

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES

AS PART OF RELATIONAL PRACTICE

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is: “A psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience, often involving a sense of intense fear, terror and helplessness.” (Perry, 2011)

IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA

Impacts of developmental trauma

Behaviours commonly seen in children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma include:

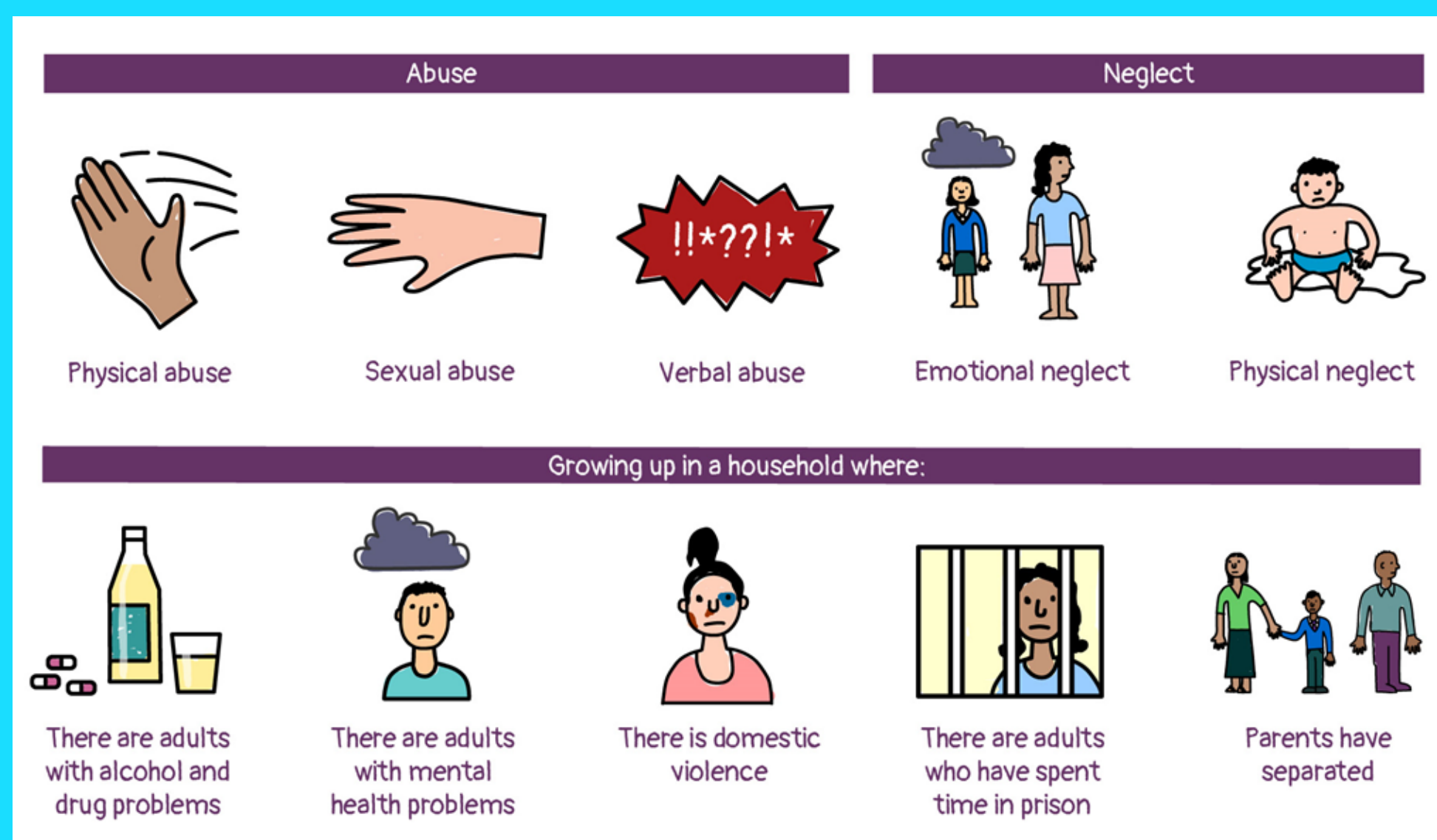
- Pervasive pattern of dysregulation
- Problems with attention and concentration
- Difficulties getting along with others
- Rapidly shifting moods
- Physical problems such as sleep disturbances or oversensitivity to touch or sound
- Destructive ways to relieve tension such as rocking or self-harm

(van der Kolk, 2015)

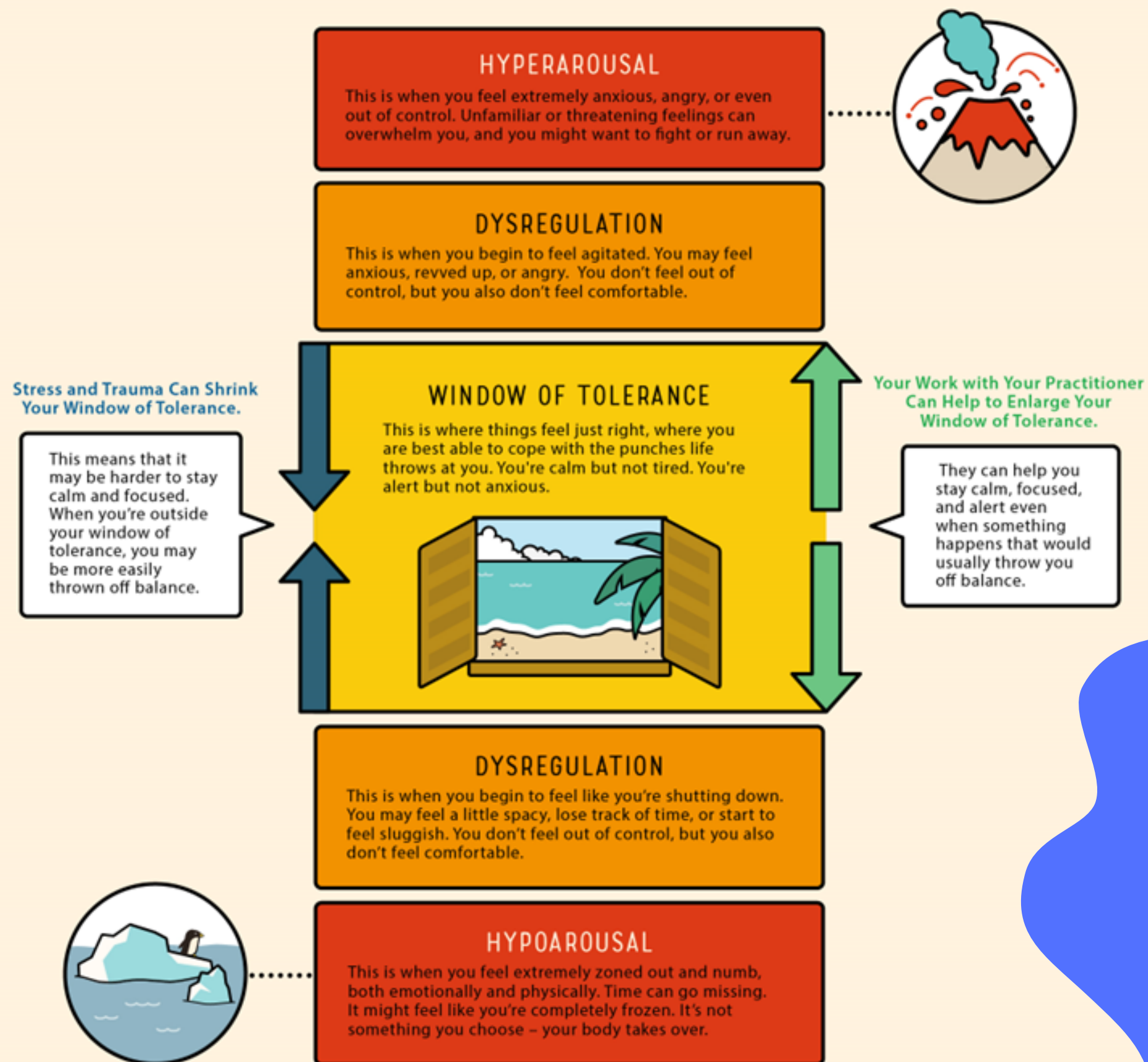
ACES

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) “are highly stressful events or situations that happen during childhood and/or adolescence. It can be a single event, or prolonged threats to, and/or breaches of a young person’s safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.”

(British Psychological Society, 2019)



How Trauma Can Affect Your Window of Tolerance



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A TRAUMAM INFORMED APPROACH

Realise

Awareness of the widespread impact of trauma, stress, and adversity

Recognise

Can identify the signs, symptoms, and extensive impact of trauma

Resist

Actively prevents re-traumatisation and is committed to being trauma-informed

Respond

Purposefully incorporates and embeds knowledge about trauma into policy, practice, language, culture and settings.

WHAT ARE RESTORATIVE APPROACHES?

- Focus on behaviours and interactions aimed to build positive relationships, resolve conflict, and repair harm following conflict.
- Supports children to understand how feelings impact behaviour and how behaviour impacts others.
- Acknowledges all behaviour is communication and adopts “no-blame” ethos.
- Instead of investigating incidents to attribute sanctions, greater focus on exploring feelings of all parties to gain understanding and repair relationships.
- Aims to help children feel accepted and reduce feelings of shame and rejection.

Restorative approaches build upon the following basic principles:

- Genuineness – honesty, openness, sincerity.
- Positive regard for all individuals – valuing the person for who they are.
- Empathetic understanding – being able to understand another’s experience.
- Individual responsibility and accountability.
- Optimistic perspectives on personal development – that people can learn and change for the better.

RESTORATIVE VS TRADITIONAL ‘BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT’ APPROACHES

Traditional approaches to behaviour management focus on:

Identifying what rule-breaking or misconduct has occurred
Blame and shame culture
Punishment/sanctions to deter

The impact of this is that:

The needs of those affected are ignored
Any unmet needs behind the individual’s behaviour are ignored

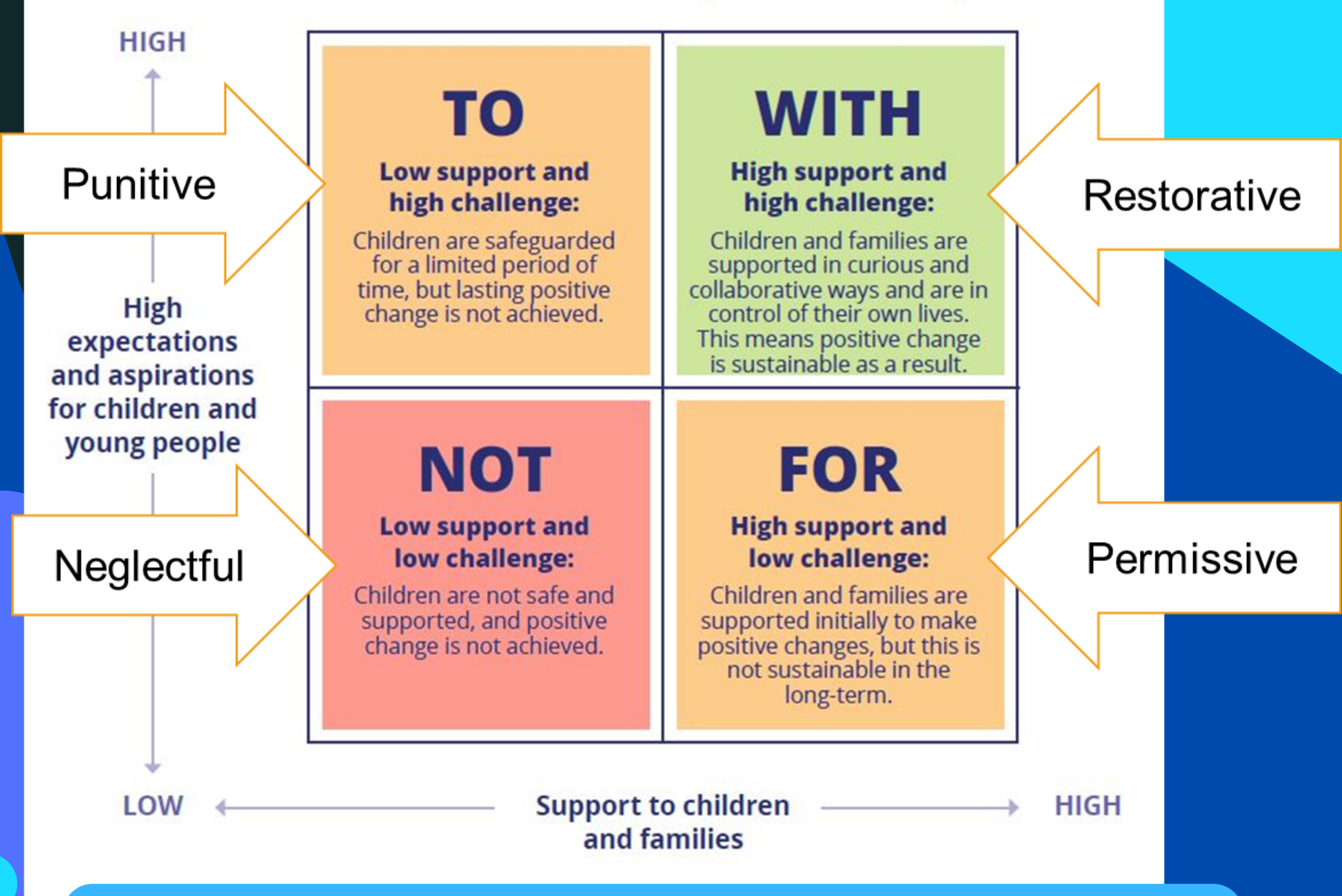
Restorative approaches focus on:

Harm done to other people
Responsibility and problem-solving
Repair, apology and re-building

The impact of this is that:

The needs of those affected are addressed
Any unmet needs behind the individual’s behaviour are identified and addressed

HOW RESTORATIVE PRACTICE WORKS: A SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



The goal when working restoratively is to work with others to achieve high challenge and high support. This is characterised by doing things with people, rather than to them.

Traditional approaches to behaviour management typically sit within the “to” section of this model; this means that children are safeguarded for a limited period of time but lasting positive change is not achieved.

CONTINUUM OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES



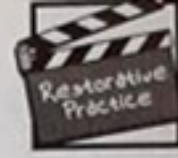
Adapted from Wachtel and McCold 2001

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH
SCHOOL CULTURE
COMMON LANGUAGE & POLICIES



APPLYING RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN SCHOOLS

Putting RP into practice – Sam and Kyle



Let's look at an incident that involves bullying behaviour and see how RP can guide your response:

It's break time, and you are just about to head to the staffroom for a cup of coffee when you witness an incident between two pupils. As students leave your classroom, Sam trips Kyle who stumbles to the floor. Kyle gets up and is then pushed against the display wall by Sam.

How should you deal with this incident?
What responses are available to you?



From: Thorsborne & Vinegrad (2009).

How could you respond?

- 1) You could turn a blind eye.
- 2) You could see it as a bit of harmless, 'boys' will be boys', fun.
- 3) You could come down hard on Sam.
- 4) You could bring together the two boys and solve the problem in a way that is both respectful and constructive.

Some possible desirable outcomes...

- Sam to stop this unkind behaviour and to understand how miserable it makes Kyle feel.
- Kyle to feel safe as a result of your response and not be further at risk or want revenge.
- The relationship between Sam and Kyle to be repaired and their future dealings with each other to be respectful and trouble-free.
- Bystanders (e.g. friends of Kyle and Sam, witnesses, etc.) to understand their responsibilities and that this type of behaviour is not okay.
- The local community to trust the school will appropriately respond to these types of behaviour by fixing things and not making matters worse.
- The parents of these young people not to feel the need to contact the school with complaints about how 'the system' dealt with the problem.
- The relationship between all parties (including school staff) to be strengthened by the response simply because it has been fair.

EXAMPLE OF A RESTORATIVE CONVERSATION

Think back to the Sam and Kyle incident:

- What happened? “I tripped Kyle as he was leaving the classroom.”
- What were you thinking and feeling at the time? “I was angry because Kyle laughed at me in the classroom.”
- What have you thought about it since? “I’m still cross that he laughed but I feel guilty that I hurt him.”
- Who has been affected and in what way? “Kyle injured his hand and it made him upset and angry. He hasn’t been to class since.”
- How could things have been done differently? “I could have told Kyle I was angry that he laughed at me and asked him not to. I could have walked away and ignored him.”
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right? “I need to say sorry to Kyle and try not to lose my temper next time.”

Kyle is also asked the same set of questions. This helps him identify his part in what happened and communicate how Sam’s actions affected him.

Your role is to facilitate, not to judge, rescue, or impose your own ideas. If you want to offer a suggestion, do it tentatively. You may also need to offer some ‘reality checks’ around their ideas, e.g. “Is that achievable?”, “What would that look like?”

Agree – make a plan to fix things.

- “Kyle, what could Sam do to make things right for you?”
- Check suggestion with Sam – “Would that be ok, Sam? Is that fair?”
- Ask both of them: “Do either of you have any other suggestions?”

Arranging for follow-up

- Ask both boys, “How should we follow this up? Any suggestions?”
- “I’ll make a note of what we’ve agreed. Shall we meet here next week at the end of lunch to see how the agreement is going?”
- Remember to thank both boys for attending.

From: Thorsborne & Vinegrad (2009).

SUMMARY OF A RESTORATIVE CONVERSATION

This is the ‘bare bones’ of a restorative process. Think back to the questions and you should find you have:

- Handed the problem back to the people who had it (Sam and Kyle).
- Worked with them.
- Used a process which has made Sam accountable first to Kyle and perhaps to you and other students.
- Given Kyle a voice.

RESOURCES

Devon County Council (2023). Guidance for Developing Relational Practice and Policy. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/document/guidance-for-developing-relational-practice-and-policy/>

Gloucestershire County Council (2022). Restorative Practice in Gloucestershire: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/restorative-practice-in-gloucestershire/>

Hendry, R., Hopkins, B., & Steele, B. (n.d.). Restorative approaches in schools in the UK. <https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/programmes/restorativeapproaches/RA-in-the-UK.pdf>

Marshall, T. F. (1998). *Restorative justice: An overview*. Center for Restorative Justice & Mediation. http://www.antoniocasella.eu/restorative/Marshall_1999-b.pdf

The New School in Croydon - <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/school-trying-do-mainstream-differently>

The School Run (2022). <https://www.theschoolrun.com/discipline-primary-schools-restorative-practices>

Thorsborne, M. & Vinegrad, D. (2009). *Restorative justice pocketbook*. Management Pocketbooks.

