



## SELF-REGULATION

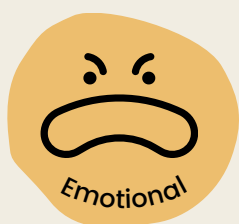
### What is self-regulation?

Self regulation is our ability to manage our thoughts, feelings, and emotions in order to complete important activities. It involves how we respond and adapt to things that are stressful in our social, physical, or bodily environment. Everybody can have moments where we feel intense emotions or want to react right away. When we recognize what is happening, how we feel, and what needs to happen to bring us back to a calm state in order to act appropriately - that is self-regulation!

There are 5 types of self-regulation situations where we may experience stress, and different behaviours that we use to overcome challenges. These domains include:



Keeping our bodies healthy and strong, recognizing uncomfortable sensations



Keeping strong emotions, positive and negative, in control



Thoughts and attention; especially when focusing on or changing between activities



Social interactions and playing with others



Sharing, working together, and being kind to others

### Why is it important?

- Helps us to stay calm when we feel upset
- Lets us pause before we act
- Helps us stay focused on our goals
- Allows us to adapt quickly to changes
- Helps us cooperate with others
- Can help build skills to deal with stressors we may find in the future
- Can help build healthy family relationships

### When it is challenged:

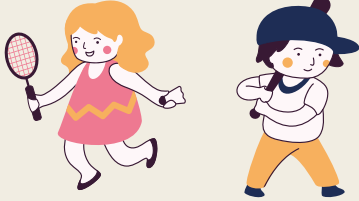
- Challenges with making friends, sharing, and playing together
- Difficulty with getting ready for bed, or disrupted sleep patterns
- Trouble concentrating in a noisy classroom or with uncomfortable textures or smells
- Difficulty waiting/being patient
- Getting upset and taking a long time/needing a lot of help to calm down
- Transitioning between tasks and trying new things can feel difficult

# Self-Regulation Strategies for Kids and Teens!



## 1 Physical activity!

Getting up and moving our bodies is a healthy way to stay calm and get out any extra energy!



## 2 Mindfulness

helps us pay attention to how our bodies feel when we are stressed, and helps us pause before we react.

## 3 Breathing exercises

help us to stay calm when we feel strong emotions (angry, worried, etc.)



## Tips for Parents and Families

### Co-Regulation

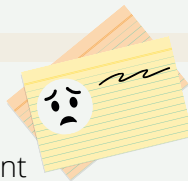
**Engaging in self-regulation strategies with your child** can help them complete each step of the strategy during an overwhelming situation; patiently walking them through strategies without judgement can help them complete the strategy.

Doing the exercise with them can also validate their efforts to self-regulate and model appropriate responses; they can draw from your calm example to help themselves become calm.

### Education

Parents can **learn the same strategies** introduced by a healthcare professional and teacher, and support the transfer of these strategies at home! **Consistent practice in multiple settings** can help to build confidence and independence of self-regulation in the child and the family. Learning about tools to support their child through routine, consistency and relaxation strategies can be helpful for the whole family.

### Build a Coping Toolkit



Help your child build a "coping toolkit" of different strategies they can implement when they are at different levels of dysregulation. For example...

**level 1** - "I am uncomfortable and a little upset so I will do some deep breathing"

**level 2** - "I'm upset and need my noise-cancelling headphones"

**level 3** - "I'm quite upset and full of energy, so I'll try some yoga or go for a walk"

### Create your own toolkit:

**Level 1:** What it looks/feels like: \_\_\_\_\_  
What I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 2:** What it's like: \_\_\_\_\_  
What I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** What it's like: \_\_\_\_\_  
What I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** What it's like: \_\_\_\_\_  
What I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Resources

- Self-regulation resources as well as courses, groups, and online communities to connect with other parents. <https://self-reg.ca/tools/>
- Strategies for parents and educators on how to best support children to improve self-regulation skills: <https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/>
- How are you Peeling: By Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. <http://www.scholastic.ca/books/view/how-are-you-peeling>.
- Me and My Feelings: By Vanessa Green Allen. <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/me-and-my-feelings-a/9781641524964-item.html>