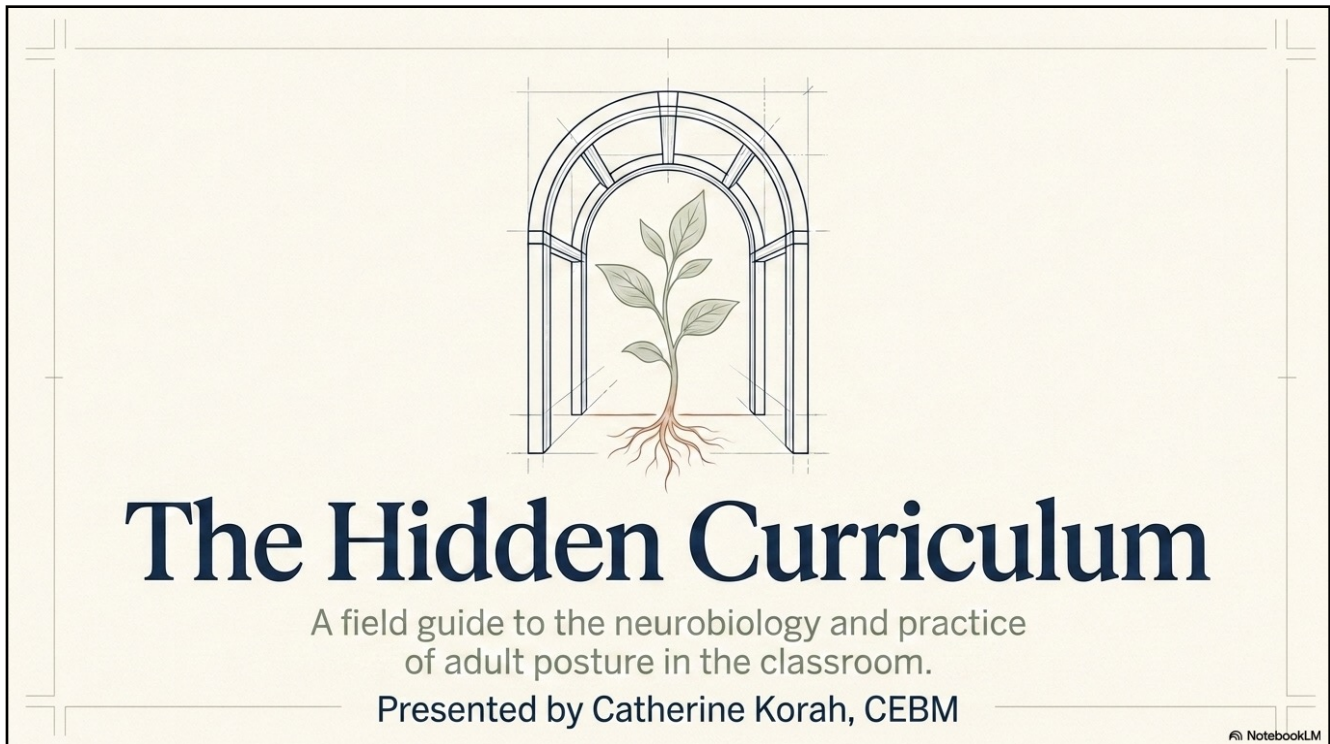
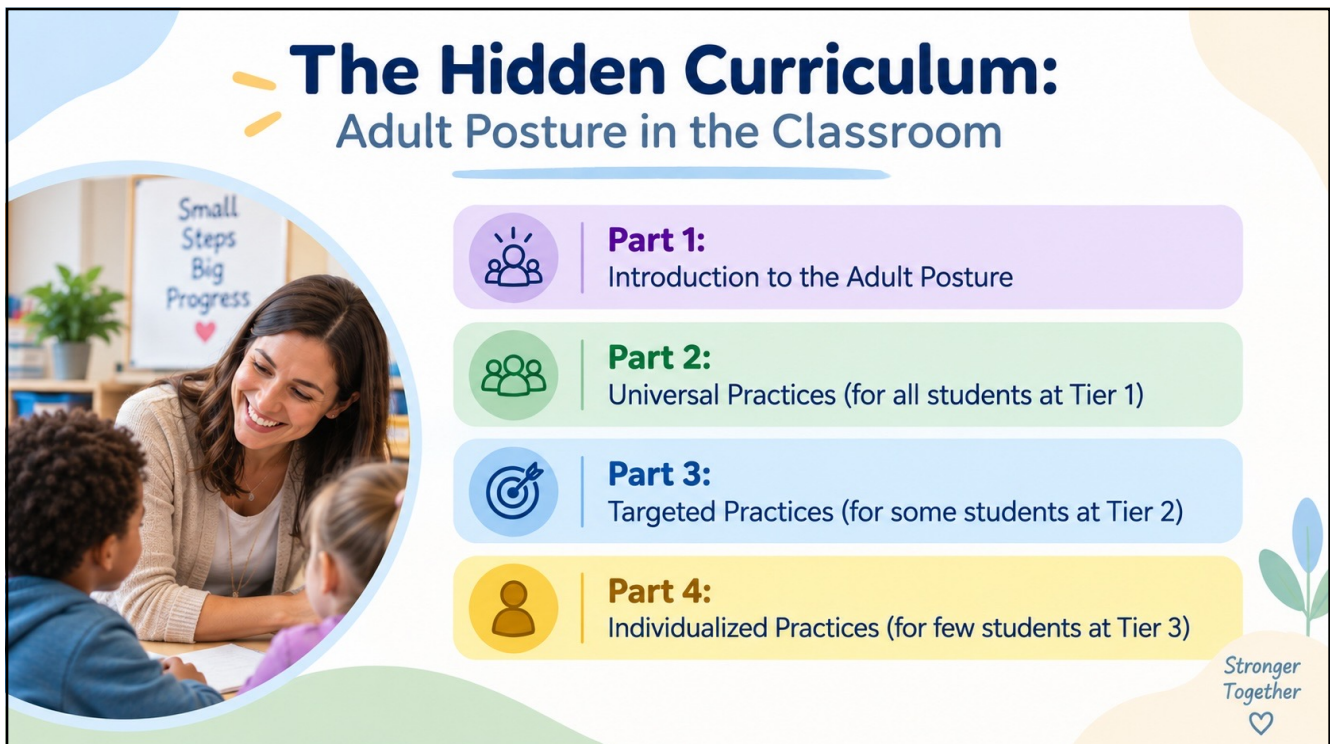




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2



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?





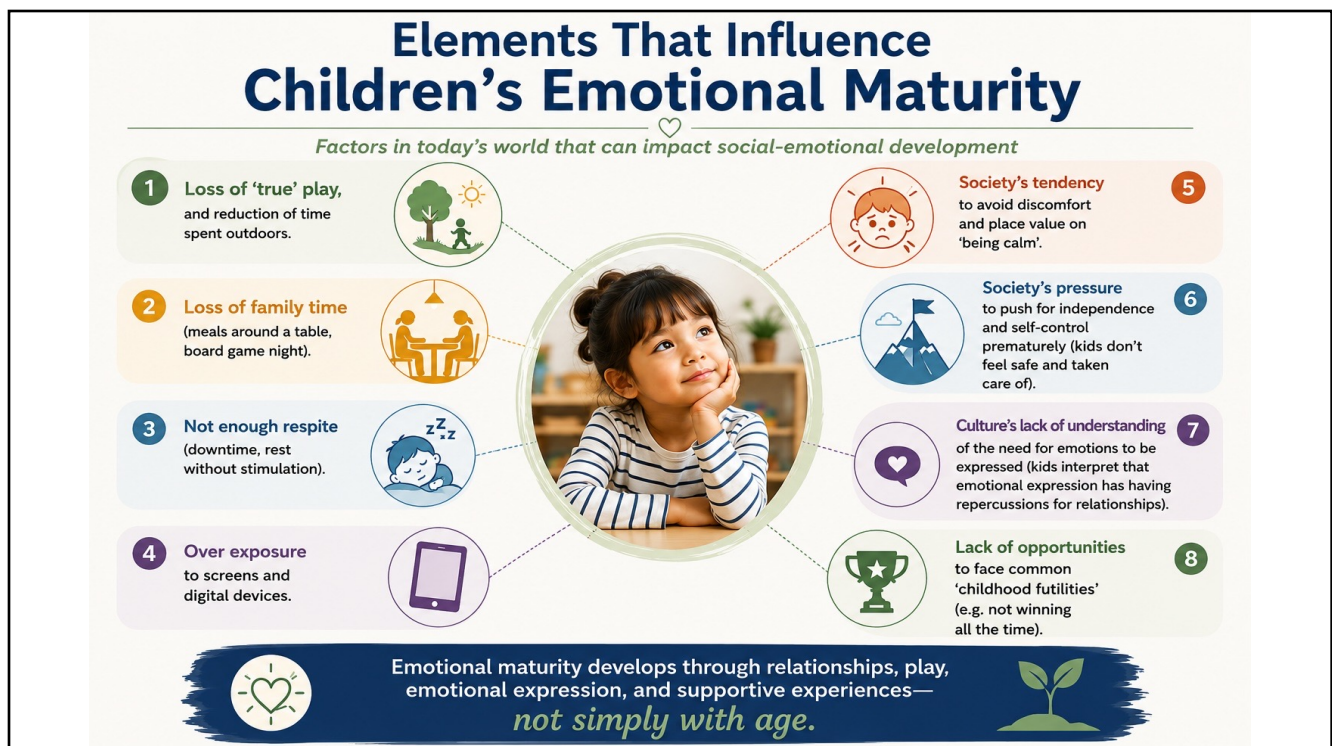
This perspective encourages **humility** and **continuous growth**.



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:

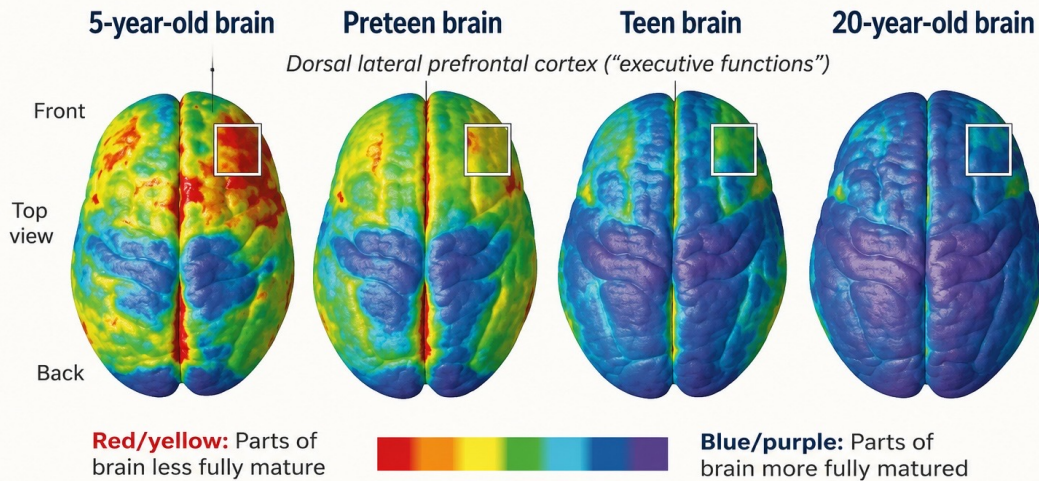


Image from the National Institute of Mental Health; Paul Thompson, Ph.D., UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging

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

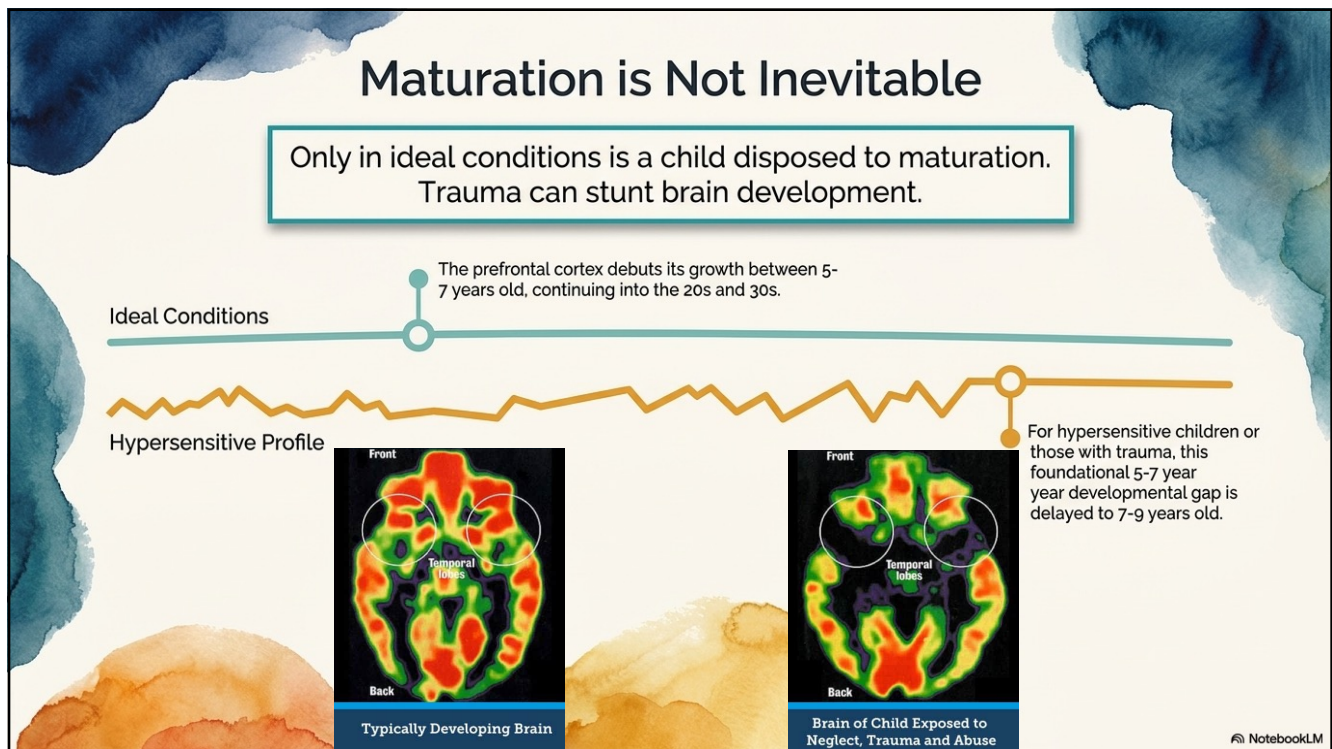
Resisting sudden impulses, managing reactions, and thinking before action.



Initiation

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

8

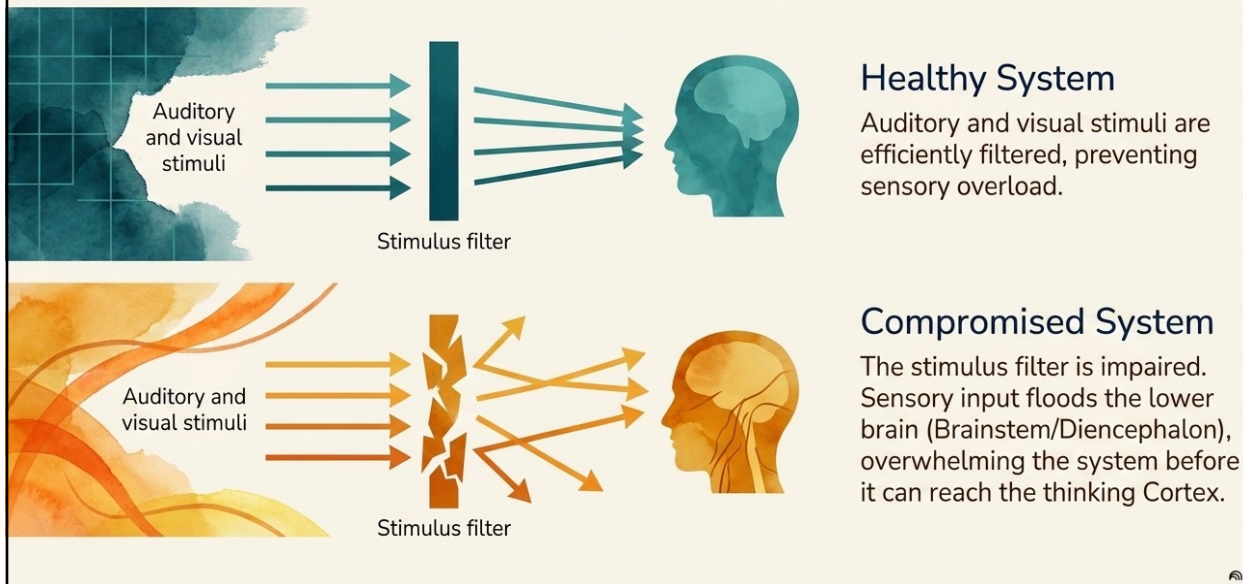


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10

The Filter: Sensory Gating



NotebookLM

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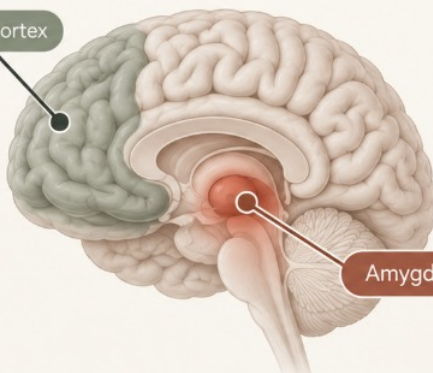
Neurological Flooding

WHEN THE BRAIN PERCEIVES THREAT, SURVIVAL TAKES OVER.

Thinking Brain ↓

- Language
- Reasoning
- Impulse control
- Flexible thinking

Prefrontal Cortex



Amygdala

Survival Brain ↑

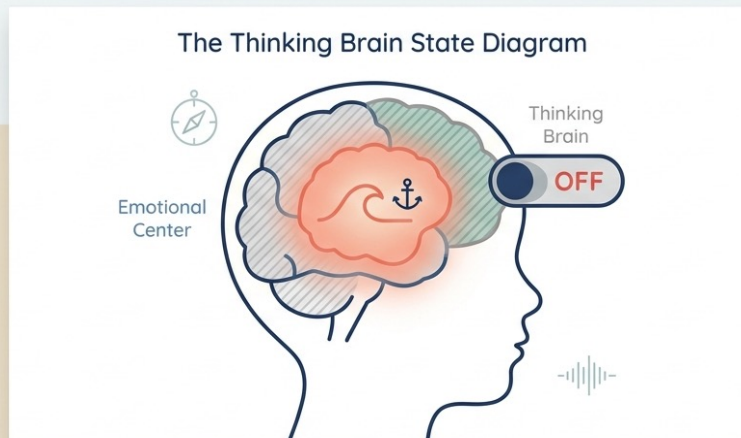
- Detects threat
- Triggers alarm
- Activates stress response

WHEN THE BRAIN FEELS UNSAFE,
SAFETY COMES BEFORE LEARNING.

12

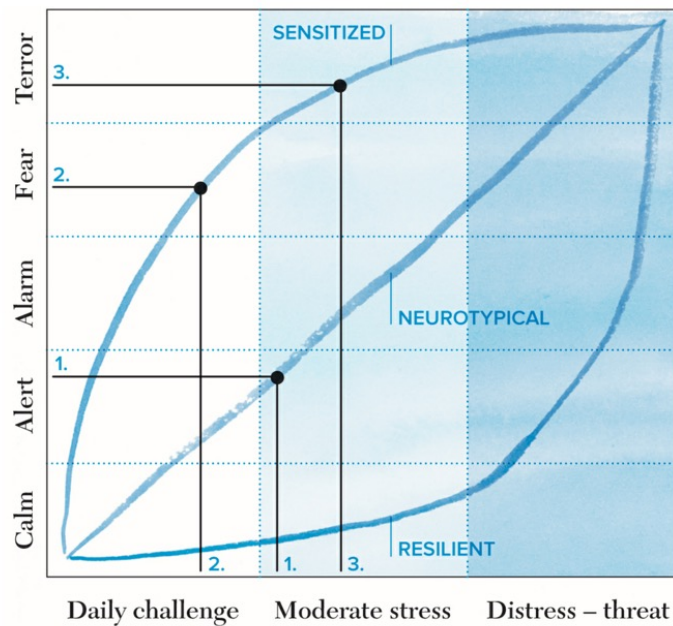
The thinking brain shuts down during emotional distress

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



NotebookLM

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

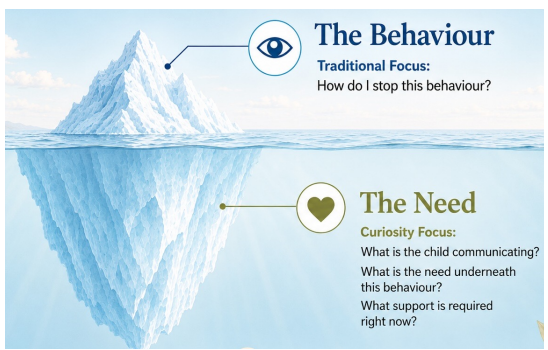
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15



Individual Reflection Question



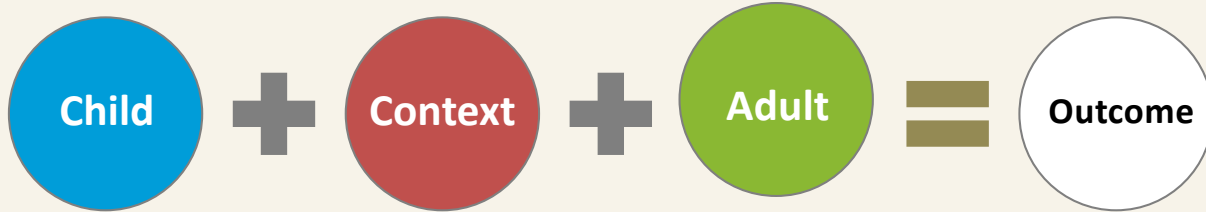
REFRAMING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR:

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.

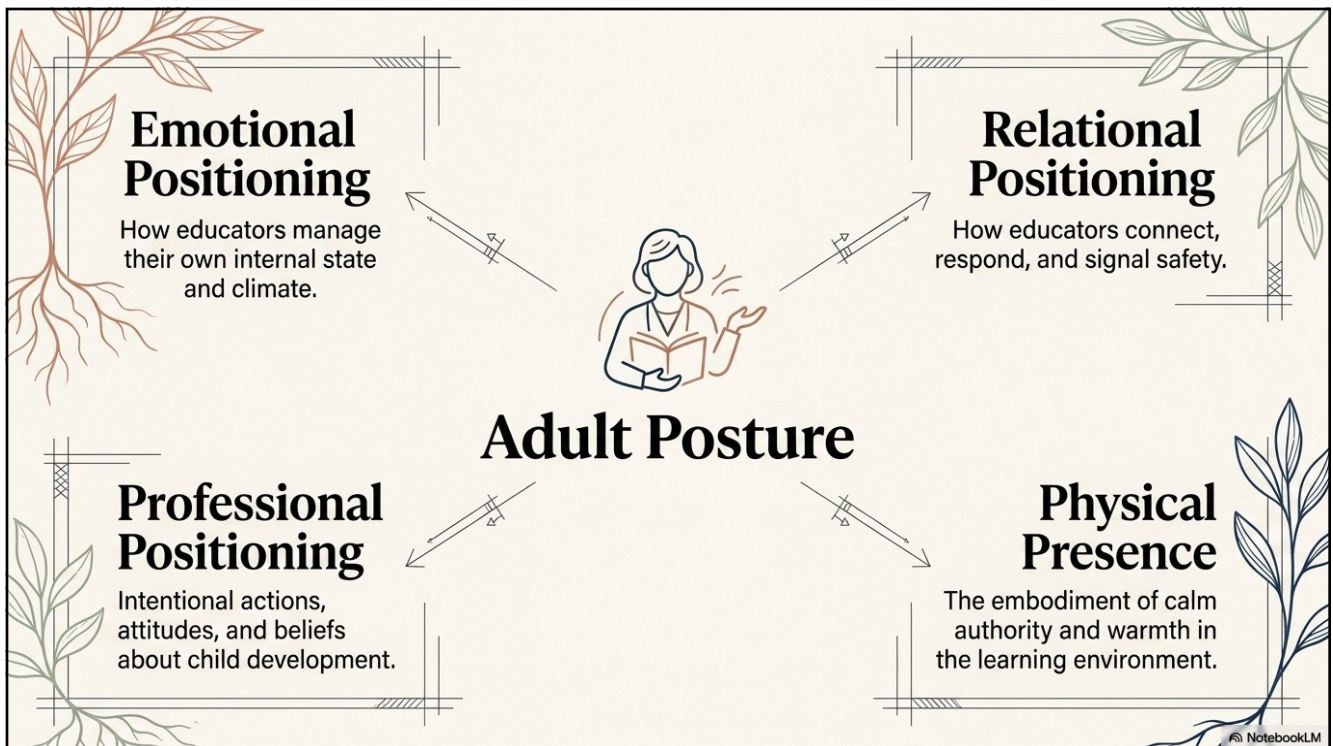
- Impact of the physical
space (size of the room,
space to move, etc.)
- Sensory input
- Type of activity going on
- Level of structure/
predictability
- Social impact (makeup of
the group, dynamics with
peers)
- Support measures in
place
- Support from other staff

- 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.)

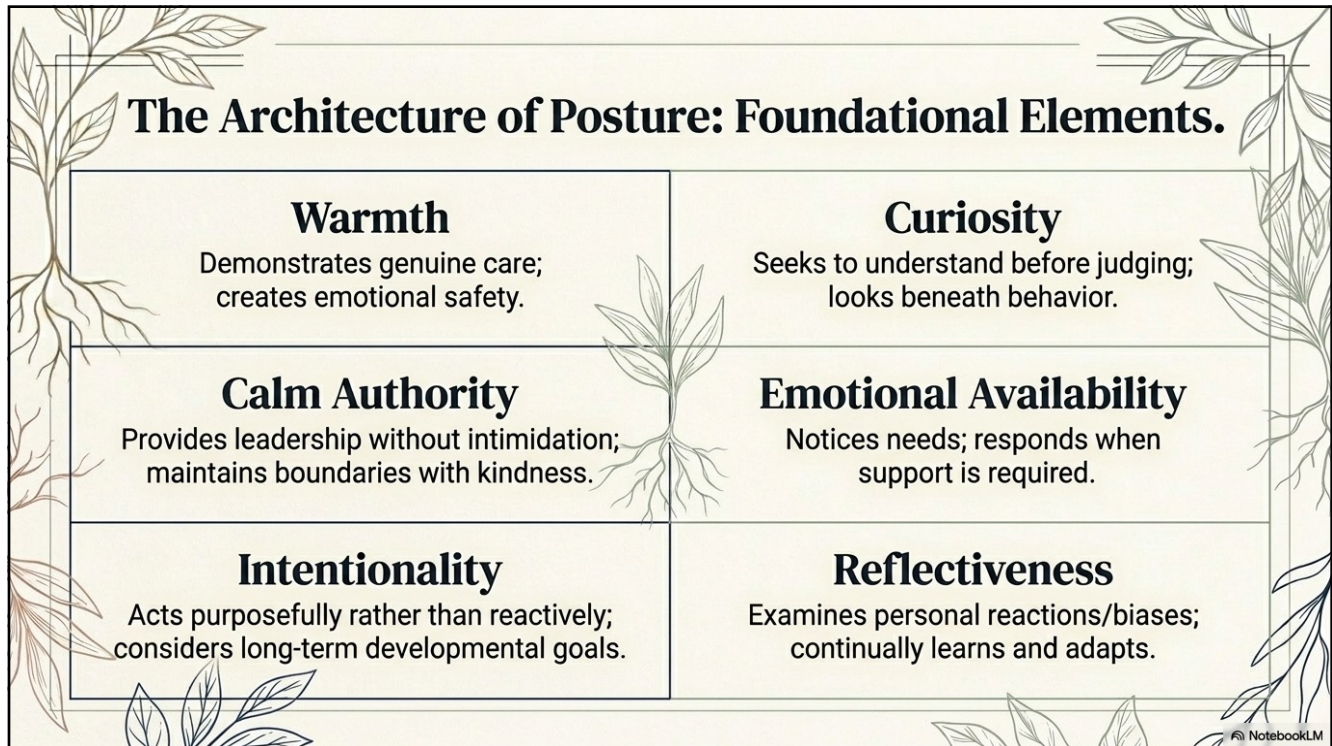
- Shift in child/adult
dynamic
- Possibly an escalation
or a de-escalation in
the child's behaviour
- Outcome becomes
problematic or is
resolved
- Debrief/follow-up?



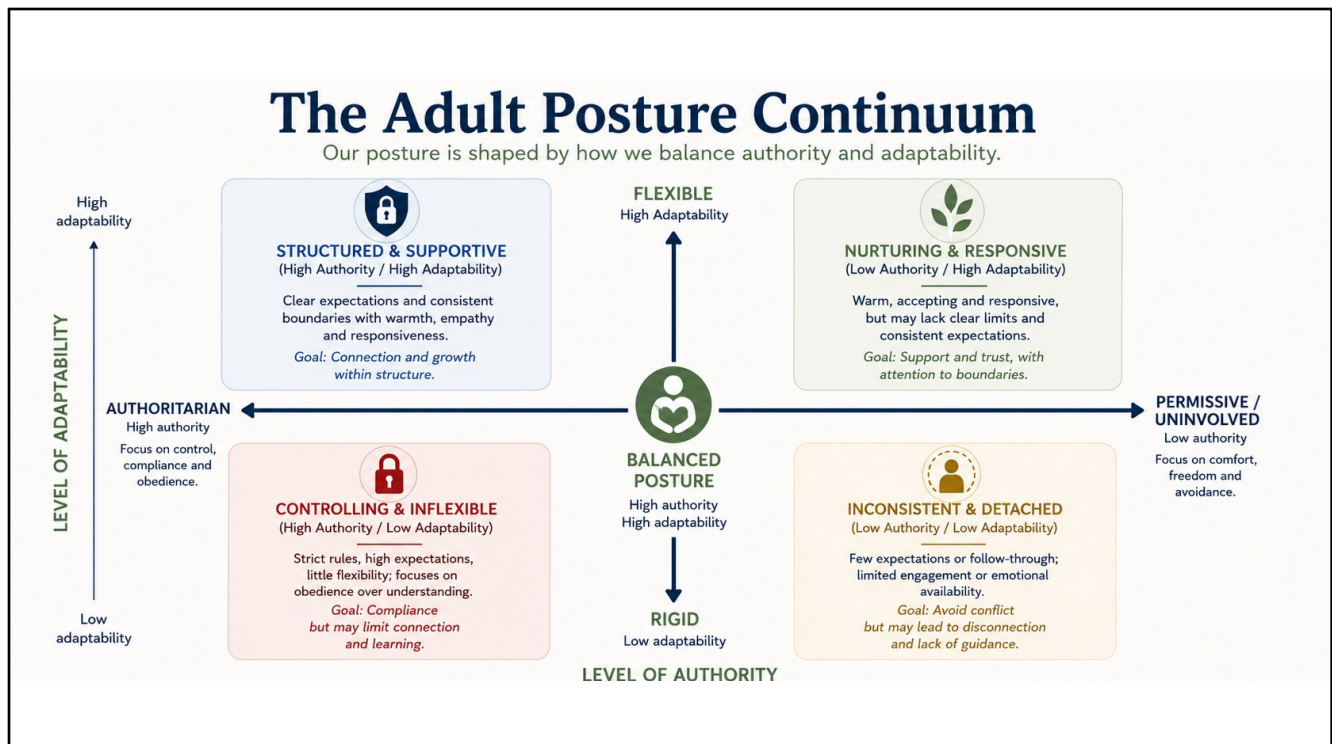
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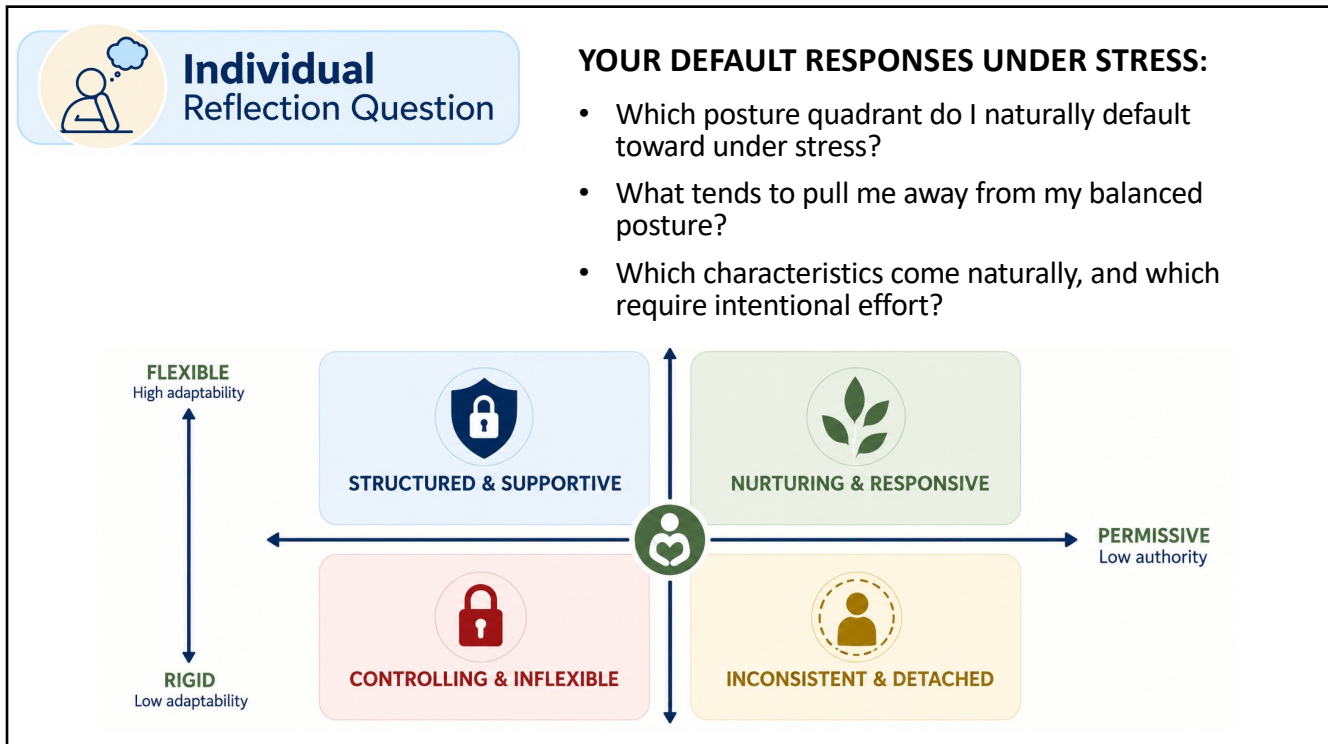
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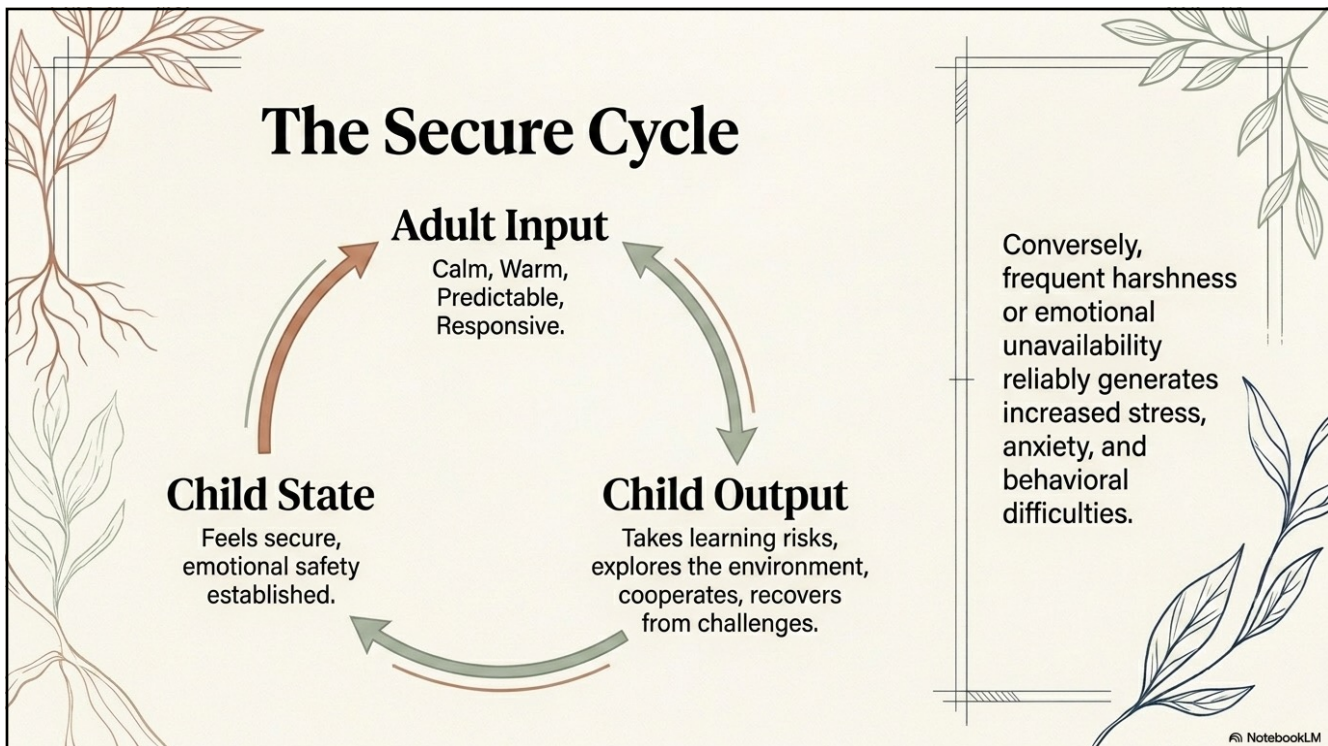
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4



5



6

Attunement Versus Technique



Attunement means **accurately noticing** and **responding** to another person's emotional state while remaining **grounded** ourselves.



It is different from simply following a protocol.



One statement may feel deeply comforting.

Two adults may say exactly the same words:

“I can see that you're upset.”



The difference is not the script—it is the **relationship** and the **authenticity** behind it.



The other may feel dismissive or mechanical.

Attuned adults:



notice subtle changes in behaviour



adjust their expectations to the student's current state



remain flexible



communicate genuine curiosity



respond rather than react



Students do not need perfect adults.

They need adults who are emotionally present enough to notice them.

7

Adult Authenticity



Students quickly recognize authenticity.



They do not expect adults to be perfect.



They expect adults to be genuine.



AUTHENTICITY MEANS:



acknowledging mistakes



apologizing when necessary



modelling emotional regulation



demonstrating humility



showing consistency between words and actions



When adults repair relational ruptures, they teach one of the most valuable lessons children can learn:

Relationships can experience difficulty and still remain safe.



This models **resilience** rather than **perfection**.



8

Relational Trust as a Protective Factor



Trust develops through thousands of **predictable interactions** rather than occasional grand gestures.



Students build trust when adults are:



- emotionally consistent
- respectful
- dependable
- fair
- calm during conflict
- available after mistakes

Relational trust creates psychological safety.



When trust is strong:

- students seek help earlier
- they tolerate challenge more effectively
- they recover more quickly from setbacks
- they accept feedback more readily
- they remain engaged despite difficulties



Trust functions as a **protective factor** that buffers stress and supports learning.



9



Relationship *as the* Foundation for Cooperation



Children are naturally more inclined to **cooperate** with adults with whom they feel **safe, connected, and valued**. When children experience adults as allies rather than adversaries, they are more likely to:

- Accept guidance
- Follow expectations
- Repair mistakes
- Seek help when needed
- Take responsibility for their actions



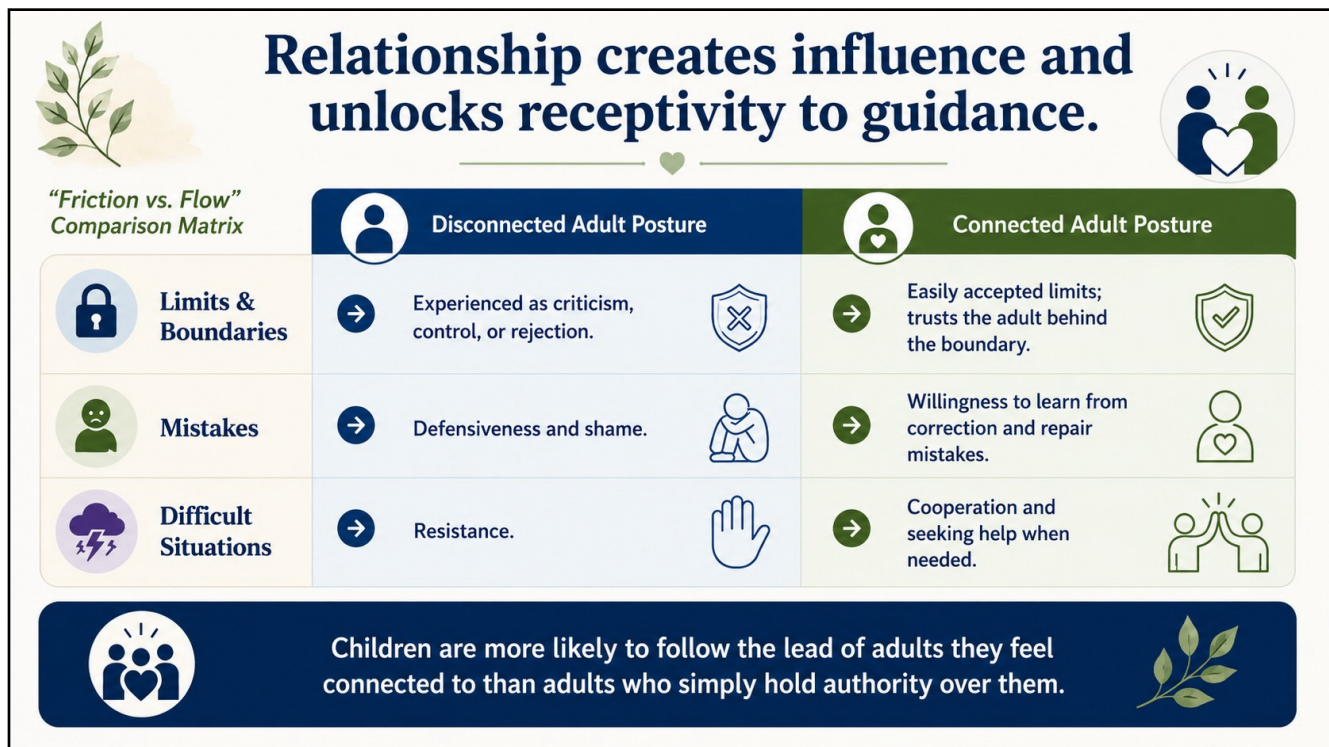
This is because *relationship creates influence*.
The strongest source of adult influence is not authority alone but connection.



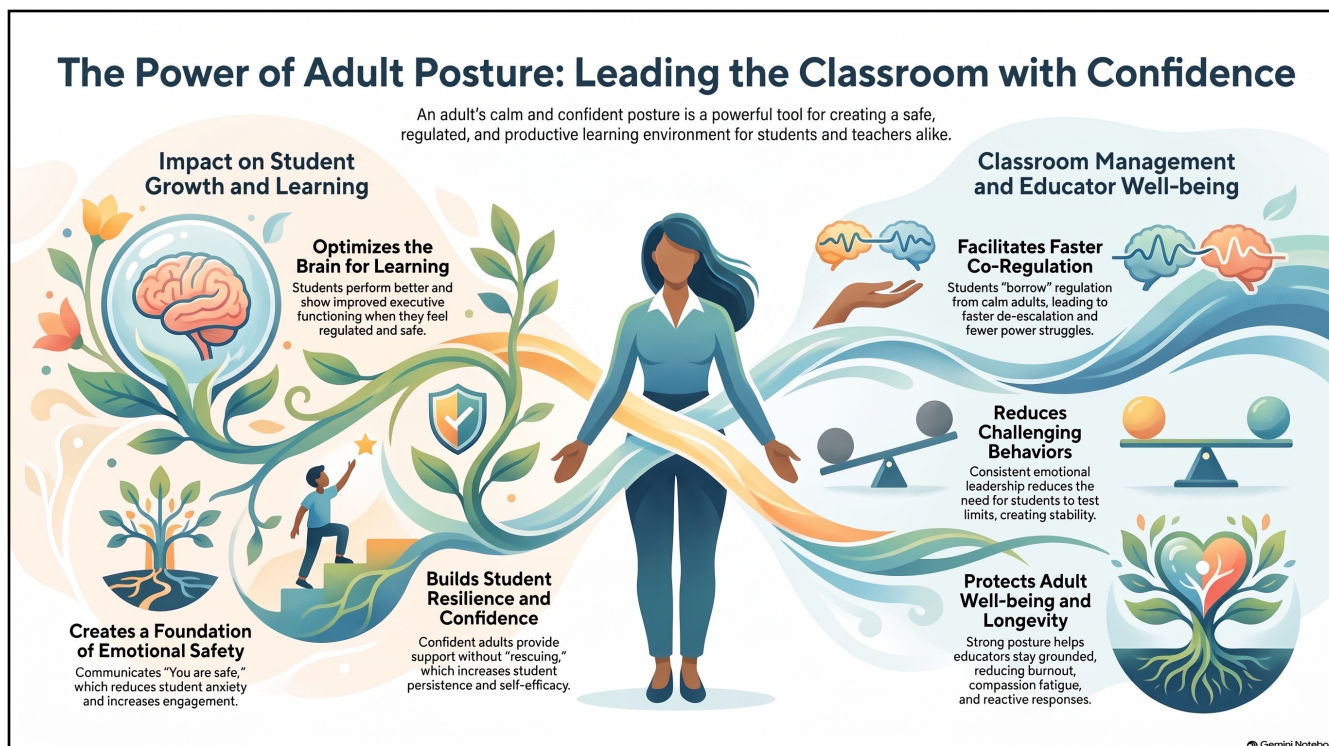
“As developmental psychologist Gordon Neufeld often emphasizes, children are most receptive to guidance from adults to whom they feel attached.
Connection opens the door to cooperation.”



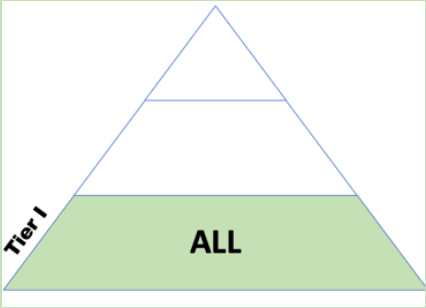
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12



PART 2:
UNIVERSAL Practices
for ALL students at Tier 1

1

Support scales with student needs



Tier 3: For few

Tier 2: For some

Tier 1: For all

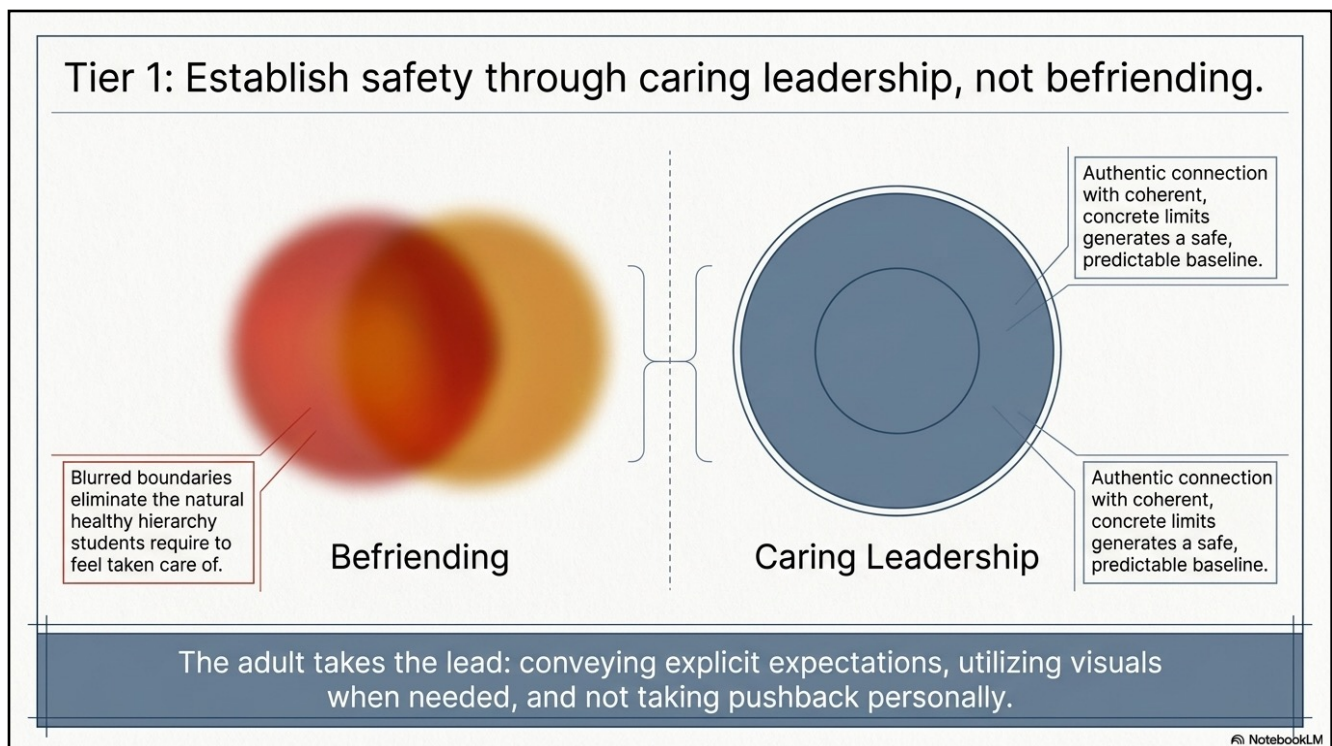
A Multi-Tiered System of Accompaniment relies on a structured escalation of care. We do not wait for problems to arise. Instead, we build a proactive environment where interventions grow more focused and specialized only when foundational practices are insufficient.

NotebookLM

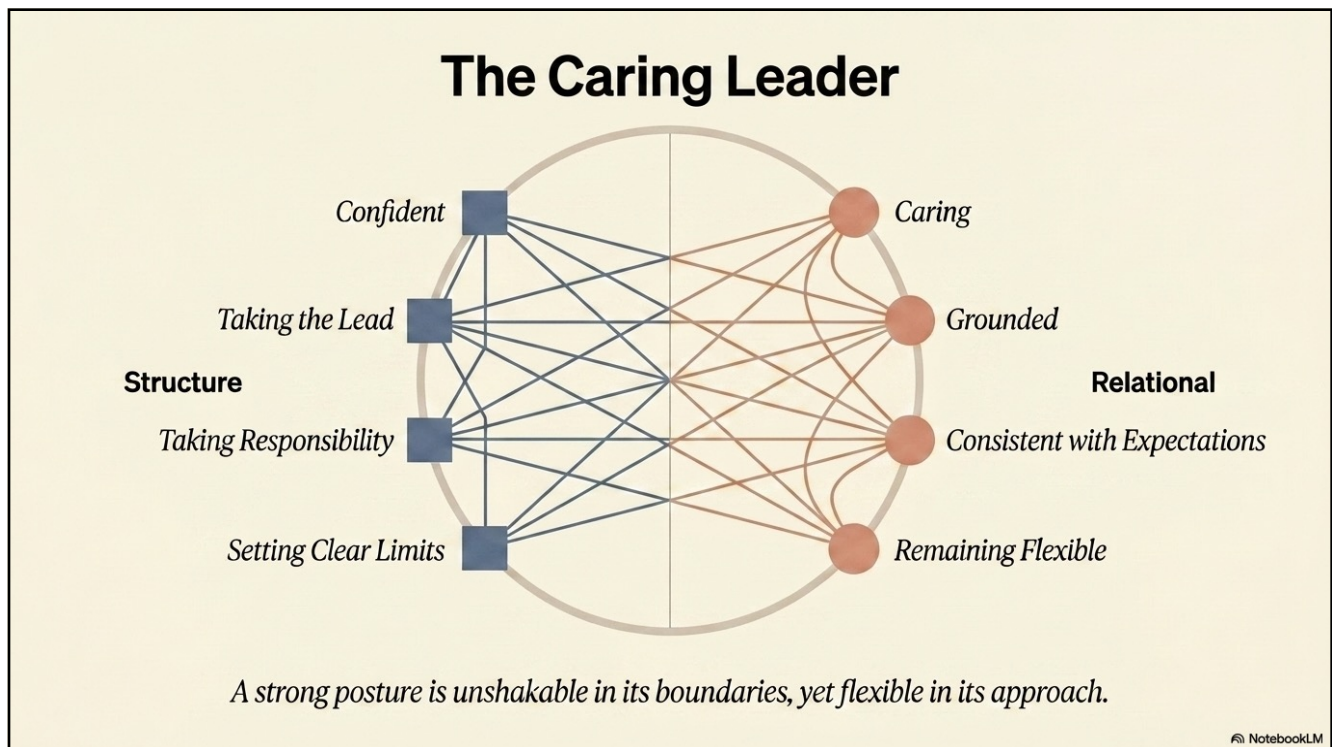
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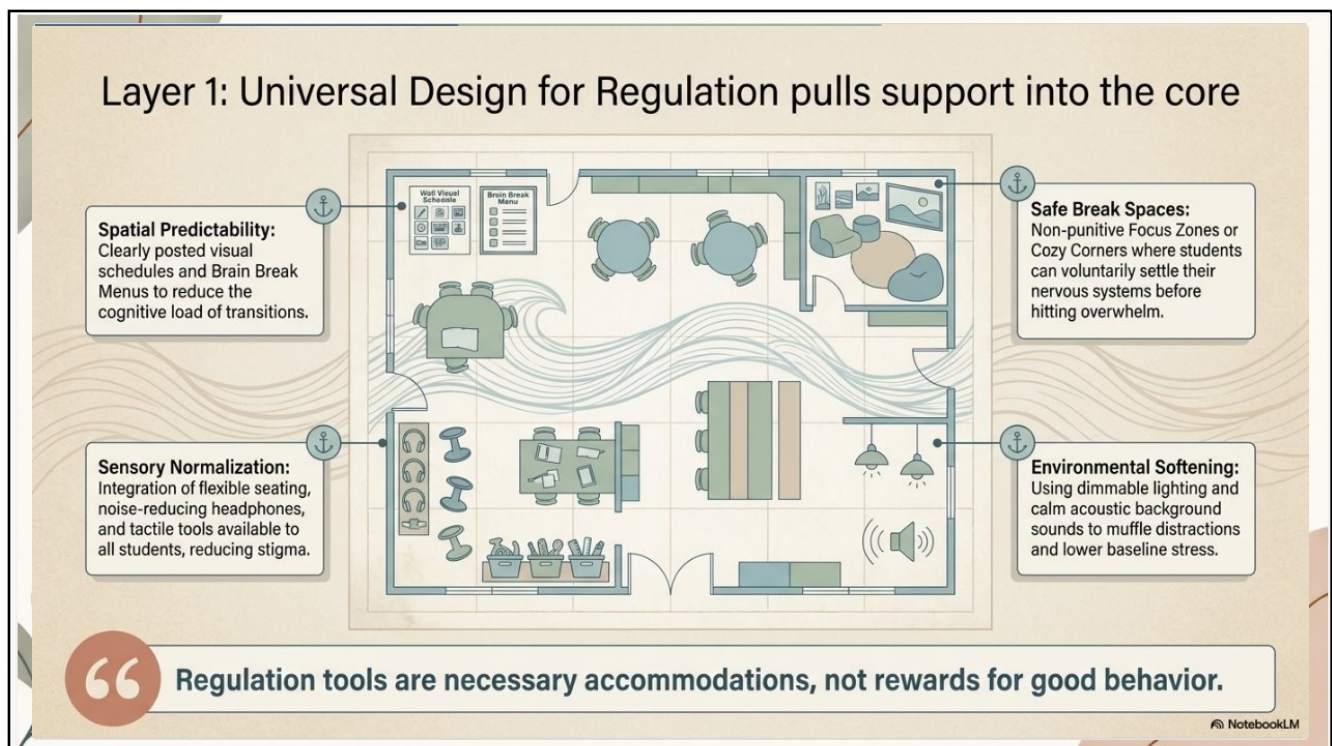
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5



6

Well established classroom structures and routines

⇒ To create consistency and predictability. ⇒

Our Classroom Routine

-  Hang up your coat and book bag.
-  Put your papers in the basket.
-  Answer the question of the day.
-  Write your name on your paper.

Today we have _____.

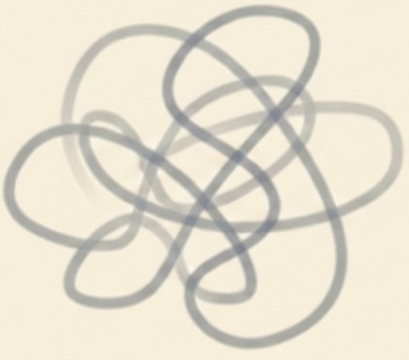
music
art
gym
guidance

Some of the key suggestions:

-  • Having a clear and explicit routine around the morning arrival, transition, or end-of-day/period departure
-  • Offering homework/assignment turn-in trays with labels
-  • Setting up structure around independent work time & asking for help
-  • Notifying students, when possible, of any changes in routine (special activities, teacher absences)

7

Explicit Expectations


→



Lengthy explanations cause students to get lost.

Speak clearly and give instructions in a concise, direct manner.

Convey explicitly what is expected of them.

Use visuals if needed to bypass cognitive overload.

Establish coherent and concrete limits and boundaries.

NotebookLM

8



Clear and explicit classroom expectations



To help clarify with students what a positive learning environment looks like.

Some of the key suggestions:

- 

Regularly modeling the classroom expectations throughout the school year
- 

Providing a variety of engaging and playful ways to prompt students (through stories, chants, role-playing, games)
- 

Offering a variety of visuals to help prompt students (poster of classroom expectations, hand signals for common requests)

IN OUR classroom

-  WE ARE ON TIME, PREPARED, AND READY TO LEARN
-  WE CLEAN UP AFTER OURSELVES
-  WE RESPECT OTHERS AND RESPECT OURSELVES
-  WE LISTEN WHEN OTHERS ARE TALKING
-  WE ALWAYS USE KIND WORDS
-  WE BELIEVE IN OURSELVES AND TRY OUR BEST



9

Firm Care



Boundary

"The answer is still no."

- "You can't have the iPad right now."
- "That language is not okay."
- "You need to stay in the classroom."



Regulation

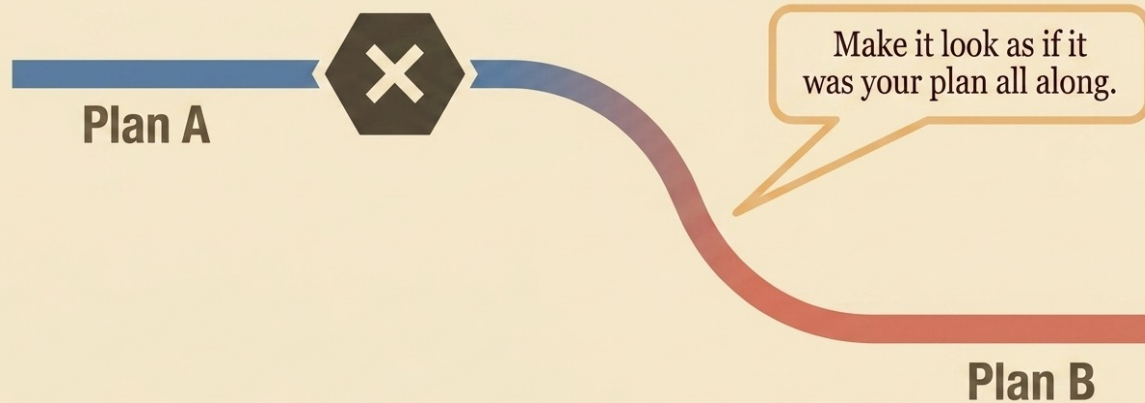
"I'm going to help you through the no."

- "I know it's hard to wait. I'm here with you until it's time."
- "I won't let you use that language. Let's find a calmer way to say it."
- "I see that you don't want to go. I'll walk with you and help you get started."

10

The Art of the Pivot

Adjust flexibly when things don't go as planned.
Ensure you have a backup plan as an alternative solution.



NotebookLM

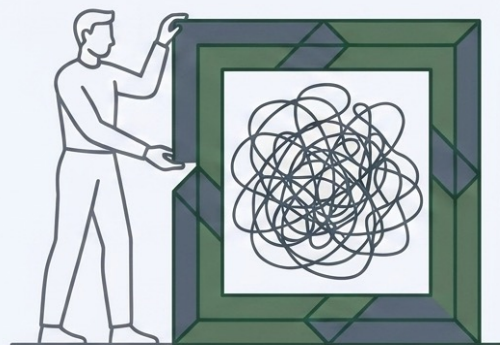
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The Core Insight of a Strong Posture

We cannot directly control student behaviour. We manage the circumstances and the environment, relying on co-regulation and de-escalation.



Controlling the Uncontrollable



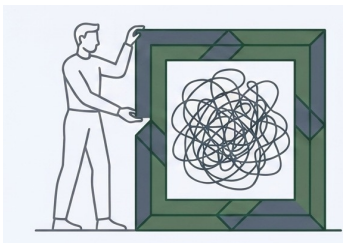
Managing the Environment

NotebookLM

12



Individual Reflection Question



A TALE OF TWO CONVERSATIONS:

Attunement is about emotional presence, not just saying the right words. It requires us to check our own internal alignment before engaging.

Reflect on two recent conversations to understand how internal attunement shifts results:

- A conversation with a student that **went well** (What was your emotional state?)
- A conversation that escalated or **went poorly** (What was different about YOU?)

13

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice

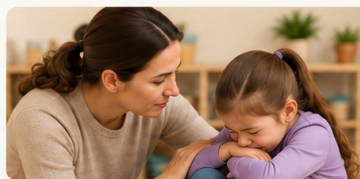


During Emotional Upset: From Control to Co-Regulation



When children experience emotional overwhelm, they need **presence more than instruction**.

Their nervous system is not ready for reasoning or correction; it is seeking safety and regulation.



This subtle shift is powerful. "Calm down" often feels dismissive or demanding, so a child who is already overwhelmed. It signals that emotional expression is unacceptable.

In contrast, "I'm here" communicates **steadiness, safety, and support**.



INSTEAD OF: a directive such as:

"Calm down."



AN ATTUNED ADULT might say:

"You're having a hard time right now. I'm here."



In these moments, the adult posture focuses on:



Staying physically and emotionally grounded



Reducing stimulation and pressure



Naming the emotional experience



Offering calm presence rather than immediate solutions



Denies the individual's internal reality.

Stop crying. You're fine. Calm down.



Validates the present emotional state without trying to immediately fix it.

You're having a hard time right now. I'm here.

Radical proximity. Safety is established through presence, not solutions. Invites collaboration to solve the root cause of the behavior.



The goal is not to rush the child out of **their** emotion, but to help them **move through it safely**.

The adult becomes an **emotional anchor** until the child can regain regulation.



14

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice



During Mistakes: From Correction to Learning Opportunity



Mistakes are a natural and essential part of learning.

However, the way adults respond to mistakes shapes whether children associate error with **shame** or with **growth**.



THIS RESPONSE DOES SEVERAL IMPORTANT THINGS:

- It removes judgment from the learning process.
- It separates the child's identity from the outcome.
- It normalizes struggle as part of learning.
- It invites persistence and exploration.

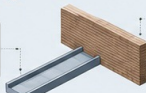


INSTEAD OF:

That's wrong.

JUDGMENT

Focuses on the person, not the process.



Finality. The interaction ends in failure.



AN EDUCATOR MIGHT SAY:

You haven't figured it out yet. Let's try another way.

PROCESS-ORIENTATION



Anatomy of a Script: The Growth Mindset Trigger Transforms a permanent failure into a temporary step in the learning process.

Focuses cognitive energy on the process, not the person.



Over time, they begin to internalize the idea:

"I can learn, even when I don't get it right the first time."



This is a foundation for *lifelong learning and resilience.*



When adults respond with curiosity, compassion, and calm leadership, *children feel safe, supported, and able to regulate.*

15

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice



During Challenging Behaviour: From Judgment to Understanding



Challenging behaviour can easily trigger frustration in adults, especially when it disrupts learning or impacts others.

However, an adult posture grounded in curiosity and connection reframes behaviour as communication rather than character.



INSTEAD OF:

BLAME

Forces the nervous system into immediate defense mode.

What's wrong with you?



AN EDUCATOR MIGHT SAY:

CURIOSITY

Something seems difficult for you right now. Let's see what you need.

Anatomy of a Script: Re-frames reactive behavior as an unmet need or a lack of skill, not a character flaw.

Anatomy of a Script: Invites collaboration to solve the root cause of the behavior.



From there, the adult can explore:



What the child might be feeling



What need is not being met



What skill is still developing



What support might help in the moment



This does not remove expectations or boundaries. Instead, it changes the pathway to addressing behaviour—from punishment and correction toward **support and skill-building**.



Children are far more likely to cooperate *when they feel understood rather than judged.*



16

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice

DURING CONFLICT: From Separation to Guided Problem-Solving



INSTEAD OF
A DISTANCING RESPONSE
SUCH AS:

"Figure it out
yourselves."

AN EDUCATOR WITH A
RELATIONAL POSTURE
MIGHT SAY:

"Something happened
between you two. Let's
work through it together."

THIS SHIFT COMMUNICATES SEVERAL IMPORTANT MESSAGES:



The relationship matters.



Conflict is not something to avoid or abandon.



Children are not left alone in difficult social moments.



Adults are present to guide, not to punish or withdraw.



In practice, this might involve helping each child share their perspective, naming emotions, slowing the interaction down, and supporting repair. The adult becomes a facilitator of connection rather than a referee or judge.

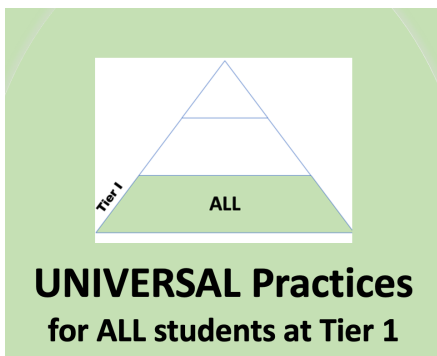


Over time, children learn that conflict is **not a threat to belonging, but an opportunity for understanding and growth.**

17



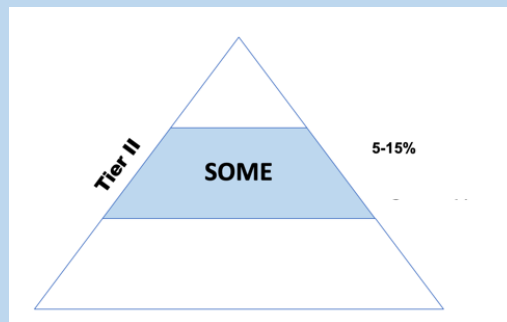
Individual Reflection Question



REFLECTION ON TIER 1 PRACTICES:

- Which Tier 1 universal practices (e.g., explicit boundaries, structures, routines, adapted scheduling) **already exist in my classroom?**
- Which would have the biggest impact if **strengthened?**

18



PART 3: TARGETED Practices for SOME students at Tier 2

1



Examples of a *Strong Adult Posture* at Tier 2

Tier 2 Targeted Practices

Intentional, responsive strategies for students who need some extra support to feel safe, regulated and successful.



1  Re-establishing a sense of safety when there's emotional overwhelm. 2  Relying on the structures and routines to effect change. 3  Being careful with applying pressure. 4  Being calm and grounded before responding. 5  Being mindful in displaying a neutral/gentle posture.	6  Waiting until a more appropriate time when addressing a situation. 7  Conveying to other students that you are handling the situation. 8  Understanding Tier 2 students may require co-regulation support. 9  Making the relationship (not the behaviour) the bottom line. 10  Reassuring the student that you are there for them.
--	--



A Strong Adult Posture is grounded in ...
connection, consistency and compassion.
*It's not about perfect responses, but about a **purposeful presence**.*


SAFETY


RELATIONSHIP


STRUCTURE


CO-REGULATION

2

Tier 2: When a student becomes emotionally overwhelmed, the priority immediately shifts to re-establishing safety.



Emotional overload results in behavioral manifestations.



The adult must be calm and grounded before responding.

Approach with authenticity, curiosity, and interest—never judgment.

Preventative elements, such as routines, scheduling, and respite, transition from proactive tools to essential supports.

Gemini Notebook

3

Co-Regulation Is Not the Same as Permissiveness



Supporting children 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.



Children need both:

- Acceptance of their feelings
- Guidance around their actions



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



4

The Self-Regulation Fallacy

Children are born with the ability to manage frustration and control impulses. Meltdowns are a choice or a manipulation.



The brain systems responsible for emotional regulation and impulse control are still under construction. Dysregulation is not a choice; it is an experience of a system overload.



Children are not choosing to be dysregulated; they are experiencing dysregulation.

NotebookLM

5

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**.

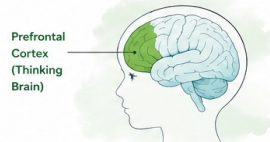
When children feel **emotionally safe**, the parts of the brain responsible for thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and learning are more accessible.

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

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

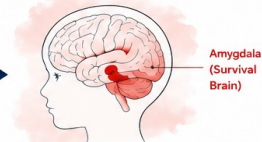
- Become reactive or impulsive
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Struggle to follow directions
- Experience emotional outbursts
- Withdraw from participation
- Have difficulty retaining new information

**SAFE & CONNECTED
LEARNING MODE**



Calm. Curious. Open.
Ready to learn.

**THREATENED & STRESSED
SURVIVAL MODE**



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**.



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



6

Educator's Field Guide

You Cannot Reason with an Overwhelmed Brain

The Biological Reality

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



The Intervention Failure

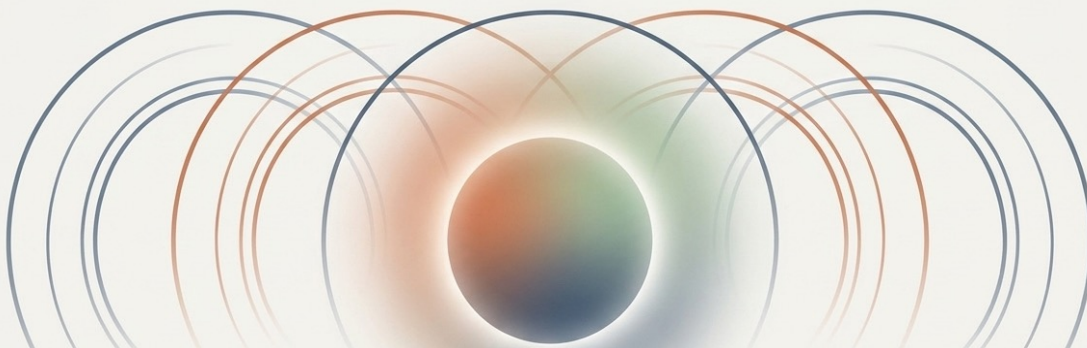
Because the reasoning centers are offline, lectures, consequences, and logical reasoning process as mere noise to the child's nervous system.



NotebookLM

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The Posture IS the Intervention



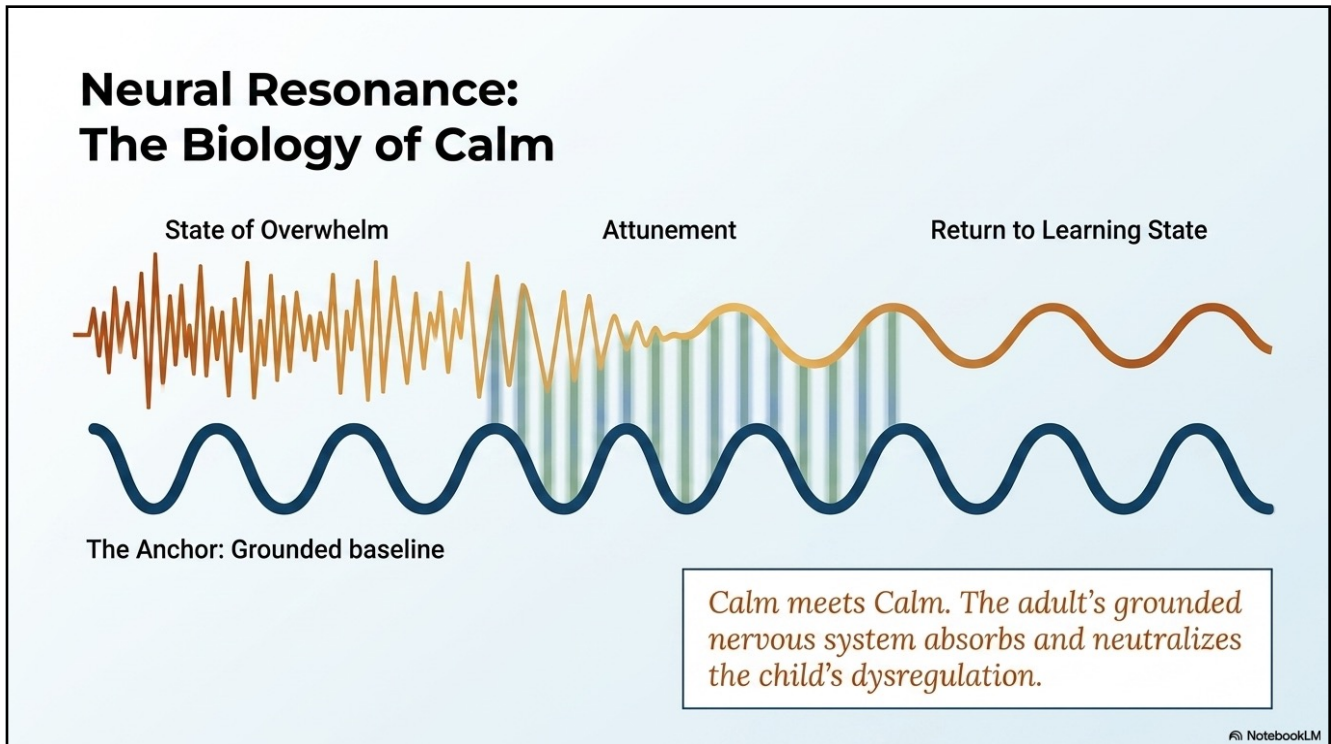
At Tier 2, you cannot talk a student into feeling safe.
Safety is an autonomic experience.

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

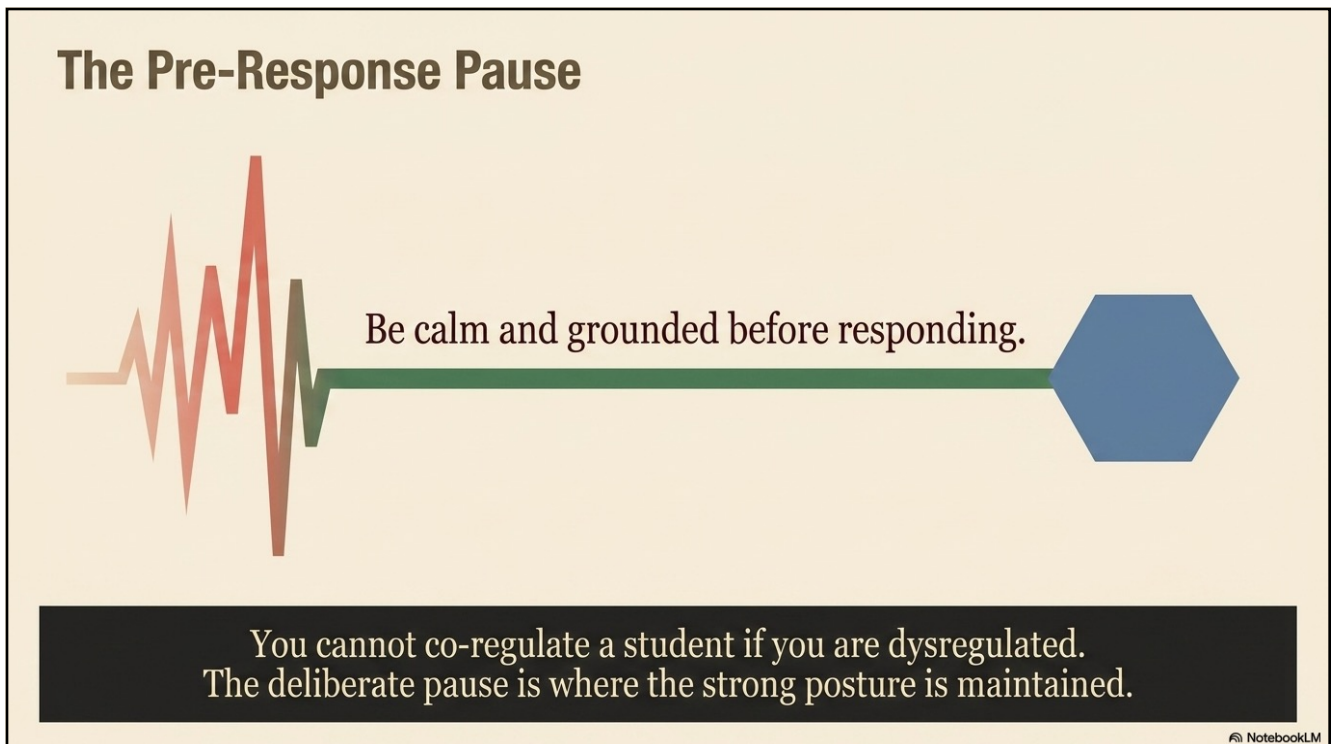
They are the intervention itself.

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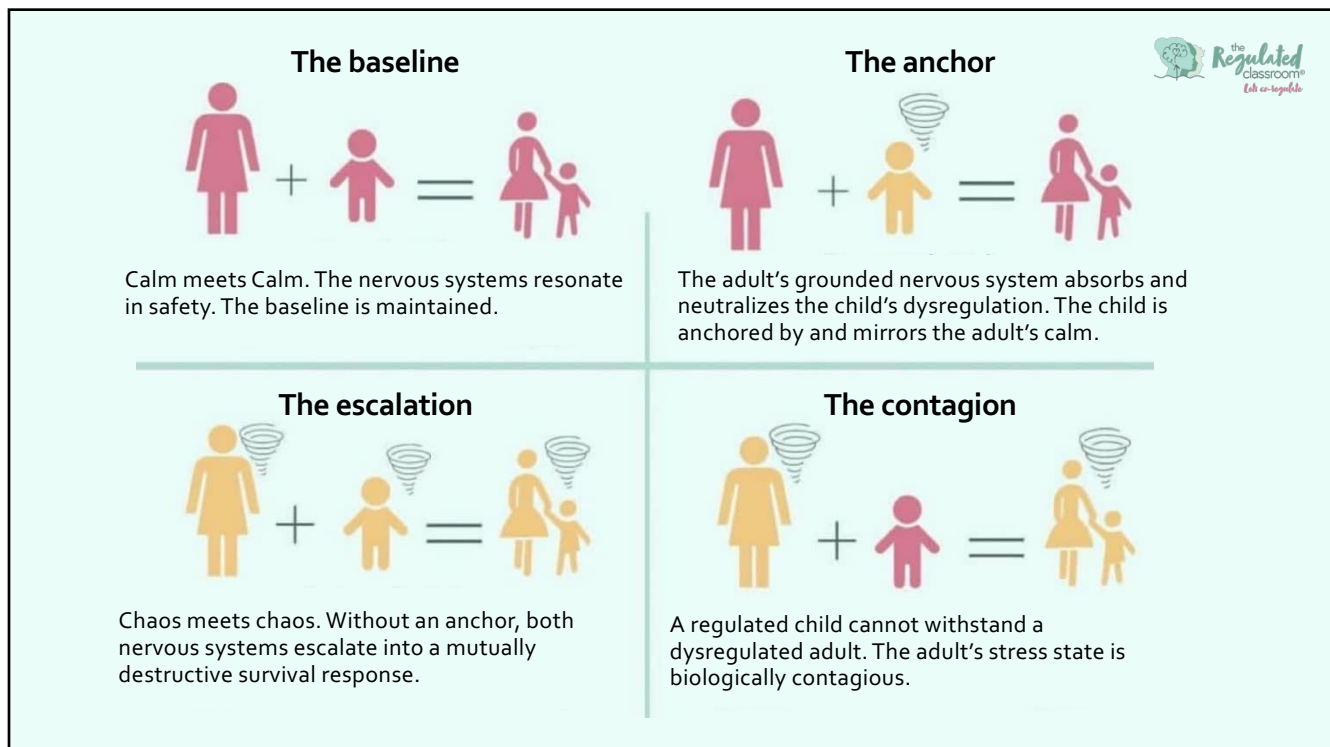
8



9



10



11

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?

12

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?

13



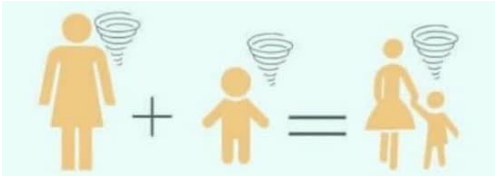
Individual
Reflection Question

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:

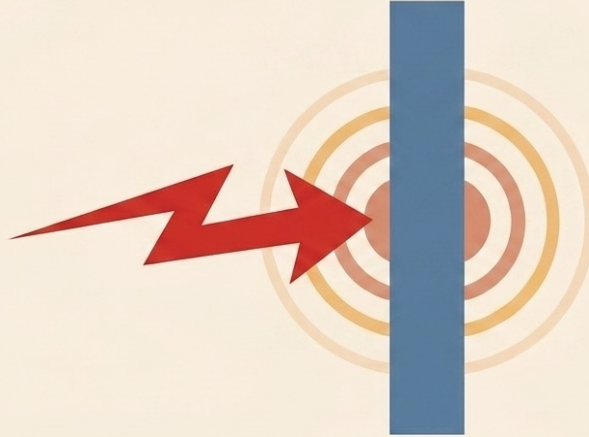
- **My Personal Classroom Triggers** (e.g., screaming, backtalk, eye-rolling)
- **My Warning Signs** (e.g., shallow breath, racing heart, clenching jaw)
- **My In-the-Moment Regulation Strategies** (e.g., deep breath, pausing, physical step back)

14

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.

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15

Respond, Don't React

SAME SITUATION. A DIFFERENT CHOICE.



A CALMER YOU CREATES A SAFER THEM.

16

The Educator's Pause: A Diagnostic Tool

When challenging behaviour occurs, hit pause and ask yourself:

1. What might this child be communicating through this behaviour?

2. Is this child 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 child need to be successful right now?

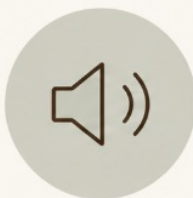


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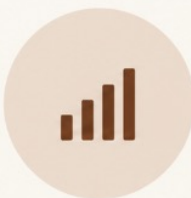
17

Regulate Yourself First

A CALMER YOU SUPPORTS A CALMER THEM.



Slow your voice.



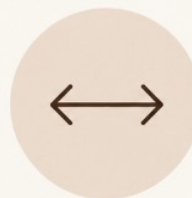
Lower your volume.



Exhale.



Ground your body.



Create space.



Pause before speaking.

YOUR REGULATION CHANGES THE MOMENT.

18

The Power of Consistency

The Alignment Matrix

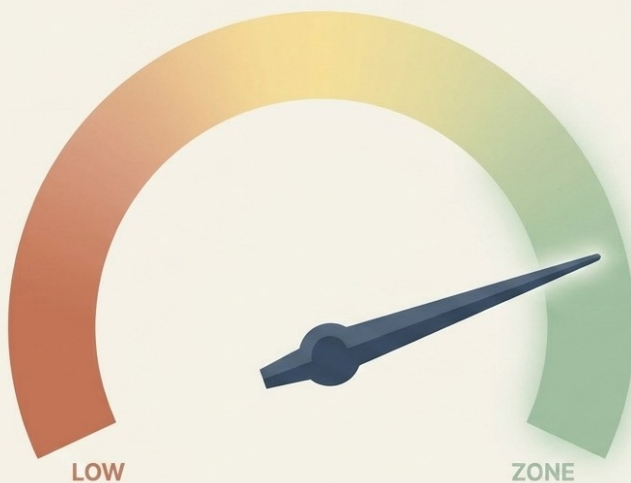
	Inconsistent Modeling	Consistent Modeling
The Scenario	Teaching kindness while speaking harshly. Promoting emotional regulation while reacting impulsively.	Embodying the exact social and emotional skills being taught.
The Child's Experience	Cognitive Dissonance and Confusion.	Authentic, meaningful learning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

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

Gemini Notebook

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The Bridge: The Discipline of Timing



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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Student Preventive Action Plan

 **STUDENT ACTIVE PREVENTION/SAFETY PLAN** (giving priority to prevention) – in **Elementary** TEMPLATE DOCUMENT

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	

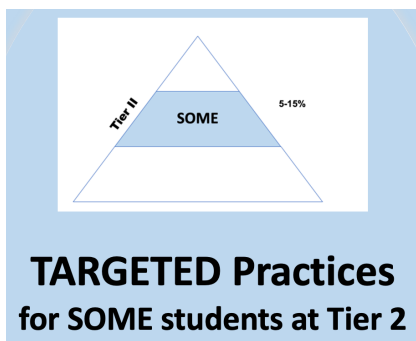
* The objectives are meant to be anchored in the adult posture and the selected support measures to scaffold/compensate for the needs and challenges
 ** The practices are meant to be preventive/proactive rather than waiting for the problem to arise to intervene. The division of adult roles and responsibilities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

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/tier-2-targeted-practices>

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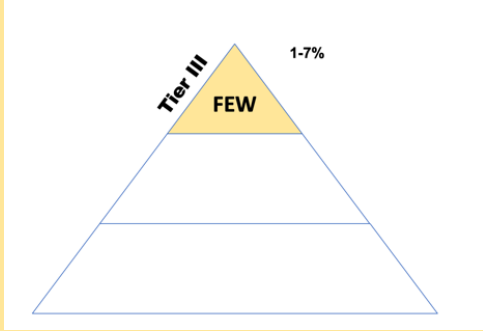
Individual Reflection Question



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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PART 4:

INDIVIDUALIZED Practices

for FEW students at Tier 3

1

Examples of a *Strong Adult Posture* at Tier 3



Tier 3 Individualized Practices

Intensive, individualized practices that prioritize **safety, connection, and collaboration** to meet complex needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- SAFETY FIRST**
- RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN**
- NEURODEVELOPMENTAL LENS**
- COLLABORATIVE**
- STRENGTHS BASED**

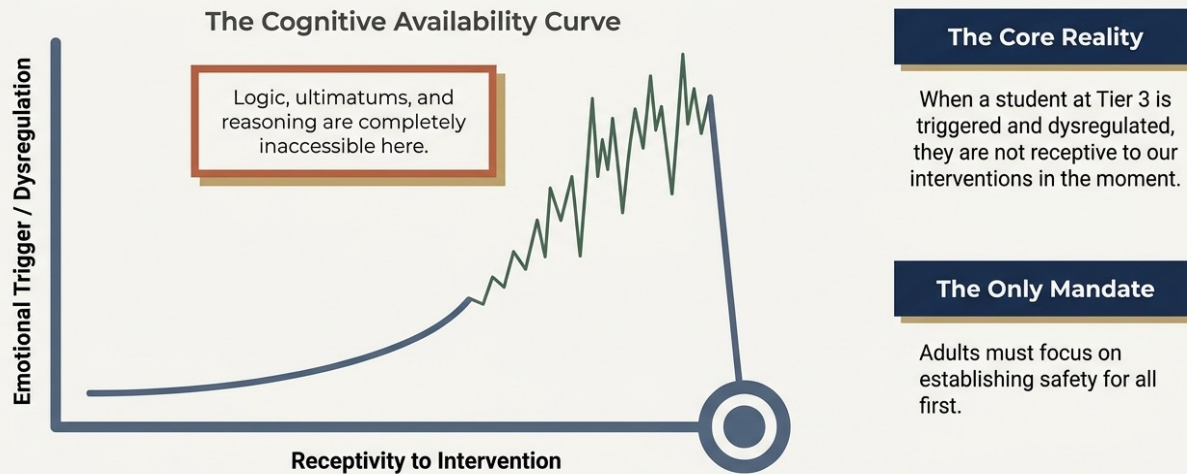
- Understanding** students at Tier 3 may **not be receptive** when triggered and dysregulated.
- Relying on the **structures and routines** to effect change (these are **non-negotiable** at Tier 3).
- Being familiar** with the student's profile, needs and triggers to avoid unnecessary blowouts.
- Not being alienated** by their behaviour.
- Being neutral, steady, and grounded** when intervening.
- Backing away from **conventional discipline**.
- Relying on **co-regulation** and **de-escalation strategies**.
- Ensuring** all staff are familiar with the student's profile and **on the same page**.
- Relying on the **power of teamwork**.
- Implementing the **safety plan** when needed.
- Making the relationship** (not the behaviour) the bottom line.

A Strong Adult Posture is grounded in... Connection, consistency, and compassion.
It's not about perfect responses, but about a **purposeful presence**.

SAFETY **PREDICTABILITY** **CO-REGULATION** **CONNECTION** **TEAMWORK** **PLANNING** **BELONGING**

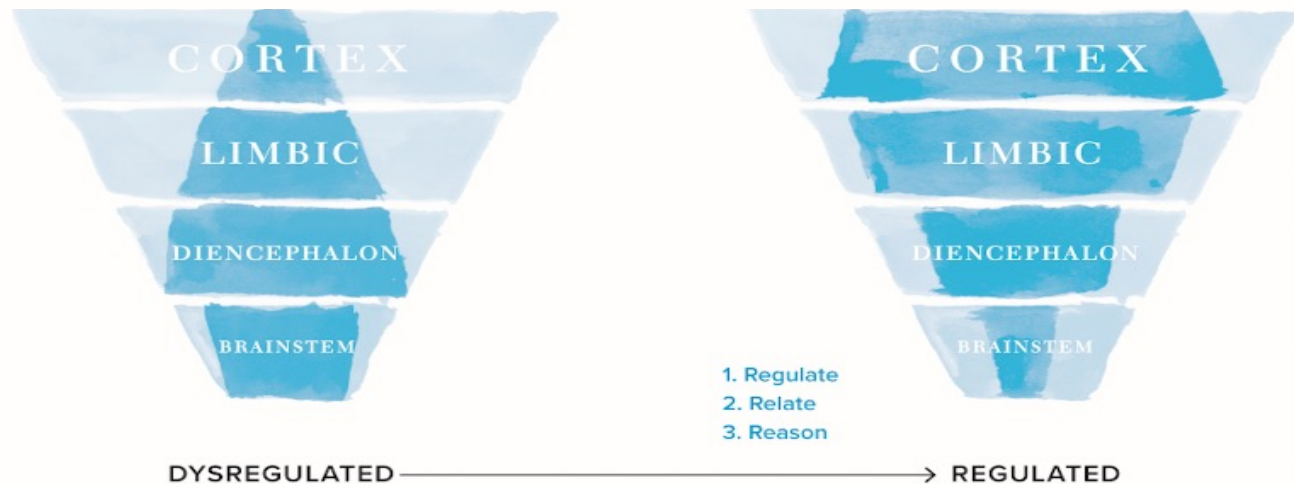
2

When dysregulation peaks, cognitive availability plummets.



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3



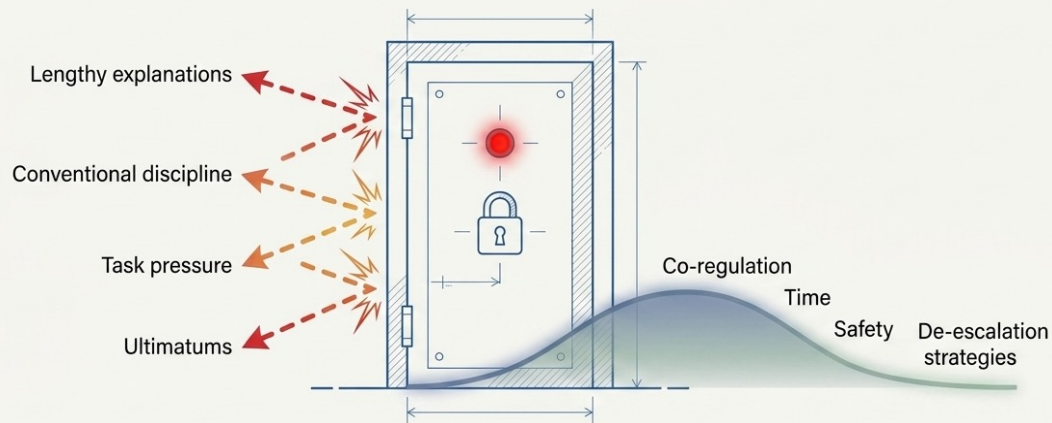
Neuroscience has helped dispel the myth that we need to think better to behave better.

When children are dysregulated, they have lesser access to their 'thinking brain'. Therefore, the key is rather helping children feel safe and grounded through structure/routine, predictability and adult support/co-regulation.

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

4

Tier 3: Triggered students operate outside the window of receptivity.



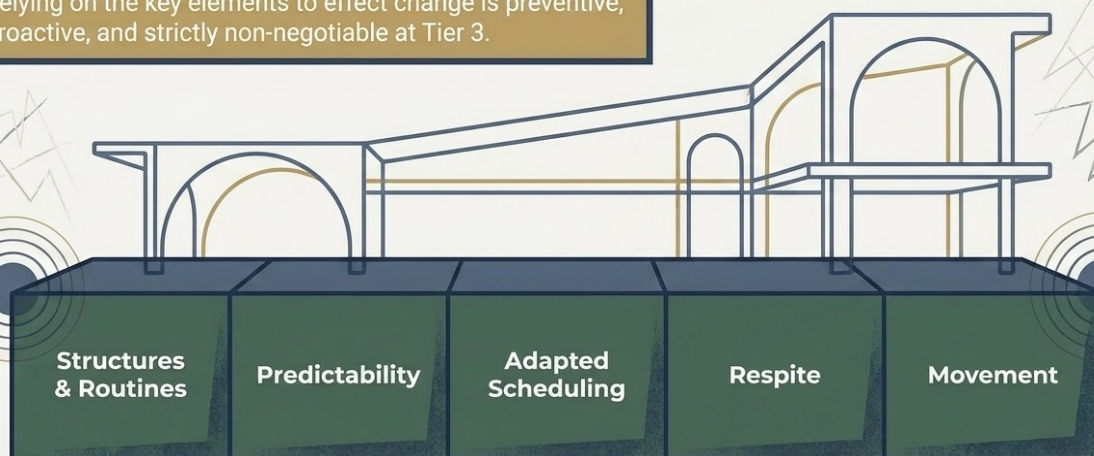
When a student is at Tier 3, they are entirely unreceptive to verbal interventions in the moment. The adult must wait until the student returns to a state of calm before addressing the situation.

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5

Tier 3 demands a non-negotiable, proactive foundation.

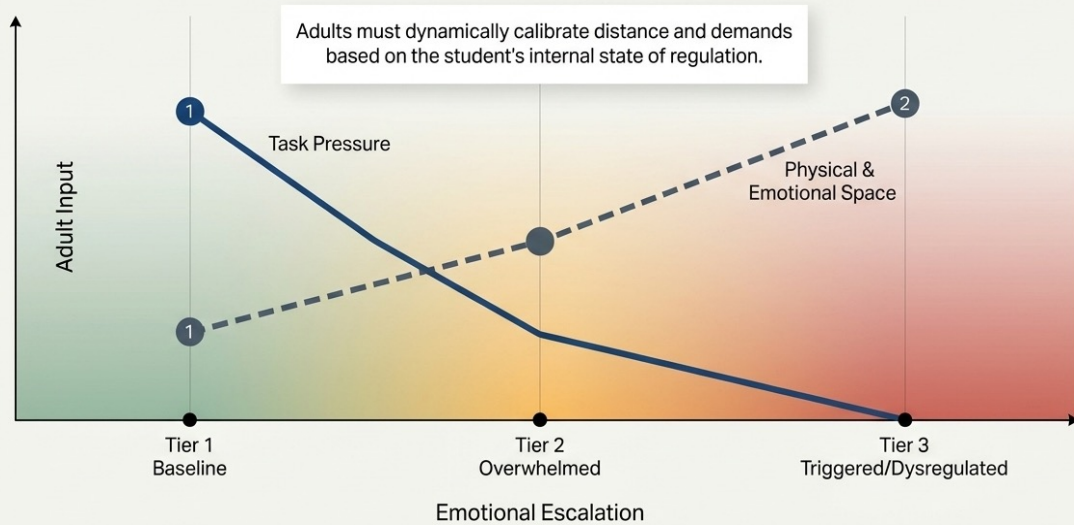
Relying on the key elements to effect change is preventive, proactive, and strictly non-negotiable at Tier 3.



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6

The escalation inverse: Task pressure must drop as emotional dysregulation peaks



7

Co-Regulation Before Crisis



Predictability



Connection



Attunement



Calm presence



Repair

These aren't crisis strategies.
They're everyday practice.

8

The Operating Metaphor: Reacting vs. Setting

The Thermometer



Reacts to the environment.
Merely rises and falls with the
student's emotional state.
Driven by the heat of the moment.

The Thermostat



Sets the environment.
Holds a steady temperature.
Acts as a stabilizing anchor
for co-regulation.

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9

Your Regulation Changes the Interaction

SAME STUDENT. A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE.

Activated Adult

-  Faster
-  Louder
-  More words
-  More demands



VS

Regulated Adult

-  Slower
-  Quieter
-  Fewer words
-  More predictable

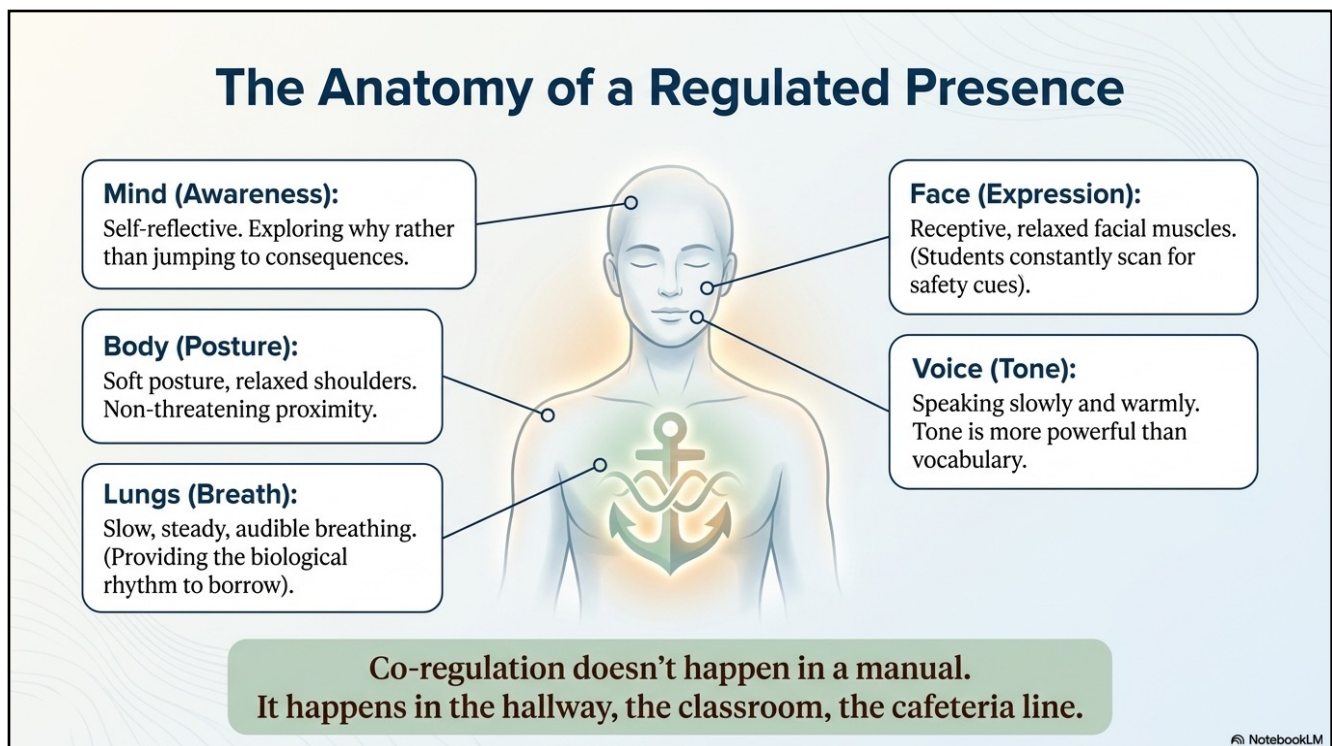


A CALMER ADULT CREATES A SAFER, MORE REGULATED INTERACTION.

10



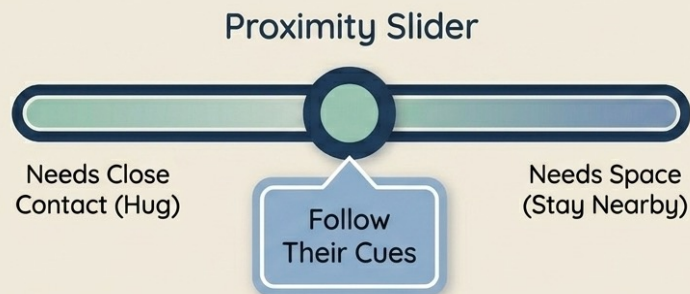
11



12

Stay close, but not too close

Some children want you close. Others need space but want you to stay nearby. Offer comfort they can accept—comfort helps the child's brain calm down.



Comfort Choices



Blanket



Quiet Space



Favorite Object



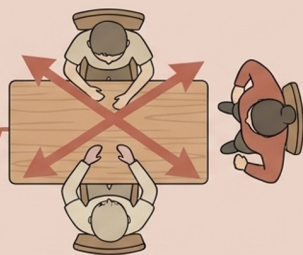
Hug

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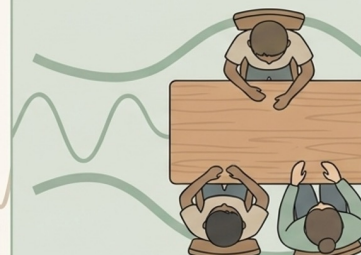
The Body: De-escalating through physical presence

The Confrontational Stance



DON'T use threatening body language. Avoid towering over, crossing arms, or pointing fingers—biological cues of threat.

The Parallel Stance



DO practice parallel regulation. For students with autism or trauma histories, sitting or walking alongside them balances power and reduces confrontational threat. Get to eye level and keep facial expressions gentle.

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14

What Co-Regulation Sounds Like

These are not scripts to memorize, but grounding options for adults who want to stay connected.

When a student shuts down completely:

"It's okay to need some quiet. I'm going to sit near you for a bit."

When a student refuses to participate:

"You don't have to talk right now. I'll be here when you're ready."

When a student begins to escalate:

"Let's take a few breaths together. We can handle this."

Building agency in moment:

"That was a lot. I'm proud of you for getting through it. Let's talk."

Building agency in the moment:

Instead of asking "How can I help?", try asking "What would help you right now?"



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15

Cultivate the internal posture of a nurturing provider.

Your internal posture is the ultimate intervention tool.

Do not be alienated

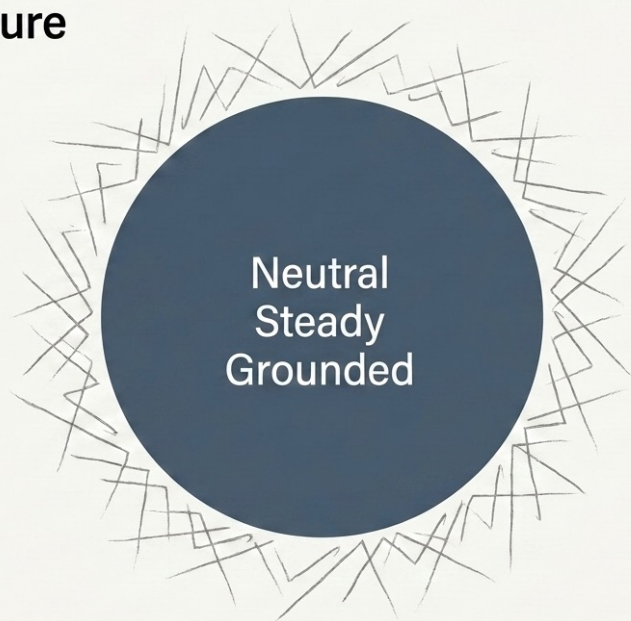
Look beyond the behavioral manifestations to the underlying dysregulated nervous system.

Back away from ultimatums

Recognize that rigid demands during a crisis will only trigger the student further.

Hold the center

Keep the student's baseline wellbeing in mind, rather than focusing on immediate compliance.



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Individual Reflection Question

The Thermometer



The Thermostat



BEING THE THERMOSTAT:

A **thermometer** reflects the room's temperature (it reacts to the student's emotional state).

A **thermostat** sets the temperature (brings a calming presence to defuse stress).

Describe a situation where a student's emotional temperature was high, but you successfully remained the thermostat.

Brief Description:

- What happened?
- How did you keep your posture intact?

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Student Safety Plan

STUDENT ACTIVE PREVENTION/SAFETY PLAN – in Elementary			
		Student name: _____ School/Board: _____	DOB: _____ Grade Level: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____
Student stress level	Observable signs	Adult posture and practices suggested	Adult posture and practices to avoid
When the student is regulated, engaged, and receptive			
When the student appears to be tense, annoyed, or frustrated			
When the student's stress response or frustration level is activated and beginning to escalate			
When the student's stress response has fully escalated and is disorganized. No longer receptive towards the adult.			
Post-intervention – following an acting-out episode			

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/tier-3-individualized-practices>

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Examples of de-escalation strategies



Removing any audience. If possible, taking the student for a walk or accompanying them to a safe and private space.



Honouring the student's personal space (needing to consider individual differences in terms of tolerance for physical proximity).



Being mindful of our verbal, non-verbal and paraverbal cues (e.g., triggering language, tone/volume of voice, speech rate, body positioning, facial expression, sudden gestures, walking fast towards the student, etc.)



Being aware of our level of stress, affect, emotional intensity, and type/level of energy reflected.



Avoiding intense eye contact (this can feel quite threatening to some students). Sitting side-by-side or standing at an angle can help with this.



Demonstrating active listening; reducing the amount of talking and allowing for moments of silence.



Being empathetic and non-judgmental; focusing on the emotion(s) experienced by the student rather than their behaviour.



Offering support or a pause; trying to accommodate and reassure the student.



If possible/available, providing a space for them to let off steam.

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19



Examples of de-escalation strategies



Avoiding getting caught in a power struggle, anticipating potential refusal from the student and perceiving their challenging questions/comments as needing to vent.



Moving away from trying to teach a lesson or reason with the student, especially when their behaviour appears erratic and irrational.



Setting simple, concise, and realistic limits by offering options/alternatives in a supportive manner; being careful to not overload with too many directives.



Allowing time/space for decision making (not pressuring for an immediate response) and choosing wisely what is insisted upon.



Coming alongside the student's frustration, by naming and validating it.



Sometimes, using humour, when appropriate, can be helpful to diffuse the situation.



Not taking it personally; being careful to not overreact (lenses and mirrors).

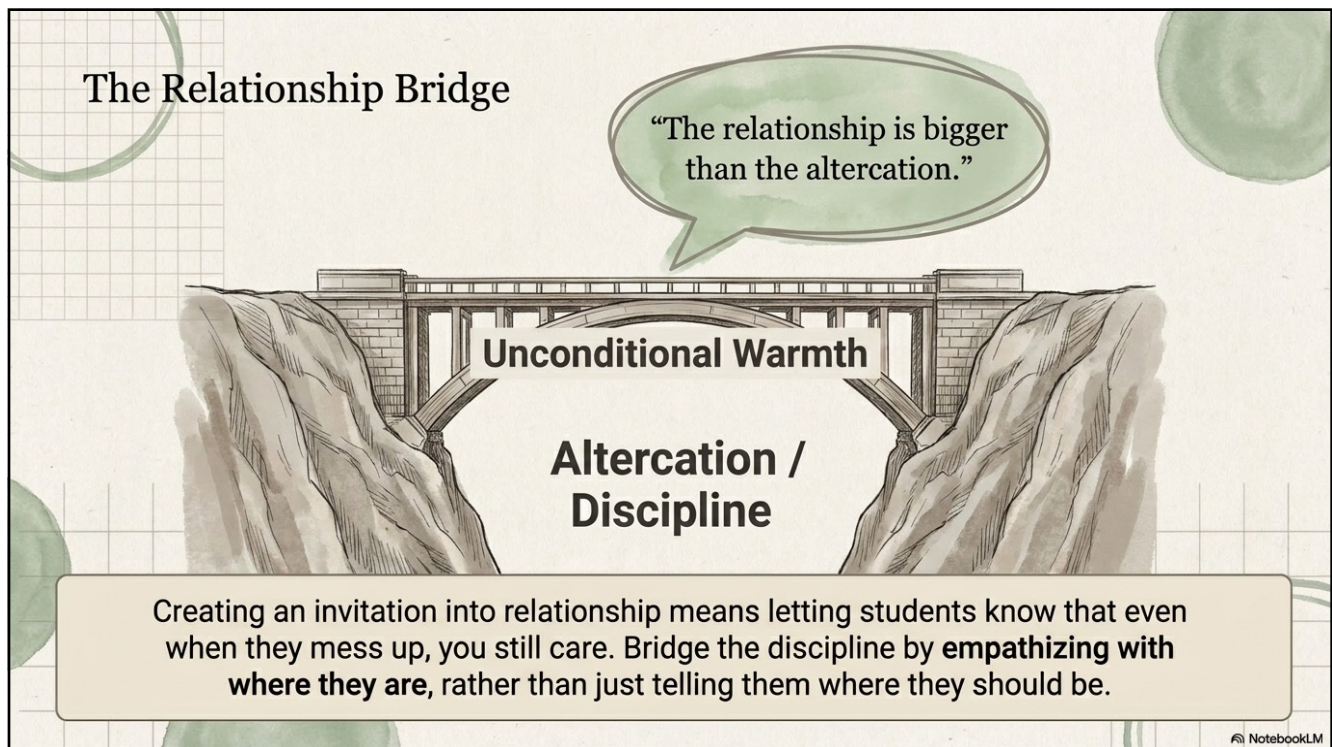


Ensuring that adults passing by don't step in and impose themselves in an ongoing intervention.

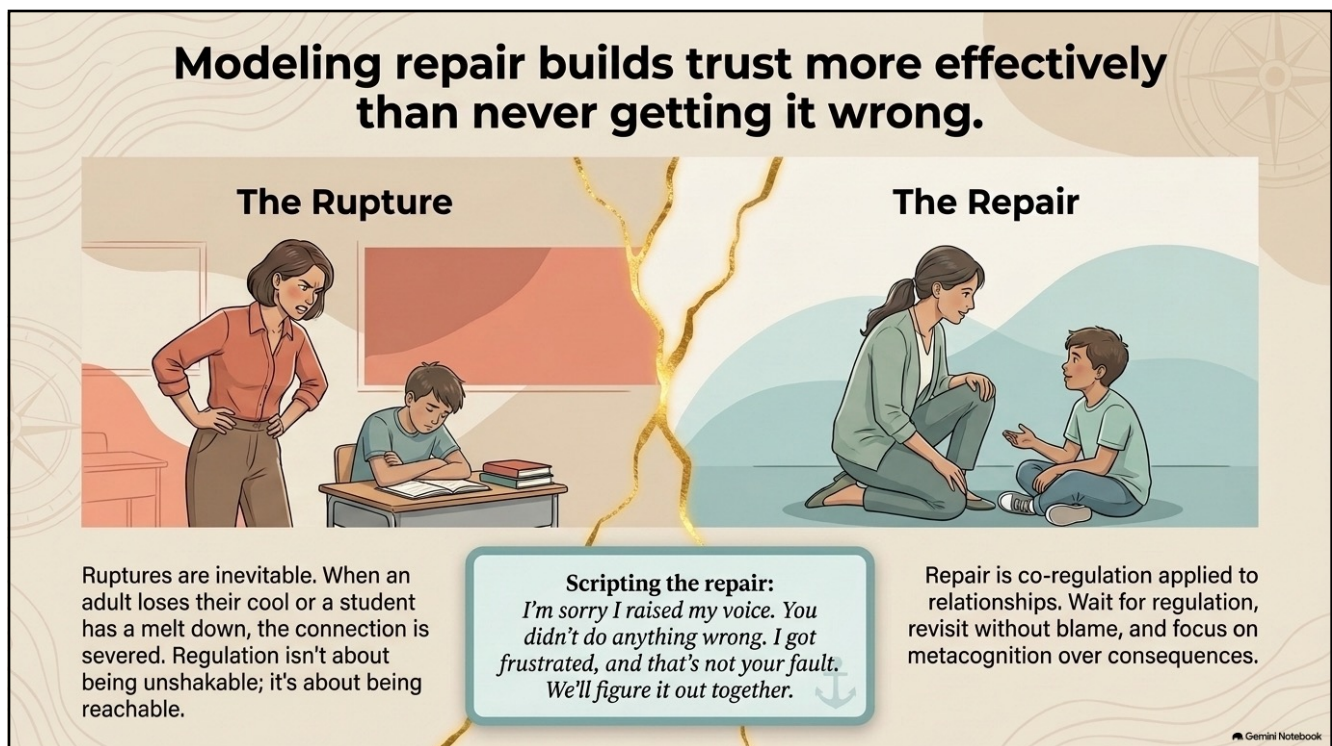


Having another adult support or step in if the situation is not defusing. It's okay for the adult to tap out if they are being triggered.

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22



Individual Reflection Question



INDIVIDUALIZED Practices for FEW students at Tier 3

REFLECTION ON TIER 3 PRACTICES:

Some students require highly individualized, intensive support that is tailored to their unique nervous system needs.

Reflect on a student who may require this level of support.

- Which individualized accommodations, co-regulation strategies, or collaborative supports have been most effective?
- How can you intentionally maintain a calm, consistent and emotionally available posture while implementing these supports?

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Systemic Support: We Cannot Pour From an Empty Vessel



What fuels the adult's vessel?


Protected time
for planning


Compassionate leadership
communication


Regular trauma-informed
professional learning

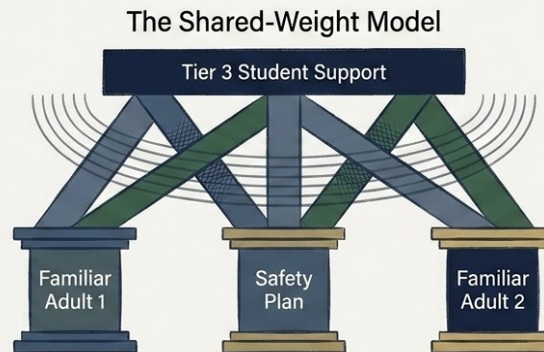

Spaces where
staff feel seen

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Distribute the emotional weight through a coordinated ecosystem.

The emotional weight of Tier 3 is too heavy for one pillar. Coherence protects your posture.



Co-Created Safety Plans

Ensure all staff are on the exact same page concerning the student's profile, needs, triggers, and support measures.

Designated Responders

Ensure that only designated, familiar adults intervene when a situation escalates.

Shared Responsibility

Rely on the power of teamwork to share the weight, allowing adults to maintain their relational posture over time.

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The educator is not only teaching the curriculum—the educator is part of the curriculum.

A calm, caring, intentional, and relationship-focused posture creates the definitive conditions for children to develop socially, emotionally, and academically.



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THE POSTURE AUDIT

- ☐ Do children experience me as safe and approachable?
- ☐ How do I respond when children are distressed?
- ☐ Am I leading with connection before correction?
- ☐ Do my words communicate dignity and respect?
- ☐ Am I reacting to behavior, or understanding what is driving it?
- ☐ What emotional climate am I creating in my classroom?

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Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management

www.cebmm.ca







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THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (CEBM)

As a support to the 10 English School Boards of Quebec, the CEBM aims to help boards and their staff to find effective and developmentally friendly interventions for working with students who experience significant behavioural challenges in the school setting.

Also visit the CEBM Resource Center

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/>

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