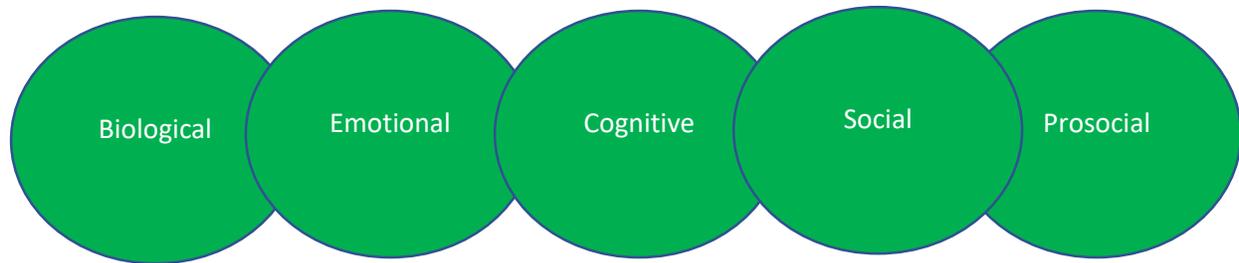


5 DOMAINS OF SELF-REGULATION

Stuart Shanker, *Calm, Alert and Learning*, <https://self-reg.ca/>



Domain Descriptions

Biological

- Domain refers to activity, or level of energy in the nervous system
- Some children are extremely sensitive to sensory input, or could be under-responsive to sensory input (could be touch, smell, sounds, visual, body awareness/movement)
- May have difficulty sitting still, or be difficult to engage due to low arousal
- When overstimulated, could shut down (hypo-alert) or could become overstimulated (hyper-alert)

Emotional

- Domain is the realm of feelings and moods
- Could be overexcited, exhibit intense frustration or become paralyzed with fear
- Positive emotions: interest, curiosity, happiness = generate energy
- Negative emotions: anger, fear, frustration, sadness, anxiety = consumes energy
- Emotions have a significant impact on optimal self-regulation; challenging domain
- Often requires down regulation via caregivers/teachers
- Development of children's cognitive abilities is fundamentally dependent on how well children function emotionally

Cognitive

- This domain involves mental processes like memory, organization, attention, problem-solving
- Means that a student can sustain and/or switch attention, sequence thoughts, ignore distractions and inhibit impulsive behavior
- These skills can most effectively develop once children have become more adept at self-regulation in the biological and emotional domains

Social

- Ability to understand, assess and act on particular social cues, also called social intelligence
- Develops as children gradually internalize – initially from their caregivers and later from their peers and teachers – the meaning of subtle social cues such as facial expressions and tones of voice.
- If a child has difficulty in this domain, it can profoundly affect his or her biological and emotional self-regulation and vice versa.

Prosocial

- Behaviours that are positive and helpful and promote social acceptance, friendship and empathy
- Intimately related to the other 4 domains (need to be regulated in the other 4 domains in order to act pro-socially)

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Strategies for each Domain

Biological Domain

Universal Strategies

- Minimize visual distractions in the room (bright coloured posters), use natural and lamp light
- Flexible Seating
- Fidgets (see video Tool or Toy), Theraputty
- Movement Breaks
- Breathing Exercises
- Heavy Work Jobs/Errands
- Privacy Screen/Study Carrel
- Tennis balls on the chairs
- Use music/sound to signal in-class transitions
- Teacher Regulation – lower voice, slow speech, model breathing – make your regulation explicit to students!

Programs/Resources

- 5 Point Scale
- Alert Program (How is your Engine Running?)
- Mind Up
- Zones of Regulation
- Classroom Design Checklist (ask your OT)

Emotional Domain

Universal Strategies

- Remember: Emotional regulation is as much about up-regulating positive emotions as it is down-regulating negative ones
- Breathing techniques & Yoga
- Class-wide visual schedule
- In class calming space
- Frontload transitions
- Visual Timer
- Journaling
- Direct lessons on what emotions are (review pictures of various facial expressions and discuss the emotion demonstrated)
- Try focusing on the emotion that may be driving a student to misbehave rather than on the misbehavior itself

Programs

- 5 point scale – How Big is My Problem?
- Mind Up

Resources

- Counsellor
- CCW
- CASEL Website <https://casel.org/>

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Cognitive Domain

Universal Strategies

- Organized classroom environment
 - Ensure hearing and vision has been cleared
 - Get Ready, Do, Done (Sarah Ward – YouTube!)
 - Visual Instructions and Class-wide Visual Schedule
 - Multiple means of Representation of material to sustain attention & focus (Oral, Written, Video, etc.)
 - Time Management Strategies – large timers (see links in handout)
 - Chunk instruction into small steps, ask the student to repeat instructions, seat the student close to you
-

Social & Pro-Social Domain

Universal Strategies

- Social Behaviour Mapping
- Classroom Code/Contract
- Frontloading Expectations
- Connecting through Literature (Story followed by discussion)
- Class Meeting Daily

Programs

- We Thinkers Curriculum
- Social Behaviour Mapping
- Zones of Regulation (Social thinking lesson plans)