

ARC

Attachment, Regulation, Competency
Framework

Our Context



- Rural School Division that consists of 17 schools across a vast geographical area, including Okotoks, High River, Brooks, Canmore, Oyen, and Drumheller.

Problem of Practice

- **An increase in dysregulated students in general classroom settings.**
- **EA's were feeling ill- equipped to work with dysregulation.**
- **Lack of access to resources/services**

Problem of Practice

Considerations:

- **What are creative ways we can support our schools with dysregulation?**
- **How can we develop a greater skill set, knowledge base and a lens of compassion in our EA's?**
- **How can we shift the resources we have to support regulation in our classrooms?**

Is there a way to develop the knowledge base and skill set of our facilitators so that they work proactively to support classrooms and schools?

Treating Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents

SECOND EDITION

How to Foster Resilience through Attachment,
Self-Regulation, and Competency



Margaret E. Blaustein | Kristine M. Kinniburgh

ARC – Attachment, Regulation, Competency

Drawing on core trauma treatment, ARC was developed by Blaustein and Kinniburgh. ARC was developed as a flexible framework which identifies core concepts of intervention which translate across service settings; breaks each of these core concepts down into key skills and targets; and works with implementing agencies and providers to apply these concepts within their clinical work or organizational setting.

What is ARC?

ARC provides training and targeted background knowledge for facilitators. In addition to the training, we created a stand alone lesson plan and "kit" to better equip our team. This was intentionally designed so that individuals with basic training could effectively support using the lesson plan and supplemental materials. The supportive structure was developed collaboratively with the Director of Student Services, Coordinator of Mental Health, and Occupational Therapists, resulting in a clearly laid-out plan.

We organized a training day for staff, including Educational Assistants, Family Support and Liaison Workers (FSLWs), Connections personnel, and some administrators, aimed at developing their understanding of Attachment, Regulation, and Competency.

The primary goal was to establish a foundational understanding and cultivate compassion among individuals who may not have extensive knowledge in mental health or regulation.

The underlying belief was that through education, we could foster a mindset of curiosity and compassion towards the idea that those we support would benefit most from an environment focused on safety.

The ARC Domains

Attachment

Focuses on strengthening the caregiving system surrounding children through enhancing supports, skills, and relational resources for adult caregivers.

Regulation

Treatment emphasizes cultivating youth awareness and skill in identifying, understanding, tolerating, and managing internal experience.

Competency

Addresses key factors associated with resilience in stress-impacted populations - Increase choice/empowerment & exploration of self and identity.

What are we seeing in the classroom

Hypervigilance

Opposition

Hostile
Attribution
Bias

Poor
Self-regulation

Executive
Functioning
Challenges

What is Trauma?

“Trauma is an experience that overwhelms our capacity to cope and leaves our relationships and our brains with the challenge of finding a way to remain integrated and functioning well.”

(Seigel, 20210)

“an autonomic, physiological, and neurological response to overwhelming events or experiences that creates a secondary psychological response.”

(Rothchild, 2000)

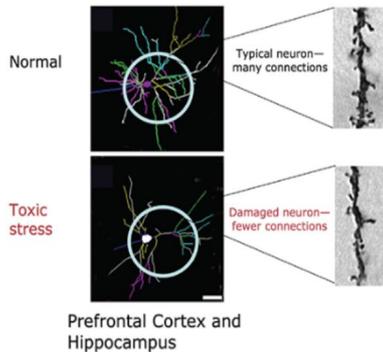
Impacts of Trauma & Toxic Stress

A stressed brain is in fight or flight and cannot learn.



- ✓ Cognitive delays
- ✓ Dysregulated behavior
- ✓ Executive function shutdown
- ✓ Learning loss

Persistent Stress Changes Brain Architecture



- Mental Health Disorders (anxiety, depression, PTSD, self harm, suicidal ideation)
- Neurodevelopmental disorders
- Cognitive & Executive Functions
- Emotional Regulation
- Educational achievement
- Physical health (not limited to cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma)

Nelson, Bhutta, Harris, Danese & Samara (2020)

- Long term » where do our kids land?

Children with a cumulative ACE score are almost **four times** more likely to have been suspended or expelled.

Pierce, Jones, & Gibbs
(2021)



1 in 3 Canadians have experienced adverse childhood experiences, including *sexual and physical abuse*, and/or exposure to *family violence*. Some children and youth also face neglect and/or adverse community experiences such as *discrimination, poverty*, and/or other forms of *violence and oppression*.

Canadian Consortium on Child and Youth Trauma (2023).

Competency		
Relational Connection	Executive Functions	Self-Development and Identity
Regulation		
Identification	Modulation	
Attachment		
Caregiver Affect Management	Attunement	Effective Response
Engagement	Psychoeducation	Routines and Rituals

- The three Domains can be further broken down into skills and building blocks
- The goal is to look at what is needed to achieve each of the domains
- What can I do to achieve the skills within these domains. Where can I fit them in?

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**Caregiver
Affect
Management**

Attunement

Effective
Response

Engagement

Psychoeducation

Routines and
Rituals

- Adults need to understand, manage and cope with their own emotional responses so they can support students.
- This differs from person to person based on our traumas and lived experiences
- Your affect management directly impacts a child's experience in the environment
- We need to be a “soft landing place”

Be Proactive

On going Self-Care

Something you do purposefully to increase well-being and decrease stress

Advance Preparation

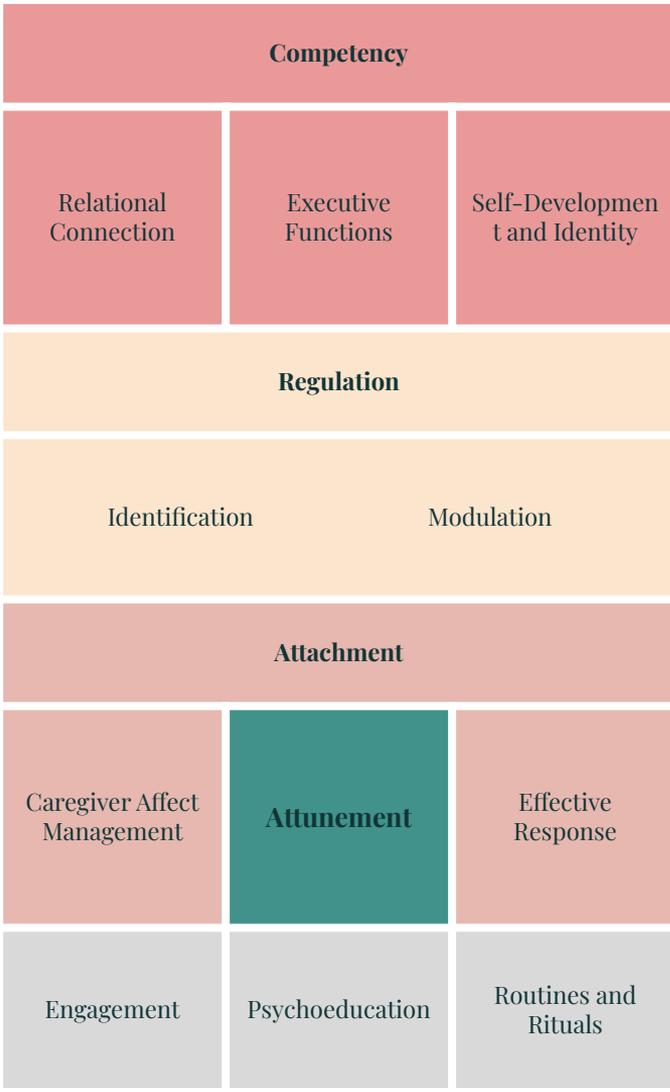
Something you could do before entering into a difficult situation (ex: seeking support)

“In the pocket” Strategies

Something you do in the situation (ex: sip of water)

“Recovery” Strategies

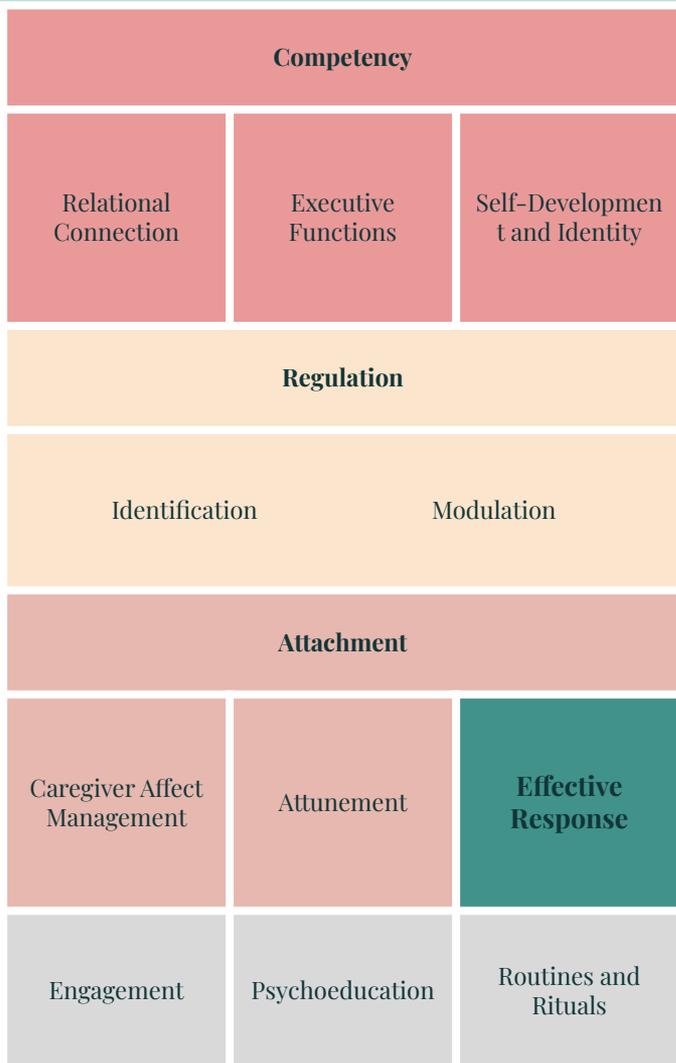
Something you do after the situation (ex: doing an activity you enjoy)



Capacity to accurately read the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological cues of another that are both verbal and non-verbal and respond appropriately.

Difficult behaviours are often fronts for unmet needs - a key attunement challenge is to identify the **function** of the student's behaviour.

Attunement is an ongoing process that involves **perception** and **response**.



- The goal here it to build predictable, safe, and appropriate responses to students’ behaviour
- How we respond should address needs:
 - *Control needs* - choice & input, avoiding power struggle
 - Is it a hill to die on?
 - *Connection needs* - Engagement, Check ins, Coaching
 - Attendance Idea
 - *Containment needs* - Dysregulated students are disorganized because there are too many things going on in their environment for them
 - How can I make my space one that supports students who may feel dysregulated?
- The end goal is to be a “safe” person

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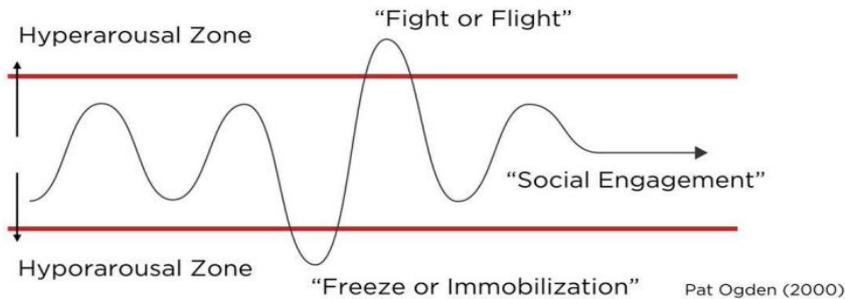
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Optimal Zone of Arousal



- **Identification:** The ability to identify and label internal experience and to connect it to thoughts, behaviours and sensation. We work with students to build an awareness of internal experience, the ability to discriminate and name emotional states and an understanding of where these states come from.
 - *Can they identify where they are at?*
- **Modulation:** Ability to regulate internal arousal and external manifestations. We work with students to develop safe and effective strategies to manage and regulate physiological and emotional experience, for maintaining a comfortable and effective state of arousal
 - *How can I get myself back to my baseline?*

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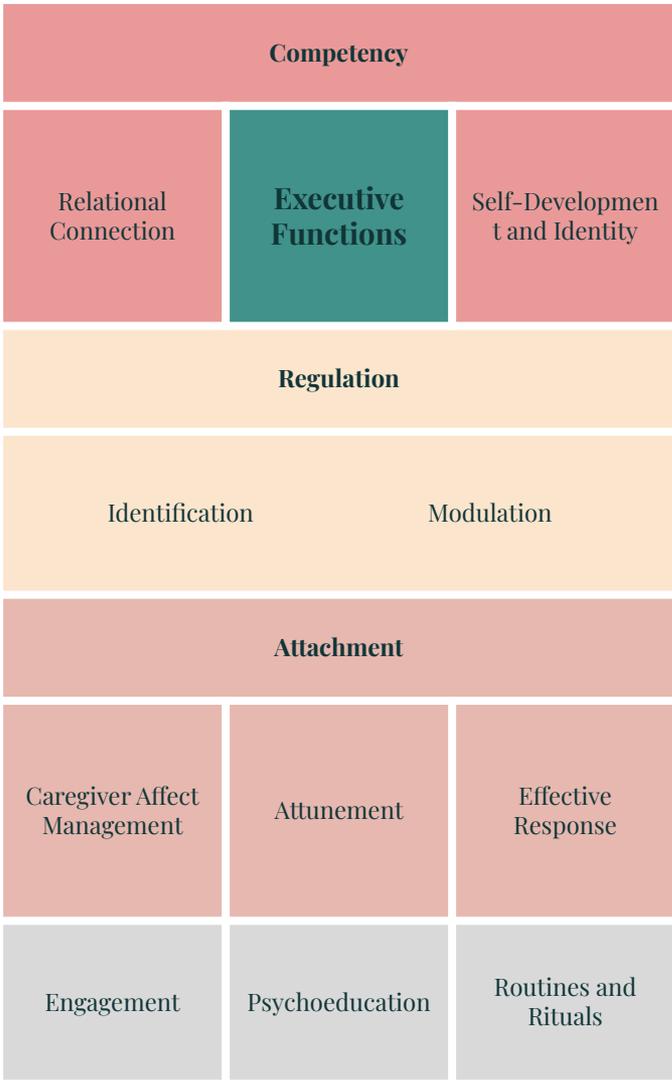
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- The main idea with relational connection is around helping students build the skills and tolerance for effectively sharing internal experiences resulting in building connection and meeting needs
- Build comfort and safety in the relationship you have with the student
- Create opportunities for connection
- Support communication by coaching and modelling effective verbal and nonverbal skills

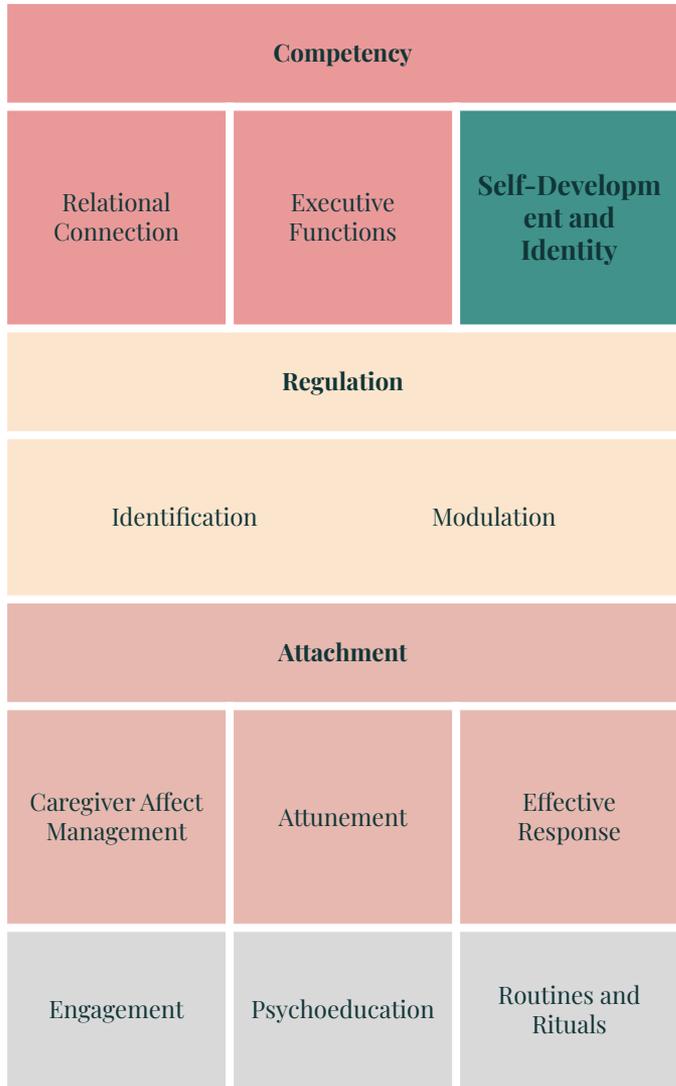
The student needs to now that you are there for them!



- Explicitly taught and practiced in order to get a resilient place
 - Ex. Gr 1 » Gr 12

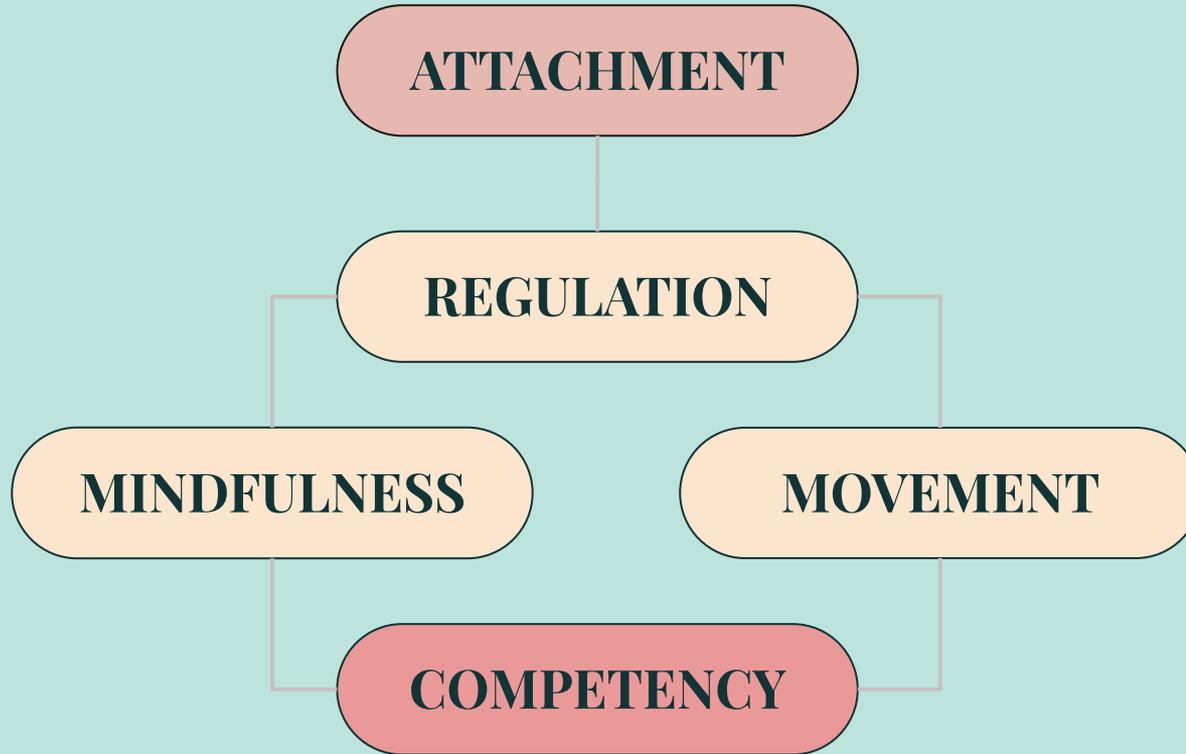
By teaching these to our students they are taking back their agency and ability to act independently. Which is something that is so often taken from them.





- Support children in exploring and building an understanding of self and personal identity. Includes identification of unique and positive qualities, building of coherence across time and experience, and support in the capacity to imagine and work toward a range of future possibilities.
 - Unique self
 - Positive self
 - Cohesive self
 - Future self
- Our goal through ARC is to get them to this point where they feel they have voice, they have advocacy, they are free to be themselves.

The CTR ARC Lesson Plan





ARC - jr. sr. high mindfulness

ARC - lesson plans

Think:Kids Plan B Organizer for _____ on _____ MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Instructions: Complete **gold boxes** before Plan B, and **orange boxes** during Plan B.

PLAN B PREPARATION

WHAT is the problem (not behavior) to focus on? _____ WHO will have the conversation? _____

WHEN, WHERE and WHILE DOING WHAT?

TIPS: Have the conversation at a time and in a place where everyone can be calm. If your relationship is good, you can start with a tougher problem. If your relationship is not strong, start with an easier problem or someone the youth trust.

INGREDIENT #1: EMPATHIZE

HOW WILL YOU START the conversation?

TIPS: Be specific. Don't focus on the behavior. Stick to the facts; don't assume or blame. Focus on seeing, "What's up?" or "Do you fit me up?" or "What's going on?"

As you **GATHER INFORMATION...**

What clarifying questions might you ask? _____

What educated guesses might you make? _____

Drilling Reminders:

- ✓ Provide reassurance.
- ✓ Ask questions.
- ✓ Take guesses.
- ✓ Reflect what you hear.

Culture & Bias

- Be curious about cultural implications & modify if your biases.

WHAT IS THEIR CONCERN(S)?

INGREDIENT #2: SHARE

WHAT IS YOUR CONCERN(S)?

TIPS: Be specific but brief. To it slow. "Healthy Safety Learning" Impact on others? Start with "And" instead of "But."

You're ready for ingredients #2 when:

- You understand their concern.
- You've warmed ourselves up.
- You've imagine solutions.
- Everyone is calm.

You've ready for ingredients #2 when:

- You have less noise or concerns (you relax on the table).
- Everyone is calm.

ARC- jr. sr. high movement

ARC - movement elementary

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Attachment-Facilitator Does

Facilitator models what zone they are in and WHY they are in that zone.

Remind the student that no zone is a bad zone

Once student has identified their Zone, ask following questions:

Allow 1-3 minutes of discussion:

1. "Why do you think you are in that zone?"
2. "Why are you feeling that way?"
3. "How do you know that is how you are feeling right now?"

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Regulation- Movement-Facilitator Does

Select 3 warm up cards from the **GREEN DECK** titled “Stretching” **OR** Select 3 warm up cards from the **PURPLE DECK** titled “Yoga”

Move alongside the student, completing the same activities, or provide verbal support as needed. Facilitator and student complete all 3 cards together.

Facilitator ask student if they would prefer to do “Bodyweight” **YELLOW DECK** OR “Yoga” **PURPLE DECK**

Facilitator selects 10 cards from selected deck. Students and facilitator review exercises briefly by reading and looking at them before beginning **TOGETHER**

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Regulation- Mindfulness-Facilitator Does

Select card from the **RETHINK Deck**

Facilitator and student complete 1 card together.

Have a discussion with the student(s) related to the question on the card.

Select a card from one of the following decks:

BE MINDFUL Deck

MINDFULNESS CARDS Deck

YOGA AND MINDFULNESS Deck

AFFECTIVE QUESTION SHEET

Facilitator & student complete 1 card together.

Have a discussion with the student(s) related to the question on the card OR do the prompt on the card together.

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Competency-Facilitator Does

Select one of the following games:

**SHOULD I SHOULD'N'T I
ZONES OF REGULATION**

CHOICES IN A JAR

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING SHEET

Facilitator and student complete 1 game together.

**The game scenarios are "real life" situations. Help students apply mindful strategies as needed to complete the games.*

Feel free to share appropriate personal examples.

**This section is also used as a celebration of successful things or goal setting.*

ARC

Logistics / Considerations



- Coordinated by Learning Support
- Facilitated by Educational Assistants, Connection Workers, and FSLW
- Scheduling-voluntary, timing, pairing with EA
- Individualized per student - some students go multiple times a day, some go once a week, some
- Stigma-impact
- Where we were - where we are - where we want to go
 - School culture
 - Discipline now
 - Success stories