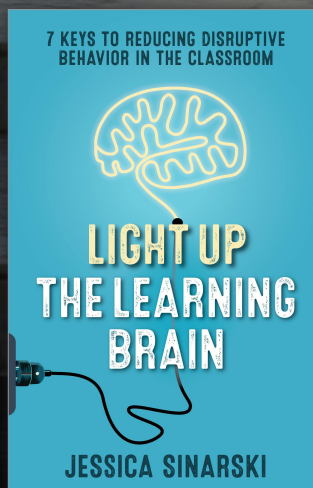


# DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

## 7 KEYS TO REDUCING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

# LIGHT UP THE LEARNING BRAIN



Activities based on:

*Light Up the Learning Brain*

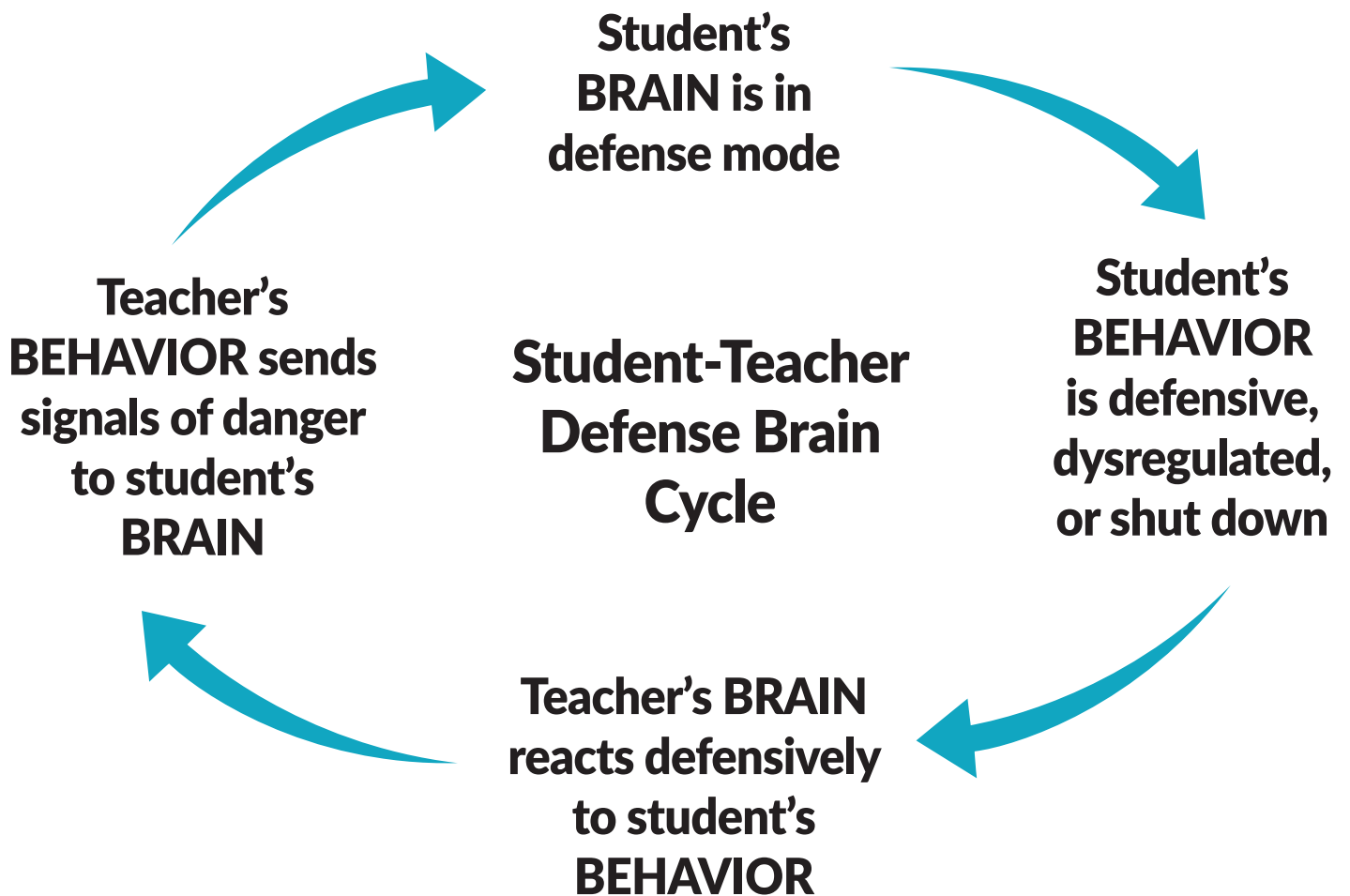
Written by: Jessica Sinarski

ISBN: 9781931636520

E-book ISBN: 9781931636537

Audio Book ISBN: 9781931636810

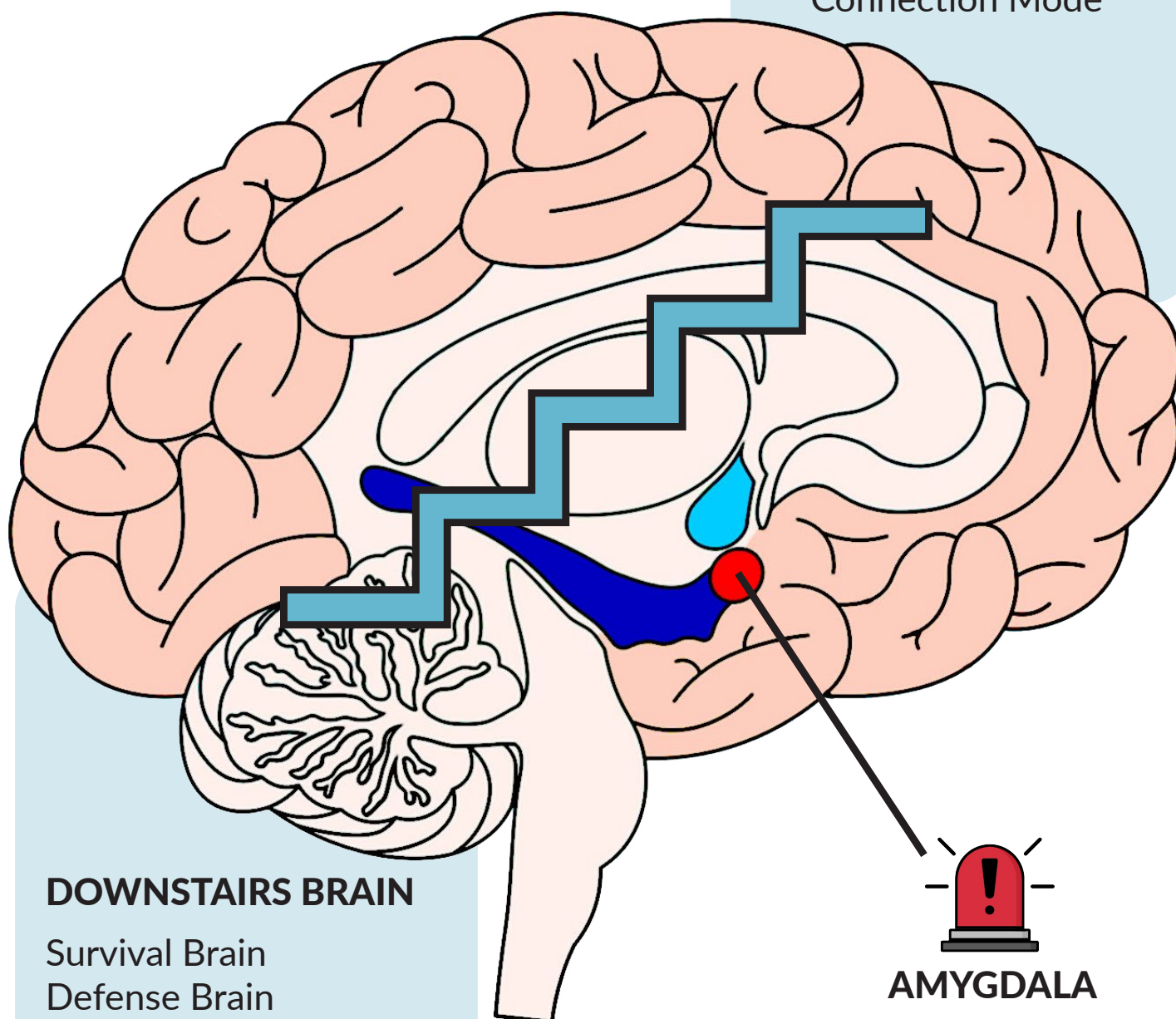
©2024 National Center for Youth Issues



SOURCE: JESSICA SINARSKI

## UPSTAIRS BRAIN

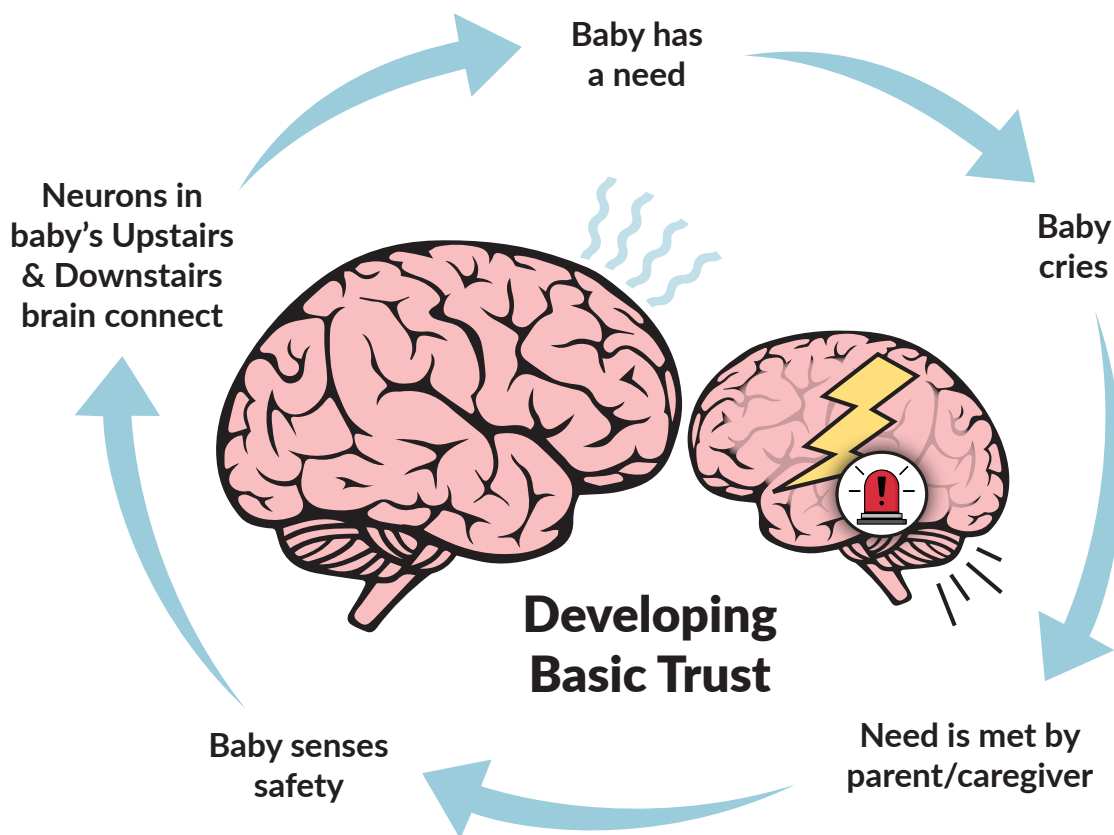
Learning Brain  
Social Brain  
Thinking Brain  
Calm / Curious / Capable  
Connection Mode



## DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN

Survival Brain  
Defense Brain  
Reptilian Brain  
Fight / Flight / Freeze  
Protection Mode







# The Trust-Building Cycle

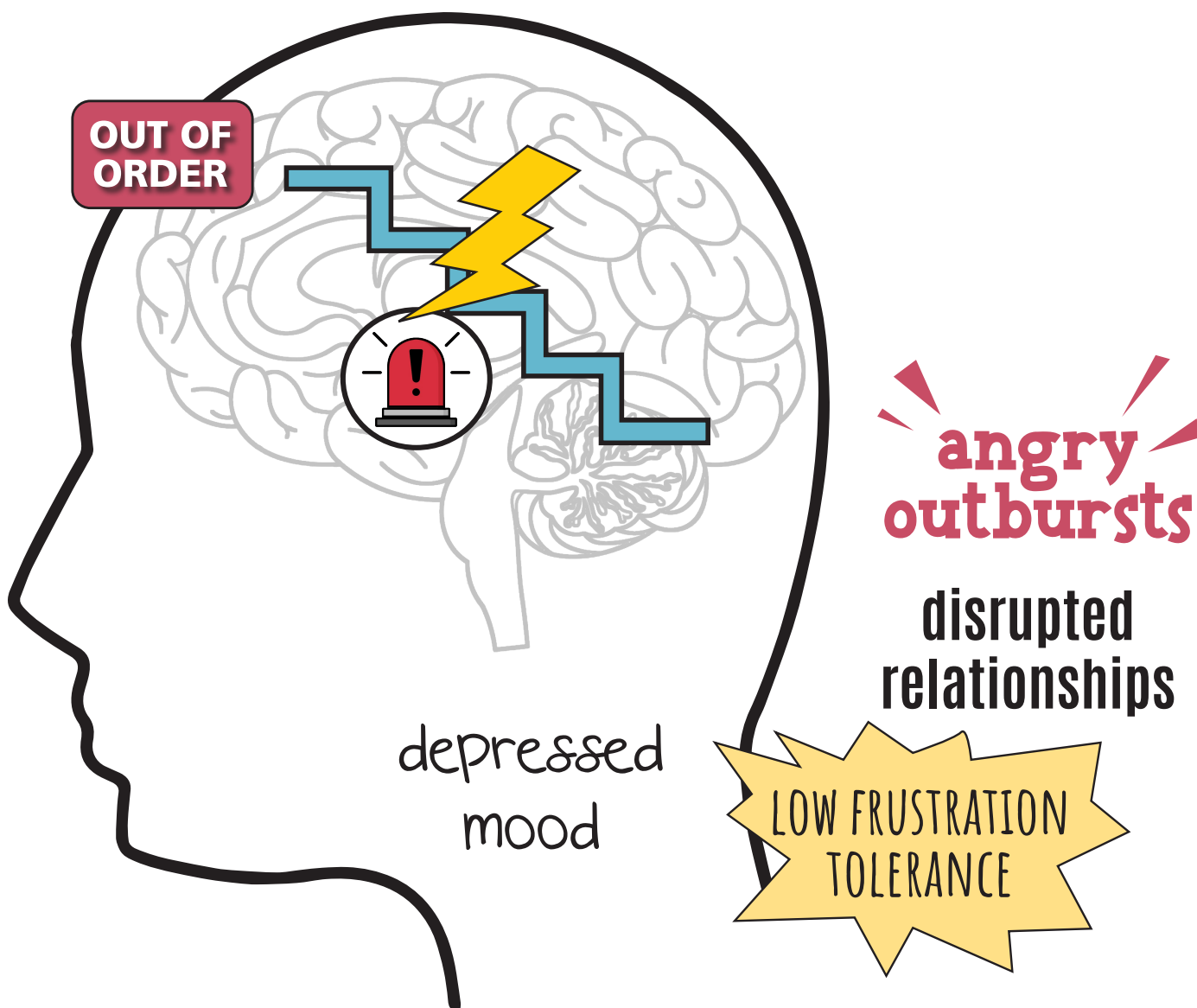


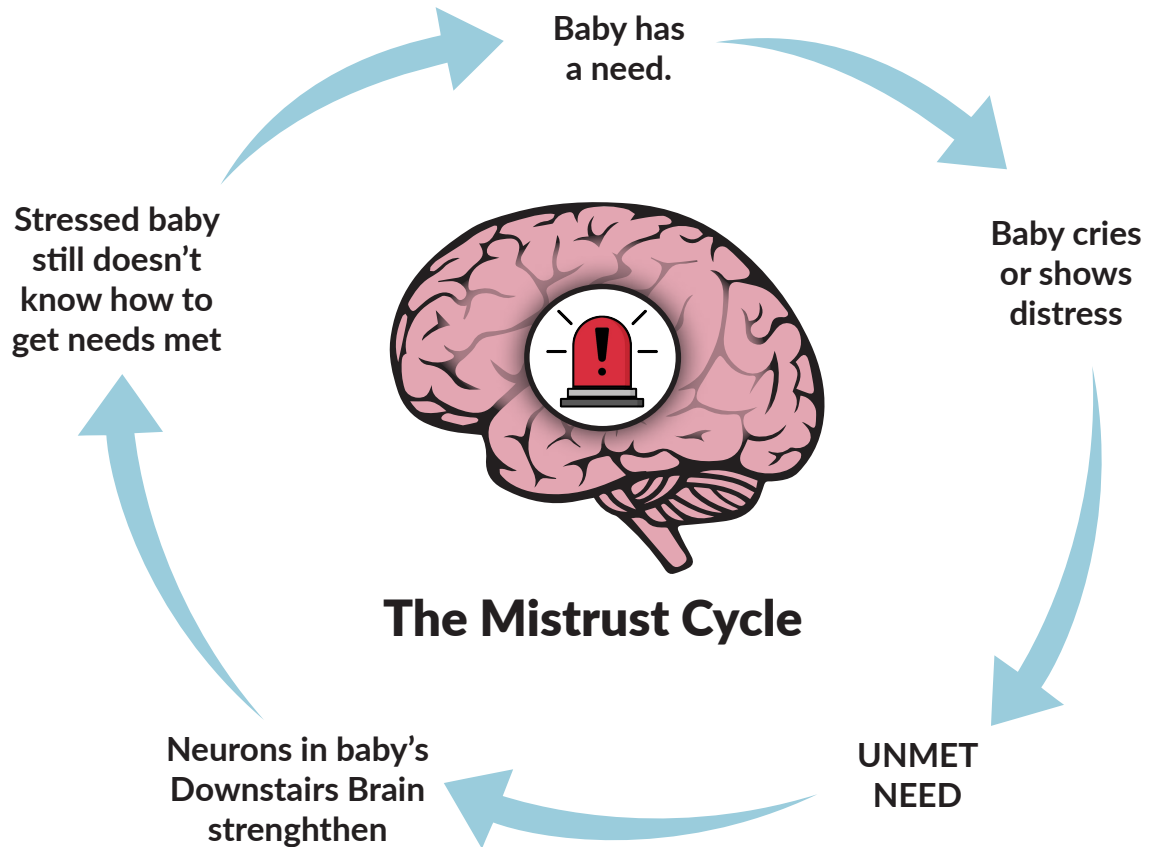
SOURCE: JESSICA SINARSKI AND DR. JONATHAN BAYLIN









APPROXIMATE AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE	UPSTAIRS BRAIN DEVELOPMENT	WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE
<b>0-18 months</b> 	Trust vs. Mistrust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning that my smiles and cries matter</li> <li>• Finding ways to get my needs met with my safe adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laughing and babbling</li> <li>• Beginning to ask for things with gestures and sounds</li> <li>• Crying during transitions</li> <li>• Coming back to calm after getting upset</li> </ul>
<b>Toddler</b> 	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploding curiosity</li> <li>• Language acquisition</li> <li>• Increasing body awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring my world with all my senses</li> <li>• Testing limits</li> <li>• Asking questions</li> <li>• Repeating words and phrases</li> <li>• Potty training</li> <li>• Curiosity about body parts</li> </ul>
<b>Preschool</b> 	Initiative vs. Guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity and courage to try new things</li> <li>• Increasing understanding of structure, roles, and rules</li> <li>• Growing creativity</li> <li>• Sequencing and beginning to understand cause and effect</li> <li>• Beginning to identify basic emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I can do it!” attitude</li> <li>• Mimicking what I see</li> <li>• Imaginative play</li> <li>• Playing to make sense of my environment and experiences</li> <li>• Skill building with support through frustrating attempts</li> <li>• More goal-directed actions like arts &amp; crafts, learning letters and numbers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary</b> 	Industry (sense of competence) vs. Inferiority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on foundational skills</li> <li>• Comparing myself with peers</li> <li>• Increasing self-control</li> <li>• More complex thinking</li> <li>• Understanding the feelings of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to read and write</li> <li>• Exploring hobbies and interests</li> <li>• Questioning differences and similarities</li> <li>• Learning to be a team player</li> <li>• Taking responsibility for more classroom or household chores</li> <li>• Caring about others</li> </ul>
<b>Adolescent*</b> 	Identity vs. Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning I am my own person with different problems and successes than the adults in my life</li> <li>• Gaining skills for adult roles</li> <li>• Increasing capacity for complex thought and reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting with available supports, like peers and trusted adults for guidance</li> <li>• Managing more responsibilities</li> <li>• Taking on leadership roles or employment opportunities</li> <li>• Finding my own style, interests, priorities, and passions</li> <li>• Exploring personal values that differ from my family of origin</li> </ul>
<b>Young Adult*</b> 	Intimacy vs. Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming my own person</li> <li>• Deepening relationships and connections with myself and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigating life with others (roommates, colleagues, etc.)</li> <li>• Enjoying the reciprocal nature of healthy relationships</li> <li>• Dealing with the emotional ups and downs of adult life</li> <li>• Making big decisions about my future</li> </ul>





SOURCE: JESSICA SINARSKI



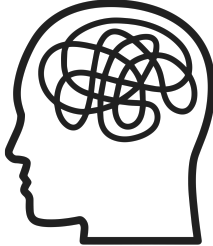




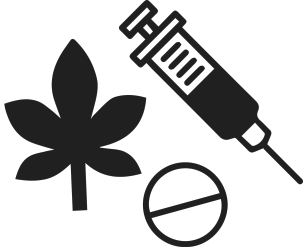


## COMMON DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN “PROTECTION MODE” EXAMPLES ACROSS AGES

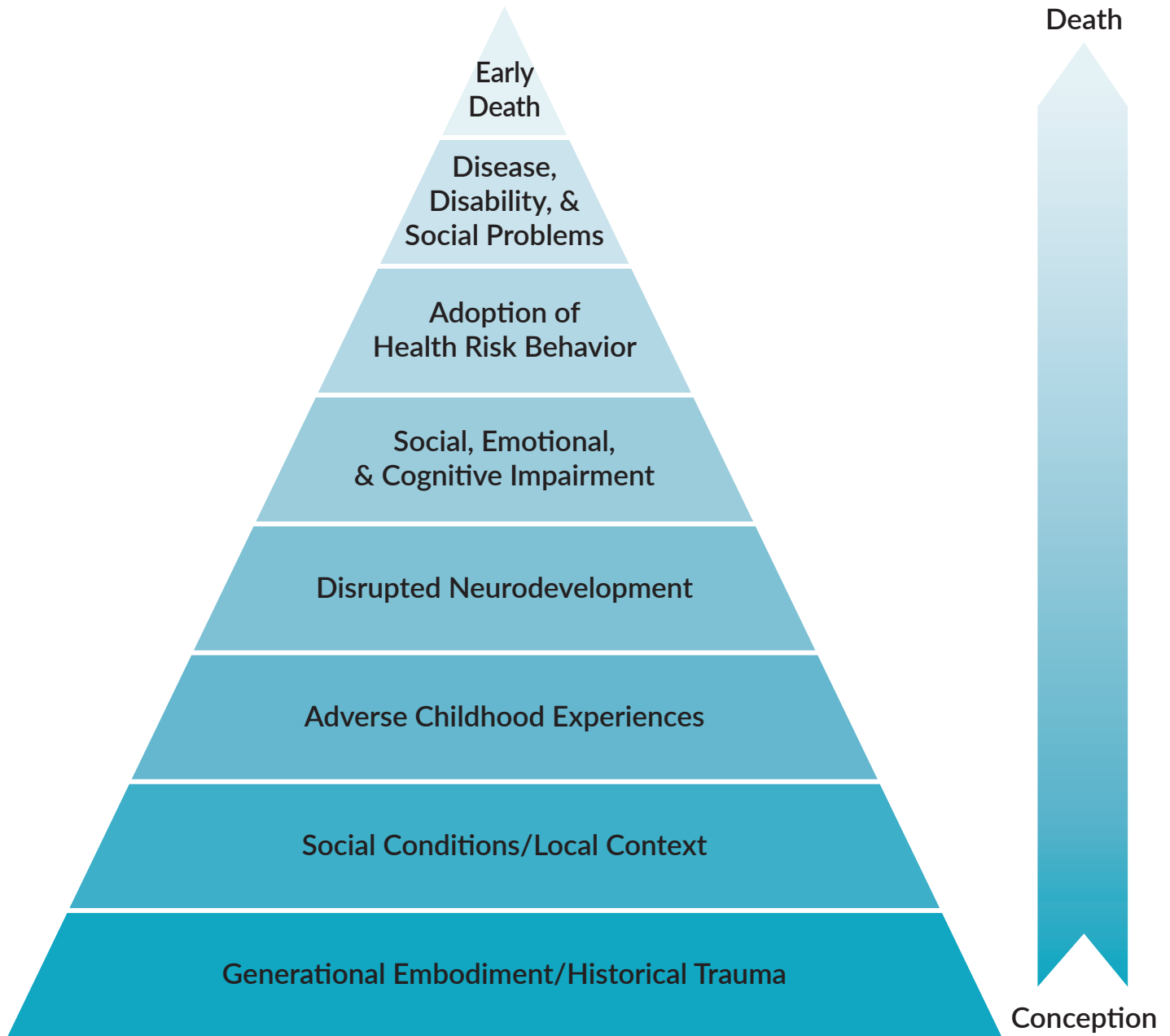
	PRESCHOOL	K-5TH	6TH-12TH	TEACHER AND ADMIN
<b>Porcupine Moment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whining</li> <li>“No!”</li> <li>Excluding others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snapping at others</li> <li>Teasing</li> <li>“I don’t want to”</li> <li>Keeping others away</li> <li>Gossiping or other clique-y behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arms crossed</li> <li>Grumpy shrug</li> <li>Talking back</li> <li>Avoiding social events</li> <li>“Whatever”</li> <li>“This is stupid”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guarded posture</li> <li>Avoiding eye contact</li> <li>Furrowed brow</li> <li>Complain and blame</li> <li>Taking behavior personally</li> <li>Getting sucked into a negative group mindset</li> </ul>
<b>Tiger Moment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biting</li> <li>Spitting</li> <li>Hitting</li> <li>Tantrums</li> <li>Kicking</li> <li>Screaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arguing</li> <li>Yelling</li> <li>Quick temper</li> <li>Running out of the classroom (often turns into a Turtle moment)</li> <li>Rough with others</li> <li>Talking meanly about others</li> <li>Name calling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fighting</li> <li>Cyberbullying</li> <li>Slamming doors</li> <li>Posturing or pacing</li> <li>Purposely bumping others in the hallway</li> <li>“I hate this”</li> <li>Swearing at others</li> <li>Extreme violent talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting in someone’s face</li> <li>Threatening</li> <li>Yelling</li> <li>Intimidating posture</li> <li>Command and demand mode</li> <li>Holds power over staff/ students</li> <li>Demeaning/ labeling students or staff</li> <li>Attacking others online</li> </ul>
<b>Chameleon Moment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiding behind a parent</li> <li>Hesitant to join in play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embarrassed by attention</li> <li>“I can’t do anything right”</li> <li>Freezing when asked a question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following peer pressure</li> <li>Driven by social media</li> <li>Difficulty hearing positives</li> <li>Perfectionism</li> <li>“I suck at everything”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afraid to show “the real me”</li> <li>Nervous to speak up</li> <li>Needing to be liked by everyone</li> <li>Looking for acceptance on social media</li> </ul>
<b>Turtle Moment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiding when in trouble</li> <li>Withdrawing from the group</li> <li>Blank stare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not wanting to go to school</li> <li>Avoiding homework</li> <li>Going on YouTube a lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cutting class</li> <li>Head down on desk</li> <li>Hiding in hoodie</li> <li>Daydreaming</li> <li>Checked out</li> <li>Phone scrolling</li> <li>Missing assignments</li> <li>Stuck and seems to refuse solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Why should I even try?”</li> <li>Numb</li> <li>Detached</li> <li>No pleasure in teaching</li> <li>Zoning out</li> <li>Mindless scrolling</li> </ul>

\*As with all these Downstairs Brain moments, sometimes this is a needed form of protection. This is especially true for marginalized populations who have had to mask their neurodivergent preferences, hide their gender identity, or use other protective Chameleon survival strategies for navigating unfair power dynamics.



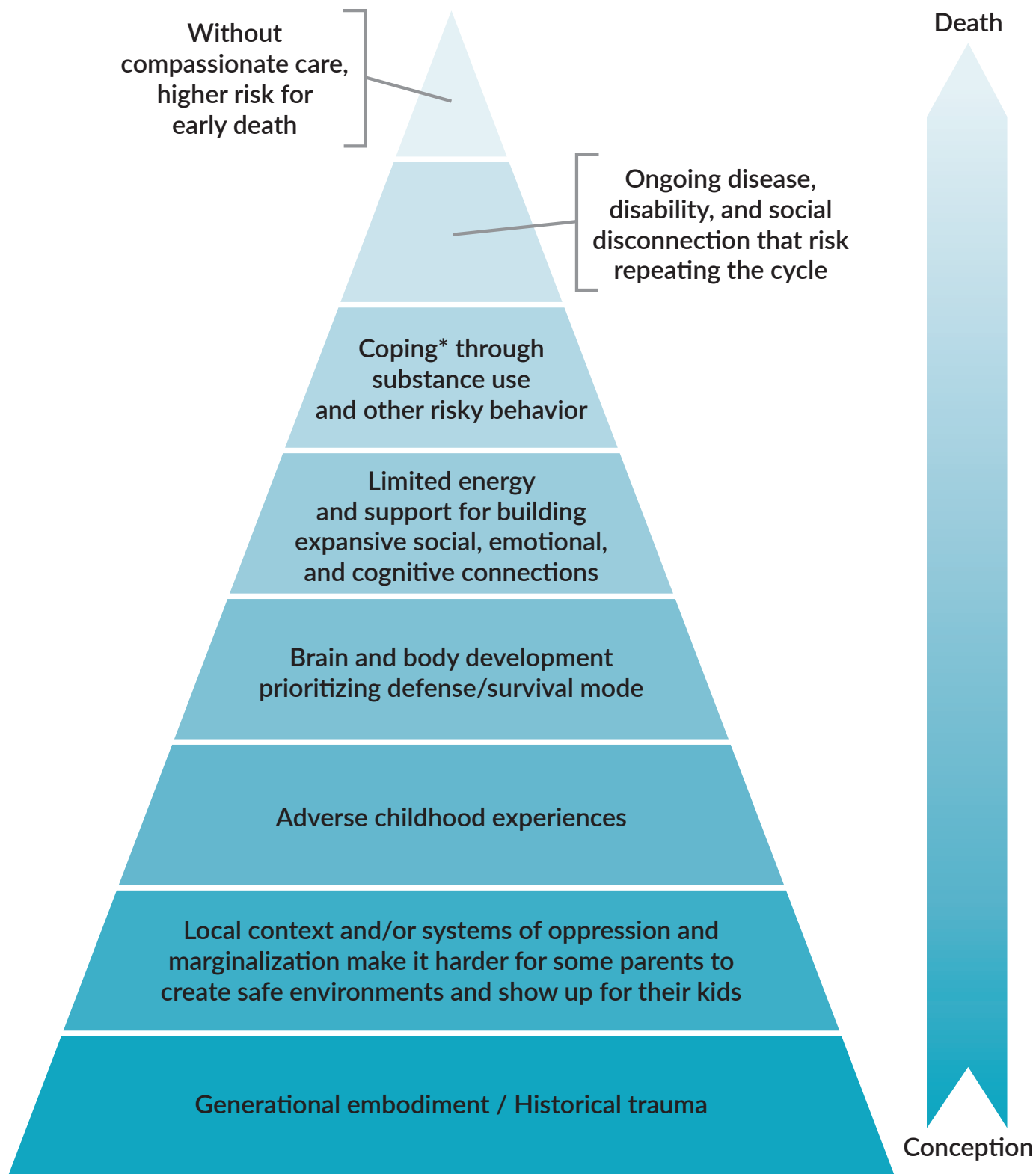
## The Types of ACEs

ABUSE	NEGLECT	HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION	
 <p>PHYSICAL</p>	 <p>PHYSICAL</p>	 <p>MENTAL ILLNESS</p>	 <p>INCARCERATED PARENT</p>
 <p>EMOTIONAL</p>	 <p>EMOTIONAL</p>	 <p>MOTHER TREATED VIOLENTLY</p>	 <p>SUBSTANCE ABUSE</p>
 <p>SEXUAL</p>		 <p>DIVORCE</p>	



## Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being throughout the Lifespan

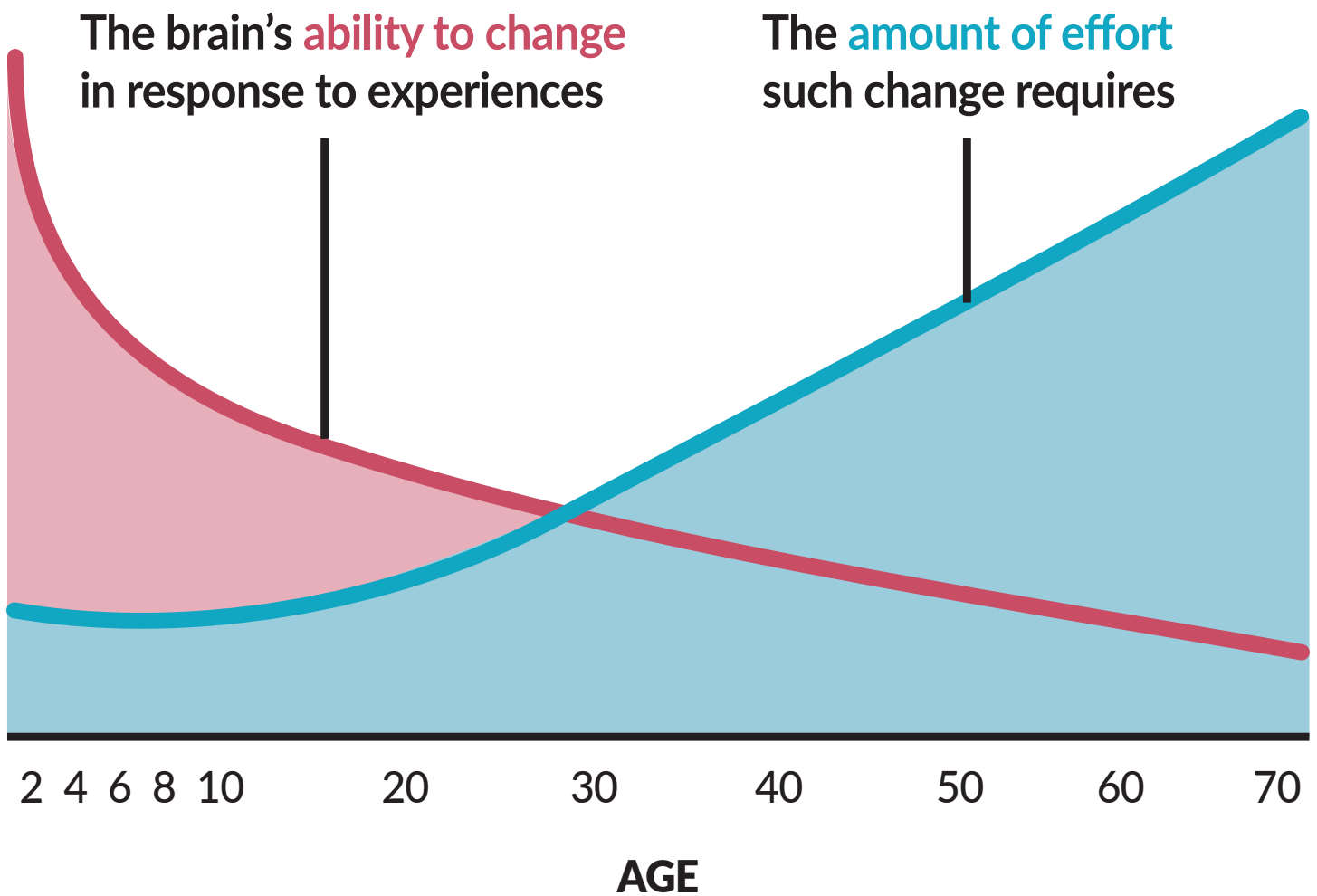
SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/VIOLENCEPREVENTION/ACES/ABOUT.HTML](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html)



## A Trauma-Informed Perspective on ACEs Impact and Well-Being

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION  
ACE PYRAMID UPDATED AND MODIFIED BY JESSICA SINARSKI

\*Thanks to the RYSE Center for naming this reframe of “coping” and continuing the exploration of deeper meanings that can be found in data.



SOURCE: [HTTPS://DEVELOPINGCHILD.HARVARD.EDU/SCIENCE/KEY-CONCEPTS/BRAIN-ARCHITECTURE/](https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/)



## UPSTAIRS BRAIN

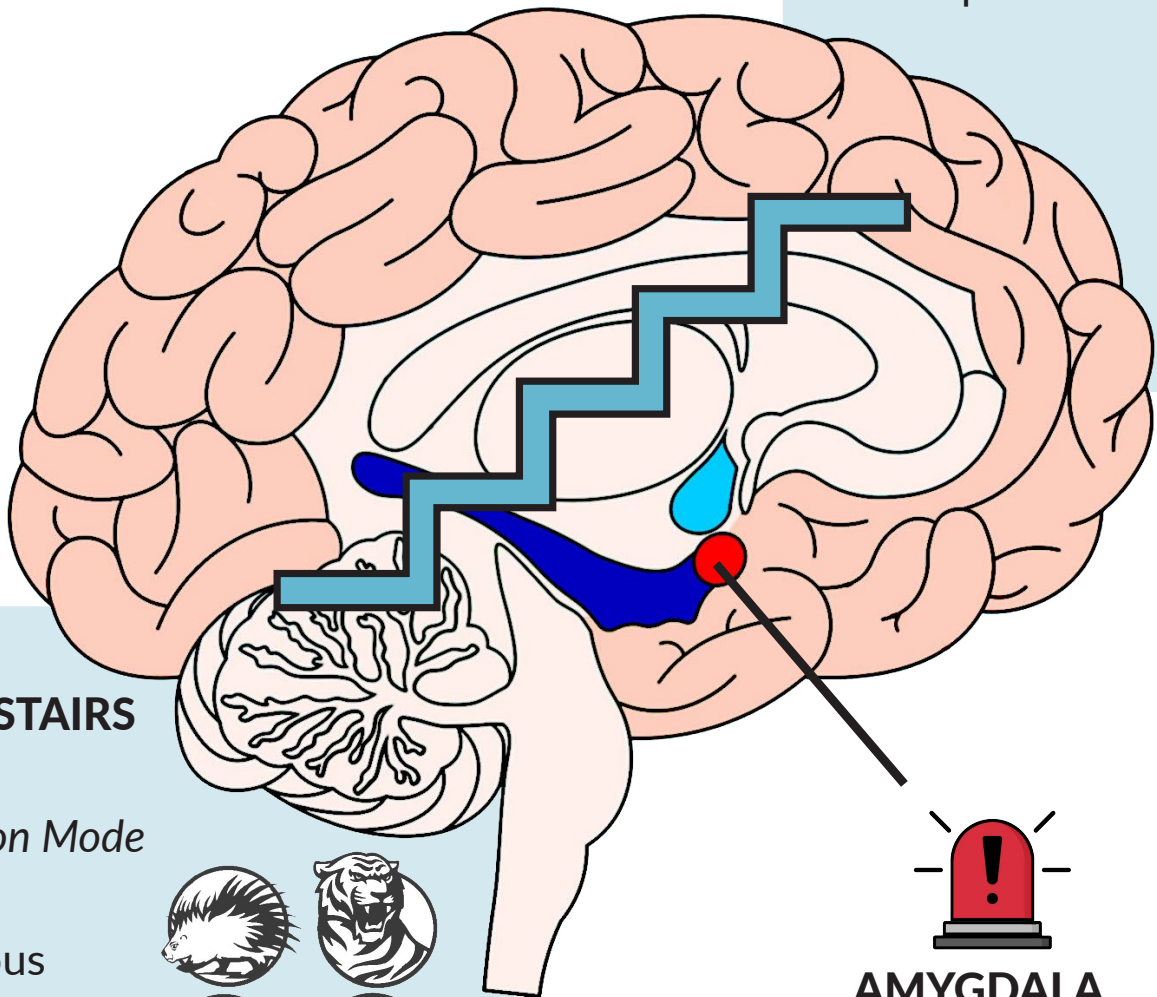
### Connection Mode

- Caring
- Curious
- Complex Thinking

## DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN

### Protection Mode

- Fast
- Furious
- Frozen or Shut Down



## AMYGDALA

Alarm System &  
Traffic Director

# DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN PROTECTION MODE: FIGHT OR FLIGHT

When your amygdala detects a threat, it tells your stress response system, "ACTIVATE!" It sends chemical and electrical messages throughout your body and brain to get ready to fight the threat or run away. Heart pounds, blood rushes to the muscles, digestion shuts down. This is all super helpful if you are being attacked by a wild animal, but less helpful when the "threat" your amygdala senses is being a little tired or hungry, trying to fix the jammed copier, or a student throwing shade your way. Without some help from your Upstairs Brain, your Porcupine and Tiger brain will jump into action whether you really need them or not. Let's look inside...



## PORCUPINE BRAIN

Think of a time you had a Porcupine moment.

Here are some clues to look for:

- Grumpy
- Predicting the worst
- Complaining and blaming
- Irritable or snapping at others
- Turning away from others
- Rejecting new ideas
- Taking others' behavior personally

Where do you feel it in your body? Describe the sensations or feelings you notice.

---

---

---

---

What do you need when you are having a Porcupine moment?

---

---

---

---



## TIGER BRAIN

Think of a time you had a Tiger moment.

Here are some clues to look for:

- Talking negatively about students
- Taking frustration out on others
- Jumping straight to punitive consequences
- Getting in someone's face
- Jumping to power and control instead of cooperation
- Yelling

Where do you feel it in your body? Describe the sensations or feelings you notice.

---

---

---

---

What do you need when you are having a Tiger moment?

---

---

---

---

# DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN PROTECTION MODE: FREEZE OR FEIGN DEATH

Another way our brains try to protect us is to SHUT IT ALL DOWN! “Freeze” is a combined state of fight-or-flight activation and the shutdown state. You might have heard this collapse or “feign death” response called “playing possum.” It is an ancient survival system found in many species across the animal kingdom that helps conserve energy and escape reality. Let’s look at some of the signs that this part of our brain is running the show.



## CHAMELEON BRAIN

Think of a time you had a Chameleon moment. Here are some clues to look for:

- Just wanting to blend in
- Looking for acceptance on social media
- Joining the negative voices in staff meeting
- Hiding the real you
- Embarrassed by any attention, including praise
- Feeling paralyzed & unsure of yourself

Where do you feel it in your body? Describe the sensations or feelings you notice.

---

---

---

---

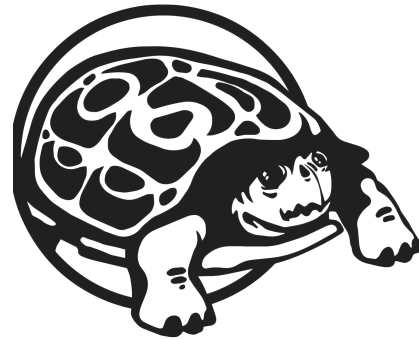
What do you need when you are having a Chameleon moment?

---

---

---

---



## TURTLE BRAIN

Think of a time you had a Turtle moment. Here are some clues to look for:

- Struggling to get out of bed
- Phoning in lessons with low student engagement
- Not connecting with peers and other supports
- Doom scrolling on your phone
- Feeling sad and alone
- Zoning out or escaping reality

Where do you feel it in your body? Describe the sensations or feelings you notice.

---

---

---

---

What do you need when you are having a Turtle moment?

---

---

---

---

# GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAVE BRAIN

The brain pays a lot of attention to one big question: Am I safe? At the slightest hint of danger, feeling left out, or even just something you don't like, your amygdala is ready to send in your Downstairs Brain protectors.

Circle or color your Downstairs Brain protector that comes out the most:

I'm having a PORCUPINE moment when I'm grumpy, prickly toward others, or stuck in my negative thoughts.



I'm having a TIGER moment when I hurt people or damage things, act big and scary, or use loud, mean words.



I'm having a CHAMELEON moment when I try to blend in too much, copy others, or don't let people say nice things about me.

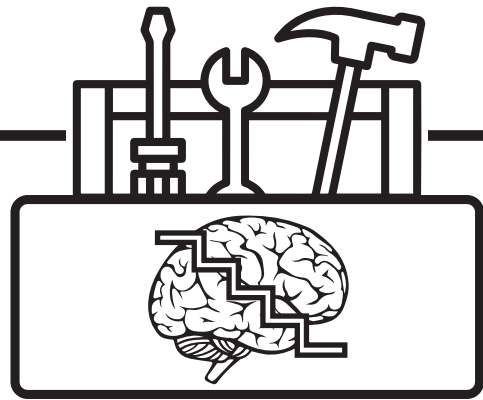


I'm having a TURTLE moment when it's tough to talk, I hide away, or I have a hard time letting someone help.





# Your Upstairs Brain Tools Are Here to Help!



*What will you do before your Downstairs Brain takes over next time?*



Take three deep breaths



Take a quick break

Try again



Get a hug



Ask for help



Eat a healthy snack

Move my body



Get a drink of water

What else helps you  
get your Upstairs Brain  
back in charge?



Tell myself:  
I can do this!



Talk to someone  
about a problem

Write or draw here:

**Keep using your Upstairs Brain tools!**  
**Every time you practice, your amazing brain grows!**

ADAPTED FROM RILEY THE BRAVE'S BIG FEELINGS ACTIVITY BOOK AND YOUR AMAZING BRAIN BY JESSICA SINARSKI

# YOUR AMAZING BRAIN TRADING CARDS

**EXTRA SPIKEY**



**MOTTO** "I stay grumpy so you don't get hurt!"

**POWER** Prickly powers to keep people away

**SPECIAL SKILLS** Teams up with other Porcupine Brains to complain and blame

**CONNECTION MODE**



**MOTTO** "We've got this!"

**POWER** Kindness, creativity, confidence, and joy

**SPECIAL SKILLS** Helps the Downstairs Brain slow down and think things through

**QUICK ACTION!**




**MOTTO** "I was born ready to ROAR!"

**POWER** LARGE AND IN CHARGE

**SPECIAL SKILLS** Does maximum damage!

**ISOLATION MODE**



**MOTTO** "Shut it all down!"

**POWER** Turns off uncomfortable feelings

**SPECIAL SKILLS** Less talking, moving, or even thinking

**SAFETY OFFICER**



**MOTTO** "Better safe than sorry"

**POWER** Sound the alarm; direct traffic

**SPECIAL SKILLS** Has a loooooong memory for Uncomfortable feelings

**MASTER OF DISGUISE**



**MOTTO** "If they don't see me, they can't hurt me."

**POWER** Hides in plain sight

**SPECIAL SKILLS** • Trying to be perfect  
• Brushing off compliments

# DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN PROTECTION MODE

We need our Downstairs Brain powers, but sometimes they get extra protective. Let's bring some Upstairs Brain power to each one so we don't end up hurting ourselves or others.



**PORCUPINE** brain tends to feel annoyed, get stuck in "complain and blame" mode, or act grumpy toward others. I can tell I am about to have a Porcupine moment when...

---

---

---



When **TIGER** brain comes out, sometimes people get hurt, things get damaged, or there are lots of loud, rude words. I can tell I am about to have a Tiger moment when...

---

---

---



**CHAMELEON** brain makes it easy to hide in plain sight by brushing off compliments, trying to be perfect, or just following others. I can tell I am about to have a Chameleon moment when...

---

---

---



**TURTLE** brain is good at shutting down thoughts and feelings. It might feel hard to move or like it's not worth trying. I can tell I am about to have a Turtle moment when...

---

---

---

# THE BRAIN GETS VERY PROTECTIVE!

Decide as a group what each of these Downstairs Brain defense modes should be called.  
Think of movie characters, YouTubers, comics, etc.

## PORCUPINE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of Porcupine brain:

- Arms crossed
- "Whatever. This is stupid."
- Ripping up paper
- Rejecting ideas
- Complaining and blaming



## TIGER: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of Tiger brain:

- Fighting
- Cyberbullying
- Swearing
- Knocking stuff off desks
- Intimidating others in the halls

## CHAMELEON: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of Chameleon brain:

- Following peer pressure
- Worrying what everyone thinks
- Feeling depressed
- "I suck at everything"
- Getting lost in social media



## TURTLE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs of Turtle brain:

- Cutting class
- Hiding under a hoodie
- Scrolling on phone
- Feeling overwhelmed or numb

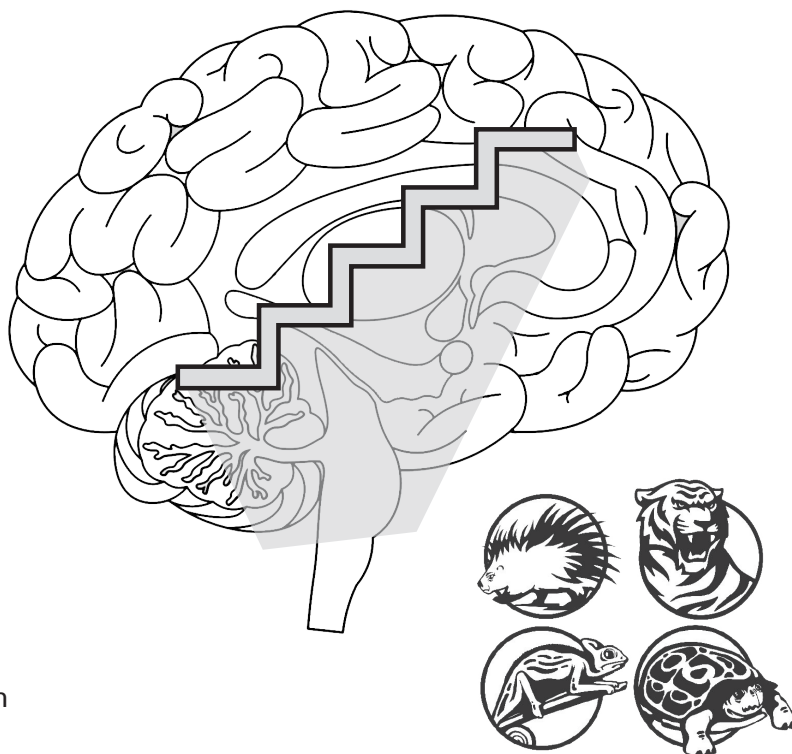


# THE BRAIN IN PROTECTION MODE

The Downstairs Brain is all about survival. This is our primitive operating system, made up of the limbic system (including the amygdala) and brain stem. It is online at birth and always on the lookout for danger.

This OS is responsible for acting without thinking. When it is in charge, we can:

- Stay alive with basic functions like breathing and heartbeat
- Activate with big Tiger or grumpy Porcupine behavior
- Lose sight of who we really are or blend in with others like a Chameleon
- Curl up in our Turtle shell to avoid harm (and sometimes miss out on good stuff too)
- Hurt ourselves and others when we get stuck in defense / self-protection mode



## In Case of Power Outage...

**COOL OFF** - Pause and breathe. Give your Upstairs Brain time to kick into action. If it's an intense power outage, you might need to walk it off, talk with someone you trust, or listen to some music while the emotional intensity settles.

**RESTART** - Remind yourself what's true: you had a Downstairs Brain moment, but you are the boss of your brain. Shake it off. You've got this!

**REPAIR** - Did you say or do something you shouldn't have while your Porcupine or Tiger brain was in charge? Did you miss an assignment while you were in Turtle mode? Did you join in some negative comments online while your Chameleon protector was running the show? Go make it better! Talk to a trusted adult if you need some help.

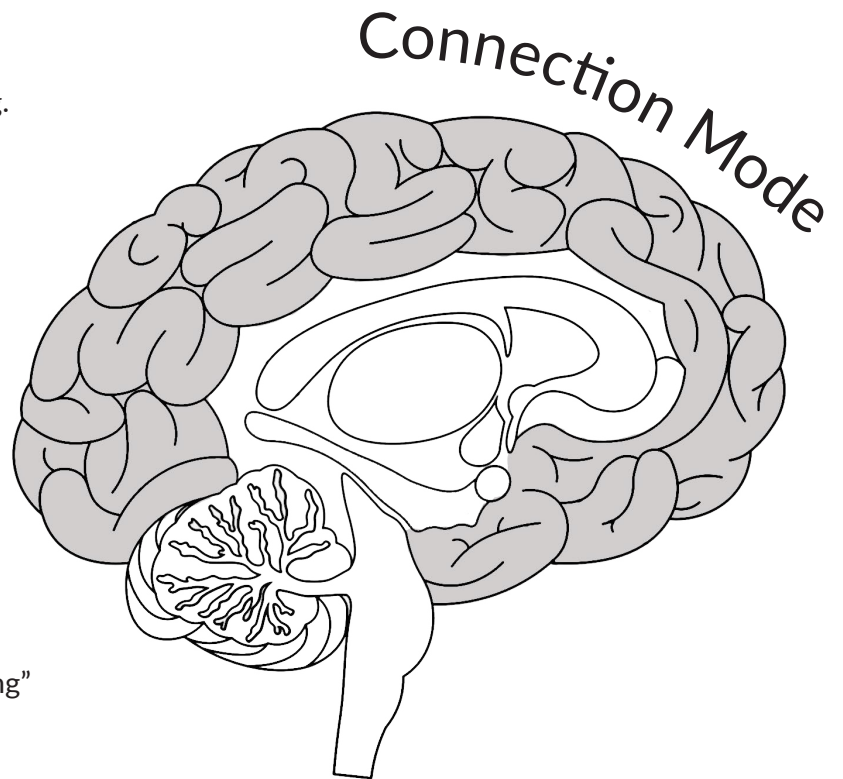
# YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN POWERHOUSE

This is our most advanced operating system. It is made up of the full wrinkly, outer portion of the brain known as the cerebral cortex, including the more advanced frontal lobe. The Upstairs Brain develops over time, reaching full maturity around age 26.

This OS is responsible for thinking before acting.

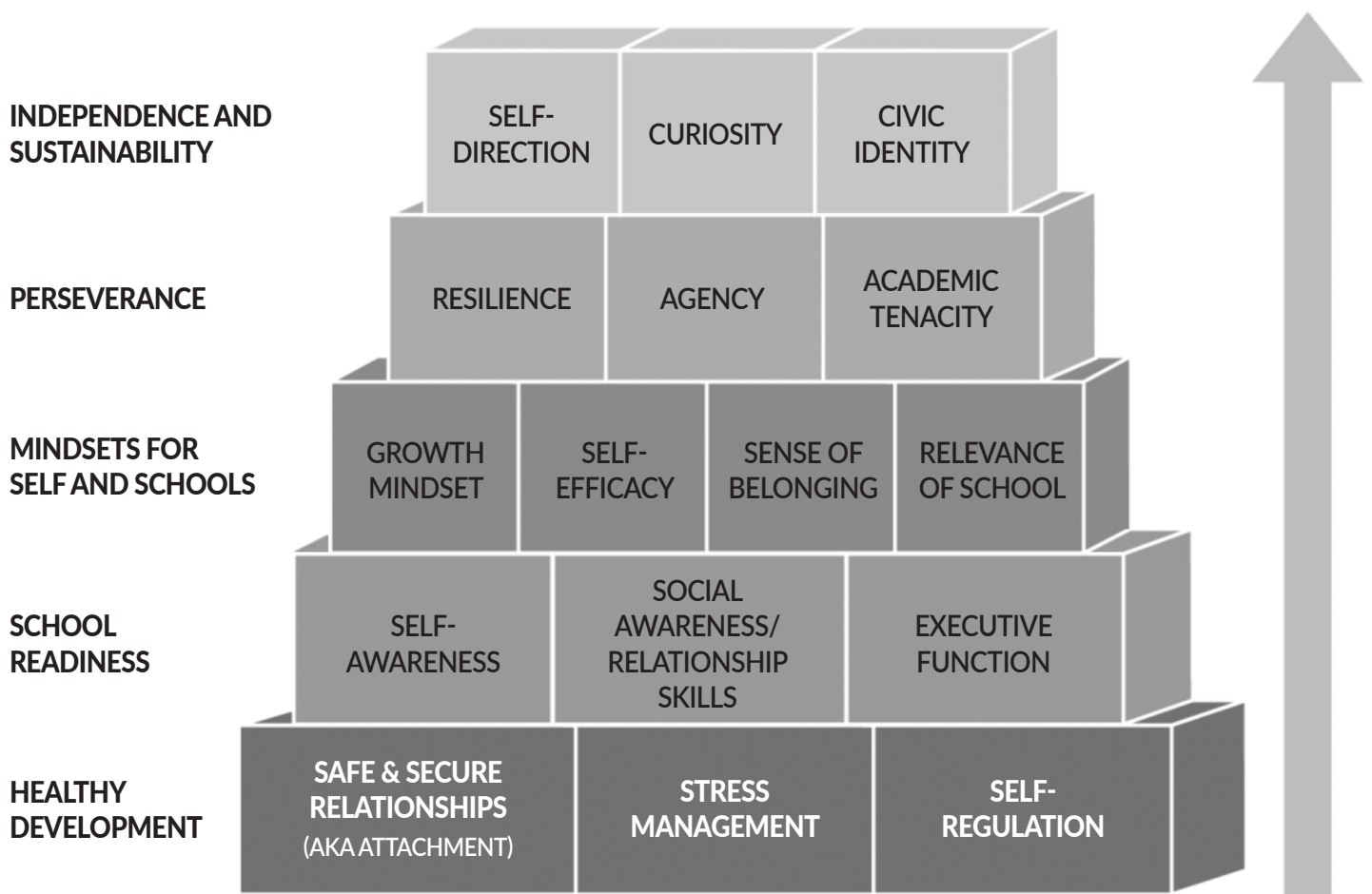
When it is in charge, we can:

- Enjoy time with friends
- Make thoughtful choices
- Deal with intense emotions and control impulses
- Learn new things
- Be creative
- Plan and persevere on big projects
- Care about other people
- Navigate all the complexities of “adulting”

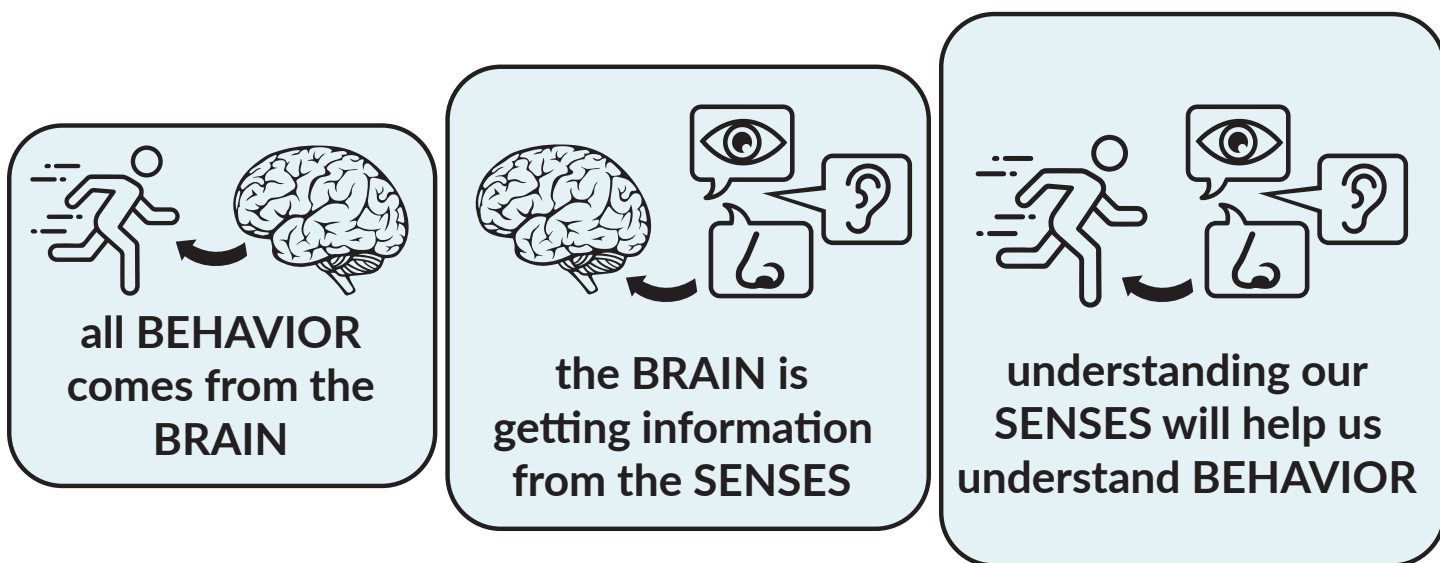


## Enhance Your Upstairs Brain OS

- Eat some greens (and go easy on the sugar and caffeinated drinks).
- Notice your feelings. Even the uncomfortable ones have something to tell you.
- Get moving! Walking, dancing, yoga, sports, bike rides...physical activity fuels your brain.
- Check the facts. Sometimes the Downstairs Brain sends false alarms.
- Notice the good, because the Downstairs Brain is really good at noticing negative stuff.
- Connect with a trusted adult who can share some Upstairs Brain power.
- Limit screen time and skip social media in favor of real time with friends.
- Sleep! That's when your brain does all its growing, connecting, and clearing out the junk.



SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM BUILDING BLOCKS FOR LEARNING: A FRAMEWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT BY TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN <sup>29</sup>



SOURCE: JESSICA SINARSKI



Can't organize their desks



Crave organization in everything

Love messy play - bring on the sand, glue, mud, and glitter



Can't stand anything on their hands

Have trouble sitting up straight



Can climb, jump, and crash around without getting hurt

Passive, quiet, and withdrawn



Hyperactive, loud, and in everyone's space

Love noises, smells, and bright lights



Can't stand most smells, sounds, or visual clutter

# MY SENSATIONAL SENSES



**touch**

- ★ Sensed by the skin all over my body
- ★ Lets me explore with my hands
- ★ Protects me from pain



**smell**

- ★ Teams up with taste
- ★ Protects me from stinky things
- ★ Connects with emotions and memories



**hearing**

- ★ Helps me enjoy music and conversation
- ★ Tunes in to danger signals
- ★ Sensitive to tone of voice



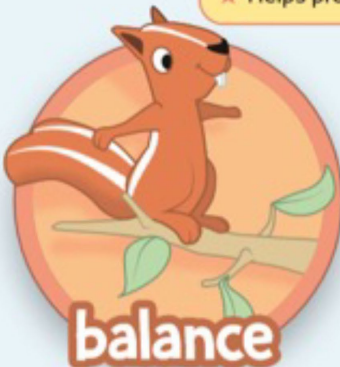
**taste**

- ★ Allows me to enjoy food
- ★ Helps protect me from poison



**sight**

- ★ Helps me plan what to do next
- ★ Alerts me to danger



**balance**

- ★ Notices even small head movements
- ★ Helps me feel stable and anchored
- ★ Protects me from feeling wobbly and unsafe



**interoception**

- ★ Senses what is happening *inside* my body, like heartbeat, breath, and OUCH that hurts
- ★ Helps me know if I am hot or cold, hungry, thirsty, or have to go potty



**proprioception**

- ★ Comes from my muscles and joints
- ★ Helps my body feel connected to my brain
- ★ Protects me from bumping into things

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL EIGHT SENSES IN RILEY THE BRAVE'S SENSATIONAL SENSES BY JESSICA SINARSKI, ILLUSTRATED BY ZACHARY KLINE.



# Bubblegum Club

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

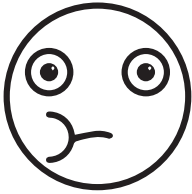
am joining the bubblegum club, using gum as a tool to help me focus.



**I will chew gum responsibly.**



**I will not play with my gum outside my mouth.**



**I will chew with my mouth closed.**



**I will not put chewed gum anywhere but the trash.**



**I will throw my gum in the trash.**



**I will spit out my gum if it becomes distracting for me or others.**

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: Please send in an approved pack of sugar-free gum for your child to use during class. Your signature below indicates that you will help reinforce responsible gum chewing for your child.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# 9 REASONS TO USE VISUALS

www.northstarpaths.com

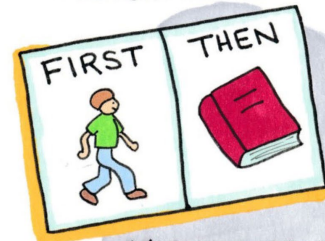
@kwiens62



- VISUALS ARE PERMANENT  
(SPOKEN WORDS DISAPPEAR)



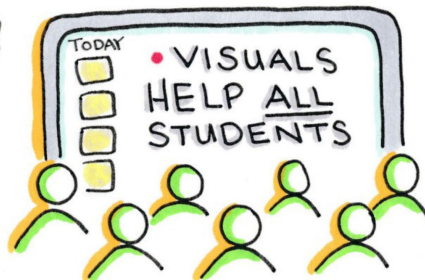
- VISUALS ALLOW TIME  
FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING



- VISUALS PREPARE  
STUDENTS FOR TRANSITIONS



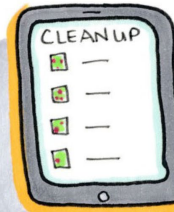
- VISUALS HELP KIDS  
SEE WHAT YOU MEAN



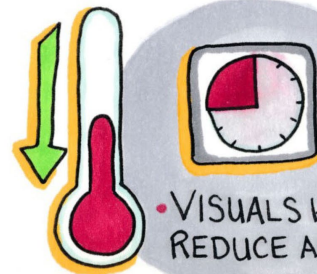
- VISUALS HELP  
BUILD INDEPENDENCE



- VISUALS ARE TRANSFERABLE  
BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS  
AND PEOPLE



- VISUALS HAVE NO ATTITUDE  
• NO TONE • NO FRUSTRATION  
• NO DISAPPROVAL



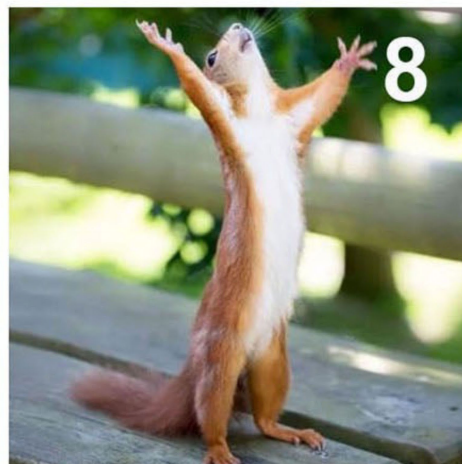
- VISUALS HELP  
REDUCE ANXIETY

Kirstin Wiens 2017

SOURCE: [HTTPS://NORTHSTARPATHS.COM/GRAPHICS-FREE-DOWNLOADS/](https://northstarpaths.com/graphics-free-downloads/)



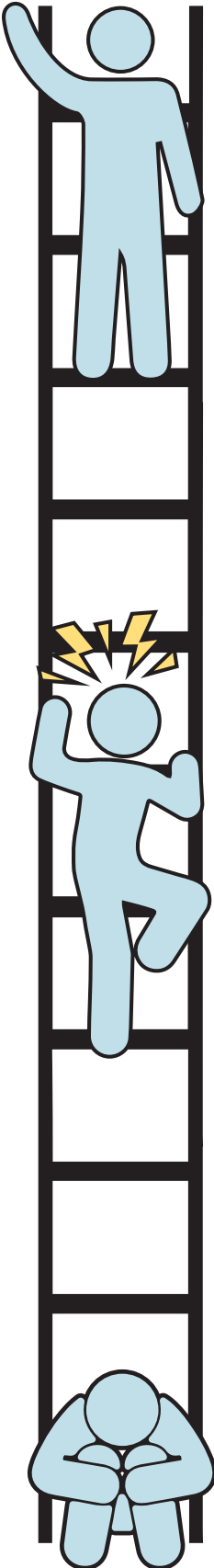
# On this squirrel scale, how do you feel today?



 Class Critters

@1classcritter

SOURCE: @CLASSCRITTERS ON FACEBOOK



	POLYVAGAL TERM	DESCRIPTION	COMMON FEELINGS	COMMON SENSATIONS
UPSTAIRS BRAIN	Ventral Vagal	Safe Steady Connected	Relaxed, thoughtful, open, creative, playful, curious, content, focused, joyful, grounded, ready, motivated, settled, interested, peaceful	Relaxed muscles, ease, lightness, energetic, free, mindfully aware
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN	Sympathetic	Activated Fight-or-flight Distressed	Angry, worried, stressed, embarrassed, distracted, grumpy, upset, annoyed, panicky, nervous, frustrated	On edge, tense, hot, restless, guarded, under pressure, agitated, jumpy
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN	Dorsal Vagal	Shutdown Immobilized Disconnected	Failure, shame, helpless, hopeless, overwhelmed, sad, vulnerable, lonely	Numb, stuck, heavy, cold, weak, slow, detached, foggy



*Think about your five biggest annoyances in your work or things that seem to overwhelm your resources. From tapping pens to missing homework to “talking back” to a new technology demand, everyone’s triggers are different. What sends you into your Downstairs Brain?*

***My Triggers:***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

***What tools are in your toolbox to deal with these triggers? If you’re not sure or it involves kicking a kid out of class, your homework is to ask a colleague or seek support to expand your plans and skills to get through these triggers.***

---

---

---





*Think about what moments from today felt good or what makes you excited about your job. What makes you smile? Come back and add to the list as you notice more!*

**My Glimmers :**

---

---

---

*Is there a special person, place, or activity that helps you feel safe and secure? What gives you confidence? What starts your day off right or sets you up for a positive evening? What helps you feel steady?*

**My Anchors:**

---

---

---

Fear of...	Looks like...
<b>Rejection or Abandonment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chameleon behavior, like following peer pressure or losing touch with their own interests or values</li> <li>• Not showing interest in connection ("I'll reject you before you can reject me.")</li> <li>• Trying too hard with peers and getting taken advantage of or getting in trouble</li> <li>• Constantly needing reassurance or physical proximity to an adult</li> <li>• Lashing out at adults, especially ones they are starting to feel close to</li> <li>• Hiding in screens (video games, social media, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Embarrassment or Confusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running out the room</li> <li>• Angry outburst ("This is stupid.")</li> <li>• Personal attack ("I hate you.")</li> <li>• Joking or heckling</li> <li>• Refusing or avoiding work</li> <li>• Story telling or instinctual lying to protect from shame</li> </ul>
<b>Failure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not trying or giving up quickly</li> <li>• Complete Turtle shutdown (sleeping in class, not responding, etc.)</li> <li>• Anxiety or perfectionism</li> <li>• Stress and lack of enjoyment even in fun situations</li> <li>• Negative self-talk ("I suck at math.")</li> <li>• Low frustration tolerance or quick to anger even with small challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Negative Consequences or the Loss of Something Valued</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saying what they wish were true</li> <li>• Hiding or running away from the situation</li> <li>• Zoning out or day dreaming</li> <li>• Shifting the attention or blame</li> <li>• Getting into a power struggle</li> <li>• An "I don't care" attitude</li> </ul>
<b>Unmet Needs or the Unknown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyper-focused on material items</li> <li>• Stockpiling food or other resources</li> <li>• Difficulty sharing or thinking of others' feelings</li> <li>• Taking other people's belongings</li> <li>• Difficulty with change or transitions</li> <li>• Constant questioning and needing reassurance</li> <li>• Tiger moments about seemingly minor things</li> </ul>

# I Had a Moment

When we are feeling upset or unsafe, we need our Upstairs Brain to help so our Downstairs Brain doesn't take over everything! Think of a tough part of your day or week. Circle the part of your brain that was running the show.

Here's what happened (write or draw pictures):

I was feeling \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.

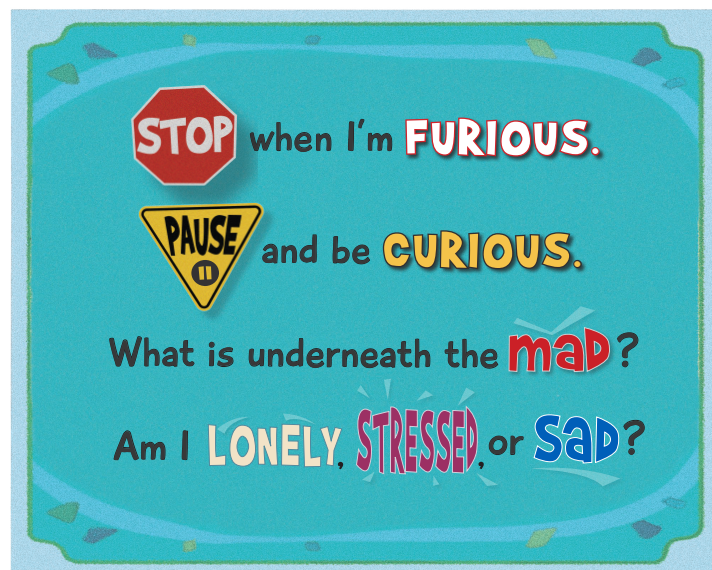
Next time I can \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.

ADAPTED FROM RILEY THE BRAVE'S BIG FEELINGS ACTIVITY BOOK BY JESSICA SINARSKI, ILLUSTRATED BY ZACHARY KLINE.

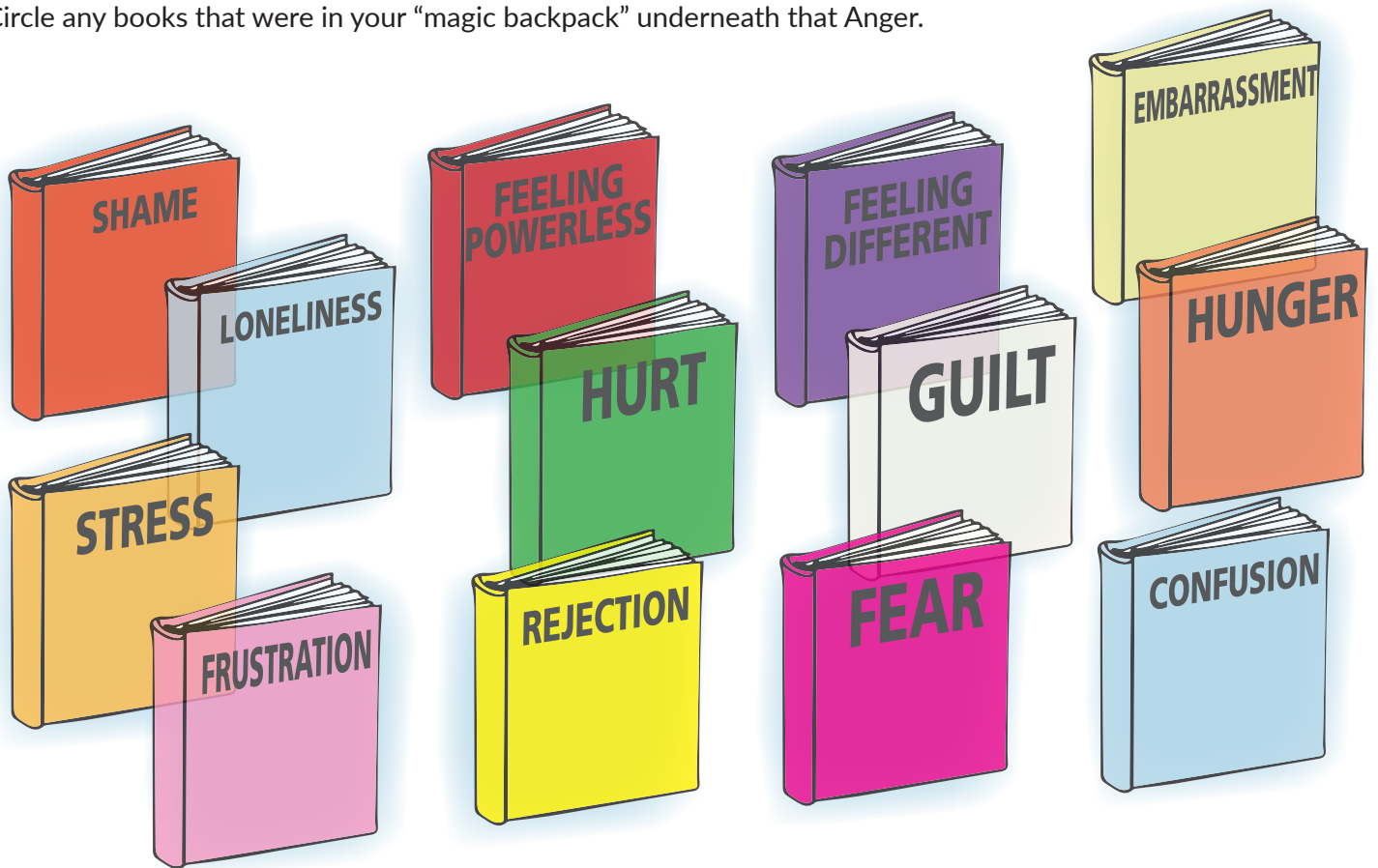


# Become a Backpack Detective

Think about a time you felt angry. Write or draw about it below.



Think about what happened right before you noticed those big angry feelings.  
Circle any books that were in your “magic backpack” underneath that Anger.



Write or draw one thing you can do to set aside some of the books that were hiding underneath Anger.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for a student to write or draw a response to the prompt above.

## Triggers

Get to know what activates your Downstairs Brain protectors



What scenarios, attitudes, or aspects of learning frustrate you?	What feels overwhelming?
When do you find yourself scrolling on your phone?	When do you find your mood dipping?
What bugs you?	What gets in the way of making healthy choices?



# Glimmers and Triggers

## Glimmers

What inspires you?	Is there a special person, place, pet, or activity that helps you feel safe & secure?
What moments from today felt good?	What sets you up for a positive afternoon or evening?
What helps you feel relaxed and ready for the day?	What feelings do you enjoy?
What makes you smile?	What sparks joy?
What makes you excited about learning?	What helps you feel steady?
What gives you confidence?	What motivates you?

**Notice and savor these moments that support your Upstairs Brain!**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Punishment</b>
Instilled in children by trusted adults	Imposed on children
Preventive	Punitive
Proactive	Reactive
Child learns self-control and accountability	Adult is responsible to try to control the child's behavior
Offers structure and guidance	Imposes demands that don't necessarily repair any damage done
Encourages desired behavior	Focuses on undesired behavior
Teaches the preferred way to solve or prevent problems	Does not teach preferred or expected behaviors
Encourages children to be capable and responsible for making decisions	Imposes decisions on children
Protects and nurtures children	May cause emotional and physical pain
Fosters self-esteem and confidence	Reinforces poor self-esteem (especially if the punishment is demeaning)
Children rely on their own inner controls or rules for conduct (growing self-regulation)	Responsible behavior is expected only when authority figures are present
Children and adults have cooperative, shared, positive relationships	Children learn to avoid and fear adults

Hello!

I'm excited to have your child in my class. I know that my students learn best when they sense that they are safe, seen, and valued and I will do my best to create a classroom community that fosters these needs. I also want you to know how much your experience and expertise about your student matters to me! Please fill out and return this form to help me create a culture of belonging this year.

---

STUDENT'S NAME

---

YOUR NAME

---

RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT

What have you / your student loved about school in the past?

---

---

---

What has bothered you / your student about school?

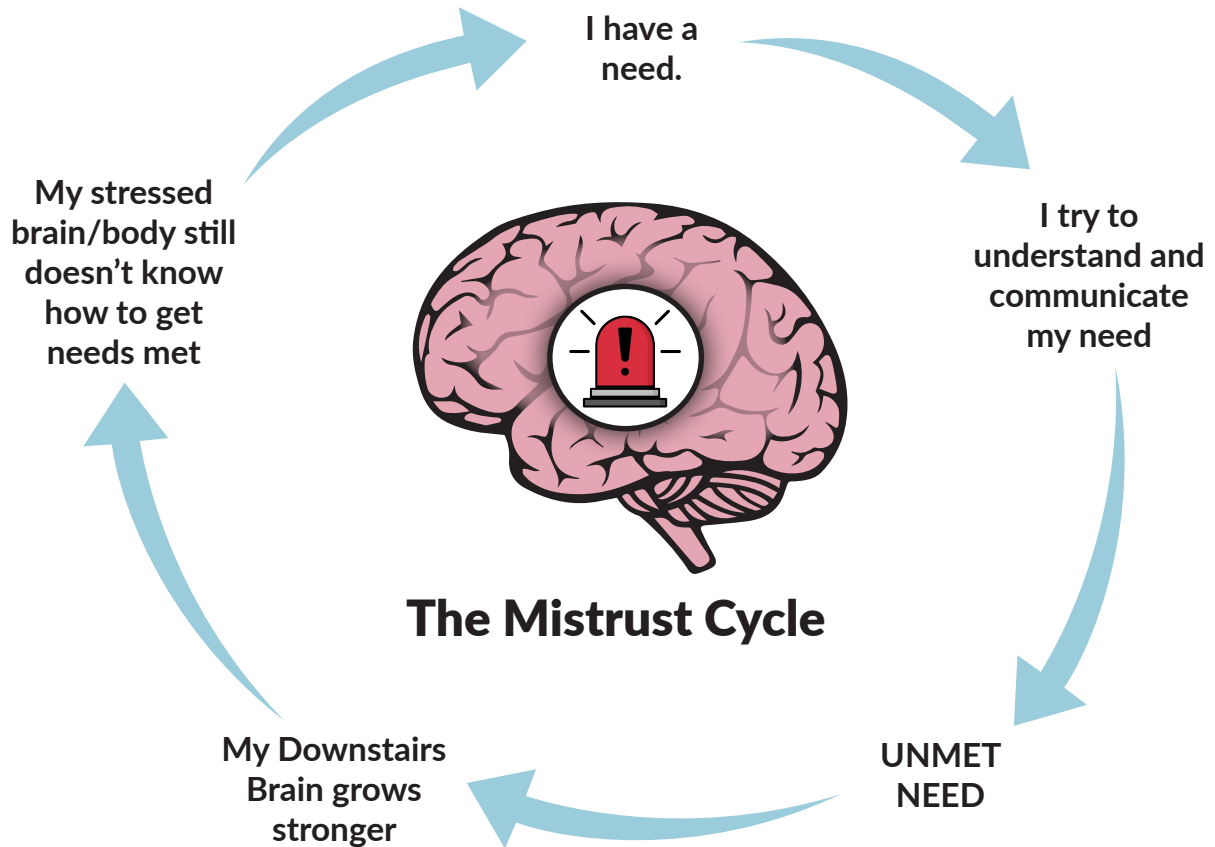
---

---

---

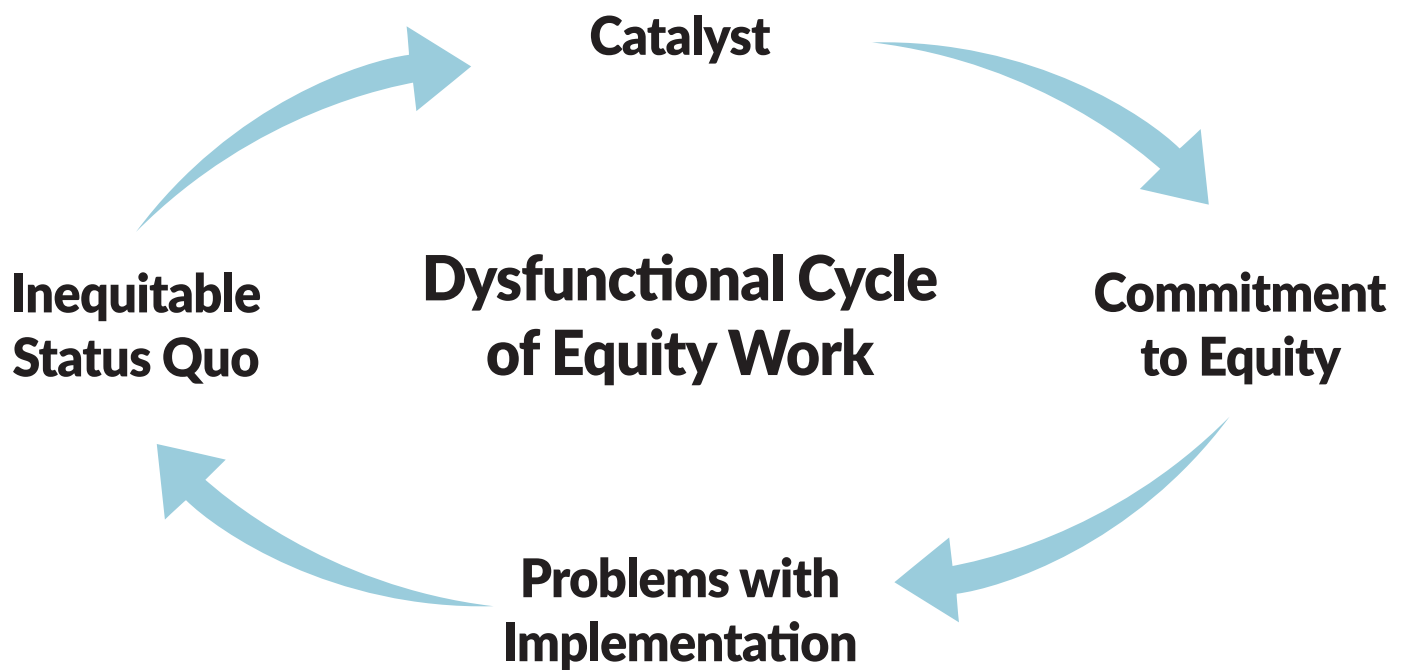
Thank you for sharing your time and energy with me. Looking forward to a great year ahead!

Sincerely,





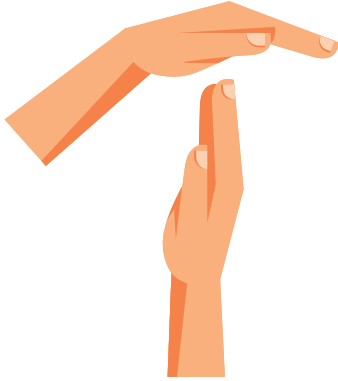
<b>CULTURE</b>	the norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals of a group built up over time	"Culture is the way we do things around here." - Cobb & Krownapple <sup>1</sup>
<b>EQUITY</b>	fairness, justice	It is not about everyone getting the same thing (equality) but recognizing that we must make adjustments where we find injustice or unfair disadvantages. <sup>2</sup>
<b>DIVERSITY</b>	the state of being diverse; variety	"Diversity is not a vision to move toward but a reality to recognize and acknowledge." - Cobb & Krownapple <sup>3</sup>
<b>IMPLICIT BIAS</b>	a form of bias (attitudes, behaviors, and actions that are prejudiced in favor of or against one person or group compared to another) that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors <sup>4</sup>	Because of the lack of awareness inherent in implicit bias, this can be difficult to detect. In fact, you may consciously express that you feel the opposite (using your Upstairs Brain) while you act without thinking (Downstairs Brain) in ways that negatively impact others.
<b>PRIVILEGE</b>	a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group <sup>5</sup>	Just like many of these terms, the word 'privilege' often sparks a strong reaction such as, "Privilege? Do you know how hard my life has been?!" Benefitting from White Privilege does not mean that life has been easy. It makes sense that you want your struggle and ability to overcome to be acknowledged or honored. After all, we all need to feel safe, seen, and valued to function at our best. I encourage a broadening of this thought...you have worked hard and accomplished a lot, AND, if you are White in this country, you have benefitted from laws and practices designed for and by White people. Hard work and privilege. Both can be true.
<b>RACISM</b>	a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race <sup>6</sup>	Because of implicit bias, however, this definition seems more helpful: "A powerful collection of policies that sustains racial inequities or injustices and is substantiated by ideas of racial hierarchy." - Kendi & Stone <sup>7</sup>
<b>RACIST (ADJ)</b>	of, relating to, or characterized by racism <sup>8</sup>	In <i>How to Be a (Young) Antiracist</i> , authors Kendi and Stone point out that while "racist" is often used as a noun (i.e. "He's a racist."), it may be more constructive as an adjective. This will enable us to notice and name the racist ideas, policies, or practices that impede equity work. <sup>9</sup>



SOURCE: DR. FLOYD COBB AND JOHN KROWNAPPLE IN  
*BELONGING THROUGH A CULTURE OF DIGNITY*<sup>79</sup>

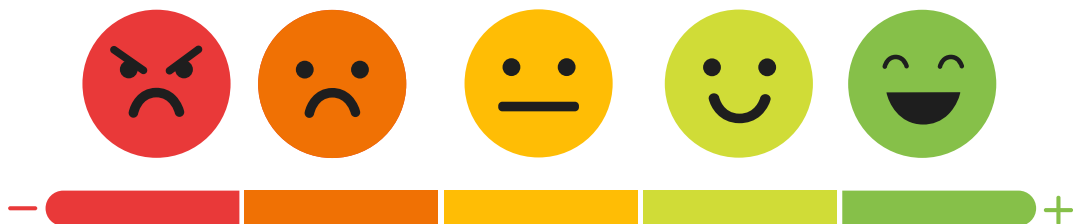
# STOP, DROP, and ROLL\*

If you are feeling the sting of someone else's Downstairs Brain moment or afraid you might flip your lid, **STOP, DROP, and ROLL**.



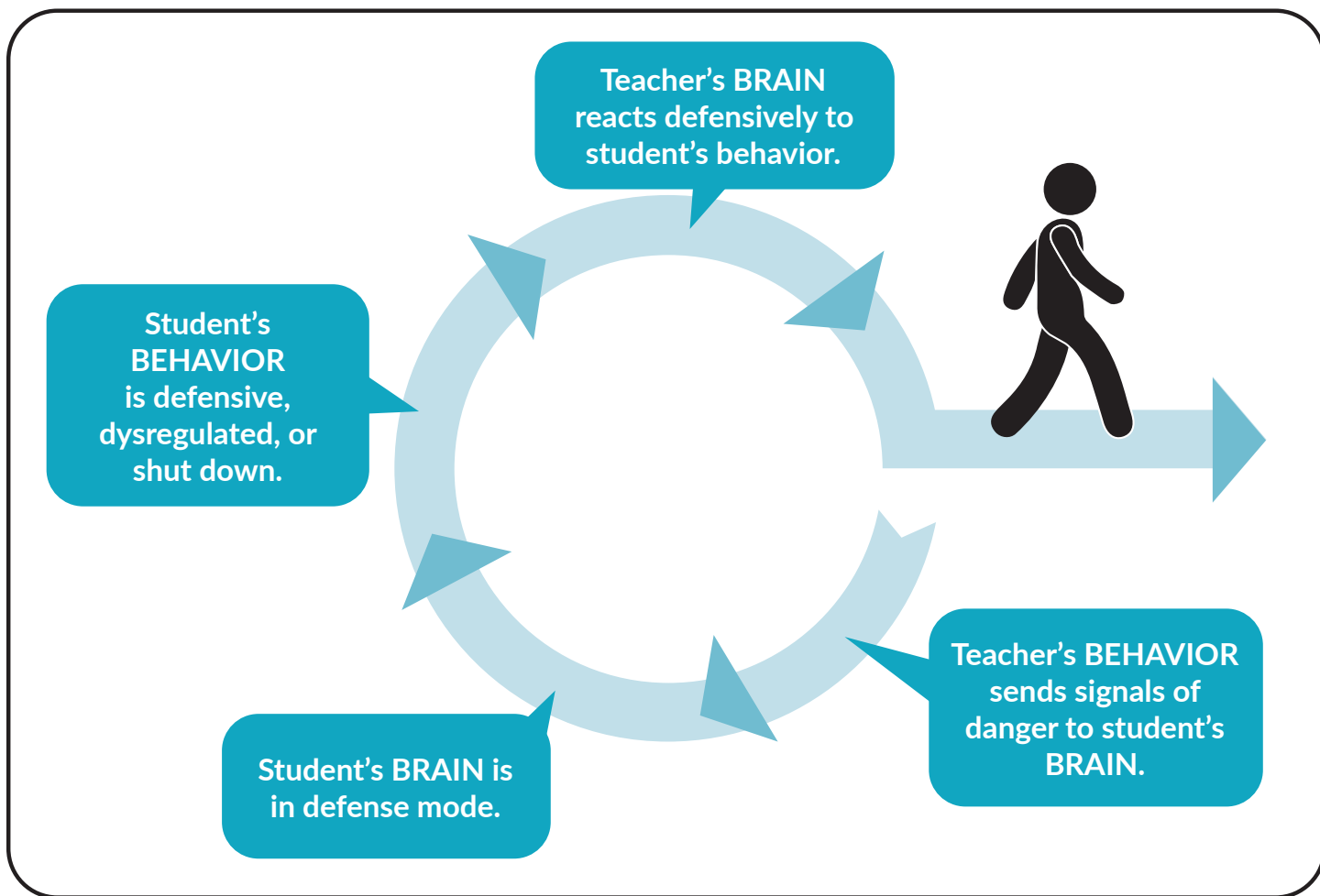
**STOP:** Whatever you are doing, thinking, or saying, stop! Don't go any further down the same emotional and mental path.

**DROP BACK:** Pay attention to what you feel, what's going on around you, and where you seem to be headed. Be curious. Is that where you want to go? If not, say so out loud: "Let's not go where I think we're headed. Let's figure out something different."



**ROLL:** Whatever happens next in your body, let it happen. You might cry or laugh or moan or sigh. Unless it will harm you or someone else, let the feeling roll on through. You don't have to fight it, run from it, or cut it off.

\*SOURCE: MY GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS BY RESMAA MENAKEM



# 1, 2, Re-Do.



Take 1 deep  
**BREATH.**

# 2

We're a

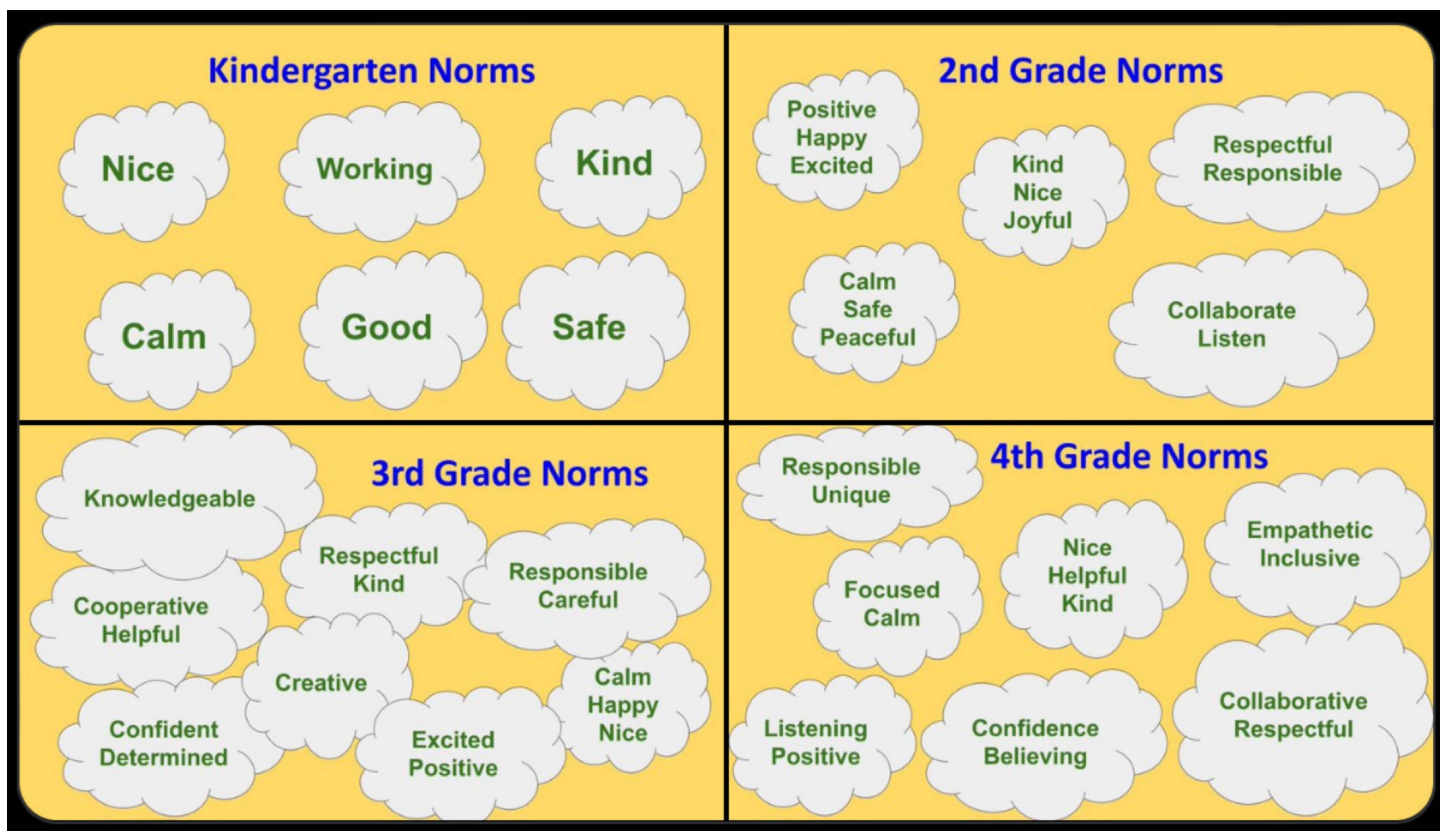


*Remember that  
you and your student  
are **on the same team.***

## RE-DO

Support your student's ability to try again. With patience, compassion, and maybe even a little playfulness, try one of these phrases:

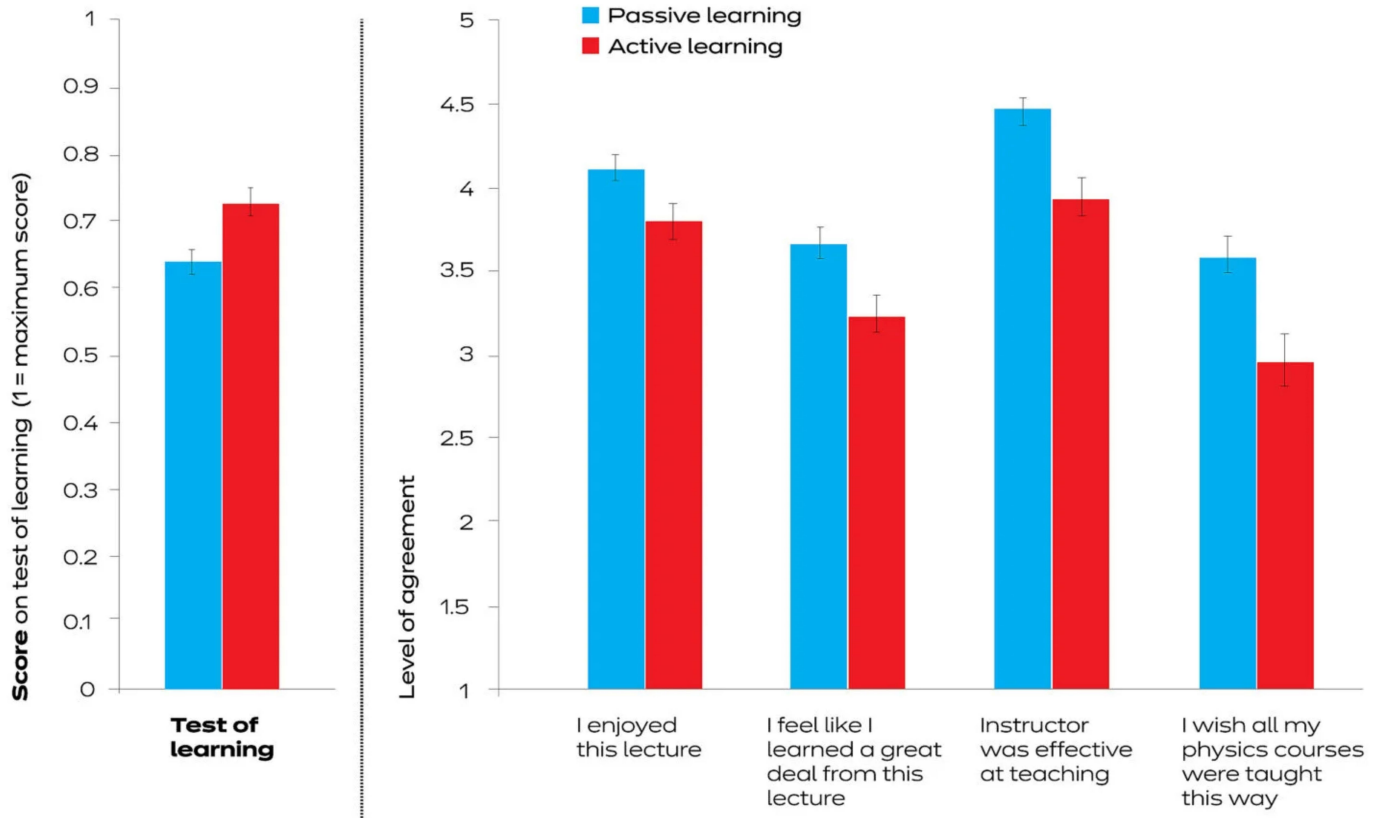
- Can we re-do?
- Can you try that a different way?
- I'm here to help.
- Let's try again.
- Help me understand.
- Seems like something is bugging you.
- Do-over?
- Want a minute to cool out?
- Oops. Upstairs Brain version...



SOURCE: @MRSWENDYMTURNER ON TWITTER



## Performance vs. Perception



SOURCE: MEASURING ACTUAL LEARNING VERSUS FEELING OF LEARNING IN RESPONSE TO BEING ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE CLASSROOM BY DESLAURIERS, L. ET AL. (2019)

<b>Survival Brain Teaching Is...</b>		<b>Brain-Building Leaders...</b>
Stress. Stress. Stress.	➡	Model stress management and self-regulation
No time for fun	➡	Play and be playful
Labeling students	➡	Use strengths-based thinking
“Sit still and listen”	➡	Get the senses involved
Command and demand	➡	Connect and redirect
Catching misbehavior	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice the good</li> <li>• Coach for skill building</li> </ul>
Power struggles	➡	Solve problems collaboratively Use and coach self-reflection
“Get out of my classroom!!”	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a deep breath</li> <li>• Remember we’re on the same team</li> <li>• (Re-Do) Offer a do-over</li> </ul>
“They should know better”	➡	Ask “What is the need?”
Fear of judgement and change	➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know it’s good to ask for help</li> <li>• Seek and act upon constructive feedback</li> </ul>
Goal: Control behavior so I can teach.	➡	Goal: Light up the learning brain!



# Grief, Gratitude, and Grit

What's on your mind? What is weighing you down? What's worth celebrating?  
As thoughts come to mind, write them down in the column where they fit best.



**Grief**



**Gratitude**



**Grit**

## Glossary Reference

- i Cobb, Floyd and John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
- ii Healy, Ginger, *Regulation and Co-Regulation* (Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues, 2023).
- iii Baylin, Jonathan and Daniel A. Hughes, *The Neurobiology of Attachment-Focused Therapy* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2016).
- iv McClure, Byron and Kelsie Reed, *Hacking Deficit Thinking: 8 Reframes that will Change the Way you Think about Strength-based Practices and Equity in Schools* (Highland Heights, OH: Times 10 Publications, 2022).
- v Healy, Ginger, *Regulation and Co-Regulation* (Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues, 2023).
- vi Sara M Moniuszko USA Today, “Glimmers Are the Opposite of Triggers. Here’s How to Embrace Them.,” USA TODAY, March 29, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2022/03/23/glimmers-opposite-triggers-mental-health-benefits/7121353001/>.
- vii “Implicit Bias | SWD at NIH,” n.d., <https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias#:~:text=What%20is%20implicit%20bias?,retaining%20a%20diverse%20scientific%20workforce>.
- viii “Definition of Neurodiversity,” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, November 8, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neurodiversity>
- ix Tedeschi, R.G. and L. G Calhoun, “The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the Positive Legacy of Trauma.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 9, no. 3 (July 1996): 455–71. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490090305>
- x Perry, Bruce. D. and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2021).
- xi “Privilege Definition & Meaning | Dictionary.Com,” in Dictionary.Com, September 17, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/privilege>.
- xii “Definition of Racism,” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, August 18, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>.
- xiii “Definition of Racist,” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, August 18, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racist>.
- xiv Stafford-Brizard, K. B., *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development* (Center for Whole Child Education, 2016). Retrieved from [www.turnaroundusa.org](http://www.turnaroundusa.org)
- xv Sinarski, Jessica, *Riley the Brave’s Big Feelings Activity Book: A Trauma-Informed Guide for Counselors, Educators, and Parents* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2023).
- xvi Neff, Kristin, “The Three Elements of Self-Compassion,” Self Compassion, 2023, <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/>
- xvii Stafford-Brizard, K. B., *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development* (Center for Whole Child Education, 2016). Retrieved from [www.turnaroundusa.org](http://www.turnaroundusa.org)
- xviii Baylin, Jonathan and Daniel A. Hughes, *The Neurobiology of Attachment-Focused Therapy* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2016).
- xix Stafford-Brizard, K. B., *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development* (Center for Whole Child Education, 2016). Retrieved from [www.turnaroundusa.org](http://www.turnaroundusa.org)
- xx Perry, Bruce. D. and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2021).

# Notes

1. EAB, "Breaking Bad Behavior: The Rise of Classroom Disruptions in Early Grades and How Districts Are Responding," District leadership Forum, 2019, <https://pages.eab.com/rs/732-GKV-655/images/BreakingBadBehaviorStudy.pdf?alild=eyJpIjoiU3BvSHAwbGZrMXJ5N3I-cL20iLCJ0IjoiRW0xOHZyTTC1eWtSR01LdStkZjkzd09ln0%253D>
2. Siegel, Daniel J. and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind* (New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 2011).
3. Baylin, Jonathan and Daniel A. Hughes, *Brain-Based Parenting* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2012).
4. "Brain Architecture," Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, August 20, 2019, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>
5. "Brain Architecture," Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, August 20, 2019, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>
6. TED, "Molly Wright: How Every Child Can Thrive by Five | TED," August 9, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSXCw0Pi94>.
7. Comedian DJ Pryor, "Kingston's Conversation with Me over next Season," June 7, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY35eXT-KVLY>.
8. Pavao, Joyce Maguire, *The Family of Adoption* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005).
9. Prizant, Barry. M., *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2022).
10. Nicole Baumer Md MEd, "What Is Neurodiversity?," *Harvard Health*, November 23, 2021, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-neurodiversity-202111232645>.
11. Aherne, Daniel. *The Pocket Guide to Neurodiversity* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2023).
12. McClure, Byron and Kelsie Reed, *Hacking Deficit Thinking: 8 Reframes that will Change the Way you Think about Strength-based Practices and Equity in Schools* (Highland Heights, OH: Times 10 Publications, 2022).
13. Weir, Kirsten. "A Hidden Epidemic of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome," *Monitor on Psychology* 53, no. 5 (July 2022). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/07/news-fetal-alcohol-syndrome>
14. Office of the Surgeon General. "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community," 2023 <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>
15. Office of the Surgeon General. "Social Connection — Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2023. <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/connection/index.html>.
16. Siegel, Daniel. *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurology (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2012).
17. Perry, Bruce. D. and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2021).
18. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study [Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC]," n.d., <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html>.
19. Harris, Nadine Burke. *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2018).
20. Bethell, Christina, Jennifer Jones, Narangerel Gombojav, Jeff Linkenbach, and Robert Sege, "Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels," *JAMA Pediatrics* 173, no. 11 (2019):e193007. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007
21. Crandall, AliceAnn., et al. "ACEs and counter-ACEs: How Positive and Negative Childhood Experiences Influence Adult Health," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 96, (2019). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104089>.
22. Baglivio, Michael and Kevin T. Wolff, "Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE): Cumulative Resiliency in the Face of Adverse Childhood Experiences," *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 19 no. 2 (2020): 139–162. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204020972487>
23. Tedeschi, R.G. and L. G Calhoun, "The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the Positive Legacy of Trauma." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 9, no. 3 (July 1996): 455–71. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490090305>
24. Perry, Bruce. D. and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2021).
25. Olivera, Lisa, *Already Enough: A Path to Self-acceptance* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2022).
26. Jessica Sinarski, LPCMH, "It's a Brain Thing!," February 4, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUtLZE1UB8g>.
27. Young, Karen, *Hey, Awesome: A Book for Kids about Anxiety, Courage, and Being Already Awesome* (Brisbane, Australia: Hey Sigmund Publishing, 2020).
28. Pounds, Dwayne, "Partnership for a Drug-Free America 'This Is Your Brain on Drugs' PSA (1987)," September 14, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5wwECXTJbg>.
29. Stafford-Brizard, K. B., *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development* (Center for Whole Child Education, 2016). Retrieved from [www.turnaroundusa.org](http://www.turnaroundusa.org)
30. Turnaround for Children, "Building Blocks for Learning - Center for Whole-Child Education (Turnaround for Children)," Center for Whole-Child Education (Turnaround for Children), January 16, 2020, <https://turnaroundusa.org/what-we-do/tools/building-blocks/>.
31. Miller, Lucy Jane, *Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder* (New York, NY: Perigree, 2014).



32. <https://www.britannica.com/science/information-theory/Physiology>
33. Sanchez, Horatio, *The Poverty Problem: How Education can Promote Resilience and Counter Poverty's Impact on Brain Development and Functioning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2021).
34. Perry, Bruce. D. and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2021).
35. Yogman, Michael, Andrew Garner, Jeffrey Hutchinson, et al; AAP COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, AAP COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA, "The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children" *Pediatrics* 142, no. 3 (2018):e20182058
36. Waldinger, Robert and Marc Schulz, "The Lifelong Power of Close Relationships," *WSJ*, January 13, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-lifelong-power-of-close-relationships-11673625450>.
37. "Instagram," n.d., [https://www.instagram.com/reel/CrzBFnaAgDu/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igshid=MWQ1ZGUxMzBkMA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CrzBFnaAgDu/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MWQ1ZGUxMzBkMA==).
38. McClure, Byron and Kelsie Reed, *Hacking Deficit Thinking: 8 Reframes that will Change the Way you Think about Strength-based Practices and Equity in Schools* (Highland Heights, OH: Times 10 Publications, 2022).
39. Sanchez, Horatio, *The Poverty Problem: How Education can Promote Resilience and Counter Poverty's Impact on Brain Development and Functioning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2021).
40. Daniels, Emily R., *The Regulated Classroom: "Bottom-up" and Trauma-informed Teaching* (Peterborough, NH: Here This Now, LLC., 2021).
41. Sanchez, Horatio, *The Poverty Problem: How Education can Promote Resilience and Counter Poverty's Impact on Brain Development and Functioning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2021).
42. Class Critters, "On This Squirrel Scale, How Do You Feel Today?" Facebook, n.d., <https://www.facebook.com/classcritters/photos/pb.100063650494596.-2207520000./347298179968092/?type=3>
43. Parris, Sheri and Christian Hernandez, "The Benefits of Play in Cognitive Development," n.d., <https://child.tcu.edu/play/#sthash.YyGbODUrdpbs>.
44. Willis, Judy, "What You Should Know About Your Brain." *Educational Leadership* 67, no. 4 (2009).
45. "Stress Relief from Laughter? It's No Joke," Mayo Clinic, September 22, 2023, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>.
46. Porges, Stephen W., *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundation of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011).
47. Dana, Deb, *Polyvagal Flip Chart: Understanding the Science of Safety*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2020).
48. Dana, Deb, *Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018).
49. Sara M Moniuszko Usa Today, "'Glimmers' Are the Opposite of Triggers. Here's How to Embrace Them.," *USA TODAY*, March 29, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2022/03/23/glimmers-opposite-triggers-mental-health-benefits/7121353001/>.
50. Dana, Deb, *Polyvagal Practices: Anchoring the self in safety* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2023).
51. "Lives in the Balance," n.d., <https://livesinthebalance.org/>.
52. Greene, Ross W., *Lost & Found: Unlocking Collaboration and Compassion to Help our most Vulnerable, Misunderstood Students (and All the Rest)* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2021).
53. Clint Pulver, "Inspirational Video- Be a Mr. Jensen- MUST WATCH!!," May 4, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p5286T\\_kn0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p5286T_kn0).
54. St. Romain, Dan, *Positive Behavior Principles: Shifting Perspectives and Aligning Practices in Schools* (Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues, 2020).
55. Holley, K, "What is the Best thing About Your Kid?" Twitter Photo, August 9, 2022, <https://twitter.com/KHolleyEdS/status/1557141499300683777>
56. Baylin, Jonathan and Daniel A. Hughes, *The Neurobiology of Attachment-Focused Therapy* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2016).
57. Souers, Kristin and Pete Hall, *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-sensitive Classroom* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2016).
58. Cobb, Floyd And John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
59. Purvis, Karyn. B., David R. Cross, and Wendy Lyons Sunshine, *The Connected Child: Bring Hope and Healing to your Adoptive Family* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007).
60. Porges, Stephen and Deb Dana (Eds.) *Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory*, Norton Series on Interpersonal Biology (New York: NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018).
61. Altogether Autism, "Autism No Puzzle, Nothing Wrong with Us," *Altogether Autism*, March 28, 2021, <https://www.altogetherautism.org.nz/autism-no-puzzle-nothing-wrong-with-us/>.
62. Prizant, Barry. M., *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism* (New York, NY: Simon & Scheuster, 2022).
63. Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (New York, NY: Scholastic, 1998).
64. Cobb, Floyd and John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
65. "What Is Equity? | National Association of Colleges and Employers," n.d., <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/equity-definition>.

66. Cobb, Floyd and John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
67. "Implicit Bias | SWD at NIH," n.d., <https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias#:~:text=What%20is%20implicit%20bias%2C%20retaining%20a%20diverse%20scientific%20workforce.>
68. "Privilege Definition & Meaning | Dictionary.Com," in Dictionary.Com, September 17, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/privilege>.
69. "Definition of Racism," in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, August 18, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>.
70. Kendi, Ibram X and Nic Stone, *How to Be a (Young) Antiracist* (New York, NY: Kokila, 2023).
71. "Definition of Racism," in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, August 18, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>.
72. Kendi, Ibram X and Nic Stone, *How to Be a (Young) Antiracist* (New York, NY: Kokila, 2023).
73. "Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers and Their Students," n.d., <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>.
74. McIntosh, Peggy, "'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack' and 'Some Notes for Facilitators,'" National SEED Project, June 14, 2023, <https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>.
75. Souers, Kristin Van Marter and Pete Hall, *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2019).
76. Souers, Kristin Van Marter and Pete Hall, *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2019).
77. Gilliam, Walter. S., et al. "Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?" Yale University Child Study Center (2016), accessed June 4, 2023, <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/75afe6d2-e556-4794-bf8c-3cf105113b7c?sv=2020-08-04&se=2023-06-04T18:05:48Z&sr=b&sp=r&sig=tRQXMKBUaqdudr3cf204Q+2X+ZhBwt9Cw1plgeRPwIA=>
78. Greene, Ross W., *Lost & Found: Unlocking Collaboration and Compassion to Help our most Vulnerable, Misunderstood Students (and All the Rest)* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2021).
79. Cobb, Floyd and John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
80. Cobb, Floyd and John Krownapple, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* (San Diego, CA: Mimi & Todd Press, Inc., 2019).
81. Menakem, Resmaa, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press, 2017).
82. Souers, Kristin and Pete Hall, *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2016).
83. Dean, Amie, *Behavior Interventions: Strategies for Educators, Counselors, and Parents* (Chattanooga, TN: National Center for Youth Issues, 2022).
84. Souers, Kristin Van Marter and Pete Hall, *Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2019).
85. Whitman, Glenn and Ian Kelleher, *Neuroteach: Brain Science and the Future of Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).
86. Deslauriers Louis, Logan S. McCarty, Kelly Miller, Kristina Callaghan, and Greg Kestin G, "Measuring Actual Learning Versus Feeling of Learning in Response to Being Actively Engaged in the Classroom," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 139 (August 2019): 19251–19257, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1821936116>
87. Reuell, Peter, "Study Shows That Students Learn More When Taking Part in Classrooms That Employ Active-Learning Strategies," *Harvard Gazette*, September 5, 2019, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/09/study-shows-that-students-learn-more-when-taking-part-in-classrooms-that-employ-active-learning-strategies/>.
88. Whitman, Glenn and Ian Kelleher, *Neuroteach: Brain Science and the Future of Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).
89. WebMD Editorial Contributors, "What Is Breathwork?," WebMD, April 9, 2021, <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-is-breathwork>.
90. Napoli, Maria, Paul Rock Krech, and Lynn, "Mindfulness Training for Elementary School Students: The Attention Academy," *Journal of Applied School Psychology* 21, no. 1 (July 2005): 99–125. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J370v21n01\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J370v21n01_05)
91. Kirp, David L., "Meditation Transforms Roughest San Francisco Schools," Jan. 12, 2014, <https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/openforum/article/Meditation-transforms-roughest-San-Francisco-5136942.php>
92. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-inside-a-student-wellness-after-school-program/2016/12>
93. Martinez, Tonnice and Yuanyuan Zhao, "The Impact of Mindfulness Training on Middle Grades Students' Office Discipline Referrals," *RMLE Online* 41, no. 3 (March 2018): 1–8.
94. Neff, Kristin, "The Three Elements of Self-Compassion," Self Compassion, 2023, <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/>

# About the Author



**Jessica Sinarski, LPCMH** is a highly sought-after therapist, speaker, and change-maker. Weaving user-friendly brain science into everything she does, Jessica ignites both passion and know-how in audiences. Extensive post-graduate training and 15+ years as a clinician and educator led her to create the resource and training platform BraveBrains. She partners with school districts and child welfare agencies around the world to unlock resilience in children and adults alike.

Jessica makes social emotional learning (SEL) practical, equipping parents and professionals with deeply trauma-informed tools. She is the author of numerous books including the award-winning *Riley the Brave* series, *Your Magic Backpack* series, and *Your Amazing Brain*. She also shares her expertise as a contributor to magazines, blogs, and podcasts. Jessica lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and three busy boys.

## Questions?

Please email [hello@JessicaSinarski.com](mailto:hello@JessicaSinarski.com)

## Connect with Jessica:

Social Media platforms @JessicaSinarski

YouTube @Jessica.Sinarski

Find books, additional resources, comprehensive toolkits, and more at [www.BraveBrains.com](http://www.BraveBrains.com)

## Other Books by Jessica Sinarski

