

EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIES FOR THE ZONES OF REGULATION

At The Zones of Regulation, we acknowledge the longstanding presence of systemic racism and "otherism" within our education systems and society at large. We believe that it is crucial to support racial equity, neurodiversity, gender diversity, and cultural diversity in schools, clinics, and community-based settings. Most importantly, we see social emotional learning (SEL) as a critical lever for advancing equity and inclusion for all learners and moving away from punitive behavioral models that perpetuate disparities in opportunity and outcomes for those who identify as BIPOC, neurodivergent, and other marginalized populations.

While The Zones of Regulation framework and concepts are often considered universal, teachers and facilitators should use neurodiverse-affirming, identity-affirming, and culturally responsive strategies/practices that respect, reflect, and honor student identities and life experiences. The following strategies will help you on your journey toward a more equitable learning experience for learners of all ages.

SCHOOL CLIMATE STRATEGIES:

- Empower learners to express a full range of emotions and provide opportunities to learn and practice healthy ways to manage them in a safe and supportive environment.
- Use a value lens (vs. deficit lens) to capitalize and build on strengths when planning for and discussing learners.
- Build authentic relationships with learners and families through intentional practices and active listening.
- Consider if biases and ableism are at work when discussing and addressing behavioral concerns, compliance, and consequences.
- Carefully examine classroom, school, and district systems around behavior and punitive measures through an equity lens.
- Consider and utilize practices around authentic inclusion of ALL learners.
- Partner with families, caregivers, and community groups to support learners across settings to enrich their learning.
- Build a climate that focuses on well-being over compliance behavioral expectations.
- Provide an opportunity for adult SEL, exploring regulation strategies for themselves to develop comfort and capacity to support regulation in their greater school community.
- Establish trust and rapport, which is foundational to supporting students real-time in managing their Zones, especially during challenging situations with big feelings.
- Normalize that regulation looks and feels differently for each of us; we each have unique brains, bodies, and life experiences.

ZONES OF REGULATION EQUITY & INCLUSION STRATEGIES:

- Incorporate learners' strengths and interests into Zones instruction. Collaborate with students to create scenarios for practice/role play that are relevant to their lives.
- "Own Your Zone" by modelling healthy communication, emotional literacy, and regulation skills.
- Discuss individual and cultural differences in how people feel, express, and perceive emotions, Zones, and behaviors.
- Create a culture where adults and learners support each other in caring for their Zones and well-being.
- Adults and learners use a Zones Check-In and have access to regulation tools as primary positive classroom management strategies. However, never force learners to check-in with their Zone, especially if they are in an elevated state.
- Utilize The Zones across tiered instruction, providing more support and individualization for those who need it.
- Teach and reinforce that All the Zones are Okay! The goal of The Zones is not to be in the Green Zone, rather it is to build skills to regulate all feelings and Zones.
- Use visual supports to increase accessibility for learners at all stages of language and cognitive development. Make sure to use imagery and media that is representative of and relevant to your learners when constructing Zones visuals and use a critical eye for bias when exploring imagery/media. *(PLEASE BE AWARE that many materials found online for free or purchased on sites such as TeachersPayTeachers.com do NOT represent the values and intentions of The Zones of Regulation and are not approved by The Zones of Regulation.)*
- Integrate The Zones' common language within Restorative Practice conversations and circles.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

National Equity Project: Social Emotional Learning and

Equity <https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/social-emotional-learning-and-equity>

The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program: Pursuing Social and Emotional Development Through a Racial Equity Lens: A Call to Action (2018) <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/pursuing-social-and-emotional-development-through-a-racial-equity-lens-a-call-to-action/>

The Education Trust: Social, Emotional, and Academic Development through an Equity Lens (2020) <https://edtrust.org/social-emotional-and-academic-development-through-an-equity-lens/>

Z. Hammond. Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain (2015)

