

Co-Regulating Cues Workbook

PURPOSE

Educators can hone their co-regulatory supports for students by identifying their own “temperature boosters,” reflecting on challenging student interactions, and planning to incorporate co-regulating moves into their practice.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Identify and reflect on your “temperature boosters” using the graphic organizer.
2. Unpack a dysregulating interaction you’ve had with a student, to think about areas for growth.
3. Create your own co-regulating cues resource.

Why Co-Regulation?

Co-regulation is the interactive process of regulatory support between a caring adult and child. Unlike self-regulation, this requires adults to actively provide the environment and the scaffolds for a child to successfully meet their needs and achieve their goals.

This type of support begins in infancy, when adults are responsible for regulating most everything for that child – their patterns of eating and sleeping, their mood and emotions, etc. As children grow and develop skills, co-regulation looks different, but is still incredibly important!

Co-regulating practices in the classroom set up students of all ages to develop and practice self-regulation. This can look like:

- ✓ Being highly attuned and responsive to students’ holistic needs – proactively and in the moment
- ✓ Providing scaffolds for things like attention, emotion management, and executive functions
- ✓ Modeling and matching the type of engagement and energy required for students to participate in the learning and meet their goals
- ✓ Keeping students physically and emotionally safe, which turns down the “fight, flight, or freeze” brain and allows the “open, engaged, learning” brain

Control vs. Co-Regulation

If we want to set students up to be engaged and productive learners, we have to understand the difference between striving toward control vs. co-regulation.

For example, there are times in schools where a calm environment is supportive to learning – but demanding calm at all times is not responsive to students’ developmental needs. In classrooms where students must always be quiet and composed, adults may also be prioritizing their own need for comfort and control, as well as missing a fundamental opportunity to support students’ self-regulation skills.

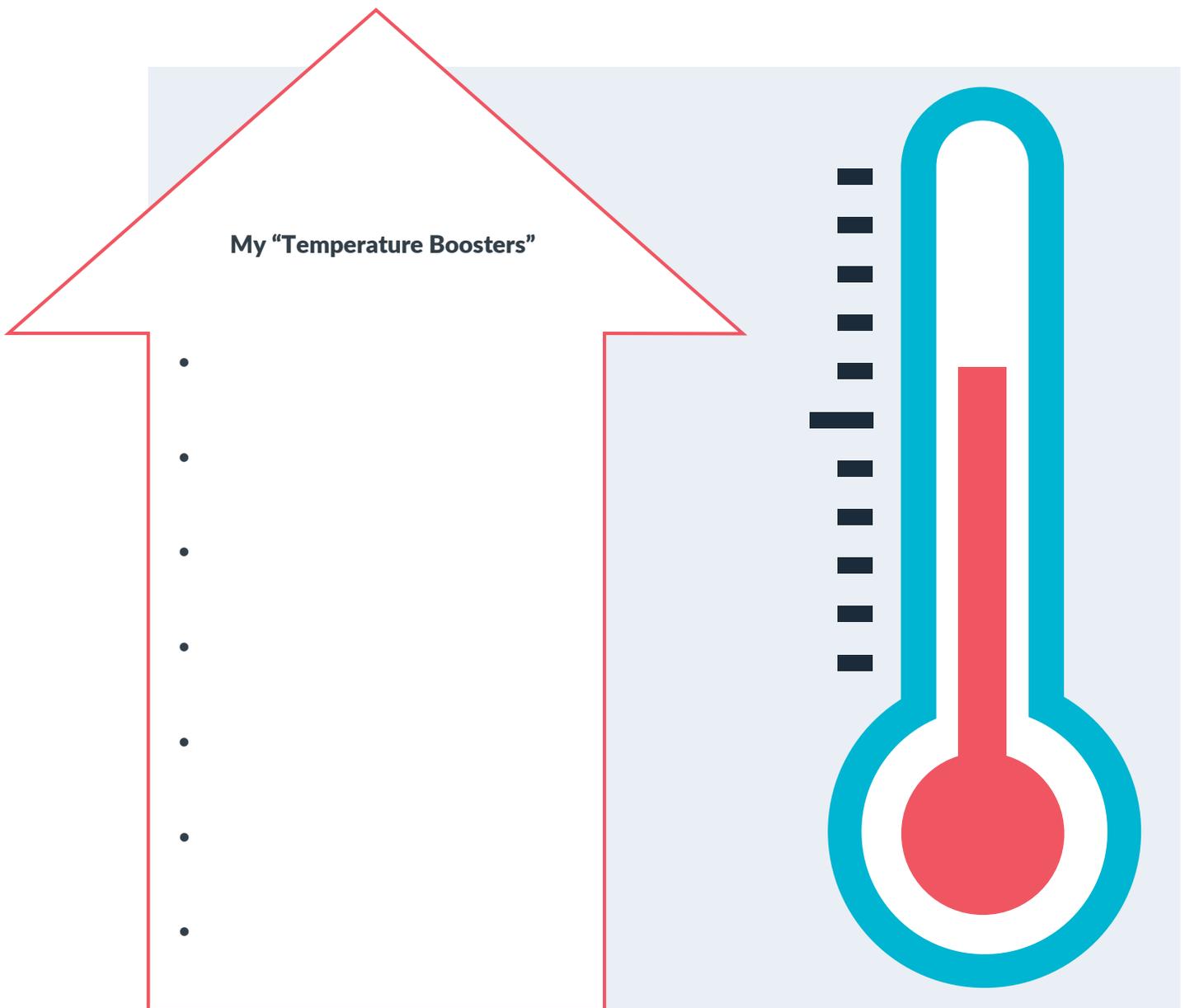
Instead, co-regulating practices provide predictable and consistent structure students can rely on, with adults who are attuned and responsive to students’ needs in the moment, and models and matches the level of engagement and energy required for students to meet their goals.

Part I: Identifying My Temperature-Boosters

We all have challenges that we can take in stride, and others that can “boost our temperature” and make it challenging for us to practice our own self-regulation – even as adults! Our stress response might be “freeze” mode, shutting down or feeling stuck; “flight” mode, wanting to escape the situation; or “fight” mode, feeling jittery, escalated and primed for reaction.

Identifying those “temperature boosters” can help us think about both the supports we need and the strategies we can use to better provide co-regulatory support for students, even in very challenging moments.

What are the behaviors or situations that really boost your stress level and make it challenging to co-regulate? List them below:



My “Temperature Boosters”

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Reflect

1. Why do you think these things boost your temperature? Do you notice any patterns?
2. How does your own stress level change how you interact with students? How you are able to support them?
3. What or whom could you draw upon for support? That might include strategies you have (e.g., a mindfulness practice), other adults in the building (e.g., learning strategies from or getting moral support from a colleague) or something else.
4. How might being aware of your “temperature boosters” help you to provide better co-regulatory support for students?

Part II: Unpacking a Dysregulating Interaction

In order to hone our co-regulation skills, we can learn from when things have been challenging. Think about a recent student interaction that you wish had gone differently. If possible, choose an example that ended in escalated conflict or behavior, dysregulation, or even damage to the relationship or trust.

Check out this example:

It all started when: Student was throwing little pieces of paper at neighbor during math lesson

My response:

I paused the lesson and told them to pick up the paper and put it in the trash, and pay attention

Student response:

Student got embarrassed/angry and refused

My response:

I stood up and walked over, started loudly counting down from 5 for him to do it

Student response:

Student got up and ran out of classroom

My response:

I called the dean to find him and talk to him (couldn't leave rest of class)

The outcome was:

I was so frustrated, student was not safe because he was without adult supervision and had to be tracked down, he missed entire math lesson and was derailed for the rest of the day

Reflect:

With this student, I think the public redirection escalated the situation – and then my proximity/calling more attention to it just made it worse – that clearly didn't support his ability to follow directions and engage/pay attention to the lesson. Next time, I could try a nonverbal redirection with proximity, or a calm whisper redirection to support his ability to listen and bring his attention back to the task without triggering his own panic.

Now, think through your own interaction using the graphic organizer below:

It all started when:	
My response:	Student response:
My response:	
My response:	Student response:
My response:	Student response:
The outcome was:	

Reflect:

- What moves did you make? How did it affect students' responses?
- Did you notice any of your "temperature boosters" come up?
- How might this interaction have gone differently? What moves could you make next time to provide co-regulatory support?
(See the chart on the next page for ideas)

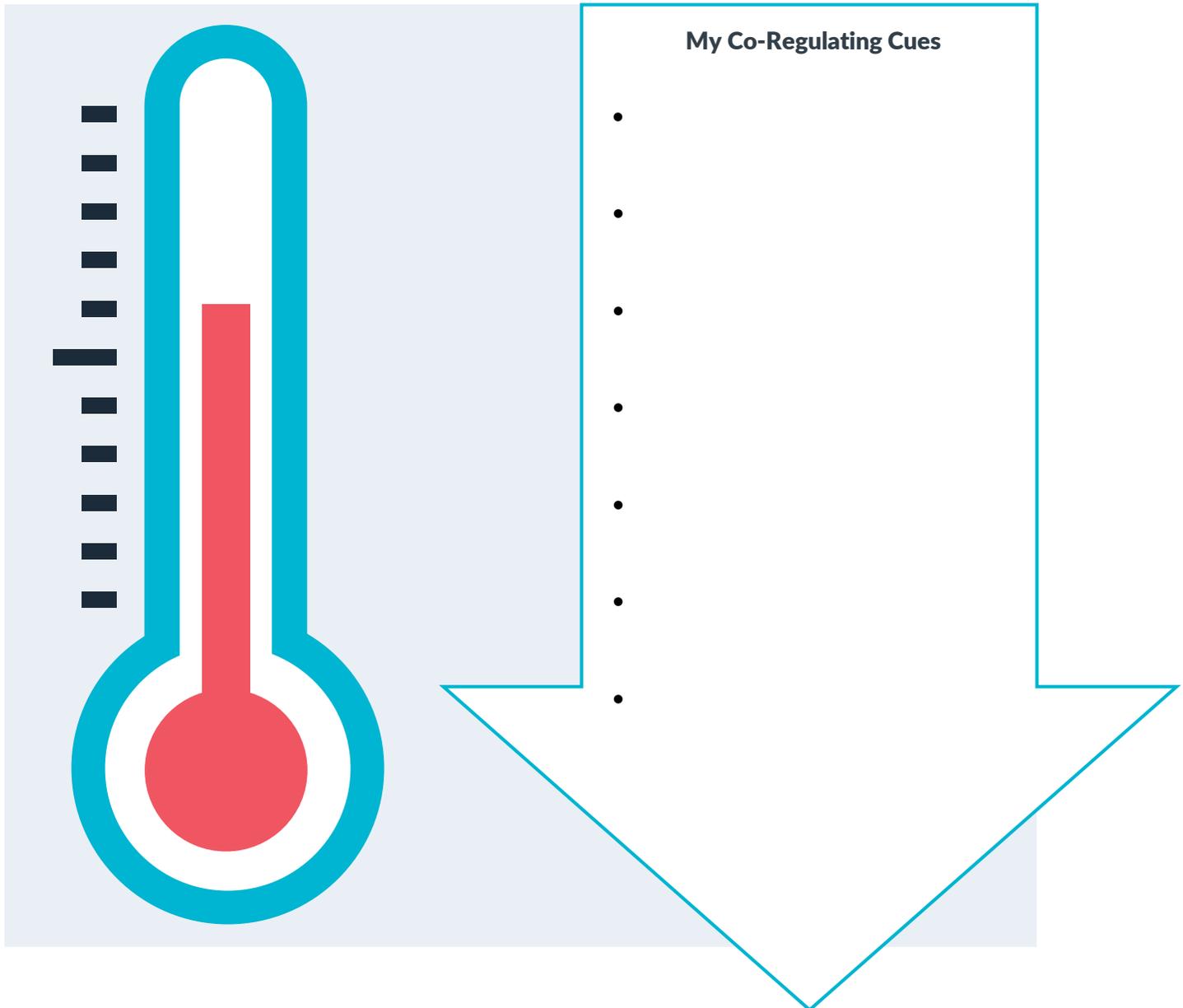
Part III: Creating My Co-Regulating Cues

Now that you have reflected on the things that can derail our co-regulation, take a look at the sample co-regulation strategies below. Then, you will have the chance to record some co-regulation moves you'd like to try in your classroom.

Co-Regulating Move/Cue	This might look like:
<p>Set the scene</p> <p>Adjust the physical, auditory and visual classroom environment to work for students' regulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Playing background sounds – up-tempo instrumentals, calm acoustics, rain noise, etc., to set the tone and muffle distractions ✓ Using lighting as a cue – dimmer to bring the energy down, brighter to bring the energy up ✓ Setting up designated zones or flexible seating to meet various needs (e.g., a collaborative work area, cool-down corner, extra help table) ✓ Reducing environmental distractions (e.g., having pre-sharpened pencils, noise-cancelling headphones, desk shields for a visual barrier when needed) ✓ Establishing consistent, predictable classroom routines
<p>Match volume and tone</p> <p>Use volume and tone to model how students should engage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When a high level of engagement is required, modeling an excited, varied, authentic tone ✓ When calm focus is required, modeling a relaxed and steady tone ✓ When a situation is escalating, keeping a quiet or moderate volume (<i>resisting the urge to get louder</i>) with a serious, calm, steady tone ✓ Establishing and practicing student volume levels (e.g., movie theater, restaurant, and playground voices)
<p>Check your physical presence</p> <p>Pay attention to how your physical presence, including body language, proximity and eye contact, affects students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting on students' eye level to balance power ✓ Using proximity as a signal you are there to support (but avoiding standing over/rushing toward) ✓ Keeping an open, non-threatening body posture (e.g., arms uncrossed, shoulders down, no aggressive gestures) ✓ Modeling using your body to help you regulate (e.g., deep breaths, taking a walk, splashing water on your face to wake up, etc.)
<p>Use reflecting language</p> <p>Name and validate students' experience and emotions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Naming the emotions students express as a way to show you are listening to or seeing them (e.g., "I hear that you're feeling really frustrated" or "Based on how quiet you are, it seems like you might be upset – is that right?") ✓ Affirming students' emotions are valid (e.g., "Working with others with can be really hard!" "If I were in your shoes, I would be overwhelmed too," "I can understand why you're feeling that way".) ✓ Separating how you address students' <u>emotions</u> from how you address their <u>actions</u> (e.g., "I hear that you're angry because of how they treated you. I'll help you express that. We've agreed we don't yell here, so instead ...")
<p>Prompt strategies and choices</p> <p>Support students' use of skills in the moment, while giving autonomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remind students of available supports or strategies, when they might not be at their best (e.g., "Remember you can ...," "Last time, ___ seemed to work for you," "You can always ..."). ✓ Provide 2-3 choices to give students autonomy (e.g., "Some students find it helpful to take a 2-minute stretch break, sit in the quiet zone, or make a list of their steps when they are having trouble focusing. How about trying one of those?") ✓ Avoiding a power struggle for compliance, especially in a challenging moment. Instead, help the student manage through, and have a follow-up conversation.

Creating My Co-Regulating Cues (cont'd.)

In the graphic organizer below, record what it looks like in your practice to co-regulate your classroom, or with an individual student. You might brainstorm a bank of co-regulating cues to pull from as needed, or choose a specific time of day, situation, or student(s) that would benefit from more co-regulatory support.



My Co-Regulating Cues

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Try it out, learn and reflect:

- How do these co-regulating cues support students? What does that look like? What else might you try?
- When you are struggling to provide co-regulatory support, who can support you? Whom might you learn from or problem-solve with? What school resources are available that you can leverage?