



ND Regulation Toolkit

Sensory + somatic options that work with ADHD / AuDHD nervous systems

By Neal Glendenning

Contact: info@theneuroinclusionproject.co.uk

© 2025 Neal Glendenning / The Neuro Inclusion Project / NdCare Group.
All rights reserved.

This material may not be reproduced, distributed, adapted, or used for training, commercial, or educational purposes without prior written permission.

Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

Regulation isn't about being calm all the time.
It's about helping your nervous system **shift out of overload** and **back into enough safety** to function.

This toolkit offers **options**, not rules.
If something doesn't help... skip it.
If something helps a little... that counts.

How to use this toolkit

- Choose **one or two** options at a time
- Use them **before** things get overwhelming when you can
- Use them **during** overwhelm to reduce intensity
- Use them **after** to support recovery

You're aiming for a **10–20% shift**, not total relief.

Part 1. Sensory Regulation Options

(Change the input coming in)

Sensory overload often drives dysregulation in ADHD/AuDHD.
Reducing or balancing input can calm the system **without thinking**.

Sound

- Noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs
- Predictable background sound (brown noise, rain, a familiar show)
- Music with steady rhythm rather than emotional build-up

Helpful when: everything feels loud, sharp, or irritating.

Light

- Dim lights or lamps instead of overhead lighting
- Sunglasses or a cap indoors if needed
- Looking away from screens for brief pauses

Helpful when: eyes feel strained, head feels buzzy, concentration drops.

Touch & pressure

- Weighted blanket or lap pad
- Compression clothing or tight hoodie
- Wrapping up in a blanket
- Firm self-hug or leaning into a cushion

Helpful when: you feel floaty, scattered, or uncontained.

Temperature

- Cool air on face
- Washing hands with cool water
- Holding something cold (glass, ice wrapped in cloth)
- Warm drink or heat pad if cold feels safer

Helpful when: emotions spike fast or feel unmanageable.

Visual simplicity

- Clearing one small area only
- Turning the screen to greyscale briefly
- Closing tabs or apps without organising

Helpful when: visual clutter increases stress.

Part 2. Somatic Regulation Options

(Work with the body, not the story)

Somatic regulation helps your body **discharge or settle activation** without needing words.

Grounding through contact

- Feet firmly on the floor
- Back against a chair or wall
- Hand on chest, stomach, or thighs

Say silently if it helps:

“I’m here. I’m supported.”

Controlled exhale breathing

No special technique required.

Try:

- Inhale normally
- Exhale slowly, a little longer than the inhale
- Repeat 3–5 times

Longer exhales gently signal “it’s okay to slow down.”

Proprioceptive input (push / pull / weight)

- Wall push-ups
- Carrying something heavy briefly
- Pressing palms together
- Stretching with resistance

Helpful when: you feel agitated, restless, or explosive.

Small, repetitive movement

- Rocking
- Pacing
- Fidgeting
- Gentle stretching

Movement is not avoidance... it’s regulation.

Stillness (only if it feels safe)

- Sitting quietly
- Lying down
- Eyes closed or softly focused

If stillness increases anxiety, choose movement instead.

Part 3. When You’re Near Shutdown

If words are hard or you feel blank, heavy, or “offline”:

- Reduce demands immediately
- Stop problem-solving
- Choose **pressure, warmth, or stillness**
- Allow silence without explanation

Shutdown needs **less input**, not encouragement.

Part 4. When Emotions Are Spiking Fast

If you feel close to tears, anger, or panic:

- Change temperature
- Move your body briefly
- Reduce sensory load
- Postpone conversation or decisions

High intensity usually means **capacity has been exceeded**.

Part 5. What Often Makes Things Worse

(Even if well-meant)

- Forcing yourself to “calm down”
- Analysing why you feel this way
- Pushing through because you “should”
- Trying multiple techniques at once
- Expecting instant relief

Regulation is **cumulative**, not instant.

Building your personal regulation menu

Pick:

- **2 sensory options**
- **2 somatic options**
- **1 emergency low-effort option**

Write them here if helpful:

Having a short list reduces decision fatigue when you're overwhelmed.

Gentle reminders

- Needing regulation doesn't mean you're failing
 - ADHD/AuDHD nervous systems often need **more input control**, not more discipline
 - Rest is part of regulation
 - You don't need to justify your needs
 - Regulation supports function... it doesn't replace it
-

Closing note

Regulation isn't about becoming someone else.

It's about **working with the nervous system you have...** the one that notices more, feels faster, and cares deeply.

You're not broken.
You're responding to load.

And with the right supports, your system can settle again.

