

# CO-REGULATION

Your baby cannot self regulate. They 100% rely on you to regulate their nervous system.

When you're scared or worried and someone is there to reassure and soothe you, your body is able to have a felt sense of calm. Through this co-regulation you learn to regulate your emotions.

It's biology and it's how our bodies are designed. Every child is wired to need us for co-regulation until they can get to self-regulation on their own.

It's a critical piece because it's the one and only way they will ever learn self regulation. The only way you teach them is through your body.

It literally takes YOU. Your presence. Your body. And your regulation. Their nervous system is attuned by your energy and presence.

Co-regulation is when your body helps them move their system back to safety through your connection. If they don't get this their body has to adapt and find another way to find safety and they develop coping mechanisms.

Co-regulation is to be felt, seen, and embraced energetically by another nervous system.

When you're not regulated and connected to yourself, then you aren't present in your body, you're not grounded to even what's actually happening in front of you, so you're not able to be present to them and their needs.

The only way you can give co-regulation is if you're regulated. If you're not regulated, you can't be responsive to them. You're reacting out of fear. And then you continue to make decisions that may not be the best for the actual situation. You can't process what is around you. You can't show up the way they need you to.

If they don't receive the help they need, they adapt. It is reinforced every time they are expected to handle emotions in ways they aren't yet able to on their own.

This gets wired as, when I get overwhelmed with big feelings, no one is going to help me. When this happens repeatedly it also increases the frequency and intensity of the dysregulation.

They need co-regulation so they can move from reactive to receptive. This is the only way they will even absorb anything that's happening.

When you change your behavior in response to their reactions, it can change their behavior.

You want them to receive a consistent message of support.

Soothing comes from connection. By being present. That's how you co-regulate.

They stay with their emotions. And you stay with them. This changes their experience from one of being alone in their discomfort to being connected.

It is the interpersonal experience of having someone witness your distress, then being comforted and connected, creates a sense of trust that opens to many inner mechanisms that heal pain, reduce stress and build resilience.

Validating, assuring, identifying and expressing sympathy are all powerful ways to use words to help co-regulate.

## **WHEN YOU DON'T CO-REGULATE**

When you just react to the behavior and not to their feelings, they are left to deal with them alone.

When you ignore and don't attempt to make sense of their feelings, they will feel misunderstood, dismissed, unloved and invisible. This also causes dysregulation.

When they don't get help with their emotions, the nervous system doesn't return to a place of calm and regulation.

This prevents them from developing a rich and rewarding emotional life. It can mean having difficulty seeing their own emotions and then being able to soothe themselves.