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# EMPOWER, EDUCATE, ELEVATE: ENHANCING RESILIENCE IN OUR FUTURE GENERATION

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# AGENDA

Part 1: Family Dynamics

Part 2: Stress and Learning

Part 3: Emotional Tolerance

Part 4: Strategies for Educators

# PART 1:

# Family Dynamics

# FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Roles and Responsibilities within a Family

- Traditional roles such as parent, child, grandparent
- Individual skills and interests can also determine roles

## Communication Styles and their Impact

- Healthy communication involves active listening and open dialogue
- Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts

## Hierarchy and Power Dynamics

- Some families have clear hierarchies and power dynamics
- Can influence decision-making and conflict resolution

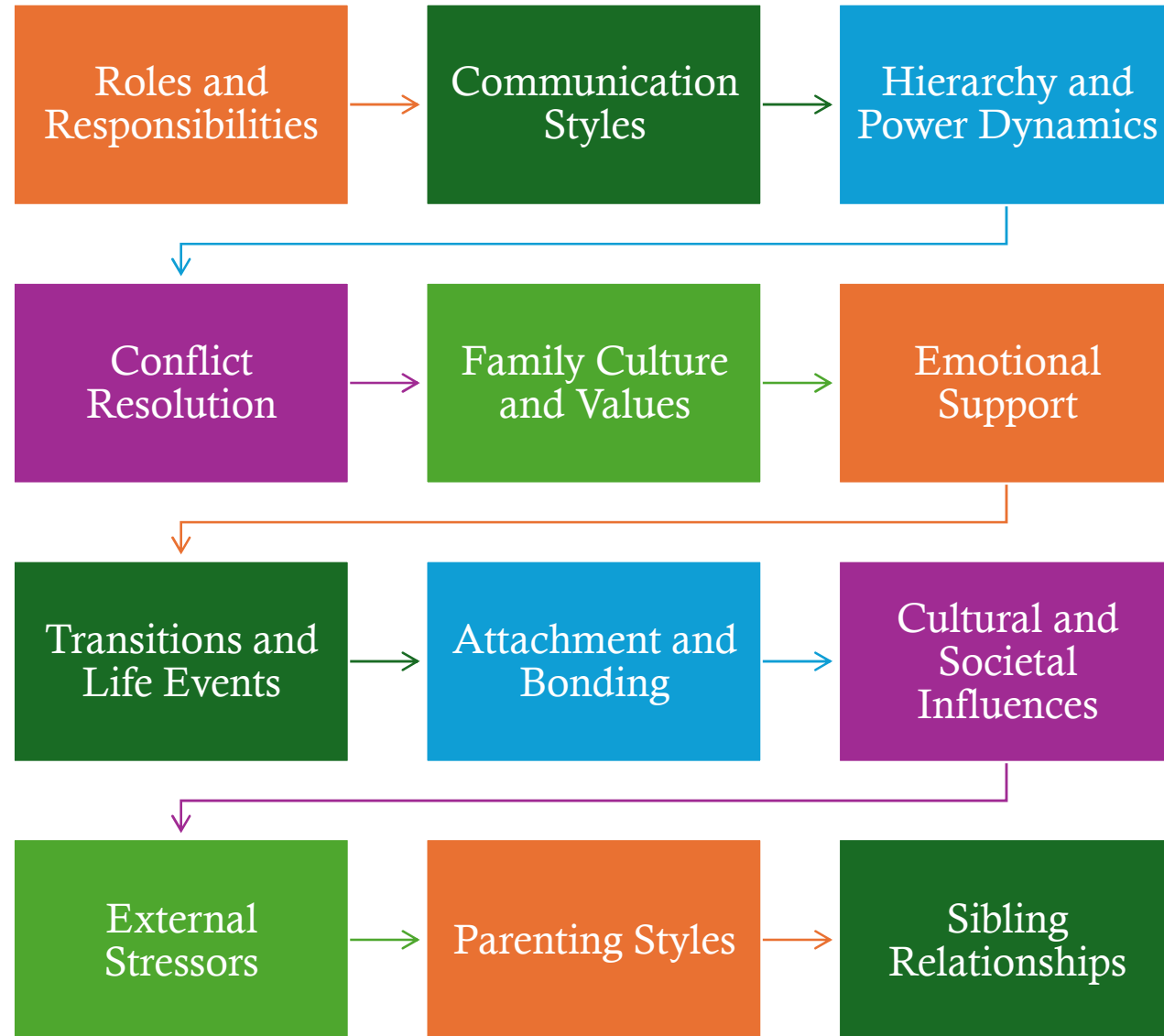
## Conflict Resolution Strategies

- Compromise, avoidance, or open discussion

## Family Culture and Values



# WHAT ARE FAMILY DYNAMICS?



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# THE IMPACT OF FAMILY DYNAMICS ON CHILDREN

Emotional Well-Being: Positive family dynamics contribute to a child's emotional well-being

- Children raised in nurturing environments develop self-esteem and self-confidence

Mental Health: Family dynamics can influence a child's mental health

- Consistent emotional support and open communication can help children develop resilience

Social Skills and Relationships: Family dynamics shape a child's social skills and ability to form healthy relationships

- Positive family interactions model effective communication and empathy

Behavioral Development: Family dynamics can impact a child's behavior

Academic Achievement: Family support and involvement in education can positively impact academic achievement



# UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY FAMILY DYNAMICS

## Frequent Relocations

- Disrupts established routines, relationships, and community connections

## Deployment Cycle

- Family members must manage daily life and responsibilities in the absence of a loved one

## Dual Roles and Responsibilities

- Non-serving spouse takes on dual roles and responsibilities

## Emotional Stress

- Related to deployments and potential risks associated with military service

## Flexibility

- Adaptability and flexibility are essential traits

## Supportive Communities

- Military families often rely on each other for emotional support and practical assistance

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# HOW MILITARY FAMILY DYNAMICS IMPACT CHILDREN

## Positive Impacts

- Resilience and adaptability
- Sense of patriotism and pride
- Supportive community
- Cultural awareness
- Independence and self-reliance

## Negative Impacts

- Emotional stress
  - Educational disruptions
  - Social challenges
  - Parental absence
  - Educational and career challenges
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# PART 2:

## Stress and Learning

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# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE BRAIN?

## Structural Changes in the Brain

- Reductions in size of brain regions such as the hippocampus
- Long-term implications for cognitive functioning

## Neurotransmitter Imbalance

- Disrupts balance of neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine
- Contributes to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety

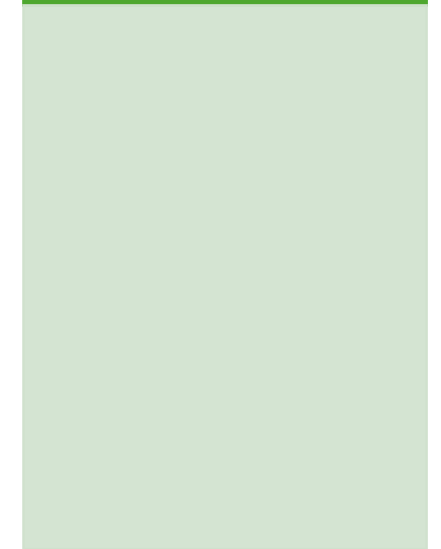
## Hormonal Changes

- Release of stress hormones like cortisol
- Detrimental effects on neural cells, particularly in regions important for learning and memory

## Impaired Neurogenesis

- Hinders formation of new neurons

## Altered Brain Connectivity





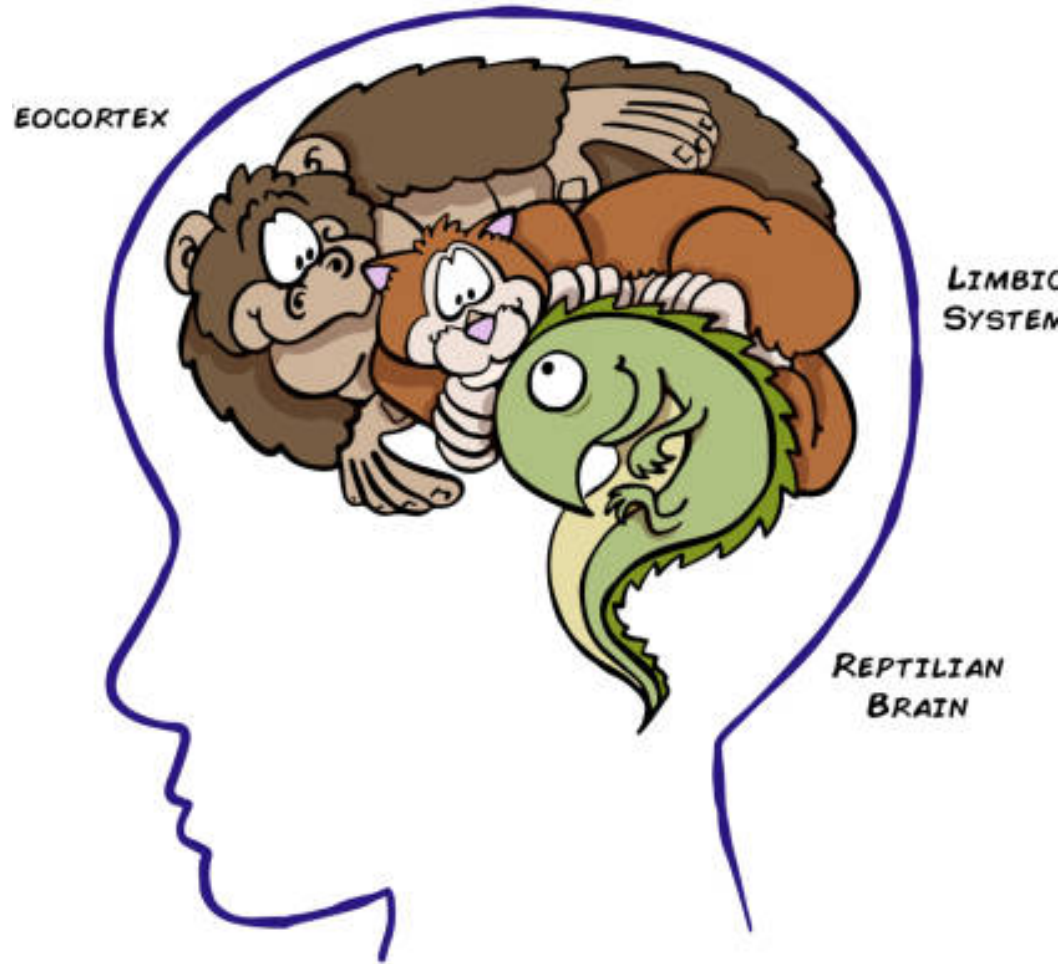
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# IMPACT OF STRESS ON DEVELOPMENT



- Structural Changes
  - Chronic stress can lead to reductions in the size of brain regions such as the hippocampus.
- Neurotransmitter Imbalance
  - Stress can disrupt the balance of neurotransmitters, contributing to mood disorders.
- Hormonal Changes
- Impaired Neurogenesis
- Altered Brain Connectivity
- Cognitive Impairments
- Emotional Regulation
- Increased Risk of Mental Health Disorders
- Long-Term Consequences
- Physical Health Impact

# INTRODUCING THE TRIUNE BRAIN THEORY



## Reptilian Brain (R-Complex)

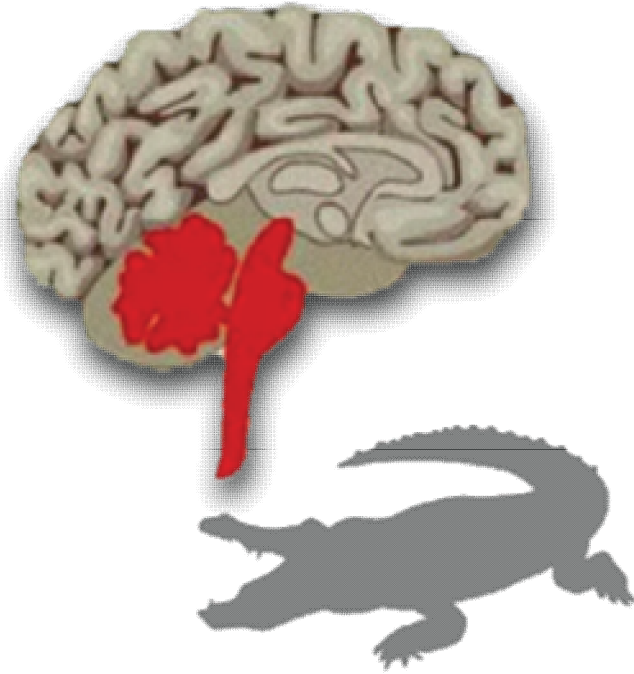
- Oldest and most primitive part of the brain
- Responsible for essential survival functions and instincts

## Paleomammalian Brain (Limbic System)

- Evolved in mammals
- Responsible for emotions, memory, and social behaviours

## Neomammalian Brain (Neocortex)

- The most recent evolutionary development
- Responsible for higher-order cognitive functions

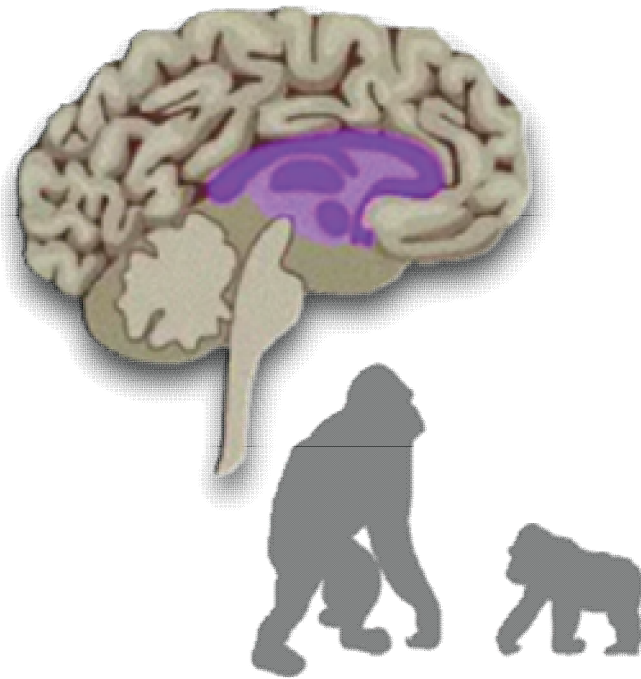


### **Lizard Brain**

(brainstem, cerebellum,  
and hypothalamus)

Responsible for  
Survival and  
Maintenance





**Mammal Brain**  
(limbic system and  
hippocampus)

Responsible for  
Feelings and  
Memory  
Formation

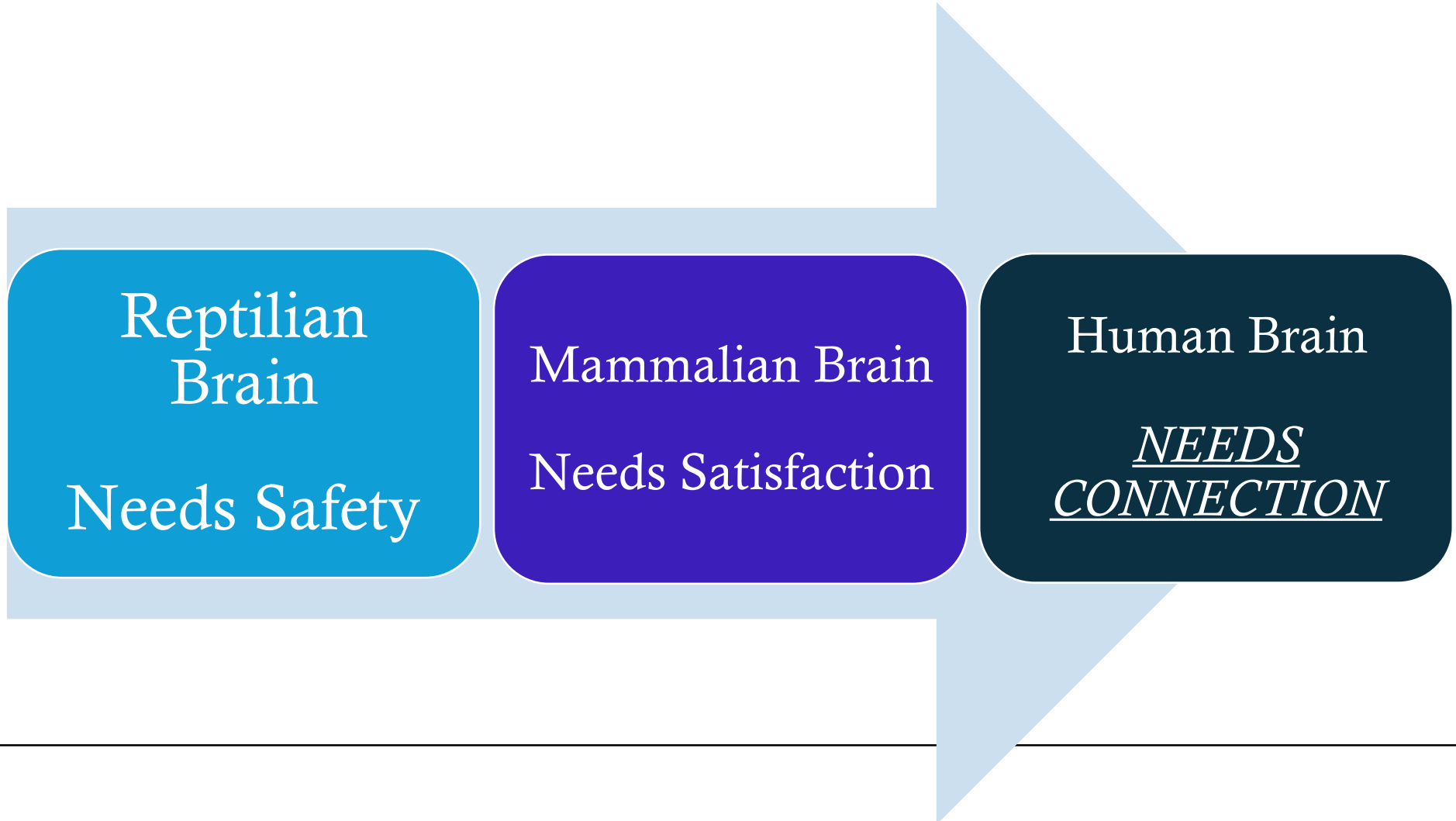


**Human Brain**  
(cerebral cortex)

# Higher Mental Functioning

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# PROGRESSION OF BASIC NEED...



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Reptilian Brain  
Needs Safety



Through  
Safety

We Experience  
Peace



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Mammalian Brain  
Needs Satisfaction

Through  
Satisfaction  
n

We Experience  
Contentment

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Human Brain

NEEDS  
CONNECTION



Through  
Connectio  
n

We Experience  
LOVE

# When We Experience Connection We Can Also...



REGULATE  
ATTENTION,  
FEELINGS, AND  
DESIRES



ENGAGE IN  
COMPLEX  
REASONING



NEGOTIATE  
ABSTRACT  
THOUGHTS



ACTIVATE OUR  
IMAGINATION



DEVELOP  
LANGUAGE



EXPERIENCE  
EMPATHY

# CONNECTING TRIUNE TO CHILDREN EXPOSED TO HIGH-STRESS ENVIRONMENT S

## Reptilian Brain (R-Complex)

- Heightened fight-or-flight responses
- More prone to anxiety, hypervigilance, and sense of danger

## Paleomammalian Brain (Limbic System)

- Emotional dysregulation and mood swings
- Stress can significantly impact emotion and social behavior

## Neomammalian Brain (Neocortex)

- Chronic stress can impair cognitive functions

## Interplay of Layers

## Emotional Impact

## Resilience and Coping Mechanisms

## Long-Term Consequences



# HOW THE TRIUNE BRAIN THEORY CONNECTS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Recognizing Diverse Learning Needs

- Brain is not uniform, students have diverse learning styles

## Emotional Engagement

- Paleomammalian brain plays crucial role in learning

## Stress Management

- Implement stress-reduction strategies in the classroom

## Building Emotional Intelligence

## Promoting Critical Thinking

## Individualized Learning

## Cultivating Creativity

## Forming Positive Relationships

## Incorporating Technology

# PART 3:

## Emotional Tolerance

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# WHAT IS EMOTIONAL TOLERANCE?



**Emotional Awareness:** Being in touch with emotions and accurately identifying feelings

Ability to differentiate between emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, fear, and frustration



**Emotional Acceptance:** Accepting emotions as valid and normal without judging or criticizing oneself



**Emotion Regulation:** Having effective emotional regulation strategies to modulate intensity of emotional responses



**Resilience:** Being able to bounce back from difficult or emotionally challenging situations



**Empathy:** Ability to understand and relate to the emotions of others



**Interpersonal Skills:** Navigating conflicts and difficult conversations with emotional intelligence



**Stress Management:** Preventing emotional overload and facilitating healthier coping mechanisms

# THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL TOLERANCE IN DEVELOPME NT

## Emotional Regulation in Childhood

- Children learn to understand and manage their emotions
- Essential for social and academic success

## Social Development

## Academic Success

## Mental Health and Well-Being

## Resilience

## Interpersonal Skills

## Identity Formation

## Adulthood and Aging

## Parenting and Caregiving

## Workplace Success



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# EMOTIONAL TOLERANCE IN CHILDREN EXPOSED TO HIGH-STRESS ENVIRONMEN TS

## Emotional Dysregulation

- Children may struggle with emotional dysregulation, leading to frequent mood swings and emotional outbursts.

## Increased Anxiety

- Chronic exposure to stressors can contribute to heightened anxiety in children.

## Depression

- High-stress environments can increase the risk of depressive symptoms in children.

## Behavioral Issues

- Some children may express their emotional distress through challenging behaviors, such as defiance or aggression.

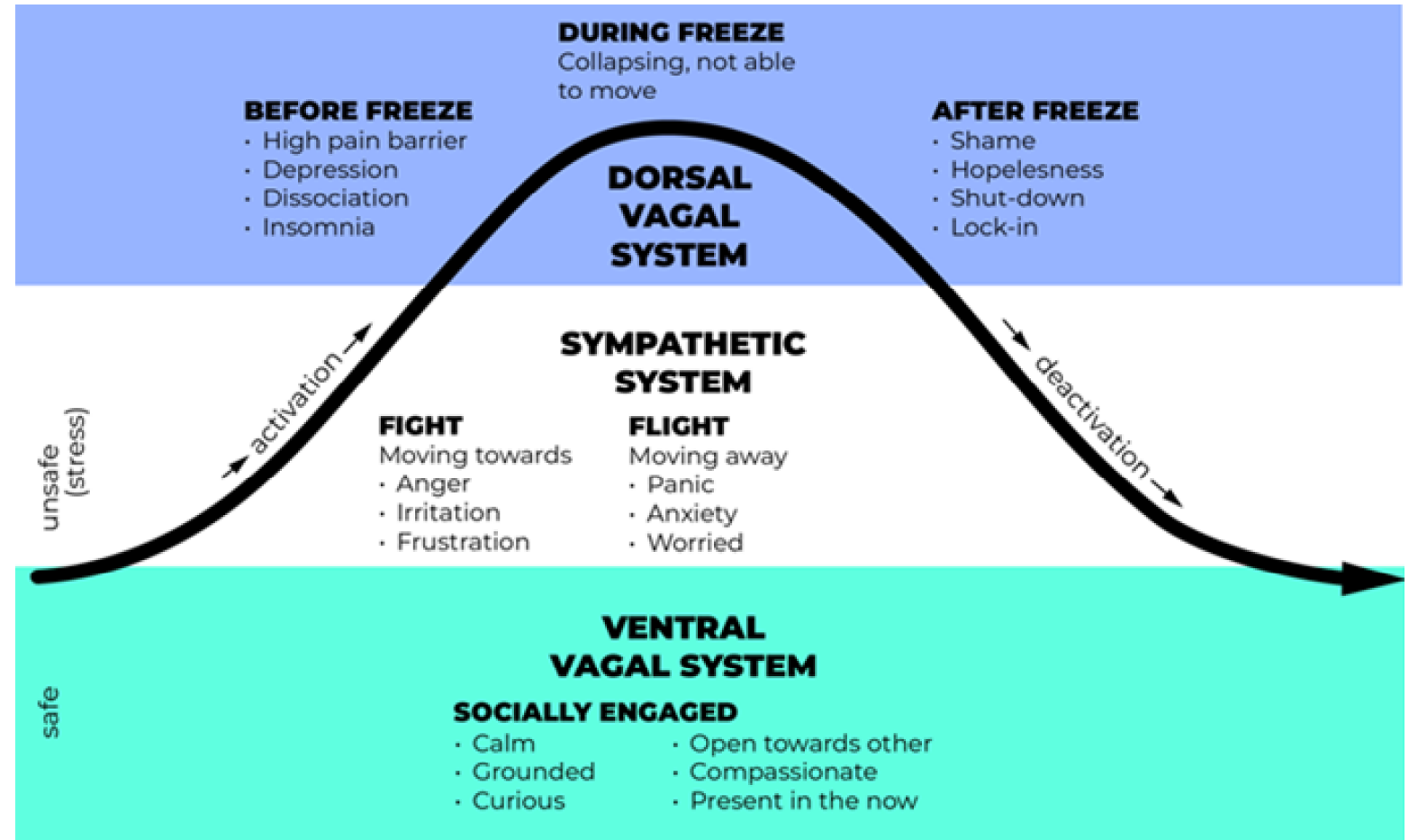
## Academic Challenges

- Stress can impact a child's cognitive functioning, making it difficult to focus and perform well academically.

## Physical Symptoms

- Stress can manifest as physical symptoms in children, including headaches and stomachaches.

# INTRODUCING THE POLYVAGAL THEORY

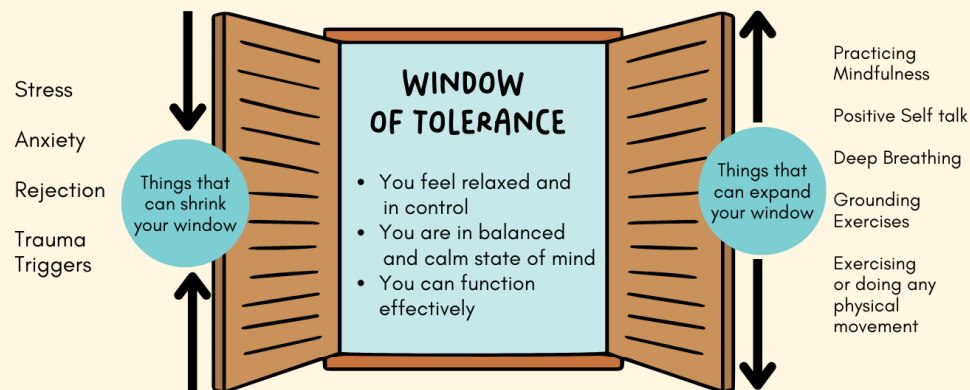




## HYPERAROUSAL

### FIGHT / FLIGHT RESPONSE

- Attacking or confronting
- Becoming angry or irritable
- Hurling insults
- Engaging in blame
- Difficulty in trusting other people
- Running away or hiding
- Quitting
- Being in denial
- Experiencing anxiety
- Sabotaging oneself



## HYPORAROUSAL

- Surrendering or becoming compliant
- Feeling empty or numb, like you are shutting down
- Experiencing detachment
- Rationalizing or justifying behaviors or situations

## Optimal Arousal Range

- The Window of Tolerance represents the emotional and physiological arousal within which an individual is most comfortable and capable of functioning effectively.

## Hyperarousal

- Above the upper threshold of the window, individuals experience hyperarousal.

## Hypoarousal

- Below the lower threshold of the window, individuals enter a state of hypoarousal.

## Regulation and Flexibility

- The goal is to help individuals expand their window of tolerance, allowing them to tolerate a broader range of emotional and physiological states.

## Trauma and Window of Tolerance

- The Window of Tolerance theory is often applied in the context of trauma.

## Individual Differences

## Therapeutic Applications



# WINDOW OF TOLERANCE AWARENESS WORKSHEET

Identify, recognize the symptoms you experience and build awareness



For **HYPERAROUSAL**, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- Abnormal state of increased responsiveness
- Feeling anxious, angry and out of control
- You may experience wanting to fight or run away

**HYPERAROUSAL**

- |                                                  |                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> — Anxiety                  | <input type="radio"/> — Addictions                        |
| <input type="radio"/> — Impulsivity              | <input type="radio"/> — Over-Eating                       |
| <input type="radio"/> — Intense Reactions        | <input type="radio"/> — Obsessive Thoughts/Behaviour      |
| <input type="radio"/> — Lack of Emotional Safety | <input type="radio"/> — Emotional Outbursts               |
| <input type="radio"/> — Hyper-Vigilance          | <input type="radio"/> — Chaotic Responses                 |
| <input type="radio"/> — Intrusive Imagery        | <input type="radio"/> — Defensiveness                     |
| <input type="radio"/> — Tension                  | <input type="radio"/> — Racing Thoughts                   |
| <input type="radio"/> — Shaking                  | <input type="radio"/> — Anger/Rage                        |
| <input type="radio"/> — Rigidity                 | <input type="radio"/> — Physical and Emotional Aggression |
| <input type="radio"/> — _____                    | <input type="radio"/> — _____                             |
| <input type="radio"/> — _____                    | <input type="radio"/> — _____                             |



For **HYPOAROUSAL**, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness
- Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression
- You may experience your body shutting down or freeze

**HYPOAROUSAL**

- |                                                           |                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> — The feeling of being disconnected | <input type="radio"/> — Decreased Reactions                  |
| <input type="radio"/> — No Display of Emotions            | <input type="radio"/> — Shame/Embarrassment                  |
| <input type="radio"/> — Auto-Pilot Responses              | <input type="radio"/> — Depression                           |
| <input type="radio"/> — Memory Loss                       | <input type="radio"/> — Difficulty Engaging Coping Resources |
| <input type="radio"/> — Feign Death Response              | <input type="radio"/> — Low Levels of Energy                 |
| <input type="radio"/> — Numbness                          | <input type="radio"/> — Can't Defend Oneself                 |
| <input type="radio"/> — Disabled Cognitive Processing     | <input type="radio"/> — Shutdown                             |
| <input type="radio"/> — Reduced Physical Movement         | <input type="radio"/> — Can't Say No                         |
| <input type="radio"/> — _____                             | <input type="radio"/> — _____                                |
| <input type="radio"/> — _____                             | <input type="radio"/> — _____                                |

# APPLYING THE POLYVAGAL THEORY IN THE CLASSROOM

## Assessing Emotional Regulation

- Children in high-stress environments often operate at the edges of their window of tolerance
- Chronic exposure to stressors can push them into states of hyperarousal or hypoarousal

## Identifying Triggers and Stressors

- Recognizing a child's window of tolerance can help identify specific triggers or stressors
- Caregivers and professionals can tailor interventions to address those specific sources of distress

## Trauma-Informed Care

- The Window of Tolerance theory is crucial in the context of trauma-informed care

## Teaching Emotional Regulation

## Creating Safe Spaces

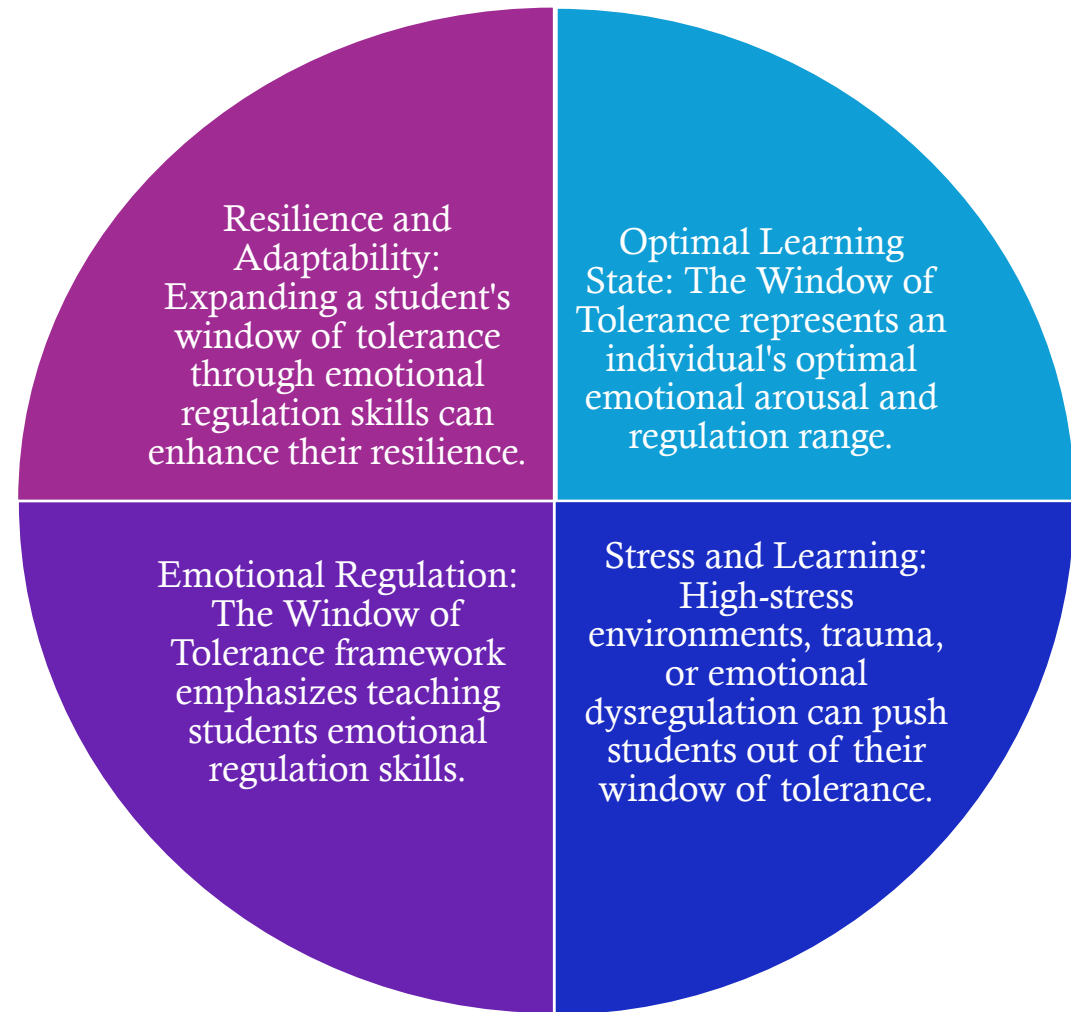
## Promoting Resilience

## Preventing Overwhelm



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# CONNECTING THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING





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# “ADVERSITY IS PART OF LIFE”

Resilience was traditionally the term used to describe to the trait that **gives us the strength to bounce back from challenges in life.**

When we face challenges, we develop the skills necessary to be resilient;

With increased resilience, we become more equipped to tap into our strengths and support system and it is THIS skill that gives us the best chance to work AND grow through the challenges...

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# PART 4:

## Strategies for Educators

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**1. Building Trusting Relationships**

**2. Emotional Regulation and Support**

**3. Promote Social and Emotional Learning (*SEL*)**

**4. Classroom Environment and Structure**

**5. Student Empowerment and Choice**

**6. Individualized Support and Inclusivity**

**7. Access to Support Services**

**8. Professional Growth and Resources**

**9. Prioritize Self Care**

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# 1. BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

1

## Establish Trusting Relationships

- Be approachable, empathetic, and consistent
- Greet each student warmly and show interest in their lives

2

## Show Genuine Care and Concern

- Regularly check in with students and offer support

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## 2. EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND SUPPORT



Implement activities that promote emotional regulation

Mindfulness exercises, deep breathing techniques, or journaling



Teach stress reduction techniques

Time management skills, such as creating to-do lists or using a planner



Encourage creative activities

Art, music, or storytelling to engage the neocortex and stimulate creative thinking



Foster metacognitive skills

Set goals, track progress, and reflect on learning strategies to improve metacognitive awareness



Use positive affirmations and encouragement

Provide specific and constructive praise to acknowledge efforts and achievements

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## Listen

### Actively listen to students

- Eg. Sit down with upset students and listen attentively without interrupting

## Conduct

### Conduct regular emotional check-ins

- Eg. Start each morning with a 'feelings check-in'

## Teach

### Teach stress management and coping skills

- Eg. Dedicate classroom time to mindfulness exercises

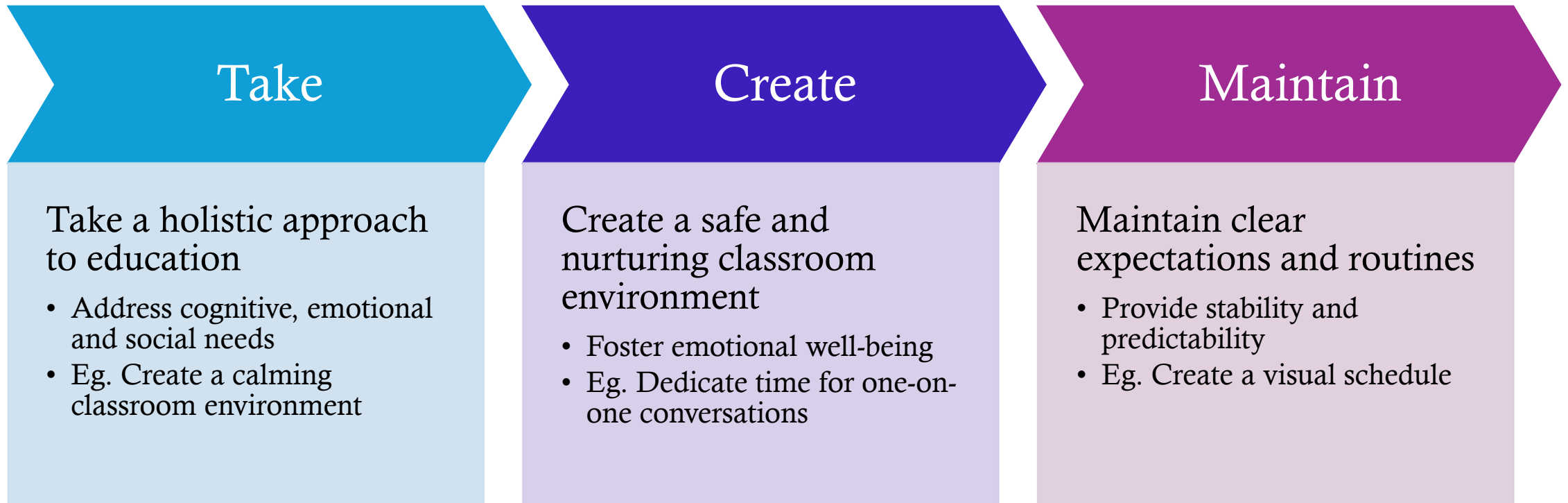
# 3. PROMOTE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Integrate	<p>Integrate SEL programs into the curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement a weekly SEL curriculum with lessons on emotions, communication, and conflict resolution</li></ul>
Build	<p>Build positive teacher-student relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dedicate time for one-on-one conversations, showing empathy and building trust</li></ul>
Show	<p>Show empathy and understanding toward students experiencing emotional challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer private conversations to express empathy, validate feelings, and discuss potential solutions</li></ul>



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## 4. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND STRUCTURE





Consider alternative  
assessment methods to  
accommodate unique needs

Eg. Allow oral presentation  
or visual poster instead of  
written report



Implement trauma-informed  
teaching practices

Eg. Display visual cues in  
classroom for self-  
regulation

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# 5. STUDENT EMPOWERMENT AND CHOICE



## Offering Students Choices

Allow students to select research topics or project themes

Gives students a sense of control over their learning



## Incorporating Mental Health Education

Teach students about emotional well-being and stress management

Devote time to lessons on mental health and self-care strategies

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## 6. INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT AND INCLUSIVITY

1

Recognize students' unique responses to stress

- Provide additional time or alternative assessments for students who require accommodations

2

Implement trauma-informed teaching practices

- Create options for students to take breaks when needed
- Use sensory tools like stress balls or fidget spinners to help them self-regulate

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# 7. ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES



**Collaborate with school counselors,  
social workers, and other support staff**

Ensure students have access to mental health services  
and resources



**Host regular meetings with the  
school's counseling team**

Discuss students' well-being  
Identify those who may benefit from additional  
support

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## 8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

1

Advocate for and participate in professional development opportunities related to trauma-informed care, social and emotional learning, and strategies for working with children in high-stress environments.

- Eg. Attend a workshop on trauma-informed teaching to learn about the impact of trauma on students and how to create a trauma-sensitive classroom.

2

Maintain open and regular communication with parents or caregivers.

- Eg. Send home a weekly newsletter or email updates to parents, summarizing classroom activities and providing tips for supporting their child's learning at home.



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# 9. PRIORITIZE SELF CARE

## Teachers: Put Your Oxygen Mask On First

*we need to remember  
that if we do not help ourselves first  
then we may not be able to help others*



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# ***SUSTAINABLE SELF CARE BEGINS AND ENDS WITH YOU!***

<b>Be</b>	Be kind to yourself.
<b>Enhance</b>	Enhance your awareness with education and experiences.
<b>Accept</b>	Accept where you are on your path at all times.
<b>Exchange</b>	Exchange information and feelings with people who can validate you.
<b>Clarify</b>	Clarify your personal boundaries. What works for you; what doesn't.
<b>Express</b>	Express your needs verbally.
<b>Take</b>	Take positive action to change your environment.
<b>Create</b>	Create a network of support.
<b>Build</b>	Build your Self-Care Toolbox and use it every day!

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*Chi-miigwetch. Nia:wen. Marsi. Wela'lin. Woliwon. Thank you.*



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*Chi-miigwetch. Nia:wen. Marsi. Wela'lin. Woliwon. Thank you.*