

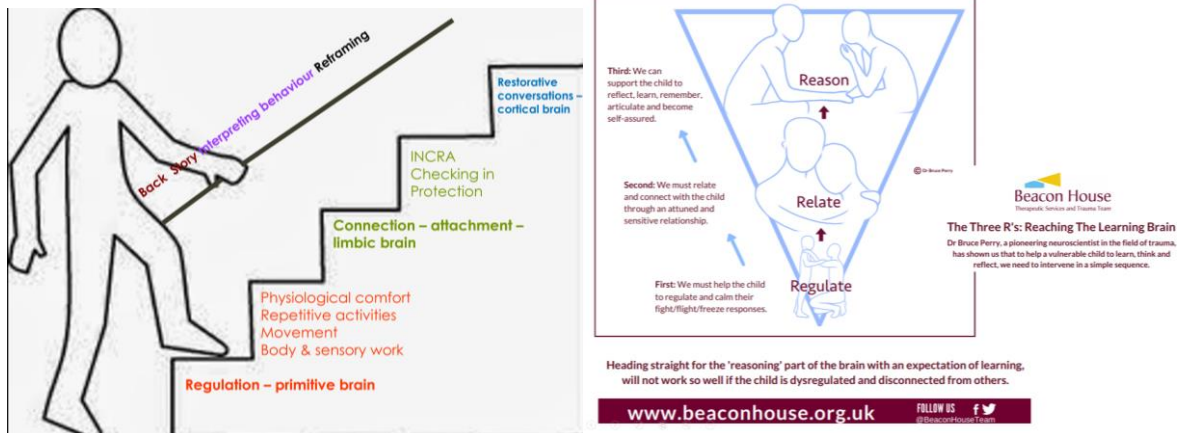
THURSDAY 2ND APRIL 2020

STAYING CONNECTED AND CURIOUS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Knowledge and understanding of attachment and trauma

Regulate, Relate, Reason Part 2

Today, we are going to focus on addressing the emotions through the Relate level in the Three Rs model, or the Connection level on Stairway, both shown below.



The first step will be a 'bridging' activity: create your own Calm Box, also called a Regulating Box or similar. This will be a physical activity, collecting, making and handling the box and its contents. It will also be an emotional activity, connecting with your feelings and memories as you touch and explore the items.

I asked you yesterday to start thinking about your box and its contents. Your main task today is to make your box or other container, if you haven't already done so. 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. If you haven't already started your collection, start now and add at least five items to your box. You can add to this daily, swapping some out for others as appropriate. There is no right number, but don't overload your senses or your emotions. Choose items 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.

Some suggestions

Smell – scented candles, lotions, a small vial of fragrances or essential oils, hand cream, perfume, chocolate, bath products, herbs and spices

Taste and oral motor - favourite chocolate, sweets, chewy bracelet, bubbles, balloons, drinking straws, crackers, pretzels, pop corn, carrot sticks, ice cubes

Touch - charms, stress ball, prayer beads, Playdoh, Aroma-doh, stones pebbles, crystals, a favourite rock, a piece of jewellery, playing cards, pipe cleaners, fabric, buttons, shells, feathers, jewels, leaves, pine cones, twigs

Sight - small journal, pictures of supportive people in your life, words of inspiration in your hand writing, images of calming scenery, bubbles, snow globe, glitter bottle, small doll/soft toy/ornament

Auditory - chime balls, rain stick, large sea shell, uplifting songs that you can listen to, sounds in nature (running water, leaves blowing in the wind)

Nurturing items – hand cream, face mask, lip balm, wipes, heat pad, plasters, soft blanket

Distractors – Rubik's cube, kaleidoscope, puzzles, colouring materials, chewies, snow globe, stress ball, stickers, playing cards, dominoes

Other – worry dolls, Russian doll, dream catcher, mandala, mask, mermaid, fairy, guardian angel, precious personal items e.g. own child's first shoes, card from a significant person

The possibilities are endless. If you put more effort into creating it, you'll be more likely to use it.

Reflective Activity

Experience your box alone.

Try to engage your senses with the contents of your box.

Notice how your **body feels** in response to the contents of your box

Take at least ten minutes and up to 20 minutes.

Body mapping: How did your body feel when you used your Calm Box?
Complete the Body Mapping work sheet.

Share your experience and if possible, your Calm Box, with someone you trust.

Keep your Box in a place where it's easily accessible to you.

This may be enough for today, but if you like, think about how you could use this activity with a child with whom you work.

NB When doing this activity with children, use life sized body outlines of their own body if possible.

We will continue to explore our Calm Boxes. Today, we focused on the response in our bodies. Tomorrow we will consider our emotional responses and later, our thoughts and cognitive responses.

Please continue to 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.

I would absolutely love to see photographs and videos of your Calm Boxes, so please do send them to me or Tweet them, tagging me in. I'll share them only if you give permission.

Your self-care today is partially managed through preparing and exploring your Calm Box, 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*