



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

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What is emotional regulation?

- The ability to effectively manage and respond to emotional experiences in a way that is perceived as appropriate for the individual and the situation
- It includes being able to resist highly emotional responses to upsetting situations, calming yourself down when upset, adjusting to change of expectations and handling frustration without a disproportionate outburst.
- We all feel big emotions, and no emotion is a 'bad' emotion, it is more about how we handle them.
- It is communication!
- Remember, children are still learning to work through big emotions. They won't learn to regulate overnight.
- It is normal!

Benefits of emotional regulation

- Emotions control our body. If they are in disarray, we will be in disarray.
- Emotional regulation can help children to develop better relationships with their peers and families, enhance their learning and focus, positive mental well-being

So what is dysregulation?

- High emotional state, a loss of control (action, emotions)
- Our body telling us it feels threatened in some way.

What can dysregulation look like?

- Different in every child!
- It could be crying or shouting
- Overwhelm
- Anger and aggression
- Hysterical laughter
- Impulsive behaviour
- Snapping
- Refusal, defiance,
- Running away or avoidance
- Shutting down
- withdrawal

What can cause dysregulation?

- Strongly connected to emotions e.g anger, disappointment and and change particularly for children
 - Interoception – how we feel inside, e.g being hungry, heat, thirst etc
 - Sensory overwhelm – e.g noise
 - Hormones – adrenarache, puberty
 - The fight/flight/freeze response – when our brain perceives a threat
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- The list is endless!

- When we are dysregulated, our 'upstairs' brain (the part that does all the rational thinking & learning) switches off. It has little space to work.
- This can impact our executive functioning skills and rational thinking.
- We need to turn on the parasympathetic response – this counteracts our 'fight or flight' response of the sympathetic nervous system.

How can we 'put the lid back on'?

- Awareness and acknowledgement – name it to tame it.
 - Self-talk – tell ourselves we are safe
 - Breathing techniques – focus on breathing, lazy breathing,
 - Look around – use the 5 senses, e.g 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch
 - Connect to the body – hugging, tapping, movement, rhythm, water
 - Mindful practice – yoga, positive affirmation,
 - Cold water
 - Stay consistent.
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- Model some of these behaviours when you are feeling stressed or annoyed, children pick up on them.

Strategies at home to support

- Establish a calm-down space
- Setting routines – can provide stability,
- Encourage open communication about feelings – model talking about feelings
- Use of playdough or water
- Journalling e.g the Happy self journal
- Role play scenarios – work through a challenging scenario
- Discuss potential outcomes if it may be different from their expected

Resources

- Happyself journal
- Your mood journal – ferne cotton,
- Happy confident me
- Headspace app – sesame street x headspace, goodnight world, mindfulness with kids
- Cosmis kids yoga and zen space.

