



BLUEBERRY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

# An Attachment & Trauma Responsive School

*Love Learning, Love Life!*

- **Attachment & Trauma Awareness – why?**
- **Emotion coaching**
- **How we manage Emotional Dysregulation in the Classroom**





# Attachment & Trauma Awareness

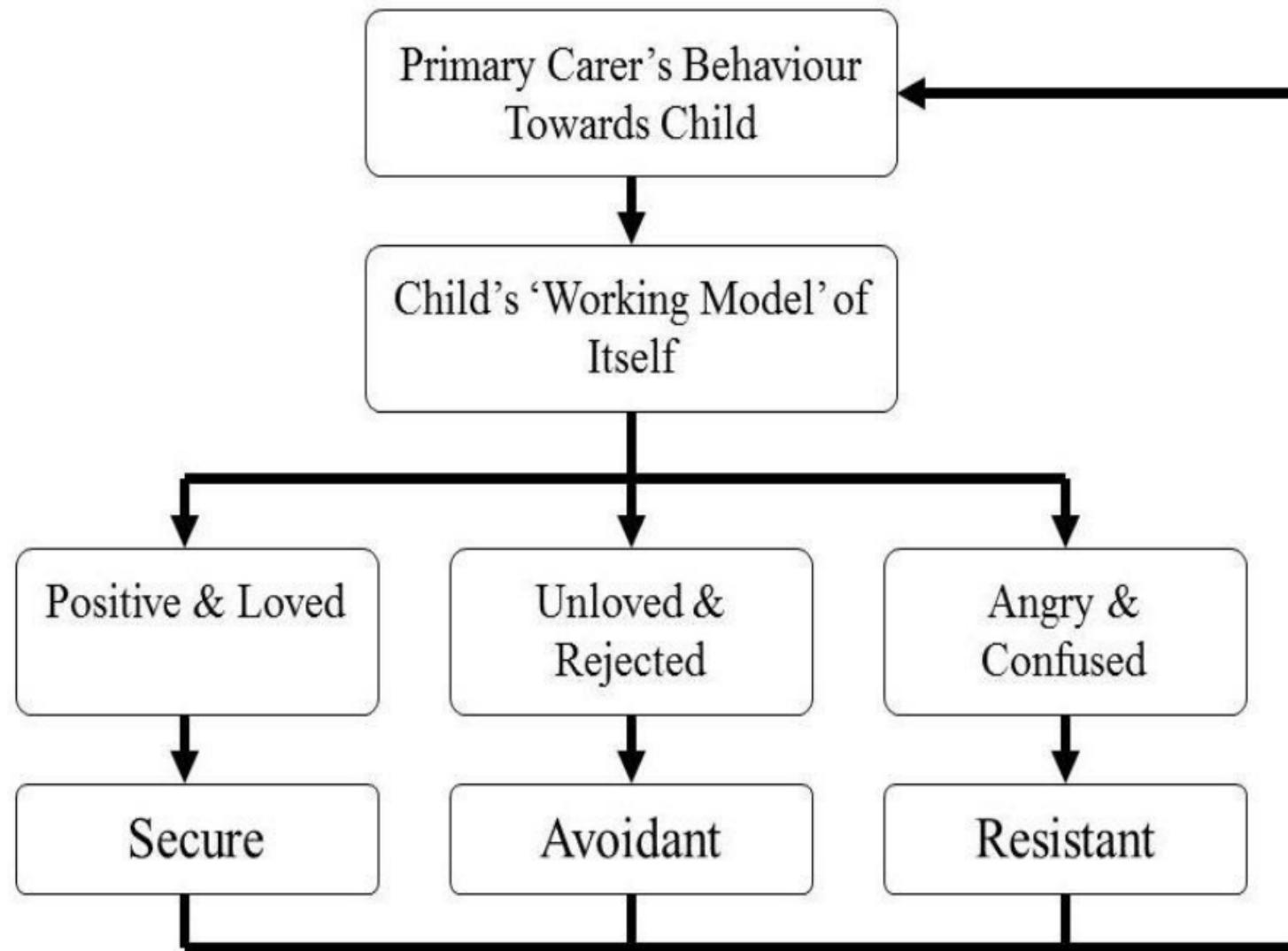


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMbhB2l4ut0>



'building connections, improving outcomes.'

# Attachment Theory: John Bowlby

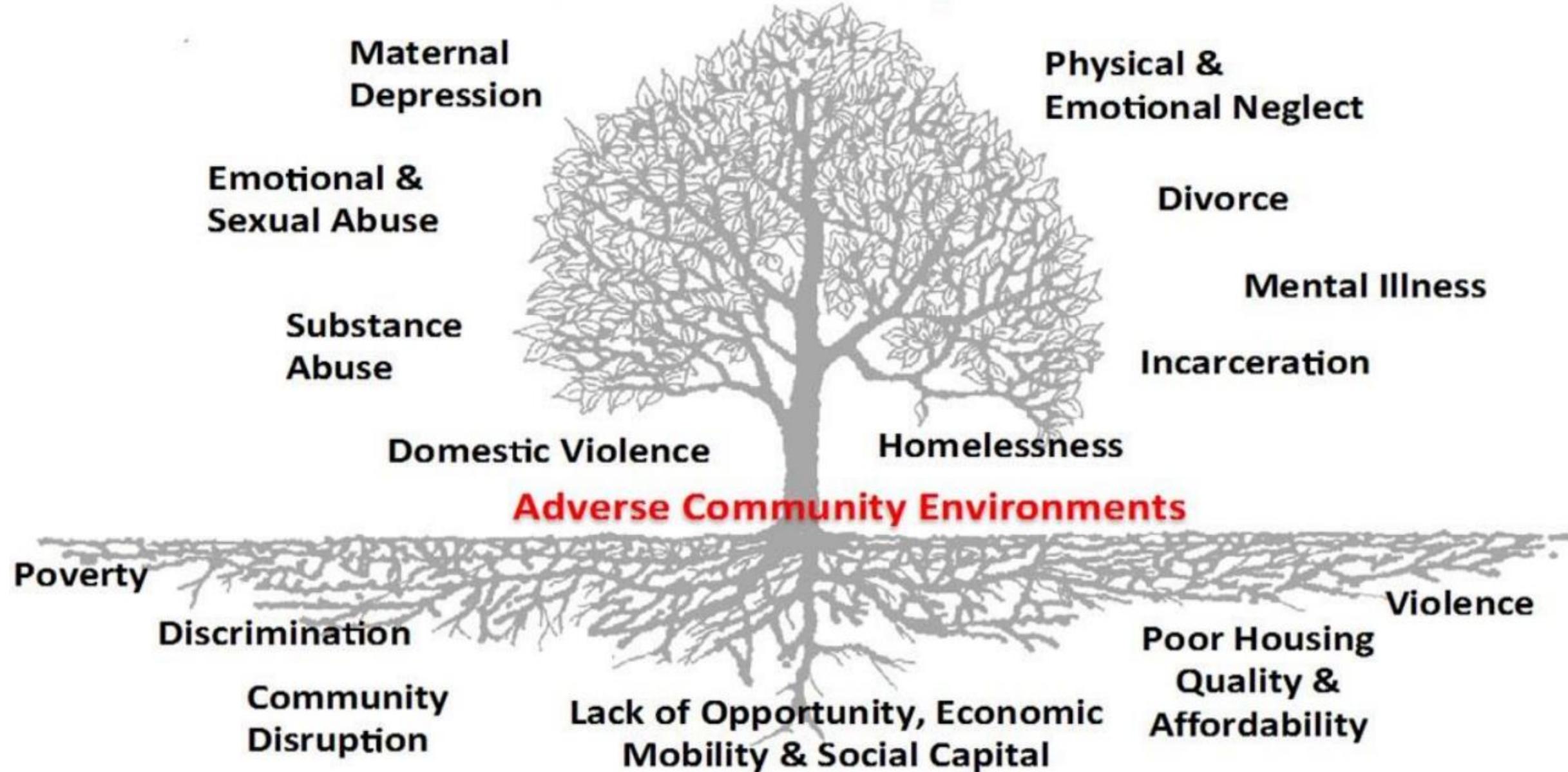


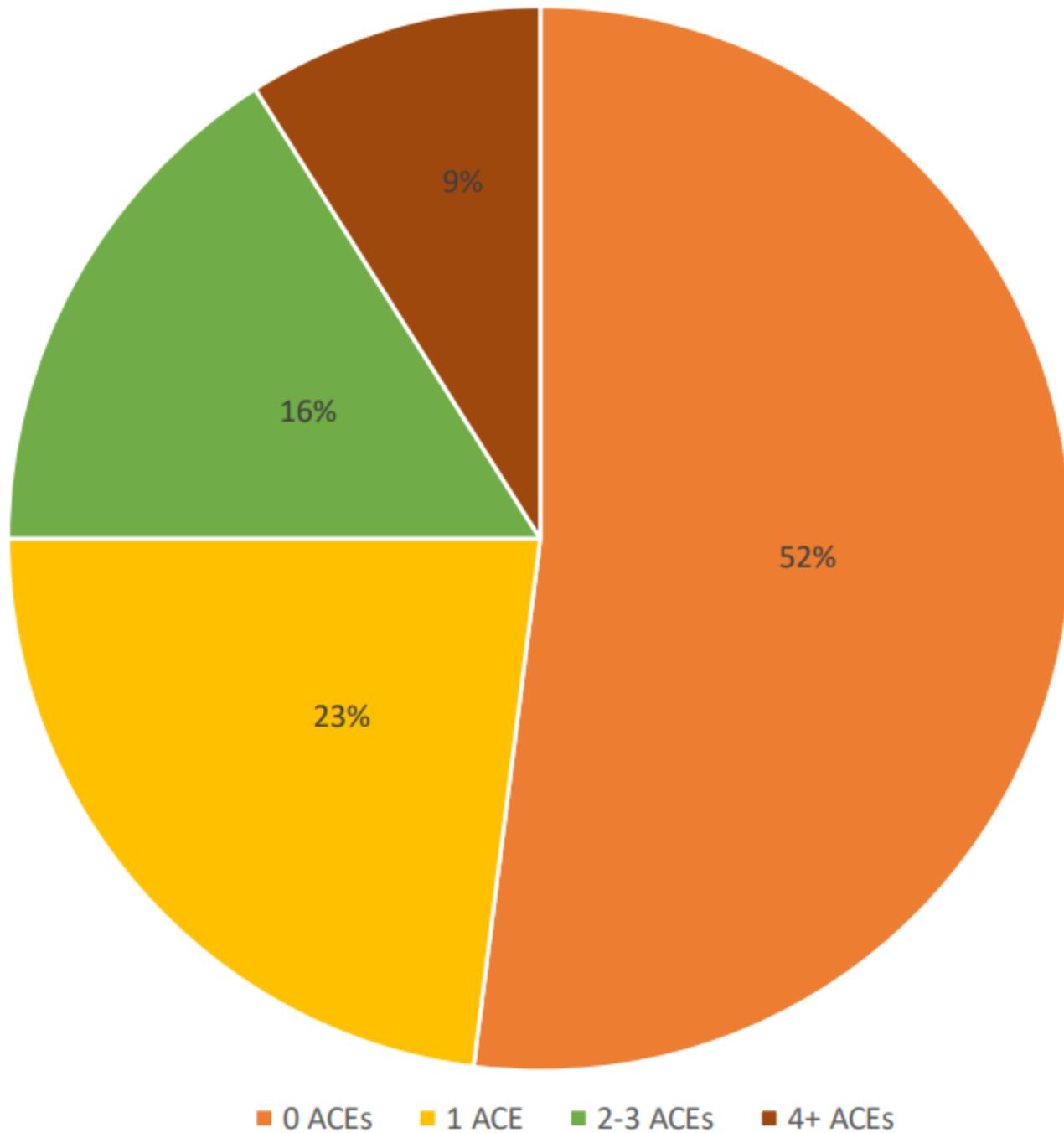
# Securely attached children...

- Can stand on their own two feet when they start school
- Can say how they feel and control their behaviour when they feel difficult emotions
- Control impulses and manage difficult emotions
- Can self regulate and re-set emotionally
- Expect adults to be helpful



## Adverse Childhood Experiences





**How  
common  
are ACES?**

# Types of Trauma

## Emotional

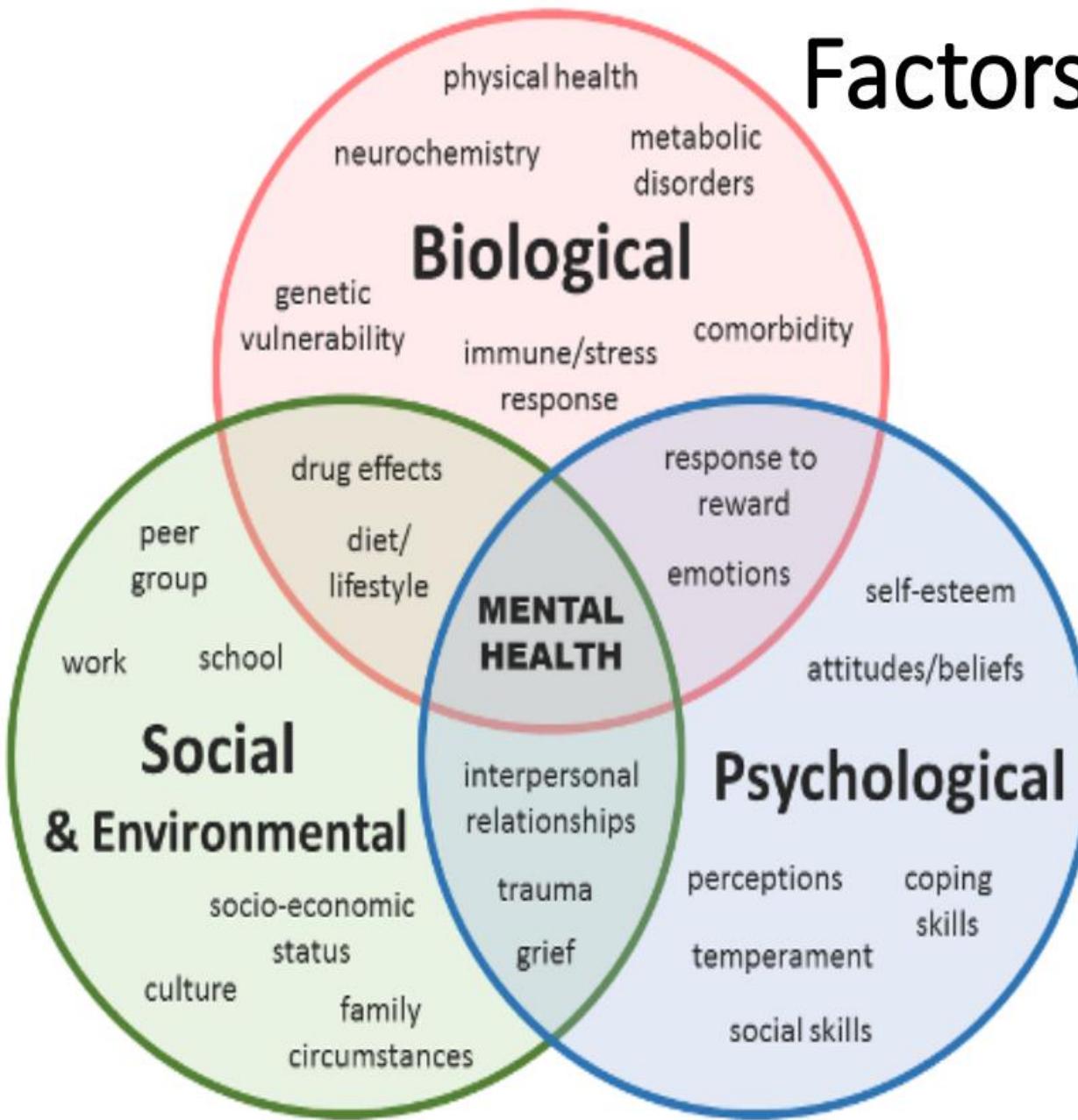
- Mental response to a disturbing event or situation
- Acute: Response during and directly after an event
- Chronic: Long-term response from prolonged or repeated events
- Complex: Response to multiple events that may or may not be related

## Physical

- Serious bodily harm or injury

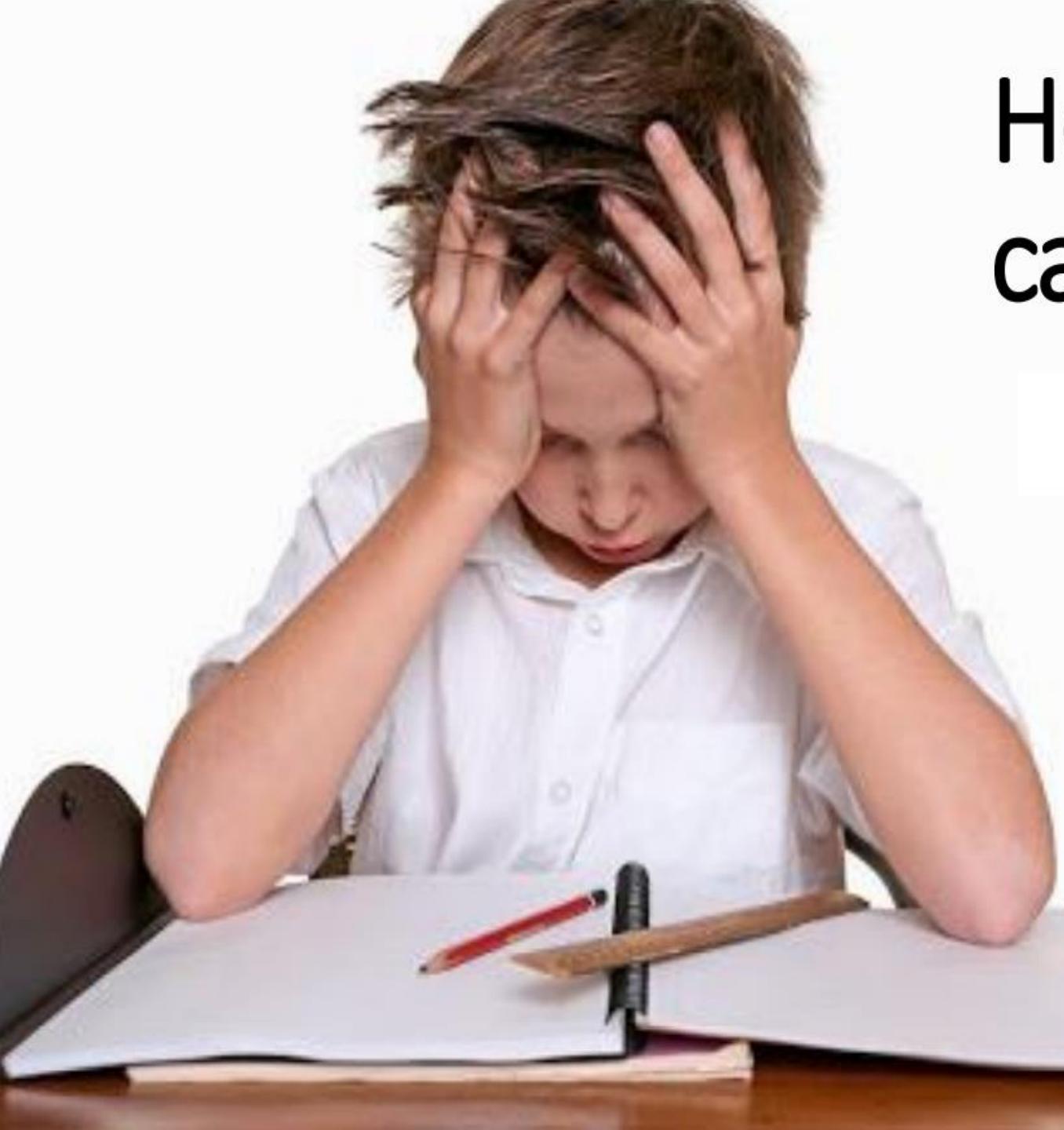


# Factors Affecting Mental Health



Mental health is determined by the following areas of wellbeing:

- Psychological
- Biological
- Social and Environmental



# How stress and trauma can affect people

Decreased ability to:

- *Focus and concentrate*
- *Recall and remember*
- *Organize and process information*
- *Plan and problem-solve*

“In a trauma and attachment aware classroom, the adults act as behaviour detectives, always looking at what drives the unwanted behaviour so that strategies can address the causes of challenging behaviour and not only the results.”

(Rebecca Brooks, 2020)



A photograph of a shattered, cracked mirror. The reflection in the mirror shows a tree on fire, with bright orange and yellow flames visible against a dark, smoky background. The mirror itself is dark and reflects the surrounding environment, including some power lines in the sky.

How do  
we deal  
with our  
own  
trauma?



# **How we manage emotional dysregulation in the classroom**





## **Six basic emotions – can you recognise them?**



# Emotional Dysregulation In Children



Signs of emotional dysregulation in children may include feeling impatient, becoming very upset or angry when demands are placed on them, and having other types of outbursts without consistency and structure.

Children learn emotional regulation skills from their parents, so if their parents struggle or have mental health issues that are not being treated or managed, children may develop dysregulation as a response to their environment.

It's important children feel safe and are allowed to display their emotions and learn how to manage them **from a place of compassion, not punishment.**

# Emotional Dysregulation Symptoms

The main symptoms of emotional dysregulation are intense emotional reactions and poor management of emotions. These emotions can be anything from sadness to anger or irritation.

Feelings are also exacerbated for those dealing with emotional dysregulation and may appear to be exaggerated. Emotional dysregulation symptoms may include:

- **Intense emotional reactions compared to the situation that triggered them**
- **Not being able to calm down**
- **Having negative thoughts**
- **Feeling out of control**
- **Difficulty coping in a healthy way**
- **Severe depression**
- **Disordered eating**
- **Conflicted personal relationships**
- **Feeling confused by emotions**
- **Anxiety**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Self-harm behaviours and thoughts**
- **High risk sexual behaviours**
- **High conflict relationships**

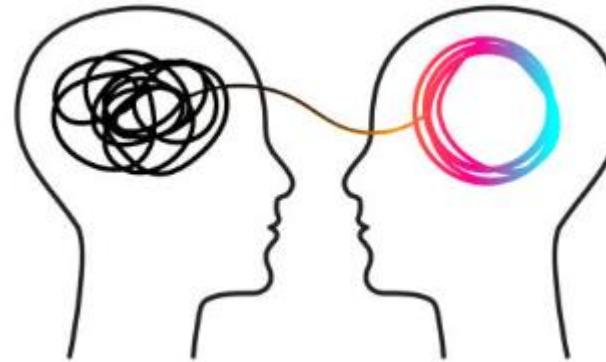


## Adults can help

Helping children to realise what they're feeling is really important.

In the early stages, we help children to understand what they are feeling and to control it. This is called **“Co-regulation”** because we’re working in partnership with children.

As children grow up we want them to be able to **“self-regulate”** their emotions. This means that they can control their emotions in social situations such as at school and at work.



**Emotion Coaching** is a way of doing this

# Strategies we use to support Emotional Regulation

*Expecting our children to be able to recognise when their emotions are heightening is a big ask.*

*Asking them to stop and to calm themselves down again is an even bigger one!*

*So, how can we help them get on the path to regulating their emotions?*

**“When a child can’t calm down, they need connection and comfort, not criticism and control.”**  
***Jane Evans (Early Childhood Trauma & Anxiety)***

Showing **empathy** is the first step to connecting with them when they’re emotionally heightened.

Showing children that we have time for and respect their feelings helps them to feel open, safe and supported. Regardless of how unreasonable their feelings are, that’s how they’re feeling!

Discussions about whether their reaction was warranted or not can come once they have calmed down enough to think logically (reasoning).

Once they feel a **connection** with us in their emotional state, they will be open to our directions and strategies (co-regulation).

- A trusted adult **makes connections** with pupils
- Supports them to feel safe and manage their feelings
- Strengthens **relationships**
- Increases understanding and empathy
- Adult connects with the child's emotions rather than judging the child's **reasons** for feeling this way
- **Connecting** with the child **before correcting** the behaviour



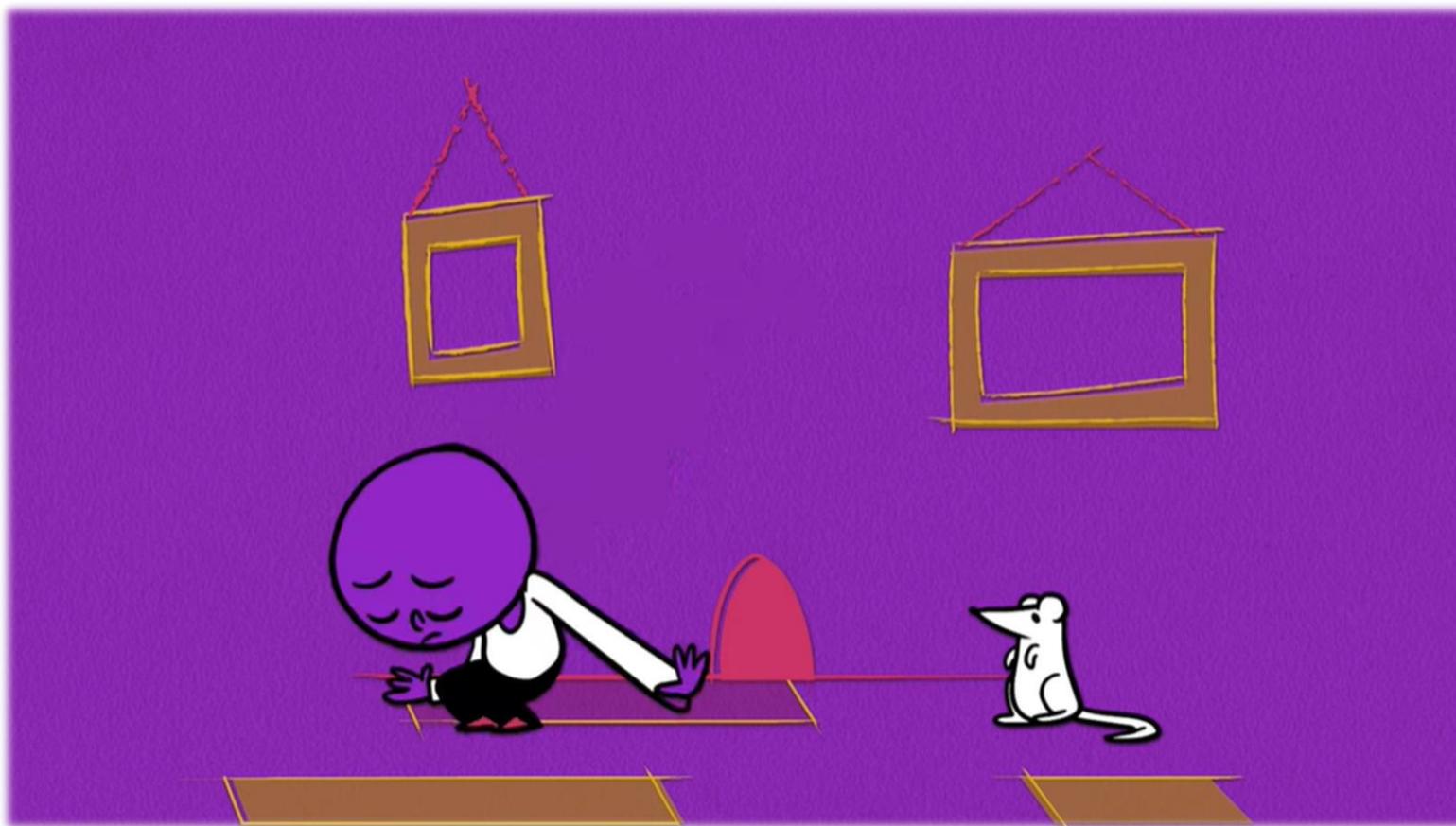
**Recognise  
Relate  
Regulate  
Reason**

# Losing control of our emotions

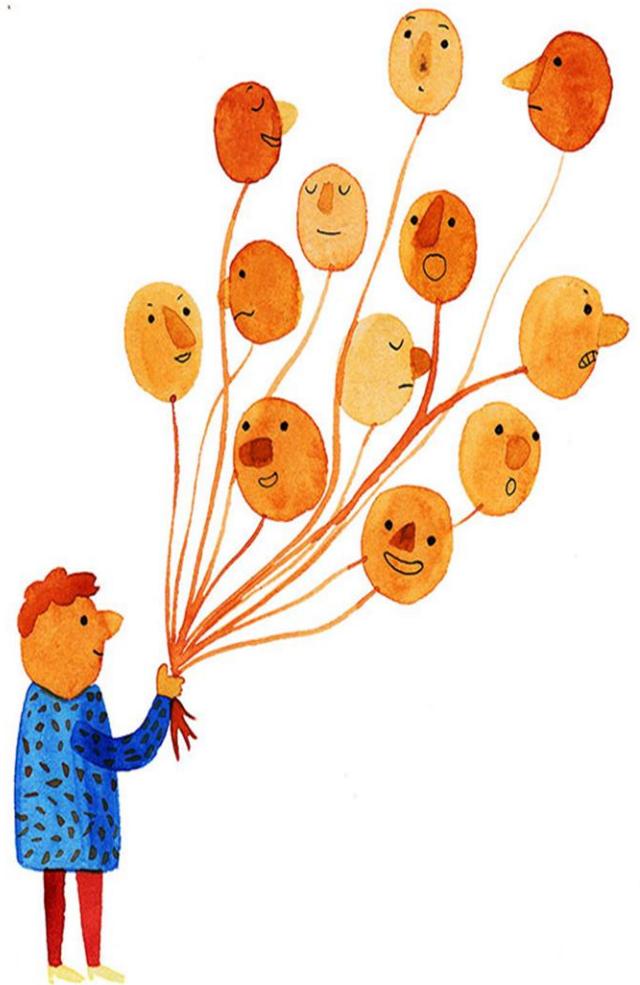


[Click here for  
video](#)

# Child-friendly explanation...



[Click here for  
video](#)



# So how do we emotion coach?

*(practising putting our lids  
back on)*

**Recognise  
Regulate  
Relate  
Reason**

*(Dr Bruce Perry 2017)*

1. Notice the child's behaviour and tune in to the emotion beneath **(recognise)**
2. Connect with the child and recognise emotional times as opportunities for intimacy and teaching **(regulate)**
3. Listen empathetically and validate the child's feelings, helping them to verbally label their emotions **(relate)**
4. Set limits on the child's behaviour whilst helping them to problem-solve **(reason)**

# Step 1 – in the moment *recognise & regulate*



- Recognise all emotions as being **natural and normal** and not always a matter of choice
- Recognise behaviour as communication – what is your child trying to say?
- Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt – are they hot, red, shaking, quiet, crying, curled up?
- Take on the child's perspective – try to put yourself in their shoes
- Affirm and empathise. Show that you're listening and understand.

## Things we say

- “I'm sorry that happened to you, you must feel angry/very annoyed”
- “I think I'd feel annoyed if that happened to me”
- “I would feel angry too”
- “It's normal to feel angry about that”
- “It's ok to feel upset by what happened”
- “I understand why you're sad”
- “I'd feel sad if that happened to me”

# Step 2 – in the moment

## *relate*



- Validate the emotion and acknowledge its existence
- Use words to reflect back child's emotion – help them to understand what they're feeling
- Help your child to label or name the emotion
- Talk them through what you think they may be feeling.

### **Things we say -**

- “You look angry to me”
- “I wonder if you’re feeling sad”
- “I can tell you’re feeling.....”
- “I can see that has made you feel...”
- “It sounds like you are feeling...”

# Step 3 – later when your child is calm

## *reason*

### **Setting limits (If needed)**

- Safety first
- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour - explain hitting, snatching, rude words are not ok.
- Make it clear certain behaviours cannot be accepted
- But retain the child's self-dignity – don't make them feel small or bad.

### **What we say**

- “.....it's not ok to behave like that.”
- “....we can't allow that to happen.”
- “...doing that is not ok.”
- “....that behaviour is not acceptable.”
- “...even when we're angry, it's not ok to hit someone.”



# Step 4 – when your child is calm

## *reason*

### **Problem-solving with the child**

When your child is calm and in a relaxed, rational state:

- Explore the feelings that gave rise to the behavior/problem/incident
- Help them to think of other ways they could have handled it
- Help your child to believe s/he can overcome difficulties and manage feelings/behaviour

### **Things we say**

- “How were you feeling when that happened”
- “Let’s think of what you could have done instead”
- “Try and do this next time you feel like that.”

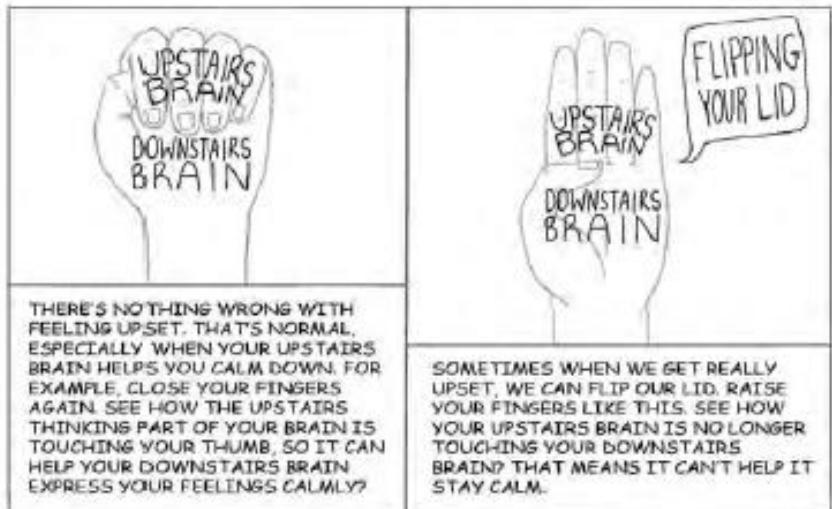
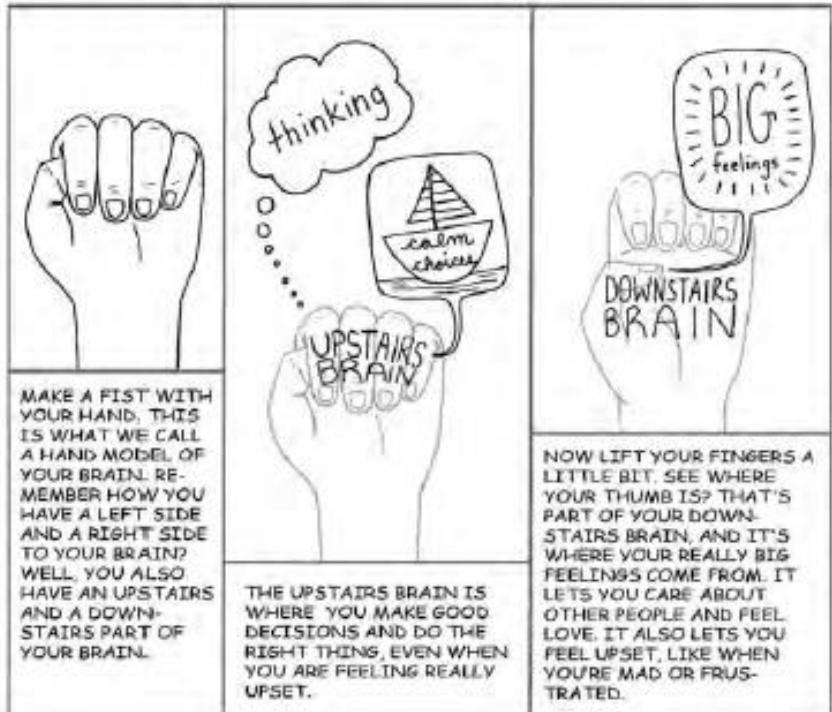


# Emotion coaching - not emotion dismissing...



[Click here](#)

YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN AND YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN



# Teaching Kids About Flipping a Lid



<https://theresponsivecounselor.com/2021/06/teaching-kids-about-flipping-their-lids.html>