

THE CO-REGULATION CONNECTION

Navigating Your Nervous System

The Science of Co-regulation

A Brain and Body Balancing Act

Your **autonomic nervous system** serves as a control centre for your body's functions. It has two main parts:



- The **"fight or flight"** system speeds things up when you feel stressed or in danger.
- The **"rest and digest"** system, which helps you slow down and feel safe.

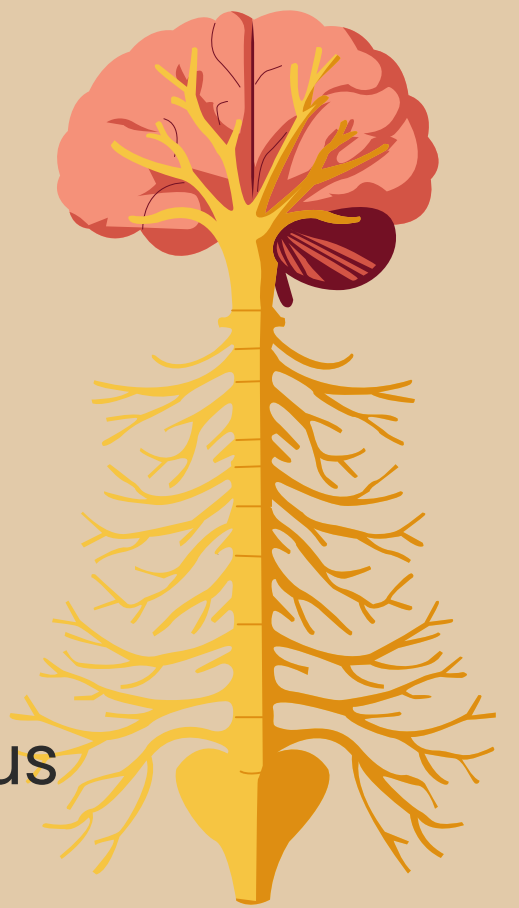
Co-regulation helps bring these two systems into harmony, allowing you to move from feeling stressed to feeling calm and secure.

The Role of Co-regulation

Co-regulation is a supportive process where one person helps another manage their emotions, behaviours, and physical responses through warm, connected interactions.

This shared experience helps us gradually develop our own **self-regulation skills**, making it easier to handle life's challenges **independently**.

This shared experience helps us gradually build our own **self-regulation skills**



Why It Matters

Co-regulation helps us feel safe. When a trusted adult is calm, we learn that it's okay to feel our big feelings, because we have a safe person to lean on.

It gives us tools to manage our emotions. By practising co-regulation, we learn what our bodies need to feel calm again.



When our bodies feel calm and safe, our **brains are ready to focus, learn new things, and get along with others.**

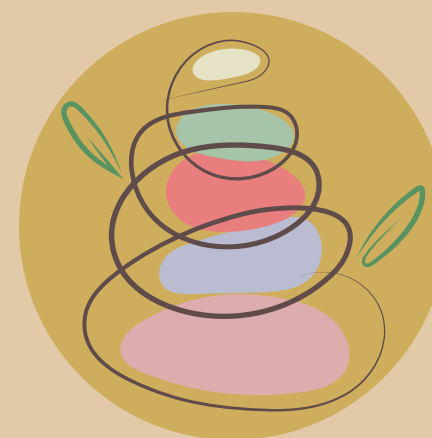
Barriers to Co-regulation and How to Avoid Them



Adult Dysregulation: Use grounding techniques to stay calm when a child is highly dysregulated.



Sensory Overload: Simplify the environment or Use soothing sensory tools to ease co-regulation.



Emotional Escalation: Respond to the aggressive behaviour with empathy and clear boundaries to encourage calm.

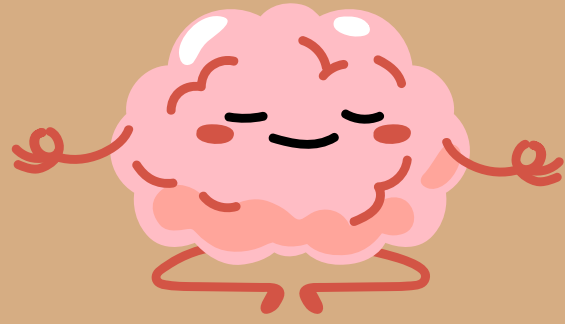
CO-REGULATION STRATEGIES

Your guide to helping others find their balance.

Modeling Regulation

Demonstrate calm behavior:

- **Model the calm.** Show what a regulated nervous system looks like by taking a few **slow, steady breaths** and speaking in a gentle tone.
- **Be a safe presence.** Your relaxed posture and calm body language can be soothing. Sit with them or get down to their eye level to **show you are present and safe.**



Breathing & Grounding Techniques

Provide strategies they can practice on their own at home, school, etc.:

Breathe together. Take slow, deep breaths. They will often match your rhythm, helping to calm their own bodies.

Use your senses. Ask questions like, "What do you see, hear, or feel right now?" to help them connect with the present moment.



Sensory Regulation

Provide sensory strategies to help regulation.

- **Deep pressure.** Gentle pressure on hands, feet, or joints can be very calming for the nervous system.
- **Active movements.** Activities like jumping, pushing against a wall, or squeezing a stress ball help our bodies feel grounded.



Creating a Co-regulating Environment



- **Reduce the chaos.** Lower bright lights and noise, and add calming elements like soft music or pillows.
- **Stick to a routine.** A predictable schedule helps everyone feel safe and secure.
- **Create a "calm corner."** Designate a quiet space with soothing objects for when big feelings happen.



Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Be a Calm Anchor

- **Watch your body language.** Use a calm, steady voice and gentle eye contact to show you are a safe person to be around.
- **Offer physical comfort.** A gentle hand on the back or sitting close by can provide reassurance, but always be **mindful of what feels comfortable for them.**

