WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CO-REGULATE?



When your child is emotionally dysregulated, their brain goes into Survival Mode, and their capacity to reason or talk through it goes down. Depending on the situation, this can also set off our own Survival Mode as parents. You start to panic, your heart pounds, and you offer to quickly fix the problem. Or you remind them about the family rules. Or bargain with them. Nothing works. Suddenly, your child saying broccoli is disgusting turns into a into a meltdown during dinner.

The Co Regulation Loan and Anchor Concept

Imagine that your completely calm and sitting in the same room as your child, who is suddenly started yelling because you said it was time for bed. Seems challenging, doesn't it?

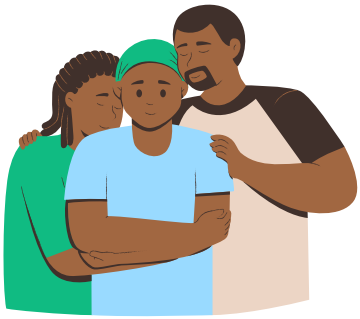


Well, lets say while your child is crying and yelling, You remember that you are the anchor for their feelings. You start to take a few deep breaths and then say, "You're feeling angry and it feels like a lot." You then pause and continue to sit quietly while taking deep breaths.

Your child says "I hate bed time. Your rules are stupid! And continues to stomp on the floor. You calmly say "Its hard when you feel this way, let me know when your ready for help".



Your child after a few minutes lowers their voice, and then sits down with their head lowered. "I'm mad and sad, I'm not ready for bed yet." They say. You then offer comfort and help with deep breathing together until they feel ready to move onto bed.



This is what Co-Regulation looks like. It doesn't look like you solving the problem, bargaining or giving consequences during the meltdown. If your child is struggling with frequent outbursts, meltdowns, or aggression, it often means your child hasn't developed the skills yet to self regulate and soothe like yours. This isn't a parenting failure. We actually all learn how to regulate our emotions from the adults we grew up around when we were little.

Until your child can develop self soothing, imagine your calm state when your child is distressed as an interest free loan. Your child needs to borrow your calm until they are able to regulate enough to start doing this on their own. Even once they do start to practice this, they may still need to borrow your calm until their adults.

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CO-REGULATING WITH MY CHILD

Below you can write a plan for you to follow for when your child's emotions and behavior escalates. Identify with your child's therapist what you see when your child becomes emotionally dysregulated, what you start to feel and do when your child escalates, and what options you can try to help co-regulate with your child to de-escalate the situation.

MY CHILDS WARNING SIGNS OF DYSREGULATION: THEIR BEHAVIOR, WORDS, BODY LANGUAGE, TONE	WHAT I DO WHEN I SEE MY CHILD ACT THIS WAY THAT DOES NOT HELP WITH SOOTHING THEM	CO REGULATION: THINGS THAT I WILL TRY TO HELP MY CHILD MANAGE THEIR FEELINGS AND MY OWN