



Charting the Cs  
Conference 2025:

To Literacy and  
Beyond

Cooperation  
Communication  
Collaboration

# De-Escalation Presentation

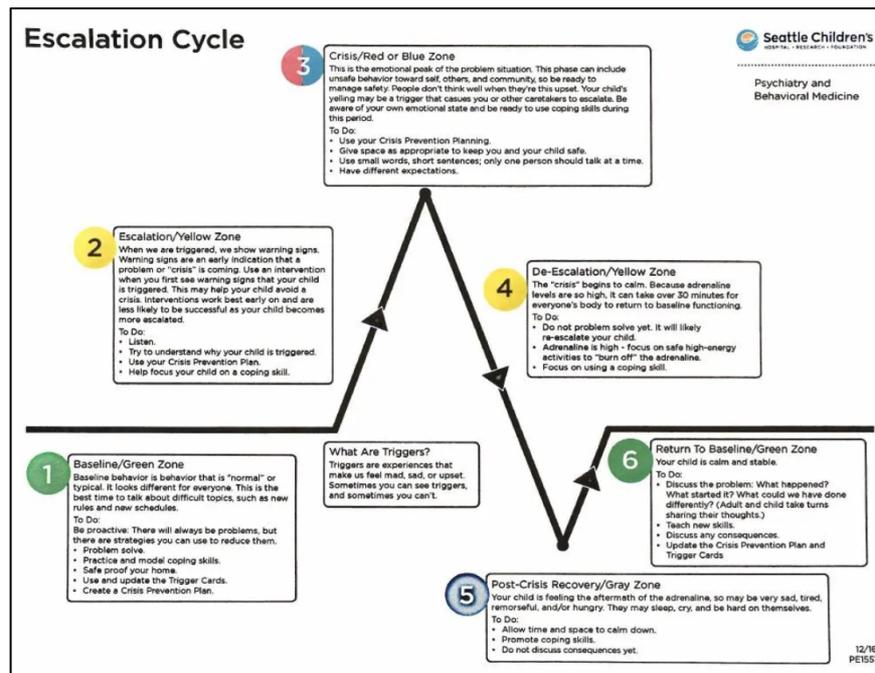
Charting the Cs Conference 2025  
Sarah Larson

# Schedule

- Welcome (1 minute)
- De-escalation - what does it mean and why is it important (10 Min)
- Understanding OTHERS behavior (10 Min)
- Understanding OUR behavior (15 min)
- De-Escalation- Trauma Informed Approach (15 minutes)
- Scenarios (5 Minutes)
- Questions (2 Min)

# Understanding **OTHERS** behavior

# Escalation Cycle



# 1: Baseline / Green Zone

1

## Baseline/Green Zone

Baseline behavior is behavior that is "normal" or typical. It looks different for everyone. This is the best time to talk about difficult topics, such as new rules and new schedules.

To Do:

Be proactive: There will always be problems, but there are strategies you can use to reduce them.

- Problem solve.
- Practice and model coping skills.
- Safe proof your home.
- Use and update the Trigger Cards.
- Create a Crisis Prevention Plan.

## 2: Escalation / Yellow Zone

2

### Escalation/Yellow Zone

When we are triggered, we show warning signs. Warning signs are an early indication that a problem or "crisis" is coming. Use an intervention when you first see warning signs that your child is triggered. This may help your child avoid a crisis. Interventions work best early on and are less likely to be successful as your child becomes more escalated.

#### To Do:

- Listen.
- Try to understand why your child is triggered.
- Use your Crisis Prevention Plan.
- Help focus your child on a coping skill.

# 3: Escalation Crisis / Red or Blue Zone



## Crisis/Red or Blue Zone

This is the emotional peak of the problem situation. This phase can include unsafe behavior toward self, others, and community, so be ready to manage safety. People don't think well when they're this upset. Your child's yelling may be a trigger that causes you or other caretakers to escalate. Be aware of your own emotional state and be ready to use coping skills during this period.

### To Do:

- Use your Crisis Prevention Planning.
- Give space as appropriate to keep you and your child safe.
- Use small words, short sentences; only one person should talk at a time.
- Have different expectations.

# 4: De-Escalation / Yellow Zone



**4**

**De-Escalation/Yellow Zone**

The "crisis" begins to calm. Because adrenaline levels are so high, it can take over 30 minutes for everyone's body to return to baseline functioning.

To Do:

- Do not problem solve yet. It will likely re-escalate your child.
- Adrenaline is high - focus on safe high-energy activities to "burn off" the adrenaline.
- Focus on using a coping skill.

# 5: Post – Crisis Recovery / Gray Zone

5

## Post-Crisis Recovery/Gray Zone

Your child is feeling the aftermath of the adrenaline, so may be very sad, tired, remorseful, and/or hungry. They may sleep, cry, and be hard on themselves.

### To Do:

- Allow time and space to calm down.
- Promote coping skills.
- Do not discuss consequences yet.

# 6: Return to Baseline / Green Zone

**6** **Return To Baseline/Green Zone**  
Your child is calm and stable.

To Do:

- Discuss the problem: What happened? What started it? What could we have done differently? (Adult and child take turns sharing their thoughts.)
- Teach new skills.
- Discuss any consequences.
- Update the Crisis Prevention Plan and Trigger Cards



# The Power of Mindset

# Won't Vs. Can't

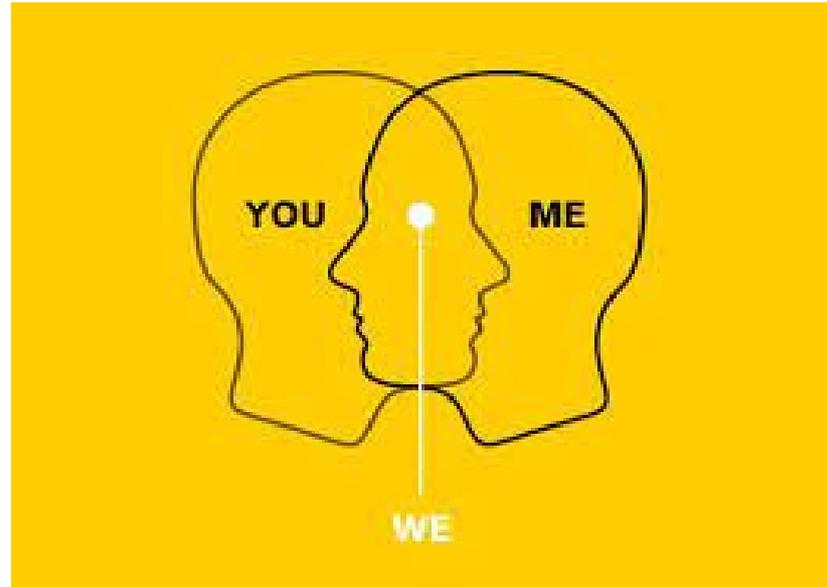


# Understanding **OUR** behavior

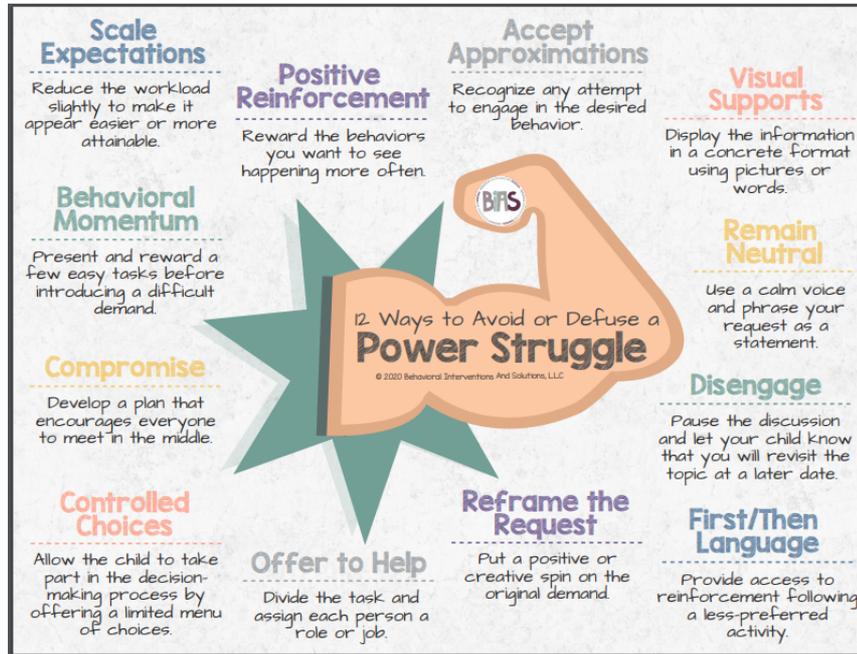
# **We all have behaviors to behaviors!**

Trigger Behaviors- Share- What is your trigger  
behavior?

# Behavior is Communication; Behavior Impacts Behavior



# How to Avoid Power Struggles



# Setting Limits

- Setting limits is not the same as an ultimatum.
- The purpose of limits is to teach, not to punish.
- Setting limits is more about listening than talking.

# Examples of Setting Limits

You can \_\_\_\_\_ When you \_\_\_\_\_.

First \_\_\_\_\_, Then \_\_\_\_\_.

When \_\_\_\_\_, Then \_\_\_\_\_.

If \_\_\_\_\_, Then \_\_\_\_\_. (Positive)

Would you like to \_\_\_ or\_\_\_\_\_.

You can either do \_\_\_\_\_ or\_\_\_\_\_.

Do you want to \_\_\_\_\_ now or in 5 minutes?

You are welcome to do \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_.

I will be able to listen when your voice is as calm as mine.

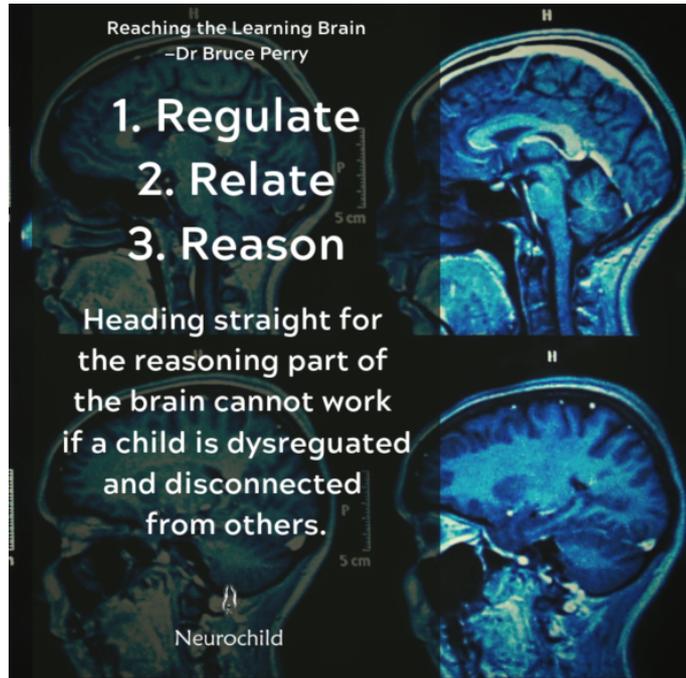
I am glad to discuss this when \_\_\_\_\_.

I care about you too much to argue. I'll be happy to discuss this with you as soon as the arguing stops.

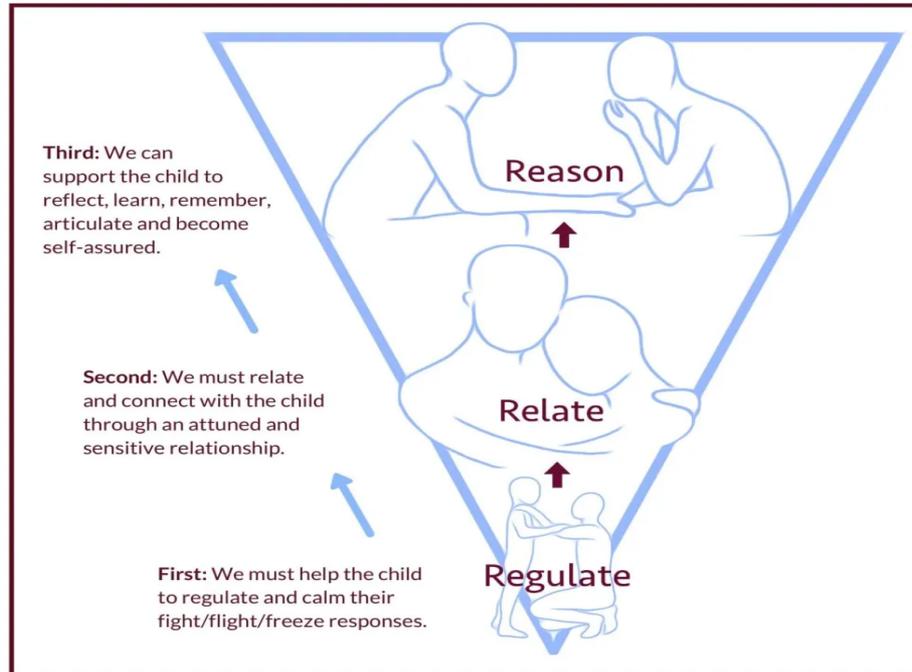


# **De-Escalation-Trauma Informed Approach**

# Bruce Perry's - Regulate, Relate, Reason



# Regulate, Relate, Reason



# Regulate

We must help the child to regulate and calm their fight/flight/freeze responses.

What does this look like for the adult?

- REMAIN CALM YOURSELF
- Soothing tone
- Limited words
- Patterned, rhythmic activities
- Watching from a distance (gives space and time while allowing you to monitor for safety)
- Provide a safe and comfortable space
- Controlled breathing
- Grounding techniques (E.g., identify things you can see, smell, hear, feel and taste)
- Demonstrate the activity yourself

# Regulate, cont.



- To be ready to regulate another person, you might need to ground or calm yourself first. Find a way to regulate yourself (a controlled breath, a parental pause, an affirmation) before even opening your mouth to respond.



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**WALK  
&  
TALK**

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# Relate

We must relate and connect with the child through an attuned and sensitive relationship. This is the most effective way to calm the nervous system. When we are around people we care about and trust, our bodies move back into a state that feels safe again.

What does this look like for the adult?

- ACKNOWLEDGE HOW THEY FEEL (“You seem angry/sad/frustrated”)
- Label their feelings out loud
- Acknowledge how hard it is for them (“That was really hard for you” or “I understand this feels really tough”)

# Relate, cont.

- Having an attuned and sensitive **relationship** with the child or young person.
- By **empathizing with** them and **validating** their feelings, adults can support the development of a connection.



## Relate, cont. 2

- When adults relate to and connect with children and young people, they are reminded that they are in a **safe and secure** environment where adults are interested in understanding them and **supporting them** to deal with their thoughts and feelings.
- The child might look calmer now, but they are **still processing**, their stress hormones are still spiked, and they are still in a state of heightened arousal. **This still isn't the time to teach them anything.**

# Invalidating Responses Vs Validating Responses

## Invalidating Responses

"It could be worse"

"You shouldn't feel like that"

"At least it's not [ fill in blank]"

"Don't worry, it will be okay".

"It's not a big deal"

"Man up"

"Just get over it"

## Validating Responses

"That sounds difficult"

"You have every right to feel angry"

"Your feelings are normal"

"I would feel that way too"

"I can see you're really upset"

"Thank you for sharing your feelings"

# A little validation goes a long way - empathy

A little validation goes a long way



empathy  
/ˈem-pe-THĒ/

1. connecting and relating
2. acknowledging feelings
3. stepping outside ourselves

# Reason

Finally, we can support the child to reflect, learn, remember, articulate and become self-assured. A reliable adult can, through words and reason, support a child to create logical and sequential connections to understand exactly what has just happened to them. They need a simple explanation of what is happening and what will happen next.

What does this look like for the adult?

- Label their feelings out loud
- Give a simple and clear explanation of what has happened, so they can put words to the sequence of events
- Do lots of teaching of feelings, and exploring of emotions
- Play around together to find ways of managing big feelings
- Remind them of their safe places and safe people

# Reason, cont.

- Student is calm and ready to engage with learning.
- Once regulated and feeling connected, they can start to access the parts of the brain needed for reason.
- It is at this stage that adults can support them to remember, reflect, articulate, and become self-assured.



# More Tools for your Toolbox





**Now what?**

# Scenarios

You are using these strategies and the behavior continues . . .  
now what?

How can we view these behaviors with the lens of Dr. Perry's  
regulate, relate, and reason?

- Hallway behaviors- Running? Can you use distraction instead?
- Students who refuse- Think-How can we regulate, relate, and reason to get them to transition?
- Basic Needs- Hungry, Sleepy, Thirsty, Bathroom needs?
- What do you see? What are your biggest concerns?

# Questions?





**Thank you!**