

# Design of the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM)

The design of the BSEM draws on neuro-scientific findings in contending that the child's biological and developmental responses to trauma need to be addressed before they are 'ready' to build relationships and engage with learning content. Emphasis on repairing the dysregulated stress response in trauma-affected students draws on the understanding that (a) self-regulation is a core developmental ability for children, and (b) by strengthening emotional control and impulse management, regulatory capacities are crucial to the child's healthy development (Bath, 2008). Educational and therapeutic strategies aimed at addressing the dysregulated stress response and building regulatory capacities involve the creation of environments within which young people can explore self-regulation and co-regulation, identify negative emotions and learn to manage their behaviour. Such environments support young people through classroom activities that have both physical and emotional foci. Physical regulation activities seek to align the body through sensory integration and rely heavily on rhythm, repetition and routine. Emotional regulation activities aim to help the young person identify, acknowledge, label, understand and work with difficult feelings; build the capacity to communicate those feelings to others; link internal thoughts to external stimuli; acquire and practise strategies for de-escalating emotions, and learn how to return to a comfortable state after arousal. In order to support students to develop these capacities, the BSEM guides teachers in developing a trauma-informed lens through which to view and understand their students' behaviours and needs. It also provides a developmental curriculum to assist students to learn skills to build networks of support, feel confident as learners, and manage difficult and challenging emotions. Underpinning the Model is the importance of building both in-the-moment self-regulation and resources and capacities over time (Brunzell et al., 2015b).

The BSEM is an approach to pedagogy that can be used consistently in the classroom and throughout the whole school. It provides a way to teach the content of any subject area while addressing the social and emotional learning needs of the students in the process. The Model comprises five domains: **BODY**, **STAMINA**, **ENGAGEMENT** and **CHARACTER**, all anchored by **RELATIONSHIP**. Each domain contains a cluster of focus areas within which are located sets of teaching and intervention strategies and recommendations (See Figure 2). Identification of the foci was guided by international research (Brunzell, Stokes & Waters 2016). Application of the BSEM is developmental or sequential, with teachers and students progressing from the domain of **BODY** through to the domain of **CHARACTER**.

The Berry Street training team provides teachers with (a) intensive and on-going professional development, and (b) detailed advice on structuring the teaching day, in the form of a suite of printed curriculum guides (Brunzell 2015b).

**Figure 1: The Berry Street Education Model (Brunzell et al., 2015b)**

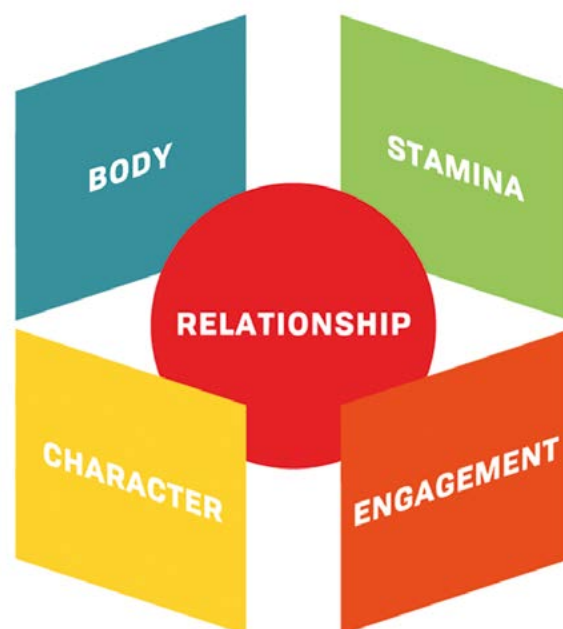
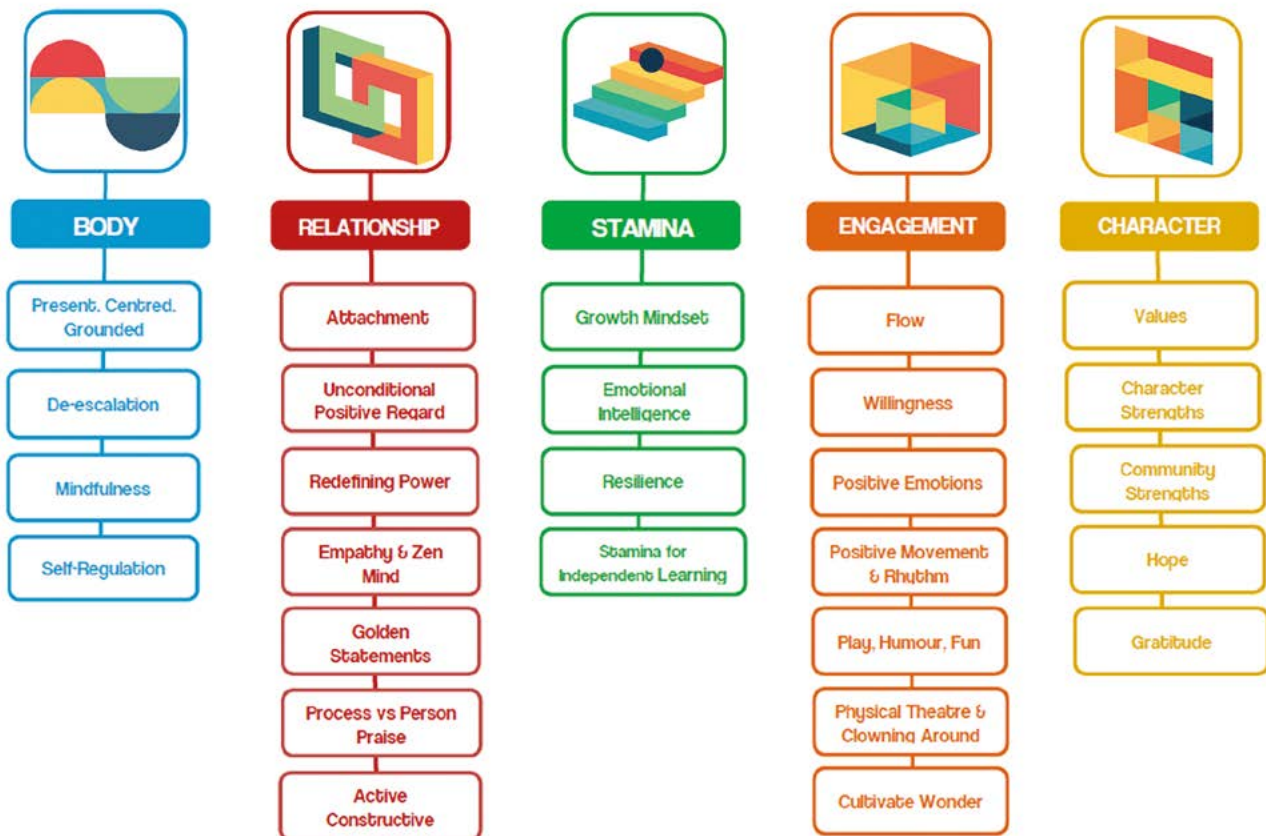


Figure 2: The Berry Street Education Model (Brunzell et al., 2015b)



The BSEM curriculum contains over 100 classroom strategies and recommendations. Each has been designed as a Strategy, a Brainbreak or a Lesson Plan. The Model has been developed in this way to enable teachers to adapt the components to their own classroom context. **Strategies** within the Model are defined as teacher-centred approaches for strengthening students' self-regulation or relationships and as teacher behaviours that are integrated with pedagogical approaches. **Brainbreaks** are short-burst regulatory activities to ready students' brains for learning. They are flexible and can be interwoven into the classes at any time. Containing options such as mindfulness and emotion/humour activities, Brainbreaks promote both self-awareness though checking current emotional, physical and psychological

states, and self-regulation through cultivating flexible, resilient and open mindsets. Lesson Plans, as the name suggests, provide detailed sequences for teaching specific skills and strategies. Within each lesson there are several core learning intentions supported by a collection of activities. Teachers are able to select lesson components to suit the needs and capacities of their students. These activities can also be integrated into other curriculum areas to support students' learning. Each lesson plan contains: Background information (outlining the reasons for the activity); Lesson aims/objectives; A list of materials; An estimate of session duration (e.g. 20 minutes); A description of the activity, and materials such as worksheets.