

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Advice and Strategies to Support Emotional Regulation

Why work on emotional regulation?

- Because extreme emotions and poor emotional regulation can have a detrimental affect on attention, communication skills and problem solving (Laurent et al, 2004)
- Research has found that children who learn to manage (i.e. regulate) their emotions have an easier time relating to others, forming peer relationships, and engaging in positive peer interactions (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000)

Who can work on emotional regulation?

- All adults working with the student.
- The student can develop strategies to support themselves.

When do we work on emotional regulation?

- As adults we can always be modelling positive self talk and emotional regulation.
- You can teach strategies during structured sessions/groups.
- The only time we do NOT work on emotional regulation is when a child is having a moment of dis-regulation. This is not a time for teaching, this is a time to stay calm and support the student and others to stay safe.

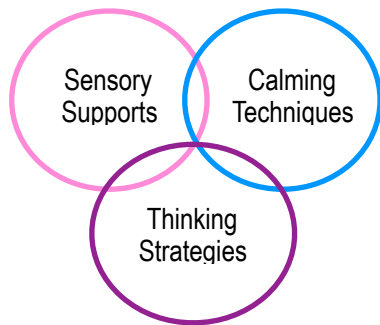


What does dis-regulation look like?

Difficulties in managing emotions may manifest in a number of ways and differs for each student:

- Verbal and physical aggression
- Screaming / Shouting / Yelling
- Throwing themselves to the floor (tantrums)
- Throwing and destroying items
- Crying
- Accusations
- Engaging others in negative behaviours
- Disrupting
- Absconding
- Avoiding
- Running
- Climbing
- Overexcited behaviour
- Not listening
- Not learning
- Self harming (cutting, pulling out hair or nails, hitting, biting etc)
- Shutting down

How do we support Emotional Regulation?



Sensory Supports

- Heavy work task – carry heavy bag/books, move chairs etc.
- Jump (on a trampet)
- Push, pull, lift objects
- Bounce or lie on a large inflatable ball
- Gentle swinging/rocking
- Deep pressure – use a weighted toy or a large inflatable ball for gentle squashing
- Massage – use vibrating massager
- Movement breaks
- Chewy/crunchy or sour snacks, ice lolly, eat fruit eg. Crunchy apple or tangy orange
- Cold drink out of sports bottles (where they have to suck)
- Jumping Jacks
- Change seating
- Wall pushes
- Rowing machine, treadmill, stepper etc.
- Sit ups, Plank, Push ups, etc.

Calming Techniques

- Music
- Walk and talk
- Stretching
- Have a drink of water
- Mindfulness
- Breathing ('Draw' number 8 lying on its side in the air, breath in as you draw one circle and breath out as you draw the other)

Thinking Strategies

Stop and Think

Figuring out the size of the problem is the first step in being able to match our emotional reaction accordingly.

When we talk about the

'size of problems' we can classify them as small, medium or big on a number scale.

Big = 8 - 10
Medium = 5 - 7
Small = 1 - 4



As they learn to **stop and think**, you can support the student to question, "does the size of my emotion match the size of my problem?"

Speakeasy Therapy

www.speakeasy-therapy.co.uk

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Zones of Regulation® (Leah Kuypers)

Uses colours instead of emotional vocabulary to support students to understand their feelings. There are four zones to describe how your brain and body feel.:

BLUE Zone – When our body is running slow, such as when you are tired, sick, sad or bored.

GREEN Zone – When you feel "good to go." Your body may feel happy, calm, content and focused.

YELLOW Zone – When you start to lose control, such as when you are frustrated, anxious, worried, silly or surprised. *Use caution when you are in this zone.*

RED Zone – This zone is for big emotions such as anger, terror, aggression and extreme excitement. *In this zone, you are out of control, and can't make good decisions and must STOP!*



Why

use the Zones of Regulation®?

- For children to be able to identify their feelings
- To have a toolbox of regulation tools
- To know when and how to use the tools
- To be able to develop problem solving skills
- To start to understanding how their behaviour influences others thoughts and feelings.

Strategies

- Different strategies work for different students, best thing to do is to 'know your student' and what works best for them. Often if they are older and mature they can communicate with you what helps what they are emotionally dysregulated.
- Help the student to examine their thoughts and consider how accurate and realistic they are by looking at the evidence.
- Get student to identify which zone they're in and what tools they can use (if you have used a zones of regulation approach).
- Give the student space.
- Encouraging them to 'check it out' with a trusted student or adult.
- Challenging what they believe the consequence will be.
- Examining different ways of interpreting situations - present them with alternative interpretations.
- Worry Books, Encourage students to write down the things that are on their mind. You can work out what to do with the worries they have written in the book. Good ways to let go of these is to discuss together, identify a solution and then Shred/ rip up the paper its written on. Visualise ripped up paper/ worry blowing away in the wind.