

The Most Powerful Classroom Support Strategies for Students with Challenging Behavior

Dr. Kristie Pretti-Frontczak

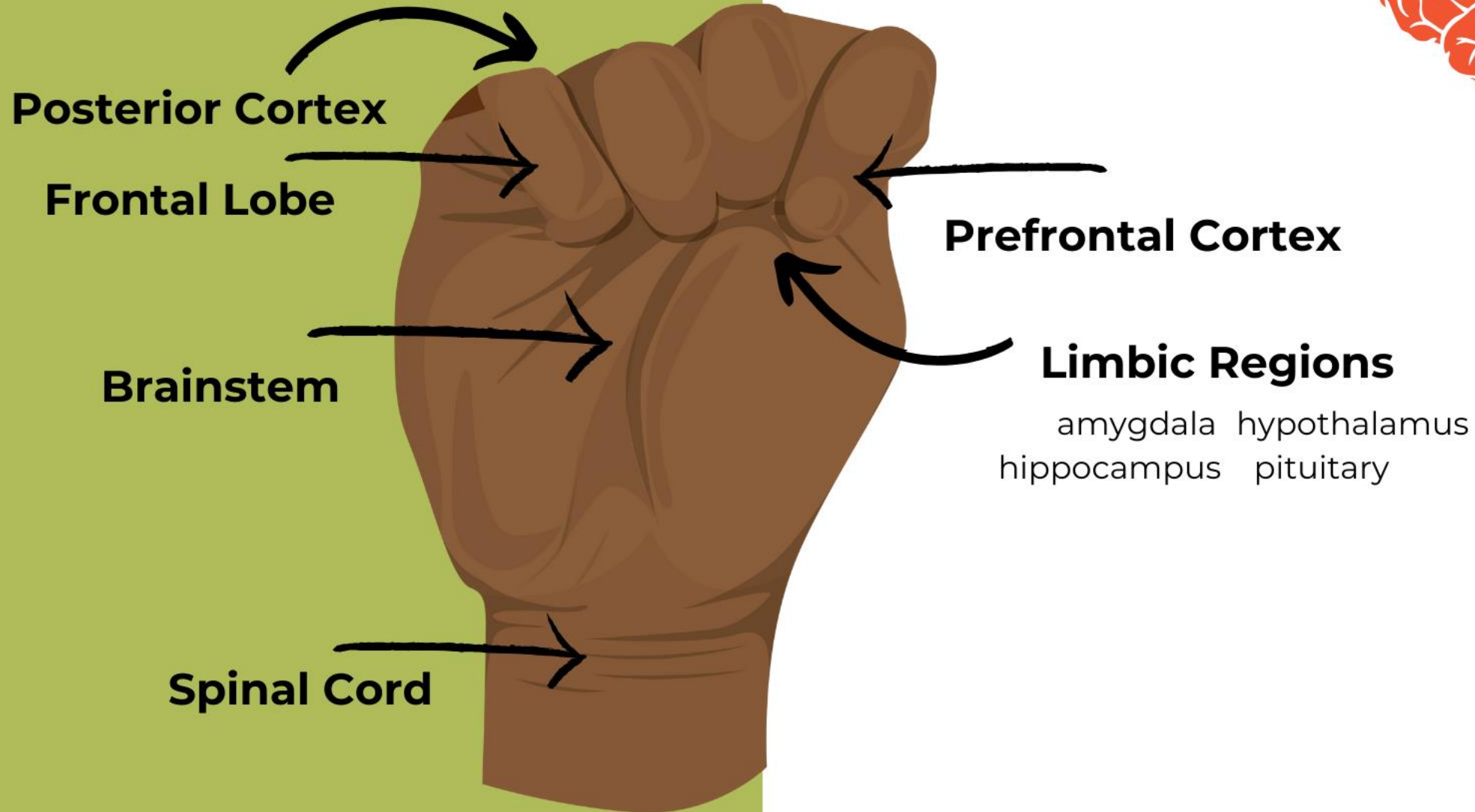
Dr. Julie Causton





Keeping Kids in the Green Zone

THE HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN



Functions Of The Prefrontal Cortex

Mathematics

Analyzing

Comprehension

Literacy

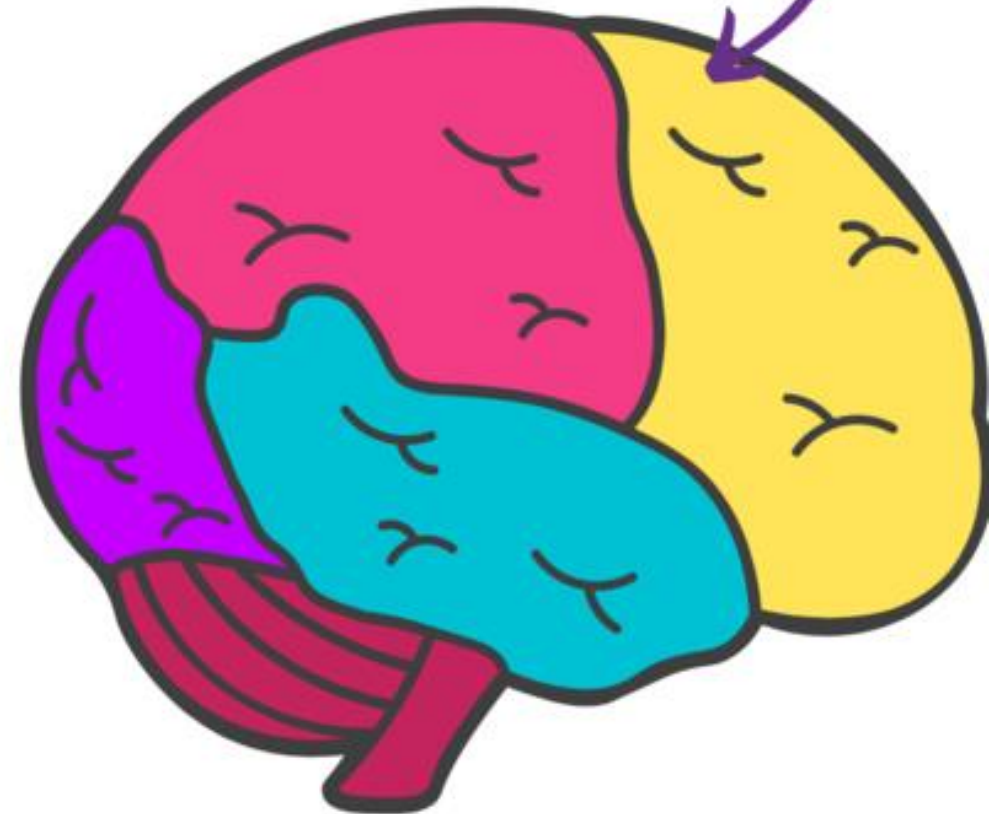
Compassion

Perspective Taking

Labeling

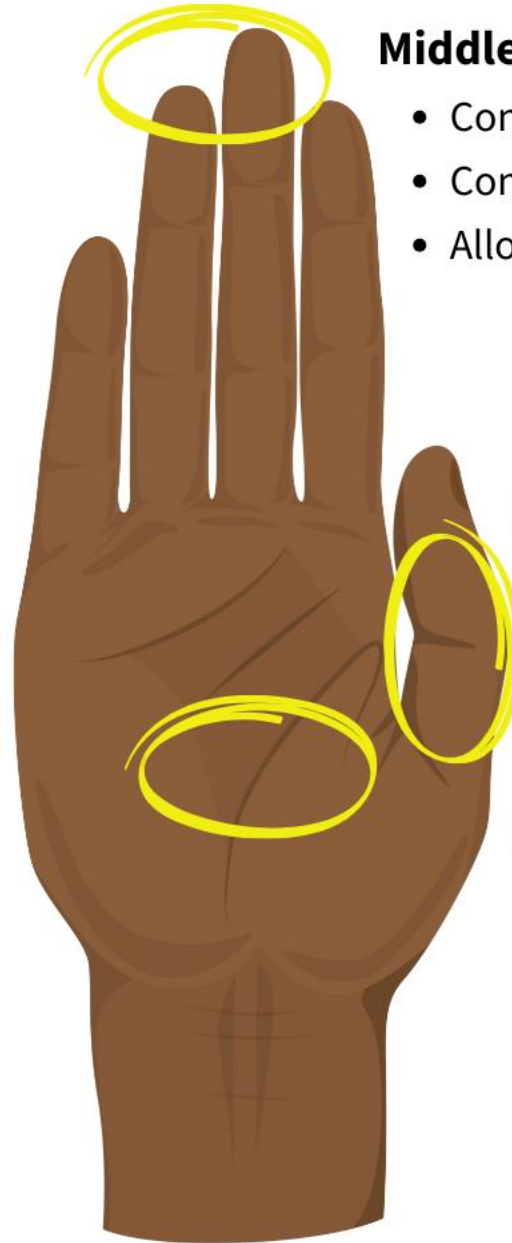
Focus

Self-Regulation



FLIPPED LIDS

- Prefrontal cortex is no longer the driver
- Reactive vs. Ready state
- Stress Behavior vs. Misbehavior
- Hyperaroused - Hypoaroused
- What we see:
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze
 - Faint
- What we need:
 - Safe
 - Seen
 - Soothed
 - Secure



Middle Prefrontal Region

- Connects critical areas of the triune brain
- Connects us to the social world of other brains
- Allows us to stop, think, and act

Limbic Regions

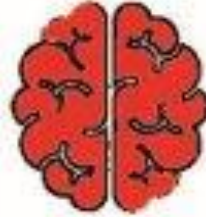
- Big Emotions - Is this something that is good or bad? Something I want or fear?
- Area that “controls emotions”

Brainstem

- Downstairs brain
- Aims to satisfy basic needs
- When activated, pushes us to act (F’s)
- Sensory input come through brainstem first

HUMAN WAYS OF BEING

FIGHT OR FLIGHT STATE (REACTIVE STATE)



Aggression
Anger
Anxiety
Chaos
Compulsive

Concern
Fear
Frustration
Highly restricted
Hyper vigilant

Impulsive
Irritation
Obsessive
Out of control
Over the top

Overwhelmed
Panic
Rigid
Worry

READY STATE



Assertiveness
Body awareness
Calm
Collected
Comfortable
Compassionate

Connected
Cool
Creative
Curious
Empathetic
Engaged

Excited
Flexible Thinking
Happy
In the Present
Joy
Learning

Open
Peaceful
Regulated
Safe
Willing

THE FREEZE OR FAINT STATE (REACTIVE STATE)



Confusion
Depression
Despair
Disconnected
Dissociation

Flat emotions
Helpless
Hopeless
Memory loss
Not present

Numb
Trapped
Shameful
Shut down

Spacy
Stuck
Withdrawn
Zoned out

FIGHT OR FLIGHT (REACTIVE STATE)



READY STATE



FREEZE OR FAINT (REACTIVE STATE)



SAFE

SOOTHED



SEEN

SECURE

SAFE

I protect students from emotional harm and avoid being a source of threat or fear.

WHEN STUDENTS FEELS SAFE THEY...

- Are comfortable with what is going on
- Know what is expected and what to do
- Feel it is okay to be vulnerable and get outside their comfort zone
- Understand what is happening or going to happen
- Sense no internal alarms going off
- Understand the meaning of gestures, words, looks, and tone of voice



TO HELP STUDENTS FEEL SAFE YOU CAN...

- Invite calm by being calm (posture, tone, pace)
- Get curious- notice what they need and are trying to communicate
- Validate their emotions
- Reduce sensory input
- Offer individualized choices
- Slow down to give time for processing ideas and emotions



READY YOURSELF

Be curious and calm -
use "I wonder" statements
Be in a creative state
Be able to see the learner behind the behavior
Be ready to address the learner's needs



OFFER SUPPORTIVE SILENCE

Say, "I am right here with you"
Take the time to read cues - be attuned to what the learner is thinking and feeling
Be ok with silence/long pauses
Avoid rushing to fix, problem-solve, or move on



APPROACH WARMLY OR SILENTLY

Use soothing tone of voice
Slow down movements, thoughts, and rate of verbal communication
Use empathetic non verbal communication
(e.g., kind facial expressions, use a calming tone, have a relaxed posture, use inviting gestures)



ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AIMED TO UNDERSTAND

Say, "Help me understand ____."
Say, "Can you tell me what you experienced/what happened?"
Say, "What was that like for you?"



EXPRESS EMPATHY

See the perspective of the learner
Attempt to feel the feelings of the learner
Try to understand (intellectually) the learner's perspective
Aim to sense their emotions and offer support
Celebrate the learner's achievements and well-being



SIMPLIFY LANGUAGE

Reduce directions
Avoid giving advice
Avoid rapid questions
Avoid corrections
Reduce interruptions



NOTICE & VALIDATE THEIR EMOTIONS

Say, "I can see how you would feel that way."
Say, "That must be really hard."
Say, "I'll bet you are frustrated."
Say, "How upsetting!"



PRACTICE SOUND MINIMALISM

Ask nearby learners and/or staff to pause or take a minute to reflect
Identify what can be turned off or down
Silence phone/computer alerts
Go silent/pause
Write collectively instead of speaking



OFFER CHOICES

Say, "Do you want to take a few minutes before getting started?"
Say, "Do you want to go someplace quieter or stay here?"
Say, "Would pausing to get a drink of water help?"
Say, "Would you prefer I wrote the ideas and you talk?"
Say, "Would you like to write or draw your ideas?"



REDUCE VISUAL CLUTTER

Clear the desk, table, carpet, etc.
Tidy or organize or straighten the space
Limit the amount of text
Highlight what is important
Reduce the visual field



101 Ways to Incorporate **CHOICE** in Learning
Because...Choice is the Friend of Inclusion

STUDENTS' Choice

101. For infinitely more choices, ask your students!



Stress Behavior not Misbehavior



CHECKLIST OF COMMON STRESSORS



BIOLOGICAL DOMAIN -- Stress on physiological systems (e.g., cardiovascular, digestive, nervous); It's where stress starts and is always a central factor



EMOTIONAL DOMAIN -- Stress caused by strong emotions (positive and negative)



COGNITIVE DOMAIN -- Stress caused from processing info; Mental processes involved in knowledge acquisition



SOCIAL DOMAIN -- Stress from social interactions with others

TOP 10 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESSORS

GO QUIET



GET CREATIVE



REDUCE INPUTS



ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS



SHOW COMPASSION



REDUCE DEMANDS



GIVE VISUAL SUPPORT



REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE GROUP



SLOW DOWN AND GIVE TIME FOR PROCESSING



OFFER BREAKS



TOP 10 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESSORS

GO
QUIET



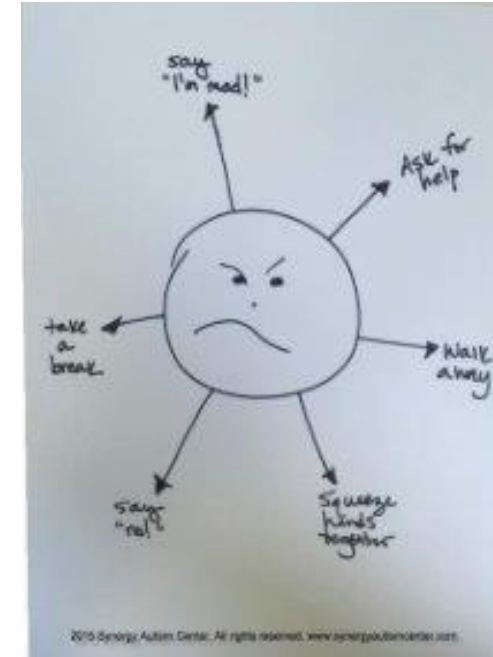
BE PREPARED WITH THESE **LIFELINES** INCLUSIVE

- 1 READY YOURSELF**
Be curious - use "I wonder" statements
Offer your calm
See the human behind the behavior
Be ready to address another's needs
- 2 APPROACH WARMLY OR SILENTLY**
Use a soothing tone of voice
Slow down movements, thoughts, and rate of verbal communication
Use empathetic non-verbal communication (e.g., kind facial expressions, use a calming tone, have a relaxed posture, use inviting gestures)
- 3 EXPRESS EMPATHY**
See their perspective
Attempt to feel their feelings
Aim to sense their emotions and offer support
Say, "I am right here with you!" or "I am here with you."
- 4 NOTICE & VALIDATE THEIR EMOTIONS**
Say, "I can see how you would feel that way."
Say, "That must be confusing."
Say, "I'll bet you are frustrated."
Say, "How upsetting!"
- 5 OFFER CHOICES**
Say, "Do you want to take a few minutes before getting started?"
Say, "Do you want to go somewhere quieter or stay here?"
Say, "Would pausing help?"
Say, "Would you prefer I wrote the ideas and you talk?"
Say, "Would you like to write or draw your ideas?"
- 6 OFFER SUPPORTIVE SILENCE**
Take the time to read cues - be attuned to what others are thinking and feeling
Be ok with silence and long pauses
Avoid rushing to fix, problem-solve, or move on and away from their emotions
- 7 ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AIMED TO UNDERSTAND**
Say, "Help me understand ____."
Say, "Can you tell me what you experienced/what happened?"
Say, "What was that like for you?"
- 8 SIMPLIFY LANGUAGE**
Reduce directions
Avoid giving advice
Avoid rapid questions
Avoid correcting
Reduce interruptions
- 9 PRACTICE SOUND MINIMALISM**
Ask nearby learners and/or staff to pause or take a minute to reflect
Identify what can be turned off or down
Silence phone/computer alerts
Go silent/pause
Visual type collectively instead of speaking
- 10 REDUCE VISUAL CLUTTER**
Clear or organize the workspace
Limit the amount of text and/or highlight what is important to look at
Reduce what is in the visual field (e.g., have just one tab open, close email, set phone aside)

approach silently, use non-verbals,
limit auditory processing demands

TOP 10 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESSORS

**GIVE VISUAL
SUPPORT**



**write, draw, and/or display directions,
provide options for capturing thoughts
and ideas, make the unpredictable
...predictable**

