

Zones of Regulation

Information for parents



Why is self regulation so important?


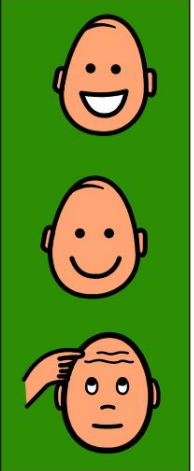
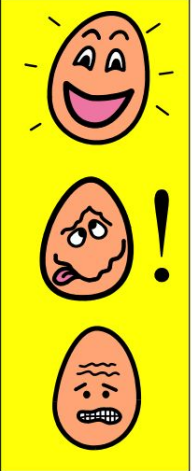
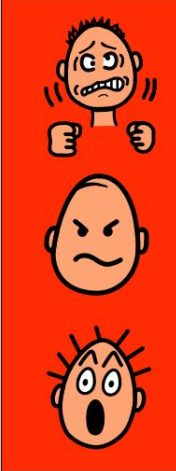
**LIFE IS
10% WHAT HAPPENS
TO YOU
AND 90 % HOW YOU
REACT TO IT.**

-CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

- because self-regulation gives your child the ability to control impulses
- because self-regulation gives your child the ability to take turns in games and conversation, share toys, and express emotions in appropriate ways
- because self-regulation gives your child the ability to make appropriate decisions about behaviour and learn how to behave in new situations with less guidance
- because self-regulation gives your child the ability to sit, listen and learn

These are the 4 zones

The Zones of Regulation

			
Blue Zone sad tired sick moving tired slowly	Green Zone happy calm feeling ok focused ready to learn	Yellow Zone frustrated worried silly/wiggly excited loss of some control	Red Zone mad/angry terrified yelling/hitting elated out of control

Why do we use the Zones of Regulation?

To teach children to:

- Understand their emotions by grouping them into the 4 zones
- Identify their own and others feelings
- Understand how thoughts, feelings and behaviours all link together
- Develop effective self regulation strategies, particularly when they are in the yellow or blue zones and hopefully before they get to the red zone
- Problem solve positive solutions

Ultimately - develop independent regulation



There are 2 parts to the Zones of Regulation

1. Understanding and recognising emotions
2. Regulating emotions using personal strategies (known as a toolkit)



Children can be in more than one zone at once

A child might feel tired (blue zone) because they did not get enough sleep, and anxious (yellow zone) because they are worried about an assessment or completing homework. Recognising more than one emotion and therefore more than one zone shows a high level of personal awareness.



Red Zone

Being in the red zone is NOT wrong or bad. Anger, is an emotion that we all feel at times and it can be helpful to get things done. You can't change how your child feels but you can change how they react in a situation. Children need to experience the natural consequences of their actions when in the red zone. If their behaviour when in the red zone causes damage or hurt feelings they need to take responsibility, when calm, to repair the situation. In school, we discuss what would be a better way to deal with such a situation should it occur again.



Hiding our emotions

It is possible to be in one zone whilst pretending to be in another, either continuously or subconsciously. We can mask our true emotions by 'putting on a happy face'. Many children go into the red zone when they leave school because they have been pretending to be in the green zone in school. This is because they are aware of their peers and school expectations, but let it all out when they feel safe at home.



How can I support identifying zones from home?

- Talk to your child at home about the Zones of Regulation and about which zone you or their siblings are in. e.g. "I'm frustrated, I am in the yellow zone"
- Label what zones your child is in and encourage them to identify which zone they are in (e.g. "You look sleepy, are you in the blue zone?")
- Read books about feelings and discuss how the characters feel and which zone they might be in.
- Match TV and cartoon characters to the different zones.



Regulating emotions

We all develop our own strategies or tools for getting back to the green zone. Some of them are not so healthy, like having a coffee if we are tired and in the blue zone or eating if we are stressed and in the yellow zone. We need to encourage our children to develop healthy strategies such as; sensory breaks, exercise, drinking water, listening to music, deep breathing, chewy foods, stop, walk away or counting to 10.

What zone am I in?



Use tools to get in the green zone.



How can I regulate emotions?

There are 3 types of regulation techniques

Sensory - Bear hug, swing/rock, go for a walk, wall push ups, sucking smoothie through straw, chewy or crunchy foods, blow bubbles, listen to music, roll on an exercise ball, trampoline, blanket roll

Calming techniques - Counting forward and backward, count breaths, count your pulse or use a Fitbit for relaxation and pulse tracking (see breathing techniques below)

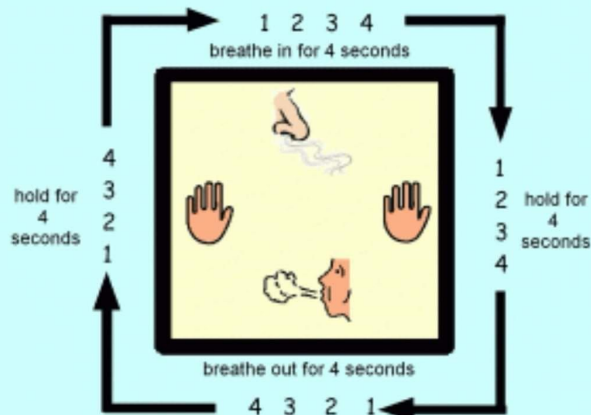
Thinking strategies - how we think about a situation can impact our emotions (see the slides below)

LAZY 8 BREATHING

Start with an 8 on its side. Starting in the middle, go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8 again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



SQUARE BREATHING



CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING



How do you feel now?
Are you calm or would you
like to take another 5 breaths?

1. Stretch your hand out like a star.
 2. Get the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your fingers up and down.
 3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
 4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
 5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down.
- Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.

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Techniques to support calm breathing

BIG EMOTIONS PRINTABLE POSTER SERIES

Size of the problem

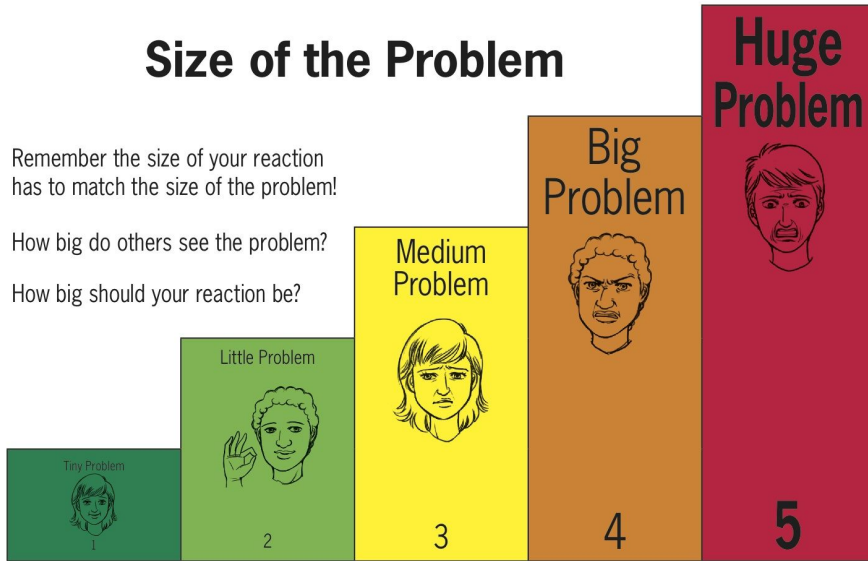
The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible W

Size of the Problem

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

How big do others see the problem?

How big should your reaction be?



Visual adapted by Leah Kuypers, Donna Brittain and Jill Kuzma for The Zones of Regulation® from the original work of Winner's *Think Social!* (2005), pages 44-45, www.socialthinking.com, and Buron and Curtis' *The Incredible 5-Point Scale* (2003), www.5pointscale.com

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Our reaction should match the size of the problem, sometimes we make a situation worse by over reacting to the problem we face. It is important we teach and model appropriate reactions for children, whilst recognising that problems may feel bigger in the moment.

Inner coach v Inner critic

IN YOUR BRAIN YOU HAVE AN INNER VOICE
WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

THE CRITIC



OR

THE COACH



What Can I Say To Myself?

Instead of...

• I'm not good at this.

• I'm awesome at this.

• I give up.

• This is too hard.

• I can't make this any better.

• I just can't do math.

• I made a mistake.

• She's so smart. I will never be that smart.

• It's good enough.

• Plan A didn't work.

Try thinking...

• What am I missing?

• I'm on the right track!

• I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.

• This may take some time and effort.

• I can always improve, so I'll keep trying.

• I'm going to train my brain in Math.

• Mistakes help me to learn better.

• I'm going to figure out how she does it so I can try it!

• Is it really my best work?

• Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters!

How can I support regulating emotions?

- Provide positive reinforcement when your child is in the Green Zone and if they make efforts to stay in the Green Zone. Eg. "I can see you are working really hard to stay in the Green Zone by..."
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (e.g. "I'm going to go for a walk, I need to get to the green zone")
- Teach your child which Zones tools they can use (e.g. "It's time for bed, let's read a book together to get to the blue zone.")
- Develop an agreed strategy for your child to use when they are in the red zone
- Use the Zones visuals and tools in your home

How can you help yourself?

The **BLUE** zone




How might you feel?

sad
tired
bored
moving slowly

What might help you?

Talk to someone
Stretch
Take a brain break
Stand
Take a walk
Close my eyes

The **GREEN** zone

How might you feel?

happy
okay
focussed
ready to learn

What might help you?

The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone.
What can you do to be happy, calm and ready to learn?

The **YELLOW** zone



How might you feel?

nervous
confused
silly
not ready to learn

What might help you?

Talk to someone
Count to 20
Take deep breaths
Squeeze something
Draw a picture
Take a brain break

The **RED** zone

How might you feel?

angry
frustrated
scared
out of control

What might help you?

Stop what I'm doing
Make sensible choices
Take deep breaths
Ask for a break
Find a safe space
Ask for help