



Recognising and Reducing Stressors

An NCSE Relate Module: A Regulation First Approach to
Reframing Behaviour and Supporting Student Engagement
and Participation



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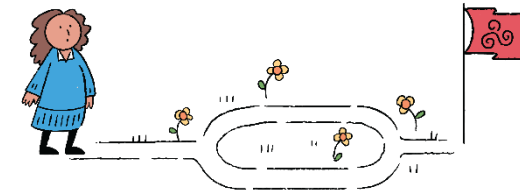
Invitation to Engage



Move/fidget as you
need to stay
engaged



Use a preferred learning
tool to interact with the
learning



Participate in a way
you are comfortable
with



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Invitation to Engage

Being mindful to be respectful of other people's learning space



Ensure any mobiles
are on silent



Only using devices for
notes or following
slides



Respectful
Interactions



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Visual Schedule



NCSE
Relate

Stages of Regulation



Stages of
Regulation



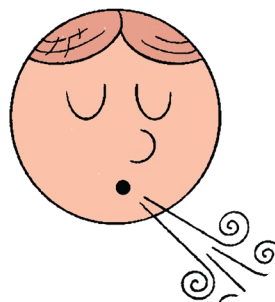
Reframing
Behaviour

STRESSOR TOOL

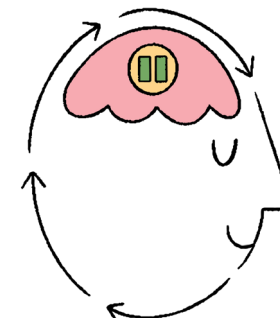
Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of self-regulation. Start with the student's strengths and abilities. Think about the stressors that you imagine through your own experiences or that you hear about from others. Then, consider ways to help the student manage the stressors. When you have recognized the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration for the student's strengths and abilities. Have you made any other changes?

Student Name:	Student's Strengths and Abilities:	Date:
RECOGNISING STRESSORS	REDUCING STRESSORS	
RECOGNISING STRESSORS	REDUCING STRESSORS	

Recognising
and reducing
Stressors



Stressors
Tool

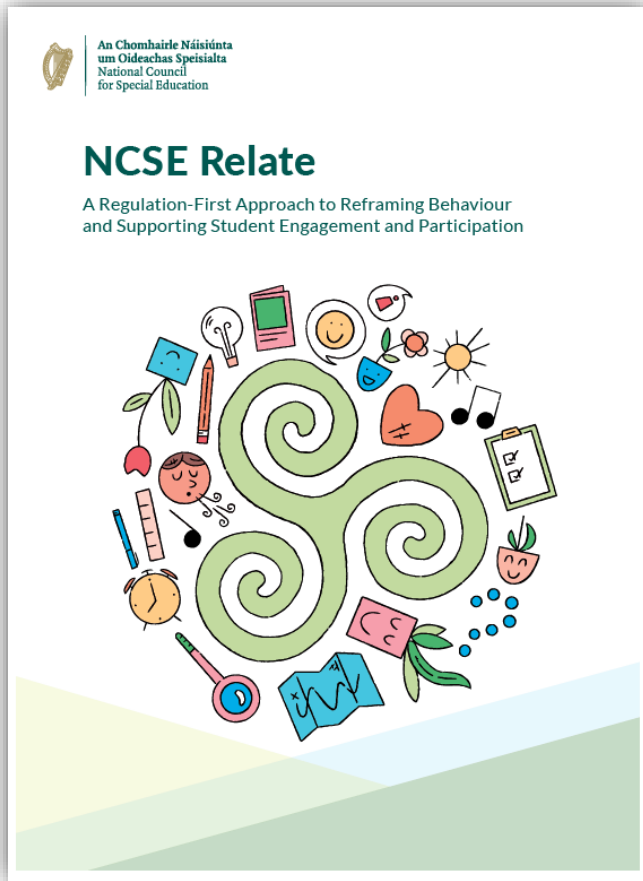


Reflection



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What is NCSE Relate?



<https://ncse.ie/relate>



QR Code for NCSE
Relate Resource
Padlet

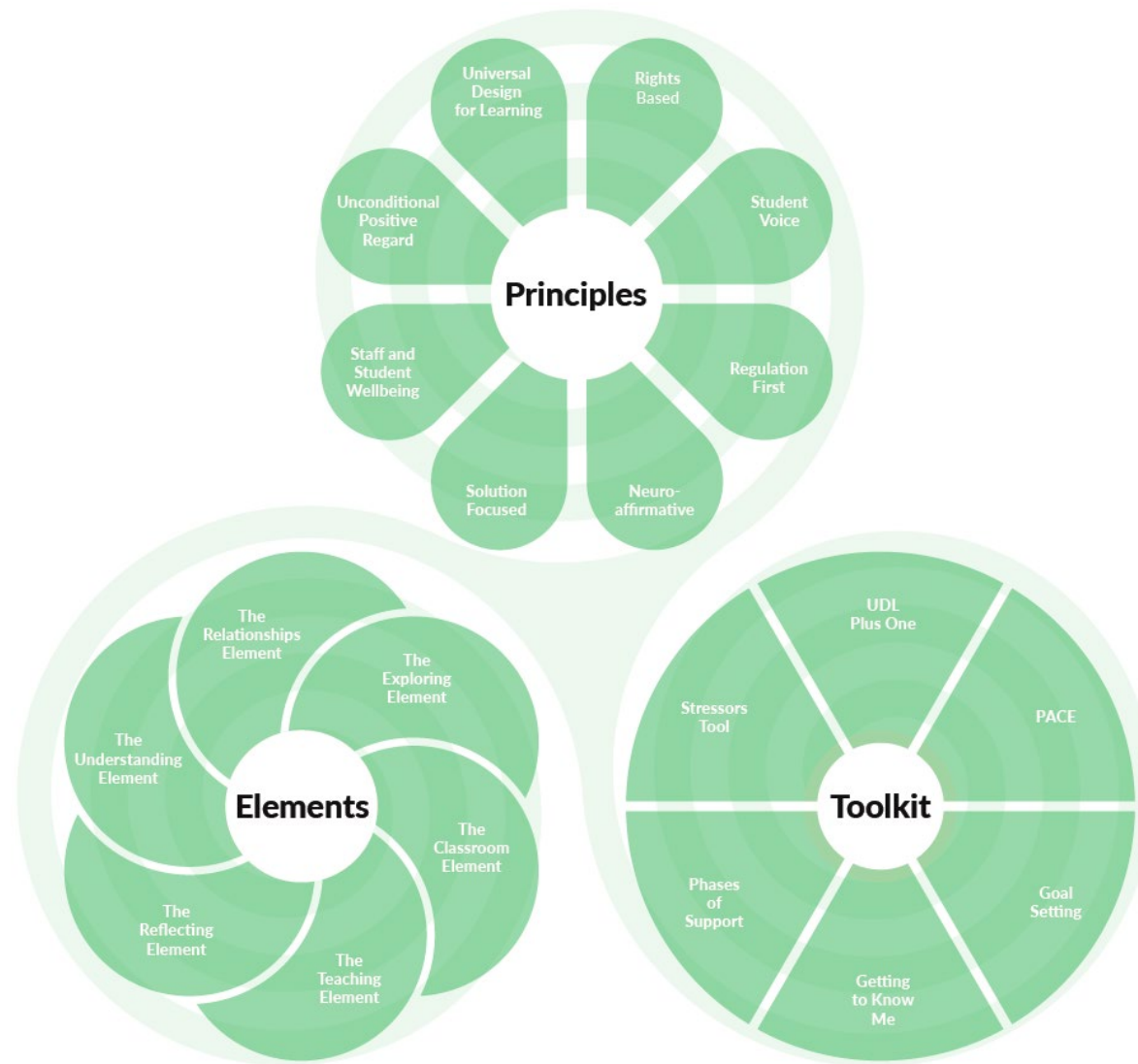


QR code for NCSE
Relate Spotify
Playlist



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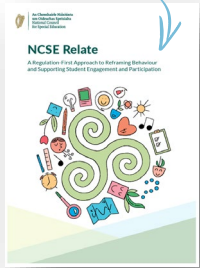
NCSE Relate Principles, Elements and Toolkit



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A Shift in Terminology

Shifting from:	Moving towards:
Seeing behaviour as something to manage	Recognising behaviour as communication and working to address unmet needs
Hypothesising functions of behaviour	Recognising stressors and understanding the influence of the environment
Relying on reinforcement through rewards	Finding intrinsic motivation by reducing barriers
Changing behaviours	Changing the environment to increase wellbeing
Collecting data on 'what is happening' with factors such as intensity and duration	Collecting data on 'why it is happening', examining stressors and occurrences in the day
Finding the problem	Leading with strengths and remaining solution focused
Focusing on when behaviours happen	Focusing on when they don't happen and identifying what is successful at that time
Compliance	Connection
Doing things 'to' or 'for' students	Doing things 'with' students
Starting with individual interventions	Making change at a universal level that is consistent and manageable in the long term



NCSE Relate Principles



Rights Based



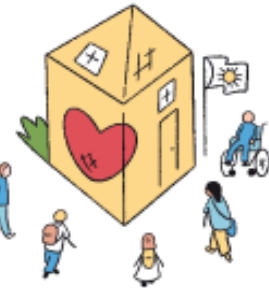
Student Voice



Regulation First



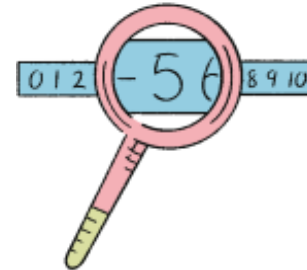
Neuro-affirmative



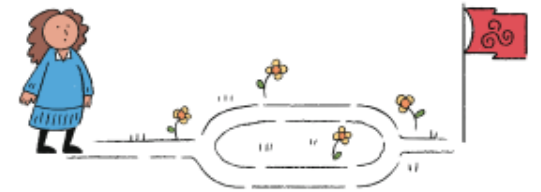
Staff and Student Wellbeing



Unconditional Positive Regard



Solution Focused



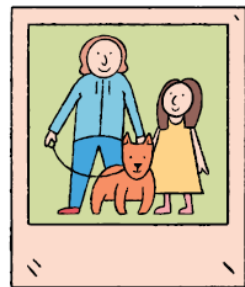
Universal Design for Learning

a vision for inclusive and relational approaches...



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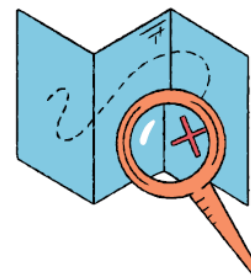
Six Elements to Support Student Participation and Engagement



The
Understanding
Element



The
Relationships
Element



The
Exploring
Element



The
Classroom
Element



The
Teaching
Element



The
Reflecting
Element



Relate Toolkit

Phases of Support Template

What the student may be experiencing:		
Preventing	Supporting	Restoring

What the adult is doing:		
Preventing	Supporting	Restoring

Phases of Support



PACE

Getting To Know Me

Things that I like to do in school/around school:	What are three times I like for tea?
My favourite part of the school day is:	What is class changeover like for me?
My favourite subjects are:	Who are the important people in my life?
What makes learning hard for me?	Something I would like you to know about me:
I prefer to show my learning by:	

Getting to know me

STRESSOR TOOL

Reimagining and reducing stressors is an important part of relearning and recovery. Start with the student's strengths and interests. Track out the potential stressors that you recognize through your own observations as well as how harmful they are to the student that prevent learning or other supporting goals. When you have recognized the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration to the student's strengths and interests. Some will be outside of your control.

Student Name:	Student's strengths and interests	Date:
RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS
RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS

Stressors Tool



Solution Focused

Solution Focused Practice is a change focused approach that helps people to find new, forward-looking solutions to the problems that are currently causing them problems. (Mead & Kavanagh, 2000)



Exploring best hopes. Finding out what is wanted and what are the best hopes in terms of differences or outcomes.



Exploring the 'preferred future'. Capturing the details of what we want to see happening.



Identifying instances of existing success and strengths and exceptions to the 'problem'. Finding moments where the preferred future may already be happening so that we can build on what is already working.



Identifying small signs of change as evidence of future progress.



Engaging in reflective practice.

Goal Setting Tool

A Plus One Approach

Write any change you are going to make towards your vision. Use this tool to record your steps towards your vision, one small step, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.

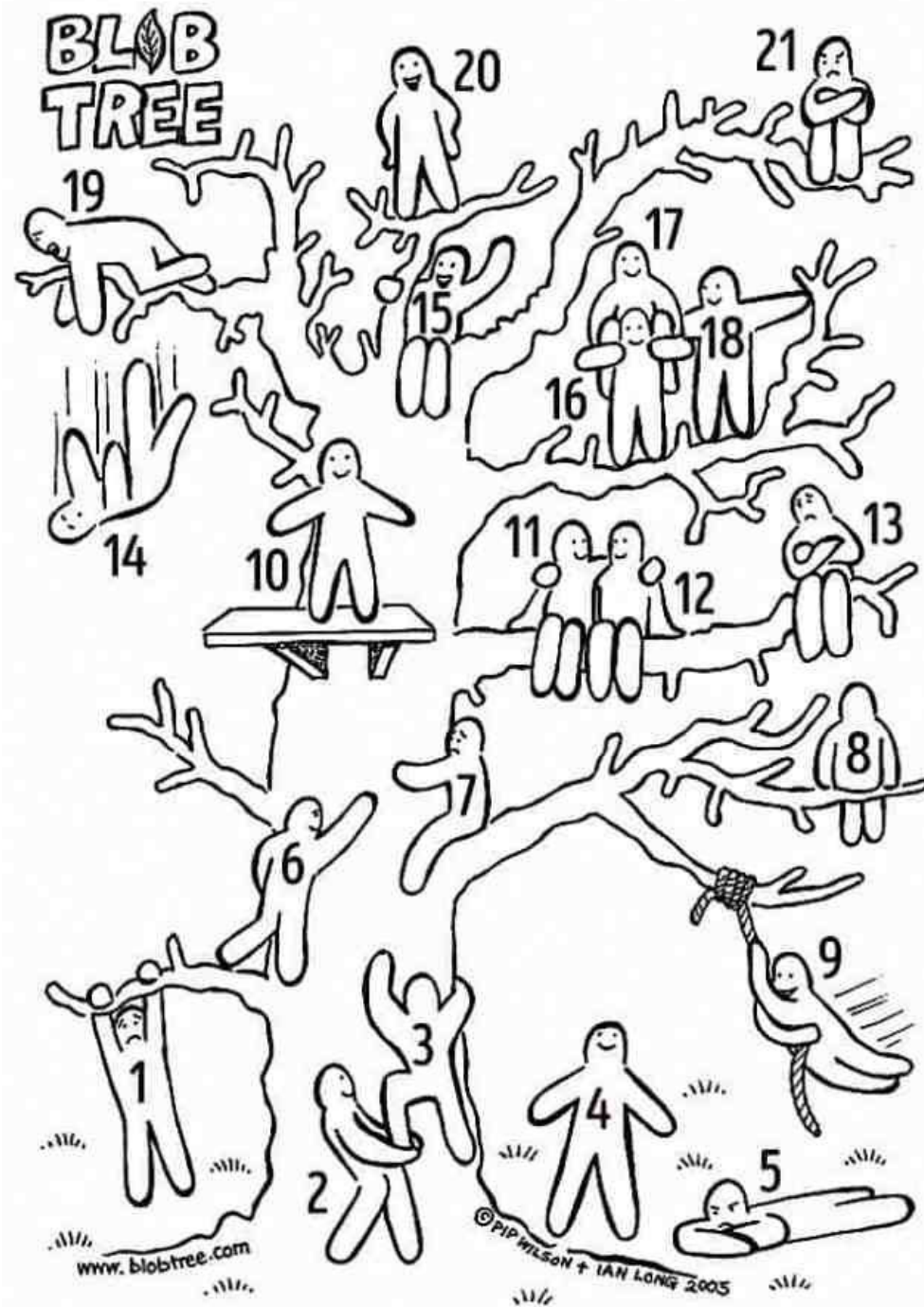
Goal	What I am currently doing	My Plus One(s) weekly/monthly	Next weekly/monthly/termly goal
1. To include all students when reading texts	All students get their own copy of the text and get notes about it	All students get their own copy of the text and get notes about it	All students get their own copy of the text and get notes about it

UDL Plus One



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A Regulation Check-in



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Visual Schedule



NCSE
Relate



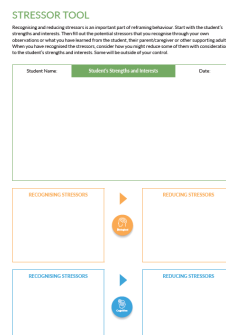
Stages of Regulation



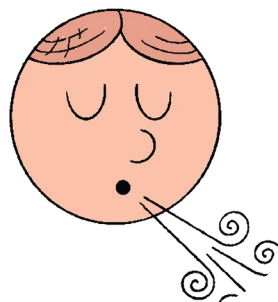
Stages of
Regulation



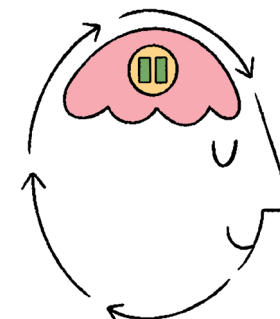
Reframing
Behaviour



Recognising
and reducing
Stressors



Stressors
Tool



Reflection



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What is Self-regulation?

Self-regulation is a complex higher level executive functioning skill.

It is the ability to manage your own energy levels, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that support you to establish and maintain good relationships, engage in learning and maintain wellbeing.

(Shanker 2010)

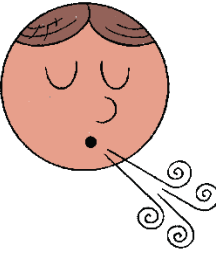
Matching your energy level to the environment and task

Focusing on the task at hand

Waiting for and taking turns

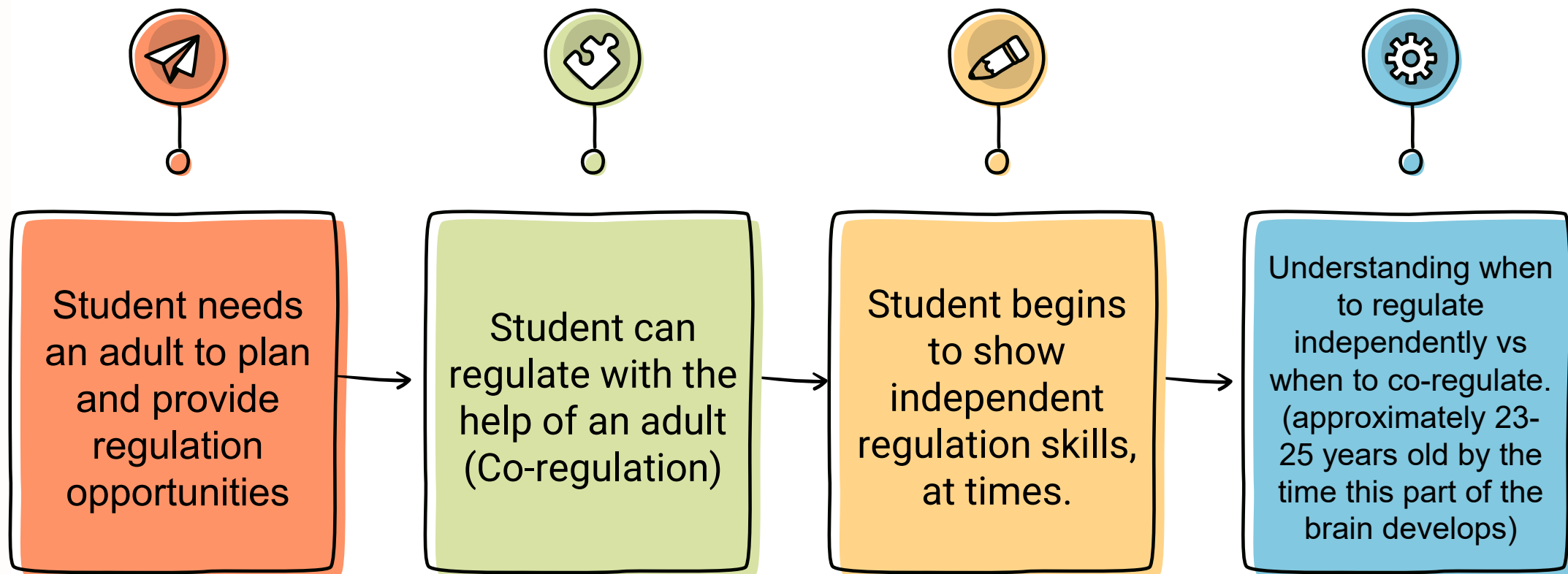
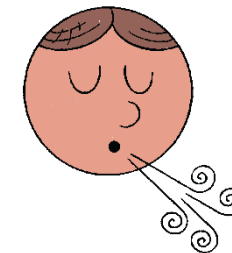
Being able to manage emotions in social situations

Maintaining a sense of calm



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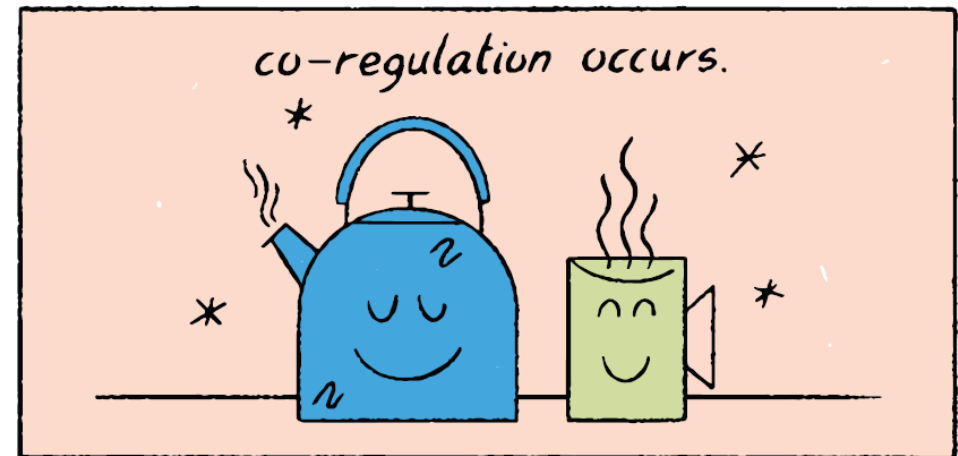
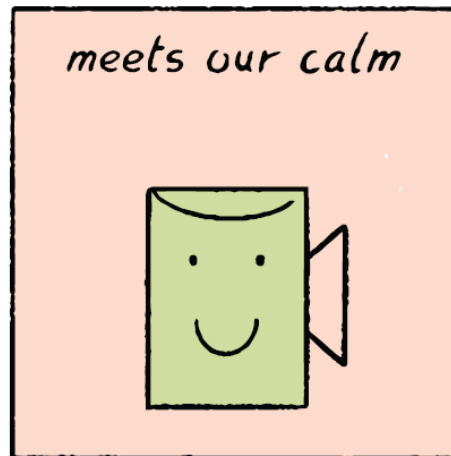
Stages of Regulation



Co-regulation



You, the adults in the room are the co-regulators, you are the most valuable environmental and regulatory tool



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Being a Co-regulator



Foster a culture
of positive and
respectful
relationships

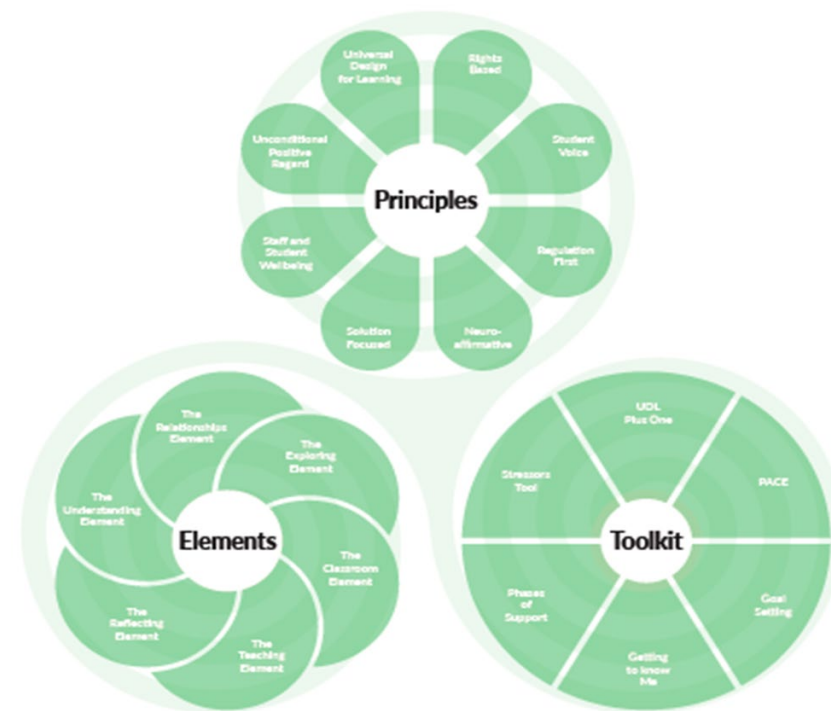
Predictable and
consistent

Planning to
support students'
regulation –The
Stressors Tool

Mindful of your
own regulation

Model regulation
strategies

Give space and
time when
needed



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Visual Schedule



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Stages of Regulation



Stages of
Regulation



Reframing
Behaviour

STRESSOR TOOL

Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of self-regulation. Start with the student's strengths and abilities. Think about the student's interests that you can use to help you and the student to deal with stressors in the classroom. Then, you can use the tool to help the student to deal with stressors in the classroom. When you have recognized the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration for the student's strengths and interests. You can use the tool to help the student to deal with stressors in the classroom.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

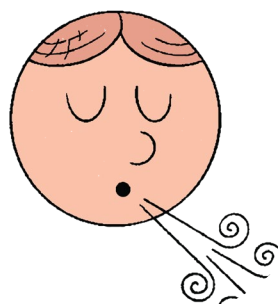
RECOGNISING STRESSORS

REDUCING STRESSORS

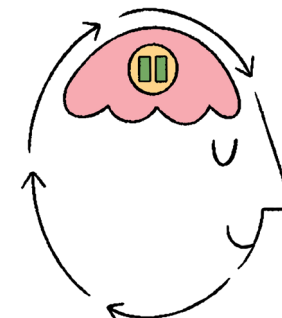
RECOGNISING STRESSORS

REDUCING STRESSORS

Recognising
and reducing
Stressors



Stressors
Tool



Reflection



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Exploring Stressors

“our ability to regulate
can be impacted by the
amount of stress that we
are tolerating ”

Stuart Shanker 2012



Extra Loads



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Recognising Stressors

WHY this student?

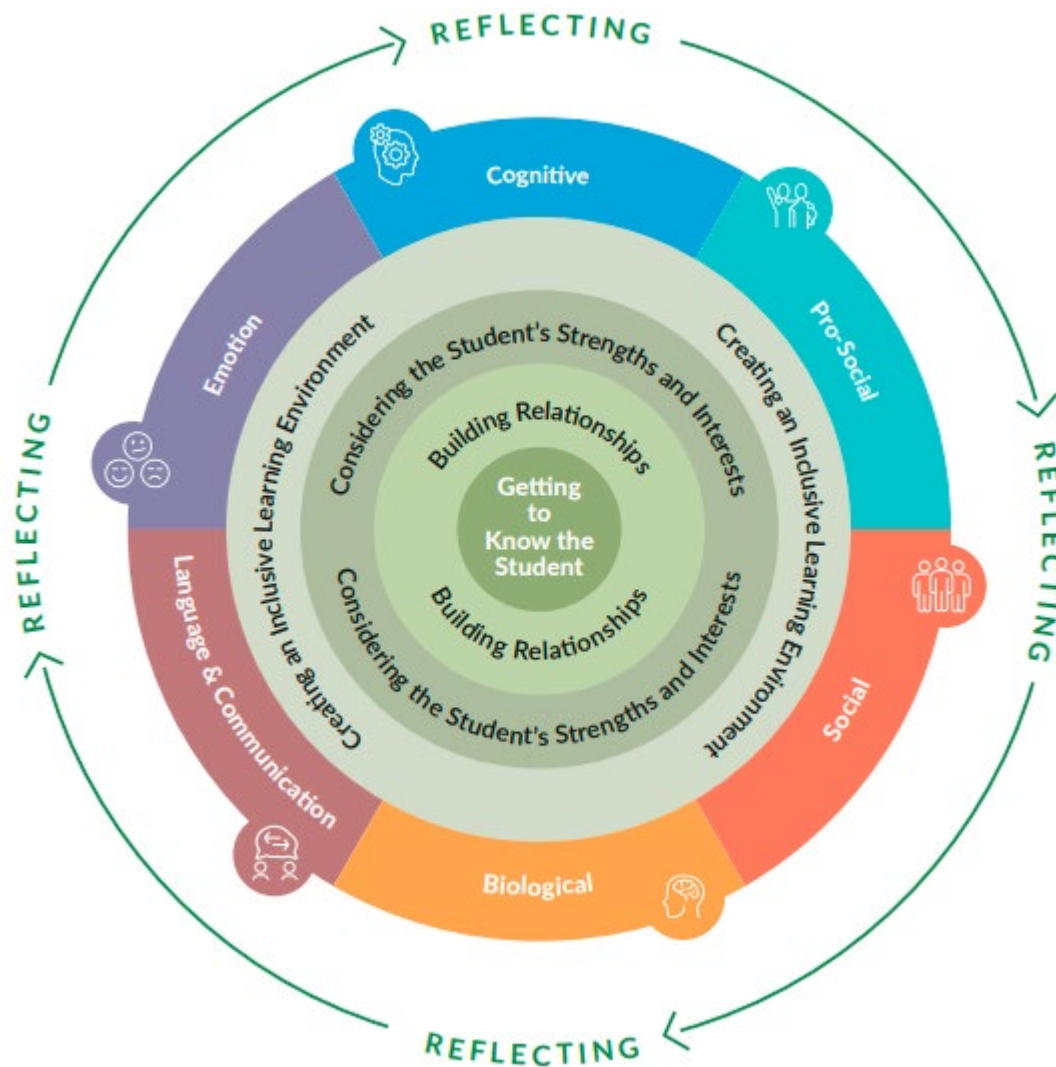


WHY now?



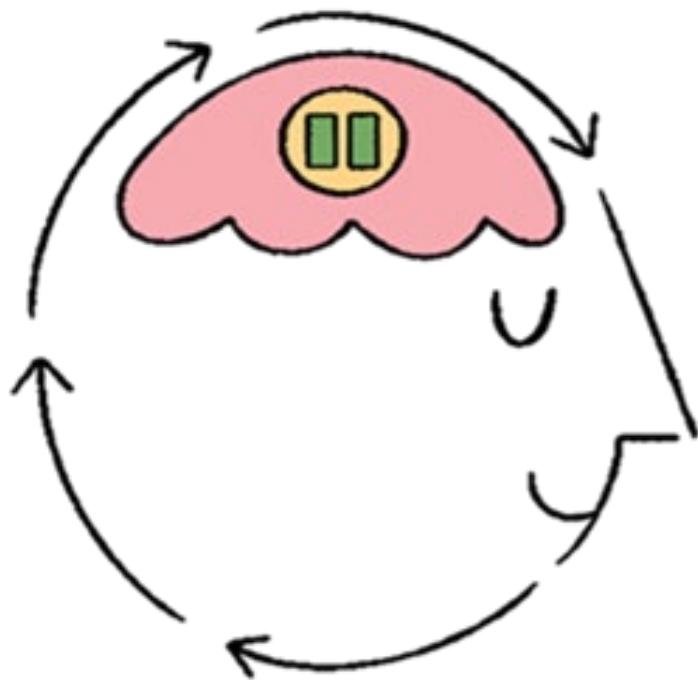
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NCSE Relate Model of Support



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NCSE Relate Model of Support



- What approaches, strategies, resources or practices are in place already in your school to
- Get to know your students
- Build relationships
- Consider student strengths and interests
- Create inclusive learning environments



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Visual Schedule



NCSE
Relate

Stages of Regulation



Reframing
Behaviour



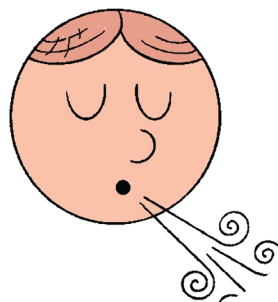
STRESSOR TOOL

Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of self-regulation. Start with the student's strengths and abilities. Identify the stressors that are most challenging for the student and work on them first. When you have managed the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration for the student's strengths and abilities. Have you made any progress yet?

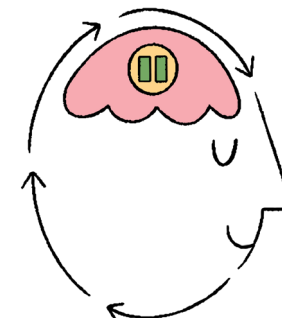
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RECOGNISING STRESSORS	REDUCING STRESSORS

Recognising
and reducing
Stressors



Stressors
Tool



Reflection



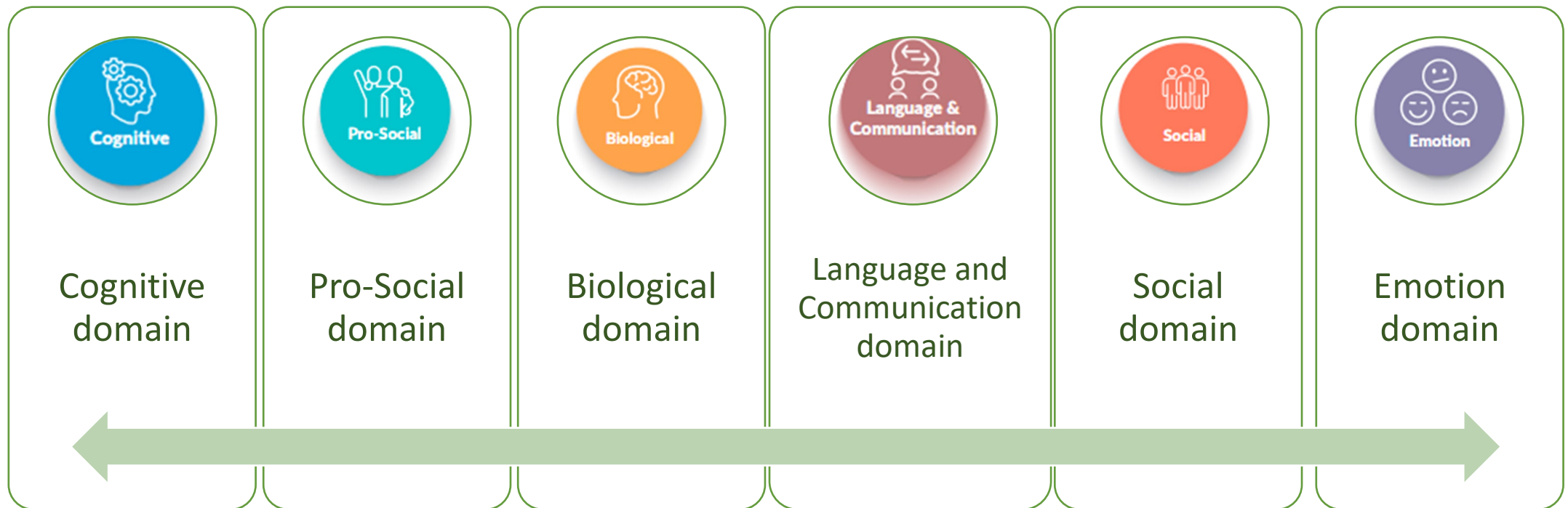
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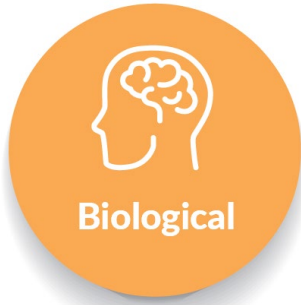
NCSE Relate Model of Support



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NCSE Relate Model of Support and the Stressors Domains





The **Biological domain** comprises of the basic physiological needs we need to successfully function in life such as physical health, sleep, nutrition, exercise including the role that the nervous system plays in regulating energy levels.

Medical needs, being unwell or in pain

Hunger or thirst

Poor sleep

Temperature, bright lights, loud spaces

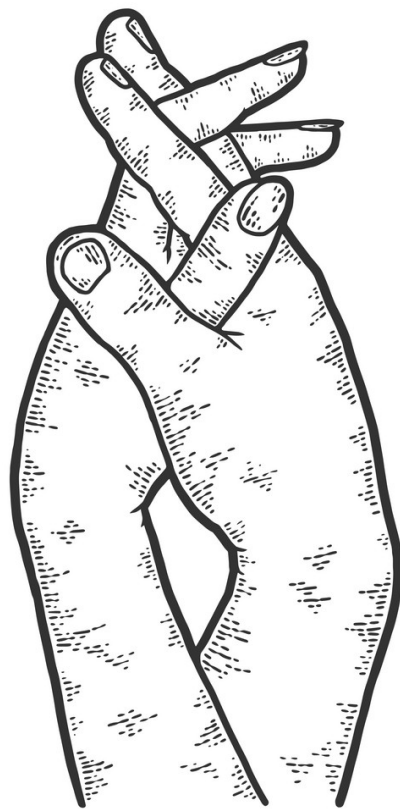
Limited exercise and movement

Sensory Overwhelm



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Coordination Activity



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The **Social domain** recognises stressors that impact the student in relation to social engagement.

Putting on a social face when your 'social battery' feels low

Not having anyone to play with/chat with at break times

One to one interactions that feel intense

Not being understood by friends or classmates

Expectation to fit into different cultural social norms

Working within a group, participating in circle time or public speaking



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The **Pro-social domain** includes the energy and emotions we take on from others. This includes empathy, relating to others, social approval and ‘fitting in’.

Conflict or changes
in the family

Digital technology
and social media

World events

Bullying

Academic pressure

Socio-economic
stressors



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In the **Emotion domain**, a regulated student can monitor, cope with and adapt their responses to any strong emotion, such as intense feelings of happiness, curiosity, excitement, frustration, fear or worry.

An intense surprise, over-excitement, anticipation during build up to events

Feeling or being responsible for other people

Not feeling safe, not feeling that they belong, falling out with peers

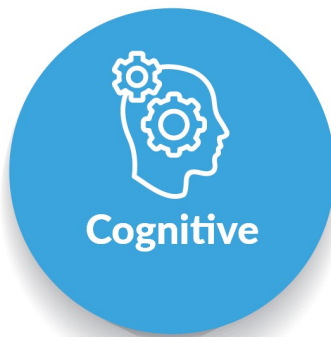
A grief/loss of a significant person or relationship

Changes in family circumstances

Experiencing disappointments or frustrations



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The **Cognitive domain** focuses on the processes of memory, attention, the acquisition and retention of information and problem solving

Slower processing in
a speedy world

Too much inferring no
clearly stated
expectations

Information presented
too quickly or slowly

Making decisions

Working memory

Constant new
learning without
connection to prior
learning



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The Language and Communication domain recognises that students with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can have difficulties in understanding what others say to them and may have expressive language difficulties

Difficulties understanding curriculum and a wide variety of texts

Using increasingly complex language (oral and written) to engage with learning

Having the language skills to seek clarification or help

Using language to problem solve and resolve conflicts

Unable to name the emotion and express how they are feeling

Difficulties explaining their actions clearly



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Hugo is a 9 year old boy, he is in primary school and he is autistic. Hugo can communicate verbally using a variety of sentences. He loves to talk about Star Wars and to share facts with his friends. Hugo benefits from visuals to support his comprehension of classroom instructions and to help him to complete his work. However, he generally does not ask for his teacher's help when he is struggling to understand what to do.



Hugo's teacher reports that he has strengths in science and maths. During free time on Fridays, he enjoys engaging in construction activities by himself.

Hugo has two friends that he interacts and plays with on the playground. He can find the playground overwhelming and he does not like loud noises. Hugo can find it difficult if his two friends are absent from school and tends to walk the periphery of the playground alone. Hugo can be sensitive to some textures and touch and can become upset if children bump into him on the yard. He avoids certain activities in the classroom and sometimes opts out of participating in PE. His teacher has noticed that he has difficulty with tasks like tying his shoelaces and throwing and catching a ball.

Hugo enjoys predictability in his daily routine and can become stressed if this changes. His teacher has also noticed that he can become tense or anxious when he is overwhelmed. At these times, he reports that he finds it hard to express himself or understand what his teacher is saying.



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Meet Hugo



Hugo is a 9 year old boy with autism, loves stars wars and sharing with his friends

Loves playing on the yard with his 2 friends only – but does not like loud noises and gets overwhelmed during group activities , especially if people get too close as he does not like certain textures and touch

Hugo finds construction activities regulating and fuel his love for science and maths



Hugo enjoys predictability and routine of school, can get distressed with changes

Loves to communicate with his teacher with on task , visuals help support his comprehension of school day. He can be slow to use these and ask for help

Hugo avoids certain tasks, like tying his shoes and can does not engage in activities with a lot of new learning

Hugo tires easily due to poor sleep pattern and can become overwhelmed at lunch time due to smells from hot lunches



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Stressors Tool

STRESSOR TOOL

Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of reframing behaviour. Start with the student's strengths and interests. Then fill out the potential stressors that you recognise through your own observations or what you have learned from the student, their parent/caregiver or other supporting adults. When you have recognised the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration to the student's strengths and interests. Some will be outside of your control.

Student Name:

Student's Strengths and Interests

Date:

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

REDUCING STRESSORS



RECOGNISING STRESSORS

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RECOGNISING STRESSORS

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RECOGNISING STRESSORS

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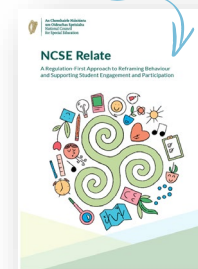
RECOGNISING STRESSORS

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Student Name:

Hugo

Student's Strengths and Interests

Date:

Star Wars; Loves sharing facts with friends; Strengths in Science and Maths; Doing construction activities

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Extreme weather

Loud noises in playground

Textures and touch



REDUCING STRESSORS

Social story , Sensory room in event of thunderstorm;

Headphones for playground;
OT programme
Sensory audit

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Information overload
Learning something new

Difficulty remembering sequence of an activity (e.g. shoelaces)



REDUCING STRESSORS

Visual schedule;
Preparation for new activity;

Task analysis and checklist for tying shoes

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Fear of trying something new

Can become tense and anxious if overwhelmed



REDUCING STRESSORS

Key adult;
PACE approach;

Incredible 5 point scale;
Calm down corner

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Playing with other students on yard when friends absent

Avoids group work

Avoids PE



REDUCING STRESSORS

Buddy system: 2 familiar friends + 1 new friend;

SET: Star wars board game;

SET: Ball games in small group

RECOGNISING STRESSORS



REDUCING STRESSORS

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Does not ask for teacher's help

Difficulty with expressive and receptive language



REDUCING STRESSORS

Clear instructions for each task using various modes: visual, video modelling, role play;
Clear concise language from staff with visual;
Processing time

Visual Schedule



NCSE
Relate

Stages of Regulation



Stages of
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Reframing
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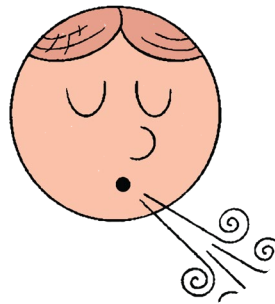
STRESSOR TOOL

Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of self-regulation. Start with the student's strengths and abilities. Think about the student's interests that you recognise through your own observations or that the student has shared with you. Then, consider signs of other supporting skills. When you have recognised the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration for the student's strengths and interests. Have you made a plan yet?

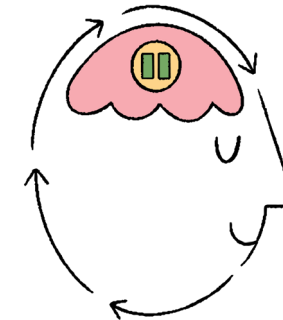
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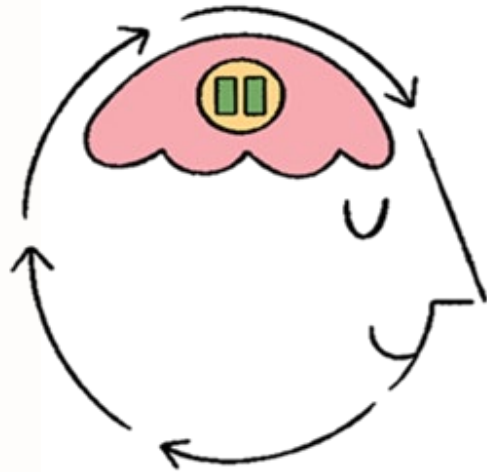


Reflection



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for Special Education

NCSE Relate Model of Support- Reflection

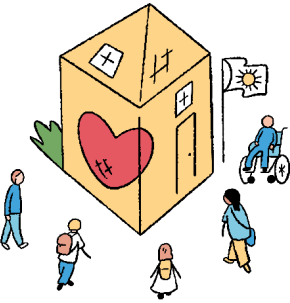


- We cannot change a student's lived experience
- We can shape what happens inside the school day
- Reflection helps us see stressors through a solution focused lens
- Reflection helps us choose responses that counter stress, not add to it



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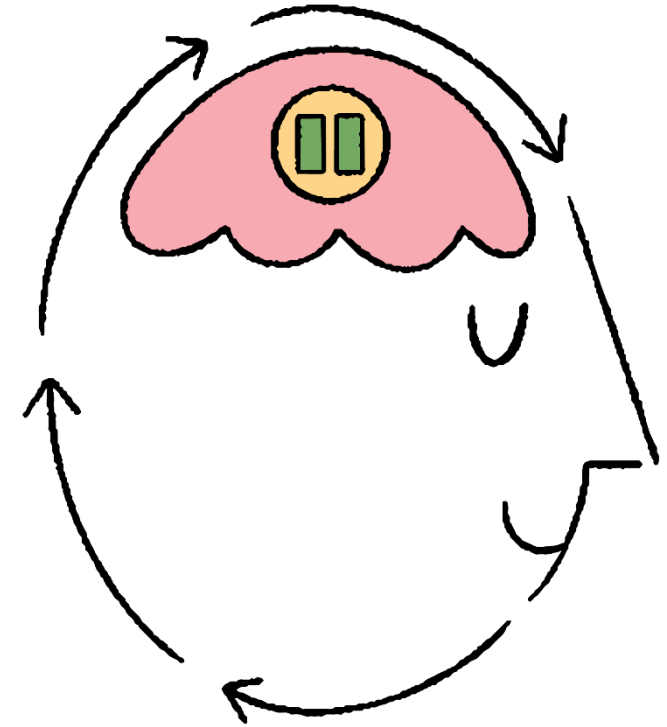
Pause and Process Your Power



Pause: Step back and reframe: “This may be coming from experiences I cannot fix”

Process: Ask yourself: “What can I influence right now?”

Position: Use your power to create safety, predictability and calm.

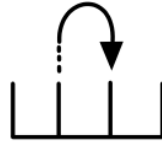


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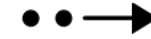
Take a Moment...



Now



Next

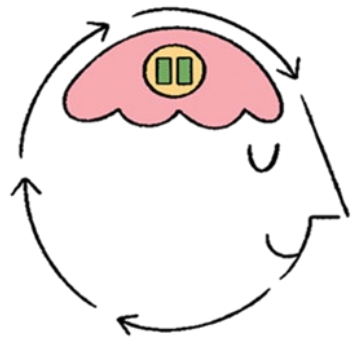


Then

What am I
powerless to
change in
terms of my
students?

What is within
my power ?

How can I put
that into
practice?



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How to continue your Relate journey?

We provide whole school seminars to enhance understanding .

In person and virtual teacher professional learning seminar

A toolkit with useable, practical resources.

QR code to go here



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