Try this *when...*

An emotional regulation menu for neurodivergent nervous systems. Find the card that matches how you feel, pick one idea, and give it a few minutes.

THE MENU

Pick by how you feel

Not sure which card? Start with the body: slow breath, feet on the floor.

ANXIOUS

Racing thoughts, tight chest

- Breathe out longer than in — in for 4, out for 6.
- Name five things you can see, out loud or in your head.
- Press your feet into the floor and notice the ground.

ANGRY

Hot, tense, ready to snap

- Move it out: a brisk walk, the stairs, or push against a wall.
- Step away and say, "I need a minute. I'll come back."
- Squeeze a pillow or stress ball hard, then let go slowly.

OVERWHELMED

Too much, all at once

- Cut input: headphones on, lights down, screens away.
- Find a quieter spot, even for five minutes.
- Choose just one tiny next step. The rest can wait.

NUMB / SHUT DOWN

Foggy, flat, far away

- Gentle senses: a warm drink, a soft blanket, a favorite scent.
- Wiggle fingers and toes, then a slow, easy stretch.
- Low-demand company: someone nearby, no talking needed.

RESTLESS

Buzzy, fidgety, can't settle

- Stim freely: rock, bounce a leg, use a fidget.
- Dance, jump or pace through one whole song.
- Give your hands a job: doodle, knead putty, sort something.

SAD

Heavy, teary, low

- Let it out: cry, write it down, or tell someone safe.
- Wrap up in something cozy or weighted.
- Reach for comfort: a pet, a favorite show, your special interest.

1 **Name it.** "I'm overwhelmed" is enough. A rough guess counts.

2 **Pick one.** Just one idea from the card. Give it five minutes.

3 **Check in.** A little better? Keep going. Not yet? Try another.

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MY ZONES PLAN

Know your signals, plan your support

Fill this in on a calm day. When things get hard, you won't have to think — just look. Share it with someone you trust if you like.

GREEN

I'm OK

Steady enough to learn, plan and connect.

IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT HELPS	WHO CAN HELP

YELLOW

Getting wobbly

Early signs. The best time to act.

IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT HELPS	WHO CAN HELP

RED

Overloaded

Meltdown or shutdown. Safety and rest first.

IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT HELPS	WHO CAN HELP

Regulation first, *reasoning second.*

When a nervous system is overloaded, the thinking, talking and problem-solving parts get harder to reach. Calm the body first. The conversation can wait until everyone is back in green.

SUPPORTING SOMEONE ELSE?

- Fewer words, softer voice, more space.
- Offer, don't insist: "Want water or quiet?"
- Save the "why" talk for later, if at all.