Regulation Scripts for Practitioners

Language for grounding ND clients without overwhelm

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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.

Clinical purpose

To help practitioners:

- reduce nervous-system threat in-session
- support grounding without forcing regulation
- avoid language that escalates shutdown, RSD, or compliance
- offer co-regulation through tone, pacing, and permission

These scripts are **options**, not instructions.

When to use

- Early signs of overwhelm or activation
- Word-finding difficulty or silence
- Emotional flooding or shutdown
- After triggering material
- When a client looks "present but gone"
- Before attempting insight or reflection

Core principles (anchor these first)

1. **Permission lowers threat**
2. **Choice restores agency**
3. **Less language = more access**
4. **Slower pace beats better wording**
5. **Presence regulates more than technique**

Opening safety scripts

(Use early… before intensity rises)

- "There's no pressure to go anywhere with this."
- "We can slow this right down."
- "You don't need to explain."
- "Nothing needs fixing in this moment."
- "We can pause or change direction at any time."

Scripts for noticing activation

(Name without analysing)

- "I'm noticing things feel heavier right now."
- "Something shifted just then."
- "Your system looks like it's working hard."
- "This might be a lot… we don't have to push."

Avoid:

- "Why do you think this is happening?"
- "What are you feeling right now?" (if capacity is low)

Scripts for offering grounding

(Always optional… never corrective)

- "Would it help to pause for a moment?"
- "We could just sit quietly for a bit."
- "You're welcome to put your feet on the floor or lean back if that helps."
- "We don't have to do anything at all."

Key rule: **offer → wait → respect the answer**.

Scripts for shutdown or word-loss

- "It's okay if words aren't there."
- "You don't need to respond."
- "We can stay quiet together."
- "I'm still with you."

Avoid:

- filling the silence
- repeating questions
- prompting insight

Scripts for emotional flooding

- "This feels intense… let's reduce the load."
- "We don't need to go further right now."
- "You're not doing anything wrong."
- "We can help your system settle first."

Avoid:

- reassurance that minimises ("You're safe, nothing's wrong")
- problem-solving mid-flood

Scripts for RSD activation

(Threat sensitivity, not fragility)

- "You're not in trouble."
- "This isn't criticism."
- "I'm not disappointed."
- "We're okay here."

Say **before** feedback or reflection.

Scripts for restoring orientation

(After intensity)

- "Let's take a moment to notice where we are."
- "You're here, in this room, with me."
- "It's [day/time]. We're not rushing anywhere."

Orientation helps integrate without analysis.

Scripts for ending regulation gently

- "We can stop here."
- "That's enough for today."
- "You've done plenty."
- "Let's leave some space around this."

Clear endings reduce post-session drop.

What *not* to say (common escalation triggers)

Avoid:

- "Just breathe."

- "Try to relax."
- "Stay with it."
- "Let's unpack this."
- "What does this remind you of?" (too early)

These often increase pressure or dissociation.

Practitioner self-check (in the moment)

Before speaking, silently ask:

- Is this **necessary** right now?
- Is this increasing **choice or demand**?
- Am I trying to reduce *their* discomfort… or *mine*?
- Would fewer words be safer?

After-session reflection (optional)

- Which phrases reduced load?
- Where did I speak too much?
- Did I mistake silence for disengagement?
- Did regulation improve access later?

Use this to refine your *presence*, not your scripts.

Scope & safety reminders

- Regulation language does not replace safeguarding
- Silence is not always avoidance
- Co-regulation is relational, not procedural
- Clients may prefer different language… ask when calm
- "Nothing" is sometimes the most regulating option

Clinical framing summary

For ND clients, regulation often comes from:

- being believed
- not being rushed
- not being analysed mid-state

- having their capacity respected

The right words don't regulate on their own.
But the **right tone, timing, and permission** often do.

These scripts are here to help you **get out of the way of regulation**,
not force it to happen.