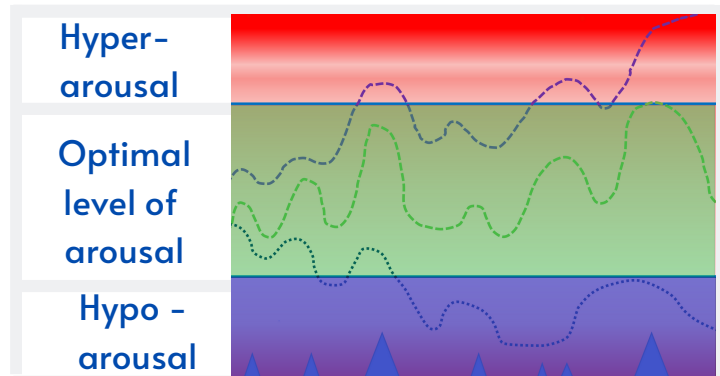


Emotional Regulation and Sensory Breaks

Emotional regulation is the ability to adjust our internal state to cope with the external demands and maintain an optimal level of arousal

Key skills for emotional regulation

- Being able to notice emotions and feelings
- Being able to label emotions / feelings
- Having internal strategies to calm or stimulate
- Being able to utilise external sources of support
- Being able to ask for support



Quick grab ideas

Check in During registrations ask pupils to rate how they are feeling: red = hyper, green = fine, blue = sluggish - if this is recorded in patterns may emerge to help you offer individual support

Build in sensory breaks at key points across the school day . For example it's helpful to have a calming activity or circle time after lunch break to resolve any upsets and conflicts

Practice simple emotional regulation activities such as:

- Squeezing from your shoulder to your hand and then pump the hands together three times
- Give yourself a hug
- Practice slow deep breathing, into the tummy with a focus on the breath out
- Tracing the outline of the hand with a focus on breathing as you go round the fingers
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness activities - listen to the sounds around us, notice five things in the room, imagine you are sitting by a stream with leaves floating by - put any worries onto the leaves
- Spend time on an engrossing activity - playing games, creative work, singing, parachute games

Circle time both for primary and secondary is a valuable way to build in a set time in the day / week to discuss any concerns and to develop emotional literacy, empathy, listening and negotiation skills

Get pupils to keep a diary - which can include text, drawings, mood charts, top tips

Prepare for transitions - visual timetable, calming activity before movement

Emotional literacy - word of the week, use literature or film to discuss emotions.

Encourage debate - choose any topic - 'is social media harmful?', 'is it good to feel angry?' and facilitate conversations between peers, enable emotional literacy and enabling them to see others have similar concerns thus reducing a feeling of being on their own with their concerns.

Teach about the Hand Model of the Brain - Dan Siegel