

Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley

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MENTAL HEALTH AND
FAMILY SUPPORT

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Vision: We believe every child deserves to thrive in an inclusive community.

Mission: To ensure that children with disabilities and their families are empowered.

Our Goal: To identify a child's developmental delay or disability, help the child reach developmental milestones, and strengthen his/her abilities via individualized rehabilitation.

Today: Each week, 1000 infants, toddlers, and children with developmental disabilities, medical complexities, and undiagnosed concerns, receive the personalized therapeutic services needed to live their best lives and succeed in school.



Highlights

- We provide services from our Elgin, Naperville and Villa Park centers, in client homes, via teletherapy, or community.
- Our multidisciplinary comprehensive services include Physical, Occupational, and Nutrition Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, Assistive Technology, Audiology, Mental Health and Family Support, Autism Services, and Specialty Clinics.
- Therapists are bilingual in American Sign Language, Arabic, Korean, Polish, Spanish & Tagalog.

GROWTH with Hanover Township

Our 18-year collaboration has made a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

- ❑ Financial support was vital during pandemic allowing us to keep our doors open and providing essential therapies and support to those who needed us most.
- ❑ Their generosity has allowed us to purchase important therapeutic tools and technology – enhancing the quality of our services.
- ❑ Their investment in workforce development has been instrumental in supporting our team of highly skilled therapists to provide specialized care for children with complex conditions and underserved communities.

Mental Health and Family Services Program

ESDFV's Mental Health Program, since 1980, provides holistic care to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

We are dedicated to helping children and families navigate challenges with compassion and guidance through collaboration and meeting the child and family where they are at in their own journey.



Mental Health and Family Support Team

- ❑ 7 Social workers with specialties in Trauma-Informed care, DIR methodology, Infant-Mental Health, FAN training, bilingual (Arabic), medical interpretation training, domestic violence/court advocacy certification, reflective supervision training and more.
- ❑ Care Coordinator with degree in psychology and Spanish
- ❑ Clinical Psychologist (bilingual – Spanish)

Our range of support includes:

- Free Social Emotional Screenings available in English & Spanish
- Mental Health Evaluations
- Care Coordination
- Individual Social Work Counseling
- Parent Groups
- Children's Groups
- Education Programs
- Resource Information
- Clinic support (feeding, bowel and bladder, Autism diagnostic and medical diagnostic)



Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ❑ Experience range of challenges in key developmental areas.
- ❑ They begin in childhood impacting their physical abilities, communication, social-emotional and behavior development and learning.

Intellectual Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health

- ❑ Youth with IDD are at an increased risk for various types of traumatic or high stress experiences:
 - ❑ Medical trauma
 - ❑ Traumatic pregnancy or delivery
 - ❑ NICU and PICU hospitalizations
 - ❑ Surgeries
 - ❑ Frequent healthcare appointments with physicians and therapists
 - ❑ Physical and emotional abuse and/or neglect
 - ❑ Sexual abuse
 - ❑ Educational needs
 - ❑ Bullying and/or teasing
 - ❑ Exploitation (i.e. social media)
 - ❑ Discrimination (abilities, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.)

Intellectual Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health

- ❑ Trauma and high stress exposure can put children at risk for mental health concerns related to:
 - ❑ Anxiety
 - ❑ Depression
 - ❑ Decreased self-esteem
 - ❑ Emotional and/or physical dysregulation
 - ❑ Attention difficulties
 - ❑ Difficulty with adjustment
 - ❑ Attachment-related struggles
 - ❑ PTSD

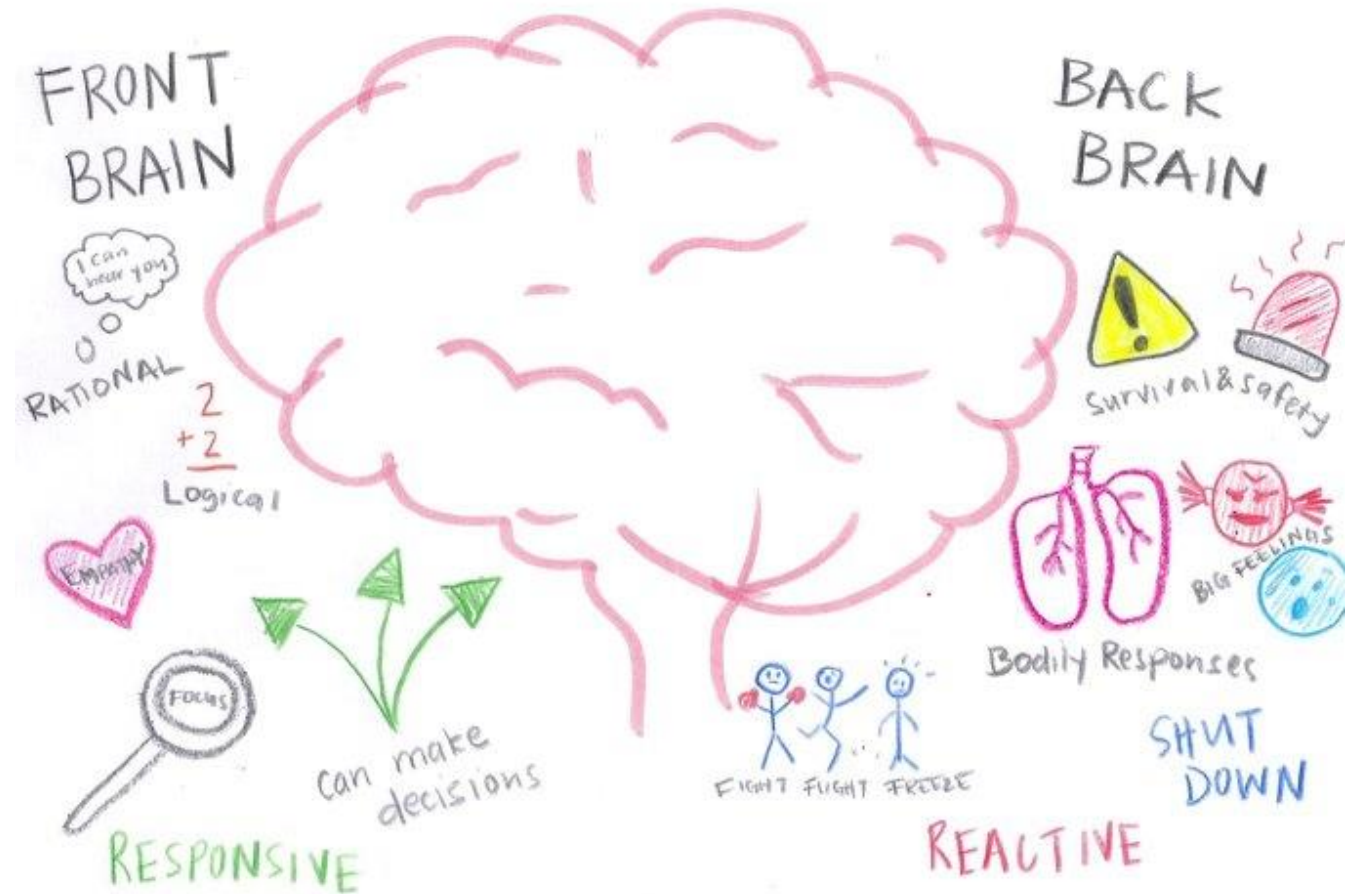
Trauma

Bombarding of the nervous system

Implicit and explicit memories

Front brain/back brain (brainstem)

Fight/flight/freeze response



What do we
see?

☐ Behavior

- ☐ Emotional outbursts
- ☐ Aggression
- ☐ Self-injury
- ☐ Avoidance
- ☐ Verbal outbursts
- ☐ Withdraw
- ☐ Meltdowns
- ☐ Fear

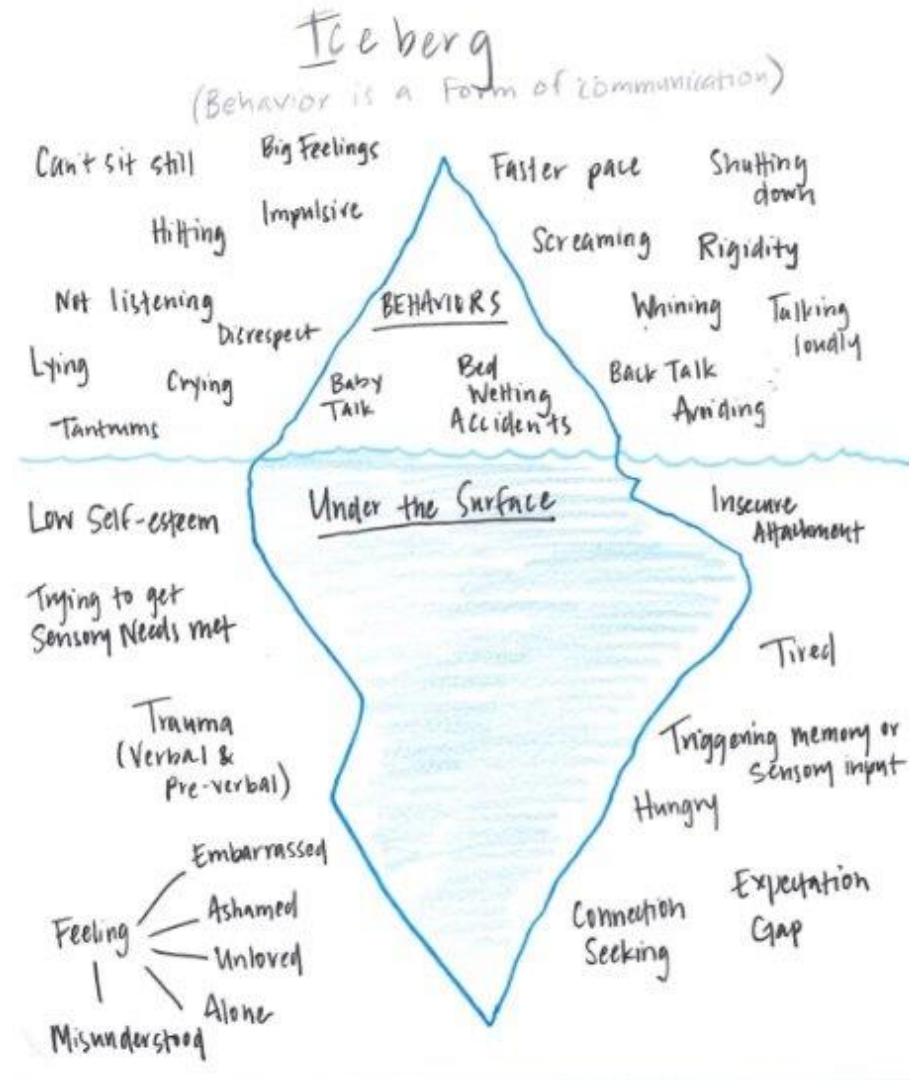
What does it
mean?

☐ Behavior -> COMMUNICATION

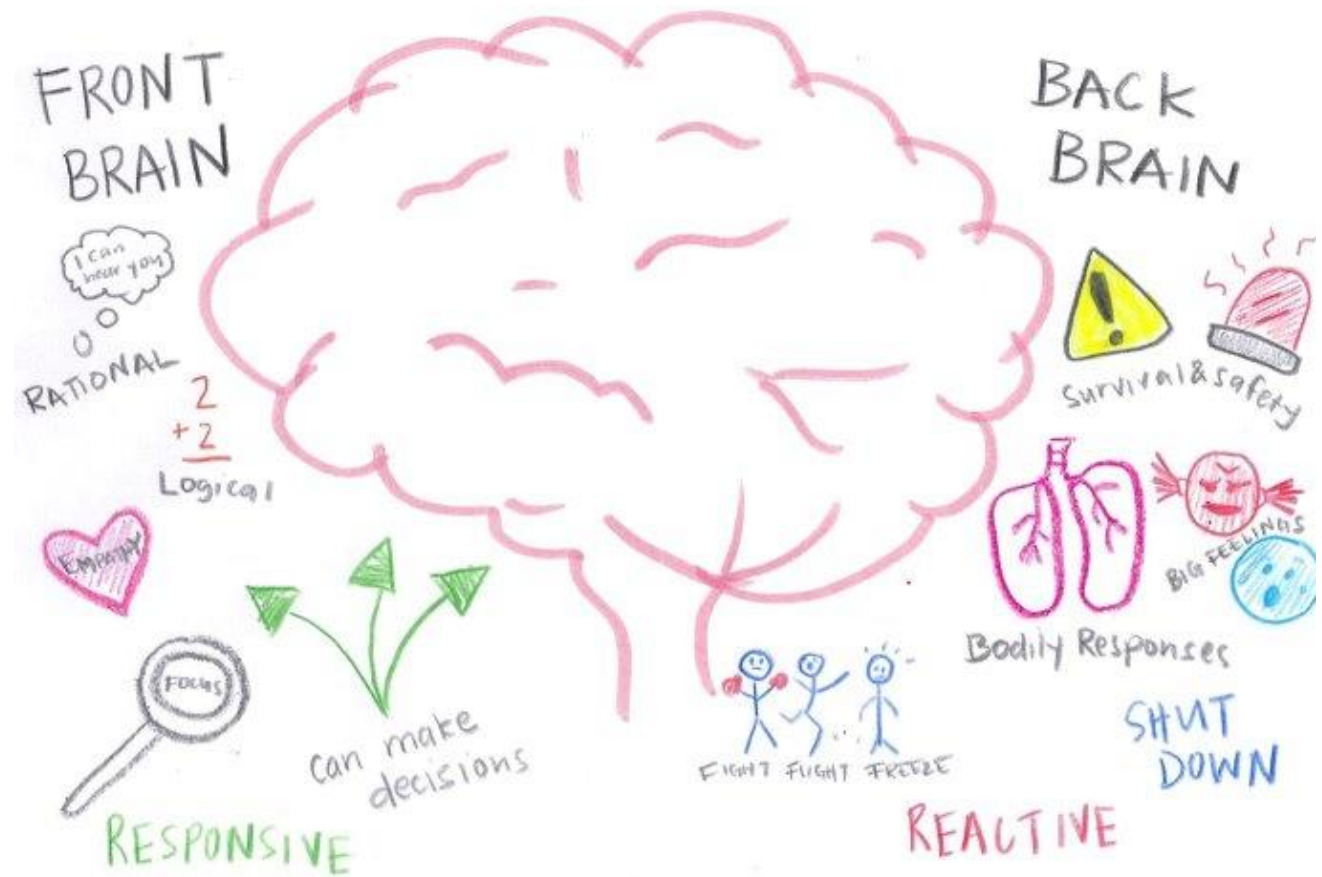
- ☐ "I'm scared!"
- ☐ "I don't understand"
- ☐ "I'm nervous"
- ☐ "I don't feel safe"
- ☐ "I'm frustrated"
- ☐ "I am overstimulated"
- ☐ "I'm struggling"
- ☐ "I don't have the words"
- ☐ "I don't know what to do"
- ☐ "I don't feel good"
- ☐ "I feel shame"
- ☐ "I feel guilty"

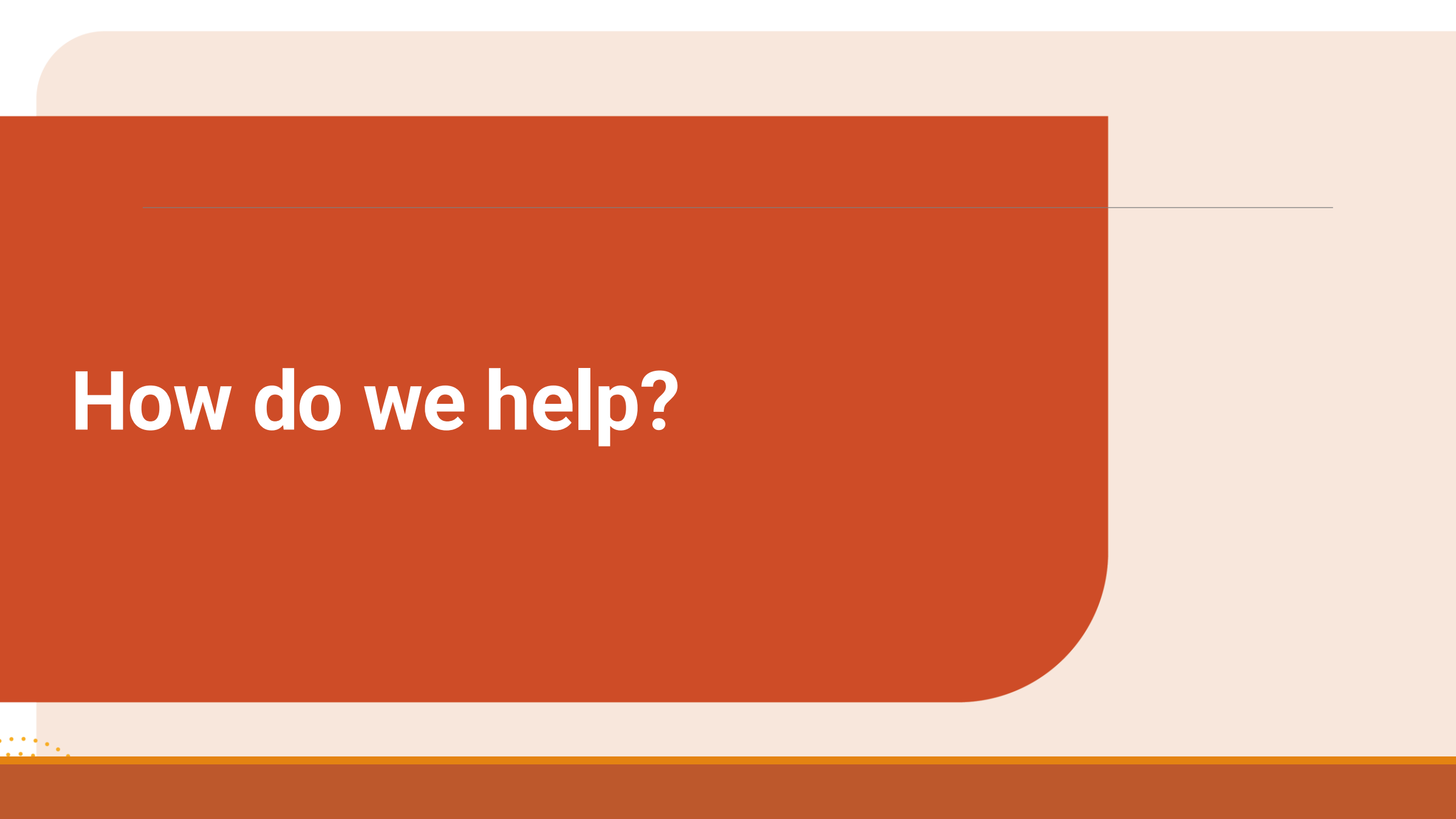
What we see:

What we don't "see"



And...
what we need
to remember:





How do we help?

Individual Differences of our clients

- ❑ Language and communication
- ❑ Sensory Processing differences
- ❑ Cognitive processing abilities
- ❑ Motor abilities
- ❑ Emotional and behavioral patterns
- ❑ Environmental stressors
- ❑ Family stressors
- ❑ Challenging experiences

Trauma-Informed practice

- ❑ “What happened to You?” Dr. Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey
- ❑ Consider individual differences and experiences
- ❑ Create a safe and supportive environment
- ❑ Trust
- ❑ Foster self-understanding, acceptance and empowerment
- ❑ Consider neurological, biological, psychological and social development
- ❑ Cultural considerations
- ❑ Collaboration

Environment and Approach

- PLAY!
- Movement
- Expression through art
- Talking
- Attachment
- Developmentally appropriate
- Parent and family work



Interdisciplinary Intervention

- ☐ Occupational therapy
- ☐ Speech and language therapy
- ☐ Physical therapy
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Audiology
- ☐ Vision

The Relationship

- ❑ Trust and mutual respect
- ❑ Acknowledge and validate
- ❑ Empathy and understanding
- ❑ Partner together
- ❑ Safe and supportive environment
- ❑ Non-judgement zone
- ❑ Active listening
- ❑ Connection
- ❑ Encouragement

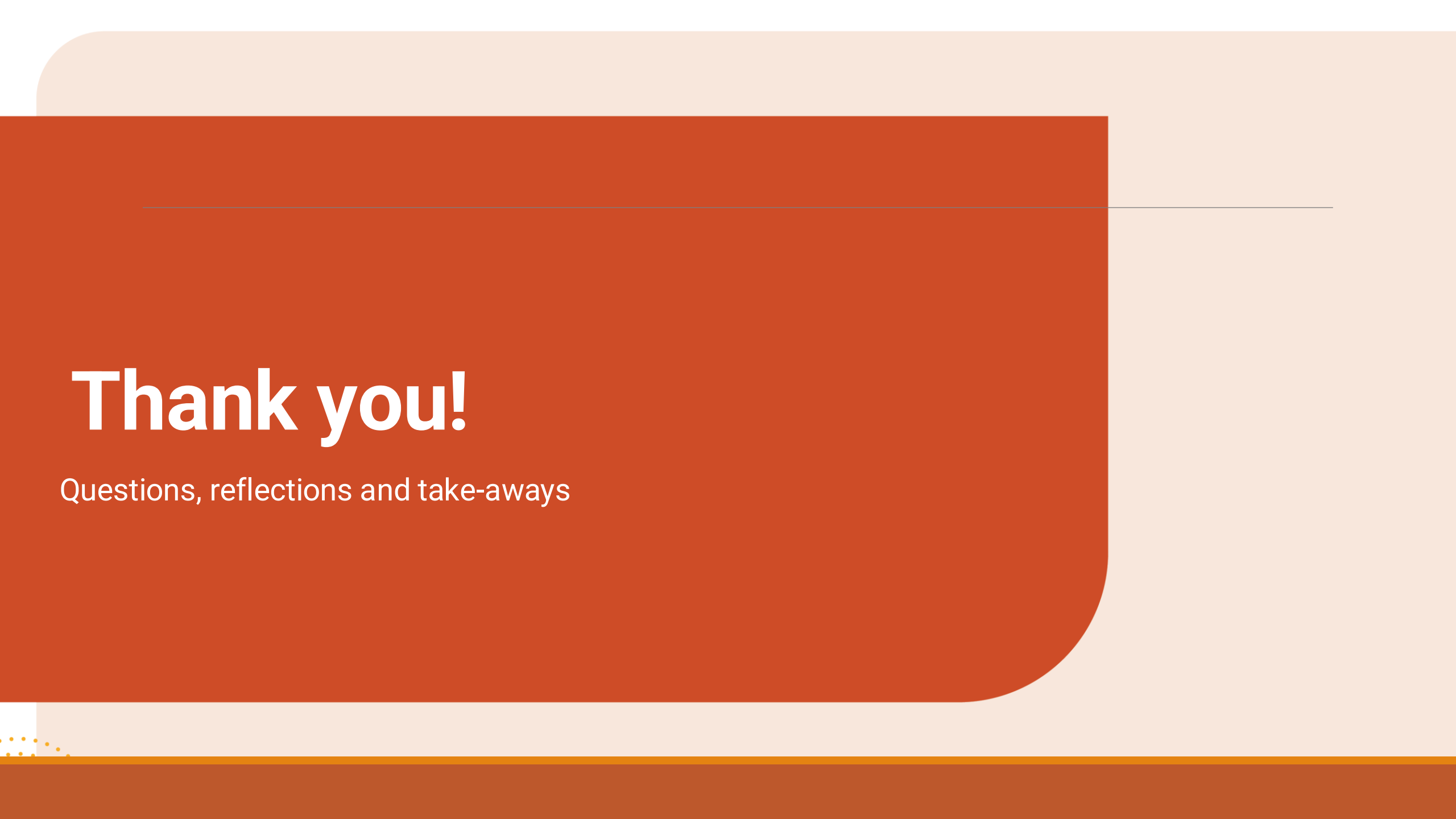
YOU ARE NOT ALONE



THE RABBIT LISTENED BY CORI DOERFFEL

Messages children need to hear:

- I'm not alone
- You are going to keep showing up for me even when I push you away; you're not going anywhere
- You hear me, see me, and are trying to understand me
- You aren't scared of my big feelings
- I don't have to be in charge of my parents feelings
- I'm not a bad kid, I'm just having a hard time and need help



Thank you!

Questions, reflections and take-aways