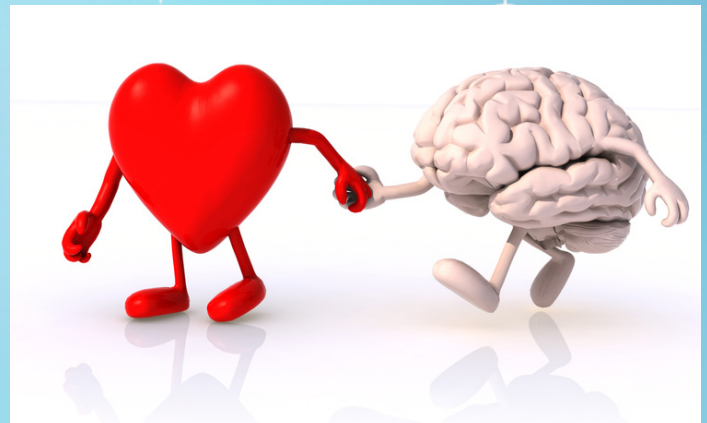# NAVIGATING TRAUMA ACTIVATIONS

INFORMED BY DR. BRUCE PERRY

This process is designed to assist the transition from a state of emotional dysregulation to regulation. The ultimate goal is for individuals experiencing dysregulation to habituate and internalize these techniques toward building capacity for self-regulation.

This method is often challenging and efforts to assist can be derailed if the support person experiences activations (triggers) in response to intervening to help (usually revolving around our own life experiences which shape our beliefs, values, bias and worldview). This inevitably can derail intentions to help, as the support person can move to control the discomfort of the situation, through behaviours such as demanding reflection, commanding, yelling, punishing, shaming, disengaging, indifference etc., rather than a calm, curious compassionate exploration.

Regardless of professional competencies, good intent, or concern we are human, and human reactions come to the table, and it is for this reason personal trauma awareness and integration, an inward journey, is of immeasurable importance when supporting others. Without this work we can do more harm than good and dis-invite opportunities for healing and growth for ourselves and others.

1. REGULATE

- Become grounded yourself, when interventing to support someone, ensure you are calm.
- Engage in a few deep breathes together.
- Invite pause and quiet
- Clear the mind

2. RELATE

- Once regulated or calm
- Be aware of your tone
- Use short sentences
- Validate persons perspective and subjective experience
- Do not judge, do not challenge, do not reassure any distress away, coach and mentor
- When appropriate offer a hug or taking their hand.
- Focus here is connecting and feeling safe

3. REASON

- Ensure foundation of calm & connection is established.
- Can return to steps 1 & 2 as needed
- Separate the behaviour of concern from the person
- Reassurance that the person is cared for
- Explore alternatives while reinforcing boundaries (i.e. rules, expectations)