



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**

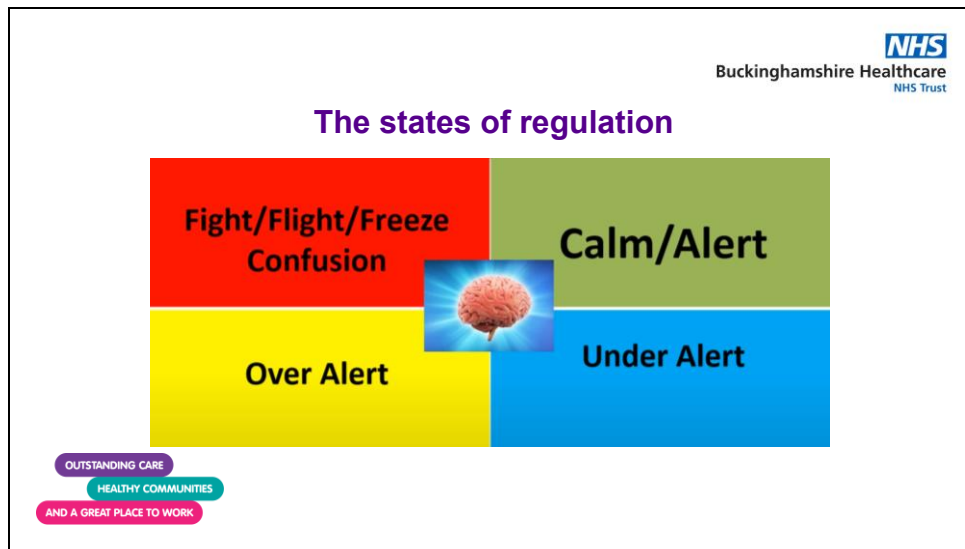
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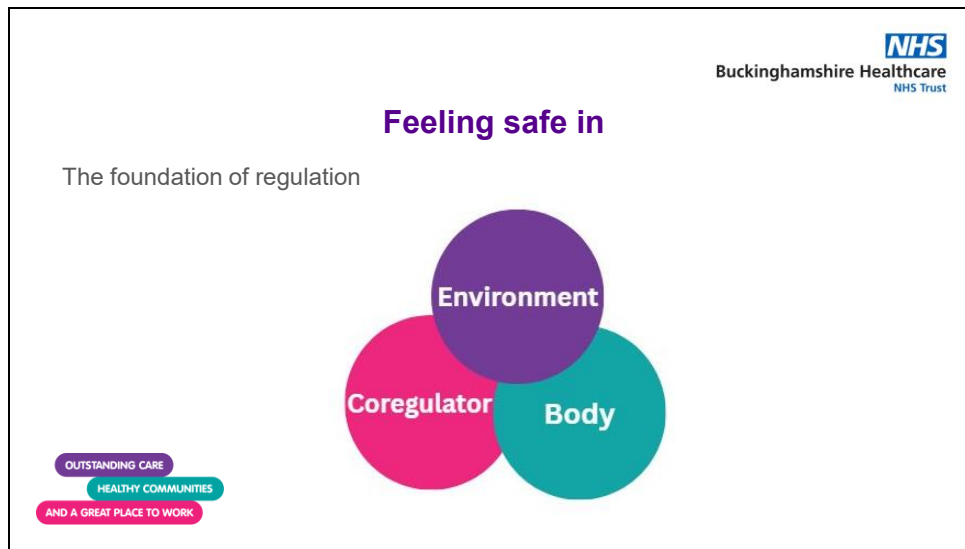
What could dysregulation look like

- 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:

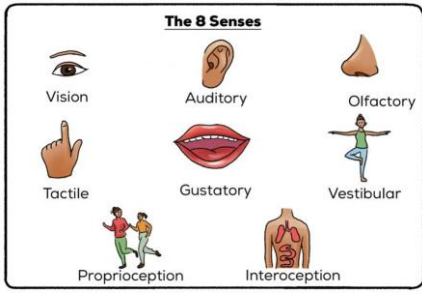
External:

- Touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing

Internal:

- Interoception, proprioception, Vestibular

The 8 Senses



The diagram illustrates the eight human senses, categorized into external and internal. It features eight icons arranged in a grid: an eye for Vision, an ear for Auditory, a nose for Olfactory, a hand pointing for Tactile, a mouth for Gustatory, a person balancing for Vestibular, two people running for Proprioception, and a torso with internal organs for Interoception.

Sense	Category	Icon Description
Vision	External	Eye
Auditory	External	Ear
Olfactory	External	Nose
Tactile	External	Hand pointing
Gustatory	External	Mouth
Vestibular	Internal	Person balancing
Proprioception	Internal	Two people running
Interoception	Internal	Torso with internal organs

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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 around a central brain icon. 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'.

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

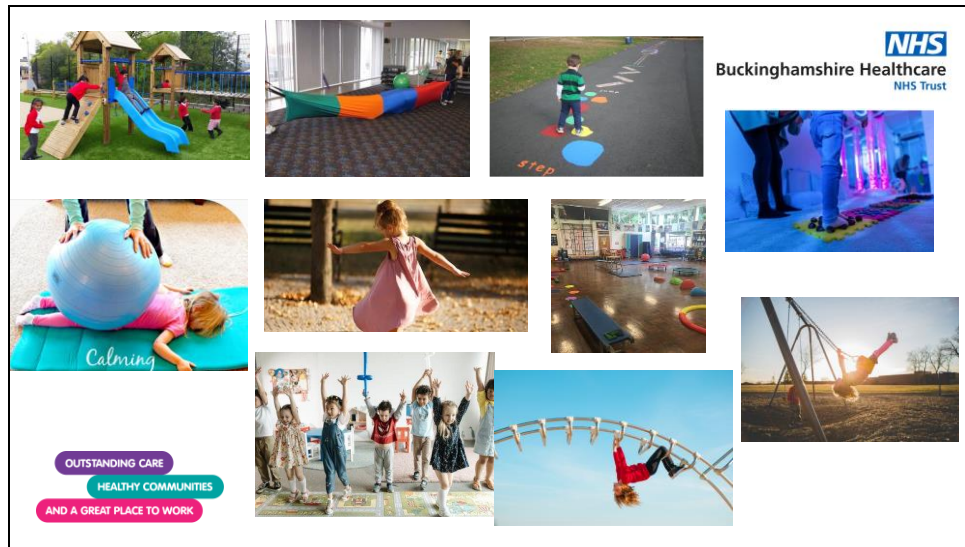
- Sensory strategies e.g. Sensory circuits, calming activities
- Sensory friendly environments
- Accommodations e.g. uniform, ear defenders, dynamic seating options
- Staff have knowledge and understanding
- Co regulation- a child will not always be able to self-regulate

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Slide 9



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
- Advice line
- BHT therapy link

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