Self-Reg RADAR
A tool to help with the “how” of becoming a Self-Reg Haven
By Susan Hopkins
A Self-Reg Haven is a school where everyone feels physically and emotionally safe, where students and staff alike feel connected to the school and to each other. But the big question is the “How?” Invariably, when a school is starting out on its journey to becoming a Self-Reg Haven I get asked questions like:

“Where do I start?”
“Can you just tell me the strategies and give me the basic tools?”
“How do I get the parents to know about this?”
“How can we get all teachers learning about Self-Reg?”
“Self-Reg is not that complicated. Why do I need to understand the science?”
“Self-Reg is SO much more complicated than I first thought. How will I ever learn it all?”

In Self-Reg, Dr. Stuart Shanker frames the two core detective-work questions for reframing stress behavior as: “Why?” and “Why now?” At an organizational level, such as a school, the challenge comes when you try to bring in Self-Reg and “why”/ “why now” doesn’t seem enough to handle all the problems you’re dealing with.

If only the “how” were something simple and straightforward that we could package and share. That would be a lovely thing for us, as you can imagine, knowing our mission is to ground self-regulation in living and learning. But instead of a program for managing behaviour, Self-Reg is an ongoing process of learning why students act and react in certain ways; what they are feeling, and why; what they are communicating, intentionally or unintentionally; what helps them stay or return to being calmly focused and alert. Not only is every student different, but each is constantly changing. So Self-Reg is a never-ending process of getting to know a student, and helping them to recognize and realize their potential. Equally, it is a process of unlearning: removing cognitive blinders that shape our attitudes and perceptions of student behaviour. And finally, it is a process of learning about ourselves: why we act and react in certain ways, what the signs are that show us when we are stuck in a state of low energy and high tension, and what we need to do to rest and restore.
Continued: Self-Reg RADAR: A tool to help with the “how” of becoming a Self-Reg Haven

The 5-stage RADAR approach will help.

RADAR – Reflect, Analyze, Design, Activate, Respond -- guides the process of moving towards a Self-Reg Haven. We designed this model to meet the challenge schools face with questions of “data” or “evidence based” decision-making. But this could easily apply to any organization traveling on the journey towards becoming a Self-Reg Haven. The process has 5 iterative steps. Self-Reg is a continual reflective process, so using the RADAR model, you could cycle through these iterative stages again and again.

### RADAR Stage 1: Reflect
Identify which of the four Self-Reg journeys aligns best with your strategic goals/directions for your school or organization, your readiness, and your resources. The four streams are: (a) Self-Reg seeds; (b) Self-Reg sunrise; (c) Self-Reg quilt; or (d) Self-Reg Haven. Document your vision and goals.

### RADAR Stage 2: Analyze
Use the Self-Reg RADAR matrix to capture information about Self-Reg and your: environments, relationships, learning, and services/ supports available to the population you serve and the adults working within your organization.

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<th>RADAR MATRIX</th>
<th>Environments</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>Systems and Supports</th>
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<td>Biological Domain</td>
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RADAR Stage 3: Design
The big picture strategic goal was identified in RADAR Step 1. In RADAR Step 3 the first phase of “design and develop” occurs. The commitment is long term but the planning is in bite-size chunks (agile approach), with ongoing reflect and develop “checkpoints” all along the way. The active reflection, the testing, the continuous growth orientation is a process over time. In the design phase you develop and document:

RADAR Stage 4: Activate
At this stage the plan that was designed in Step 3 is activated. Documentation is crucial in this phase.
- This is the stage in which the researcher in every practitioner comes to life: observing, active listening, documenting what’s perceived and experienced with the activation of the plan, discussions of emerging themes with team.
- This is a non-judgment phase. The focus is on testing out your plan and noticing what happens. The emphasis is on gathering information to inform the Haven oriented work next steps etc.
- Various forms of data collection tools can be used in this phase depending on the design and context. Keep in mind that observation and documenting of what’s noticed in personal/professional reflections journals is a good starting place for Self-Reg development.

RADAR Step 5: Respond
- Deconstruct the information gathered in the Activate stage, appraise, and respond by returning to the “Design” stage of the RADAR model as appropriate.