

Regulation refers to the way we respond to experiences or situations we find 'challenging'. Particularly ones that cause us to feel afraid, angry, upset or anxious. It's the process of being able to restore calm, soothe ourselves, which means we can respond in ways that are not harmful to ourselves or others.

We learn to **regulate** by first **co-regulating** with an **attached adult**. Children who have experienced issues with **attachment** may find regulating their emotions very difficult and will need to learn to regulate with an adult before they can regulate or soothe themselves. If a child or young person has experienced **trauma** and **adversity** their brain may have a heightened fear response, interpreting normal events as dangerous, activating their **survival response**. They do not actively 'choose' how they behave and they will need support to **calm** before they can fully access the cognitive parts of their brain.

If a child is **overwhelmed** try

- Staying physically close (as close as is tolerable for child) in a quiet calm place if possible
- Be at same level, next to rather than opposite or standing over, which might be perceived as threatening.
- Use a calm quiet voice or be silent for a time.
- Reassure them that you will stay with them, that they are safe with you and that you will help them cope with their feelings.
- Taking a few deep breaths, having a drink or snack, moving outdoors or walking may all help with the calming process.

Help the child/young person identify what **calm** feels like for them

Regulation

Self-regulation helps teachers recognise and respond to their students' needs, improve their relationships and ultimately help their students learn how to care for themselves, i.e. how to self-regulate.

Dr Stuart Shanker

Ensure the child/young person has opportunities to take part in calming activities regularly, not just when they are in need of calming. That way you can identify with them the specific activities that may help them when they need to regulate.

As an adult be aware of your own 'state' and what you do to regulate.

When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm not join their chaos. L.P. Knost

A few things to remember

- Child is not choosing their behaviour (think what you would do if put in a situation that would cause you to panic)
- Emotions are contagious – overwhelmed child needs a calm regulated adult
- Intense emotions can be very frightening for children and young people – they need reassurance
- They can learn to regulate if they are given the experiences they need of co-regulating and understanding what is happening in their body and brain

There are a number of activities to try on the next sheet but some will need adapting to the age/stage of the child AND the environment or setting.



Calming Activities

Rhythmical Repetitive Activities It's how we calm a babies!	Creative Activities Emphasis is on process not product – avoid frustration	Activities in Nature Nature is Calming	Calming Sensory Input Think about the different senses - eating and drinking can often be Calming too.
<p>Walking, running dancing or marching</p> <p>Skipping rope or clapping games</p> <p>Rhythmical games with balls like hitting a ball against a wall</p> <p>Drumming or tapping</p> <p>'Rocking' in a swing</p> <p>Listening to rhythmical music (music can calm or excite choose with care)</p> <p>Swimming if rhythmical</p> <p>Brushing hair or repetitive movements such as during story massage</p> <p>Singing or chanting</p> <p>Stroking a cat, dog or other animal.</p> <p>Chewing crunchy snacks, sucking through a straw</p> <p>Rhythmical breathing</p> <p>Rhythm of travelling in a car/train can be Calming for some</p>	<p>Painting, drawing, gluing and sticking, collage</p> <p>Handling clay, playdough, plasticine or playing in mud sand, or water</p> <p>Baking or cooking, mixing ingredients or icing biscuits, kneading dough, rolling pastry etc.</p> <p>Dressing up and pretending, putting on a show, playing make believe in an imaginary shop, home corner, hairdresser or den</p> <p>Telling stories and writing or inventing plays, games, songs</p>	<p>Walking, running, simply being outdoors</p> <p>Treasure hunts for bugs, trees, flowers, birds or leaves</p> <p>Den making</p> <p>Games like hide and seek</p> <p>Listening games for insects and birds</p> <p>Using wood to make things – not carpentry just let children use their imagination</p> <p>Throwing stones or sticks into water</p> <p>Pond dipping</p> <p>Kite flying</p>	<p>Watch a lava lamp or fish in an aquarium</p> <p>Fill a jar with water and glitter glue – shake it up and then watch it 'settle' (there are plenty of youtube videos explaining how to do it)</p> <p>Watch rain drops as they travel down a window or watch water as it pours from one container to another</p> <p>Familiar movies can also be Calming especially if snuggled up watching them with a calm adult</p> <p>Listen to music but also other sounds like the sea, rain or wind in the trees there are plenty of free apps that offer Calming sounds</p> <p>Being read to or sung can be very soothing – the human voice is often what calms people in distress. However old children are, even when they can read for themselves, this is a lovely Calming activity.</p> <p>Touching particular textures like stroking cuddly toys or some children like the feel of velvet (others hate it) or silk, some like touching hair – so playing hairdressers can be Calming.</p> <p>Eating and drinking was mentioned before – but sucking and blowing can be Calming so things like using a straw for a drink – or to make a picture and blowing bubbles can be Calming.</p> <p>Smells can help us build associations and some smells are thought to be Calming, like lavender, try some in bath for a child or on a small piece of fabric.</p>

