

Spring 5-4-2023

## An Occupational Therapy Guide to Regulation and Resilience in the Classroom

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### Recommended Citation

Newton, C., & Orozco-Arteaga, J. (2023, May 4). An Occupational Therapy Guide to Regulation and Resilience in the Classroom. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesspring2023/25>

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# An Occupational Therapy Guide to Promoting Regulation & Resilience in the Classroom

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## BACKGROUND

Protective factors (i.e., supportive relationships, safe environments, effective self-regulation skills) can mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences and environments (ACEs) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.; Sciaraffa et al., 2018).

Without protective factors, ACEs can impact a student's occupational participation in play, education, social participation, activities of daily living, and sleep (Petrenchik & Weiss, 2015).

The prevalence of childhood trauma and educators' lack of adequate training in topics surrounding childhood trauma require increased education and support for teachers to transform classrooms into classrooms focused on promoting protective factors.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this capstone was to develop an online program to educate and support teachers in incorporating regulation and resilience-promoting activities within the classroom routine.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Identified schools (2 preschools, 1 charter high school)
2. Conducted semi-structured interviews or online surveys with teachers
3. Observed classrooms and school environment

**Acknowledgements:** A special thank you to Rebecca Heymann, OTD, OTR/L for your guidance and support!

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### Overview of Learning Modules

Charts, videos, infographics, and interactive components were incorporated throughout the learning modules to compliment written information as well as accommodate a variety of learning preferences. The modules were divided into four main sections:

- An Introduction to Trauma
- The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT)
- An Introduction to Co-regulation
- Promoting Regulation and Resilience in the Classroom.

The last section focused on supporting teachers in implementing proactive strategies that are beneficial for all students. Strategies were categorized into building supportive relationships, creating safe classrooms, teaching/coaching self-regulation, and teacher self-regulation.

### Learning Modules Objectives

Define trauma and examine how trauma impacts occupational participation through toxic stress.

Identify core assumptions and principles associated with trauma-informed care approaches.

Explain how trauma affects brain development through NMT and recognize the "6 Rs" related to effective brain functioning.

Define co-regulation and identify key elements of co-regulation.

Apply information related to trauma-informed care, NMT, and universal co-regulation strategies into daily routines within the classroom.

### Evaluation

Participants were asked to rate confidence levels associated with the learning module objectives following completion of course.

To reinforce key concepts throughout the modules and check comprehension of information, teachers were asked knowledge check questions (e.g., multiple choices, true/false questions).

### Additional Website Features

- Information related to occupational therapy's (OT's) scope of practice as well as OT's role with individuals who have experienced trauma
- Community forum to connect, ask questions, and share resources
- Resources (e.g., books, podcasts, online resources) related to trauma education, trauma-informed care, and tools for the classroom

## DISCUSSION

### Strengths

The website was available to teachers at a variety of schools with information that was applicable to preschool to high school grade levels. The accessibility of the website design and the convenience of the format and length of modules was advantageous.

### Limitations

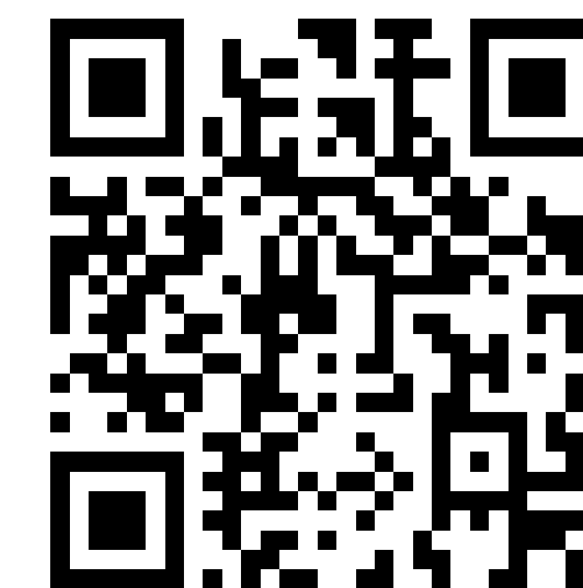
Obtaining timely buy-in from school administration and teachers interfered with the ability to support teachers in applying strategies in-person. Lack of mandatory completion of modules discouraged teachers from completing modules.

## IMPLICATIONS

The increased knowledge of OT's scope of practice may encourage school administrators and teachers to increase collaboration with school-based occupational therapists on matters related to the mental health of students and teachers.

## WEBSITE & REFERENCES

### Website



### References

