

## The Spectrum/Continuum of Mental Health/Wellness

- Mental health is NOT who you are, but how you think, feel & behave under certain situations
- All have moments where frustration, worry, anxiety or anger get better of us
- On extreme end, brain seems to actually stop thinking, no logic/reasoning left, temporarily losing full control of actions
- Many serious mental health challenges related to unaddressed cognitive exhaustion & sensory overload

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## In Mental Health, Language is Everything

- Mental illness/wellness by its' nature is chaotic & messy
- Language is everything - all diagnosis through words people use to describe themselves/others' thoughts, feelings & behaviors
- Cultural Considerations
- "Hurting People Hurt Others."

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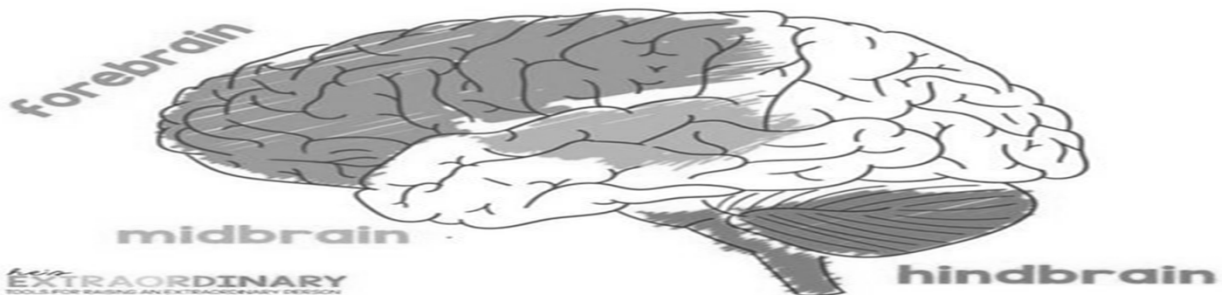


*“Trying to understand madness with logic, is not unlike searching for darkness with a torch.”*

(Mad Hatter in Batman)

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## EMOTIONAL REGULATION & THE BRAIN



### forebrain

**THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX** – The thinking part of the brain. Controls executive functions, reasoning, problem solving, etc. When regulated your child's forebrain is engaged and ready to learn.

### midbrain

**THE LIMBIC SYSTEM** – The feeling part of the brain where emotions are experienced. When engaged there is less connection with the forebrain. Your child will seem emotional, needy, demanding, uncooperative, nervous, etc. Help them regulate their emotions.

### hindbrain

**BRAIN STEM & AMYGDALA** – The survival part of the brain. Controls fight or flight instinct. When engaged there is no connection to the forebrain. Your child may hit, bite, scream, spit, run away, shut down. They need to feel safe. You cannot teach or discipline right now.

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SAY THE COLOR AND NOT THE WORDS

**YELLOW BLUE ORANGE**  
**BLACK RED GREEN**  
**YELLOW RED PURPLE**  
**ORANGE GREEN BLACK**  
**BLUE PURPLE RED**  
**GREEN ORANGE BLUE**

Left ~ Right Brain Conflict  
Your right brain tries to say the color but  
your left brain insists on reading the word

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### What do we Know about Anger, Fear & the Brain?

- Amygdala HiJack
- Short-circuiting of the brain
- Cognitive processing & learning does not occur at this moment
- When we reach our limit for problem solving/thinking, we revert to our, “Reptilian, Survival brain”

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### **“Neuro-crash,” (R. Kaufman & K. Wilde)**

- “Neuro-crashes occur when one’s cognitive or emotional energy consumption has reached a limit.”
- “When demands of the environment/situation,” outweigh our capacity to respond in a socially, emotionally, and/or behaviorally appropriate way.”
- Our brain becomes so overwhelmed that our coping mechanisms shut down which can result in:
  - Loss of behavioral control
  - Invasion of others’ personal space
  - Running out of area, classroom, building
  - Aggression/threatening behaviors
  - Total shutdown/refusal to engage

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### **Brain’s Response to Trauma**

- Trauma is a disturbing experience that causes physical, psychological, or emotional harm
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
  - 46% of US Children experienced at least 1 ACE
  - More than 30% are exposed to multiple ACES
- Childhood trauma can affect cognition & behavior for decades
- Symptoms are similar to those of PTSD
- More ACES exposed to, higher the risk of:
  - Health Problems
  - Financial/Employment challenges
  - Involvement with Justice System
  - 5 times more likely to have school attendance challenges
  - 6 times more likely to experience behavioral/emotional/social challenges

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## What Happens when a Child Experiences a Trauma-Based Flashback/Trigger?

- Often appears to, “come out of nowhere, they just lost it”
- Negatively affects their mood, cognitive behavior & physical health
- Can trigger the Fight, Flight, or Freeze response
- The response becomes part of the brain’s habit response & less and less triggering may cause that habit to occur

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## Trauma-Informed Approaches

- **Recognizes the effects of trauma on students, biologically, psychologically & socially**
- **Connection before Correction**
- **Supportive, caring environment**
- **Minimizes future traumatic stress by realizing the prevalence of trauma, recognizing how it affects people & putting that knowledge into practice**

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### **The Mental Health/Wellness Continuum - Internalizing Behaviors**

**On a Scale of 1-10 where would you place yourself right now, this morning, yesterday?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**0 - 3** Feeling pretty okay, just sad/worried/nervous sometimes

**4 - 5** I feel sad/worried/nervous a lot of the time & can't make it go away

**6 -7** I can't do any schoolwork, don't want to get up, or do stuff I like to do, have started/resumed cutting

**8 -10** I've been cutting myself a lot - I'm done, can't do this anymore - (possible suicidal/ideations/plan)

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### **The Mental Health/Wellness Continuum - Externalizing Behaviors**

**On a Scale of 1-10 where would you place yourself right now, this morning, yesterday?**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**0 - 3** I'm good, getting my work done, some stuff annoys me, but I can handle it

**4-5** I'm getting angry more often and/or sometimes hit, kick, threaten etc.

**6-7** I am very angry - the slightest little thing good set me off

**8-10** I've lost it - I tore up the room, am still feeling aggressive towards objects, peers & staff, feel like I am about to go off again

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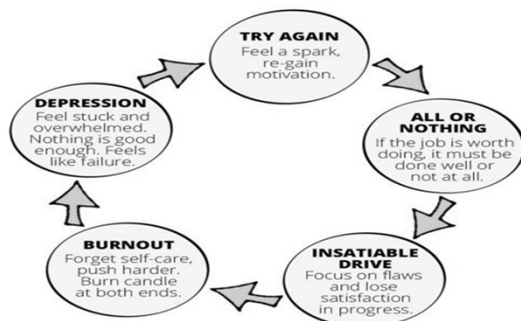
## HOPE - The New Four Letter Word

- “Hope is taught & learned.”
- “Hope as action, “
- Time traveling concept - “Understand the Past, Exist in the Present, Effectively Plan for the Future.”
- Kids At Hope Pledge
- “We cannot give up on kids, even when they give up on themselves”
- “Dealer of Hope”

Rick Miller - “The Soul, Science & Culture of HOPE

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### The Vicious Cycle of Perfectionism and Depression.



Are you stuck in this cycle?  
If you've been here long enough,  
it's time to break the cycle.

CREATING  
HOME

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## ANXIETY TRIGGERS

**On a Scale of 1-10, Identify how anxious each of the triggers makes you feel**

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
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**CALM**

**LITTLE ANXIOUS**

**ANXIOUS**

**EXTREMELY ANXIOUS**

### EXAMPLES

\_\_\_ Conflict/Drama in relationships  
friend/family member

\_\_\_ A sick

\_\_\_ Other people's expectations of me  
\_\_\_ Giving a presentation in front of class  
\_\_\_ Working with peers in a group  
\_\_\_ Loud noises/raised voices  
\_\_\_ Not knowing what is going to happen

\_\_\_ Changes in my body or weight  
\_\_\_ Making new friends  
\_\_\_ Low grades/too much work to do  
\_\_\_ People messing with my stuff  
\_\_\_ Interacting on/Social Media in general

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


**You Can Help Me Calm Down/Regulate Myself By .....**

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>
Remind me of my breathing trick			
Just listen to my story			
Rub my hand/arm/back			
Talk to me quietly & calmly			
Ask me how I'm feeling			
Give me time & space			
Remind me about consequences			
Hug me			

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### COPING TOOLS: What Helps Me

<input type="checkbox"/> Read A Book or Magazine 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride a Bike or Skateboard 
<input type="checkbox"/> Hug or Climb a Tree 	<input type="checkbox"/> Create Origami 
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal or Write a Letter 	<input type="checkbox"/> Cook or Bake 
<input type="checkbox"/> Use Kind & Compassionate Self-Talk 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for Help 
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a Collage or Scrapbook 	<input type="checkbox"/> Talk to Someone You Trust 
<input type="checkbox"/> Rest, Nap or Take a Break 	<input type="checkbox"/> Weave, Knit or Crochet 
<input type="checkbox"/> Go on a Hike, Walk or Run 	<input type="checkbox"/> Build Something 
<input type="checkbox"/> Take Good Care of the Earth 	<input type="checkbox"/> Get a Hug 
<input type="checkbox"/> Drink Water 	<input type="checkbox"/> Visualize a Peaceful Place 
<input type="checkbox"/> Play a Board Game 	<input type="checkbox"/> Stretch 
<input type="checkbox"/> Do Something Kind 	<input type="checkbox"/> Make Art 
<input type="checkbox"/> Make and Play with Slime 	<input type="checkbox"/> Use Positive Affirmations 
<input type="checkbox"/> Discover Treasures in Nature 	<input type="checkbox"/> Take Slow, Mindful Breaths 
<input type="checkbox"/> Take a Shower or Bath 	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean, Declutter or Organize 
<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise 	<input type="checkbox"/> Use Aromatherapy 
<input type="checkbox"/> Drink a Warm Cup of Tea 	<input type="checkbox"/> Cry 
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgive, Let Go, Move On 	<input type="checkbox"/> Try or Learn Something New 
<input type="checkbox"/> Practice Yoga 	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to Music 
<input type="checkbox"/> Garden or Do Yardwork 	<input type="checkbox"/> Use a Stress Ball or Other Fidget 
<input type="checkbox"/> Jump on a Trampoline 	<input type="checkbox"/> Get Plenty of Sleep 
<input type="checkbox"/> Cuddle or Play with Your Pet 	<input type="checkbox"/> Kick, Bounce or Throw a Ball 
<input type="checkbox"/> Practice Gratitude 	<input type="checkbox"/> Take or Look at Photographs 
<input type="checkbox"/> Do a Puzzle 	<input type="checkbox"/> Eat Healthy 
<input type="checkbox"/> Blow Bubbles 	<input type="checkbox"/> Play Outside 
<input type="checkbox"/> Smile and Laugh 	<input type="checkbox"/> Sing and/or Dance 

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Meet Izzy

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### **Calming Centers/Chill Zones/Calming Walls/Calming Boxes Considerations**

- **Setting them up, teaching/normalizing their use**
- **Tracking usage levels/patterns etc.**
- **Have mixture of items available**
  - **Take a Break items (puzzle, book, Magna-Doodle, coloring)**
  - **Breathing/self calming aids (bubbles, visuals to follow)**
  - **Oral sensory input (chewing gum, hard candy, chew necklace/lego piece)**
  - **Get Moving items (Yoga Poses cards/floor tiles, Gym skipping rope, mini-trampoline)**
  - **Visually Rest items (snow globe, light up toys, glow wands)**
  - **Fidgets, play dough, stress balls, mini massager, nail brush, blankets, stuffed animals**

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### **Why Connecting with Students is So Critical**

- **“Connection before Correction”**
- **Programs don’t change people, relationships change people**
- **We don’t take feedback/learn from people we don’t like/respect**

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### **Building, Cultivating & Sustaining Meaningful Relationships with Students**

- Get to know your students – interest inventory etc. Incorporate these interests into your conversations & instructional activities when possible
- Greet students at the door daily – let them know you are glad they **CHOSE** to come to school today
- Have a birthday board – Acknowledge students’ birthdays
- Consider experiential games in the classroom
- Journaling with responses
- Write positive notes to students from time to time
- Make positive phone calls to parents
- Ask students about their lives outside of school
- Consider having, “Good News,” activity
- Share some of your life with students (Remember, appropriate boundaries)
- Consider going to watch their sports games, plays, outside school activities
- Train yourself to be consistent & controlled in your mood with & responses to students daily
- **LET THEM KNOW YOU SEE THEM AS A HUMAN BEING FIRST, HUMAN DOING SECOND**

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### **Meet Levi**

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## **Barriers Often Encountered**

- Reward/Reinforcer Vs. Programming/Support Need
- “WIN Time,” - What I Need Right Now
- Manipulation Vs. Emotional Response (Choice Vs. Just How He/She is)

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- The Behavior Doctor - [www.behaviordocor.org](http://www.behaviordocor.org)
- Intervention Central - [www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org)
- Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org))
- National Center on Intensive Intervention - [www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org)
- PBIS World - [www.pbisworld.org](http://www.pbisworld.org)

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Meet Dylan

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**“It is not always possible to find the right words, but you can still be part of the conversation, by sitting with people & hearing them.”**

(Piglet to Winnie the Pooh)

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