

A Brain-Based Approach in a Daycare Context

How play, connection, and co-regulation
serve as anchors.

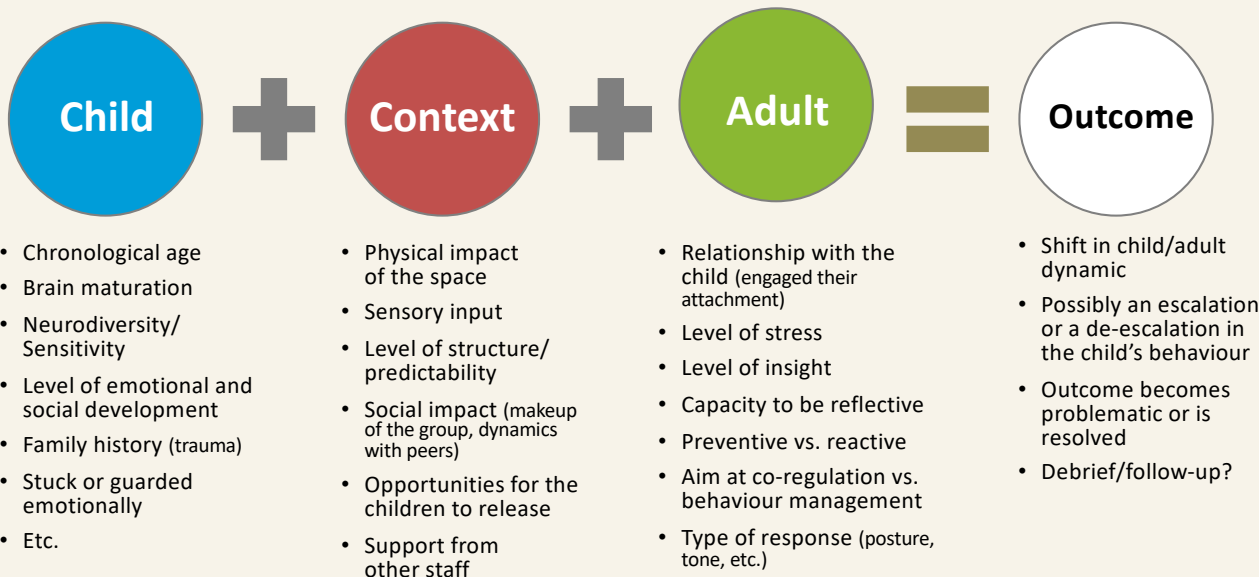
Presented by Catherine Korah and
Kerrie Bremner, CEBM.



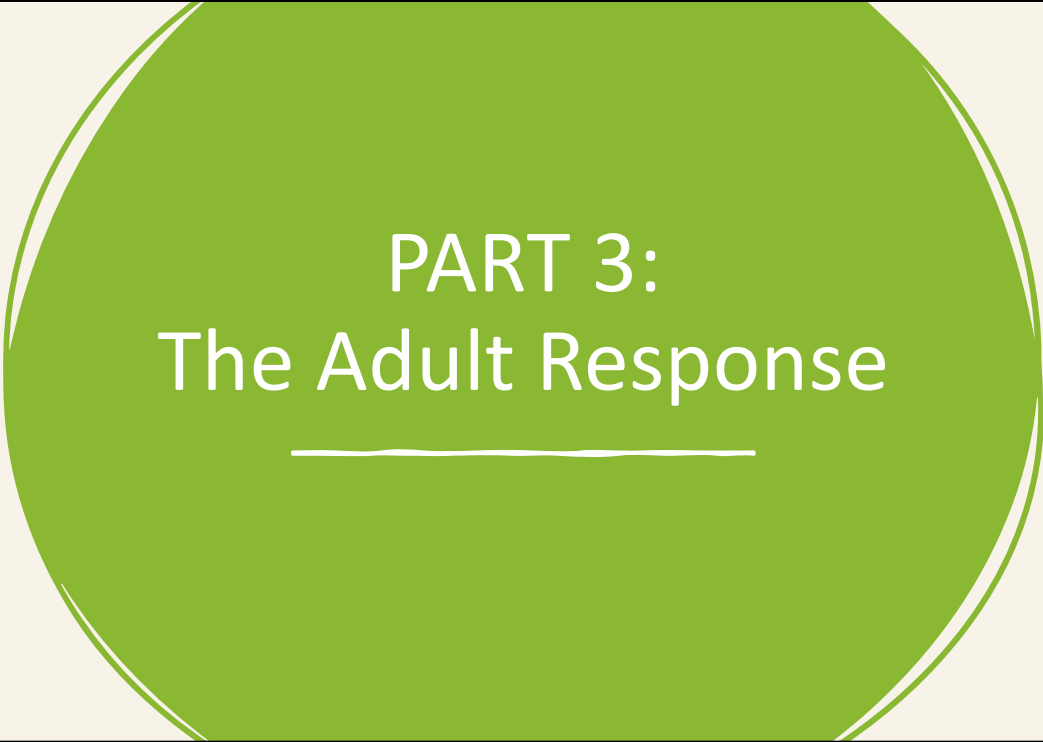
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IN A DAYCARE SETTING

Considering all the elements involved in a child's day



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PART 3: The Adult Response

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PART 3: THE ADULT

- Relationship with the child (engaged their attachment)
- Level of stress
- Level of insight
- Capacity to be reflective
- Preventive vs. reactive
- Aim at co-regulation vs. behaviour management
- Type of response (posture, tone, etc.)

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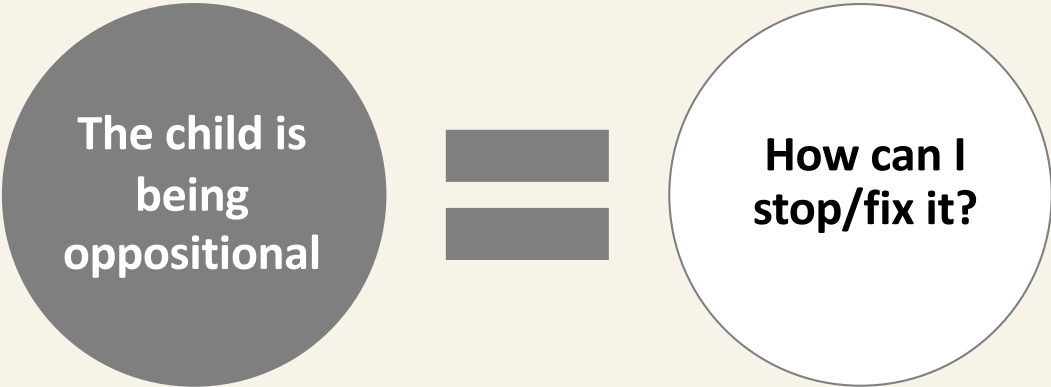
Individual exercise (5min)

What specific student behaviors trigger judgment in me?

Trigger Mapping: Identify personal triggers and typical reactions.

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COMMON CHALLENGES WITH THE ADULT'S RESPONSE:

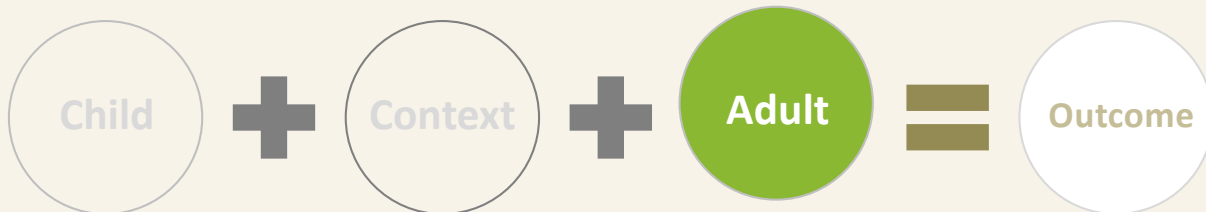


THE PROBLEM:
child's behaviour

THE ANSWER:
behavioural strategy

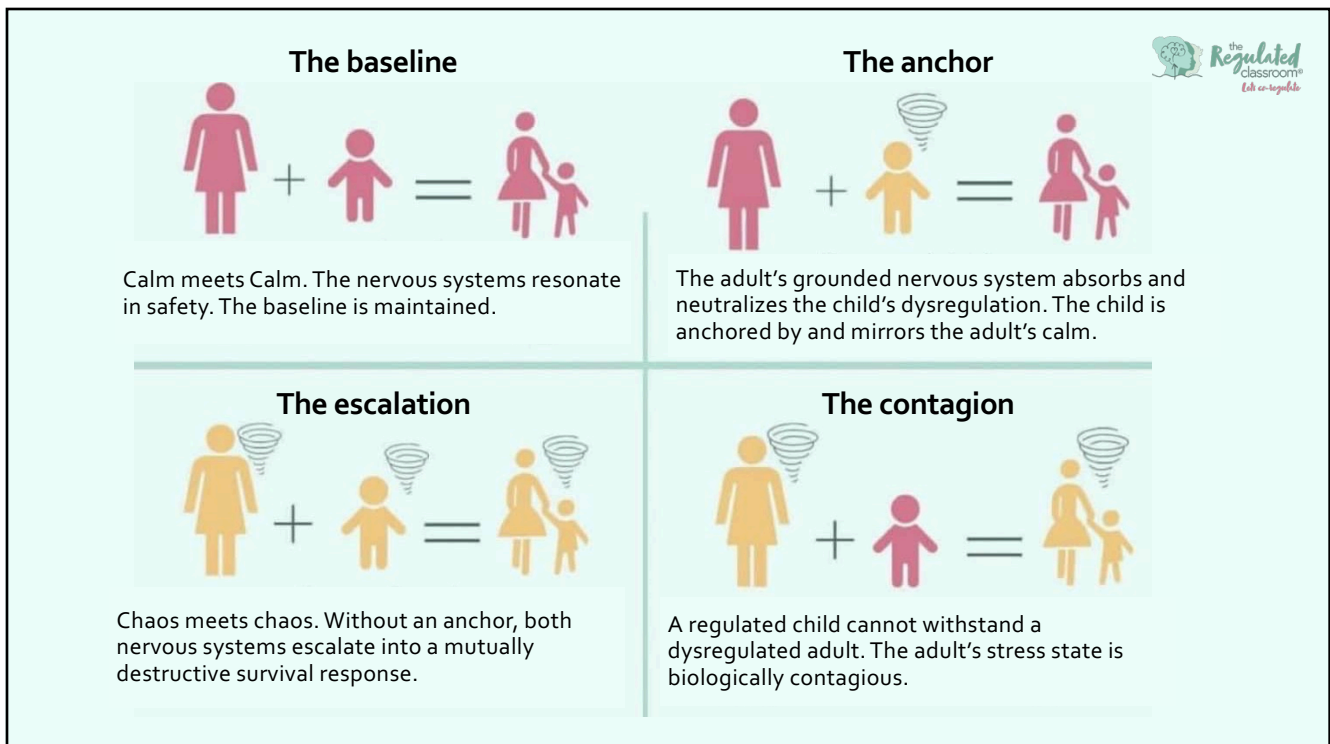
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VULNERABLE CHILDREN EXPERIENCE STRESS ALL DAY LONG



- Relationship with the child
- Level of stress
- Type of response (posture, tone, etc.)

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Cultivating natural influence through secure attachment



Daily Rituals: Create consistent, predictable moments of connection upon arrival and departure.



Leverage Interests: Learn and actively use children's specific interests to strengthen the relational bond.

Find Commonalities: Explicitly highlight points in common between the educator and the child.



Ensure Universal Anchor: Guarantee that every child has at least one exceptionally strong connection with an adult in the room.

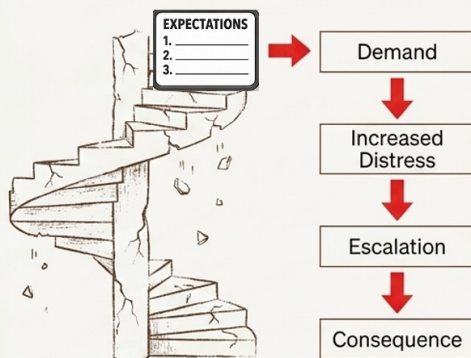


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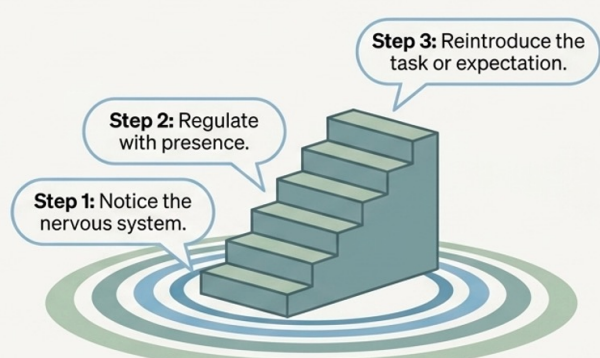
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Regulation Before Expectation

The Trap: Traditional Sequence



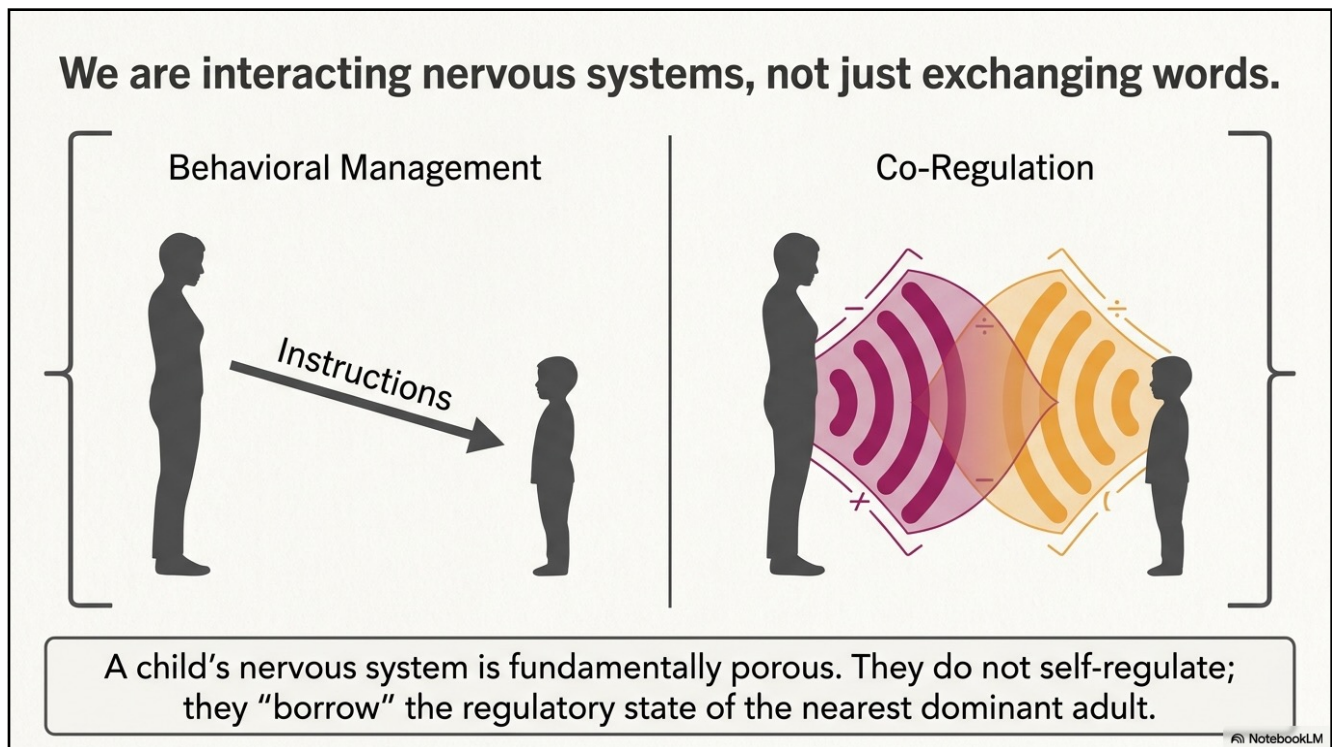
The Scaffold: Trauma-Informed Sequence



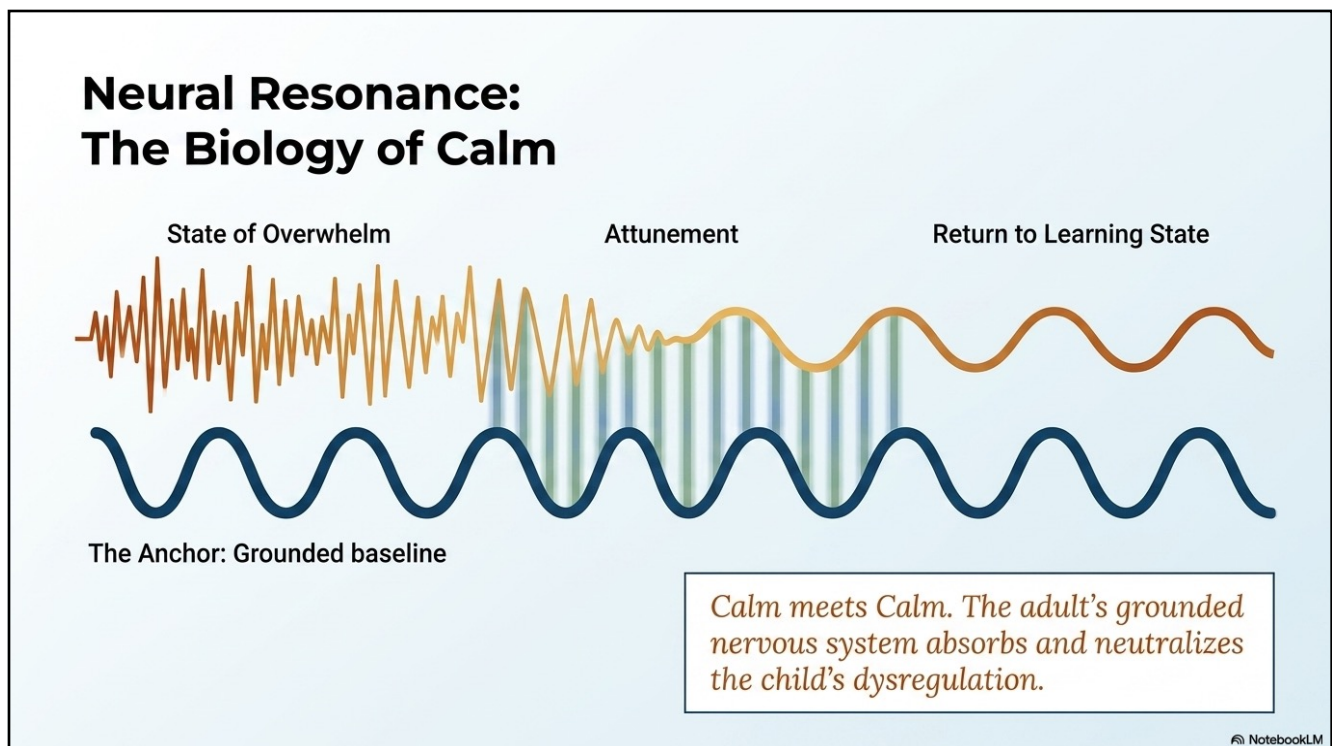
This isn't permissiveness; it's prioritization.
We are not lowering the bar; we are scaffolding the ladder.

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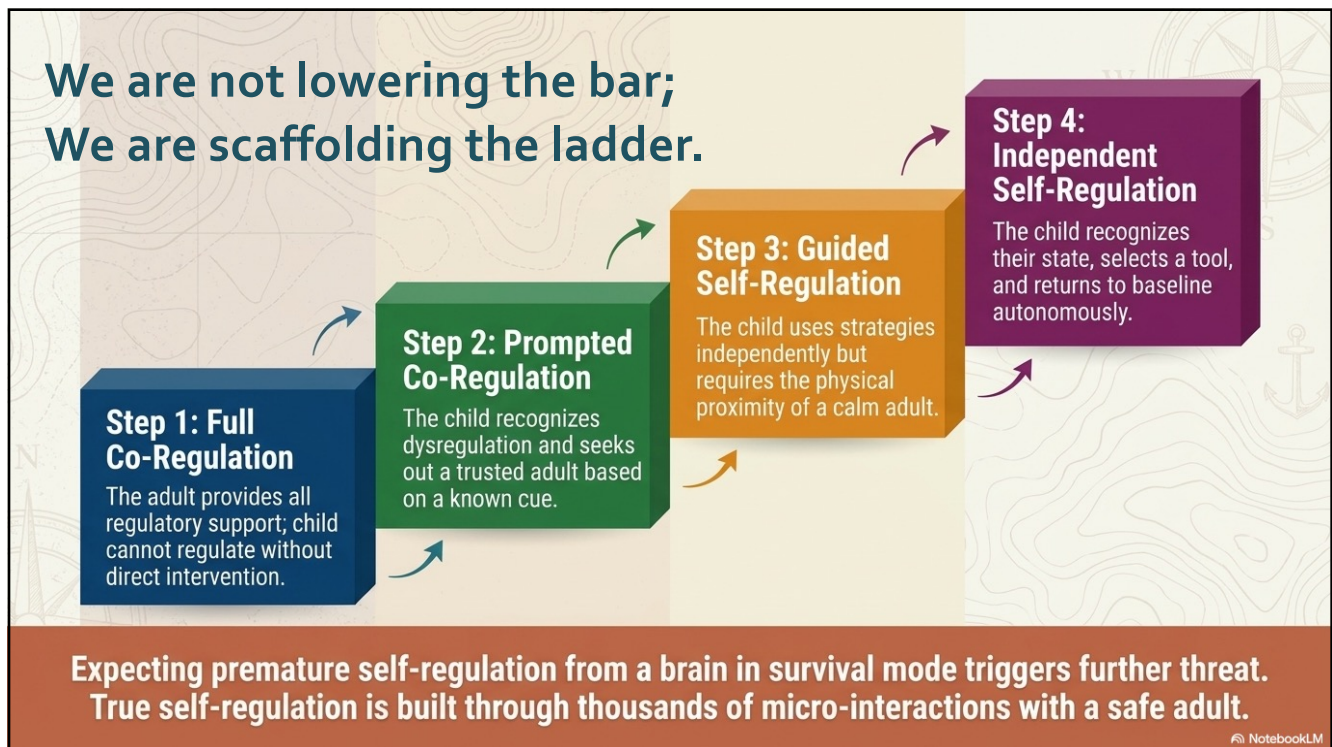
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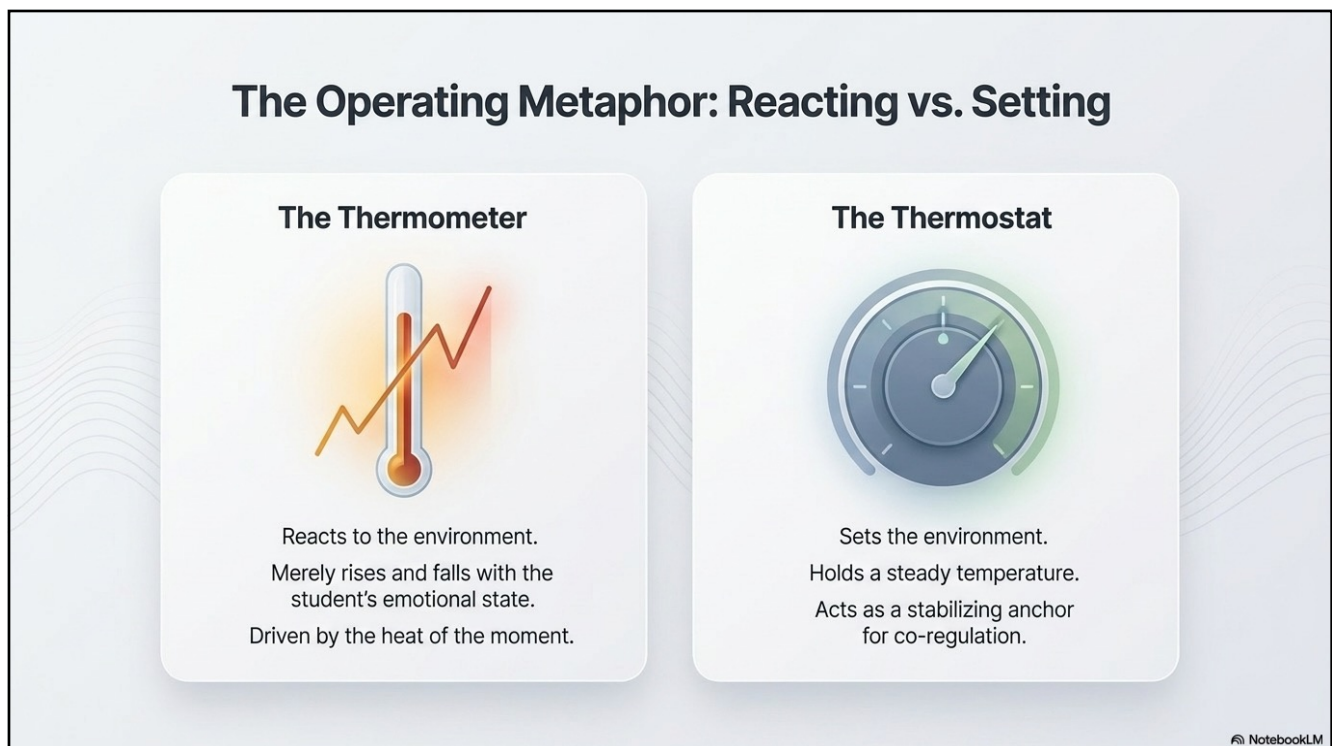
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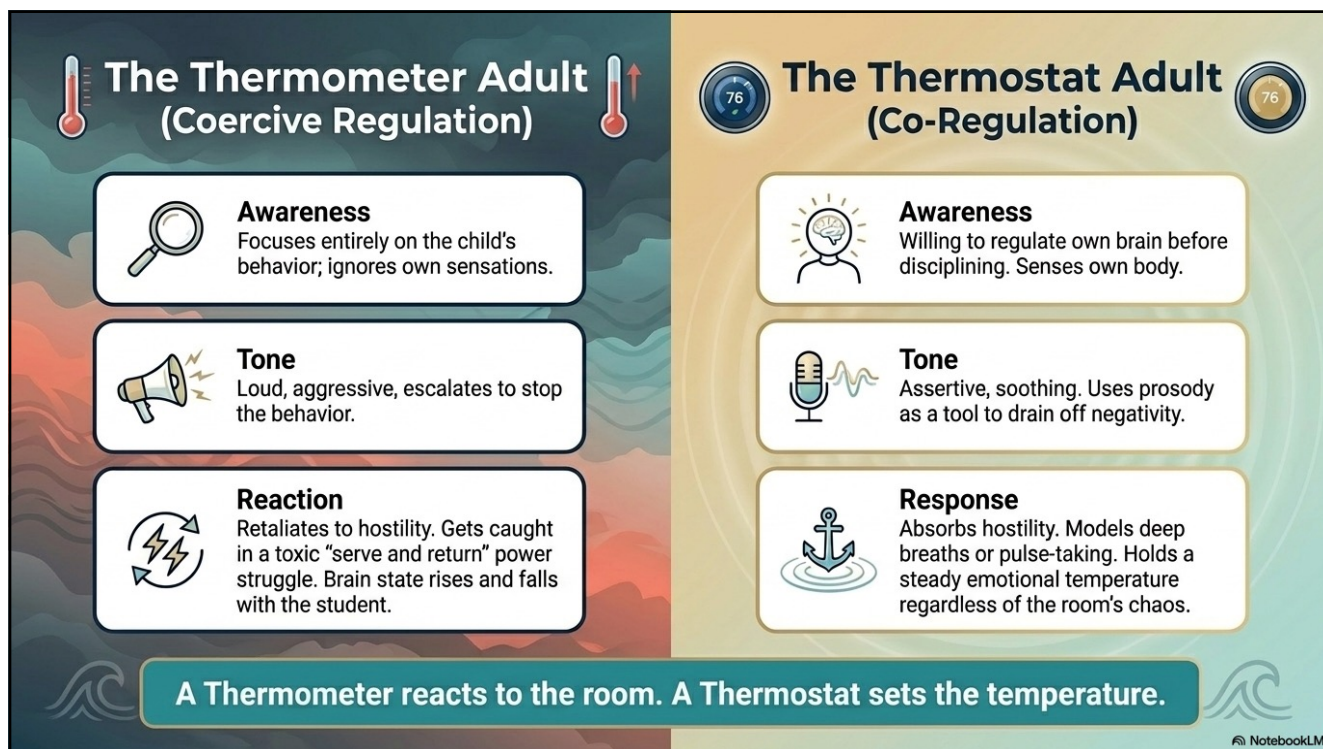
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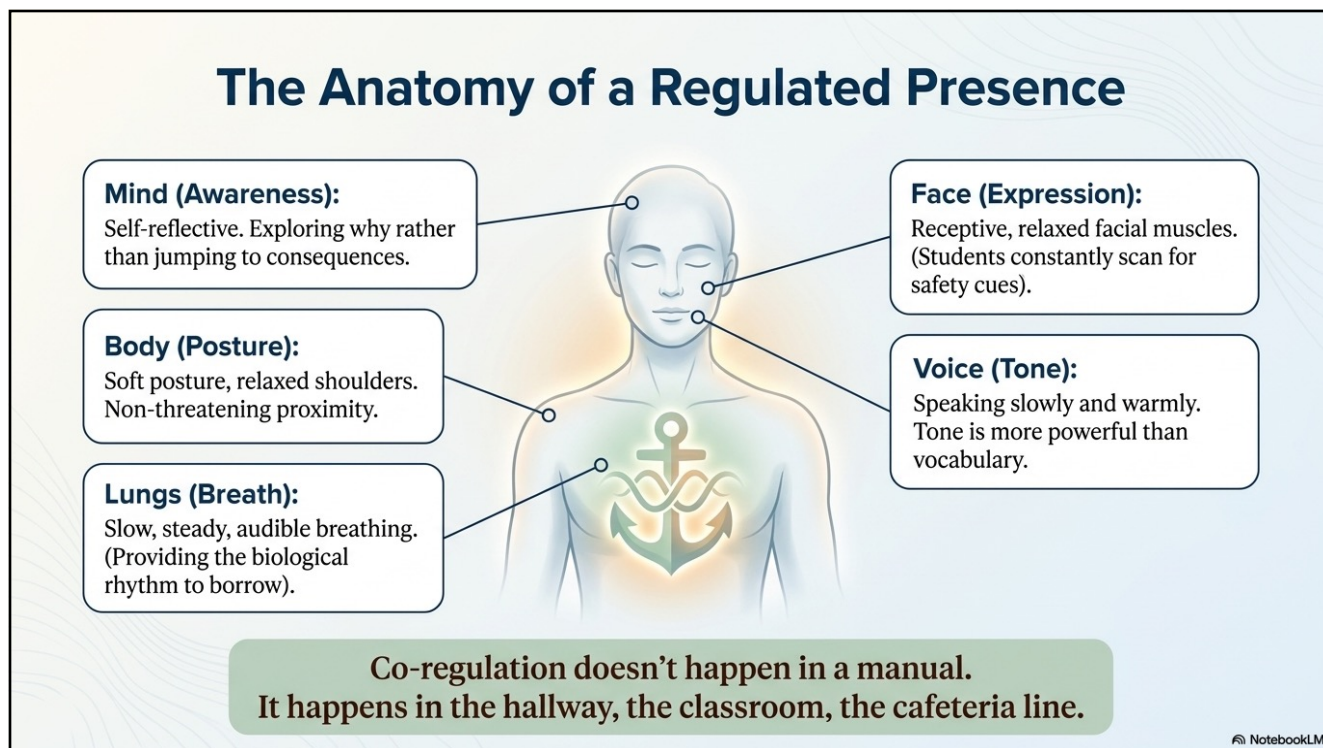
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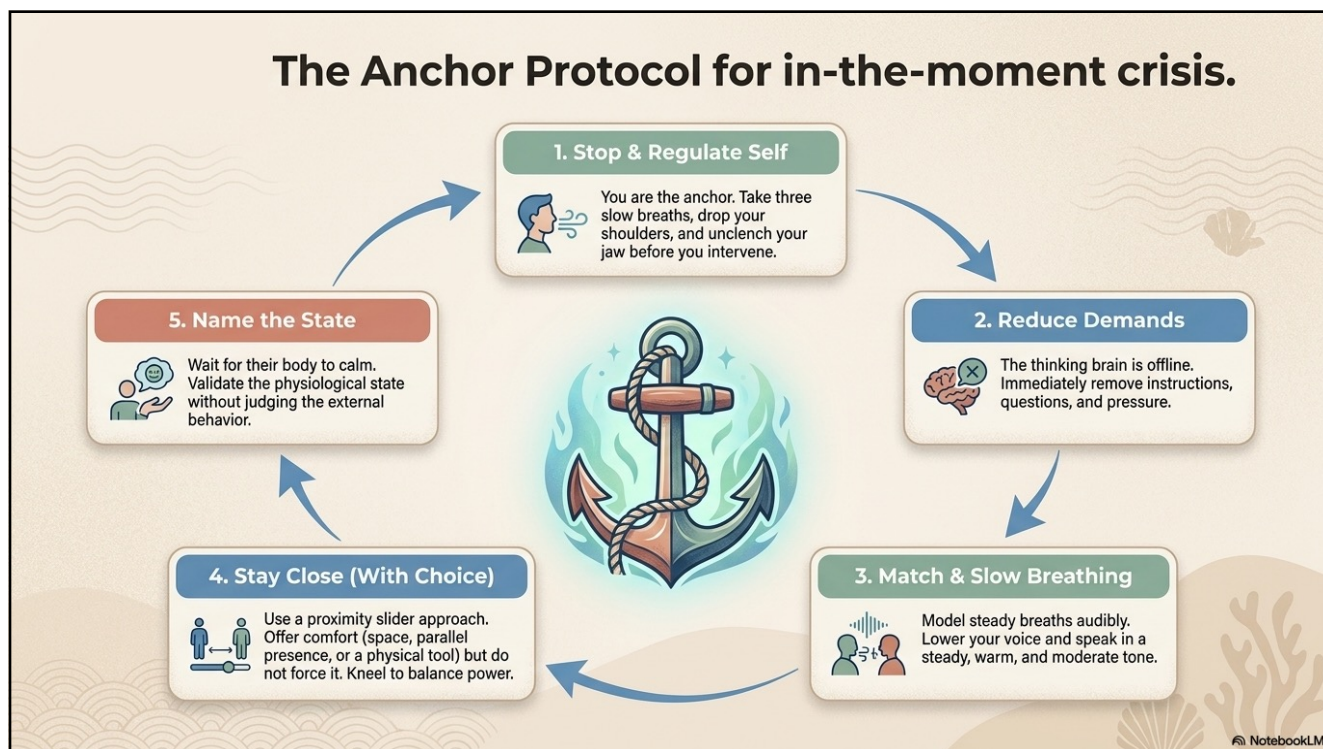
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The Master Co-Regulation Matrix

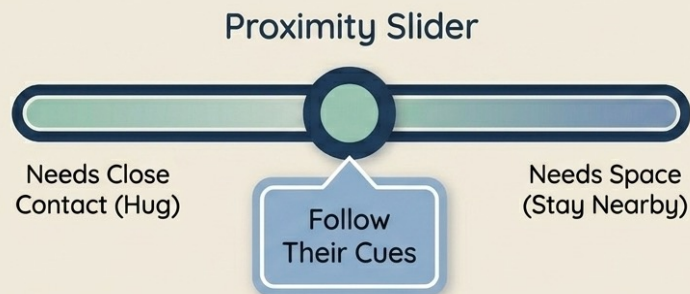
DO: The Regulated Adult	Dimension	DON'T: The Reactive Adult
Grounded, takes 3 slow breaths	Mindset	Takes behavior personally
Open arms, gentle expression	Body Language	Crossed arms, pointing fingers
Eye-level, parallel stance	Spatial Presence	Towering, confrontational face-to-face
Slow, quiet, warm tone	Voice	Matching volume, retaliating
Narrate, validate, offer choices	Communication	Interrogate, dismiss, demand
Delayed until calm (Repair)	Consequences	Imposed during crisis (Shame/Exile)

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Stay close, but not too close

Some children want you close. Others need space but want you to stay nearby. Offer comfort they can accept—comfort helps the child's brain calm down.



Comfort Choices



Blanket



Quiet Space



Favorite Object



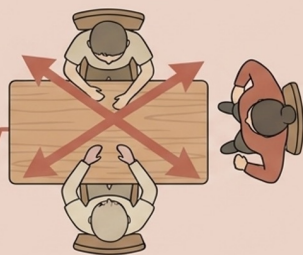
Hug

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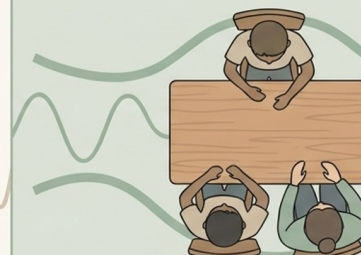
The Body: De-escalating through physical presence

The Confrontational Stance ❌



DON'T use threatening body language. Avoid towering over, crossing arms, or pointing fingers—biological cues of threat.

The Parallel Stance ✅



DO practice parallel regulation. For students with autism or trauma histories, sitting or walking alongside them balances power and reduces confrontational threat. Get to eye level and keep facial expressions gentle.

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What Co-Regulation Sounds Like

These are not scripts to memorize, but grounding options for adults who want to stay connected.

When a student shuts down completely:

"It's okay to need some quiet. I'm going to sit near you for a bit."

When a student refuses to participate:

"You don't have to talk right now. I'll be here when you're ready."

When a student begins to escalate:

"Let's take a few breaths together. We can handle this."

Building agency in moment:

"That was a lot. I'm proud of you for getting through it. Let's talk."

Building agency in the moment:

Instead of asking "How can I help?", try asking "What would help you right now?"



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Systemic Support: We Cannot Pour From an Empty Vessel



What fuels the adult's vessel?


Protected time for planning


Compassionate leadership communication


Regular trauma-informed professional learning


Spaces where staff feel seen

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Modeling repair builds trust more effectively than never getting it wrong.



The Rupture

Ruptures are inevitable. When an adult loses their cool or a student has a melt down, the connection is severed. Regulation isn't about being unshakable; it's about being reachable.

The Repair

Repair is co-regulation applied to relationships. Wait for regulation, revisit without blame, and focus on metacognition over consequences.

Scripting the repair:
I'm sorry I raised my voice. You didn't do anything wrong. I got frustrated, and that's not your fault. We'll figure it out together.

Gemini Notebook

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Individual exercise (5min)

THE ADULT

Somatic Toolkit:
Build a list of regulating strategies that work for you.

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