

SMART PRACTICE

Responses and Strategies

Activities and Discussions



SMART Circle of PRACTICE

The SMART Circle of PRACTICE is a tool designed by the Australian Childhood Foundation to conceptualise ways to support and co-regulate students using what is called “Bottom Up and Top Down” responding and strategies. When under stress or having been impacted from trauma, a student’s ability to stay engaged in their learning and social interactions is significantly impacted.

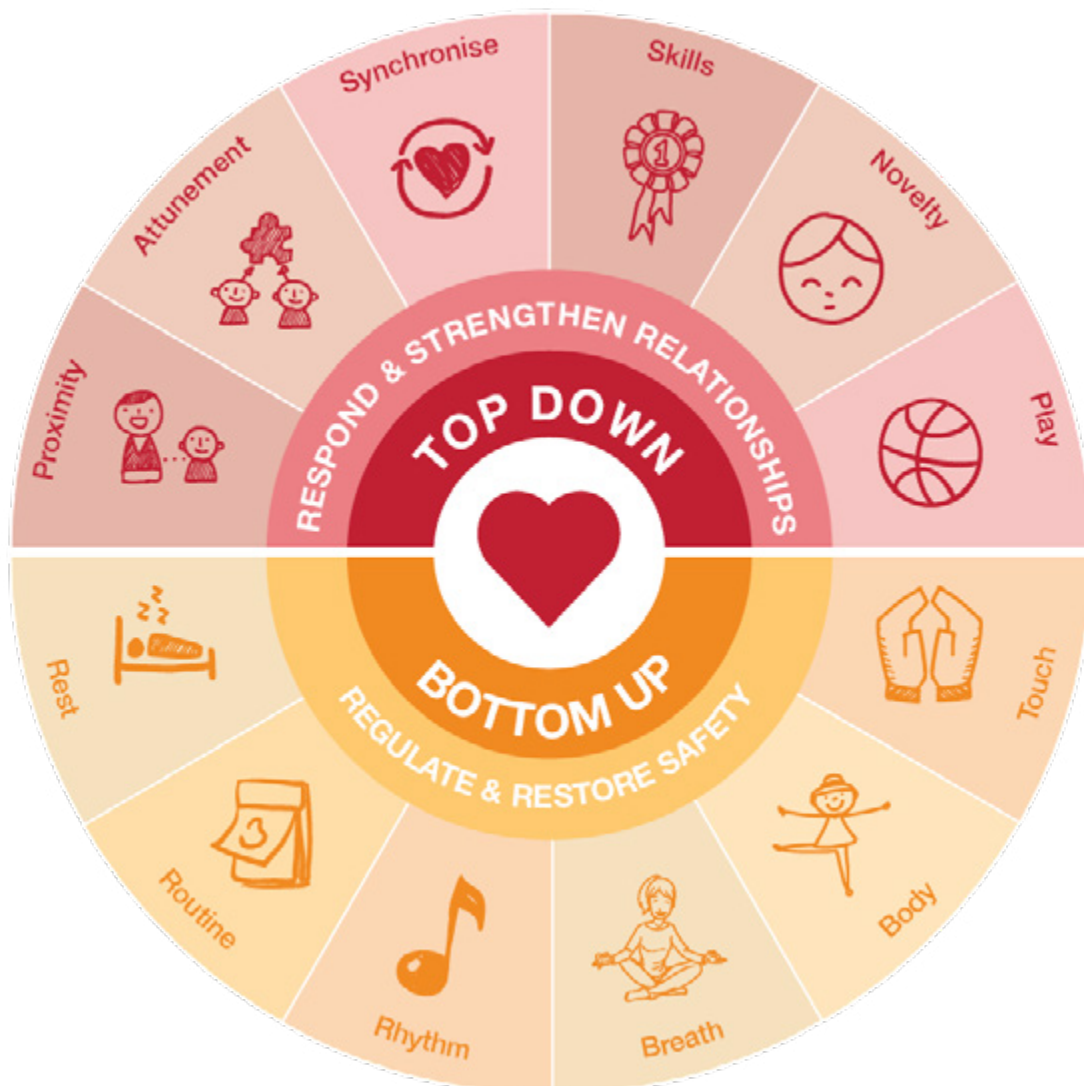
Two factors that are essential in healing and recovery from experiences of trauma and the accompanying dysregulation are:

1. **Enhancing self-regulation and**
2. **Supporting relationships through sensory-based attunement** (Malchiodi, in Mitchell, Tucci & Tronick, 2020).

The goal is to provide educators practical ways to help students be and feel safe and stay engaged in their learning and social interactions at school. This is done through enhancing their self-regulation, through co-regulation, and strengthening their relationship with educators and their peers.

“Bottom Up” responding refers to engaging the subcortical (lower) parts of the brain to regulate the higher parts of the brain. “Top Down” responding refers to engaging the cortical (higher) parts of the brain to regulate the lower parts of the brain. Educators can use the “Top Down” approach when students are in, or able to still engage, a regulated state to help them stay there, and use the “Bottom Up” approach to help students access a regulated state when feeling distressed, unsafe or disconnected.

The 12 elements in the circle are ways that have been identified through research to provide what human brains and bodies need for regulation.



Bottom-Up Responses



Breath

Understanding and using breath to regulate/ the importance of understanding breath for alerting/calming/staying in the WOT

Activity

Discussion



Body

Body awareness/ what's happening in my body/how am I feeling somatically & emotionally/ body sensations

Activity

Discussion



Touch

Safe & sensory touch experiences

Activity

Discussion

Bottom-Up Responses



Rhythm

Body movement, rhythm of the day/year/lesson

Activity

Discussion



Routine

Predictability and consistency

Activity

Discussion




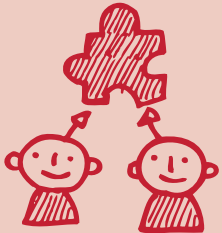

Rest

Rest, moments of calm and quiet, sleep

Activity

Discussion

Top-Down Responses

 <p>Proximity Understanding and using proximity</p>	<p>Activity</p>
 <p>Attunement Connection/tuning in to what I need/what the student needs</p>	<p>Activity</p>
 <p>Synchronise Working together, working alongside one another</p>	<p>Activity</p>
	<p>Discussion</p>

Top-Down Responses



Skills

Building understanding and capacity – in learning tasks/emotional literacy/social/emotional competence

Activity

Discussion



Novelty

Inclusion of fun and laughter, novel experiences

Activity

Discussion



Play

Playing together/being playful and joyful

Activity

Discussion