



Strategies for Effective Family Guidance

Generalizing ABA Skills in Family Guidance

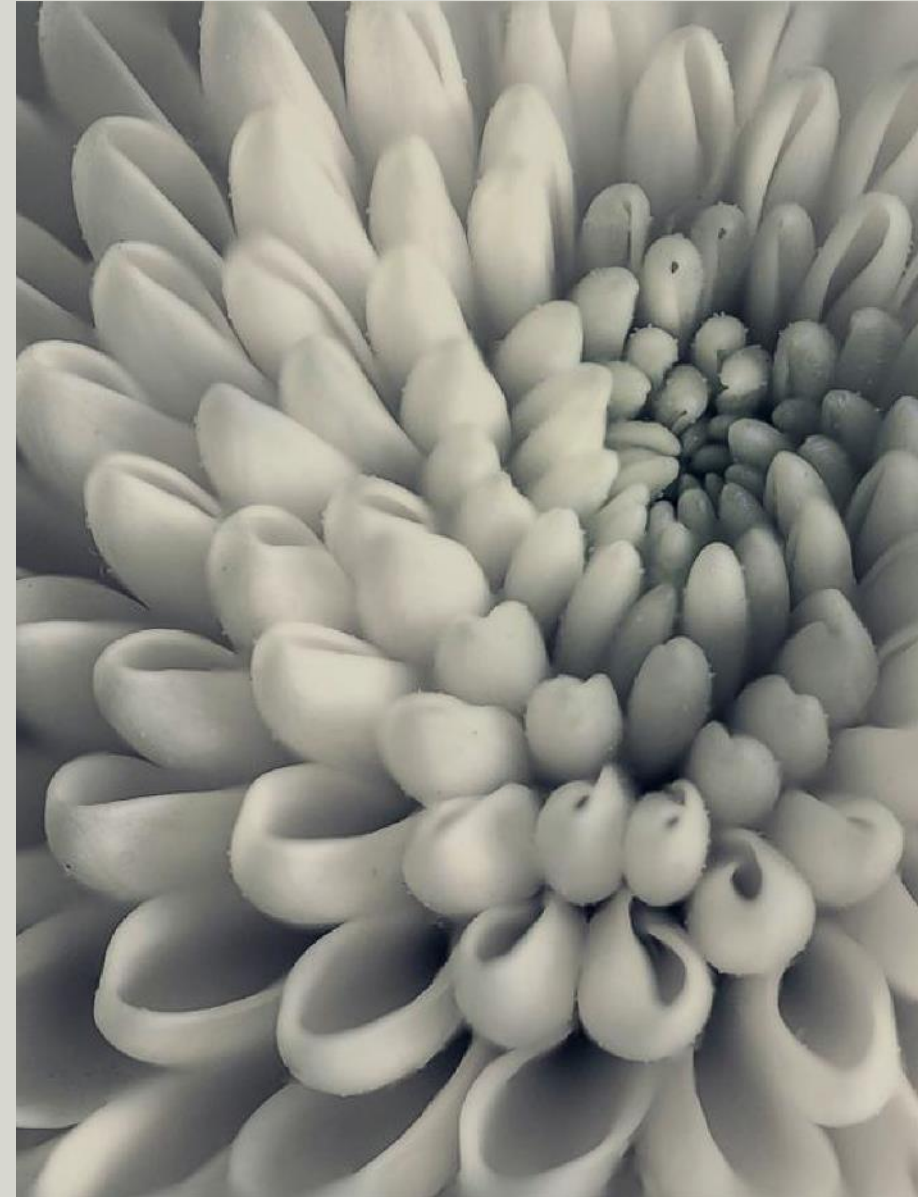
May 7, 2025

By CMHCM Behavior Analysts:
Sarah McDonald, BCBA, CMHP, LBA
Travis Van Oosten, BCaBA, CMHP, LABA



Introduction

Why the CMH team focuses solely on family guidance and the increase we've seen in participation



Where My Mind Went?



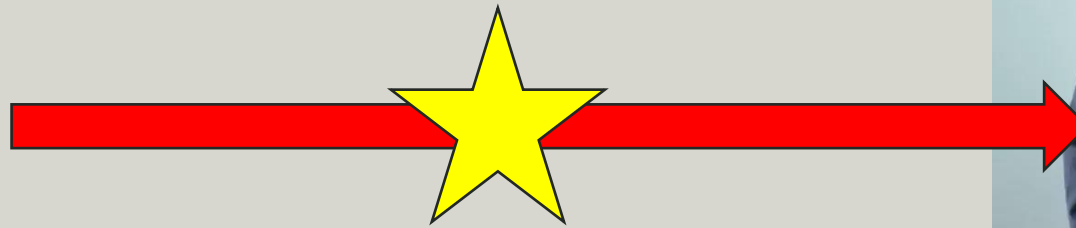
Where My Mind Went?



How have
Things been
Going?

Where My Mind Went?

How have
Things been
Going?



Learning Objectives



Increase
Confidence



Establish
Parent Buy-In



Create Effective
Interventions



Strategy #1

Pairing + Building Rapport

Establish Trust

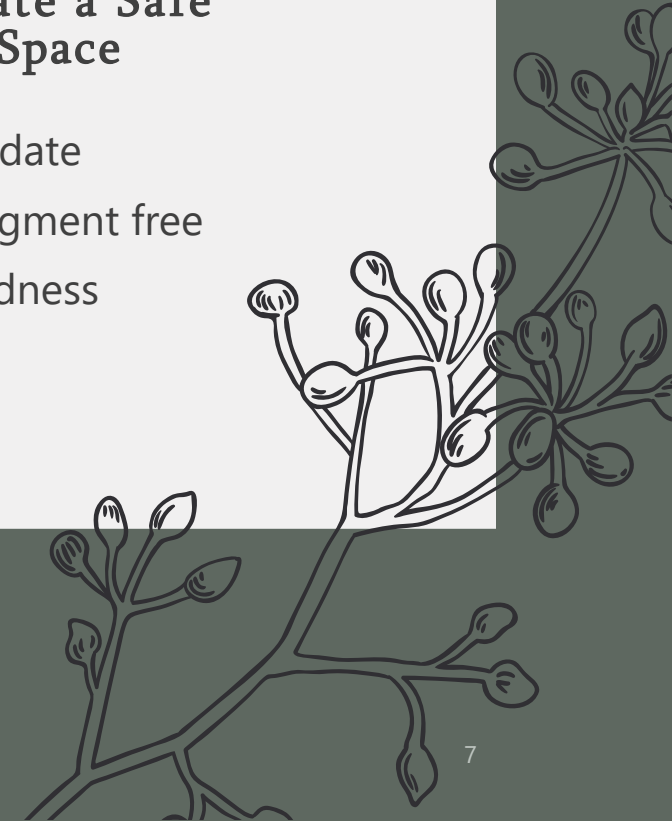
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Understanding

Prioritize the Relationship

- First listen,
Then respond

Create a Safe Space

- Validate
- Judgment free
- Kindness





Strategy #2

Assessment: Family Values

Identify Strengths

- Parent A
 - _____
- Parent B
 - _____
- Child
 - _____

Explore Values

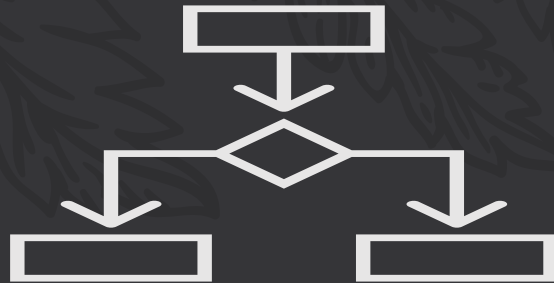
- Parent A
 - _____
- Parent B
 - _____
- Child
 - _____

Consider Reinforcers

- Parent A
 - _____
- Parent B
 - _____
- Child
 - _____

Strategy #3

Values-based Goals, Objectives and Targets



Goal:

Reduce Problem Bx

Values related to calm,
order, respect

Goal:

Communication

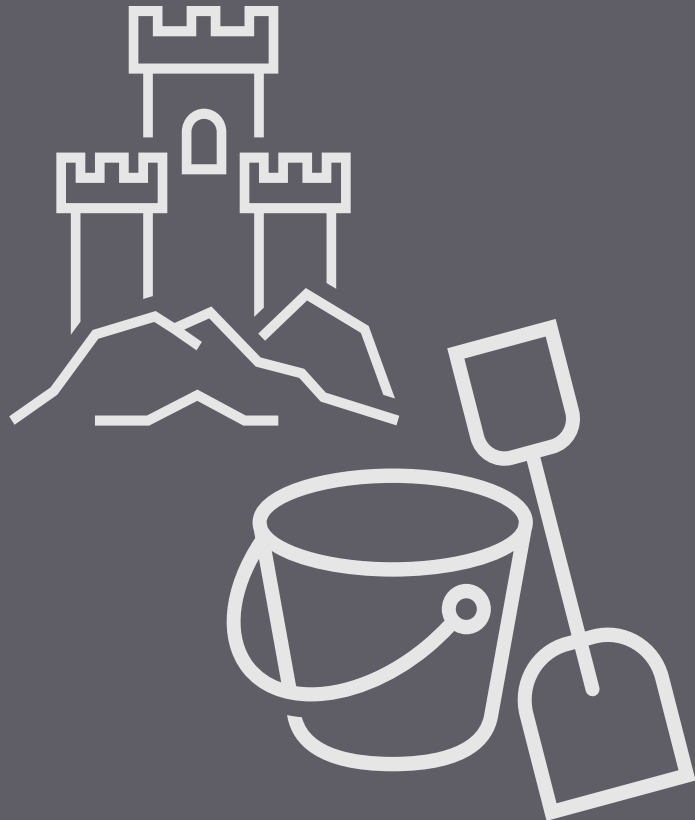
Values of self-advocacy,
independence,
participation in their
school, church or
community

Goal:

Self-Regulation

Valuing intentional
responding, patience,
kindness, or improved
relationship with their
child

Shaping: reinforcing successive approximations of a desired behavior.



Strategy #4 *Shaping*

- Noticing
Without being required to change anything
- Committed actions



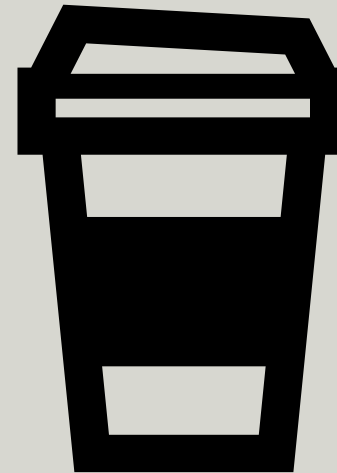
Strategy #5

Building Momentum

Easy, easy, hard

High probability to Low Probability

Build on success to lay the foundation for more complex skills



Strategy #6 Flexibility



Strategy #7

Plan for fading





Applying the 7 Strategies to Increase BCBA Confidence, Increase Parent Buy-In and Effectiveness



Applying the 7 Strategies to Increase BCBA Confidence,
Increase Parent Buy-In, and be Effective.

15-year-old Girl



Applying the 7 Strategies to Increase BCBA Confidence, Increase Parent Buy-In, and be Effective.

15-year-old Girl

History of receiving ABA in the Past

Applying the 7 Strategies to Increase BCBA Confidence, Increase Parent Buy-In, and be Effective.

15-year-old Girl

History of receiving ABA in the Past

And her mom kind of scared me during the initial assessment...



Applying the Effective Strategies

- My confidence in my role as a behavior analyst who is providing family guidance is low.
- I do not feel comfortable.
- There is a lot of pressure on me to get results.



Applying the Effective Strategies

Compassion, Empathy and Understanding

Listen First, Then Respond.

In order to build rapport, we both need to understand our roles and expectations.



**Strategy #1
Pairing and
Building
Rapport**

Applying the Effective Strategies

- "I may not have all the answers."
- "I may make some mistakes."
- But I am happy to be on your **TEAM** and do my best to help you and your daughter reach your goals.
- My confidence has now increased



Applying the Effective Strategies

- Parent Interview

Applying the Effective Strategies

- Parent Interview
- Mom starts to share what is going on with her daughter, in the home, at school, etc

Applying the Effective Strategies

- Parent Interview
- Mom starts to share what is going on with her daughter, in the home, at school, etc
- Assessment of family's preferences, values, and reinforcers



Strategy #2:
Assessment: Family's
Values

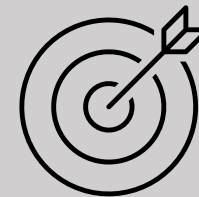
Applying the Effective Strategies

“I don’t feel comfortable when I have not dialed into what the parents are really seeking from family guidance sessions.” -CMH BCBA



Applying the Effective Strategies

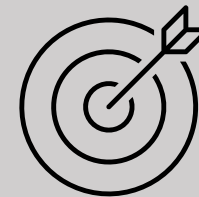
Strategy #3: Goals,
Objectives and
Targets based off the
parent's values



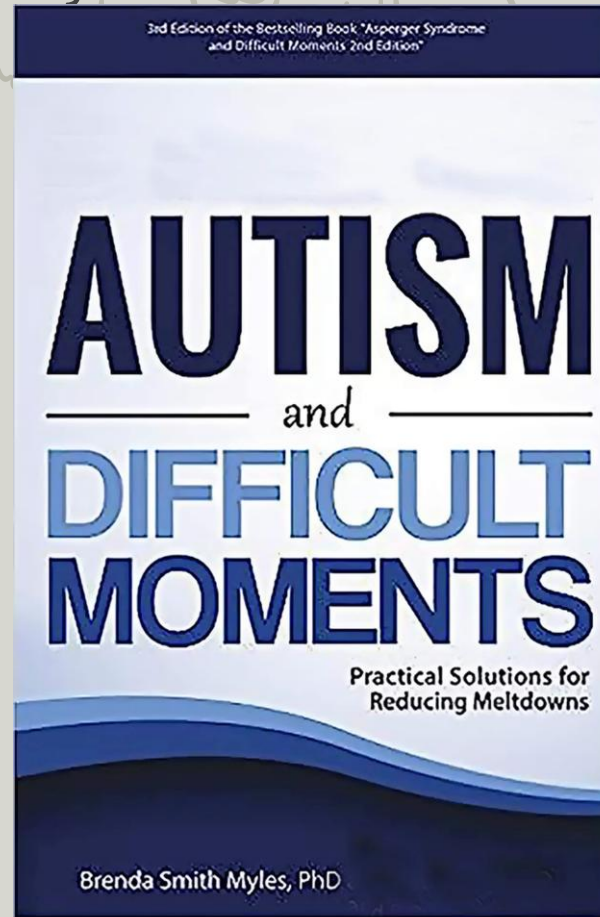
Applying the Effective Strategies

- My confidence has increased knowing that **WE** will be working on goals based off the parent values.
- My confidence has increased that we have pinpointed where the **TEAM** wants to start with family guidance.

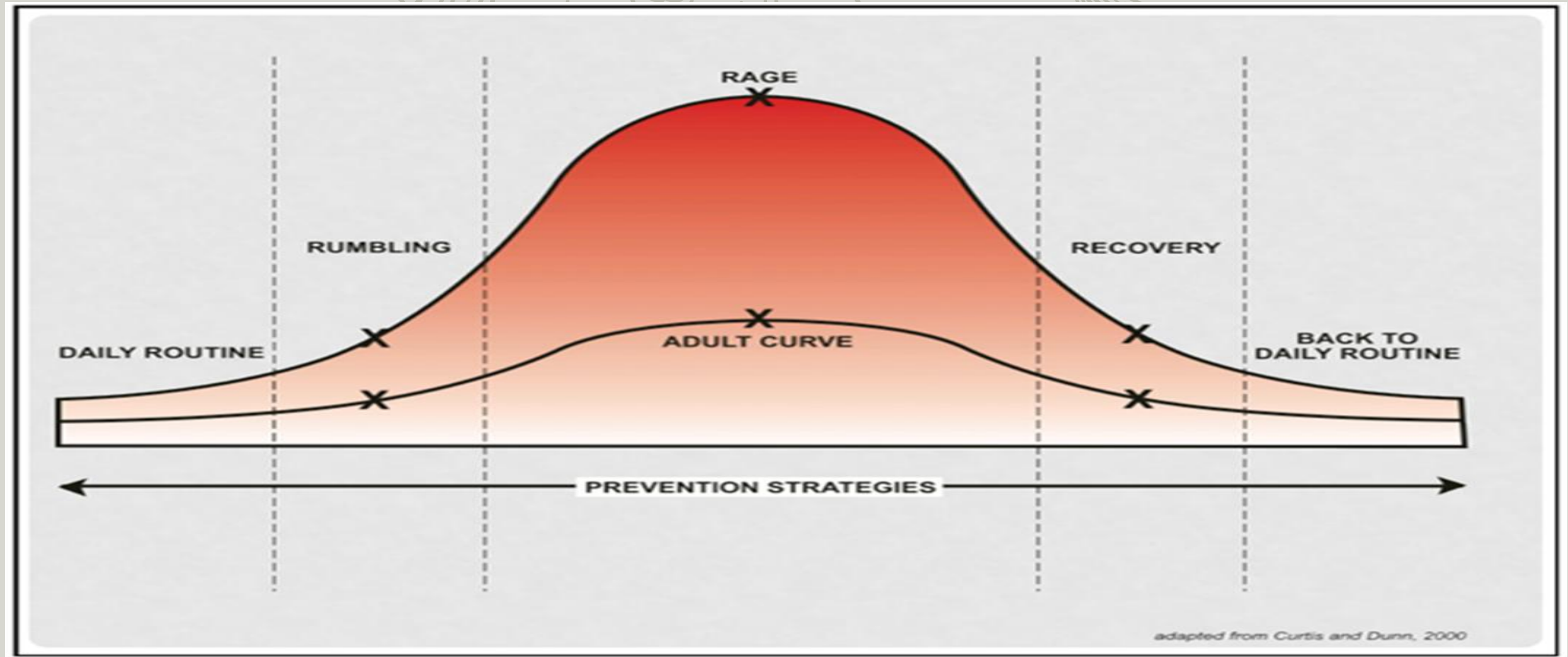
"I really want to learn some strategies to help my daughter when she gets into a meltdown. I'm overwhelmed."



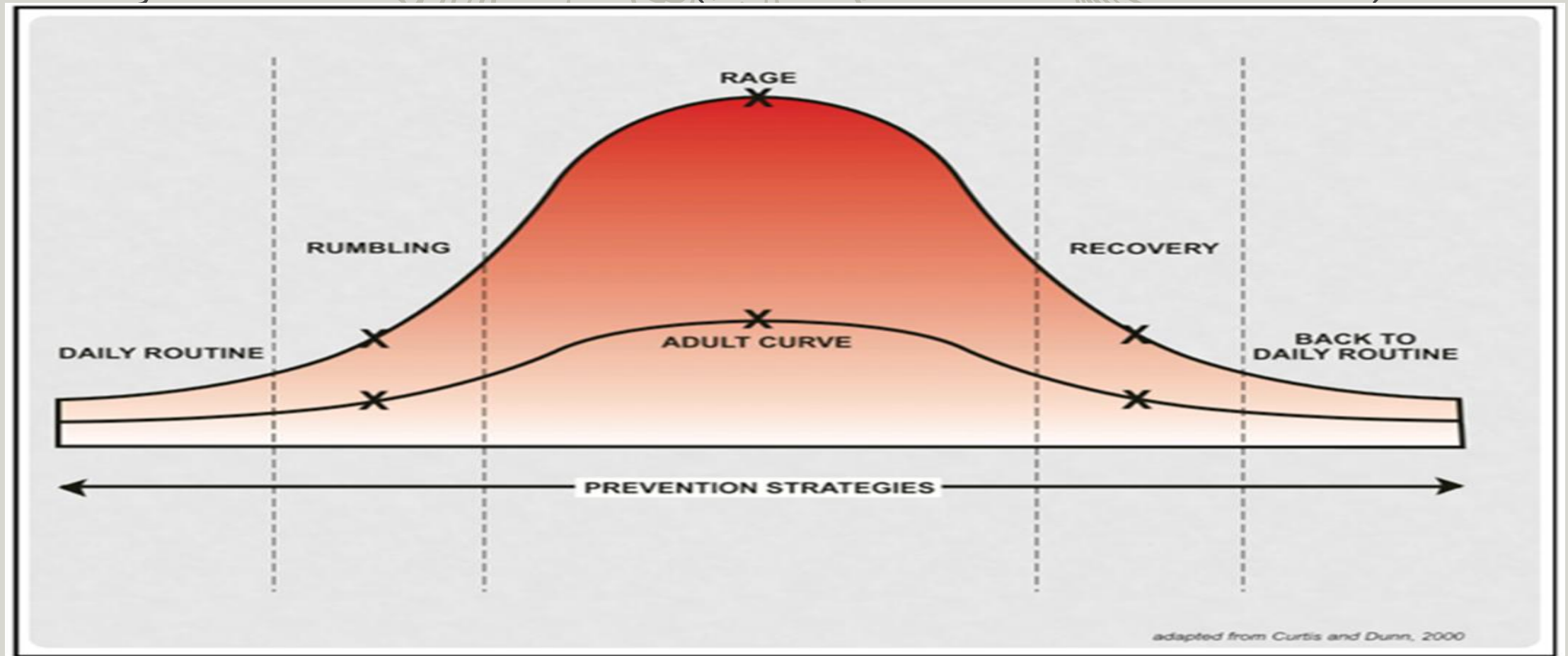
Find Your "Go to" Resources
Brenda Smith Myles, PhD and Ruth Aspy, PHD



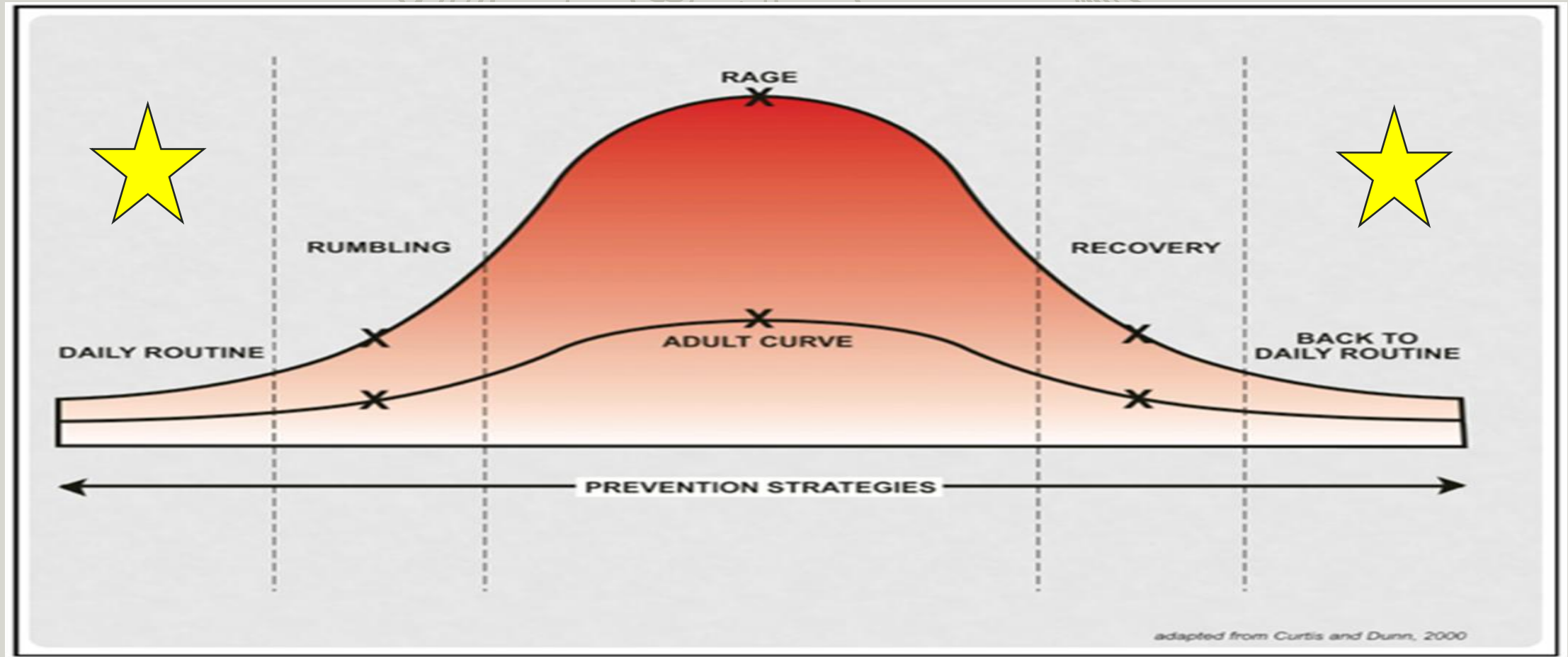
The Cycle of a Meltdown



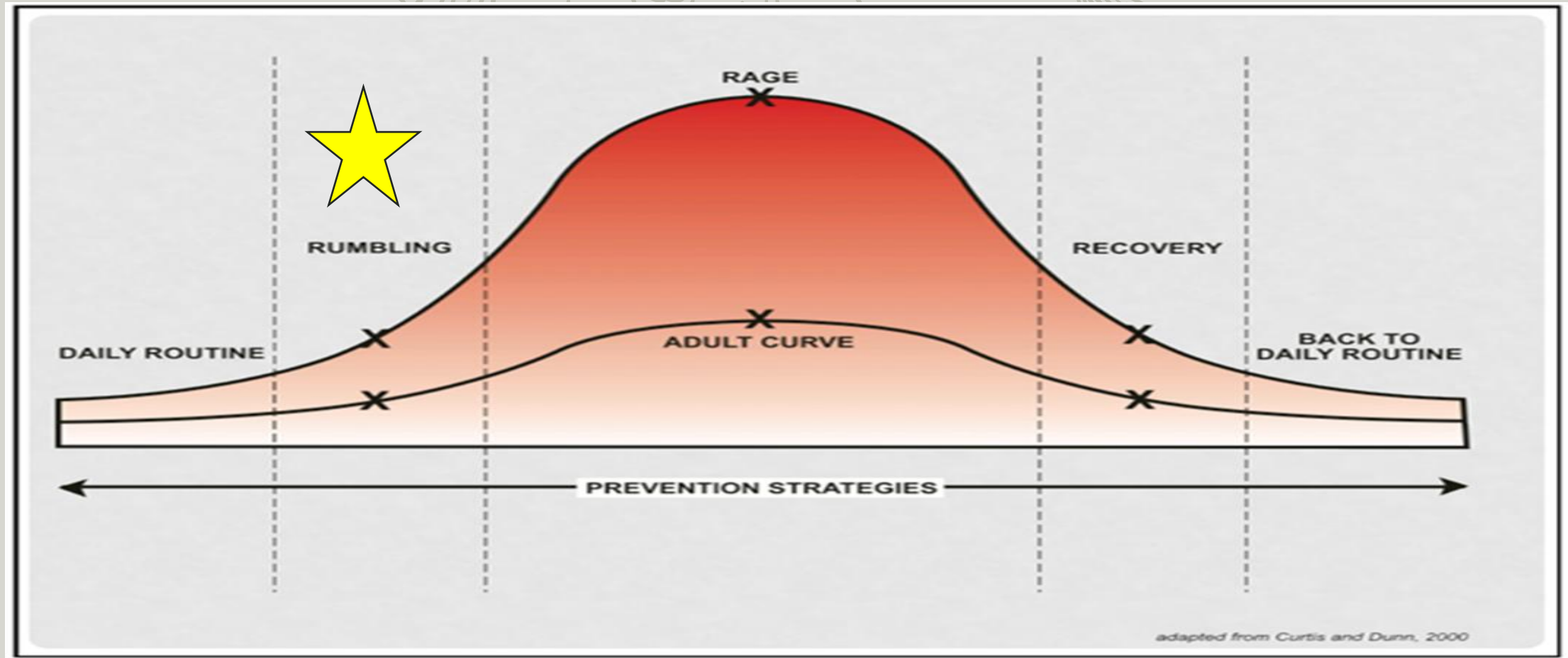
We start with noticing what is going on during the cycle of a meltdown. (Both Child AND Parent).



Daily Routine, HRE, Reinforcers.



The Rumbling Stage



Support Person Behaviors that can Escalate a Crisis

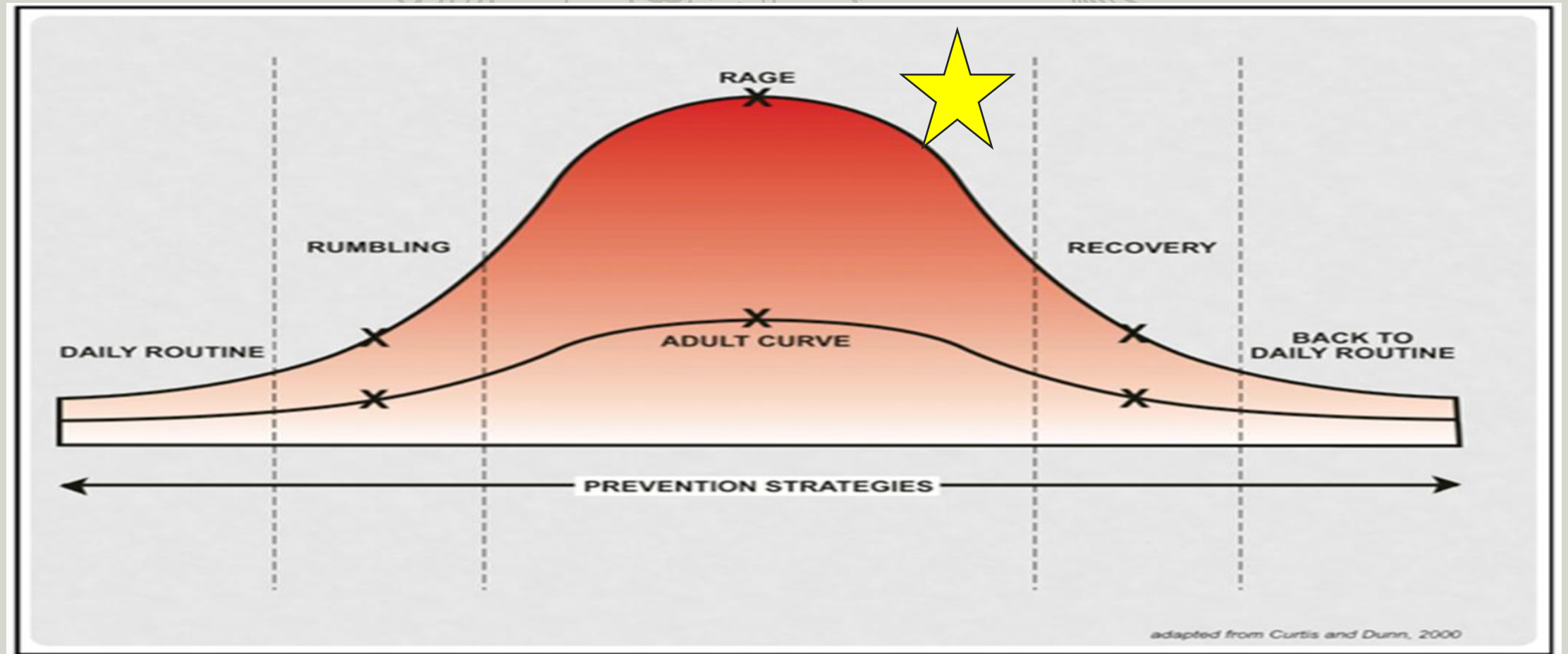
Support Person Behaviors that an escalate a crisis:

- Raising Voice or Yelling
- Making assumptions
- Preaching
- Back the person into a corner
- Pleading or Bribing
- Insisting on having the last word
- Bringing up unrelated events
- Using tense body language
- Being Sarcastic

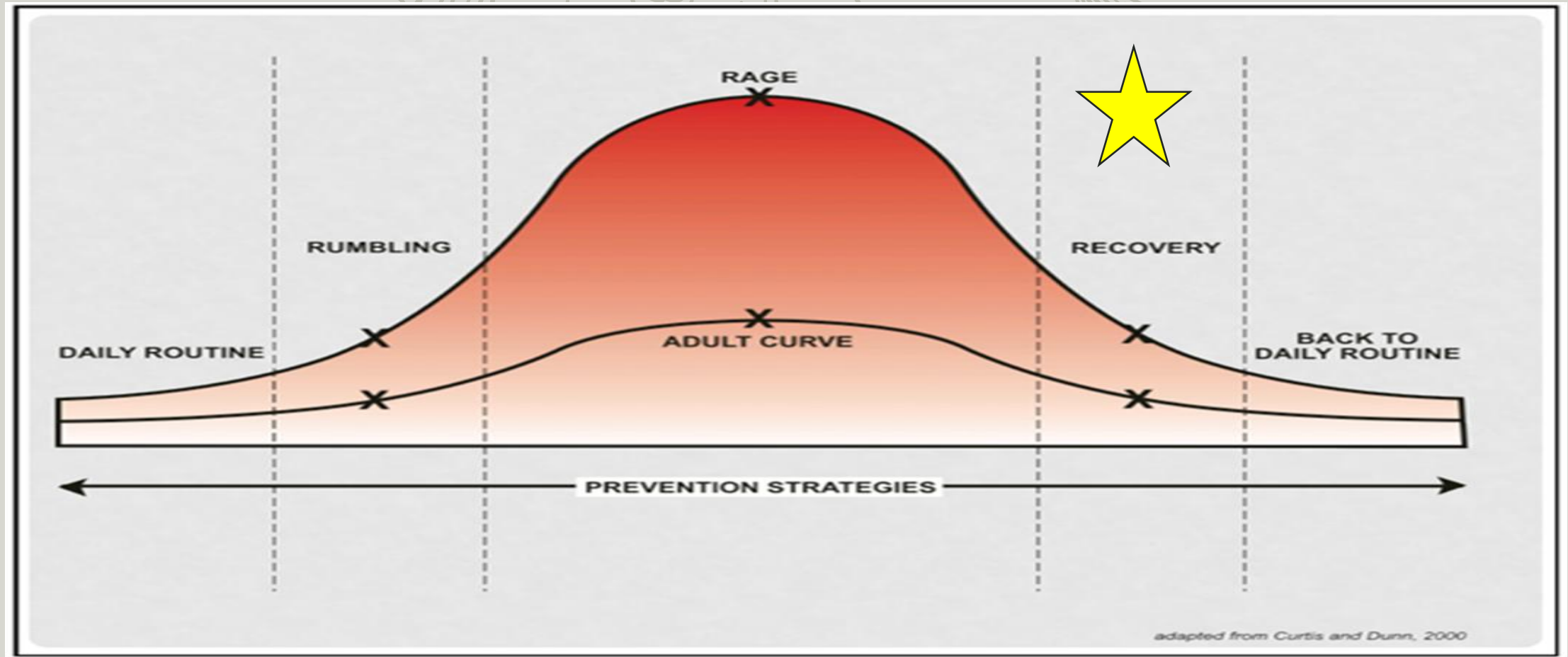
Support Person Behaviors that an escalate a crisis:

- Attacking the individual's character
- Making accusations
- naggings
- Holding a grudge
- Acting superior
- Using unwarranted physical force
- Mocking
- Insisting on being right
- Commanding, demanding, dominating
- Using insults

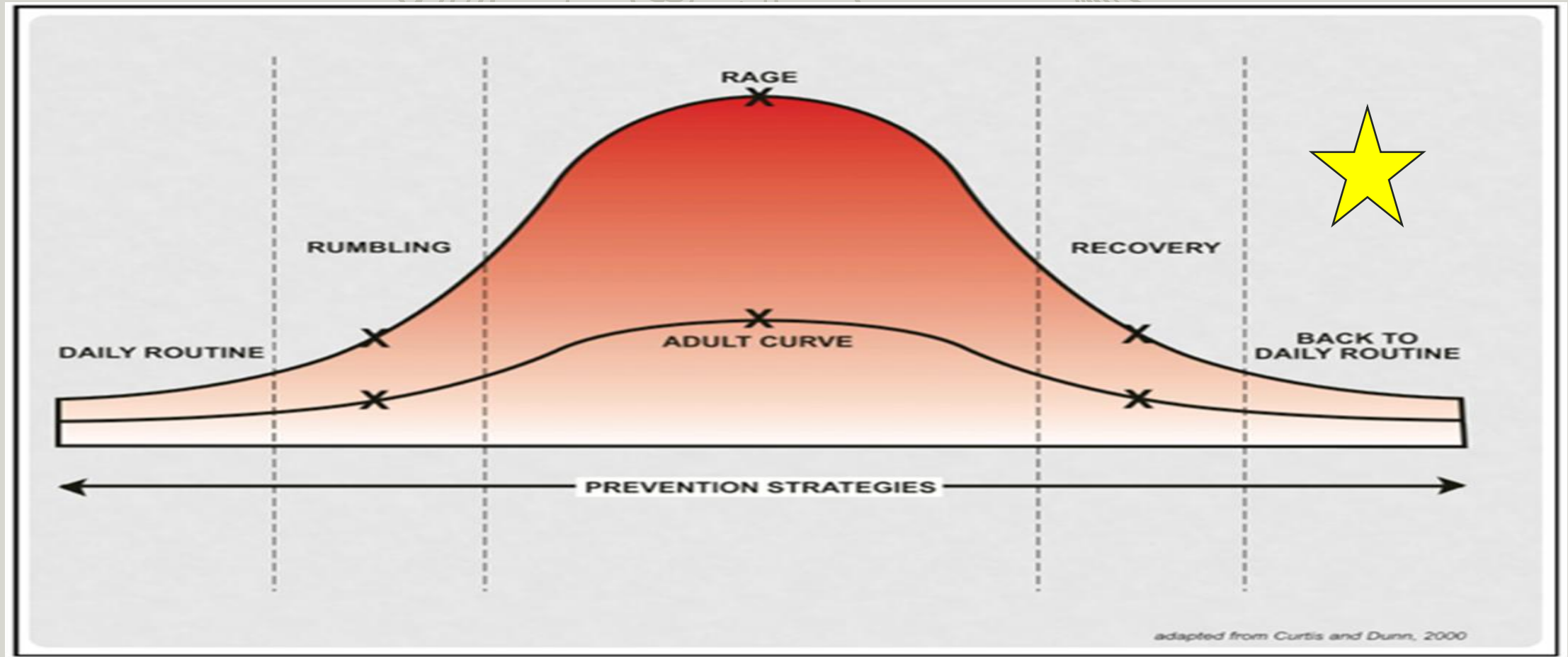
The Rage Stage



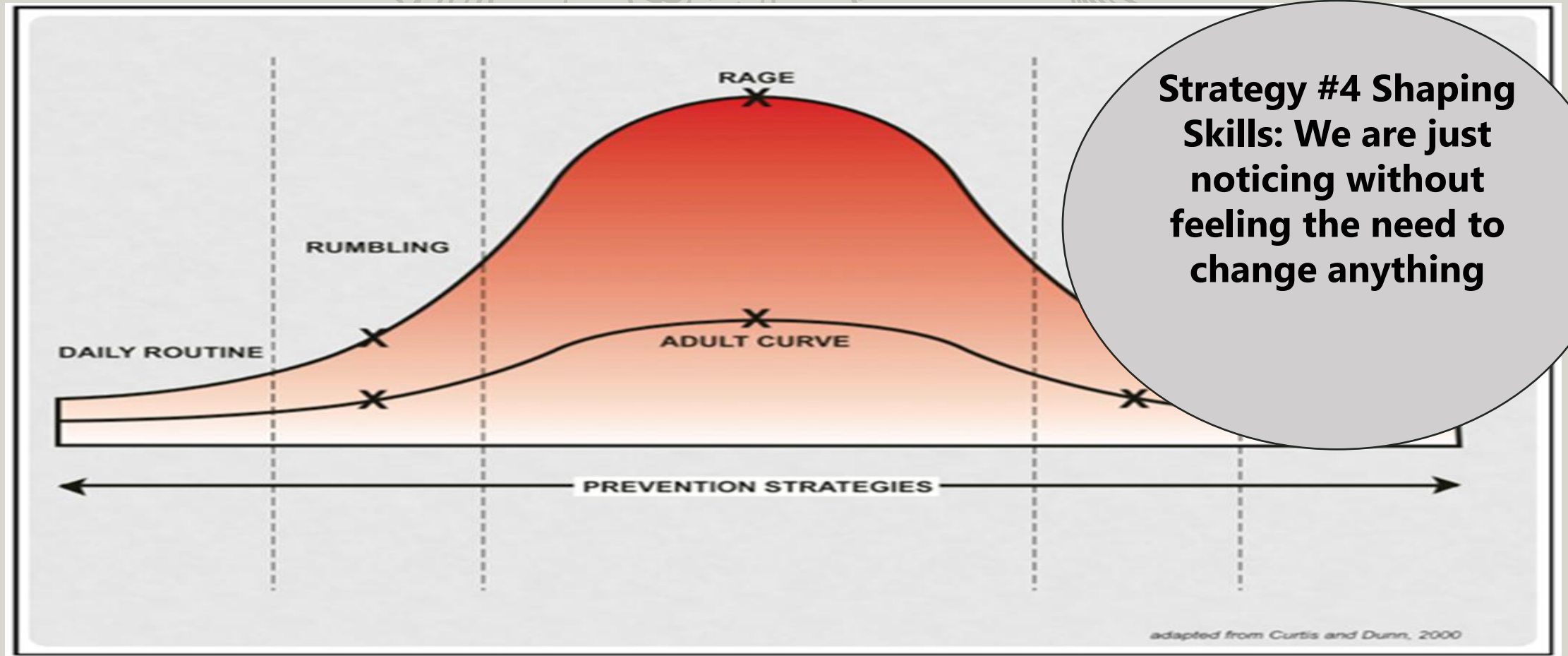
The Recovery Stage



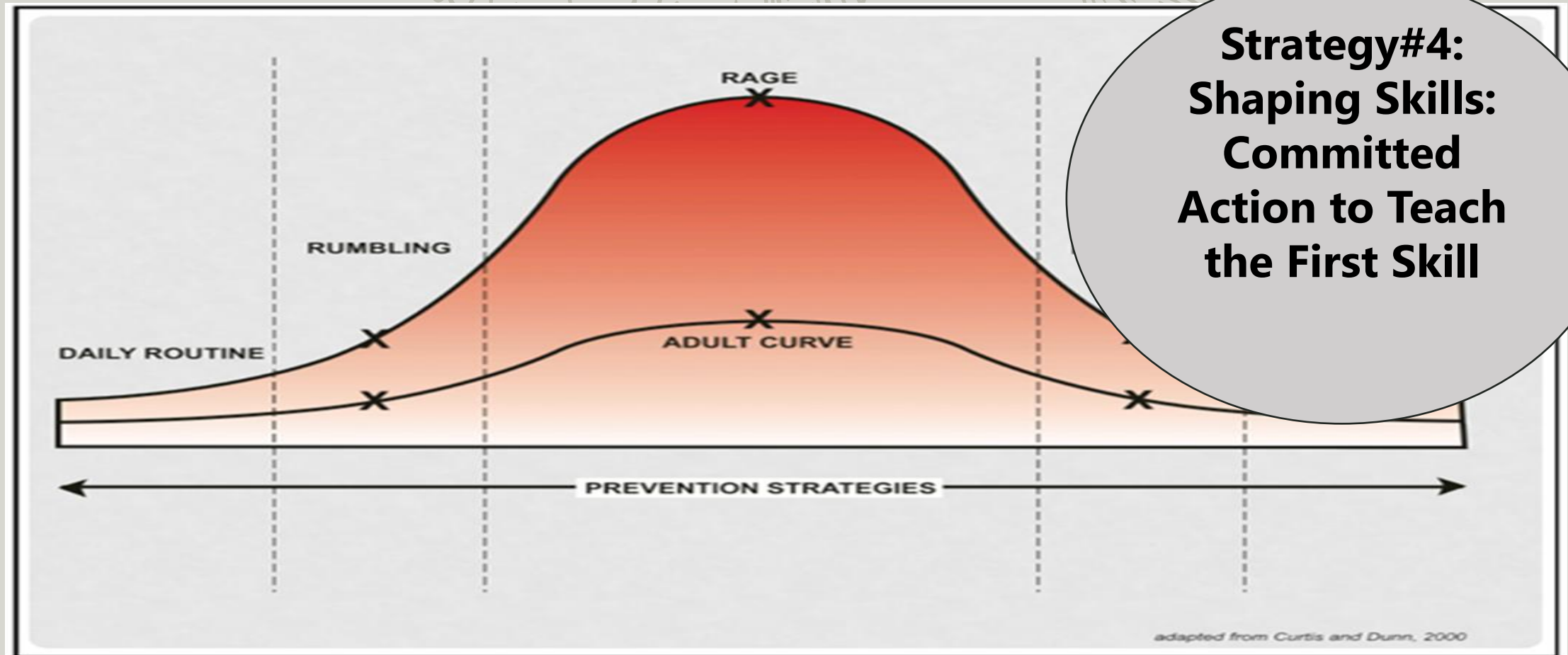
The Return to Daily Routine, HRE.



The Cycle of a Meltdown



The Focus now Shifts to the Parent's First Committed Action

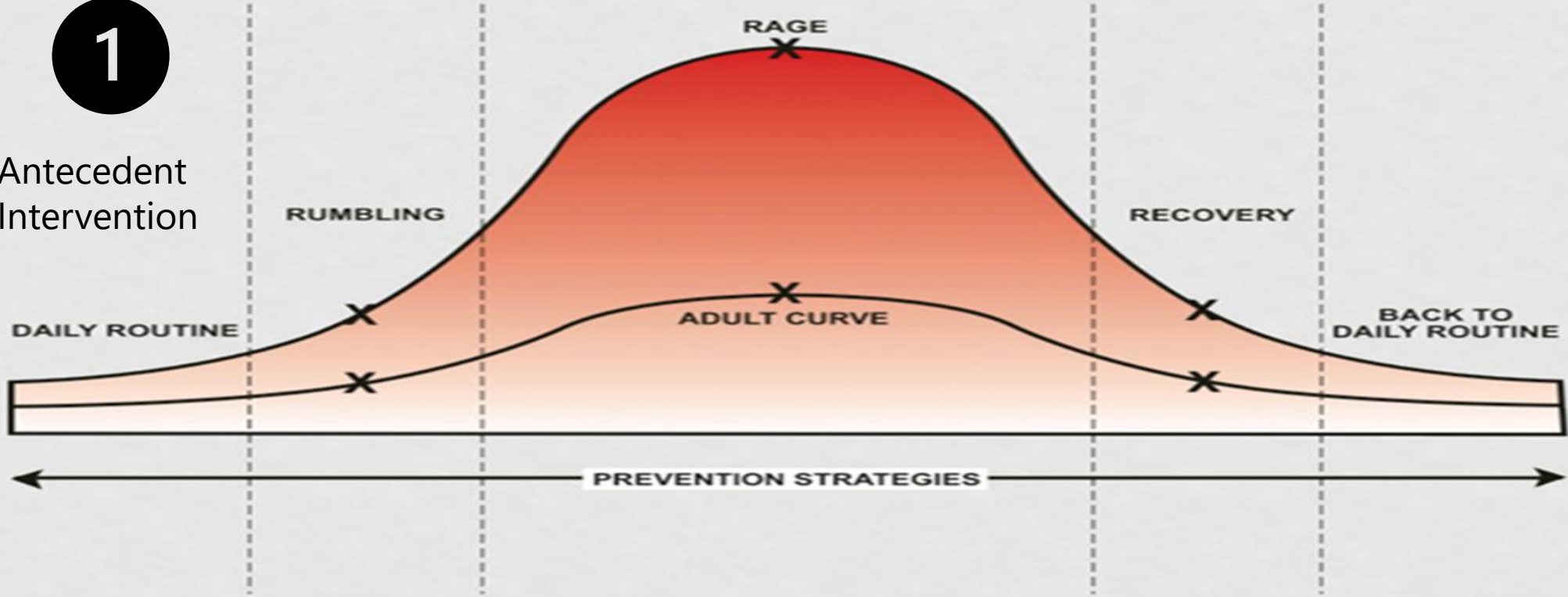


**Strategy#4:
Shaping Skills:
Committed
Action to Teach
the First Skill**

Committed Actions in Stage 1

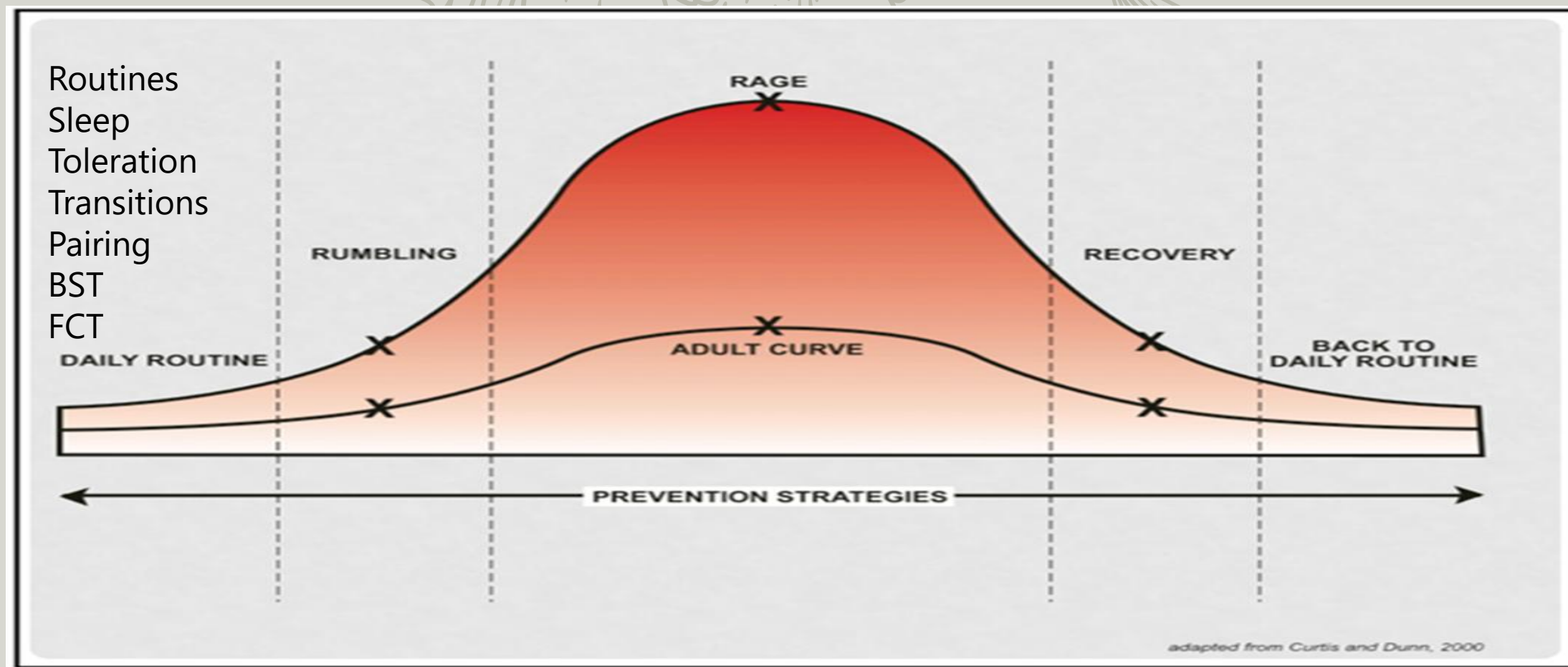
1

Antecedent Intervention

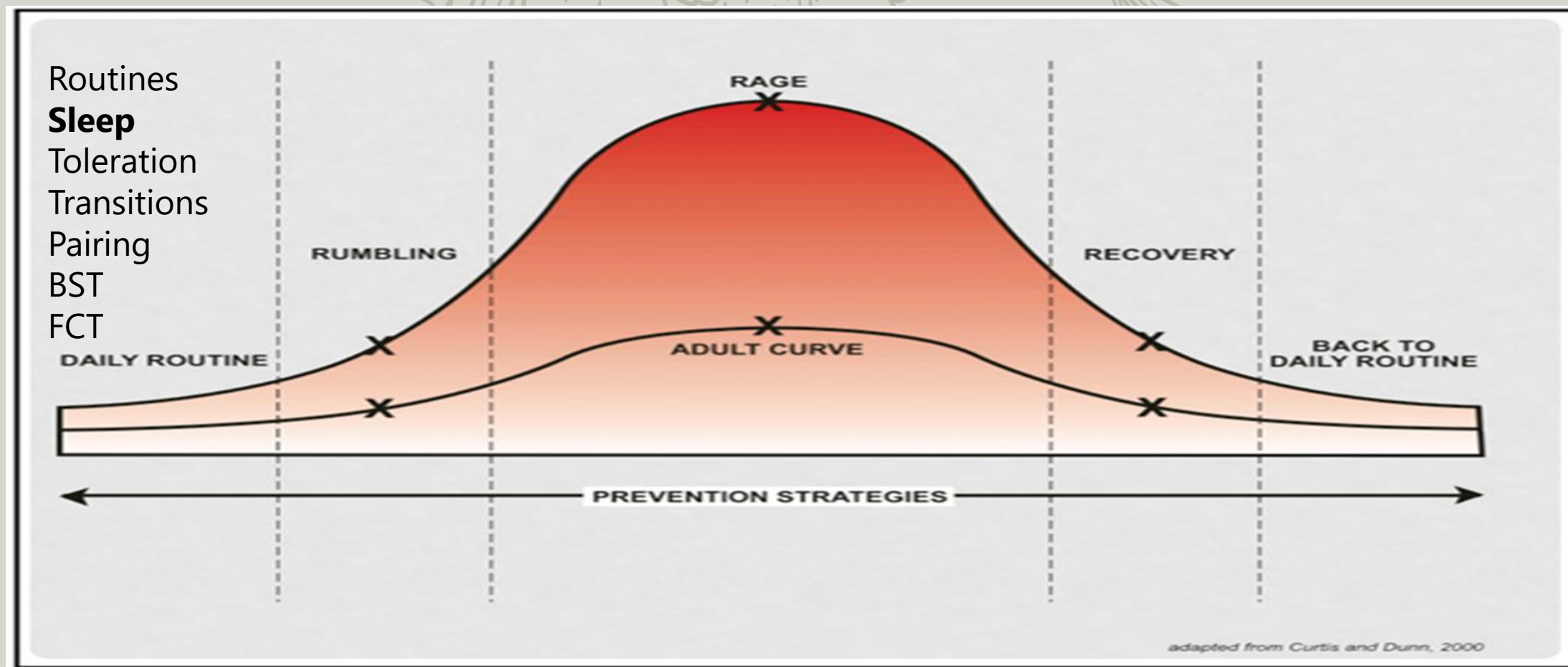


adapted from Curtis and Dunn, 2000

Committed Action in Stage 1



Committed Action in Stage 1



Committed Action in Stage 1

Routines

Sleep

Toleration

Transitions

Pairing

BST

FCT

DAILY ROUTIN



*Journal of
Applied Behavior Analysis*

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

2013, 9999, 1-20

NUMBER 9999 (SUMMER 2013)

*AN INDIVIDUALIZED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO
TREATING SLEEP PROBLEMS IN YOUNG CHILDREN*

C. SANDY JIN, GREGORY P. HANLEY, AND LAUREN BEAULIEU

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY

adapted from Curtis and Dunn, 2000

Committed Action in Stage 1

Routines

Sleep

Toleration

Transitions

Pairing

BST

FCT

DAILY ROUTINE



Addressing Sleep Issues:

- Develop a sleep schedule that includes age-appropriate hour of sleep
- Develop a bedtime routine
- Optimize Bedroom conditions
- Optimize Sleep Dependencies
- Addressing Sleep Interfering Behavior
- Addressing Nighttime Awakenings

Committed Action in Stage 1

Routines

Sleep

Toleration

Transitions

Pairing

BST

FCT

DAILY ROUTINE



Addressing Sleep Issues:

- Develop a sleep schedule that includes age-appropriate hour of sleep
- Develop a bedtime routine
- **Optimize Bedroom Conditions- *First Committed Action***
- Optimize Sleep Dependencies
- Addressing Sleep Interfering Behavior
- Addressing Nighttime Awakenings

Committed Action in Stage 1

Routines
Sleep
Toleration
Transitions
Pairing
BST
FCT

DAILY ROUTINE



Addressing Sleep Issues:

- Develop a sleep schedule that includes an hour of sleep
- Develop a bedtime routine
- **Optimize Bedroom Conditions**
- Optimize Sleep Dependencies
- Addressing Sleep Interfering Behavior
- Addressing Nighttime Awakenings

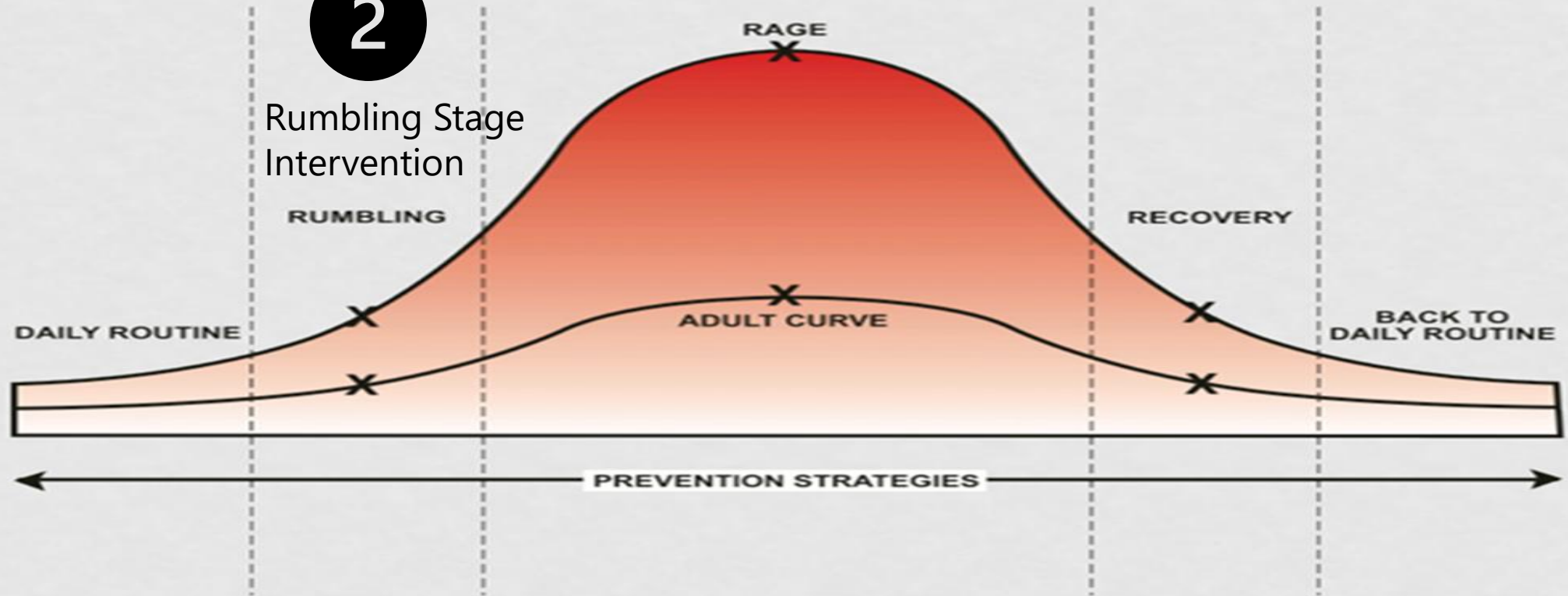
**Strategy #4:
Momentum Building**

Committed Action*

Committed Actions in Stage 2

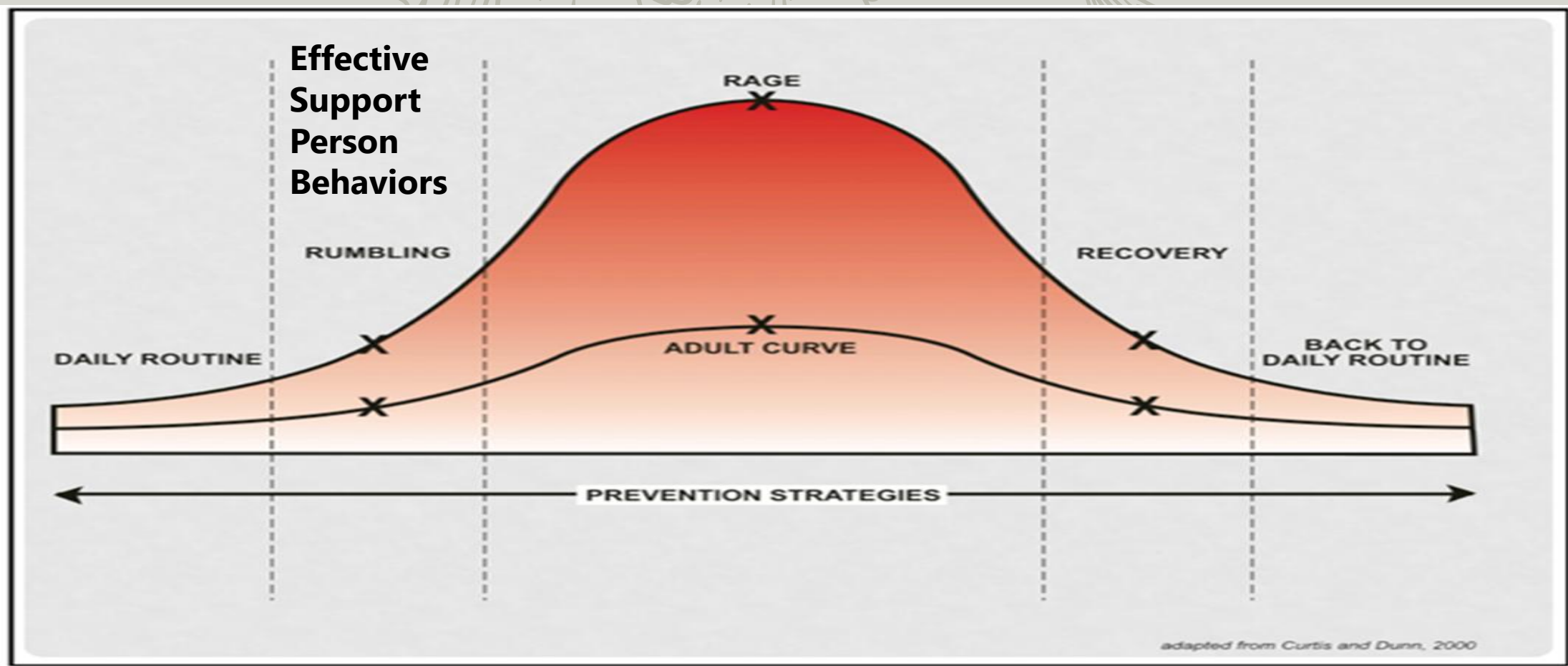
2

Rumbling Stage
Intervention

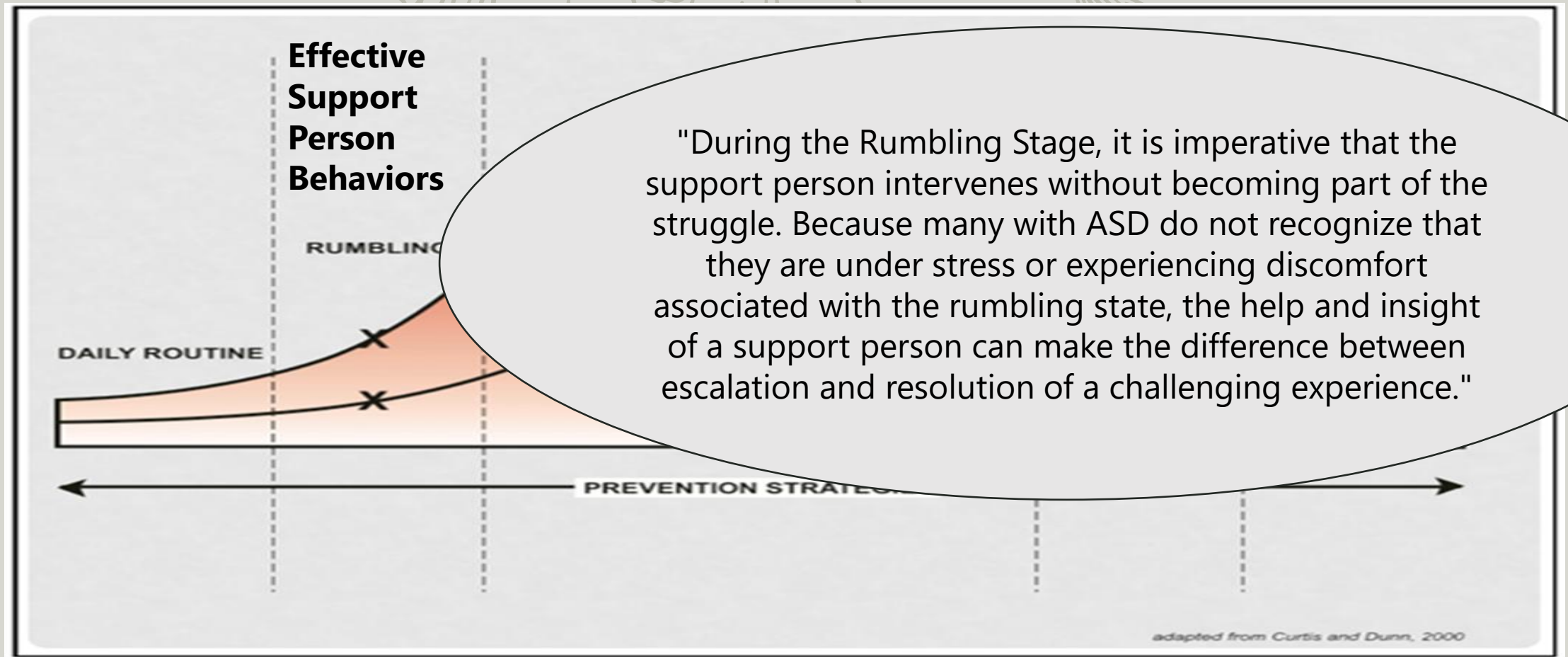


adapted from Curtis and Dunn, 2000

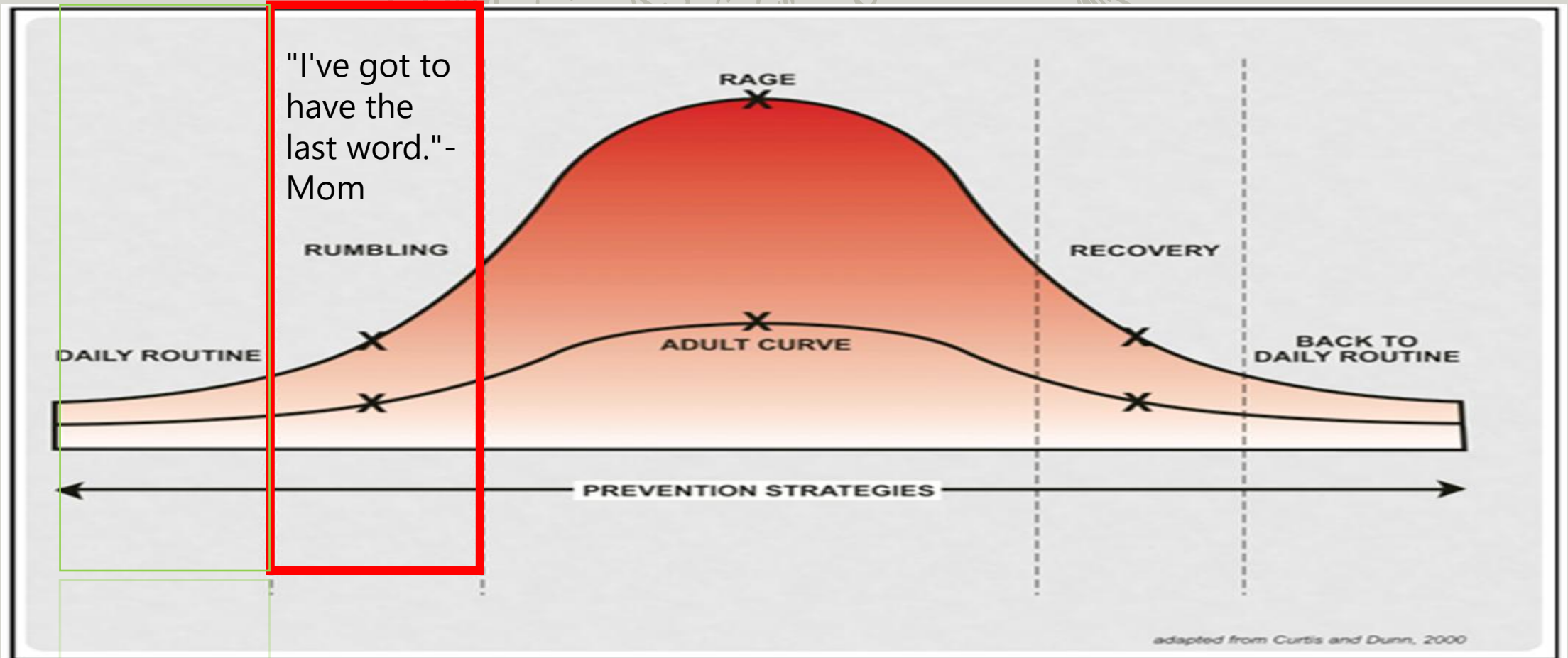
Committed Action in Stage 2



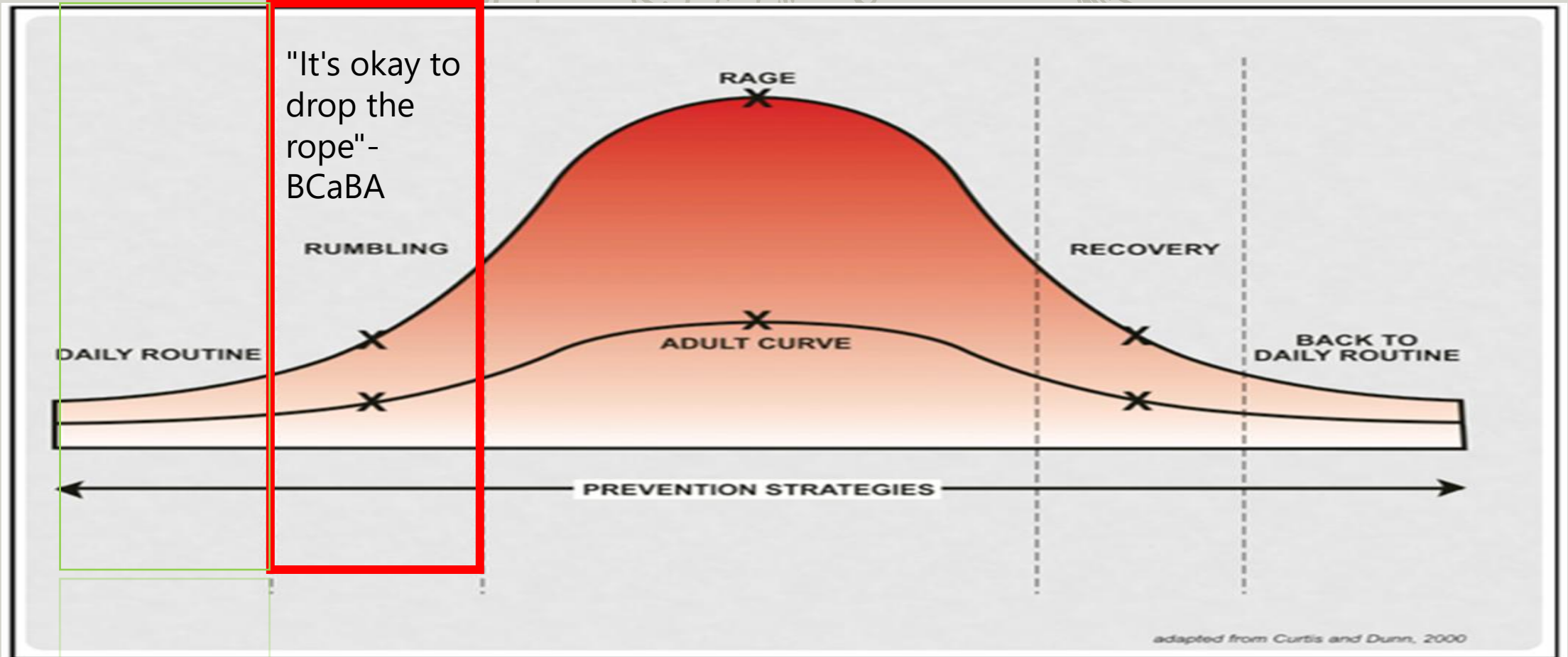
Committed Actions in Stage 2



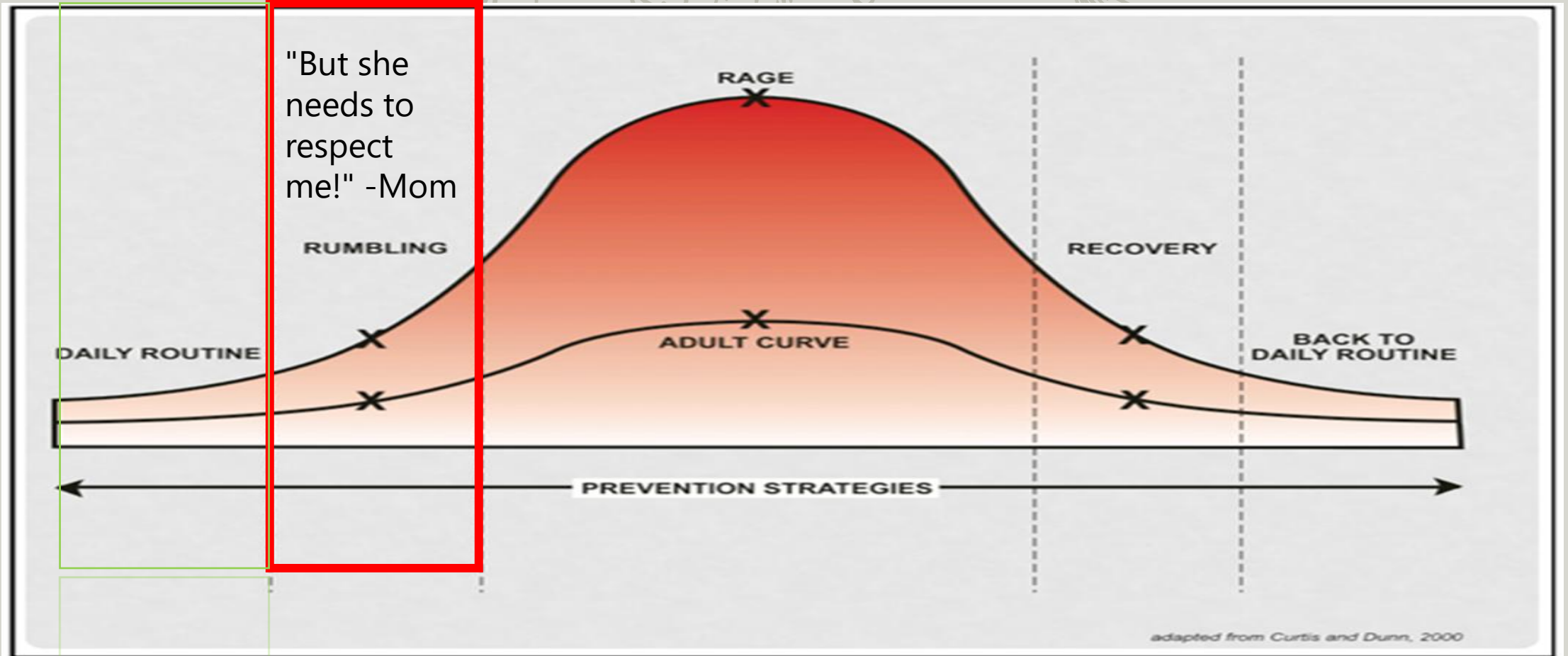
Committed Action in Stage 2



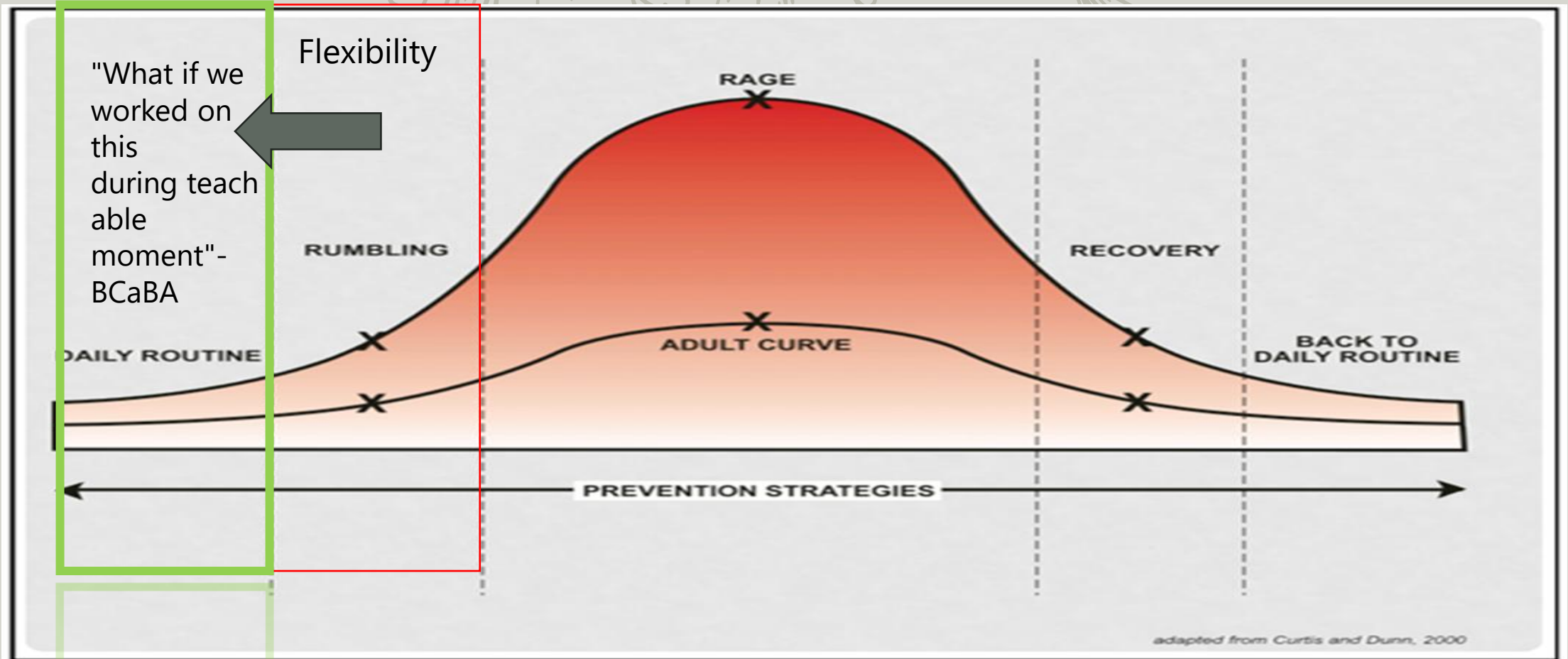
Committed Action in Stage 2



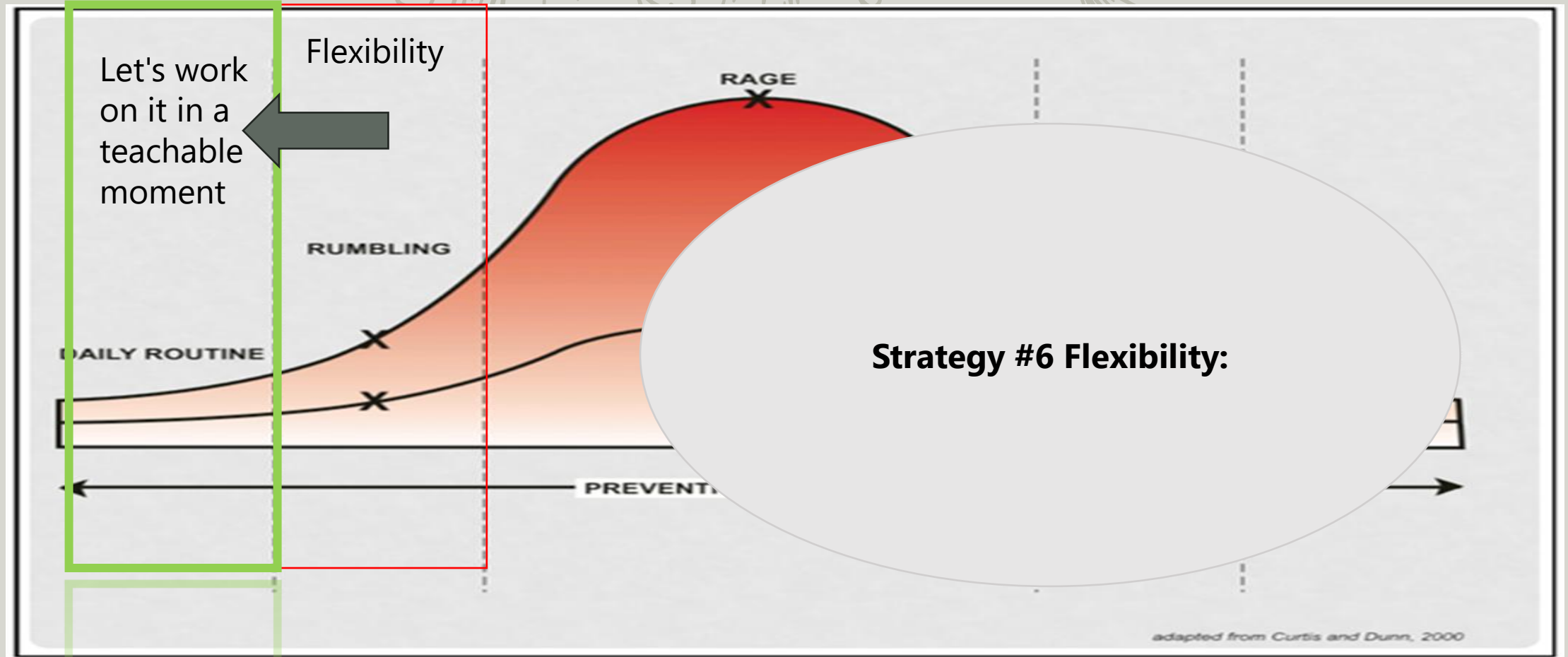
Committed Action in Stage 2



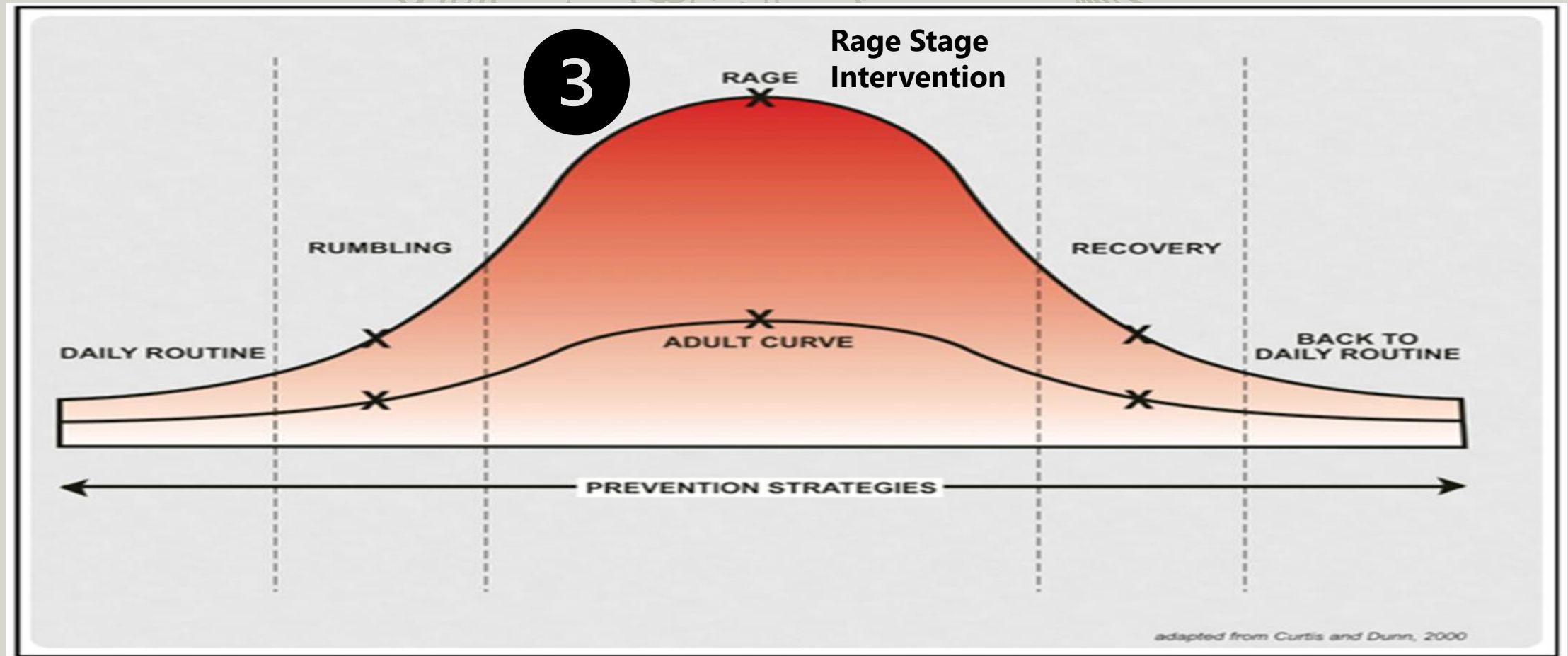
Committed Action in Stage 2



Committed Action in Stage 2



Committed Actions in Stage 3





Committed Actions in Stage 3

Effective Support Person Behaviors:

- Control "flight or fight" tendency
- Remember that "less is more"
- Remain calm and quiet
- Do not take behaviors personally
- Disengage emotionally
- Be conscious of your nonverbal cues
- Take Deep Breaths

Rage Stage Interventions:

- Protect the Student
- Protect the Environment
- Protect Others
- Don't Discipline
- Remove any audience
- Be nonconfrontational
- Plan a 'graceful exit strategy
- Follow a Plan
- Obtain Assistance
- Prompt to a cool zone, as appropriate
- Use few words
- Prevent a power struggle
- Re-evaluate the students goals
- Be Flexible-The individual is not able to



Committed Actions in Stage 3

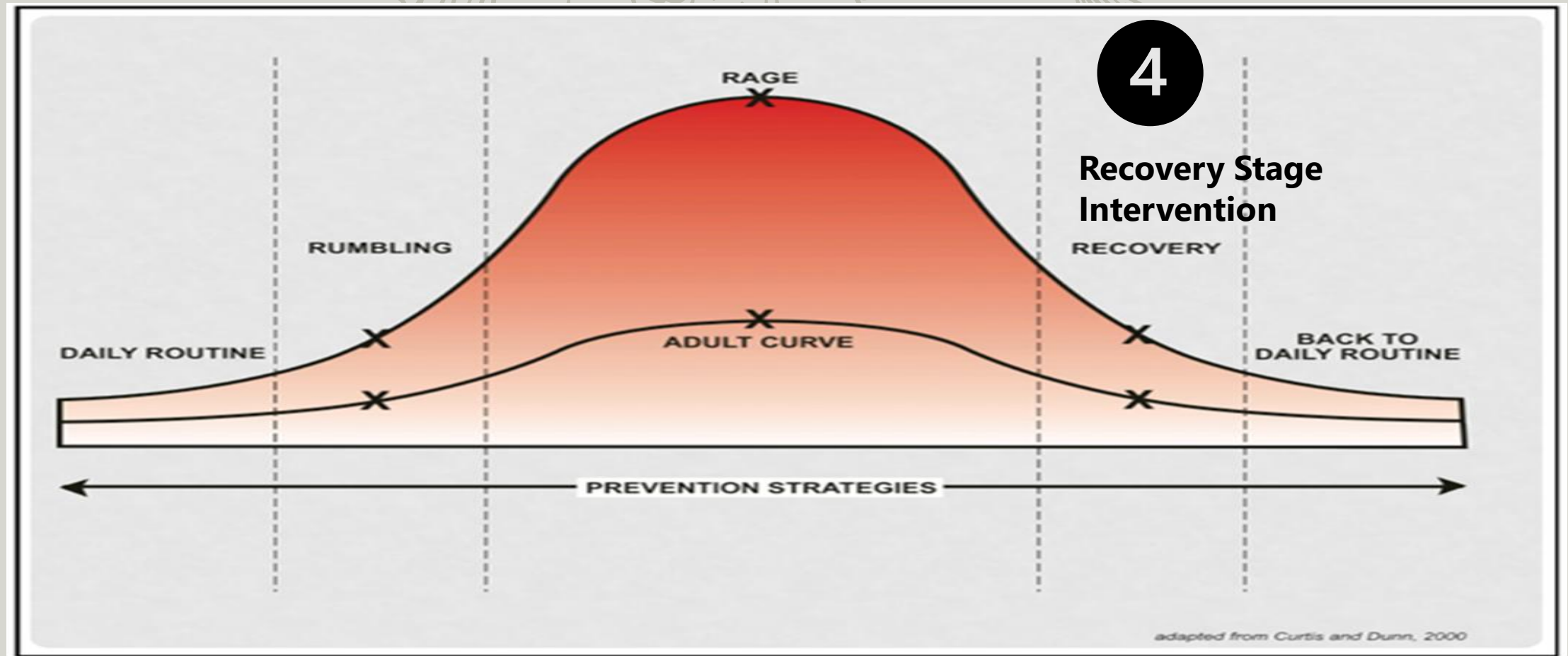
Effective Support Person Behaviors:

- Control "flight or fight" tendency
- Remember that "less is more"
- Remain calm and quiet
- Do not take behaviors personally
- Disengage emotionally
- Be conscious of your nonverbal cues
- Take Deep Breaths

Rage Stage Interventions:

- Protect the Student
- Protect the Environment
- **Protect Others- *Committed Action***
- Don't Discipline
- Remove any audience
- Be nonconfrontational
- Plan a 'graceful exit strategy
- **Follow a Plan- *Committed Action***
- Obtain Assistance
- Prompt to a cool zone, as appropriate
- Use few words
- Prevent a power struggle
- Re-evaluate the students goals
- Be Flexible-The individual is not able to

Committed Action in Stage 4





Committed Actions in Stage 4

Effective Support Person Behaviors:

- Remain Calm and Quite
- Take Time for Yourself to Regroup

Recovery Stage Interventions:

- Allow the child to sleep, if necessary
- Support the use of relaxation techniques
- Do not refer to the rage behavior
- Support with structure
- Consider the individual to be fragile
- Determine appropriate options: Redirect to successful activity or special interest, provide space.
- Check to see if the individual is ready to learn or go back to work
- Do not make excessive demands
- Reinforce positive behavior



Committed Actions in Stage 4

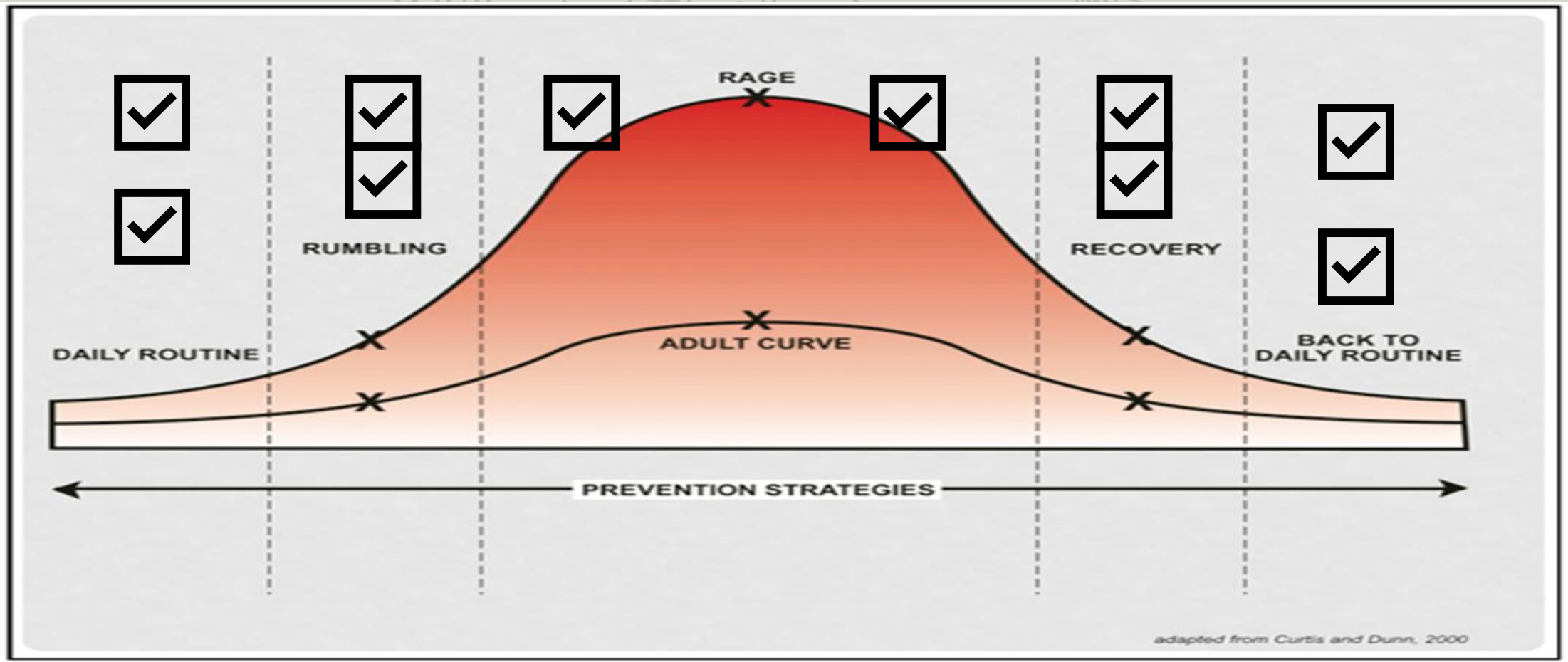
Effective Support Person Behaviors:

- Remain Calm and Quite
- Take Time for Yourself to Regroup

Recovery Stage Interventions:

- Allow the child to sleep, if necessary
- Support the use of relaxation techniques
- Do not refer to the rage behavior
- Support with structure
- Consider the individual to be fragile
- **Determine appropriate options: Redirect to successful activity or special interest, provide space.**
- Check to see if the individual is ready to learn or go back to work
- Do not make excessive demands
- Reinforce positive behavior

Stacking Committed Actions Throughout the Cycle





Thoughts on why I enjoy Family Guidance

- " I have compassion towards those who are in the greatest of need. I show this compassion by teaching families the skills to promote confidence, independence and joyfulness while parenting a child with ASD." -CMH BCBA

Thoughts on why I enjoy Family Guidance

**The Goal is for the
Parents to be the
Superhero!**



Thoughts on why I enjoy Family Guidance

**The Goal is for the
Parents to be the
Superhero!**

Strategy #7 Fading

