

The Self-Reg Journey of

NorthWest Territories Department of Education



Self-Reg for Renewal, Wellbeing, and Student Agency

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Why Self-Reg

“Dr. Stuart Shanker’s Self-Reg became part of the NWT Department of Education discussions as part of a larger Education Renewal process. The goal was to consider how Dr. Shanker’s Self-Reg framework could support the deep relationship between health and learning.”

Big Picture

“We understand wellness was seen as a condition for learning, and with Self-Reg, students themselves could be actively engaged in that process. One of the primary issues we were looking to address was intergenerational trauma (a legacy of Residential Schools) then we needed to be looking at a ‘solution’ that supported student agency. Self-Reg puts the teacher into a role of collaborator in this learning process instead of a ‘behavior manager’.”

Process at this Point

- 2014-2015 Stuart Shanker presented in Yellowknife, and participated in a session with NWT knowledge keepers (representing 7 indigenous language/cultural groups) so that we could validate the alignment of Self-Reg with traditional knowledge.
- ‘Cross-country check in’ to see what was happening in other Self-Reg focused education systems,
- Ongoing connecting with Paula Jurczak to lead an online book clubs using Calm, Alert and Learning and as a Self-Reg consultant.
- 2015 held a week-long Self-Reg Symposium for teams from all NWT school boards, led by Yukon Dep’t Education, and focused on Teachers Wellness and the “5 Domains.”
- Regular discussion and planning with our regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinators and Self-Reg

visits to a key school in each board with capacity building as the focus so that the implementation could be ‘scaled up’

- Funding for Self-Reg consultation, PD, Self-Reg kits for all staff, and a ‘contingent’ of between 8 and 12 participants at SRSS annually.

Challenges

- “As Self-Reg is a process and not a program it is challenging to provide a solid learning foundation that enables people to learn/personally apply, and then implement in school settings.
- Responding to geographical challenges and high levels of teacher turnover has required that we provide as much support via distance as possible”
- We have now moved away from the ‘one week’ school visit to providing consultation support ‘over time’

Fond Memory

“A 10 year old girl got HUGE eyes when she first saw a ‘stand to learn’ desk in her classroom. She hadn’t demonstrated significant dysregulation in class but after three days using the desk the school got a call from her parents wondering what was different. The school had no idea – but offered that there was a new desk and she seemed to like it. The parents said that she was a completely different child at home – instead of exhausted and irritated, she came home cheerful, ate all her supper, was patient with her younger brother - all because she could meet her biological needs with a different desk.

Hope!

Self-Reg helps us to remember that education is not about ‘fixing’ – it reminds us to celebrate and accommodate diversity; our own and those of others. When people can be supported to understand and creatively respond to their needs, then we have a new collective ‘strength’ and capacity to tackle wicked challenges.