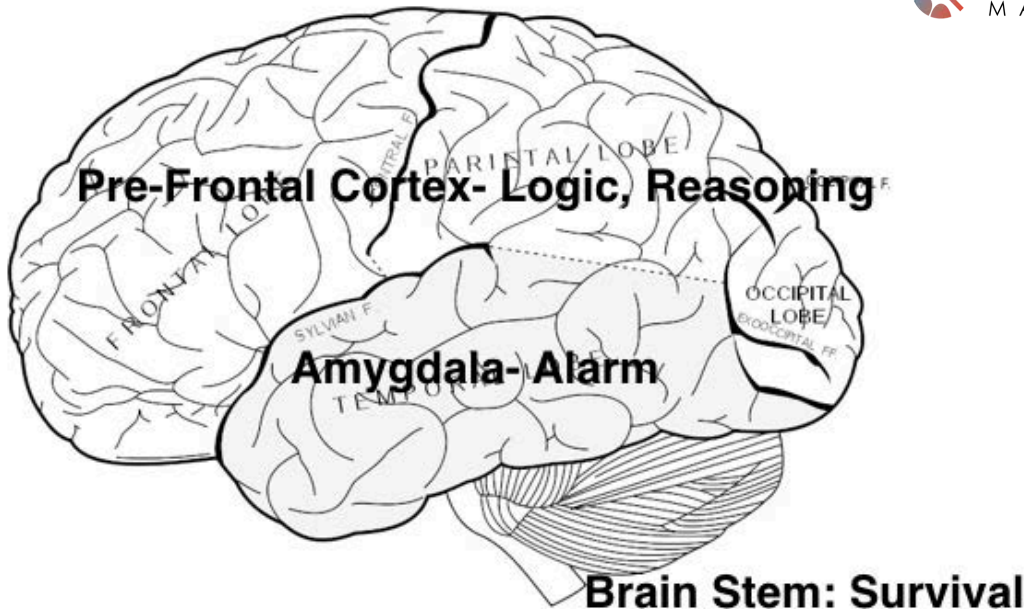


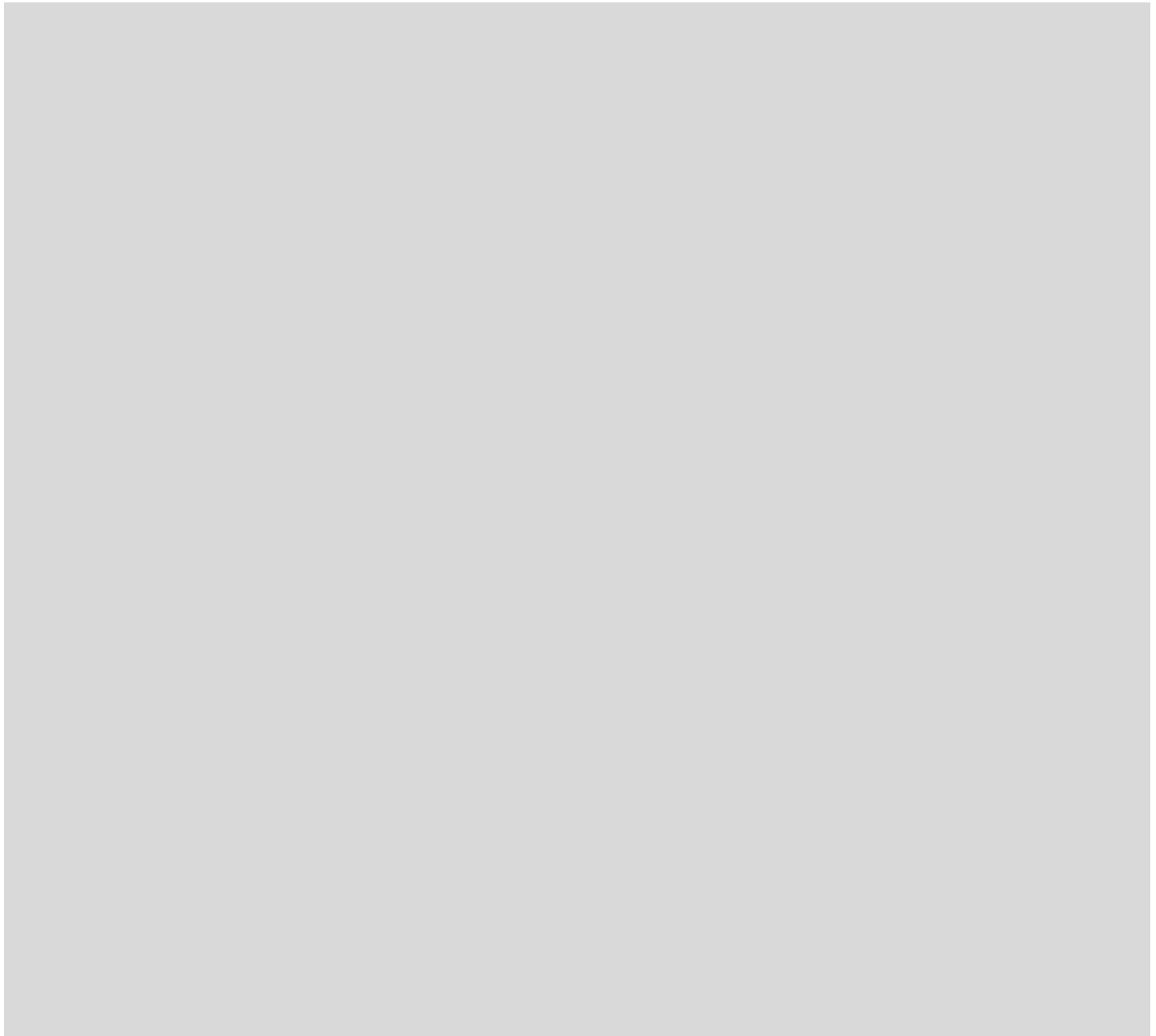
A SIMPLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRAIN



- **The Brain Stem: The Part that Keeps Us Alive.** According to William C. Shiel Jr., “The brain stem controls the flow of messages between the brain and the rest of the body, and it also controls basic body functions such as breathing, swallowing, heart rate, blood pressure, consciousness, and whether one is awake or sleepy.” The brain stem keeps us alive. It oversees the things we do without thinking, like breathing, heartbeat, pulse, blood flow. The brainstem is also where we retreat when we are alarmed, in danger, or experiencing something intense.
- **The Amygdala: The Brain’s Alarm System.** The amygdala filters sensory input to assess potential risk before that information is transferred to the rest of the brain for further processing. The amygdala functions as an alarm system as well as the pleasure sensor, and is thought to play important roles in emotion and behavior.² It is best known for its role in processing fear, however it is also responsible for much of our human behavior. When our amygdala senses the smell of Grandma’s apple pie, it processes that input to quickly put our mind at ease. When it senses the smell of smoke, it alerts the brain to potential danger. If danger truly exists, our body becomes prepared to get to safety. If danger doesn’t exist—for instance, if the smell of smoke is a campfire—the alarm will quiet and the rest of our brain will process the smell as something anticipated and potentially fun. For people with trauma history, the amygdala plays a crucial role in how they respond to certain high-intensity situations.

- **The Prefrontal Cortex: Where Logic and Reasoning Live.** The prefrontal cortex is located at the front of the brain and is responsible for a person’s executive-functioning skills. Executive functioning is responsible for impulse control, planning, decision-making, problem-solving, self-control, and strategizing for long-term goals. Our prefrontal cortex gets us from point “A” to point “B” in the most efficient and successful way possible. Our executive-functioning skills are especially important when it comes to tasks such as getting ready for work or school, following a list of chores or errands, and preparing for the day in time to meet our daily demands. The prefrontal cortex is also where our calm, collected, and reasonable natures live.

Notes:



Trauma Knowledge 101 with Kristin Berry

F.L.I.P. IT



- **F- Feelings:** We notice that our child is growing frustrated for example, so we respond with a statement such as *"It looks like you're feeling really frustrated right now. Why is that?"* (**Identify the feeling, begin to inquire**)
- **L- Limits:** We say to the child, *"I understand that you're frustrated, but we can't push someone when we feel this way."* (**Identify the behavioral response and set the limit**)
- **I- Inquiry:** After we've set the limits, we respond with *"What can we do to make you feel better?"* Or, *"We can't push others when we feel frustrated, but what's something we can do instead?"* (**Inquire Into the behavior and continue to reinforce the limit**)
- **P- Prompt:** We then let them know what we're going to do to help them process through the emotion/feelings. Ask, *"Would you like me to sit here with you while you calm down?"* (**Once you've Identified the origin of the emotion or behavior, you prompt them toward a different response**)

From the Devereux Center for Resilient Children: <https://centerforresilientchildren.org/>

Notes:





THE ATTACHMENT ROADMAP[®]



1 UNDERSTANDING

The first milestone in the roadmap is understanding. As caregivers, our first move must be to work to understand before we respond. Our tendency is to ask 'why?' when we should first ask 'what?' Step back and ask, 'What is really going on here?' before you ask 'Why are you pushing me away?'



2 CONSISTENCY

Understanding forms connection and connection paves the way for continual healthy attachment growth. This must happen consistently. Consistency over time is key to building lifelong attachments.



3 TIME

Disrupted attachment takes time to repair and heal. When you remain consistent with your approach to your child, and you understand that this is a journey, healthy attachments can form.

4 LISTEN

Our children often leave us nuggets of understanding through their words and actions. When we keep our ears open to hear what they are saying first, before we respond, we build connection and trust can grow.



5 RESPOND

After we have listened to our child's heart, and asked ourselves bigger questions about their behaviors, we must respond to the need they are expressing.



Behavior Response Blueprint

Version 2.0

A 4-STEP PLAN TO RESTORE CALM



BEHAVIOR RESPONSE
MASTERCLASS & COACHING PROGRAM



The Simple Parent Scripting Formula:

REGULATE



The most important step to begin with is your own emotional regulation. If you do not have a handle on your emotions, and you do not approach your child's behavior calmly, you can not expect them to re-regulate quickly.



VALIDATE



Most of the time, our children are looking to us for acknowledgement that they are feeling something that is causing the behavior we are seeing.



INVESTIGATE



There is much more happening with your child than just bad behavior. You must become a detective and walk backwards from the point you are currently to the beginning, where the trigger occurred.



RE-REGULATE



Once you've validated their emotions, and you've spent time investigating the cause of the trigger, help your child re-regulate their emotions. Remember: this is your primary goal in managing behaviors (before correction or discipline).



Script Examples:

● Personal Regulation:

- Text a friend before you respond
- Take a few deep breaths
- Tag team if you are co-parenting
- Mentally coach yourself:
 - "Remember, this is trauma behavior, it's not about me!"
 - "He's in survival mode. I need to help him get back to regulation first."
 - "There's something else going on here."

● Validation:

- "I see that you're upset...how can I help you right now?"
- "I can tell that you're frustrated...what can I do to help you calm down?"
- "It seems like you're angry, how can I help you right now?"
- "It seems like you feel [name the feeling/or what you see]..is there something I can do to make you feel better?"
- "Oh, I'm really sorry that happened. That would frustrate me too!"

● Investigation:

- **NOTE- the Investigative stage may need to be a part of Re-Regulation if the child's emotions prevent him or her from articulating their thoughts and feelings.*
- "Why do you think you're feeling this way?"
- "What is causing you to feel angry?"
- "Why do you think that made you feel so upset?"

● Re-Regulation:

- Take time to...
 - Listen to what they are saying
 - Sit with them as long as it takes for them to calm down
 - Help them process and come up with solutions
 - Examples:
 - "I'm here to help you in anyway I can."
 - "I'm not going anywhere. I will stay here with you If you need me to."
 - "Let's take a walk while we calm down."
 - "What can we do to help you feel better?"



Additional Examples:

• Crucial Communication:

- "I would love to help you find a way to feel better, but first I need you to stop screaming at me."
- "I know that you are feeling anxious or [insert emotion here], but we can't call people names. Would you be able to stop doing that so we can talk about how you are feeling?"
- "It's okay to feel angry, or hurt, about something, but It's not okay to hit your sister. Let's talk about this but then I need you to apologize to her."

• Boundaries:

- "I understand you are curious, and If you have questions, you can ask me, but remember- private parts are private. And we need to always make sure we are dressing In privacy." (this could also be used to explain why knocking on a bedroom or bathroom door before entering Is Important).
- "I know you wanted to play In your brother's room, but remember, It's Important that we stay where mommy and daddy can see you."
- "You can always have a snack If you feel hungry. You just need to ask me first. The answer Is always yes, but with permission."

• IMPORTANT KEYS:

- Tone, body language, facial expressions, and personal regulation are all crucial elements of successfully communicating boundaries, or details you need the child to understand.
- Using words like "we" verses "you" lets the child know you are "with them In this." When you use words like "you" they tend to build walls between you and the child. When you shift "you" to "we" It lets the child know you are Invested and thus builds bridges between you and the child.



4 Common Behaviors:

- **Perceived Threat:**

- Perceived threat is a common behavior in children with a trauma history. A child in this state is constantly on defense and reacts to what they believe is a threat to their survival and/or well-being.
- Remember: It is survival-based, most likely learned behavior from methods the child used to meet their needs prior to coming into your home.
- Response:
 - Ask permission to help. Example: you see your child Is struggling with a task. Instead of telling them what to do ask, "Would you like me to show you how to do that?"
 - Reframe the question. Example: you ask your child an inquisitive question and they snap at you, or yell back at you. Respond with, "Hey, I am not trying to upset you, I was just asking [insert reframed question]"

- **Manipulation:**

- An important aspect to remember with manipulation Is that this behavior is almost always a means to meet a need your child believes he or she has. This is an Important frame of reference that will change your perspective and help you respond differently.
- Response:
 - Inquire about the need. Ask, "What do you actually need?"
 - Set your boundaries calmly but firmly. "No, we cannot do that right now." Or, "I would be happy to [insert action here] but not today."
 - Be willing to compromise



4 Common Behaviors (con't):

- **Survival Behaviors:**

- Survival behavior takes on many different forms. A child may gravitate toward self-harming behaviors (substance abuse, stealing, dangerous activity, physically harming themselves), or seem to fight you on everything from food, to clothing, to the simple boundaries you set for them.
- Response:
 - First and foremost, we must remind ourselves constantly that what we are seeing is survival-behavior, a product of a trauma history, and is the attempt on the child's part to meet a perceived unmet need. Self-coaching ourselves on this fact helps us reframe our perspective.
 - Remember to meet the need first before you focus on the behavior.
 - Example: "How can I help you feel better?" "I would be happy to help you, but it's important that we not [insert behavior here]"

- **Sexual Maladaptive or Highly Sexualized Behaviors:**

- Response:
 - Firm boundaries.
 - Child does not leave your line of site for any reason
 - If the child is in the care of another adult, child stays in line of site at all times.
 - Boundaries around environments that could become compromising
 - Example: everyone has their own chair/sofa/blanket during family movie time in the living room
 - No sitting on laps
 - No unsupervised time in one another's rooms. (*It's a good idea to make rooms off-limits in situations like this)
 - Only qualified, trusted adults provide care apart from you.
 - Supervised access/parental controls on all devices or smart TVs.

What To Do When...

- **What do you do if you're the cause of a child's dysregulation?:**

- Apologize- take ownership of the mistake and seek your child's forgiveness
- Reconnection- ask how you can help your child feel better
- Reconcile- work to make things right now, and move forward
- Reframe- consider how you can respond to your child's emotion or behaviors in a different way

- **What do you do if your child is unsafe in the car?**

- Large carseat- yes, they make these ;-). Consider upgrading to a larger car seat that can accommodate an older child
- Plan ahead- as hard as it may be to do so, you must plan car trips ahead of time as much as you possibly can. Pack things to do during the car trip, allow screen time on a limited basis (or just for the car ride itself), and make sure children with volatile relationships are not sitting near one another.
- Pull over- plan a lot of time to arrive at a destination so you can pull over and ride out the emotional storm if need be.
- Take separate cars- If possible, drive separate cars to a destination to ensure that all children are safe during the car trip

- **What do you do when one child attacks your other children?**

- Send others away- move your other children to a safer part of the house, or create a physical barrier between the dysregulated child and others
- Re-regulate the first child- your number 1 goal with a dysregulated child is to help them re-regulate.
- Move first child into a safe place- remain in a separate environment, or car, with the first child. Work on regulation strategies.
- Re-regulate the other kids



What To Do When (con't)...

- **What do you do when one child is angry or explosive?**

- Remember: Anger is a window into something else
- Eye-contact- even If the child looks up at your and then away quickly, thank them for looking at you.
- Tone of voice needs to be soft, firm and even
- Inquire Listen to the entire story (even if it makes you mad)
- Formulate a new perspective once you've gained Insight Into the behavior.

- **What do you do when your child is self-harming?**

- Lock medications in a lock box.
- Supervise the child taking medication
- Lock sharp objects in a safe
- Keep regular appointments with therapist
- Alarm on bedroom door
- Lock devices up when an adult isn't able to supervise
- Remove locks from bedroom door, keep the child in line of sight.

- **What do you do when your child is stealing?**

- Carry a clear backpack
- Check in and out of school
- Check in and out of home
- Wear pants without pockets
- Repay those you've stolen from
- Lock up tempting items
- Do not take the child in the store.



What To Do When (con't)...

- **What do you do when your child is hoarding food?**
 - Check hiding spot each day
 - Allow child to carry non-perishable food
 - Lock pantry
 - Keep certain food accessible at all times
 - Keep regular appointments with therapist
- **What do you do when your child wanders off or runs away?**
 - Door alarms
 - Tracking device (some police departments will provide this)
 - Crib tent (for toddlers.)
 - Large sleep sack (toddlers)
 - Window alarms
 - Positive communication with neighbors.
- **What do you do if your child harms animals?**
 - Keep animals and child in line of sight
 - Practice caring for the animal under the supervision of a caregiver
 - Keep hands and feet to yourself
- **What do you do when your child gas lights?**
 - Remember what is factual
 - Don't bite on the dangling hook
 - Stay silent in the face of gas lighting
 - Remember that this is a survival behavior



Crisis Response Checklist:

- **As The Crisis Unfolds:**

- ___ Determine who's in your corner, who you can confide in, and who's a part of your support team
- ___ Text, call, or email your support team
- ___ Notify your therapist, case manager, etc
- ___ Create your safety plan
- ___ Set up ongoing therapy appointments
- ___ Make Immediate necessary moves (move bedrooms, Install cameras, put chimes/alarms on doors, schedule therapy, etc)
- ___ Stay connected to your other children, spouse, or partner during this phase (remember, during a crisis, the entire family is affected)
- ___ Allow space for honest conversation and Q&A
- ___ Create a special file in a secure area for all documentation.

- **During & After Crisis:**

- ___ Stay in contact with your support team or network. While it's easy to slide into isolation (and may feel safer), you need community more than ever.
- ___ Continue therapy for the entire family
- ___ Make sure you reiterate and stay consistent with your safety plan
- ___ Continue to maintain file or folder with all documentation (emails, phone calls, text messages, etc.)
- ___ Be intentional about time with family member at the center of crisis, but also affected family members
- ___ Don't forget to take necessary time for you to heal (self care)
- ___ Continue to foster open and honest conversation in your family

