

TRAUMA & MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Dr. Bruce Perry's 3 R's: How to aid a child during emotional dysregulation

Adapted from <https://wvpbis.org/wp-content/uploads/Effective-Responses-to-Trauma.pdf>

Regulate

When information from the outside world (sensory input) or the inside world (somatic input), are overwhelming to the nervous system, one may have difficulty taking in additional information.

When a vulnerable child is dysregulated the first step is to help the child to regulate themselves and calm any trauma reactions that may be causing a fight, flight, freeze response.

How? Offer the child soothing with little words, allow them to walk away from the situation to calm, offer them a cup of cold water. Give them a safe space to process their feelings. Ensure that you remain calm. Once the child is calm move to relate.

Relate

Once a child has calmed down, move to relating with the child. Validate the feelings are they are conveyed. If the child is feeling sad, validate this emotion and focus on the connection.

How? Remain calm and allow for a sensitive conversation of the child's feelings and how difficult the feeling was for them to experience, "Sharing that toy with your sister was seemed very upsetting to you...". Allow for a dialogue without dismissing the child's stated emotions, listen more than speaking.

Reason

Lastly reasoning with the child is the opportunity to support the child's learning. Once the child is in a calm brain state, they may be more open to learning, be better able to articulate the reasons for their emotional response and plan for future difficult feelings.

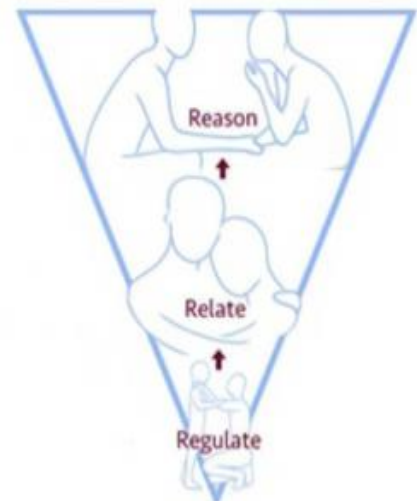
How? Review the places and people that help them feel safe. Teach emotion language and the use of regulation techniques.

OCYF TRAUMA TIP SHEET MAY 2023

QUESTIONS? [RA-
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Heal PA is sponsoring a Day at the Capital with Yoga, a press conference and their annual all member meeting. [Registration](#) is required. Questions? Email info@healpa.org



The Three R's (beaconhouse.org.uk)

More from Dr. Bruce Perry for
Exploration

[Early Brain Development Video](#)

[Social & Emotional Development
in Early Childhood Video](#)

Additional Helpful Tips for Regulation

What to do – Trauma informed support for children

1

Create Safety

If the child is overwhelmed perhaps guide them to a quiet corner and give them the space they need to calm themselves. They need to feel comfortable with a trusted adult who they know has their welfare at the forefront of their mind.

Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a pattern of psychological responses: hyper-arousal (jumpy, agitated, explosive) or hypo-arousal (depressed, withdrawn, frozen). The child needs to explore strategies to find what helps them to find calm.

2

3

Connect

This is the most effective way to calm the nervous system. When we are around people we care about & trust, our bodies produce oxytocin, the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress.

Support a coherent narrative

Structure, routine & a reliable calm adult helps reduce the chaos and supports the child create logical sequential connections that help them understand their own narrative. They need to hear a simple explanation of what is happening & will happen next.

4

5

Practice power-with strategies

Trauma comes with a loss of power & control. When someone/thing wields power over you with disregard for your feelings or thoughts it triggers toxic stress, bringing back previous traumas. Maintain dignity & respect for the child and be with them without dominating them.

Build skills of social & emotional resilience

When the brain is preoccupied with survival it does not devote energy to building & developing relationships. Model the skills and actions of a caring, kind and supportive person for them to observe, copy & practice so they become more skilled.

6

7

Foster post-traumatic growth

We know that there are qualities that allow people not just to survive trauma, but to find new meaning & purpose. Problem solving, planning & maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control, emotional regulation and seeking support are skills that enable this.

Effective-Responses-to-Trauma.pdf (wvpbis.org)