

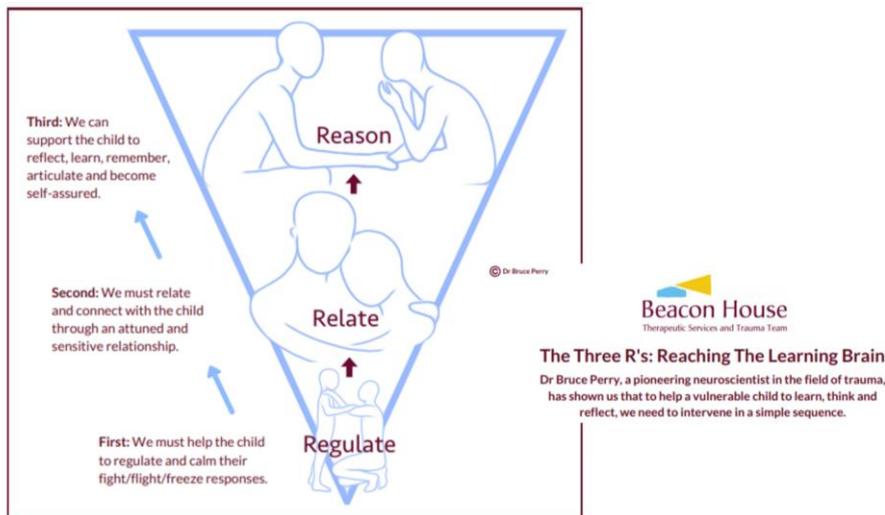
WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL 2020

STAYING CONNECTED AND CURIOUS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Knowledge and understanding of attachment and trauma

Regulate, Relate, Reason Part 1

On Day 1 and Day 4, we considered how we must address the body in order to help the child to regulate, and I recommended some sensory snacks and other body/sensory interventions. Bruce Perry's Three Rs model is useful: Regulate – through addressing the body; Relate - through addressing the emotions; and finally, Reason, through addressing the thoughts.



Heading straight for the 'reasoning' part of the brain with an expectation of learning, will not work so well if the child is dysregulated and disconnected from others.

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In addition to the body and sensory interventions suggested, it's important to check regularly on physiological comfort, bearing in mind that some children and young people may have real difficulties identifying their bodily signals – they may not be physiologically literate (I'll develop on this another day) and have a poorly developed sense of interoception. So, as with a baby, we need to check and to raise awareness, usually by 'wondering': 'I wonder if you're feeling ...' and offer the solution, for example, water, tea, biscuit, comfort break, power nap, sweatshirt on/off, open window, movement etc. Ensure that fresh water and healthy snacks – fruit, nuts, seeds – are readily available. Make sure the child has clean, comfortable clothes and shoes, a place to rest, a den (enclosed space for physical and emotional safety). Prompt regular toilet visits, regardless of age. (See additional document Sensory and Movement Needs). Energising and activating for children who are disconnecting and switching off include massage, repetitive simple tasks;

weighted blanket; swinging; building with Lego or play-dough; deep soapy water; aromatherapy oils to sniff.

So, for now, that's enough about the body, but do remember that when a child has been frequently exposed to physical and sensory discomfort (recall the Case Studies from Day 6), s/he needs to relearn the value and function of the body by developing new, pleasurable memories in relation to physical and sensory experiences.

Questions for reflection

1. What will be your response, both personally and across your school community, to what you have learned so far about the importance of regulation through the physical, sensory body?

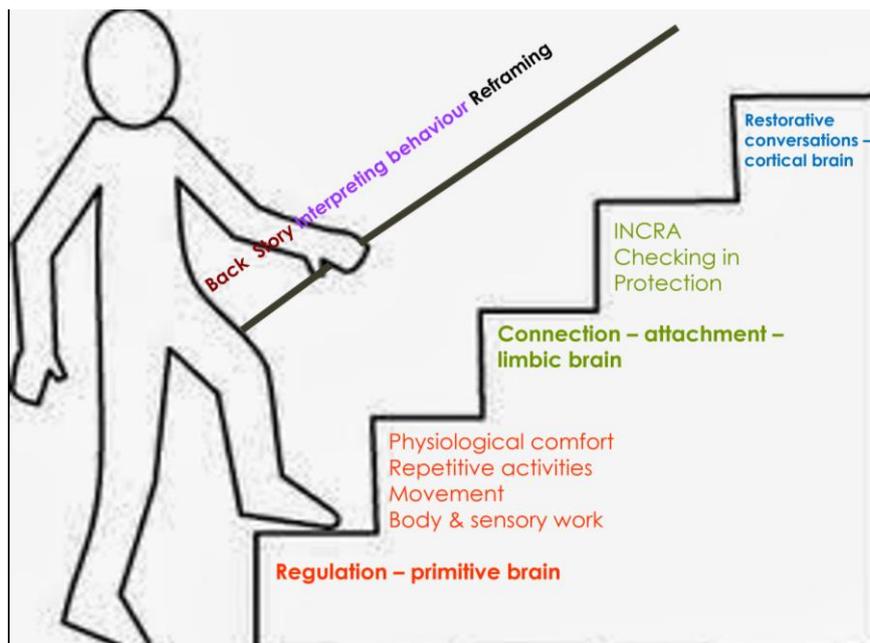
Actions

1. Work with colleagues to draw up an Action Plan for development and implementation. The following model may be useful:

Describe the vision, then...

- a. **What** actions or changes will occur?
- b. **Who** will carry out these changes?
- c. **By when** will they take place (and for how long, if appropriate)?
- d. **What resources** (e.g. money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes?
- e. **Communication** - who should know what?

Tomorrow, we are going to start to focus on addressing the emotions through the Relate level in the Three Rs model, or the Connection level on the model below.



The first step will be a 'bridging' activity; create your own Calm Box, also called a Regulating Box or similar.

This is a great self-care exercise and while it is designed to help children and young people navigate their feelings with the aid of a supportive adult, it can also be really helpful for adults too. In addition to self-soothing and helping us to manage and take care of ourselves in high-stress or triggering situations, creating and using the Calm Box also gives us an insight into how the activity helps children self-soothe and regulate.

Action 2

In preparation, I'd like you start thinking about your box and its contents. It can be as small or large as you like, but think practically – is it large enough for all the items you want, is it small enough to be easily transportable? It doesn't have to be a standard 'box'; it can be a sturdy bag, large pencil case, small basket or other container, but it should be durable. Collect pictures, photos materials etc. of things that make you feel calm, safe, happy, e.g. your family, your favourite food, your hobbies and interests, a sunset, flowers ... and decorate the box with these. Then decorate with your name, e.g. 'Jenny's Calm Down Kit'.

Consider all your senses to decide what soothing and comforting things to place in your kit. Tomorrow, I'll be providing a list of suggestions, but begin your collection today if you have time, or at least begin to think about the items you'd like to include.

Add items to the box that aid you in becoming more aware of your surroundings, calm you down, or help you to express your feelings. You can include pens and crayons, and pieces of paper or Post It notes to write out what's going through your mind, as well as items that make you feel better.

For tomorrow's session, please dress in comfortable clothes in which you can move and sit comfortably. Please bring warm slippers or socks as you may want to remove your shoes. Please bring layers of clothing so that you can wrap up and take off as necessary.

Your self-care today is partially managed through reflection and preparation for starting work on your Calm Box tomorrow, but still try to walk outside, in a green space with water if possible.

Have a good day, keep safe and healthy and ring or email me to chat if that would help. *Jenny x*