

13 Things That Can Make It Harder for Youth to Stay Regulated



Knowing what gets in the way can help us respond with empathy, support, and fewer crashing out moments.

- 1 NOT ENOUGH SLEEP**

When youth are tired, it is much harder to cope, focus, and manage emotions.
- 2 HUNGER & DEHYDRATION**

Not eating enough or not drinking enough water can quickly affect mood, energy, and concentration.
- 3 SENSORY OVERLOAD**

Too much noise, light, chaos, touch, or screen input can overwhelm the nervous system.
- 4 CONSTANT SOCIAL MEDIA**

Comparison, drama, and nonstop scrolling can increase stress, reactivity, and overwhelm.
- 5 SCHOOL PRESSURE**

Deadlines, homework, tests, and performance stress can shrink a youth's coping capacity.
- 6 CONFLICT OR REJECTION**

Arguments, bullying, exclusion, or friendship stress can strongly affect behaviour and emotions.
- 7 MASKING ALL DAY**

Some youth spend so much energy holding it together that they crash out later in a safer space.
- 8 BIG TRANSITIONS & CHANGE**

Unexpected changes, shifting plans, or moving between settings can be especially hard.
- 9 TOO MANY DEMANDS AT ONCE**

Back to back tasks, pressure, or too much language at once can overload coping quickly.
- 10 UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS**

Vague directions or not knowing what is expected can increase anxiety and shutdown.
- 11 NOT ENOUGH DOWNTIME**

Overscheduled days can leave little room for recovery, rest, or emotional reset.
- 12 STRESS, ANXIETY, OR LOW MOOD**

When stress builds up, everyday problems can start to feel much bigger and harder to manage.
- 13 FEELING DISCONNECTED**

When youth feel alone, misunderstood, or unsupported, regulation usually gets harder.