

On the Self-Regulation Journey

“Teach Your Children Well” Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young



***Where Neuroscience and Education Meet;
and
Where What We Know Impacts What We Do***

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Let's Start With This Sacred Trust: “Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day”

- Never doubt the impact of high quality, nurturing school environments (Social, Emotional, Physical & Intellectual)
- Every professional must pay attention to current brain research to the learning and teaching dynamic. Anything less is malpractice
- Exploring the nexus between education and neurophysiology profoundly changes children's life chances, particularly those with the greatest needs



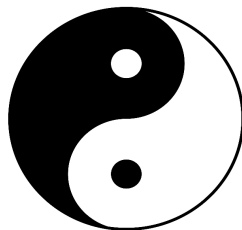
*Understanding and applying an **integrated approach to Self-Regulation** is a critical factor in creating the high quality environment our kids need and deserve*

Why Self-Regulation?

As educators, we know that the “complexity trajectory” is increasing in our schools, communities, & society in general.

@ CSRI, we take a broad and inclusive approach to self-regulation & we work with schools & systems to build capacity to:

- Effectively respond to stressors, and
- Rise to life’s potential by understanding and experiencing the various elements of self-regulation that promote our ability to thrive

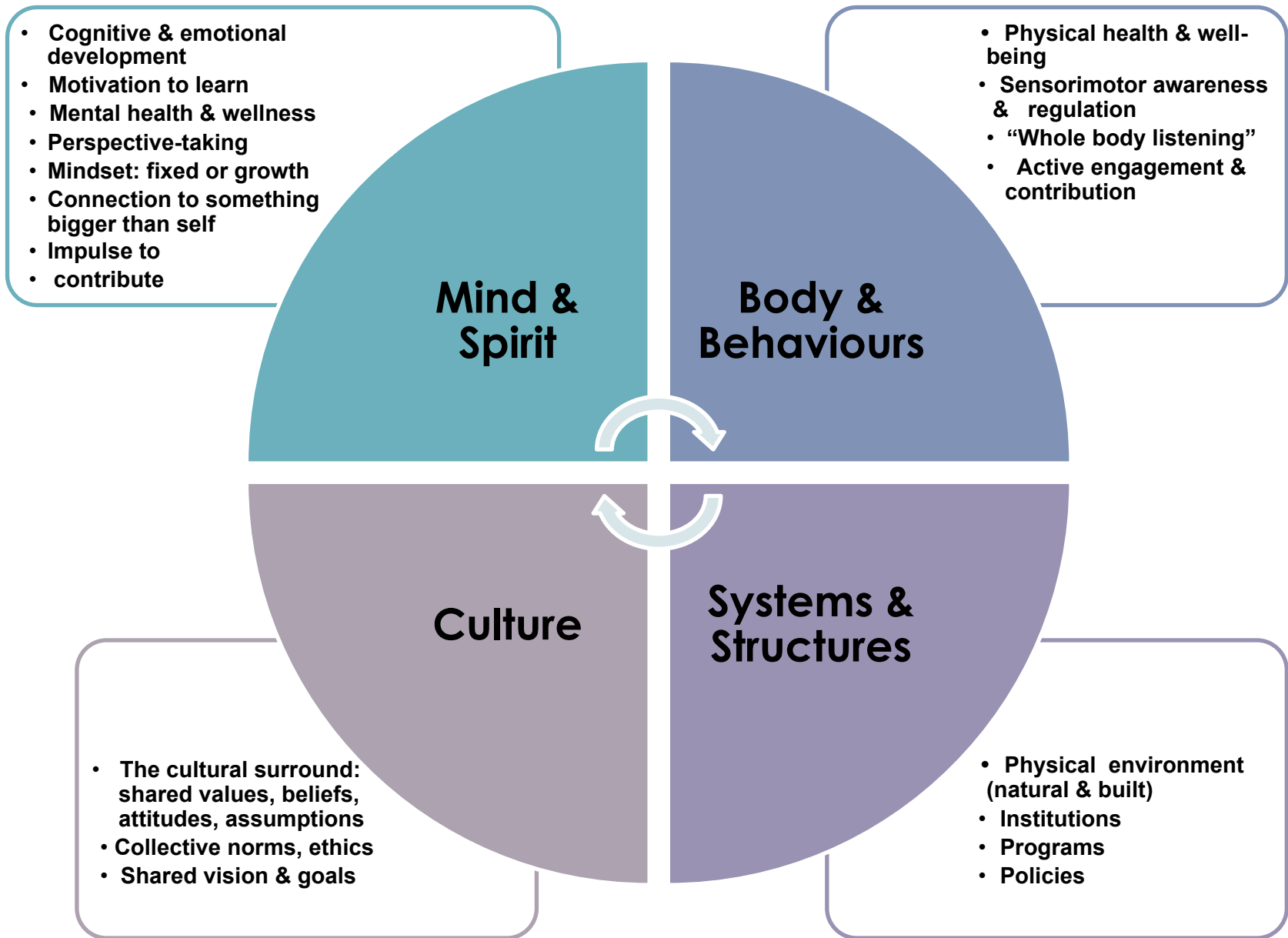


Why we care



We believe all kids can learn and thrive in their schools and communities. We also believe that **self-regulation** is an essential capacity for learning and healthy human development.

Working together to foster self-regulation in students and the adults that support them, we can change lives and build healthier, more sustainable communities.



4 Essential Dimensions of Self-Regulation: An Integrative Perspective

What Skills Are We
Growing & How Do We
Align Efforts Among
Schools, Community
Agencies and Families ?



Today's Session

Part 1

- A “Golden Age” for Self-Regulation: Where Learning is Informed by Brain Research & We Begin to Apply *What We Know to Influence What We Do*

Part 2

- The ‘Self’ in Self-Regulation

Part 3

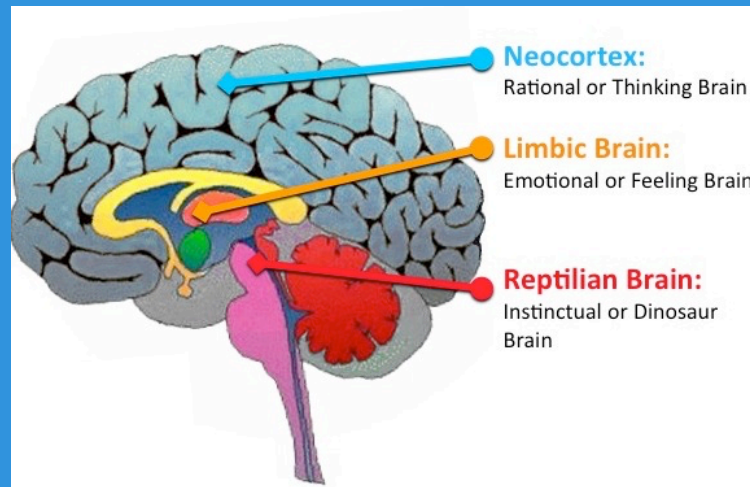
- Self-Regulation in the Complex 21st Century Classroom

Part 4

- Self-Regulation, Mental Wellness, Safe & Caring Schools and Inter-agency Connections

Part 1

What Makes Us Who We Are CSRI Self-Reg 101



- Life – from before birth until the moment of death – is a rhythm of energy spent and energy restored
- Self-regulation means that there is a functional energy flow and an effective return to calm focus
- Dysregulation happens when your ancient “survival brain” is on high alert and your “learning” brain – the most recent part of human evolution – is short-circuited

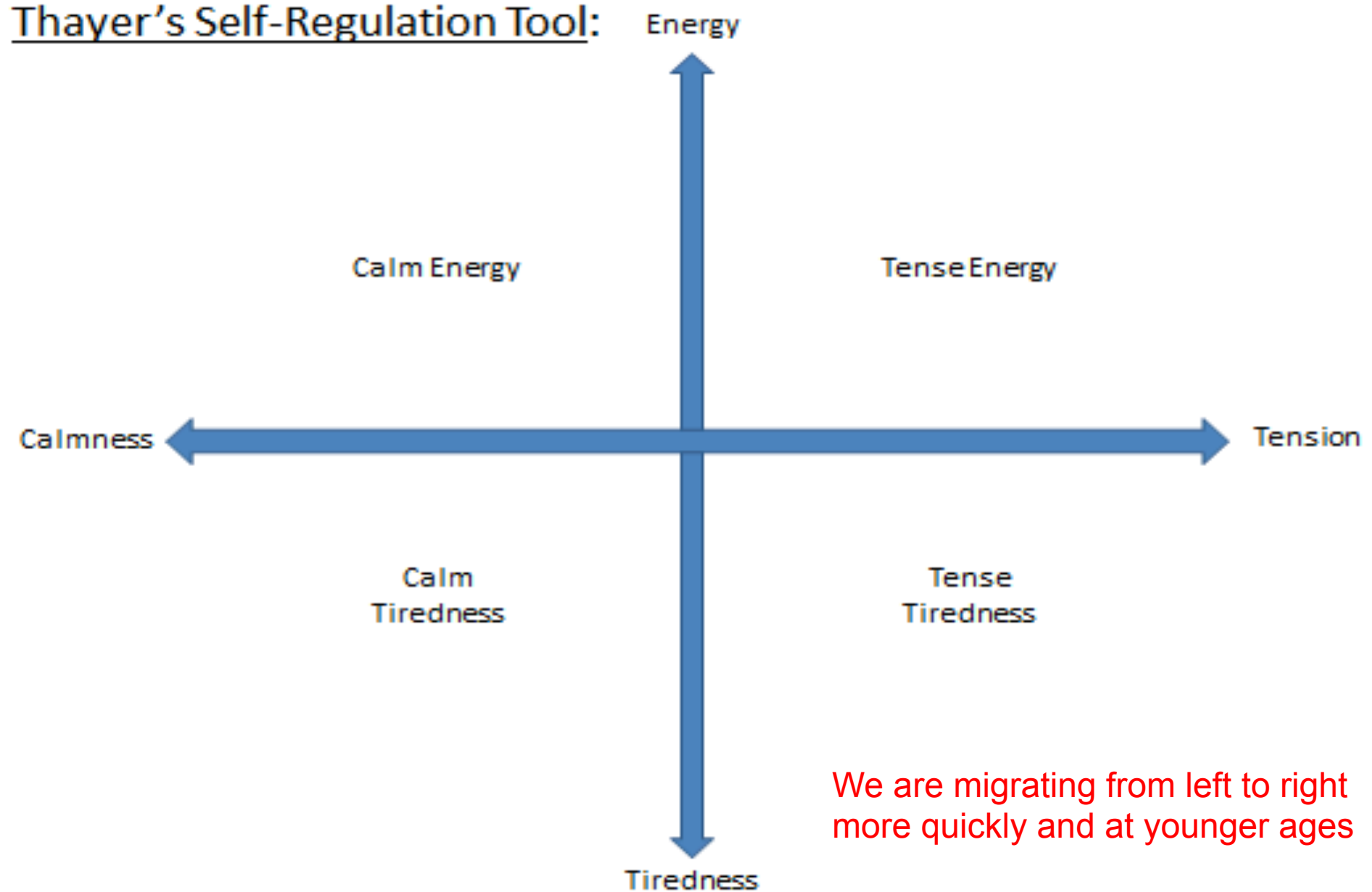
It is NOT about:

- Willpower or strength of character; “Good kid/bad kid”;
- Reward & punishment; “Just get over it” or “Don’t be silly”

So...you can't learn and you can't replenish your energy reserves if you are filled with anxiety or fear. All of your energy is being spent on survival.



Thayer's Self-Regulation Tool:



We are migrating from left to right more quickly and at younger ages

Source: Robert E. Thayer, *The Origin of Everyday Moods*, 1996

Stress-Response Systems

Three core systems for responding to stress:

1. Social Engagement
2. Fight-or-Flight
3. Freeze



****We often mistake “Freeze” for compliance and understanding*

Understanding Five Domain Model (Shanker)

Flooded



Hyper-Alert



Calm Focused Alert



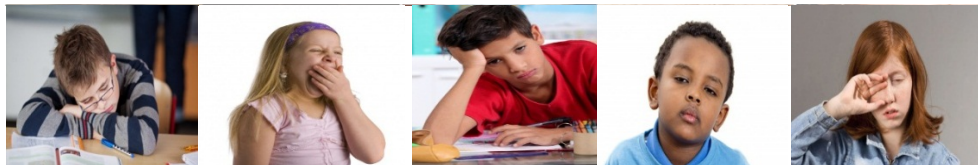
Hypo-Alert



Drowsy



Asleep



Biological

Emotional

Cognitive

Social

Prosocial

We have all been in each of these states many times. The essential questions are:

Why?

Why Now?

How Long?

How Frequent?

Creating *emotion detectives* helps change “**Why is this always happening to me?**” from lament to enquiry. Kids are ready for this step very early.

Based on the work of Dr. Stuart Shanker

“This is the me you can see” (and may judge)

- actions & behaviours
- skills & abilities
- physical health & well-being
- fitness
- brain imagery (PET)
- nervous system scans (CT, EEG, MRI, etc.)
- interaction with others

“This is the me you can't see” (but can help to shape)

- thoughts
- feelings
- attitudes & assumptions
- values & beliefs
- intentions
- moral sense
- motivation
- purpose
- inner health and well-being
- resolve & commitment
- caring connection to others

A Familiar/Essential Question: Who's the Boss of Me?



The “Boss of Me” Requires Development of a Capacity to Monitor and Modify

“The mind’s regulation creates new patterns of energy and information flow, which we then continue to monitor and modify. This process is the essence of our subjective experience of life.”

Daniel J. Siegel (2010) Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation

Your Turn: Reflections/Curiosities

Here's What...So What...



...Now What?

How do current system norms create safe spaces for kids to develop to their capacity? ...or are we still stuck in a “Louder and Harder” way to deal with moments of dysregulation?

Part 2

The 'SELF' in Self-Regulation

Self- Regulation

IS	IS NOT
A framework for understanding children's needs	A program
Differentiated	One – size fits all
Building self-awareness	Self-control
Universal	Only for learners with Special Needs designations
Part of the equation	The panacea

Self-Regulation Requires:

1. Matching energy level to the demands of a task or situation.
2. Monitoring and managing emotions.
3. Focusing attention and ignoring distractions.
4. Understanding and engaging in social interactions.
5. Connecting with and caring about others. *Baumeister & Vohs, 1994*

Co-Regulation is:

a form of coordinated action between participants that involves a continuous mutual adjustment of actions and intentions. *Fogel & Garvey, 2007*

Our capacity to contribute to a co-regulating environment depends largely on our own state of self-regulation

As an Educator, Your Own 'SELF' in Self-Regulation is an Essential Difference Maker in Supporting Kids' Success

1. How am I reacting to this situation and why?
2. How is my reaction impacting the environment?
3. How is the environment influencing the situation?
4. What is my adult perspective? (How do I take my sail out of that wind?)
5. What is the child's need?
6. How can we strengthen our relationship?

Never underestimate the learning that occurs when our students or our own children watch us react to dysregulating situations.

Your Turn: Reflections/Curiosities

Here's What...So What...



...Now What?

How do we create space in a crowded curriculum to build the the integrative approaches that will help children learn and thrive?

Part 3

Self-Regulation in the Complex 21st Century Classroom

We assume...

Children read our feelings

Children read the feelings of others

Children regulate intuitively

Adults in the child's world are regulated

We support...

Children in understanding our emotional states

Children in inferring the emotional state of others

Children to connect the dots between emotions and actions

Adults in providing time for reflection, education and support

Understanding Children's Development

Developmentally children need structure and need direct instruction to co-regulate and self-regulate.

The **adults** in the child's world create these structures and invest time in shaping environments where children can thrive.

Investing **time** in building quality learning environments is essential. It allows for **deeper** more complex cognitive processes to take root.

All of the planning time (upstream effort) spent developing a self-regulating environment pays off many times over in the short and long term.

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words: Self-Regulation & Dysregulation

The professor and the furniture mover



Which “self” enabled
learning & maximized
individual and team
capacity?

(and who had more NCAA
Championships??)



*Think about kids in any high stress/anxiety situations.
How often do they shut down as a result of being overwhelmed?*

School Strategies to Support Children's Return to Calm

Flooded



- Decrease power/authority relationships

Hyper-Alert



- Give children choice
- Increase activity time

Calm Focused Alert



- Change/De-clutter the classroom design

Hypo-Alert



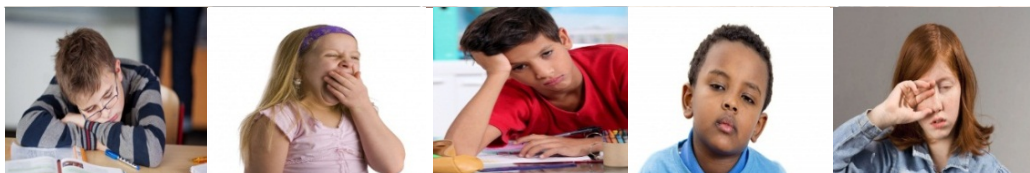
- Recognize "dysregulating" variables

Drowsy



- Introduce classroom tools
- **Teach** self-regulation

Asleep



- Up-regulate/down-regulate as needed

Biological

Emotional

Cognitive

Social

Prosocial

21st Century Barriers to Healthy Development

- less natural food/more fast food packed with sugars/salts/fats
- Disconnection from nature because of crowded urban living, environmental pollution and “stranger danger”
- Lack of sleep – time and quality
- Screen time (the video screen is NOT a good teacher or child care provider)
- Exposure to violence and other anti-social behaviour
- Family stressors: parents working two jobs, intergenerational poverty, family violence, lack of community supports and connections

Your Turn: Reflections/Curiosities

Here's What...So What...



...Now What?

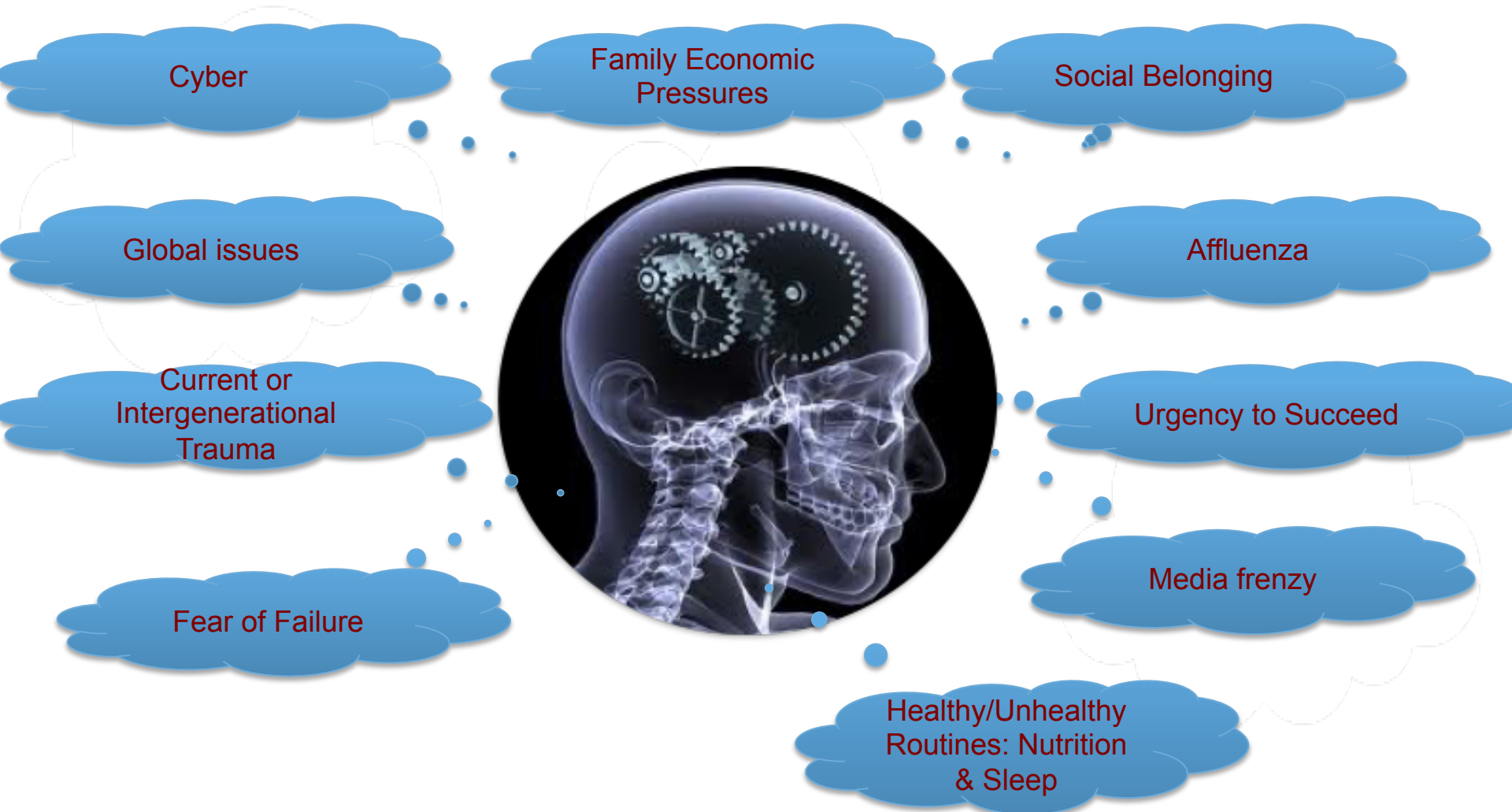
Think about the kids in your class

- Where are they distributed across this profile grid?
- How can we become “emotion detectives” to see what causes their How and When?
- How can we influence those factors?

Part 4

Self-Regulation,
Mental Wellness,
Safe & Caring Schools & Inter-
agency Connections

Our capacity to thrive is influenced by how effectively we deal with stressors



“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.” William James, the father of American psychology.

Self-Regulation and Trauma

Working on self-regulation is especially important for children who have been traumatized, are victims of intergenerational trauma, or are being raised by caregivers who have been traumatized. These youngsters:

- Quickly shift from Learning Brain to Survival Brain
- Are in a chronic state of fight-or-flight, freeze, or even dissociation
- Have no energy left because fight-or-flight is extremely energy draining, reducing the person's capacity to pay attention, inhibit impulses, regulate mood, co-regulate

How Exposure to Early Adversity Impacts Development and What We Can Do About It

- The ACE Study – Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
 - Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse
 - Physical or Emotional Neglect
 - Incarceration
 - Parental Separation or Divorce
 - Domestic Violence

Early adversity dramatically impacts health across the lifetime. We now know what it takes to interrupt that progression. The single most important thing we need today is the courage to directly address this

Adverse Childhood Experiences – a Primer



**MIND
(Regulation)**

Mind: insight, awareness,
intention, focused attention

**Energy &
Information
Flow**

Brain: command
centre for an
extended nervous
system
throughout the
body

Relationship:
connectedness,
attachment,
supportive environment

**BRAIN
(Mechanism)**

Which “me” is the boss?

**RELATIONSHIPS
(Sharing)**

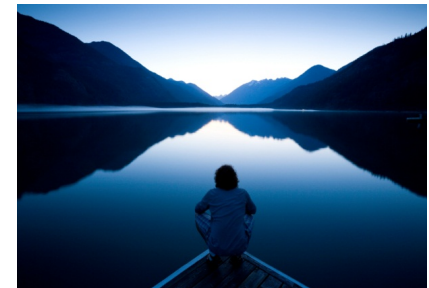
Building Capacity

Six critical elements of self-regulation

- ☐ When feeling calmly focused and alert, have the ability to know that state
- ☐ When one is stressed, the ability to recognize what is causing that stress
- ☐ The ability to recognize stressors both within and outside the classroom
- ☐ The desire to deal with those stressors
- ☐ The ability to develop strategies for dealing with those stressors
- ☐ The ability to recover efficiently and effectively from dealing with those stressors

Trauma-impacted communities have few resources/tools in their toolbox to access these elements without carefully constructed and consistent support and guidance over time.

Creating an environment where students and staff become “emotion detectives” helps to build capacity and hope.



Impact on Learning: A Teacher's Voice

..."I am starting to look at the reasons behind problem behaviors, rather than just giving consequences for students' poor choices. It is less about what I need them to do and more about what they need from me"...

..."I see more clearly what my students bring to the classroom with them (both gifts and challenges) and have an understanding of how these issues impact their learning time with me. I have also had to take a hard look at myself and my teaching. The piles of paper, the stacks of books here and there, the chaos is adding to the visual clutter. The disorganization of the "stuff" is unsettling for some of my kids"...



Your Turn: Reflections/Curiosities

Here's What...So What...



...Now What?

Agencies working with vulnerable children must engage with the child/the “client” through a common framework of understandings about human behaviour and what makes us who we are.

That maximizes our chance to make a positive difference & decreases the likelihood kids will be overwhelmed by multiple & confusing inputs.

SO...

It's time to work smarter together rather than harder alone.

Together, we build individual and system capacity
so that *What We Know Changes What We Do*



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Thank you

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For more information, please visit

www.self-regulation.ca

and on Twitter

CSRI_SelfReg