

# TVDSB SAFE SCHOOLS AND WELL-BEING IN THE VALLEY

THE IMPACT OF RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Stress can affect a students' ability to be curious, engaged, and learn.  
A safe and inclusive classroom is where all children feel valued, supported, and affirmed.

WANT TO KNOW MORE? UNDERLINED TEXTS ARE HYPERLINKS.

### Why it Matters?

Students must first feel emotionally and physically safe to access their learning brain.

## Hierarchy

### of Trauma-Sensitivity

(adapted from Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools, J. Alexander, 2019)

IN-PERSON STRATEGIES

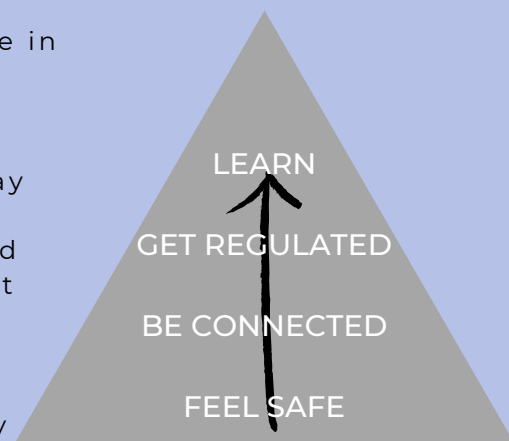
ONLINE STRATEGIES

LEARN - Promote engagement by encouraging choice in learning and teach students how to set goals

GET REGULATED - Model mindfulness and calming techniques by incorporating them throughout the day

BE CONNECTED - Intentionally build rapport with and among students by finding common connections that encourage relationship development

FEEL SAFE - Reinforce co-created, predictable classroom norms and routines and consistently apply them to foster emotional safety



### Professional Reflection:

How are you fostering relationships with each of your students?

## You Are The STRATEGY:

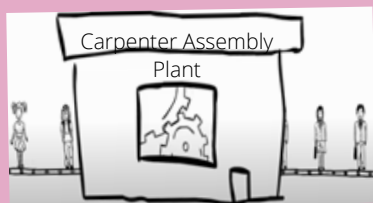
Why it Matters?

### A relationship-based approach to learning

The need for supportive relationships is more important now than at any other time. Relationship-based education is a broad pedagogy that can be applied to various aspects of education, and forms the foundation for initiatives. **What is taught matters, but how and why one teaches matters more** (Tranter, Carson, Boland, 2018). "Positive teacher-student relationships – evidenced by teachers' reports of low conflict, a high degree of closeness and support, and little dependency – have been shown to support students' adjustment to school... promote academic performance and foster students' resiliency..." (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011, p.5). Teachers' consistent, positive, and nurturing interactions lead students towards feeling safe and feeling connected in the learning environment and make a path for students to access their learning brains.

A carpenter has a predefined outcome and uses the same tools regardless of the project. A gardener creates the conditions that fosters growth for each individual plant.

Are you a Carpenter or a Gardener?



Ask yourself ...

# Stress Behaviour or

# Misbehaviour?

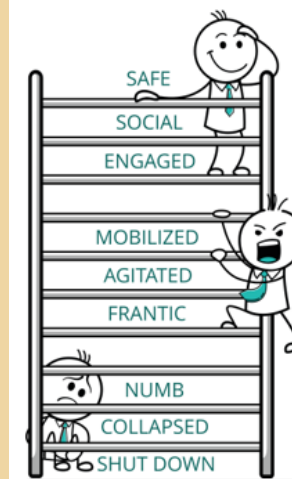
## 1. Is it stress behaviour?

### Signs of Stress Behaviour:

- Difficulty solving problems or setting goals
- Trouble asking for help
- Defiance, aggression, opposition
- Hesitant to take on new tasks or challenges
- Easily overwhelmed, moody, irritable
- Withdrawn, disengaged
- Isolated
- Physical complaints

## 2. What emotions are engaged?

Where am I on the ladder? Where is my student on the ladder?  
How will I manage my stress so I am available to co-regulate?



Autonomic Nervous System as a Ladder: Adapted from the Polyvagal Theory in Therapy by Deb Dana

"I feel at ease, connected, engaged and ready to learn"

Fight/Flight: "I feel overwhelmed, irritated, anxious, unsafe"

Shutdown: "I feel buried, trapped, shutdown, alone and in despair"

## 3. How can you help?

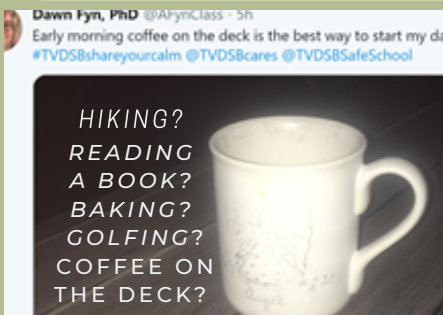
- Create opportunities for the student to build a relationship with a trusted educator in their classroom.
- Create a plan that allows a trusted educator to support co-regulation when a student exhibits stress behaviour.
- Reflect on potential stressors in the physical and social environment of the classroom and school.

Tranter, Carson & Boland, 2018)

# Share Your Calm

## Why it Matters?

Staying calm can be challenging. "The first step is monitoring our own regulation. It is imperative that we are able to know our own set of triggers and see them for what they are. It's OK to admit it; we all have triggers. The key is to acknowledge them and learn to manage them in healthy ways..." (Souers & Hall, 2016, p.61). When we share our calm, students respond differently, and this supports de-escalation of stressful situations. This supports students' ability to access their learning brains.



TAKE A PICTURE OF SOMETHING YOU DO THAT HELPS YOU STAY CALM AND TWEET IT OUT WITH THE HASHTAG

#TVDSBshareyourcalm

## 4 STEPS TO CREATING HABITS OF SELF-CARE

1. Build in rest as a catalyst for productivity, not a break from it.
2. Streamline your schedule by doing fewer things, better.
3. Pair a self-care habit with your regular routine so it becomes automatic.
4. Focus on the habit of the habit: value right actions over right results.



**Self-Care**

Give us your feedback!

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

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Coming Soon...Promoting Positive Relationships Toolkit on Sharepoint