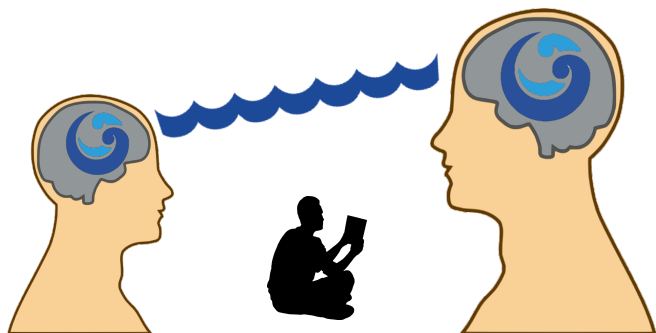


Using Mirror Neurons and Co-Regulation

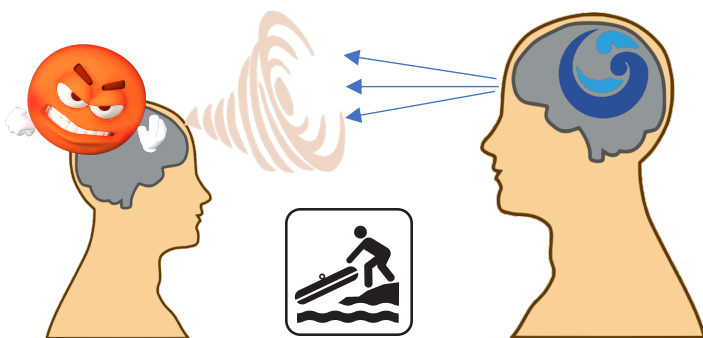
Anger is contagious – but so is happiness, fun, motivation and an atmosphere of cooperation



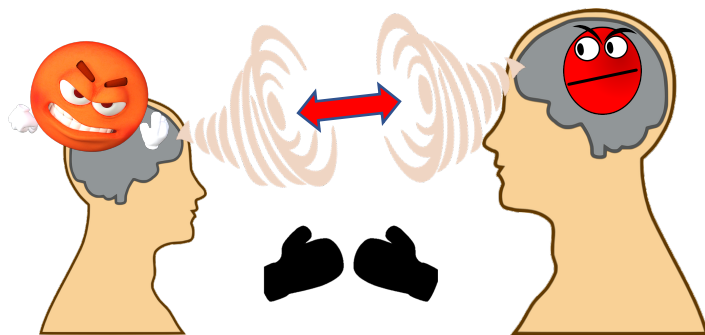
Attunement and Resonance (Dan Siegel)

If we are calm – we not only model this behaviour to our children – but our brains can connect and we can build positive relationships. It is of course impossible to be calm all the time – but an awareness of how our brain's communicate can help us understand our children's behaviour. Often when we are feeling at our worst is when our children play up. If we can relax and bring back a sense of fun – things may improve. However, kids still need strong boundaries to feel safe - and to grow into respectful and responsible adults. So how do we handle their upset?

Calmly say :*"I see you are angry and upset with my decision – do you need to go and get drink or do some colouring for 5 minutes before doing your chores. (Children on the Autism Spectrum may need much longer to calm down)*



- Name the emotion. Name it to tame it.
- Give a choice – provide a life raft.
- Going for a walk and colouring can both lower cortisol (stress hormone) levels.
- Assisting to co-regulate by not getting swept away by their emotions. Children need a lot of practice at co-regulation before they can self-regulate.
- Modelling self-regulation while having empathy with their feelings. *I see/understand you are...*
- Modelling problem solving. Consider options. Ensure options are within boundaries.
- **Regulate – Repair Relationship – Reason** (Bruce Perry) You cannot reason with a child when they are dysregulated as that part of the brain is not engaged. It is in fight/flight/freeze mode.



Stop

Take a breath

Observe what is happening

Plan what to do

Proceed



Notice that you have been sucked into the child's emotions. This will end in conflict unless you can escape. This is not conducive to good relationships. Model self-regulation (take another breath, walk away if you cannot regain your sense of calm and say *"we can talk about this later – do you need to get a drink etc...."*)

Regulate – Repair Relationship – Reason (Bruce Perry)