Co-Regulation in Schools: YOU Make the Difference

Participant Reflection & Activity Booklet

For school support staff in elementary and secondary settings

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Purpose of this booklet

Use this booklet alongside the presentation to connect ideas to daily practice. The activities invite you to notice, reflect, rehearse, and collaborate—not to find a single perfect response. Adapt examples to the age, needs, dignity, and context of each student.

Our five-part learning journey

1. Understanding Co-Regulation
2. Understanding What Lies Beneath Behaviour
3. The Adult as the Regulation Anchor
4. Co-Regulation in Practice
5. From Co-Regulation to Self-Regulation

Before we begin: My starting point

What situations at school are most challenging for me to respond to calmly? What is one strength I already bring to my relationships with students?

PART 1 | Understanding Co-Regulation

From self-regulation to co-regulation: relationship and nervous-system awareness before compliance.

Reflection: What do I notice first?

Individual reflection • *Suggested time: 8 minutes*

Think of a recent moment when a student was upset or refusing to participate. Describe your first interpretation and response.

1. What did I see and hear?

2. Did I focus first on behaviour, emotion, safety, or connection?

3. What might change if I asked, “What support does this nervous system need?”

Two lenses, one situation

Pairs • Suggested time: 10 minutes

A student refuses to line up after recess and says, “I’m not going.” Compare two adult responses: a compliance-first response and a regulation-supportive response.

1. What might each adult say or do?

Compliance-first response	Regulation-supportive response

2. Which response preserves safety and expectations while supporting connection?

3. How would you adapt your response for a teenager (for those that work in secondary schools)?

A shared definition

Small-group discussion • Suggested time: 10 minutes

In groups of three, create a one-sentence definition of co-regulation that a new colleague could use.

1. What makes co-regulation relational rather than a quick trick?

2. How is it different from permitting unsafe behaviour?