

Calmer Classrooms: Supporting Positive Interventions



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What You'll Learn Today

- What is a Positive intervention?
- Maslow and Learning
- PACE model
- Emotional literacy

Explore

- Understand how connection, predictability, and empathy reduce challenges for students.

Understand

- Everyday strategies for positive intervention and classroom regulation

Identify



What Makes a Classroom Calm?



“One word that describes a calm classroom to you”



Did you think of any of these words?

Quiet

Peaceful

Orderly

Focussed

Serene

Relaxed

Harmonious

Attentive

Comfortable

Soft-spoken

Respectful

Tranquil

Gentle

Organised

Concentrated

Did you think of any of these words?

Ponder point:
Is a Quiet classroom
always a calm
classroom?





What is a Positive Intervention?



A SPARKLE OR
A LIGHTBULB ONE



HELPFUL &
HEALING OR
HARMFUL

EXPANDING

➡ RESTRICTING ⬅

TRAUMA-INDUCING
OR
TRAUMA-REDUCING

TRAUMA-INDUCING
OR
TRAUMA-REDUCING

A
TURN
AROUND
ONE

TURN AROUND ONE

EVERY MOMENT &
INTERACTION CAN BE
AN INTERVENTION

A SEED PLANTED



AN
OPEN
OR
CLOSED
DOOR.

A SNAKE OR A LADDER

A SNAKE OR A LADDER



A RIPPLE
OR
A TIDE

A RIPPLE
OR
A TIDE

ENRICHING
OR
CONSTRICTING

ENRICHING
OR
CONSTRUCTING

DR KAREN TREISMAN / SAFE HANDS AND THINKING MINDS

SAFE HANDS AND THINKING MINDS

Relationships matter

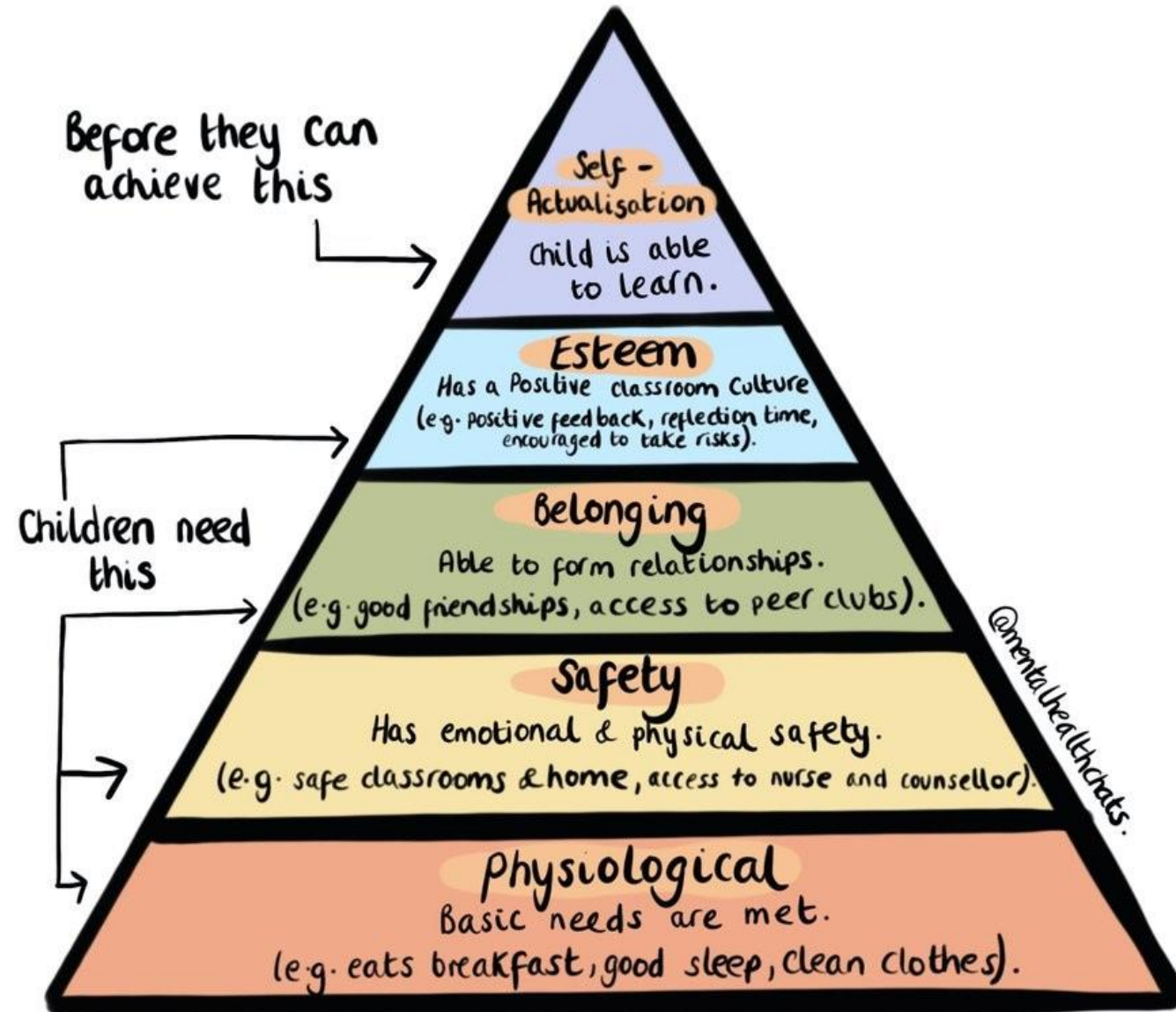
Am I safe?

**Do you like
me?**



If a child (or indeed an adult) feels threatened, unsafe, stressed, or lonely, the brain's lower section, the brain-stem, which is responsible for the survival function, takes over the lead. Perry (2016)

Maslow's Hierachy of School Needs



Physiological Needs

- Tired, hungry, sensory overload

Physiological

Basic needs are met.

(e.g. eats breakfast, good sleep, clean clothes).

Safety Needs

- Physical + emotional safety

Safety

Has emotional & physical safety.

(e.g. safe classrooms & home, access to nurse and counsellor).

Physiological

Basic needs are met.

(e.g. eats breakfast, good sleep, clean clothes).

Belonging & Connection

- Relationship and attachment

Belonging

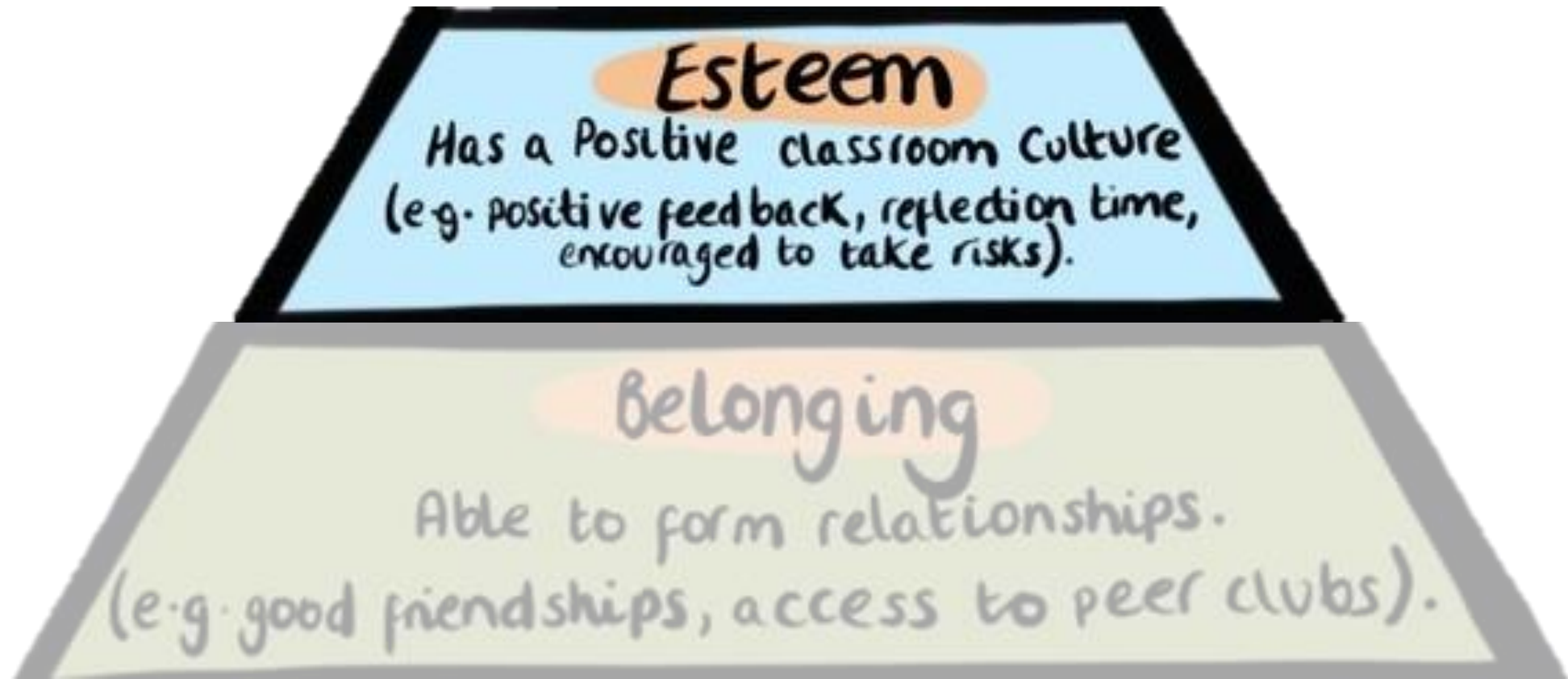
Able to form relationships.
(e.g. good friendships, access to peer clubs).

Safety

Has emotional & physical safety.
(e.g. safe classrooms & home, access to nurse and counsellor).

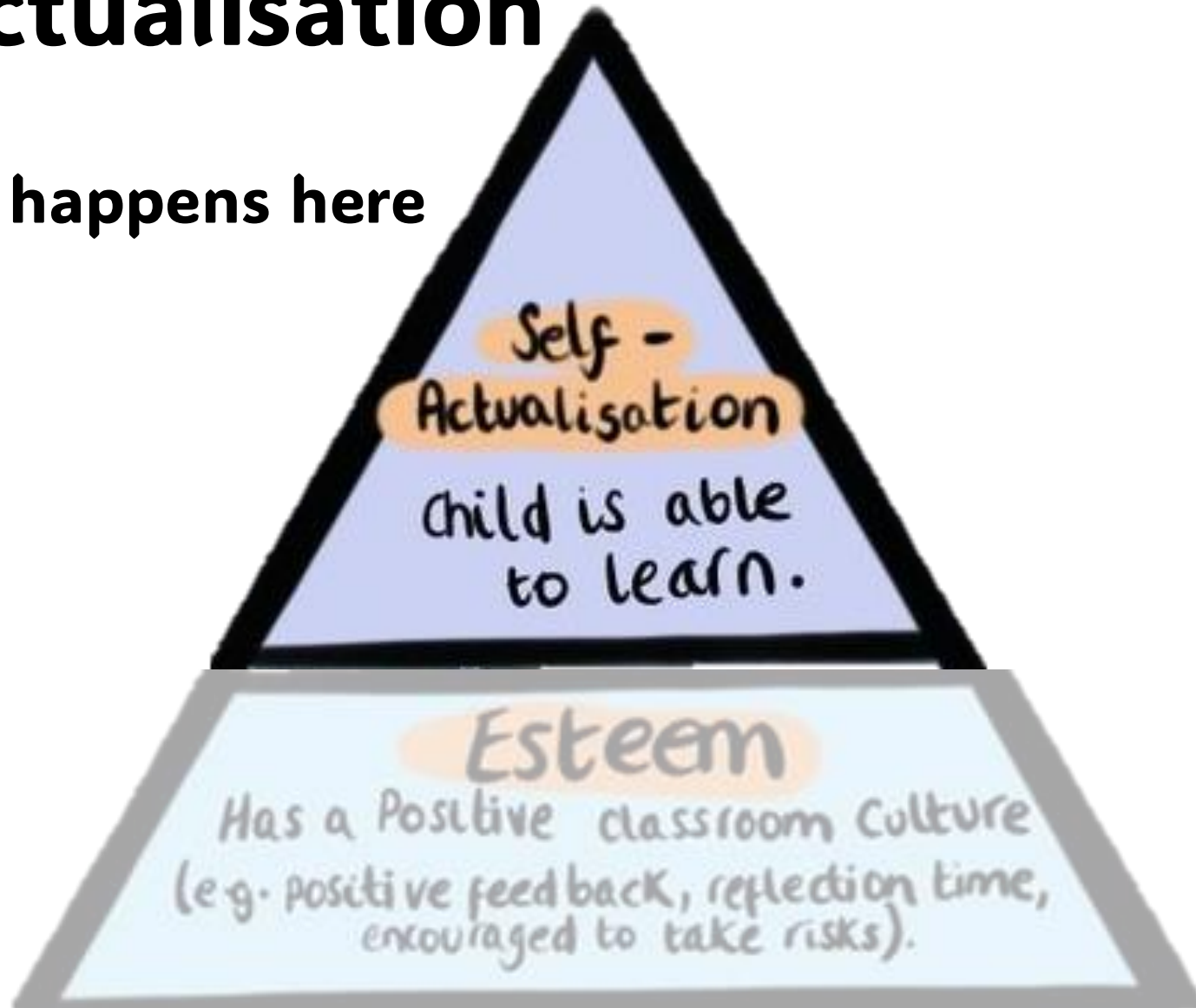
Esteem

- Feeling capable and valued



Self-Actualisation

- Learning happens here

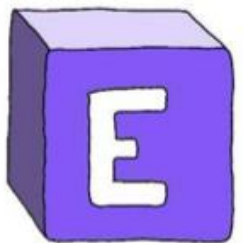
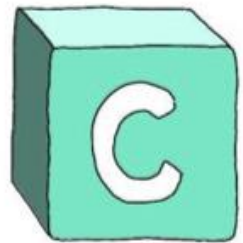
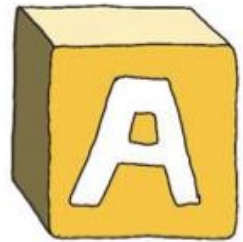
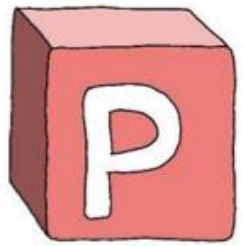


Relational Practice

A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with blonde hair, wearing a patterned blue and grey dress, is leaning over a desk. She is smiling and looking at a young Black boy who is looking up at her with a smile. The boy is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. Another student, a young girl with dark hair, is partially visible in the foreground, looking towards the teacher. The background shows a classroom setting with a whiteboard and other students.

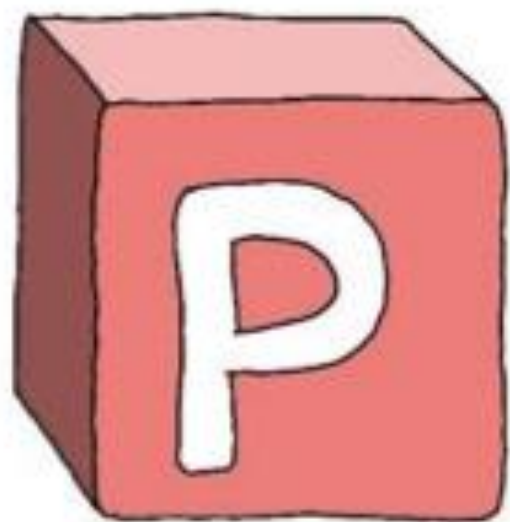
Warm, consistent, attuned interactions build safety

**"Every child deserves a champion –
an adult who will never give up on them, who understands
the power of connection, and insists that they become the
best that they can possibly be." - Rita Pierson**



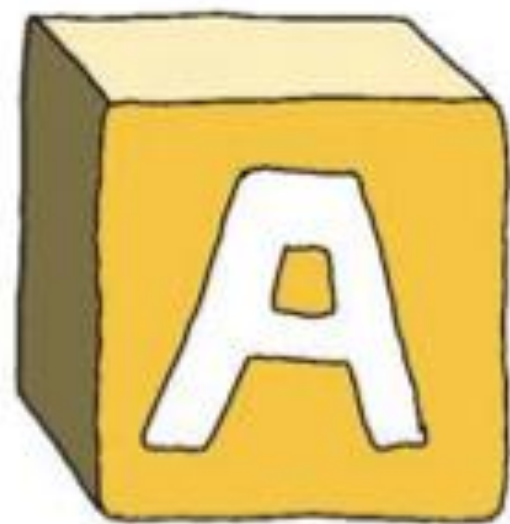
Dr Dan Hughes

PACE strategies help meet safety, belonging, and esteem needs. Together, they create optimal conditions for learning and self-regulation



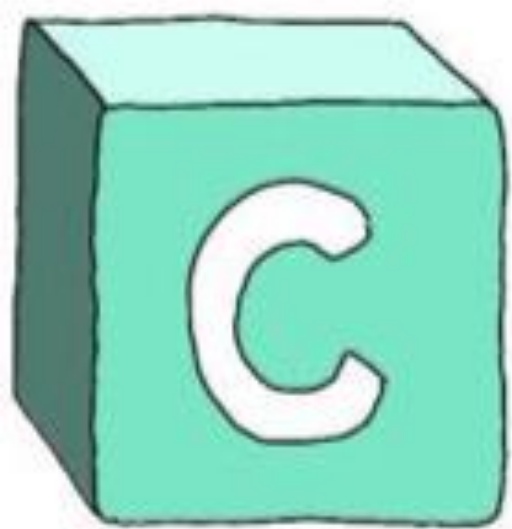
Playfulness

- Playfulness in interactions can diffuse conflict and promote connection
e.g. Maintaining a relaxed 'lightness' and can involve making a joke (though this has to be done carefully)



Acceptance

- Accepting needs and emotions that drive behaviour (not necessarily the behaviour) without judgement



Curiosity

- Being curious to where a behaviour has come from (in your head or out loud...)



Empathy

- Really connecting with how they are feeling and showing compassion



What Makes a Classroom Calm?

Playfulness

- Lighthearted
- Joyful
- Engaging
- Creative
- Cheerful

Acceptance

- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Understanding
- Patient
- Welcoming

Curiosity

- Inquisitive
- Thoughtful
- Reflective
- Open-minded
- Observant

Empathy

- Supportive
- Kind
- Gentle
- Considerate
- Compassionate



Ready-to-use teacher phrases



‘I see this is hard’ (Acceptance)

‘I wonder what happened?’ (Curiosity)

‘I get that’ (Empathy)

‘Let’s try together’ (Playfulness).



“Unconditional positive regard means I care about you, you have value, you don’t have to do anything to prove it to me, and nothing will change my mind,” *Venet, A. S. (2021)*



THE ZONES OF REGULATION



Blue Zone

Sad • Bored •
Tired • Sick



Green Zone

Happy • Focused •
Calm • Proud



Yellow Zone

Worried • Frustrated •
Silly • Excited



Red Zone

Overjoyed/Elated •
Panicked • Angry •
Terrified

Understand - Labelling

Help the young person to name their feelings by giving it a label.

Naming feelings is the first step in helping young people to learn to identify them.

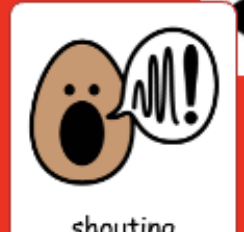
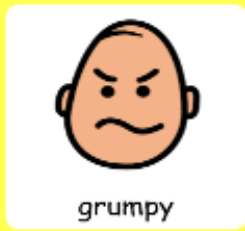
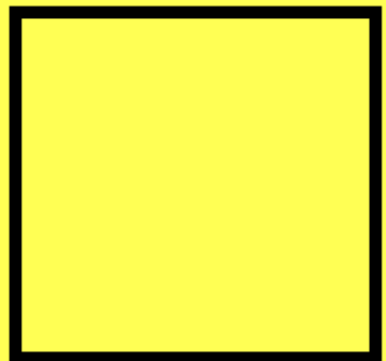
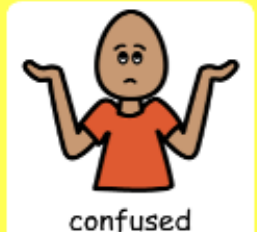
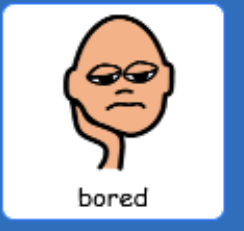
It helps a young person to develop emotional language so they can tell us how they are feeling.

**I think that
you're feeling
frustrated**

**You look
happy and
ready to learn!**

**I think that
you're feeling
angry**

You look tired



Zones of Regulation – Emotional Literacy



Zone: Blue

Low arousal: tired, sad, bored



Zone: Green
Calm & ready



Zone: Yellow

Heightened, but in control





Zone: Red
Out of control

Common challenges



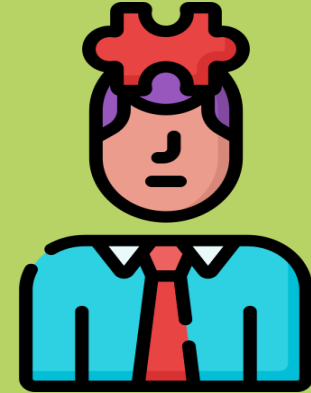
Sensory



Unpredictability



**Social
communication**



Demands

Why Classroom Environment Matters



Key Elements of a Calm Classroom

Universal support

Consistency

Sensory Friendly environment

Predictable routines

visual schedules

Clear expectations

Predictable Staff

Support when needed



Struggling student makes it
hard for helpful teacher



when's that year 7

Calm Adult Presence

A modern classroom with various zones for learning, quiet, and sensory movement. The room features large windows, a clock, a mirror, and a television. A teacher is sitting at a table with a young child, and another child is sitting on a beanbag chair. The room is filled with educational materials and toys.

Classroom Zones

Learning Zone (Green)

Quiet/Calm Zone

Sensory/Movement Area

Embedding Calm Routines

Start-of-day check-ins

**Throughout the day
informal check-ins**

Transition cues

Calm-down routines

**mindfulness/breathing
exercises**



Sustaining Calm – Teacher Wellbeing



Protect emotional energy

Use micro-recoveries throughout the day

Build supportive relationships at work

Set realistic boundaries

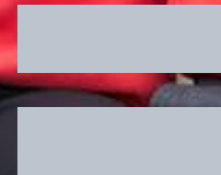
Practice compassionate self-talk



Safety and
Security-
relationship
driven, have a
process for
everything.



Build
engagement.



Show them
they can do it!



Tell them exactly what they did well and when

"That was a really interesting story with an exciting ending"

Create feeling of success to
boost confidence

Praise effort rather than ability

Identify activities the student does well

Take every opportunity to acknowledge achievement

Effective Praise Techniques
Extrinsic or Intrinsic Motivation?

Maintain consistent reward approach across staff



Questions?

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Training Session Evaluation

