

## The Three R's: Regulate, Relate, Reason

Dr. Bruce Perry, a neuroscientist with expertise in trauma, developed what he calls The Three R's: Regulate, Relate, Reason.<sup>23</sup> The Three R's are a helpful frame to remind us that when we see someone in the midst of a stress response we respond by using trauma-informed and calming techniques in order: 1) regulate the lower brain through cues of safety, 2) relate with the emotional brain by actively listening and connecting with the other person, both of which will help the thinking brain come back online and 3) allow us to reason.

### Regulate

- ✓ Have a calm, soothing tone of voice.
- ✓ Get on the same level as the client (rather than towering over them, which can feel threatening).
- ✓ Offer to guide the client through grounding, breathing, shaking it off, or progressive muscle relaxation, or offer water, tea, or coffee to help provide sensory support.
- ✓ Check in with the client to see when they are feeling more regulated before moving on to the next step.

### Relate

- ✓ Start with active listening, using a non-judgmental approach to understanding what the client's concerns or experiences are.
- ✓ Affirm their experience by relating *with compassion*, such as "I've heard that from a lot of my clients," "That's a really tough and common experience," or "I recognize those feelings in myself."

### Reason

- ✓ Once the client feels safe and connected and they can think, they will be able to problem solve together.
- ✓ This problem-solving conversation may need to wait until later that day or even the next day.
- ✓ Consider the underlying issue and make a plan for coping more effectively in the future.

For more detail, watch this [20-minute video](#) with Dr. Bruce Perry explaining "Regulate, Relate, Reason" and how it can help minimize miscommunication and behavioral challenges (especially with dysregulated adults and children).

For more information and training on how to identify what is causing concerning behaviors and how to resolve them collaboratively and proactively, visit [www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org).