



What is regulation?

"Sensory regulation is the process through which our nervous system integrates and adjusts sensory input, enabling us to maintain balance and optimal levels of arousal"

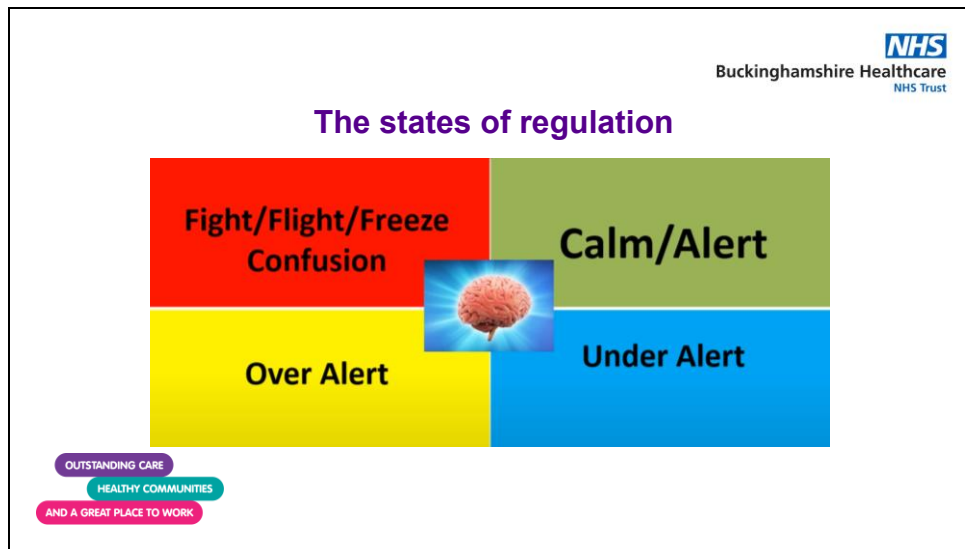
Sensory behaviours are a form of sensory regulation- **we only stop these if they are not safe and may cause harm**

Other factors that impact on regulation: Trauma, emotional regulation, sleep, medication, anxiety. **Sensory is only part of the picture**

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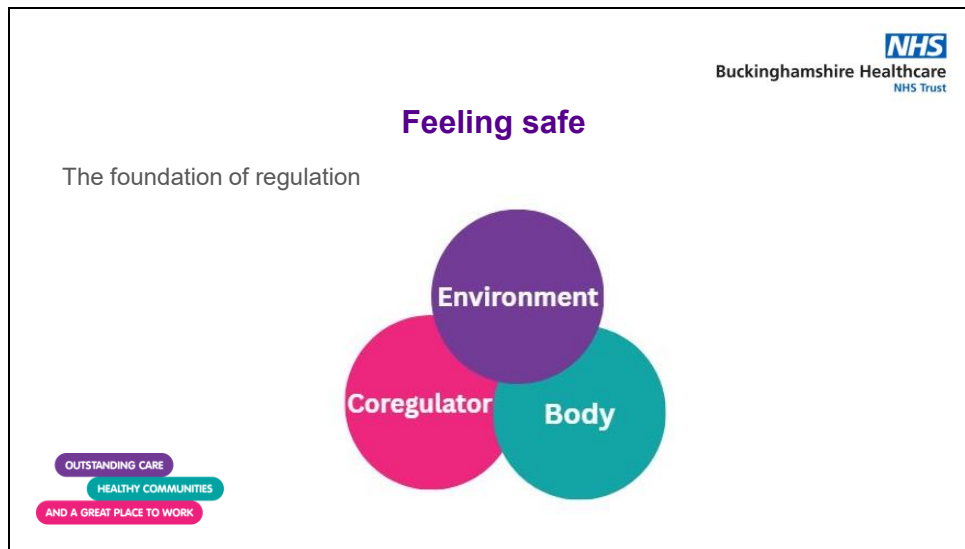
What could dysregulation look like

- Physical behaviours
- Fidgeting
- Loosing focus
- Loss of ability to follow instructions
- Giggling
- Shutdown
- Physical signs e.g. Turing red, raised heart rate etc

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Getting to know our senses

We have 8 senses:

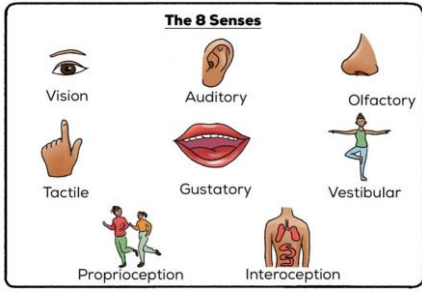
External:

- Touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing

Internal:

- Interoception, proprioception, Vestibular

The 8 Senses



Vision Auditory Olfactory

Tactile Gustatory Vestibular

Proprioception Interoception

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How to create safety- Co regulator

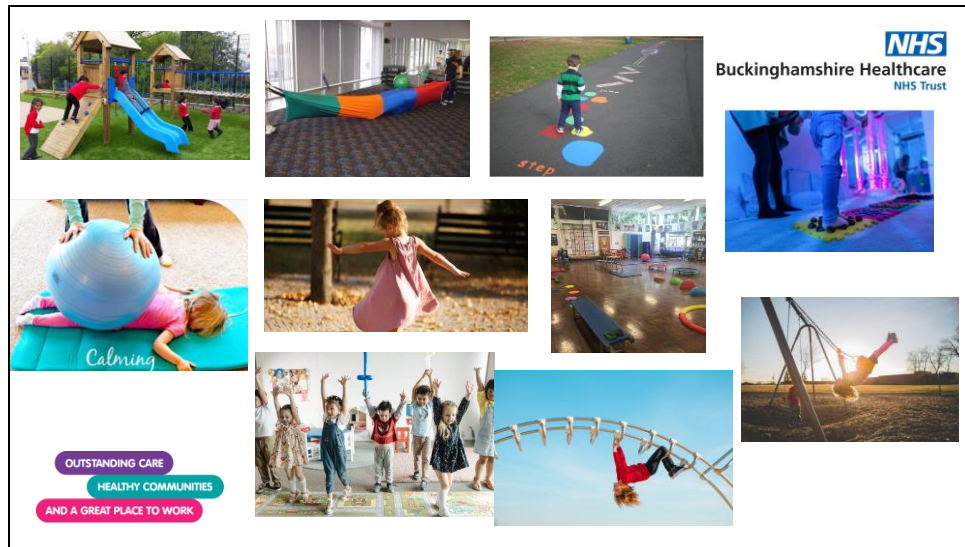
- Those supporting the child should understand how they present in each sensory state.
- Offering the best strategies at the right time e.g. if the child is over alerted easily offer more calming input
- This allows their co regulator to proactively react and offer support/strategies.
- Help the child advocate for their sensory needs.
- Support them to understand their feelings e.g "I can see you are frustrated"

The diagram illustrates four sensory states arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left quadrant is red and labeled 'Fight/Flight/Freeze' and 'Confusion'. The top-right quadrant is green and labeled 'Calm/Alert'. The bottom-left quadrant is yellow and labeled 'Over Alert'. The bottom-right quadrant is blue and labeled 'Under Alert'. In the center of the grid is a small image of a brain.

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Slide 8



After school routine

- Incorporate sensory calming strategies into your child's routine to help them wind down and feel regulated, for example:
- Try some of the feel-good/calming strategies at home. Consistency between home and school.
- blanket burrito (roll up into a blanket), tight hugs, weighted blanket, squash between pillows (pillow sandwich), crash corner (area of soft cushions / blankets to 'crash' into) wall push ups, floor push ups, sit ups, jumping jacks,
- carrying the laundry basket up and down the stairs), bringing in shopping, taking in / out wheelie bin, scooter, digging in the garden, sweeping, bread kneading, squeezing sponges
- Introduce wrapping tightly in a towel after bath time, doing deep pressure massage, then putting pyjamas on.
- Environmental calming strategies such as dim lighting before bed, introduce calming scents, smells, sounds or music. Sit on a big bean bag with a weighted cushion whilst listening to a story.

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How can OT support young people to feel regulated/safe?

- Sensory strategies e.g. Sensory circuits, calming activities
- Sensory friendly environments
- Accommodations e.g. uniform, ear defenders, dynamic seating options
- Staff have knowledge and understanding
- Co regulation- a child will not always be able to self-regulate

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Case study

Henry is an autistic 8-year-old boy. He is often fidgety in his seat and can't cope in class for longer than 30 minutes. Without any warning he will become dysregulated causing him to throw and push classroom furniture, he will often run from the classroom and hide.

How can we support Henry's sensory regulation?

- Sensory audit
- Sensory strategies e.g. sensory circuits, proprioception, heavy work
- Accommodations e.g. a safe play to retreat, regular breaks, dynamic seating

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Further resources

Webinars/resources:
[Occupational therapy - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust - CYP Website](#)

BHT Therapy Link:
Get in touch with Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy teams.
Send a text message to 07312 263754 for confidential help and advice.

Advice lines:
30minutes Teams/phone call with an OT. Can be booked through our website

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Resources

Choose the area below that your child needs help with

- Early years
- Focus and attention
- Foundation skills
- Preparing for school
- Movement, play and leisure
- Self care (including washing, toileting, and getting dressed)
- Sensory processing
- Writing and drawing

Our trust website Has a variety of ready to use resources:

[Occupational therapy - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust - CYP Website](#)

The screenshot shows the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust website. At the top is the NHS logo and the text 'Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust'. Below this is a navigation bar with a home icon and links for 'Health visiting', 'School nursing', 'Learning disabilities', 'Community paediatrics', 'Family Nurse Partnership', and 'Referrals from professionals'. A search icon is on the right. The main content area is titled 'Occupational therapy' and includes a sub-header 'What we work with'. Below this, it states: 'We help children and young people to overcome challenges with daily activities such as dressing, washing, eating and moving.' It then says: 'We work with families, healthcare professionals, education and social care colleagues. Our aim is to help your child get the most from their lives and achieve their potential.' A section titled 'What we do' follows, stating: 'Children and young people may need help with certain activities. We help to develop participation skills in self care, productivity and leisure. This might include things like:'. A bulleted list starts with '• eating, drinking and washing (self care)'. On the right side of the website, there is a sidebar with a heading 'In this section' and a list of links: 'Occupational Therapy' and 'virtual advice sessions'.

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