

The Family Nervous System Reflective Workbook™

An Interactive Practice & Implementation Guide for Poly-Regulation in the Family Regulatory Field

Session Review & Practice Overview: Grounded in the Reflective Coaching Framework and The Family Nervous System, Community of Care (CoC) session, this workbook better prepares you to bridge theory into daily practice. Your home is a multi-body Family Regulatory Field where nervous system states are contagious. Before introducing new co-regulation strategies, we pause to examine our inner emotional landscape—our feelings, fears, and automatic survival habits—so we can step into family collisions as a grounded 'third nervous system'.

1. Pre-Practice Reflection: Feelings, Fears & Internal Barriers

Before changing how you respond to family stress, tune into your own internal baseline. Shifting parenting strategies often brings up unexamined emotions and somatic resistance. Fill in your pre-practice reflections below.

A. Somatic Readiness & Current Emotional Baseline

When you anticipate upcoming household transitions or sibling collisions, what sensations show up in your body (e.g., shallow breathing, chest tightness, restlessness)? What emotional state (e.g., exhaustion, hope, anxiety) are you starting from?

B. Fears & Hesitations Around Changing Your Approach

What internal fears surface when you consider stepping back from refereeing, abandoning quick punishments, or offering differentiated care? (e.g., 'Fear that my children will take advantage', 'Fear of losing control', 'Fear of unfairness')

C. Identifying My Automatic Stress Reaction Pattern

Check the primary reaction pattern your nervous system defaults to during family stress spikes, and note what triggers it:

☐ Match: Raising my voice / matching the room's energy	☐ Fix: Rushing to solve / enforce quick rules to force quiet
☐ Shut Down: Freezing, going numb, or checking out	☐ Escape: Wanting to physically leave or retreat

D. My Core Co-Regulation Intention

Write a single grounding intention for how you want to show up as a stabilizing 'third nervous system' in your home this week:

2. Co-Regulation Strategy Planning & Support Architecture

Sustainable co-regulation requires pre-planning before high-arousal events occur. Use this section to design your proactive support anchors across environment, adult state, and sibling bridges.

A. Environmental & Sensory Anchor Design

Select 2 physical or sensory adjustments you will proactively put in place to reduce environmental friction in your home:

☐ Lighting & Sound: Softening overhead lights / playing low background rhythm during transitions	☐ Transition Buffer: Adding a 5-minute buffer before departures to prevent rushed panic
☐ Sensory Retreat: Creating a designated quiet space with pillows/heavy blankets for co-regulation	☐ Outdoor Reset: Planning a daily outdoor nature break or movement transition

B. Adult Somatic Reset & Self-Regulation Plan

What specific body-based micro-practice will you perform the moment you hear noise or conflict escalating?

☐ Physiological Sigh: Dual inhale through nose + long vocal exhale	☐ Grounding Feet: Pressing feet firmly into the floor / sensing contact
☐ Hand on Heart: Placing hand on chest to signal self-compassion	☐ 3-Second Pause: Dropping shoulders & unclenching jaw before speaking

C. Sibling Collision Response Plan: Combining RELATE & Differentiated Care

Pre-map your step-by-step strategy for the next time conflict erupts between children in your home:

1. PAUSE & SENSE (RELATE Lens) What will I check INSIDE ME before walking into the room? 	2. DIFFERENTIATED CARE TARGET What unique care will Child A vs. Child B receive? 	3. PRE-PREPARED 'TWO TRUTHS' BRIDGE Draft exact phrase using AND to bridge both children's realities:
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3. Strategy Practice Progress & Effectiveness Log

Track and chart your practice over multiple stress events. Co-regulation is a dynamic skill developed through trial, reflection, and iteration. Use this fillable tracker to log what strategies were used, how the field responded, and their effectiveness.

Event / Date Context	Strategy Attempted	Systemic & Child Response	Effectiveness Rating	Adult Emotional State
			☐ High Impact ☐ Partial Shift ☐ High Friction	
			☐ High Impact ☐ Partial Shift ☐ High Friction	
			☐ High Impact ☐ Partial Shift ☐ High Friction	
			☐ High Impact ☐ Partial Shift ☐ High Friction	

Mid-Course Strategy Analysis & Reflections

A. What worked unexpectedly well? What specific micro-actions (e.g., lower voice tone, physical sigh, validating statements) produced the fastest settling in your home field?

B. What strategy caused high friction or failed to land? Where did the system get stuck, and what adjustments will you make next time?

4. Post-Practice Integration & Emotional Growth

Reflect on your overall practice journey. True relational growth involves recognizing shifts in your home environment while holding space for the feelings, fears, and internal challenges that arose along the way.

A. Post-Practice Review: Systemic Shifts in Our Family Field

After practicing these strategies, what overall shifts have you noticed in your home's regulatory environment? (e.g., 'Volume drops faster after conflict', 'Children accept different boundaries with less resentment', 'I feel less exhausted after arguments')

B. Reflecting on Feelings, Fears & Challenges Along the Way

What unexpected emotional challenges, parental guilt, or old survival habits surfaced during practice? How did you navigate moments when you lost your calm or reverted to old refereeing habits?

C. Long-Term Commitment: Sustaining the Reflective Coaching Loop

How will you continue integrating the 6-step Reflective Coaching Framework into your daily family life? Write your commitment to ongoing practice:

The Reflective Coaching Framework: SENSE (What is in my body?) → NOTICE (What changes my state?) → NAME (What helps/hinders?) → EXPLORE (Under what conditions?) → CHOOSE (What to try?) → CONNECT (How does this affect my child?)