



‘Strengthening Skills and Building Confidence in Regulating your Child’s Emotions’

Emotions in Check: Guide Your Child to Emotional Mastery!

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Aims for today

To help you build
your
understanding of
Emotional
Regulation

Explore and build
your
understanding of
Emotion Coaching

To briefly
introduce
strategies for
helping your child
to emotionally
regulate

What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation is the **core process** underlying **attention and social engagement** and is **essential for optimal social, emotional and communication development and for the development of relationships** (Prizant and Meyer, 1993).

Emotional Regulation

Self Regulation

Things we do to monitor and manage our emotional states. Self-regulation is all about pausing between feeling and reactions

Mutual/ Co Regulation

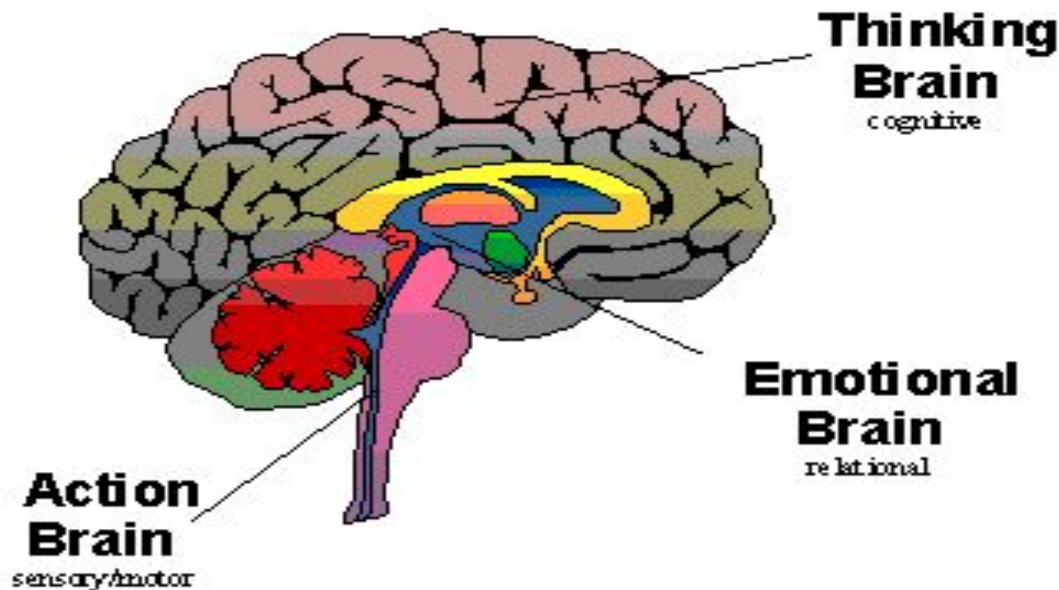
Seeking help or comfort from others to make us feel calm or safe

No emotion is bad, it is how we or others respond to it that is important.

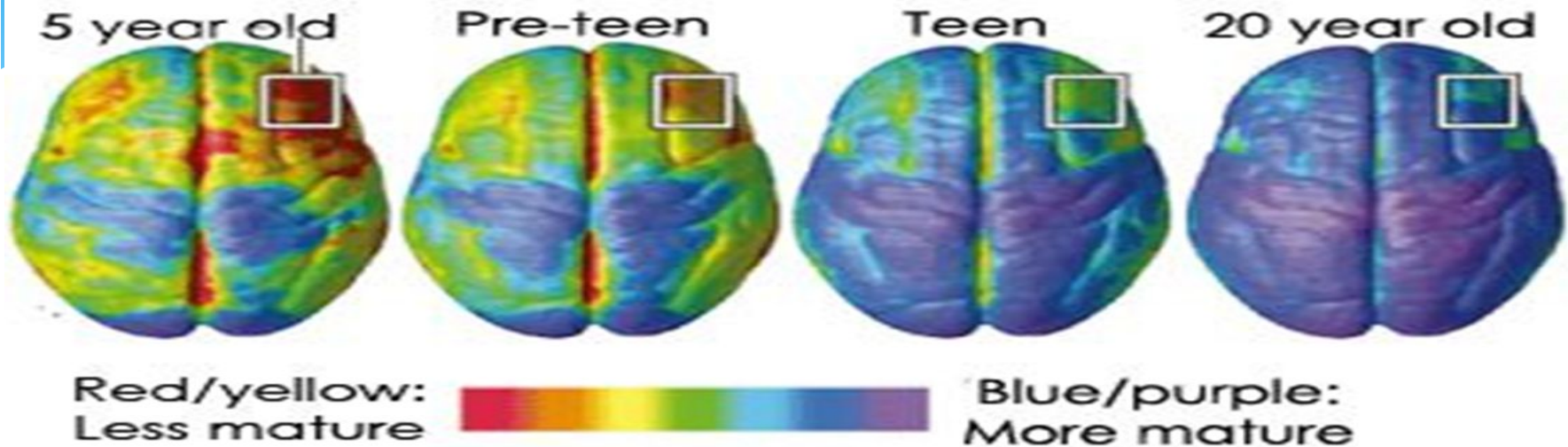


What happens to the brain when someone has strong feelings

When we feel strong feelings the emotional part of the brain stops the thinking part of the brain, making it more difficult to think logically and rationally. Therefore when someone is emotional it is important to give them time and space.



Understanding Emotions and Behaviours in Children and young people?



REMEMBER:

Younger children's emotional brain has not fully developed, and this can make it hard for them to deal with powerful emotions

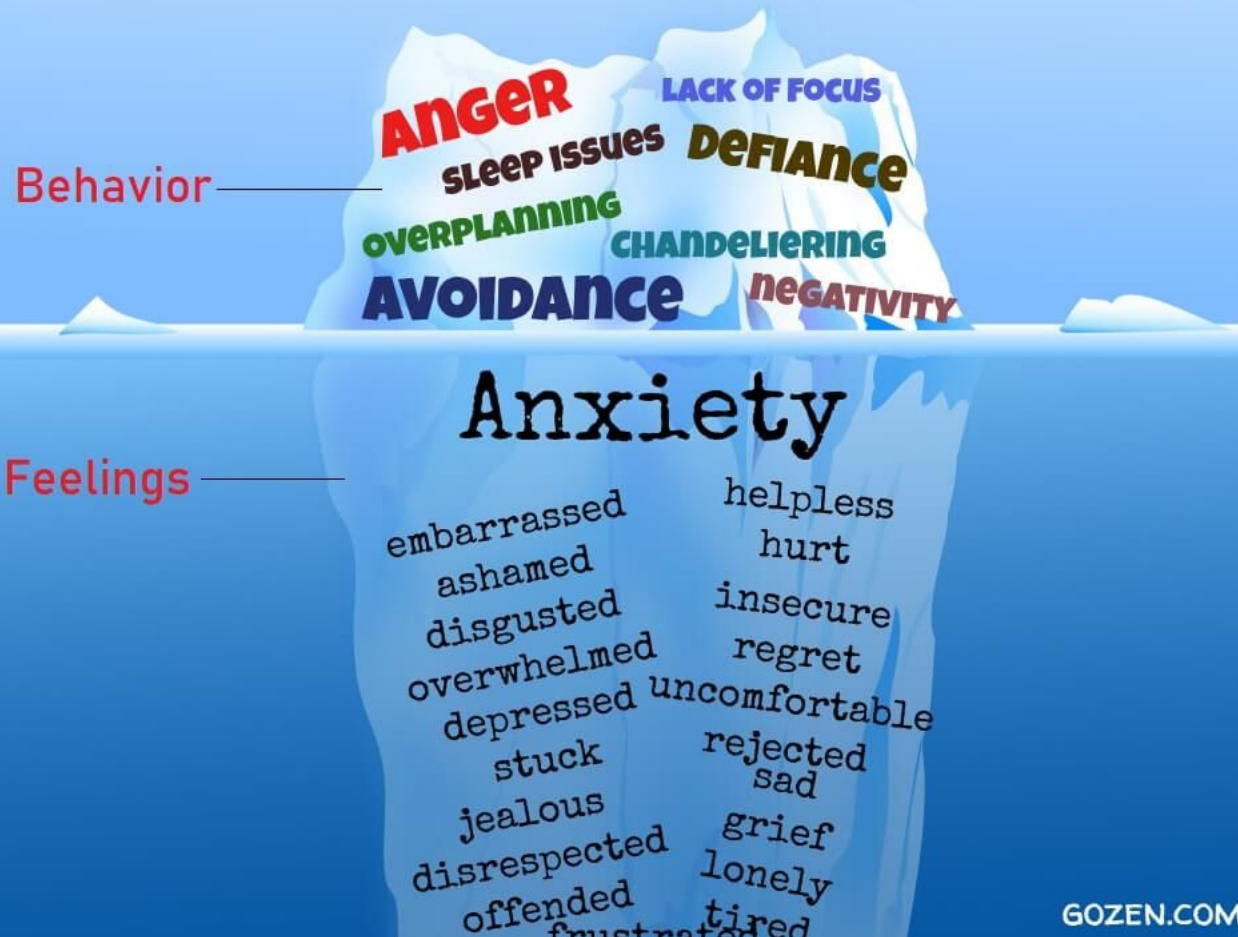
Co-Regulation / Self Regulation

- We are not born able to self-regulate
- Emotional regulation is gained by co-regulation
- Well-regulated adults are needed when children or young people experience dysregulation
- The brain is shaped by social experience and strengthened by repetition

What does it look like when children are having difficulty regulating?

- * Act overly silly or out of control
- * Have tantrums or meltdowns
- * Struggle with transitions
- * Have difficult waiting turns
- * Difficult to be close to others
- * Grab, throw or touch things impulsively
- * Have difficulty waiting in line or walking slowly
- * Talk too loudly, stand too close, touch others
- * Withdrawn, teary or preoccupied.
- * Iceberg – emotions under the surface – fear, hurt, pain, sad, excited, angry

ANXIETY ICEBERG REVISED



Triggers

- * The event that triggers the emotion
- * You can be triggered by any one of your five senses
- * Could be related to a historical event -Trauma
- * Learning and brain development



Dominos effect

- * **Many tiny steps** can lead up to a meltdown.
- * **What about 0-100%** (under the surface thoughts and emotions, trauma)
- * **Lack of sleep**, hunger, not feeling well, adults on edge, punishment, school stress.
- * **Emotions** – shame, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, powerlessness, hurt, grief
- * **Negative thoughts** – I am not safe, I am a bad kid, I am not good enough, I can't do anything right, I don't belong.
- * **Children will do whatever they can to protect themselves**, comfort themselves and self-regulate (survival response)
- * **Learnt from their environment.** – Modelled response.

So what is emotion coaching?

- Developed in the US by psychologist John Gottman (1997)
- Based on research into what parents of happy, resilient and well-adjusted children and young people actually do
- Recognises the scientific evidence that what adults do shapes and strengthens brain development in children

Emotion coaching enables children and young people to manage their own behaviour through helping them to:

**Understand the different emotions
they experience**

Understand why they occur

Learn how to handle them

Emotion Coaching

1

- Notice, name and empathize the feelings of the child

2

- Set limits on the behaviour

3

- Help the child to solve the problem

Emotion Coaching – A style of response

High Guidance

Disapproving style

- Notice the behaviour not the emotion
- Critical or intolerant
- Believe that emotions are being used to manipulate
- Believe a child needs to 'toughen up'

Coaching style

- Name and validate the emotion
- Support the child to stay safe
- Identify ways that the child can manage the emotion differently in the future

Dismissing style

- See emotions as something that need to be 'gotten over'
- Reduce the emotional experience 'you'll be fine'
- Ignore the emotions as worried that paying attention will make it worse
- Use logic or distraction

Laissez-Faire style

- Adult feels helpless or afraid
- Lots of empathy from the adult but no guidance
- Behaviour likely to escalate further

Low
Empathy

Low Guidance

High
Empathy

Disapproving and dismissing may seem to work, but the actual message is ...

Can lead to suppression of natural emotions, less (or no) self-regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion



The child does not learn to trust their own feelings, which affects their capacity to make any decisions



Deprives the child of opportunities to self-regulate or problem-solve



Lacking opportunities to deal with emotions, the child grows up unprepared for life's challenges

“What you are feeling is not right, your assessment of the situation is wrong, you must not feel this way”

Generates additional strong feelings – resentment, guilt, shame, anger



Step 0 – Getting ready

Co-regulation: Connecting, Mirroring & Matching



The adult should set the emotional tone: NOT the adult reflecting back the angry or distressed face of the child, but the child being able to reflect the calm and empathic face of the adult.

Step 1

1

- Notice, name and empathize the feelings of the child

Notice

What physical or verbal signs are there to indicate distress?

'I can see that... I notice that... I can hear that'



Name

Name the emotion and help the child to label it.

'It looks like you are feeling angry...' 'I can see you are sad'



Empathize

Be sympathetic and let them know you understand how they may feel.

'I understand that your angry. That's ok, it sounds very upsetting'

Step 2

2

- **Set limits on the behaviour**

- Maintain a calm and empathetic tone
- Be the change you want to see - help the child mirror your state of calm and relax
- Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted
- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour (We can go to the corner but we cant...)
- Reinforce that it is the behaviour and not the child that is unacceptable

'We cant damage our things, you can go to the book corner but damage is not ok'

'You must remember that its always ok to talk to me but you cant leave the room'

'Every one in school has the right to be safe. You behaviour has not been safe and that is not ok'

Step 3

- Help the child to solve the problem

3

Explore

support the child to strengthen their awareness of their personal triggers and body cues as well as developing emotional vocabulary.

How were you feeling?

I wonder if you were feeling Because.....?

How did you know you were feeling.....?

What did your face, hart, stomach, hands do when you felt.....?



Scaffold

Work with the child to establish alternative responses to the given feeling.

What could you do when you feel like that again ?

Who could you tell when you feel like that next time ?

How could we help when you feel that again ?

Where could you go when you feel like that again ?



Empower

Encourage the Child and remain emphatic in order to remove feelings of shame from the encounter

Remind the pupil of times they have done this before.

Set clear targets about what to do next time.

Provide praise and motivation as the child achieves to wards these targets.

Emotion Coaching in Everyday situations

Scenario 1: A Child Throws a Tantrum Because They Can't Have a Toy

Step 1: Notice, Name, and Empathise

Parent: "I see that you're really upset because you want that toy. It's okay to feel disappointed when we can't have something we want. I know how much you liked it."

Step 2: Set Limits

Parent: "Even though it's okay to feel upset, we can't scream and throw things in the store. It's important to behave respectfully, even when we're angry."

Step 3: Help to Solve the Problem

Parent: "Let's think about what we can do instead. Maybe we can save up your allowance to buy it another time, or you can play with the toys we have at home and choose one to bring next time we come."

Emotion Coaching in Everyday situations

Scenario 2: A Child Is Angry and Hits Their Sibling

Step 1: Notice, Name, and Empathise

Parent: "I can see that you're very angry with your brother for playing with your game. It's normal to feel angry when you feel someone has taken something of yours without asking."

Step 2: Set Limits

Parent: "But hitting is not okay. We must find safe ways to express our anger. Hitting hurts others and is not allowed."

Step 3: Help to Solve the Problem

Parent: "Let's talk about how we can deal with this anger. You can use your words to tell your brother how you feel, or come to get me so I can help sort it out. Shall we try asking for the game back nicely?"

Emotion Coaching in Everyday situations

Scenario 3: A Child Is Frustrated With Homework and Wants to Give Up

Step 1: Notice, Name, and Empathise

Parent: "It looks like this homework is really frustrating you. It's okay to feel stuck sometimes. Everyone gets frustrated when something is hard to understand."

Step 2: Set Limits

Parent: "We still need to complete our schoolwork even when it's challenging. Giving up is not an option, but taking a short break could help."

Step 3: Help to Solve the Problem

Parent: "What if we take a 10-minute break and then look at the problem together? Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes and a little teamwork can make a big difference."

Emotion Coaching in Everyday situations

Scenario 4: A Child Feels Left Out After the Arrival of a New Baby Sibling

Step 1: Notice, Name, and Empathise

Parent: "I've noticed you've been feeling a bit left out since baby brother came home. It's understandable to feel that way when there's so much focus on the new baby."

Step 2: Set Limits

Parent: "But remember, everyone in our family is equally loved and important. It's not okay to withdraw or say hurtful things because you feel overlooked."

Step 3: Help to Solve the Problem

Parent: "How about we set aside special time for just you and me each day? And we can also find ways you can help with the baby, so you can feel included and a part of everything that's happening."

How can you help yourself?

The BLUE zone



How might you feel?

sad
tired
bored
moving slowly

What might help you?

Talk to someone
Stretch
Take a brain break
Stand
Take a walk
Close my eyes

The GREEN zone



How might you feel?

happy
okay
focussed
ready to learn

What might help you?

The goal of this
exercise is to get to
the GREEN zone.
What can you do to
be happy, calm and
ready to learn?

The YELLOW zone



How might you feel?

nervous
confused
silly
not ready to learn

What might help you?

Talk to someone
Count to 20
Take deep breaths
Squeeze something
Draw a picture
Take a brain break

The RED zone



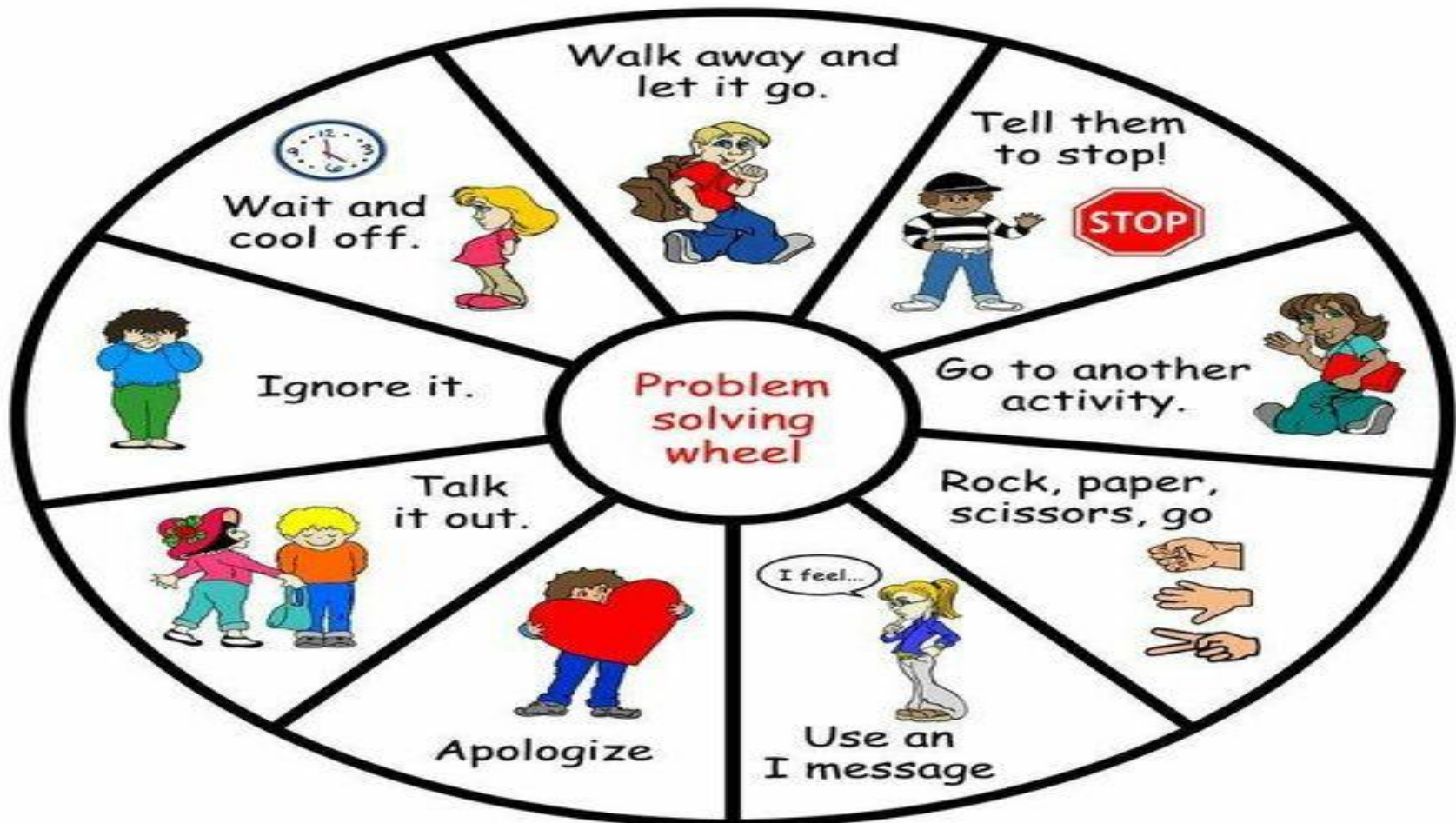
How might you feel?

angry
frustrated
scared
out of control

What might help you?

Stop what I'm doing
Make sensible choices
Take deep breaths
Ask for a break
Find a safe space
Ask for help

What can I do?

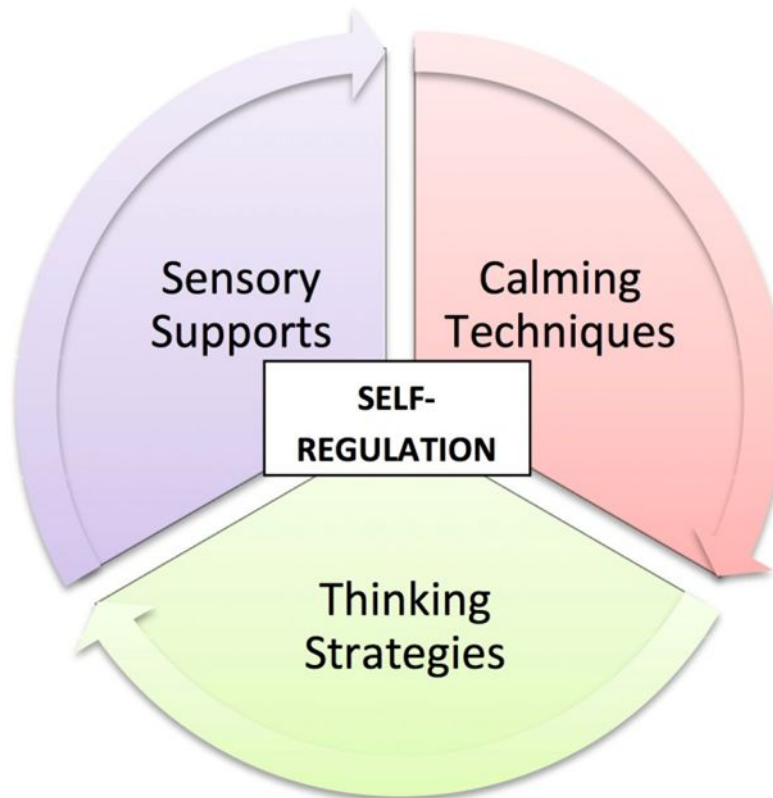




Palm Strategy

- * **P – Pause and panic quietly**
Give yourself time to think,
- * **A – Attune and analyse.**
How is the child feeling? Why is s/he doing that?
- * **L – Label**
Validate and name the behaviour you are observing. I see that you are angry and upset....
- * **M – Model**
Set limits on the behaviour and model an acceptable response.... ‘We need to keep everyone safe, I am going to step away until you are calm,,’

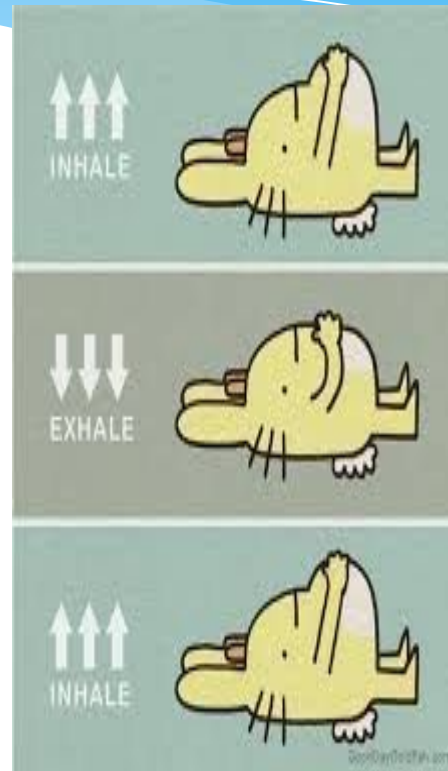
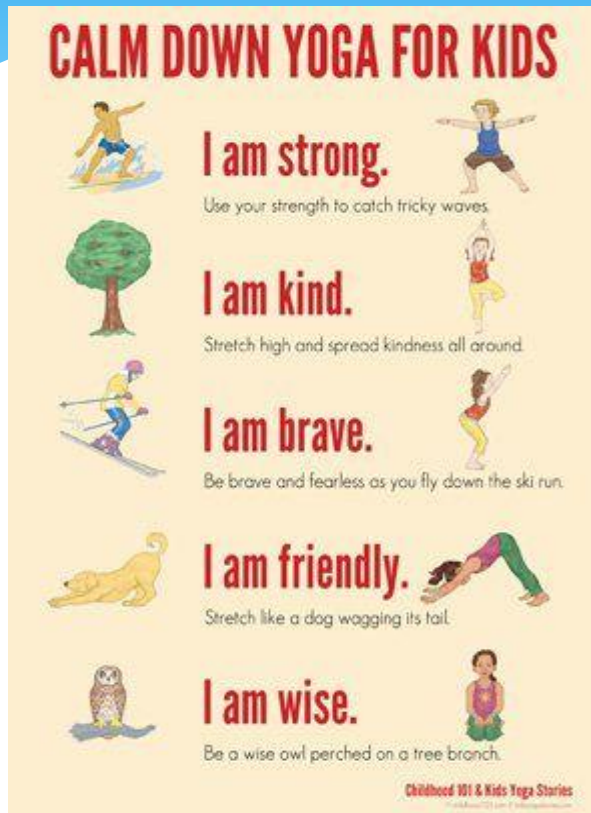
Emotional Regulation Strategies – becoming a co-regulator



Sensory Support



Calming Techniques

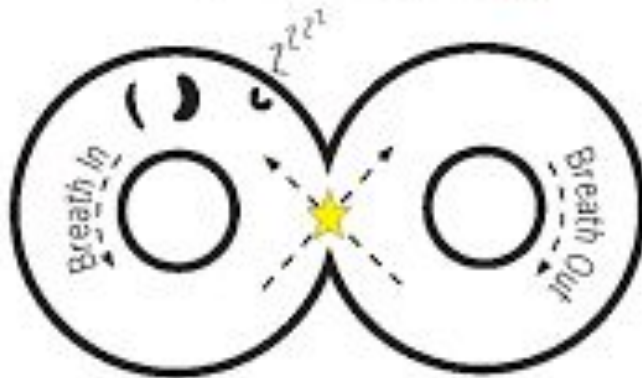


Pizza breathing, magic moustache, quiet time, self hug

Breathing Exercises

The ZEPHUS of Regulation® Reproducible 1

Lazy 8 Breathing

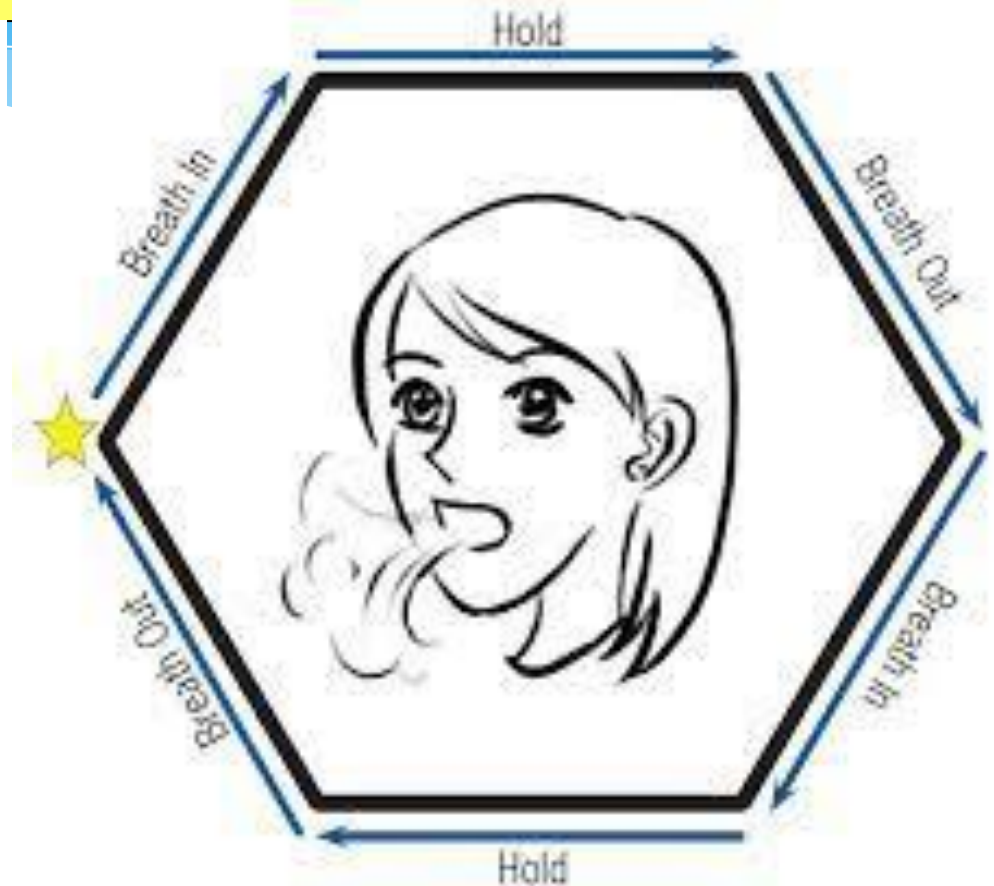


Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.

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Thinking Strategies -

The best time to help children learn to calm their brain is when they are already calm.

- * **Before** - Prepare and set expectations – *“This afternoon you will have to wait for... to..... before.....”* OR *“Remember this activity is about sharing so.....”* Or *“If you feel sad, annoyed, angry, etc. What shall we do?”*
- * **During** – Help them to problem solve - *What would your inner coach say? What would your friend say? Remember we need to do this before we can do that. How big is the problem?*
- * **After** – Reflect with them what went well – *It was really nice to see you..... What could we do next time?*

Recap - How to respond when children are emotional

- * **Give space if safe or help them name the emotion** – *I wonder if you are feeling.... If I were you, I might feel.... It is understandable to feel.... (Also, notice how you feel)*



- * **Acknowledge how difficult it can be** – *‘Sometimes it feels hard to wait’. ‘You sound really upset’.*



- * **Sensory support** (stress ball) or **calming technique** (deep breathing) **Thinking technique** (coping statement)



- * **Reflect** with them and **plan** for next time

Looking after yourself

- * **Parenting has its beautiful moments but can be challenging**
- * **Safety lecture travel by air – put your mask on first**
- * **What are your triggers?** Can lead to emotion-driven reactions
- * **Judgemental thoughts** – I am a bad parent
- * **Embarrassed thoughts**- Others think I am a failure
- * **Hopeless thoughts** – Here we go again – this will never get better
- * **Misguided thoughts** – This child needs to learn her lesson, I can't let her get away with that, he/she is just spoilt, he/she is disrespecting me, he/she hates me or has it in for me.
- * **Notice your emotions** and the sensations in your body?
- * What can you do to **look after yourself?**

Final Thought

"Parenting is a journey filled with highs, lows, joys, and challenges. Remember, every emotion your child feels is a step towards their growth and understanding of the world around them. By tuning in, setting boundaries, and guiding them through their feelings, you're not just addressing the moment; you're equipping them with the skills and resilience they'll carry into adulthood. Embrace each emotion as a teaching opportunity and remember that the foundation of positive parenting is understanding, patience, and love. Here's to celebrating emotions, setting loving boundaries, and growing together."



Reflections



Thank you for coming!