

USD#363

Trauma Guidebook

A Resource for Teachers



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The pure definition of trauma states that it is caused by a deeply disturbing or distressing event. Our understanding is that trauma severely affects the neurological development of the brain when it happens to a child. Therefore, trauma creates a block in the development of social and cognitive skills. This impacts our students' abilities to grow and their abilities to utilize their cognitive skills. Trauma can be classified into three categories: Abuse, Neglect, and Household Dysfunction. Each of those categories has multiple facets that will have an impact on a student's physical and emotional growth.

Trauma in schools is a manifestation of students not being able to regulate their emotions due to the effect trauma has had on the brain. Trauma shows itself in many ways in the students:

- sudden outbursts for no reason,
- students not sitting still, or
- when asked/challenged to do something they fight back verbally and sometimes physically, or
- a total shut down, both physically and verbally.

The hidden impact of trauma can be seen when students shut down. When this occurs, they are seen as lazy or uninterested, but in reality they are using their skills learned from surviving trauma.

We have to recognize the trigger(s) that can prompt their reaction and teach them the skills to regulate those emotions so they can maximize their learning time and potential.

Trauma directly impacts how students learn and react to adverse situations. Being informed on what can cause or trigger negative student reactions can help us guide students toward coping with their past experiences and building pathways toward success. As educators, we must move past mere punishment of behaviors and focus on treating the whole student. Using research-based strategies to help students cope with trauma will build empathetic connections between adults and students, and it will also empower students to make positive choices to work toward personal improvement and improve their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

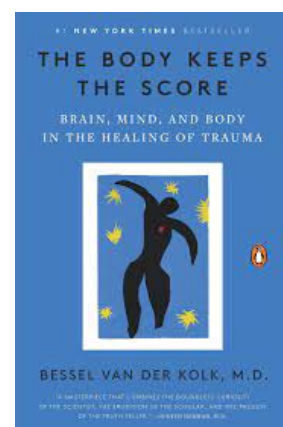
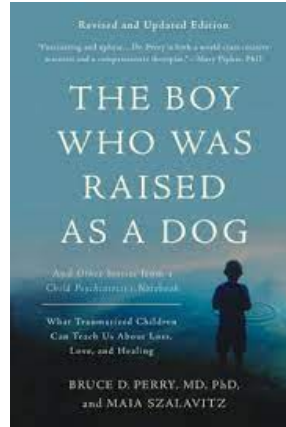
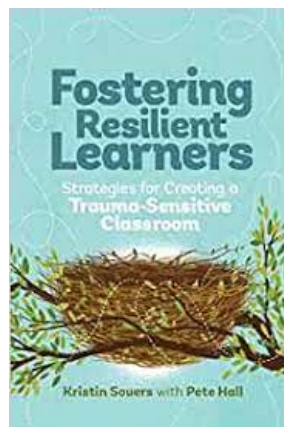
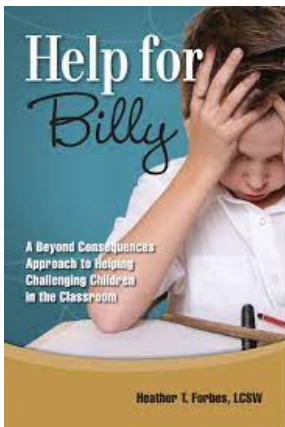


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1. Self Care

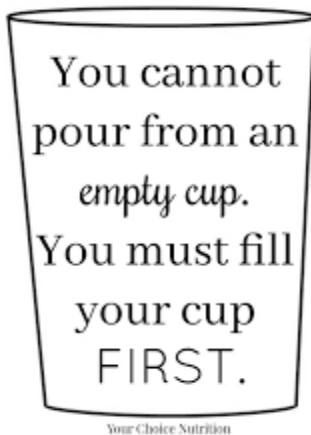
Working with traumatized students can be overwhelming so managing personal and professional stress is vital.



Self Care must be about you and for you....

- ~Intentional
- ~Honest
- ~Meet your needs
- ~Non-Destructive

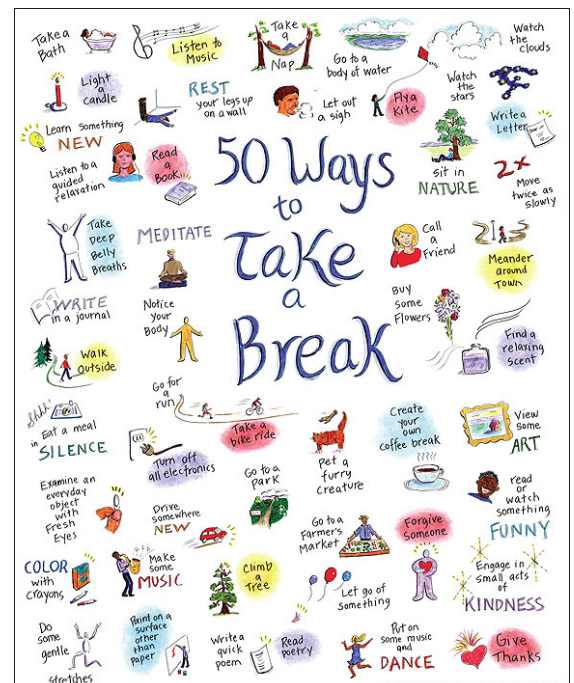
Self-care is what people do for themselves to establish and maintain health, prevent and deal with illness. It includes the activities and experiences that bring us pleasure. It does not have to be big things that take a lot of time; small things like deep breaths or a quick walk are helpful. Self-care also includes making tough decisions and asking for help. Consider how saying no to some things may allow you to say yes to other things.



- Exercise and eat healthy
- Engage in a pleasant hobby or activity
- Create a healthy lifestyle structure and pattern in your personal life
- Know your limits
- Improve your understanding of trauma and secondary trauma
- Take a time out
- Seek support from coworkers, family, friends
- Consider professional counseling
- Take a Vacation

Practical Ideas for Self Care:

- Try different breathing techniques
- Reach out to colleagues
- Get physically active
- Get out in nature
- Disconnect from technology
- Forgive yourself
- Reflect on little things you are grateful for
- Nurture your creative side
- Treat yourself to something special
- Learn about emotional regulation
- Try something for your spirit



Components of Self-Care

- **Emotional self care**
 - Allowing yourself to safely experience your full range of emotions.
 - Examples: supportive friendships, go to the movies, write 3 good things you did each day
- **Psychological self care**
 - Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the professional challenges that are found in your work and personal life.
 - Examples: reflective journal, turn your email and phone off after hours, make time for relaxation
- **Physical self care**
 - Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through your work and personal commitments.
 - Examples: healthy diet, quick walk during lunch, regular sleep routine
- **Relationships self care**
 - Maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are connected to people beyond the workplace.
 - Examples: prioritize close relationships, arrive and leave on time every day, attend family events
- **Spiritual self care**
 - Having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life.
 - Examples: reflective practices like meditation, yoga, go to church
- **Workplace or professional self care**
 - Activities that help you to work consistently at the professional level expected of you.
 - Examples: peer support group, read professional journals

2-5 minute activities

Talk a quick walk
Favorite song
Pictures on phone
Notes from previous students
Favorite quote(s)
Look outside, appreciate nature
Twitter
Do a few affirmations



Taking Care of Yourself

Here are a few items folks keep in their desks for that little pick-me-up during a busy day:

- Tea
- Chocolate
- Protein boost (nuts, granola bar)
- Healthy snacks
- Thank you notes
- Stress ball

Some two-minute strategies to take care of yourself:

- Do a few yoga poses or stretches to get your blood moving
- Get out of the building for some fresh air and a change of scenery
- Take a mindful moment and pay attention to your breathing to center yourself

After a tough day, some ideas for energizing or unwinding:

Get creative:

- | | |
|---------|-------------------|
| • Knit | • Play air guitar |
| • Quilt | • Bake cookies |
| • Draw | • Sing |

Connect with others to fill your tank:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| • Share projects with fellow teachers | • Spend time with animals |
| • Make positive phone calls to parents | • Give back to your community by volunteering |
| • Spend time with loved ones | |

Look for the positive and hang on to it for a rainy day:

- Keep a folder of kind notes or feedback from students and families
- Keep a notebook of inspirational quotes
- Record something positive each day in your journal

Chill - here were some of your favorite ways to just unwind:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Watch a mindless TV show | • Meditate |
| • Take a hot bath | • Take the scenic route home |
| • Read | • Eat chocolate |
| • Listen to music | |

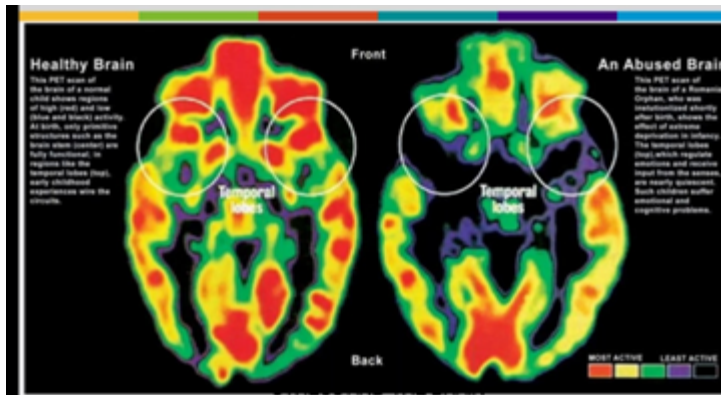
Get your body moving:

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| • Run | • Crossfit |
| • Dance | • Go for a walk |
| • Yoga | |

Everyone's self-care may look a little different, and there's no single way to take good care of yourself. Try some different strategies until you have a full toolbox: something that energizes you, something that helps you unwind, and something that helps you manage when you're having a hard time. Finally, encourage students to do the same. Self-care can help us continue to grow as leaders and as learners.

[Self Care Activities and Exercises](#)

2. Brain Development



A healthy brain vs an abused brain.

STATES of the Brain:

Executive State



PREFRONTAL LOBES

The Executive State represents the optimal state for problem-solving and learning. This Brain State asks the question, *"What can I learn from this?"*

Emotional State



LIMBIC SYSTEM

This Brain State represents mid-level functionality and asks the question, *"Am I loved?"* The only way to soothe an upset emotional state is through *Connection*.

Survival State



BRAIN STEM

Survival State represents the base level of Brain State, and asks the question, *"Am I safe?"* The only way to soothe the Survival State is through the creation of *Safety*.

<https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/brain-state-model/>

Brain Development and Research: Understanding how the brain works helps to understand why the child reacts the way he/she does.

The Brain:

- dictates behaviors, behaviors are NOT personal.
- creates stress tolerance levels.
- shrugs off most triggers but a stressed brain responds to triggers.

Emotional trauma:

- Causes lasting changes in the prefrontal cortex region of the brain that is responsible for regulating **emotional** responses.
- Specifically, this region regulates negative emotions such as fear that occur when confronted with specific stimuli.

Cortisol is released in response to fear or stress by the adrenal glands as part of the fight or flight mechanism. Cortisol is increased from fear and decreased from regular physical activity and many of the practices discussed in this document.

The effect of cortisol release can include:

- interfering with learning and memory,
- lowering immune function and bone density
- increasing weight gain, blood pressure, cholesterol and heart disease to name a few.

Traumatic stress can affect :

- brain development-coordination and balance.
- memory and focus.
- a child's mood.
- a child's ability to regulate their emotions and create detachment from their emotions if exposed repeatedly.
- the development of coping skills to help them survive the repeated trauma that causes them to appear numb to emotions.

Potential Long Term Effects of Childhood Trauma:

- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues (such as depression and suicide)
- Promiscuity
- Criminal behavior

Potential Challenges for Trauma Impacted Youth:

- Managing 'big' emotions
- Working in groups
- Showing Empathy
- Expressing concerns/needs in words
- Understanding how actions affect others
- Problem Solving
- Seeing the big picture
- Thinking about the future (goal setting)

3. Intentional Connections with Students

Intentional Connections - nonjudgmental communication shared between individuals or groups. It is not our job to “fix” students with trauma, but to guide in making good decisions that help them cope and move forward. Maintain their trust by keeping what is shared confidential; unless someone/student is in danger or they give permission to share with another trusted adult.

When we focus on building relationships with our students, it has positive and long-lasting effects on social and academic development. The following ideas can be used in various settings and can be adjusted to fit different grade levels and personalities.

1. Class Meetings

- a. Spend time at the beginning of each day with a class “family” meeting. Have conversations that are casual and not tied to the curriculum. Get to know your students and share announcements with your students.

2. Meeting Students

- a. Meet with students throughout the day just so you can chat. For example, offer lunch with the teacher coupons, mini conferences during snack, recess or break time, meet before/after school, set up “office hours” that are set aside for students to come into the classroom, whether just to chat, to work on homework, or relax.

3. Attend Extra-Curricular Activities

- a. Students love to see you outside of the classroom!

4. Contact Kids

- a. As a building, each teacher is assigned a handful of “contact kids”. For example, the teacher will meet with these students for 5 minutes 2 times a week. In these few minutes you can catch up, chat about any missing assignments or behavior concerns (if needed), and enjoy a little chat.

5. Interview Your Students

- a. Take time at the beginning of the year to ask your students questions and find out their interests.

6. Personal Assignments

- a. Give assignments where students will share their experiences or interests. Have them write about themselves, or draw something that is personal.

7. Classroom Discussion

- a. Encourage classroom discussion that centers around the students.

8. Play a Game

- a. Playing games as a class helps students open up.

9. Listen to Music

- a. Spend some time listening to music and talking about what kinds of music they like or dislike and why. Maybe have a quick dance break!

10. Watch What They Watch

- a. Watch the television shows/movies they watch, or play the video games they play in your free time. Get to know what they enjoy doing and talk to them about it.

11. Include the Students

- a. Include the students when planning your curriculum and when writing rules for the class.

12. Be Human

- a. Let your students know when you make a mistake and apologize for it. Talk about your life outside of the classroom. Let them see that you are human.

13. Take a Deep Breath

- a. Before reacting to a student with challenging behavior, take a breath. Think about your response. Don't fight fire with fire!

14. Ask Your Colleagues

- a. Ask your colleagues how they connect with certain students. Find out what works for them!

15. Break Signals

- a. Have students create a signal that they can use when they need a break. Listen and respond to this signal.

16. Free Chat

- a. Set aside times for students to spend some time chatting freely.

17. Approach Students

- a. Approach all students with a greeting and a smile. Sometimes this simple gesture is all they need to make their day better. Sometimes you are the only one in their life that greets them that way.

18. T-Mail

- a. AKA Teacher-mail. Have a mailbox for students to write a note to the teacher, then make sure to respond!

19. Post-it Praises

- a. Write the name of each student on a post-it note at the beginning of the week. As the week goes by, write down a positive praise for each student and give it to them. Start over again next week.

20. Conversation Notebooks

- a. Students have a notebook that they can write notes in for the teacher. When they write a note, turn it in, and then you can respond.

21. Morning Greeting

- a. Greet students at your door, or when they get off the school bus, or wherever you can interact with multiple students in a positive way. Tell them good morning and ask how practice was, or whatever else they might have going on.

22. Student Jobs

- a. Assign weekly or daily student jobs in your classroom or building.

23. Guardian Letters

- a. At the beginning of the year, ask students' guardians to provide an informative letter about their child. This letter can go beyond academics and explain more details about them as a child.

Resources

Book Resources

[5 Ways to Connect and Build Positive Relationships With Students](#)

[Morning Meeting Resources](#)

[Power of Morning Greeting](#)

[5 Easy Ways to Connect with Students](#)

[3 Ways to Make Meaningful Connections](#)

4. What Are The Zones?

The Zones are a systematic, cognitive behavioral approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete colored zones. The Zones framework provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, manage their sensory needs, and improve their ability to problem solve conflicts.

By addressing underlying deficits in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning, and social cognition, the framework is designed to help move students toward independent regulation. The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking® (www.socialthinking.com) concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states.

Zones of Regulation

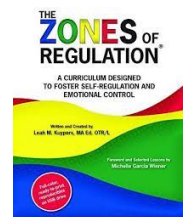
The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.


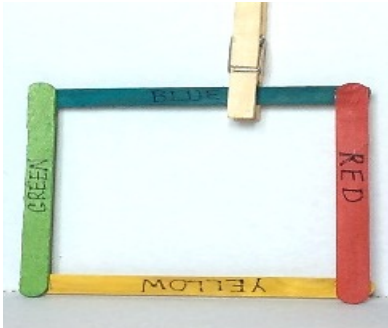
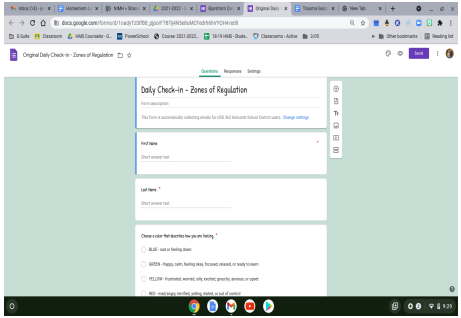



Found from - (<http://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html>)



Zones of Regulation Resources

Resource	Summary	Link
Zones of Regulation (Helpful Resources)	Books, more videos, powerpoints, and so on.	The Zones of Regulation - Let's Get in the ZONE!
Zones of Regulation (video)	Animated explanation of zones of regulation	Zones of Regulation video f...
Get to Know Your Emotions (video)	Characters from the movie inside out explain the different emotions with a little guessing game.	Identify the emotion...
Opioid Crisis: NBC Nightly News (video)	The impact of opioid on schools and how zones of regulation helped.	Opioid Crisis: Historic Cape ...
** Printable Resources** Zones of Regulation materials	Teachers pay teachers has Zones of Regulation items that can be purchased and printed.	www.teacherspayteachers.com

Ways to Check in - Feeling Identification

		 <p>Daily Check-in</p>
		

5. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. It can be cultivated through techniques, particularly meditation and breathing. It is evidence based and proven to be positively beneficial to our lives.

Mindful breathing is a skill that doesn't take much time to teach to students and is something that they can use for a lifetime. Here are some strategies to try along with links to quick and easy activities to incorporate it into your day:

- Go Noodle (<https://www.gonoodle.com/>) This website provides a variety of short, interactive activities to get kids moving and engaged. It is research based and is designed for the K-5 student. There are several "mindfulness" activities to choose from varying from 1 minute to 20 minutes long. Many of the elementary school teachers access this site. There is a free sign up as well as an "upgrade" that you must pay for.
- 18 Amazing Mindfulness Activities for the Classroom ([5 Minute Classroom Mindfulness Activities for Kids](#))
This website offers 18 quick (5-10 minute) activities to do with your class. Step by step instructions are given for each activity as well as printable ["Activity Task Cards"](#)

Activities listed are:

1. Mindful Breathing (5 minutes)
2. Pinwheel Breathing- pinwheel template included (5 minutes)
3. Belly Buddies (10 minutes)
4. Shark Fin (4 minutes)
5. Breathing Colors (5 minutes)
6. Breathing Hands (2 minutes)
7. Back to Back Breathing (10 minutes)
8. Body Scan (10 minutes)
9. Mindful Eats (5 minutes)
10. Mindful Steps (10 minutes)
11. Mindful Sounds (2 minutes)
12. Spidey Senses (5 minutes)
13. Gratitude Practice (5-10 minutes)
14. Glitter Bottle (5 minutes)
15. Mindful Safari (10-30 minutes)
16. Sense Countdown (5 minutes)
17. Heartbeat (5 minutes)
18. Add a Touchy Feely Focus (5-10 minutes)

- Activities and Teaching Resources [Mindful Teachers](#)
This site provides tons of resources for practicing and teaching mindfulness, meditation, kindness, compassion, generosity, gratitude, social responsibility and social-emotional skills. You will also find video playlists for teachers.
- Song Playlists For Teachers [Song Playlists for Teachers](#)
Provides playlists and questions for reflection and discussion, songs about breathing through strong emotions, diversity, regret and forgiveness . Be sure to check out the “Great Children’s Songs about Mindfulness, Self Acceptance, and Gratitude”! This link gives at least one song in each area for young children sung by Sesame Street characters (Elmo’s “Belly Breathe” and “The Power of Yet” have to be seen!).
- Smiling Mind- free app available through the “App Store” or on “Google Play” developed to help bring balance to the lives of children as well as adults by helping to deal with challenges and stressors of daily life. [App — Smiling Mind](#)
- Mandalas- mandalas require attentive focus and calmness to create and color and can help to cultivate mindfulness, self-awareness, and stress relief. They are one of the most effective ways to teach children mindfulness. The idea is to color the mandala while paying attention to thoughts, feelings and the body. Not only does it help kids to meditate, it can be a way to express themselves. Free printables for kids (as well as adults): [Free Printable Mandalas for Kids](#)
- Bibliotherapy is the use of stories or books to support mental health or teach someone how to cope with an issue. [Books That Heal](#) is a website with suggested books on the topic of “Mindfulness” as well as a long list of other topics from “acceptance” to “zones of regulation”.
- Anxiety Apps - 2 articles that explains some of the best apps to target anxiety.
[9 Best Anxiety Apps of 2021](#)
[The Best Meditation Apps for Anxiety in 2021](#)

6. SAFE SPOT/CALM ROOM

Why use a safe spot? A safe spot gives our students an outlet. We should not just expect our students to calm down when they are told to do so. When students need a break the safe spot helps them to manage their emotions. For more information about setting up your safe space and why it's important, see the resources below.

- ☐ [▶ Peace Corner: Creating Safe Space for Reflection](#)
- ☐ [Safe Spaces Should Be a Part of Every Classroom, and Here's Why](#)

What is a safe spot? A safe spot is intended to teach students to self regulate and de-escalate. Children should be taught how to use the safe spot before an incident occurs. The spot must be a safe place for reflection. Class work that is not completed due to being in the safe spot is then sent with the student to make up at a different time. The safe spot is not a way out of classwork for the student. The safe spot is not a place where we as teachers are looking for compliance, instead we are looking for **regulation**. This spot can be referred to in a variety of ways. Some of these include: Peace Corner, Calm Corner, Reset, Zen Zone, Chill Out Corner, Cool Down Spot and Safe Spot.

How should a safe spot be set up?

How long can students stay?

- Do what works for you in the controlled environment of your classroom.
- It is important to recognize that some students may need to request additional time depending on the situation and the student.
- Students vary on the time it takes to regulate.
- As students work on their self-regulation, their time in the safe spot should decrease.

What resources are available to students while they are regulating?

- stress balls
- theraputty
- glitter jar
- paper and pencils
- coloring pages
- pop its
- fidget spinners
- books
- fidget cubes
- calming bottles
- breathing exercises
- music
 - upbeat music can make you feel more optimistic and positive
 - slower tempo can quiet your mind and relax your muscles, releasing the stress of the day
- simple reflection sheet

Anything goes! Ask your students what they would need available to them.

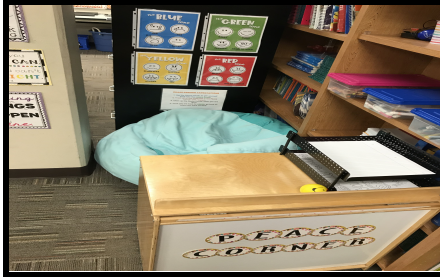
Where should a safe spot be located in the classroom?

- consider a spot free of distractions
- consider a spot that is somewhat hidden from other students
- the safe spot should be somewhere that has a calm feeling

[5 Replies to “A Quiet Place for Rough Moments”](#)

[The Peace Corner: An Essential Classroom Resource - Self-Regulating Emotions with a Chill Out Corner in the Classroom](#)

What a Safe Spot might look like:



What is a Calm/Sensory Room? A calm/sensory room is a supportive, therapeutic environment which assists students in their self calming efforts by offering them an environment of relaxation. It is a designated place designed to calm the senses where the student can experience calming visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli.




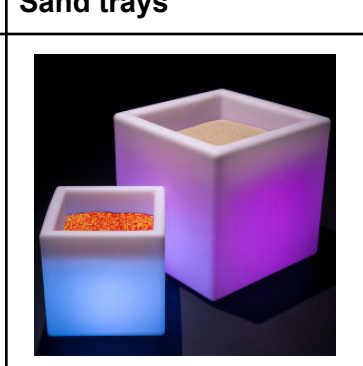


7. Breaks: Physical

Research shows students are easily distracted, but regular, short breaks can help them focus, increase their productivity, and reduce their stress. The American Psychological Association recommends frequent breaks, in addition to other activities such as exercise and meditation.

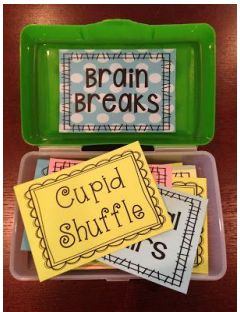
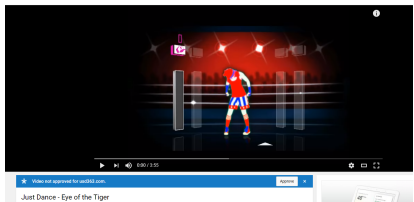

Physical Breaks

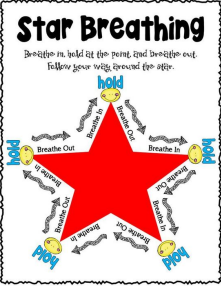
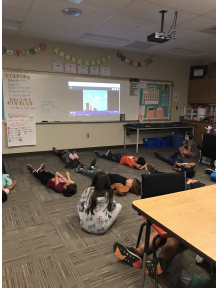
- ❑ Something active
 - ❑ Take a walk or go get a drink
- ❑ Sensory room or using sensory items
 - ❑ Fidgets, sensory mats, stationary bikes, treadmills, punching bag, sand trays
- ❑ Meaningful jobs
 - ❑ Door greeter, paper returner, ticket passer, sharpening pencils, etc.
- ❑ Regulation Spaces/Peace Corner
 - ❑ Bean bags, couches, stress balls, theraputty, coloring sheets, calm down strategies, yarn to braid, cards of physical activities, a timer
- ❑ Buddy room
 - ❑ student goes to work in another classroom/office space
- ❑ Whole class brain break

Sensory

Fidgets	Sand trays	Sensory mats	Sensory gel bags
			

Whole Class Breaks

Activity cards	Just dance activity	Yoga exercises
		

Breathing exercises	Mindfulness/Breathing	Transition ideas
 <p>Star Breathing Breathe in, hold at the point, and breathe out. Follow your path around the star.</p> <p>The diagram shows a red five-pointed star with arrows indicating a clockwise path. Each point and intersection is labeled with a breathing instruction: 'Breathe In' at the top, 'Hold' at the top-right intersection, 'Breathe Out' at the right, 'Breathe In' at the bottom-right intersection, 'Hold' at the bottom, 'Breathe Out' at the bottom-left intersection, 'Breathe In' at the left, and 'Hold' at the top-left intersection.</p>	 <p>A photograph of a classroom where several children are lying on their stomachs on the floor, participating in a mindfulness or breathing exercise. A teacher is visible in the foreground, also lying down. A projector screen in the background displays a presentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk like a bear • Hop like a frog • Crawl like a snake • Walk like a crab • Army crawl • Move slow like a turtle • Fly like a butterfly • Yoga pose