

Slide 1 - Self Regulation- Using Zones of Regulation Framework

So what is *The Zones of Regulation* framework? It is a curriculum for teaching children strategies for emotional and sensory self-management. Rooted in cognitive behavioural therapy, The Zones approach uses four colours to help students identify how they are feeling in the moment, given their emotions and level of alertness as well as guide them to strategies to support regulation.

By understanding how to notice their body's signals, detect triggers, read social clues and consider how their behaviour impact those around them, children learn improved emotional control, sensory regulation, self-awareness, and problem-solving abilities.

Slide 2 – What is Self-Regulation?

Self- Regulation is:

- Being able to control yourself, your anger and impulses
- Regulating your sensory needs and emotions, to meet the demands of an environment, reach your goals and behave in a socially appropriate way.

Slide 3 - ICEBERG - A Child's Behaviour is not always what it seems

Whenever our child is showing particular emotions, we should try to remind ourselves that there is more than what meets the surface. This is similar to the make up of an iceberg. 90% of an iceberg's structure is below the surface (triggers). We can either choose to only "see" the top 10% or we can view the behaviour as a whole 100% and dig down below the surface. It is the hidden 90% of the behaviour that can help us to shape our children's emotions.

Slide 4 - COKE CAN - What you see vs what's going on inside

How often are we seeing children's emotional explosions, wondering how it got to that point? We need to try to find ways of helping our children before they explode at crisis point

We need to Identify their triggers and reflect in order to prevent....

- **What** do they typically do when angry/upset?
- **Where** do they become angry/upset?
- **When** do they usually get angry/upset?
- **With whom** do they tend to become angry/upset?
- **Why** do they become angry/upset?
- Are there any **Exceptions....?**

If we can see their emotions escalating

- We need to try to show them we '**Expect**' the situation to calm down, then it's more likely to happen....

- **Label the emotion** they are feeling
- **Show empathy** and acceptance
- **Guide** them how to cope with the emotion
- **Actively listen** to them
- **Wondering aloud** – I wonder if you are feeling.....I see your..... Let's do this.... to help you calm down/feel better

But all this is very challenging..... This is where the Zones of Regulation come in....

Slide 5 - What are the Zones of Regulation?

THIS IS NOT A BEHAVIOUR PLAN! We are working towards an outcome of more proactive, social behaviour but this is not the main intent. It is working with individuals to develop their thinking and awareness, moving them to self- management of their emotions. 'This is how I am feeling, this is what is happening around me and this is what I know works.'

We encourage each other to get to a positive place- and recognise all emotions. We sense our feelings but need language to explain how we feel. Language is often inadequate for what we feel-we don't have enough emotional language. So, starting by sorting our emotions into colours is a good start. It's a very visual approach, so you don't have to keep telling children!

Slide 6 - The Zones of Regulation

We use the **Four zones** to categorise all the ways we are feeling, they represent our internal state, those energy levels and feelings inside us.

The four colours help to create a language around this and a visual structure.

Green zone is our more calm and organised state- happy, focussed and ready to learn- 'My body is moving just right'

The **Blue zone** represents those lower energy levels- 'My body is moving too slowly.' You need to recharge and get energy.

Yellow represents a more elevated level of arousal. Our emotions might become more intense - silly, stressed, nervous, excited, surprised, shocked. They are positive emotions but also maybe for some kids they feel agitated, anxious nervous and frustrated. We still have a little more control and are able to tap into exec functions- 'My body is beginning to move too fast, can't sit still.' We need to slow down.

The **Red zone**, is the intense emotions that overwhelm us- Can be positive feeling like elation, overcome with joy, but then tears and panic, feeling enraged- 'My body is moving way too fast, I am out of control.' My body needs to stop!

There is **No bad zone**, all are a part of the spectrum of emotions we are feeling. What we work to do is really help kids have an awareness of where they are at and develop tools for each of their colour zones. So when I recognise I am in the yellow zone, these are what works for me and develop a toolkit.

Slide 7 – How are the Zones Useful?

Read the slides

Slide 8 - Zones at Home

Read the slides

Slide 9 - Tools and Visuals

You could watch the Disney Film 'Inside Out' and use characters from this for emotions discussions. Some children may like minions, emojis, road signs or a visual thermometer. Pictures of the tools they have decided to try, connected to the colours can help. Your ways to represent the zones can be tailor made to your family.

Slide 10 - Check in Chart example

We need opportunities to practise all zones. Don't just bring them out when children are in the red zone- recognise all feelings in all zones. Don't have judgement around zones- red can be elation having won something!

Talk out loud, about your feelings and emotions, you are always using a tool, things don't just happen!

Don't wait until your child is dysregulated, introduce things throughout the day, whichever zones you are in.

Slide 11- Tools to Support Regulation

We think of sensory and thinking tools.

A sensory tool could be heavy work-pushing, pulling, carrying something heavy, running, climbing, any form of movement break or exercise.

Some children may use a more mentally based tool- self coaching- eg reminding themselves to think about how long there is to go in a lesson.

These can overlap with calming activities-mindfulness, breathing exercises, yoga.

We need to help empower children to find their own ways, so they are more likely to use them, rather than imposing tools on them. Exploring different ways is very important. We may say things like 'take a deep breath' and this may not work for them and they become despondent.

These tools support the self-regulation for all kids. The children are taking responsibility for themselves and their emotions,

Slide 12 – Some Tools

Six sides of breathing

Starting at the yellow star trace with your finger the sides of the hexagon as you take a deep breath in, feeling your shoulders rise as the air fills you. Trace over the next side as you hold your breath for a moment. Slowly breathe out as you trace the third side of the hexagon. Continue tracing around the bottom three sides of the hexagon as you complete another deep breath.

Continue The Six Sides of Breathing cycle until you feel calm and relaxed.

Lazy Eight breaths

This breathing technique is very simple and consists of tracing the 8 shape with your finger taking a deep breath in as you go through the first half and breathing out as you cross to the second half.

Calming Sequence

There are 3 ingredients to calming- PHYSICAL, SENSORY, REPETITIVE

We can use pictures to show the sequence of movements:

Squeeze your hands together, close your eyes and rub your head, then rub your legs- repeat the sequence 5 times. Change it so it works for your child

We can help children decide on the size of a problem and understand other people's perspectives, which can regulate their response.

'Remember the size of your reaction has to match the problem!'

'How big do others see the problem?'

'How big should your reaction be?'

- **Big problems** – are problems that many people share and that have no easy or quick solution.

- **Medium problems** – are problems some people share that are able to be resolved in an hour to a couple of days.
- **Little problems** – are problems that only affect one to two people and can be ignored or solved in a matter of minutes.

- If your child reports that he or she feels it is a big problem he or she is experiencing you can ask follow up questions such as:
- Do you need to go to the hospital?
- Should I call '999'?
- How many people shall I gather to help solve this problem?

Superflex vs Rock

Encourage your child to have '**Superflex thinking**' a flexible thinking pattern, in which a person is able to consider different points of view or ways of doing something

Rather than '**Rock brain thinking**' - a rigid thinking pattern in which a person gets stuck on an idea and has difficulty considering other options or ways of doing something.

Slide 13 - St Agatha's Toolkit – Things we could use

Just a few more ideas for tools you can use to get your children back to Green.

Slide 14 - Benefits of Using the Zones

So, finally a summary of how Zones can help your children.