

# Supporting Young People who are Neurodiverse



Noelene Armstrong  
NT Lived Experience Network

1

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

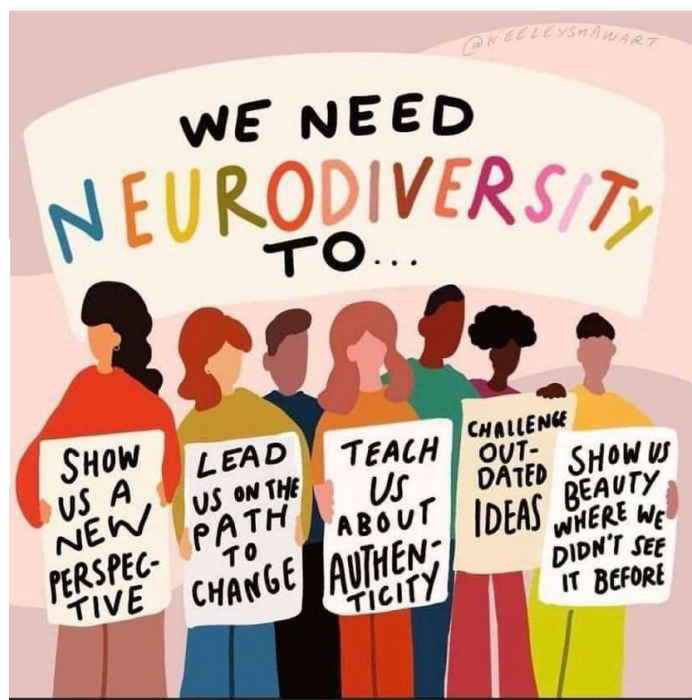
# Acknowledgement of Country



2

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Acknowledgement of people with Diverse Abilities



3

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Acknowledgement of people with Lived Experience

Understanding the perspectives of people with Lived Experience is a national priority.

Partnering with people with Lived Experience to inform decision making is central to the reforms outlined in the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.



4

## A bit about me ...

### Noelene Armstrong

- NT Peer Worker
- Mental Health & Peer Work Vocational Trainer
- Lived Experienced Advocate
- Mental Health First Aid Instructor



5

## Workshop Objectives



Provide evidence based knowledge



Lived experience perspectives



Challenge your thinking

Support your path to further learning ...



6

## Workshop Outline

- Part 1 – Preliminaries & background to NTLEN
- Part 2 – Understanding Neurodiversity & Human Rights
- Part 3 – Experiencing the world differently
- Part 4 – Fostering self-awareness & creating inclusive environments
- Part 5 – Further resources and training/education



7

## Housekeeping



15 min break



Full copy of the slides will be sent out.

We will be using slido to make the session interactive.

**slido**

1. Open a browser on your device
2. Go to [www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)
3. Enter #2058399

8



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

# Housekeeping for zoom

6. If I am making a 'zoom mistake' and you can't hear/see me or the screen, please unmute yourself and let me know asap.

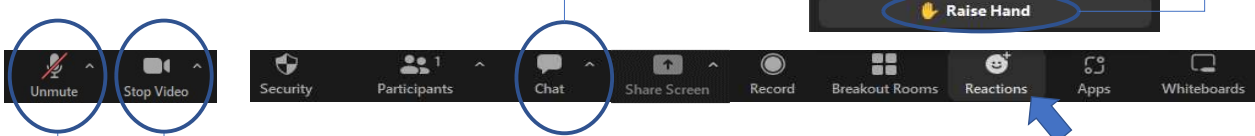
2. Use the chat function to ask questions. (I will answer them after the break & session end).

3. Raise your hand if you need to get my attention.

4. Please leave your camera on unless you are doing something that would be a distraction to others.

1. Please set your microphone to mute, unless we are having a discussion and it's your turn to speak.

5. Please send me a direct message if you need to leave early.






9

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

# NT Lived Experience Network


The NT Lived Experience Network (NTLEN) is a volunteer operated network made up of people with lived experience of mental health and related issues in the NT.

Our vision is to provide a collective and independent voice in the NT for people with individual lived experience and experience providing care and support to a loved one.

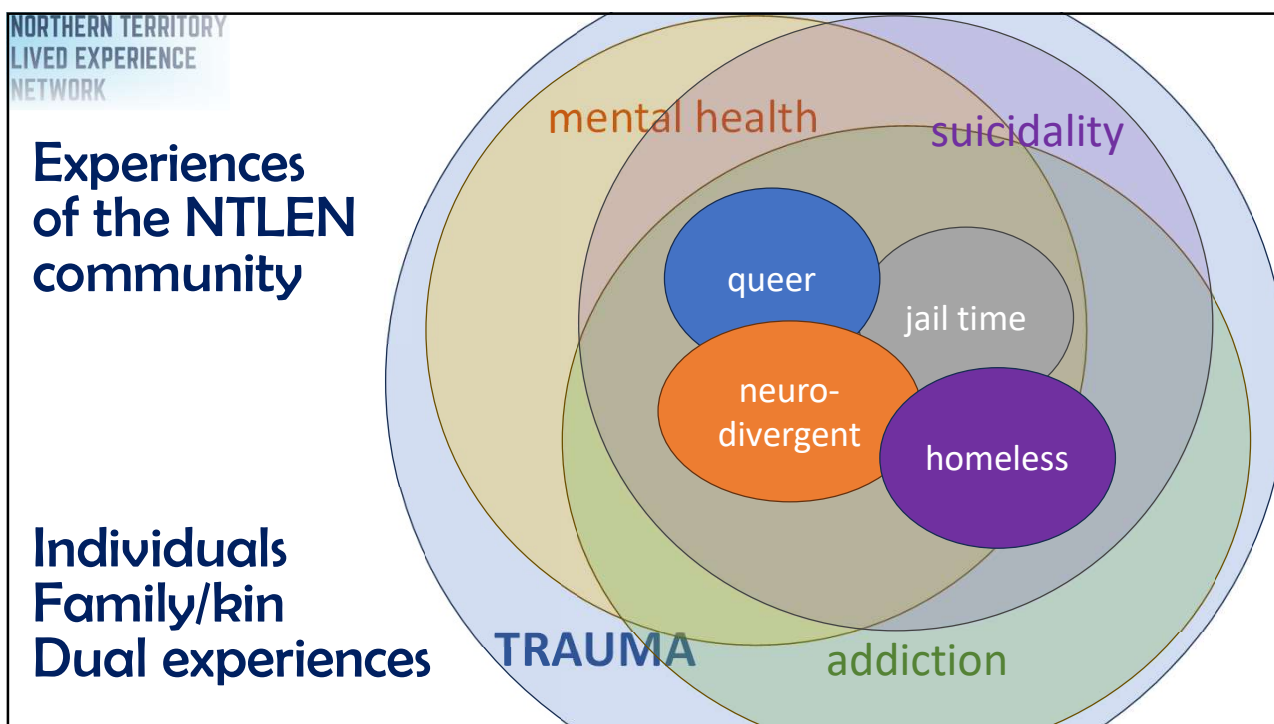




NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
LIVED  
EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

Email: [contact@livedexperiencent.net](mailto:contact@livedexperiencent.net)  
 Web: [www.livedexperiencent.net](http://www.livedexperiencent.net)  
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livedexperiencent>  
 LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/66674136](http://www.linkedin.com/company/66674136)  
 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/livedexperiencent](http://www.instagram.com/livedexperiencent)



10



11

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## NT Lived Experience Network

Emerged during 2020

Seek to provide a collective & independent voice for Territorians with Lived Experience

- MH, AOD, trauma, suicidality, etc.
- Individuals, families, kin and supporters

Systems advocacy (unfunded)

- Own formal submissions
- Promote other lived experience engagement opportunities

Have delivered programs and services in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs

Community & Professional Development Workshops (funded)

- Provide evidence-based information and are presented from a lived experience perspective

Peer-led education and support programs (funded)

- Recovery Together (adults) \*\*
- Circles of Support (family & kin) \*\*
- Empowering YOUTH Program (young people)

Peer workforce development (funded)

- Custom-stepped vocational pathway from program participant to Cert IV qualified peer

**\*\*The peer workforce is still emerging in the NT. Our work is nearly always evaluated.**

12

# Peer Programs

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**


Adults impacted by MH&AOD

### Katherine Recovery Together

A free peer education and recovery program for people who experience mental health, alcohol, drug, gambling or related issues


Delivered over 9 x 3-hour sessions

**Venue:** Flinders University, Katherine Hospital  
**Days & Time:** Thursdays 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
**Dates:** Thurs 2 May to Thurs 27 June 2024




**Lived experience group**

Programs are run by peers - people with their own lived experience of mental health and addiction - who are trained to support recovery.



**Become part of a community**





Connect with others who have similar life experiences, in a safe and confidential space.



**Learn tools to support recovery**

Understand your triggers. Learn through discussions and creative activities. Make a plan to stay well.

Register online at: [livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
 or contact: [noslene@livedexperience.net](mailto:noslene@livedexperience.net) | 0438 022 032  
 Participation is free and all resources and catering will be provided


Family and Kin

### Katherine Circles of Support

A peer support program for family & kin of people who have gambling, alcohol, drug or mental health related problems


Delivered over 9 x 3-hour sessions

**Venue:** Flinders University, Katherine Hospital  
**Days & Time:** Fridays 9:30am - 12:30pm  
**Dates:** Fri 3 May to Fri 28 June 2024



**Peer support group for family & kin**


A safe, supportive and confidential space for family and kin of someone with gambling, alcohol, drug or mental health related problems.



**Learn about addiction & recovery**

Information based on the evidence, in simple everyday language.




- managing overwhelming emotions
- dealing with a crisis
- setting boundaries
- effective communication
- responding to stigma and discrimination
- navigating the service system



**Feel empowered**

Learn tools and strategies to support your own wellbeing and to practice self-care. Learn through discussions and creative activities.

More information & to register: [noslene@livedexperience.net](mailto:noslene@livedexperience.net) | 0438 022 032  
[livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
 Participation is free and all resources and catering will be provided

Young People

### Empowering YOUTH PROGRAM


For neurodivergent young people aged 12 - 17, including those who may:

- be on the autism spectrum
- have ADHD
- have sensory processing needs, or
- who have experienced challenges that affect their wellbeing.

Fun, interactive and hands on program, using creativity to explore concepts such as diversity & inclusion, self-awareness & self-regulation, sensory needs, mental health & wellbeing, strengths & identity, and rights & self-advocacy.





**2024 PROGRAMS (TERM 2)**

<b>PALMERSTON</b> Saturdays 2:30pm - 5:30pm <b>27 April &amp; 4, 11 and 18 May</b> Community Room Palmerston Library	<b>DARWIN</b> Saturdays 2:30pm - 5:30pm <b>25 May &amp; 1, 8, 15 June</b> Crest NT Winnellie	<b>KATHERINE</b> Saturdays 12:30pm - 3:30pm <b>25 May &amp; 1, 8, 15 June</b> the Y, Henry Scott Recreation Centre
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------





- connect with peers
- snacks provided
- lots of breaks
- separate sensory/quiet space available
- celebrate our achievements
- imagine our ideal planet

For more information and to register go to [livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
 The program is FREE but places are limited!  
**CONTACT:** Sarah | 0474 426 316  
[sarah@livedexperience.net](mailto:sarah@livedexperience.net)

13





## From 1 to 5, what is your energy level today?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

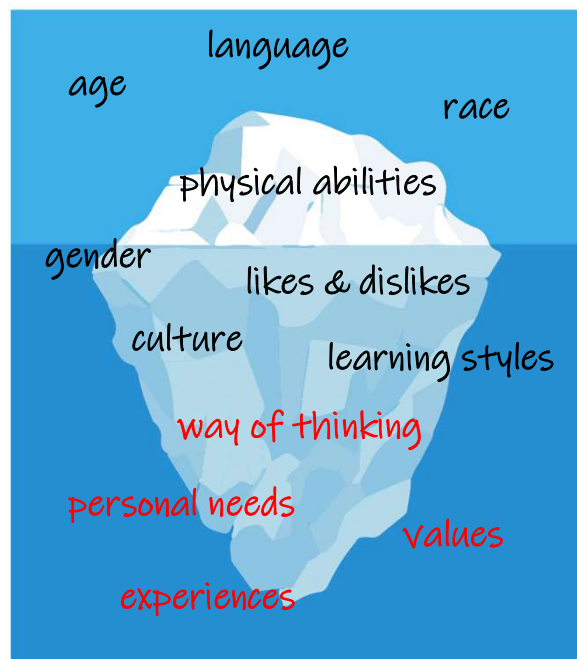
14

## Group Safety

The best things we can do to make this session a safe space is to:

- Not make assumptions about other people's lived experience
- Communicate ways that are curious, but still respectful and not stigmatizing
- Be gentle with yourself if this brings up big feelings based on your personal experiences, or those of loved ones

less visible with depth



15

## A note on language

Language is important.



My preference is to use ...	Instead of ...
Condition	Disorder
Mental distress	Mental illness
Person or Individual	Consumer
Family & Kin	Carers
Diverse Abilities or Different Abilities	Disability

16

## The power of language

The most unfortunate thing about autism is that it is often talked about in negative ways



Let's change the narrative and recognize that autism is a different neurotype; a different, yet valid way of being human



17

## Getting to know the group

Why did you want to attend the session today?

Please say "pass" if you don't feel comfortable to share.

18



## Getting to know the group



slido

### SLIDO QUESTION

Why did you want to attend the session today?

1. Open a browser on your device
2. Go to [www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)
3. Enter #2058399

19

slido



Why did you want to attend today?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

20

## Part 2 – Understanding Neurodiversity and Human Rights

- What's normal?
- What is 'neurodiversity'?
- Why is neurodiversity important?
- Understanding our history
- Human Rights & the Social Model for Disability
- The importance of empowerment

21



## What's 'normal'?

by Yana Buhre Tavanier

22



23

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## The term 'normal' comes from statistics

This value is called the 'Average'

Some People

Most People

Some People

A distribution of information that has this 'bell curve' shape is called a 'normal distribution'.

**'Diversity' is the true normal**

24



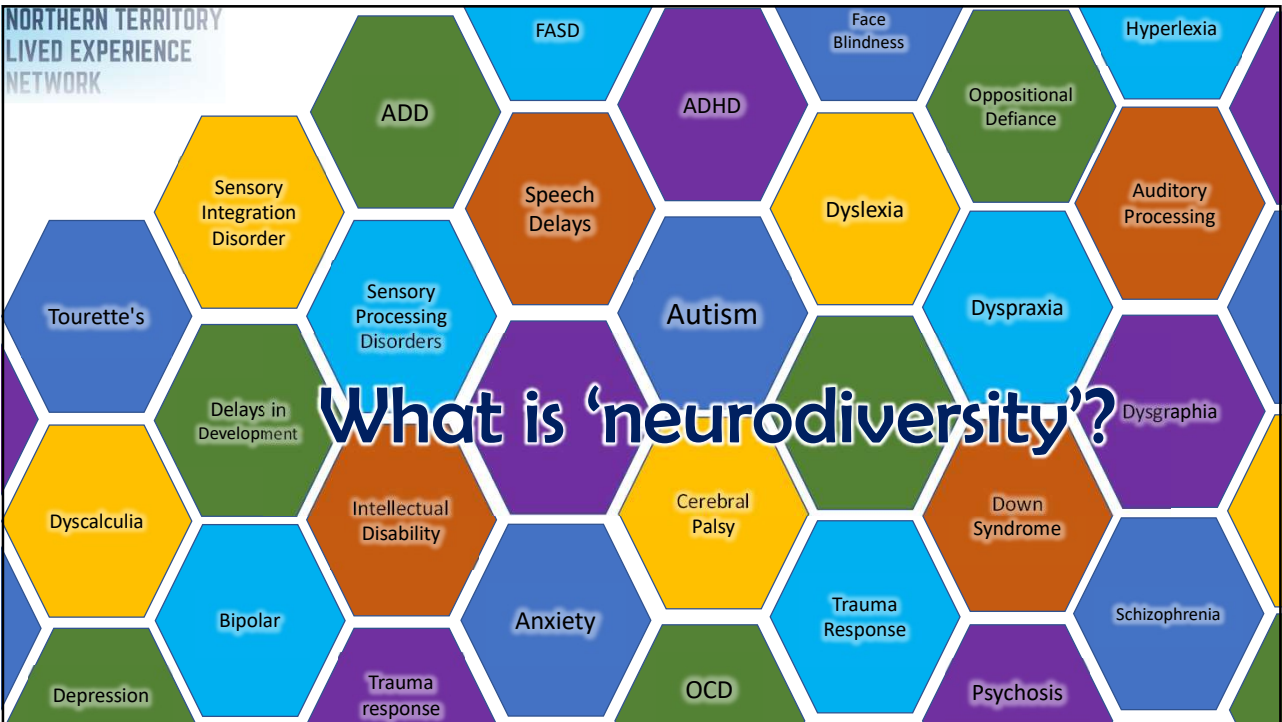
Judy Singer,  
Australian Sociologist &  
Autistic Advocate

# What is 'neurodiversity'?

"Neurodiversity as a concept regards individuals with differences in brain function and behavioural traits as part of normal variation in the human population."

Stanford Neurodiversity Project

25



26

Neurodiversity contrasts with the 'medical model' which labels conditions as 'disorders' that need to be 'prevented, treated and cured'.

The medical view, is the strongest voice influencing political leaders and system decision makers. This filters out to society.

## Why is the concept of neurodiversity important?

Neurodiversity seeks to elevate differences as strengths, yet still acknowledges people experience challenges requiring support.

Neurodiversity doesn't force individuals to conform with a clinical determination of 'normal' – instead it says that society needs to change and become more inclusive.

27

## Understanding our History

Treatment of people in mental distress through the ages ...



5000 BC  
Demonic possession



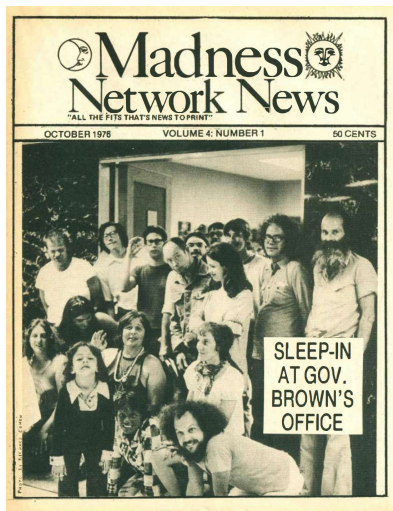
1400s  
'Criminally' insane

28





## Understanding our History



1950s to 2000s  
Disability Human Rights Movement

31

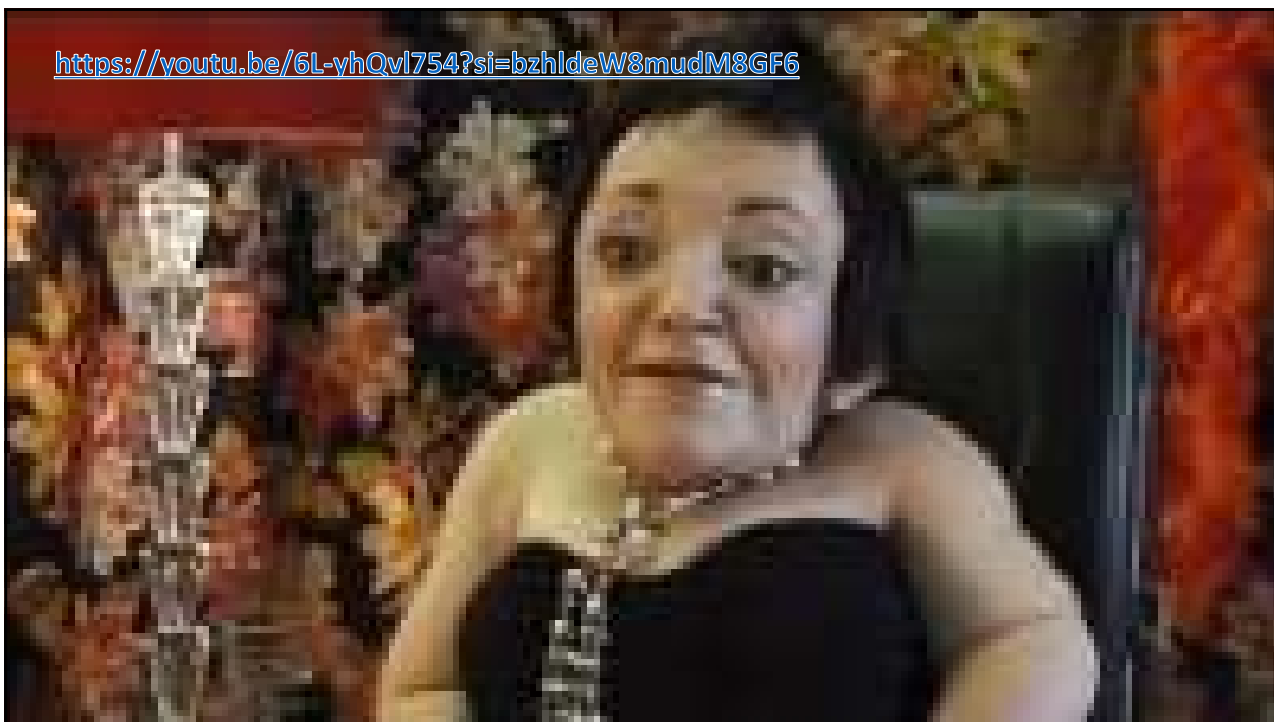


## Defiant Lives

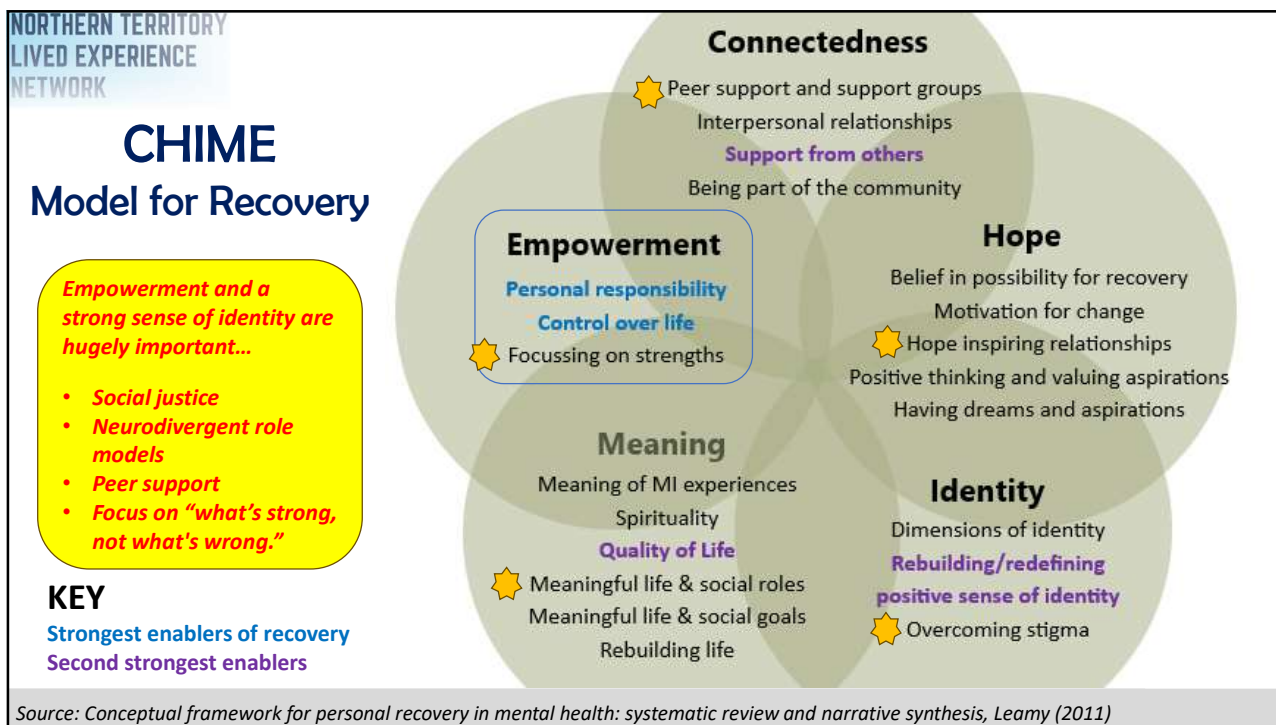
[www.defiantlives.com](http://www.defiantlives.com)

32

<https://youtu.be/6L-yhQvl754?si=bzhIdeW8mudM8GF6>



33



34

© Reframing Autism, 2020



Reframing Autism  
presents...

Shadia Hancock  
(they/them), Autistic  
advocate at  
Autism Actually, and  
Speech Pathology student,  
on Passions and Pastimes.

35

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Part 3 – Experiencing the World Differently

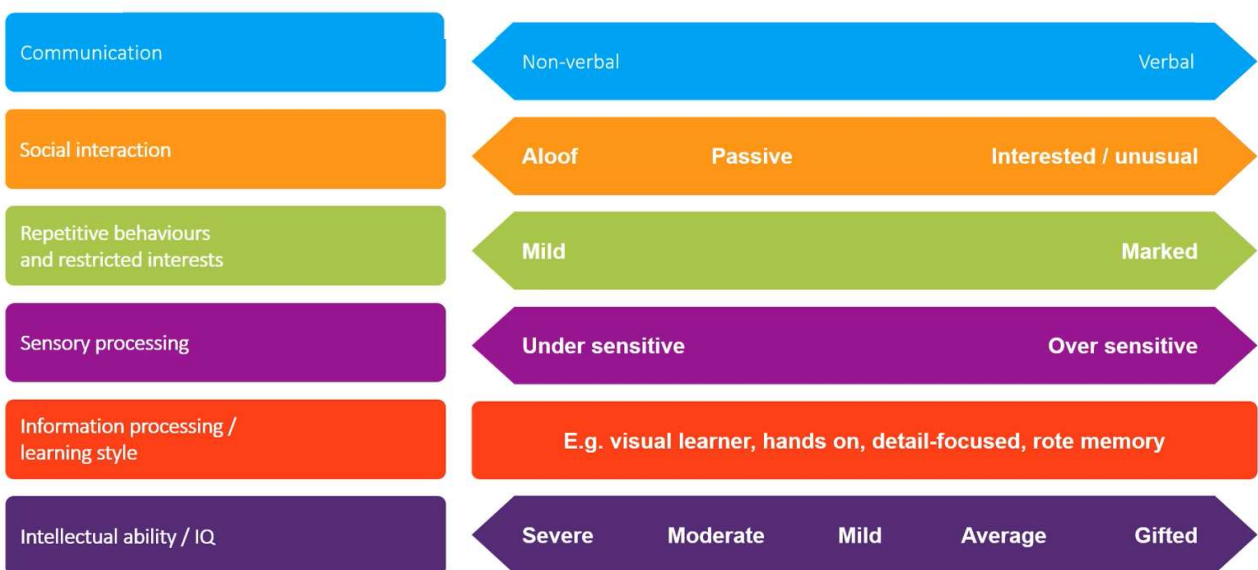
- Sensory Processing
- Communication
- Social Interactions
- Executive Function
- Trauma and Mental Health
- Prevalence and co-occurrence

36

# The experience of autism & other sensory processing differences

37

## Changes in the representation of autism (old)



38



## Changes in the representation of autism (new)

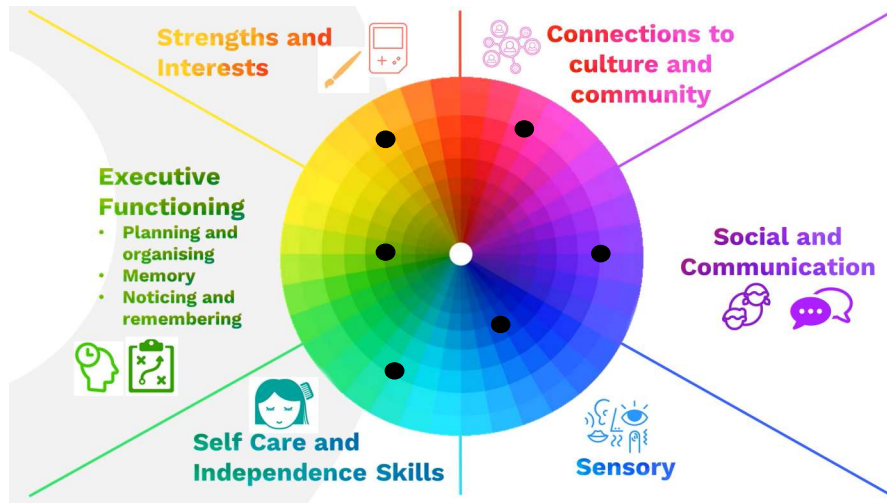


Image Source: [www.positivepartnerships.com.au](http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au)

Adapted from: Rebecca Burgess, *Understanding the Spectrum*, 2015

39



## Temple Grandin

40



41

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## The diversity of autism

**Autism is a spectrum**  
**NOT like this**

**But like this**

@autism\_happy\_place

**AUTISM IS A SPECTRUM**  
@THE CHRONIC COUPLE

AUTISTIC TRAIT	AUTISTIC TRAIT
<b>NON VERBAL</b>	<b>HYPERVERBAL AT A YOUNG AGE</b>
UNAWARE OF AWKWARDNESS	HYPER AWARE OF AWKWARDNESS
<b>MONOTONE VOICE</b>	<b>OVER EXPRESSIVE VOICE</b>
<b>HIGH PAIN TOLERANCE</b>	<b>EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO PHYSICAL SENSATIONS</b>
<b>LOWER EMPATHY</b>	<b>HYPER EMPATHETIC</b>
<b>LOW EYE CONTACT</b>	<b>FORCED EYE CONTACT</b>

42

## The Myth: Autism and Intellectual Disability

- The reality: A diagnosis of autism and the ability to verbally communicate does not equal intelligence.
- In the 1980s, 69% of autistic people were diagnosed with intellectual disability. By 2014, this had declined to 30%.
- Many Autistic advocates and allies highly critical of the Intelligence Quotient as an indicator of future potential.

The student who went from being non-verbal to one of the state's best in just 18 months

By 9News Staff | 10:31pm Sep 7, 2022

NSW July 2022



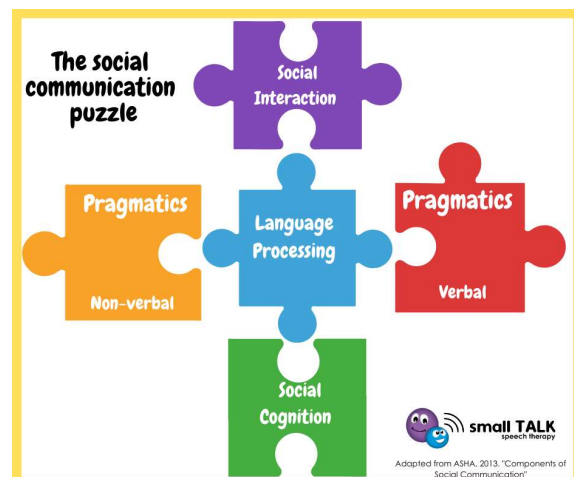
**"Communication has changed my life for the best. It saved my life."**

43

## Communicating as an Autistic person

Communication is more than the ability to hear and talk.

- Recognition of others' tone and tempo of voice
- Ability to moderate own tone and tempo of voice
- Recognition of others' non-verbal cues
- Congruence between own message and non-verbal cues
- Ability to 'read between the lines'
- Understanding of social norms



44

# Autism from the Inside vs the Outside

@neurodivergent\_lou

## Communication

4/9

The way that I communicate is often misunderstood by people. I frequently feel like I don't know how to exist and interact in the world. I feel as though I have to watch and mimic the way other people communicate in order to avoid hostility.



Autism from the inside

vs

'Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity'



Autism from the outside

@neurodivergent\_lou

45

# Autistic Masking

## What is it?

- Masking = Mimicking + Social Scripts
- Occurs when self-aware of social differences → becoming automatic

## What does it look like?

- Imitation. The 'good kid'. Shy and reclusive. Adopting personas of others.

## Why is it bad?

- Suppression of self can lead to disconnection, loneliness, self-medication (AOD), self-harm, depression, anxiety, suicidality, etc.

# Autistic Masking

Autistic Masking is when a person on the autism spectrum mimics and uses social scripts learnt from others, in order to fit in and to go unnoticed in the neurotypical world.

Both males and females on the autism spectrum mask, especially when the individual is more aware of their social differences to the neurotypical world.

Studies show that people on the autism spectrum begin observing and masking from as young as six months old.

## What does it look like?

Imitating peers by copying the way they dress, talk or play.

They can use naturalised scripting methods and integrate them into their everyday discussions.

They can hold back and observe situations and context, then try to copy it either through imitative play or in direct social situations.

They don't want to be noticed, so they hide and blend in. They become the 'good child', the one who sits quietly and doesn't contribute much to the conversation. They can be considered shy or reclusive.

Difficulty expressing emotions, so they cover them up.

Take on the persona of other people, YouTubers or screen/book characters.

Can persist into adulthood.

Can become like a chameleon and blend into many situations.

Masking often becomes automatic and a natural way of functioning, with the person on the spectrum not knowing that they are doing it.

## Why is this so bad?

Masking is a suppression of the authentic Autistic state. This can be dismissed by professionals, other times people are misdiagnosed with mental health difficulties. It's exhausting, which can lead to small amounts of burnout and lead to long term intense burnout, with self-harm, suicidal ideation and attempted suicide.

Adulthood can lead to a sense of losing one's self, feeling more socially isolated, like no one knows their authentic Autistic self. This leads to further masking and further disconnection from themselves.

Suppression can lead to loneliness, self-medication, self-harm, heightened anxiety, depression, confusion, anger and mental exhaustion.



All rights reserved. Advice is general in nature. Not to be reproduced without written permission

46

## Eye Contact

Many autistic people struggle with eye contact.

Some people can't maintain it at all.

Some use inappropriate amounts of eye contact.

Some are so good at masking, you wouldn't know they were autistic because they are so good at eye contact.

For me:

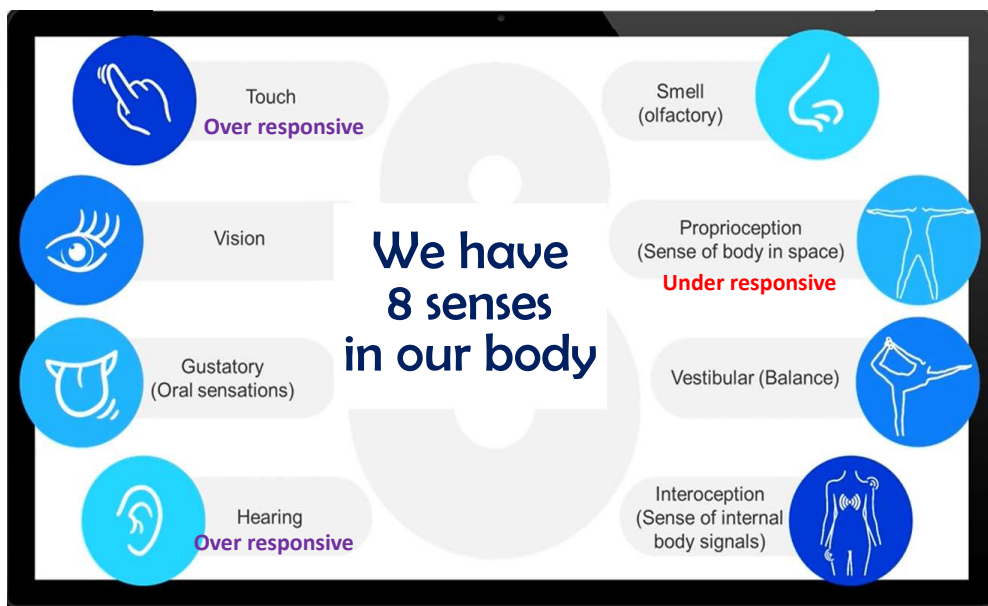
- Eye contact becomes impossible with distress.



47

## Sensory processing differences

Over responsive senses



Under responsive senses

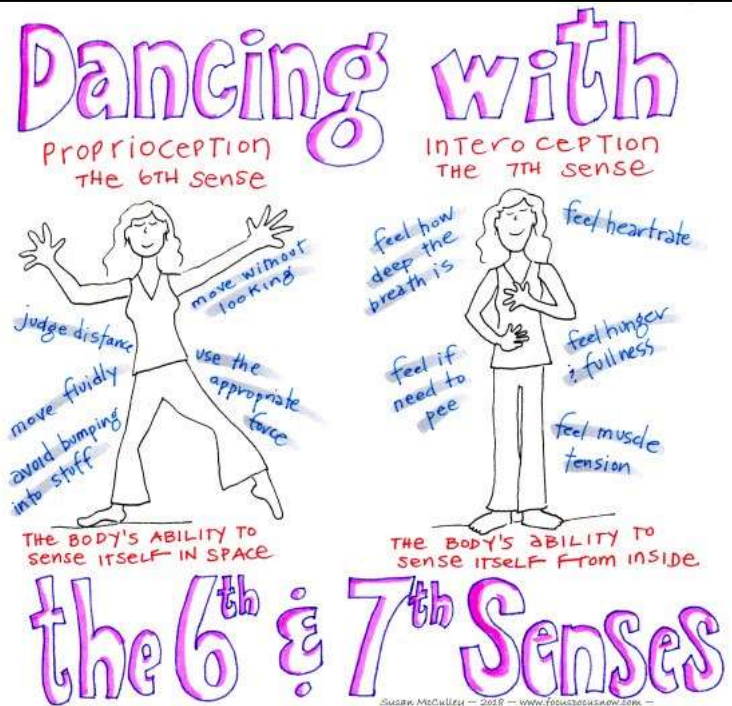
48



For more information:



Interoception Explainer Video  
by Positive Partnerships  
[www.vimeo.com/440561147](http://www.vimeo.com/440561147)



49



## Understanding Sensory Processing – Temple Grandin

50

## AUTISM IS A SPECTRUM OF SENSORY DIFFERENCES.

[www.vimeo.com/476304957](http://www.vimeo.com/476304957)

51

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Sensory Processing and Stimming

### Sensory issues

7/9

I can hear the many different layers of sound and they build up getting worse the longer that I am subject to them. For me, my senses feel intensified sometimes to the point that I cannot concentrate on what is going on. I can feel the seams of my clothes sat against my skin.



Autism from the inside

vs

'Unexpected reactions to sounds, tastes, sights, touch and smells.'



Autism from the outside

@neurodivergent\_lou

### Stimming

3/9

When I need to stim, I feel a build up of tension in my body and stimming helps me to release that tension. It releases energy in my body allowing me to cope and concentrate on what is happening. It helps me to cope with all my sensory issues.



Autism from the inside

vs

'Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech.'



Autism from the outside

@neurodivergent\_lou

52

## Special interests

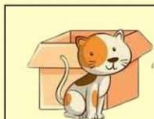
### Special Interests

2/9

My special interests bring me so much joy and escape from the world. I feel so absorbed and a lot of my life revolves around when I will next be able to engage in my interests again. My special interests can help me to feel safe in a world which feels chaotic to me.



Autism from the inside



Autism from the outside

'Fixed interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus'

@neurodivergent\_lou

### Need for routine

6/9

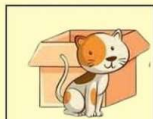
Routine helps me to predict what is happening next. This helps me to regulate my emotions. My routines can feel like the only thing that I can control, when the rest of the world doesn't match up with how I process things. After all, why would I change something unnecessarily.



Autism from the inside

vs

'Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior'



Autism from the outside

@neurodivergent\_lou

53

## Executive Functioning



54

## Executive Functioning

What might be difficult:

1. Self-Awareness & self-directed attention
2. Self-Restraint
3. Non-Verbal Working Memory
4. Verbal Working Memory
5. Emotional self-awareness and expression
6. Self-Motivation
7. Planning and Problem-solving

### Executive Dysfunction

8/9

Sometimes I really want to start a task and feel as though I have a lot of energy to do so. But I just am unable to start. Like all my thoughts are stuck. Similarly, once I have started a task and completed the first stage of the task, I find it really difficult to know the next stage and it can feel overwhelming.

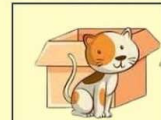
vs

'They may have trouble with certain skills like planning, staying organized, sequencing information, and self-regulating emotions.'

@neurodivergent\_lou



Autism from the inside



Autism from the outside

55



## Executive Functioning by How to ADHD

56



57

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

# Adolescent Development

58



## Understanding adolescent development and mental health

59

## Typical Adolescent Development

### Physical development:

- Puberty
- Secondary sex characteristics (weight, height)
- Ongoing brain development

### Psychological development:

- Establishing identity, autonomy, intimacy
- Advanced thinking and reasoning

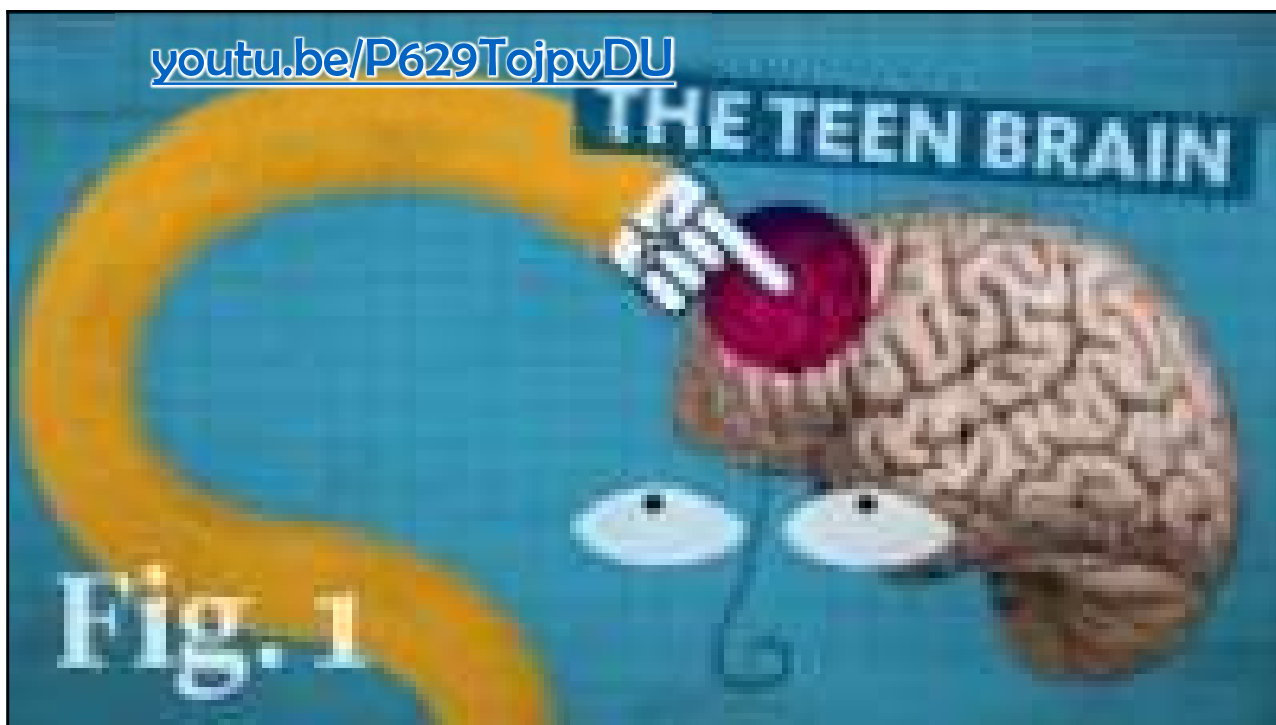
### Social development:

- Becoming comfortable with sexuality
- Personal identity, autonomy, intimacy
- Achievement (especially educational)

60



61



62

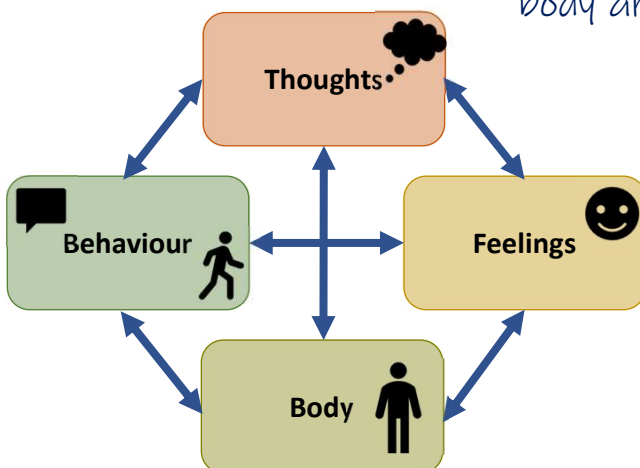
## What is mental health?



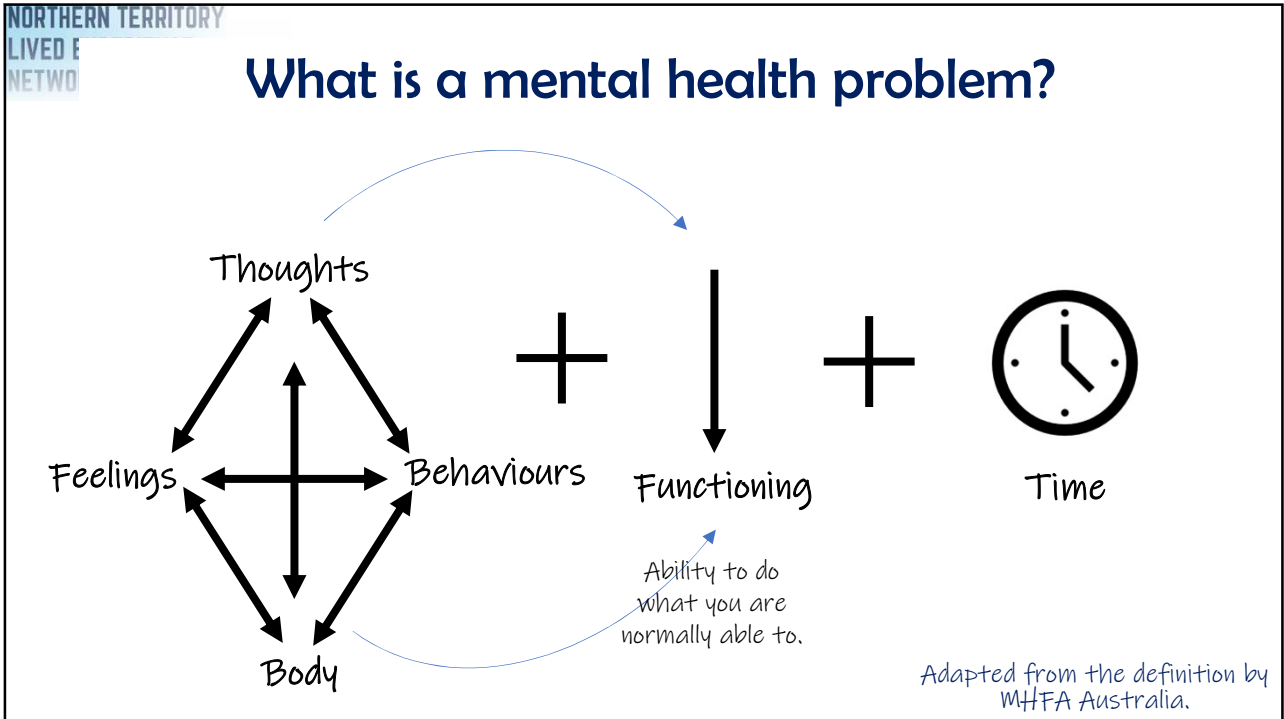
63

## Mind, Body, Emotions & Behaviours

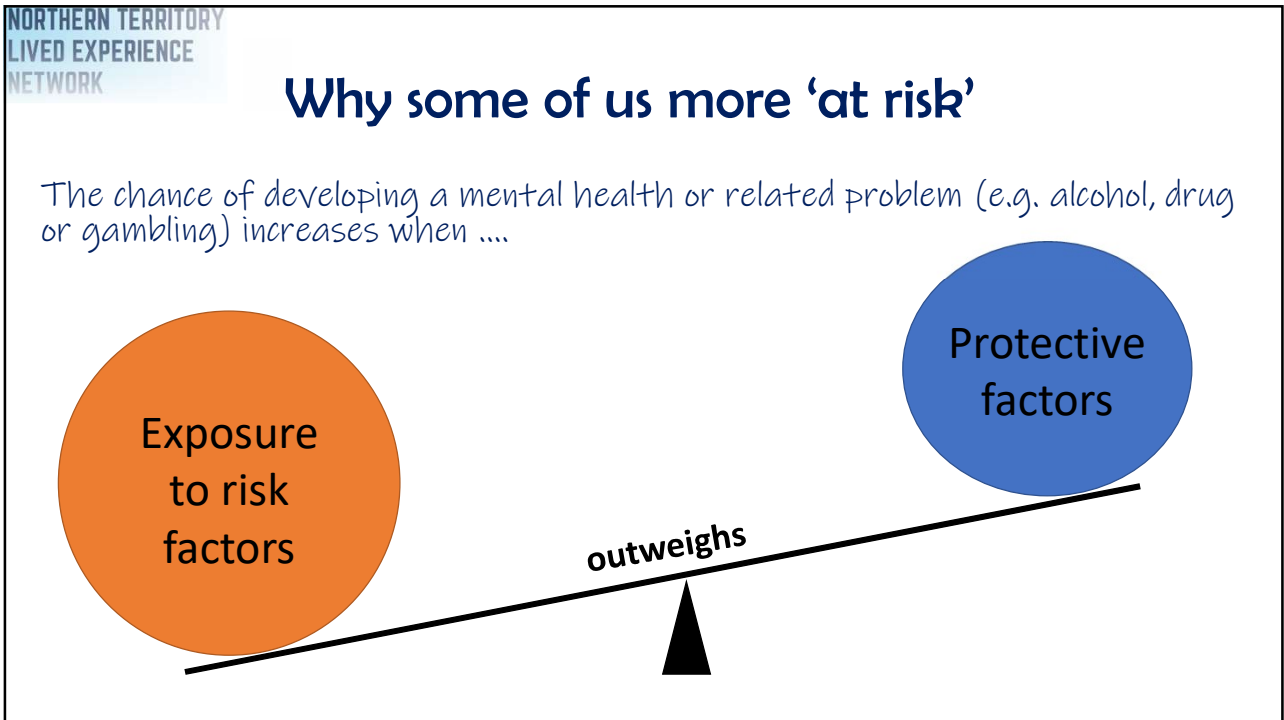
Our thoughts, feelings, behaviours & body are all linked. They bounce off and affect each other.



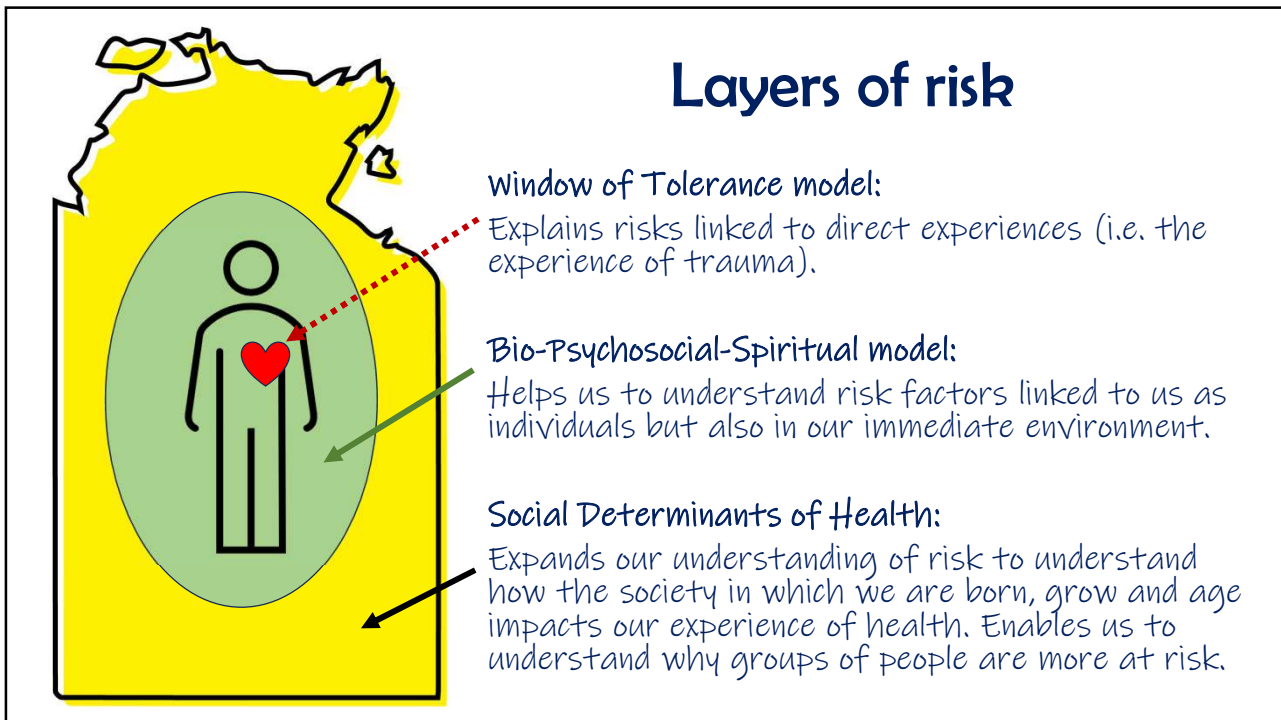
64



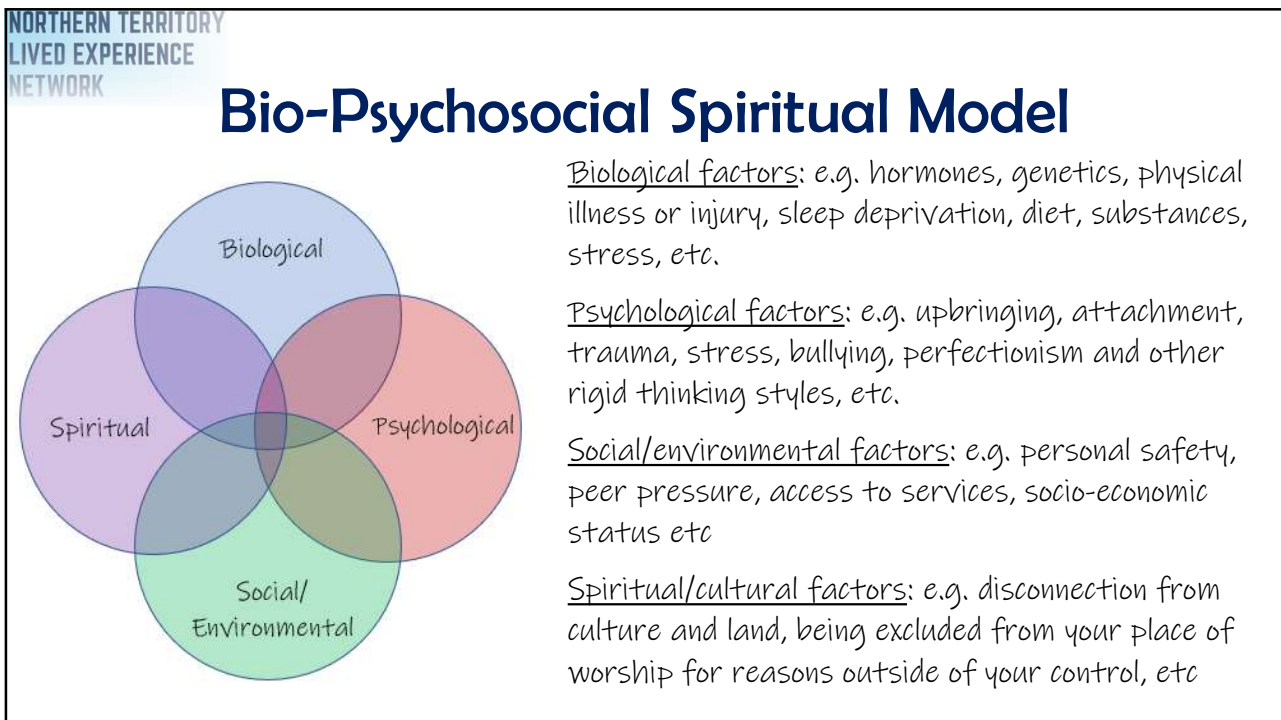
65



66



67



68



## Understanding trauma

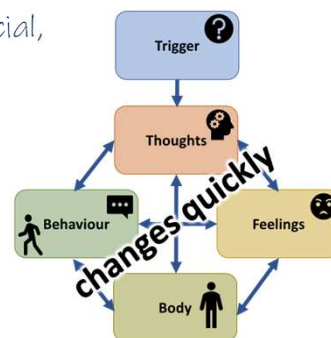
69

## 'Trauma' is a common experience in the lived experience community

Emotionally or physically harmful, or life threatening.

Some people have ongoing impact to emotional, social, spiritual and/or physical wellbeing, including:

- Easily startled (hypervigilant)
- Easily triggered into a distressed state
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Increased risk of long-term mental health problems and/or use of alcohol or other drugs
- Distressing dreams and/or intrusive thoughts



**"The experience of being powerless & in significant distress with not control over your circumstance or way to protect yourself and/or loved ones."**

70

# Trauma Truth

To our brain what is familiar is safe, and  
safety is our brains #1 priority.

“If a child is familiar with chaos in  
their home & suddenly she is  
placed in a safe environment free of  
chaos, she will seek & provoke the  
familiar stress in the new  
environment to feel safe.”

BethTyson.com

Beth Tyson   
TRAUMA CONSULTING

71



## Childhood Trauma and the Brain by the UK Trauma Council

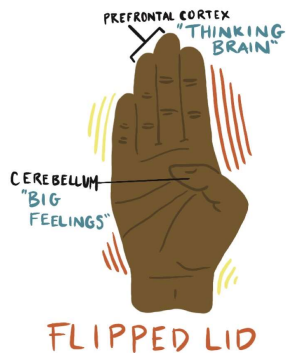
72

[youtu.be/EFrfBJrVLbE](https://youtu.be/EFrfBJrVLbE)



73

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK



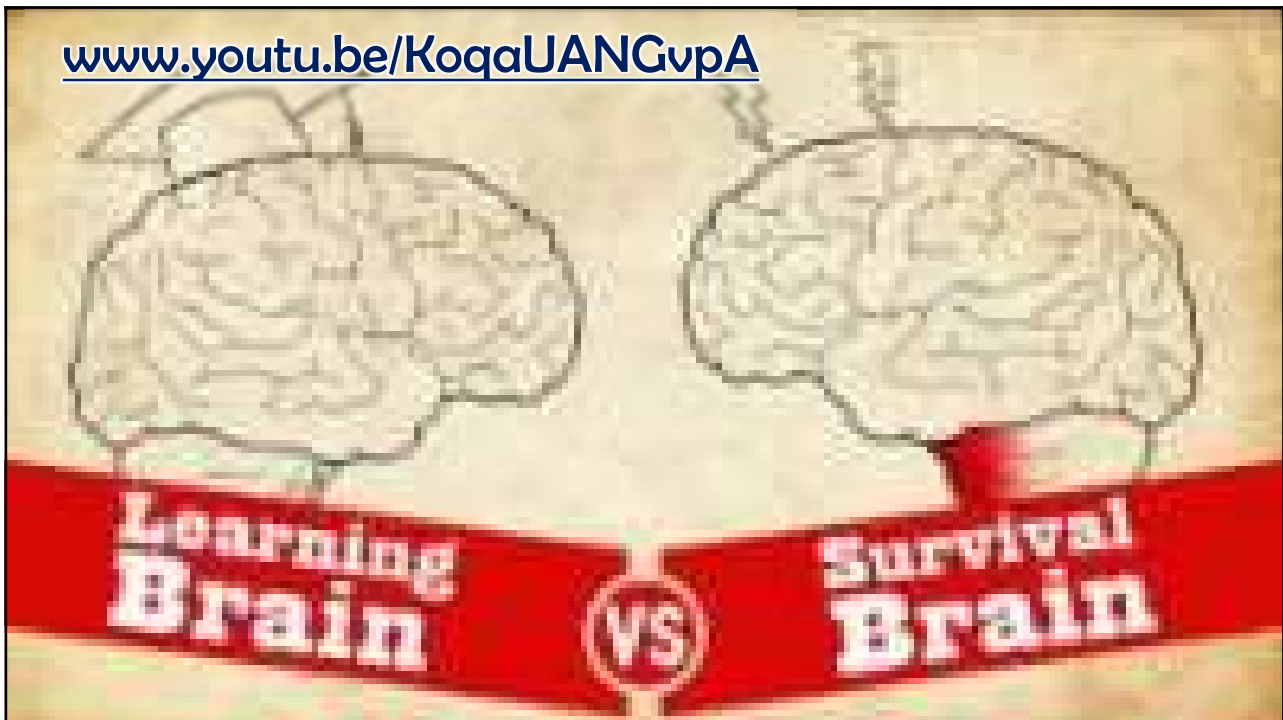
Trauma is not about **THOUGHT**.

Hypervigilance is not  
a thought.  
Startle is not a thought.  
Dissociation is not  
a thought. Triggers  
are not a thought.  
Freezing is not  
a thought.  
Shutting down is  
not a thought.

@CPTSDCOACH

These are autonomic responses below  
the level of the thinking mind.

74



75

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## How common are mental health problems & neurodivergent experiences?

**slido**

1. Open a browser on your device
2. Go to [www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)
3. Enter #2058399

76

slido



What do you think is the most commonly experienced 'mental disorder' among 4 to 7 year old children?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

77

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Percentage of children aged 4-11 with a mental disorder in 12 months

Type of Disorder	% Male	% Female	% Persons
ADHD	10.9	5.4	8.2
Anxiety disorders	7.6	6.1	6.9
Conduct disorder	2.5	1.6	2.0
Depressive disorder	1.1	1.2	1.1
Any mental disorder	16.5	10.6	13.6

1 in 7.3

Source: Australian national survey of mental health and wellbeing in children and adolescents (2013/14)

78



slido



What proportion of adolescents aged 12 to 17 do you think experience a 'mental disorder' in any given year?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

79

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Percentage of adolescents aged 12-17 with a mental disorder in 12 months

Type of Disorder	% Male	% Female	% Persons
Anxiety disorders	6.3	7.7	7.0
ADHD	9.8	2.7	6.3
Depressive disorders	4.3	5.8	5.0
Conduct disorder	2.6	1.6	2.1
Any mental disorder	15.9	12.8	14.4

1 in 7

Source: Australian national survey of mental health and wellbeing in children and adolescents (2013/14)

80

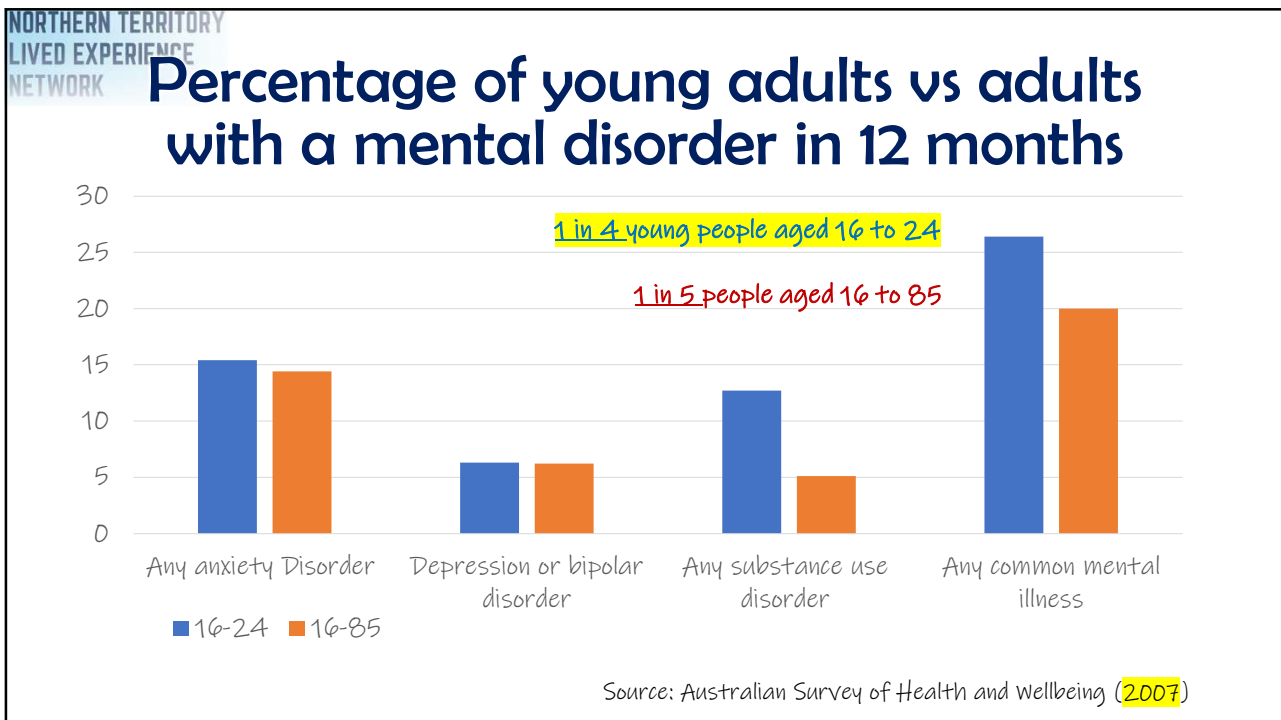
slido



Do you think Young Adults (aged 16 to 24) experience mental disorders at a higher, lower or the same rate as Adults (aged 16 to 85)?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

81



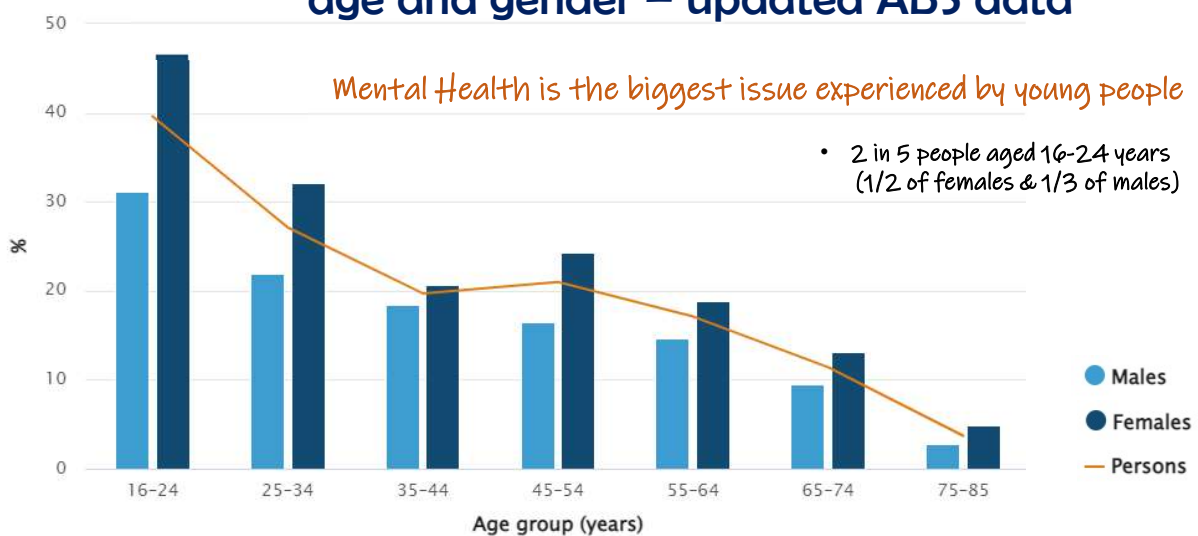
82

## Emergence of mental health problems

TYPES OF ILLNESS	MEDIAN AGE ON ONSET
Anxiety	15 years
Anorexia or bulimia nervosa	18 years
Substance use problems	18 years
Depression	25 years
<b>Any disorder</b>	<b>18 years</b>

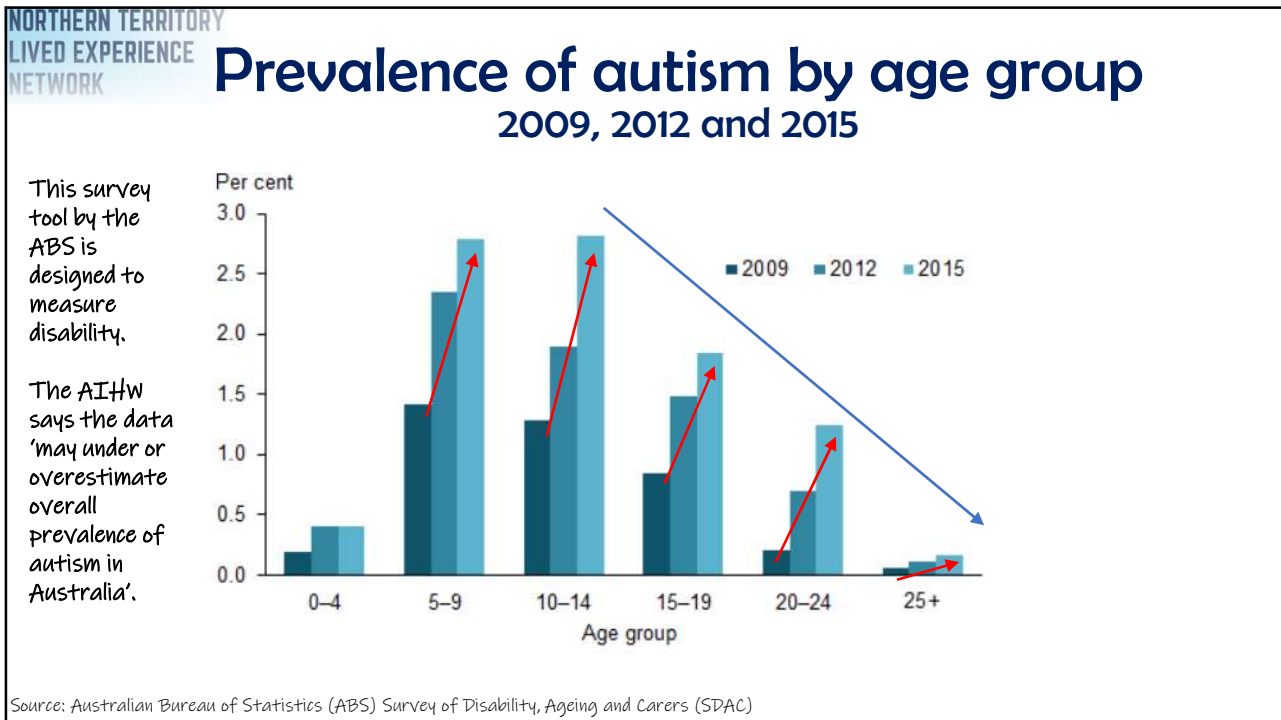
83

## Prevalence of common mental health conditions by age and gender – updated ABS data



Source: National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-2021)

84



85

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## The forgotten history of autism

- **1943:** American Child Psychiatrist, Leo Kanner, publishes his discovery of 'infantile autism'. He described it as an extremely rare condition, with specific diagnostic criteria, and caused by 'cold and unaffectionate parents'.
- **1944:** Austrian Physician Hans Asperger publishes a paper about 'autistic psychopathy'. Asperger describes autism as a diverse continuum that spans an astonishing range of giftedness and disability.
- **1970s:** Lorna Wing is a cognitive psychologist in London with a 'profoundly autistic' daughter. To make the case to NHS for support, Lorna undertakes a study of the general population by walking the streets in Camberwell to find autistic children. This leads to her discovery of the 1944 paper by Hans Asperger.
- **1990:** American Psychiatric Association broadens the criteria for autism.
- **2010:** Steve Silberman researches the forgotten history of autism.
- **2017:** Silberman publishes 'Neurotribes' confirming Kanner's knowledge of the work undertaken by Asperger.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
"Beautifully told, humbling, important."  
—The New York Times Book Review

### NeuroTribes

The Legacy of Autism  
and the Future of Neurodiversity

STEVE SILBERMAN  
Foreword by Oliver Sacks  
with a new afterword from the author

 TED Talk by Steve Silberman  
The forgotten history of autism  
[https://youtu.be/\\_MBiP3G2Pzc](https://youtu.be/_MBiP3G2Pzc)

86

## Co-occurring Conditions

87

## Co-Occurrence of Autism and MH

- A conservative estimate for the co-occurrence of autism with mental health conditions is 50%. Other studies estimate 70-80%.
- Many people experiencing co-occurrence with 2 or more mental health conditions.
- Most common co-occurring mental health conditions are depression and anxiety.



Source: Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022

88



## Co-occurrence of autism, trauma and suicidality

3x more likely to attempt suicide

4x more likely to die by suicide

More likely to be exposed to traumatic events

More likely to have a traumatic to those events

Source: Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022

89

## Queer Autistic People

- Gender identity and sexuality are more varied among autistic people than in the general population.
- Autistic people are 7.6 x more likely to be gender and/or sexuality diverse.<sup>1</sup>
- A 2018 Australian survey of transgender adolescents and young adults found that 22.5% had been diagnosed with autism, compared with 2.5% of all Australians.<sup>2</sup>

Sources:

1. Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022
2. Strauss et al, Trans Pathways, 20417



90

## Misdiagnosis of Autistic Women

- Many women on the autism spectrum are misdiagnosed with personality disorder.

"There's actually a lot of similarities between a woman on the autism spectrum with mental health difficulties who camouflages and borderline personality disorder and I can speak to my experiences as a clinician..." - Davina Sanders

Source: Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022

91

## Psychological distress & substance use in the NT

People who experience high psychological distress:

2 x use illicit drugs  
1.6 x drink 4+ alcoholic drinks  
2.3 x smoke

(AIHW, 2021)

Adults living in areas of most disadvantage across are more than 2 x likely to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.

(ABS, 2018)

The NT has 41 of the 100 most disadvantaged regions in Australia.

(Socio-economic indexes, 2016)

In the NT, mental health, suicide and substance use disorders make up approximately 36% of the total burden of disease. This is 3 x the national average.

(AIHW, 2015)

92

# Break Time: 15 min

93

## Part 3 – Fostering Self-Awareness and Creating Inclusive Environments

- Promoting recovery and wellbeing
- Fostering self-awareness (and self-regulation)
  - The Brain Gauge and Hand Model of the Brain
  - Window of Tolerance
  - Brainstorming self-awareness and self-regulation
- Other ways we foster inclusive environments

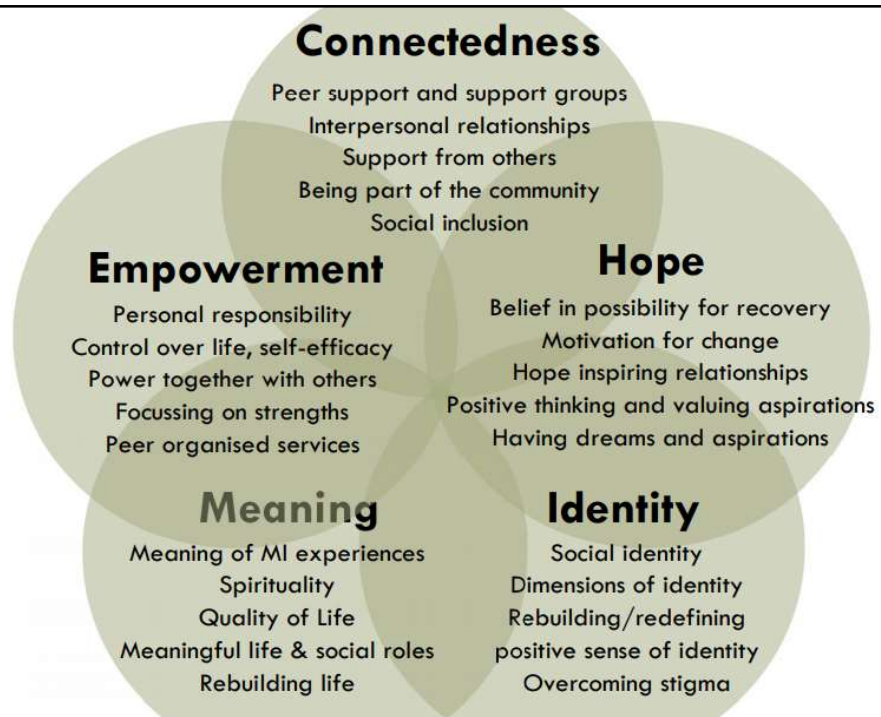
94

## Promoting Recovery and Wellbeing

95

### CHIME

Mary Leamy et al (2011)

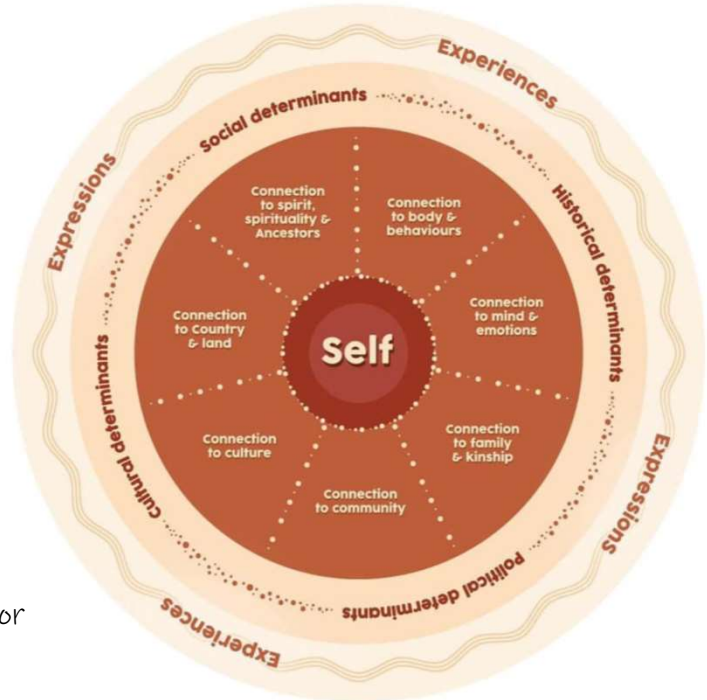


96

## Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model

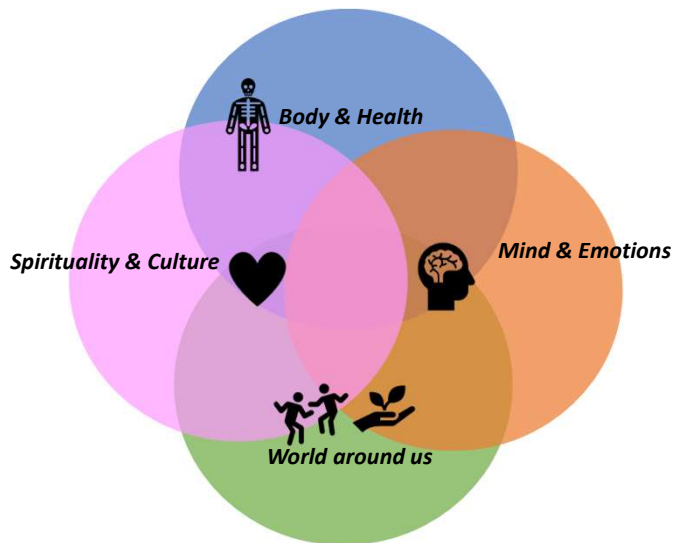
Adapted from Gee et al., (2014)

SEWB Explainer video by Kevin Taylor  
<https://vimeo.com/368715660>



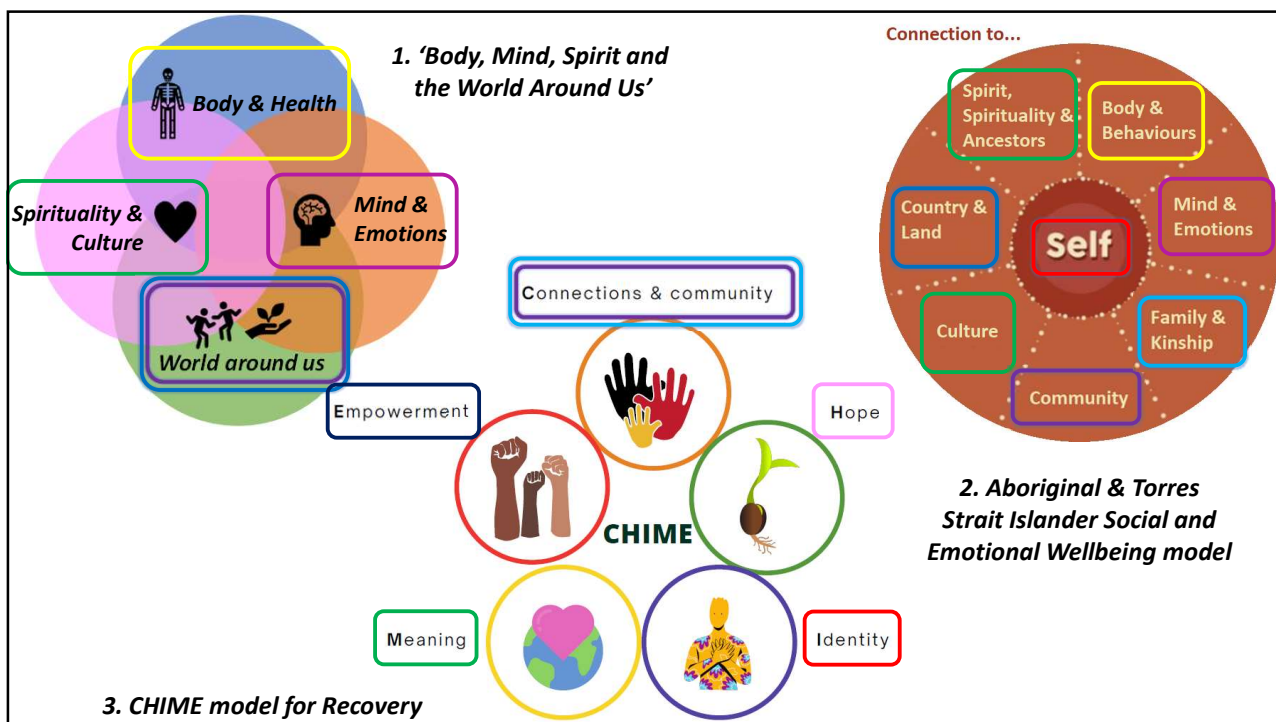
97

## Body, Mind, Spirit and the World Around Us

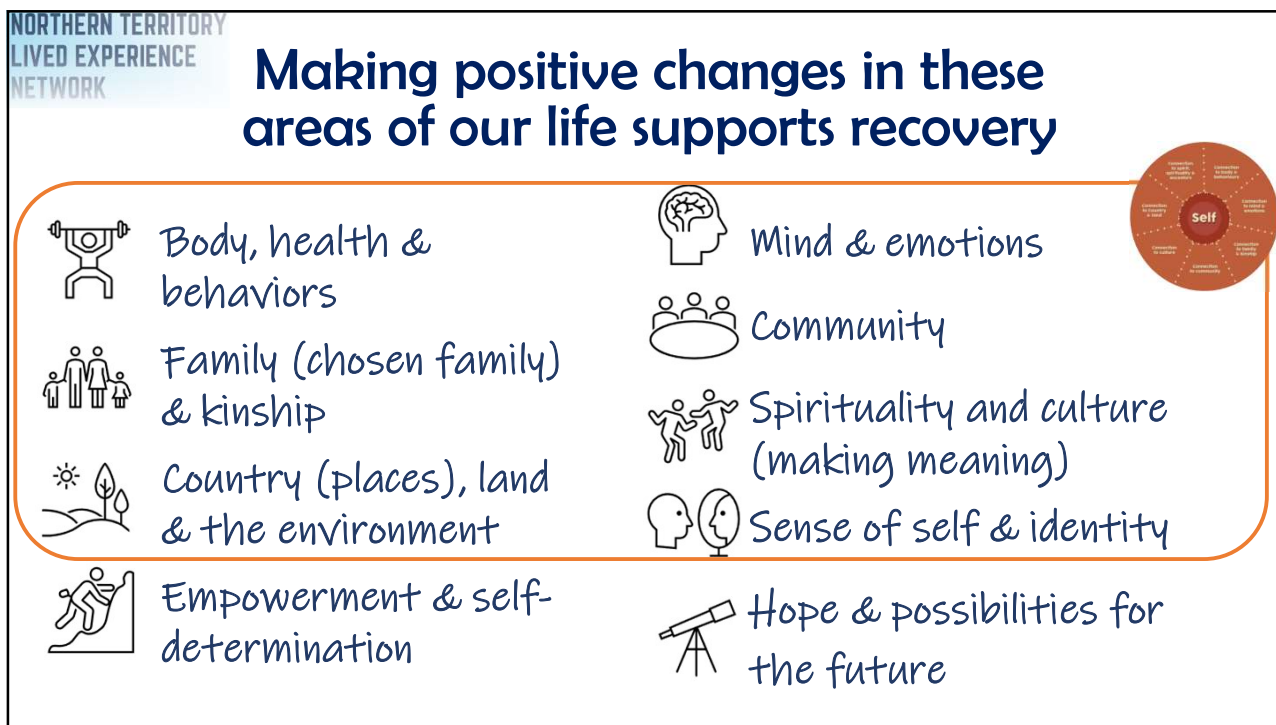


Turning the Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual model for risk upside down.

98



99



100



## Our approach to growing the knowledge of participants in our peer programs

The following slides capture the most recent way the NT Lived Experience Network builds the capability of adults and young people attending our peer programs, to grow their 'self-awareness' and 'self-regulation', and to build their understanding of mental health (i.e. psycho-education).

Programs include:

- 'Recovery Together' for adults who experience issues related to mental health and alcohol and drug use
- 'Circles of Support' for family and kin of people who experience these issues
- 'Empowering YOUTH Program' for young people who are neurodivergent or have experienced adversity

Source: [www.livedexperiencenet.net/programs](http://www.livedexperiencenet.net/programs)

101

## Fostering self-awareness (and self-regulation)

102

## Other ways we foster inclusive environments

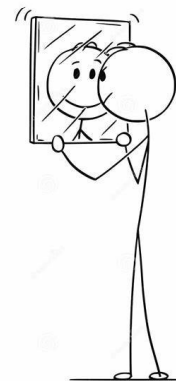
103

## Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation

The activities and discussions in our peer programs are intended to grow your 'self-awareness' and ability to 'self-regulate' ....

'Self-awareness' is knowing yourself.

'Self-regulation' is having strategies to be in control of how you are feeling and what you say and do.



104

## Self-Awareness is

Tuning into what you are thinking, feeling, doing and even how your body feels...



## Self-Regulation is

So you can identify if you are about to 'flip your lid' (and stop it from happening.)



105

## Self-Awareness is

Knowing what upsets or triggers you ...



## Self-Regulation is

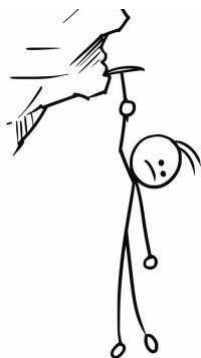
So you can plan ahead to avoid triggers, or reduce their impact.



106

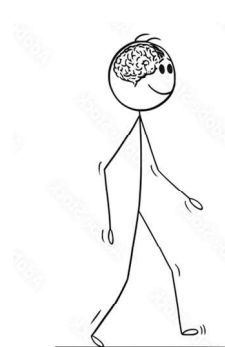
## Self-Awareness is

Recognising the changes that show you are at risk of becoming unwell or relapse ...



## Self-Regulation is

So you can implement your recovery or relapse prevention plan.



**Note:** This learning not a part of the 'Empowering YOUTH program'.

107

Self-Awareness

Self-Regulation

Living your best life

We need good self-awareness to self-regulate. This helps us to live our best life.

108

## Self-Awareness is also ...

- Discovering is important to you
- Knowing your rights
- Understanding what is in your control
- Defining limits or boundaries
- Knowing what you want for your life

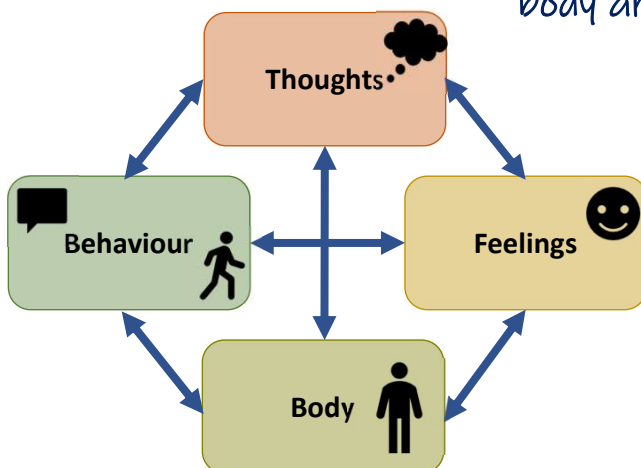
All of these things help you to live your best life ....



109

## Mind, Body, Emotions & Behaviours

Our thoughts, feelings, behaviours & body are all linked. They bounce off and affect each other.



110

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

## What is a trigger?

111

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

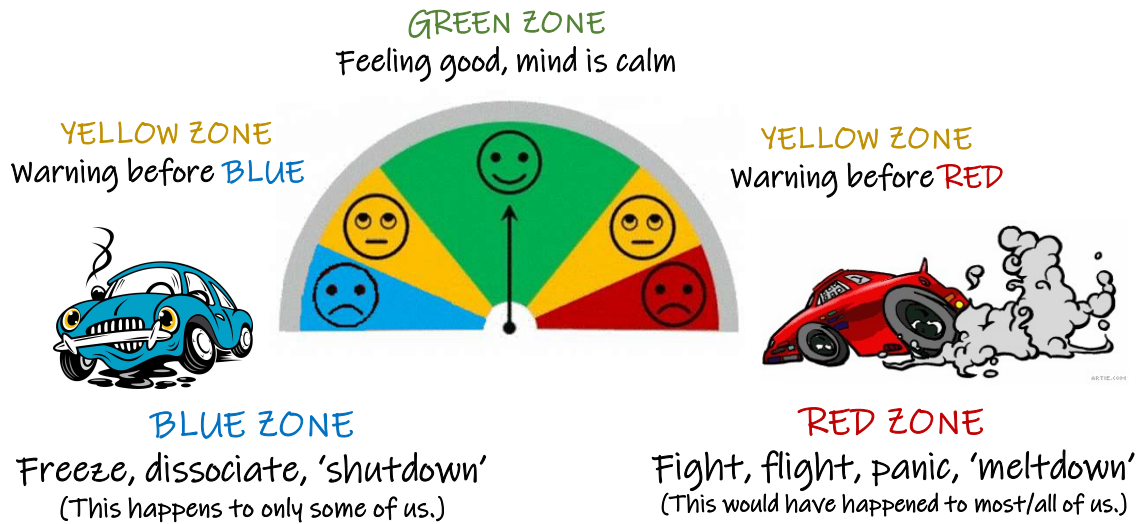
## What happens when we are triggered?

- Feeling good, mind is calm
- Big feelings, warning zone
- or ■ 'Flipping your lid' - in survival mode

112



## The 'Brain Gauge' and 'Flipping Our Lid'



113

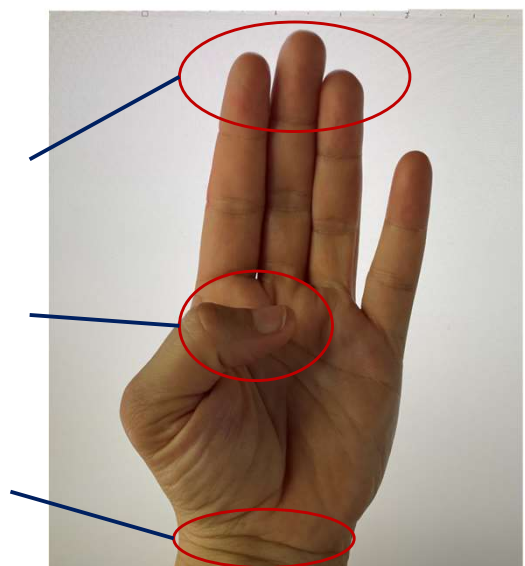
## What happens when we 'flip our lid'

### The 'Hand Model' of the Brain

Upper brain: for thinking, socializing and problem solving.

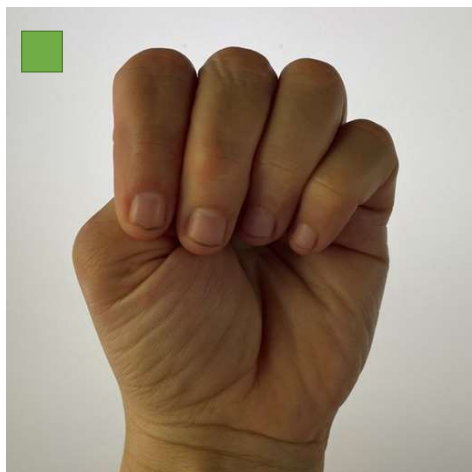
Lower brain: limbic region responsible for 'big feelings', instinct and survival.

Brain stem and spinal cord are at the base of the skull. They transport messages from brain to body.



114

## What our brain looks like when we are feeling good & our mind is 'calm' ■



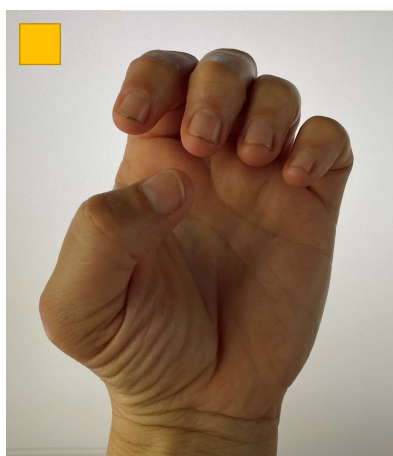
When we are in the **green zone**, the upper and lower parts of the brain are connected and working in harmony.

The upper brain can be accessed for thinking, socializing and problem solving.



115

## What our brain looks like when we have 'big feelings' ■



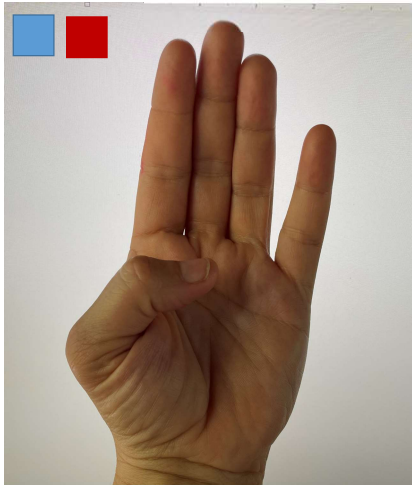
When we are in the **yellow zone** the upper and lower parts of your brain are no longer working in harmony (are disconnecting).



If you act now, you can **calm** yourself.

116

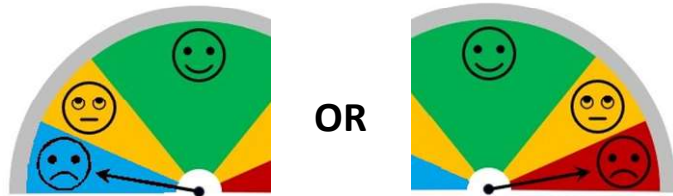
## What our brain looks like when we lose control or 'flip our lid' ■ ■



Upper and lower parts are not connected.

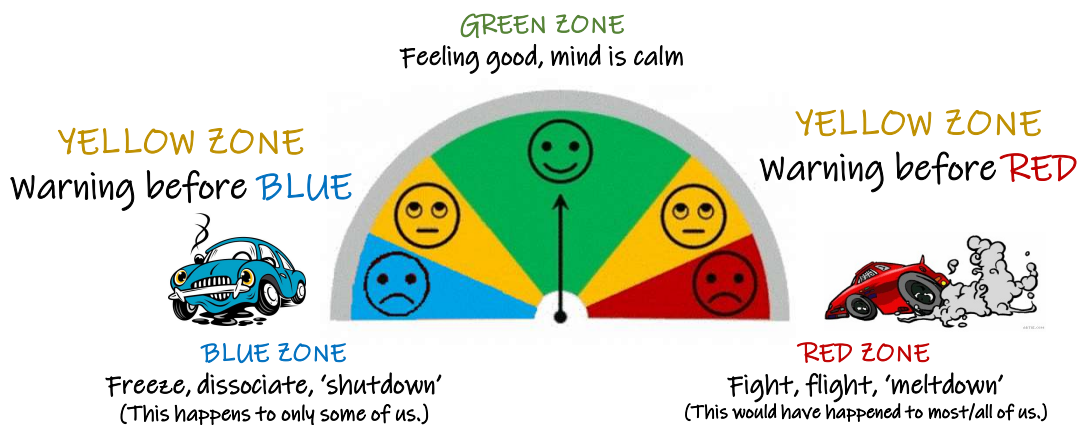
Can't think or problem solve.

Survival brain takes over – **red zone** (fight, flight) or **blue zone** (freeze, dissociate)



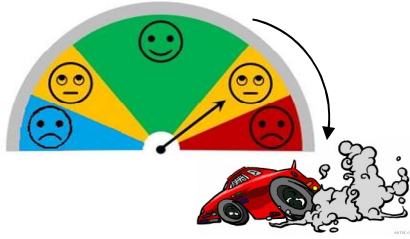
117

## Tuning into your yellow warning zone/s



118

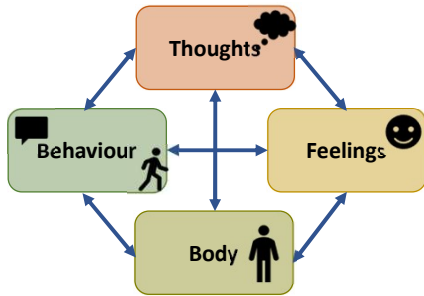
NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK



## Brainstorm: Warning signs before the red zone

Responses in the **RED ZONE** include fight, flight, panic and meltdown.

- How does your body feel?
- What changes in the body do you notice?
- What are you doing?
- What type of thing are you saying?
- How are you saying it?
- How do you feel emotionally?
- What type of thoughts are you having?



119

slido



What do you notice about changes in your **BODY**?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

120

slido



**What do you notice about changes to your BEHAVIOUR? The things you say and do.**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

121

slido



**What do you notice about changes to your EMOTIONS?**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

122

slido



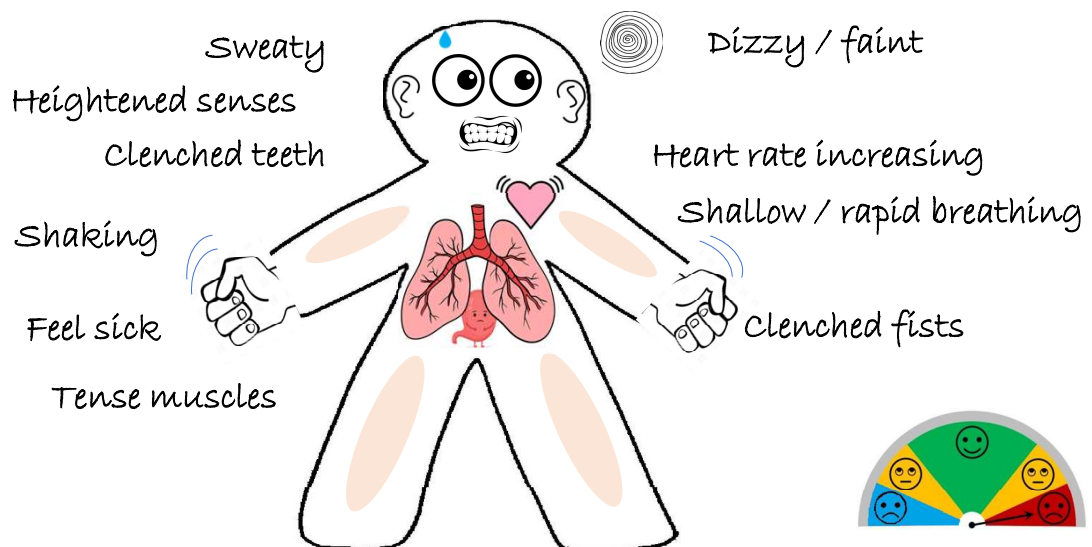
What do you notice about your **THOUGHTS** and how they change?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

123

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

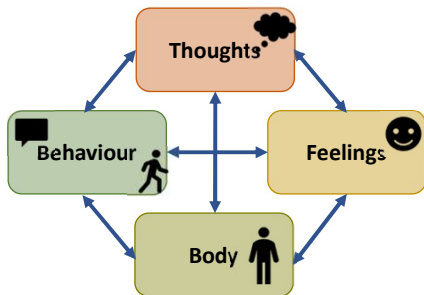
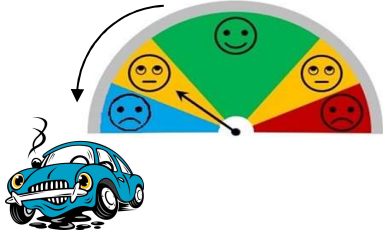
## The 'shaky man' (our body in the **red zone**)



124



## Brainstorm: Warning signs before the blue zone

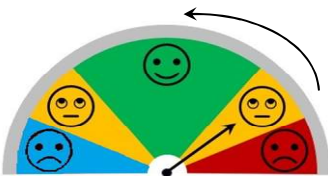
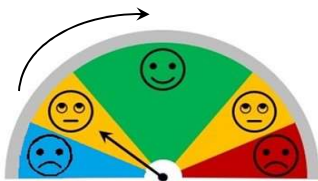


Responses in the **BLUE ZONE** include freeze and dissociate.

- How does your body feel?
- What changes in the body do you notice?
- What are you doing?
- What type of thing are you saying?
- How are you saying it?
- How do you feel emotionally?
- What type of thoughts are you having?

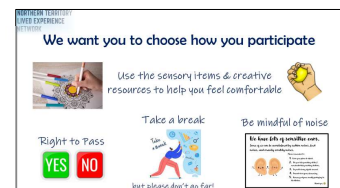
125

## Brainstorm: Ideas to self-regulate (go back to the green zone)



What can we do, to help us move from the **yellow warning zone** back to the **green zone** where we are **feeling calm and in control**.

We already encourage you to do some things that support self-regulation.



126

## slido



What kinds of things work that support you to SELF-REGULATE? e.g. Go back to the GREEN ZONE.

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

127

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Ideas to self-regulate



Take a break



Have a drink



Splash your face



Go for a walk



Take 3 deep breaths



Ask for help



Squish or fidget



Stimulate your senses



Play some music



Name your feelings



Stretch



Scribble on a piece of paper



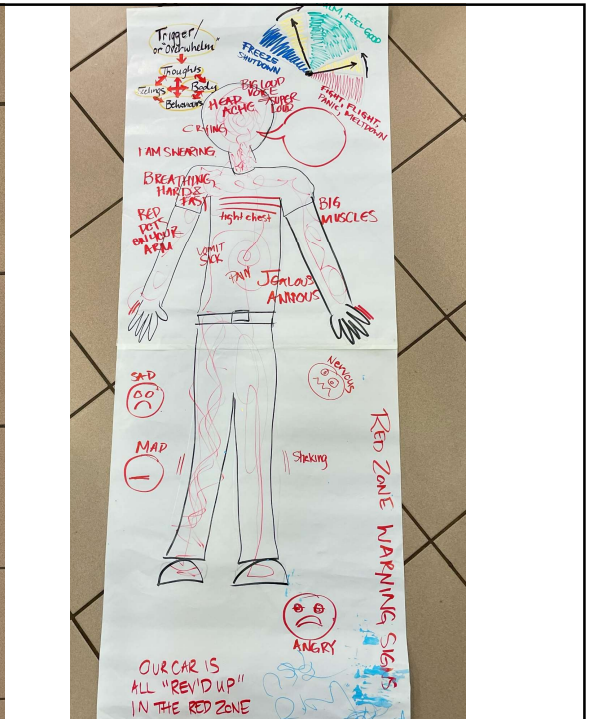
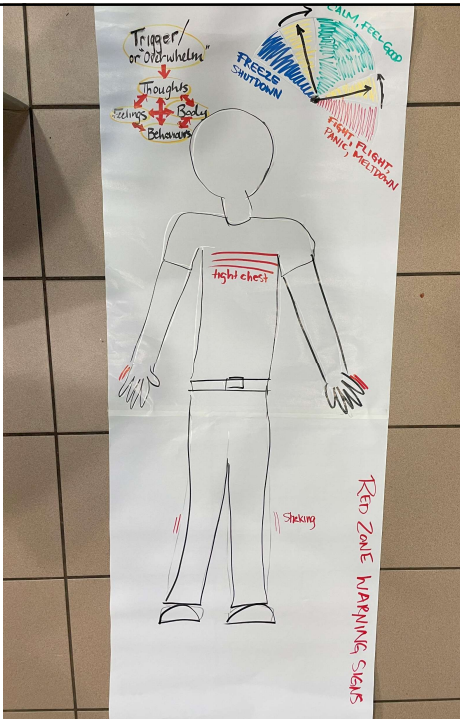
Clench & relax your muscles



Rub your bare feet on the floor

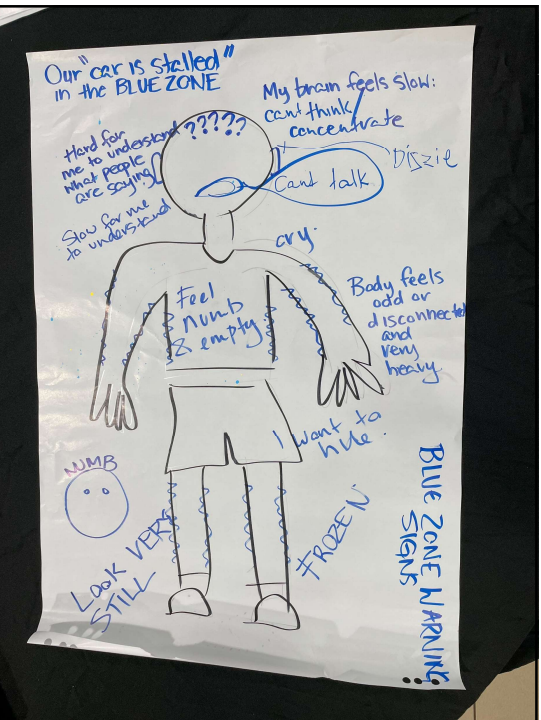
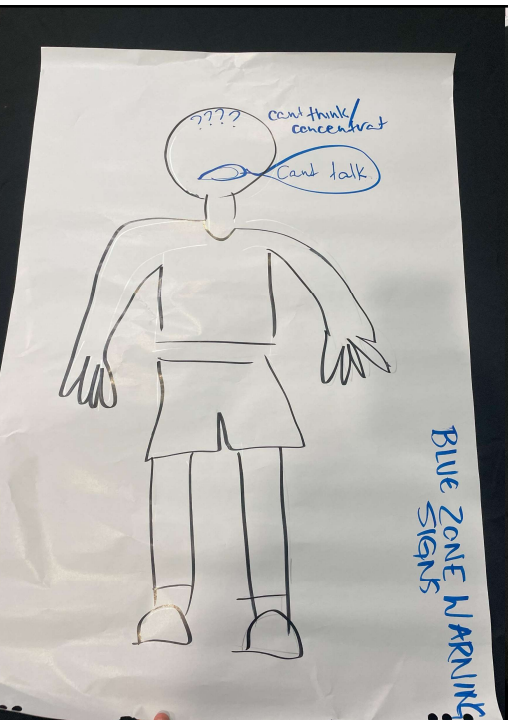
128

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK



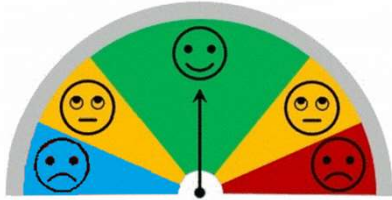
129

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

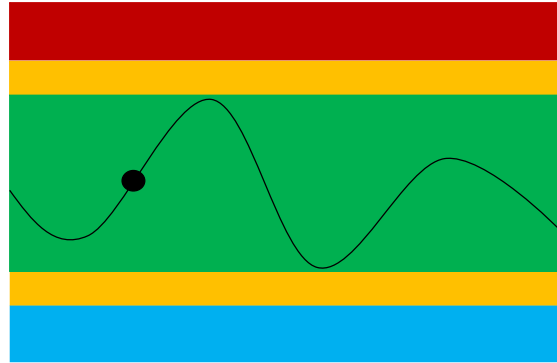


130

## The 'Brain Gauge' & the 'Window of Tolerance'



- Green zone: Feeling calm
- Yellow zone: Warning
- Red zone: fight, flight, panic
- Blue zone: freeze, dissociate

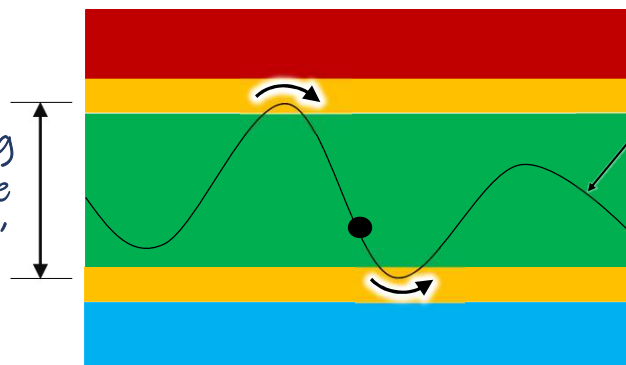


The 'Window of Tolerance' helps us understand the impact of trauma.

131

## The 'Window of Tolerance'

The gap representing the **green zone** is the 'Window of Tolerance'

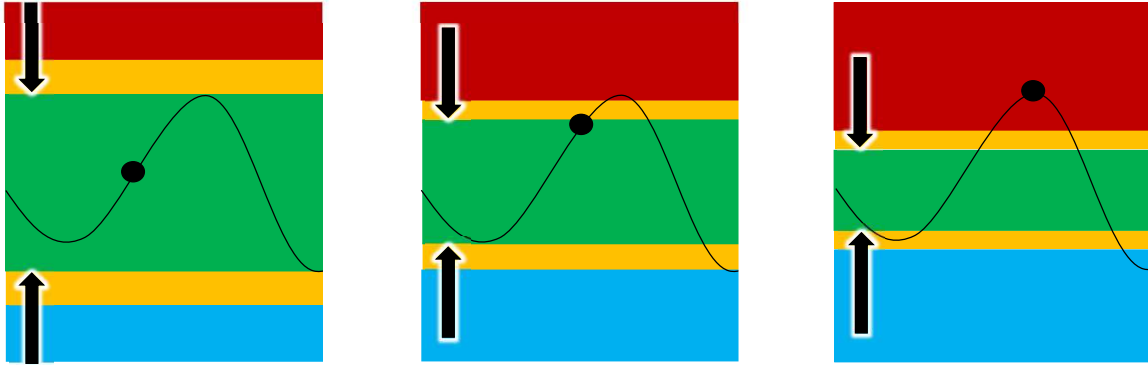


Represents the needle of the Brain Gauge changing through the day.

In the **green zone** we function best. We feel safe, secure, calm, logical, rational, clear, present, able to learn and problem solve. We can cope with the stressors that come our way.

132

## The impact of trauma and constant stress (sensory overload and social demands)

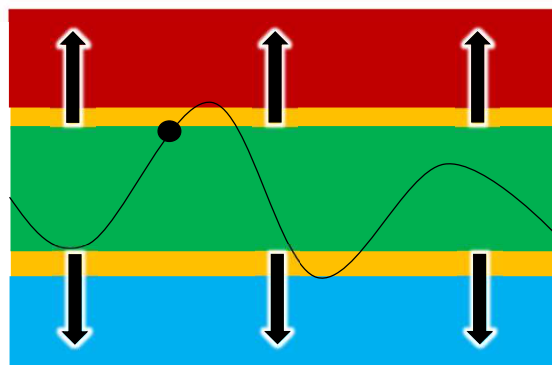


When we experience constant stress (or have been exposed to trauma) our window of tolerance – the **green zone** – will start to narrow. We are less able to cope and can easily move into the **red zone** or **blue zone**.

133

## GOOD NEWS

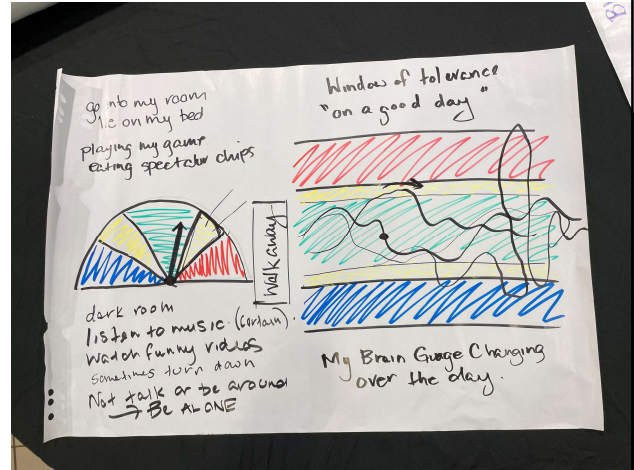
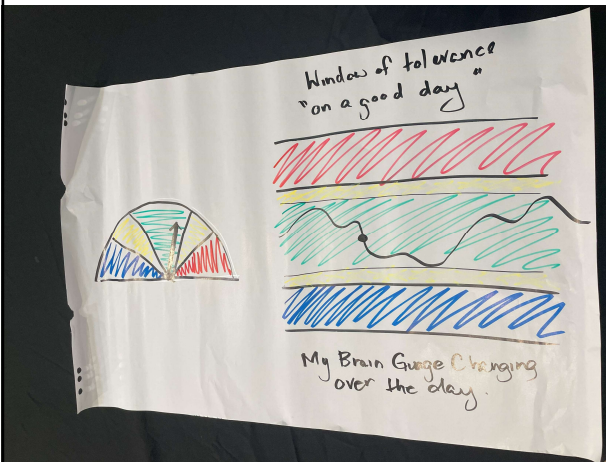
We can widen our window of tolerance



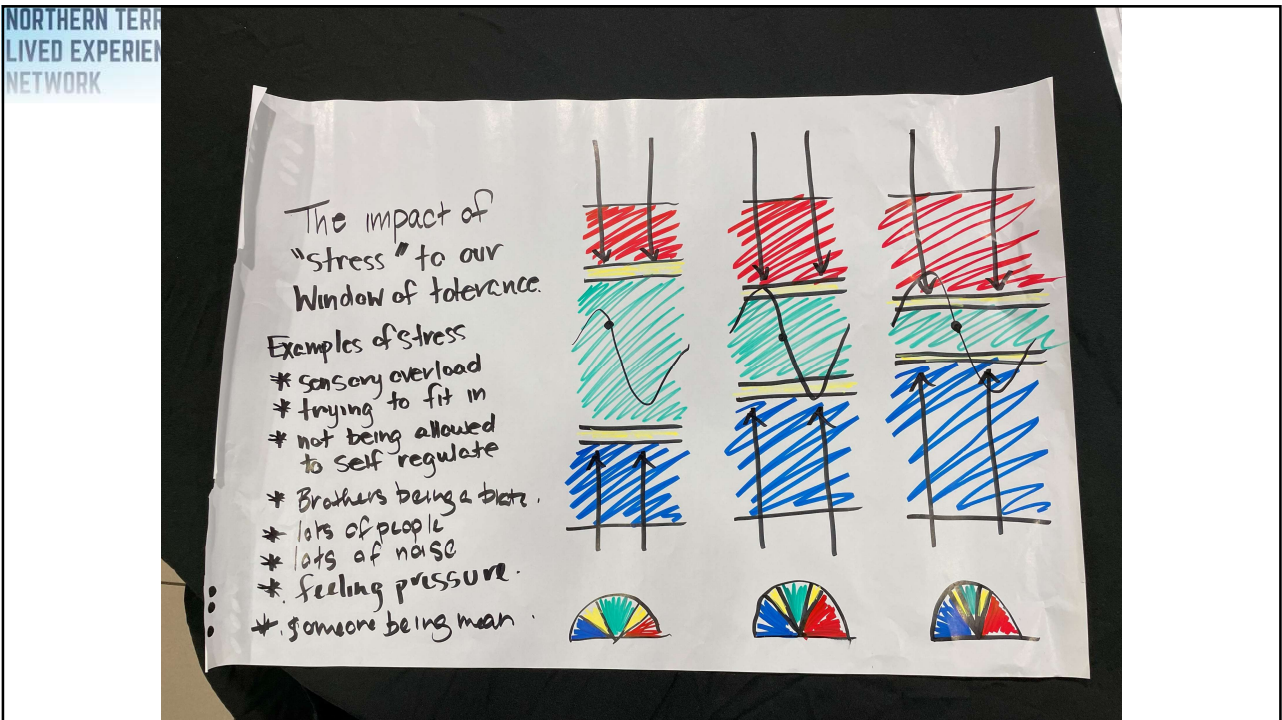
Learning other ways to grow our window of tolerance also supports self-regulation (no matter who you are or what your age).

134





135

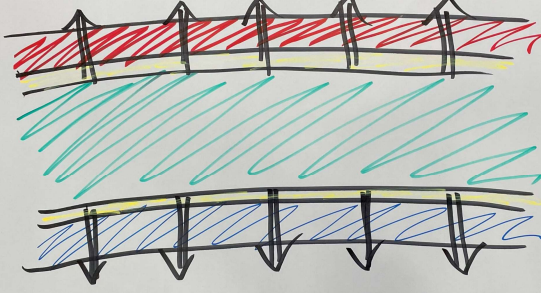


136



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

GOOD NEWS!! WE CAN WIDEN  
OUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE




IDEAS: Good sleep, doing things I enjoy, eating good food (vitamins) & treats, getting along with family, having fun. fitness/exercise, having good friends.

137

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## What is mental health?



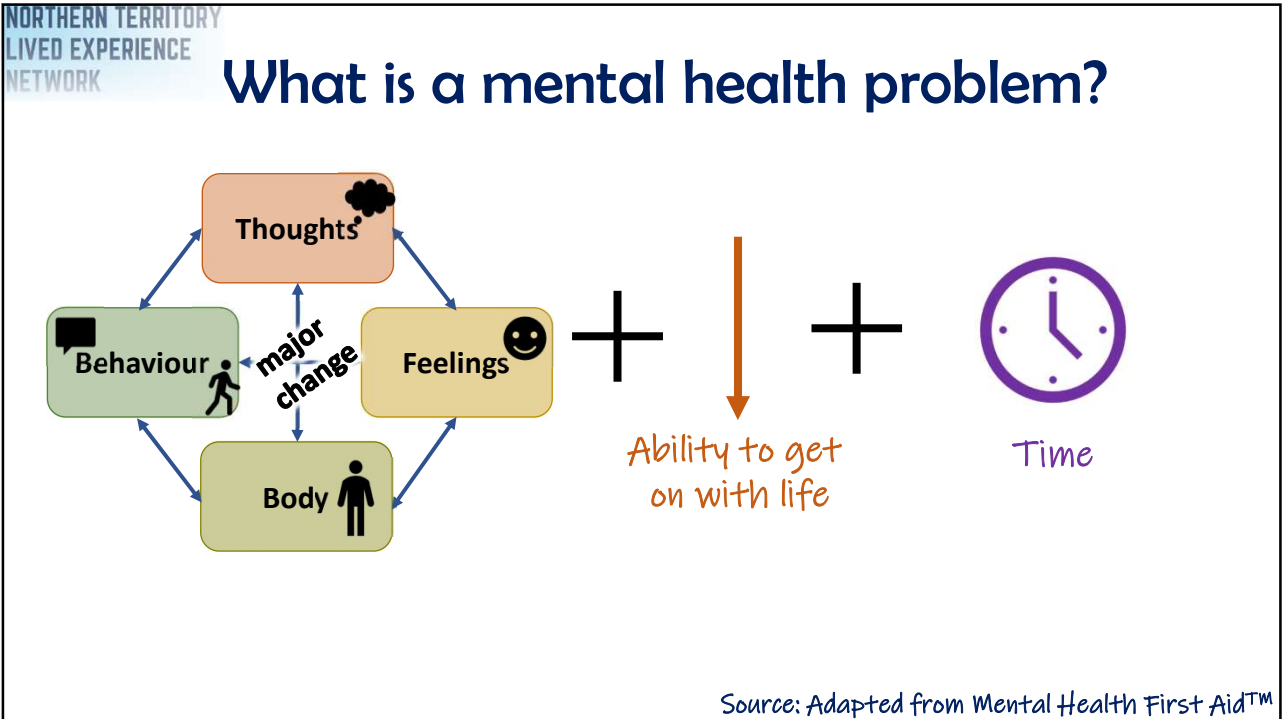
Mental Health

poor health / problem

good health

Physical Health

138



139

## What does good mental health look and feel like?

Thoughts

Feelings

Behaviours

64

140

# What does a mental health problem Look and feel Like?

Thoughts

Feelings

Behaviours

65

141

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Other ways we foster inclusive environments in our peer programs

142

**Use democracy:**

**Create group values and  
group agreements.**

**Mutual accountability  
Personal responsibility**

143

## **Values to create a supportive environment**

Select the values which represent what would make this program a safe and supportive experience for you.

Write down your own values, if you see something missing from the list.



144


Curiosity	Choosing Own Goals	Personal Growth	Self-Care
Self-Respect	Acceptance	Courage	Change Fun
Comfort	Commitment	Perfection	Shared Power
Order	Belonging	Acceptance	Flexibility Humility
Helpfulness	Friendship	Mindfulness	Honesty Purpose
Compassion	Reliability	Forgiveness	Co-Operation
Authenticity	Broad-minded	Equality	Social Justice
Trust	Helping Others	Generosity	Mutual Respect
Confidentiality	Deep Listening	Valuing Diversity	Personal Responsibility
Self-Motivation	Accountability	Integrity	Contribution
Tolerance	Nurturing Others	Caring	Openness

145

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## Group Agreement

How should we demonstrate these values through our behaviours?  
 What do you need from others to make this a safe experience for you?  
**CREATE A GROUP AGREEMENT THAT IS MORE SPECIFIC.**



**GROUP AGREEMENT**

Start a 'Safe Space' discussion and make some Group Agreements on how you're going to respect one another, interact with each other.

These could look like:

- X not checking phone during session
- X listening carefully to each person as they speak
- X being non-judgemental
- X making all feedback constructive and kind
- X arriving on time
- X no swearing (if applicable)
- X Not sharing private information shared in the session

146

## Promote and encourage self-regulation

147

## Choose how you participate



Use the sensory items & other ways to self-regulate



Right to Pass



7

Take a break



Be mindful of noise

**We have lots of sensitive ears.**  
Some of us can be overwhelmed by sudden noises, loud noises, and crutchy scratchy noises.

**Please remember to:**

1. Turn your phone to silent.
2. Do your best practicing at the 2 neurological help practising stations.
3. Try not to bang objects around.
4. Present doors from slamming.
5. Remove your feet crutchy practicing in the kitchen.

Thank you 🙏

148



# Celebrate difference

149



Walk



or



Ride



150

## Different but the same

The 'what would you rather' activity showed that we have similarities and differences.

Despite our different preferences, we all have the same needs.



For example, we like different foods, but we all eat food.

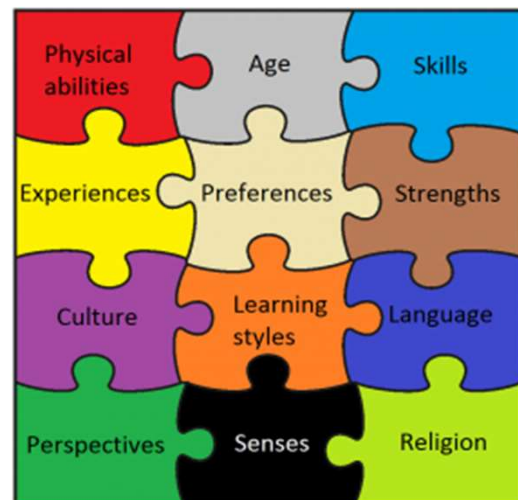
11

151

## Understanding diversity

We use the term 'diversity' to represent the range of 'things' that makes us different and unique.

This includes our age, gender, abilities, way of thinking, language, culture, preferences and experiences.



12

152

## Build empathy

153

## Find your tribe activity

1. You will be given a small piece of paper.
2. Your job is to not show the piece of paper to anyone else - it's a secret.
3. As quickly and as quietly as possible, find the rest of the people in the room with the same coloured paper as you.
4. Arrange yourselves from tallest to smallest while waiting for the end of the activity.



154

## Find your tribe activity

How did it feel for everyone else who could find a group? The people who were 'included'.



15

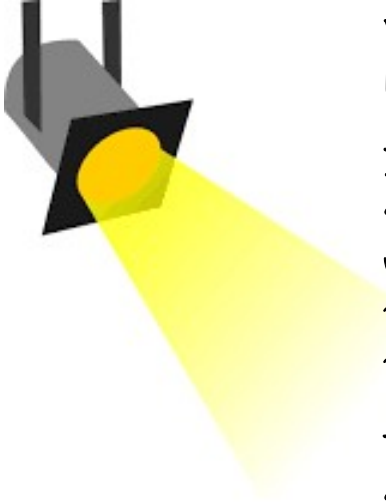
155

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Celebrate strengths

156

## Shining a Light on our strengths!



We are going to take a breather from all the learning and reflect on our strengths.

It can be difficult to identify your own strengths. A helpful way to think about your strengths, is to imagine how someone who knows you well and cares about you, would describe you.

Think of this, as you select 3 cards from the selection out the front.

88

157

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Seek feedback

158

## Ask for feedback and suggestions



Please let us know what you liked & what we can do better

ASK ABOUT PEOPLES EXPERIENCE. ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO BETTER.  
CREATE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AMONGST YOUR WHOLE 'COMMUNITY'

159

What we know about supporting young people to develop self-awareness & self-regulation? It really, really helps if you can put into practice all of these values ...

Patience

Non-judgement

Detective skills

Empathy

Flexibility

160



## Further advice from Positive Partnerships

161

**A structured approach to creating a safe environment and supporting young people to develop self-awareness and self-regulation**

### Responding to and supporting your young person

1. Get to know the child and connect with them

2. Understand the purpose of the behaviour

3. Consider if the behaviour is:

- harming the person or others?
- interrupting their learning or the learning of others?
- affecting their quality of life such as relationships?

**No:**  
Accommodate the behaviour

**Yes:**

- Make environmental changes
- Teach self-regulation skills
- Use reactive strategies – co-regulation

Source: [www.positivepartnerships.com.au](http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au)

162

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

### Responding to and supporting your young person

1. Get to know the child and connect with them
2. Understand the purpose of the behaviour
3. Consider if the behaviour is:
  - harming the person or others?
  - interrupting their learning or the learning of others?
  - affecting their quality of life such as relationships?

**No:**  
Accommodate the behaviour

**Yes:**

- Make environmental changes
- Teach self-regulation skills
- Use reactive strategies – co-regulation

*Very few people listen to / pay heed to someone they do not trust or feel close to.*

*Put your 'detective hat on'. Look for patterns, and reasons behind the behaviour. ASK the young person 'why' something happened, what contributed. What are their reflections later when they feel calm (note, they may not remember).*

*Don't just accommodate the behaviour. Use your influence to grow a more inclusive, non-judgemental and respectful community around the young person. Be an ally and supporter to create a more compassionate society.*

*Co-regulation is helping the person in the moment of 'flipping their lid'. It does NOT include saying the words 'calm down'.*

*Self-regulation can't be taught without self-awareness. No person can know 'when to do what' if they can't recognise the cues! Self-awareness and self-regulation need to be discussed when calm and engaged. Mastering takes practice and ongoing commitment.*

Source: [www.positivepartnersh.com](http://www.positivepartnersh.com)

163

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## Further advice from Autistic people

164

Source: Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022

# Get to know ME AUTISTIC



165

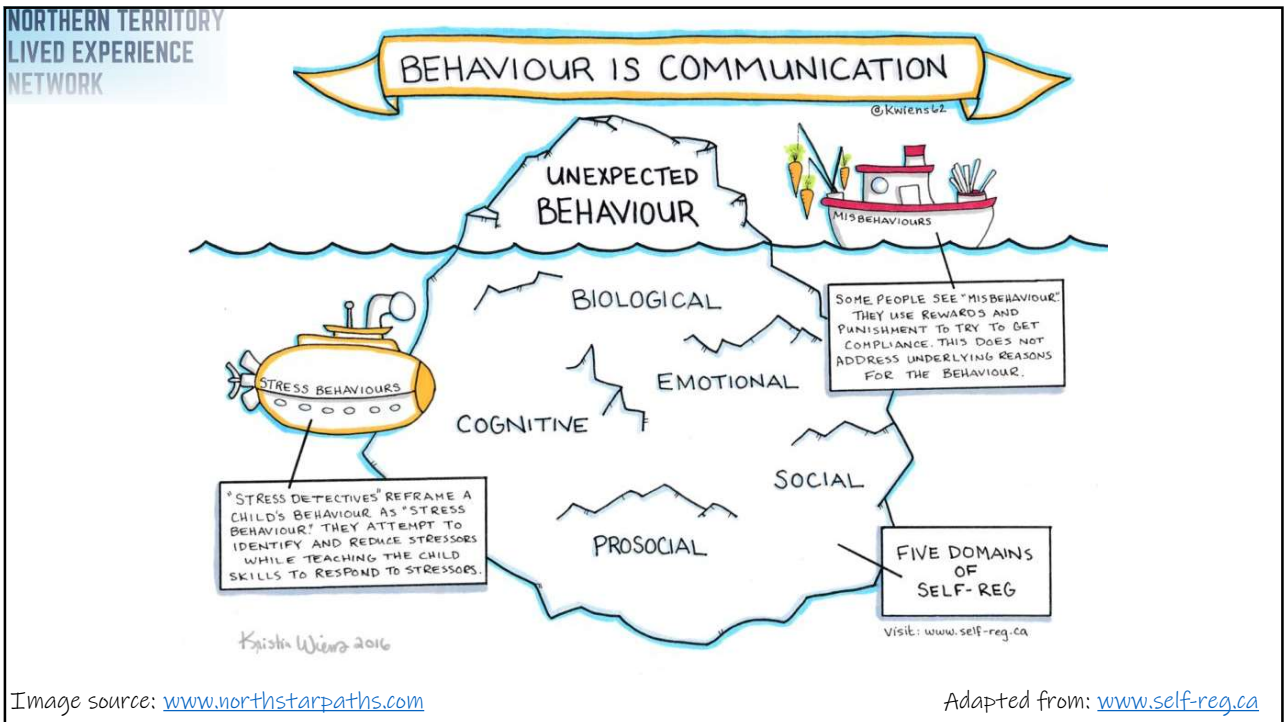
## Practitioner characteristics that Autistic people want & need



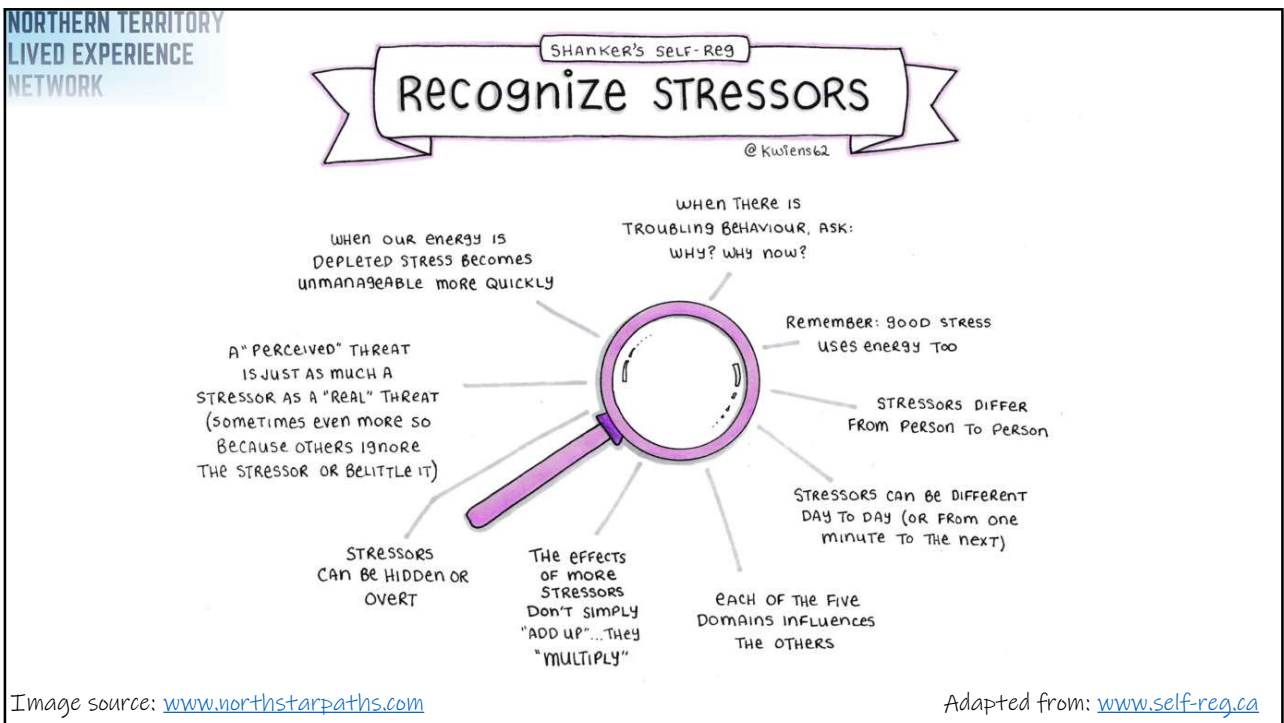
- Flexible & adaptable
- Patient
- Person-centred & strengths-focused
- Caring, empathic & validating
- Respectful
- Create safety
- Listens & seeks to understand

Source: Davina Sanders, Autism Queensland, IMHC 2022

166



167



168



### EXAMPLE STRESSORS

## BIOLOGICAL DOMAIN

@kwiens62

STRESSORS CAN AFFECT OUR PHYSIOLOGICAL SYSTEM AND TAKE US OUT OF OPTIMAL FUNCTION. THIS CAN INCLUDE NOISES, CROWDS, TOO MUCH VISUAL STIMULATION, OR NOT ENOUGH EXERCISE.

**BALANCE** HOMEOSTASIS - OTHERWISE KNOWN AS CALMNESS - OCCURS WHEN ENERGY EXPENDITURE AND RECOVERY ARE IN SYNC

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.SELF-REG.CA

### EXAMPLE STRESSORS

## EMOTION DOMAIN

@kwiens62

STRESSORS IN THIS DOMAIN INCLUDE STRONG EMOTIONS, BOTH POSITIVE (OVEREXCITED) AND NEGATIVE (ANXIETY, ANGER) AND OFTEN INTERACT WITH AND MULTIPLY STRESSORS IN OTHER DOMAINS.

**BALANCE** BALANCE IS ATTAINED, NOT BY TRYING TO CURTAIL STRONG EMOTIONS, POSITIVE AS WELL AS NEGATIVE, BUT RECOGNIZING THEM AS SUCH

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.SELF-REG.CA

169

### EXAMPLE STRESSORS

## PROSOCIAL DOMAIN

@kwiens62

SIGNS OF PROSOCIAL STRESS SUCH AS DIFFICULTIES SHARING, TELLING THE TRUTH, OR UNDERSTANDING RIGHT AND WRONG ARE OFTEN TIED TO A CHILD'S DIFFICULTY COPING WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S STRESS.

**BALANCE** WHEN THE INDIVIDUAL PUTS THE GROUP AHEAD OF SELF, YET REMAINS AN INDIVIDUAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.SELF-REG.CA

### EXAMPLE STRESSORS

## SOCIAL DOMAIN

@kwiens62

SOCIAL STRESSORS RELATE TO A CHILD'S DIFFICULTY PICKING UP ON SOCIAL CUES, AND UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF THEIR OWN BEHAVIOUR ON OTHERS.

**BALANCE** BE NEITHER TOO ACQUIESCENT NOR TOO OVERBEARING, NEITHER TOO SOLITARY NOR TOO GREGARIOUS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.SELF-REG.CA

170

**EXAMPLE STRESSORS**

**COGNITIVE DOMAIN**  
@kwiens62

COGNITIVE STRESS IS CAUSED BY DIFFICULTY PROCESSING CERTAIN KINDS OF INFORMATION.

**BALANCE** A CHALLENGE THAT IS TOO EASY IS NOT A 'CHALLENGE'; BUT NEITHER IS SOMETHING THAT IS TOO HARD

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.SELF-REG.CA

Adapted from: [www.self-reg.ca](http://www.self-reg.ca)  
Image source: [www.northstarpaths.com](http://www.northstarpaths.com)

# What to do when someone has already 'flipped their lid'?



## Meltdowns

5/9

The world feels like it is caving in and my senses become more amplifies. I can sometimes feel a building tension. My body feels increasingly heavy. I often feel suddenly exhausted and like I can no longer hold everything together. It feels out of control.



VS

'A temporary loss of control of their behaviour. This loss of control can be expressed verbally (eg shouting, screaming, crying), physically (eg kicking, lashing out, biting)'



@neurodivergent\_lou



## Recommended reading for supporting a young person to co-regulate

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CO-REGULATION



The feelings and behavior of people in close proximity to us, directly impact how we feel, and respond to our own emotions. When children become upset, if those around them stay calm, demonstrating how to calm down, the child can calm down quicker.

In the same way adults are impacted by others actions, children pick up the moods of others around them. When people around us are behaving a certain way, we can be directly affected, responding both internally and externally.

**The definition of co-regulation is**– the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors to soothe and manage stressing internal sensory input or external situations, with the support and direction of a connecting individual. Co-regulation is nurturing connection of another individual that supports regulation needs through the use of strategies, tools, and calming techniques in order to self-soothe or respond in times of stress.

#1

<https://www.theottoolbox.com/co-regulation/>

173

## Recommended reading for supporting a young person to co-regulate

**Children learn new skills through hands-on activities. Regulation skills can be learned the same way.**

**Deep Breathing**- Deep breathing exercises for kids teaches young children how to calm down through pausing, and taking large breaths. Relaxation breathing is a great strategy for adults and kids to do together (best practiced when calm). When your child becomes upset, immediately start one of the breathing techniques alongside the child and they will calm.

However, even without prior practice together, you can support someone through co-regulation by sitting beside and using your breath audibly and intentionally to promote self-regulation. They will 'tune in' and begin to regulate in alignment with your breath and calm demeanor.

**Note: Speaking to someone while they have 'flipped their lid' - in particular using the words 'calm down' - is likely to escalate feelings and have the opposite intended effect.**

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CO-REGULATION



#1

<https://www.theottoolbox.com/co-regulation/>

174

## Part 5 – Further resources and (free) training/education

- Cultivating shared responsibility and inclusion
- Resources that support young people and their families to understand their rights (and self-advocate)

175

### 1. Cultivating shared responsibility and inclusion

176

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Recommended resource for creating inclusive environments in learning environments



# A toolkit for schools

#2

The toolkit is user-friendly and can be easily adapted to suit the needs of your students. You can pick it up, and dip in and out depending on how much time you have in your planning. There is a great range of fun, engaging activities which enable children to truly understand the meaning of quite complex terms such as values and diversity. It is an educational resource that tackles big themes in a manageable way.

Erasmus+  
Funded by the European Union and Erasmus+

Source: <https://inclusiveschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/INSCOOL-Inclusion-Week-Activities-Pack-ENG.pdf>

177

# Contents

#2

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Exploring values and actions</b>
<b>Our School: now</b>	<b>32 Activity 1: Values mine</b>
<b>6 Activity 1: Our classroom</b>	<b>34 Activity 2: Values for inclusion</b>
<b>11 Activity 2: Our school</b>	
<b>14 Activity 3: Me!</b>	
<b>Understanding diversity</b>	<b>Our school: review</b>
<b>16 Activity 1: Random Pairs</b>	<b>37 Activity 1: Our classroom</b>
<b>18 Activity 2: That's my potato!</b>	<b>40 Activity 2: Our school</b>
	<b>46 Activity 3: Me!</b>
<b>Understanding inclusion</b>	<b>Our school: next steps</b>
<b>20 Activity 1: What does inclusion mean?</b>	<b>49 Activity 1: Our values</b>
<b>22 Activity 2: A bag of difference</b>	<b>53 Creating or reviewing a charter for your classroom, school or playground</b>

Source: <https://inclusiveschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/INSCOOL-Inclusion-Week-Activities-Pack-ENG.pdf>

178

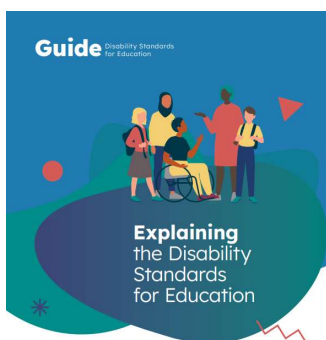
## 2. Resources that support young people and their families to understand their rights (and self-advocate)

(Similarly informs educators of their responsibilities in alignment with disability standards in education.)

179

## Recommended resource to understand your rights (i.e. the legislation & disability standards in education)

#3



This resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

This resource was co-designed by students with disability and their parents and caregivers

### Using this resource

This resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. In this resource, we will refer to the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* as the DSE.



The DSE explain two things:

1. The rights of students with disability.
2. What education providers have to do to help students with disability to get their rights.

Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/explaining>

180

## Contents

#3

<b>Using this resource</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Unpacking the DSE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Am I protected by the DSE?.....	3
Who has to follow the DSE?.....	5
What are my rights?.....	6
What do education providers have to do?.....	8
Are there exceptions to the DSE?.....	11
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Index.....	12
The DSE.....	13
Rights and laws.....	27
Everyday terms.....	28
<b>Useful web links</b> .....	<b>30</b>

<https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/explaining>

181

## Recommended resource to support you to advocate 'with and for' your primary school aged child

#4



### Using this workbook

This workbook is for parents and caregivers of primary school children with disability.

This is a resource for you and your child. It will help you both come up with potential accommodations. These are actions or changes that let your child take part in every aspect of school life. Accommodations are also known as **reasonable adjustments**.

It can be hard to know what to ask for or what your child may need to feel supported at school. You and your child can use this resource to help you think and plan. You can also use it to involve your child in planning. Then you can bring your ideas into meetings with the school.

Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/advocating>


182



<p>NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK</p>		<h1>Contents</h1>	<div style="background-color: #e67e22; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <span style="color: white; font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">#4</span> </div>
<p><b>Part 1) Setting a goal</b> .....</p> <p>Step 1) Ask yourself .....</p> <p>Step 2) Ask your child .....</p> <p>Step 3) Support your child to answer .....</p> <p>Step 4) Come up with a shared goal (or goals) .....</p> <p>Step 5) Record the goal (or goals) .....</p> <p><b>Part 2) Having the conversation</b> .....</p> <p>Conversation tips .....</p> <p>Ways to have a conversation .....</p> <p>    Short story .....</p> <p>    Social story .....</p> <p>About consultation .....</p> <p>    Ideas for the conversation .....</p> <p>    Involving your child .....</p> <p>About reasonable adjustments .....</p> <p>    Ideas for the conversation .....</p>	<p><b>Part 3) Identifying barriers to participation</b> .....</p> <p>Step 1) Reflect on school life .....</p> <p>Step 2) Identify barriers .....</p> <p>    Ways to involve your child .....</p> <p>Step 3) Organise your information .....</p> <p><b>Part 4) Suggesting reasonable adjustments</b> .....</p> <p>Step 1) Seeking out information .....</p> <p>    Use what is out there .....</p> <p>Step 2) Working with your child .....</p> <p>Step 3) Putting it together .....</p> <p>Step 4) Next steps .....</p> <p>    Get ready for the meeting .....</p> <p><b>Web links</b> .....</p>		

Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/advocating>

183

<p>NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK</p>		<h2>Recommended resource to support you to advocate 'with and for' your child during key transitions</h2>
<div style="background-color: #3498db; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <span style="color: white; font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">#5</span> </div>		<h3>Using this resource</h3> <p><b>Who is this resource for?</b></p> <p>This resource is for anyone who has a child with disability. Whether your child is in preschool or university, no matter their age and stage of life, there should be something here that you can use.</p> <p><b>This resource covers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Key transitions (p.7)</a> – preparing for times of change</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Pathways and options (p.30)</a> – exploring different education options</li> </ol> <p>It will take you through key questions to ask to put your child's rights in place. These rights are explained in the <a href="#">Disability Standards for Education 2005</a>. In this resource, we refer to these standards as the DSE.</p>
<p>Source: <a href="https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/milestones">https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/milestones</a></p>		

184



**NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK**

## Contents

**#5**

<b>Using this resource</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Who is this resource for? .....	2
What is this resource for? .....	3
Transitions .....	4
Skillset and mindset .....	6
<b>Key transitions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Transition to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) .....	8
ECEC to primary school transition .....	10
Primary to secondary school transition .....	12
Early to late secondary school transition .....	14
Late secondary to post-secondary transition .....	17
Year-to-year transitions .....	20
Getting your rights: Questions to think about and ask .....	22
Using the DSE: Meeting with your institution .....	22
Using the DSE: Getting accommodations .....	24
Using the DSE: Creating a safe environment .....	26
Using the DSE: Getting your rights .....	28
<b>Pathways and options</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Making decisions .....	32
More information .....	32


Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/milestones>

185

**NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK**

## Recommended resource to support the implementation of reasonable adjustments at every stage of education

**#6**



**Workbook** Disability Standards for Education

The Disability Standards for Education in Practice: Action Plan

This workbook is for students. It will help you to plan and set up reasonable adjustments for your time in education.

This resource was co-designed by students with disability and their parents and caregivers.

### Using this workbook

This workbook is for every student with disability. In here, you will find a series of steps and activities. These will take you through how to get accommodations to help you learn. You can use these steps in a school, university, or vocational education and training (VET) institution (e.g. TAFE).

**Accommodations** are actions or changes that support you to join in with your peers. These are sometimes known as reasonable adjustments.

You may be carrying out these steps with a parent, caregiver, mentor, or support worker. Or you might be doing this by yourself. Either way, you can use this workbook in whatever way helps you best.

Going through all these steps can take a lot of time and energy. You do not need to finish everything at once! In fact, we recommend going through it over a few days or sittings.

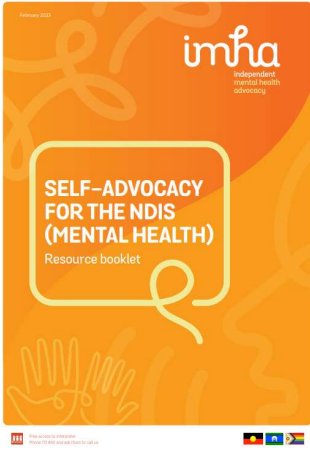
Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/dse-in-practice>

186

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK		<h1>Contents</h1>	#6
<b>Using this workbook</b> .....		Step 4) Prepare for the meeting .....	
Your rights .....		a) Plan to share your experiences .....	
Getting what you need .....		b) Write a script .....	
<b>Making your action plan</b> .....		c) Organise supports .....	
Step 1) Research the process .....		d) Get in the zone .....	
Before you enrol .....		Step 5) Have the meeting .....	
Questions and answers .....		Next steps .....	
Tips for keeping a written record .....		Different approaches .....	
Step 2) Gather evidence .....		Step 6) Take action .....	
a) Map your existing supports .....		a) Put things in place .....	
b) Identify barriers .....		b) Check in on things .....	
c) Think of accommodations .....		Step 7) Change or renew your accommodations .....	
d) Collect your evidence .....		Change .....	
Step 3) Set up the meeting .....		Renew .....	
Meeting details .....			

Source: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/english/dse-in-practice>

187

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK		<h2>Recommended resource for taking a structured approach to advocacy / self-advocacy when rights are infringed</h2>
#7		<p>This resource has been created by and for people who experience issues mental distress to such an extent that they have a NDIS plan to accommodate their needs.</p> <p>Chapter 1 provides a structured approach to advocacy and self-advocacy that we find extremely helpful for individuals and families seeking to challenge organisations/systems in positions of power who have infringed upon their rights. We have included this resource with our additional information because it is used in all of our adult peer programs.</p> <p>When we are able to take a structured approach to advocacy, we can separate our emotions from the issue at hand and are more likely to be successful / feel successful, despite the trauma and re-traumatisation that comes from advocating for our rights (or those of our loved one).</p>
Source: <a href="https://www.imha.vic.gov.au/self-advocacy-ndis">https://www.imha.vic.gov.au/self-advocacy-ndis</a>		

188

# CONTENTS

#7

## Self-advocacy

### Module 1: Learning how to self-advocate

- When do we need to advocate for ourselves?
- What are the steps I take to advocate for myself?
- Step 1: Identifying the issue
- Step 2: Knowing your rights
- Step 3: Identifying solutions
- Step 4: Develop a plan
- Step 5: Enact the plan
- Step 6: Review

### Resources

- IMHA's 6-Step Guide to Self-Advocacy including a blank advocacy plan
- Description of decision-making forms to nominate a support person
- Advocacy organisations
- Organisations that handle complaints
- Complaint letter outline
- Self-advocacy skills
  - Negotiating and compromising
  - Managing conflict
  - Practicing self-advocacy
  - Barriers
- Barrier breakthrough: Worksheet

Source: <https://www.imha.vic.gov.au/self-advocacy-ndis>

189

## 2. Evidence based sources of online information and training to support professional development and parenting/care giving

190

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

#1

# Positive Partnerships

Workshops and online training, video and resources to support school aged children on the autism spectrum.

[www.positivepartnerships.com.au](http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au)

positive partnerships  
Working together to support school-aged students on the autism spectrum

Listen Select Language Search

Powered by Google Translate

What is Autism Resources Workshops and Online Learning About us Get in touch Online Learning Hub

## Positive Partnerships

Working together with parents, carers and educators of school-aged children on the autism spectrum to provide current, relevant and evidence informed information through workshops and online resources.

Acknowledgement of Country

For Parents & Carers For School Staff

**Workshops**  
We offer free workshops around Australia to provide information and strategies to support your child's learning.  
[Learn More](#)

**Online Platforms**  
Connect to our new Online Planning Tool and our Online Learning Hub. Free and available at your convenience.  
[Connect](#)

**Resources**  
From information sheets and tools, to stories from other families, you'll find loads of autism spectrum information and support.  
[Find Resources](#)

191

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# Emerging Minds

Online training, toolkits and resources relating to childhood mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Emerging Minds. [www.emerginqminds.com.au](http://www.emerginqminds.com.au) Practitioners Families Organisations Researchers Learning lo

About Our work News Events Resources Training Get in touch Login

Explore our wide range of resources here. [View all](#)

**Watch.**  
Interviews, animations, interactive sessions and more.  
Webinars Videos [Watch more](#)

**Listen.**  
The latest ideas and insights from expert guests.  
Podcasts [Listen more](#)

**Read.**  
Everything from short articles to guides and more.  
In focus Fact sheets Practice papers [Read more](#)

**Toolkits.**  
Browse curated collections of resources.  
[View more](#)

#2

192

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

be you Beyond Blue

Get started ▾ Learn ▾ Resources ▾ About ▾

Search Register or Log in

< Home

## Professional Learning

#3

## Be You

Resources to support schools and other education settings to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

[www.beyou.edu.au](http://www.beyou.edu.au)

A flexible, whole learning community approach

At the heart of Be You is a content framework that provides educators and leaders with a structure for both Professional Learning, and the actions which early learning services and schools can take to implement a whole learning community approach to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

The Professional Learning consists of 13 content modules grouped under five domains, with content centred around mentally healthy communities. Once you've signed up, your dashboard gives you full access to the modules and allows you to track your progress.

To complete a 'module', you'll need to progress through every topic. To complete a 'topic', read through the content – making sure you watch any videos and click through all sections within the content.

Read an [overview](#) of each Be You Professional Learning module.

193

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK


## MHFA Guidelines

For different mental health problems	For specific community groups	For specific skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Psychosis</li> <li>• Trauma</li> <li>• Eating Disorders</li> <li>• Panic Attacks</li> <li>• Suicide</li> <li>• Problem Drug Use</li> <li>• Problem Alcohol Use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous</li> <li>• Co-workers</li> <li>• People experiencing financial difficulties</li> <li>• LGBTIQ individuals</li> <li>• Family members or friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating with adolescents</li> <li>• Communicating with an Aboriginal adolescent</li> <li>• Considerations when offering mental health first aid to certain CALD groups.</li> </ul>

**Free, comprehensive, evidence-based, online.**  
[www.mhfa.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-guidelines](http://www.mhfa.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-guidelines)

194





Get support ▾ Learn about mental health ▾ Get involved ▾

### Anxiety

When anxious feelings don't go away, happen without any particular reason or make it hard to cope with daily life it may be the sign of an anxiety condition.

Anxiety conditions affect 1 in 4 people in Australia and they are treatable.

[Learn about anxiety](#)

### Depression

We all feel sad, moody or low sometimes, it's a normal part of life. If these feelings come and stay for more than 2 weeks it might be a sign that you have depression.

Depression affects 1 in 7 people in Australia and it is treatable.

[Learn about depression](#)

### Suicide


Learn the warning signs, how to talk about it, what to do after a suicide attempt, and support if you've lost someone to suicide.

1 in 6 Australians will have thoughts of suicide at some point during their lives. Support is available.

[Learn about suicide](#)

**Free, comprehensive, online information and phone support.**  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health>

195



Find a centre 📍 Emergency assistance 🚑 Donate now ❤️ Login or create account 👤 ▾

Explore topics ▾ Our services ▾ Online & phone support ▾ For professionals & educators ▾ About us ▾ Get involved ▾ Search the site... 🔍

Who are you?

I'm a young person

I'm supporting a young person

I'm an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

I'm an educator

I'm a health professional

I'm an employer

**Mental health online support**

Create a free account, join group chats, or talk to a qualified professional online

[Mental health support](#)

**Work and study support**

Get support to plan a career, find employment or work towards further education

[Work and study support](#)

**Find a headspace centre**

With locations in over 150 communities across Australia, we're here to help

[Find a centre](#)

**Explore mental health topics**

Learn about mental health challenges and ways to maintain a healthy headspace

[Explore topics](#)

**Free, comprehensive, online information and phone support (youth)**  
<https://headspace.org.au/>

196



## Youth MHFA course

- Suitable for adults working or living with adolescents.
- **Face to Face:** 14-hour course can be delivered over 2 days or 4 x 3.5 hour modules.
- **Blended Online:** Half self-paced & half online. Flexible, more options, cost effective.



### MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS COVERED

- Depression
- Anxiety problems
- Psychosis
- Substance Use
- Eating disorders
- Gambling problems

### MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SITUATIONS COVERED

- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours
- Non-suicidal self-injury
- Panic attacks
- Traumatic events
- Severe effects of drug or alcohol use
- Severe psychotic states
- Aggressive behaviours.

Find a course: [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au)

197

## teen MHFA course

- Young people prefer to share problems with their peers.
- Young people are trained to seek the help of a responsive and trusted adult.



- Interactive classroom sessions

Years 7-9 3 x 60 mins

Years 10-12 3 x 75 mins

- Focus on the pattern of thoughts, feeling and behaviours rather than focusing on specific illnesses.
- In school settings is delivered to a whole year level and requires a certain % of staff to do Youth MHFA.
- Sacha King from 2-2-1 Mental Health Charity is the main NT instructor & may be able to provide support for funding applications. Go to [www.twotwoonettraining.com](http://www.twotwoonettraining.com).

198

### 3. The NT Lived Experience Network's peer programs, workshops and resources

199

### NTLEN's scope of activities

#### Unfunded systems advocacy

- *On behalf of individuals and family/kin impacted by MH, AOD, trauma and/or suicidality*
- *Own formal submissions*
- *Promote other lived experience engagement opportunities*

#### Peer programs, workshops and vocational training

- *Facilitated online, and*
- *In person in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and online*

*Custom resources on our website to navigate the system (e.g. find a support)*

#### Community & Professional Development Workshops

- *Provide evidence-based information and are presented from a lived experience perspective*

#### Peer-led education and support programs

1. *Recovery Together (individuals) \*\**
2. *Circles of Support (family & kin) \*\**
3. *Empowering YOUTH Program (youth)*

#### Peer workforce development

- *Custom-stepped vocational pathway from program participant to Cert IV qualified peer \*\**

#### Lived Experience Research

- *Partnership with Flinders University*
- *Work has been externally evaluated \*\**

200

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## Everything we know to help you navigate the local and national mental health and related systems

**Support to Navigate NT and National Mental Health Services**

**For all emergencies dial Triple Zero - 000**

*Stay focused, stay relevant, stay on the line.*

**For Crisis Support: Lifeline - 13 11 14; 13YARN - 13 92 76; Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800**

**NT Mental Health Access Team - 1800 682 288**

Source: [www.livedexperience.net/resources/](http://www.livedexperience.net/resources/)

201

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## Lived Experience Workshops

### Hope for Recovery

**Hope for Recovery**  
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF  
**MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION**  
ON INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES

**WORKSHOP SERIES**

Come along to our free workshop series presenting evidence-based information about mental ill-health, addiction and recovery from the lived experience perspective. Hear from Sam, Sal and Rocket, 3 x NT Lived Experience advocates, who generously share their stories of recovery, including what its like and what helps.

This workshop series is for individuals and family/kin with their own lived experience, interested community members, and professionals seeking to improve their understanding of lived experience perspectives.


**Workshop #1** (duration 1 hour)

- The relationship between mental ill-health, trauma and addiction.
- The experience of individuals and families.
- Why families need support too.

**Workshop #2** (duration 1 hour)

- Evidence based ways to promote recovery and healing.
- An opportunity to find out about our peer programs *Recovery Together & Circles of Support*.

Visit our website to find out more  
[www.livedexperience.net](http://www.livedexperience.net)  
contact@livedexperience.net  
0438 022 032



**2024**

JUNE  
JULY  
AUGUST

REPEAT SESSIONS WEEKLY

BUSINESS HOURS & EVENINGS

ATTEND ONLINE OR IN-PERSON:

DARWIN  
KATHERINE

**2024**

ONLINE  
**21 May**  
9:00am - 12:00pm  
(Tuesday)

**KATHERINE**

**5 June**  
5:30pm - 8:30pm  
(Wednesday)  
*Flinders Training Room | Katherine Hospital*

ONLINE  
**11 June**  
2:30pm - 5:30pm  
(Tuesday)

### Supporting Neurodivergent Youth




UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING  
**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NEURODIVERGENT**

**WORKSHOP**

This free 3-hour workshop is for people who work with youth, parents and caregivers, and any interested members of the community.

The workshop will build the knowledge and skills of adults to support young people who have 'diverse' abilities and different experiences of the world (e.g. autism, ADHD, trauma, mental ill-health, sensory processing needs, FASD). It includes evidence-based information and strengths-based practices presented from the lived experience perspective.

Register online at [livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
contact@livedexperience.net | 0438 022 032

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

**phn**  
Northern Health

**Workforce**  
NT

**Flinders UNIVERSITY**

**2024**

ONLINE  
**21 May**  
9:00am - 12:00pm  
(Tuesday)

**KATHERINE**

**5 June**  
5:30pm - 8:30pm  
(Wednesday)  
*Flinders Training Room | Katherine Hospital*

ONLINE  
**11 June**  
2:30pm - 5:30pm  
(Tuesday)

202

101

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

**Adults impacted by MH&AOD**

### Katherine Recovery Together

A free peer education and recovery program for people who experience mental health, alcohol, drug, gambling or related issues

Delivered over 9 x 3-hour sessions

Venue: Flinders University, Katherine Hospital  
Days & Time: Thursdays 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
Dates: Thurs 2 May to Thurs 27 June 2024

**Lived experience group**

Programs are run by peers - people with their own lived experience of mental health and addiction - who are trained to support recovery.

**Become part of a community**

Connect with others who have similar life experiences, in a safe and confidential space.

**Learn tools to support recovery**

Understand your triggers. Learn through discussions and creative activities. Make a plan to stay well.

Register online at [livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
or contact: [nolene@livedexperience.net](mailto:nolene@livedexperience.net) | 0438 022 032  
Participation is free and all resources and catering will be provided

**Family and Kin**

### Katherine Circles of Support

A peer support program for family & kin of people who have gambling, alcohol, drug or mental health related problems

Delivered over 9 x 3-hour sessions

Venue: Flinders University, Katherine Hospital  
Days & Time: Fridays 9:30am - 12:30pm  
Dates: Fri 3 May to Fri 28 June 2024

**Peer support group for family & kin**

A safe, supportive and confidential space for family and kin of someone with gambling, alcohol, drug or mental health related problems.

**Learn about addiction & recovery**

Information based on the evidence, in simple everyday language.

- managing overwhelming emotions
- dealing with a crisis
- setting boundaries
- effective communication
- responding to stigma and discrimination
- navigating the service system

**Feel empowered**

Learn tools and strategies to support your own wellbeing and to practice self-care. Learn through discussions and creative activities.

More information & to register: [nolene@livedexperience.net](mailto:nolene@livedexperience.net) | 0438 022 032  
[livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)  
Participation is free and all resources and catering will be provided

**Young People**

### Empowering YOUTH PROGRAM

For neurodivergent young people aged 12 - 17, including those who may:

- be on the autism spectrum
- have ADHD
- have sensory processing needs, or
- who have experienced challenges that affect their wellbeing.

Fun, interactive and hands on program, using creativity to explore concepts such as diversity & inclusion, self-awareness & self-regulation, sensory needs, mental health & wellbeing, strengths & identity, and rights & self-advocacy.

- connect with peers
- snacks provided
- lots of breaks
- separate sensory/quiet space available
- celebrate our achievements
- imagine our ideal planet

**2024 PROGRAMS (TERM 2)**

<b>PALMERSTON</b> Saturdays 2:30pm - 5:30pm 27 April & 4, 11 and 18 May Community Library Palmerston Library	<b>DARWIN</b> Saturdays 2:30pm - 5:30pm 25 May & 1, 8, 15 June Crest NT Winnellie	<b>KATHERINE</b> Saturdays 12:30pm - 3:30pm 25 May & 1, 8, 15 June the Y, Henry Scott Recreation Centre
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

For more information and to register go to [livedexperience.net](http://livedexperience.net)

The program is FREE but places are limited!

CONTACT Sarah | 0474 426 316  
[sarah@livedexperience.net](mailto:sarah@livedexperience.net)

The Empowering YOUTH Program is fully funded by a NDIS Information Linkages & Capacity Building grant!  
Young people do NOT need a NDIS Plan to participate.

203

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK**

## Empowering YOUTH Project

The Empowering YOUTH Program is for young people aged 12 to 17 who are neurodivergent or have experienced adversity.

The program is designed to promote self-advocacy, and strengthen connection to community, for Young Territorians with 'diverse abilities'.

At present (July 2024), there is only funding for one more program in Darwin during week 1 of the July holidays.

**DARWIN**  
Saturdays  
2:30pm - 5:30pm  
25 May & 1, 8, 15 June  
Crest NT  
Winnellie

**The Empowering YOUTH Program is fully funded by a NDIS Information Linkages & Capacity Building grant.**

*Young people do NOT need a NDIS Plan to participate.*

204

## Empowering YOUTH Program

The Empowering YOUTH Program fosters the self-confidence of participants by implicitly and explicitly exploring the CHIME enablers for recovery: Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment.

It is interactive, fun and hands on program that uses creative activities to explore a variety of concepts including

- Diversity & inclusion,
- Self-awareness & self-regulation,
- Identity & values, and
- Self-advocacy, wellbeing & coping

At present each program is delivered over 4 x 3 hour sessions that incorporate lots of breaks and down time. However we are currently re-developing the program for delivery over a 10 week term, featuring weekly (shorter) sessions.

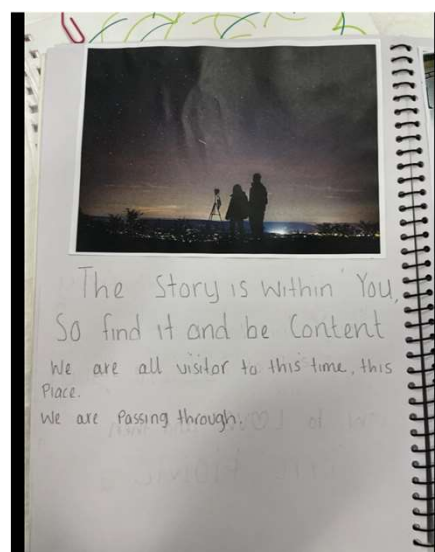
205

## Recovery Together

- Balance of psychoeducation, recovery activities & peer support facilitated in groups to 7 or more adults with experience of distress and/or alcohol and drug problems
- We connect, discuss, reflect, be creative, share knowledge and experience, reimagine and have FUN!



Laminated recovery posters – a fun activity we allocated extra time for.



Vanessa's recovery scrapbook

206

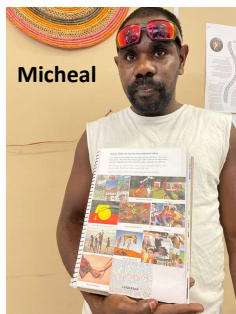


# Recovery Together

- Psychoeducation is delivered through a lens of understanding trauma and its impact.
- CHIME and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing model are explicitly explored and are implicit benchmarks for program design.
- Core themes are **self-awareness** (knowing oneself, what matters, what I need) and **self-regulation** (knowing what helps, what I can do)



Samantha



Micheal

## Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation

'Self-awareness' is knowing yourself.

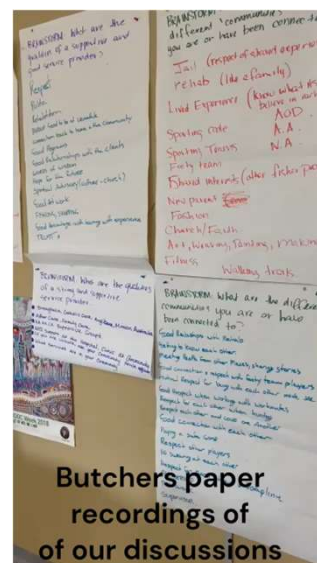
'Self-regulation' is having strategies to be in control of how you are feeling and what you say and do.



Favourite activities in recovery scrapbooks:  
**Samantha** - Motivation for change  
**Michael** - Values, what's important to me

# Recovery Together

- Participants have very diverse backgrounds including suicidality, hospitalizations, dual diagnosis, homelessness, queerness, neurodiversity and incarceration
- Cultivating safety as well as connection within our groups is paramount. Our only requirement for participation in programs is a commitment to safety within the group.

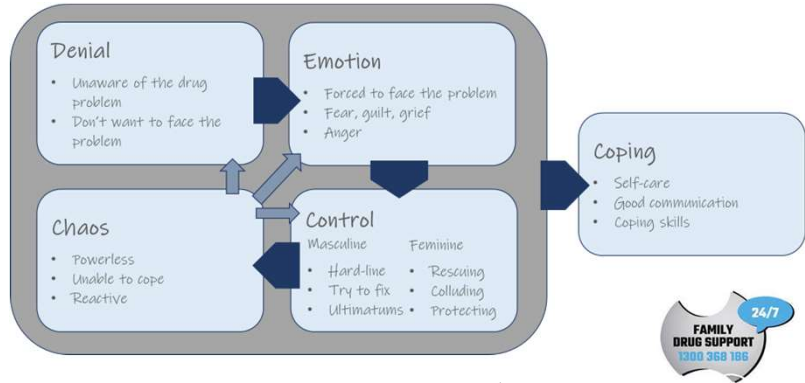


Butchers paper recordings of our discussions



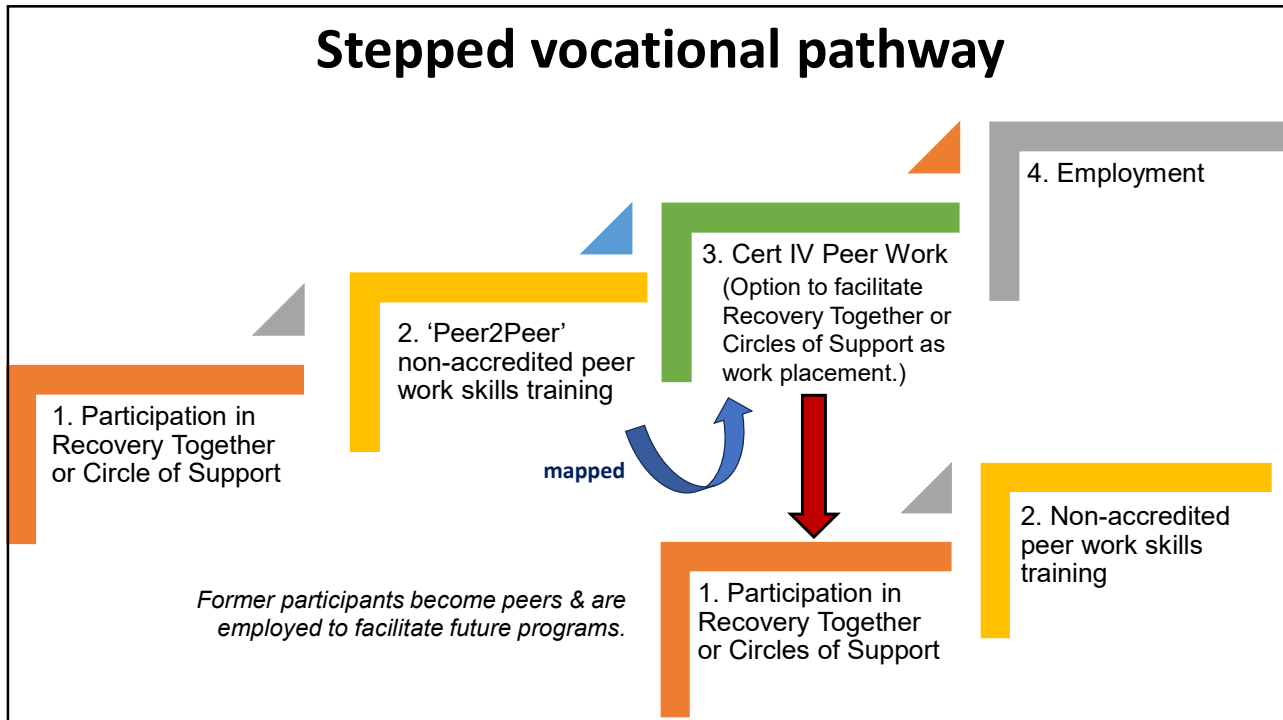
# Circles of Support

- Balance of psycho-education, recovery activities & peer support for the family and kin of people who experience mental distress and alcohol or drug related issues.
- Facilitated by 'Carer-Consumers' with a focus on the Carer experience.
- Emphasis on the 'recovery and wellbeing' of participants, not their loved one.
- Similar to Recovery Together (tailored for different cohort) but includes unique carer specific info and activities.



209

# Stepped vocational pathway



210

## 4. Reading and online social media for neurodivergent people

211

## Neurodiverse and Queer

1. Article by Autism Spectrum Australia with links to research and resources about Autistic LGBTIQ+ people:

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/blog/gender-and-neuro-diversity>

2. Autobiography by Laura Kate Dale, "Uncomfortable Labels: My Life as a Gay Autistic Trans Woman"

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/41766247-uncomfortable-labels>



212

## Local Stories of Recovery

1. Addiction and Recovery by Sam, Sal and Rocket from the NT Lived Experience Network

<https://youtu.be/CrxUlW05UsM>

2. Recovery and Peer Work by Noelene Armstrong (me)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Na55z7mo1E6BzCY7UeT9Q>

213

## Facebook groups for Neurodiverse people

Mums on the Spectrum

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mumsonthespectrum>

AE+ (Asperger Experts)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/481163311959296>

ADHD/ADD/ODD/ASD/SPD ETC AUSTRALIAN Support Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AUSTRALIANADHDETC SUPPORT>

Australian Disability Ltd Discussion Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/disabilityaultddiscussion>

214

## Facebook groups for Neurodiverse people

Autistic Adults of Darwin (no need to be diagnosed)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2988021118166837>

Darwin Mental Health Support, ADHD ADD BPD ASH SPD and more...  
(no need to be diagnosed)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/920485872454955>

Northern Territory Neurodivergent Professionals Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1490506221452113/>

215

## Facebook groups for Neurodiverse people

Consumer Led Research Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/472285009620995>

CAPS Network – Mental Health Consumer Advocates and Peer Support Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1436481300003142>

216

## 5. Great infographics

217

### Window of Tolerance

<p><b>Flight/Fight</b></p> <p>During extreme stress you move out of your window of tolerance and into fight or flight mode.</p> <p>Anxiety   Panic   Fear   Anger   Aggression</p>	Overloaded
<p><b>Window of Tolerance</b></p> <p>Where you can handle and process your feelings in a healthy way while being able to function and thrive.</p> <p>You increase your tolerance with coping skills.</p> <p>Safe   Capable   Grounded   Self-Aware Mindful   Engaged   Self-Soothing   Connected</p>	Comfortable
<p><b>Freeze</b></p> <p>During extreme stress you just completely shut down and withdrawal physically/emotionally.</p> <p>Depression   Fatigue   Numb   Disconnected Disassociated   Checked Out   Unfocused</p>	Shut Down

@BlessingManifesting

218

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# FIXED vs GROWTH

## FIXED

- I'll never be as smart as that person.
- I can't do it.
- This is too hard.
- I'm not good at this.
- I made a mistake.
- I give up.

## GROWTH

- Everyone is talented in many ways.
- I'm still learning. I'll keep trying.
- With more practice it will be easier.
- This may take some time and effort.
- Mistakes help me learn.
- I can try a different strategy.

219

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# 9 REASONS TO USE VISUALS

www.northstarpaths.com @kwiens62

• VISUALS ARE PERMANENT (SPOKEN WORDS DISAPPEAR)

• VISUALS ALLOW TIME FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING

• VISUALS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR TRANSITIONS

• VISUALS HELP KIDS SEE WHAT YOU MEAN

• VISUALS HELP ALL STUDENTS

• VISUALS HELP BUILD INDEPENDENCE

• VISUALS ARE TRANSFERABLE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS AND PEOPLE

• VISUALS HAVE NO ATTITUDE  
• NO TONE • NO FRUSTRATION  
• NO DISAPPROVAL

• VISUALS HELP REDUCE ANXIETY

Katie O'Neil 2017

## Supporting

220



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

# Supporting

USE **RESPECTFUL** WORDS

WHAT IS THIS **STUPID JERK** DOING

LOOK AT THAT **STUPID JERK**

IT'S JUST A **WORD**

YOU CAN'T SAY **ANYTHING** ANYMORE

I DIDN'T MEAN IT IN A **BAD** WAY

EVERYONE IS SO **SENSITIVE** ABOUT EVERYTHING

**CHILDREN** ARE LIKE **SPONGES**

**WORDS CAN HURT** EVEN IF **YOU** DON'T UNDERSTAND

**How** OR **Why**

LET'S BE **KIND & THOUGHTFUL** WITH OUR LANGUAGE

MAKING A **FAMILY PLEDGE**

INKSBRITANNY.COM

221

NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

# Supporting

IT'S OKAY TO **NOTICE**

KIDS ARE NATURALLY **CURIOUS**

TAKE TIME TO GIVE A **POSITIVE** DESCRIPTION/ EXPLANATION

WHAT'S THAT AROUND HIS **NECK?**

TAKE THE **LEAD** BY STARTING A **CONVERSATION**

"THEY **CAN'T** HEAR"

HEARING AIDS **HELP** PEOPLE HEAR

SIGN LANGUAGE **HELPS** PEOPLE COMMUNICATE

BUILD A **FOUNDATION** IN THEM

"THEY **CAN'T** WALK"

IT'S CALLED A **TRACH** IT **HELPS** HIM **BREATHE**

WHEELCHAIRS **HELP** PEOPLE GET AROUND

THERE ARE **MANY** WAYS OF DOING THINGS

& **MANY** WAYS OF **BEING** IN THE WORLD

**DISABILITY** IS NATURAL

INKSBRITANNY.COM

222

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# Supporting

**WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES?**  
**WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?**  
**HOW WILL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BE IMPACTED?**  
**CHAMPIONS VOTE**  
 CHAMPIONS GO BEYOND AWARENESS & FULLY  
**ACCEPT**  
 & EMBRACE DIVERSITY  
 DO I NEED TO CHANGE?  
 CHAMPIONS USE RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE  
 & SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE  
 & LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE GENUINE CONNECTIONS  
**CHAMPIONS STAY VITAL**  
**COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS**  
**INCLUDE**  
 CHAMPIONS SHIFT THEIR MINDSET TO  
 PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN DAILY LIFE  
 I BET SHIRLEY WOULD LOVE TO HAVE DINNER WITH US  
 WE'RE SO GLAD YOU COULD JOIN US  
 BRIDGING THE GAP OF SILENCE WITH CONVERSATION  
 NAH MAN, YOU'RE PERFECT JUST HOW YOU ARE  
 IT'S JUST A WORD  
 WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL  
 THANKS FOR POINTING THAT OUT.  
 DIDNT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THAT EXPRESSION. I'LL DO BETTER

INKSBRITANNY.COM

223

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# Supporting

**TEACH UNDERSTANDING**  
 PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME EXPERIENCE THE SAME RANGE OF EMOTIONS AS ALL PEOPLE  
 THEY'RE JUST SO PURE  
 THEY'RE HAPPY ALL THE TIME  
**ADDRESS & CONDEMN BULLYING**  
 EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT THE ONE DOING IT  
 SPEAK UP  
 TELL A TEACHER  
 THINK ABOUT HOW YOU WOULD FEEL IF IT WERE YOU  
**AUTISTIC PEOPLE ARE NOT ANTI SOCIAL**  
 IT CAN BE HARD FOR ANYONE TO FEEL COMFORTABLE IN SOCIAL SETTINGS OR READ SOCIAL CUES FROM OTHERS  
 WANNA GO SIT OUTSIDE  
 IT'S TOO LOUD IN THERE FOR ME  
 THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY DON'T WANT FRIENDS

INKSBRITANNY.COM

224



## Supporting



225

## Supporting

# Autism & Meltdowns *a guide*

Bendigo Autistic Advocacy and Support Service

**Autistic brains**  
experience the world differently.

Autistic experiences are real and valid.



Sensory processing differences can mean some sounds, textures, tastes and sensations may be intolerable or painful.

It can mean differences in movement, balance and different skills develop at a different pace.

### Meltdowns

are an involuntary response to overload from sensory stimuli, overwhelm/exhaustion/anxiety, change or an accumulation or combination of these. Autistic people cannot control a meltdown.


226

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

## Facts and Tips

# Supporting

It is important to respect and gently support a person in meltdown. Do not judge and please do not ever punish or impose consequences.



**Ensure safety**  
of the person and yourself.  
Give space  
Remove others from area  
Subtle supervision from distance

**\*\*Intervene only if imminent danger\*\***  
(eg. traffic)

**Reduce eye contact**

**Reduce speech**  
Reduce volume  
Positive, calming tone

**DO NOT TOUCH / RESTRAIN**  
Only hold person if known to be effective for them and only by someone known well

**Respect cues**  
If speaking to, being close by, eye contact or touching someone increases distress or signs of distress, avoid these wherever possible

**Reduce stimulus in environment**  
Where possible, reduce noise, bright lights  
Remove triggers

**Recovery time**  
drink and snacks, space and unlimited access to calming/favourite activity is crucial

✔ Ensure environments/activities are inclusive and accessible










✉ [bendigoautisticadvocacy@gmail.com](mailto:bendigoautisticadvocacy@gmail.com)

227

NORTHERN TERRITORY LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK

# Supporting

### Signs of autistic burnout

 nonchalance/ flat mood	 low attention span	 exhaustion
 scared to make commitments	 irritability	 overwhelmed & / or underwhelmed
 special interests unappealing	 low capacity for socialising <small>@adulding_with_autism_</small>	 unshakeable and constant anxiety

### Burnout Recovery

- Maintain routines.
- Stim freely.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Reduce demands.
- Have lots of quiet/alone time. Seek support.
- Practise self care.
- Make time for special interests.
- Meet sensory needs.
- Create sensory spaces.
- Remember to rest.
- Listen to music.
- Sensory Overload

[www.sensoryoverloadaustralia.com.au](http://www.sensoryoverloadaustralia.com.au)


228



# Identity

## ASPERGERS - POSITIVE TRAITS

- ADVANCED VOCABULARY
- ACCEPTING
- COMPASSIONATE
- CONSCIENTIOUS
- CREATIVE
- CURIOUS
- DEDICATED
- DEPENDABLE
- DETAIL ORIENTED
- DETERMINED
- DILIGENT
- DIRECT COMMUNICATORS
- EMPATHETIC
- ETHICAL
- EXCEPTIONAL HONESTY
- FAIR AND EQUAL
- FOCUSED
- FRIENDLY
- GENUINE
- HARDWORKING
- HIGH INTEGRITY
- INDIVIDUALISTIC
- INDEPENDENT THINKERS
- INTELLIGENT
- INNOVATIVE
- KNOWLEDGEABLE
- LOYAL
- NON-DISCRIMINATORY
- MOTIVATED
- NON-MALICIOUS
- NON-MANIPULATIVE
- PERCEPTIVE
- ORIGINAL
- PERSISTENT
- PUNCTUAL
- RULE BOUND
- RELIABLE
- SENSITIVE
- SINCERE
- TALKATIVE
- TALENTED
- TRUSTWORTHY
- UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES
- UNPREJUDICED



229

# Stimming

### Stimming feels like...:

.. floating on a cloud.  
Like I'm about to fly

Recharging. Calming.  
A breath of fresh air



Autism-sketches

### What stimming can look like:

@Mollys\_adhd\_mayhem

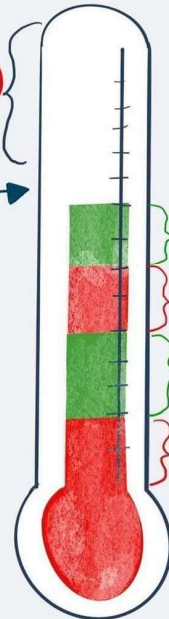
- Humming
- Whistling
- Repetitive blinking
- Snapping fingers repeatedly
- rocking
- Grinding teeth
- Head-banging
- padding
- picking
- tapping your pencil
- staring off into space
- Joint-cracking
- fidgeting
- Tapping
- Chewing on inedible items
- sniffing or licking objects
- spinning
- walking on tiptoe
- Nail-biting
- jumping
- hand-flapping
- Biting the inside of the mouth
- complex body movements
- Punching objects
- Hair-twirling
- Making sounds

230

# Understanding

**Meltdowns**

Where a lot of children (and adults) are sitting right now



- Increased social expectations
- Sensory overload
- Tired, rushing, busy
- Changes in routine

@The\_Therapist\_Parent

231

# Understanding

## AUTISM & EYE CONTACT



Art by Isabella (at age 7)

"Eye contact is not necessary for listening or paying attention.

Many Autistic people find it easier to listen and process auditory information when we don't have to also process visual information.

Forced eye contact for the sake of 'appearing normal' can be challenging, tiring, even painful. We avoid it for a reason. Respect that."

- ANONYMOUS



232



# AUTISM DURING A CONVERSATION

lizzy @autieselfcare

## Understanding

- Monitoring my voice & body language
- Trying to say the 'correct' answer
- "I'm so embarrassed of my stuttering"
- Noticing everything around me & finding it hard to concentrate on the other person
- "What is she trying to tell me?"
- Feeling uncomfortable when others look at me
- "I should smile, am I smiling?"
- "Am I making enough eye contact"
- Infodumping about a special interest
- Copying the other person's replies & facial expressions
- "There's too much noise, it hurts"
- Replaying every interaction in my head afterwards, feeling like I said something strange
- Feeling socially exhausted & overwhelmed
- "Am I giving too much information or too little?"
- Questioning if it is my turn to speak
- Unintentionally getting into other people's personal space
- Struggling to keep track of multiple conversations at once
- Suppressing stims
- "I don't know what to say now"
- "Do they think I'm weird?"
- "I don't fit in"
- Preferring the company of animals / nature
- "They look bored, do they want to leave?"
- "What are the appropriate physical gestures?"

233

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I might forget to ask you 'chit chat' questions.



Small talk is something I don't always like or understand.

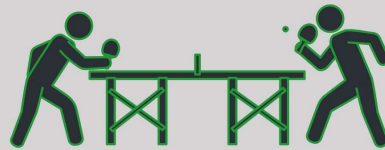
@more than one neurotype

234

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

It can sometimes take me a while to answer back.



My brain often needs time to think about my response.

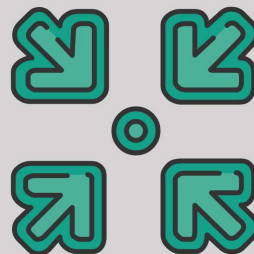
@more than one neurotype

235

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I might keep turning the conversation back to me.



My way of showing you I understand is to share my own experiences.

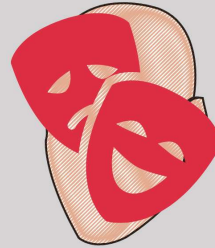
@more than one neurotype

236

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

The way my face moves and expresses  
itself might be "different".



It has its own way of sitting that may  
not be what you expect.

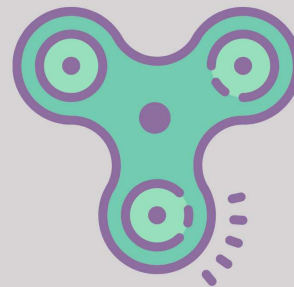
@more than one neurotype

237

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I might move, fidget or stim.



Moving helps me to listen, focus and  
regulate myself.

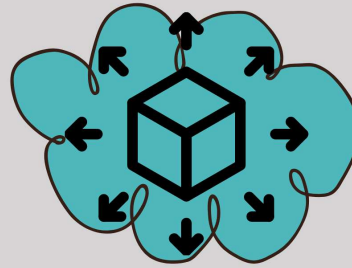
@more than one neurotype

238

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I am straightforward with my words.



I prefer to say exactly what I mean, as all the stuff around it can be confusing.

@more than one neurotype

239

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I may start telling you lots of facts or stories.



I find it easy to talk about things I like and sharing them makes me feel good.

@more than one neurotype

240

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

I might not notice your emotions or a situation you are in.



It's not always obvious to me how you are feeling or why.

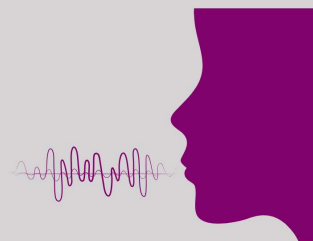
@more than one neurotype

241

## Understanding

When I talk to you...

The tone of my voice might make you think I'm angry, rude or bored.



The emotion you hear in my voice doesn't always match what I'm feeling.

@more than one neurotype

242



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
LIVED EXPERIENCE  
NETWORK

## Noelene Armstrong

[noelene.armstrong@yahoo.com.au](mailto:noelene.armstrong@yahoo.com.au)

[noelene@livedexperiencent.net](mailto:noelene@livedexperiencent.net)

0438 022 032

## NT Lived Experience Network

Email: [contact@livedexperiencent.net](mailto:contact@livedexperiencent.net)

Web: [www.livedexperiencent.net](http://www.livedexperiencent.net)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livedexperiencent>

Linkedin: [www.linkedin.com/company/66674136](http://www.linkedin.com/company/66674136)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/livedexperiencent](http://www.instagram.com/livedexperiencent)