

66TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Using Zones of Regulation in a Middle School Setting

Rachel McElroy & Susan Huff
Asheboro City Schools



SELF-ASSESSMENT: A Journey of Change

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Introduction

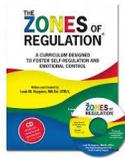
- There were some students that were having trouble with the social aspects of middle school and we wanted to be able to address their social/emotional needs in a direct instruction group.
- Susan had experience with using Zones of Regulation and Social Thinking (Michelle Garcia Winner) and thought it would be beneficial because it is focused on self-regulation and emotional control.

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Zones of Regulation

- The Zones uses four colors to help students identify where their bodies are related to emotion and self control as well as identifying the emotions of others.
- The terminology is not complex and can be easily integrated into conversations by parents and teachers as well.
- cognitive behavior approach and it's activities are designed to help students recognize when they are in different states ("zones").



Choosing Participants

- We wanted to choose students who were relatively in the same level of social/cognitive ability and had difficulties which included:
 - ❖ Emotional regulation
 - ❖ Perspective Taking "understanding what others are thinking"
 - ❖ Working with a group
 - ❖ Joint attention
 - ❖ Unexpected behaviors
- * It is best to group students who struggle with emotional regulation separate from those who struggle with social/emotional issues so that you can better address needs of all students.

Team Members

- We recommend 2 adults so that you can role play/model behavior and reaction to behaviors
- Rachel McElroy...Exceptional Children's teacher that lead the social skills group and coordinated the order and activities
- Susan Brock Huff, OTR/L...was a support related to the curriculum and sensory tools
- Laura Trogon, Speech Pathologist...addressed issues related to speech/communication and support related to the curriculum

Organization

- 4-5 students per adult is an ideal size.
- Prior knowledge of students- it is important to understand what the social struggles are and where they may be coming from.
- We encourage group work and discussions so it is important that students in the groups are willing to speak to each other. If you have a few "quiet" students, make sure that they are split up or that an adult is able to facilitate conversation.

Introducing Group to Students

- First Year: We wanted the students to feel like they were part of a "club" or special group and liked coming.
- They named the group themselves "The Mysterious Communicating Comets"
- Many of our sessions focused on basic good communication and conversation skills and had them practice these skills through activities such as interviewing teachers in the school.
- We saw that the students could TELL us what good social skills looked like but struggled to apply them in real situations.
- Also, they did not realize that their actions impacted others thoughts, feelings and behavior (A key idea in Social Thinking)

First Year- Culminating Activity

- Students planned an outing to a restaurant and then to a school dance...with some help.

Celebrations:

- Independence- it was the first time some of the students had ever ordered for themselves!
- Connections- The students had great conversation during dinner with very little prompting.

Second Year

- We wanted to really focus on Social Thinking and Zones of Regulation ideas to address Perspective Taking, and Emotional Regulation.
- A few 6th grade students were added to the group but there were about 7 returning students.

Materials Needed: “Zones of Regulation Tools” Folder

- Each student needs a folder to keep their papers so that they can refer back to them.
- When students begin learning about “The Zones” they can refer back to these to become well versed in each zone.
- Later, students will be putting together “Tools” that work to regulate their emotions in an appropriate manner.
- *We kept them in the room but would like the students to begin carrying them so that they can be reminded to check their zone and use a tool, if necessary.

ZONES Bingo activity

- An activity that students enjoyed was Zones Bingo. They were provided laminated Bingo cards (in the Zones manual) and squares made of red, green, blue, and yellow.
- As the emotions were called out and picture revealed, they checked their boards to determine if they had it. If so, they selected which zone they thought they were in and placed the square on the board.
- This activity prompted a lot of discussion which included that some students feel one way about an emotion and others might respond in another way.

Expected and Unexpected Behavior

- Before the group moved into use of the Zones of Regulation, they had done activities related to concepts from Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Thinking. This included working on perspective taking (I have a thought but you might be thinking something different, social files)
- Staff initially discussed expected and unexpected behavior
- Using the Smart Board and Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Mapping template, some school settings were discussed and dissected related to behavior.

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Identifying Zones in Others-Colored Tents

- Use of colored tents to boost student participation.
- Videos used to show different "Zones"- Students had to identify the zone, the "emotion" and the details that supported their choice.
- Follow Up- Zones Charades- Students can create skit of social situation or be given a situation and act it out while other students decide what zone each person might be in.

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Identifying Zones in Themselves-Session sign ins

- As students arrived, they were cued (as needed) to take their name and place on one of the four colors depending on where they were as they entered the room. This gave a good starting point to discuss what was contributing to the student's feelings and if there were things that could be addressed to change the colors as needed. Wall sign-in included the school staff which allowed them to discuss how they felt and why. (I am reminded of when Rachel had a team going to an athletic event and she was excited and as well as anxious.)

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Identifying Zones in Themselves- Session sign ins

- * Good discussion about zones besides "green" NOT being negative but just something you feel. It's ok to be in different zones but important to be aware and use tools as needed!

Zones in videos...Zones in scenarios

- How do I feel? Zone scenarios...

[://mrsduranteszones.weebly.com/the-zones-of-regulation.html](http://mrsduranteszones.weebly.com/the-zones-of-regulation.html)

Making the sessions fit your group

- Around the holiday we decided to prepare for Thanksgiving table expectations
- We watched a video on Thanksgiving table etiquette but it was the following that really got their attention:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l2rY6ODfS8>

Good Thoughts vs. Uncomfortable Thoughts

- Maria walked into class and shouted, "What's up everybody?! Wooohooo!" As she walked by the other students in class she smacked one in the back of the neck and pushed another one's binder off their desk. When she finally sat down, she copied off the person sitting next to her and even grabbed their paper and wouldn't give it back. When it was time to work with partners no one wanted to work with Maria.

Good Thoughts vs. Uncomfortable Thoughts

- A few days later, Maria came into class quietly and sat down. She smiled at her classmates and said good morning to them when they came in. She lent a classmate a pencil because they didn't have one. She raised her hand when she had an answer and completed all of her work. She even helped another student. When it was time to work with partners a few students said they would be her partner but not everyone wanted to work with her.

Visual reinforcement of this idea

- Popsicle sticks for good and uncomfortable thoughts
- Used during class to show how actions influenced others thoughts.
- ALSO, showed it took a lot more good thoughts to overcome negative perceptions.



Sensory tools use:

- Goals for this activity:
- Students gain insight about how sensory support tools can help regulate zones
- Students understand that sensory support tools can help them wake up and be more alert as well as help them calm down and feel more organized.
- Students understand that sensory support tools should be used in all zones in order to self-regulate
- Students learn how to access and use sensory support tools

Hand fidgets: Rub, squeeze, twist...but be quiet!

- Various hand fidgets were passed around and discussed in groups (how it felt, how it made them feel, which ones might work for them and when)
- A balloon inside a balloon was filled with sensory medium:
- Baking soda
- Peas
- Beans
- Common fidgets (paper clip, pencil, etc...) were also tried and discussed.

Big Problem, Little Problem

- Pictures on the wall...went around in groups picking which picture would be considered a certain level and determining why based on criteria taught.



2nd Year Culminating Activity: Comet Café

- Room transformation to the "Comet Café"
- Students had to order from people that they didn't know (volunteers)
- Then they were encouraged to have conversations with their peers.



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Comet Café Critic

you restrand was a big succes. Man next year you do with out those lights. they got on my nevers. Also you should do it at lunch and have steak and bacon and make it a little bit faster. Also get a 1 dollar menu. Man i would be so happy if you had outain dew. You should give us more cash to spend. You should call it the meat bomb. also the lightes should be **not** that crazy. light maybe ones that dont move liike an adhd kid.

P.S. You would **not** be the next food network star. You should leve that to me when i am like 21 because then i can handle achool. **NOT NOT NOT** to to drink with but to cook with. By the way stick with store bought food. **DO NOT** try to cook steak you will burn all of them and also **dont** cook bacon you will burn your house down. Get a professional cook. I think pepole though you possessed it or something. Stay safe. Thank god school is almost out and DONT try to cook make mr,magiry cook for you.

Make you restrand a little less A.D.H.D.
The Bacon King.



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Volunteers

- Community in Schools was also a resource, providing money for some of the food (we did a lot of it!) and staff to help. We wanted people they did not know to take and fill their orders. We used fake money but they shared with each other or begged from us...a teaching moment!



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Comet Cafe



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In the future...

- Things we learned: Changes don't happen overnight! However, with the Zones curriculum, we had common language to discuss things that were happening with our students as well as helping them consider options related to self regulation and choices they would make.
- Take data...or have students log data info in their book
- End with a way for students to take information/use it whether they return next year or not.
- Consider needs for student with diabetes.

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Citations

- The Zones of Regulation- Leah Kuypers, MA Ed. OTR/L
- Social Thinking- Michelle Garcia Winner

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Questions?

- Email: rmarinucci@asheboro.k12.nc.us
