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Physical Strategies

As mentioned previously, there is a logical reason for starting with physical regulation skills. In order to be able to discuss emotions and engage in problem-solving we must be physically calm. Individuals who haven't developed this skill are still regularly operating in a fight/flight/shut-down mode that inhibits their ability to progress. When people are in this state, they are not able to learn or benefit from common forms of intervention. They are not open to rational communication or problem-solving and may not respond well to traditional forms of behavior modification.

The importance of having well-developed physical calming skills cannot be overstated. From our experience, even a child with the most serious of issues can function in the home or learning environment, if they can physically calm themselves down before they escalate. Prior to initiating higher level interventions, or expecting children to make progress, we must be sure they have developed the skills necessary for physical regulation.

The following interventions are designed to teach the basic skills of physical regulation. There are two main functional skill-training areas within the Physical Regulation domain:

- ✓ Identification of physical warning signs for upset
- ✓ Learning how to get safe and calm to deactivate the warning system

The lessons can be used one at a time, as part of a core curriculum, or to address a specific problem area. With young children, much of the Self-regulation skill-training will be spent on the development of physical regulation strategies.

— **Note: The physical strategies are THE ONLY strategies that should be implemented when an individual is upset. They should NOT be taught when a child is upset, but instead practiced until mastered ahead of time. The child will then know exactly what to do when the fight/flight/shut-down response is triggered.**

IN THIS SECTION

Core Lessons

1. Controlling Our Body
2. Body Parts (Part One)
3. Body Parts (Part Two)
4. Threat
5. Warning Signs (Part 1)
6. Warning Signs (Part 2)
7. Calming Strategies (Part 1)
8. Calming Strategies (Part 2)
9. Safe Place
10. Tying It All Together

Supplemental Activities

- My Warning Signs
- Warning Signs Gingerbread Kids
- Don't Scratch It
- Horsefly Sigh
- Pufferfish Breathing
- Safe and Calm Bottle

Quick Practice

- Animal Matching
- Deep Breath Song
- Matching Game
- Safe Sam Says
- Safe Place
- Physical Play Dough Mat Number 1
- Calming Skills Block Game

Physical Regulation

Controlling Our Body



Objective Understanding that you can make your body do things or not do things

VOCABULARY

Control

Materials

Box
Toy or candy

Introduction

“Today we are going to talk about your body.”

Lesson

“Your body moves and makes noises. Sometimes your body makes noises all by itself. One noise your body makes is a sneeze. Raise your hand if you know another noise your body makes by itself.”

- Stomach growls, burp, cough, etc.
- Offer specific praise and repeat that those are all noises your body makes by itself.

“Your body can make lots of other noises too because you tell it to. One noise you can make is clapping your hands. You can also make noise by talking. Raise your hand if you know another noise you can make with your body.”

- Screaming, yelling, tapping your legs, whistling, etc.
- Offer specific praise and repeat that those are all noises you can tell your body to make.

“You can make your body make noises. You can also make your body move in lots of different ways. Let’s practice making your body move. Watch me and move your body the same as mine.”

- Raise right hand
- Stand up
- Turn around in a circle
- Offer specific praise making sure to reinforce the children made their own bodies move and no one else can make their bodies move.

Physical Regulation

Controlling Our Body (continued)



Lesson

“Now we are going to play a game. I am going to see if you can control your body. Control means that you tell your body what to do. You are in charge. See this box?” *(Hold up box with toy or candy inside. Box should be closed so children cannot see what’s inside.)* “If you want to find out what is inside this box, you have to turn around and wait. Do you think you can do that?” *(Encourage children to respond that they can do it.)* “I’m going to put this box on the chair. Now you all turn around and face the _____ *(wall, door, or whatever else is in the room opposite the box)*. Stay right where you are while I count to five. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now you may turn around.” *(Wait for children to turn around.)* “Good job! You controlled your bodies and turned around. You didn’t look at the box until I said it was okay. Now, let’s look in the box.” *(Open box and excitedly show what is in the box. If it is candy, provide the reward to the children. If it is a toy, allow the children to explore the toy.)*

“You really did a good job of controlling your bodies. Even though you wanted to turn around and look at the box, you didn’t. Let’s say this together, ‘I control my body!’ Ready, ‘I control my body!’”

- Offer praise for their participation in the lesson and quickly review what was covered. Transition to next classroom activity.

