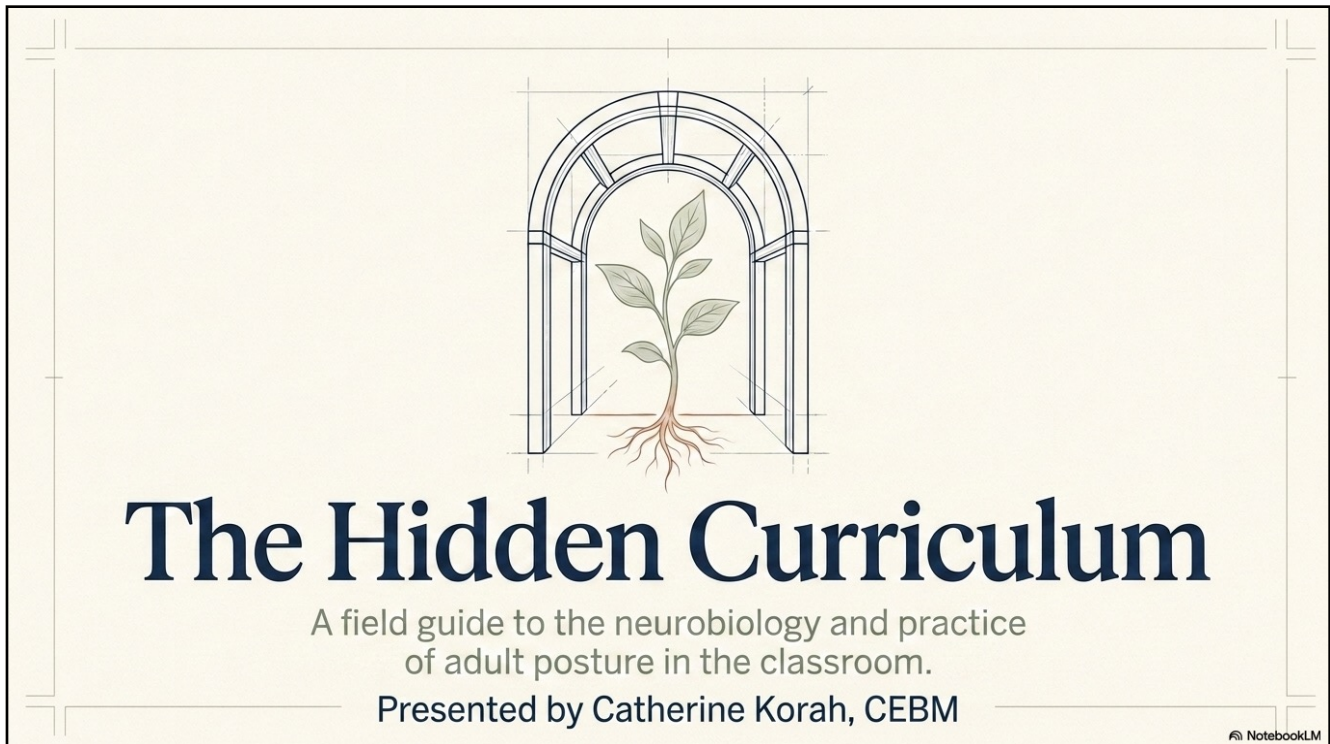
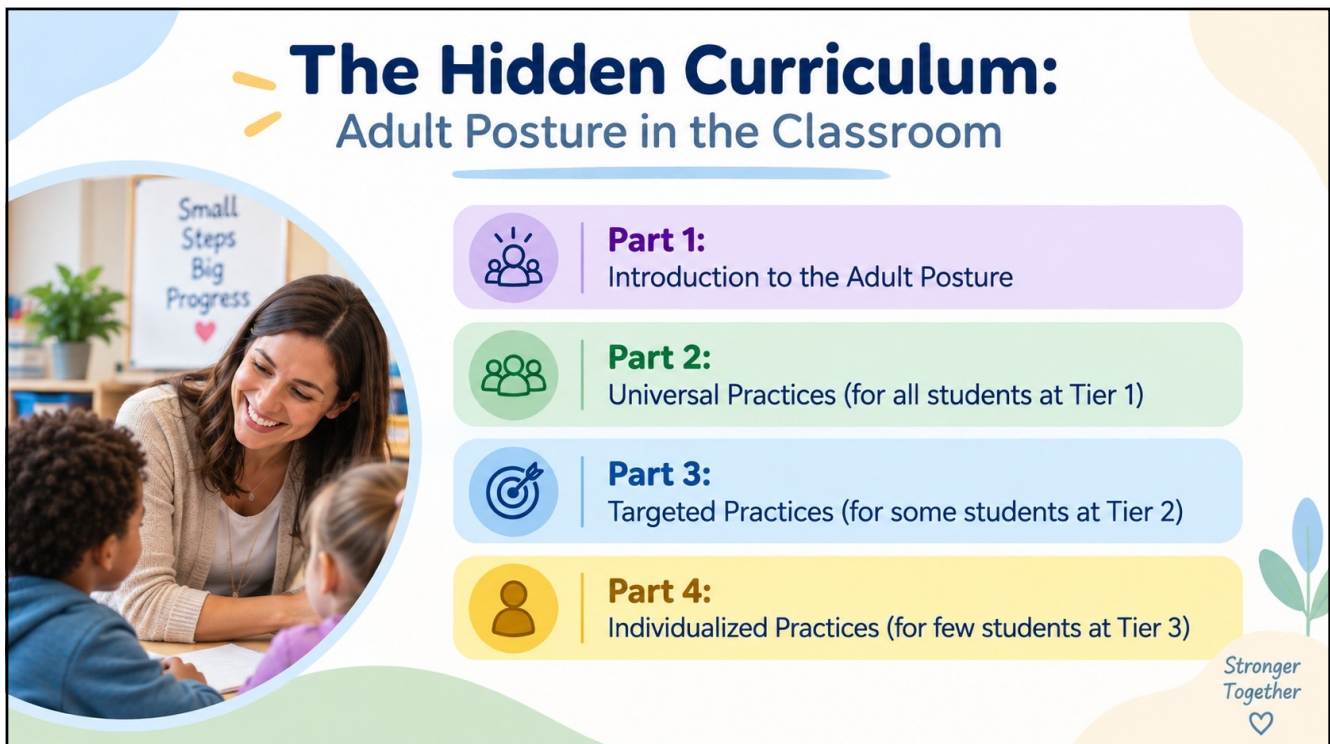




1



2



Long after children forget specific lessons or activities, they remember how adults made them feel.



The Unspoken Syllabus

Adult posture is the true hidden curriculum of the classroom. It is one of the most influential factors affecting children's well-being, behavior, and learning.



Children do not learn best when they feel threatened; they learn best when they feel safe.

3

How Students Experience Adults



Educators often evaluate themselves based on their **intentions**.



Students evaluate adults based on their **experiences**.





An adult may intend to be:

- **firm**

but be experienced as **frightening**.





An adult may intend to be:

- **efficient**

but be experienced as **dismissive**.





An adult may intend to be:

- **consistent**

but be experienced as **rigid**.





Reflective practice therefore requires asking:

- How might my behavior feel to this student?
- What message is my body communicating?
- Does my presence increase safety or threat?
- Would I feel regulated if I were interacting with me?





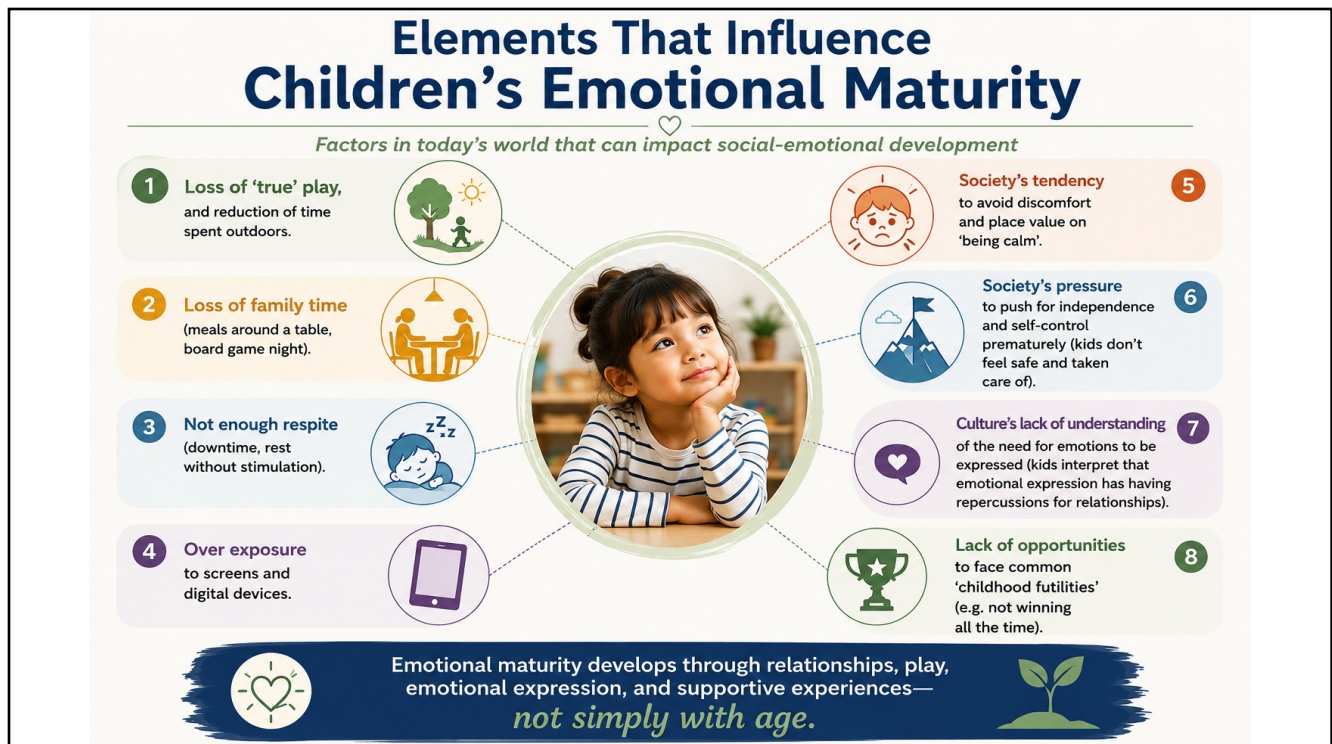
This perspective encourages **humility** and **continuous growth**.



4

THE ARCHITECTURE OF POSTURE: PARADIGM SHIFT <i>Shifting the Posture: Control vs. Connection</i>		
	 CONTROL PARADIGM <i>Traditional Control</i>	 CURIOSITY PARADIGM <i>Relational Connection</i>
 THE CORE QUESTION	How do I make this child behave?	How do I help this child succeed?
 THE FOCUS	Reacting to the visible disruption (The tip of the iceberg).	Uncovering the unmet need driving the action.
 PRIMARY GOAL	Gaining compliance, stopping disruptions, enforcing rules	Understanding the child and addressing the root need
 THE ADULT'S ROLE	Enforcer of rules and authority	Guide and supporter
 CHILD'S EXPERIENCE	Feels managed, judged, or threatened.	Feels understood, connected, and safe to cooperate.
 THE LIKELY OUTCOME	Power struggles, resistance, or shame	Maintained expectations combined with the support needed to meet them
  When we shift our posture, we shift outcomes. From controlling behavior to connecting with the child. From managing moments to building trust that lasts. 		

5



6

Judgment last to develop

The area of the brain that controls “executive functions” — including weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses — is among the last to fully mature.

Brain development from childhood to adulthood:

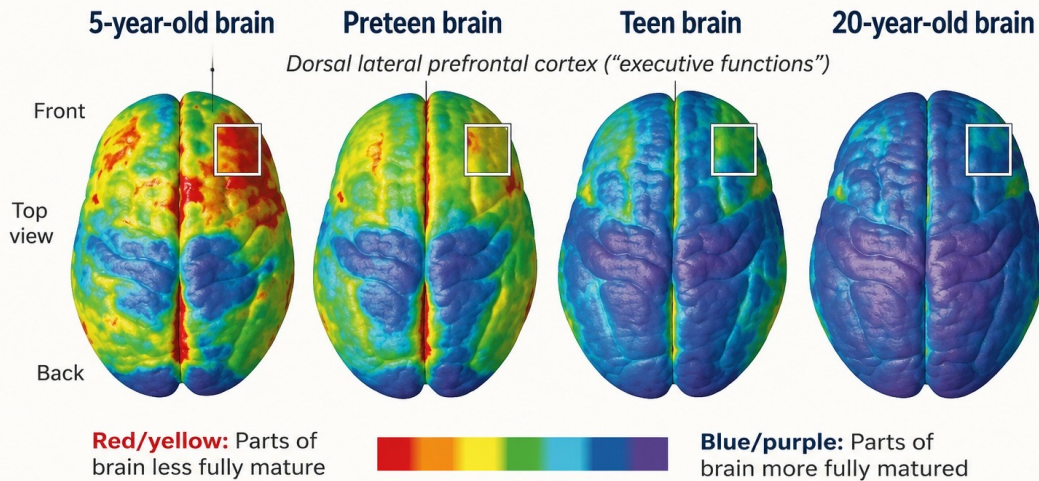


Image from the National Institute of Mental Health; Paul Thompson, Ph.D., UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging

7

The 8 Key Executive Functions

The brain's essential command center: core cognitive processes that allow school-age children to organize behavior, manage emotions, and achieve self-regulation.



Planning & Organizing

Setting practical goals, creating sequential steps, and managing active materials.



Working Memory

Holding, updating, and processing multi-step guidelines actively in mind.



Emotional Control

Calmly modulating emotional responses during daily transitions and moments of stress.



Shifting

Transitioning flexibly between mental tasks, unexpected priorities, or rules.



Task Monitoring

Checking ongoing performance during a goal and correcting errors along the way.



Self-Monitoring

Assessing own behaviors dynamically to evaluate the real-time social impact.



Inhibition

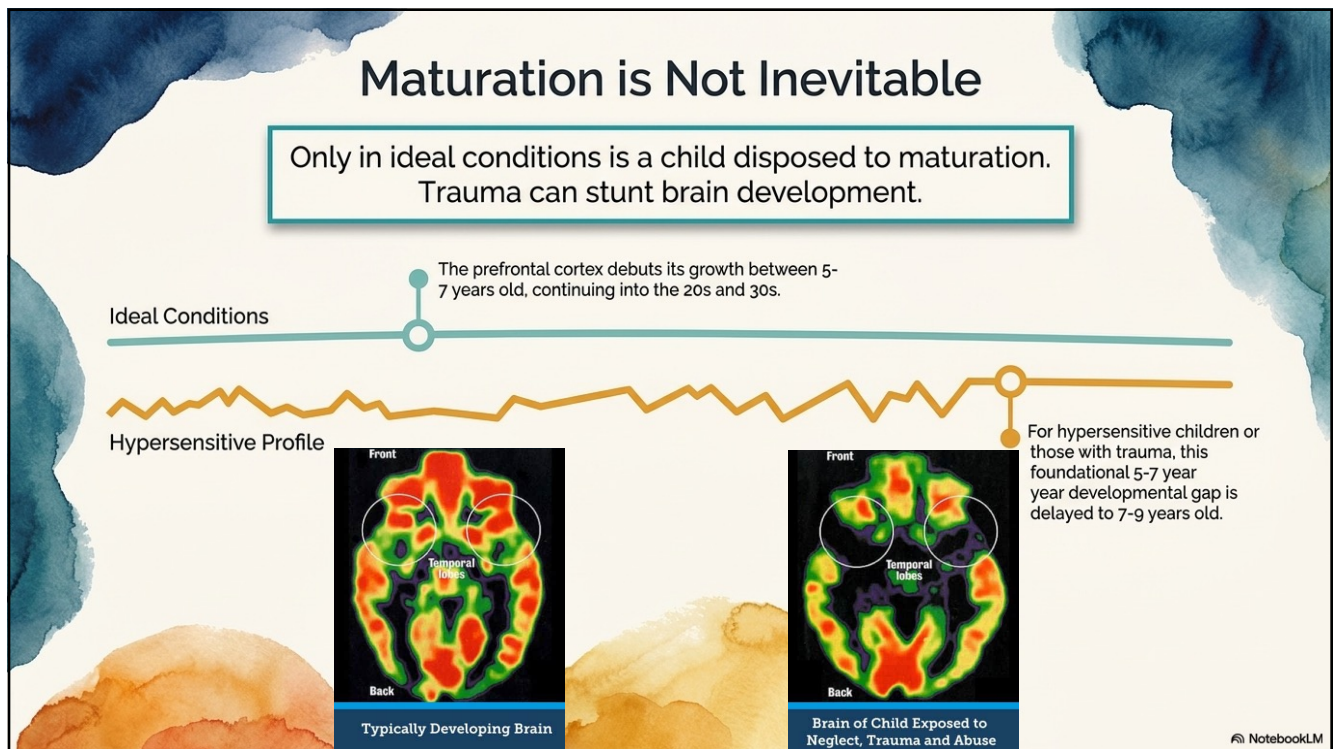
Resisting sudden impulses, managing reactions, and thinking before action.



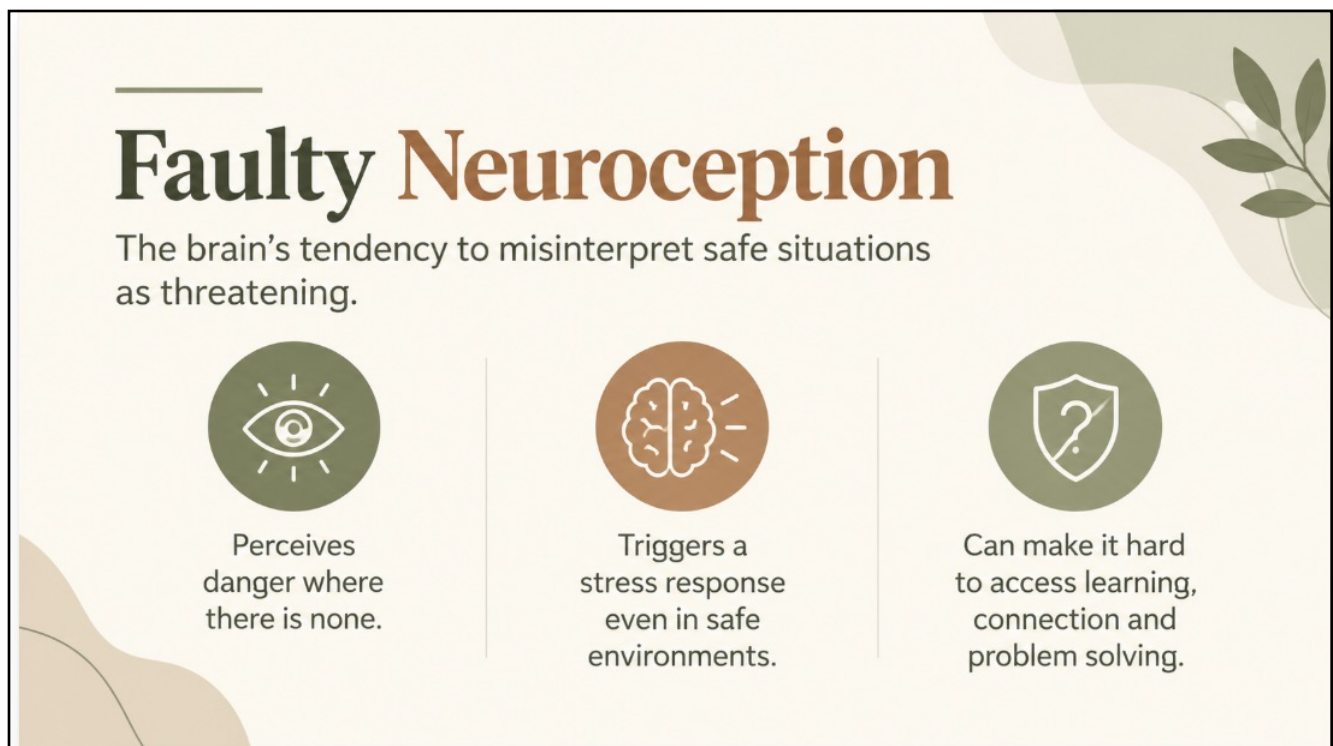
Initiation

Independently starting classwork, chores, or physical tasks without delay.

8

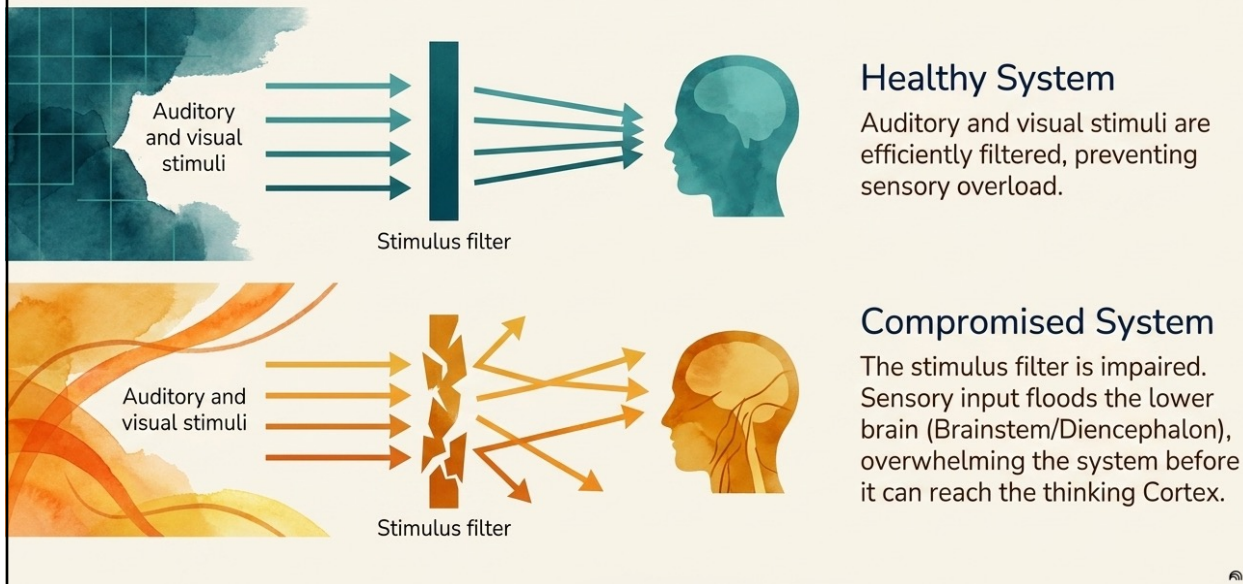


9



10

The Filter: Sensory Gating



NotebookLM

11

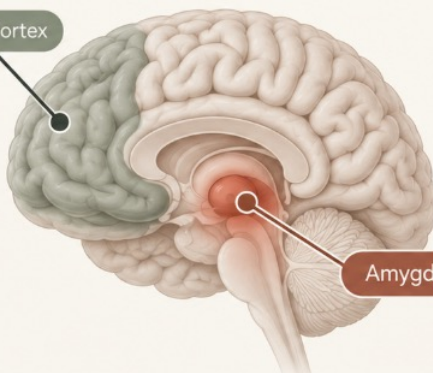
Neurological Flooding

WHEN THE BRAIN PERCEIVES THREAT, SURVIVAL TAKES OVER.

Thinking Brain ↓

- Language
- Reasoning
- Impulse control
- Flexible thinking

Prefrontal Cortex



Amygdala

Survival Brain ↑

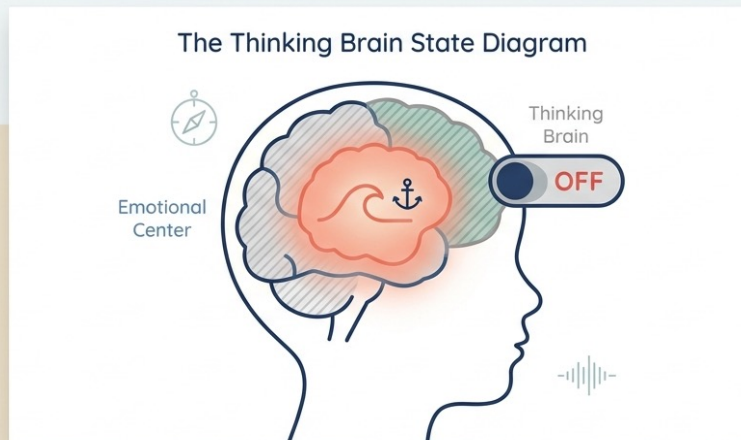
- Detects threat
- Triggers alarm
- Activates stress response

WHEN THE BRAIN FEELS UNSAFE,
SAFETY COMES BEFORE LEARNING.

12

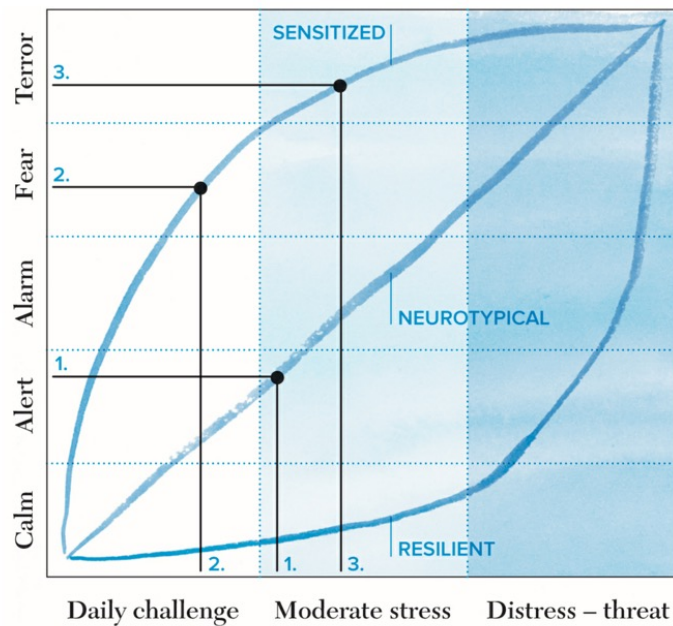
The thinking brain shuts down during emotional distress

When a child is overwhelmed, their thinking brain is not fully working.
They cannot process logic, learn lessons, or answer questions.



NotebookLM

13



Dr. Bruce Perry (2021) *What Happened to You?*

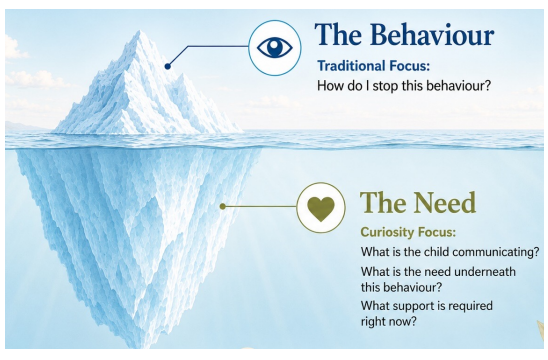
14



15



Individual Reflection Question



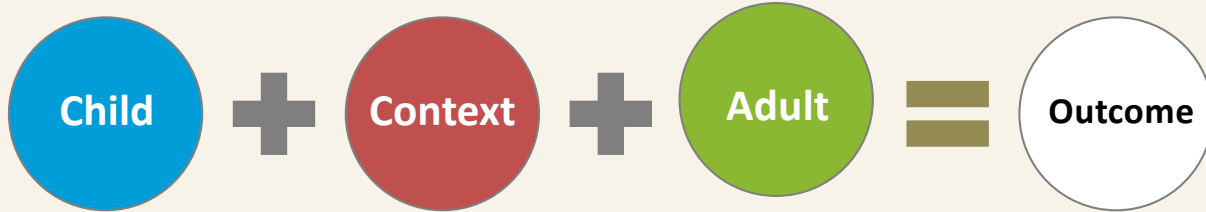
REFRAMING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR:

Think of a recent challenging student behavior. Deconstruct it through a curiosity lens:

- **Visible Student Behaviour** (What did you see/hear?) [Describe the raw physical indicators...]
- **Possible Unmet Needs** (What might they be communicating?) [Physiological, relational, safety, or sensory needs...]
- **My Initial Response** (What did you do or feel tempted to do?) [Triggers, frustration, impulse to control...]
- **Alternative Curious Response** (What could you say with a relational posture?) [Validating emotions, open-ended question, slowing down...]

16

Considering all the elements involved



- Chronological age
- Brain maturation
- Neurodiversity/
Sensitivity
- Level of emotional and
social development
- Family history (trauma)
- Stuck or guarded
emotionally
- Etc.

- Impact of the physical
space (size of the room,
space to move, etc.)
- Sensory input
- Type of activity going on
- Level of structure/
predictability
- Social impact (makeup of
the group, dynamics with
peers)
- Support measures in
place
- Support from other staff

- Relationship with the
child (engaged the child's
attachment)
- **Adult posture**
- Level of stress
- Level of insight
- Capacity to be reflective
- Preventive vs. reactive
- Aim at co-regulation vs.
behaviour management
- Type of response (posture,
tone, etc.)

- Shift in child/adult
dynamic
- Possibly an escalation
or a de-escalation in
the child's behaviour
- Outcome becomes
problematic or is
resolved
- Debrief/follow-up?