SELF-REG FOR MILITARY PARENTS

Photo submitted by Makala Chapman

What is Self-Reg all about?

Shanker Self-Reg® is a process for enhancing selfregulation by understanding and dealing with stress. In Self-Reg we consider both our responses to stress and our underlying state of energy and tension when we encounter a stress.

Self-Regulation

- Self-Reg is based on the original, psychophysiological definition of self-regulation, which refers to how we respond to stress.
- We all self-regulate, though sometimes in ways that are maladaptive: i.e., that don't help us recover from stress and actually lead to even greater stress down the road.
- Adaptive (effective and helpful) self-regulation promotes growth and learning as well as helping us recover from stress.
- Self-regulation is not the same as self-control. Self-control is about inhibiting troublesome impulses. Effective self-regulation reduces the stress-induced feelings that cause impulses.
- Self-regulation is about understanding, not "monitoring and managing," emotions, thoughts and behaviour in ourselves and others.

Shanker Self-Reg® looks at stress across five domains of experience: biological, emotion, cognitive, social, and prosocial.

There are five practices in The Shanker Method®:

1. Reframe the behaviour.
2. Recognize the stressors across the five domains.
3. Reduce the stress.
4. Reflect and enhance stress awareness.
5. Restore energy.

Self-Reg includes recognizing what calm feels like for yourself as well as what it feels like to become overstressed.

The ultimate, long-term Self-Reg goal is to help children acquire the necessary understanding of when and how to manage their own energy and tension, so they can adapt to the various stresses of life. But Self-Reg is also personal. If we are going to support our children's self-regulation we first have to understand our own stress and know how to manage our own energy and tension.

Self-Reg can help us understand and respond positively to the roots of many behaviour, emotion and social challenges that affect children and families. Self-Reg provides a new lens to transitions, school, parenting from afar and other challenges unique to a military context.

Check out our Self-Reg Military Parenting Course, developed in partnership with the Trenton Military Family Resource Centre, to learn about Self-Reg in action.

Self-Reg Guiding Values

Shanker Self-Reg® has 8 guiding values, which are very well aligned with the goals of Canada's Military Family Resource Centres.

1. Shanker Self-Reg® is a universal platform (not a targeted intervention or a behaviour management program).
Self-Reg is for everybody, not just for families who are struggling. Self-Reg helps all parents, regardless of the age of your kids or your family circumstances.

2. Shanker Self-Reg® is a process not a program.
You are not alone. All families deal with similar struggles, challenges and questions about how best to parent their children. Self-Reg is an ongoing process in which we evolve and change as our children grow and we learn more about them and ourselves.

3. ALL people are capable of improving their self-regulation, no matter the age, stage or ability level.
Everyone self-regulates in response to stress, even babies. And we do it in different ways. The goal of Self-Reg is to help kids (and yourself) learn to self-regulate in effective ways that promote growth, learning and well-being.

4. Each individual, family, culture and community holds unique insights about Self-Regulation.
Whether your family is army, navy, air force, the basic challenges are similar, and we all have knowledge, experience and skills we bring to the table, along with our own unique challenges and problems. Self-Reg will help you gain a personalized perspective on dealing with deployment and other realities of military parenting.

5. There is no single set way to do Self-Reg.
Self-Reg is not about trying to get everyone to follow a set of directions and parent in exactly the same way. Self-Reg helps you understand your children's needs—and your own—in ways that will help find strategies that make sense for your family.

6. There are no quick fixes, Self-Reg is a continual and reflective process.
Self-Reg is about understanding behaviour, not changing it. As you learn to better understand children's behaviour (and your own), you be more able to find helpful and positive strategies that work for your family.

7. Self-Reg is for everyone, it's not just about children and youth.
People self-regulate throughout life. It's never too late for adults to learn more helpful ways of self-regulating.

8. The well-being of children is inseparable from the well-being of the critical adults in their lives.
Self-Reg is as much about you as it is about your child. Learning to understand and manage your own stress will help you be the loving, supportive, effective parent you'd like to be.

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