

Impacts of Trauma in the School Setting:

Faulty Neuroception:

Neuroception is our brain's constant evaluation of safety in our environment. This is done at a **subconscious level**. Some students have faulty neuroception. They may **perceive threat when they are safe**. Student's who have experienced trauma will be more susceptible to faulty neuroception - their brain has been wired to be on alert for danger more often than students who have not experienced trauma. They are in a constant state of hypervigilance. Some students externalizations their feelings of threat by acting disruptive or aggressive or both (red zone/fight-flee). Some students internalize their feelings of threat and fear by shutting down to become invisible (blue zone/freeze). When their brains are in a fear state (in a reactive state - red or blue), they are not well-prepared to learn in a classroom setting (not in a receptive state - green).

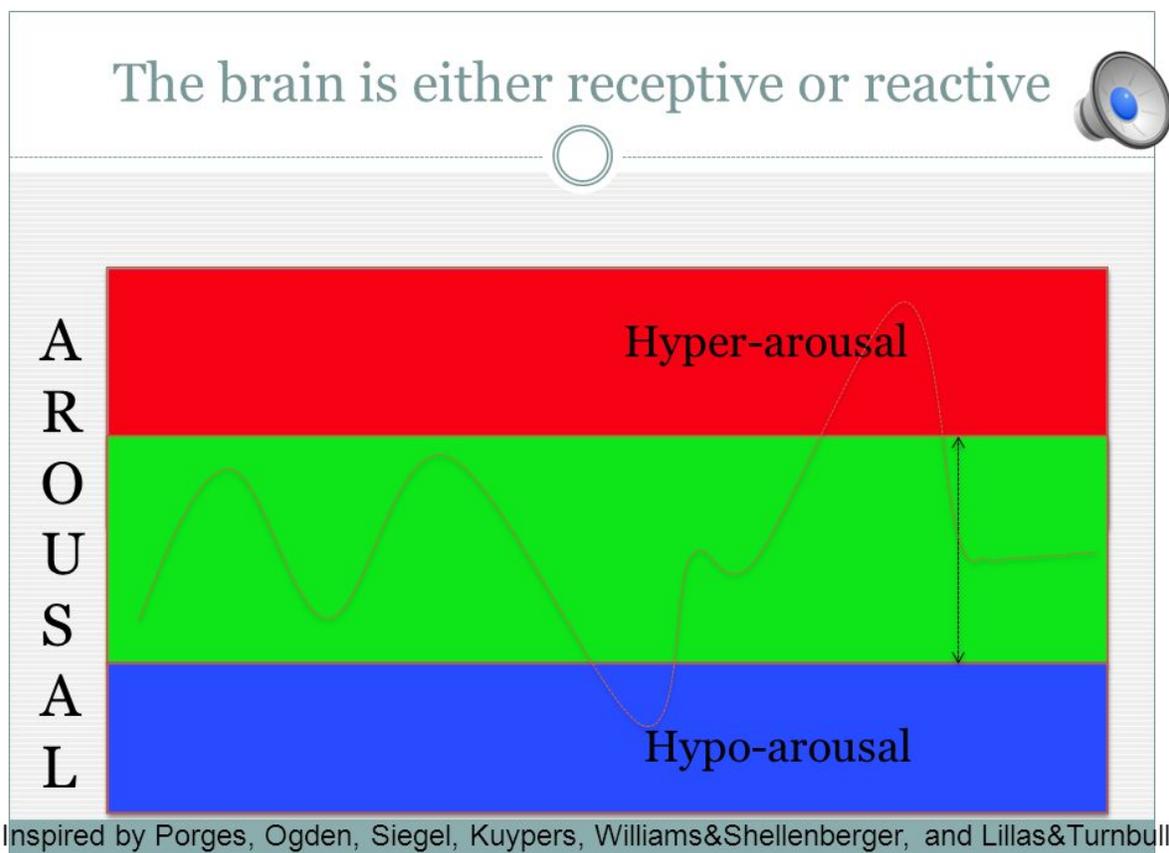


image by Tina Payne Bryson, PH.D.

Specific Difficulties/Characteristics:

Difficulties relating to peers and teachers	Distrustful or suspicious of others	Recognizing or responding to social cues	Withdrawal from social situations
Distrustful of authority figures	Negative self-image	Significant feelings of shame	Difficulty regulating emotions and behavior
Poor impulse control	Difficulty recognizing others emotions	Difficulty recognizing and naming their own emotions	Attention lapses because of difficulty distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information
Difficulty connecting words to experiences	Difficulty taking another persons perspective	Difficulty organizing material sequentially	Exaggerated fight/flight response or constant state of fight/flight
Difficulty with working memory	Trouble focusing on simple tasks	Forgetfulness	Difficulty planning and organizing to achieve an end goal

Common Triggers (situations that make it likely behaviors will occur):

- Punishment
- Confinement
- Particular subject areas (students lose their ability to engage in certain subjects after trauma)

Resources:

[The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom: Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching](#) by Patricia Jennings

Tina Payne Bryson, PH.D.

[Beyond Behaviors Using Brain Science to Understand and Solve Children’s Behavioral Challenges](#) by Mona

Delahooke, PH.D.