

Parent/Carer School Session

Emotional Regulation



SEND and Inclusion Service

Specialist SEND & Inclusion Advisory Teachers

SEND & Inclusion Service



Hoped for outcomes:



- Increase awareness of emotional regulation
- To raise awareness of co-regulation and the importance of this
- To support CYP to develop regulation strategies with increasing independence

What is emotional regulation?

How do you recognise how you are feeling?

How do you manage your emotions during the day?

What do you think emotional regulation means?



What is emotional regulation?

Ability to maintain a 'well-regulated' emotional state, letting us work, interact, have fun (Gross 2014)

Manage our emotions rather than have them manage us, in a flexible and responsive way

- Lift ourselves up when we are tired or low
- Self calm when angry /anxious
- Focus and ignore distractions
- Inhibit a response for a long-term goal

What is involved in good emotional regulation?

- Recognise we are having an emotional response
- Modify the emotion by thinking about the situation differently OR
- Help ourselves tolerate difficult feelings
- Self care - eat /sleep, exercise
- Distraction

What does dysregulation look like at home?



What is happening ‘under the surface?’

Why might your child/children become dysregulated?

Why does it happen so quickly?

4 Functions of Behaviour

1) To meet a **S**ensory need

2) To **E**scape

3) **A**ttention

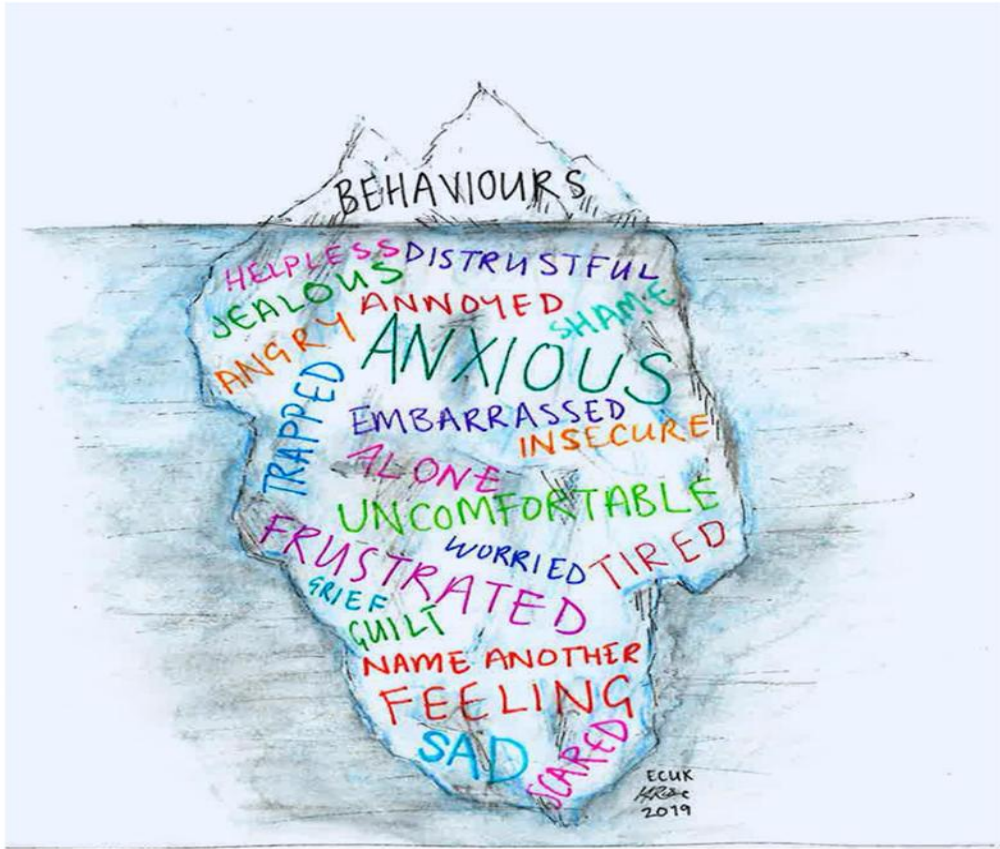
4) **T**angible

Behaviours

Behaviours are a communication of *our emotions*

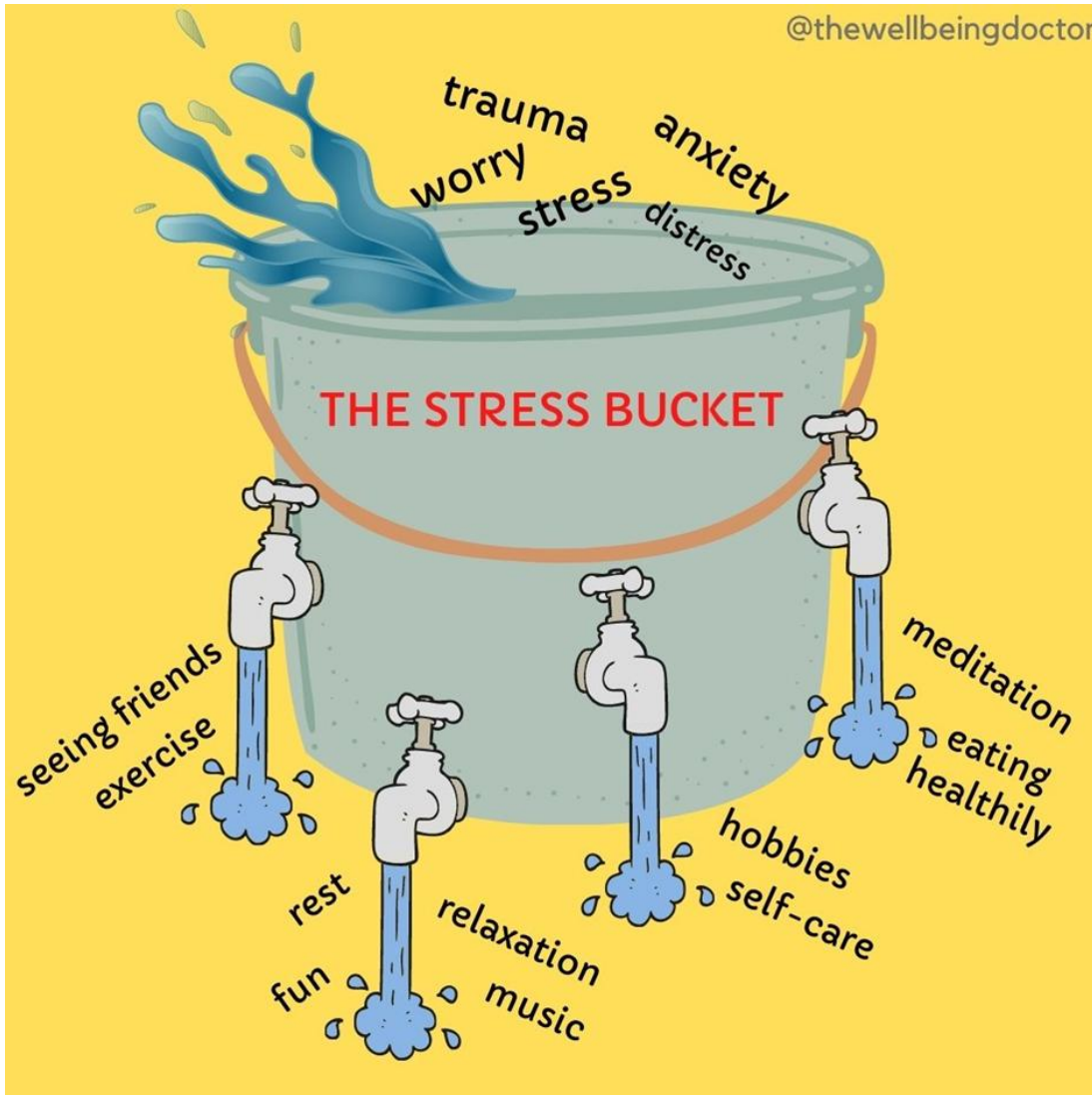
Through our *relationships* with *others* we learn to understand our experiences and regulate our emotions

Relationships, Experiences and Environments matter to Learning



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PowerPoint Support for EC Training



Window of Tolerance

When people are within their window of tolerance, they are in a psychological space that allows them to perform daily activities without their emotions and thoughts overwhelming or interfering with their functioning.



HYPERAROUSAL

FIGHT / FLIGHT RESPONSE

- Attacking or confronting
- Becoming angry or irritable
- Hurling insults
- Engaging in blame
- Difficulty in trusting other people
- Running away or hiding
- Quitting
- Being in denial
- Experiencing anxiety
- Sabotaging oneself



HYPOAROUSAL

- Surrendering or becoming compliant
- Feeling empty or numb, like you are shutting down
- Experiencing detachment
- Rationalizing or justifying behaviors or situations

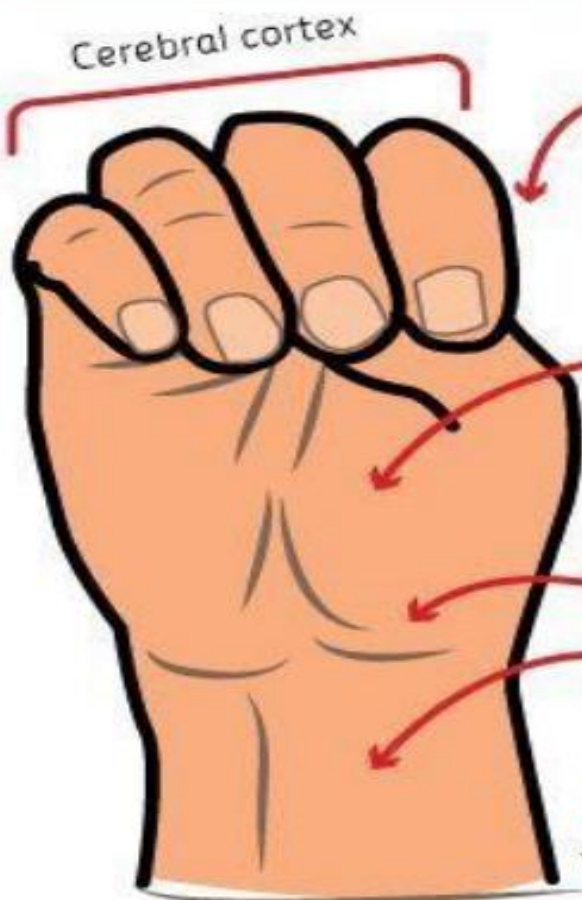
The Hand Model of the Brain

What happens when we "flip our lid"

When our brain is working efficiently both the upper and mid brain are communicating effectively. Information comes in and is processed logically. Sometimes too much information is coming in for the Upper brain to process and it disconnects. We "flip our lid" and can no longer access the functions provided by the upper brain

The Cerebrum or Neo Cortex

Cerebral cortex
Prefrontal cortex
Upper brain
"Logic centre"
"Thinking brain"
"Upstairs brain"



Your brain working in harmony. All parts are connected and talking. The upper part of the brain can be accessed for logic, socialising and reasoning. Our upper brain is hugging our mid brain, making it feel safe

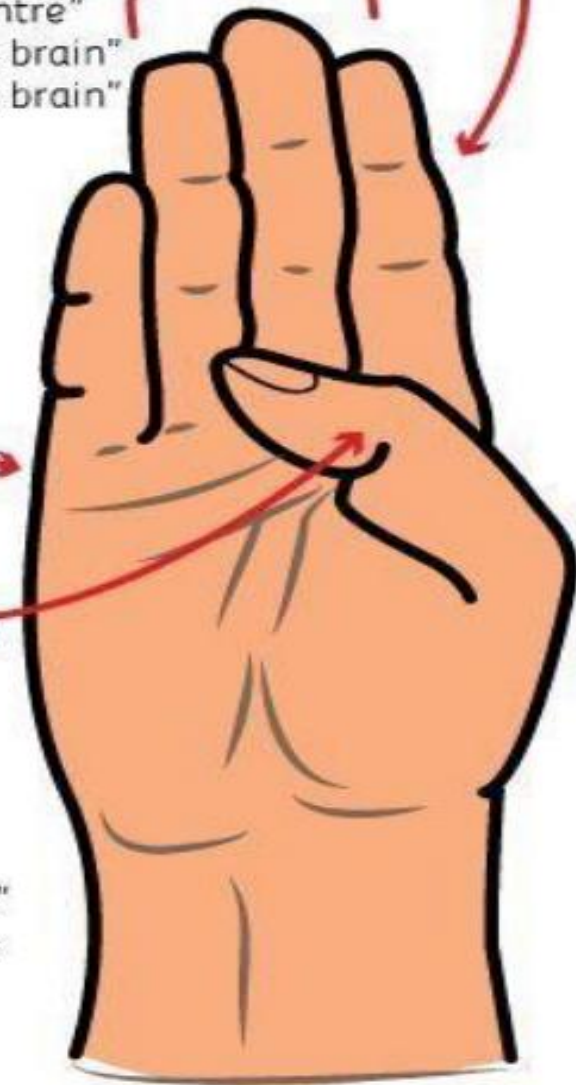
Brain Stem
Reptilian brain
Basic functions
Hind brain

Base of Skull
Spinal cord

Upper and lower parts of the brain are no longer connected and talking. Logic no longer influence emotions. You've "flipped your lid"

The Cerebellum or Limbic Regions

Hippo campus
Amygdala
Mid brain
"Big feelings"
"Cave man" brain
"Downstairs brain"
Information dump from the Central Nervous System



The Hand Model of the Brain

Adapted and presented by Emotion Coaching UK

Taking Action – emotions are heightened:

- Now is the time to ***keep safe***.
- Use whatever you can to help make a safe exit/environment if possible (distractors- food, special interests, sensory) get other children/adults/pets out of the way
- Model calming strategies- **not the time to ask the young person to make choices**
- get help if you need I
- keep language to an absolute minimum
- often the best thing is to ***do nothing*** as long as there is no immediate physical danger e.g. I am here when you're ready



Slow – Low – Low – Low – Low

Speak more slowly

Lower the volume

Lower your pitch

Lower your body

Lower demands

Afterwards

- give the child (and yourself) plenty of space and time to calm down – use predictable tasks/preferred items/calm box
- don't jump in too soon
- get back to 'normal'
- make the demands again – don't give in to a tantrum but it may require a compromise or reduced demands.
- once calm, talk it through and plan for strategies to solve the problem

How to help?



Exploring co-regulation

- Sensory processing
- Executive functioning
- Emotional regulation



Adult role in supporting emotional development

When is the adult role especially important?

When children are:

- very young (developmentally and/or chronologically)
- non-verbal
- very anxious
- struggling to communicate even though they have language
- impacted by learning difficulties too
- not yet able to respond to strategies



Co-regulation strategies will help children develop self-regulatory skills.

Researchers have identified three basic strategies for co-regulation:

Positive Relationships

- Provide a warm, responsive relationship where children feel respected, comforted and supported in times of stress, and confident that they are cared for at all times.

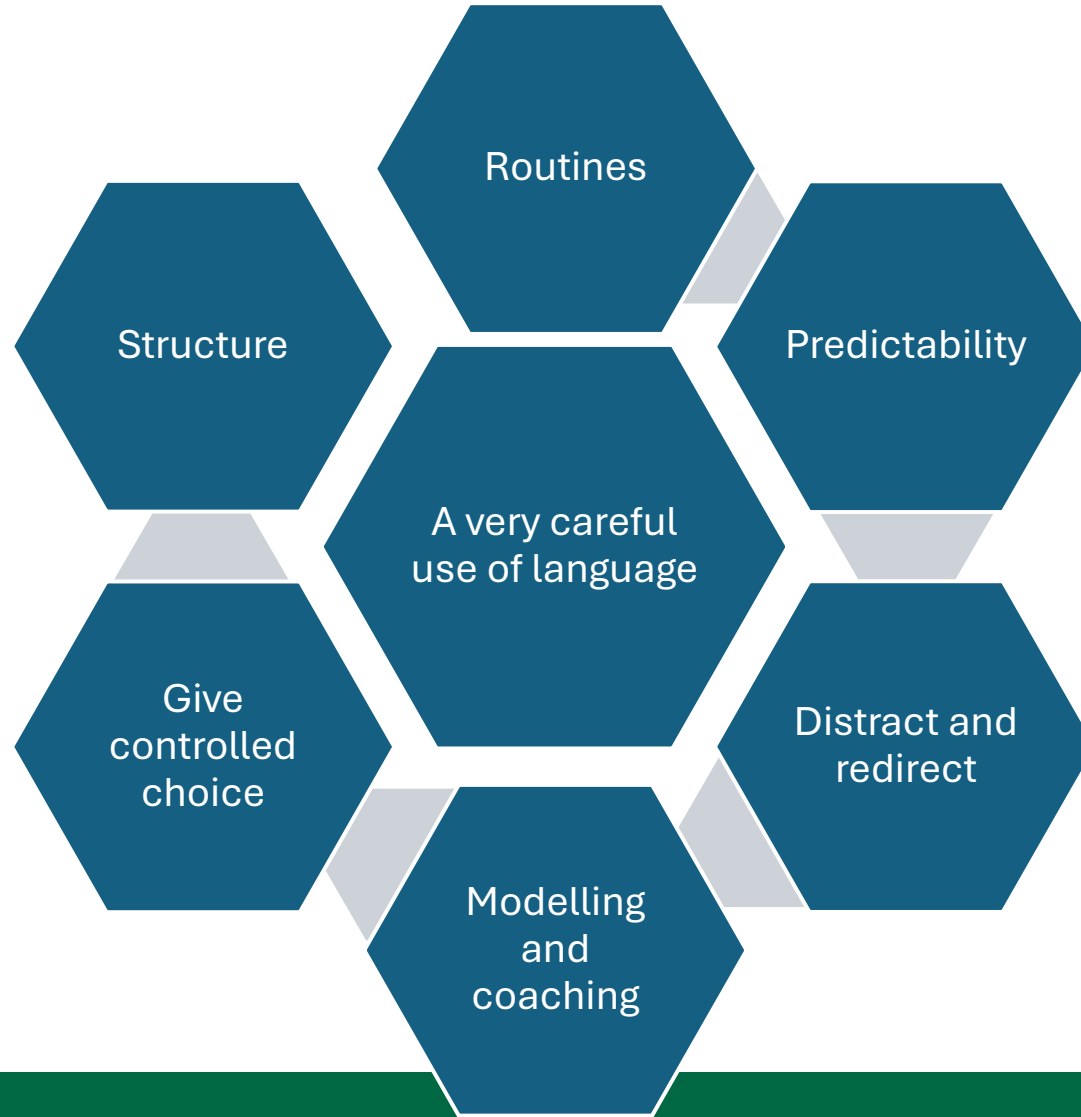
Enabling Environments

- Create an environment that makes self-regulation manageable, structured in a predictable way that is physically and emotionally safe for children to explore and take risks without unnecessary stressors.

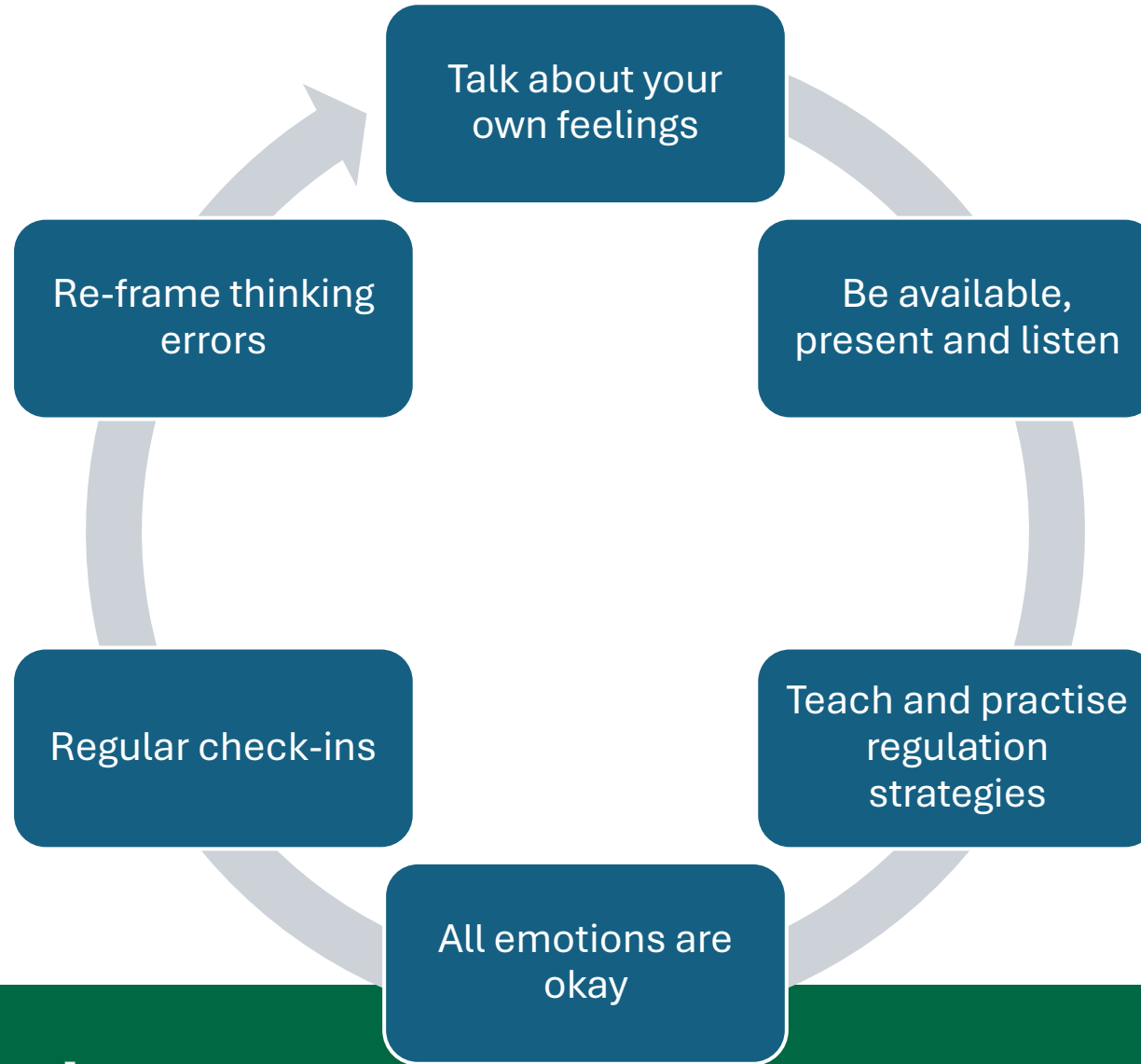
Learning and Development

- Teach self-regulation skills through modelling, suggesting strategies, providing frequent opportunities to practise, and scaffolding to support children to use self-regulation skills.

How can we co-regulate? Strategies to keep anxiety and arousal low:



Coaching and Modelling



A careful use of language – top tips



Practical strategies



Discussion

How do you regulate?

What are your go-to strategies – do they always work?

What other things can be helpful?



Supporting Emotions

VISUALS:

SCRIPTS, SCHEDULES, TASK PLANS,
PROMPT CARDS



ADJUST YOUR COMMUNICATION



PLAN SUCCESS

MOTIVATOR
CHALLENGE
MOTIVATOR



STRUCTURE & PREDICTABILITY:

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?, WHAT DO I
NEED TO DO?, WHEN WILL IT END?, WHEN
DO I GET TO DO WHAT I WANT TO DO?

TEACH SELF REGULATION



ADDRESS VITALS NEEDS



ENTHUSIASMS:

BUILD INTO TASKS?
ENSURE ACCESS TO



BUILD IN RELAXATION : PLAN WHO, WHEN AND WHERE



MODEL COURAGEOUS COPING:

TALK ABOUT OWN EMOTIONS AND HOW
MANAGE THEM
PROMPT CARDS



INTRODUCE AND LIMIT WORRY TIME



SENSORY ACCOMODATION AND ACTIVITIES



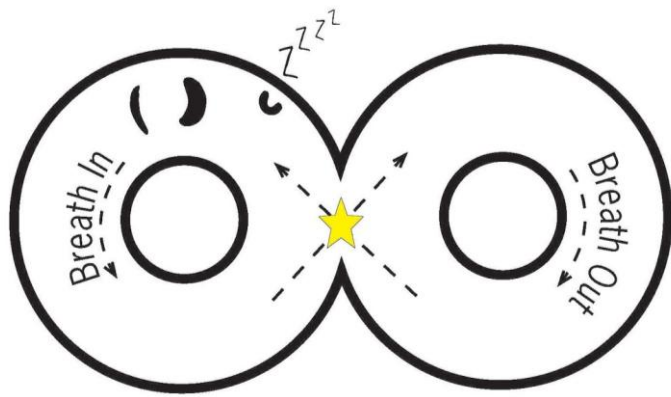
Taking Action – low arousal

Now is the time for *habitual, routine, daily* activities designed to extend the calm times

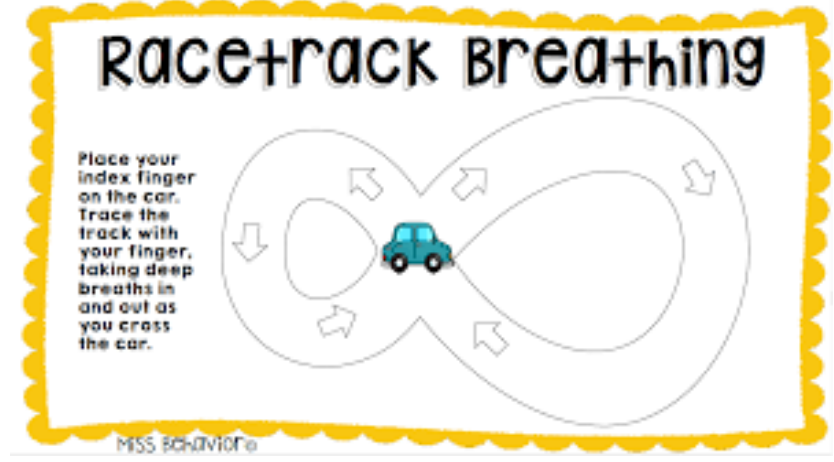
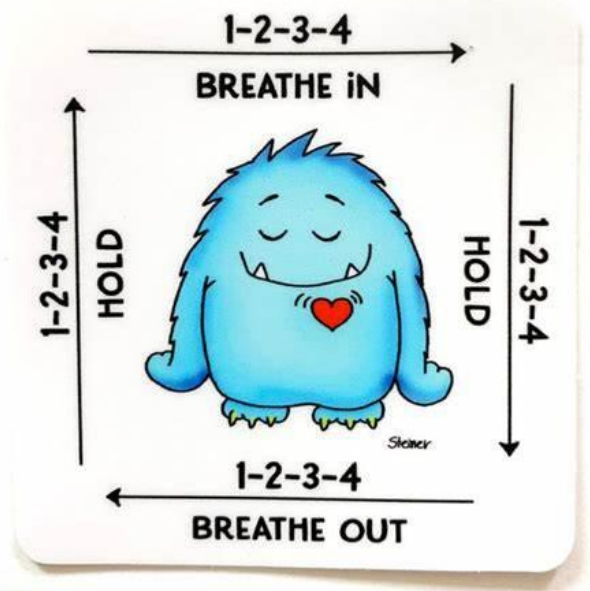
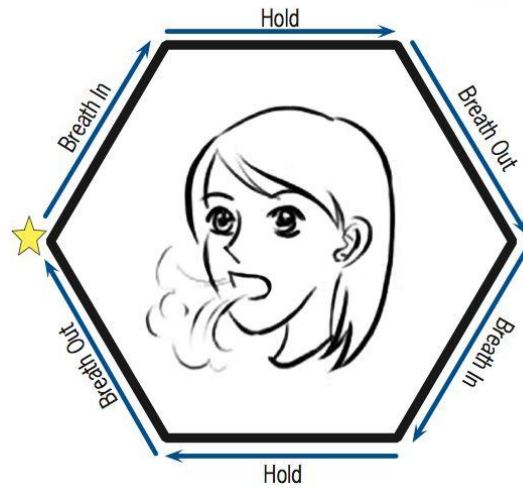
Think:

- Physical – exercise and movement
- Sensory – activities which are enjoyable and help to calm
- Interests – favourite things and conversations
- Predictability and structure
- Distraction





Lazy 8 Breathing



The Six Sides of Breathing

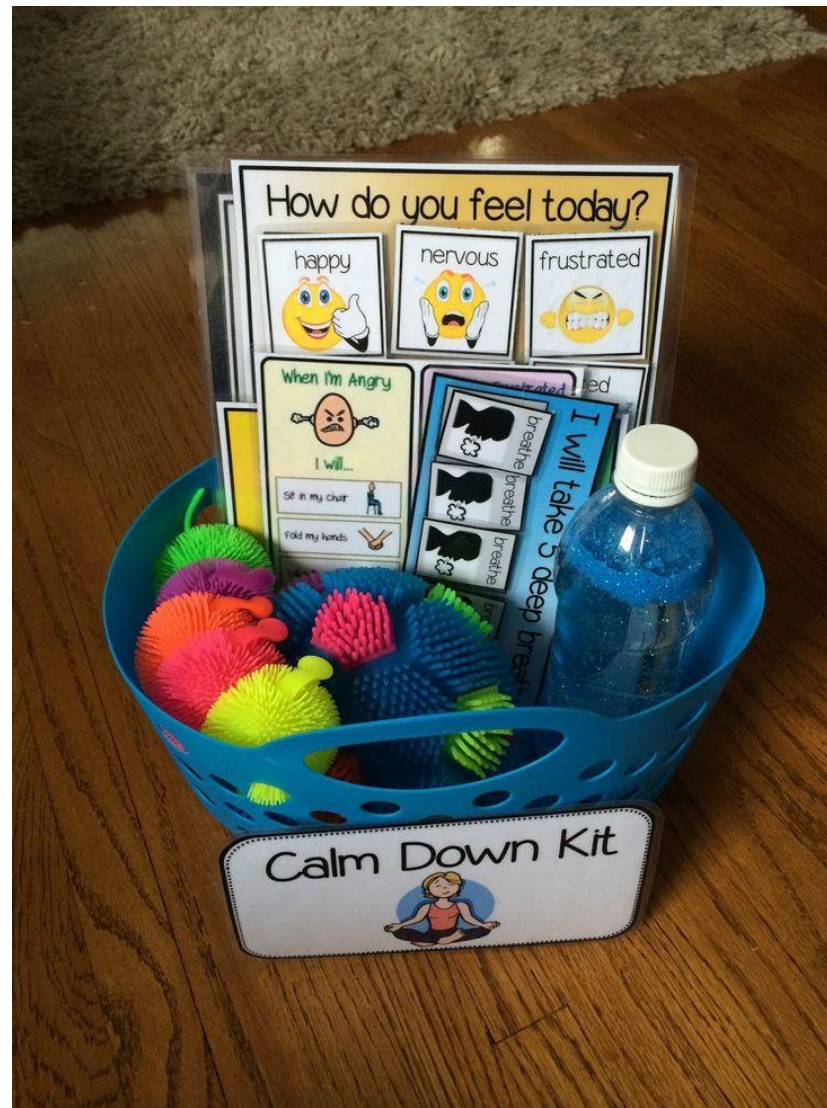


My Calming Sequence

			
First, I can squeeze my hands together.	Next, I can take three really slow, deep breaths. Slow in - slow out, slow in - slow out, slow in - slow out.	Then I can sit down, rub my legs and close my eyes. Now I feel more like a 3 or a 2.	I can think about happy things, like my dog or my stuffed lion, or our family cabin in the summer. Now I am at a 1.

When My Worries Get Too Big, Kari Dunn Buron

EWEL Toolkit



GIVE MYSELF A HUG



This can help you feel where your belly and back are by giving you **proprioceptive input**, which can then help calm you down whether you are feeling **Fast and Emotional** or **Fast and Wiggly**.

It can also wake you up if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**. This exercise also has you **cross midline**, which can really help you focus if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**, or **Fast and Wiggly**.

Directions

- ★ Cross your arms in front of you, far enough to bring your palms almost to your sides.
- ★ Squeeze your arms or sides firmly, and hold for five to ten seconds.



ARM MASSAGE



Firmly squeeze your arms, from your wrists to your shoulders, or from your shoulders to your wrists.

This can help you feel where your arms are by giving you **proprioceptive input**, which can then help calm you down whether you are feeling **Fast and Emotional** or **Fast and Wiggly**. It can also wake you up if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**.

(Alternative: To improve focus, cross wrists and squeeze them at the same time, going up the arms together!)

Directions

- ★ Starting at the wrist or shoulder, squeeze firmly.
- ★ Do this motion, going up or down the arm five to ten times.
- ★ Do the same motions to the other arm.

Alternative:

- ★ Cross wrists, squeeze wrists at the same time.
- ★ Go up and down the arms five to ten times.



Review the home environment

- Sound – minimise sound as much as possible, even low-level noises that we might not be aware of, ear buds/defenders, be mindful of the number of devices on at once
- Remember careful use of language
- Reset and calm time
- Low demand once in from school
- Consider displays and how distracting/overwhelming they might be
- If possible, have a space in the house that can be a calm space for children to go to, if they need to
- Use outside space e.g. garden
- Sources of light – ideally avoid bright, fluorescent lights

Energy Accounting

What makes me feel tired and drains my battery?



What makes me feel better and charges my batteries?



BEST SLEEP STRATEGIES



MAINTAIN A
REGULAR SCHEDULE



CREATE A RESTFUL
ENVIRONMENT



LIMIT SCREEN TIME



PRACTICE
RELAXATION

In the last hour (wind down hour):



- Have a bath, wind down, and chill out
- Read, or listen to relaxing music
- Stick as closely as you can to the same bedtime and getting up times, even at weekends
- Try a relaxation technique in bed to help you drift off to sleep
- Charge phones/tablets out of bedrooms
- Brightness down
- Not in bedrooms
- Time limit – boundaries (cut off point)



Dysregulated responses	Instead of this	Try this (Healthy Swap)
Running away, hiding	Chasing	Create a safe retreat spot
Shouting, screaming	talking over them; giving long explanations	Provide controlled loud outlets e.g. pillow shouting
Hitting, kicking, throwing	“Stop hitting!”	Offer safe physical outlets (soft ball throwing, wall push-ups, playdough squeezing)
Refusing, avoiding	Adding more demand	Do together, offer choices, lower demand
Freeze/shut-down	Add more demands. Trying to direct	Reduce stimulation and offer sensory supports
Arguing, talking back, unkind words	Shout back	Use reflective language, fresh starts, provide a reset and validate emotions
Physical towards the environment	Shouting and commenting on the action	provide heavy compression (pillow squeezes, yoga poses); redirect to safe impact (beanbag slam, mattress jump).

Further Support...

Find out what is on in your nearest Family Hub

 **Waves** 
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust

Parent and carer support group in County Durham and Darlington

Do you care for a child or young person with emotional or mental health difficulties?

Join Waves, our parent and carer support group, in County Durham and Darlington

Led by a friendly parent peer practitioner and supported by a CAMHS staff member, the group will listen, support and give advice and guidance based on their own lived experiences.

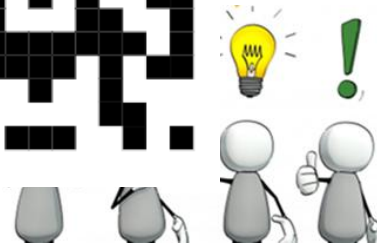
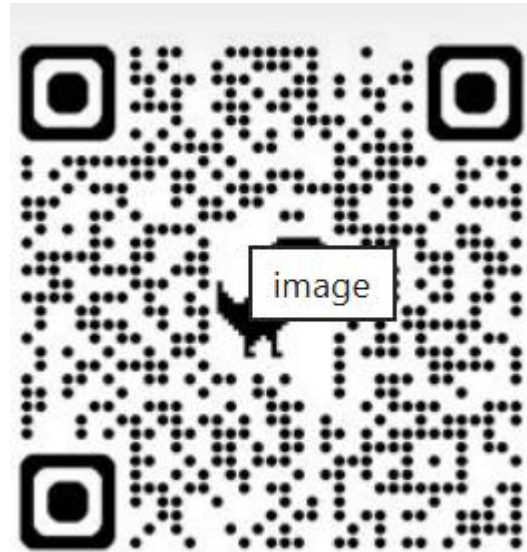
There's no need to book.

If you have any questions, email the team at TEWVwaves@nhs.net

2026 locations and dates:

Acley Centre, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4PE 6pm - 8pm		Lanchester Road Hospital, Durham, DH1 5RD 10am - 12noon	
21st January	15th July	7th January	1st July
18th February	19th August	4th February	5th August
18th March	16th September	4th March	2nd September
15th April	21st October	1st April	7th October
20th May	18th November	6th May	4th November
17th June	16th December	3rd June	2nd December

SENDIASS, Lee House, Lee Terrace, Easington Village, Peterlee, SR8 3AB 10am - 12noon		Mulberry Centre, Rowan Building, Darlington Memorial Hospital, DL3 6HX 10am - 12noon	
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16th June	15th December	2nd June	1st December



Evaluation

We collect feedback from families to contribute to the development of our support offer. It would very much be appreciated if you could scan the QR code and complete the brief form 😊

Neuro needs led support offer -
Support to Schools & Families

