

# PARENTING A CHILD WITH A SENSITIVE FIGHT RESPONSE

Feeling angry and the powerful actions that come from this can feel far safer than feeling frightened, sad, hurt or alone. Being angry also might prevent us from getting even more hurt than we already feel. This simple resource supports those parenting or working with a child who has a sensitive 'fight' survival response. Here we give you some of what you need to know on how to better calm the child's nervous system.

## WHAT YOU NEED...

**Nurture** yourself and accept nurture from others as much as possible. Receiving nurture lowers the risk of developing blocked care. Nurture looks different for everyone but receiving it is fundamental in staying well.

Your own **regulation** is the key to teaching your child how to regulate themselves. What do you need to do to stay regulated, especially in times of stress?

**Parental presence** can disappear when parenting 'anger', yet your child needs you to have it to feel safer. Structure your parental responses so in times of stress you can maintain your safe parental presence.

**Safety is always the first priority.** Are you and others safe? Is the young person safe? What do you need to do in this moment or for future moments to ensure safety? Do throwable objects or knives need to be put away? Is there a room that is safer than others? Do you need to ask your neighbours to knock on the door if you signal that you need help? What do you need to do to stay safe?



## SO YOU CAN...

Weave **regulating** tasks and activities throughout the day, everyday as this soothes the nervous system and eventually calms the survival response.

Offer consistent and regular doses of **high nurture**. Nurture activates oxytocin and opioids that lower aggression.

Purposefully and positively **connect** again and again despite the rejection. Anger often puts a wall between you and your child. Connecting with your child will help them to feel safer, lowering their stress levels.

Siphon off the **truncated response**. When a child has gone into fight mode they will need to be safely supported to discharge the build up of anger or it may appear later on.

Understand that you will get it wrong - all the time! Model **repair** so your child can learn that relationships can survive a rupture.

**Teach** your child what is happening in their body when they go into a fight survival response.

Be compassionate to yourself and your child. It takes **time** for the nervous system to learn not to leap into a survival response.