



Talk To 10 - Session #4

SOOTHING THROUGH CO-CONNECTIONS

Helping children regulate their nervous systems

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Teaching soothing behaviours is critical to coping. When children's internal systems are calm, so are their minds. **Our nervous systems are here to protect us** - when they are activated, we are focussed on keeping ourselves safe and **NOT** focussed on: Thinking, learning, reflecting, wondering, curiosity, and more.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

Our brain is constantly scanning our environment for cues of threat or cues of safety. Cues of safety let us know we are in a zone of comfort, whereas cues of threat let us know we are in a zone of discomfort.

- **Cues of safety** = regulation and calm.
- **Cues of threat** = dysregulation and escalation.

NOTE: Everyones cues of threat and safety are different, as we all have different zones of comfort and discomfort. Some of our children have broader zones of comfort than otherwise, and the inverse is also true.

Children's nervous systems are triggered into **dysregulation** when threat cues are:

- **Too much** - too many instructions all at once
- **Too soon** - going on scary rides
- **Too long** - family arguments that don't stop
- **Not enough for too long** - adults' attention

STRATEGY:

Co-Regulation

Where the child requires another person,
usually an adult to help them return to calm.

This strategy is based upon research led by scientists like Daniel Siegel and Bruce Perry, and is necessary to help switch on a child's thinking brain.

What can adults bring to **Co-Regulation**?

- **Presence** - present yourself to see if you're needed
- **Promise** - that you will control your calm, including breaks as needed
- **Proximity** - stay close in case children change their mind
- **Patience** - it's not a personal attack on adults, it's an attack on the child's nervous system. They target you because they need you.
- **Perception** - tell them you see their distress + help put words to the feelings
- **Protection** - guard the connection to your child with empathy, love and care

NOTE: For Co-Regulation to work well, the adult who is helping must first be self-regulated themselves, AND they need to be able to maintain that during attempted soothing.

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