




# Trauma-Informed Teaching

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Facilitator: Elley Cannon  
Saturday Academy  
June 10th 2021



# Warm Welcome

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In the chat:

Name & pronouns

What do you teach?

Which dog are you today and why?

WHICH DOG ARE YOU TODAY?



ANSWER IN THE COMMENTS

# Introduction

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Elley Cannon - SUN  
(Schools Uniting  
Neighborhoods) - Jackson  
Middle School

Popular education model

Responsibility: Readers

## Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Teaching

6:30 PM - 6:40 PM	Warm Welcome
6:40 PM - 7:00 PM	Culture: What is my lens?
7:00 PM - 7:15 PM	Qualities of a Warm Demander
7:15 PM - 7:25 PM	Trauma and its impacts on the classroom
7:25 PM - 7:30 PM	Bio break
7:30 PM - 7:45 PM	Signs of escalation in students and myself
7:45 PM - 8:00 PM	De-escalation techniques
8:00 PM - 8:20 PM	The four R's of a trauma-informed classroom
8:20 PM - 8:30 PM	Optimistic Close

Created for Saturday Academy by Elley Cannon

# Land Acknowledgement





Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.

We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are standing on the ancestral lands of the **Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other Tribes** who made their homes along the Columbia River. We pay respects to their elders past and present.

Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.



# Learning Objectives

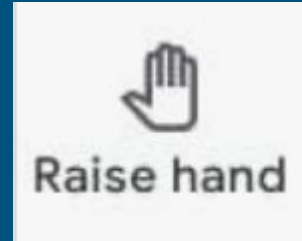
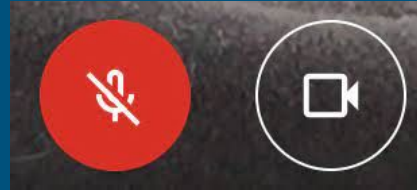
-  Identify my own cultural lens and begin to think critically about how it impacts my teaching
-  Reflect on the characteristics of a warm demander
-  Understand the impacts of trauma in the classroom
-  Acquire tools for creating a trauma-informed classroom

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# Housekeeping

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- Maintain positive regard for students and each other
  - Be aware of airtime
  - Commit to self-inquiry and vulnerability
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- Keep Padlet open
  - Utilize the chat
  - Keep yourself muted unless to speak
  - Raise your hand to speak
  - Yellow is a task for you!



# Culture & Teaching

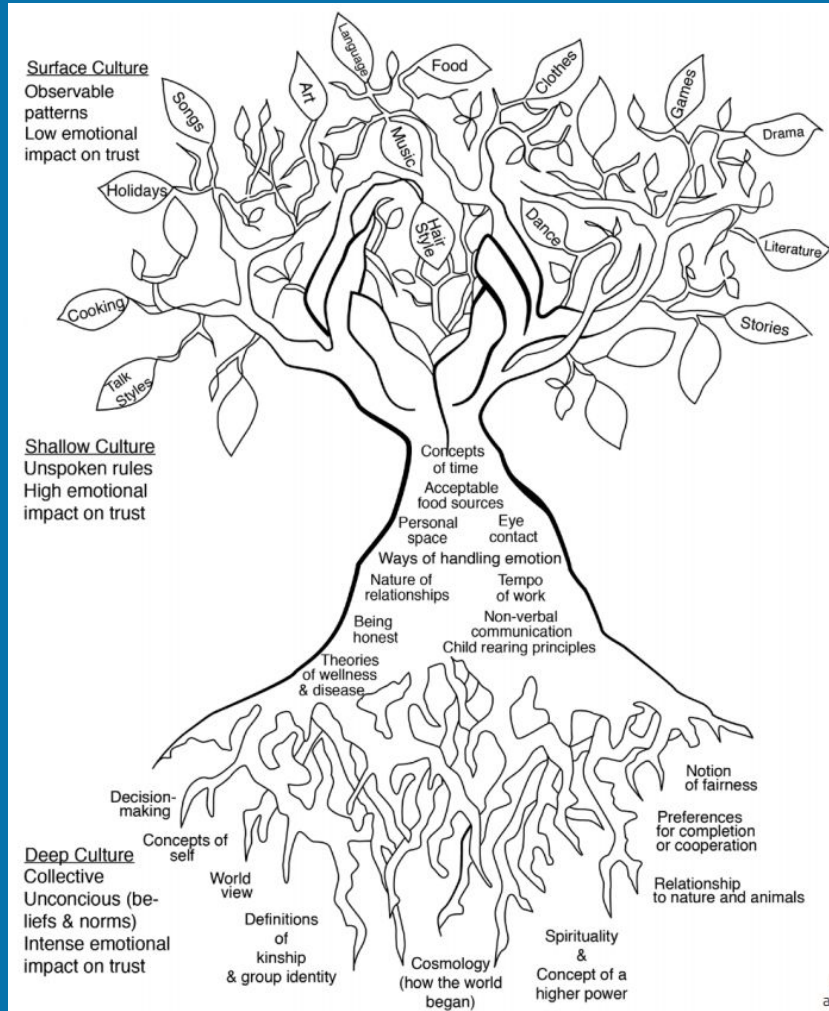
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# What is culture? *Excerpt from Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*

At the deep cultural level, our brain is encoding itself with the particular worldview we will carry into our formative years. Two people from different cultures can look at the same event and have very different reactions to it because of the meaning they attach to the event based on their deep culture. For example, in Eastern culture, the color red means good luck while in most Western cultures red means danger. While every person's individual culture evolves as we grow up and experience the world, our core mental models stay with us. My grandmother had a saying, "you can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy." The point is that one's culture, especially one's deep cultural roots, is part of how the brain makes sense of the world and helps us function in our environment. This worldview continues to guide our behaviors even when we change our geography. We call these mental models **schema**.



# The Culture Tree



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# Example: Individualism

Individualism	Collectivism
Focused on independence and individual achievement	Focused on interdependence and group success
Emphasizes self-reliance and the belief that one is supposed to take care of himself to get ahead	Emphasizes reliance on the collective wisdom or resources of the group and the belief that group members take care of each other to get ahead
Learning happens through individual study and reading	Learning happens through group interaction and dialogue
Individual contributions and status are important	Group dynamics and harmony are important
Competitive	Collaborative
Technical/Analytical	Relational

From  
*Culturally  
Responsive  
Teaching  
and the  
Brain -  
Zaretta  
Hammond*

Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede found that approx. 80% of the world practices a collectivistic culture, whereas 20% of the world is individualistic.

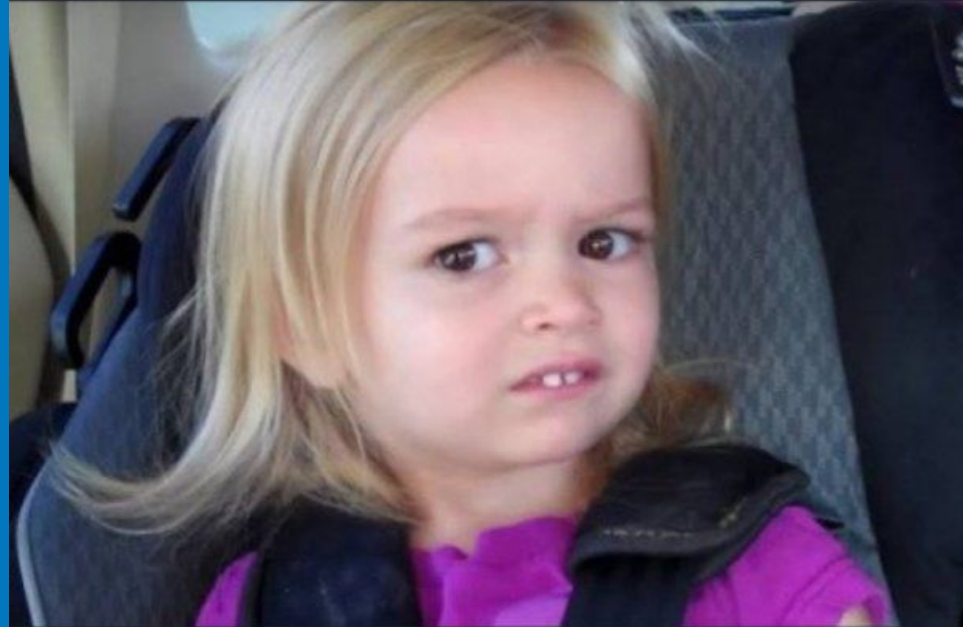
# Anecdote

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When I am talking with teachers about this idea of interpreting other's behavior through our own cultural frame of reference, I use the example of an exchange between an African American student and a White teacher that Lisa Delpit highlights in her seminal piece, "The Silenced Dialogue" (1988). The student was up and out of his seat sharpening his pencil along with other students as the teacher was about to begin the lesson. She got his attention and said, "James, would you like to take your seat?" James said no and continued to sharpen his pencil. The teacher became outraged and sent James to the principal's office for being defiant. James was surprised and didn't understand why he was being sent to the office. When asked what happened, he said the teacher asked him a question and he answered her question.

This exchange highlights the

**ME WHEN MY TEACHER**



**PUTS US INTO BREAKOUT ROOMS  
ON ZOOM**

makeameme.org

# Breakout Rooms

How does my culture affect  
my teaching?

# Share out

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**Questions or reflections?**

# Warm Demanders

# Qualities of a Warm Demander

Warm demanders are teachers who, in the words of author Lisa Delpit, "expect a great deal of their students, convince them of their own brilliance, and help them to reach their potential in a disciplined and structured environment."



# How to be a Warm Demander

1. Believe in the impossible
  - a. *ALL children are capable of learning*
  - b. *Get to know your students' cultures to know how they learn best*
2. Build trust
  - a. *BE YOU - have fun!*
  - b. *Create a firm but flexible container*
3. Teach self-discipline
  - a. *Setting high standards is showing respect for your students*
4. Embrace Failure
  - a. *Praise mistakes*
  - b. *Explain why they are important*

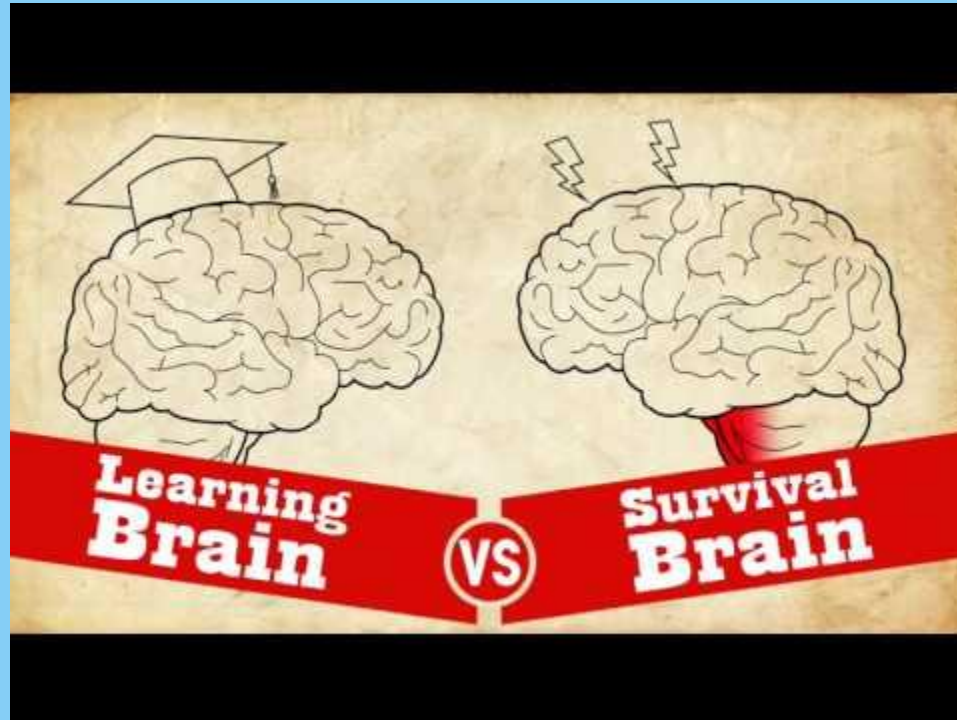
# Padlet:

**What is one thing you will do to be more of a warm demander?**

# Trauma and its effects on the classroom



# Learning Brain vs. Survival Brain



# Reframing challenging behaviors

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Behaviors that disrupt your teaching are **unmet needs**.

## The Invisible Backpack

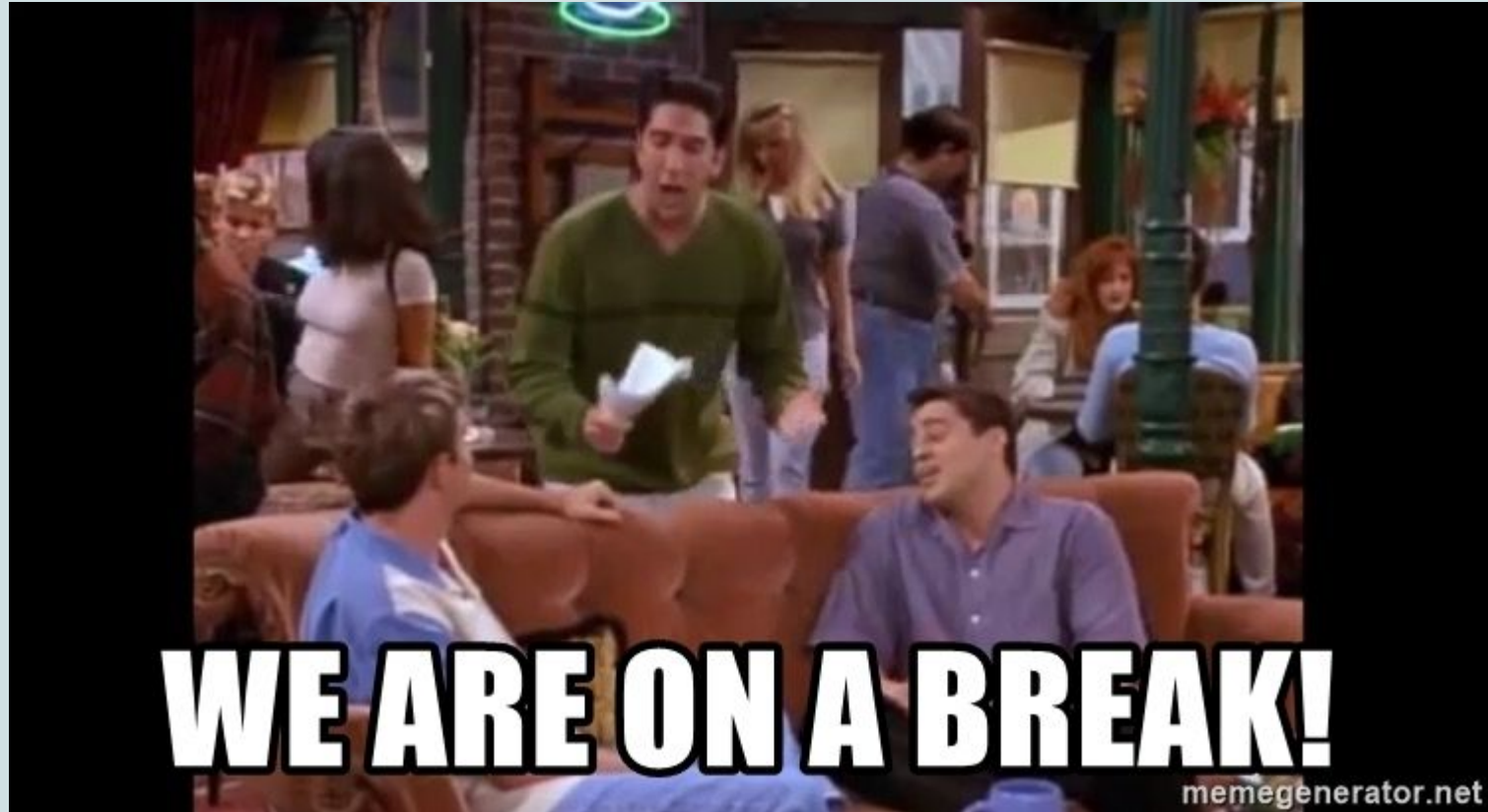
Primary vs. Secondary emotions: When our students feel vulnerable (whether due to stress, fear, anxiety, etc.) the emotions we see are often their **secondary emotions**. For instance, anger may cover up shame, apathy may cover up feelings of inadequacy or overwhelm, and so on.

We can look beyond the secondary emotions to see what our students really need. More often than not, it is **compassion & reassurance**.





BIO BREAK

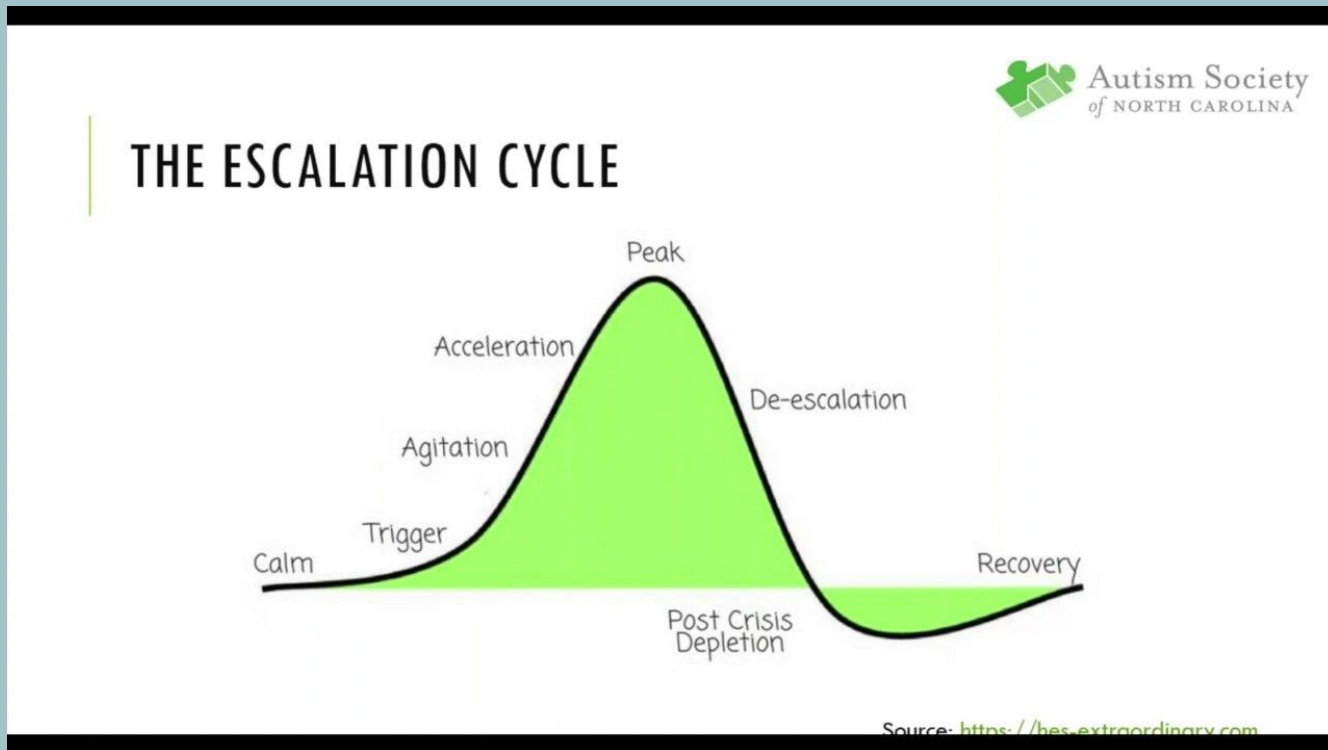


# Escalation and De-Escalation



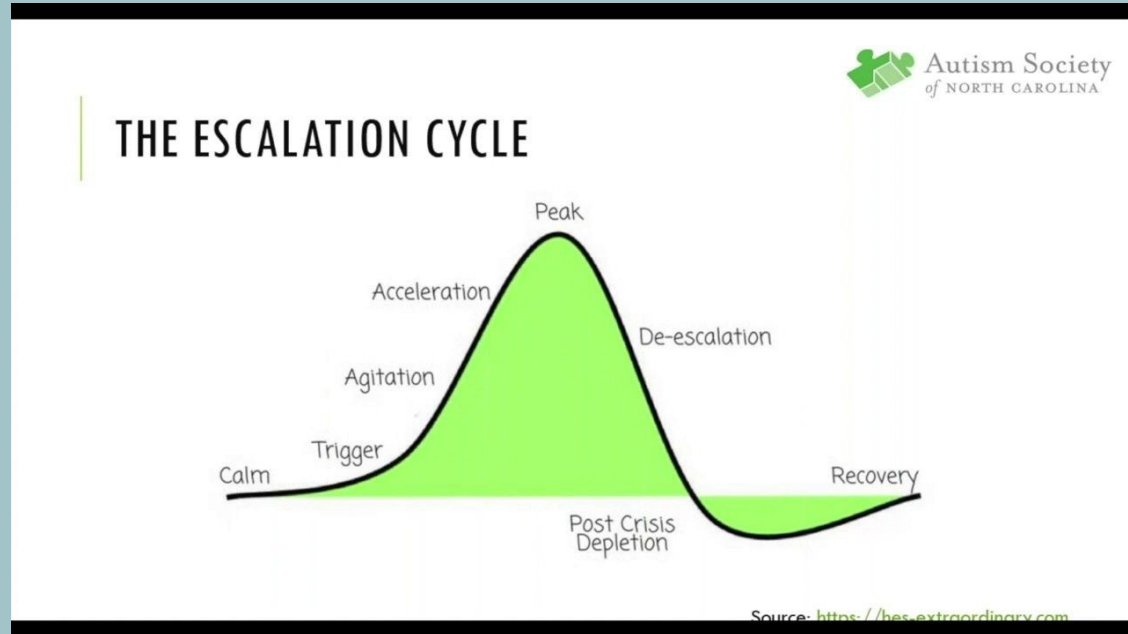


# Cycle of Escalation



# Signs of escalation in students

- Bothering others
- Off-task behavior
- Arguing
- Non-compliance/defiance
- Raising voice/yelling
- Disruption
- Damage of property (like a desk)
- Complaining
- Crying
- Limit testing
- Threats and intimidation
- Escape/avoidance



# Signs of escalation in myself

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Hop into our Padlet.

**What are signs of escalation in myself? How do I know I'm activated?**

# De-escalation Techniques for Students

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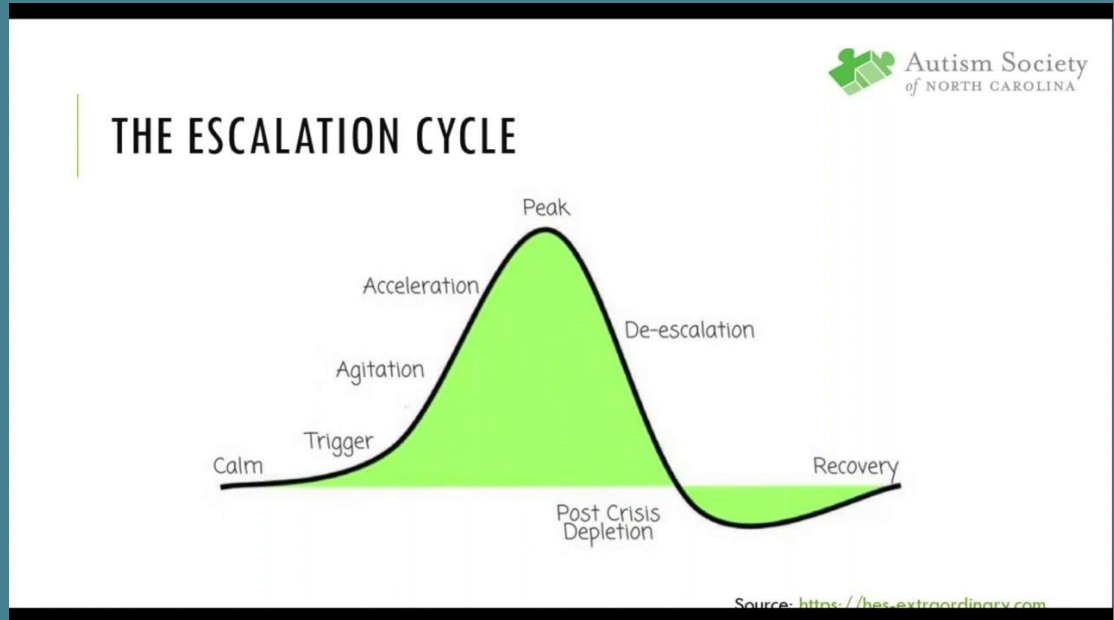


# Trauma-Informed De-Escalation at Every Stage

**Calm:** reinforce positive/on-task behaviors

**Trigger:** Re-direct focus/task, reduce anxiety

**Agitation:** Make structural/environmental modifications, give reasonable options/choices to help student feel they have agency

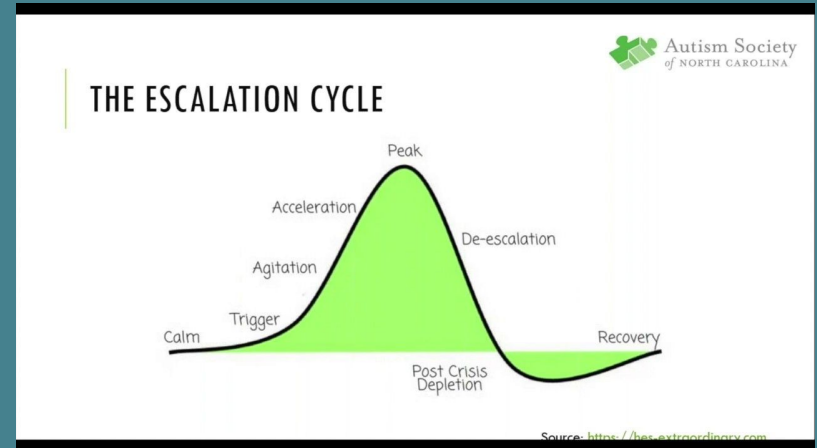


# Trauma-Informed De-Escalation at Every Stage

## Acceleration:

- Utilize non verbal communication & proximity (e.g., give space)
- Increase “start” requests vs. “stop”
- Offer choices or yes/no questions
- Hold compassionate structure/boundaries
- Use minimal and simple communication
  - “I see you are feeling \_\_\_\_.
  - Do you want to do X or Y?”
- Maintain calm, respect & detachment
- Recognize the student as in distress, rather than intentionally misbehaving

**Peak:** Focus on safety, enact Saturday Academy protocol



# Do's and Don'ts

## Instead of this approach...

- Agitated behavior from teacher (e.g, raising voice)
- Engage in power struggles/arguing or being defensive
- Move into a student's space or touching a student
- Sudden or very wordy responses
  - *An escalated brain is not processing the same way as a calm brain*
- Body language that communicates anger or frustration

## Try this approach...

- Speak calmly & respectfully
- Demonstrate empathy:
  - *"I see you feel overwhelmed;"*
  - *"You seem upset;"*
  - *"I'm worried about your safety"*
- Once student is de-escalated, speak privately to problem solve
- Respond slowly and deliberately, both with your words and proximity
- Stick with yes or no questions until the student is more calm

# Mirroring

You can help an agitated student calm down by activating their mirror neurons - the part of their brain that seeks to match and synchronize with others.

1. Stay calm and secure in yourself with a firm but caring tone.
2. Validate their emotions: "I see that you're feeling really upset. I want to understand what you're feeling."
3. Gradually make yourself smaller and softer while continuing to show care and validate their feelings.
4. Engage in a calm conversation about what happened. You can test the student's readiness by seeing how they respond to open-ended questions.





# Take care of yourself!

An activated brain cannot effectively help another activated brain.

Some tips:

- Know your triggers
- Recognize what it looks and feels like when you are stressed
- How does it affect your communication?
- What are YOUR coping strategies?
- Make a plan:
  - In the moment (e.g. breathing, slowing down, water)
  - At the end of the day (what are your self-care practices?)

Questions?

# The Four R's of a Trauma-Informed Classroom

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1. Routine
2. Responsibility
3. Recognition
4. Ritual

# Routine

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Predictability is a key component of a trauma-informed classroom. Routines help

- Reduce stress and anxiety (prevents escalation cycle)
- Reduce distractions and guessing
- Reduce off-task disruptions
- Prepare the neurons for learning

# Examples of Routines

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- Warm Welcome & Optimistic Close
- Mindful Moment to start each class
- Visual or auditory cues (dims the lights, play a sound)

Hop onto the Padlet and brainstorm possible routines.

# Responsibility

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Giving students responsibilities in the classroom helps them feel a sense of agency, control, and importance.

Some examples:

- Reading aloud
- Timekeeper
- Discussion facilitator

# Recognition

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Recognizing students' achievements (and willingness to make mistakes!) helps them feel like their learning matters. Ways to recognize students:

- MVP of the day
- Paper plate awards at the end of of the term
- Display student work
- Phone calls/emails home

# Rituals

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Rituals differ from routines in that they are celebratory, meaningful, and inspiring. They mark progress, achievements, and the passage of time. Simply put: they feel special.

Examples of rituals:

- A showcase event where students get to demonstrate their learning
- A music and dance break after completing a multi-day project
- Rewarding students with a snack of their choice when they complete a project
- A specific way of applauding students after sharing in front of the class



# Breakout Rooms

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Discuss: What are some new things you can implement in your classroom to make it more trauma-informed?

# Share Out

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Questions or reflections?

# Optimistic Close

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Add two things to our group Padlet that you plan to incorporate into your classroom.