



# Our Journey to Becoming a Trauma Responsive Agency

The impact of building resilience  
and felt safety for our staff and  
those we serve.

Presenter:

Andy Maidlow  
Community Supports, Inc

# WELCOME



## Introductions



**Andy Maidlow**

Certified Trauma Specialist  
Community Supports, Inc

Andy has been with Community Supports, Inc., for 10 years. As COO he is responsible for day-to-day operations, program compliance, strategic planning, state/county collaboration, client acquisition, and training programs for the agency. He directly supervises Community Supports team members who are implementing Trauma Responsive Care.



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## Introductions Who We Are



### Community Supports, Inc

Community Supports, Inc (CSI) is a home and community-based waiver provider in Hamilton County. We provide supported living, remote supports, money management, nursing, and HPC transportation services. CSI just celebrated 25 years of service!



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## Outcomes for the morning:

Increasing awareness of the impact of trauma in the lives of people served.

Increasing knowledge of trauma-informed care to support staff.

Understanding the essentials of becoming a trauma competent organization.

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## Learning Agreement to Promote Felt Safety

Approach with curiosity, it engages the cortex. While certainty engages the fear center. (Baim, 2020)

Being Brave:  
Lean in or Lean out

Everyone here is  
important and unique!

Keep learning and  
growing!

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Our Journey:

Trauma Competent



Trauma Informed



Trauma Responsive

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## Our Journey:

In 2015 CSI was presented with the opportunity to participate in a DODD grant titled “Building Capacity Through Trauma Informed Care”

We received funding and went ALL IN!

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## Our Journey:

We changed our Behavior Support Specialist role and added a Trauma Responsive Care Coordinator as well.

One year of intensive training centered around:  
A 2 Day Foundational Training  
Theory to Practice Training Series  
Self-Care  
Trauma Informed Biographical Timeline Cohort  
Series



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We Learned:

TRAUMA IS..... “TOO MUCH,  
TOO FAST, TOO SOON!”

–Sarah Buffie

WELCOME



We Learned:

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

The importance of taking care  
of those who take care of  
others!

Secondary trauma is real, and  
we must take time for Self  
Care.

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

Increasing awareness of the impact of trauma in the lives of people served.

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

ACEs

(Adverse Childhood Experiences)

&

CATS

(Complicating Adverse Toxic Stressors)

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

About Resilience Factors... the resilience we have and how we can build resilience and heal the brain!

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

## The Top 5 Resilience Factors

1. Agency
2. Self Esteem
3. Affiliation
4. External Supports
5. Positive Safe Adults

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



We Learned:

We can increase knowledge of  
trauma-informed care to  
support staff by:

Robust TIC Training through Resilience Based De-Escalation  
Training

Building a sense of understanding and empathy by conducting  
Trauma Informed Biographical Timelines-Resilience Based  
Plans



The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



## Outcomes:

In 2014 we served 12 individuals with restrictive measures in their ISP, today we serve 3.

In 2014 we filed 40 MUIs, in 2022 we filed 15.

In 2014 we served 4 individuals with 2:1 staffing, today we serve 1 requiring 2:1 staff during half of all waking hours.

The Impact of Trauma

Affects Everyone In Your Organization



## How are we helping other organizations?

Contract agency assisting Ohio's Developmental Centers with becoming trauma responsive from 2019 to present.

Collaborating with consulting agencies; Finding Hope Consulting, Soul Bird Consulting, Humans Being Human Consulting.

Northstar Advantage Program in Hamilton County Ohio 2019.

SWOCOG Youth Respite Home Project since 2021.

Offering Resilience Based De-Escalation Training since 2022.



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Understanding the Essentials of  
Becoming a Trauma-Responsive  
Organization:

The Felt Safety Manual

# FELT SAFETY VS. ACTUAL SAFETY

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE AND DOES IT MATTER?

**Felt Safety,  
THE ABILITY TO FEEL CALM IN OUR BODY,  
is the cornerstone of our ability to  
CONNECT & REGULATE.**

# WHERE TO BEGIN?

The very first thing you can do is change your language from:

- Good/Bad
- Appropriate/Inappropriate
- Healthy/Unhealthy or
- Anything else that is Either/or

These words create set off the **fear center** and take the thinking brain offline even when you're on the positive side of them.

To...

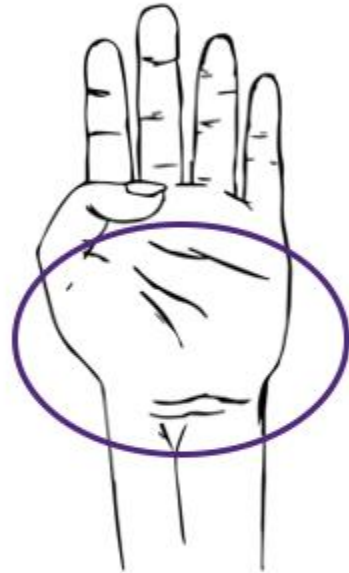
- SAFE and UNSAFE

**SAFE** and **UNSAFE** get the attention of the fear center, so your brain stays online.

# THE HAND BRAIN



**VAGUS NERVE:**  
Sends feelings to  
every part of the body



**BRAIN STEM**  
Controls heart,  
Lungs, etc.



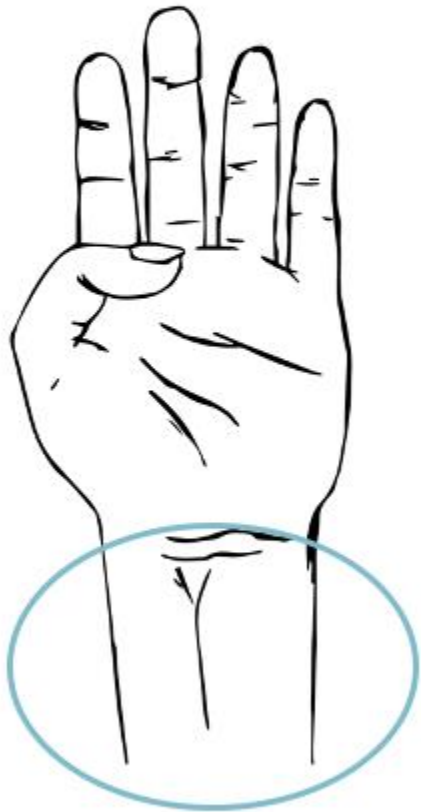
**LIMBIC SYSTEM**  
The fear center

**Felt Safety  
Attachment  
Regulation**



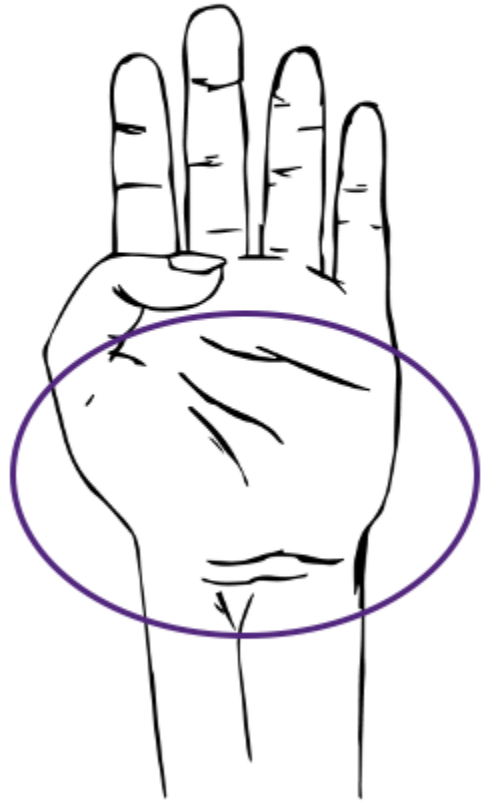
**CORTEX-**  
Thinking Brain

# VAGUS NERVE



- Wraps around every organ in body
- Sends feelings as sensations, to the body
- Controls our social engagement system
- Stores memories as physical sensations starting at 23 weeks gestation
- Decides how much information is let into the brain. It lets in extra information if you are on the Autistic Spectrum or have complex trauma

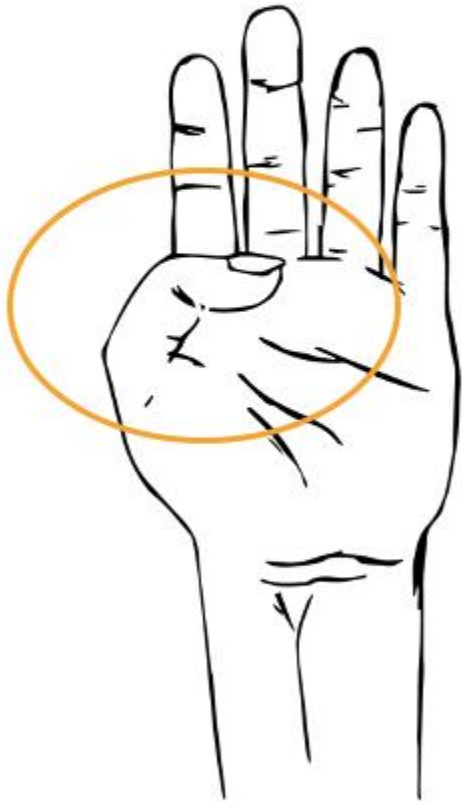
# BRAIN STEM



- In charge of everything we do not want to have to think about like
  - Breathing
  - Digestion
  - Bladder & Bowel Control
  - Heart rate
- Blood pressure
- Arousal
- Let's information into the brain
- "Communicates" through body sensations

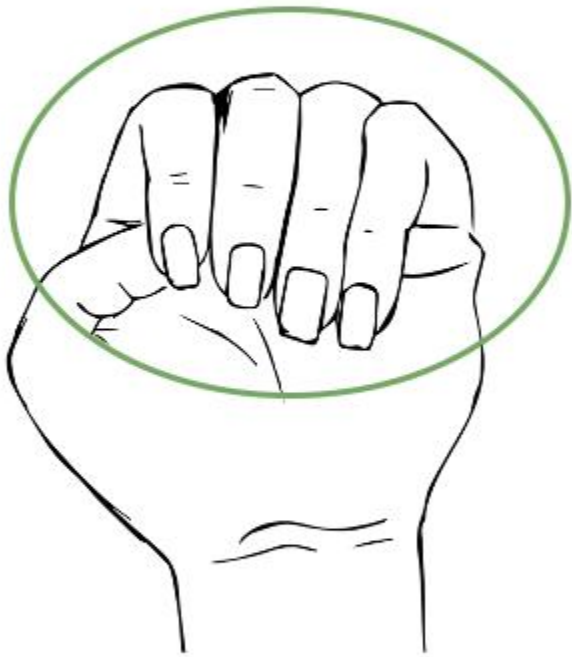


# LIMBIC SYSTEM



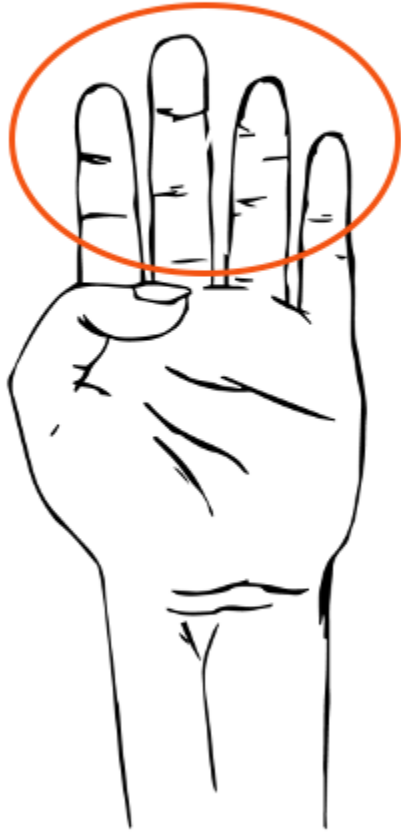
- Felt Safety, Attachment, Regulation
- Sets off the Flock, Flee, Fight, Freeze, Faint (Submit) response
- No conscious control over this activation
- "Communicates" through sensations & pictures

# CORTEX



- Executive Functions like planning, organizing creativity, and problem-solving
- Assists with Empathy/ compassion
- Not fully formed until we are in our mid-30s!
- “Communicates” through pictures & words

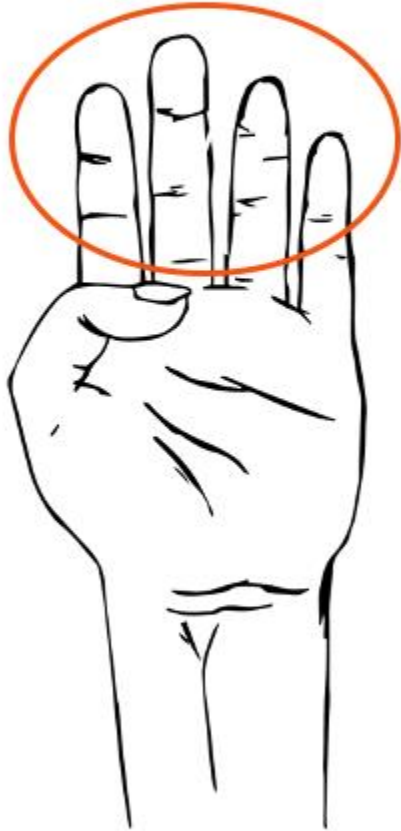
# CORTEX OFFLINE



## FLIPPING OUR LIDS

- When we experience big emotions or stressful situations, we can “go offline” or “flip our lids”.
- Our fear center takes control, helping us to survive.
- Our thinking brain goes “offline”.
- We don’t have conscious control over this activation.

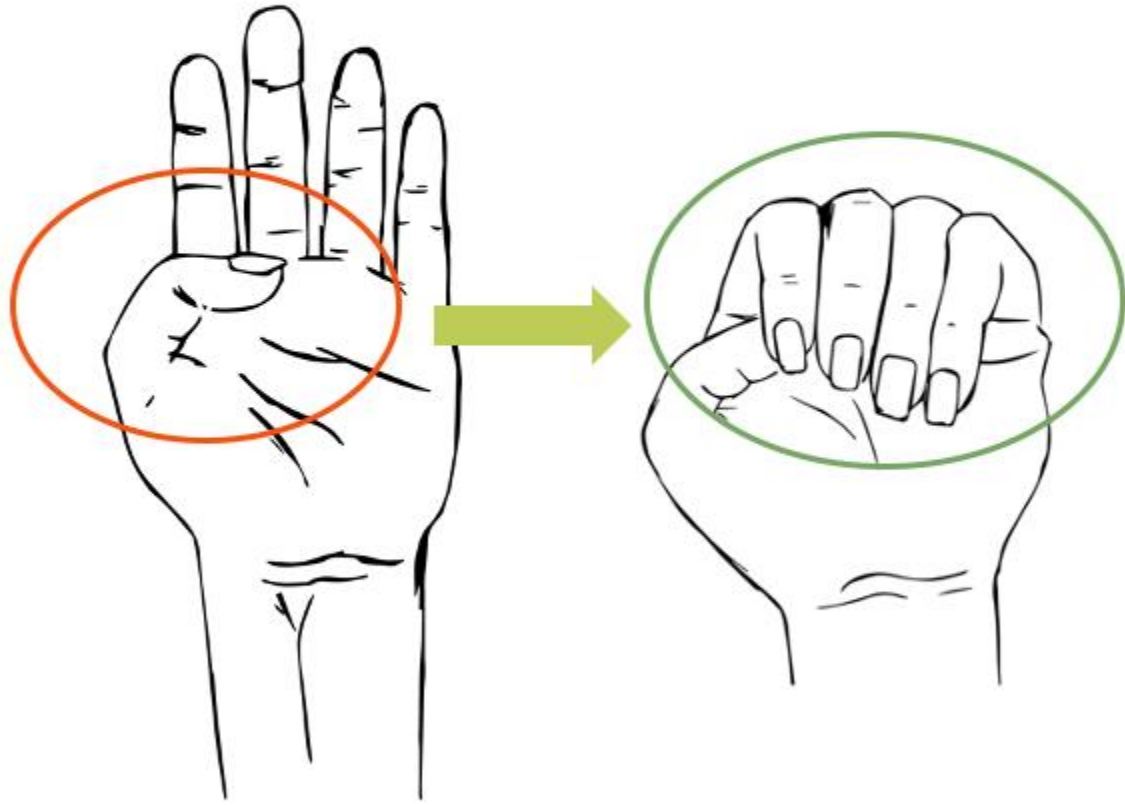
# CORTEX OFFLINE



## FLIPPING OUR LIDS

- Sensory overload
- May experience:
- Emotional rollercoaster
- Feel out of control
- Not aware of actions
- "I don't know"
- Repeated activation

# IN ORDER TO GET OUR BRAIN "ONLINE" WE NEED....



- Felt Safety (Regulate)
  - comfortable, relaxed, mutually enhancing connection
- Safe Connection (Relate)
  - someone we can build/ maintain trust with)

... BEFORE WE CAN REASON!

Perry, B. and Szalavite, M. (2017). *The boy was raised as a dog: And other stories from a child psychiatrist's Notebook*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Information adapted by The Center for Family Safety and Healing;  
Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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# FELT SAFETY THROUGH SAFE CONNECTION

## THE KEY TO RESILIENCE-BASED DE-ESCALATION

Safe Connection:  
Centering belonging  
over managing.  
Having power with  
instead of power  
over.

Increases  
Resilience




Decreases  
Restrictions

# SAFE CONNECTION


**CENTERING BELONGING OVER MANAGING.**  
**HAVING POWER WITH INSTEAD OF POWER OVER.**

## INCREASES RESILIENCE



Frustration tolerance:  
Knowing what to do while  
you're waiting.  
Knowing when you can return  
to your preferred activity.

## DECREASES RESTRICTIONS



Fewer Restrictions With  
Preferred Items  
Preferred Activities  
Preferred People  
Access  
Staffing Needs (maybe change this)

# THE FEAR CASCADE

UNSAFE

FLOCK



FLY



FIGHT



FREEZE



FAINT  
(SUBMIT)



Cortex  
(online)



Fear  
Center  
(limbic  
system)



Brain  
Stem



FLOCK

FLY



FIGHT



FREEZE



FAINT  
(SUBMIT)



SAFE



# THE FEAR CASCADE

UNSAFE

FLOCK



FLEE



FIGHT



FREEZE

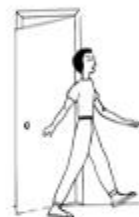


FAINT  
(SUBMIT)



FLOCK

FLEE



FIGHT



FREEZE



FAINT  
(SUBMIT)



SAFE

# THE FEAR CASCADE

UNSAFE

Cortex  
(online)



FLOCK

Fear  
Center  
(limbic  
system)



FLEE

FIGHT

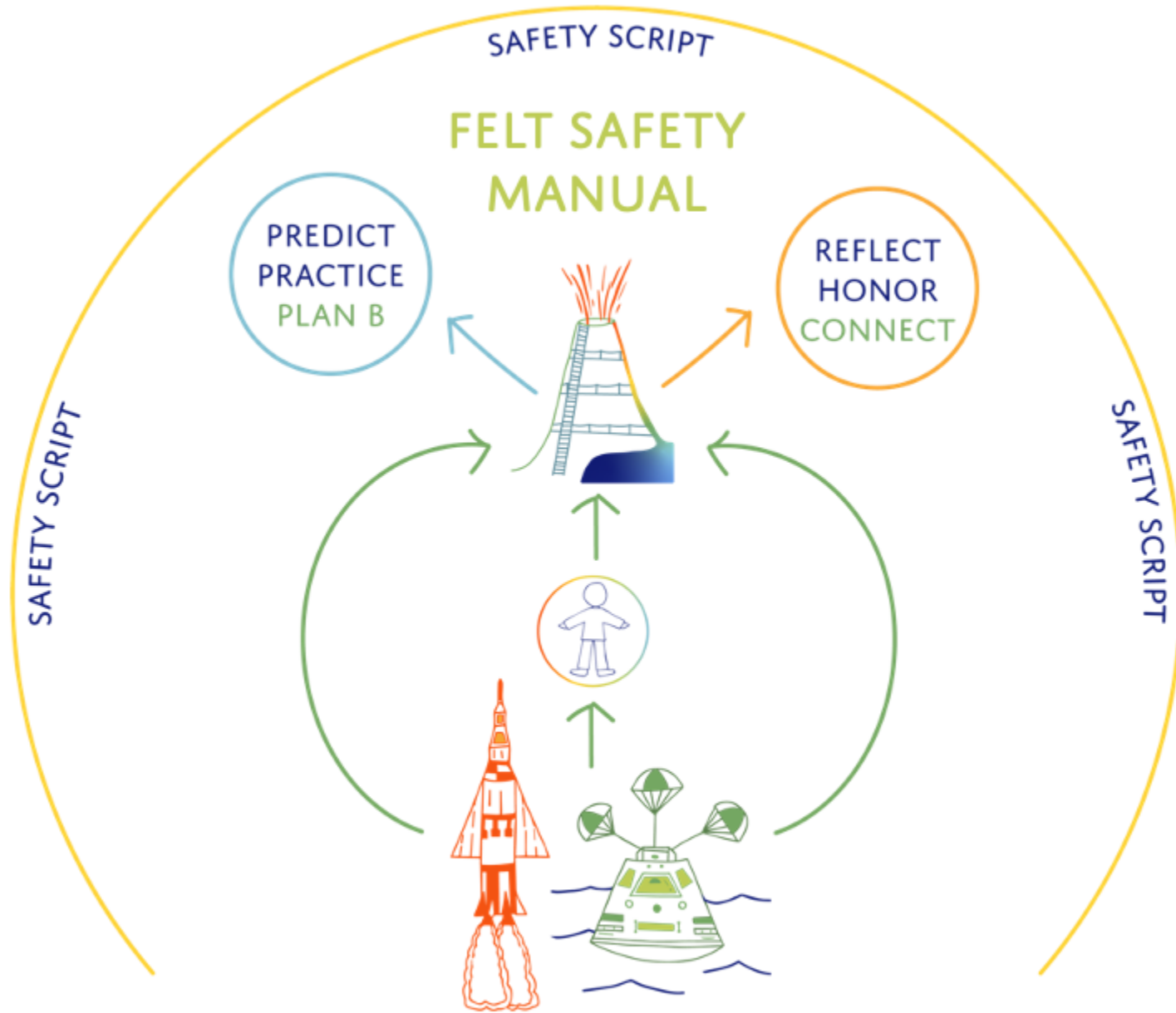
Brain  
Stem



FREEZE

FAINT  
(SUBMIT)

SAFE



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# SAFETY SCRIPT

THIS IS A SAFE PLACE  
AND I WON'T LET ANYONE \_\_\_\_\_

(name the behavior you want the person to stop)

SO I CAN'T LET YOU \_\_\_\_\_

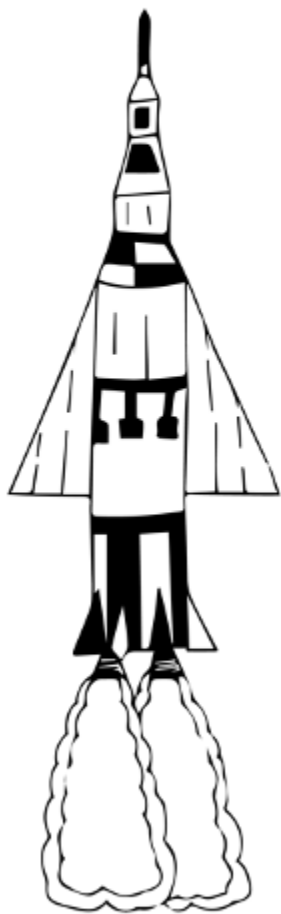
(again, name the behavior you want the person to stop)

BECAUSE THIS IS A SAFE PLACE.

# LIFTOFF & LANDING

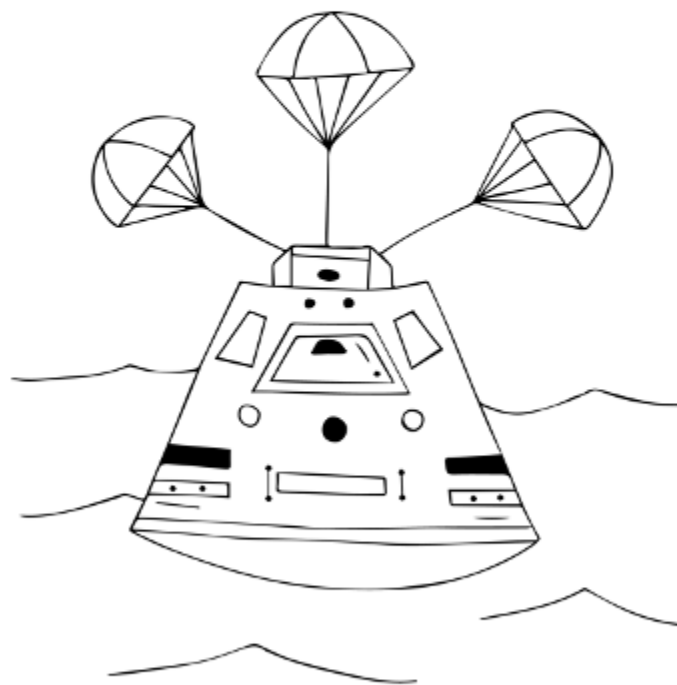
## LIFTOFF:

What makes you happy, brings you joy, gets you excited and gives you energy like fuel for a rocket ship!

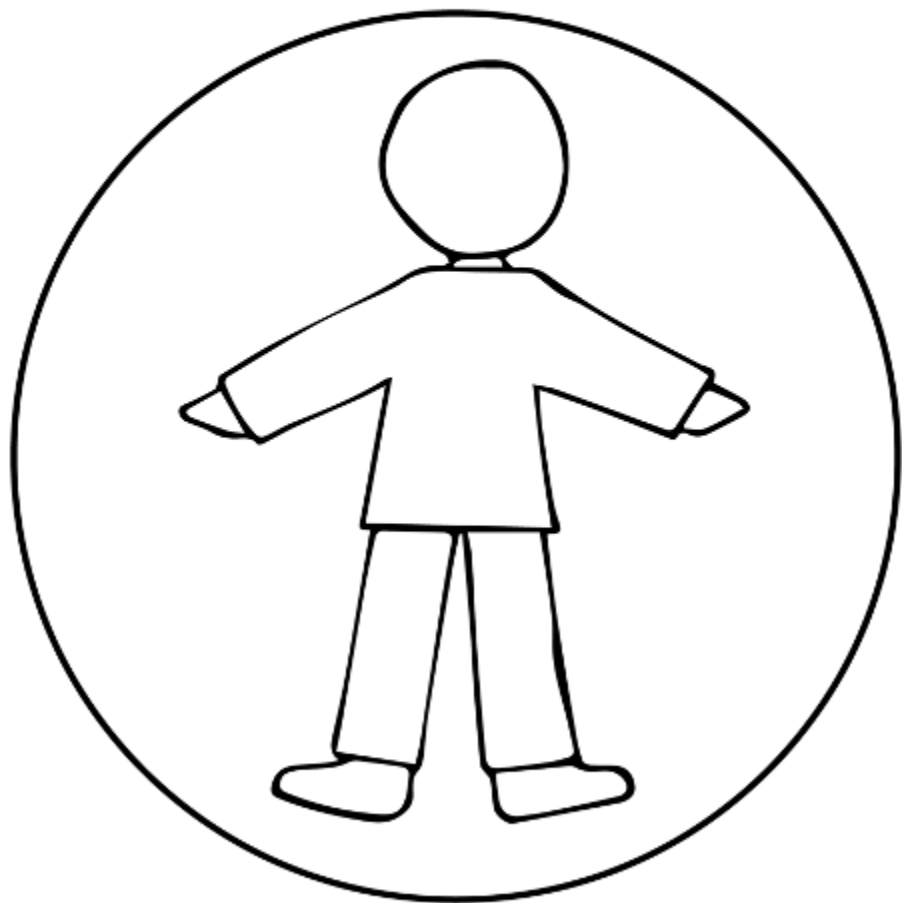


## LANDING:

What calms, comforts you and helps you cool your jets so you can relax?



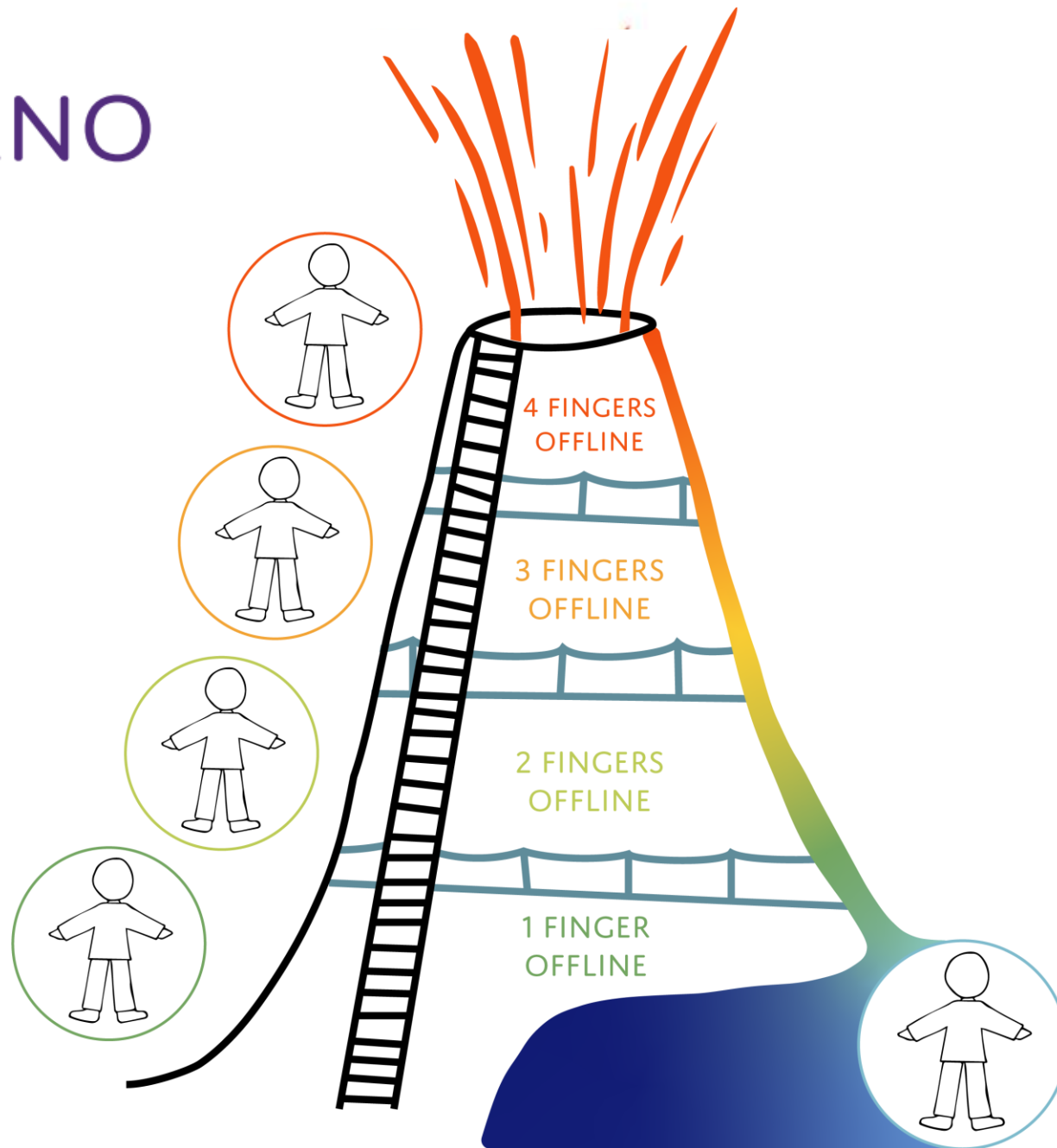
# PERSON IN A MANDALA



- Identify what cues you get from your body when you start to experience stress?
- Using your art materials (markers, pens, pencils, crayons), give your stress a shape, size, and color and show where you feel it.

# ANGER VOLCANO

The intent of the Anger Volcano is to identify escalating levels of stress and anxiety and implement activities (as identified by Roots and Wings) at each level that can allow the person to bridge across the volcano of escalation to get to their positive emotion without “blowing their top” or their cortex going offline (as identified by the Hand Brain).



# THE 3 Ps

Helps us plan and execute action (turn our thoughts into action).

Since switching from one thing to another (transitions) set off our fear center, they can be difficult especially when we are under stress.

The 3Ps are designed to help the brain and body prepare for transitions or any changes.



**Predict:**  
What you think will happen & what you want to happen.

**Practice:**  
How you want to respond to everything you predicted could happen.

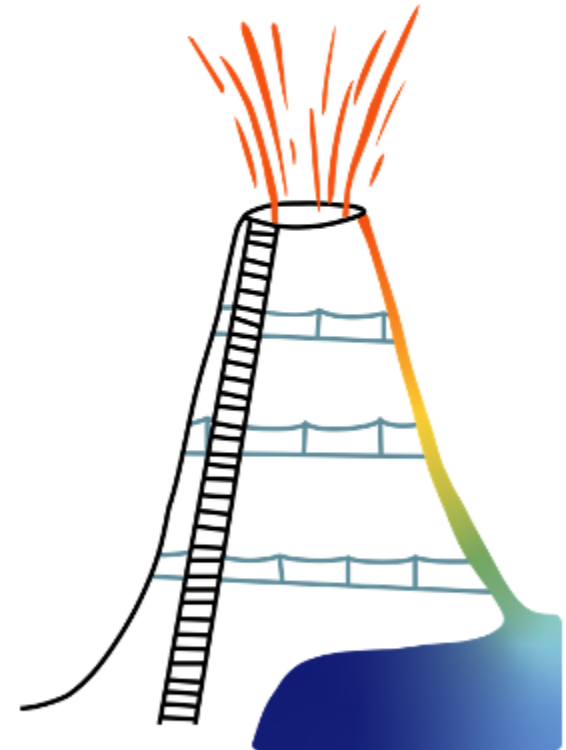
**Plan B:**  
Have a back up plan in case what you predicted & practiced does not happen.



# THE 3 PS & THE ANGER VOLCANO

Since the 3 Ps helps us plan, it is an excellent tool to help us assist a person in creating their anger volcano.

It will help them **Predict** what agitates them, and **Practice** what they want to do to cross to the calming side of the volcano. Finally, **Plan B** will help them prepare what to do when they have missed the bridges across and are at the top of their anger volcano.



# REFLECT, HONOR & CONNECT

This is an intervention used to promote being seen, heard, and connected.

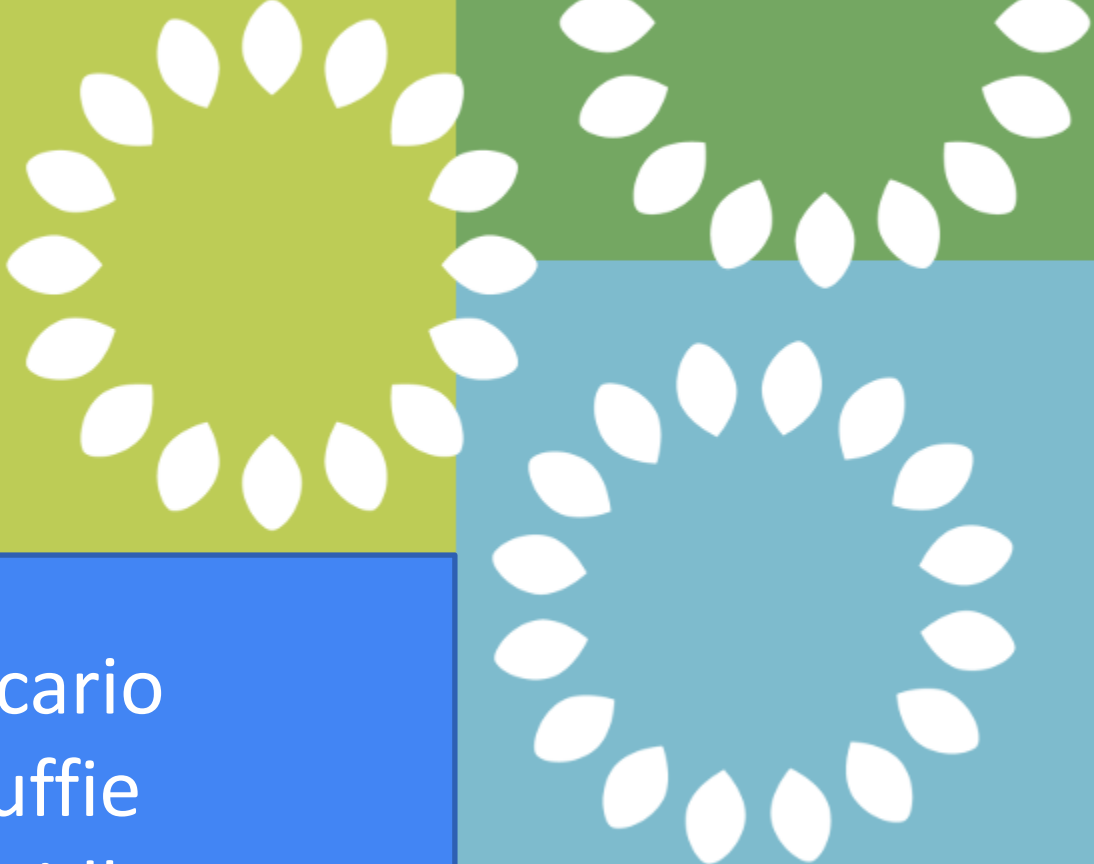
Additionally, Reflect-Honor-Connect is a way of being that can foster de-escalation and reintegration.





RESILIENCE-  
BASED  
DE-ESCALATION  
INTERVENTIONS

BUILDING FELT  
SAFETY, BELONGING  
& RESILIENCE



Mary Vicario  
Sarah Buffie  
Andy Maidlow  
Danae Riggs



# Resilience Based De-Escalation Training & The Felt Safety Manual

Contact Us:

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Thank you for your  
attendance today!

