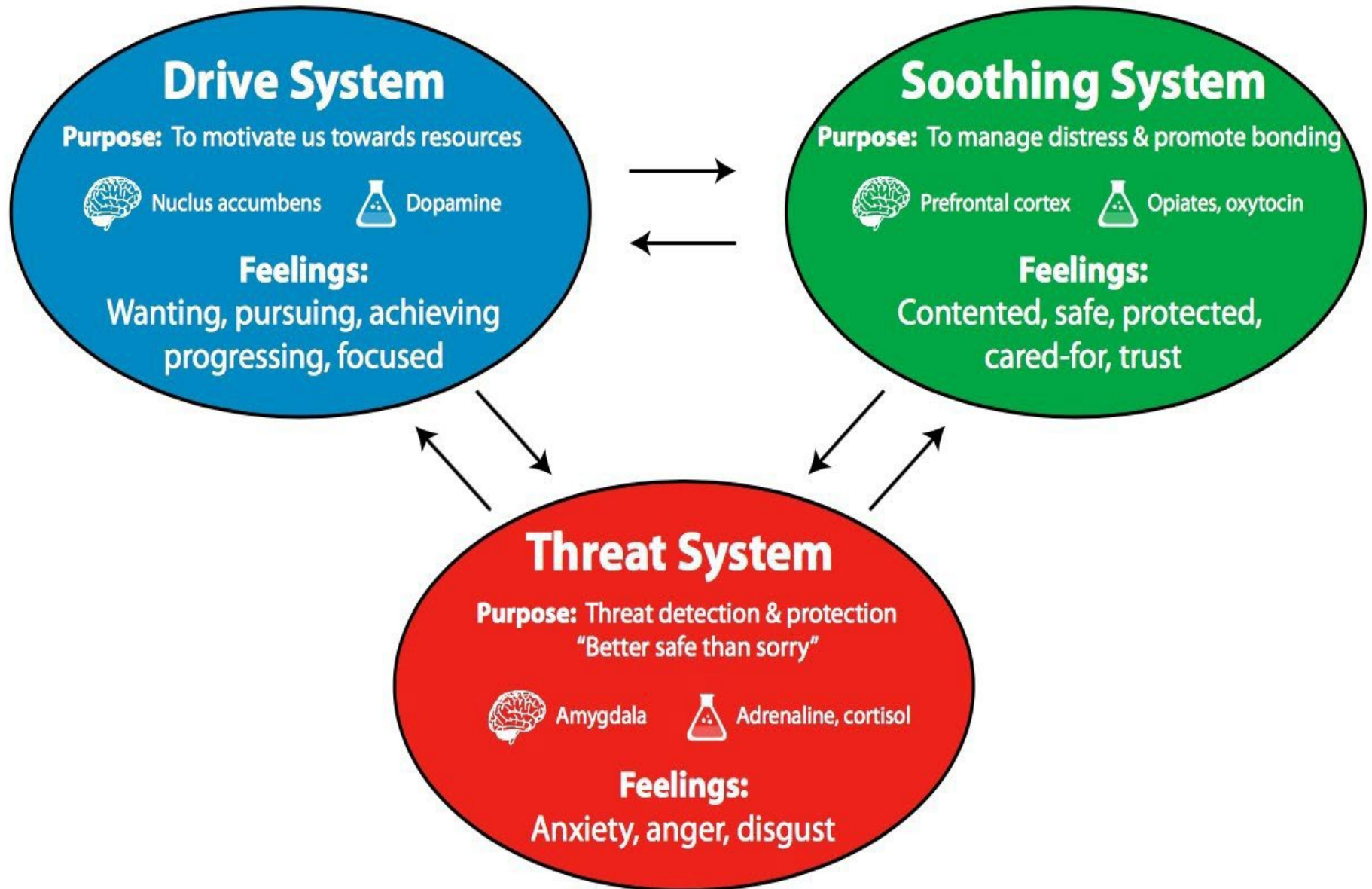


Emotional Regulation Systems





Threat System in ASD
Is a big deal!

Threat System in ASD

- ▶ Early development of Amygdala (adrenaline/cortisol)
- ▶ Delayed development of PFC
- ▶ Challenges in EF and Emotional Regulation
- ▶ Very sensitive to their environment, people, places and events
- ▶ Even in a supportive environment for neurotypical child, ASD child goes into Red more easily
- ▶ Changes to environment and parental interaction required to support co-regulation



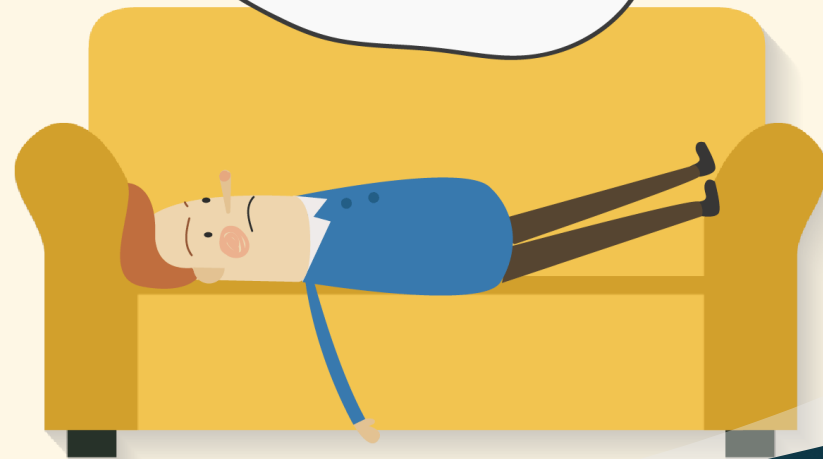
Reducing Escape

Drive System in ASD

Are they lacking drive?

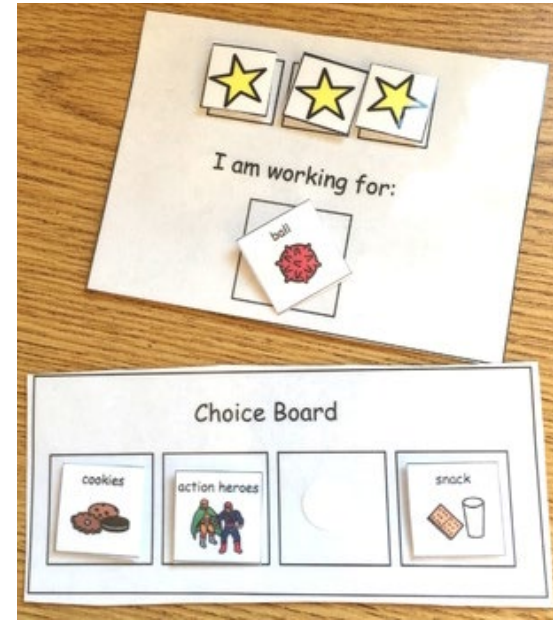
THE AVOIDER

IT'S BETTER TO
DO NOTHING
THAN MAKING MISTAKES



Drive System in ASD

- ▶ Individuals with ASD like all humans respond to reward and dopamine increase, but they
- ▶ may access their reward system in unusual ways.
- ▶ They may avoid tasks others would do in order to receive social praise from teachers or parents
- ▶ May not consider social praise or achievement others value as reinforcing
- ▶ Access to what the individual finds rewarding and of interest can be paired with more socially acceptable behaviours.



Shifting Drives to more socially acceptable tasks (providing dopamine contingently)



AUTISM AND STIMMING

Soothing System

Some aberrant ways of self soothing

Soothing System in ASD

- ▶ Individuals with ASD usually struggle to self sooth and to accept typical methods of soothing from parents.
- ▶ Touch may not be soothing, or may need to be specific or delivered in a non social/human contact way
- ▶ Pressure, sensory stimulation, and access to soothing environments can be introduced and taught to replace aberrant methods (stimming)
- ▶ Identification of stressors, what it feels like and how to sooth need to be targeted and taught.



How Am I feeling today...

SCALE	Looks Like...	Feels Like...	I Can Try...
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

©2010 color scale

More appropriate ways to access the soothing system.

We can use equanimity to support co-regulation



Learning to stand behind the waterfall

- ▶ What are you learning in this program to help you sooth yourself, and balance your system?

