



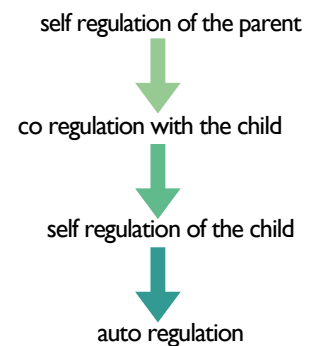
Co-Regulation

WHAT IS CO-REGULATION?

Co-regulation begins during pregnancy and continues throughout life. It is the process in which we match our arousal levels with other's to go up/down to just right. When a child connects to a calmer, more regulated nervous system they can use this person to regulate themselves, especially when they do not have the skills to self regulate. It is the basis of biological rhythms, social interaction and competence in the world. Some examples of interactions of co-regulation are child and parent, child and therapist, child and teacher, therapist and parent.

WHY IS CO-REGULATION IMPORTANT?

In order to be more independent in managing our stressors (self regulation), we first need the support of others (co-regulation). Co-regulation is something we all do to manage our stressors when we need more support. Calling a friend after a long day, getting a hug from a family member, going for a lunch time walk with a colleague or playing a fun game with peers are all examples of co-regulating.



THE SIGNAL CYCLE



The Signal Cycle is like a constant game of "catch the ball" happening all around us. Every moment of the day, we're picking up on signals — not just from others, but from ourselves too. It's a back-and-forth process, where everyone involved — whether it's a caregiver, teacher, or child — is both giving and receiving cues from the environment.

The cool thing is, a lot of this happens without us even realising it! While some parts of the cycle are conscious (like when we deliberately ask someone if they're okay), most of the time, it's automatic. For kids, it's especially tricky because they're constantly picking up emotional cues, but they might not have the skills to manage those feelings yet. This can lead them to get caught up in the emotional energy around them.

A great example of this is what happens in a playground. One small disagreement between two kids can quickly spiral, attracting more and more students. The tension and energy spread because everyone is picking up on those stress signals. Adults, on the other hand, often have more practice stepping back and not absorbing the stress from others, which helps break the cycle before it grows out of control.

WHAT DOES CO-REG LOOK LIKE?

hugs with loved ones



playing games



phone calls



spending time together

