

Annual report from the Nordic Network on Self-Regulation to the Nordic Leader Forum on Deaf blindness, 2025

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Aim and purpose for the network:

The Nordic Network on Self-Regulation aims to strengthen Nordic competence in understanding and supporting self-regulation in individuals with congenital and acquired deafblindness.

The network's strategic focus is to:

- Develop a shared Nordic conceptual framework for self-regulation in deafblindness
- Translate theory into practical, applicable tools for services
- Contribute to long-term knowledge development through cross-network collaboration, conference contributions and publications.
- Strengthen the deafblind-specific perspective within broader discussions on mental health and participation.

Self-regulation is increasingly recognised as central to participation, communication, and mental health. Within the deafblind field, reduced access to information increases vulnerability to stress and dysregulation. The network seeks to provide structured, practice-relevant responses to this challenge.

Meetings Held in 2025

Due to illness, the planned physical meeting in September was cancelled.

Three digital meetings were conducted:

- 25 February 2025
- 23 April 2025
- 1 December 2025

Despite limited physical meetings, the network maintained strategic progress and development work throughout the year.

Key Activities and Progress in 2025

1. Renewal and Strategic Planning (2025–2029)

The network completed renewal documentation outlining a structured development plan for the next four years.

The long-term plan includes:

- Model development and testing
- Cross-network collaboration
- Gradual dissemination through courses and conference workshops
- Publication goal by 2029
- Larger Nordic course contribution by 2030

This ensures continuity, progression and measurable outputs over time.

2. Development of a Nordic Self-Regulation Framework

A central focus in 2025 has been further development of a circle-based model of self-regulation. The work has been aimed at:

- Clarify the developmental progression from external regulation to self-regulation
- Integrate cognitive, emotional, physiological and behavioural dimensions
- Anchor the model in relational and communicative practice

The ambition is to create a shared Nordic model that is both theoretically sound and operational in practice settings.

3. Strengthening Practical Tools

The existing Nordic self-regulation mapping material has been digitised (Norwegian and English versions).

This enables:

- Repeated assessments over time
- Visualisation of developmental progression
- Easier implementation across services

4. Nordic Conference Contribution (Copenhagen)

The network submitted and received approval for a workshop at the Nordic Conference in Copenhagen:

Making Sense of Self-Regulation: A Four-Dimensional, Low-Arousal Framework for Practice in Deafblindness

The workshop:

- Presents an integrated four-dimensional framework
- Connects the model to the Window of Tolerance and Low Arousal
- Introducing the Co-regulation Ladder
- Uses a co-creation format to actively involve participants

This contribution strengthens visibility of the network and positions self-regulation as a key topic within the broader Nordic deafblind field.

5. Cross-Network and Nordic Collaboration

The network has discussed:

- Collaboration with the cognition network and other relevant networks
- Recruitment of members from Iceland and Finland to strengthen Nordic representation
- Long-term publication and dissemination strategy
- The network sees interdisciplinary collaboration as essential for strengthening the field.

6. Plans for 2026

In 2026 the network will:

- Develop the workshop further and present it at the conference
- Continue working on the circle model
- Collaborate with other networks
- Explore possibilities for publication
- Re-establish physical meetings

The network will continue developing the framework and ensure that it remains practical and useful for professionals and services.

Helene Arefjord, coordinator of the Nordic Network on Self-Regulation