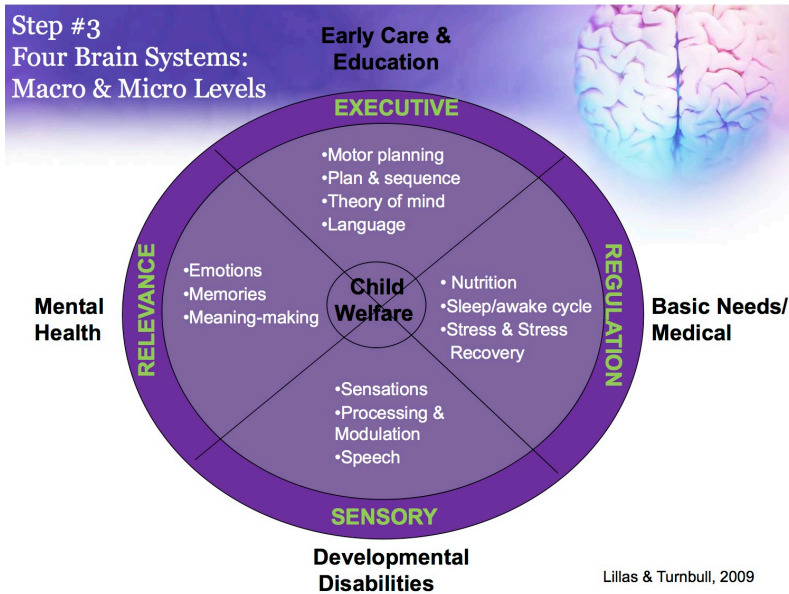


# Step Three Cheat Sheet: Assessing Strengths and Vulnerabilities in the Four Brain Systems



## BRAIN SYSTEMS: STRESS TRIGGERS AND RECOVERY TOOLKITS

STEP#3

STRESS TRIGGERS	RECOVERY TOOLKITS
Body (Regulation)	Regulation (Body)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
Sensations (Sensory)	Sensations (Sensory)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

STRESS TRIGGERS	RECOVERY TOOLKITS
Feelings (Relevance)	Feelings (Relevance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
Thoughts/Planning (Executive)	Thoughts/Planning (Executive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

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STEP #3

STEP #3

## History Worksheet for the Four Brain Systems

**Parental Risk Factors**  
That Can Compromise a Parent's Ability to Provide Interactive Regulation

- ☐ Significant prenatal stresses
- ☐ No or poor prenatal care
- ☐ History of, or current substance abuse, smoking
- ☐ Teenage pregnancy
- ☐ Poor nutrition
- ☐ Premature labor
- ☐ Multiple births
- ☐ Genetic disorder(s)
- ☐ Chronic medical condition(s)
- ☐ Chronic allergies
- ☐ Sleep difficulties
- ☐ Rigid or chaotic pattern of annual energy that is entrenched (hypertonic, hypotonic, flooded)
- ☐ Low maternal education
- ☐ Few financial resources
- ☐ Limited community resources

**Global Questions**  
That Assess the Overall Functioning of Each Brain System

**REGULATION**

- Are stress responses adaptive? That is, does a person show adequate recovery?
- Is the person's use of energy efficient and flexible or rigid or chaotic?
- How does the person conserve energy?

**SENSORY**

- How quickly and efficiently does the child/adult process sensory information?
- How reactive is the child/adult to sensory information from relationships?
- Is the child/adult leaning toward types of sensory information that are considered safe as opposed to those that are threatening?

**RELEVANCE**

- Is the individual able to express a range of positive and negative emotions flexibly?
- How do experiences influence memories and appraisals?
- Are emotionally loving, significant, and long-term relationships present?
- Does the individual tend to attribute positive or negative meanings to experiences?

**EXECUTIVE**

- Does child/adult show purposeful movement that is both adaptive and flexible?
- Can child/adult see the big picture?
- Can the child/adult stay on track in expressing a thought, emotion, or narrative?
- Can the child/adult complete tasks in a relatively smooth fashion?

**Child Risk Factors**  
That Can Decrease Self-Regulation and Increase the Need for Interactive Regulation

- ☐ Prenatal maternal stress
- ☐ No or poor prenatal care
- ☐ Intrauterine growth retardation or fetal malposition
- ☐ Toxins in utero
- ☐ Premature birth
- ☐ Genetic disorder(s)
- ☐ Infant medical condition(s)
- ☐ Chronic allergies
- ☐ Feeding problems
- ☐ Poor suck, swallow, and breath coordination
- ☐ Poor nutrition
- ☐ Sleep difficulties
- ☐ Rigid or chaotic pattern of annual energy that is entrenched (hypertonic, hypotonic, flooded)
- ☐ Loss of hearing or vision
- ☐ Inaccurate processing of information
- ☐ Slow processing of information
- ☐ Speech delay
- ☐ Learning disorder(s)
- ☐ Overreactive, underreactive, or both to sensory information
- ☐ Institutional care or neglect without adequate sensory information
- ☐ Male preterm infant
- ☐ Exposure to domestic violence
- ☐ Abuse and/or neglect
- ☐ Traumatic memories
- ☐ Lack of emotional care due to foster care or orphanage placement
- ☐ Chronically depressed or anxious
- ☐ Rapid swings into high-intensity emotions; low frustration tolerance
- ☐ Lack of empathy for self and others
- ☐ Lack of eye contact, absence of interest in others and/or lack of social referencing (overly detached)
- ☐ Highly demanding of others
- ☐ Over accommodating to others
- ☐ Lack of one person in the family who is strongly committed to child and who provides loving care
- ☐ Discrepancies exist among words, actions, or nonverbal communication
- ☐ Learning disruptions
- ☐ Inability to ask for help when necessary
- ☐ Motorically clumsy, awkward, or lethargic
- ☐ High distractibility
- ☐ High impulsivity
- ☐ Unable to delay gratification
- ☐ Lacks developmentally appropriate use of gestures to communicate needs and wants
- ☐ Lacks developmentally appropriate use of words to problem solve
- ☐ High distractibility
- ☐ High impulsivity
- ☐ Unable to delay gratification
- ☐ Lacks developmentally appropriate abilities to sequence activities of daily living (e.g., mental rigidity)
- ☐ Adheres to rigid routines and habits, avoiding novelty
- ☐ Lacks cause-effect reasoning
- ☐ Unable to hold self and others in mind at the same time
- ☐ Unable to consider the part in relation to the whole

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## Assessment of Load Conditions and Current Brain Capacities for Child and Parents

### Instructions:

1. Place a ✓ mark in each box that applies to the parents (P1 and P2) and the child (C) for both categories: triggers and concerns and preferences and strengths.
2. Place an N/A in capacities that do not apply to the child for developmental reasons.
3. The three highlighted items are the most salient intervention goals.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Four Load Conditions

1. Too frequent stress responses to real or perceived stressors
2. Inability to adjust (habituate) to initial challenges that, over time, should no longer be stressful
3. Prolonged stress response after the stressor is removed
4. Inadequate stress recovery back to baseline

### Regulation

- Deep sleep cycling
- Stable and expanding alert processing state
- Expression of all three stress responses
- Distinct states w/ smooth transitions
- Connection to visceral cues
- Efficient stress recovery

### Sensory

- Internal (body)
  - Pain (visceral, hunger, pain, pressure)
  - Balance/vestibular/movement
  - Proprioception (use of joints, muscles)

### External (world)

- Tactile (light and deep touch)
- Taste
- Smell
- Auditory
- Vision

### Processing

### Modulation

### Relevance

- Full range of emotions (positive and negative)
- Appropriate access to full range of memories
- Accurate meanings of self and other

### Executive

- Purposeful adaptive behavior
  - Spontaneous format
  - Automatic format
  - Conscious control format
- Integrating thoughts and emotions
- Shifting between self and other/context

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