



# Navigating *CONFLICT*

with Empathy, Honesty, and Creativity

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# Navigating Conflict

## *Goals*

- To deepen skills of:
  - Listening to the experiences of others with empathy
  - Sharing your own perspective with honesty
  - Creatively and collaboratively problem-solving
- Apply the Collaborative Problem Solving approach to an actual and current work-related problem
- Create a plan for ongoing practice

# Section 1

## *Goals*

- Get to know each other + how conflict affects us
- Learn what happens in our brains when we're triggered
- Identify 3 options for dealing with conflict
- Practice listening with empathy

# Let's get to know each other

## Poll #1: What hats do you wear?



Image: Joshua Coleman

# Chat Discussion

What communication challenges do you experience at work?

Examples:

- Communicating needs to team interpreter
- Communicating feedback to team interpreter
- Receiving feedback from interpreters or consumers
- Turning down job requests
- Providing coaching to employees



Image: cloudvisual

# Poll #2

How does the stress from communication challenges affect you?



Image: Matthew Henry

What happens in the brain when we're triggered?  
Think of something that scares you

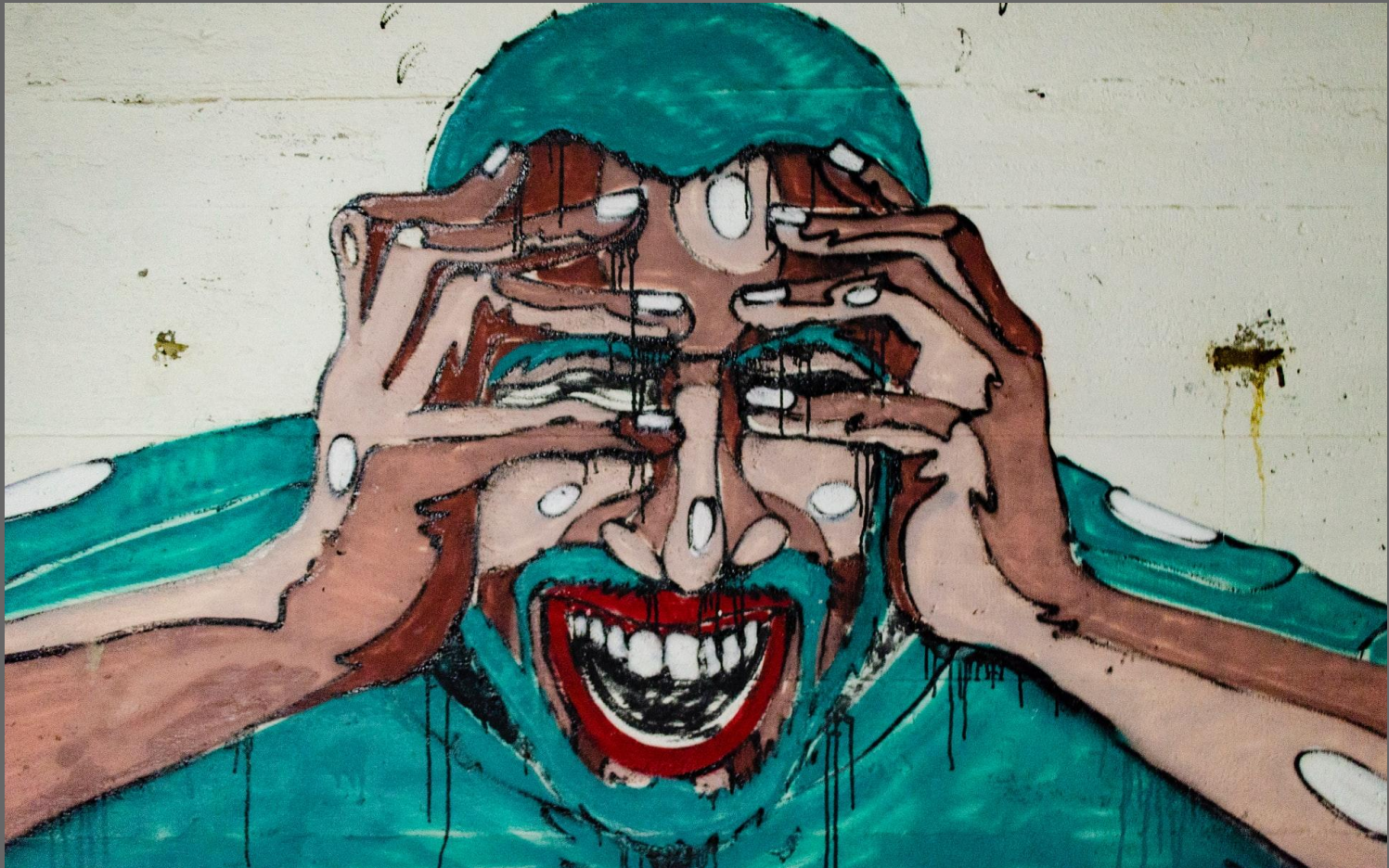


Image: Aarón Blanco Tejedor

# Flipping Your Lid

## Dysregulation

- Palm/Wrist: Reptilian Brain Amygdala
  - Fight, Flight, Freeze
- Thumb: Limbic System
  - Emotions & Memories
- Fingers: Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)
  - Language & Communication
  - Cognitive Flexibility
  - Reasoning & Problem Solving

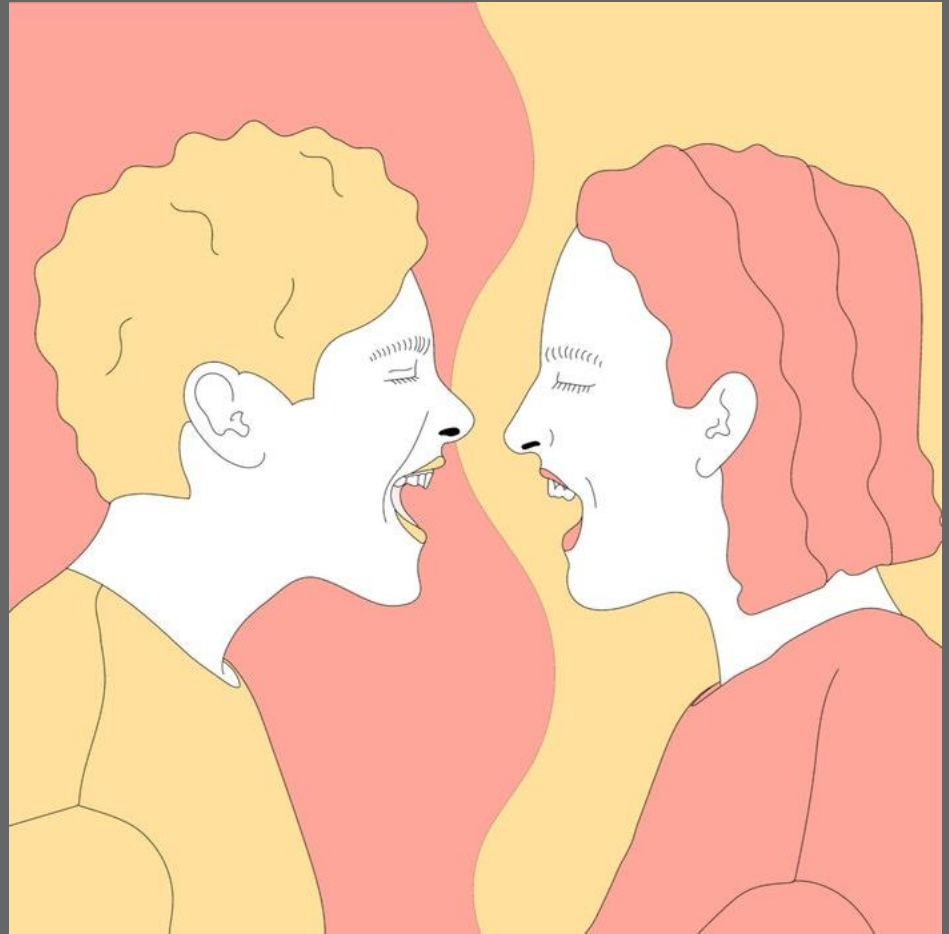


When  
you feel  
frustrated,  
worried, or  
attacked

# Dysregulation is Contagious

Communication  
requires  
a calm brain

When you feel triggered it's  
important to attend to  
yourself before engaging in  
communication with others



Art: Antonella Machiavello

# Watch for the wave

Notice:

- Thoughts
- Sensations
- Behaviors



Image: @silasbaisch

Write - worksheet #1

# The good news

- Regulation is also contagious
- Regulation is a skill
- We practice by recognizing our dysregulation and coming back to regulation
- Practice builds stronger neural pathways that support us when stressed



# To get your thinking brain back online...

## Breathe

- Without the PFC, getting calm is hard
- BREATHE is the only thing we need to remember
- Calm deep breathing sends message to our nervous system that we're not in danger
- Practice in times of calm to create strong neural pathways



# Breathing Basics

- Relax your chest and neck
- Put a hand on your navel
- Breathe in and out through your nose
- Inhale deeply
- Fill the belly like a balloon
- Exhale fully



# Square Breathing



With your calm thinking-brain  
back online, you're ready  
to approach a conversation



Image: Mihai Surdu

Choose an interpersonal  
conflict or communication  
challenge from your own  
work experience

Write it down - #2

# When conflict arises, we have 3 options:

1. Plan A
2. Plan B
3. Plan C



Image: Frank Busch

# Plan A: Impose my will

- Immediate safety concern
- Authoritarian leadership

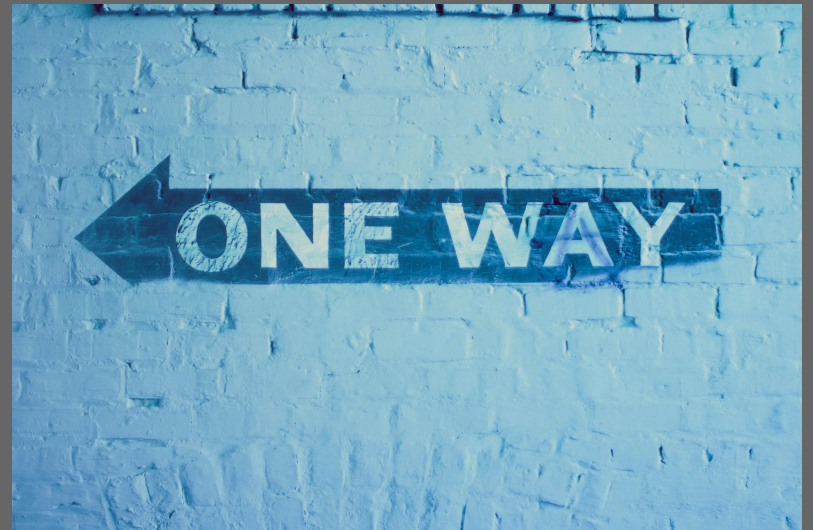


Image: Sean Thomas

# Plan B: Collaborate



- Exchange points-of-view
- Collaborate on a solution
- Egalitarian leadership

Image: Christen LaCorte

# Plan C: Drop my expectation for now

- Wait for Plan B
- Permissive leadership



Image: Will H. McMahan

# All are viable

1. Plan A
2. Plan B
3. Plan C



Image: Frank Busch

# PLAN B

## Collaborative Problem Solving

1. Empathize
2. Share your concern
3. Collaborate on a solution

# Collaborative Problem Solving

- All behavior is changeable
- Skill not will
- Reduces defensiveness and comparison
- Fosters mutual respect, growth mindset, valuing others' perspective and wisdom

# Collaborative Problem Solving Neurobiological Process

1. Empathize - Regulate - Brainstem
2. Share concern - Relate - Limbic
3. Collaborate - Reason - Cortex

# Step 1: Empathize



Image: Brett Jordan

# Communication Breakdown

- IQ drops <100 points when stressed to amygdala response
- Dysregulation is contagious
- Effective communication requires a calm state

EMPATHY REGULATES

Empathy means:  
To understand



Image: @emotional\_discord

# Empathy is NOT:

- A feeling of compassion
- Something you express
- Agreement

# Empathy IS:

- The most complex and difficult of the three steps
- Impacted by dysregulation

# Step 1: Empathize

## Listen to Understand

# Regulation is Required

- Keep monitoring your own dysregulation
- Remember you're building 'muscles'

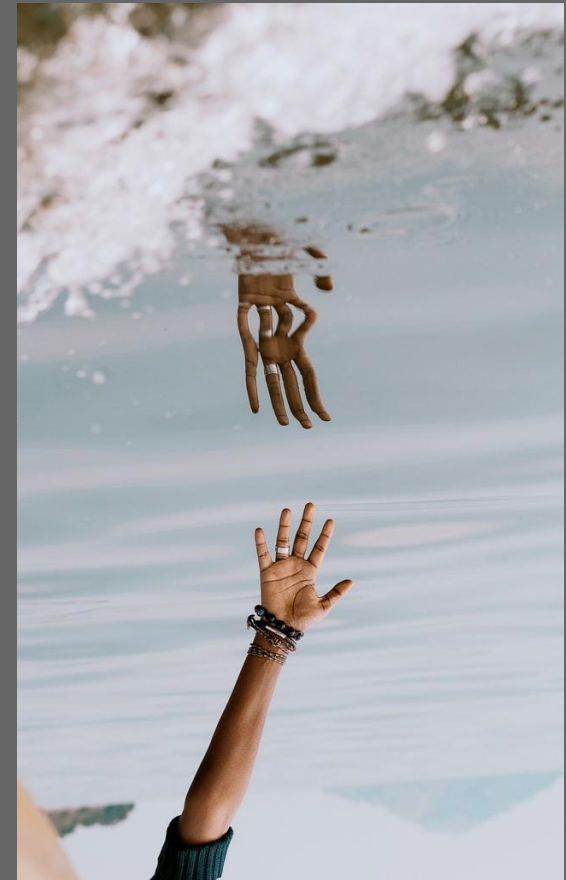


Image: Serrah Galos

# Begin with a gentle start-up

Two calm brains and a neutral entry

- Examples:
  - “I’ve noticed that ..., what’s up?”
  - “I see you saying..., did I get that right?”
  - “I really want to understand what’s happening for you.”
  - “Tell me more.”

# Empathize - Listen to Understand



Image: Christina @wocintechchat.com

- Feelings
- Needs
- Values
- Concerns

# Feelings

- The signals we receive from our body, alerting us to the state of our needs
- Experienced as a physical sensation or emotion
- Feelings are universal = great door to empathy

# Feelings

- Pit in stomach, lump in throat, tightness in chest, buzzing head
- Sad, mad, happy, excited, nervous



Image: Oliver Ragfelt



Image: Joshua Rawson



Image: Ivana Cajina

# Needs

- What I need or value that stimulates my feelings
- Resources required to sustain and enrich life
- Not a preference or a specific action
- Needs make no reference to any specific person doing any specific thing
- Needs are universal, but vary in priority

# HUMAN NEEDS

## Physical Well Being

Clean Air  
Food, Nutrition  
Water, Hydration  
Health, Healing  
Movement  
Rest, Sleep  
Physical Safety  
Shelter, Comfort

## Significance

To Matter  
To be seen, heard  
Meaning  
Wholeness  
Unity  
Beauty  
Simplicity  
Wisdom

## Interdependence

Empathy  
Trust  
Support  
Communication  
Mutual Respect  
Consideration  
Feedback  
Nurture, Care, Love  
Understanding  
Gratitude  
Companionship  
Contribution  
Mutuality  
Touch, Connection  
Collaboration  
Recognition  
Generosity

## Vitality

Autonomy, Choice  
Learning, Growth  
Play, Fun, Laughter  
Creativity  
Stimulation, Challenge  
Explore, Discover  
Spontaneity  
Competence  
Impact, Effectiveness  
Ease, Efficiency  
Resources (\$, tools, info...)

## Authenticity

Honesty  
Integrity  
Clarity  
Humility  
Transparency

## Self Awareness

Self-Connection  
Self-Compassion  
Self-Acceptance  
Self-Responsibility  
Reflection  
Insight, Discernment

## Community

Belonging  
Inclusion  
Harmony, Peace  
Acceptance  
Solidarity  
Celebration  
Mourning  
Personal Space  
Justice (Restorative)  
Predictability



# *Value*

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A value is a way of being or believing that we hold most important. Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk—we are clear about what we believe and hold important, and we take care that our intentions, words, thoughts, and behaviors align with those beliefs.

**Brené Brown**

# Values

Achievement	Diversity	Hope	Responsibility
Adventure	Equality	Humor	Safety
Authenticity	Fairness	Inclusion	Security
Balance	Faith	Independence	Self-expression
Beauty	Family	Integrity	Service
Belonging	Financial- stability	Joy	Spirituality
Collaboration	Forgiveness	Justice	Stewardship
Commitment	Freedom	Kindness	Teamwork
Community	Friendship	Knowledge	Thrift
Compassion	Fun	Learning	Tradition
Competence	Generosity	Love	Trust
Confidence	Grace	Order	Truth
Connection	Gratitude	Patience	Understanding
Contribution	Growth	Patriotism	Usefulness
Cooperation	Harmony	Pride	Wealth
Courage	Health	Recognition	Well-being
Creativity	Home	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
Curiosity		Respect	Wisdom

# Concerns

- The unmet need or expectation
- The value that's not being upheld
- The experience or perspective
- The fear or frustration

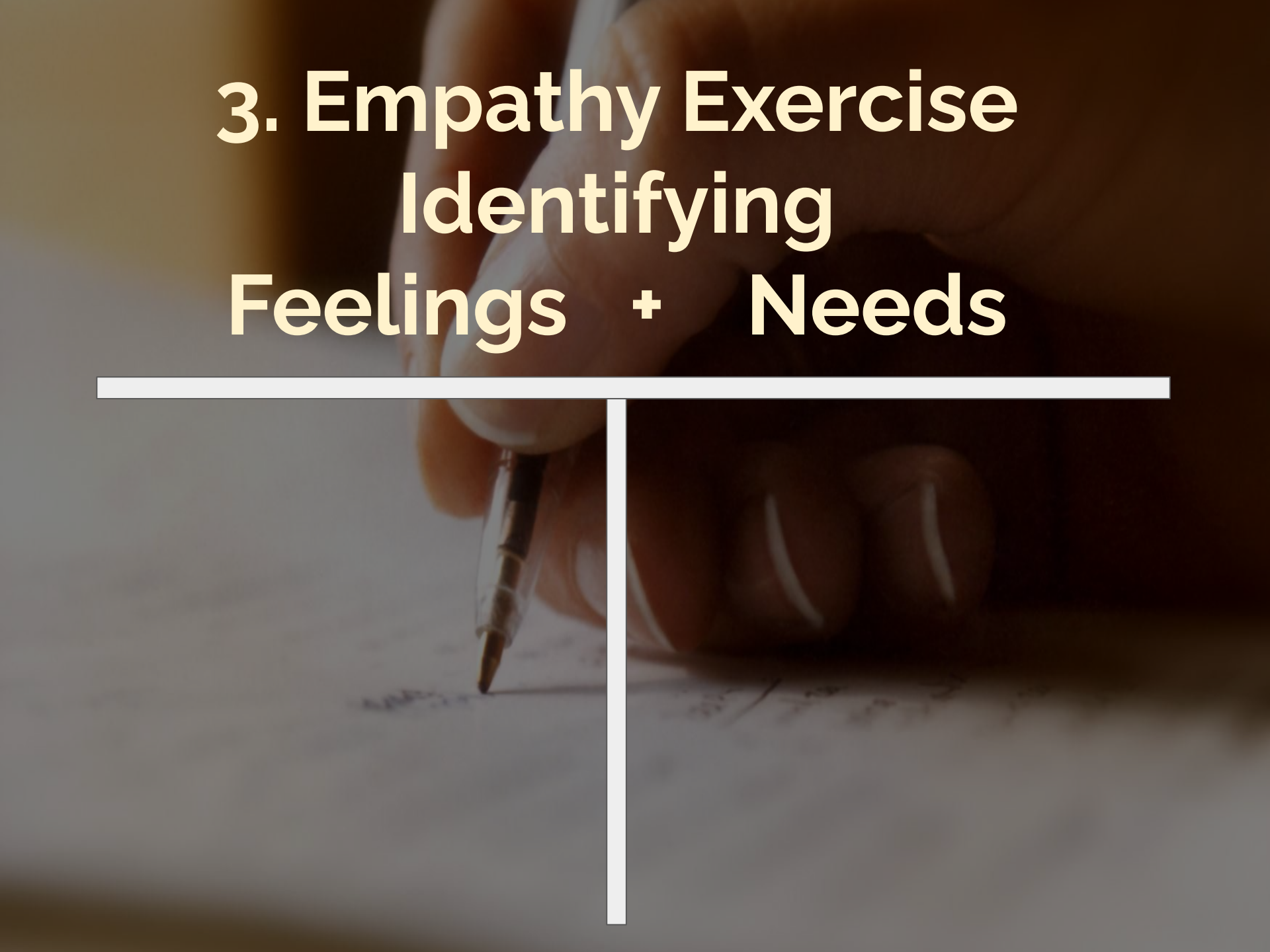


Image: Nathan Dumlao

# 3. Empathy Exercise

## Identifying Feelings + Needs

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# Step 1: Empathize

Listen to understand:

- Feelings
- Needs
- Values
- Concerns

By toggling between:

- Clarifying questions
- Educated guesses
- Reflective questions
- Reassurance

# Be a Curious & Empathetic Receiver

“It is the receiver of the feedback who holds all the power, not the giver. The giver has no control over how the receiver interprets what is said or whether or not and how to use the feedback.”

-Sheila Heen via Jackie Emmart

# Empathize

## Listen to Understand

Toggle between:

1. Clarifying questions
2. Educated Guesses
3. Reflective questions
4. Reassurance (regulation)

# Clarifying Questions

- Be a detective
- Make sure you understand completely
- “Can you help me understand?”



Image: Ali Hajian

# Educated Guesses

- Person is unclear as to what happened or what's bothering them
- Hazard some educated guesses
- "Do you mind if I take a guess?"
- "I'm wondering if..."

# Reflective Questions

- Check out what you understood
- “It sounds like you’re feeling...(misunderstood, frustrated, sad), is that right?”
- “It sounds like you’re concerned about... Am I understanding correctly?”
- “I hear/see you saying... Did I get that right? Did I miss anything?”

# Reassurance (regulation)

- Monitor your own dysregulation
- Keep both brains calm
  - “You’re not in trouble.”
  - “I know you must have a good reason.”
- Reminder of goal
  - “I want to understand how you see this.”

# Be Aware of Power

- Power affects empathy
- Power differentials are inherently dysregulating
- Can induce fake compliance

# Empathy Reminders

- The goal is to understand the other's point of view
- Don't move on until you understand. Be curious. Don't rush the process.
- Empathy doesn't not mean agreement

# Empathy Pitfalls

- Drive-By Empathy
  - “I hear you, but...”
- Seeking to be understood before trying to understand
- Forgetting to monitor dysregulation
  - yours and theirs



Image: Pablo Guerrero

# What's Not Empathy?

- Blaming
- Explaining
- Negating
- Complaining
- Giving advice



# Not-Empathy Practice

## ~~Empathetic Listening~~

- Seek to understand
- Respond to emotions
- Wait quietly
- Ask clarifying questions
- Restate what you heard

## What's Not Empathy

- Blaming
- Explaining
- Negating
- Complaining
- Giving advice

# Not-Empathy Practice

- Breakout #1
- Person A
  - Gentle start-up
  - Use not-empathy
- Person B
  - Brief description
  - Share your concerns
- Switch after 2 minutes
- Debrief for last minute

## **Not-Empathy**

- Blaming
- Explaining
- Negating
- Complaining
- Giving advice

“People don’t listen to understand. They listen to reply. The collective monologue is everyone talking and no one listening.”

-Stephen R. Covey

# Empathy - Practice

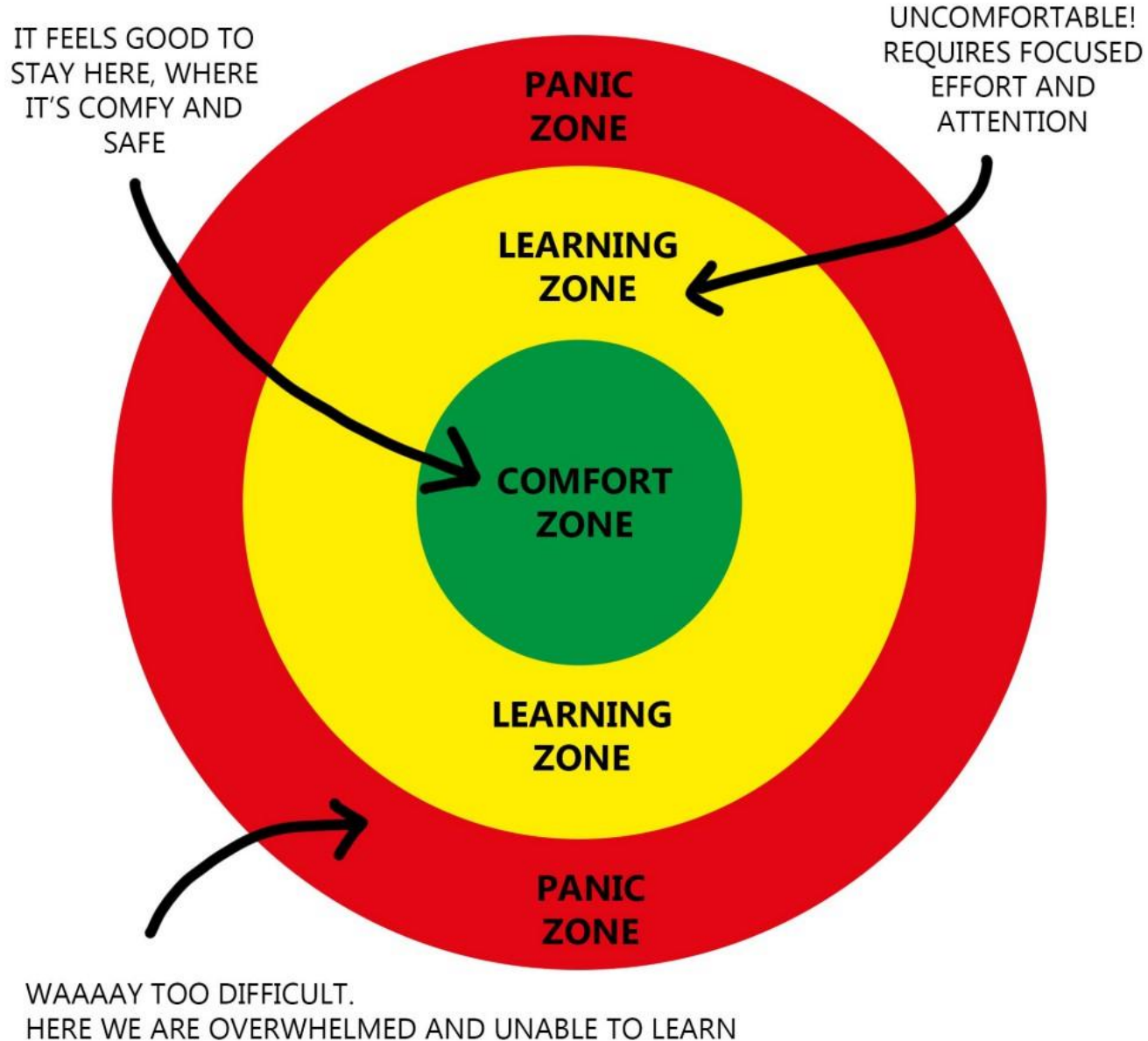
- Breakout #2
- Same pairs - 10 min
- One person share your concerns, the other practices listening to understand
- 3 min each + 4 min debrief
- Debrief together + Write - worksheet #4
  - How'd it feel?
  - What did you learn?
- Share a takeaway with the larger group

# Section 2

## *Goals*

- Use the Learning Zone Model to understand how to work with stress
- Practicing sharing your perspective with honesty

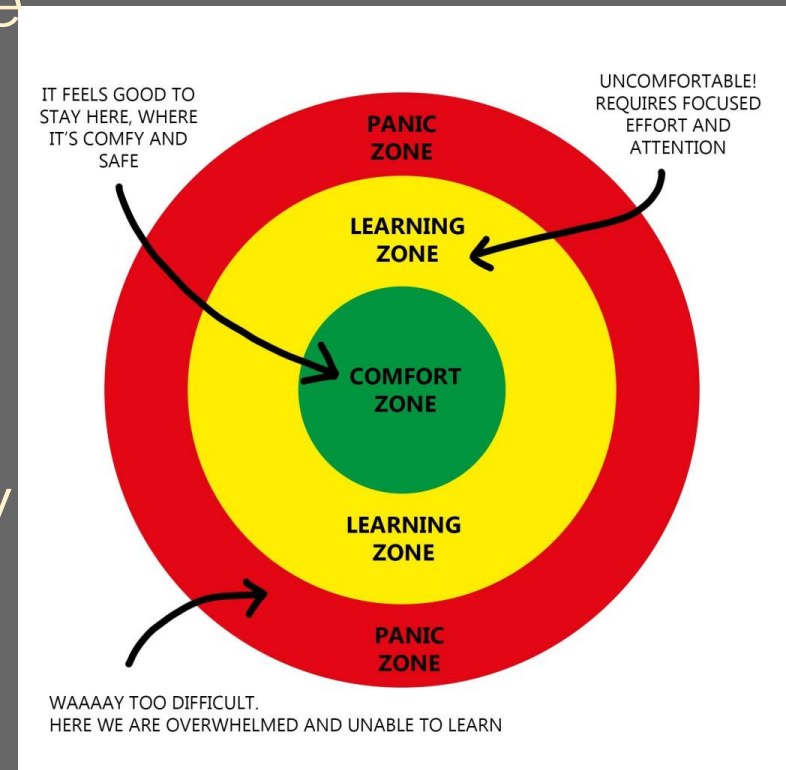
# The Learning Zone Model



Viscott, 2003

# The Red Zone

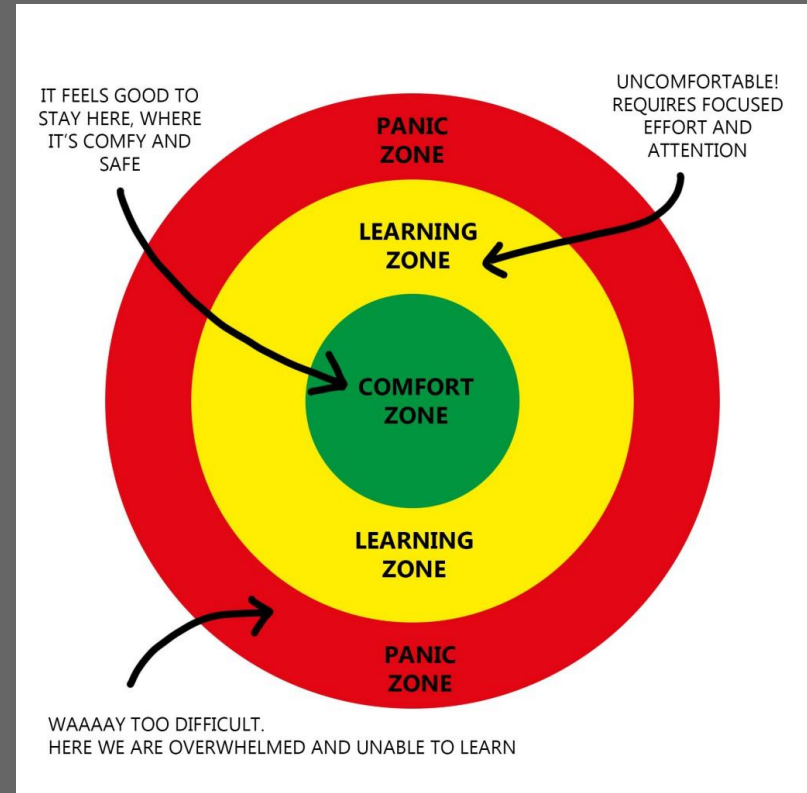
- Stressed to survival response
- Lose access to higher thinking
- Fight/Flight/Freeze safety mechanism kicks in
- No learning - prioritize safety
- We hold these emotions in our bodies and they accumulate
- Potential for trauma



Brain dysregulated

# Green - The Comfort Zone

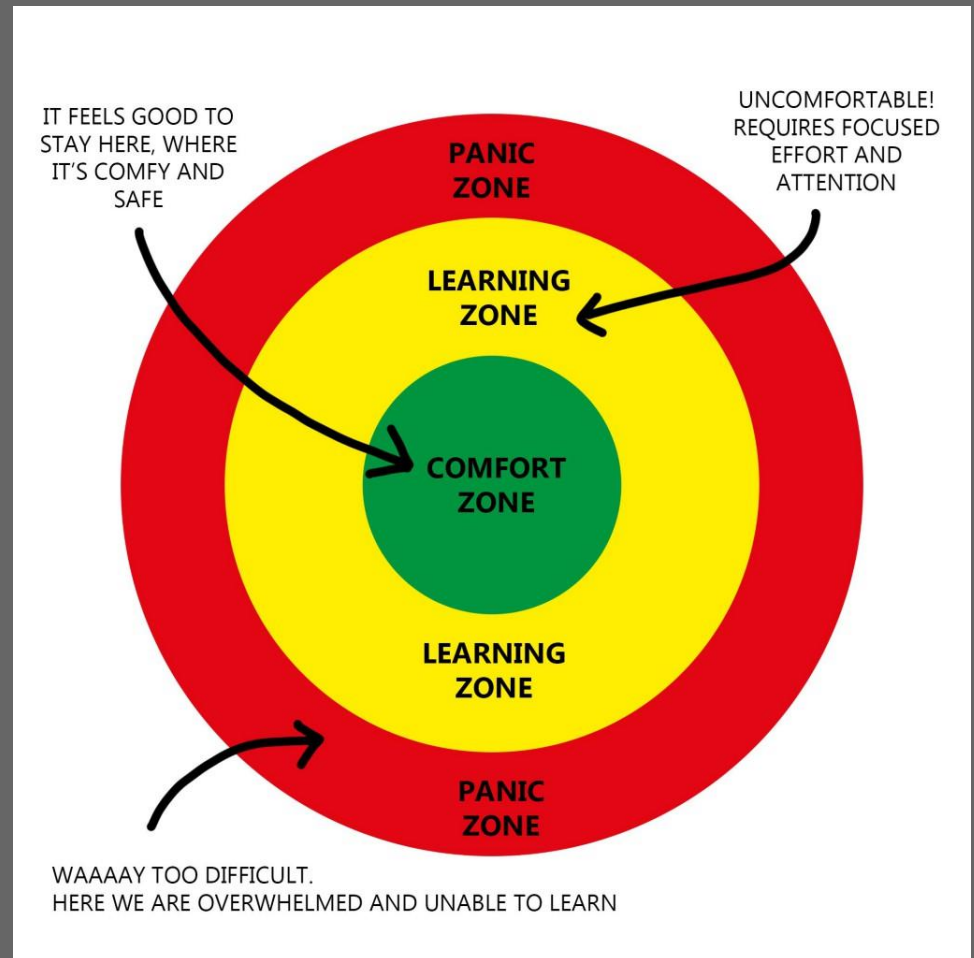
- Parasympathetic Nervous System - Rest + Digest
- Brain and body calm
- Able to reflect and integrate learning
- Takes INTENTION during stressful times



Brain integrated + regulated

# Yellow - The Learning Zone

- Requires 'good' stress = small necessary doses
- Grows as it's stretched
- Collaborative Problem Solving - the process itself is where the magic is!



PFC works to stay integrated

# Specificity Principle of Neural Plasticity

To change a neural network, you have to activate that specific neural network

“You can’t change a person’s stress response without activating their stress response. The dilemma is how to stress the brain safely without causing trauma. Healthy stress is moderate, predictable, and can be controlled. This is exactly what Plan B is.”

# Collaborative Problem Solving Neurobiological Process

- ✓ 1. Empathize - Regulate - Brainstem
2. Share concern - Relate - Limbic
3. Collaborate - Reason - Cortex

“Define a problem simply as two concerns that have yet to be reconciled.”

-Ross Greene

# CPS Step 2

Share your  
perspective  
and concerns

At the end of the empathy  
step, the other person  
should feel calmer and  
understood.

Only then can you share  
your concerns.

Lead with their concern:

“So, let’s be sure I got this right. Your concern is ... Did I get that right?”

# Express your top 1-3 concerns:

- Needs, Values + Priorities
- Health + Safety
- Emotional well-being
- Impact of behavior on others

# Revisit Empathy as Needed

- Active listening
- Reassurance
- Regulate again before trying to Relate



Image: Bob Scirpo

# Share Your Concern Starters



Image: Ali Yahya

- “I’d like to share my perspective with you.”
- “I’m concerned that...”
- “I’m wondering if...”
- “I’m operating from these priorities...”

# Share Your Concern Tips

- Use 'I' statements
- Avoid 'but'
- Remember, the other person doesn't have to agree with you, this is about perspective sharing

# Share Your Concern Tips

Watch for solutions masked as concerns.

- Solution: "I need you to be here on time."
- Concern: "I'm concerned because when I don't know you're going to be late I'm distracted."

# Share Your Concern Tips

- Don't expect the other person to wholeheartedly embrace your concern. It's your concern, not theirs.
- The goal is to take each other's concerns and perspective into consideration.

# Share Your Concern

## Team Example:

“I’m concerned that when one of us arrives late, the other is distracted wondering if they’ll have a team.”

# Share Your Concern

## Feedback/Debrief Example:

“I’m wondering if the point about ... was clearly conveyed (in the interpretation).”

# Share Your Concern

## D/HH VRS Example:

“I’m wondering if the hearing caller doesn’t realize you’re male because the interpreter has a feminine-sounding voice.”

# Share Your Concern Recap

- Lead with their concern:  
“So, let’s be sure I got this right. Your concern is ... Did I get that right?”
- Express your top 1-3 concerns
- Tips:
  - Use ‘I’ statements
  - Avoid ‘but’
  - Remember, the other person doesn’t have to agree with you, this is about perspective sharing

For Plan B to work,  
your perspectives  
need to take on equal  
standing

# Share Your Concern - Practice

Write - worksheet #5

Share - 10 min in pairs - Breakout #3

- Share your main concerns or values
- Switch - watch for 3 min message
- Afterward, debrief together 4 min:
  - How'd it feel?
  - What did you learn?
- Share a takeaway with the larger group



Image: Mike Von

# Section 3

## *Goals*

- Identify the 5 skill areas
- Learn how to develop thinking skills
- Practice coming to a creative and collaborative solution

# Collaborative Problem Solving

Skill not will

...what skills?

What skills are necessary  
for interpreters  
to be able to engage  
in constructive feedback  
conversations, self-analysis  
and reflection?

# Skills such as:

- Perspective-Taking
- Staying calm while frustrated
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Problem-Solving

# Skill Areas

1. Language & Communication Skills
2. Attention & Working Memory Skills
3. Emotion & Self-Regulation Skills
4. Cognitive Flexibility Skills
5. Social Thinking Skills

# 1. Language & Communication Skills

- Understands directions
- Expresses concerns, needs, or thoughts in words
- Is able to tell someone what's bothering them

## 2. Attention & Working Memory Skills

- Sticks with tasks requiring attention
- Does things in a logical sequence
- Keeps track of time; assesses correctly
- Ignores irrelevant noises, people, or other stimuli; tunes things out when necessary

# 3. Emotion & Self-Regulation Skills

- Thinks rationally, even when frustrated
- Manages irritability, anxiety, & disappointment in an age-appropriate way
- Thinks before responding; considers likely outcomes or consequences of actions
- Can adjust arousal level to meet demands of a situation

## 4. Cognitive Flexibility Skills

- Handles transitions; shifts easily from one task to another
- Is able to see shades of gray rather than thinking only in black and white
- Thinks hypothetically; able to envision different possibilities
- Handles deviations from rules, routines, & original plans

## 4. Cognitive Flexibility Skills - continued

- Handles unpredictability & ambiguity
- Can shift away from original idea, solution, or plan
- Takes into account situational factors that may mean a change in plans
- Interprets information accurately - avoids overgeneralizing or personalizing

# 5. Social Thinking Skills

- Pays attention to verbal and nonverbal social cues
- Accurately interprets nonverbal cues
- Starts conversations & enters groups appropriately
- Understands how behavior affects others
- Empathizes with others; appreciates others' perspectives

# Collaborative Problem Solving

Skill not will

All behavior is changeable

# How do we develop lagging skills?

- Everyone is working on something
- My skill deficits affect how I respond to skill deficits in others
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Skills Inventory

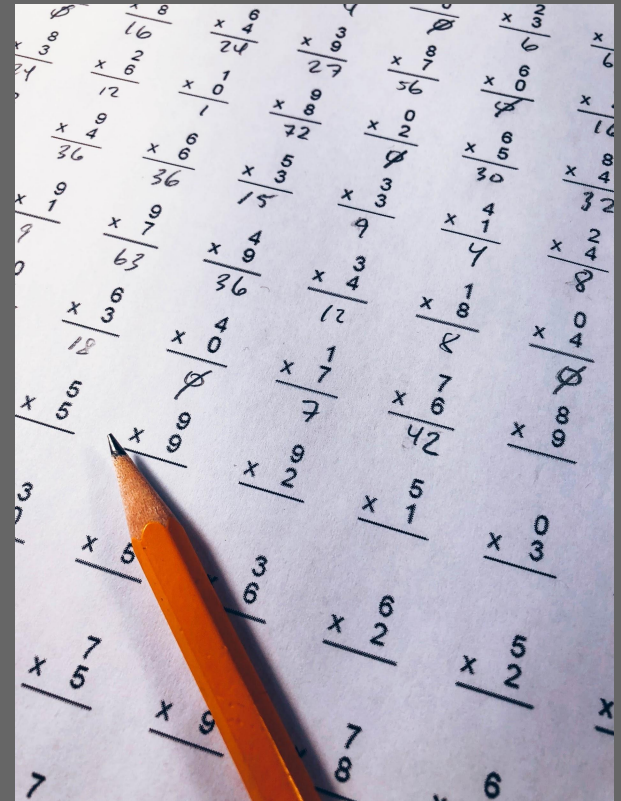
# Take The Thinking Skills Inventory

<https://www.stuartablou.com/the-skills-to-change>

What thinking skills are most difficult for you?

Write - worksheet #6

Share in chat



(Wang et al, 2018)

Image: Chris Liverani

## Thinking Skills Inventory for Youth & Young Adults (TSI-YYA)

We all have some things that are easier for us and some things that are harder for us.

Choose an answer for each item below.

		Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Often or Always	Total Score
<b>A.</b>	It's hard for me to stay focused on things that I need to	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Sum of Section A  1
	It's hard for me to remember the steps or directions I need to get things done	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	It's hard for me to keep track of time to get places and do things on time	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>B.</b>	I have a hard time understanding what other people are trying to tell me	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Sum of Section B  4
	I have a hard time telling people how I feel	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	I have a hard time telling people what I am thinking	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>C.</b>	It's hard for me to settle down when I am hyped up	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Sum of Section C  5
	It's hard for me to get my energy level up when I need to	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	It's hard to control my worries	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	I have a hard time thinking straight when I am feeling frustrated	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	I have a hard time handling things when I am feeling disappointed	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	It's hard for me to stop and think before I say or do things	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	I don't do well in new or unexpected situations	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Sum of
	I have a hard time when my plans or schedule changes	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	

	A: Attention & Working Memory	B: Language & Communication	C: Emotion & Self-Regulation	D: Cognitive Flexibility	E: Social Thinking
Very Difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
			<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
			<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
			<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	
Not Difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0

# Recap: Collaborative Problem Solving

- ✓ 1. Empathize - Regulate - Brainstem
- ✓ 2. Share concern - Relate - Limbic
3. Collaborate - Reason - Cortex

# Recap: Collaborative Problem Solving

- Skill not will
- Understand a problem in order to solve it
- Perspectives have equal importance

# CPS Step 3

Collaborate  
on a solution

# Collaborate on a Solution

- Find a solution together that is:
  - Mutually-acceptable
  - Realistic
- Set a time to check in

# Collaborate on a Solution

Mutually-acceptable

- Works for both of you
- Takes all concerns into consideration

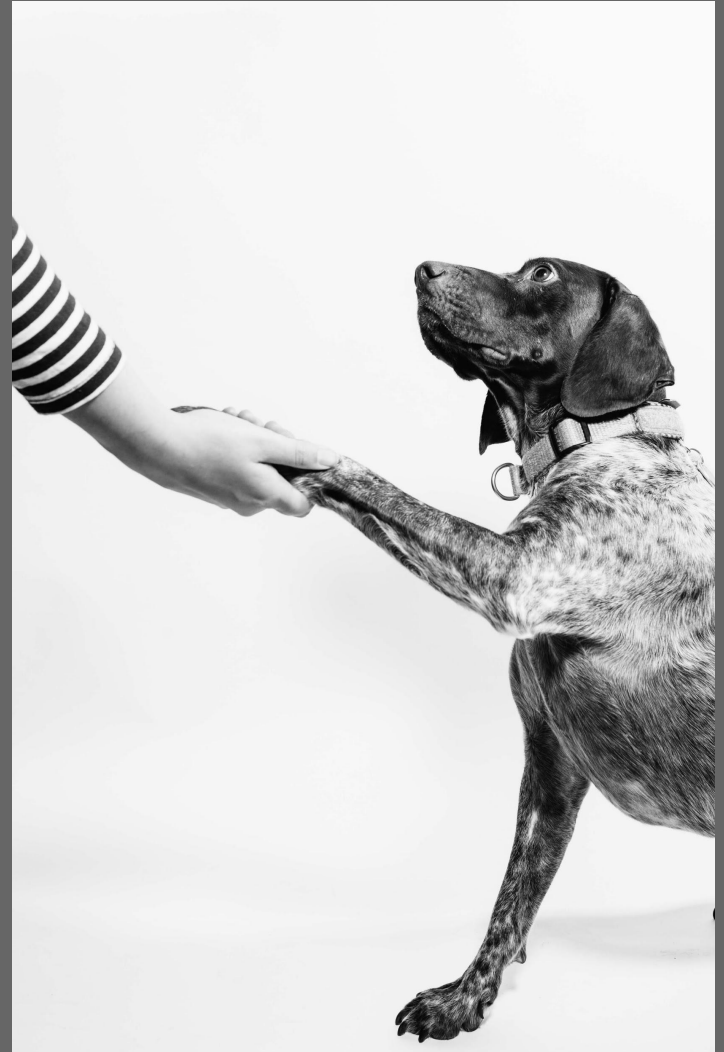


Image: Fabian Gieske

# Collaborate on a Solution

## Realistic

- You have the ability, resources, authority to carry out the solution

# Collaborate on a Solution

Set a time to check in

- Most issues need more than one conversation to resolve long-term
- Create appropriate expectations



Image: Claudio Schwarz

# Collaborate on a Solution

## To Begin

- You're both reasonably calm
- You have two sets of concerns

Ready to move to the final step

# Collaborate on a Solution

- Start by recapping both sets of concerns so that it's clear what you're trying to solve.
- Allow the other person to generate the first solution, especially if you're in a position of power.

# Collaborate on a Solution

Examples:

- “What do you think we can do about it?”
- “I wonder if there’s a way that (their concern) and (your concern). Do you have any ideas?” ...then: WAIT

# Collaborate on a Solution

- There are no bad ideas.
- Don't dismiss, instead:
  - Develop
  - Expand
  - Combine
  - Modify

# Collaborate on a Solution

Example:  
“That’s an idea!  
Let’s think about it  
together...”



Image: Markus Spiske

# Collaborate on a Solution

## Litmus Test

- Does it work for both of us?
- Is it realistic and feasible?
- Does it raise any other concerns?

# Collaborate on a Solution

## Check-in Examples:

- “Seems we have a good solution. Can we try it and check in again in a week?”
- “Seems we have a good solution. If it's not working in a week will you reach out to me again?”

# Collaborate on a Solution

## Recap

Find a solution together that is:

- Mutually-acceptable
- Realistic

Set a time to check in

# Collaborate on a Solution - Practice

Write worksheet #7

Practice - 10 min in pairs - Breakout #4

- Share your 'collaborated' solution
- Do the litmus test together
- Switch after 5 minutes
- Share a takeaway with the larger group

# Section 4

## *Goals*

- Identify the benefits of CPS
- Learn the 4 types of Plan Bs
- Identify the barriers to CPS
- Create a plan for further practice
- Share takeaways



Image: Toa Heftiba

2015 Harris Poll  
found  
more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of  
managers  
dislike providing  
feedback  
to employees

Ablon, 2018

“If everyone in your workplace had the capacity for difficult, productive conversation – how many of you think things would change overnight?”

-Brene Brown, The Call to Courage

# Benefits of Collaborative Problem-Solving

- Builds multiple skills simultaneously
- Builds precisely the skills needing the most work
- Both people benefit
- Teaches relational skills in a relational context

“You don’t have to point out that the other person lacks the skill in order to develop it. They don’t have to admit to it, or be willing to work on it, all they have to do is engage in solving a problem collaboratively and the skill-building is smuggled in through the back door.”

Ablon, 2018

# 4 Types of Plan Bs

- Proactive
- Emergency
- Spontaneous
- Group



Image: Priscilla DuPreez

# Proactive Plan B

- Identify and prioritize lagging skills, unmet expectations, or concerns ahead of time
- Thinking Skills Inventory is a great resource
- Build skills, relationship, and trust over time

# Proactive Plan B

- Not for one-time events or interactions
- Good for long-term clients, teams, co-workers, managers, agencies and personal relationships

# Proactive Plan B

Ask yourself ahead of time:

- What is my true concern about?
- Why do I want them to act differently?



Image: Hannah Olinger

# Proactive Plan B

Prioritize your list by choosing to approach first:

- A situation the other person cares about
- Low-hanging fruit
- An issue you can be flexible about

# Proactive Plan B

Example of a predictable situation  
the other person cares about:

Teen who wants to borrow the car

# Proactive Plan B

Example of 'low-hanging fruit'  
(will depend on the people involved):

Turning off the break-room TV  
after use

# Proactive Plan B

Example of an issue you can be flexible about:

Who starts first in a hot-seat-switching team interpreting situation

# Proactive Plan B - Practice

Breakout #5 - 10 min - pairs

Person A has arrived 5-minutes late 3 times in the last month to a team-interpreted college class.

Person B is the team who's arrived 5-minutes early to each class and will initiate the conversation.

# Emergency Plan B

- In a moment of conflict or immediate problem needing to be solved
- Be sure you take time to empathize and share your concern fully, don't rush to the solution step

# Emergency Plan B

Example:

Consumer in waiting room is upset with interpreter because of recent interaction with front desk staff.

# Spontaneous Plan B

- Using this process as a default way of communicating
- Less need for emergency or proactive Plan B over time

# Group Plan B

- Each participant voices concerns
- All agree to hold solutions for later
- Facilitator ensures all have opportunity to share
- Facilitator invites collective brainstorm
- Develop, Expand, Combine, Modify
- Use litmus and set check-in

# Final CPS Tips & Reminders

## 1. Empathize

- Calm brain - Neutral Entry
- Rhythmic movement regulates - eating, walking, fidget toys
- Listen to understand
- This is the most complex and most important step

# Final CPS Tips & Reminders

## 2. Share Your Concern

- Needs, Values, Priorities
- Beware of solutions masked as concerns
- Revisit empathy as needed and give reassurance that you remember their concerns

# Final CPS Tips & Reminders

## 3. Collaborate on a Solution

- Offer optimism and reassurance
- Remember that the purpose is to go through the process, not to create a solution that works perfectly the first time

Too Busy to Solve  
Problems  
Collaboratively?

# It takes time to:

- Deepen relationships
- Develop neurocognitive skills
- Increase capacity for tough & productive conversations
- Hone problem-solving skills
- Grow empathy
- Expand creativity

But...

Difficult conversations  
can feel so scary!

“Vulnerability is  
showing up and being  
seen when you can't  
control the outcome.”

-Brene Brown

Vulnerability

=

Uncertainty, risk, and  
emotional exposure

# Vulnerability is the birthplace of everything we really want

- Love
- Belonging
- Joy
- Courage
- Empathy
- Creativity



Make  
Collaborative  
Problem Solving  
a Habit

# Building a New Habit

- Make it tiny
  - Start with empathy
- Identify an Anchor
  - What will remind you to empathize?
- Celebrate
  - Feel it in your body



Image: Lynda Hinton

(Fogg)

# For further learning

- Resource Guide
- Find classes & trainings in your area
- Read *Change-Able*
- Assess your own skills

# How will you practice?

- Make it tiny
- Identify an Anchor
- Celebrate

Write - worksheet #8

Discuss in small groups

- Breakout #6 - 10 min - 3-4 people



Image: Lynda Hinton

# Reminders

- A calm brain is the first necessary ingredient
- Skill not will - people change if they're able
- Get clear on your concerns and what values they're tied to before initiating a conversation
- You don't have to agree
- Perspectives have equal standing
- Don't dismiss solutions: modify, adapt, expand
- The magic is in the process

# What are you taking away?



Photo by Thomas Martinsen on Unsplash

# Final Chat Discussion

What are you taking away?

What do you want to remember or put into practice?

Any last questions?

# Thank you for showing up!

“Vulnerability is hard, and it’s scary,  
and it feels dangerous, but it’s not as  
hard, scary, or dangerous as getting  
to the end of our lives and having to  
ask ourselves,

‘What if I would have shown up?’”

-Brene Brown



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