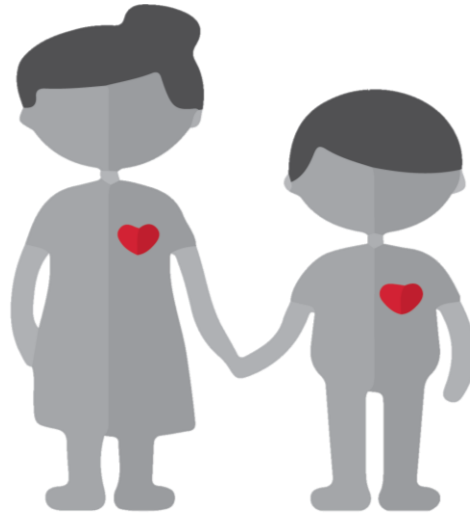
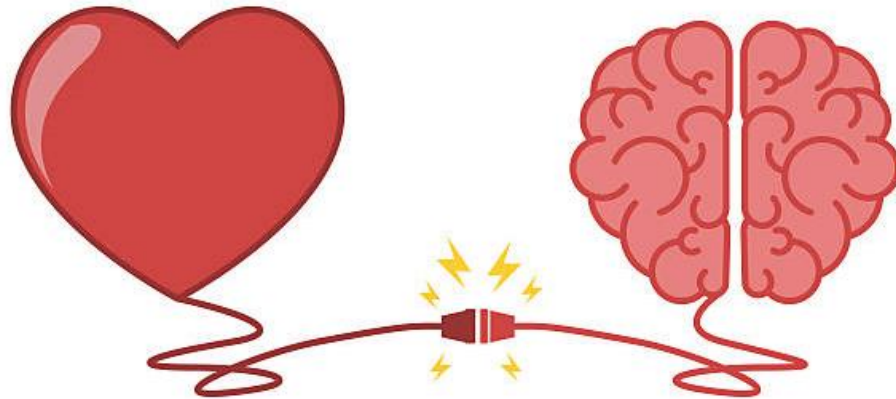


Understanding Behaviour Through a Body – Brain – Relationship Lens



Facilitators and Co-learners:

Waffa Elhaddad (PQCHC) and Joanne Boyd (PRC)



We can't truly help children with their behavioural challenges without first helping ourselves to be present, self-aware, and calm.

Managing the Expectation Gap



We falsely assume that children of a certain age have volitional control over their emotions and behaviors. That assumption is the main reason that many techniques to help children with behavioral challenges fail, taking a heavy toll on relationships.

Mona Delahooke

Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children's Behavioral Challenges

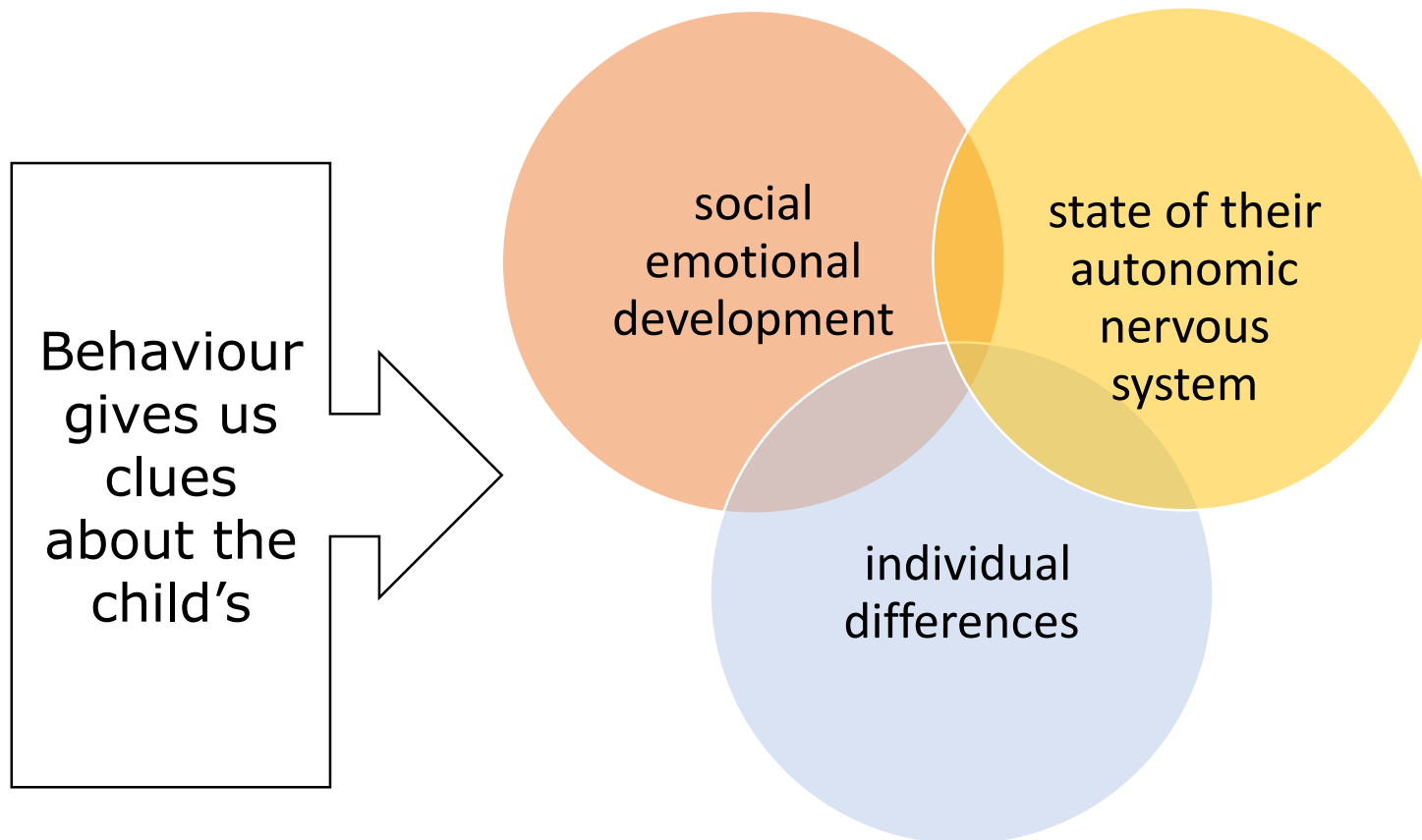
#kindlequotes

Support caring adults to learn about brain development so they have realistic expectations & be able to support children's unique needs.

Shift from Behaviour Management to Body- Brain-Relationship Based Approach

What is behaviour? An observable response to our internal and external experiences

(Lillas and Turnbull. Infant/Child Mental Health, 2018)



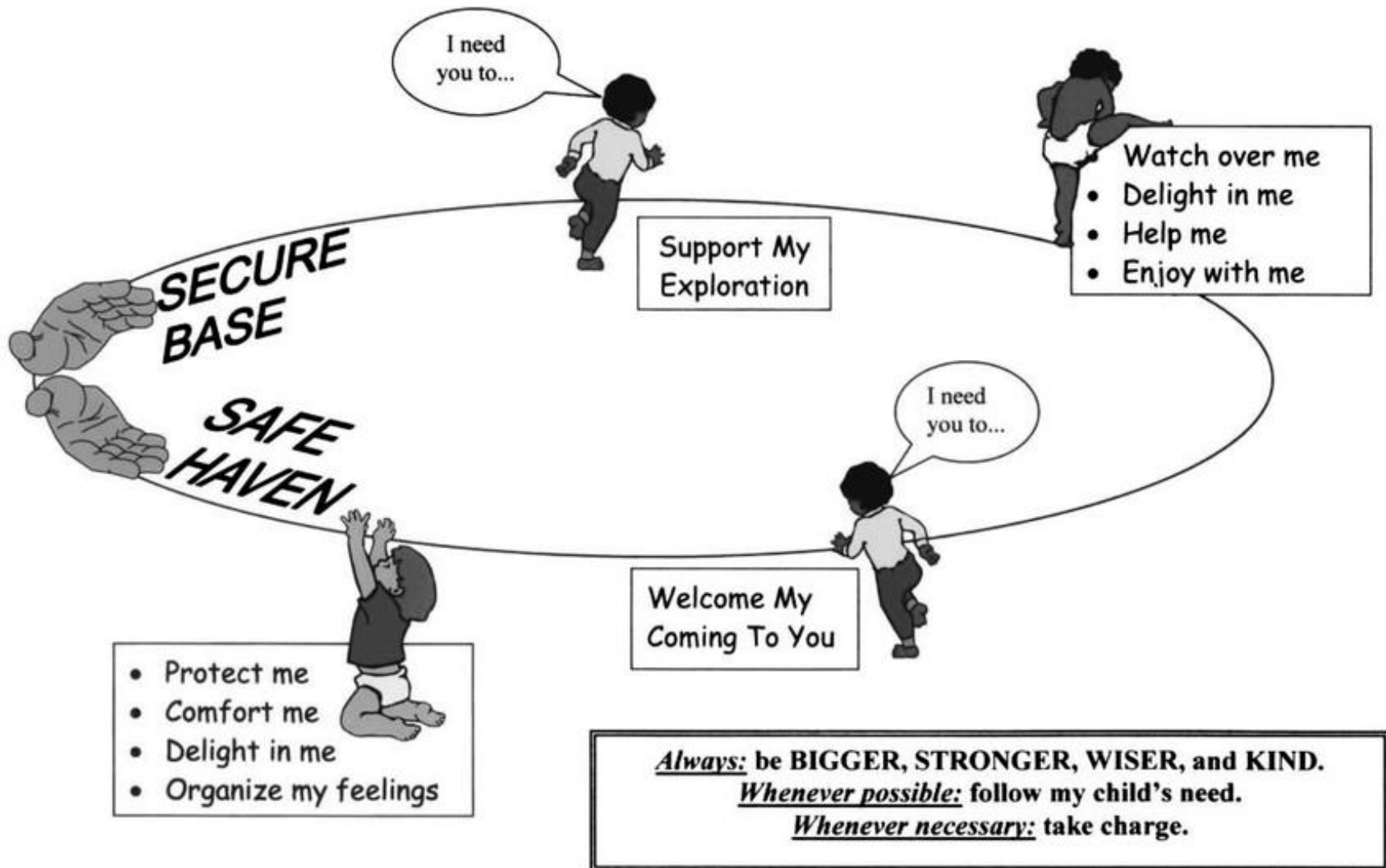
Social Emotional Development Defined



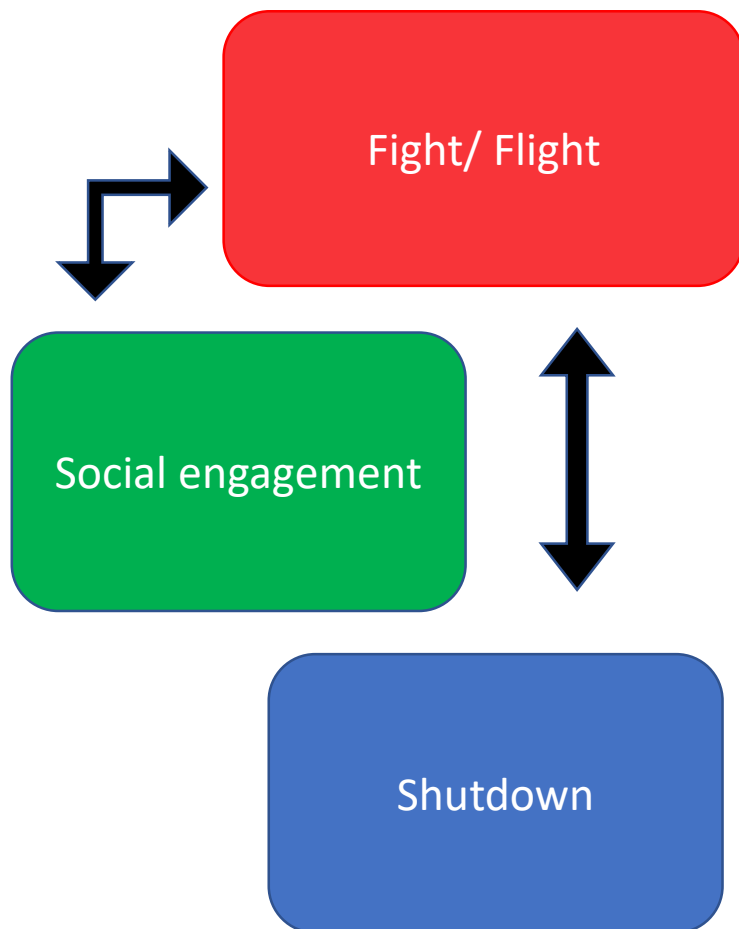
It is the developing capacity of the child from birth to six years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships, experience, manage and express a full range of emotions, and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and culture. (Cohen, 2012; Clinton, 2014)

CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



Understanding the Automatic Nervous System (Polyvagal Theory & Neuroception)



Polyvagal Three Circuits

Mobilization

- Cues of threat or danger
- Chronic stress or anxiety
- Fight or flight response
- Greater conflict in relationships



Social Engagement System

- Safe Connection
- Calm | Regulated
- Healthy Balance
- Resourced | Resourceful



Immobilization

- Threat feels life-threatening
- Collapse | Shutdown
- Unhealthy coping behaviours
- Despair | Hopelessness



THE STRESS RESPONSE IN KIDS

FIGHT

Yelling, Screaming,
Using Mean Words

Hitting, Kicking, Biting,
Throwing, Punching

Blaming, Deflecting
Responsibility, Defensive

Demanding,
Controlling

"Oppositional",
"Defiant", "Noncompliant"

Moving Towards What
Feels Threatening

Irritable, Angry,
Furious, Offended
Aggressive

FLIGHT

Wanting to Escape,
Running Away

Unfocused, Hard
to Pay Attention

Fidgeting, Restlessness,
Hyperactive

Preoccupied, Busy with
Everything But the Thing

Procrastinating, Avoidant,
Ignores the Situation

Moving Away From What
Feel Threatening

Anxious, Panicked
Scared, Worried,
Overwhelmed

FREEZE

Shutting Down,
Mind Goes Blank

Urge to Hide,
Isolates Self

Verbally Unresponsive,
Says, "I don't know" a lot

Difficulty with
Completing Tasks

Zoned Out,
Daydreaming

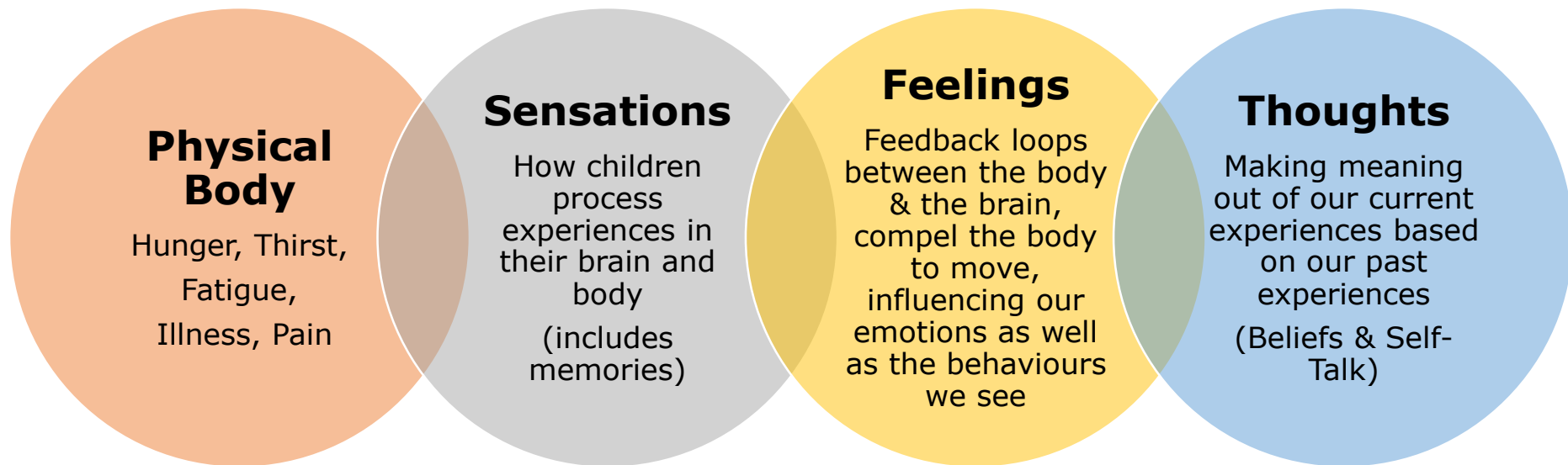
Unable to Move,
Feeling Stuck

Depressed, Numb,
Bored/Apathetic,
Helpless



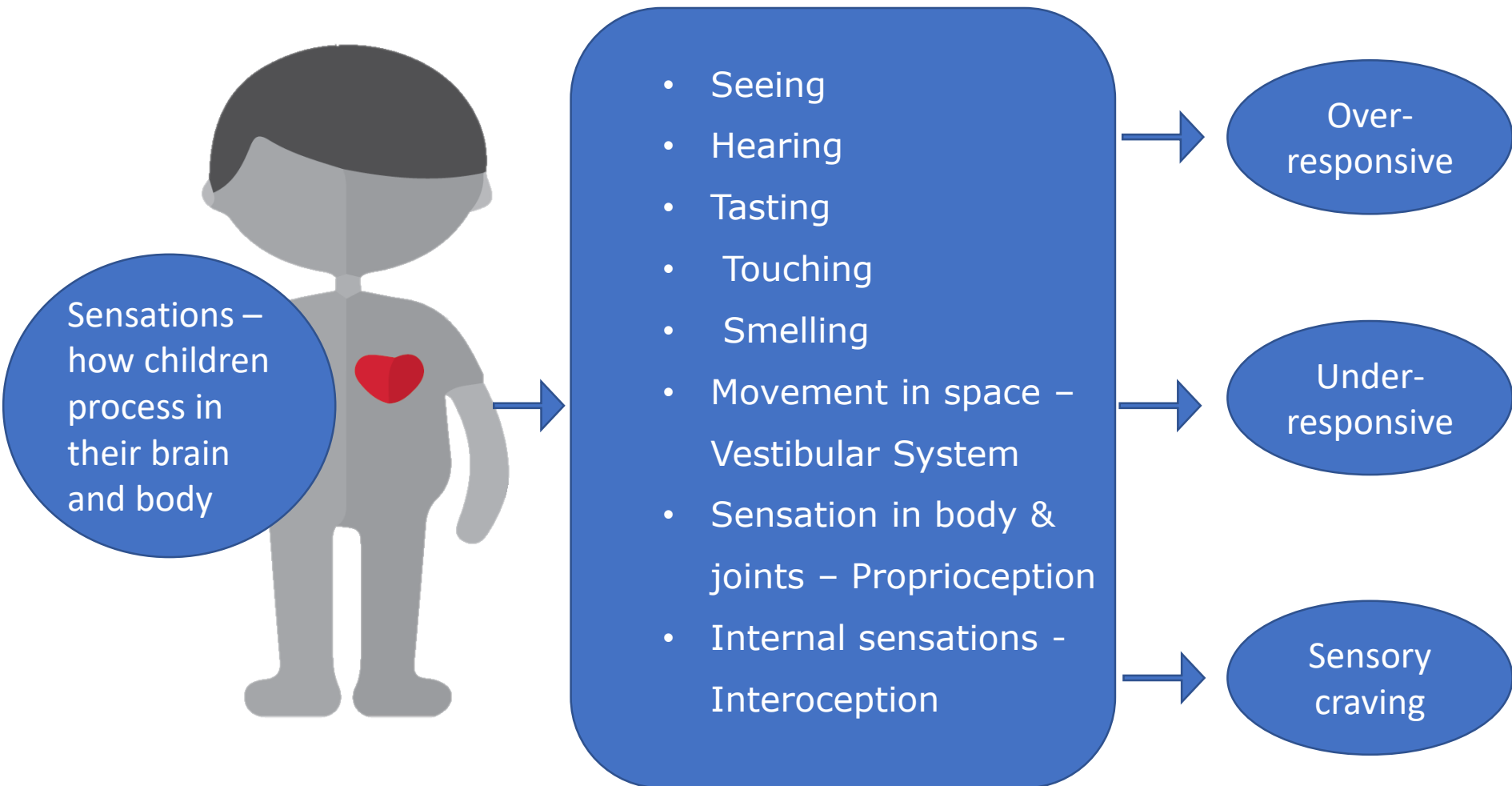
What kinds of stress behaviours are you seeing in yourself, in the children, in the adults participating in your program?

Individual Differences & Experiences



Individual differences are the characteristics & qualities that shape how we take in & respond to the world around us & are influenced by our genetics, epigenetics, neuro-physiology, relationships, experiences & the environment.

Sensations – Sensory Processing



Support for Sensory Needs

OVER-RESPONSIVE

to sensory input–
sensory avoiding (too
loud, fast, bright, hot,
prone to meltdowns)

Provide:

- Predictable routines
- Reduce noise
- Lower lights
- Calm, organized environment
- Body breaks
- *Time In* space
- Support for transitions

UNDER-RESPONSIVE

to sensory input
(low muscle tone,
quiet, passive, low
energy, may not feel
cuts or pain)

Provide:

- Predictable routines
- Bright lights
- Stimulating music or sounds
- Movement / Heavy work
- Fidget objects
- Aromas
- Increase body awareness
- Support to engage in play (adult-based & peer-based play)

SENSORY CRAVING

very high need for
sensory stimulation
(bumping into things,
constant movement,
hyperactive, restless,
demanding, explosive)

Provide:

- Wiggle seats
- Kinesthetic learning
- Fidget objects
- Fast moving input
- Movement /Heavy work
- Deep pressure or touch
- Oral & visual stimulation
- Smaller spaces

Children / adults can have a mix of sensory sensitivities. May be different at different times.

Behaviour Iceberg

Shift from managing behaviour to understanding what's happening for the child

Behaviour we see

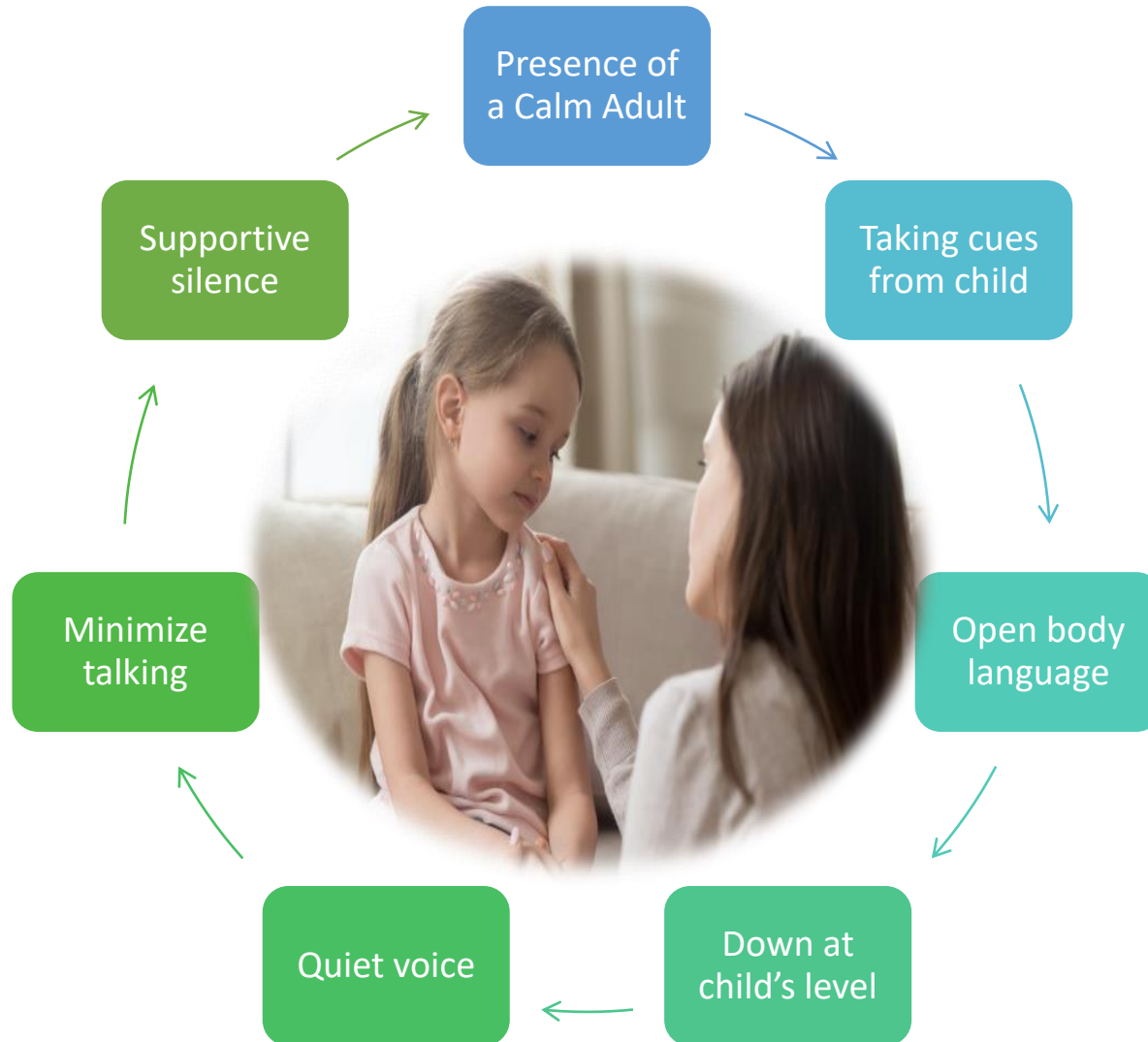
Blame child, parent or environment
Use of consequences, punishments, rewards, time-outs, etc.

Root causes of behaviour
Behaviour = Communication

Individual Differences & Experiences

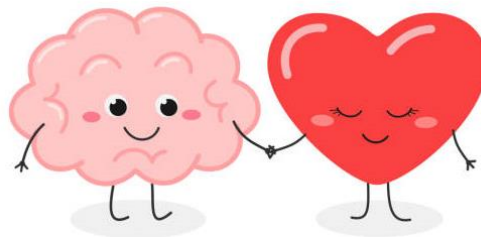
- Developmental capacities
- Experiences -Toxic Stress / Trauma
- Sensing threat in the environment –faulty **NEUROCEPTION**
- Physical body & internal processes
- Sensory processing
- Emotions
- Thoughts and Beliefs

Relational Safety Needs & Co-Regulation



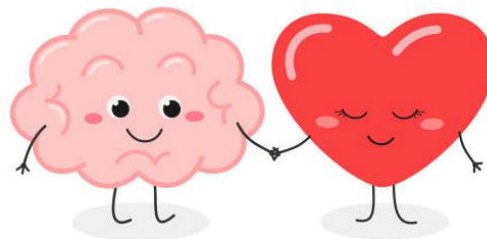
In summary: Plan for the child who may be struggling

- **Prepare / assess the environment** to reduce barriers
- Anticipate the diverse needs of children and families
- **Reframe** from misbehavior to adaptative coping mechanism
- Get curious...**Why? Why Now? Calm yourself**
- Support **realistic expectations** for the child's developmental age
- Observe & notice signs of child being in **red / blue pathway**
- Explore possible **triggers & underlying needs including sensory needs** that may be overwhelming a child's nervous system

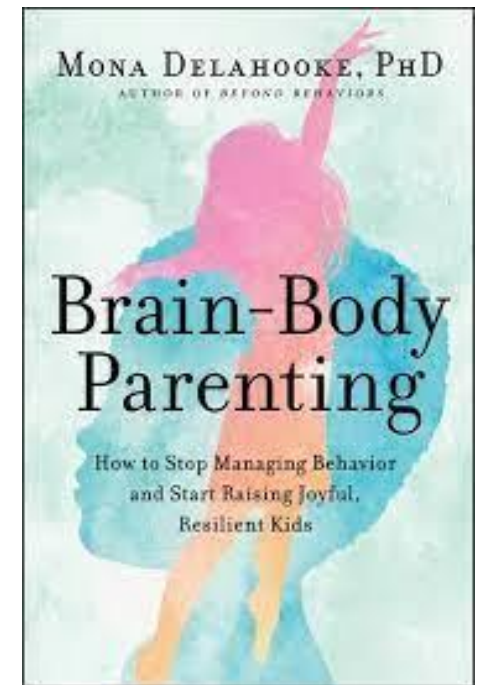
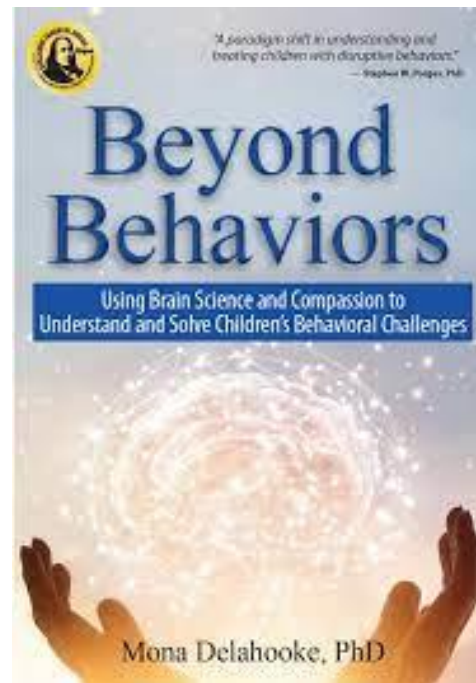
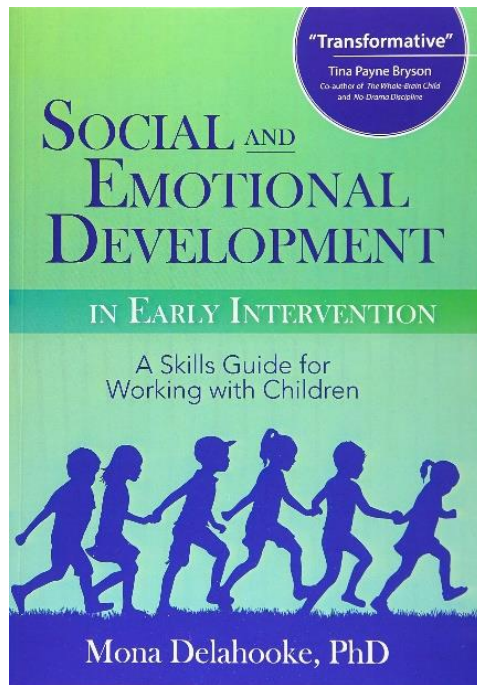


Plan for the child who may be struggling (continued)

- **Meet needs** - food, rest, movement, connection, health
- List the social emotional supports to be put in place - cue signs of **relational safety (co-regulation)** & fill the child's emotional cup
- Observe what is **calming for the child**, build on those
- **Reduce demands** & provide continual support for each child's unique & shifting needs.
- Model words & actions that **connect the child to their body & brain.**



Mona Delahooke's Books



Resources

Videos: (Highly recommended)

- Healthy Baby, Healthy Brain – Attachment Video: <https://youtu.be/rITEu638fCQ> 6.04 minutes
- Babies Brains Wire to Their Worlds https://youtu.be/0V487Zr_Aww 2.30mins
- The Most Important Question to ask about Children's Behavioral Challenges <https://youtu.be/keDvv-SwXvo> 3.03 minutes
- Deb Dana Describes Polyvagal Theory <https://youtu.be/JXGy7M4kvaY> 2.58 minutes
- Video polyvagal theory <https://youtu.be/ZdIQRxwT1I0> 8.57 minutes
- Behaviour is Communication <https://youtu.be/eiLTVhHivaA> 2.06 seconds
- Sensory Needs In Children with Autism <https://youtu.be/Rsw-cBs74q0> 6.56 minutes
- The Nervous System & Co-regulation: Dr. Mona Delahooke, author of Beyond Behaviors (full webinar) <https://youtu.be/6pBHLHKjqE4> 1:14:43 mins
- How to Look Beyond Behaviors to Solve Children's Behavioral Challenges with Mona Delahooke, PhD <https://youtu.be/HAW9yCPg8Lw> 46 minutes
- Dr. Porges & Dr. Delahooke Interview with Debbie Steinberg Kuntz <https://youtu.be/t4A0R6kd77I> 28.29 minutes

Articles/Blogs:

- Excellent Book Summary of Beyond Behaviours: <https://parentotheca.com/2021/11/12/beyond-behaviours-mona-delahooke-book-summary/>
- Great blog post explaining co-regulation and tips to support adults and children <https://www.theottoolbox.com/co-regulation/>

Additional Reflective Exercise – Identifying the Causes and Triggers of Behavioural Challenges

Identifying the Causes and Triggers of Behavioral Challenges

Let's now use the information we have gathered about these three areas to best support the child's behavioral challenges:

①	②	③
A child's nervous system and how safe they feel in their body (The Colors)	Individual differences (The Iceberg)	Social-emotional development (The House)

This approach allows us to work on the level of the triggers and causes of the behavioral challenges, rather than on surface behaviors.

Let's start with filling in the developmental iceberg. Using a dry-erase marker, list the child's behavioral challenges on the top and the potential triggers or causes on the bottom.

Remember to consider:

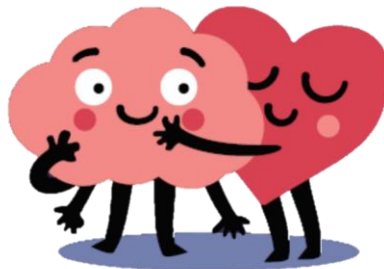
- Contributions from the **physical body** that can impact a child's basic health
- How the child interprets the world through their various **senses**
- The child's **social and emotional processes** (the "house")
- The **emotional environment** and the child's emotional state
- The **thoughts and beliefs** that might be at play in instructing the child's actions

Identifying the Causes and Triggers of Behavioral Challenges

Iceberg

Diagram illustrating the Iceberg model for identifying causes and triggers of behavioral challenges. The iceberg is divided into two main sections: the visible tip above the water line and the much larger, submerged base below the water line. The top of the iceberg is labeled "Iceberg". The diagram includes eight horizontal lines with dots at the ends, representing a scale or timeline. Each line has a text box on either side for notes.

Thanks for participating today and support the *shift from **what we do with children to **how we are with them!*****



The reasons for the challenging behaviours often diminish when we are properly addressing the child's physiological and emotional needs.

Mona Delahooke