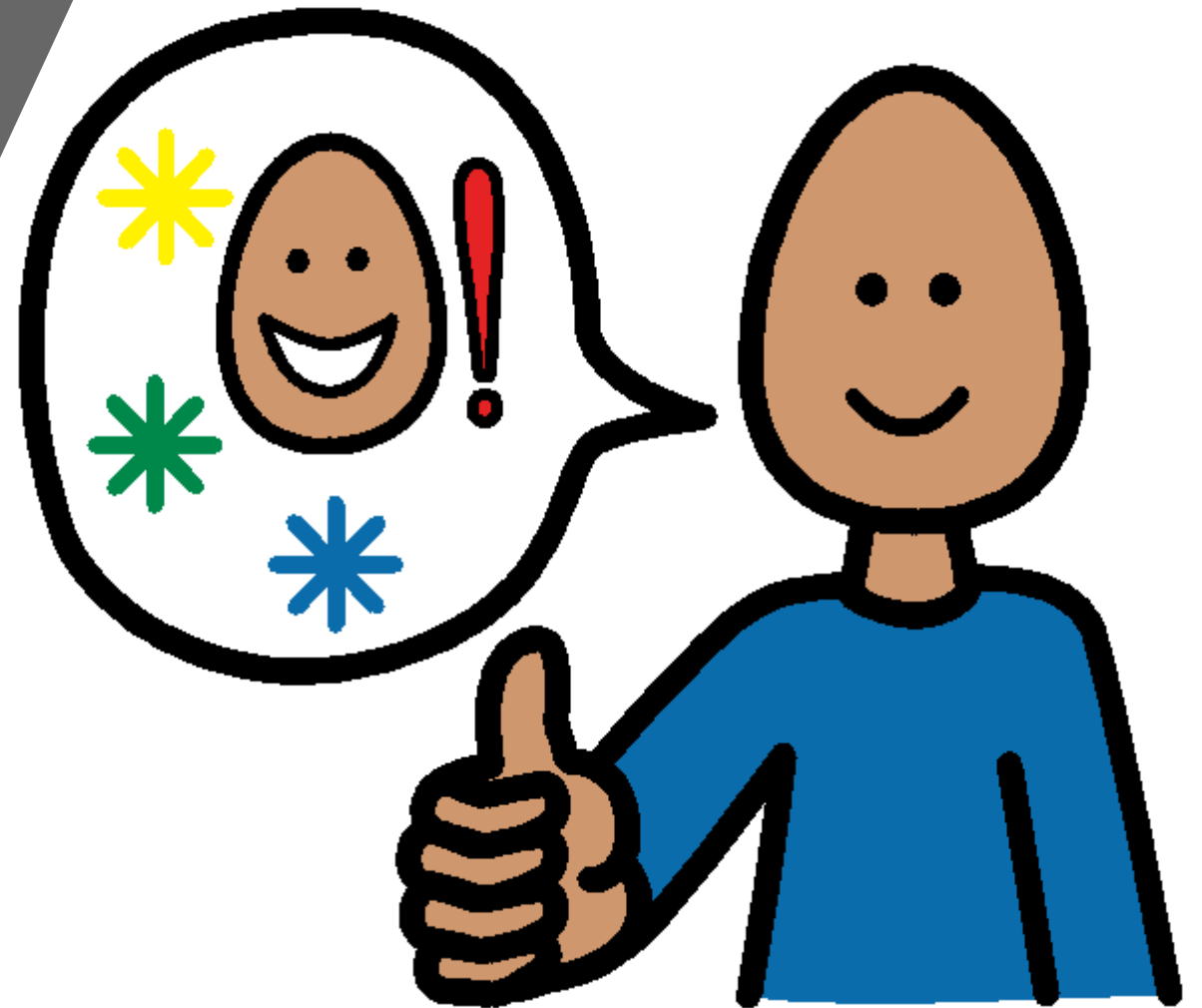


# Understanding Behaviour

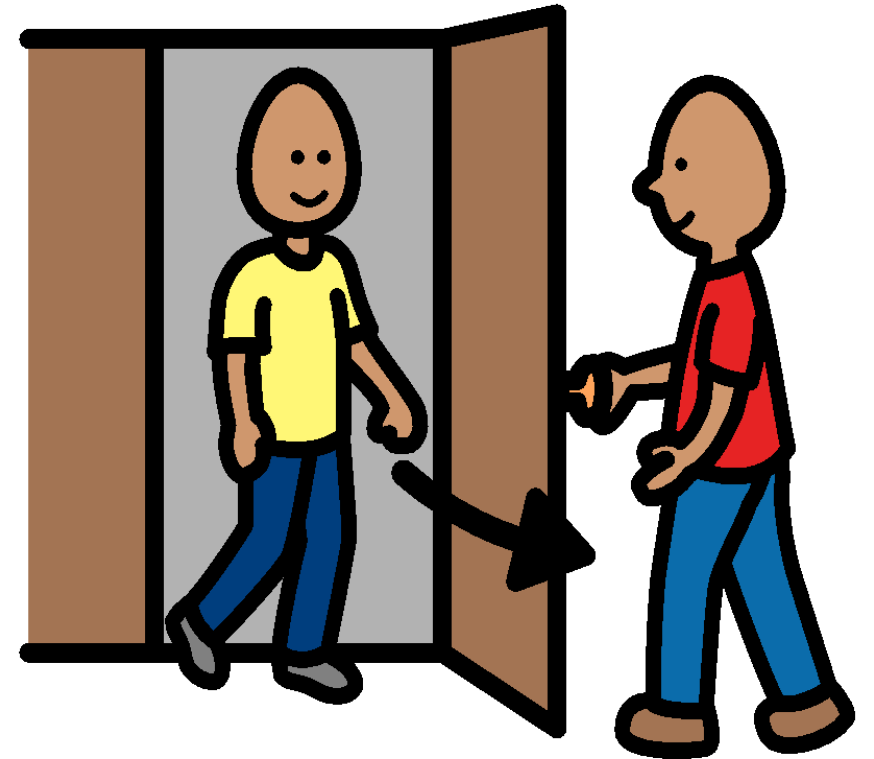
By Kirk Anderson, LD Nurse.



# Behaviour.

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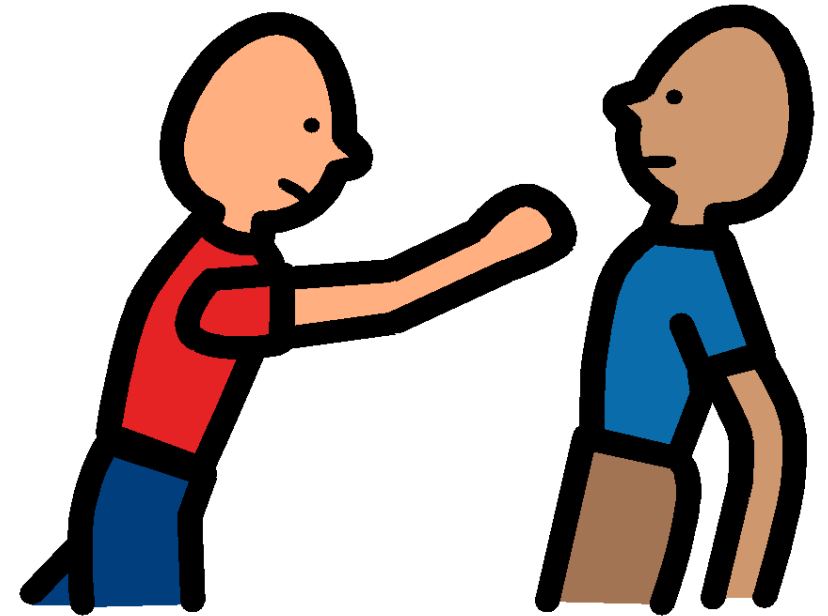
- Behaviour is something that we do in response to a particular trigger or situation. It will always serve a purpose (function).
- Sometimes behaviours are positive, they are good for us and the people around us. These might include things like shaking hands when we greet people or holding a door for someone.
- They might also include asking nicely for something we want or politely and safely saying no to something we don't want to do.



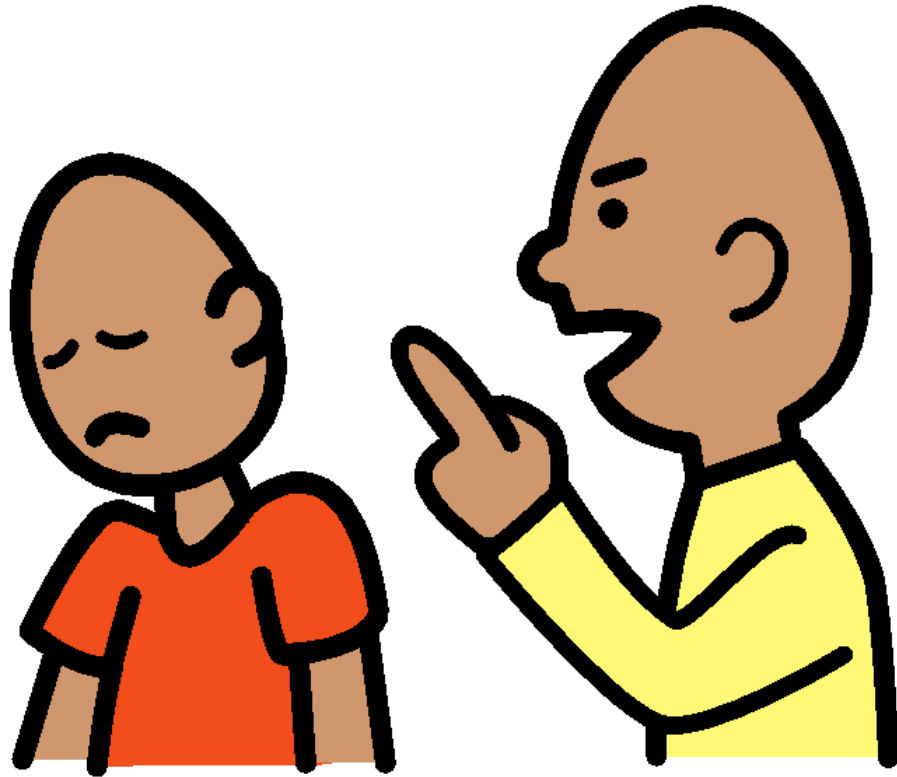
# Behaviour.

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- Some behaviours are less positive.
- These might be things like shouting at people, throwing or breaking items, hurting other people or hurting ourselves.
- They still have a function, they are just not positive behaviours.
- We refer to them as unwanted behaviours.



# Fixing People

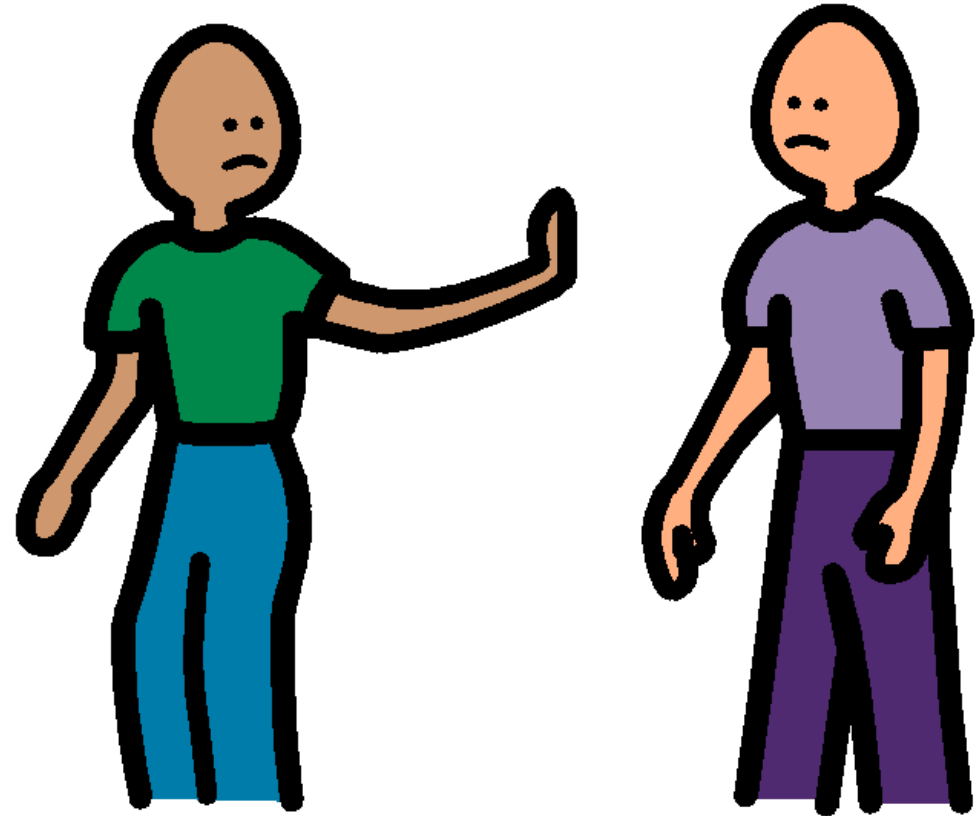


- In the past, people used to think about using punishments and fixing the person. We now know this often doesn't work, and that we need to think more about understanding why people use difficult behaviour and then showing people a more helpful behaviour to replace the difficult one.
- Sometimes, they may not need to use a behaviour at all if we can help solve the problem with them.

# Teaching Positive Behaviours.

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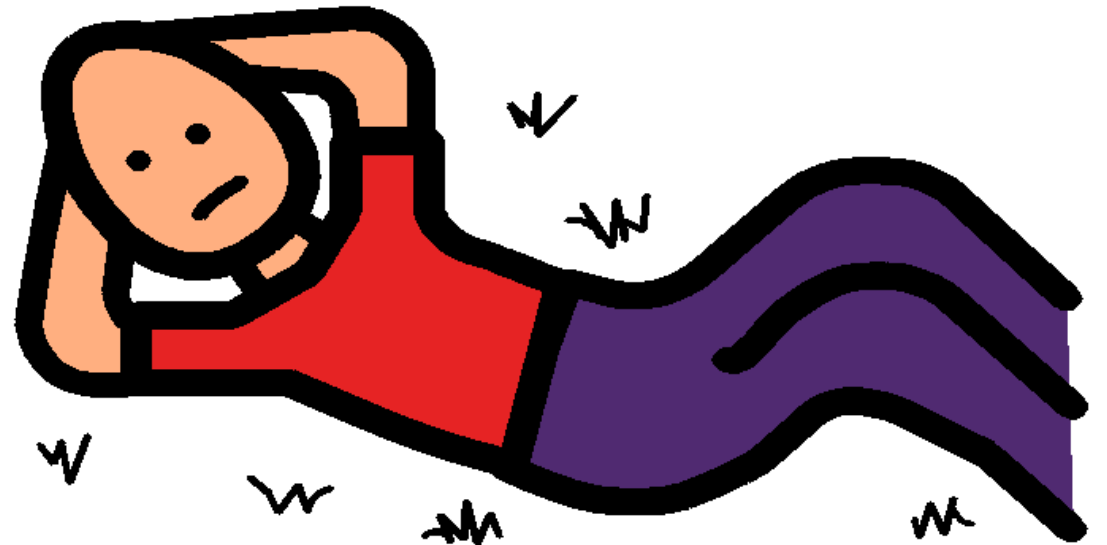
- We like to think about identifying the function of an unwanted behaviour, and then teaching the person a positive behaviour to replace it, that has the same function.
- For example, a person who hits out to make people go away and leave them alone, might be taught how to talk, sign or use a symbol instead.



# Changing Other People.

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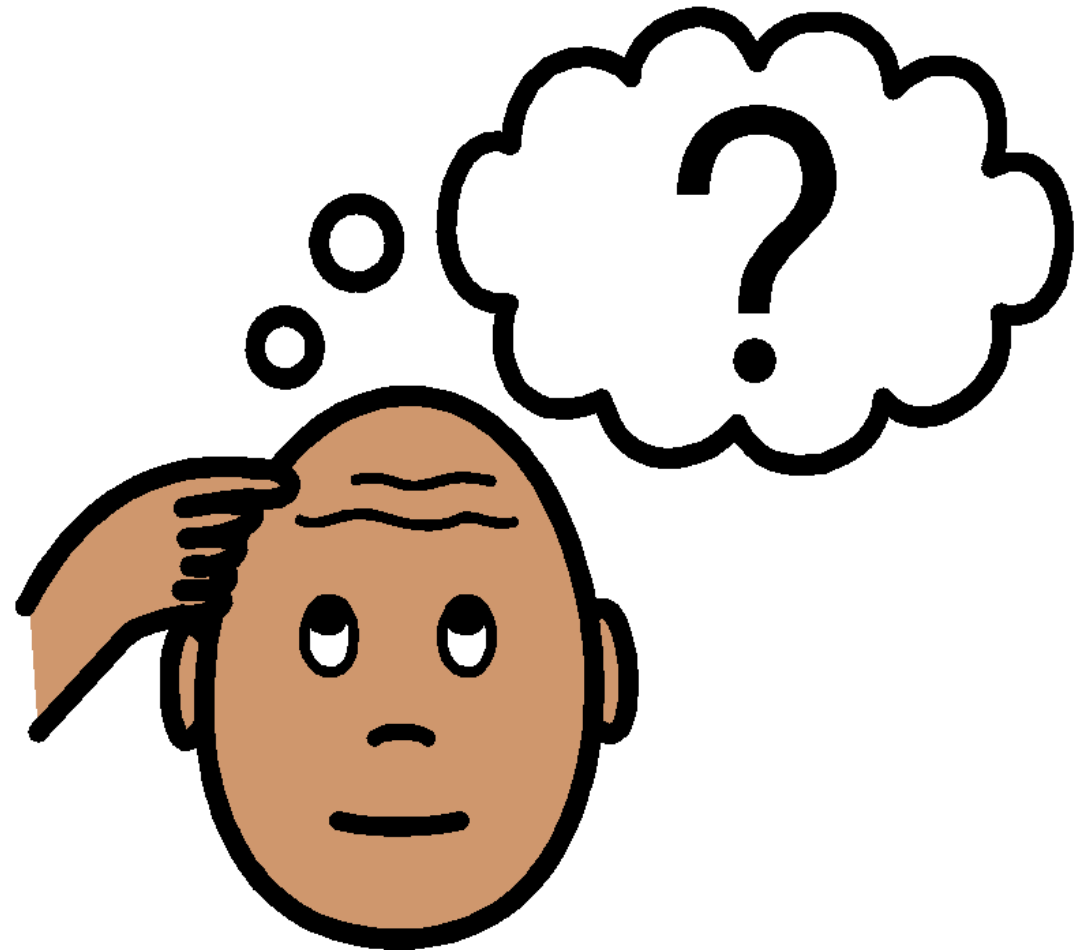
- We might also teach the people supporting the person using the unwanted behaviour to recognise when they want to be left alone as well.
- This would remove the need for the person to use their unwanted behaviour.



# Teaching Positive Behaviours.

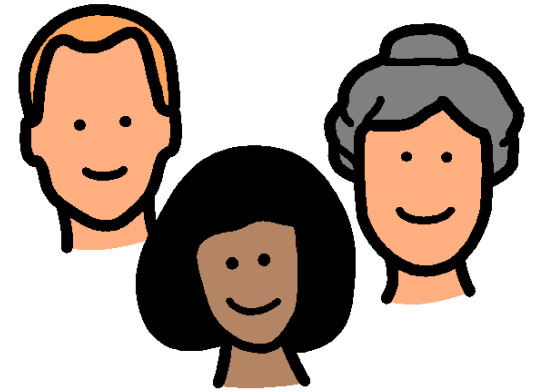
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- But remember, who's problem is it?
- Just because it's not the way we would do it, is it really a problem?



# Consider The Environment

- We don't just focus on the behaviour or the individual, we look at all of the things around the person, such as people, places, situations and the way other people do things.
- We need to understand the world around our person from their perspective.
- And we think about how to keep them and those around them safe, and how to enable them to have a good quality of life.





# Functions of Behaviour.

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We tend to organise behaviours into five main groups.

1. **Tangible** - this is when people want something, such as food, drink, an object or an activity.
2. **Avoidance** - this is when people don't want something, such as going to work or school or to sit at the table for a meal.

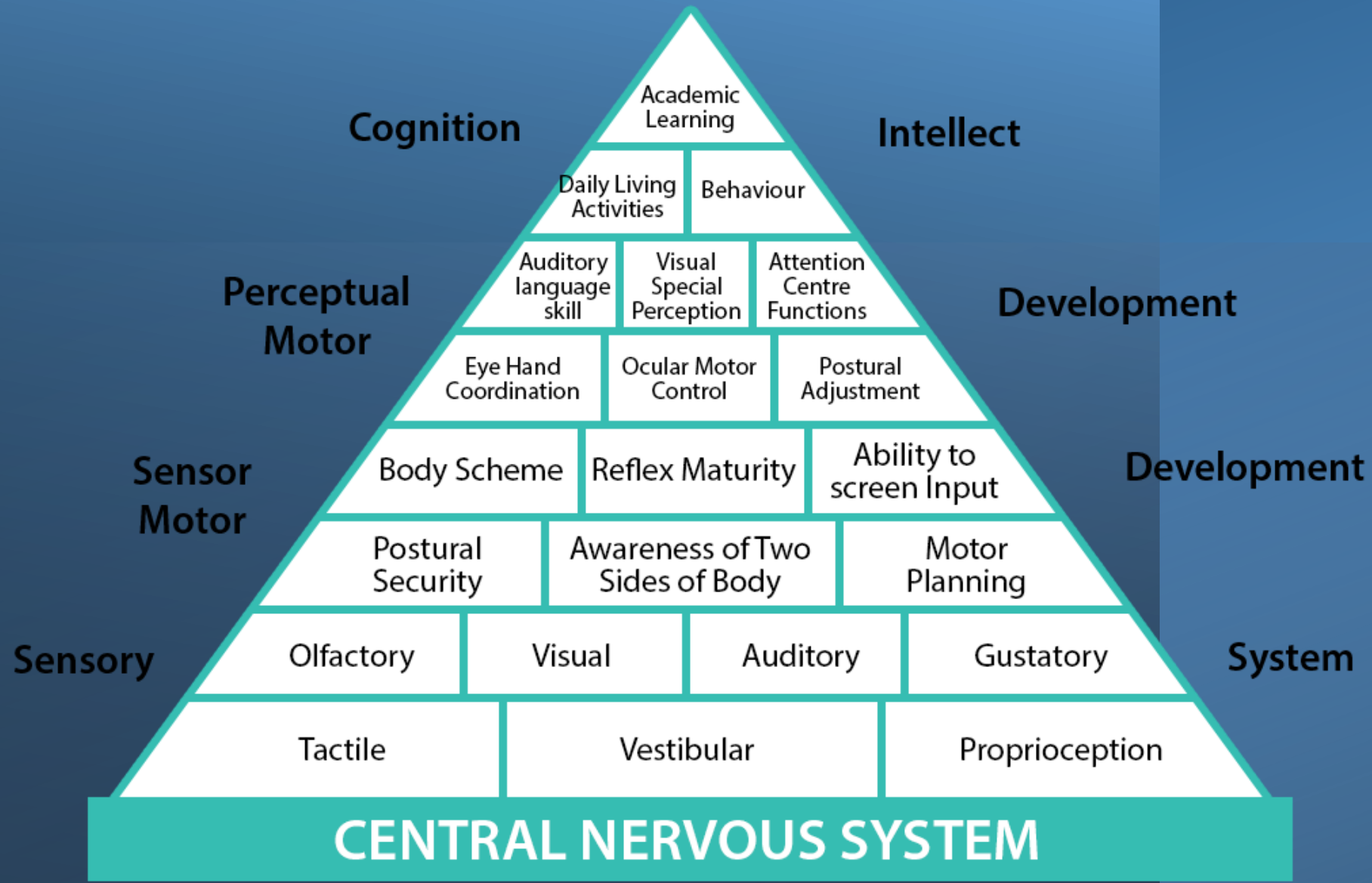




# Functions of Behaviour.

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3. **Attention** - sometimes people don't know how to gain attention appropriately or safely, or maybe they don't distinguish between positive and negative attention.
4. **Control** - sometimes people feel they need to control things or situations in order to feel safe.
5. **Sensory** - sometimes people have sensory needs, such as issues with noise, and may have developed unhelpful ways of meeting these needs.



Pyramid of Learning (Williams and Shellenberger 1996).

# ABC Charts.

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- We sometimes ask people supporting our person to fill in a chart every time the behaviour occurs for a set period of time, anything from a week to a month or longer.
- We call these **ABC** charts, they record the **Antecedent** (what was happening just before the behaviour occurred), the **Behaviour** (exactly what occurred), and the **Consequence** (what happened immediately afterwards).
- We also record the time and date each time the behaviour occurs.

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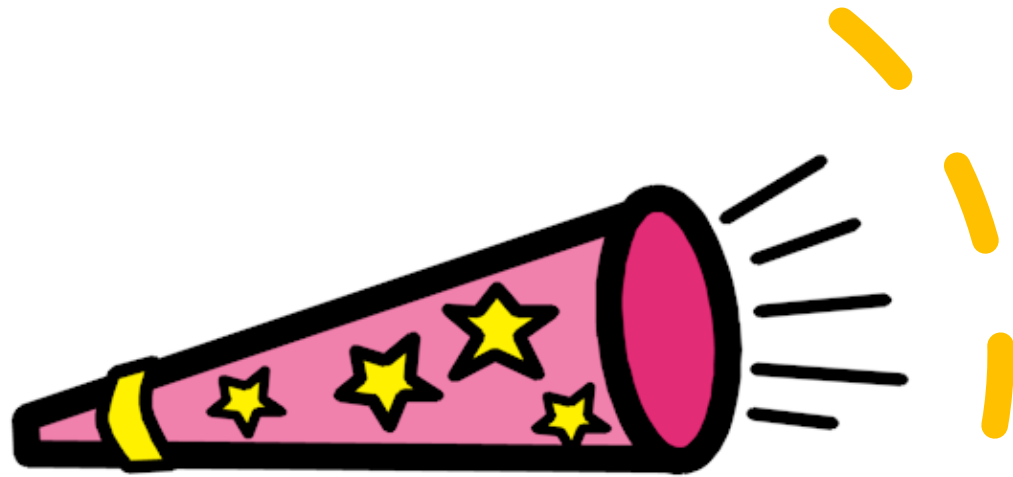


# Triggers

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- Bring us to a survival state – gives us a cue to danger, makes us feel antsy, release of stress hormones.
- Sympathetic (fight or flight) or parasympathetic (freeze or fawn) response.
- Panic and danger zones – makes us feel even more uneasy and we spend all our time and energy managing our fears and anxiety, can lead to shutdown.
- Can raise past traumas.





# Triggers

- Triggers are those things that cause a behaviour to occur.
- They can be different for different people.
- We tend to organise triggers into two types, **fast** and **slow**.

# Fast Triggers

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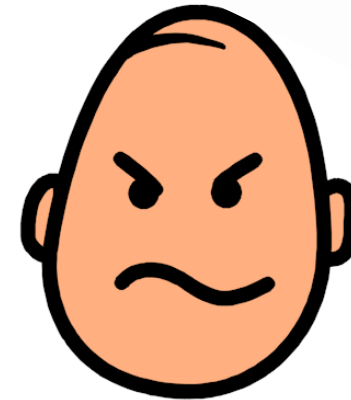
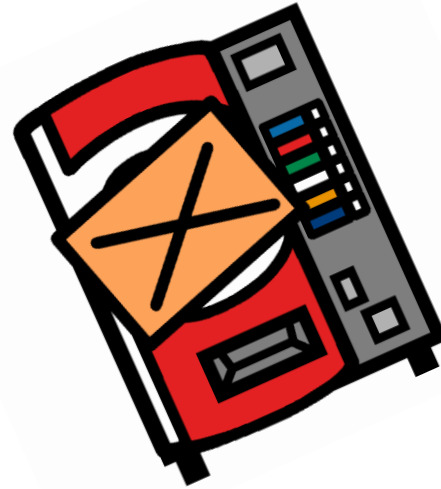
- Fast Triggers are those things that immediately cause a behaviour or behavioural episode to occur.
- You will probably know what some of them are, the word “no” is a common fast trigger.



# Slow Triggers

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- Slow Triggers are those irritating things that niggle away at people.
- Exposure to slow triggers can make people irritable and less tolerant.
- Being exposed to enough slow triggers in a short period of time can cause one of these triggers to be the “straw that broke the camel’s back”.





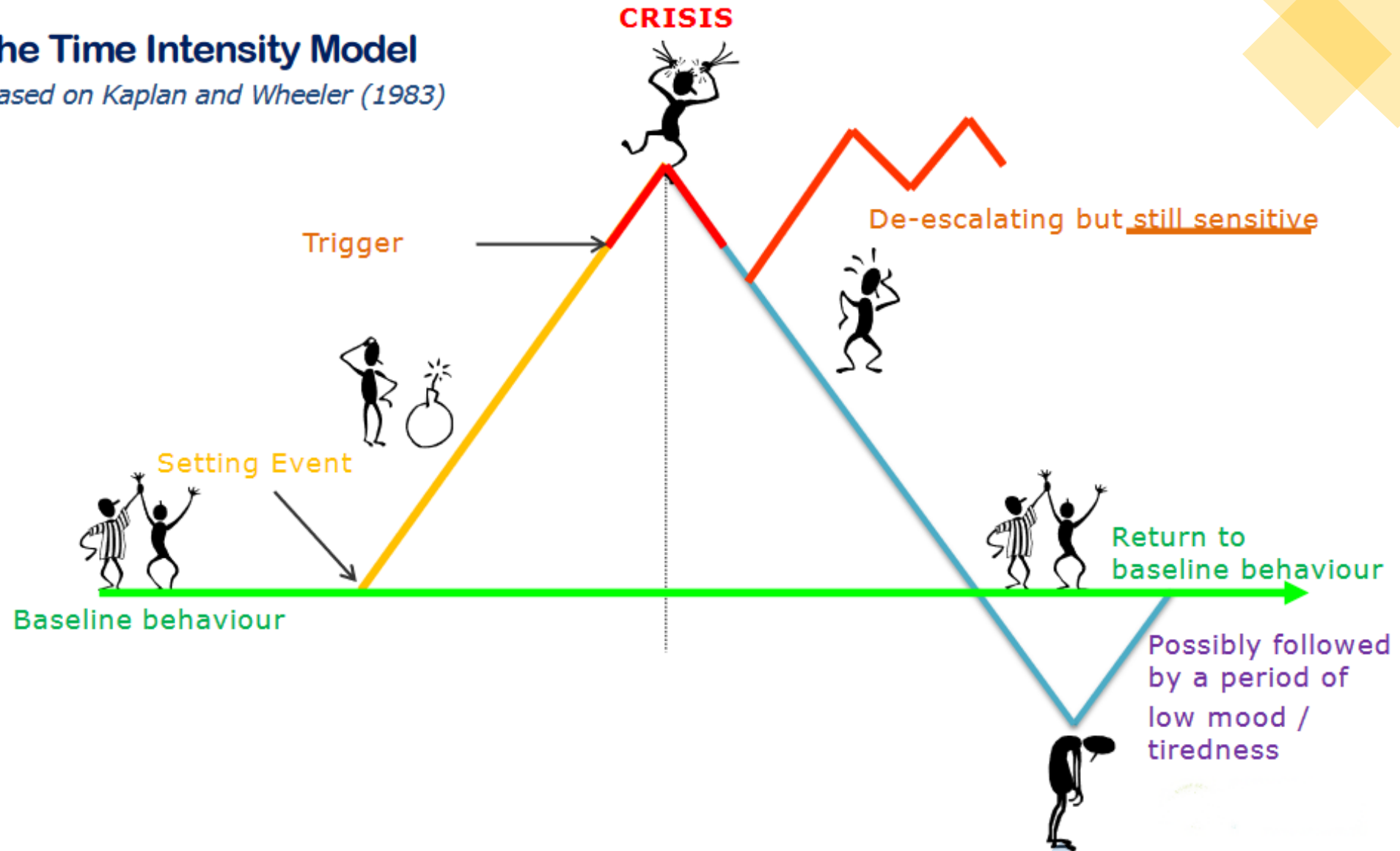
# Slow Triggers

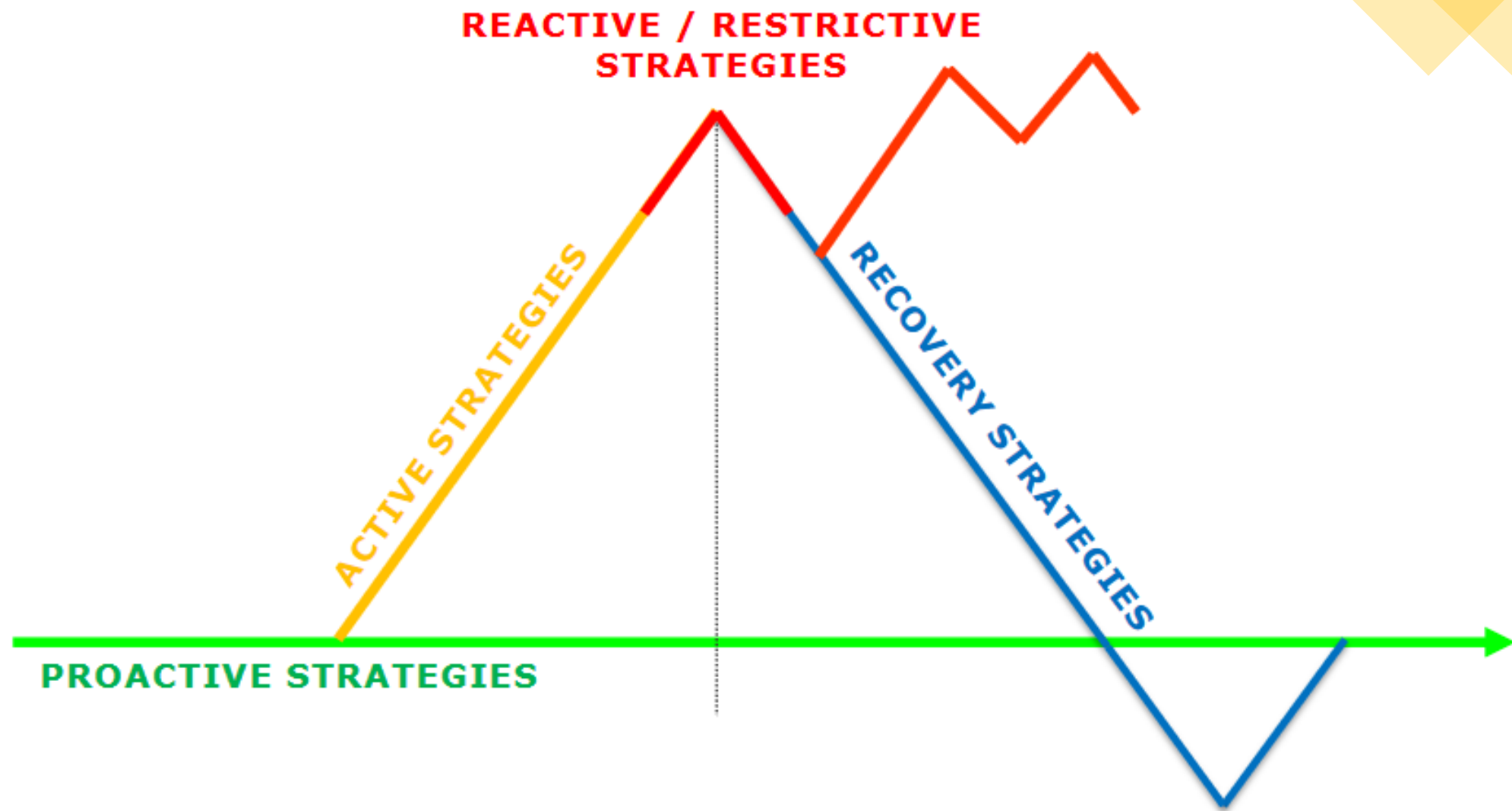
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- We sometimes use a tool called the Groden Stress Survey to assess a person's triggers and to rank them in the order of the amount of stress they cause.
- Once identified, we may be able to reduce or eliminate them from a person's environment, to better allow them to cope with other stressors.

# The Time Intensity Model

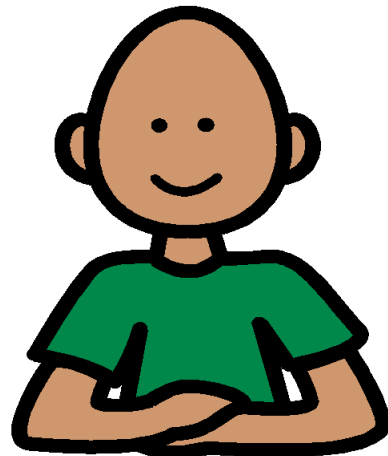
Based on Kaplan and Wheeler (1983)





# Behaviour Support Plans.

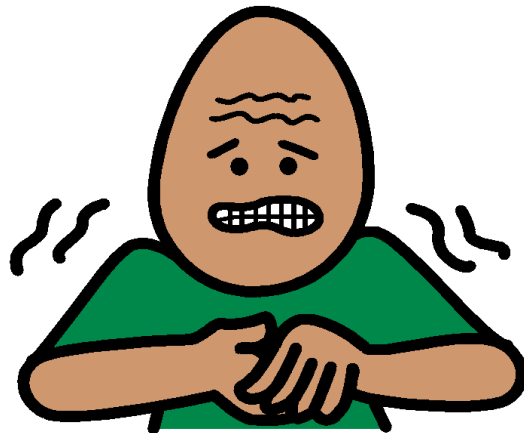
- Our plan may be in four sections.
- The **green** section will talk about how the **person** presents when **they** are not using the unwanted behaviour, and the things we need to do to keep things that way.



Calm, relaxed & happy	
Proactive Strategies The things we can say and do to keep Name in the green.	Behaviour What does Name say and look like that shows us s/he is calm, happy and relaxed.

# Behaviour Support Plans.

- The **amber** section will talk about how the **person** presents when they are starting to need to use the behaviour, and the things we can do to stop this happening and get **them** back to the **green** stage.



Things may be going wrong	
Behaviour	Active Strategies
What Name does, says and looks like that shows us s/he is becoming anxious or aroused.	The things we can do or say to stop the situation from escalating and return Name to the green.

# Behaviour Support Plans.

- The **red** section will talk about how the **person** presents when they using or engaging in the unwanted behaviour, and the things we can do to help **them** stop and get back to the **green** stage.



Things have gone wrong	
Behaviour	Reactive / Restrictive Strategies
What Name does, says and looks like when s/he has lost control (meltdown / fight or flight).	The things we can do or say to quickly manage the situation and to prevent unnecessary distress, injury and destruction.

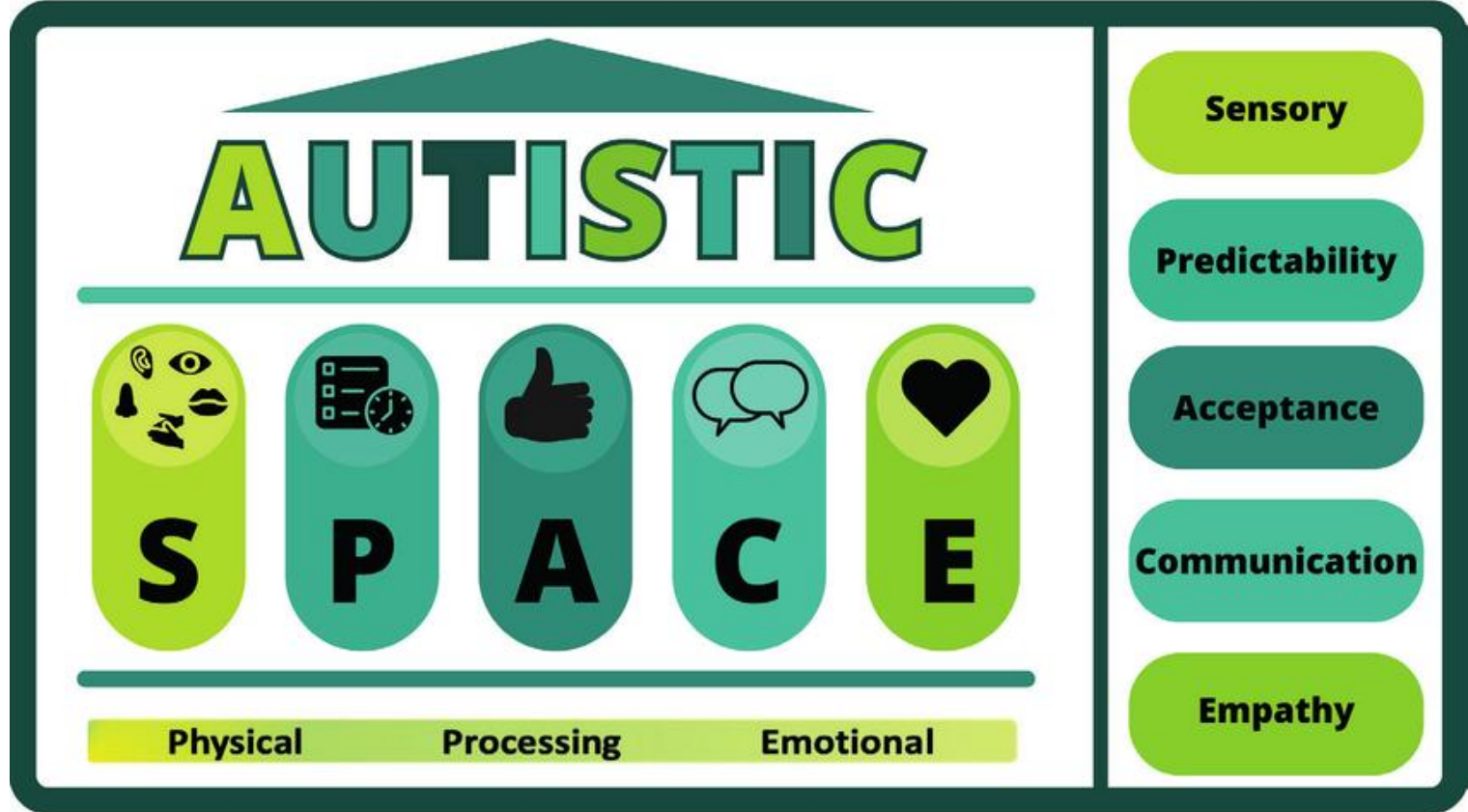
# Behaviour Support Plans.

- And finally the **blue** section will talk about how the **person** presents when they are starting to not need to use the unwanted behaviour, and the things we can do to help **them** keep moving back towards the **green** stage.



Things are starting to calm down	
Behaviour	Recovery Strategies
What Name does, says and looks like that tells us s/he is starting to calm.	The things we can do or say to support Name to become calmer and to return to the green (and not go up again into the red).

Autistic  
SPACE  
Framework



Space

Sensory needs



Sensory sensitivities are common to almost all autistic people but the type of and degree to which people experience these varies. Hypo or hyper-reactivity to any sensory stimuli is possible and can vary contextually.

sPace

Predictability



Access to healthcare is best maximised for Autistic people when the environment and context is made as known and predictable as possible. Sudden or unplanned change is particularly difficult.

spAce

Acceptance

It is important to have a holistic approach, in which Autistic characteristics are understood and accepted.

spaCe

## Communication

Autistic people communicate differently. Many use fluent speech, but may experience challenges with verbal communication at times of stress or sensory overload. Others may be non/minimally speaking and use augmentative and alternative communication methods, including visual cards, writing or electronic devices.

spaceE

Empathy

Autistic people do not lack empathy  
but it may be experienced or  
expressed differently from people  
who are not Autistic.

# Space

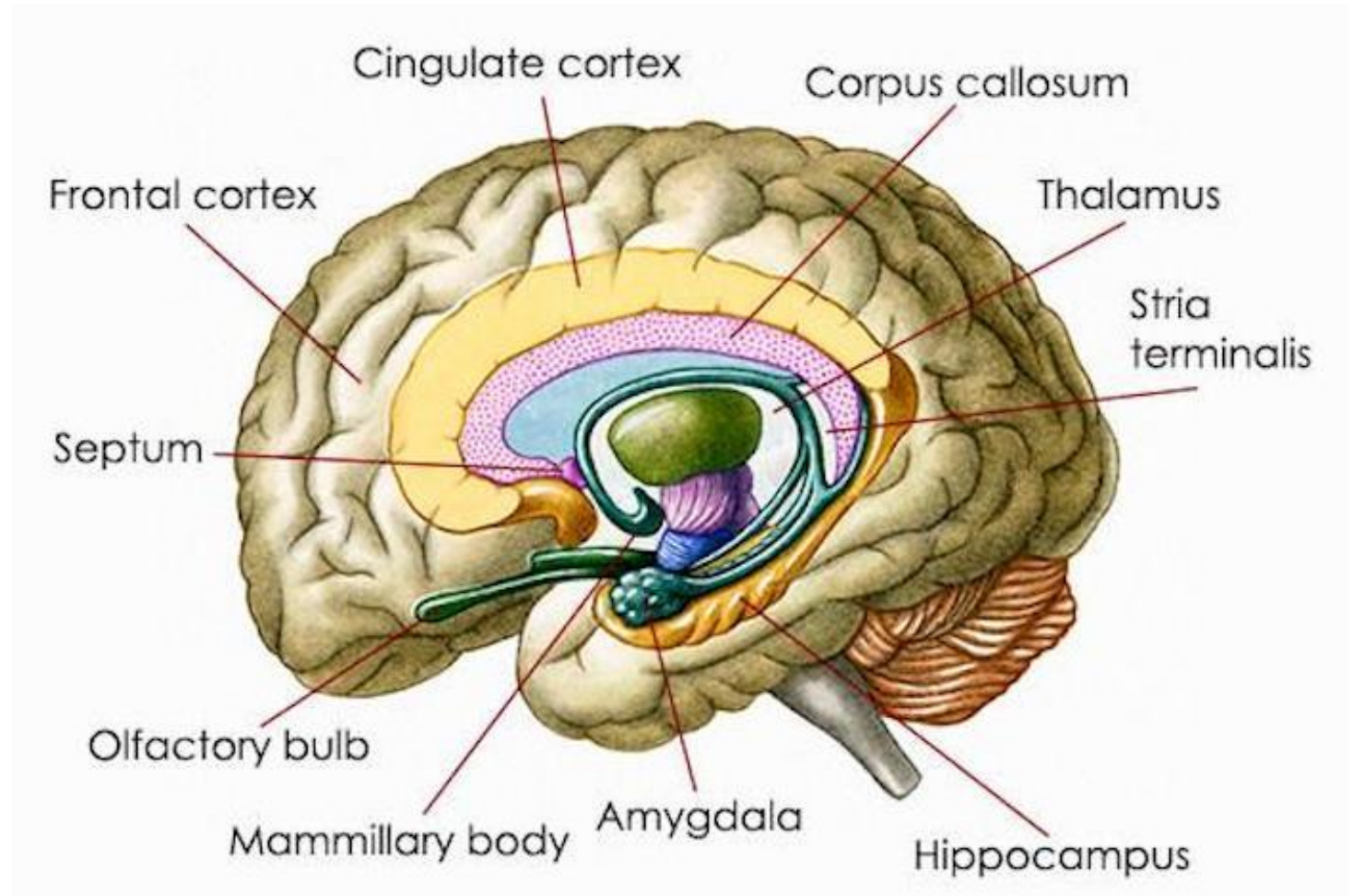
## Physical, emotional and processing space

- Autistic people may need more physical space. Proximity to others, particularly within touching distance, is often difficult to tolerate.
- Identifying, processing and managing emotions can be challenging, particularly when Autistic ways of expressing emotions are not understood. Sensory overload or overwhelming emotions may lead to Autistic meltdown or shutdown. Considering this will minimise risks, but if it occurs, the best approach is often to allow space to recover.
- Understanding that Autistic people may need additional time to process new information or unexpected changes when compared to non-Autistic people is invaluable in improving the accessibility of healthcare.

# Meltdowns.

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- Frontal Cortex shuts down.
- Amygdala takes over.
- “Fight or flight”.
- This is a normal response to triggers.
- May implode, explode or shut down.

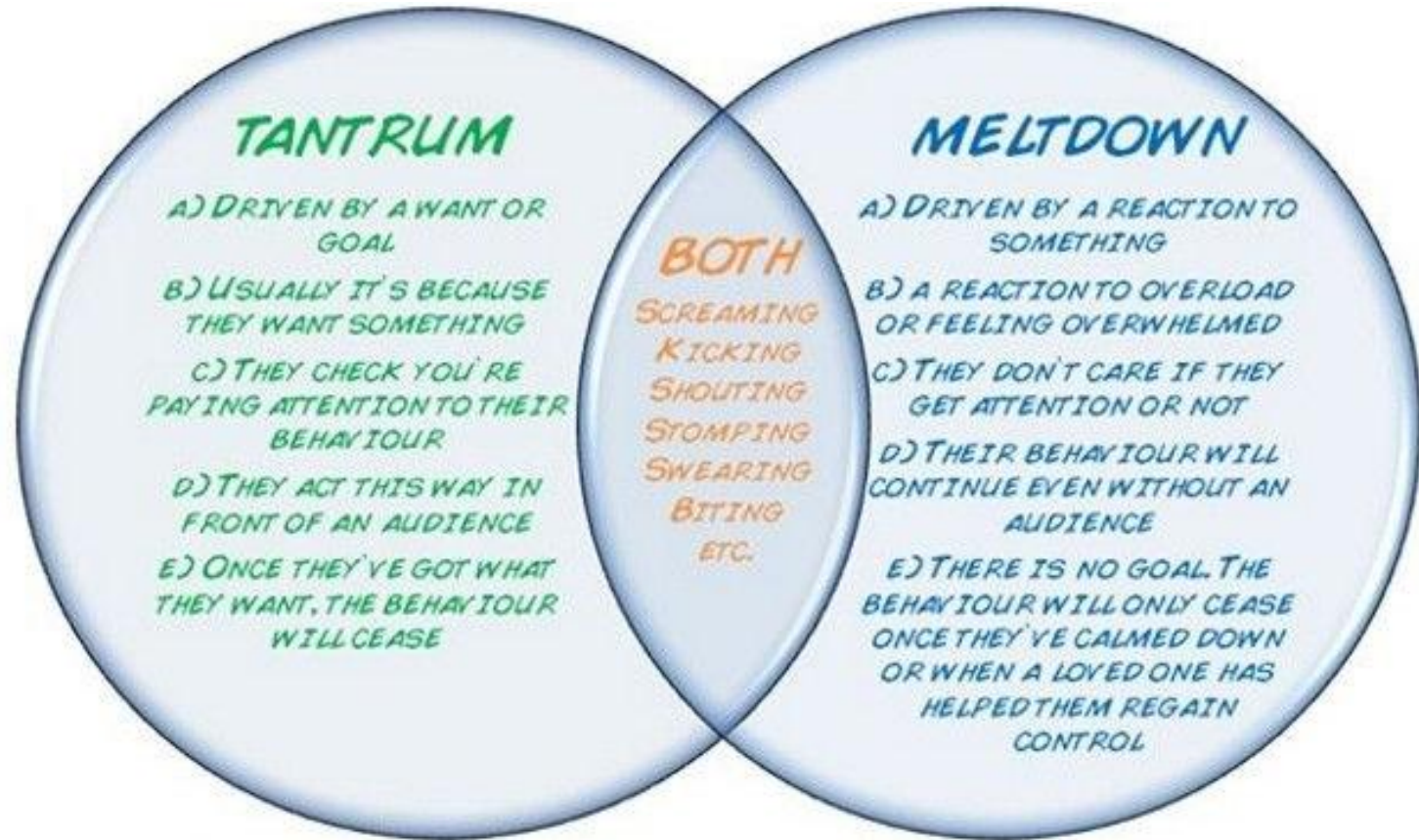


# Meltdown vs Tantrum (behaviour)

- A tantrum will usually stop when the child gets what they want, changes their tactics, or when we respond differently to how we usually respond.
- A meltdown will usually continue even after they get what they want because, in many cases, the child does not even know what they want.



## Meltdown vs Tantrum (behaviour)



## Consequences

Actions have consequences. 'Ignoring' a behaviour is a rare recommendation for when attention is the likely function and we are trying not to maintain a behaviour.



There are two main types of consequences, natural and logical.

# Natural Consequences

- These occur without adult involvement.
  - Child stays up late, they feel tired all the next day.
  - Leaves toys out in the rain, the toys get wet and rusty.
  - Child soils self - they smell and other children don't want to play with them.

# Logical Consequences

- These don't occur naturally from a behaviour, like getting cold if you go outside without a coat, **but they are still connected to the child's behaviour.**
  - Child sends abusive social media messages, child loses access to phone for predetermined period.
  - Not listening when asked to turn down the TV volume, the TV is turned off.

# Illogical Consequences

- These provide no learning experience for the child because the consequence does not directly link to the behaviour e.g. child/young person refuses to eat their dinner, so you confiscate their mobile phone for the day.
- When the child/young person finds it difficult to understand the link between the punishment and incident it can leave them with feelings of shame, which can lead to the situation escalating as the child becomes angry in attempt to reduce the shame.

# Relationship Repair

- Always model and allow the relationship to be repaired.
- It's OK (and good modelling) to admit you were wrong or overreacted.
- They need to know your love for them is unconditional in order to feel safe and secure. Do not assume they know this.



# PERMA

POSITIVE EMOTION



```
graph TD; A[POSITIVE EMOTION] --> B[ENGAGEMENT]; B --> C[RELATIONSHIPS]; C --> D[MEANING]; D --> E[ACCOMPLISHMENT]
```

ENGAGEMENT

RELATIONSHIPS

MEANING

ACCOMPLISHMENT

# Glimmers

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Bring us to an anchored state - we can learn and thrive in this state.

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Empathic Response - gives us a feeling of being seen, heard, understood and validated.

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Comfort and learning zone - evokes a feeling of safety and security within a space or with an individual.

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Micromoments of goodness - help us to release the build up of cortisol and can speed up the return a state of calmness.



# Zones of Regulation

# Incredible Five Point Scale

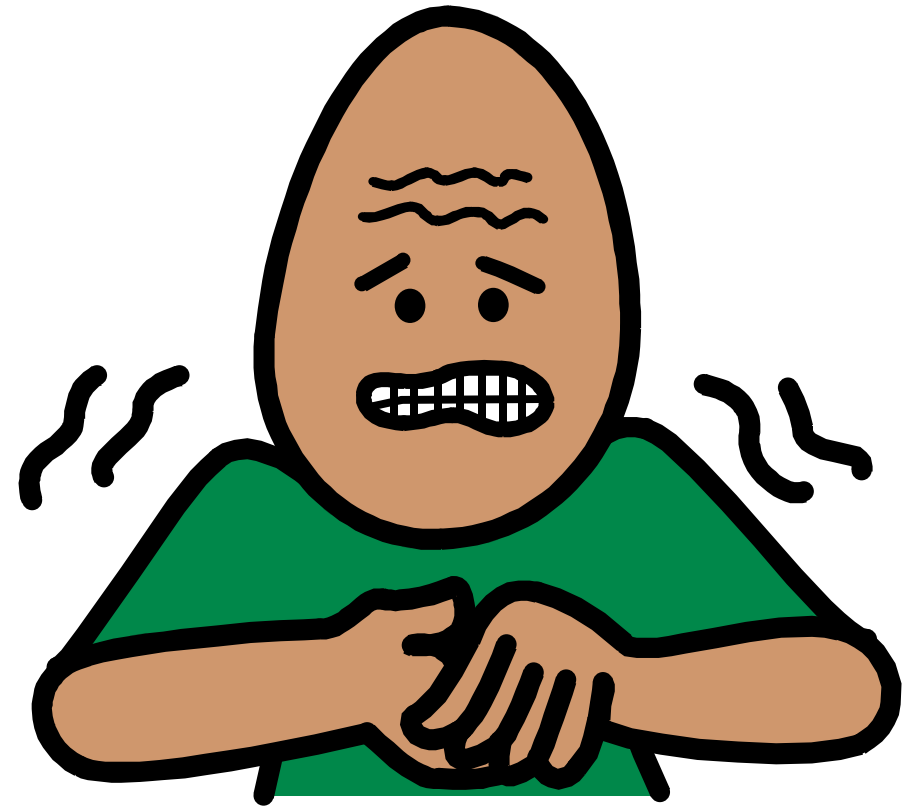
5		<b>Angry</b> I've lost control. I'm not listening Anymore. I could hit, kick or bite. I need a quiet place to calm down.
4		<b>Overwhelmed</b> Everything is too hard. I'm losing control and need to leave the environment I'm in. Give me space.
3		<b>Frustrated</b> I'm not getting it, I'm showing signs of stress. I should take a break now.
2		<b>Anxious</b> Trying to stay focused, but having a hard time staying on task. Use calming strategies now.
1		<b>Happy</b> Ready and willing to Work.



LEVEL	I FEEL	I CAN	MY OPTIONS
5	Very mad Very angry Very upset	Take deep breaths Walk around a hallway for me	
4	Sad Scared Angry Upset	Take a break Take deep breaths Ask someone to check for me	
3	Confused Worried Unhappy Nervous	Ask for help Take a break Go for a walk Take deep breaths	
2	A little confused A little worried Content	Ask for help Take a break Go for a walk	
1	Excited Happy Joyful	Finish Do my work Follow directions	

# Anxiety

- Often we think of anxiety as feeling sick, clammy hands, hot, short of breath, feeling faint etc.
- However anxiety can also be shown in anger, distress, refusal to carry out routine tasks, aggression, OCD and Selective Mutism.



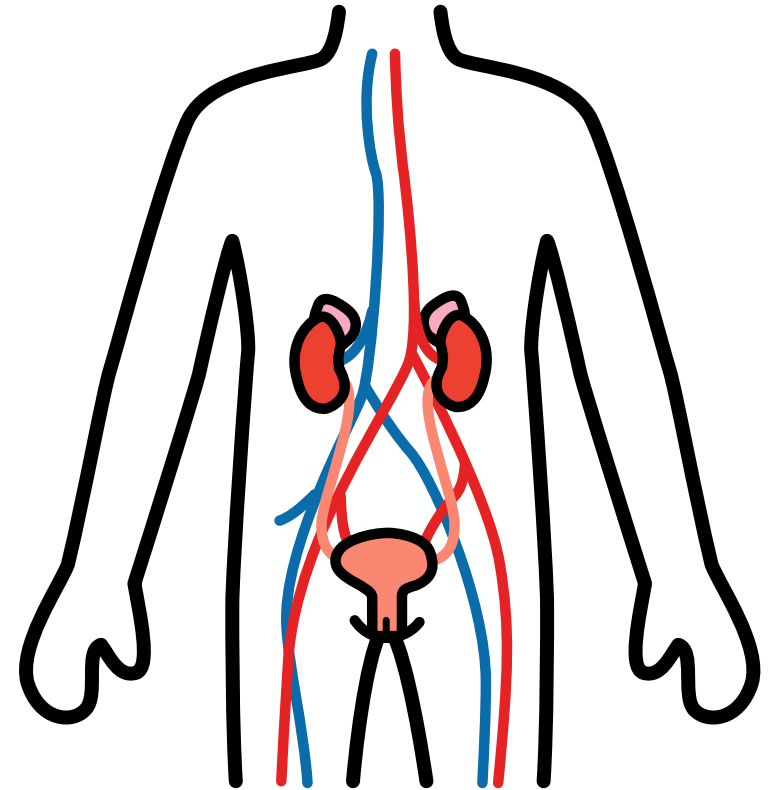
# What Is Anxiety?

- A brain function that keeps us alive.
- Controlled by the lower part of the brain, the primitive part which we are born with.
- Controls our fight, flight, freeze response.

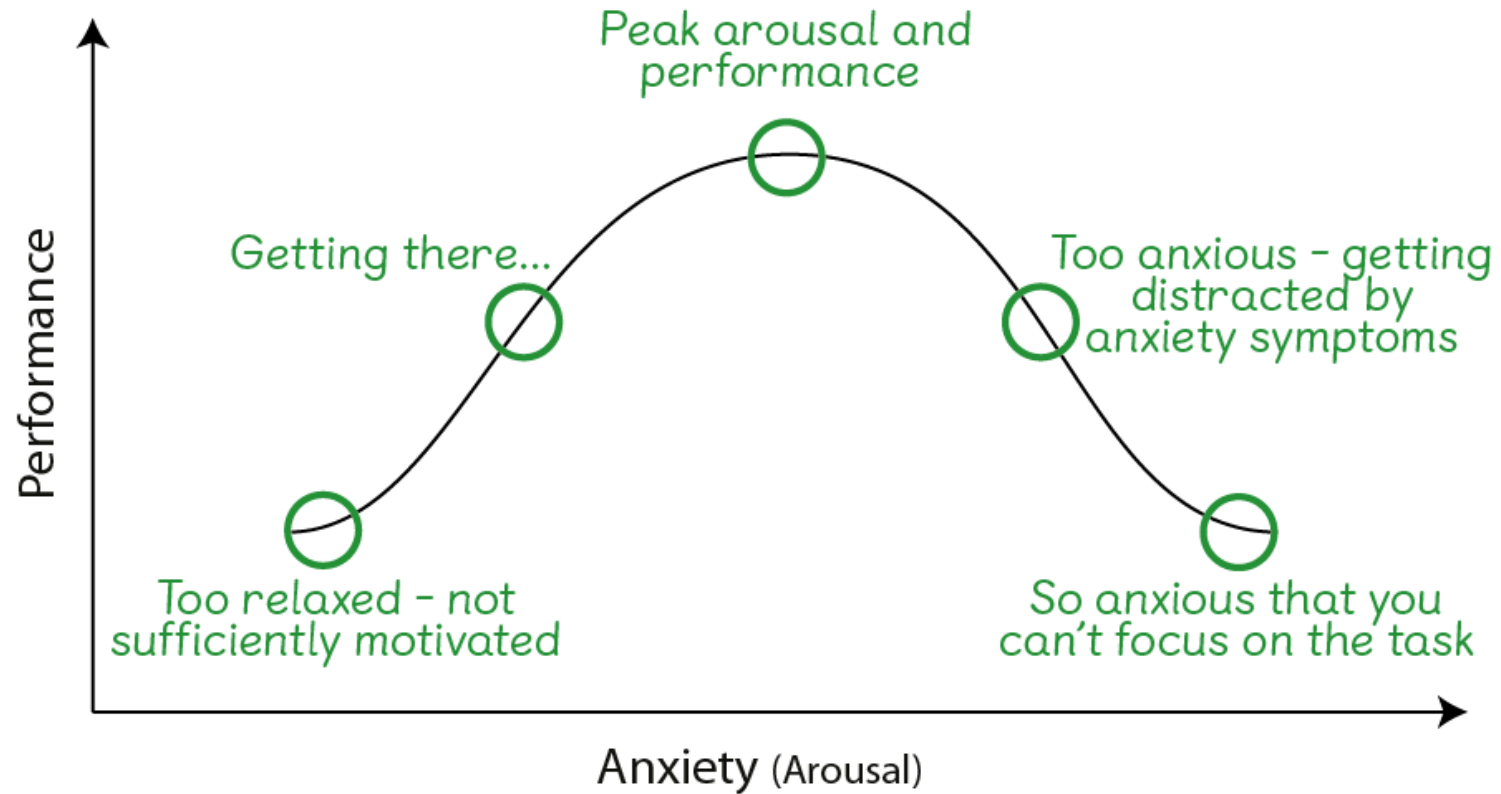


# What Is Anxiety?

- It uses so much energy that the upper part of the brain that controls language, logic and listening skills is inaccessible.
- It also impacts on other parts of the body, drawing all the energies into the thighs, and upper parts of the arms and shoulders. This can lead to a relaxation of the digestive system and cause people to lose control of their bladders.

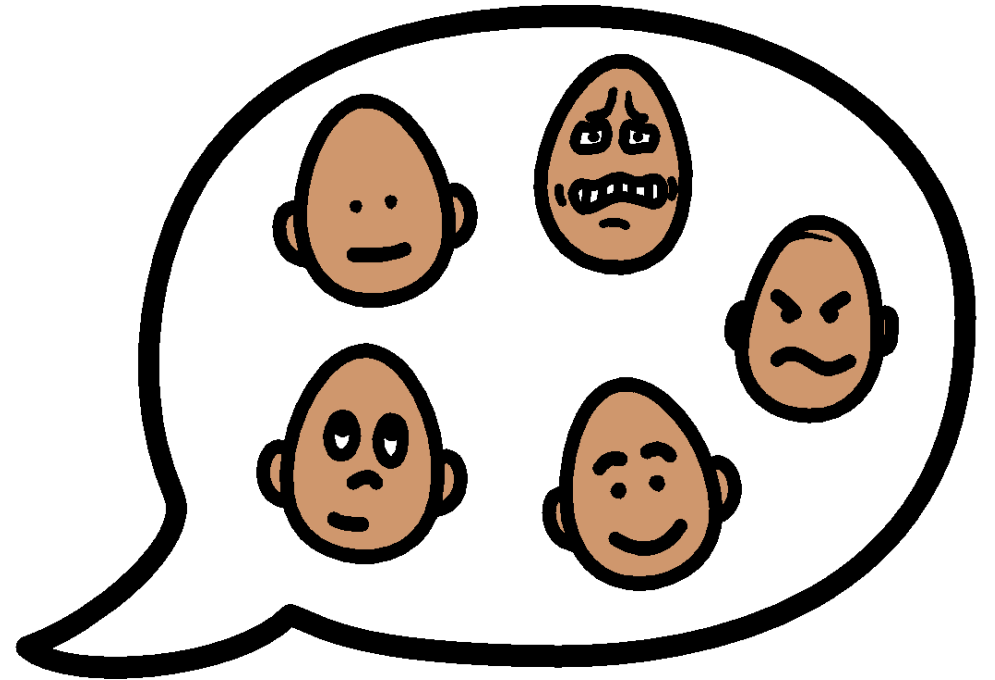


# Anxiety



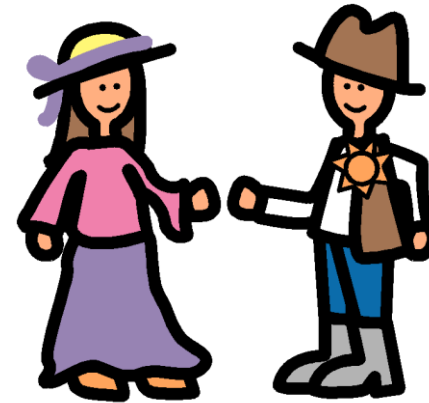
# Supporting our Children's emotions

- Normalise and Model - we all feel emotion.
- How do our bodies feel in different emotional states?



# PACE

- **P**layful Connections.
- **A**ccept the child's inner feelings.
- **C**urious the underlying cause of the behaviour.
- **E**mpathy.



# PACE

- **P**- Being playful offers a safe, short connection with a child.
- **A**- feelings are never wrong or right, they just are what they are, allow them to be.
- **C**- this is taking in an attitude of not knowing. If we can stay curious when our child is behaving in a way we don't like it can support our stress levels from rising.
- **E**- Express the emotion you are witnessing, 'you are feeling really angry right now' – feeling understood and listened to can help reduce stress.



# Masking



Suppressing one's feelings.

Often leads to the coke can affect.

Often due to a child not being able to communicate their needs.

Just because a child isn't acting outwardly at school/nursery it doesn't mean that support cannot be put in place in an educational setting.

This can often leave those around the child to believe the problem lies with the parents!