



The Relational Classroom:

Creating a culture of belonging based on strategies that build relationships

Tom Brunzell

Director Education
Berry Street Victoria
tbrunzell@berrystreet.org.au

 @BSEMAus

RESPECT

Is it your job to get students to  you?

The R word...

What are your own steps?



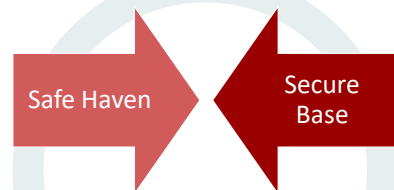
1. Healing connections are based on healthy **ATTACHMENT**.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed flexible learning: Classrooms that strengthen regulatory abilities. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 7(2), 218-239.

ATTACHMENT

- **Habits and means of relating** form in the **first 2 years** of our life in the mother-infant dyad (Bowlby, 1971)
- **Attunement and stress** interactively regulate brain systems and self-protection strategies (Schoore, 2012)
- **Interrupted, irregular, abusive, neglectful care** result in insecure attachment patterns
- An infant does not have the ability to **self-soothe**
- Child comes to believe they are **unlovable, shameful & incompetent**; and thus: The wider world seems frightening and undependable
- Remember the cycle of **rupture and repair**

Circle of Security: Attending to our Children's Needs



Welcome my coming to you

- Protect me
- Comfort me
- Delight in me
- **Organize my feelings**

Support my exploration

- **Limit setting**
- Watch over me
- Help me
- Enjoy with me

(Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin, & Powell, 1998)



2. Healing connections are mirroring humanity.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed positive education: Using positive psychology to strengthen vulnerable students. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 20, 63-83.

Attachment: MIRROR NEURONS

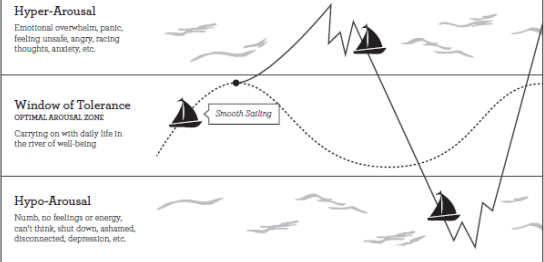
- Side-by-side, *non-verbal* interactions
- Soothing, comfort, and safety
- You are **CONSTANTLY modeling how to deal with stress and adversity**
- You are **CONSTANTLY** showing students that **YOU** are in **control, calm, confident** and can confidently handle their disruptions

(Rizzolatti et al., 2004; Keysers, 2010)

3. Healing connections **DE-ESCALATE** us.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed flexible learning: Classrooms that strengthen regulatory abilities. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 7(2), 218-239.

Window of Tolerance



Ogden, et al. (2006); Siegel, (1999).

Our teaching challenge is to negotiate the internal and external storms in our classrooms.

4. Healing connections are **CO-REGULATORY**.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed positive education: Using positive psychology to strengthen vulnerable students. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 20, 63-83.

Our job is to **CO-REGULATE.**

Co-Regulation

Self-Regulation

'Bringing kids into our calm—not joining their chaos'

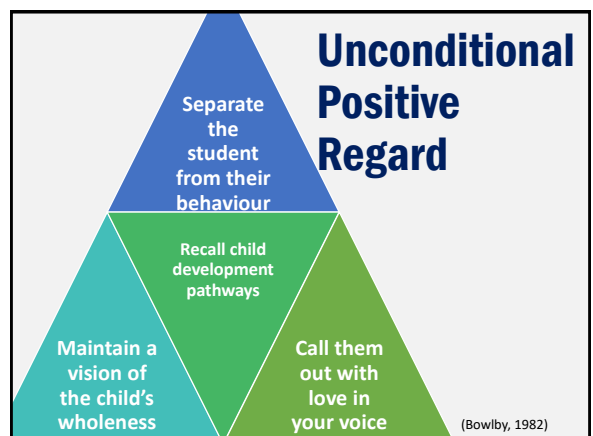
5. Healing connections help a student meet her or his **unmet needs**.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2018). Why do you work with struggling students? Teacher perceptions of meaningful work in trauma-impacted classrooms. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(2), 116-142.



6. Healing connections are framed in **UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD**.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2019). Shifting Teacher Practice in Trauma-Affected Classrooms: Practice Pedagogy Strategies Within a Trauma-Informed Positive Education Model. *School Mental Health*, 1-15.



How did you do? 😊



1. Healing connections are based on healthy **ATTACHMENT**.
2. Healing connections are **MIRRORING** humanity.
3. Healing connections **DE-ESCALATE** us.
4. Healing connections are **CO-REGULATORY**.
5. Healing connections help a student meet her or his **UNMET NEEDS**.
6. Healing connections are framed in **UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD**.



@BSEMAus