

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2026 • 10 OCTOBER

Real voices, real change in everyday moments

Trauma-responsive approaches that support mental health and wellbeing in school



LISTEN. CONNECT. RESPOND.

Promote positive mental wellbeing for all

Promoting safety, connection and belonging, and listening to understand children's lived experience.

Predictability. Use visible routines, prepare for change and respond calmly and consistently.

Voice and participation. Offer safe, accessible ways for pupils to share what matters to them to inform support

Reduce barriers. Adapt sensory and communication approaches, pace, tasks or environment, and review what helps.

Connection before correction. Prioritise the relationship and consider what behaviour may be communicating about wellbeing.

Emotion coaching. Notice and validate feelings, hold clear boundaries and problem-solve together when ready.

Use the PACE approach in the moment

Dan Hughes' PACE helps children feel safe, understood, connected and supported within clear, consistent boundaries

P

Playfulness. Bring warmth and playfulness in your interactions.
NOTE: never make light of distress.

A

Acceptance. Accept the feeling or inner experience; but not always the behaviour: keep boundaries clear.

C

Curiosity. Stay non-judgemental: "I wonder what made that feel hard?"

E

Empathy. Show understanding of the feeling: "That sounds really hard. I am here to help you."

When stress rises, respond in sequence

Before consequences or problem-solving

REGULATE

1 Lower demand • Calm presence
• Sensory support

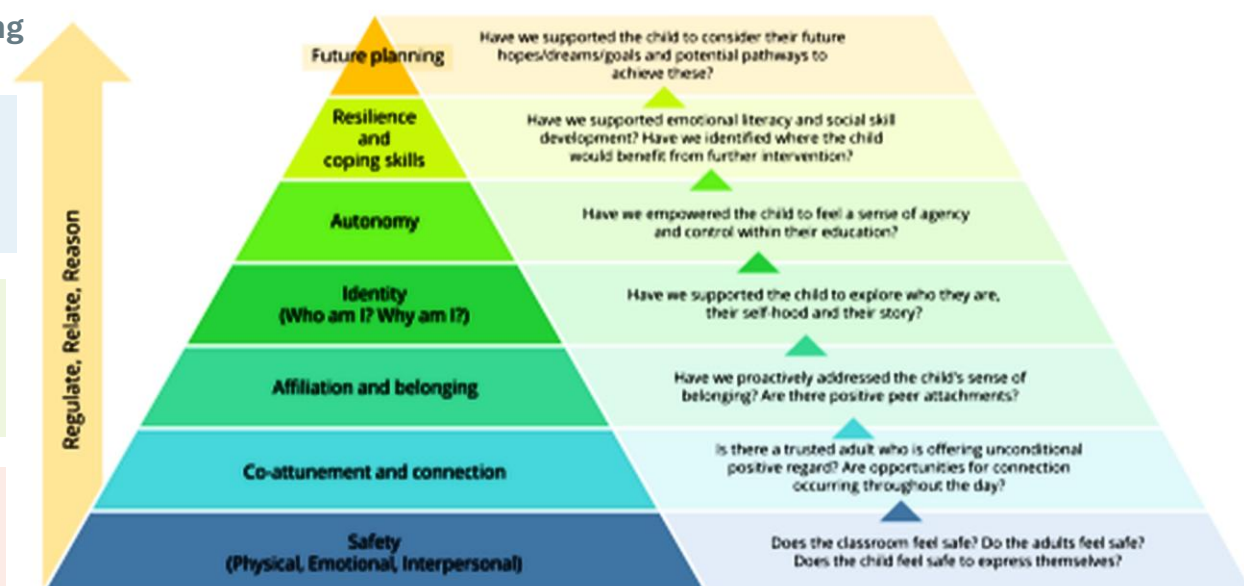
RELATE

2 Connect • Validate feelings
• Co-regulate

REASON

3 Reflect • Repair and reconnect
• Plan when ready

Carter's Applied Trauma Responsive Classroom Model



Source: Carter, J. (2023), "Creating a trauma sensitive classroom", Edpsy.

**Listen and
create safety.**

Take pupils seriously. Be calm and predictable. Connect each pupil with a trusted adult, appropriate support and a safe place.