

# Everyday Skills for Regulation

Implementing Regulation Skills in the Classroom Setting

# Speaker Disclaimer



Monica L. Raminger, LMHC, CATP does not have any financial conflicts or ventures to disclose.



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This presentation is not meant to be a replacement for other relevant educational teachings and should be considered supplemental material.

# What is Regulation?

The ability to control one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to work towards goals.

Understanding and managing behavior, reactions, and feelings to things that happen around you

# Regulation is Not...

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Compliance

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Lack of difficult emotions

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Completely predictable  
behavior

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Acting in favor of the adult

# How Does Regulation Relate to Learning?

Critical developmental task with long-term impacts and indicators for ability and wellbeing

Associated with higher resilience in the face of toxic stress

Students who can self-regulate are more capable at applying self towards academic standards

- Improved performance

- Better social outcomes

- Higher life satisfaction

- Positive affect

- Less disruptions in learning environment

# Self- Regulation

Regulation that is managed and maintained through independent effort

*I can regulate myself*

Complex skill that requires practice and reinforcement

Requires:

- Self-efficacy: I believe I can control myself
- Self-awareness: I understand my own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs
- Self-control: I can dictate my own behaviors and expressions

# Typical Trajectories for Self-Regulation

## Elementary School

- Improved empathy, improved emotional intelligence, increased independent problem solving, express opinions and negotiate, sense of identity forms, improve cooperative skills, develop set of values and morals, understand others around them, refined communication, value rules and authority, better control of behavior

## Middle School

- Increased independence, acceptance of self and others, provide support and companionship to others, value opinions and viewpoints of others, improved sensitivity to others' needs, aware of how other people see them, increased self-sufficiency, further development of morals and values

## High School

- Planning for future goals and expectations, improved identity formation, collaborative problem solving, ability to seek out good feelings from others, understand and seek out feedback from others, self-selecting joy and positive emotions, improved responsibility for actions, understand immediate and future consequences, acknowledge strengths and weaknesses

An inability to regulate self, underproductive regulation attempts, or maladaptive regulation attempts

- Outbursts, acting out, reactivity, behavioral concerns
- Self-destruction, self-sabotage, self-harm
- Bizarre, unpredictable, or unsafe expressions of emotion
- Unhelpful support-seeking

Self-regulation is a skill that must be taught

# What is Dysregulation?



# Types of Dysregulation

Brain: dysregulation and disruption in cognitive processes: attention, understanding, executive functioning, irrational/obsessive/intrusive thought content, dissociation, difficulties understanding or processing emotions, etc.

Body: dysregulation and disruption in physical processes: heart rate, muscle tension/tone, adrenaline and cortisol loads, gastro-responses, hunger and bathrooming cues, breathing rates, nervous system communication, extreme or dulled emotional experiencing, hyper- or hypo- arousal, pain or illness/injury, etc.

Behavior: dysregulation and disruption in action processes: harmful or damaging behaviors, impulsive or compulsive behaviors, hyper- or hypo-activity, aggression or passivity, irrational or bizarre behavior, self-directed or outward directed, intentional or accidental behavior, etc.

Most people with dysregulation have a combination of 2 or 3 at a time

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Temperament and personality development

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Genetics and biological predispositions

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Learned behavior from environment

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Mental health needs and diagnoses

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Developmental or intellectual needs

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Trauma-based changes or disruptions

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What Determines Regulation Ability?

When a student cannot self-regulate, they need support through co-regulation

The ability to soothe and manage distress through connections with nurturing and reliable adults

Support process between adults and youth that acts as regulatory model that allows the youth to practice and reinforce skills of regulation

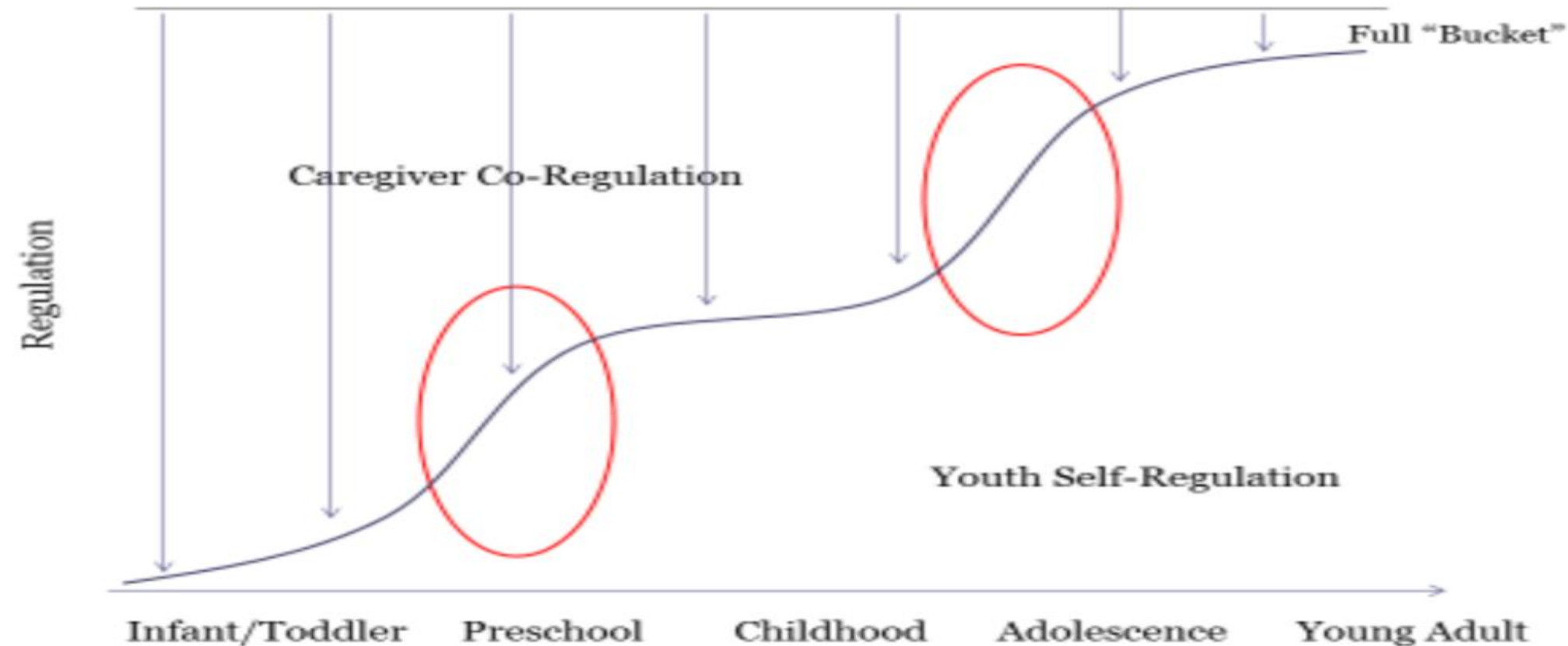
Looks different across the lifespan

Even without apparent, or disruptive dysregulation, all children need and benefit from co-regulation across the lifespan

# Co-Regulation

# Different Developmental Stages

## Balance of Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation



Rosanbalm, K.D., & Murray, D.W. (2017). *Caregiver Co-regulation Across Development: A Practice Brief*. OPRE Brief #2017-80. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services.

# Infancy to Pre-School

Provide warmth and nurturing

Anticipate needs and respond to cues

Provide structure and consistent routine

Provide physical and emotional comfort when child is distressed or dysregulated: speak calmly and give affection

Modify the environment to decrease demands and stress

Teach age-appropriate rules and expectations

Label emotions; teach and coach use of words to express emotions

Model waiting and self-calming strategies

Redirect child attention to regulate behavior

Teach and coach identification of solutions to simple problems

Coach and incentivize rule-following and task completion

Model, prompt, and reinforce self-calming strategies like taking a deep breath

Provide external structure for calming down, including a calm-down space and materials

Provide clear and consistent consequences, carried out in firm yet calm manner

# Elementary School

Continue to provide a warm, nurturing, supportive relationship

Assist in problem-solving more complex academic, behavioral, and social situations

Model conflict resolution strategies

Prompt and coach coping skills and calm-down strategies, including self-talk and relaxation

Teach and support organization and planning skills needed for academic success

Provide opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor behavior

Continue to provide clear rules, structure, and consequences in a calm manner

# Middle School

Provide a warm, responsive relationship

Provide support and empathy in times of intense emotion

Model, monitor, and coach more sophisticated self-regulation skills across different contexts

Monitor and limit opportunities for risk-taking behavior

Provide opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor behavior in less risky situations

Give time and space to calm down in times of conflict

Monitor and prompt use of organizational and planning skills for successful task completion

Continue clear rules, boundaries, and consequences to incentivize good choices

# High School

Provide an ongoing warm, supportive relationship

Provide comfort and empathy during times of strong emotion

Prompt and support coping strategies

Support long-term goal achievement by encouraging effective planning, awareness of consequences, and task completion activities

Share perspective and provide coaching for complex problem-solving and decision-making

Ultimately, allow space for the young adult to make his or her own decisions and experience the consequences of those decisions



## Basics of Co-Regulation

A- Affect

G- Gestures

I- Intonation

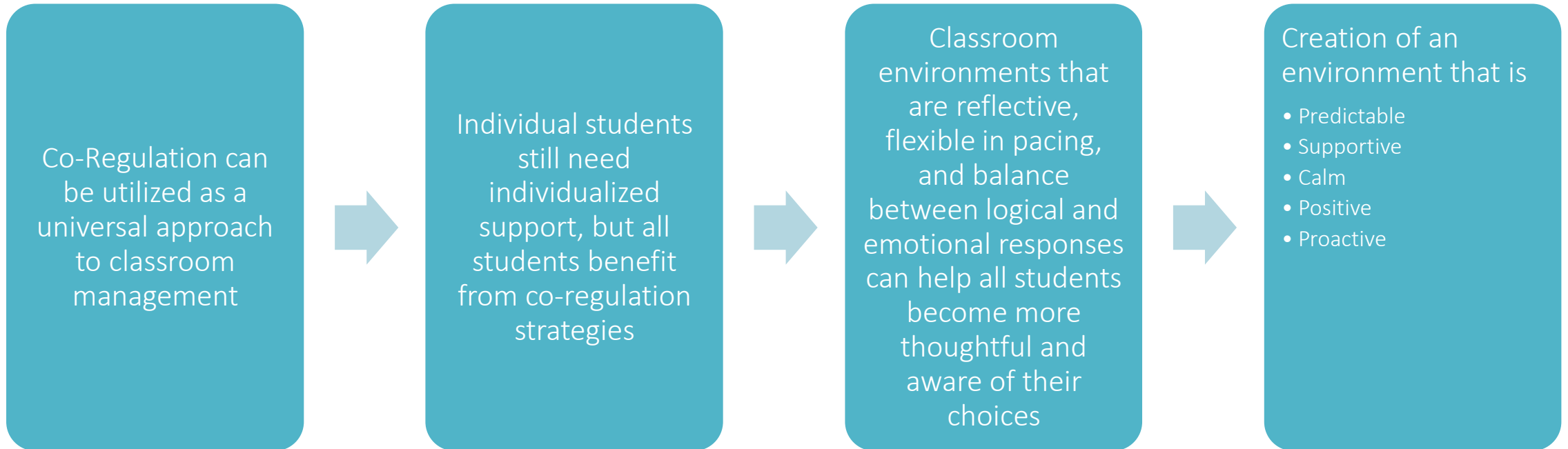
L- Latency

E- Engagement

Teaching, modeling, and reinforcing skills

Scaffolding and repetition for maintained change

# Co-Regulation and Classroom Management



# Classroom- Appropriate Skills

Universal skills that can be practiced

As stand-alone skills: Pause instruction, implement, then return to teaching

As integrated skills: Push skills into instruction material

As individualized skills: Taught or modeled to one specific student

As universal skills: Taught or modeled to the entire classroom

As play or free time skills: Incorporate skills into moments of free-play

# Matching Skills to Types of Dysregulation



Requires us to understand what we are observing when it comes to dysregulation



Brain Skills- address symptoms associated with thinking and cognition



Body Skills- address symptoms associated with physical symptoms and movement



Behavior Skills- address symptoms associated with choice and action



Effective skill use is skills most closely matched with observed area of dysregulation, or incorporates a combination of all 3 areas

# Elementary School

## Best ways to implement

- Use of games, interactive opportunities, and with pleasure/joy attached
- Balance between integrated, stand-alone, and free-play

Brain- 5 Senses exercise, mindful observations, feeling trackers, mindful moments/meditation, distraction games, mindful listening

Body- Progressive muscle relaxation, mindful breathing, movement and stretching activities, body scans

Behavior- Mindful coloring/drawing, STOP skill, opposite action, following instructions, awareness of behavior activities, impulse control games

# Elementary School: Brain Skills

5 Senses exercise

Mindful observations

Feeling trackers

Mindful  
moments/meditation

Distraction games

Mindful listening

# Elementary School: Body Skills

Progressive muscle relaxation

Mindful breathing

Movement and stretching activities

Body scans

## Elementary School: Behavior Skills

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Mindful coloring/drawing

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STOP skill

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Opposite action

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Following instructions

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Awareness of behavior activities

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Impulse control games



### Brain: 5 senses exercise

- What can we see?
- What can we hear?
- What can we touch?
- What can we smell?
- What can we taste?

### Body: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Squeeze our faces
- Squeeze our shoulders
- Squeeze our bellies
- Squeeze our legs
- Squeeze our hands and feet
- Squeeze our whole bodies

### Behavior: Opposite Action

- What does our brain or body WANT us to do?
- What could happen if we did this thing?
- What is something we could do that is opposite?
- What could happen if we did this thing?

# Elementary School: Practice

Best ways to implement:

Balance between integrated and stand-alone

Peer collaboration with feelings of efficacy/confidence attached

Brain- Problem/solution activities, visualization, compliment sharing, positive affirmation creation, emotion identification, changing the channel

Body- heartbeat tracking, mindful breathing, mindful movement, yoga, body activation

Behavior- timed tasks, choice-based games, journaling prompts, learning-based sketching, goal setting, independent work with reward/praise

# Middle School

# Middle School: Brain Skills



Problem/solution activities



Visualization



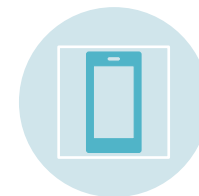
Compliment sharing



Positive affirmation creation



Emotion identification



Changing the channel

# Middle School: Body Skills

Heartbeat tracking

Mindful breathing

Mindful movement

Yoga

Body activation

# Middle School: Behavior Skills



TIMED TASKS



CHOICE-BASED GAMES



JOURNALING PROMPTS



LEARNING-BASED  
SKETCHING



GOAL SETTING



INDEPENDENT WORK  
WITH REWARD/PRAISE



## Brain: Visualization

Close eyes or focus on something non-distracting

Allow vision to focus on blackness or darkness of closed eyes

Create an image in your head, like a daydream

Create as many details of that image: colors, sounds, smells, textures, objects, etc.

Wipe the image clean, returning to the blackness of closed eyes

Review image out-loud or in writing



## Body: Mindful Breathing

Focus on air coming in and out

Release all tension or tightness in belly

Move air from chest down to belly

Breathe in as slow as possible, filling belly like a balloon

Breathe out as slow as possible, deflating belly like a balloon

Breathe in for 5, out for 7 and repeat



## Behavior: Goal Setting

S: Specific goal to achieve

M: Measurable steps

A: Achievable steps

R: Relevance to greater goals

T: Time limit for completion

# Middle School: Practice

# High School

Best ways to implement:

Balance between integrated and stand-alone

Peer collaboration and teacher-based observations with challenge/success attached

Brain: checking the facts, positive events selective-attention, thought stopping, distraction skills, cognitive reappraisal

Body: PLEASE, emotional experiencing, heartrate tracking, sensory engagement, body-focused grounding, mindful breathing

Behavior: emotional cause-and-effect, behavioral activation, help/support seeking, mindful participation, emotional or experiential journaling

# High School: Brain Skills



Checking the facts



Positive events selective-attention



Thought stopping



Distraction skills



Cognitive reappraisal



# High School: Body Skills

PLEASE

Emotional  
experiencing

Heartrate  
tracking

Sensory  
engagement

Body-focused  
grounding

Mindful  
breathing

# High School: Behavior Skills

Emotional cause-and-effect

Behavioral activation

Help/support seeking

Mindful participation

Emotional or experiential journaling

# High School: Practice

## Brain: Checking the Facts

Think of a worry or fear

If this worry comes true, what is the worst possible outcome?

Best possible outcome? Most probable outcome?

Is there any evidence to suggest it WILL come true?

Is there any evidence to suggest it will NOT come true?

What is the most likely outcome?

## Body: Emotional Experiencing

Identify where we feel our emotions in our body

Anger- where do you feel it?

Sadness- where do you feel it?

Fear- where do you feel it?

Happy- where do you feel it?

Are any of these sensations uncomfortable or unbearable?

## Behavior: Emotional Cause-and-Effect

Journaling or discussion-based activity

Anger- What causes it? How does it make you want to respond?

Is this always helpful?

Sadness- What causes it? How does it make you want to respond?

Is this always helpful?

Fear- What causes it? How does it make you want to respond? Is

this always helpful?

Happy- What causes it? How does it make you want to respond?

Is this always helpful?

Co-regulation is best SHOWN instead of taught

- Intentionally modeling and monitoring skills

Building relationships with students will help them attune to you

- Warm, responsive relationships help kids feel comforted even when faced with consequences or challenges
- More structure and connection helps everyone self-regulate better- including the teachers!
- Better mirroring of skills and behaviors through the process of neuroception helps them 'do as you do, not as you say'

# Teacher-Modeling

We must be able to self-regulate before we can teach kids to self-regulate

We should practice and master any skills we want our students to utilize

We should focus on the self-care of our basic needs

- Management of healthy breath

- Management of food, fluid, and movement intake

- Management of balance between sleep, rest, and productivity

Check in- what is your own capacity for self-regulation?

- Pay attention to your own feelings and reactions during stressful interactions

- Pay attention to your own thoughts and beliefs about other people's behaviors

- Pay attention to how effectively you can use skills to manage your responses

# Self-Regulation for Staff

# Co-Regulation for Staff

We can use each other as co-regulation support when overwhelmed

Who is your co-regulator in the workplace?

Who is your co-regulator at home or in the community?

How can we more effectively show up to co-regulate our coworkers during times of need?

# Barriers to Regulation in Staff

Barriers that mirror student barriers

- Individual mental health needs

- Individual trauma histories

- Individual baselines for calming ability

Burnout and overworked staff

Difficulties with self-efficacy, self-esteem, or confidence in managing stress

Blocks to switching how we view behavior (Bad kid versus dysregulated kid)

Remember: if it is hard for you, it's just as hard (or harder!) for our students. Keep this in mind when feeling frustrated at how a student or classroom regulates itself

### Short-Term + Immediate:

- Faster returns to baseline
- Avoidance of larger crises
- Calmer, more focused students
- Better relationships and connection
- Improved trust among peers and staff
- Better academic performance

### Long-Term + Accumulative:

- Reduce 'fadeout effect'
- Reduce special education service utilization
- Reduce grade retention and summer school
- Reduced suspensions, detentions, and use of disciplinary measures
- Improved and maintained executive function skills
- Higher levels of well-being post-graduation
- Reduced staff burnout, improved retention

# Benefits to Teaching Regulation



# Next Week

Implementing  
regulation skills in  
the face of crisis