

Bringing Up Great Kids (BUGK)

Training handouts 2018



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

Facilitating respectful, reflective & effective parenting groups
www.bringingupgreatkids.org

My children

➔ If you had 3 wishes for your children 20 years from now, what would they be?



Mindfulness Exercise



STOP... PAUSE... PLAY

When we can relate to our children with mindful awareness we activate a part of the brain (the medial pre-frontal cortex) which allows our defensive systems to switch off, putting us in a more relaxed state and allowing us to think and act more rationally and to step outside our own experience so that we can BE MORE PRESENT TO OUR CHILDREN NEEDS.

This is an exercise that we will practice every week or use any time you need to take time out to calm down before you respond to whatever is going on.



STOP

- Stop what you are doing.
- Make sure your feet are placed firmly on the ground.



PAUSE

- Focus on your breath.
- Breathe in slowly, right down into your belly, then exhale completely.
- Take 5 more slow breaths, being aware of each breath in and each breath out.
- Smile and enjoy standing like this for a moment. Feel your body relax.
- Reflect. Ask yourself "What do I need?" and "What does my child need?"



PLAY

Respond to your child with new understanding



Breathing Relaxation Exercises



1 Abdominal breathing

Place one hand over your heart and the other over your abdomen. Breathe normally, noticing the rise and fall of your chest and abdomen. Continue this practice for about 10 breaths.

2 1,2,3.....Sigh!

Count slowly 1..2..3 (either aloud or silently) as you breathe in. Then give a long sigh as you breathe out. Repeat this several times until you feel yourself calming down.

3 Snake breathing

Breathe in normally. Then with a long breath out, make a SSSSSSSSS sound like a snake.

4 Bee breathing

Breathe in normally. Then make a humming or buzzing sound like a bee as you exhale an extended breath out.

5 Feather breathing

Hold a soft feather in one hand and raise that hand as you breathe in. Let go of the feather and breathe out slowly as you watch the feather float to the ground. Try to make your breath out last until the feather reaches the ground.

Parenting Rainbow



聽 Listen

耳 Ear

眼 Eye

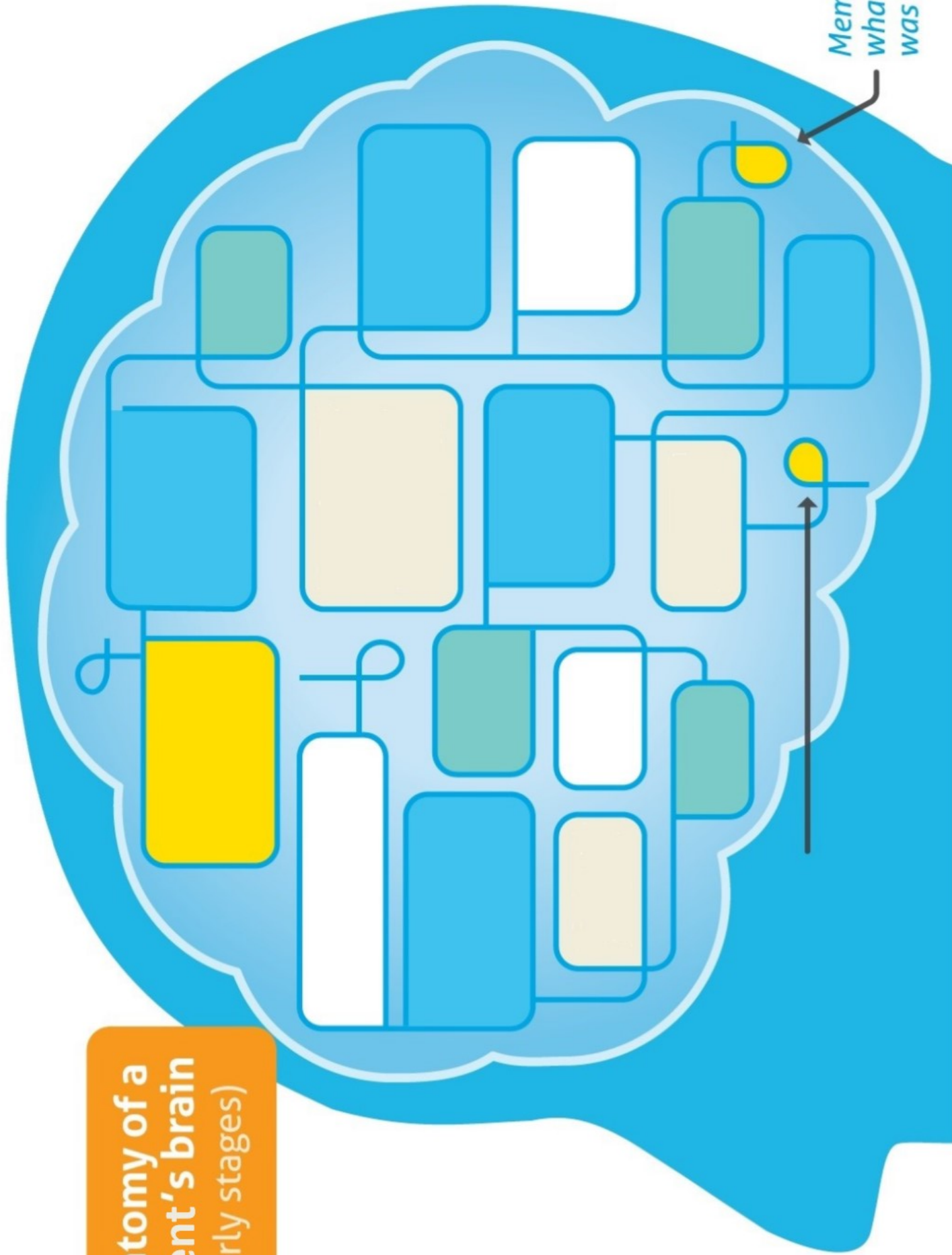
心 Heart

一 One (Whole body undivided attention)

王 King



**Anatomy of a
Parent's brain
(early stages)**



Memory of
what life
was like

Neuronal Connections



Newborn

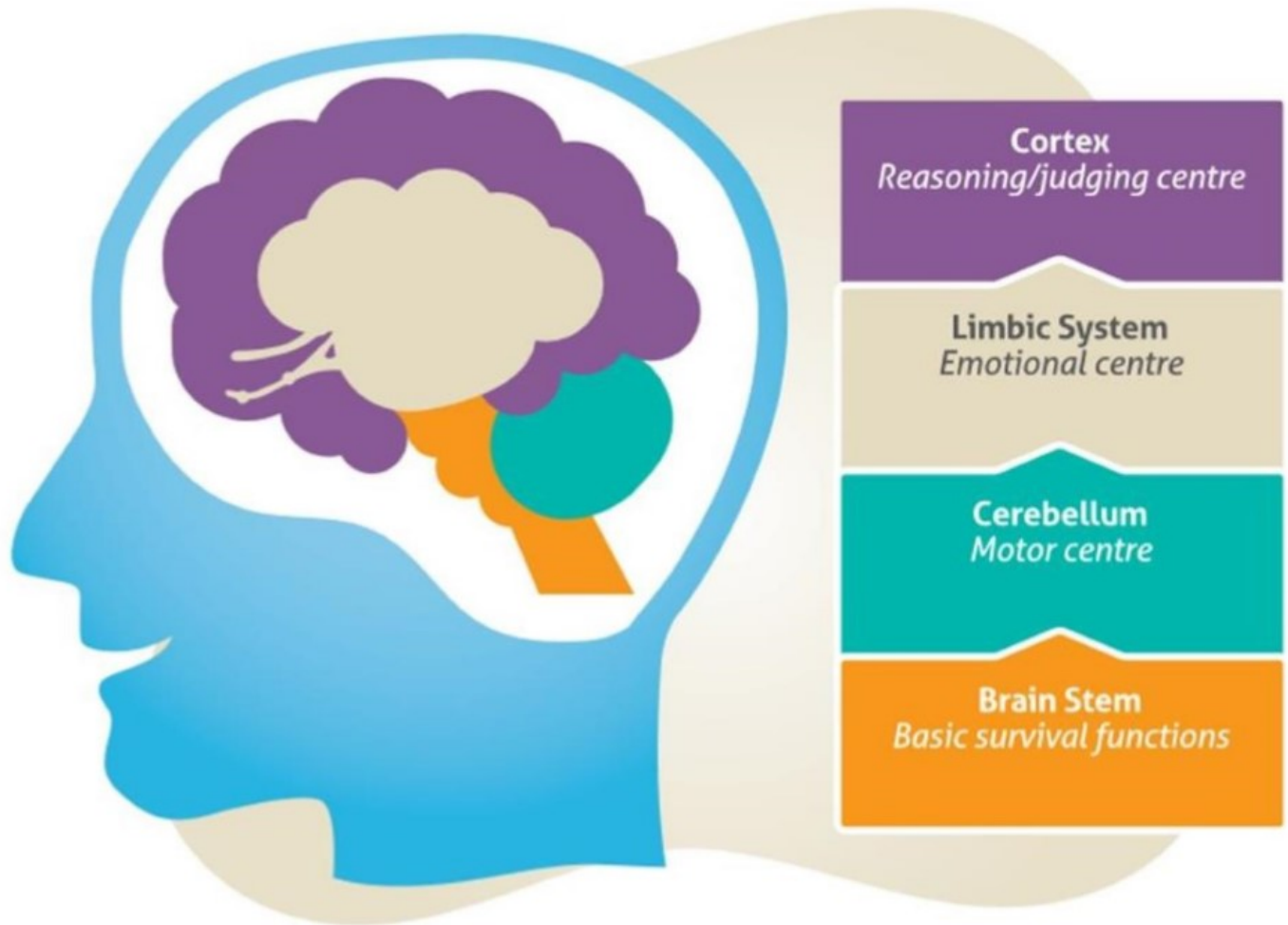


2 Years



Adult

Bottom-Up Brain Development



The brain is comprised of different structures that grow and develop at different rates and different times.

The **brain stem** area of the brain develops first and is responsible for basic functions that keep us alive such as heart rate, breathing and regulating our body temperature. The brain stem is fully developed at birth. It is the part of the brain that is 'hard wired' and least susceptible to change.

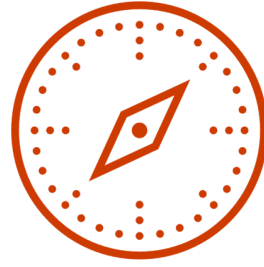
Connected to the brain stem is the **cerebellum** or motor centre of the brain. This area is responsible for movement and develops over the first few years of life. Development in this area is seen in babies gaining head control, sitting, crawling and walking. In the next few years, children will gain greater co-ordination, learn to skip, kick a ball, ride a bicycle, cut, draw and eat with cutlery.

The **limbic system** is the emotional centre of the brain and rules the lives of young children up to around four years. During the toddler years, the limbic system goes through a period of rapid development. This helps explain their bursts of irrational behaviour and tantrums. Toddlers need our help to manage their strong feelings. Young children feel then act, they can't think then act. This is due to the emotional centre of their brain developing before the cortex, or the thinking part of their brain. Young children basically view the world through an emotional lens.

The **cortex**, or thinking part of the brain, is the last part to develop. This is the part of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning and problem solving. This is the part of the brain that enables humans to think before they act. As children grow and develop, the cortex is gradually able to help us to pause when we are flooded by strong emotions, thus allowing us to feel, think, then act.

Unlike the brain stem, the limbic system and cortex are highly susceptible to change due to experience and the environment in which the child lives.

Values and goals



Values



Goals

What are your goals for yourself as a parent?

What are your values in parenting?

If you were to choose, which one would be your choice to focus on?
Values or goals?

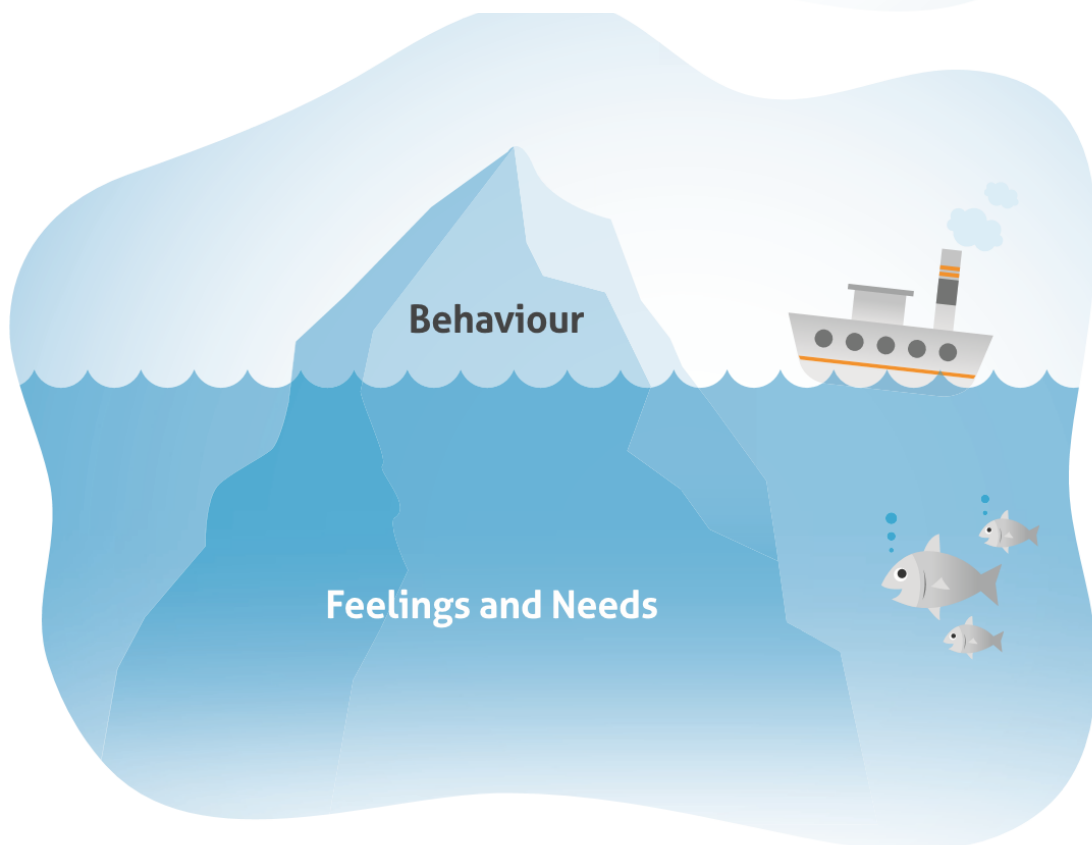
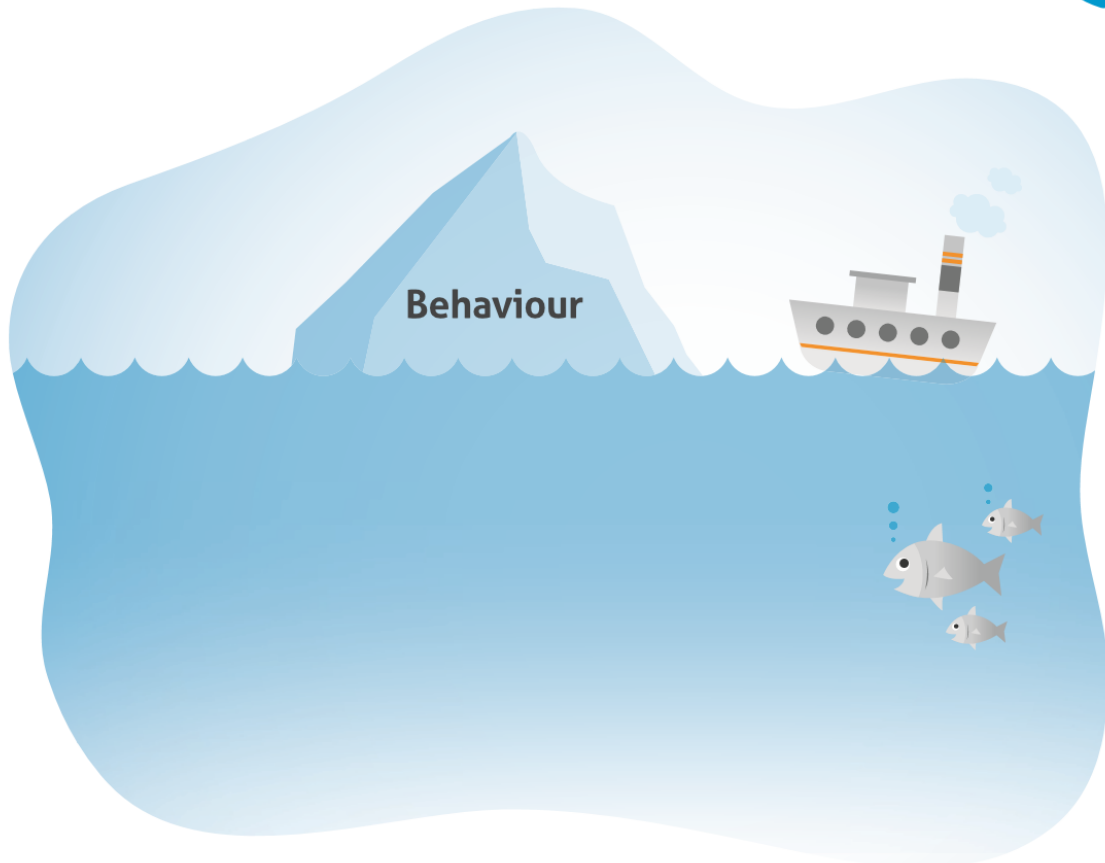
Where did these goals come from?

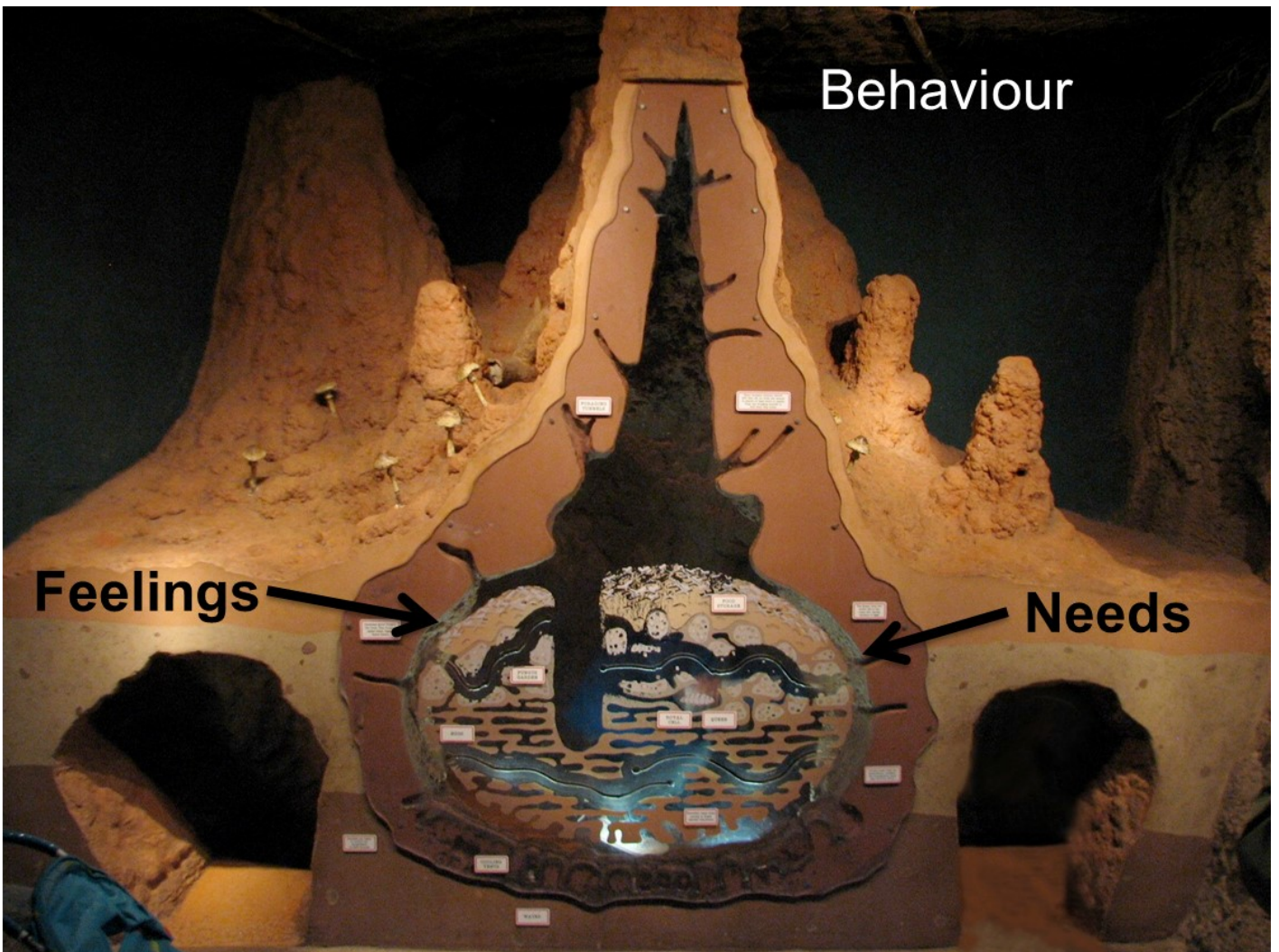
From where your values come from?

Children's Behaviour

Situation	Behaviour	Understanding (emotion, reason, intention)
		
		
		

Behaviour Iceberg





Iceberg Scenarios



7 months

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

I feel ...

I need ...

2 years

Screams, throws herself on floor, and kicks, when taken off coin-in-slot ride at shopping centre.

I feel ...

I need ...

4 years

At Pre-school, concentrates well with stories and puzzles. Recovers quickly when upset.

I feel ...

I need ...

6 years

Stears at the window during class time, leaves work uncompleted.

I feel ...

I need ...

8 years

Hits other children. and disrupts other childrens games.

I feel ...

I need ...

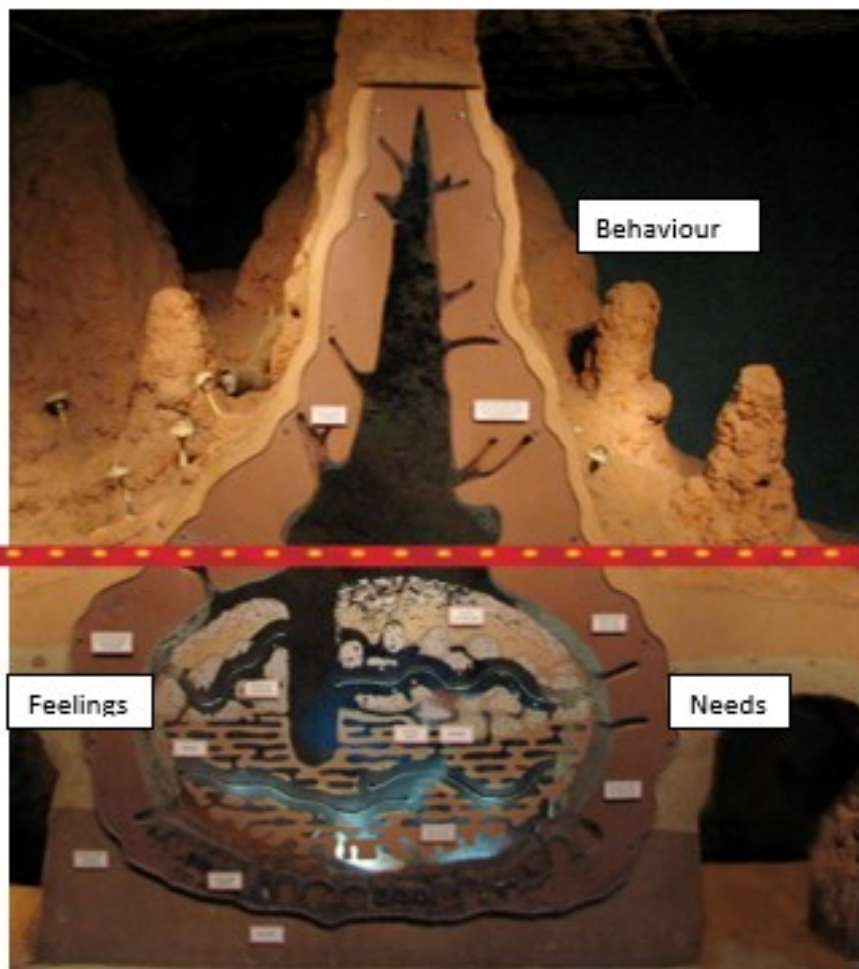
10 years

Very quiet, with a blank expression on his face. Never asks for help. Chooses to stay in the library at lunchtimes.

I feel ...

I need ...

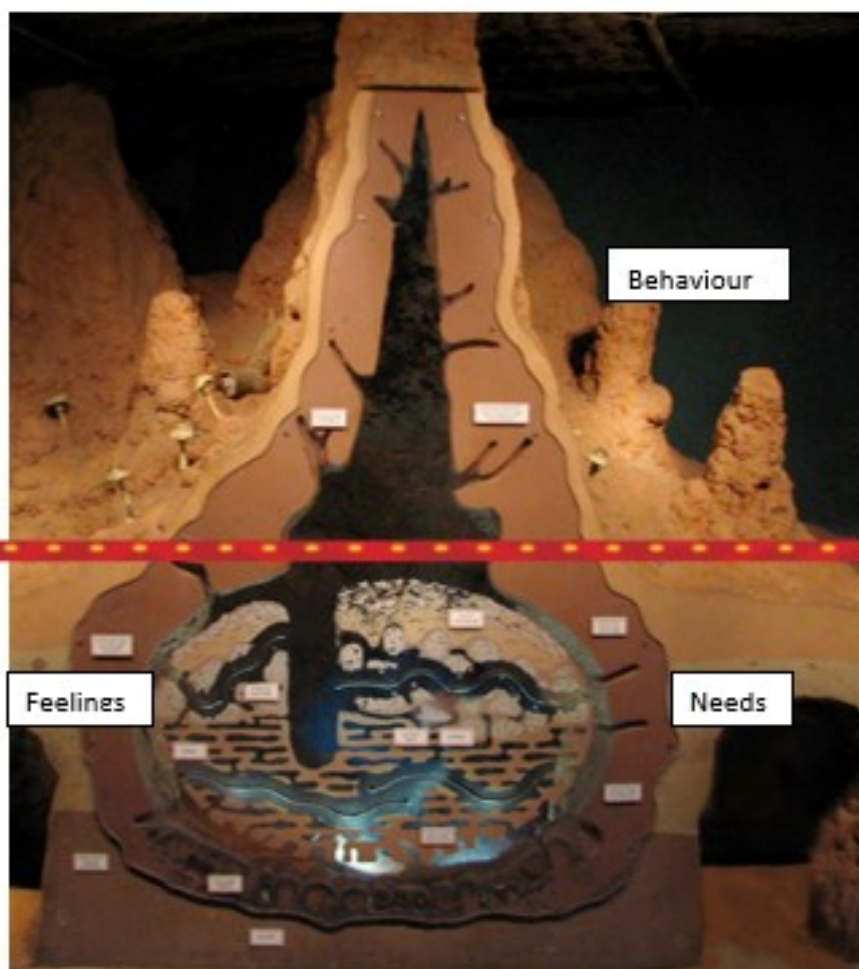
Anthill Scenarios



Behaviour (year old)

I feel...

I need...

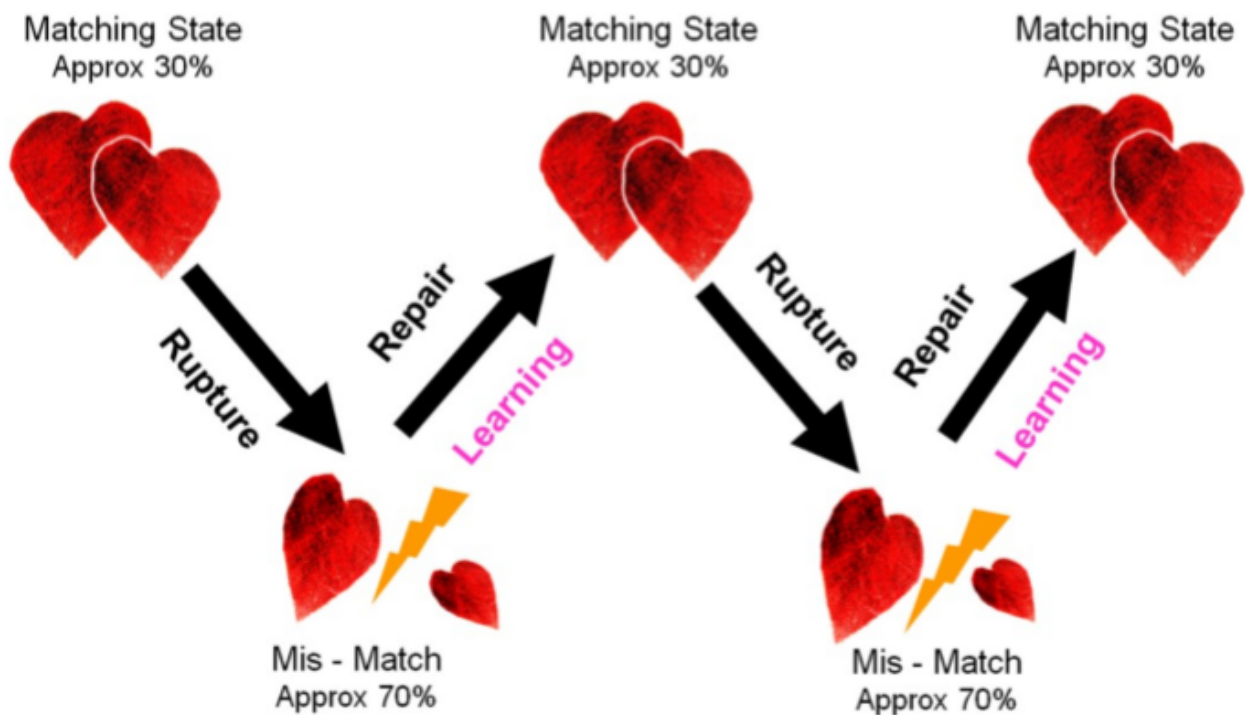


Behaviour (year old)

I feel...

I need...

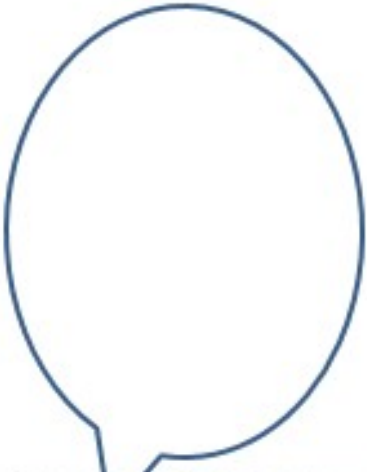
The Good enough parenting



Having a look to this illustration, please discuss the following questions in your group:

- Is it always possible to maintain a perfect parent- child relationship?
- Is a perfect relationship a never ruptured one?
- How can a rupture in relationship be an opportunity for a learning and growth?

Repair in Relationships



Family Case Scenario



Shalini and Jack Murphy have four children:

Darren, their sensitive 10 year old son, attends the local primary school;

Kieran, their sociable 6 year old son, is in his early years at school;

Three year old Kevina their only daughter, is known as the comedienne of the family and has started an early years program this year; and

Their placid baby boy, 8 month old mason.

The family has recently moved to the country from their home of the last 10 years in the inner suburbs of a capital city, to a rural area where they now live on a small farm property.

While the family was living in the city, Jack went out to work for 5 days each week. Since the move to the country, he works from home.

Shalini has not returned to the workforce since Mason's birth.



Group Discussion

Consider the child in your 'age group' and what the family's change of circumstances might mean for him or her. Take into account, the child's

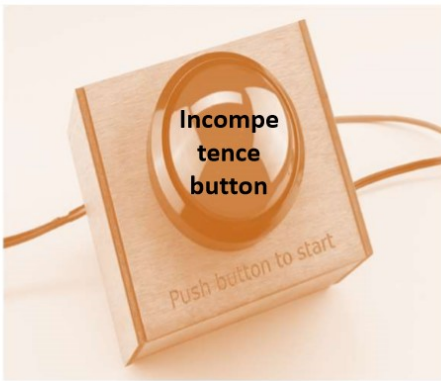
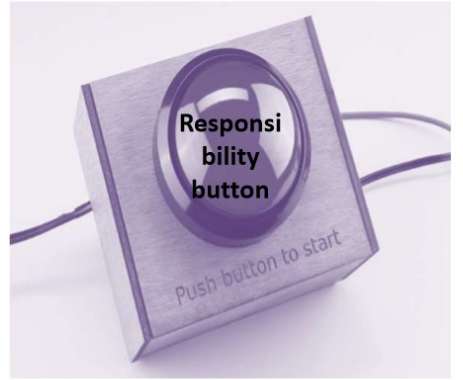
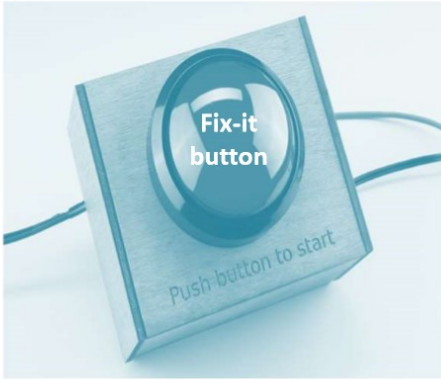
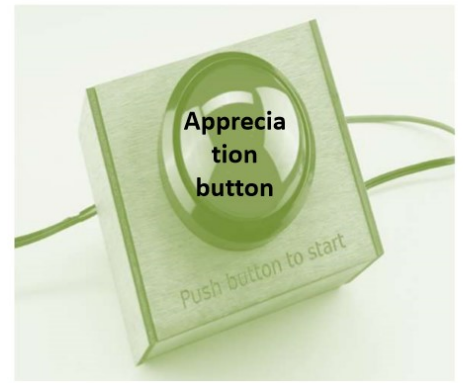
- Stage of development
- Personality
- Gender
- Position in the family

Consider possible impacts on the child's:

- feelings
- sense of security
- friendships
- behaviour

Handout 35

Pressing your buttons



Self-care reflection

Psychological Self-Care

Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the professional challenges that are found in your work and personal life.

- Keep a reflective journal
- Engage with a non-work hobby
- Turn off your email and work phone outside of work hours
- Make time for relaxation

Make time to engage with positive friends and family

Emotional Self-Care

Allowing yourself to safely experience your full range of emotions.

- Develop friendships that are supportive
- Write three good things that you did each day
- Play a sport and have a drink together after training
- Go to the movies or do something else you enjoy
- Meet with a social group

Talk to a friend about how you are coping with work and life demands

Spiritual Self-Care

This involves having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life.

- Engage in reflective practices like meditation
- Go on bush walks
- Do yoga

Reflect with a close friend for support

Relationship Self-Care

Is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are not only connected to people at work but also in your personal life.

- Prioritise close relationships in your life e.g. with partners, family and children
- Attend the special events of your family and friends
- Arrive to work and leave on time every day

In creating a self-care plan it is important to ask yourself, "what might get in the way?" What can you do to remove these barriers? If you can't remove them you might want to adjust your strategies. Think honestly about whether any of your strategies are negative and how you can adjust your plan to avoid or minimise their impact. It is important that your plan resonates for you.



10 Breaths

When something wonderful touches you, savour the experience by offering it 10 full breaths. By paying close attention to special moments, we come to see that opportunities for happiness present themselves many times each day.

Give your 10 breaths to anything that seems wonderful to you

- ◇ Something beautiful from Nature
- ◇ A special moment with your child/partner/friend
- ◇ A piece of music
- ◇ Eating something delicious
- ◇ A work of art

1. Stop whatever you are doing
2. Close your eyes, place a hand on your belly and take 3 deep breaths to calm yourself.
3. Open your eyes and focus on your special object/person/experience
4. Stay focused on whatever has caught your attention as you 'count with your body', 10 slow breaths, by pressing and releasing in turn, each finger resting on your belly.
5. If you are still entranced by your special moment, repeat the 10 breaths practice.

How to Change the Colour of Your Day

Have you ever noticed that the way you are feeling affects the kind of day you have with your children?

When we are tired, stressed or cranky, we more easily become frustrated and impatient and less playful with our kids.

When this happens, power struggles are more likely between us and our kids and we become more reactive – then our connection with our kids gets broken.

BUT....

When we take a few moments to STOP, to PAUSE – take some mindful breaths and reflect on how we're feeling....

THEN....

We reconnect with our children and 'change the colour of our day' with our kids.

CONNECT WITH YOUR BREATH TO STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR KIDS!