

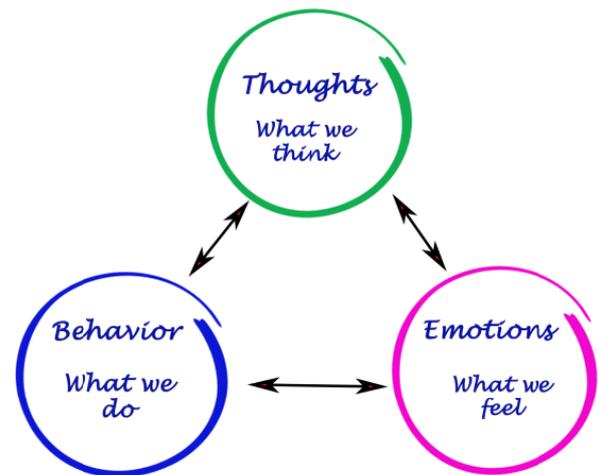
Understanding and managing emotions: The Zones of Regulation—Part 2

In Part 1, we gave an overview of the Zones of Regulation framework and what the different, coloured zones represent. This week, we are focusing on how to help children understand what they can do once they know and recognise the feeling they are having and which zone they are in.

How our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are interlinked

Our thoughts and the way we think about an experience has a profound effect on our emotions: whether it is something that we are expecting (e.g. going to the dentist or having the weekly time spellings test) or something we are not expecting or out of our control (e.g. a fire alarm, somebody shouting on the bus on the way to school). The way we then cope or manage those emotions will determine our subsequent behaviours and actions. In time, this shapes our future thoughts and feelings, and so the cycle continues. It is important to remember that **behaviours are a form of communication**.

The ZONES of Regulation®



There are some things that we do not have control over. But our attitudes, emotions and behaviors...these are the things that we can influence.

- Susan Steinbrecher

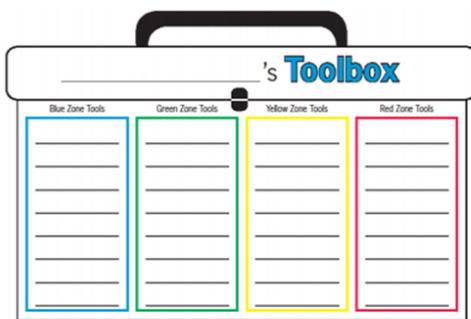
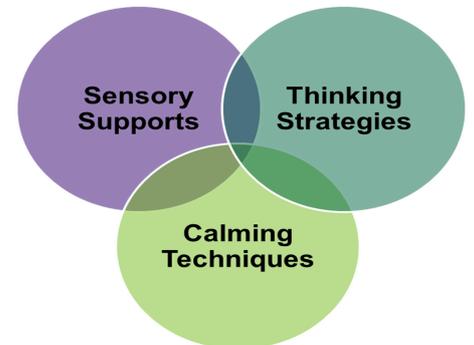
Things that can also impact our emotions are:

- * Uncertainty, change or transitions e.g. the end of term
- * The behaviours of those around us
- * Things out of our control
- * Our senses e.g. hunger
- * Changes in our physical health
- * And ultimately...self regulation!

What is self regulation?

Self regulation is about having coping strategies when we are feeling big emotions such as feeling angry, stressed, anxious or sad. This helps us remain calm and organised in a stressful or challenging situation or to cheer ourselves up after a disappointment. There are three ways to self regulate:

- * **Sensory Supports:** for instance, using putty, drinks and food, listening to music, movement/exercise such as yoga
- * **Thinking Strategies:** how to solve the problem or get help
- * **Calming Techniques:** counting, breathing exercises and mindfulness



Through our Zones lessons in school, we help the children to choose self regulation ideas for each zone, creating a tool box of strategies to support them - these can be a mix of sensory, calming and thinking strategies:

- Blue Zone tools:** help wake up our bodies, feel better and regain focus.
- Green Zone tools:** help us stay calm, focused and feeling good.
- Yellow Zone tools:** help us regain control and calm ourselves.
- Red Zone tools:** help us stay safe and start to calm down.

Part 3 will give more examples and ideas of ways that children can use these strategies to support them.