

The DRAMA with teaching STUCK students
a tragedy in three acts

ACT I

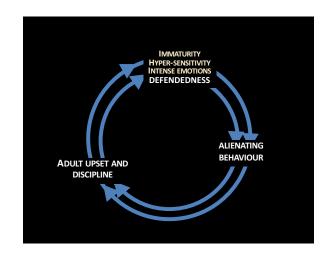
When students get stuck, adults start pushing.

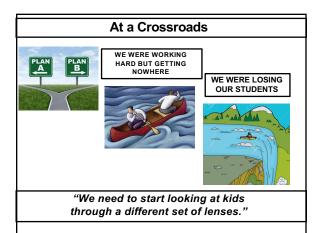
ACT II

When students feel pushed, they put on the brakes.

ACT III

When adults are resisted, they get more persistent.





# Shift in addressing Classroom Management and Problem Behaviour

What we see on the outside is telling us something about what is happening on the inside.



What we see influences what we do.

When we understand what is behind the behaviour we can then:

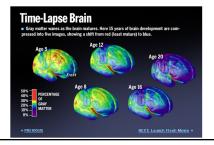
- choose interventions that will make a difference
- · avoid interventions that risk making things worse

#### **SHIFTING YOUR LENS**

- Attachment-based developmental paradigm Gordon Neufeld, Deborah MacNamara, Hannah Beach & Tamara Striiack. Mona Delahooke. etc.
- Research on the human brain (neuroscience) and its impact on emotion – Jay Giedd, Laurence Steinberg, Steven Porges, Daniel Siegel, etc.
- Trauma research Bruce Perry, Bessel Van der Kolk, McCrory, Gabor Maté, Reggie Melrose, Edmiston & Jackowski, etc.
- Research on play and its benefits for brain development and learning – Jaak Panksepp, David Elkind, Peter Gray, Iain McGilchrist, Pellis & Pellis, Lillard & Else-Quest, etc.

## **Maturation - Principles**

- 1. Natural Process that unfolds according to a plan it is in our nature to mature.
- 2. Maturation cannot be rushed



#### The IMMATURE child has a hard time:

- Finding information efficiently and quickly (underdeveloped Cerebellum)
- Seeing the "whole" picture (under-developed Corpus Callosum)
- Tempering their <u>instinctual reactions</u> with conflicting thoughts and feelings. (under-developed Prefrontal Cortex)

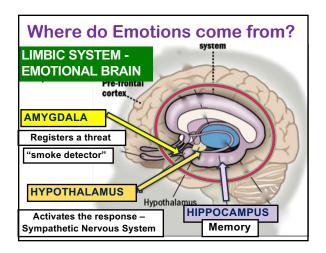
As a result they often KNOW better but cannot DO better as Emotion overwhelms REASON.

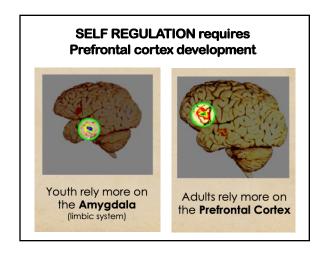
Behaviour will improve when maturation occurs, but this takes time.

## **Emotions - Principles**

#### Emotion has WORK to do.

- The ultimate job of emotion is to GROW THE CHILD UP.
- The immediate task of emotion is SURVIVAL.
- EMOTIONS need to be EXPRESSED to preserve healthy functioning and wellbeing.

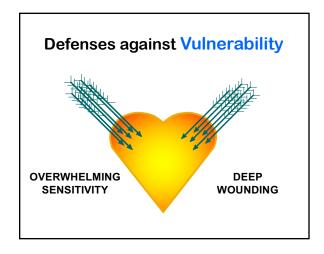


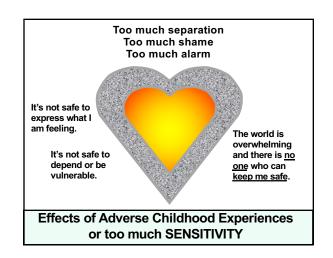


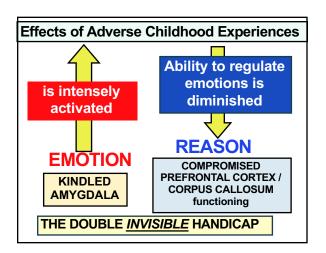


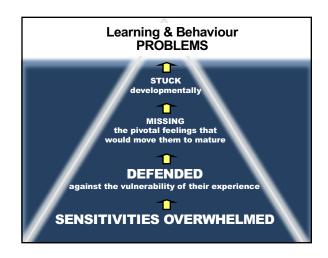
## **Vulnerability Principles**

- Growth requires softness which means being vulnerable.
- 2. When the brain senses it is too vulnerable, it protects itself
- 3. When the brain is **protecting** itself, it <u>cannot</u> <u>be growing</u>.
- Immaturity is at the root of, and the most likely explanation for, learning and behaviour problems.











#### Impact of Defendedness on Learning

New Learning increases the feelings of VULNERABILITY

- These students instinctively avoid doing anything that would lead them into vulnerable territory – trying new things, asking questions, presenting original ideas, exploring the unknown.
- These students are reluctant to look at their own mistakes or to attend to their failures as that would make them feel vulnerable.
- They find it difficult to admit to inadequacy or ignorance, or to confess confusion, as that would open them to feelings of shame
- They rarely ask for assistance from the teacher as that would create feelings of dependency and vulnerability.
- Since they cannot feel sad about what is not working, their brain is then less able to do "work arounds" – they get stuck in their learning disabilities.





- > A scowl when contact is made
- Mumbling or rude comment "under the breath"

TO REMEMBER from the student's point of view:

- Attachment feels vulnerable
- Better to reject than be rejected
- Waiting for the kindness to be turned into a "but", or critique, or a judgement about all they have done wrong

## **Attachment Principles**

- Attachment is the primary need of a developing being. Separation is the greatest fear.
- Growth takes place in the context of a safe Attachment.
- A "safe" Attachment figure both cares about and cares for (takes charge of) the dependent being.
- 4. Being dependent requires the ability to tolerate vulnerability.



### What works

#### A Quiet Safe Place

- Calm adults
- Calm environment
- ·Lots of predictability and structure

#### Compassionate containment

- Close proximity to a CALM contained adult
- •Research shows that the brain is soothed by the touch and close proximity of a caring adult. *Perry, Coan*

#### **BEHAVIOUR CHANGES WHEN...**

#### **Maturation**

Behaviour changes as the brain matures

## **Emotions**

Behaviour changes when emotions are felt

## **Vulnerability**

Behaviour changes when vulnerability is protected

#### **Attachment**

Behaviour changes when students are attached to adults

### WHAT DOESN'T WORK

Conventional Classroom Management and Problem Behaviour Centered Intervention



- Rewards/Consequences
- Behaviour management tracking systems
- Being sent to the Principal's office



- Detention/Reflection Room
- Student behaviour contract



- Zero tolerance discipline measures
- Suspensions

It doesn't help change or improve student behaviour and it exacerbates the problem with troubled students

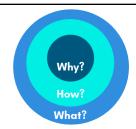
#### WHAT DOESN'T WORK

# Student IEP and Action Plan based on child-centered goals

Making them responsible and accountable for goals they cannot consistently attain on their own is a recipe for disaster:

- Highly challenging students often KNOW better but cannot DO better as Emotion overwhelms REASON.
- These students are reluctant to look at their own mistakes or to attend to their failures as that would make them feel vulnerable.
- To be able to regulate emotions it requires emotional growth and tender feelings, which highly challenging students often lack and struggle with. They need us to co-regulate.
- Behaviour will improve when maturation occurs, but this takes time. In the meantime, they need our support and accompaniment to compensate for their immaturity.

It doesn't help change or improve student behaviour and it exacerbates the problem with troubled students



## **HOW: process**

specific actions taken to realize the why

# CHILDREN GROW AND MATURE WHEN ADULTS CREATE A RELATIONAL GARDEN





We are gardeners, not sculptors.

We create the environment and wait patiently for the growth.

The consistency that children need is the knowledge that they can count on the adults in their world to provide what they need.

We must have faith in the developmental plan.

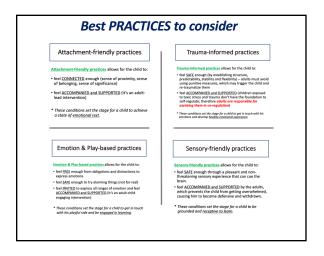
Gordon Neufeld, PhD.

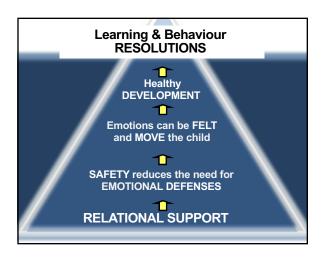


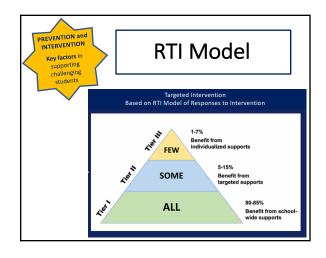
#### **INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES**

- Respect and compensate for the level of Immaturity
- Come along-side the emotional experience by allowing Emotional Expression and encouraging Play
- Protect the Vulnerability
- Preserve and maximize the Attachment relationship

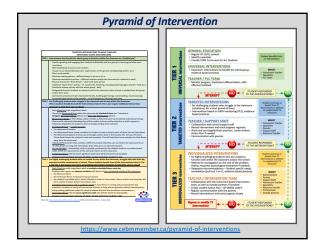
Working with behaviour at its roots for lasting change.

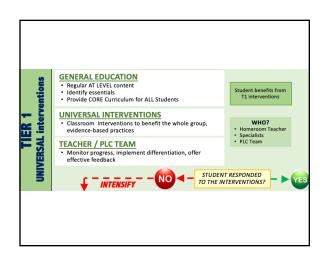


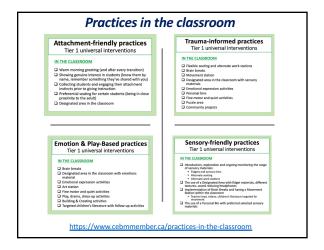


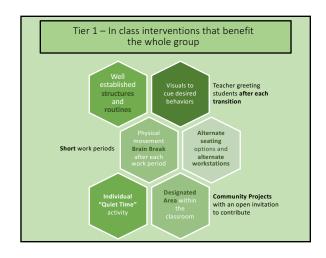


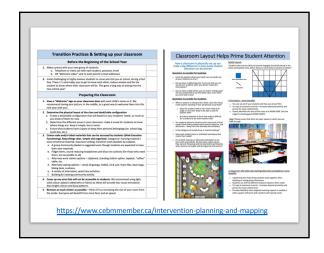






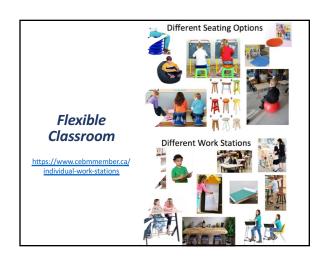






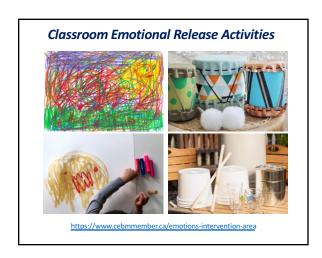




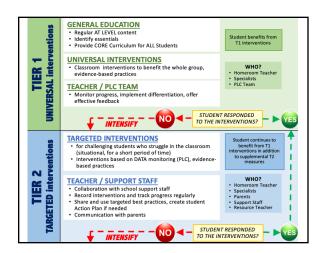


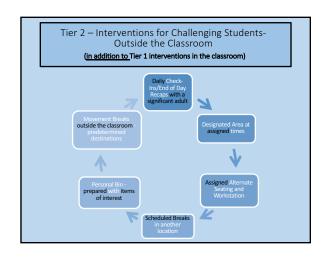


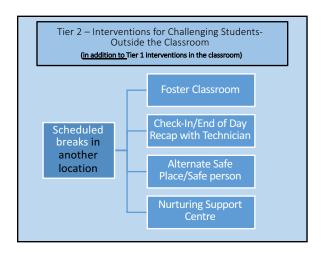


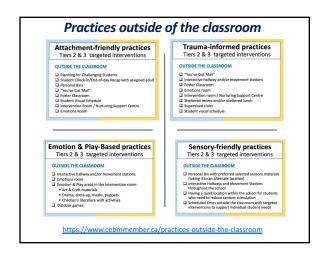


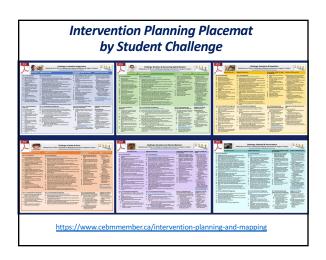


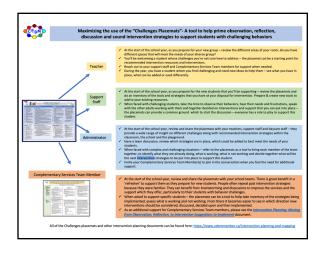


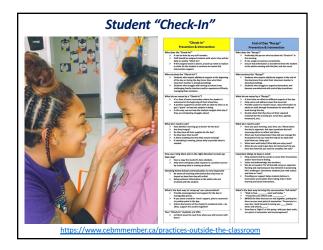






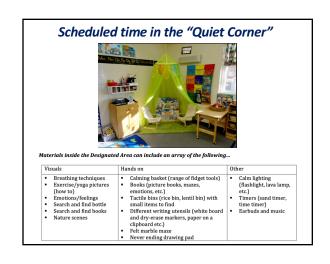




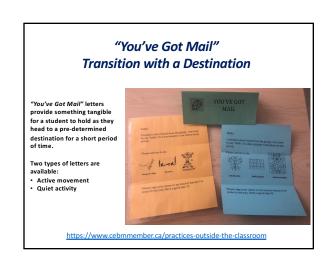


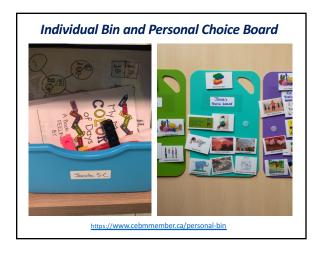
















#### **NSC - KEY INTERVENTIONS**

- Caring adults
- Calm environment
- Structure and predictability
- · Opportunity to talk
- · Variety of calming spaces
- · Variety of activities to help process emotions
- ACADEMIC SUPPORT
- · Learning tools
- Communication with teachers to link intervention strategies back to the classroom

GOAL: TO KEEP THE STUDENT ACADEMICALLY ENGAGED

# NSC - DESIGNATED AREAS ELEMENTARY

- ENTRY AREA
- ACTIVITY SPACES
- COCOONING/CALMING SPACES
- **O WORK SPACE WITH ADULT**
- INDIVIDUAL WORK STATIONS
- **O INTERVENTION MATERIALS AT ARM'S REACH**
- **O WORK BASKETS**
- SCHOOL SUPPLIES IN COMMUNITY BASKETS
- KITCHEN AREA







