

Self-Regulation— What it is and How to Get it

A Presentation by
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What is Self-Regulation?

What are the behaviors we want?

- Think of the child who presents difficult behavior
 - What's missing?
- Now think of a child who gets along well
 - What is present that is missing in the other child?

How does self-regulation develop?

- Human brains are wired to connect
- The default system is for impulsivity and vigilance
- Feeding and nurture in the first year form the foundation for the “replacement” neural pathways to develop
- In the absence of responsive care, the default system reigns

Relationships are the greatest predictor of behavior

- Belonging: loving connections, predictable environments, warm responses
- Significance: opportunities to demonstrate capabilities, practice and mistakes that motivate learning

The Building Blocks of Self-Regulation start with the Foundation of Secure Attachment

- Secure beginnings, love, attunement, safety and personal power begin here

Basic
Trust

Adapted from Penny Davis, MA, CPDA, adapted from 'Attachment Parenting' by Grossmont College FKCE



A Foundation for Learning

A leads to B leads to C and the world is predictable and safe- and I can take risks!

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

EMPATHY

The development of empathy requires that neural pathways be created and supported.

Love and nurture “teach” the Infant brain to develop these Pathways.



Conscience Development

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

I Need to *WHAT?*

Taking Turns, Sharing, Waiting, Cooperating—virtually all relationships require these foundational blocks.

**Basic
Trust**

**Causal
Thinking**

**Conscience
Development**

**Delay
Of
Gratification**

With a foundation in place

- Healthy development and interactions increase and learning naturally occurs

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place
I know who I am and that I am
significant.

Identity
Formation



Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place

- I know who I am and trust YOU.

Identity
Formation

Relationships



Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place

- I can Learn!

Identity
Formation

Relationships

Intellectual
Potential

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place

I am likely to do well in school and in life. I can get along with others.

Identity
Formation

Relationships

Intellectual
Potential

Socialization

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place I am ready to learn!



Requirements and Expectations for behavior
Getting along with others, Paying attention,
Waiting, Sharing, Cooperating

Identity
Formation

Relationships

Intellectual
Potential

Socialization

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

With a foundation in place

I can
Meet the
Expectations
At school

Concentrate
Perform
Cooperate
Work in groups

Identity
Formation

Relationships

Intellectual
Potential

Socialization

Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

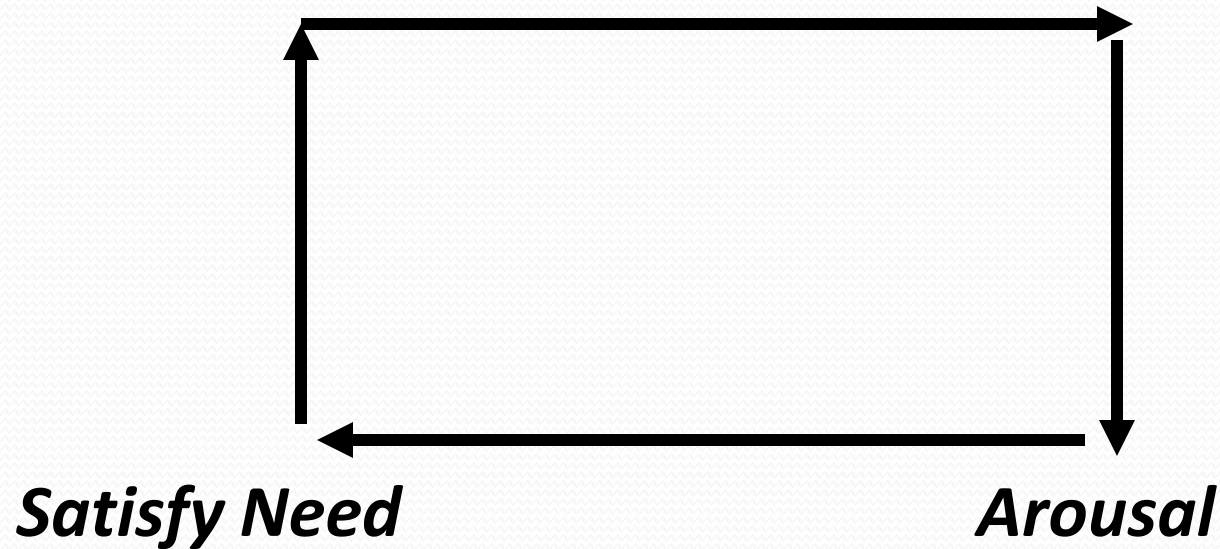
Delay of
Gratification

Arousal/Relaxation Cycle

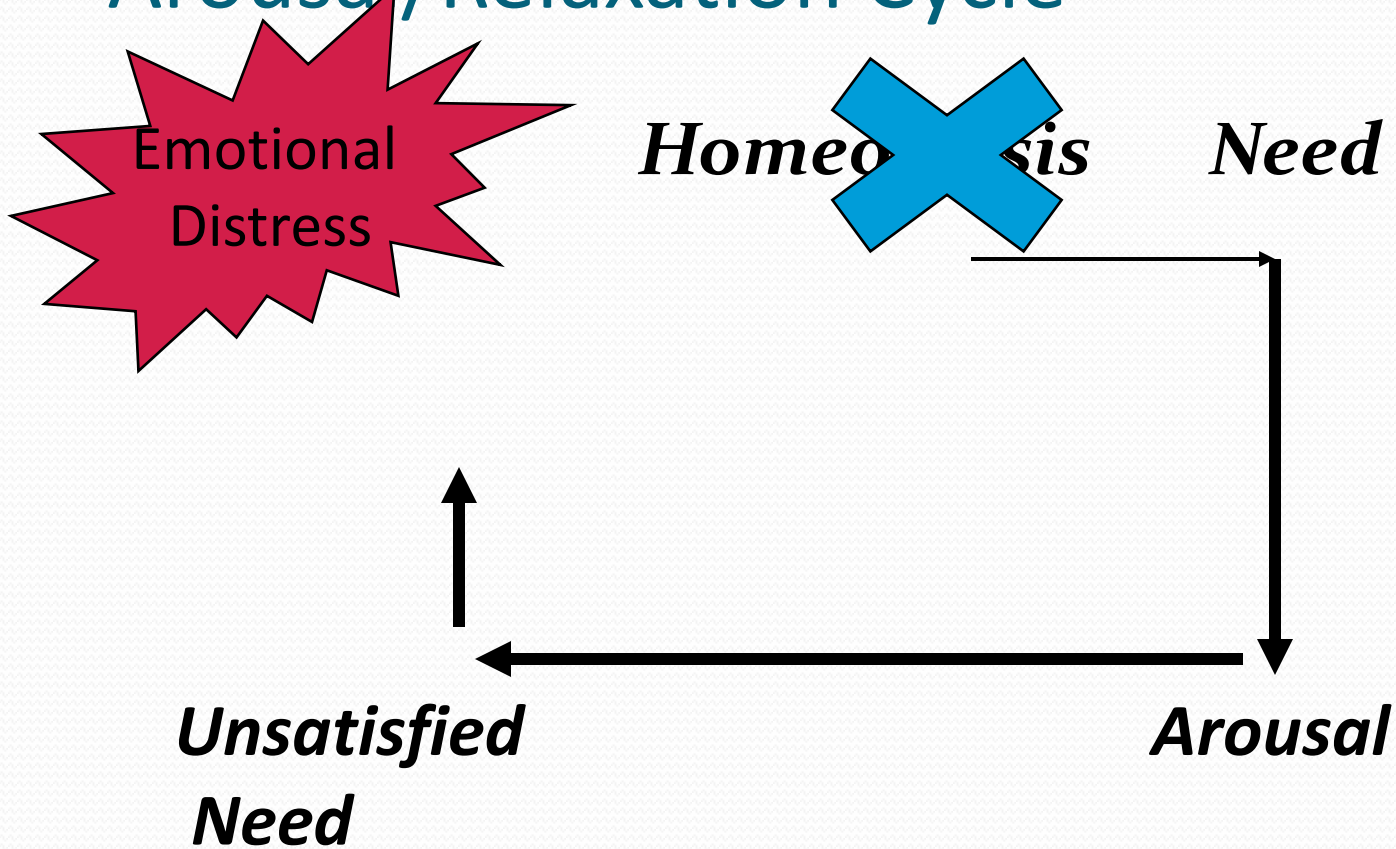
Relaxation

Homeostasis

Need



Disrupted Arousal/Relaxation Cycle



With a foundation in place

Expectations
At school

Concentrate
Perform
Cooperate
Work in groups

Handle
Stress

Identity
Formation

Relationships

Intellectual
Potential

Socialization

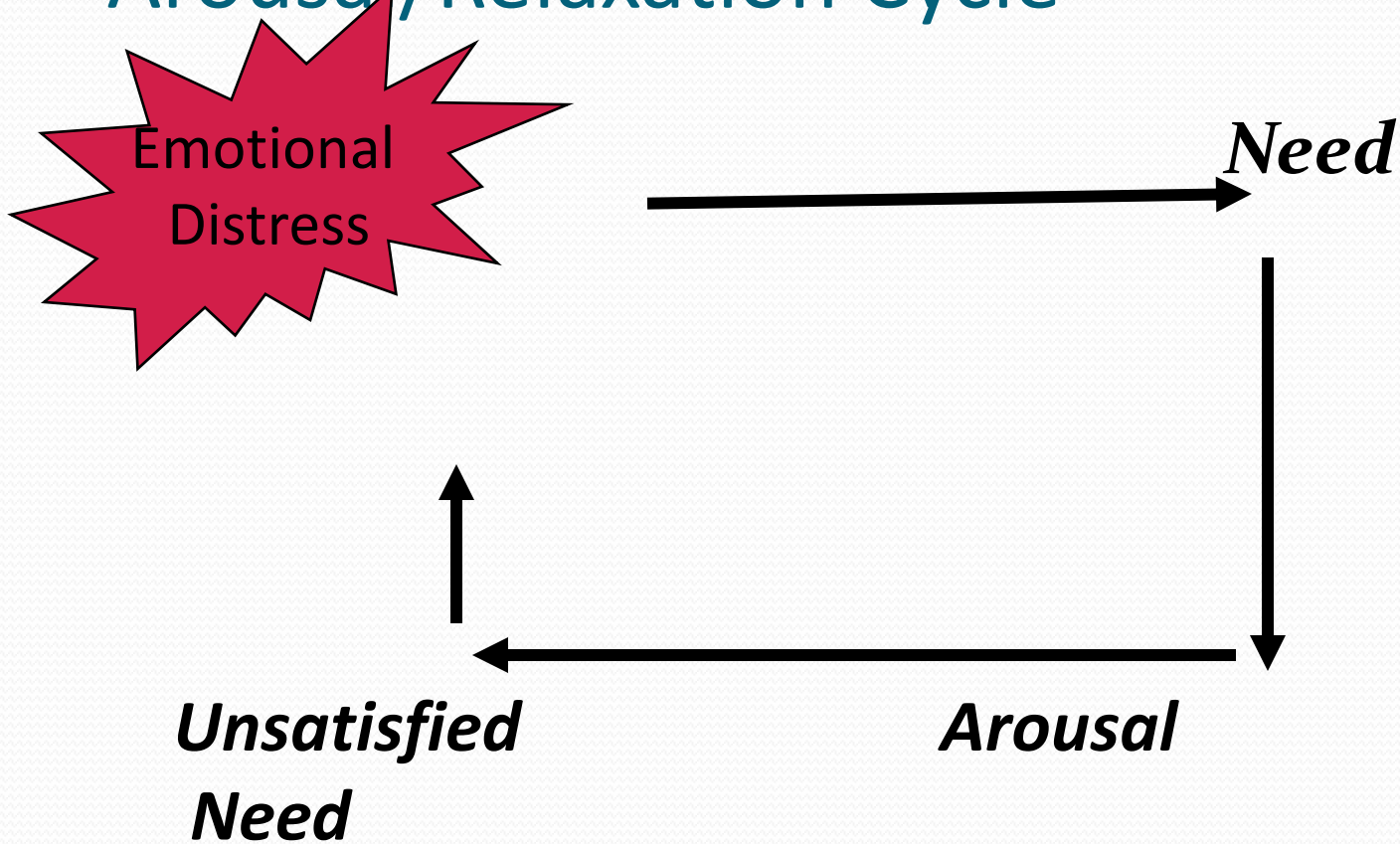
Basic
Trust

Causal
Thinking

Conscience
Development

Delay of
Gratification

Disrupted Arousal/Relaxation Cycle



What interferes with development?

- Some neurological issues
- Pre-natal exposure to drugs, alcohol, and other teratogens, or toxins
- Chaotic environments
- Abuse, neglect, harsh punishment, aggressive adults

How do we support and nurture Self-Regulation?

- Avoid strengthening the “hyper-vigilant, impulsive, stress response”
 - Avoid harsh responses—time out, scolding, anger etc.
 - RESPOND instead of REACT—
 - Model patience
 - Model gentle touch
 - Validate feelings
 - Teach skills
 - Focus on emotional needs—they come first, before social and academic skills



We have to change what we do

If we want to support children in
developing a new neural
pathway so their behaviors can
change, WE must change what
we do!

Resources

Attachment information Adapted from Penny Davis, MA, CPDA, adapted from 'Attachment Parenting' by Grossmont College FKCE

The work of Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D. Childtrauma.org

Positive Discipline positivediscipline.org

To make arrangements for trainings and workshops on this topic , challenging behaviors, and staff relationships, contact the presenter at

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