

Helping children to regulate
emotions:
applying *The Zones of Regulation.*

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Educational Psychology Service



**achieving
for children**

Topics for today...

- Assessing regulation and the stages of escalation
- Understanding key vocabulary and lessons from the *The Zones of Regulation*

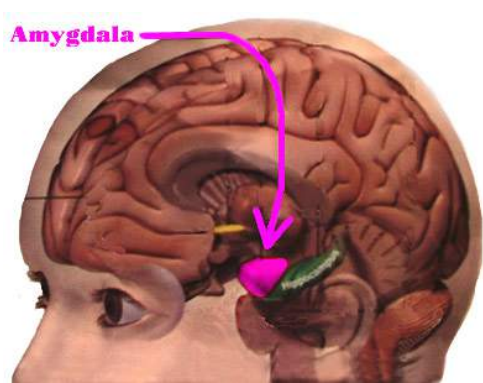
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Responsive intervention

Assessing regulation vs
assessing behaviour

Calm Alert Alarm Fear Terror





What happens when we are... Flipping our lids!

Dan Siegel – “flipping the lid”

Amygdala the stress centre fires off
Downstairs brain is active
and stress hormones flood the
body.
This causes the upstairs brain
to flip its lid.

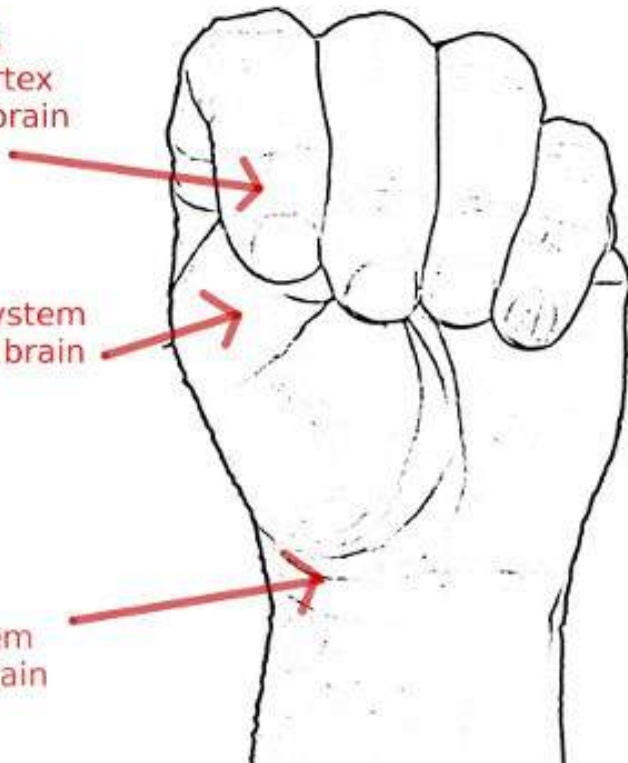
***When we are in a feeling
place we have no capacity to
think.***

“Name it, to tame it.”

FINGERS
Front cortex
Human brain

THUMB
Limbic system
Mammal brain

WRIST
Brain stem
Lizard brain



Three ingredients to calming:



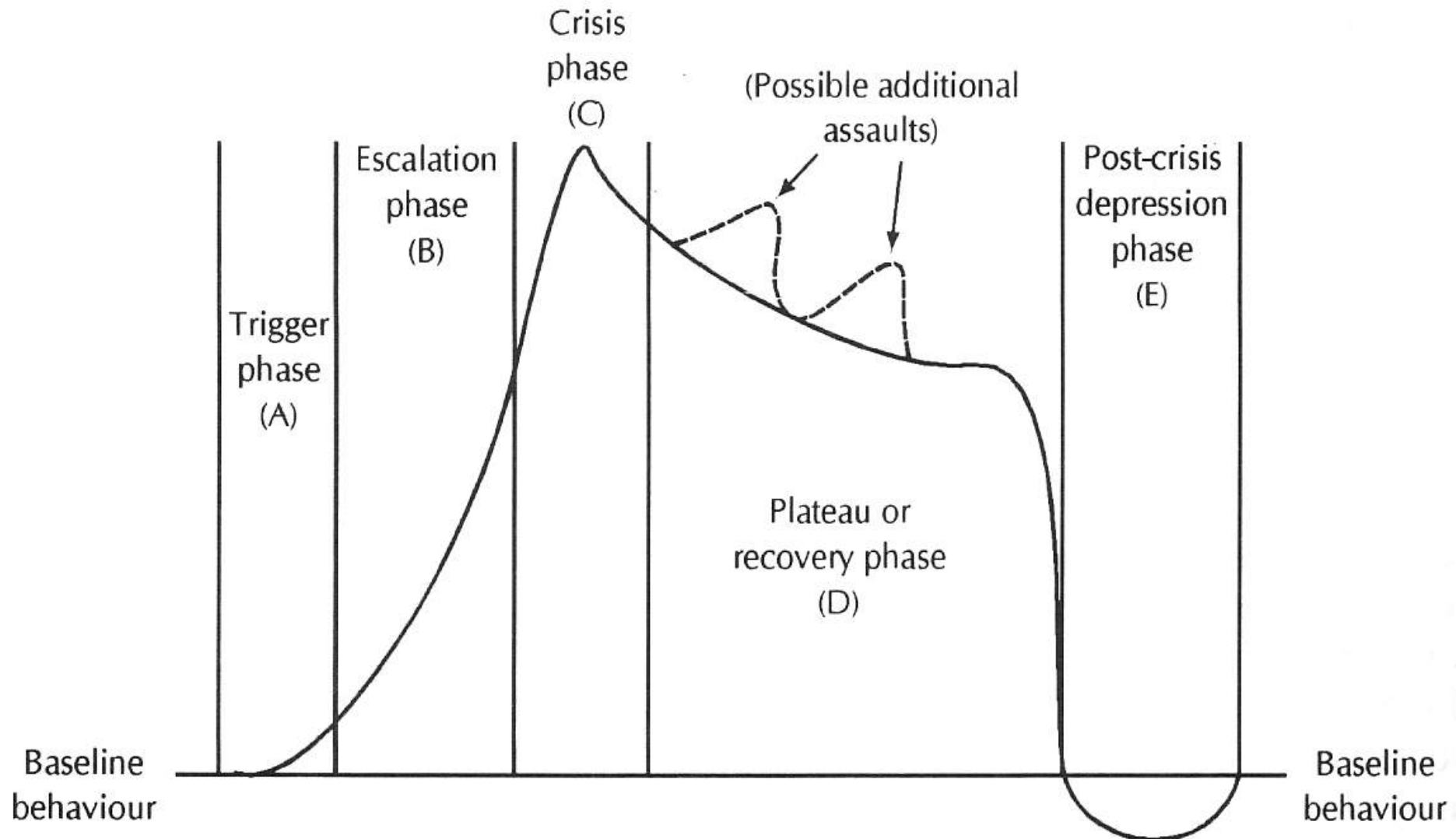
PHYSICAL

SENSORY

REPETITIVE



Stages of Escalation





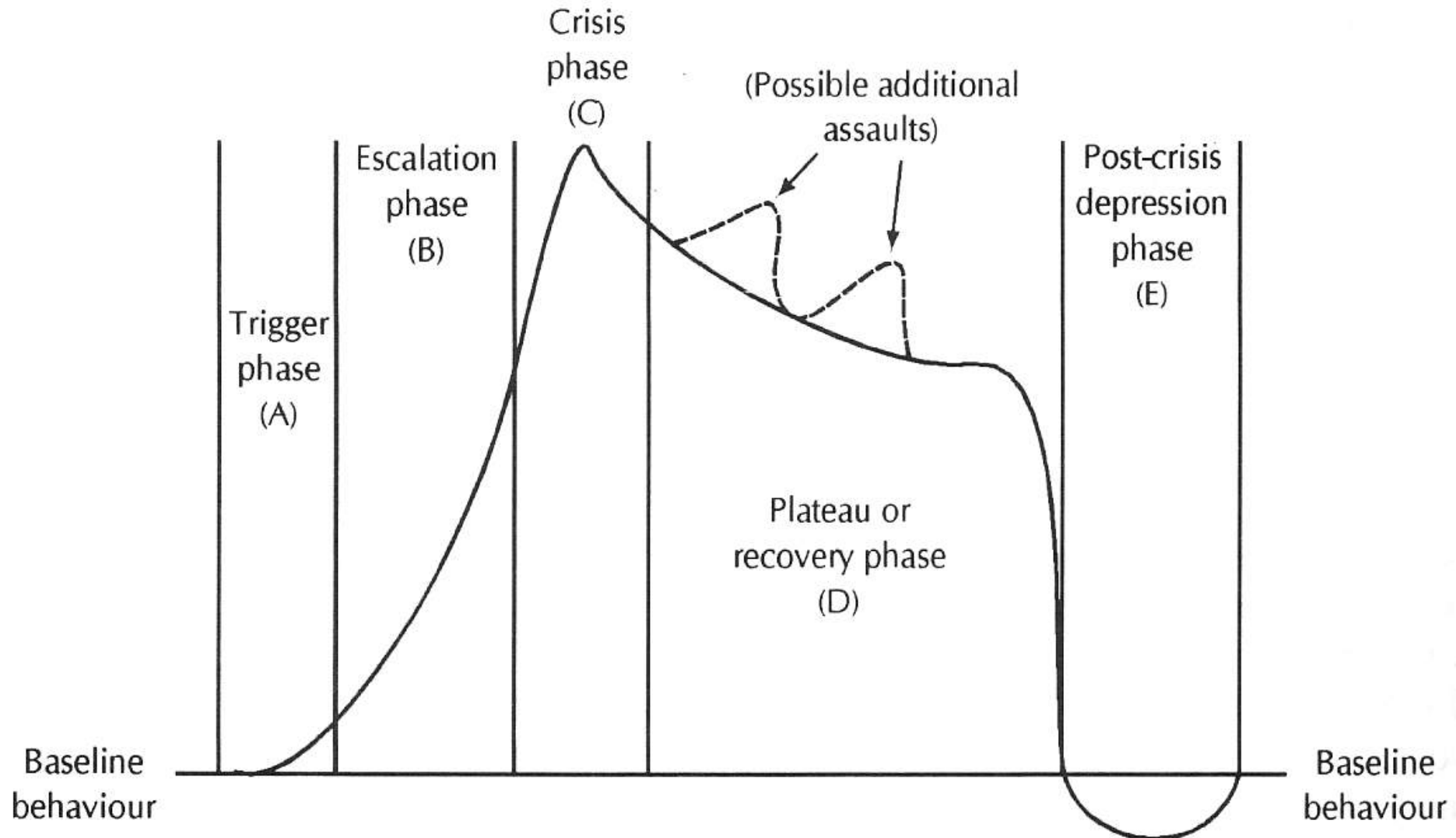
The Trigger Phase

When rational thought is still possible...

Identify triggers: Reflect in order to prevent

- **What** do they typically do when angry/upset?
- **Where** do they become angry/upset?
- **When** do they usually get angry/upset?
- **With whom** do they tend to become angry/upset?
- **Why** do they become angry/upset?
- **Exceptions.....?**

Stages of Escalation





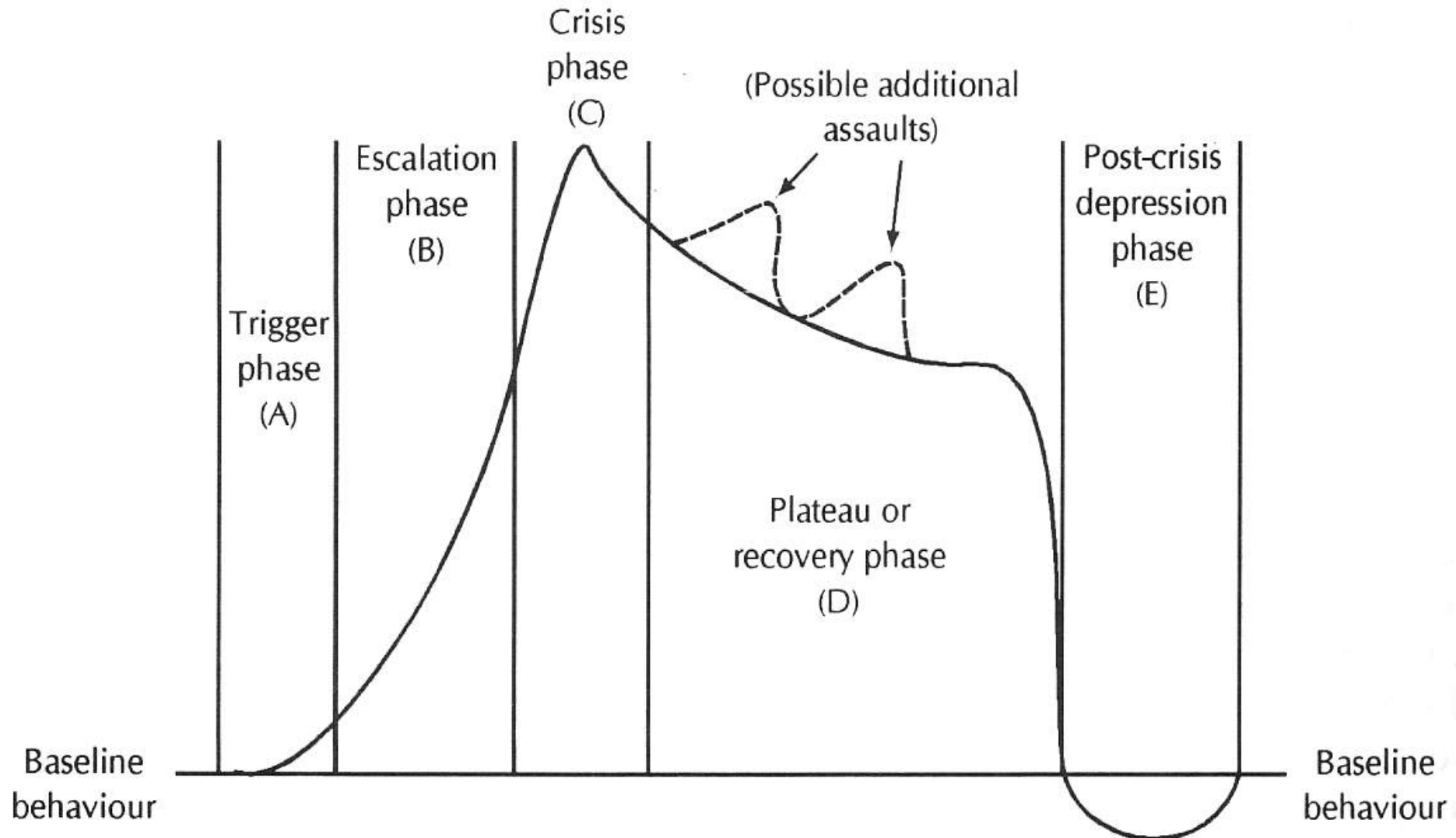
The Escalation Phase

The body is preparing itself for 'fight, flight or freeze'.

Reduced capacity for rational thought

- **Expect** the situation to de-escalate =more likely to happen
- **Label the emotion**
- **Show empathy** and acceptance
- **Guide** them how to cope with the emotion
- **Active listening**
- **Wondering aloud** – I wonder if you are feeling.....I see your..... Let's do this.... to help you calm down/feel better

Stages of Escalation





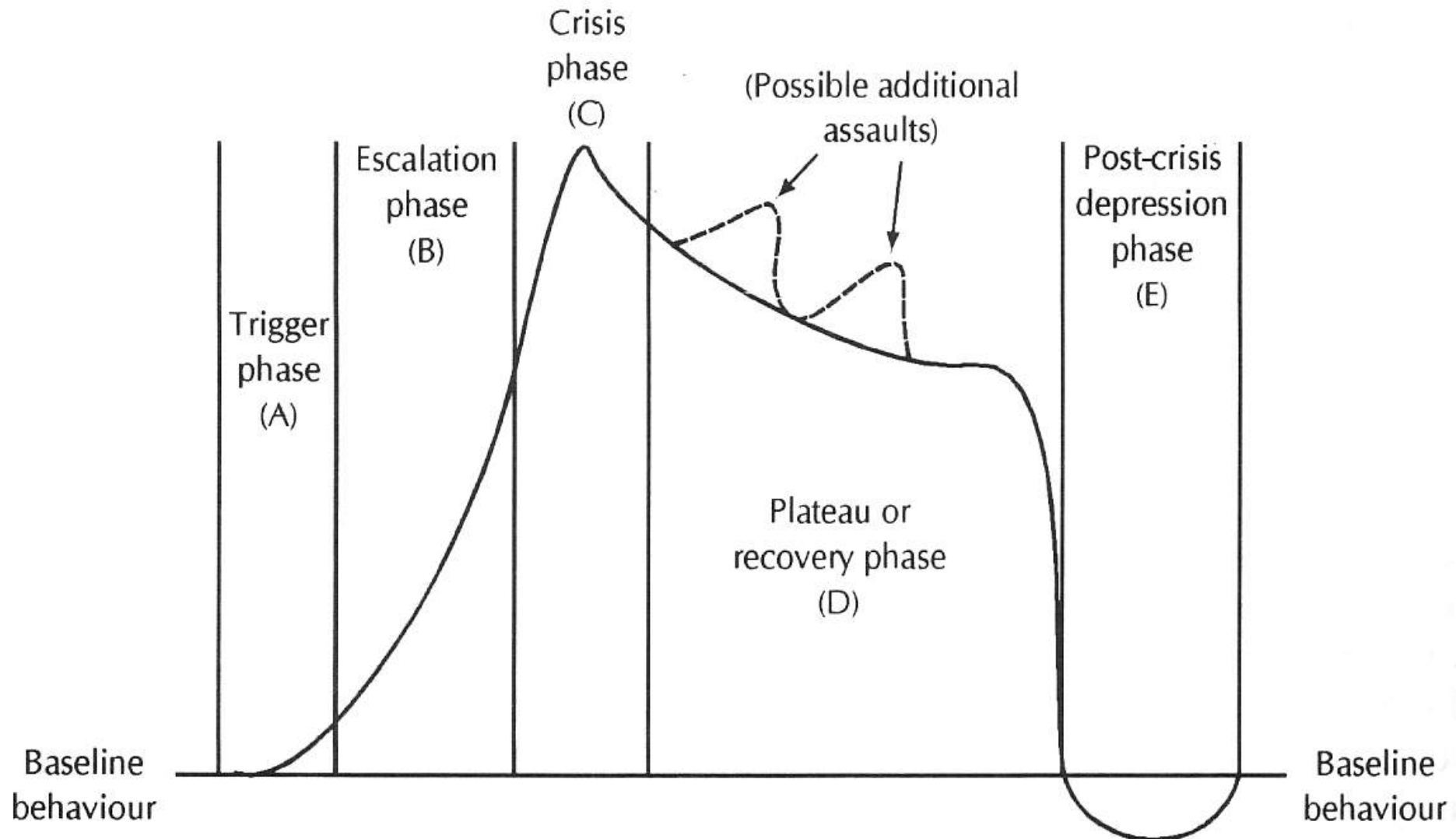
The Crisis Phase

There's an explosion!

Inability for rational thoughts

- **Protection** – pupil, other pupils, self, other staff
- **Be aware of your own body language**
- **Don't block an escape route**
- **Consider your tone of voice and eye contact**
- **Reflect** – how are you feeling?

Stages of Escalation

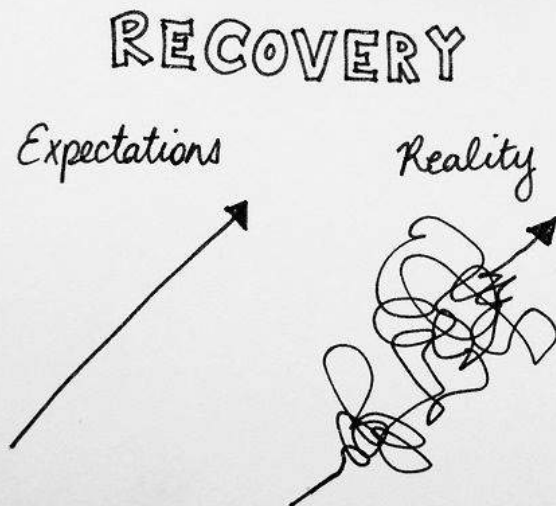




The Recovery Phase

Body is still prepped for for 'fight, flight or freeze'.

- **Don't ask why questions**
- **Feelings of guilt could trigger another outburst**
- **Allow recovery time** (for you and them!)
- **Guide towards soothing activities**



The Post-crisis Phase

*Thoughts lead to guilt...
These last two stages can
last 90 minutes.*

Reparation: be clear it is the behaviour that is a problem not them...

1. Be explicit about the fact something has happened.
2. Gently let them know you realise they are probably feeling all shaken up / disturbed now.
3. Be explicit that something needs to happen to 'repair what's gone wrong'. Give them an idea about how this can be done.
4. Let them know that we will help them practice in the area they had difficulty in – so that they can cope.
5. Supervision, structure and support for reparation
6. Once engaged in the reparative activity, be explicit about the fact that their relationship with key adults remains intact.

The Zones of Regulation

- **What is Self Regulation?**
- Self control, self management, anger control and impulse control...
- Regulating one's sensory needs, emotions and impulses to meet the demands of an environment, reach one's goals and behave in a socially appropriate way.

The Zones of Regulation

- **How do we successfully self regulate?**
- Sensory processing
- Executive functioning
- Emotional regulation

The Zones of Regulation

- **Sensory processing** – *how you manage the amount of sensory input you receive so that you don't become overwhelmed.*
- **The Zones of Regulation** *helps children understand what supports they need to feel regulated.*

The Zones of Regulation

- **Executive Functioning**– *the conscious control of thoughts and actions, attention shifting, working memory, self talk, planning and organising, and inhibiting impulses*
- **The Zones of Regulation** *helps children gain skills in consciously mediating their actions, which in turn leads to increased control and problem solving abilities.*

The Zones of Regulation

- **Emotional Regulation**– *controlling emotional reactions to meet your goal. However, emotions are automatically triggered...*
- *But! We can decide upon the size of a problem and understand other people's perspectives, which can regulate our response.*
- **The Zones of Regulation helps children develop these cognitive skills related to emotions**

The Zones of Regulation: self regulation

- ***How would you describe your child's self regulation?***
- ***How do they regulate themselves - what do they choose to do to calm themselves?***

If these questions are difficult to answer, quietly observe your child's emotions across a period of a typical week or two.

The Zones of Regulation: mutual regulation

Mutual regulation steps:

- 1. Expresses a range of emotions***
- 2. Responds to assistance offered by others***
- 3. Responds to feedback and guidance regarding behaviour***
- 4. Requests others' assistance to regulate emotional state***
- 5. Recovers from extreme dysregulation***

The **ZONES** of Regulation®



BLUE ZONE

Sad
Sick
Tired
Bored
Moving Slowly

GREEN ZONE

Happy
Calm
Feeling Okay
Focused
Ready to Learn

YELLOW ZONE

Frustrated
Worried
Silly/Wiggly
Excited
Loss of Some Control

RED ZONE

Mad/Angry
Terrified
Yelling/Hitting
Elated
Out of Control

Blue



Hurt



Sad



Depressed



Tired



Sick



Bored



Exhausted



Shy

Green



Good



Calm



Appreciated



Proud



Thankful



Happy



Good Listener



Ready to Learn

Yellow



Excited



Frustrated



Nervous



Anxious/Worried



Silly



Annoyed

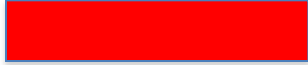


Overwhelmed



Scared

Red



Mean



Mad



Yelling



Angry



Aggressive



Terrified



Out of Control



Elated

Name: _____



This is a picture of me in the RED ZONE:

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a double-line border, intended for a student to draw a picture of themselves in the 'RED ZONE'.

My face and body clues are:

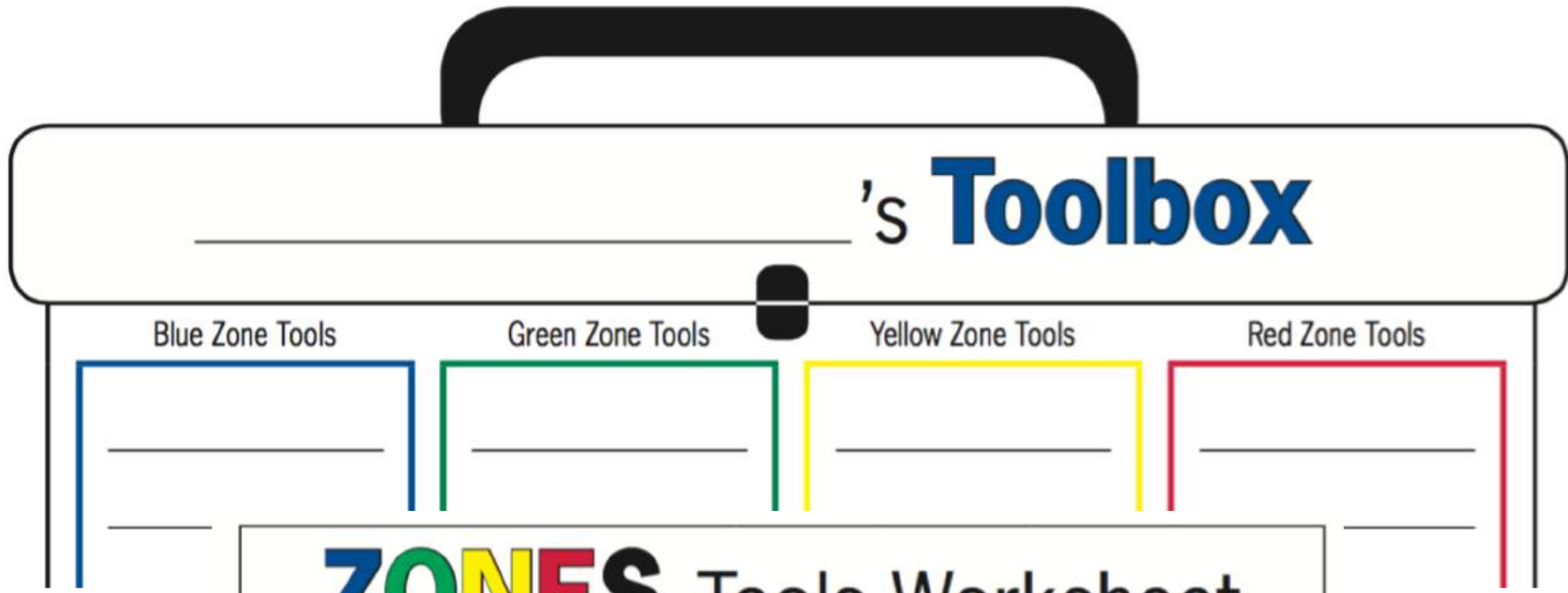






I feel in the RED ZONE when:

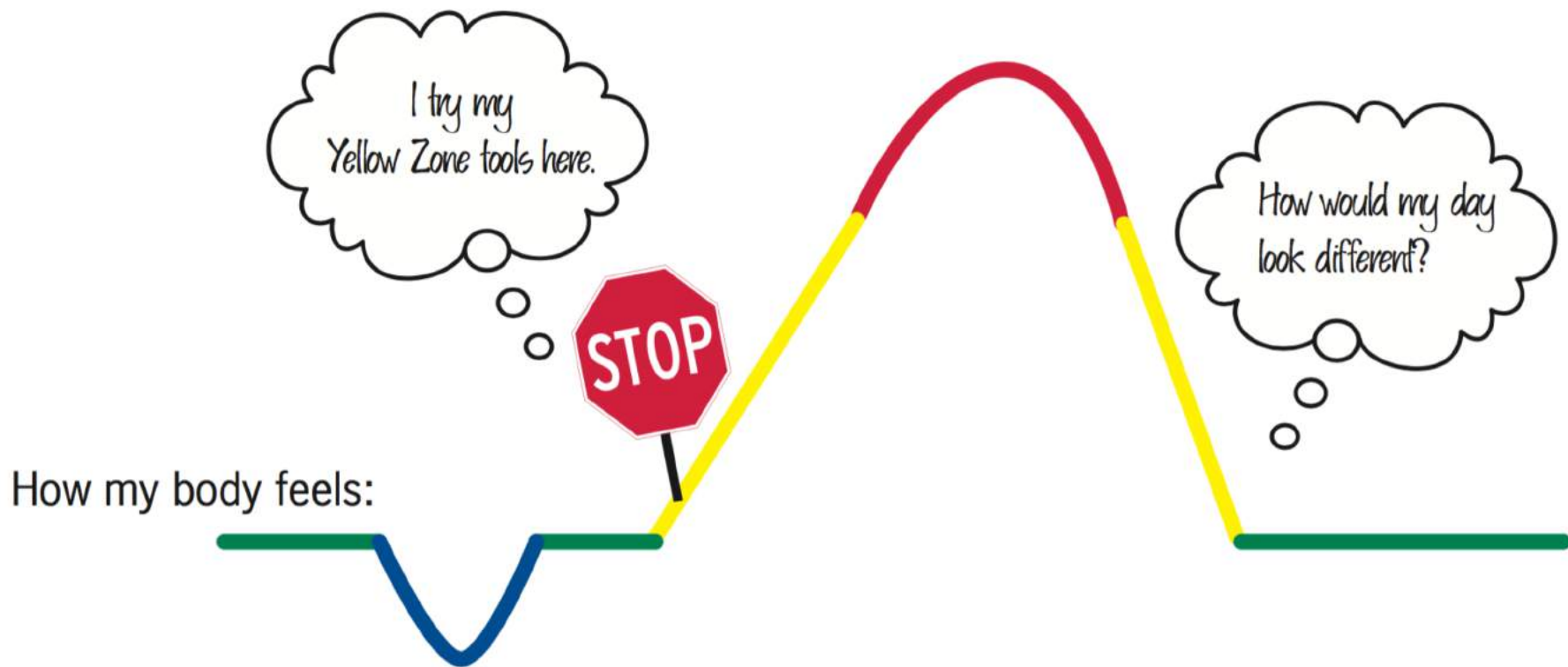
I am more likely to make others feel:



ZONES Tools Worksheet

Name of Tool	Circle the zone or zones you think the tool would help in.				
rice bin	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
putty	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
cushion	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
fidget ball	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
headphones	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
sit on ball	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
weighted vest	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None
rub back	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red	None

When To Use My **Yellow Zone** Tools



In the Yellow Zone, _____

The Zones of Regulation: Critical Vocabulary

- **Expected Behaviours**
- ***Unexpected Behaviours***
- ***“You can change my feelings” “I can change your feelings”***
- ***Comfortable thoughts vs Uncomfortable thoughts***

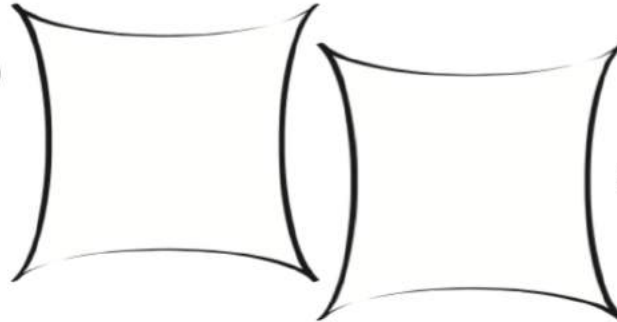
When I am in the

YELLOW ZONE

and my behavior is unexpected...

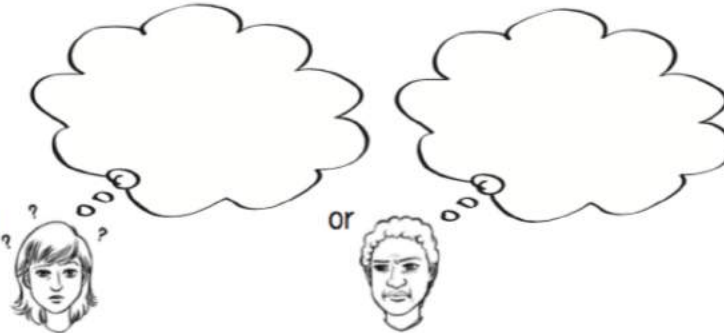


Other kids might feel



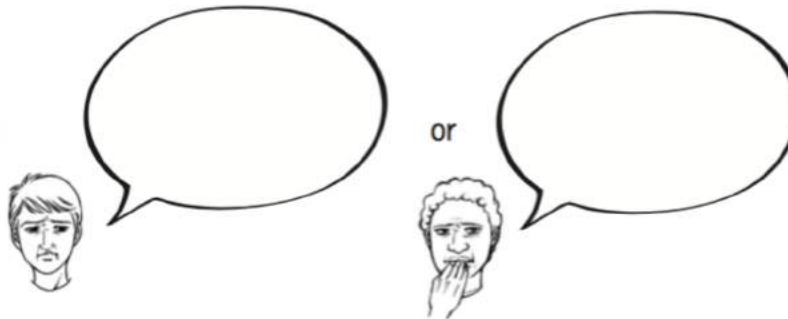
around me.

Other kids might be thinking



or

Other kids might say



or

Social Behavior Mapping

What's Expected for:

Being in the Green Zone in the Classroom

Expected behaviors	How the behaviors make people FEEL	How people react to how THEY FEEL about your behavior	How the person feels about himself or herself
1. Attending to teacher, taking notes	Teacher feels respected	I get good grades from my teachers	Proud
2. Head up, looking at materials being presented.	Classmates feel comfortable around me	Positive reports at conferences	Good
3. Engaged in classroom discussion (raising hand, adding comments)	Others feel I am a good student	Classmates want to sit near me	Liked by others

Social Behavior Mapping

What's Unexpected for:

Being in the Blue Zone in the Classroom

Unexpected behaviors	How the behaviors make people FEEL	How people react to how THEY FEEL about your behavior	How the person feels about himself or herself
1. Head down on the table, slumped posture	Classmates feel ignored	Teacher and classmates think I am rude	Lousy
2. Sleeping in class	Teacher feels disrespected	Students do not want to work with me on projects	Distant from others
3. Ignoring others when they talk to me	Teacher questions if he or she is a good teacher and wonders how to reach me	Poor performance on assignments and tests	Bored
4. Sitting away from others			

SITUATION: HOMEWORK

Unexpected behaviour

We are running out of time

I really want to help A with her homework

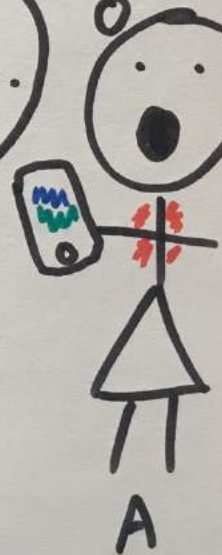
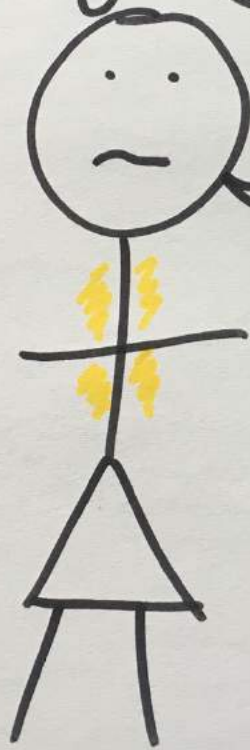
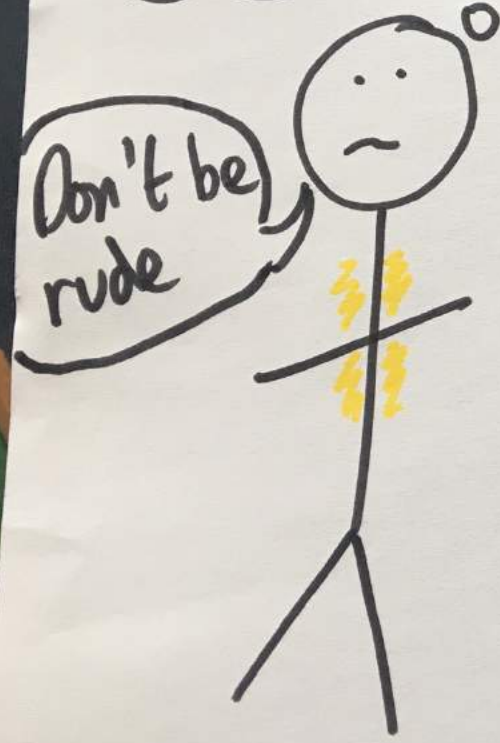
I want to play on my device
It's not fair

Don't be rude

B's turn

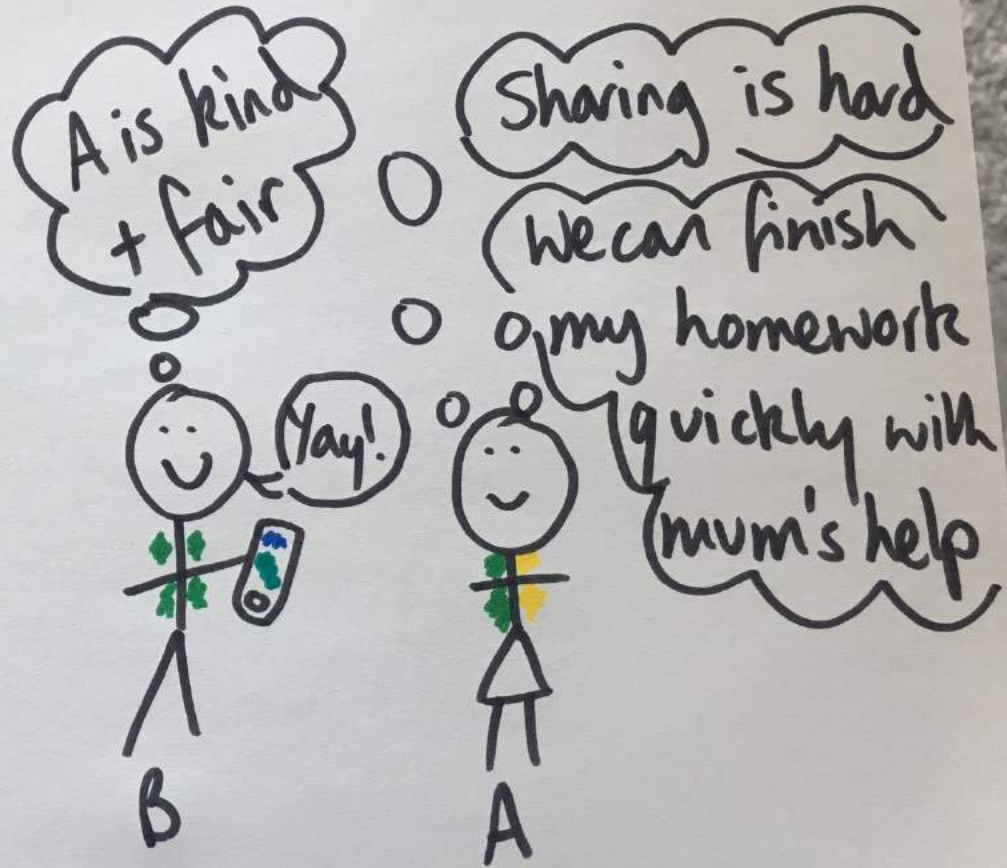
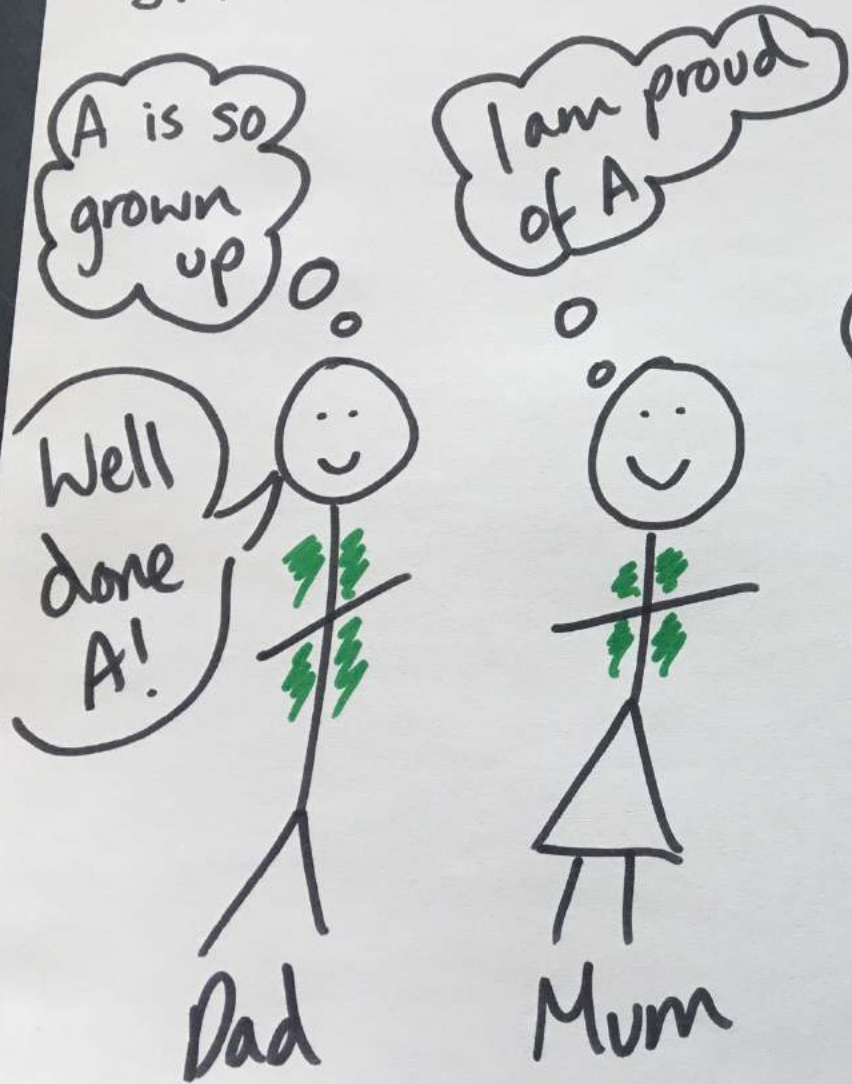
My turn!

No!



SITUATION: HOMEWORK

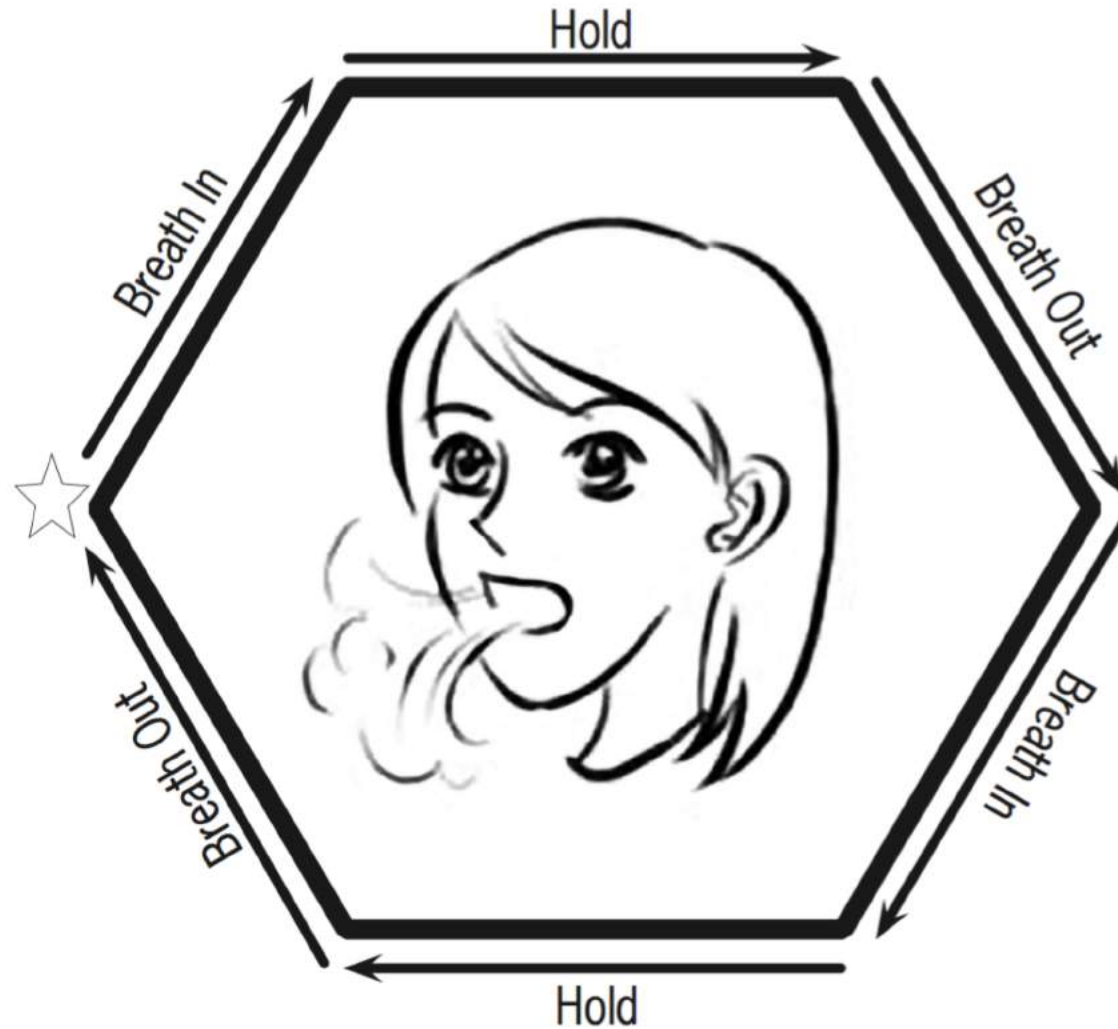
Expected behaviour



The Zones of Regulation: Tools to regulate

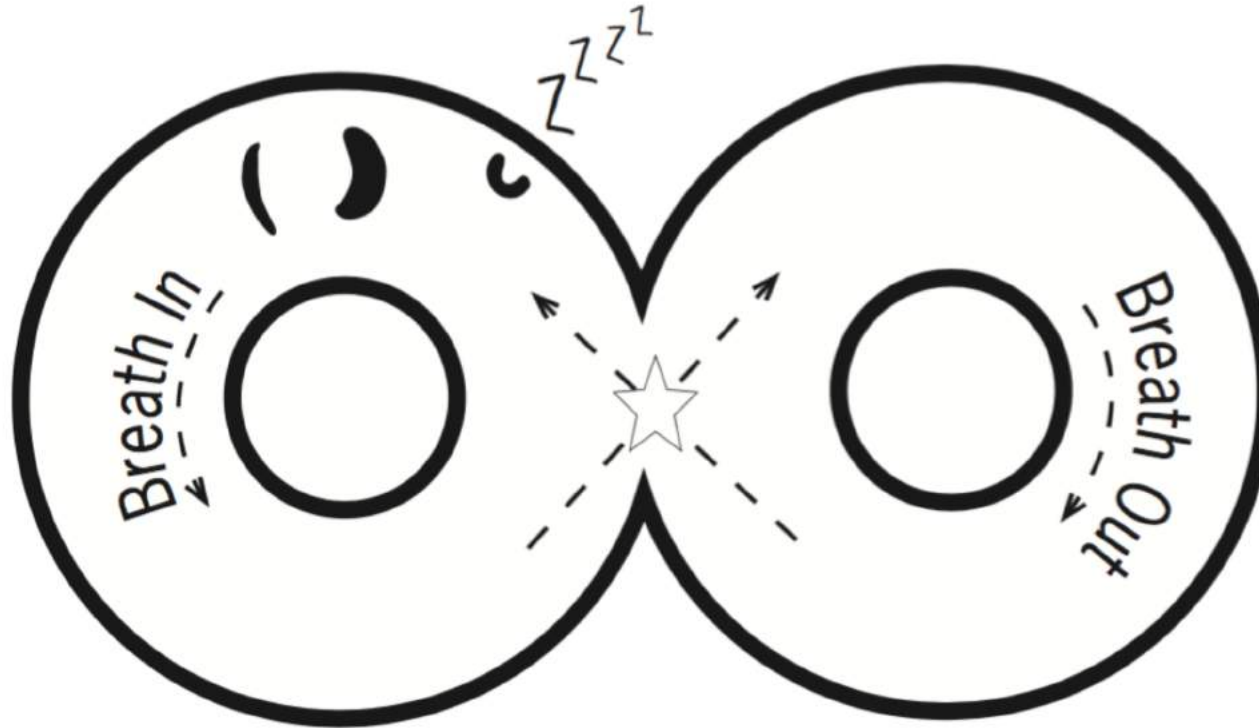
Sensory	Calming	Thinking
Deep pressure	Lazy 8 breathing	Big vs Little problem
Progressive muscle relaxation	Learning to Take a Deep Breath	Inner Coach vs Inner Critic
Standing press ups	6 Sides of breathing	Superflex® vs Rock Brain thinking
	Calming Sequence	
	Count to 10	

The Six Sides of **Breathing**



Starting at the yellow star trace with your finger the sides of the hexagon as you take a deep breath in, feeling your shoulders rise as the air fills you. Trace over the next side as you hold your breath for a moment. Slowly breathe out as you trace the third side of the hexagon. Continue tracing around the bottom three sides of the hexagon as you complete another deep breath. Continue The Six Sides of Breathing cycle until you feel calm and relaxed.

Lazy 8 Breathing



Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.

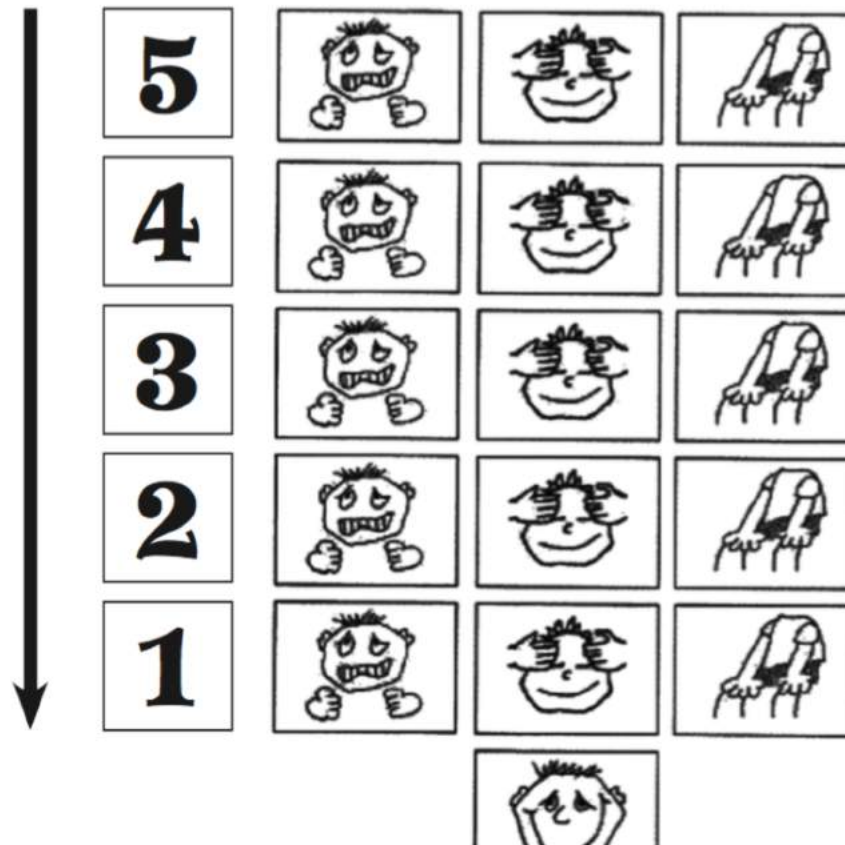
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My **Calming** Sequence Visual

Activity: Try this calming sequence. Does it feel good and calming? How can you change it so that it works for you?

This calming sequence goes like this: Squeeze your hands together; close your eyes and rub your head; then rub your legs. Repeat the sequence five times, bringing your stress down.



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Buro

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The Zones of Regulation: Critical Vocabulary for Size of the Problem

- **What is the size of the problem? Is it a big problem or a little problem?**
- **Big problems – are problems that many people share and that have no easy, quick, or pleasant solution**
- **Medium problems – are problems some people share that are able to be resolved in a hour to a couple of days**
- **Little problems – are problems that only affect one to two people and can be ignored or solved in a matter of minutes**


Size of the Problem

Remember the size of your reaction has to match the size of the problem!

How big do others see the problem?


How big should your reaction be?

Tiny Problem



1

Little Problem



2

Medium Problem




3

Big Problem



4

Huge Problem



5



Inner Coach

Inner coaches help us use positive self-talk to give us the courage and strength to get through stressful situations.

Difficult times I may need my inner coach are:

My inner coach reminds me to use strategies to keep myself calm.

To help me get to the Green Zone, my inner coach reminds me to:

My inner coach also helps to keep positive thoughts in my head so I can be successful.

My inner coach might say to me:

Inner Critic



Inner critics use negative self-talk that get us nowhere. It puts defeating thoughts in my head.

Times my inner critic gets to me:

My inner critic does not help and instead ends up making a situation worse.

My inner critic might say to me:

I am in control of who I listen to — the inner coach or inner critic.

I can use my inner coach to defeat my inner critic by telling it:

Zones Glossary

Self-regulation: The ability to achieve the preferred state of alertness for the given situation. This includes regulating one's body's needs as well as one's emotions.

The Zones: A concept used to help students learn how to self-regulate. The Zones of Regulation creates a system to categorize how the body feels and emotions into four colored zones with which the students can easily identify.

Blue Zone: Used to describe a low state of alertness. The Blue Zone is used to describe when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

Green Zone: Used to describe the ideal state of alertness. A person may be described as calm, happy, focused, or content when he or she is in the Green Zone. The student feels a strong sense of internal control when in the Green Zone.

Yellow Zone: Used to describe a heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or fear when in the Yellow Zone. The student's energy is elevated yet he or she feels some sense of internal control in the Yellow Zone.

Red Zone: Used to describe an extremely heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, panic, extreme grief, terror, or elation when in the Red Zone and feels a loss of control.

Toolbox: A collection of calming and alerting strategies a student can pull from depending on the present need.

Tools or strategies: Used interchangeably to refer to a calming or alerting technique that aids the student in self-regulation.

Trigger: An irritant that causes a student to become less regulated and increases the likelihood of going into the Yellow or Red Zone.

Stop, Opt, and Go: A concept used to aid students in controlling impulses and problem solving better solutions. This phrase is paired with a stoplight to provide additional cues for students.

Expected behaviors¹: Behaviors that give people around you **good or comfortable thoughts** about you.

Unexpected behaviors¹: Behaviors that give people **uncomfortable thoughts** about you.

What is the size of the problem? and Is this a Big or Little Problem?¹: Questions posed to help students measure the size of the problem they are experiencing (Big Problem, Medium Problem, or Little Problem).

Big Problems: Problems that many people share and that have no easy, quick, or pleasant solution.

Medium Problems: Problems some people share that are able to be resolved in an hour to a couple of days.

Little Problems: Problems that only affect one to two people and can be ignored or solved in a matter of minutes.

Inner critic: Used to describe negative, self-defeating thoughts.

Inner coach: Used to describe positive thoughts.

Superflex thinking²: A flexible thinking pattern in which a person is able to consider different points of view or ways to do something.

Rock Brain thinking²: A rigid thinking pattern in which a person gets stuck on an idea and has difficulty considering other options or ways to do something.

Thank you!

Any questions?