

# Regulating in a One Person System: *Mark what might work for you.*

## **Orienting, Present Time, Safety and Curiosity**

*Do this in an environment where you know you are safe, (even though you may not feel safe).*

Let your eyes roam or focus as they like. When you can, notice what attracts your attention. Staying curious about our present environment shifts us out of anxiety and hypervigilance and towards what might be pleasant or interesting. Think like a happy puppy on a walk. You may want to include self referencing (noticing how you feel inside) and social referencing (how you are experiencing the people and social scene around you.)

## **Pleasant Memories or Images**

*Remember, imagine or write about any of these. Fill in the details: time of day, time of year, weather, visuals, color, temperature, texture, sounds.*

Feeling safe at home or in nature, pleasant experiences or successful endeavors, relaxing sights, sounds, smells, textures, tastes, or environments. Competent protectors (real or imagined: your own private army, a wise mentor, a loyal gorilla) magical powers (an invisibility cape, an impenetrable shield, a magic wand), corrective images of how it should have been.

## **Meaningful or Rhythmic Activity**

*Pick tasks that you can finish without exhaustion or injury. It helps if the accomplishment is visible or makes your life easier on a regular basis. Rhythmic work is especially regulating.*

House cleaning, gardening, building or fixing something, hiking, boating, raking leaves, dancing solo, playing music, cooking nutritious food .....

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## **Pleasant Sensation, Grooming**

*Touch can be intense. Try familiar things first.*

Track any part of the body that feels strong, relaxed or even just less tight or painful than the rest. Track the breath. Put on lotion, Brush your hair. Pet a pet. Take a bath. Breathe, move, listen to music that soothes you. Fix yourself a candlelight dinner.

## **Turning Inward**

*Caution: Avoid ruminating on unpleasant thoughts.*

Take time for yoga, meditation, prayer, conscious breathing, journaling, creating art.

## **Grounding**

*Caution: Grounding often helps us feel more.*

*Stop if you start to feel overwhelmed.*

Feel your physical connection to something solid outside yourself: feet on the floor, seat on the chair. Let the weight of your bones drop into the floor or chair. Taking the time to feel our bodies and our connection to the ground, in the present, can be a powerful way to regulate our selves.

## **Language of Sensation** (Levine, Poole-Heller, 1997)

*Naming the difficult or painful sensations can bring them to consciousness where we can work with them, instead of feeling controlled or overpowered by them. Avoid this if you tend to get easily overwhelmed.*

Track what you feel in your body. Use words to name the sensations and bring them into shared consciousness. If it gets too intense, shift your attention to pleasant sensations, or the least painful or unpleasant areas of your body.

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## Regulating in a Two Person System: *Mark what might work for you.*

### **Orienting, Present Time, Safety and Curiosity**

*Most anyone who is willing can follow your curiosity and their own. Take turns or use a timer: 2-5 min. each way. Agree on a time frame, say 15 or 30 min. It works well on a walk.*

Let your eyes roam or focus as they like. When you want, notice what attracts your attention and describe it. Sharing curiosity about the present environment shifts us out of fearful expectations and hypervigilance and towards what might be pleasant or interesting. Think like a happy puppy on a walk. Explore everything. Shift your attention back and forth between the environment and connecting with a person. You may want to include self referencing (noticing how you feel inside) and social referencing (how you are experiencing the people and social scene around you.)

### **Pleasant Memories or Images**

*Remember, imagine or tell about any of these. Fill in the details: time of day, time of year, weather, visuals, color, temperature, texture, sounds.*

Feeling safe and welcome with others, enjoying loved ones, trusting competent protectors (real or imagined), relying on supportive or protective people, sharing pleasant experiences or successful endeavors with others, sharing relaxing sights, sounds, smells, textures, tastes, or places.

### **Social Engagement**

*Choose a person or group where others are sufficiently well-regulated and kind that you feel safe enough.*

Engage in cooperative play or a project with others: house cleaning, gardening, building or fixing something, political action, hiking, rafting, shopping, boating, playing music.....

Communicate. Another person's verbal and non verbal connection draws us to resonate. We can "borrow " their resource to settle ourselves down. Babies do this. When Mom is upset, baby cries. When Mom is calm, baby settles.

### **Pleasant Sensation, Welcome Touch, Grooming**

*Touch and sensation can be intimate and intense.*

*Be sure you feel safe and can set boundaries.*

*Choose activities that fit the relationship comfortably.*

Track and share about any part of the body that feels strong, relaxed or even just less tight or painful than the rest. Sit back to back and track the breath. Give or receive pleasant massage or hair brushing. Pet an animal or a friend or a loved one. Take a bath with someone safe. Cuddle with someone. Breathe and move with someone, Listen to music that soothes you both.

### **Grounding**

*Do this with a partner. Caution: Grounding often helps us feel more. Shift your focus if you start to feel overwhelmed.*

Feel your physical connection to something solid outside yourself: feet on the floor, seat on the chair. Taking the time to feel our bodies, and our connection to the ground, in the present, can be a powerful way to regulate ourselves.

### **Language of Sensation** (Levine, Poole Heller, 1997)

*For this, you need a good listener who is comfortable in their own body and able to talk about sensations.*

Track what you feel in your body. Use words to name the sensations and bring them into shared consciousness. If it gets too intense, shift your attention to pleasant or sensations or the least painful or unpleasant areas of your body.

# Your Regulation Choices

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle a choice from each sentence:

1. I need to **calm down** or **get moving**.
2. I want to regulate **alone**, **with someone**, or **both**.

*Solo Choices. Fill in the blanks. See p.15 for ideas.*

*Alone, Calming Down:*

- What solo activities calm you down?

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- What internal thoughts or practices calm you down?

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*Alone, Getting Going:*

- What solo activities get you going?

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- What internal thoughts or practices get you going?

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*Global Down Regulation:*

Collapsing into shutdown can help us reset when we are too revved up. Think about allowing yourself the luxury of collapse, and how you will shift out of it gently. If you can, do this with someone reliable standing guard while you rest.

*Interactive Choices. Fill in the blanks. See p. 12 for ideas.*

*Regulating with another person:*

- Who might you turn to? How might they help?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- What agreements with them might you want?

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- What agreements with yourself might help?

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*When no one on your list is available:*

- Whose values or ways of regulating work for you?

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- What might they do or approve of in your situation?

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