

# TANTRUMS, MELTDOWNS, AND RAGE: PARENTING STRATEGIES FOR CALMING THE STORM

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CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

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## EMOTIONAL THERMOMETER



## TYPES OF ANGRY OUTBURSTS

- TANTRUM (6 TO 7) – CHILD HAS SOME CONTROL. GOAL DRIVEN. IT JUST MIGHT WORK. MIGHT STOP IF CHILD GETS WHAT IS WANTED, FEARS CONSEQUENCES, OR IF REWARDED FOR ASKING THE RIGHT WAY.
- MELTDOWN (7-9) – CHILD VACILLATES BETWEEN TANTRUM AND RAGE WITH INTERMITTENT CONTROL. PARENT THREATS ARE RISKY AND MAY ESCALATE.
- RAGE (9-10) – LIMBIC STORM; CORTEX HIJACKED; FIGHT OR FLIGHT; BEHAVIOR IS IRRATIONAL. CHILD WILL NOT RESPOND TO REASON. RIDE IT OUT. YOU ARE PAST THE CRITICAL WINDOW.

## ZONES OF REGULATION



**Red Zone:** Extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror.

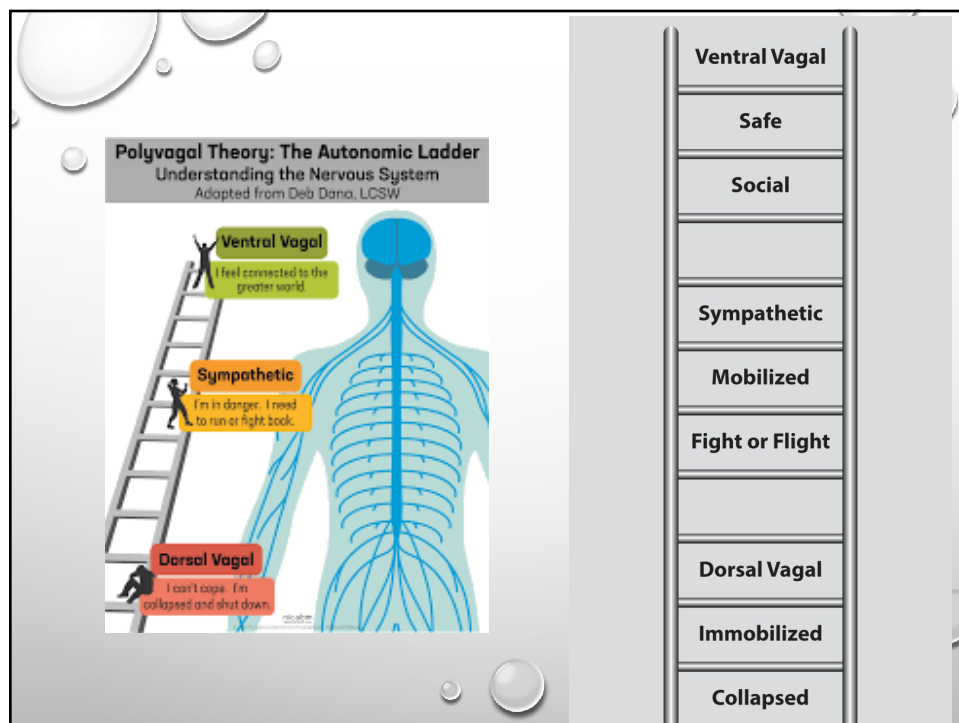
**Yellow Zone:** Heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness.

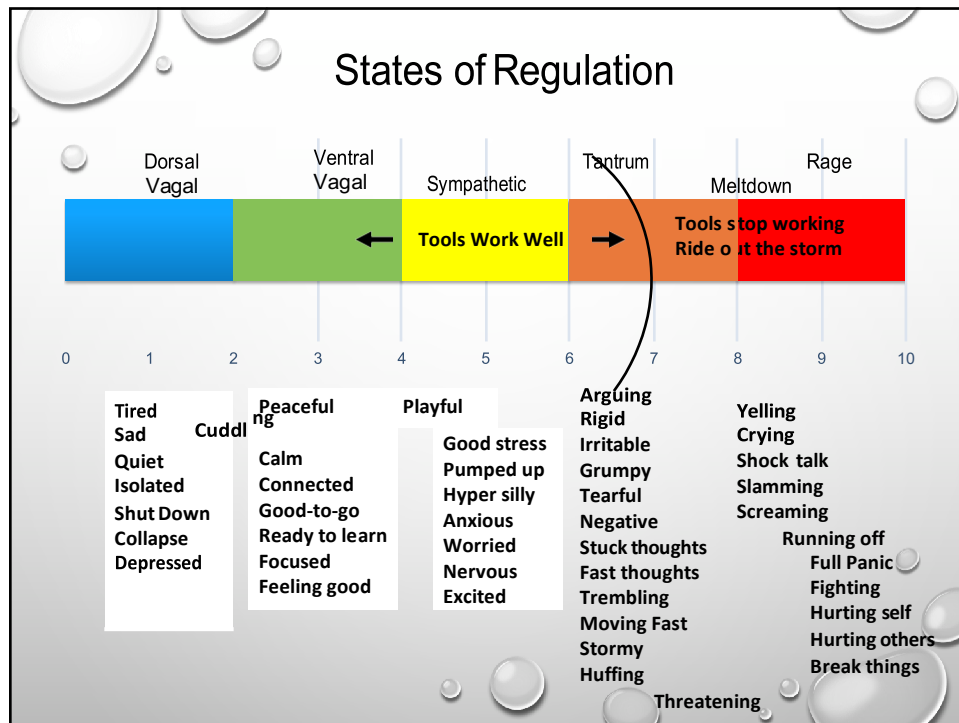
**Green Zone:** Calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn. Zone of optimal learning.

**Blue Zone:** Low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored. Shut down.

# THEORIES OF ANGER

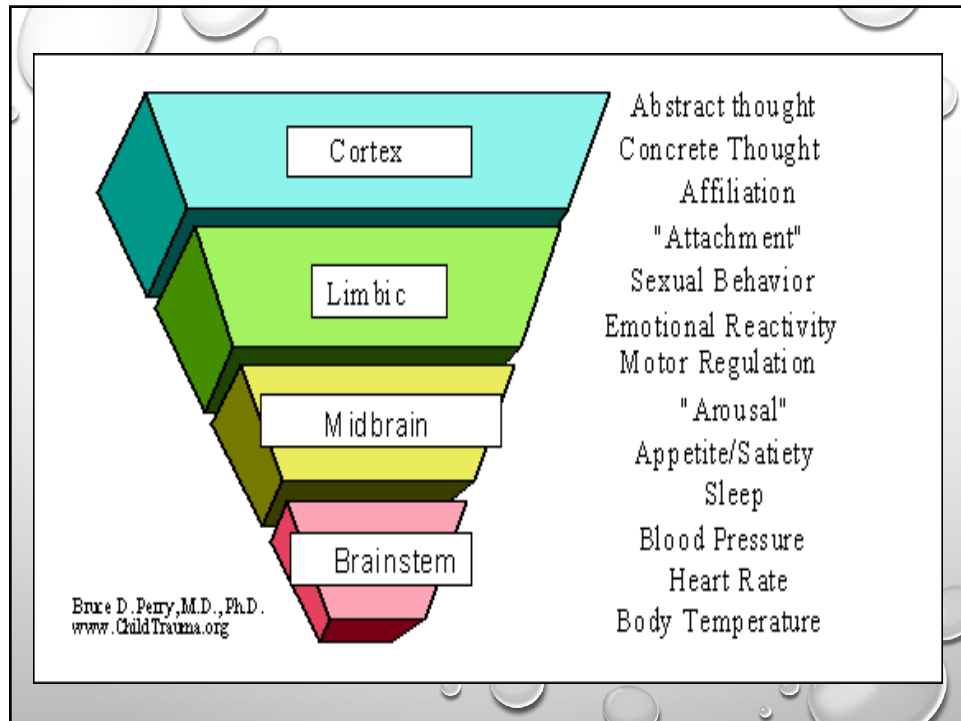
- EXPERIENCE>SENSATION>PHYS. REACTION>EMOTIONS
- EXPERIENCE>THOUGHTS>EMOTIONS>BEHAVIOR
- AROUSAL STATE>EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, BEHAVIOR
- ANGRY BEHAVIOR HABITS>BRAIN CHANGE>MORE ANGER
- BRAIN CHEM/STRUCTURE>EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, BEHAVIOR
- BOTTOMLINE: WE HAVE TO TACKLE ANGER BY NOTICING AND SHIFTING AROUSAL STATE, CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS, CHANGING NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR HABITS, AND DECREASING INTENSITY OF UPSETTING EXPERIENCES





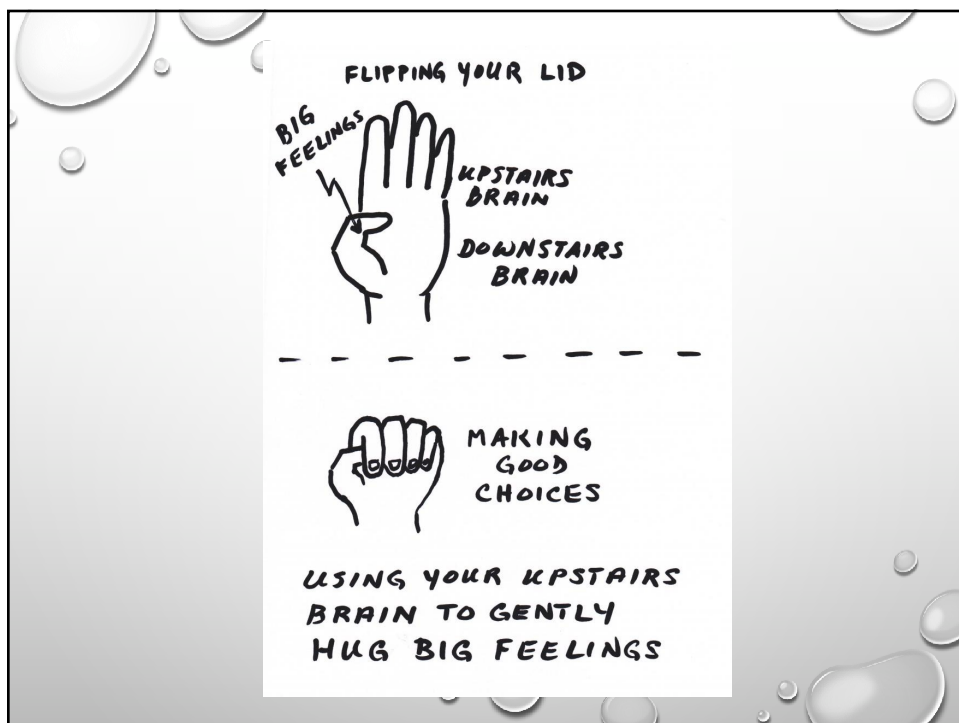
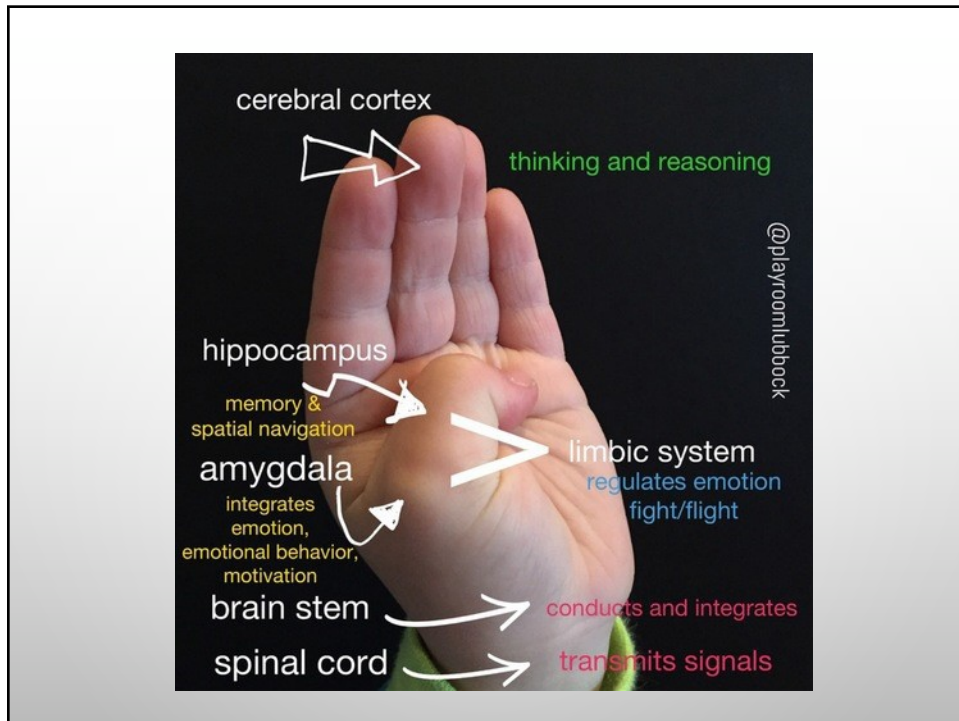
## TRIGGERS AND SIGNALS

- KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS (SEE HANDOUT)
  - LYING, BACK TALK, BEING IGNORED, BEHIND SCHEDULE, DISRUPTIONS, FIGHTING
- KNOW YOUR CHILD'S TRIGGERS (SEE HANDOUT)
  - CORRECTIONS, CERTAIN TYPES OF WORK, EXCLUSION, LOSING, "NO"
- WHAT ARE YOUR STRESS SIGNALS?
- WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S STRESS SIGNALS?
- WHAT IS YOUR PLAN TO NOTICE SIGNALS AND MANAGE TRIGGERS?



## BRAIN EXPLANATION FOR EMOTIONAL FLOODING





## LEFT-RIGHT INTEGRATION

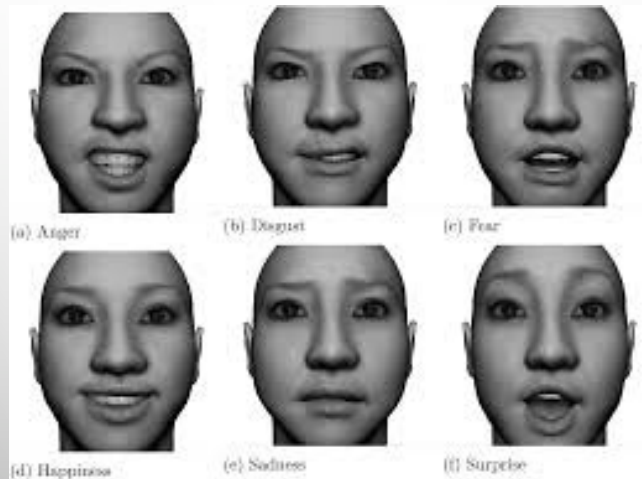
- *LEFT*-LOGICAL, LINEAR, LANGUAGE
- *RIGHT*-NONVERBAL, INTUITION, EMOTIONAL, EMPATHY
- LEFT BRAIN LOGIC DURING RIGHT BRAIN MELTDOWN WON'T WORK
- RIGHT BRAIN EXCESS EMOTION WILL FLOOD CHILD IN RIGHT BRAIN MELTDOWN, LEADING TO MORE CHAOS
- YOUR GOAL:  
PARENT INTEGRATION > CHILD INTEGRATION

## PARAVERBALS AND NONVERBALS THAT DE-ESCALATE

- FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION: 7% = ACTUAL WORDS; 35% HOW WE SAY IT, 58% NONVERBAL
- NONVERBALS: SOFT EYES, SLOW BREATH, DROPPED SHOULDERS, SIDE STANCE, OPEN ARMS, RAISED EYEBROWS
- PARAVERBALS – HOW WE SAY OUR WORDS (TONE, VOLUME, RATE, RHYTHM)
- *“WHAT YOU DO SPEAKS SO LOUDLY THAT I CANNOT HEAR WHAT YOU SAY.”*

– RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## WHICH FACIAL EXPRESSION WOULD CALM YOU?



## IMPACT OF SENSORY EXPERIENCES ON OUR AROUSAL STATE

- SLIDESHOW
- NOTICE YOUR RESPONSE INTERNALLY TO EACH SLIDE.
- PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SENSATIONS, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS.
- **WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR REACTION IF WE ARE NOT AWARE OF OUR REACTION.**





# Arousal Continuum

State	Calm	Arousal, Attention	Alarm	Fear	Terror
<b>Adaptive Response</b>	Rest	Vigilance	Freeze	Fight	Flight
<b>Regulation Brain Region</b>	Neocortex Cortex	Cortex Limbic	Limbic Midbrain	Midbrain Brainstem	Brainstem Autonomic
<b>Deescalating Adult Responses</b>	Talking, adult presence, rocking	Eye contact, simple directives, quiet voice	Quiet words, invited physical touch	Disengagement, quiet adult presence	Wait, leave group, allow child to calm, no words
<b>Escalating Adult Responses</b>	Noise, confrontation	Complex directives, anger, ultimatums	Raised voice, shaking finger	Chaos, frustration, yelling	grabbing, shaking, screaming
<b>Cognition</b>	Abstract	Concrete	Emotional	Reactive	Reflexive

Perry, B. (2006). *Applying principles of neurodevelopment to clinical work with maltreated and traumatized children*. New York, NY: Brunner/Mazel.

- an **overview** of the internal states, related brain systems, and some impact of fear on thinking
- **external cues** for each internal state, both for fight/flight and freeze/surrender responses
- **classroom strategies** to engage students at each stage, generated by classroom teachers and child care counsellors, as well as suggestions for building plans for safety and calming.

Internal State	Calm	Alert	Alarm	Fear	Terror
Brain Systems: Primary and Secondary	Neo Cortex Cortex	Cortex Limbic	Limbic Midbrain	Midbrain Brain Stem	Brain Stem Autonomic
Plans ...	Extended Future	Days / Hours	Hours / Minutes	Minutes / Seconds	Loss of Sense of Time
Does	Thinking/Reflecting (Abstract)	Thinking/Learning (Concrete)	Emotion	Reactive	Reflexive
Flight/Fight (Hyper arousal)	Rest	Vigilance	Resistance (Crying)	Defiance (Tantrums)	Aggression
Freeze / Surrender (Dissociative)	Rest	Avoidance	Compliant (Robotic)	Fetal Rocking	Fainting
Cognitive Abilities & Developmental Stage	30 year old – 15 year old Adult/Adolescent	15 year old – 8 year old Adolescent/Child	8 year old – 3 year old Child/Toddler	3 year old – 1 year old Toddler/Infant	1 year old – newborn Infant/Newborn
Responds to ...	Talk, Ideas	Talk, Engaged Learning	Play, Engage Learning, Metaphors	Reactive Doing, Cues	Safety Cues (non verbal)

For more on how fear changes thinking go to Child Trauma Academy <http://childtraumacademy.com>

## DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

- ATTUNE – DIAL IN, MATCH AFFECT, RIGHT BRAIN  
CONNECTION, *RELATE*
- BALANCE – SOOTHE, DISTRACT, *REGULATE*
- COACH – LEFT BRAIN LOGIC, VERBAL, *REASON*

## ATTUNEMENT EXERCISES

- PRACTICE ATTUNED MIRRORING WITH A PARTNER AS THEY SHARE AN EMOTIONAL STORY WITHOUT USING ACTUAL WORDS.
- “IT’S TIME TO GET READY FOR BED.” WITH IRRITATION, ANGER, DISENGAGEMENT, FEAR/APPREHENSION, AND LOVING AND CONNECTED TONE AND BODY LANGUAGE.
- SELFIES WITH IRRITATION, NEUTRAL, POSITIVE, AND COMPASSION EXPRESSIONS
- STARE VS. LOOK VS. GAZE WHEN PARTNER TELLS STORY

## OTHER DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

- APPEAR CALM AND SELF-ASSURED (OPEN ARMS, SHOULDERS AND FISTS RELAXED)
- AVOID DIRECT STAND-OFF POSITION
- NEUTRAL, SOFT FACIAL EXPRESSION (RELAX JAW, SOFTEN EYES, RELAXED BROW)
- ALLOW PHYSICAL SPACE; ALLOW FOR EITHER OF YOU TO EXIT IF NEEDING MORE SPACE
- CONTROL YOUR BREATHING (MATCH CHILD'S BREATHING FIRST AND THEN SLOW YOUR OWN BREATH)
- LOWER YOUR VOICE, KEEP YOUR TONE EVEN.
- DISTRACT/DIVERT WHEN POSSIBLE (LOOK OUT WINDOW, ETC.)
- ARRANGE/REMOVE AUDIENCE DEPENDING ON THE CHILD
- SIMPLE WORDS OR CALMING MANTRAS; BROKEN RECORD
- SAY WHAT YOU WANT THE CHILD TO DO (NOT WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO STOP DOING) – (“PUT THE CHAIR DOWN” VERSUS “QUIT SCREAMING”)
- GIVE CHOICES
- ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS
- REFLECT, AGREE WHEN POSSIBLE

## VIDEO: COACHING THROUGH ANGER

- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=XS7OWBJ\\_GIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS7OWBJ_GIE)
  - BECKY BAILEY, *CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE*
- ATTUNEMENT VIDEO CLIPS TO WATCH ON YOUR OWN:
  - TRONICK'S STILL-FACE EXPERIMENT: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=6CZXW4R9W2G](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CZXW4R9W2G)
  - ATTUNEMENT: [HTTPS://QZ.COM/1639907/THE-VIRAL-VIDEO-OF-A-DAD-TALKING-TO-HIS-BABY-DEMONSTRATES-A-CRUCIAL-PARENTING-SKILL/](https://qz.com/1639907/the-viral-video-of-a-dad-talking-to-his-baby-demonstrates-a-crucial-parenting-skill/)
  - MISATTUNEMENT: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=0WOPDE7OE1K](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WOPDE7OE1K) (ZOOTOPIA CLIP; START AT 1:00)
  - TODDLER RESE: SHORT PHRASES, REPETITION, MIRROR LEVEL OF ENERGY (START 3:46-5:15). [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=-HQZ4NOSQYG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HQZ4NOSQYG)

## INCREASE JOY AND CONNECTION

- PLACE:  
PLAYFUL, LOVING, ACCEPTING, CURIOUS, EMPATHIC
- WE ARE MOTIVATED TO PLEASE OTHERS WHEN WE FEEL CLOSER AND VALUED BY OTHERS.
- THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS PERMISSIVENESS

## END OF FIRST SESSION

- PLAN FOR YOUR CHILD'S TRIGGERS
- PLAN FOR YOUR OWN TRIGGERS
- NOTICE YOUR CHILD'S SIGNS OF UPSET
- PRACTICE ATTUNE, BALANCE, COACH
- INCREASE SHARED JOY, "PLACE"