



## Nervous System Symptoms of Regulation and Dys-regulation

*All symptoms of dys-regulation arise out of perceptions of the events in our lives. When we integrate our perceptions, we change the symptoms in our nervous system. It is wise to master the art of how to integrate our perceptions and how to regulate the symptoms that arise in our bodies to help return us to a more regulated/ventral state.*

### Sympathetic - Flight, Fight Hyper-arousal Symptoms

*Perceptions of Threat/Challenge*

- Hyper-alert
- Hyper-vigilant
- Increased heart rate
- Defensive
- “Pounding” sensation in the head
- Anxious
- Excessive motoric activity
- Overwhelmed, disorganized
- Highly irritable
- Uncontrollable bouts of rage
- Aggressive
- Dissociation

### Parasympathetic/Ventral Vagal- Regulated Symptoms (Mindful/ “Attached to Self”)

*Neuroception of Safety*

- Think logically/clearly
- Able to make conscious choices
- Able to make eye contact
- Display a wide range of emotional expression
- Feel “grounded” and “in the body”
- Able to notice breath
- Poised
- Internal awareness of both mind and body
- Able to communicate in a clear manner

### Parasympathetic/Dorsal Vagal- Collapse, Immobilization Hypo-arousal Symptoms

*Perceptions of Threat/Challenge*

- Helplessness
- Appear life-less
- Non-expressive
- Numbing
- Lack of motivation
- Lethargic/Tired
- Dulled capacity to feel significant events
- Emotional constriction
- Depression
- Isolation
- Dissociation

## Synergetic Play Therapy® - Regulation Activities

*Listed below are just some examples of activities that can be used to help regulate a dys-regulated nervous system. It is wise to do these activities pro-actively, as well as in moments of dys-regulation. It is also important to follow the body's innate wisdom back to a regulated/ventral state. These activities are important to be done alone AND also with someone.*

- Run, jump, spin, dance with pauses to take deep breaths- you can make a game and have child jump high to touch something high on a wall or in a door frame
- Run, jump, etc. and crash into something soft (i.e. jump on a bed and crash repeatedly)
- Bounce on a yoga ball
- Roll across the floor back and forth
- Sit in a chair and push up with your arms (as if trying to get out of the chair) ...keep some resistance
- Massages
- Deep pressure on arms and legs (you can slowly apply pressure down arms and legs in a long stroking motion)
- Eat (particularly something crunchy)
- Drink through a straw
- Take a bath or shower
- Wrap up in a blanket and snuggle (a little tightly for some pressure)- of course, do this safely.
- March or sing during transitions
- Play Mozart music in the background during challenging times of the day if in hyper-arousal
- Play Hard Rock/Fast/Bass music if in hypo-arousal
- Carry heavy things or push heavy things around
- Do isometrics (wall pushups or push hands together (looks like you are praying))
- Walk quickly
- Run up and down steps
- Shake head quickly
- Hang upside down off of a bed or couch
- Play sports
- "Doodle" on paper (this one can be a bit more distracting, but sometimes works)
- Hold or fidget a Koosh ball, rubber band, straw, clay
- Rub gently or vigorously on your skin or clothing
- Put a cold or hot wash cloth on face
- Dim the lights if in hyper-arousal
- Turn on the lights if in hypo-arousal
- Read a book
- Swing
- Learn about "Brain Gym"- tons of ideas
- Yoga
- Snuggle
- Dance
- Move, move, move- anyway that it feels good to your body
- Describe what is happening in your body out loud- "My tummy is going in circles", "My legs feel heavy", etc...
- Breathe, breathe, breathe- make sure that your inhalation is the same length as your exhalation