

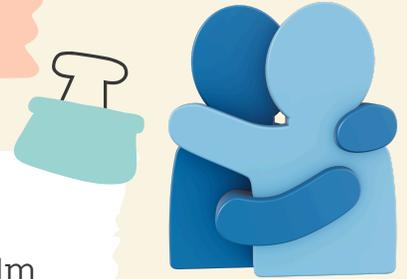


Therapy...  
AND A WHOLE LOT  
MORE!

# Co-regulation

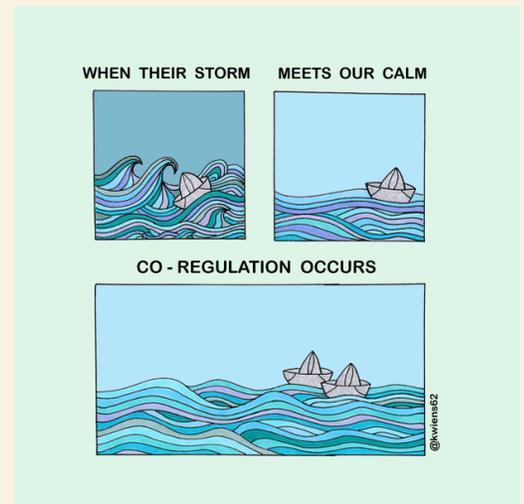
## What is co-regulation?

When a dysregulated child learns to calm their mind and body to get through stressful moments with the help of a trusted adult



### Importance of co-regulation

- Children are not born knowing how to handle their emotions
- Co-regulation teaches a child how to handle their stress
- Over time, the child can manage emotions on their own



## The Dysregulated Brain

- The limbic system is the emotion center of the brain.
  - **Amygdala**- alarm system for danger.
  - **Prefrontal cortex**- helps with thinking and self control
- When a child is overwhelmed or upset, they become dysregulated- this is an **overreaction of the limbic system**.
  - **Amygdala**- goes into high alert without actual danger
  - **Prefrontal cortex**- more intense emotional reactions and it's hard to think clearly

This is a brain response, **not a choice!** Co-regulation helps the limbic system get back to normal.

# The 3 R's of Co-regulation



## 1. Regulate (yourself first)

**Calm yourself down before helping your child. They pick up on your stress and notice your voice, face, and body language .**

1. Remind yourself- “I can be calm even when they cannot”.
2. Breathe deeply (in for 4 counts, out for 6 counts).
3. Pause and step away if needed and it's safe.



## 2. Relate (connect to your child)

**Once calm, get down to your child's level to be a safe presence.**

**Validate their feelings.**

1. Notice, name, and honor their feelings- “I can see this is hard for you”
2. Provide supportive language- “I'm here with you” or “you're safe”.



## 3. Reason (teach after calm)

**Wait until your child is calm to teach or problem solve.**

1. Label feelings- “That felt frustrating and that's okay”.
2. Practice coping skills: deep breathing, fidgets, calming space.
3. Talk about what to do differently next time.
4. Reflect back- “It sounds like you felt overwhelmed. Tell me more”.



Scan for a related  
Youtube video!

### **What to avoid:**

- Raising your voice- this increases stress for both of you and makes the child feel less safe
- Providing punishment before the child is regulated
  - They cannot think clearly at this time
  - They might feel blamed for their feelings

**\*Safety first\*** If your child is being unsafe or damaging items, it is okay to step in more firmly and remove them from the situation.

