

**It Starts With Us!
Using Coregulation
To Support Students**

**The 2024 TAFE Queensland
Virtual Summit for Educators**

**Presenter:
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**Australian
Childhood
Foundation**

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Australian Childhood Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters across Australia in which we share. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to the children who are leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge the histories and living cultures and the many thousands of years in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have raised their children to be safe and strong. We recognise and accept it is the oldest continuous living culture in the world and that their sovereignty has never been ceded.

**Australian
Childhood
Foundation**

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The Australian Childhood Foundation



We Help Children Heal

On their own, children do not recover from the devastating impact of abuse, neglect and family violence. They need specialised support to heal. We provide therapeutic services to children.



We Keep Children Safe

We build the ability and confidence of individuals and organisations to protect children. We provide parents with education and support to help them raise happy, safe and loved children.



We Stand Up for Children

We advocate for changes to laws and policies that help to make all children safer. We work to strengthen community attitudes that prioritise the rights of children to love and safe relationships.



We Create Understanding for Children

We educate and support adults who look after and work with traumatised children to be better able to understand and respond to their complex needs.



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Our Education Services

- Our Education Services co-create and amplify knowledge that changes children's lives for the better, by creating networks of learning in partnership with professionals and organisations working with children and young people.
- Our efforts include:
 - Accessible learning opportunities for professionals: a range of self-paced modules and virtual classrooms covering trauma prevention, relational healing and evidence-based approaches to best practice.
 - Customised organisational education: tailored training packages designed to support ongoing staff development, including Train The Trainer options for long-term success.
 - Accredited training: our unique Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma

Access our latest offerings:

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/training-development/>



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Our Safeguarding Services

- Over a decade, Safeguarding Services have partnered with over 300 organisations nationally and internationally to strengthen the capacity of institutions to keep children and young people safe.
- We offer a suite of standard and customised solutions that meet national and state Child Safe Standards, aimed at creating organisational culture change.
- We draw on best practice from the Foundation's experience and our network of partners, and evidence, including our recent Safeguarding Evaluation by the Centre for Social Impact.

Accreditation

Certification

Training

Bespoke Services

Access our latest offerings:
<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/safeguarding-children-services>



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Safety

Our experience of safety is so intertwined with the physiological state of others with whom we relate. It is therefore a survival imperative that we are able identify people who are safe or who represent a threat to us.



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Relational Safety

- Deep relational safety is how children who have been hurt come to find the comfort and love they need to recover

“Convincing the body it can be safe in the presence of another”

- Neuroception describes how a child can distinguish between and interpret safety and danger in people and experiences
- It is a deep visceral experience felt in their bodies



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The ability to engage and learn requires Safety.



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What is Regulation?

Regulation refers to the process your brain goes through to determine whether you are safe or not and then it's ability to adjust how calm or alert you are.

If we consider domains of regulation these could include:

- Physiological
- Emotional
- Relational
- Cognitive



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What is Self Regulation?

Self regulation is the ability to monitor and control our own behaviour, emotions, or thoughts, altering them in accordance with the demands of the situation (J.Cook, 2014).

Self regulation, however, is not a destination (Dana, 2019).

Daily experiences will see us move in and out of a calm and regulated state. A significant strategy for providing self regulation is co-regulation (warm, responsive interactions with others that provide emotional support is essential).

Nurturing collegial relationships where co-regulation can exist is a strong antidote to stress (Badenoch, 2018).



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What is Dysregulation?

Trauma is a violation of relational safety that changes the way the child's brain and body functions. It reshapes a child's developing physiology and psychology through experiences of terror and a lack of safety.

A child's narrative and identity is filled with fears of rejection, isolation and shame.

Children must find ways to keep themselves safe based upon survival that might present in relational behavior's that are difficult to understand. It is a child's search for comfort and attempt to seek safety.

A child is forced to become preoccupied in ensuring their own safety. Impacting in their capacity to attend to task, listen, recall and analyse information.



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Creating Understanding

Two explanatory frameworks utilised to help us understand, monitor and respond to regulatory states are:

1. Polyvagal theory
2. Window of tolerance

These provide an understanding of the physiology that gives rise to states of safety and states of threat and how we transition from one to the other.

For some children being ready to shift states rapidly into action is how they have adapted to seek safety.



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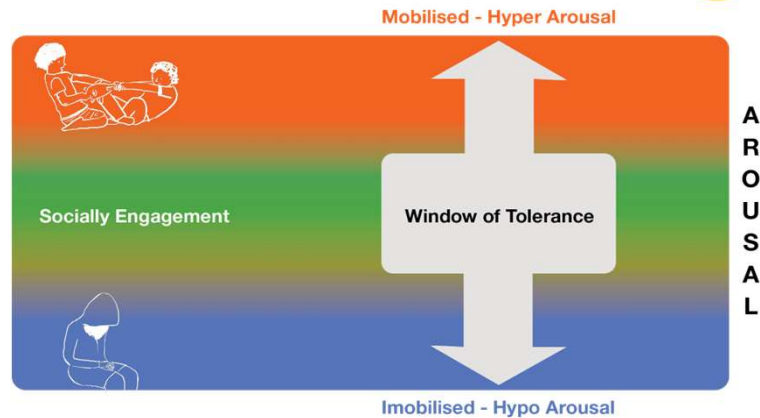
Window of Tolerance

A resource for:

Understanding how regulation states present for a child.

Monitoring: mapping the child's states across the day/ week.

Response: Understanding what is helpful to bring comfort to the child.



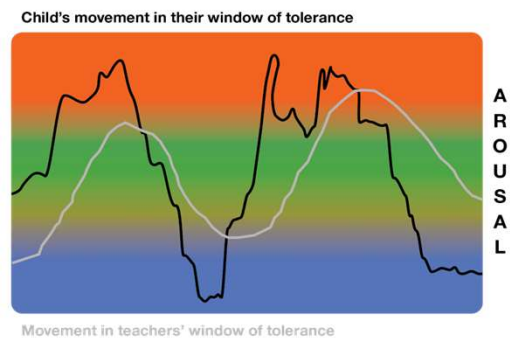
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What is Co-regulation?

Co-regulation is a relational regulation with an offer of safety

It involves:

- A collaborative process that involves attunement, empathy, and active listening. By working together to regulate emotions and behaviours, individuals can build stronger connections and promote overall well-being.
- Growth and development: children can gradually take on more responsibility for their own regulation, with the support of caregivers and other adults.
- Involves a physiological connection that involves the sharing of oxytocin and the soothing of the stress hormone cortisol.



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Co-regulation- a relational offering

Relational offering:

- An orientation – I'm going to be open. Adaptive, understand this unique relationship with the child.
- Presence – showing up, *heard, met, felt and understood*.
- Curiosity and empathy about the meaning of the child's story.
- Provide understanding and meet the child's need.
- Develop classroom relational rituals, Participating in these rituals can help educators build and maintain connection with the students

Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy PACE Framework Dan Hughes



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Rupture and Repair

Repair and rupture are intrinsic to all relationships. Repair is an opening which enables a child to feel pleasure, trust and security. It provides an implicit belief and knowledge that problems can be overcome. Repair enables anticipation and makes transition possible.

- Build in opportunities for 1:1 time to connect with children.
- Consider an additional relationship or emotional anchor that is available to children when issues arise.
- Provide social stories of ways in which ruptures and repairs happen in your classroom.
- Initiate timely repair.
- Find ways to reconnect with the child through play, art, creation, relational activities.

“Someone who cares for me knows how to bring us back together”



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The Importance of You

“As committed and caring professionals, we put the needs of our students at the fore of all we do and regularly support colleagues who may need help, but how often do we take time to meet our own needs?”

- Being mindful of your emotional and physical state.
- Understanding the influence of your own story.
- Know your stress points
- Having a range of self-care strategies that are planned and practiced
- Ensuring wellbeing strategies such as sleep, nutrition.
- Nurturing supportive collegial relationships.

Stephenson, E (2021) *Please secure your own mask first*, Teaching in Action, Issue #2 2021, Australian Council for Education Leaders, NSW



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