Here is an example of a structured living room space:

Some details of what is happening there:

Activity Centres

The room is separated into "activity centres." All the objects related to an activity are put in the same spot and you can see what that spot is used for based on those objects:

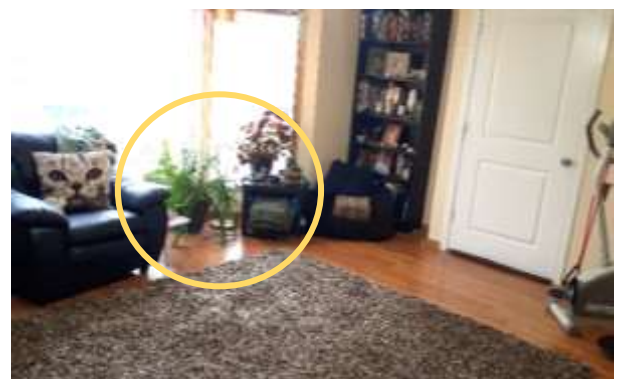Exercise Area: Calming / Regulating spot:

An activity centre works when the person can use the objects in the same place they find them. Therefore, each centre is set up in a spot that makes logical sense for that activity:

Social area is central where people gather

Calming area is in a cozy nook away from others

Calming Objects

Different objects are used to make the room a calming place for those in it:

Mobiles

Curtains in a favourite colour

House Plants

Soft blankets

Fuzzy pillows

Shag carpet

Natural elements - tree branches

Water fountain

Easy to reach calming tools

A person in the room does not have to work as hard at managing their own feelings because the space itself is starting to help them feel more calm. Objects are also freely available for them to touch / use for self soothing such as the carpet, pillows and blankets. This then makes it easier for them to engage in the activities present the room.

Here is an example of a structured bedroom space:

In this room, both activity centres and calming sensory elements are also used, but there are also a few additional notes to consider that make them work in this smaller room

Use Visual Barriers

Here two barriers are used:

• A curtain (which doubles as a calming sensory element)

• A shelf (which doubles as storage)

Barriers visually separate activity centres from one another so they feel more like distinct / different spaces.

This helps both areas "make sense" and be used more easily for their designed purpose (ie one is not getting distracted by work stuff when trying to sleep).

Storage

Different storage options can be used in small spaces to reduce visual clutter and to make the room more functional. This room uses the closet / under the bed for less used items
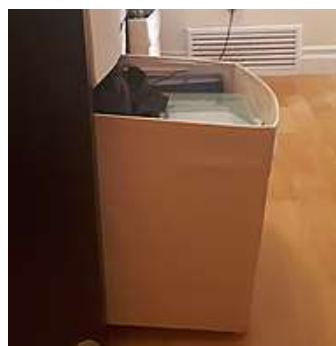
And bins that can be opened on both sides of the room for frequently used items. They can be accessed in either "activty centre"

For smaller children clear storage bins work better here

Small rooms often feel cramped and croweded. Containing clutter with storage helps limit visual distractions and makes the room feel bigger, cleaner and more organized.

Why do Structured Spaces Help?
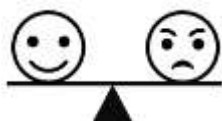
Helps Balance Emotions: The room around me is calm and structured. This exterenal cue shows me what calm is, so I can start calming myself.

Creates Stability /Security: The room makes sense. I know where everything is since it's organized logically. I can see the things I need and easily get them

Builds Self-Regulating Skills: I see around me tools / objects that help me feel calm when I use them. They are easy to reach, so I can grab them when I need. The more I use them, the more I become used to using those tools.

Helps with Transitions: Each spot is meant for a certain activity. When I move from one spot to the other, I intutively start getting ready for the activities that happen in the new spot.
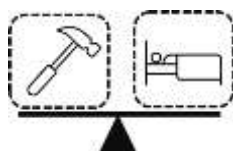
Helps Balance Work and Rest: I associate a spot with it's activity, when I am in the "work" spot I am working, and in the "rest" spot I am resting. I can separate "work" time and "rest" time so my life feels more balanced

Increases Children's Indepenance: physical or sensory needs can be met as needed. When I have a physical / sensory need (like too much energy) I can see and use the objects that help me with it (like a bike) and use it

Contains Disruptive Activities: messy activities (like art) only happen in one spot. A visual routine can be created, put up on the wall and taught to a child so they can start, do and clean up a project independently.
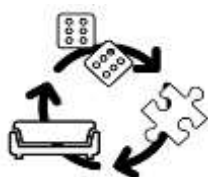
Makes the Room Multi-Purpose: Multiple people can use one space at a time for different reasons without it feeling crowded. Different tasks can be done in one space with out it feeling confusing.

Check out our Resource page to try some of our other Emotional Resources

- For other regulation strategies check out the: Calming Objects Library

- For and intro to Calming Activities: Back in Balance Brochure

- For more Calming Activities check out the: Calming Activity Library

Plus much more!

Got questions? Let us know www.heartandhomeconsulting.com/contact/