



Frumerie Counseling

Sensory Strategies for Regulation

Start here: Notice your current body state, choose 1 or 2 strategies, and try them for 2 to 5 minutes.

Then Ask: "Did this help, make no difference, or make things worse?" Use this as a menu rather than a rulebook.

Body State	What it May Feel Like	Goal	Try first	Strategy Menu
High arousal Overwhelmed, anxious, overstimulated, or "body on high alert"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety, panic, irritability, emotional swings Fast breathing, racing heart, muscle tension Sensory defensiveness, overload, urge to escape 	Reduce arousal Calm, soothe, and lower input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dim lights or reduce noise Longer exhale breathing Firm pressure or heavy work Move to a quieter space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise reduction: earplugs, headphones, white or brown noise Visual reduction: sunglasses, hat, hoodie, fewer screens Deep pressure: weighted blanket, firm touch, compression clothing if preferred Slow rhythm: rocking, slow walk, gentle stretching Tactile/temperature: soft texture, warm mug, cold pack, cold water on hands or face Comfort object or grounding item Safe exit plan: know where to go for less input
Low arousal Shut down, foggy, flat, tired, or under-responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lethargy, fatigue, flat affect Low initiation, slow processing, brain fog Low engagement, hard to start tasks 	Increase arousal Alert, energize, and re-engage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand up or change posture Cold water or bright light Short walk or light bounce One tiny concrete task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating movement: walking, marching, stairs, light bouncing Brighten input: open blinds, step outside, use a task light Strong taste/scent: peppermint, citrus, sour candy, mint, cold drink Auditory: upbeat rhythmic music Oral input: crunchy or chewy snack, gum, straw bottle Task initiation: wash hands, fill water, put shoes on, walk to mailbox Co-regulation: brief check-in, body doubling, doing a task near a safe person
Mixed or dysregulated Scattered, disconnected, "all over the place," or fluctuating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fidgeting, distractibility, disorganized behavior Out of body or disconnected feeling Hard to sustain attention, tension, restlessness 	Organize and stabilize Ground, focus, and create predictability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feet on floor Heavy work 5-4-3-2-1 grounding Reduce choices to 2 options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy work: push, pull, carry, wall push-ups, chair push-ups Fidgets: texture, putty, rings, fabric, worry stone Grounding: name 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste Postural input: feet grounded, isometric holds, hands pressed together Repetitive tasks: folding, sorting, coloring, wiping counter, knitting/crochet Regulating movement/stimming: rocking, pacing, tapping, humming, doodling Structure: written plan, transition warning, "what happens next" list



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Sensory Strategies for Regulation: Extra Tools and Personalization

Build a sensory kit

- Earplugs or noise-canceling headphones
- Sunglasses, hat, hoodie, or other visual-reduction tool
- Fidget, textured item, putty, worry stone, or fabric swatch
- Gum, mints, sour candy, crunchy snack, or straw bottle
- Water, snack, cold pack, warm pack, or hand warmer
- Comfort object, grounding card, or reminder note
- Optional scent if helpful: peppermint, citrus, lavender, or unscented alternative

Client-tested ideas to consider

Type	Examples
Less input	Quiet corner, car break, bathroom reset, lights off, headphones, fewer screens, reduce talking for a few minutes.
More input	Walk outside, cold drink, upbeat music, bright light, brisk movement, crunchy/chewy snack, brief social check-in.
Organizing input	Heavy work, fidgets, repetitive tasks, bilateral movement, feet on floor, written plan, 2-choice decision, transition warning.
Regulating movement	Rocking, pacing, tapping, humming, stretching, hand movements, doodling, knitting/crochet, folding/sorting. Stimming can be regulation.

Make it personal

When I Notice...	Strategies that Help Me	Strategies to Avoid or Use Carefully	Notes
High Arousal / overwhelmed			
Low Arousal / Shut Down			
Mixed / Dysregulated			

Safety note

This handout is a general sensory-regulation menu, not a medical or mental-health crisis plan. For acute safety concerns, follow your safety plan, contact your clinician/crisis support, or use local emergency resources. Use caution and personalize. Stop or adjust any strategy that increases distress, pain, dizziness, nausea, panic, shutdown, or discomfort. Consider medical, sensory, trauma, swallowing, allergy, food, and movement-related needs. Weighted or pressure-based strategies should feel safe and never restrict breathing or movement. Adapt with a clinician/provider as needed.