



{inclusion outreach}

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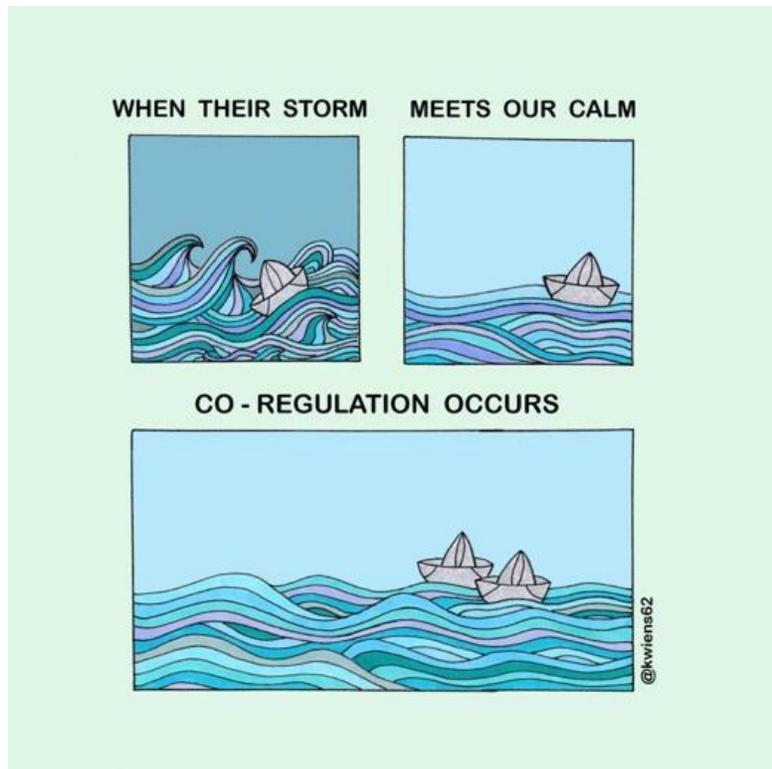
Co-Regulation in the Classroom

Regulation is often referred to as self-regulation because the end goal is to independently regulate behaviours, thoughts, feelings, and energy without assistance. Regulation is complex and demands energy from our bodies, thoughts, and feelings. All children need support to learn to regulate themselves, and the ability to self-regulate takes time to mature into early adulthood. Students with complex needs require intentional support to help them regulate and will likely require lifelong assistance for regulation, also known as co-regulation.

Co-regulation

People in close relationship adjust to and regulate one another's behaviour, mood, and emotional state.

Educators have an important role in supporting students to co-regulate first through developing trusted relationships and second by the modeling of soft tone of voice, facial expression, body language, and calm energy state to co-regulate with a student.



Credit: Kristin Weins, Northstarpaths.com

Much of what is practiced in universally designed classrooms supports co-regulation:

- Using visual/auditory schedules
- Predictable, consistent routines
- Transition warnings
- Reducing visual clutter

Respect

Competence

Inclusion

Presence

Choice

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Successful regulation happens for students with complex needs when student specific essential supports are applied:

- Co-regulation is the goal (not self-regulation)
- Regulation strategies are modified to the specific student
- Recognize, interpret and respond to sensory information to give it meaning
- The type and level of support matches the regulation needs of the student

- The co-regulator knows the student well and is in tune with how the student manages or doesn't manage in a variety of circumstances and environments

Successful Co-Regulators are Skilled at:

- Observing the early subtle clues given by students
- Assessing the levels of arousal and stimulation the student is experiencing
- Being aware of the sensory impact of the classroom and modifying elements within the environment to make it more manageable
- Anticipate the demands of activities on the student's nervous system and adapt elements within the activity accordingly
- Being aware of how a student's specific disabilities may impact regulation and sensory processing
- Modeling regulated behaviours and responses, especially during times of upset
 - Use a calm, quiet voice
 - Say less, use few words and make comments that acknowledge the upset
 - Use firm but gentle pressure touch, such as a hand squeeze
 - Model deep breaths
 - Move to a calm, quiet space then return to class when ready
 - Stay close, but give the student time and space
- Assisting the student to regulate in the context of always being included

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