



Nervous System Symptoms of Regulation and Dys-Regulation In the Classroom

States of Arousal	Sensations	Behaviors
Dys-Regulated Nervous System Hyper-Arousal Energy goes to our extremities, our head/face, arms/hands, and legs/feet, as we prepare to "take on" a perceived threat.	The following body states or sensations: Increased heart rate Sweaty palms Highly Irritable Overwhelmed or overwhelming others Anxiety Defensive or Aggressive Hyper-alertness - hears/sees everything Hyper-vigilance - seems ready to pounce	The following on-going excessive behaviors: Getting in others' space Moving from thing to thing Spinning, Jumping, Pounding Making noises/sounds Calling out Jumping from thought to thought Biting nails or shirt Chewing or Tapping pencil
Regulated Nervous System Within our Window of Tolerance	Feeling "grounded" Able to recognize physiological sensations Able to notice breath	Displaying wide range of emotional expression Ability to initiate and inhibit Able to focus and shift focus Thinking logically and clearly Communication effectively Holding up body without great effort Able to change pace of movements Demonstrating self-regulation
Dys-Regulated Nervous System Hypo-Arousal Energy goes inward as we prepare to "shut down" to protect ourselves from a perceived threat.	Seems numb, unable to feel body Shuts down Lethargic Excessively tired Non-expressive Lack of motivation or initiative	Withdrawn or Won't participate Says "I can't" or "It's too hard" Easily gives up Whining Unresponsive to others Can't make choices Overly compliant Covers face or head or Head on desk Slumped forward or Collapsed body Arms or legs pulled into self



Synergetic Play Therapy™ Regulation Activities for School

Listed below are just some examples of activities that can be used to help regulate a dys-regulated nervous system. It is wise to do these activities pro-actively, as well as in moments of dys-regulation.

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| ☐ Put your hand in front of your mouth, on your chest or on your belly and "find your breathe" | ☐ Use Braindrops Language or other ways to talk about states of arousal | ☐ Rub gently or vigorously on your skin or clothing |
| ☐ Belly breathing, or other breathing | ☐ Describe what is happening in your body out loud--- "My shoulders are tight", "My legs feel heavy", etc... | ☐ Get a drink of water |
| ☐ Interlace your fingers and put your hands behind your neck with your elbows out to the sides | ☐ Use a learning tool | ☐ Put cold or hot water/wash cloth on face |
| ☐ Sit in a chair and push up with your arms as if trying to get out of the chair, keep some resistance or do Chair yoga | ☐ Balance on one foot, then the other | ☐ Eat (particularly something crunchy) |
| ☐ Deep pressure on arms and legs. Squeeze your muscles | ☐ Carry heavy things or push heavy things around | ☐ Mindful listening, or other mindfulness activity |
| ☐ Sway back and forth | ☐ Do isometrics, wall pushups or push hands together | ☐ Movement and/or Brain break |
| ☐ Use duck-walker, saucer twist or a balance board | ☐ Get a book, iPad, or computer | ☐ March or sing during transitions |
| ☐ Talk a walk | ☐ Use In Focus Activity | ☐ Focus on one sense during transitions |
| ☐ Dim the lights if in hyper-arousal | ☐ Run, jump, spin, dance with pauses to take deep breaths | ☐ Go to cozy corner, or find a pillow or soft chair. |
| ☐ Play Mozart music in the background during challenging times of the day if in hyper-arousal | ☐ Bounce on a yoga ball | ☐ Wrap up in a blanket, or use a weighted blanket or vest. |
| | ☐ Dance, or other rhythmic movement | ☐ Use GoNoodle |
| | ☐ Do Brain Gym: PACE, cross crawls, hook ups | ☐ Turn on the lights if in hypo-arousal |
| | ☐ Use alternate seating or standing desk | ☐ Play Hard Rock/Fast/Bass music if in hypo-arousal |