

Grange Primary School. Parent webinars.

Session One.

<https://neurodiversitytraining.uk>

<https://www.witherslackgroup.com>

www.additude.com



Session One 21.9.26: "Understanding and Supporting Emotional Regulation, practical strategies to support children."

Session Two 28/10/26: "Understanding and Supporting **Anxiety, practical strategies to support children."**

Session Three 13/1/27: "Understanding and Supporting **ADHD, practical strategies to support children."**

Session Four 26/4/27: "Understanding and Supporting **Autism, practical strategies to support children."**



What is emotional regulation?

A set of learned skills we use to manage, experience and express emotions:

- 1) **Recognising and labelling** emotions accurately.
- 2) **Adjusting** emotional responses through strategies like calming the body, reframing thoughts or shifting attention.
- 3) **Choosing** behaviours aligned with goals and values, even when emotions are strong.

We learn what we see.



What is emotional dysregulation?

Different in every child.

Frequent, intense angry outbursts, tantrums and/ or meltdowns.

Difficulty recovering or lengthy recovery from upsets.

Impaired ability to cope with even small changes, transitions or disappointments.

Response seems disproportionate to the trigger.

Sudden tearfulness.

Shutting down or freezing.

Swinging rapidly between emotional states.



**Prefrontal (Cerebral)
Cortex**

Learning, thinking, executive function.

Limbic system

Emotion attachment, memory evaluation of good and bad.

Hypothalamus

Spots the danger: real or perceived.

Pituitary Gland

Releases Cortisol and Adrenaline
This is known as the HPA - AXIS, and will keep going until the stress/ fear is gone.

Amygdala

Stimulates Fear Response
Can hijack system with an out of proportion response, shuts down the cortex.

Brain Stem
Instinct and survival

What does my child's brain need?
(consistently & in the moment?)

Fight, Flight,
Freeze
stress
response.



Emotional regulation is primarily a **nervous system process** rather than a cognitive one.

Importance of **regulating the nervous system** rather than directly controlling emotions.

Your child's behaviour is the clue to what their nervous system is doing?



Hitting

Running

Crying

Refusal

The what

Kicking

Biological

Temperature,
Hunger,
Thirst,
Tired,
Environment discomfort

The why

Social

Being bullied,
Lack of friends,
Peer pressure,
Interaction with others

Emotional

Grief/loss,
Anxiety/Fear,
Embarrassment,
Loneliness,
Helplessness

Cognitive

Organising thoughts,
Making decisions,
Memory,
Under-stimulation (bored),
Overstimulation.

Prosocial

The world, expectations of others, responsibility, empathy/sympathy

Dr Stuart Shanker

“5 domains of stress”



Neurodivergent factors:

An immature prefrontal cortex.

Sensory processing challenges.

Alexithymia.

Communication challenges.

Executive functioning challenges & Anxiety.



The big picture:

Daily habits.

Building coping capacity to manage emotions without escalating.



Emotional regulation principles

- 1) Set limits/ boundaries on behaviour, not emotions.
- 2) Label & discuss emotions (constantly).
- 3) Validate feelings & listen with empathy.



Orienting exercises: brief, sensory-based practices that helps you ground yourself in the present moment and calm your nervous system. What can you see? Feel around you?

Slow breathing.

Grounding- the ability to return to the present moment with sustained attention 3 types- mental, physical, soothing. Grounding scripts.

Mental: counting slowly, reimagining a previous experience in detail.

Physical: stretching, yoga, tactile sensations, hands in water, rubbing fingers over different fabrics.

Soothing: using kindness & positive sentiment to help induce a sense of calm & relaxation- thinking of people you love or repeating a positive statement to yourself.



Category games- lists of TV Shows, songs, ice cream flavours, visualise a place that is calming and safe.

Group clap- clap on every count, only on agreed upon numbers.

List of positive affirmations that are written down.

Colouring exercises to sooth. Boys: free form colouring, girls: more structured colouring activities as mandalas (Carsley et al 2015)

54321 Senses game- 5 objects, 4 things they can hear, three items they can smell, two they can touch, one item they can taste (can be adapted)



Physically move (walk, shake, stretch, dance, rhythmic jumping) or Exercise.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Massage points of the body linking to nervous system (ear lobes, wrists, feet, neck)

Singing (especially together) or humming

Gargle

Swill face and wrists in cold water



Is your child's stress cup overflowing?

Watch out for patterns and adjust & make a plan.

Lack of sleep. Foods. Medication is wearing off. Specific environments. Sensory demands. Masking at school.

Relationships.

Build up throughout the day.



Sensory Audits

Sensory Checklist

From *Raising a Sensory Smart Child*, © Biel & Peske, 2005

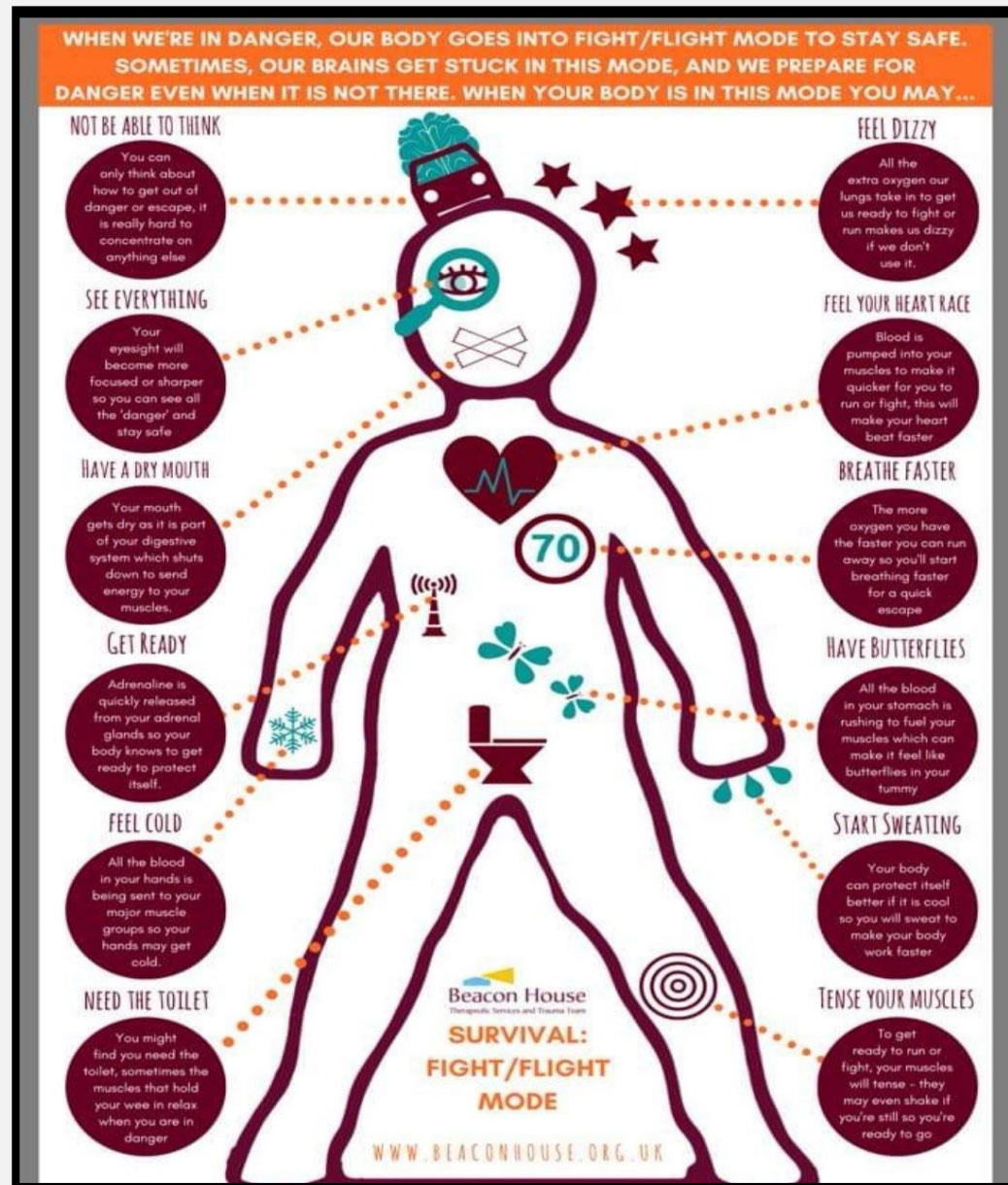
TOUCH				
	AVOIDS	SEEKS	MIXED	NEUTRAL
Being touched on some body parts, hugs and cuddles	☐	☐	☐	☐
Certain clothing fabrics, seams, tags, waistbands, cuffs, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clothing, shoes, or accessories that are very tight or very loose	☐	☐	☐	☐
Getting hands, face, or other body parts "messy" with paint, glue, sand, food, lotion, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grooming activities such as face and hair washing, brushing, cutting, and nail trimming	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taking a bath, shower, or swimming	☐	☐	☐	☐
Getting toweled dry	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trying new foods	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feeling particular food textures and temperatures inside the mouth—mushy, smooth, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Standing close to other people	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking barefoot	☐	☐	☐	☐

PROPRIOCEPTION (BODY SENSE)				
	AVOIDS	SEEKS	MIXED	NEUTRAL
Activities such as roughhousing, jumping, banging, pushing, bouncing, climbing, hanging, and other active play	☐	☐	☐	☐
High-risk play (jumps from extreme heights, climbs very high trees, rides bicycle over gravel)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fine motor tasks such as writing, drawing, closing buttons and snaps, attaching pop beads and snap-together building toys	☐	☐	☐	☐
Activities requiring physical strength and force	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eating crunchy foods (pretzels, dry cereal, etc.) or chewy foods (e.g., meat, caramels)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smooth, creamy foods (yogurt, cream cheese, pudding)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having eyes closed or covered	☐	☐	☐	☐



Emotion Naming and Emotion Coaching.





Sensory diets.

Calm Spaces/ Sensory breaks: noise-canceling headphones, weighted blankets, attentional tools. Breaks during the day for deep breathing, stretches, calming music.

Attentional Tools: Stress balls, blu tack, textured items.

Weighted Items: Weighted blankets or vests to provide deep pressure input.

Noise-Canceling Headphones: Noise-cancelling headphones or ear defenders to block out distracting sounds.

Calming or Stimulating Music: A playlist of calming or stimulating music.

Visual Schedules and Routines: To provide structure and predictability.



It starts with you- Coregulation.

Your child senses threat, can't differentiate. Is it increased by adult activity?

Model calm. Calm is contagious. Regulate their nervous system instead of demanding compliance.

Redirect attention. Adjust the environment.

Fewer words (not “calm down”- “I’m here”, “I can see....”)
or stop talking or leave.

Could be touch if appropriate.



1) Show Calm.

2) Connect.

3) Correct/ Teach (afterwards).

1) The love pause- slow it all down.

2) Breathing- in for 4, hold for 7, out for 8.

3) Heart Hug- right hand on heart, left over right shoulder and press down.

4) Physical resistance- pushing, leaning, weighted resources.

Lots of reinforcement.
The 34 times rules
(3 times this for ND children)



During meltdown

Think - Where is your child functioning?

Reduce language and hold off referring to consequences of behaviour – this adds to the threat response.

Be present but reduce attention.

Make sure that your child is safe and those around your child are safe.

Allow your child to calm.



When logical thought is regained

Maintain a calm tone of voice.

Offer the child a drink.

Acknowledge the child's feelings – "I can see that you got angry and that now you're feeling upset"

Give space to allow the child to process what happened.

Label the behaviour (it's important to not label your child), tell your child that you value them.

Explain to your child that all behaviour that challenges has a consequence. Discuss the consequence with the child.



- 1) Recognise the challenge and rise to it.
Regulate your child's nervous system-
through building everyday habits & in the
moment.
- 2) Model the calm you want to see.
- 3) Validate their emotions, not collusion &
not an excuse.



Thank you.

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