

# WHAT DO WE CALL THIS .....BESIDES JUST BEING NICE!

Trauma Informed Care (TIC)

Trauma Informed Practise (TIP)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Gyeksm Goot (Calm Heart)

In Prince Rupert School District, we call it Gyeksm Goot which means Calm Heart in Smalgyax...an name given to us by Tsimshian elder language speakers.



# 3 CORE CONCEPTS

Build Relationships



Teach Emotional Regulation Skills



Create Safety



# BUILD REALTIONSHPIS



It is the  
foundation  
and most  
important  
concept of  
trauma  
informed care

# ATTACHMENT IS EVERYTHING

Attachment is the most critical factor in the healthy psychological development of human beings  
(Neufeld & Mate, 2004)

FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP (the attitude) AND NOT  
BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

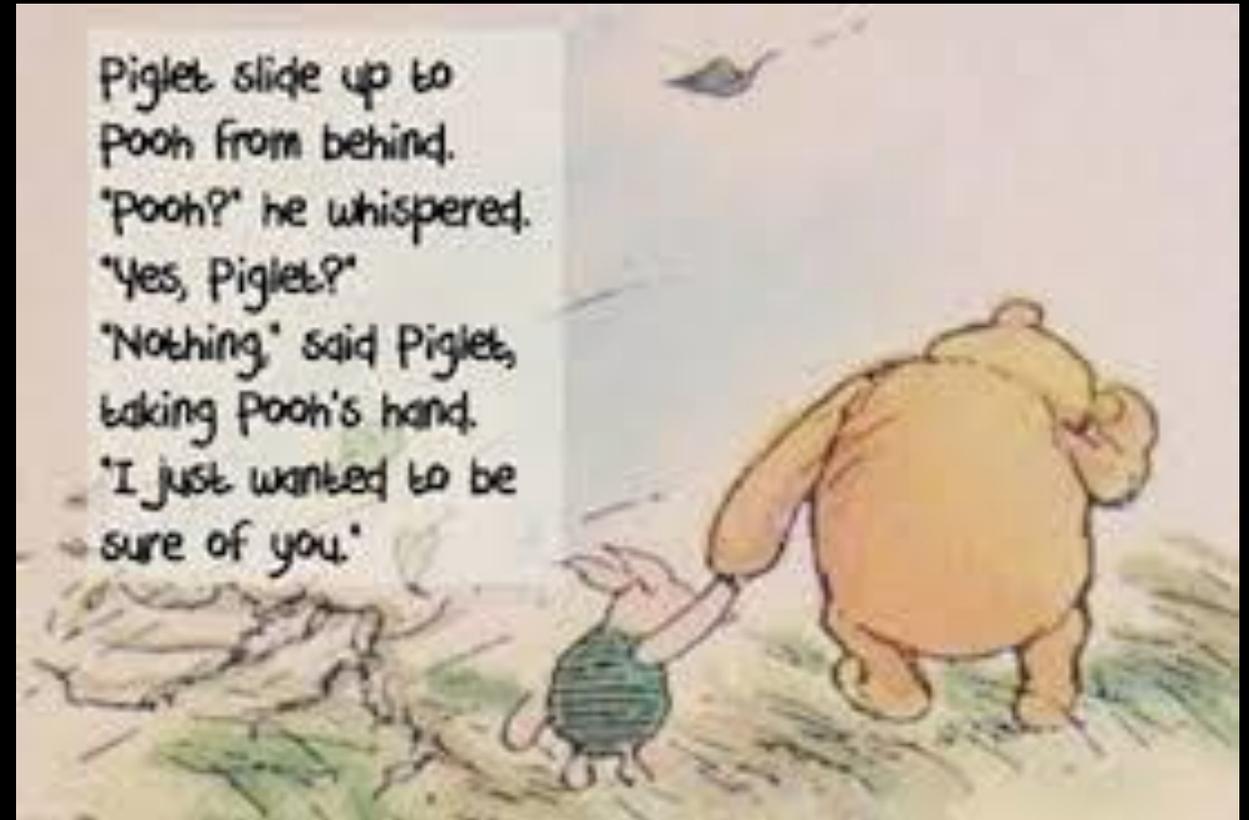
A STUDENT WILL TRY HARDER AND BEHAVE BETTER FOR A  
TEACHER THEY ARE CONNECTED TO



# FOUNDATIONS OF ATTACHMENT

## Attitude rather than strategies

- Authenticity (genuineness)
- Warmth (relationship)
- Acceptance (unconditional positive regard)





The impact of trauma on the brain comes from a lack of connection. The neural pathways we need didn't develop. The good news is, we now understand that the brain is capable of building new pathways and reinforcing existing ones throughout our lives. Simply by having meaningful conversations with people, we develop and strengthen these pathways. Listening to others share their stories, their successes and failures, and connecting with them is one of the most powerful ways we have to heal our brains.

Dr. Gabor Mate

# Talking Circles

- Sitting in a circle and passing along a stone/object gives everyone an opportunity to see each other, feel included and to share out their thoughts and feelings.
- Traditional talking circles stem from indigenous culture and are based on equality between participants and the principle of sharing power with each other instead of having power over one another (Winters, Heartland).
- “In this materialistic, fast-paced culture, many children have broken circles, and the fault line usually starts with damaged relationships” (Dr. Martin Brokenleg).



## AGENGA-LESS CONVERSATIONS

Let kids *teach* you about their interests. It will help *empower* them and build strong relationships at the same time.



# 10 Ways to Build Relationships with Kids

- 1 Talk to them about non-school related subjects.
- 2 Let them teach you about their interests.
- 3 Remember things about their lives.
- 4 Share about your own life.
- 5 Engage in activities with them.
- 6 Tell hilarious (and even embarrassing) stories.
- 7 Share inspirational stories from your life.
- 8 Do crazy things.
- 9 Use their interests in your lessons and activities.
- 10 Apologize when you mess up.

# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is the emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experiences of threat, violence, and life-challenging events. Trauma occurs when someone is overwhelmed by something beyond their control. It is a normal human response to abnormal human events. Trauma is a wound that happens to us; It can be physical or emotional.

**SIMPLE TRAUMA:** They are often single incidents. They are shorter in duration often involving a discrete crisis.

**COMPLEX TRAUMA:** It generally includes multiple incidents and is therefore longer in duration. It is almost always associated with stigma and a sense of shame experienced by its victims. The impacts are greater.

**DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA:** Can impact on all elements of children's development.

# Can you think of some examples of trauma?

## ***Big-T trauma***

Big-T trauma is usually one or more major events where we feel loss of control. Some examples:

- Sexual or physical abuse
- Injury or illness requiring hospitalization
- Loss of a loved one
- Breakup of a family
- Domestic violence in the home

There are many types of big-T trauma. And it isn't just trauma that happens to us, but trauma we are around and observe.

## ***Small-t trauma***

Small-t trauma is the build-up of smaller events that happen over and over. It feels like “death by a thousand paper cuts.” Some examples:

- Bullying
- Having our needs minimized or ignored
- Criticism or mocking of our behaviors
- Being told we're too fat, thin, tall, short, unattractive
- Being made fun of
- Good things that should have happened but didn't.

Trauma is not just what happens to you;  
It is what happens inside of you as a result of what happens to you

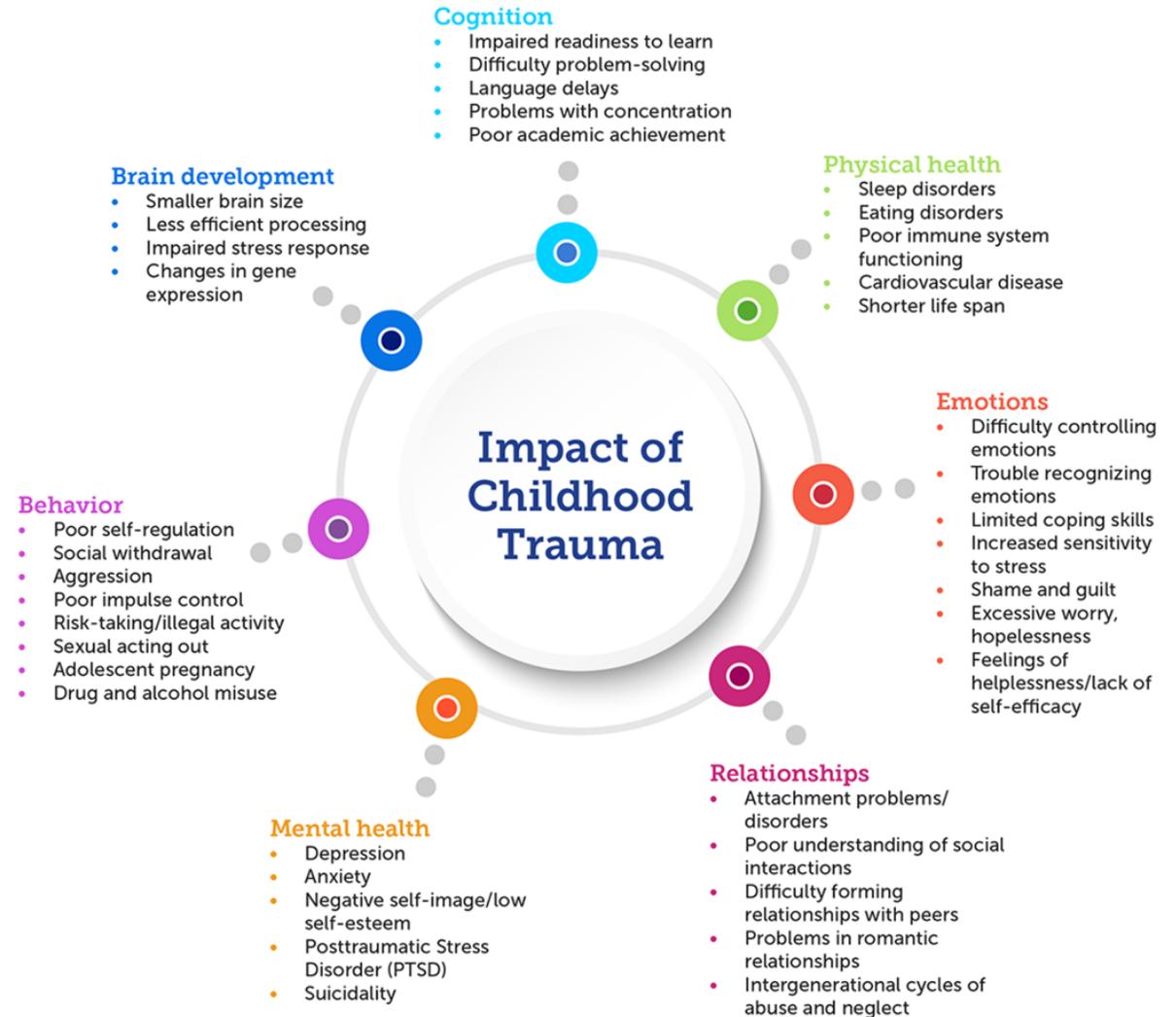
When in a survival state, the learning brain disconnects and a student cannot reflect, understand, process information and learn.

Everyone experiences trauma differently and symptoms can change from day to day.

Watch this video about the learning brain versus the survival brain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoqaUANGvpA>

## Impact of Childhood Trauma



## Gabor Mate describes seven ways in which trauma impacts us:

- *Separation from self.* We lose touch with our intuition.
- *Disconnection from others.* It's hard for us to trust and to connect with those around us, and we feel lonely or isolated.
- *The world is distorted in a negative way.* We see the world as dangerous and untrustworthy.
- *Creates a wound that never heals.* Trauma creates emotional pain that we need to escape from. The pain is there until we work through it.
- *Impacts brain development.* It influences our ability to feel emotions, our impulse control, and other factors.
- *Creates shame-based view of self.* We think of ourselves as unworthy of love, belonging, and success.
- *Makes it difficult to be in present moment.* We respond to situations that remind us of the past, rather than what's happening in the present.



# ACE STUDY

The ACE study started in 1995. Vincent Felitti MD and Kaiser Permanente's Department of Preventative Medicine recruited some 17,000 people in an ongoing study. The ACE study looks at how negative childhood experiences affect the participants as they go through life. It has been ongoing since the mid-1990s.

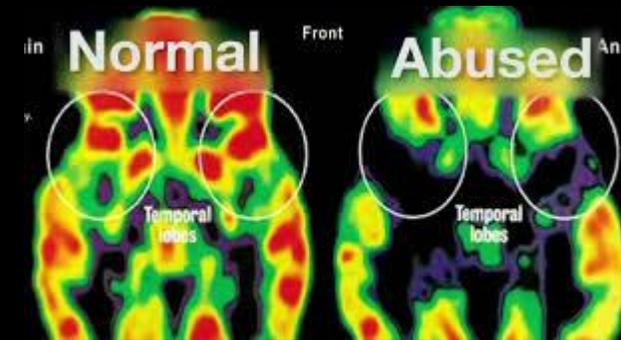
The ACE study looks at ten common adverse experiences in the household:

- Being regularly put down, humiliated, or yelled at by a parent or adult
- Being pushed, grabbed, slapped, or thrown, or hit hard
- Being touched, fondled, or having sexual activity with someone at least 5 years older
- Feeling like we weren't loved or important or special by family members
- Not having enough to eat, or clean clothes
- Parents frequently drunk or high and unable to adequately protect us
- Parents separated or divorced
- Domestic violence in the home (mother or stepmother hit, grabbed, pushed)
- Living with someone in the home who was a problem drinker or used street drugs
- Having a mentally ill, depressed, or suicidal family member
- Having a family member go to prison

Each of the above experiences, if present in a child's life, is one point. The higher the point score, the higher the risk of addiction and other problems.

From this research, we know that almost any kind of childhood trauma increases our risk for addiction, juvenile delinquency, obesity, mental and physical health conditions. The risk increases exponentially for those of us who have experienced multiple traumas. For example, a male child with a score of 6 or higher is 4600% more likely to become an IV drug user than someone with a score of 0.

# TRAUMA RESPONSE IS THE BRAIN IN SURVIVAL MODE



The lower part of the brain (amygdala) doesn't always communicate with the higher part of the brain (prefrontal cortex) to help accurately assess the people and the environment. A person often thinks and feel like they are under attack even when they are actually very safe. The lower brain disconnects from the higher brain and activates survival mode to protect the person.

Watch this video to explain the brain by Dan Siegel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>

# THE THREE F'S RESPONSE TO SURVIVE

FLIGHT



FIGHT



FREEZE



Watch this video to learn more about the body's response:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG-Q>

# FLIGHT: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Keeping super busy
- Running away
- Constantly asking to go to the toilet
- Constantly asking to get something some thing outside of the classroom
- Hiding under tables
- Head on the desk
- Not coping in free time or able to follow school rules
- Need to be first or at the front
- Avoiding tasks and activities or closeness to people
- Baby talk or silly voices



# FLIGHT: THE INNER WORLD OF THE CHILD

- Adults can't be trusted; they don't keep you safe
- I want to escape from this scary moment, but I can't
- I am trapped
- I don't want you to see my real feelings you can't handle them
- I am really worried I can't do what is going to happen next

How might a student be feeling?

# FIGHT: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Hot and bothered
- Aggressive, angry
- Argumentative, shouty
- Controlling
- Demanding, inflexible
- Lying or blaming
- Can't concentrate, unable to finish work or tasks
- Pushing people away
- Not 'fitting in'
- Loner
- Immature
- Loud, noisy and disruptive
- Disrespectful
- Confrontational



# FIGHT: THE INNER WORLD OF A CHILD

- I can't be cross at the people I really want to be cross at
- I need to be in control, so everything is predictable
- I am going to push you away before you get rid of me
- I feel unsafe
- I hate myself, I am unlovable
- I want to die
- Why am I not good enough?
- Adults can't be trusted; they don't keep you safe

How might a student be feeling?

# FREEZE: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Not interested, bored
- Confused
- Forgetful
- Trying to distract, talking about something else
- Hard to move through a task
- Scanning the room
- Not listening
- Daydreaming or staring into space
- Clumsy
- Slow to move
- Head on the desk
- Socially withdrawn, quiet
- Compliant – never drawing attention
- Unable to think, just yes or no answers
- Passive
- Resigned
- Neutral expression
- Low mood



# FREEZE: THE INNER WORLD OF A CHILD

- I can't bear your rejection
- I need to feel safe
- Shame, I hate myself
- I'm scared, I don't know what is going to happen
- When I fail at this, you'll send me away
- When you realize, I can't do this, you won't want me in your class anymore
- Adults can't be trusted; they don't keep you safe

How might a student be feeling?

WHEN OUR  
STUDENTS ARE  
"OUT OF CONTROL"  
"DEFIANT"  
"DISRESPECTFUL"  
"OPPOSITIONAL"  
"DISRUPTIVE"  
WHAT THEY  
REALLY MIGHT BE  
COMMUNICATING  
TO US IS

The landlord kicked us out of our home and we don't have a place to stay.

I don't understand this material. I'm worried people will think I'm dumb.

The cops arrested my dad last night.

I didn't get any sleep; my parents were fighting.

I'm living with a foster family. I don't know when I'll see my mom again.

We don't have much food at home. I'm really tired and hungry.

WHOLEhearted

# ALL BEHAVIOUR HAS A PURPOSE

Behaviour is communication of inner world

BUILDING SAFETY  
IN RELATIONSHIPS  
AND SPACES



Cultural Safety



Emotional Safety



Mental Safety



Physical Safety



# CAPPD

## ***Calm***

- ▶ The goal is to create a relaxed, focused state for yourself and your children. Learning to regulate emotions and return to a relaxed state after being alarmed or triggered helps children function in the neocortex

## ***Attuned***

- ▶ Be aware of children's non-verbal cues including body language, tone of voice, and emotional state. Staff and caregivers must connect with a child on an emotional, sensory level before moving to a cognitive level



# CAPPD

## ***Present***

- ▶ Be in the moment and focus attention on the child. All children can tell when people are not truly engaged or paying attention to them.

## ***Predictable***

- ▶ Provide children with routine, structure, and repeated positive experiences. This will help children to feel safe and allow them to be free to grow and explore.

## ***Don't***

- ▶ Let children's emotions escalate your own. Remain in control of own emotions and the expression of them

# EXTERNAL, INTERNAL TRIGGERS

**Triggers may be external stimuli from any of the five senses**

- ▶ helper shouting, kind words said in comfort, slamming doors, turning off the lights

**Triggers may also be internal**

- ▶ feeling hungry, tired, anxiety, physical comfort can help calm children and help them learn to regulate their emotions

Triggers can be a combination of external and internal stimuli



# YOU CAN HELP A STUDENT FEEL SAFE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- Wait for me to volunteer, don't single me out
- Connect and show empathy before exploring the consequences of my behaviour
- Really chewy snack
- Give me an important job
- Accept I might not understand or remember what happened, I was trying to survive what felt dangerous
- Give me somewhere safe to go if I need to self-soothe
- Safety first. Keep me & everyone else safe
- Allow me to choose a trusted adult to go to
- Give me a role
- Support me socially
- Give me somewhere safe to go at break time
- Match my energy (not my affect)
- Make things predictable
- Let me know about changes in routine, especially if there are strangers visiting the school – even if you think they are safe, I might not
- Deep breathing

“

## Ask the question **twice.**

First: 'hands up if you think you know the answer.'

Then: 'hands up if you want to tell me the answer.'

Watch how many leave hands up, because they now want to. **It's a small thing but helps build a trusting environment based upon consent.**

—MR. BLACHFORD, TEACHER

edutopia

# Box Breathing

- Place your finger on a dot. Take a deep breath in and count to 4.
- Move your finger to follow the arrows and let out your breath.
- Breathe in at each corner and hold to the count of 4.



## Breathing Boards:

Can be used in the classroom;

- laminate pages and place in a calm down spot for students to use
- Full size boards can be used as posters around the room
- Smaller printouts can be used in a calming box or for take home strategies
- Pocket sized cards can be used on a key ring in for the student to refer to as needed

# BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS

Children with trauma may have difficulty with accepting limits around inappropriate behaviour because of intense shame and or re-enacting trauma patterns

Recognize that setting limits is necessary to maintain safety. However, all types of limit setting can act as triggers.

- ▶ “I see you’re having trouble moving that chair”  
Give space for child to try again, if unable to finish/focus:
  - ▶ “Since it took longer to finish cleaning the table, we have run out of play time”  
Use direct, specific, and positive language for verbal and written rules and directions
- Ignoring or removing a child can trigger feelings of abandonment or rejection.

# PROACTIVE CHOICE AND CONTROL

- ▶ Trauma intensifies children's need for control. For demanding, controlling, or stubborn children give them control over small things
- ▶ Encourage and validate children as they try new things or work independently
- ▶ When children feel like they have choice and control, they will be calmer and less controlling. This helps build self-efficacy, trust, and a sense of identity.



# TRANSITIONS AND SAFETY PLANS

- ▶ When a child feels safe in one activity, a transition to something new involves risk. Consequently, the change becomes the trigger for the child.
- ▶ Consider playing music, singing between activities to cue children
- ▶ Create individual safety plans



# CALM ZONES AND PEACE CORNERS

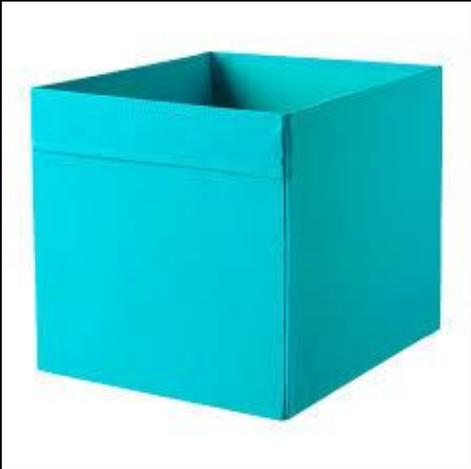
- ▶ Create a space where children can voluntarily move when they feel themselves getting out of control or having a difficult time
- ▶ This safe space is different from where children may be sent for a time out
- ▶ Children can choose to go there without consequences
- ▶ Children can learn how to deal with big emotions and feel safe





# SAFETY BOXES

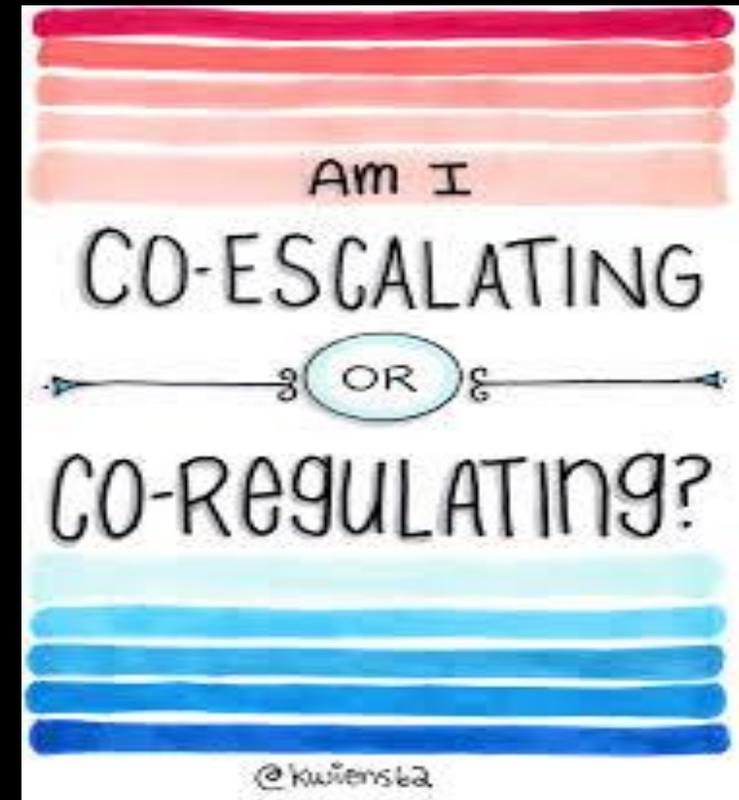
**To help children feel a sense of safety, express emotions, and understand traumatic events**



- ▶ Ask children to collage images of safety, comfort, and protection on the outside of the boxes.
- ▶ Focus on how the children can obtain comfort or protection. This activity is meant to contain expression of feeling and help children focus on the acquisition of self-help skills. (Loumeau-May, 2008, pp. 89-90)

# BASIC REGULATION

- ▶ Recognize early warning signs and communicate these to the child verbally and non-verbally. This is co-regulation.
- ▶ Help child to understand the link between their behaviours and the effect on others
- ▶ Use physical activity such as walking to match the emotional state of a child at a particular time, slow them down to return to a calmer baseline



# EMOTIONAL REGULATION

## *Slowing down*

Help children slow the pace between moving from intense and overwhelming feelings to thoughts to actions by considering each channel of emotional response



Watch these video for some emotional regulations strategies:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4RPzy2GA\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4RPzy2GA_U)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESVTrPrf2vs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UD9m5n-ZpB0>

- ▶ Connects child/youth to practitioner, safety of relationship
- ▶ Connects child/youth to present (here and now)
- ▶ Connects child/youth to personal control

*"And so, because of trauma, it's hard to be present in the current moment. When we experience something in the present, our brains are wired to respond to something similar that happened in the past."* Gabor Mate

## GROUNDING



# GROUNDING: MENTAL AND PHYSICAL

- ▶ Describe objects, sounds colours in environment
- ▶ 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Grounding (rescuing self)
- ▶ Hand child 5 objects to feel
- ▶ Think of 5 steps in any activity
- ▶ Hug yourself

## Name

-  5 things you **SEE**
- 4 things you **HEAR** 
-  3 things you **TOUCH**
- 2 things you **SMELL** 
-  1 thing you **TASTE**

# RELAXATION

*Use with care, allow any child survivor to leave eyes open*

*Examples:*

- Squeeze a lemon  
make fist, fast release
- Imagine your happy place



Learn about mindfulness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>

# TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Generational Trauma
- Secondary or Vicarious Trauma
- Body and brain changes due to trauma
- Dr Gabor Mate: trauma and addiction

This video sums up childhood trauma:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8>

“When someone  
is hurting,  
just your presence  
is medicine...”

-First Nations Wisdom

