

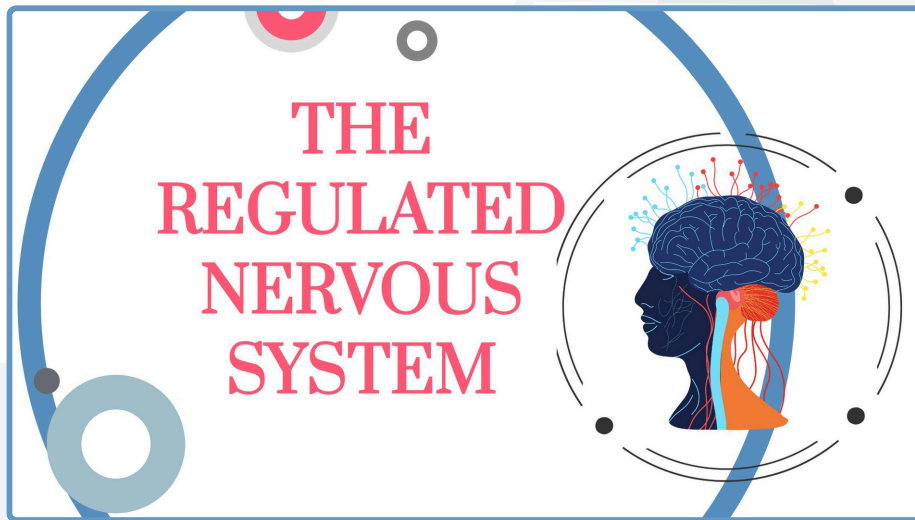
3. Teacher GUIDE

The Regulated Nervous System

Alignments

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **IEP Goal:** Student will recognize personal triggers and emotional patterns, using self-reflection tools to monitor behavior.
- **CASEL Focus:** Self-Management (*Primary*), Self-Awareness (*Secondary*)
- **DBT Skills:** Emotion Regulation (*Primary*), Core Mindfulness (*Secondary*)



WHY DOES THIS LESSON MATTER?

- Teaches that regulation is a skill, not a fixed trait
- Builds awareness of the body's early stress signals ("dashboard")
- Provides concrete tools to return to a balanced state
- Helps students trust they can influence their internal experience
- Lays groundwork for better impulse control and emotion regulation

Gholdy Muhammad's HILL Framework

IDENTITY

- Students recognize their regulation patterns as unique and valid
- Students understand that emotional regulation is a strength
- Students develop agency and confidence in managing big emotions
- Students reframe stress responses as protective, not “bad behavior”

SKILL

- Self-check-ins and nervous system state identification
- Soft belly breathing, grounding, and movement-based calming tools
- Pattern recognition of personal warning signs
- Creating a personalized toolkit for regulation

CONCEPT

- Three nervous system states: Regulated, Activated, Shutdown
- Sympathetic vs. parasympathetic responses
- The body's early warning system
- Regulation as a practice and learnable habit

CRITICALITY

- Regulation struggles are often a result of life context, not personal flaws
- Students examine how environments affect their nervous systems
- Recognize how stress impacts learning and relationships
- Practice self-awareness as a step toward reclaiming control

Day-by-Day Breakdown

Day 1 - What Does It Mean to Be Regulated?

Introduce the Week 3 Video (students watch this on their own or in class)

Discussion Prompts:

- Think of a time you felt steady and in control. What did that feel like in your body?
- What situations knock you off balance most easily?
- What's the difference between being happy and being regulated?

Extension Prompts:

- How could staying regulated help you in a tough situation?
- What might change if you felt more in control of your reactions?
- When have you successfully calmed yourself down? What worked?

Day 2 - Understanding Stress Signals

- Activity: Complete the worksheet: *My Alert System Dashboard*
- Students identify their personal body cues and zones (green/yellow/red)
- Lead a short breathing exercise (soft belly or box breathing)
- Optional: Invite students to share body signals in small groups

Day 3 - Building a Regulation Toolkit

- Activity: Complete the worksheet: *Build Your Regulation Toolkit*
- Students explore and choose tools that work for them
- Practice grounding: 5-4-3-2-1 senses or butterfly hug
- Discuss which tools feel most helpful and when to use them

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Day 4 - Applying Your Tools in Real Life

- Role-play or journal: What tool would help in a stressful situation?
- Small group or class share: "What's in your toolkit, and why?"
- Encourage students to test one tool in real life today and reflect

Day 5-Weekly-Wrap-Up Quiz

- Weekly Wrap-Up Quiz

Worksheet 1

My Alert System Dashboard

Spotting My Stress Signals Early





INTRO PROMPT:

Just like a dashboard in a car shows when something needs attention, your body gives you signals when stress or strong emotions are rising. The earlier you notice the signals, the more choices you have. This activity helps you become a “body detective” — learning to notice and name what your body is telling you.

PART 1: MY STRESS SIGNALS – BODY CLUES

Think about what happens in your body when you start feeling upset, anxious, angry, or overwhelmed.

Fill in the chart with your personal signals:

Signal Type	What I Notice In Me
 Heartbeat	(e.g., faster, pounding, still, jumpy)
Breathing	(e.g., shallow, holding breath, slow, rapid)
 Muscles	(e.g., tense fists, jaw tight, shoulders high)
 Thoughts	(e.g., racing, blaming, blank, worried)
 Face & Eyes	(e.g., glare, frozen face, teary, narrowed eyes)

PART 2: MY RED, YELLOW, GREEN ZONES

Complete the boxes below like a traffic light. Write how you act, feel, or think in each state.

● Green (Regulated):

I feel: _____

I act like: _____

I can usually: _____

● Yellow (Rising Stress):

I feel: _____

My body starts to: _____

Others might notice: _____

● Red (Stress Overflow / Shutdown):

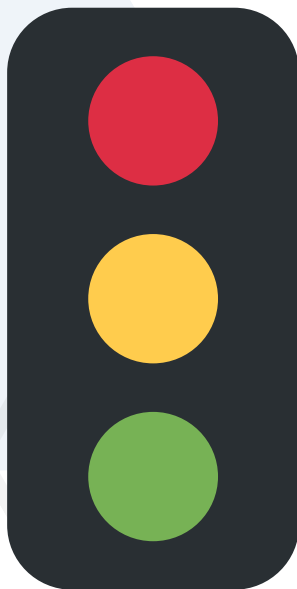
I feel: _____

My body does this: _____

I may need: _____

Reflection Questions:

- What signs usually come first when you're moving out of the green zone?
- Which zone do you find yourself in the most lately?
- What's one way you can notice a yellow zone signal before you reach red?



Worksheet 2

Tools to Help Me Reset

My Personal Response Profile

INTRO PROMPT:

When your stress levels rise, it's helpful to have a set of tools you already know work for you. This activity helps you build a personal regulation toolkit — so when things feel hard, you know exactly what to try.

PART 1: PICK YOUR TOP 3 TOOLS

**Check or circle the tools that help you feel calm, safe, or more in control.
You can also add your own!**

Body-Based Tools (DBT Distress Tolerance)

- ☐ Box breathing
- ☐ Cold water splash
- ☐ Squeezing a pillow
- ☐ Grounding with 5-4-3-2-1
- ☐ Movement (run, stretch, shake)
- ☐ Tapping (EFT or butterfly hug)
- ☐ Weighted blanket or pressure
- ☐ Taking a walk

Mind-Based Tools

- ☐ "Name it to tame it" (label the emotion)
- ☐ Repeating a calming phrase
- ☐ Listening to music
- ☐ Visualization (imagining a safe place)
- ☐ Journaling
- ☐ Gratitude list
- ☐ Talking to a trusted adult
- ☐ Drawing or coloring

PART 2: DESIGN YOUR CALM PLAN

Fill this in as your go-to plan when you're stressed or overwhelmed:

When I notice I'm in the yellow or red zone, I will:

- First, _____ (tool or action)
- Then, _____ (tool or action)
- If I need more help, I will talk to: _____

Reflection Questions:

- Which tools have worked for you before?
- Which tool will you try the next time you feel overwhelmed?
- How can you remind yourself to use your calm plan in the moment?

Family Letter

English

DEAR FAMILIES,

This week in our emotional wellness curriculum, students are learning about **what it means to feel regulated**—calm, focused, and in control of their actions. We are exploring the **nervous system's role** in emotions and behavior, and students are practicing tools they can use when they feel overwhelmed or stressed.

KEY TOPICS THIS WEEK INCLUDE:

- How the nervous system responds to stress
- Early warning signs when stress is rising
- Building a personal **regulation toolkit** with calming strategies

YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS LEARNING AT HOME BY:

- Asking your child what “regulated” feels like for them
- Practicing a calming tool together like deep breathing or the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding activity
- Noticing and naming your own stress signals as a model for them

Thank you for partnering with us to help students develop strong self-regulation skills that support lifelong well-being.

Warmly, The Namaste Project Team

Carta Familiar

Español

QUERIDAS FAMILIAS:

Esta semana en nuestro currículo de bienestar emocional, los estudiantes están aprendiendo qué significa sentirse **regulado**: tranquilo, enfocado y con control de sus acciones. Estamos explorando el papel del **sistema nervioso** en las emociones y el comportamiento, y los estudiantes están practicando herramientas que pueden usar cuando se sienten estresados o abrumados.

TEMAS CLAVE DE ESTA SEMANA:

- Cómo responde el sistema nervioso al estrés
- Señales tempranas cuando aumenta el estrés
- Crear una **caja de herramientas de regulación** con estrategias calmantes

USTED PUEDE APOYAR ESTE APRENDIZAJE EN CASA:

- Preguntando a su hijo/a cómo se siente cuando está “regulado”
- Practicando juntos una herramienta calmante como la respiración profunda o la actividad de los 5-4-3-2-1 sentidos
- Nombrando y explicando sus propias señales de estrés como modelo para su hijo/a

Gracias por acompañarnos en este trabajo de ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar habilidades de autorregulación que los apoyarán a lo largo de sus vidas.

Con gratitud, El equipo de The Namaste Project