



## Co-Regulation Cues Cheat Sheet

A therapist's guide to slowing the story without shutting it down

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## **When to Use This Cheat Sheet:**

- Your client is mid-story... and has been for 20+ minutes
  - You haven't breathed since they sat down
  - The story's looping, spiraling, or avoiding
  - You want to invite pause but don't want to rupture rapport
  - You're feeling overwhelmed and need to co-regulate you, too
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## **Gentle Verbal Cues (Warm Redirects)**

These phrases say “pause” without saying “stop talking.”

- “Can we press pause for a second together?”
  - “I want to make sure we don't lose the really important part you just named—can we slow it down a bit?”
  - “You've shared so much, and I want to make sure we don't miss what matters most today. Would now be a good time to refocus?”
  - “I'm hearing a lot of strong threads—can we check in on what's feeling most urgent right now?”
  - “Would it feel okay to shift gears for a moment and check in on your body?”
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## **Pre-Agreed Nonverbal Cues (Especially Helpful for ND Clients)**

Discuss and co-create these before they're needed!

-  Hand signal for “Pause” (e.g., therapist slowly raising one palm)
-  Visual pause card (a color card or symbol laid on the table or screen)

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- 🕒 Timer cue (gentle chime at 15/30 min mark to regroup together)
  - 🌀 Grounding object shift (e.g., holding a tactile item when it's time to slow)
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### **Collaborative Redirect Scripts (Empowering, Not Controlling)**

- “I notice we’ve been in motion a while—can we pause and check if we’re getting what you need from today?”
  - “Would it help to jot down what’s coming up so we don’t lose it while we shift focus?”
  - “Is this something you want to follow deeper now, or park and return to later?”
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### **Regulation-Friendly Voice Tips (Because how matters)**

- Speak slower than you think you need to
  - Let your tone rise at the end to signal curiosity, not correction
  - Include long pauses after redirection—don’t rush the shift
  - Hold soft eye contact or offer a visual focus point (plant, object, etc.)
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### **Therapist Regulation Check-In (Mid-Session Pause for You)**

If you’re feeling activated, overwhelmed, or unsure:

- Drop into your seat—literally. Feel it.
- Wiggle your toes. Exhale longer than your inhale.
- Ask yourself: “What part of me is online right now?”
- Then proceed with intention, not reactivity.

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