



MINDFUL EMOTION COACHING

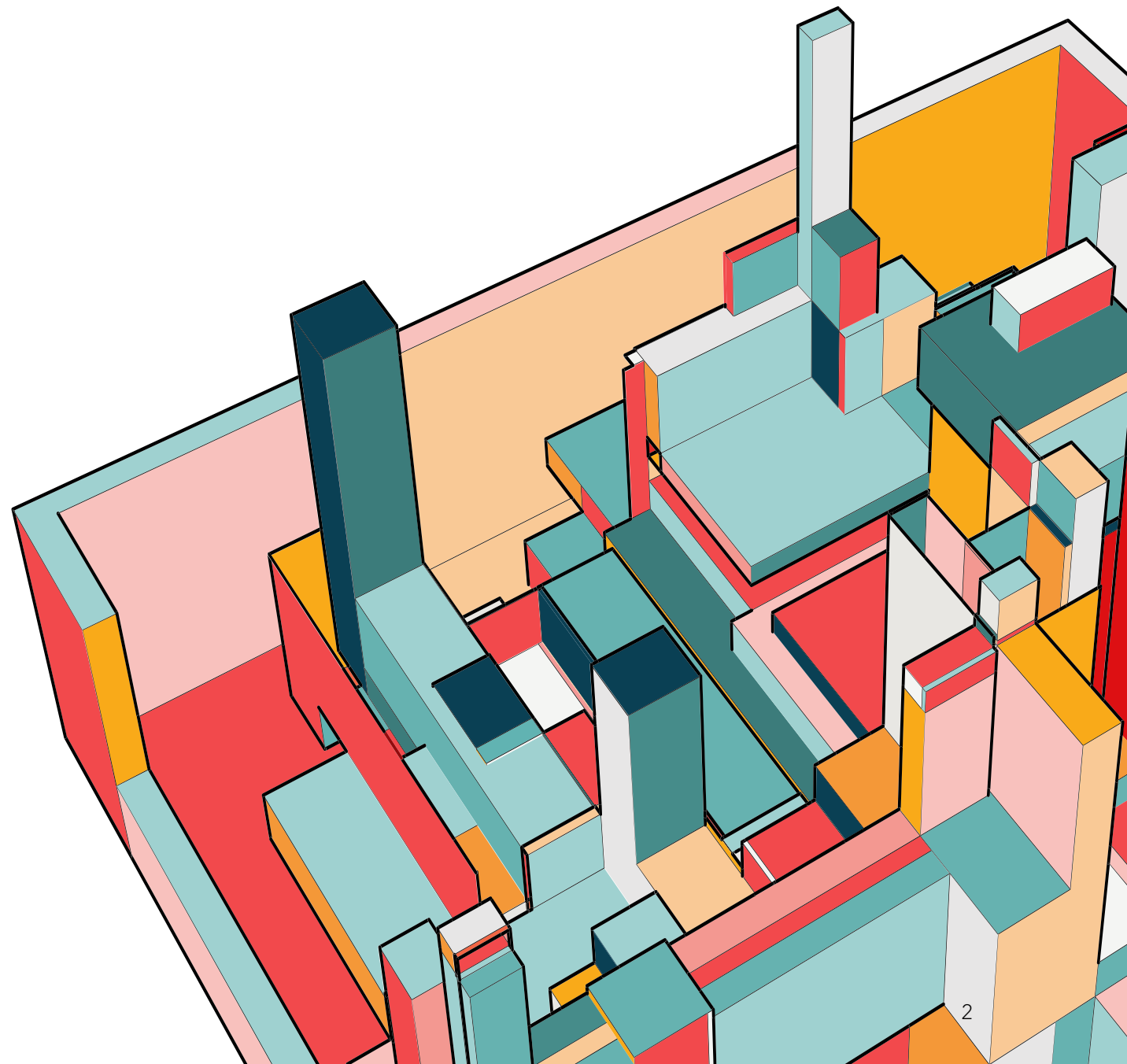
Parent Workshop

WHAT IS MINDFUL EMOTION COACHING?

MEC is a family wellness coaching programme that can be helpful within a range of contexts.

It is the work of EHCAP, led by Dr Sarah Temple, a GP in Somerset. Most of this presentation is directly from the work of EHCAP. It is based on science from the Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University.

The process begins by developing insight into our own emotional world and managing our 'lid'.



TOOLS TO HELP FAMILIES

THE BIOLOGY OF STRESS

The Biology of Stress introduces what stress is and how this can impact on development, and influence us as adults.

THE HAND MODEL & MIRRORING

Siegel's Hand Model and the process of mirroring - why this is important for family relationships.

FAMILY OF ORIGIN EXERCISE

Thinking about family dynamics and how experiences are passed down.

THE AFWI RESILIENCE SCALE

The Resilience Scale is a helpful tool that can allow us to look at the factors affecting wellness, and how to rebalance scales when they have tipped.

THE RIVER OF WELLBEING

A metaphor for self-care and looking after individual wellness.

MINDFUL EXERCISES

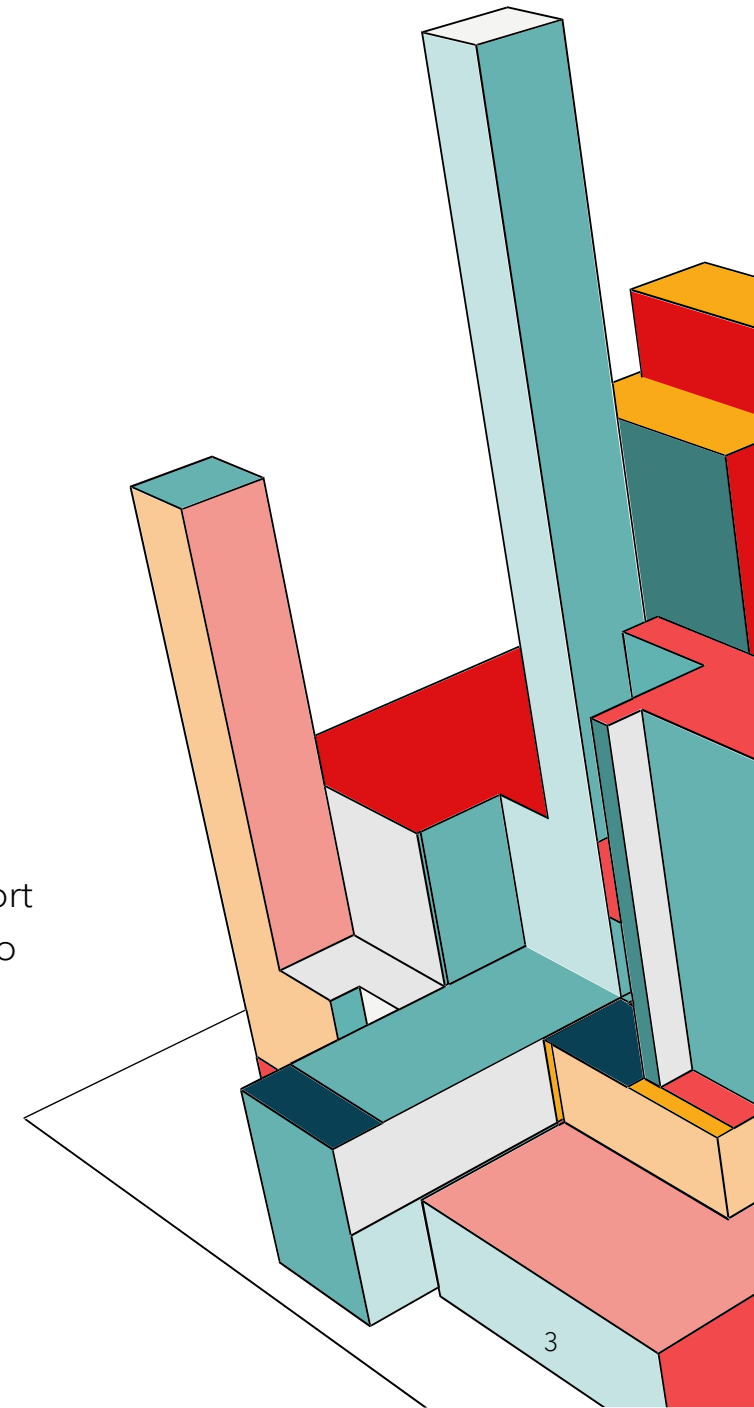
How drawing attention to the senses individually can support wellness and relationships.

EMOTION COACHING

A tool, or parenting style that can help support a child during difficult times, allowing them to build skills and experience positive relationships.

TALKING THERAPIES

How to access support when needed.



THE BIOLOGY OF STRESS

POSITIVE STRESS: This is a normal and essential part of life.

Characterised by brief increases in heart rate and milk elevations in hormone levels. Eg. Leaving for an appointment, getting ready for school. Experiencing positive stress enables normal childhood development.

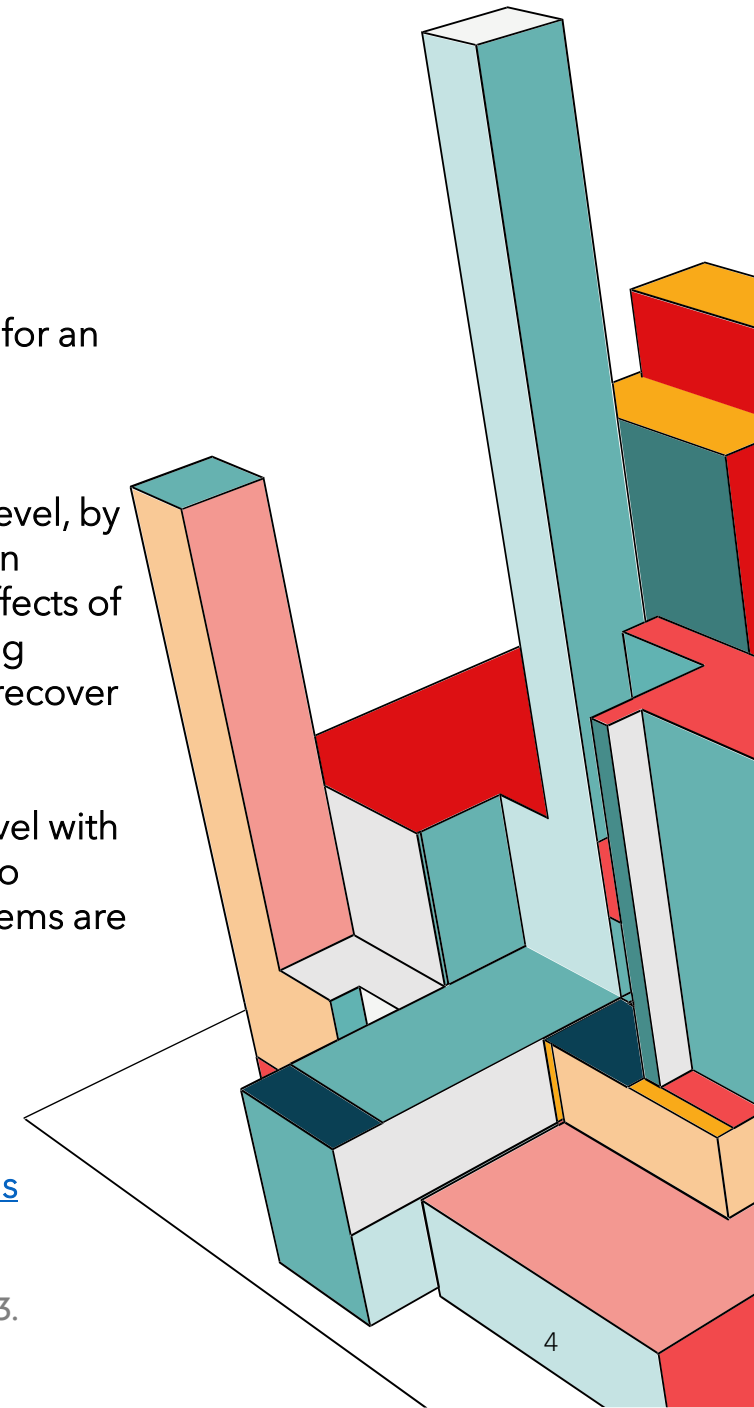
TOLERABLE STRESS: Occurs when the bodys stress response systems are activated at a higher level, by more severe or longer lasting difficulties. Many of us experienced this during the pandemic when relatives were unwell or died, or we lost financial stability. With a tolerable stress response, the effects of the body's stress response is buffered by relationships. Emotion-coaching and emotion-validating interactions with adult caregivers help children to adapt so that the brain and other organs can recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

TOXIC STRESS: This occurs when the body's stress response systems are activated at a higher level with strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity – examples include neglect, abuse, and exposure to violence. Without the buffering of emotion-coaching style relationships, the stress response systems are active at a level that can cause long term physiological changes.

- Stress hormones rise
- The inflammatory phase of the immune system is activated
- Metabolic regulation is affected
- Brain architecture is disrupted (fear circuits, executive function, emotion regulation)
- Molecular turning on and off of genes is affected

In other words – *a toxic stress response changes how cells work together.* [Building Better Brains](#) [Why I am rude - A Poem](#)

Stress undermines healthy development of biological systems, particularly during pregnancy until the age of 3. Genetic predisposition means that we are not all the same in terms of sensitivity to the environment (ND)



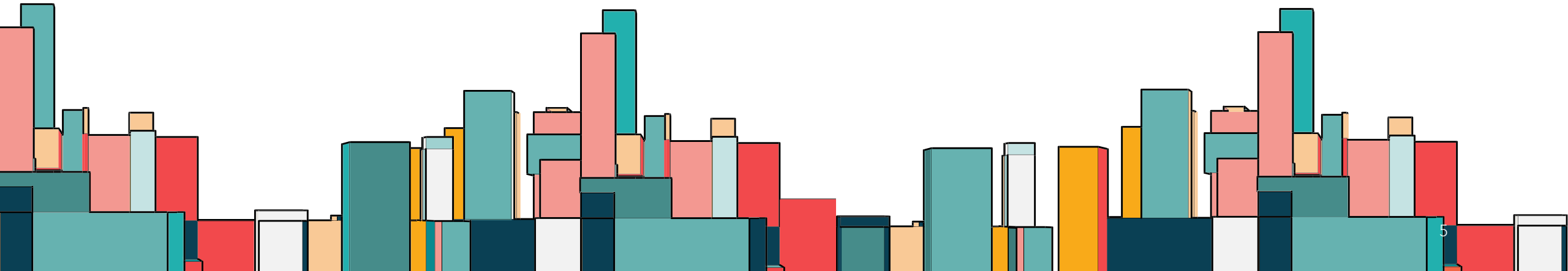
THE HAND MODEL

Forefingers Represent
Upstairs Brain -
(Thinking)



Thumb Represents
Downstairs Brain -
(Emotions)

... .. Making sense of the 'Flipped Lid' [Brilliant Brain, Hand Model - Amy Harper on Vimeo](#)



THE HAND MODEL

GOTTMAN

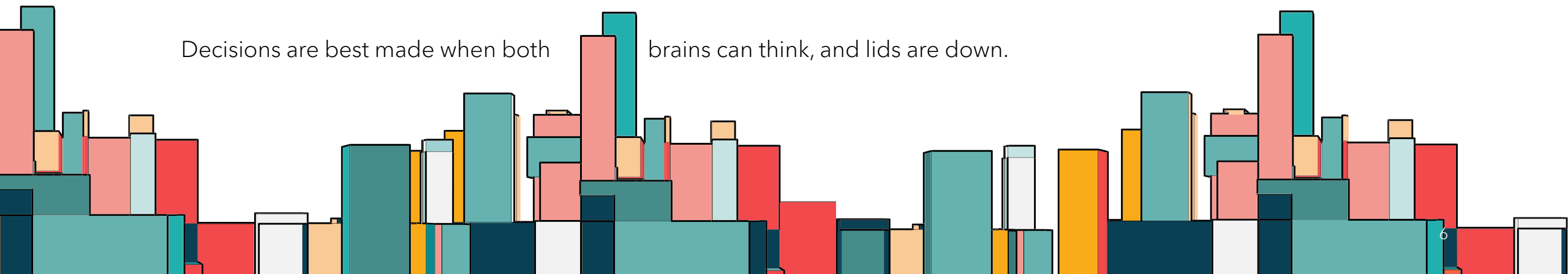
“Much of today’s popular advice ignores the world of emotions. Instead, it relies on child-rearing theories that address the children’s behaviour, but disregard the feelings that underlie that behaviour” (Gottman, 1997)

MIRRORING

This is a social process through which our brains are able to create pathways to aid recognition and replication of emotional states. The process of mirroring allows us to connect and understand one another, and forms part of the explanation for how children are affected by things that are going on with the wider family and the world around them.

If we think of behaviour as part of emotional communication, often a child’s behavioural challenges can be linked with parental wellbeing. They can mirror emotional states, both positive and negative.

Decisions are best made when both brains can think, and lids are down.



EMOTION COACHING

Different Parenting Styles

Emotion Dismissing Style (Don't worry, you'll be fine)

Emotion Disapproving Style (If you hadn't gone out yesterday and you'd done some work, you'd)

Laissez Faire / Permissive (Talks about emotions but doesn't give boundaries or set limits on behaviour)

Emotion Coaching Style: (30%)

Pause.

Breathe.

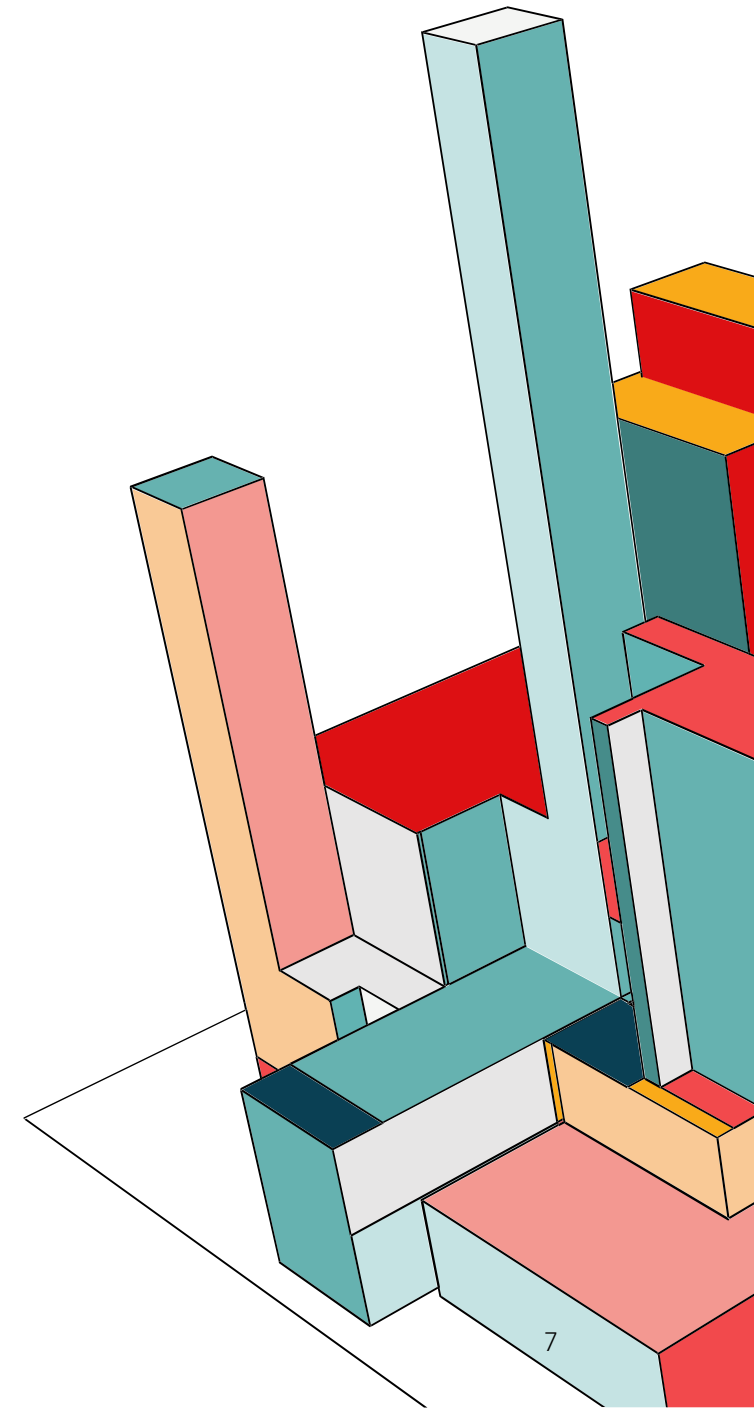
Connect.

Engage with Empathy & Compassion

Problem Solve (with limit setting where necessary)

All Emotions Are OK, But Not All Behaviours Are OK

<https://youtu.be/TzMxrMJBZdQ> - Serve and return interactions.



EMOTION COACHING

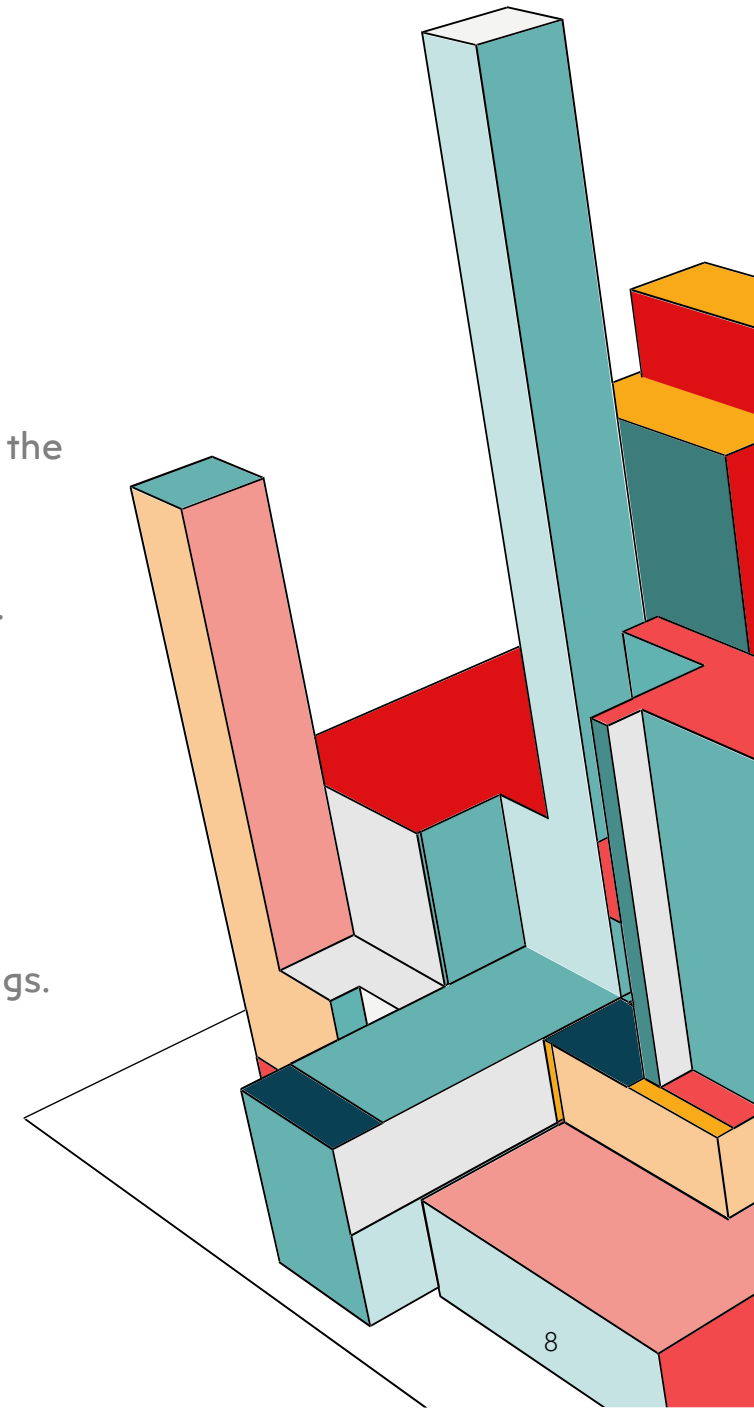
One of the ways the thinking part of the brain supports the brain stem to calm the body is via the Vagus nerve.

The Vagus nerve starts in the brain stem and travels to vital organs, including heart and lungs.

When emotions are accurately labelled, the thinking part of the brain stimulates the vagus nerve.

This is where Siegel's 'Name it to Tame It' comes from.

<https://youtu.be/ojZhktsrDqk> – Shark Music Clip shows the importance of noticing own feelings.



EMOTION COACHING

Emotion coaching validates emotions and feelings.

It starts with a premise that talking about emotions and feelings is good.

This begins with noticing and commenting, not trying to change the emotion or distract.

Boundaries are still important – all emotions can be validated but not all behaviour needs to be.

Emotion coaching aims to connect first, and problem solve later.

Inside Out Clip - <https://youtu.be/kdhjztWMnVw>

EMOTION COACHING

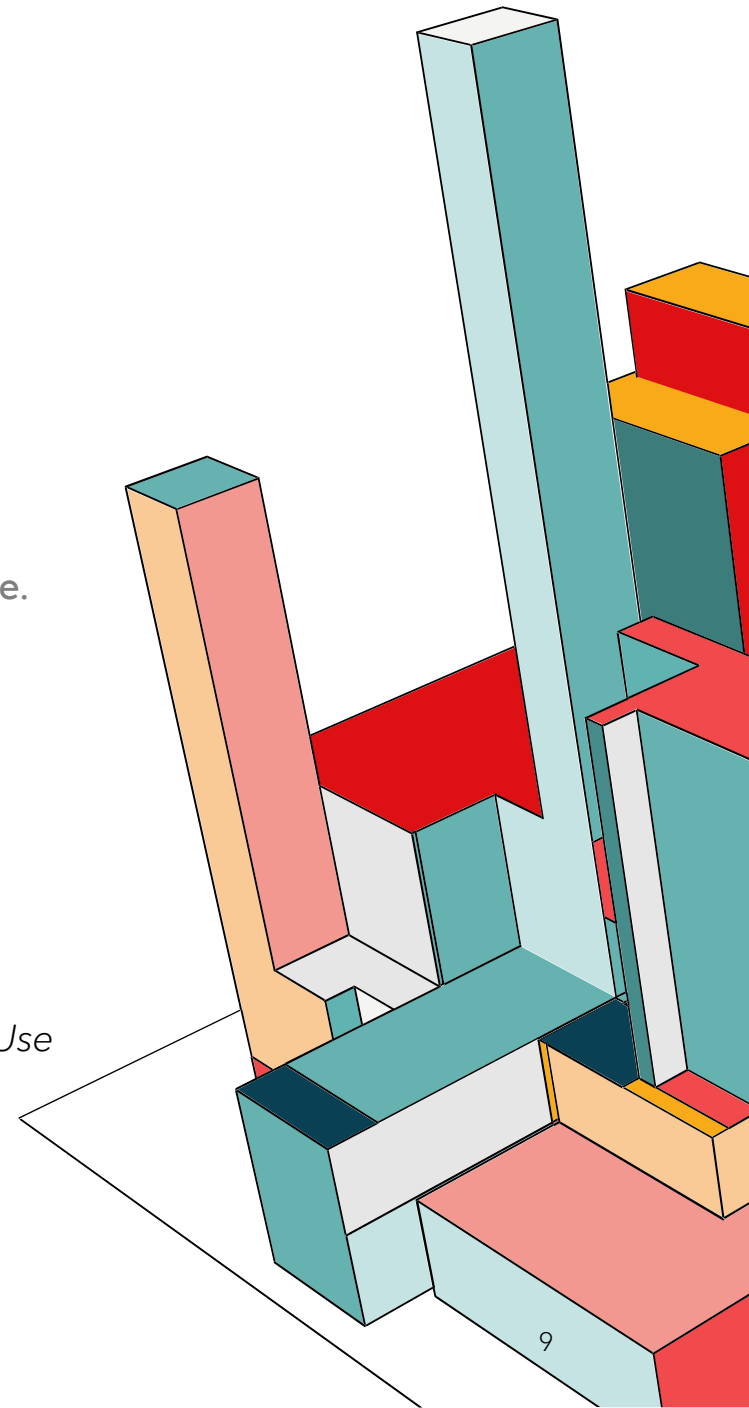
This is a multi-step process – you should all have a copy.

Step 1.

Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt, take on the perspective of the child. Use words to reflect this back to them and help the child/young person to understand the emotion.

Step 2.

Lid is down. Now there is an opportunity for limit setting and problem solving.



EMOTION COACHING

How to process 1. <https://youtu.be/v0hslqIHOpA> 2. <https://youtu.be/gRCvHQOdbME>

Examples of phrases that can be used:

Sounds like you're feeling angry

Something has made you feel sad

Sounds like something is going on

I can see you are...

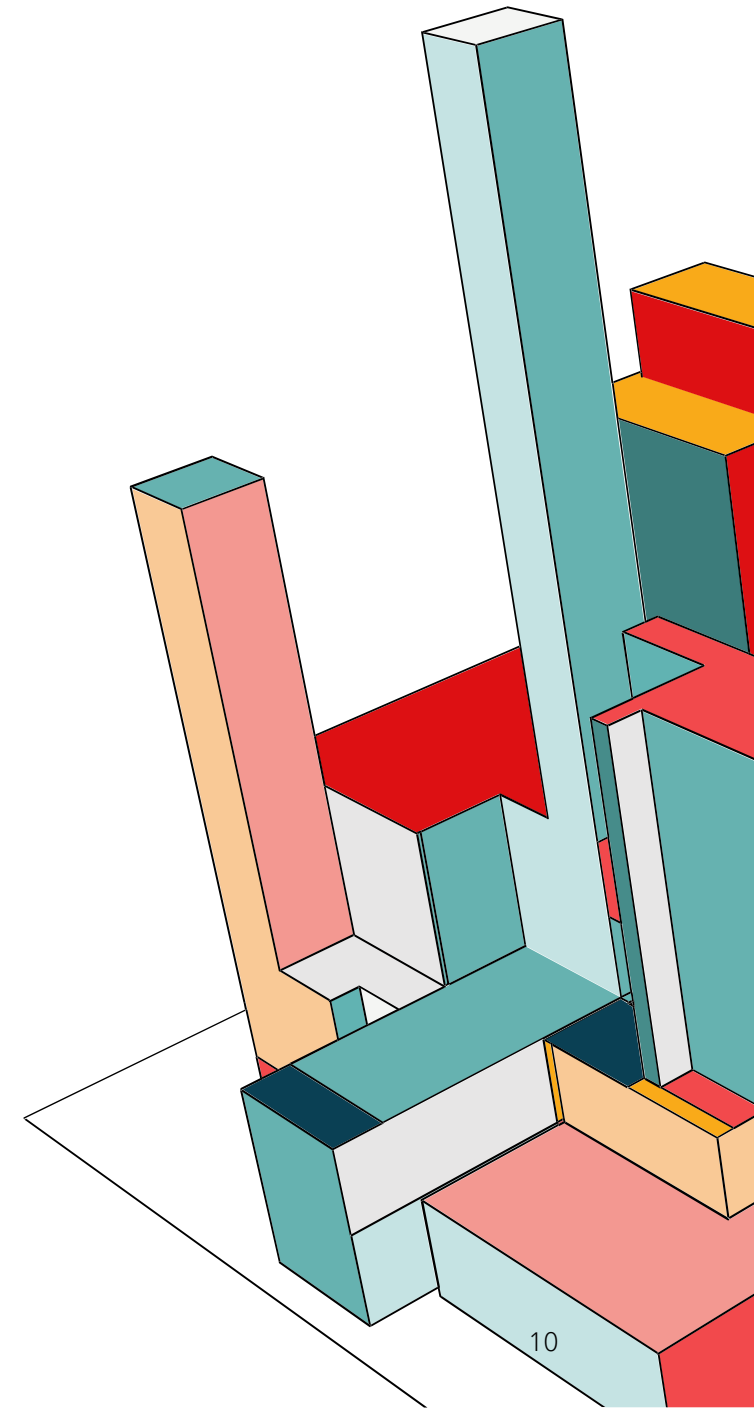
You seem upset to me

It's annoying when somebody takes your toy

That's scary

I get that you are frustrated

Empathy Clip <https://youtu.be/1Ewgu369Jw>



EMOTION COACHING

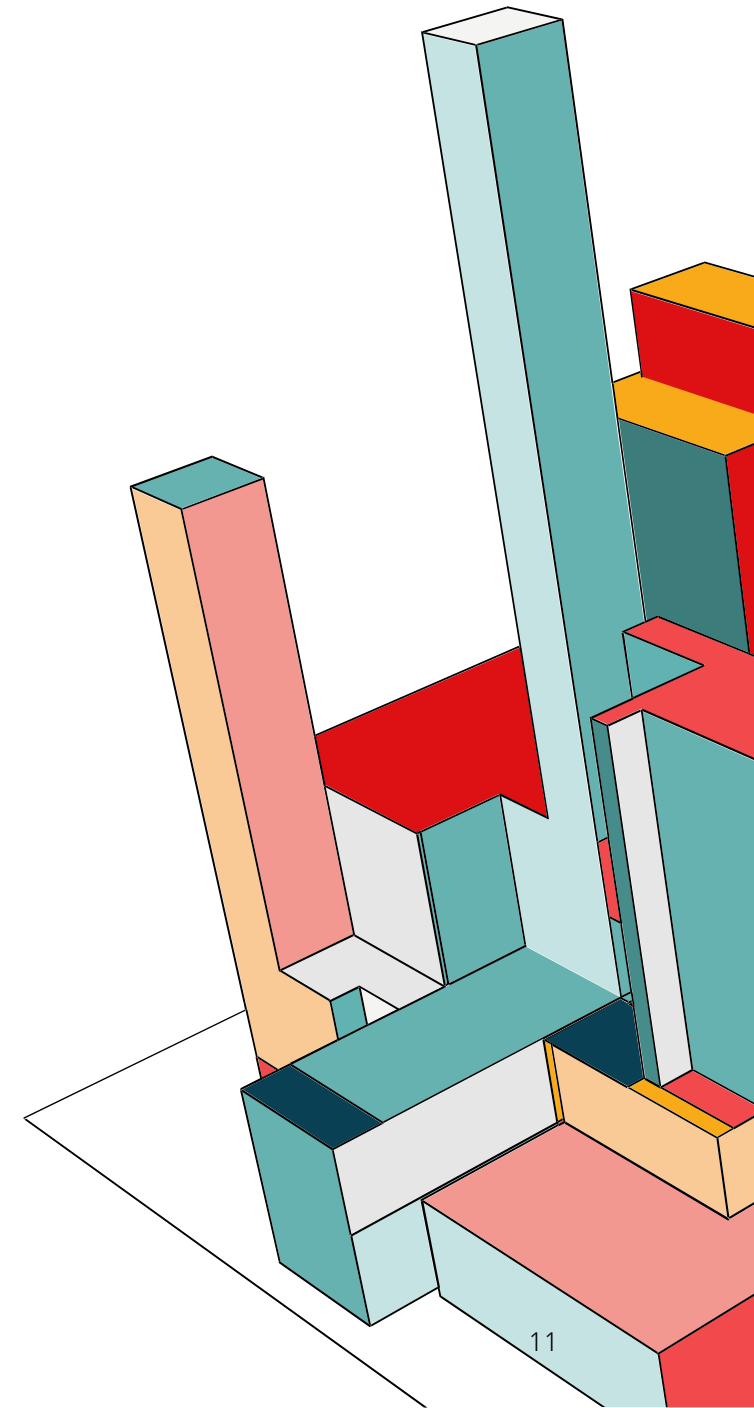
Examples of Problem Solving & Limit Setting:

Can you remember what happened to make you feel like that?

It's OK to feel angry, but it's not OK to hit your sister.

Can you think of a different way to handle frustration next time?

What could you do differently if it happened again?



MINDFUL EXERCISES & ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness helps us to spend more time in our River of Wellbeing.

Mindful Exercise:

Take 5 Breathing, Mindful Walking, Rolling Feet - Touch

Sound - Hearing

It is easier to bring a flapping lid down than one that has flipped.

<https://youtu.be/-YEZnrySrtQ> - Just Breathe Clip

Examples of Mindful Activities:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Colouring
- Building with Lego
- Building with Knex
- Running
- Juggling
- Knitting
- Crochet
- Swimming
- Meditation

THE RIVER OF WELLBEING (SIEGEL)

Think of moments of calm, when you feel happy and your lid is down.

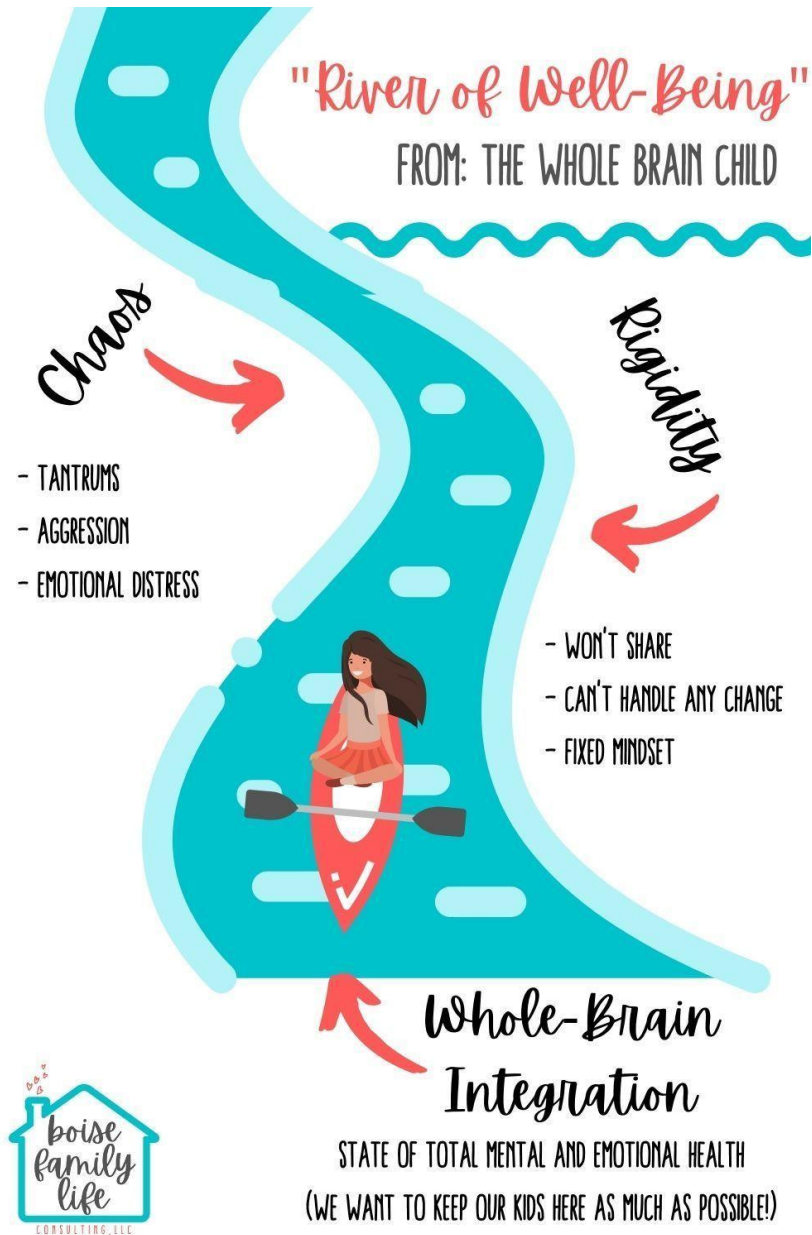
The River of Wellbeing is a sense of floating along, in the flow of life.

Some of us will spend little time in the River and may find ourselves drifting to the Bank of Rigidity or the Bank of Chaos, with a flapping or flipped lid.

Children with Neurodevelopmental differences such as ADHD or autism may be more sensitive to stressors, and emotion-coaching relationships are even more important.

Mindful activities can be really helpful in returning to the flow of the River - spending time under a weighted blanket, rolling on a ball, or bouncing on a trampoline.

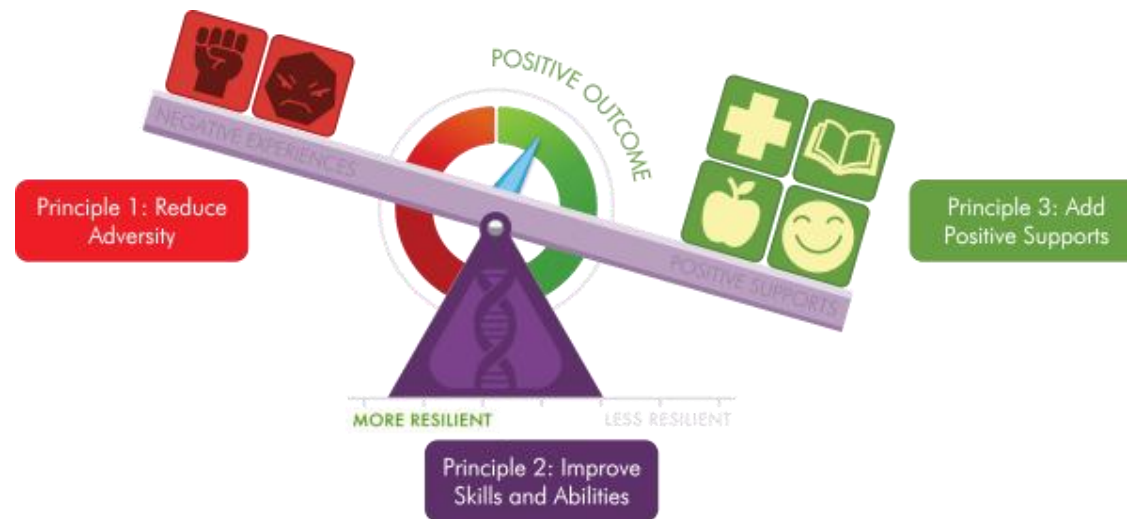
Regular exercise helps our sensory systems to stay balanced.



THE ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS INITIATIVE - RESILIENCE SCALE

Negative Experiences &
Stressors:

Family separation
Domestic violence
Bereavement
Financial difficulties
Job instability
Mental health difficulties



Positive Supports:

Supportive relationships
Healthy diet
Getting enough sleep
Regular exercise
Socialising
Belonging to groups

[V1. Brains Journey To Resilience](#)

TALKING THERAPIES

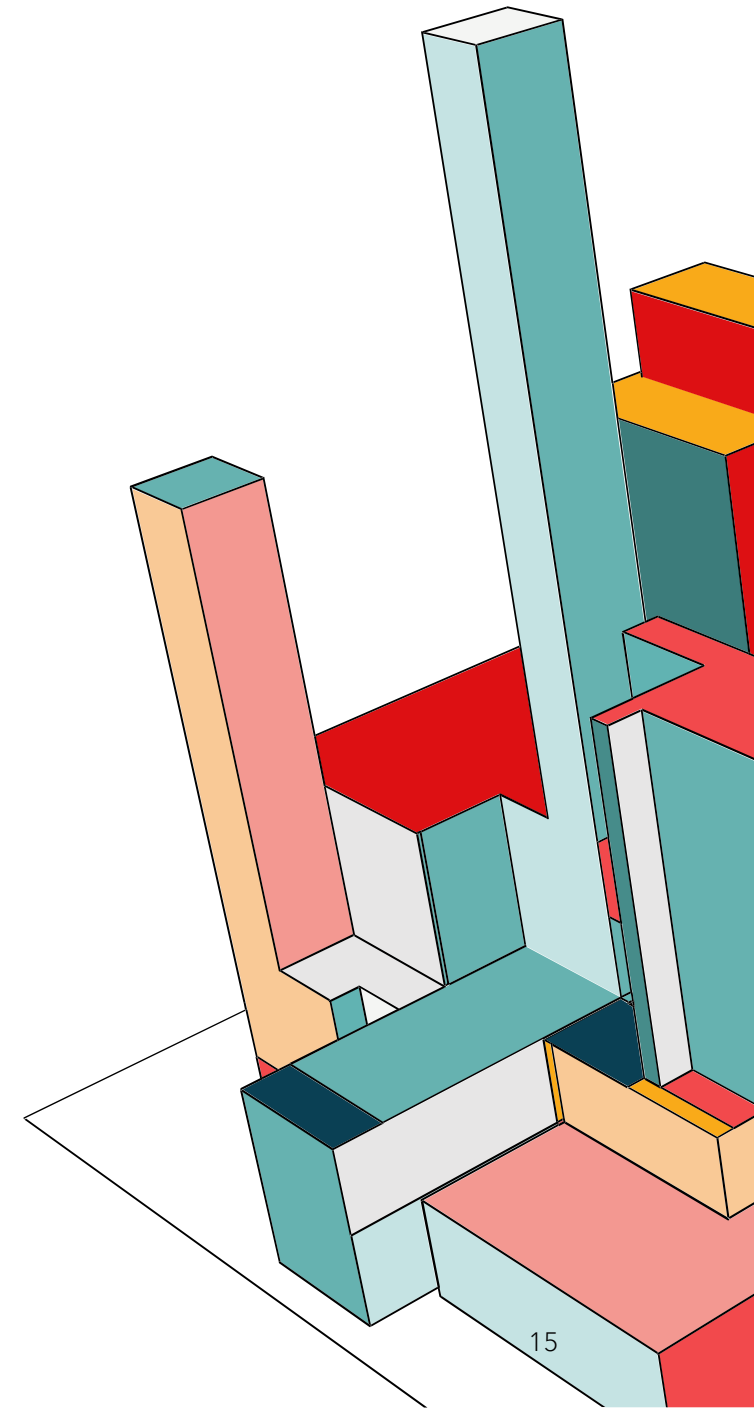
Talking therapies are for everyone, and it is important that we challenge any stigma so that people are comfortable accessing support when it is needed.

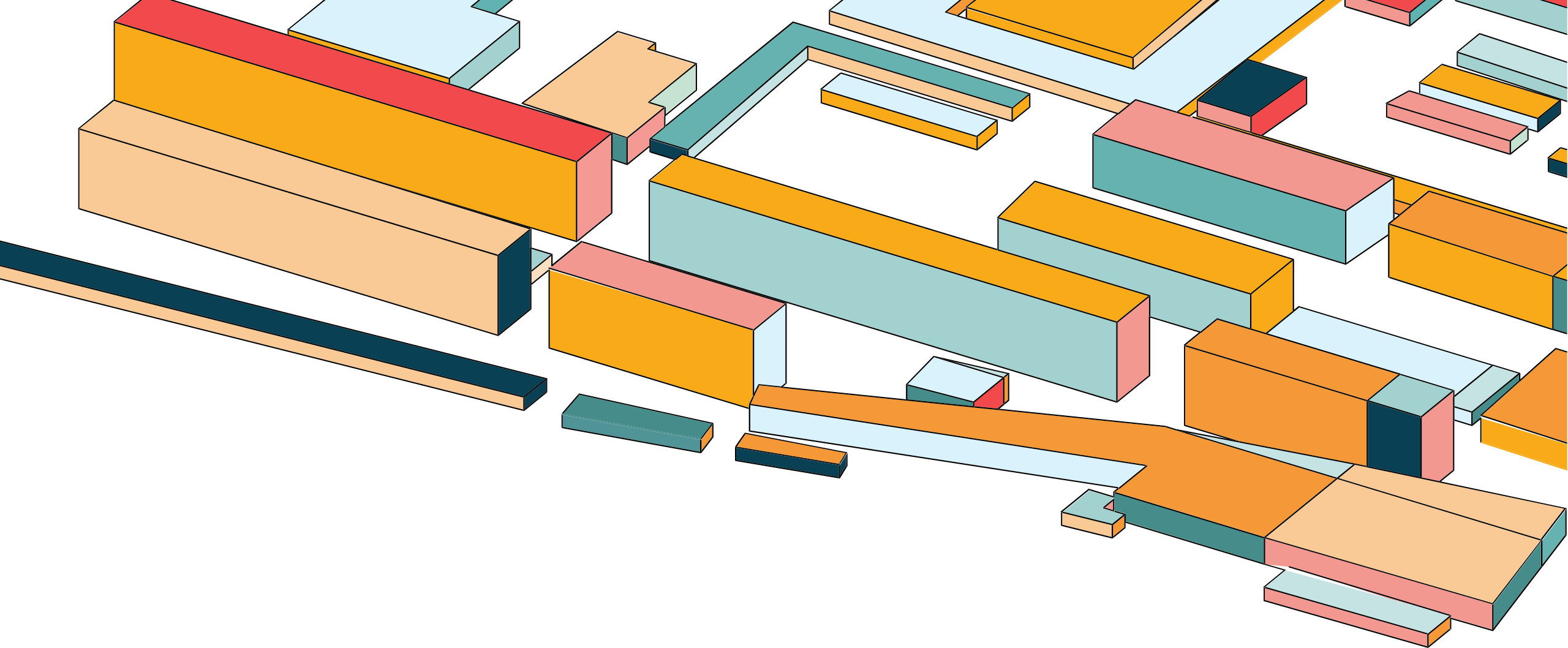
You can self-refer and do not need to visit a GP in order to access talking therapies in Nottinghamshire:

<https://youtu.be/SGoCYriqzVg>

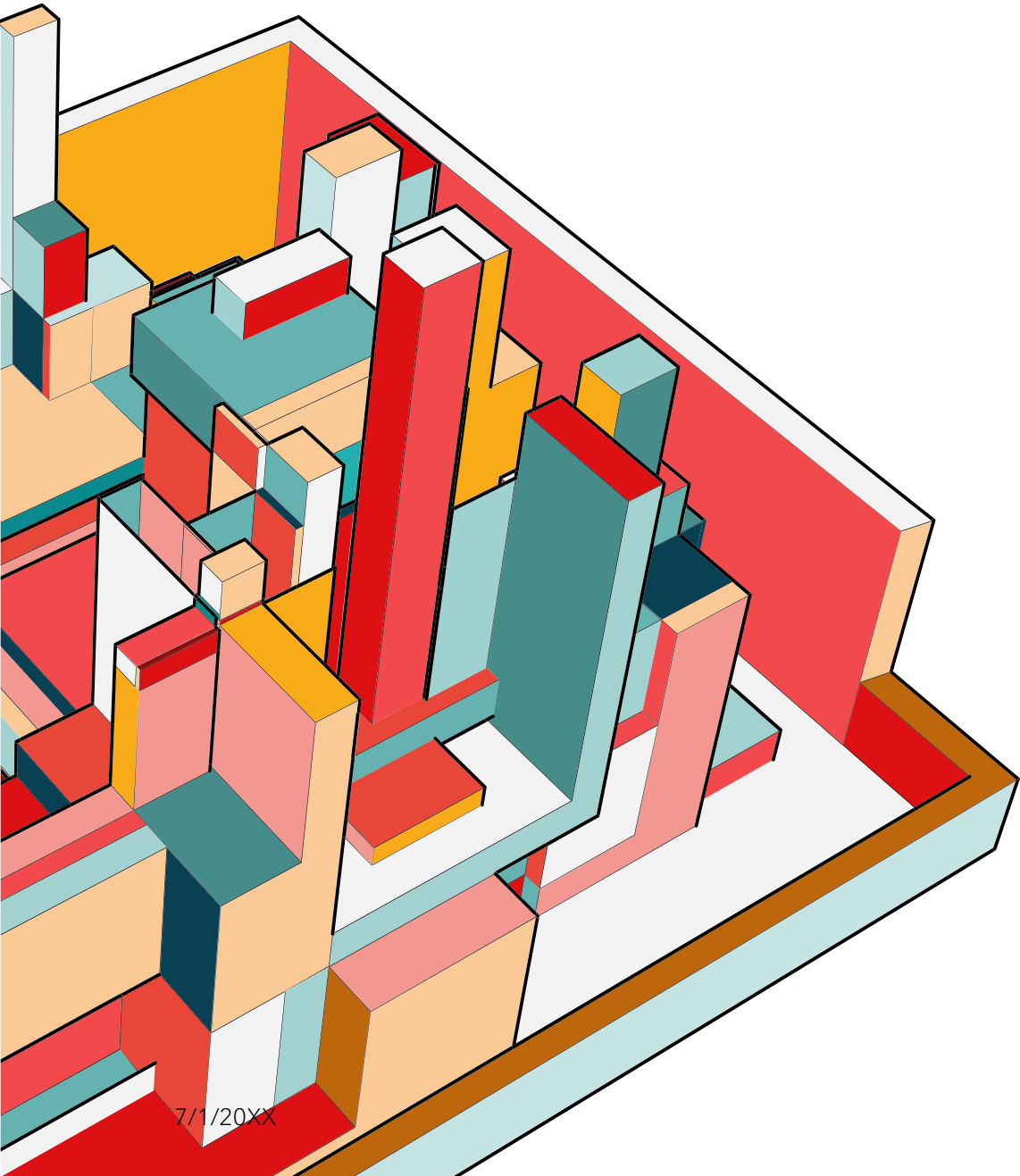
<https://notts-talk.co.uk/>

Looking after your own mental health and wellbeing reduces stress within a family unit and has a positive impact on children.





ANY QUESTIONS?



SUMMARY

Relationships are key to a child's development.

As parents and caregivers, you are the experts in your child and uniquely placed to understand *who* and *how* they are.

By tuning in first to yourself as the parent, and in turn within the parent-child relationship, there is a positive impact on your child.

Positive changes within relationships can show up in a child's behaviour, and ability to learn.

Don't underestimate the difference that can be made by strengthening parent-child relationship.