



Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Programs

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Coffee Hour
Calm Together: Co-Regulation in Practice

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Co-Regulation

Help! I blew my lid!

Co-Regulation: What is it?

- shared sense of safety
- responsive interactions
- learning how to soothe and manage distressed emotions

Co-Regulation in Infancy

Co-regulation begins in infancy, baby cries and we soothe it.

Upstairs and Downstairs Brain

Image of a brain - divided into two hemispheres, top and bottom

- “Upstairs Brain” or top brain: thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, planning
- “Downstairs Brain” or bottom brain: safety, reactive, sensory processing

Lizard Brains also Struggle with Executive Function

Executive function is how we conceive an idea - to picture the end product, think through the steps and materials needed, and then stick with the task through completion

Regulation is Not the Same Thing as Self-Control

Sometimes we can confuse teaching how to self-regulate with the need to teach self-control

- Self-control is the ability to stop a behavior
- It is important that we are teaching strategies to manage the reason behind the behavior, and not just looking to extinguish it

Many Regulation Strategies are Learned Incidentally

Sighted and hearing children incidentally observe countless examples of regulation from their environment

Co-Regulation Builds Resilience

When students become dysregulated or encounter a difficult situation and are able to navigate it successfully, this builds feelings of success and emotional resilience.

We Must be able to Co-Regulate Before We can Learn to Self-Regulate

All humans learn how to self-regulate through co-regulation; however, once we are able to self-regulate, the need for co-regulation doesn't go away.

Dysregulation is not Simply a Tantrum.

Our students with complex access needs often have sensory input needs.

- Self-soothing or self-regulating behaviors, such eye-pressing, intense rocking, hitting or biting, may also be providing needed proprioceptive or vestibular input to their bodies

Guidance for Planning Behavior Intervention Document

Tool designed to assist teams in setting up their daily environment and interactions with students to promote feelings of safety, connectedness, autonomy, and independence.

How do we Support Students in Distress?

Model the Behavior You Want to See

- Co-regulation is modeling what we want to see
- We can co-regulate or we can co-escalate

Co-Presence

Promotes safety, regulation, communication, and connection

Tactile-Bodily Communication

Physical contact to convey information, affirmation, and shared experience

Pacing - Doing this Together

When a student is in distress, they need more support. Not less.

Adjust Complexity

This might mean complexity of task, work area, and/or support

Predictability

Helps calm a dysregulated nervous system, while also helping to prevent escalation

Teach all Communication Partners

Predictability, again, is key - pre-teach students and staff

- If all staff know which strategies and interventions to use, this increases the likelihood of fidelity in not only implementing, but also in continued use, of consistent language and co-regulation strategies across situations and staff.

Link Co-Regulation to Assessment and Planning

Instead of “why” - can we start to think about, “what?”

- What does the nervous system need to feel safe? The answer to this question can then be used to create proactive routines and support throughout the student’s day.

Staying Calm

Strategies for the co-regulator.

The Power of the Wait

Our natural reaction is to fix - but sometimes, we unintentionally add to the situation when we try to do too much or fix too fast.

Count to 30

A strategy you can use during “the wait.”

Declarative Statements

- Imperative language requires a response - it's asking a direct question, "What should you be doing?"
- Declarative language is to share information - and doesn't require a response.
- It allows the student to hear our thought process - and can help to build executive functioning.

Tag Team - Take a Mini-Break

This isn't always an option - but support is key.

- The team having a plan in place for the co-regulator can be just as important as a plan for the student.

Community of Practice for Students with Complex Access and Communication Needs

We explore behavior and communication strategies that are meaningful and take into consideration the sensory and access needs of our students

- Sign up at TSBVI Events linked [here](#)

Resources:

- [Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children's Behavioral Challenges](#) - Mona Delahooke
- [Cuddles, Chemicals, and Co-Regulation: Reflections on Stress and Resilience](#) - by Dr. Adam Graves
- [15-Minute Focus: Regulation and Co-Regulation: Accessible Neuroscience and Connection Strategies that Bring Calm into the Classroom](#) - Ginger Healy
- [Help your Child Self-Regulate by using Declarative Language](#) - Thechildhoodcollective.com
- [Co-Regulation handbook](#) - Linda K. Murphy
- [Guidance for Planning Behavior Intervention for Children and Young Adults who are Deafblind or have Visual and Multiple Impairments](#) - Schultz, et all

Contact Me

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Thank you for joining me!