

The Hidden Curriculum

The role of the **Resource Teacher** in strengthening adult posture and co-regulation to help students feel safe, regulated, engaged, and ready to learn.



Presented by Catherine Korah, CEBM



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Small Changes. Big Possibilities.

How Resource Teachers Help Create the Conditions for Safer, More Regulated and More Successful Learners



PEOPLE
Build relationships.



PRACTICE
Strengthen systems.



POSSIBILITIES
Support every learner.

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We often begin at the end of the sequence



We want students to *learn*, so we try to increase their *engagement*.

But when engagement is low, the question may not simply be, "*How do I get this student to participate?*"





We need to move upstream:

- 1 Is the student sufficiently **regulated** to engage?
- 2 Do they experience enough **safety** to regulate?
- 3 And what is **my posture** contributing to that experience of safety?

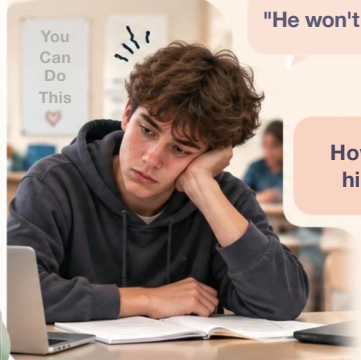


When we understand what comes before engagement and learning, we can respond with more compassion, effectiveness, and impact.

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A Different Lens Makes a Difference

✗ Instead of...



"He won't do the work."

↓

How do I make him comply?

✓ The framework encourages...

"He isn't engaging." →

And then the teacher considers the **first variable** they can influence immediately:

↓

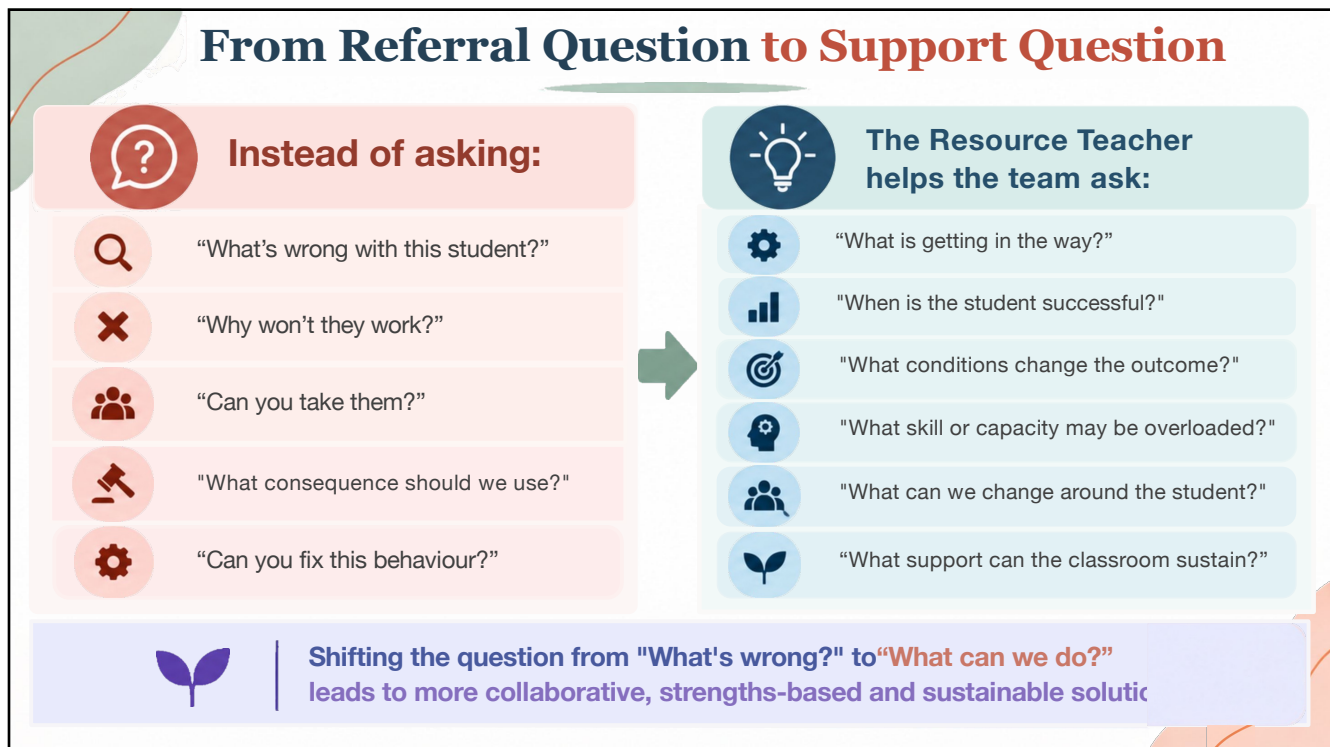
"What does this student need from me right now?"

- Is the task overwhelming?
- Is he frustrated?
- Is he worried about failing?
- Does he need clarification?
- Does he need connection?
- Does he need scaffolding?
- Does he need movement?
- Does he need reassurance?
- Or simply a little more time?

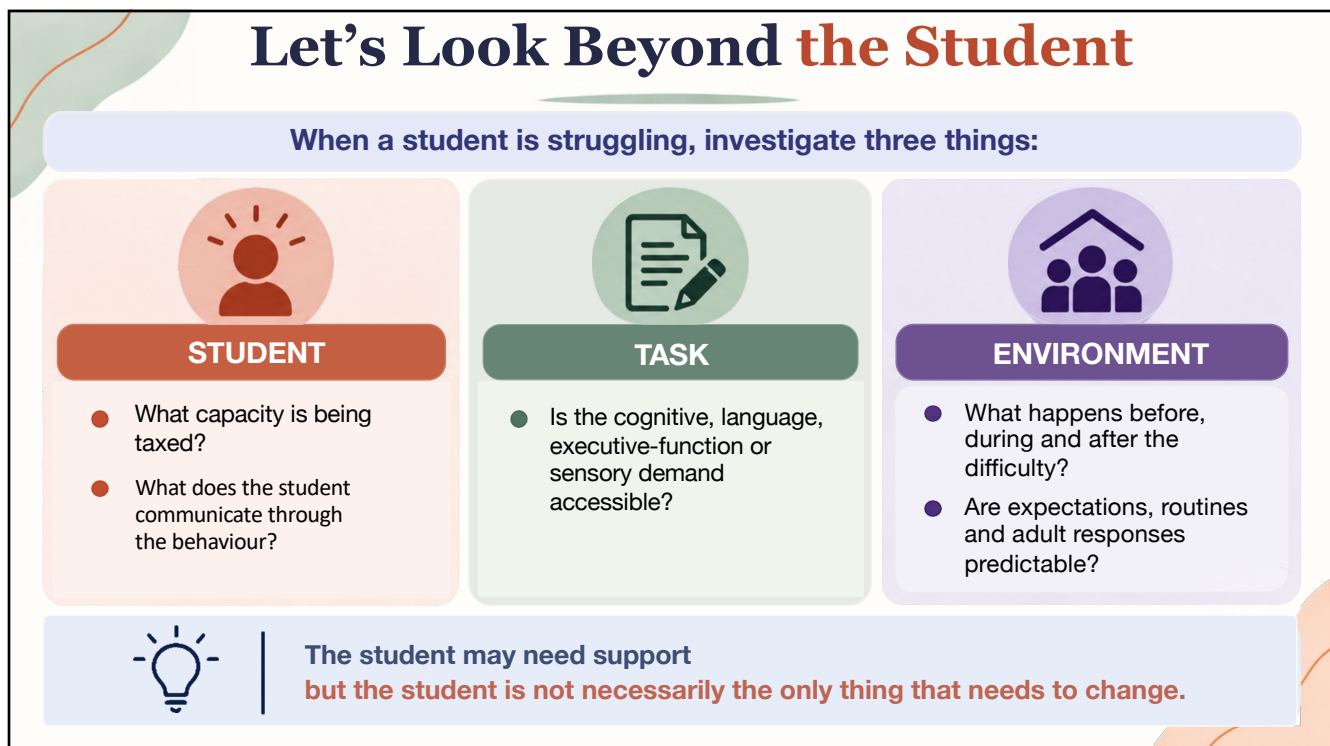


When we shift from compliance to curiosity, we create the conditions for connection, regulation, and learning.

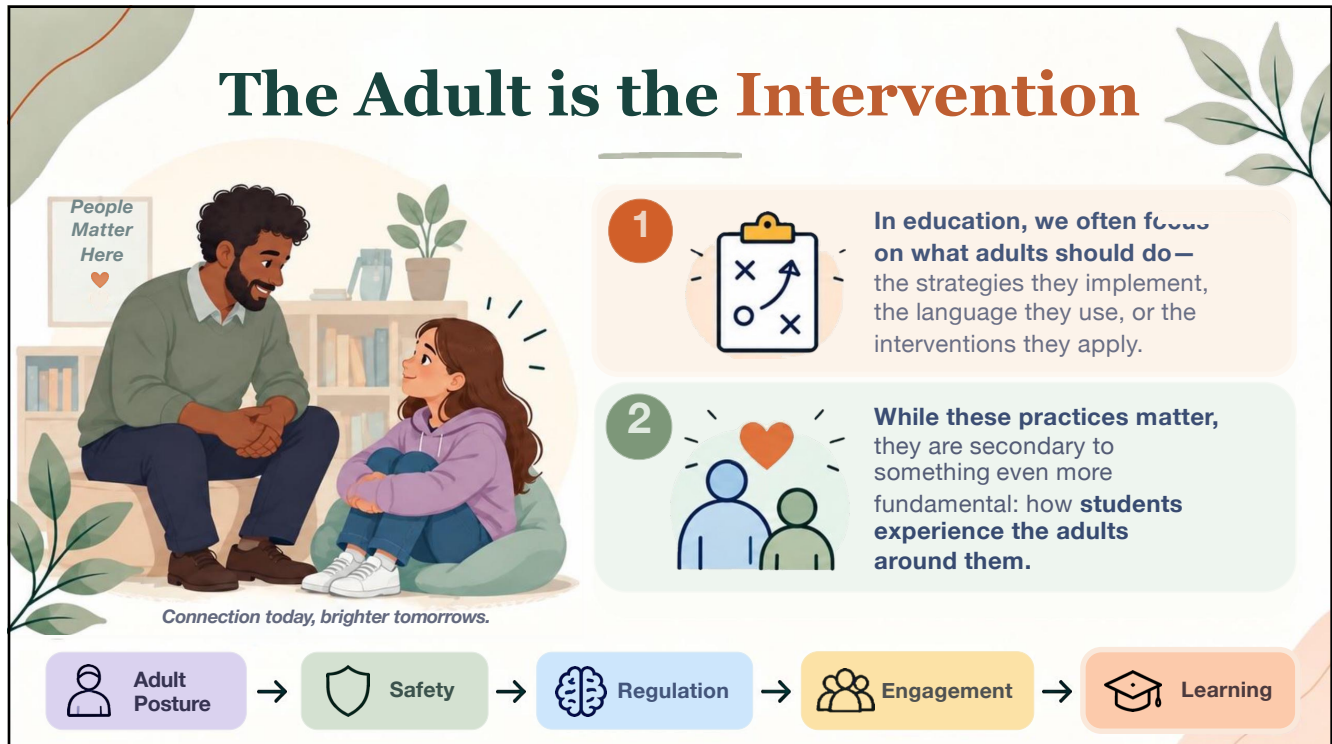
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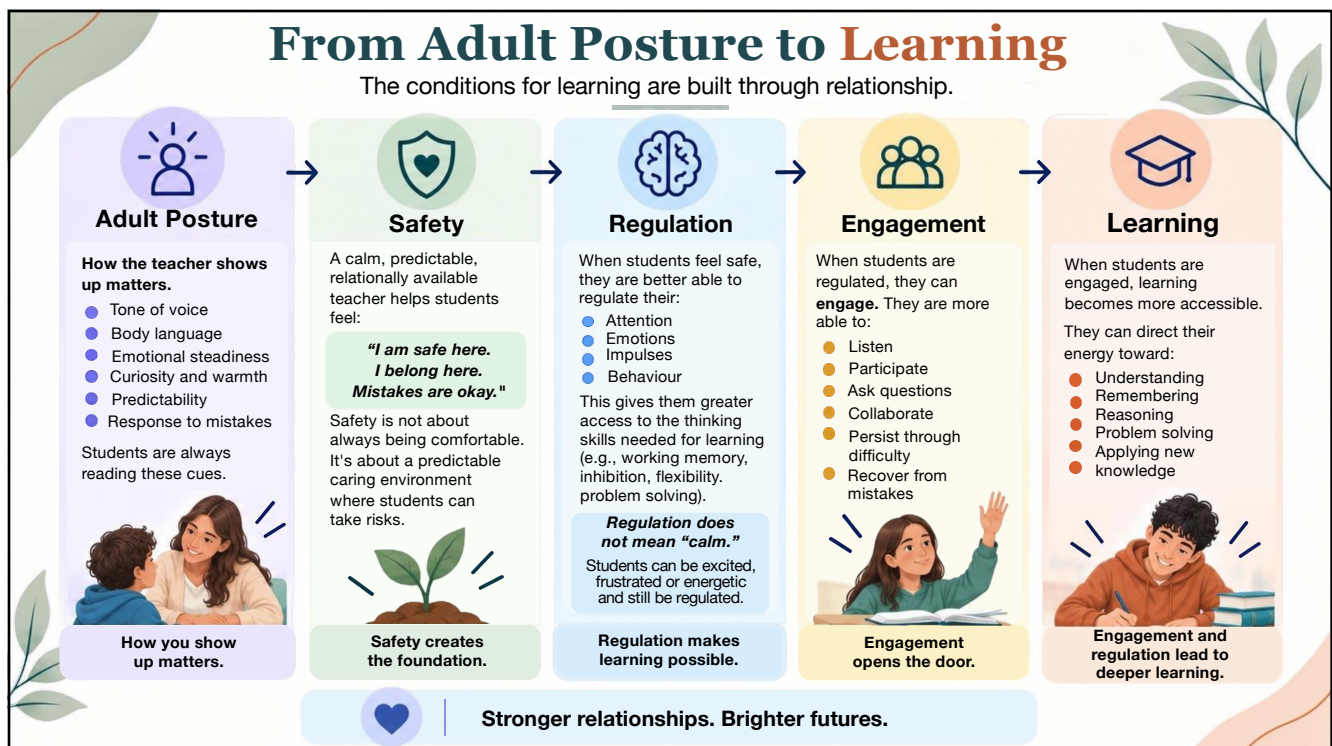
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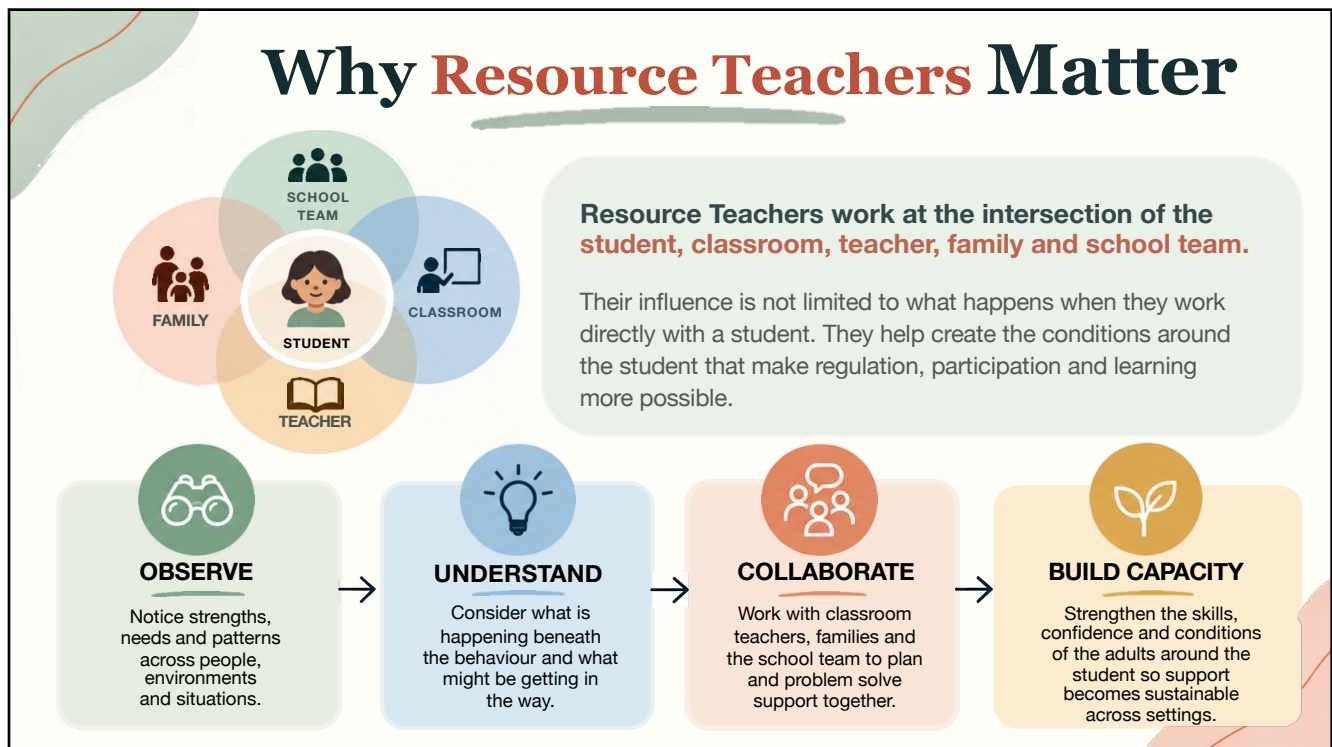
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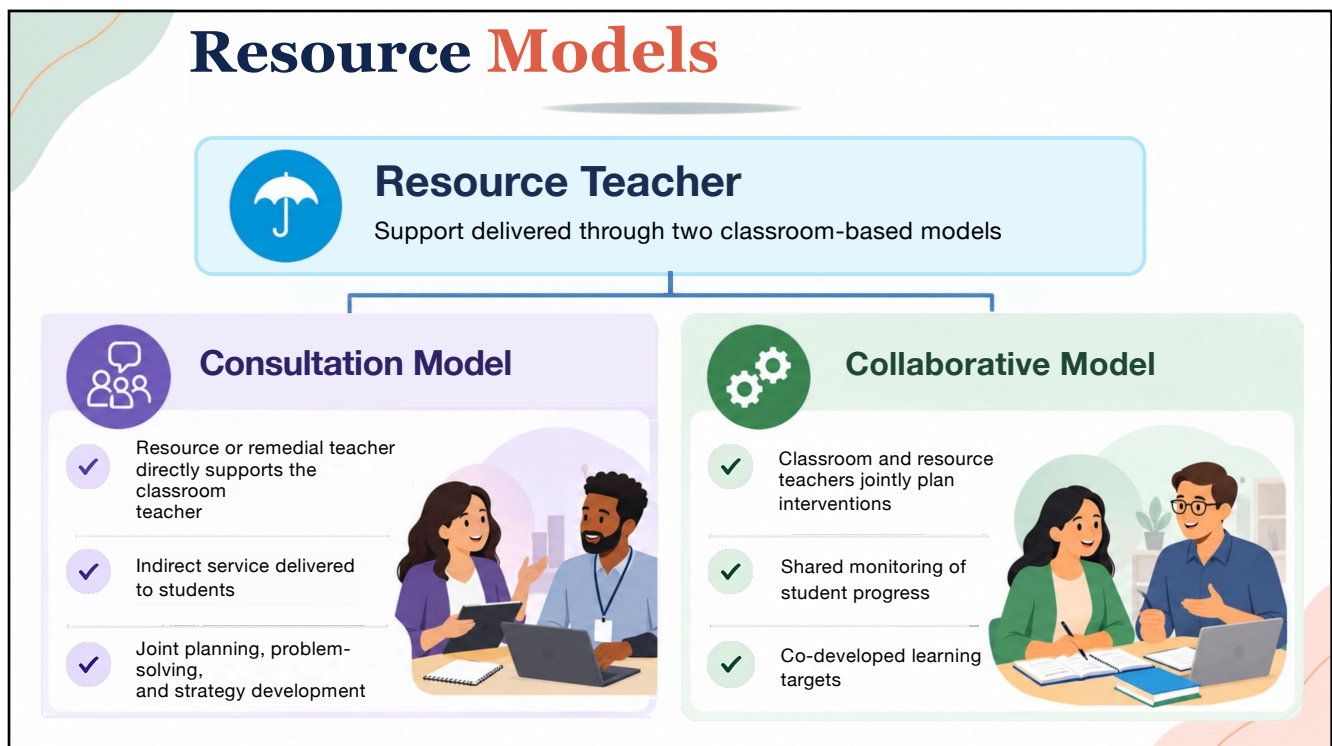
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Push-In Resource Models

In-Class Support

- ✓ Resource teacher works directly within the regular classroom
- ✓ Students remain integrated with peers
- ✓ Targeted academic support provided during instruction



Co-Teaching Approaches

Six evidence-based co-teaching structures

- ✓ One Teacher, One Support
- ✓ One Teacher, One Observer
- ✓ Parallel Teaching
- ✓ Station Teaching
- ✓ Alternative Teaching (Small Targeted Group)
- ✓ Team Teaching



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Pull-Out Resource Models

Resource Room

- ✓ Students leave class temporarily for targeted intervention
- ✓ Individual or small-group instruction
- ✓ Focus areas: literacy, numeracy and executive functioning

Remedial Services

- ✓ Short-term targeted intervention
- ✓ Academic support tailored for students at risk
- ✓ Re-teaching or pre-teaching core curriculum content

Individual Intervention

- ✓ One-to-one support specialists
- ✓ Resource or special education teacher
- ✓ Speech-Language Pathologist, Psychologist, Psychoeducator or Special Education Technician



These resource models can be used in both Elementary and Secondary settings.

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Specialized Class Models



Specialized Support Classroom

Self-contained setting tailored for intensive academic and developmental needs.



Low Student-Teacher Ratio

Provides intensive, personalized instruction and specialized behavioral or developmental support within a structured classroom setting.



Flexible Classroom Integration

Students may be integrated into the regular classroom for specific subjects or parts of the school day to foster social and academic inclusion.

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Small Group Service Models



Targeted Intervention Groups



Reading

Structured decoding and comprehension skill groups



Numeracy

Foundational math principles and problem solving



Social Skills

Guided peer interactions and emotional regulation



Executive Functioning

Organization, planning and focus strategies



Response to Intervention (RTI/MTSS)

TIER 1

Universal classroom supports for all students



TIER 2

Targeted small-group intervention for students at risk

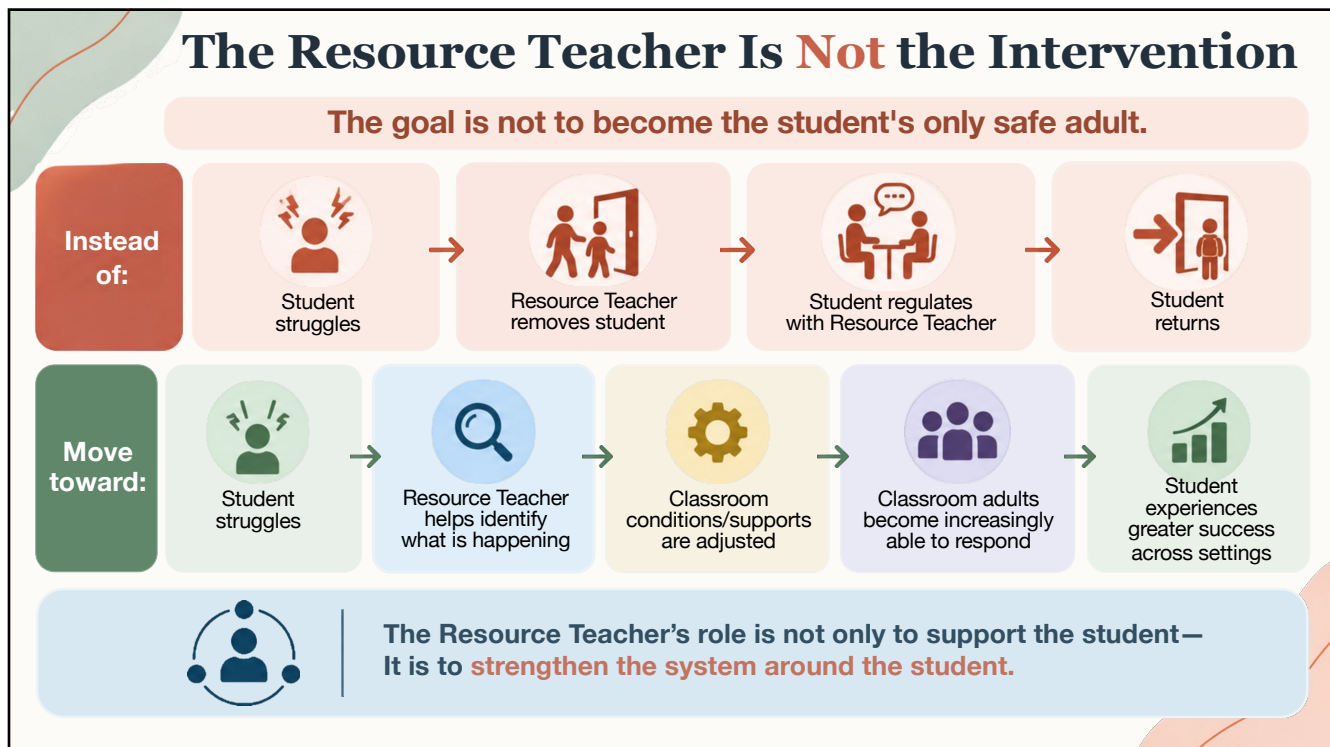


TIER 3

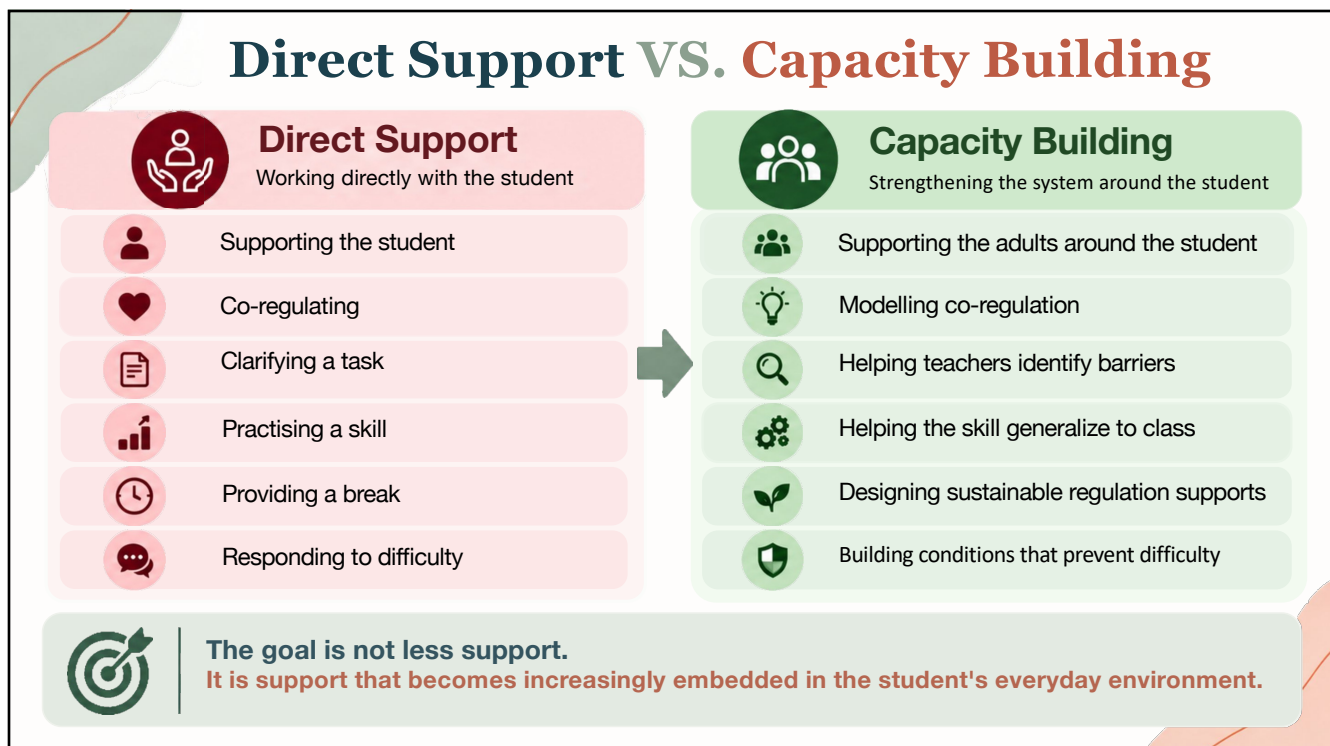
Intensive individualized intervention for students with high needs



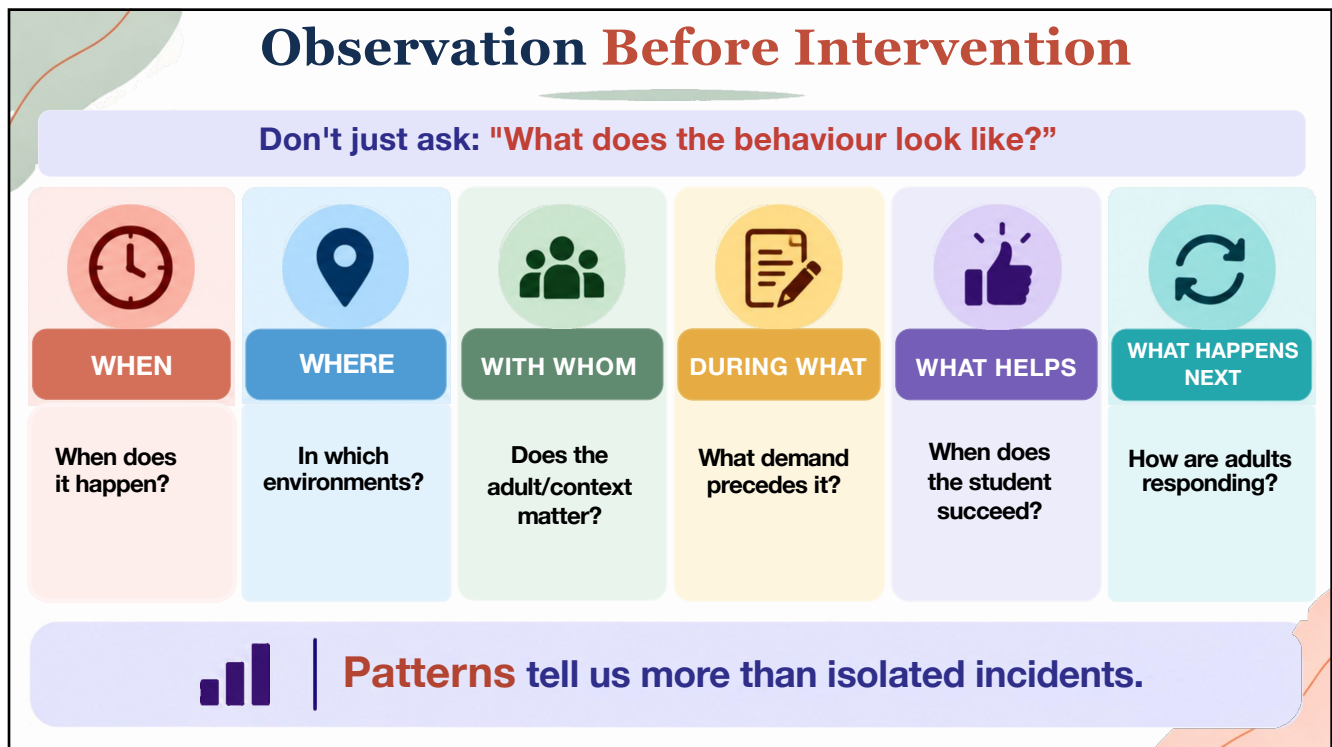
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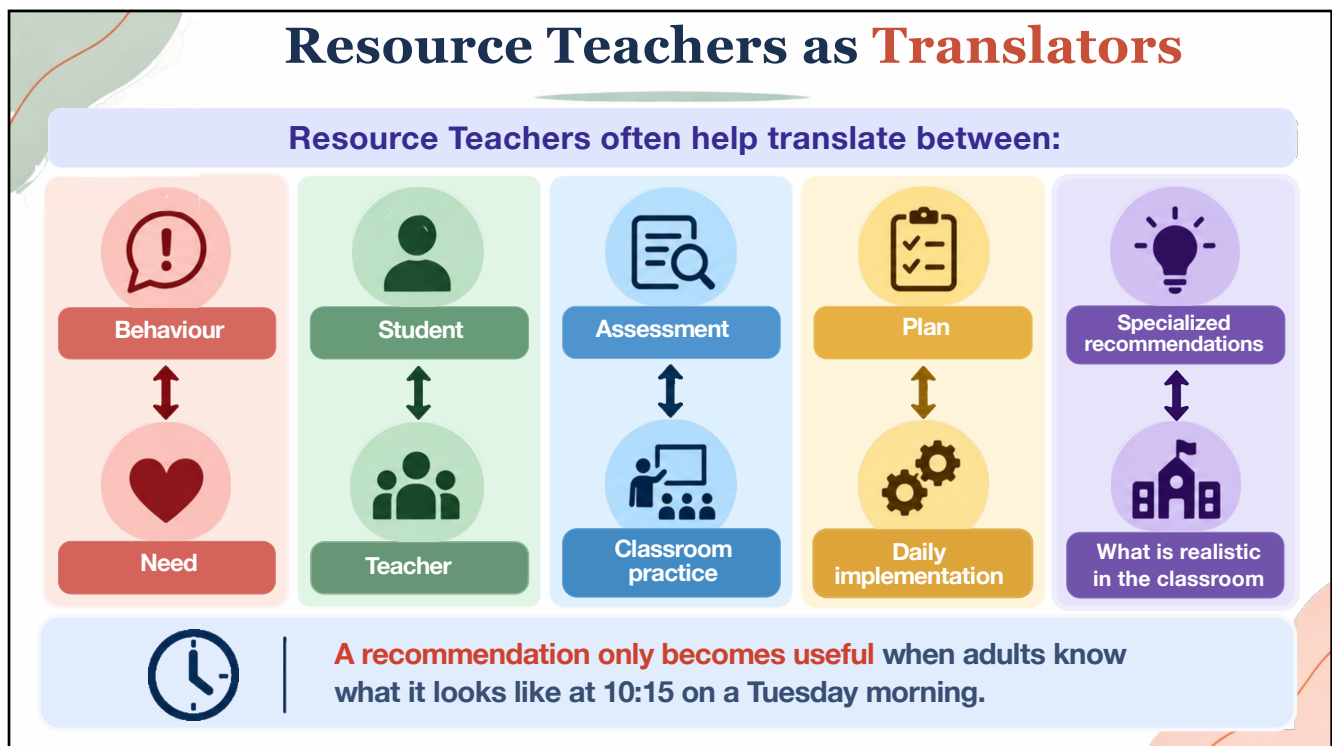
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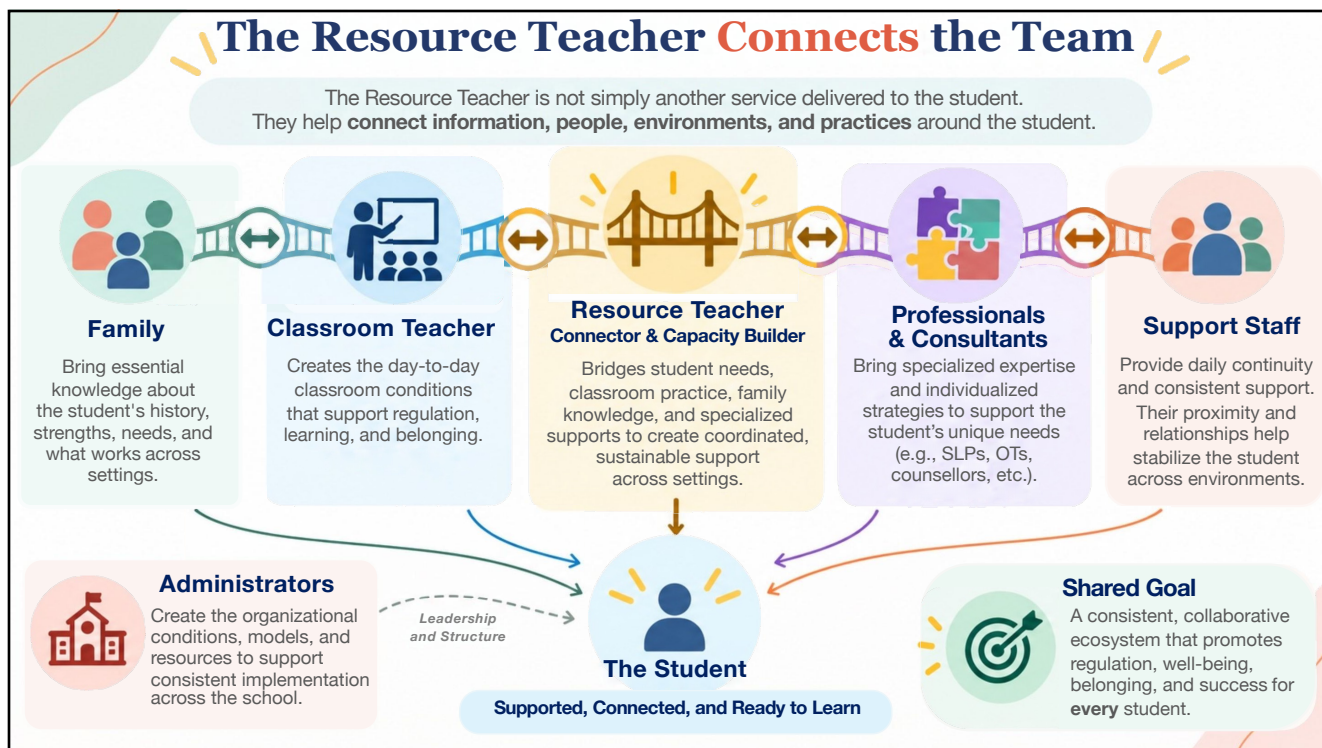
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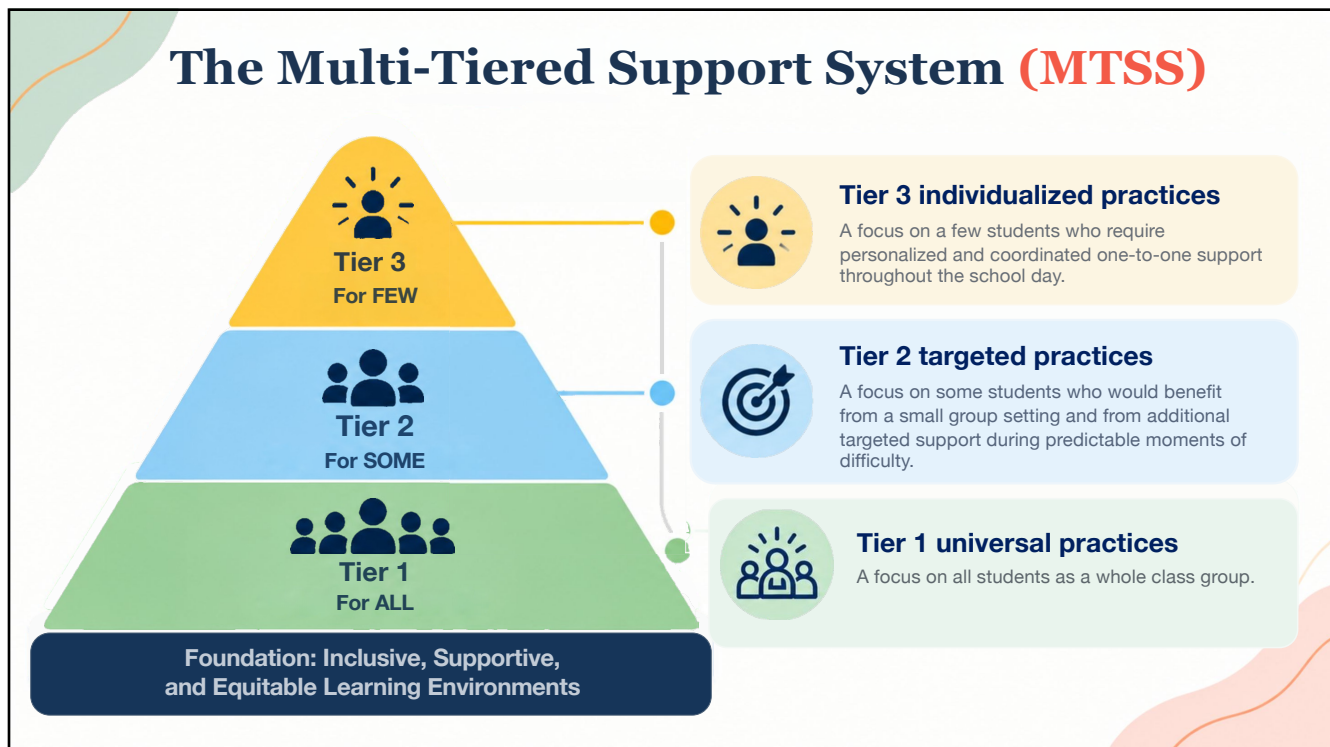
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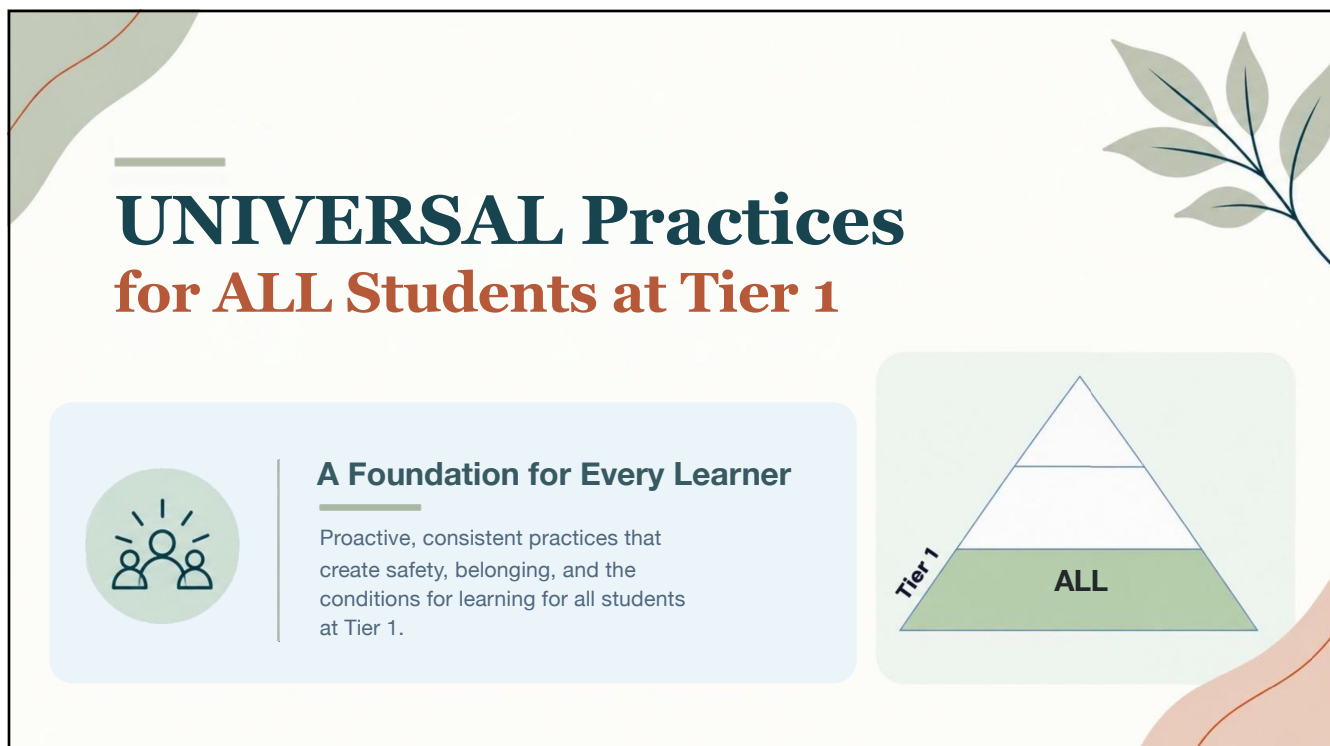
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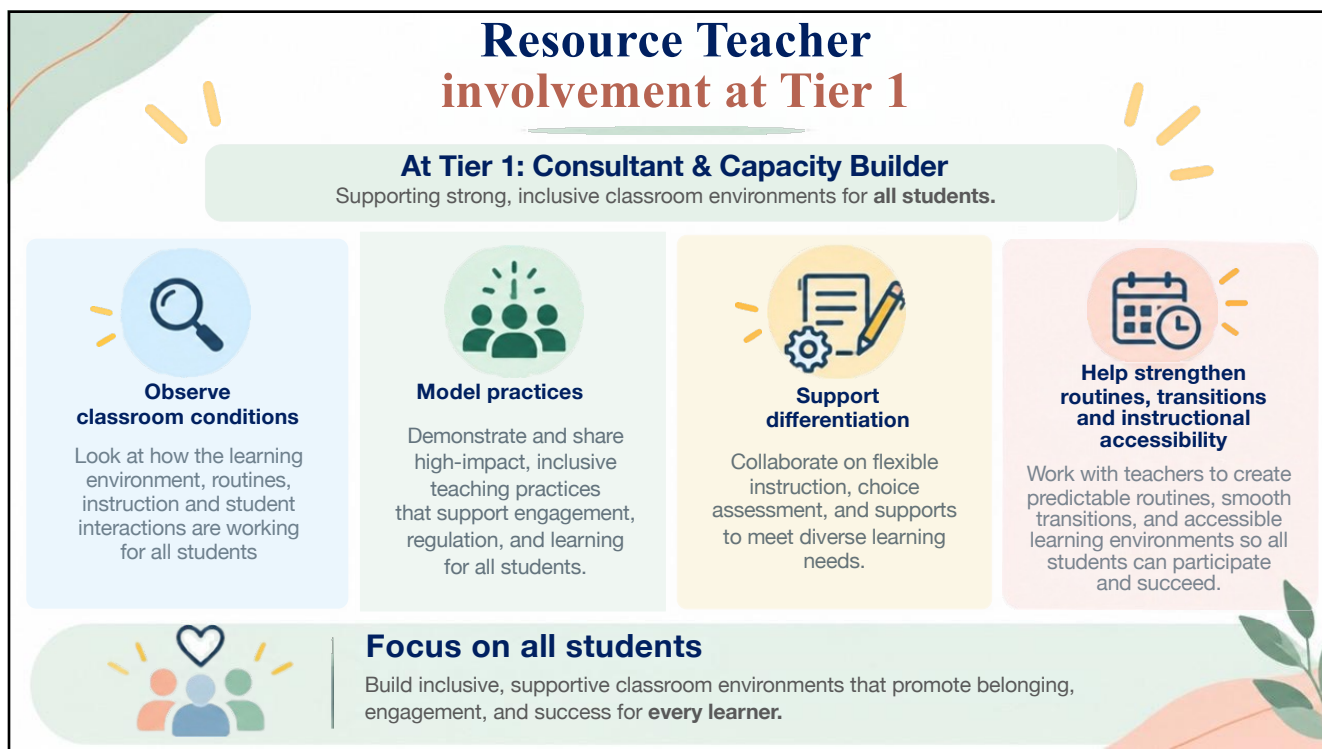
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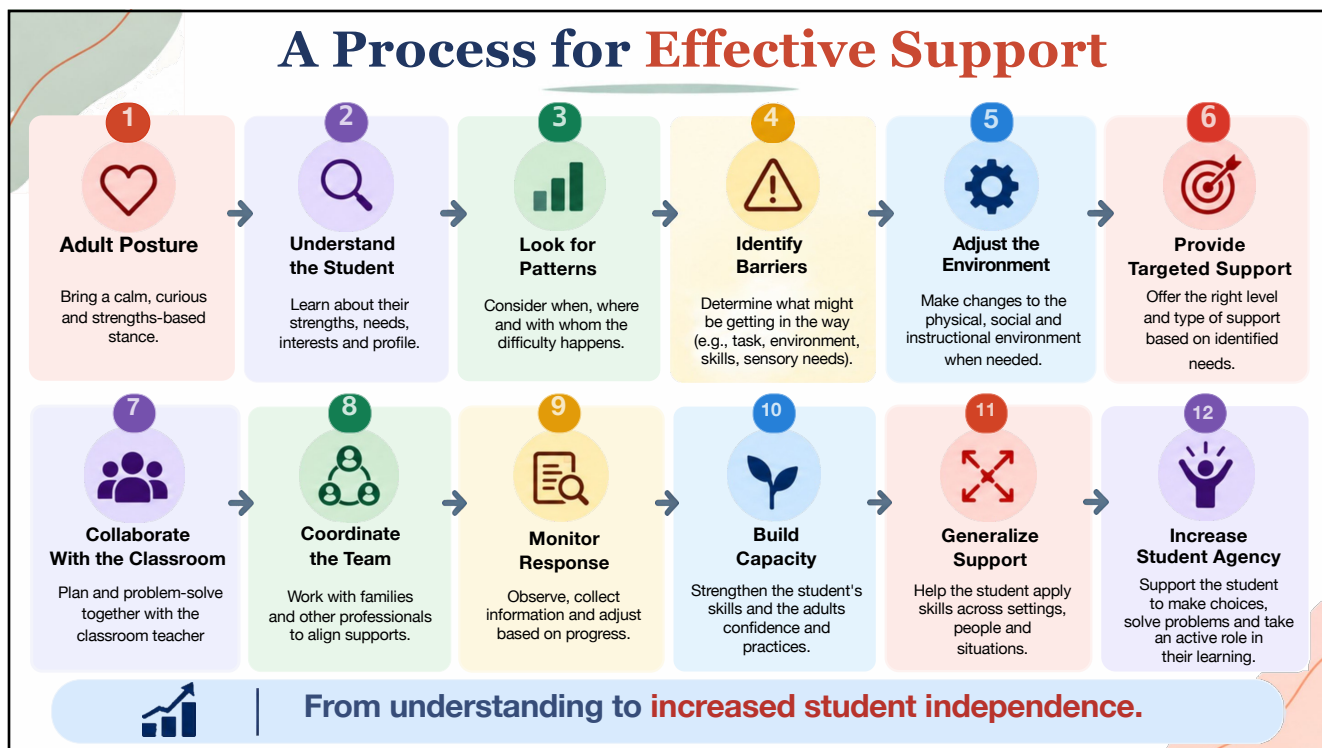
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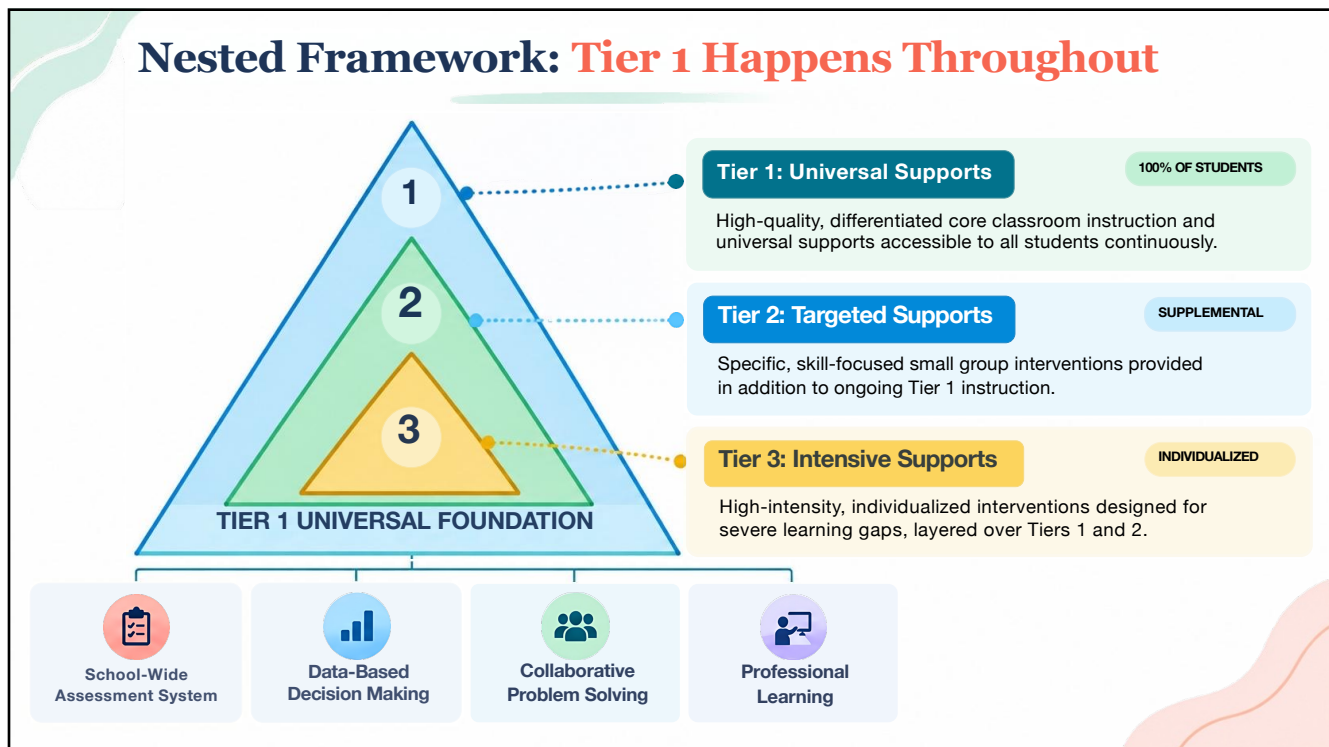
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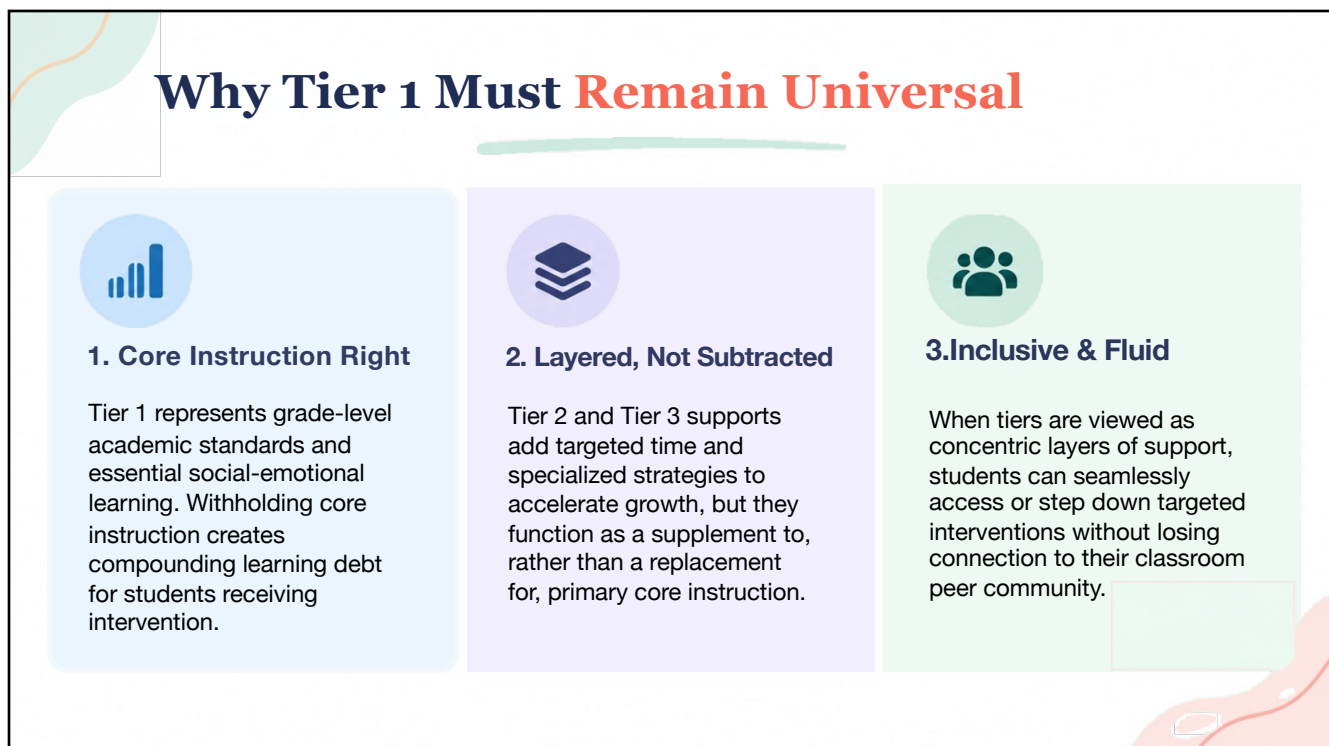
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Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning

Every interaction matters.



Adult posture is not something we use only when behaviour becomes challenging.
It is present in **every** instructional interaction.



Every lesson contains hundreds of small relational moments.
Students notice how teachers give directions, respond to confusion, wait for answers, correct errors, react to unfinished work, handle disagreement, respond to frustration, and support students who need more time.



In other words, adult posture isn't separate from instruction.
It is the relational context in which learning happens.



Same expectations in a more supportive way.



Before learning

→



Direct instruction

→



Independent work

→



Group work

→



Feedback & correction

→



Assessment

→



Transitions

→



Mistakes & recovery

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Attunement Versus Technique

The difference isn't just what we do-it's how we show up.



Attunement means accurately noticing and responding to another person's emotional state while remaining **grounded ourselves**.



One statement may feel deeply **comforting**.



It is different from **simply following a protocol**.



The other may feel **dismissive or mechanical**.



Two adults may say exactly the same words:
"I can see that you're upset."





The difference is not the script-it is the **relationship** and the **authenticity** behind it.

Attuned adults:



notice subtle changes in behaviour



adjust their expectations to the student's current state



remain flexible



communicate genuine curiosity



respond rather than react



Students do not need perfect adults.
They need adults who are emotionally present enough to notice them.



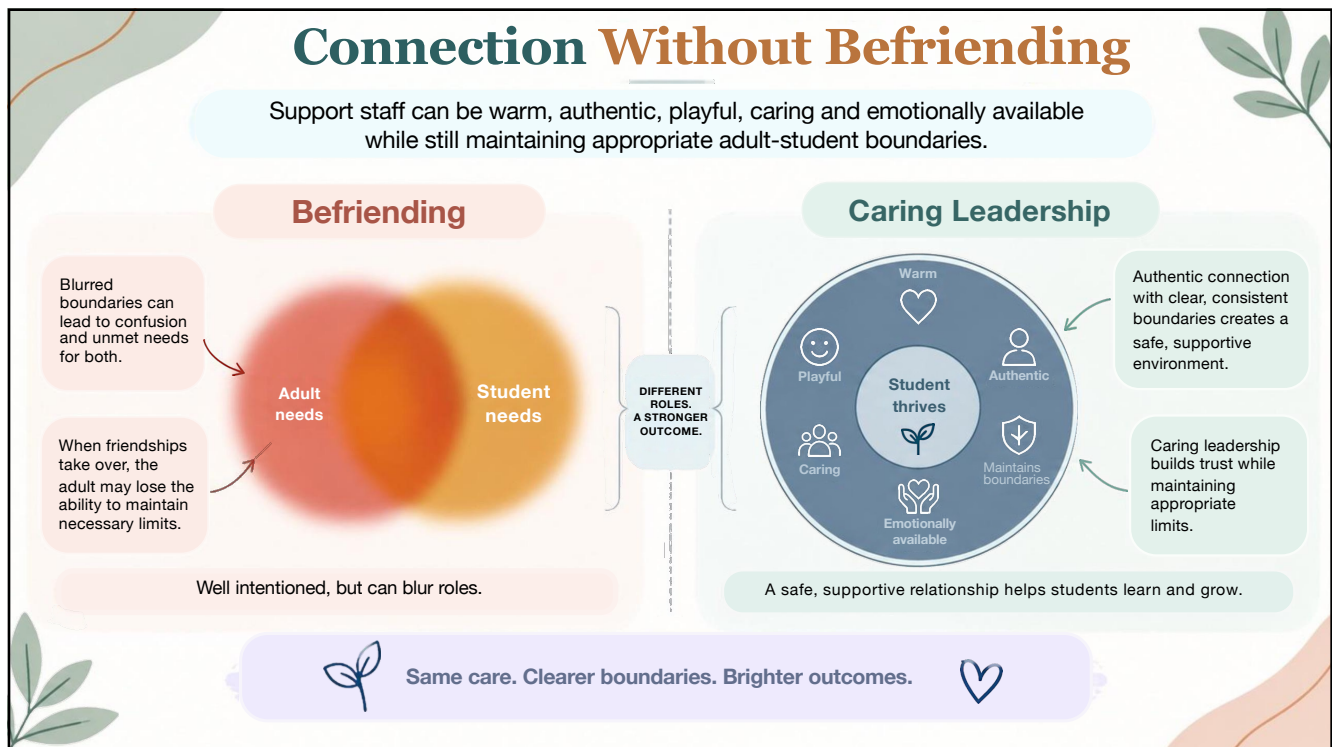
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Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning Same learning. A more supportive experience. Small moments. Big impact.		
Instructional Moment	What Adult Posture Looks Like	What It Communicates to Students
 Before Learning	Welcoming students, establishing predictable routines, noticing emotional states, communicating expectations calmly and preparing students for what is coming.	"You belong here. You know what to expect."
 Direct Instruction	Using a calm pace and tone, checking understanding without judgment, noticing confusion, allowing processing time and adjusting explanations when needed.	"You don't have to understand immediately. I will help you get there."
 Independent Work	Distinguishing between won't and can't yet, noticing frustration or overload, scaffolding without taking over and allowing appropriate movement, breaks or additional processing time.	"Struggling doesn't mean you can't do this. I'm here if you need support."
 Group Work	Monitoring belonging and participation, supporting students who struggle socially, responding to conflict without humiliation and creating space for different ways of participating.	"Your voice matters here, and you are part of this group."
 A supportive adult posture helps students feel safe, connected and confident to learn.		

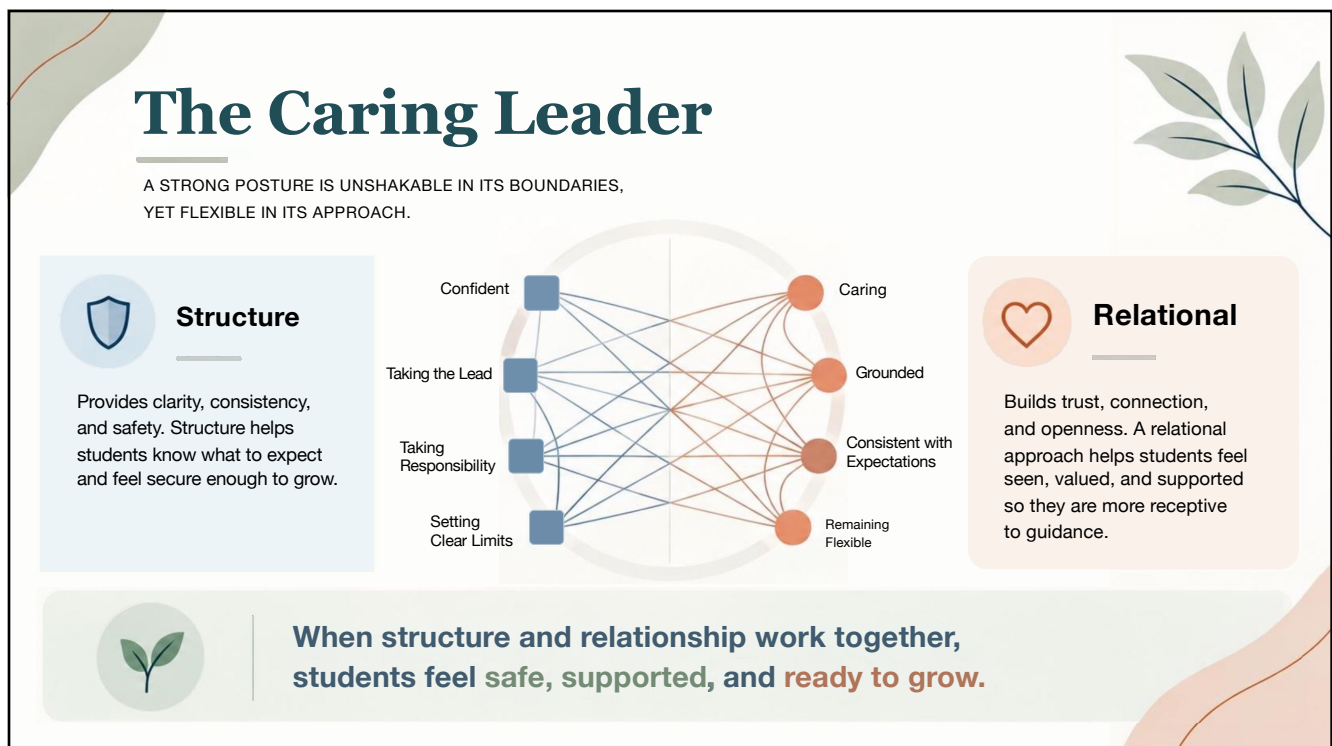
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Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning Same learning. A more supportive experience. Small moments. Big impact.		
Instructional Moment	What Adult Posture Looks Like	What It Communicates to Students
 Feedback & Correction	Correcting without shaming, separating the student's work or behaviour from their worth, being specific and maintaining warmth while holding expectations.	"Correction is information, not rejection."
 Assessment	Recognizing that evaluation can increase stress, communicating expectations clearly, reducing unnecessary threat and helping students remain regulated enough to demonstrate what they know.	"This is an opportunity to show what you know—not a judgment of who you are."
 Transitions	Providing warning, structure and predictability; recognizing the executive-function demands involved in stopping, shifting attention, organizing materials and beginning something new.	"I'll help you move from one demand to the next."
 Mistakes & Recovery	Normalizing mistakes, remaining curious rather than disappointed, helping students repair and try again, and communicating confidence in their capacity to recover.	"A mistake doesn't change how I see you. We can try again."
 A supportive adult posture helps students feel safe, connected and confident to learn.		

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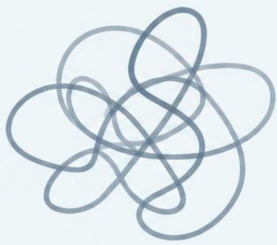
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Explicit Expectations

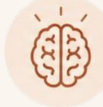
CLARITY CREATES CONFIDENCE



Lengthy explanations
cause students to
get lost.



- ✓ Speak clearly and give instructions in a concise, direct manner.
- ✓ Convey explicitly what is expected of them.
- ✓ Use visuals if needed to bypass cognitive overload.
- ✓ Establish coherent and concrete limits and boundaries.



The Core Reality

When expectations are unclear, students must work harder to understand, which increases confusion, stress, and the likelihood of challenging behaviors.



The Opportunity

Clear, explicit expectations reduce uncertainty, build student confidence, and create the conditions for cooperation and success.

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Firm Care



Boundary

"The answer is still no."

"You can't have the iPad
right now."

"That language is not okay."

"You need to stay in
the classroom."



Regulation

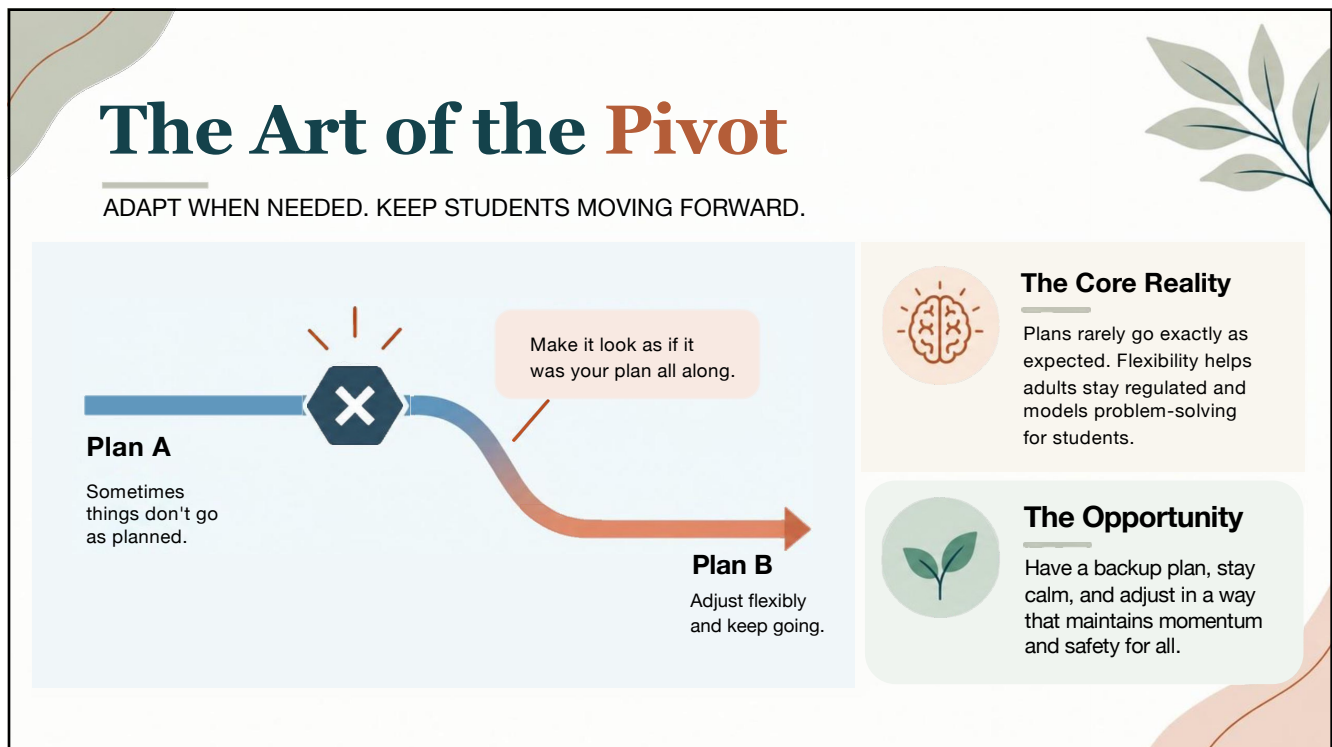
"I'm going to help you
through the no."

"I know it's hard to wait.
I'm here with you until it's time."

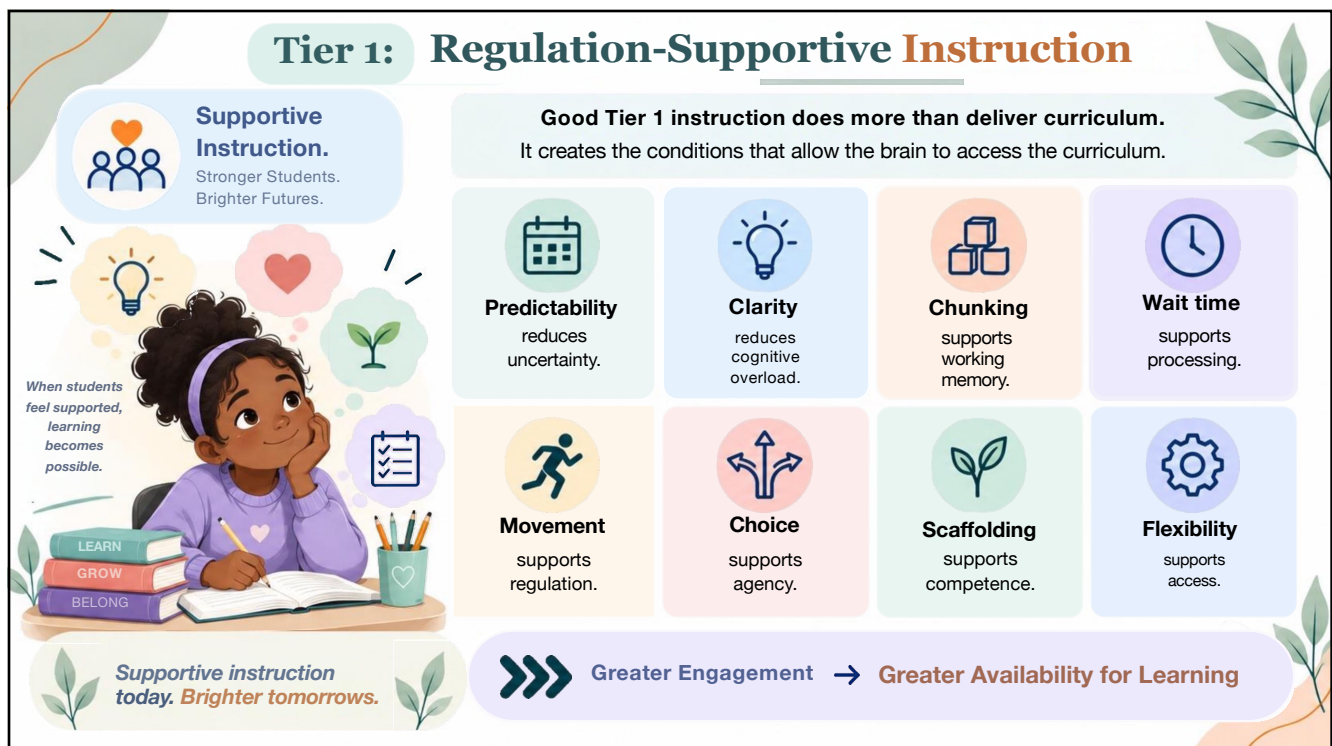
"I won't let you use that language.
Let's find a calmer way to say it."

"I see that you don't want to go.
I'll walk with you and help you get started."

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Tier 1: Designing Instruction for Regulation and Learning

Proactive supports. Greater access. Stronger learning.

Small changes. Big impact.

Tier 1 Practice	What It Might Look Like	Why It Matters for Regulation
Predictable lesson structures	Similar opening routines, agenda visible, clear beginning/middle/end.	Reduces uncertainty and helps students anticipate what comes next.
Instructional clarity	Short directions, modelling, examples, checking understanding.	Reduces confusion before confusion becomes frustration.
Chunking	"Do questions 1-3, then check in with me" rather than presenting the entire task at once.	Reduces working-memory and cognitive demands.
Managing cognitive load	One direction at a time, visual supports, reducing unnecessary information.	Helps students stay cognitively available for learning.

When instruction is well designed, students can stay more regulated, engaged and available for learning.

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Tier 1: Designing Instruction for Regulation and Learning

Proactive supports. Greater access. Stronger learning.

Small changes. Big impact.

Tier 1 Practice	What It Might Look Like	Why It Matters for Regulation
Wait time	Giving students processing time before repeating, correcting or prompting.	Prevents adult urgency from becoming student pressure.
Transitions	Previewing transitions, countdowns, clear routines for moving between activities.	Supports shifting and reduces abrupt changes.
Movement & regulation opportunities	Brief movement opportunities, flexible positioning, purposeful pauses.	Helps students regulate activation without having to reach a crisis point.
Pedagogical flexibility	Different ways to access material or demonstrate understanding while maintaining the learning goal.	Separates the essential learning expectation from unnecessary barriers.

When instruction is well designed, students can stay more regulated, engaged and available for learning.

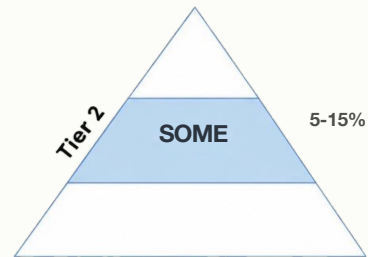
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TARGETED Practices for SOME Students at Tier 2



Targeted Support Meaningful Progress.

Evidence-informed practices
designed to support the unique
needs of some students at Tier 2



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Tier 2: Tier 2 Does Not Necessarily Mean Severe Behaviour

Notice
the
patterns



Targeted Support for Individual Needs

Not every student needs the same
level of support.

1²3



Different
challenges.
Same potential.
With the right
support, students
can succeed.



A student may be functioning adequately much of the day
but repeatedly struggle in a particular context.



Math
→
shutdown



Writing
→
avoidance



Tests
→
anxiety



Group work
→
conflict



Transitions
→
escalation



Unstructured
periods
→
dysregulation



A Tier 2 lens asks:

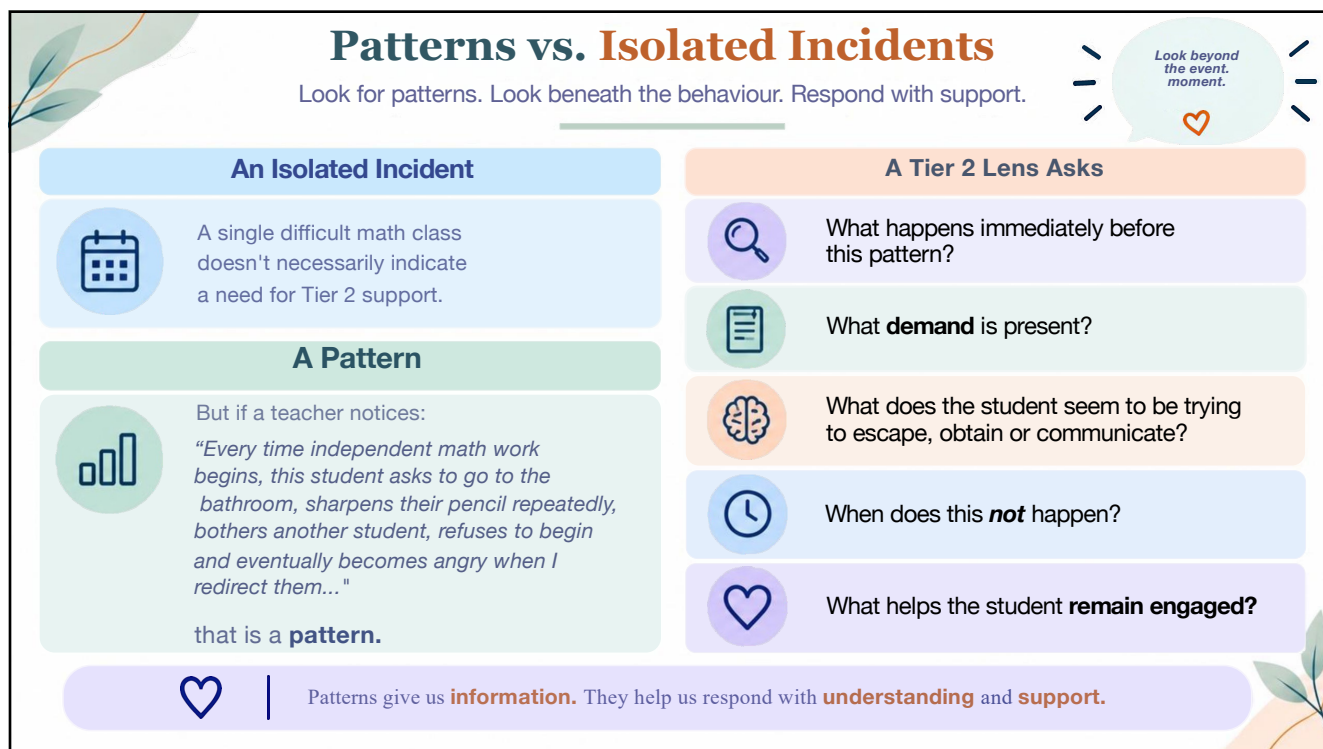
"What predictable situations are exceeding this student's current
capacity, and what additional scaffolding can we put in place
before the student becomes overwhelmed?"



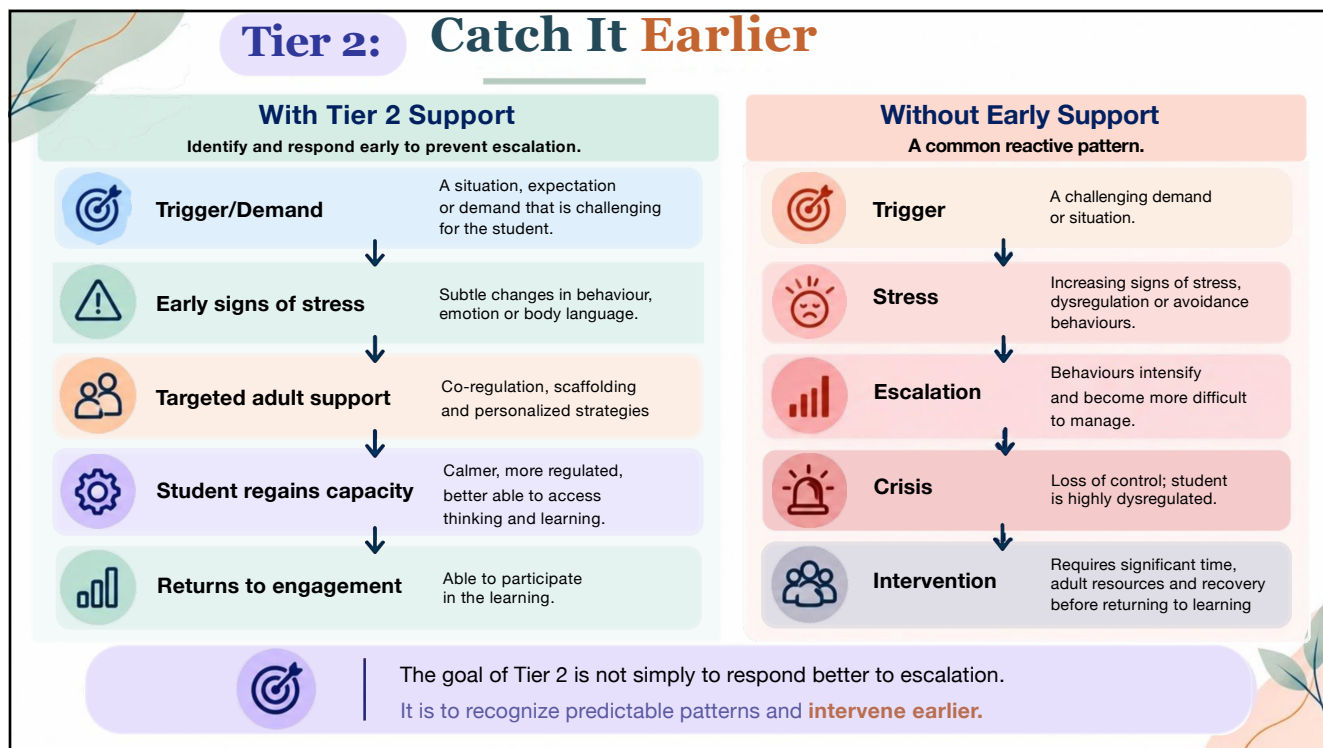
Tier 2 is preventive rather than reactive.

The goal is to recognize patterns early, provide targeted support,
and help the student stay regulated, engaged and successful.

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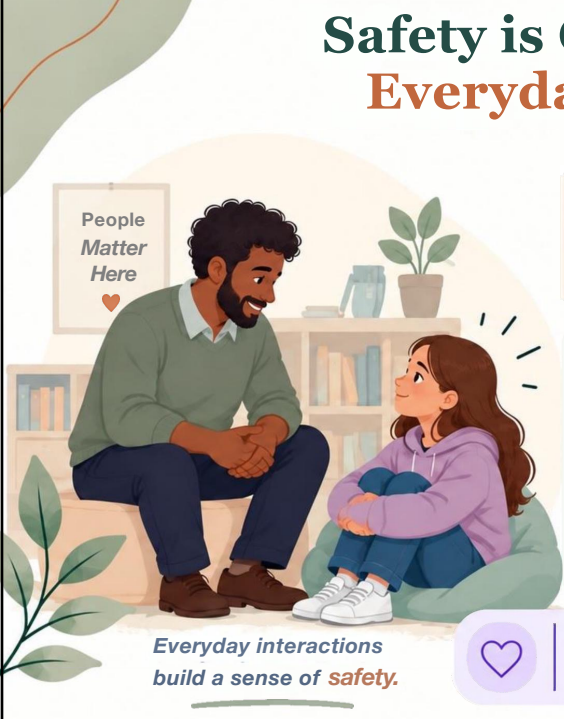


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Safety is Created Through Everyday Experiences.



1  **Safety isn't just for crises.**
One misconception is that safety is created only during crises. In reality, students decide whether school feels safe through hundreds of small, daily interactions.

2 **Examples of everyday experiences that build safety:**

 Predictable routines	 Consistent responses	 Warm greetings	 Humour	 Being remembered
 Respectful correction	 Opportunities for choice	 Emotional availability	 Adults repairing mistakes	 Seeing peers treated with dignity

These experiences communicate:
"This is a place where I can relax enough to learn."

Safety is therefore not an event.
It is a culture.

*Everyday interactions build a sense of **safety**.*

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Resource Teacher involvement at Tier 2

At Tier 2: Collaborator & Problem Solver

Working with teachers and others to provide targeted supports for students who need additional help.

1 Identify patterns
Work with teachers to look at classroom data, observations, and student input to identify patterns and areas of need.

2 Clarify needs
Help the team understand the underlying needs strengths, and barriers so supports can be purposeful and targeted.

3 Develop targeted supports
Collaborate with teachers to plan and select evidence-informed strategies, interventions, and accommodations that match the student's needs.

4 Model strategies
Demonstrate and co-teach targeted strategies, share resources, and support classroom implementation.

5 Check whether supports are helping
Collect and review feedback and data with the team to see what is working, what isn't, and under what conditions.

6 Adjust collaboratively
Make changes based on what is working, continue to refine supports, and plan next steps with the teacher and team.

Focus on targeted support
Build targeted, evidence-informed supports that help students make progress, increase their independence, and experience success in their learning.

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Proactive MTSS Decisions



Shifting from Reaction to Prevention

Routine screening data allows educators to assign targeted interventions immediately upon identifying risk. Structured team reviews ensure every learner receives appropriate evidence-based support without delay.



Using Screening Data

Identifying students at risk early through routine screening.



Assigning Targeted Supports

Providing appropriate, evidence-based interventions immediately.



Reviewing as a Team

Using structured team reviews to ensure every learner receives the support without delay.

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Actions to Consider...



Shifting the Professional Language

Referring to "Tier 2 practices" or "Tier 3 measures" instead of calling children "Tier 2 or Tier 3 students." Words shape expectations.



Protecting the Core Instructional Time

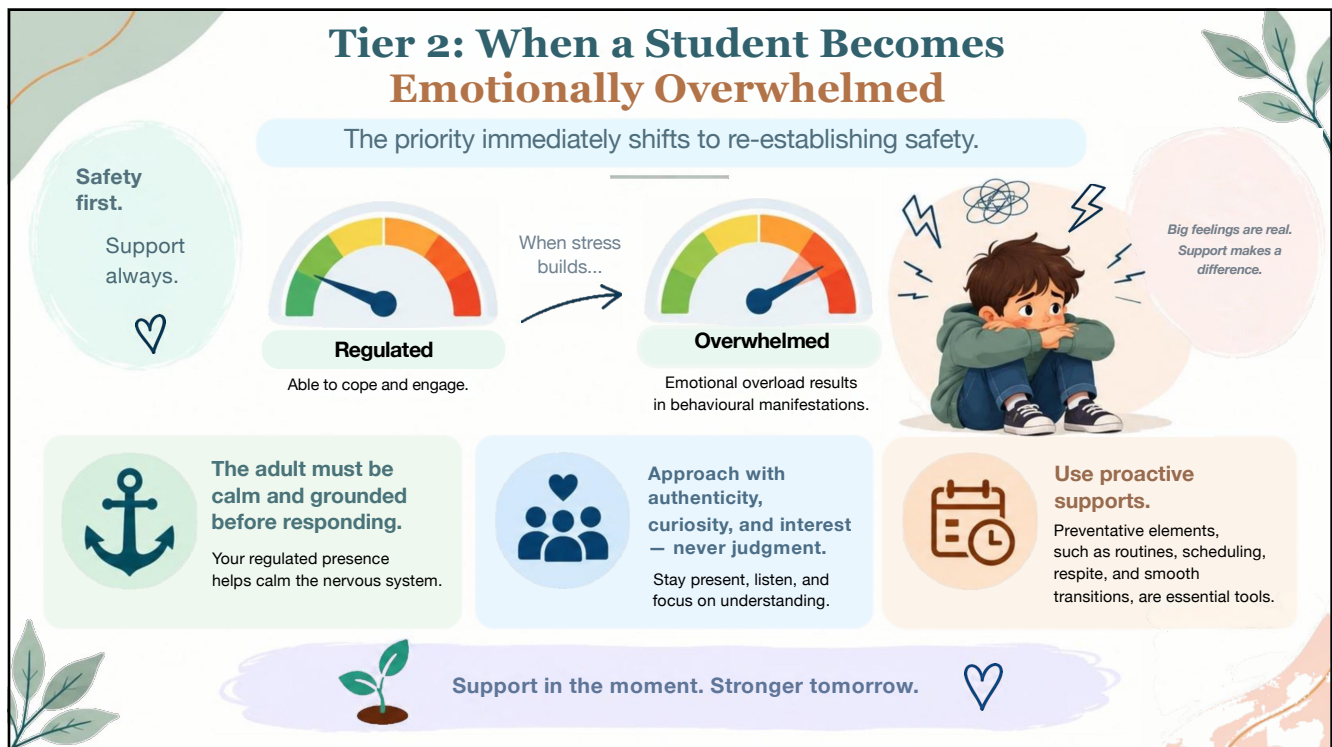
Scheduling intervention blocks (e.g., "What I Need" or WiN time) so that pull-out or small group supports do not replace Tier 1 whole-group core instruction.



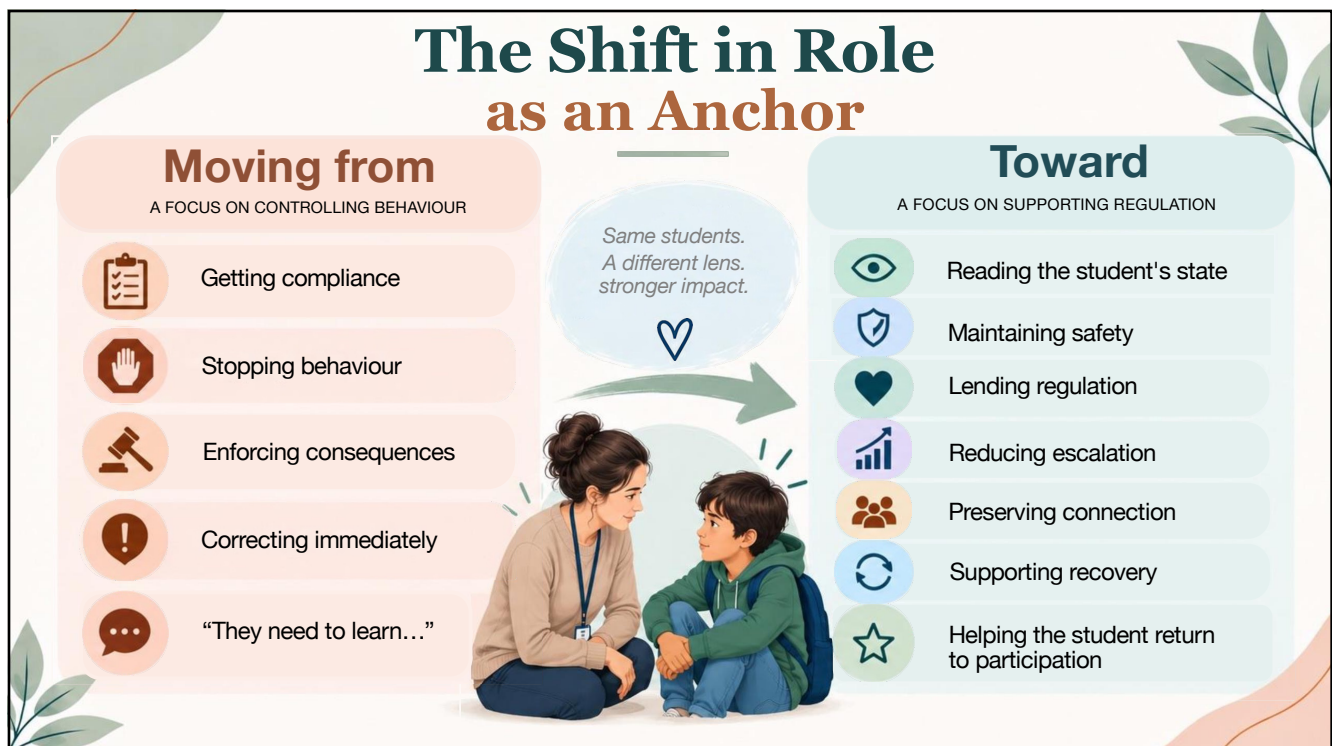
Embracing Flexible Data-Driven Movement

Using frequent progress monitoring to enter and exit targeted supports quickly, keeping tier boundaries fluid and responsive rather than permanent.

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The Pre-Response Pause



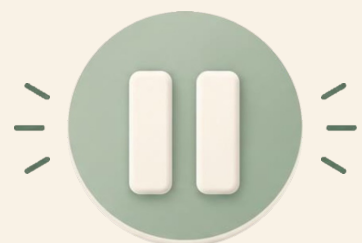
You cannot co-regulate a student if you are dysregulated.
The deliberate pause is where the strong posture is maintained.

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The Educator's Pause: A Diagnostic Tool

WHEN CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS, HIT PAUSE AND ASK YOURSELF:

- 1 What might this student be **communicating** through this behaviour?
- 2 Is this student giving me a hard time, or having a hard time?
- 3 What **need, emotion, or skill deficit** might be contributing to this situation?
- 4 How can I maintain the **boundary** while strictly preserving the relationship?
- 5 What **specific support** does this student need to be successful right now?



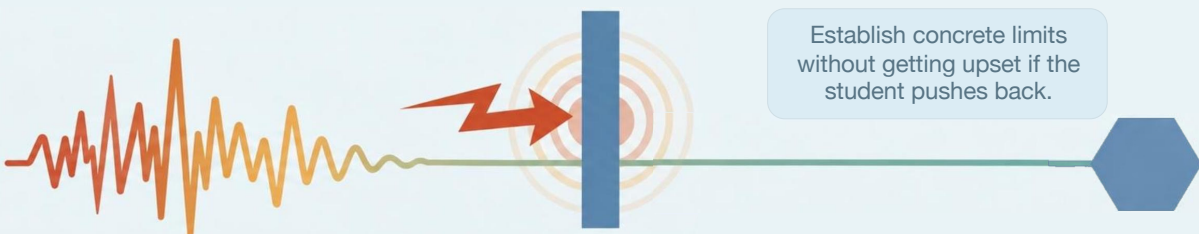
**Pause to respond
with purpose.**

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Tier 2: What Tier 2 Might Actually Look Like in a Teacher's Classroom Notice the whole picture.		
Different challenges. Deeper understanding. Targeted support.		
What the teacher sees	What may be happening underneath	Possible Tier 2 response
 Task avoidance	Task feels overwhelming; fear of failure; difficulty initiating; working-memory demand.	Preview the task, reduce the visible workload, chunk the first steps, provide a starting prompt, brief teacher check-in.
 Escalating frustration during difficult work	Cognitive overload; frustration tolerance exceeded; repeated experience of failure.	Notice early signs, temporarily slow the pace, validate difficulty, scaffold without removing the challenge.
 Repeated shutdown	Overwhelm, threat response, inability to access language/problem solving in the moment.	Reduce verbal demands, allow processing time, provide a predictable regulation option, reconnect before problem-solving.
 Assessment anxiety	Evaluation is being experienced as threat, fear of failure or embarrassment.	Preview expectations, increase predictability, break assessment into manageable portions, establish a check-in/regulation plan.
 Transition difficulties	Difficulty shifting attention or expectations; uncertainty about what comes next.	Individual advance warning, visual cue, transition routine, brief adult connection before the transition.
 Peer conflict	Social interpretation difficulties, emotional activation, rejection sensitivity, impulsivity.	Adult proximity, pre-correction, structured peer interaction, co-regulation before conflict resol
 Understand the why. Provide the support. Keep the learner engaged.		

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The Grounded Pushback Response

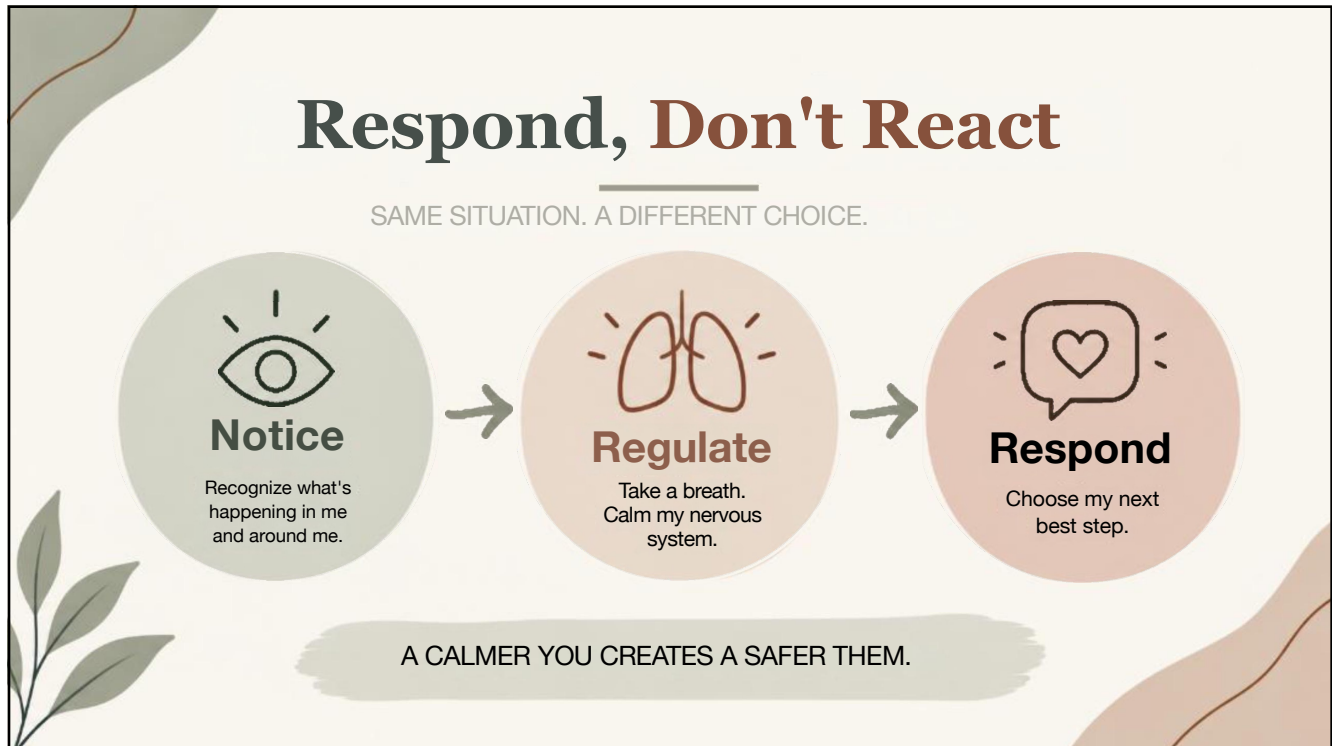


Pushback is a data point, not a personal attack.
Manage the environment through co-regulation rather than emotional reaction.

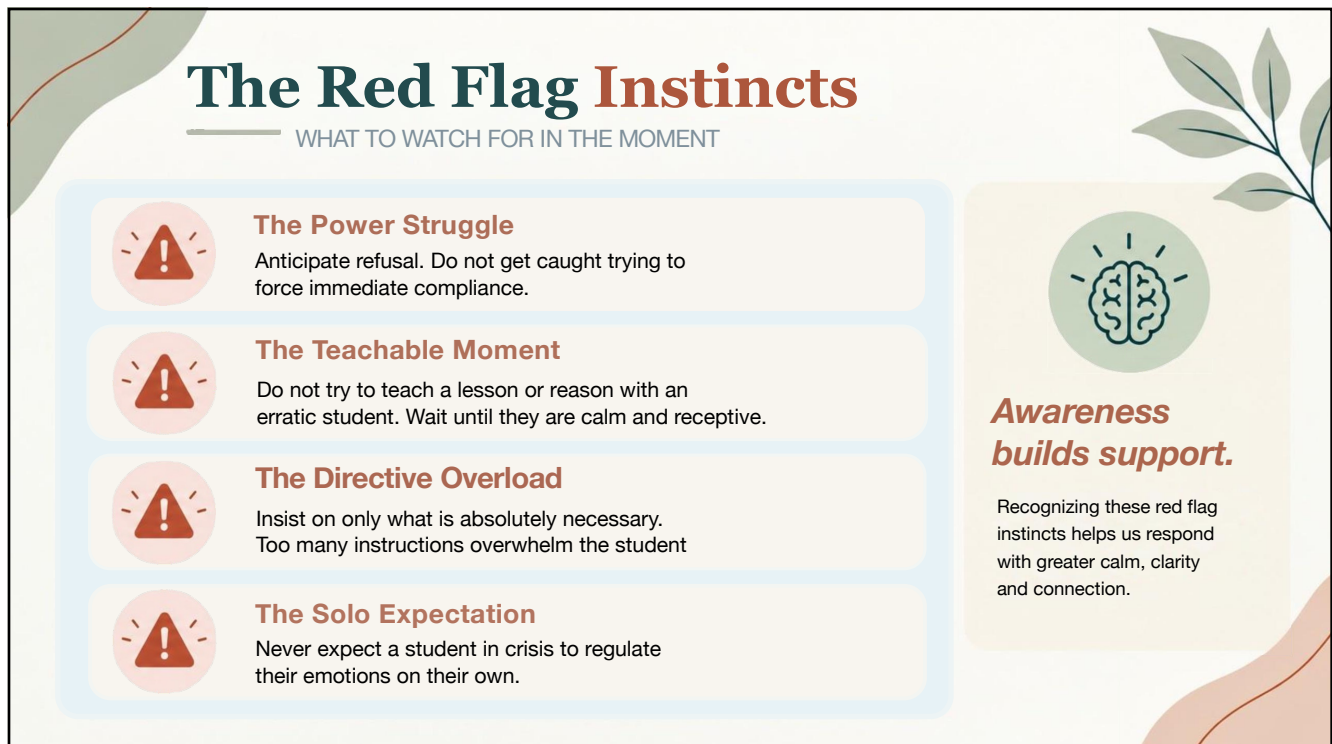


You cannot co-regulate a student if you are dysregulated.
The deliberate pause is where the strong posture is maintained.

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Student Preventive Action Plan

A proactive tool to support student success.

Identify needs
Understand triggers and challenges.

Plan ahead
Use proactive strategies and supports.

Promote success
Build safety, confidence, and independence.

TEMPLATE DOCUMENT

STUDENT ACTIVE PREVENTION/SAFETY PLAN (giving priority to prevention)

Student name: _____ DOB: _____
School/Board: _____ Grade Level: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Student's needs/challenges/triggers	Specific objectives* related to the needs/challenges/triggers	Best practices/approaches* related to the objectives	Selected tools/support measures related to the practices
Plan B for a difficult time or activity		Plan B for a difficult day	

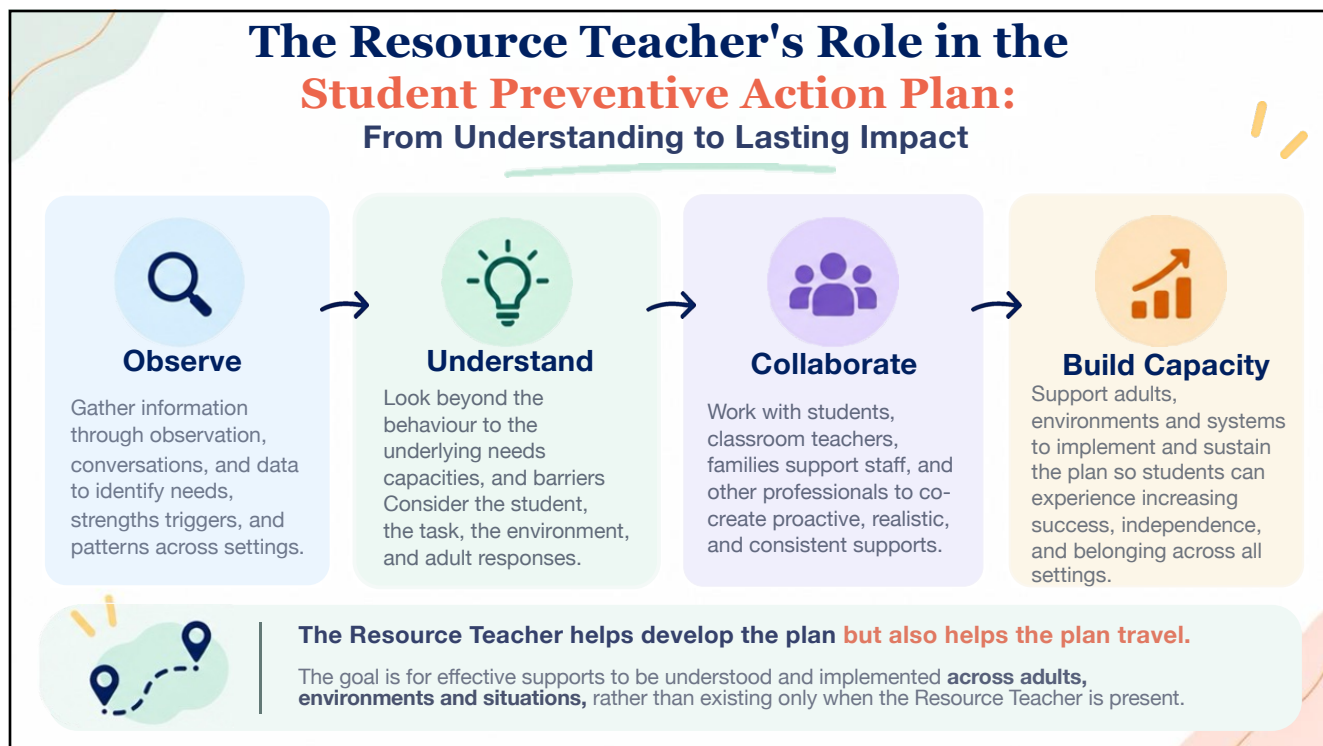
* The objectives are meant to be anchored in the adult posture and the selected support measures to scaffold/compensate for the needs and challenges
** The practices are meant to be preventive/proactive rather than waiting for the problem to arise to intervene. The division of adult roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined

*Prevent challenges.
Build brighter days.*

*Same template.
Greater possibilities.*

Access the template here:
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/tier-2-targeted-practices>

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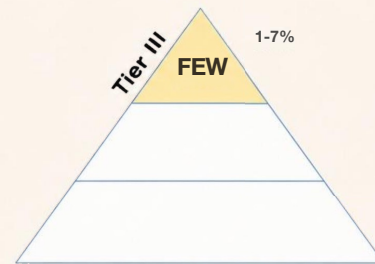
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INDIVIDUALIZED Practices for FEW Students at Tier 3



Personalized Support. Meaningful Impact.

Individualized, intensive practices designed to meet the unique and complex needs of a few students at Tier 3.



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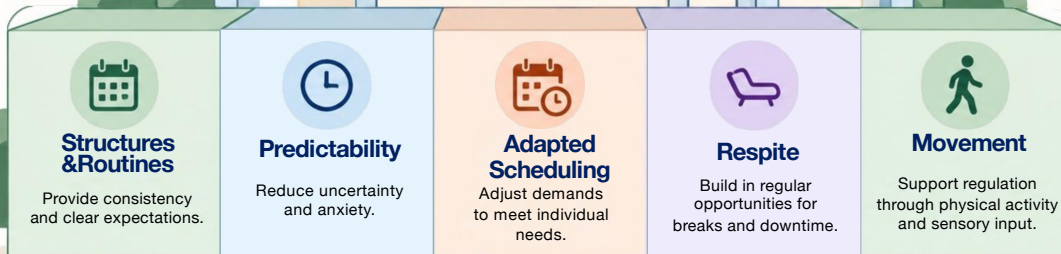
Tier 3 Demands a Non-Negotiable, Proactive Foundation

Relying on the key elements to effect change is preventative, proactive, and strictly non-negotiable at Tier 3.

A strong foundation creates safety, regulation, and opportunity for success.

Support today builds brighter tomorrows.

Consistency today. Greater possibilities tomorrow.



The right supports, in the right place, make a difference.



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Tier 3: At Tier 3, adult posture becomes even **more important – not less**
Challenging behaviour calls for a more intentional, regulated and relational response.

When behaviour becomes more challenging...

Adults naturally become more activated.

This is a normal human response — our nervous system reacts to stress and perceived threat.

Awareness of our own activation is the first step to staying regulated and intentional.

As adult activation rises, posture can shift:

	judgment	→	curiosity	
	control	→	calm authority	
	confrontation	→	connection	
	rigidity	→	flexibility	
	personalization	→	neutrality	

The more dysregulated the student becomes...

the more intentional the adult posture needs to become.

Not more permissive.

More intentional.

The more dysregulated the student becomes,
the more intentional the adult posture needs to become.

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The teacher's role changes at Tier 3
From individual eForts to a coordinated team approach.

Together we make a difference.

Teacher's role	What this means
Know the student	Understand the student's profile, triggers, early warning signs, strengths, communication patterns and effective supports.
Implement the plan	Consistently use agreed accommodations, prevention strategies, regulation supports and safety procedures.
Observe and communicate	Notice patterns and share useful classroom information with the support team.
Maintain connection	Continue communicating belonging, dignity and relational safety, particularly after difficult incidents.
Collaborate	Work within a coordinated team rather than independently trying to "fix" increasingly complex behaviour.

A coordinated approach leads to **better support** and **better outcomes**.

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Tier 3: Know the Student **Before** the Difficult Moment

Preparation leads to better support and safer outcomes.

Before difficulties occur, the teacher should ideally understand:

- What tends to trigger this student?
- What are the earliest signs that regulation is deteriorating?
- What does this student look like when regulated?
- What does increasing activation look like?
- What helps?
- What tends to make things worse?
- Which adult relationships are particularly regulating?
- What sensory/environmental factors matter?
- How does the student communicate distress?
- What is the agreed response when safety becomes a concern?

That is different from simply knowing:

**"This student has
behaviour problems."**

Knowing the whole student leads to more effective support, stronger relationships and better outcomes.

The more we know about the student, the better we can **anticipate, prevent and support.**

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Resource Teacher **involvement** at Tier 3

At Tier 3: Team Partner & Coordinator

Working closely with the student, family, and school team to plan, implement, and monitor individualized support.

1 **Contribute to individualized planning**

Bring knowledge of the student's strengths, learning profile, and support needs to help develop and refine the IPRC, IEP, Safety Plan, and other individualized plans.

2 **Help identify triggers and protective factors**

Gather and interpret information from observations, student voice, family input, and team discussions to understand what increases risk and what supports success.

3 **Align adult responses**

Support a shared understanding of how adults can respond consistently and appropriately across settings, based on the student's needs and plans (e.g., Safety Plan, Behaviour Support Plan).

4 **Support implementation across environments**

Help ensure supports, strategies, and plans are understood and used across classrooms support staff, specialists, administrators, and home, with regular communication and team check-ins.

5 **Monitor and communicate patterns**

Collect and share observations, progress, and areas of need with the team and family. Use this information to adjust supports, celebrate growth, and plan next steps together.

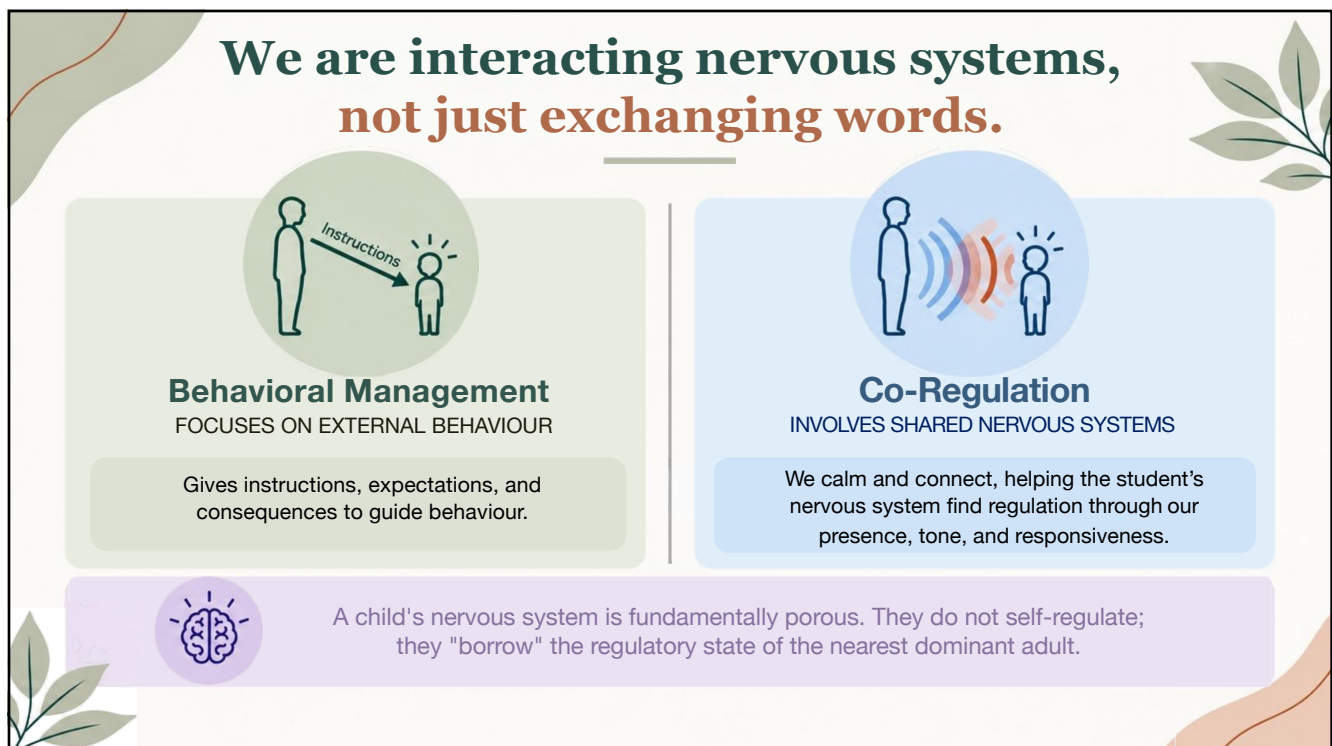
Focus on individualized, coordinated support

Build a collaborative, wraparound approach that meets the unique needs of the student, promotes safety and well-being, and supports progress toward their goals

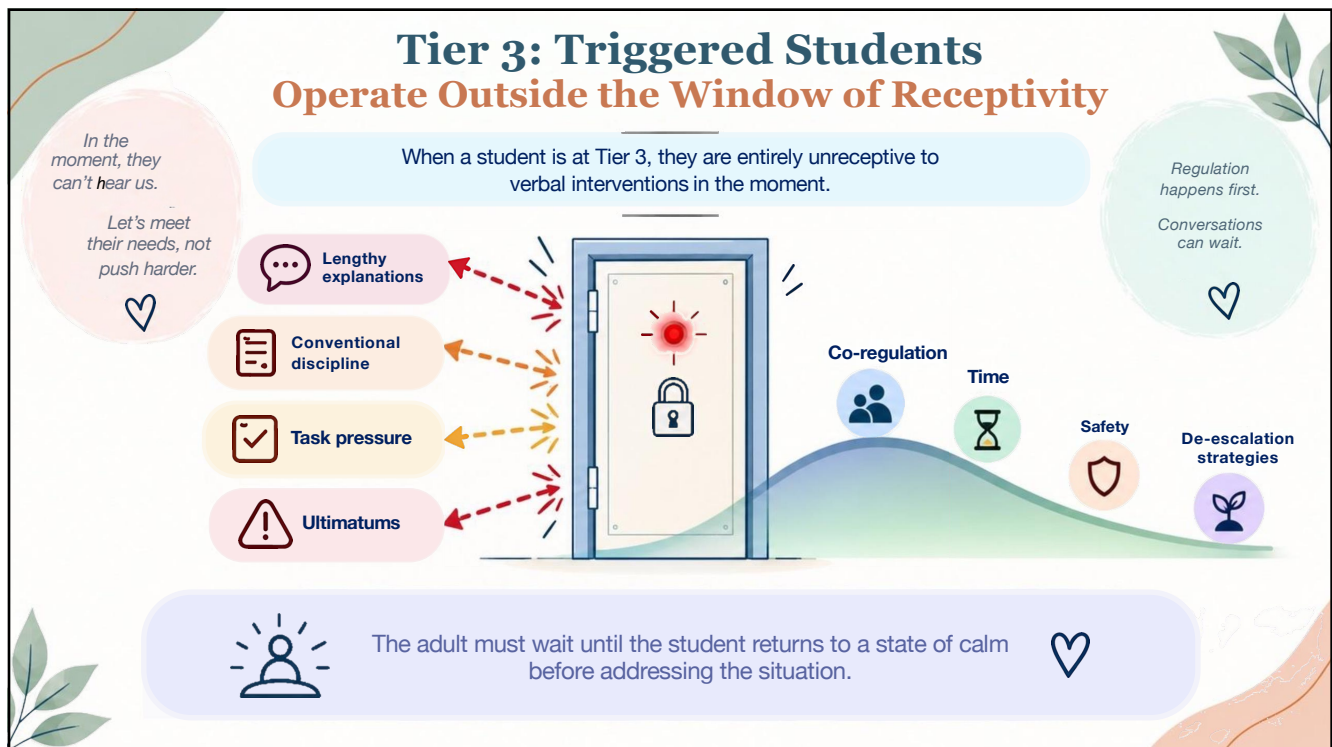
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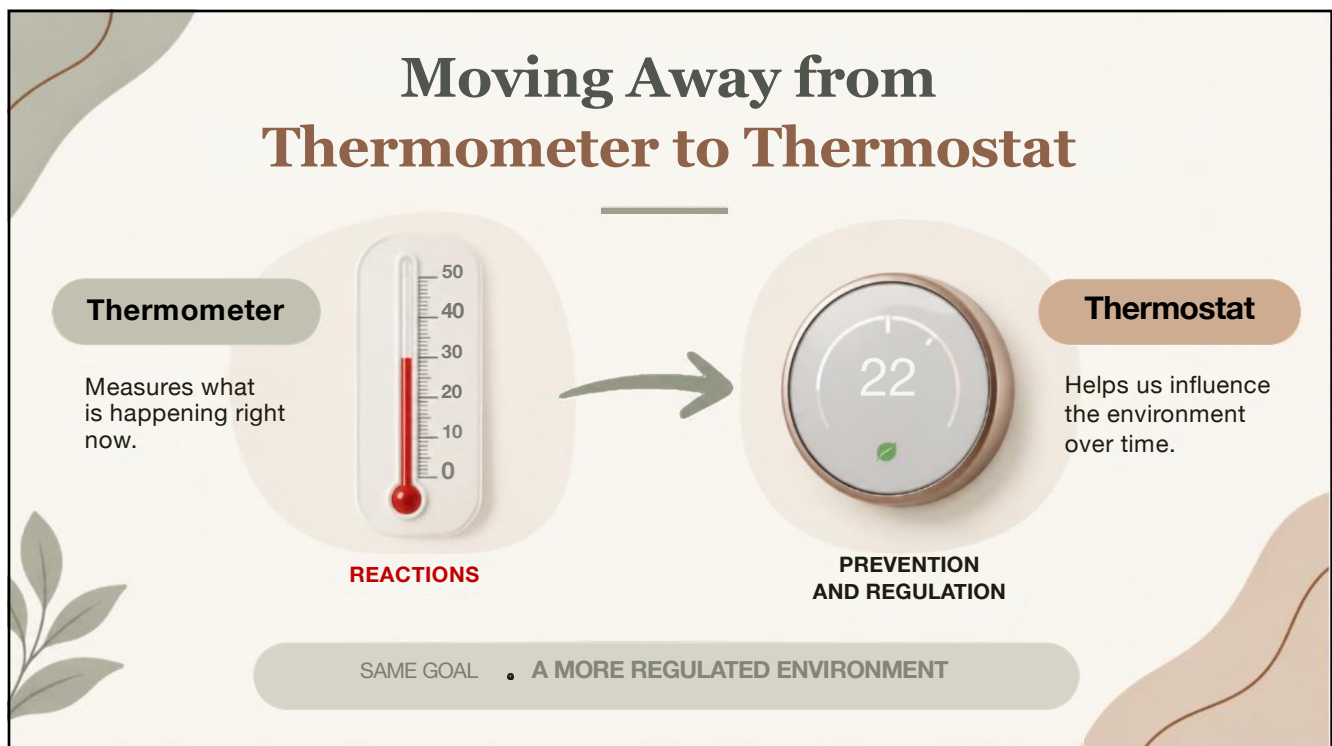
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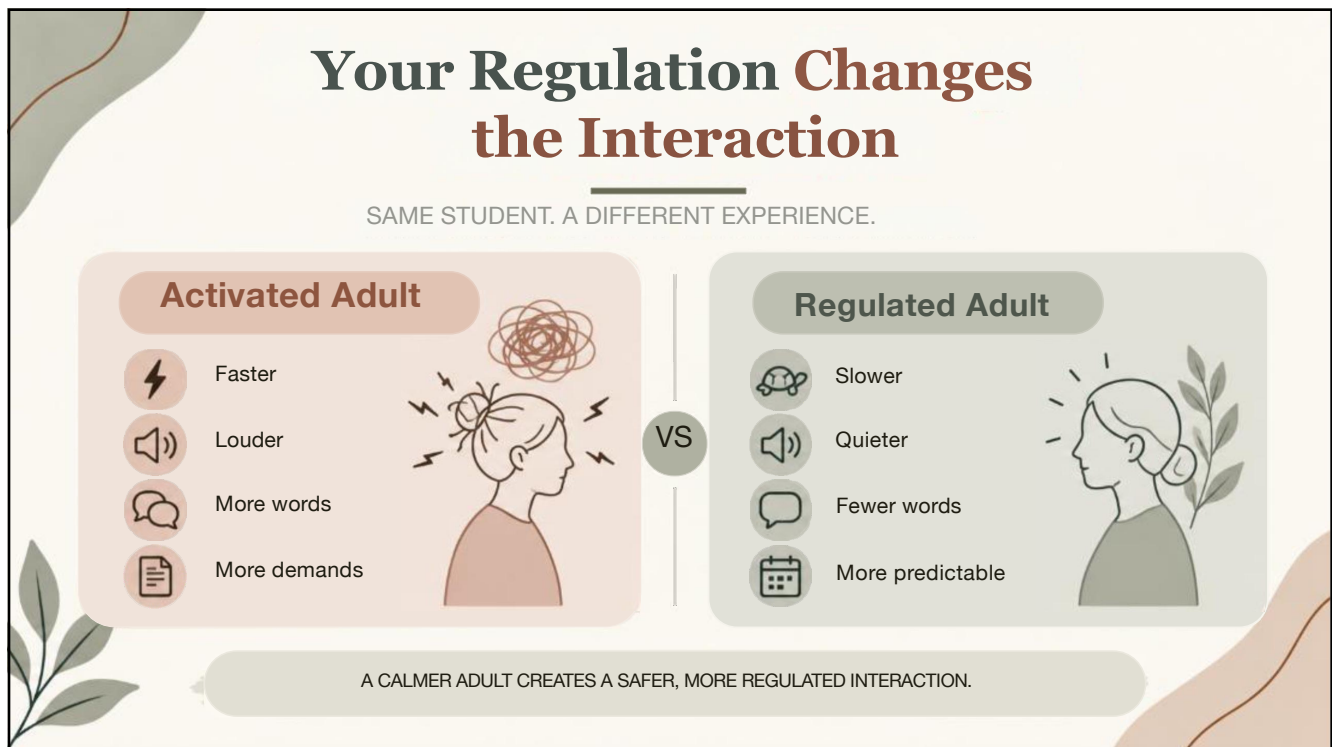
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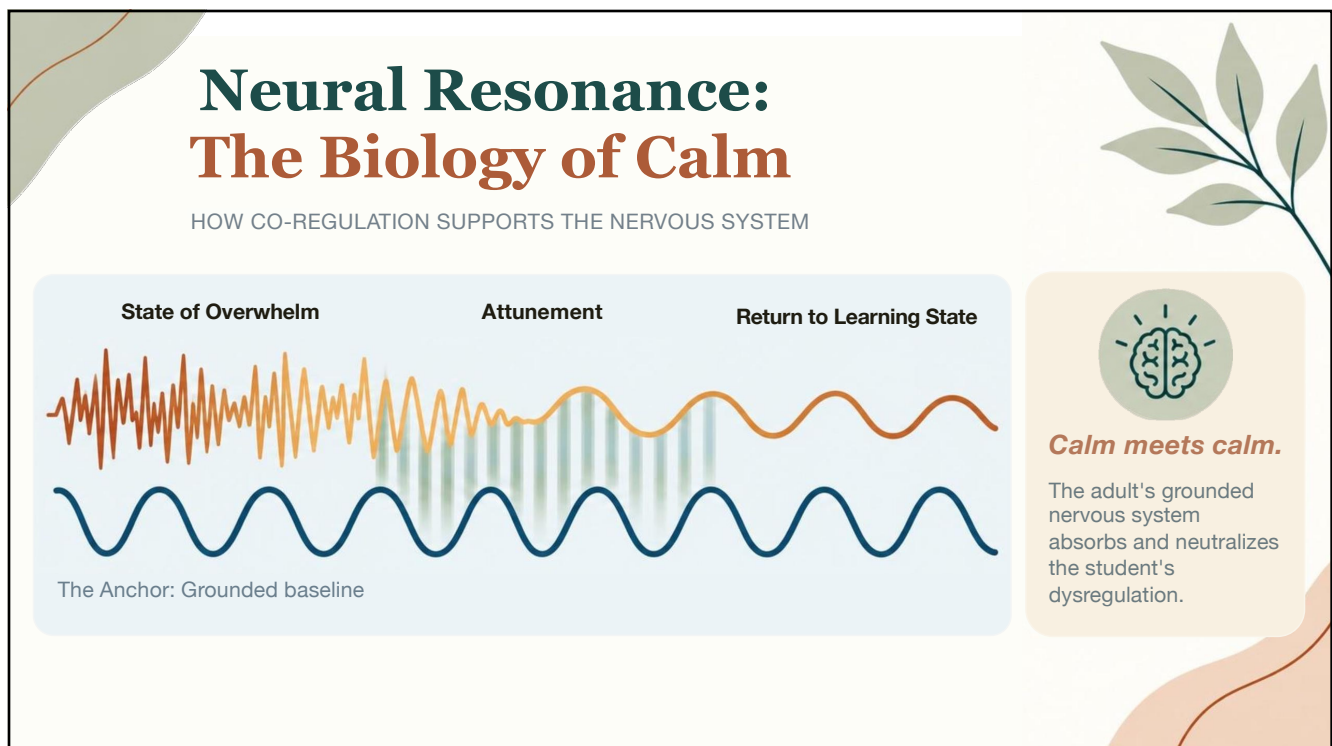
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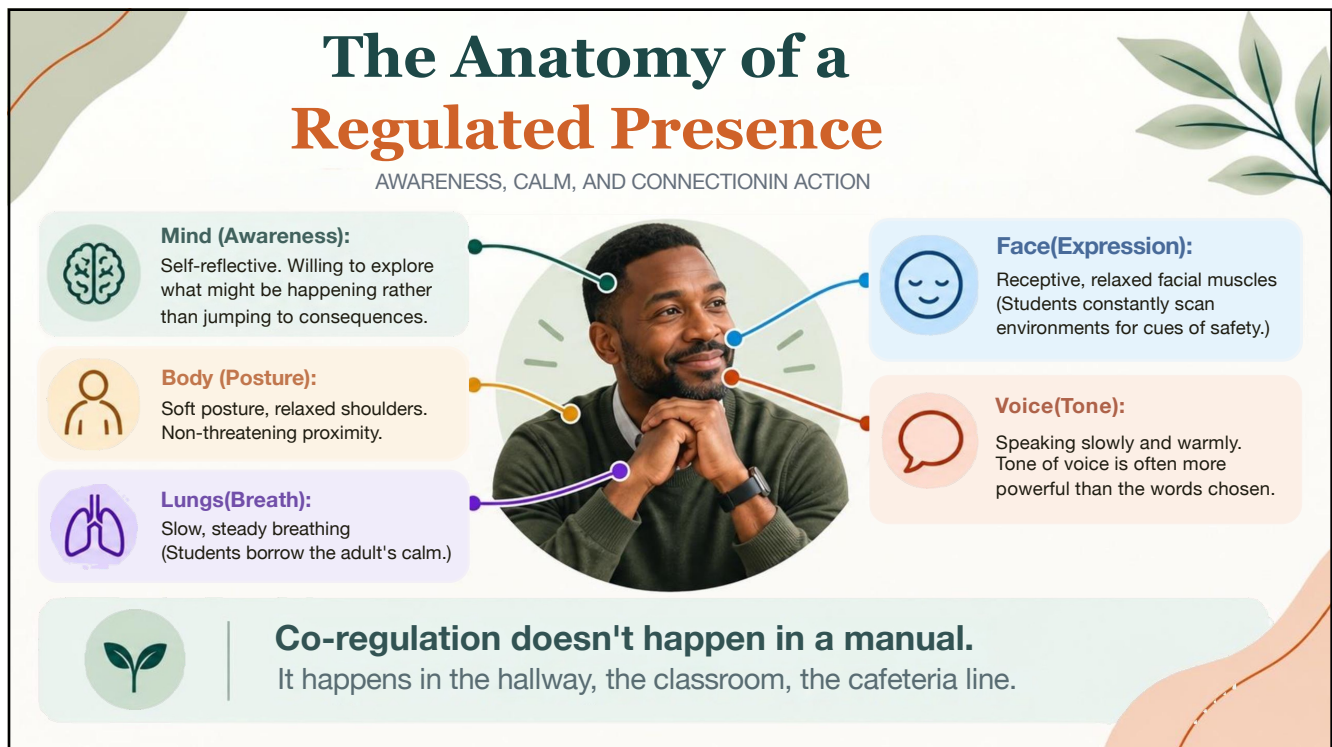
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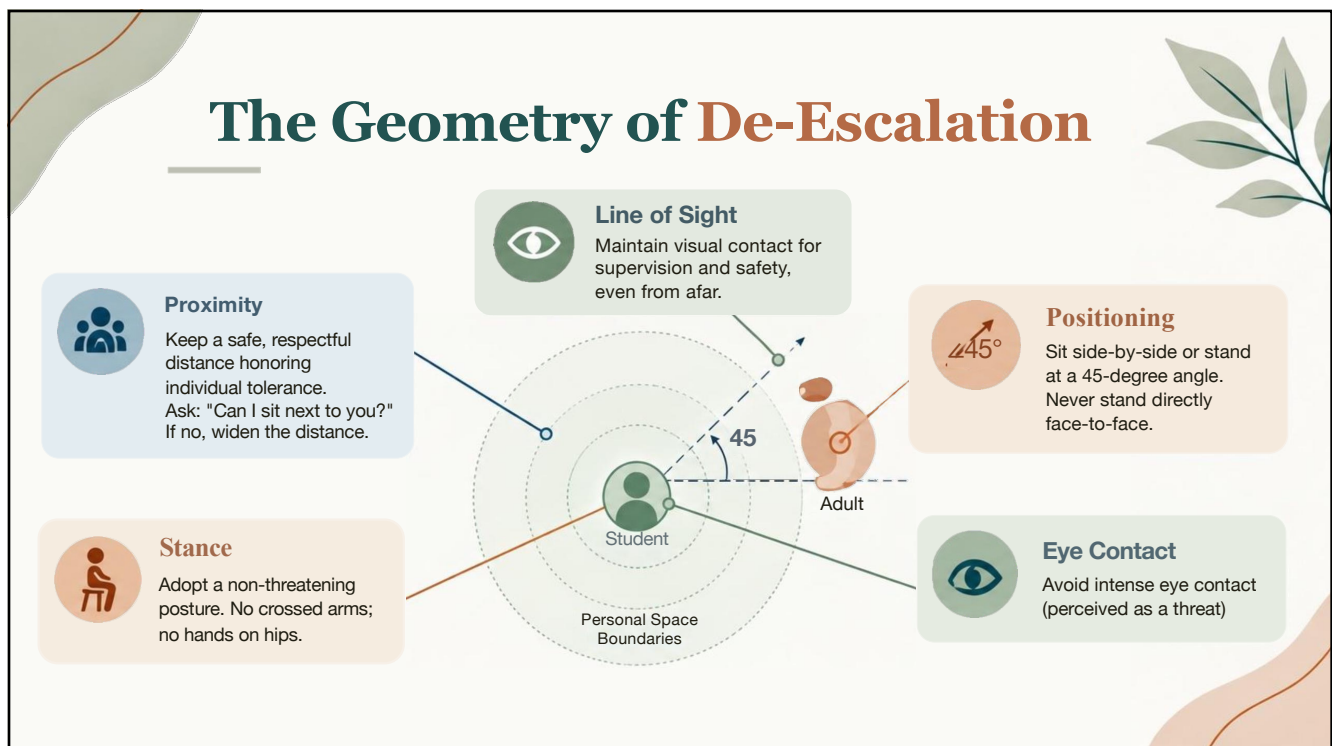
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Tier 3: Reduce Language as **Dysregulation Increases**

Less words. More regulation. A calmer, safer connection.

When a student is highly dysregulated, that is generally not the moment for:

- ✗ lecturing
- ✗ reasoning
- ✗ processing consequences
- ✗ asking multiple questions
- ✗ demanding explanations
- ✗ requiring apologies
- ✗ debating what happened

Instead, the teacher's communication becomes:

- shorter**
- slower**
- calmer**
- more concrete**
- more predictable**

For example:

Instead of:

"We've talked about this before. You know you're not allowed to leave your seat and speak to me that way. Why are you doing this again?"

Move toward:

"You're having a hard time right now. I'm here."

or

"I'm going to give you some space. We'll talk when you're ready."

The processing comes later, once the student is again available for it.

Support in the moment. Learning for the long term.

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Narrate, Don't Interrogate

*Different words.
A calmer tomorrow.*

- 1

During dysregulation, avoid questions that require reflection or explanation.

Questions like "Why did you do that?" can increase pressure and escalate distress.
- 2

Instead, try narrating what you observe:

 - "I can see your body is working really hard right now."
 - "Something feels really overwhelming."
- 3

Observation reduces pre while communicating understanding.

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Validate the Emotion



1 Validate the Emotion.

Validation tells students: "Your feelings make sense."
Examples include:

- "That was really disappointing."
- "I can understand why you're frustrated."
- "Anyone might feel overwhelmed in that situation."

Validation does not mean approving inappropriate behaviour.
It simply acknowledges the emotional experience before teaching alternative responses.

All feelings are welcome here.

2 Help Students Find Words.

Many students experience emotions before they can describe them. Adults can gently help by saying

- "It sounds like you felt left out."
- "I wonder if that felt unfair."
- "Your body looks frustrated."

Naming emotions helps organize the nervous system.

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Offer Grounding Statements

Simple words can make a big difference.



1 Use simple, calming statements.

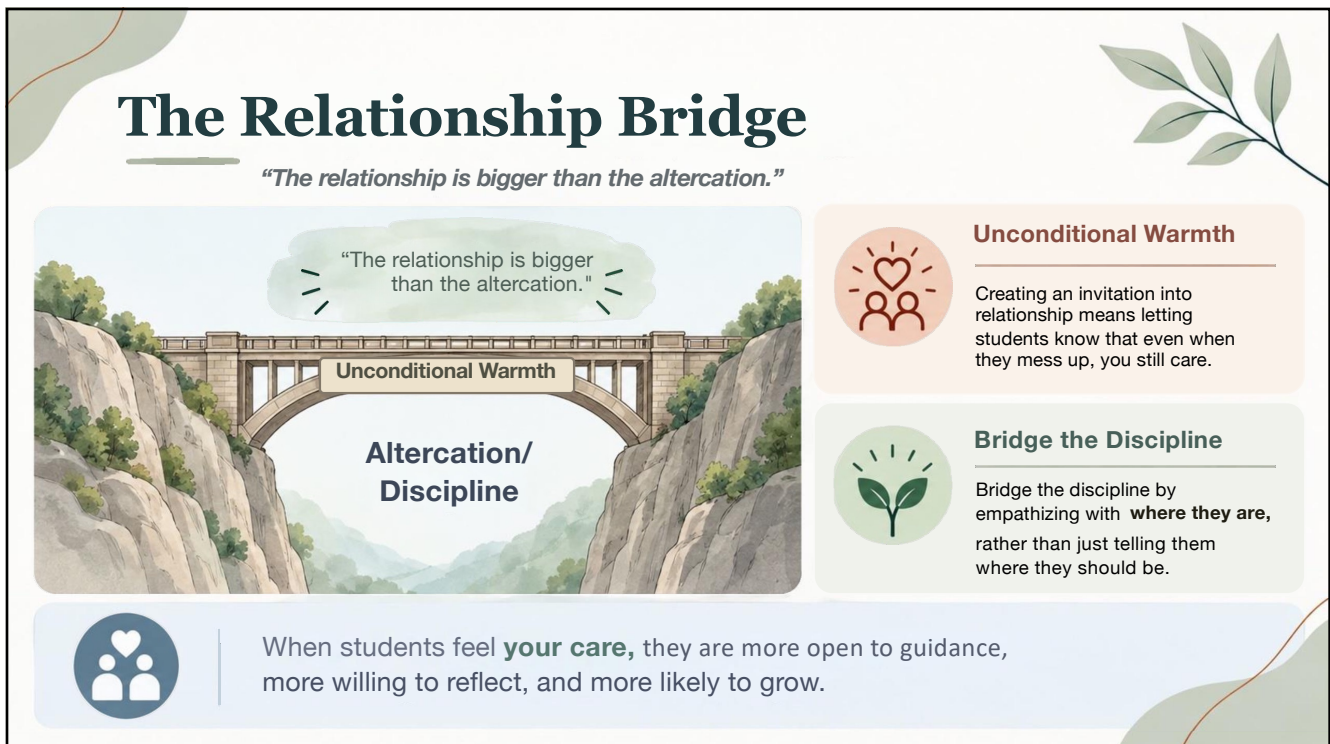
During moments of distress, fewer words are often more effective.

2 These brief statements communicate safety
more effectively than lengthy explanations.

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Student Safety Plan

A proactive tool to support safety, regulation, and success.

Plan for success
Identify early signs and triggers.

Use proactive strategies
Support regulation before challenges escalate.

Keep it collaborative
Involve the student, family, and school team.

STUDENT ACTIVE PREVENTION/SAFETY PLAN

Student name: _____ Date: _____
 School/Board: _____ Grade Level: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

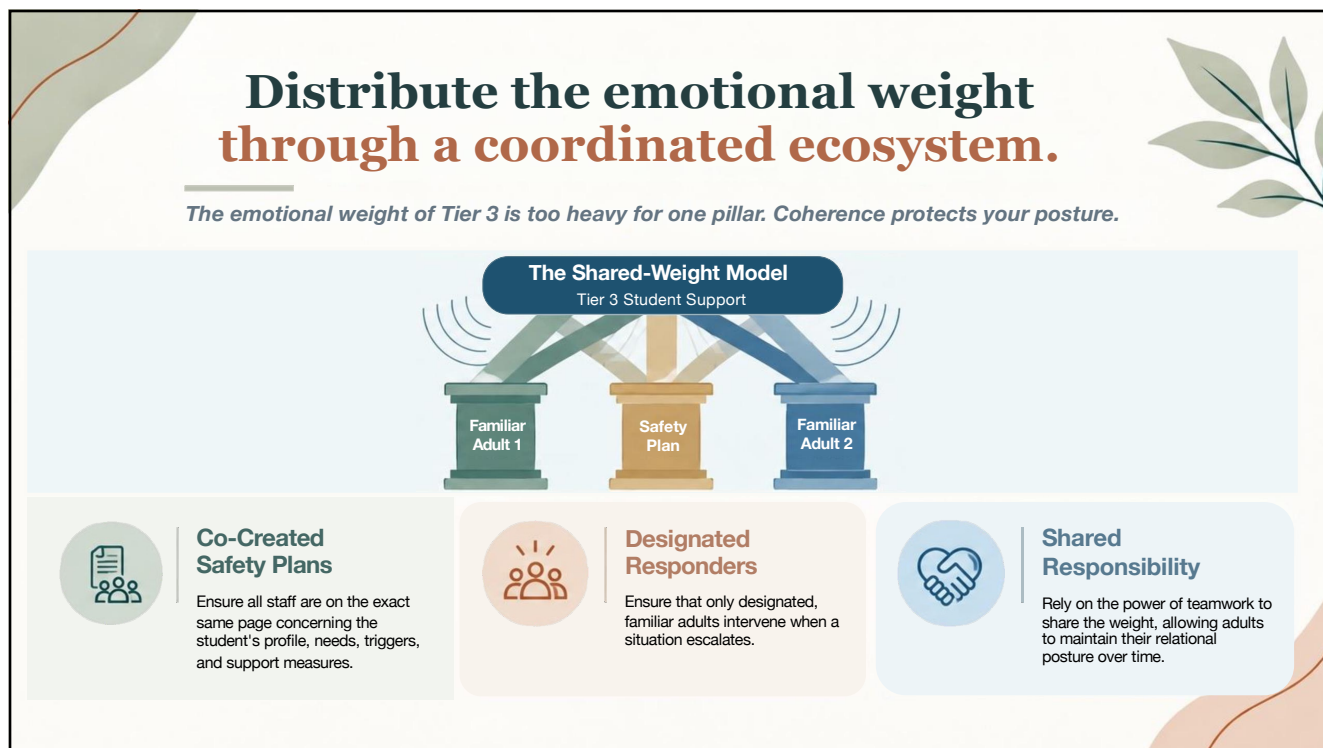
Student stress level	Observable signs	Adult posture and practices suggested	Adult posture and practices to avoid
When the student is regulated, engaged, and receptive			
When the student appears to be tense, annoyed, or frustrated			
When the student's stress response or frustration level is activated and beginning to escalate			
When the student's stress response has fully escalated and is disorganized. No longer receptive towards the adult.			
Post-intervention following an acting-out episode			

Safety today
Brighter tomorrows.

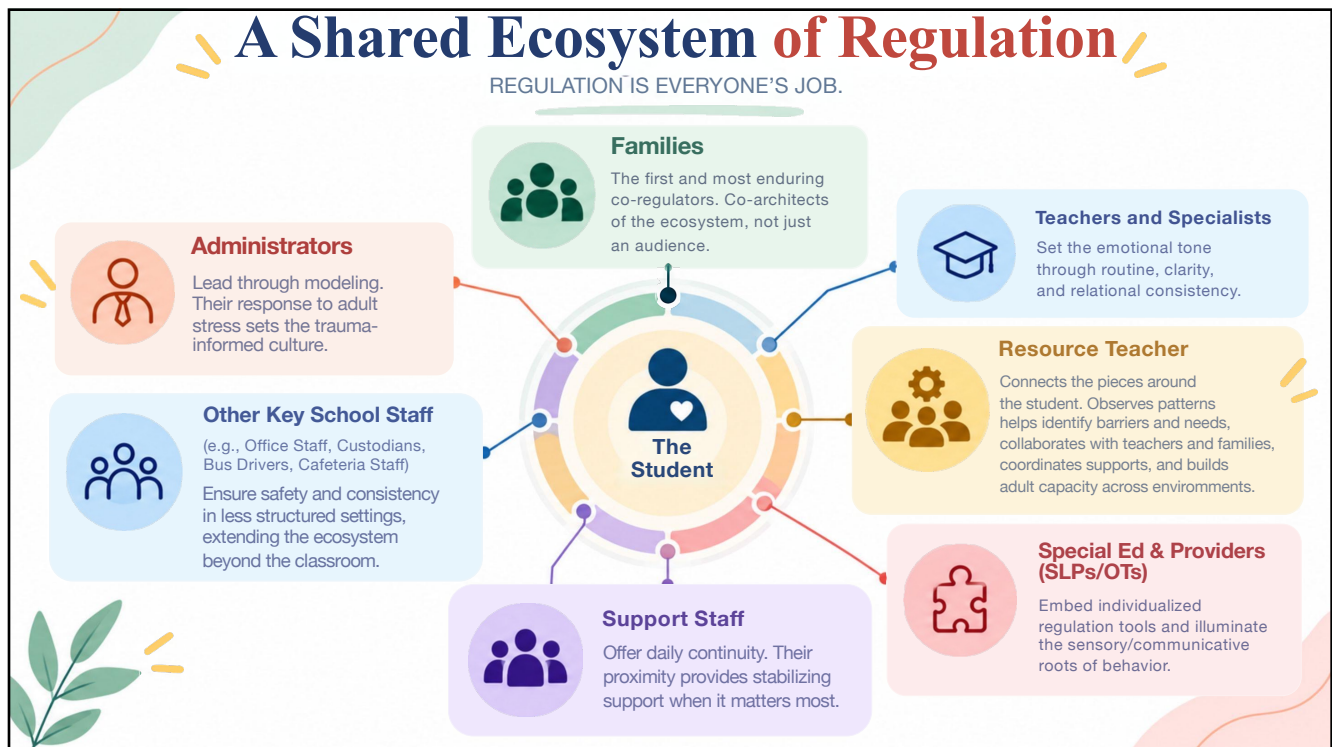
Support that grows at every stage.

Access the template here:
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/tier-3-individualized-practices>

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Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management

www.cebm.ca

Practical resources for real challenges.

Supporting Quebec's English school boards.

Also visit the CEBM Resource Center
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/>

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