as they are

No matter what, they MUST believe: We are on your side!

We all need different things when we're distressed

What do you need from others when dysregulated?
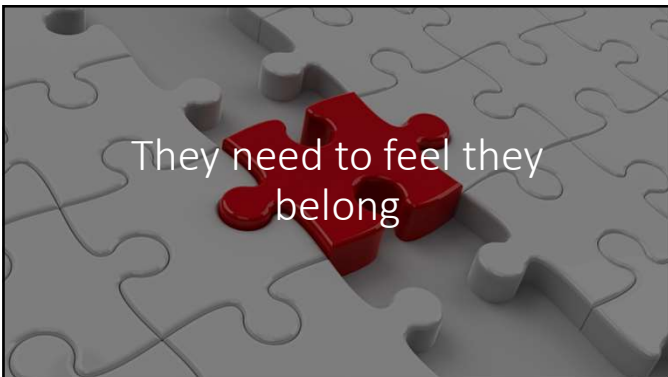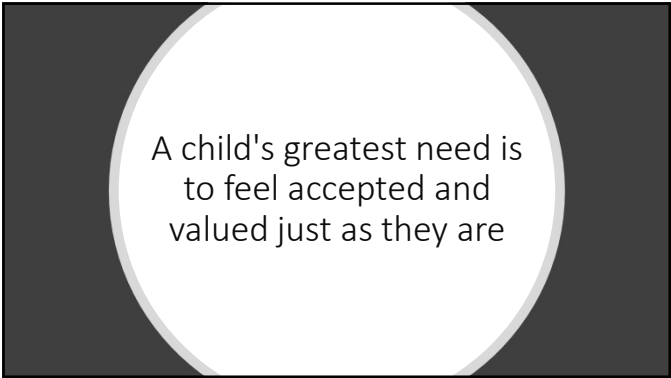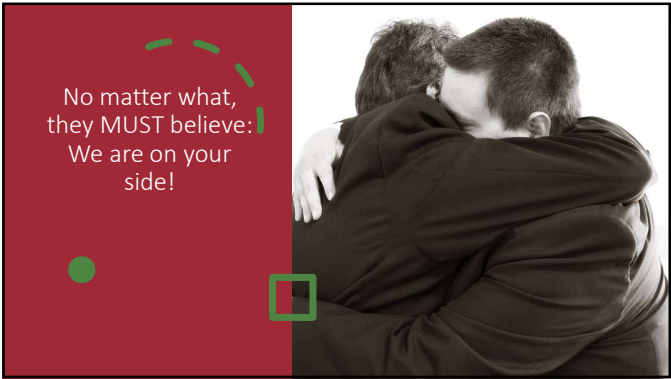
Reminder

Do this

🔇	Create (quiet) space
🕸	Nothing
▶	Wait until PFC back online

Not that

Talk	Only escalates the problem. They aren't going to process and learn from what you have to say anyway
Do	For risk of escalating your emotions, which will just escalate them.
Rush	It can take a long time to recover from overload. Some children need hours of downtime.

Effectively expressing thoughts, feelings, and needs

Verbal anger not directed to anyone

Verbal aggression towards others

Physical aggression towards objects

Physical aggression towards others

Helpful to remember!

Remember!
Kids want to be and do good!

So, let's expect them to.
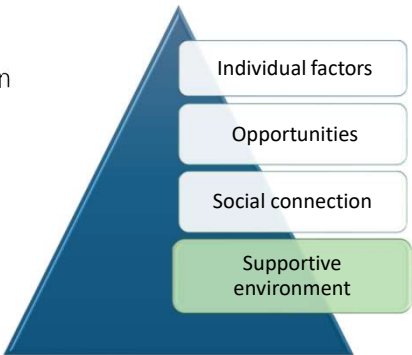*Be proactive, set them up for success, and support them when they can't.*

If the tree isn't growing... you don't change the tree....

Self-regulation Pyramid
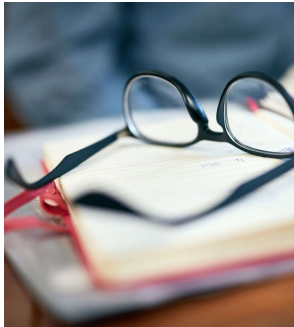
- Individual factors
- Opportunities
- Social connection
- Supportive environment

Mismatch in demands and needs

School settings

Adjust the Environment: Sensory Regulation!

Reduce overwhelm
- Turn off bright lights
- Lower noise
- SPACE!

Remove unnecessary stressors
- Clutter
- Background noise
- Unnecessary demands

Give students ownership of space!

Collaborate to create a classroom to promote learning

🖥	Breakout desks?
🔇	Quiet workspace?
🛋	Conferencing couch?
🫖	Tea station?
🖼	Rows? Groupings?

Reduce Decision-Making Burden

The more decisions students make throughout the day, the less mental energy they have left to self-regulate

- Automated or structured routines to minimize unnecessary decisions
  - Use schedules so students know what's next without needing to decide.
- Pre-plan workflows to reduce decision fatigue
  - Prep the night before
  - Set up their workspace for next class
  - Create default routine structures (e.g., homework right after snack)

Behaviour!

Reprimanded and strengthens worries → Assigned task → Challenged (perceived or real) → Anxiety, self-doubt & criticism → Freeze, distracted, non-compliant, explosive →

Consider feedback loops

If they aren't experiencing success or getting their needs met, they become even more vulnerable

Fail & Avoid (cycle)

Never take away recess – Give more! EVEN HIGH SCHOOLERS

- Movement increases blood flow to the brain.
- Improves performance, creativity, attention, and focus.

Get on Offense! Be Proactive!

Spend time putting support strategies in place vs. waiting for problem behaviours to happen.

Do anything you can to promote positive behaviour

- Greet students as soon as you see them
- Help them transition to/from various activities throughout their school day
- Clear and simple expectations that are both reasonable and enforceable;
- Provide the ability to problem-solve what needs to happen for them to be successful in challenging situations
- Adults and kids take "practice breaks" before they really need them
- Model appropriate tone, volume and cadence with students who are frustrated
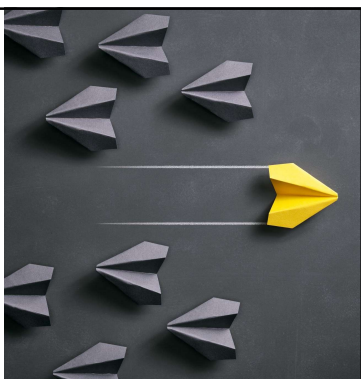
MUST have Clear & Consistent Expectations & Limits

- Establish predictable consequences for behaviour
  - Clear expectations and consequences for both desired and undesired behaviours.
    - Ideally, same expectations across settings
- Consistency helps them understand what is expected of them and reinforces positive behaviours.
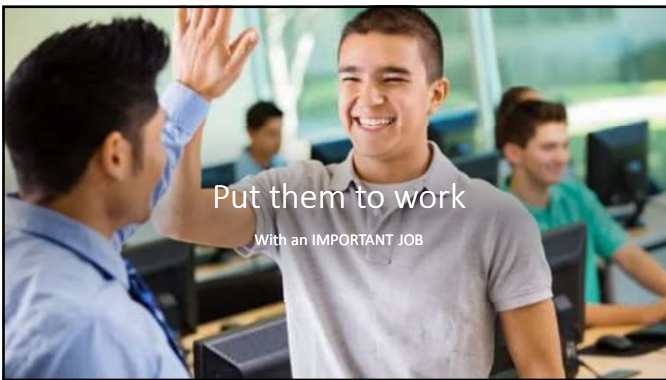
Provide:

- 3-5 expectations
- Rationales
- Explicitly Teach
  - Examples and non-examples of expected behaviours
  - Models

Immediate successes

Build on their confidence!

Emphasize what is going right rather than what is going wrong.

Kids stick with things they feel confident with

Put them to work
With an IMPORTANT JOB

Opportunities for Independence

Decision making
- They need to know you support and trust them!
- Collaboratively discuss consequences
  - Experiment: What might happen if you...
  - Show decision-making process to lead to consequences

Backwards Behaviour Modification: Catch 'em being good

Find the Antidotes!

Defies authority	• Follows directions; obeys rules
Destroys property	• Uses objects appropriately
Fights with others	• Plays, shares with, assists others
Hits others	• Solves problems verbally
Disrespectful	• Collaborates, accepts decisions
Irritable	• Express how they feel • Good natured & easy going
Lies	• Is honest

I caught you!

Calling out	• Put up their hand
Name calling	• Helping, complimenting
Hitting	• Using words to express upset

I caught you!

Hold the door open for another student as they followed up behind you.

Conduct an Acknowledgement Assessment!

- How do you like being acknowledged? How do you hate being acknowledged?
- Create a developmentally appropriate assessment form with a menu of lots of feasible options
- Acknowledge students based on their preferences
  - Reflect and adjust!

Name:		Date:	
Praise Examples		YES PLEASE!	NO THANKS
Personalized compliments: "You did an excellent job on your project, showing great creativity and effort!"			
Encouraging words: "I'm really proud of how hard you worked on this!"			
Public acknowledgment in class: "Let's give a round of applause class!"			
Thumbs up or other positive gestures like...			
Smiling or nodding to show approval			
A positive note about my work			
Sticker			
A 'praise note' to take home			
Tokens or points that can be collected and exchanged for a privilege			
Being the class helper or leader for a day			
Choosing a game or activity for the class			
Extra computer time or free time to do what I want in class			
Featuring my work on a classroom display or bulletin board			
Mention in the school newsletter to parents or morning announcements to the school			
A certificate of achievement for my accomplishment			
Lunch with the teacher or a special guest			
Opportunity to share a skill or interest with the class			
Peer recognition moment where classmates share something positive about them			

Write other ideas here and the back of the page for types of praise you like to receive!

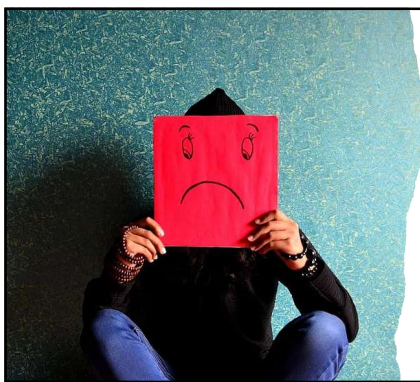## Tootling Slip

Who: Suzie

Did What: Helped figure out a problem in science.

From: Chana

When giving out discincentives,
*BE BORING,*
but when giving out rewards,
BE PASSIONATE.

Remember context:
Save Face

Watch what you say when and where you say it

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Classwide Good Behaviour Game

- 2+ teams (I prefer adults vs. kids)
- Review & post rules
- Earn special privileges
  - Each successful team accesses reward or
  - Selected random group wins for whole class
- Contingency: rule following connected with GROUP consequence
 - Leverages major classroom motivator for following rules: peers
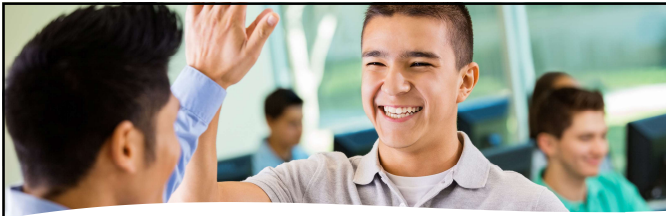
Check-In Check-Out (CICO)

- Enhanced student-adult relationships
- Immediate feedback
- Increased self-monitoring
- Data-driven decision making
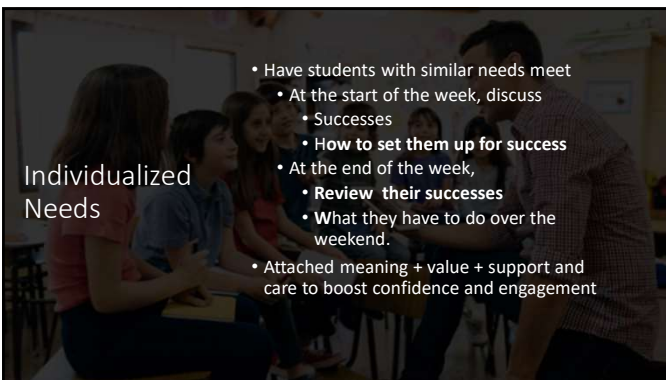
Individualized Needs

- Have students with similar needs meet
  - At the start of the week, discuss
    - Successes
    - How to set them up for success
  - At the end of the week,
    - Review their successes
    - What they have to do over the weekend.
- Attached meaning + value + support and care to boost confidence and engagement
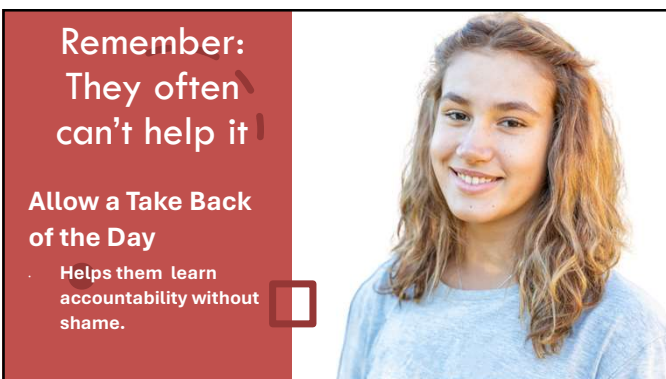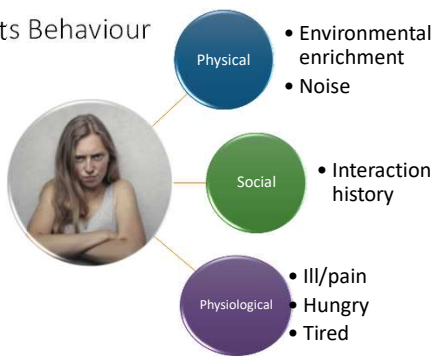
Remember: They often can't help it

Allow a Take Back of the Day

- **Helps them learn accountability without shame.**

Also want to know: When are kids are doing good?!!!!!

Mood Predicts Behaviour

Physical
- Environmental enrichment
- Noise

Social
- Interaction history

Physiological
- Ill/pain
- Hungry
- Tired

Proactively Adress Psychological Functions

Attention seeking

Power

Revenge

Inadequate

Attention Seeking
What's the underlying need?

- Skill deficit
- Don't feel connected
- Insecurity
- Wrong attention

Attention Seeking

Relationship! THEY NEED CONNECTION!

Maintain connection with lots of positive attention.

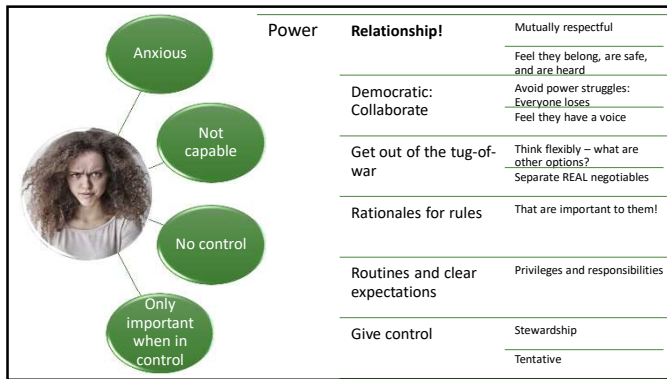Acknowledge the wanted behaviours & ignore the unwanted ones

Proactively establish expectations – what behaviours WILL and WILL NOT get attention
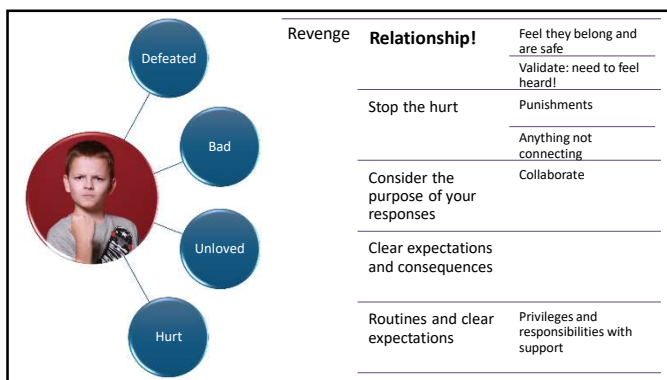
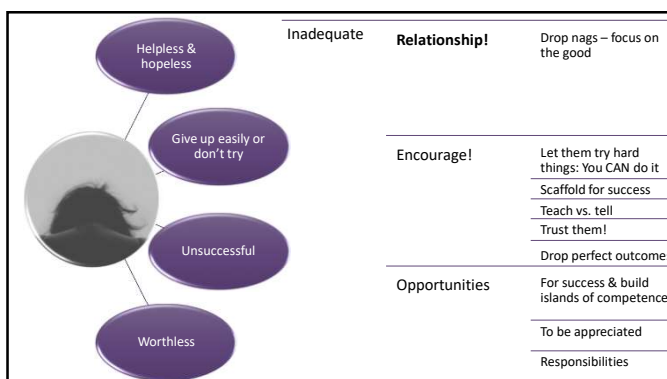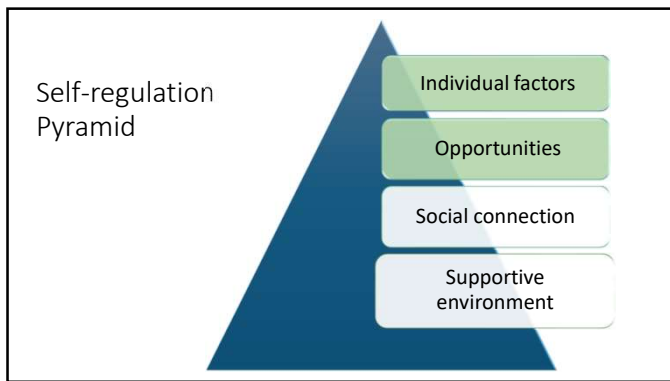Teach & practice how to get attention appropriately

- Skill deficit
- Don't feel connected
- Insecurity
- Wrong attention

Positive Attention & Planned Ignoring

⚠️

For behaviours that are maintained by adult attention

Power

Anxious	Power	**Relationship!**	Mutually respectful
Not capable			Feel they belong, are safe, and are heard
No control		Democratic: Collaborate	Avoid power struggles: Everyone loses
Only important when in control			Feel they have a voice
		Get out of the tug-of-war	Think flexibly – what are other options?
			Separate REAL negotiables
		Rationales for rules	That are important to them!
		Routines and clear expectations	Privileges and responsibilities
		Give control	Stewardship
			Tentative

Revenge

Defeated	Revenge	**Relationship!**	Feel they belong and are safe
Bad			Validate: need to feel heard!
Unloved		Stop the hurt	Punishments
Hurt			Anything not connecting
		Consider the purpose of your responses	Collaborate
		Clear expectations and consequences	
		Routines and clear expectations	Privileges and responsibilities with support

Inadequate

Helpless & hopeless	Inadequate	**Relationship!**	Drop nags – focus on the good
Give up easily or don't try		Encourage!	Let them try hard things: You CAN do it
			Scaffold for success
			Teach vs. tell
			Trust them!
Unsuccessful			Drop perfect outcomes
		Opportunities	For success & build islands of competence
			To be appreciated
Worthless			Responsibilities

Self-regulation Pyramid

- Individual factors
- Opportunities
- Social connection
- Supportive environment

The # 1 thing they need to learn?

Behaviours are Driven by Emotion

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Focus on the student
not the behaviour

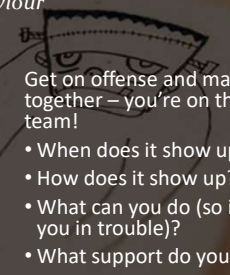Externalize Behaviours & **Work as a Team**

Externalize
They are not their behaviour

Things to watch for:
- Mind robbers
- Brain drainers
- Freaking out Fran
- Mean Jean
- Explosive Bob
- Throwy McThrower
- Hitting Hal
- Yelling McGee

Get on offense and make a plan together – you're on the same team!
- When does it show up?
- How does it show up?
- What can you do (so it doesn't get you in trouble)?
- What support do you need?

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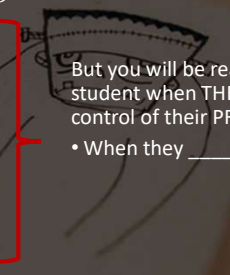
Planned Ignoring!

- You are NOT going to respond to any of these henchmen:
  - Mind robbers
  - Brain drainers
  - Freaking out Fran
  - Mean Jean
  - Explosive Bob
  - Throwy McThrower
  - Hitting Hal
  - Yelling McGee

But you will be ready for the student when THEY are in control of their PFC
- When they _____

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Talking will NEVER TEACH! Practice

- Not being first in line
- Losing a game
- Doing something hard
- iPad unavailable
- Someone cheating in soccer
- Making a mistake

Practice!

Structured teaching trials where we set up the stressor and teach students the skills they need to tolerate and cope with the stress

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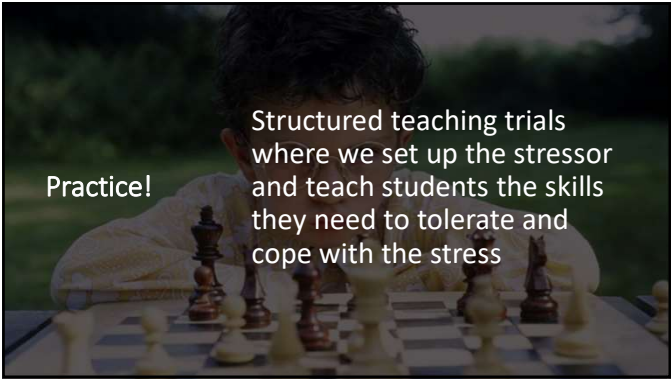
- Which child was most like you?
  - Why?
- Who was successful?
  - What did they do to be successful?
- Who wasn't successful?
  - What could they have done to be successful?
- When is it better to get the small reward right away vs. the big reward later?
  - When is it better to wait?
  - When have you chosen the bigger reward later over the smaller one right away?
- What are your marshmallows? Your phones? iPad? Videogames?
- When is it important to think before you act?
  - When do you NOT need to think before they act?

Goal: Waiting for things we want

Teaching (teach skills through small steps and supported interactions) vs. social stories

Understand: Function of the behaviour

Identify: Desired/expected behaviour

Rationale: Ensure their buy-In

Teach: Model, Role-play

Practice: Structured & Success-oriented

Evaluate: Constant feedback
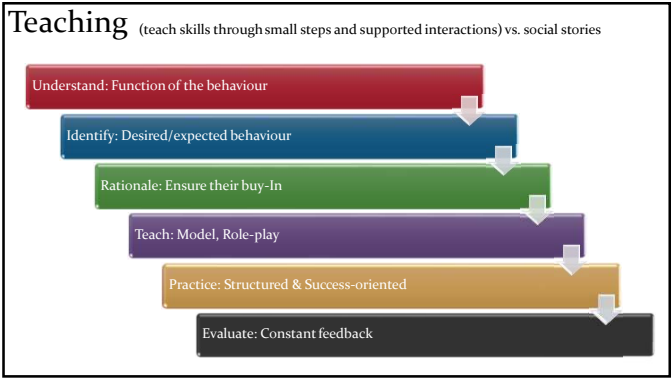
Teaching

Resistance training:
Structured teaching trials to
learn to resist the temptation

- Do vs. not do
- Proactive
- Clear expectations and consequences
- Ongoing support for success
- Short redirection vs. lectures
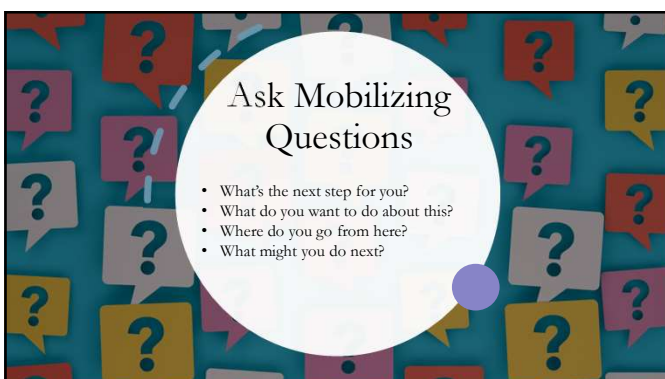
Get Them Thinking About
Their Own Behaviours

- Your choice.
  - I'll know you want option A if….;
    And
  - I'll know you want option B if…
- Ask questions
  - What is this, a **preschool?**

Ask Mobilizing
Questions

- What's the next step for you?
- What do you want to do about this?
- Where do you go from here?
- What might you do next?

Get Meta!
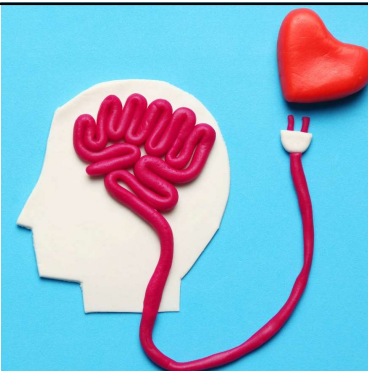
Build Autonomy: Cue HOWS (vs. prompt)
- How will you handle _____?
- How will you respond?
- How will you make your next move?
- *How can you try something different?*
- How will you keep your PFC online?
- How will you get started?
- How will know when you are done?
- How will you keep going if it gets hard? If you are tired?
- How do you know what you need?
- How do you know where to start?
- How did you know how to do that?
- How would you do this differently next time?
- How were you successful in the past?

Conflict Resolution

Teach!
- Normal part of relationships!
- Not a bad thing – can be positive
- Examples of helpful vs. unhelpful responses

Practice Flexibility: Getting Unstuck

Looks like _____ is trying to make your amygdala stuck

What little change can help?

Focus on Hows

How will you respond?　*How can you try something different?*
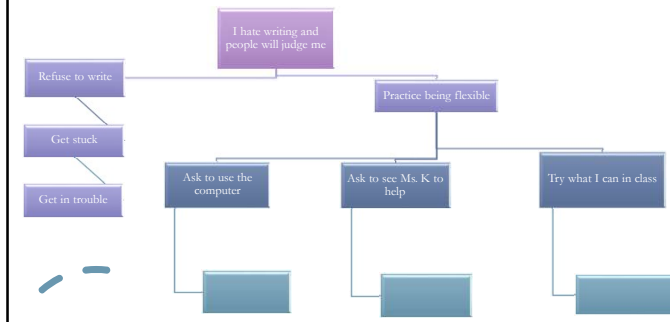
Out of my control → Acceptance and Tolerance

In my control → Problem Solve

Problem-solving

Help them be thinkers
Independent problem solvers to figure things out

Problem-solving

🔍 Identify the problem

📊 Brainstorm all possible solutions

🧠 Evaluate pros/cons of the feasible ideas

✓ Make a plan

📋 Implement & Tweak as needed

Brainstorm, Practice, & Evaluate Options

I hate writing and people will judge me

- Refuse to write
- Get stuck
- Get in trouble

Practice being flexible

- Ask to use the computer
- Ask to see Ms. K to help
- Try what I can in class

Practice!

- Problem-solving
  - Start with emotion free problems
  - Move toward emotionally charged situations

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Conflict Resolution
Effective Communication

Use teaching interactions
▪ Reciprocity in relationships

Drawbacks to Angry Interactions
When is _____ helpful? When is it not helpful?
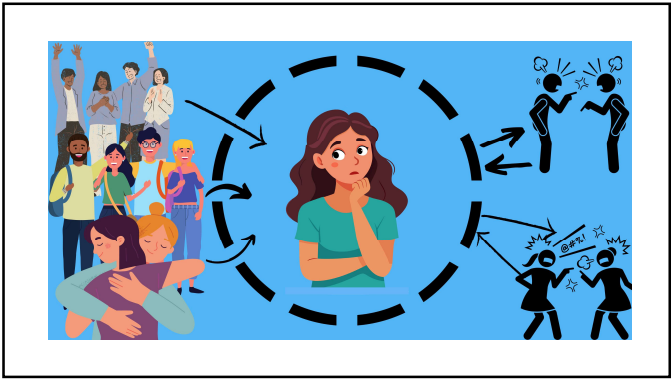
Promote self-reflection
• What does prosocial behaviour mean?
    • How do you know when someone is being prosocial?
• What types things have you done to help others?
    • How did it feel?
• What are the benefits of helping others?
• Who is someone you know who is kind or helps others?
    • How do they interact with others?
• How come some people are prosocial and some aren't?
• How come some kids choose to bully others and some don't?
• Are some people prosocial sometimes and not others?
    • What gets in the way of them being prosocial sometimes?
• What motivates you to be kind to others?
• How do you think being prosocial affects your relationships with others?
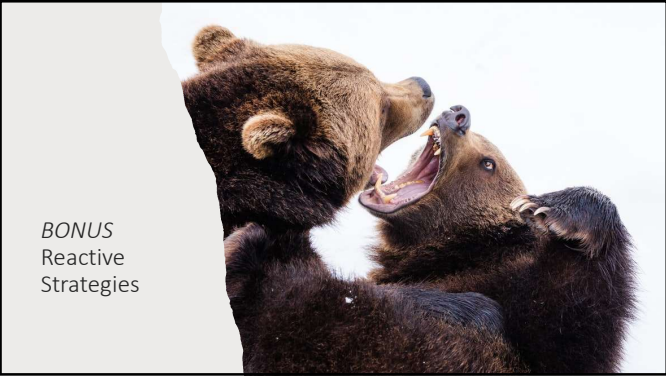
Model!

- Polite & respectful behaviours
  - Verbal
  - nonverbal
- Listening
- Validating others
- Collaboratively problem-solving

POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY

https://drcarolinebuzanko.com/behaviour-post-survey/

BONUS
Reactive
Strategies
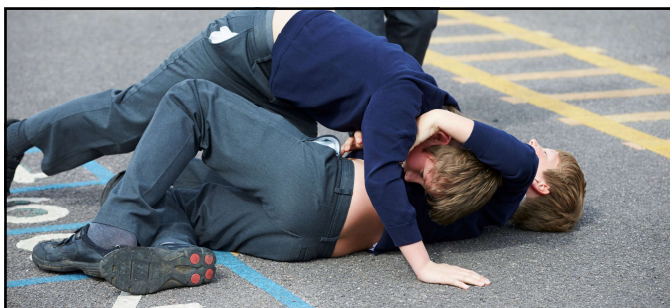
Avoid Reinforcing Problem Behaviours

Act vs. Talk

Behavioural momentum

- Give quick instructions of high probability requests in succession
- Add lower probability Instruction

When crisis hits

Cycle of escalation

CRISIS

Calm

Triggered

Heating Up

De-escalation

Settling

Calm (may be exhausted)
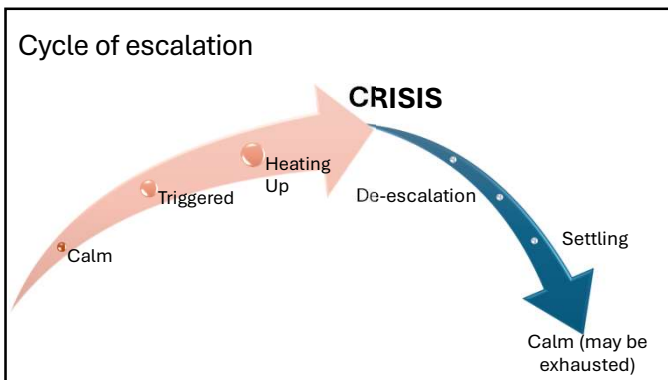
Verbal aggression

Master listener & compassion
- Acknowledge the upset & validate their experience
- You understand their pain
- Show safety
- Praise! They are communicating with words!
- Be natural and neutral

Verbal aggression & Threats

- Doable & targeted to someone
  - Dangerous (especially if they are holding scissors etc.!)
- Doable but not targeted at anyone specific
  - Credible but less predictable

Always:
- Validate & listen
- Disarm
- Stay calm
- Don't take it personally!
- Lots of love & positive attention when calm

- Use environment to create safety

Verbal aggression & Threats

Always:
- Validate & listen
- Disarm
- Stay calm
- Don't take it personally!
- Lots of love & positive attention

- Yell or swear at someone specific without threats
- Yell or swear without threats to no one in particular

- Screaming – likely sensory overload

- Teach boundaries proactively
- In crisis though: Meh
  - Just words
  - Normal reaction
  - Helps release tension (better than aggression!)
- Stay calm
  - Otherwise, we teach this is an effective hurtful strategy

---

How would you respond?

You are the worst person in the universe and I hate you. You are a dumb f&%ing a%%hole.

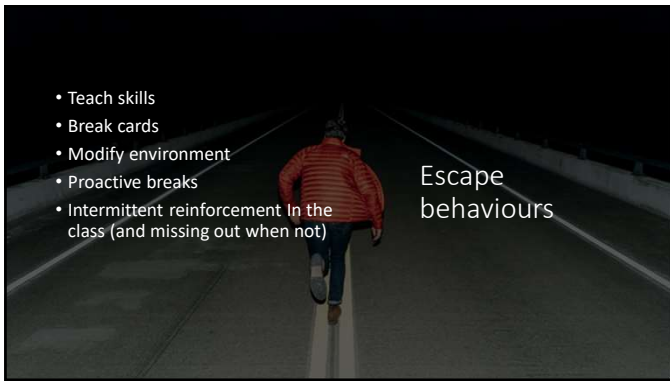### Ideas on how to respond?

Master listener & compassion
- Acknowledge the upset & validate their experience
- You understand their pain
- Show safety
- Be natural and neutrak

- Always validate their experience and
- Ensure they feel that we understand.

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"Ugh, sounds pretty sucky right now.
What do you need to get through it so
you/we can_____?"

Escape behaviours

- Teach skills
- Break cards
- Modify environment
- Proactive breaks
- Intermittent reinforcement In the class (and missing out when not)

Physical aggression

Adults & Kids Master De-Escalation & Crisis Management

Physical aggression towards you

Dignity & respect

Create safety

Collaborative Framework

De-escalation strategies
- Create space
  - Call for help

Physical aggression: Escorting or Evacuation?

Avoid physical restraint, but:
- When, How, Who & Where
- Return plan afterwards
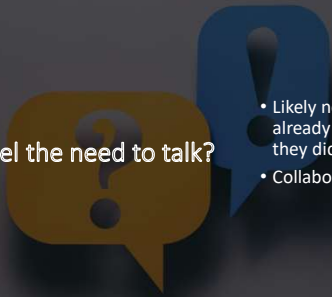
Evacuation system:
- Subtle! Don't make a big deal about the behaviour
- Code word & practice drills

Still feel the need to talk?
- Likely not helpful (they already know what they did wrong)
- Collaborate

Managing Behaviours
When you feel the need to respond

It is critical that students can **save face** and have the chance to **self-correct** or **solve the problem** on their own

Least-to-most intrusive response	Choice	Proactive conversations

Create a Framework

NATURAL SITUATION → Remind Batman expectations

Batman is engaging in appropriate, calm behaviour (e.g., following instructions)

Ensure these behaviours lead to payoffs.
o Give lots of praise, **surprise** him with a treat or privilege.

Batman starts to get upset, complaining, negotiating

Important Early Decision:
Is this negotiable? If not, are you prepared to handle the behaviour that occurs?

Follow your agenda / Follow Batman's

Remind & Warning
e.g., "Remember the plan Batman. It is up to you – you can choose a, and this will happen, or b, and this will happen. It is up to you."

Prompt Batman to ask calmly

Is calm, continue with his agenda

Batman remains calm, tolerates plan, follows through

Continues to be upset/ more upset/negotiation

Biggest payoff!!!

**Do not negotiate, do not bribe, do not give him what he wants etc.

Respond in a neutral way "Looks like you chose b, this is what will happen" (if he changes his mind, he can try again next time – he needs to make the choice the first time)

Overall framework for behaviour change

- Understand what the behaviour tells us
- Address motivation of behaviour and behaviour change — How is the child motivated
- Teach skills
- Safety, mutual respect

Important Considerations for Success

Exercise!!!

- Strengthens the brain
- Chemicals calm brain during stress
- Stress chemicals released to help stressed out system recover efficiently
  - Promotes attention and other key skills

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Sleep!!!

- Critical for learning: glue for remembering
  - Need good night sleep before exam
  - Need good sleep after studying for exam!
- Helps manage stress
- Helps eat better

More sleep =

- Better grades & standardized scores
- Less depression
- Increased attendance
- Less car crashes
- Less impulsivity
- More control over emotions
- Less aggression
- Fewer symptoms and illnesses

4/8/2025
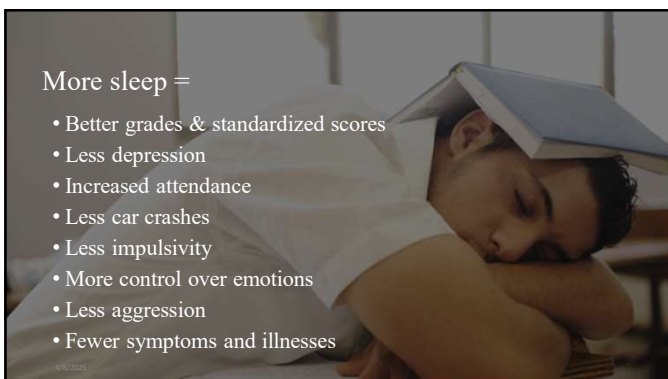
Important Considerations

Hydration!

Healthy diet

Appropriate leisure activities — Collections, Physical recreation, Creative pursuits, Nature

POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY

https://drcarolinebuzanko.com/behaviour-post-survey/

PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY

https://drcarolinebuzanko.com/anxiety-resilience-pre-workshop-survey/

Anxiety Solutions

Practical Strategies for Resilience, Confidence and Coping Skills in Children and Youth

Dr. Caroline Buzanko
drcarolinebuzanko.com
caroline@korupsychology.ca

70% of all mental health problems begin in childhood and adolescence
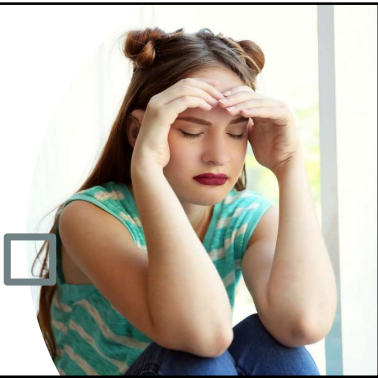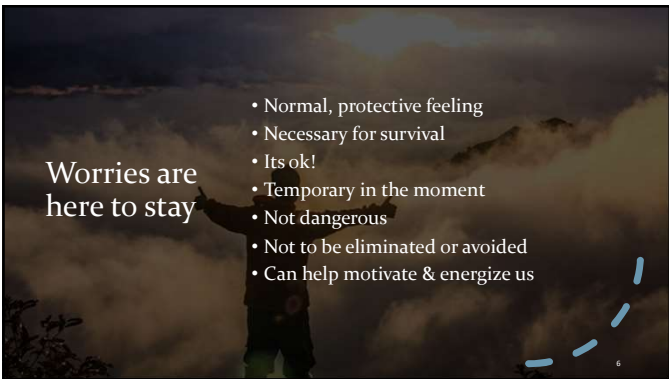
Untreated anxiety is the leading predictor of depression in teens & young adults

THRIVE
UNDERSTAND
DARE & DEFY
CONNECT
DETACH & ENHANCE
INSPIRE
ACCEPT & UNWIND
EXTERNALIZE & EXPOSE
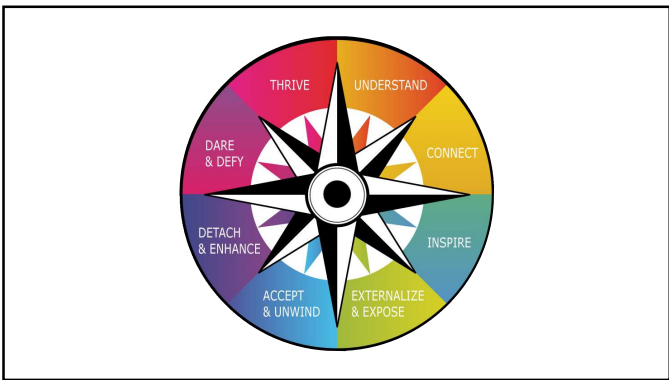
Worries are here to stay

- Normal, protective feeling
- Necessary for survival
- Its ok!
- Temporary in the moment
- Not dangerous
- Not to be eliminated or avoided
- Can help motivate & energize us

Worries to be expected

Developmentally appropriate fears
• Survival: separation, danger

Life transitions
• New school, graduation, change in family composition, teenage years

Stressful experiences
• New or unfamiliar situations

Worries to be expected

Infant/ Toddlers	Preschool	Early Childhood	Elementary	Pre-Adolescence	Adolescence
• Separation • Novelty • Loud noises • Shyness, fear of strangers • Santa	• Animals, dark, thunder, fire • Nightmares • Monsters & shadows • Novelty	• Fear of death or ghosts • Separation • Dark • Getting lost • Thunder	• Changes • Performance • Getting sick or hurt • Animals, monsters, ghosts • Natural disasters	• Home alone • Family or pets • Rejection • Mortality, health	• Social • What others think • Family getting sick • School performance • World events • After high school!!!!

Worries to be expected

Temporary

Do not interfere with functioning

Students still successful in achieving goals

BEGINNING **MIDDLE** **END**

The brain cannot tell the difference between what it actually sees and what it imagines

& will react as truth

Students continue to worry themselves with their own thoughts

What is anxiety?

I can't handle it!

Everyone is predisposed to anxiety.
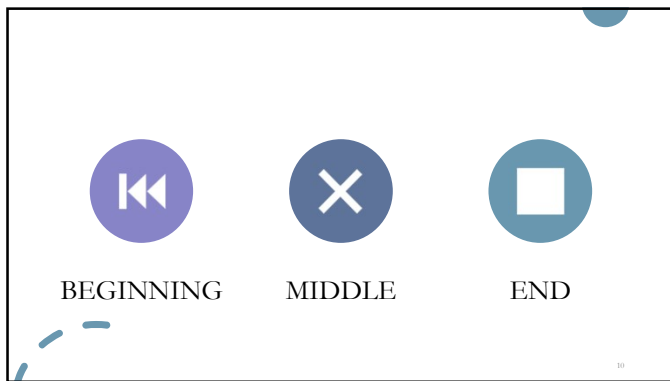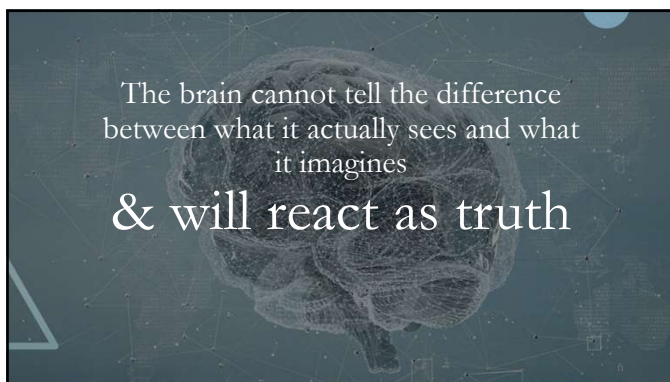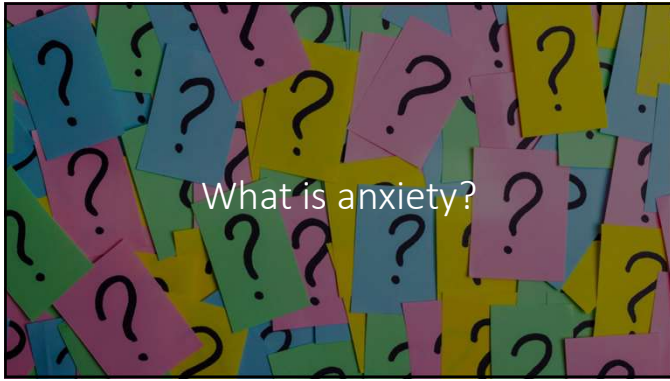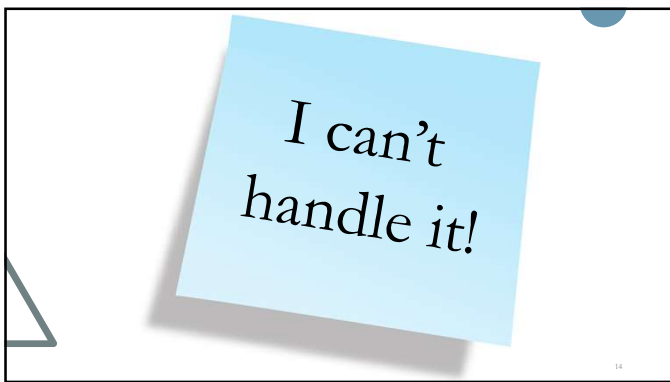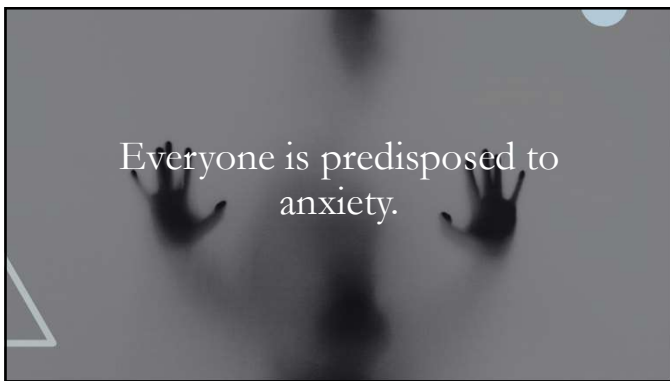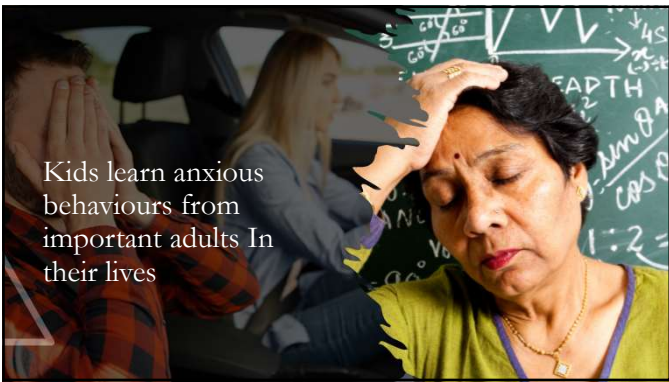
Kids are More Stressed, More Anxious, & Less Resilient than ever before

Kids learn anxious behaviours from important adults In their lives

Fixing   Persuading

Pushing   Directing
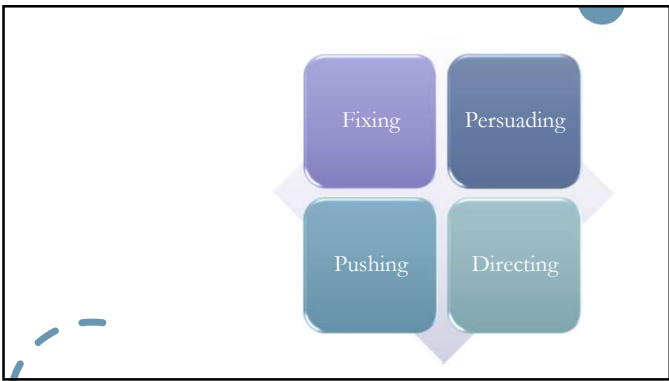
Unsolicited Support

- Swooping in can:
  - Undermine the equity in the relationship
  - Create a sense of obligation
  - Independence and self-esteem threatened
  - Feel invalidating
  - Seem unsympathetic
  - Shut down communication
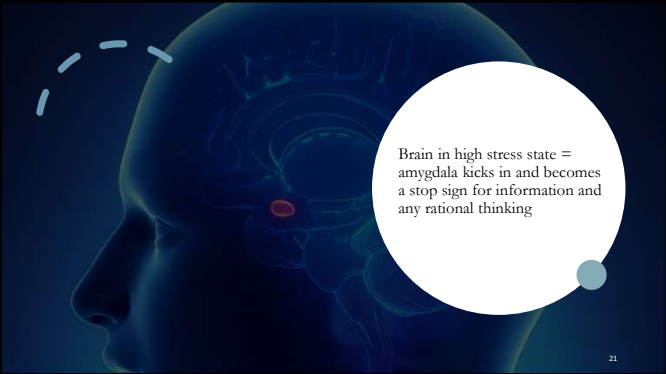
Saying "Don't worry" doesn't work

Minimizing

Get stuck in constant need for reassurance

No skills developed
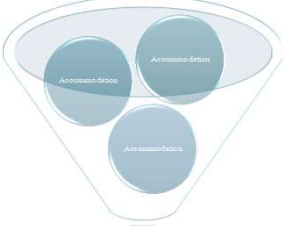
Brain in high stress state = amygdala kicks in and becomes a stop sign for information and any rational thinking

Anxiety…

- Wants certainty
- Wants predictability
- Wants comfort

Accommodations worsens emotional dysregulation long-term

Accommodation

Accommodation

Accommodation

More impairing and severe with poorer treatment outcomes

Accommodation Behaviours

Participation
- Assist in checking behaviours
- Assist in avoidance
- Reassure

Modification
- Prevent distressing situations

Speaking for the student	Allowing students to be excused	Ensuring predictability	Avoiding outings	Sitting out of anxiety provoking situations (e.g., gym)
Only having one substitute	Participating in rituals	Not throwing away unnecessary items	Not opening windows	Rigid routines
Seeing school nurse unnecessarily	Leaving lights on	Checking homework	Accompanying the child to certain parts of the school	Distraction
Adjusting routines	Alternate place for lunch	Fixed schedules	Pre-warnings and Transition warnings	Stress balls

Consider IPP's/IEP's

Does it accommodate anxiety? Or prevent it from showing up?

Are skills being taught?
- How do breaks/office visits help?

Is there a transition plan?

Does the plan address physical symptoms?

Does it document how to maintain contact between home and school?

Your Big But

Deprived Kids

Freedom

Unsupervised play

Responsibility

Opportunities for risk-taking
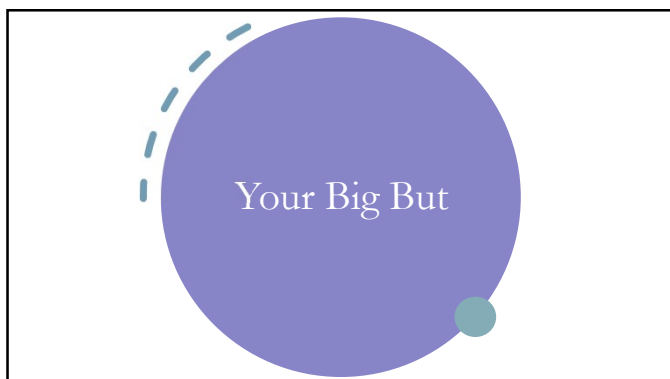
Critical for developing:
• Resilience
• Competence
• Confidence
• Maturity
• Mental health

Stunted Resilience

Kids develop patterns of behaviour/ways to respond to stress and other emotions depending on whether they believe they can manage.

And when they don't think they can manage….

DON'T see themselves as capable and do avoid, give up, or lash out

Withdraw

Give up

Tantrum/ emotional meltdown

Vindictive

Low resilience

Anger outburst

Defiance

Aggression

Anxiety

Resentment
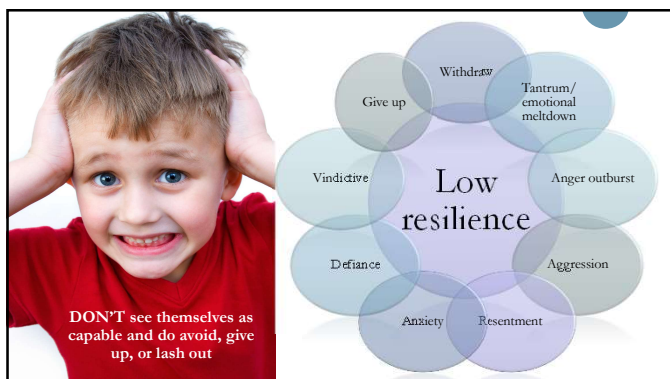
What are you doing for your kids they can do themselves?

Harming kids when we do

- Changes brain development & ingrains emotional challenges
- Makes kids vulnerable: Confidence and resilience stunted
  - No opportunities to experience manageable amounts of stress
  - No opportunities to learn that they can handle it

Get Out of the Traps

This alone can make all the difference in the world

What are you doing for kids that they can do for themselves?

Solution: Break the cycle that cripples resilience

- Independent play
- Errands
- Responsibilities

Resilient kids

- Effectively respond to and cope with everyday challenges+

High resilience

- Interest in school
- Asks for help when needed
- Effective problem solver
- Independent
- Assertive
- Positive outlook
- Take initiative
- Realistic
- Responsible and trustworthy
- Empathetic

Sometimes we just need to step back and wait a bit

THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS CAPABLE!

To cope | To get things done | To persist on a hard task | To find solutions to a problem | To work through a friendship fire | To work through any challenge | To master a new skill (even if hard) | To take risks (helps them to learn) | For success

Self-regulation Pyramid

Individual factors
Opportunities
Social connection
Supportive adult relationship

TO DO THE WORK THEY MUST FEEL SAFE WITH YOU!!!!

Modelling Resilience

Show kids how to handle mistakes and challenges.

Make comments like, *"I am worried about this but this is what I am going to do…"*

Use reflective problem-solving aloud: "This didn't go as planned—let's figure it out."

Show emotions BUT model how you manage them
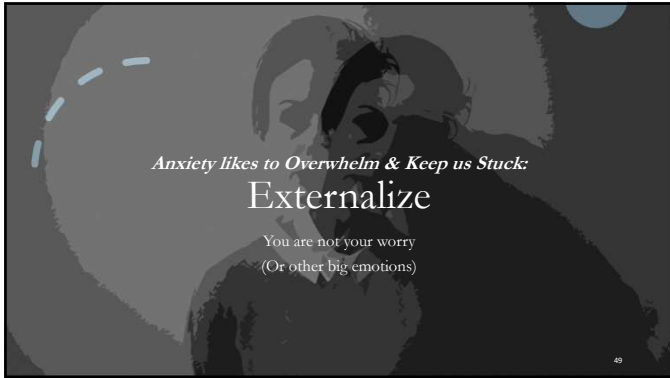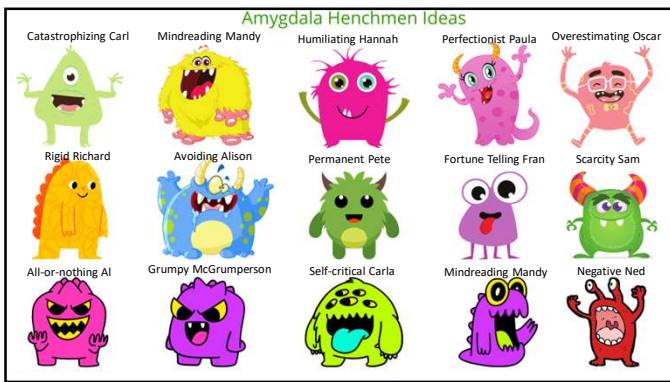

Effective Communication

Big emotions disrupts their ability to stay present and connected
- We must create the space to do this

Self-regulation Pyramid

- Individual factors
- Opportunities
- Social connection
- Supportive environment

How to manage the experience of big emotions when they show up

Not the actual trigger

Core Skill:
Emotion Awareness

Teach the connection!
- All are just as strong and important
- All influence each other and re-trigger emotions

Feelings

Emotions

Behaviours ← → **Thoughts**

Establish a Framework

Physical Feelings
- Prepares to take action

Emotion

Behaviours
- Nonverbals
- Compelled to take action

Thoughts
- Focus on perceived threats

Anxiety-Driven, Maladaptive Response

Anxiety likes to Overwhelm & Keep us Stuck:

Externalize

You are not your worry
(Or other big emotions)

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Amygdala Henchmen Ideas

Catastrophizing Carl	Mindreading Mandy	Humiliating Hannah	Perfectionist Paula	Overestimating Oscar
Rigid Richard	Avoiding Alison	Permanent Pete	Fortune Telling Fran	Scarcity Sam
All-or-nothing Al	Grumpy McGrumperson	Self-critical Carla	Mindreading Mandy	Negative Ned

Saying it out loud gives us more power

✓ To expose it
✓ To take control and use helpful coping strategies

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Curiosity is a key response to emotional experiences

Curious kids feel safe & have nervous systems that self-regulates

Anxiety leaves no room for curiosity.

Labelling Emotions
& All that comes with it

- With no words comes behaviours
- Name it to tame it
  - Calms nervous system
  - Builds confidence

Feelings Vocabulary

The more specific, the better
- Keeps PFC online
- Helps with foresight

How do emotions show up?

Sounds like:
List the worried thoughts and images that come up:

Feels like:
List physical symptoms associated with worries:
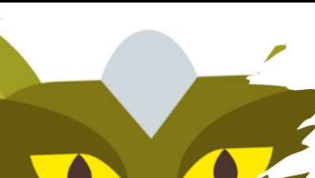
Looks like:
List behaviours that result from the worries, including avoidance:
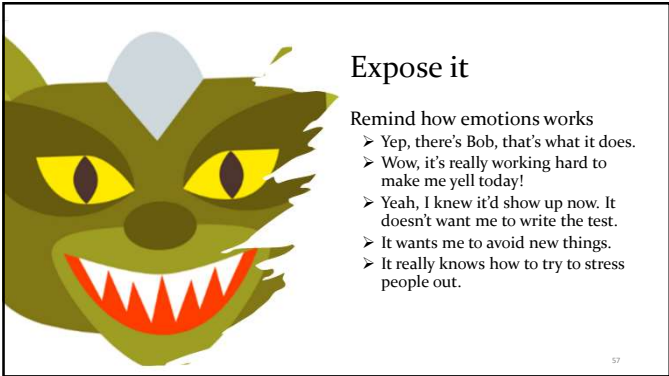
Expose it

Remind how emotions works
➢ Yep, there's Bob, that's what it does.
➢ Wow, it's really working hard to make me yell today!
➢ Yeah, I knew it'd show up now. It doesn't want me to write the test.
➢ It wants me to avoid new things.
➢ It really knows how to try to stress people out.

Understand Functions of Emotions
and all that comes with it

MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening

• Cannot change reactions without this understanding

Disappointment

Hurt

Fear
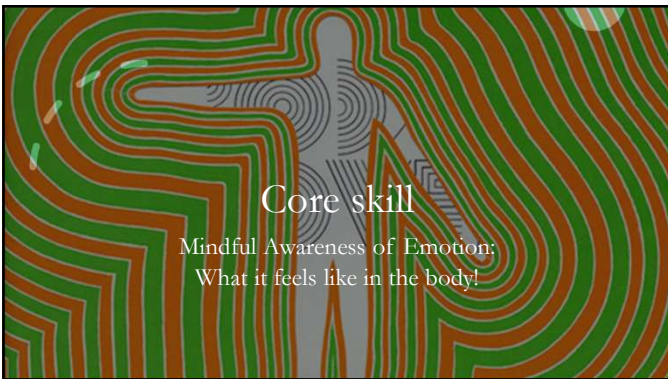
Physical Symptoms are a Problem

They start to worry about the physical feelings, which are distressing, which they will do anything to stop

Become reactive

Misinterpret and leads to more sensations…

Core skill
Mindful Awareness of Emotion:
What it feels like in the body!

And we can respond in helpful ways!

That makes sense!

No wonder - your adrenal glands have sent out all that yucky stuff.

Emotions show up in the body
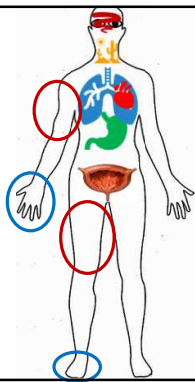
They need to know that we MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening
• Cannot change reactions without this understanding

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When uncomfortable, EVERYONE's amygdala takes over to try to make us quit.

Discomfort is temporary quitting is forever

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Understand how stress shows up = Adaptive thinking

The mystery is gone

BONUS: Expecting physical sensations helps reduce signals to amygdala

> Of course, I feel uncomfortable! I know what my body is doing. I can handle this.

Mindfulness

Not about relaxing or getting rid of physical symptoms

Not about changing thoughts

Mindfulness

IT'S ABOUT *NOT* FIGHTING THEM

Mindfulness

- Active process
- Paying attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way
  - Being detectives

Emotions Likes to Keep us Stuck!

Negatively influences affect, thoughts, behaviours → Thoughts of Past or Future → Negatively influences affect, thoughts, behaviours → Keeping thinking of past or future →

At the expense of valuable information now
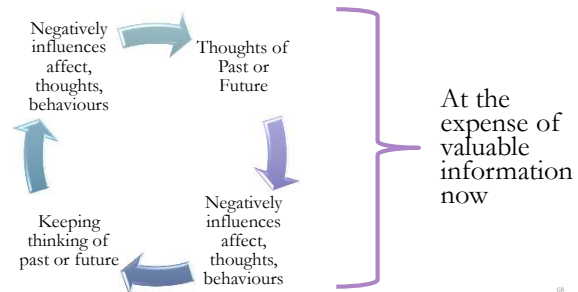
Mindfulness

- Need to stay here and attend to the current context
  - To keep prefrontal cortex online
    - To attend to corrective information
    - To learn!

Versus getting sucked into worries, which intensifies the emotional experience and keeps us stuck

Understand Functions of Emotions
and all that comes with it

MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening

• Cannot change reactions without this understanding

Disappointment

Hurt

Fear
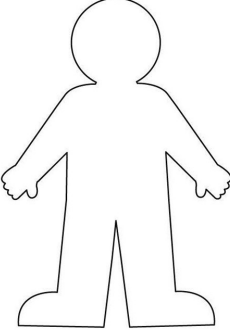
Dizzy	Shivers
Racing	Increased heart rate
Tension	Weak legs
Achy	Ringing ears
Sore	Blurred vision
Hot	Muscle tension
Cold	Shaking
Tingly	Trembling
Numb	Chest pain
Sharp	Headaches
Breathless	Burning skin/sweating
Shivering	Blushing
Sweating	Changes in breathing
Trouble swallowing	Stomach-ache/ Nausea
Tired	Relaxed

Identify& describe where anxiety shows up. Stronger on left or right?

Name it

Where is it in the body?

How does it feel?

Left or right?

What's next?

Teach process to keep cortex working

When we label the different parts of emotions and our experiences, we:

- Change our interpretation of them
- Change how our body responds
- Dampen amygdala's false alarm
- Turn on prefrontal cortex
- Make adaptive decisions
- Learn that we have control over our responses
  - I know what you are & I know how to handle you
- Avoid getting sucked in – it's just a piece of information

Can't just talk about it.
Practicing Emotional Awareness Key!

Excitation and Settling Activities

Physical games to release excess energy followed by settling and body scan to raise awareness

Nonjudgmental Awareness of the NOW is Foundational

- Without mindful awareness and acceptance of emotions, can't move on with any of the other work to strengthen more adaptive responses
  - Therefore, need **LOTS of practice and experiences with UNCOMFORTABLE feelings**

Change Relationship with Emotions

From judgmental and critical stance in which they try to avoid, minimize, or eliminate

---

GOAL
Acceptance & Tolerance

- Normal part of being human
- Temporary, not fact
- Sit with them until they subside

Emotion Dial   Acceptance Dial

0   100   0   100

Did you know?
Fear and excitement
feel the same in the body?
But how we think about it makes all the
difference in the world….
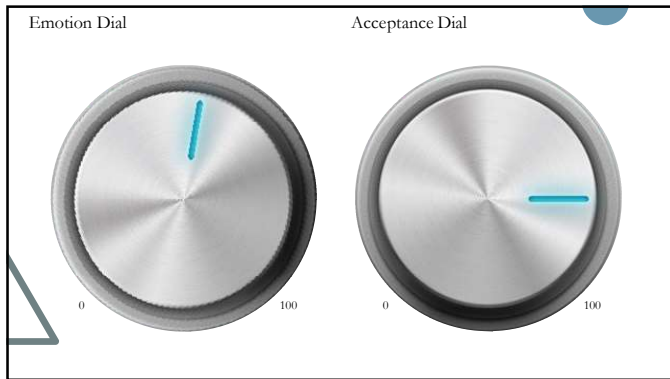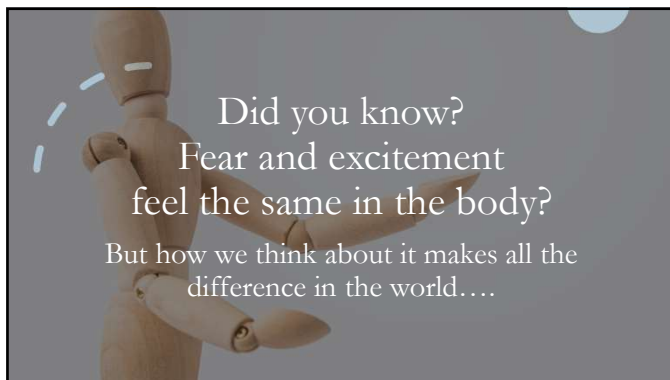
Different hormones
released to prepare
for what's to come.

How does our body
know?

- Depends largely on our
  evaluation of the situation,
  which COMES FROM
  EXPERIENCE!

Threat vs. Challenge Response
Not good or bad, different purposes

Threat response: Goal is survival in situations we
aren't equipped to handle
- More cortisol to defend and protect

Challenge response: Opportunity for growth where
we tackle hard but manageable situations
- More testosterone and adrenaline to help us achieve
  our goal

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Build Acceptance & Tolerance

- NOT resist, control, or eliminate emotions
- Focus on *ending fear of discomfort*
  - I am uncomfortable but I am going to do this anyway

Core skills

Identifying and modifying unhelpful emotion-driven behaviours

Resilient kids

Effectively respond to and cope with everyday challenges

- This is where we are going!

Resilience

Ability to adapt well to **adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress.**

Resilience Needs stress

Antifragility: Growing Stronger from Challenges

- We grow stronger under pressure.

- In strength training, muscles grow when they're exposed to challenges – more than what they're used to
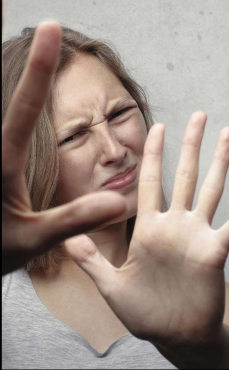
- If students aren't challenged, their resilience "muscle" doesn't grow.

Key Ingredients

Risk or adversity

Positive adaptation or competence

Opportunity

Resilience
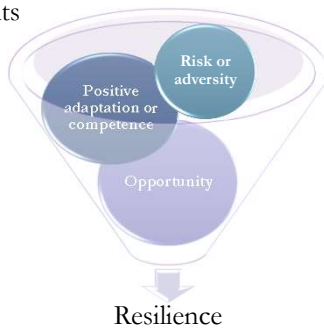
90% of what kids learn is from what they *experience*

When children avoid things they don't feel comfortable with, they lose the chance to practice and grow

With avoidance, they never learn!

Biased Thoughts

Never learn thoughts are biased and bad things might not happen or be as bad as thought.

Safety behaviours

Never learn they can cope on their own

Hinders their ability to face challenges

Anxiety strengthened

Worried thoughts seem believable

Emotional (Avoidant) Behaviours

Function: To reduce the intensity of the emotion
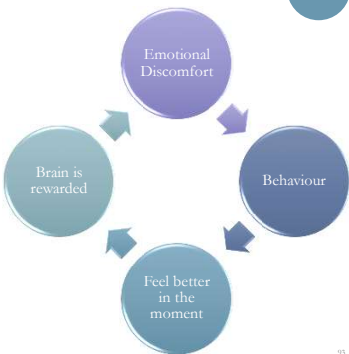
	Overt Avoidance	Avoid situations, people, things
	Subtle Avoidance	Avoid full experience of emotions
	Cognitive Avoidance	Avoid distressing thoughts
	Safety Behaviours/signals	Used to feel as safe as possible

Important!

MUST understand how their behaviours are maintaining, or even worsening, their emotional discomfort

- The behaviour is reinforced in the moment, increasing the likelihood of using this strategy again in the future

Emotional Discomfort

Behaviour

Feel better in the moment

Brain is rewarded

Remember! Short- and long-term outcomes of maladaptive vs. adaptive coping strategies

Maladaptive Coping	→	Feel better in the moment	→	Worsens emotional discomfort in the long run	→	Ingrains emotional pathways
Adaptive Coping	→	Feel distressing in the moment	→	Tolerate & manage emotions in the long run	→	Create new healthy pathways

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I ensure I look perfect to feel safe against potential embarrassment.	• But I end up missing school • But I fight with my mom	I fail school Homelife is tense
I skip social functions to avoid rejection	• But I miss out seeing my friends and nurturing those relationships	I will lose relationships and become isolated.
I constantly check my health to stay in control and catch anything early	• But I miss out on things • Time consuming • Always worried and no time for hobbies	I disrupt relationships, lose self, become depressed

---

Core skills

Integration of all the skills through emotion exposure to
MASTER ADAPTIVE RESPONSES

Outcomes directly relates to their willingness to **feel** big emotions

Emotion Dial

Willingness Dial

0   100

0   100

Willingness
Action Plan

Goal:

Big why:

The steps I need to take are:

I will take the first step on (date) at (time)

The discomfort I am willing to have to achieve this goal:

Thoughts
Feelings
Sensations
Urges
I can remind myself that:

Practice Coping with Uncertainty and UNCOMFORTABLE Feelings!

100

Practice

- Not being
- Losing a g
- Meeting a cue p
- iPad unavailable
- Someone cheats at s
- Making a mista

The more microsucks throughout the day, we build resilience, motivation, and tenacity

*Practice practice pr
automatic they don't have
about it*

Integrate Skills through
Emotion Exposure

Integrate skills to master adaptive responses
- Talking not enough to change the brain!
  - Doing makes stronger memories
  - Doing gives us experience
  - Quicker progress
- Provoke STRONG EMOTIONS - MUST show up for learning to happen

Get their buy-In

Otherwise, you get resistance

- Emotional distress directly related with hesitancy towards engaging in the work.
- We MUST identify what is more important to them than feeling uncomfortable

Motivation Fluctuates – Address this Early!

Example Teen Cost Benefit Analysis

Benefit of anxiety	Cost of anxiety
Protection – alert to potential dangers	Too upset and reactive
	Social isolation
Makes me feel safer and more prepared	Personal relationships affected
	Academics affected
Better liked	No time for hobbies and self-care
	Time consuming!
Prevent judgment	Not sustainable
	Chronic physical symptoms
Responsible & taking good care of my health	Loss of self
	Effortful to feel overwhelm
Easier & more comfortable	No joy in life

What is Important

And how is anxiety getting in the way?

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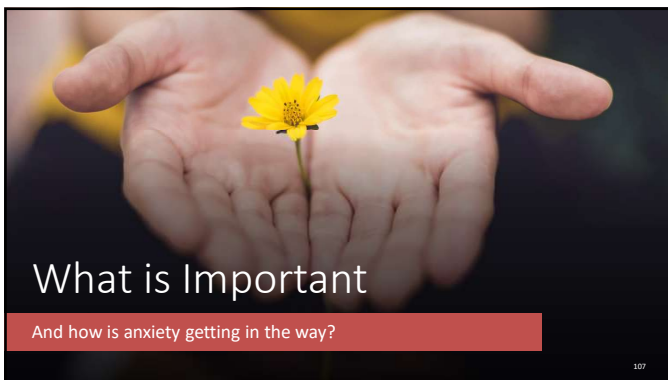
All the things anxiety makes you do when avoiding
- Cry
- Yell
- Feel gross
- Isolate
- Stay home
- Feel bored
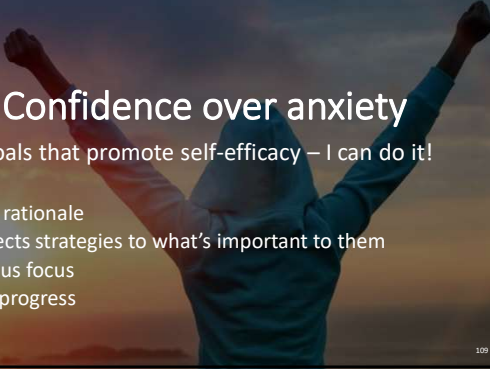
All the things anxiety makes you avoid
- Seeing friends
- Sleepovers
- Birthday parties
- School
- Tryouts for sports (and therefore sport teams)
- Sleeping in own bed
- Making new friends

Confidence over anxiety

Goals that promote self-efficacy – I can do it!

- Boost rationale
- Connects strategies to what's important to them
- Gives us focus
- Track progress

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Become so good at managing ANY emotion that comes up.

Learn to *respond differently* through **LOTS OF EXPERIENCES**

- Anxiety
- Shame
- Guilt
- Rejection
- Disappointment
- Frustration
- Self-doubt

Avoiding Rejection Ingrained in the Brain

Why?

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No Safety Behaviours Allowed!
(It's only an illusion of safety anyway)
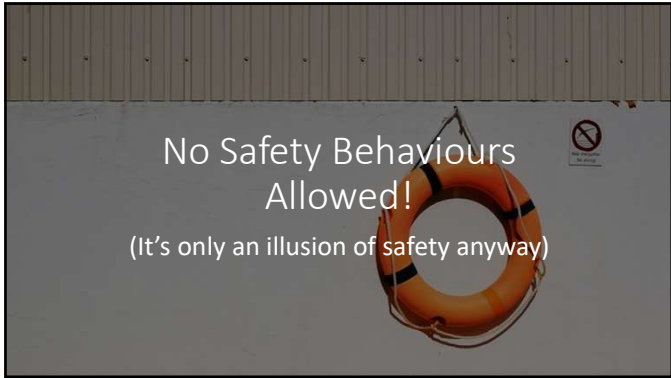
The Problem with Safety Behaviours

Habits that maintain & worsens anxiety
- No learning happens: believe the behaviour prevented catastrophe
- Still trying to control anxiety (so never confront fears)
- Effortful and exhausting (which causes more anxiety and dysregulation)

Safety Behaviours
Any strategy to control, avoid, or reduce anxiety

Sitting strategically (e.g., near exits)	Having someone with you	Carrying a safety object	Never letting heart rate get too high	Having phone charged and on at all times
Medications	Reassurance seeking	Checking google all the time	Having water available at all times	Not eating before leaving the house
	Not going to work or school	Asking forgiveness	Praying	

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When the gremlin shows up, it is going to:

- Tell me
- Make me feel
- Want me to

I am going to:

- Say
- Notice
- Do

For Adults: 👎 Reassure   👍 Support Confidence

Collaborate!

- Brainstorm ideas, rate them, and let them choose
  - The harder it is, the faster the gains!

Easy   Hard

|———————————|

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Predictions are important for learning!
Set up as experiments to ensure learning

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Hypothesis Testing

Lots of experiments and experiences needed!

- What do you think will happen?
- How sure? (1-10)?
- Was the hypothesis right?
- What did you learn?

Exposure to LEARN:

Emotions are safe, tolerable, & temporary

When I don't do anything to try to make myself feel better, the amygdala learns: This is not dangerous! (**And stops sending the false alarm**.)

Exposure to LEARN

Despite feeling anxious, I still did it

And… I can still live life and do anything, even while feeling anxious!

Exposure TO LEARN

No matter what happens, I can handle it!

On my own
- Without others
- Without safety behaviours

Our job is not to convince:

Learning happens through experience

They need to:
- Test the accuracy of their predictions
- Make their own conclusions
- Create new expectations

Predict to Maximize Learning!

Antecedents (Triggers to anxiety)	Predicted Awfulness	Actual Awfulness	Later
Walking by M's desk and saying Hi	90		

I predict this will happen — **What really happened?**

- I will turn bright red
- I will stare like a deer in headlights
- I will say something nonsensical or stupid
- M will look at me in disgust
- Everyone will hate me
- I will die from embarrassment

Need to disconfirm their fear story to the fullest extent possible

Ending Exposure Session

Did the feared outcome happen?
- Yes
  - Did you survive?
  - How manageable was it?
- No
  - How tolerable was the distress waiting for It to happen?
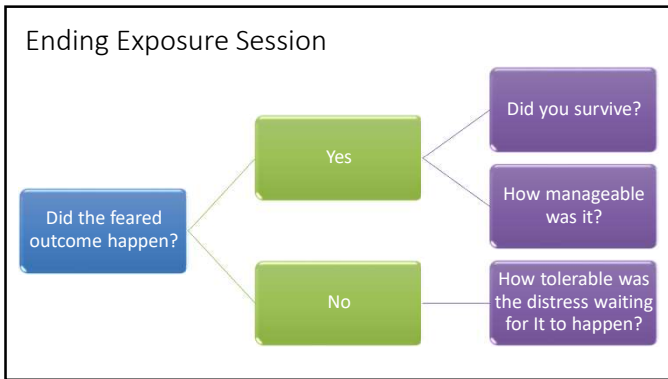
When exposure is done

- Lots of opportunities
- Can do it on their own without safety behaviours
- NOT about their subjective distress!!!!

Willingness to face anxiety provoking experiences!!!

Recovery is when:

You're not worried about worries

END

Lifestyle Focus

Opportunists: Choosing to be anxious now for more success later

---

You don't grow with easy

Experience to cope with challenges – realize they CAN manage and have the capacity to succeed

CHALLENGE BOARD
- Choose tasks
- Track progress – the harder the task, the further they go!

Missions for Self-Exposure
You're only limited by your own creativity!

Create themes for the week
- Imperfection
  - Make a guess when don't know
  - Focus on quantity vs. quality in a timed task
  - Fast decision making
- Independence
  - Book own appointments
  - Buy things on their own
  - Order the family's pizza
- Talking to people
  - Ask stranger for time or directions
  - Ask someone to play
  - Compliment someone

Opportunities to Be Comfortable in the World

Promote independence!
- Give kids the chance to do, think, be, and make their own decisions and mistakes
- Encourage kids to try new things, even when scared
  - They need to know you support and trust them!

Opportunities for Independence

- Give more responsibility
- Give kids the chance to do, think, and make on their own
  - Get ready to go home
  - Check their homework
  - Solve conflicts
  - Make their own friends
  - Fix mistakes
  - Solve problems
  - Students to come to you with concerns
  - Assert their needs (set up opportunities)
  - IPP goals
- Teach kids to be comfortable in the world

Opportunities: Use Real Challenges!

Challenges are part of life. Dealing with them is part of learning.
- Use teachable moments
  - Solve their own problems
  - Figure things out on their own
  - Take accountability
  - See the consequences of their behaviours
  - Work through next steps and how to fix things
  - Let them fail (don't set them up though)

Create challenges!

- **Challenge of the day, week, or month**
  - Work through things on their own
  - Might get frustrated in the moment but the intrinsic reward once solved is far greater than if helped

---

Create Challenges For Experimentation

Objective: Encourage students to take risks, think creatively, and learn from mistakes. Reinforce the value of trial and error.
- Ensure tasks include **iteration, problem-solving, and self-correction**

Paper tower challenge	Spaghetti & marshmallow bridge test	Egg drop experiment	Paper plane contest	Balloon-powered car race	Bottle rocket launch
Strongest paper chain	Cup tower competition	Mystery STEM challenge	Popsicle stick catapult	Float or sink experiment	Index card tower
	LEGO engineering task	Balloon hovercraft	Create a roller coaster for marbles	Design a parachute	Escape room puzzle design

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Risk-takers advantage
Exposing kids to opportunities for some risk is helpful

- Limits on screen time
- Learn the skills they need to survive early
- Help with important events and occasions
- Let them bake and decorate the cake (without you fixing it)
- Eskimo club
- Using tools

Risk-takers advantage

Doing something brave and difficult is more important than the outcome

LET THEM PLAY**!!!**

LET THEM HELP!!!

With IMPORTANT things
Sooner vs. later

NEED TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED

Skills: tolerate uncertainty and think about different options themselves

Unexpected event/mistake of the day & how you handled it

The power of I Don't Know
They can figure it out themselves
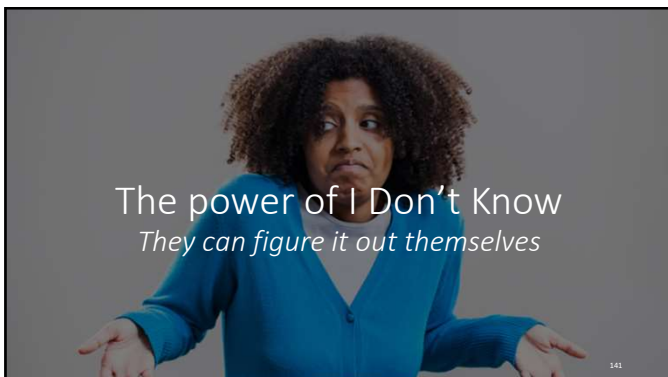
(We can't know, so avoid reassurance.)

Let's figure that out.

What could you do?

Coaches use mirror neurons

Brain can't tell the difference

Show confidence = FEEL confidence

Kids need to figure out their own challenges: Put it back to them!

Confidence

Validation

Effective Response

What I know	What I don't know
• We are going to the zoo	• If I have to go to the bathroom
• We are going by bus	• Where the bathrooms are
• We are leaving at 9:10	• Who will be in my group
• We will get back at 2:55	• I will get lost
	• Where to go if I get lost
	• What parent will be in our group
	• if we will see the gorillas
	• If I will fall down and get hurt
	• If I have an allergic reaction

Adult Role: Master the Art of Stepping Back & Letting Children Learn from Mistakes

• To maximize student learning, independence, problem-solving, confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, and overall growth, we must allow them to **experience and navigate mistakes**
  • If a child is struggling:
    • Pause and ask if this is a growth opportunity
    • Validate their struggle and show confidence in their ability to figure it out
    • Encourage reflection with open-ended questions (e.g., what could you try next?)
    • Acknowledge persistence and small improvements (vs. the end result)

Trust the process. If they stumble, they will rise stronger.

Avoiding mistakes limits opportunities for creativity, innovation, and learning.

DO NOT try to eliminate stress or avoid mistakes – capitalize on them for growth and learning.

Help students view frustration as a sign of learning, not defeat, and emphasize the importance of sustained effort.

Reframe Mistakes as Opportunities

First though, MUST feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them.

The Importance of Mistakes and Failure

➢ Talk about your own mistakes and failures as adults
➢ Talk about others' experiences
➢ Talk about their own – what have they learned?

Create a culture where mistakes are openly discussed, valued, and expected.

Normalize & Celebrate Mistakes

Celebrate Mistakes

- Have a "Mistake of the day" to share a mistake or challenge they faced, how they fixed/handled it, and what they learned
- (Most top performers know they haven't tried hard enough if they haven't met a certain # mistakes in a day)

Embrace mistakes

What was this experience like

What did you learn today?

What mistake did you make

What did you try hard at today
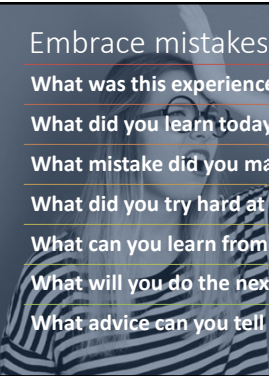
What can you learn from this?

What will you do the next time you are in this situation?

What advice can you tell others based on this?

Best response to a mistake = Yay! You get to try again!

Important!

It is not what they did wrong that counts, but *what they do next.*

Build Procedural Thinking!

- Strive for excellence, but address unrealistic standards
  - Emotions related to expectations
- Focus on what's next (vs. circumstances, rumination, should's)

What's next? → What's next? → What's next?

Worry is strong & makes us forget

Prefrontal Cortex Thinking/logic/ what to do/ evaluation.

Hippocampus Regulates memory and emotions.

Amygdala Turns on fight or flight, and stores memories of the event.

WEAK

STRONG

Everything is ok.

Aargh!

Hard

Working on It

Success!

Bonus Material
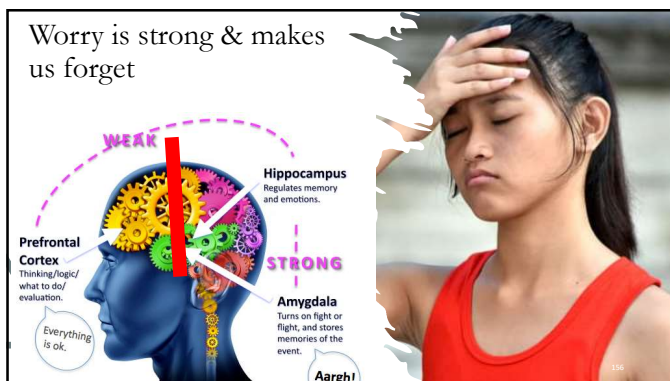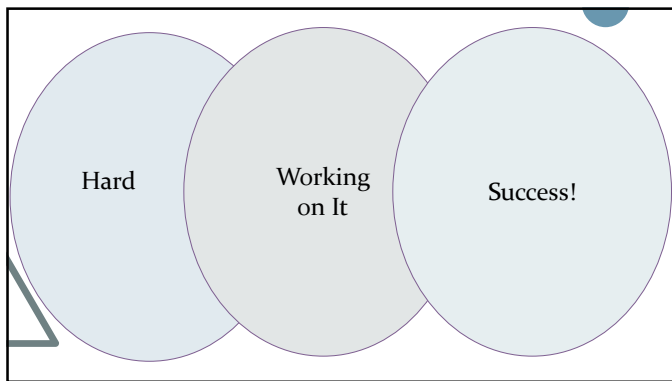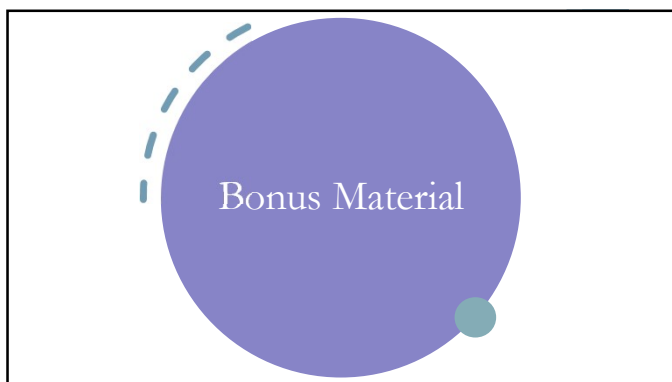
Mindful Awareness & Acceptance of Thoughts

- Infinite amount of thoughts
  - (4.617 x 10^61 potential thoughts= four hundred sixty-one duodecillion and seven hundred decillion)

We can't control our thoughts – only our response to them

Be aware and accept it for what it is: A random thought

Core Skill:
Cognitive Flexibility

Knowledge Influences Sensory Information
(e.g., all faces are always convex)

- Our knowledge/ experience misleads us into seeing the mask as convex

Bottom-up sensory information is overridden by top-down knowledge

Illusion of Emotions
(and all that accompanies it)

The first draft

These are only guesses!!

Wrong 99% of the time

Zoom Out!
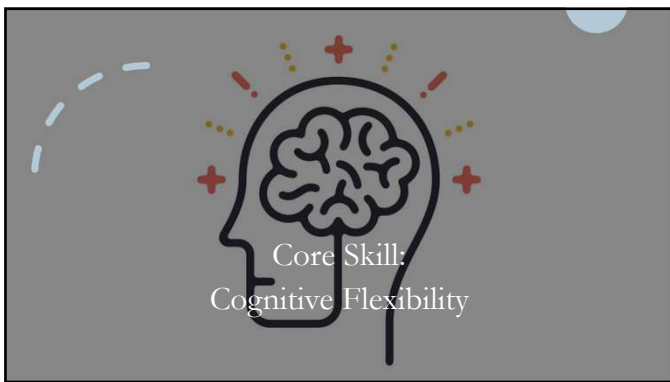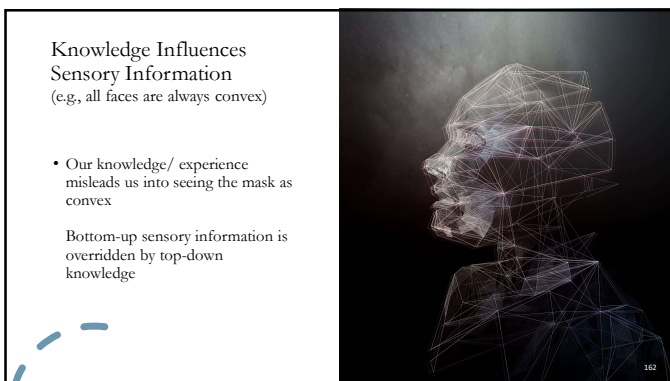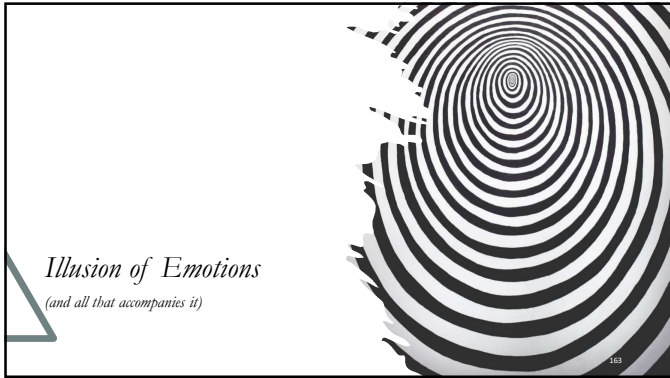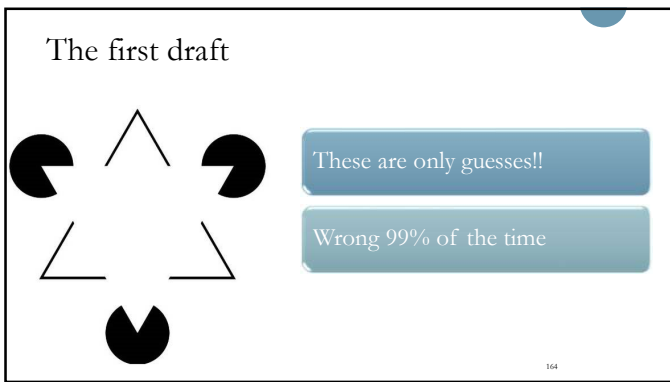
Get Unstuck: Detach

Distancing
- "____ is noticing ____ is having the thought that…."
- Use third person language
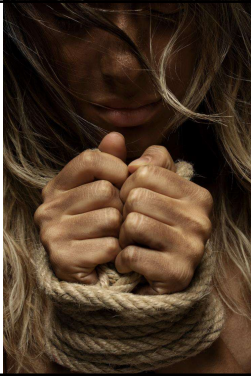
Train, balloons, bubbles clouds, or leaves on the river

Thank them

Objectify
- What colour? How big? What shape? What texture? How would it move if it could?

Name that Story

Possibility 1

Possibility 4 — Situation — Possibility 2

Possibility 3
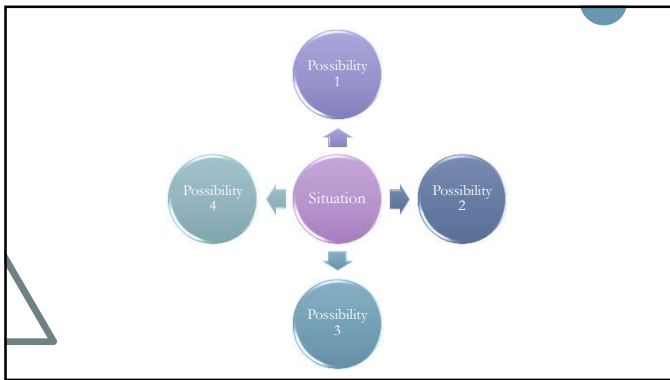
Build Awareness!
Externalize & Get Meta

- When does Stuck Stan show up?
  - What is easy to get stuck on? What is easy about it?
  - What is easy to avoid getting stuck? What is easy about it?
  - What helps you get unstuck? What worked before? What do you say to yourself to get unstuck?
- Identify obstacles to getting unstuck
- Collaboratively develop strategies to overcome them

Out of my control → Acceptance and Tolerance

In my control → Problem Solve

Problem-solving

- 🔍 Identify the problem
- Brainstorm all possible solutions
- Evaluate pros/cons of the feasible ideas
- ✓ Make a plan
- Implement & Tweak as needed

Problem-solving

Help them be thinkers
Independent problem solvers to figure things out

Brainstorm, Practice, & Evaluate Options

I hate writing and people will judge me

Refuse to write

Get stuck

Get in trouble

Practice being flexible

Ask to use the computer

Ask to see Ms. K to help

Try what I can in class

Model!

- I feel frustrated. I need to take a minute to think what to do next.
  - Can you help me brainstorm ideas?

- That's a tight timeline. I am going to plan this out.

- I am a little nervous; I have no idea what will happen. Let's figure this out.

Practice!

- Problem-solving
  - Start with emotion free problems
  - Move toward emotionally charged situations

POST-WORKSHOP SURVEY

https://drcarolinebuzanko.com/anxiety-resilience-post-workshop-survey/

https://parentsoftheyear.buzzsprout.com/

rebrand.ly/OverpoweringEmotionsPodcast
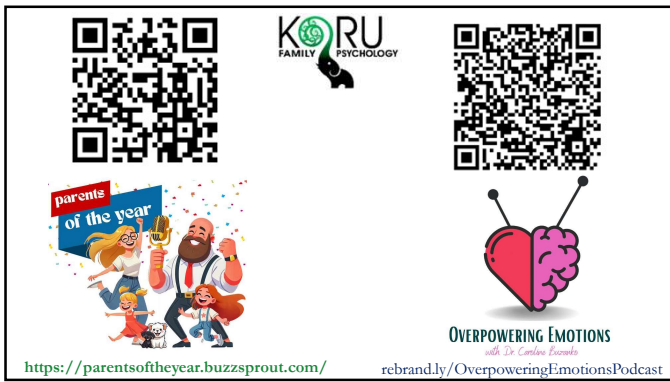
Bonus Resources

Behaviours

Developing a personal action plan: Get out of traps!

What traps do I need to get out of?	How can I improve my approach for effective communication?	What can I do proactively ?	What can I start collaboratively problem-solving?	What I can do to strengthen our relationship?

Screen Resources

- Canadian Home Video Rating System (CHVRS) https://www.mpa-canada.org/canada-home-video-rating-system/
- Center for Humane Technology: https://www.humanetech.com/
- Common sense media: https://www.commonsensemedia.org/
  - Teach digital citizenship: https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship
- Family Online Safety Institute: https://www.fosi.org/
- Media Smarts: https://mediasmarts.ca/
- Screenagers: https://www.screenagersmovie.com/
- Wait until 8th: https://www.waituntil8th.org/

Behaviour Change Always Starts with Us!

- **Assessing My Role**
  - What am I contributing to this conflict?
  - Am I reacting to this situation or responding thoughtfully?
  - Am I enforcing rules consistently, or might my approach appear unfair or biased?
  - Am I modeling the behavior I want to see in this student?
  - Did I provide clear expectations and consequences beforehand?

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Always Starts with Us!

- **Understanding the Student**
  - What might be going on for this student now? What might this student be feeling?
  - What external factors (e.g., home environment, peer relationships, personal struggles) might be influencing their behavior?
  - Does the student feel heard and respected during this interaction?
  - Have I considered the student's context/developmental needs in interpreting their behavior?
  - What unmet needs (e.g., safety, belonging, competence) might be driving this behavior?

Behaviour Change Always Starts with Us!

- **Improving the Relationship**
  - What is one action I can take to improve the dynamic?
  - What steps can I take to repair trust with this student?
  - What can I do to help this student feel seen and valued?
  - Have I built a strong enough relationship with this student to understand their triggers and motivators?
  - Am I focusing on the student's strengths as much as addressing their challenges?
  - How can I create a safe space for the student to express themselves without fear of judgment or punishment?
  - Have I provided opportunities for the student to share their perspective on this conflict?

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👍

Effective Communication

You listen more than talk

You remain calm

You acknowledge their perspective

Your attitude is respectful and caring

You respect their autonomy

You ensure that they feel heard

👎

Unhelpful Communication

You ignore perspective

Your attitude is not respectful and caring

You try to lecture, teach, nag, or fix the situation, share your agenda

Talk too much

Emotional escalation or power struggle

Taking things personally

Negativity

Judgment

Establishing Behaviour Expectations Tips

Involve child
Start small! Few rules and build on successes
State rules positively
Make rules visible
Teach & practice to success
Use role play to keep kids actively engaged
Train every day
Automatize (requires less brain energy!)
Tie new behaviours to existing ones
Use positive motivators vs. Punishment
Make rewards appealing and immediate
Acknowledge adaptive behaviours
Review expectations and support at point of performance
Provide ongoing structure and support for success
Choices
Structured breaks

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Self-Regulation Expectations & Supports

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Example Stressors Depleting Self-Regulation Capacity

Biological	Emotion	Cognitive	Social	Prosocial
Loud noises, sensory overload	Changes in routine, transitions	Put on the spot	Bullying	Empathy overload
Pain or discomfort	Leaving parents	Uninterested in a topic	Social media pressures	Moral dilemmas
Inadequate or irregular sleep	Over-excitement	Information overload	Peer pressure	Injustice to self or others
Lack of physical activity	Fear of making a mistake	Distractions	Friendship fires	Feeling undervalued or unappreciated
Sitting too long	Trauma	Fast pace, time pressures	Family conflicts	Observing or learning about widespread suffering
Screens	Feeling unsupported	Lack of clear instructions	Social anxiety or shyness	Witnessing distress without being able to help
Poor diet	Negative self-talk	Language barriers	Miscommunications	Conflict between personal values and societal expectations
Dehydration	Anxiety, sadness, anger, frustration	Complex problem solving under pressure	Disagreeing with what someone is saying	Being undervalued or unappreciated
Too hot or cold	Guilt or shame	Memory demands	Being in a social setting alone	
Allergies or intolerances	Feeling overwhelmed with work	Clutter	Sharing ideas as part of a group plan	
Illness	Inability to express emotions	Unfamiliar or new environments	Missing friends	
Poor air quality – classrooms!	Feeling powerless	Inconsistent routines	Navigating complex social hierarchies	
Lack of exposure to natural light	Uncertainty	Lack of feedback on performance	Trouble making friends	
Discomfort in clothes	Loneliness	Concentrating for long	Cultural assimilation challenges	
GI problems	Social exclusion	Homework	Being a minority	
Overexertion	Pressure to perform	Making choices	Lack of empathy	
Medication side effects	Relationship conflicts	Busy schedule	Managing social commitments	
Lack of natural light	Feeling unloved or unsupported	Disorganization	Navigating societal norms and rules	
	Stress from life changes	Frequent task switching		
		EF challenges		

Early Childhood Co-regulation Considerations

Adult relationship
- Key for effective emotion regulation

Teach
- Expressing emotions & problem solving through direct instruction, modelling, and coaching

Identify & Label
- Observed emotions

Model
- Appropriate emotion management (e.g., self-talk)

Prompt & reinforce
- To follow the same process.
- Self-regulation supported through external consequences.

Role of Language

Receptive and expressive skills related to executive functions & impulse control
- Parent verbal skills also predictive of impulse control

Language also important in learning strategies for self-regulation
- Explain rules and talk through problems
  - Learn rationale for behaviours
  - Interpersonal communication
    - Negotiate adult demands and peer conflict
- Verbal self-instruction to internal speech and later thoughts
- Label emotions helps appraise their experience and how to react

Early Childhood
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

- **Guided choices** to promote a sense of control
- Establish **consistent daily routines** to provide a sense of security and predictability.
- Use stories or play to discuss feelings and appropriate responses to different situations.
- Engage children in play activities that require turn-taking and sharing to naturally **teach self-regulation in a social context**.
- Encourage them to **solve minor problems** on their own with verbal guidance, fostering early decision-making skills.

Early Childhood
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

Ideas for in the classroom

- Visual and verbal cues to **signal transitions** between activities, helping children prepare for changes and reducing anxiety.
- Provide **structured choices** during activities to promote autonomy while ensuring the choices align with educational goals.
- **Model appropriate social and emotional responses**. Use role-play to practice these skills in a controlled setting, providing immediate feedback.

Middle Childhood Co-regulation Considerations

- Adult relationship
- Teach problem-solving.
- Model conflict resolution.
- Provide time and space to manage emotions.
- Model, prompt, and reinforce developing skills.
- Encourage independence in task completion with external consequences as needed.

Middle Childhood
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

- **Explicit teaching** of specific strategies
  - Managing emotions, managing time, monitoring work and behaviour, focusing attention, and being more independent through the day.
- **Scaffolding** for complex tasks: step-by-step guidance, gradually reducing support as their skills improve.
- **Positive reinforcement** for desired behaviours that promote self-regulation.
- **Collaboratively problem-solve**
  - Encourage them to generate potential solutions, consider different options and consequences

Middle Childhood
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

Ideas for in the classroom

- Implement classroom management strategies that **encourage self-regulation**, such as a place to reset their battery or a point system for self-monitoring behaviour.
- Use **group projects to teach cooperative skills**, turn-taking, and conflict resolution, requiring children to regulate their behaviour in social contexts.
- **Teach skills directly**
  - E.g., organization - how to keep a tidy desk or use an assignment notebook, providing regular check-ins and support as needed.

Adolescence
Co-regulation
Considerations

More reactive to stress

- Increase in reward sensitivity and sensation seeking
  - Stronger than cognitive regulation
  - Low impulse control
  - Peer context increases risky behaviours
- Reduced avoidance behaviour
  - Experimentation and novelty seeking

= Self-regulation is out of balance

More vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and risk behaviours

Adolescence

Adolescence
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

- Relationship
- Effective communication - always supportive so they feel safe to express and manage their emotion
- Invitations and seeds of guidance on coping mechanisms.
- Coach
  - EF skills & healthy stress management
- Collaboratively problem solve
- Encourage decision-making when regulated
- Set and review goals
- Set limits to reduce reward-seeking behaviours
- Monitor task completion

Adolescence
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

- Encourage projects that require planning, research, and execution over longer periods.
- Teach and model effective time management strategies.
- Work with them to set personal goals related to self-regulation and actionable steps to achieve these goals.
- Gradually increase their autonomy over daily choices and responsibilities, providing guidance as needed while encouraging independent problem-solving.
- Foster an environment for open discussions about emotions and struggles without judgment, emphasizing collaborative solutions.
- Encourage self-reflection about their beliefs, values, and goals for identity development.

Adolescence
Co-regulation to Self-regulation

Ideas for in the classroom

- Provide opportunities for students to **assess their own work** and set personal learning goals.
- Offer **project-based learning opportunities that require independent** research, planning, and execution, with the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than a director.
- **Incorporate lessons** on stress management, mindfulness, and coping strategies to help students manage academic pressures and personal challenges.
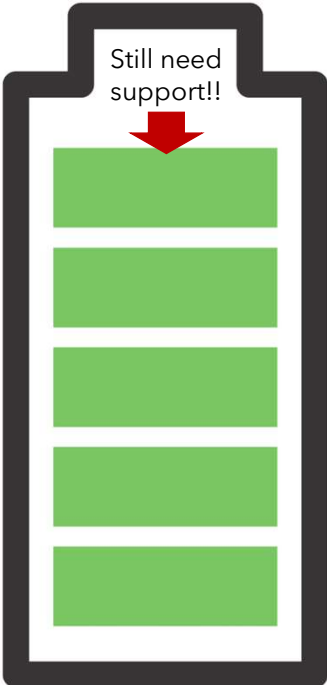
Tips for All Ages

- Relationship and safety
- Explicit and consistent expectations
- Positively reinforce desired behaviours

  Focus on effort and improvements
- Mindfulness

SELF-REGULATION BATTERY
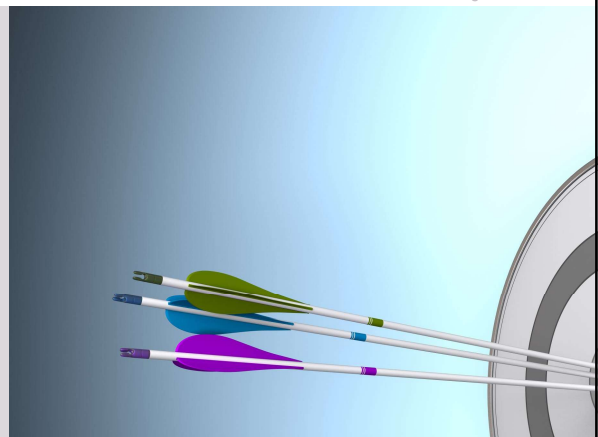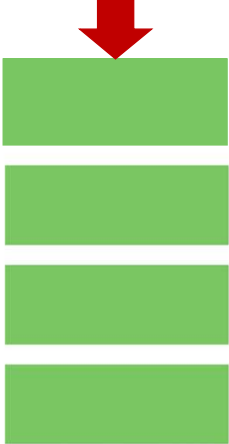
Signs for energy level	Regulation Plan/Strategies
	Self-regulation support:
	Self-regulation support:
	Co-regulation support:
	Calming co-regulation support:
	Emphasizing cues of safety:

Self-Regulation Battery Example

Still need support!!
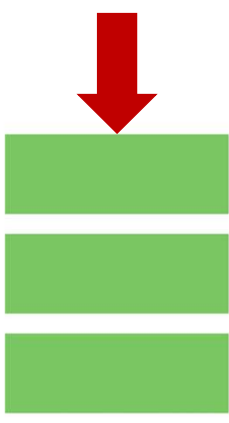
Signs for Billy's energy level	Self-regulation Plan/supports for Billy
Optimal participation ▪ Communicates needs ▪ Easily transitions ▪ Engaging ▪ Smiles ▪ Follows requests easily ▪ Follows rules	**Self-regulation support** • Adults monitoring his energy levels & providing support as needed • First-then for less preferred activities • Regular breaks to do energy restoring activities
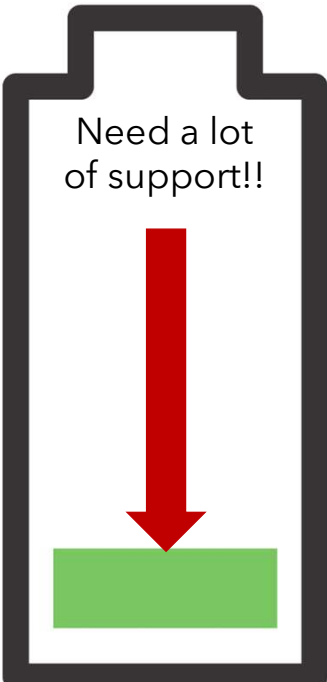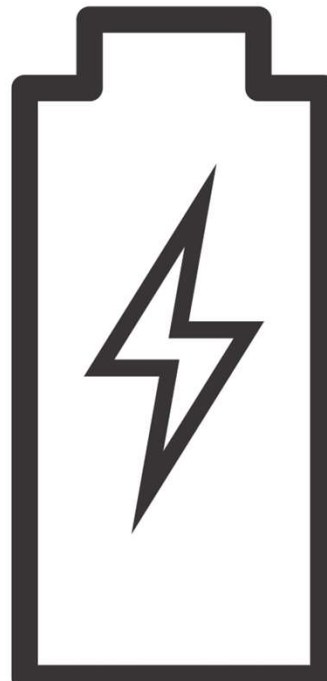
Signs for Billy's energy level	Self-regulation Plan/supports for Billy
OK Participation ▪ Seeks attention/connection ▪ Can choose and engage in tasks with frequent check-ins ▪ Responds to strategies offered ▪ OK with following rules ▪ Transitions with support ▪ Negotiates-can come to agreement	**Self-regulation support** ▪ First-then ▪ Visual schedule ▪ Choices ▪ Hands-on activities out and available to use ▪ Social acknowledgment when requested ▪ Frequent breaks with energy restoring activities ▪ Regularly monitoring signs of stress

Still need support!!

Signs for Billy's energy level	Self-regulation Plan/supports for Billy
Struggling to participate ▪ Echolalia ▪ Grabs ▪ Less agreeable Little patience/hard to wait ▪ Impulsive ▪ Says he is "bored" ▪ Stomps feet ▪ Moves away from group ▪ May not eat when needed/hungry ▪ Self-Initiating breaks ▪ 1:1 support to do activities ▪ 1:1 support to transition ▪ Rigid negotiations ▪ Anxiety	**Co-regulation support** ▪ First-then ▪ Modify expectations ▪ Following his lead about calming activities ▪ Physical activities ▪ 1:1 quiet time ▪ Self-regulation supports Into routines ▪ Connect before direct ▪ Reduce stressors draining energy ▪ Energy boosting activity

Need more support!!

Need a lot of support!!

Signs for Billy's energy level	Self-regulation Plan/supports for Billy
Struggling to participate ▪ Unresponsive ▪ Does not following prompts connected to routines ▪ Pinching self ▪ Runs away from group ▪ Hyper, giggly, silly, high-pitched squeal ▪ Arguing ▪ Noncompliant ▪ Rigid ▪ Trying to get control of the situation ▪ Throwing things ▪ Anxious	**Calming co-regulation support**: ▪ Calm tone of voice ▪ Listen vs. talk ▪ Focus on connection ▪ Reduce stressors draining energy ▪ Acknowledge emotions ▪ Say there for support ▪ Provide low energy options for expectations ▪ Cuddles

| Signs for Billy's energy level	Self-regulation Plan/supports for Billy
Very Challenging Behaviours ▪ Physical aggression ▪ Verbal aggression ▪ Running away ▪ Screaming ▪ Hitting ▪ Face turning red ▪ Crying	**Emphasizing cues of safety** ▪ Position body lower than his ▪ Minimal talking ▪ Let him know you are there with him/there to help him If needed ▪ Give time and follow his lead for space or connection ▪ Keep him safe

Optimize the Environment: Self-Assessment

- Is the classroom arranged to accommodate the needs of all students? Is the home environment organized in a way that supports structured activities and routines for your child?
- Are routines been established, explicitly taught, and made predictable to ensure a smooth flow of activities throughout the day?
- Are there three to five positive expectations outlined and prominently displayed? Have these been clearly defined and taught to children?
- Are prompts and active supervision used proactively to guide behaviour positively in anticipation of potential challenges?
- Is there a variety of opportunities for children to actively participate and engage at a high frequency, encouraging positive interactions and learning?
- Is specific praise and other positive reinforcement strategies regularly used to acknowledge and encourage the behaviours you wish to see more frequently?
- Are reminders consistently provided before a potential behavioural issue arises, to preemptively address and guide expected behaviour?
- Are responses to misbehaviours appropriate, consistent, and systematic, ensuring a clear understanding of consequences?
- Is there a system in place for collecting and analyzing behaviour-related data to inform strategies and interventions?

Does the environment support student needs?
Strategically Optimize Classroom Environment

- Versatile and activity-centric learning environment
- Diverse instructional activities (e.g., small groups, whole-class lessons, and individual learning stations)
- Create a dynamic learning space that is activity-centric
- Enhance visibility and accessibility: Clear sightlines and easy access for both teacher-led and student-centered activities.
- Strategic Seating Arrangements to foster interaction and ease of movement.
  - Facilitate smooth transitions between activities.
- Ready-to-Use Materials
  - Keep instructional resources organized and within reach.

Optimize Classroom Environment

- Visual aids
- Manage personal and instructional materials
    - Provide clear options for storing personal items
- Regularly assess the classroom setup to ensure that all students are visible and engaged, adjusting seating as necessary to promote inclusivity.
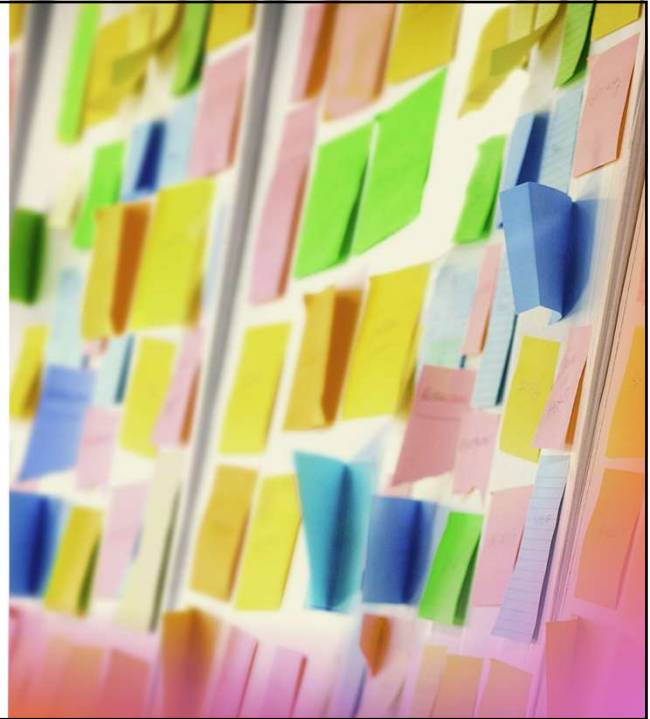
Consider

- Avoid blind spots where students or sections of the room are out of the teacher's sightline.
- Mitigate congestion and design clear pathways
- Ensure furniture is appropriately sized and arranged to support the physical comfort and engagement of all students.
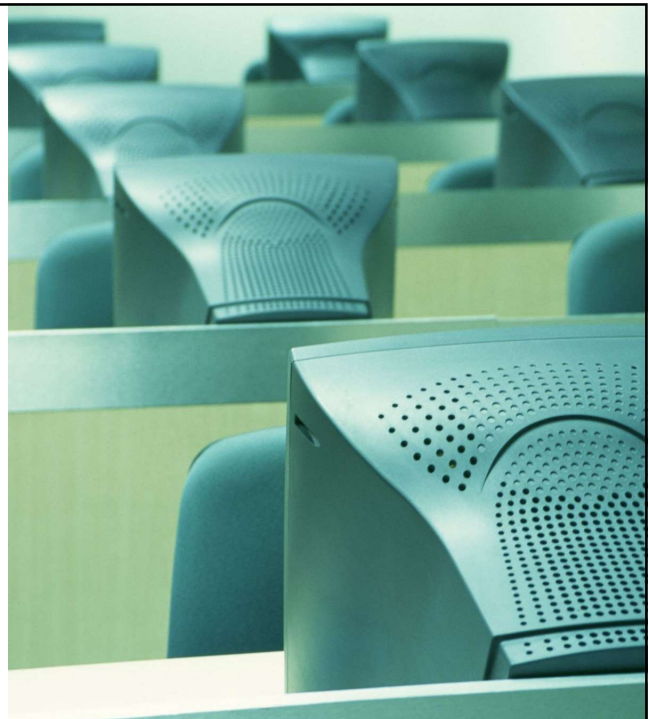
Optimal Home Environment

- Create defined spaces and ensure to personalize them!
  - Designate specific areas for various activities, such as homework, play, and relaxation.
  - Tailor the study and play spaces to their preferences and needs, incorporating their input to increase their comfort and sense of ownership over their space.
  - Provide a quiet, comfortable spot for downtime or when feeling overwhelmed.
- Foster independence with organized choices
  - Arrange belongings and toys in a way that allows the child to make choices independently, within set boundaries to foster autonomy while maintaining a structured environment.

Optimal Home Environment

- Visual schedules and rules
  - Visuals for daily routines and expectations.
  - Display clear, simple rules in a visible area to reinforce expectations and boundaries consistently.
- Ensure accessibility and organization
  - Organize essential materials in accessible, designated places to foster independence and responsibility.
  - Use labeled bins or shelves for toys and supplies to promote responsibility and ease in finding and returning items. Clear labeling and consistency in where items are stored can help reduce frustration and conflict.

Optimal Home Environment

- Minimize high-stress areas
  - Identify and modify areas in the home where conflicts frequently occur, aiming to reduce triggers. This may involve rearranging spaces to avoid cramped conditions or creating clearer divisions between activity areas.
  - Keep the living space orderly and minimize clutter to reduce sensory overload and distractions, supporting calmness.
- Safety and adaptability
  - Regularly assess the home for safety, ensuring that furniture and home setups do not pose risks and are adaptable to the child's changing needs.
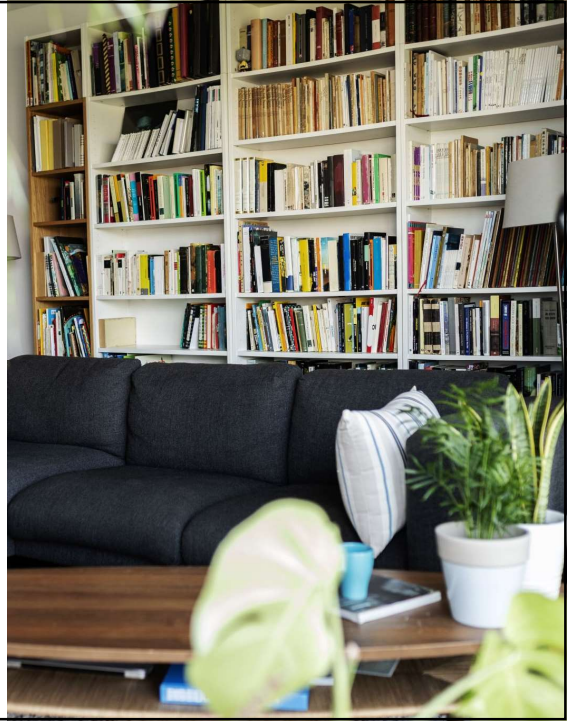
Are routines established, explicitly taught, and made predictable to ensure a smooth flow of activities throughout the day? *In the Classroom:*

Elementary Examples

- Ensure activities follow a predictable sequence.
- Explicitly teach and practice routines for daily activities.
- Acknowledge and reward students who follow these routines and procedures – encourage collaboration!

High School Examples

- Encourage students to manage their schedules and follow established routines with more autonomy.
- Implement structured routines for each class period, including a warm-up activity, review of previous lessons, introduction of new material, and a summary or wrap-up activity.

Routines At Home

- Consistent and structured daily routine for wake-up times, meals, homework, play, and bedtime.
- Teach and practice home routines with your child. Clearly outline the steps involved in each task and practice them together.
- Acknowledge and reward your child when they follow these routines.
- Consider what is developmentally appropriate!
  - Younger children: Focus on simple, visual schedules.
  - Older children and adolescents: Have them create their schedules and manage their responsibilities. Discuss and collaborate routines together, such as homework times and household chores, ensuring they are realistic and mutually agreed upon.

Consistent routines & lesson structure	Clear expectations	Posted timetables, rules, and expectations	Things to look forward to through the day!	Shorter tasks, explicit, closed ended	One predictable detail at a time	Minimize distractions
Talk less	Revisit and reinforce expectations	Structured tasks & teaching	Structure nonroutine or chaotic situations with a specific plan, job, or rules	Visual schedules and time organizers	Individualized checklists for task completion	

Helpful

- Engaging (interests)
- Immediate consequences
- Frequent feedback
- Personally important or relevant
- Early
- Supervised
- 1:1
- Structured
- Clear expectations and jobs
- Close to needed materials
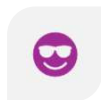- Quiet/low arousal
- Choices
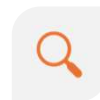- Consistent routines & lesson structure

- Clear expectations
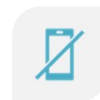- Posted timetables, rules, and expectations
- Things to look forward to through the day!
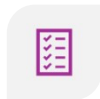- Shorter tasks, explicit, closed ended
- One predictable detail at a time
- Minimize distractions
- Talk less
- Revisit and reinforce expectations
- Structured tasks & teaching
- Structure nonroutine or chaotic situations with a specific plan, job, or rules
- Visual schedules and time organizers
- Individualized checklists for task completion

Not so helpful

Boring tasks
Delayed consequences
Infrequent feedback
Low importance tasks
Late in the day
Unsupervised settings
Group situations
Unstructured activities
Uncertainty
Need to search for materials
Loud/high arousal environments
Excessive multitasking requirements
Overloaded sensory stimuli without a relevant educational focus
Sudden changes in schedule or expectations without preparation
Overemphasis on competition rather than cooperation
Poor relationships with peers
Poor relationships with teachers

8 Forces of Motivation

Gregariousness	Need to belong	Group projects & collaborative learning
		Classroom circles
Autonomy	Need for independence	Choices
		Self-directed learning
Inquisitiveness	Need to know	Inquiry-based learning
		Research projects
Aggression	Need to assert	Debate & discussion
		Leadership roles
Power	Need for control	Class jobs
		Involve in creating rules & norms
Recognition	Need for acknowledgement	Praise and + feedback
		Showcase their work
Affiliation	Need to associate and belong	Clubs & extracurriculars
		Peer mentoring/buddies

Acknowledgement Examples	YES PLEASE	NO THANKS	Acknowledgement Examples	YES PLEASE	NO THANKS
Personalized compliments: "You did an excellent job showing great creativity and effort!"			Being the class helper/leader		
Encouraging words: "I'm really proud of how hard you worked!"			Choosing an activity for the class		
Public acknowledgment in class: "Let's give a round of applause!"			Extra computer time or free time to do what I want in class		
Thumbs up			Featuring my work		
Smile or nod to show approval			Mention in the school newsletter or morning announcements		
A positive note about my work			A certificate of achievement		
Sticker			Lunch with the teacher or special guest		
A 'praise note' to take home			Opportunity to share a skill or interest with the class		
Points that can be collected and exchanged for a privilege			Peer recognition: classmates share something positive about them		

Reward ideas

Homework pass	Pass from a class or task	Store (e.g., pencils or erasers)	Lunch with the teacher	Bring a friend from another class	Free time in class or extra recess
Choose a seat for the day	Positive call home	Keep class mascot	Front of line pass	Clasroom coupons for privileges	Dance party
Treasure box	Movie	Bonus point	Talent show	Music choice	Late pass
Science experiment	Extra computer	Class leader	Teacher chair	Podcast	Scavenger hunt
		Teacher dress up			

Amygdala Henchmen Ideas

Catastrophizing Carl

Mindreading Mandy

Humiliating Hannah

Perfectionist Paula

Overestimating Oscar

Rigid Richard

Avoiding Alison

Permanent Pete

Fortune Telling Fran

Scarcity Sam

All-or-nothing Al

Grumpy McGrumperson

Self-critical Carla

Mindreading Mandy

Negative Ned

Create Many Opportunities to Focus on Emotions & Work on it Every day!

Speak in front of a small group	Make small talk with someone new	Practice losing a game to someone who cheats	Use pictures, videos, or live encounters with feared bugs
Simulate test-taking conditions with practice exams or timed quizzes.	Role-play scenarios where express their concerns or assert themselves in a safe setting.	Create situations where they can safely express anger and practice coping strategies.	Tolerating not knowing what's happening today.
Engage in activities they've been avoiding due to emotional discomfort.	Experience and tolerate physical sensations like increased heart rate through exercises.	Watch sad video	Kindie running away with the soccer ball in the middle of a game