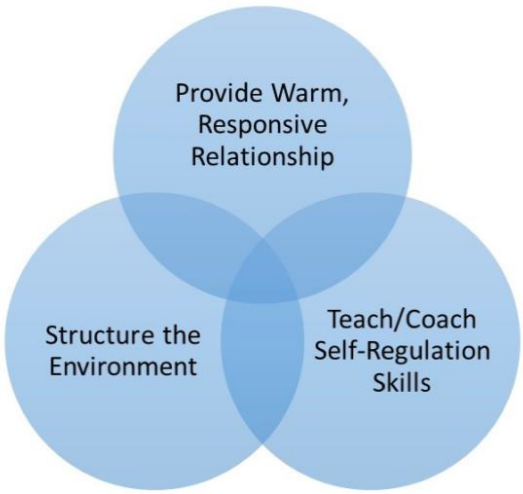
How to Co-Regulate



Co-regulation

*Co-regulation is the supportive process between a caring adult and their young person that fosters self-regulation***.**

Self-regulation can be defined as the act of managing thoughts and feelings to enable goal-directed actions bringing forth success. Regardless of their roles a parent's warmth, responsiveness and sensitivity to a presenting situation and/or environment helps to support self-regulation. Effective co-regulation by a supportive parent will promote self-efficacy and allow a young person to feel secure enough to practice new skills and learn from mistakes. More detail is outlined in the parent psycho-education booklet.

Supporting co-regulation:

The first and foremost important factor is to focus on your *own* capacity for self-regulation. To co-regulate successfully, you will also need to be in a space of self-regulation.

Provide a warm, responsive relationship display care and affection; recognize and respond to cues that signal needs and wants; and provide caring support in times of stress. Communicate through words and actions, your interest in their world, respect as an individual, and commitment to caring for them no matter what (i.e., unconditional positive regard).

Structure the environment to make self-regulation manageable, provide a buffer against environmental stressors. This means creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for them to explore and learn at their level of development without serious risk to their wellbeing. Consistent, predictable routines and expectations likewise promote a sense of security by providing clear goals for behaviour regulation, in addition to well-defined logical consequences for negative behaviours.

Teach and coach self-regulation skills through modelling, instruction, opportunities for practice, prompts for skill implementation, and reinforcement of each step towards successful use of skills. Like a coach on a sports team, you should first teach skills, and then provide needed supports, or scaffolding, for self-regulation implementation in the moment.

Pay attention to your own feelings and reactions during stressful interactions. Pay attention to your own thoughts and beliefs about the behaviours of others. Use strategies to self-calm and respond effectively and compassionately. You will greatly benefit when you take a moment to reflect, take some deep breaths or engage in positive self-talk. When you respond calmly towards your young person it helps to reduce the likelihood of escalation and also role models regulation skills.

Self-regulation during a stressful interaction with your young person is no easy task, particularly when there are multiple activities and stressors completing for your mental and emotional resources. You may at times need to seek out supports from your friends/family or professionals to build your own coping and calm-down skills, which in turn will aid your promotion in the effectiveness of skills.

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