SMART Adolescents

Activities & Resource Booklet

Australian Childhood Foundation

Introduction

Welcome to the SMART PRACTICE suite of trainings.

We hope that these trainings will be a value add to your trauma responsive practice in your educational setting.

This Activities Booklet for Adolescents accompanies the SMART Adolescents Day 1 and Day 2 trainings that you are attending and is to support you in your practice. We hope that this resource will support you in the work you are doing with your high school students.

In the Activities and Resource Booklet will find a vast range of supportive ways to respond to your students. Your trainer may use some of the activities in the session.

The activities in this booklet are designed for High School Educators and Support Staff, such as SSO's, BSSO's and Behaviour Coaches, to be done alongside the young person, and supporting the young person to use these activities themselves. We encourage you to find activities that you feel comfortable with, and practice them with a colleague, so you feel confident to use these with your students.

For SMART Train the Trainers, you may like to use some of these activities when you deliver your sessions.

For each section your will find connections to the SMART PRACTICE Framework, as well the SMART Discussion Papers. As well, you are encouraged to use the Reflection questions in the Discussion Papers to consider your responses further.

There are links to ACF Activity Sheets referenced throughout the booklet and at the end of the booklet, you will find links to further ACF resources.

Please do not copy or distribute this book to others. Your trainer will be referencing material in this booklet, so please ensure you have an electronic or hard copy available when you attend your training.

All the very best with the important work you are doing to support young people in education settings throughout South Australia.

This booklet was developed by the Education and Safeguarding Services (ESS) Team at ACF.

The authors would like to acknowledge the ESS Team, as well as the ACF Therapeutic Services Team and DfE Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma previous students for many of the strategy ideas in this booklet.

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Introduction to the SMART Circle of PRACTICE

SMART Circle of PRACTICE

The SMART Circle of PRACTICE is a tool designed by the Australian Childhood Foundation to conceptualise ways to support and co-regulate students using what is called “Bottom Up and Top Down” responding and strategies. When under stress or having been impacted from trauma, a student’s ability to stay engaged in their learning and social interactions is significantly impacted.

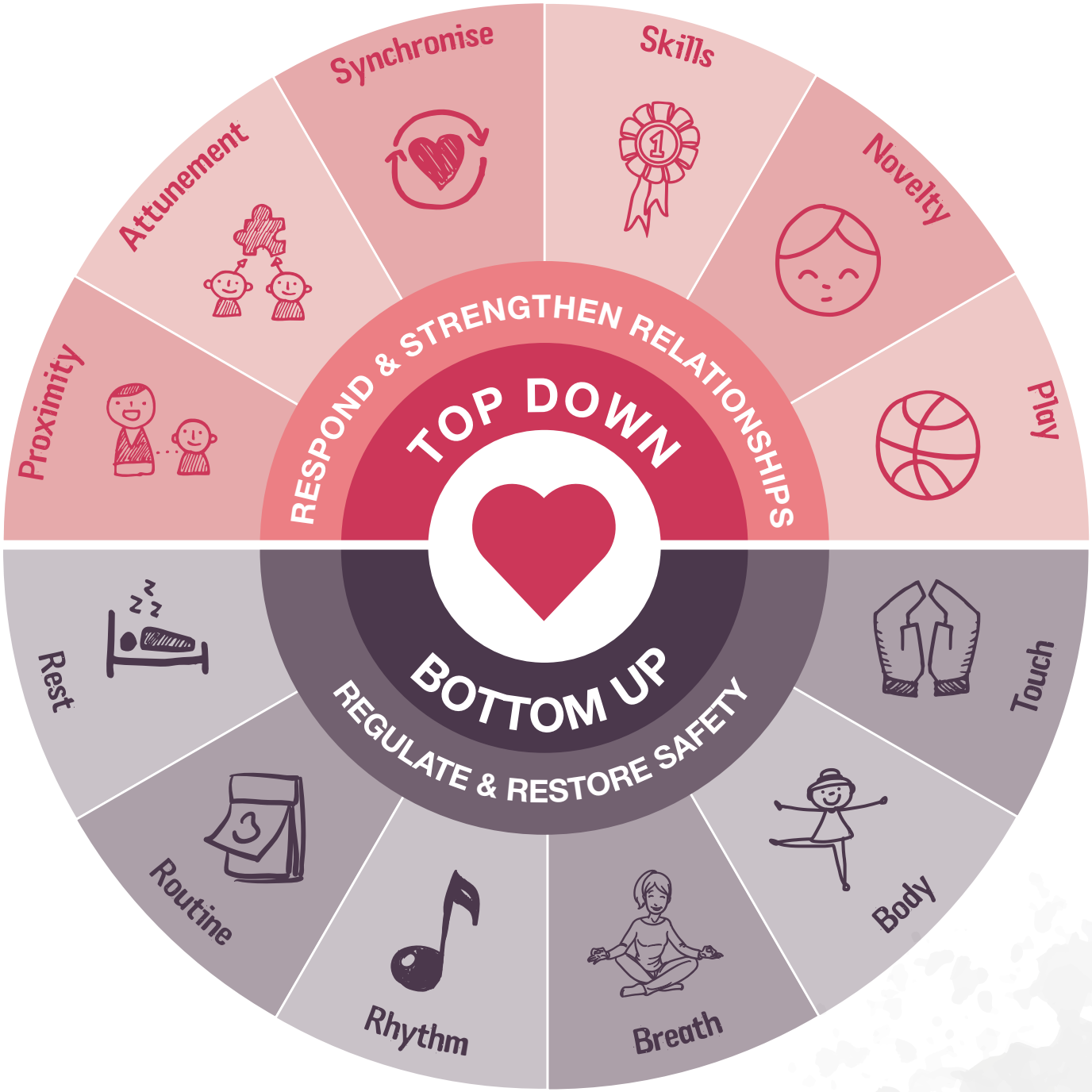
Two factors that are essential in healing and recovery from experiences of trauma and the accompanying dysregulation are:

1. Enhancing self-regulation and
2. Supporting relationships through sensory-based attunement (Malchiodi, in Mitchell, Tucci & Tronick, 2020).

The goal is to provide educators practical ways to help students be and feel safe and stay engaged in their learning and social interactions at school. This is done through enhancing their self-regulation, through co-regulation, and strengthening their relationship with educators and their peers.

“Bottom Up” responding refers to engaging the subcortical (lower) parts of the brain to regulate the higher parts of the brain. “Top Down” responding refers to engaging the cortical (higher) parts of the brain to regulate the lower parts of the brain. Educators can use the “Top Down” approach when students are in, or able to still engage, a regulated state to help them stay there, and use the “Bottom Up” approach to help students access a regulated state when feeling distressed, unsafe or disconnected.

The 12 elements in the circle are ways that have been identified through research to provide what human brains and bodies need for regulation.



Discussion Papers to support your learning:

Discussion Paper 1: Responding to children who have experienced abuse related trauma – Ideas for school-based treatment.

Discussion Paper 5: Extending our understanding of the role of specific brain structures in responding to trauma.

Discussion Paper 11: Exploring SMART PRACTICE with adolescents.

What is a 'bottom up and top-down approach?'

Bottom Up

A "bottom up" approach engages the subcortical parts of the brain (Brainstem, Cerebellum, Amygdala and Hippocampus), as well as the body to regulate higher brain parts. These lower parts of the brain are constantly activated for survival and will often "highjack" higher brain parts when under stress or threat. For students, this may mean that they are unable to focus or concentrate on tasks, be able to use their "executive" function to complete work tasks.

Working from the "bottom up" generally means a progression that begins with the body's sensory (lower brain parts) and somatic (body) experiences as the foundation for the eventual exploration of emotions (affect) and personal narratives and executive functioning (cognition). This in turn will help students engage in their learning more.

Top Down

A "Top Down "approach to responding refers to engaging the cortical (higher) parts of the brain (cortex, pre-frontal cortex and medial prefrontal cortex) to generally regulate the lower parts of the brain. This approach can also be used when students are in, a regulated state to help them remain there.

Adolescent Voice

Ensure you include your students in the decision-making process around imbedding "strategies", activities, or changes in the classroom and across the whole school site –

Allow them CHOICE – and honour their voices

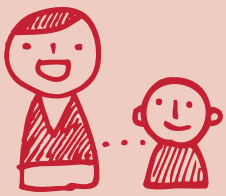
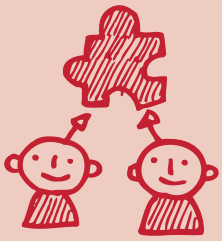
Key Messages for each domain of the SMART Circle of PRACTICE

Bottom-Up			
	Key Messages	Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 Touch	Touch is critical to human survival. How we process touch has a huge impact on how we feel. The same sensation causes a different reaction depending on how we feel. An easy way of understanding this is to imagine the sensation of a fly landing on your arm. You dismiss how it feels. Although the same sensation could be felt if a wasp lands on your arm you react to keep yourself safe. If a young person is constantly reacting to touch it can be difficult to focus on a task or activity. Providing safe touch is so important in school environments.	Brainstem Cerebellum Amygdala Hippocampus	Responsive Attuned Connected Calming
 Body	Students who have experienced trauma often are not aware of their bodily states and sensations and hence become dysregulated. Students may also create own boundaries, to keep themselves safe in their body. Sometimes this can be seen as inappropriate. e.g., young person may always need to go at the end of the school line as this removes themself from groups. A student's tolerance of being in the presence of other students may be compromised. These activities assist the body to tolerate being in the presence of others. Being able to provide deep pressure and containment type activities help the body to feel safe and regulated.	Brainstem Cerebellum Amygdala Hippocampus Cortex	Responsive Attuned Connected Translating

Key Messages		Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 **Breath**	Understanding and using breath to regulate by alerting or calming and to stay regulated is important. When dysregulated or stressed (hyperaroused) our breathing can become shallow and short. Being able to use the strategy of having short breaths in, followed by longer, slower breaths out can help some young people will help calm. When feeling flat (hypoaroused), taking longer, slower breaths in, followed by shorter, quick breaths out, can upregulate or alert. Consistent regular breaths in and out can help a student to stay regulated.	**Brainstem** **Amygdala** **Prefrontal cortex**	**Predictable** **Attuned** **Connected** **Calming**
Rhythm	Brains and bodies naturally respond to rhythm. Rhythm is a part of our world and our lives. Think of the rhythms of the day – the sun rising and setting, the seasons of the year or the rhythm of celebrations. Having rhythm as part of our lives, in our body movements, and the rhythms of the school day/ year/lesson are so important in providing regulation and a felt sense of safety.	**Brainstem** **Cerebellum** **Amygdala** **Hippocampus** **Cortex**	**Connected** **Involving** **Calming** **Engaging**

	Key Messages	Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 **Routine**	Our brains and bodies crave predictability and routine. This creates a felt sense of safety. Having routines that are consistent and predictable is so important. Routine creates structure, makes us more efficient, helps us to plan and instills good habits, helps with procrastination, and builds self-confidence, just to name a few benefits. Routine is like rhythm in that helps cue a sense of safety through creating patterns and familiarity. The brain has learnt how to respond to each experience and can predict the outcome based on this past learning and what events/ tasks etc are coming up, setting up predictability and therefore a sense of preparedness.	**Brainstem** **Amygdala** **Hippocampus** **Cortex** **Prefrontal cortex**	**Predictable** **Involving** **Calming** **Engaging**
 **Rest**	Rest is incredibly important to our body's health. Studies have proven the benefits of rest in reduction of stress, providing the opportunity to be more active, and boosts the immune system, as well as enhancing sleep. Apart from the physical benefits of rest, it also plays a big role in the health of students. Students who take time away from work to rest can have more mental energy, creativity, and productivity, as well as even sharper memories. When we rest, we activate our default mode network which assists in memory consolidation and creativity and innovation	**Brainstem** **Amygdala** **Hippocampus** **Medial prefrontal cortex** **Default mode network**	**Predictable** **Attuned** **Calming** **Engaging**

Top-Down

	Key Messages	Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 **Proximity**	Proximity gives us indication that someone is close by and is present to our needs. Raising our voice across the room sends a different signal than if you move yourself closer and talk ensuring connection. Proximity can also happen online when focus is given to being present with an-other. Proximity may look like face-to-face com-munication however shoulder to shoulder or being near is equally powerful. Working together on a task is one way of providing proximity, as well as synchronicity.	**Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala** **Brainstem**	 **Responsive**  **Attuned**  **Connected**  **Engaging**
 **Attunement**	Like tuning a musical instrument, one needs to focus and "tune" in to determine whether the instrument is in tune or not. In relationships being able to "tune into" one another is so important. Once again, it creates a sense of connection, safety and belonging. Attunement also speaks to accompani-ment. Accompaniment is an experience for a young person that offers emotional reciprocity, validation, care, and comfort. In this experience they feel heard, met, felt, and understood	**Cortex** **Prefrontal Cortex** **Medial Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala**	 **Responsive**  **Attuned**  **Connected**  **Involving**

	Key Messages	Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 **Synchronise**	When you hear the word synchronise, what do you imagine? Often the picture of synchronised swimmers comes to mind. In synchronised swimming, each swimmer matches the other. When we are in synchronicity with each other, we "match" each other. Working collaboratively together on tasks or projects is one way of synchronising. Working in this way helps to provide, once again, that important sense of safety, purpose, recognition and connection and fosters understanding and care. For a student, it means that they feel as though someone "gets me", and is willing to work with me, rather than against me.	**Cortex** **Prefrontal Cortex** **Medial Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala**	 **Responsive**  **Attuned**  **Connected**  **Translating**
 **Skills**	It is important to assist students to build a repertoire of new skills – especially somatically (body), emotionally, and cognitively. Somatic practices help students build new skills and competencies that are relevant to what they care about. New skills are developed somatically so that they become more than just good ideas; they are actions and habits that eventually become second nature. Through explicit teaching of emotional literacy, students can learn more about their experiences and feelings. It's not enough for the student to know what triggers their fears or how the brain sets off a fear response, for example, it's more important that they are able to manage their fear in the moment and remain positive, productive, and learning when fear is present.	**Cortex** **Prefrontal Cortex** **Medial Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala** **Hippocampus**	 **Responsive**  **Connected**  **Translating**  **Involving**

Key Messages		Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 **Novelty**	Novelty, by definition, is anything that is new, unique, or unusual, and the experi-ence of novelty can take many forms: meeting a new friend, learning a new skill, listening to new music. Humans, naturally prefer novelty, so long as it does not come with some perceived threat. If safe, it can engage the curiosity of a young person. Learning depends on novelty. Novelty helps to strengthen memories in the brain. In education settings, looking for new ways to approach subjects (i.e., novelty) makes things interesting, which in turn makes information easier to remem-ber. New experiences and information stimulate the hippocampus and prefrontal cortical memory centres of the brain, which are closely related to the pleasure centres of the brain. These “pleasure centres” of the brain, are located mainly in the mid-brain, and when activated there is a flood of dopamine throughout the brain.	**Cortex** **Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala** **Hippocampus**	 **Attuned**  **Connected**  **Involving**  **Engaging**

Key Messages		Brain Areas supported	Links to SMART PRACTICE elements
 Play	Play is not just for children! Play is so important for adolescents and adults as well! Play is an integral part of learning. It is characterised by engagement, with high levels of involvement, focus, and intrinsic motivation. Play involves imagination, creativity, as well as cognition, communication, and planning. Play also develops problem solving, language and collaborative skills. It can increase attention and focus and provide structure and outcomes For students who have lived or living experiences of trauma, they may have missed the critical developmental stages of play when young, and hence may need to learn to "play", be playful, and understand playfulness. Otherwise, this may be interpreted neuroceptively as a threat. When a student is and feels safe, they will engage in playfulness, which provides enjoyment, as well as a sense of connection and belonging. Play, in safety, can create a sense of overall wellbeing and calm.	**Cortex** **Prefrontal Cortex** **Medial Prefrontal Cortex** **Amygdala**	 **Connected**  **Involving**  **Calming**  **Engaging**

Further information to support your strategies

How movement changes the brain

Rhythmic movements, grounding and deep pressure movement fosters organization and brings the young person into attunement or better interpersonal contact with others. Interactive rhythm, grounding and deep pressure movement regulates nervous systems whilst movement activates the cerebellum and hence the limbic system through neuronal connections.

Standing up can change alertness- this could be whole of class as well as individually.

Rocking can be soothing and calms the nervous system

Dancing and music engages poly-vagal social engagement, helping a student to stay engaged in their learning

Jumping can alter arousal and calm the student

Contact comfort calms and soothes arousal

Grounding helps with regulation and vertical integration of brain

Rhythm provides regulation and calming

Easy classroom activities

Standing

- Stand on one foot and then other -whirl arms like a windmill
- Stand and bend and touch knees, toes
- Stand and stretch – by raising arms above the head and looking up.

Rocking

- Swing arms backwards and forwards
- Do Floss dance
- Rock backwards and forwards from toes to hells

Dancing

- Dance Monkey https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiXCxfWWwPo
- Cha Cha Slide https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1gMUbEAUFw
- Stay https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLzXCdtQHaQ
- Move it Mob Style Episode 3 https://youtu.be/uj7goZVSWY8
- Take a current hit and create your own dance moves in class

Jumping

- Star jumps
- Frog jumps
- Hopping from one foot to the other
- Running on the spot

Strong Proprioceptive input such as pulling and pushing or jumping or bouncing can bring the arousal system into an optimal state of alertness.

Contact comfort- consider safety with these activities:

- Eye contact - who blinks first
- Use stretch bands/rubber tubing for push/pull activity
- Body socks
- Attention to the other person's body comfort is essential. As the individual's body is made comfortable, so does he or she feel welcome. It is important to attend to physical comfort, to see to it that the other person has a kind of supportive spatial arrangement and a sense of anchorage

Grounding

- Lie on floor
- Take shoes and socks off and place weight on floor (sitting or standing)
- Heavy beanbags/Rock cushions
- Weighted cushions/balls
- Rolling large exercise ball across body

Rhythm

- Bouncing to a beat
- Bounce-and-clap
- Ball toss in a rhythm
- Repetition of a young person generated movement to a beat, -cup rhythm, clapping games.
- Body drumming
- Desk top drumming
- Clapping games

Interoception - Sensory integration at school

Interoception is the perception of sensations from inside the body and includes the perception of physical sensations related to internal organ function such as heartbeat, respiration, satiety, as well as the autonomic nervous system activity related to emotions.

Strategies for sensory integration

Create opportunities across the day for sensory based activities to promote regulation of arousal level, attention, and emotion

- Documenting and tracking learning to observe the non-verbal cues ABC Scatter Plots* -and use and share the data.
- Sharing: verbally contacting with the young person what one tracks
- Mindfulness: a state of conscious attending to the present moment as it unfolds
- Curiosity: an attitude of open mind
- Collaboration: getting the students' collaboration in the process. Collaborate in activity choice – music using headphones, colouring in, fidgets, sensory tools, essential oils, blue tack, stress balls, beads,
- Understanding the young person's Fight/Flight/Active Freeze or Submit/Disassociated response- their natural truncated range of immediate orienting and defense responses available to them when a threat is perceived; How and what are you going to replace this behaviour with as this may be a long-term survival response? (You cannot just remove the response)
- Skills for sequencing arousal in the body because of trauma
- Building emotional literacy-Emotional bingo, emotional ball, emotion cards, emotion charades
- Support the young person's intrinsic motivation to play
- Tailor the activity to the "just right" challenge
- Ensure activities are successful* https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/management/improvement/abc-scatter-plot-data.pdf

Emotional regulation

Adolescence is a time of change. Changes in hormones, body shape, friendships, and relationships, as well as greater demands on their time, expectations on what they need to do or achieve, as well as the increased cognitive load, can leave the young person a whole range of emotions.

Coupled with an overactive limbic area and an underdeveloped Prefrontal Cortex (which regulates impulsive control, motivation, and focus), it can feel like a recipe for an emotional roller coaster.

For a young person who has lived or living experiences of relational trauma, they may never have had the experience of having their emotions supported. Initial reactions to trauma can include exhaustion, confusion, sadness, anxiety, agitation, numbness, dissociation, confusion, physical arousal, and blunted affect. Most responses are normal in that they affect most survivors and are socially acceptable, psychologically effective, and self-limited.

Helping to regulate a young person's emotions and supporting them through these changes is possible using **co-regulation.**

Co-regulation is the ability to use oneself to create safety and connection.

(See the sheet "Strategies for remaining in the Window of Tolerance – Use of Self" in Chapter 2 for further ideas.

It is important that we understand this first.

- Where is the young person and me in our individual Window of Tolerance?
- What are the indicators for me and what are the young person's indicators?
- How do I use this information to adjust my contact to be regulating for the child? What have I seen and mapped previously for them?

Strategies for creating co-regulation

- Matching vitality affect -understand your own ability for tolerance and ability to modulate your own regulation/behaviour use the relationship, create a playful fun atmosphere
- Create physical and psychological safety
- Match tone
- Match intensity - Don't match the emotion
- Match prosody

Applying the SMART Circle of PRACTICE

In this section we have provided a few ideas to inspire you as you apply the SMART Circle of PRACTICE for individual students, the whole of school, or for individual subject areas. We encourage you to add your ideas as well.

Applying the SMART Circle of PRACTICE to individual students	
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	**Activity Ideas**
 **Touch**	• Teacher student handshakes • Elbow taps • High fives • Partner hand planks
 **Body**	**Mirroring activity** Working in pairs, practice some mirroring activities, to focus and attune into one another Choose one person to be the first person to lead this activity, then swop. You may like to make hand and arm movements up and down or in circles. Another way to do this activity is to use an item such as a marker or pop stick. Each person is to use their Pointer finger to "hold" on to the item. Working together, as above, try and follow each other patterns of movement. **Heart -body** Do some star jumps or run around classroom. Stop to notice your heartbeat. Place your hand on your chest and feel your blood pumping! **Body scans** Close your eyes and squeeze the muscles in your feet. Hold them tight, then release and relax. Do the same in your legs and continue up your body. **Pushups/Wall planks** While standing, have students create a push up on the wall or their desk. The deep pressure from these activities provide regulation.

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Breath	**Dragon Breath: (Zombie Breathing – Adolescent)** Invite participants to notice the warmth of their breath in the palm of their hand trying the two types of breathing mentioned below. 1. Take a long breath in and a short, quick breath out. What do you notice with the temperature on your palm? Most will say it is warm 2. Take a shorter breath in and a long, extended breath out. What did you notice this time? Most will say it is cooler. This can then form the discussion below about how different types of breathing produce different outcomes. **Four Corner Breathing** Four-corner breathing involves inhaling deeply and exhaling deeply four times. Students can complete this breathing exercise by standing up and taking one inhalation and one exhalation while facing each of the four corners in a room.

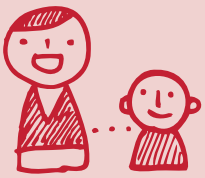
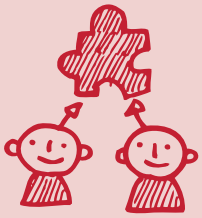
Heart rate monitor – biofeedback

Using a heart rate monitor or smart watch is a great way for students to be able to monitor their own heart rates, and the influence certain strategies has on their regulation. Invite students to measure their heart rate when they are resting (i.e., sitting at their desk) or after movement (i.e., running or skipping). What do they notice? Invite them to then engage in a regulating activity – i.e., deep breathing, grounding, or going for a slow-paced walk. Invite them to then check their heart rate. What did they notice? Did their heart rate reduce? Finding heartbeat and seeing whether they can slow it down. This strategy be very effective in bringing awareness to breath and calm.

How can you use this knowledge to support you to understand their own levels of regulation?

What have you noticed about your heart rate before or after using certain regulation strategies – i.e., breathing, or going for a slowed paced walk?

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Rhythm	• Provide brain and body breaks that include rhythmic movement – walking, jogging, moving to music • Rocking from left to right **Body Percussion is also great for rhythm also desk top drum riffs – a pattern of hand movements/ beats lasting a few seconds that create a rhythm.** 
 Routine	• Ensure student knows what their daily routine is • Provide lots of visual reminders in the classroom • Assist the student to use their diaries or phones to set reminders
 Rest	• Provide moments of quiet at different times of the lesson or day. • Allow students to work on their own • Dim classroom lights

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 **Proximity**	**Get to Know You Jenga** Getting to know the student and their personal interests helps the student to feel that they belong and are connected. Using a game such as "Get to Know You Jenga" is one way of doing this. See the Resources section for ACF's Get to Know You Jenga" activity sheet. Develop a summary profile of the student so everyone is aware of the student's triggers. **Self-awareness** Promote self-awareness by having students review a feelings chart and share how they are feeling. To help them communicate their feelings, encourage the use of a scale, such as, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how bored are you feeling?" or "Are you feeling a little lonely, somewhat lonely, or very lonely?"
 **Attunement**	**2×10 strategy** Spend two minutes per day for 10 days in a row talking with an at-risk student about anything they want to talk about. The strategy researched by Raymond Wlodkowski, is designed to build rapport and relationship between teacher and student, and lets the young person see that you genuinely care about them as a person. https://www.raymondwlodkowski.com/ **Connection to others** Understanding the motivations of others can be challenging, particularly when people are driven by different perspectives. Encourage students to identify their hypotheses about others' motivations and then consider alternatives. *"Why do you think she bumped into you? Can you think of another explanation?"* Young people who are not used to this kind of thinking may need you to model the process: *"Could it be that she didn't see you?"* Validation
 **Synchronise**	**Self-Talk** Self-talk is a powerful way to bring thoughts and actions into consciousness. Examples include having students talk themselves through the steps of a difficult activity or periodically pausing for a mental play-by-play narrative of what is happening. When occasions arise that provoke strong negative emotions or feelings of failure, self-talk can help adolescents identify potentially problematic thinking and behaviour patterns. **4321** This is a structured question and response check-in tool used at the beginning of a class or end of day activity: 4 things that happened to me today (activities, happenings, events) 3 feelings felt (& context) 2 things I learnt or want to learn more about 1 value or gratitude

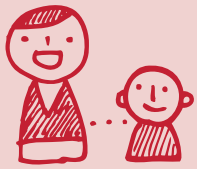
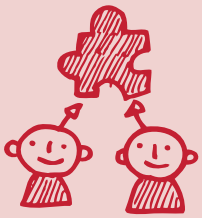
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
Skills	Self-regulation is necessary in any goal directed activity. Identifying goals, planning, monitoring progress, and adjusting behaviour are important skills to practice. **Doodling** Allow students time to just doodle. If you want to connect it to learnings, give them the chance to doodle what they just learned. (Research shows that doodling embeds learning.) **Mind Mapping** Mind Mapping is a way of embedding learning through creating diagrams of key concepts using a doodling style.
Novelty	Writing a personal journal can foster self-reflection by providing students a means with which to explore thoughts, feelings, actions, beliefs, and decisions. There are many ways to approach journaling, but all encourage self-awareness, reflection, and planning extension.missouri.edu/p/GH6150
Play	**Balance a piece of paper on head without holding it, walk keeping it on head, speed up as fast as possible while keeping the paper on the head. Can use as a race too – forces slow but steady movement and elongated spine, which is great when a student is feeling flat** 

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Play	**Left hand, right foot challenge** This is a great playful activity that integrates both the left and right hemispheres, as well as engaging the Medial Prefrontal Cortex, which assists in regulation, and improves focus. **Left hand, right foot, right hand left foot challenge** This fun activity involves crossing the midline but also uses balance and repetition, as well as attunement and connection In pairs invite participants to do the following pattern **Left hand** (touch on or near each other's left palms together) **Right foot** (touch right toes together) **Right hand** (touch on or near each other's right palms together) **Left foot** (touch left toes together) At first participants may struggle with this. Invite them to keep repeating until it becomes more familiar. Invite them to both say the words, "left hand, right foot, right hand, left foot" as they do this. Challenge them to even try a melodic/sing song voice as they do. Do they notice a change in their ability to focus and achieve the activity? Then invite participants to attune in and connect to each other, by focusing on each other's faces, not their hands and feet. Do they notice a change in their ability to focus and being able to do this activity? **Song Art** Play a song and have students draw/doodle/scribble what they envision the song to look like. When finished, students can share and give their art a name.

Applying the SMART Circle of PRACTICE to the whole of school

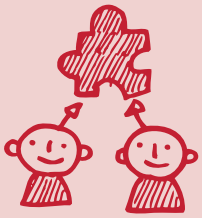
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Touch	• Give high fives when students have achieved their goals • Use wall planks or push up as well partner hand planks as brain breaks
 Body	**Dim Lights** Turn off classroom lights as classroom teachers report this helps with afternoon regulation. **Declutter classrooms** Check if your classrooms are visually clear, no complexity, available distance viewing either through windows or poster, correct lighting and visual fields, environmental light can used as visual cues, brightness = activity; lowered light + concentration and lower energy time. **Resourcing** Find resources and ideas to develop and build a trauma informed activities resource library and individual toolkit of ideas, resources, and capacities to support your leadership in Trauma-Aware education. **Incorporate stretching into brain breaks – Try Seated Yoga www.darebee.com**
 Breath	Select one or two breath activities that your class can do as a transition activity – Try the Adolescent Breathing activities mentioned in this booklet.
 Rhythm	Create rhythm in the day – same greetings each morning, and check outs at the end of lesson or day Have visuals of lesson plan in each classroom

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Routine	**Visuals** **Ensure timetables and events are clearly visible around the site and in classrooms** **Support students to use their diaries and devices to schedule their day/week** Daily announcements of special things happening that day visible on TV in each room (this also avoids PA announcements and keeps rooms quieter and calmer) **Changing Time** Trial structuring timetables that might be beneficial, instead of traditional scenarios with rigid schedules. Teachers might look at immersion in one subject at a time. Time lost moving students around the school might be minimized by using technology.
 Rest	**Whole of school design** You may have a demonstrated need for a redesign and restructure of the whole of school. Think: comfortable semi-private spaces for the students to study, how do you create spaces that enable students to be more engaged and move more fluidly between and in the classroom space. (Engage the students in designing spaces that more effectively shape their learning experience with restful peaceful spaces). Develop nature spaces for students to rest and relax. Provide a calming room / safe spot e.g., library or gym always open at lunch every day of the week for students to utilise **Classroom design** Ask your students what would make them comfortable in the classroom. Talk and discuss with your students directly to figure out the best design for their environment. Commit to redesigning your classroom to better address the needs and desires of your students. 

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Proximity	Choice of teacher to spend the day with if relief teacher on a particular class. Consider where students are seated in the classroom.
 Attunement	Values and behavioural expectations revised at the start of each term by all teachers. Student posters around school e.g., of what it looks like, sounds like, feels like. Counsellors/Year coordinators timetables displayed on door showing availability. Invitation for student to leave a note Home groups / pastoral care group at the start of each day with the same teacher.
 Synchronise	Having music at recess and lunch five minutes before the bell goes so students and staff have time to prepare for returning to classrooms. Flowchart so students and staff know what the routines are for acknowledgements/rewards, consequences. Seating plans so students know where to sit in each classroom, on bus, in assembly.
 Skills	Ensure there are Lunch Clubs available each day e.g., table tennis, cards, magazine, dance. Clubs not only provided a basis for development of the skills of the activity, but also provide important social skill opportunities. Support and encourage students to play a musical instrument or a sport. Playing an instrument or sport can help build fine motor skills. Playing as part of a group or team also helps build social skills through attunement, proximity, and synchronisation.
 Novelty	Consider how lessons are taught. Can an element of novelty be added to keep lessons interesting and engaging. Schools do this well anyway, but a review of this may be helpful.
 Play	Reflect on how play and playfulness can be added into the school day, both in classroom and the yard. Allow moments in each class for students to “play” … Laughter is the best medicine, it’s said, so how can you also incorporate moments of laughter as well.

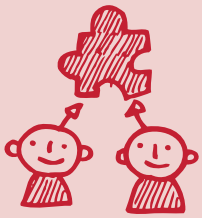
Applying the SMART Circle of PRACTICE to selected subject areas

STEM (Science, Technology, Maths)	
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	**Activity Ideas**
 **Touch**	Provide and explore different tactile materials and rate them - Warm water, hot water, cold water and explore their properties. - Slime, sanding paper, textiles Make slime Touch creatures, frogs, spiders, butterflies Classic games like chess, as well as computer-based training programs like Cogmed and Lumosity, exercise aspects of working memory, planning, and attention. https://www.lumosity.com/en/ and https://www.cogmed.com/
 **Body**	Explore heart beats, breaths per minute Teach neurophysiology of Flight/Flight/Active Freeze/Submit
 **Breath**	• Measure breaths. • Measure volume of air exhaled. • Measure expansion of stomach with breaths and compare.
 **Rhythm**	• Desktop drumming • Check out these great Youtube clips for ideas: - Cup Song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5kYLOb6i5I - Desktop Drumming: https://youtu.be/2-MpzjxEVBU - Hand Clapping Games: https://professionals.childhood.org.au/resources/

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Routine	There is a lot of predictable outcomes in STEM subjects. Explore with students about how this makes people feel. Predictability and routine make us feel safe and sure.
 Rest	• Explore light and sleep research • Explore physics of movement and rest • Measure body systems at rest and active graph the findings
 Proximity	**Doodling** Allow students time to just doodle. If you want to connect it to learnings, give them the chance to doodle what they just learned. (Research shows that doodling embeds learning)
 Attunement	**Classroom Partner** Allocate or ask students to select a classroom partner, someone they do not know well. Then during curriculum discussions stop on occasion to give these pairs time to work together and develop a response together. Then call on them to share their ideas as a team. This can be alternated across weeks and terms, subjects.
 Synchronise	**Weather check in** Check in with your feelings. Are you happy? Bored? Now compare your feelings to a weather report link to understanding the science of weather reporting. Do you feel cloudy or sunny? Are you warm or cold? Check back in every morning for a new weather report! **Circle Time Check in** Invite students to check in during a morning Circle Time rating how they are travelling using, for example, the Zones of Regulation.

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Skills	**Understanding your brain YouTube Tuesday** Every Tuesday choose a YouTube on neuroscience or brain development to play to your class. Lots of cartoons, science, and neuroscience. Think Dan Siegel, Bruce Perry, Harvard Centre for Child Development and NICAHMB. **Psychoeducation Infographics** Discover posters and infographics on a range of sites and place in classroom or create discussions around the information utilising current curriculum, i.e., English. Arts, STEM. These are available on ACF website, Blue Knot, NICABM- https://www.nicabm.com/ **LEGO** LEGO may be thought of as a toy for younger kids, but there are advanced kits with thousands of pieces that may interest adolescents (and adults). LEGO also has a robotic product that combines bricks with motors and sensors, so young people can build creations that can be programmed to move.
 Novelty	**Building hemispheric integration** **Finger snap/eye wink:** Wink with one eye and snap with your fingers on the opposite hand. Then swap. **Pinkie swap:** Have students hold up their little finger on one hand and create an L with their index finger and thumb on the other hand. Have them continue to switch simultaneously. **Ear /nose swap:** Get students to grasp their left ear with their right hand and grasp their nose with their left hand. Then quickly swap.
 Play	• Get students to create a booklet of activities and strategies based on what they have discovered works for them. • Utilise smart watches, fit bits to understand what is happening in their body, and especially their heartrate. Get them to monitor this. They can also monitor their sleep as well. • Plan for problems that need to be solved and allow students to solve them .. in playful ways or use playful design tools. • E.g., Using Charlotte's Web, the students attempt to solve Farmer Zuckerman's urgent problem – all the bugs were eating the apples in his orchard. This can facilitate all sorts of questions and ideas about the natural world, ecosystems, and growing food. **Revisioning** Randomly gather objects from household, junk, garage, and place in a bag. Ask students to take an object from the bag. They then must come up with a new use/purpose for that object.

Wellbeing Subjects (PE, Health, Psychology)	
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	**Activity Ideas**
 Touch	**Barefoot learning** Barefoot learning spaces. In Scandinavia and other countries children often learn with shoes off, perhaps because it reminds them of home and creates a relaxed learning environment. (Heppell S. 2021)
 Body	**Building Praxis skills** **Wheelbarrow walking:** For upper body strength. **Unstable surfaces:** Walking/climbing over unstable surfaces (e.g., large pillows) as it requires a lot of effort and increases overall body strength. **Catching and balancing:** Standing with one foot on a ball while catching another ball (encourages balance while practicing catching and throwing). **Small parts of activities:** Practice doing a small part of a task at a time as it is easier to learn new skills in smaller sections.
 Breath	Either teach or encourage students to do their own research about the different types of breathing strategies they might use, as well as the benefits of breathing. Can this be a project they could work on as a group, and create a document for the whole school?
 Rhythm & Routine	**Routines** Break routines into tasks and small steps and use you can use an egg timer for them to complete the small steps. Create repetition in classroom, same activity every morning-catch up circle, music, and drumming. This assists with their struggle with multi-step tasks and remembering directions.
 Rest	**Design and development** Involve students in the Design and development of quiet and escape spaces both in within a classroom, as well as in designated areas at school. - What could be included in these zones? - Hanging chairs, cushions, beanbags. All these furniture options provide a sense of containment and regulation.

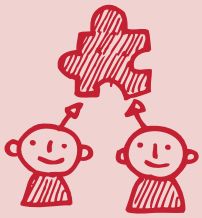
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Proximity	**Energizers** Students take time to reflect on how they learn and what motivates them to learn. To get this started, ask students to think of those things they enjoy doing the most. Then list those things that energize them to participate, work with others, listen and get to know other students and to learn. **Stop Doing List** Students frequently need to work on time management issues. One exercise that often helps is to have students create a Stop Doing list. These are things that should be changed to free up more time and energy. In small groups, students may want to exchange things they are either reducing or cutting out entirely.
 Attunement	**Classroom connection rituals** Create, and utilize, relational rituals prior to moving into learning with students. Students and teacher can share one tough moment, one hopeful moment, or one new lesson they learned about themselves during their morning. Participating in these rituals can help educators build and maintain connection with the students.
 Synchronise	**Classroom Norms** Ask students the following question: **In a perfect classroom, how would students treat each other?** List their responses as classroom norms or rules for the group. Transition supports: – pre-warn about change using a timer; use transition cues like music or hand signals; visual cues; implement transition activities such as stop get ready and go- red lights, orange green or use transition reminders (something to carry to remind them where going can be a visual or object or sensory tool).

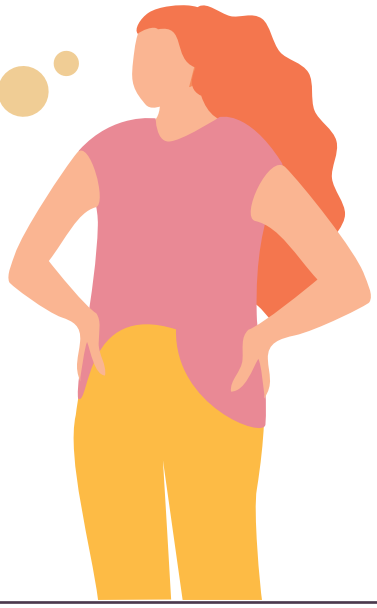
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Skills	**Self-Talk** Encourage self-talk that focuses on growth. Help students recognize that an experience—particularly a failure—can offer lessons and need not be interpreted as a final judgment on one's abilities. For example, when a team loses a game, help a discouraged team member to consider what went wrong and what he or she might do to improve next time—rather than simply deciding the team lacks any skills. The same thinking can be helpful for school assignments. **Gratitude** Have students complete a written appreciation card or gratitude circle. Encourage students to write one thing they appreciate about classmates. Add your own, and then give each student the appreciations written about them. You may even like to keep a class/home group Gratitude Jar.
 Novelty	**Observe and describe success** Be curious and provide mindful support for new behaviours and actions
 Play	Provide opportunities for sensory based activities to promote regulation of arousal level, attention, and emotion Utilise smart watches, fit bits to understand what is happening in their body, and especially their heartrate. Get them to monitor this. They can also monitor their sleep as well.

Humanities (HASS) Subjects (English, History, Geography, Economics, Languages)

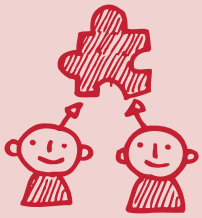
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Touch	How can you include sensory touch elements into these lessons? Bring in items for your subject areas that students can touch and feel and explore…. i.e., in History, it may be an old piece of clothing or tool, in Geography, maybe paper maps or a globe of the world.
 Body	Write a list of sensations onto the board as warm, hot, sweaty, twitchy, soft, butterfly feeling, goose-bumpy, tired, prickly, jittery, weak, empty, calm, etc. Have students identify where they feel that sensation in their body. Invite students to think in their head, then discuss with a partner, or draw a stick person and label where they feel the sensations. Invite students to write a creative piece about how they are feeling using sensation words. Check out Lori Desautels TED Talk below or her webpage: https://www.ted.com/talks/lori_desautels_survival_abc_school_sensations_and_emotions_cognition https://revelationsineducation.com/addressing-adversity-through-sensations-emotions-art-movement-and-breath-dr-lori-desautels-college-of-education-butler-university/?v=4096ee8eef7d
 Breath	**Breathing** "When you control breathing, the Vagus nerve links it to everything else! You have sensors in your lungs that when you slow your breathing, it slows your heart! When you speed your breathing, it speeds your heart. - ALL OF THESE ORGANS ARE CONNECTED!" Stephen Porges.  **Paper football breathing** Get students to make a paper football. Have students use their breath to move the football down the field to a goal end. You can have students play against each other or alone at their desk, adding up their goals. **Follow the sign breathing** Hold up your thumb about 10 inches from your face. Create an infinity sign in the air with your thumb slowly. Follow your thumb with your eyes while taking deep breaths.

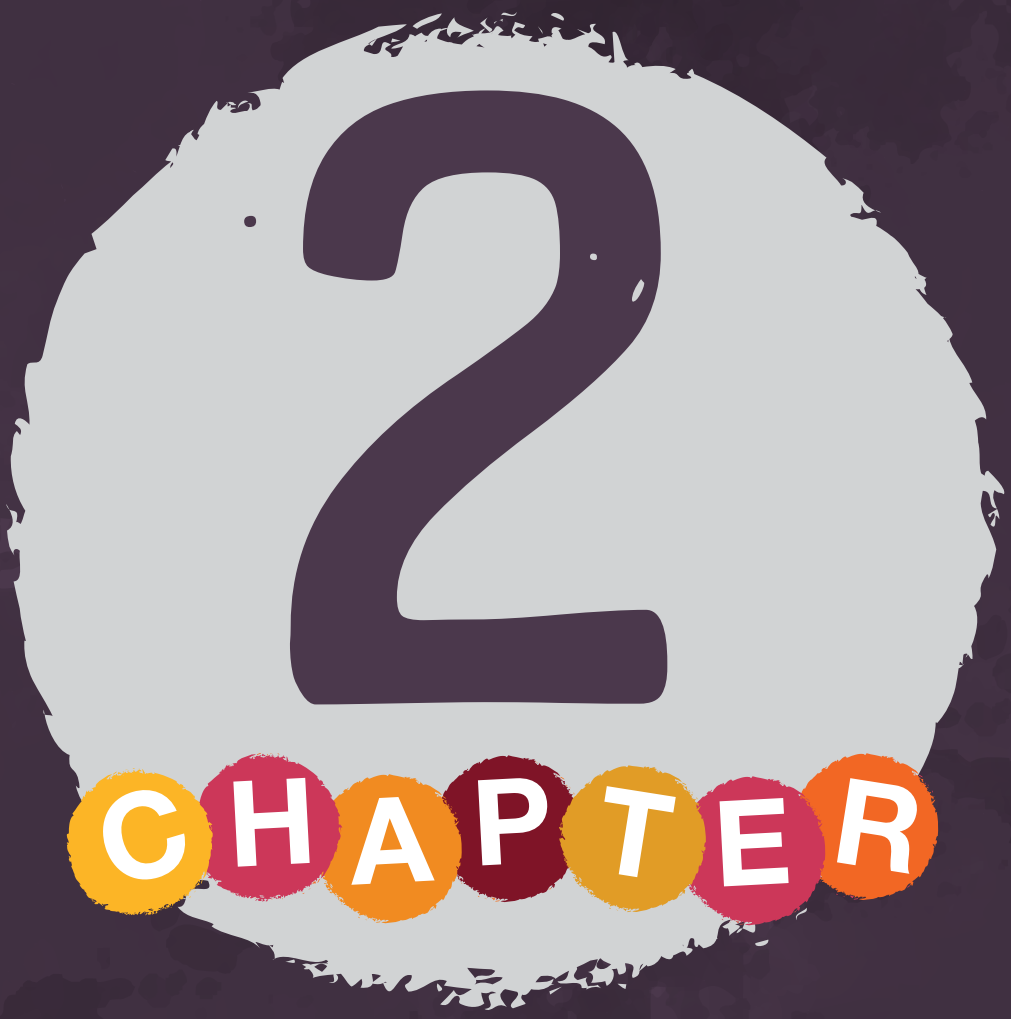
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Rhythm	**Syllables/Vocabulary/Movement** Students put the same number of body parts on the floor or desk as the number of syllables in a word (watermelon - 4 parts on the desk). Think of an action for each syllable and do it as you say the word. The action may be the same for each syllable or different: *wa ter mel on,* *jump-jump-jump-jump* *wa ter mel on* *jump-turn-punch-stamp* This activity embeds learning using rhythm.
 Routine	Invite students to design lesson plans alongside of you and ask them to create visuals for each class.
 Rest	Allow discussion and quiet reflective time and develop applied attention to quiet time. Encourage time away from devices to read or research using books. Perhaps have students read about the “7 Types of Rest” for ideas. One of the types of rest we need is sensory rest. So having a break from screens and devices is sensory rest. https://ideas.ted.com/the-7-types-of-rest-that-every-person-needs/

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Proximity	**Musical Bites** Play five different musical clips to represent different class for example, music that portrays a class that is quiet, stormy, indifferent, excitable, divided, aggressive, disjointed, connected or fun. List the musical titles and play the clips. Ask students to explain to the group which musical piece best fits their class and why. This should open some enjoyable discussion about classroom tone and behaviour. A variation of this is to present five different current movies and titles and get them to choose one that fits their classroom and why.
 Attunement	**Classroom connection rituals** Create, and utilize, relational rituals prior to moving into learning with students. Students and teacher can share one tough moment, one hopeful moment, or one new lesson they learned about themselves during their morning. Participating in these rituals can help educators build and maintain connection with the students.
 Synchronise	**Stand by your Quote** Find and place psychoeducation learning pictures, information and/or quotes on the walls. Make sure that the quotes touch on different areas of the brain relevant to the curriculum you are responsible for. Maths: Complex problems build cortex. PE: Balance and exercise build cerebellum.
 Skills	**Memory development** Play the game MEMORY. Shuffle the cards. Place them face down on the table in 4 rows of 6 (i.e., 6 cards across and 4 cards down). 2. Take it in turns to turn over 2 cards. Say the name of each card as you turn it over. If the cards rhyme (Have the same ending), the person gets to keep the pair and gets another turn. 3. If the cards are different, they are turned back over, and the next person has a turn. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end. Conversations in any language besides English are also helpful. It has been found that bilingual students of all ages have better executive function skills than monolingual children, so experience using an additional language is an important skill.

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
Novelty	**Completing the story** **This morning I got up and took the dog for a walk, and I saw:** Participants weave a story together with each person taking turns to add a sentence or word at a time, beginning each subsequent sentence with a specific phrase that helps to build the story. The resulting narrative is always unexpected and completely funny." – Builds memory, self- expression, and storytelling skills.
Play	**Provide art and symbolic play materials** Take issues, dilemmas from books and story such as Charlotte's Web the students then solve issues such as Farmer Zuckerman's urgent problem – all the bugs were eating the apples in his orchard. This can provide discussion, questions and ideas about the natural world, ecosystems, and growing food. Think and plan for fun the curriculum, role plays for history, acting out scenarios, dressing up, hats, fictitious travel to the country for language development, they have to book and buy tickets 

The Arts Subjects (Music, Art, Drama, Design & Technology)	
SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	**Activity Ideas**
 Touch	• Use tactile materials to create art, make music
 Body	• Reflect on your body movements as you position yourself through drama/ role play characters
 Breath	• Harmonise- sing as a choir or match the tunes of your instruments with the sound of your voice **Colour Breathing** Get students to breathe in their favourite colour. Then breathe out a worry/ concern/thought.
 Rhythm	• Create artwork as students listen to different music genres. Reflect on the mood/tones for the students at work. Is there connection from their creation to their felt sense whilst they create their artwork?
 Rest	• Ensure noise levels are at lower levels across the class • Talk about the importance of rests in music. What do they provide? Discuss what rest offers the body and brain.

SMART Circle of PRACTICE element	Activity Ideas
 Proximity	• Use movement activities to connect and explore. • Listen and move to music to explore closeness and distance. What does each of these feel like for the student. Does it create a sense of calm and connected or distance and disconnection?
 Attunement	• Singing in parts and rounds, is also a fun challenge, requiring a coordination of working memory, monitoring, and selective attention. As their musical skills grow, you can present them with steadily increasing challenges. • Dancing provides many opportunities to develop attention, self-monitoring, and working memory, as students can choregraph their own moves and dancers must hold choreography in mind while coordinating their movements with the music. NITV has great YouTube clips on Dance moves
 Synchronise	• Play mirroring game – match body movements • Role play scenarios to teach regulation.
 Skills	• Music — Working memory, selective attention, cognitive flexibility, and inhibition are challenged while developing skills in playing a musical instrument, singing, or dancing—
 Novelty	• Computer games can also be valuable if time limits are established and observed. Games that require constant monitoring of the envi-ronment and fast reaction times challenge selective attention, moni-toring, and inhibition. Moving through complicated imaginary worlds, such as those found in many computer games, also challenges work-ing memory
 Play	**Oms and Hums** Have a student hum a musical note. Have other students match the pitch they are making while feeling the vibrations on their vocal cords. You can do the same with Oms. • Finger painting or using other art or drama mediums is a regulating activity for all ages. Try dancing or moving to music



Working with the Window of Tolerance and Understanding Behaviour

Working with the Window of Tolerance

SMART PRACTICE focus: all elements

Discussion Paper 15:
Working with the window of tolerance in the classroom

Discussion Paper 18:
Polyvagal Theory and its implications for traumatised students

Strategies - MOBILISED responses – Fight

- Stabilize their hyper-aroused nervous system
- Use rhythmic, containing and grounding activities
- Use co-regulating movements - hang, swing, climb
- Use large movements to move energy - stomp, jump on the spot, drum

Strategies – MOBILISED responses - Flight

- Be kind & patient when "finding" young people who have "flown" or left the room
- Help them to settle their body
- Encourage them to carry something heavy – see "Brainstem strategies

Strategies – MOBILISED responses - Freeze

- Be curious about the freeze state- are there any places that are less frozen
- Gently facilitate movement e.g., Move one finger or toes, blink,
- Encourage breathing or use breath-based activities
- Help them to engage their senses – see "Diencephalon" strategies

Strategies – MOBILISED responses - Feign/Flop

- Orient to the space/grounding exercises
- Orient the senses – see activities on next pages
- Alignment - engaging the spine – see activities on next pages

Strategies remaining in the Window of Tolerance - Use of self

Creating safety – supporting the social engagement system	
 Environment	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 seems safe for one person may not be for another.
 Proximity	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.
 Eye contact	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. Chatting while driving along in the car, creating art or shooting 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.
 Facial expressions	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 cards/games that match faces to feelings.
 Tone of voice	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.
 Posture and gestures	Consider your posture and gestures. How you approach the child will determine how safe or unsafe they may feel. If your posture is puffed 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 the 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 (whilst 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.

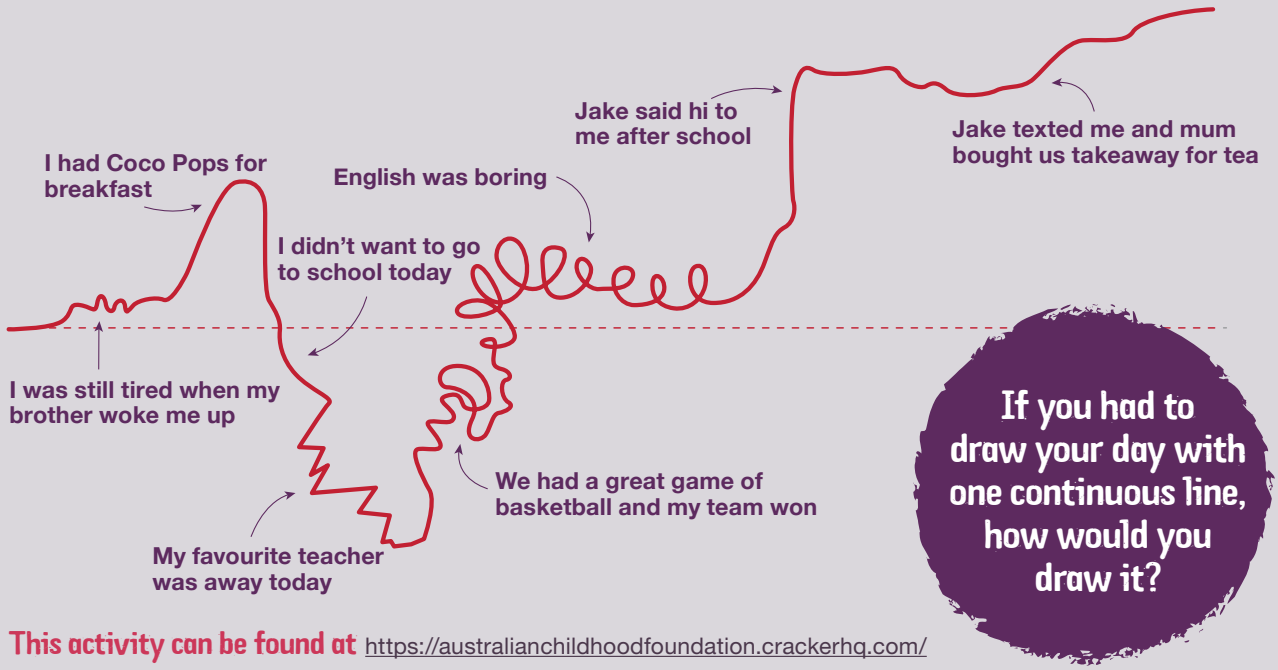
Arousal & Regulation - Strategies and Activities

Line of My Day Activity

Using the document "Tracking your student's Own Window of Tolerance" (in the Handouts section), track the movement in and outside of the Window of Tolerance over your chosen time frame.

The purpose of the activity is for the young person to gain an understanding of how they are throughout their day and to anticipate when they may be feeling, say, more anxious or worried or excited. This can then assist to help both the adult and young person to know what they need the most at that time.

This activity can also be used by the young person to connect the course of the day, link emotional responses and look for patterns of their experience. Are they able to identify when they are more dysregulated? Is it during a certain lesson, or before, during or after recess or lunch?



This activity can be found at https://australianchildhoodfoundation.crackerhq.com/pvl/9b20e31a6fa3c43f414af2fcb00f1a52/share/v1/1aaffc3d-7c3c-4df1-993f-50c0d5062a16

Activity – to do with the young person.

- Draw the young person's arousal profile over time, onto the WOT.
- Circle each point where they moved out of their WOT.
- Note what they showed in body and behaviour.
- List 3 possible triggers.
- Circle each point where they returned to their WOT.
- List 3 things which might've helped them return to their WOT.

Reflection Questions

- What do you/they notice?
- When were they more hyper or hypo-aroused?
- How much time did they spend in their WOT?
- What helped them to feel more regulated or to move back in to their WOT?

Engaging the Senses Activities

Engage the senses

Discuss with the young person what are their sensory soothers (ones which calm) and their sensory alerters? (ones "wake them up") or "regulators" (ones that keep them calm).

Ask the young person…. ***"does this make you sleepy or awake or feel good?"***

Encourage them to identify what is a regulator, soother or an alerter for them? They can then build their own toolkit of resources either at school or home to assist them to down or up regulate or to stay within their own Window of Tolerance.

For example, splashing their face with cool water, or having a drink of cool water may be an "alerter", as can having regular movement or "brain breaks".

Having access to various seating options in the classroom may be a "regulator".

Having moments of quiet, listen to relaxing music or reading may be a "soother".

My Sensory Hand Activity

Trace your hand on a piece of paper and label each finger with each of the five senses.

Alternatives – use face paints to write the senses at the base of your non-dominant hand's fingers or use a per cut out hand shape or plastic/rubber glove to write the sense on

Think of your favourite thing/s associated with each of the senses ie taste – chocolate, smell – flowers/flower shop

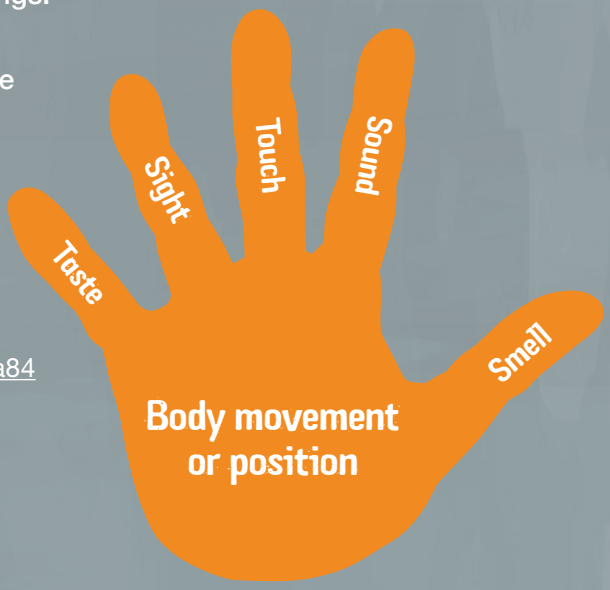
Write or draw a symbol of your favourite thing associated with each sense in the associated finger or about the finger

Alternative – paint a symbol or colour on each fingernail to remind the child of their favourite things associated with their senses.

Make copies of the drawings so they can be easily accessed.

Encourage the child to look at their real hand and remind themselves of their favourite things. Practice accessing their favourite things.

Encourage the child to think about their 5 Senses Hand when/if they begin feeling like they are drifting off or becoming activated. Explore with them if getting in touch with some senses are easier than others.



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Notice and name

Explore together with the young person

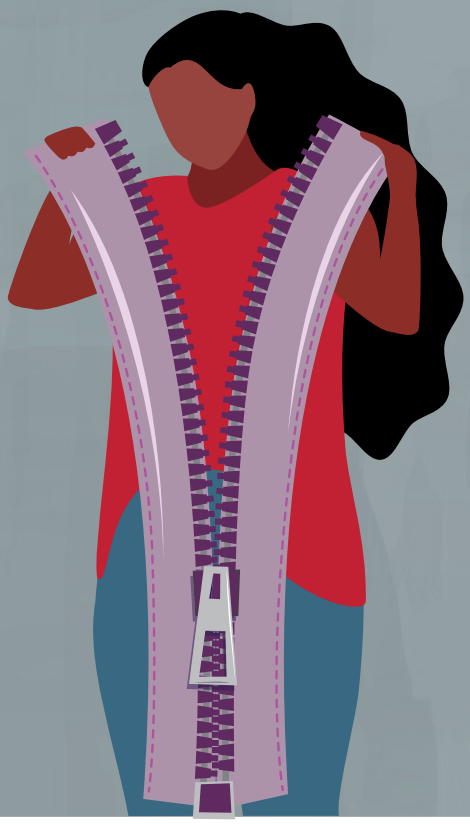
- 3 things you can hear
- 5 things you can see
- 2 things you can smell
- 4 things you can touch/feel/sense
- 1 thing you can taste

Aligning the spine

Our midline extends down our spine and when it is aligned there is no collapse or compression of the spine. Under stress it is hard to maintain spinal alignment. Think, too, about seating options for students. Movement breaks help.

Aligning the Spine Activities

- Yoga poses
- Chair yoga
- Wall squats
- Wall Planks
- Stretches
- Balancing a book on the head



Zipper Upper

Pretend to "zip" yourself up....

Starting at your feet pretend you have a "zip" at the bottom, then moving slowly upwards "zip" yourself up until you reach over your head

Repeat 5 times.

Notice how your body feels.

Invite the student to use an actual zipper on a jacket to visualise this further.

Grounding Activities

Purpose: focused activities to support regulation and calm

Engages: brainstem, cerebellum, limbic area, cortex, medial pre-frontal cortex, stimulates the Vagus Nerve

Suitable for: individuals and pairs (coregulation)

What is grounding?

Grounding exercises encourage students to focus on the things around them, rather than on the thoughts and feelings that are distressing them.

After a traumatic, frightening or upsetting experience, **a grounding exercise may help a young person to experience calm.**

Grounding exercises can help adults too, so you could do a grounding exercise together with your students

Grounding exercises are a type of mindfulness activity. For further information check out: https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/activity-guides/wellbeing/grounding-calming-exercise-children-teenagers

Key points

- **Grounding exercises can help young people to regulate and experience calm.**
- **In a grounding exercise, young people breathe deeply and focus on things around them.**
- **Young people can do grounding exercises anywhere.**

Grounding Activities

- Name objects in the room out loud
- Open a window or door to let in fresh air
- Encourage the child to look up and out rather than down
- Move outside if you're inside and in-side if you're outside
- Hang an interesting object at height in the space
- Ask she/he the time
- Encourage students to take their shoes off and feel their feet on the floor
- Offer the student a cold drink
- Ask student to point to a particular item – something green, something square
- See – diencephalon for more strategies
- Tree Roots Grounding activity (see page 48)

Tree Roots Grounding activity

1. Find a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes or look downward and turn your attention to your tailbone at base of your spine.
3. Imagine that from the base of your spine you are a tree connected into the earth with roots growing very, very deeply into the ground.
4. Feel your roots held strongly in the soil connecting down from your tailbone into the deep center of the earth.
5. Feel how deep your roots grow.
6. As you are imagining your deep, deep roots, take a few slow, deep breaths. Breathe slowly in then pause, then out and pause.
7. Now that your roots are deeply planted, pay attention to your body that is the trunk of the tree. Does it feel strong and solid? What happens if you imagine some wind right now? When the wind comes, does your body feel strong? If you feel like the wind can still push your body around, then add a bigger root system. Imagine that you have heaps and heaps of roots holding you firming to the ground. You might even grow kilometers into the earth. Feel how great it is to be strongly connected to the earth, how strong your body feels. Let's stay with that for a while.
8. Now let's take three more breaths before coming back into the room

Deep Breathing for Adolescents

Purpose: a breath-based activity to support regulation and calm

Engages: brainstem, cerebellum, limbic area, cortex, medial pre-frontal cortex, stimulates the Vagus Nerve

Suitable for: individuals and pairs (coregulation)

Breathing Exercise

Ask the young person to sit comfortably in a chair or on the floor

Guide the young person through the exercise

1. Put one hand on your abdomen (stomach area)
2. Concentrate on taking deep slow breaths – best to breath in through your nose and out through your mouth
3. Feel your abdomen going in and out as you breathe
4. Try counting for the young person as they breath
5. Encourage them to repeat a word to them self each time they breathe – like “strong”, “calm” or “relax”

Repeat 5 times

Regulation Activities Hand

Purpose: to aid in regulation, calming and energizing, integration of brain and body

Suitable for: young people to do individually or in groups – whole of class

This activity can be done by individuals and is a way to remember 5 different things we can all do when feeling dysregulated. Dysregulation may look different for each of us – we may feel worried or jumpy, or unsure what to do next. It may be that we feel unmotivated or tired and exhausted. These activities can aid in helping us to feel regulated and connected with our bodiesand helps us to be grounded and in the moment.

1. Trace your hand on a piece of paper or write on a ready cut out hand shape.
2. Label each finger with the following areas for regulation and calming or energising: Connection, Containment, Movement, Breath, Gratitude
3. In the middle of the palm write the word "fun and laughter"
4. Think of your favourite thing/s associated with each of the areas that helps you

Connection – talk to a friend, educator or Support person, call or text a friend or family member

Comfort (Containment & Deep pressure) – wrap yourself in your favourite blanket, wear your favourite and comfortable clothes, have a warm drink, do some stretches, a plank or a wall squat

Movement – go for a walk or jog, dance, play a favourite sport activity with a friend,

Breath – practice mindful breathing, noticing how your body feels with different lengths and widths of breath

Thankfulness/Gratitude – name 10 things you are thankful for, keep a Gratitude Jar in your class, write these down in your diary, share these with others

Fun and laughter – include activities that are fun and make you laugh. Laughing helps release endorphins and dopamine, which are great antidotes for the adrenaline and stress hormone cortisol that is released.

Write or draw a symbol of your favourite thing associated with each sense in the associated finger or about the finger

Encourage yourself to look at your real hand and remind yourself of the things that help you to connect to yourself and others.

Understanding behaviour: understanding the triggers

SMART PRACTICE focus: Translating and Engaging

Discussion Paper 1:
Responding to children who have experienced abuse related trauma – Ideas for school-based treatment

Keeping a Trigger/Dysregulation Diary

This is a great tool for educators to use. You could either keep a notebook/section in a notebook for each young person.

Reflective questions:

What are some triggers/dysregulators in your environment? Noise? Bright lights? Swaying object? transitions?

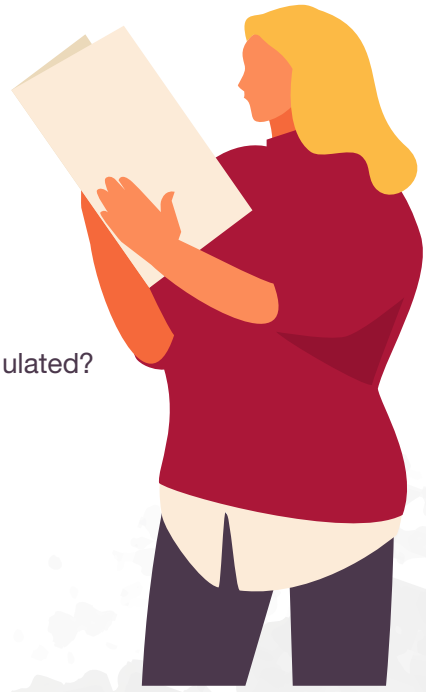
When do you notice they have been triggered/ become dysregulated?

What kinds of things trigger/dysregulate the young person?

What happened after they got triggered/dysregulated??

- What I/they thought
- What I/they felt
- What I/they did
- How I/they know I've /they've been triggered/dysregulated

What I/the young person could do so that I/they won't get triggered/dysregulated?



Trigger Grid

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/app/uploads/2019/11/Trigger-Grid-Briere-and-Lanktree-2011.pdf (Based on: Briere & Lanktree (2011))

The Tree Case Study

Use the example in this book to identify either yourself or with your young person about what are the behaviours “seen”.

Explore with a colleague/student about possible “feelings” and “needs” underneath the behaviour.

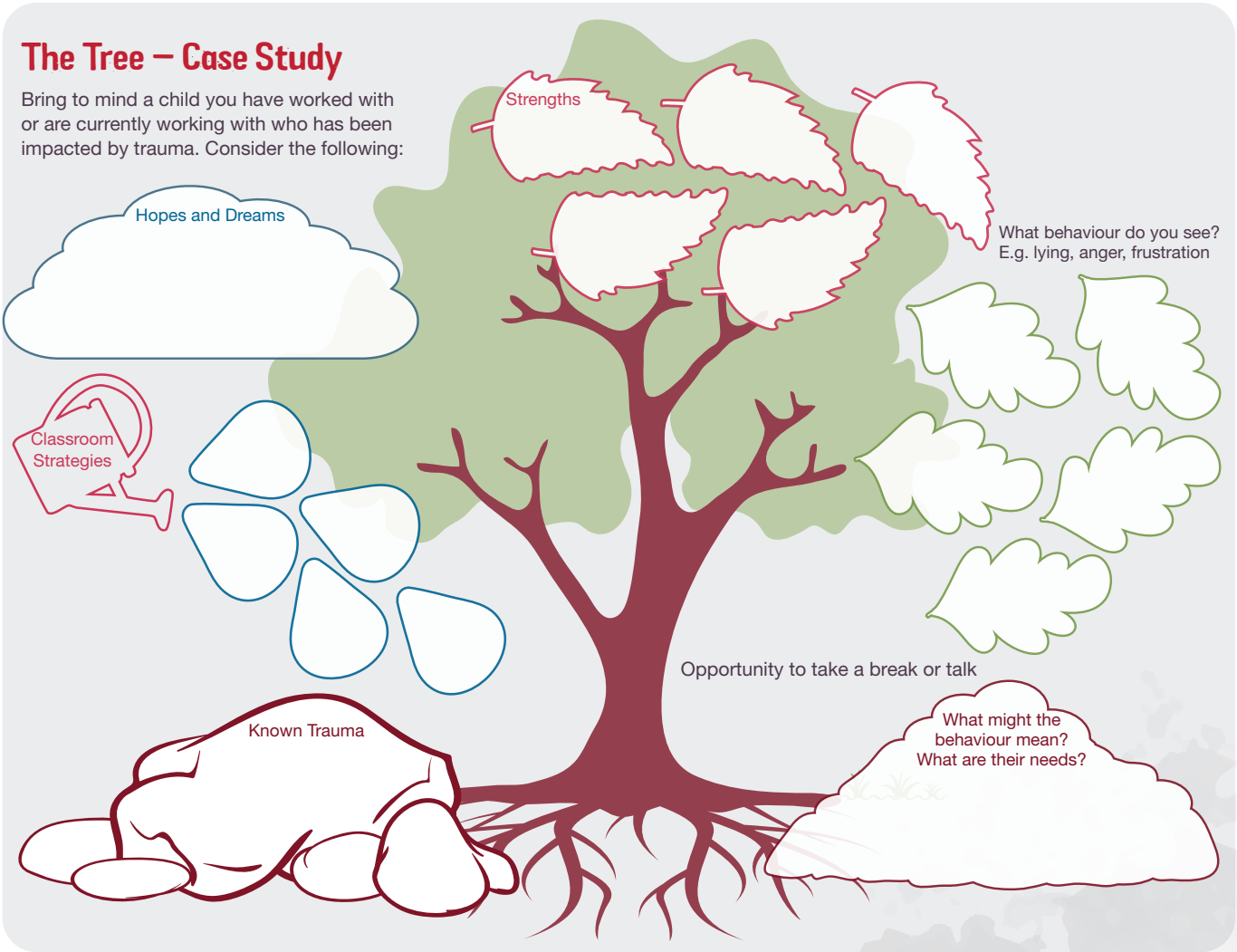
Reflective questions:

What is this behaviour telling me about the young person?

What is/are the feeling/s associated with this behaviour?

What does the young person need the most to feel safe and connected?

Example



The Shield of Shame

Activity – as per class discussion

Reflect on each one of the Shield of Shame aspects.

- **Blame**
- **Deny**
- **Minimise**
- **Rage**

How does your young person present when they feel a sense of shame? What have you heard them say for each of these aspects?

Using the Shield template in this booklet, think about each of these aspects and come up with two or three phrases for each one.

See the example below for some starting ideas.

The Shield of Shame

Blame
"It was his fault!"

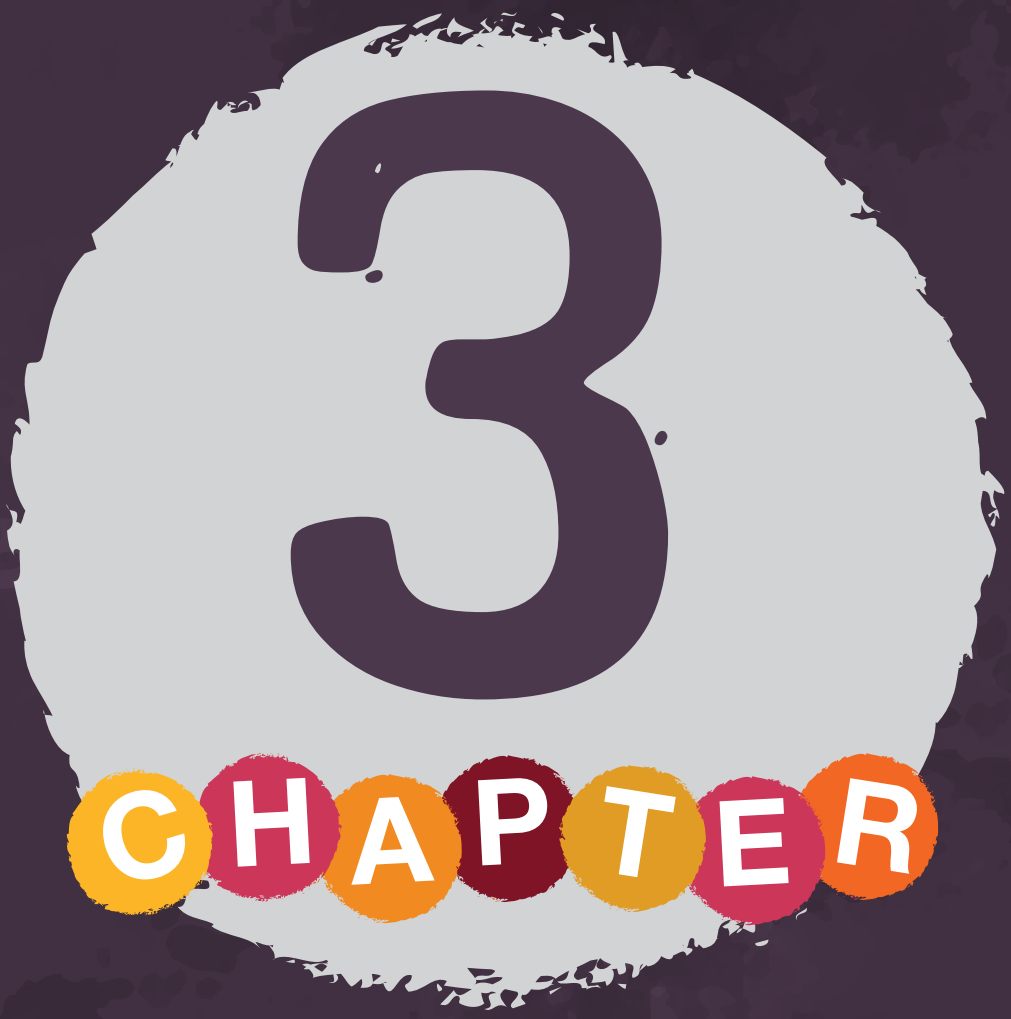
Deny
"I never did anything!"

Minimise
"He wasn't really hurt"

Rage
"You always blame me for everything!"

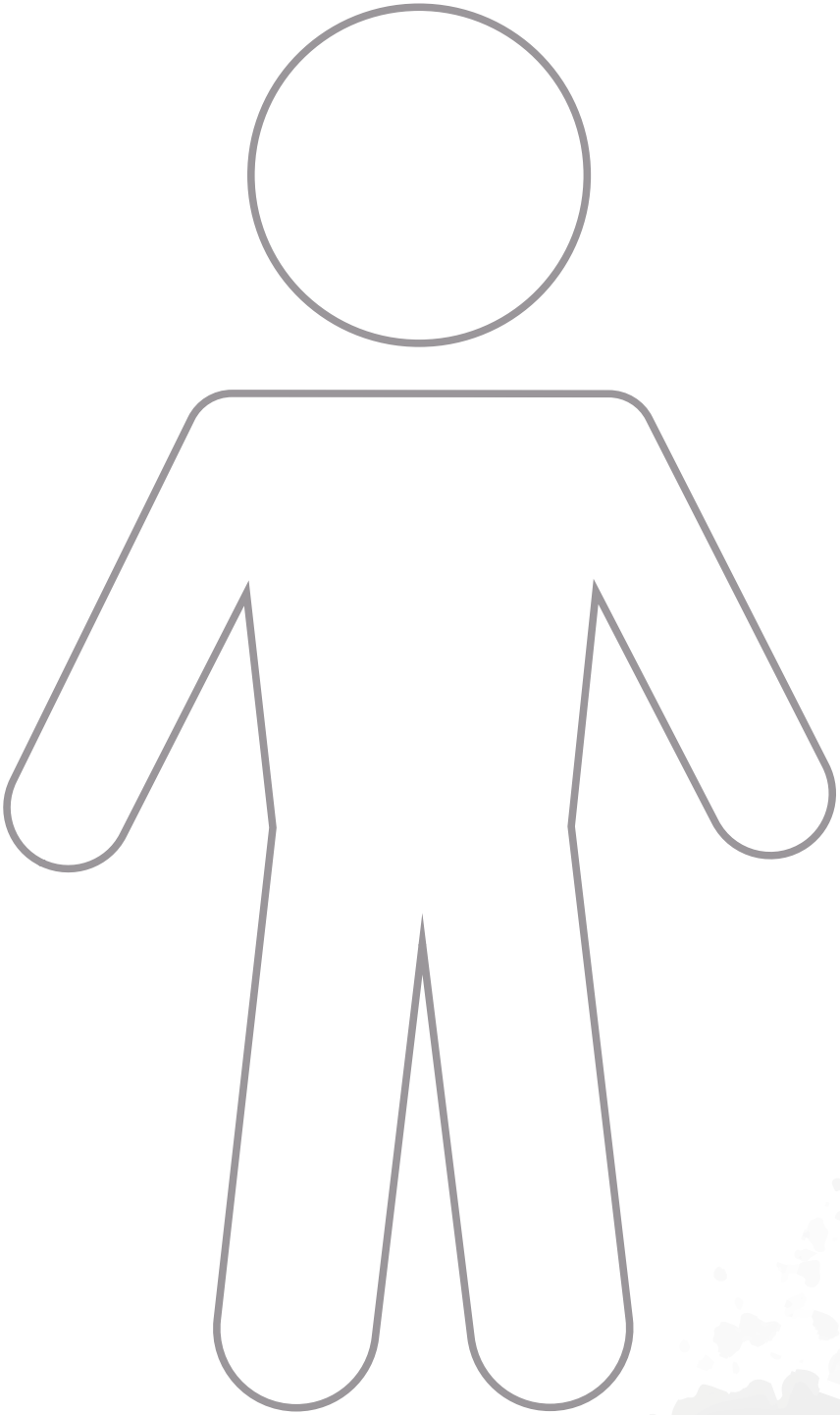
For more information check out

ACF's Prosody Blog: **Shame**
https://professionals.childhood.org.au/prosody/2015/05/shame/
https://www.learningandwellbeing.org/post/the-shield-of-shame

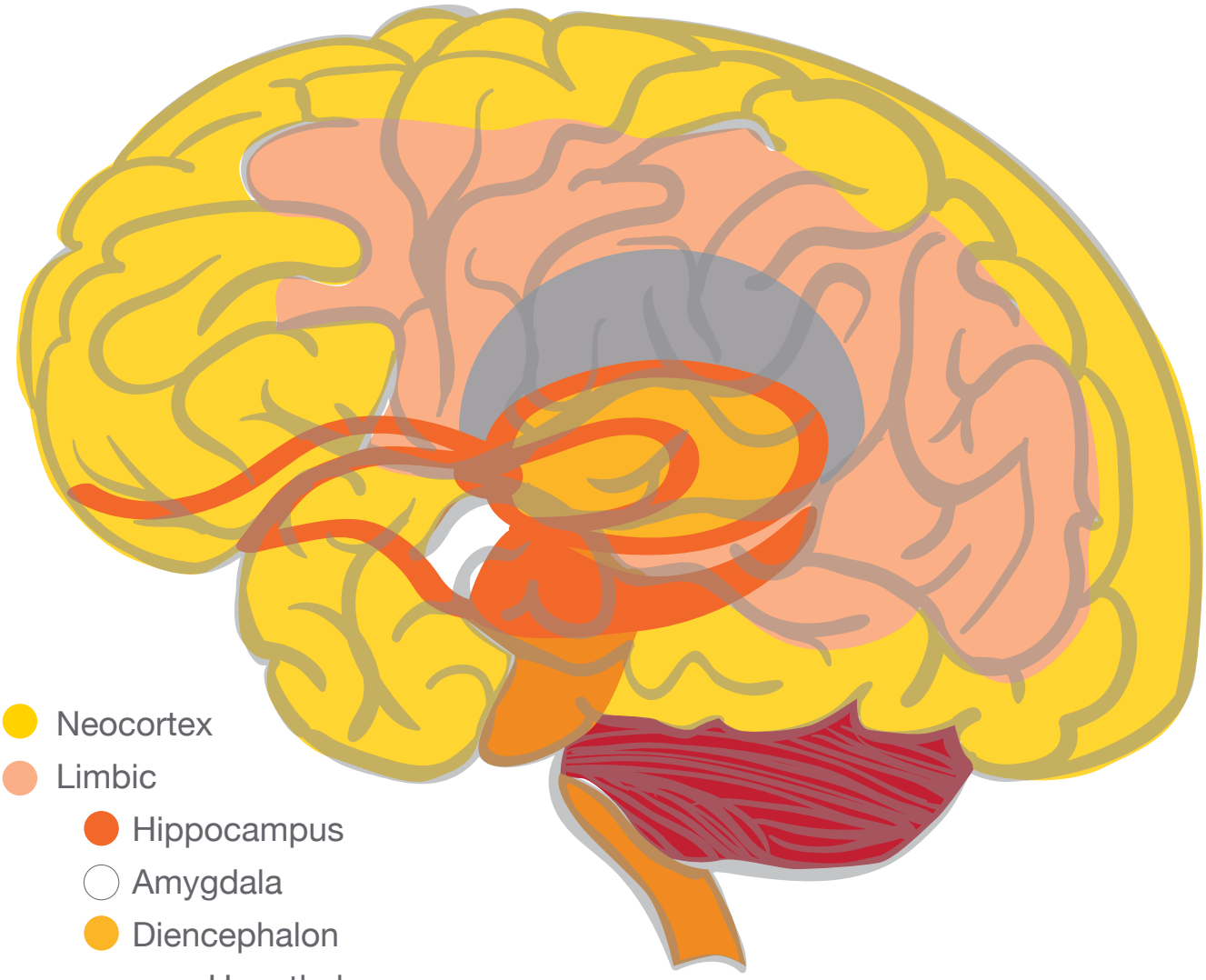


Activity Sheets and Handouts

Bringing a young person into the space



Exploring the brain



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

The Adolescent Brain

Pre-Frontal Cortex
Higher Functioning Centre

Cortex
Reasoning and Judging Centre

Limbic System
Emotional Centre

Cerebellum
Motor Centre

Brain Stem
Basic Survival Functions

Brain food the developing young person

Age	Brain function focus	Brain food
12-25 years	Abstract thinking, decision making, analysing and problem solving	Opportunities to practise making decisions, to weigh up consequences, to take risks in non life and death settings, to learn boundaries. Integrative activities such as outdoor adventures, ropes courses, group work, yoga, meditation, mindfulness.
7-12 years	Consolidation and exploration	Problem processing opportunities to concentrat on areas of interest to challenge and be supported, games requiring skill, strength and agility, experiences of raised and lowered heart rate.
3-6 years	Maturing thinking functions	Reading, playing games, counting, talking, storytelling, games with siblings and in teams.
1-4 years	Emotional functions	Playing games with parents, dress ups, acting stories, act out feelings, sharing, taking turns, dress ups.
6 months - 2 years	Coordination of body movements	Dancing, painting, blocks, threading, sliding, crawling, rolling, running, clapping.
In utero - 9 months	Basic survival	Tactile play, peek a boo, lots of touch, being rocked.

Strategies for transforming

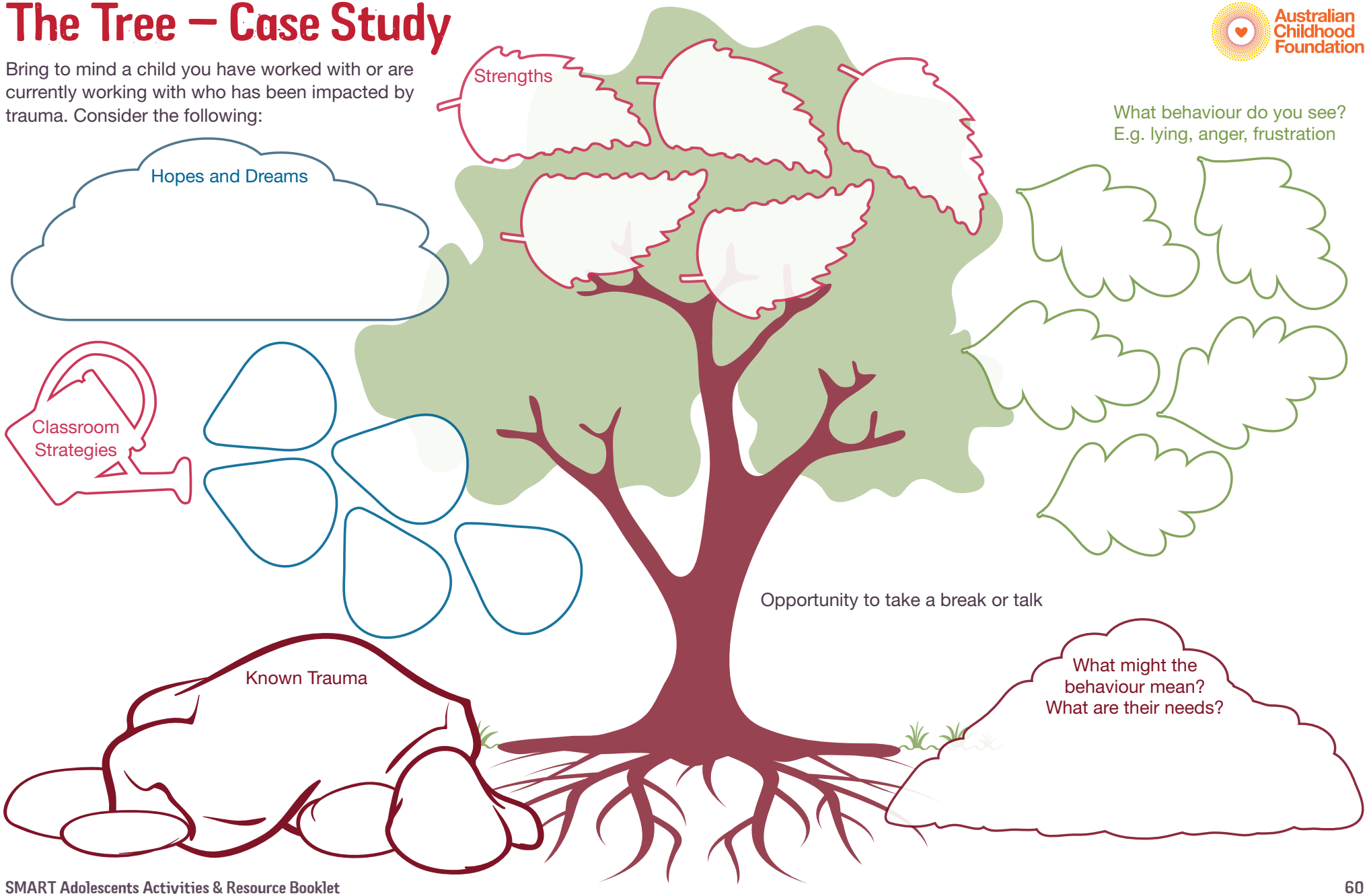
Brain area	Function	Activity ideas
Brainstem and diencephalon	Basic survival and sensory processing	Pacification or stimulation. Activities in the child's preferred sensory modality.
Cerebellum	Coordination and movement	Using music, rhyme and movement activities.
Limbic	Emotional processing	Building relational connection through plays, animals and games.
Cortex	Thinking processes	Linking experiences and sensations to words and descriptions.
Prefrontal cortex	Analytical and abstract thinking	Challenges and safe risk taking activities.

Tracking your student's own Window of Tolerance

The Tree – Case Study

Australian Childhood Foundation

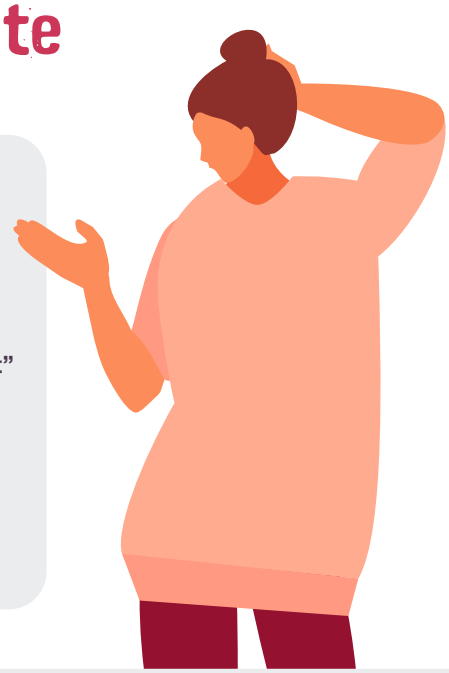
Bring to mind a child you have worked with or are currently working with who has been impacted by trauma. Consider the following:



Group Activity - Behaviour

Observed behaviour	Assumed Meaning (how we might interpret the behaviour)	Possibly underlying cause/ need (needs might include: safety, calm, connection/ engaging)
Eg refuses to make eye contact when spoken to, despite being asked several times to look at the teacher	• Defiance • Wants to assert dominance	• Physiological response to feelings of unsafety – their body won't allow them to make eye contact (NEED – safety) • Student has withdrawn and cannot hear/process instructions (NEED – connection/engaging)

Shield Against Shame template



Example

Blame
"It was his fault!"

Deny
"I never did anything!"

Minimise
"He wasn't really hurt"

Rage
"You always blame me for everything!"

Blame

Deny

Minimise

Rage

Demands and Capacities Tool

Increasing safety and engagement in the classroom; decreasing dysregulation and disconnection

A tool for matching lessons with students' capacities and making modifications for meeting them where they are at.

This tool is based on the concept that dysregulation can often happen when the demands of the environment outstrip the capacities of the individual to cope. As educators we can sometimes forget how many demands the school environment and individual lessons can place on a student. A student who is already impacted by trauma may struggle even more. We may be able to reduce student disengagement and dysregulation if we can break down the skills, resources and abilities required for a session, reflect on our students' capacities to meet those requirements, and think about how we could modify those aspects so that we don't overshoot where a student is currently at.

This tool can be used as a training aid to help build educators awareness of the demands placed on students within their classroom environment / where dysregulation is likely to occur. It could also be used by educators as needed to look at where the potential lies within lessons to reduce student stress / threat / protective responses. For instance, if there is a student who is experiencing frequent states of dysregulation, staff may use this tool to bring their awareness to the demands within the environment that the student is presented with, where those demands may be overshooting the capacities of the student and looking at helpful modifications to make the lesson more accessible/ the environment more supportive.

Note that the skills, resources and abilities should consider, where relevant, factors such as home life, access to resources outside of the classroom, the impacts of trauma on such areas as memory, attention span, self-regulation etc, relational templates/ understanding accepted social norms and using social skills, a student's self-narrative (how they perceive themselves) and specific skills and knowledge.

Modifications might include removing or limiting some tasks/ transitions, providing additional support or scaffolding around a particular task, checking in with the student/s on how they are tracking at strategic points, providing prior foundational opportunities for students to practice skills such as group work skills i.e. giving them explicit simple instructions and modest group work tasks to develop the underlying skills before longer or more complex group work. Patience, understanding, a few minutes away to decompress and extra guidance may be all that's needed sometimes! Some modifications could already be addressed through learning support plans etc.

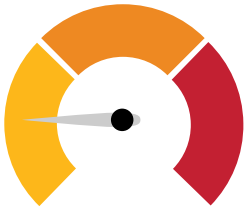
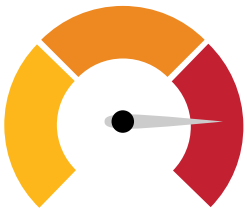
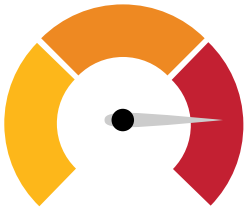
Educators are often time poor so identifying individual modifications may not be feasible or necessary if just identifying where the stressors may lie and allowing the educator to bring this awareness to their relationship and support of the students who need it.

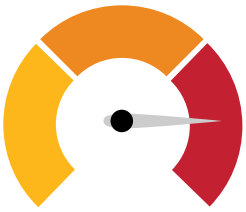
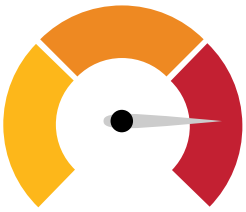
Example: Demands and Capacities Tool

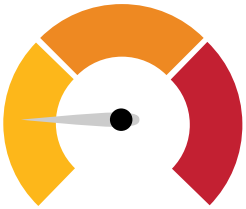
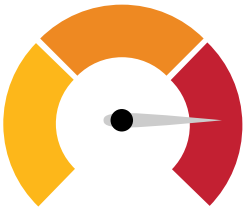
Lesson topic: Studying a text to understand plot and character development...

Types of activities involved: (i.e., whole class, small group, individual, text and question focused, experiential component, discussion, written based)

Whole class, small group, individual, text and questions, discussions, individual note taking, verbal answering of questions.

Skills, resources and abilities required	Potential for requirement to outstrip any of your students' capacities?	Modification?
Literacy competence to the level of the text.	LOW 	Everyone's literacy level is adequate for the text. Could provide simple guide on characters and plot.
Capacity for self directed work at home (so they have read the text ready for the lesson)	HIGH 	It's likely the student won't have read the text at home or done the preliminary work. As above; a simple summary might help. Make sure tasks allocated to the student doesn't require specific knowledge about the novel. Fo-cus on ways for them to feel use-ful and engaged with the work and peers outside of specific con-tent input; i.e. get student to hand out flip chart paper/ pens and then gather all the groups flip chart paper with their responses and stick to wall.
Home environment conducive to reading	HIGH 	Audio version? May not be realistic. Do as above.

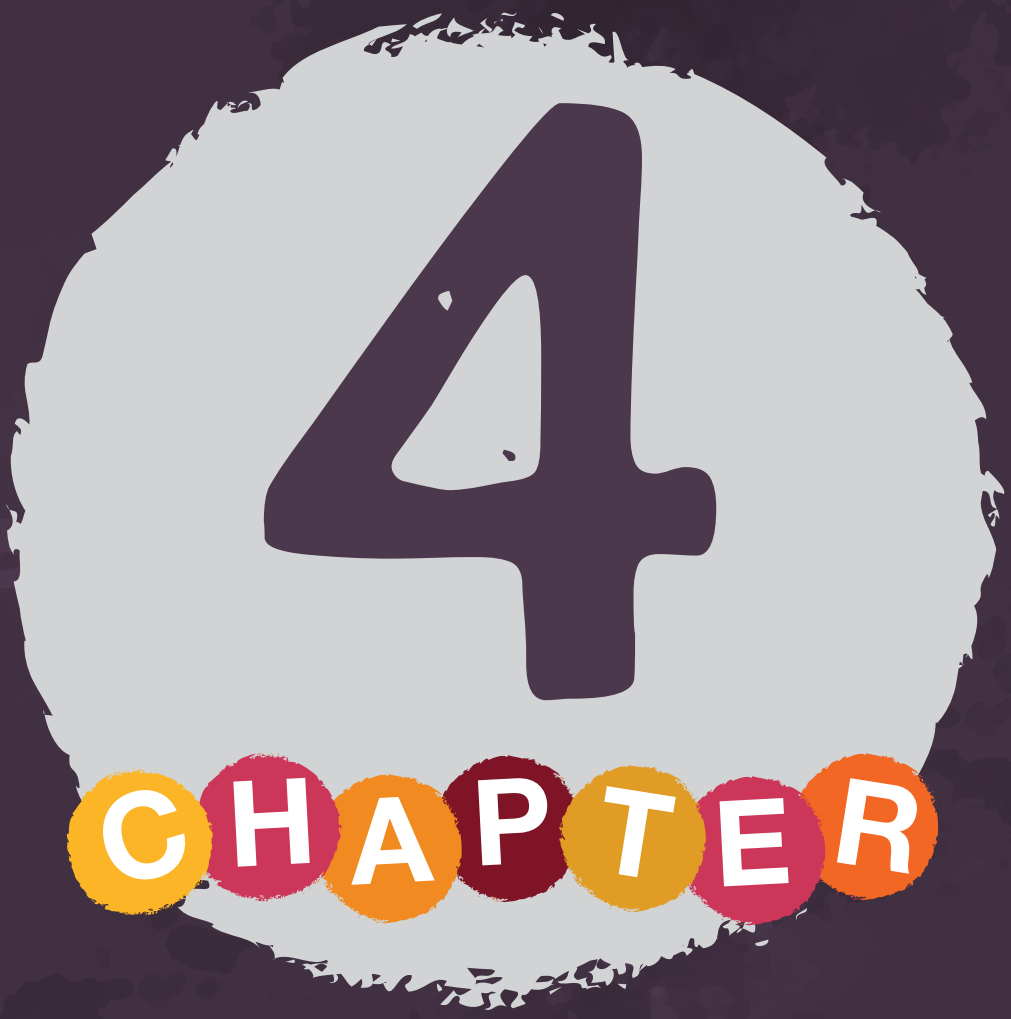
Skills, resources and abilities required	Potential for requirement to outstrip any of your students' capacities?	Modification?
Social skills in group work: • impulse control • turn taking • articulating ideas to peers • listening and language comprehension • verbal and non verbal cues of engagement • felt sense of safety in relationships	HIGH 	Organise groups strategically. Provide list of roles within group task and assign students. Give a single focus or only a couple of questions to answer (according to the groups capabilities). Keep groups to four maximum. Have a student with sound note taking skills to note down group responses in large print (flip chart paper) to present to whole class and for others to copy down.
Self-esteem / confidence to engage	HIGH 	Give role that student can cope with and undertake to allow success and sense of usefulness.
Ability to focus and hold attention	MODERATE 	Small group work tasks kept to no more than 10 mins each. Student allocated role to meet their capability; roles that only require short burst of concentration for those that struggle to focus. Brain breaks. Mix simple tasks, such as copying, with more demanding cortical tasks. Body breaks; allow short breaks where the student can move/ stretch. Recognise when a student is flagging and allow rest.
Knowledge of note taking skills	HIGH 	As above – allocate group note taking to capable student; individuals to copy, provide key word glossary, provide a structure of note taking i.e. 3 points related to characters, must include xyz available if student wants it.

Skills, resources and abilities required	Potential for requirement to outstrip any of your students' capacities?	Modification?
Ability to transition between whole class work to group work to individual work	MODERATE 	Limit to three transitions; whole class to small group and finish with quiet individual work. Bridge transitions with body stretch, breathing exercise, quick lateral brain challenges.
Organisation of necessary materials such as pen, paper and copy of text.	LOW 	Have spares!
Self-regulation	HIGH 	Use whole class self-check in system every lesson (wall chart). If student identifies possible dysregulation or I observe it, connect with them, have regulating resources available, give simple supporting task outside of group work, whatever else they have previously identified as soothing.

Example: Demands and Capacities Tool

Lesson topic:		
Types of activities involved: (i.e., whole class, small group, individual, text and question focused, experiential component, discussion, written based)		
Skills, resources and abilities required	**Potential for requirement to outstrip any of your students' capacities?**	**Modification?**
	 Low ☐  Moderate ☐  High ☐	
	 Low ☐  Moderate ☐  High ☐	
	 Low ☐  Moderate ☐  High ☐	

Skills, resources and abilities required	Potential for requirement to outstrip any of your students' capacities?	Modification?
	 Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐	
	 Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐	
	 Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐	



PRACTICE documents

Practice involves being

- **P** Predictable
- **R** Responsive
- **A** Attuned
- **C** Connecting
- **T** Translating
- **I** Involving
- **C** Calming
- **E** Engaging

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

Discussion Paper 2:
Ideas for integrating SMART into school policies & processes

Discussion Paper 9:
Engaging collegial support for the implementation of SMART

Discussion Paper 10: Revisiting the SMART PRACTICE framework for supporting traumatized children

Discussion Paper 11:
Exploring SMART PRACTICE with adolescents

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

This is an opportunity to reflect on the current application of the SMART PRACTICE framework across your site. This tool can also be used to plan further implementation strategies as a site plan. It is acknowledged that not all areas will be relevant to all sites however each area has value in terms of a holistic application of the skills and knowledge underpinning SMART PRACTICE.

In the following table, list strategies, policies or other processes that are currently undertaken that support each of the listed groups in each of the elements of the SMART PRACTICE framework.

SMART PRACTICE	Whole site	Staff team	Classroom/Group	Small group	Individual child or young person
P PREDICTABLE					
R RESPONSIVE					
A ATTUNED					
C CONNECTING					
T TRANSLATING					
I INVOLVING					
C CALMING					
E ENGAGING					

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

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P PREDICTABLE					
R RESPONSIVE					
A ATTUNED					
C CONNECTING					
T TRANSLATING					
I INVOLVING					
C CALMING					
E ENGAGING					

SMART PRACTICE Framework for Adolescents

A snapshot of Key Principles, Outcomes and Practice Ideas

Predictable

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma may experience any change as a potential threat. Even if the familiar is difficult and destructive, the familiar is safer for them than the unfamiliar.

Outcomes:

Young people who have experienced trauma, will come to trust, and rely on their reference point(s) as an interpreter of their environment. They will respond in a less volatile way to changes in the classroom and build a platform for responding to change overall. The young person will learn to use others as a resource to support them at school.

PRACTICE ideas:

- provide predictability in every part of the day – lots of routines will create the sense of safety
- plan and prepare schedules in advance – keep in mind transition times

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

Being PREDICTABLE... would your students be able to answers these questions?

- How you greet them each lesson?
- Do they know what's coming up in the lesson?
- Do they know the general routine of the lesson?
- Do they know where they will sit?
- Do they know how you will give them their instructions, tasks, work, feedback..?
- Do they know where to find what they need?
- Do they know what to do if they are struggling with a task? Do they know how you will react?

Responsive

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma, will often display behaviour which is experienced as difficult or challenging by others but often makes sense in the context of their trauma. They find it hard to internalise external rules and consequences.

Outcomes:

Young people who have experienced trauma, will often display behaviour which is experienced as difficult or challenging by others but often makes sense in the context of their trauma. They find it hard to internalise external rules and consequences.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Recognise and reflect the meaning of the behaviour
- Repair after rupture – young people need lots of reparative experiences

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

Being RESPONSIVE to trauma related behaviours and other impacts...

- Do the students impacted by trauma know you get them, what they've been through and what they need to support them?
- Can you be open and curious about what their behaviour is telling you?
- Can you see the person behind the behaviour and translate it as a form of communication?
- Can you respond to their behaviour and their cognitive and emotional levels where they are at rather then where, chronologically, they 'should' be?

Attuned

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma, do not easily know how they feel and have had limited experience of having their feelings recognised by others.

Feelings are experienced as separate to traumatised a young person's knowledge of themselves.

Outcomes:

- Young people will be better at tracking their own feelings/concerns/worries.
- They will practice enjoying and marking experiences of positive feelings.
- The young person will develop experiences of having his/her feelings validated.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Acknowledge and reflect feelings and emotions
- Acknowledge body states – our bodies are great communicators

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

Being ATTUNED to your students...

- Can you pick up on the students non verbal and body language cues to help you gauge where they are at, what their state of being is?
- Can you be flexible in your approach so that if they're getting agitated or start withdrawing in the lesson you can meet them where they're at and guide them back?
- Can you see when they need your understanding and connection?
- Can you pick the moments when they can be responsive to playfulness, or having their capacity for learning pushed, or when they need more sensitivity from you?

Connecting

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma will often feel disconnected from their feelings, memories of experiences and their sense of identity.

They need support to get in touch with how they're feeling, what they are feeling and linking their perceptions and experiences to their feelings.

Outcomes:

Young people will build capacity to express themselves in language.

They will come to know how their feelings are affected by past experiences and can be better supported to be in control of their feelings and reactions.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Create a story of what's happening for them by building "here and now" activities into the everyday. This will assist young people who may be struggling with trauma triggers to reconnect with the moment. These might include asking the class to focus on one colour in the room, dig their toes into the floor or engage in a mindfulness or breathing technique/ exercise.
- Create environments that are relationally safe and connected

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

CONNECTING with your students...

- Can you help raise their awareness of their feelings, naming them, linking to signals from their movement, facial expression, behaviour or drawing attention to their internal signals?
- How does this sound in your own voice?
  - "You seem agitated, you're fidgeting heaps and your eyes are darting everywhere. Is your body making it hard to settle?"
  - "I'm thinking, judging from your expression and your slumped shoulders, you're feeling a bit low right now; have I got that right?"
  - "I'm guessing the task I just handed out has made your brain and body go NO WAY, I'm not ready for that! It looks like they are freaking out a bit but I've got you, we can work this out"

Translating

Principle:

Young people who have experience trauma will find it difficult to make stories about their day-to-day experiences because their memory and interpretive functions have been impaired.

They struggle to make sense of their past, feel separate from their present and have no starting point for making their path into the future.

Outcomes:

Young people will build better memory for events and experiences, including their capacity to learn and retain information.

They will build a base for being able to explore their history and begin to make conscious sense of their experiences of abuse and/or violence.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Talk to the young person about their feelings and thoughts – be curious *"I wonder what you are experiencing/feeling?"* Use cartoon-based activities to build connected stories of understanding about a range of experiences such as social, behavioural, or general daily patterns.
- Track these using the "Line of my day" activity with students to connect the course of the day, link emotional responses and look for patterns of experience (see Resource section)

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!
Helping students to TRANSLATE their responses and interactions to bring about understanding and growth.

- It can be tricky helping to bring students awareness to their responses and ways of interacting with their environment in a safe respectful way in the classroom environment so that they may begin to make meaning of these responses and ways of being. Doing this though, can help students to heal, to challenge unhelpful internal working models and create space for personal growth and encourage experiences of success.
- What does this sound/ look like in our interactions with them? How do we bring their awareness to their ways of being such as their reactions, how they interpret events/ conversations, what they struggle with, what they seem most comfortable with....?

Involving

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma, will find it difficult to make friends, having poorly developed maps to guide them.

They often fail to constructively interpret social cues and will often feel isolated and different from their peers. They may use socially inappropriate behaviour to try to engage with peers and this often leads to ostracization.

Outcomes:

Young people will feel they belong and will be able to engage in appropriate behaviours as attempts to become part of a friendship group.

They will be better able to understand social cues and will be less likely to feel peer interactions are threatening.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Invite young people to participate in a variety of relationship-connecting activities – buddy support, student councils, interest groups, student feedback opportunities
- Include physical or challenge activities to both give a positive experience of heightened arousal, and which will increase dopamine, endorphins, and oxytocin levels. This will build a positive experience with peers.

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

INVOLVING your students in healthy safe positive peer connections...

- Do you know how safe and positive each of your students feel in peer relationships? How connected they feel? How competent and respected they feel in those relationships?
- Consider the kinds of engagement and relational tasks that are common in your lessons/ interactions with students? Are your students working in pairs, groups, with equipment, moving around, in close proximity? How well do they know each other? How are their social and academic skills matched to enhance the experience? How do we take these factors into consideration to promote safety and positive experiences? How can you scaffold students to be able to engage safely with their peers in your classroom?

Calming

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma, find it difficult to shape or change their own feelings of stress/distress.

Trauma has impaired their cortical capacity to regulate sub cortical functioning.

Outcomes:

Young people will feel more supported and connected to those around them and their early learning communities by feeling less blamed.

They will not feel singled out because everyone is learning how to stay calm and will be able to come up with and use plans to stay calm or become calm that make sense to them.

You will be able to respond rather than react.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Connect student with individual calming and regulating resources and tools of their choice. Have these readily available in classrooms.
- Create environments that are and feel safe - consider the physical environment of the classroom and any indoor communal spaces. Is that environment sensorily soothing? What might be causing dysregulation in your classroom or yard?

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

Helping students feel safe in CALM peaceful environments and relationships

- Building trust and a felt sense of safety is sometimes done by testing limits for understanding and reassurance. How do we stay calm and grounded ourselves in order to hold a student who is learning to adapt to and trust calm peaceful environments? How do we help them to adapt and learn to trust and thrive in these environments of calm and peace, including the engaged hum of a focused classroom? How can we promote their sense of being an integral part of that, so they don't feel like an outsider, alien to that kind of environment?
- How do you check in on your inner state of calm? How do you check that you are well grounded yourself; particularly when students might be testing the limits?

Engaging

Principle:

Young people who have experienced trauma, have insecure blueprints for forming, maintaining, understanding and being in relationships.

Changing relational representations comes with repetitive opportunities to practice and experience difference in exchanges with others.

Outcomes:

Young people will learn to tolerate adults at school with different levels of intimacy.

They will experience opportunities to review their relationship representations.

They will practice maintaining connection with important adults.

The young person will be more likely to feel safe.

PRACTICE ideas:

- Explore opportunities to engage in relational connection. As a staff group (whole staff, year level or other group) identify key staff for each identified young person. This person becomes the key contact or key relationship, but not the only one.
- Explore their own narrative and story with them. Be genuinely curious and validate who they are and their experiences.

Reflection:

I'VE GOT ONE LESSON!

Supporting students to actively ENGAGE in relationships and their learning with hope and success...

Remember we largely come to understand ourselves through how others experience us and reflect that back to us. This is why, how we engage with students, has the potential to influence their life journey. How does your compassion, respect, enjoyment, playfulness, and investment in a student shine through in the way you engage with them? How do you reflect these genuine experiences of their strengths, their uniqueness, their potential back to them so that they might come to see and truly believe themselves to be, or capable of being, the amazing human beings you are experiencing them as?

Resources

Further information, resources and activity ideas and worksheets can be found at:

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/centre-trauma-aware-responsive-education/

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/resources/

Sign up to ACF and you will be able to access even more resources!

Keep in touch with ACF and SMART

ACF - Centre for Trauma Aware and Responsive Education

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/centre-trauma-aware-responsive-education/

ACF - Training and resources

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/professional-community-network/

SMART Online training (register via Plink)

SMART training (register via Plink)

Further reading:

National Guidelines for Trauma-Aware Education

The Australian Childhood Foundation, in collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology has developed a consolidated set of National Guidelines for Trauma-Aware Schooling.

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/centre-trauma-aware-responsive-education/

Making Space for Learning: Trauma informed practice in schools

https://professionals.childhood.org.au/centre-trauma-aware-responsive-education/

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