



DOVER COURT
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
SINGAPORE

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

DCA Transitions Workshop

Vivienne Scott, Educational Psychologist



Overview of the morning

This workshop will focus on:

- Relocating and the impact of transition;
- Parents' own support needs and capacity to respond to their children;
- How children's behaviour should be recognised as a means of communication;
- The importance of structure and routine;
- Parents role-modelling positive skills.

Activity 1

- Paper slips show a number of scenarios involving transitions.
- Pick three each at random.
- Place your scenario under the 'category' it seems to fit best:

Breeze

Wind

Storm

Gale

Cyclone



(Do not be influenced by others at your table)

Activity 1

- Did you place scenarios in the same place as others?
- Which scenarios were most often placed at the 'stormy' end?
- What other factors would affect where you placed scenarios?



Factors that influence reactions to transition

1. The nature of the transition, e.g. hoped for, positive?
2. The importance of the change, e.g. good job, closeness to family?
3. How the transition happened, e.g. planned, voluntary?
4. Previous experience of change, e.g. adaptability, compounding loss?
5. Personality and temperament, e.g. optimism, anxiety, flexibility?
6. Available support networks?
7. Other changes or losses resulting from the transition?
8. Expectations, e.g. luck, gender roles, cultures?

Effects of change

Discuss examples in each of the five dimensions below:

1. Physical: body
 - what happens to the body when a significant change happens?
2. Emotional: psychological
 - what feelings might be strongest?
3. Social: relationships
 - what may happen in relationships?
4. Mental: cognitive
 - what thoughts and self-talk take the focus?
5. Spiritual: meaning/values/philosophical outlook
 - what becomes important in life?

Activity 2 – with a partner

Partner A

Think of a special or significant object you have once lost. Tell Partner B:

- What was the object?
- What happened?
- How did you react?

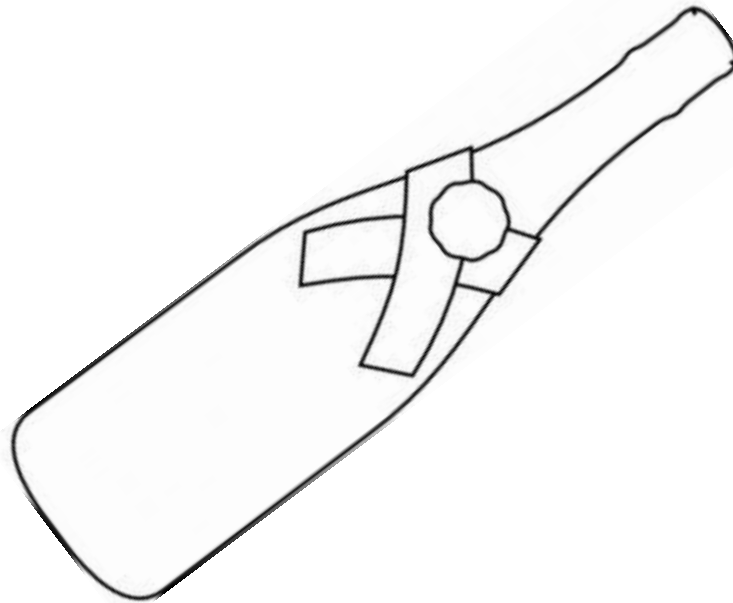
Partner B

- Write down / remember 4 key words to describe Partner A's reaction.

Swap and repeat.

Activity 2 – share

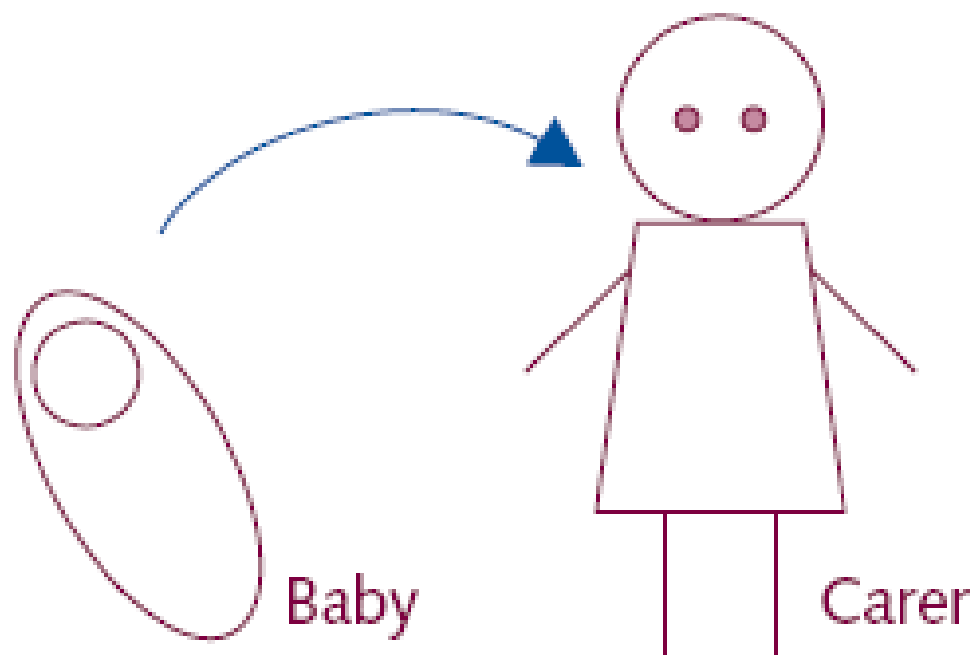
- Share the key words to describe your partners' reactions to losing their special object.
- How does this bottle reflect how you were feeling? Were you 'full up'?
- How 'full up' are you at times of transition?



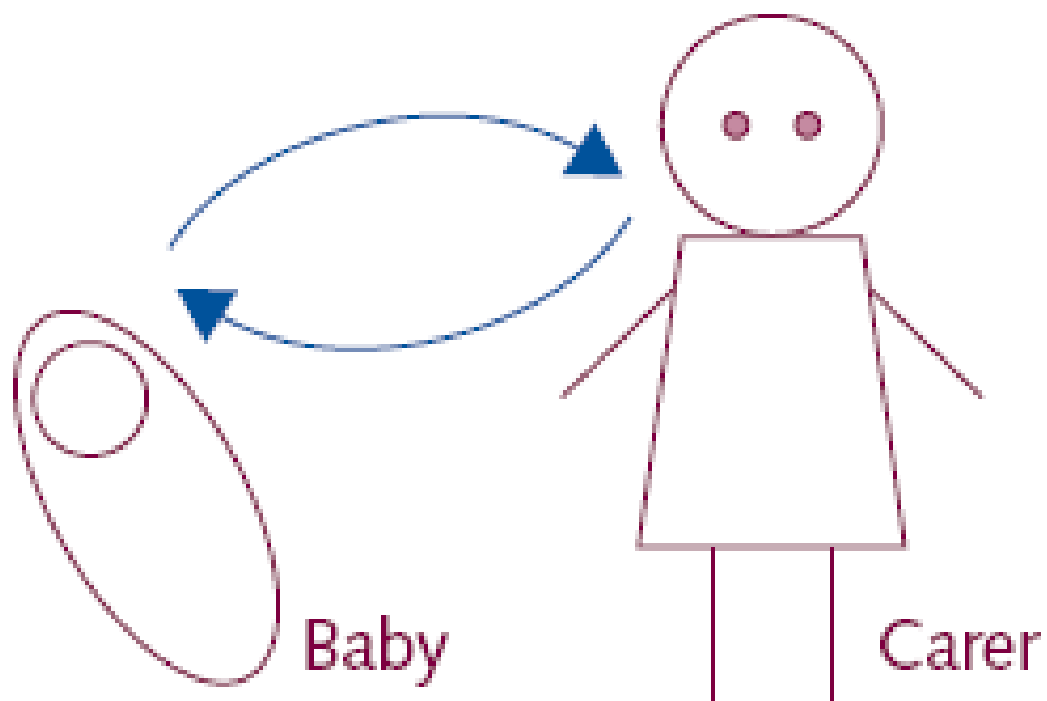


Consider what happens to all these emotions under stress...

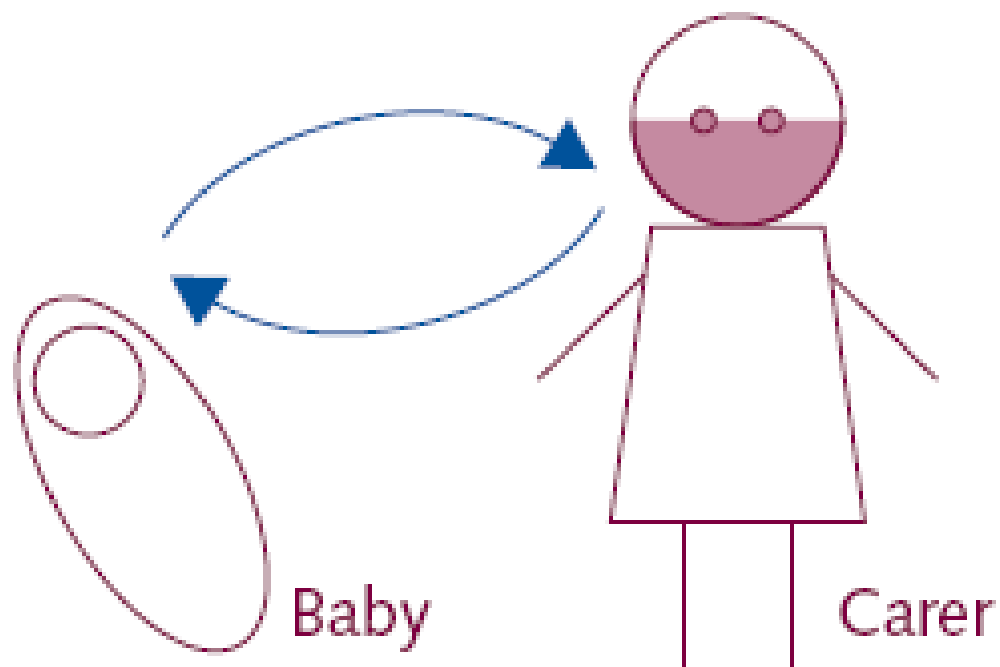
Containment - Diagram 1



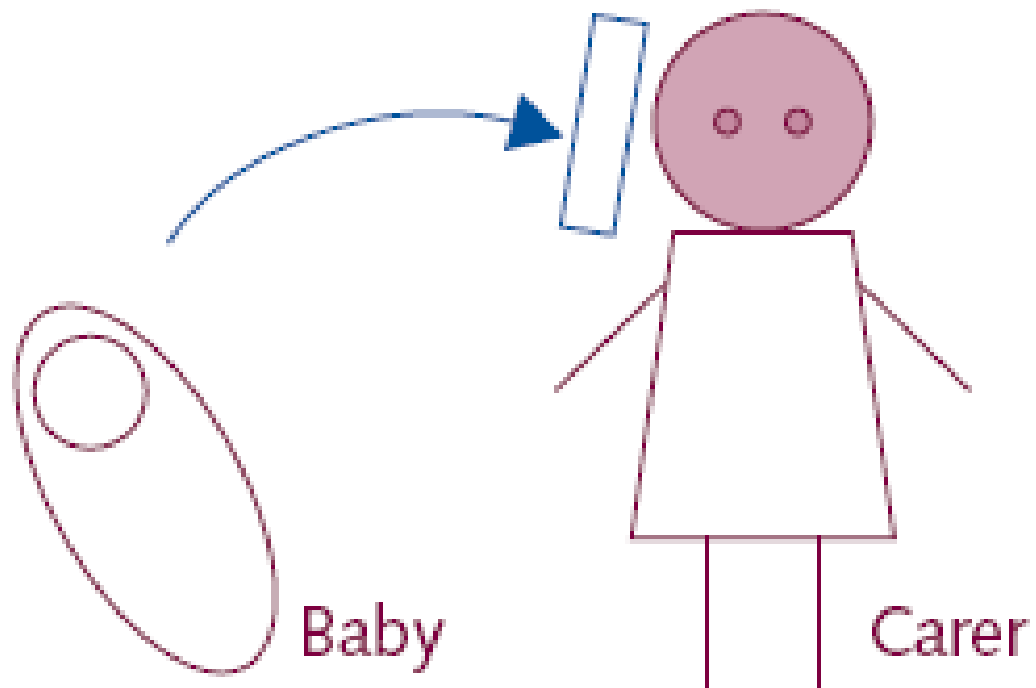
Containment - Diagram 2



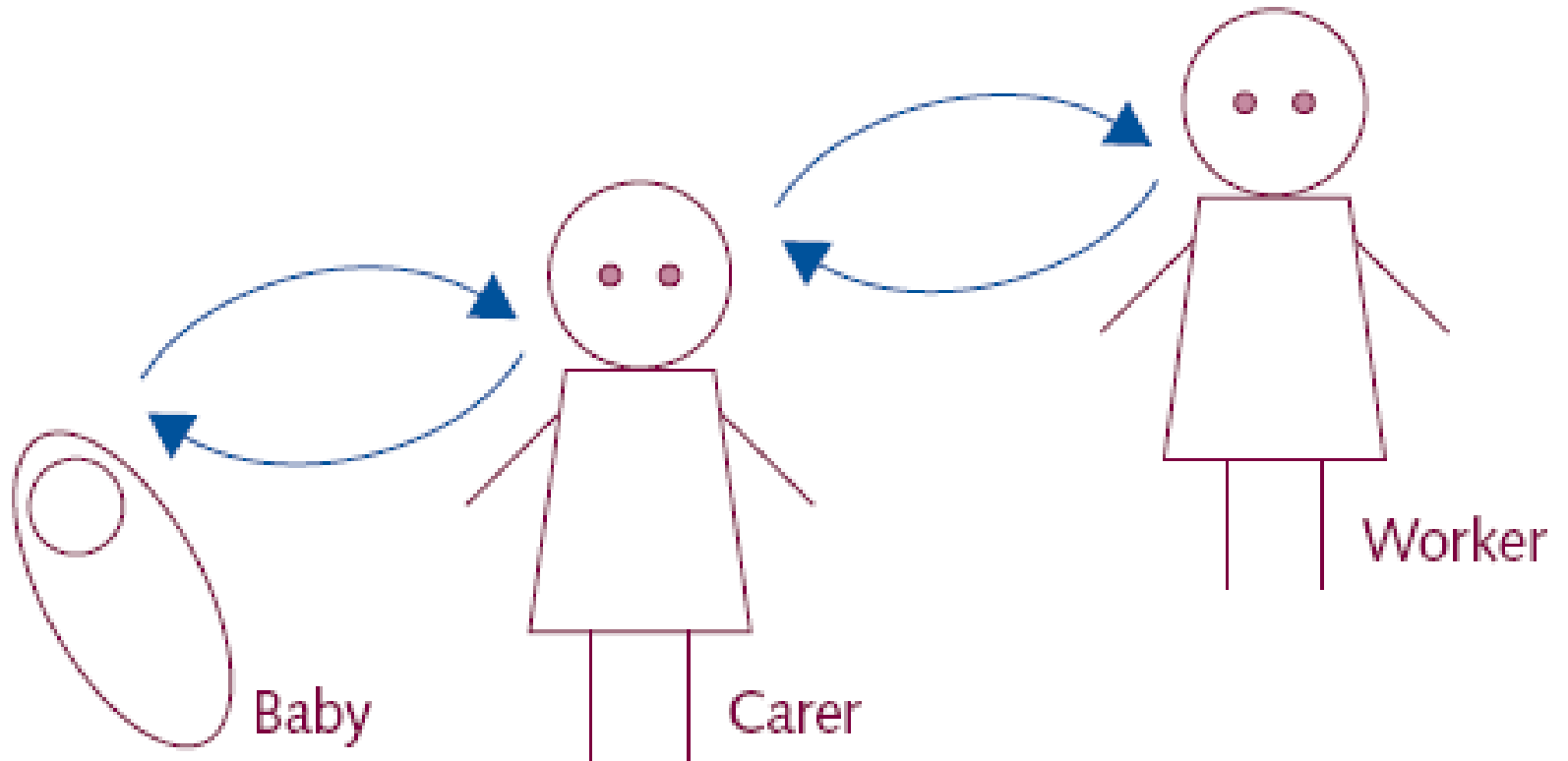
Containment - Diagram 3



Containment - Diagram 4



Containment – Diagram 5



Containment

- Emotional containment is like feeling full of a problem, telling someone who listens and understands and then feeling the problem is in perspective, rather than going round and round in your head.
- The other person may not have said anything to help solve the problem but, by their attention and understanding, they have restored your ability to think about the problem, instead of feeling overwhelmed by it.

Containment –like oxygen masks on a plane...

- ‘You can’t give away what you don’t possess’
- On a plane, in case of emergency you’re told to put your mask on first before you put on your child’s
- The importance of taking care of yourself in order that you can meet the child’s needs
- True in all walks of life, in all situations.
- You have to be full enough to give to someone else



What can we do?

- The four unhelpful R's:

- Resistance – “I’ll just forget it.” “It will probably be great.”
- Resentment – “I hate this.” “It’s not fair.”
- Rejection – “I’ll just avoid... / stay away from...”
- Repression – “I must make myself look happier.”



- CLAIM the feeling: It’s ok to feel this.
- NAME the feeling: What am I really feeling?
- TAME the feeling: What can I do to release some of the energy associated with this feeling? *Are you carrying around a Huge Bag of Worries?*
- AIM the feeling: What can I do with this feeling?



Behaviour is a means of communication

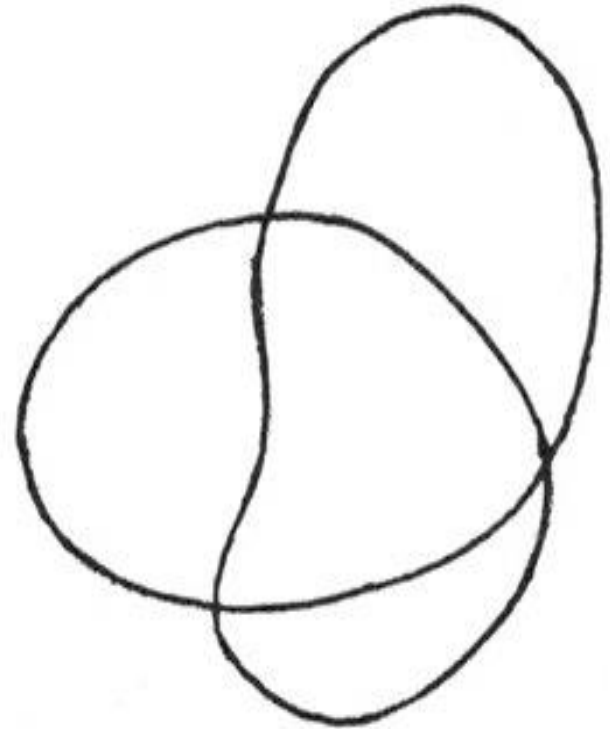
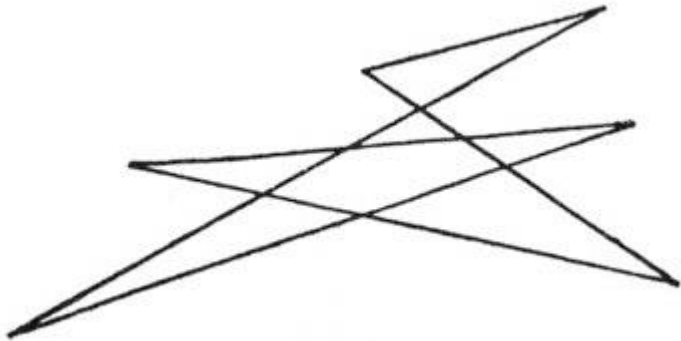
- Read Activity 3.
- With a new partner, discuss some specific behaviours.
- What might the behaviour suggest is *really* going on? (Name it)
- What could be tried to resolve the behaviour? (Tame it / Aim it)

Behaviour is a form of communication

- As our stress levels go up, our emotional age goes down!
- Relate to your child in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Importance of nonverbal communication
- Physical contact can be a form of communication
- Variety of strategies to respond to behaviour, but be consistent.
- Challenging behaviour is managed firmly, not punitively
- Logical and natural consequences to behaviour
- Children know their behaviour is understood

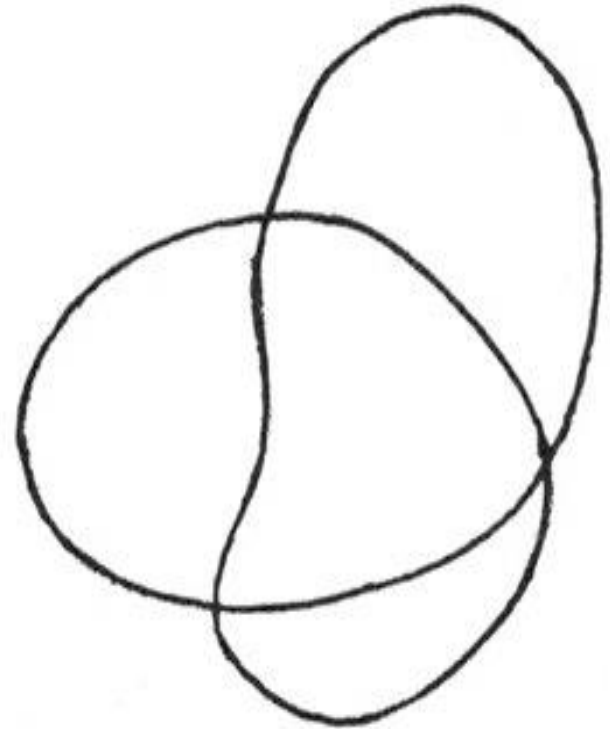
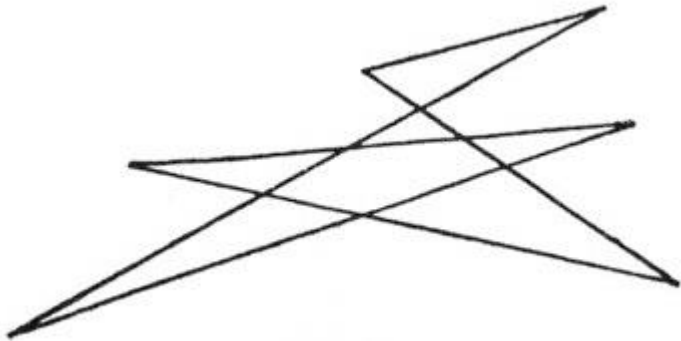


Consider these figures...



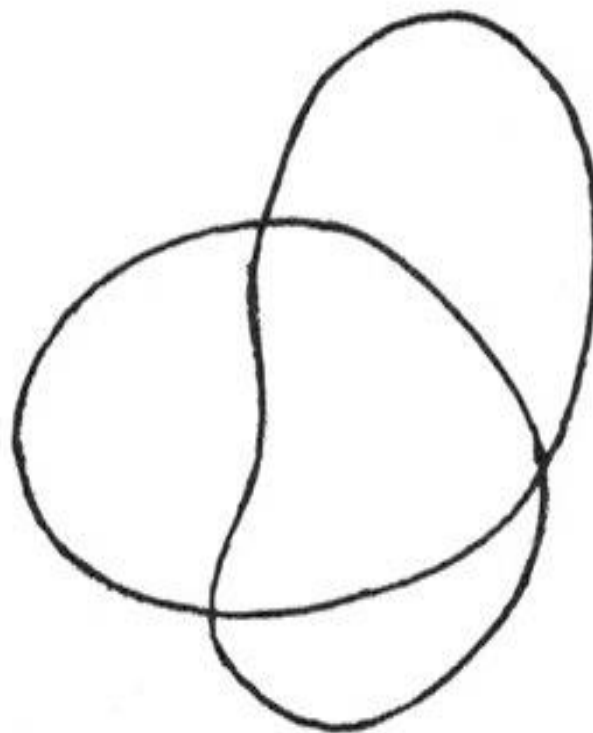
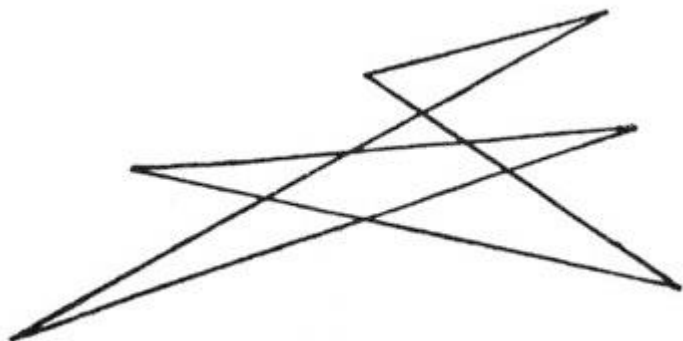
Kohler (1929)

Which one is called 'Takete'?



Kohler (1929)

...and which one is called 'Maluma'?



Kohler (1929)

Amazing, huh!?

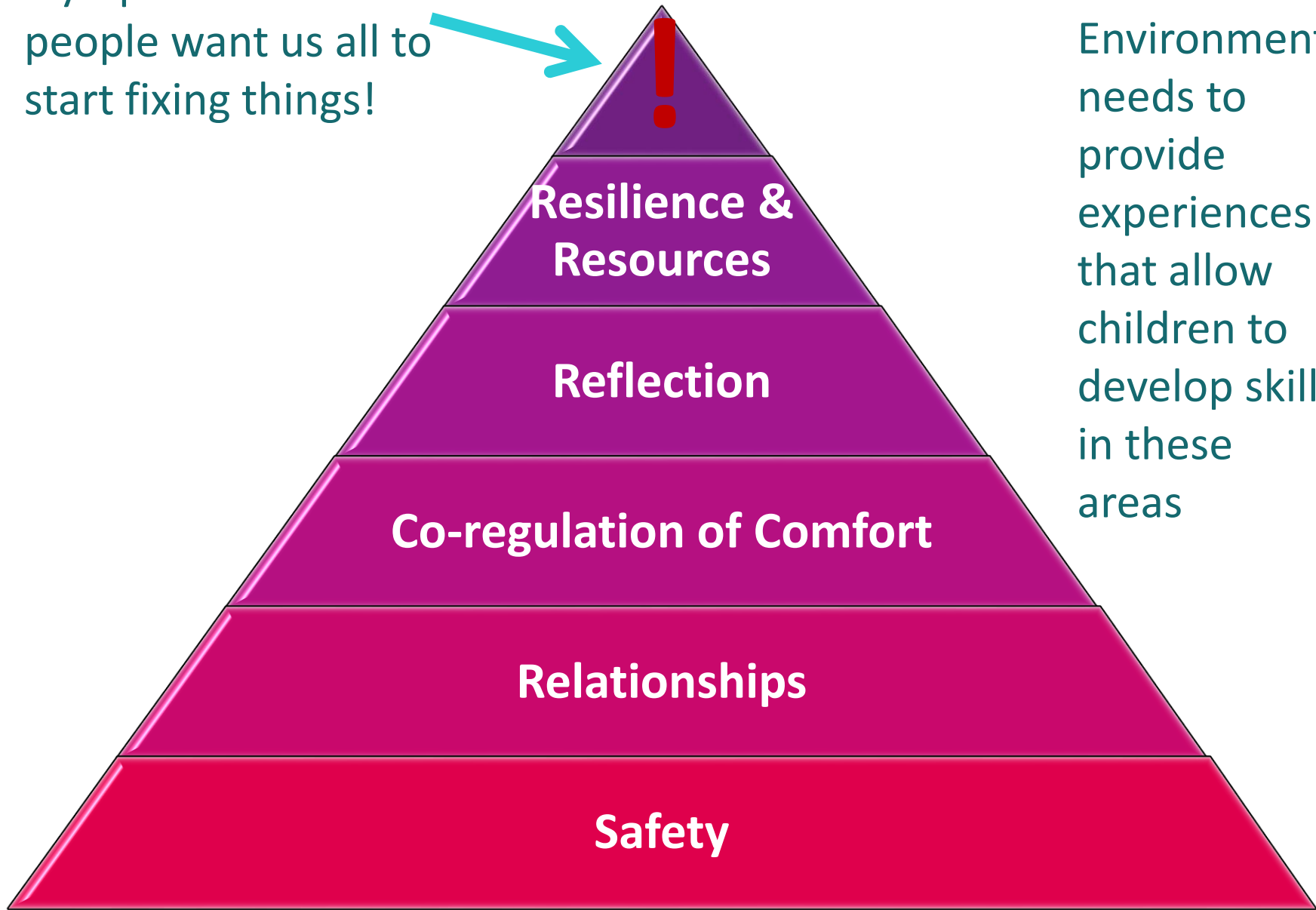


How we make sense of the world

- Experiences that are rewarding, routine and consistent will start to form a network of connections between brain cells.
- If these connections are reinforced on a regular and predictable basis, they will form stable structures in the appropriate part of the brain which can last for a lifetime.
- This is the basis of a safe environment.



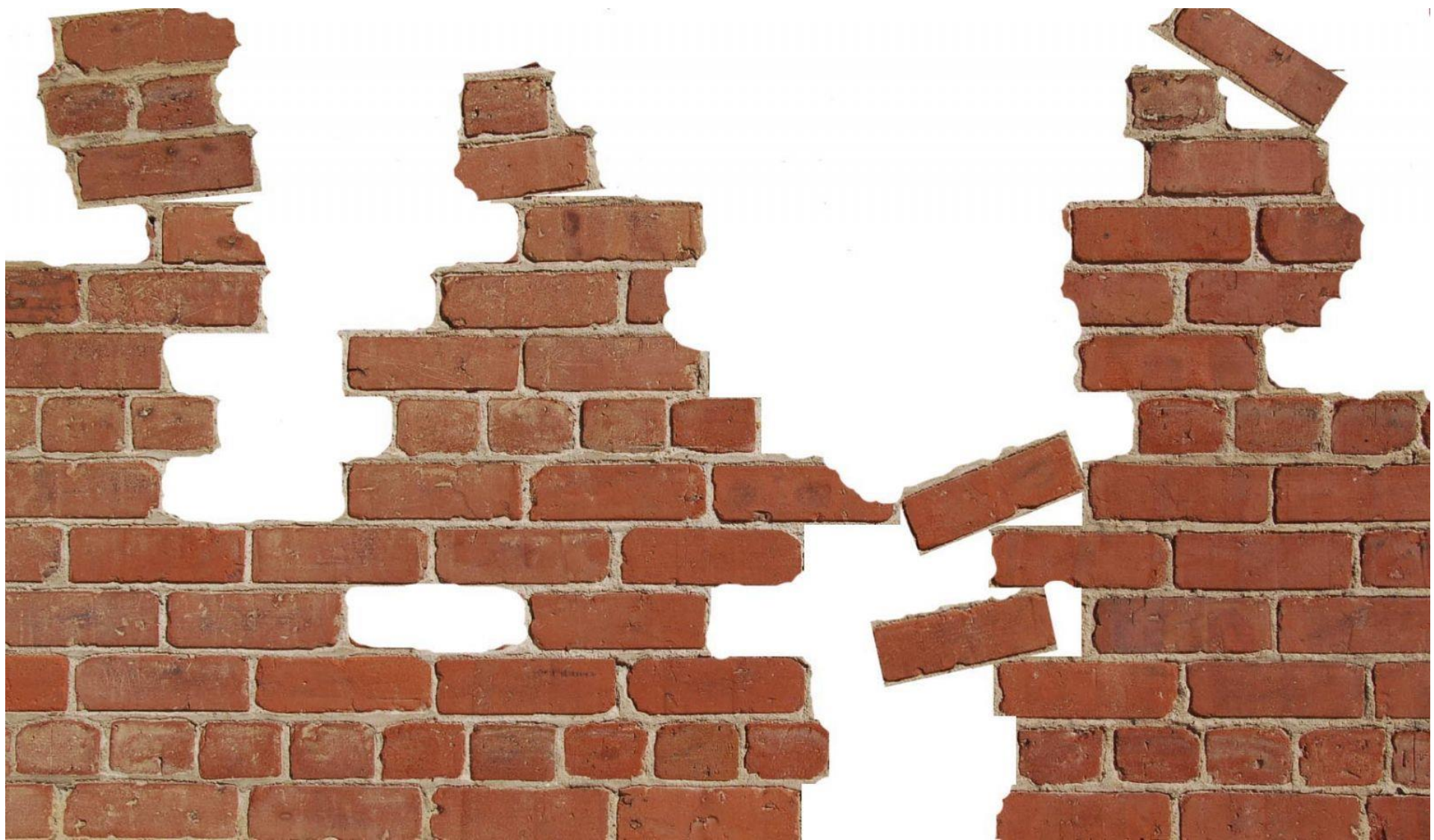
'Symptoms' where people want us all to start fixing things!



Environment needs to provide experiences that allow children to develop skills in these areas



If we don't have a safe base...



Signs of insecure attachment

Insecurely Attached (ambivalent):

- 'I need comfort/help but I will resist it. I will need you all the time and you will notice me.'
- Makes sure adults are available all the time, even if they don't need the adult at that point
- Extremely attention needing, e.g. parent can't go to the toilet without the child banging on the door.
- Will find it difficult to be disciplined by the adult.
- These children tend to act on half of the information available – just the feelings, not the facts.
- Always seem to test rules and boundaries.

Signs of insecure attachment

Insecurely Attached (avoidant):

The child may feel that adults are unavailable and readjusts their behaviour to feel safe.

- 'If I don't show discomfort my parent will be more available.'
- Child suppresses their emotion – signals to adults & peers that they're fine even when they're not and really do require comfort.
- We need to learn to meet hidden needs as well as expressed needs.
- Think about children who never seek help, quietly underachieve, and who are hard to motivate.
- These children only use half of the information available too – they go on the facts, not the feelings.

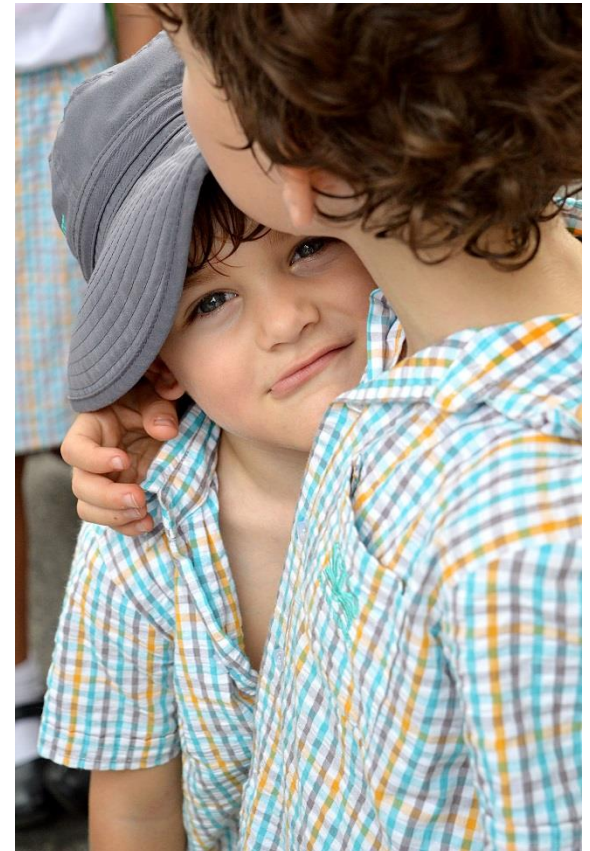
What we all need:

1. An environment that offers a safe base.
2. Our needs and learning to be understood developmentally.
3. Opportunities for the development of self-esteem.
4. Language, as a vital means of communication.
5. Our behaviour to be recognised as communication.
6. The importance of transition in our lives to be understood.

Something to consider...



- How will you find the containment, structure and ways to tame / aim:
 - Your emotions and needs?
 - Your child's emotions and needs?





Thank you.