

Caregiving in a Sometimes Stressful World:

How to Recognize and Support Diverse
Regulation Needs in Children

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Understanding Stress

- * Stress Response lives in our arousal system and is involved in numerous neural functions including:
 - * Hunger
 - * Novelty and Learning
 - * Transitions
 - * Challenges
- * Some is needed to build resilience....no stress does not equal resilience
- * Too much stress can significantly impact ability to regulate relationships and numerous brain functions

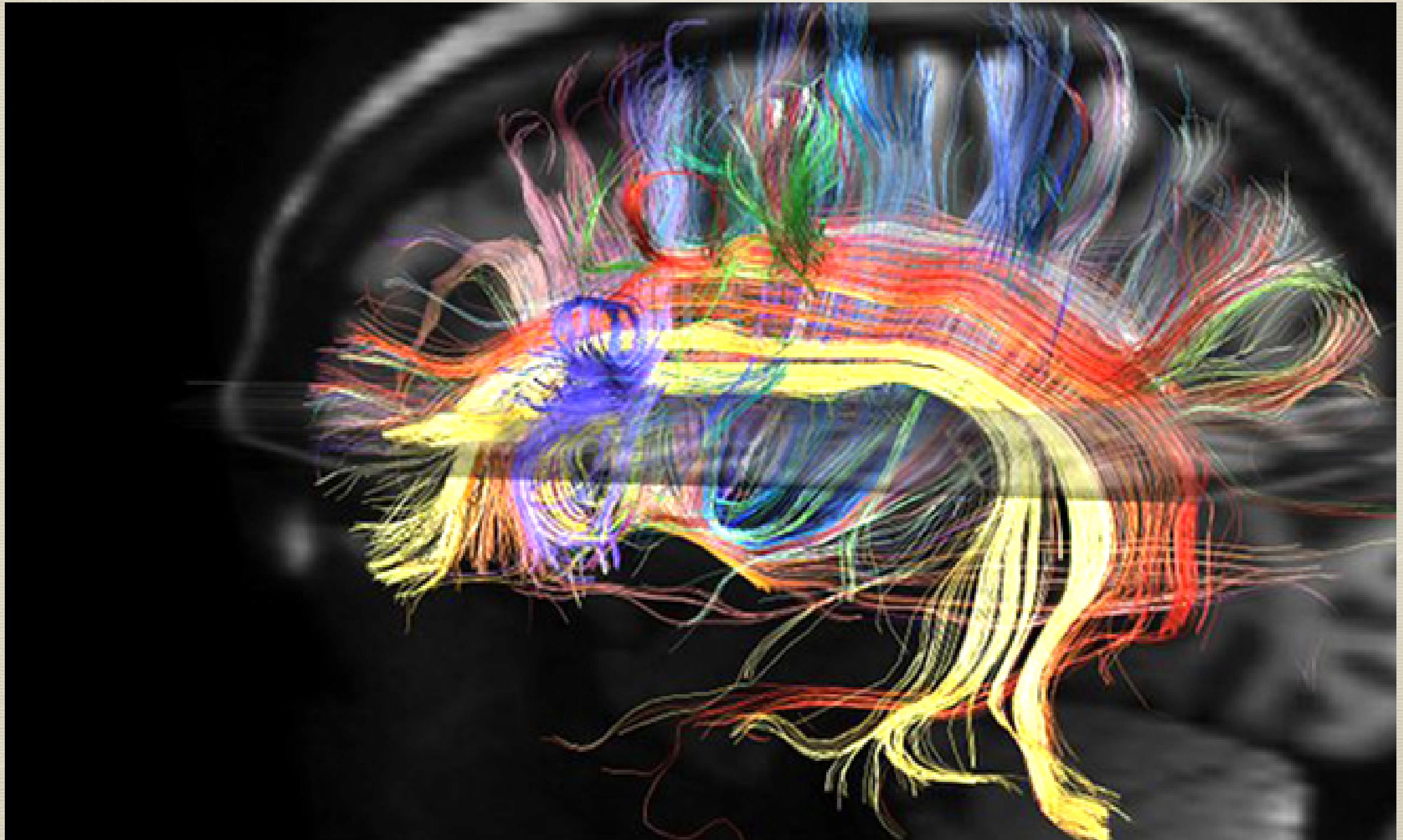
Determinants of Stress Capability

- * Genetics
- * Epigenetics
- * Intrauterine
- * Early Childhood Experiences:
 - * Primary caregivers are external regulators for infants
 - * Predictable responses to stress help build flexibility and resilience
- * Adverse Experiences

The Impact Of Too Much Stress

- * How We Grow Our Brains
- * Altered stress response system: Stress, Cortisol, Amygdala's, HPA, and Neurons
- * The Role we Play as Builders and Regulators

Understanding Regulation





Pro-social
Regulation

Social Regulation

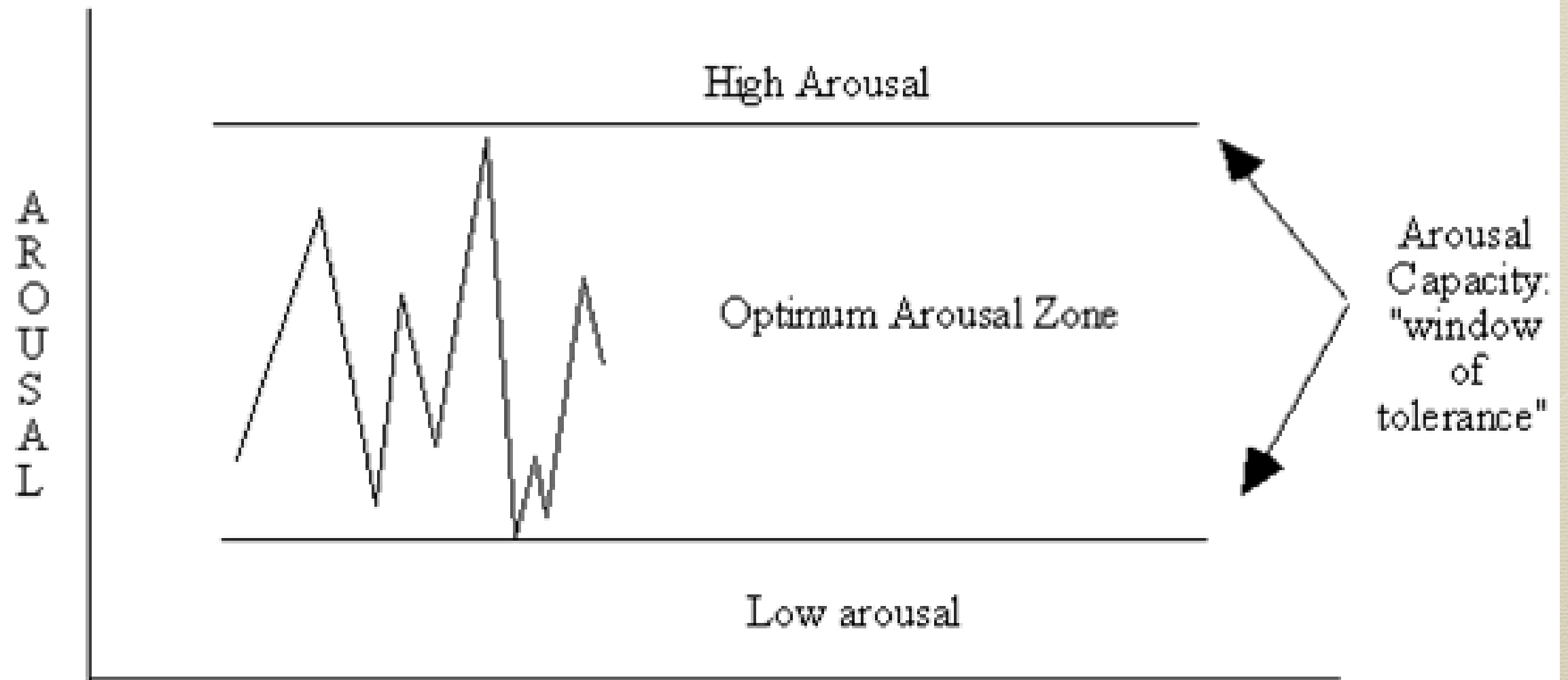
Cognitive Regulation

Emotional Regulation

Arousal Regulation

SAFE RELATIONSHIPS

Window of Tolerance

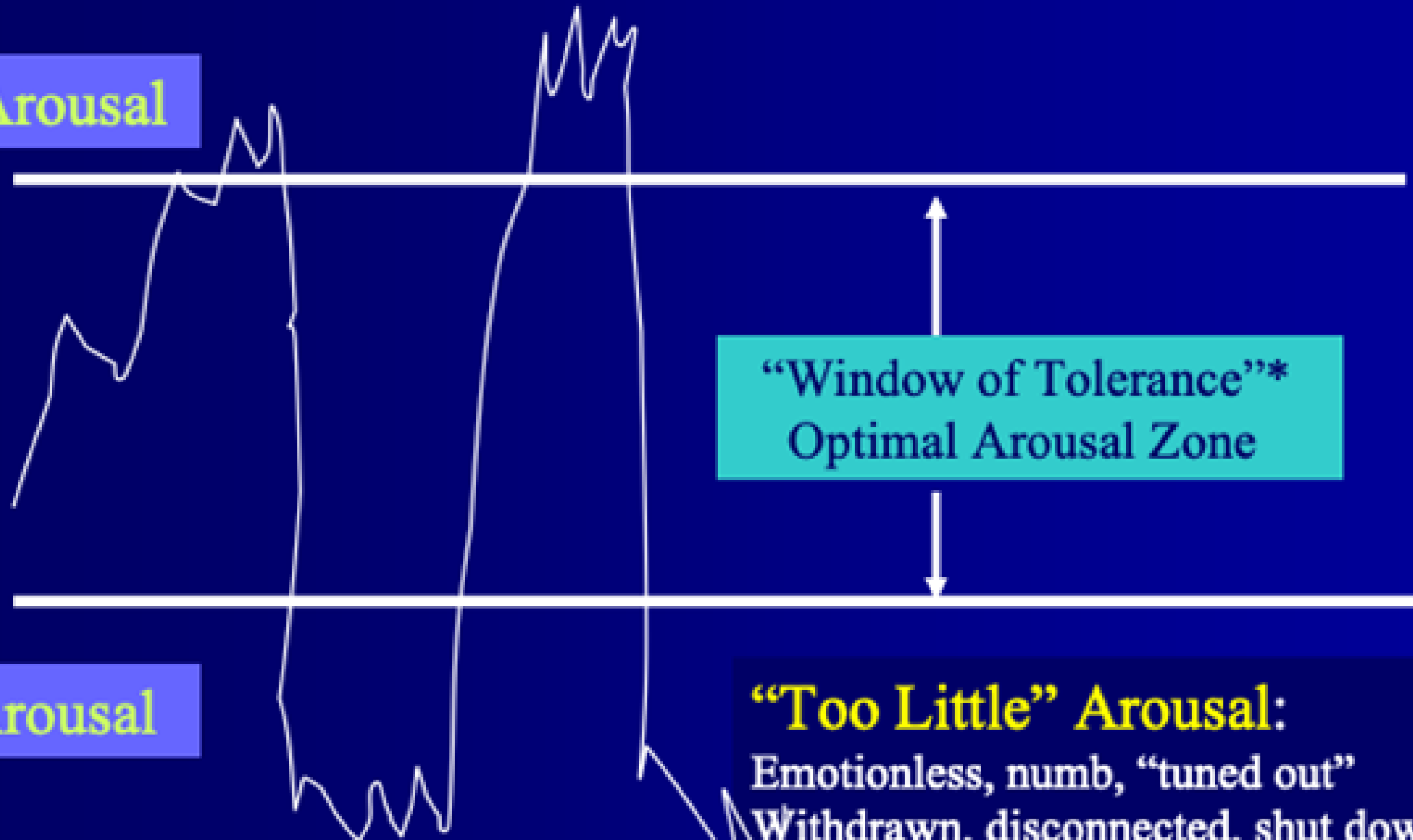


Nervous System Arousal After Trauma

“Too much” Arousal:

Emotionally reactive, impulsive
Hypervigilant, hyperdefensive, rejection sensitivity
Difficulty sleeping, nightmares
Hyperactive, restless or explosive aggressive behavior

High Arousal



“Too Little” Arousal:

Emotionless, numb, “tuned out”
Withdrawn, disconnected, shut down
Unable to think or make an effort
“Don’t care,” can appear resistant or defiant

Ogden and Minton (2000)

*Siegel, D. (1999)

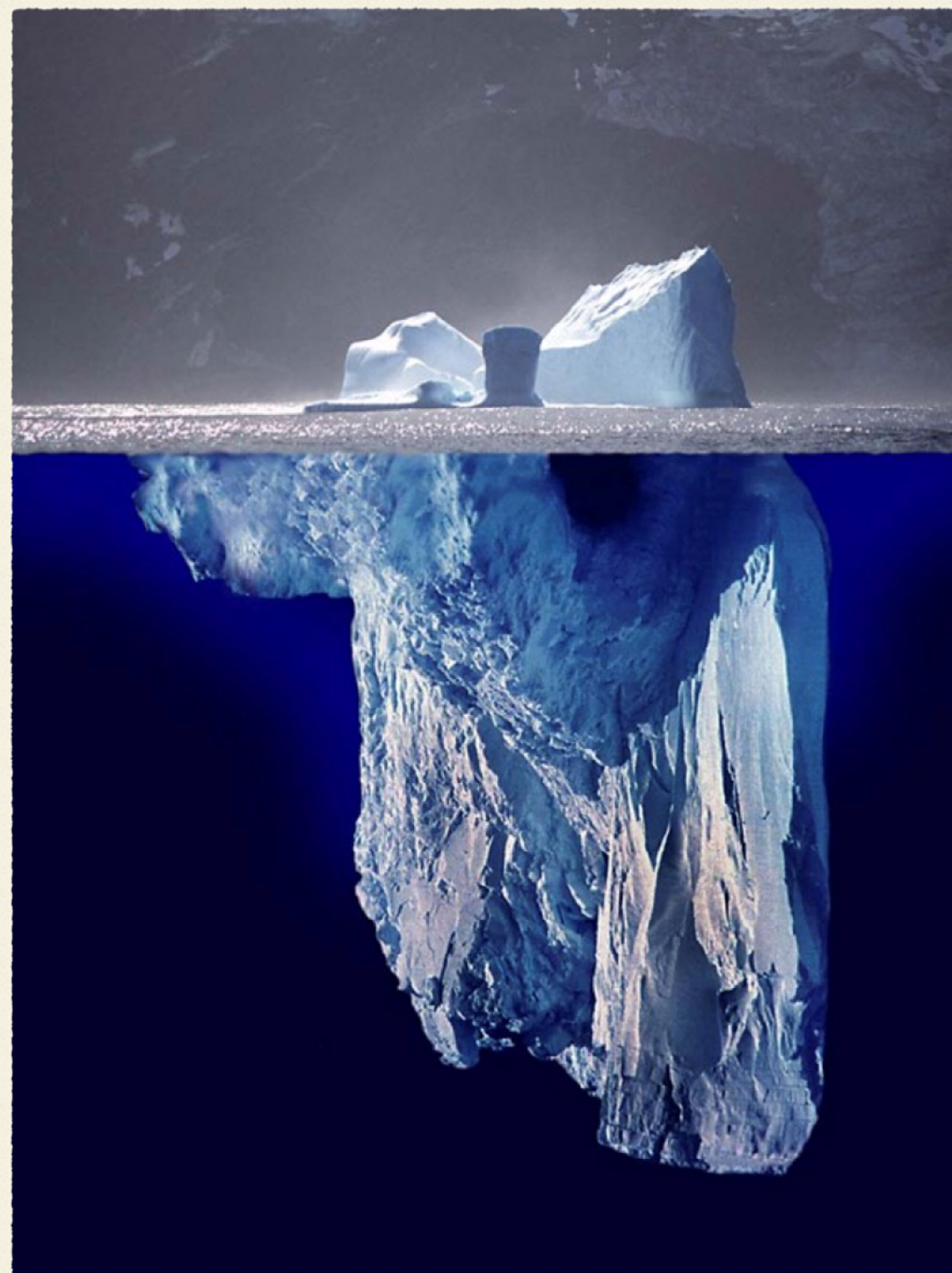
Some Signs Kiddos Are Struggling with Their Windows

- * Running Away
- * Triggered Aggression
- * Defiance/Overly controlling behaviour
- * Picking at Skin or Clothing
- * Intense clinginess
- * Self Harm
- * Anticipatory Rejection
- * Covering Eyes/Ears
- * Hiding under tables/in closets
- * High pitched Vocalizations
- * Regressive Behaviours
- * Lying
- * Dissociation

What Impacts their Windows?

- * Other people's ability to stay in their windows
- * Poor Sleep
- * Not exercising/eating well/getting outside
- * Illness
- * Stress/adversity
- * Isolation
- * Insecure relationships
- * (Mal) adaptive reactions
- * **Pressures on the Pyramid** (that get bigger as they do! - how heavy is the backpack??)

Understanding Leads to Efficacy,
Which Leads to Hope



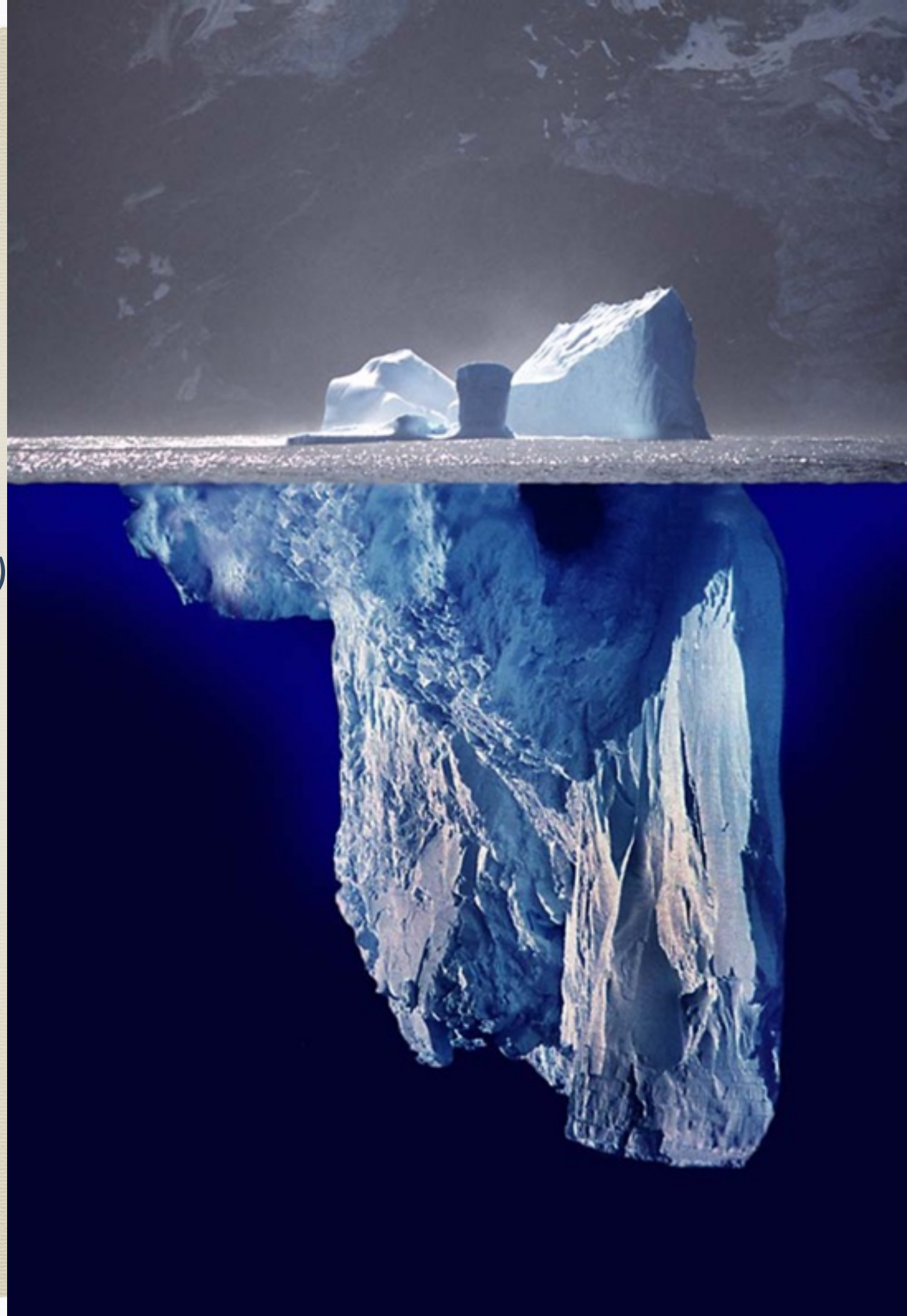
What we
see

What's
Happened?
(*not "what's wrong"*)

What's the
stress?

What are the
strengths?

What do
they need?



Building the Window

- * Be curious - always
- * Validate
- * Be predictable and routine
- * Build routines around connection
- * Think sensory!
- * Teach about stress and how to manage it
- * Be mindful and teach others to do the same
- * Create spaces in your setting for caregivers to feel connected
- * Look after yourself so you can look after them; so you can respond to them and not react to the lava

Exposure to Violence Dysregulates Us

Hyperarousal-Related Symptoms:

CHILDREN: impulsivity, risk-taking, poor judgment, self-destructive behavior

Hypervigilance, fear of abandonment, dread of closeness

CAREGIVERS: difficulty sleeping, irritability, more reactive, quicker to anger/frustration

Hypervigilance, fear/dread of relationships with kids, quicker to judgment

Sympathetic Hyperarousal

“Window of Tolerance”*
Optimal Arousal Zone

Parasympathetic Hypoarousal

Hypoarousal-Related Symptoms:

CHILDREN: flat affect, numb, “not there”

Passive, no initiative or motivation, victim identity

CAREGIVERS: loss of interest, detachment, ‘just what I have to do,’ Loss of hopefulness, energy, playfulness

Ogden and Minton (2000);

Fisher, 2006

*Siegel (1999)

Building Your Window

- * Know what most worries you/where you are struggling. Don't be afraid to naval gaze. Remember - Vulnerability brings joy.
- * Ask others for help and ideas. Work as a team
- * Know your symptoms of burnout and keep an eye out for them. Early detection is key
- * Think positively; Focus on strengths, not weaknesses
- * Take care of your pyramid. Actively engage in self-care. Little bits add up
- * Never forget the difference you make (understanding, leads to efficacy, leads to hope....it's contagious too!)