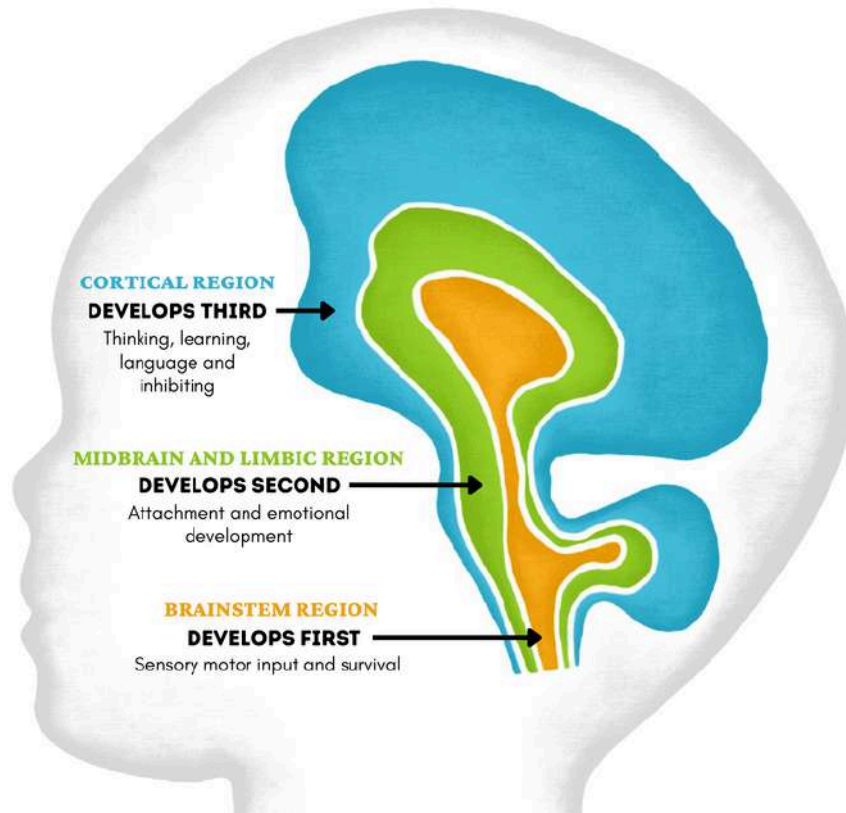


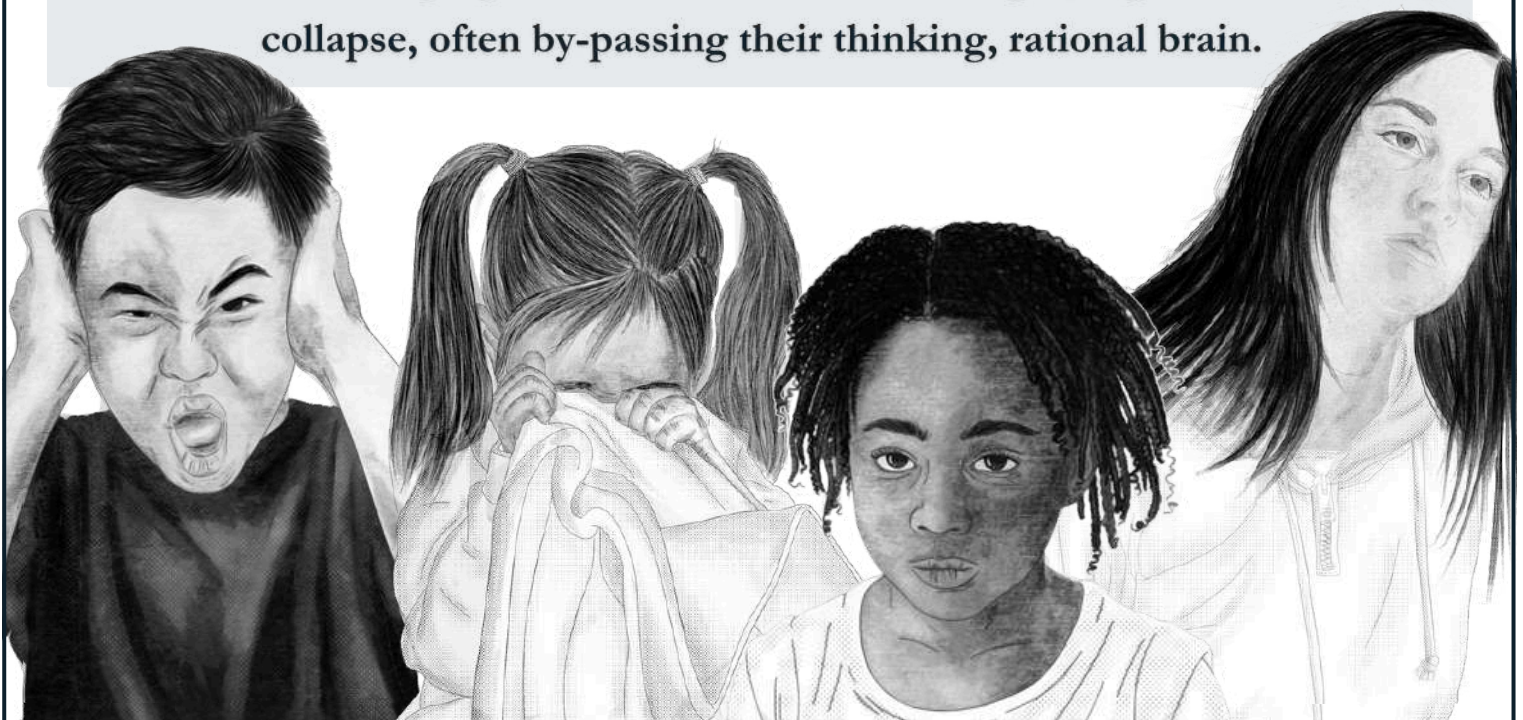
BRAINSTEM SOOTHERS

Helping a child's brain and body to learn that they are safe.



Children's brains develop and organise from bottom to top, with the lower parts of the brain (brainstem aka "survival brain") fully developing earliest, and the cortical areas (thinking brain) fully developing much later.

Children who have suffered early trauma and loss have their development traumatised. They react to the world around them from their very sensitive brainstem, swinging between survival states of fight, flight, freeze and collapse, often by-passing their thinking, rational brain.



A psychiatrist, Dr Bruce Perry, has developed the 'Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics', which is a framework that helps us to know how to help children who have suffered early trauma and loss.

One of the most helpful ways to help children reacting from their 'survival brain' move into their more regulated 'thinking brain', is to enrich their daily routine with patterned, repetitive, rhythmic brainstem soothing activity.



BRAINSTEM REGULATING ACTIVITIES NEED TO BE:

- Relational (offered within a safe relationship)
- Relevant (developmentally-matched to the child rather than matched to their actual age)
- Repetitive (patterned)
- Rewarding (pleasurable)
- Rhythmic (resonant with neural patterns)
- Respectful (of the child and family)



Creating a therapeutic web of safe relationships around the child together with regular brainstem soothing activities can, over time, help a child's brain and body to learn that they are safe.

On the following pages you will find cards to use in school and/or home.



These cards share brainstem soothing activities which can be offered across home and school, with the "6R's" principles in mind.

The best way to use these activities is to weave them into the child's daily routine so that they have them little and often, every day. Many of them can be offered as part of a whole-class activity. We have also included blanks so you can add your own ideas.

Stay curious and hold in mind the qualities in the 6R's, not all activities will suit all children, be flexible and adapt as you discover what the child finds helpful. Remember, supporting the brain to heal takes a very long time and offering consistent and safe relational support alongside these daily activities is essential.

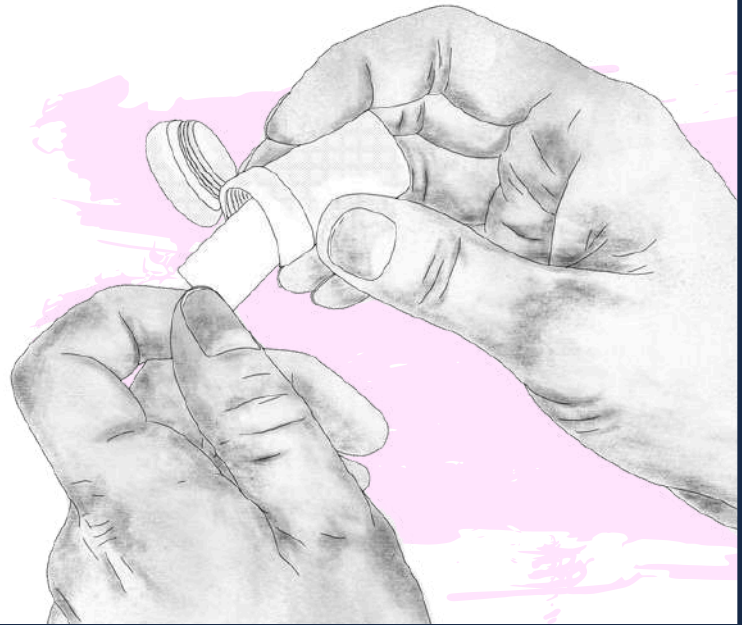


WALKING



Walk in
nature

Geocaching



WALKING

WALKING



Walk
and
learn

WALKING



Nature
scavenger hunt

WALKING



Take a walk before your next task or lesson

Walk and listen



WALKING

WALKING



Walk the dog

DANCING

Dance to
music



DANCING

Dance
lessons



DANCING



DANCING

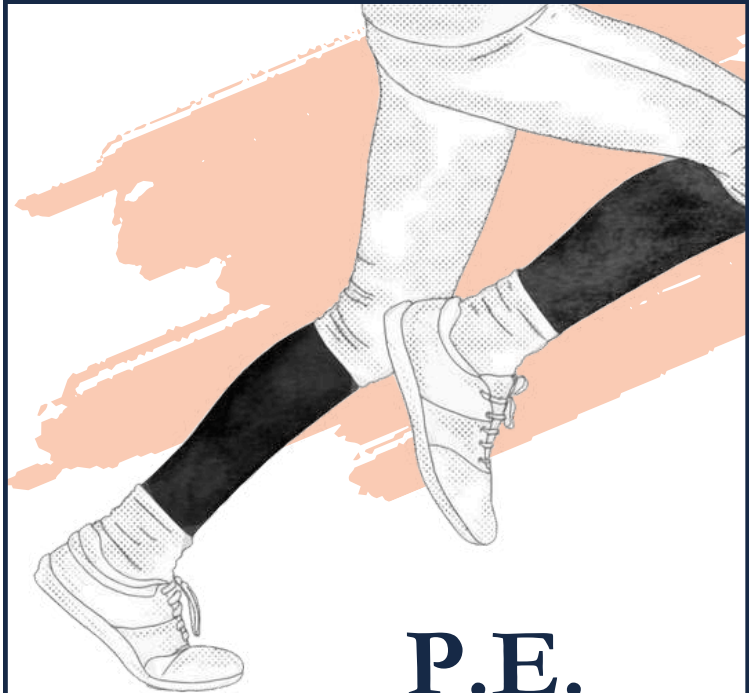


RUNNING



Run round
the hall or
playground
before
your next
task or
lesson

RUNNING



**P.E.
Lesson**

RUNNING

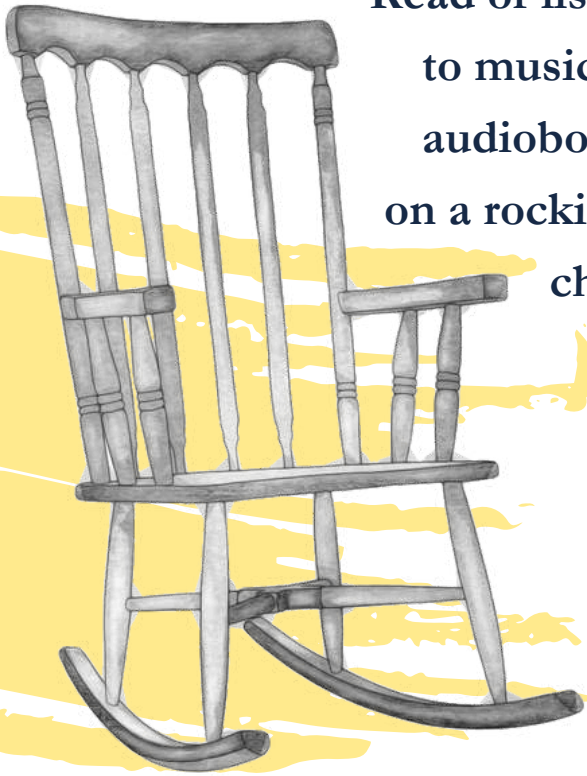


Running club

RUNNING

MOVEMENT

Read or listen
to music or
audiobook
on a rocking
chair



MOVEMENT

Sing songs with
movements

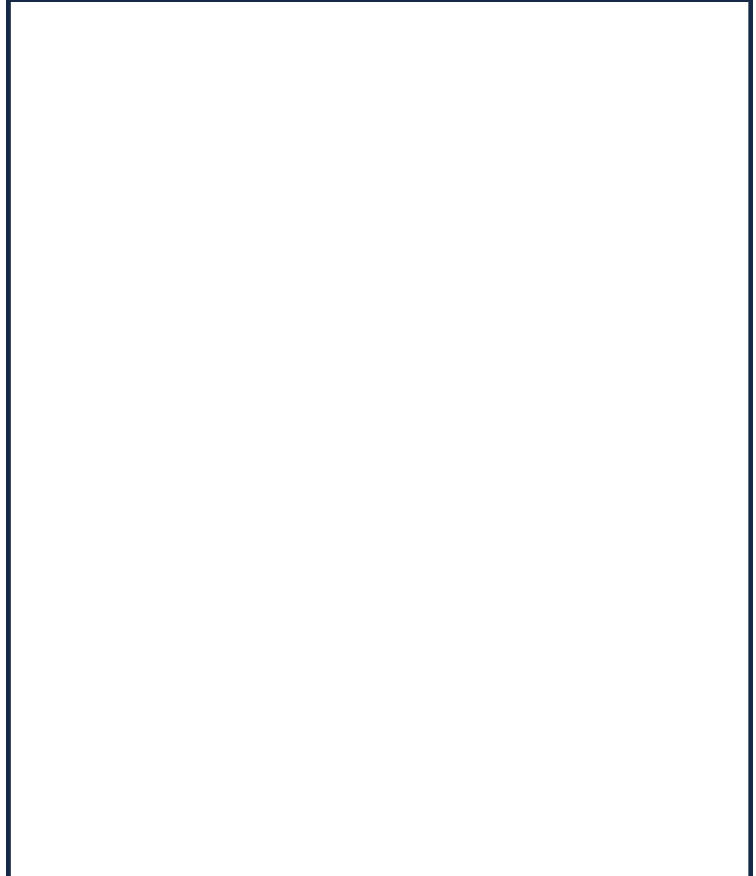


MOVEMENT

Simple pre-lunch
stretching sequence



MOVEMENT



SWIMMING



SKATEBOARDING



ICE-SKATING



POTTERY

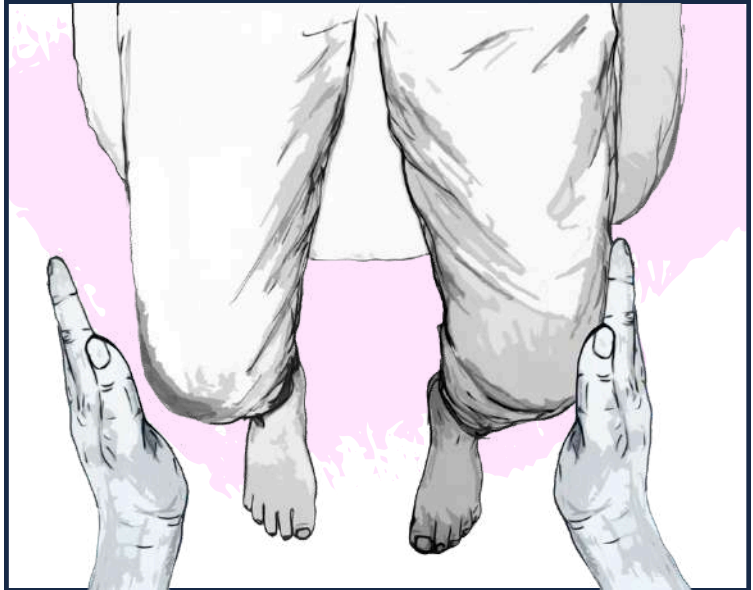


TAPPING

Give yourself a butterfly hug, tapping slowly



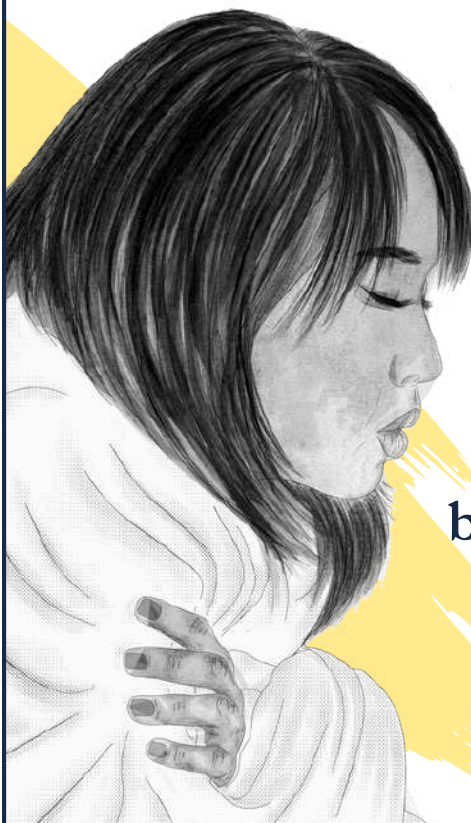
TAPPING



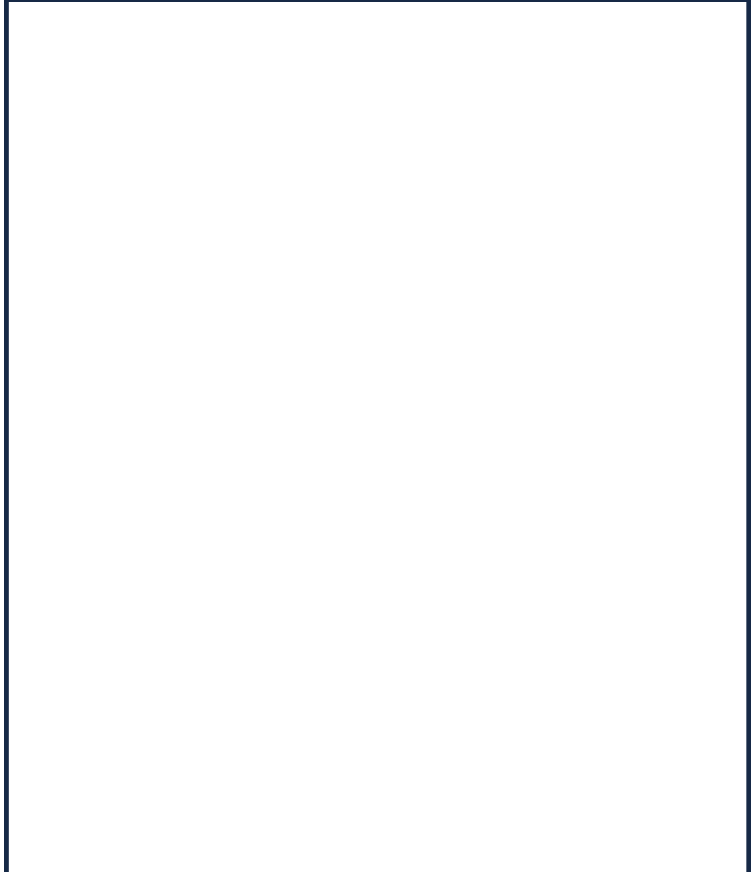
Slow knee tapping left then right whilst thinking of happy or positive things

TAPPING

Slow tapping whilst noticing your breathing



TAPPING



SINGING

Sing your
favourite
songs



SINGING

Choir or band
practice

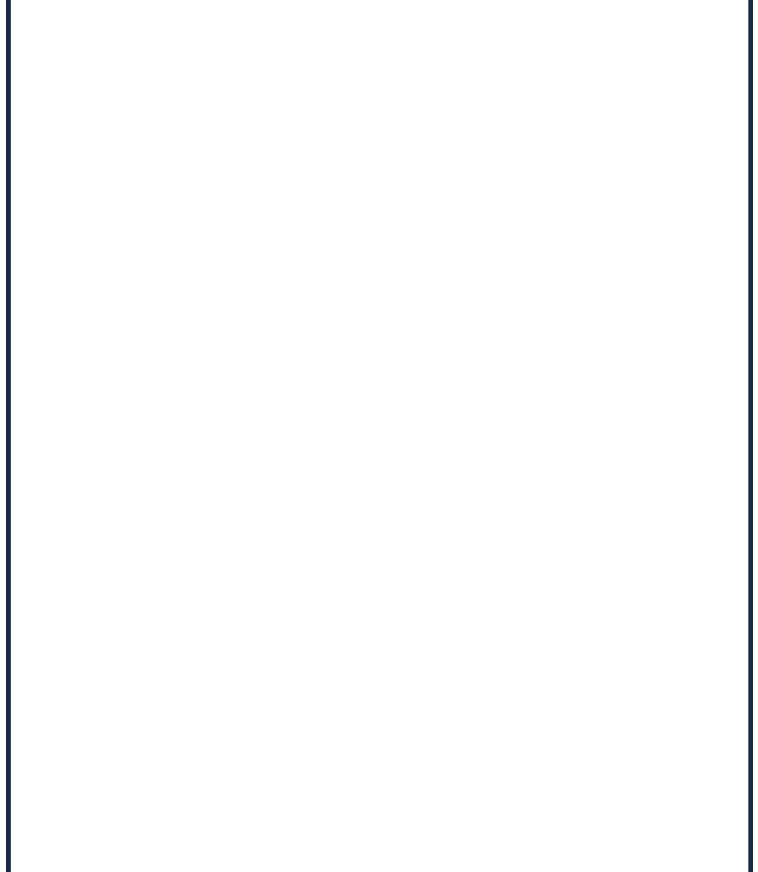


SINGING

Write
and
sing
your
own
songs



SINGING



MUSIC

Simply listen



MUSIC

Play music with
rhythmic
beats in
short
bursts
through
the
day



MUSIC



Learn an instrument

MUSIC

DRUMMING



**Make and
play your
own drums**

DRUMMING



Drum lessons

DRUMMING

**Between tasks
or lessons**



DRUMMING

BREATHING

Just notice your breath
for 20 seconds



BREATHING

Blow bubbles using
deep, slow breaths



BREATHING



Mirror breathing
with a safe adult

BREATHING

