# An Introduction to Self-Reg

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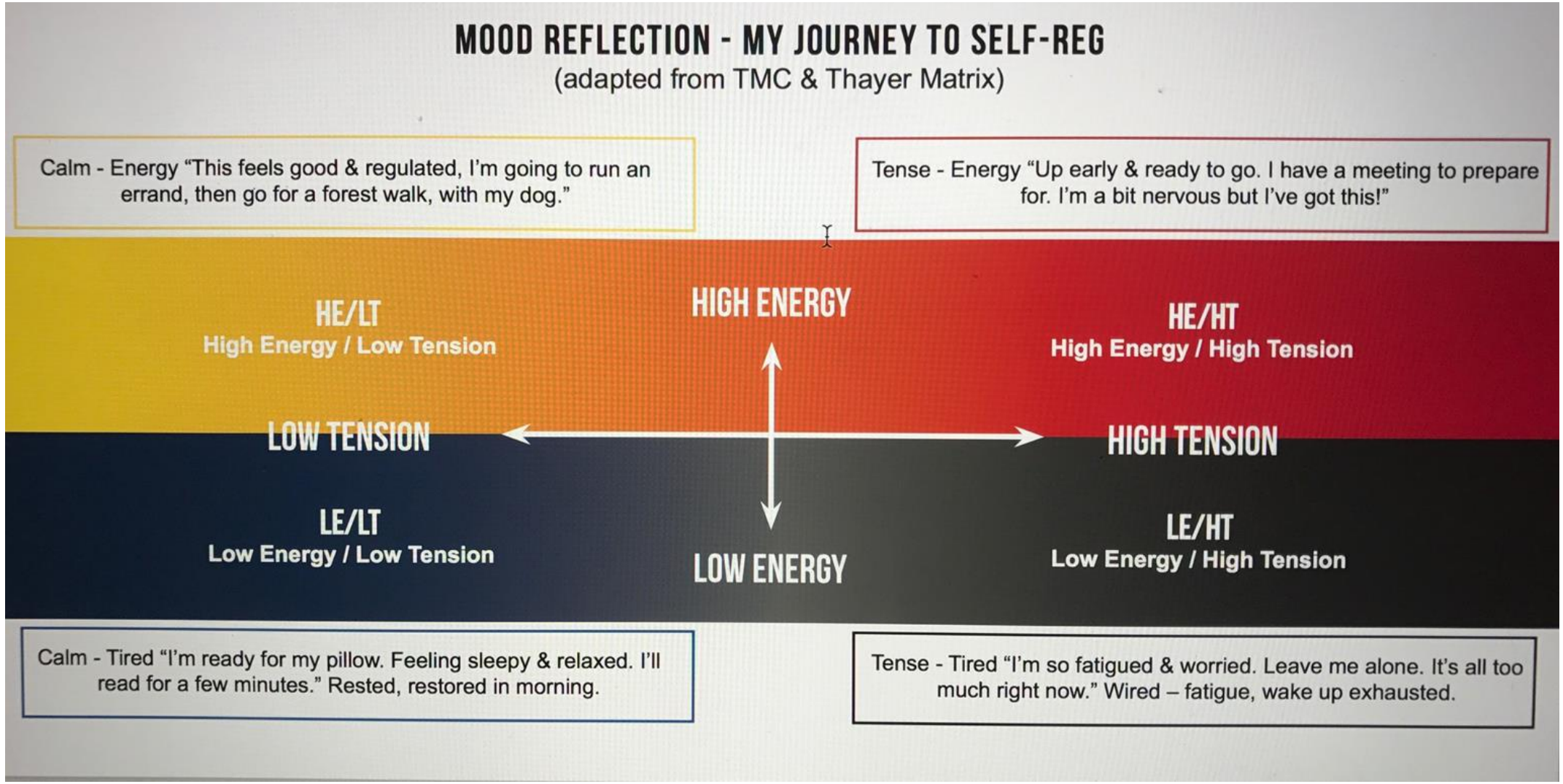
# What is Self-Reg and why is it important?

With Kim Smith

Education professionals all over the world are experiencing a huge increase in student stress, challenging behaviours and mental health concerns and are looking for ways to effectively support students and families. We often feel under-prepared to deal with these areas. Educators are feeling stressed and
In the last few years there have been some amazing discoveries that are transforming the way we look at stress, behaviour and brain development that help us understand how to reduce the stress that both adults and children feel on a daily basis. Self-Reg helps us build school communities that help provide both educators and students with the experiences they need to create happy and healthy learning and working environments.

# What is Self-Regulation and why is it important?

**Find more information about the basics of Self-Reg Here**




Paying attention to our energy levels will help us understand our stress and how to reduce it. When we have good energy we are more likely to be able to use appropriate strategies to reduce our stress.

# Why is Self-Regulation Important?

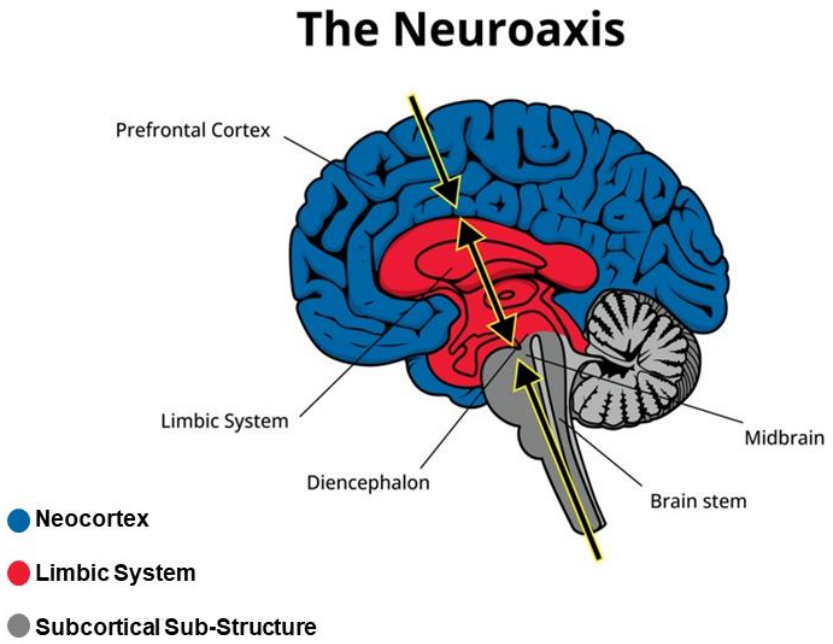
| For Adults - Parents and Educators | For Children |
|---|---|
| • They are able to create safe and comfortable learning environments for children.<br>• They understand and support behaviour problems that arise in an empathetic way, recognizing stressors that children may be experiencing.<br>• They are more likely to be flexible and able to adapt to changes and challenges.<br>• They use a variety of positive strategies to deal with difficult people and situations.<br>• By being calm and regulated they are able to co-regulate with children which helps them feel safe and supported in the classroom, at home, in the community.<br>• They are less likely to become ill. | • By understanding children's stressors we can learn to support children's healthy development and address the root causes of many behaviour problems.<br>• Children who can self-regulate tend to be more successful in school and in life. They can learn in a variety of social contexts and develop cognitive skills needed for academic learning and problem solving.<br>• They are able to recover from unfamiliar situations faster and easier.<br>• They know what will help them to feel calm and comfortable in most situations and they can access these strategies on their own.<br>• They are able to think through possible consequences and consider alternative actions that would be more appropriate.<br>• They are able to build and maintain strong and positive relationships with others. |

| SELF-REG IS | SELF-REG IS NOT |
|---|---|
| a process for understanding stress and managing energy and tension | NOT a program |
| a process for understanding and responding to the stress system roots of<br>•behaviour<br>•student learning skills, motivation, and accountability problems<br>•student social struggles<br>•strong emotions that impact energy systems | NOT<br>•a behaviour management program<br>•a student accountability, motivation, learning skills program<br>•a social skills program<br>•a social-emotional learning program |
| mindfulness—lived Self-Reg is mindful self-regulation | NOT a mindfulness program |
| inclusive of all students and adults | NOT a segregated classroom for behaviour students |
| inseparable from relationships, teaching, the learning environment, and day-to-day school life | NOT a series of lessons |

# SEEKS *Balance*, SEEKS *Safety*

**WE BRAIN**

**ME BRAIN**



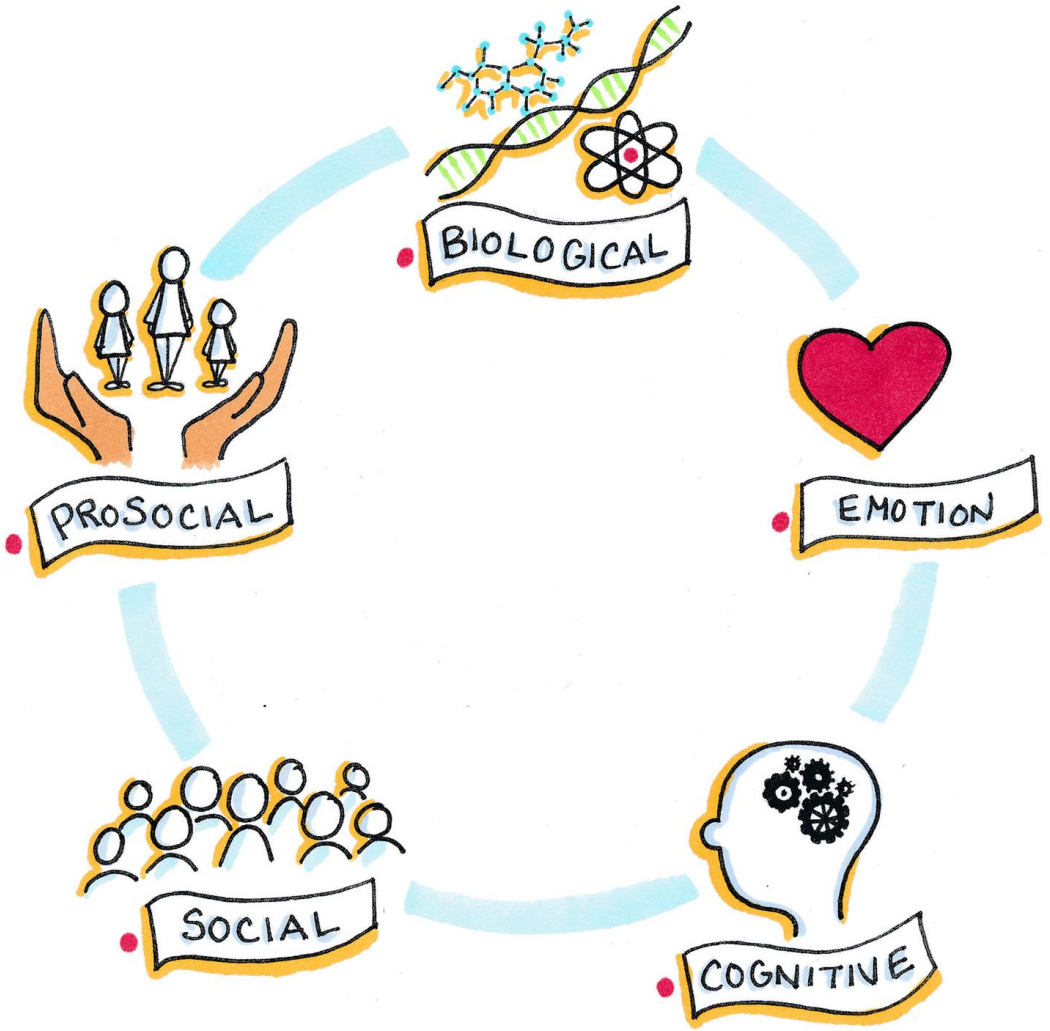
# Stress Responses

| Flight |
| --- |
| Fearful |
| Anxious |
| Avoidance |
| Run away |
| Procrastination |
| Withdrawal |
| Hide |

| Flight |
| --- |
| Fearful |
| Anxious |
| Avoidance |
| Run away |
| Procrastination |
| Withdrawal |
| Hide |

| Freeze |
| --- |
| Helpless |
| Overwhelm |
| Stuck |
| Shut down |
| Zone Out |
| Unresponsive |
| Isolate |

| Fawn |
| --- |
| Co-dependence |
| Anxious |
| People-pleasing |
| No boundaries |
| Flattering others |
| Can't speak up |
| Easily controlled |

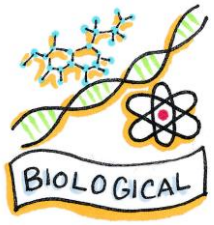



We feel stressors in 5 Domains:

Biological
Emotion
Cognitive
Social
Prosocial

We see and show stress behaviour as a result of the stressors we experience.

# EXAMPLES OF STRESSORS TO REDUCE



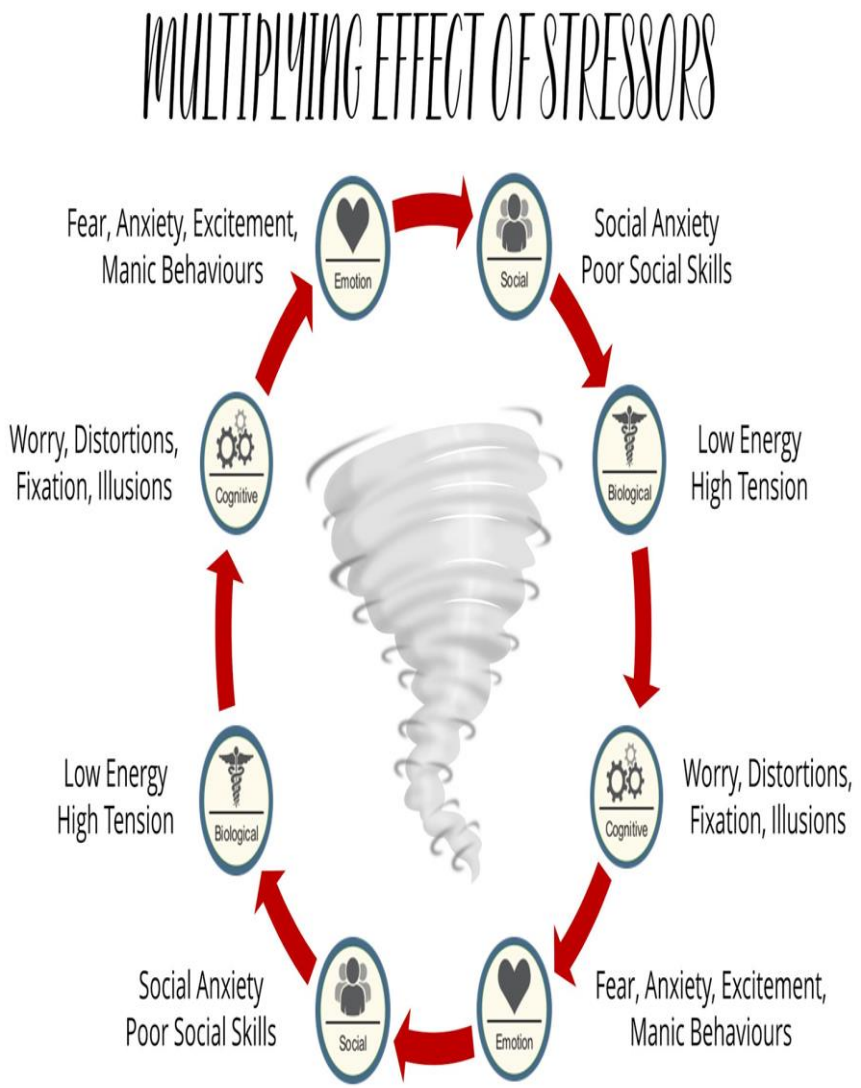

Loud noise, crowds, too much visual stimulation, not enough exercise, exhaustion, junk food, allergies, headaches, illnesses, smells, being cold, hunger, etc

Strong emotions, both positive (over-excited) & negative (anger, fear).

Difficulty processing certain kinds of information, recognizing patterns, a challenging task, not understanding something

Difficulty picking up on social cues, or understanding effect of behaviour on others, working in groups, having to sit close to someone, sharing, etc.

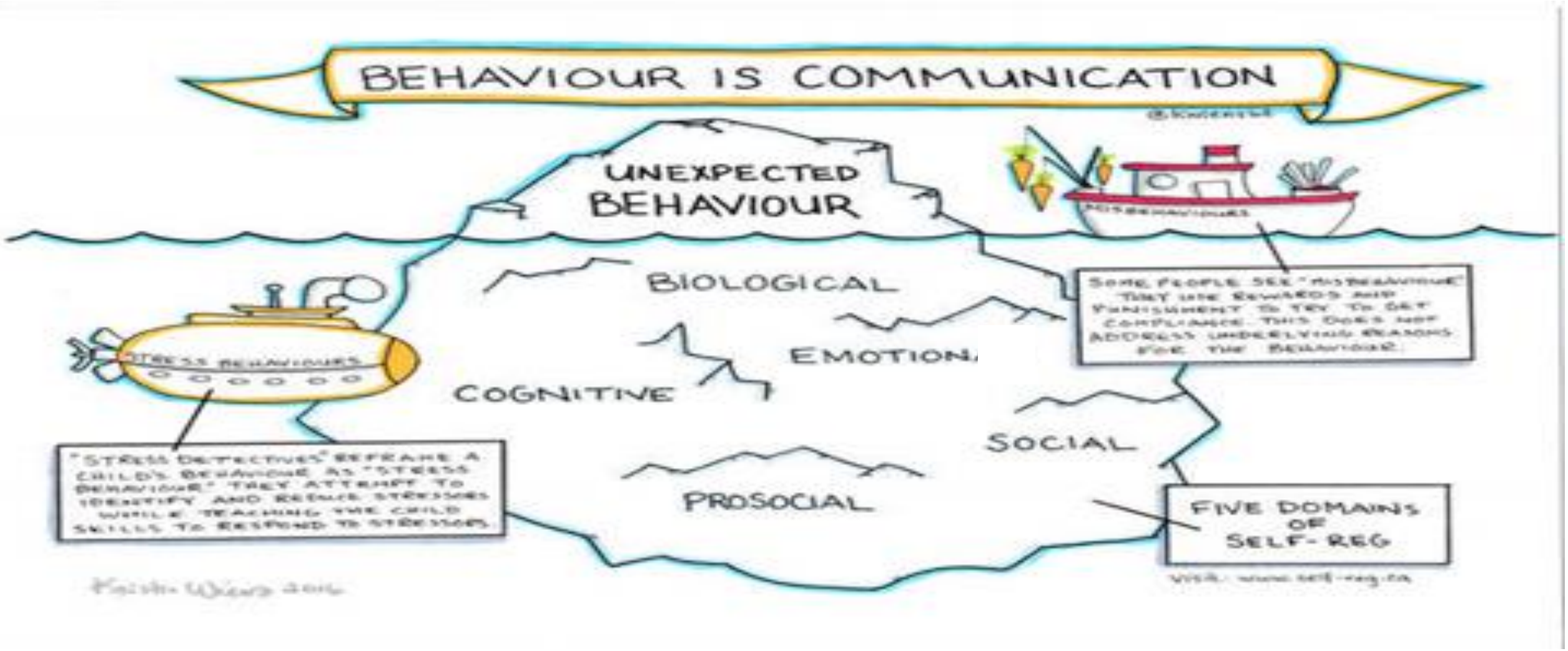
Difficulty coping with other people's stress; sense of injustice, empathy is an "expensive" emotion.




We can experience stress in one or all of the domains at the same time.

For example, if it is too loud in the classroom and that bothers us then we may become irritable and not be able to complete a task (biological, social, cognitive)

Our brain reacts to these stressors.
We may see or show behaviours that fall into the fight, flight or freeze categories.


BEHAVIOUR IS COMMUNICATION
UNEXPECTED BEHAVIOUR
BIOLOGICAL
EMOTIONA
COGNITIVE
SOCIAL
PROSOCIAL
FIVE DOMAINS OF SELF- REG

# The Paradigm Shift of Self-Reg

## Misbehaviour

The key to *misbehaviour* is that the child *could* have acted differently: that she was *aware* that she shouldn't have done something, and was perfectly capable of acting differently.

## Stress behaviour

The key to *stress behaviour* is that the child *is not* fully aware of what she is doing, or why: she has *limited* capacity to act differently.

Stress behaviour is caused by too high a stress–load. The big challenge in doing Self–Reg is figuring out why the child's stress is so high.

# 21st Century Stressors - Gluckman

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sensory Issues | Social Anxiety | Maladaptive coping strategies | Lack or poor quality sleep |
| Lack of exercise | Superstimulants (e.g., Junk Food and Junk Media) | Video games | Social Media |
| Job Stress | Lack of community | Loneliness | Family stress |

## Over-Stressed Signs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Find it hard to fall asleep or stay asleep | Become much more irritable | Heightened stress reactivity |
| Hard to stay focused | Memory lapses | Hard to problem solve |
| Lagging energy | Intense cravings | Constant worrying |
| Intrusive thoughts | Emotional jags | Inability to feel pleasure |

**What are you signs of over stress?  How does stress show in your behaviour?**

# What Does Calm Feel Like to You?

Adjective. **calm**, peaceful, and tranquil **mean** quiet and free from disturbance. **calm** is used when someone is not excited or upset even when there is cause for it. They stayed **calm** during the fire. peaceful is used when someone or something has reached a quiet state after some period of disturbance.
Webster's Dictionary

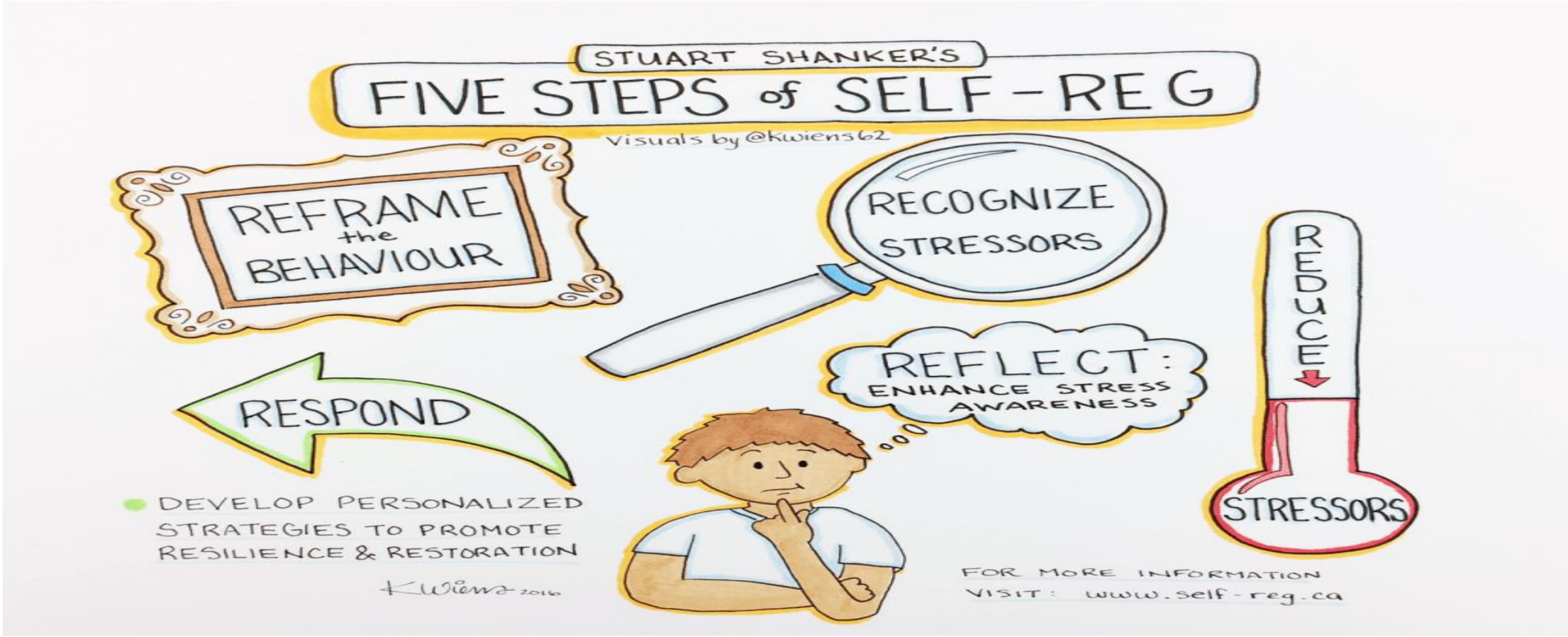
**When you're ready, put in the chat what you do to restore your energy and be calm**

THE MEHRIT CENTRE

SELF-REG *Alumni*

# Shanker Self-Reg: A process for understanding STRESS and managing TENSION and ENERGY.

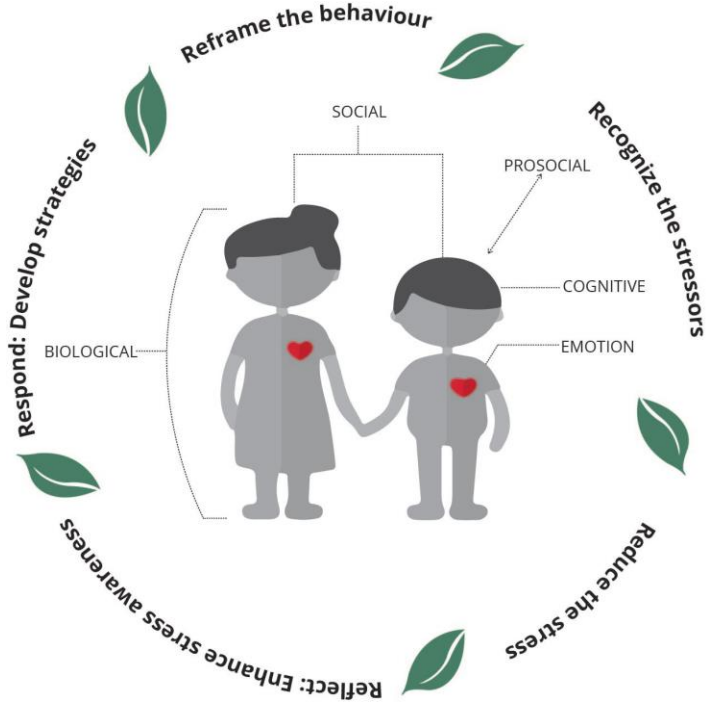
SELF-REG.CA

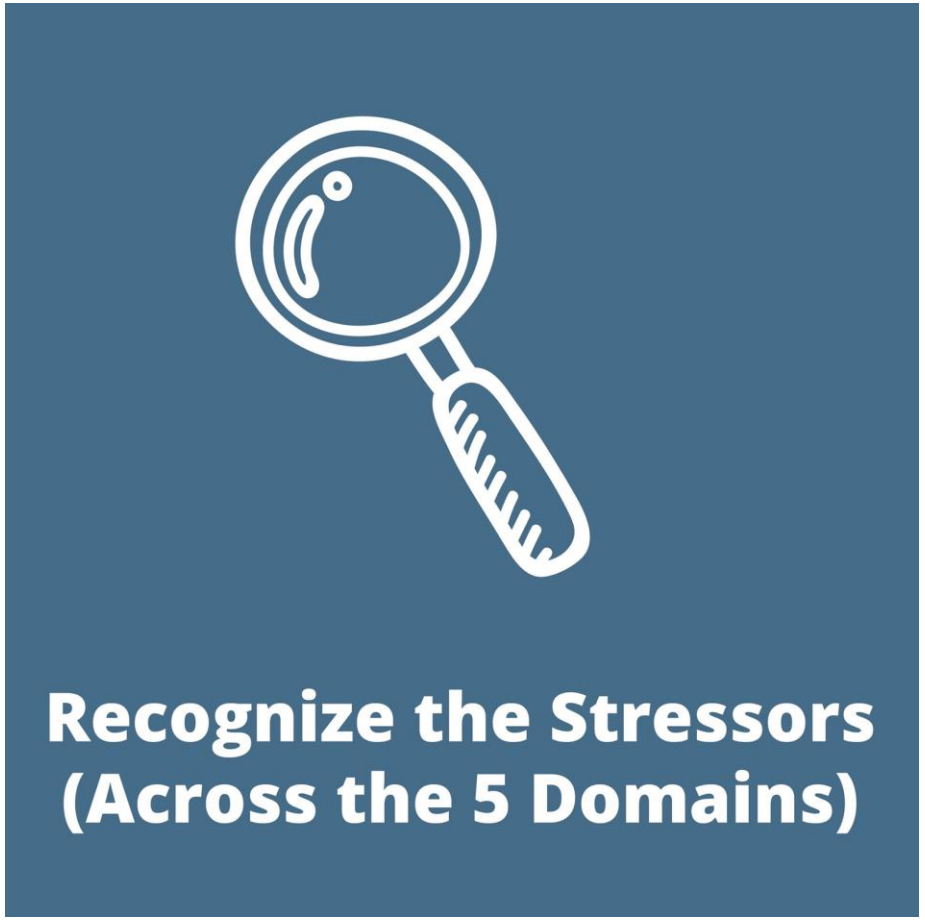



Find more information about the Five Steps of Self-Reg Here

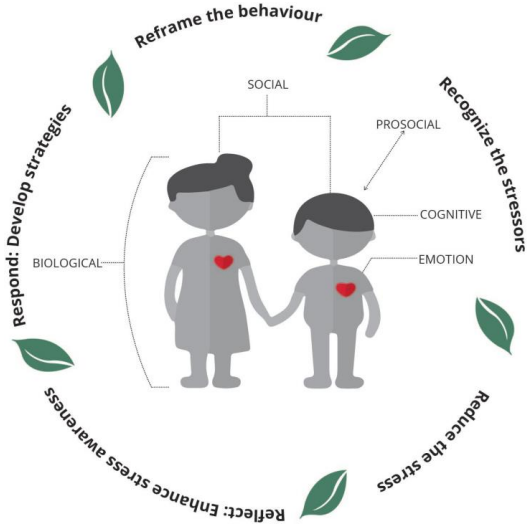
The Self-Regulation Institute presents
WHAT IS SELF-REG?
a Self-Reg in 60 Seconds Video with Dr. Stuart Shanker

- Move beyond the behaviour to the roots
- Reflect: **Why** and **why now?**

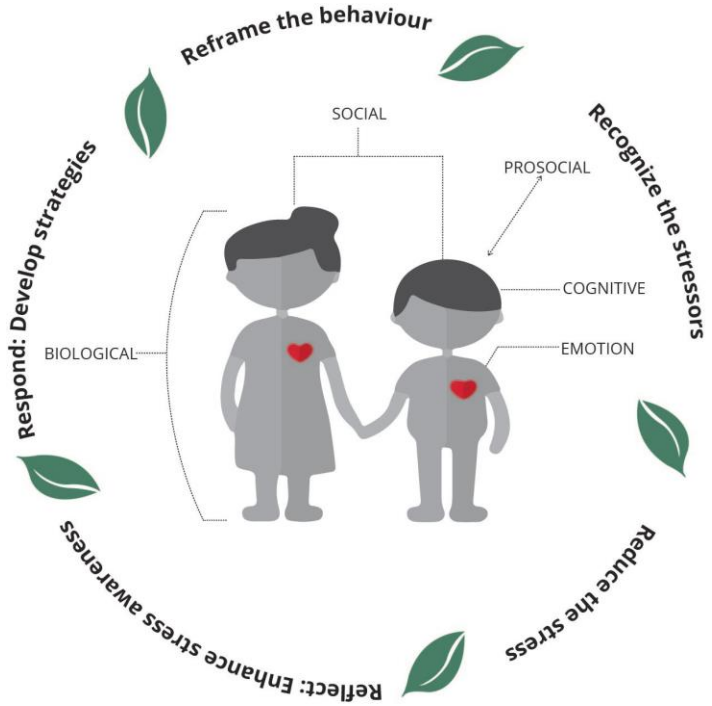




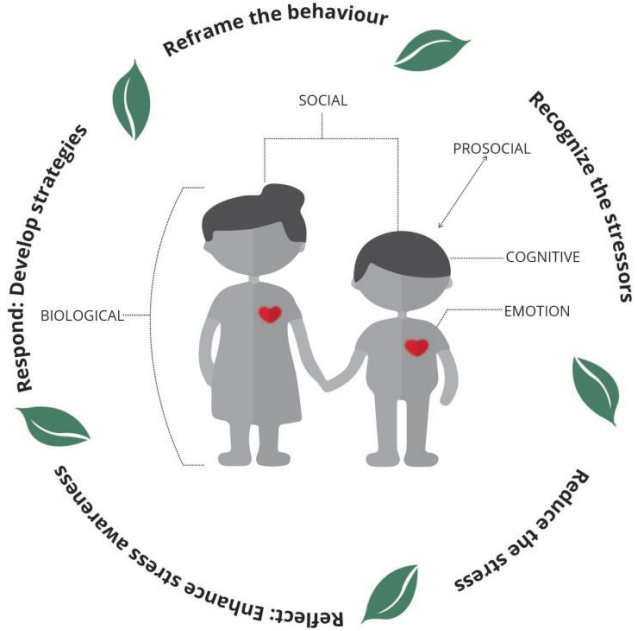

- **Recognize** when something is a positive stress and when it is a negative stress: for ***this*** person at ***this*** moment.
- Be able to see when a child is caught in a stress cycle, and why.



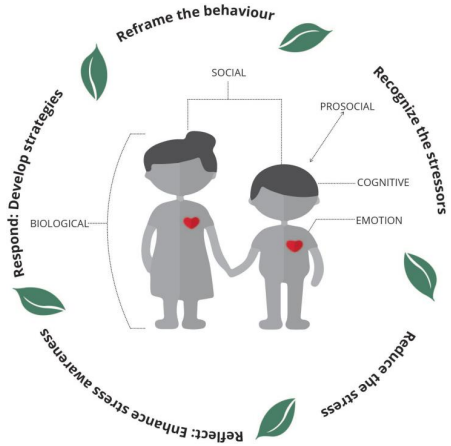
- **Reduce** whatever negative stresses you can and "dial down the tension"



- **Reflect**: on signs of an individual approaching the point of being overstressed ***AND*** the signs that *you* are approaching such a point.

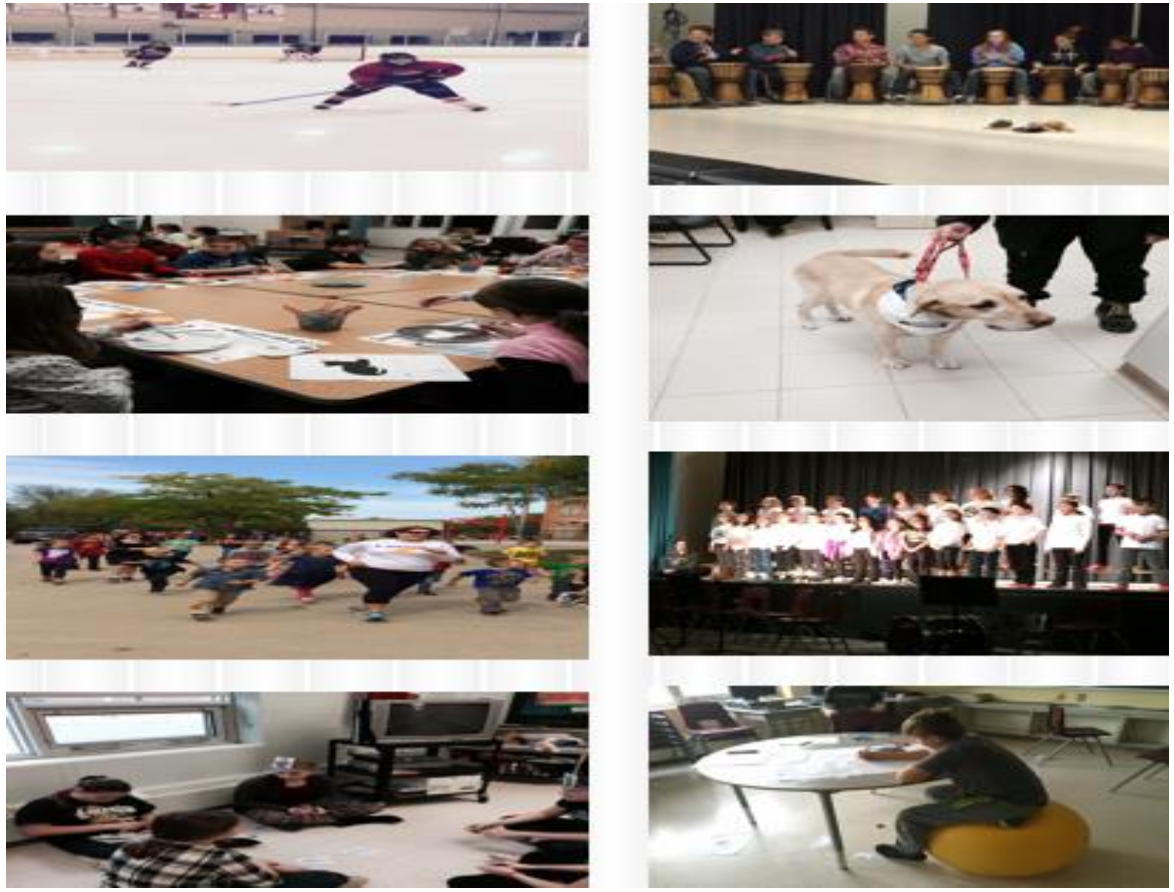


- **Respond** when balance is upset
- Help the person find opportunities to restore not just in terms of "what to do in the moment", but also to establish well-being thinking, including self-nurturing, as second nature.



# What can we do in our schools to help children regulate?

- Alternative seating - standing desks, wiggle cushions, yoga balls
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Therabands on chair legs
- Calm spaces in classrooms or in the school
- Listening to music
- Talking a walk
- Having a snack, getting a drink
- Using a timer to time a task or break
- Building in preferred activities into the day
- Using fidget tools
- Colouring
- Bring nature into the school or take students into nature
- Allow space for emotions - whatever they are

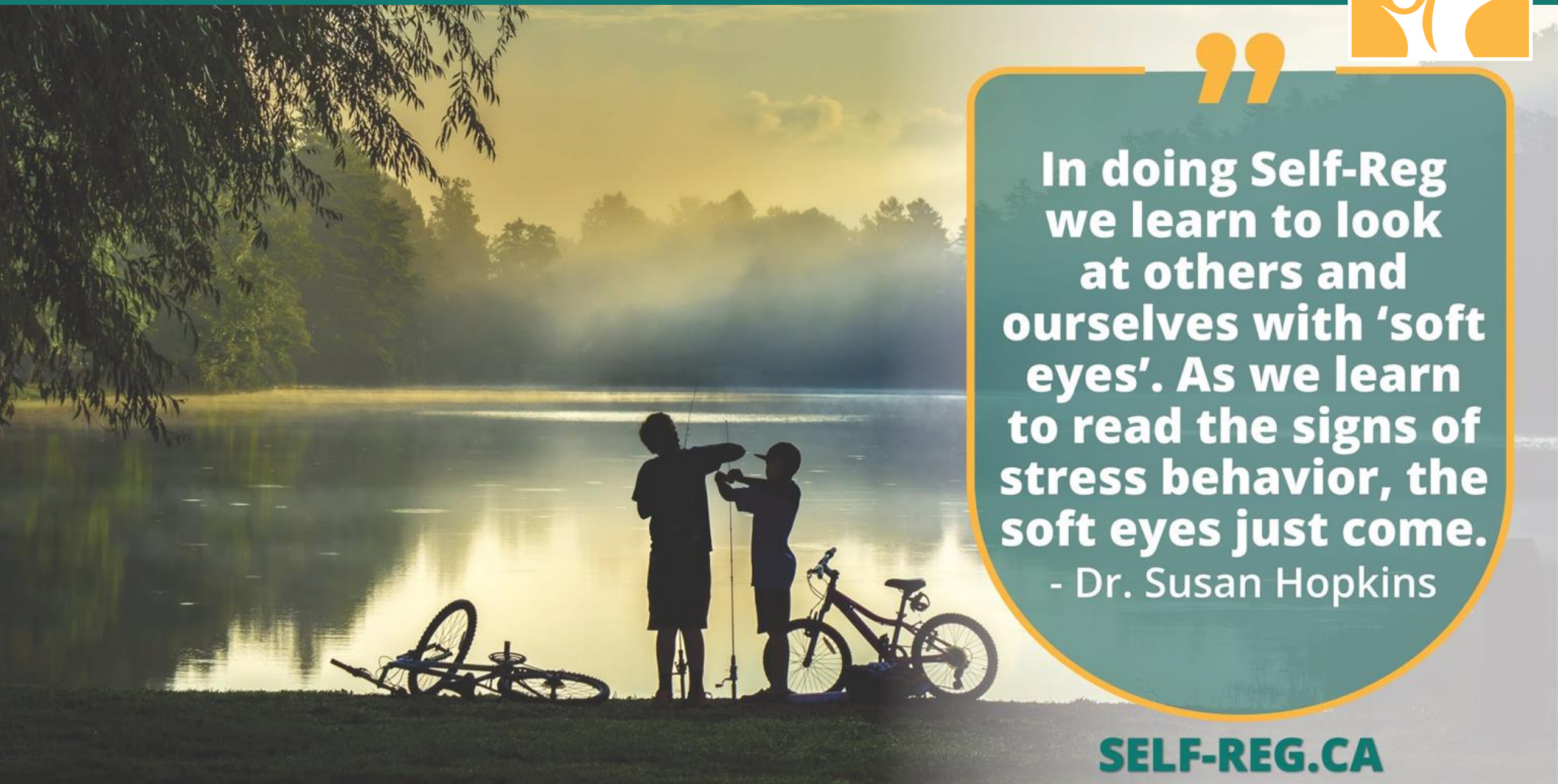


# What can we do in our schools to help children regulate?

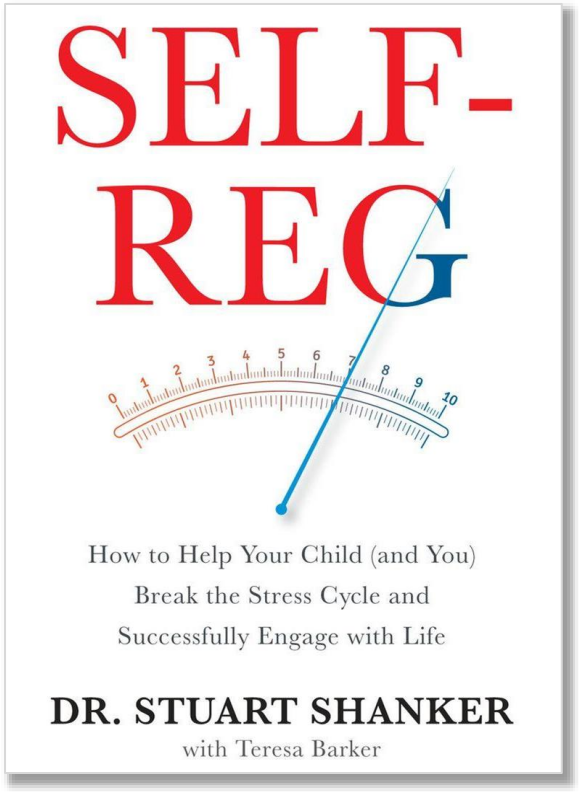
**Consider using spaces differently and using different equipment.**

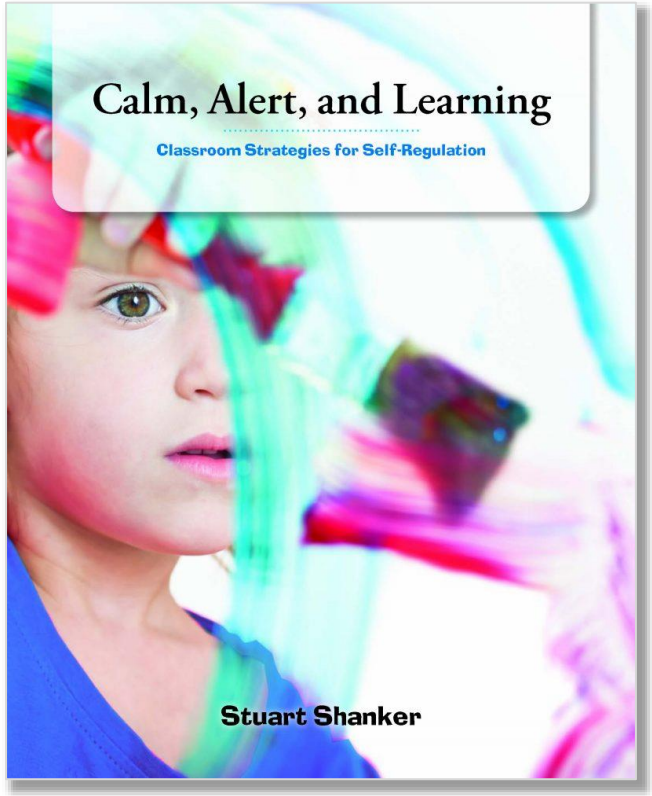
# What can we do in our schools to help adults regulate?

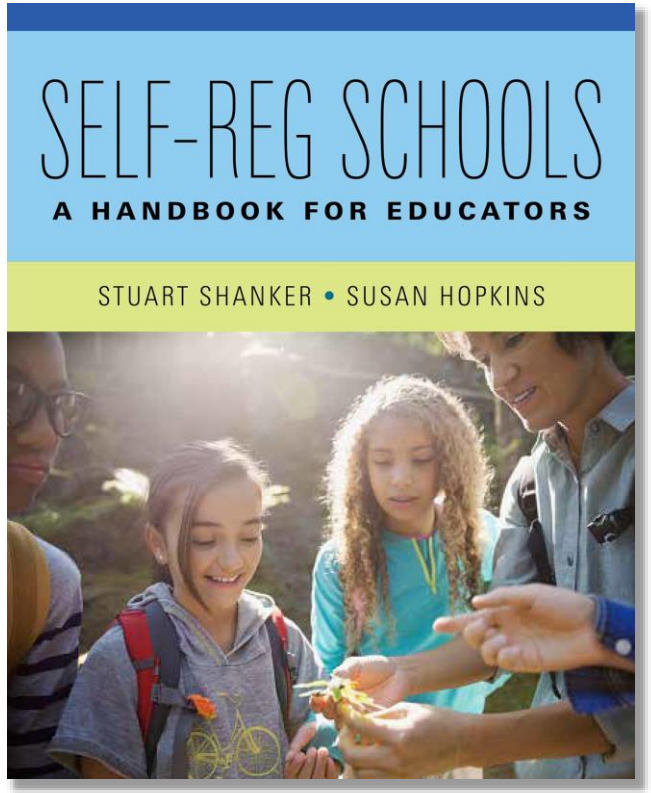
- Keep the school well organized and clean
- Follow timelines and communicate clearly and regularly
- Have appropriate resources available - in good shape, well organized and easily accessible
- Recognize and show appreciation often and in different ways (cover outside duty, give positive feedback, offer PD that they may be interested in, connect in a personal way)
- Respond to emails and questions in a timely manner
- Be visible in the halls, classrooms, yard, bus loop
- Work closely with students who may be struggling with stress behaviour
- Support staff when they are dealing with difficult situations and difficult people
- Make meetings meaningful and focused
- Organize, support staff social functions - when it's allowed bring in food
- Recognize when someone is struggling and offer the support they may need
- Apologize when you need to
- Observe your own voice and how you use it
- Have a sense of humour

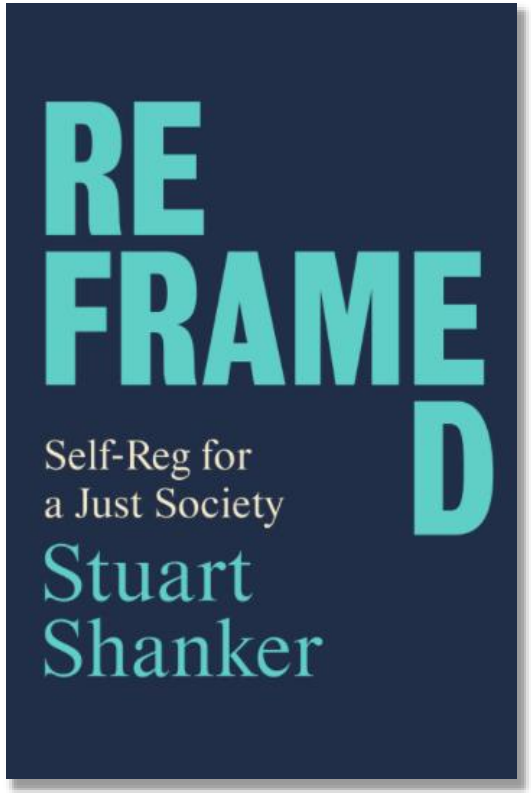

In doing Self-Reg we learn to look at others and ourselves with 'soft eyes'. As we learn to read the signs of stress behavior, the soft eyes just come.
- Dr. Susan Hopkins
SELF-REG.CA

# SELF-REG BOOKS



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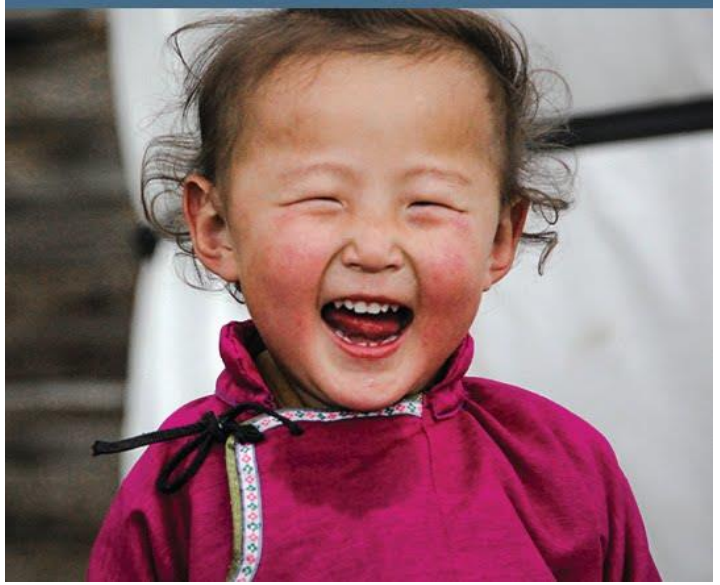
## WITH OUR SELF-REG ONLINE COURSES

### SELF-REG FOUNDATIONS CERTIFICATE

Foundations, our flagship Self-Reg course, has been a game-changer for thousands of learners. This four-course, online program, Stuart Shanker and Susan Hopkins take you deep into the foundational science of self-regulation and stress.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE



This course will show you how to revolutionize your practice by understanding, and responding to, the unique and sometimes hidden stressors that shape the caregiving and learning experiences — and hence, the temperaments of the children you work with.

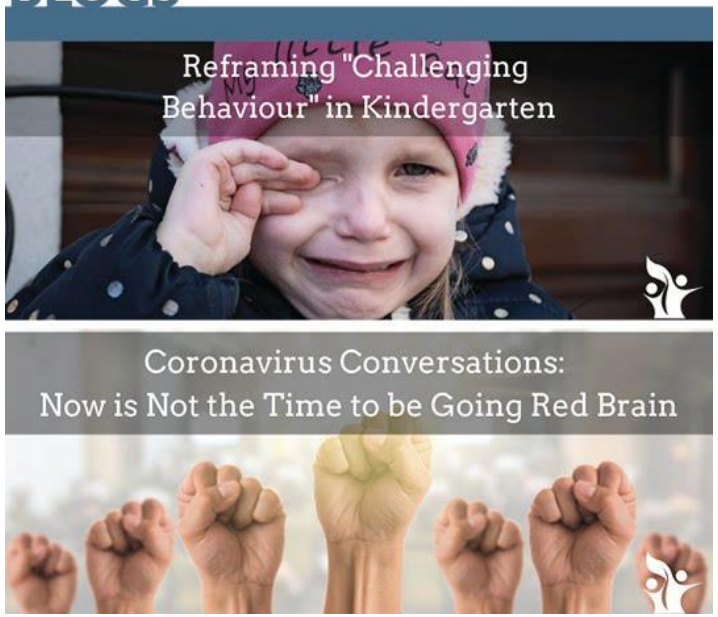
### LEADERSHIP FOR SELF-REG SCHOOLS CERTIFICATE

Every educational leader has always had the same goal: a school in which everyone flourishes. This program will give you the Self-Reg knowledge and guidelines needed for your school to become a centre of deep learning, in all its many facets.

# DIVE DEEPER

## WITH OUR FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

### BLOGS




BLOGS

### INFOSHEETS

INFOSHEETS

### QUOTES AND GRAPHICS

QUOTES & GRAPHICS

# SHANKER SELF-REG® ONLINE COMMUNITIES

The Co-Reg Community is a place to discuss and share with like-minded friends (and connect with new friends), have access to an extensive library of Self-Reg resources, and be a part of something special.

Our Self-Reg Parenting Facebook Group connects parents who share Dr. Stuart Shanker's vision of supporting kids to become calm, focused and alert through developing self-regulation (not self-control).

Join discussions grounded in the Shanker Self-Reg® approach, drawing on decades of neuroscience and child development research to create a roadmap for managing energy, tension and stress for ourselves and our children.

# KEEP IN TOUCH

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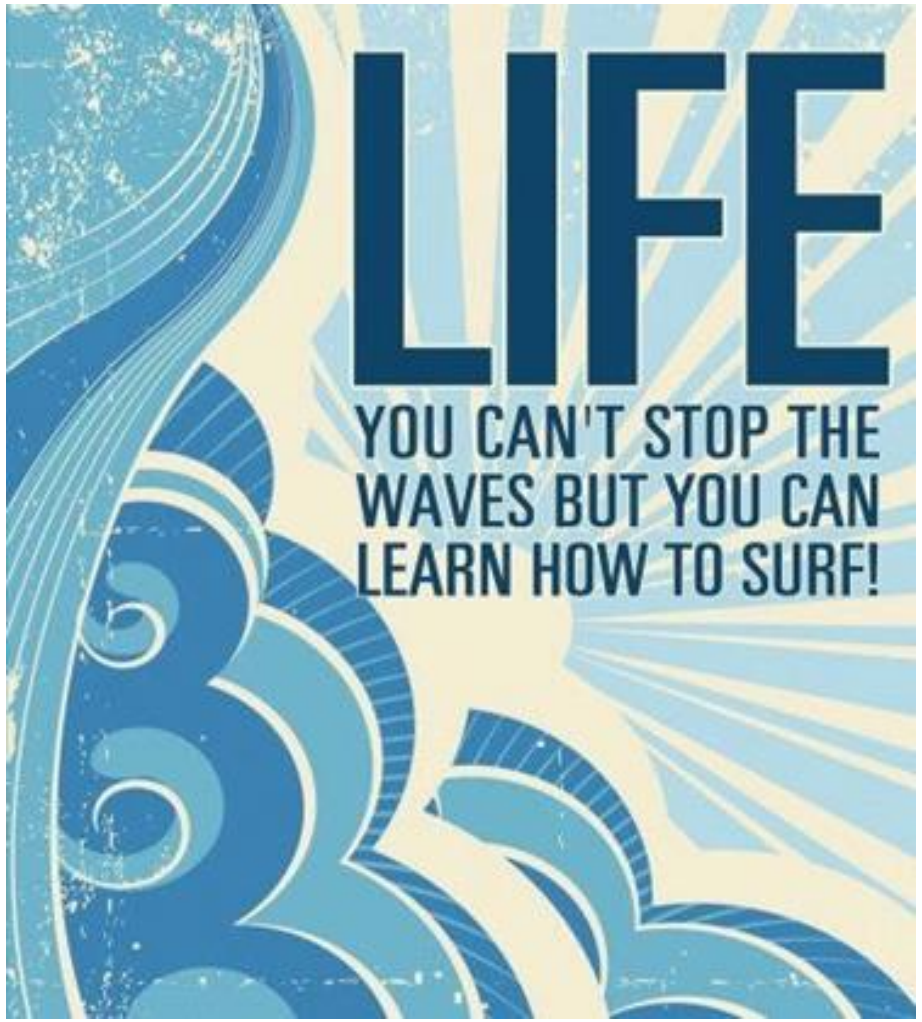


## 6 CRITICAL ELEMENTS

1. The ability to know you are calm and alert, while feeling this way.
2. The ability to recognize what is causing you stress, while stressed.
3. The ability to recognize stressors in and out of the classroom.
4. The desire to deal with your stressors.
5. The ability to develop strategies for dealing with said stressors.
6. The ability to recover efficiently and effectively.

Calm, Alert and Learning: Stuart Shanker