Ways to Support Emotion Regulation





Model Emotion Acceptance and Awareness

Neurodivergent people may see negative emotions as 'bad' because of past experiences with negative consequences, which can lead to avoidance or other unhelpful responses

- Model that "All emotions are OK"
- Reassure students that emotions are natural and normal, even uncomfortable emotions
- Model awareness and coping to neurodivergent people



Support Routine Self-Assessment of Emotional Intensity

Neurodivergent people often have difficulty with identifying and understanding emotions

- Focus on routine noticing of emotional intensity
- Tailor self-assessments with visuals for increasing levels of intensity
- Avoid emotion labeling or memorizing words to describe an emotion
- Use common language across professionals to assist with selfassessment of emotional intensity



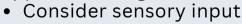
Provide Opportunities for Physical Movement

Movement is a form of self-regulation for emotions and sensory processing

- Walking, standing, and physical grounding
- Breaks from triggering situations
- · Rocking or stimming



Affirming environments that minimizes the impact of differences will support learning and wellbeing



- Social & Communication
 - Be discrete and model that differences are welcome
 - Provide options for communication differences (e.g. cards, AAC)
 - Maintain flexible social norms (e.g. eye contact)
 - Provide supports for learning with peers



Individualized Emotion Regulation Supports



Identify Stressors and Signs of Distress

- Identify situations and circumstances that cause distress, such as:
 - Overwhelming sensory environments
 - Changes in routine
 - Confusing social interactions
 - Unstructured spaces (e.g. cafeteria, hallway for students)
- Identify clues of upcoming meltdowns/shutdowns
 - How do they know it's coming?
 - Are there signs you can look out for?
 - Can they signal to you?

Build Awareness of Emotional Intensity

- Focus on routine noticing of emotional intensity
 - This should be completed routinely throughout the day and not only when distressed
- Tailor self-assessments with visuals for increasing levels of intensity
- Avoid emotion labeling or memorizing words to describe an emotion
- Use common language across professionals to assist with self-assessment of emotional intensity
- Work with systems to track self-assessment data of emotional intensity

Have a Plan in Place

- Identify a safe place where neurodivergent people can regulate
- Identify a trusted, safe person(s) that can support distress
- Include early warning signs (e.g. raised voice, physical agitation)
- Reduce demands and sensory input at the early signs of challenges
- When calm, identify and practice 1-2 strategies the neurodivergent student knows how to use
 - Consider at least one strategy that incorporates movement and one that can be seated
- Determine individualized cues or reminders to use strategies in advance (e.g. visual cue, hand signals, verbal cue)
- Identify sensory tools or items that can assist in regulation

