Zones of Regulation Lesson Plan

**Presenters:** Tiffany Schuette (School Counselor) & Kelly Davies (Occupational Therapist)

**Unit:** Understanding Myself & Emotional Regulation

**Title:** Zones of Regulation

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Materials:**

* *Zones of Regulation –* Teacher Survey (Copied in Yellow)
* *The Zones of Regulation (Reproducible E)* – Visual on board
* A sign for each sensory station with the tool and directions for how to use the tool.
* Sensory support tools/manipulatives or calming strategies for each station (examples: stressball, noise cancelling headphones, putty, a therapy ball, etc.
* *Zones Tools Worksheet (Reproducible R) –* Write all of the sensory support tools used in the activity on the worksheet then make copies – one per student.
* *Zones toolbox poster* – to be posted in the classroom
* *Zones of Regulation Toolbox (Reproducible Z)–* Handout
* Timer or stopwatch
* Consult or co-teach with an Occupational Therapist for this lesson
* Computer, document camera, and projector for videos
* Lesson Derived from The Zones of Regulation: A Curriculum Designed to Foster Self-Regulation and Emotional Control. A book by Leah M. Kuypers

**Learning Activities:**

1. Introductions – Mrs. Davies - What she does in her job at school as an occupational therapist. Hand out teacher and student surveys at this time if you are administering the surveys.
2. Introduce topic – Zones of Regulation. Project Reproducible E (the Zones chart). Enlarge so only the faces on the chart are showing and the words on the bottom cannot be seen by the students. Point to the title of the chart and explain that the Zones are the four different colors and that all of the feelings we experience can fit in these four different colors (blue, green, yellow, and red). Point to the word Regulation. Explain that this also means self-regulation and it means helping yourself. So if you are angry (point to the Red Zone), you do something to help yourself feel better and move to Green Zone. “If you are feeling sad you don’t want to feel sad all the time, you want to self-regulate – you want to help yourself feel better and move to Green Zone so you feel happy again.”
3. Continue to use Reproducible E on the projector to explain each Zone with the visual on the board. Encourage kids to look at the facial expressions in each Zone to get them to guess what feelings fit in each color. Keep Reproducible E enlarged and the feelings words in each Zone hidden to help aid in discussion and get their responses. (It is important that students learn to recognize facial expressions.) Ask students to respond and tell about a time when they felt they were in the Blue, Green, Yellow, or Red Zones.
4. Explain to students that there is no such thing as a “bad” Zone because there are times in which we all experience each Zones (even adults do!). Also make it clear that this is different than any behavior modification system they have in their classroom.
5. Explain that we have many different emotions and there are times it is expected to be in a certain Zone; now we are going to review strategies on what to do when we are in a Zone but need to get to another Zone. Using the Zones Toolbox Poster, encourage the students to offer suggestions on what they can do when they are in the Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red Zone. Fill out as a class until the poster is full or they can add strategies later with their teacher when they think of other strategies. They can also fill out a copy of their own toolbox (Reproducible Z) while the poster is being completed. (Leave spaces blank for each Zone. At the end of the lesson they will fill them in with new strategies they learned.
6. Explain basic sensory needs by using some or all of the following information:
   * Everyone has sensory needs that meet our five senses (Give personal examples of the following)... Sense of touch (sensitive to different clothing textures or a dislike for grooming activities), hearing (sensitive to sounds), taste (being a picky eater or not liking a food because of the texture), smell (more sensitive to odors than others), and movement (unsure of footing on unstable surfaces). Everyone has sensations they seek out or try to avoid. For example some people enjoy perfumes or air fresheners but other people may be over-stimulated by the smells and might cause them to feel less regulated and uncomfortable (Give personal examples). Assess comprehension.
7. We experience many Zones throughout the day. Sometimes using sensory support tools or certain strategies can help us stay in the Green Zone, move from the Blue Zone to the Green Zone, OR move from the Yellow or Red Zone to the Green Zone so that we can feel calm, happy, and ready to learn.
8. Handout the Zones Tools Worksheet and explain the activity. Explain that we are going to rotate through stations so that they get a chance to experience all of the sensory tools/strategies. While quietly using the tool at each station, they need to consider if the tool would help them feel calmer, more awake, or if it had no effect. If they found the tool to be calming they can use it when they are in the Yellow or Red Zone. If they found that it made them feel more awake they can use it when that are in the Blue Zone. If they feel that it can help them focus or stay calm/happy they can use it in the Green Zone.
9. Do the first tool/strategy on the worksheet together as a class. Have the students circle the Zone(s) in which they feel the tool would be helpful. Let them know that it is okay to circle more than one Zone for each tool or circle “none” if it is a tool/strategy that may not help.
10. Place the stations (make sure they are numbered) around the perimeter of the classroom in the form of a circle. Go through each station and explain all of the tools/strategies. Direct the students on which station they will rotate to then begin. Give them 45 seconds in each station using a timer. Here is a list of tools/strategies that can be used:
    * Six Sides of Breathing
    * Squeeze ball or stress ball
    * Hard Stress ball
    * Small bean bag squeeze
    * Putty
    * Lazy 8 Breathing
    * Digging or hunting on for objects in a rice bin
    * Sitting with a weighted blanket, vest, or lap pad
    * Wearing noise-cancelling headphones
    * Wall push-ups
    * Jumping
    * Count to Ten
    * Deep pressure squishes with a bean bag or oversized pillow
    * Bouncing on a Therapy ball
    * Velcro under a desk
    * Run in place
    * Stretching station
    * Calming sequence
    * Move Bouncy Ball between hands
    * Finger Hugs
    * Netting– rub or squeeze
    * Stretchy band on leg of desk
    * Deep Breaths (Imagine you are smelling a rose and blowing out the candle)
11. After everyone has rotated through each station ask the following questions:
    * What were some of you favorite tools or strategies or which do you feel would be the most helpful?
    * Who would like to share a new strategy you learned that you feel can help you?
    * What would your day look like if you were in the Blue Zone all day? What consequences would you receive? Explain the importance of having tools/strategies they can use to wake them up.
    * What would your day look like if you were in the Yellow Zone all day? What consequences would you receive? Explain the importance of having tools/strategies they can use to slow them down or calm down.
12. Ask students if all of these strategies are appropriate to use during class when you are working or listening to the teacher? The answer is no because some of the strategies or tools can be distracting to others (classmates or teacher) and maybe even put others in the Yellow Zone because they would be annoyed. So, you need to choose a strategy that you can do quietly at your desk so that it does not distract anyone else. Other tools/strategies are more appropriate for use at home.
13. Have them take out their Zones Toolbox from earlier in the lesson. Go through each Zone again and ask if they can add any new strategies from the sensory stations they explored today.
14. Tell students that now if they hear their teacher say “you are in Blue Zone” they know what it means and can use strategies to move to Green Zone. They can use the Zones as a tool to help them self-regulate or feel calm and ready to learn.
15. Collect the completed survey from the teacher or send a survey via Google forms for the staff to complete.

See Below for a list of stations to be copied and pasted onto Reproducible R for the Zones Tools Worksheet.

1. Six Sides of Breathing
2. Soft Stress ball
3. Hard Stress ball
4. Bean bag squeeze
5. Putty
6. Lazy 8 Breathing
7. Rice bin
8. Weighted lap pad
9. Wear headphones
10. Wall push-ups
11. Jumping
12. Count to Ten
13. Pressure squishes
14. Bouncing on a ball
15. Velcro under a desk
16. Run in place
17. Stretching station
18. Calming sequence
19. Roll ball between hands
20. Finger Hugs
21. Netting– rub/squeeze
22. Stretchy band on desk
23. Deep Breaths