Tantrums v's Meltdowns

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Professional Learning!

Are you a professional attending tonight's webinar?

Would you like a certificate of attendance for your professional body?

- Please answer the following questions and email to reception@bcbm.com.au and we will forward you a certified certificate.

1) Define 3 differences between a tantrum and a meltdown

2) Describe the role anxiety plays in meltdowns

3) Describe the role theory of mind has on meltdowns

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Tantrums v’s Meltdowns and Shutdowns

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Goals for tonight

- Be able to clearly define the difference between a tantrum and a meltdown and a shutdown
- Have access to a range of responses to escalating behaviours to interrupt escalation cycles leading to Meltdowns and Shutdowns
- Have 3 strategies or concepts you feel comfortable to experiment with
- Be able to describe the role anxiety plays in a meltdown
- Impact of ‘theory of mind’ impairments of meltdowns

Intrinsic differences between a tantrum and a meltdown

- Both very different
- Clear defining features
- Different purposes
- Can begin as one and morph into the other

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Tantrums

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- Want directed not need directed
- Externalised behaviour
- Goal driven
- Audience to perform
- Check for engagement
- Protective factors are in place
- Age appropriate 1-5 years and then reducing as language and problem solving skills improve
- A form of communication
- Resolves quickly without support if goal or desire meet
- Will require support for relationship repair and restitution

Meltdowns and shutdowns

- Internalized and externalized
- Over stressed and overwhelmed
- Whole of body experience
- Lack of protective factor
- Anxiety as antecedent
- Fatigue
- Not goal dependent
- About real or perceived need
- A form of communication
- May require support to gain regulation
- Requires deliberate recovery process and re-engagement
- Will require support for relationship repair and restitution

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Three distinct stages of meltdowns and shutdowns

- Rumbling
- Rage
- Recovery

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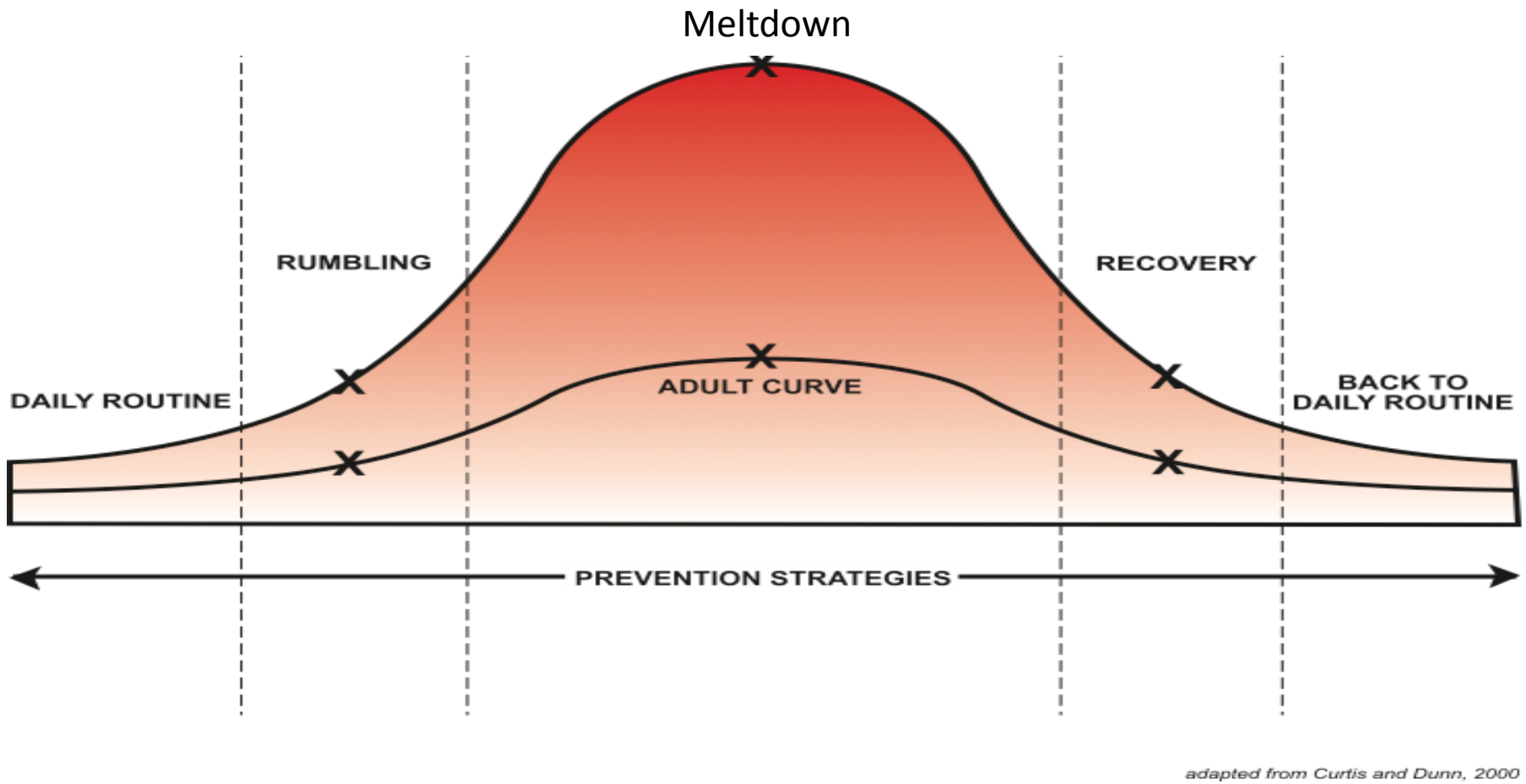

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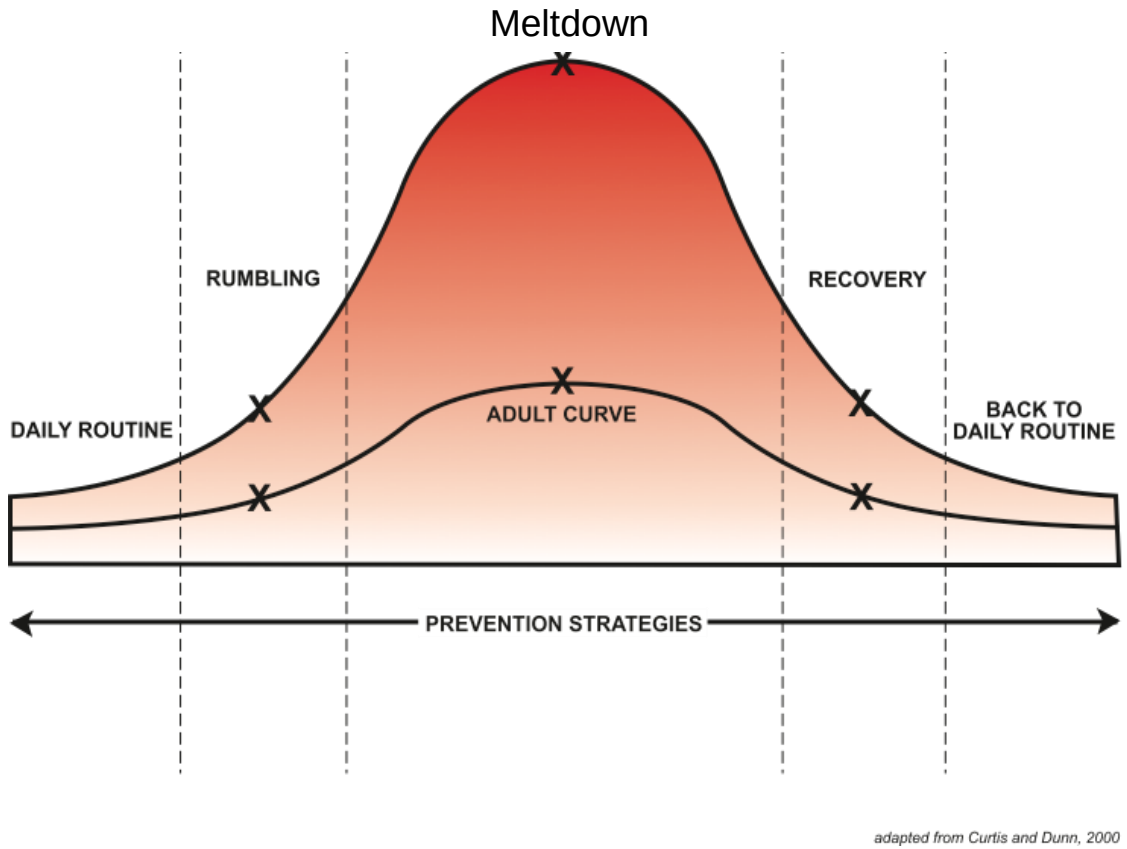
Rumbling Behaviours

- Fidgeting
- Swearing
- Making noises
- Ripping paper
- Grimacing
- Refusing to cooperate
- Rapid and jerky movements
- Tears
- Tensing muscles
- Name calling
- Increasing/decreasing volume
- Verbal threats
- Foot tapping
- Pacing
- Rocking
- Covering ears or eyes



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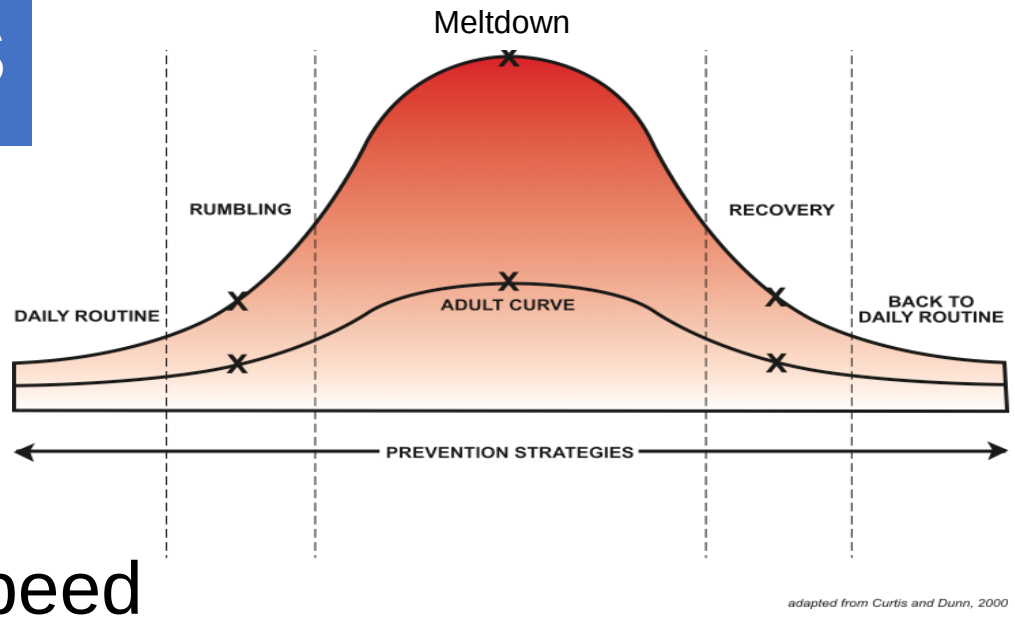
Rumbling Adult Responses



Remain calm

Use a quiet voice

Drop an octave

Slow your voice down to about half speed

Take deep breaths - deliberately

Prevent power struggle

Be flexible

Offer an option – walk, doona, location change

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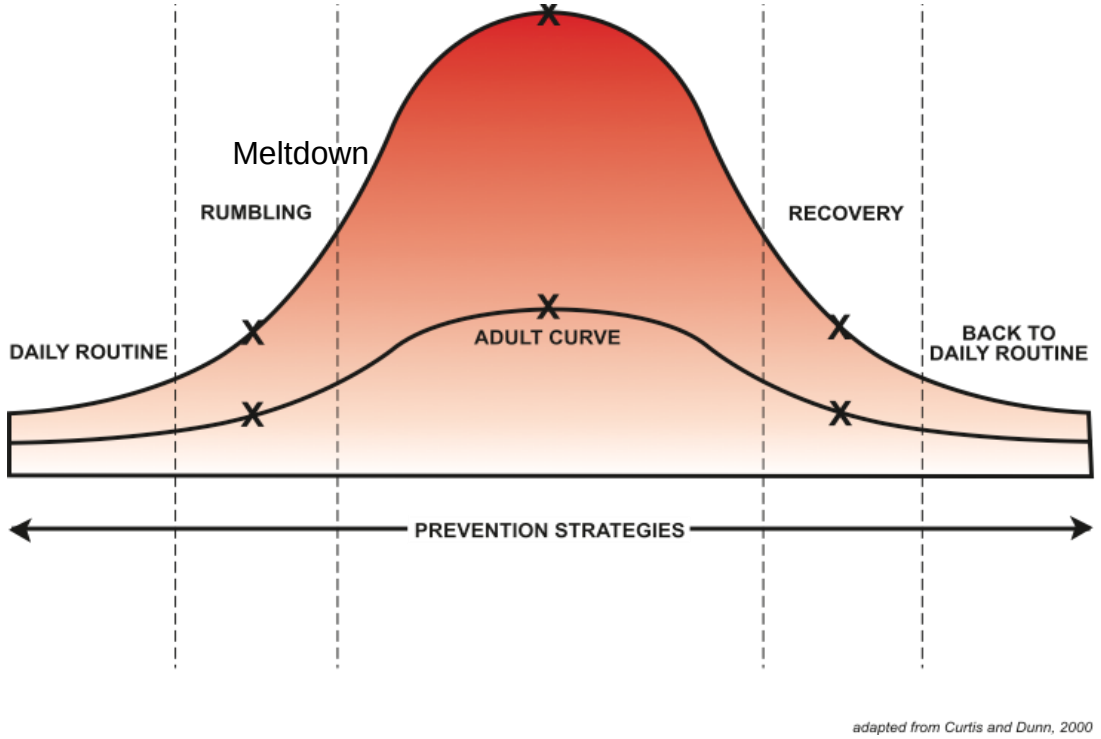
Meltdown and Shutdown Behaviours

- Disinhibited
- Impulsive
- Emotional
- Explosive
- Destroying property
- Self injury
- Screaming
- Biting
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Internalised behaviours



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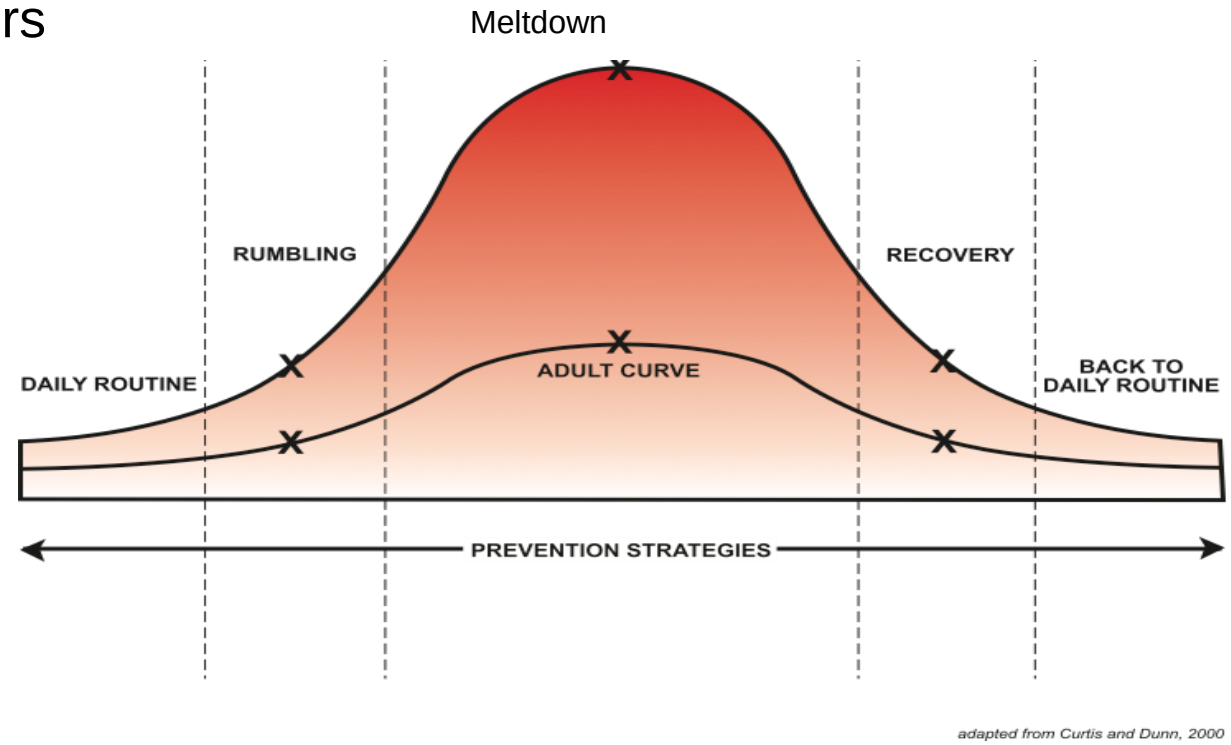
Meltdown and Shutdown Interventions

- Protect individual, property, self and others
- Do not try to discipline
- Remove audience
- Be non confrontational
- Disengage emotionally
- Plan a graceful and face saving exit
- Follow a plan
- Obtain assistance
- Prompt to safe place
- Use few words
- Prevent power struggles



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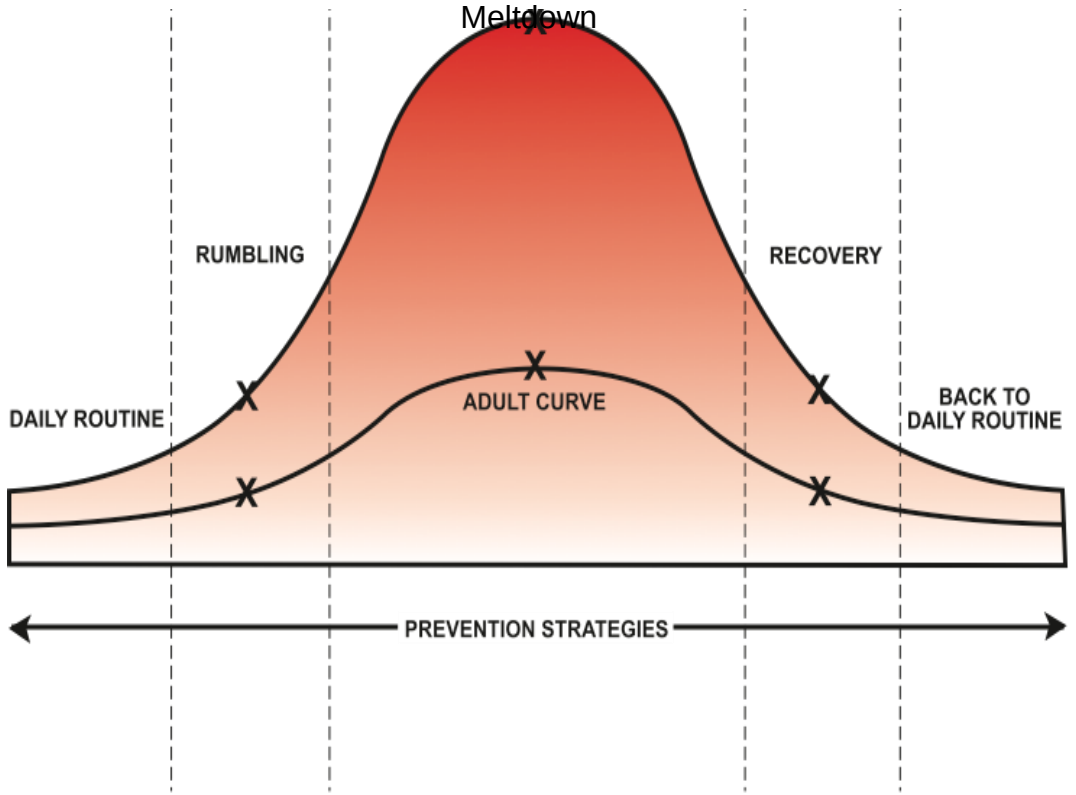
Meltdown Adult Response

- Control own flight/fight tendency
- Remember less is more
- Remain calm and quiet
- Don’t take behaviours personally
- Disengage emotionally
- Be conscious of non-verbal cues
- Take deep breaths
- Wiggle toes inside shoes



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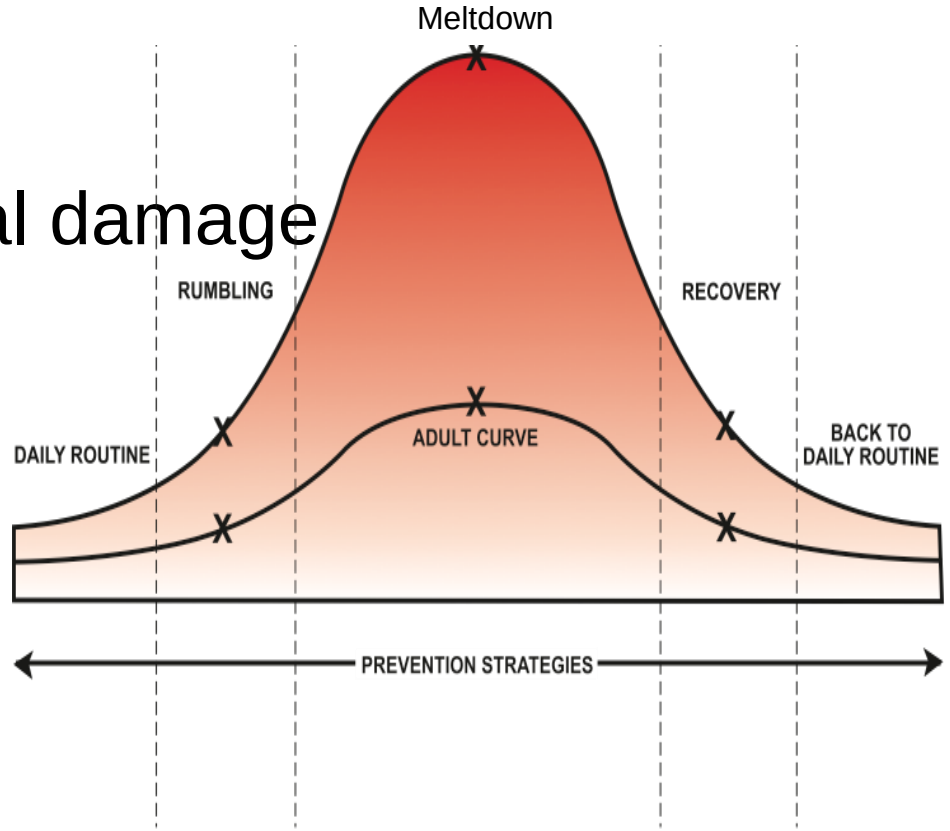
Recovery Stage

- Sleeping
- May deny meltdown behaviours
- May reject property and personal damage
- Withdraw into fantasy
- Withdrawal from others
- Act like nothing has happening
- Be very chatty and silly
- Apologizing
- Fragile
- Hungry / thirsty



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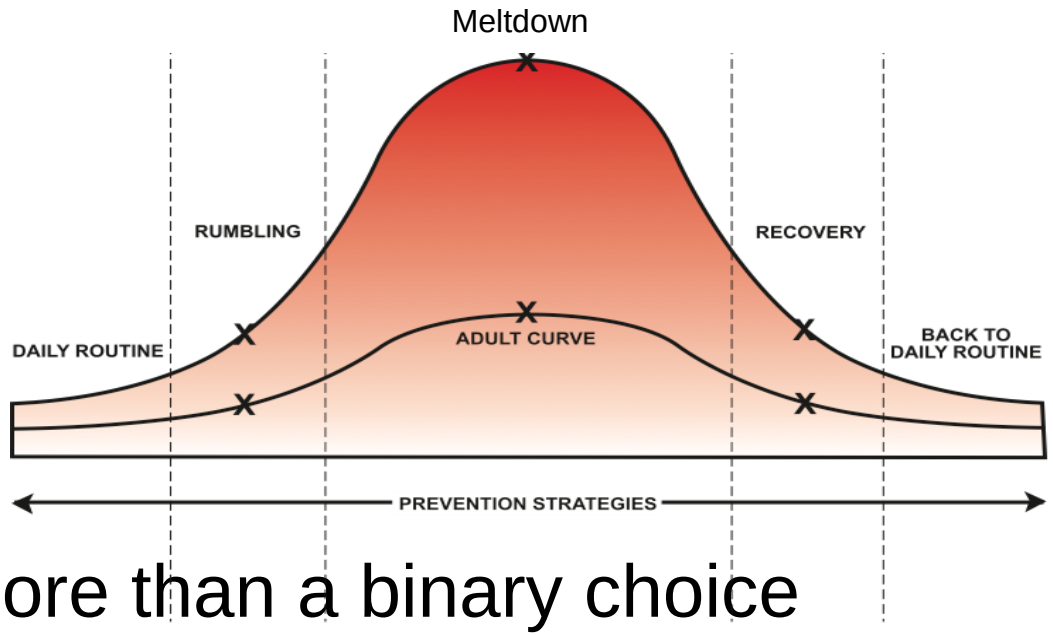
Recovery Interventions



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Allow to sleep/ rest

Relaxation techniques- when ready

Don't refer to meltdown behaviour

Direct to next activity- do not give more than a binary choice

Don't make excessive demands

Support with structure

Plan recovery conversation but not yet

Give food and drink- protein

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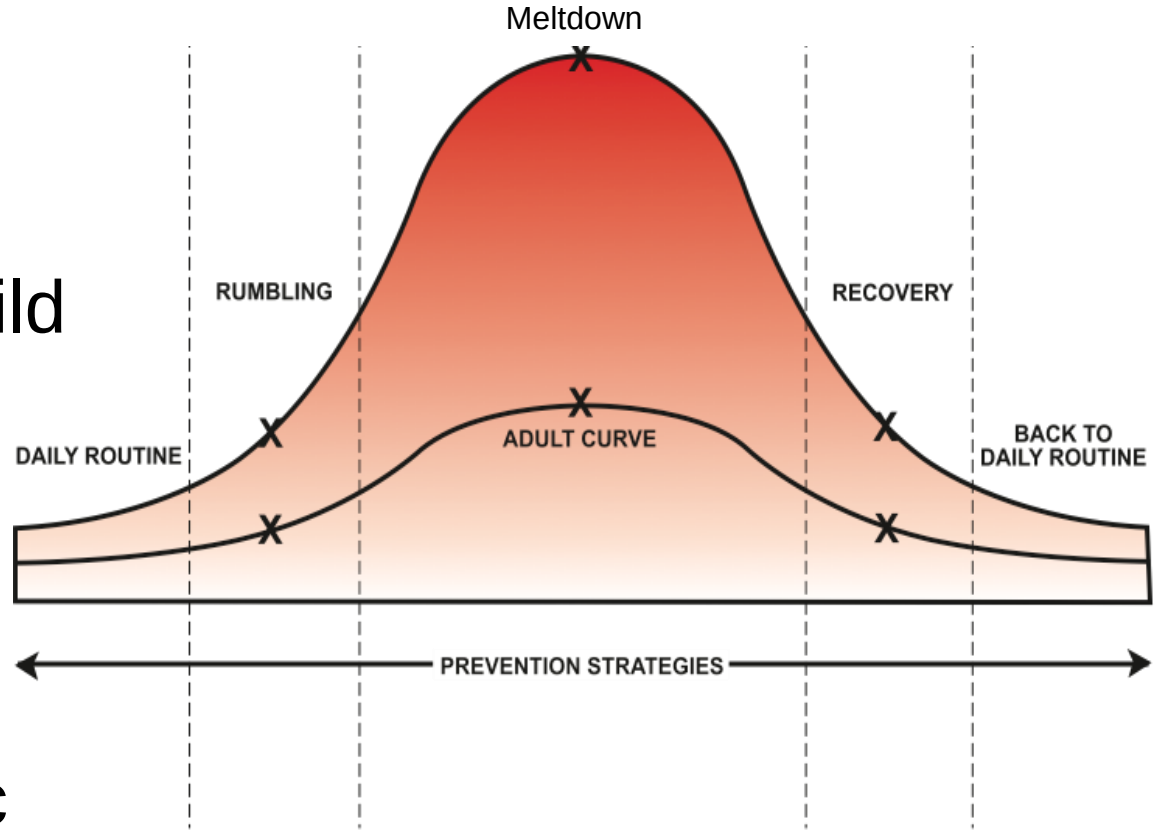
Recovery Adult Response

Remain calm and quiet
Tag out as soon as you
Restore relationship with child
Eat and drink
Debrief
Write incident report or journal the incident so you can recall detail for paed etc



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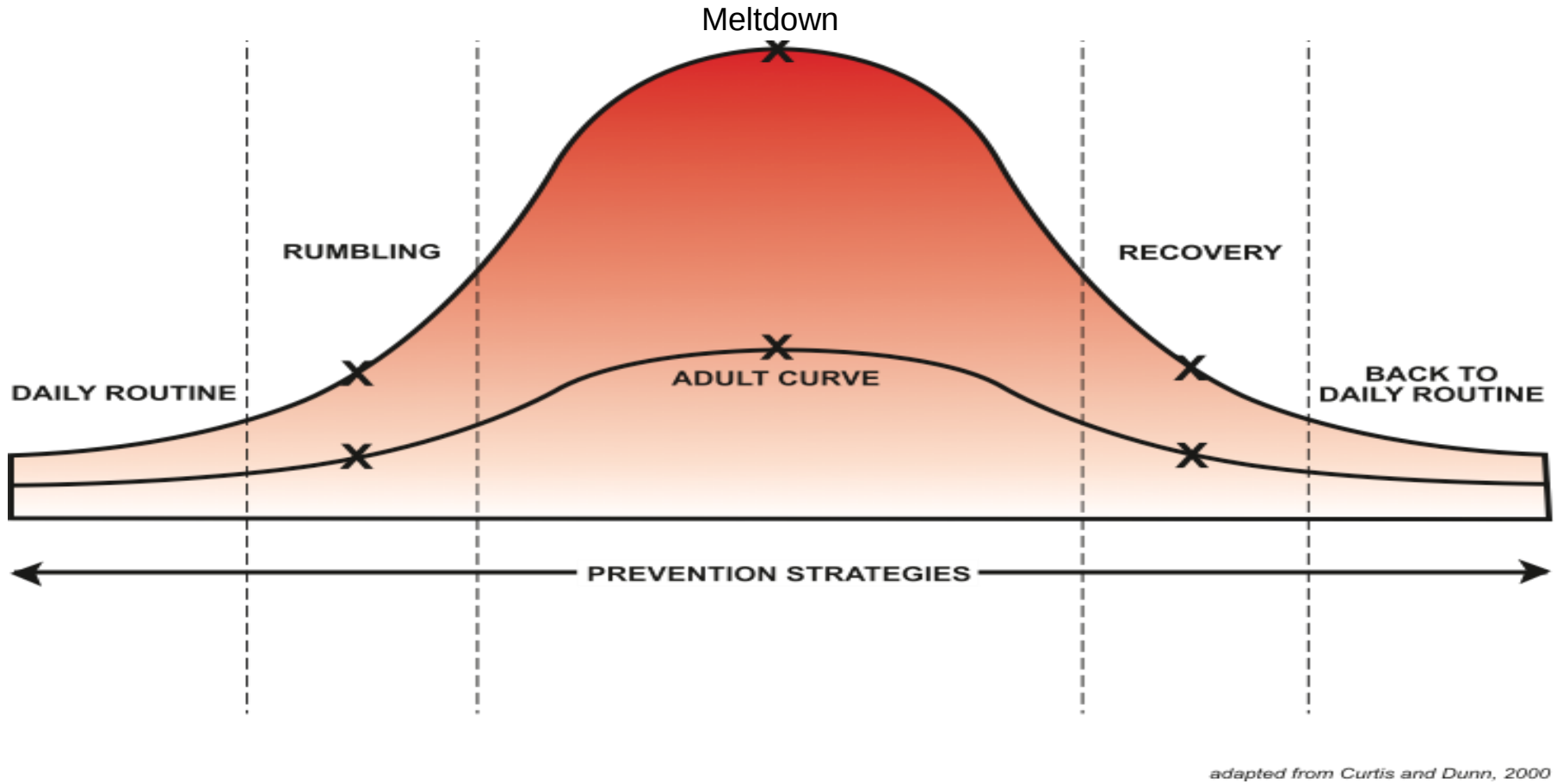

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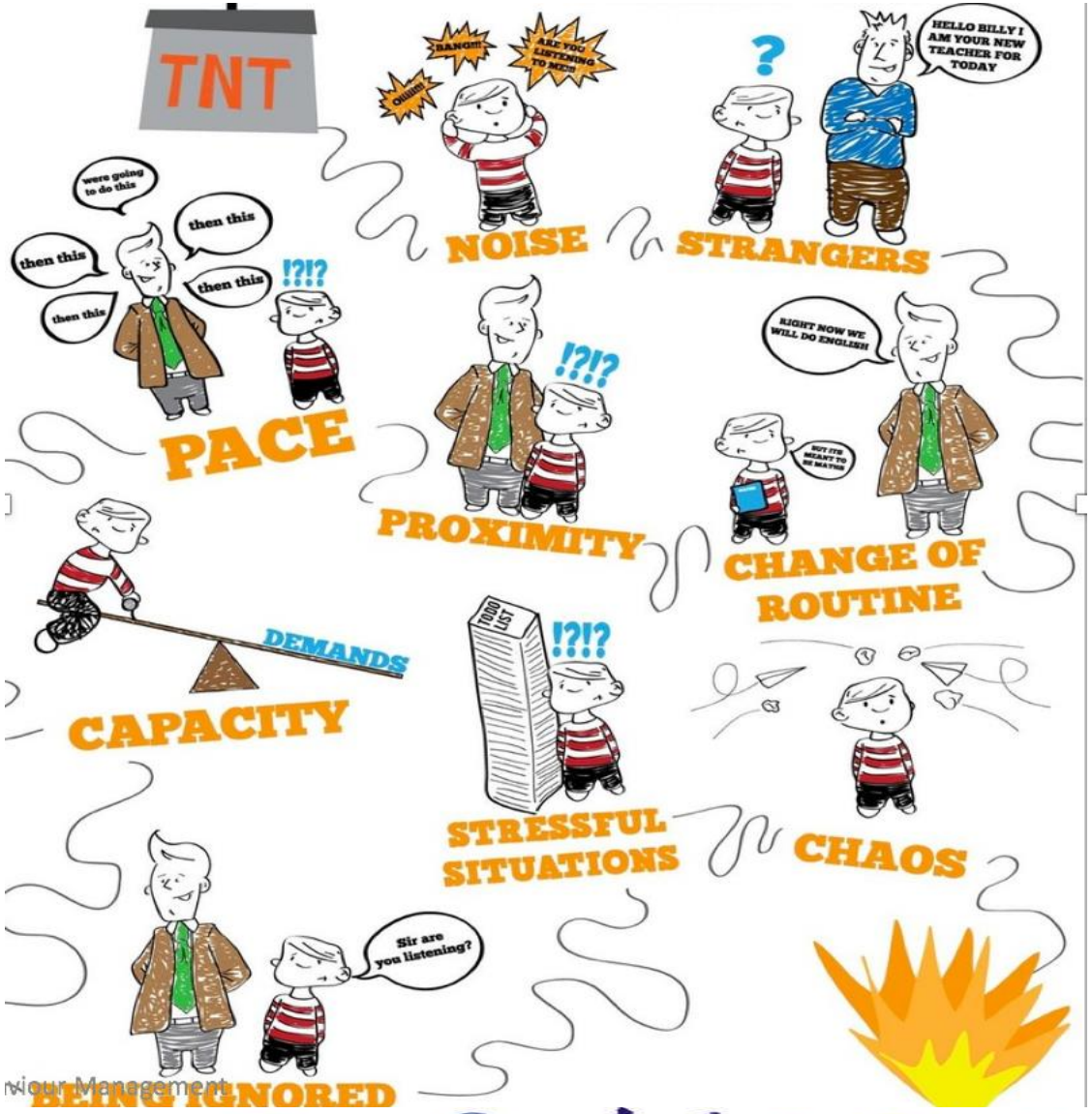
Triggers

- Often we say there is no trigger
- We need to be detectives
- Find the trigger



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Theory of Mind

Ability to imagine what someone else might be feeling and moderating your behaviour in response

Ability to predict and interpret others behaviour

- Unable to imagine how someone else feels
- Unable to experience empathy
- Assumption you don't know how they feel until they make you experience it
- Often laugh with relief and leave you or another child in a puddle on the floor

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Theory of Mind

- Difficulty in …
  - Predicting
  - Reading intentions
  - Understanding emotions
  - Explaining own behavior
  - Perspective or reference
  - Reading and reacting to others' interests
  - Understanding social interactions

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Top 10 Situations that Trigger Insistence on Sameness

- Annoying behavior
- Activity interrupted
- Losing a game
- Object breaks
- Event cancelled
- Event delayed
- Materials run out
- Item misplaced
- Sequence changed
- Momentary separation

Green, Sigafoos, Pituch, Itchon, O'Reilly, & Lancioni (2006). Assessing Behavioral Flexibility in Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 21(4) 230-236.

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Anxiety

- Anticipatory anxiety and delayed anxiety
- Disrespect, arguing, surliness,
- Sensory responses
- Demand avoidance
- School refusal
- Intense, intractable special interests
- IT addiction and obsession and resultant meltdowns
- Asthma, eczema and food intolerances and allergies
- Self harm, picking at skin or nails
- Trichotillomania
- Selective mutism
- Phobias

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Problem Solving

- “One way of viewing a problem”
- Stuck thinking
- Sees immediate, self relevant facts instead of a whole picture
- Problems with cause and effect
- Does not see problems as having more than one option
- Problem solving is often literal

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Use Their Own Kind of Logic

- Sense of social justice
- Use logic, but the logic is very unique based on that student's perspective
  - If my parents love me and they have one child, how much will they love me if they have two children, 3 children? ½ or 1/3 as much.

This is called Pseudo-Logic

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Executive Function

- Difficulty in …
  - Imitating others
  - Planning
  - Starting and stopping
  - Organizing (time, self, space)
- Thrive in a predictable environment

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Do Not Understand the Seemingly Obvious

- Expectations
- Assumptions
- Unstated social rules, mores, guidelines

This is often called Hidden Curriculum

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Special Interests and Obsessions

- Narrow interests
- Not permanent
- Often appear “uncontrollable”
- Role of the interest: interest, fun, security, comfort, relaxation
- Adaptive or maladaptive tool for stress reduction

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Fuel on the Fire: Avoid these words…

- Never
- Always
- Can't
- Won't
- Don't
- Should, Shouldn't

…& other absolutes

- And "*Mind Reading*"
  - "…On purpose"
  - "….deliberate, you chose to"
  - "anything to get your own way"
  - "…because you wanted to…"

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Words that De-escalate

- Maybe, Perhaps
- Sometimes, Once-in-awhile
- What if…, Consider this…
- Let's check whether we can…
- I wonder if…
- I'll consider it.
- No guarantees, but I'll…
- Help me understand what you are thinking about this.
- And other words & phrases that exude
    - Optimism
    - Consideration
    - Wisdom
    - kindness

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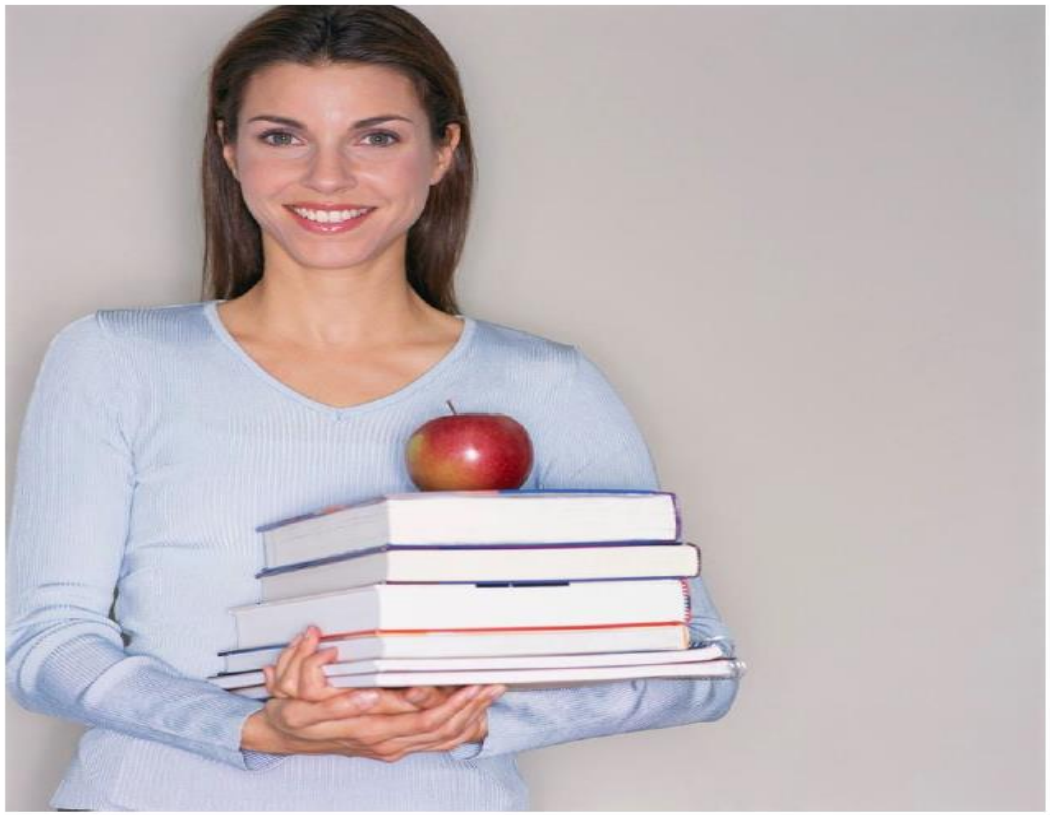
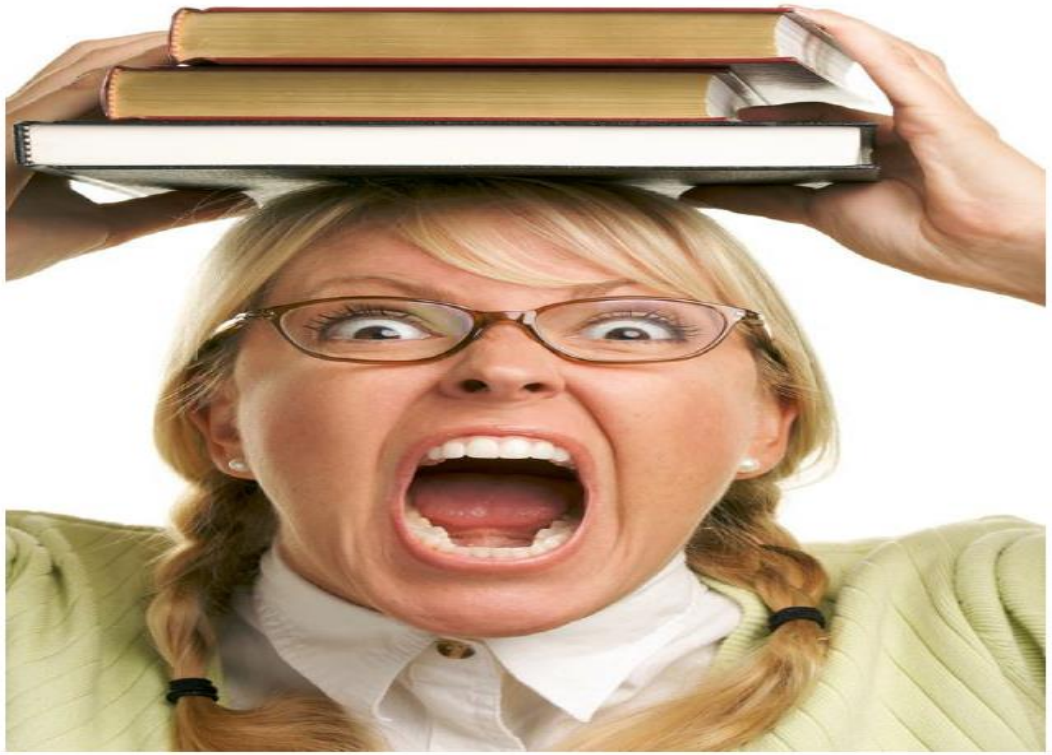
Which Parent Are you?

Regulated



Dysregulated



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An end of year resolution

- A full nights sleep
- A meltdown free day
- A day, an hour, a minute off- will have to be deliberate and its tough
- Not having to make 4 separate meals because there are only 4 foods in the whole wide world your child will eat
- Be able to go places without having to worry about how your child will react
- Going places and not fearing your child will bolt or climb onto the roof of your or someone else's car
- No waiting lists for services
- Asking for school supports and having them readily available and accessible
- A day where you don’t have to watch the same show or meme over and over and over and over…….

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Question & Answer Time

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Webinar recording will be available next week on the website. Share freely with extended family, carers, support workers, therapists and schools

Language and Social Challenges

- Nonverbal communication
- Initiating and maintaining social interactions
- Literalness
- Perspective taking
- Hidden curriculum
- Cause/effect relationships
- Difficulty conveying own thoughts
- May not use social “niceties”

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Central Coherence

- Idiosyncratic focus
- Preference for the known
- Difficulty in choosing and prioritizing
- Difficulty seeing connections
- Lack of compliance

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