

Beneath the surface.

WHAT WE SEE IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE.

What we often notice first



Behaviour

What we see them do.



Attention

Where their focus goes.



Learning

How they take in and use information.

What else might be happening?

Behaviour, attention and learning are influenced by many interconnected factors beneath the surface.



Brain

How their brain is working and developing.



Emotions

What they're feeling inside.



Environment

What's happening around them.



Body

What their body is experiencing.



Relationships

Connection, safety and belonging.



Everyday needs

Four physiological.
Two relational.
One creative.

Regulation Gears

What gear are they in – and is it helping right now?



Still

Rest, reset and feel safe.



Move

Release energy and shift state.



Flow

Focus, create and engage.

A gentler way forward.

When we look beneath the surface, we can respond with more understanding, more support and strategies that meet their needs.



Understand

Look beneath the surface.



Support

Meet their underlying needs.



Help them grow

With greater regulation, connection and learning.



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Beneath the Surface

A reflection tool

When behaviour, attention or learning is challenging, there is often more going on beneath the surface.

Use this simple framework to pause, consider what might be happening, and explore what could help next.



1 What am I noticing?

LOOK ABOVE THE SURFACE.

What behaviour, attention or learning am I seeing right now?



Behaviour

What are they doing or not doing?



Attention

What does their attention look like right now?



Learning

What might this mean for their learning or participation?

What do I notice?

2 What else might be happening?

EXPLORE BENEATH THE SURFACE.

Consider the different areas that might be influencing what you're seeing.



Brain

What might be happening in their brain right now? (e.g. stress response, cognitive load, development)



Body

How might their body be feeling? (e.g. energy, sensation, stress, health, sleep)



Emotions

What emotions might be present or hard to express? (e.g. worry, frustration, overwhelm, sadness)



Relationships

What is happening socially? Who do they feel safe with? What are their connection needs?



Environment

What aspects of the environment might be adding load or support? (e.g. noise, routine, transitions, expectations)



Everyday needs

Are basic needs being met? (e.g. sleep, movement, food, water, connection, belonging)

3 What state might they be in?

CONSIDER THEIR REGULATION GEARS.

What might their nervous system need right now?



Still

Rest and recover.
Do they need safety and calm right now?



Move

Release and reset.
Do they need movement, energy or a change in sensation?



Flow

Engage and create.
Are they ready to connect, play, explore or learn?

Which state might they be in?

4 What might help next?

EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES.

Use what you've noticed to think about small, supportive changes you could try.



Add

What could we add to provide more support or capacity?



Modify

What could we change or adjust to reduce load?



Delete

What could we remove that might be getting in the way?



Support

How can I, or others, offer support, connection or co-regulation?

What will I try?

How did it go?

"WHEN WE LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE,
WE MOVE FROM REACTING TO UNDERSTANDING.
UNDERSTANDING CREATES COMPASSION,
AND COMPASSION CREATES POSSIBILITY."



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