

# Keeping Our Expectations High Trauma Informed Principles

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Who is in our room today?



You?

Me?

# Today's Goals

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## Let's Talk About...

**01** Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

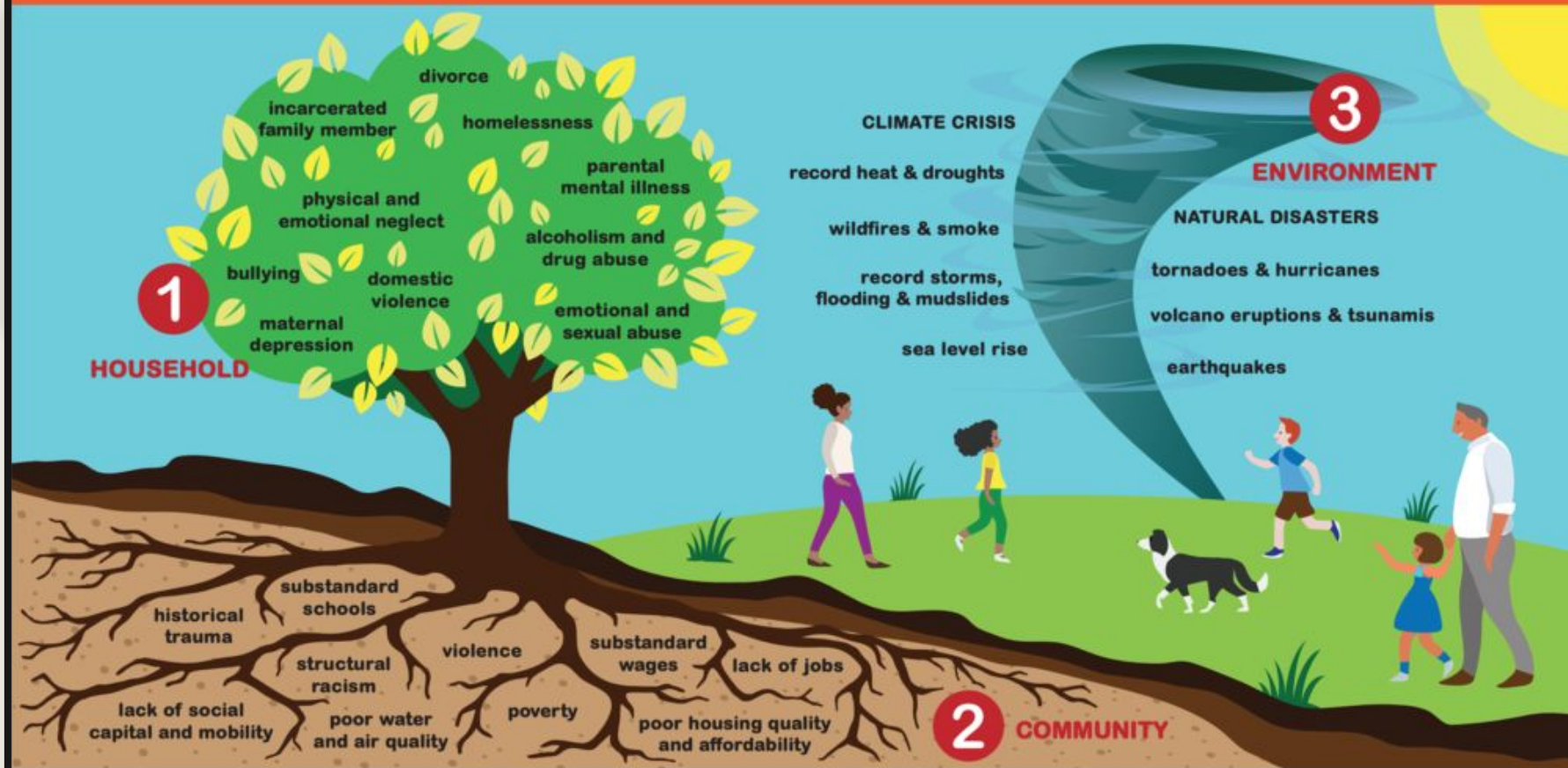
**02** Impact of ACEs on the brain

**03** Trauma Informed Principles



# 3 Realms of ACEs

ACEs Connection accelerates the global movement to prevent and heal adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and supports communities to work collaboratively to solve our most intractable problems. Left unaddressed, toxic stress from ACEs harms children and families, organizations, systems and communities, and reduces the ability of individuals and entities to respond to stressful events with resiliency. The ACEs in these three realms intertwine throughout people's lives, and affect the viability of organizations, systems and communities.



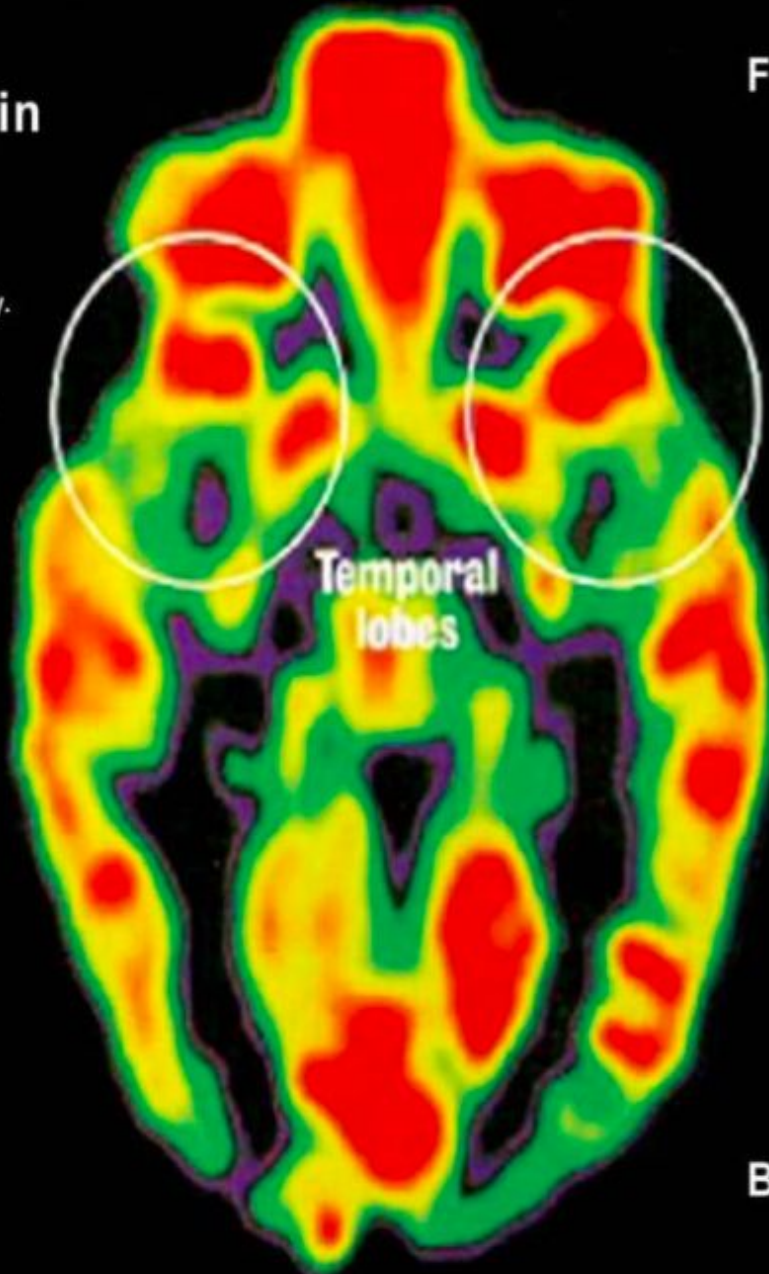
Thanks to Building Community Resilience Collaborative and Networks and the International Transformational Resilience Coalition for inspiration and guidance. Please visit [ACEsConnection.com](https://www.acesconnection.com) to learn more about the science of ACEs and join the movement to prevent ACEs, heal trauma and build resilience.





## Healthy Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

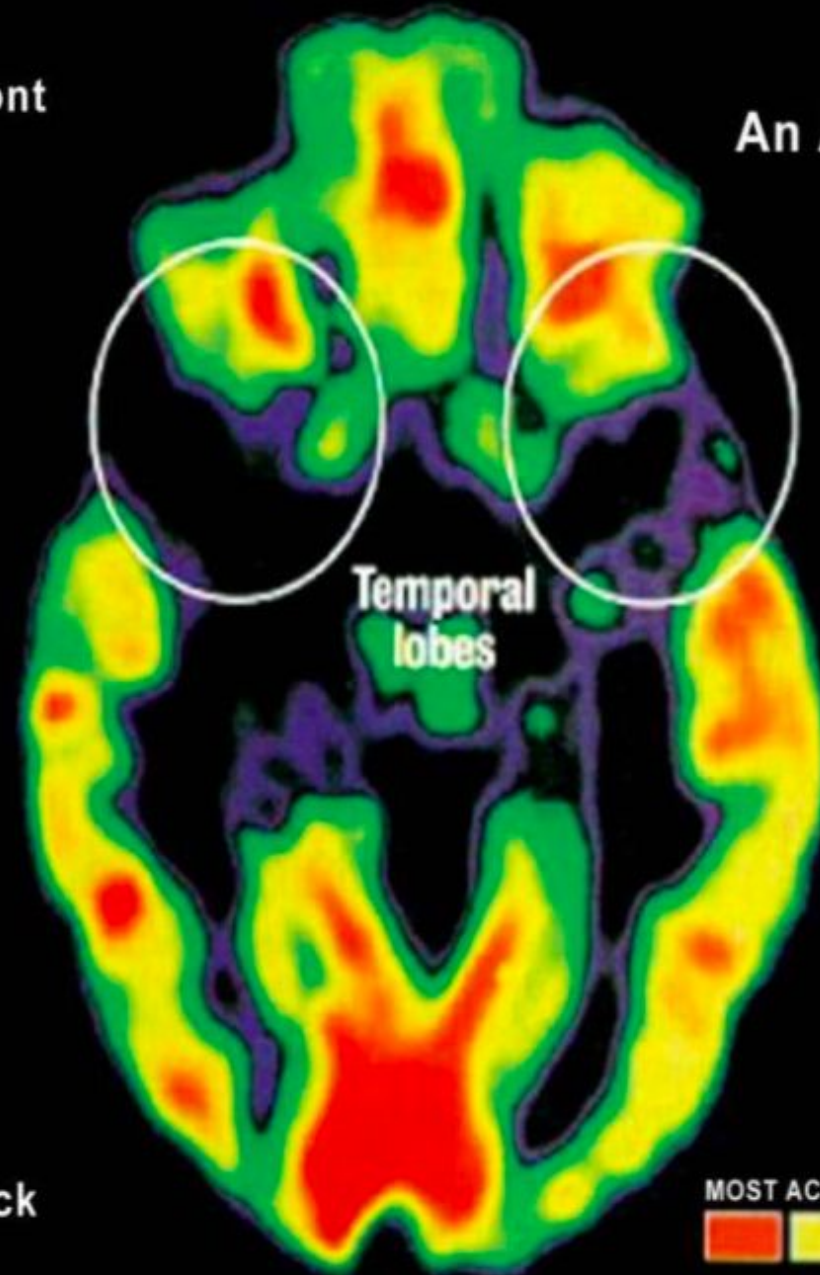


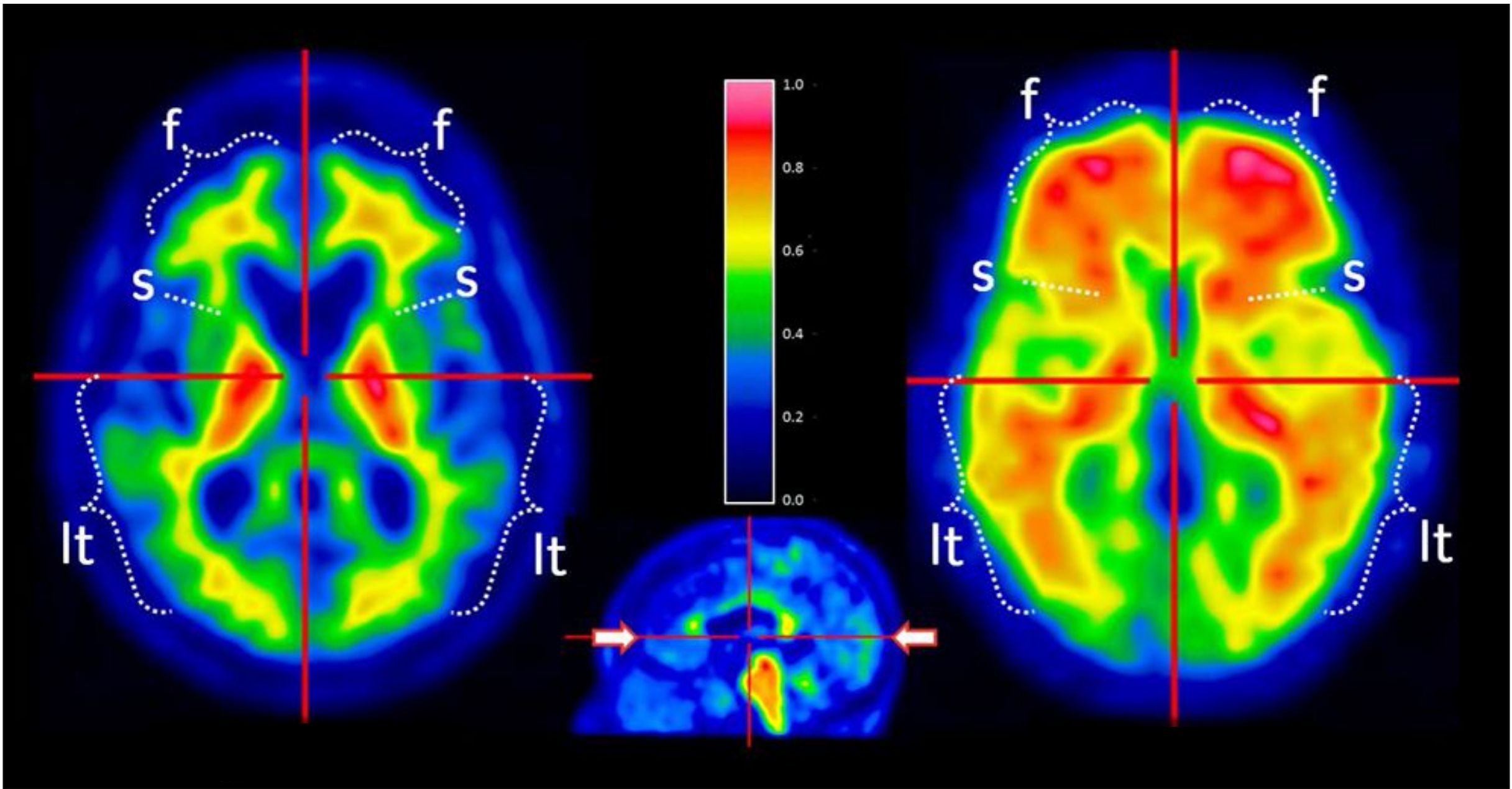
Front

Back

## An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.







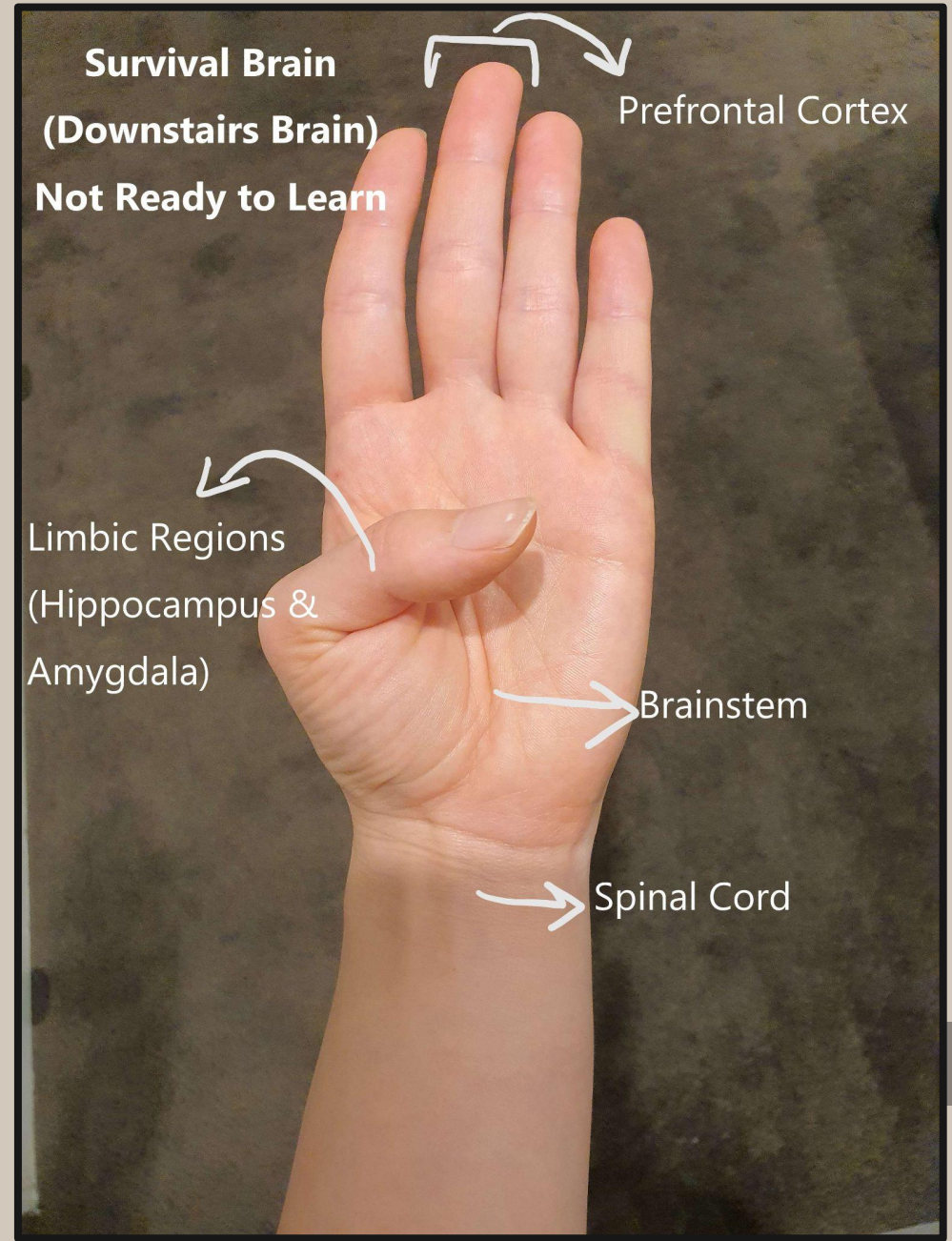
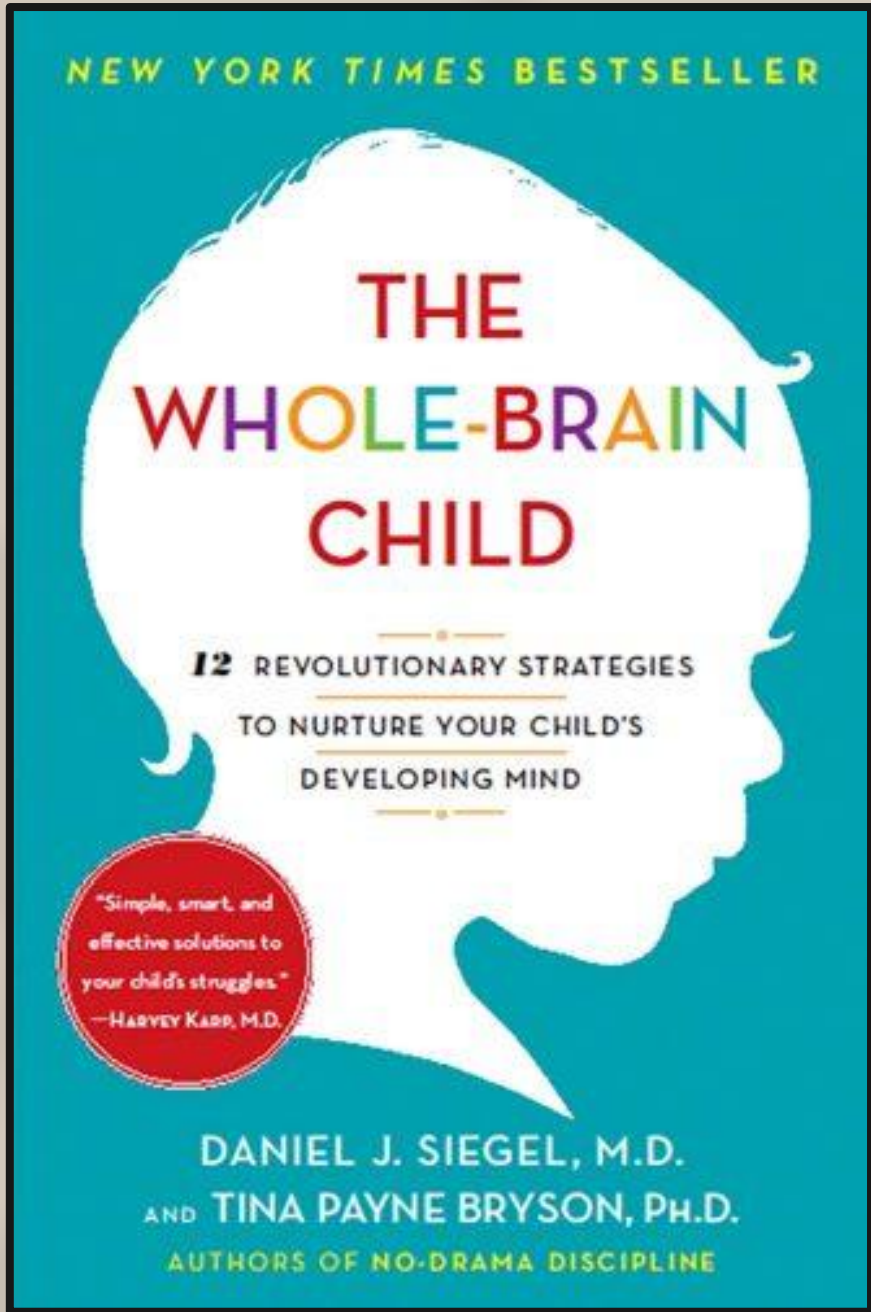


**Learning  
Brain**



**Survival  
Brain**

**VS**





Lowers tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out or defiance

Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships

Increases stress hormones which affects the body's ability to fight infection

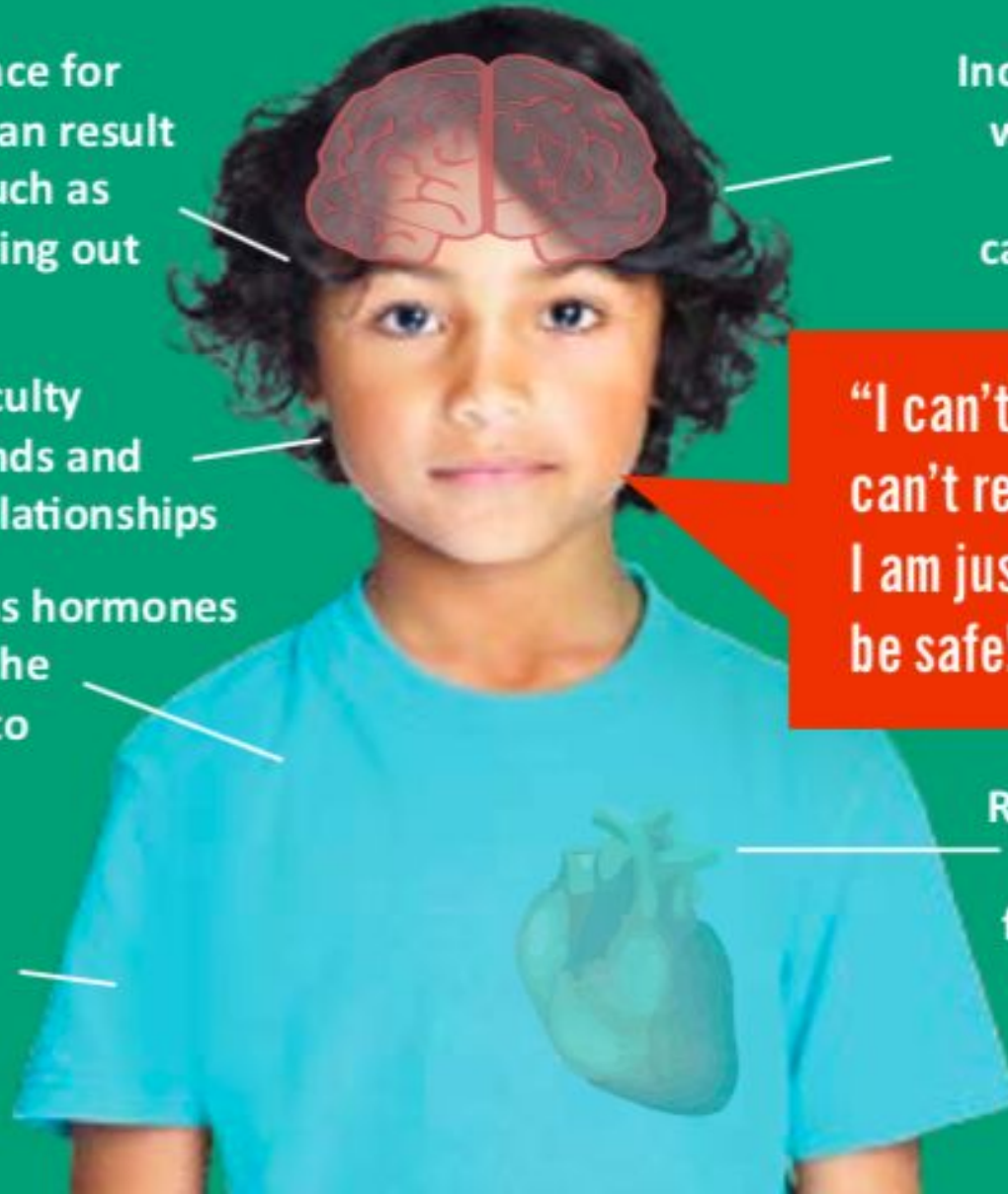
May cause lasting health problems

Increases problems with learning and memory, which can be permanent

“I can't hear you, I can't respond to you, I am just trying to be safe!”



Reduces ability to respond, learn, figure things out, which can result in problems in school



Fight	Flight	Freeze	Fawn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acting out</b></li> <li>• <b>Behaving aggressively</b></li> <li>• <b>Acting silly</b></li> <li>• <b>Exhibiting defiance</b></li> <li>• <b>Arguing</b></li> <li>• <b>Screaming</b></li> <li>• <b>Yelling</b></li> <li>• <b>Tantruming</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Withdrawing</b></li> <li>• <b>Fleeing the classroom</b></li> <li>• <b>Skipping class</b></li> <li>• <b>Daydreaming</b></li> <li>• <b>Seeming to sleep</b></li> <li>• <b>Avoiding others</b></li> <li>• <b>Hiding</b></li> <li>• <b>Wandering</b></li> <li>• <b>Disengaging</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exhibiting numbness</b></li> <li>• <b>Refusing to answer</b></li> <li>• <b>Refusing to get interact</b></li> <li>• <b>Giving a blank look</b></li> <li>• <b>Feeling unable to move</b></li> <li>• <b>Staring off into space</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People-pleasing with peers and adults</b></li> <li>• <b>Needing to be close to adult - hugging, holding hands, in your lap</b></li> <li>• <b>Apologizing for no reason and often</b></li> <li>• <b>Mediating to keep peace</b></li> </ul>



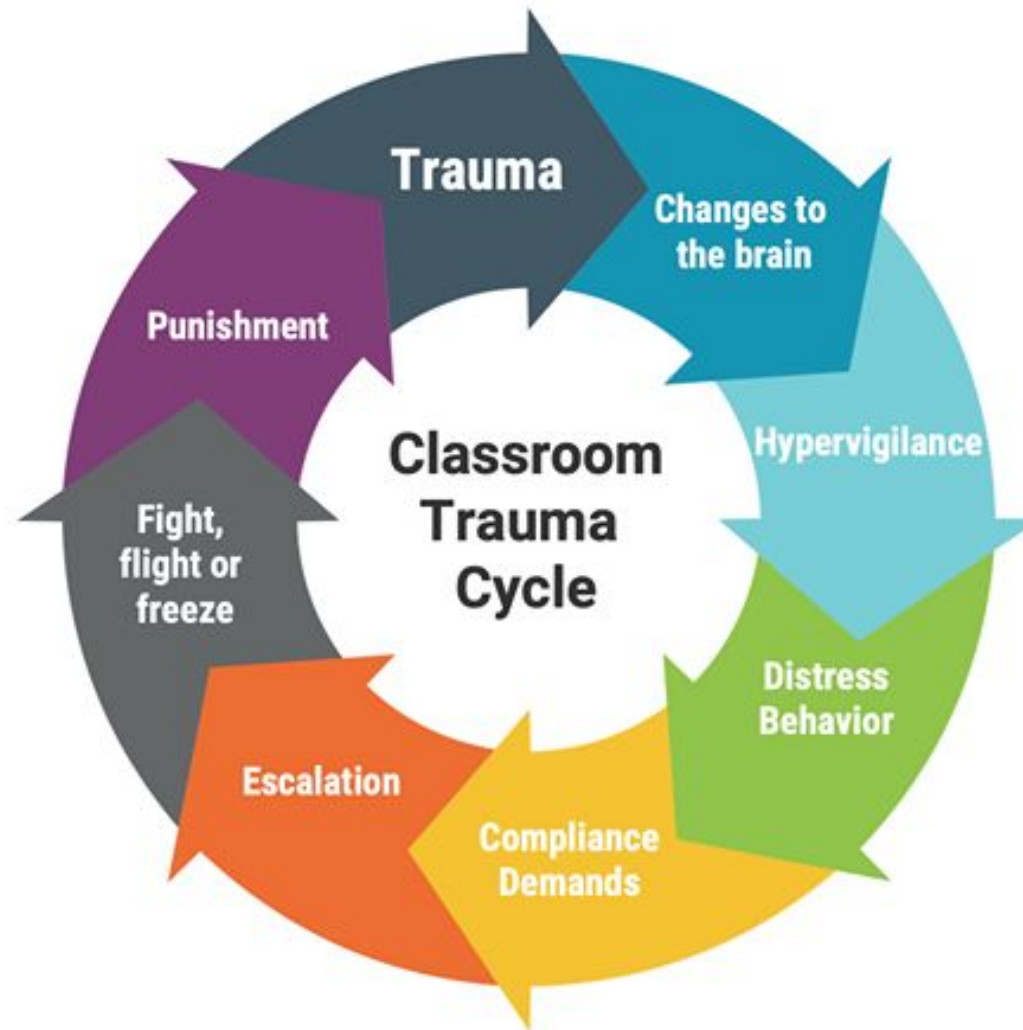
When a child exhibits their trauma response, they are living in their *survival brain* and their *learning brain* is offline.

What do we do to co-regulate with our students to get their learning brain back online?

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.

*-Dr. Haim Ginott*





**ALLIANCE  
AGAINST**

**SECLUSION  
RESTRAINT**

	Trauma-Inducing	Trauma-Indifferent	Trauma-Informed	Trauma-Invested
Definition	A setting that not only lacks safety but also is actively unsafe for students and/or adults	A setting that does not take childhood trauma into consideration in its policies and practices	A setting where stakeholders have acquired some knowledge about childhood trauma and are versed in related strategies	A setting where stakeholders have consented to act on their knowledge, truly working together to enhance safety across the board.

Identify in your own mind where you are on this continuum.



**Predictability**  
**Flexibility**  
**Connection**  
**Empowerment**

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graph TD; A["Predictability  
Flexibility  
Connection  
Empowerment"] --> B["Universal Design for Learning  
Tier 1"]; A --> C["Intervention  
in/out of the classroom  
Tier 2"];
```

Universal Design for  
Learning  
**Tier 1**

Intervention  
in/out of the classroom  
**Tier 2**

# Predictability

- Safety and danger are core concerns of a trauma-affected brain
- Many children are hypervigilant, scanning for real or perceived danger
- Anxiety increases when they are unsure of what is going to happen and when during their day

- Build sign-posts into the schedule, particularly during transitions or “special” days
- Anticipate emotional dysregulation
- Respond predictably to misbehavior – even keel
- Offer tools to support dysregulation – peace corners, sensory tools/diets, Zones Toolkits

# Flexibility

- Human trauma responses are different, not linear
- Students' days may be interrupted by secondary adversities - legal proceedings, separation
- Students may have difficulty regulating their emotions and their bodies

- Meet students where they are - hourly, daily, etc.
- Consider compliance vs. collaborative approaches
- Break down power and control struggles; emotional maturity
- Reduce number and severity of policies; approach case by case
- Allow for breaks, differentiation, and check-ins



# Connection

- Difficult for children with insecure attachment to connect – give it time
- Adversity and trauma disconnects and splinters families
- Connection with adults, peers, and academics
- Innate Human need to belong
- Social Emotional Learning plays an important role in secure attachment and connections

- Infuse academics with connection points to peers and other adults
- Explicitly teach and model social emotional skills and self-regulation
- Don't leave connection to chance – ensure each student has someone and keep track of their bonds
- Representation is vital – children's literature, bulletin boards, music, anchor charts

# Empowerment

- Children experience disempowerment through trauma - either by a perpetrator or circumstances
- Seek to help students regain their sense of agency - acting rather than being acted upon
- Turn over power to students as often as possible
- Model consent practices through democratic decision making.

- Utilize student-centered voice and choice when appropriate and possible
- Focus on natural consequences, especially in relationships
- Seek to dismantle systems that robs students of agency
- Use restorative practices as opposed to punitive practices
- Give students time and space to process
- Keep your expectations high and support them to meet the expectations - build agency and self-determination

# Unconditional Positive Regard

Carl Rogers - humanistic psychologist



Showing complete support and acceptance of a person no matter what that person does.

“I care about you. You have value. You don't have to do anything to prove it to me. Nothing is going to change my mind about these feelings.”



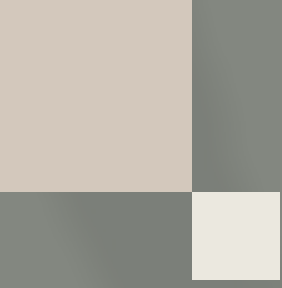
We should give the **Unconditional Positive Regard** to the student with a **Conditional Response** to the behavior.



Add the **Conditional Response**:  
“I care about you, but we need to work through what just happened because it didn't feel good to me.”







Please reach out with questions or comments or to  
help me learn more.

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