



CREATING CALM: FAMILY APPROACH TO CO-REGULATION

MEG KAPIL, MA, CCC-S, RCC

1

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT



THIS SCHOOL IS LOCATED ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE LKWUNGEN AND WSÁNEĆ PEOPLES. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR WELCOME AND GRACIOUSNESS TO THE PEOPLE WHO SEEK KNOWLEDGE HERE.

2

THE PLAN

1. UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES WITH REGULATION
2. HOW TO WORK TOWARDS IMPROVED REGULATION PART 1
3. HOW TO WORK TOWARDS IMPROVED REGULATION PART 2

3

WHAT IS 'REGULATION'?

The act of **regulating** or state of being **regulated** (Oxford)

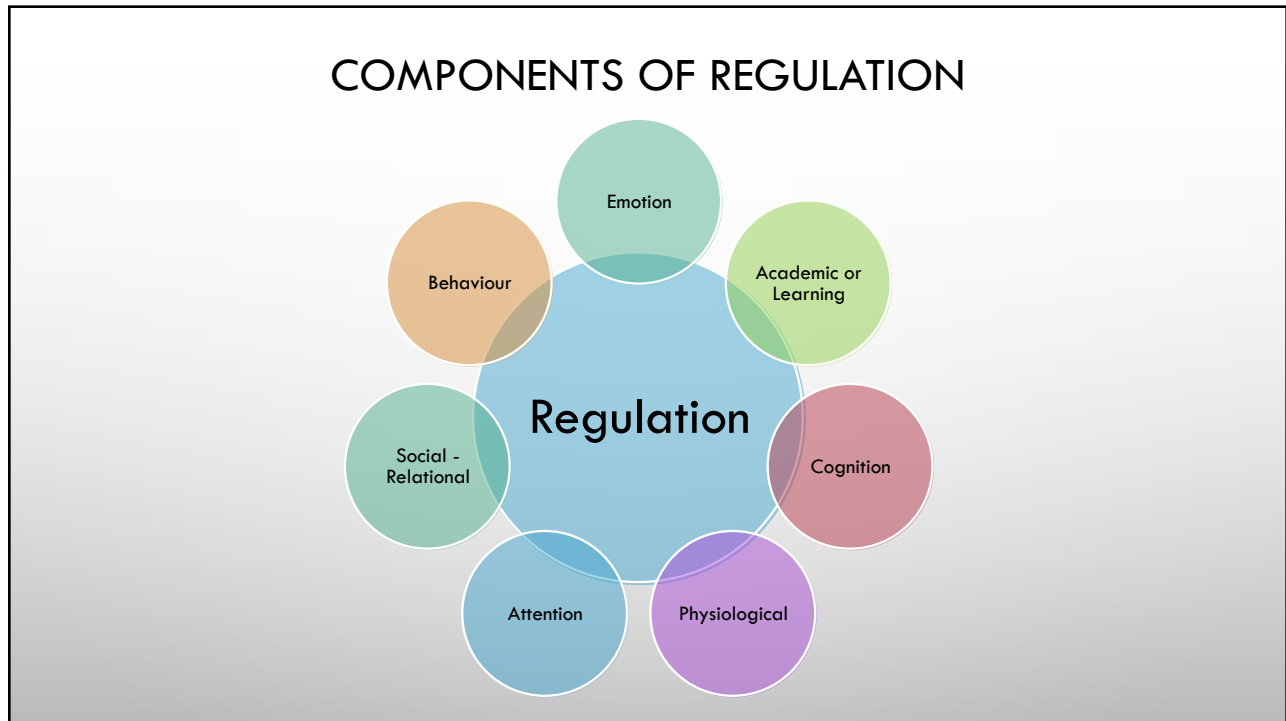
The process of the person managing their own psychological and physiological states, as well as actions. (Psychological dictionary)

Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to individual learners taking metacognitive control of cognitive, behavioural, motivational, and emotional conditions or states through iterative processes involving reflection and adaptation (Hadwin, Järvelä, & Miller, 2017).

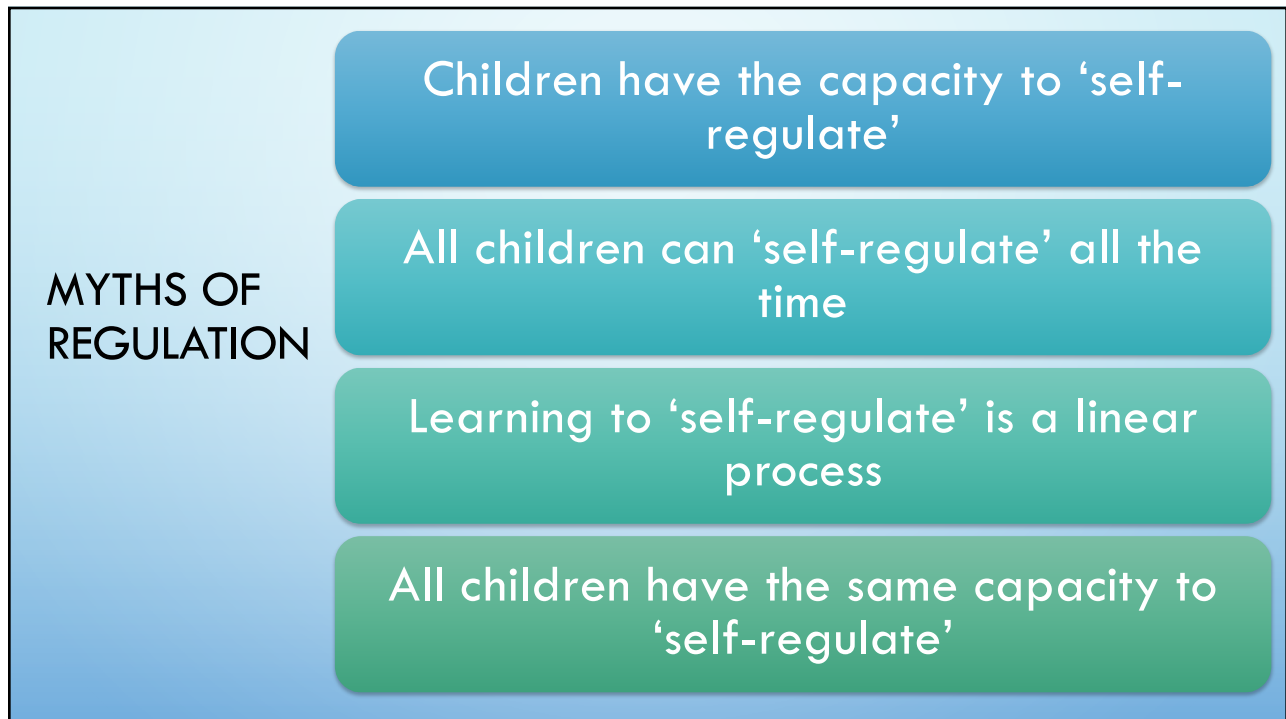
Emotional regulation means a set of abilities that include our ability to recognize our own and others' emotions, to adjust our emotional intensity to match the situation, and to modify our emotional reactivity in line with our own goals, intentions, and social demands.

The original psycho-physiological self-regulation refers to how we manage stress (where stress is the stimuli that requires us to expend energy to maintain balance)

4



5



6

REGULATION CHALLENGES

- CHALLENGE WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW ABOUT BEHAVIOR
- A BEHAVIOUR IS AN OBSERVABLE RESPONSE TO OUR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTION OF THREAT
- CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS OFTEN REPRESENT THE BODY'S RESPONSE TO STRESS AND NOT INTENTIONAL MISBEHAVIOR
- APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING AND REGULATING BEHAVIOUR MUST CONSIDER THIS
- WHEN WE OBSERVE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR, INSTEAD OF WONDERING HOW TO 'GET RID OF IT', INSTEAD BE CURIOUS ABOUT 'WHAT THIS IS TELLING US ABOUT THE CHILD?'
- CHILDREN DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO USE TOP-DOWN THINKING TO CONTROL THEIR BEHAVIOURS (SELF-REGULATION) THROUGH BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH CAREGIVERS, ENGAGEMENT INCREASES IN COMPLEXITY AS THE CHILD GROWS

7



TEACHING SELF-
REGULATION IS NOT
ENOUGH, IT MUST
BE **EXPERIENCED**

8



KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN, IF THEY CAN'T THERE IS A GOOD REASON

(E.G. UNSOLVED PROBLEM, LAGGING SKILL – ROSS GREENE)

9

BEHAVIOUR AND NEUROCEPTION

- BEHAVIOURS ARE SIGNPOSTS TO HOW A CHILD IS MANAGING STRESS (THEIR PERCEPTION)
- BEHAVIOURS ARE ADAPTIVE RESPONSES TO OUR HUMAN DRIVE FROM OUR EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE
- THESE SURVIVAL INSTINCTS REMAIN IN THREE UNDERLYING NEUROPHYSIOLOGICAL STATES (POLYVAGAL THEORY)
 - SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
 - DEFENSE (FIGHT OR FLIGHT)
 - LIFE THREAT (SHUT DOWN)

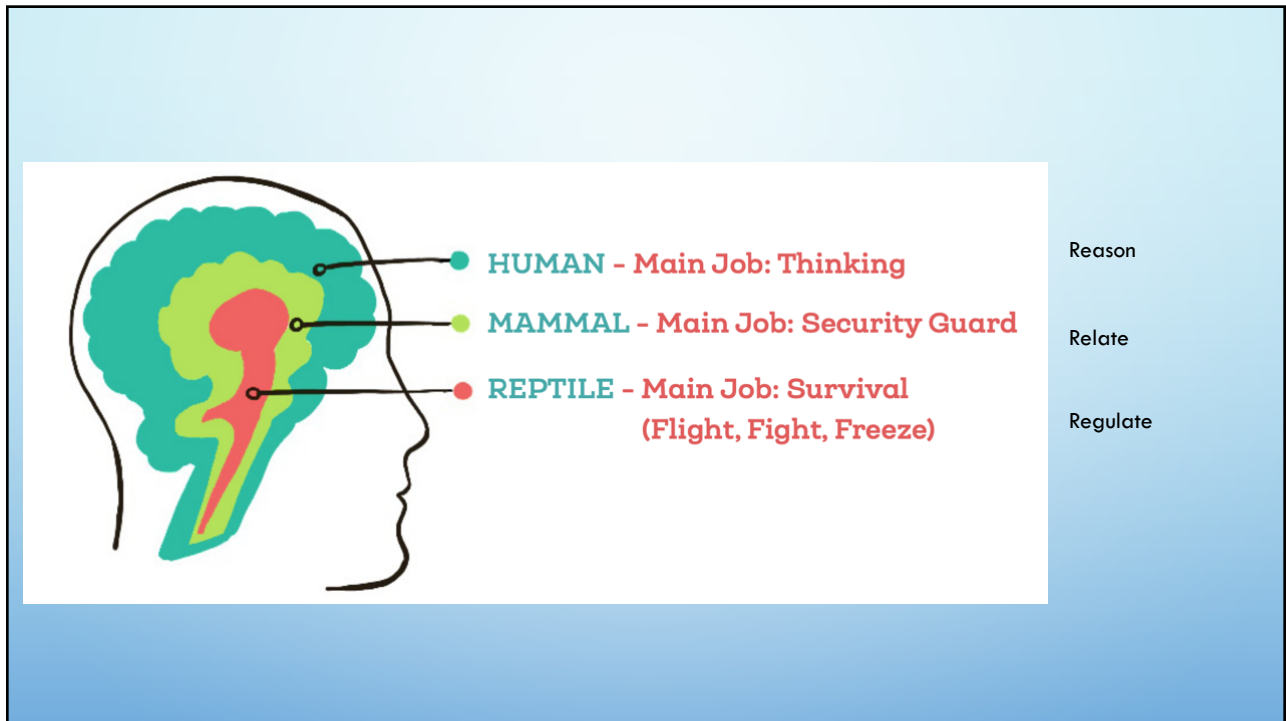
NEUROCEPTION: BODY'S UNCONSCIOUS SURVEILLANCE OF SAFETY AND THREAT IN THE ENVIRONMENT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

SERIOUS AND PERSISTENT BEHAVIOUR CHALLENGES ARE RESPONSES TO A CHILD'S SUBCONSCIOUS PERCEPTIONS OF RISK (EITHER PHYSICAL OR RELATIONAL) AND FAULTY NEUROCEPTION
NEURODIVERSITY AND TRAUMA HISTORY

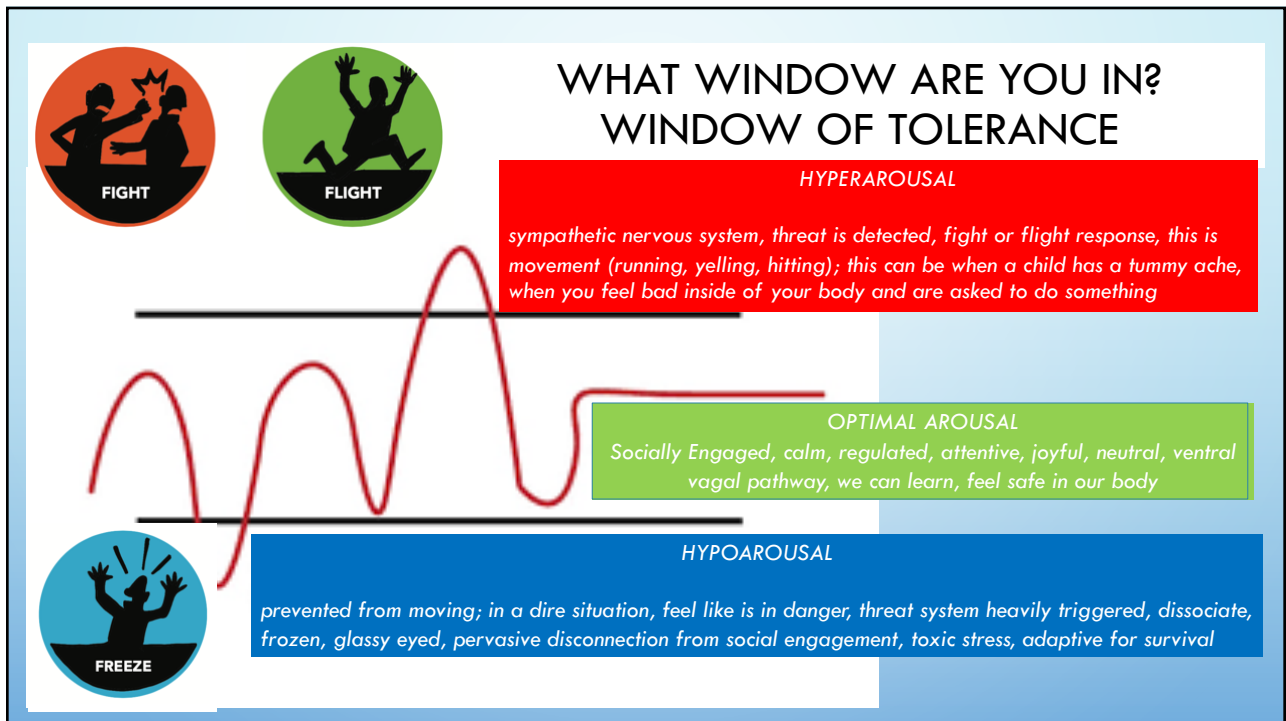
WITH NEUROCEPTION IN MIND, WE FOCUS ON HOW WE ARE WITH CHILDREN INSTEAD OF WHAT WE DO TO THEM

UNDERSTANDING STRESS RESPONSES HELPS US DO THIS

10



11



12

WINDOW SIZE	Narrow Window	Wide Window
	Genetic predisposition Neurodiversity Overwhelming or traumatic experiences Few supportive relationships Toxic stress Social Isolation Few healthy habits	Supportive relationships Good coping skills Able to return to the window quickly Social connections Many healthy habits

13

LOOKING AT REGULATION THROUGH A NEURODIVERSE AND TRAUMA INFORMED LENS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND THE CAPACITY TO MANAGE CHALLENGES AND SOLVE PROBLEMS DEPEND ON THE NEURAL REGULATION OF PHYSIOLOGICAL STATE. • NEURAL REGULATION CAPACITY IS IMPACTED BY NEURODIVERSITY AND HISTORY (E.G. TRAUMA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACES RESEARCH • CHANGES TO BRAIN ARCHITECTURE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMYGDALA ACTIVATION • RESPONSE TO FACIAL EXPRESSIONS • PERSISTENT IRRITABILITY AND ANGER

14

TOP-DOWN VERSUS BOTTOM UP BEHAVIOURS

MISBEHAVIOUR VERSUS STRESS BEHAVIOR?
 CHOICE?
 PUNISHMENT VERSUS DISCIPLINE?

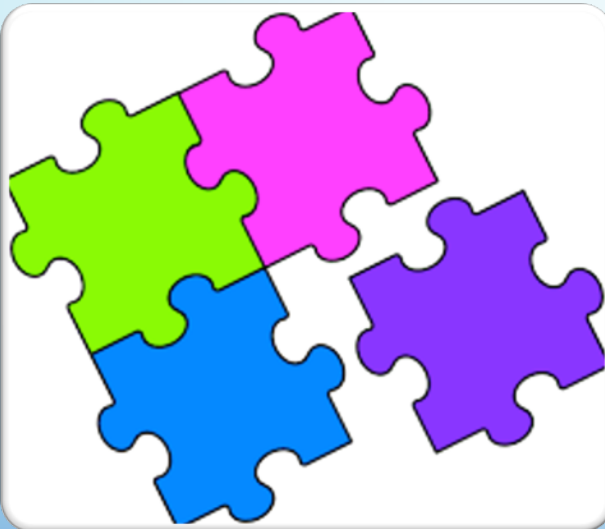
Top-Down Behaviours: Intentionality and Planning (Green path)	Bottom-up Behaviours: Stress Responses (red and blue paths)
<p>Brain activity that reflects the conscious mind and it's 'mental doings'(Goleman & Davison, 2)</p> <p>Top-down thinking occurs in the 'upstairs brain' and requires an integrated brain (Siegel & Bryson)</p> <p>Top-down thinking develops over time with connections to the prefrontal cortex</p> <p>Most children have some control over their behaviour by age 3.5 it can take much longer for these abilities to fully develop</p> <p>Brain growth supported by nurturing and attentive relationships support development of control, learning, reflecting, planning, goal pursuit</p>	<p>Before top-down thinking is developed, we rely on bottom-up behaviours</p> <p>These are survival related, they keep us alive and are subconscious</p> <p>These behaviours are linked to subconscious perception of safety</p> <p>We develop patterned responses to stress that are automatic</p>

15



QUESTIONS

16



**PART TWO:
SUPPORTING
BETTER
REGULATION
- ADULTS FIRST**

17



**SETTING THE
STAGE**

SUPPORTING REGULATION
IN CHILDREN BUILT ON
FOUNDATION OF
EXPERIENCE OF LOVE,
SAFETY, AND CONNECTION
IN RELATIONSHIPS

18

WHAT IS THE MIND?



SELF-ORGANIZING, EMERGENT, EMBODIED AND RELATIONAL PROCESS THAT REGULATES THE FLOW OF ENERGY AND INFORMATION.

(DANIEL SIEGEL)

- FROM THIS DEFINITION, THE MIND IS:
 - A PROCESS OF ENERGY AND INFORMATION
 - INCLUDES NOT JUST THE HEAD BUT ALSO THE BODY
 - EXISTS IN RELATIONSHIPS

19

4 S'S OF ATTACHMENT

(SEE "THE POWER OF SHOWING UP" D.SIEGEL & T. PAYNE-BRYSON)

Seen — this is not just seeing with the eyes. It means perceiving them deeply and empathically — sensing the mind behind their behavior

Safe — we avoid actions and responses that frighten or hurt them, we hold space for and validate how they are feeling

Soothed — we help them deal with difficult emotions and situations

Secure — we help them develop an internalized sense of well-being

20

CO-REGULATION

IT IS ONLY BY BEING REGULATED THAT A CHILD LEARNS TO REGULATE
WHEN A CHILD IS DYSREGULATED, THE ADULT CAN PROVIDE THE INHIBITORY AND REGULATING BRAIN THROUGH CONNECTION

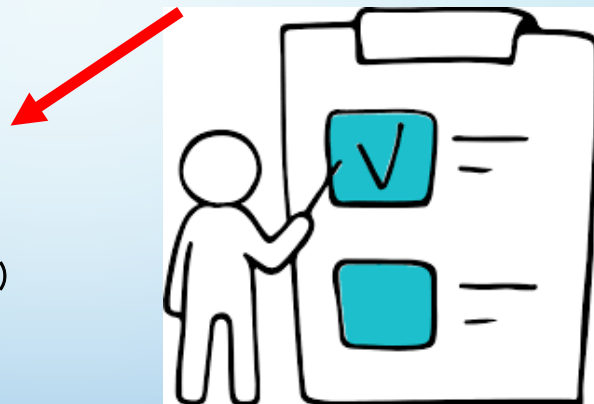
- BUT THE ADULT MUST FIRST ATTEND TO THEIR OWN REGULATION AND ACTIVATION LEVELS
 - THIS STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP
 - PROTECTIVE FACTOR
 - CONSIDER VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMPONENTS (80%; EYES, SMILE, NOD)

KIDS WILL REMEMBER HOW THEY FEEL WITH YOU MORE THAN WHAT YOU SAY

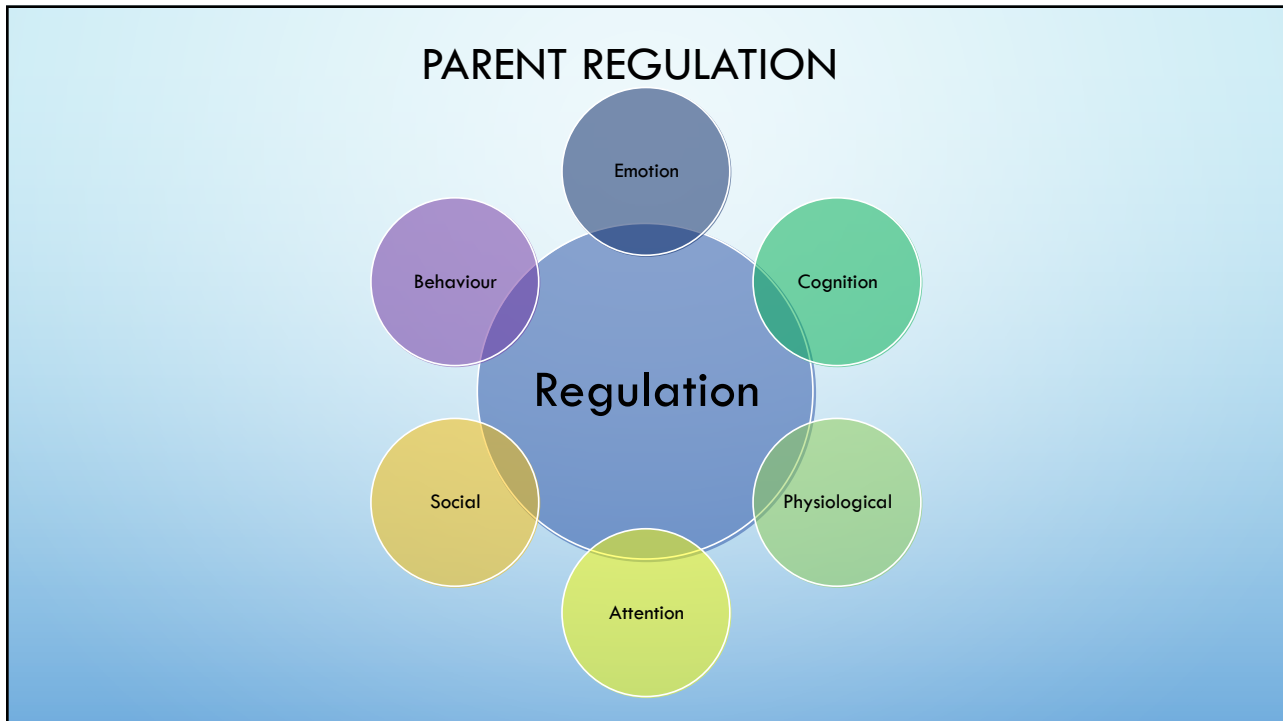
21

MAIN IDEAS

- ATTEND TO YOUR OWN REGULATION FIRST
- FOCUS ON COLLABORATIVE RECOVERY (SHORT TERM FOCUS)
- PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR A HEALTHIER REACTIONS AND HABITS OVER TIME (LONG TERM FOCUS)



22



23

BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR OWN REGULATION STORY

Make space for the discomfort of emotion	Let your child know that discomfort of their emotions are not too much for you
Understand your own relationship to emotions, the assumptions you make and what story you bring	Be curious and compassionate about the message of the emotion, Stay connected to the message, try not to bypass the emotion
What assumptions do you make about behaviours?	What does your child's regulation (emotion, behavior, learning, etc...) mean about you?

24

SELF COMPASSION

1. SELF-KINDNESS VS. SELF-JUDGMENT

SELF-COMPASSION INVOLVES BEING WARM AND KIND TO OURSELVES, EVEN WHEN WE MAKE MISTAKES. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO JUDGING OURSELVES HARSHLY, BEATING OURSELVES UP.

2. COMMON HUMANITY VERSUS ISOLATION

SELF-COMPASSION INCLUDES THE RECOGNITION THAT PART OF BEING HUMAN IS THAT WE ARE VULNERABLE AND WE SUFFER. WE SHARE THIS EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER HUMANS. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO FEELING ALONE AND ISOLATED AND THAT WE ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO IS STRUGGLING.

3. MINDFULNESS VS. OVER-IDENTIFICATION

SELF-COMPASSION INCLUDES NOTICING OUR EXPERIENCE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT OR AVOIDANCE.


NEFF, K. (2011). *SELF-COMPASSION: THE PROVEN POWER OF BEING KIND TO YOURSELF*. NEW YORK: HARPER COLLINS.

25



QUESTIONS

26

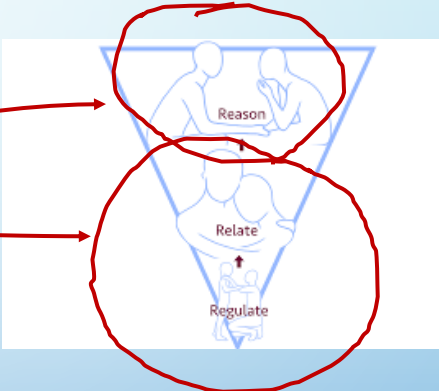


PART THREE: SUPPORTING BETTER REGULATION IN CHILDREN

27

TWO POINTS OF FOCUS FOR REGULATION

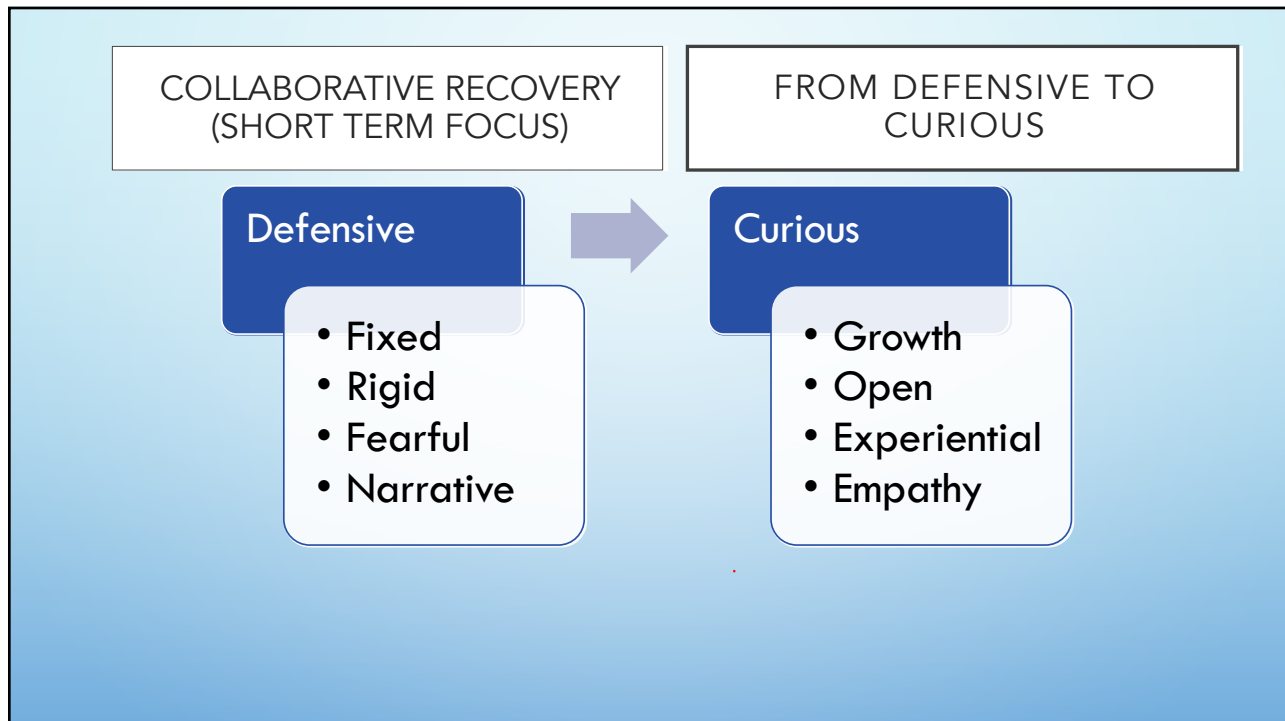
- **SHORT TERM**
 - RECOVERY (GETTING BACK IN THE WINDOW)
 - REGULATE, RELATE
- **LONG TERM**
 - REASON (NEED TO ALREADY BE CALM)
 - WIDER WINDOW OVER TIME
 - COLLABORATIVE PLAN
 - THE DEBRIEF



28

COLLABORATIVE RECOVERY (SHORT TERM FOCUS)	
Regulate	Relate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety is in the mind-body of the beholder • Goal – Integrate upstairs and downstairs brain, have the thinking brain be in charge • ‘Low & Slow’ (Delahooke) • Move from perception of threat to perception of safety (additive) • Fight flight (hyperarousal) • Freeze (hypoarousal) • Bridge to later when you can figure out a solution • Find out about your child’s sensory system and what will work to calm their nervous system (e.g. soft or firm touch, talk more or less.....) 	<p>Collaboration and connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation • From Defensive to Curious <p>“Hmmm.....”</p>

29



30

SHORT TERM FOCUS: VALIDATE & SUPPORT

STEP 1- VALIDATE.

- A. CONVEY UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR EXPERIENCE & PROVE THAT YOU "GET IT".

VALIDATION EXAMPLE: IT'S NOT ABOUT THE NAIL

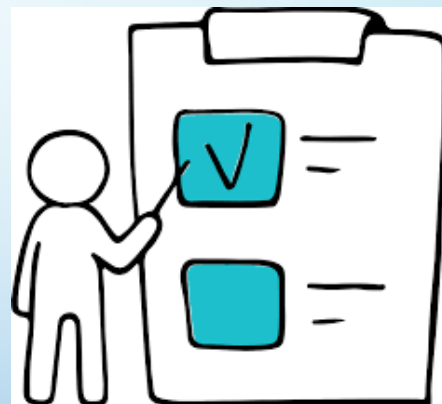
STEP 2 – SUPPORT.

- A. EMOTIONAL NEED: OFFER COMFORT, REASSURANCE OR SPACE
- B. PRACTICAL NEED: REDIRECT / HELP PROBLEM-SOLVE / SET LIMITS

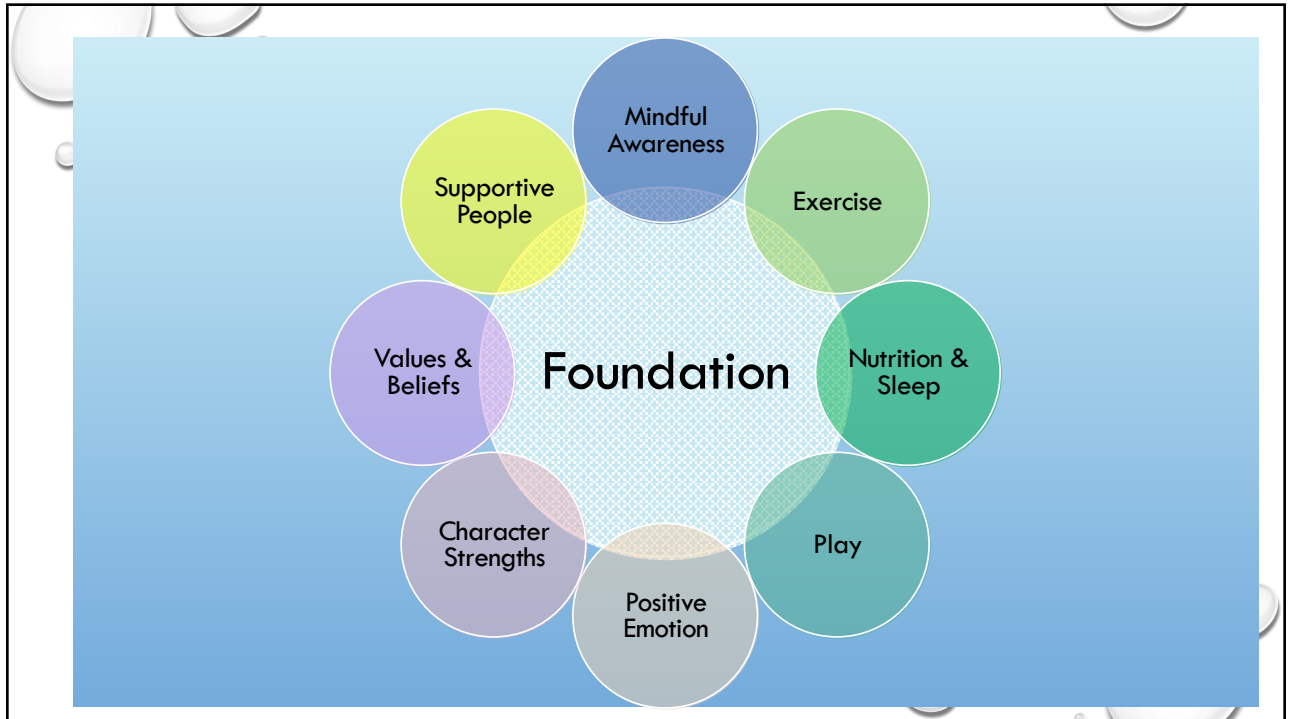
31

MAIN IDEAS

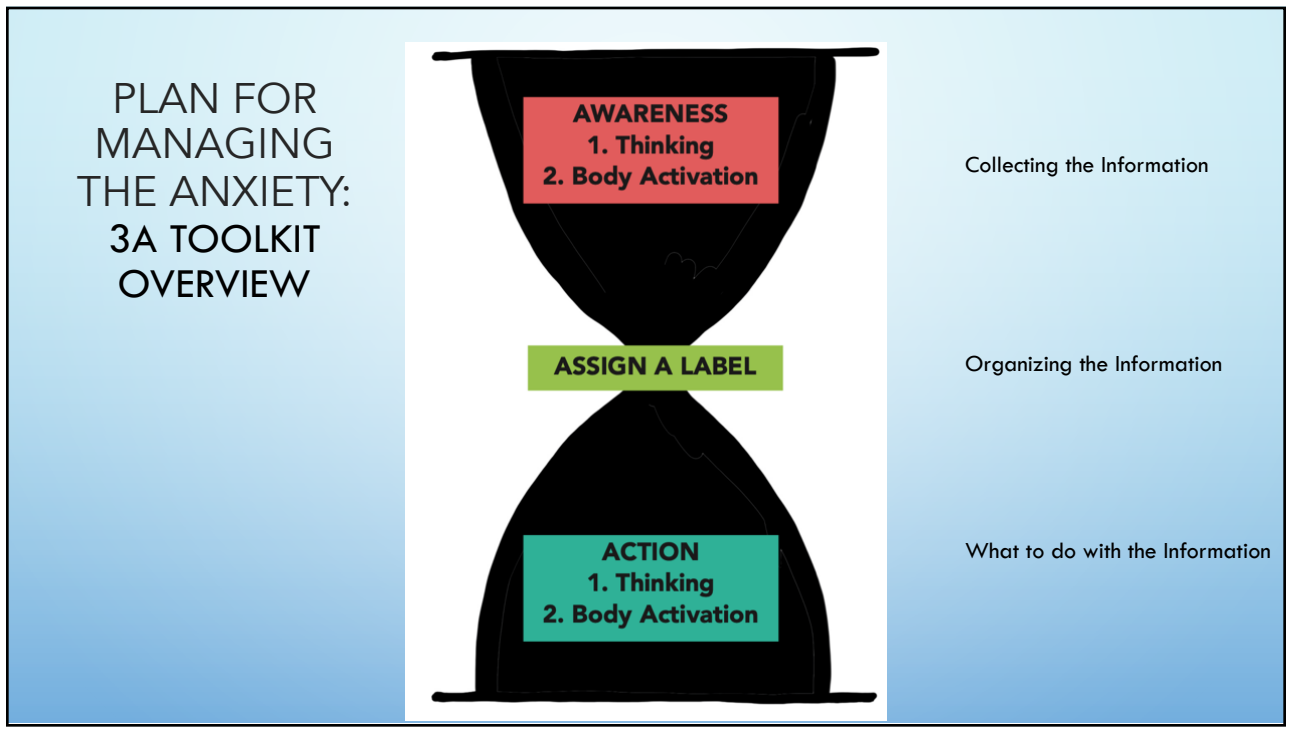
- ATTEND TO YOUR OWN REGULATION FIRST
- FOCUS ON COLLABORATIVE RECOVERY
(SHORT TERM FOCUS)
- PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR A HEALTHIER REACTIONS AND HABITS OVER TIME
(LONG TERM FOCUS)



32




33



34


ACTION "RESPONDING TO THE INFORMATION"

Helpful Thinking Bucket



Messages of safety	Specific helpful thoughts
I am safe, there are no tigers here, I can handle this, worry is making things up	I can do this, I will figure it out, I have practised a lot.

Body Calming



A bit worried	A lot worried
Breathing	Movement
Orienting	Shaking
Butterfly Hug	

35

LONG TERM FOCUS – HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED THESE DOMAINS ALL REST ON A PERCEPTION OF SAFETY, ESPECIALLY RELATIONAL SAFETY

Emotion	Cognition	Physiological	Attention and Executive Function	Social	Behaviour	Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, evaluating, modifying one's emotions Increasing positive emotion Managing negative emotion 	Flexible Adaptive Growth oriented Increase positive thinking. Inhibit negative thinking (negativity bias)	Manage physiological activation - Breathing - Heart rate - Muscle tension	Alertness Orientation Executive control Increase concentration Attentional shifting Working memory Task initiation Organization Time and sequencing	Attunement Regulation of social interaction Managing conflict Problem solving Collaboration	Inhibit impulsive behavior Increase pro social behaviour	Metacognitive control of cognitive, behavioural, motivational, and emotional conditions or states through iterative processes involving reflection and adaptation

36

THE DEBRIEF (LONG TERM FOCUS)

MUST BE CALM AND RECEPTIVE FIRST

- REASON
- HEALTHY HABITS OVER TIME
- RELATIONSHIP FIRST
- MASTERY EXPERIENCES
- REWIND, REFLECT AND REPLAY
- WHAT WOULD WORK BETTER NEXT TIME?
- (ANTICIPATORY COPING)



Image source:
<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf>

37

- AFTER THE FACT, REWIND AND RETELL THE NARRATIVE OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH A FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CHANGE
- A GREAT WAY TO FACILITATE AGENCY, PRACTICE STRATEGIES, AND GROW PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBILITY REGARDING A DIFFERENT (AND MORE POSITIVE) OUTCOME
- RECOGNITION THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ENACT STRATEGIES WHILE ACTIVATED
- IF THIS STOPS BEING COLLABORATIVE - **STOP**

THE DEBRIEF

AWARENESS

- WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?
 - CONSIDER THINKING, BODY SENSATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, EMOTION & MEMORY
- WHAT WAS THE CONTEXT?
 - ARE THERE ANY CONTEXT FACTORS THAT CAN BE CHANGED?

ASSIGN A LABEL

- WHAT WERE YOU FEELING?
- WHAT LABEL WILL YOU USE FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

ACTION

- WHAT WORKED?
 - THINKING, BODY, RELATIONSHIP, EMOTION & MEMORY
- WHAT CAN WE DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?
 - THINKING, BODY, RELATIONSHIP, EMOTION & MEMORY

38

KEEP IN MIND THAT WHATEVER AREA OF REGULATION YOU ARE WORKING ON IN YOUR FAMILY: CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE MIND AS RELATIONAL

- THAT WE ARE SHAPED BY OUR HISTORY AS WELL AS BY OUR PRESENT
- THAT CHILDREN AND NOT JUST TINY ADULTS
- RATHER CONSIDER THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL AND CAPACITY IN THAT MOMENT AND WORK ON THE RECOVERY FROM DYSREGULATION (WHATEVER KIND)
- SLOWLY, INCREMENTALLY, COMPASSIONATELY BUILD HEALTHY HABITS OVER TIME WITH SCAFFOLDING FROM THE SUPPORTIVE BIG PERSON TO CLOSE THE GAP FROM DYSREGULATION TO CO-REGULATION TO SELF-REGULATION
- ASSUME THAT EVERY CHILD IS DOING THEIR BEST

39

REVIEW: WHAT ADULTS CAN DO TO SUPPORT REGULATION

- CONSIDER EVERY CHILD'S BEHAVIOR AND PROGRESS WITH DEVELOPMENT, HISTORY, NEURODIVERSITY, AND NEUROCEPTION IN MIND
- ASSUME EVERY CHILD IS DOING THEIR BEST. IF NOT, THE ADULTS WILL CONSIDER WHAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY AND HOW THEY CAN HELP.
- BE CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE IN YOUR RESPONSES AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILD
 - CONSIDER THE **4 S'S: SAFE, SEEN, SOOTHED, SECURE**
- **CO-REGULATION:** THE ADULTS WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THE CHILD IS WORKING TOWARDS SELF-REGULATION OVER TIME BUT WILL OFTEN REQUIRE CO-REGULATION.
- WHEN THE CHILD IS DYSREGULATED: START WITH **REGULATE**, THEN **RELATE**, THEN **REASON**
- WHEN CONSIDERING **CO-REGULATION:**
 - ATTEND TO ADULT REGULATION FIRST, WHEN THE BIG PEOPLE ARE CALM, WE PROVIDE RELATIONAL CUES OF SAFETY
 - VALIDATE WHAT THE CHILD IS FEELING IN THE SHORT TERM
 - HOW WE SAY THINGS MATTER AS MUCH AS WHAT WE SAY
 - ATTEND TO HEALTHY HABITS, ANTICIPATORY COPING AND PROBLEM SOLVING ONLY WHEN THE CHILD AND ADULT ARE REGULATED

40

**THANK
YOU!**

Change takes time, be patient.

Focus on the recovery and progress towards improved regulation (incremental growth)

Solutions will be individualized

Curious, collaborative, compassionate