

MIRRORING

Mirroring is when a someone accurately reflects how another person is expressing their thoughts and feelings. It's like someone is holding a mirror up to us by the way they respond.



The person you're talking to mirrors your smiles and frowns, raised eyebrows and shock or embarrassment and laughter...



...rather than just sitting with a blank face and no emotions...



...or with a mood and facial expressions that are not tuned into yours.

WHY IS MIRRORING IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE?



It is deeply important for children to experience the adults around them (and particularly their care-givers) mirroring them. When an adult accurately reflects back to the child their thoughts and feelings, the child's own internal world feels seen, accepted and validated.

Their nervous system moves into a state of regulation and they experience themselves, others and the world as safe.



When mirroring happens again and again, over time, two fundamental things develop for the child:

- They begin to internalise their own sense of self-acceptance and self-awareness
- They begin to truly trust that others are safe, others are trustworthy and others notice

As adults we have the same experience. Someone authentically and accurately mirroring us is co-regulating, We feel seen and heard and our point of view or experience feels accepted as valid and true for us.

IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO BE CLEAR HERE THAT MIRRORING IS NOT:



- Agreeing with another person's point of view.

Instead, it is validating that the person's feelings are acceptable and that you believe what they are feeling is true. You are creating a moment where they feel seen and heard, meaning they are more likely to accept an alternative point of view later on.

- Being a parrot, mimicking them inauthentically.

Instead, it is a tool of empathy, stepping into their shoes for a view from their perspective.

It is also really important to be clear that mirroring every single person in every single interaction would be impossible and exhausting!



MIRRORING ACTIVITIES

Mirroring with children can be spontaneous, or it can be brought in through a game or playful interaction between you and the child. The more you can laugh and the more you can use all the child's senses when playing mirroring games, the better!

Whilst doing these games with adolescents or adults might seem a bit juvenile, you might be surprised how well they work once the hurdle of discomfort is overcome.

FUNNY FACES



Ask the child pull one funny face at a time and mirror back to them what their face is showing.

DRUMMING



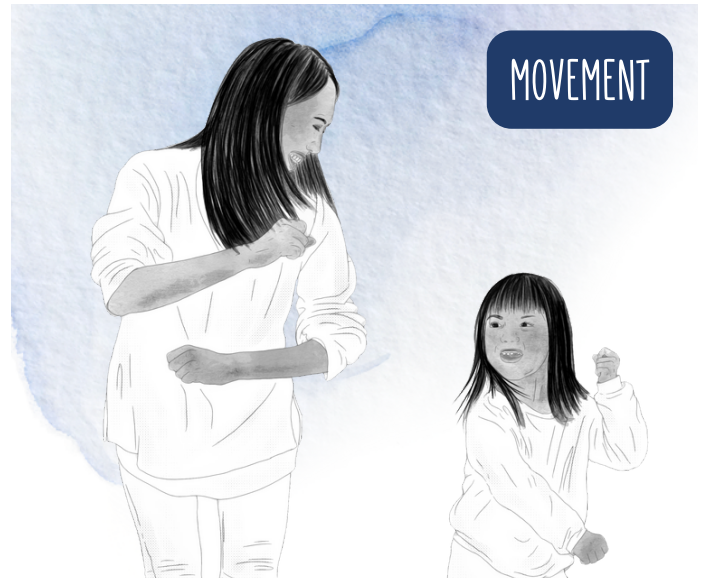
Ask the child to drum a rhythm of beats and then repeat the rhythm back. Invite the child to do a series of rhythms, one at a time. Swap over and see if they can mirror you.

DOODLING



Invite the child to take a large piece of paper and a pen. As the child draws a squiggly line slowly, you copy the line on your own piece of paper, mirroring their speed and movements. (This is a great portable activity)

MOVEMENT



Ask the child to move around the room, changing the speed, position and energy of their movement. Pay close attention and follow the child's body with your body.