

THE NEURORELATIONAL FRAMEWORK'S

# Self-regulation & Co-regulation

First recognize your  
own stress responses,  
and get yourself calm.



# THE NEURORELATIONAL FRAMEWORK'S Oxygen Mask Metaphor

The airlines describe that if an oxygen mask drops during the flight you are required to put it on yourself before you assist others. This instruction is to ensure that you have oxygen and can breathe so you are able to help others.

Similarly, the NRF suggests that when you are experiencing a challenging situation with your child, that you get yourself as calm as possible (green zone) before or while you are helping your child get calm. This process is called co-regulation. When you co-regulate your child's stress responses and big emotions you are teaching your child ways they can self-regulate as they mature. You are teaching your child that all feelings in their body and their emotions are OK, and that you can help them find ways to get calm.

Sometimes in certain situations when you and your child are experiencing stress responses, it may be necessary or appropriate for you to have a modulated stress response. For example, if your child is frantic and running away, you will need to have your gas pedal on to run after him, to keep him safe. Another example is that you and your child may both go into the blue zone while cuddling and rocking together.

Sometimes you may briefly not be able to get yourself calm. If your child is intensely frustrated and this is triggering you to also be in an intense angry red zone, it is advised that you make sure your child is safe, and take a short break to get yourself calm, before you help your child to get calm.

Understanding one's own stress response cues, what triggers them and what toolkits help one get back to the green zone, are essential so you can teach your child the same skills over time.