



autism
oxford uk

NDC Post
Diagnostic
Workshop

**Emotional
Regulation**

Week 5

Introductions

Paul...



Tara...



Recap / Check In



- Week 4- Executive functioning and strategies to support developing independence
- How is everyone feeling?
- Any positives or learning points in the last week?
- Today's workshop is likely to stir up emotions for you. Please be kind to yourself and others.
- If you are upset after today's session, please contact us at youngpeoplesupport@autismoxford.org.uk and one of the team will give you a call
- Remember this is a safe confidential space.

What is Emotional Regulation?



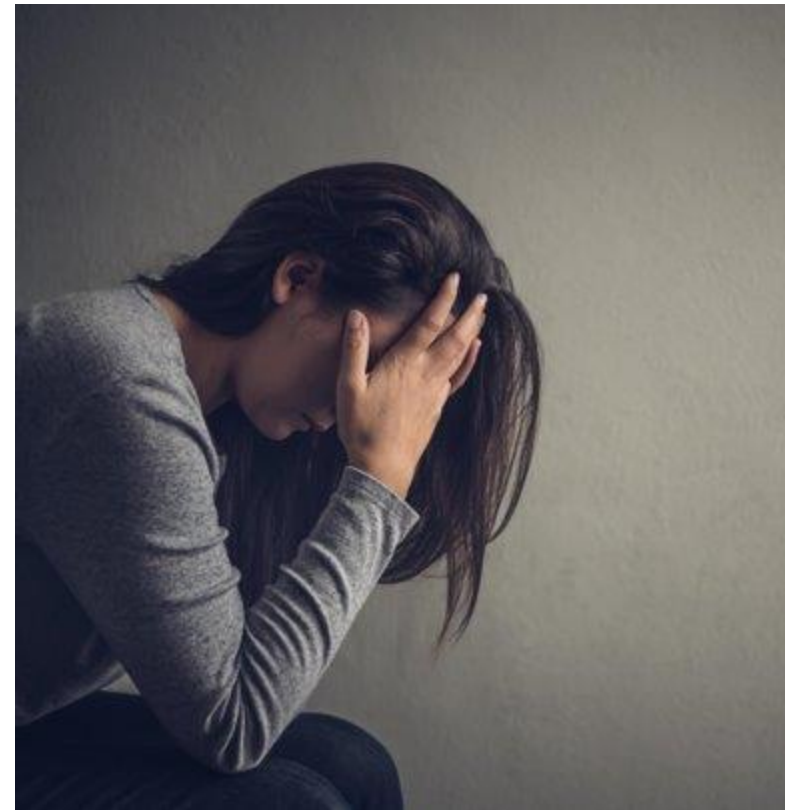
“Emotion regulation is the **ability to exert control over** one’s own **emotional state.**”

Psychology today;2022

What is Emotional Dysregulation?



- Emotional **Dysregulation** means that you have **difficulties** with understanding or **managing your emotions**.
- While many people may experience moments where they **feel anxious** or **upset**, someone with an emotional disorder may experience these **feelings very frequently**.
- These feelings are in a way that they are **out of their control**.

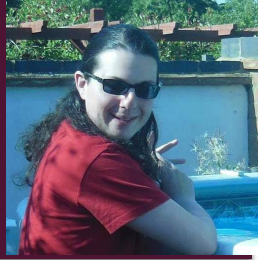




What do you think will impact someone's ability to regulate?

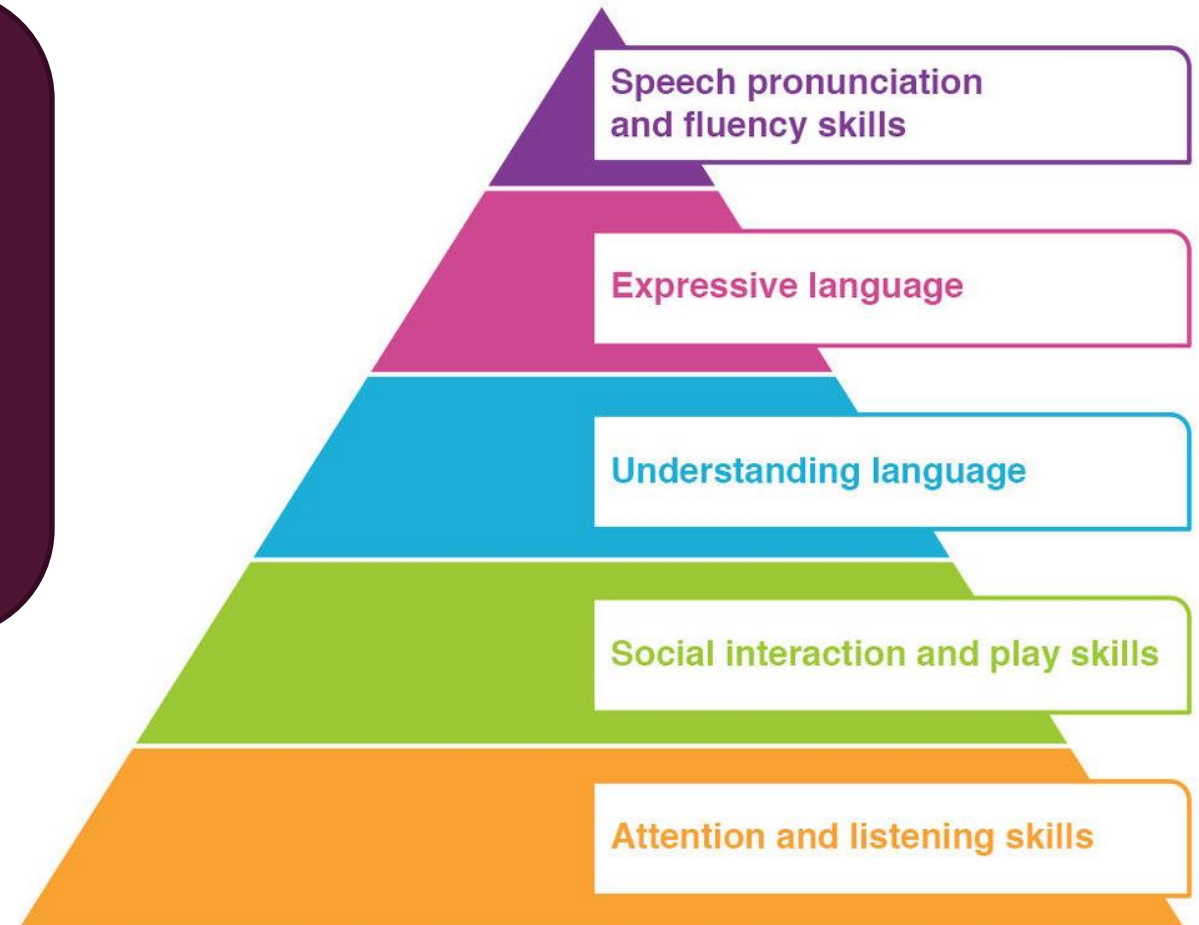
Communication

- everyone can communicate, but some people do not use words.



Communication difficulties for autistic people can include:

- Concentration / attention
- Sensory impairment
- Speech intelligibility
- Reduced vocabulary
- Comprehension (understanding)
- Social communication



Diagnostic Overlays- Mental Health



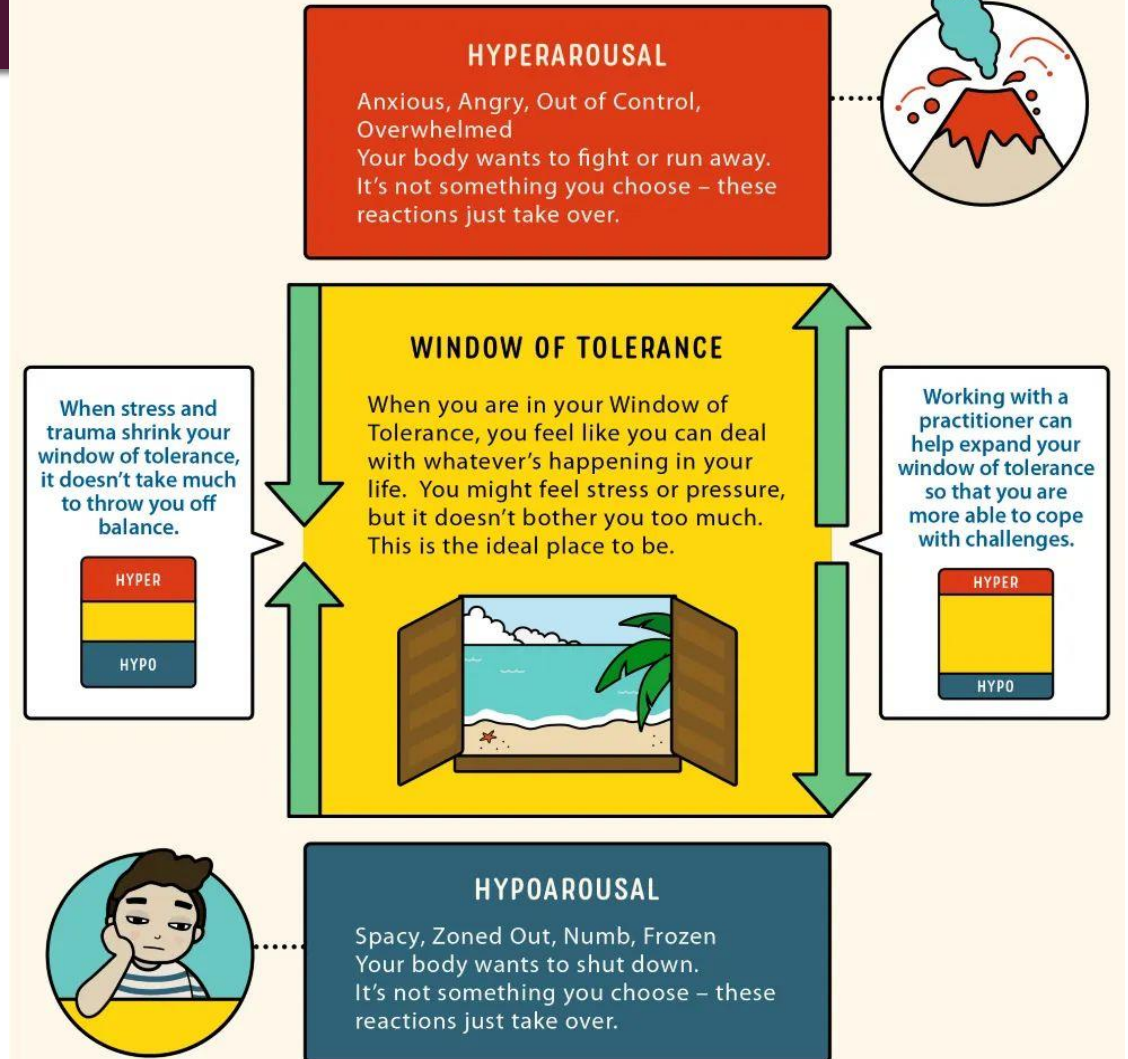
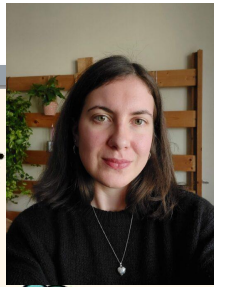
- Schizophrenia
- OCD
- ADHD
- Personality Disorder.
- Psychosis
- Anxiety

Autistic people can also have these conditions, but it is important to think about the diagnostic overlay and if the presenting needs are the persons autism needs.

Trauma Impact

Trauma and adverse life events will impact on the tolerance window for stress

How Trauma Can Affect Your Window Of Tolerance





Diminished capacity to describe subtle and complex emotions



Autism and

Alexithymia

Difficulties in recognising and distinguishing between different emotions and bodily sensations



"How was day today?"
Answers about events, not feelings



Emotions build up and then need to be released



Rely on emotion suppression and avoidance rather than a reappraisal



May impact one's ability in maintaining relationships and engaging in social situations



Interoception & self-regulation

'The eighth sensory system'



- Allows us to notice '**internal body signals**' 'internal self' (Interoceptive **awareness**), physiological symptoms
- The perception (discrimination) of our inner self – making sense of the information (interoceptive accuracy)
- When we notice these body signals our brain uses them as clues to our emotions, to **Feel** our emotions
- The Body/emotion connection



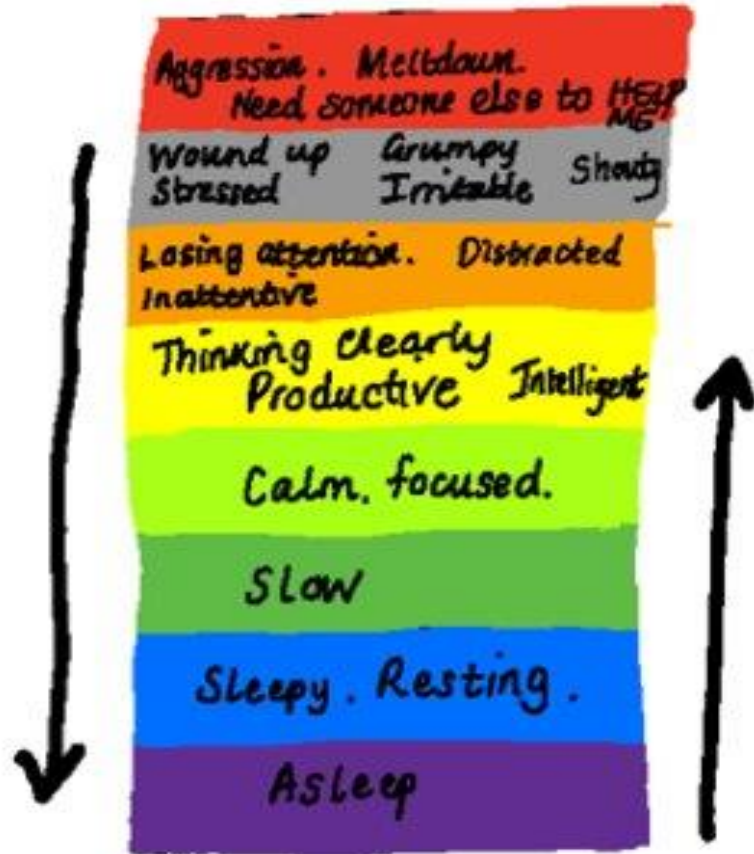


Stress Bucket





How strong is your emotion? *Sensory Ladder*



- Rating scales can be helpful in learning the intensity of the emotion.
- 5 points is a good starting point for most, but this can be reduced to **2 points** for young people and grown to **10-point rating scale** for older people or individuals that have mastered the **5-point rating scale**

How Do We Know What The Cause Is?



- Remember all behaviour you see is a form of communication.
- Become an investigator- identify what was happening before (**A**ntecedent) what occurred during (**B**ehaviour) and what happened after (**C**onsequence). There will be clues. (ABC Charts)

For example;



Time and Date	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence
Wednesday at 4.30pm	Mum asked C to tidy her room	C screamed and yelled at mum and rolled on the floor	Mum stayed in hallway. Room was not tidied.

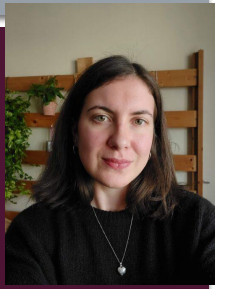
Arousal Cycle



- Strategies need to be used on the up, not at the top.
- When at the peak it moves to safety management.
- The post high-stress slump trap- Be aware of it.

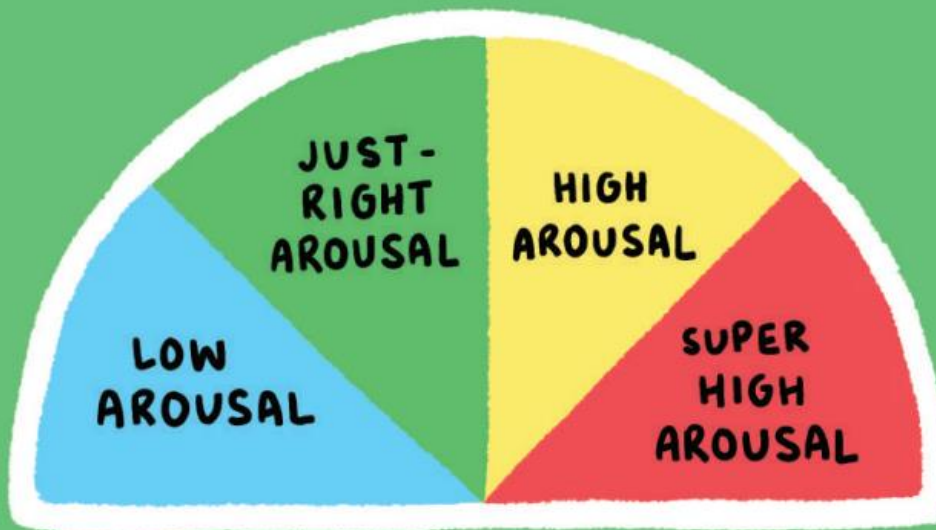


Arousal Curve



THE AROUSAL CURVE

Everyone has an arousal curve (our energetic state) that we move up and down as we go about our days.



Low arousal:

low energy, sluggish, lethargic, sleepy, tired

Just-right arousal:

calm, awake, attentive, grounded

High arousal:

high energy
can be anxious/edgy/upset/stressed
or excited/joyful

Super high arousal:

loss of control
anger, fear, panic

We can use our senses to boost our arousal if its low, or lower our arousal if its high, and bring ourselves closer to that just-right state.

THINK AUTISM MELTDOWN

- Autism Meltdowns can present like psychosis and or even be viewed as symptoms of a personality disorder (especially in PDA women).
- It is important to get a good understanding the norms for that person.
- Any new changes to routine?
- Any unplanned changes occurred for the person?
- Any increase in demands/ expectations?

(PDA society)





Are you Co-escalating
Or
Co-regulating?

3 R's For Parents And Support



Third thing is we can support to reflect, learn, remember, articulate and become self assured.

Second thing to do is to relate and connect.

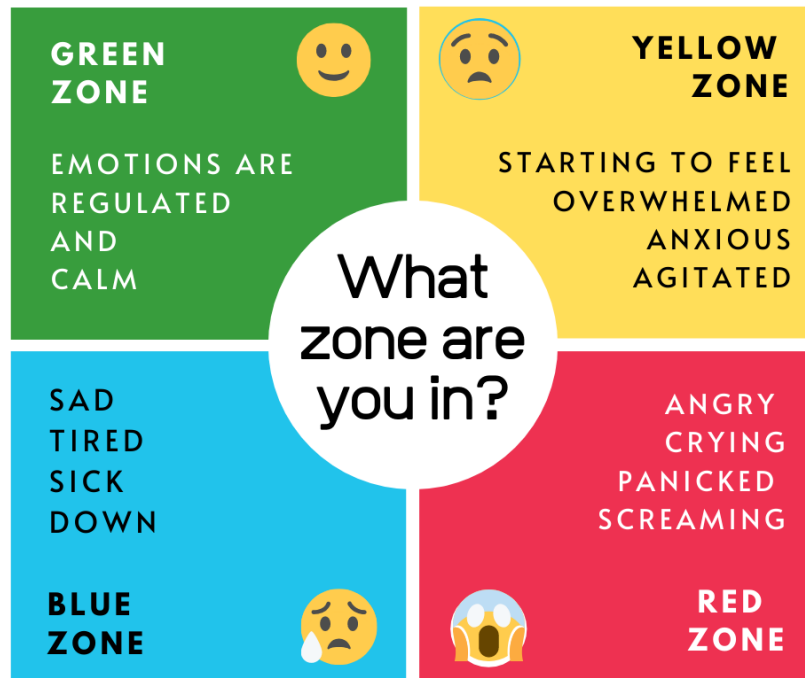
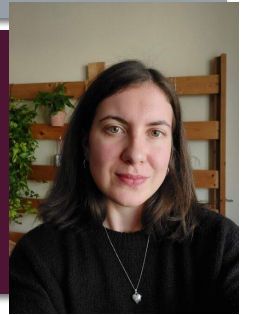
First thing, we need to do is co-regulate (or regulate ourselves) to bring down from the fight, flight freeze response.

Reason

Relate

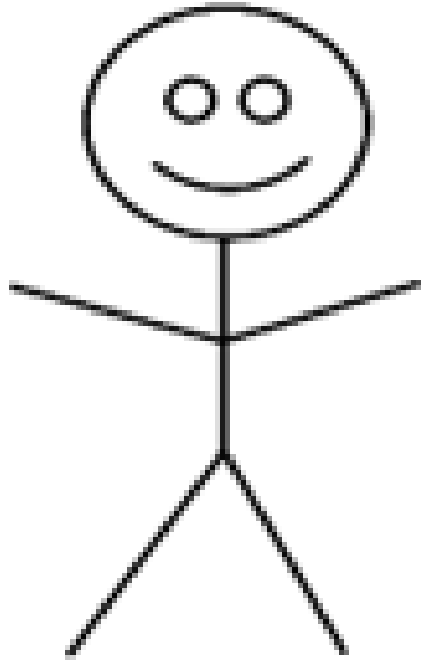
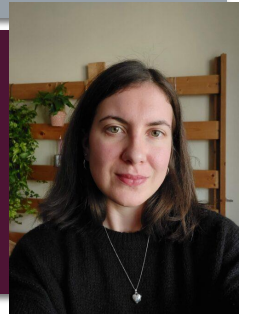
Regulate

Zones of Regulation



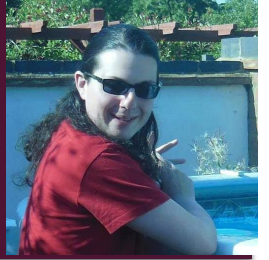
- Zones of regulation was first developed by Leah Kuypers (an Occupational Therapist) which was a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control.
- The principles are transferable across all ages and all settings.
- Remember positive emotions that are equally as intense as negative ones, can be in any of the zones.
- Having a family zones care plan is hugely valuable!

'Body Check' And Interoception 'Builders'



- Draw attention to a body part, start with those that can be seen before those that can't be visually observed.
- Initially use at times of calm and in positive situations 'the green zone' (Zones of Regulations)
- If more intense sensation is needed then focus on positive emotions e.g.: running around at play time/active game.
- Notice Body signals and connect with body states (start with matching to choices)
- Use structured and fun experiments to increase awareness
- 'Feeling' your body better

Emotional Toolbox (Dr Tony Attwood)



- **Physical tools**

Running, going on a swing, trampolining, dancing.

- **Relaxation tools**

Music, art, reading, sleep, deep breathing.

- **Social tools**

Time with your pet, meaningful occupation (purpose), some time with a trusted person.

- **Thinking tools**

Positive self-talk, counting, the ‘storm won’t last forever’.



Create an Emotion Repair Toolbox



Self-awareness Tools:
For self-regulation and
clarity of thought



Pleasure Tools:
For well-being and energy



Relaxation Tools:
To feel calm and
confident



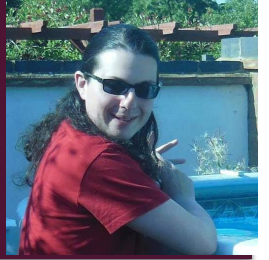
Physical Tools:
For well-being and energy



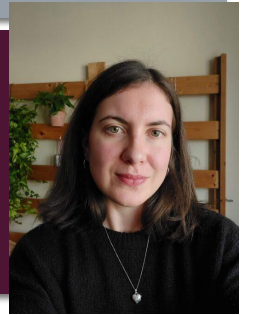
Thinking Tools:
To stay in touch with
reality



Social Tools:
To combat loneliness



5,4,3,2,1



Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

5 things you can hear

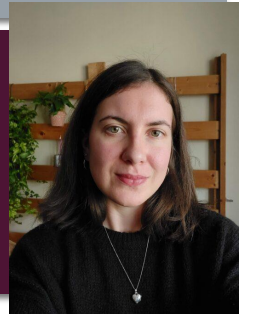
4 things you can see

3 thing you can touch

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste (or like the taste of)

TIPP



■ T– Temperature.

Cold temperatures trigger your ‘dive reflex’ which will slow your heart rate down. This effectively lowers the intensity of the high energy emotions such as anger, rage or fear.

Try splashing your face with cold water, putting an ice pack on your forehead, holding ice in your hands or you could try eating some ice or rubbing an ice cube on your skin.

■ I– Intense Exercise.

This is good for any high energy emotions like anger or fear, but also for low energy emotions like sadness. Increasing oxygen levels helps decrease stress levels.

Intense exercise may include star jumps, jumping, wall push ups or sit ups. You could also go for a walk.

■ P– Pacing.

Breathing Paced breathing can be helpful in calming the body down in it’s response to emotions.

Breathe in and count to 4. Hold your breath at the very top of your inhale for a couple of seconds and then exhale for as long as you can (more than 4 counts). Focus on your breathing and not the problem.

■ P– Progressive Relaxation.

Progressive muscle relaxation helps reduce stress and anxiety in your body by having you slowly tense and relax each muscle. This can provide an immediate feeling of relaxation but needs lots of practice.

For progressive muscle relaxation, tense your muscles in groups, starting from your feet and working your way up your body to your head and face. Tense them tightly as you can, and then release them.

De-escalation Strategies



- Avoid making demands
- Remain non-judgemental
- Silence
- Don't try and 'fix' the issue
- Be aware of your body language
- Regulate your breathing (mirroring)
- Reflective listening



Useful Links



- Molehill Mountain App

<https://www.autistica.org.uk/molehill-mountain>

- Emotional Tool box

<https://tonyattwood.com.au/the-emotion-repair-toolbox/>

- Zones of Regulation

<https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

- Kelly Mahler- Interoception

<https://www.kelly-mahler.com/what-is-interoception/>

Thank you