

PART 3

Adult Posture & Co-Regulation

The more dysregulated the student becomes,
the more intentional the adult posture needs to become.

SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS: My posture under pressure

- What student behaviours are most likely to activate me (refer to the **Educator Trigger Inventory** at page 12 for more details)?
- When I become activated, what changes first—my voice, pace, body, language, expectations, proximity, or thinking?
- Which shift do I want to practise: judgment → curiosity, control → calm authority, confrontation → connection, rigidity → flexibility?

Educator Trigger Inventory

SELF-REFLECTION & REGULATION TOOL

Date: _____

Room: _____

Objective: Identifying our personal professional triggers allows us to move from reactive stress to intentional co-regulation. Check the items below that consistently push your nervous system toward dysregulation, then complete the brief action strategy below.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL & SITUATIONAL TRIGGERS

Sensory Load

- ☐ High vocal volume / piercing screams
- ☐ Multiple overlapping noises (toys, music, voices)
- ☐ Visual clutter / unorganized spaces
- ☐ Sustained high-energy chaos in close spaces

Transitions & Logistics

- ☐ Delays or pacing hitches during room changes
- ☐ Cleaning up major/repetitive messes
- ☐ Staff scheduling adjustments / sudden coverage changes
- ☐ Unpredictable routine interruptions

2. BEHAVIORAL & RELATIONAL TRIGGERS

Student Behaviors

- ☐ Active defiance or direct refusal ("No!")
- ☐ Physical dysregulation (hitting, throwing, biting)
- ☐ Emotional withdrawal / total shut down
- ☐ Chronic attention-seeking / constant interruption

Adult & Team Dynamics

- ☐ Misaligned co-educator responses or styles
- ☐ High-stress drop-off/pick-up parent interactions
- ☐ Feeling unseen, unvalidated, or unsupported
- ☐ Lack of clear communication within the team

3. PERSONALIZED MICRO-PLAN

My Top 2 Triggers:

Identify the two specific situations above that compromise your capacity to co-regulate most quickly.

Early Warning Signs (My Internal Body Signals):

How do I know I'm hitting my limit? (e.g., shallow breathing, tight shoulders, rushed pacing, tone changes)

Proactive Reset Strategy:

What is one realistic micro-action I can take in the moment to anchor myself? (e.g., 3 deep breaths, changing physical position, a brief grounding phrase, tapping in a teammate)

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE: The Pre-Response Pause



How to use this activity

Use a recent challenging moment. Slow the sequence down and identify a different choice point.

NOTICE: What was happening in the student? What was happening in me?	
REGULATE: What could help me become slower, quieter, and more grounded?	
INTERPRET: What might the behaviour be communicating?	
BOUNDARY + RELATIONSHIP: What limit still matters, and how can I preserve dignity and connection?	
RESPOND: What is the next best step—not every step?	

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY: Less language, more regulation



Discuss

In groups, rewrite adult responses for a student whose regulation is deteriorating.

1. Create a “too many words” response that adults commonly use.
2. Reduce it to one short, concrete, predictable statement.
3. Add a nonverbal adjustment: proximity, stance, processing time, or environmental change.
4. Discuss when the teaching/problem-solving conversation should happen instead.

SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS: The small stuff matters

- How do I give directions when I am rushed?
- How do I correct without shaming?
- What does repair look like after I make a mistake?
- How do I communicate that the relationship is bigger than the altercation?