



# FELT-SAFETY

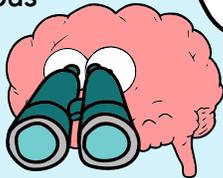
*What's that?*



## FELT-SAFETY

**BEING safe**  
**doesn't** always  
**mean FEELING safe.**

Our nervous system **constantly scans** for safety, danger, and life threats through a process called **neuroception**. It evaluates risks automatically, without needing conscious awareness.



## DETERMINING SAFETY

The brain blends **PAST** experiences **together with** what is happening **NOW**.

Previous experiences influence responses to present events.

Aha, now it all makes sense. This child's past experiences with new adults in professional clothing at school help explain their reaction to the new school counselor.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Humans can be one of the most dangerous threats to other humans! Even more dangerous than hippos (look it up!)

When people feel unsafe and move into **protection mode** they become **unpredictable** and sometimes **dangerous**.

It makes sense that being with someone who is in protection mode would flip **US** into protection mode. 

## SAFETY DETECTOR

The lower, unconscious parts of our brain continuously asks,



**"Am I safe?"**

This super fast safety detector is looking in three different places:

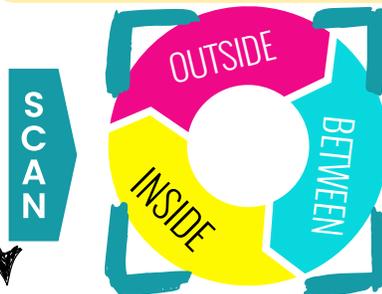
**Inside:** our inner experience

**Outside:** the environment

**Between:** people & relationships

## FELT-SAFETY IS NOT...

- Only about relational safety
- Only about physical safety
- Always related to what is happening in the moment
- Always easy to identify



Neuroception is continuously scanning all three places!

*Always*

## CONTAGIOUS

Everyone's **energy** goes up up up until **BOOM!**

So of course when our kids are **dysregulated**, we get **dysregulated too**. And yet it's hard for our kids to feel safe when we're dysregulated!

We can also use nervous system contagion to **co-regulate into safety**.



*Safety* 

# FELT-SAFETY

*Inside. Outside. Between.*



## INSIDE

Neuroception helps us know when **something's off** in our **inner world** so we will **tend to it**: hungry, tired, gotta pee? Illness, infection, neuroimmune disorder? Chronic "danger-danger" protection mode? Un-integrated intense past experiences?

## OUTSIDE

**Sensory**: Everyone has a unique way of processing sensory information. Sometimes what feels good to one person is too much, too loud, too stinky, too EVERYTHING.  
**Structure, routine, predictability**: this can increase safety for some kids but too much can be a cue of danger for others.

## BETWEEN

Neuroception knows safety in relationships by detecting others' emotional and regulation states, even if they hide it. Felt-safety comes from feeling known, not from ideas about what kind of connection is good or preferred. Felt-safety can be impacted when other's around our kids are in protection states.