

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET): Universal, Selective, and Indicated Prevention and Intervention in the Schools

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Disclosure

I, Julian D. Ford, am a consultant to Advanced Trauma Solutions Professionals (ATSPPro), Inc., Sole Licensee of the University of Connecticut for the TARGET© Treatment/Training Model

Learning Objectives

- Describe the Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) method of psychoeducation and stress management skills.
- Describe how TARGET can be used in school settings for universal or selective prevention
- Describe how TARGET can be used in school settings for indicated prevention in the aftermath of violent or other traumatic incidents

The Common Denominator in All Forms Of Students' Stress-Related Behavioral and Emotional Problems

Chronic Survival Coping

- Hypervigilance (Distrustful/On Edge)
- Reactive Aggression (Overt or Covert)
- Hopelessness Masked as Indifference

TARGET Translates Neuroscience into Behavioral Health and Educational Practice

- ✓ Demystifies/destigmatizes trauma and stress reactions as survival/protective adaptations that can be re-set
- ✓ A User-Friendly Toolkit of Skills for “In the Moment”
In Vivo Intentional Multi-domain Self- Regulation
- ✓ Enables providers to prevent burnout and enhance effectiveness in patient care and crisis resolution

A Transtheoretical Transdiagnostic Framework

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy© (TARGET)

1. Psychoeducation:

- ❑ the brain's stress response system becomes stuck in a survival “alarm” state in PTSD/DTD – our inner “Alarms” need a re-set

2. Strengths-based self-regulation skills:

- ❑ Focusing (SOS) – building the ability to stop and (really) think
- ❑ FREEDOM – 7 steps to thinking clearly under stress

HIJACKED *by Your* BRAIN
How *to* Free Yourself
When Stress Takes Over

Dr. Julian Ford and Jon Wortmann

ISBN-13: 978-1-4022-7328-5
9 781402 273285 51499



The Body's Alarm System: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Narrow focus on
threat

Black and white
thinking

Breathing speeds
up and becomes
shallow

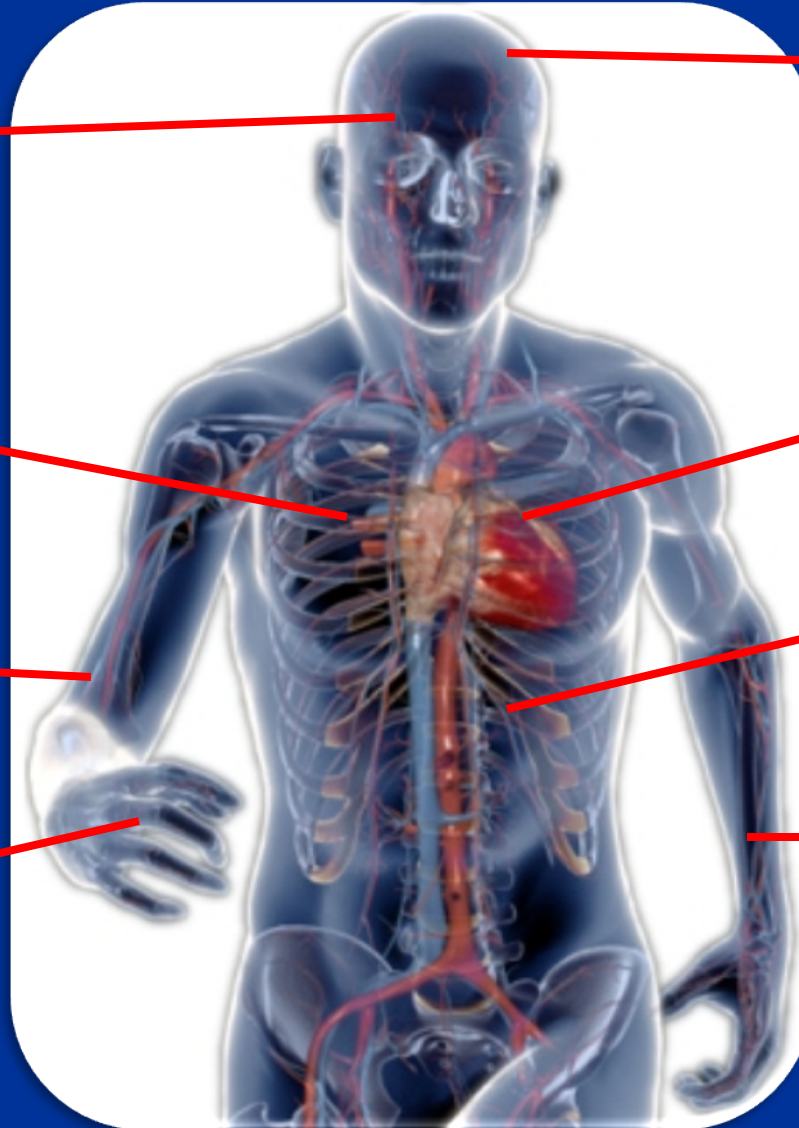
Heart rate increases

Shaking

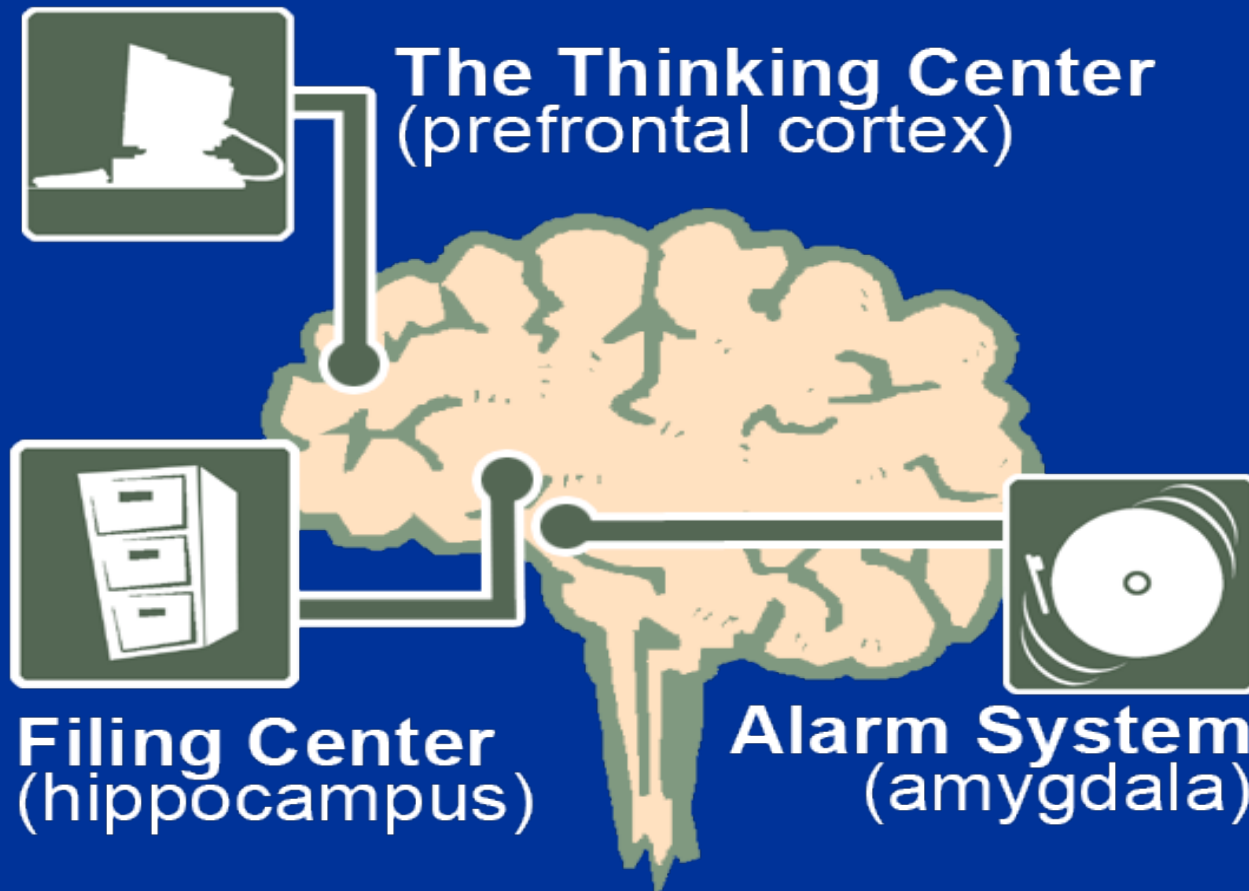
Blood flows away
from gut to muscles

Sweaty palms
and feet

Peripheral blood
vessels **constrict**



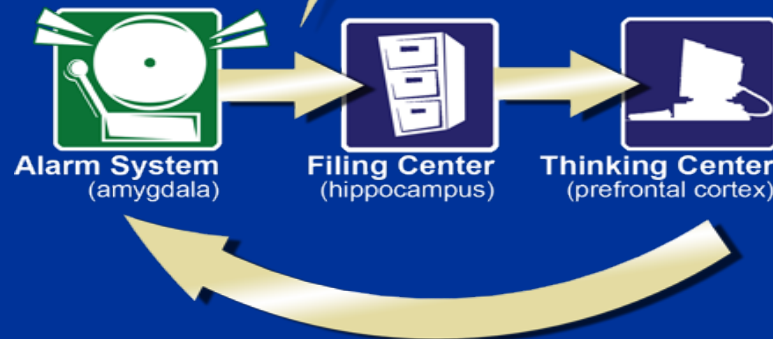
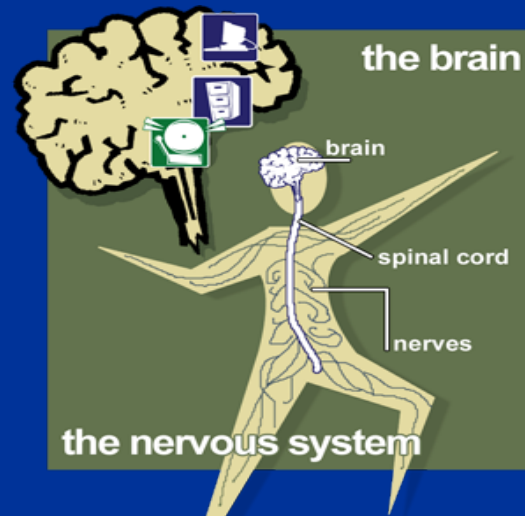
The Brain Under Normal Stress



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normal stress

The Brain & Body Working Together

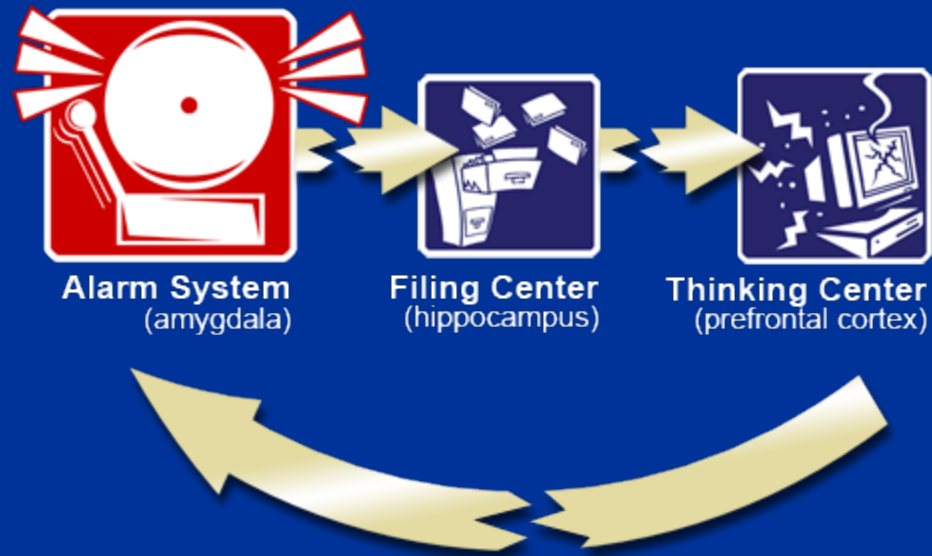
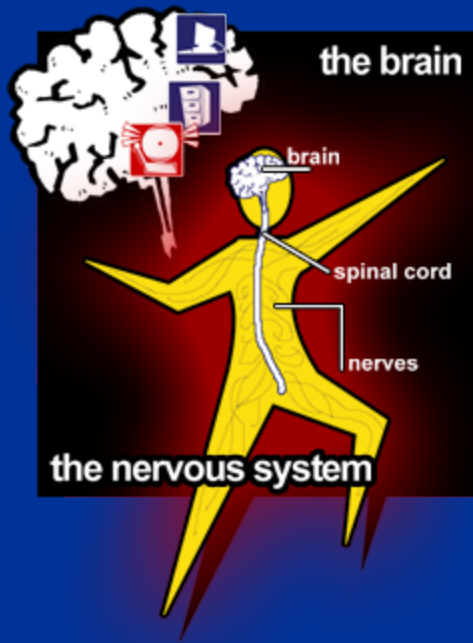


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extreme stress / trauma

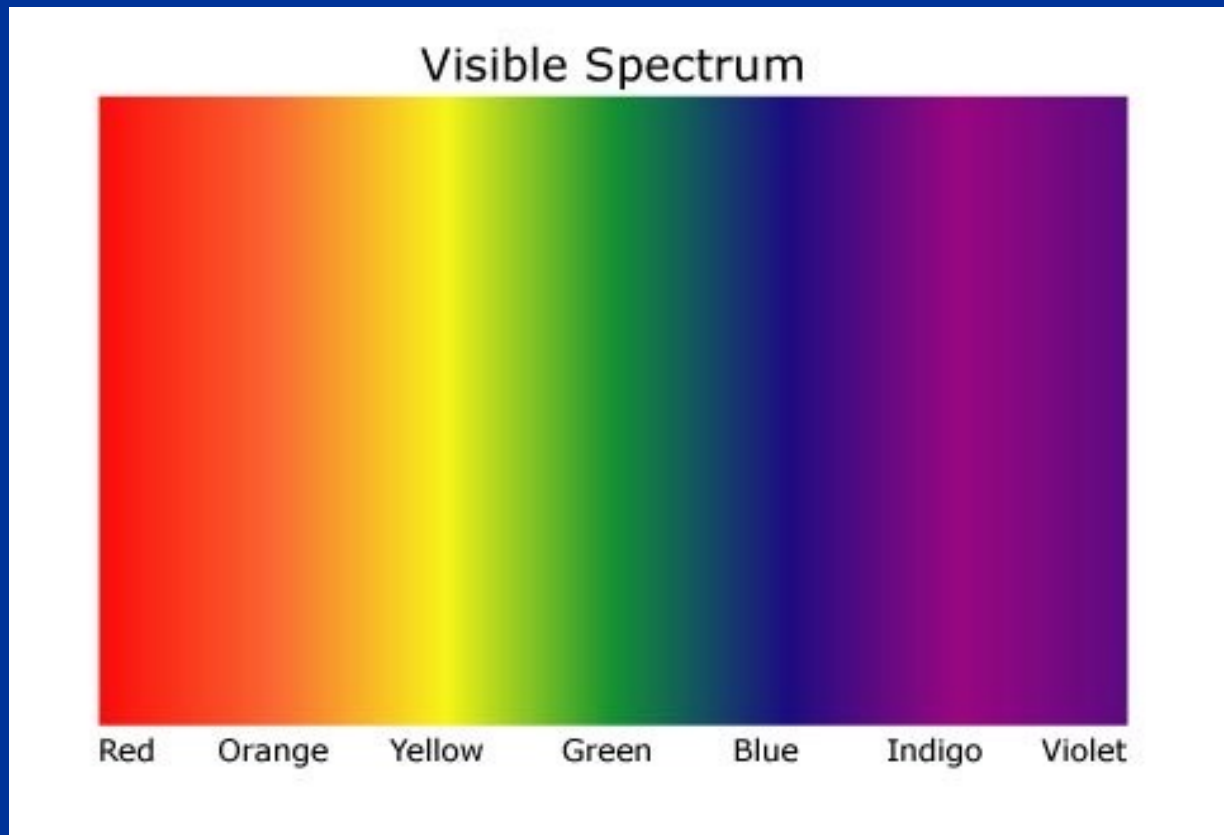
The Alarm Takes Control



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HOT and COLD Alarm Reactions



7 Steps to Re-Setting the Brain's Alarm in Survival Mode

FREEDOM steps

FOCUS

Slow down, Orient, Self-Check

REGOGNIZE

Stress Triggers

EMOTION

One MAIN Emotion

EVALUATE

One MAIN Thought

DEFINE

One MAIN Personal Goal

OPTIONS

Build On Your Positive Choices

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

Make the World a Better Place





SOS: 3 Steps to FOCUSING

- **Step I: Slow Down**
 - Stop, Step Back, Sweep your Mind clear
- **Step II: Orient Yourself**
 - Focus your mind on ONE THOUGHT that YOU CHOOSE based on what is MOST IMPORTANT and VALUABLE in your life at this moment
- **Step III: Self Check**
 - How Much Stress? How Much Control?
 - Optional: Strength of Urges to Use?
 - Optional: Sense of Connection/Support?

Sample Orienting Thoughts for SOS

“Keep swimming”

“I got this”

“Make Mama proud”

“Graduate!”

“I’m here for the kids”

“Never give up”

“I’m going places”

“S/he’s in my heart”

Picture your family →



Beginning of Session



SOS

Slow down - Orient - Self-Check



End of Session



Alarm Triggers



- ✓ Things that make me feel unsafe
- ✓ Things that take control away from me
- ✓ Things that make me feel disrespected
- ✓ Things that are boring
- ✓ Someone else's alarm stuck going off
- ✓ Things that seem like too much to deal with
- ✓ Violations of my personal space

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9_WwuGF4dM

Practice Exercise for FREEDOM

Focus (SOS)

Recognize Trigger(s)

Alarm/Reactive

MAIN

Emotion

Emotion

Evaluate (Thoughts)

Evaluate (Thoughts)

Decide (Goals)

Decide (Goals)

Options

Options

Mobilize for Action

Make a Contribution

MAIN Emotions, Thoughts, Goals, Options = Revisiting the Orienting Step in SOS

- My core values, beliefs, loyalties, and ...
- Attachments that give security, love, and ...
- Innner peace, and calm confidence.
- Nothing is more important to me than this.

The Final Step in FREEDOM

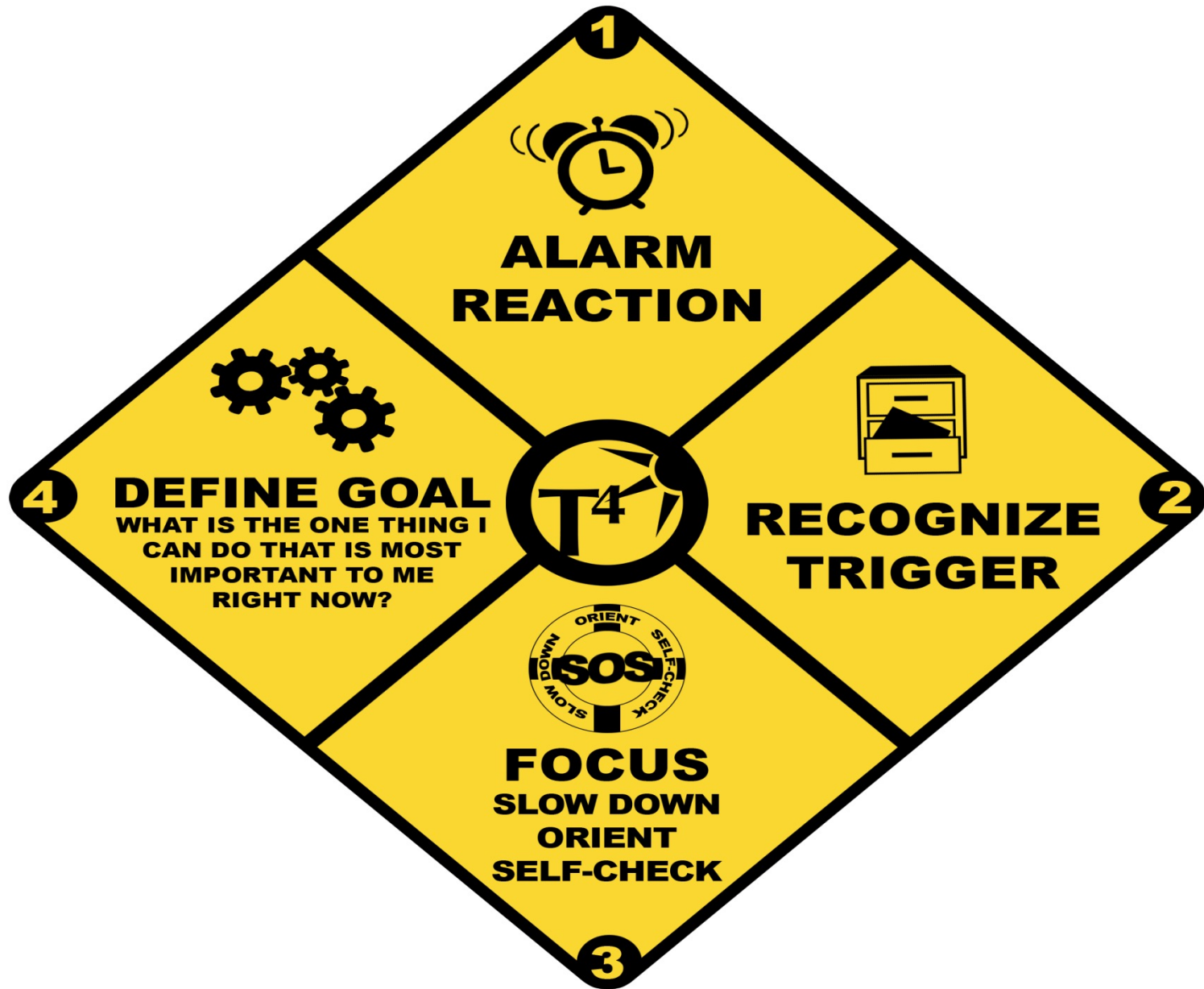
Making a Contribution

by being a role model for
responsibly managing the
alarm in your own brain

T4

A 4-Step Short-cut to Mental Focusing

- ✓ A short-cut to re-setting the brain's alarm
- ✓ T4 is really *two sets of 2-steps*
 - ✓ *First pay attention to messages from the ALARM*
 - ✓ T1 Recognize alarm reactions
 - ✓ T2 Identify specific alarm triggers
 - ✓ *Second activate the THINKING CENTER*
 - ✓ T3 SOS Orient to your values & who you are as a person
 - ✓ T4 Choose a MAIN goal that honors BOTH the ALARM and THINKING Center)



My T4

Think of a stressful personal or school experience:

1. What were your Alarm Reactions?

In your body? Your thoughts? Your behavior?

2. What was the Trigger Moment (peak Alarm)?

3. How did you/could you focus in that situation?

Clear your mind? Orient yourself for personal control?

4. What MAIN goal did you/could you choose?

To make things better and honor your values?

TARGET/T4 as Universal Prevention in Schools

- ✓ Teach it in classes about the stress and the body
 - ✓ Use the SOS in extracurricular activities
 - ✓ Do an SOS at the beginning and end of every class/school activity
- ✓ Do an SOS when students need to focus attention
- ✓ Honor students who Make a Contribution by being focused or helping everyone turn down their alarms

TARGET/T4 as Selective Prevention in Schools

- ✓ Use “alarm reaction” as **nonjudgmental** shorthand for students’ (or one’s own) stress reactions
- ✓ Use “focusing” as shorthand to shift from disruptive or distracting behavior to paying attention on-task
- ✓ Incorporate TARGET activity plans/materials in school Social Emotional Learning activities
- ✓ Incorporate T4 into school counseling/social work
 - ✓ Incorporate SOS in school nursing/health visits

Using T4 to Translate Alarm Signals into Personal Control

When a student or parent is angry and argumentative:

Activate the Filing & Thinking Centers:

*“If you’ll work with me we can find
a way to make this right.”*

Using T4 to Translate Alarm Signals into Personal Control

If a troubled student is shutting you (or everyone) out ...

Activate the Filing & Thinking Centers:

*“I won’t give up on you because I see
what a good/caring/strong/ etc.
person you are”*

Breaking the Cycle of Dueling Alarms

When your alarm sets off someone else's (or vice versa):

1. **Call out the alarms (silently to yourself):**

“Our alarms are on, what do I need to pay attention to?”

2. **Focus in on an orienting thought for both of you.**

“What’s really important to me is _____.”

“What’s really important to him/her is _____.”

“What I can do that’s win-win for both of us is _____.”

Applying T4 to Crisis Prevention and De-Escalation

“We need to figure out what’s most important to you right now, and together we’ll find at least one step to start to make that happen!”

“I’ll stay with you until we find a way to make this better!”

TARGET/T4 for Indicated
Interventions Following Violence

Create safety by listening attentively, nonjudgmentally, and with a focus on Main and Orienting thoughts

TARGET/T4 for Indicated
Interventions Following Violence

**Help Students and Colleagues
to Join Together in Doing an
SOS – and be a Role Model
by actively demonstrating it**

TARGET/T4 for Indicated
Intervention Following Violence

Highlight how students/adults
are Making a Contribution

by staying focused on Main goals

TARGET© Outcome Studies

Randomized Clinical Trial Studies

1. Frisman, L. K., Ford, J. D., Lin, H., Mallon, S., & Chang, R. (2008). Outcomes of trauma treatment using the TARGET model. *Journal of Groups in Addiction and Recovery*, 3, 285-303.
2. Ford, J. D., Steinberg, K., & Zhang, W. (2011). A randomized clinical trial comparing affect regulation and social problem-solving psychotherapies for mothers with victimization-related PTSD. *Behavior Therapy*, 42, 661-578.
3. Ford, J. D., Steinberg, K., Hawke, J., Levine, J., & Zhang, W. (2012). Randomized trial comparison of emotion regulation and relational psychotherapies for PTSD with girls involved in delinquency. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 41, 27-37.
4. Ford, J. D., Chang, R., Levine, J., & Zhang, W. (2013). Randomized clinical trial comparing affect regulation and supportive group therapies for victim-ization-related PTSD with incarcerated women. *Behavior Therapy*, 44, 262-276.
5. Ford, J. D., Grasso, D. J., Levine, J., & Tennen, H. (2018). Affect regulation enhancement of cognitive behavior therapy for college problem drinkers: A pilot randomized controlled trial study. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 27(1), 47-58. doi: 10.1080/1067828X.2017.1400484
6. Ford, J. D., Grasso, D. J., Greene, C. A., Slivinsky, M., & DeViva, J. C. (2018). Randomized clinical trial pilot study of prolonged exposure versus present centered affect regulation therapy for PTSD and anger problems with male military combat veterans. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 25(5), 641-649. doi:10.1002/cpp.2194
7. Ford, J., Tennen, H., Grasso, D., & Chan, G. (2022). An *In Vivo* Daily Self-Report Approach to the Assessment of Outcomes of Two Psychotherapies for Women with PTSD. *Behavior Therapy*, 53, 11-22.

TARGET© Outcome Studies

Published Quasi-Experimental Field Trial Studies

1. Ford, J. D., & Hawke, J. (2012). Trauma affect regulation psychoeducation group and milieu intervention outcomes in juvenile detention facilities *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 21*(4), 365-384. doi: 10.1080/10926771.2012.673538
2. Marrow, M., Knudsen, K., Olafson, E., & Bucher, S. (2012). The value of implementing TARGET within a trauma-informed juvenile justice setting. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma, 5*, 257-270.

Independent Randomized Effectiveness Studies

1. TARGET in-home family therapy with traumatized foster children (ACYF).
2. TARGET in-home family therapy with traumatized adopted children (QIC).