



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA



Conflict Management, Emotional Intelligence and Bullying Prevention

24.06.2026 Joanne Scolaro Noelle Zahra



BEYOND THE BEHAVIOUR

Understanding before responding

45-minute staff workshop

- Assumptions
- Regulation
- Response

Same task. Different information.



The House Challenge

Experience first. Explain later.

PAIR RULES

- One sheet of paper
- One pen — shared
- No talking
- Do not show your instruction
- Complete your task as best you can

After 2–3 minutes...

- What did you think your partner was doing?
- Who tried to take control?
- What assumptions did you make?
- How did the lack of communication affect you?

Do not reveal the different instructions yet.



Old Model: Eliminate
the behaviour.

New Model:
Understand the
behaviour.



The Brain in Conflict

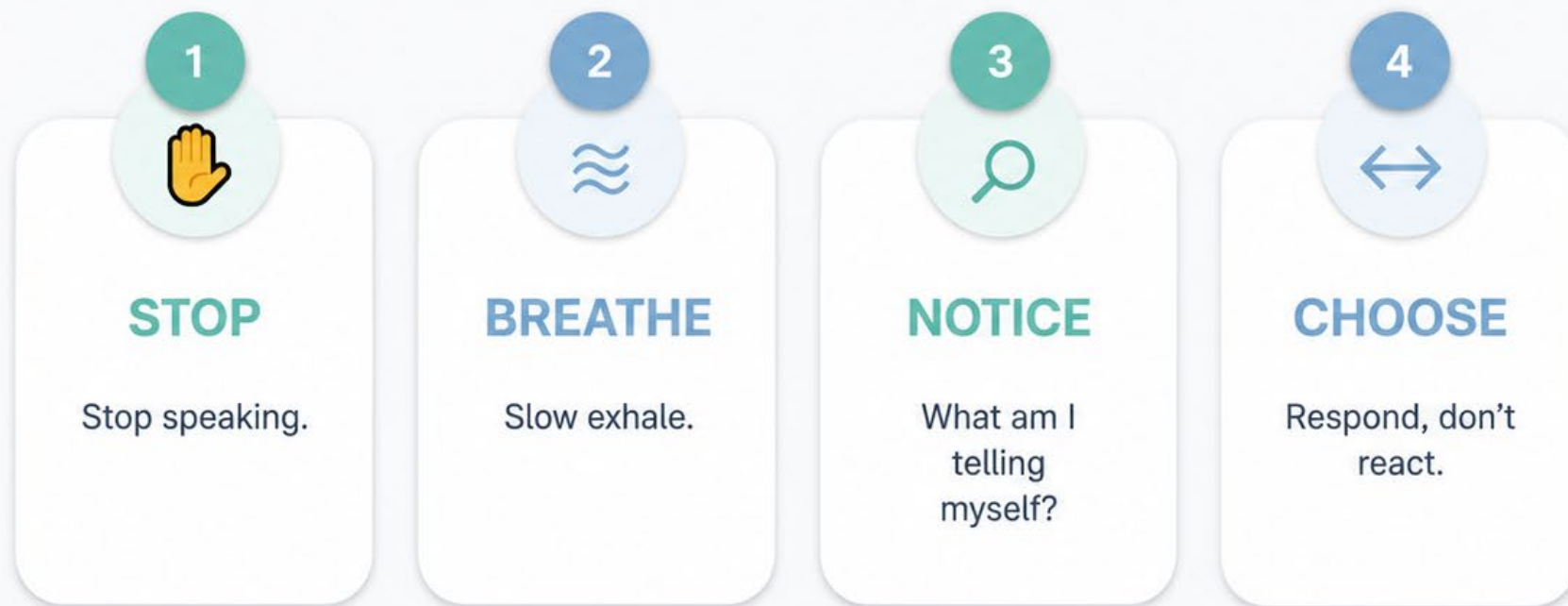
- **UPSTAIRS BRAIN (The Wise Owl)**
 - Logic & Reason
 - Planning
 - Emotional Regulation
- **DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN (The Guard Dog)**
 - Survival Instincts
 - Big Emotions
 - Fight, Flight, Freeze



When You Flip Your Lid

6-second reset

Not a magic number — a deliberate pause
before we add our own emotion.

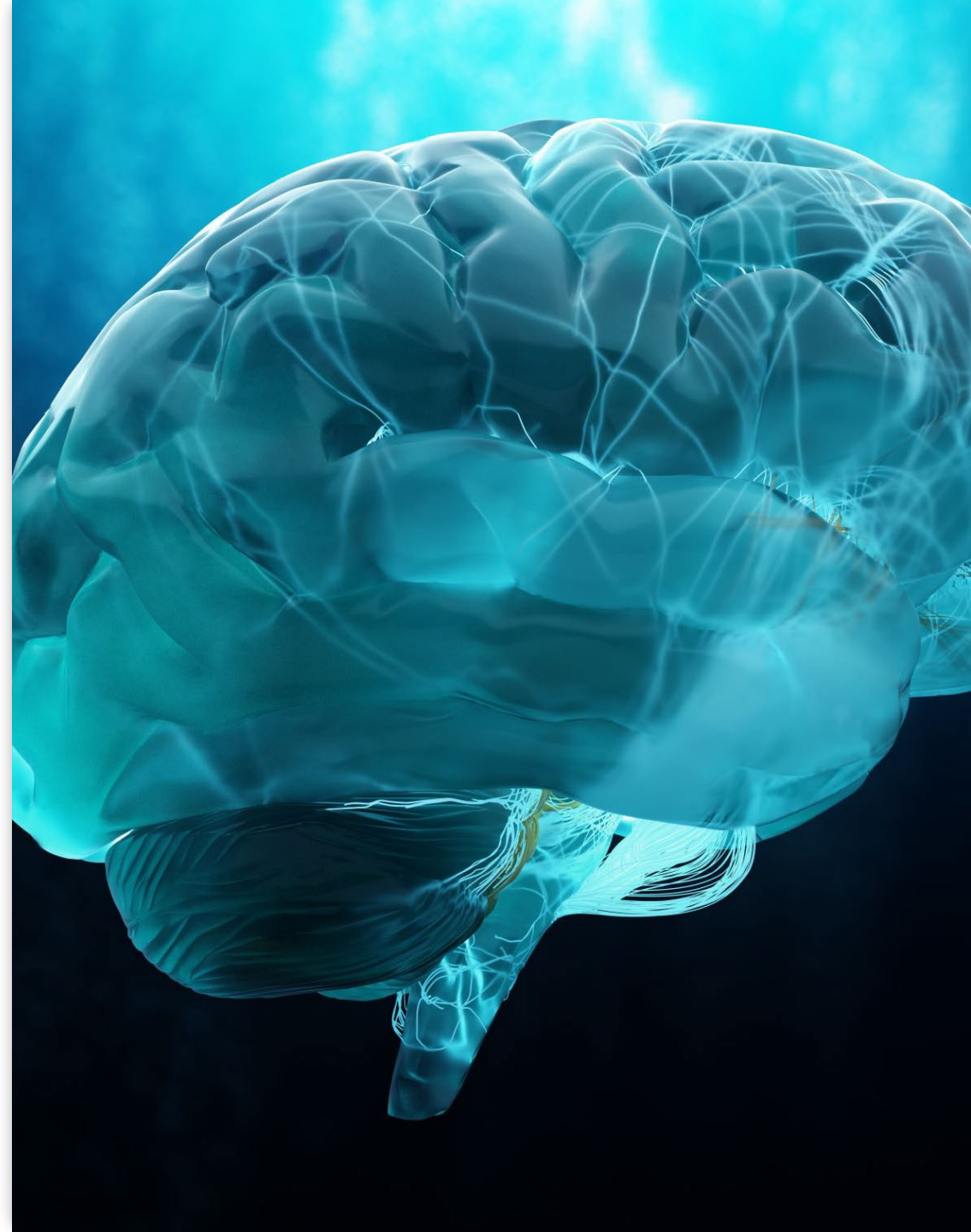


“ Lower the temperature, not the expectation.”



Your Strategy: The 3 R's

- You **cannot** reason with a dysregulated brain. You **must** connect with it first.
- **1. REGULATE** Help them calm their body and brain. Be the calm in their storm. (*Co-regulation, not commands.*)
- **2. RELATE** Validate their feeling (not the behaviour). Show empathy. (*Connection, not judgment.*)
- **3. REASON** Only when they are calm. Problem-solve for the future. (*Collaboration, not lecture.*)



Transactional Analysis

Parent • Adult • Child

Notice the state first.

Key idea: In conflict, notice your own state first, then invite the Adult.



PARENT

Uses rules, values, care, guidance, correction and authority.

Nurturing: supportive, reassuring, calming

Structuring: clear, firm, boundaried

Watch out: critical Parent can escalate conflict



ADULT

Calm, thinking, factual, curious, problem-solving.

Sounds like: “What exactly happened?”

“What part of the task is not working for you?”

Main conflict skill: invite the Adult



CHILD

The emotional, reactive, spontaneous part of us.

Free Child: creative, playful, curious

Adapted/Rebellious: defensive, resistant, upset

Adults can slip into Child when tired, stressed or feeling disrespected

Am I reacting — or responding?

Invite the Adult

Teacher move

Acknowledge the feeling. Keep the boundary. Invite the Adult.

1

PAUSE

Notice your own state.

2

ACKNOWLEDGE

Name the feeling without feeding the drama.

3

SET THE BOUNDARY

Be calm, clear and respectful.

4

ASK AN ADULT QUESTION

Move towards thinking and next steps.

Student says:

“I’m not doing this.
This is stupid.”

Escalating response:

“You’ll do it because
I said so.”

Adult response:

“You don’t want to do it right now.
What’s the main problem — too difficult,
too boring, or not clear?”

Respond in a way that calms the situation and protects the relationship.

The Principle Behind De-escalation

The goal is not to win. The goal is to create space for the student to make a better choice.

- Protect dignity
- Stay calm
- Address behaviour not character
- Offer choices not ultimatums
- Forgive daily

Behind every
prosperous student
is a great teacher.
Happy New Academic
Year.

THANK YOU
FOR
YOUR TIME

Please refer to the padlet link
for more resources