How Behavioral and Emotional Dysregulation Affects Confidence Transcript

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How Dysregulation Erodes Confidence

Confidence doesn't just disappear overnight. It erodes. One correction, one meltdown, why can't you just at a time? And when a child is dysregulated, it's not just behavior that suffers, It's their belief about who they are.

We often focus on the melt down, the defiance, bad grades. But underneath all of it, confidence is quietly unraveling. And there's such a cost when kids lose their confidence.

It really affects them in the now and in And we're going to talk about that. But because when a child lives in chronically dysregulated nervous system state, when they're there, they hear more correction than encouragement because these are kids that are being impulsive.

They're having a hard time listening. zoning out. They experience more failure than mastery. The feel behind more than they're capable. And the brain wires around that story.

That's the story that they are going to tell themselves because they aren't ever successful or they were more unsuccessful than successful. Shame gets wired into that nervous system.

When a child is constantly corrected, Pay attention, try harder. If you didn't finish, stop acting like that. Leave your brother alone. You know better.

Their nervous system doesn't hear guidance. It hears and feels threat because they're so activated. Each correction activates that sympathetic nervous.

Heart rate rises, cortisol increases, the amygdala activates. And these are for kids. We're never saying correct your kids, We're seeing the chronically dysregulated kid can't receive it because they're in a threat mode.

Why Constant Correction Triggers Shame

Of course, all that, the prefrontal cortex isn't working. That's where confidence is starting from because that's were problem solving is housed, where they are thinking through things, they learning, it's going offline.

So, aside from that nervous system physically being activated, that executive functioning center to support the confidence growing because you're successful isn't working.

So now the child is just struggling. They're really not just struggle, they're surviving. And survival mode does not build confidence. It builds vigilance and creates a sympathetic loop.

That's where we have dysregulation, behavioral problems. behavioral problems, more correction, More correction. More stress. more stress on top of that, and more dysregulation.

And that quietly, that loop, quietly shifts a kid's internal narrative. I'm too much. Am not good at this. am not at school. Why should I bother? I always mess up.

and over time, this becomes who they think they are. And that's a real problem because I know kids are very capable. I'm talking crazy smart, crazy in a good way.

and they just are dysregulated kids and just don't see their capabilities and that's sad. So I worked many, many years ago with a kid named Harrison and he struggled with dyslexia.

He was bright, he was curious, who's a deep thinker. I literally can just visualize him and me testing him. Geez, it was at least, well it's pre-max, so it at was least 21 years to go.

When you have kids, its like pre this kid, post that kid. But reading overwhelmed his brain and required effort at every ounce. He had a decode text and he was older and was definitely in middle school and hadn't been identified as dyslexic.

And the reason why it came to me is he spending six hours a night doing homework and the school told his mother that that was normal. She was like, no, it's not.

She's so lovely. I'm sure he has his own kids. And we were talking 27 years ago when he was already in middle school and this pushed his nervous system into overload.

So what did he do? He tuned out and from the outside, he looked like He was avoidant that he was lazy.

Harrisonu2019s Dyslexia and Nervous System Overload

He wasn't trying because he stopped doing the six hours of homework at home. It became this battlefield. Can you focus? Can stop staring? What happened?

Why you were trying before. Why are you not trying? I mean, he gave up each reminder, even while tensioned by his lovely mother. landed as you're a failure.

I mean, he came in, and he was like, I'm stupid, Dr. Rowe. And I was, like no, you are not. He's a successful adult, by the way. Lovely, lovely human being.

We got him the help he needed. But his nervous system stayed in that sympathetic dominant state. He was feeling tight. I remember he didn't want to do breath work because all he doing was shallow breathing, chest breathing.

he had avoidant posture.he was quick to get frustrated. He just gave up until we got him help. And that's when his confidence, which was so down and gone, improved.

But when a child feels chronically unsafe and learning, they disengage to protect themselves. Not because they don't care. Even if they say they do care, it's because caring hurts because you feel stupid.

This is across whatever the issue is. If we're in a correction mode and we are never mastery, We're in problem, right? So correction without regulation does three things.

It keeps the nervous system activated, it reinforces shame circuits and shrinks risk taking. and resilience and we need resilience for lifelong mental wellness.

And confidence is built through safe challenge, supported effort, nervous system flexibility, trying things out, failing, learning from it, and then figuring it out again.

I mean, that's the scientific method, but we gain confidence through our learning and when we feel safe enough, to take risks, we will take risk. I mean, I think over the years, so many parents have said to me, my kid's bright butt, and one of the bright butts is, but she holds herself back or he won't take rest.

And it's because of this dysregulation. Dysregulated kids don't experience challenges growth. They experience it as a threat. It's truly beyond uncomfortable.

They're already so activated. So what builds confidence? Regulation first. We have to create the capacity of the nervous system. The nervous has to settle and that prefrontal cortex is going to come back online.

They are much more likely to start and complete things, hear the order of things. Their working memory is gonna

improve, which you need to get through tasks.

Regulation First: Building Confidence Safely

You're gonna have greater emotional flexibility. and learning becomes accessible, even in Harrison's case, a total dyslexic. He started to have capacity to do new learning to help him read, but also he needed study skills support.

For Harrison, what happened is that he could do shorter time, spending less time in reading. We added more movement to what he was doing, because he literally would sit there forever.

and just work and work, and that wasn't the answer. And then his mother really focused on co-regulation instead of correction. She was lovely. That was her nature.

But when you get so caught up in trying to say, well, why, this should be better, you'll get yourself in a correction mode. Then she celebrated him a lot more in his micro steps.

She didn't wait for the outcome. She started trying to reinforce his attempts and that really saved their relationship. They have a lovely, very lovely relationship, I stay in contact with so many of my peeps, especially from my evals when I used to do eval.

Instead of why aren't you trying, it became you know, I see how hard this is, and I say how you're working. And instead of, you need to focus, it became, let's get your body ready first.

His nervous system stabilized, his confidence returned. Not because he suddenly became good at reading, but he did wind up becoming pretty good reading.

But because, he no longer felt unsafe trying. I mean, he was trying and trying, and he had a perseverance that stands out to me and so many of these kids that I've worked with.

And it's hard just his temperament, lovely human being, but let's think about confidence differently because it isn't built by pushing harder. It's built when the nervous system feels safe, effort is noticed, mistakes aren't threatening, and the brain can stay flexible.

When kids regulate first, they can take feedback. Not saying they're going to be like skipping through the roses on that daisies, but they can handle feedback.

Try again, persist. Even Harrison, he was persisting. He was trying. It was also, He just wasn't getting the right support. You can recover. And that's what resilience is, is that you can tolerate frustration, you tolerate failure and get back up on the horse and try again.

Learn those skills to figure things out. The parent nervous system matters too because if a parent is chronically stressed, you're going to sound not so nice.

You're gonna have a little bit of a snotty tone. Recently, we had somebody being snotty at our office, which doesn't happen too often because you have to sign a contract that says you won't be rude, disrespectful or demanding because I don't care how hard your problem is.

I just don' want to have you be route to me or anybody on my team because these are 100% the nicest women you've ever met in your life. So both my foreign team and US team, 100 percent women.

We do have one male contractor, Steven, and we love him. And he's definitely a mama's boy. But your patience is going to get real small. Man, our kids try our patience.

Parents, Co-Regulation, and Protecting Identity

I always say, Max was put on this earth to make me have patience, patience not my forte. Or I have a lot of patience for my kids. Do not have tolerance for waiting in line.

for slow and bad drivers, it's taken me a lot of work and a of EFT tapping to get through that. But your correction and be able to correct your child is going to increase and even loving parents can unknowingly amplify shame when they're dysregulated themselves.

And when parents regulate first, Again, everything their body, their safety signals, the voice, they're child's nervous system is going to respond differently and confidence is gonna grow in safety, not in pressure.

Again we don't avoid hard things. It's the order on what we're doing. We're regulating. Connecting, then we go to correction and teaching. That is the only way the brain is going to learn and you're going get that.

I know you are because you here and then you going share this with five friends. But behavioral and emotional dysregulation doesn't just create chaos.

It's quietly chipping away at your child's identity. The narrative they're telling themselves. for the rest of their life. I mean, I hear this so much from adults because again, i'm that person that everybody tells everything to and it just that inner lack the imposter syndrome is a big word.

in the world and all that means is you lack confidence and it starts when you're young and our kids are neurodivergent kids you know they're wired differently they feel things more but they can also really have confidence.

One of John Carlo's teachers said I was so grateful I'm so excited you the number one parents we wanted I wanted to meet he's an older guy so nice world history teacher and he said, I want to see Whose parents raised that confident kid and he's like your kids not confident in a cocky way.

He literally helps all the other kids in the class and to see how dyslexic he was in writing and his 504 plan. That's a lot of damn hard work to do that on all of our parts.

Mr. and Mrs. Hodge and John Carlo. Lots and lots of work. Preserving his self-confidence was the number one priority, obviously other than regulating.

But he was just always open and he's a regulator. He just came out regulated and I just sprinkled more on it and just does it. But we have to have confidence.

Like when I think about my triple deficit dyslexic and what he has achieved, it is purely unconfident. Yes, we provided great intervention. But I know lots of people who are doing great treatments and intervention, and confidence is a destroyer.

When we calm that nervous system first, we don't just improve behavior, We protect confidence. And confidence Is the foundation of lifelong mental health.

and when you understand how dysregulation erodes that confidence, you parent differently.

Preorder, Resources, and the Path to Resilience

Right? Not avoid parenting. In my book, The Dysregulated Kid, I walk you through step by step. on how to calm the nervous system first, so your child can learn, grow, and believe in themselves.

You can pre-order your copy now and start shifting the story, because you get access to free resources. Go to dysregulatedkid.com or DrRosanne, dys-reg-u-la-ted-k-i-d.

com, forward slash dys, go to the notes. And it's really important. I have an ask. if you too pre-order, not just

because you're getting great stuff, but because it actually sends a signal to Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Target, all these places that it's available, Independent Bookstores Association, by the way, that this is important.

and they will actually push it out more. So that's my ask. And of course, leave me a review when you get it and start implementing these things that you're learning in your daily life because everybody can do this and it can start making a difference immediately.

You can start feeling different in 10 minutes or less, I promise you. You just have to be consistent and it's not that hard to consistent because you're going to start regulating your nervous system like brushing your teeth, you are going prioritize it.

So we brush our teeth not to have cavities, we regulate our nervous systems to inoculate ourselves from stress, to protect ourselves form clinical mental health help our kids love themselves and feel good, but also so that they can distinguish between real stress, the stress they handle, and they know how to problem solve.

And that is the path to resilience. Want more insights and solutions? Well, subscribe to our Disregulation Insider and it will show up in your inbox every week.