Emotional regulation directly relates to our ability to think clearly and put our other executive functions into action.

As we move through our day, we are continually regulating our emotional reactions.
- may happen quickly and subconsciously, such as shifting your body in a chair if you are bored or talking a little faster or louder if you are excited.
• The foundation of being ready to learn is to have a mind and body that is well regulated and able to engage in instruction.

• Some students may need more time and tools to help them achieve this.

• Strategies must be individualized.
It is completely normal for people to feel a variety of emotions along with a range of intensity levels throughout the day.

Important to teach that it’s ok to stay away from people when you are in a bad mood - it’s a good strategy.
Little can be Big

- Individuals with autism can process small changes, such as a change in the schedule, similar to the way another person would process a major change, such as being fired from a job.
It is important to understand the relationship between our emotions and the emotions of others.

We must appreciate that what helps me regulate myself may be different from what helps you, such as squeezing a stress ball vs. flapping my hands vs. going for a walk.
We use our own experiences and awareness to understand other people’s emotions.

This explains why a person may misunderstand or react unexpectedly to a situation, such as a student laughing when another student gets hurt on the playground.
Challenges occur when...

the individual does not have the skills to:

1) recognize their own feelings
2) match feelings to events
3) have appropriate strategies to regulate their energy and intensity of emotions
Emotional Regulation Strategies
What’s your plan to support Emotional Regulation?
Build Relationships
Why use visual supports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neurotypical Brain</th>
<th>Autistic Brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10x more powerful</td>
<td>10x more powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to process what is heard.</td>
<td>Ability to process what is seen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interoceptive Awareness (IA)

The ability to:
1. Listen to our body
2. Understand its messages

https://www.kelly-mahler.com
IA and Self-Regulation: The ability to control the way we feel

Feel Sensations: Hot Cheeks, Fast Heart Rate

Body State or Emotion: Embarrassed

Urge to Act

Action or Behavior: Change what you are doing

Outcome: Discomfort Fades

https://www.kelly-mahler.com
IA and Self-Regulation: The ability to control the way we feel

Feel Sensations: Fast Heart Rate, clenched fists, tight muscles

Body State or Emotion: Angry

Urge to Act

Action or Behavior: Go for a Walk

Outcome: Discomfort Fades

https://www.kelly-mahler.com
Interoception / Body Check

- Interoception, Kelly Mahler (2015)
https://www.kelly-mahler.com
IA and Emotional Regulation

- Feel Frustrated - Find another way
- Feel Confused - Ask for help
- Feel Guilty - Apologize
- Feel Embarrassed - Alter Actions
- Feel Sad - Seek a Friend
- Feel Scared - Run
- Feel Bored - Find Activity
- Feel Calm - Keep Going
- Feel Excited - Celebrate
- Feel Angry - Get Out

https://www.kelly-mahler.com
Factors that influence our emotions

• Environment
• Task in front of us
• How we physically feel
• The emotions and behavior around us
What does Calm feel like?

• Teach the individual to recognize what CALM feels like

• May not know how to physically get calm once they are taking a break … this is why many times calming strategies don’t work
Create a Calming Space
Teach a Calming Routine

1st - Do Breathing Sequence

2nd - Squeeze stress ball and put in jar

3rd - Match pictures of interest in binder

4th - Check Schedule card

Calmimg Down
1. STOP
2. Smell the Flower
3. Blow out the candle
4. Relax your body
Mindfulness with Visual Supports

Pathway 2 Success on Teachers Pay Teachers website
Mindfulness using some visual structure
Dimmer vs. on/off

- Need to be able to adjust the intensity of our emotions and the outward expression of those emotions
The 5 Point Scale
by Kari Dunn Buron

The Incredible 5-Point Scale
Second Edition - Revised
Assisting students in understanding social interactions and managing their emotional responses
Kari Dunn Buron
Mitzi Curtis

www.5pointscale.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>5 Point Scale</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Looks Like</strong></th>
<th><strong>Feels Like</strong></th>
<th><strong>I Can Try To</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kicking or hitting</td>
<td>My head will probably explode</td>
<td>Call my mom to go home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screaming, almost hitting</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Go see Mr. Peterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet, rude talk</td>
<td>Bad mood, grumpy</td>
<td>Stay away from kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular kid</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Enjoy it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing</td>
<td>A million bucks</td>
<td>Stay that way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buron & Curtis, 2012
5 Point Scale

A “5” Could Make Me Lose Control!

An activity-based method for evaluating and supporting highly anxious students

Kari Dunn Bunker

5
4
3
2
1

5
4
3
2
1

Feeling like I’m going to explode – I need help to calm down
Feeling angry – I need to calm down
Feeling anxious – something is bothering me
Feeling fine – everything is OK
Feeling happy – things are going well
Do a Check-in

Kenworthy et al.
ZONES of Regulation

• Refer to the Zones of Regulation Program
  • **Blue**: Low state of alertness: Sad, tired, bored
  • **Green**: Ideal state of alertness: happy, calm, focused
  • **Yellow**: Heightened state of alertness: frustration, anxiety, silliness, excitement
  • **Red**: Extremely heightened state of alertness: rage, anger, panic, extreme grief

www.zonesofregulation.com
How Does Your Engine Run?

Cruising

Low N Slow

Speed

The Alert Program
Emotional Vocabulary

- Irritated
- Frustrated
- Angry
- Furious
- fine
- good
- great
- awesome
- disappointed
- bummed
- upset
# Teach Levels of Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pencil breaks, get a math question wrong, someone says something gross</td>
<td>irritated, grumpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>People ignore you, phone dies, someone changes your avatar</td>
<td>sad, mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hole in backpack, lose $20, lose your phone charger</td>
<td>upset, fiery/hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Someone dies, drop phone in coffee, Xbox gets smashed</td>
<td>inconsolable, explosive, furious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Teach Levels of Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What does it look like?</th>
<th>What can I do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support Flexible Thinking

- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Disappointment
- Excitement
- Next best thing…
### When I Feel Frustrated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I'm frustrated because</th>
<th>I don’t know how to answer this question</th>
<th>I choose</th>
<th>To ask my teacher for some help</th>
<th>So I can focus on my work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I got in a fight with my brother</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>To talk to Mr. Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structured Script with choices to teach flexibility
A Change Today

Sometimes things change. Change is not bad. It just means that I will do something different than what I thought. Today I will go to Music instead of PE. I will go to PE tomorrow. I can hold my stress ball during Music to help me stay calm. I will try to be okay when changes happen. I can use my calming strategy if I start to feel upset.
Offer Choices - Calming Cards

ANGER MANAGEMENT
23 CALMING STRATEGY CARDS

CALM DOWN
kit for little learners
Songs / Positive Self Talk

✓ Daniel Tiger songs:
   ❖ “When you feel so mad that you’re gonna roar…”
   ❖ Grownups come back
   ❖ It’s ok to feel sad
   ❖ Use your words
   ❖ Calming down
   ❖ Keep trying
Books to support Emotional Regulation
Evaluate Calming Techniques

- Go for a bike ride
  - X school
  - X home (he doesn't have a bike at home)

- Take a bubble bath
  - X school
  - + home

- Close your eyes
  - + school
  - + home
## Strategy Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping strategy</th>
<th>How much does this strategy help?</th>
<th>I like this strategy</th>
<th>I don’t like this strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 None</td>
<td>2 A little</td>
<td>3 Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take five deep breaths.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your eyes and think of a “happy place” (e.g., the beach).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your eyes and think of your favorite activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run outside (maybe a lap around the house or ball field).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chew a piece of gum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a drink of water.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make your own strategy:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make your own strategy:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kenworthy et al.
What’s your plan to support Emotional Regulation?
Practice, Practice, Practice

Use the strategies throughout the day

Model

Reinforce the use of strategies
The right Emotional Regulation supports will...

• Help decrease stress
• Change level of alertness
• Increase engagement
• Influence all aspects of life
Best wishes!

Amy Gaffney

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