

Felt Safety Presentation

ACES - Denver 2023

Learning Objective 1:

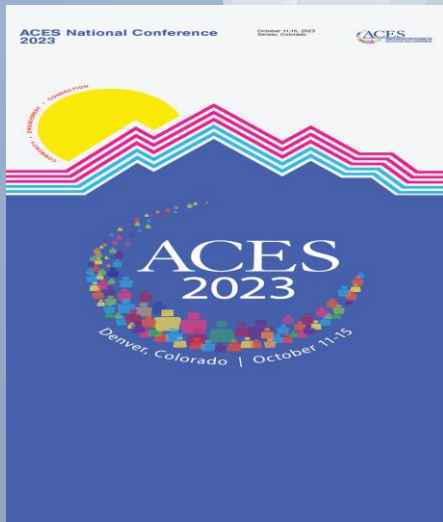
1) Participants will be able to describe theories of brain development and functioning in relation to felt-safety in the classroom.

Learning Objective 2:

2) Participants will be able to identify methods for building attunement and student co-regulation.

Learning Objective 3:

3) Participants will be able to identify ways to increase felt-safety in the classroom to facilitate an improved learning environment.



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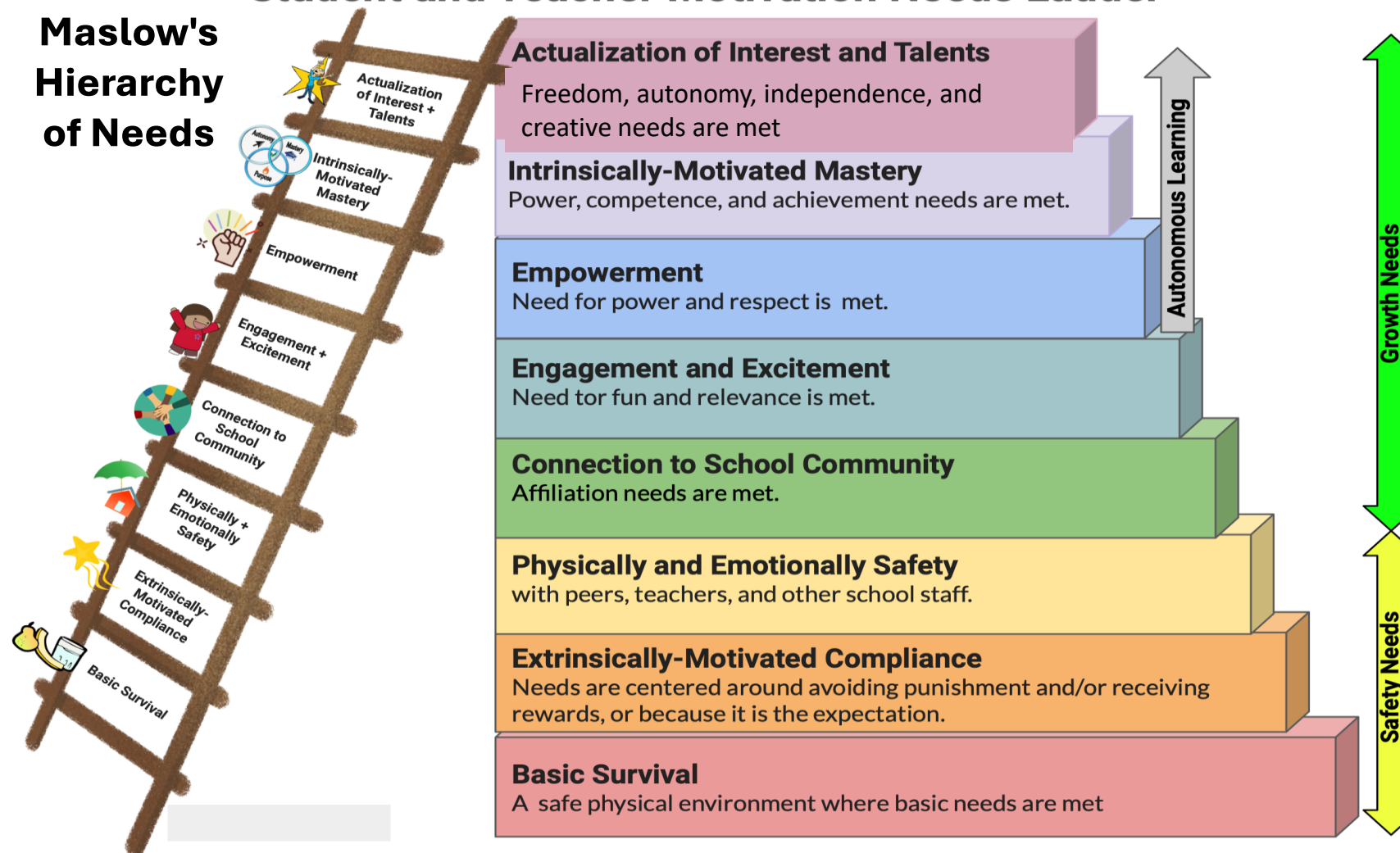
Liberty University

Feeling Safe? How am I learning?



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Student and Teacher Motivation Needs Ladder



Attachment - Bowlby & Ainsworth

Primary Relationship

- **Bonding**
- **Relational Template**
- **Establishes Developmental Patterns**

Impact of Trauma

- Insecure attachment bonds
- Poor relationship skills
- Unhealthy patterns

Safe Base

- Responsive Care
- Proximity Seeking

Dangerous Base

- Inconsistent Care
- Survival Behaviors

Secure Harbor

- Exploration
- Self Confidence

Lack of Harbor

- Fear of exploration
- No Confidence

Security Priming

Activating attachment-related mental representation to increase responsiveness to enhance a person's sense of security

- **Affect Outcomes**

- Increased positive affect
- Improved emotion-regulation
- Reduced affective mental health issues

- **Cognitive Outcomes**

- Higher accessibility of positive attitudes
- Decrease in negative attitudes

- **Behavioral Outcomes**

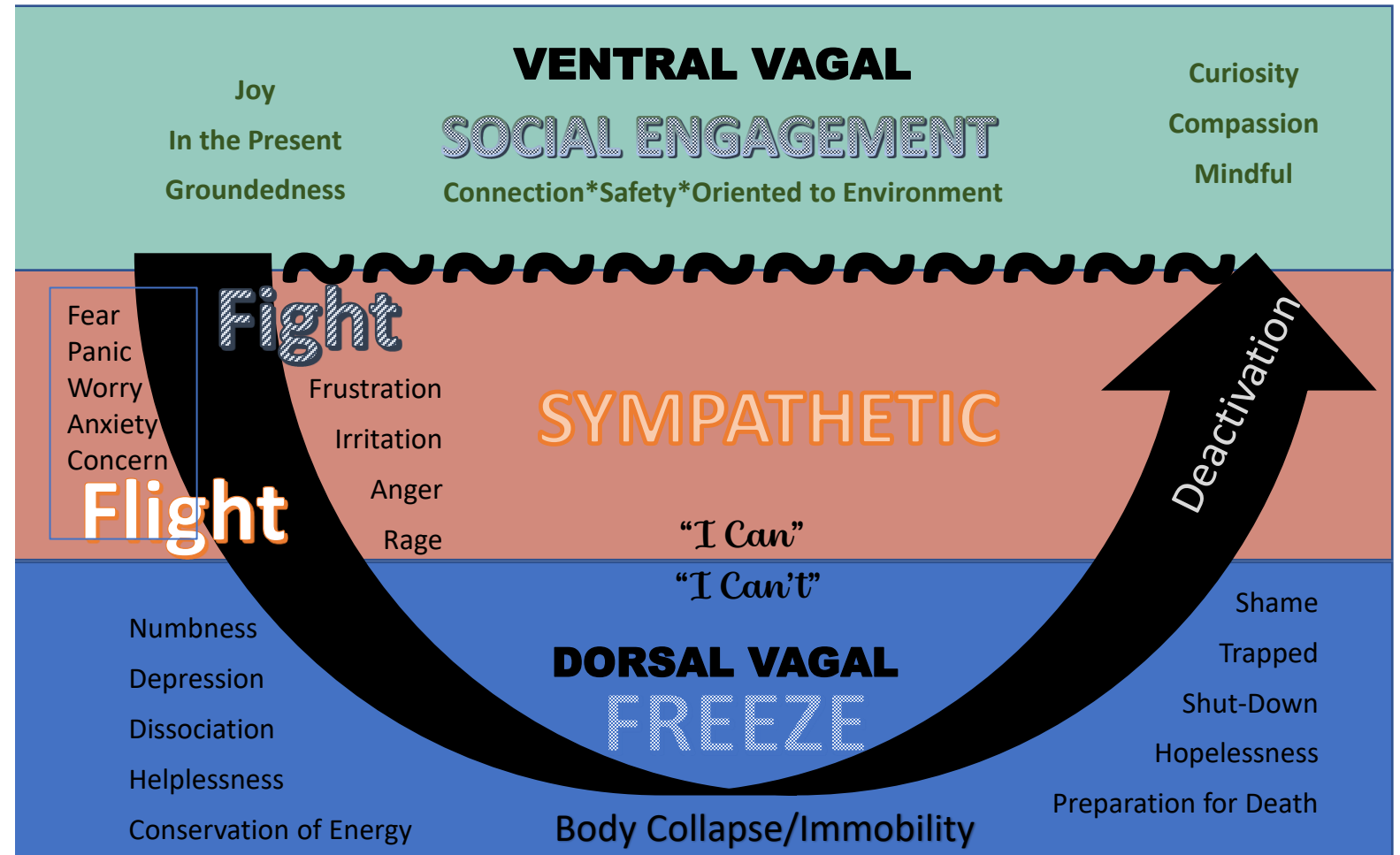
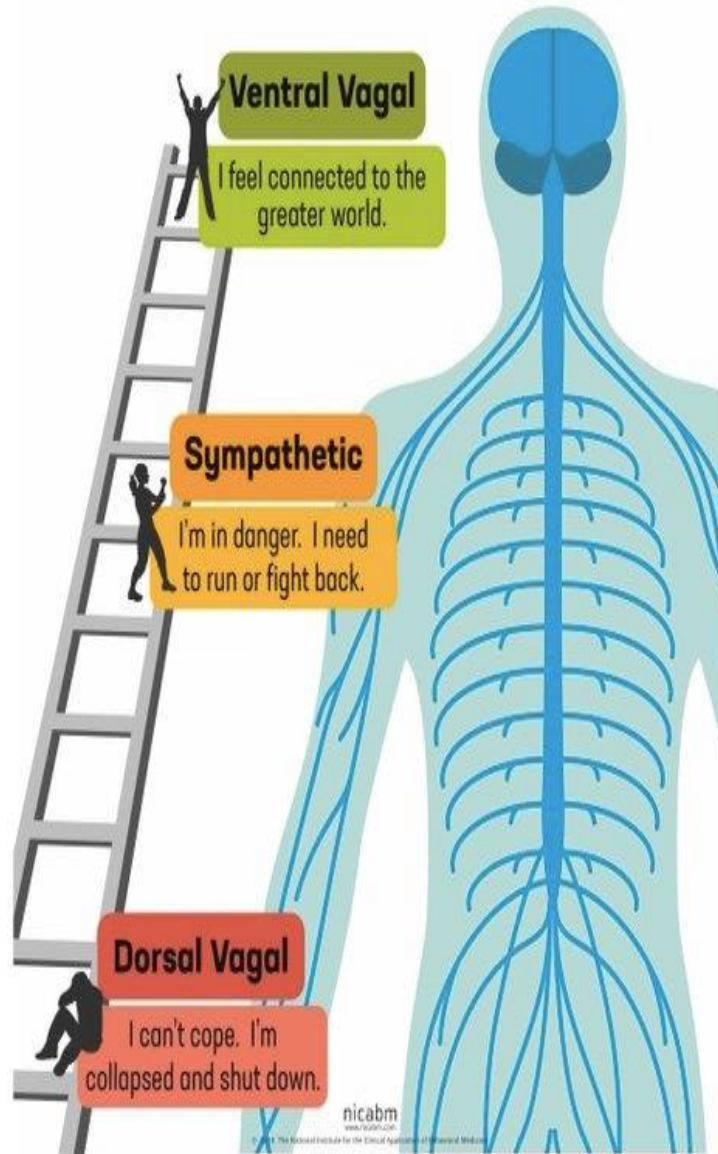
- Increased Pro-Social tendencies
- Demonstrations of compassion and altruism



Polyvagal Theory: The Autonomic Ladder

Understanding the Nervous System

Adapted from Deb Dana, LCSW

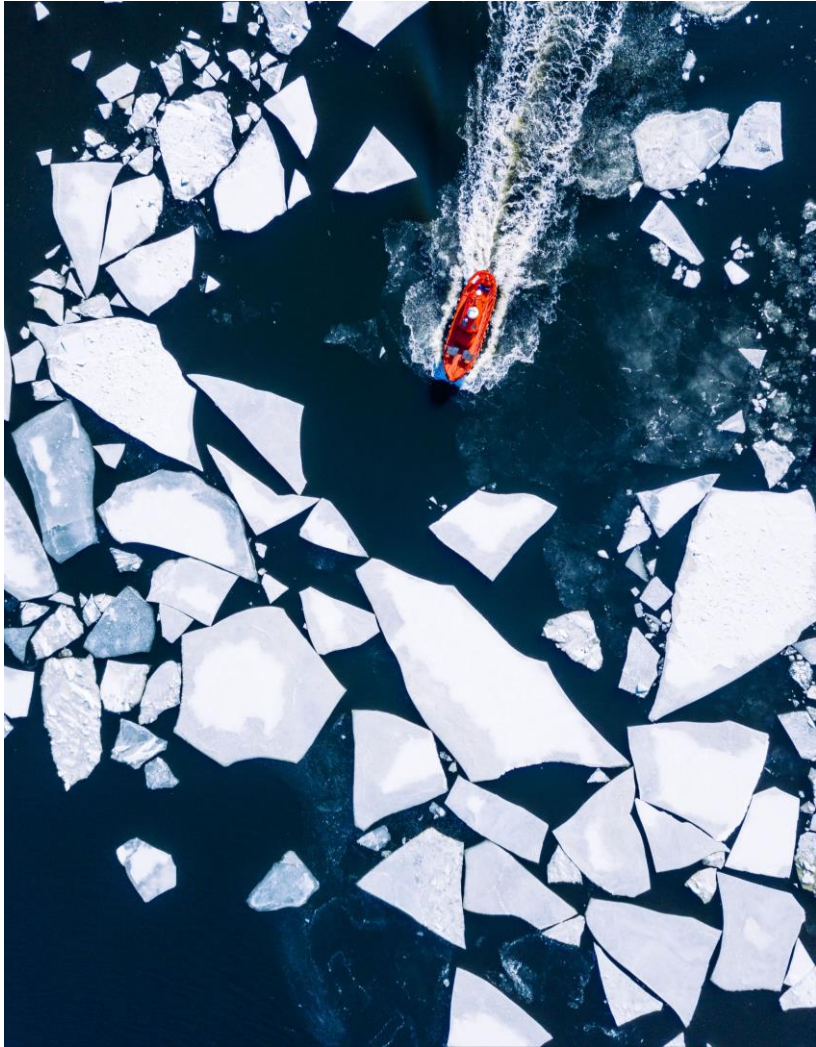


Adapted version of slide by Ruby Jo Walker from Sanders, Wheeler, & Porges



What or Who
makes you feel
SAFE?



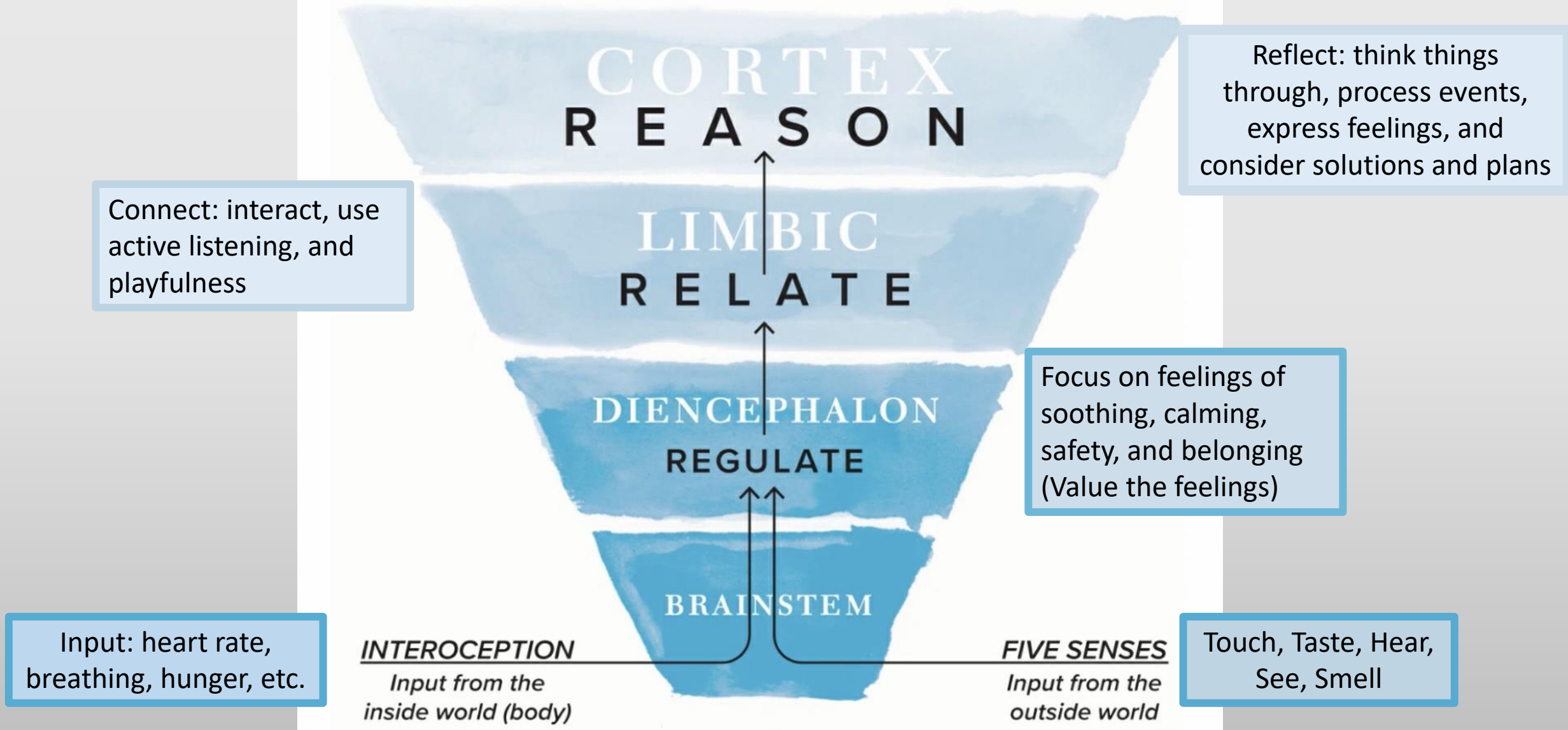


Ice Breaker 3 minutes

- Turn to someone you don't know
- Ask for their name and where they live
- Find out 2 things you have in common

SEQUENCE OF ENGAGEMENT

Bottom Up

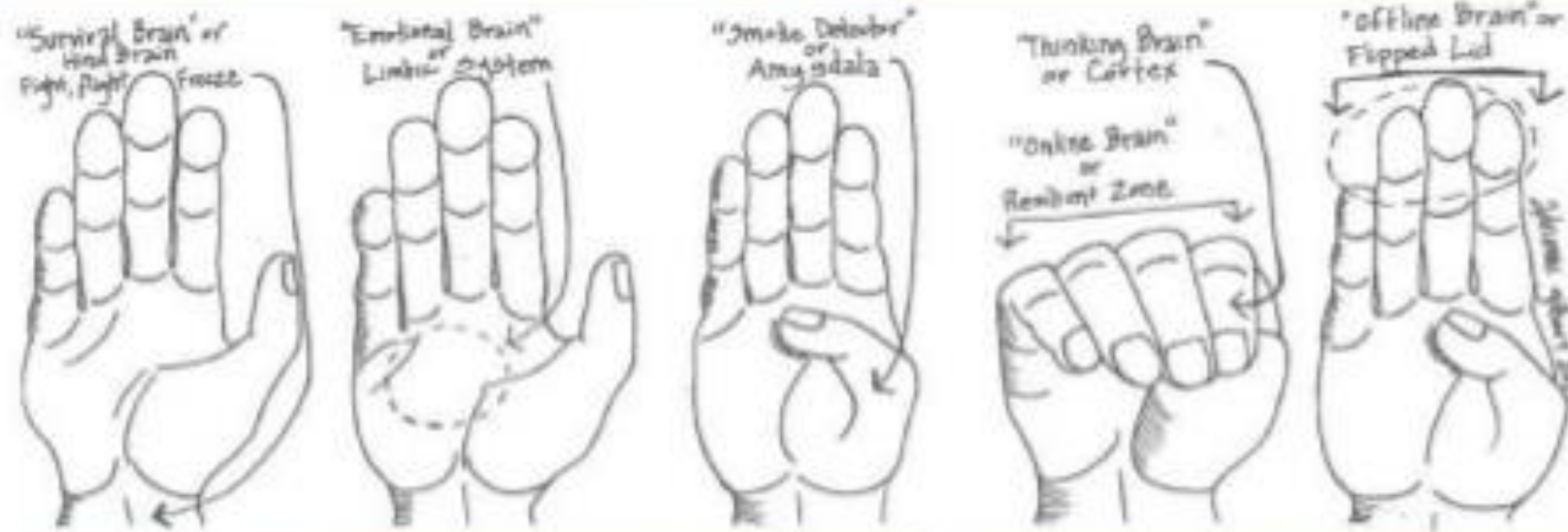


“STATE”	CALM	ALERT	ALARM	FEAR	TERROR
DOMINANT BRAIN AREAS	Cortex (DMN)	Cortex (Limbic)	Limbic (Diencephalon)	Diencephalon (Brainstem)	Brainstem
ADAPTIVE “Option” Arousal	Reflect (create)	Flock (hypervigilance)	Freeze (resistance)	Flight (defiance)	Fight
ADAPTIVE “Option” Dissociation	Reflect (daydream)	Avoid	Comply	Dissociate (paralysis/catatonia)	Faint (collapse)
COGNITION	Abstract (creative)	Concrete (routine)	Emotional	Reactive	Reflexive
FUNCTIONAL IQ	120–100	110–90	100–80	90–70	80–60

State Dependent Learning

Understanding the Brain

Hand Brain Model, Dr. Dan Siegal



Survival Brain

Sensation
Autonomic functions
Survival strategies:
fight, flight,
freeze, submit,
& collapse

Emotional Brain

Expression/
regulation of
feeling
Memories
relationships/
attachment

Amygdala

Smoke alarm

Thinking
Brain
Critical thinking
Problem solving,
planning,
creativity,
beliefs, impulse
control

Offline Brain

Survival brain
in control
Not able to
access the
thinking brain.



Children's Media Society

Neuroplasticity

Mirror Neurons



Motor perception



Interpersonal cognition



Register shared intentions, goals, and emotions



Impact cohesion



Impact affective tone



Increase Attunement

Cammisuli & Castelnovo, 2023

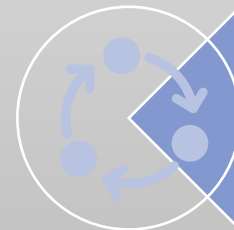
Resonance Circuits



Resonating Physiologically with others



Pathway of mirror neurons to other areas of our brain that fall into sync with the internal state of others around us.



More well-used, stronger connection

Siegel 2019



Questions So Far???



What causes feelings of “Not Being Safe”?

Attachment Ruptures
Trauma
Disconnection
Sin

Leads to Dysregulation



Is it Safe for my Voice to be Heard?

Recognize	Recognize power differentials and diversity
Establish	Establish ground rules
Commit	Commit to dignity and respect
Use	Use thoughtful discourse
Own	Own Opinions and beliefs
Discuss	Discuss carryover into the counseling setting

Developing an Environment of Felt-Safety

- Safe: Provide a sense of safe harbor to allow others to take the needed risks for growth and change.
- Seen: Pay attention to emotions—both positive and negative. Strive to attune to what's happening in the mind beneath the behavior.
- Soothed: Teaching how to cope when life gets hard and being there along the way: not just making everything easy. Projecting a feeling that one never has to suffer alone.
- Secure: When others can count on you, time and again, to show up—when you reliably provide safety, focus on seeing, and soothing in times of need, there will be trust in a feeling of secure attachment.

Siegal and Bryson



Relational-Cultural Theory

- Growth-fostering relationships
- Empathy
- Mutual empathy
- Authenticity
- **Strategies to deal with Disconnection**
 - Central relational paradox
 - Relational images
 - Relational resilience
 - Relational competence

SELF COMPASSION



With self-compassion, we give ourselves the same kindness and care we'd give to a good friend.

Kristin Neff

<https://self-compassion.org/>

Self-Kindness

Vs

Self Judgment

- Being supportive and sympathetic toward ourselves
- Benevolent and encouraging internal dialogue
- Discarding negative self-talk or judgment

Common Humanity

Vs

Isolation

- Recognize we are all works-in-progress who make mistakes
- Life challenges and personal failures are part of being human
- Reframing "self" as bound with all that has made us a person
- Avoid isolating from others

Mindfulness

Vs

Over Identification

- Being aware of the present moment and bearing witness to the painful thoughts and emotions
- Taking an objective view by avoiding over-identification with negative thoughts or feelings

Core Longings

For more information on Anne Halley
<https://www.healingcare.org/>



CORE LONGINGS

Development of the Brain and the Self
Anne Medaglia Halley, D.Min.

Increasing Felt-Safety

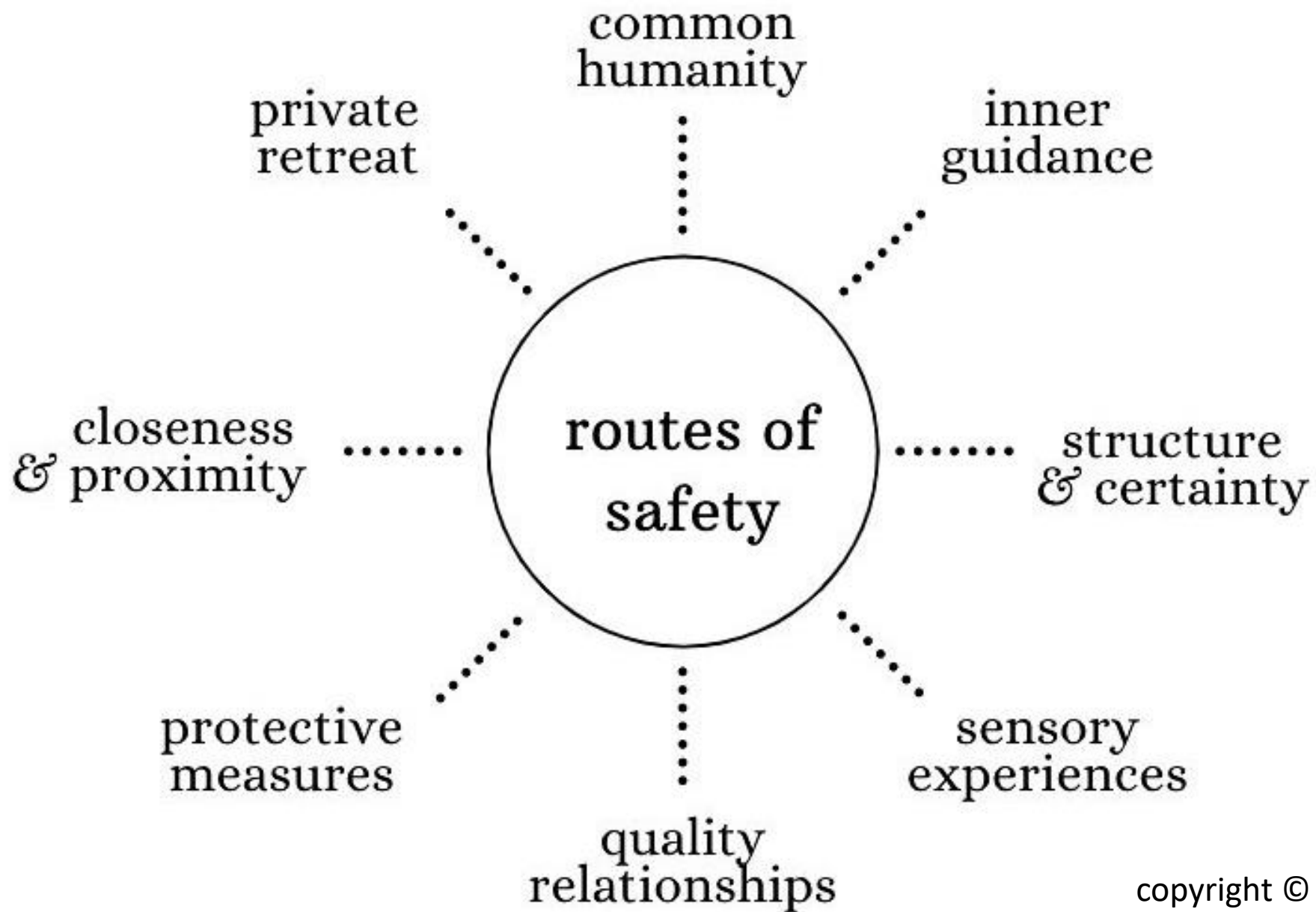
- Are we authentic
- Do we sit with them without judgment?
- Do we let them experience acceptance without shame?

- **Know Students Names**
- **Instill Self-Directed Learning**
- **“Hear” What they have to Say**
- **Validate their Voice (Differentiate Voice and Content)**
- **Be Open to Conversation and Feedback**
- **Appreciate the Differences and Unique Contributions of Each Student**
- **Provide Unconditional Positive Regard**

Applications in the Classroom

- Feed, Water, Move
- Be a Thermostat
- Make Personal Connections (Instructor to class, peer to peer)
- Explore with Class what makes them Feel Safe
- Prime Safety (Images/Words)
- CoRegulate * Be the Calm
- Notice Body Language (Yours and Theirs)
- Look for Beauty, Glimmers
- Notice potential triggers in a room – where is the door?
- Use Playfulness and Humor
- Take Breaks in Longer Sessions
- Encourage self care
- Normalize experiences
 - Anxiety, uncertainty, imposter syndrome
 - Failure – Reframe as a learning opportunity

Your Ideas?



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Sensory Experiences

- Grounding through the 5 senses
- Lighting a candle, smelling a calming scent
- Scratching head, feeling body parts
- Wearing soft clothing
- Listening to nature, being in nature
- Putting on music or TV for background noise
- Self-holding or self-brushing exercises
- Using a weighted blanket
- Cuddling your partner, pet or stuffed animal
- Eating your favourite food, listening to music
- Folding warm laundry
- Breathwork, taking deep breaths
- Basking in the sunlight

routes of safety | @mswjake

Common Humanity

- Being heard, seen, recognized and known
- Allowing mistakes, being good enough as you are
- Knowing another person isn't going to judge you
- Being able to be yourself, laughing with others
- Shared experiences (good or bad)
- Reciprocity in vulnerability
- Normalizing hardship and sharing feelings
- Empathy, connection and play
- Being listened to, believed and understood
- Verbal reassurance and positive praise
- Someone respecting your boundaries
- Having your accessibility needs met
- Advocacy and meaningful change

routes of safety | @mswjake

Inner Guidance

- Meditation
- Self compassion
- Reparenting yourself
- Building self-trust
- Having a sense of self
- Relying on personal experience & inner wisdom or intuition
- Grounding practices
- Cultivating presence
- Self confidence
- Writing & journaling
- Guidance from guides & ancestors (tapping into outer guidance)
- Freedom to make decisions
- Having a religious or spiritual practice
- Soothing inner child
- Meeting own needs
- Relying on strengths & personality traits
- Feeling your feelings

routes of safety | @mswjake

Closeness & Proximity

- Receiving a hug, giving a hug
- Experiencing close physical contact
- Needing to be near someone else
- Having someone there just in case
- Knowing you can count on someone
- Being by yourself with someone else available
- Having help available if you need it
- Reaching out to others if/when you need it
- Doing activities you enjoy with someone else
- Texting a friend to ask them about their day
- Having friends who will reach out to you first

routes of safety | @mswjake

Quality Relationships

- Held space
- Relational attunement
- Coregulation with humans and pets
- Responsive and caring relationships
- Having a strong, positive role model
- Loving-kindness and compassion with others
- Experiencing repair after rupture
- Someone helping you meet your needs
- Intimate touch, sex and play with someone else
- Strong sense of community and togetherness
- Connecting with others, healing in relationships

routes of safety | @mswjake

Protective Measures

- Being physically protected
- Feeling a sense of security
- Survival strategies you use to cope & stay alive
- Self-sufficiency and being pragmatic
- Someone defending you & defending yourself
- Meeting your own needs first
- Radical honesty and radical vulnerability
- Apology accompanied with changed behaviour
- Someone clearly stating their intentions
- Not being constantly watched or monitored
- Reconciliation & restorative justice
- Advocacy work & policy changes

routes of safety | @mswjake

Private Retreat

- Quiet time, alone time, down time
- Watching a movie alone under a blanket
- Gravitating to small, dark spaces
- Enjoying being home by yourself
- Doing something independently
- Night time, finding solace in darkness
- Lying in bed by yourself, journaling alone
- Reading, listening to music, making art
- Privacy, keeping something to yourself
- A locked door with the curtains closed
- Shutting down, checking out, dissociation
- Day dreaming, focusing on your thoughts

routes of safety | @mswjake

Structure & Certainty

- Keeping busy
- Maintaining a routine, getting enough sleep
- Having more choice and control
- Increasing predictability in your life
- Having money in the bank, affording life
- Carving out space & time
- Having a consistent hobby
- Making a calendar or schedule to follow
- Knowing what's coming & having a plan
- Having an answer or solution
- Reading and making this list

routes of safety | @mswjake

IF FEELINGS COULD TALK

SADNESS might be telling me I need TO CRY

LONELINESS might be telling me I need CONNECTION

SHAME might be telling me I need SELF-COMPASSION

RESENTMENT might be telling me I need TO FORGIVE

EMPTINESS might be telling me I need TO DO SOMETHING CREATIVE

ANGER might be telling me I need TO CHECK-IN WITH MY BOUNDARIES

ANXIETY might be telling me I need TO BE BRAVE

STRESS might be telling me I need TO TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME

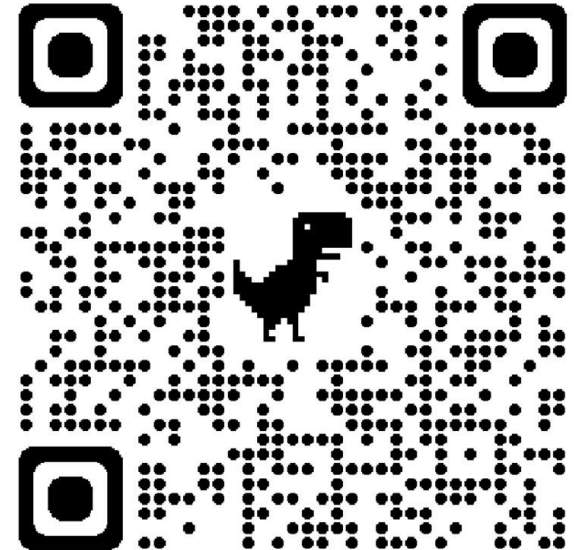


Thank you for coming!



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