



# CALM MINDS

Helping Children to Build Confidence,  
Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing



PARENTING HAS CHANGED  
CHILDREN HAVE CHANGED  
THE WORLD HAS CHANGED



Our Children's world is **different**.....



Not better



Not worse



Just different



# Why Are So Many Children Struggling?

Increasing numbers of children struggling with:



Anxiety



Perfectionism



Friendships Difficulties



Emotional Overwhelm



School Avoidance



Low Frustration Tolerance



Reduced Confidence





# CHILDHOOD HAS CHANGED



## MANY CHILDREN NOW HAVE:

- more information
- more stimulation
- more organised activities
- more adult supervision
- more opportunities



## BUT OFTEN LESS:

- free play
- boredom
- independence
- healthy risk taking
- unstructured problem solving



Let's help children thrive in today's world  
with what they need most. ♥



# EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Emotional regulation is the ability to **understand, manage and respond** to our emotions in helpful ways.

## EMOTIONAL REGULATION IS...



Not about **never** feeling big emotions



It's about **pausing** before reacting



It builds **skills** in the brain over time



It helps children **cope, connect** and make **better choices**

## IT HELPS CHILDREN TO:



Handle stress and frustration



Build stronger relationships



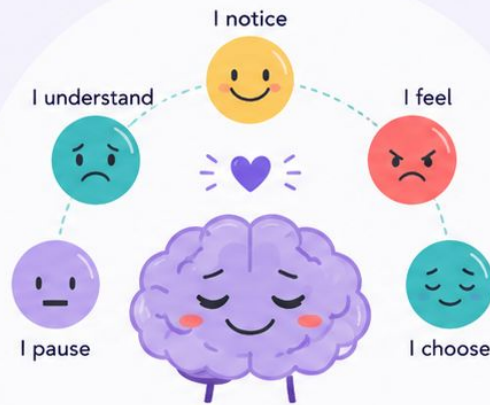
Stay focused and achieve goals



Adapt to change



Feel more confident and in control



**Name it. Feel it.**  
**Manage it. Move forward.**



Big emotions are **normal**. Helping children learn to manage them is **powerful**.



# CALM MINDS FRAMEWORK



C



A



L



M





# Connection Comes First

Positive relationships create psychological safety. 

Before children  
can think...



they need to  
feel safe.



I see you.



I hear you.



I understand you.



Let's work  
through this  
together.

# FEELINGS



ANGRY



HAPPY



AFRAID



SURPRISED



SAD



SCARED

## Emotion Coaching



**For Children:**

Supports  
emotional regulation



**For Parents:**

Reduces power  
struggles & guilt



When we help children with their emotions,  
we help them with **life.** ♥



# BIG EMOTIONS



**Small events**  
can feel enormous  
to children



**Feelings**  
are temporary



**Behaviour**  
needs guidance



Instead of asking,

**“Why are you  
crying?”**



Try saying,

**“You’re having a  
really hard time”**



Children often don’t need an explanation,  
**they need someone calm** enough to sit  
beside them while the feeling passes.



# EMOTION COACHING



How do we deal with our children when their emotions run high?

Children have reasons for their emotions – whether they can articulate them or not.

## Empathy – the foundation



### Listen

Give your full attention.



### Understand

Show you get what they're feeling.



### Try and help

Work together to find a way forward.



### Problem solve

Support them to learn and grow.



When children feel heard and understood,  
**they feel safe.**  
When they feel safe,  
**they can grow.**

# 5

## The Five Key Elements

1



**Be aware** of your child's emotions

2



**Recognising** the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching

3



**Listening** empathetically and validating your child's feelings

4



**Help** your child to verbally label emotions

5



**Set limits** while helping your child problem solve





# Emotion Coaching – What to Say

Simple words that help children feel understood and learn to manage big feelings.



1



## Notice

Tune in and notice.



“I can see something is up.”

2



## Name

Help them name the feeling.



“It sounds like you feel... (angry/worried/sad).”

3



## Validate

Let them know their feelings make sense.



“It makes sense you feel that way.”

4



## Set limits

Set limits while teaching what's okay.



“It's okay to feel angry.  
It's not okay to hit.”

5



## Problem solve

Help them find solutions.



“What might help you feel better?”  
Let's think of an idea together.”



The goal: **Connection first, then coaching.** Stay calm, be curious and believe in their ability to grow.





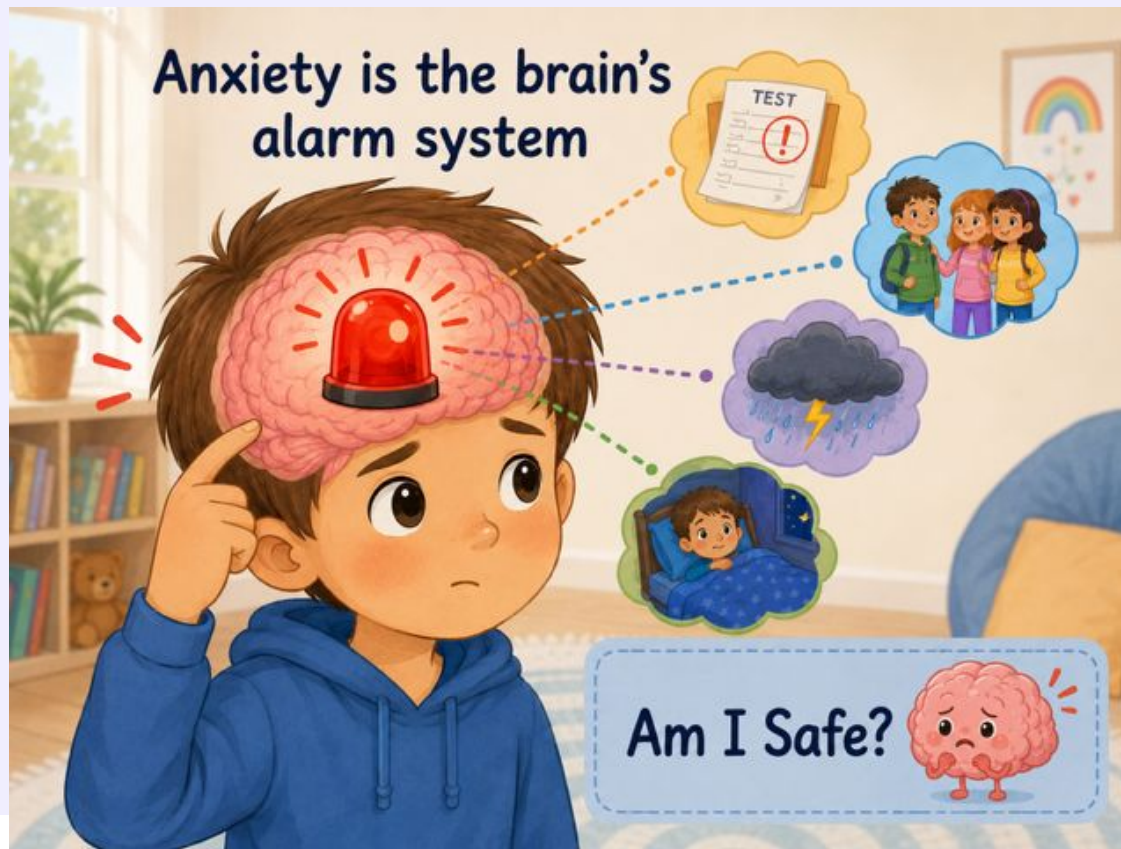
When I feel safe,  
calm and connected,  
my upstairs brain  
is online. I can  
think, learn and  
make good  
choices.

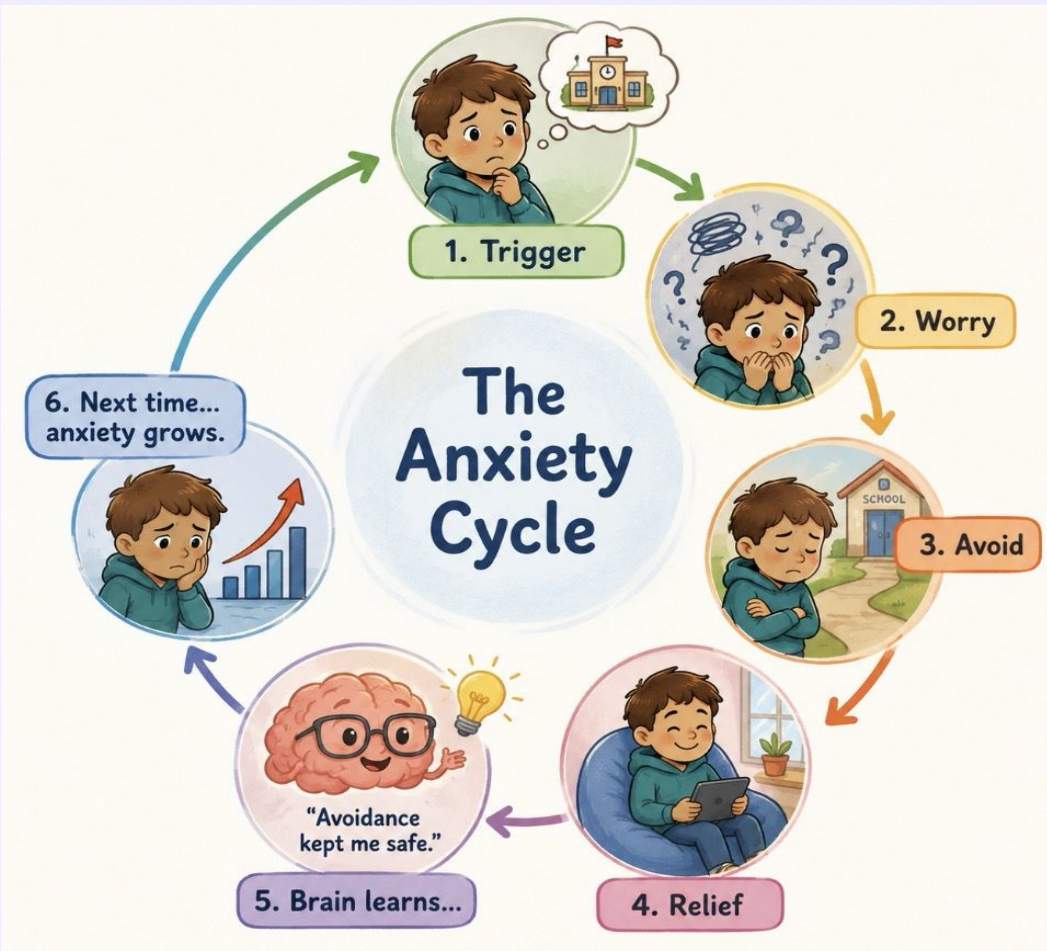
When I feel  
afraid, stressed,  
overwhelmed or  
unsafe, my  
downstairs brain  
takes over to  
keep me safe.

# The Upstairs Downstairs Model of the Brain



# UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY







# CONNECT

The foundation for calm and learning

Connection doesn't make difficult feelings disappear.  
It makes children feel safe enough to manage them.

## WHEN CHILDREN FEEL EMOTIONALLY SAFE:



Their brain's alarm system begins to settle.



Their thinking brain comes back online.



They become more able to listen, learn and solve problems.



Confidence grows through feeling understood—not rescued.



"Connection is the bridge between emotion and learning."



Before we teach...



Before we solve...



Before we correct...

## We connect.

Children don't need us to remove every storm. They need to know they're not facing it alone.



# CALM MINDS FRAMEWORK

C



**CONNECT**

**BEFORE YOU  
CORRECT**

Connection is the  
foundation for  
calm and learning.

A



**ALLOW**

**MANAGEABLE  
STRUGGLE**

Struggle builds  
resilience and  
problem-solving.

L



M



FOUR SIMPLE STEPS. POWERFUL IMPACT. CALMER MINDS. STRONGER FUTURES.







# CONFIDENCE

## COMES AFTER COURAGE



The same is true emotionally



- Children don't become brave by talking about bravery



- They become brave by discovering  
"I felt scared.....and I still managed"



- That experience changes the brain



Every small  
act of courage  
builds lasting  
confidence.



# The Confidence Equation



Challenge

+



Support

=

Confidence



Challenge

-



Support

=

Overwhelm



Support

-



Challenge

=

Dependence



The goal is to find the right balance of challenge and support for your child to grow confident, capable and resilient.

Challenge

Support



# The Confidence-Resilience Cycle

Confidence grows because children experience resilience.



# DISTRESS ISN'T THE SAME AS DANGER



being disappointed



being bored



waiting



losing



not getting invited



making mistakes

These are **painful experiences** .....  
but they are also **human experiences**





How big is the problem?



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



How big is my reaction?



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



“

**If we remove every  
uncomfortable feeling.....  
we accidentally remove many of  
the opportunities children have  
to discover how capable they are**





Oh my gosh,  
I'm flying!

Sometimes  
falling flat on  
your face  
allows you to  
see things  
from a totally  
different  
perspective

# CALM MINDS

## FRAMEWORK

C



### CONNECT

**BEFORE YOU  
CORRECT**

Connection is the  
foundation for  
calm and learning.

A



### ALLOW

**MANAGEABLE  
STRUGGLE**

Struggle builds  
resilience and  
problem-solving.

L



### LET THEM LEAD

**GIVE THEM SPACE  
TO FIND THEIR WAY**

When they lead,  
they build confidence  
and independence.



♥ FOUR SIMPLE STEPS. POWERFUL IMPACT. CALMER MINDS. STRONGER FUTURES. ✨



# Every Challenge is an Opportunity



With every challenge, ask one question... What am I teaching?



**When we rescue immediately,** children may learn that someone else can solve this.



**When we shame,** children may learn that big feelings aren't safe.



**When we stay calm,** hard feelings pass.



**When we believe in them,** children begin believing in themselves.



**Everyday parenting matters.**



The way we respond today shapes the **confidence**, **resilience** and **emotional wellbeing** of tomorrow.



# Navigating Parenting in a Digital World



**Last of the low tech childhood**  
but first of the high tech parents



**Technology winning the prize**  
for trickiest parenting challenge



Let's raise **connected, confident kids** in a distracted world. ☺



Technology: A balanced conversation



**TECHNOLOGY ISN'T GOOD OR BAD**

**≡ IT'S POWERFUL ≡**



**“HOW DO WE HELP CHILDREN TO USE TECHNOLOGY  
WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY USING THEM?”**





# CALM MINDS

## FRAMEWORK



C

A

L

M



### CONNECT

**BEFORE YOU  
CORRECT**

Connection is the  
foundation for  
calm and learning.



### ALLOW

**MANAGEABLE  
STRUGGLE**

Struggle builds  
resilience and  
problem-solving.



### LET THEM LEAD

**GIVE THEM SPACE  
TO FIND THEIR WAY**

When they lead,  
they build confidence  
and independence.



### MODEL CALM

**YOUR CALM TEACHES  
THEIR CALM**

Regulate yourself  
to help them  
regulate themselves.



FOUR SIMPLE STEPS. POWERFUL IMPACT. CALMER MINDS. STRONGER FUTURES.



# MODEL CALM

*Your calm  
becomes  
their calm*



Children borrow our calm  
before they build their own.

Your child's big emotions can't always be fixed.  
But your calm can help them feel safe,  
settle down and get through it.



Slow your  
breathing



Lower your  
voice



Stay emotionally  
available



Regulate  
yourself first

*Your calm today helps a stronger tomorrow*



When big feelings take over, connection comes first.

# CO-REGULATION



Calm is contagious.  
They borrow our calm until  
they build their own.



## WHAT CO-REGULATION LOOKS LIKE



**Calm presence** – stay close, steady and available.



**Attuned listening** – listen with empathy, not to fix.



**Validate feelings** – name it to tame it.



**Model regulation** – slow your breath, soften your voice, relax your body.



**Offer connection** – a look, a touch, a word: “I’m here with you.”

## WHY IT MATTERS



Helps settle the brain's alarm system



Builds the pathways for self-regulation



Strengthens trust and connection



Sets the stage for learning and problem solving

## REMEMBER

We don't give children calm.  
We share it.  
That's how they learn  
to find it within.



Connection is the bridge between emotion and learning.





# Co-Regulation

Our calm helps their calm. 



## Examples of What to Do



### Stay close

Your presence helps them feel safe.

*"I'm right here with you."*



### Use a calm voice

Lower your voice and speak slowly.

*"Take a deep breath with me."*



### Match and soothe

Acknowledge their feeling and offer comfort.

*"It's okay to feel this way."*



### Simplify and reassure

Use simple, gentle words to reduce overwhelm.

*"You're safe. We've got this."*



### Support them to settle

Help their body calm before problem solving.

*"Let's get calm first, then we can think."*



Co-regulation builds connection, safety and self-regulation.





# CHILDREN SPELL LOVE

T-I-M-E



What do you think children will remember most about their childhood?



Did it feel **safe**?



Did it feel **calm**?



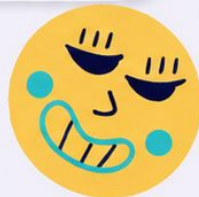
Did they feel **listened to**?



Did they know they **mattered**?



Parenting happens in the **ordinary moments**, not the perfect ones. 





Children don't need **perfect** parents.



They need **calm, connected** adults  
who keep showing up.



**Progress**, not perfection.  
**Connection**, not control.



The power of repair over perfection.



**We are not raising children for today,**  
**but we are raising adults *for tomorrow.***



## Calm Your Body

- ♥ Belly breathing  
("smell the flower, blow out the candle")
- ♥ Box breathing  
(4 in – 4 hold – 4 out – 4 hold)
- ♥ Slow "dragon breaths"
- ♥ Progressive muscle relaxation  
(squeeze and release)



## Move Your Body

- ♥ Go for a walk
- ♥ Jump on a trampoline
- ♥ Animal walks  
(bear, crab, frog)
- ♥ Stretch or do yoga
- ♥ Shake your whole body  
for 30 seconds



## Calm Your Thoughts

- ♥ Name the feeling  
("I'm feeling worried.")
- ♥ Remind yourself:  
"This feeling will pass."
- ♥ Ask: "Am I safe?"
- ♥ Use coping statements:
  - "I can do hard things."
  - "One step at a time."
  - "I've got through this before."



## Connect

- ♥ Talk to a trusted adult
- ♥ Ask for a hug
- ♥ Sit quietly with someone
- ♥ Hold a favourite comfort item



## Reset Your Senses

- ♥ Drink cold water
- ♥ Listen to calming music
- ♥ Look out the window
- ♥ Smell something pleasant
- ♥ Hold something soft or weighted



## Refocus

- ♥ Draw or colour
- ♥ Read
- ♥ Build Lego
- ♥ Do a puzzle
- ♥ Listen to an audiobook
- ♥ Play with playdough





# CALM MINDSet



C

I see you  
I hear you  
I understand you



A

I believe in you.  
You can do  
hard things.



L

I trust you.  
I won't take over.  
we can learn  
together.



M

I'll be the calm  
you can borrow.





# Scenario: "I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL"



- “My tummy hurts”
- “I don’t want to go”
- “Everyone hates me”
- “I don’t want to do the test”



Our instinct is often one of **two extremes**.



**Push harder** or **remove the problem**.



Our goal isn't to eliminate every hard feeling, it's to help our children feel safe, supported and capable.





## CONNECT

"I see you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "It's really hard when going to school feels so worrying."
- "It makes sense that you feel like this today."
- "I'm here and I'm listening."



## ALLOW

"I believe in you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "We can take this one step at a time."
- "You can do hard things, even when it's tough."
- "We'll keep trying together."



## LET THEM LEAD

"You've got this.  
I'm beside you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "What feels like the smallest next step for you today?"
- "What would help you feel a little more ready?"
- "You get to decide what you need right now."



## MODEL CALM

"I'll be the calm  
you can borrow."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "Let's take a slow breath together."
- "I'm staying calm, and I'm here with you."
- "We'll get through this together."



When we use CALM, we help our child feel **safe**, build **confidence** and take **small steps** forward — even on the hard days.



# Scenario: FRIENDSHIP PROBLEMS

“

- “She won’t play with me”
- “They’re excluding me”
- “My best friend has a new best friends”



As parents, our hearts break.  
**We immediately want to solve it.**



Become the **friendship coach**.



Build a **problem solver**.



Our goal isn’t to prevent every hurt,  
it’s to help our children grow through them.





## CONNECT

"I see you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "That sounds really hurtful."
- "I can see why you're feeling upset."
- "Thank you for telling me."



## ALLOW

"I believe in you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "We'll take it one small step at a time."
- "You can handle more than you think."
- "It's okay to find things hard."



## LET THEM LEAD

"You've got this.  
I'm beside you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "What do you think you could do?"
- "I'm here with you while you decide."
- "I trust you to figure this out."



## MODEL CALM

"I'll be the calm  
you can borrow."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "Let's take a deep breath together."
- "I'm going to stay calm, and we'll get through this together."
- "It's okay to feel big feelings. I've got you."



Our calm, consistent support helps children build **confidence**, **solve problems** and **feel safe** enough to try — even when it's hard.





# Scenario: Homework Battles



Homework challenges are about:

- Executive functioning
- Attention
- Perfectionism
- Fatigue
- Organisation
- Motivation
- Relationships



Ask:

**“What’s making this hard?”**

- ✓ “I don’t understand”
- ✓ “I’m scared of getting it wrong”
- ✓ “I’ve had to concentrate all day”



Our goal isn’t to make homework perfect,  
it’s to help our children **build skills and confidence.**





## CONNECT

"I see you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "That looks really frustrating."
- "I can see why this is hard for you."
- "Thank you for telling me how you feel."



## ALLOW

"I believe in you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "We can take this one step at a time."
- "You can do hard things."
- "It's okay to make mistakes."



## LET THEM LEAD

"You've got this.  
I'm beside you."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "What do you think would help you right now?"
- "What's your plan for this?"
- "I'm here if you need me."



## MODEL CALM

"I'll be the calm  
you can borrow."



### PARENT RESPONSES

- "Let's take a deep breath together."
- "I'm staying calm, and we'll work through this."
- "We'll get through this together."



Our goal isn't to make homework perfect,  
it's to help our children **build skills and confidence.**



# POOCH

## A simple problem solving plan



Take a  
breath.  
Think it  
through.

P

Problem



What is the problem?  
Be clear about what  
happened.



O

Options



Think of some options.  
What could you do?



O

Outcomes



What could happen with each  
option? Think about the good  
and not-so-good.



C

Choose



Pick the best option.  
What will you do?



H

How did it go?



Reflect on how it went.  
What went well?  
What could you do differently?



Use POOCH to stay calm, think clearly and make good choices.





# CALM MINDS

## FRAMEWORK



C

A

L

M



### CONNECT

**BEFORE YOU  
CORRECT**

Connection is the  
foundation for  
calm and learning.



### ALLOW

**MANAGEABLE  
STRUGGLE**

Struggle builds  
resilience and  
problem-solving.



### LET THEM LEAD

**GIVE THEM SPACE  
TO FIND THEIR WAY**

When they lead,  
they build confidence  
and independence.



### MODEL CALM

**YOUR CALM TEACHES  
THEIR CALM**

Regulate yourself  
to help them  
regulate themselves.



FOUR SIMPLE STEPS. POWERFUL IMPACT. CALMER MINDS. STRONGER FUTURES.





**Tracy contact:** [tracy.bentin@hsthornburyeast.catholic.edu.au](mailto:tracy.bentin@hsthornburyeast.catholic.edu.au)

