



Finding Calm in a Pandemic

A Message from the Building Better Lives Initiative of the

Franklin County Family & Children First Council



“Pandemic” is a scary word! We all want to try to stay calm, but right now, everything seems to be pushing us toward panic. So, how do we find calm during a crisis that is changing everything?

The first step is to calm our brain so that our body can be calm. This is called “**Regulation.**” Our brain and body must be regulated *first* before we can talk to other people and before we can think clearly.

Here are three things to help stay calm, even when things are tough.

1. Prepare A Schedule & Routine (Something you do at the same time every day)



Our brain likes things that are familiar. Right now, everything around us is changing, so we want to have a routine for the things in our life that we *can* control, for example:

- Create a daily schedule of mealtimes, work, play and relaxation
- Plan for positive experiences every day, like a phone call with a loved one
- Turn off phone notifications and cable news announcements to limit surprises

2. Move! Move! Move!

Our brains *love* rhythm, and the easiest way to get rhythm is through movement. Even when we are stuck inside or can't be around other people, there are ways to move. It only takes a short movement break of 5-10 minutes to help our brain be happy and calm, for example:

- Listen to music (*Bonus:* Add dancing or drumming for extra rhythm!)
- Take a walk outside
- Do art projects, like drawing, coloring, or knitting
- Do tasks at home such as cooking, washing dishes, vacuuming, or cleaning flat surfaces
- Follow a guided yoga video online, or doing simple stretches

3. Connect with People

Our brains are built to be with other people. When you feel upset, even just a 5-minute chat with another person will make a positive difference!

- Call a friend or loved one to check in (Note: phone call is better than texting)
- Wave and a quick chat with a neighbor from a safe distance
- Sit with someone who is calm, or video “chatting” with friends or family
- Play simple games or read a story together



Summary

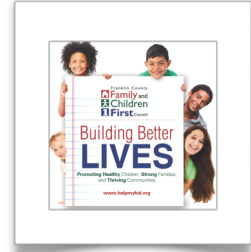
Regulation is the key, especially during difficult times. **Routine, Movement** and **Connections** are all key things to regulating our brains. If we can find ways to combine all three of these (e.g., Schedule exercise with family members, etc.), then we will quickly find calm for our brains and bodies.

For more information and help, visit www.helpmykid.org; or email: information@helpmykid.org



Regulating Through A Pandemic

*A Message from the
Building Better Lives Initiative of the
Franklin County Family & Children First Council*



There could hardly be a more *dysregulating* word than “Pandemic.” If you are familiar with the work of the Building Better Lives Initiative, you know that we emphasize the importance of Regulation. But right now, everything seems to be pushing us toward dysregulation.

So, how do we stay regulated during a crisis that is impacting nearly every aspect of our lives?

Dr. Perry’s NeuroSequential Model (neurosequential.com) teaches the importance of Regulation. Our brain and body must be regulated *first* before we can relate to other people, and so we can access our “thinking brain” (the cortex) and reason. That’s why we so often say the phrase: Regulate, Relate, Reason.

Here are three general ways to regulate, even during the most dysregulating situation.

Predictability

When life is unpredictable and uncontrolled it is overwhelming! But when we increase predictability and structure, we are better prepared to handle stress. It is kind of like exercise; the more we practice, it makes us stronger.



Look for ways to **increase the predictability** in your daily life. This may include things like:

- Following a daily schedule of mealtimes, work, play and relaxation
- Scheduling positive experiences every day, like a phone call with a loved one
- Limiting unpredictable interruptions, like phone notifications or news programming

Movement

Our brains *love* rhythm, and the easiest way to get rhythm is through movement. Even when our physical space is limited, there are many ways to physically move throughout the day. Taking short breaks (5-10 minutes) to move throughout the day helps us to stay regulated.

Look for ways to **increase movement** in your daily life. This may include things like:

- Taking a walk
- Listening to music (*Bonus*: Add dancing or drumming along to the beat for extra rhythm!)
- Simple art projects, such as drawing, coloring, or knitting
- Simple tasks such as cooking, washing dishes, vacuuming, or cleaning flat surfaces
- Practicing yoga or doing simple stretches

Relationships

Our brains are wired for social interaction. When you start to feel dysregulated, one of the best things you can do is to connect relationally. *The best thing for a dysregulated person is a regulated person.* Dr. Perry says that even just a 5 minute conversation with another person will have a positive impact.



Look for ways to **increase relationships** in your daily life. This may include things like:

- Calling a friend or loved one to check in (Note: phone call is more regulating than texting)
- Waving and a quick conversation with a neighbor from a safe distance
- Sitting with someone who is regulated and having a simple conversation with people in your home or video “chatting” with friends or family
- Playing simple games or reading a story together
- Practice any of the movement activities listed above, *with another person*

Summary

Regulation is fundamental, especially during difficult times. **Predictability**, **Movement** and **Relationships** are all key components to regulating our brains. If we can find ways to combine all three approaches (e.g., Schedule exercise with family members, etc.), then we will quickly feel our bodies and our brains becoming more regulated.



For more information and resources, contact:
information@helpmykid.org helpmykid.org