

The Self-Reg Journey of

Lisa Taylor



Dufferin County: Sparking Self-Reg Through "Dialogue, Dialogue, Dialogue"

"I was noticing a significant increase in the number of children, younger and younger, unable to cope with the simplest of things and seeming so anxiety filled and depressed. Professionally, I noticed that educators were expressing the feeling of being overwhelmed and they were reporting an escalation in the number of children with extreme behaviors. A deep desire grew in me to understand why we were seeing what we were seeing, how could a mother help her child, how could an educator help the children in his/ her care, and how could a community make a bigger difference. I was hoping Dr. Stuart Shanker's Self-Reg would address the "Why? Why now?"

Why Self-Reg

Concerned about the level of anxiety in children and youth Lisa was witnessing professionally and personally she launched into what has become a mission to spread Self-Reg through gentle, thoughtful, and "contagious" conversations.

Big Picture

"As leaders, if we embody the Self-Reg way of seeing children it becomes contagious - one person at a time, one conversation at a time. We need to watch for the gentle invitations to who would be interested in knowing more and who would be receptive. It is challenging but possible. To quote Dr. Susan Hopkins, "You can't learn Self-Reg without feeling a profound sense of hope." Our biggest wish and dream is that we view all humans through a Self-Reg lens. What if we can have this reframe, what would be the possibilities, for the children, families, educators that we work with, for ourselves, and our community and society as a whole. Can you imagine what kind of world that would be?"

Process at this Point

"I first went to my manager and expressed my interest in taking the foundations course. My Self-Reg passion grew so strongly that the conversations and curiosity continued. Professionally, we hosted a self-regulation symposium which ignited a friendship with Angie Rosati." Angie Rosati is "a professor, a facilitator for The MEHRIT Centre, a PhD candidate from York University, a fellow educator and now dear friend." Together, Angie and Lisa embarked on a project "that began with

training a group of educators on Self-Reg with a very heavy emphasis on reframing a part of The Shanker 5 Step Method. Educators in Dufferin County participated in a two-day training session, followed by visits."

"As a community, we have threaded opportunities continuously throughout our community, for educators, families, children, and community partners. These include invitations to Self-Reg encounters, such as Susan Hopkins' 'Creating a culture of safety'; our pedagogical work; book club studies; our special needs program; daily emergent conversations; and through other initiatives in the community, like the natural playscape playground."

Challenges

"The main struggle has been to have all educators adopt a Self-Reg lens. We encourage them to "see a child differently and you see a different child." We continue to offer opportunities to engage in Self-Reg. This is not a one-day workshop but a continued dialogue and a way of "being and becoming."

Fond Memory

"I look back at the Self-Reg Foundations course and thought "I don't have the time". I laugh at that thinking now because I see how it has changed me. It is so essential for everyone's wellbeing. I will be honest, there were weeks when I struggled; however, the gift that it has given me personally and professionally far outweighs any struggles to get there."

Hope!

"Our biggest breakthrough has been growing and cultivating a large number of Self-Reg educators. We have Reframed how we see behaviours and moved away from the old inherited script of "behaviour management" rooted in compliance to seeing behaviours as stress behaviours. We have a more empathic lens and are more attuned with the child's needs. How we notice and listen to our educators in the community, and how stressed and overwhelmed they have become, is another breakthrough. I feel the Self-Reg encounters and dialogue have not only helped the children in our community but the educators as well."