The background is a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of small white dots. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular elements. One prominent feature is a large circular scale with tick marks and numbers ranging from 140 to 260. Other elements include dashed circles, solid circles, and curved lines, some with arrows pointing in various directions, creating a sense of motion and complexity.

TRAUMA INFORMED THEATRE TEACHING PRACTICE

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MOMENT TO REFLECT

- **Housekeeping:**
- Add pronouns to Zoom name
- Know how to raise hand (in participant box)
- Mute when not talking
- Use headphones to block out noise
- Understanding that pets/people/complications may interrupt session
- **Moment of silence** for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery & all victims of white supremacy and hate

- **Stolen Land:** Acknowledge that much of the space we occupy is on stolen land from indigenous people (Denver: Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and the Utes)

REMEMBER A TIME

- Remember a time you worked with a student who had a strong emotional response in your class.
 - What did it look like? Sound like? Feel like?
 - How did you respond?
 - Did you have any insight as to why?
 - What happened to this student earlier in their day?
 - At the end of this session, you will revisit this situation and apply some of the trauma-informed strategies to this situation

DEFINITION OF TRAUMA

Oxford English Dictionary:

- A deeply distressing or disturbing experience.
- Emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis.
- **Origin:** Late 17th century: from Greek, literally 'wound'.
- **Connection Coalition:** An event that overwhelms the nervous system and leaves the person unable to fully process the experience. If it stays unresolved in body and mind, the person has dysregulated nervous system.

Respond in small groups:

- When I think of trauma I think of....
- In my classroom, I've seen trauma show up as....

TYPES OF TRAUMA

- Shock trauma: Sudden, major unexpected event, too big, too much, leaves someone out of control, in fear, hits like a ton of bricks. Examples: Car accident, cancer, assault, rape, witnessing crime, fire, natural disaster, divorce, deportation, adoption
- Developmental trauma: Over time, repetitive, hands of someone they trust (family, parent, teacher). Causes injury to attachment. Examples: Incest, assault, abuse, gaslighting, domestic violence, neglect, violence, early loss of virginity, malnutrition, bullying, homelessness, incarceration, foster system, food insecurity, refugees, mental instability in parent
- Shock traumas, over time may have the ability to be resolved whereas developmental trauma often leaves the individual with long term habitual patterns or continuous cycles of negative behavior.
- Secondary Trauma: The self-inflicted traumas that are the result of the original trauma. Examples: Trauma reenactment, promiscuity
- Vicarious Trauma: Cumulative effects of working with survivors of life events, hearing/witnessing trauma survivors, medical health, nurses, parents, welfare workers, vets, first responders, emotional residue of exposure to witnessing people w trauma. Symptoms: anger, jumpy, over/under eating, sleep, worry, dreaming about clients, diminished joy
- **Question**: In this current historical moment, how are students and teachers being impacted by these forms of trauma?

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Two ways to regulate:

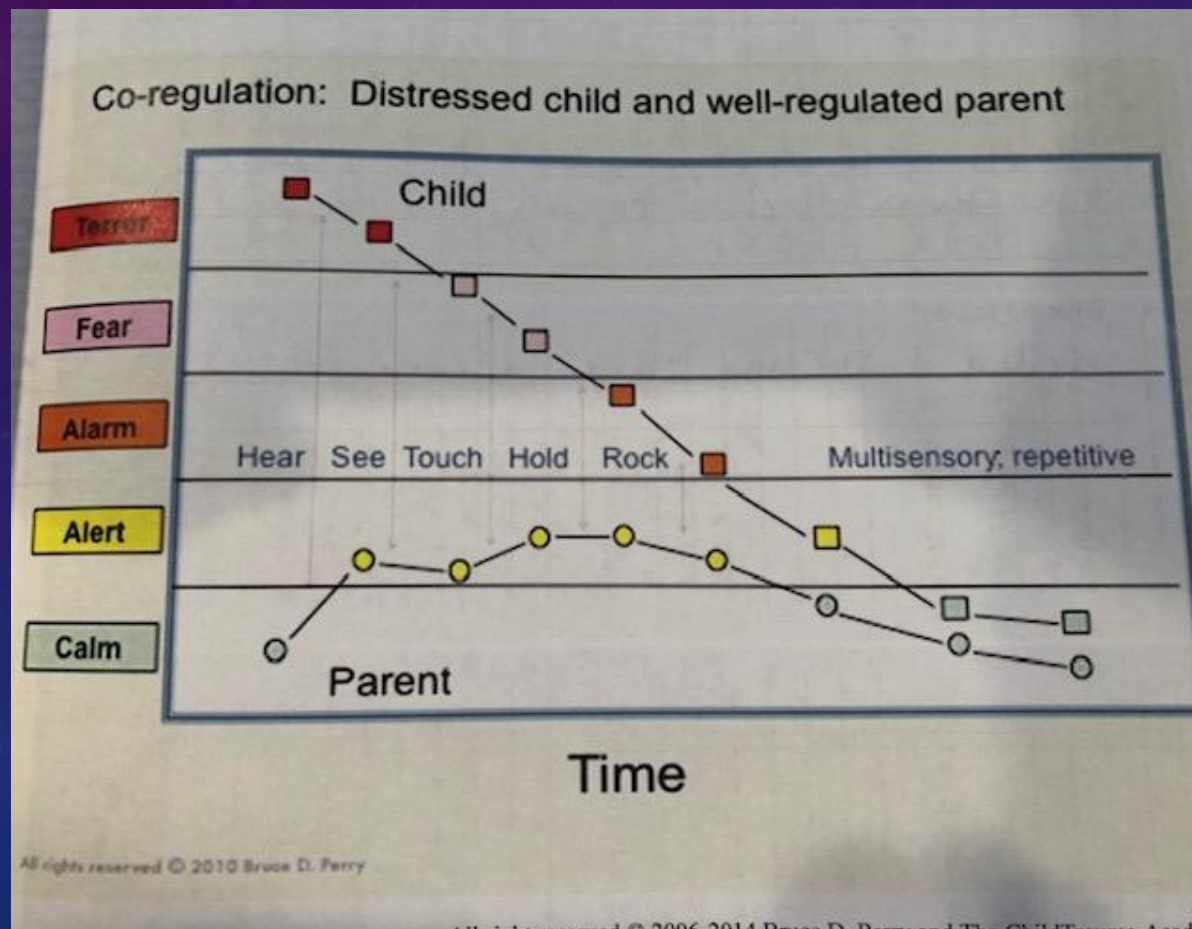
- Top down (talk kids out of behavior)
- Bottom up (parts of brain). Hit sensory system first. Bottom up regulation is the only thing that works with kids (they don't have a cortex).

Strategy that works with the brain in mind:

- Regulate
- Relate
- Reason

For some kids: just regulating is where you may get. That's fine!

CO-REGULATION



CORE ELEMENTS OF A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE

6 R's:

1. Relevant: Matched to developmental level of child (as opposed to chronological age).
2. Repetitive: Patterned/routine interventions that take place frequently, for brief periods of time. (time warnings, rituals in class)
3. Rewarding: Elicit a felt sense of pleasure in the child and provides emotional/developmental benefit.
4. Relational: Child feels safe and secure, provides opportunity to build and foster relationships.
5. Rhythmic: Coordinated, steady pattern that influences healthy brain development.
6. Respectful: Positive regard of child, family, and culture. (55% of communication is non-verbal)

REFLECT: When/how do you use these tools?

THE BRAIN 101: BRAIN STEM

- **90% of the brain is developed by age 5**
- **Brain stem/primitive**: (in vitro-9 months) primal, reflexive, impulsive, unconscious, safe, defensive, aggressive, aggressive, self-preservation, sensory system, some kids can't filter out sensory, sensory system not wired in a working way, flight, flight, freeze, IE: driving: swerve away from oncoming car, pull away from hot stove, no thought, feel threatened, protect self, flight, fight, freeze, (cortisol: stress hormone, it takes 8 hours to release, but what if there's never a break?), helps with bodily functions: digestive, reproductive system etc.

THE BRAIN 101: DIENCEPHALON

- Develops by 4-6 years old
- Motor regulation, arousal, sleep
- Emotional regulation:, “how do I express anger?”

THE BRAIN 101: LIMBIC SYSTEM

- ECE-teenage/adulthood
- intermediate brain, middle section,
- social, affect, relationship
- emotions, store stories, the world is safe or not, unconscious, activated through sensory experiences: smell, images, sound, watching a movie

THE BRAIN 101: CORTEX

- Develops at 25 years old
- Higher order thinking, big picture, see all sides of a situation, instead of fight flight/emotional, you can say “how can I weigh my options?” language, verbal, communication, abstract thought, imagination, higher consciousness, intellectual tasks
- Problem solving, logical, reasoning
- **PRO TIP**: Adults have a cortex, kids don't! We ask: why did you do that? Why is a cortex question. Don't ask why!! It triggers emotional component. Instead: tell me what happened?

Let's all practice: TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotional regulation or self regulation is the ability to monitor and modulate which emotions one has, when you have them, and how you experience and express them.

Emotion Dysregulation may be thought of as the inability to manage the intensity and duration of negative emotions such as fear, sadness, or anger.

- A dysregulated adult shouldn't regulate a kid
- We have to regulate ourselves
- It's okay to tap out and get help!! If you have a kid that's super hard, find someone to help you!
- Find ways to dose regulation throughout the day. Dose regulation (IEP/504). Look at distance between negative behaviors. Put strategy in place and be pro-active

STRATEGIES FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION: BRAIN STEM

Start with brain stem thinking (bottom up/inside out). Start with brain stem adjustments first

1. Sensory: what do they hear, see, taste, touch. Are there too many posters that is distracting? (Put butcher paper over posters) White board markers?
2. High Heartrate: Use oximeter to gage heart rate. 60-80 is normal. If child has a high heart rate, they may need regular snack breaks because they are burning so many calories
3. Rest: Children will sleep when they feel safe. If they feel safer in your classroom, see if you can find a place for them to get needed rest
4. Pattered repetitive activity: walk, rocking, swing
5. Mint. Can't be pissed off at the same time as having a mint. Outsmarting sensory system. Gives system a new place to focus.
6. Crossing the midline: (build muscles across left/right side of brain). Raise hands high. Slowly Touch left hand to right foot across body. And the opposite. Do behind you. Really need to do this at HS level. Dose these throughout day.
7. Weighted pillows/blankets
8. PLAY!
9. Visual arts/creating something

STRATEGIES FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION: MIDBRAIN

Midbrain regulations: (emotional development)

- Activity: Put your feet on the ground, close eyes. 3 deep breaths. Remember something sad. **Where do you feel it in the body?** How does it taste, touch, feel smell? Give it a shape, size and weight. Remember a happy moment. Where do you feel it in the body? How does it taste, touch, feel, smell, weight, shape?
- Where do you feel it in body? This becomes concrete instead of abstract. What do you want to do with that shape? (IE: I want to take those pink triangles in my stomach and shrink them)
- Strong emotion: cross arms, tap (Try doing tapping during transitions to keep regulated). This gets the cross-brain working

STRATEGIES FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION: CORTEX

1. Regulate
 2. Relate (empathy)
 3. Reason
- You can't talk to students when they are in big feelings
 - When they're regulated, you can have intellectual conversation
 - Adults feel that kids need to do repair. Adults have to model the repair. Model this first.

COMMUNICATION

- Share Control
 - Offer choices: Would you like to wear the blue or tan shorts today?
- Speak simply
 - Avoid lecturing
 - Use short repeatable phrases.
 - Children may have language delays from abuse

COMMON TRIGGERS

Two major triggers for emotional response:

1. The word No
 2. Transitions
- **No:** we have an emotional response. It takes time to adjust. Give time and space for kid to accept the word. Don't solve the problem. Instead, empathize. "I can understand that that is hard." Kids don't have cortex. Their behavior might be big. We have to teach them (when they're regulated) how to accept no.
 - **Transitions:** Front load: visual schedules (this helps predictability) this creates safety. Have we practiced transitions?

APPLICATION

- In small groups, share a situation with a young person where they had a surprising, strong emotional response. Discuss: how could you use bottom-up regulation strategies to handle the situation? What dosing of regulation strategies could you have used to help keep this student regulated?

SHARE AND REFLECT

- Share a situation from your group that seemed to work well with the bottom up approach
- Reflect:
 - What traumas are our students coming in with in the fall?
 - How can we dose regulation in our classrooms to prevent emotional outbursts?
 - What self-care methods are we using to regulate ourselves???

RESOURCES

- <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/childhood-behavioral/2019/07/kids-who-need-their-external-world-to-match-their-internal-chaos/?fbclid=IwAR2LfPXmB6gBXVzh4zIUfZzHPYzu3vM5ncoQahouTdmfjiCaldRpGmBtWzA>
- Gillian.McNally@unco.edu
- Stacy York (therapist/consultant): <https://www.gobeyou.org>