Zones of Regulation
A review of the curriculum and strategies for supporting students
Check-In and Group Activity
Check-In Activity

- Complete the check-in activity at the front board.
  - **Green Zone**: Ideal alertness; calm and ready to learn
  - **Blue Zone**: Low alertness; sad, tired, bored, sick
  - **Yellow Zone**: Heightened alertness; stress, frustration, silliness, fear
  - **Red Zone**: Extremely heightened alertness; anger, range, panic, terror, elation
Introductions and Intended Outcomes
Intended Outcomes

By the end of today’s presentation, participants will:

○ Learn about the Zones of Regulation curriculum, including the four colors and how they correspond to different states of alertness, feelings, moods, etc.

○ Learn about how the Zones have been incorporated into programs within MCPS

○ Learn about specific tools, strategies, and activities to support the incorporation of Zones of Regulation into each program
What is Zones of Regulation?

• Zones of Regulation is a curriculum to support self-regulation and emotional control.
  ○ Aims to support students in “consciously regulating their actions, which in turn leads to increased control and problem solving abilities” (Kuypers, 1).
  ○ Relies on a cognitive behavioral approach to support students in identifying their feelings and strategies to support them in coping with feelings in order to remain calm and ready to learn.
What is Zones of Regulation?

- Uses the language of “zones” to help students self-identify their current states of alertness and ability to self-regulate (i.e., green, blue, yellow, and red zones).

- Supports student in identifying triggers and coping strategies, building self-regulation skills, and differentiating behavior based on context.
Self-Regulation and Zones

At its core, Zones is a program that focuses on self-regulation.

- Children who have good self-regulation can regulate their responses to sensory input, emotions, and impulses in order to behave appropriately in a given context.
Self-Regulation and Zones

Self-regulation involves:

● Two components:
  ○ Ability to adjust level of alertness
  ○ Ability to achieve goals by managing behaviors in response to emotions in socially adaptive way

● Three integrated neurological processes:
  ○ Sensory processing
  ○ Executive functioning
  ○ Emotional regulation
Self-Regulation Development

- Development of self-regulation begins in early infancy through behavioral strategies
  - What are some behavioral strategies young children may use to get needs met?
  - How do you think early experiences may shape development of self-regulation?

- In childhood, children develop language-based strategies to support regulation (e.g., expressing themselves verbally to trusted adults)

- As children age, begin to develop metacognitive strategies through internal dialogues and reflection, considering others’ perspectives, recognizing their own triggers, anxiety, impact on environment, etc.
Components of Self-Regulation: Sensory Processing

What does it involve?

- Includes several integrated abilities:
  - Perceive and make sense of external stimuli/sensory information
  - Organize and integrate information to determine response
  - Manage quantity and quality of sensory information

Why does it matter?

- Difficulties in sensory processing and regulation can be related to different issues:
  - Difficulty filtering out external stimuli (e.g., hypersensitivity to sounds, textures, smells, etc.)
  - Requiring additional sensory input to feel “right” (e.g., needing pressure, movement, etc.)
Components of Self-Regulation: Executive Functioning

What does it involve?

- Consciously controlling thoughts and actions
- Similar to a command center for actions and mental operations
- Some areas under this broad umbrella include attention shifting, working memory, planning, and inhibition

Why does it matter?

- Struggles in this area may relate to difficulties:
  - Listening and completing work
  - Engaging in self-talk
  - Considering multiple options
  - Organizing actions and materials
  - Controlling impulses
Components of Self-Regulation: Emotional Regulation

What does it involve?

- Being able to control emotions and emotional reactions
- Integrated process of managing emotional responses:
  - Monitoring
  - Evaluating
  - Regulating intensity
  - Considering context

Why does it matter?

- Difficulties may relate to:
  - Emotional outbursts
  - Prolonged or intense emotional responses
  - Struggle to manage reactions to setbacks, conflicts, and disappointments
The Zones of Regulation Curriculum
What is it?

- Zones of Regulation is a supportive cognitive framework and teaching tool to support student growth and development.

- It is *not* a punitive discipline model or behavior approach.
The Zones

- Four Zones are used to describe internal feelings:
  - Feelings
  - Energy
  - Arousal level

- Paired with visuals: colors and road signs
Blue Zone (Rest/Re-energize)

Low state of alertness
Body and brain moving slowly
May feel
  Sad
  Sick
  Tired
  Bored
Green Zone (Go ahead)

Regulated alertness
Ready to learn and socialize appropriately

May feel
  Calm
  Happy
  Focused
  Content
Yellow Zone (Slow Down)

Heightened alertness
Starting to lose control
May feel
  Stressed
  Frustrated
  Anxious
  Excited
  Silly
  Nervous
  Confused
Red Zone (Stop and Think)

- Extremely heightened awareness
- Very intense feelings
- Out of control
- May feel
  - Anger
  - Rage
  - Explosive behavior
  - Panic or terror
  - Elation
Additional Information About the Zones

- No “bad” zones
- Everyone falls into all of the zones at some point
- Context is important
  - What behavior is expected in each environment?
  - Recess behavior vs. classroom behavior
  - Expected vs. unexpected behavior
- Goals, task demands, and basic needs must be considered
- Feelings may not be in the same zone for all students
  - What is an example of a feeling that may fall into different zones for different students?
- Behavior doesn’t determine Zone, is byproduct of it.
Addressing the Zones

- Staff responses to students vary depending on Zones
- Teach strategies and skills in calm, regulated state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue Zone</th>
<th>Green Zone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Energize student – offer walk, drink of water, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- “Alerting” tools should be used</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reinforce student behavior</td>
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<td>- Praise calm, ready-to-learn state</td>
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Addressing the Zones

Yellow Zone

• Want to intervene here before move into red (consider triggers, environment, time of day, etc.)
• Calming tools should be used
• Need to lower energy level to return to calm, ready-to-learn state
• May be appropriate and expected at unstructured times

Red Zone

• Safety is priority – provide safe location
• Rely on CPI foundations
  • Limit verbal commands, avoid power struggles
  • Validate student’s feelings, empathize, give time/space as possible
• Process later
• Never expected or appropriate
Tools for Self-Regulation

- Ask for a hug
- Take a walk
- Use headphones
- Use fidgets

Sensory Supports

- Deep breathing
- Yoga
- Muscle relaxation
- Music

Calming Strategies

- Size of problem
- Self-talk
- Problem-solving
- Social thinking

Thinking Approaches
Community Circle

Ground Rules:
1. One person speaks at a time (must have talking stick)
2. Be respectful of others
3. No one has to share

The ZONES of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE
Sad
Sick
Tired
Missing

GREEN ZONE
Happy
Feeling okay
Ready to Learn

YELLOW ZONE
Frustrated
Worried
Wrestling
Loss of some control

RED ZONE
Mad/Anxiety
Mean
Terrified
Hitting
Out of control

Topic: How do you feel about returning from break?
Incorporating Zones into the Reflective Process

STUDENT REFLECTION

Name ____________________________ Date ____________________________

My ZONE:  □  □  □  □

My behavior: ______________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Was my behavior expected or unexpected?

Why? ______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Did my behavior have a positive or negative effect on others?

Why? ______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What tools could I have used to get back into the green zone?

1 ____________________________ 2 ____________________________ 3 ____________________________

What choice can I make next time that would be a better option?

____________________________________________________________________
THE ZONES OF REGULATION

**BLUE ZONE**
- Stretch
- Take a walk
- Go to the support room
- Lay down on a pillow
- Drink water

**GREEN ZONE**
- Have a drink
- Read a book
- Eat something you like
- Program the space
- Be a helper

**RED ZONE**
- Take a break
- Deep breaths
- Go on a walk
- Talk to someone
- Use a stress ball
- Fidgets
- Quiet room
- Take a break

**How Big is my Problem?**

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**Ms. Niemeyer**

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How Big is My Problem?

1. Tiny Problem
   - Dropping a pencil
   - Not getting called on by the teacher

2. Little Problem
   - Clip stays in green zone
   - Getting a toy or book taken away from you
   - Missing a lesson at school

3. Medium Problem
   - Clip moves to yellow zone
   - Frustrating homework
   - Feeling stressed out about something
   - Arguing with a friend
   - Not feeling well (blue zone)

4. Gigantic Problem
   - Clip moves to red zone
   - Getting into a fight with someone
   - Getting lost

5. Emergency
   - Someone is very badly injured
   - Earthquake
   - Tornado
ROLL SOME BRAIN BREAKS

1. Go to the bathroom
2. Go for a walk
3. Stretch
4. Walk around
5. Drink water
6. Do a puzzle
7. Play a game
8. Take a break
9. Do a yoga stretch
10. Do a dance routine
Challenges within the classroom setting

- All students begin the year at varied levels of awareness
- For a fully developed understanding, Zones must be implemented across all areas and settings
Benefits of Using Zones

- Common language amongst staff and students
- Students gain awareness of themselves and others
- Students are given concrete visuals and examples for behavior
- Students develop a variety of coping skills and strategies
- Multiple opportunities to practice
Discussion and Questions
Zones of Regulation References


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