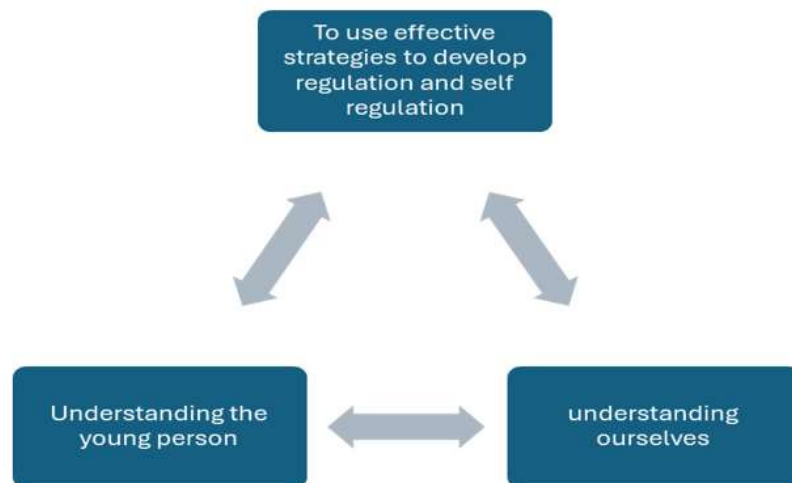


De-escalation

Emotional de-escalation is a proactive, interpersonal process designed to reduce the intensity of conflict, anger or agitation preventing situations from escalating into violence or crisis. In other words, our aim is to maintain regulation by preventing escalation or increasing levels of distress.

To be successful you need all three elements below. They are not hierarchical but equally important.



Understanding ourselves (adults)



Understanding the child – to understand what is driving the behaviours.

Remember - Every behaviour is a communication! Use professional curiosity – find the cause of the behaviour.

You may see:

- Fight, flight, freeze behaviours: crying, aggression, meltdown, withdrawal, yelling, meltdown, avoidance

Because the student is feeling:

- Overwhelmed, embarrassed, sick, hungry, scared, lonely, anxious, sad, frustrated, tired, stressed, lonely, hurt or their basic needs are not being met.

Underlying causes...



Strategies:

- **Build strong and trusting relationships** – have allocated emotionally available adults,
- **Gather pupil voice** – ABC charts (fast triggers and slow triggers), My ideal school, my ideal self, the three houses, body maps,
- **Gather information** – Thrive profile, Boxall profile, Strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), Sensory profile, parent meetings,
- **Monitor** – read the signs and intervene early being proactive is better than reactive

- **Consider your body language/safety cues**– face, body, voice - calm stance, calm body, calm voice, position, posture, proximity
- **Language** – clear, simple, short, clear statement of expectation and provide alternative means of communication if needed,
- **Provide reassurance** – connection, validation, empathy
- **Use supportive scripts** – I wonder, I imagine, I notice (WIN)
- **Time** – allow take up time, allow plenty of time to calm
- **Divert and distract**
- **Provide clear limits/boundaries** – offer structured get out choices – change of face, change of environment, reduction of demand
- **Designated safe spaces**

Recovery and support

- **Co-ordinated letting go time** for staff and student
- **Physical and verbal reassurance** of child and their feelings (at a point of calm)
- **Time to calm** (at least 45 minutes often much longer)
- **Time for staff to recover**

Reconnect, Reflect, Repair

- Listen, link, learn...
- Without judgement / blame
- Don't make assumptions
- Ask what happened, not why
- Consider better ways for next time - SOCCSS approach, comic strips
- Support to repair / restore
- Self / Team reflection – what did I / we learn?
- Is there anything I need to repair?
- Review and update personal plans

Managed return to class / restorative scripts...

- On return to class, pupils are given a fresh start.
- Apologies are not demanded. Unhelpful comments are avoided.
- Staff use an agreed script to help pupils return successfully. E.g. "We have talked about the incident and X would like to come back to work now." This indicates to the teacher that no discussion is needed at this time and the pupil should be allowed to return quietly to work. Or "We have talked about it and X would like to talk to you when possible." Or "X and I would like to talk with you later if possible."
- After an incident, all staff aim to repair and rebuild relationships as soon as possible

Resources:

[Maslow's Hierarchy of need](#)

[The incredible 5-point scale](#)

[The iceberg effect](#)

[Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)

[Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence chart \(ABC\)](#)

[Cycle of development](#)

[Dan Seigal – hand model of the brain](#)

Sensory profiles - various