

Making a 'Regulation Station' in your classroom to help children & young people build the skills & strategies needed to regulate themselves.



What is a Regulation Station?

As a classroom teacher and then a head in a Therapeutic Special School helping children manage their emotions was a key part of the work we did. Moving back into mainstream schools I noticed this need was still very much needed but wasn't as well incorporated into classroom practice.

Working with an Occupational Therapist and undertaking a range of training around Sensory Processing I came across setting up areas of the classroom to help children and young people calm. This designated space for children to use, supported by a collection of regulation ideas goes by many names- "calm corner", "regulation station", "Time out space" to name a few. However, they all have the same idea and ways of working.

The first golden rule is that you can't just put a load of resources in a quiet area and expect children to use them and regulate themselves. The Regulation Station has to be properly introduced, emotions talked about, and strategies to manage explored with the children. Once you have then shared, talked about, practiced and modelled these strategies then it is a great idea to create this special area with the help of the children.

[Lesson Plan: Emotional Literacy Activities](#)

Setting up your area.

It is really important for children to understand that we ALL experience a range of feelings and that they all have a purpose. None are bad, but some are more tricky to manage. Sharing a range of books and stories is an ideal way of weaving emotions into our classroom.

[Emotional Literacy Book List](#)

- A Regulation Station is NOT a punishment space and should never be seen as a negative place to be sent by the children and young people. It is NOT a place to send a child when they are in trouble. It is a place to use when children or staff need to regulate and manage their emotions. It is a space to help them regulate themselves and move back into a place where they are able to focus and learn and interact with others.



[Lesson Plan: Stress busting with calming strategies](#)

- It can be great fun to work with the children to find a name for your space. This has the added benefit of making sure they have understood its true purpose and that they all think of the space as their own space.
- If, as a school you use the zones of regulation then you can have posters up sharing the different zones with strategies to move from each one to the Learning Zone.



- Remember to talk about emotions, and how you manage them before you create the Regulation Station. Spend time teaching and practicing each tool that you choose to put into the Regulation Station before you add them to the tools you have. Explore emotions and the strategies they already use to manage situations. One of the best things in my station was a box of buttons. Children loved sorting and sorting really helps to calm the nervous system. You

can create calm boxes together to put in the Regulation Station.

[Make a Calm Box](#)

- It can be really helpful to establish expectations around how to use the Regulation Station, such as how many students, how often, appropriate use, clean-up and respect for materials in it etc. Sometimes we are keen to use new ideas but if we don't introduce it and think about how to use it first with the children it is likely to go wrong and you won't get the benefit out of it and nor will the children. Remember some children may need to use it more frequently than others and this can be framed in a conversation around equity vs. equality.

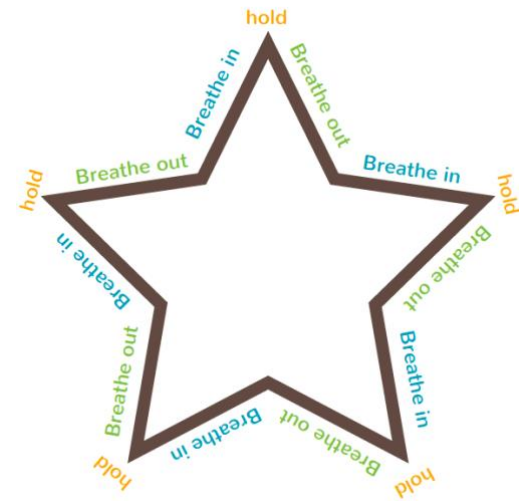
[Lesson Plan Equity V Equality](#)

- Where do you put it? Is a really important question and one that is useful to work through with the children. Role play different situations and see what happens. It is usually best if it is off to the side of the room, but not at the back. Ideally children should be able to still see and hear you and the activity you're working on, just not be



right in the middle of it all. You will need to find the balance between inclusion and privacy.

- Expect all students to be curious when your Regulation Station is first introduced. I have found it useful to allow children to 'try' it out and see what it feels like.
- It can be useful to talk to the children and explore how long they might need to use the Regulation Station (preferably with a timer or visual) and then to think about what it will be like to return to the work of the class and what help they might need. Make sure children understand that being in the Regulation Station doesn't mean they miss the work they are supposed to be doing.

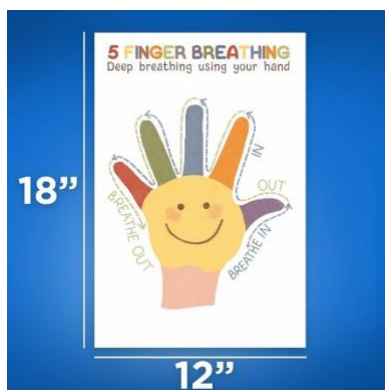


Lesson Plan: My Comfort Zone

- When setting up something new it is really good practice to show the children how you review something and change things if needed. When doing this it can be helpful to think of the different activities or strategies that they have used, which ones have worked for them and which ones they have found not so good. New ideas will be brought in by the children so exploring how to 'test' things can be really helpful. It can also open up conversations about how we are all different and that we can find different emotions difficult to manage and we can all find different strategies useful.

[A to Z of Coping Skills](#)

- You might find it helpful to model using the Regulation Station yourself – You can then explore with the children different scenarios or situations "I'm feeling Can anyone give me an idea of which tool might help me start to feel calmer and more able to focus and work?"



- One thing I found really helpful was to have a way for the children to ask for help from one of the adults in the room. The Regulation Station isn't the place for problem solving or to listen to challenges it is a place to calm and regulate their nervous system. Once this is done, they are more able to talk so a way of facilitating that has to be worked out. I used a folder which they could put a message in and then place on my desk. By using the folder no one else could read what they had written – it was a bit like the folders used in a restaurant to put the bill inside. I could then write back or speak to them

and arrange a time to talk.