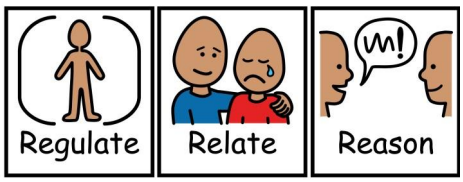
Toddington St George Church of England School

Family Wellbeing

Discover the science, skills and knowledge behind healthy relationships that help nourish family wellbeing.

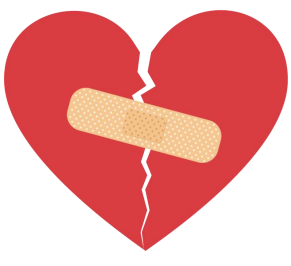
Emotional Regulation



Regulate, Relate, Reason

Containment

Attachment



Rupture & Repair

Emotional Bou

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Nith Street, Dunfermline, KY11 4LU

@LynburnNurture

November 2023

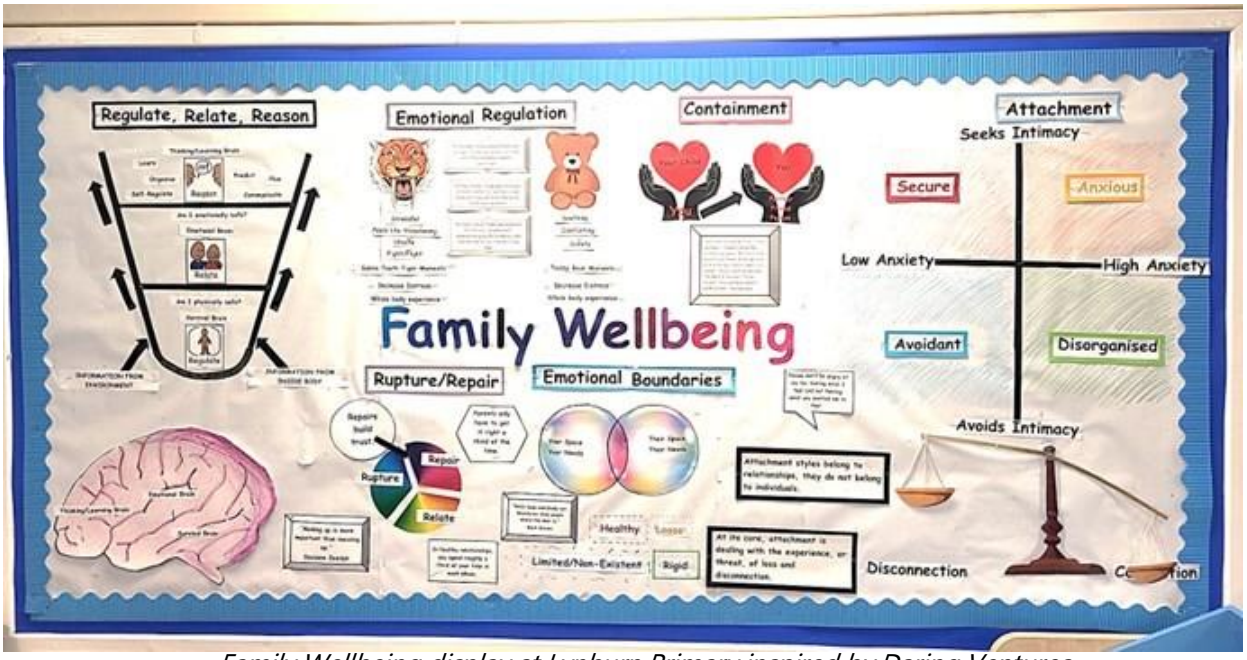
Many thanks to Lynburn Primary for creating and sharing this resurce to support us and our community with well-being.

Welcome

This booklet aims to help you understand key processes that help relationships to be as healthyas they can. Relationships are like food and water, we cannot live without them. The better quality the food and water, the healthier we are. The better quality our relationships, thehealthier we are physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Hence the title "Family Wellbeing." The concepts within this booklet come from leading science. Rather than spending hours reading through books, attending courses, and conferences - the information has been condensed into this one accessible booklet with all the "juicy bits". Families deserve to know this information. Quite simply, putting the science in to practice is transformative!

This booklet will hopefully lead you into a journey of self-discovery, self-awareness and self-reflection that will raise levels of self-compassion. When we start with ourselves, it becomes easier to apply this knowledge to those we love and cherish the most. The beauty of these concepts showthat it's not the big moments in life like holidays, birthdays, gifts, and outings that make a big impact on family wellbeing. The secret is in the small moments of relational delight that showerlove and self-worth upon children, lasting a life time.

We all have the power to make the world a better place. One breath at a time, one moment at atime, one hug at a time, one conversation at a time.



Family Wellbeing display at Lynburn Primary inspired by Daring Ventures. Autumn 2023

Emotional Regulation

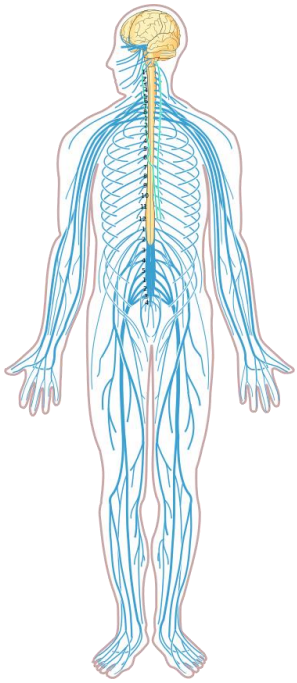
"When your child is having a problem, stop, listen, then *respond to the need not the behaviour*. The behaviour can be addressed later, after the need is met, because only then is the door to effective communication truly open."

L. R. Knost

Sabre Tooth Tigers and Teddy Bears

Dr Suzanne Zeedky has created a useful analogy that helps us to understand the science behind our nervous system using "teddy bears and tigers". Our nervous sys-tem is made up of two systems that affect our emotional regulation. The Sabre Tooth Tiger is activated when we *feel that we are* threatened. It's an automatic re-sponse that will trigger behaviours that help us survive the threat. Fight (attack the tiger), flight (run away from the tiger), freeze (shut down & disconnect), fawn (please/befriend the tiger). Because babies and children are more vulnerable to en-vironmental threats, their threat response system is more sensitised. Sabre tooth tiger moments are whole body experiences; heart rate & blood pressure increase, breathing speeds up and blood is redirected to muscles, brain and limbs.

The Teddy Bear system is an inner comfort blanket that promotes recovery fromsabre tooth tiger moments. Early childhood experiences can help strengthen this system when babies are soothed during the many stressful experiences infants facein their first year of life. The stronger our inner teddy bears, the more resilience we have to face the inevitable ebbs and flows of life. When we are in teddy bear mode, we feel safe, relaxed, and we're not alone. Both Teddy Bear mode and Tigermode are whole body experiences.. We receive emotional feedback from our envi-ronment that triggers physical sensations in our bodies.



"I like to use the terminology of 'sabre tooth tigers' and 'internal teddy bear'. The image of tigers reminds us that a baby's behaviour results from his fear of impending danger and that his fear is not imagined, be-cause it is physiological and thus real. The notion of a 'sabre tooth tiger'helps us adults to take a baby's many moments of fear more seriously."

Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

Scripting

I Wonder If

Children might not be able to identify what they are feeling, but we can help them using the "I wonder if" script. *"I wonder if you are feeling sad?"* Or betterstill match up the emotion to the trigger or event. *"I wonder if you are feeling sad because you broke your toy?"* Taking it a step further, we can match up the event with the physical signals and emotions of anxiety. *"I've noticed you are cry-ing. I wonder if you are feeling sad because you broke your toy."* Children will feel first, act second, and think last. Help them to make sense of what they feel by thinking out loud.

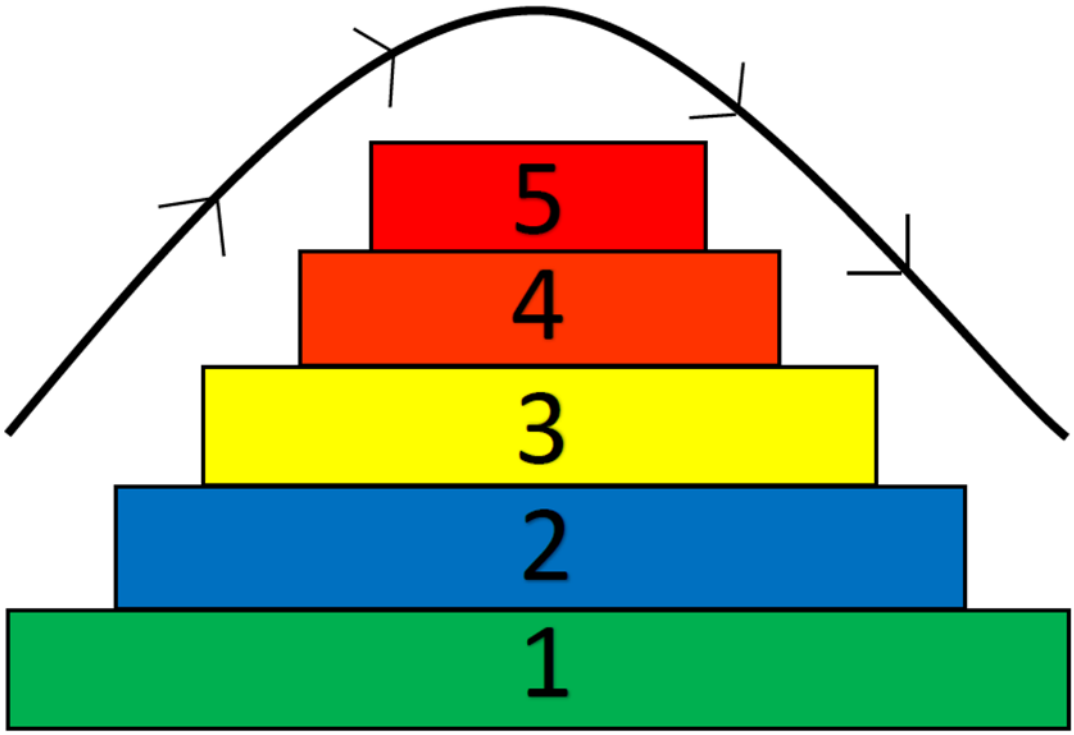
It can take 20 minutes for the stress hormone (cortisol) to leave our system fol-lowing a stressful situation. It can take a while for children to recover from out-bursts—you might experience secondary behaviours such as stomping feet, loud exhaling, or a dirty look. Ignoring these behaviours will prevent further escala- tions. Remember, their brains are still developing and they have not yet mastered the skill of self-regulation. Have patience with them. Have patience with yourself, you are doing your best.

Thoughts Aren't Facts (self scripting)

We have over 50,000 thoughts per day, 40,000 of them are negative. Our emo-tional brain likes to prepare us for worst case scenarios giving previews and running commentary that is generally unhelpful and hurtful. Emotions aren't facts either. They are clues about how threatened we feel in our environment.Together thoughts and emotions can run havoc with our mental health.

Try to befriend your emotions and reframe your thoughts with this simple mental health hack. When an uncomfortable emotion flags up, get curious and compassionate as it's an opportunity to nurture your inner child. For example, if you suddenly feel inadequate at work perhaps it's insecurity coming through. In-stead your thoughts looking for evidence that back up your initial thought about being inadequate, take charge of your inner narrative: "Hello insecurity, Isee you. I know you are keeping me safe. You served a purpose once, but it's ok. I've got this. I'm in control." Acknowledging your emotions instead of pushing them away helps you to process them. Make friends with your emotions and start taking control back from your thoughts.

The 5 Point Scale



5PS is from the work of Kari Dunn Buron, Mitzi Curtis

The Five Point Scale can be used to give an intensity to uncomfortable feelingschildren might be experiencing.

Emotions can intensify and then "peak", the intensity will gradually reduce and children will need help through positive relationships with caregivers. Supportinga child to regulate their emotions by just being there and understanding insteadof reacting is – an important process co-regulation.

Children need hundreds of examples where adults have co-regulated their emo- tions before they are able to start self-regulating. Regulation is a developmentalmilestone, not the child choosing the behaviour.

Emotions are telling us something about our environment. They serve a purpose. Emotions are temporary, they change frequently – like the weather. Those stormy emotions, like disappointment, are unpleasant to experience. Labelling emotions help us to verbalise and externalise those big, scary feelings inside us. The 5 Point Scale can also be used to give an intensity to physical sensations thataccompany emotions.

1 – child is regulated, happy, able to communicate, play, learn.
2 – child appears ok, might have a feeling or sensation of mild anxiety or upset in body.
3 – the child will appear anxious or agitated.
4 & 5 – behaviours will have escalated, child might be aggressive or violent, they will be unable to express themselves effectively and will need the support of an understanding adult to help them reduce the intensity of their emotions. The *thinking* brain is offline and the *survival* brain has taken over.

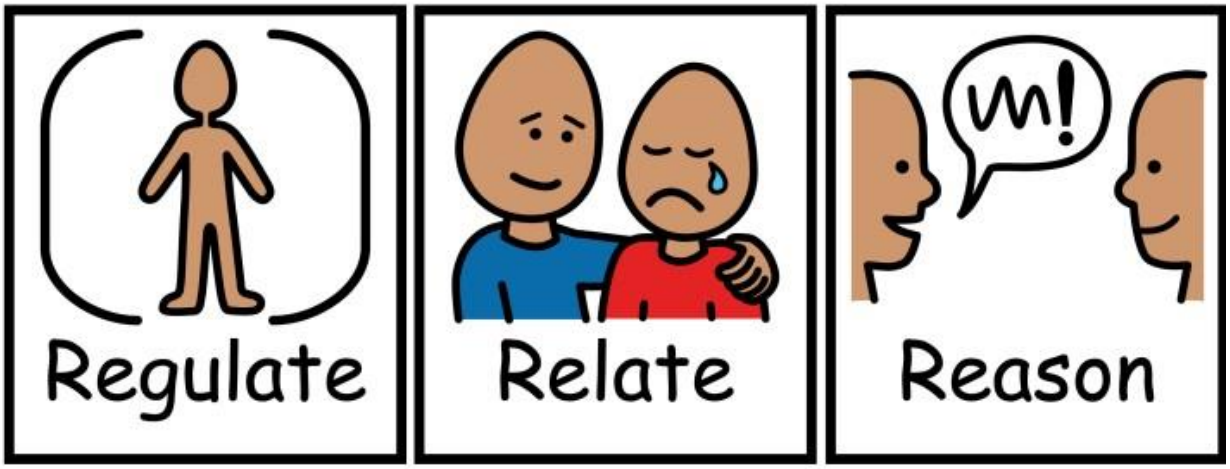
Reflections…

What are your early warning signs that your emotional regulation system is triggered? *i.e. intrusive thoughts, knotsin stomach, hot feeling in face, tightening of jaw…*

What strategies could you use to strengthen your own inner teddy bear?

What strategies could you use to strengthen your child/ren's inner teddy bear?

Regulate
Relate
Reason



"Regulation gives us the ability to put time and thought between the feeling and the action."

Dr Bruce Perry

Regulate, Relate, Reason

Dr Bruce Perry's neurosequential model of the brain gives a useful insight that explains feelings of safetyand regulation. The brain learns when two pieces of sensory information co-occur. For example, a toddlerwill learn that dogs (visual sensory information) bark (sound/auditory sensory information).

When infants are in utero, they are kept at a consistently warm and pleasant temperature, they havea constant supply of calories and sustenance. All this isco-occurring with the shooshing of blood being pumped round the mother's body and the heart beating.

From pre-birth, regulation is associated with rhythmic sounds and movement. This is organically replicated when the baby is born. We rock, pat, and sway babies to a rhythm similar to the tempo of a beating heart.

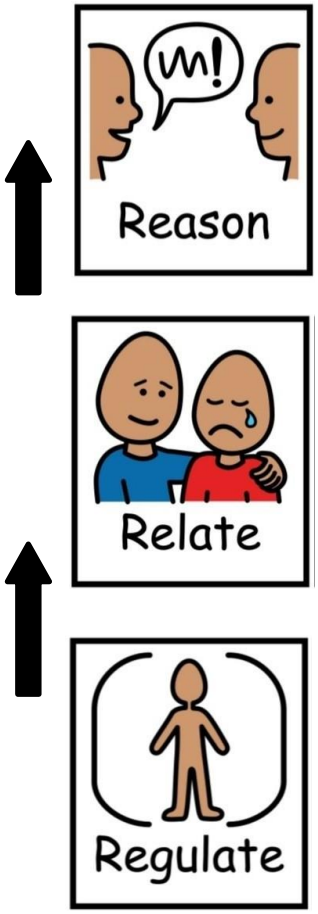
We can use this knowledge to soothe the impact, stressand emotional upset has on our wellbeing.

The Neurosequential Model of the Brain:

Using neuroscience to support wellbeing

Understanding how the brain is sequenced puts us in a better position to respond to ourself and others during times of emotional upset.

REGULATE, RELATE, REASON helps to explain the sequence of the brain.



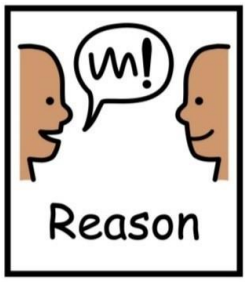
3. Once we feel physically safe (REGULATE), emotionally safe(RELATE) we can communicate effectively, think clearly, plan efficiently, organise, learn, self-regulate and predict outcomes. We have accessed the thinking and learning and can REASON. IQimproves with regulation, we are rational, less reactive and can think clearly. This part of the brain is not fully developed until 28–30 years old. Therefore, this part of the brain is under development in children.

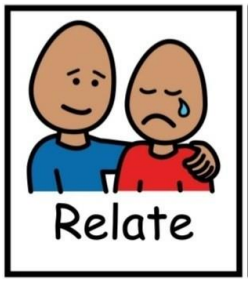
2. RELATE is all about positive relationships, meaningful connections and emotional safety. Naming emotions and havingthose emotions validated can help to reduce the overwhelmingeffect emotions have on our behaviour. "Name it to tame it."
Being understood and given permission to feel builds emotional safety. This prevents the internalisation of shame. When we feel emotionally safe, the learning brain functions better. Children need calm adults to accommodate and allow for strong emotional outburst to help them build emotional resilience. The emotional brain scans the environment for belonging and emotional safety.

1. Our survival brain doesn't communicate through words, it communicates through our senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, & taste) Information from the environment and signals within our bodies, will soothe or trigger us. We can use our sensory systemto help REGULATE our nervous system. Rhythmic movement, such as bouncing, walking, running, can provide the body and brain with feelings of safety. This gives us a sense of physical safety, and therefore regulation. The brain will then process informationin the emotional brain. Babies and young children often have strong reactions, their survival brain is doing it's job and keeping them safe. Babies and young children will naturally experience theworld from a position of fear and stress which is why they are so dependent physically and emotionally on adults. Our survival braincontinuously and subconsciously scans the environment for threats.

Strategies

REMEMBER! The nervous system does not respond to words (which is why telling someone to calm down doesn't work!) It responds to the sensory environment Think about how you can calm and soothe your nervous system and your child/ren's nervous system using these strategies. This will make scripting more effective.





Adult	Children
Yoga Use objects that bring emotional comfort (i.e. favourite mug) Mindfulness* Notice negative thought patterns and challenge them Consider counselling to work through childhood trauma*	Listen to the small stuff so they tell you the "big stuff" Play Laughter - this give relief to the nervous system Consistent daily routine (bed time, meal times) Hugs Hand holding
Name your emotions* Talk to a supportive friend, parent, partner Try and remain present to stop "inner voice" taking over Tune into body—where do you feel the sensation (hollow chest, tight stomach) Long, slow, deep breathing	Support child to label emotion Help them give their emotion a strength (*see 5 Point Scale) Listen without distraction Create a sense of "togetherness" in problem solving Bumble bee breathing* Horsey lips*
Rhythmic movement: walking, running, swaying. EFT (tapping)* Butterfly Hugs * Loud or calming music Eat something crunchy, sour, or minty Hot/cold drink Vicks vapour rub Soothing essential oils Hot spot body scan* Box breathing *	Jumping on trampoline Bouncing on space hopper EFT (tapping—either self or by adult) * Lower lights Create a safe space Teddies and toys that bring emotional comfort Ice poles, banana chips, digestive biscuit Essential oil roller Shower or bath Blow bubbles (this is a game changer)

* see next page for suggested resources

Start Here

Strategies

Butterfly Hugs

This is a quick way to ground yourself and re- duce feelings of anxiety or panic. Put this is in your emergency emotional toolkit to use if you start feeling overwhelmed.

Box Breathing

Practice breathing ina deliberate way to slow down your nerv- ous system and give yourself a moment of calm.

Body Scan

Give yourself the gift of awareness. A body scan is a great way to acknowledge emotions that are emerging as physical sensations.

Horse Lips Breathing

A fun way for children to release stress and ten- sion. Horse Lips helps gen-erate laughter which fur- ther relieves the body of tension.

Bumblebee Breathing

This is a firm favourite with children. It creates a vibrating sensation in the body whilst elongating the out breath to calm and soothe.

Name it to Tame it

Learn about the science of naming emotions and the calming effect it hason our nervous system from a global expert in this field, Dan Siegal.

Insight Timer App (mindfulness)

Self Help for Trauma (EFT/tapping)

Insight Timer App (mindfulness)

Self Help for Trauma (EFT/tapping)

Reflections...

What do you understand about your sensory system that might support your emotional wellbeing? i.e. would you respond to mints, tapping, slower breathing, afast paced walk, loud music...

What sensory strategies or techniques might you use when your child/ren is upset? i.e.low lighting, soft voice, blowing bubbles, side on body language, gentle tapping or pat- ting...

What signs might you look for that indicate your child's survival brain has calmedand their learning/thinking brain is back online and ready to communicate?

Attachment

"It is astounding to realise how muchof our adult lives are influenced by experiences we had before we could walk, talk or consciously remember."

Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

Attachment

What is attachment?
We are pre-disposed to "attach" emotionally to key adults inour lives. Babies are born already connected, and early experiences form blue prints for future relationships. Frombirth, we start making sense of who we are in the world andwhat we mean to the world.

Why does it matter?
Understanding how we react during arguments and moments of distress and discomfort can help us understand ourselves and our loved ones better. Understanding attachment gives us a starting point to improve our communication and relationships with loved ones. Knowing why we feel and act the way we do helps to make the tough stuff life deals out easier.

Is there such a thing as good or poor attachment style? In an ideal world, we would all be securely attached. We don't live in an ideal world, we live in a busy world which has changedbeyond that which the infant brain and body were designed tocope. There is no such thing as a poor attachment. Using knowledge about attachment styles might help us respond to each other's emotional needs and improve relationships with ourselves and each other.

Did I do something wrong as a parent?
When we struggle to make meaning following moments of distress, there are some thoughts which are unhelpful: It's allmy fault or It's all your fault. Blaming ourselves or others increases shame and distress, which is emotionally draining.
However, being curious about how experiences have shaped us means that you can start to do the work to improve and heal relationships. It's never too late to create new and healthy habits. We all have the ability to emerge from trauma, learn from our emotions, and evolve our experiences into what BrucePerry calls Post Traumatic Wisdom.

Please choose SEVEN statements you agree with most:

Be as honest as you can, there is no right answer or wrong answer—this is a useful exercise to find out more about your emotional needs.

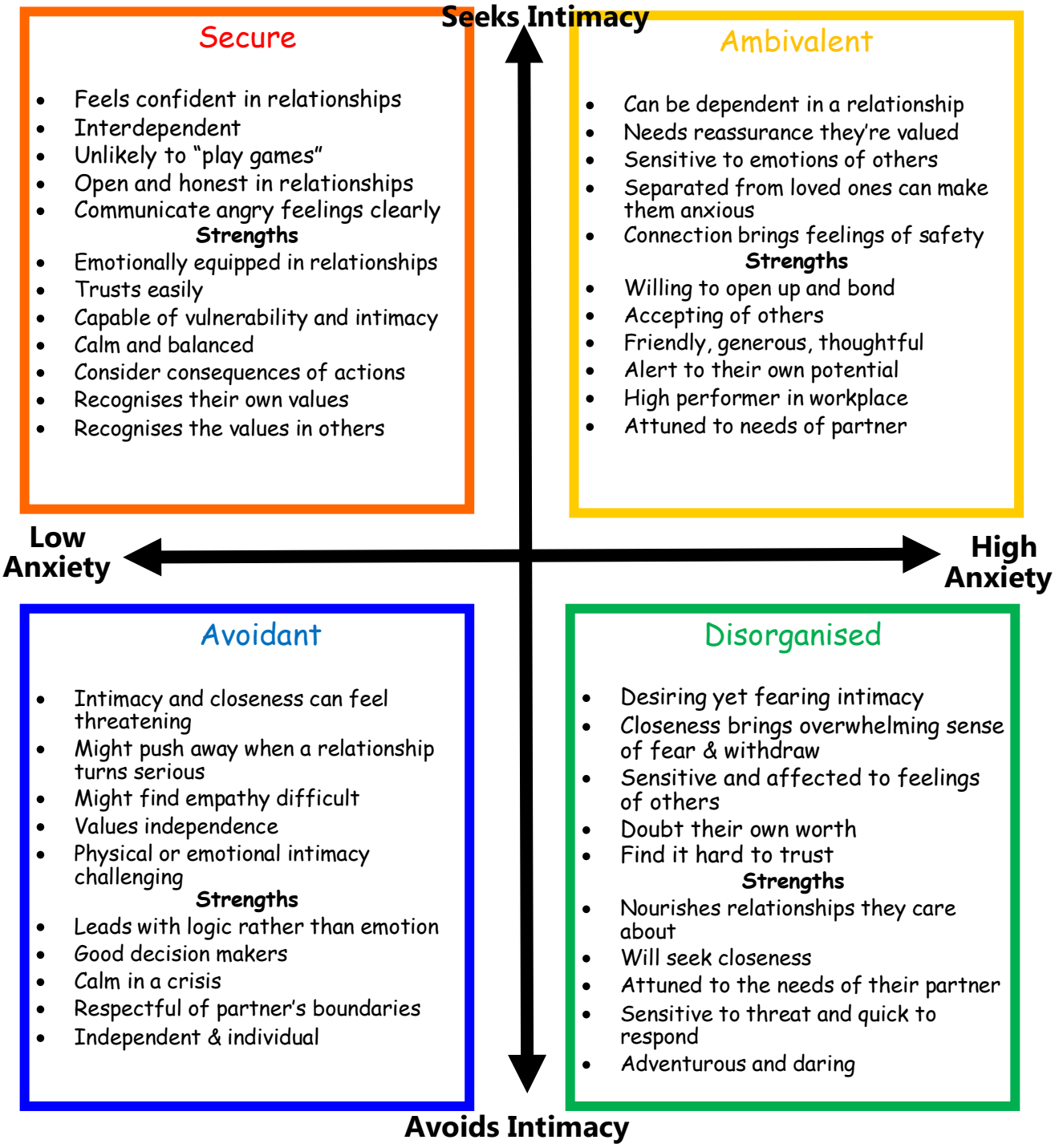
Having close relationships comes naturally to me.
I would like to be emotionally intimate with others, but I often feel that oth-ers don't want to be as close to me.
I would describe myself as independent and self-sufficient.
I tend to break off relationships before they get too serious.
I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me.I can resort to attention-seeking behaviours when I don't feel safe.
The idea of someone depending on me makes me feel anxious.
I find it uncomfortable and challenging getting close to others.
When dating someone, I tend to put all my cards on the table and don't play any games.
I feel a need to cling on to close relationships.
I prefer not to rely on other people.
Part of me wants to go, and part of me wants to stay when in a relationship.I'm happy in myself whether I'm in a relationship or not.
I feel quite anxious when facing time away from a partner.I tend to feel tied down by intimate relationships.
I feel that I'm likely to be hurt if I become very close to others.
Generally, I feel that others accept me for who I am.
If things aren't going well in my close relationships, I find it almost impossibleto concentrate on work.
I don't mind at all if my partner is away.
I find it difficult to talk about my feelings as they are often confused.

Was there a dominant colour in your selection? Look at the next page to findout more about your attachment style.

From www.balance.media/attachment-style-quiz/

The Four Styles of Attachment

At its core, attachment is dealing with the threat of loss and disconnection. If the emotional needs of a child are met, attachment styles might not emerge because the child/person feels safe and secure in the relationship.



Attachment styles belong more to relationships than they do to individuals.

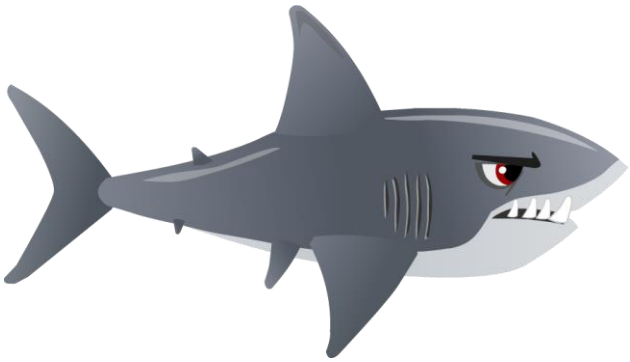
Shark Music

Circle of Security uses Shark Music to help parents explore how uncomfortable feelings left over from experiences from their own past can influence their current relationship with their child and theway they think and feel about parenting.

www.circleofsecurityinternational.com

Shark music is an early warning signal within your body that you are feeling stressed, agitated, or overwhelmed in the presence of an emotional child. Thefirst step is to *notice* your shark music. These signals will lead to a reaction. Your body is telling you physically you are in some form of danger, it's learningfrom past experiences that have been wired into your biology. Noticing your shark music is crucial to supporting your child in the moment. It gives you the opportunity to **respond** rather than **react**. In this moment, you can choose calm.You can choose a different experience for your child. You can choose to soothe your nervous system with a deep, long, slow, breathe. You can notice the cool airof the inbreath contrasting with the warm out breath which expels your frustration.

What triggers your shark music?



What physical sensations does it bring?

Scripting

Keeping to "I" statements, rather than "you" statements help to communicate what you feel while avoiding to blame the other person. I statements are powerful. Notice the difference between "I" statements and "you" statements.

These examples are meant for adult to adult conversations.

You never reply to my texts, you obviously don't care about me.

I feel lonely when you don't reply to my texts or call me back.

Will you just leave me alone!

When I feel angry or upset, I need space to calm myself and gather my thoughts.

You're not listening!

I feel frustrated and alone when you don't listen to me.

WINA

The WINA script helps to communicate needs and requests in an assertive and non-confrontational way. It can help reduce feelings of resentment that can lead to arguments.

When you...I feel...I need you to...Can I ask that you...

When you (sit on your phone/avoid housework)
I feel (ignored/unappreciated)
I Need you to (show me you care/help me out)
Can I Ask that you (put your phone away so we can talk/do the dishes)
***WINA scripting can be adapted for using with children*

From www.scottishmediation.org

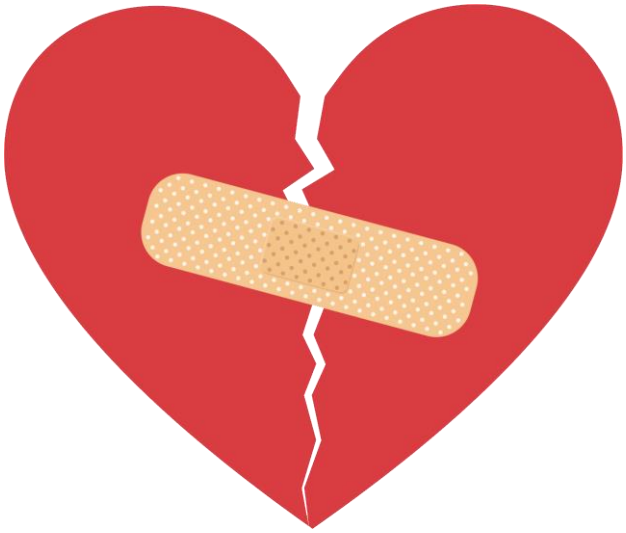
Reflections…

What have you learnt about your attachment style?

How could you use what you know about attachment to better understand relationships?

What are your thoughts about your child/ren's attachment styles?

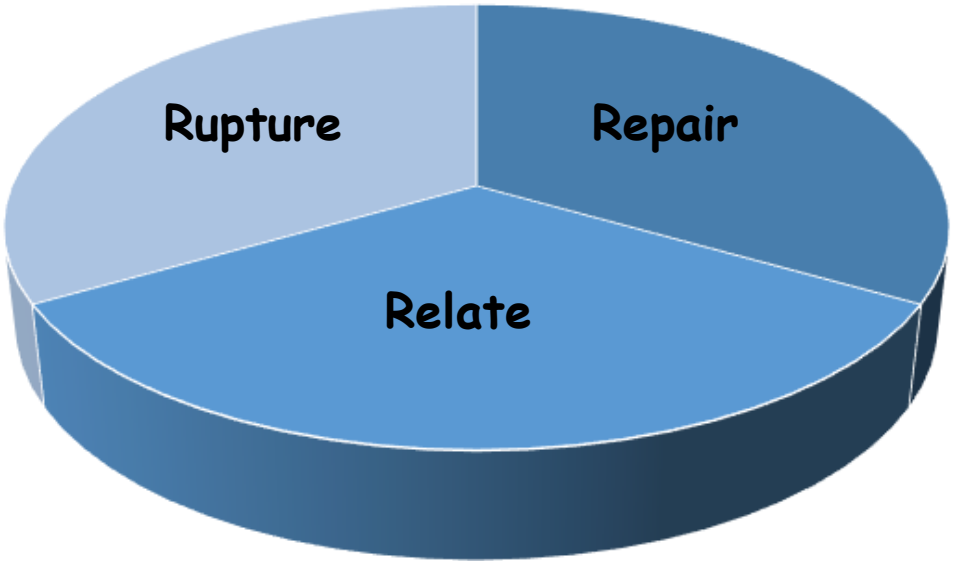
Rupture Repair Relate



“When there has been a rupture in a relationship it is never too late to attempt a repair. No action could come with any guarantee, but we can try. We can open the door. Nothing might happen. But it is likely not to happen if we stay behind a closed door.”

Philippa Perry

Rupture Repair Relate



In healthy relationships, we spend roughly a third of our time in each stage.

Resilience is built in between the rupture and repair

Repairs build trust, the repair is what happens after we "fall apart".

Trauma is made up of unrepaired ruptures. Being alone with those feelings is what causes the trauma.

Making up is more important than messing up.

Being able to apologise authentically to children teaches them accountability.

"Ruptures are inevitable, repair is optional."
- Circle of Security

The Secret of Successful Relationships: Rupture/Repair

Put an X on the line against how true each statement is for you:

I find it difficult to apologise:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I find it difficult to trust people:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I find it difficult to forgive:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I am hopeful

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

People fall into two categories: they are either good or bad

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I sometimes feel criticised during arguments

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I get frustrated if I am not understood during arguments

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Both ruptures and repairs can feel intimidating. For those who are anxiously attached, the rupture can feelterrifying. For those avoidantly attached, the repair might feel too intense. Learn about the skills involved inthe rupture repair cycle to see how you could strengthen relationships. Through developing 4 skills.

*Questionnaire inspired by The School of Life video: https://youtu.be/rgQvqi6aYD8?

The Still Face Paradigm

The Still Face experiment was initiated in the 1970s by Dr Ed Tronick. At the time, researchers suspected that babies are born into the world ready to connect to their caregiver rather than being passive within the baby/caregiver relationship. Rather than simply "receiving" connection, Dr Ed Tronick believed it was a "reciprocal" process.

Relate

The first part of the experiment consists of a Mother interacting with their baby. Relational exchanges are based on "serve and return", a bit like social tennis. Baby smiles at Mum, babbles, makes eye contact (serve) Mum responds to this interactionwith smiles, loving words, and eye contact (return).

Rupture

The second part of the experiment, Mum's face loses any expression and she stops returning interactions. Baby continues to make cues to Mum. Within 16 seconds, baby increases their attempts to interact and reaches towards Mum, who is continuing thepan-faced expression, unresponsive. Babbles turn to screeches, the feeling of discon-nection is too overwhelming and baby begins to look away. After 1 minute 18 seconds, baby begins to cry, turn away, show signs of self soothing, and lose their posture.

Repair

The third part of the experiment sees Mum reunite with baby, she comforts them. Both are feeling overwhelmed by the disconnection, the rupture. The experiment showed that babies rely and depend upon moments of connection with their caregiv-ers. Common, everyday occurrences like preparing dinner or conversing with anotherchild are not a problem if it happens in small, manageable doses. If parents are non-responsive for longer periods of time the effects can be detrimental to a baby's de-velopment. Particularly when we can be so easily distracted, and soothed, by our phones.

Disconnection and the Still Face Paradigm: Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

Watch this short clip to observe the interactions between Motherand baby in this experiment.

Still Face Experiment with Mobile Phones: Lise-Lotte Austad

Watch this short clip to observe the interactions between Mother and baby in this experiment when Mum is responding to amessage on her phone.

Still Face Experiment with Dads

The same experiment is undertaken with Dads. Dr Richard Cohen explains the long term repercussions of ruptures that go unrepaired.

Scripting

Ruptures

During ruptures, it can be tempting to inform our loved ones of what they have done to upset us in the form of "you" statements. Remember "I" statements on page 17.

Separate the person from the situation. If you keep focused on the situation, ruptures are less likely to get personal.

Label emotions—if you notice someone becoming frustrated during a rupture you could label their emotion. "You seem really upset by this" in a gently, compassionate voice. This helps to validate how they feel and can sometimes diffuse some of their anger. Equally important is labelling your emotions.

State what you do want, rather than what you don't want.

"Trying to win arguments through facts and logic is unhelpful and pushes everyone into a harmful game of right and wrong. Instead of judgement and victory, try to build understanding and empathy." Philippa Perry

Repairs

When we are under stress from being tired, hungry, or overwhelmed we all have the potential to exchange angry words. Being able to apologise will restore relationships.There is a skill in apologising. Here are some top tips:

- Move away from who is "right and wrong" - you will both have your own truths which might not match up.
- Avoid a "but" on the end of an apology. It will negate the apology.

The four steps to apologising

1. **Be accountable:** *"I shouldn't have spoken to you like that."*

2. **Explain what happened without making excuses:** *"I'm feeling under pressure at work, that's no excuse for what I said."*

3. **Express remorse:** *"I really regret my choice of words."*

4. **Acknowledge the impact of the rupture and offer a repair:** *"I know I hurt your feelings. I love you and I'm sorry."*

**Taken from:* https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-art-of-a-heartfelt-apology-2021041322366

Reflections...

A healthy rupture repair cycle is made up of 4 separate skills:

- The ability to *forgive*
- The ability to *apologise*
- The ability to *learn*
- The ability to *teach*

Which area would you like to develop?

Set yourself a target/intention.

How could you make repairs in everyday relational situations to help build resilience in your child/ren? Think about situations like seeing your child first thing in the morning or drop off/pick up from school.

What are your thoughts on the Still Face Paradigm?

Emotional Boundaries

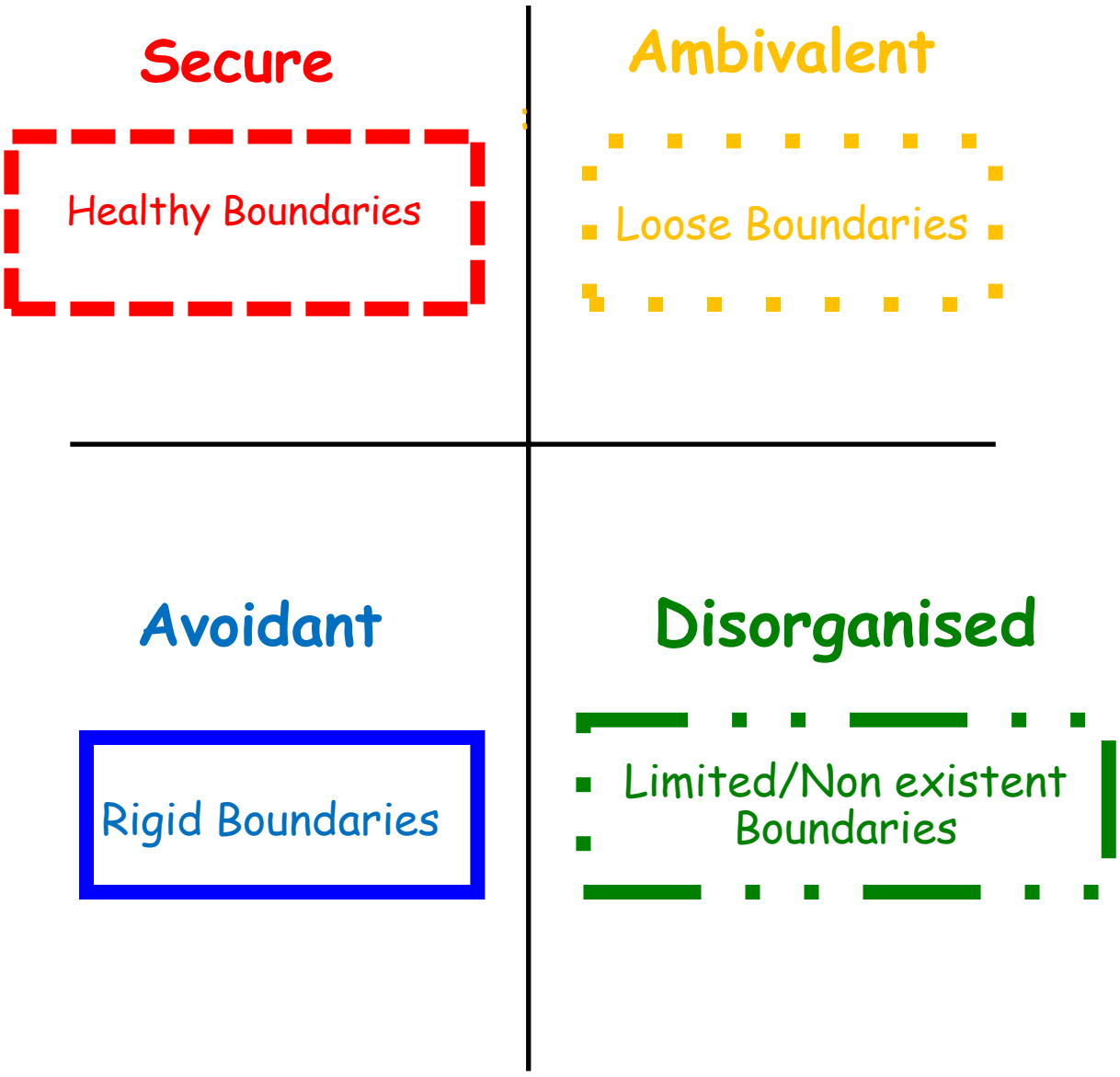
"Walls keep everyone out. Boundaries show people where the door is."

Mark Groves

How attachment style affects boundaries...

Our attachment style can impact boundary setting. Boundaries are essential for children to feel safe. They know where they stand withadults. Children will naturally test and push boundaries. Too many boundaries (rigid), a lack of boundaries (loose), as well as inconsistent boundaries (limited) can produce feelings of uncertainty in children. Children will communicate uncertainty through behaviour.

Remember, attachment styles belong more to relationships than they do to individuals.

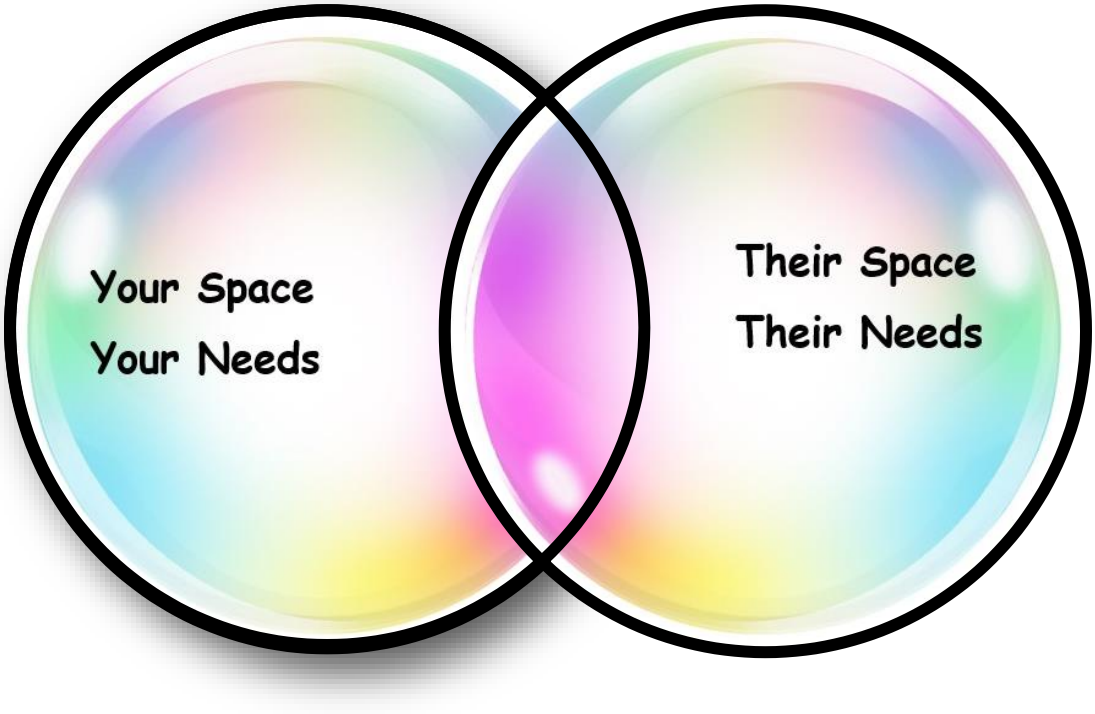


If it feels uncomfortable setting boundaries in relationships, know you are not alone. Boundaries take practice, awareness, reflection, and courage.

Credited to the work of Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, Daring Ventures

Warm Boundaries

Boundaries don't have to be a cold, hard list of dos and don'ts. Perhaps this is why boundaries can feel intimidating. Boundaries are simply where your emotional needs meet another's. Everyone has wants and needs in a relationship, communicating boundaries helps you and your loved one understand these wants and needs.



Boundaries are an essential component to healthy, loving, trusting relationships that allow us to thrive emotionally . We might associate boundary setting as something weput in place for children, however, children also deserve their boundaries to be understood and respected. Some children might not like to hug or kiss relatives goodbye, often perceived as rudeness, it is in fact a boundary that might be fuelled by attachment (goodbyes are tricky for me) or sensory need (I don't like the feeling of kisses from Granny.) The child is not saying they don't love their relatives, they are simply saying they do not want to express their love through a hug and kiss. By respecting children's boundaries, you are helping them to establish healthy boundary setting in their relationships. Think of these experiences as a blue print for future relationships.

Boundaries
Brene Brown

Setting Healthy
Boundaries

Personal
Boundaries & Red
Flags

Boundary Setting
with Children

Scripting

Boundary setting with loved ones

Philippa Perry suggests when choosing between guilt and resentment, always go with guilt. People pleasing tendencies are a form of survival mode. The behaviour served a purpose and helped keep us safe at one point. Women in particular, learn at an early age to put the needs of others before their own. This mantra might make it easier to set boundaries. Tip: WINA scripting is great for boundary setting (page 17)

Family Contracts

Kate Silverton suggests creating a "family contract" containing a guideline for boundaries. Creating the contract *with* your children will ensure they are a part of the process. It could contain rules such as "Sweets are allowed after meals" (notice the positive language rather than "no sweets before dinner.") During moments of boundary pushing, take it back to the contract: "Remember, we agreed in the family contract we are allowed sweets after dinner." Follow up with a why "because eating sweets between meals can damage our teeth."

Separate the Behaviour from the Child

Refer to the behaviour, rather than a child. "You are such a kind boy, that wasn't kind behaviour. In this family, we do not hit each other. We have gentle hands." This avoids it becoming part of their character or identity. It's not who they are it's what they did.

Catch them being Good

The behaviour we pay attention to is the behaviour we see more of. Catch them at their best and comment on when they have been a good friend by sharing or showing kindness. "I noticed that you tidied up your toys, even though you had fun playing. I'm so proud of you."

It's Ok to be...

This scripting supports both boundaries and emotions is the child. "It's OK to be angry, it's not OK to throw toys."

Reflections…

What relationships do you find challenging to set boundaries?

What boundaries do you want to set?

Write some scripting that might help you set boundaries,,,

What boundaries do you think your children have communicated through behaviour or through discussions they have had with you?

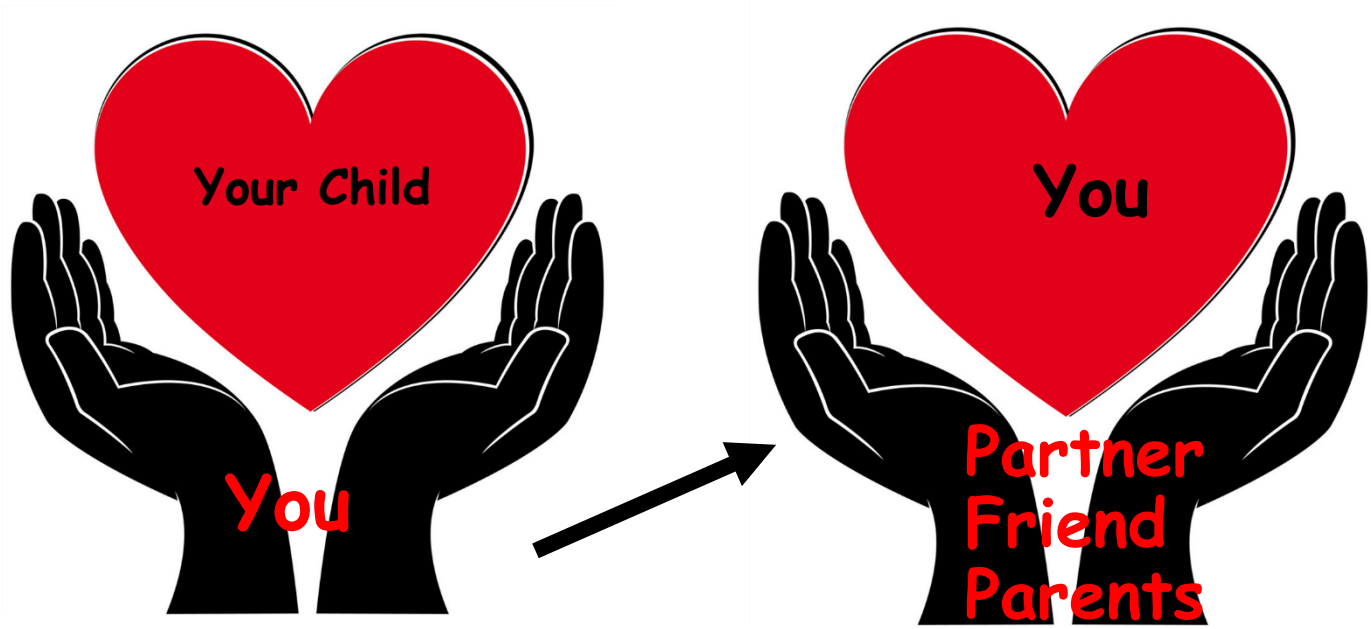
Containment

"Containment occurs when one person receives and understands the emotional distress of another without being overwhelmed by it, processes it and then communicates understanding back to the other person. This helps to restore theability to think in the distressedperson."

Hazel Douglas

Emotional Containment is a concept first introduced by Wilfred Bion in 1962. Babies project their unmanageable feelings onto parents, who in turn reflect backsoothing, loving and calming expressions and gestures. Parents and caregivers essentially become an "emotional container" for scary emotions experienced by children and babies. The fear of the baby is contained and absorbed by the loves ofthe parent.

When a child is shouting and crying for a toy or sweetie they want but cannot have,they are looking to the adult to learn how to deal and cope with the situation and emotions they experience as a result. This is an opportunity to help children learn how to express emotions. If the adult screams and shouts back at the child, the child will learn this is how to deal with emotions. The pattern is likely to be repeated.



What does containment look like?

- Someone who has time for us.
- Someone who gives us their full attention.
- Someone who is not distracted.
- Someone who shows empathy.
- Someone who holds and sets clear boundaries.
- Someone who holds space for us.

Emotional containment can cause a ripple effect on our emotional wellbeing. It helps to have a trusted friend, parent, or partner to then contain your emotions to help you process the experience.

Containment takes curiosity, courage, boundaries and self awareness.

*https://c-f-g.co.uk/blog/10-the-concept-of-emotional-containment

Non-Verbal Cues

This booklet contains scripting that could support moments of emotional distress and dysregulation. Let's take a closer look at non-verbal cues whichour brains pick up on subconsciously. Being aware of:

Facial Expressions–our face is filled with tiny muscles that can tense upduring stressful moments. Practice relaxing the face to a neutral expres-sion.

Physical Gestures–slow movements help instil calm. Facing front on might feel invasive to a distressed child. Sometimes, side on can feel safer. Keeping still signals you are calm and not distressed in or by the situation.

Eye Contact–for some children, eye contact is too much. Maybe you are beginning to notice eye contact changes during ruptures. Don't think thata lack of eye contact means a lack of respect. It usually indicates shame or fear. As for your eye contact, try "soft eyes", eyes that are filled with love and compassion. This is a conscious intention rather than a per-fected look.

Touch–consider if your child would prefer gentle loving pats, tight hugs,or gentle finger taps on their back to help them regulate. Perhaps touch feels triggering. Everyone has different tolerances.

Space–holding space, just being there. Leaving children alone with their emotions sends the message that when they experience big, scary, tricky,emotions they are not accepted by us. We are not pleased by their be-haviour. Children learn to internalise their emotions, they stop coming to us when they need us the most. Hold space for them, as long at it takes–they must rest upon your love and feel enveloped in it.

Voice–quiet, calm, soft, gentle.

Hand Gestures–hands on hips and folded arms can appear confrontation-al or closed. Try palms up on your lap

"Beneath every behaviour there is a feeling. And beneath every feeling is a need. And when we meet the need rather than focus on the behaviour, we begin to deal with the cause not the symptom." Ashleigh Warner

Reflections…

Think of a time when someone supported you through containment.

What did they *do*?

What did they *say*?

How did they *act*?

How did it *feel*?

Think of a time you supported someone through containment (adult or child).

What did you *do*?

What did you *say*?

How did you *act*?

How did it *feel*?

Acknowledgments

This creation of this booklet has been inspired by the Daring Ventures Course, based on the incredible work, passion, and knowledge of the Tigers team and Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, founderof *Connected Baby*. Their commitment to understanding and disseminating information on the foundations of relationships has, since 2019, helped promote meaningful healthy emotional connections for many people across Scotland and beyond.

QR code for Tigers group website

https://tigersgroup.co.uk

QR code for Connected Baby website

https://connectedbaby.net

If you would like to hear more about how the Tigers team puts the Daring Venturescourse into action in their Relationship-Led Practice, which helps in their work with young people, here are some links to informative videos:

Yvonne Stanley, Early Years Manager & Laurene McVay, Early Years Assessor Yvonne and Laurene share their views on the impact Daring Ventures has had on themboth professionally and personally.

Relationship Led Practice—Tigers Group
Read about how the Tigers Group believe putting relationships at the heart is thekey to a thriving organisation.

Children in Scotland: Daring Ventures
Attendees choose one word to describe the three day Relationship Based Practicecourse facilitated by tigers and Dr Suzanne Zeedyk.

If you'd like further reading, here are some books and links we've found helpful:

Brené Brown (2021). *Atlas of the heart.* New York Random House.

Douglas, H. (2007). *Containment and Reciprocity Integrating Psychoanalytic Theoryand Child Development Research for Work with Children*. Routledge.

Gold, E. (2020). *POWER OF DISCORD : why the ups and downs of relationships arethe secret to building intimacy, resilience, and trust.* S.L.: Scribe Publications.

Kari Dunn Buron and Curtis, M. (2003). *The Incredible 5-point Scale*. AAPC Publishing.

Neufeld, G. and Gabor Maté, MD (2011). *Hold On to Your Kids*. Vintage Canada.

Perry, P. (2020). *The book you wish your parents had read : (and your children will beglad that you did)*. New York: Pamela Dorman Books Life.

Perry, P. (2023). *The book you want everyone you love to read (and maybe a few you don't). London: Cornerstone Press,*

Siegel, D.J. and Tina Payne Bryson (2012). *The whole-brain child : 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's development, survive everyday parenting struggles,and help your family thrive*. Brunswick, Vic.: Scribe Publications.

Silverton, K. (2021). *There's no such thing as 'naughty' : the groundbreaking guide for parents with children aged 0-5*. London: Piatkus.

Tolle, E. (2004). *The power of NOW : a guide to spiritual enlightenment*. Vancouver,B.C.: Namaste Pub. ; Novato, Calif.

Zeedyk, S (2020). *Sabre Tooth Tigers & Teddy Bears: the connected baby guide to attachment*. Great Britain, Connected Baby Ltd

The art of a heartfelt apology: https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-art-of-a-heartfelt-apology-2021041322366

The Attachment Project:: https://www.attachmentproject.com/

Balance, live well :https://www.balance.media/attachment-style-quiz/