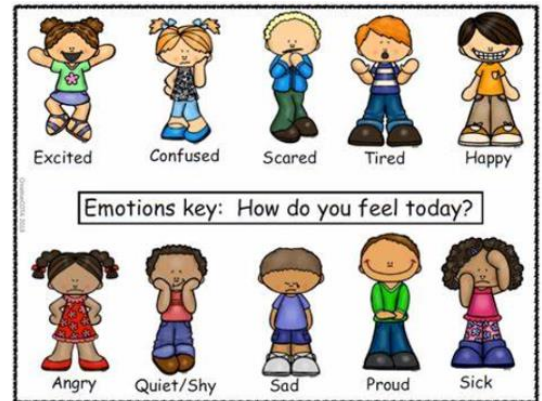


The ZONES of Regulation Information Sheet

Why Teach Self-Regulation?

Regulation is something everyone continually works on whether we are aware of it or not. We all encounter trying circumstances that can test our limits. If we can recognize when we are becoming less regulated, we are able to do something about it to manage our feelings and get ourselves to a healthy place. This comes more naturally for some, but for others it is a skill that needs more attention and practice. This is the goal of The Zones of Regulation.



Sorting Our Emotions into Four Zones

Feelings are complicated. They come in different sizes, intensities, and levels of energy that are unique with in our brains and bodies. To make them easier to talk about, think about, and regulate, The Zones of Regulation organises our feelings, state of alertness, and energy levels into four coloured Zones – Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red. The simple, common language and visual structure of Zones of Regulation helps make the complex skill of regulation more concrete for learners and those who support them. We learn to regulate our Zones to meet our goals and task demands, as well as support our overall well- being.

The Four Zones

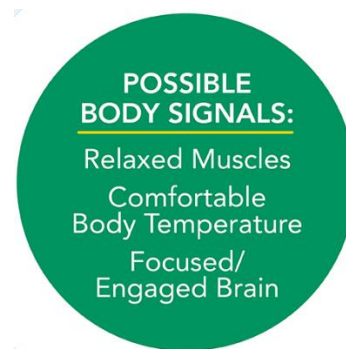
Blue Zone



(Adapted from Zonesofregulation.com)

The **BLUE ZONE** describes low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when a person feels sad, tired, sick, hurt, lonely, or bored. Our energy is low, and our body is moving slowly when we are in the Blue Zone. When in the Blue Zone we often need to rest and recharge to meet our goals. We can regulate by seeking (or co-regulate by offering) comfort, energizing, or resting. If we are feeling sick in the Blue Zone, we may need to rest. If we are feeling tired, we may need to energize (depending on the context). If we are feeling sad, we may need comfort. In all these situations, the common theme is noticing our lower energy and/or down feelings and options for managing them.

Green Zone



The **GREEN ZONE** describes a calm, alert state. We may be feeling happy, focused, content, peaceful, or calm in the Green Zone. The nervous system feels safe, organized, and connected in the Green Zone, helping us be primed to learn. *However, we can learn in other Zones too.*

When in the Green Zone we regulate by using tools and supports that keep us moving forward comfortably, helping us feel ready to go! In the Green Zone, we might regulate by choosing to eat a healthy snack, exercise, take a break, or pause for a mindful moment. These restorative actions help us proactively care for ourselves so we can move forward with ease.

Yellow Zone



(Adapted from Zonesofregulation.com)

NHS Borders Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Service

The **YELLOW ZONE** describes when our energy is higher, and our internal state starts to elevate. Our emotions get a little stronger. We may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, confusion, nervousness, be overwhelmed, or have the wiggles, when in the Yellow Zone.

In the Yellow Zone we may need to take action to regulate to manage our energy and feelings as they get stronger. For example, if we are feeling energetic at the lunch table it helps to use caution and take a deep breath, so we do not spill something. If we are feeling nervous before our performance, we can slow down our racing thoughts and speech by using a mindfulness tool. When we are frustrated, and pause to take notice, we can decide to take a break to collect ourselves before we say something we regret.

Red Zone



The **RED ZONE** describes a state of extremely high energy and intense, very overwhelming feelings. We may be in an extremely heightened state of alertness, potentially triggering our fight, flight, freeze or flee protective response. We may feel elated, euphoric, anger, rage, devastated, out of control, panicked, or terrified when in the Red Zone. When in the Red Zone we might need to pause and assess if we need to regulate and gain a sense of control of our strong feelings and high energy. For example, if we are feeling angry it may help to pause and count to 10 before we act. If we are panicked, we can stop and use our self-talk to help us gain a sense of control of our thoughts in order to meet our goal. If we are elated, such as when a teammate scores the winning point, we might need to pause and take a big breath to regulate our impulse to run out on the field to celebrate if there is still time on the clock.

(Adapted from Zonesofregulation.com)

Talk through the zones with your child. Ask them how they would feel in each zone?





- Discuss what emotion they feel in each zone e.g., in the yellow zone I may feel worried.
- How they physically feel e.g., in yellow zone I may have butterflies in my stomach or have sweaty palms (if feeling anxious).
- Then discuss what might they be doing- what be their actions e.g., in yellow zone would they be pacing around, snapping at others, fidgeting?
- Then discuss how to help them move into the Green zone e.g. if I was in the Yellow zone and feeling anxious I might find competing some yoga stretches/ breathing techniques helps me get back into the green zone.
- Create a list of strategies that work for the child- Remind the child that we are all unique and the strategies that work for one person might not help them so they need to think about what would help them.

Remind them that we will experience all zones and there are no good or bad zones- however our success in regulating our emotions depends on us recognising our emotion, understanding it and putting a support strategy in place.

If you are using zones at home and in school ensure you are all being consistent, there may be a different tool box needed for school or the same have a discussion with school to set the appropriate strategies for both places. Use the same language or visuals so not to confuse your child.

Tools to help communicate what zone your child is in.

ZONES OF REGULATION!

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Good to Go Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Anxious Excited	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Out of Control I Need Time and Space

What zone am I in

<p>Sad Bored Sick Tired Moving slowly</p>	<p>Happy Calm Ready to learn Focused</p>	<p>Frustrated Worried Silly/wiggly Anxious excited</p>	<p>Mad/angry Mean Shouting/hitting Out of control</p>
---	--	--	---

			
<p>Blue Zone</p> <p>Sad Bored Tired Sick</p>	<p>Green Zone</p> <p>Happy Focused Calm Proud</p>	<p>Yellow Zone</p> <p>Worried Frustrated Silly Excited</p>	<p>Red Zone</p> <p>overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified</p>

What are the self-regulation tools we can use?

Every child will have a different set of tools that help them get back to their green zone – this will relate to hobbies, interests, and personal preference. Some examples are listed below and can be taught and practised in school and at home to provide your child with a toolkit of strategies. They can include:

- Sensory tools: having a snack or something to drink; fidget toys; walk and movement breaks; exercise; listening to music; sand/ water/messy play;
- Thinking tools: thinking about the size of the problem and the reaction – is it a tiny/little/medium/big/huge problem; how big do you see the problem/ how big do others see the problem? how big should your

reaction be? positive self-talk; discussing the problem with adults/peers.

- Calming activities: lights on/off; change seating; temperature of the room; noises in the room; independent working area; relaxation area; reading; colouring/drawing; listening to music; breathing exercises.

_____ 's **Toolbox**

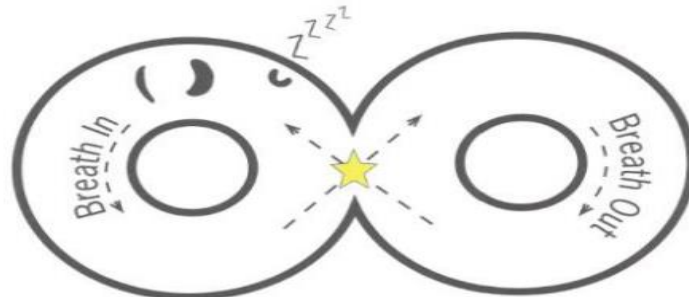
Blue Zone Tools	Green Zone Tools	Yellow Zone Tools	Red Zone Tools

What tool should I use?

 have a break	 lazy eight	 inner coach	 need a hug
 tell someone	 theraputty	 use fidgets	 sequence
 walk	 play music	 star jumps	 body sock
 count to 10	 wall push ups	 chair push	 drink water

Let's practise our calming tools

Lazy 8 **Breathing**



Move your finger around in the shape of an 8, breathing in on one side of the shape, and breathing out on the other

Further resources:



For more information and resources about Zones of Regulation visit [The Zones of Regulation | A Curriculum For Emotional Regulation](#)

For more resources to help with developing skills or for further helpful tips and tricks, please visit our website or lookout for our Facebook posts.

www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot

www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders



Link to YouTube channel - [Sensory Integration Mini Series - YouTube](#)

