

CRISIS INTERVENTION SKILLS FOR REGULATION

Implementing Crisis Skills in the Classroom Setting

SPEAKER DISCLAIMER

Monica L. Raminger, LMHC,
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supplemental material.

TYPICAL REGULATION

Benefits of Regulation Skills: better emotional, cognitive, and behavioral control, improved attention and performance, overall better wellness outcomes

Self-Regulation: I can regulate myself independently

Co-Regulation: I can regulate myself with your help

Everyday Skill Work: creating and maintaining a safe, calm, stable environment where everyone has the potential to regulate their nervous systems

REGULATION IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

Crisis: negative changes in the person, environment, or circumstances that is often abrupt, signifies disruption or disorder, and is emotionally significant

Self-regulation in crisis- *I can find safety and return to baseline on my own*

Co-regulation in crisis- *I can find safety and return to baseline with your help*



BEHAVIOR MEANING AND FUNCTION

All behavior has meaning

All behavior serves a function

When observing a behavior, ask yourself “What is the student trying to tell me with this behavior?”

Fears are complex!

BEHAVIOR AND UNMET NEEDS

All students have needs

Behavior helps meet unmet needs

When observing a behavior, ask yourself “What need is being met by this behavior?”

Never assume needs are being met at home, at school, or in the community

BEHAVIOR AND MALADAPTIVE COPING



ALL STUDENTS WILL REFLEXIVELY ATTEMPT
TO COPE



IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE HEALTHY
COPING SKILLS, THEY WILL USE
MALADAPTIVE OR UNHEALTHY SKILLS



WHEN OBSERVING A BEHAVIOR, ASK
YOURSELF "WHAT IS THE STUDENT
TRYING TO COPE WITH BY USING THIS
BEHAVIOR?"

TYPES OF CRISES

Individual: happens only for the person or within the person

Collective: happens to or for an entire group or community

Acute: brief, short-term, likely one-time event

Chronic: lasting, long-term, or a repeated event

Is the crisis internal?

- Happening within the student only

Is the crisis external?

- Happening in the environment around the student

Is the crisis real?

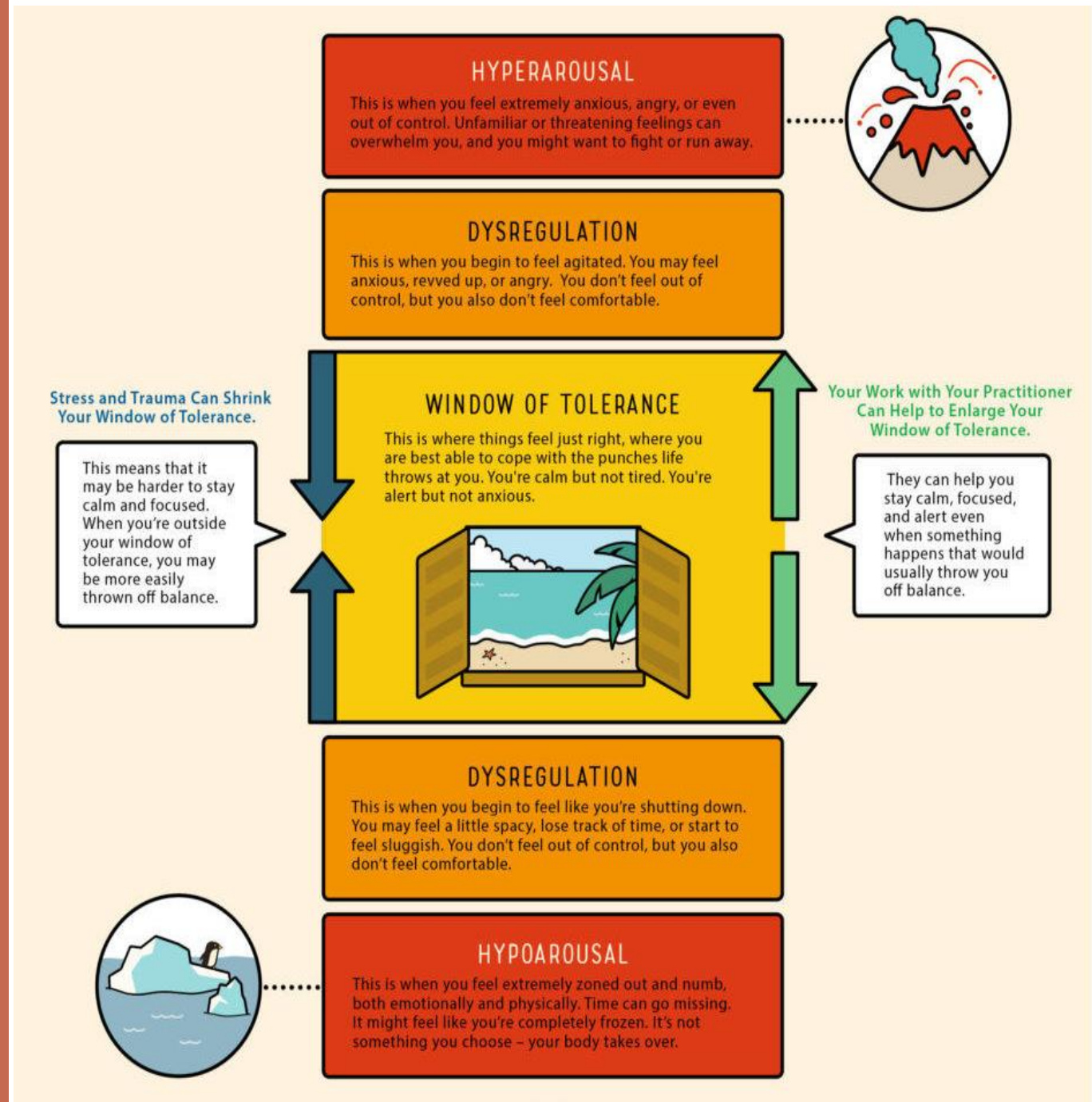
- Actual threat is present and possible

Is the crisis perceived?

- The threat will likely not cause actual harm

THINGS TO CONSIDER

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



CRISIS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Automatic and Safety Focused

- Fight

- Flight

- Freeze

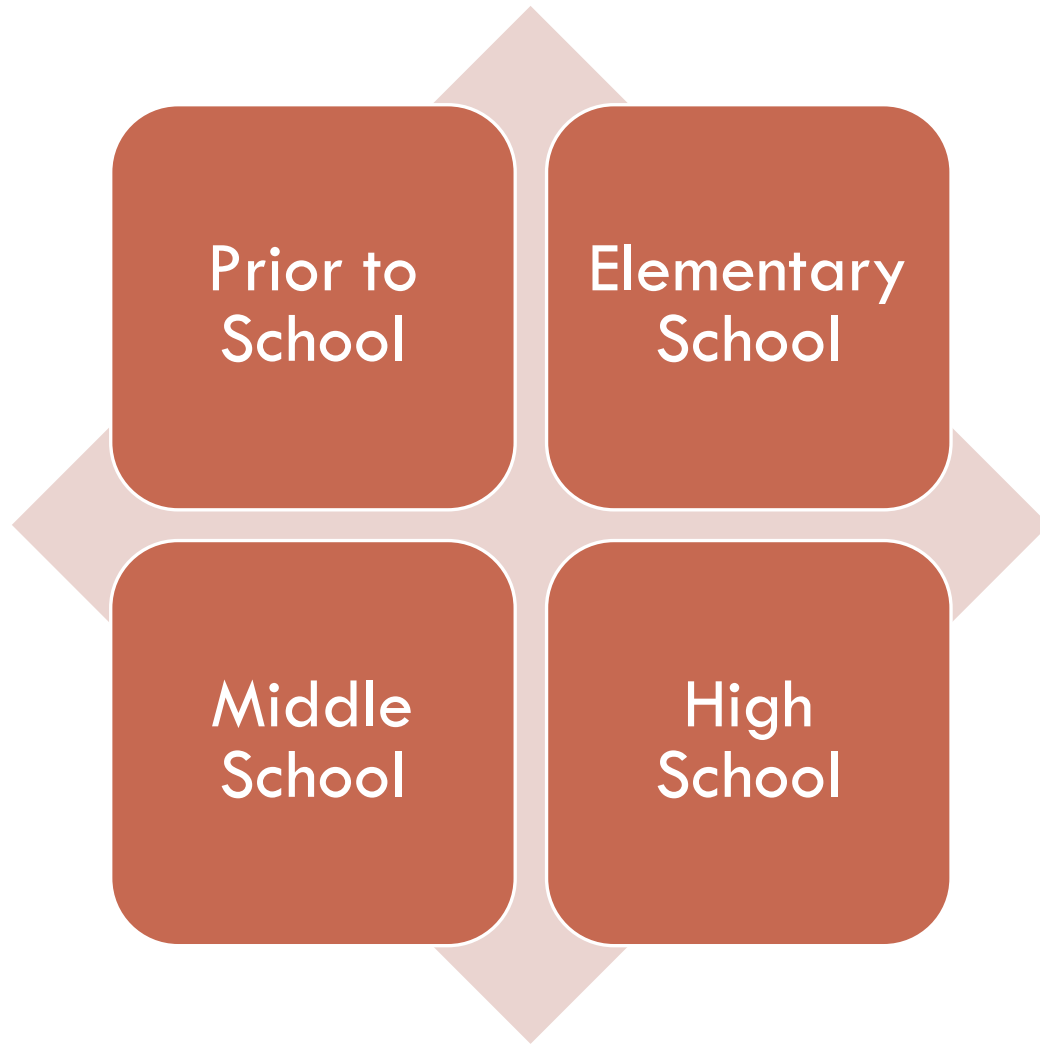
- Fright

- Flop

- Fawn

- Faint

- Face



DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CRISIS RESPONSE



Initial stages of noticing,
experiencing, and expressing
emotions



Sets the baseline for how our
students manage their
regulation moving forward

PRIOR TO
SCHOOL

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Adaptive: asking for help, displays of emotion, copying pro-social peers, seeking reassurance, following routines

Maladaptive: physical aggression or violence, extreme or prolonged outbursts, intense displays of opposition, bizarre or unpredictable displays of emotion, prolonged periods of shutdown, clinginess or over-attachment to adults

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Adaptive: managing emotional responses, seeking support, collaborating with peers, noticing cognitive difficulties, challenging physical changes

Maladaptive: self-harm, unhealthy or unsafe relationships, misuse of social media, verbal or physical outbursts, displays of defiance or opposition, task refusal, performance obsession, panic



HIGH SCHOOL

Adaptive: implementing skill use, communicating needs, verbalizing emotions, expressing through non-verbals, seeking solutions when appropriate

Maladaptive: reckless behavior, truancy, increased destructive behaviors, targeted violence or aggression, criminal or unlawful behavior, disordered eating, substance use

WHAT
INCREASES RISK
FOR CRISIS?

Baseline Dysregulation

Trauma

Mental Health

Developmental Health

BASELINE DYSREGULATION



A STUDENT'S ABILITY TO REGULATE
EMOTION IN THE ABSENCE OF A CRISIS



RESPONSIVENESS TO CO-REGULATION
IN THE ABSENCE OF A CRISIS

TRAUMA

Disruption in nervous system development

Can be caused by a single event, multiple events, or long-term exposure to toxic stress without appropriate support or regulation

Changes how the student perceives stress, experiences stress, responds to stress, and recovers from stress

Changes how safe a child is capable of feeling in certain environments

MENTAL HEALTH

Certain diagnoses and conditions lower over-all baseline ability for regulation

Anxiety disorders

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorders

Eating Disorders

Mood Disorders

Impulse control disorders

Personality Disorders

Trauma or attachment disorders



DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH

Certain diagnoses and conditions lower over-all baseline ability for regulation

Pervasive developmental disorders

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Intellectual functioning disorders

Sensory processing disorders

Speech, language, communication disorders

Feeding disorders



DYSREGULATION IN CRISIS



Brain: Thoughts, cognitions, beliefs, or images that increase sense of risk of harm, negative outcomes, or overpowering emotions



Body: Physical distress, physical discomfort, overactive or underactive nervous system responses, extreme or muted emotional sensing



Behavior: Safety-seeking behaviors, risk-seeking behaviors, impulsive behaviors, compulsive behaviors, self-soothing behaviors

STAGES OF CRISIS

1. Baseline anxiety
2. Rising anxiety
3. Overwhelming anxiety
4. Crisis
5. Resolution
- 5a. Crash

IMPORTANCE OF CO-REGULATION

A- Affect

G- Gestures

I- Intonation

L- Latency

E-
Engagement

PREPARING FOR CRISIS

General classroom co-regulation

Understanding individual and collective baseline for regulation in your classroom

Awareness of potential risks for trigger, cues for escalation, or possible threats for students

Managing needs for all students and staff in the classroom when possible

CLASSROOM-APPROPRIATE SKILLS

Environmental management

STOP Skill

Distraction and redirection skills

Sensory management

Body-based regulation skills

Connection reinforcement



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Sensory input- lights, sounds, temperature, crowding

Proximity- using physical presence to create or reinforce safety

Reducing triggers- redirecting triggering students away, pause expectations until regulation, etc.

Aware of weapons- removal of items that can be used to harm self or others

STOP SKILL



S – Stop!



T – Take a step back!.



O – Observe!



P – Proceed mindfully!

DISTRACTION AND REDIRECTION SKILLS

Distracting or competing activity

Contributing or connecting with another person

Imagery or competing brain content

Relaxing or releasing activity

“One thing at a time”

Vacation from the room or their space

SENSORY MANAGEMENT

Sound

Smell

Taste

Touch

Sight

Temperature regulation

Intense movement

Paced breathing

Progressive muscle relaxation

BODY-BASED REGULATION SKILLS

CONNECTION REINFORCEMENT



Positive affirmations and statements of encouragement



Engaging non-verbal cues



Proximity and closeness



Offering support



Hurdle help or scaffolding

RESPONDING TO CRISIS



Response: based on information, more logical, rooted in a desired outcome



Reaction: based on impulse, more emotional, rooted in a desired input



Returning a student to baseline must come before teaching

How can I create safety right now even if I don't understand why this child feels unsafe?



Brain Distress: The crisis seems to be rooted in a student's thought or cognitive processes



Body Distress: The crisis seems to be rooted in a student's nervous system reaction or physical distress



Behavior Distress: The crisis seems to be rooted in a student's behavioral urges or actions

LOCATE THE SOURCE OF THE CRISIS

MATCHING INTERVENTIONS TO TYPES OF DYSREGULATION

Brain- Intrusive thoughts, obsessive thoughts, negative self-talk, perception of threat, frightening images, hopeless thought

- Challenge by competing with neutral content first to redirect the student's brain, then shift into more positive thinking if appropriate

Body- Heart racing, muscles tense, stomach pains or churning, flush of heat or adrenaline, rapid breath, restlessness

- Calm by regulating through body-skills, presenting student to a safe base and then modeling ways to calm the system through breath and muscle release

Behavior- Aggressive or violent behaviors, impulsive behaviors, rigid or inflexible behaviors, urges that feel hard to fight, destruction towards self or others

- Compete with urges by providing alternatives, redirection to more neutral or distracting behaviors, activation of the body in less destructive ways

RESPONDING TO CRISIS DIRECTLY



REMOVAL OF AUDIENCE
OR STUDENTS AT-RISK OF
TARGETING



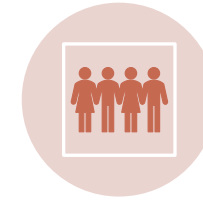
VERBAL DIRECTIONS AND
GUIDANCE WITH CALM,
NEUTRAL TONE



ACKNOWLEDGE OF
CRISIS, FOCUSING ON
REALITY



ALLOW OPPORTUNITY
TO DISCUSS THOUGHTS
AND FEELINGS



PROVIDE SPACE FOR PEER
SUPPORT AND
UNDERSTANDING











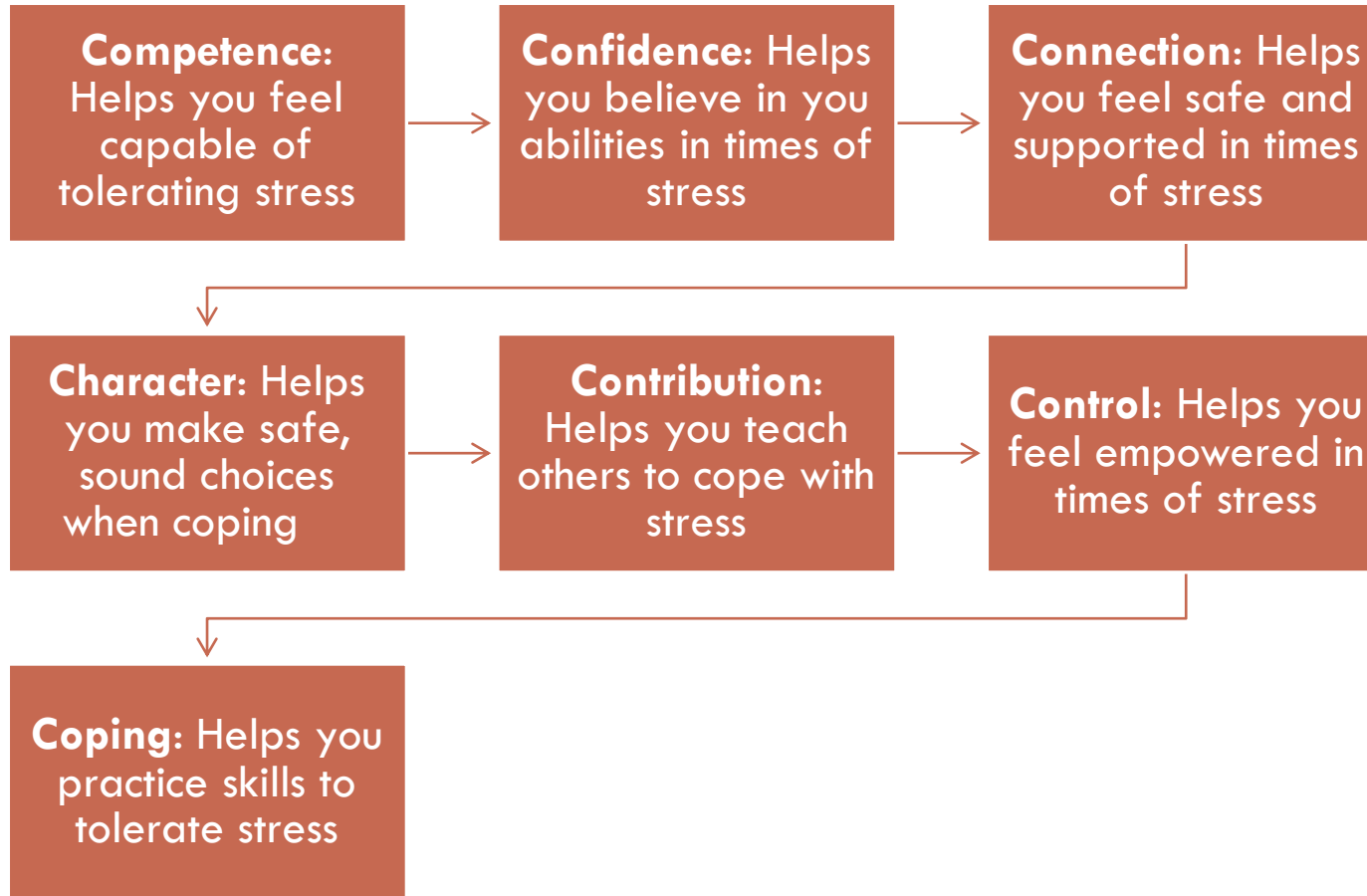
PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS
MAY BE USED IN YOUR
MILIEU



-FOLLOW SCHOOL-WIDE
CRISIS POLICY

THE AFTERMATH OF CRISIS

-  Establish safety and calm back to the environment
-  Assess any needs for other students to avert additional crisis
-  Help the student understand or identify their triggers
-  Help the staff understand or identify their triggers
-  Find ways to meet their needs, if appropriate
-  Create plans to avoid future crises
-  Reintegrate the student back into their routine, when possible
-  Don't miss opportunities for appropriate consequences



USING RESILIENCE TO REDUCE CRISIS

TEACHER-MODELING

Show, Don't Tell

Neuroception- unconscious awareness of external messages

Attachment- bonding with trusted adults to manage feelings of safety

Mirroring- unintentionally mimicking of trusted adult behaviors

MANAGING STAFF NEEDS IN CRISIS

Boundary setting

Support seeking

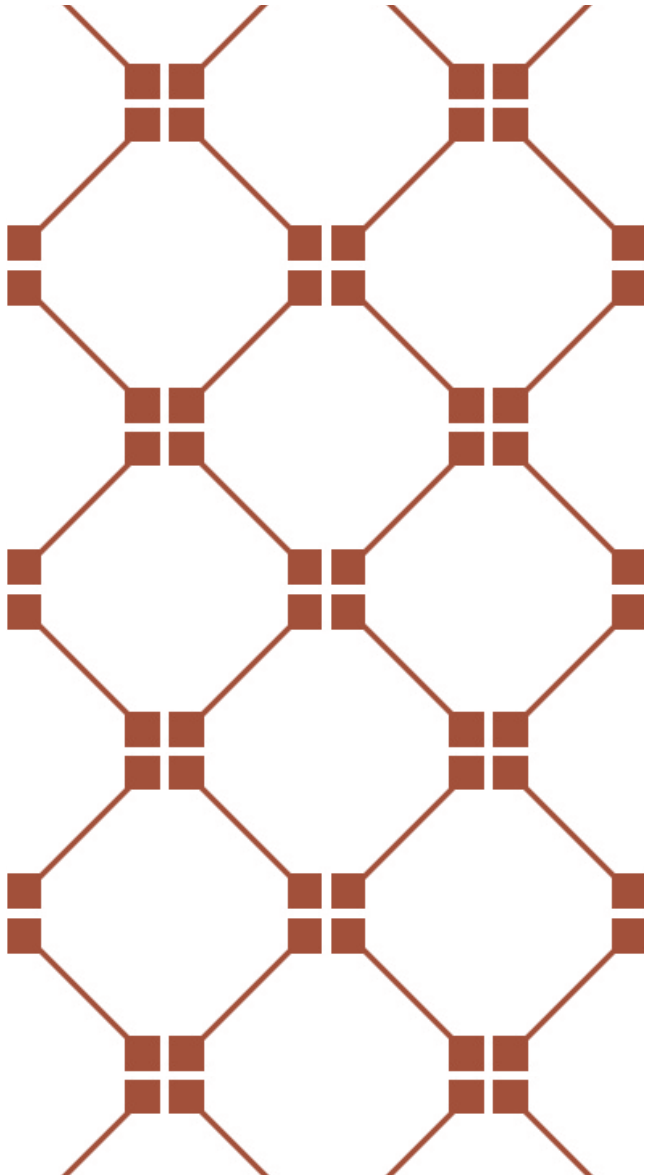
Self-care

Management of needs

Awareness of regulation abilities

Monitoring for burn-out

Co-regulation among staff



Information clarification

Implementation clarification

Additional resources

QUESTIONS?