

# Section 5:

## Stress And Trauma: Supporting Recovery



# Session aims

- To understand what stress and trauma is
- To know the impact stress and trauma has on young people
- To understand the importance of relationships
- To gain ideas of how to support traumatised young people on a whole-school and individual level
- To appreciate the importance of self-care



**What is trauma?**

# Stress vs trauma



Heightened stress can be seen as fight, flight, fear or freeze

Trauma has an overwhelming stress at its core, which has left its mark and is easily triggered and re-lived through flashbacks



# Stress



Is the body's natural defence against real or imagined danger



It flushes the body with hormones to prepare the system, to evade or confront danger



Acute stress: usually brief, most common, caused by reactive thinking



Episodic stress: frequently experiencing acute stress



Chronic stress: prolonged

# Three levels of stress response

## **Positive**

Brief increases in heart rate,  
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

## **Tolerable**

Serious, temporary stress responses,  
buffered by supportive relationships.

## **Toxic**

Prolonged activation of stress response systems  
in the absence of protective relationships.

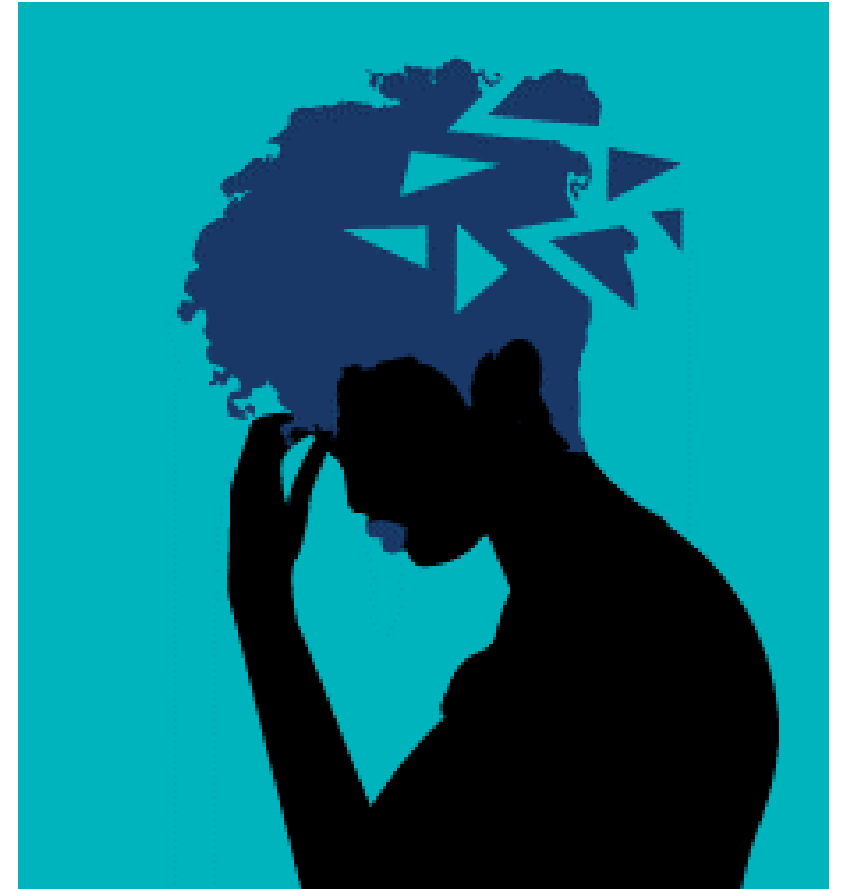
(Shonkoff, Boyce & McEwen, 2009)

# What is trauma?

*“A psychologically distressing event (s) that is outside the usual range of human experience often involving a sense of intense fear, terror and helplessness”*

(Perry 2011)

**Perception is more important than  
reality**



# Trauma as a scar





# The prevalence of trauma



**One in four children will  
have experienced  
developmental trauma  
affecting their behavior  
and ability to learn**

# Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

Forms of ACEs include:



## Maltreatment

i.e. abuse or neglect



## Violence & coercion

i.e. domestic abuse,  
gang membership,  
being a victim of crime



## Adjustment

i.e. migration, asylum  
or ending relationships



## Prejudice

i.e. LGBT+ prejudice,  
sexism, racism or disablism



## Household or family adversity

i.e. substances misuse,  
intergenerational trauma  
destitution, or deprivation



## Inhumane treatment

i.e. torture, forced  
imprisonment or  
institutionalisation



## Adult responsibilities

i.e. being a young  
carer or involvement  
in child labour



## Bereavement & survivorship

i.e. traumatic deaths,  
surviving an illness  
or accident

# Activity

Take a moment to think about  
and note down what  
experiences we might be  
talking about when we talk  
about childhood Trauma and  
Adverse Childhood  
Experiences?



# Trauma in the context of Covid-19

# Direct impact from Covid-19

Loss of control

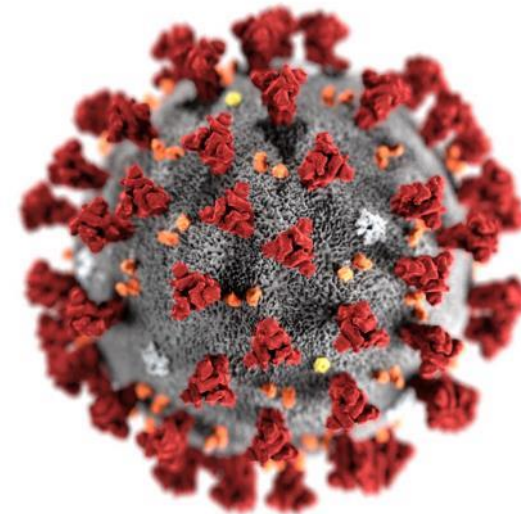
Threat to life

Witnessing a relative  
seriously unwell

Witnessing the  
death of a relative

Perception is important.  
These experiences can be traumatic for  
some, but not to others.

Also, current trauma can reactivate previous  
trauma.



# Traumas exacerbated by Covid-19

**Covid-19 has illuminated and exacerbated existing inequalities and created an environment for new concerns.**

**Racism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination, intolerance and abuse**

**Domestic abuse (escalating concerns)**

**Child abuse or neglect (escalating concerns)**

**Young carers (supporting a parent/carer who is shielding)**

**Online bullying during lockdown**

**Economic impacts (increased poverty, losing jobs, widening of rich-poor divide)**

**Isolation**

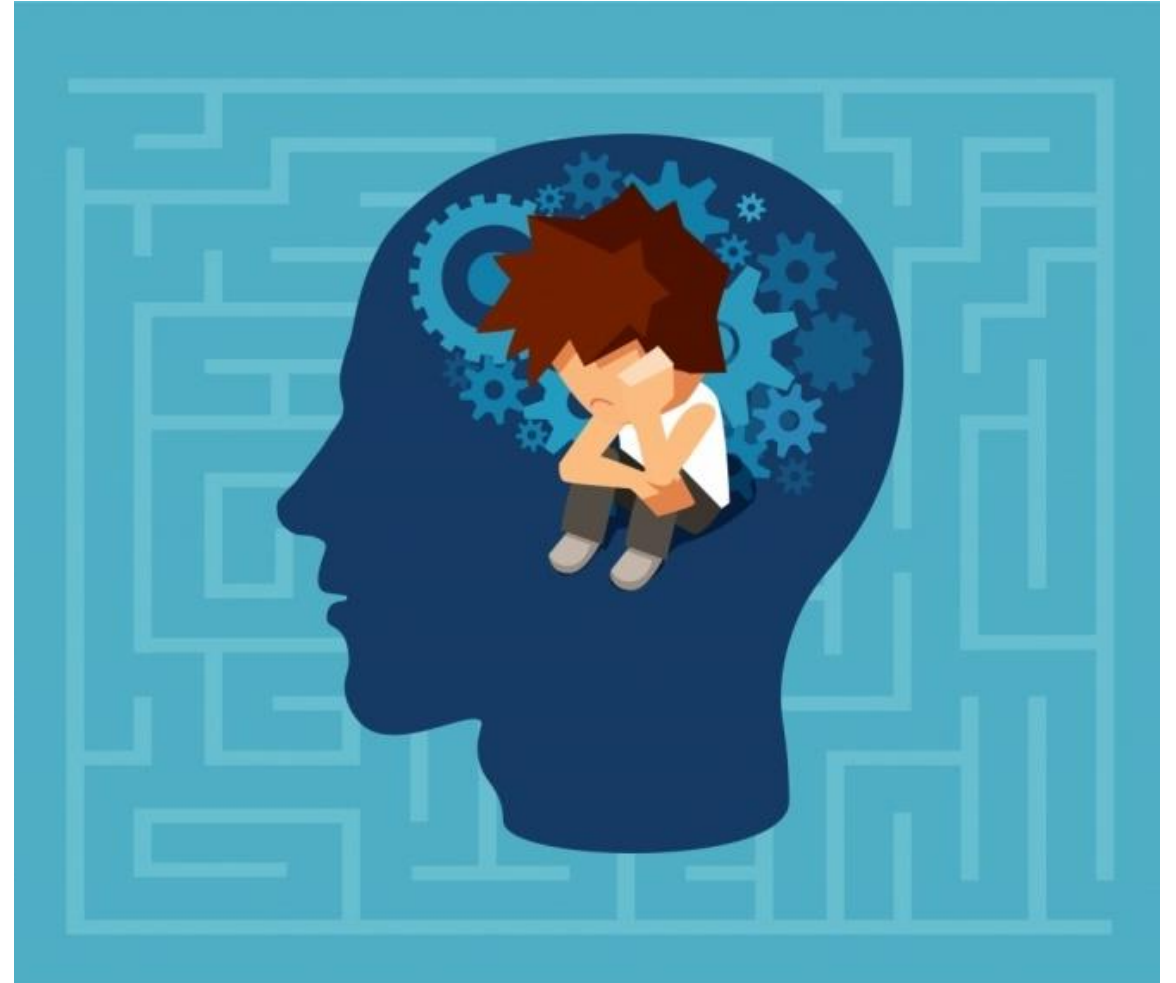
**Mental health difficulties (including from exposure to negative news)**

**Experience of losses (including loss of anticipated experiences, social support, established coping strategies)**

# The impact of stress and trauma

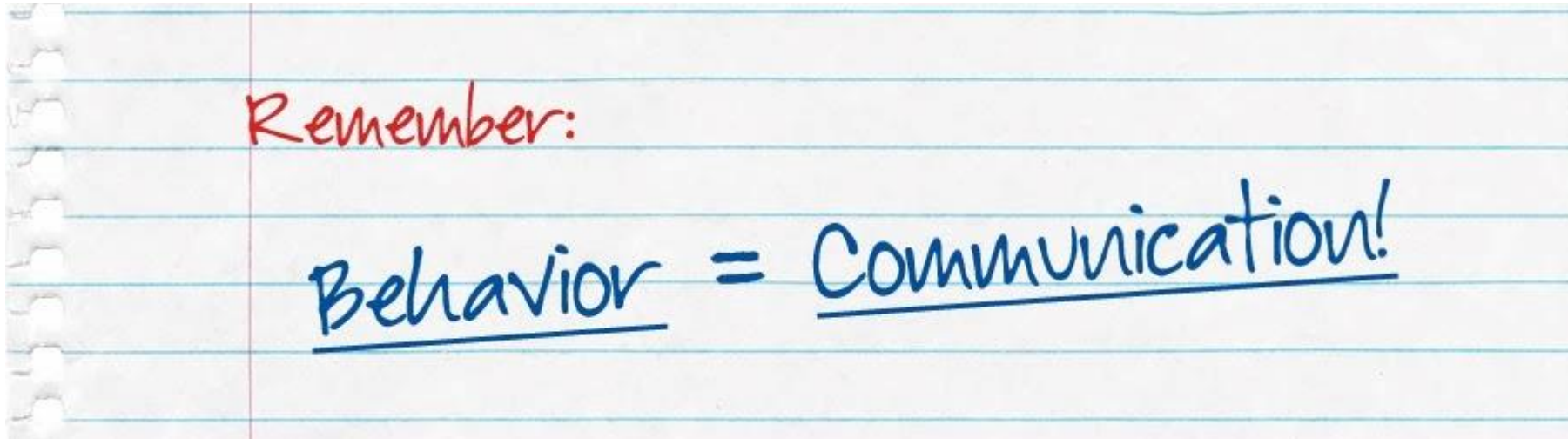
# The impact of trauma

- Trauma impacts on a child's body, brain, memory, emotions, relationships, learning and behaviour.
- By learning about the impact of trauma on a child we **reduce the chance of a child being misunderstood** - this in turn reduces stress for staff and pupils





# Understanding behaviour



**Behaviour is generally functional and makes sense in the context in which it developed - but may not in other contexts/ relationships**

# The iceberg model



# Activity

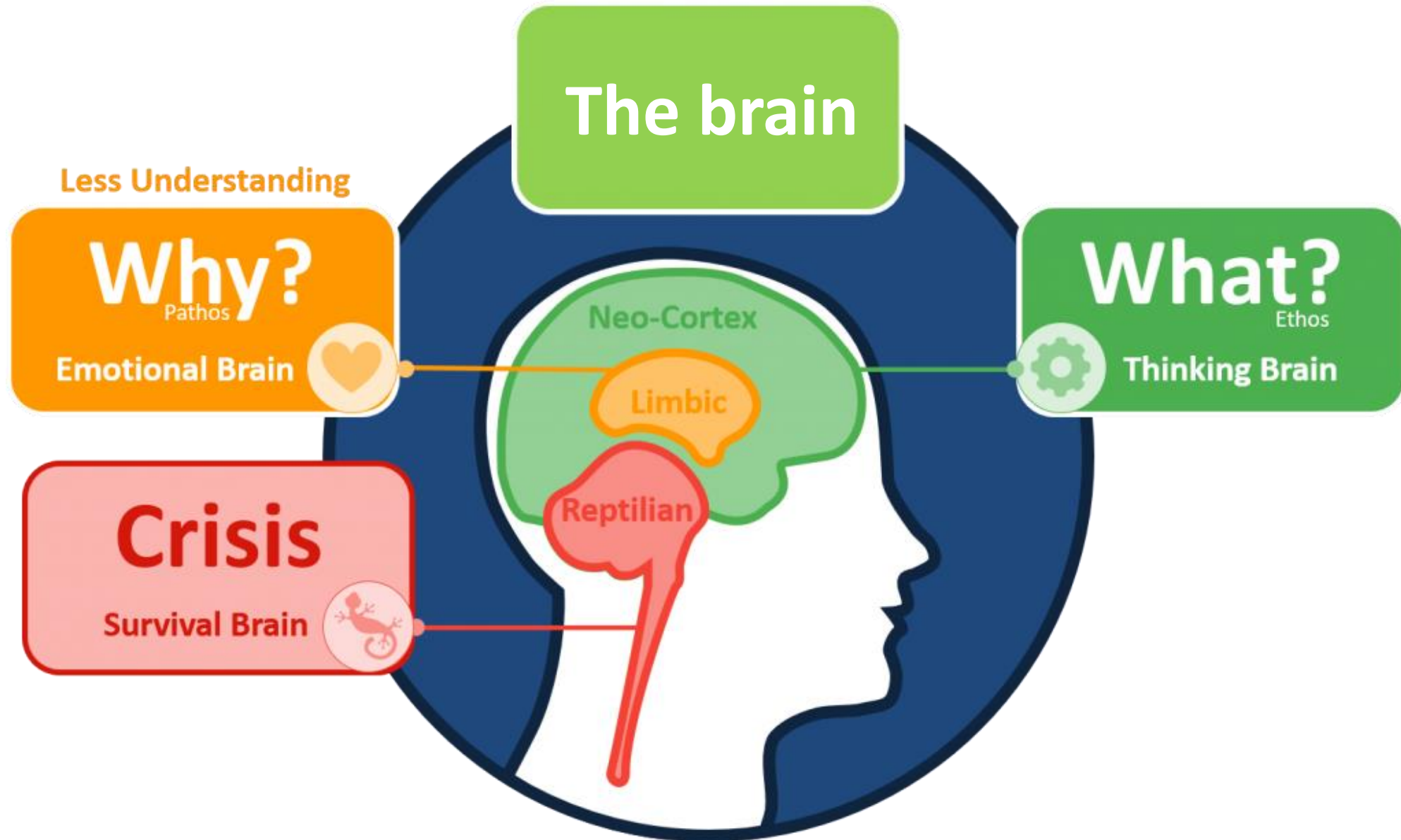
Think of a pupil who you think may have experienced trauma –

- What do you notice about them?
- What behaviours do they show?
- How do they respond to you?

Make notes



# The brain



# Short-term effects on the brain



**Fight**

Face it and fight



**Flight**

Flee from a  
dangerous  
situation



**Freeze**

Become still

# Prolonged effects on the brain

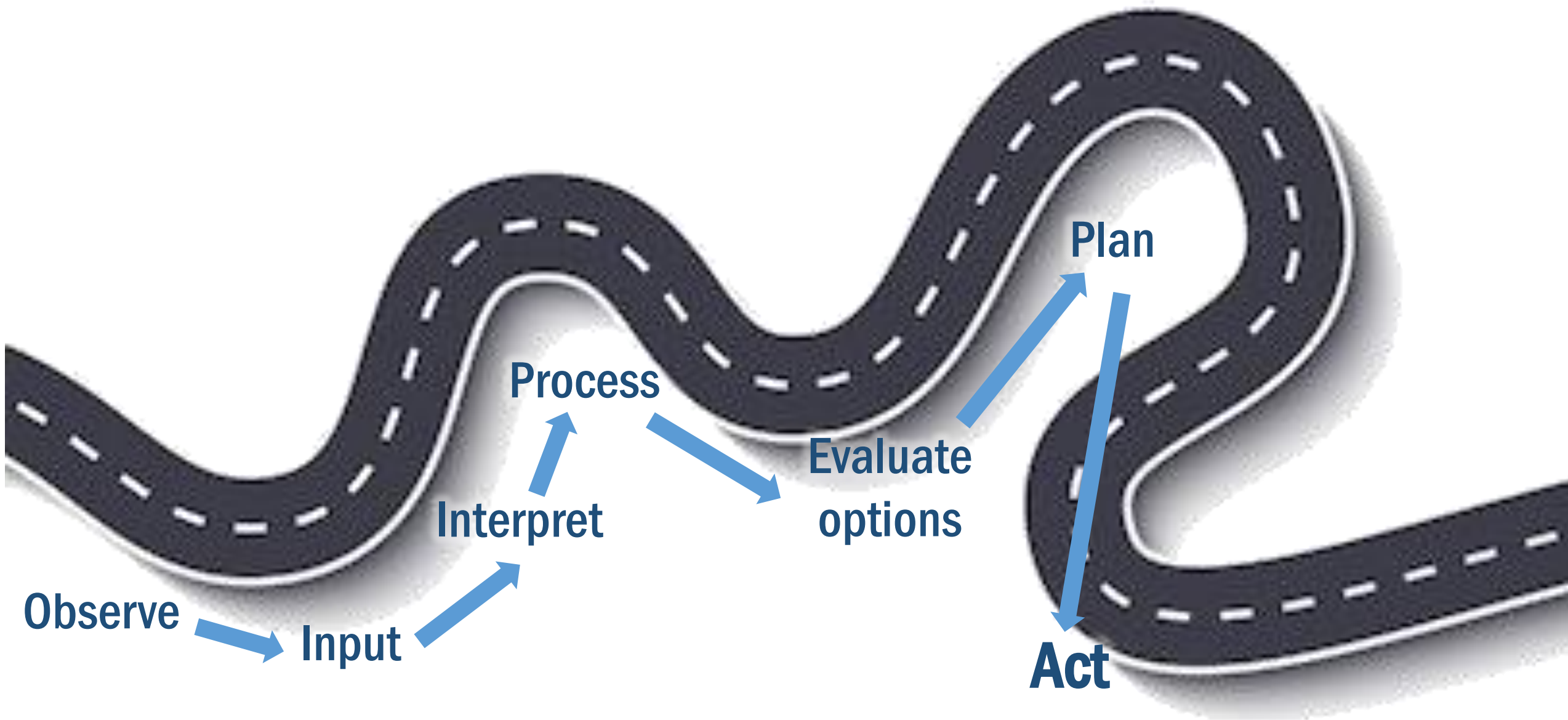
However....

if the stress response is **extreme** and **long-lasting**, and **buffering relationships are unavailable to the child**, there can be a physical and lasting impact on the brain and mind.

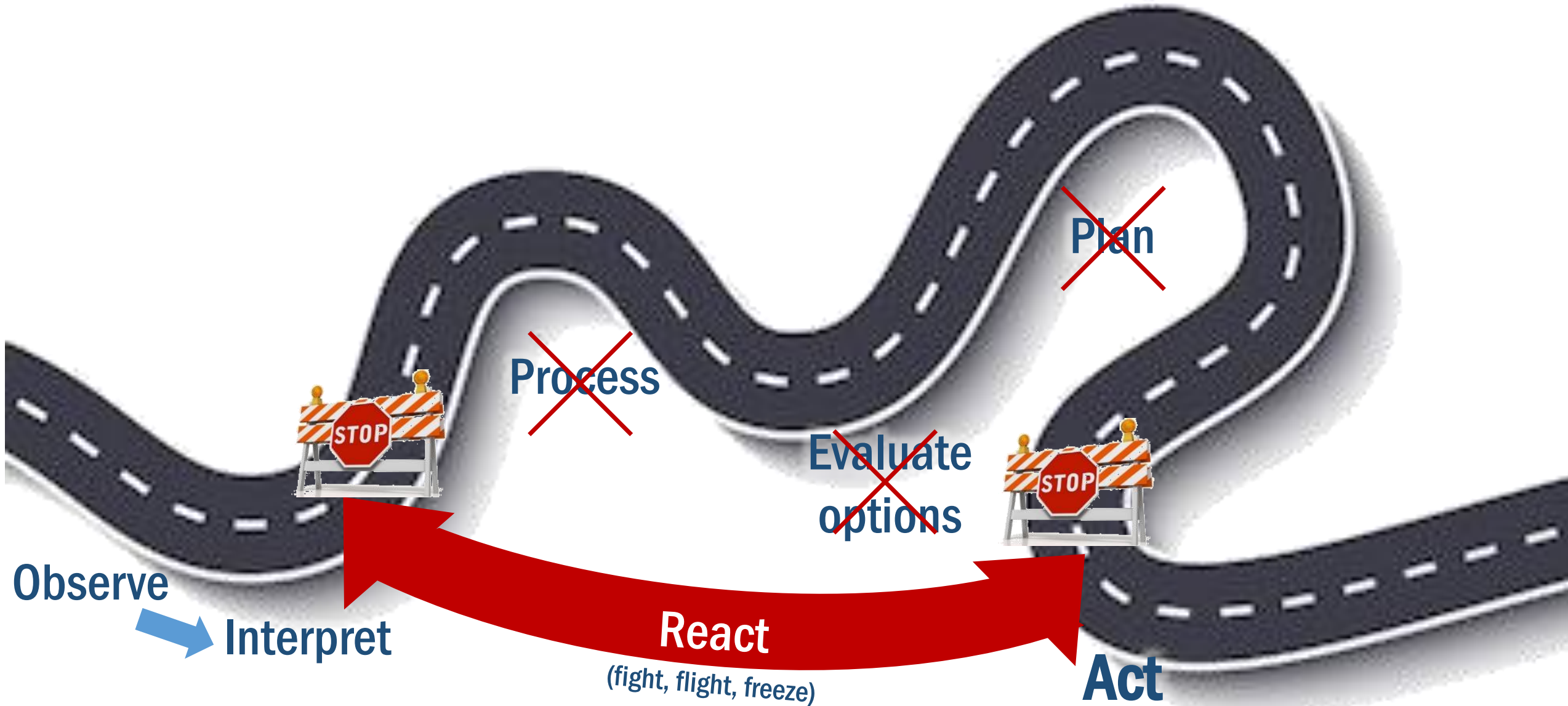




# The brain under typical conditions



# The brain in 'survival mode'





# What survival looks like in the classroom



## Freeze

- Not interested, bored
- Confused
- Forgetful
- Talking about something else
- Hard to move through a task
- Not listening
- Staring into space
- Day dreaming
- Clumsy
- Distracted



## Flight

- Running away
- Keeping SUPER busy
- Not coping in free time
- Need to be first or at the front
- Bumping into people
- Avoiding tasks and activities
- Baby talk or silly voices
- Hyperactive
- Giddy and silly
- Hiding under tables



## Fight

- Hot and bothered
- Angry and aggressive
- Controlling
- Lie or blaming
- Shouty and argumentative
- Pushing away friends
- Lonely
- Demanding
- Inflexible
- Unable to follow 'rules'
- Disrespectful



## Submit

- Socially withdrawn
- Compliant
- Quiet
- Unable to think, just yes or no answers
- Passive
- Resigned
- Neutral expression
- Alone
- Low mood
- Head down on the table

# Key areas affected by trauma

**Relationships**

**Emotional  
regulation**

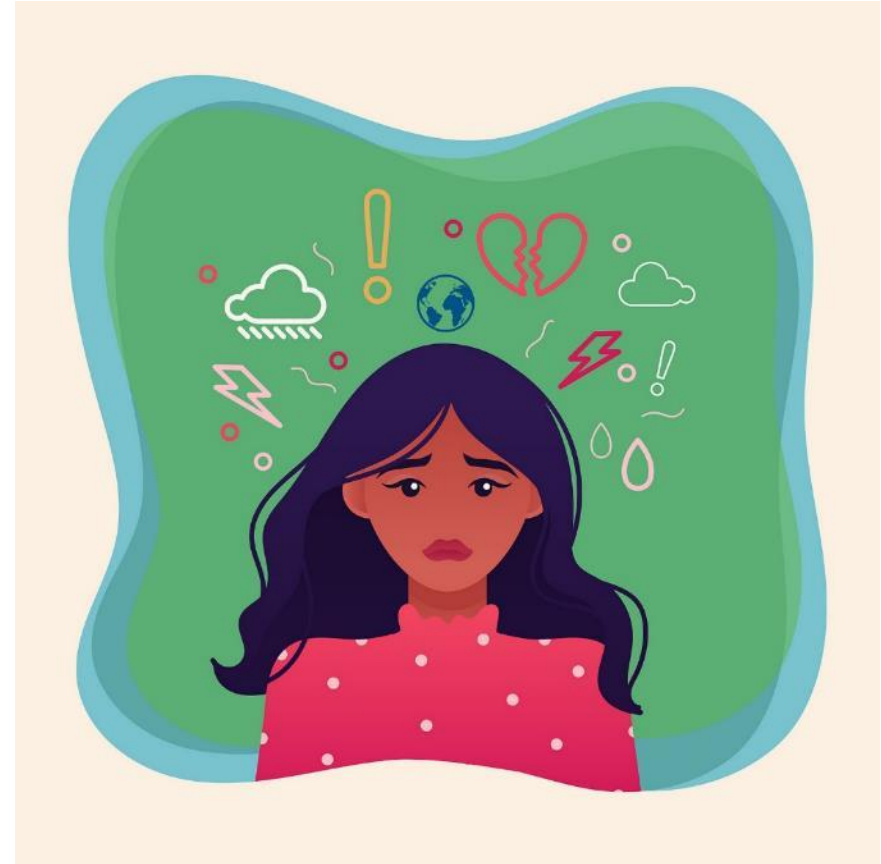
**Executive  
functioning**

**Hypervigilance**

**Self-esteem**

# Common triggers for survival behaviours

- Feelings of vulnerability or rejection
- Confrontation, authority or limit setting
- Sensory overload (too much stimulation from the environment)
- Loss of control
- Experiencing elements or symbols of their previous trauma
- Feeling unsafe



# Long term outcomes of ACEs

ACEs impact a child's development, their relationships with others, and increase the risk of engaging in health-harming behaviours, and experiencing poorer mental and physical health outcomes in adulthood. Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:



**2x**

more likely to  
binge drink and  
have a poor diet



**3x**

more likely to  
be a current  
smoker



**4x**

more likely to have  
low levels of mental  
wellbeing & life satisfaction



**5x**

more likely  
to have had  
underage sex



**6x**

more likely to  
have an unplanned  
teenage pregnancy



**7x**

more likely  
to have been  
involved in violence



**11x**

more likely  
to have used  
illicit drugs



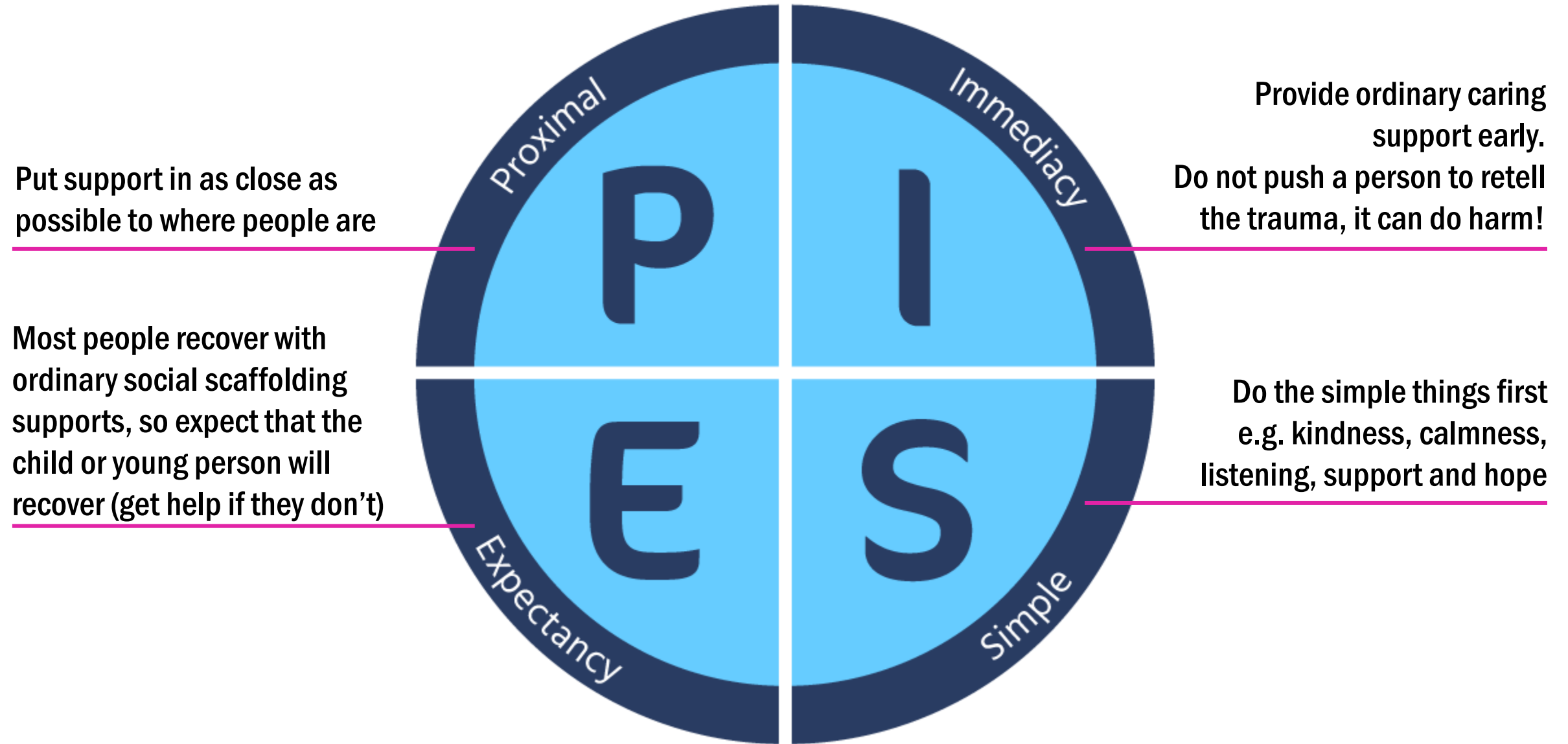
**11x**

more likely  
to have been  
incarcerated



**Supporting those who have  
experienced trauma**

# Helping Those With Trauma



# What Will Strengthened Wellbeing Look Like?

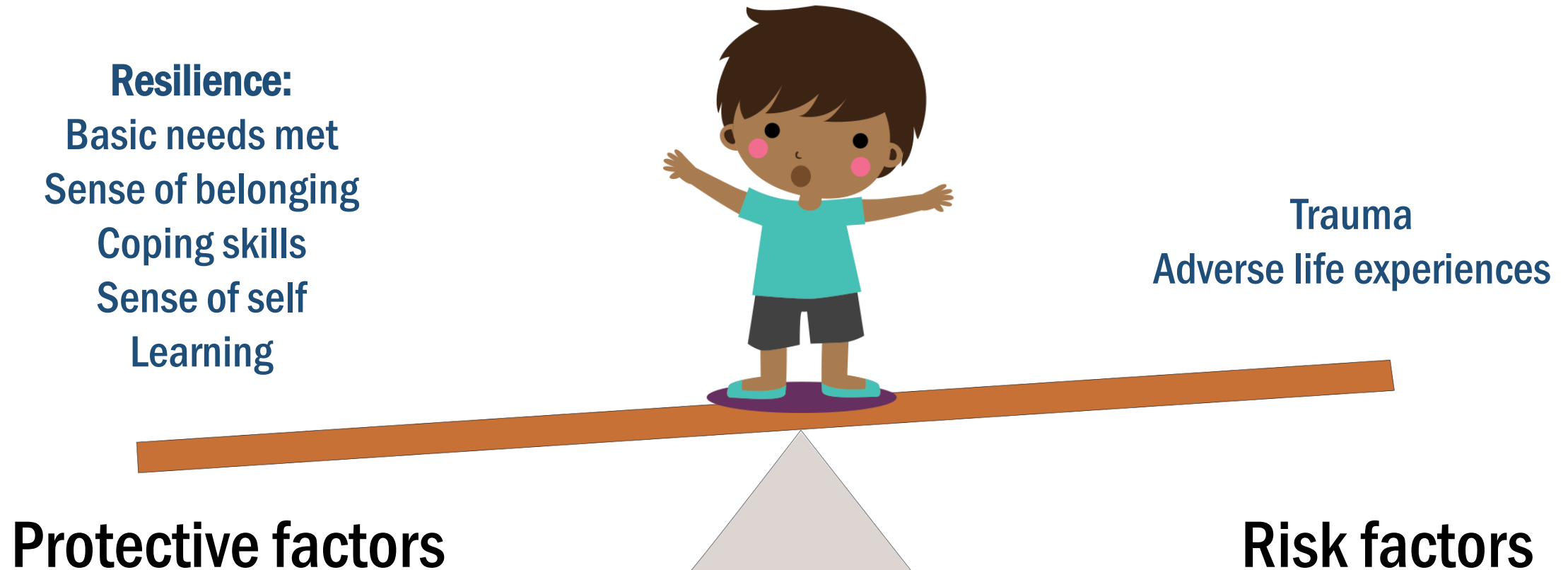
**Being Able to Make Change Happen**



**Building Relationships**

**Learning Habits of Resilience**

# Resilience





# Resilience framework

## Basics



Good Housing



Money to live



Being safe



Transport and getting to places



Healthy diet



Exercise and fresh air



Enough sleep



Play and hobbies



Not being judged

## Belonging



Find somewhere you feel like you belong



Find your place in the world



Spend time with good people and in good places



Keep relationships going



More healthy relationships the better



Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope



Get together with people you can rely on



Responsibilities & obligations. For example: looking after your brother/sister or going to school



Focus on good times and places



Understand what has happened in your life



Predict a good experience of someone or something new



Make friends and mix with other people

## Learning



Make school or college work as well as possible



Engage mentors



Plan out your future



Organise yourself



Highlight achievements



Develop life skills

## Coping



Understand right from wrong



Be brave



Solving problems



Focus on the good things in life. Put on your Positivity Glasses!



Find time for your interests



Calming down and making yourself feel better



Remember tomorrow is another day



Lean on others when necessary



Have a laugh

## Core self



Instil a sense of hope



Understand other people's feelings



Know and understand yourself



Take responsibility for yourself



Find time for your talents



There is existing help and solutions for problems, use them

# The importance of relationships

# Strong school relationships are protective

“

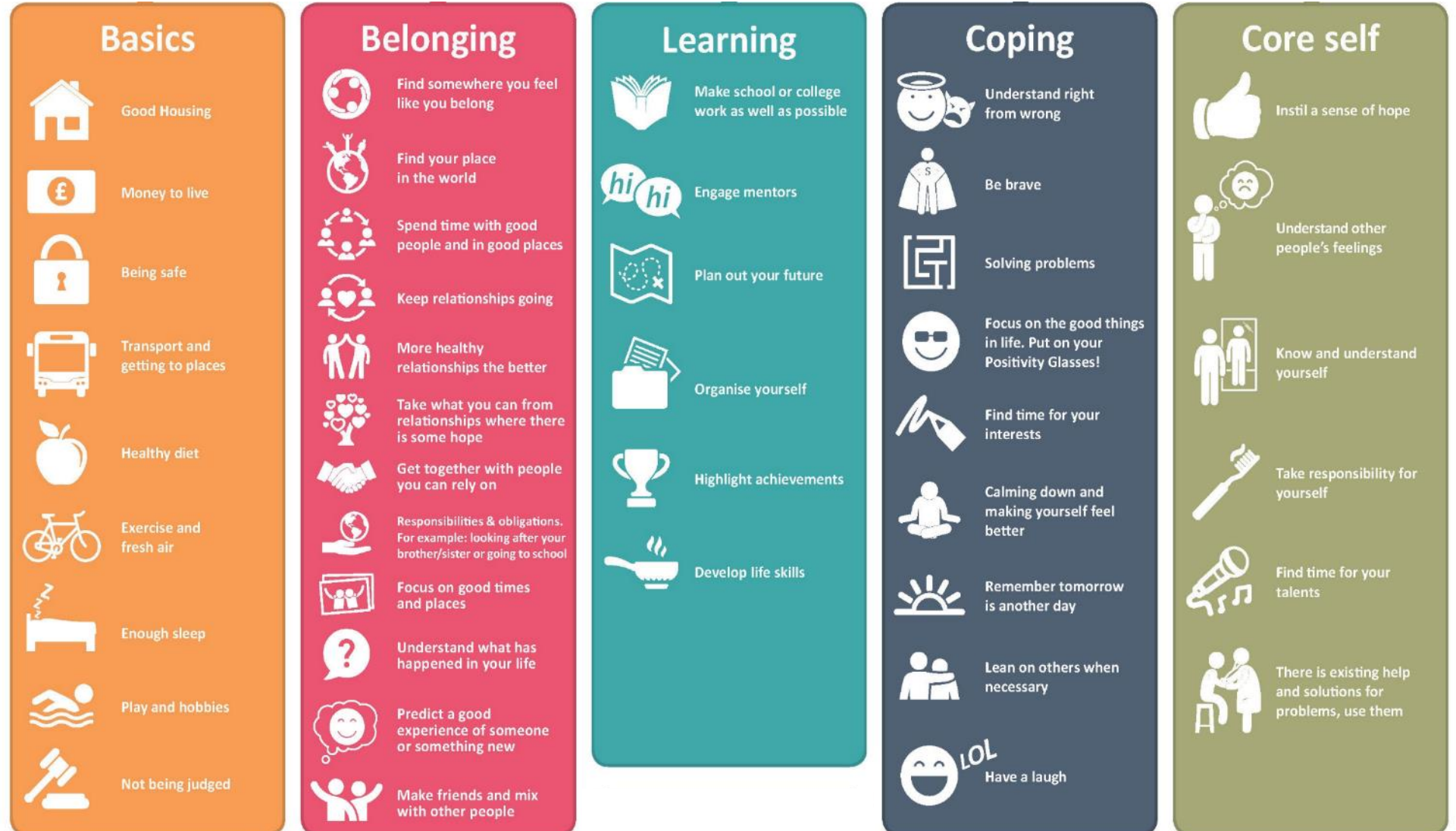
Strengthened social relationships are key... they protect... against the likelihood of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

”

**How can you build on relationships in your Whole School/College?**

# Resilience framework

Relationships underpin all areas of the resilience framework



# Attachment

**Our early relationships and experiences affect the way we view ourselves and relate to others and to the world around us.**



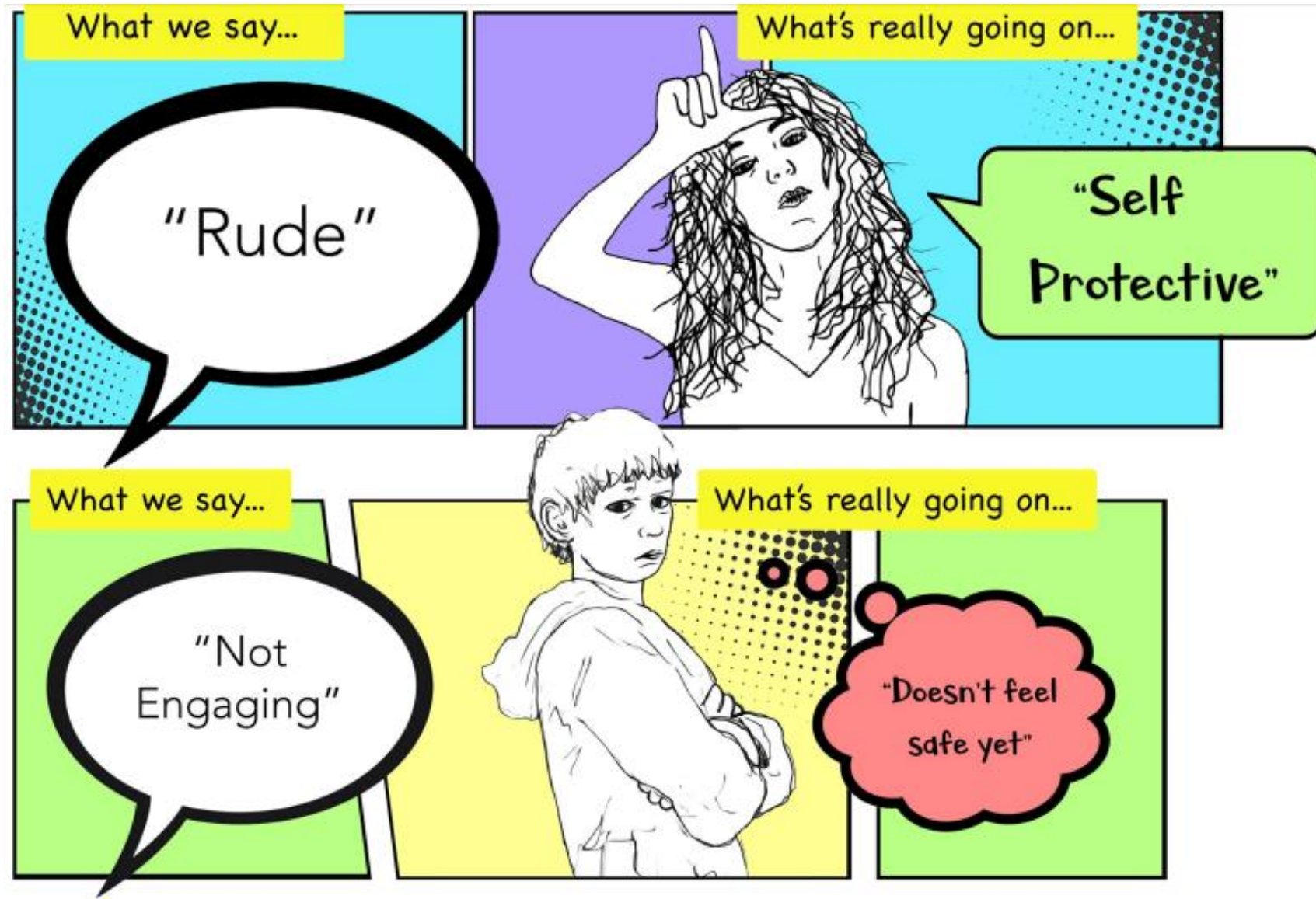
# Emotionally available adults

*“there is no more  
effective neurobiological  
intervention than a safe  
relationship”*

**Bruce Perry, researcher and child psychiatrist**



# Remembering that behaviour is communication



**Whole school approach**



# Trauma informed approach

A whole school approach,  
building resilience

Behaviour as a symptom of the  
problem, not the problem

Commitment to building trust  
and relationships day by day.

Assuming complexity – being  
empathetic and curious

Support children to develop  
skills they are struggling with  
such as self-Regulation and  
emotional literacy

Connect with the whole family  
and connect with external  
agencies

# Recovery curriculum

- Written by Professor Barry Carpenter and Matthew Carpenter
- The Recovery Curriculum focuses on an analysis of the loss children have suffered during this time, and the potential anxiety and trauma it may cause, with significant impact on their ability to learn effectively.
- A Recovery Curriculum, enables schools to consider the processes they will need to put in place to successfully transition children back to school.

**It is a process of building, of co-constructing, a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of children, that harvests their experience and makes sense of it emotionally as well as cognitively.**



# Recovery curriculum

## Relationships

Existing relationships may need to be invested in and restored.

- Reach out to students
- Spend time rebuilding your relationship with them
- Facilitate students rebuilding relationships with each other

## Community

Base the curriculum in the community

- Listen to what has happened to students
- Understand the needs of the community
  - Engage the community in the transition of learning back into school

## Transparent curriculum

Students will feel like they have lost time in learning.

- Show students how you are addressing gaps
  - Consult and co-construct the curriculum with your students
  - Provide time for students to heal their sense of loss

## Metacognition

Students will have been learning in different ways at home.

- Spend time reflecting of what students have been doing at home and help them identify the skills they were using and developing
- Make the skills they're using in school explicit to rebuild their confidence as learners

## Space

Students will need to rediscover their selves and their voice

- Be mindful of the intensity and pace in which you are trying to make up for lost learning
- Ensure you are still providing opportunities for exploration within your lessons

# Resilience framework

## Basics



Good Housing



Money to live



Being safe



Transport and getting to places



Healthy diet



Exercise and fresh air



Enough sleep



Play and hobbies



Not being judged

## Belonging



Find somewhere you feel like you belong



Find your place in the world



Spend time with good people and in good places



Keep relationships going



More healthy relationships the better



Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope



Get together with people you can rely on



Responsibilities & obligations. For example: looking after your brother/sister or going to school



Focus on good times and places



Understand what has happened in your life



Predict a good experience of someone or something new



Make friends and mix with other people

## Learning



Make school or college work as well as possible



Engage mentors



Plan out your future



Organise yourself



Highlight achievements



Develop life skills

**A whole school approach can support these areas of resilience**

# Whole school support: the basics

## Basics



Good Housing



Money to live



Being safe



Transport and  
getting to places



Healthy diet



Exercise and  
fresh air



Enough sleep



Play and hobbies



Not being judged

**Providing additional  
resources to students who  
need it (e.g. free school  
meals, books, technology,  
extra curricular activities)**

**Providing a calm, safe and  
accessible school  
environment**

**Opportunities for physical  
activities and play**

**Ensure students are well-  
informed of the measures  
school is taking to reduce  
the transmission of  
coronavirus / safeguarding  
measures**

**Information about sleep  
hygiene and healthy eating**

**Maintain ongoing  
communication between  
school and home**

# Whole school support: belonging

## Belonging



Find somewhere you feel like you belong



Find your place in the world



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Understand what has happened in your life



Predict a good experience of someone or something new



Make friends and mix with other people

**Remind students there are key adults where they can seek support**

**Develop positive teacher-student relationships**

**Foster an ethos of acceptance and diversity**

**Listen to what students have to say**

**Provide opportunities to develop friendships**

**Encourage shared experiences**



# Whole school support: learning

## Learning



Make school or college work as well as possible



Engage mentors



Plan out your future



Organise yourself



Highlight achievements



Develop life skills

**Encourage meta-cognitive thinking**

**Help students to set goals**

**Opportunities to apply learning to real life**

**Encourage collaborative and cooperative learning**

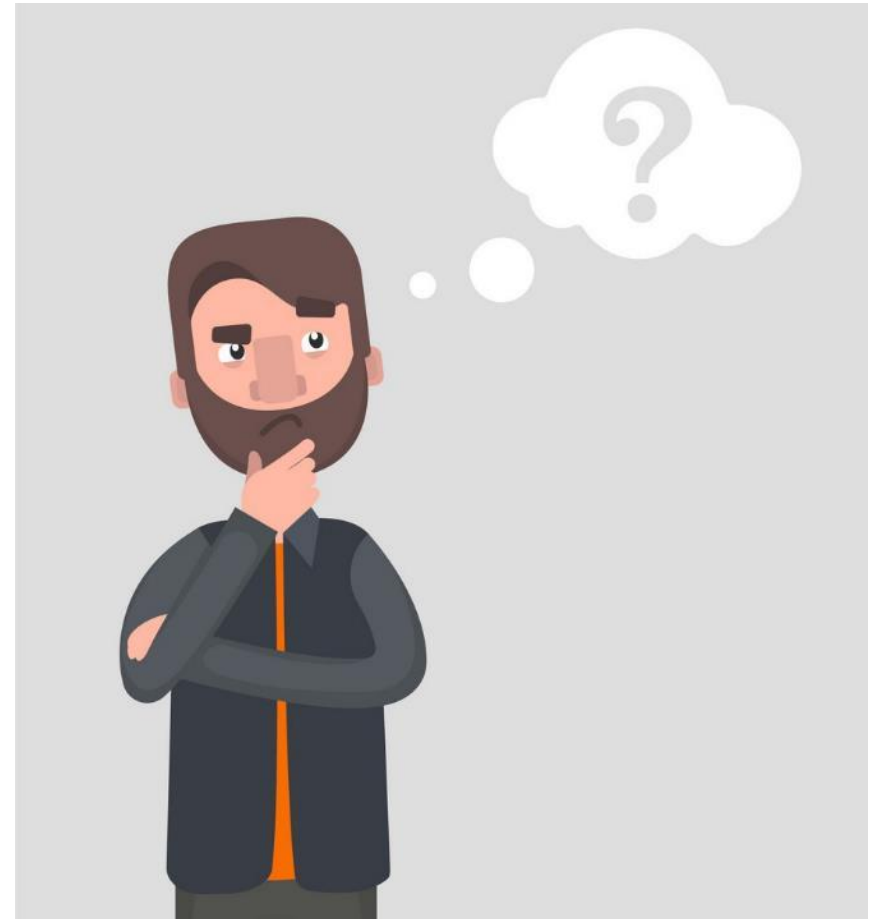
**Provide ongoing positive feedback**

**Encourage students to be organised and independent with their learning**

# Activity

What are you doing as a school to support children who have experienced trauma/ACEs?

Which of these suggestions could you implement?





Targeted support

# Resilience framework

## Belonging



Find somewhere you feel like you belong



Find your place in the world



Spend time with good people and in good places



Keep relationships going



More healthy relationships the better



Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope



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Responsibilities & obligations. For example: looking after your brother/sister or going to school



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## Learning



Make school or college work as well as possible



Engage mentors



Plan out your future



Organise yourself



Highlight achievements



Develop life skills

## Coping



Understand right from wrong



Be brave



Solving problems



Focus on the good things in life. Put on your Positivity Glasses!



Find time for your interests



Calming down and making yourself feel better



Remember tomorrow is another day



Lean on others when necessary



Have a laugh

## Core self



Instil a sense of hope



Understand other people's feelings



Know and understand yourself



Take responsibility for yourself



Find time for your talents



There is existing help and solutions for problems, use them

**A targeted approach can support these areas of resilience**

# Targeted support: belonging

## Belonging



Find somewhere you feel like you belong



Find your place in the world



Spend time with good people and in good places



Keep relationships going



More healthy relationships the better



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Responsibilities & obligations. For example: looking after your brother/sister or going to school



Focus on good times and places



Understand what has happened in your life



Predict a good experience of someone or something new



Make friends and mix with other people

**Give students roles and responsibilities in the classroom**

**Identify a trusted adult to be a 'co-regulator'**

**Organise structured 'friendship groups' and activities**

**Be empathetic and curious**

**Get to know the young person as an individual e.g. through 'special time'**

**Show the young person they are being 'held in mind' throughout the day**

# Targeted support: coping

## Coping



Understand right from wrong



Be brave



Solving problems



Focus on the good things in life. Put on your Positivity Glasses!



Find time for your interests



Calming down and making yourself feel better



Remember tomorrow is another day



Lean on others when necessary



LOL  
Have a laugh

Recovery conversations

Calming activities

Growth mindset

Support children to develop skills they are struggling with

Provide opportunities to make choices

Sensory input opportunities

# Targeted support: core self

## Core self



Instil a sense of hope



Understand other people's feelings



Know and understand yourself



Take responsibility for yourself



Find time for your talents



There is existing help and solutions for problems, use them

**Facilitate opportunities for success**

**Help explore the young person's sense of self – who they are, what they're good at, what they enjoy etc.**

**Targeted emotional literacy support**

**Social stories**

**Model and teach positive and desirable behaviours**

**Building self-esteem – frequent positive feedback**

# Targeted support: learning

## Learning



Make school or college work as well as possible



Engage mentors



Plan out your future



Organise yourself



Highlight achievements



Develop life skills

**Highlight and celebrate student strengths**

**Big learning expectations that last only a small, achievable amount of time**

**Differentiate curriculum**

**Scaffolding**

**Consistent routines and a language of expectation and support**

**Teach life skills as well as academic**

# Recovery conversations

*Conversations with traumatized learners... interrupting thought patterns and calming situations before they escalate*

Gentle, personal, non threatening, side on, eye level or lower. Don't demand eye contact. Not over emotional – avoid power play

Name the emotion – “I can see/understand that you are angry”

Remind of previous good behaviour

Challenge their negative perception “you can do this...”

Walk away, allow time for the pupil to decide what to do next. “I am going to walk away and give you chance to think about what happened. I know when I come back we can have polite and productive talk.





# Recovery conversations

- A repair or reparation conversation should be short, private and should be done by the adult involved in the incident.
- The meeting is discuss the incident not the pupils character. It needs to be structured and planned. A stepped approach can help
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?
  - What have you thought since?
  - How did this make you/others feel?
  - How should we put things right





# Activity

Think of a pupil who you think may have experienced trauma

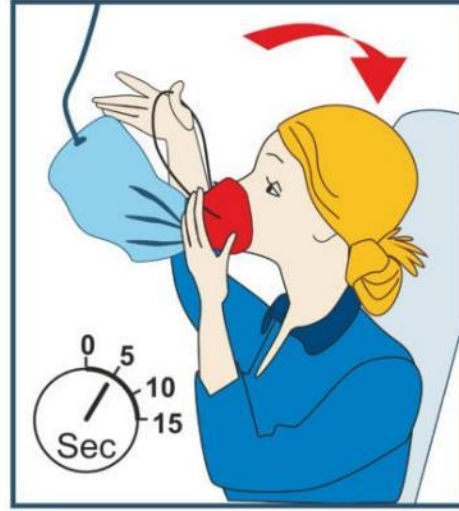
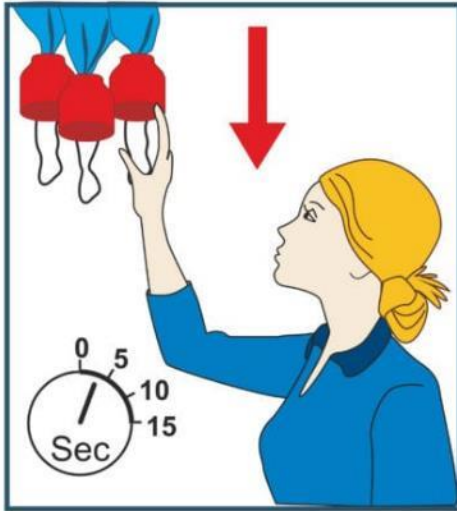
What are you currently doing to support them?

Which of these suggestions could you implement?



**Self care**

# Looking after ourselves



**Before we can help others,  
we need to help ourselves**

**dysregulated adults can't  
help dysregulated children**

# Activity

How does it feel working with  
children with challenging  
behaviour?

What support do you have in  
place?



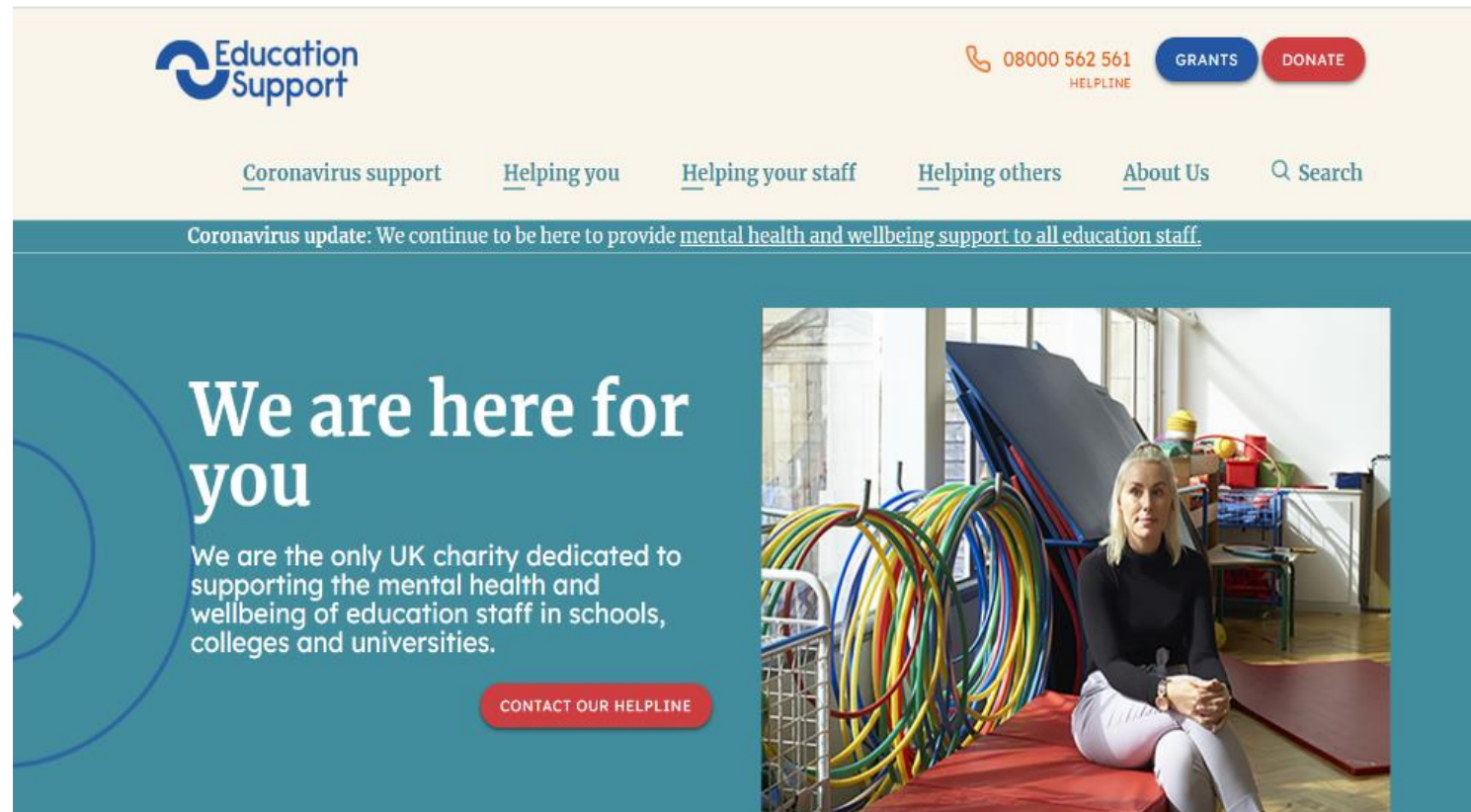
# Next steps and self-care

- **Be kind to yourself**
- **Take time to reflect**
- **Share what you have learnt with others**
- **Cascade to your staff**
- **Contact us if you need to talk to someone**



# Support for staff

- <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk>





# Supporting each other

- Reflective practice groups are a safe space for staff to come together
- The group discuss their experiences and reflect on their practice working with children
- This can be led by an external facilitator but can be run internally
- Speak to your EP for more information and/or support setting this up





**Additional support**

# Signposting



Make yourself aware of resources, including self help and their value

Is an active process; listen carefully and refer appropriately

Remember to consider local and national communities, including on-line

Remember, guiding someone to a good resource is empowering

Help build coping and resilience

# Key Points

## A repeat from the start:

Many people will retain their wellbeing and resilience.

Some will need more support to recover.

## A Whole School/College approach which:

- Builds relationships, flexible coping and renews a sense of agency
- Values emotional wellbeing
- And re-affirm safety and routines
- Will maximise learning and growth

“

Schools and Colleges truly can be... guiding lighthouses and safe havens in a sea of uncertainty

”

Y

# Seeking Additional Or Specialist Help

**Before seeking additional help, ensure you have implemented a whole school approach.** This includes speaking with parents/carers to ensure everyone works together\*. Remember safeguarding.

## **If concerns persist, liaise with:**

- Wellbeing for Education Return local expert(s),
- Educational Psychologists, (where available),
- CYPMHS,
- School/College Mental Health Support Teams (where available),
- school nurses and/or school/college counselling services (if available)

(Also applies where EHCPs in place)

## **Further support for Children and Young People:**

- The NHS has provided advice for parents and teachers [here](#), alongside [advice on what to do if you are a young person](#) and [advice for parents, guardians and carers](#)
- Parents/carers should contact their GP or NHS 111 immediately if they notice physical injuries on a child, such as deep cuts or burns.
- Barnardo's [See, Hear, Respond](#) partnership to support vulnerable CYP not currently in receipt of statutory support – includes advice for staff, parents/carers and CYP (Covid-19 specific – available until November 2020)
- Local experts should adapt this slide to include their local mental health and wider, relevant services' contact details (statutory and voluntary). NHS mental health urgent access support lines (for all ages) can be checked [here](#)

## **In addition further support for adults includes:**

- IAPT (Improving access to Psychological Therapies)
- Adult mental health services

# Local support – Southwark Council & CCG

**What's available at the moment (Mar 21), plus online resources:**

<https://localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/wellbeing/mental-and-emotional-health-services>

<https://schools.southwark.gov.uk/essential-information/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.schools.southwark.gov.uk/pshe-healthy-schools/mental-health-wellbeing>

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/health-advice-and-support/taking-care-of-your-mind?chapter=6>

<https://www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub/the-directory/hub-category/children-young-people-mental-health/>

For YP (11-25 yrs): [www.thenestsouthwark.org.uk](http://www.thenestsouthwark.org.uk)

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# Your next steps

1. How you are going to use the training content & slides to plan your school's training?
2. What are your next steps in strengthening your school's "PSHE & Wellbeing" curriculum?
3. How would you describe "staff wellbeing" in your school? What is working well to support staff? Does anything need to change with the current context?
4. Participating in the free Sheu H&WB survey, focus on MH & EWB incl. resilience (years 4 & 6 and years 8 & 10), email: [angela.balding@sheu.org.uk](mailto:angela.balding@sheu.org.uk)
5. for "Wellbeing Action Plan template" and further information : <https://schools.southwark.gov.uk/pshe-healthy-schools/mental-health-wellbeing>
6. How will this event impact on your work?

