



The Impact of Toxic Stress on Social Emotional Development

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Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

- use knowledge regarding toxic stress when supporting teachers.
- increase prevention of behaviors from occurring in the classroom through staff support.
- apply knowledge to encourage and strengthen relationships among staff.

Why Do Children Struggle With “Behavior” At School?

1. Schedule/routines - developmentally appropriate
2. School context vs. home context
3. Special needs
4. Toxic Stress



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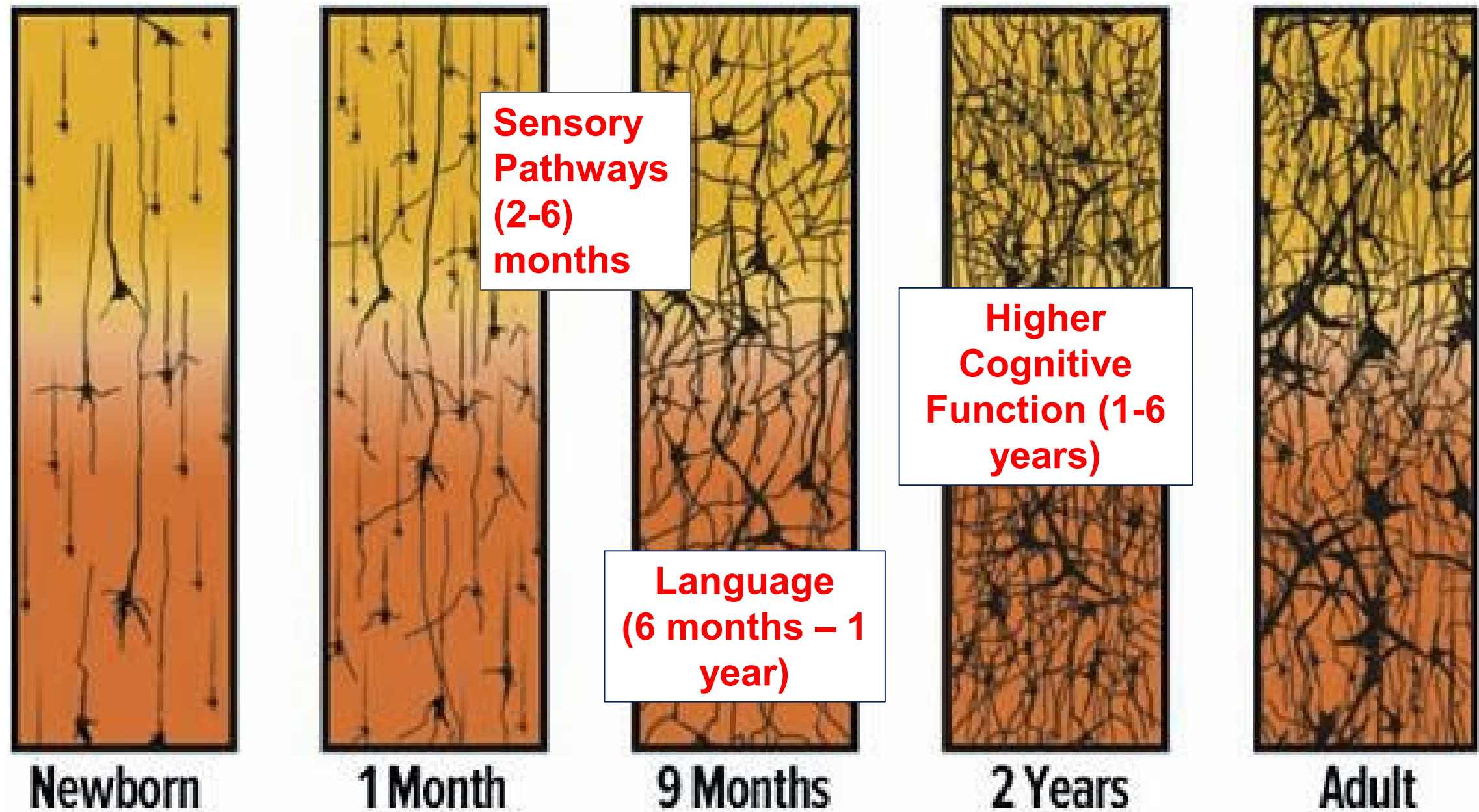
Brain Architecture and Toxic Stress

Brain Architecture

Early experiences change how brains function, respond to stress, and impact the ability to form trusting relationships.

- Language develops in leaps and bounds.
- Thinking increases in complexity.
- Children begin to understand emotions in themselves and others.

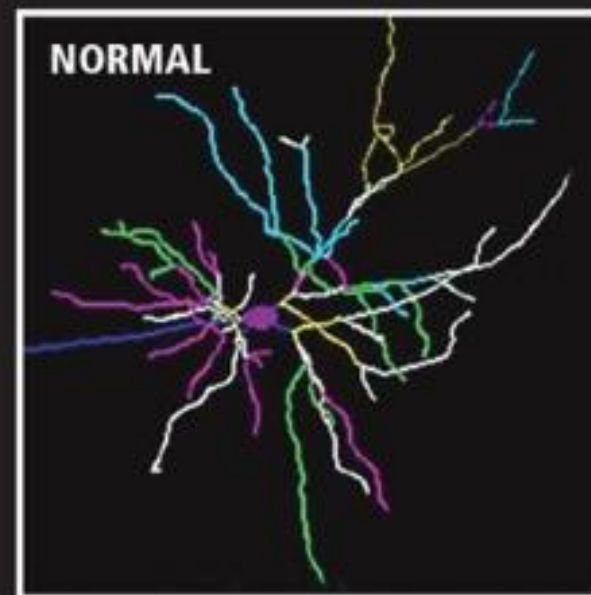
Brain Neuron Development



Toxic Stress

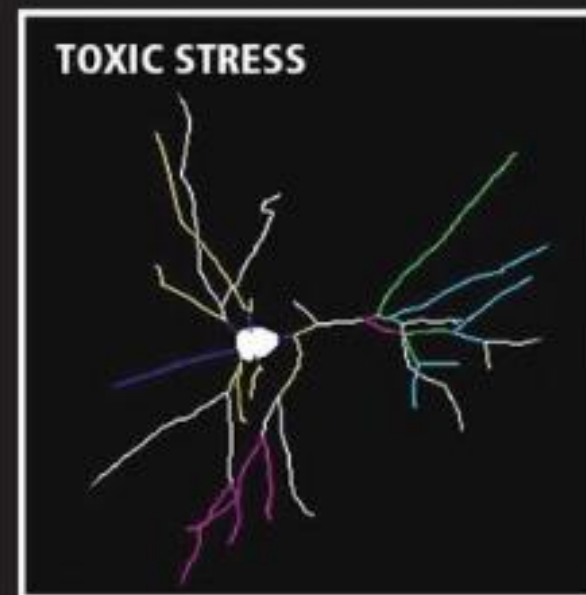
HOW TOXIC STRESS IN CHILDHOOD ALTERS THE BRAIN

Exposure to major adversity in early childhood can weaken brain development. This can permanently set the body's stress response system on high alert. A stable, nurturing environment can prevent these responses and outcomes for learning, behavior and health.



A typical neuron with many connections looks like this.

SOURCES: J.J. Radley Neuroscience 2004

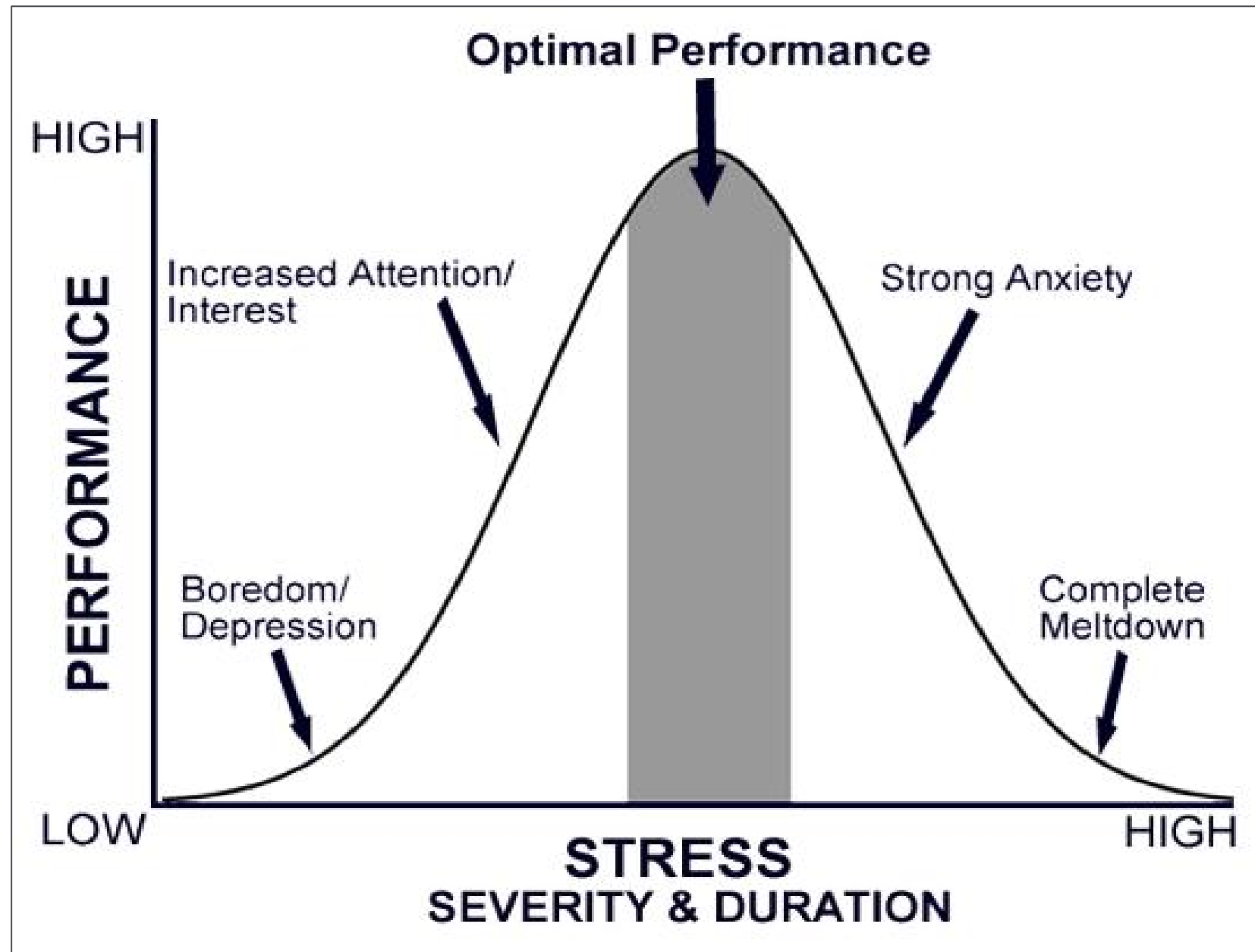


A neuron damaged by toxic stress has fewer connections.

MARTHA THIERRY/DETROIT FREE PRESS

2 MONTHS!

Toxic Stress

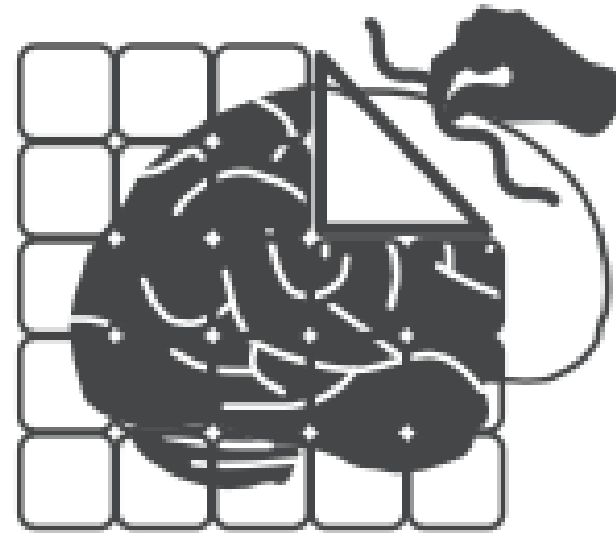


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Let's Talk



What are your
students and
families
experiencing in
their lives?



THE **BRAIN** **ARCHITECTURE** GAME

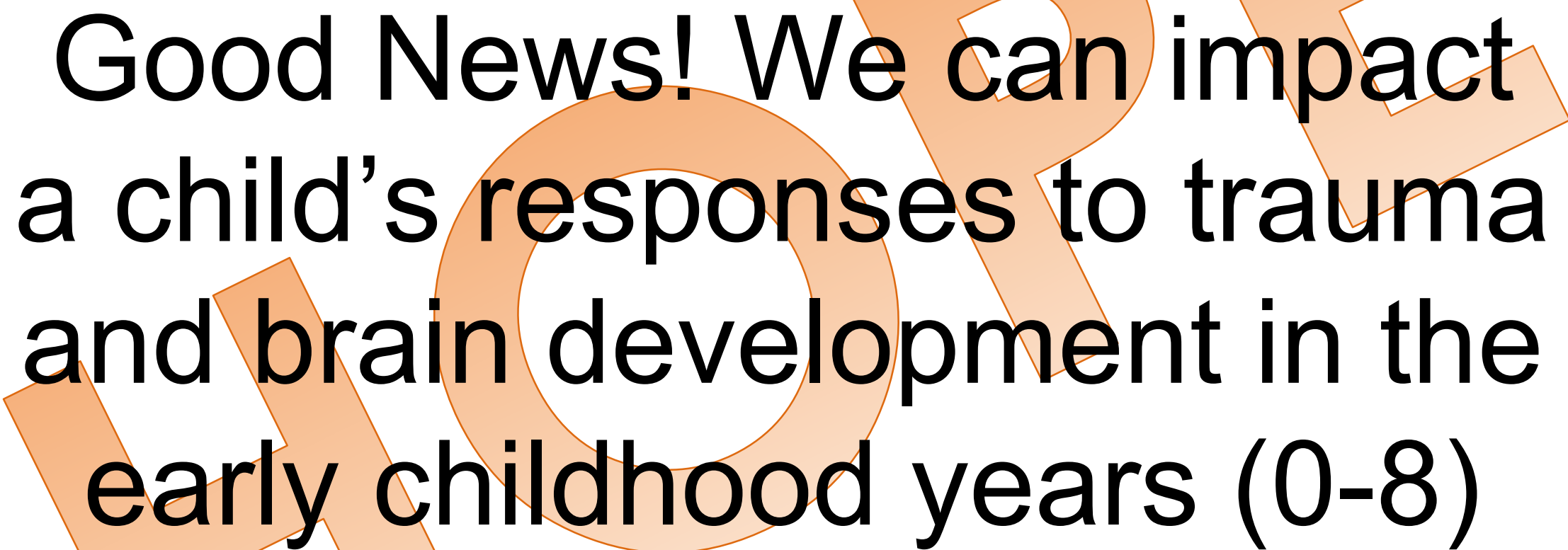
Reactions?



BREAK

“Often it isn’t the initiating trauma that creates seemingly insurmountable pain, but the lack of support after.”

— S. Kelley Harrel



Good News! We can impact
a child's responses to trauma
and brain development in the
early childhood years (0-8)

“Research suggests that just one caring, safe relationship early in life gives any child a much better shot at growing up healthy.”

Article: *Take the ACE Quiz – And Learn What It Does and Doesn't Mean* by Laura Starecheski

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesnt-mean>

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Reflection and Connection

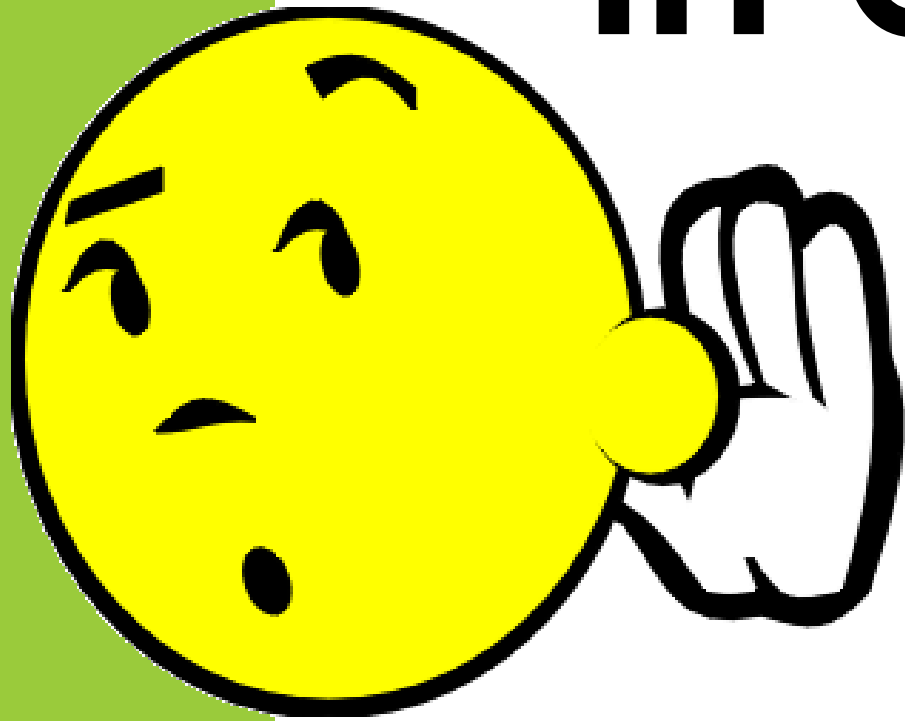
- Are any of your staff having personal experiences similar to his/her students?



Reflection and Connection

- What classroom behaviors are the teachers and your school staff experiencing and facing each day?
- Impact on staff?
- Still green?

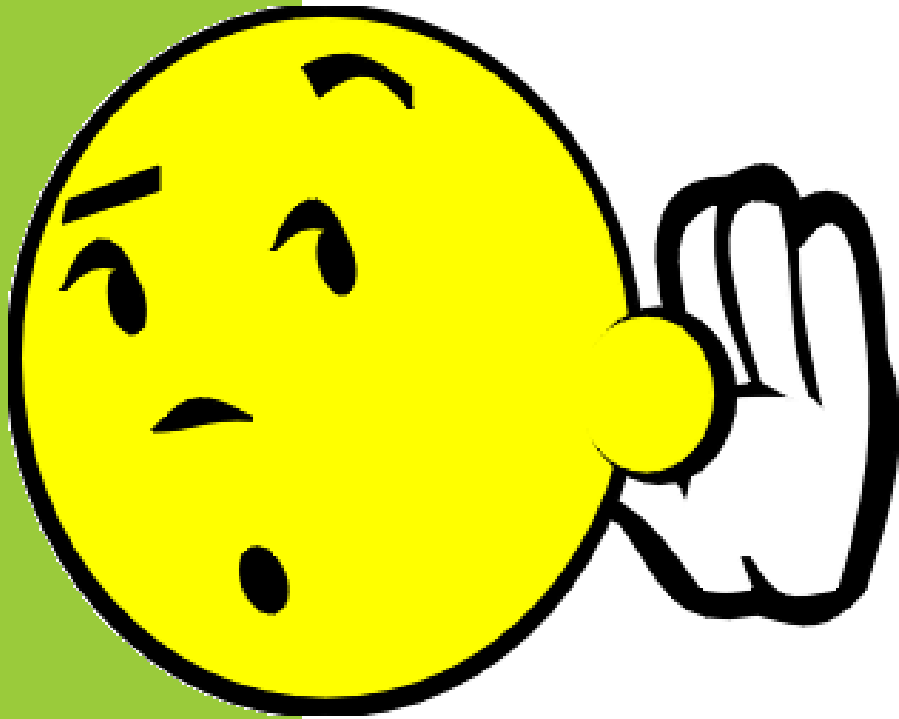
How do you check in on your Staff?



Intent vs. Impact



Intent vs. Impact



Relationships

Reality Check



Teachers

- don't always have the “perfect” physical classroom.
- don't always have the “perfect” ratio.
- don't always have the endless budget.
- What do teachers have control over?

Our Actions and Relationships

- Teachers can control how they are in the classroom.
- Teachers can build relationships with co-teachers.
- Teachers can build relationships with parents and families.
- Teachers must build relationships with the children.

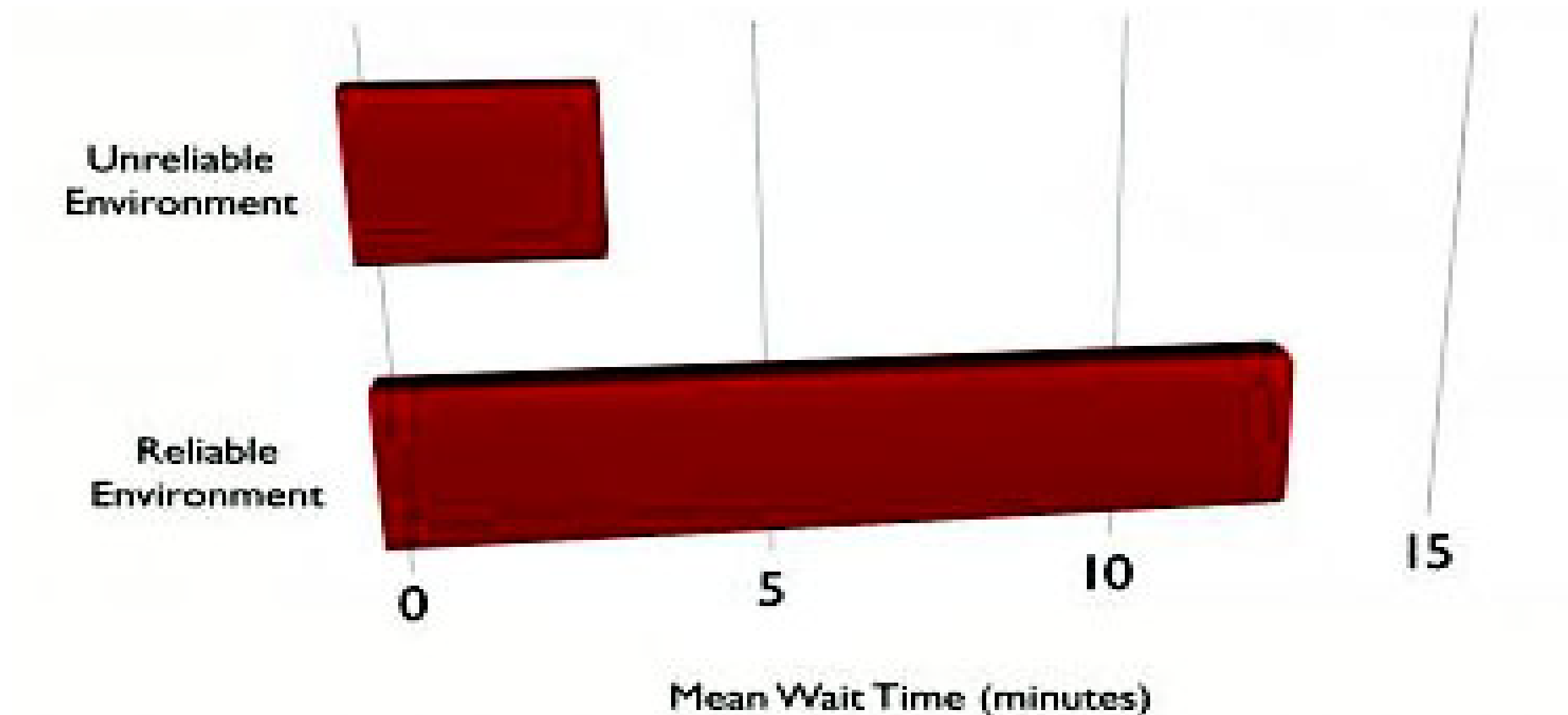
Relationships are the Foundation

Relationships are built **while** implementing high quality instruction *and* **needed** in order to implement high quality instruction.

- Know the students? What motivates them? What interests them?
- Do you know your staff?

Expectations

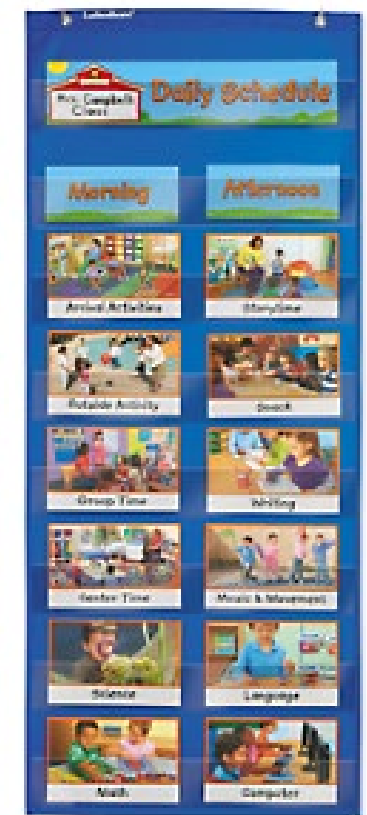
How does this translate into students' behavior in the classroom?



Daily Schedule



- Do you see consistency?
- Can students anticipate what will happen or what changes are occurring?
- Used daily?





- When are your staff ***MOST*** consistent and reliable?
- When do your staff ***STRUGGLE*** with being consistent and reliable?
- How can you support your staff?

Reflection

What are your next steps thinking about:

- impact of toxic stress
- supporting staff
- Intent vs. impact
- Relationships and expectations

Questions?

Thoughts?



References

Keren, N., Hopp, D. & Tyano, S. (2017). *Does Time Heal All? Exploring Mental Health in the First 3 Years*. Washington, D.C.: Zero to Three.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu>

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/protecting-brains-stimulating-minds-the-early-life-roots-of-success-in-school/>

<https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com>

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