

# SMART PRACTICE STRATEGIES BOOKLET 2019

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma



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Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

# Understanding and responding to the manifestations of trauma

**What do you see in your students?**



Image source: istock

**How do you understand it?**

# Manifestations of trauma

Behaviour

Learning &  
Cognition

Emotional &  
Social

Body

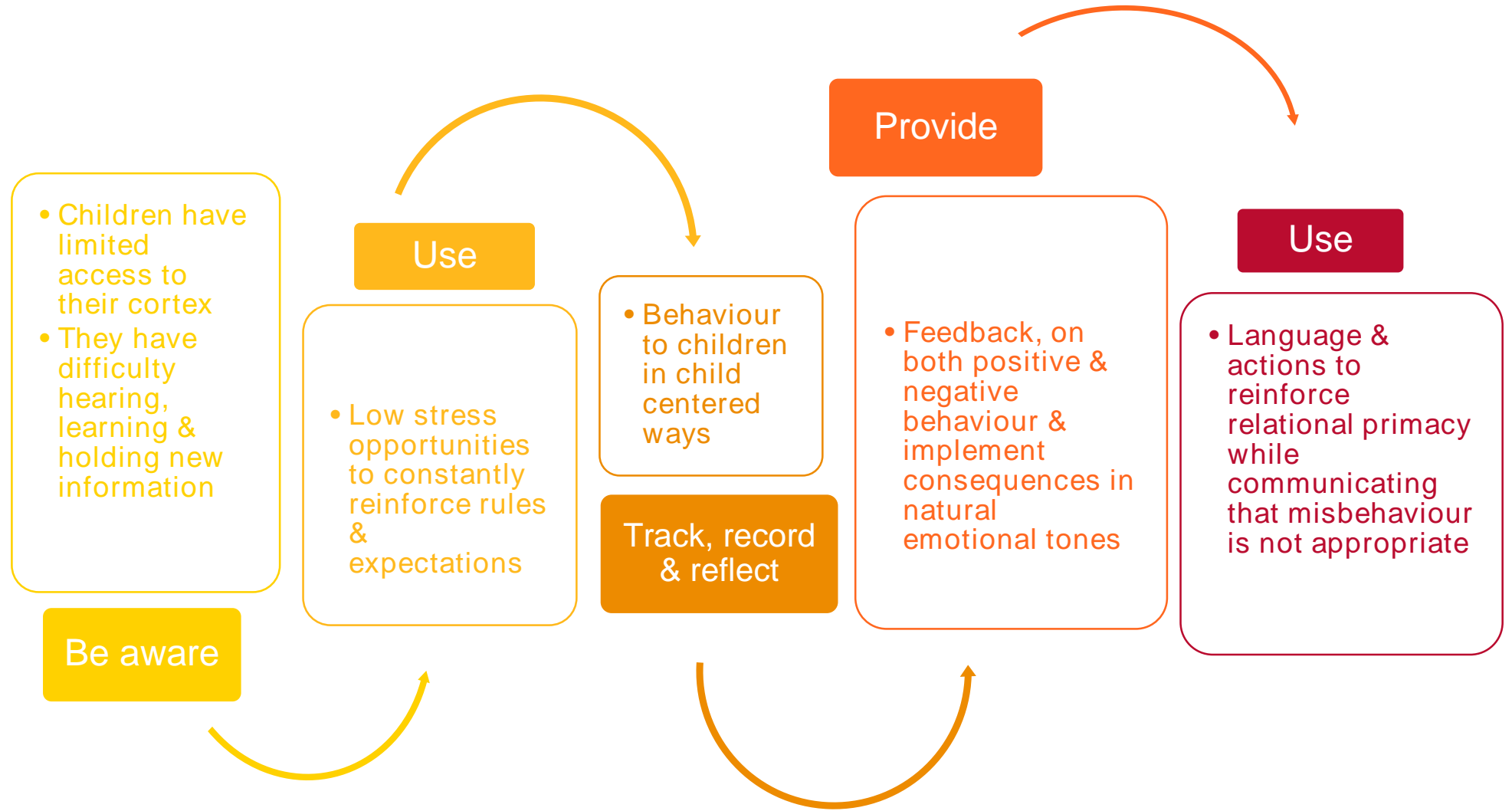
# Behaviour

- Behaviours have underlying meanings – they are driven by feelings and needs
- Traumatized children display behaviour that often makes sense in the context of their trauma

# Trauma triggers

- Trauma memories are usually implicit, tagged with the intensity of the original experience
- We can look for patterns in behaviour - your knowledge of the child will be valuable in this observation
- Be aware of the possibility of transference
- We may inadvertently trigger children (and parents) by e.g. tone of voice, facial expression, smell

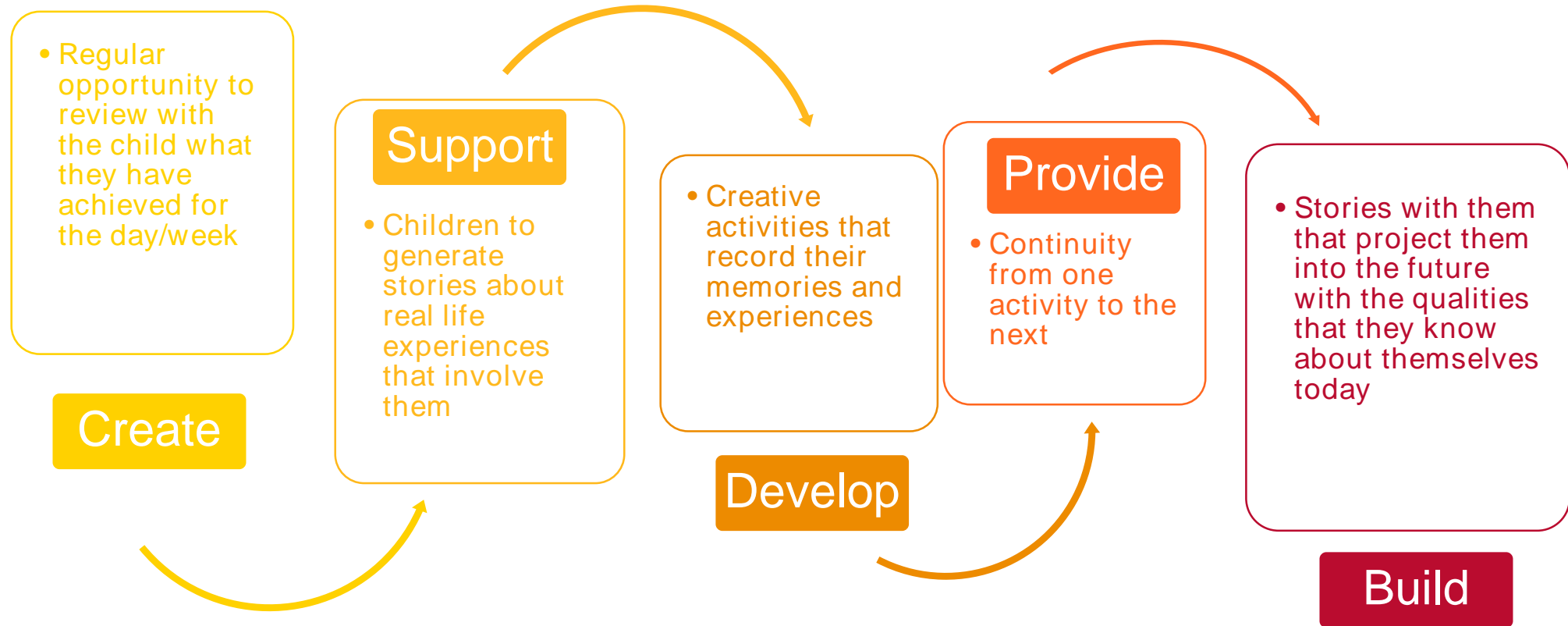
# Behaviour - things to do



# Learning and cognition

- Traumatized children's memory and interpretive functions have been impaired
- Because of the disruptions to their arousal levels, they struggle to stay engaged in the classroom
- Traumatized children often have a limited sense of self. They feel separate from their present and have no starting point about referencing their path into the future

# Learning & cognition: things to do





# Emotional & social

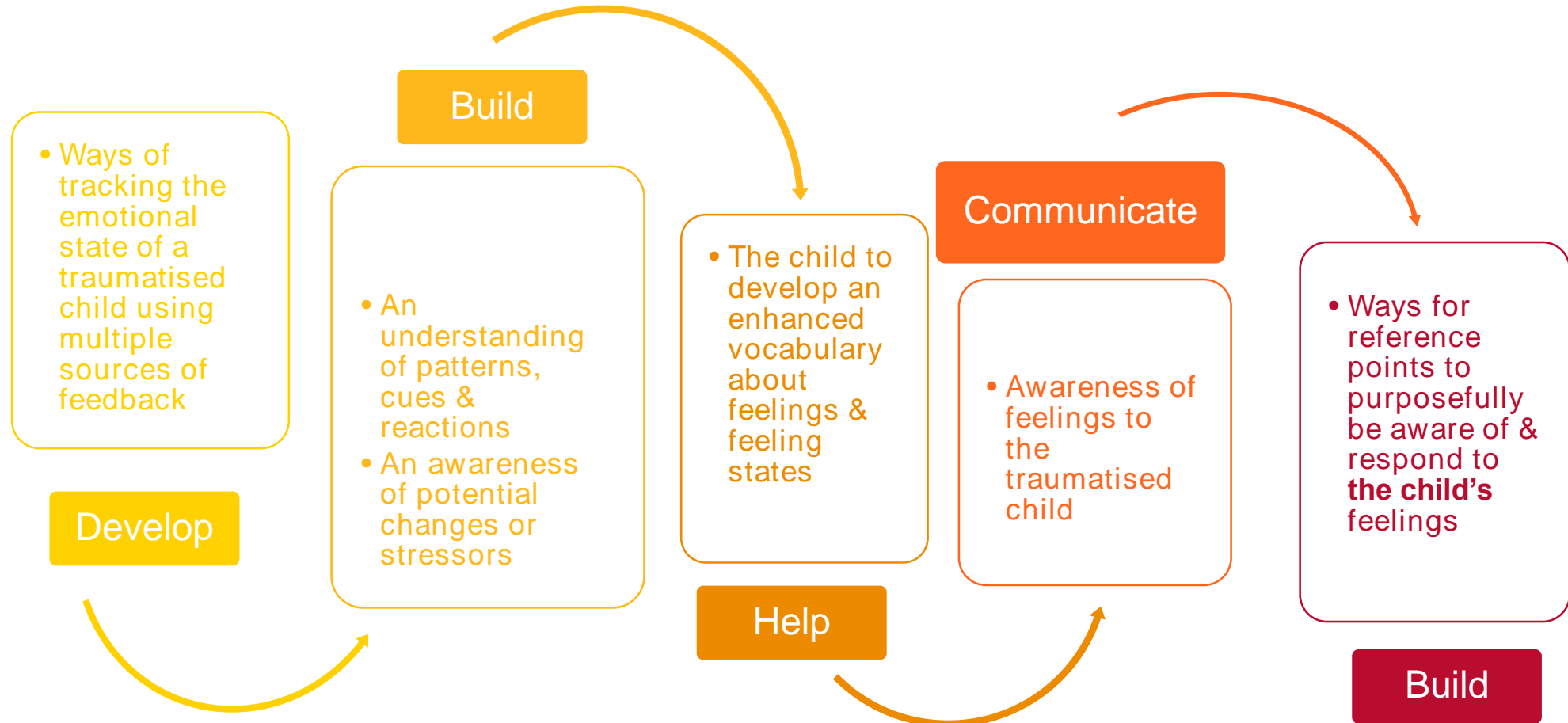
- Traumatized children do not easily know how they feel and have had limited experience of having their feelings recognized by others
- Feelings are experienced as separate to traumatized children's knowledge of themselves

# Social manifestations

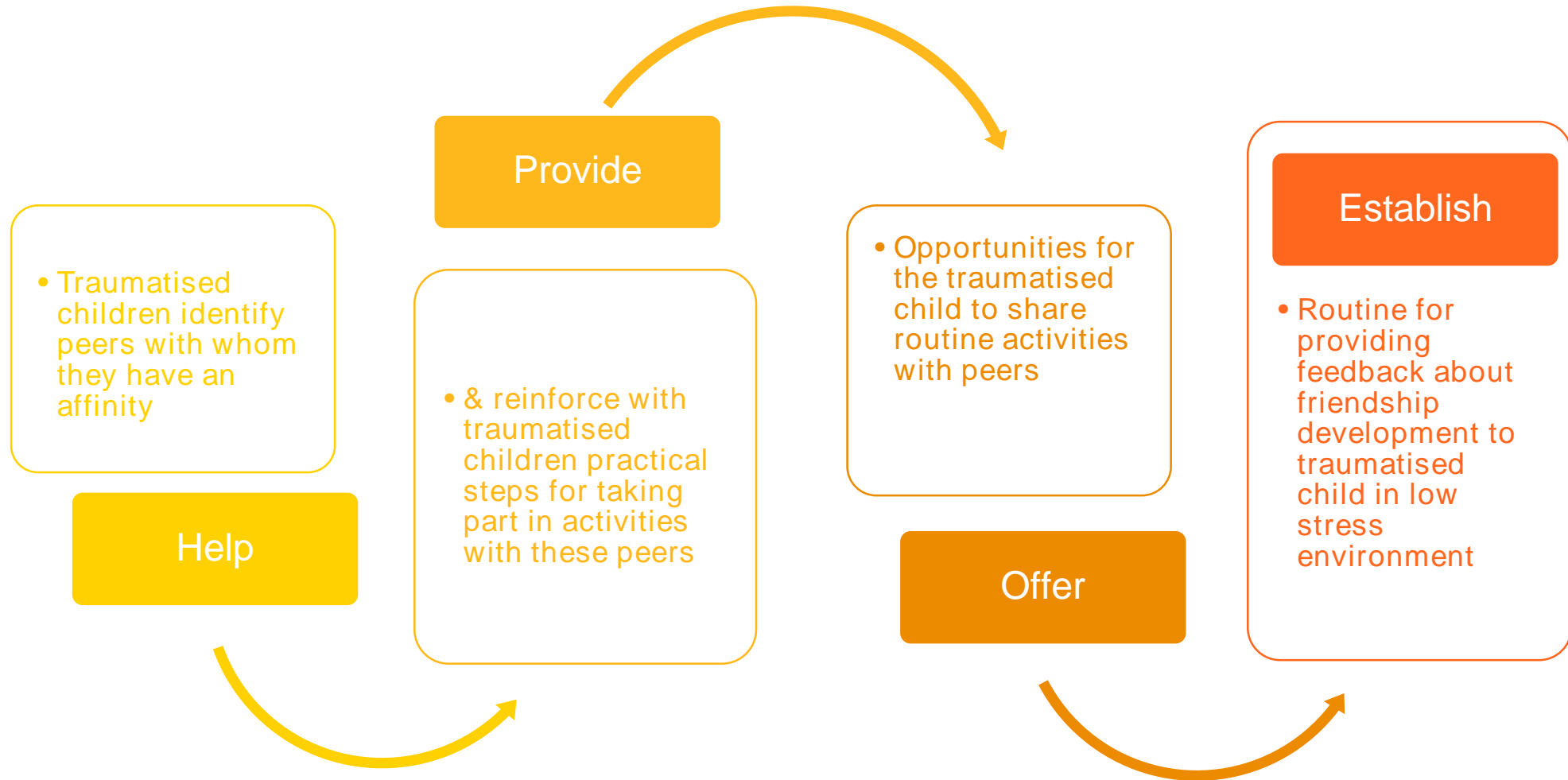
Traumatised children:

- have poor maps that guide them in making friends
- often fail to constructively interpret social cues
- feel isolated and different from their peers
- use socially inappropriate behaviour to try to engage peers and as a result are frequently ostracised

# Emotional: things to do



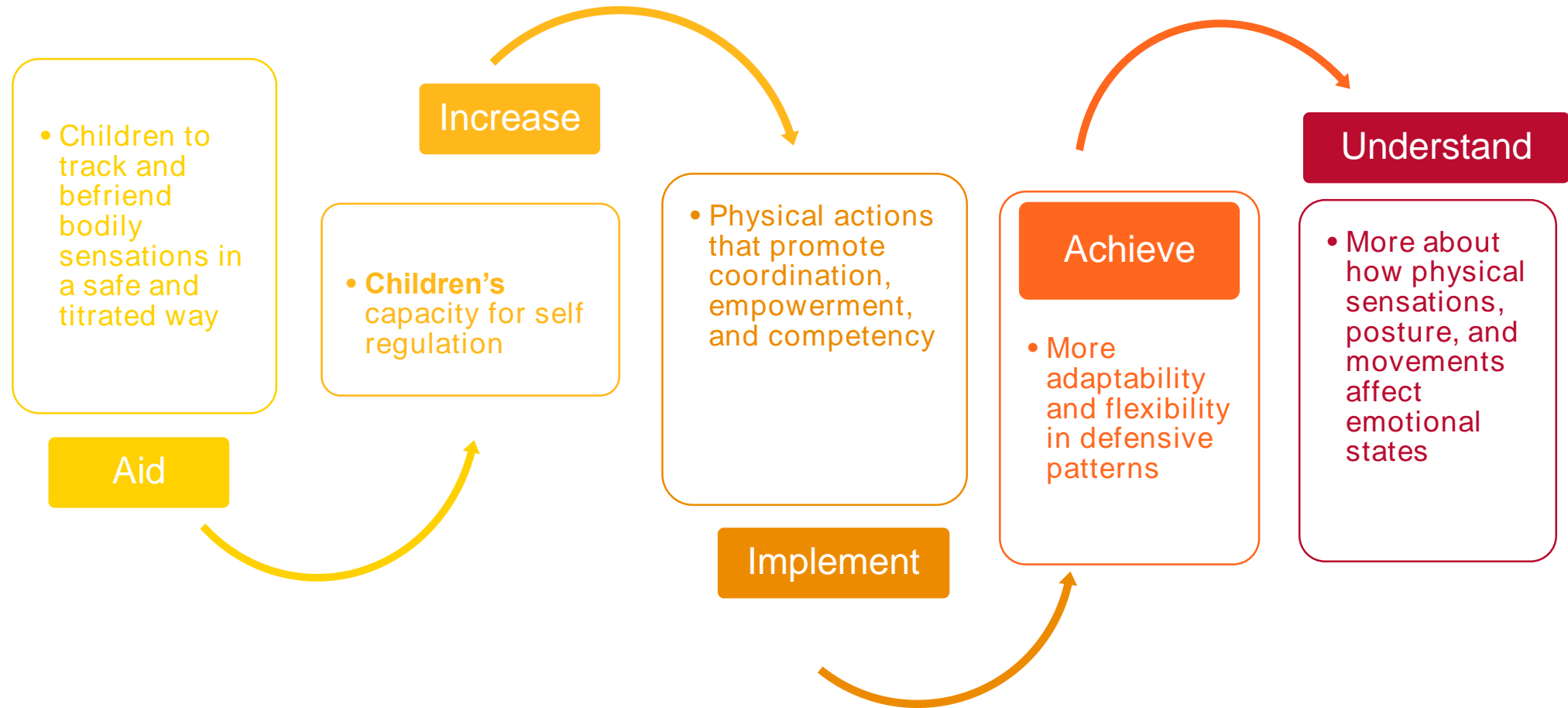
# Social: things to do



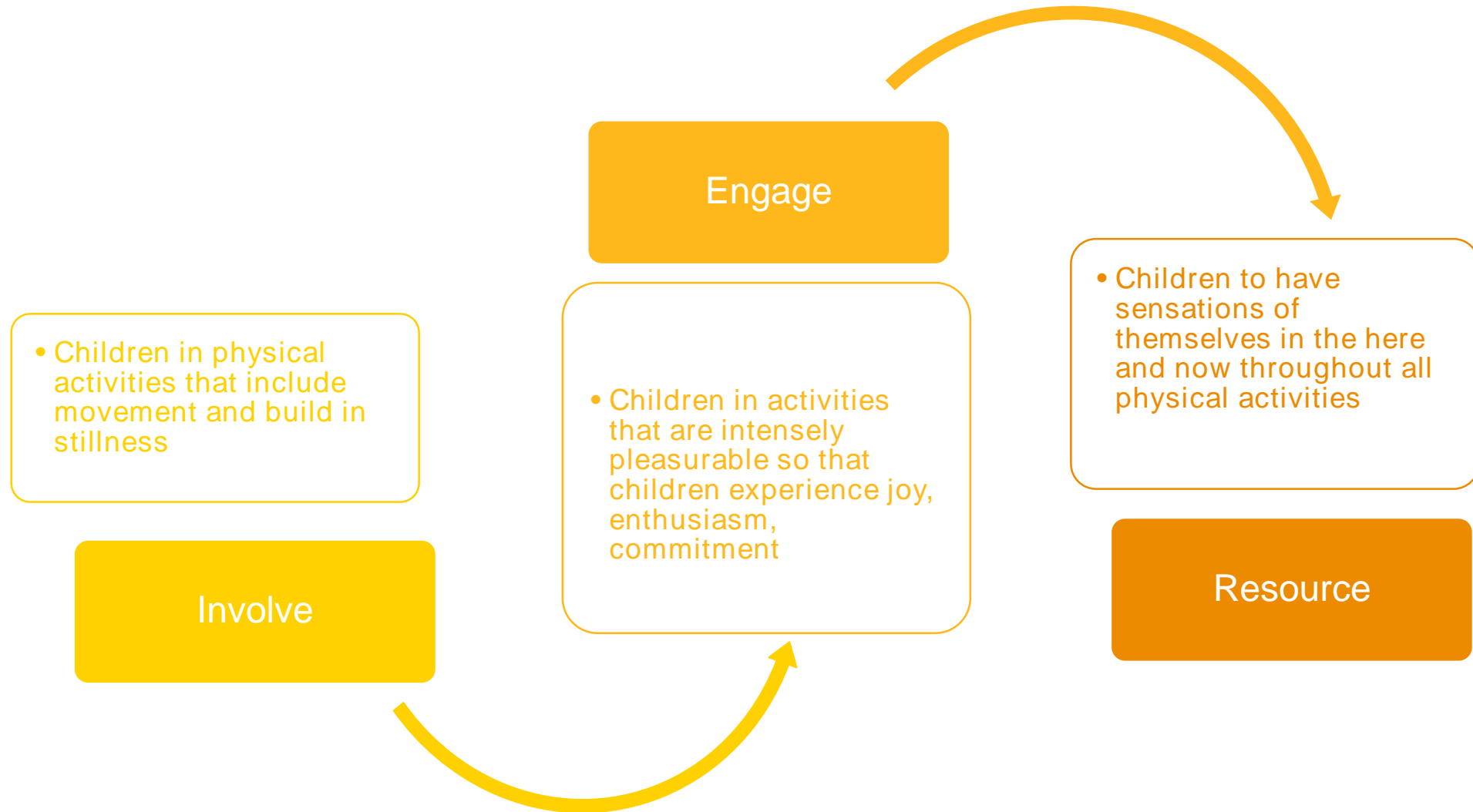
# Body

- Trauma results in unregulated body experience
- Traumatized children have their attention focused in the past, leaving them with reduced resources to attend to the present- accessing the body is always a link to the present
- Trauma impairs children's capacities to orient to, interpret and integrate sensory stimulation in an adaptive fashion

# Body: things to do



# Body: things to do



# SMART PRACTICE

Traumatised children require environments that provide opportunities to:

- Develop connection and belonging
- Reintegrate experiences of shame
- Experience trust and respect
- Develop a sense of personal competence

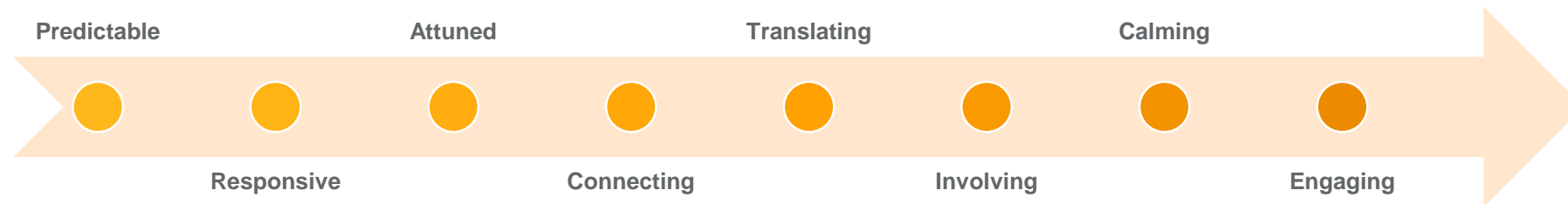


# A closer look at practice...

- We need to review our practice with traumatised children and young people with our increased understanding of the impact of trauma
- These strategies are often not those which come to us automatically so we need to practice them to become more familiar
- Knowing that we are trying to change the way the brain is wired reminds us that these skills and responses need to be practiced consistently and persistently to be of value

# Framework for supporting traumatised children

## SMART PRACTICE



# Foundational Platforms

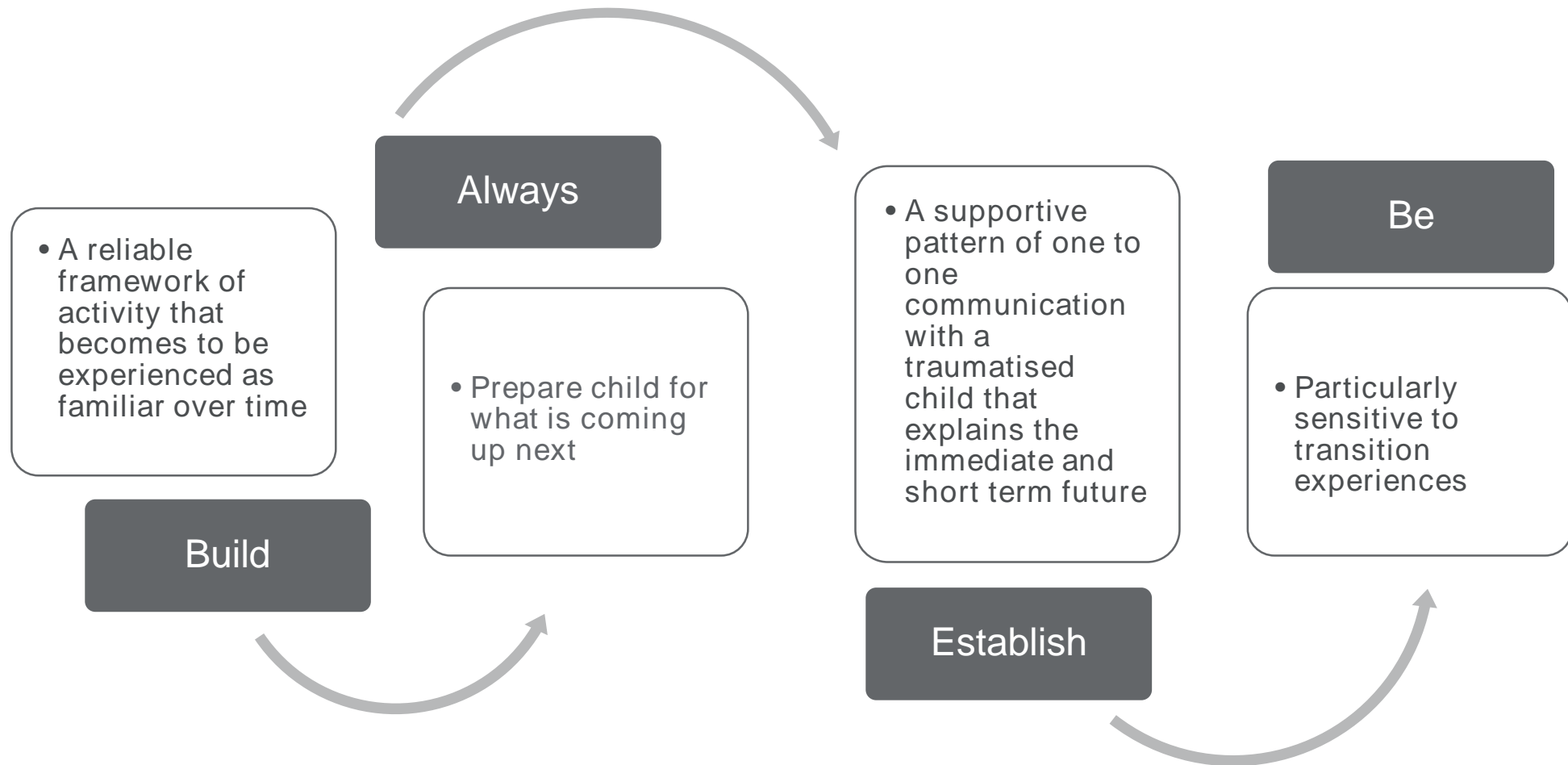
**Predictable**

# Predictable

Create environments that are routine and predictable and prepare traumatized children for change

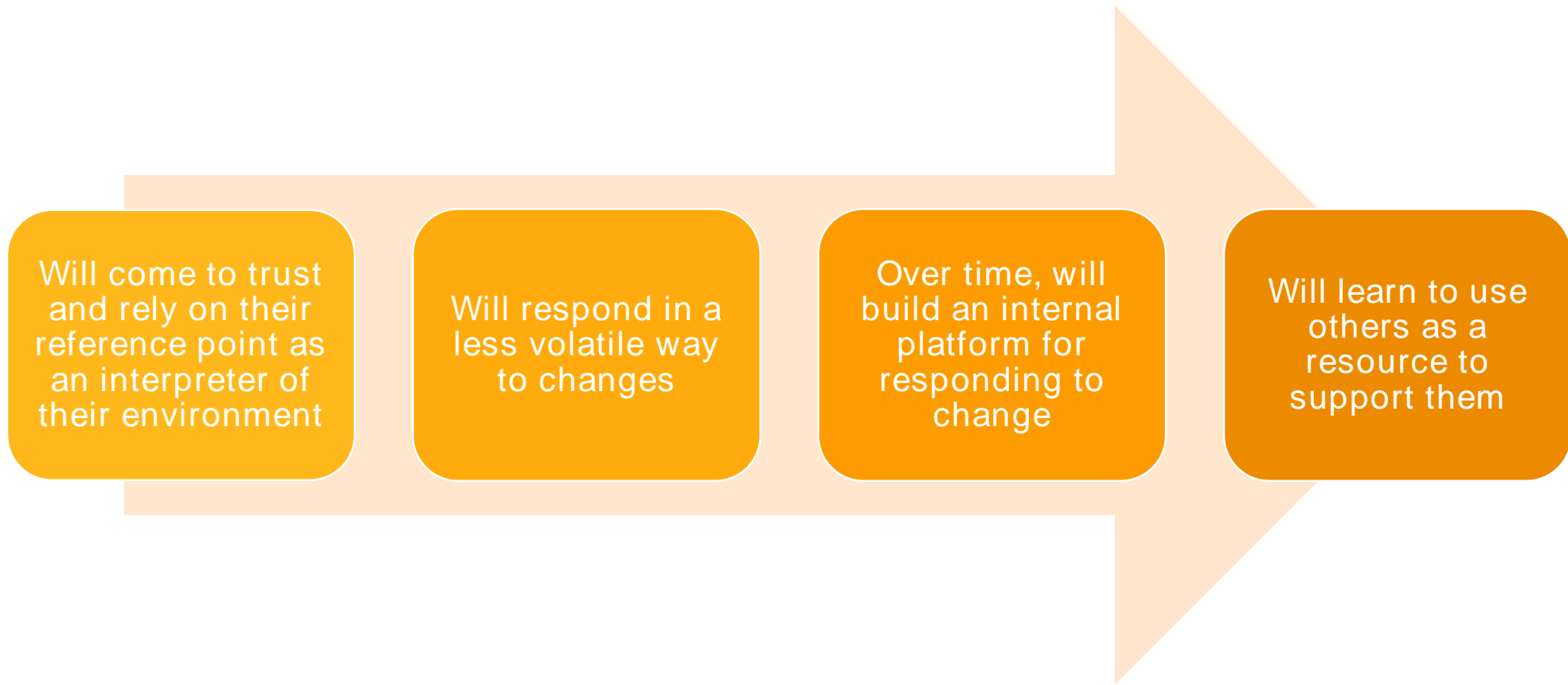
- Traumatized children experience any change as a potential threat
- Even if the familiar is difficult and destructive, the familiar is safer for traumatized children than the unfamiliar

# Predictable - strategy



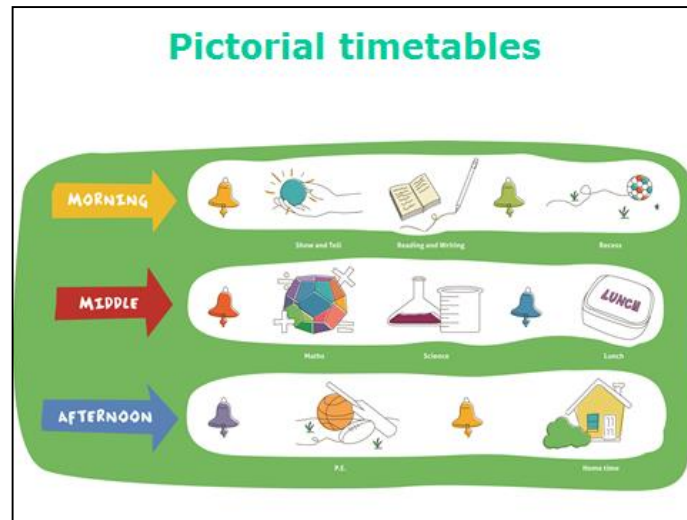
# Predictable: outcomes

Traumatised children:



# Predictable: things to do

- Pictorial timetable
- Plan and prepare excursions and camps well in advance



## Develop plans for the lead up to excursions & camps

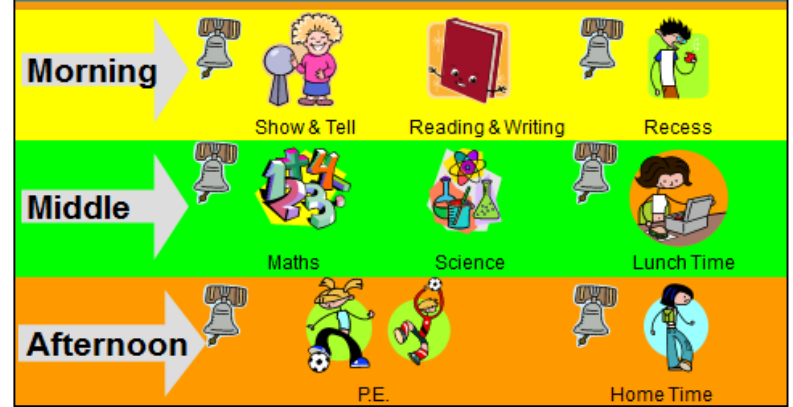


Timeline	Task	Resources/ Key contact	Issues Arising
1 month prior to camp	Inform student 1:1 Inform carers Look at photos of previous year's camp	Reference point Year level Coord Whole class or reference point	Be sure to respond clearly to questions. What strategies will be put in place for behavioural concerns?
1 week prior to camp	Daily reminders of camp Clearly outline schedule of first day Develop contact list Plan response to any behavioural issues on camp	Class or camp teacher Reference point Reference point and carers Care team	Try to ensure first day is fully scheduled. Expect some behavioural responses to this experience. What strategies have worked in the past?
Day before camp	Check packing requirements Final reminder of camp schedule Plan for departure clearly outlined	Class teacher Year level Coord Reference point	Does the child require a security item (no matter what age)? How can this be managed?
Day of camp	Follow departure plan Put behavioural strategies into place as required	Reference point Camp or care team	How will you manage positive behavioural response?

## Pictorial Timetable



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# Foundational Platforms

**Responsive**

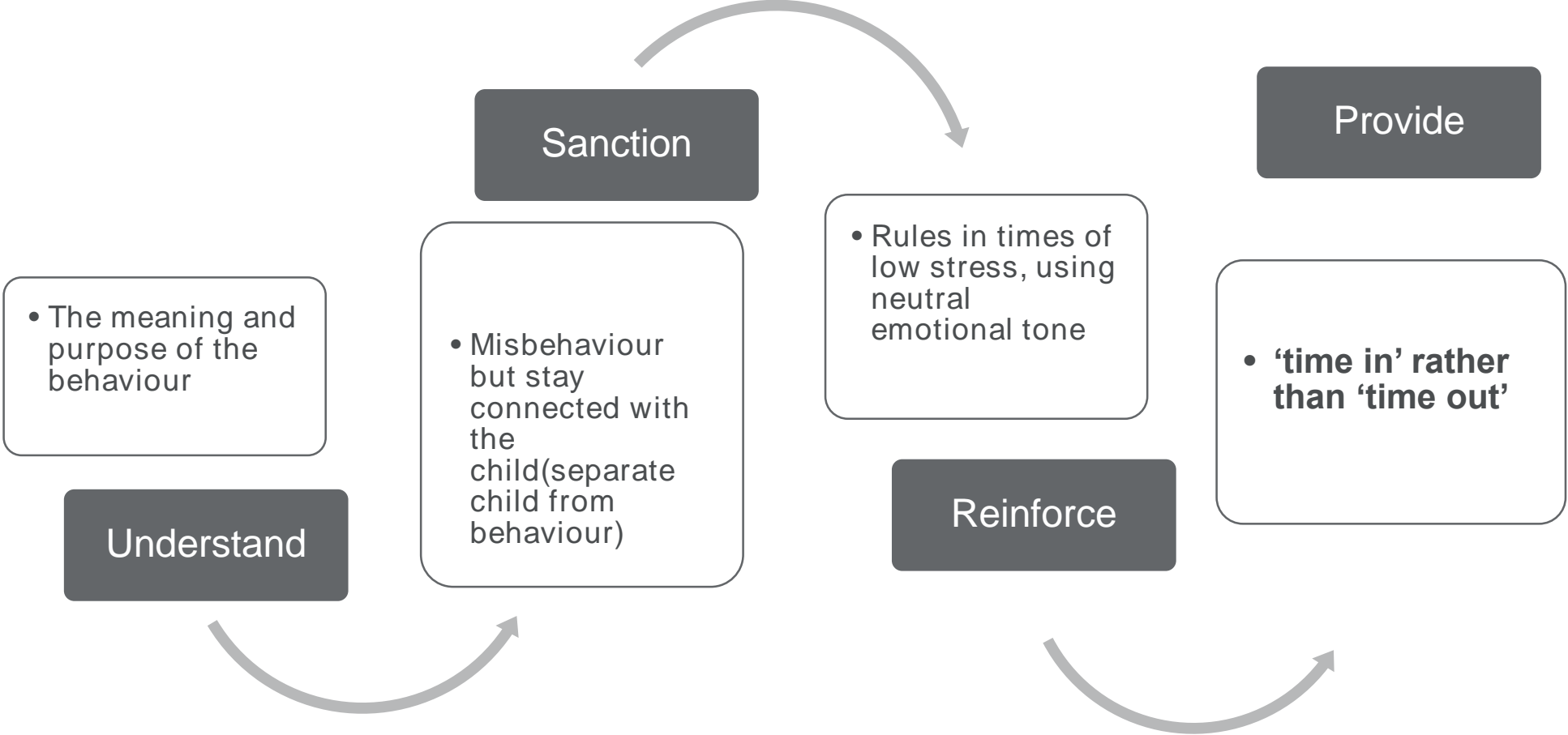


# Responsive

Respond to traumatized children with the understanding that their past trauma will guide present behaviours, cognitions, and emotions

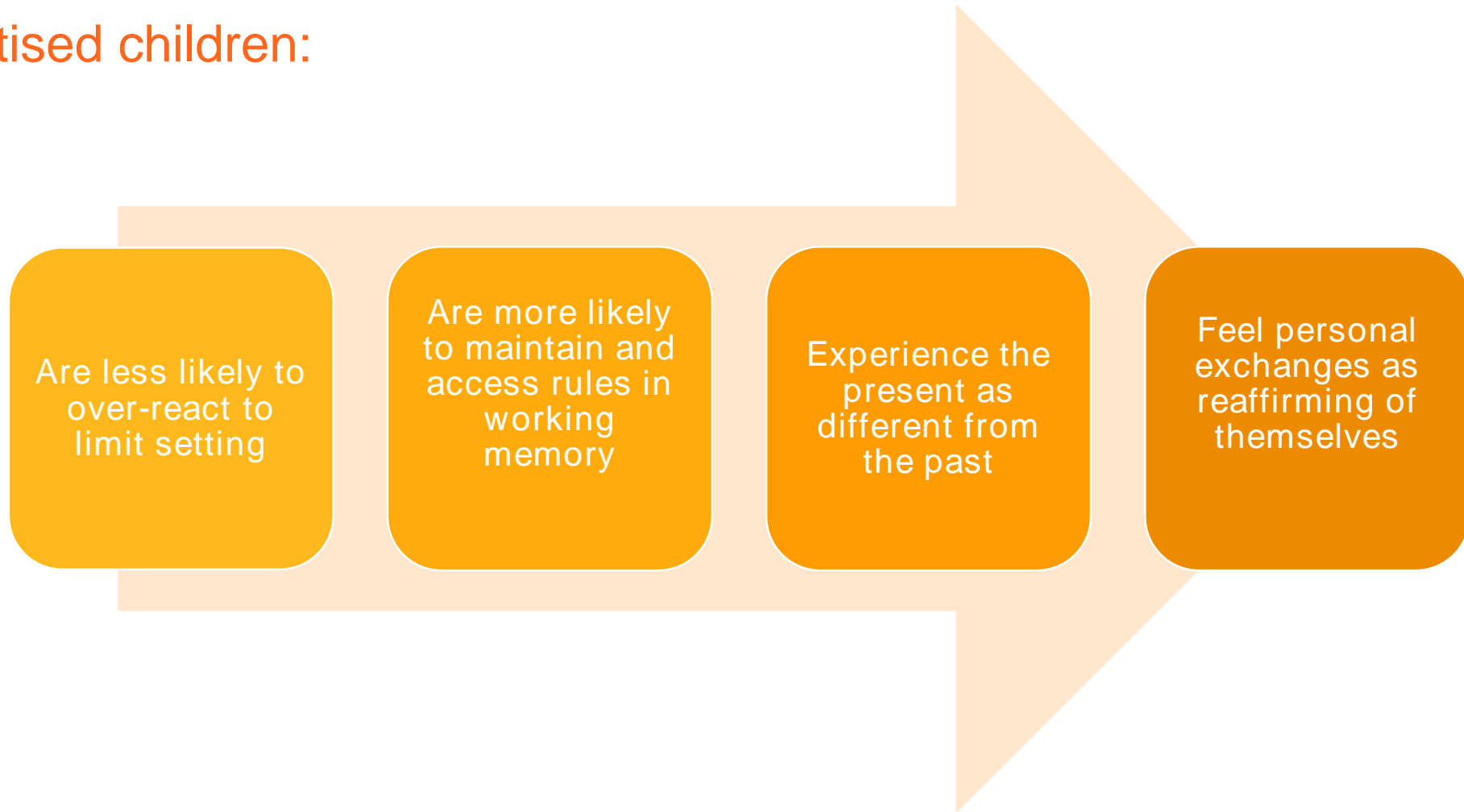
- Traumatized children will display behaviour which is experienced as difficult or challenging by others, but often the behaviour makes sense in the context of their trauma
- Traumatized children find it hard to internalise external rules and consequences
- The misbehaviour of traumatized children evokes secondary reactions in others which are experienced as threats. In turn, traumatized children play out familiar patterns of responses that aim to minimise the threat

# Responsive - strategy



# Responsive: outcomes

Traumatised children:



# Responsive: things to do

- Develop a script for children
- Develop a script for teacher responses
- Always follow through

**Developing a Script for Teacher Responses**

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Element	Guidelines	For this Student
Identified Issue	Provide a clear outline of the situations to which this script applies	
Identified behaviour	List triggers or signs of situation escalating ie: when to implement this script	
Location of intervention	Where would this process work? Eg: do you need to take child aside? Is it a playground script? etc	
Goal of intervention	What is the expected outcome of utilising this script? How will you see that?	
Words & actions to use	Identify key verbs and other words to use. Include actions which work as well as verbal tone.	
Words & actions to avoid	What exacerbates the child's reaction? Eg: does trying to give them a hug just escalate the situation?	
Follow-up action	Having implemented the words and actions, what is the next step?	
Evaluation	What is in place to review this process for the child, yourself and the other teacher(s)?	


**Developing a script for children**

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- When I got to school I was thinking about...
- My body was (could choose from pictures)
- I was feeling...(feeling continuum)
- The best thing that happened at school today was....
- In the morning I.....
- Between playtime and lunch I liked .....
- After lunch..... Happened
- Today was different from yesterday because....
- 1 thing I know is happening next week is....

- When I got to school today I was thinking about....
- I was feeling....
- The best thing that happened at school today was.....
- The bit I really didn't like was....
- In the morning I.....
- Between recess and lunch I.....
- Lunchtime was different from yesterday because .....
- Thinking about today, it was like last (day) because .....
- What I would like to happen tomorrow is .....
- Chances of that happening are .....



Primary Age







Secondary Age

**Responding to behaviour – “always follow through”**

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- If making “contracts”, abide by the terms – each issue needs to be responded to separately
- Provide praise that is concrete, specific and delivered without effusiveness – Look for opportunities
- Provide “cool down” time and space that is clearly not delineated as punishment

# Foundational Platforms

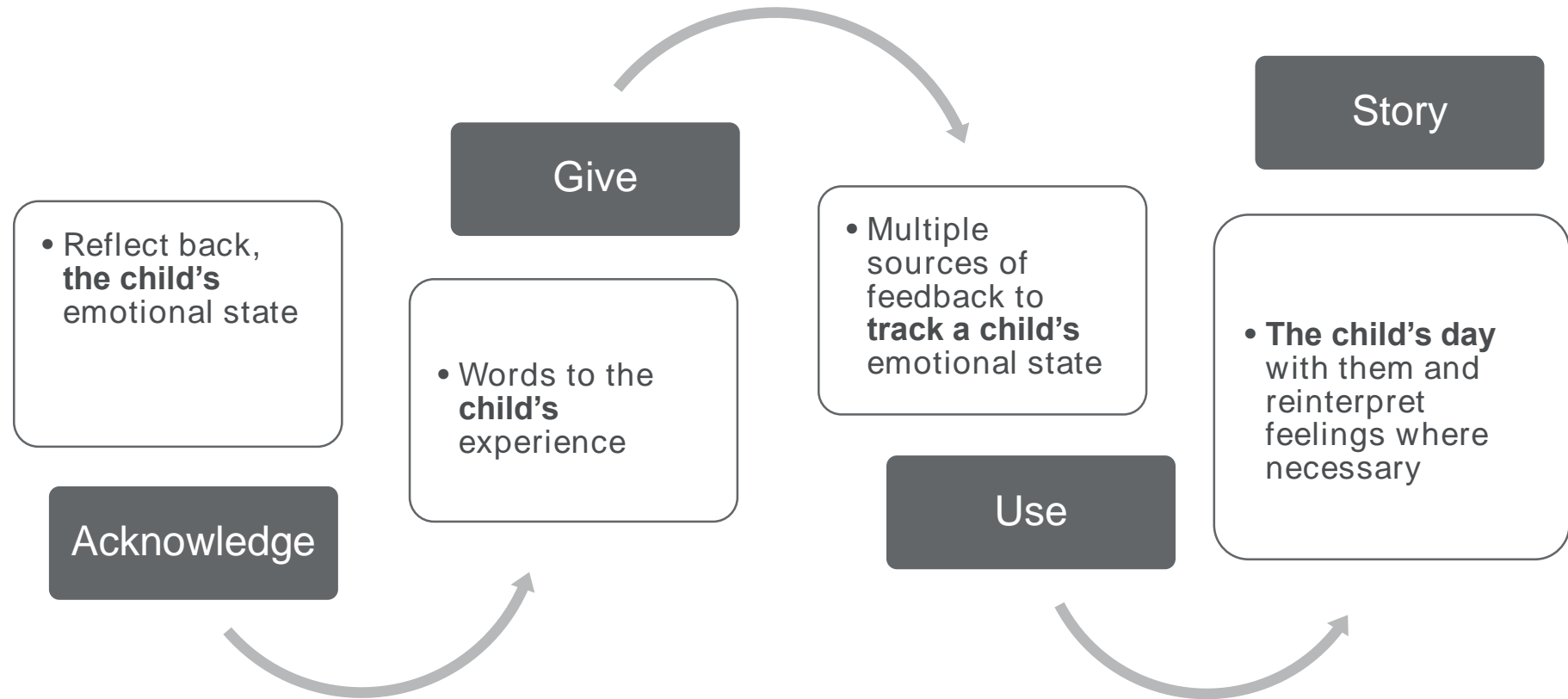
**Attuned**

# Attuned

## Recognize and act upon trauma related cues displayed by the child

- Traumatized children do not easily know how they feel and have had limited experience of having their feelings recognized by others
- Feelings are experienced as separate to traumatized children's knowledge of themselves

# Attuned - strategy



# Attuned: outcomes


Traumatised children:





# Attuned: things to do


- Body Mapping
- Feelings buddies
- Feelings faces



## Body Mapping


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Body Mapping helps children practice tuning into their body, increase body awareness and befriend their inner body sensations

Traumatized children need to be encouraged to engage in conversation that may enlarge self-awareness and offer a space that may help draw out connections between what was found in the body and their experiences

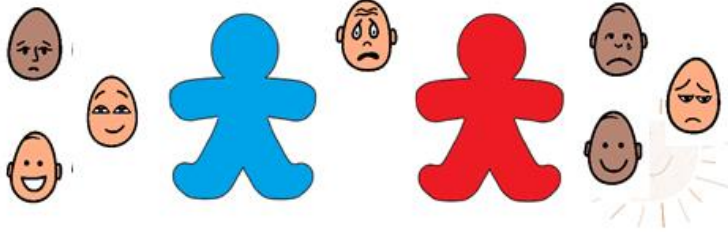


## Use of feelings faces in a range of ways

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### Feelings Buddies




## Feelings Faces

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- Track and monitor mood over a period of time
- Review events in the context of a feelings response rather than focussing on the behaviour
- The use of stories & narratives can prove valuable in this process
- Provide regular communication to parents/carers about a child's feelings rather than behavioural issues



# Foundational Platforms

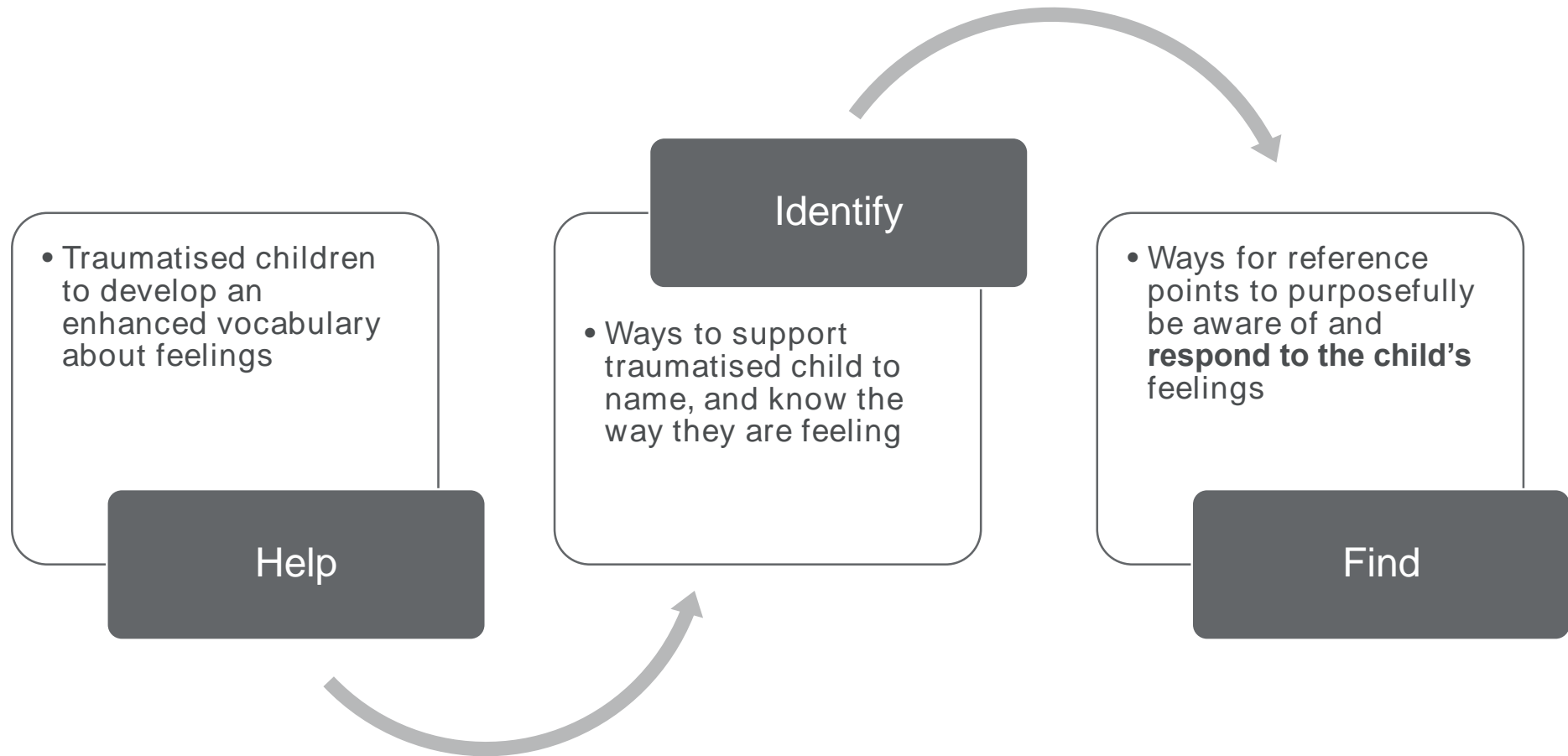
## Connecting

# Connecting

Help children to be more in touch with their feelings as they relate to language, bodily sensations, and behaviours

- Traumatized children feel disconnected from their feelings, memories of experiences and their sense of identity
- Traumatized children need support to get in touch with how they're feeling, what they are feeling and linking their perceptions and experiences to their feelings

# Connecting - strategy



# Connecting: outcomes

Traumatised children:

Build capacity to express themselves in language

Are better able to link internal emotional states with conscious cognitive processes using language

Children come to know how their feelings are affected by past experiences

Can be better supported to be in control of their feelings and reactions

# Connecting: things to do

- The size of a feeling
- Sentence starters
- Feelings narrative
- Create a story

### Create a story

**WHEN I GOT HERE TODAY:**

I was thinking about



My body is/was feeling



### The size of a feeling

1. CHOOSE A BALLOON COLOUR TO MATCH YOUR FEELING.
2. BLOW UP THE BALLOON TO A SIZE THAT MATCHES THE INTENSITY OF YOUR FEELING.

*How could you make the feeling smaller?*




### Sentence Starters:

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Use these sentence starters as prompts for the child. Only use as many or as few as you think are valuable. Ask the child to write, or say, the first thing that comes to mind.

- I am.....
- I wish.....
- Families are.....
- I really miss.....
- I feel safe when.....
- I know it sounds strange but sometimes.....
- If I need help I.....
- People who hurt.....
- Bad things happen because.....
- I am best at.....
- I like.....



### Use feelings faces in a range of ways

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When I got here today:

I was thinking  about



My body  is / was feeling



# Foundational Platforms

## Translating

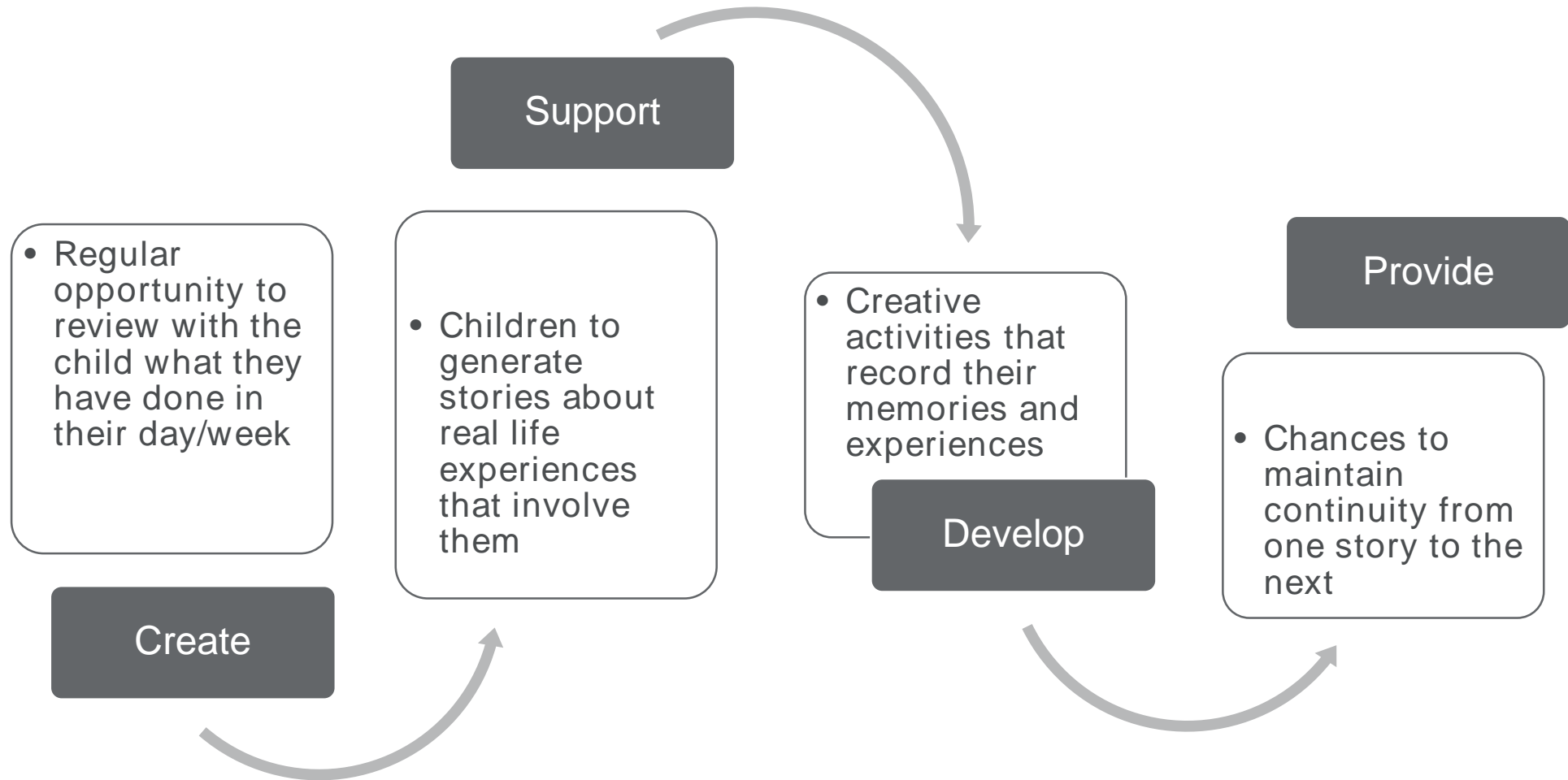
# Translating

Aid children to interpret and organize their experiences

- Traumatised children's memory and interpretive functions have been impaired
- Traumatised children find it difficult to make stories about their day to day experiences
- Traumatised children struggle to make sense of their past. They feel separate from their present and have no starting point about referencing their path into the future

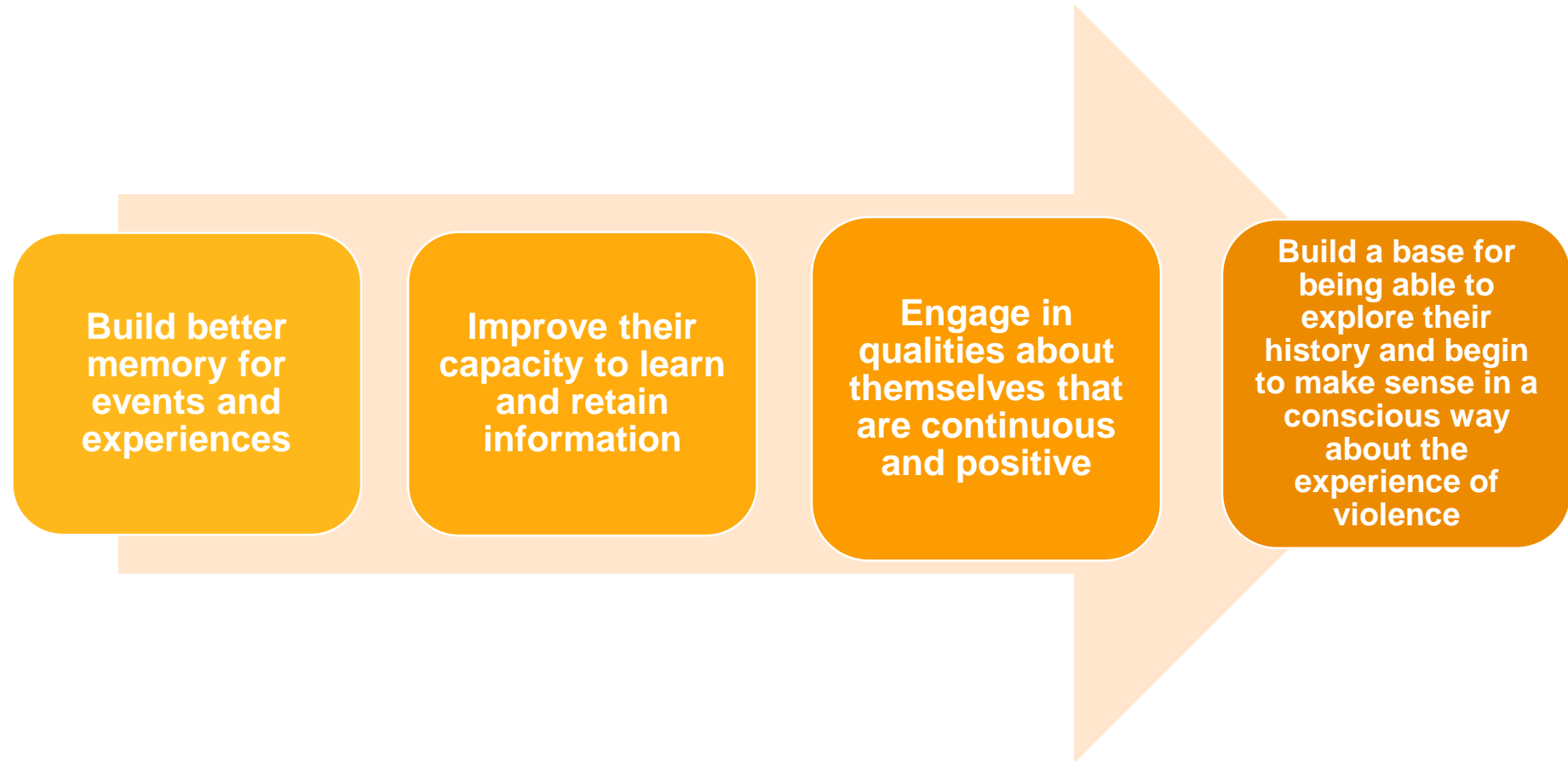


# Translating - strategy



# Translating: outcomes

Traumatised children:

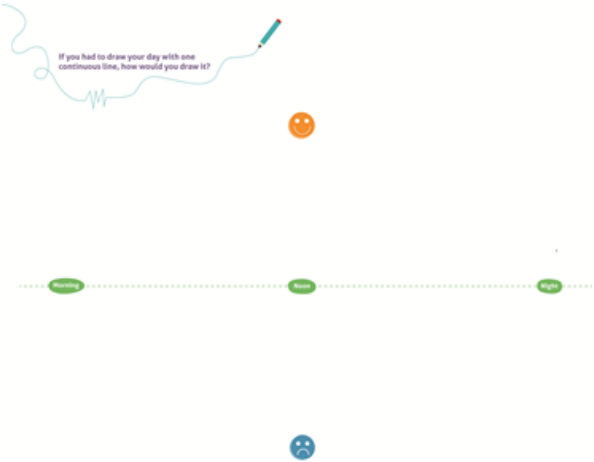


# Translating: things to do

- Develop a joy box or sack of my life
- Line of my day

### Line of my day

If you had to draw your day with one continuous line, how would you draw it?



### Develop a .....

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- A box of joy for memory making for individual students

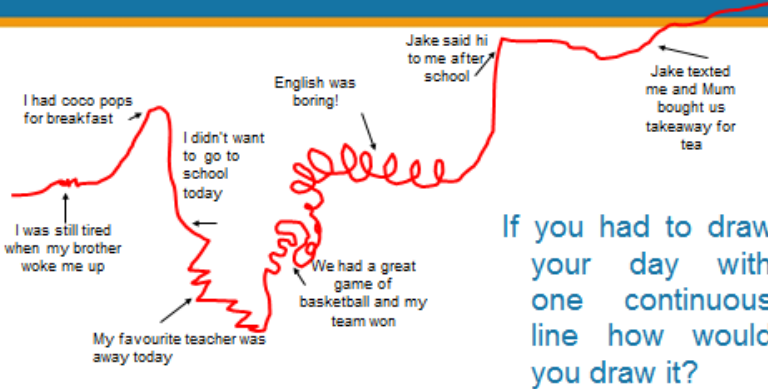


- A sack of my life – which holds small items or treasures that evoke a memory – this can be used to build a story

### Line of my Day

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If you had to draw your day with one continuous line how would you draw it?

# Foundational Platforms

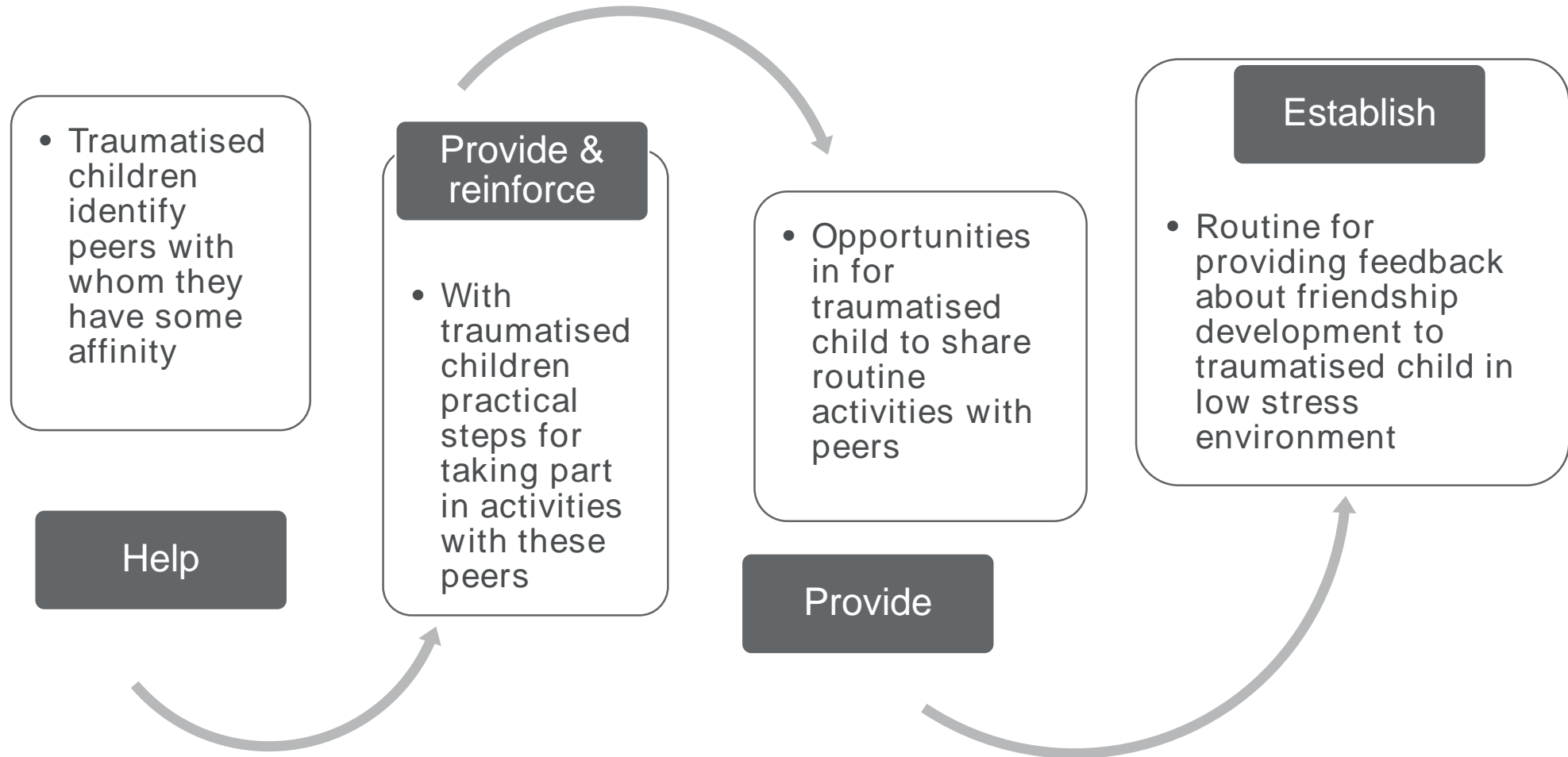
## Involving

# Involving

## Promote traumatized children's participation in relational activities

- Traumatized children have poor maps that guide them in making friends
- Traumatized children often fail to constructively interpret social cues
- Traumatized children feel isolated and different from their peers
- Traumatized children use socially inappropriate behaviour to try to engage peers and as a result are frequently ostracised

# Involving - strategy



# Involving: outcomes

Traumatised children:



# Involving: things to do

- Relationship maps
- Relationship Jenga
- Peer Support

## Relationship Jenga

Use sentence starters and stick them to jenga blocks as prompt. Ask the child to write, or say, the first thing that comes to mind.

- I am.....
- I wish.....
- Families are.....
- Something I like doing...
- I really miss.....
- I feel safe when.....
- I know it sounds strange but sometimes.....
- If I need help I .....
- People who hurt.....
- Bad things happen because.....
- I am best at.....
- I like to eat.....
- I think it's funny when.....



## Thinking about Relationships or Friendships

From my past experiences in relationships.....

	I	The other people or person	Together we	Things outside the relationship
I have felt at ease when....				
I have felt uneasy when...				
It has been good when....				
It has been painful when....				

You do not need to provide a response in every box

## Relationship Maps



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# Foundational Platforms

## Calming

# Calming

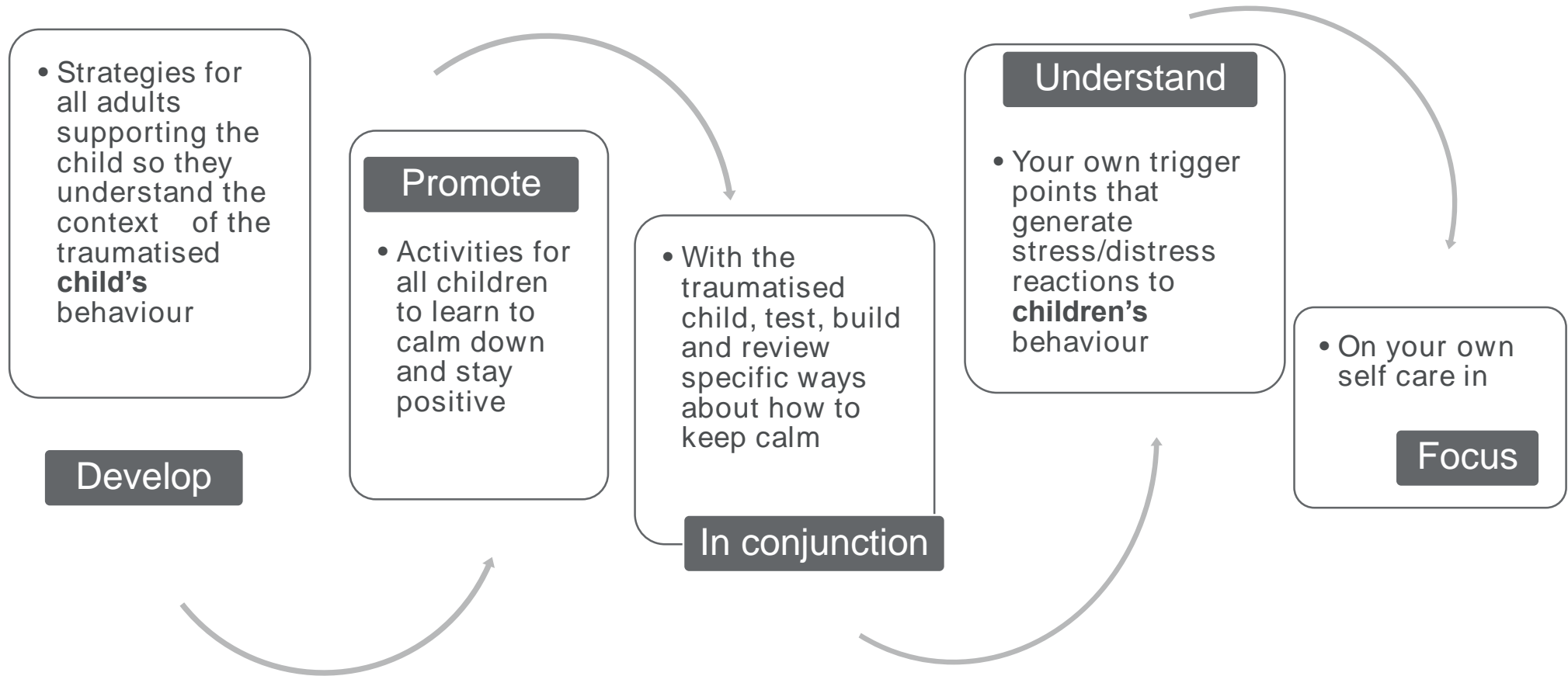
Assist traumatized children to attain a sense of peace and quiet inside

- Traumatized children find it difficult to shape or change their own feelings of stress/distress
- Trauma has impaired children's cortical capacity to regulate subcortical functioning



Foundational Principal

# Calming - strategy



# Calming: outcomes

Traumatised children:



## Paper Magiclay



Clean - No water required. No dirty stains or messy clean ups  
 Fast air drying - No kiln or oven required  
 Non toxic - Safe & easy to use by all ages. No harmful odours  
 Pliable - Soft malleable for all ages to use with ease, embosses with ease  
 Modelling ease - Easy to bend, manipulate roll, coil & stretch  
 Paper like - May be rolled into thin sheets



www.magiclay.com.au

For this activity you can make anything you wish—your creativity is the limit! Should you wish to have some guidance you may follow the directions below:

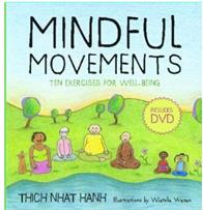
### How to Make a Paper Magiclay Flower:

1. Take a small amount of the Paper Magiclay and add a small amount of texta colour to knead through the clay to colour it.
2. Shape petals by pushing the Paper Magiclay with your thumb or fingers, thinly onto a tabletop or hard surface until you get very thin petal shapes. Allow to sit and stiffen for a few minutes.
3. Start with a small bud in the centre and build up the petals in a circular fashion around the central bud, shaping the petals to open out, as the flower gets larger.
4. When you reach the desired size, allow to dry. You will have a beautiful and delicate hand created flower with paper thin petals, these can even be scented with a few drops of essential oil.



## Mindful Movements

- Choose 3 of the movements in the book and practise them together.
- It's ok to laugh!



### Visual Cues for Calming

The following are suggested visual cues that may help children when their feelings begin to escalate- similar to the cool down card concept- but with more visual input. The selection needs to be the child's choice and their use needs to be negotiated.

- Relationship maps
- Relationship Jenga
- Peer Support
- Mindfulness
- Drumming
- Guinea rocks



### Aims

- To explore the use of non-cognitive measures to work on self calming techniques.
- To assist children to recognise the experience of calm.
- To promote tuning into others and working as part of a team
- To provide a non verbal outlet for emotion

### Strategies

- Give some "free time" to drum as the class want to.
- Start by finding a single rhythm that all the group/class can follow
- Slowly pick up the pace of the rhythm until it gets really fast!
- Then start fast drumming and slowly bring the pace down. Keep at the slow pace until the group start complaining or stop!
- Ask each person to drum at the best speed for them- the speed that feels most comfortable.
- Focus again on a slower beat- look for something between 70 and 80 beats per minute.
- Give some "slow drumming free time" to end the session



Tick the strategies you like to use or would like to use to help yourself calm down	Running	Quiet music	Put a cross against the strategies that just do not work for you
	Self talk	Reading	
	Deep breathing	Counting	
	Knitting	Sleeping	
	Drawing/Painting	Watching fish/sitting at beach	
	Drumming	Walking the dog	
	Writing	Pottery/modeling	
	Spending time alone	Yoga	
	Dancing	Playing Sport	
	Spending time with others	Phoning a friend	
Loud music	Playing the computer or play station		



# Calming - for staff

- The best way to help the extremely dys-regulated child is to remain calm and regulated yourself
- Who takes care of the caretaker?
- Where is calm for you in the school?
- What activities do you participate in to intentionally care for yourself?

# Foundational Platforms

## Engaging

# Engaging

Support traumatized children by building relationships with them that are respectful, compassionate and sustained

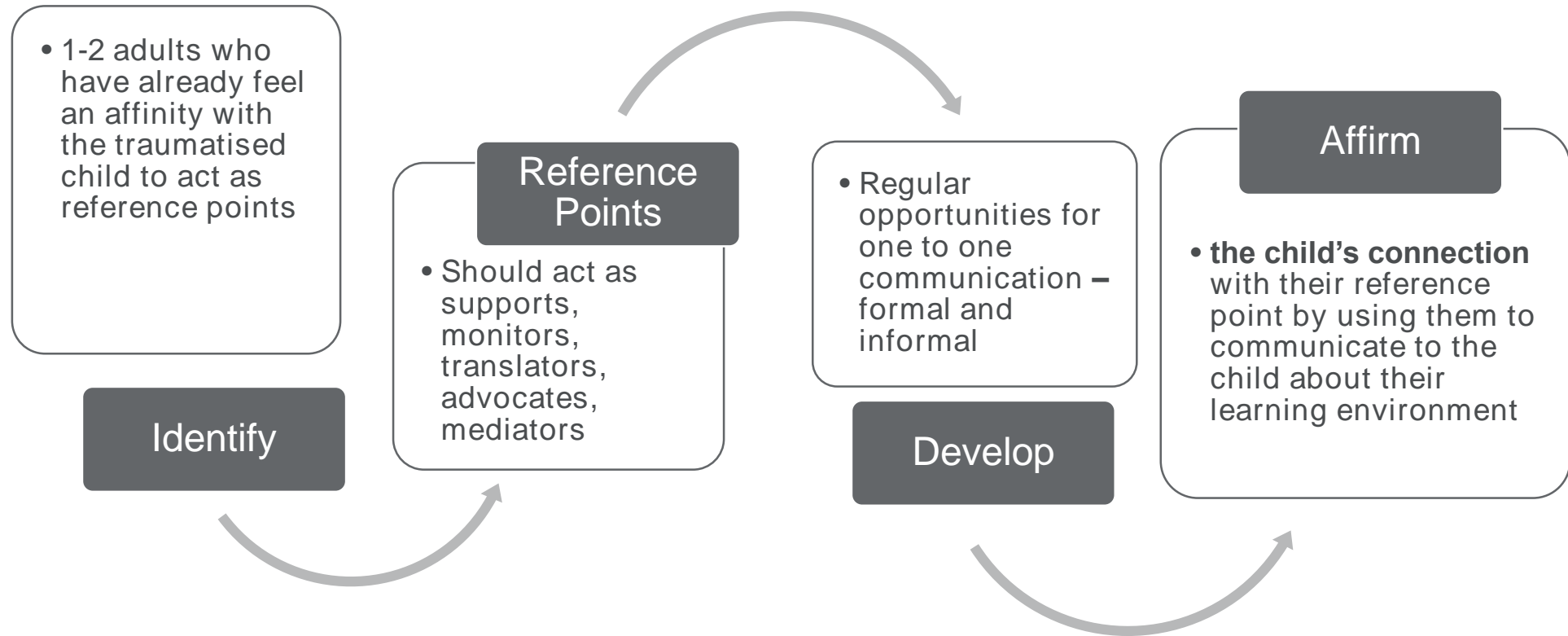
- Traumatized children have insecure blueprints for forming, maintaining, understanding and being in relationships
- Changing relational blueprints comes with repetitive opportunities to practise and experience difference in exchanges with others



**Foundational Principal**

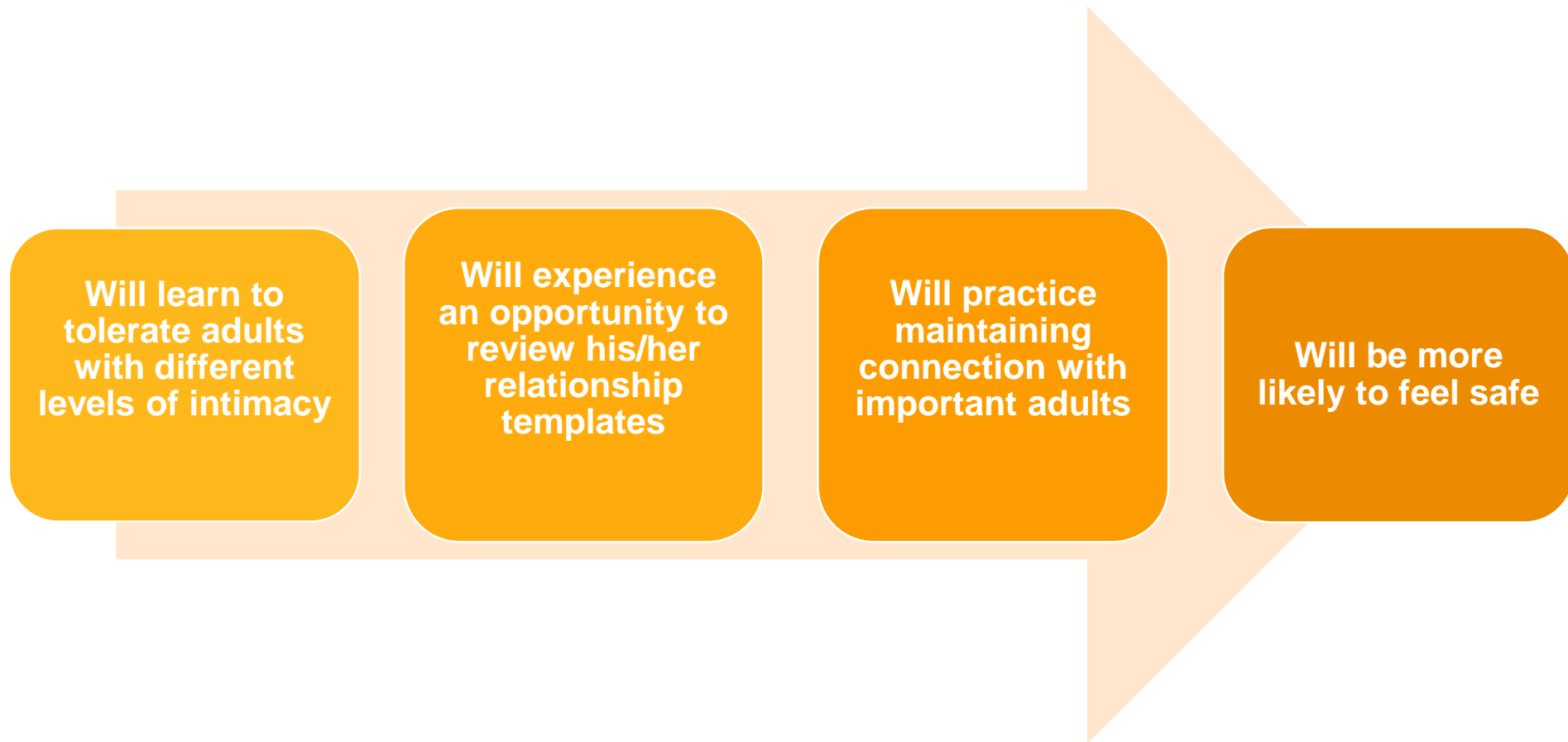


# Engaging - strategy

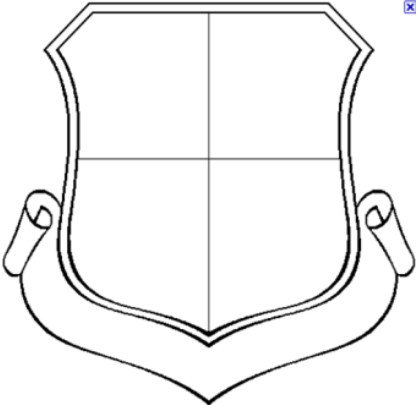


# Engaging: outcomes

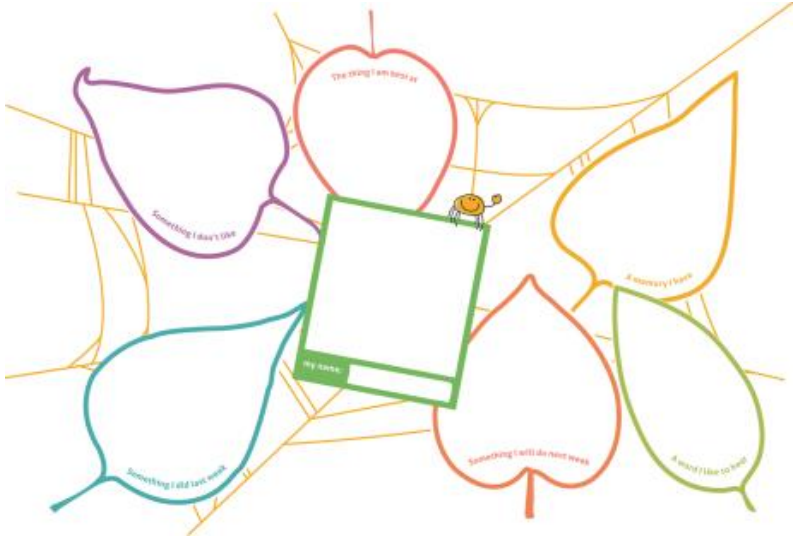
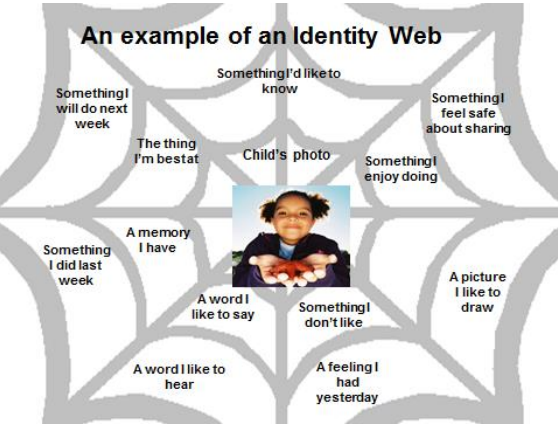
Traumatised children:



# Engaging: things to do



- Identity Shields
- Cup Tapping games
- Identity Webs
- Mandalas



# SMART PRACTICE

## Audit tool

# Where to from here?

## Action plan

What is reasonable for you personally, and for your service or setting to develop, take action on, or learn more about following this workshop?

# What supports the SMART PRACTICE responses?

- Knowledge
    - To what extent is the impact of abuse and trauma on a child's behaviour and learning widely understood and identified across the setting?
- Professional development

# What supports the SMART PRACTICE responses?

- Attitudes and values
  - To what extent does the existing service culture (embodied in charters/policies/processes) reflect understanding and compassion for the needs of traumatised children?
- Review culture/plans/policies/practices

# What supports the SMART PRACTICE responses?

- Commitment

- To what extent does the informal service culture demonstrate a positive and shared commitment in relation to the specific needs of these children?

→ Address barriers to the development of a shared vision and commitment



# What supports the SMART PRACTICE responses?

- Communication

- To what extent does the setting incorporate collaborative strategies and processes for supporting traumatised children?

→ Establish effective internal and external processes

# Keeping in touch with SMART

- Online discussion papers
- SMART online training
- [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)