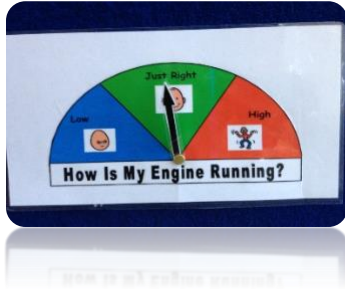

Engine Plates



How to use engine plates to teach children to be aware of their internal states:

Let your child help you make their very own engine plate. All you need is paper plates, markers, brads, and black construction paper for the arrow. (supplies are listed and linked below. I highly suggest parents make one for themselves as well (modeling is the best way to teach!) Pick a time your child is calm, rested, and fed to explain to them about how engine plates work. Tell them that your body is like an engine.

Sometimes your engine is running on RED: TOO HIGH (OR FAST) (I learned not to use the "high" term when working with substance abuse population and changed it to "fast" instead).

If your engine is running on RED this might mean that:

You might feel: angry, hungry, scared, etc.

If your engine is running on GREEN this might mean that:

-You feel just right, you feel calm, relaxed, ready to learn, able to concentrate, your tummy is fed, you have gotten the right amount of sleep, you have had ample time to play, or happy.

If your engine is running on BLUE this means that:

-You may be feeling tired, you may feel lonely, sad, or worried

Teaching coping skills:

HOW TO GET YOUR ENGINE OUT OF THE RED:

-Am I hungry? Have a healthy snack! Am I thirsty? Get a drink of water!! (Often children get dysregulated when their blood sugar is low or they are dehydrated. Children should have a healthy snack every 2 hours and their pee should be almost clear in color) ***TIP: keep a basket of healthy snacks and water bottles readily available in the home or classroom for children to get whenever they need it.

-Take deep breaths

-Do some jumping jacks, run a lap, listen to music, draw or color, play with play doh

-Push a wall (stand against a solid wall with knees slightly bent) and push the wall as hard as you can and count to 10. Repeat until you feel better. Take deep breaths.

-Do a chair push up (can be done in a school desk, hold yourself up in your chair or your desk using your arms)

-Do a chair pull up (pull up on the bottom of your chair)

-Squeeze play dough, tear paper, punch a pillow (safely),

-Use a calming glitter bottle to help aid in taking deep breaths

*Have your child try different strategies and ask them what works best for them. Each child is different and some strategies will work better than others for some kids.

HOW TO GET YOUR ENGINE OUT OF THE BLUE

-Do I need a nap? Do I need a snack? Do I need a drink of water?

-Do I need some love and support? a hug? A friend to talk to

-Maybe I need a happy book or music

-Do I need someone to sit with me for some companionship