

What do you notice about their capacity?

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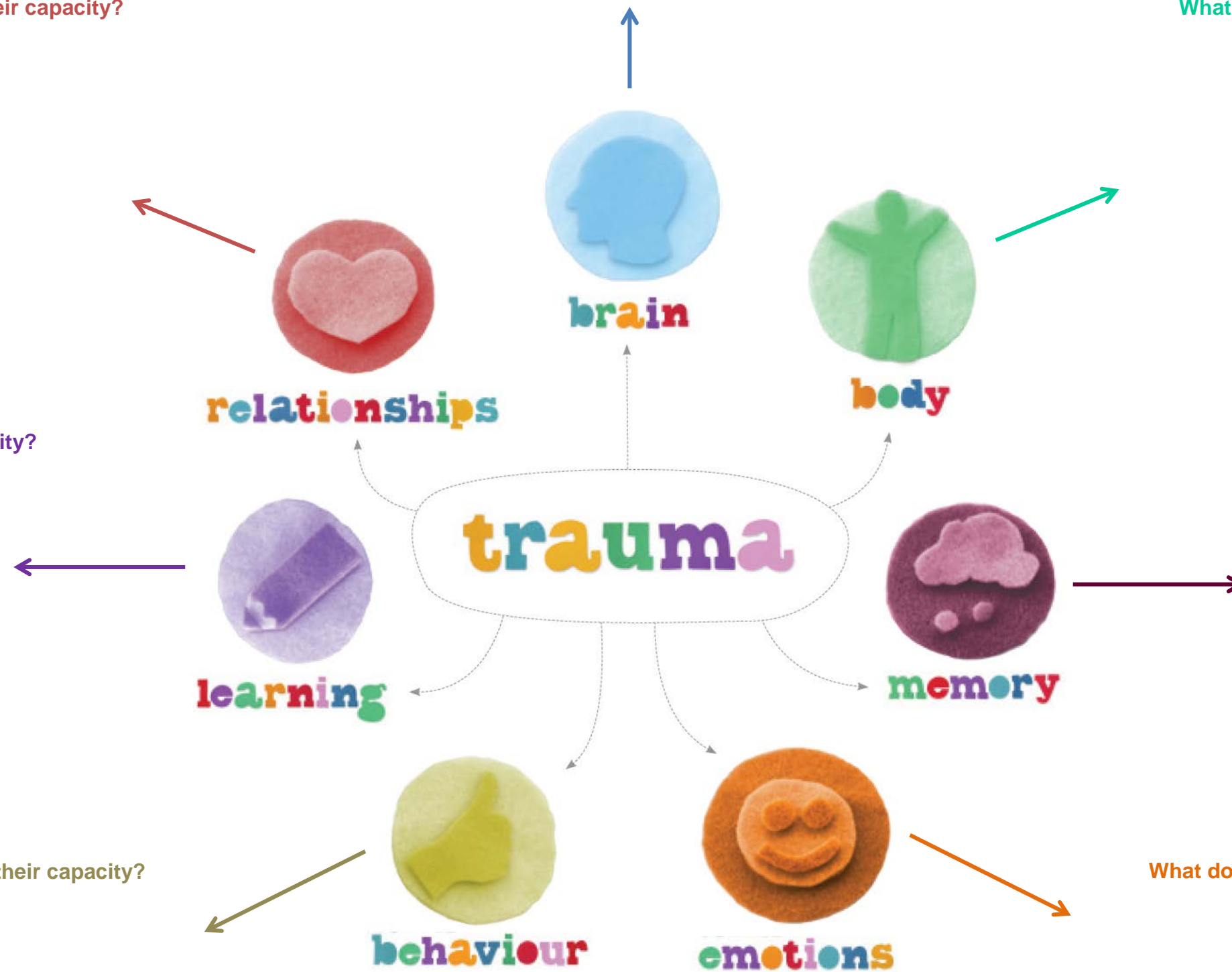
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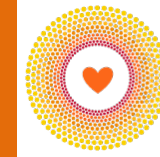
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# Making SPACE for Learning

Trauma Sensitive Practice in Schools



**Australian  
Childhood  
Foundation**

[www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

	What do you see?	How do you understand what you see?	What have you tried previously?	What would offer in terms of reparative strategies now?
Brain				
Body				
Memory				
Emotions				
Behaviour				
Learning				
Relationships				

Write down Strategies that you would now consider developing and trying using Trauma Sensitive Practice:



### Your space

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To support traumatised or stressed students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With whole classes to support traumatised or stressed students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>That may have focused on whole of school approaches to supporting traumatised or stressed students</li></ul>
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## Making SPACE for Learning – Site Audit Tool

This audit tool can be used to evaluate the policies and initiatives of a school that resource and equip different levels of the school structure to undertake trauma informed practice. In the following table, list strategies, policies or other processes currently undertaken that support traumatised students at your school.

	Whole Site	Staff	Classroom / Group	Small Group	Individual Student / Child
 STAGED					
 PREDICTABLE					
 ADAPTIVE					
 CONNECTED					
 ENABLED					

# Polyvagal Theory and Protective Responses by Stephen Porges

## Behavioural Functions

## Body Functions



### Social Engagement

Soothing and calming

Indicates safety

- \* Lowers or raises vocalization pitch
- \* Regulates middle ear muscles to perceive human voice
- \* Changes facial expressivity
- \* Head turning
- \* Tears and eyelids
- \* Slows or speeds heart rate



### Mobilization

Fight or Flight  
Active Freeze

Moderate to extreme danger

### Hyper arousal

- \* Increases heart rate
- \* Sweat increases
- \* Inhibits gastrointestinal function
- \* Narrowing blood vessels- to slow blood flow to extremities
- \* Release of adrenaline



### Immobilization

Collapse or submission  
Death feigning  
Increased pain threshold  
Conserves metabolic resources

Life threatening situations

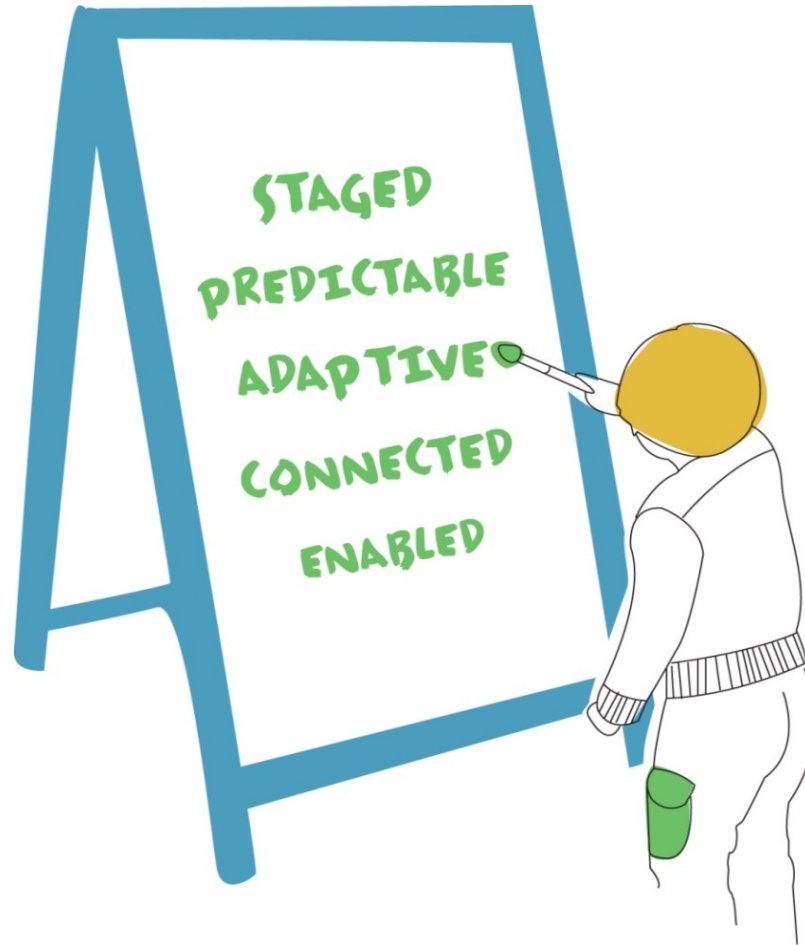
### Hypo- arousal

- \* Slows heart rate
- \* Constricts bronchi
- \* Stimulates gastrointestinal function



Evolution

# SPACE



# Staged

- Sophisticated functions of the brain-body system only emerge after basic functions have developed and been consolidated with rehearsal and practice
- Assists with vertical and horizontal development of the brain
- Progression of basic memory of sequences of experiences to narrative memory, which combine experience and interpretations
- Skills developed: reading = built from the blocks of letters, syllables, words, sentences and paragraphs

# Predictable

- Traumatized children and young people experience any change as a potential threat
- Even if the familiar is difficult and destructive, the familiar is safer for traumatized young people than the unfamiliar
- Focus on creating environments which promote:
  - Consistency
  - Predictability
  - Repetition
  - Flexibility
  - Co-regulation



# Adaptive

- Children and young people who show challenging and intense behaviours are often excluded from activities which could prove to be beneficial for them
- The options in schools often become focused on discipline and behaviour management
- Locked down systems in themselves restrain flexibility

## Ideas:

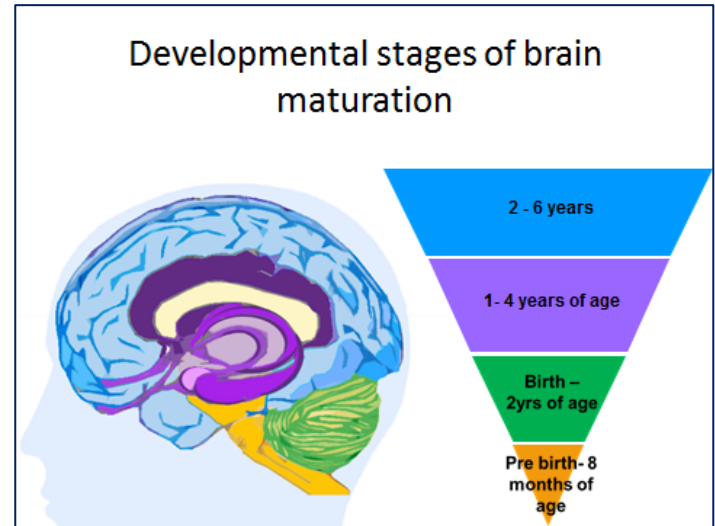
- Strategies that promote adaptability in children and young people are those which are able to maintain multiple meanings for behaviour and remain open to multiple options for interventions

# Connected and Enabled – Calming and Engaging

Trauma has impaired children's cortical capacity to regulate subcortical functioning. In order to return cortical capacity (which is essential for learning) we must restore calm.

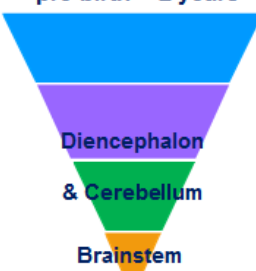
- Be predictable
- Be connected
- Be present
- Promote understanding
- Equip the child with calming tools they can use

# Trauma and the Developing Brain



### Brainstem and Mid brain Soothing activities

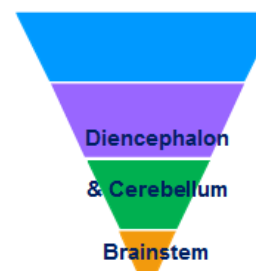
**Trauma occurred pre-birth – 2 years**



- Soothing activities in the young person's preferred sensory modality
- Activities need to be rhythmical, repeated and calming
- Rocking, swinging (hammock, rocking chair), stroking an animal, massage, brushing hair, painting nails, kneading dough, dancing, drumming, yoga, some computer games, watching waves at the beach

### Brainstem and Mid brain Sensory activating activities

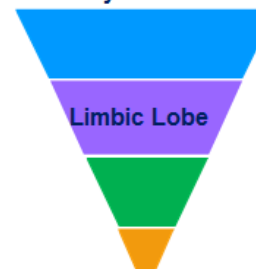
**Activities that stimulate the 5 senses:**



- Playing in sand or with clay
- Some art and craft activities e.g. painting
- Making and decorating dough based biscuits
- Feeling textures (rough, smooth, silky, slick, hard, etc.)
- Taste or smell sampling- aromatherapy

### Limbic Lobe Feelings based activities

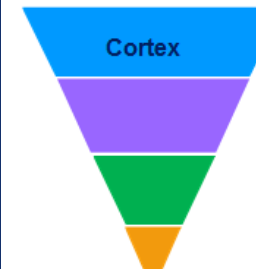
**Trauma occurred 1 – 4 years**



- Social Skills/cooperation encouragement
- Feelings based identification activities
- Commentary on soap operas with the sound down, drama groups, involvement in team activities, journaling, art activities representing feelings visually

### Cortex Talk based activities

**Trauma occurred 3 - 6 years**



- Higher order, concept based activities with a language focus that integrate information from many lower brain regions
- Scaling activities
- Discussion
- Encouraging young people to examine the links between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours

# Trust

## Children and Young People who have difficulty with trust can:

- Find it hard to trust anyone
- Misjudge the intention of others and trust the wrong people
- Trust too much and be exploited
- Struggle to invest in new relationships because they do not know how

# Empathy

## Children and Young People who have difficulty with empathy can:

- Find it difficult to understand the feelings of others
- Misinterpret how others are really feeling
- Harm others and not seem to feel any remorse
- Struggle to recognise and name their own feelings
- Feel “out of sync” within their relationships, even the most secure ones

# Stress

## Children and Young People who have difficulty managing their stress can:

- Be withdrawn or absent in everyday interactions
- Experience sleep disruption
- Avoid activities that add even minimal stress
- Become over-excited
- Feel disconnected from themselves and their feelings
- Act in ways that lead to others feeling uncomfortable or stressed

# Anger

## Children who have difficulty with shaping their anger can:

- Find it difficult to make and keep friends
- Have the potential to hurt others
- Change from calm to angry very quickly
- Struggle to be part of group activities
- Make others feel uncomfortable, frightened and tense

# Shame

## Children and Young People who have difficulty with managing shame can:

- Find it difficult to accept responsibility for their behaviour
- Struggle with any sort of feedback
- Avoid situations where they might lose out or not be able to perform
- Find it hard to make decisions for themselves, in case they get it wrong
- Seek out others who feel the same way as them