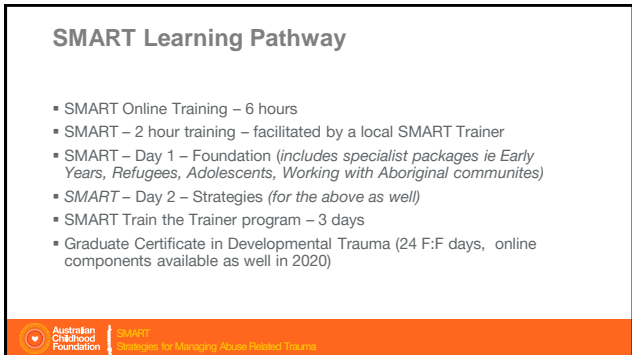


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Key learning outcomes

- Review brain development, the impacts of complex trauma and ways to provide support
- Explore the Window of Tolerance as a framework to guide observation, reflection and action, and provide an understanding for arousal
- Understand the feelings and needs behind behaviour
- Build a toolkit of strategies to support the SMART P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E framework



4

Relationships shape our sense of self and safety

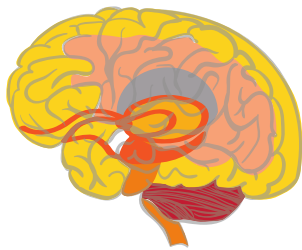


Image source: GACF2021



5

Brain review

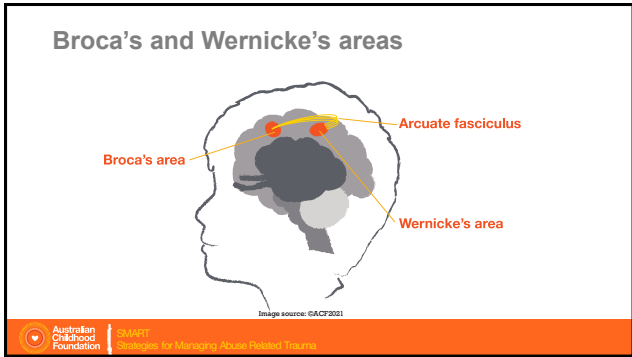


- Neocortex
- Limbic
- Hippocampus
- Amygdala
- Diencephalon
- Hypothalamus
- Thalamus
- Corpus Callosum
- Cerebellum
- Brainstem

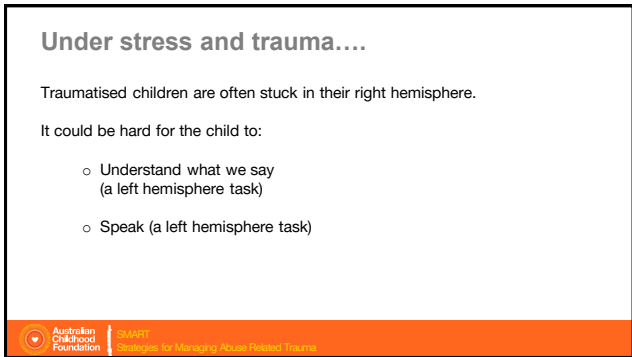
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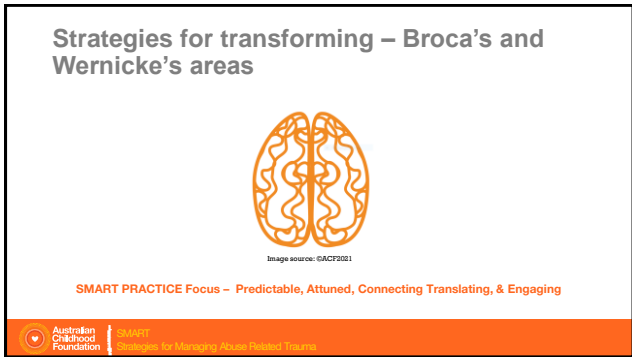
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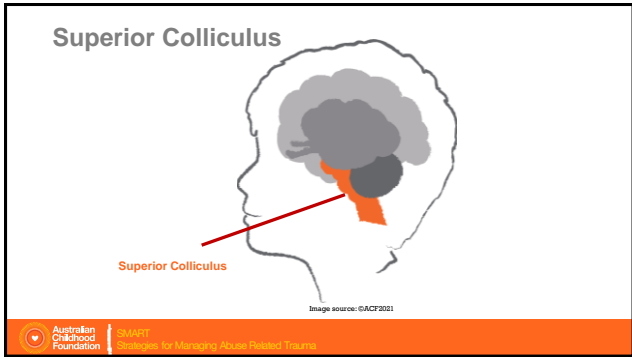
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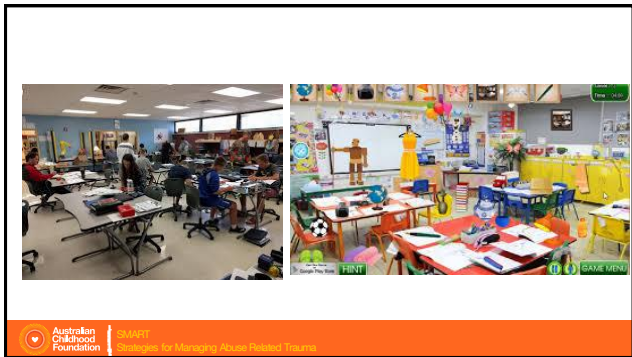
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Neuroception

“Before we can engage in social behaviour and learning we must first feel safe.”

(Porges, 2015, p.115).

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Polyvagal theory and protective responses

by Stephen Porges

Behavioural Functions	Body Functions
Social Engagement Soothing and calming Indicates safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowers or raises vocalisation pitch • Regulates middle ear muscles to perceive human voice • Changes facial expressivity • Head turning • Tears and eyelets • Slows or speeds heart rate
Mobilisation Fight or Flight Active Freeze Moderate or extreme danger	Hyper arousal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases heart rate • Sweats increases • Inhibits gastrointestinal function • Narrowing blood vessels - to slow blood flow to extremities • Release of adrenaline
Immobilisation Collapse or submission Death feigning Increased pain threshold Conserves metabolic resources Life threatening situations	Hypo - arousal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slows heart rate • Constricts bronchi • Stimulates gastrointestinal function

Image source: (MCF2021) (Porges, 2012)

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Regulated Arousal

Fight or Flight hyper-vigilant, action-oriented, impulsive, emotionally flooded, reactive, defensive, self-destructive

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

Sympathetic Hyper-arousal

Social Engagement

Window of Tolerance

Parasympathetic Hypo-arousal

Submit Collapsed, weak, defeated, flat affect, numb, empty, helpless, hopeless

Image source: (MCF2021) Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006

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Dys-regulated Arousal

Fight or Flight Hyper-vigilant, action-orientated, impulsive, emotionally flooded, reactive, defensive, self-destructive

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

Submit Collapsed, weak, defeated, flat affect, numb, empty, helpless, hopeless

Sympathetic Hyper-arousal

Parasympathetic Hypo-arousal

Window of Tolerance

AROUSAL

Image source: ©ACF2021
Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006

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Reflecting on Regulation

My 5 point scale

5 I am not safe, I want to leave before anyone gets hurt.

4 I am feeling overwhelmed, I need to challenge myself to calm down.

3 I am not fully in control, I need to take deep breaths.

2 Things are ok, I can handle it.

1 I feel super.

How do you regulate?

Go Slow (calm, breathe, listen, think, feel, act)

Go Fast (run, jump, shout, dance, sing, stretch)

Go Freeze (stand still, hold breath, close eyes)

Go Fight (clench fists, growl, stare)

Go Flop (collapse, cry, hug someone)

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Teaching students about the WOT

Hyperarousal

Fight
Flight
Active Freeze

Social engagement

When we feel and are safe we will be able to:

- Play well
- Engage well with others and our environment
- Think well and make decisions

Hypoarousal

Feigned death
Flop
Collapse

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Overshooting your Window of Tolerance:

- Upset and hyped up
- Angry and agitated
- Frustrated
- Heart beating fast
- Tense and can't think clearly
- Unable to regulate your emotions

Within your Window of Tolerance:

- Feeling safe, calm and peaceful
- Happy and able to think clearly
- Ready to learn
- Settled and content
- Mindful and able to regulate your emotions

Undershooting your Window of Tolerance:

- Sad and tired
- Unmotivated with no energy
- Feel empty and withdrawn
- Don't want to listen, talk or play
- Can't think about learning

Making Space for Learning – Action Research Project - St Thomas More School, Elizabeth Park, S.A.

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Line of My Day

I had Coco Pops for breakfast

English was boring

I didn't want to go to school today

My favourite teacher was away today

We had a great game of basketball and my team won

Jake said hi to me after school

Jake teased me and mum bought us takeaway for tea

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

Image source: ©ACF2021

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Strategies - MOBILISED responses - *Fight*

What it might look like

- angry, aggressive, irritable
- confrontational, controlling, shouting
- blaming others, pushing others away, argumentative

Supportive responses/strategies

- Help me stabilise my hyper-aroused nervous system
- Rhythm, containing and grounding
- Match my energy before helping me calm down
- Hanging, swinging, climbing, marching
- Stomping, jumping on the spot, drumming



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Strategies - MOBILISED responses - *Flight*

What it might look like

- Anxious, silly, manic
- Running away, hiding, disruptive
- Difficulty with free play, silly voices, distracting

Supportive responses

- Be kind and patient when “finding” or collecting me
- Offer me an easy task/chore to do
- Help me settle my body – weighted blankets, heat packs
- Engage senses
- Encourage me to hang/swing/carry something heavy



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Strategies MOBILISED responses – *Freeze*

What it might look like

- Arousal is high, but movement is inhibited
- May look confused or distracted
- Scanning the room, dilated pupils, wide eyes

Supportive responses/strategies

- Be curious about the freeze state- places that are less frozen than others?
- Gently facilitate movement eg. Wiggling one finger
- Play with metaphors like thawing ice
- Encourage breathing
- Engage senses



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Strategies - IMMOBILISED responses - *Submit*

What it might look like

- low, sad, flat mood
- quiet, compliant
- alone, withdrawn

Supportive responses

- Orienting to the space/grounding exercises
- Orienting the senses
- Alignment- engaging the spine

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Strategies for keeping students in their WOT.

- Breath based activities
- Grounding activities
- Movement & Regulation activities
- Use of self



Image source: GACF2021

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Understanding behaviour

- What is the behaviour telling me?
- What might have triggered this behaviour?
- How does this behaviour serve to protect the child/young person and help him/her survive?
- What is the impact on me?



Image source: GACF2021

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Reflecting on our practice - SMART PRACTICE

Image source: GACF 2021

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Holding Hope

Image source: GACF 2021

What are your hopes for the children/yp you work with?

What are your hopes for your school?

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Thank you for your participation!

We appreciate your feedback!

Image source: GACF 2021

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