

PART 3:

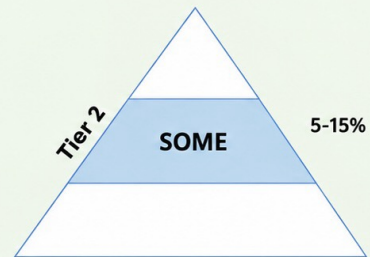
TARGETED Practices

for SOME Students at Tier 2



Targeted Support. Meaningful Progress.

Evidence-informed practices designed to support the unique needs of some students at Tier 2.



1

Tier 2: Tier 2 Does Not Necessarily Mean Severe Behaviour

Notice the pattern.



Targeted Support for Individual Needs
Not every student needs the same level of support.

A student may be functioning adequately much of the day but repeatedly struggle in a particular context.



Math
→
shutdown



Writing
→
avoidance



Tests
→
anxiety



Group work
→
conflict



Transitions
→
escalation



Unstructured periods
→
dysregulation



A Tier 2 lens asks:

"What predictable situations are exceeding this student's current capacity, and what additional scaffolding can we put in place before the student becomes overwhelmed?"



Tier 2 is preventive rather than reactive.

The goal is to recognize patterns early, provide targeted support, and help the student stay regulated, engaged and successful.

2

Patterns vs. Isolated Incidents

Look for patterns. Look beneath the behaviour. Respond with support.

Look
beyond the
moment.
❤️

An Isolated Incident	A Tier 2 Lens Asks
A single difficult math class doesn't necessarily indicate a need for Tier 2 support.	What happens immediately before this pattern?
A Pattern But if a teacher notices: <i>"Every time independent math work begins, this student asks to go to the bathroom, sharpens their pencil repeatedly, bothers another student, refuses to begin and eventually becomes angry when I redirect them..."</i> that is a pattern .	What demand is present?
	What does the student seem to be trying to escape, obtain or communicate ?
	When does this not happen?
	What helps the student remain engaged ?

| Patterns give us **information**. They help us respond with **understanding** and **support**.

3

Tier 2 is not "more consequences"

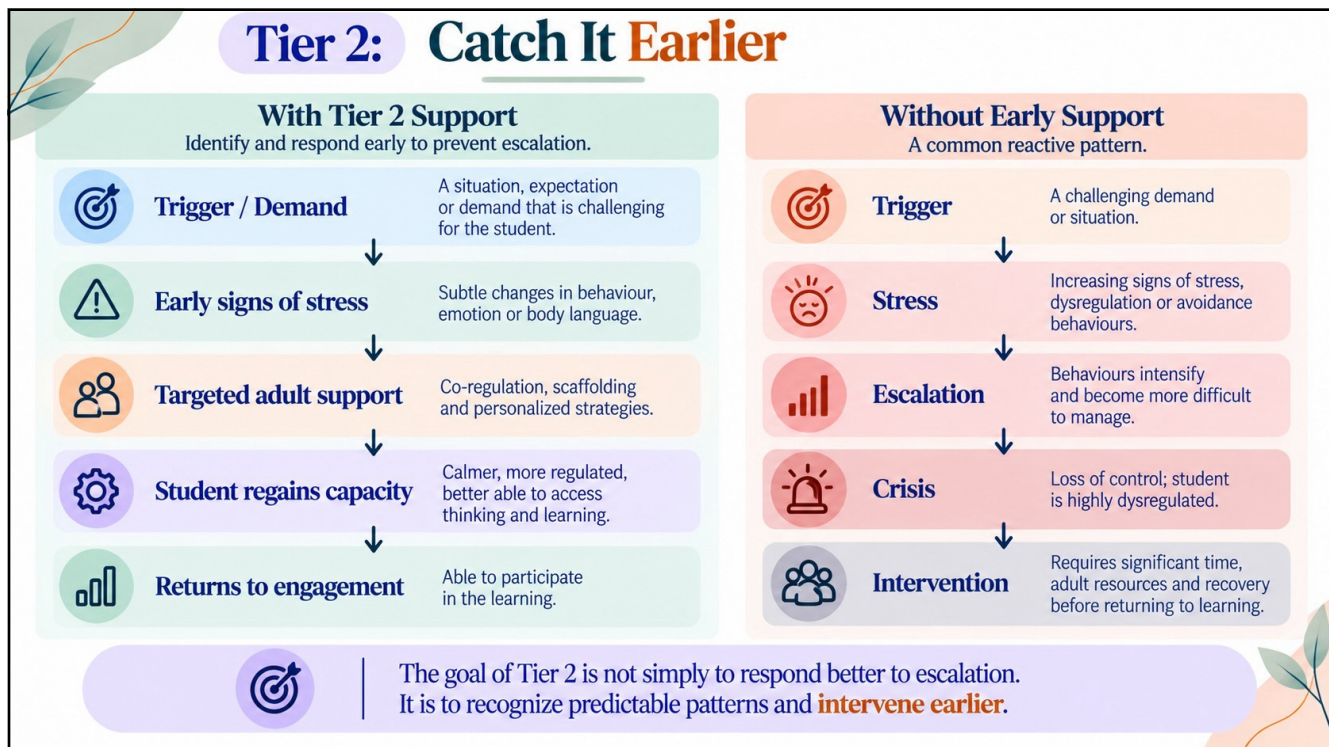
Support instead of more pressure.

Different
support.
Brighter
possibilities.
❤️

When Tier 1 isn't enough...	Instead consider:
Not necessarily:	More predictability
More correction	More scaffolding
More consequences	More connection
More prompting	More individualized preparation
More adult intensity	Earlier intervention
	More opportunities for co-regulation

| Since students at Tier 2 **cannot consistently access** the expected skill under particular conditions, increasing pressure may **increase dysregulation**.

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Tier 2: What Tier 2 Might Actually Look Like in a Teacher's Classroom

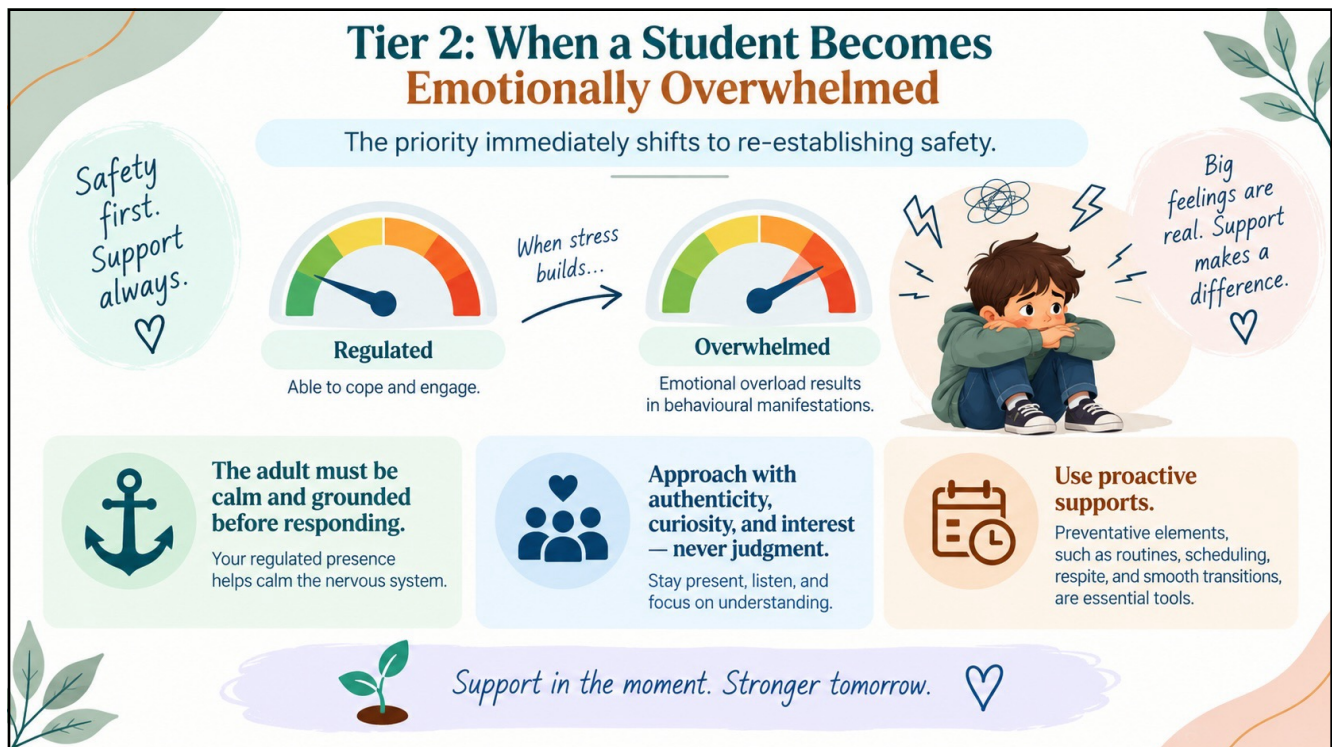
Different challenges. Deeper understanding. Targeted support.

Notice the whole picture.

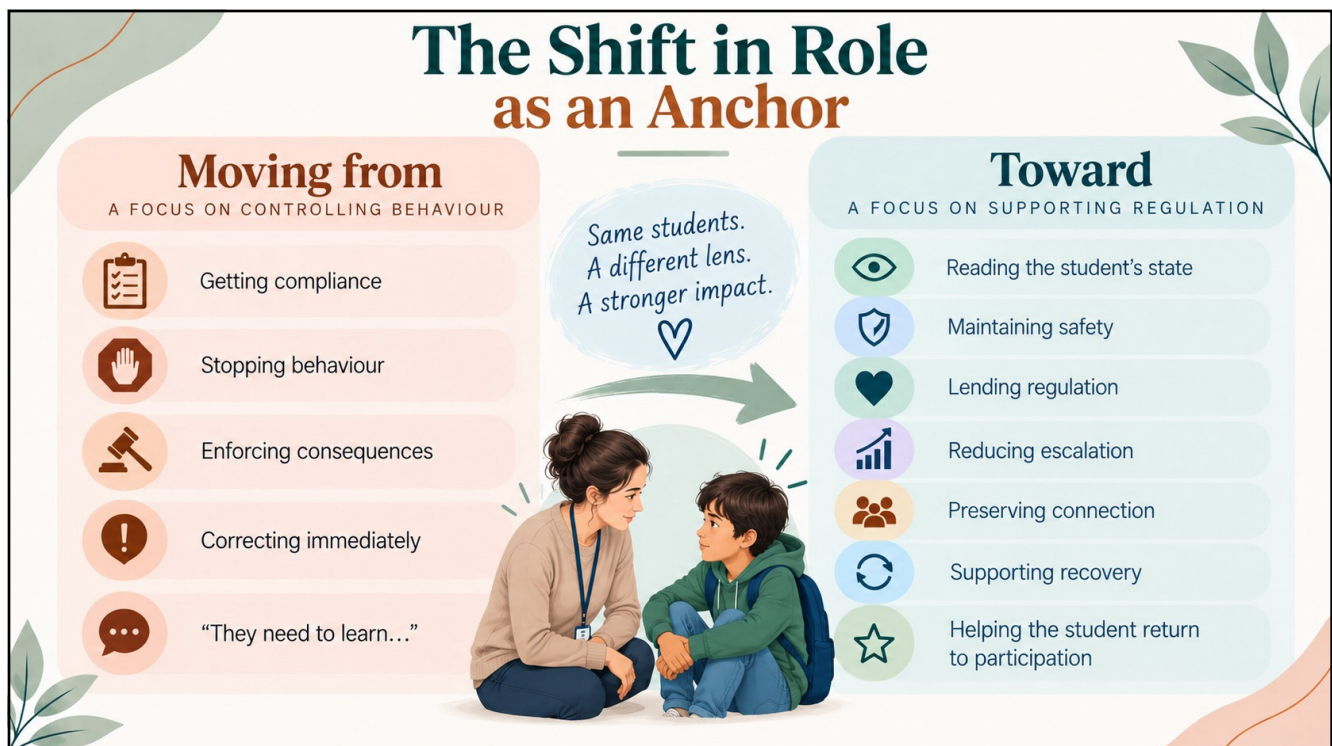
What the teacher sees	What may be happening underneath	Possible Tier 2 response
Task avoidance	Task feels overwhelming; fear of failure; difficulty initiating; working-memory demand.	Preview the task, reduce the visible workload, chunk the first steps, provide a starting prompt, brief teacher check-in.
Escalating frustration during difficult work	Cognitive overload; frustration tolerance exceeded; repeated experience of failure.	Notice early signs, temporarily slow the pace, validate difficulty, scaffold without removing the challenge.
Repeated shutdown	Overwhelm, threat response, inability to access language/problem solving in the moment.	Reduce verbal demands, allow processing time, provide a predictable regulation option, reconnect before problem-solving.
Assessment anxiety	Evaluation is being experienced as threat; fear of failure or embarrassment.	Preview expectations, increase predictability, break assessment into manageable portions, establish a check-in/regulation plan.
Transition difficulties	Difficulty shifting attention or expectations; uncertainty about what comes next.	Individual advance warning, visual cue, transition routine, brief adult connection before the transition.
Peer conflict	Social interpretation difficulties, emotional activation, rejection sensitivity, impulsivity.	Adult proximity, pre-correction, structured peer interaction, co-regulation before conflict resolution.

Understand the **why**. Provide the **support**. Keep the learner engaged.

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Regulation Before Expectation

SUPPORT THE NERVOUS SYSTEM BEFORE RAISING THE BAR

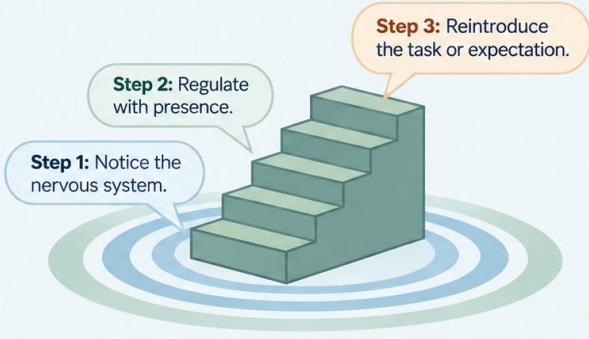
The Trap: Traditional Sequence



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graph TD
    A[Demand] --> B[Increased Distress]
    B --> C[Escalation]
    C --> D[Consequence]
  
```

The Scaffold: Trauma-Informed Sequence



This isn't permissiveness; it's prioritization.
We are not lowering the bar; we are scaffolding the ladder.

9

Co-Regulation Is Not the Same as Permissiveness

Supporting students through emotions does not mean allowing all behaviours.
An effective adult posture combines empathy with leadership.

For example:

"I can see that you're angry because it's time to stop playing. It's okay to be angry. I won't let you hit."

The adult accepts the emotion while maintaining the boundary.

Students need both:

- Acceptance of their feelings
- Guidance around their actions

This balance helps students learn that all emotions are acceptable, even when some behaviours are not.



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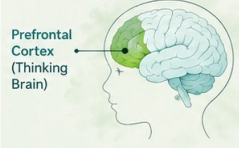
The Brain Learns Best *in a State of Safety*

Research in neuroscience has shown that children's brains are designed to **prioritize safety before learning**.

When children feel **emotionally safe**, the parts of the brain responsible for thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and learning are more accessible.

When children feel **threatened, overwhelmed, or disconnected**, the brain shifts into **survival mode**.

Safe & Connected LEARNING MODE



Prefrontal Cortex (Thinking Brain)

Calm. Curious. Open.
Ready to learn.

Threatened & Stressed SURVIVAL MODE



Amygdala (Survival Brain)

Alert. Defensive. Overwhelmed.
Focused on staying safe.

↔

This means that before children can fully engage in learning, they must first experience a sense of **emotional security**.

In a state of stress, children are more likely to:

- ❗ Become reactive or impulsive
- 🎯 Have difficulty concentrating
- 😞 Struggle to follow directions
- ⚡ Experience emotional outbursts
- 👤 Withdraw from participation
- 📖 Have difficulty retaining new information

A child who feels safe is far more available for learning than a child who is focused on managing anxiety, uncertainty, or fear.



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EDUCATOR'S FIELD GUIDE

You Cannot Reason with *an Overwhelmed Brain*

The Biological Reality

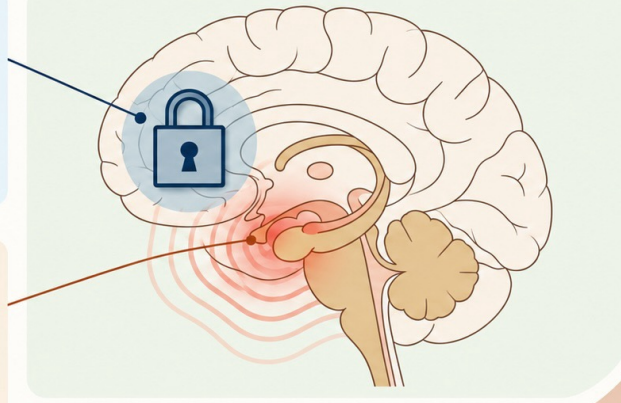


In moments of stress, frustration, or conflict, a student's "thinking brain" becomes less accessible. They are operating entirely from emotional overwhelm.

The Intervention Failure



Because the reasoning centers are offline, lectures, consequences, and logical reasoning processes are mere noise to the student's nervous system.



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The Posture IS the Intervention

SAFETY CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING



At Tier 2, you cannot talk a student into feeling safe.
Safety is an autonomic experience.

Your **predictability**, your strategic timing, and your unwavering **physical calm** are not merely the prerequisites for an intervention.
They are the intervention itself.



Tier 2 Reality
When a student is dysregulated, logic, reasoning, and conversation do not create safety.



Your Role
Your predictability, strategic timing, and physical calm set the conditions for learning.



The Key Takeaway
You cannot make a student feel safe in the moment — safety is an autonomic experience.
Your posture is the intervention.

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Safety is Created Through Everyday Experiences.



People Matter Here

- 

Safety isn't just for crises.
One misconception is that safety is created only during crises. In reality, students decide whether school feels safe through hundreds of small, daily interactions.
- Examples of everyday experiences that build safety:**

Predictable routines	Consistent responses	Warm greetings	Humour	Being remembered
Respectful correction	Opportunities for choice	Emotional availability	Adults repairing mistakes	Seeing peers treated with dignity

Everyday interactions build a sense of **safety**.

These experiences communicate:
"This is a place where I can relax enough to learn."

Safety is therefore not an event.
It is a culture.

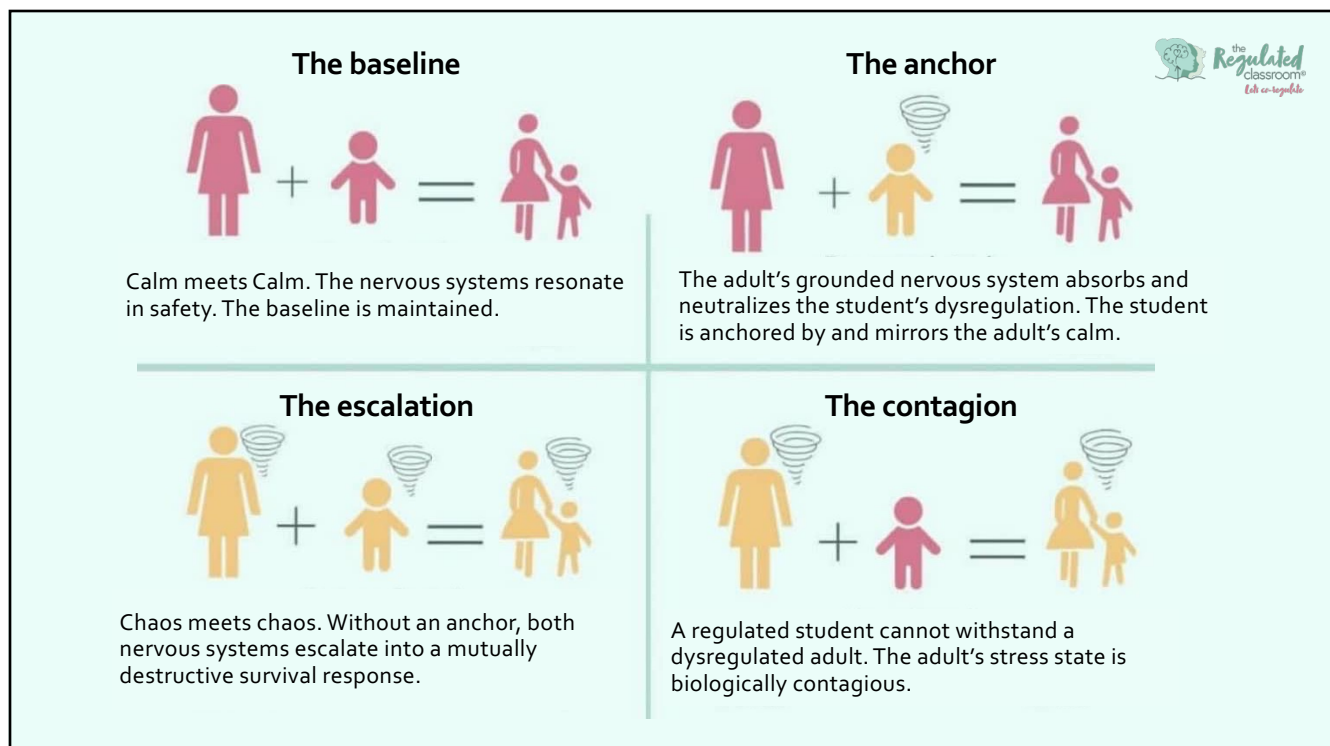
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The Pre-Response Pause



You cannot co-regulate a student if you are dysregulated.
The deliberate pause is where the strong posture is maintained.

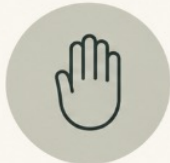
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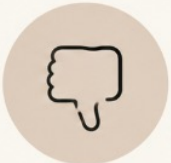
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Know Your Triggers

What student behaviours get under your skin?



Refusal



Disrespect



Swearing



Ignoring



Arguing



Aggression



TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT...

Which behaviours are most challenging for you?
What might be underneath your reaction?

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What Happens in **YOUR** Body?

What tells you that you're becoming activated?



Jaw
(clenched)



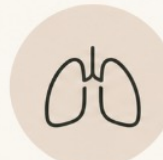
Shoulders
(tight)



Heart rate
(faster)



Voice
(shifts)



Breathing
(shallower)



Urge to react
(stronger)



TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT...

What are your early warning signs?
How can you notice them sooner?

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Individual Reflection Question



MY REGULATION ROADMAP:

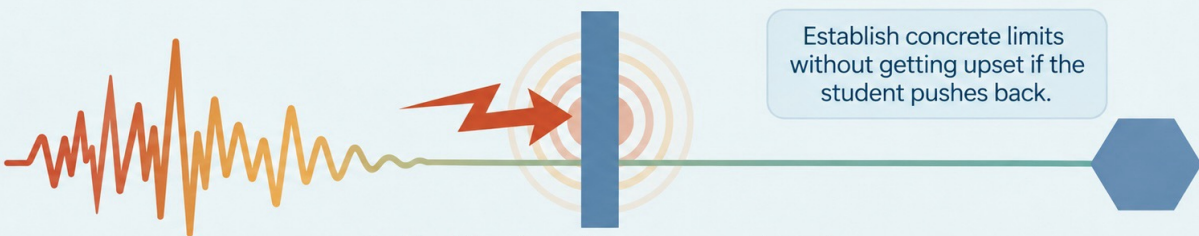
We cannot co-regulate a student unless we are regulated ourselves. Co-regulation starts with self-awareness of our own physiological triggers and our warning signs of activation.

Outline your physiological profile below so you can catch your activation early:

- **My Personal Classroom Triggers** (e.g., screaming, backtalk, eye-rolling)
- **My Warning Signs** (e.g., shallow breath, racing heart, clenching jaw)
- **My In-the-Moment Regulation Strategies** (e.g., deep breath, pausing, physical step back)

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The Grounded Pushback Response



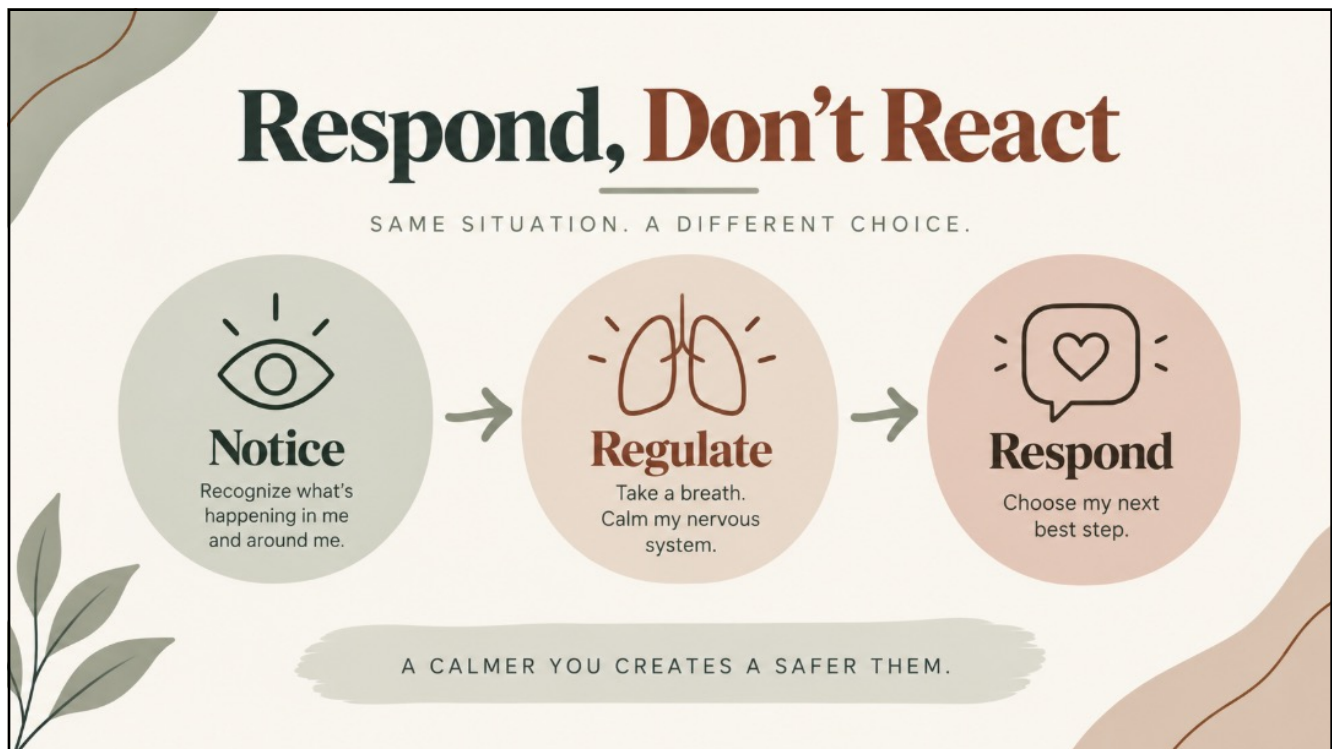
Establish concrete limits
without getting upset if the
student pushes back.

Pushback is a data point, not a personal attack.
Manage the environment through co-regulation rather than emotional reaction.

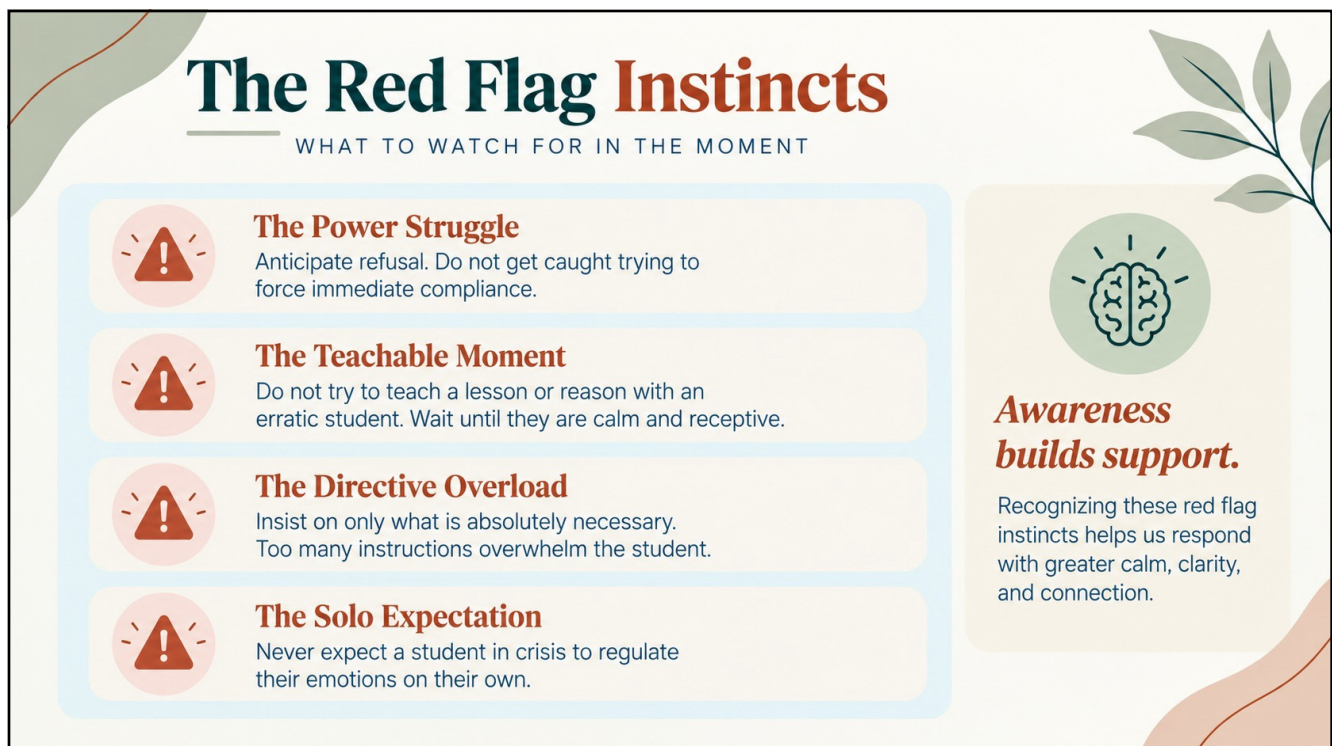


You cannot co-regulate a student if you are dysregulated.
The deliberate pause is where the strong posture is maintained.

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The Educator's Pause: A Diagnostic Tool

WHEN CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS, HIT PAUSE AND ASK YOURSELF:

- 1 What might this student be **communicating** through this behaviour? 
- 2 Is this student giving me a **hard time**, or having a hard time? 
- 3 What **need, emotion, or skill deficit** might be contributing to this situation? 
- 4 How can I maintain the **boundary** while strictly preserving the relationship? 
- 5 What **specific support** does this student need to be successful right now? 

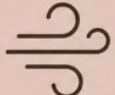

Pause to respond with purpose.

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Regulate Yourself First

A CALMER YOU SUPPORTS A CALMER THEM.








Slow your voice. Lower your volume. Exhale. Ground your body. Create space. Pause before speaking.

YOUR REGULATION CHANGES THE MOMENT.

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The Bridge: The Discipline of Timing

KNOW WHEN TO WAIT, AND WHEN TO ACT



LOW ZONE

You may only cross the bridge to address the behavior when the student has fully returned to a state of calm and is neurologically open and receptive.



The Waiting Period

When a student is upset, do not attempt to process the event or give corrective feedback immediately.



Strategic Patience

Wait until a more appropriate time to address the situation.



The Green Zone

You may only cross the bridge to address the behavior when the student has fully returned to a state of calm and is neurologically open and receptive.

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The Power of Consistency

THE ALIGNMENT MATRIX

	 Inconsistent Modeling	 Consistent Modeling
 The Scenario	Teaching kindness while speaking harshly. Promoting emotional regulation while reacting impulsively.	Embodying the exact social and emotional skills being taught.
 The Student's Experience	Cognitive dissonance and confusion.	Authentic, meaningful learning and deep internalization.



Key Takeaway

Students learn most effectively when the behaviour that adults model is in perfect alignment with the values that they teach.



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Student Preventive Action Plan

A proactive tool to support student success.

Identify needs
Understand triggers and challenges.

Plan ahead
Use proactive strategies and supports.

Promote success
Build safety, confidence, and independence.

STUDENT ACTIVE PREVENTION/SAFETY PLAN (giving priority to prevention)

Student name: _____ DOB: _____
 School/Board: _____ Grade Level: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Student's needs/challenges/triggers	Specific objectives* related to the needs/challenges/triggers	Best practices/approaches** related to the objectives	Selected tools/support measures related to the practices
Plan B for a difficult time or activity		Plan B for a difficult day	

* The objectives are meant to be anchored in the adult posture and the selected support measures to scaffold/compensate for the needs and challenges
 ** The practices are meant to be preventive/proactive rather than waiting for the problem to arise to intervene. The division of adult roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined

Prevent challenges.
Build brighter days. ♥

Same template.
Greater possibilities. ♥

Access the template here:
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/tier-2-targeted-practices>

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Individual Reflection Question

TARGETED Practices
for **SOME** students at Tier 2

REFLECTION ON TIER 2 PRACTICES:

- How can I tell if a student needs Tier 2 targeted support?
- How should I adjust my role and posture to meet this student's heightened emotional needs (e.g., adopt a neutral physical stance, display non-threatening expressions and use a calming tone)?
- Do any of my students have some sort of Preventive Action Plan in place with targeted measures?

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