

# Co-Regulation Strategies for Caregivers

*Stay regulated enough to lend your nervous system to your child — because co-regulation is how self-regulation is learned.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Clinician: \_\_\_\_\_

***What is co-regulation?** Co-regulation is the process by which a calm, regulated adult helps a dysregulated child return to a manageable emotional state. Children's nervous systems literally borrow regulation from ours. You cannot pour from an empty cup — your own regulation comes first.*

## THE SCIENCE OF CO-REGULATION

Children's brains are not yet capable of self-regulation — they need to borrow it from regulated adults. When you stay calm in the face of your child's distress, you are literally lending them your regulated nervous system. This is called co-regulation, and it is how self-regulation is learned over time through thousands of repeated experiences.

## CO-REGULATION STRATEGIES

<b>Your voice</b>	Lower your voice rather than raising it. Slow your speech. Use fewer words.
<b>Your body</b>	Get on their level physically. Unclench your jaw and shoulders. Breathe slowly.
<b>Your presence</b>	Stay close without demanding eye contact or response. "I'm right here."
<b>Touch (if welcomed)</b>	A hand on the back, a hug, or firm pressure if sensory-appropriate for your child.
<b>Space</b>	Sometimes the most regulating thing is to give space while staying nearby.
<b>Narration</b>	"I can see you're really upset right now. That makes sense. I'm here."
<b>Time</b>	Regulation takes time. Do not rush it. Don't problem-solve until calm is restored.

## REFLECTION & INTEGRATION

**My own regulation practices — what I do to stay regulated enough to co-regulate:**

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**What makes it hardest for me to stay regulated when my child is dysregulated:**

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**One co-regulation strategy I want to practise this week:**

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