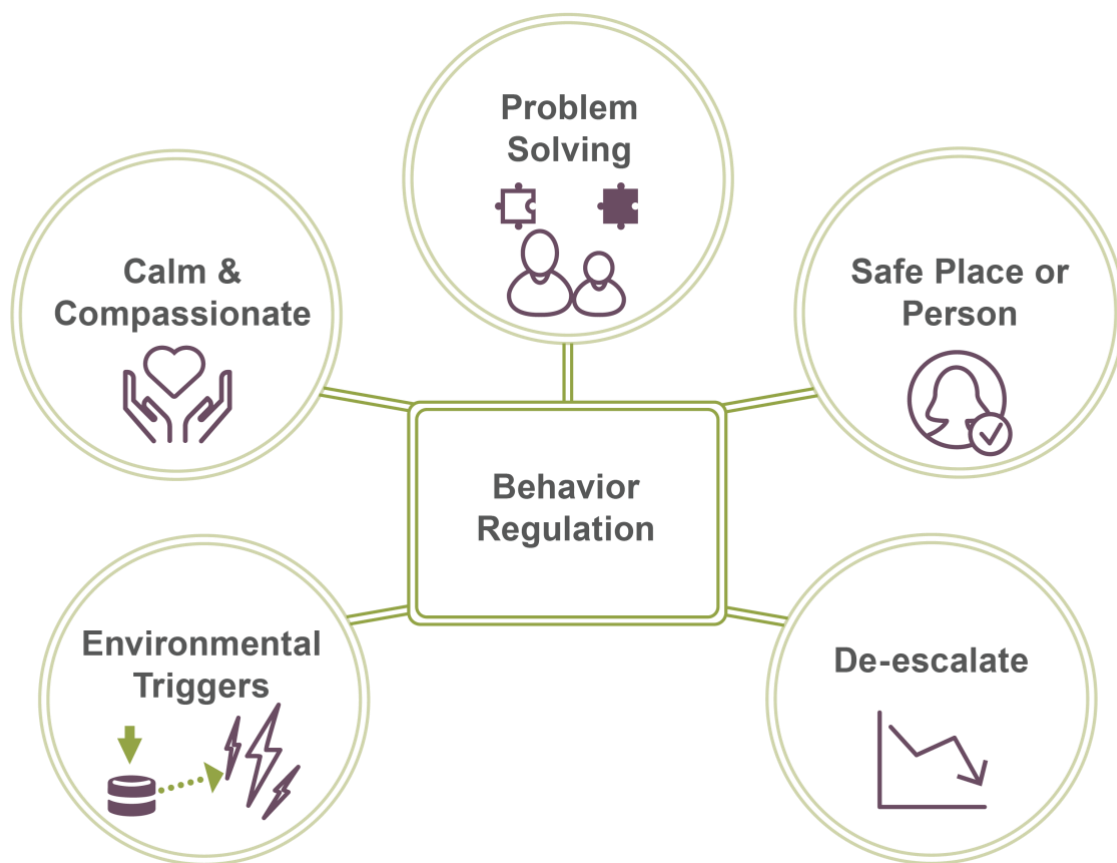




Strategies for Supporting Students: Behavior Regulation

Students struggling with behavior regulation may argue with other students and adults, not follow instructions, lose their temper, and engage in physically aggressive behaviors toward property, others, or themselves. This may be especially difficult for teachers to cope with and increase their risk of burnout.



ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGERS

Can you identify times that a student is more likely to be triggered? What needs are they trying to get met and are there ways to avoid triggers? For example, a sudden change in the classroom environment or schedule could make the student feel unsafe, and they may express that discomfort externally. Or the lesson material is too challenging leading to frustration and even a sense of helplessness. Chunking,

scaffolding, and peer tutors can make it easier for a student to engage with the material.

CALM AND COMPASSIONATE

Even when students have a negative attitude, are aggressive, or are not following expectations, do not allow misconduct to provoke angry or emotional reactions. Responding with anger or coercion increases the emotional temperature in the room and often leads to power struggles. Use reflective listening to help students feel heard and understood. Speak firmly, with compassion and kindness, even when students exhibit defiant behavior. When children feel heard and understood, are given choices, and feel connected to others, their emotionality decreases, and behavior is likely to improve.

PROBLEM SOLVING

When a student is struggling, it can be helpful to collaboratively define the problem and brainstorm solutions. An offer of help to problem solve invites the student to join you in working together to address their needs. Support, versus attempts to control, help maintain and even build student-teacher relationships as well increases the student's buy-in for the proposed solution. In a moment of pending crisis, offering a student several choices usually lowers their defenses and offers them some level of control when they may be feeling out of control.

SAFE PLACE OR PERSON

Create a place for students to go or someone they can speak with when they become agitated or dysregulated. Students benefit from having places that feel safe and people they trust, especially when distressed.

DE-ESCALATION

Listen before reacting and allow the student to describe why they are upset without judgment or correction to help the student feel heard. Give simple, firm directives, but discuss problems privately. Use your skills of self- and co-regulation to help both you and the student stay calm.

