

Strategies to support student mental health

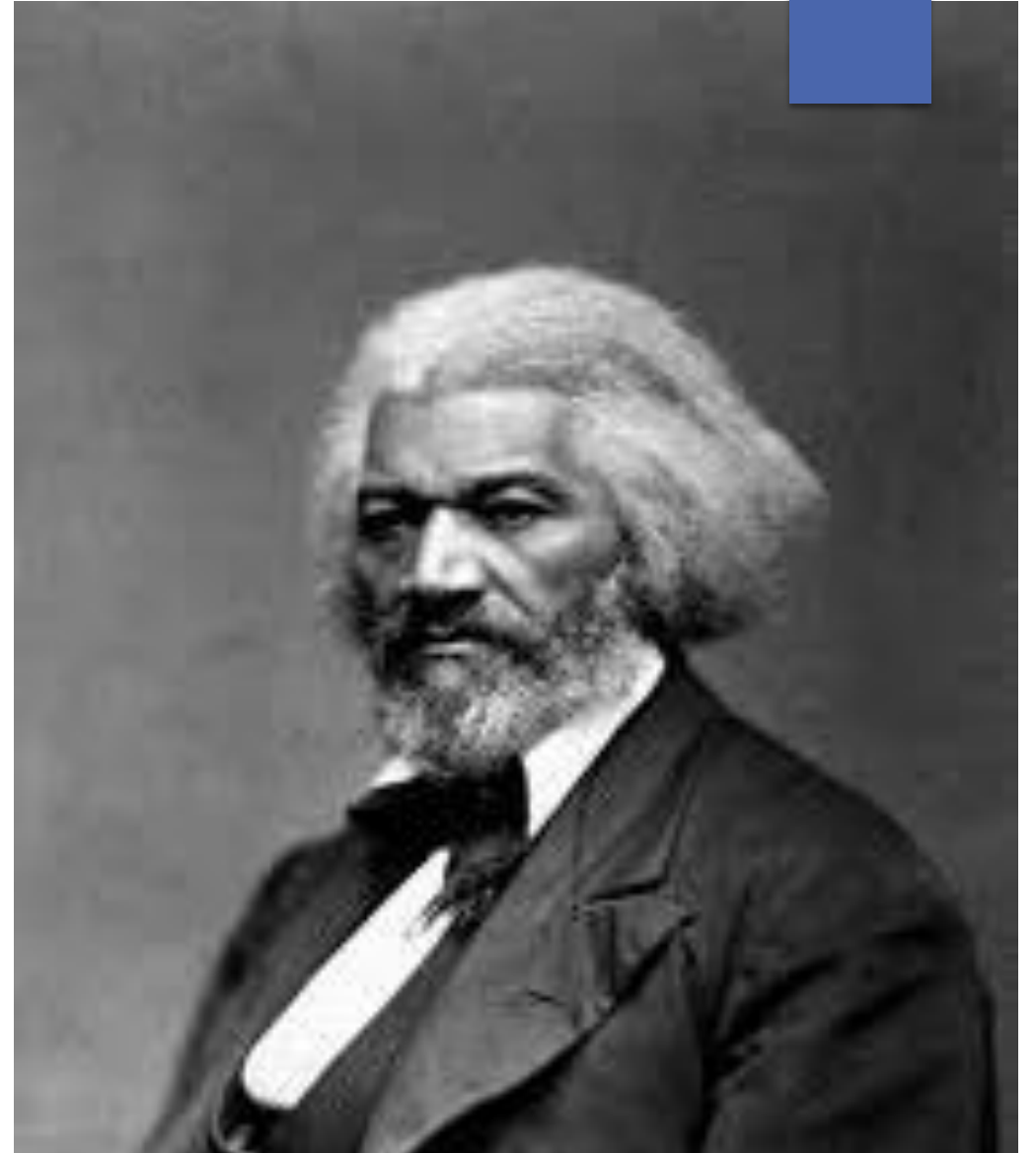
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“It is easier to build
strong children than to
repair broken men”

Frederick Douglass 1818 - 1895

Escaped slave, abolitionist, social
reformer, statesman



Strategies for children

Strategies for adults

- ▶ Understanding anxiety
- ▶ Self-regulation
- ▶ Feelings, thoughts and behaviour – understanding the link
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Being a trusted adult
- ▶ Being trauma informed
- ▶ Good at noticing

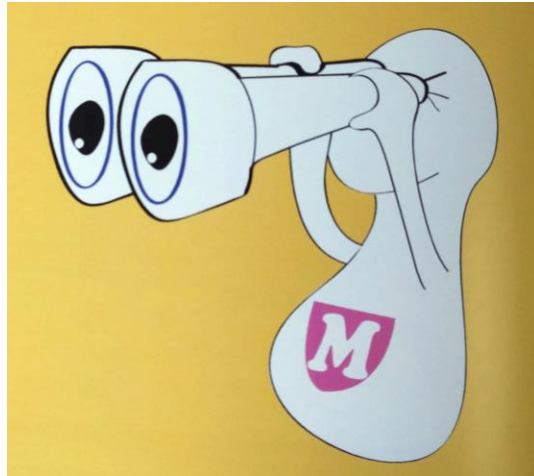
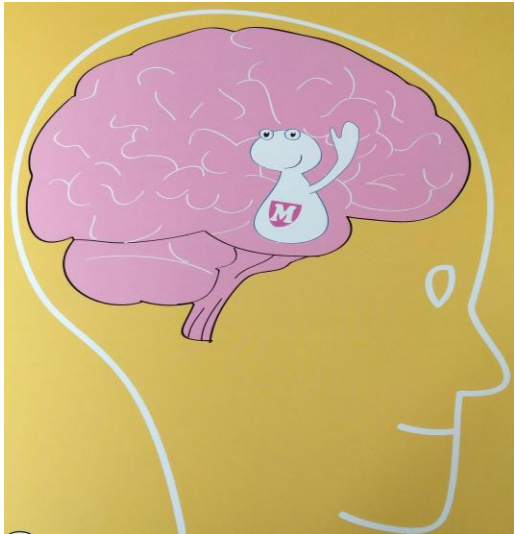


The



of anxiety

The amygdala

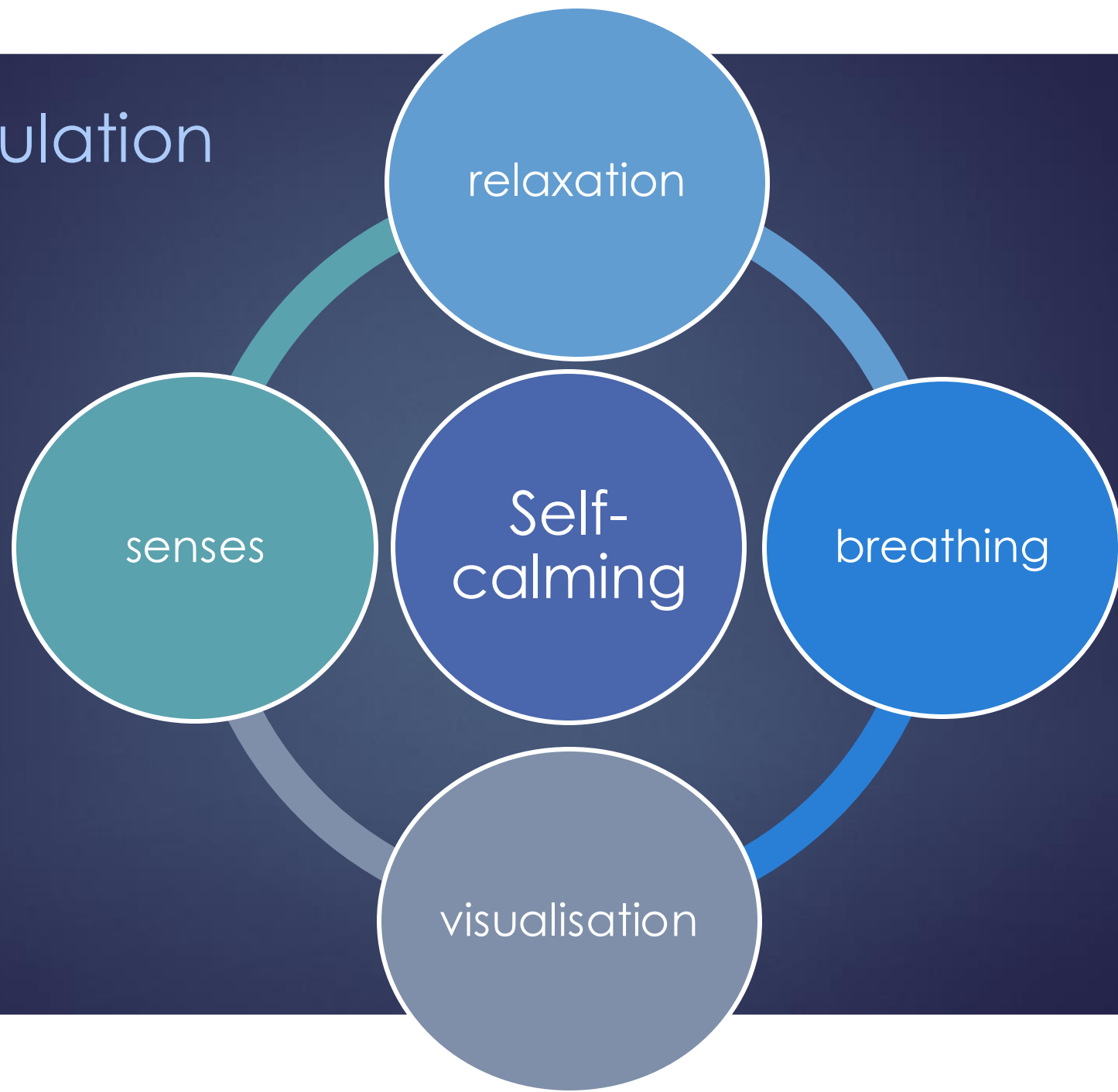


Being in control



“It’s ok Myg, I’ve got this!”

Self-regulation



My Brilliant Brain:Myg and Me Understanding Anxiety and Implementing Self-Calming

My Brilliant Brain:Myg and Me: enables positive conversations about anxiety....explained clearly and simply without compromising on facts. The suggested activities are well pitched and beautifully illustrated with six easy to follow sessions which work well one-to-one or in groups. I particularly liked the 'extra guidance' section which gives practitioners an additional set of tools to respond to an anxious child, to recognise signs and intervene early.

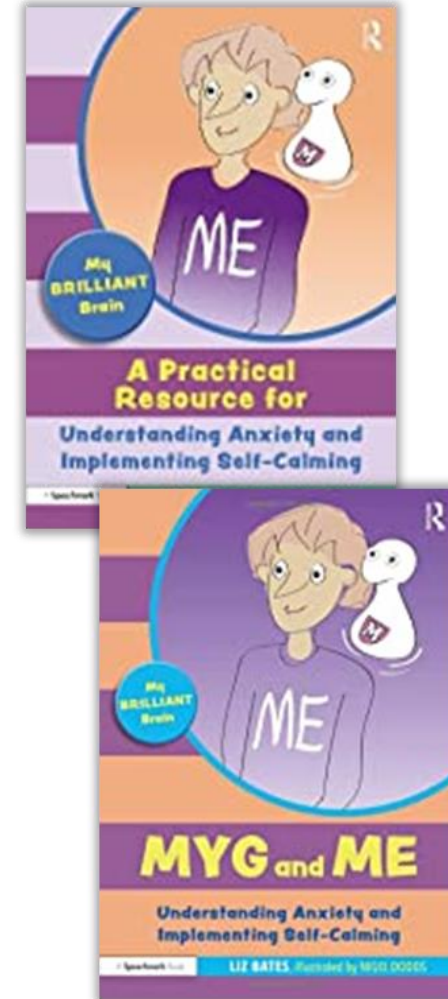
Peacemakers


"I'm taking this home to read with my son."

Headteacher and parent

"I love using this resource to facilitate conversations around worry in a creative and engaging way." ***Clinical Psychologist***

<https://www.routledge.com/9781032069036>





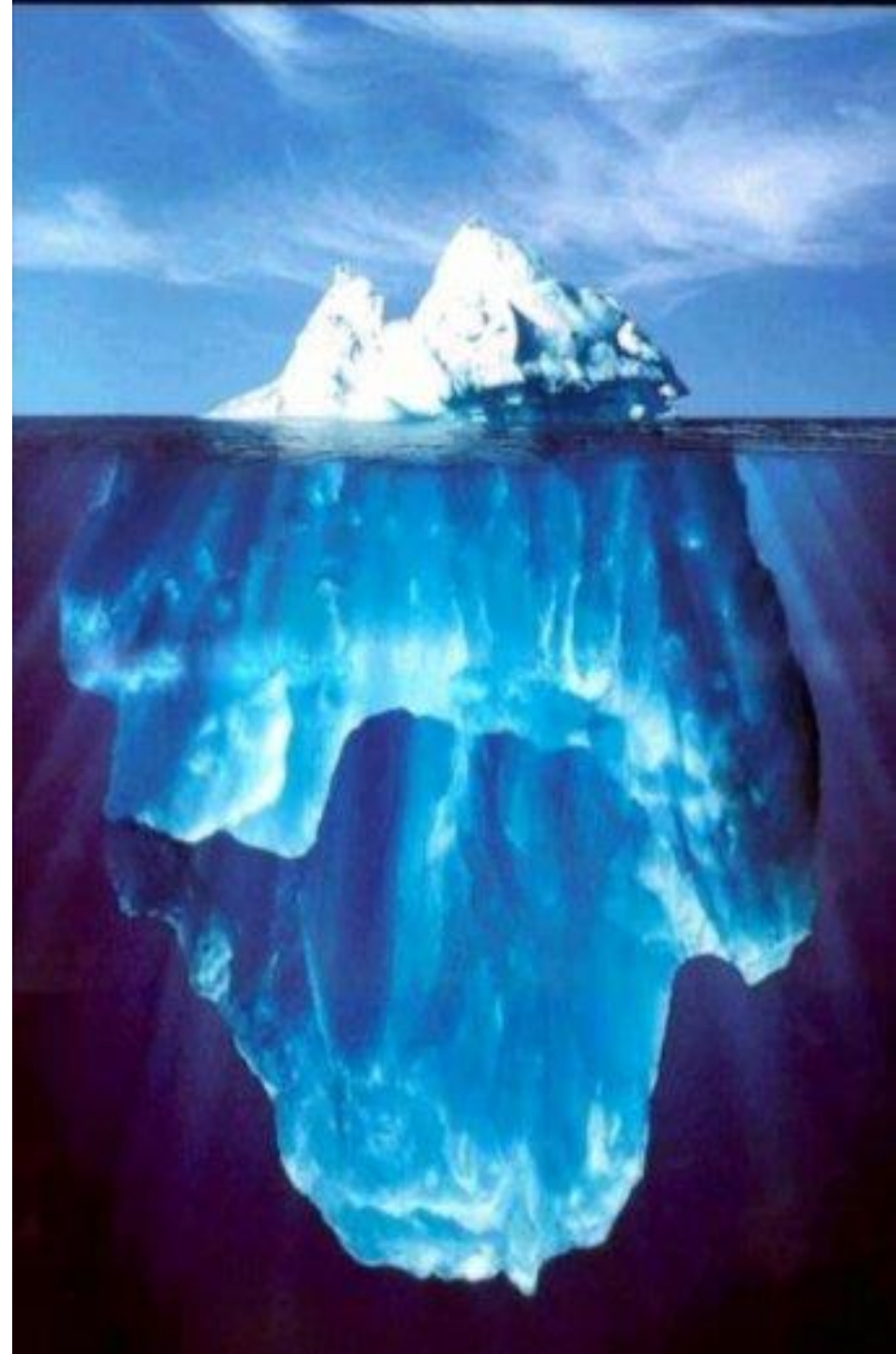
Understanding feelings, thoughts and behaviour

"I'm inside and no-one sees inside..."

BEHAVIOURS - how the world experiences me

THOUGHTS - what I tell myself about the world

FEELINGS - how I experience the world



Rafa is on his way to school. He has a maths test this morning. Rafa doesn't like maths. Last night his mum had too much to drink again and fell sleep on the sofa. Rafa made sure his younger sister had something to eat before getting her to bed and this morning got her ready for school after checking on his mum. Mum was still asleep, definitely breathing. Rafa doesn't want to go to school but has already been in trouble over his attendance and punctuality. Rafa knows his class aren't happy that they never get the 'Star Attenders' award.

What might Rafa do?

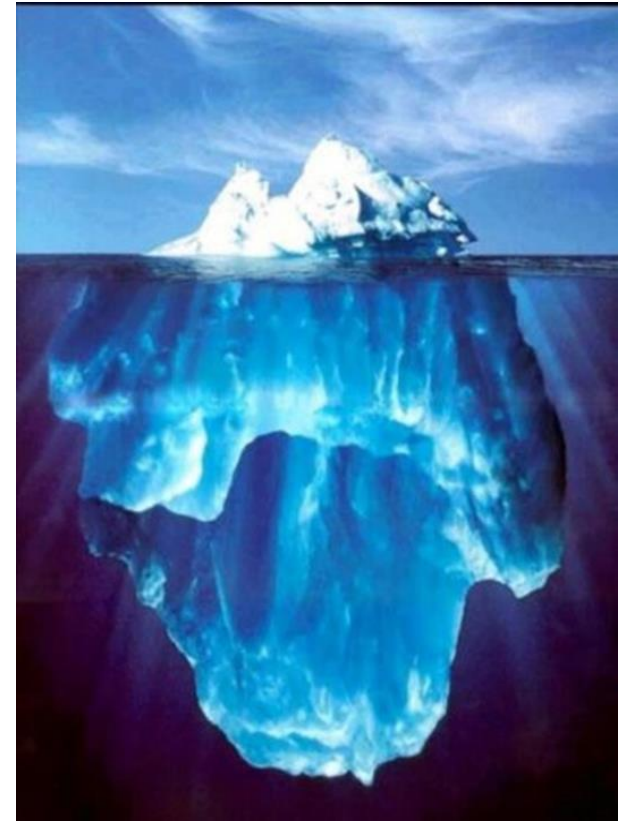
(how the world experiences Rafa)

What might Rafa be thinking?

(Rafa's belief about the world)

What/how might Rafa be feeling?

(Rafa's experience of the world)



Feel Think and Do with Ruby Rafa and Riz

Understanding behaviour and emotions

"The '*Ruby, Rafa and Riz*' story book and guide together provide a valuable resource for promoting children's healthy social and emotional development. In a warm and engaging way, adults are encouraged to think about and explore with children the subtle links between their emotions, thoughts and behaviour."

**Emeritus Professor Gillian Schofield, *University of East Anglia*,
creator of 'The Secure Base Model'**

"For those with behaviour issues it made sense. They really enjoyed talking about others' emotions and their own."

Year 5 Teacher

<https://www.routledge.com/9781032059396>



Relationships



Being a trusted adult

An illustration of two superheroes standing back-to-back. The superhero on the left is a woman with dark hair, wearing a light grey long-sleeved shirt, blue pants, and a large red cape. She has a small blue circular emblem on her chest. The superhero on the right is a man with dark hair, wearing a blue suit with a red cape. He has a small blue circular emblem on his chest. They are standing on a dark grey ground with a thin blue line. The background is a dark grey with faint, stylized clouds. The text "The power of being an adult" is overlaid in white. A blue rectangular shape is in the top right corner.

The power of being an adult

“I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am **the decisive element** in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess a tremendous power to make the child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of kindness. It is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or de-humanised”

Haim Ginott



Barriers to connectedness

For me

Previous interaction

Expectations

Biases / Beliefs

Last night / this morning

Lack of confidence

Lack of support

Time

Not my job



Barriers to connectedness

For me

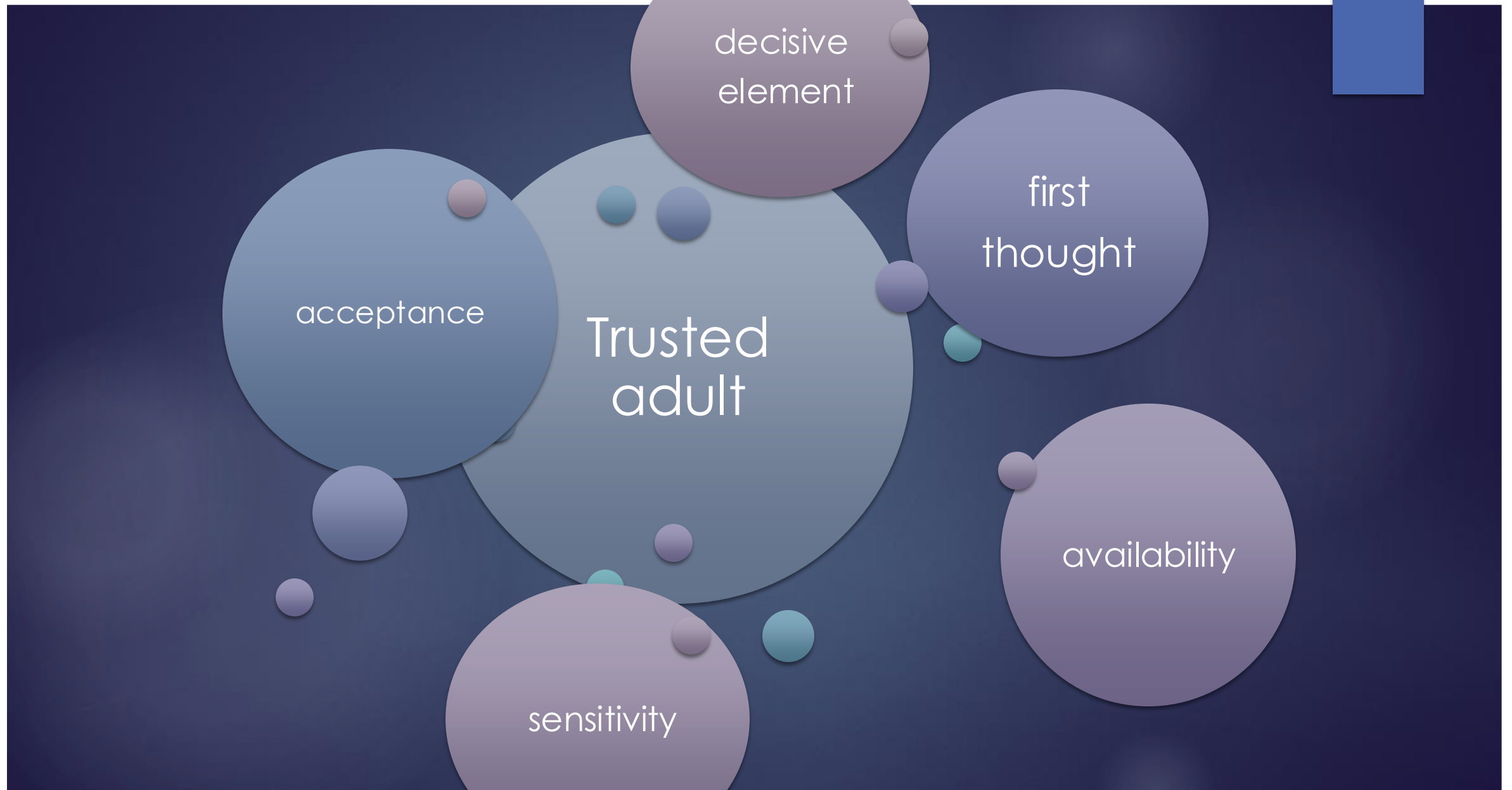
Previous interaction
Expectations
Biases / Beliefs
Last night / this morning

Lack of confidence
Lack of support
Time
Not my job

For the child



Anxiety
Trauma
Learning needs
Lack of agency



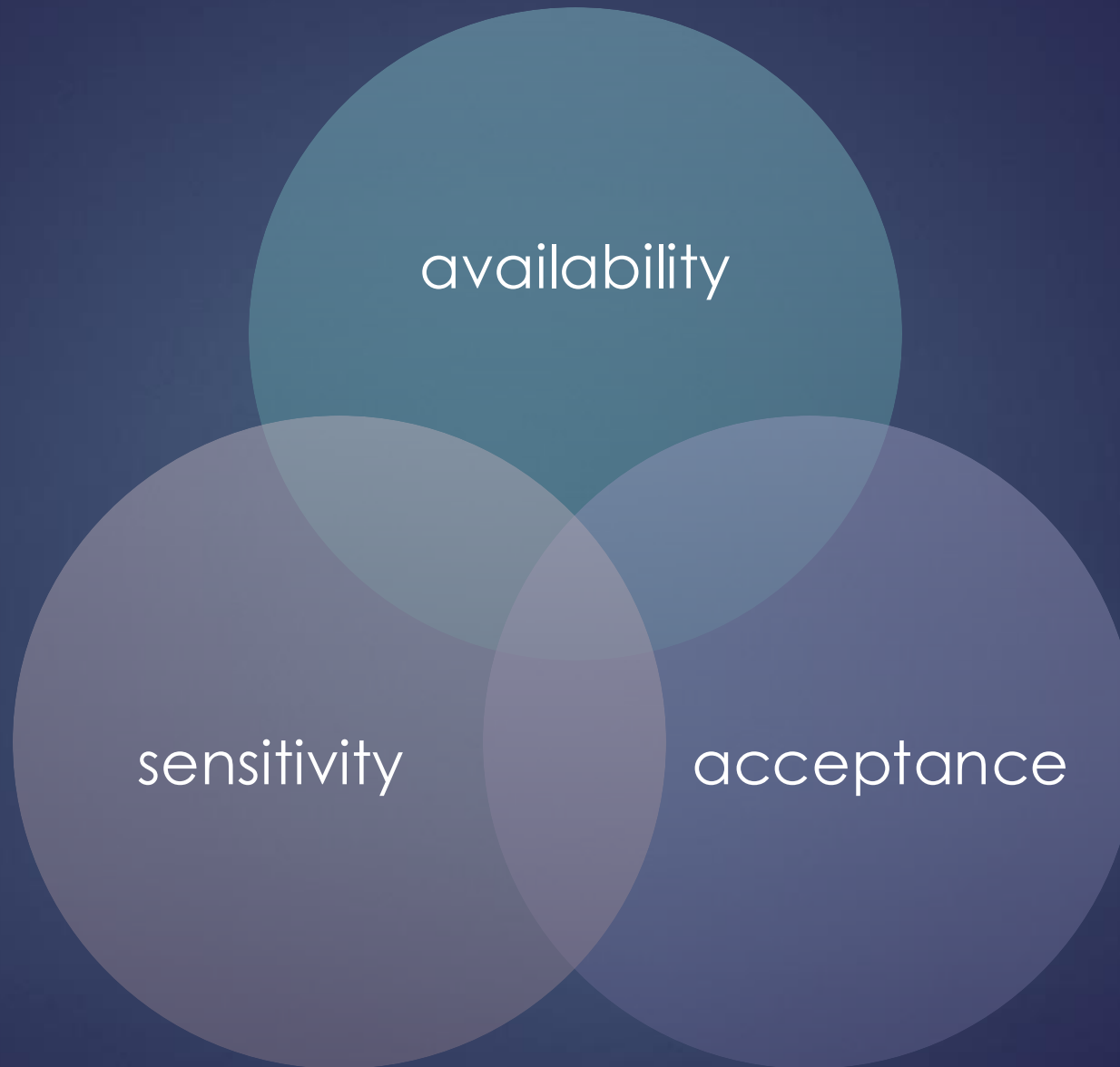
My first thought.....

Can but
don't want
to

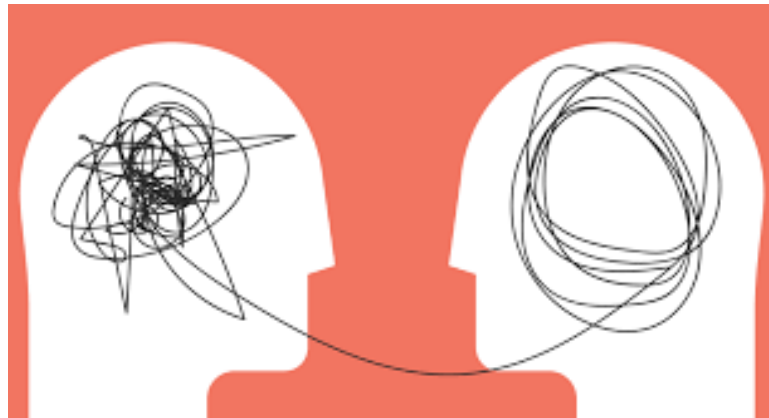
My first thought.....

Can but
don't want
to

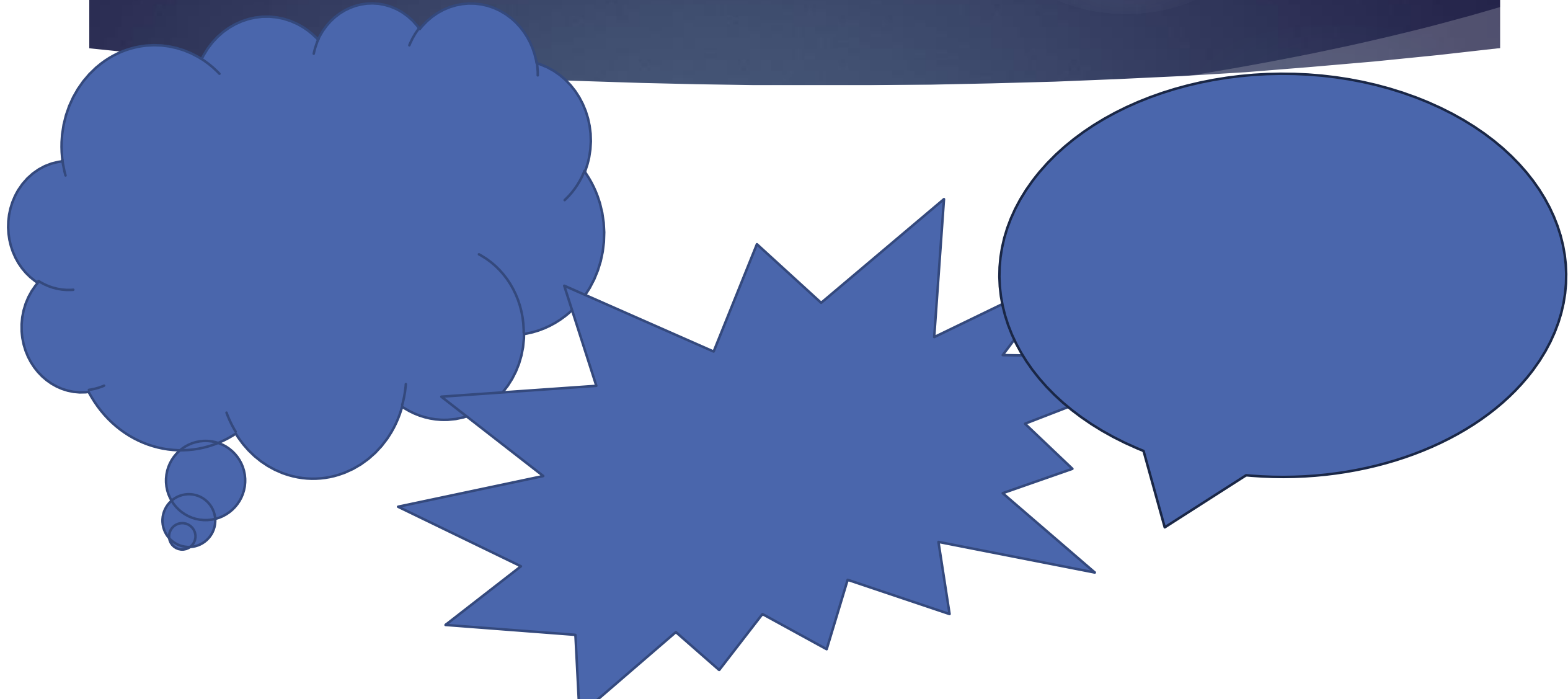
Want to
but can't



Being trauma informed



How does trauma feel, sound and look?



How does trauma feel, sound and look?

I need to make this safe

I need to get
somewhere safe

I need to feel safe

I don't feel anything

I don't know how I feel

Avoidance
Refusal
Challenge
Anger
EVERYTHING
NOTHING

I can't.....

I hate you...

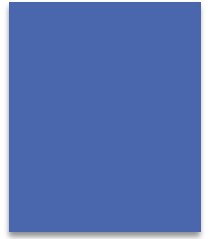
I'm rubbish...

What if.....

I give up....

Silence....

And what
might that
mean for the
classroom?



Why you?

1

empathic

2

connectable

3

reliable

4

mentalise

5

mind-minded

6

on their side

1

inconsistent

2

let them down

3

belittle feelings

4

in a hurry

5

**use language
that minimizes
or invalidates**

6

not notice



Getting
good at
noticing.....
...starting
with
ourselves

Good at noticing

- ▶ A determined activity
- ▶ Seeing, hearing, sensing.....
- ▶ Barriers?
- ▶ Challenging my thinking
- ▶ Changing my thinking
- ▶ Responding from a place of strength
- ▶ When I need support



A photograph of two young children running outdoors, dressed as superheroes. The child on the left wears a green suit with a white star and a green mask. The child on the right wears a blue suit with a white star and a red mask. Both have capes and are running towards the camera with joyful expressions. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a hill. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangle is overlaid on the image, and a solid blue rectangle is in the top right corner.

building strong children
relies on being a strong adult



Thank you

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