

# Circle of Security® PARENTING™

By Glen Cooper, Kent Hoffman & Bert Powell



## Caregiver Workbook

Name \_\_\_\_\_ V19.4

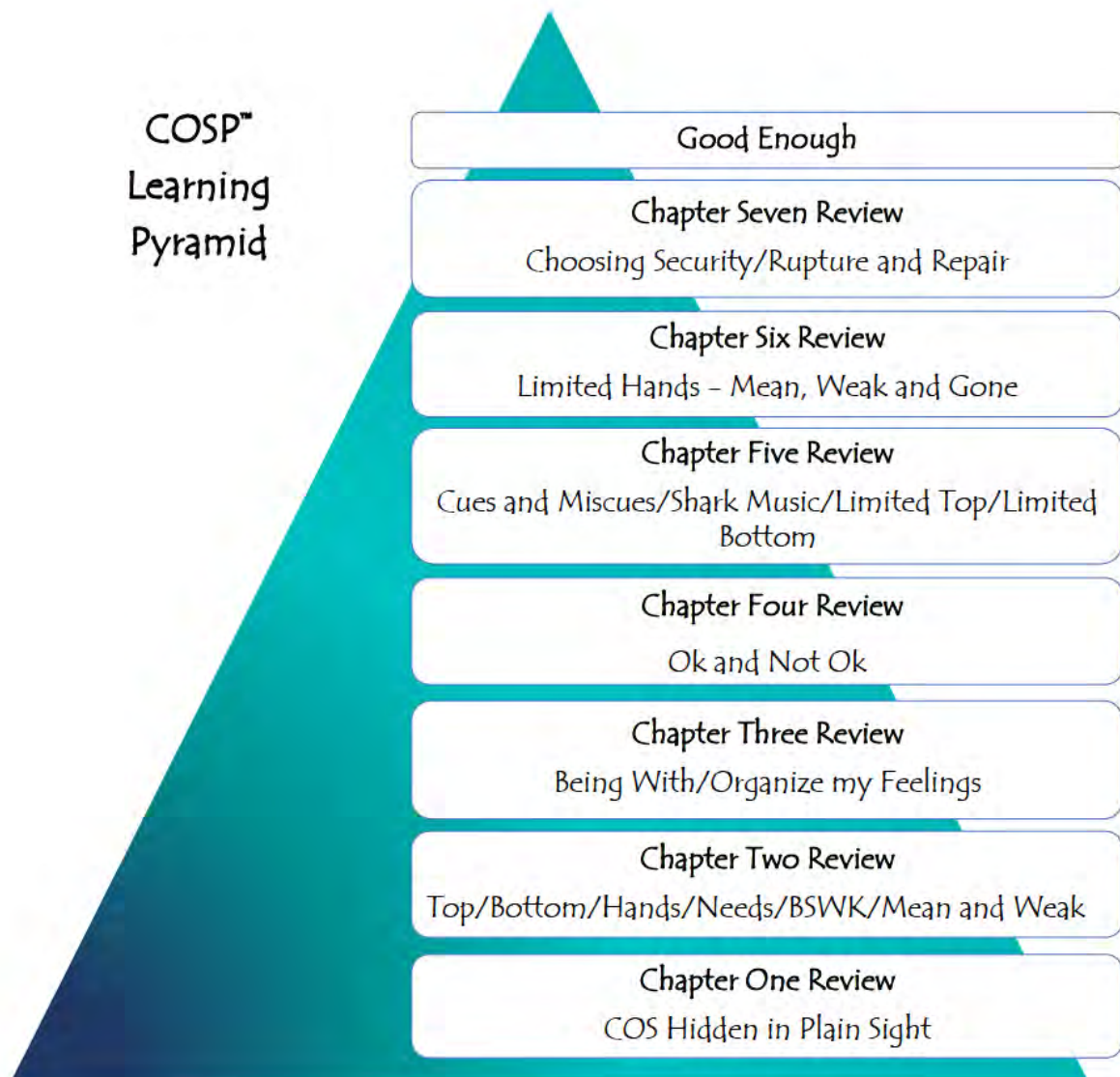


Circle of Security  
INTERNATIONAL  
*Early Intervention Program for Parents & Children*

© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International



COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



The COSP™ Learning Pyramid is made available at the beginning of each chapter to help you find your way through this step by step learning process. You will find that each chapter adds new information and builds on the learning from previous chapters.

Because COSP™ brings new ways to look at caregiving, sometimes it can be difficult to see the whole picture until you get through the entire program. Hang in there. This is a new way to look at caregiving and may take some time and practice to see things in a different way.



*chapter one*  
Welcome to  
Circle of Security®  
PARENTING™

© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International



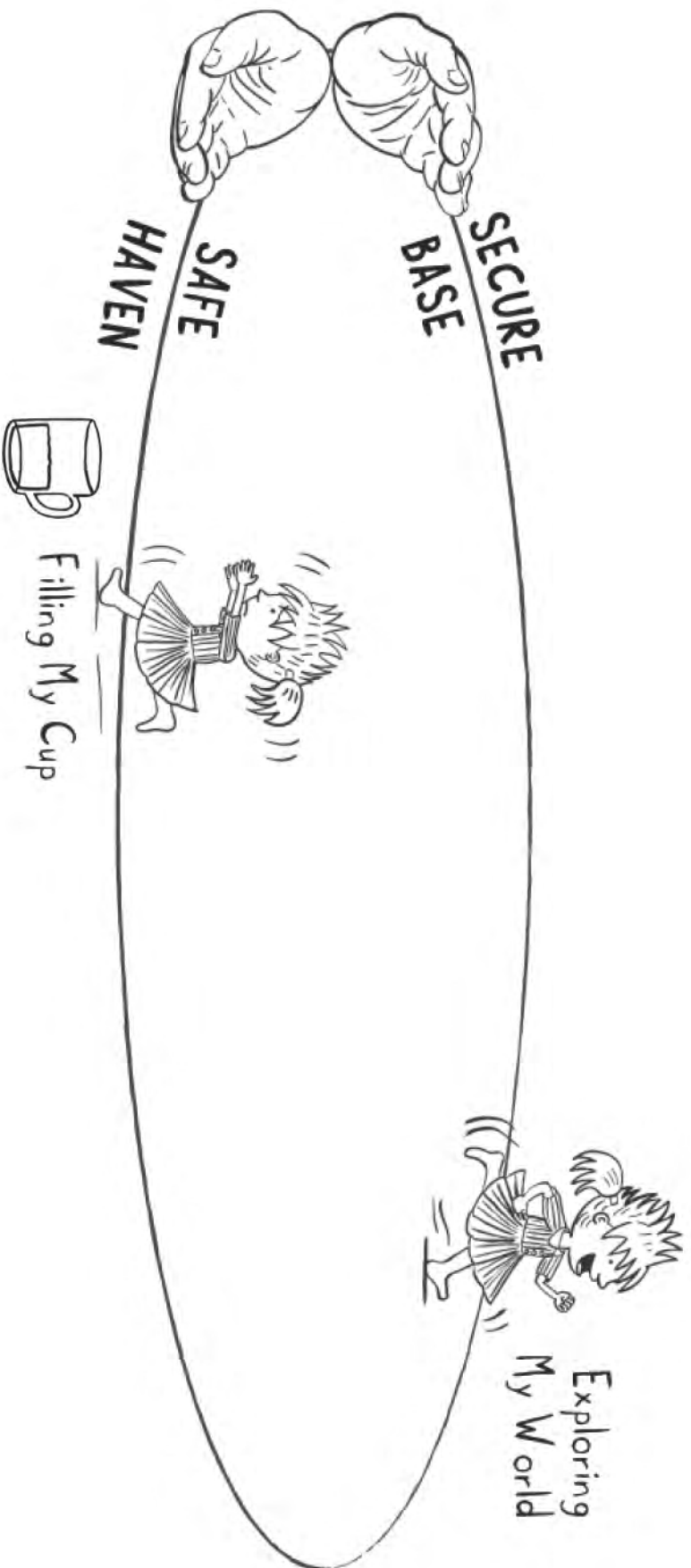
# The Difference that Makes a Difference

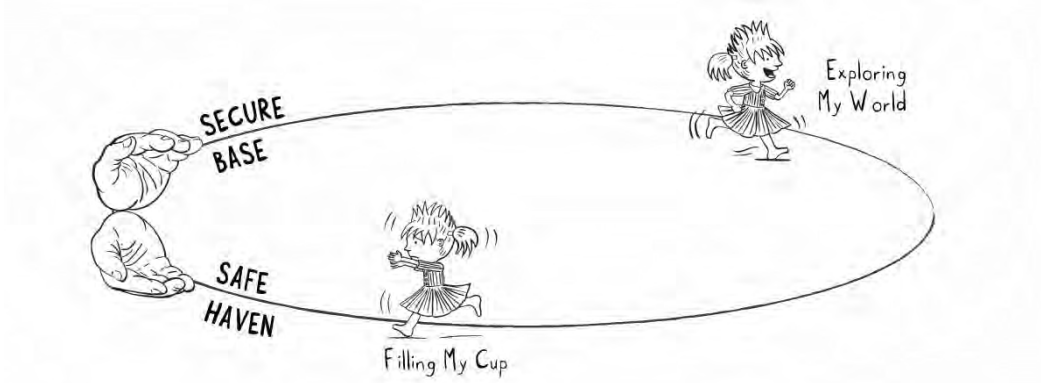
After 60 years of research we know that the more secure children are, the more they are able to:

- Enjoy more happiness with their parents
- Feel less anger at their parents
- Turn to their parents for help when in trouble
- Solve problems on their own
- Get along better with friends
- Have lasting friendships
- Solve problems with friends
- Have better relationships with brothers and sisters
- Have higher self-esteem
- Know that most problems will have an answer
- Trust that good things will come their way
- Trust the people they love
- Know how to be kind to those around them

# Circle of Security<sup>®</sup>

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Ask yourself:

- What's it like knowing your child needs you just as much when they are out exploring as when they are right there with you?

.....  
.....  
.....

Preview of Chapter Two:

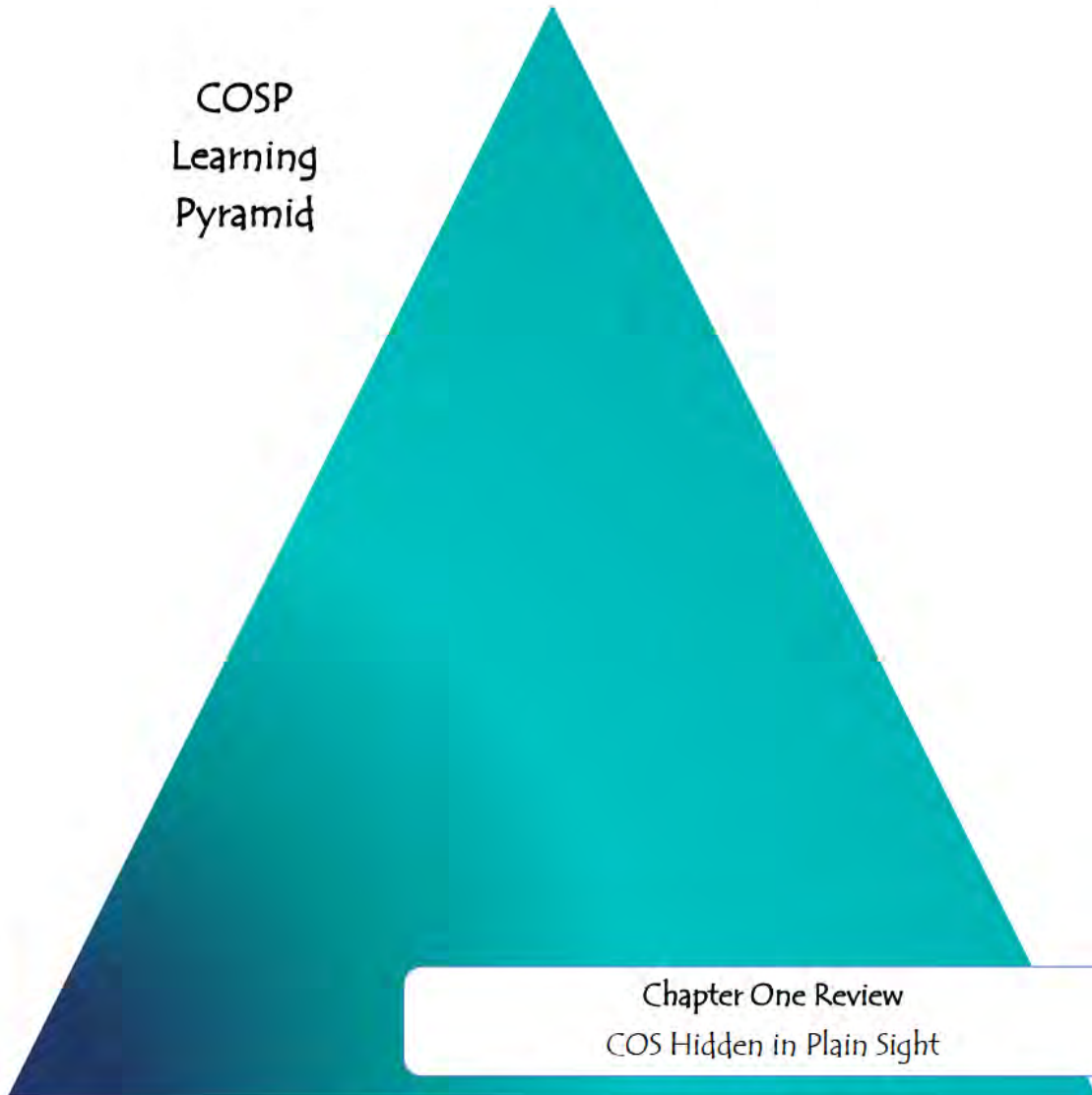
- All caregivers know what it's like to feel lost and without a clue about what their child needs. It turns out that knowing the Circle is a great way to make sense of what they're really asking for. If we know what they need, their lives and our lives go so much more smoothly. That's what we'll be learning about next time.



## chapter two

# Exploring our Children's Needs all the way Around the Circle

COSP  
Learning  
Pyramid

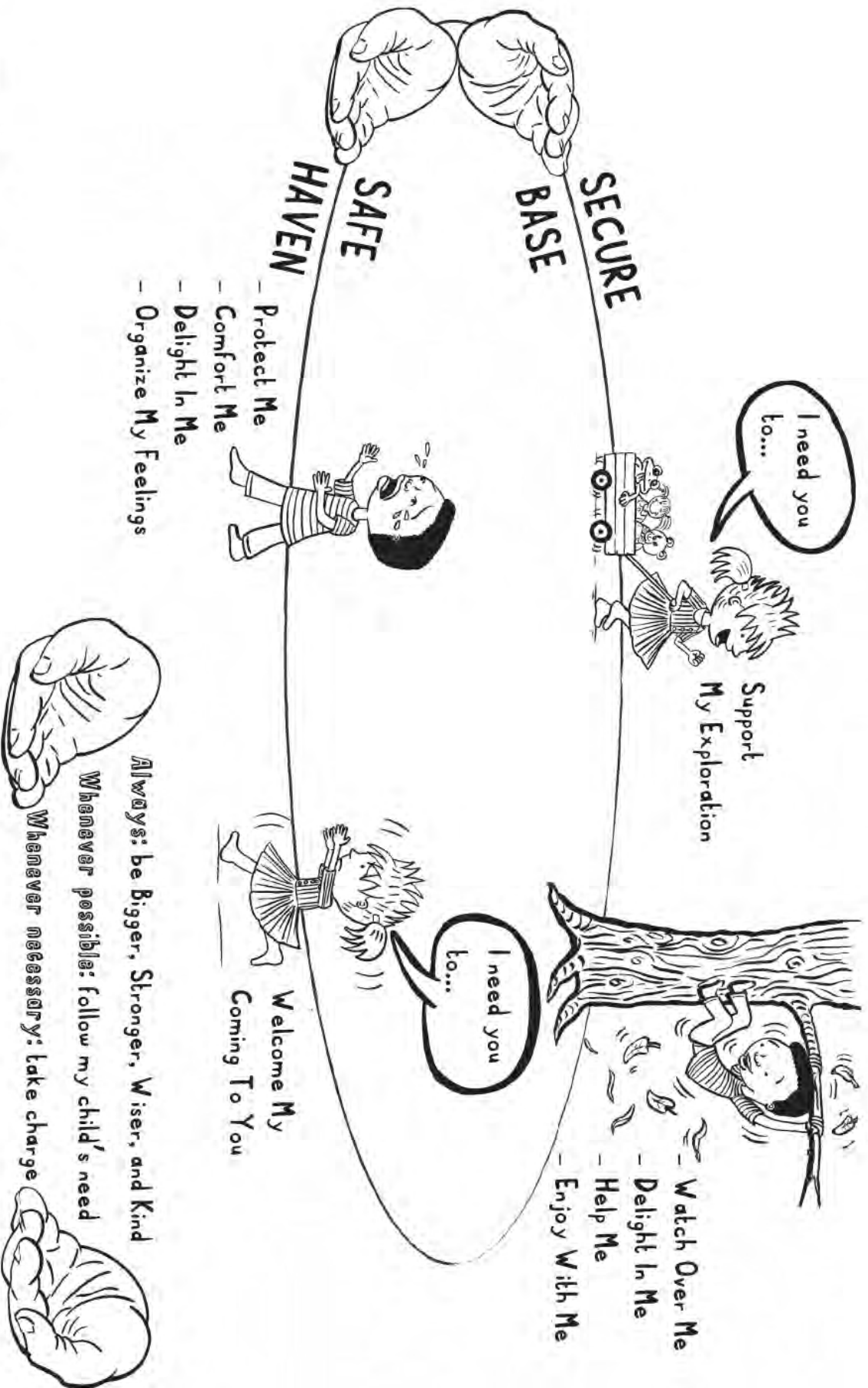


© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International



# Circle of Security®

## Parent Attending To The Child's Needs





(Almost)

Everything I need to know about supporting security

in 25 words or less

**ALWAYS BE: BIGGER, STRONGER, WISER & KIND.  
WHENEVER POSSIBLE: FOLLOW MY CHILD'S NEED.  
WHENEVER NECESSARY: TAKE CHARGE.**

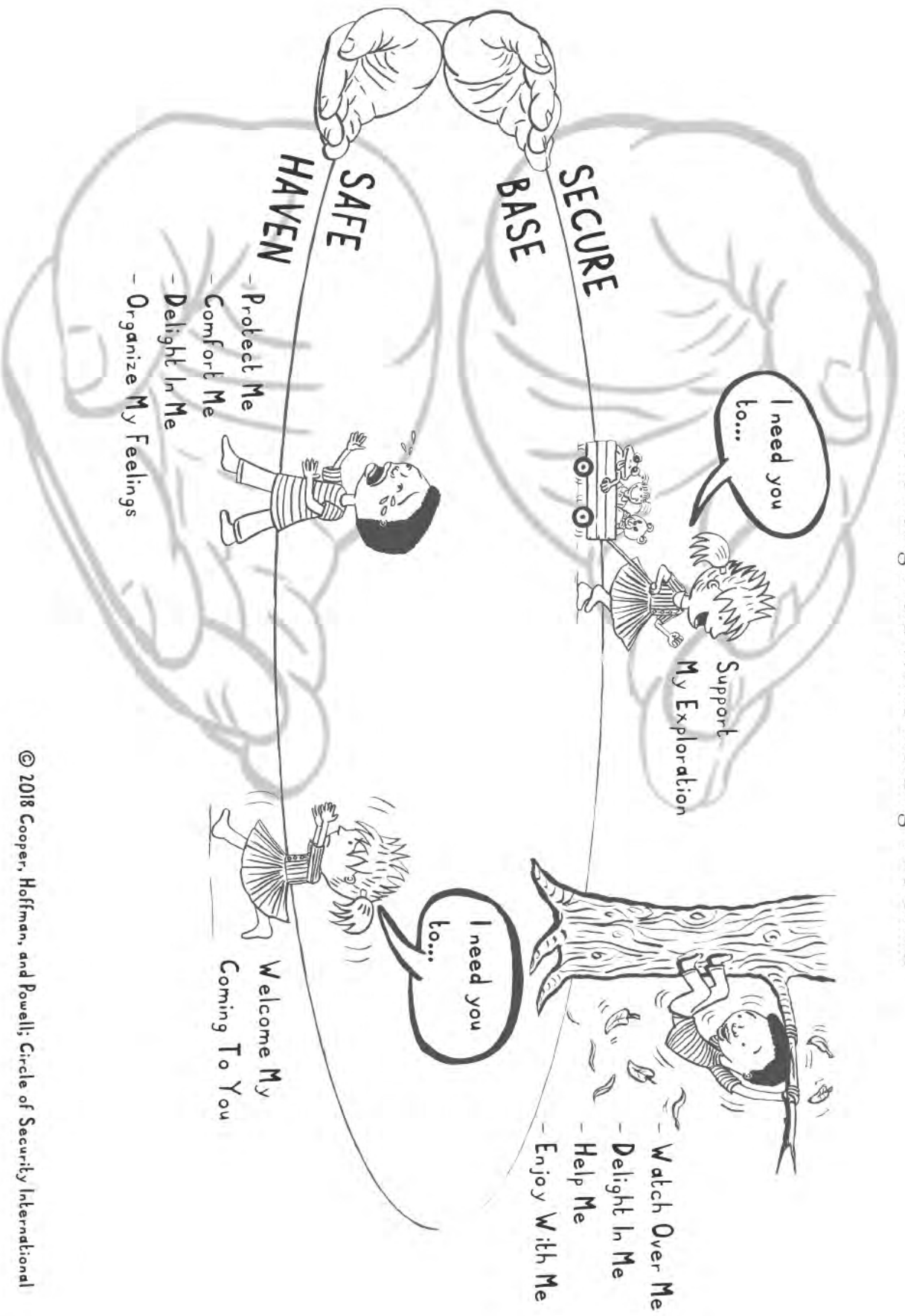


©2016 Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin & Powell

© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

# Circle of Security

Parent Being Held While Holding The Child





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?  
.....  
.....
- What does my child need?  
.....  
.....
- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?  
.....  
.....



Watch for stories of Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

We all struggle at times with maintaining the balance of Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind. Keep an eye out for moments of Mean or Weak.

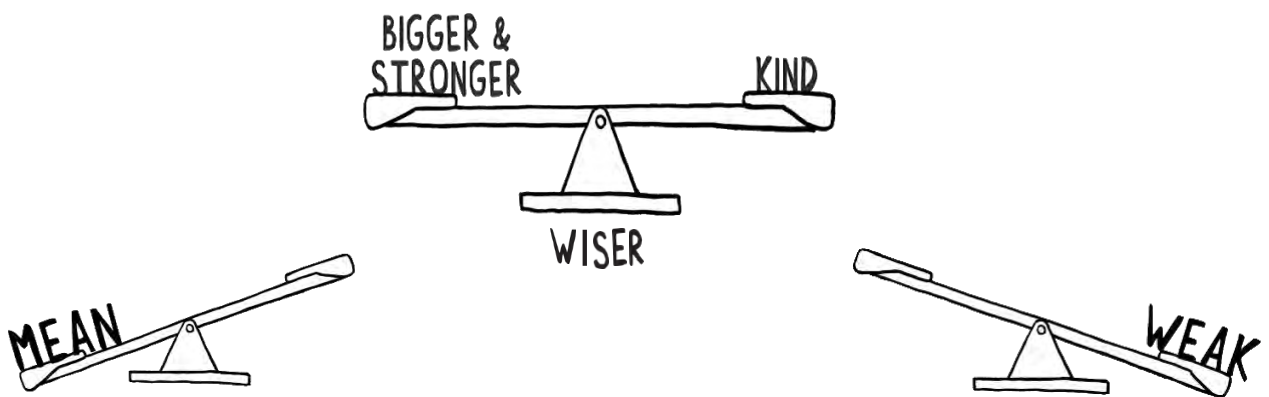
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Write about your thoughts and feelings concerning the support you need in order to deal with the issues in this program. Who are your Hands?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Preview of Chapter Three:

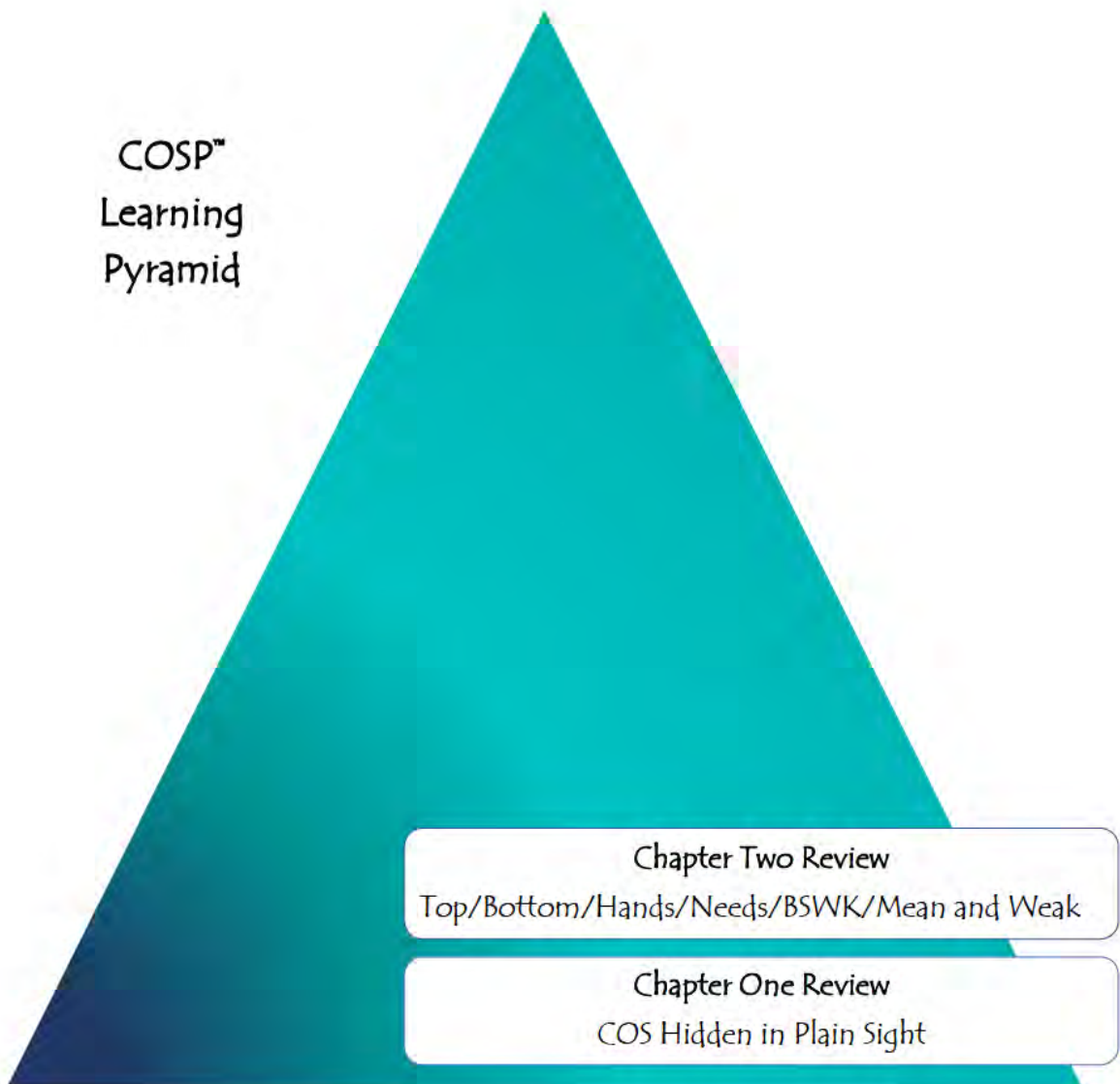
- It's really helpful to know the specific needs our children have. But knowing their needs and meeting their needs are two different things. Is there a key to actually meeting our children's needs that we can all learn? We'll find out in the next chapter.



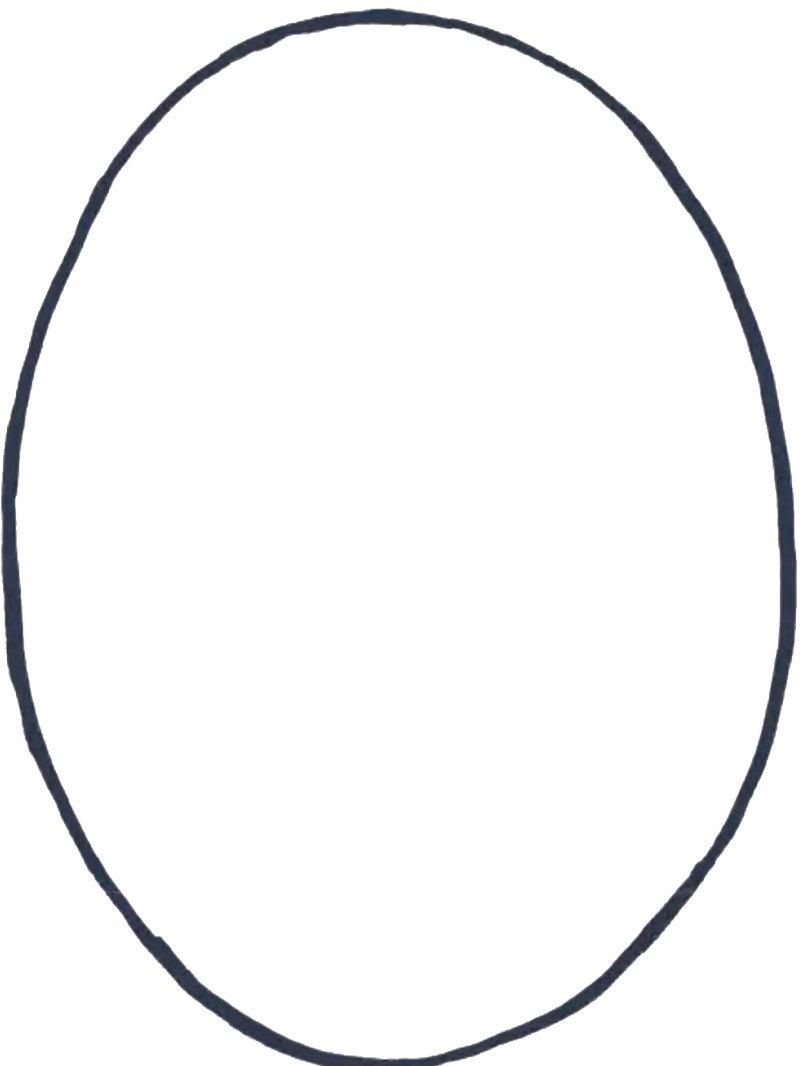
# chapter three

## 'Being With' on the Circle

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



# Being With



For each of the core emotions draw a circle. Place each circle either inside, outside, or partially in/outside the Circle of Security based upon:  
In your experience as a child, how much your caregiver was able to Be With and help organize these six key feelings.



CURIOSITY



JOY



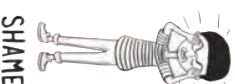
SADNESS



FEAR



ANGER



SHAME



Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?

.....

.....

- What does my child need?

.....

.....

- What is my child feeling (mad, sad, curiosity, joy, excitement, anger, shame)?

.....

.....

- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?

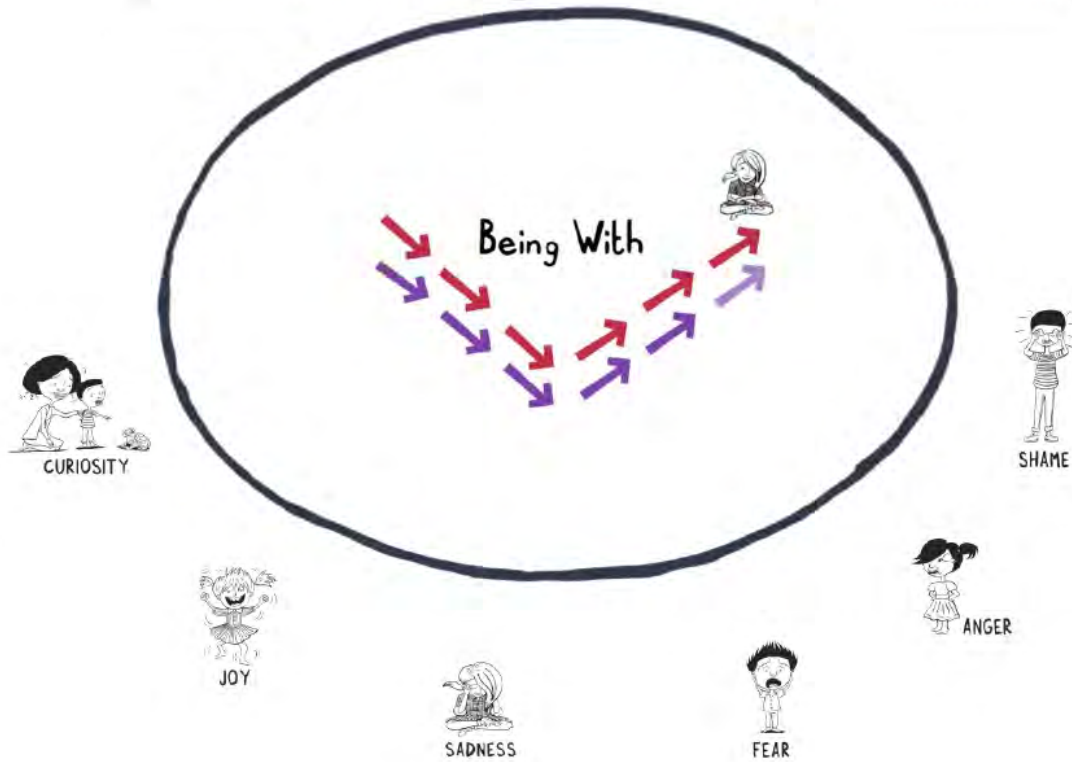
.....

.....



Look for stories about Being With your child and helping them organize their feelings

.....  
.....  
.....



Look for stories about Being With your children when they were expressing an emotion that is outside of your feelings circle.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Preview of Chapter Four:

- Now we know how to read needs on the Circle and the importance of Being With those needs both physically and emotionally. Many parents ask, "How early do those needs get expressed?" In the next chapter, we'll look at the Circle in infants. Babies are born hardwired for the Circle of Security and they start teaching us early in their lives about their needs around the Circle.

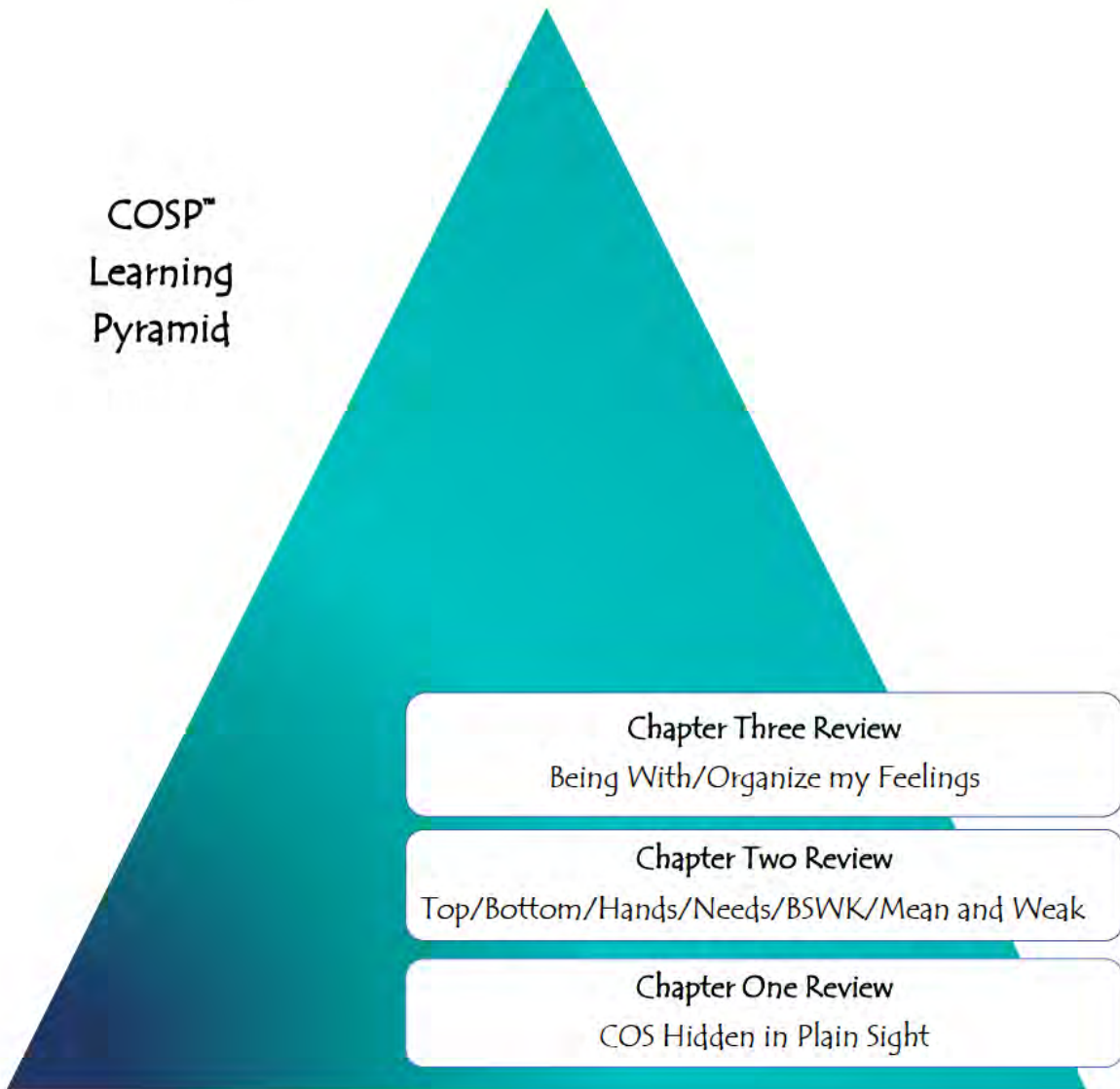




# chapter four

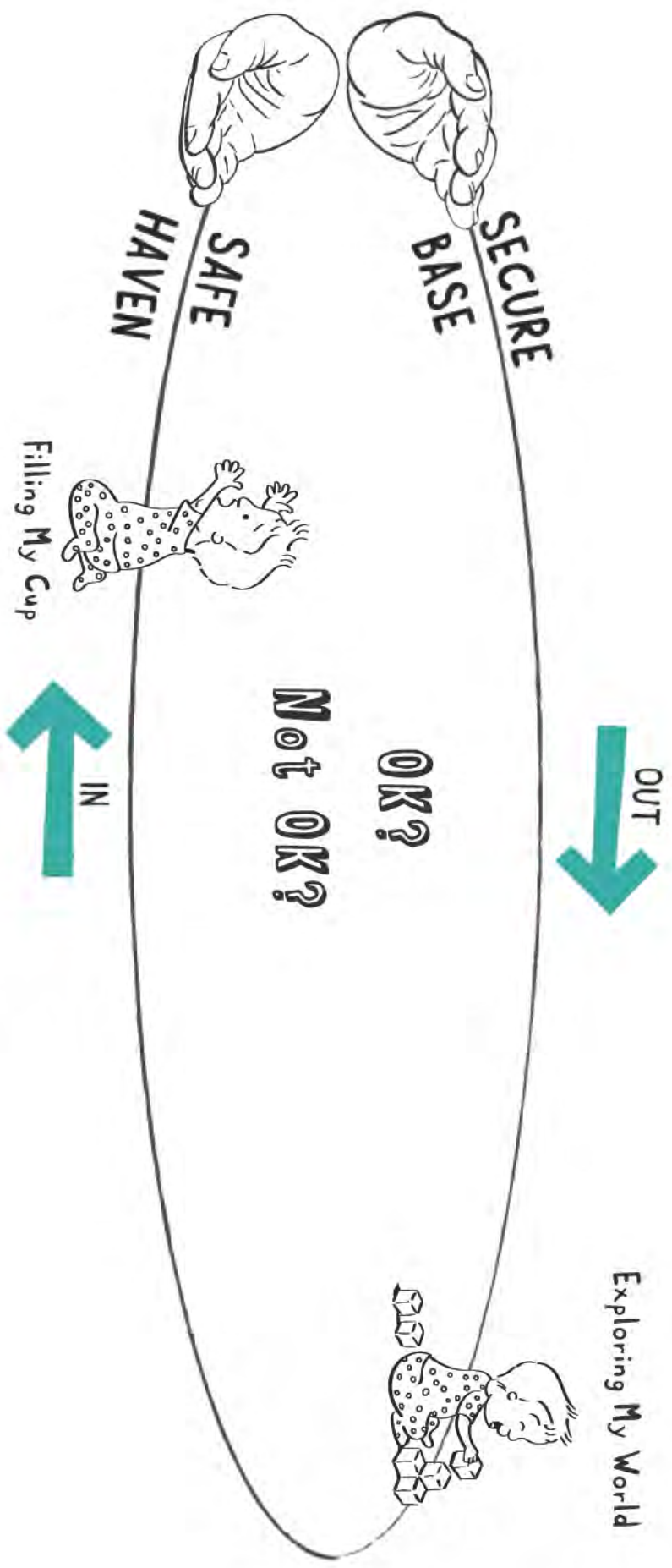
## 'Being With' Infants on the Circle

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



# Circle of Security

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?

.....

.....

- What does my child need?

.....

.....

- What is my child feeling (mad, sad, curiosity, joy, excitement, anger, shame)?

.....

.....

- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?

.....

.....



What is it like Being With your child when they're feeling OK and NOT OK?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Look for a moment where you were able to be Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind with a feeling that is outside of your feelings Circle.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Preview of Chapter Five:

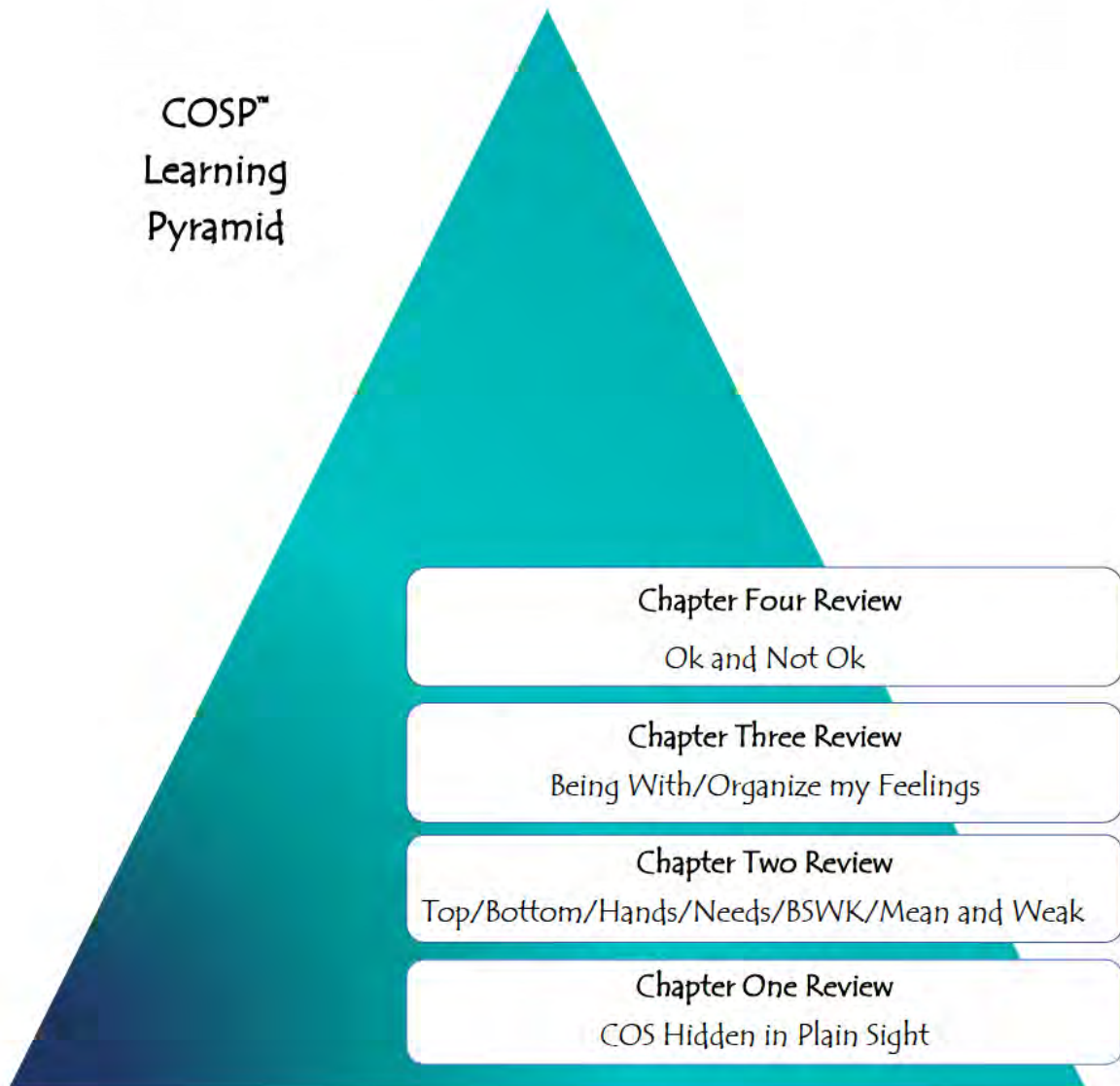
- It's really helpful to know how to use the roadmap to see our children's needs and what it means to Be With our children in whatever they are feeling. But sometimes, it can be just plain hard to meet those needs. Next week, we'll look more closely at what gets in the way of meeting our children's needs as we look together at the Path to Security.



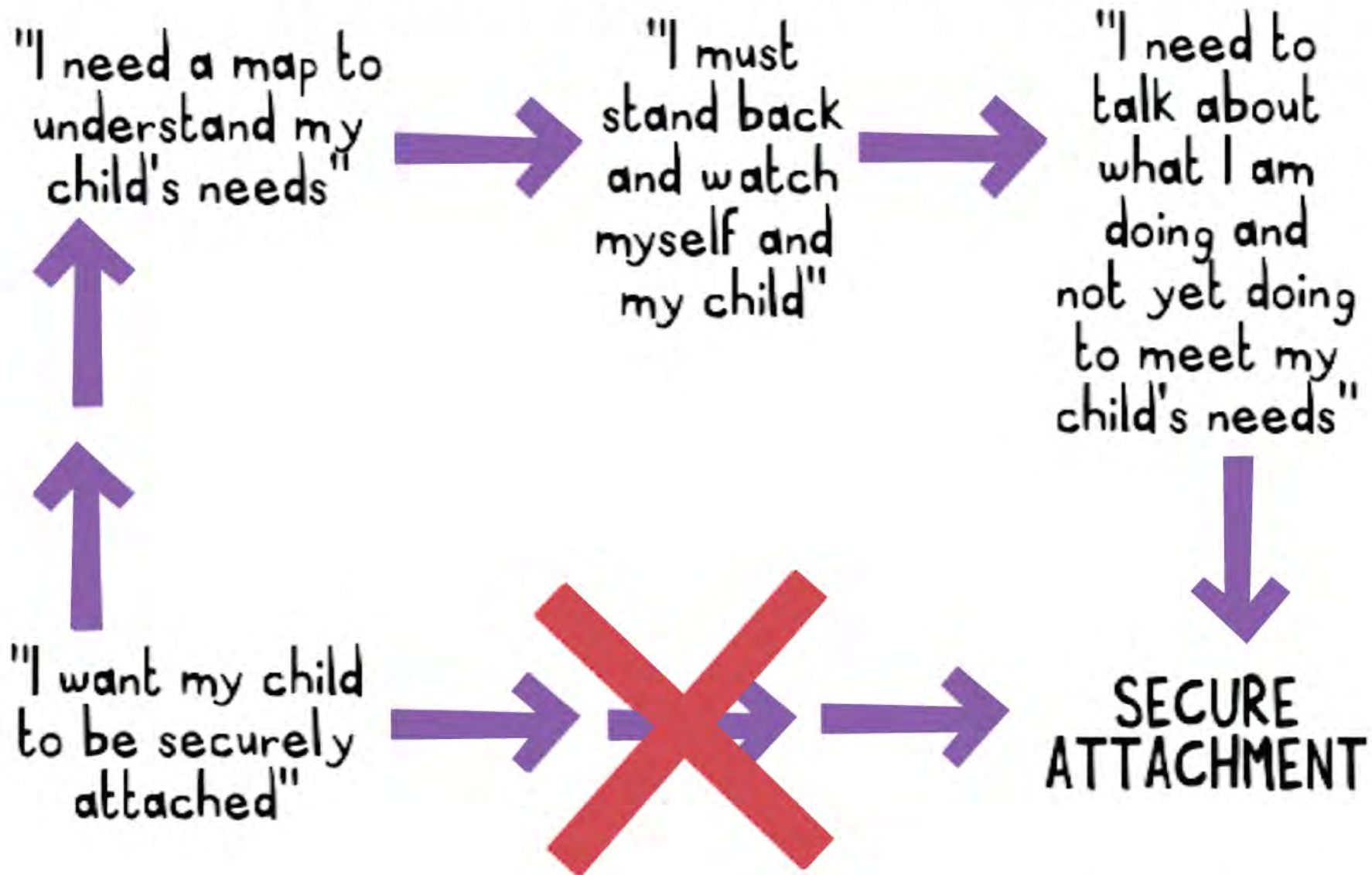
# chapter five

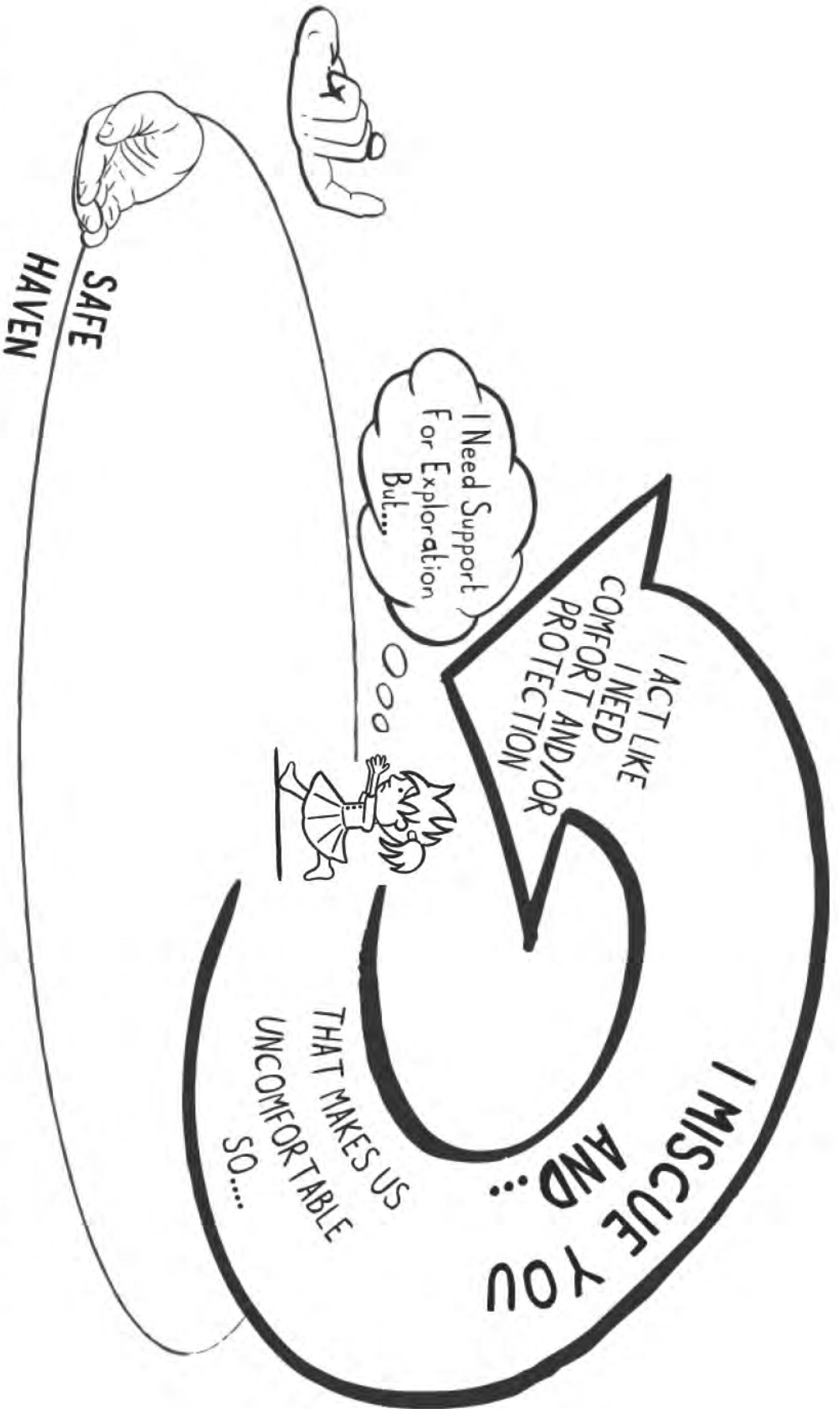
## The Path to Security

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



# The Path to Secure Attachment



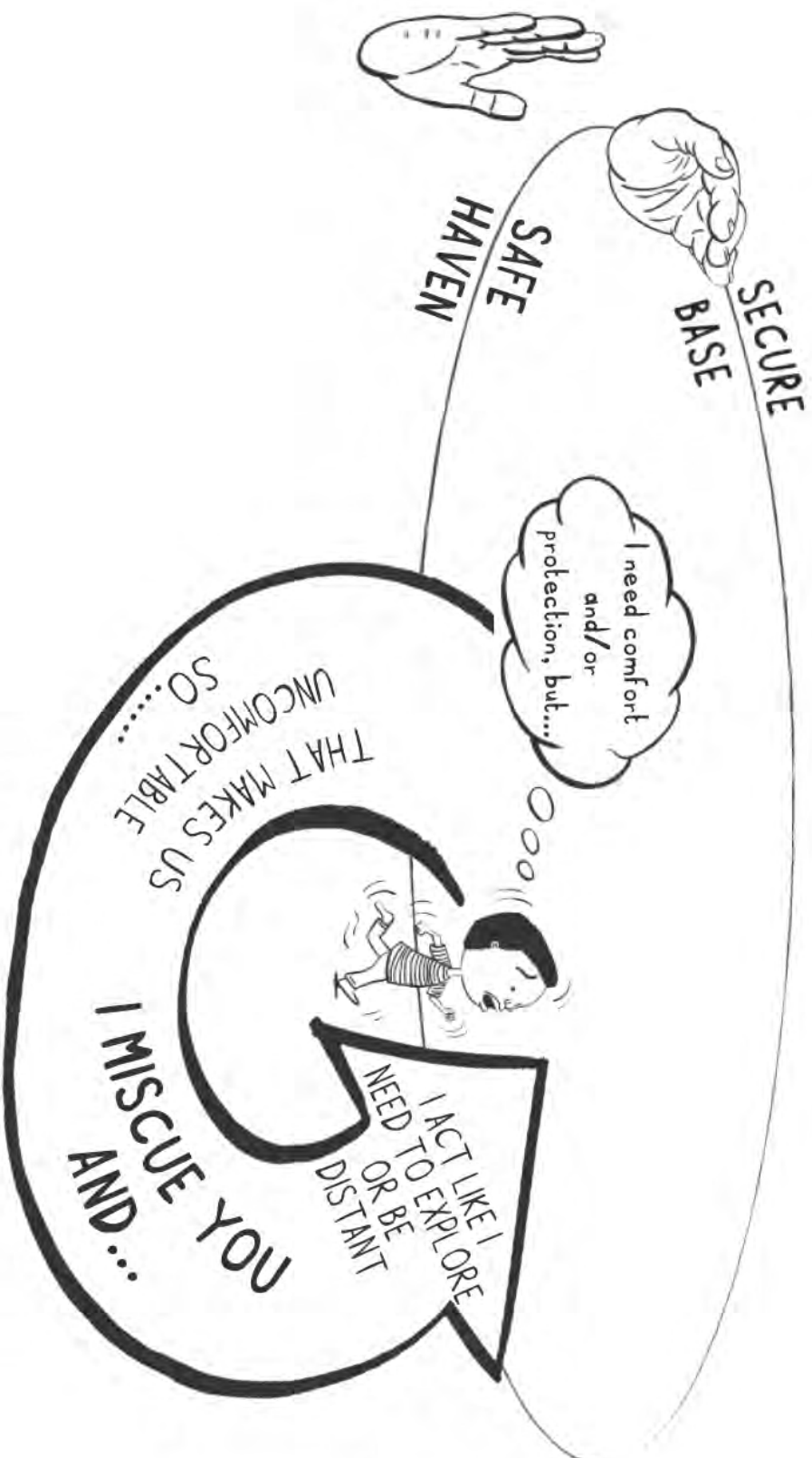


# Circle of Limited Security™ Top

Child Miscuing: Responding to Parent's Needs

# Circle of Limited Security™ Bottom

Child Miscuing: Responding To Parent's Needs





# Choosing Security

## Your Child's Need:

When your child's need requires a response that is not comfortable for you...

## Shark Music:

You suddenly feel uncomfortable... (e.g. lonely, unsafe, rejected, abandoned, angry, controlled etc.)

## Choice Point:

You can respond to your child's need (in spite of the discomfort it causes you),

**OR**

You can protect yourself from further pain by overriding your child's need (limiting or avoiding a response).  
If you protect yourself from uncomfortable feelings, your child's need will go unmet.  
Over time s/he will begin to express that need indirectly, causing both of you difficulty.

All parents hear Shark Music with some of their child's needs. The parents of secure children recognize their Shark Music. Often (not always) they choose to find a way to meet their child's need, in spite of the temporary pain it causes them.

## Steps to Security:

1. Recognize the discomfort  
"Here's my Shark Music again."
2. Honor the discomfort  
"I hurt now because this particular need triggers my Shark Music."
3. Respond to your child's need.

# Optional: "Shark Music Activity" Handout

Think of examples and fill in each of the four quadrants

## Feelings



Comforting

Frightening

Reality

Safe

Dangerous

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>On Target</b><br/>Activities that are safe and feel comforting<br/>Example: A walk in the park</p>        | <p><b>Shark Music</b><br/>Activities that are safe and feel frightening<br/>Example: Scary Movie</p> |
| <p><b>An Error Has Occurred!</b><br/>Activities that are dangerous and feel comforting<br/>Example: Smoking</p> | <p><b>On Target</b><br/>Activities that are dangerous and feel frightening<br/>Example: Violence</p> |



All parents hear Shark Music with some of their child’s needs. Welcome to the club. The parents of secure children recognize their Shark Music. Often (not always) they choose to find a way to meet their child’s need, in spite of the temporary discomfort it causes them

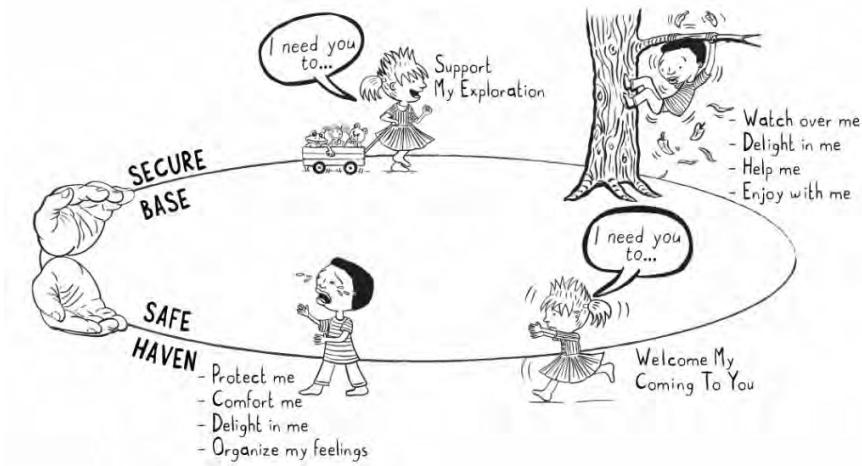
Write a story about a time your Shark Music showed up. What was happening?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How did Shark Music affect how you responded to your child?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....  
 .....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?  
 .....
- What does my child need?  
 .....
- What is my child feeling (mad, sad, curiosity, joy, excitement, anger, shame)?  
 .....
- Is this a cue or a miscue?  
 .....
- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?  
 .....

Preview of Chapter Six:

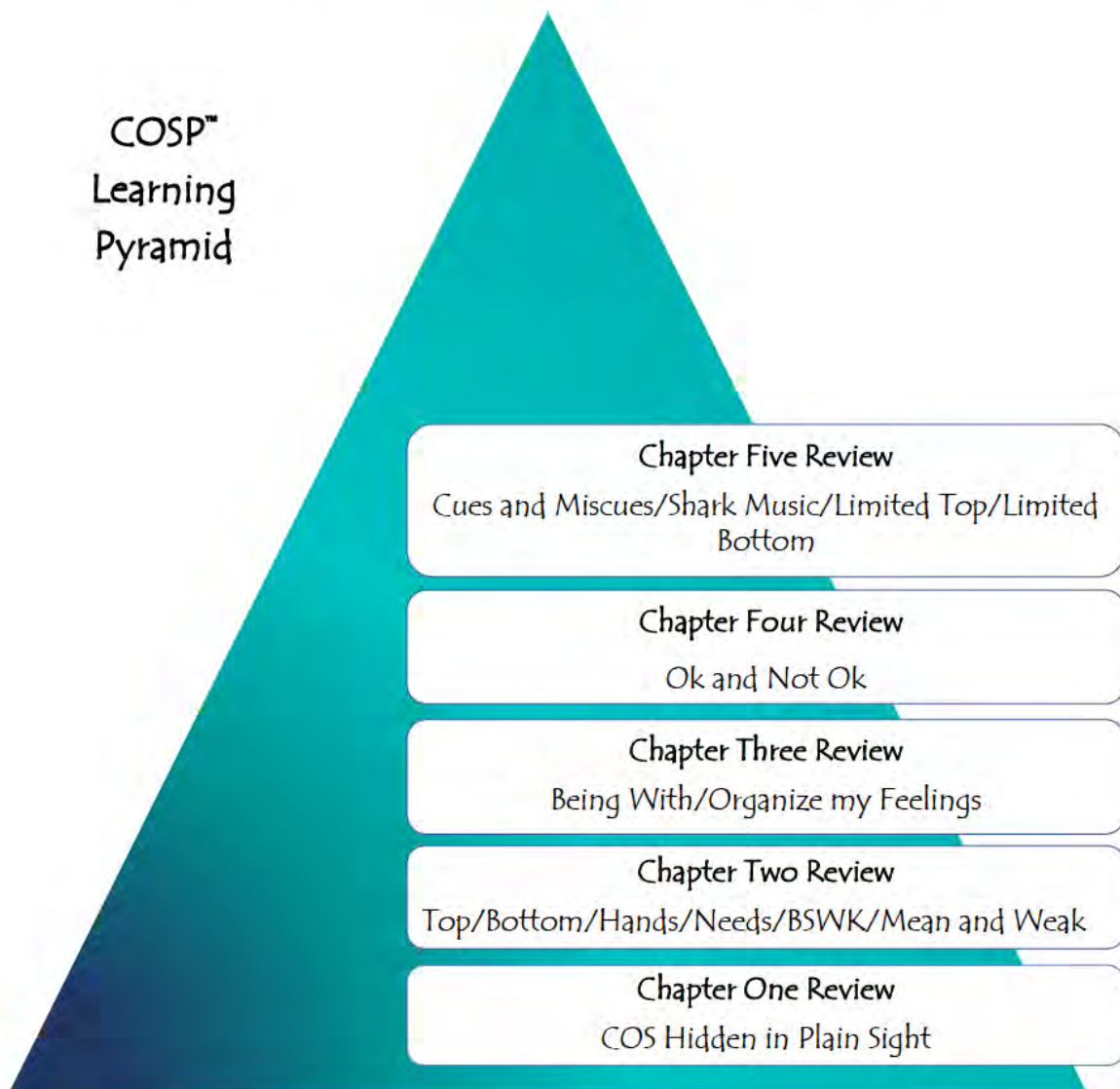
- In the next chapter, we'll take a closer look at Mean and Weak and the struggles we all share in wanting to be the best caregiver we can be.



# chapter six

## Exploring Our Struggles

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



# Circle of Limited Security®

Child Frightened: Unable to Find Parent's Hands



When we are **Mean, Weak, or Gone** our children feel afraid of the person they most need to turn to.

When this happens repeatedly, our children learn not to turn to us, teachers, or other safe adults for help.

# Limited Hands

Losing the Wisdom to Stay in Balance

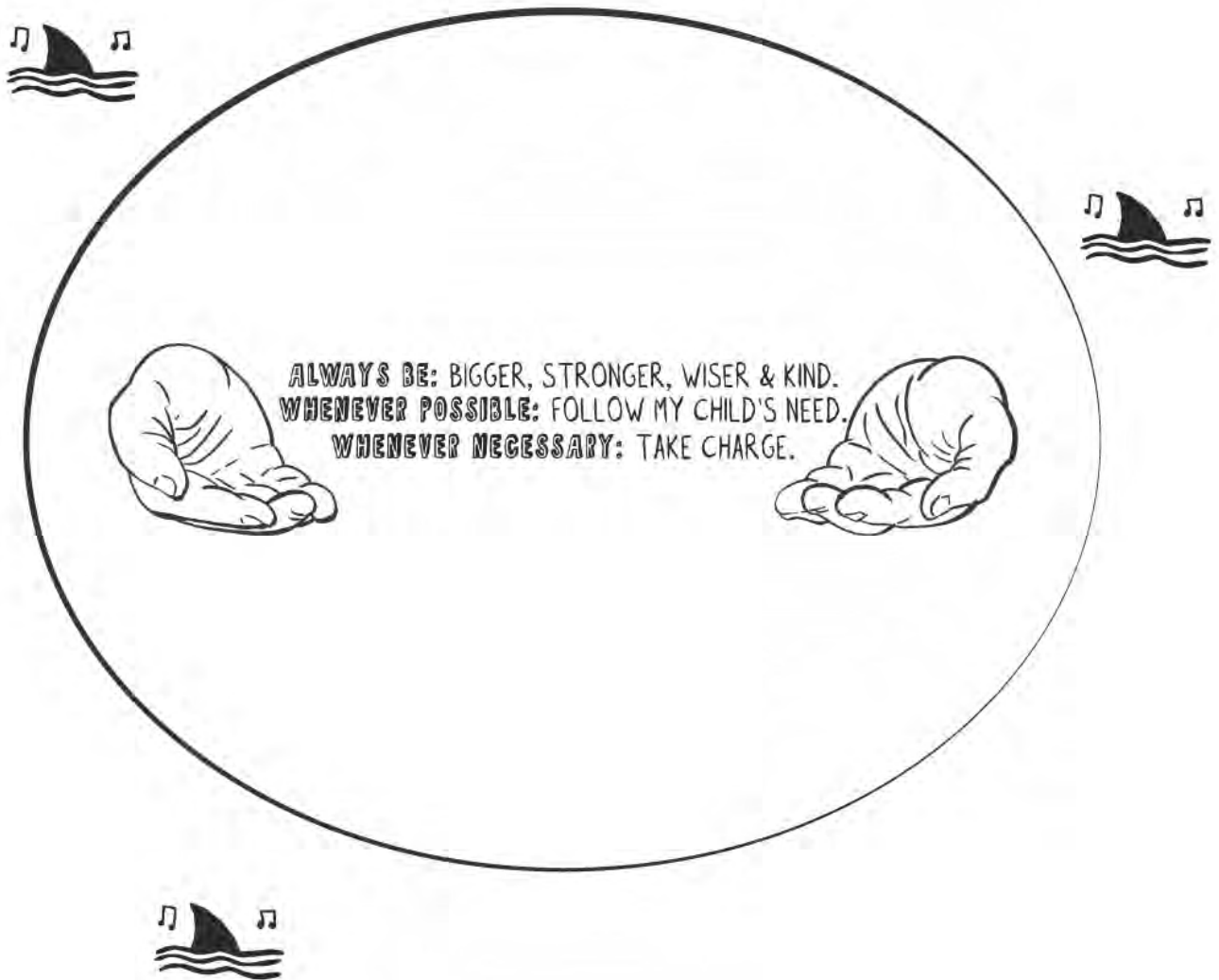


© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

## Optional: Being With, Hands, and Shark Music Circle Handout

This optional exercise provides an opportunity to once again work with the “Being With” Circle introduced in Chapter 3 and consider the intersection of **Being With** feelings, **Shark Music**, and being the **Hands**. This time place **your children’s** six core emotions (curiosity, joy, sadness, fear, anger, and shame) either all the way in, part way in, or outside the Feelings Circle based on how much you feel you are able to ‘Be With’ your child and help organize these feelings.

### Being With, Hands, and Shark Music







Look for stories about times where you heard your Shark Music and leaned towards Mean, Weak or Gone to manage the discomfort

.....

.....

.....

.....



What do you notice about when your Shark Music shows up? Are there some needs on the Circle where you often hear Shark Music?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Can you think of an example how a feeling outside of your Being With circle activates Shark Music for you and pushes your child to miscue?

.....

.....

.....

.....





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....

.....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?  
.....
- What does my child need?  
.....
- What is my child feeling (mad, sad, curiosity, joy, excitement, anger, shame)?  
.....
- Is this a cue or a miscue?  
.....
- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?  
.....
- Am I hearing Shark Music? How does it affect my response?  
.....

Preview of Chapter Seven:

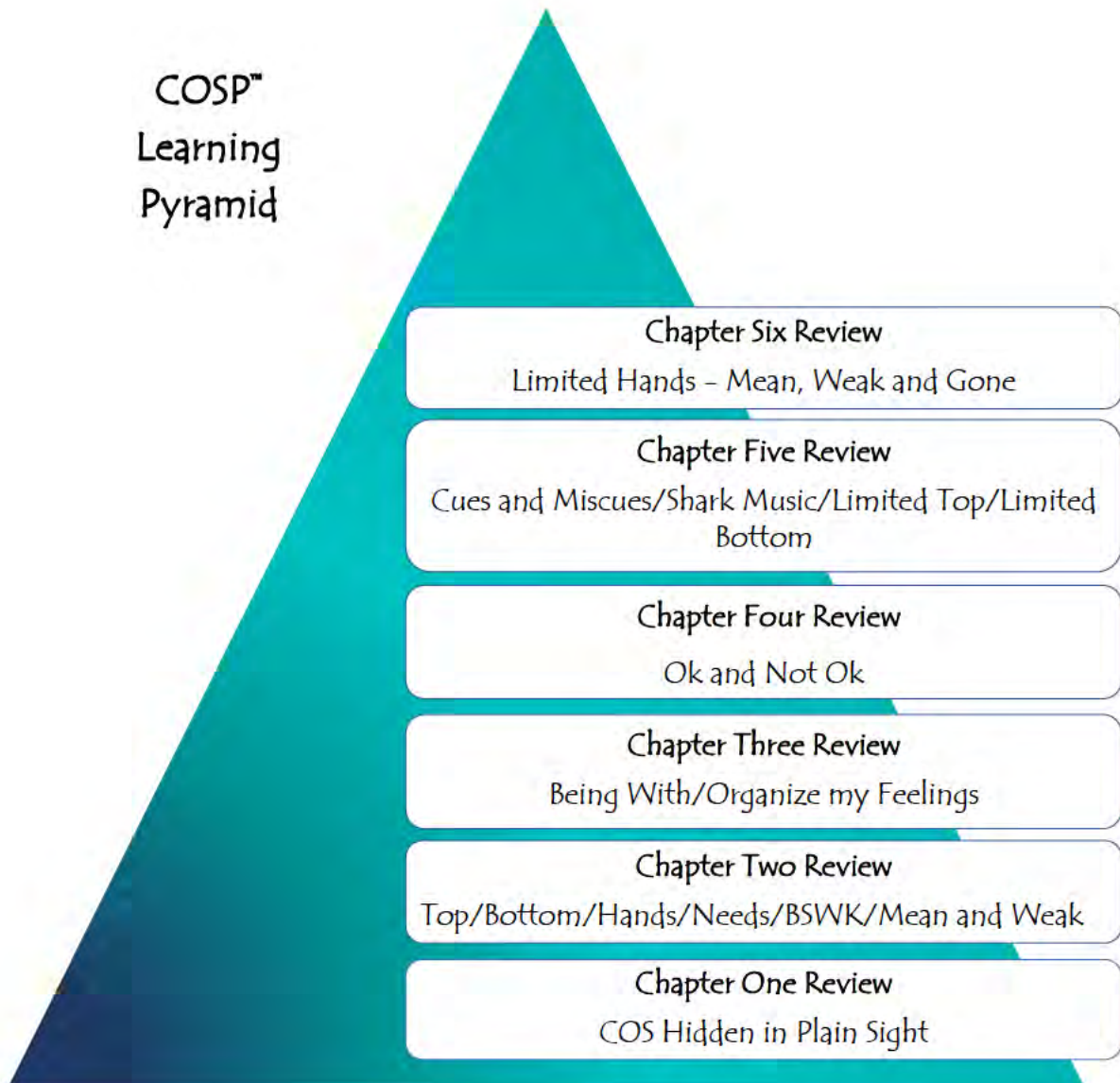
- We've learned about Shark Music and the ways that Mean, Weak, and Gone show up in our caregiving. It's good to have a deeper understanding of where you struggle. But you may find yourself wanting to know what to do when your child struggles or your Shark Music causes a rupture in the relationship. Next Time we'll take a look at Rupture and Repair.



# chapter seven

## Rupture and Repair

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



**When I get upset**  
(frustrated, withdrawn, whiny, demanding, out of control):

**My behavior**  
is telling you something  
important

When my feelings are  
too much for me to handle  
alone, I need you to  
help me.



**When Good Kids Do Bad Things**  
Seeing our child rather than our Shark Music

# Repairing Relationships with a Time-In

This is a guideline. It is, of course, harder than this page makes it sound.

## I am Upset and My Child is Upset

When necessary, I start with a Time-Out \* for me, for my child, or for both of us, until I get back on the Circle by:

Realizing that I am Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind.

Reminding myself that no matter how I feel, my child needs me.

\*A Time-Out can be helpful as a first step, but not as a punishment

## I am Calm (enough) and My Child is Upset

We can build a safe "repair routine" together (remember: the first 1,000 times are the hardest!).

I Take Charge so my child is not too out of control

Go to a neutral place that is our Time-In spot, where we sit together and let feelings begin to change.

I maintain a calm tone of voice (firm, reassuring, and kind).

We can do something different, for several minutes: read, or look out the window,  
or attend to a chore together.

I help my child bring words to her/his feelings.

"It looks like this is hard for you" or "Are you mad/sad/afraid?"

I talk about my feelings about what just happened.

"When you did that, I felt..."

I stay with my child until s/he is calm enough. It may take a while for a child to calm down from  
overwhelming and unorganized feelings. Rule of thumb: Stay in charge, and stay sympathetic.

## I am Calm (enough) and My Child is Calm (enough)

I use the following to support our repair and to make repair easier in the future.

I help my child use words for the needs and feelings that s/he is struggling with my listening and talking  
together. Remember KISS - Keep It Short and Sweet.

I help my child take responsibility for her/his part and I can take responsibility for my part.

Rule of thumb: No blaming allowed.

We talk about new ways of dealing with the problem in the future. Even for very young children, talking out  
loud about new options will establish a pattern and a feeling that can be repeated through the years.

Bottom line: It's the relationship (and only the relationship) that will build the child's capacity to organize her/his feelings. My child's problem may look like something that is being done on purpose. But at its root, it's an issue of needing to reconnect and learning to handle difficult feelings in a safe and secure way. By taking an "I can/we can" perspective "Together we are going to figure out what you need" my child will realize that I'm in charge as someone who is Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind.

This will reassure her/him that feelings will settle and organize and the relationship will be repaired.

# So What is Repair?

## BSWK Repair

Repair always involves staying BSWK. Maintaining a kind, no nonsense firmness means that I take responsibility for taking my hands off the Circle and make repair, all the while holding my position as the person in charge.

Have you ever found yourself saying something like this to your child? What happened next?

---

---

---

---

## Mean Repair

Some caregivers feel guilty with seeing that they have stepped off the Circle and fall back into patterns of blaming the child. Saying I'm sorry followed by a blame statement isn't repair.

Have you ever found yourself saying something like this to your child? What happened next?

---

---

---

---

## Weak Repair

Other caregivers feel guilty for stepping off the Circle and want to "repair" by actually giving in to their child's anger or upset. Some may even think asking their child for forgiveness is a form of repair. It isn't. Sadly, when a caregiver asks a young child to forgive them, it is often to make the caregiver feel better. This role-reversal places a burden on the child and makes them responsible for the caregivers.

Have you ever found yourself saying something like this to your child? What happened next?

---

---

---

---

"I'm sorry for how I just spoke to you. That wasn't OK. I was angry. I'm guessing that felt bad for you. I know you want to go outside. I'm glad to keep you company while you pick up your toys."



"I'm sorry for how I spoke to you, but you made me mad. You did deserve it. You should have listened to me the first time I told you to pick up your toys."



"I'm sorry for how I spoke to you. Do you forgive me? It's ok if you want to go outside. I'll pick up your toys - let's not be mad anymore."



# Choosing Security

Look for stories about times where you heard your Shark Music and chose to override the discomfort and meet your child's need

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

# Rupture and Repair

Look for stories about times where you took your Hands off the Circle and caused a rupture. Were you able to make a repair?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

At times, we all struggle with repair.

Do you ever find yourself blaming your child and lean toward mean repair? Or do you ever struggle with feeling guilty for stepping off the Circle and lean toward weak repair?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....





Look for examples of the Circle of Security that are hidden in plain sight. Notice the ways your child communicates needs through behaviour.

.....  
 .....

Ask yourself:

- Where is my child on the Circle (top or bottom half)?  
 .....
- What does my child need?  
 .....
- What is my child feeling (mad, sad, curiosity, joy, excitement, anger, shame)?  
 .....
- Is this a cue or a miscue?  
 .....
- Did I see any take charge/follow moments?  
 .....
- Am I hearing Shark Music? How does it affect my response?  
 .....

Preview of Chapter Eight:

- We've learned a tremendous amount during our time together. Next time we will pull it all together and apply what we have been learning about your children's needs and how to best meet them through Circle of Security Parenting.

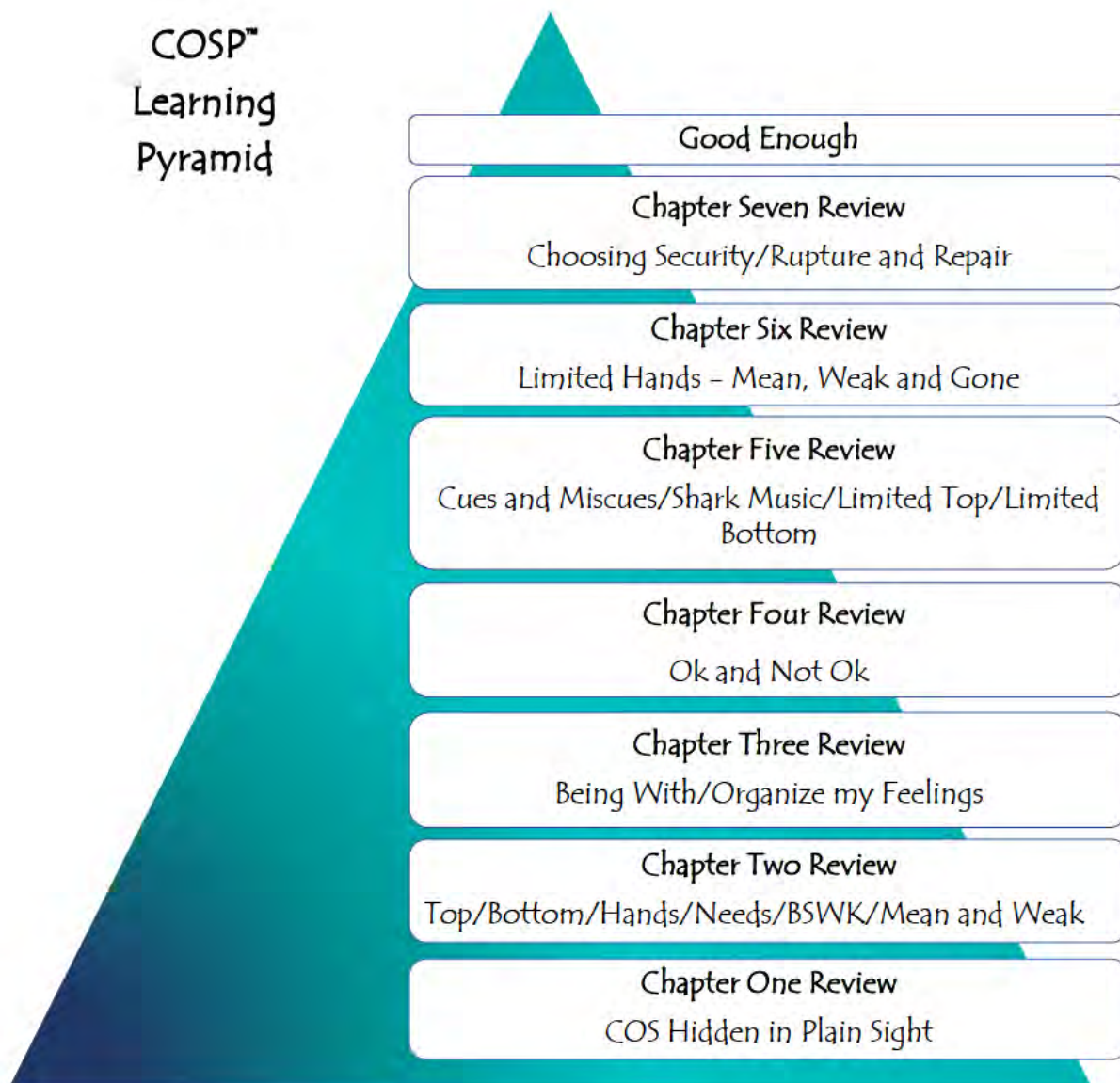




# chapter eight

## Summary and Celebration

COSP™  
Learning  
Pyramid



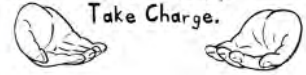


Caregiver Pushing Child to Feel O.K.



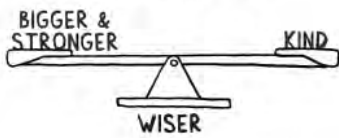
always be:  
**BIGGER, STRONGER,  
WISER, & KIND.**

whenever possible:  
**Follow the Child's Need.**  
whenever necessary:  
**Take Charge.**



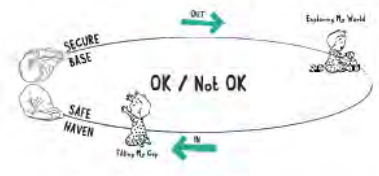
Balanced Hands

The Wisdom to Stay in Balance



Circle of Security

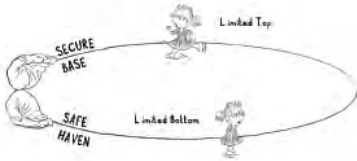
Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

Circle of Security

Child Missing: Attending to the Parent's Needs



Circle of Security®

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

Limited Hands

Using the Wisdom to Stay in Balance



"CUE"  
Showing a need

"MISCUE"  
Hiding a need

Circle of Security®

RUPTURE



Circle of Security

Parent Being Held While Holding The Child



© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

Organize My Feelings



Circle of Limited Security®

Child Frightened; Unable to Find Parent's Hands



© 2018 Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell; Circle of Security International

# Choosing Security

## Your Child's Need:

When your child's need requires a response that is not comfortable for you...

## Shark Music:

You suddenly feel uncomfortable... (e.g. lonely, unsafe, rejected, abandoned, angry, controlled etc.)

## Choice Point:

You can respond to your child's need (in spite of the discomfort it causes you),

**OR**

You can protect yourself from further pain by overriding your child's need (limiting or avoiding a response).  
If you protect yourself from uncomfortable feelings, your child's need will go unmet.  
Over time s/he will begin to express that need indirectly, causing both of you difficulty.

All parents hear Shark Music with some of their child's needs. The parents of secure children **recognize** their Shark Music. Often (not always) they **choose** to find a way to meet their child's need, in spite of the temporary pain it causes them.

## Steps to Security:

1. Recognize the discomfort

"Here's my Shark Music again."

2. Honor the discomfort

"I hurt now because this particular need triggers my Shark Music."

3. Respond to your child's need.

# Circle of Security

What was the most rewarding moment in your experience of Circle of Security Parenting? What was the most difficult moment?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

At times, we all have unkind thoughts about ourselves. Compassion for ourselves is so important in COSP, and can be so hard to do. As you move forward, list some ways you can offer yourself kindness and compassion.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If you were to write a note to your future self about this experience, what would you want to remind yourself of?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

