

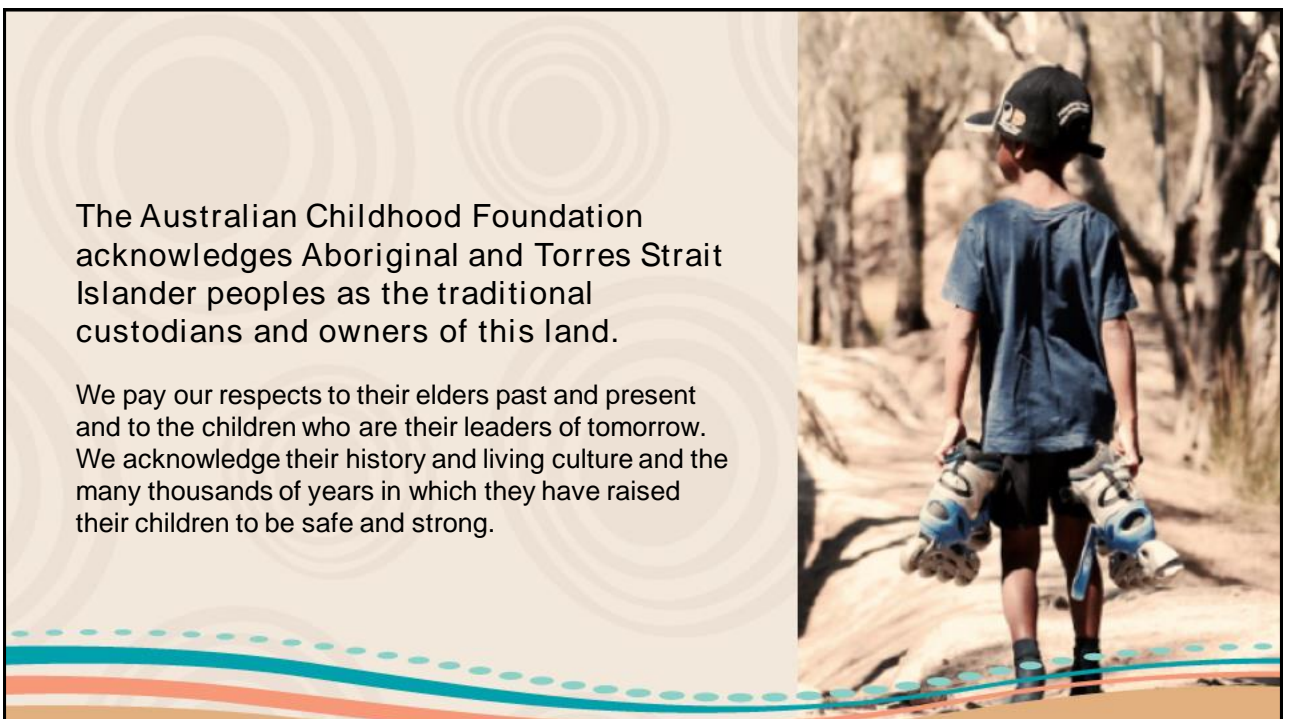


**Making SPACE for Learning**  
Nawarddeken Academy  
6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
Trainer: Carolyn Grace

 Australian Childhood Foundation

 NAWARDEKEN ACADEMY

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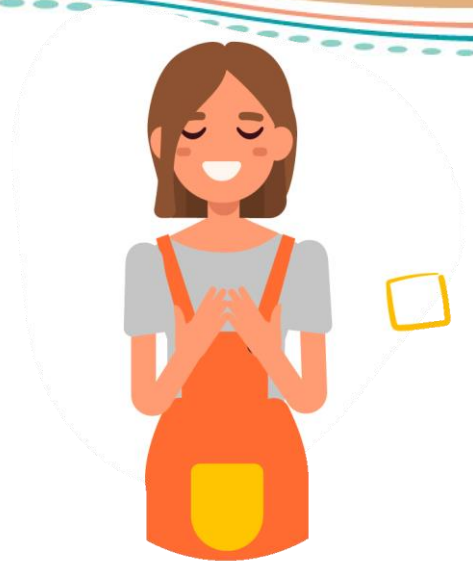
The Australian Childhood Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians and owners of this land.

We pay our respects to their elders past and present and to the children who are their leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge their history and living culture and the many thousands of years in which they have raised their children to be safe and strong.

2

## Please take care of you today....

- Your emotional safety is important to us
- This training may evoke strong emotions and memories
- Please let someone know
- Take a break
- Your colleagues are here to support you.



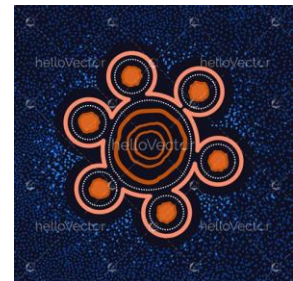
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## Welcome and Getting To Know Each other

- Our learning is about shared wisdom
- Curiosity and learning build our brains

Share your name and a meaning of your name or symbol that tells us a little about you



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## Our journey....

- Connection to culture
- Our Brain House
- Impacts of our experiences
- SPACE – support ways to help
- Understanding behaviour
- Supportive strategies
- Creating safety
- Using ourselves to co-regulate
- Putting it into practice



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## Our connection to culture

6

## Culture – our resource

### Provides a protective factor

**Safety:** Belonging

**Relationships:** Connection

**Meaning making:** identity

- Guides our interactions with self, others and our lands
- Provides us with a navigational framework, a sense of certainty and predictability = security
- Provides a mental framework that supports meaning making- narrative of self, others and natural world



7

## Healing Principles

- Sharing and telling the story
- Holding each other
- Dancing and Singing
- Reconnecting to those around us and our community
- Celebrating and Sharing

Dr Bruce Perry.



8

## Linking traditional healing practices to the neurobiology

- Repetitive
- Rhythmic
- Relevant
- Relational
- Respectful
- Rewarding



[www.flipboard.com](http://www.flipboard.com)



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## Neurodiversity and Disability

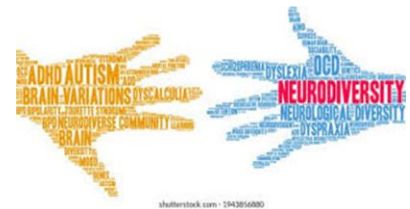


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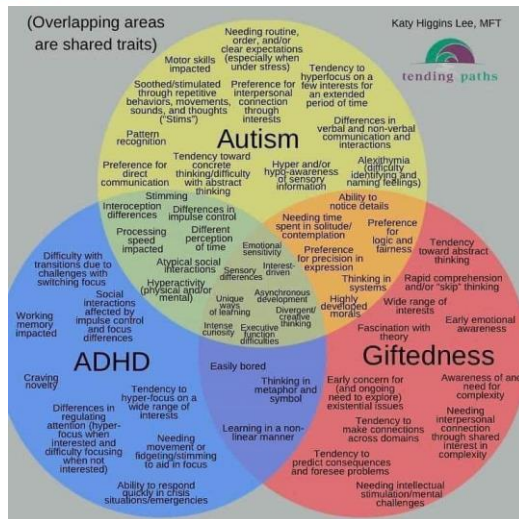
## Diverse Learning needs

Diverse learning needs may appear in various presentations in students

- Learning difficulties
- Memory problems
- Impulsiveness and impaired judgement
- Limited attention span
- Difficulty relating actions and consequences
- Difficulty following instructions and generalizing information
- Difficulty with abstract thinking
- Slow cognitive processes
- Difficulty with social relationships



## Neurodiversity and Disability



# What is FASD?



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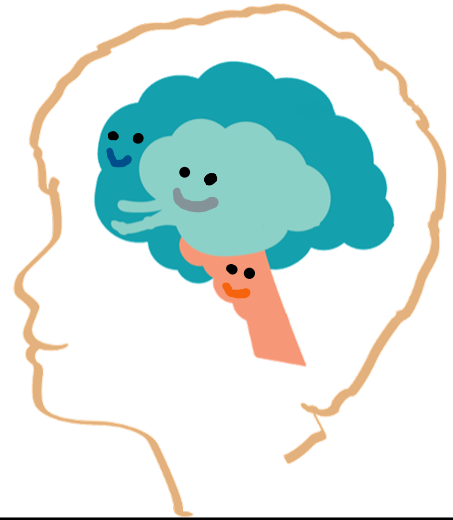
# Our Brain House



14

## Welcome to Your Brain

- Our brains are amazing. They help us do everything.
- Our brains grow up, from the bottom to the top.
- Our brains keep growing and changing all the time.

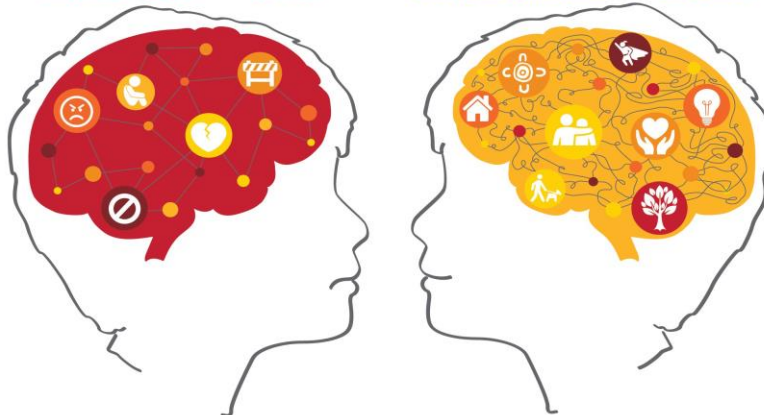


## What shapes our brain?

### Early experiences shape the architecture of our brain

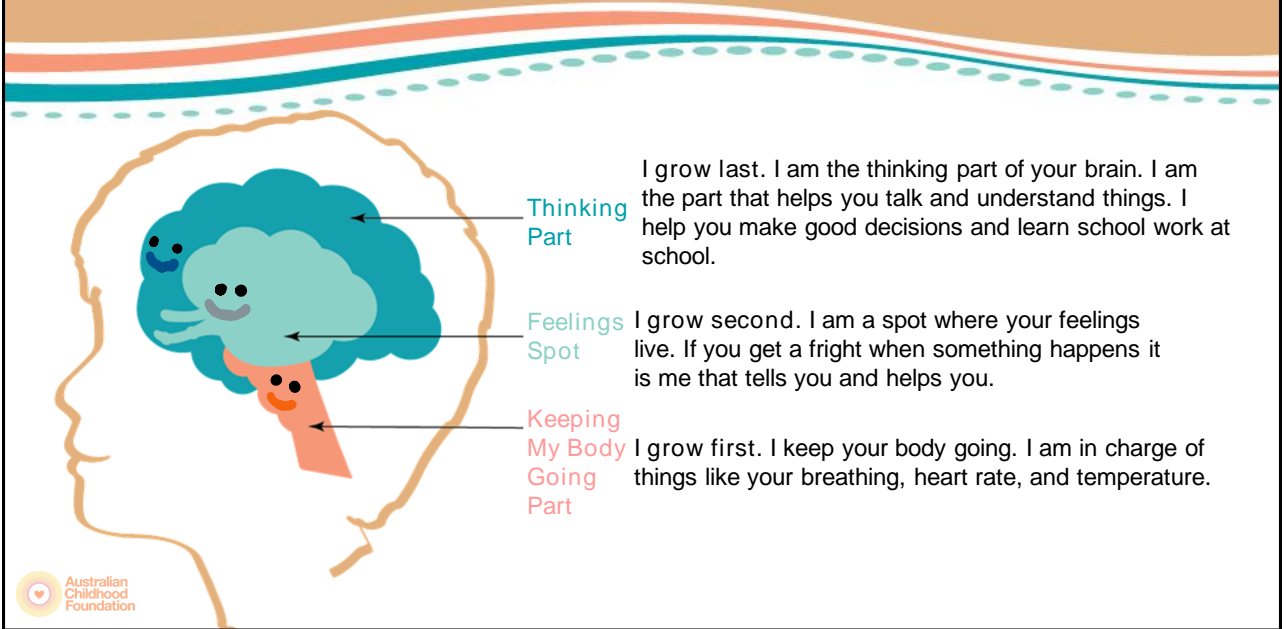
Threat and Neglect → Survival

Safety and Connection → Integration



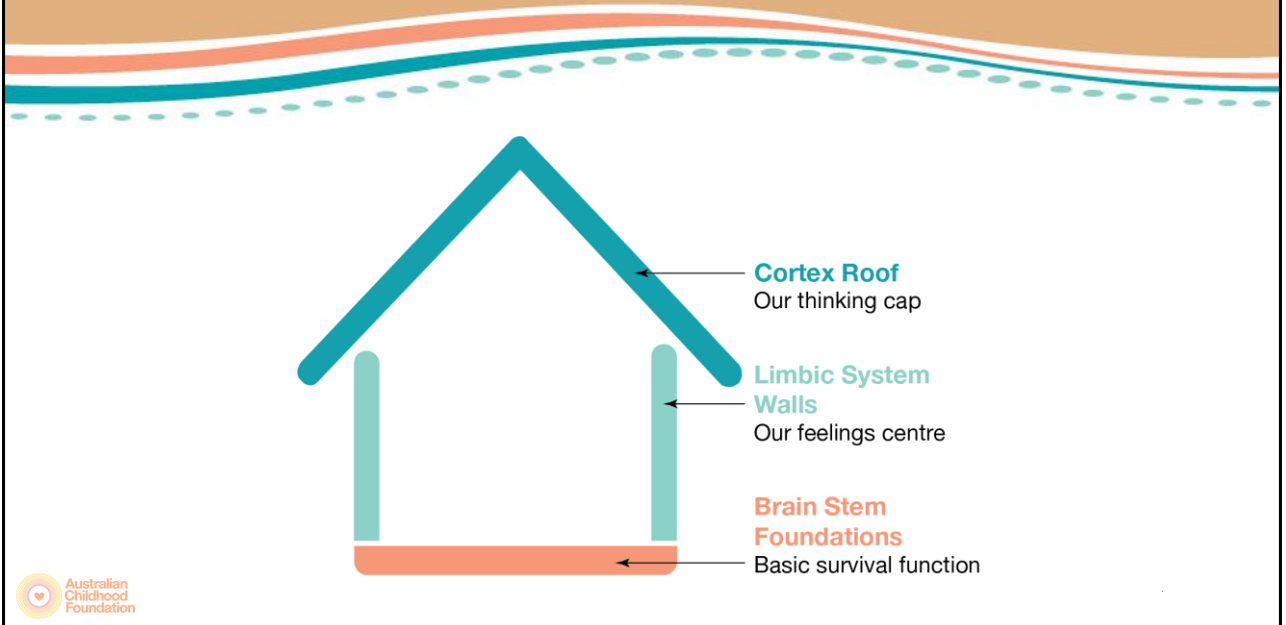


## Important brain parts that help us in different ways



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## Staged- A brain development metaphor - My Brain House



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# Brain House


The diagram shows a stylized house with a teal roof, two teal pillars for walls, and an orange base for the floor. To the left, a human head profile contains a smiling brain with a red tongue sticking out. Labels with arrows point to the roof, walls, and floor.

Thinking Cap Roof

Feelings Walls

Keeping My Body Going Floor

Our brain is like a house or a shelter.



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# My Brain House Song with Actions

The diagram is identical to the one on page 19, showing a house-like structure representing the brain with labels for the roof, walls, and floor.


Thinking Cap Roof

Feelings Walls

Keeping My Body Going Floor

There is a song with actions about how our brain house is built and can sometimes fall down!

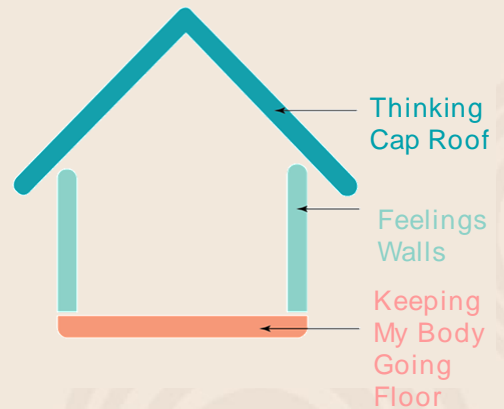
We can learn it together.



20

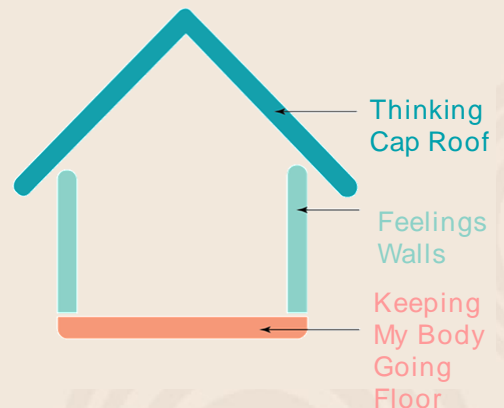
## The Brain House Song

My house has a floor, has a floor, has a floor  
 My house has some walls, has some walls,  
 has some walls  
 My house has a roof.... has a roof...  
 has a roof....  
 My house is strong and tall strong  
 and tall.  
 My house is strong and tall



## The Brain House Song

My house has a floor, has a floor, has a floor  
 My house has some walls, has some walls,  
 has some walls  
 My house has a roof.... has a roof...  
 has a roof....  
 My house isn't strong and tall strong  
 and tall.  
 My house isn't strong and tall



## Building our student's brain houses....

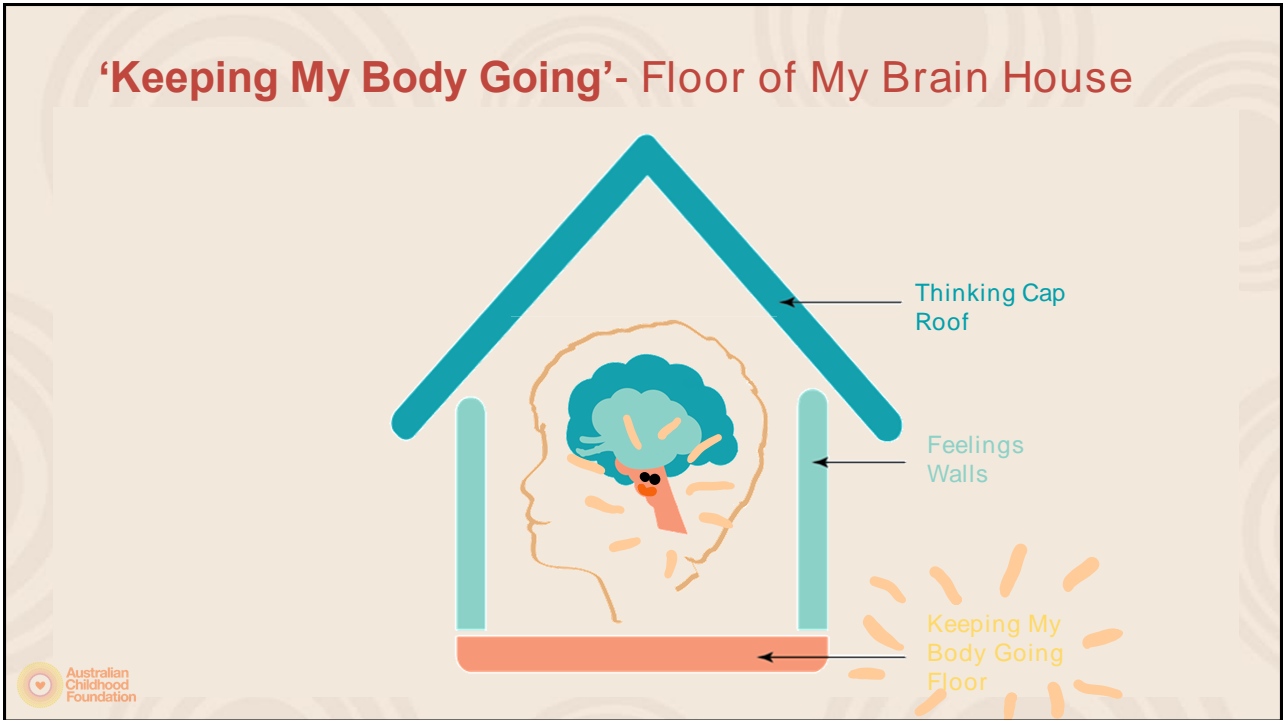


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## Our Brain House Floor

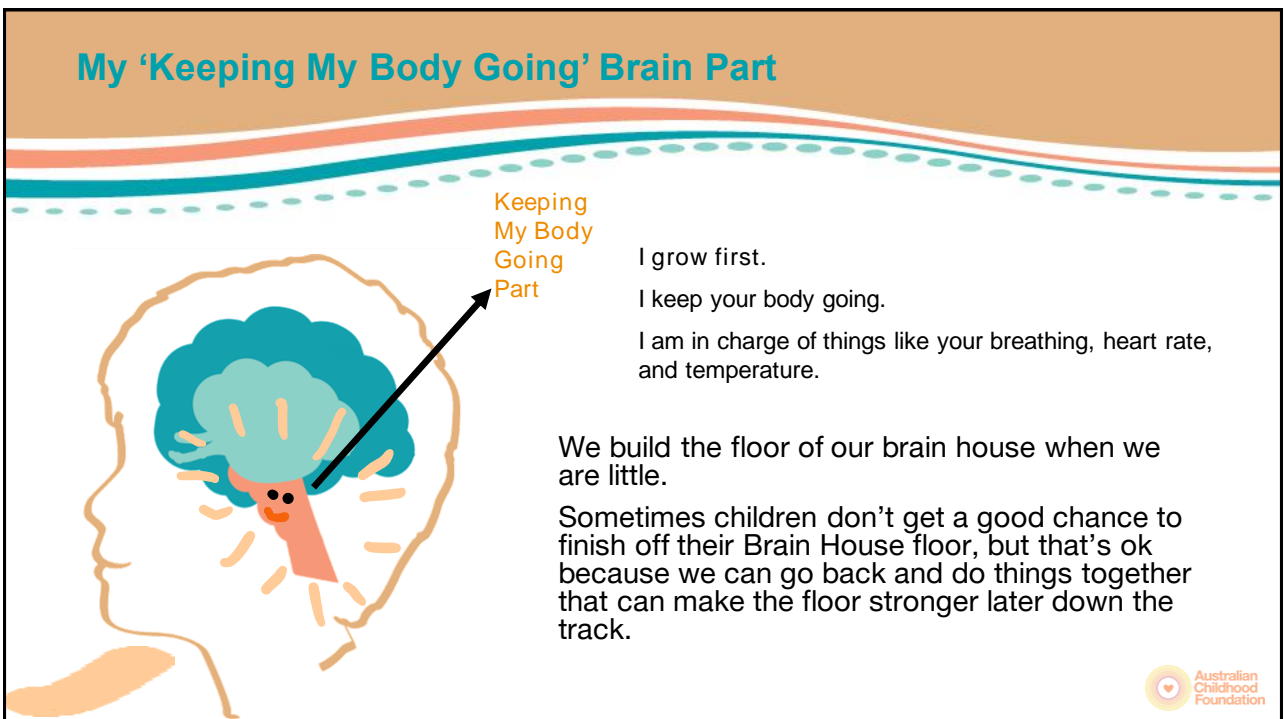
24

## 'Keeping My Body Going'- Floor of My Brain House



25

## My 'Keeping My Body Going' Brain Part



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## Ways to Strengthen Our Brain House Floor- Rhythmic Activities

Our Brain House floor likes

**tactile rhythmic, repetitive games, activities, and movements.**

Practice these over and over again activities help it to get stronger.

Doing an activity just once will not make much of difference to this part of the brain, but doing an activity over and over will.



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## Ways to Strengthen Our Brain House Floor- Heads and Tails Activity

dancing,  
 swinging,  
 listening to a familiar story,  
 tapping your leg or foot,  
 drumming,  
 walking,  
 running,  
 brushing hair,  
 bouncing a ball,  
 humming,  
 riding a bike,  
 shooting hoops,

jumping,  
 skipping rope,  
 repeated exercises,  
 hammock swinging,  
 kneading bread,  
 digging,  
 weaving,  
 fishing- casting the rod,  
 swimming strokes,  
 ping pong,  
 hand clapping games,  
 listening to a song over and over, focusing on our breath going in and out.



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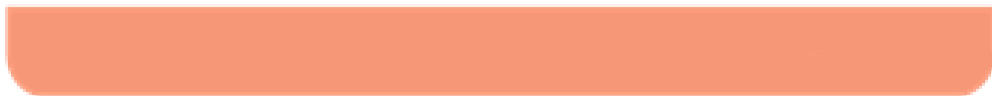
## Heads and Tails continue

- playing with clay or play dough,
- painting,
- drawing,
- craft activities,
- playing with sensory toys like fidget spinners or squishy balls,
- snuggling with a soft blanket,
- cuddling a soft toy,
- colouring in,
- building in the sand or mud,
- patting a pet or animal
- sucking a cool drink or ice block,
- sipping a warm drink.
- listening to:
  - the sound of rain,
  - a loved one's voice, music,
  - a favourite story,
  - A bird song,
  - swaying trees,
  - animal noises,
  - the water flowing or running



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## Building and strengthening Our Brain House Floor



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## Rhythm Activity- A Brain House Floor strengthening activity

Many drumming traditions begin songs with two rhythms known as a drum **call and response**. Drum calls are short little rhythms that introduce the songs- like a signature or your name. After there is the drum call, there is always a similarly short rhythmic response to this call made by other drummers. These two rhythms go together, you can't have one without the other. They are like friends.

Let's all make up our own little personal rhythms and tap them on our laps or on the table.

Let's go around the room and everyone can make up their own little rhythm- it doesn't have to have many beats, 3, 4, 5 or 6 beats?

Turn to the person next to you and say hello with your rhythm. Then they can say hello back with their rhythm. Keep doing it back and forth for a while.

Maybe when you as the teacher marks the role your students could tap out their rhythm and people could try tapping out their rhythm in return to say hello to each other in the morning. If they forget their rhythm, don't worry just make up another one!



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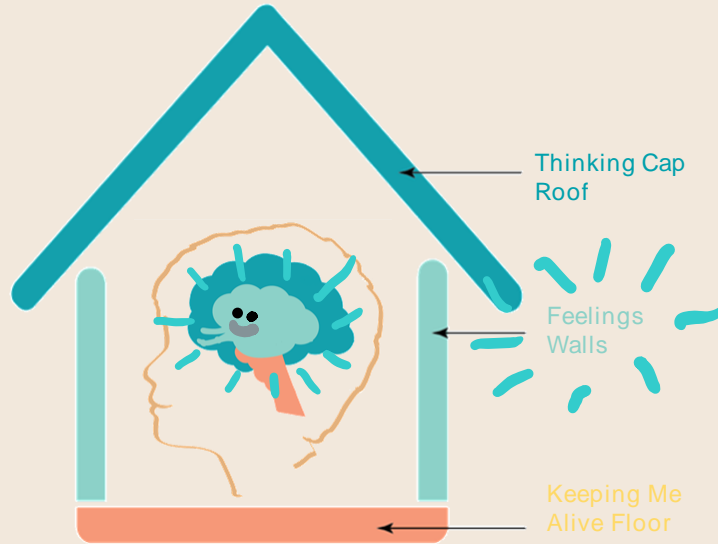
## Our Brain House Feeling Walls



32

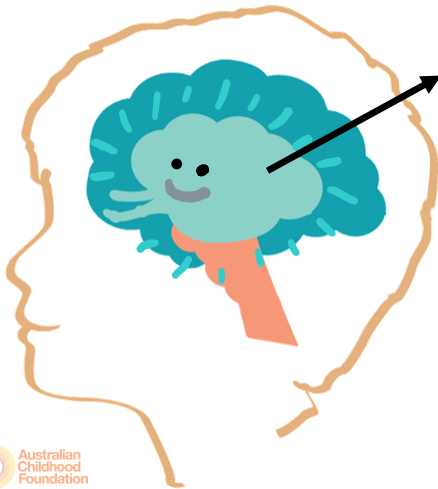


## Feeling Walls of My Brain House



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## My Feeling Spot



Feelings Spot

I grow second.

I am a part of your brain where your feelings live.

Children often practice using me a lot when they are little.

I help them get better at sharing, and working together with others.



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## Thumbs Up, In the Middle and Thumbs Down

- playing a board game,
- playing a group game at school,
- sharing with family,
- cooperating to achieve a goal together,
- cooking together with someone,
- playing sport as a part of a team,
- acting in a play,
- reading a story and getting into the characters,
- dancing as a part of a group,
- caring for animals, caring for land,
- spending time with your elders, learning about feelings,
- caring for younger children in your family, sharing friendships with people.



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## Building and strengthening Our Brain House Feelings Walls



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## Group Count- An Attunement based Activity

Collect into a circle so everyone can see one another. Then someone begins counting by saying 'one.' Without going around the circle or there being any pattern emerging, people should continue to add a number each 'two,' then 'three' and so on. Should more than one person say a number at the same time, the group count must begin again. Every member of the group should have a turn before someone gets another go. Notice how the number you achieve together gets larger the more you play the game.



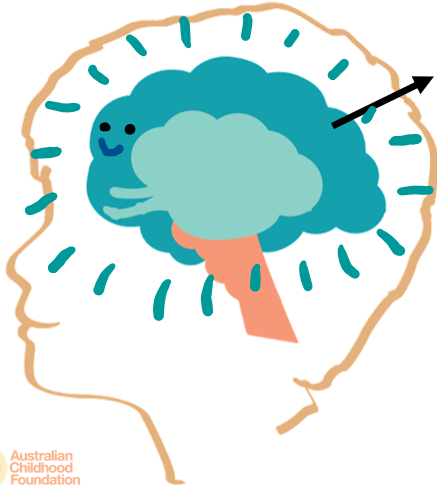
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## Our Thinking Cap Roof



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## My Thinking Cap Roof

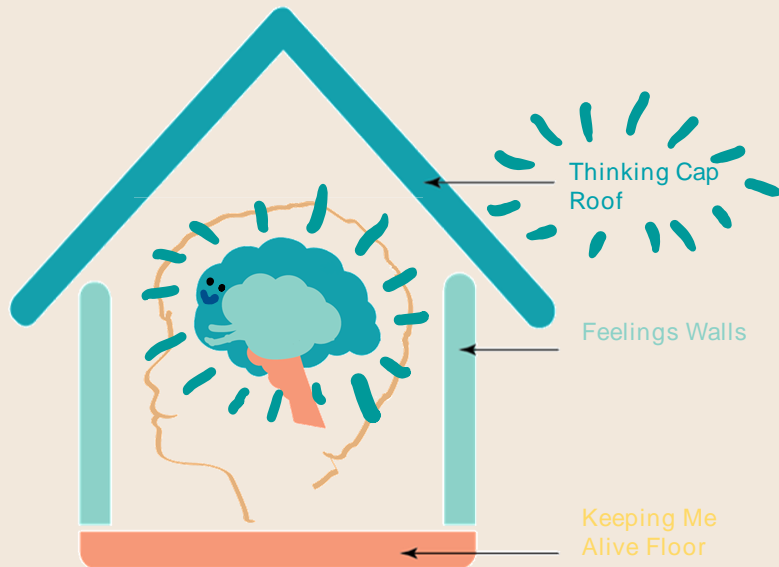


### Thinking Part

I grow last-

- I am the thinking part of your brain.
- I am the part that helps you talk and understand things.
- I help you make good decisions and learn school-work at school.

## Thinking Cap Roof of My Brain House



## Our Thinking Cap Roof

- To finish off our house we need a roof. The roof of our house is like our thinking cap. This part of our brain helps us to talk, read, add up numbers, do puzzles, work things out, know our way around, make decisions about things, and plan what we might want to do in the future. It is our thinking part of the brain.
- Everyone's thinking cap rooves aren't fully developed until our mid 20s.
- When students do school-work it's their thinking cap that is helping them to do it and you are strengthening your thinking cap. Amazing!



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## Strengthening Our Thinking Cap Roof Game – Hands Up

doing puzzles,  
 counting,  
 reading,  
 writing,  
 story telling,  
 building things so they work,  
 coming up with a plan for something,  
 solving problems,  
 fixing things,  
 reading maps,

making up jokes,  
 following instructions,  
 computer coding,  
 playing computer games,  
 learning a new language,  
 being able to navigate to get from one place to another place,  
 reading music,  
 playing music,  
 coming up with new ideas.



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## Building and strengthening Our Brain House Thinking Cap Roof



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## Tell A Story Together



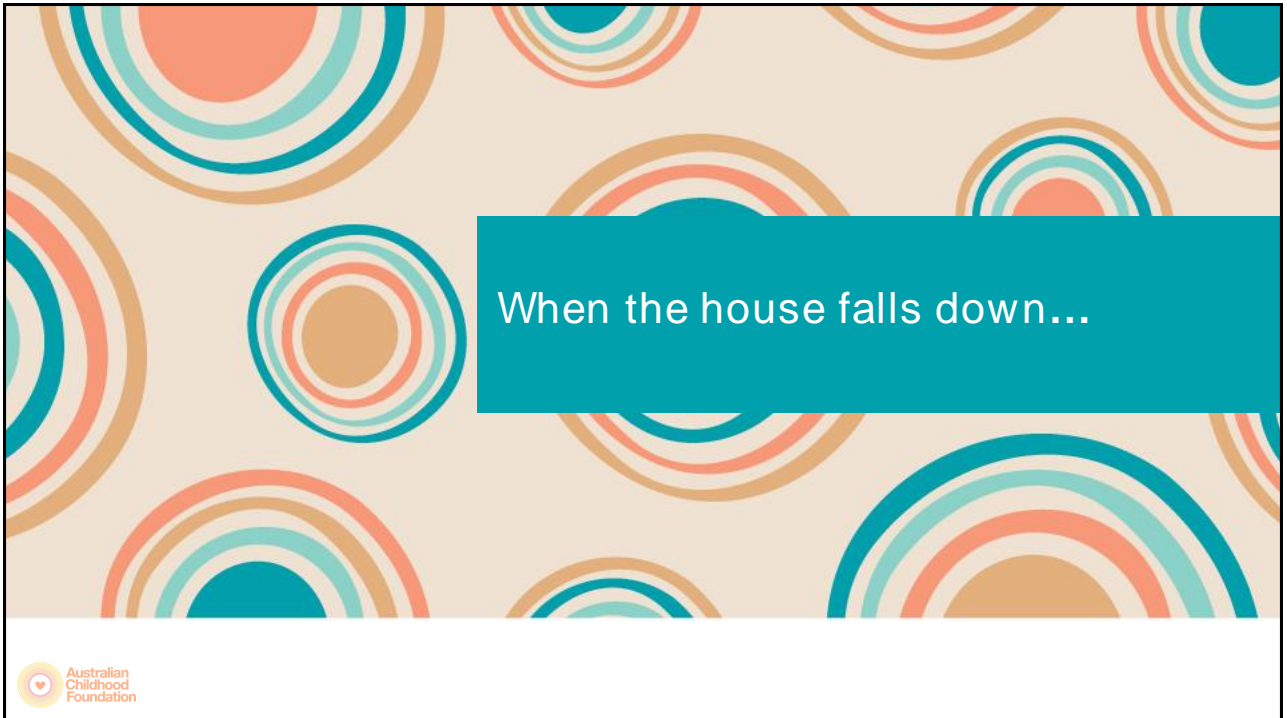
Gather in a circle and explain that we are going to tell a story together. We are going to do this as a group, each putting in a sentence as we go.

There is no right or wrong ways that this story could go. It could go anywhere, it's up to all of us.

Someone starts, they might say Once upon a time, or they might start the story some other way. Then the person next to them keeps the story going by adding a sentence and so on around the circle.

Everyone needs to have a turn before the story can end.

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## Defining trauma

Any single, ongoing or cumulative experience which:

- is a response to a **perceived threat**, usually to survival
- **overwhelms** our capacity to cope
- feels/is **outside our control**
- often evokes a **physiological** and **psychological** set of responses based on fear or avoidance

Developmental

Simple

Complex

Intergenerational

Transgenerational

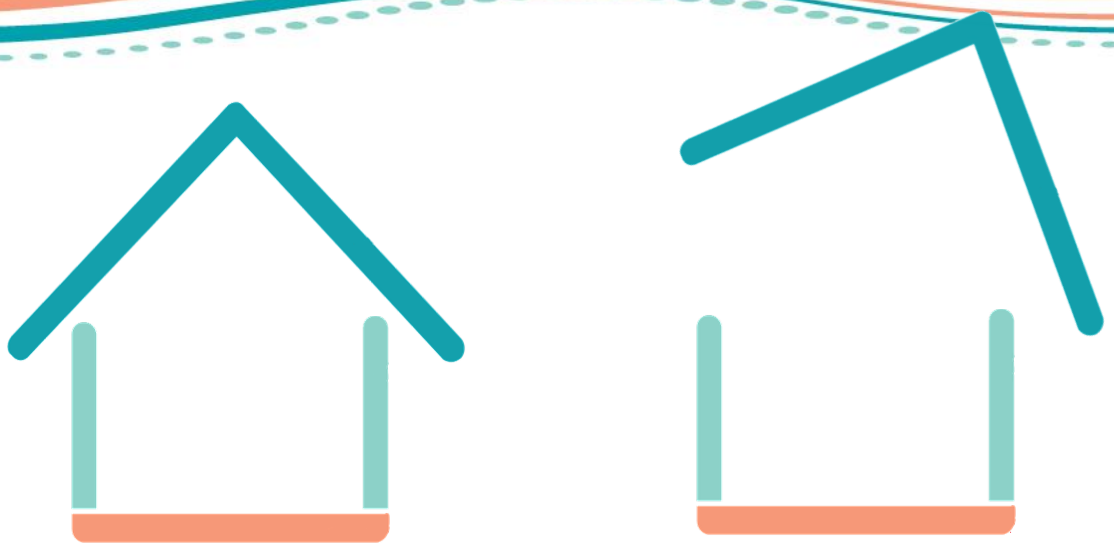
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## Impacts of stress, grief, loss & trauma



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## Experiences of adversity



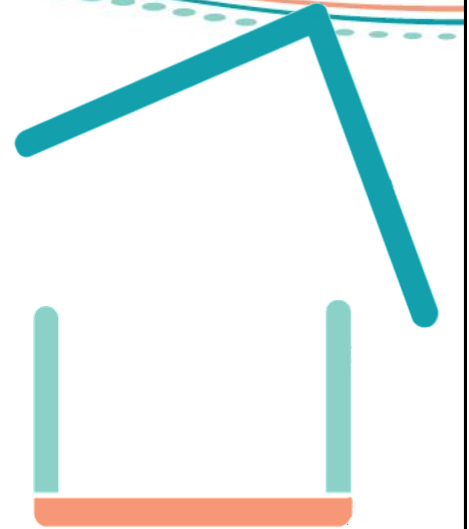
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## Sometimes the Roof can come off

- If something hard happens our thinking cap roof can come off. It can blow off like in a storm.
- Our thinking cap roof does our thinking and talking and making good decisions. When our roof comes off we can lose our words, and not be able to make sense of what people around us are saying.
- It feels hard to think when our thinking cap comes off.

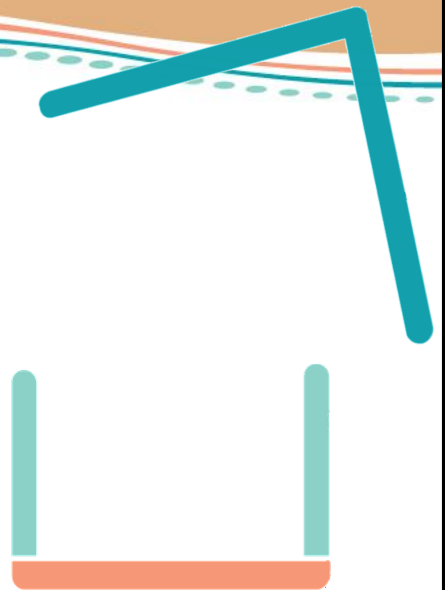
Can you think of a time when your thinking cap roof came off?



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## Sometimes the Roof can come off

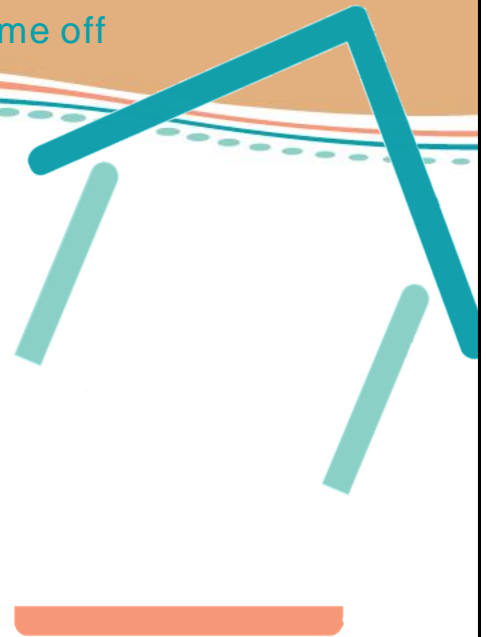
- With the thinking cap gone we can see our feelings walls.
- Our feelings shine brightly at these times.
- We often feel stressed out when we lose our thinking cap, so we shine out feelings like that.
- Everyone's roof has blown off their brain house at some time....this can happen to our family, our friends, our teachers....
- It is ok if our thinking cap roof comes off. We can find it and put it back on again **TOGETHER**



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## Sometimes the roof and the walls can come off

- If something really hard happens our roof and walls might blow off or fall down and leave only our floor.
- Our floor is very strong and keeps us alive. It can't blow away or fall down.
- Our breathing and our heartbeat will keep us going even if the rest of our house falls down.
- Then we can re-build our house back up again.



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## Making Our Brain House Stronger

- We can learn some ways we can make our brain houses stronger.
- We can also learn some ways to make it easier to build our brain houses back up again if they fall down.



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## Social and Emotional Wellbeing from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective (SEWB)

This conception of self is grounded within a collectivist perspective that views the self as

**inseparable from,**  
**and embedded within,**  
**family and community**

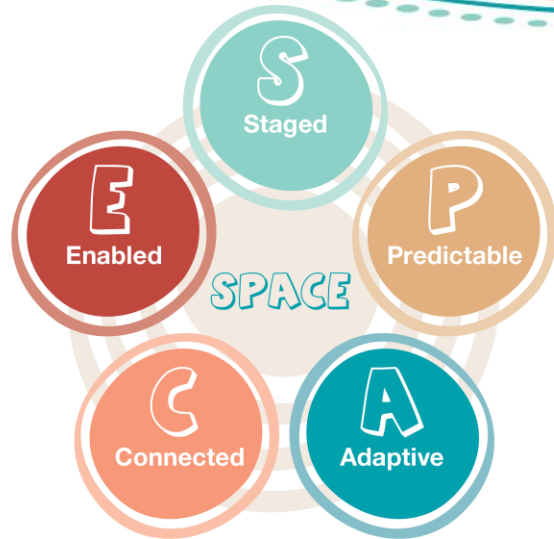
© Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart and Kelly, 2013 Artist: Tristan Schultz, Relative Creative.

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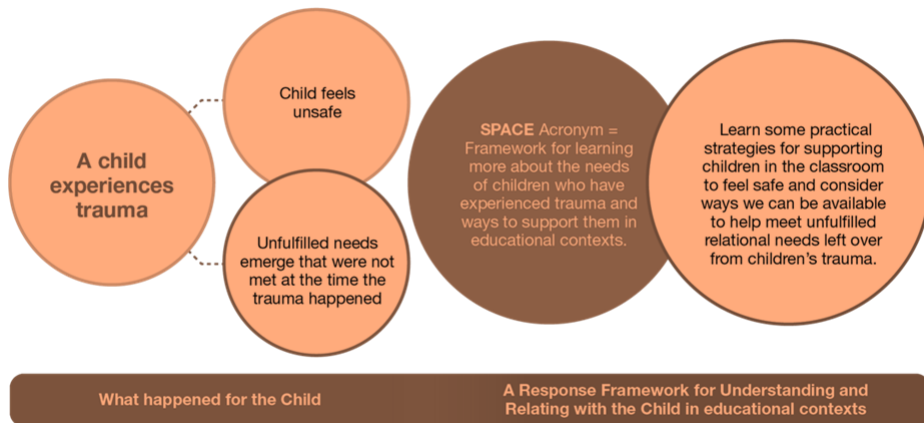
## Introducing SPACE- Five Domains

- SPACE is the central acronym of the program.
- It includes five areas to help educators better understand and support the social and emotional well being of children in the classroom.



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## How does SPACE fit?



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# Audit – Celebration and Reflection Tool

## 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 children and young people who have been impacted by trauma.

	Whole Site	Staff	Classroom / Group	Small Group	Individual Student / Child	Families/Carers
<b>S</b> Staged						
<b>P</b> Predictable						
<b>A</b> Adaptive						
<b>C</b> Connected						
<b>E</b> Enabled						



# Staged

The brain develops sequentially – lower parts develop first

Sophisticated functions only emerge after basic functions are consolidated.

**We should resource children in line with what their developing brain’s need.**

**Taking a step-by-step approach to help our students is important.**

**Start with what the lower parts of the brain needs first**



## Predictable



- Uncertainty and unpredictability can disrupt emotional wellbeing and threaten social competence.
- Strategies which promote stability and familiarity enhance social and emotional wellbeing.
- Changes to routines and uncertainty can be a source of stress for the student
- Predictability in students' relationships and activities modulates their stress systems
- This then promotes flexibility and adaptability

## Adaptive



Behaviour is communication

- If we can understand what drives a behaviour, we can work out how to respond to it.
- If we can meet the need that is driving a behaviour, the behaviour can start to reduce.

Behaviours are functional and almost always makes sense given their specific experiences of trauma.

- Openness and curiosity about behaviour is an important response.

**Strategies which promote adaptability in children's behavioural routines are ones that meet children creatively with multiple options for intervention.**

## Connected



- Children's relational templates for forming and being in relationships take shape as they grow. They learn what to expect and how to navigate relationships through their experiences of connection with those around them.
- We tend to expect things from relationships based on what we have known from past connections.
- Negotiating relationships at school and in the community can be a source of stress when children have found them hard or unsafe in the past.
- **Strategies to support children as their relational templates continue to develop emphasize relationships with safe and consistent adults and peers as the foundation for healthy, strong social and emotional functioning.**



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## Safety and healing...

*“ Safety and healing gives us back to ourselves.  
Not to hide or fight any more.  
But to sit still calm our minds, listen to the universe and  
allow our spirits to dance on the wind. It lets  
us enjoy the sunshine and be bathed by the golden  
glow of the moon as we drift into our dreamtime...  
Safety in relationships gives us back to our country.  
To stand once again in our rightful place, eternal and  
generational. It keeps us strong and gentle at the same  
time.”*



Helen Milroy (2018)

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## What is relational safety in the classroom?

Accompaniment is an experience for a child that offers emotional reciprocity, validation, care and comfort.

In this experience they feel heard, met, felt and understood.

*“ Children internalise the people who understand and comfort them, so that they often have the felt sense of accompaniment when they are alone.”*

(Bonnie Badenoch)



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## Enabled



- All children can benefit from engaging in the process of understanding themselves more deeply.
- The capacity to identify feelings and learn how they relate to the body, thoughts, and behaviours is a worthwhile life skill.
- Learning to communicate feelings with each other enriches social cohesion.
- Making sense of our stories helps us to build coherent identities over time.



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## Enabled

- Engaging students in the process of understanding themselves can build social and emotional learning.
- When students know about their qualities, their attributes and their talents they can feel good about themselves.
- Knowing about their own special story helps students to build a coherent self-narrative.

**How do you enable your students?**



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## Understanding Behaviour



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## Understanding your students' needs

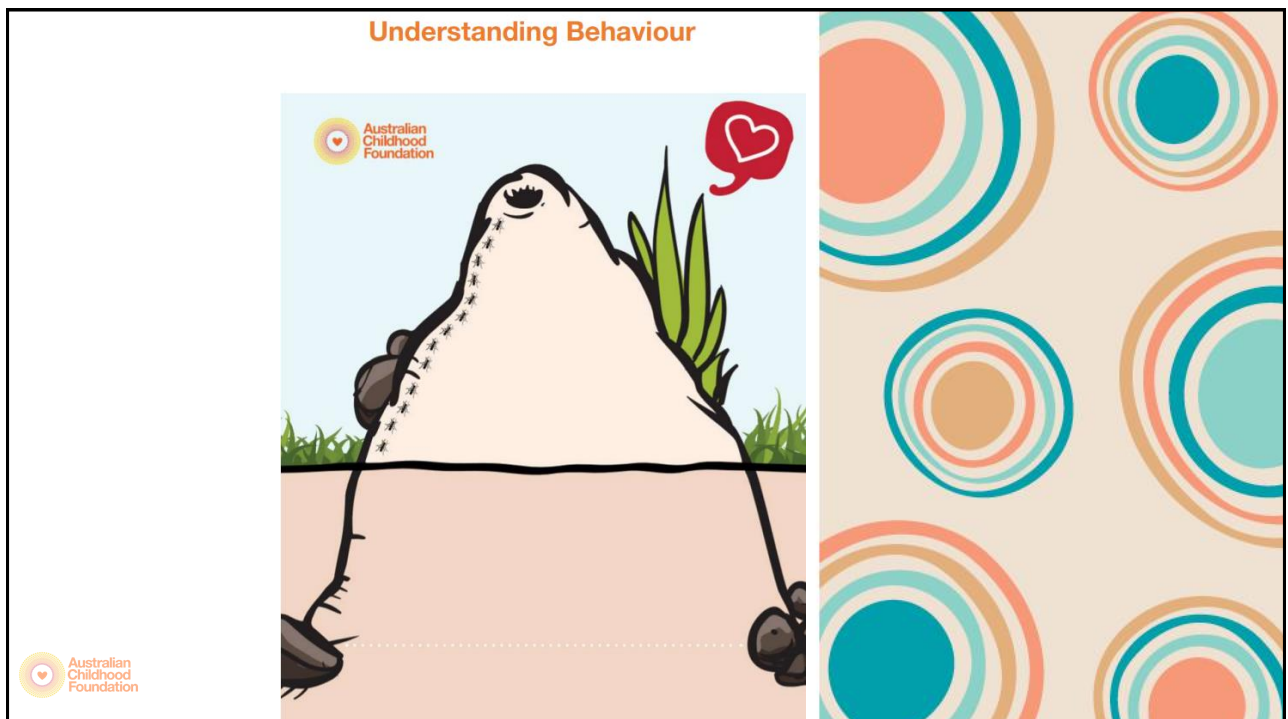
SPACE element	Translated into needs statements
Staged	Children's brains need support to grow and learn <i>My brain grows upwards step by step</i>
Predictable	Children need to know what they can count on <i>I feel better when I know what is coming next.</i>
Adaptive	Children need support to grow up healthy and strong <i>There are things I need to grow up healthy and strong.</i>
Connected	Children need to feel like they are connected. <i>I need to feel like I am connected.</i>
	Children need to feel safe and know about what makes a safe connection. <i>I need to feel safe. I need safe connections in my life.</i>
Enabled	Children need to know more about what makes them who they are. <i>I grow stronger as I learn more about what makes me, me.</i>

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## Key Concepts

Domains	Domain Explanation	Translated into needs statements
Staged	The brain develops sequentially. Sophisticated functions only emerge after basic functions are consolidated. We should resource children in line with what their developing brain's need.	Children's brains need support to grow and learn <i>My brain grows upwards step by step</i>
Predictable	Uncertainty and unpredictability can disrupt emotional wellbeing and threaten social competence. Strategies which promote stability and familiarity enhance social and emotional wellbeing.	Children need to know what they can count on <i>I feel better when I know what is coming next.</i>
Adaptive	Familiar behavioural routines are more likely to be enacted in response to life challenges than new ones. Familiar routines may not always be constructive. Strategies which promote adaptability in children's behavioural routines are ones that meet children creatively with multiple options for intervention.	Children need support to grow up healthy and strong <i>There are things I need to grow up healthy and strong.</i>
Connected	Children's internal maps for forming, maintaining and being in relationships are affected by their experiences of relationships throughout their lives. Negotiating relationships at school and in the community can be a source of stress when children have found them hard or unsafe in the past. Relationships with safe and consistent adults and peers form the foundation for change.	Children need to feel like they are connected. <i>I need to feel like I am connected.</i>
		Children need to feel safe and know about what makes a safe connection. <i>I need to feel safe.</i> <i>I need safe connections in my life.</i>
Enabled	All children can benefit from engaging in the process of understanding themselves more deeply. The capacity to identify feelings and learn how they relate to the body, thoughts, and behaviours is a worthwhile life skill. Learning to communicate feelings with each other enriches social cohesion. Making sense of our stories helps us to build coherent identities over time.	Children need to know more about what makes them who they are. <i>I grow stronger as I learn more about what makes me, me.</i>

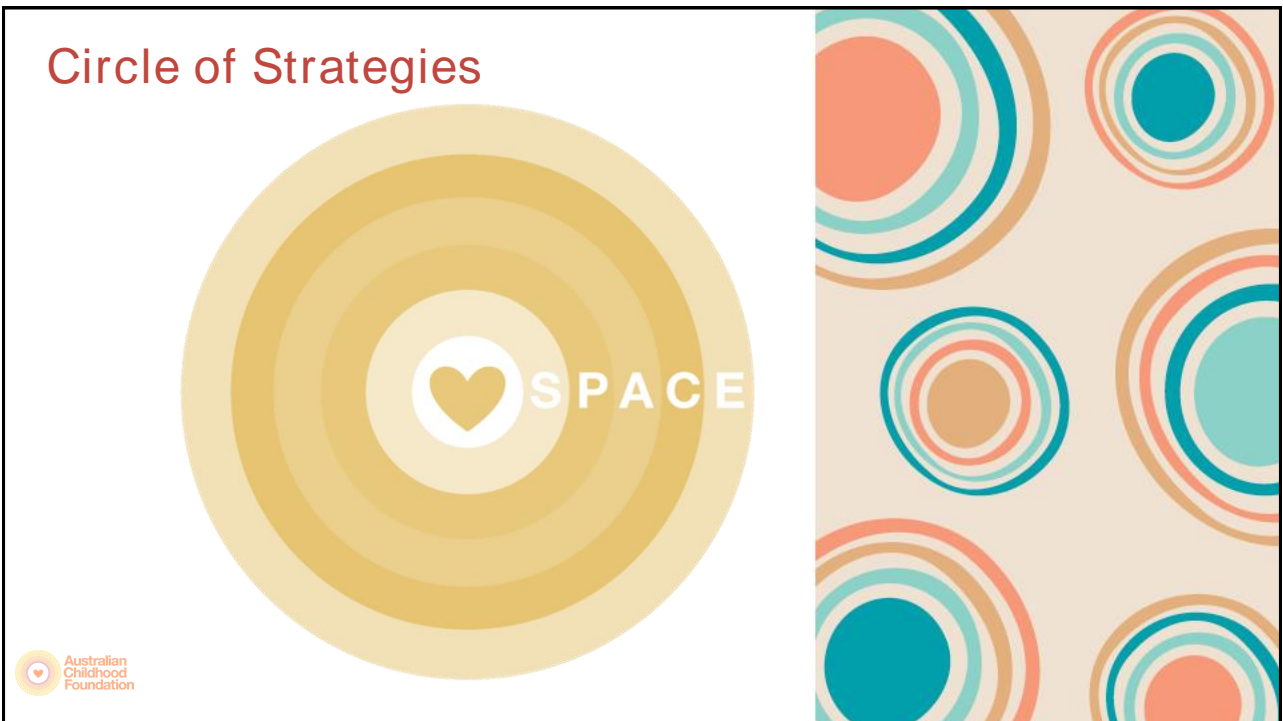
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# Staged

- Brain development is sequential
- One of the ways our brain develops is vertically, from the bottom to the top
- Some neurodevelopmental delays such as those effected by trauma can cause brain changes. However with the right support the brain can be repaired through neuroplasticity.

**Cortex**  
Reasoning and Judging Centre

**Limbic System**  
Emotional Centre

**Brain Stem**  
Basic Life Functions  
Eg. breathing, respiration, heart rate

Children's brains need support to grow and learn

My brain grows upwards, step by step.

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# Staged – Bottom up - Rhythm

## Finding our Rhythm

Many drumming traditions begin songs with a rhythm known as a drum call and response. Drum calls are short little rhythms that introduce the songs - like a signature. After there is the drum call, there is always a similarly short rhythmic response to this call made by other drummers. These two rhythms go together, you can't have one without the other. They are perfect companions.

What if we were to make up our own rhythmic call and response. Let's sit together and have a go at tapping out our own short rhythmic signatures that go together. We could do this on our laps, or on a table-top for example. Then let's practice it so we don't forget. Before bed we can tap out our rhythm together, or when we get in the car, or as you leave for pre-school or school we can tap out our rhythm, or at home sitting on the couch together we can practice.

We can take our rhythm with us into times that feel hard. No-one else needs to know that we have our rhythm. We can hold hands and tap out our rhythm with our fingers into each other's palms. We can sit beside each other and tap out our rhythm on each other's backs. Even when you are on your own and feel like you need me there, tap out our rhythm and part of me will be there with you.



childhood.org.au  
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This activity is about attachment and connection. It may be useful for parents/careers and children. It is designed to strengthen bonds between people in their lives and to create a higher quality parent/child relationship by tapping rhythm together.

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# Staged – Top Down - Mindfulness

## Magnetic Mindfulness


**A Mindfulness Analogy – Our Magnetic Minds**  
Every day we have thousands of thoughts passing through our minds. Unfortunately, sometimes we think thoughts we don't want to think. These thoughts can get stuck and magnetism in our minds. It can feel hard to let them go. If emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, guilt, or worry attach to the thought, the thought gets even bigger and has more magnetic attraction in our mind.

What mindfulness attempts to do is to reduce the power of the magnets so that those thoughts can pass through our minds more easily. The more we practice mindfulness, the weaker the magnets in our minds become.

**Non-Mindful Magnetism**  
A busy, very or distracted state; strong magnetic pull with stuck thoughts and feelings.



**Mindful Magnetism**  
An open, mindful state; thoughts and feelings pass through the mind with weak magnetic pull.




**Magnetic Mindfulness - An Experiment**

**What you will need**

- 2 big magnets - (representing a magnetized mind)
- A small range of different sized metal objects, e.g. Coins or metal beads - (representing thoughts and thoughts with emotions attached)

**The Experiment**

- Place 2 big magnets on a table or the ground, parallel with each other. This is our magnetized mind.
- Move a small coin or metal ball between them. This is a thought traveling through our mind. See if the coin moves through without being caught by the magnets. Experiment with moving the magnets closer together, indicating a more magnetized mind, and further apart, indicating a less magnetized mind.
- Use a bigger coin (which might represent a thought attached to an emotion) and see how it's even more likely the coin will get stuck on the magnets because it's bigger and has more magnetic attraction.
- Spread the two magnets further apart - this is what mindfulness allows our mind. It increases the strength of the magnetic field in our mind to allow thoughts to pass through more easily, without getting stuck. Move coins through and feel the reduced magnetic pull.



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This resource offers an analogy and experiment for professionals to use with young people or parents/careers, to aid in the understanding and practice of mindfulness.

## Magnetic Mindfulness

**Three Tasks for Reducing the Mind's Magnetism**


**Acceptance**  
Thoughts are going to always come through our mind, like a passing parade, and we can choose to pay attention to them, or not. As we accept our thoughts in the way, our mind relaxes, and our thoughts are less likely to get magnetized and stuck.

**Focus on the Breath**  
Our mind can only focus on one thing at a time. By focusing on our breath, we aren't focusing on those tricky magnetic thoughts. The tasks practice, but each time we let go of a thought and return to focus on our breath we are growing the skill.

**Consentment**  
Just like going to the gym, mindfulness might take a while before we notice any real change. We also might not like it to start with because it could expose us to some thoughts that feel hard. However, the more we practice, the further apart and weaker the magnets become, and this makes it easier to get thoughts and feelings past through our mind.

**Mindfulness Related Apps to try**

- Mind - IOS, Android, or Web
- Stop, Breathe and Think - IOS, Android, or Web
- Headspace - IOS, Android, or Web
- Calm - IOS, Android or Web
- Mindful Powers - IOS or Android



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# Predictable

**PREDICTABLE**  
Children need to know what they can count on

- Predictable environments
- Reliable relationships
- Transparency
- Expectations
- Planned transitions
- Maps/plans/timetables
- Routines

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# Predictable

**HELLOS and GOODBYES**

**WELCOME**  
Hello Ideas

**SEE YOU LATER**  
Good Bye Ideas

**Elbow bump**

**Pull a Funny Face**

**Little Dance**

**Wave**

**Bow**

**Little Dance**

**Jazz Hands**

**Peace Out**

**Rock On**

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**Introduction:**  
We know that children who have experienced trauma often thrive in environments that provide them with the security of routines and predictability. We also know that transitioning between activities or situations can be tricky. Marking transitions with clear signs and signals that are practised regularly by all can be helpful.

**Purpose:**  
The following signs have been developed for professionals to use with younger children in settings like schools, kindys, or other locations that involve children visiting professionals. They set out a range of connecting gestures that children and adults could share when a child arrives and again when children and the adults in their lives that they don't see very often, will need to engage with each other without touch for health and safety reasons.

**What to Do:**

- Print out the signs and laminate them for longevity if you can.
- Place the welcome sign near to the entrance where you greet children. Stick the 'See you later' sign next to the doorway the children leave from.
- Ensure the signs are stuck at an accessible level for the height of the children they are intended for.
- Encourage the children you work with to point to one of the five suggestions that they prefer from the sign and greet each other with the gesture that the sign points to the way to the child here.
- Repeat it in time for the child to learn to associate this with the 'See you later' sign. Encourage the child to point towards the goodbye gesture they prefer and do the action for each other.
- Repeating these rituals each time the child returns to the setting provides them with a transitional marker, with limited but welcome, secure and positive gestures they choose.

**Extension:**  
Individual children you work with might prefer to develop their own signature greeting and goodbye gestures that are shared together.  
You might like to develop your own signs with the group of children you work with. Children could contribute ideas to gestures that they would like to share when they come and go from your setting.

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## Predictable: Reliable relationships

# HEART BUTTONS

### Feeling connected when we are apart

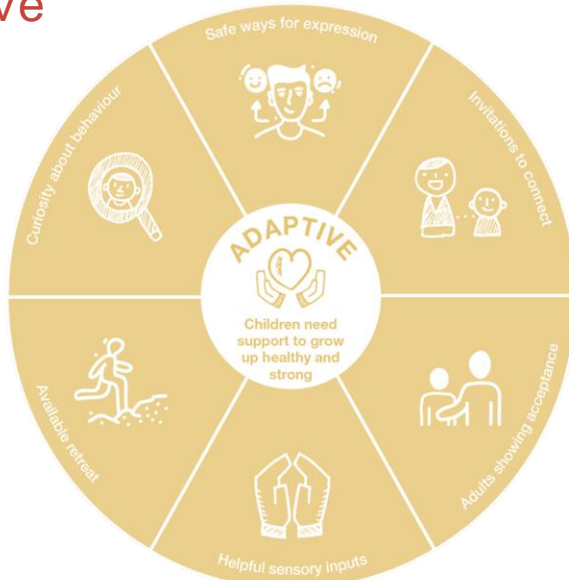
Parting for kinder, or school or whatever reason can be hard  
 What if we drew a little heart on the back of each other's hands?  
 I will draw you a heart and then blow a kiss onto it to seal in my love  
 You can draw a little heart or spot on the back of my hand  
 and blow a kiss onto it to seal in your love  
 These are our heart buttons, and they are connected by love  
 It doesn't matter where we are, all we have to do is press our heart  
 buttons, if we miss one another and we will be connected  
 When I press my button, I will think of a fun time  
 we had together and send you some love  
 You can do the same

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This resource was designed as a connecting activity for children and their important people to ease separation anxiety and transitions. It is hoped that this activity might inspire physical parenting tool boxes with their knowledge that each will hold the other in mind until they can come back together.

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## Adaptive



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# Adaptive: Helpful Sensory Inputs

**Building Your Sensory Hand**

- Trace around your hand on a piece of paper and label inside the fingers each of the five senses.
- Consider each sense one at a time. What pops into your mind when you think about something soothing or comforting that is related to each sense?
- Above each finger write or draw the comforting thing's or idea's.

There are no right or wrong answers and everyone's sensory hand is unique to them.

**Afterwards...**

- Are there any creative ways you could build these comforting sensory ideas more strongly into your everyday life?
- Are there any creative ways you could access any of these sensory comforts when or if things start to feel stressful or hard?

**Follow up Questions**

- Was it easier to think of something soothing for some of the senses and not others? That is called a sensory preference and we all have them.
- Do you think your sensory hand might be different, depending on the season? Would it be helpful to build a summer and a winter Sensory Hand?
- Do you think your sensory hand might change over time? Why? Why not?

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This resource is licensed under Creative Commons. It is a quick and easy sensory profile that can help us understand more about what soothes and comforts us, and why. For more information, visit [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

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# The Colours of My Heart

Colours have long been linked with feelings. This activity is about colouring in a heart shape with colours that represent the feelings in your heart right now.

You might like to draw a heart outline on a piece of paper or get someone to draw a heart for you. Use whatever drawing/painting implements are available to you and feel right to colour in your heart.

How will you apply the colours? Will you use dots, stripes, squiggles, smudges, block colouring, blend the colours? Will there be spaces without colour in your heart?

**After...**

Stand back and look at your colouring in. What did this activity feel like? I wonder what colours you used and what they might mean to you in terms of feelings? I wonder if the way you applied the colours in or around your heart shape means something to you right now? I wonder if the colours of your heart might change over time?

**And then...**

- This activity could promote exploration around how we link feelings with experiences, and how we express feelings ...how could someone else know what we are feeling in our hearts?
- You could explore certain situations/experiences and what feelings dominate, recede, or are maybe missing. It can be used as a springboard for exploring calming strategies if fear, anger, worry etc. are dominating.
- You might like to revisit this activity at different times as a non-verbal expressive tool that offers a chance to know more about your shifting feelings.

This activity emerged from the practice of Katherine Gentle, a Child Psychologist based in Bermagui, Australia, she participated in ACF's Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma. Thanks, Katherine for generously sharing it with ACF and our wider online community.



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# Adaptive: Exploring liked and unliked sensory inputs and what students consider as available retreats for them at school.

## Body Talk

A Fun Sensory Exploration Activity

Our bodies are very smart. If we tune into them, they can have lots to tell us. Our bodies are always located somewhere. Like the place you are right now. Tuning into how the place you're in affects parts of your body could provide some ideas about how you might change your environment to fit in the best possible way.

**How to Play**  
 Preparation: Cut up the body parts cards, laminate them if you like, and then put them in a bag or box.  
 Activity: Put out body parts cards one at a time and respond to the question on the back of the card. You can record your responses on the recording sheet if you like.  
 Format: Follow the process.  
 Further: Have your experience of tuning into your body based on your response agreement with changing the environment to better fit with what your body needs and likes.  
 Options: Invite children to make up the two body parts that people when all of the questions are answered.

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### Recording sheet

LIKE		DON'T LIKE
What do you like to look at the most when you are here?		What don't you like to look at when you are here?
What do you like to hear the most when you are here?		What don't you like to hear when you are here?
What do you like the smell of the most when you are here?		What don't you like the smell of here?
What do you like to taste the most when you are here?		What don't you like to taste when you are here?
What do your hands like to play with the most when you are here?		What don't your hands like to touch when you are here?
Let your legs take you to your favourite spot here.		Let your legs take you to your least favourite spot here.
What is an activity that your whole body likes to do here?		What is an activity that your whole body doesn't like to do here?

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# Adaptive: Exploring what safety means on a sensory level at school

### What my body likes

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### What my body likes

What do you like to look at the most when you are here?

What do you like to hear the most when you are here?

What do you like the smell of the most when you are here?

What do you like to taste the most when you are here?

What do your hands like to play with the most when you are here?

Let your legs take you to your favourite spot here.

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### What my body doesn't like

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### What my body doesn't like

What don't you like to look at when you are here?

What don't you like to hear when you are here?

What don't you like the smell of here?

What don't you like to taste when you are here?

What don't your hands like to touch when you are here?

Let your legs take you to your least favourite spot here.

What is an activity that your whole body doesn't like to do here?

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# Connected

**CONNECTED**  
Children need to feel like they are connected and know about what makes a safe connection

Synchronised exchanges  
Deepen cultural links  
Repair rupture  
Socially engaged nervous systems  
Know what safety means for individuals  
Involve animals/nature

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# Connected

## Adventures in Nature

Ideas for Day Time Walking Explorations

**Traditional Custodians**  
As you set off on your walk you might want to talk about how you are on the land of first nations people that have shared a connection with this place for tens of thousands of years. How amazing is that! Do you know who the Traditional Custodians of your area are? There are some websites that might give you a hand to find out if you aren't sure- <https://australia.gov.au/indigenous-country> and <https://australia.gov.au/regions/indigenous-australia>

**Feathered Friends**  
Look out for birds on your walk. Do you know much about the birds that live in your local area? What bird songs do you know? Visit [Birdlife Australia](http://Birdlife Australia) (<http://www.birdlife.org.au/>) to learn more about common birds in your area. You might also like to take part in the annual Aussie Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science event which happens every October.

**Micro Creatures**  
Keep your eyes out for any tiny creatures you might see on your walk. They might fly by or move along the ground or be hiding in moist crevices as they reduce some big giant's foot approaching. I wonder what the tiniest of creatures might be doing with their day as we notice them? Are they hunting for food or looking for shelter or on their way to visit a friend? Are they part of a group or on their own? How do they move from place to place? Can we follow their trail?

**Tree Time**  
Pick a big tree and sit at the base of it and look up into its branches. What animals might live in this tree? Can you see any? Close your eyes and listen to the sounds of the tree. Feel how the tree supports your back and touch its bark with your hands. What smells are you aware of as you sit by the tree? How long do you think this tree has been alive? What change has it seen happen around it in its lifetime?

## Adventures in Nature

Ideas for Day Time Walking Explorations

**Frog songs**  
Do you hear any frogs around where you live? There are many species across Australia. Learn about frogs or take part in some citizen science counting frogs in Australia's biggest frog count- [www.frognet.net.au](http://www.frognet.net.au)

**Animal Detective- Follow the trail**  
Can you see any signs that animals might have been here recently? Footprints, tracks, dropped feathers or skin or animal poo. Be an animal detective and see if you can identify any animals that might have been past recently. Take photos of the evidence as you investigate how many different animals you think you have detected.

**Cloud watching**  
Look up at the clouds. Sometimes they move into familiar shapes that you can talk about together. Check out the fun Instagram account that might inspire your own cloud shaping imagination- [wideglobeout](https://www.instagram.com/wideglobeout)

**Sun rise or Sun set**  
In her book "What Cheryl Strayed reminds us that we can choose to put ourselves in the way of beauty everyday- "There's always a sunrise and always a sunset and it's up to you to choose to be there for it." Which one would suit you more to put yourself in front of today, sun rise or sun set? Maybe you could take a photo each time you put yourselves in the way of a sun-rise, sun-set or other natural wonder!

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# Connected

## Keepy Uppy

A game of Cooperation and Coordination

### Preparation

- Inflate a few balloons.
- Let's see if we can work together to keep our balloon from touching the ground.

### More things we could add:

- Every time we hit the balloon in the air we could make a funny noise—bork, baw, beep, etc.
- Or! Let's count each time we hit the ball up in the air and see what number we reach before it touches the ground.
- If we get good with one balloon, we could add another one into the mix. Can we keep two balloons off the ground together? Or even more?



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## Hacky Sacks

A game of Cooperation and Coordination

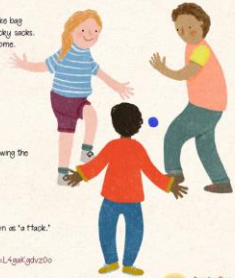
A hacky sack (otherwise known as a footbag) is a small rice, sand, pellet, or legume filled ball like bag that is small enough to fit in your pocket. There are many games that can be played with hacky sacks. Most are cooperative games which involve coordinating with other players to achieve an outcome. You don't need a lot of space or equipment or time to play with a Hacky Sack in indoor or outdoor environments. It does however, take some body coordination, which builds through practice in groups or on your own.

### Achieving a 'Hack'

**Guidelines:** This game is for 3 or more people

- Stand in a loose circle together.
- The only one to hold the hacky sack in their hand is the server, who begins each turn by throwing the ball at waist height towards another player. Players should take it in turns to serve.
- Kick the hacky sack up on the end or inside of your foot towards another player.
- Try to direct the hacky sack towards someone that hasn't had a turn yet.
- No one is to apologise if the hacky sack falls on the ground.
- When everyone has had a turn at kicking the hacky sack on in one passage of play it is known as a 'hack'.
- 'Hacky Sack' can be easily purchased in store or online—(google for local options)
- Or make your own following this young person's tutorial—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4gaUgsh0s0>

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A simple fun game, great for children and young people. This game encourages cooperation, connection, movement and coordinated bodies to achieve collective aims. It can be a great game to play in a number of times with little or no equipment or specific locations for play required.

# Connected

## Group Count

This game helps groups drop into connection with one another and promotes listening.

It is good for groups of five or more people. Collect into a circle so everyone can see one another. Then someone begins counting by saying "one." Without going around the circle or there being any pattern emerge, people should continue to add a number each "two," "three," "three" and so on. Should more than one person say a number at the same time, the group count must begin again. Every member of the group should have a turn before someone gets another go. Notice how the number you achieve together gets larger the more you play the game.



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## Hand to Hand Attunement



Let's work together to hold an object up between our hands or fingers and not let it fall.

We will need to synchronise our movements and attune to one another. What object feels right to hold between us? A big gym ball? A sports ball? A cushion? A balloon? A pencil? Let's try moving the object around. What is that like for you? As you move together notice if one person is leading, or if the movement initiation is swapping between you? Try around with this. When you become accomplished, add another object to you are using both of your hands to hold up two objects between you. What does it feel like to be in synch with another person?



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## Connected



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# Enabled

Emotional literacy

New narratives

ENABLED

Children need to know more about what makes them who they are

Grow strengths

Deepen belonging

Expand cultural knowing

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# Enabled

## Identity Clouds

When we began working with young people we usually spend some time connecting with those who know them best to learn more about them and to begin building a picture that will be added to as we go. What if at this time we composed an actual picture of words for our young people based around the contributions of those who know them best. Word pictures or clouds are images composed of words based around particular subjects. The size of each word in the display indicates its frequency or importance.

What if we asked those in a young person's support team to contribute five positive descriptive words about the young person to help us better understand more about them. It would be good for these people to be aware that their words will contribute to a word picture that the young person will see.

Once we have collected these words they can be entered into a free online word cloud generator. There are many available, including this one: <https://www.wordclouds.com/>

The resulting word cloud could be printed out or electronically shared with the young person as you engage with them. It could be a place to start considering 'identity' together. This could be an activity that allows conversations about the picture others have of us compared with our own internal conception. Who we think we are, what we believe others think of us, and who we are becoming can feel increasingly important as we move through adolescence.

athletic

sweet

friendly

sporty

kind

active

loving

funny

strong

thoughtful

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This identity focused activity could be useful for educators as they build meaningful relationships with young people. It provides an opportunity for young people to learn more about how others view them, and to think about how this aligns with the way they know themselves.

Teachers could gather ideas for word clouds from students and other teachers.

They could make up a word cloud for each student in their home group or grade and give it to them for their birthday each year.

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# Enabled

## Linked Together

**What you will need**

- Coloured paper to be cut into strips
- Scissors
- Glue or a stapler

Let's cut up some coloured paper strips (approx 3 cm width & 20 cm length)  
 Each of us can choose a strip of paper to write on.  
 Let's write down one strength or positive thing about ourselves and our names on the coloured side of our strip.  
 If it feels ok, let's read them out to each other.

Using some coloured strips let's write down one thing we know about a strength of each of the other people in the group as well as the individual's name on each strip.  
 Everyone can then move around and give the strips they wrote for others to the individual they are written about.

Using glue or a stapler let's make our strips into a series of looped circles. Once we have linked the strips with our names on them, let's link them together with everyone else's to form a group paper chain.  
 We are all a part of this chain. Our strengths combine when we come together in this group.  
 What could we do with our group's linked up chain?

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This is a craft activity for formed groups of many bodies. It could be used therapeutically for example with families or in schools or other settings. It encourages people to share ideas about individual strengths and experiences that contribute to making up the group. It is suited for people with mild to moderate autism and longer attention spans on standard strips of paper.

# Creating Safety

## Polyvagal Theory & Sensing Safety



<b>Mobilisation</b> Fight, Flight, Active Freeze	I don't feel safe	I am filled with energy I need to move I need to act now	Red Faced, hot and sweaty Fast beating heart Muscles tensed Moving body, hard to find stillness
<b>Social Engagement</b>	I feel safe	I am all set to play and explore I am ready to connect I am open to your ideas	Making Eye contact Orienting towards those around Listening Relaxed, loose, flowing body
<b>Immobilisation</b> Flop	I don't feel safe	I am numbed out I am retreating inside I am collapsed, small, and distant	I have cold extremities Glazed eyes, distant stare Slow movement Lethargic & passive body

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## My Day feeling safe and unsafe

**Mobilised**

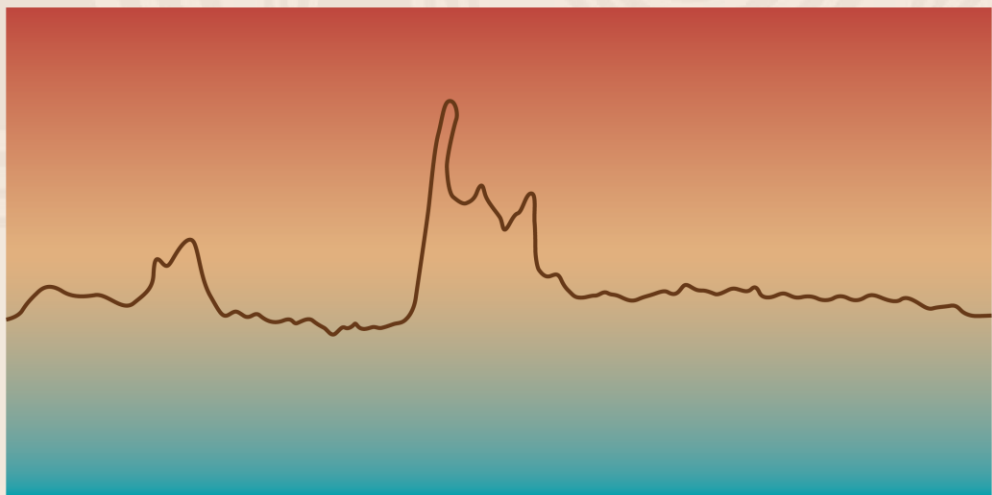
I don't feel safe zone

**Socially Engaged**

I feel safe zone

**Immobilised**

I don't feel safe zone



My Day



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## Detecting Safety with our Social Engagement System

- We feel safe together in this state.
- This is a calm behavioral state
- Often characterized by mirroring and reciprocity.
- Tell tale signs— people are orientated towards one another with engaged faces



### Neuroception of Safety

Neuroception = the way our neural circuits quickly and implicitly work out if situations or people are safe or dangerous

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## Mobilization in safety.....danger

Play

Fight or Flight or Active Freeze

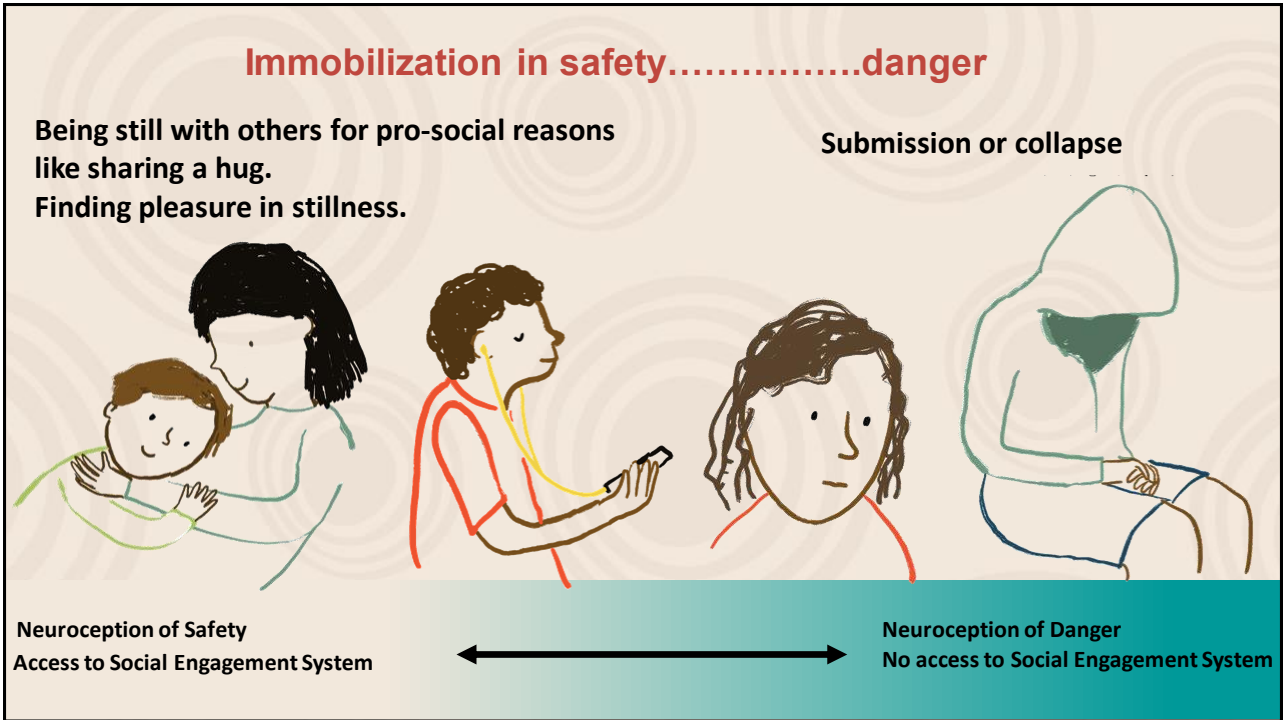


Neuroception of Safety  
Access to Social Engagement System



Neuroception of Danger  
No access to Social Engagement System

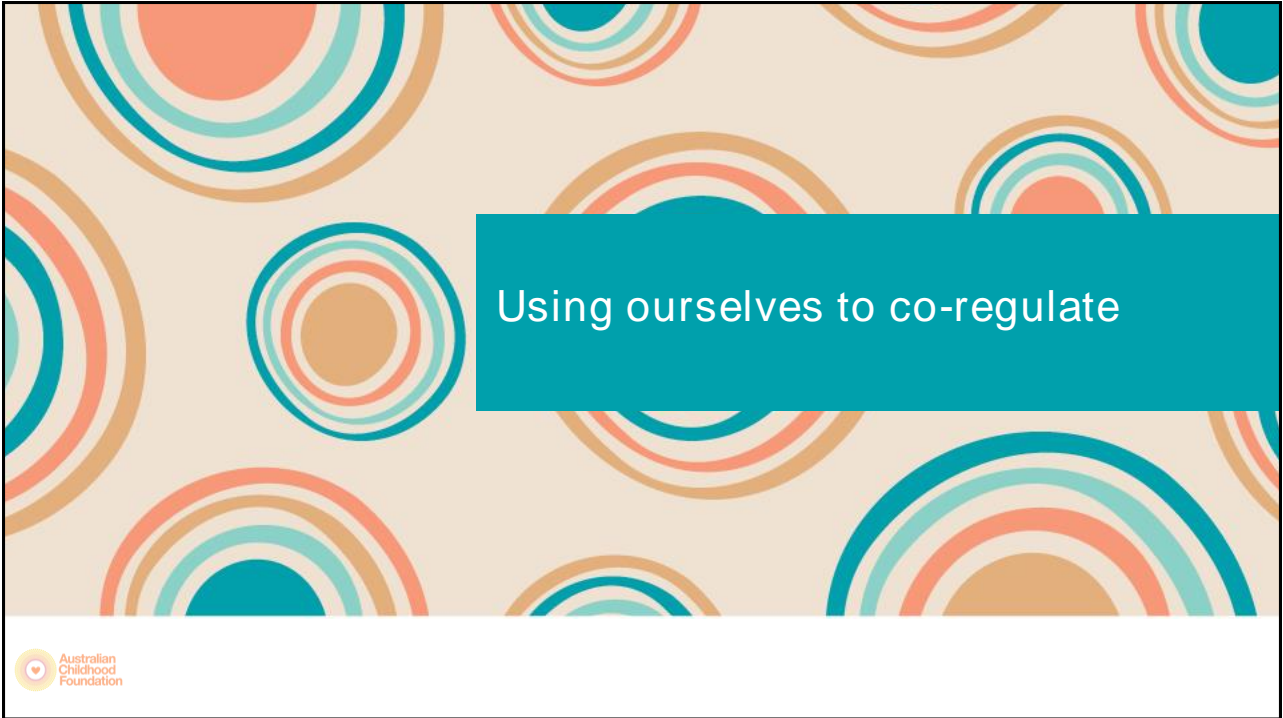
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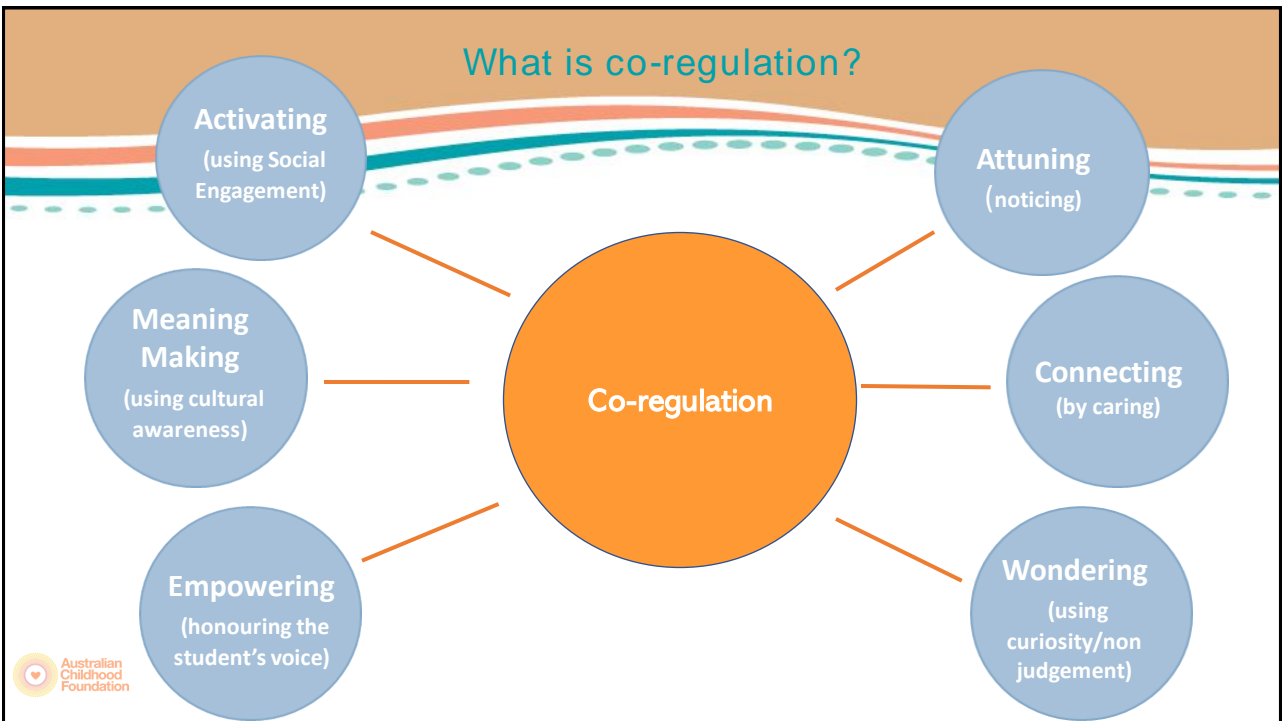
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## Creating safety – using ourselves

- Environment
- Proximity
- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Tone of voice
- Posture and gestures



Creating safety – supporting the social engagement system	
 <p><b>Environment</b></p>	A safe environment is paramount. Consider physical, emotional and cultural safety. Is the environment free from violence and abuse, responsive to physical and emotional needs and inclusive of cultural needs. Also ensure the environment considers the sensory needs of the child. Spaces that have too much stimulation - loud noises, bright lights, strong smells or too many pictures on the walls can be overwhelming for children experiencing trauma. Understanding the child's individual needs and providing enough sensory stimulation for growth but not too much so that the child is overwhelmed is the key. Remember safety is an individual experience. What works for one person may not for another.
 <p><b>Proximity</b></p>	Consider the child's need for closeness or space. Each child is different. Take into account the context, your relationship and the developmental age of the child. Being attuned to the child will help you to navigate what the child needs. If a child is dysregulated always remain within the line of sight of the child, unless your safety or the safety of others is at risk. Remember time in rather than time out. Any direct contact with the child should be initiated by the child.
 <p><b>Eye contact</b></p>	Eye contact is an important aspect of social engagement and enables feelings of connectedness and validation. Eye contact can be threatening though to a child who has experienced trauma as their social engagement system is usually on high alert. Consider ways to engage with the child using minimal eye contact. Chattering while driving along in the car, creating art or snodging hoops is a great way to engage the child in conversation and is less threatening than sitting face to face. Remember, each child is different so be guided by the child.
 <p><b>Facial expressions</b></p>	Children who have experienced trauma can often have trouble reading facial expressions and will often interpret expressions as anger or disappointment. Be aware of your facial expressions when engaging with the child. Aim for contingent facial expressions that look to mirror the child's inner experience - this conveys empathy and helps the child to understand themselves and feel heard. When the child is regulated, look for opportunities to assist the child to develop emotional literacy by using card-games that relate faces to feelings.
 <p><b>Tone of voice</b></p>	Prosody is the rhythm, pitch and tone of the voice, like when a mother alters her voice to soothe her baby. Tone of voice can have a powerful impact on a child's sense of safety. In situations where a child is dysregulated, consider the tone and pitch of your voice. A soft and gentle voice is more likely to deescalate an overwhelmed child.
 <p><b>Posture and gestures</b></p>	Consider your posture and gestures. How you approach the child will determine how safe or unsafe they may feel. If your posture is perked up with your shoulders back, the child may read you as defensive and primed to fight. A posture that is strong, yet open and welcoming, will help to calm the child. The child's implicit memory system may interpret certain postures or gestures as threatening, so stay attuned to the child and again be guided by them. Mirroring (staying within your window of tolerance) is also important. Mirroring can convey empathy and a sense of feeling heard and this will help with coregulation.

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Putting it in to practice... what are our next steps?



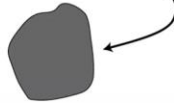
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## Putting it into practice....

Theory into practice – what are our BIG ROCKS?

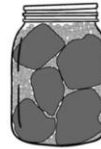


IF YOU FILL YOUR JAR WITH GRAVEL AND SAND FIRST, YOU WON'T HAVE SPACE FOR YOUR BIG ROCKS



Big Rocks first...

- What are our big ideas, values, mindsets
- E.g. School wide agreements/expectations



Gravel next...

- What does this look like in practice?
- E.g. Consistency - language, visuals



Lastly, sand...

- What do we do every day to support this?
- E.g. Timetables/Routines



## Audit – Celebration and Reflection Tool

### 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 children and young people who have been impacted by trauma.

	Whole Site	Staff	Classroom / Group	Small Group	Individual Student / Child	Families/Carers
<b>S</b> Staged						
<b>P</b> Predictable						
<b>A</b> Adaptive						
<b>C</b> Connected						
<b>E</b> Enabled						



## Linking your learning to your Wellbeing and Inclusion Framework



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## One thing you will take away from today

Circle Time:

Share one thing you will  
take away from our two  
days together



Image: Pinterest

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**Thank you .....**



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To find out more about the  
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