

□ □ **How to Regulate Yourself When Your Kid Is Melting Down**

A No-BS Guide for Parents Who Want to Stay Grounded

(But Sometimes Lose Their Sh*t)

□ **Why This Guide Exists**

Parenting a neurodivergent kid isn't hard because of your child — it's hard because you're expected to:

- Stay calm when you're exhausted
- Be patient when you're overwhelmed
- Handle screaming, biting, hitting, bolting — without *reacting*

And guess what? You're human.

You *will* lose it sometimes.

But you *can* learn to catch yourself earlier, recover faster, and model emotional regulation *even when it's messy*.

This guide is here to help you:

- Stay centered in the storm
- Recover with grace when you explode
- Build emotional safety for both of you — without shame or guilt

□ **Step 1: Understand What's Actually Happening (in Your Body)**

When your kid is melting down, your nervous system gets triggered too.

You might feel:

- Tight chest
- Clenched jaw
- Tunnel vision
- Racing thoughts
- Surges of anger, fear, or helplessness

That's not you being a bad parent.

That's your **body preparing for a threat**. It's called dysregulation — and it's real.

□ *Step one is catching it. Step two is choosing what to do with it.*

□ **Step 2: Ground Yourself — Fast**

Here are **5 fast regulation tools** you can use in the moment:

1. Name it to tame it:

“I feel out of control. I feel overwhelmed. I feel like I want to scream.”
Saying it quiets your nervous system.

2. Cold water reset:

Splash cold water on your face, hold a cold can, or step outside. It shocks your system back into the present.

3. Box breathing:

Inhale 4 – Hold 4 – Exhale 4 – Hold 4. Repeat.

4. Wall press:

Push both palms into a wall as hard as you can for 10 seconds. It releases adrenaline.

5. Five things:

Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.

You don’t need to *feel calm*. You just need to *be safe enough* to respond instead of react.

□ **Step 3: Repair After You Lose It**

You’re going to snap sometimes. That’s not failure — that’s humanity.

What matters is **how you repair**:

“I got too angry. That wasn’t okay. I’m sorry I scared you.”
“My job is to help you feel safe, and I didn’t do that very well. I’ll keep working on it.”
“You didn’t make me mad. I just had big feelings too.”

Repair builds trust. It teaches emotional accountability better than anything else.

□ **Step 4: Build a Personalized Regulation Plan**

Let’s keep it simple. Fill in the blanks:

- **My signs I’m about to lose it:**
(e.g. tight chest, snapping tone, urge to walk away)
- **My go-to grounding move:**
(e.g. box breathing, leave the room, cold water)

- **What I'll say instead of yelling:**
(e.g. "I need a second" or "This is hard for both of us")
- **What I'll do to repair if I explode:**
(e.g. apologize, hug, restart the activity)

Write it. Tape it inside a cabinet. Use it *before* you're spiraling.

☐ **Bottom Line**

You're not a robot.

You're not a bad parent for losing it.

You're a whole human raising another whole human.

You both deserve space to feel big things —
and tools to *come back to each other* when those things get messy.

Regulation isn't perfection.

It's self-awareness, self-responsibility, and self-compassion.

You got this. And even when you don't — you can *come back*.