

REGULATE

Help me get back in control

Catch My Calm

Lend calm instead of demanding it.

WHAT IT IS

When a student is emotionally activated, resist the urge to match their intensity or immediately talk through the problem. Your own regulation can become part of the intervention. Slow your voice. Use fewer words. Soften your posture and facial expression. Give the student appropriate physical space. Do not rush to fill every silence.

Instead of telling the student to calm down, give them something calm to synchronize with.

START WITH YOUR PRESENCE

Lower your voice, pace, and intensity. Keep your words simple. Sit or position yourself in a way that feels less confrontational. Allow pauses. The goal is not to perform calmness; it is to avoid adding more intensity to a nervous system that is already overloaded.

GIVE THE HANDS A JOB

If appropriate, casually offer something the student can hold, manipulate, or squeeze while you talk. It might be a stress ball, therapy putty, smooth stone, small fidget, textured object, or even a cold bottle of water. A student may also prefer to doodle, walk, or simply sit quietly.

“You can mess with this while we talk if you want.”

Offer rather than prescribe. The object is a support, not the intervention itself.

TRY THIS

LOWER

your voice, pace, and intensity.

LESSEN

your words and immediate demands.

OFFER

space, time, and something for the hands.

WAIT

do not rush the student into explaining.

KEY MOVE

Be the calm you are asking for.

KEEP IN MIND

This will not fit every student or every situation. Some students may find a particular sensory object irritating or distracting, and an object should not be offered when it creates a safety concern. Follow the student's cues, offer choices when possible, and use your professional judgment and school safety procedures.