

Interactive Regulation Options

Interactive Regulation is our most effective means of regulating intense and difficult emotional experience. It allows humans to create safe relational containers: for nurturing children, for healing trauma and for avoiding overwhelm as we cooperate to adapt to stress and change. Emotionally challenging tasks like parenting infants and teenagers, grieving, adjusting to disability and responding to overwhelming change, demand all the neural regulation we can muster. Interactive regulators can and do turn toward other people for help when they are dysregulated.

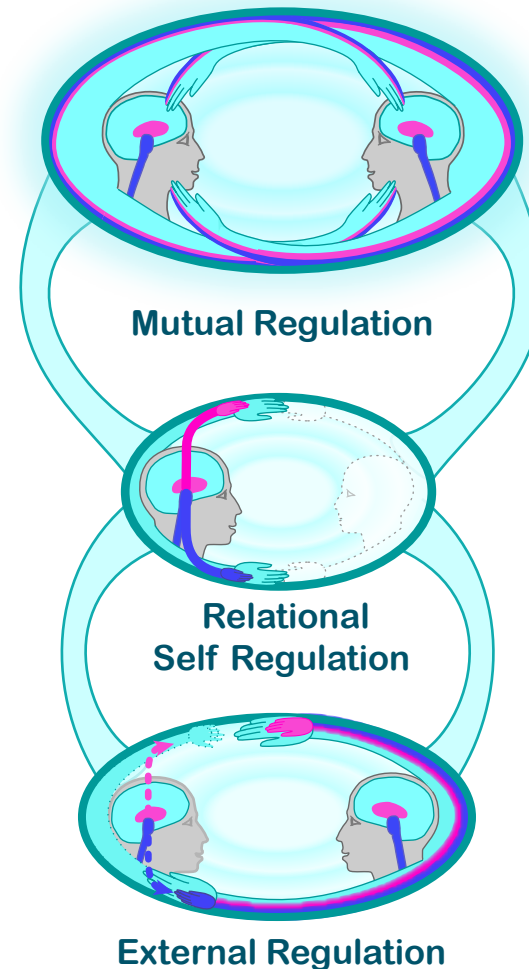
Mutual Regulation (also called co-regulation): Mutual Regulation develops as partners learn to regulate themselves and each other. They learn exactly what to do or say to calm or energize their partner. Effective mutual regulation expands on the individual's capacity to regulate intensity, especially shame and grief.

Relational Self Regulation: We can regulate much of our own arousal and emotions without live relational support, and without turning away from people. We learn to do this by internalizing our experience of people who care about us and regulate us.

External Regulation: In external regulation, one person stays regulated and attunes to the other, finding effective ways to rev them up or calm them down. Parents, teachers, therapists and friends regularly provide external regulation for dysregulated children, clients and friends.

Effective Interactive Regulation depends partly on skill and partly on neurological wiring built during experience with competent interactive regulators. Our capacity for interactive regulation is an important form of cultural capital. The better we are at it, the better we can cope with stress, change and potentially overwhelming issues.

Interactive Regulation *A Two Person System*

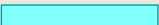




Highest
Capacity

Developing Regulatory Skills and Capacity

Lower
Capacity

Color Key: 3 Layers of the Autonomic N. S.

-  Social N. S. - Adjusts us for social engagement
-  Sympathetic N. S. - Revs us up
-  Parasympathetic N. S. - Slows us down