

"Managing" Big Feelings

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**TOOLKIT FOR
PARENTS & CARERS**

GOAL

Feel more empowered to support your child when they are experiencing big feelings.

We will be...

Reflecting on how you can be your best self in these moments



Building your understanding of brains, bodies & development



Learning practical tools to use every day but especially during meltdowns



Focus on how you are **being** rather than what you are **doing**.

“When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it’s our job to **share our calm**, not join their chaos.”

L.R. Knost

I hate my brother!

DISMISS

You don't mean that

GRATEFUL

Just remember how kind he was sharing his car with you this morning

SHUTDOWN

Stop yelling, enough of that

HOLD SPACE

Wow you sound really angry ...that's a big feeling I can tell.

THREATEN

If I hear you say that again...

GIVE INFO

He's just really tired

JUDGE

Don't say that, that's not nice

COMPENSATE

Oh don't be upset, here have a treat and a cuddle and...

I am not going to school today!

DISMISS

Oh stop carrying on, hurry up and get ready

GRATEFUL

You are lucky to have a teacher who tries to make it fun

HOLD SPACE

I wonder if anxiety is visiting again? How can I help?

FIX IT

How about we go and talk to your teacher

THREATEN

If there are any more tears then no park after school

GIVE INFO

School helps you learn, it's important to go

JUDGE

Don't be a sook!

COMPENSATE

Awww my poor baby, how about we buy that new game after school

You are so mean! I don't want to leave yet...

DISMISS

Stop being so silly

GRATEFUL

Maybe you need to think about how I took you to the playground this morning

SHUTDOWN

I don't want to hear any more whinging, enough!

FIX IT

Don't be upset, okay you can stay (or have it...)

THREATEN

If I have to deal with any more nonsense then no screen time later

HOLD SPACE

My decision has really upset you, I can see that.

JUDGE

You need to appreciate all I do for you and stop being so selfish

COMPENSATE

How about we stay up later tonight to have some fun

Guiding tools for being an emotional "space holder"

Take a breath

Remind yourself, "It is just a learning opportunity"

Observe and then connect





No need to...

- ✗ fix
- ✗ problem solve
- ✗ give information
- ✗ shhh them
- ✗ threaten them
- ✗ remind them to be grateful

Just hold a space for them to express and tame their feeling.



Think of big feelings like an emotional storm.

You don't stop a storm from storming.
You don't punish a storm for storming.
You don't tell a storm to calm down.

And it certainly isn't the time to lay a garden.

(Karen Young - Hey Sigmund)

Examples of what you might say in the moment...

- I'm listening, keep talking
- Yep you do seem ...
- Even when you are angry I love you
- It's okay to feel worried
- How you feel about ... matters to me
- Okay, tell me what you mean
- I did wonder if you were feeling ...
- Aaah that makes sense
- Ugggh that's tough
- Is it elephant size, dog size or fish size feeling?
- Do you just need some time or can I help you?
- I can see you are really ...
- Or simply a hug, hand on the shoulder, pat on the head

- Would you like to choose a song to play really loudly to help shift your anger, if you are ready for some happy vibes...
- Given we need to do ... (school work, brush teeth or whatever) how about you choose whether we do A or B ?

LATER share some wisdom about shifting stuck feelings...

- Let's go outside, nature can really help us relax.
- Have you got an idea how to problem solve this situation?
- What is your brain thinking now?
- Feel like a bubble bath to grow a relaxed feeling?!

Meltdowns

A big tip out of feelings in the "only" way we can in that moment

Misbehaviour versus stress behaviour?

After school meltdowns?

Why do meltdowns happen?

PHYSICAL

Crowd, noise, hungry, tired, unwell, sensory overload

EMOTION

Excited, scared, devices

COGNITIVE

Memory, worries

SOCIAL

Conflict with peers

PROSOCIAL

Dealing with other people's feelings

Too many extra-curricular activities?



Upstairs & Downstairs

Image: The Whole Brain Child
Daniel J. Siegel, Tina Payne Bryson

Connect & Redirect
(attunement)

Image: The Whole Brain Child
Daniel J. Siegel, Tina Payne Bryson





Example of mindfulness to try...

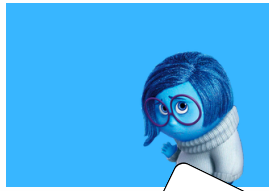
5 breath hug

5 senses check

Body scan x5



WHAT ZONE ARE YOU IN?



Low state of alertness

bored
tired
sad
disappointed
blah
sick
slow

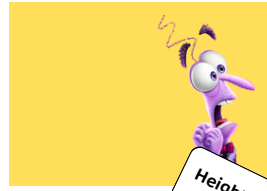
REST



Ideal state of alertness

happy
focused
grateful
proud
calm
relaxed
ready to learn

GO



Heightened state of alertness

excited
frustrated
annoyed
silly
worried
confused
nervous

SLOW



Extremely heightened state of alertness

upset
angry
rage
panicked
hyperactive
scared
out of control

STOP

↓ [DOWNLOAD](#)



Rituals

Comfort object

Music

Taming Tools

Code word

Task/job

Where's Wally? / Spot the Difference

Playdough/plasticine

Ice

Lightness/silliness

Feelings poster

Bath

Name it and rate it

Yoga

Singing/humming

Dancing



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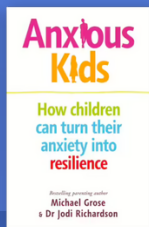
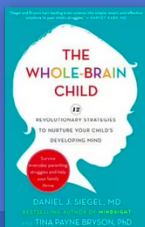
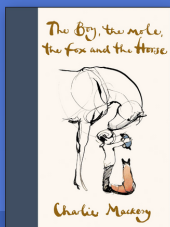
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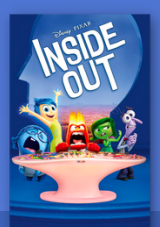
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