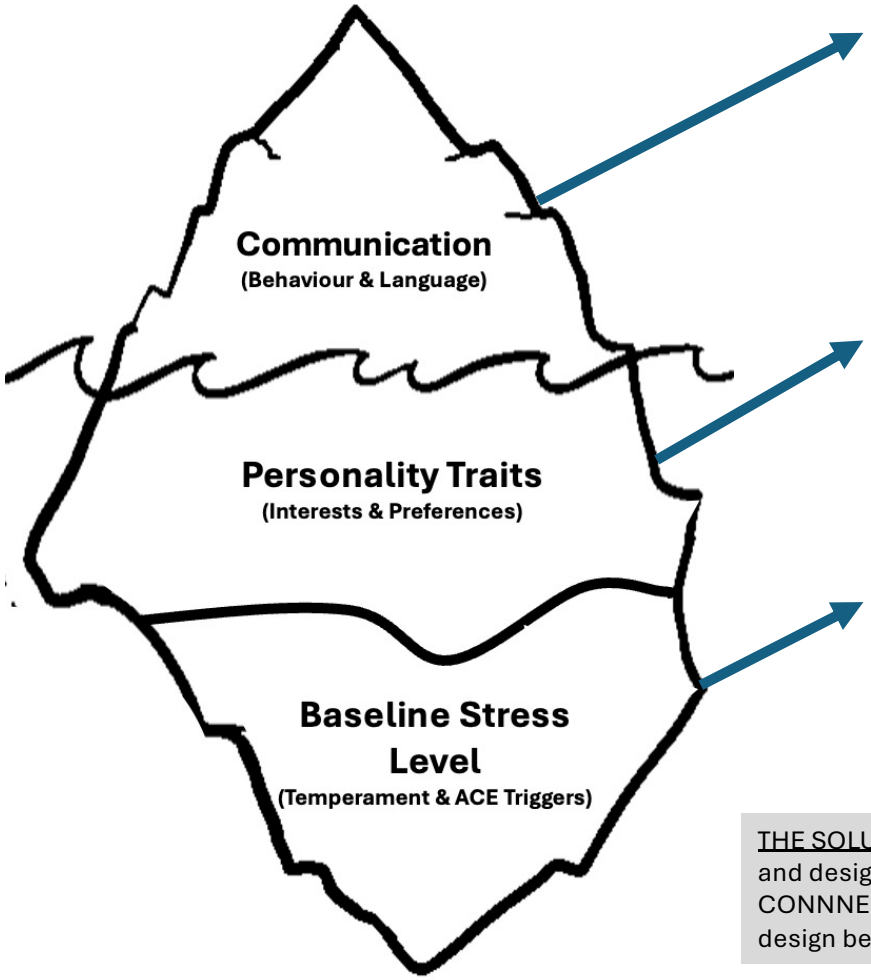
DISCUSSION PAPER

The Student Disengagement Iceberg

The CONNECTED Communication Approach

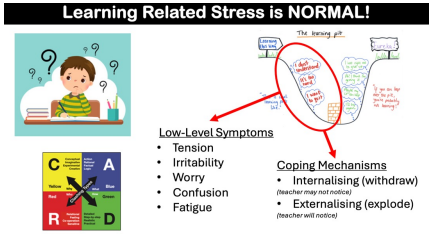
THE PROBLEM: Learning is difficult and learning related stress is normal. Disengagement and disruption are not caused by learning stress but rather by 1 or more of 3 unmet needs.



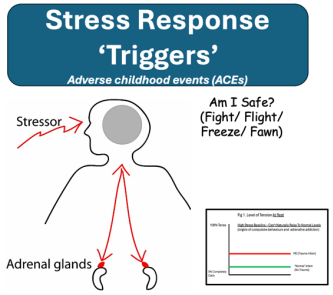
1. When normal learning stress is encountered student must 'cope' with their stress symptoms. They do this by either 'internalising' (withdrawing) temporarily or 'externalising' (challenging) temporarily. Ordinary classrooms do not accommodate for both these coping responses and instead prematurely label the student as disengaged or disruptive further escalating unmet needs for coping. CONNECTED Classrooms can manage different stress coping responses from students according to their personality and communication needs before enacting consequences if need be.

2. Disengagement begins with students not CONNECTING with the learning tasks the teacher is presenting because of the way in which they are communicated. There are 4 possible communication pathways to engage students in a task and this must be matched to the student or done in a specific protocol that meets all students' engagement needs. Ordinary classrooms follow lesson instruction protocols that are not accommodative of all 4 personality types. CONNECTED classrooms take a holistic view of lesson engagement that meets all 4 types of needs.

3. Student stress can be triggered by a) cognitive overload (too hard) b) cognitive underload (bored) and when they feel disconnected, they become either too low or too high from their baseline stress level and act out. Thus, being too quiet can be just as triggering for some students as being too loud for others etc. Co-regulation therefore is about supporting a student to return to their own baseline stress level which will vary according to each student's temperament and trauma history. Ordinary classrooms focus on co-regulation only as 'calming down' using a narrow range of personality prompts whereas CONNECTED classrooms co-regulate both upwards and downwards using all 4 types of personality prompts



CONCEPT Why *Why should I do it!*	ACTION What *I won't do it!*
ENGAGEMENT NEED: 'An Adventure To Go On'	ENGAGEMENT NEED: 'A Challenge To Rise To'
RELATIONAL Who *Help me do it!*	**DETAIL** How *I can't do it!*
ENGAGEMENT NEED: 'People To Work With'	ENGAGEMENT NEED: 'A Process I Can Follow'



THE SOLUTION: Ordinary classrooms take a narrow view of human support needs and design behaviour support strategies that work for some but not all students. CONNNECTED Classrooms take a holistic view of human support needs and design behaviour support strategies that work for ALL students.

HIGHPERFORMANCE SCHOOLS