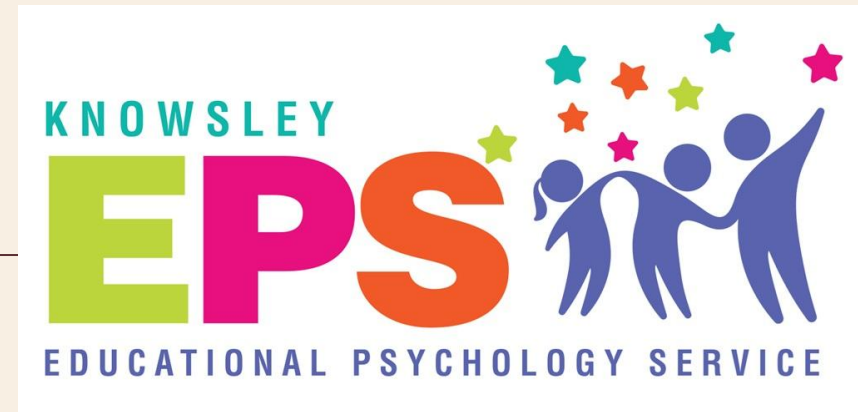


# PINS:

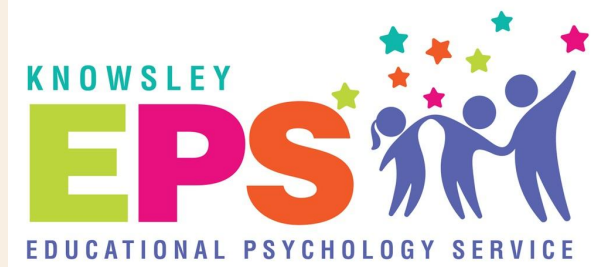
Getting to the cause of behaviour.  
A relational and trauma informed approach

Dr Hannah Francis

Educational Psychologist



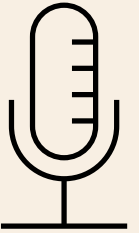
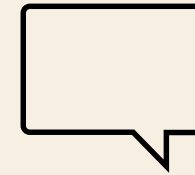
# Today's aims:



- \* What behaviour are we seeing in schools?
- \* What is trauma and how may this present
- \* The science behind trauma informed and relational approaches
- \* How you can implement them as a school and in the classroom

# General Housekeeping

- \* Please could you sign in (Name, role and school)
- \* Microphones off during the presentation
- \* Please use the chat box for questions
- \* Please be mindful this is an introduction
- \* Be kind to yourself – we will be discussing difficult topics



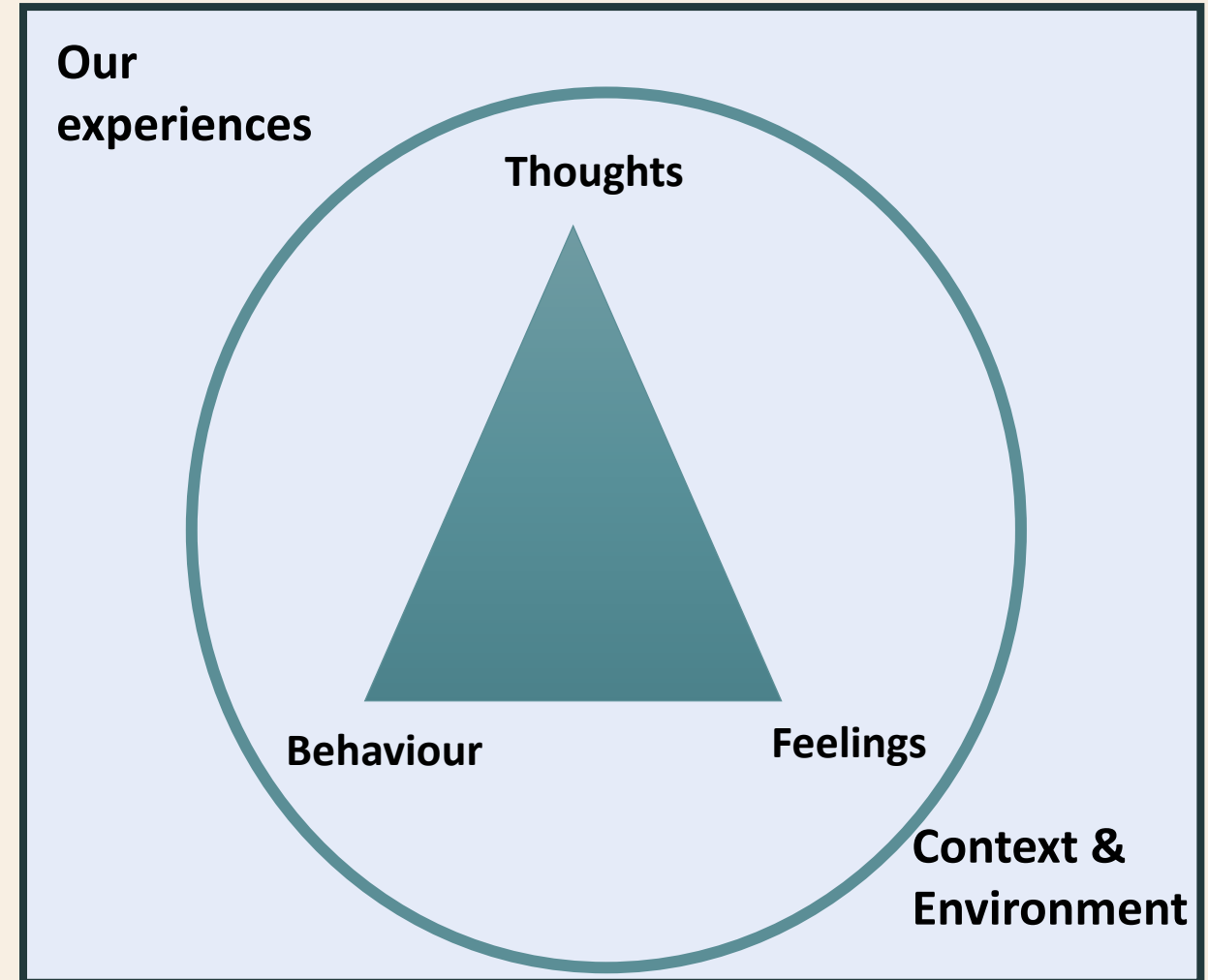
# What is behaviour?

A broad term encompassing any observation action or reaction.

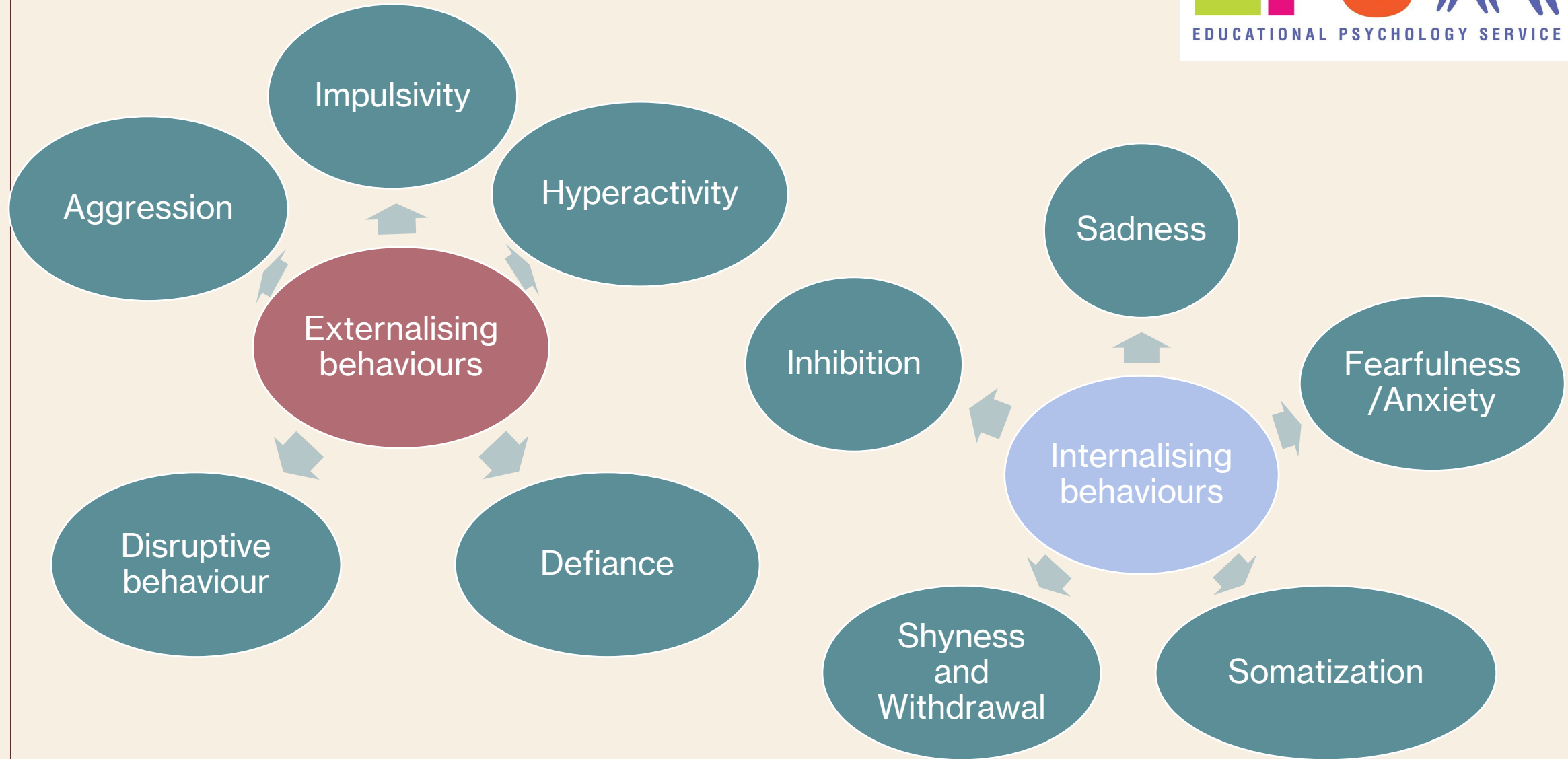
It includes both physical actions and internal mental processes

Behaviour can be influenced by both conscious and unconscious factors

The pattern is the same for everybody – the difference is in our experiences



# Types of behaviour



# What can cause behaviour?

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Unmet needs

---

Communication

---

Trauma and adversity,

---

Social learning (learnt behaviour)

---

Environmental conditions

---

Behaviour is complex, it can be a result of combinations of the above

# What is trauma?

Trauma can be experienced, witnessed or 'confronted' with. It can include racism, generational trauma, and community violence.

Trauma can be a single event, or sustained periods of toxic stress over days, weeks, or years.

Developmental trauma is an intense or prolonged stress response to negative events that occur in childhood.

Resources or support available will impact on the development of a trauma response.

Danger is a universal event for humans. Trauma is one response to danger (Dr Gabor Mate)

Not everyone will experience trauma responses to the same dangers (Crittenden)

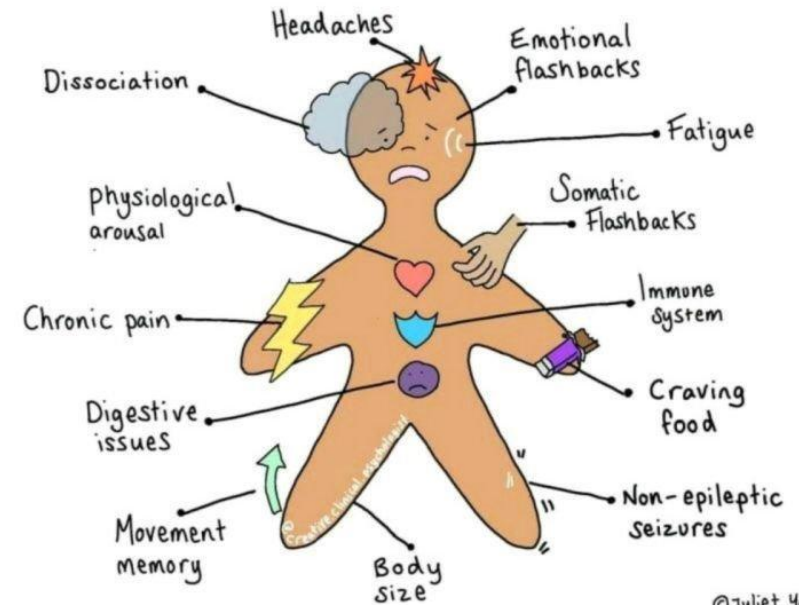
# What is Trauma?

*“Trauma is not what happens to you but is what happens inside of you”*

Gabor Mate

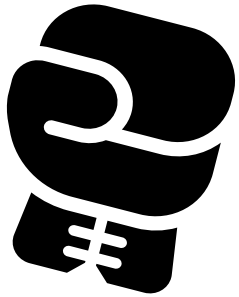
## How Does the Body Keep the Score?

Sometimes when overwhelming traumatic events happen, the physiological energy can be pushed down into the body. This 'trapped trauma' energy can show in different ways...



©Juliet Young

# What can this look like in school?



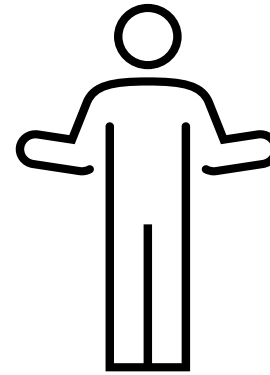
**Fight**

Hyper-arousal



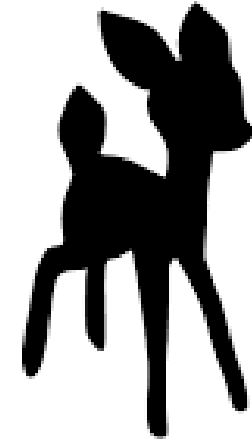
**Flight**

Hypo-arousal



**Freeze**

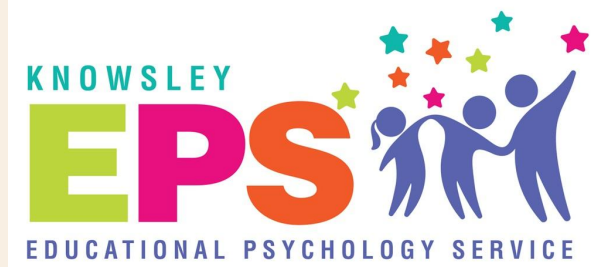
Hypo-arousal



**Fawn**

Hypo-arousal

# What does this look like in school?



## **Fight (Hyperarousal)**

Shouting, arguing back, swearing, throwing things, aggression, kicking things, hands clasped in a fist

## **Flight (Hypoarousal)**

Restlessness, fidgeting, wandering the corridors, walking out of lessons, running away, hiding, walking away from an adult

## **Freeze (Hypoarousal)**

Unresponsive, refusal to speak, refusal to do anything, not making eye contact, daydreaming, shutting down, in own world

## **Fawn (Hypoarousal)**

Doing what friends tell them to, smiling when being told off, complying with what others want (e.g. gang involvement, risk of sexual exploitation), trying to keep someone happy even when in an abusive situation.

# The Neurosequential model



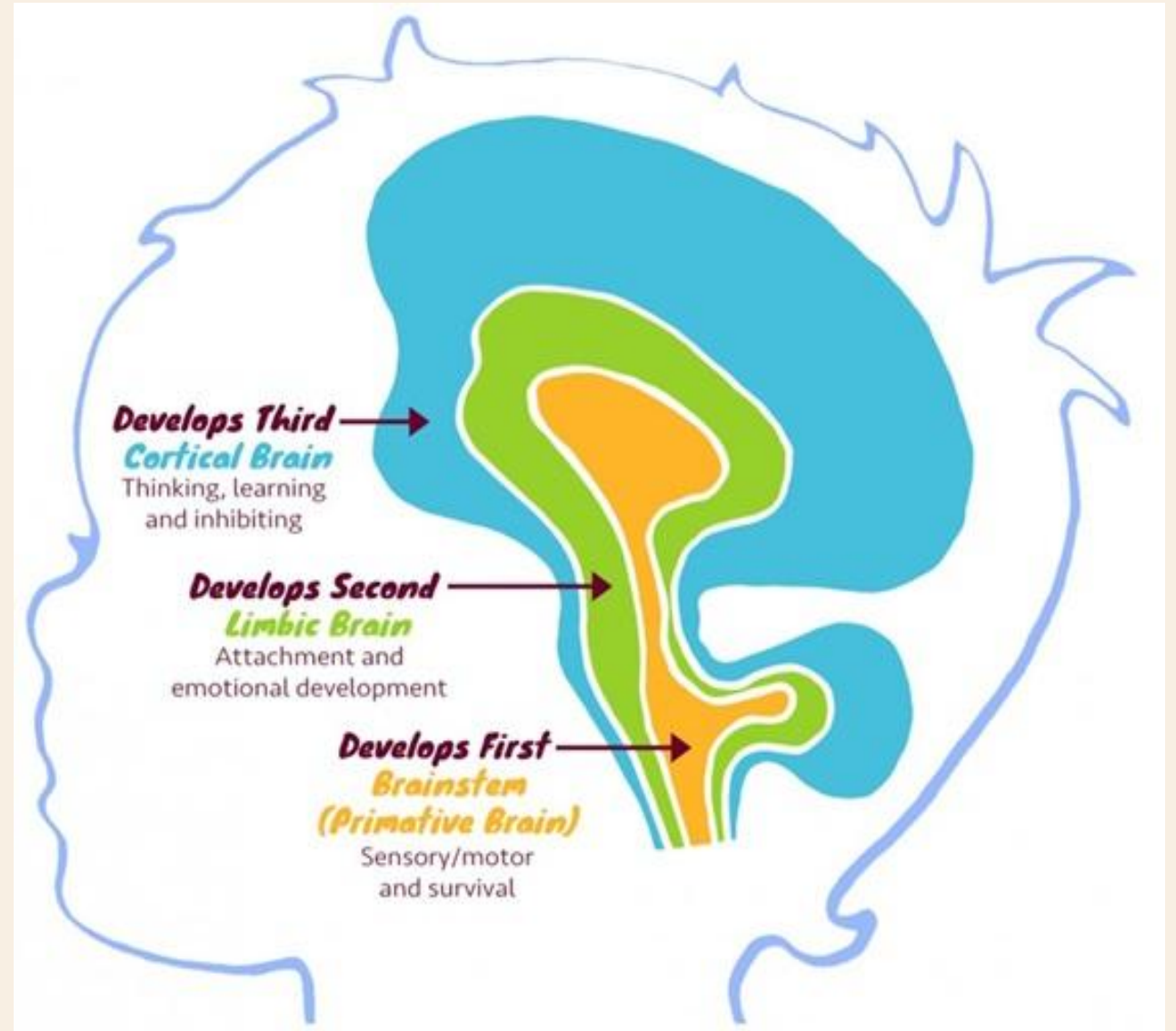
3. Cortical Brain



2. Limbic system

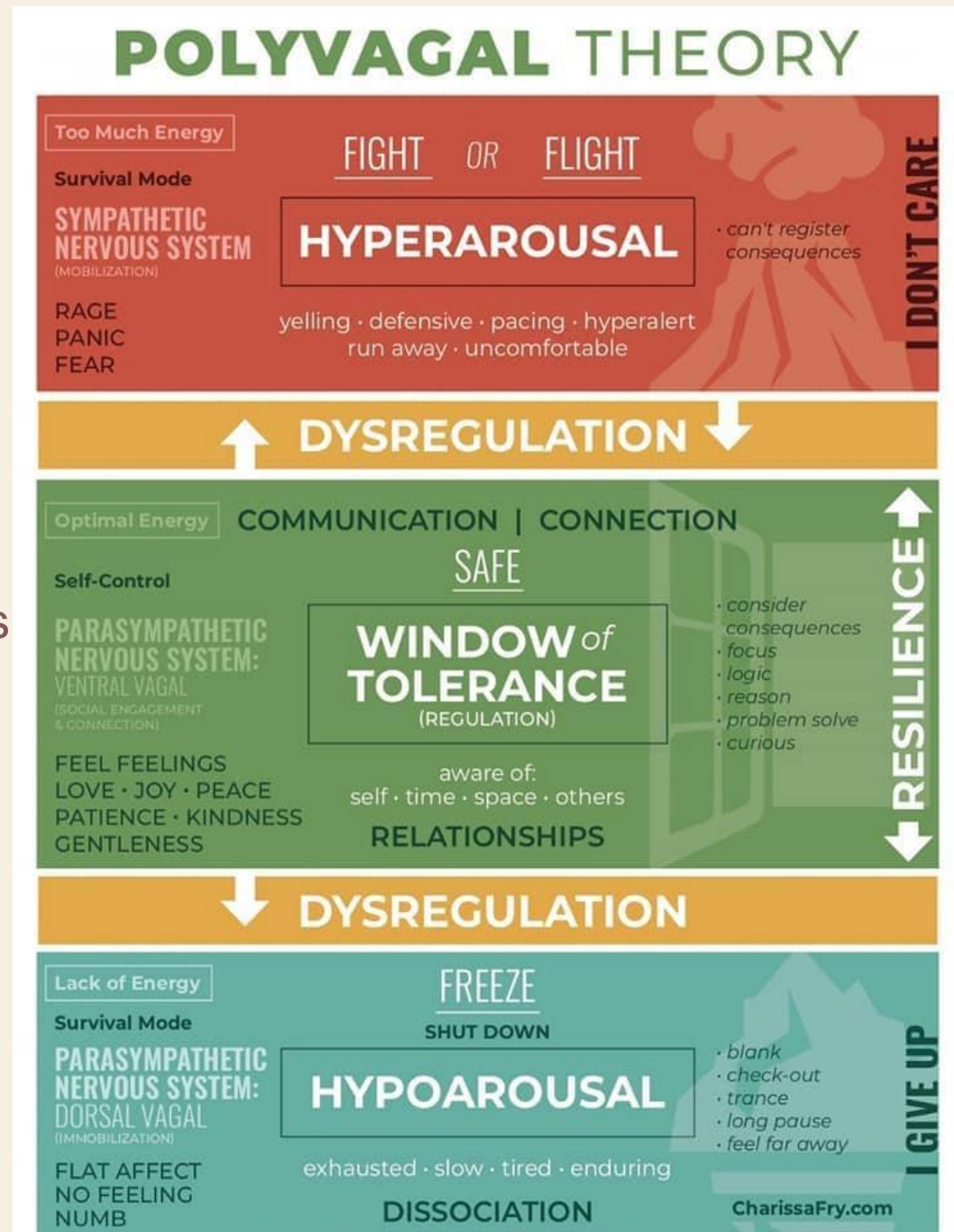


1. Brainstem

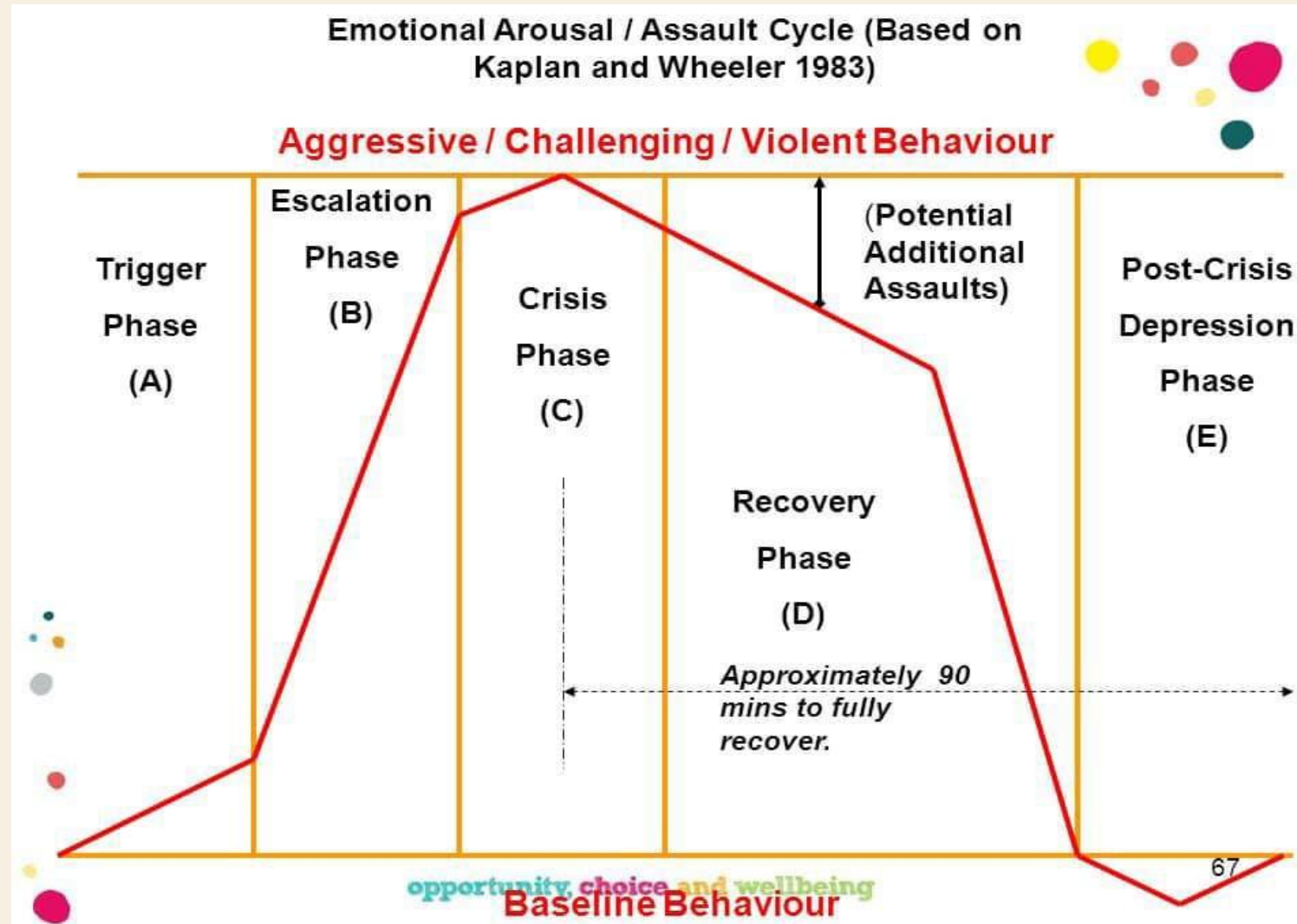


# Polyvagal Theory

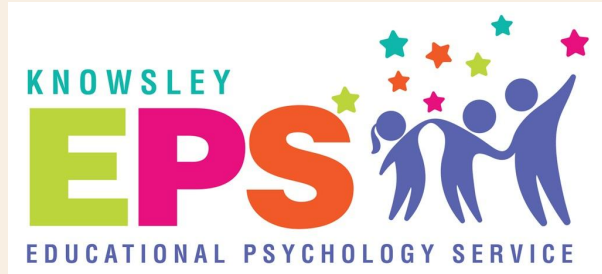
- \* Polyvagal Theory is a theory which aims to explain how our bodies respond to stress and how this links to our emotional and behavioural responses (Dr Stephen Porges, 1994)
- \* We have an innate sense of when we are safe and when we are not: the autonomic nervous system. This is the body's automatic, unconscious surveillance system.
- \* There are cues within our environment which signal to us that we are safe or that we are not.
- \* The impact of stress/trauma on the ANS can cause children to fall outside the window of tolerance and lead to hyperarousal or hypoarousal.



# What does this look like in school?



# How does a child read the environment?



*Through something called neuroception – our autonomic nervous system constantly scans our environment for danger.*

## Interpersonal Cues

Greetings, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, body movement, proximity of people, threat of judgement/evaluation, unstructured time. 'Gut feeling'.

## Environmental Cues

Seating position; temperature; noise level; calm or busy environment; exit strategy, predictability, changes in the environment; stimulation of environment; containment

# How do we help?

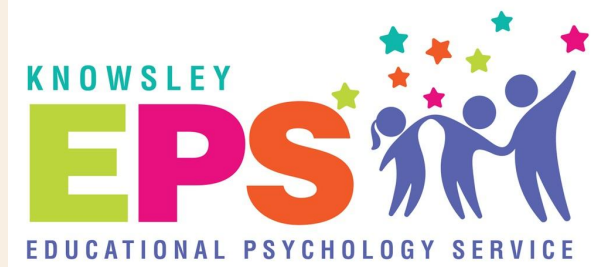
Trauma informed

Relational Approach

“Relationships are the agents of  
change”

Bruce Perry

# How do we help?



*We seek to understand children's behaviour not to control it*

## Interpersonal responses

Greetings, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, body movement, proximity of people, threat of judgement/evaluation, unstructured time. 'Gut feeling'.

## Environmental set ups

Seating position; temperature; noise level; calm or busy environment; exit strategy, predictability, changes in the environment; stimulation of environment; containment

# Environmental set up

The  
Welcome

Routines &  
predictability

Boundaries &  
consistency

Physical  
organisation

Emotional  
organisation

Appropriate  
scaffolding

Stimulation

Seating  
plans

Community  
vs individual

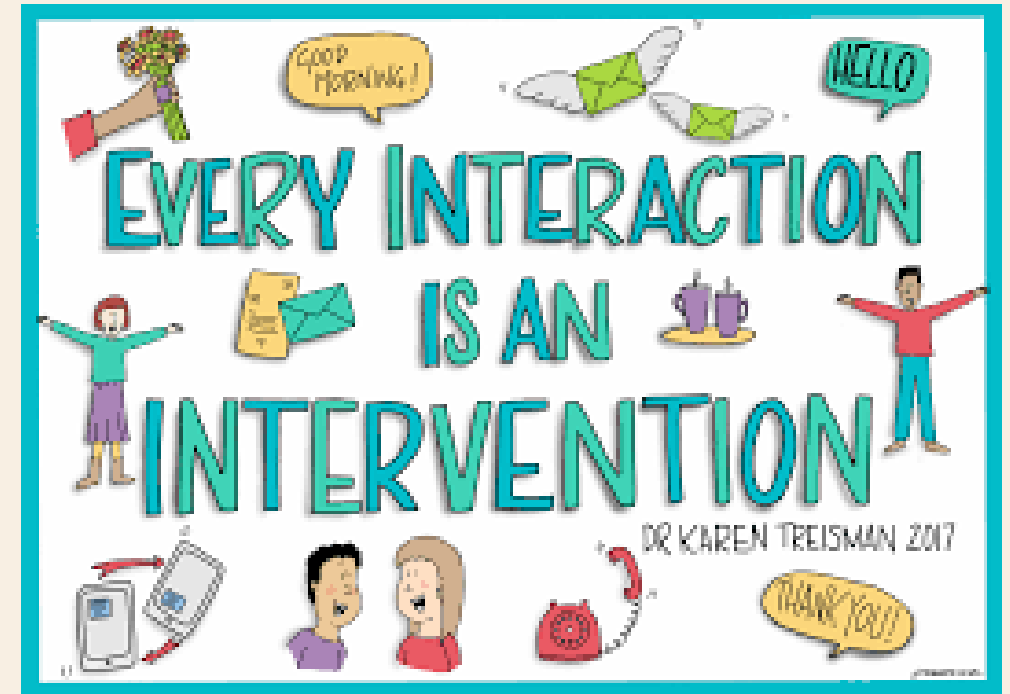
Relationships

# How do I help?

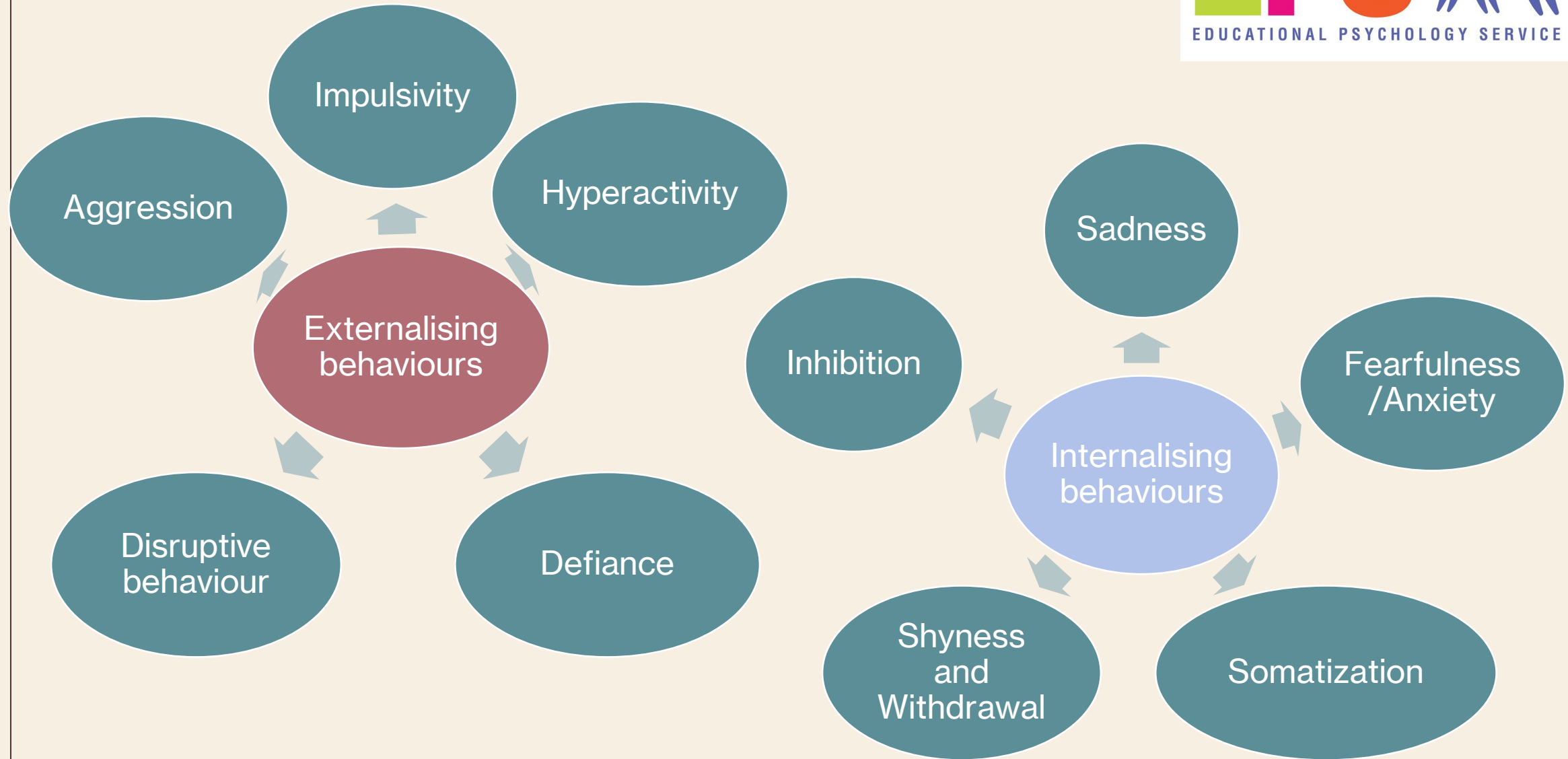
The most powerful weapon available to teachers who want to foster a favourable learning climate is a positive relationship with students.

# Relationship building

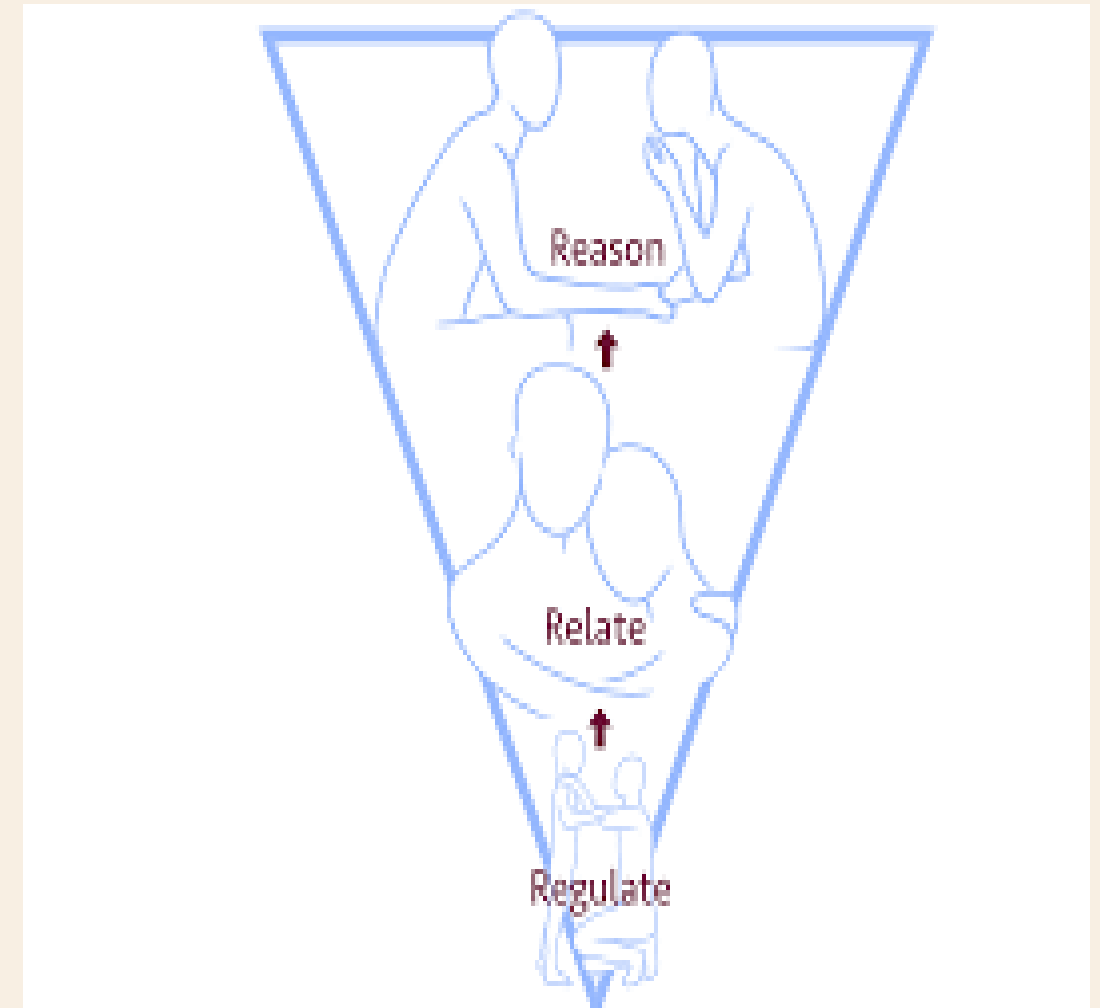
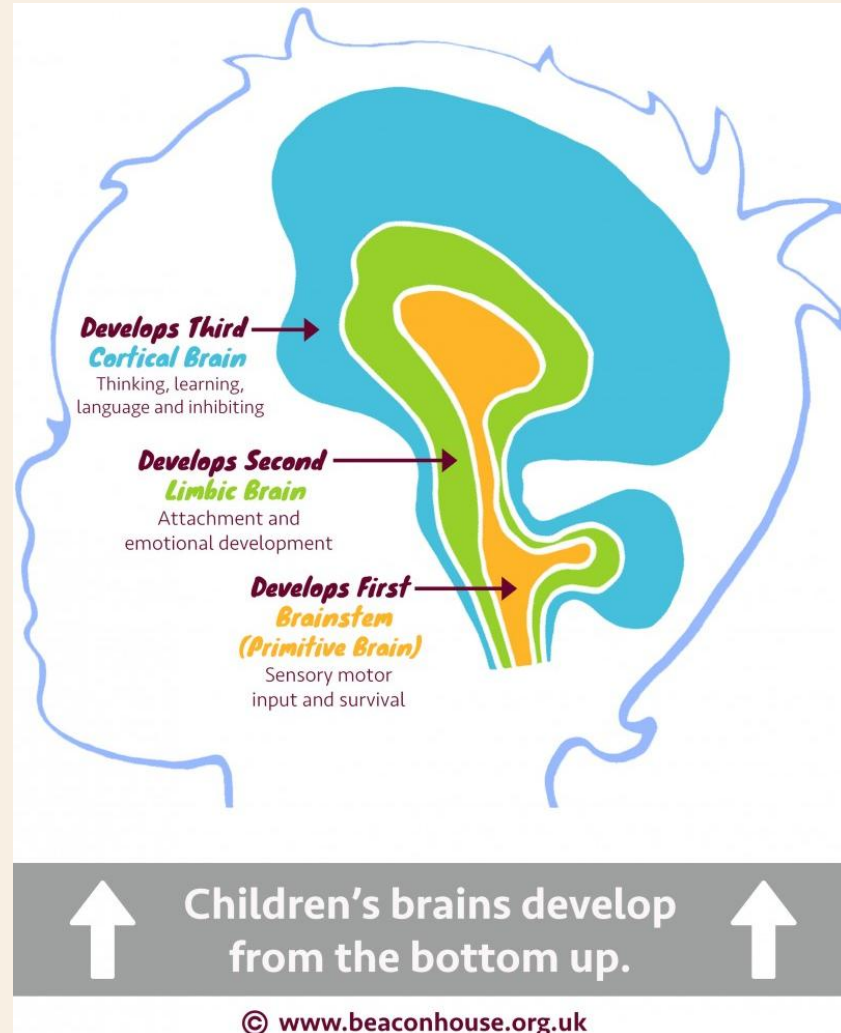
- ★ **Connecting comments** – pre-planning, connecting praise comments. Can help shift stuck patterns of negativity and criticism. Aim for a ratio of 3:1 – 3 connecting comments for every correcting comment.
- ★ **2 for 10 approach** – two minutes for ten consecutive days.
- ★ **PACE** approach



# Types of behaviour



# How do we respond?



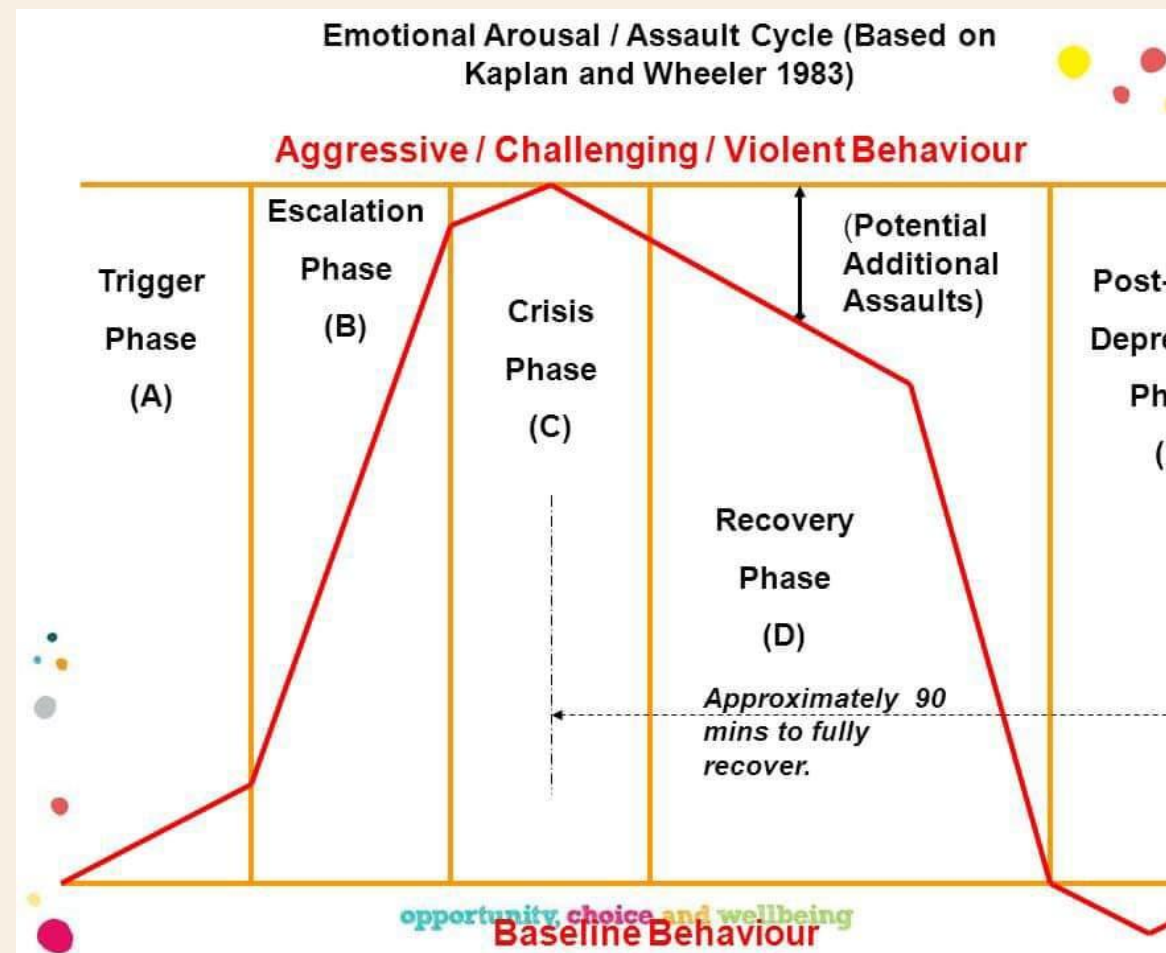
# Step 1: Regulate

## What?

A way of moving from alarming to calming

## Why?

They can't learn or reflect when in survival mode, so their psychological stress response needs to be calmed FIRST.



# Stages of Regulation

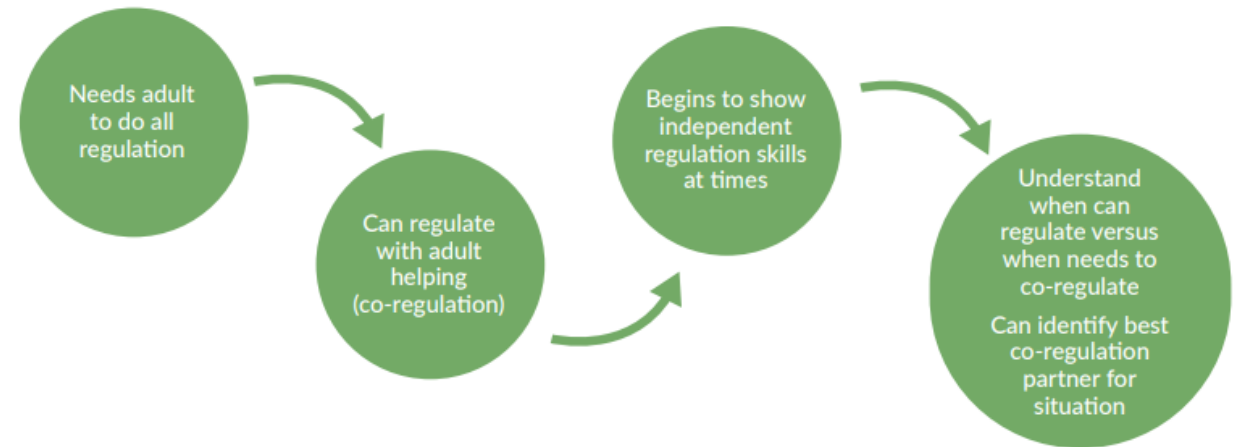
We regulate by activating the Vagus nerve otherwise known as the parasympathetic nervous system.

It is responsible for returning our body back to calm.

Good vagal tone allows for faster responses and faster information processing meaning the body is able to return to normal more quickly.

Neurological resilience to self-soothe is fostered by the emotional climate at home and school

## Stages of Regulation



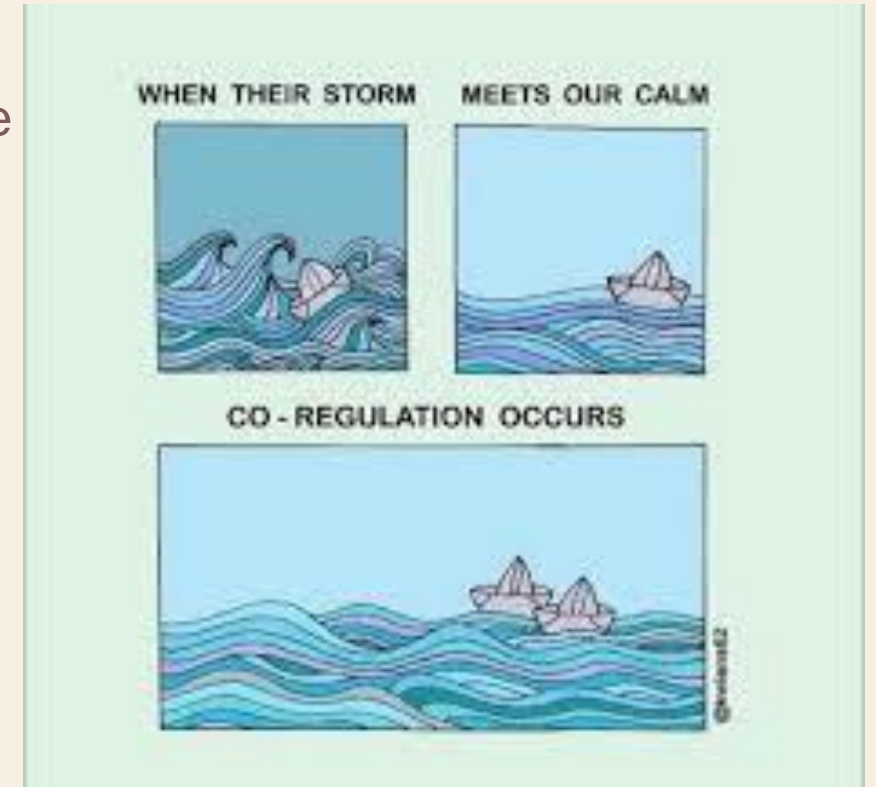
# Regulate yourself

- An escalated person cannot de-escalate another person.
- You can't fight fire with fire
- Be aware of your own triggers and warning signs
- Calming your own body, slowing your breathing, untensing.
- Well rested, cared for staff will feel more emotionally safe as a starting point.
- Circles of support for adults around the child – working against isolation, together with colleagues and parents.

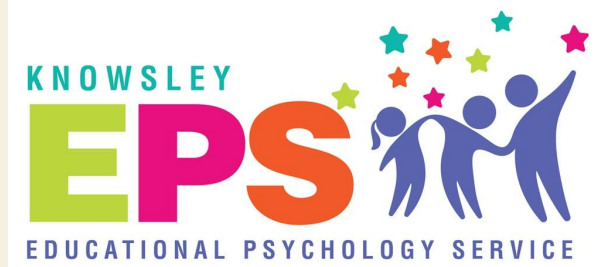


# Regulating through interpersonal responses

- \* Send cues of safety
- \* In early stages; use humour or distraction to defuse from the situation
- \* Provide 'take up time'
- \* Be mindful of body language
- \* Limit the amount of language used to supportive
- \* Use acceptance and confidence statements
- \* Present as calm – when they turn up, you turn down
- \* Remember Mirror Neurons
- \* Offer an out : Solve the moment now and the situation later
- \* Remove the threat of judgement and social gaze



# Regulating through activities



- \* Allow for movement to release some adrenalin that has built up
  - \* Early Stages: handing out books
  - \* Going for walks
  - \* Fiddle toys / sensory resources
- \* Organisation activities that are repetitive and soothing help the thinking brain come back online.
- \* Have a drink or something to eat

- \* Provide an easy, familiar task
- \* Deep breathing
- \* Rhythmic activities
- \* Grounding
- \* Journalling
- \* Being read to

Most strategies need to be taught when calm to access them when they are not!

# Step 2: Relate



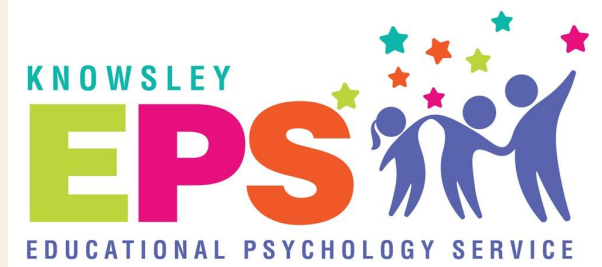
What?

The ability to connect with others

Why?

A child cannot easily access their reason if they are not feeling connected. Connection helps further calm the nervous system.

# Relate



*“When we feel bad, we don’t need to be fixed. We want to be felt with rather than dealt with. We want someone else to understand how we feel so we do not feel lonely with that feeling.”*

*The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read (and your children will be glad that you did” by Philippa Perry*

---

# Relationship building

- ★ **Connecting comments** – pre-planning, connecting praise comments. Can help shift stuck patterns of negativity and criticism. Aim for a ratio of 3:1 – 3 connecting comments for every correcting comment.
- ★ **2 for 10 approach** – two minutes for ten consecutive days.
- ★ **PACE** approach



# Connect with them

- \* Focus on connecting with the student
- \* Make them feel;
  - \* Safe
  - \* Seen and Understood
  - \* Supported
- \* Validate their feelings and validate again!
- \* Use short sentences

I know  
you're  
angry at  
the minute

I'm  
listening

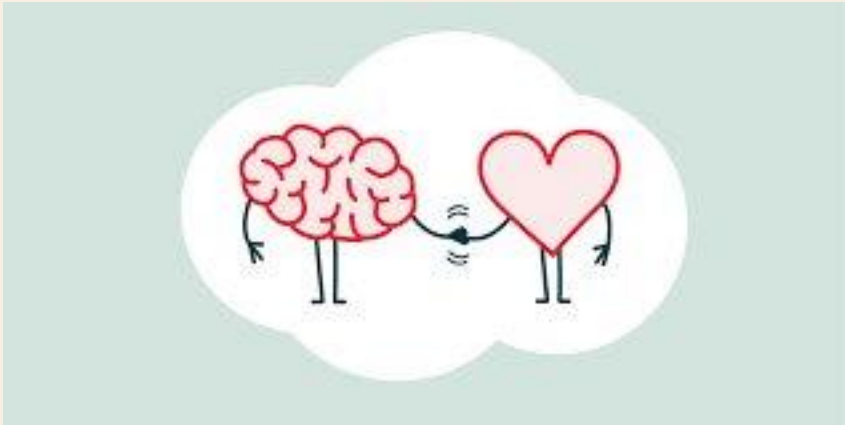
That must  
be really  
hard

I can see  
you're very  
upset

Avoid...  
What's  
wrong?

# Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience



A four-stage approach

Recognise the child's feelings and empathise

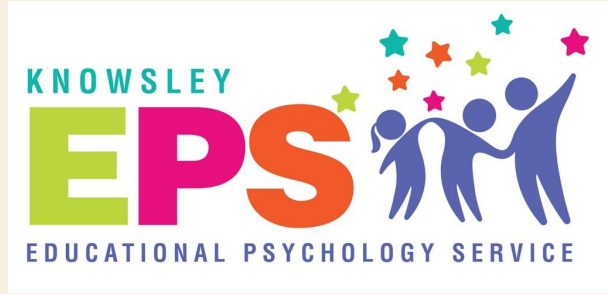
Validate and label the child's feelings

Set limits on the child's behaviour (if necessary)

Problem-solve with the child

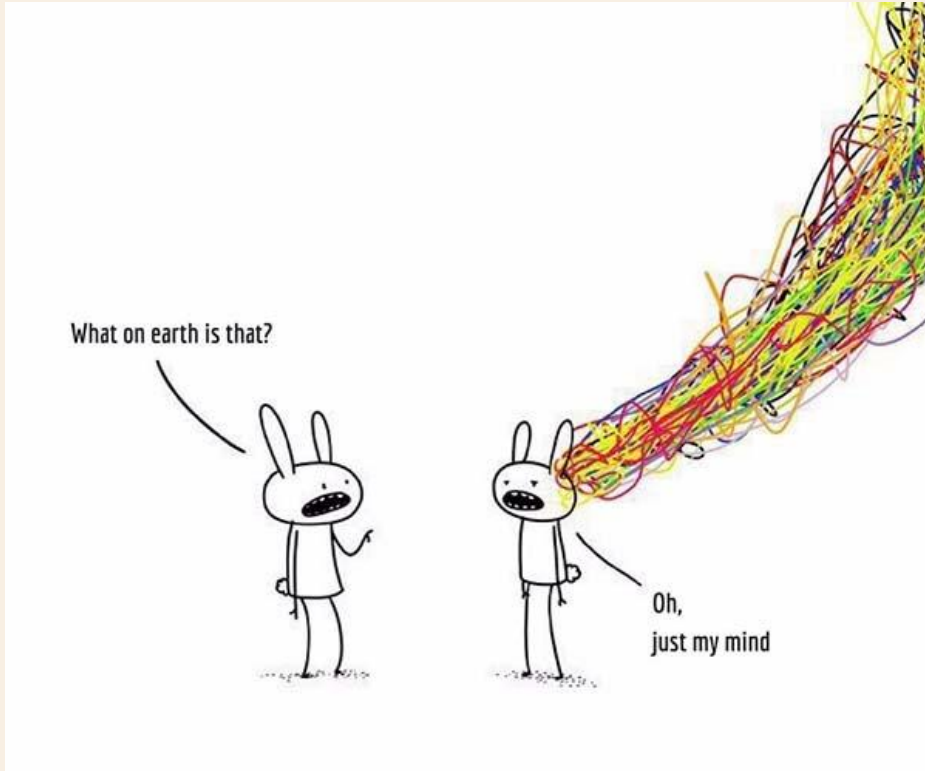
. (Gottman 1997)

# Example of Emotion Coaching



A primary school example is also available in the same series

# Step 3: Reason



When?

Only when calm!

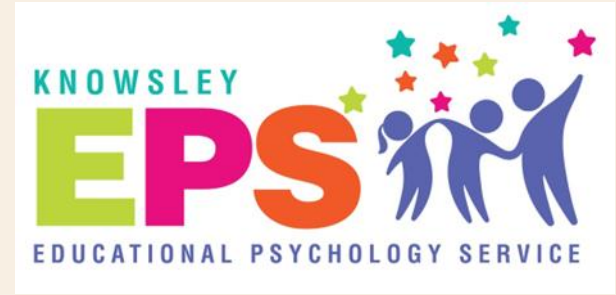
What?

To help them learn from this experience

Why?

To reinforce the limit and providing them opportunity and support to explore alternative strategies and behaviour

# Reason successfully



## Reasoning requires our thinking brain.

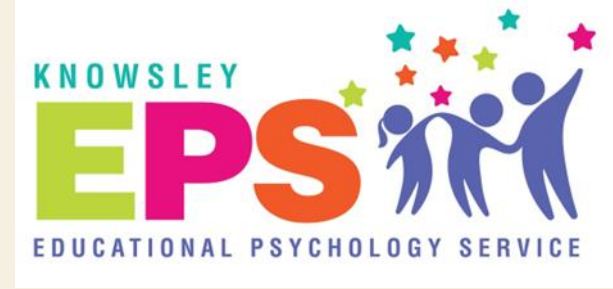
*It is only when someone is calm (Regulated) that they are able to form trusting relationships (Relate) and access their ability to understand think and reflect (Reason)*

- \* **Explore** what happened, be sure to take time to understand their perception
- \* **Educate:** only if needed provide information on why it may have happened (e.g. hand model) and how it affected others
  - \* Set limits only if necessary: often the incident and problem-solving process is enough
- \* **Scaffold:** Invite the younger person to engage in creating solutions, developing ideas and actions that could lead to a more appropriate outcome
- \* **Empower:** the child to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage feelings and behaviours.



# Long term goals

- \* Spot and help the student to spot when they are climbing the cycle of escalation
- \* Identify triggers (or cues of danger) and try to prevent the cycle
- \* Help the child to understand themselves and their reactions through psychoeducation
- \* Help them to develop strategies which help and support them to put them in place



# Repair: A way of keeping lines open



## What?

To repair any relationship ruptures

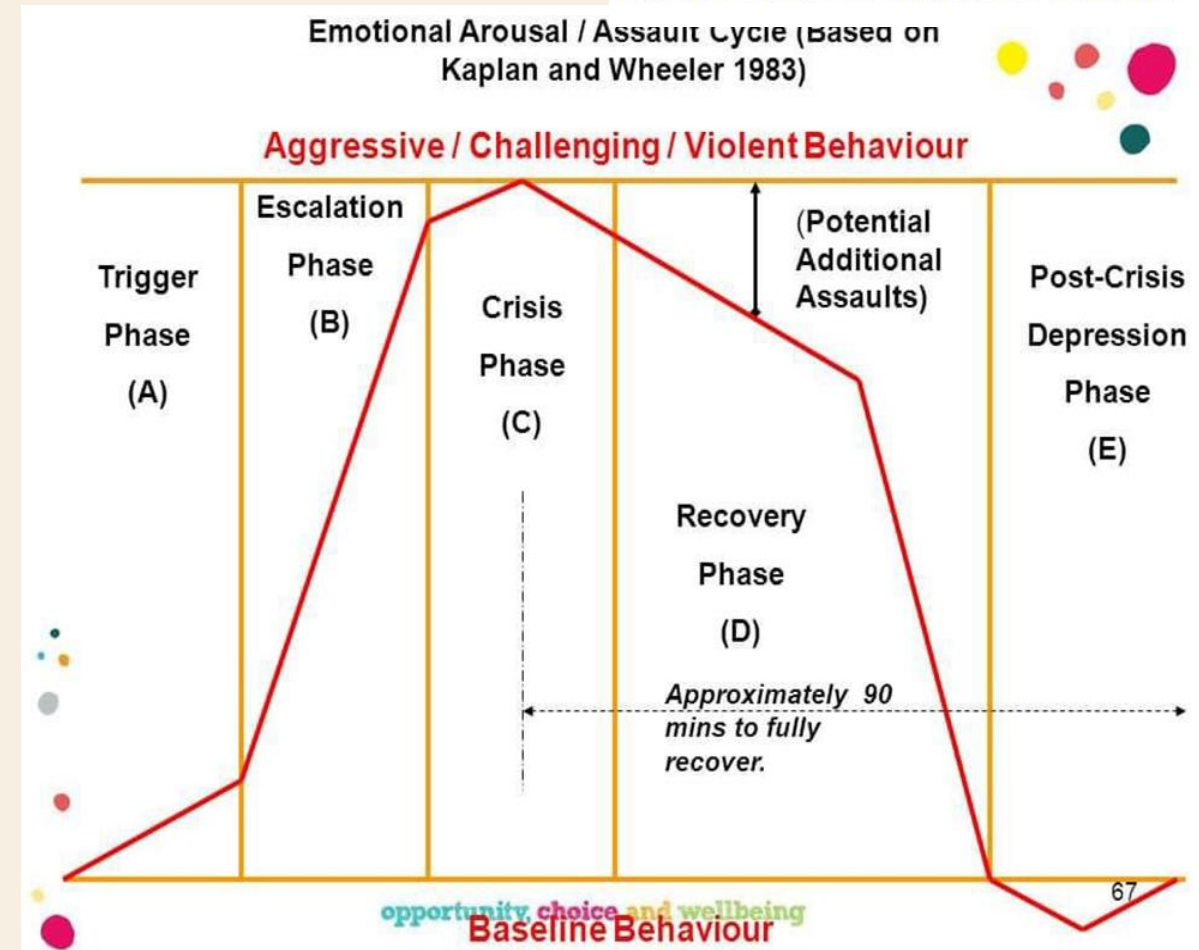
## Why?

To maintain trust, dignity and respect for all.

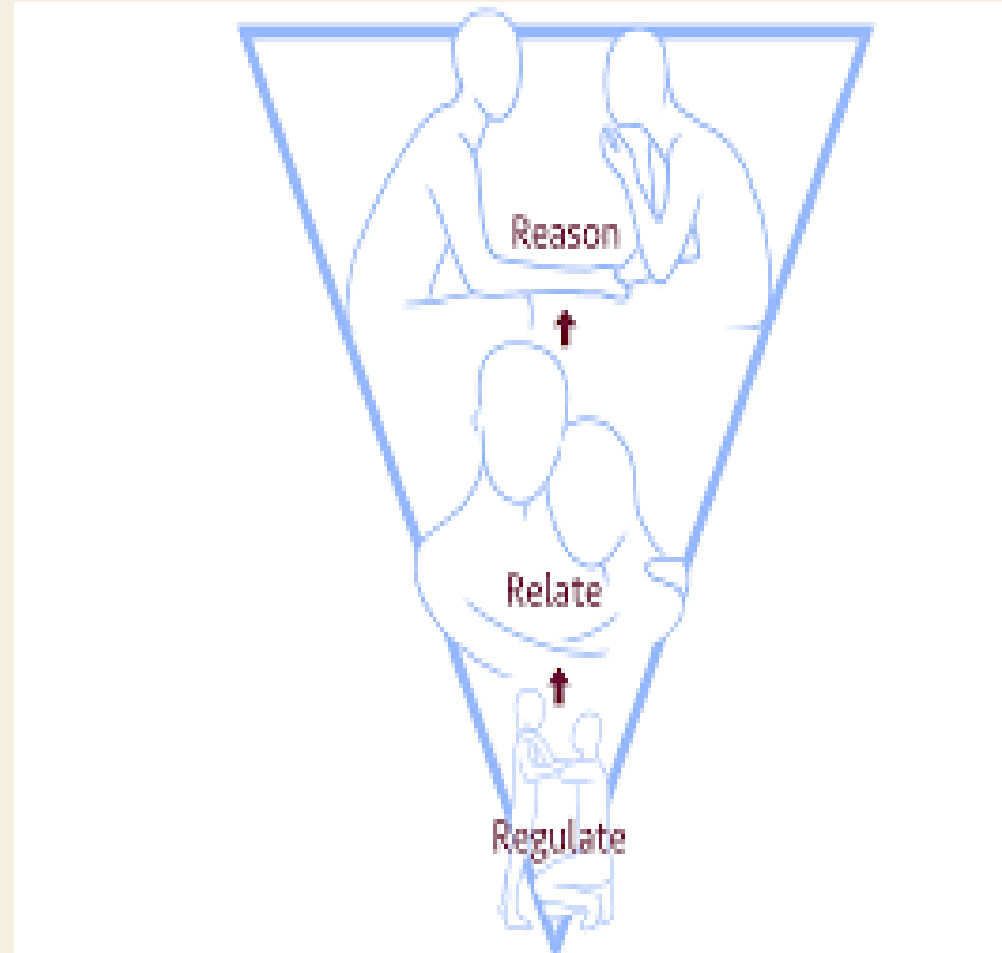
To encourage further growth and learning and protect wellbeing.

# When a child loses control

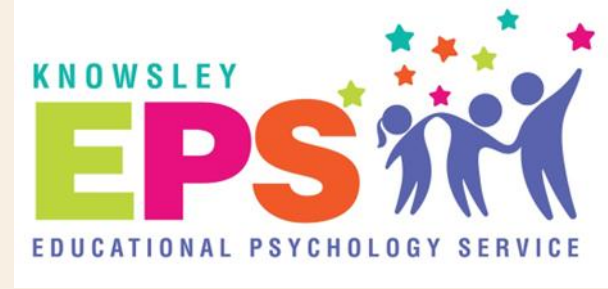
- \* Solve the moment first; solve the problem later
- \* A delayed response allows the teacher to take the heat out of the situation
- \* Keeping them and everyone else safe
- \* Remove audiences
- \* Alternative adults may be needed
- \* Enlist support through help scripts



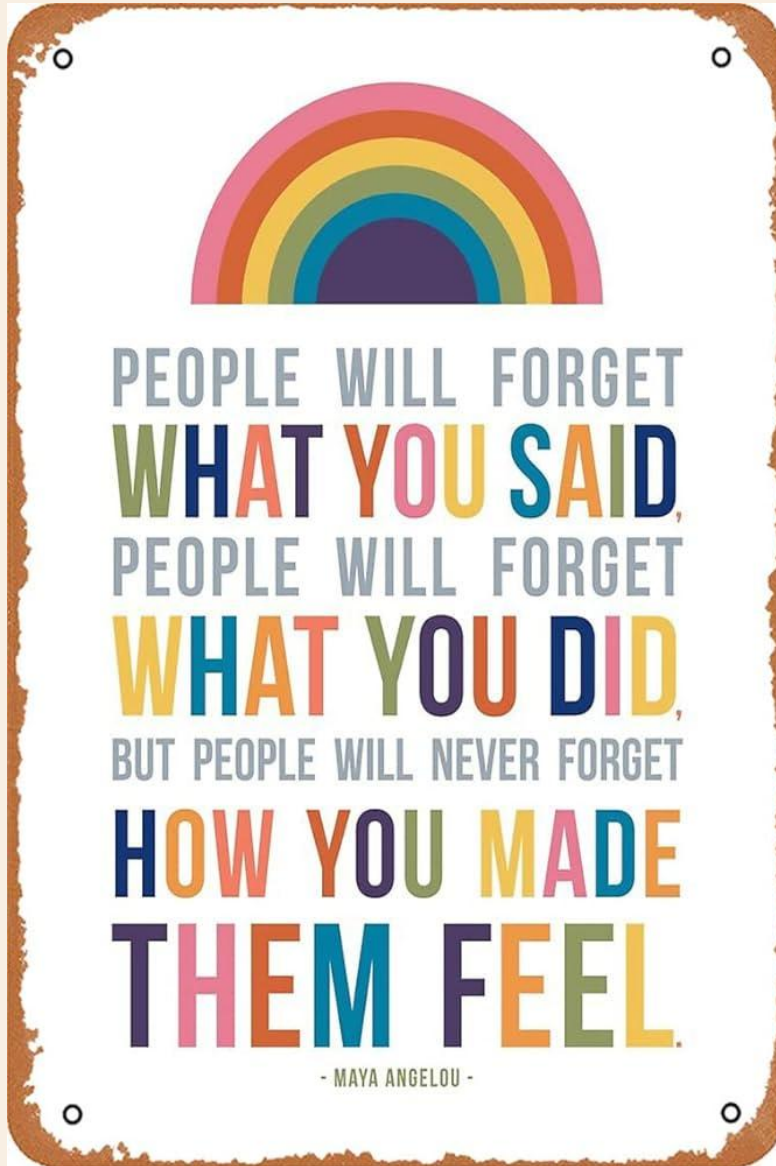
# The 4 R's Approach



# References and further reading



- \* Stuck not Broken Series 1 Episode 10-15 – Podcast about the Polyvagal Theory and applications in school
- \* The Secondary Behaviour Cookbook: Strategies at your Finger Tips – Sue Roffey
- \* Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain – Daniel J. Siegel
- \* Emotion Coaching with Children and Young people in Schools – Louise Gilbert et al
- \* The Whole Brain Child: 12 Proven Strategies to Nurture your child's developing mind – Daniel J Siegel and Tine Payne Bryson
- \* The Trauma and Attachment Aware Classroom – Rebecca Brooks
- \* The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porge
- \* Beacon House. [Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)



Thank you for listening!

