

# How to Get In-Synch with the Out-of-Synch Child

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# Five Areas That a Child May Be In-Synch or Out-of-Synch

- Emotionally Regulated vs. Anxious/Depressed/Over-Aroused
- Approach vs. Withdrawal
- Engaged vs. Sarcastic
- Flexible vs. Inflexible/Perseverative
- Resilient vs. Fragile

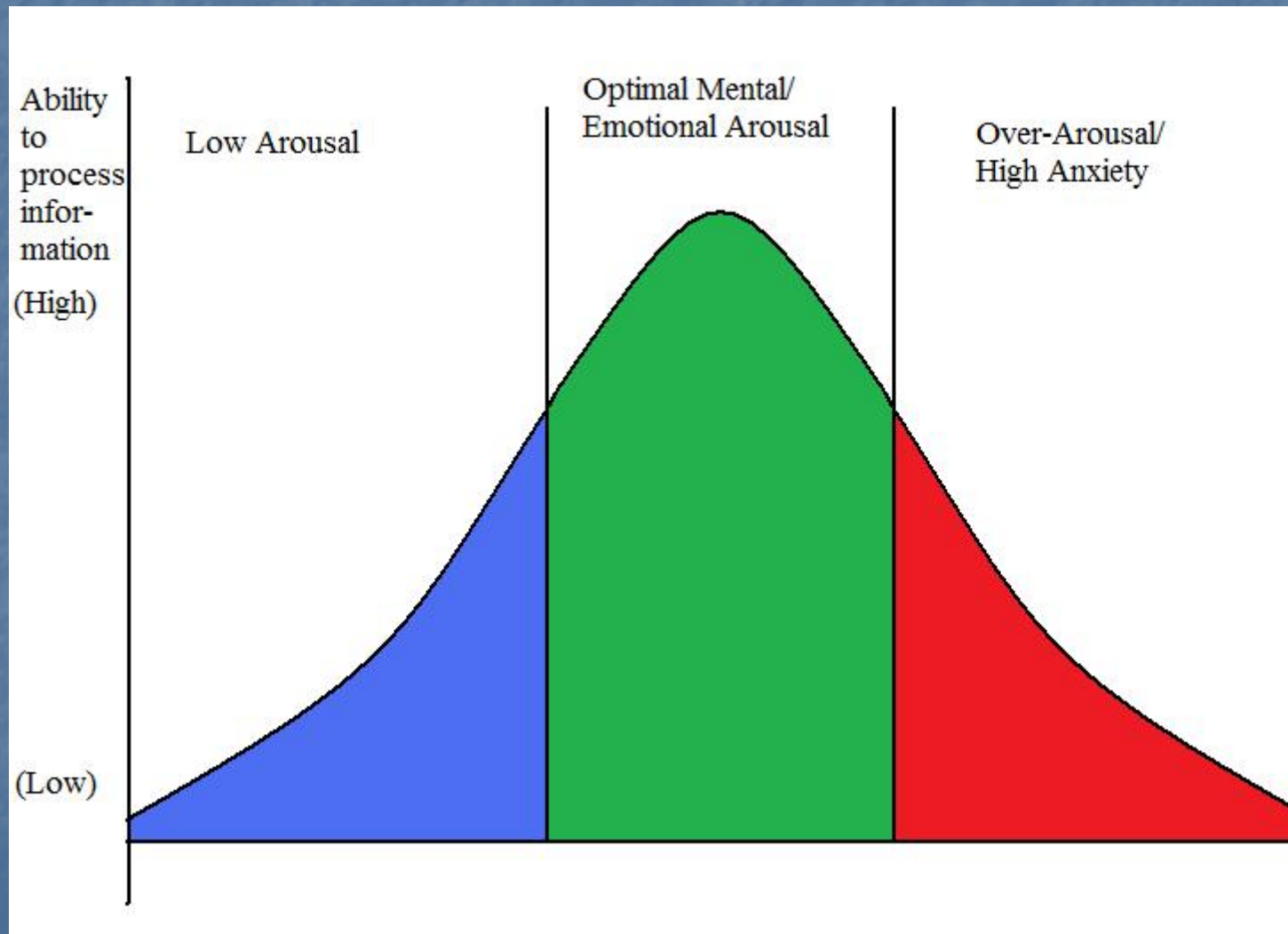
# Factors Which May Interfere with Becoming "In-Synch"

- Neurobiology
  - Autism, ADHD, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Panic Disorder, Oppositionality, etc.
- Experience
  - Parent's, child's, and the parent-child duo
- Technology
  - iPod, video games, text messaging, etc.



Emotionally Regulated vs.  
Anxious/Depressed/Over-  
Aroused

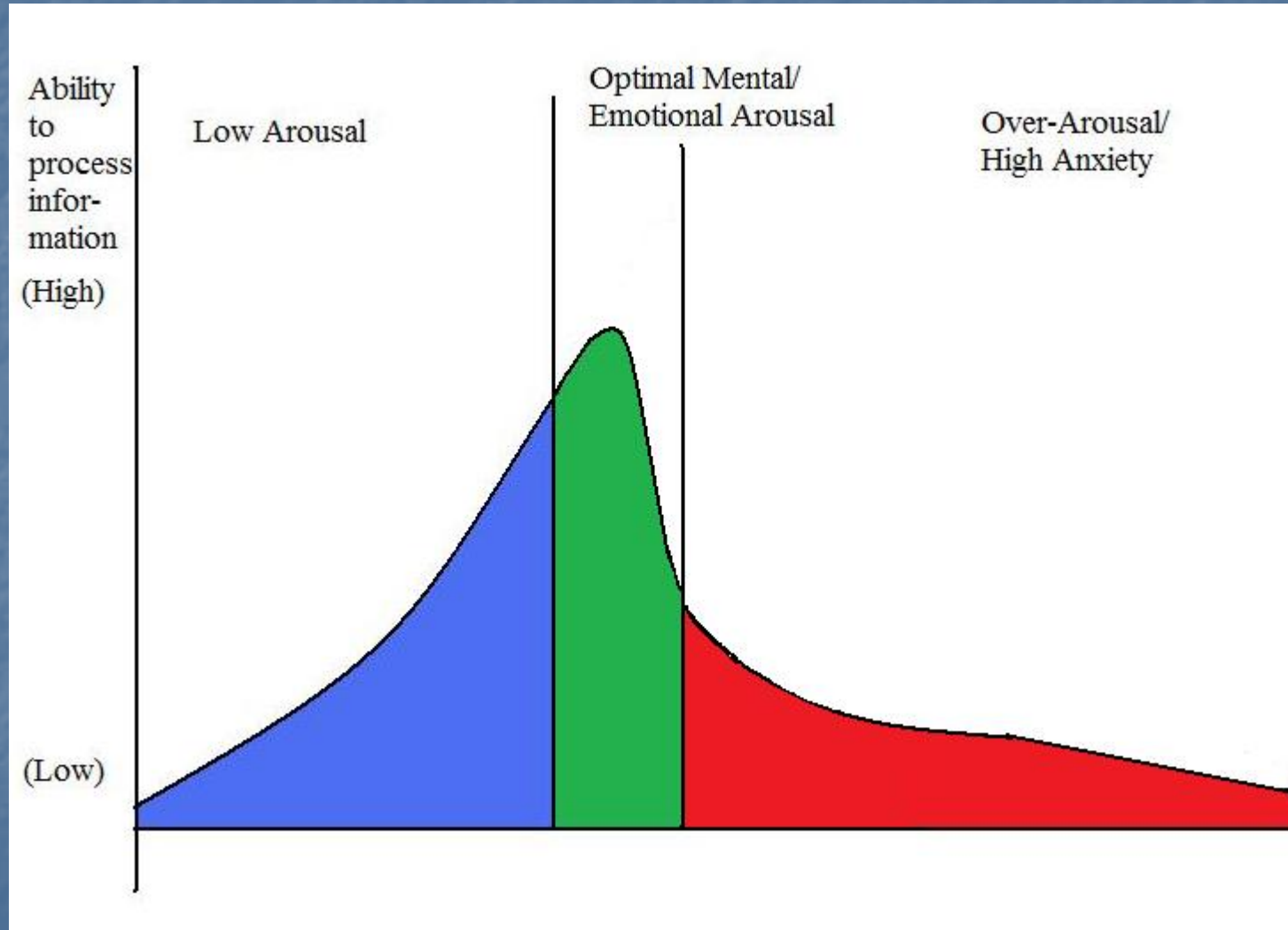
# Mental/Emotional Arousal Curve



# Kids who are Out-of-Synch in this area tend to:

- Relate more to adults than peers
- Relate more to younger children
- Relate more to other out-of-synch children
- Have difficulty in the other four areas that may impact on their ability to be "in-synch"

# Ivy's Arousal Curve





# An “alternative” model for looking at anxiety and arousal

- Anxiety and arousal have pronounced relationships with our sense of connection with others
  - The greater our connection with others, the less anxiety we tend to feel
  - The greater our anxiety, the less connected we tend to feel

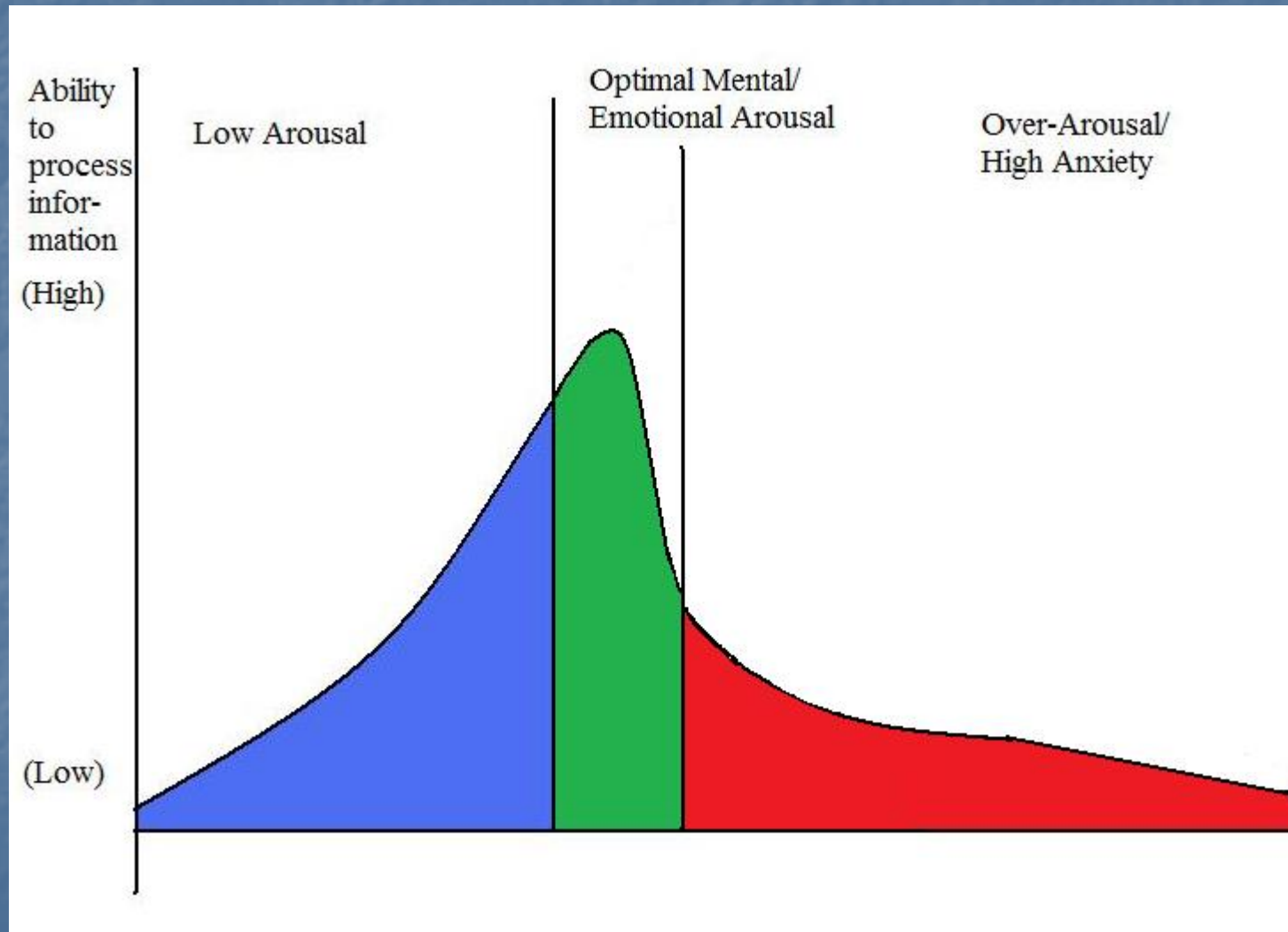


# Intervention or Treatment

- Increase in tolerance for arousal
  - Sensory Integration and Priming
  - Take person's perspective/interpret world for them
  - Experience of success with others
  - Empathy/Attunement
  - Play- sand play, imaginative play

# Approach vs. Withdrawal

# J's Arousal Curve





# Withdrawal

- For the person who withdraws:
  - People may be difficult to understand
  - This may cause people and interactions to become threatening
  - Focus may go to objects or interactions through objects

# Treatment or Interventions

- Work on person's ability to recognize intention or emotions of others
  - Ekman Micro-Expression Training Tool and Subtle Expression Training Tool ([www.paulekman.com](http://www.paulekman.com))
  - Mindreading: The Interactive Guide to Emotions software ([www.autismshop.com](http://www.autismshop.com))
  - Face-Cards ([www.face-cards.com](http://www.face-cards.com))
- Get their brain to light-up over interactions with others
  - Play
  - When do I enjoy being with the child?

# Calibration Test

## Instructions

Before you proceed you'll need to measure your visual acuity – how well you are able to recognize emotions that flash very quickly. Click a numbered button to see an expression starting with number 1.

After the expression flashes select the corresponding emotion button on the right, and then click on the next number.

When you have finished and chosen an emotion for each of the 12 expressions you will find out what percentage you judged correctly, and which level you should take, either A or B.



Sad

Angry

Surprise

Fear

Disgust

Contempt

Happy

Return





Engaged vs. Sarcastic

# Sarcasm

- For the person who uses sarcasm as a defense mechanism:
  - Psychological vs. neurological
  - Way to engage and avoid closeness at the same time
  - Tends to take away from other person and opportunity for relationship

# Treatment and Intervention

- Language of relationship
- Engagement, empathy, and attunement
- Impact of our words on other people
  - Both the words themselves and tones of voice behind words
  - When these are not "In-Synch" with one another focus tends to be on tones of voice



# The Language of Relationship

## ■ Language of Relationship

1. State things in the positive
  - "I like how you are walking with me quietly."
  - "Here is what I need from you."

## ■ Language of Threats, Judgment and Failure

1. State things in the negative
  - "Don't run."
  - "Don't talk."
  - "You're going to get a time out if you talk again."

# Language of Relationship

## 2. Success focused

- "Let's see how we can solve this together."  
(recognize the child for taking a positive step)
- "Let's think about a time we worked well together."

## 2. Problem focused

- "You better knock it off or you'll both be in trouble."
- "You're terrible to disrespect me that way."

# Language of Relationship

## 3. Avoids negative assumptions

- "Jon, remember that our rule is..."

(this is stated with firmness and authority, while tone of voice still says, "I like and respect you and expect the best from you")

## 3. Makes negative assumptions

- "Take off your hat now."  
(stated with challenging tone that implies the child intends to be "bad" and deserves punishment- the child then needs to defend against not feeling likeable)



# Language of Relationship

## 4. Language of relationship

- "I appreciate your effort."
- "I was disappointed when..."

## 5. Work toward "goal"-which provides flexibility

## 4. Language of judgment

- "Good boy."
- "You're in trouble now"

## 5. Work toward "reward" which limits

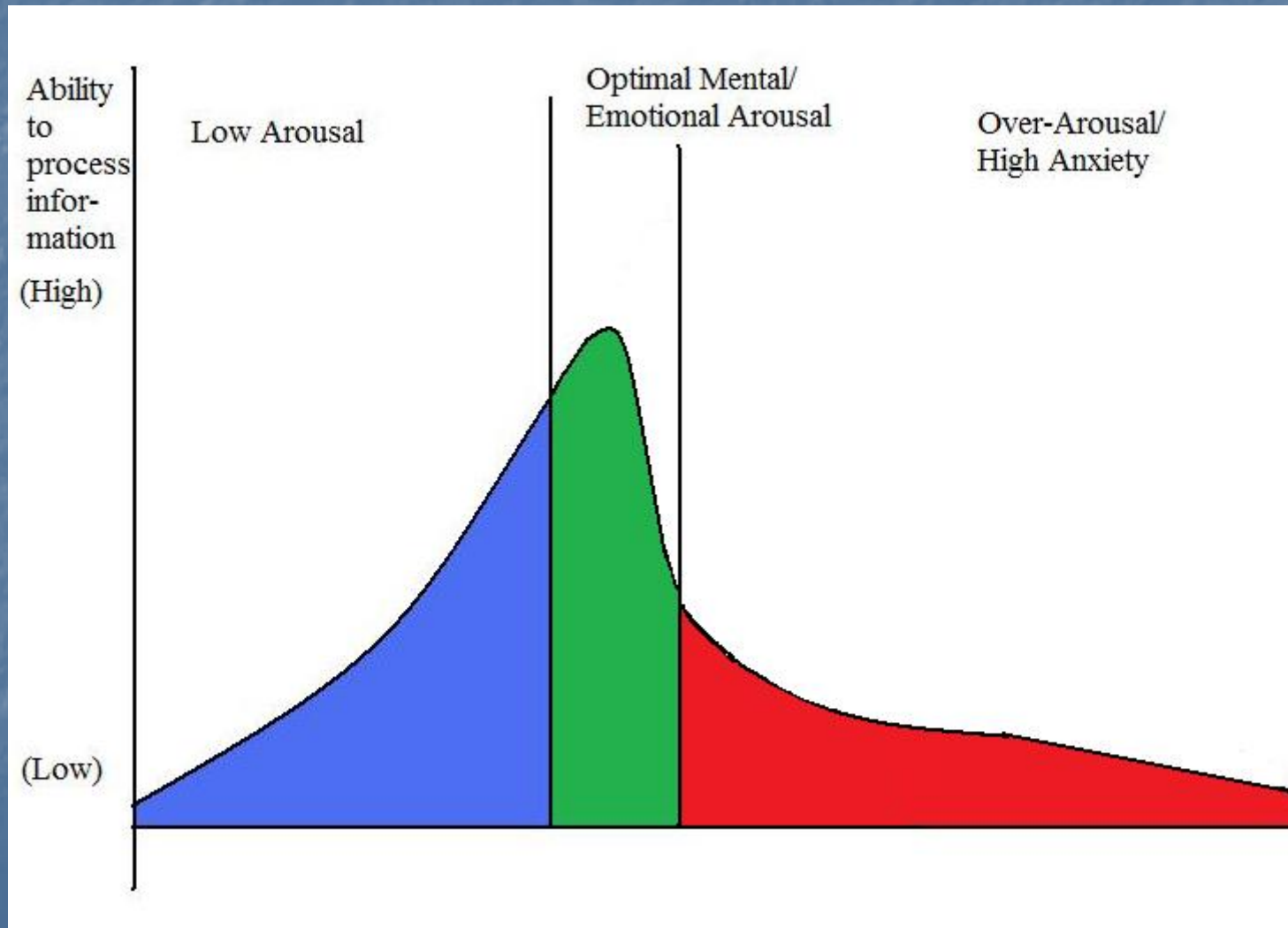
# Flexibility vs. Inflexibility/Perseverative

# Inflexible/Perseverative

- For the person who is inflexible/perseverative:
  - Gets something in their head and can't let go/"becomes stuck"
  - Has difficulty with over-focus on certain things
  - Becomes rigid and has difficulty transitioning



# A and B Arousal Curve



# Treatment or Intervention

- Structure
  - Set up environment to reduce stress, increase flexibility
- Need to become more flexible in our thinking
- Empathy and attunement with the person's experience
- Social Stories, Comic Strip Conversations, Power Cards ([www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org))

# Comic Strip Conversations

- A conversation that incorporates the use of color and simple drawings to improve clarity of social interactions.
- Developed by Carol Gray.



# Social Stories

- A social story is a short story that describes a situation in terms of relevant social cues and common responses, providing an individual with accurate and specific information regarding what occurs in a situation and why.
- Developed by Carol Gray.

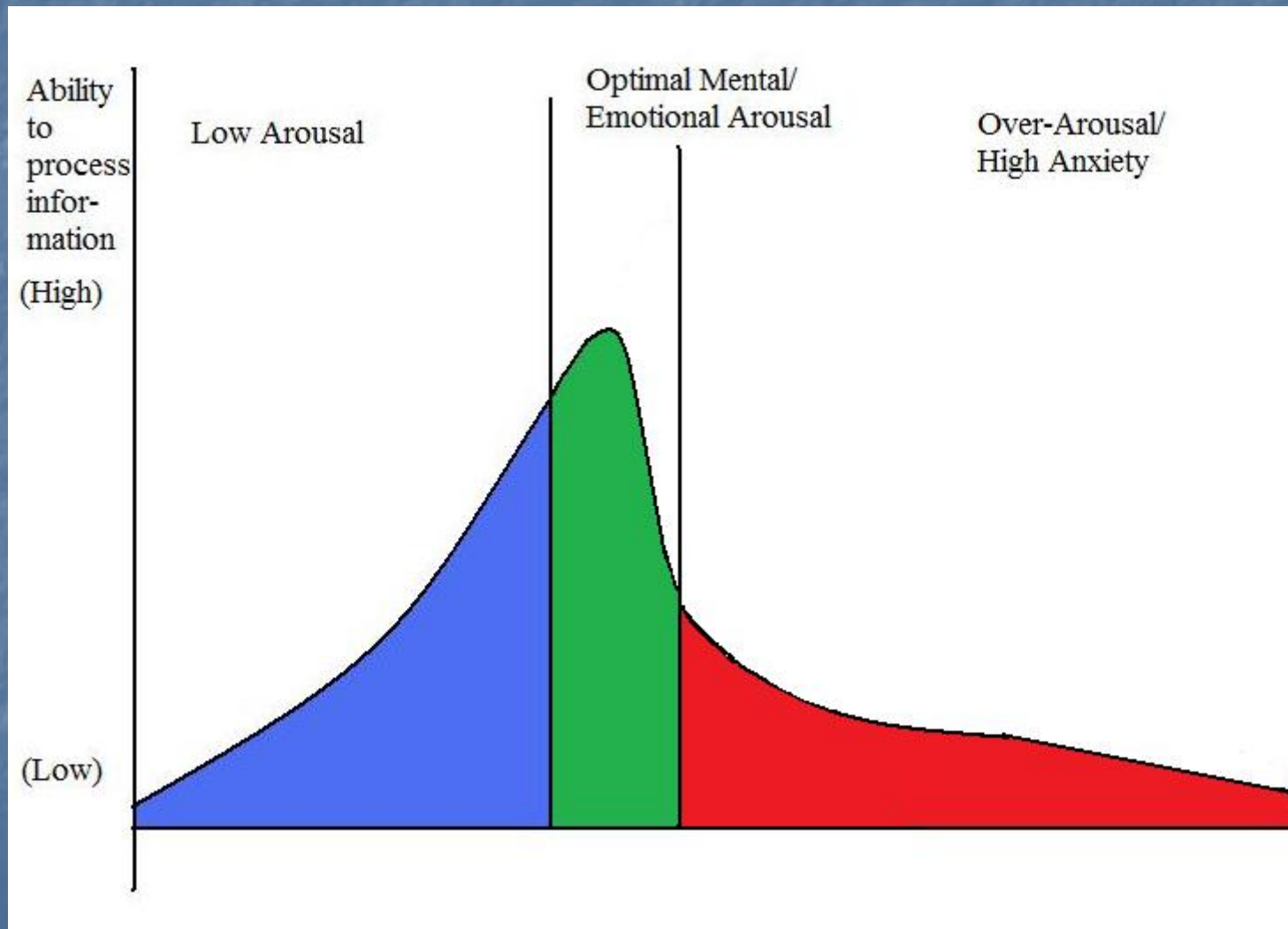
# Power Cards

- A visual aid that builds on an individual's special interest to teach appropriate social interactions, behavior expectations, the meaning of language, and the hidden curriculum.

# Resilient vs. Fragile



# S Arousal Curve



# Fragile

- For the person who is more fragile:
  - They may be...
    - Overly perfectionistic
    - Break down when challenged
    - Have a low tolerance for frustration/failure
    - "Meltdown" when there are changes from what they "expected"-predictability

# Treatment and Intervention

- Work to develop resilience
  - Practice making mistakes, focus child's attention on what is "important" in the interaction
- Parent as trusted guide
  - What's the one time I enjoy my child?
  - Providing undivided attention during these times
  - The "quality of interaction" is focused on over the "outcome"
- Self-talk--internalization of language
  - Modeling of self-talk- verbalize own internal thoughts, feelings, ideas



# Summary and Questions

- Five areas of In-Synch vs. Out-of-Synch behavior
  - Emotionally Regulated vs. Anxious/Depressed
  - Approach vs. Withdrawal
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