Nervous System Signs Behind Emotional Dysregulation in Kids Transcript

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Why behavior is really a nervous system issue

Most parents are watching the behavior, almost no one is watching, the nervous system. If your child melts down, shuts down explodes, spirals, maybe withdraws, you're being told it's attitude, ADHD, anxiety, or defiance.

But what if those are just surface symptoms of a nervous that's stuck? Because really, that's what I've been seeing for three decades. And that is why I wrote The Disregulated Kid.

That's why do this show, DisRegulated Kids, so that you start to understand the impact of the nervous system on everyday life, but also so we can reset the with simple strategies that everybody can do, doesn't require medication, it doesn' require fancy things.

Yes, I love PEMF and magnesium and all these tools. They're great. And if you can afford them and you could do them, and add them to your life, like I use them every day, wonderful.

There are many other ways to regulate our nervous system. The impact of that is incredible, not just on your child today, but in the future and the generations that come.

So the problem we're missing with our kids is we often are missing those early clues. When I was doing one-to-one clinical work, what I would see is the kura-wara-shura and people saying, oh no, now this is making sense.

Early signs of dysregulation parents miss

I saw this, that, and the other thing. Or we are seeing signs that we just can't connect. We're diving into that today. So let's talk about some of those early clues because emotional dysregulation doesn't just start with a meltdown.

It starts quietly. So what are some more subtle signs that most parents miss? Constant irritability, overreactions to things that are minor. And I don't mean once in a while.

I mean, it's showing up more than you think it should. Don't base that on your own parenting. Base it on what your kid and what their temperament is. Perfectionism.

Rigidity. Rigidity is a problem. Clinginess, especially when separating or after school, times of high stress, sudden shutdowns, lazy and unmotivated behaviors, that's actually really just overloaded nervous system, sensory defensiveness, picky eating.

These are all signs of nervous-system dysregulation and definitely You know, if your kid is, you know kids are telling us they're having a hard time. They're showing us.

So these are nervous system signals, not personality characteristics. If you are struggling to understand your child's behavior and you want more That's what my solution matcher is.

It's actually a nervous system pattern interpreter and gives you a path. You can go to DrRosanne.com for help. We've revised it and if you haven't taken it or you have taken and you want some help, this is the way.

The nervous systems, let's talk about signs. we have are the over-activated nervous So this is when we're in a sympathetic dominant state. And here the child looks like big reactions to small problems, explosive anger, anxiety spirals, racing thoughts, particularly at bedtime.

So that's when a lot of things like a nervous system just can't turn off, we see hyper focusing, which people can think can be good. But on the other side of that is difficulty focusing in other areas.

We could see paper behaviors, impulsive behaviors difficulty putting on.

Over-activated nervous system: fight, flight, freeze

The brakes underneath it, We see elevated cortisol, your emotional center, Your amygdala run in the show. The emotions are running the show. We know some adults like this too.

we don't hang out with them. Aquarians, we know like people who always run by their emotions. Were too logical for that. Makes me such a great strategist for you all because they lead with logic.

The prefrontal cortex is offline and their brain is scanning for threat. That is what happens in overstimulated that is biology. It is designed to look be fight, flight or freeze.

That's just the way it is and fun. So they're not choosing drama or reactivity and big emotions. They are stuck in survival mode to the under activated child.

This is dorsal shutdown. OK, this one gets missed constantly because they can look well behaved. So they can be tuning out though, they could be staring off and zoning out, They can avoid tasks.

They could told not trying or low motivation or flat affect. These are kids that are pulling away. The huzz, the was, when you call their name, their not listening.

Now, that can also be avoided. But underneath, it's nervous system collapse, low arousal, cognitive fog, That's the Hanwha stress exhaustion. This isn't laziness.

It's a nervous system conserving energy because it feels overwhelmed. That what's behind most shutdown is just overwhelmed, but if your child isn' too much or not enough, but simply dysregulated.

That's the question I'm posing and trying to get you think differently because when we know better, we can do better and we focus on the nervous system.

So what are signs that confuse parents? Dysregulation often gets labeled a lot of clinical diagnosis from learning disabilities to ADHD and mood disorder and oppositional define is a big one.

Big one I see all the time, because you're just like, no. Because you are trying to conserve your energy. They can be labeled as having an anxiety disorder.

And you know, these things can co-occur. So I don't want to say it doesn't happen. Sensory issues, strong will, difficult, sensitive, deeply feeling. Maybe those are true, again.

Under-activated shutdown and collapse

But in all cases, nervous system, there's a problem. It's dysregulated. And sometimes those diagnoses, again, they're accurate. Many times what I see is in brain maps, in clinical work, is this chronic nervous-system instability underneath all these behavior.

When we regulate that nervous system time and time again, three decades, thousands of kids, this is what I see, an improvement in focus, often improvement and grades, emotional flexibility increases, which is so helpful for parents because, oh, it's really hard when you have a rigid reactive kid.

It's hard for both of you. Frustration tolerance improves. so they don't see every stressor as a threat. Sleep starts to get better. Transitions get easier and smoother because behavior follows biology.

So, what are some other signs, early signs that you should be watching for? So meltdowns after holding it together all day, that's that after school restraint collapse, please listen to that episode.

Mood swings that feel disproportionate to the issue, perfectionism with self-criticism. You hear kids saying, I'm stupid and I can't do that, and not even going to bother, or I am awful at that or everybody is better than that.

I don't ever want a kid to have that running around in their head. That's never going to serve them and they're just going limit themselves. So big reactions to sensory issues, any type of sensory that can be a real sign, a need for over control or even OCD like patterns, because there's almost a ritualistic component in it.

I mean, it could be OCD, and then we have OCT. Emotional shutdowns that seem sudden. Constant need for reassurance.

Misdiagnosis, compounding problems, and regulation first

That is a big thing, a trap, the sand trap that parents fall into. And these are nervous system clues, not character issues. What it feels like for your child is, but kids can't say, is my sympathetic nervous system is activated.

And instead, what they say is I don't know why I'm so mad. I can calm down. They just don't have the ability to feel safe because that's really what it is.

Their brain doesn't feel. Safe. And this is important because when dysregulation goes unaddressed. anxiety compounds, clinical issues, increase, go through the roof.

You heard me talk about a bunch of times, anxiety, OCD, depression. They start with nervous system dysregulation. School struggles increase. Even my smarty pants kids.

After a certain amount of time, we cannot run an empty. And that all-important confidence and self-esteem starts eroding. family conflict starts to happen because you're scratching your head, especially when we have nervous system instability of up and down between over and under stimulation.

It's very perplexing. And so usually one parent is like, they're doing this on purpose. And they start like, well, they were fine here and they're okay at school.

And then it just creates marital conflict or partner conflict. Then of course, if they do have clinical issues, They're going to intensify. This is where you start getting shopping cart diagnoses, all because the nervous system is not being treated, it's not regulating, not happening.

You think somehow there's a pill for it, because I see you in the Facebook groups. you don't know any better. That's why you're here. And then patterns start to harden and what started as, you know, a little stress can turn into a chronic mental health struggle.

Again, when you add in the self-esteem issues, people start giving themselves that narrative that it will always be that way. Farmer wants you to think you are going to have anxiety, depression, and OCD the rest of your life.

You do not have to have that happen. You've got to regulate, learn new skills with a licensed therapist. Kids, the biology is the issue. We've never stabilized that nervous system.

When you change what you're doing by focusing on regulation first, that is when the nervous system really can stabilize and all those things that you know about.

Executive functioning starts improving because your prefrontal cortex is coming back online. Your emotional swings start to decrease and frequency and intensity, your recovery is better.

Whatever you're teaching, school, new behavioral learning, it all starts to stick. Even my nonverbal autistics, whatever type of treatment they're using starts improve.

And calm isn't the goal here. Flexibility is. A regulated brain can. pause, shift, recover, adapt. And that's resilience.

That is what they need. So stop asking what's wrong with my child and start asking, what state is her nervous system is.

How to respond and support regulation at home

That is where we start to shift what we're doing. We stop rescuing our kids, we stop arguing with them because we are starting to say, what is the nervous system showing me they need?

So, here's what I want you to do this week. Instead of reacting to behavior, I'll want to pause and ask, is this an over-activation? Is this under- activation?

regulate first, correct later, and that's really the shift what you need to do. It's as simple as that. An emotional dysregulation isn't a personality flaw, it's a nervous system signal.

And when you learn to read the signals, you stop fighting your child and start guiding their nervous system. If this resonates and you're seeing these patterns and no one has explained them this way before, because guess what?

I trademark regulation first and regulation, first parenting. This is exactly why I wrote the dysregulated kit because behavior isn't random. And your child isn't broken or can't get better.

Everybody comes to me and says, is this the worst case you ever seen? No. Worst case I ever seen is a parent who's stuck in their dysregulation and doesn't want to do anything and wants to pathologize their child.

If that is you, you can get help for yourself. And that's how your child gets better. But I've never seen a kid that couldn't get better when we have a parents who is willing to some work, not perfectly some.

We need kids to have nervous system that feels safe enough to grow and that safe is a capacity in the nervous system. And you're really understanding that over time, things add up.

So you can a pre-order your copy of the dysregulated kid, and you help your child find calm so everything else finally starts to work. Your kid feels better about themselves and you move from co-disregulation to co regulation.

It's so important that you pre-order this book because you get some great resources right out of the gate And it is your first step to making a change.

Want more insights and solutions? Well, subscribe to our dysregulation insider and it will show up in your inbox every week.