

TRAUMA AND THE PANDEMIC

Helping Youth Transition to the New Normal

“New Normal?”

Can we call constantly adapting to abnormal situations normal?



Meghan Hug
@meghanhug



March 1st 2020 vs March 1st 2021



Angela Mayfield
@pinkrocktopus

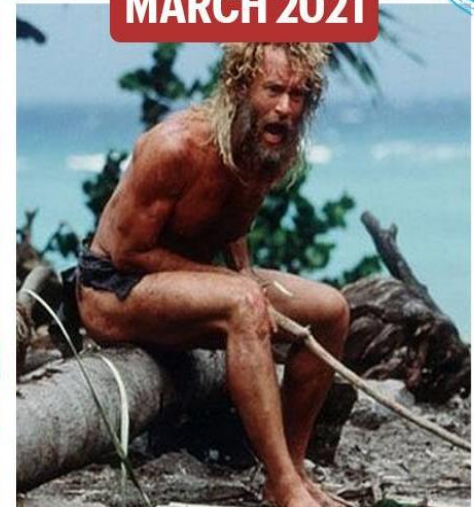
ME AND MY SOCIAL SKILLS



MARCH 2020



MARCH 2021



Many of the difficulties we may experience are normal responses to abnormal situations.

The stress of constantly adapting

Last year	This year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global pandemic• National political discord• Mobilization around racial trauma and injustice• The anxiety of not knowing what was coming or how we would manage• The grief of last year's losses: loss of life, rituals & traditions, economic security, opportunities, and loss of a way of life that may not return	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All those issues PLUS• A vaccine rollout fraught with difficulties and new COVID variants• School changes for kids: staying virtual, hybrid learning, returning to in-person• The need to once again adapt and shift as the world begins to re-open• "The acute state of anguish has given way to a chronic condition of languish." –Adam Brock

languishing

verb / 'laNG wiSHiNG /

1. A name for the blah you're feeling.
2. The void between depression and flourishing — the absence of well-being.
3. It can dull your motivation and focus. And it may be the dominant emotion of 2021.

Adam Grant 

Studies show Americans report higher stress now than last April.

Window of Stress Tolerance

Breaking point

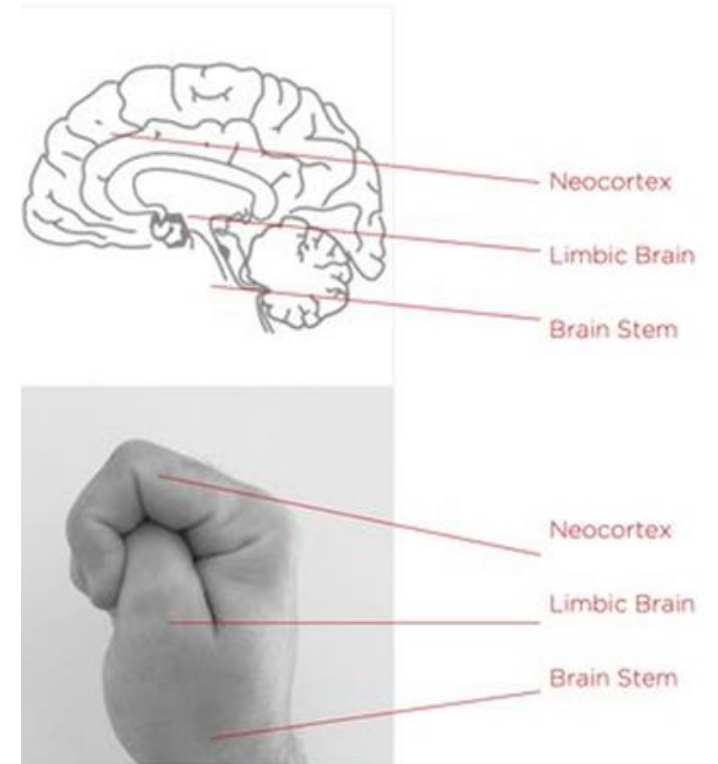


Baseline Stress



"We just weren't built to maintain this level of stress and hypervigilance and hyperarousal for this length of time." –Vaile Wright, PhD APA

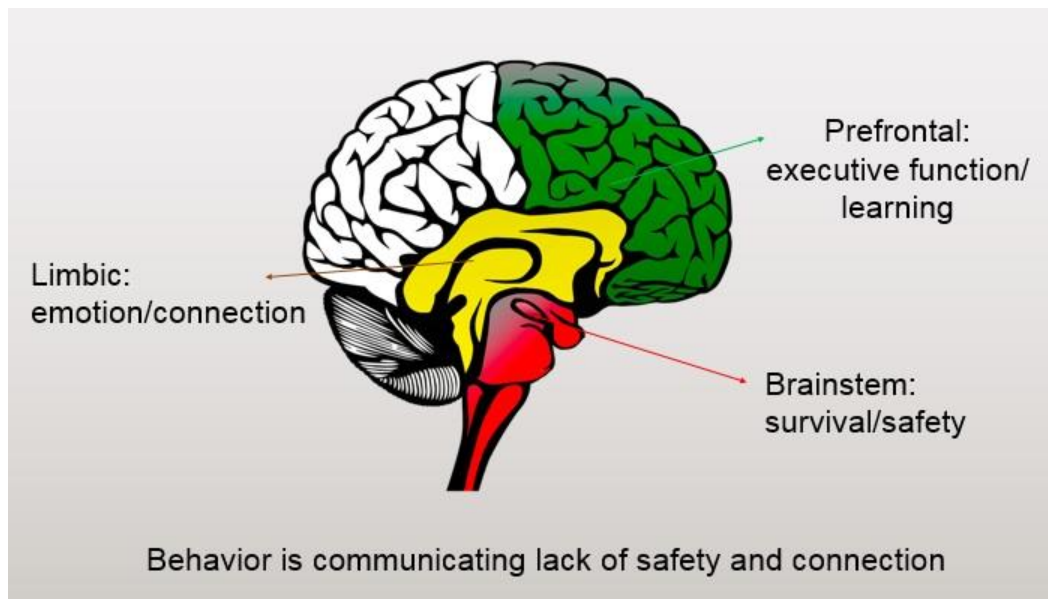
Neuroscience: helpful metaphors



Dan Siegel: the brain as a house, and hand model of the brain

Brain basics: All behavior is communication

States



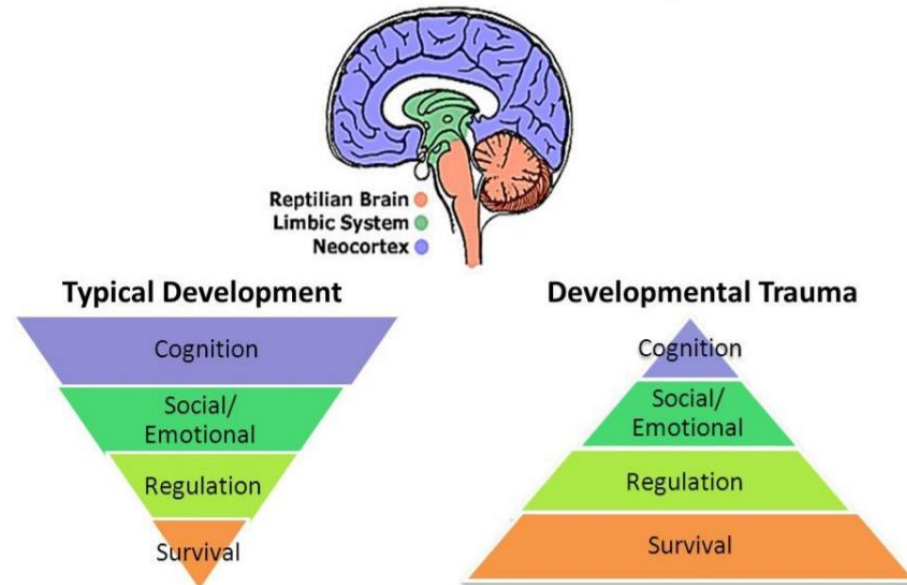
Needs



Brain state images from Community Resilience Initiative

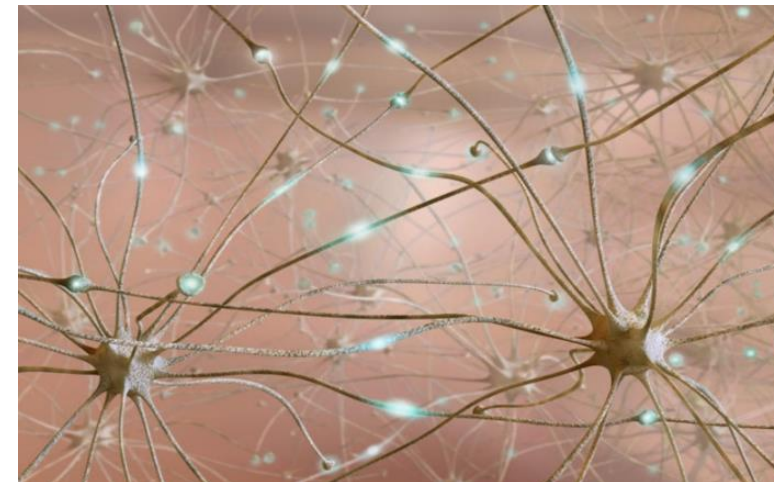
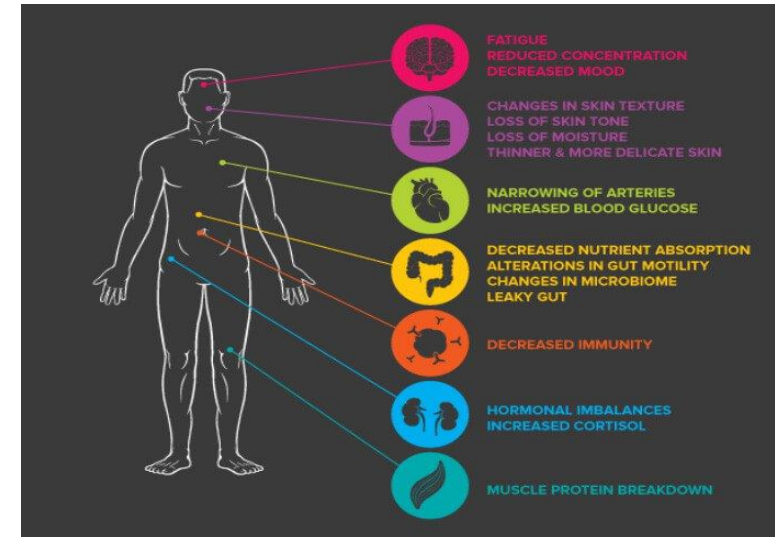
Exposure to adversity and stress

Trauma & Brain Development



Adapted from Holt & Jordan. Ohio Dept. of Education

Young brains who have been exposed to prolonged adversity may be more sensitized to stress, or have less capacity to manage that stress.



Is the pandemic a trauma?

- The 3 Es of Trauma
 - Event
 - Experience
 - Effects



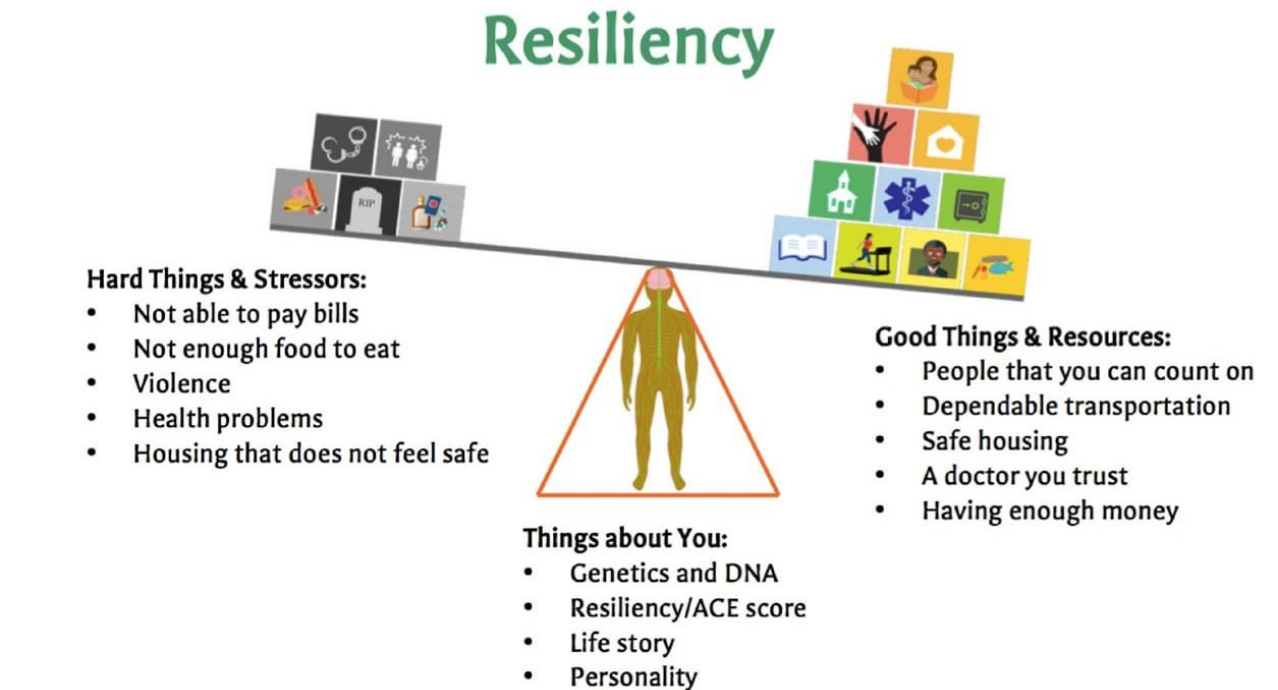
What might we see?

Symptoms such as	Increased rates of
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty concentrating• Disrupted sleep• Feeling irritated or agitated• Withdrawal from others• Apathy• Increased substance use• Increased somatic complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety• Depression• ADHD• Behavioral difficulties• Suicidal ideation



The good news: resilience tips the scales

- Resilience is not something we are born with; it's something we can grow and develop throughout the life span
- Resilience is, of course, individual skills, but it's also relationships, supports, and access to the resources we need to do well
- The quality and quantity of relationships youth have are protective factors that buffer against stress and predict higher resilience
- A focus on community resilience and co-care will improve outcomes



Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good even when there are stressors and hard things.

How should we respond?

- First, it starts with us.
- If you want to take care of children, you need to take care of the adults.
- We can not regulate others if we are not regulated.
- Self-care versus co-care?
- All resilience strategies discussed today work best for kids if the adults caring for them are engaging in them as well.



The science of resilience

- C.A.R.E.E.R. takes the science of resilience and translates it into ready to use strategies and structures



COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Holding space: six stations

- Celebration Station
- Affirmation Station
- Regulation Station
- Expectation Station
- Education Station
- Restoration Station



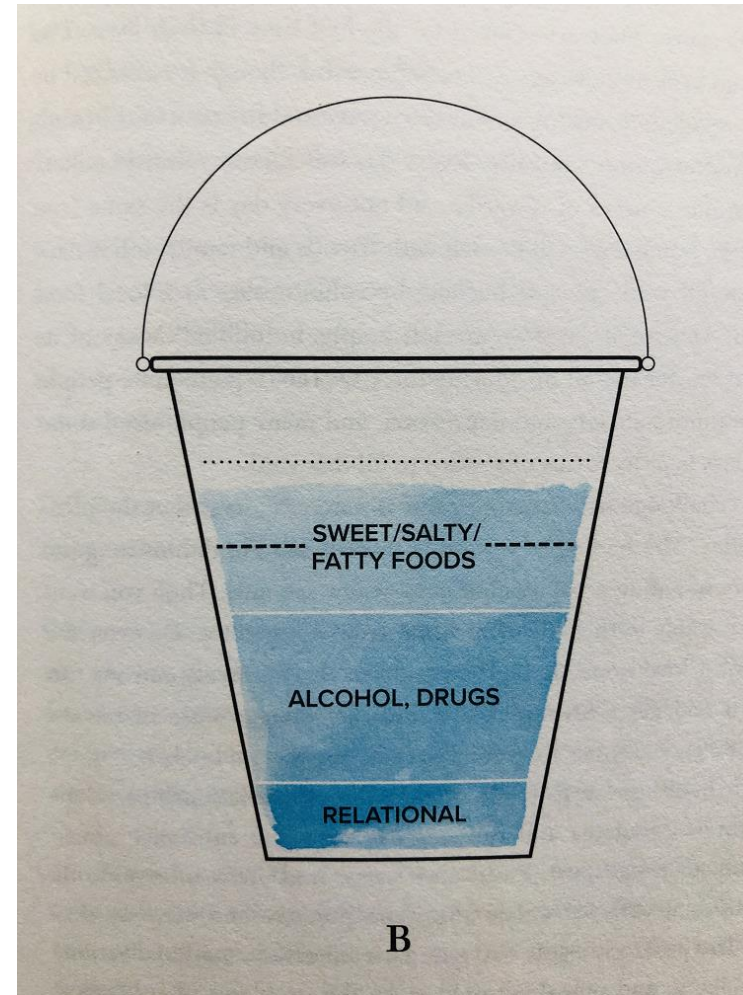
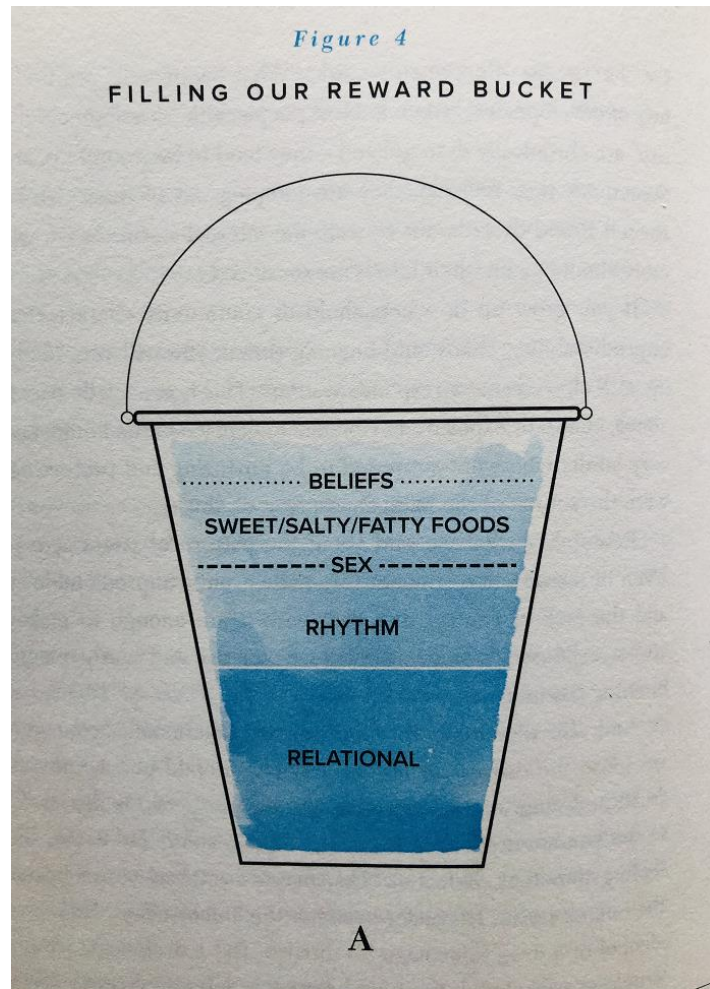
Celebration Station

Science says...

- Family celebrations have been identified as powerful organizers of family life that provide stability during times of stress and transition.
- Research indicates that when we celebrate the small things in daily life with intentionality and creativity, life with others is more meaningful.

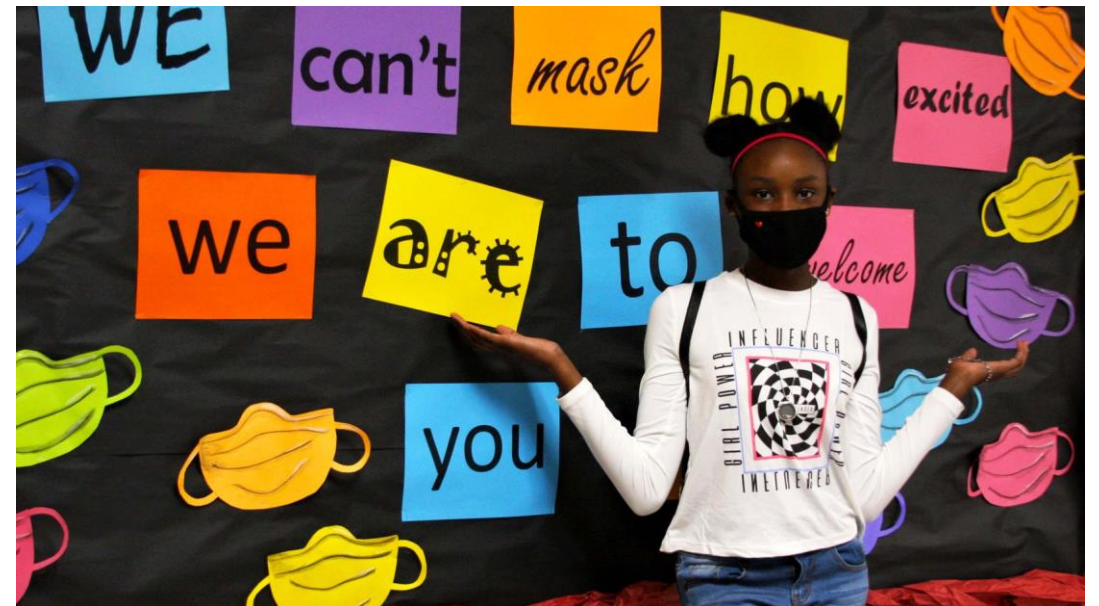


Bruce Perry's reward buckets in "What Happened to You?"



Celebration Stations

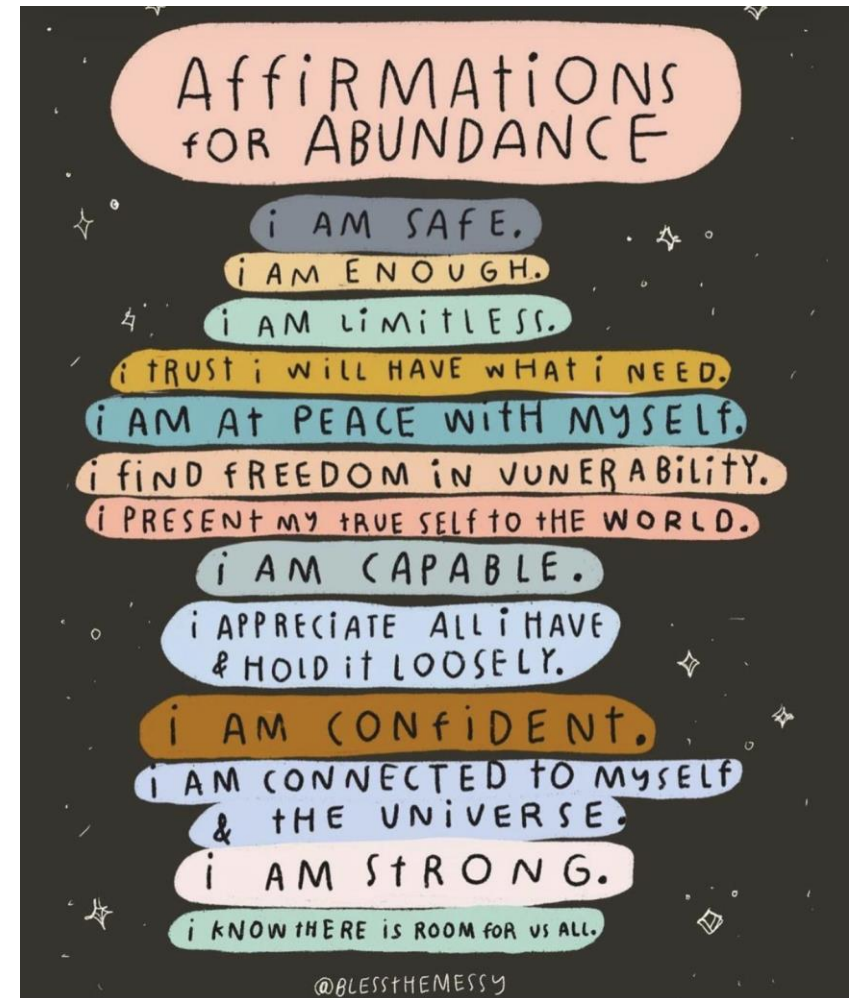
- How do we celebrate small, daily successes?
- How do we celebrate in ways that create family identity and cohesion?
- How do we help each individual feel love and belonging?
- What are our rituals, new and old, that foster a sense of safety and connection?



Affirmation Station

Science says...

- The support of a caring, affirming relationship is one of the strongest protective factors to help individuals rise above their circumstances.
- How do we catch one another doing things well or acknowledge when we are doing hard things?
- How do we reinforce the idea that mistakes are opportunities for learning?



Take what you need!

Regulation Station

Science says...

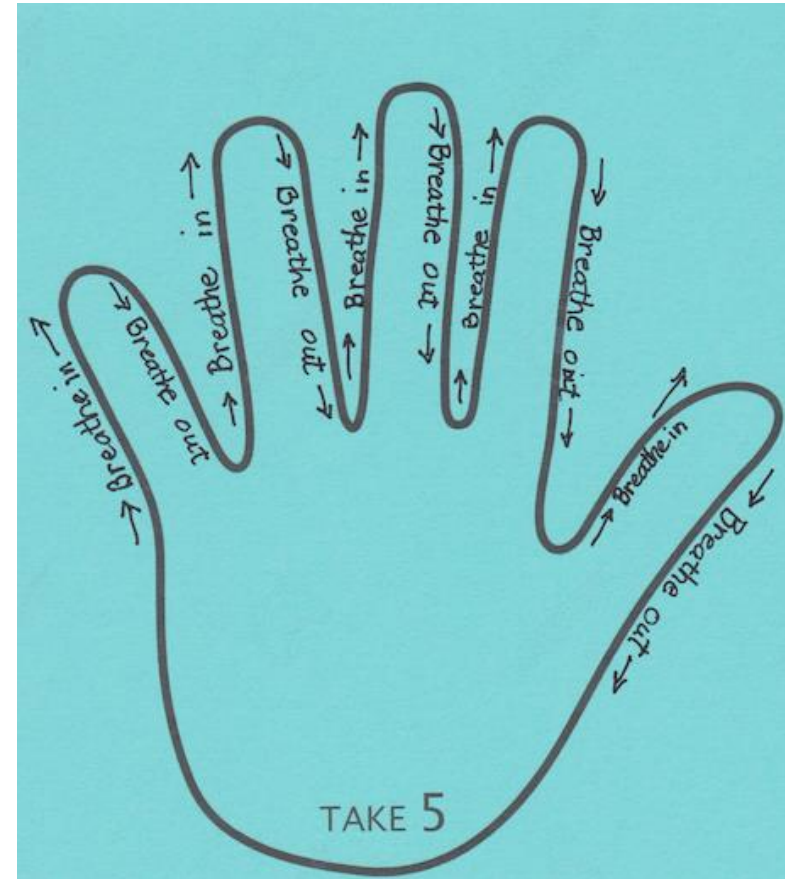
- It is important to develop our capacity to be calm, to be aware, and to be present, even in stressful situations.
- Regulating the autonomic nervous system is the key to calming stress and can strengthen our immune system.



- Physical Regulation
- Co-Regulation
- Resonance Regulation
- Mindfulness Regulation
- Sensory Suitcase
- Regulation Buddy
- Regulation Plan

Regulation Station

- How can you start the day with regulation?
- Take frequent breaks for regulation?
- Remind ourselves of our regulation strategies and remind each other?
- How can we end our days with regulation?



Expectation Station

Science says...

- Engaged “family” members are less likely to violate expectations when they know the expectations.
- Every family should communicate expectations that address how people treat each other and how they operate in all areas of the family.

How do we provide regular, predictable structure and routine during and after COVID?



- Expectations
- Monitoring
- Consequences (+ & -)

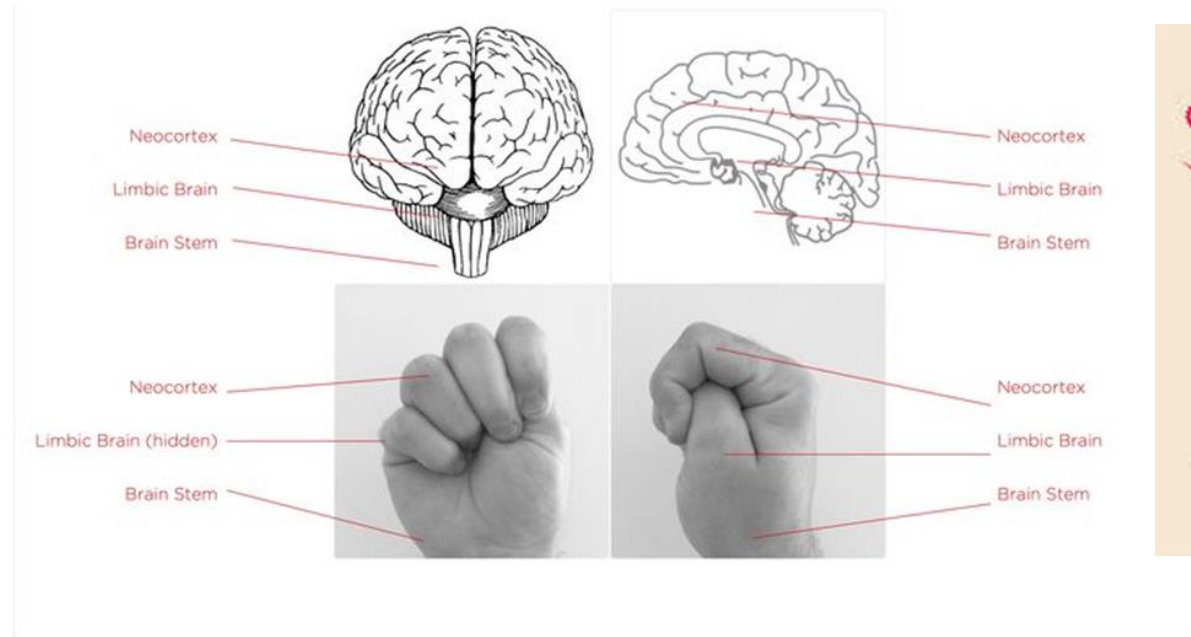
Expectation Station

- Visual Expectation
- Show and Tell
- Do overs (Remind and Rewind)
- Grace Period



Education Station

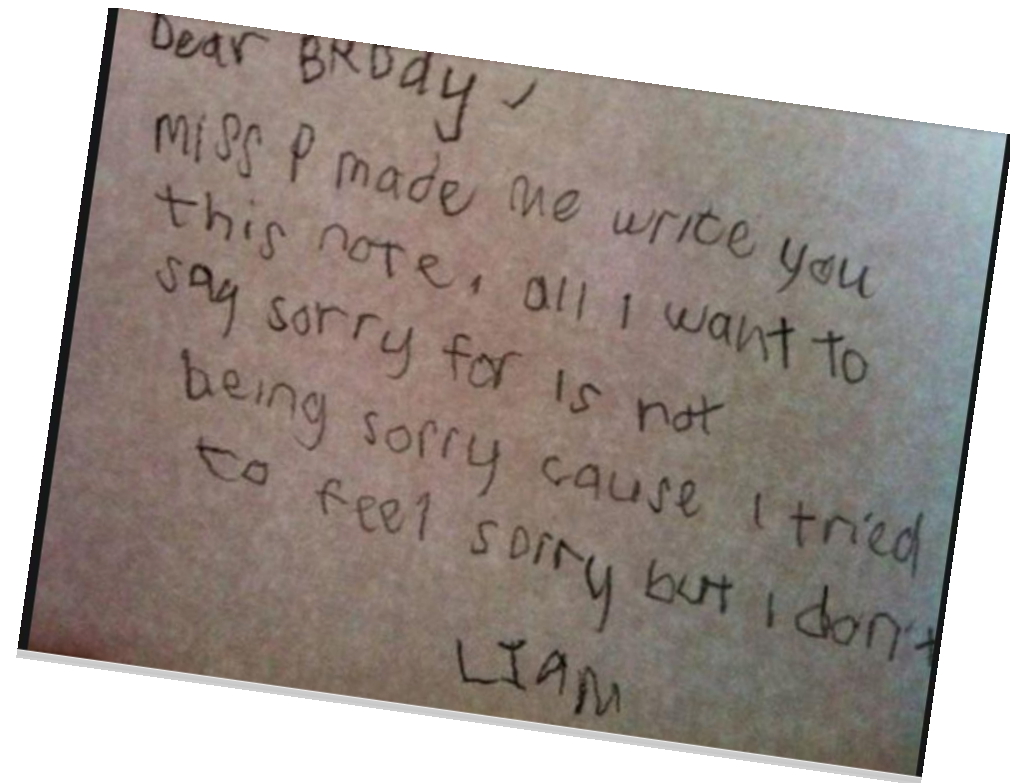
- How do we normalize the many feelings we may be experiencing during times of transition?
- How do we teach others about their own brains to empower them?
- How do we teach others about the different responses our bodies have to stress, and ways to manage that stress?



Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain

Restoration Station

- How do we recognize, acknowledge, and respond to conflict in relationships?
- How do we teach the skills of restoration before conflicts occur?
- How do we model the skills of restoration?
- How do we support kids to repair ruptures in relationships?



Reminders

- We all need safety and connection in order to learn.
- A well-bonded 'family' can handle challenges, solve problems, and overcome adversity.



Infograph by Inspire(d) Aryn Henning Nichols