

Supporting your child through transitions – strategies to avoid meltdowns



JICS Lunch and Learn

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Many types of transitions

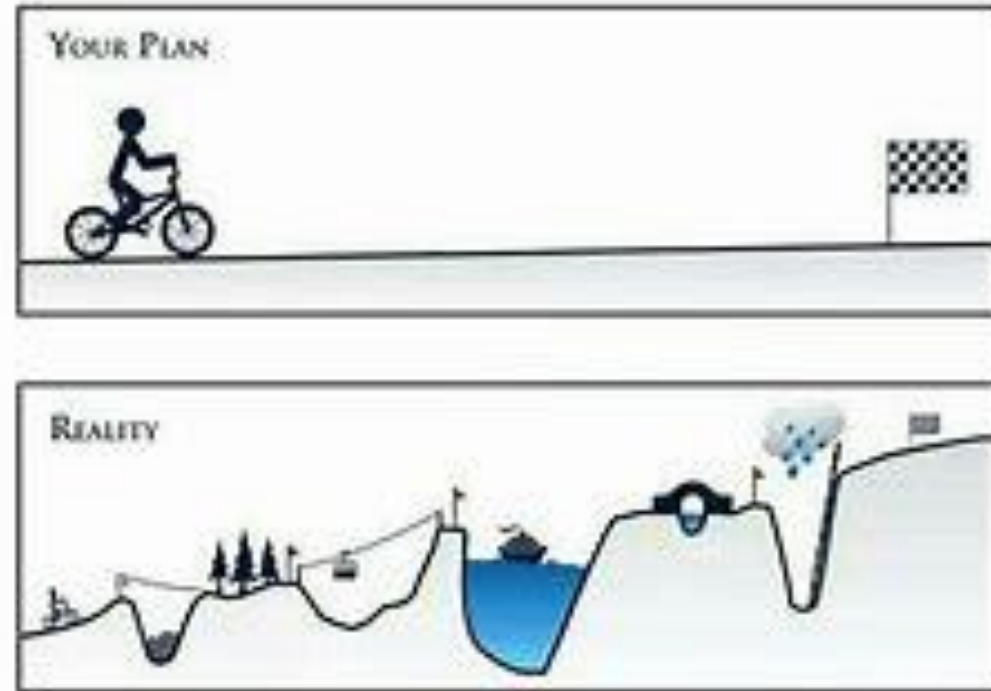
Horizontal transitions – those that occur on an everyday basis, our routine movements between various activities or domains of our lives

Vertical transitions – key changes from one state or status to another, kindergarten to grade 1, grade 6 to grade 7

Developmental perspective

Developmental theories necessarily engage with concepts of transition. **Development is all about processes of individual growth, change and transformation**, and it is frequently conceptualized in terms of moving through a sequence of age-approximate stages.

Life is generally much messier!



**Change is hard,
children's lives
are busy and they
are rarely in
control**





Challenges may show up as behaviour

- Resistance
- Avoidance
- Distraction
- Negotiation
- Full blown meltdown

Sometimes ongoing challenges with transitions are a signal

May want to consider further assessment and support if there are ongoing difficulties with transitions

Children with ADHD, anxiety, sensory processing difficulties, and/or autism will typically struggle with transitions and need extra support



Holding it all together

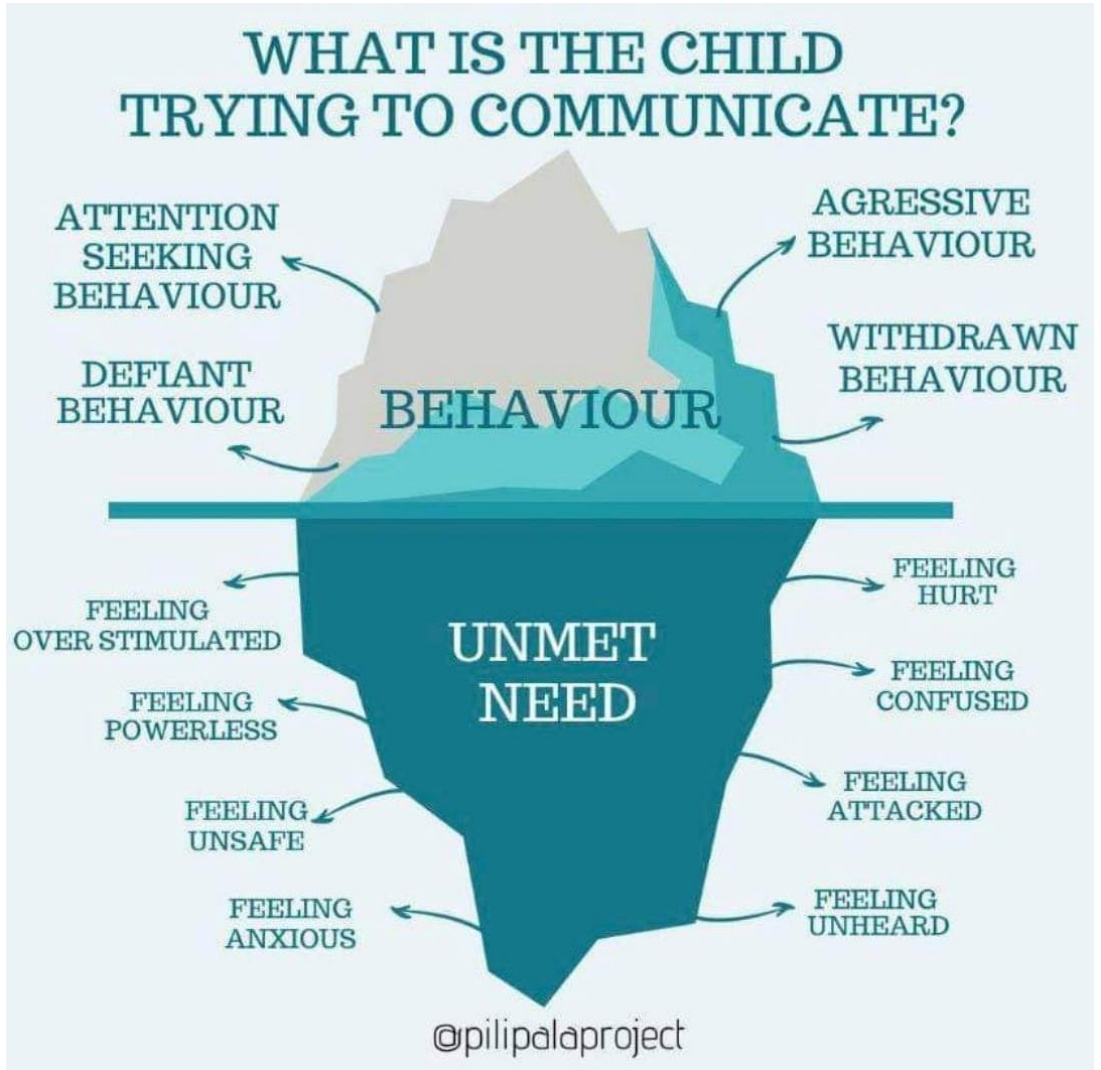
- Being at school can create a significant cognitive and emotional load
- Children may experience restraint collapse
- Children who hold themselves together at school will need a soft landing at home

Your relationship
is the foundation

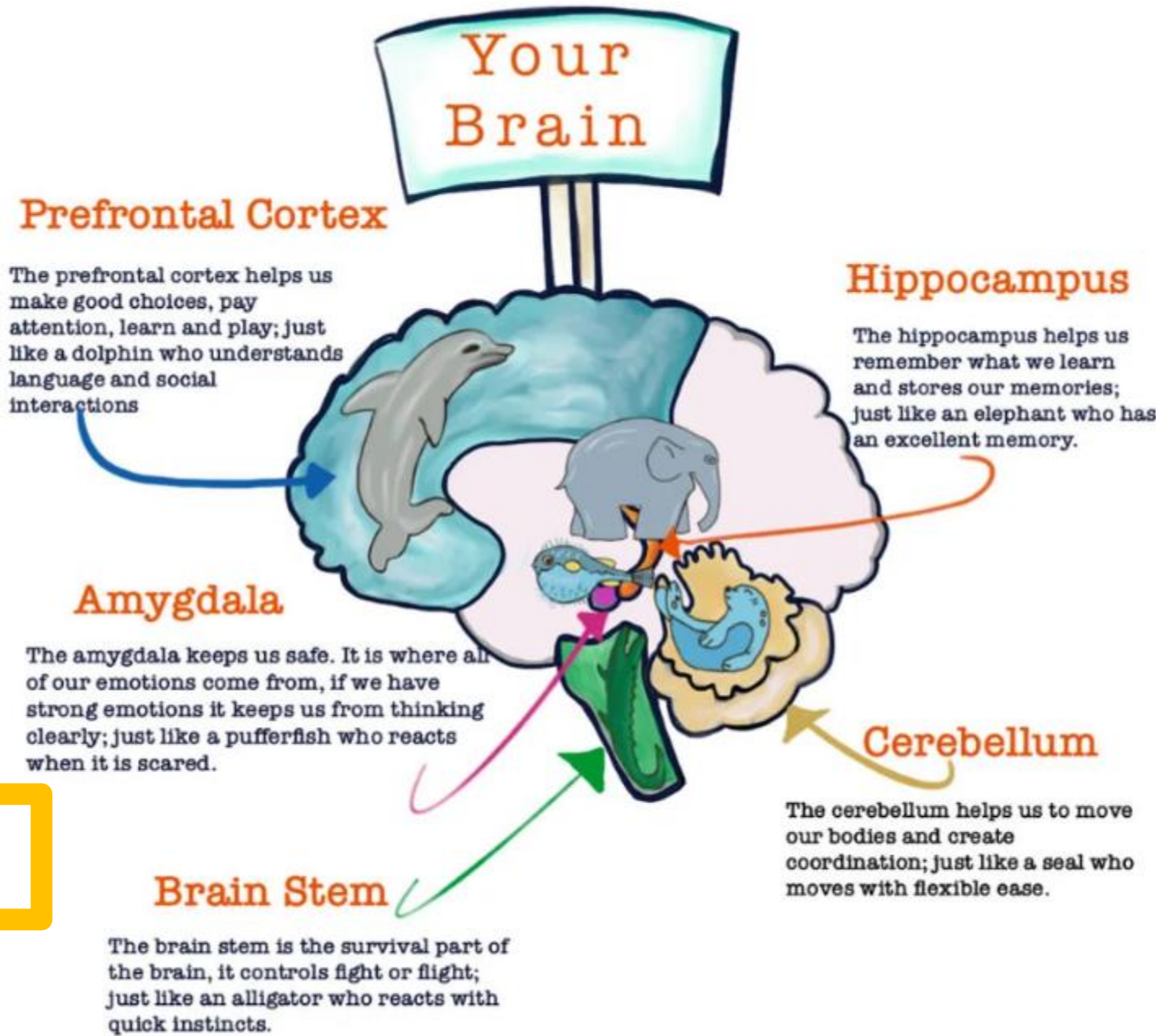


CORE BELIEF

Behaviour is communication

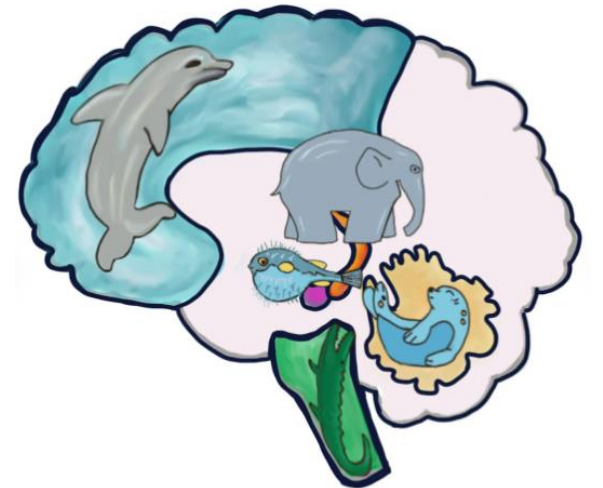


Understanding emotions



"Name it to Tame it" - Dr. Daniel Siegel

- When we can accurately label emotions it activates the prefrontal cortex and helps to regulate the amygdala's response to emotion
- We call this process **emotional regulation**



Presence and attunement

Eye contact

Body language

Tone of voice











routine

- Create routines around transitions
 - Preview and countdown
 - Practice changing
 - Add a soundtrack
 - Consider making it into a game – fast forward, slow motion
-

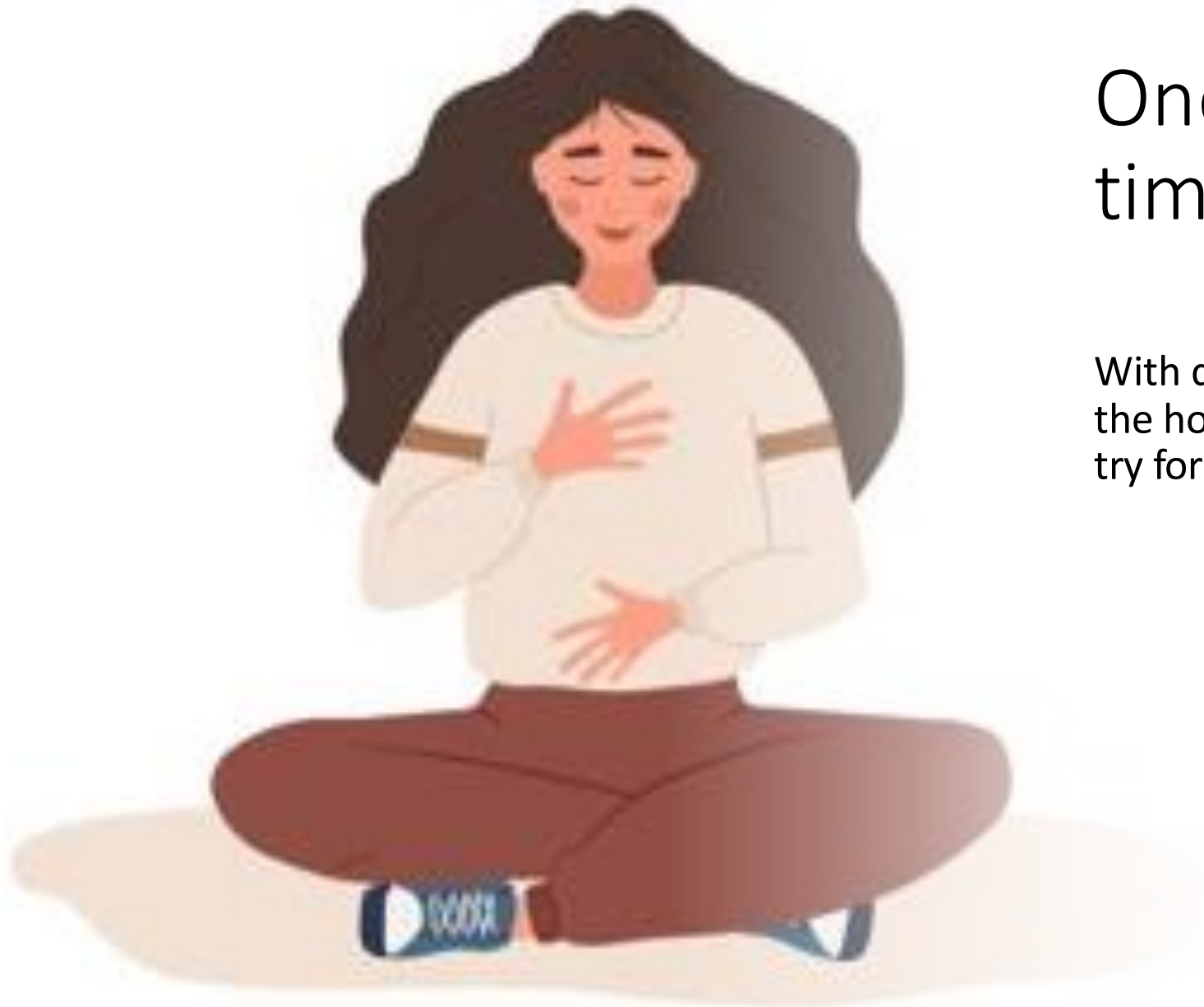


Visual cues

'S MORNING ROUTINE

	Breakfast
	Change Clothes
	Brush Teeth + Hair
	Sunscreen
	Put on Shoes
	Pack Snack + Water
	Organize Homework Folder
	Pick a Mask



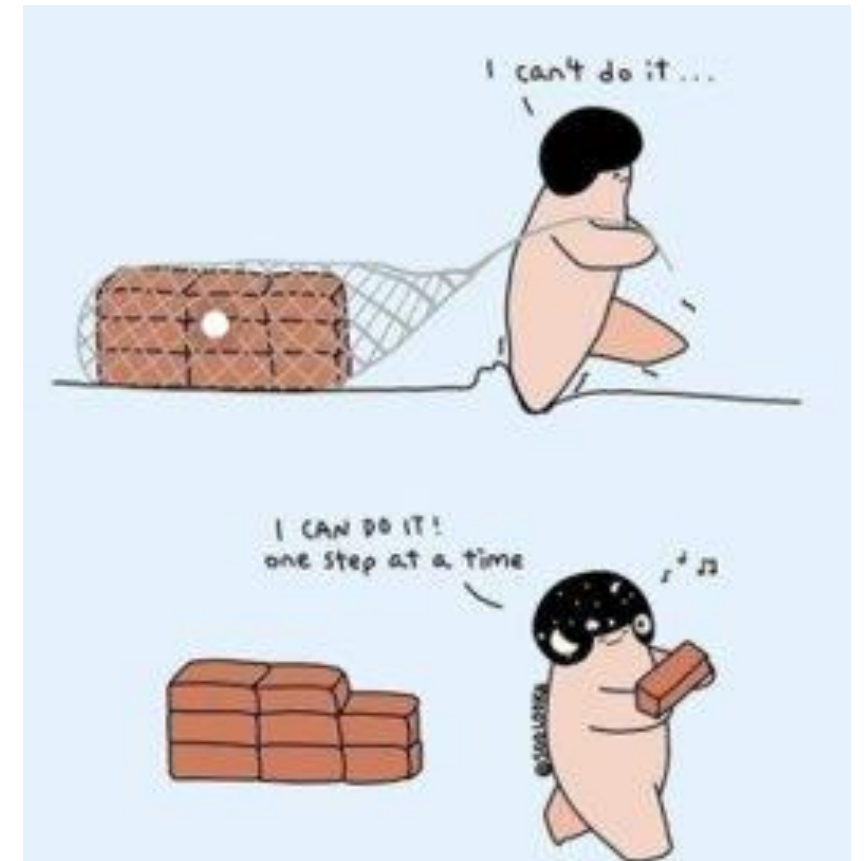


One thing at a time

With daily transitions like leaving the house, or getting ready for bed try for 1 thing at a time

Think of coaching - make tasks smaller

- Provide rationale for decisions
- Providing rewards - external rewards can provide necessary motivation (dopamine)
- Be compassionate and understanding
- Take breaks
- Encourage responsibility



Clear Expectations

Clear, achievable tasks reduce anxiety
Provide a framework to practice in
Write things down
Setting time-limits, make time external
Make a checklist



Plan B Cheat Sheet

1. Empathy (I've noticed that...)
 1. keep it neutral
 2. drill/clarify well (who, what, when, where)
 - 2. Define the problem (my concern is that....)
 - - usual adult concerns; safety, learning, how the behavior is affecting student or others
 - 3. Invitation (I wonder if there's a way...)
 - -summarize the two concerns, sticking as closely as possible to what was identified
 - -is the solution realistic and mutually satisfying?
 - -agree to return to plan B if necessary

CPS –
Collaborative
and
Proactive
Solutions

Ross Greene



Note on Challenges with Screen Time - **Warning Signs**

*What is your child's emotional
relationship with media?*

- **Unsuccessful control** child has a hard time stopping use of tech
- **Loss of interest in other activities or preoccupation with screens**
- **Interference with family time**
- **Screen time is a source of conflict**
- **Withdrawal** child becomes frustrated when cannot use screens
- **Screen time is increasing**
- **Deception** child sneaks screen time

Setting limits effectively

Managing amount of time on screens can require limits

- Parental controls
- Schedules
- Family Media Agreements (commonsensemedia.org)

These strategies require **cooperation** and **agreement** from your child

- Talk about what worries you before saying no



Vertical transitions

There may be feelings of ambivalence

Grief as well as excitement

Consider ways to have celebration as well as making space for the sadness



Make time

- Visit new school more than once
- Discuss what will change
- Ways to stay connected with friends
- Connect to internal and external resources



Key points

- Challenges regarding transitions are understandable and typical
- When these challenges persist consider a plan as a family
- Lead with empathy - attunement
- Develop routines in dynamic ways

