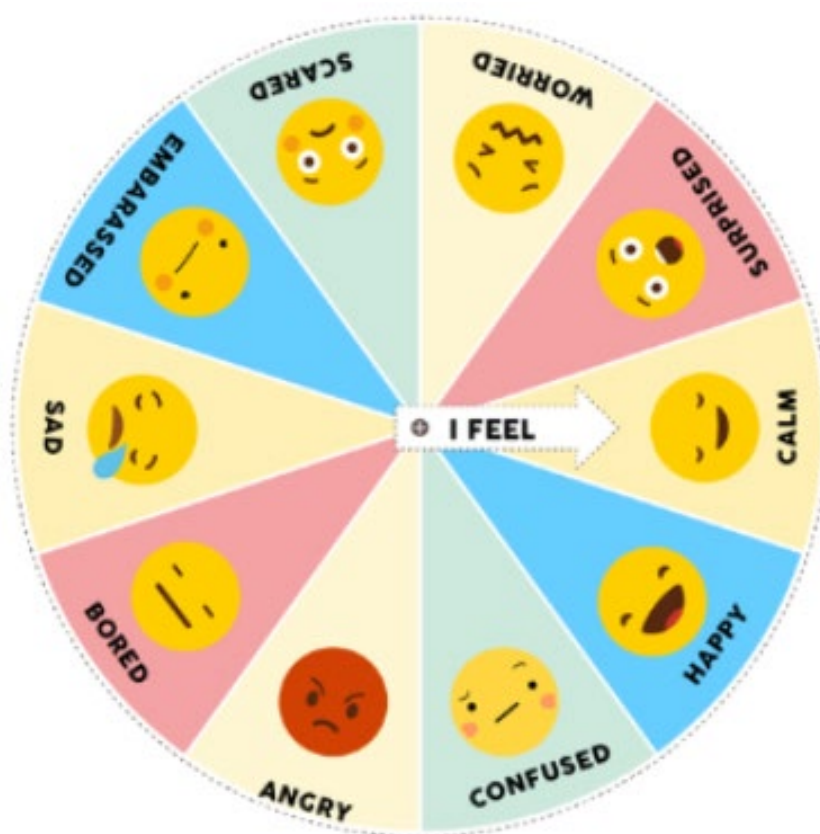


Managing emotions and feelings

Child Health Information patients and carers



Staff at the Child Development Centre made this booklet.

We hope it helps parents and carers support their children to manage their emotions.

We talked to the local parent carer forums. Parent Carers Together and Dorset Parent Carer Council.

To make sure this booklet includes helpful details and guidance for SEND families.

Terms and acronyms

This booklet may contain some unfamiliar words and terms.
We hope this list helps.

Neurodiverse children

Children whose brains develop and function differently from what is considered “typical”

ND

Neurodiverse

Stimming

Self-stimulating actions or repetitive movements.

For example:

- arm or hand flapping
 - rocking
 - jumping
 - spinning the body or objects
 - turning
 - repeating words or phrases
 - chewing objects
-

Self-regulation

Being able to understand and manage your own actions and reactions.

Resilience

Being able to face and recover quickly from difficulties. Being able to bounce back from difficult events

Co-regulation

A supportive and responsive exchange to help someone control their emotions. Provides comfort, guidance, and shows how to cope and behave

Emotional dysregulation

Trouble managing emotional responses.

This can be:

- strong emotional reactions
- trouble controlling impulses
- difficulty returning to a stable state after an emotional experience

Validate feelings - accept another person's emotions are valid, even if you don't personally agree with them or their reasons. It is possible to validate the feeling without agreeing with the action taken as a result.

**Not all of the details in this booklet may be relevant for your family.
However, we hope you find some of it helpful.**

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Why do we have emotions?

All emotions are normal and everyone has them.

Emotions help:

- alert us to danger
- keep us safe
- give us balance
- tell us what we think is important

Emotions are not “good” or “bad”.

They are signals and we can learn healthy ways to manage them.



It is natural to want to reduce a child's distress.

When they are upset you may want to say “You are ok”.

It is important to acknowledge how they are feeling in that moment.

Emotion regulation is how we manage and express our feelings.

Learning this skill helps us to:

- handle setbacks
- build resilience
- be able to bounce back
- cope with stress
- adapt to our surroundings
- adjust to the world around us
- talk about how we feel

ND children often need more support to learn this skill.

Recognise and manage emotions

ND children may express their emotions in different ways than people might expect.



For example, they might become really quiet then suddenly start shouting or crying.

They may not show feelings on their face. It is important to check in with them more often. You can find out how they are feeling.



They may show feelings which seem over or under responsive to an event. Their reaction may not appear to match the size of the problem.

ND children may have different reactions to others.

People may enjoy things that ND children are more bothered by.

People might stop ND children doing things that make them feel happy.



For example, people might tell an ND child something is 'fun'. But they are really feeling very anxious. This can make them confused about their feelings.

Understanding feelings

ND children find it harder to recognise and/or describe their feelings and emotions. It can also be harder for ND children to recognise other people's feelings.

We feel our emotions throughout the body. Some children find it harder to feel their senses inside the body. This makes it harder to recognise feelings. ND children can find it hard to sense these physical symptoms. This can make emotions confusing, unpredictable and scary.

ND children may not realise they are upset. They may become really upset, and not know why. This can feel confusing and scary.

For some ND children, feelings can be so big, they are overwhelming. For others they are so small they are hard to notice.

Noticing emotions and feelings

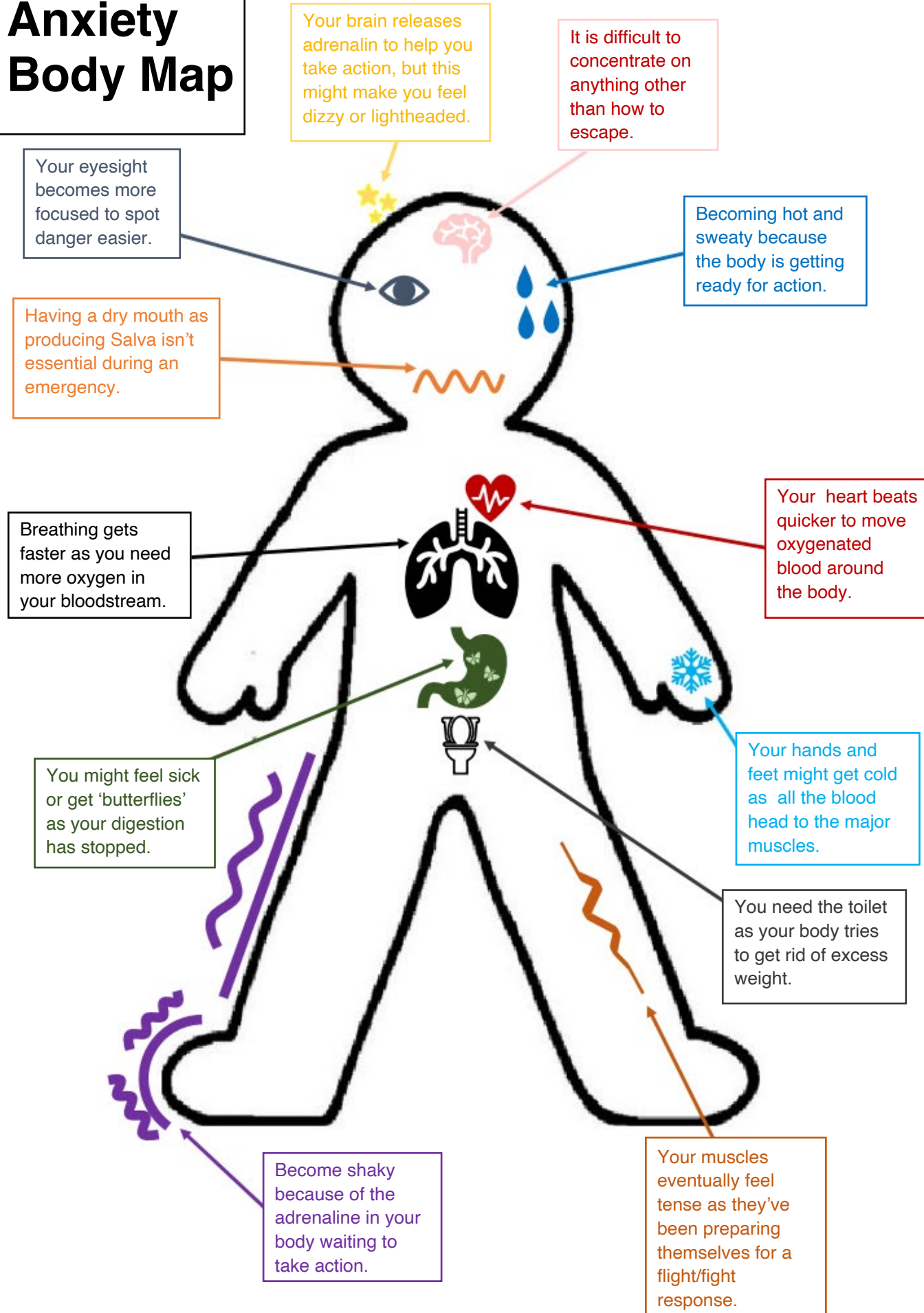
Making sense of our emotions is an important part of making decisions. When you cannot tell how you feel it can be hard to make choices.

A child may not be sure how or why they feel a certain way. They will then find it harder to do anything to feel better.

They will need support to recognise and act on their feelings. This can help them feel more in control of themselves.

For example:

Anxiety Body Map



HOW DOES WORRIED OR SCARED FEEL?



Some other words for feeling worried:

anxious
nervous
afraid
upset
fearful
scared
panicked
frightened
dread
terrified
horrified
petrified



You may experience some or all of these:



Clenched teeth / jaw



Wanting to cry



Feeling sick / like you might vomit



Wanting to **SCREAM!**



Needing the toilet a lot



Feeling hot / clammy / sweaty

Can't think straight / feeling dizzy



Eyes wide open



Heart beating faster



Feeling of butterflies in stomach or stomach ache



Clenched fists / tense muscles in body

Wanting to run away or avoid things



Feeling COLD



When we feel:

- anxious
- worried
- stressed
- overwhelmed
- annoyed
- angry

This can make us:

- have headaches
- feel light headed
- have 'butterflies'
- get tummy aches
- feel sick
- feel tired
- find it harder to concentrate
- find it harder to remember things

Triggers for emotions

ND children can react to different things which others might not. They can experience higher stress levels for many reasons and each child is different.

Some of triggers can include:

- being more sensitive to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, movement and balance
- a certain noise, word or action
- changes in routine
- communication difficulties
- difficulty processing information
- changing between tasks
- too many demands
- free time / lack of routine
- too many choices
- difficulties communicating with others
- lack of sleep
- too much instruction



Think about what triggers your child.

Look for clues and patterns to work out their triggers.

Name it to tame it

Putting words to feelings can help children work out what is happening. This allows them a chance to respond to what they are feeling.

Words used to describe feelings may differ. It is important to reach a shared understanding of what a word means. For example, to explain feelings like anger you could say “exploding like a volcano”.

Children can start learning about emotions by noticing what they see in daily life. To help them to start building this skill you can label what you see. For example, label the emotions of characters in programmes that you watch together.



“Piglet looks scared!”

“Shrek looks happy”



ND children need more support noticing and explaining their own feelings and emotions. It helps for others to notice, label and respond to their emotions.

You can help your child link what has happened to their feelings.

Practice noticing emotions with your child. This can help them learn to recognise the emotion. Together you can then name the feeling in the body.

Many ND children need more support to learn these skills.

ND children struggle to manage emotions when overwhelmed. This is known as emotional dysregulation.

How to start talking about emotions

You may not know how to start talking about emotions with your child.

Here are some ideas:

- talk about emotions in daily life
- read books where the author describes the character's feelings
- notice characters emotions in TV shows and films
- practice pulling faces and talking about feelings
- talk about how to recognise different feelings in your body
- describe how you are feeling and how you know this.

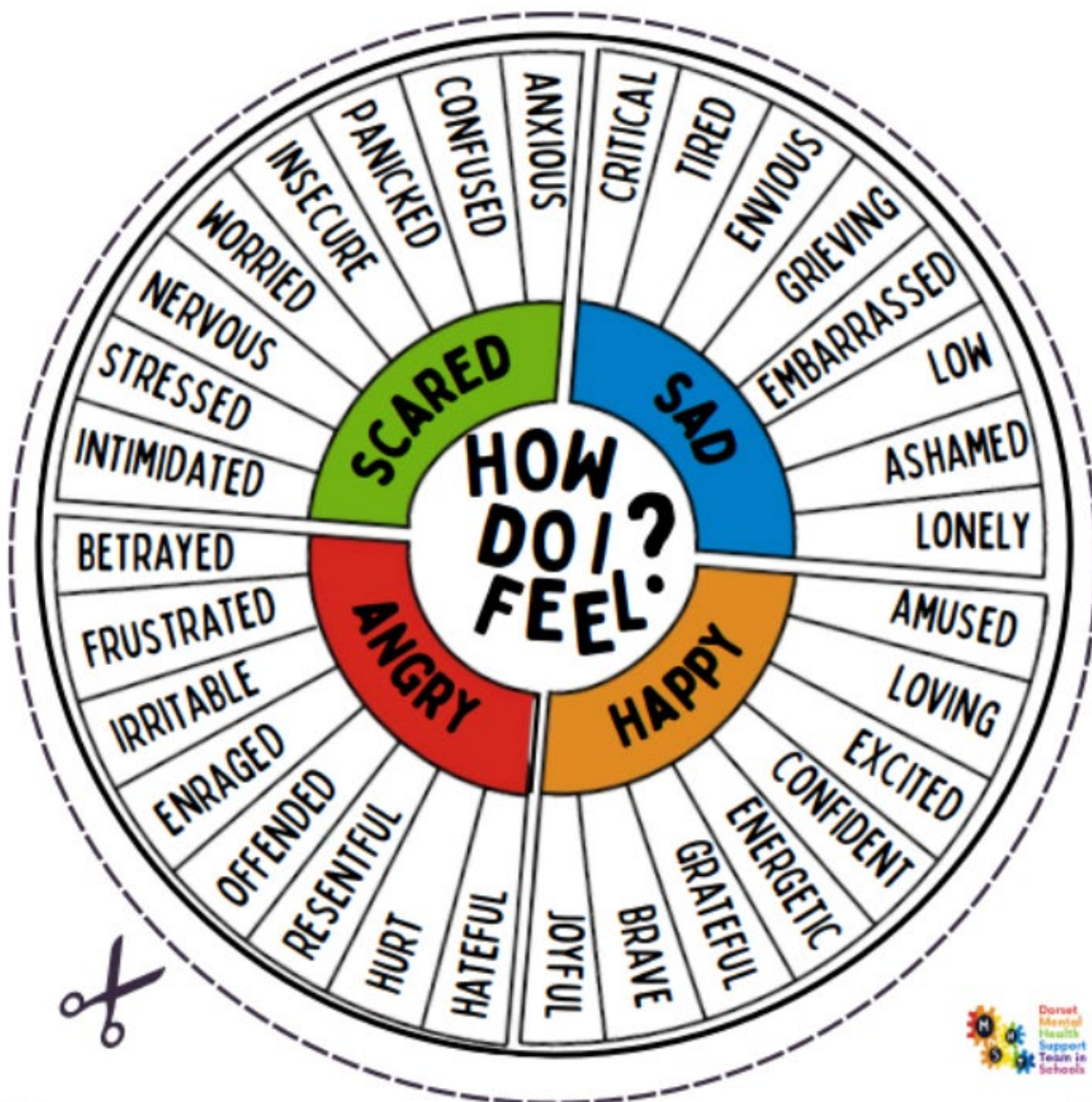
I can tell I'm getting cross. My body is feeling tense and my heart is beating faster

- notice the child's emotion and name it. Say what you see
- support them to share their feelings and validate their experiences
- look at a feelings wheel together



FEELINGS WHEEL

The Feelings Wheel is a powerful tool for understanding and expressing your emotions. Begin at the centre with a core emotion, then move outward to pinpoint a more specific feeling. For a hands-on approach, print out the wheel, cut out the arrow, and secure it in the centre with a butterfly pin. Spin the arrow to identify how you are feeling.



These are some of the ways you can talk about emotions with your child.

It can be helpful to:

- show how you manage your own emotions
- express them in a respectful way
- share how you cope with problems

For example:

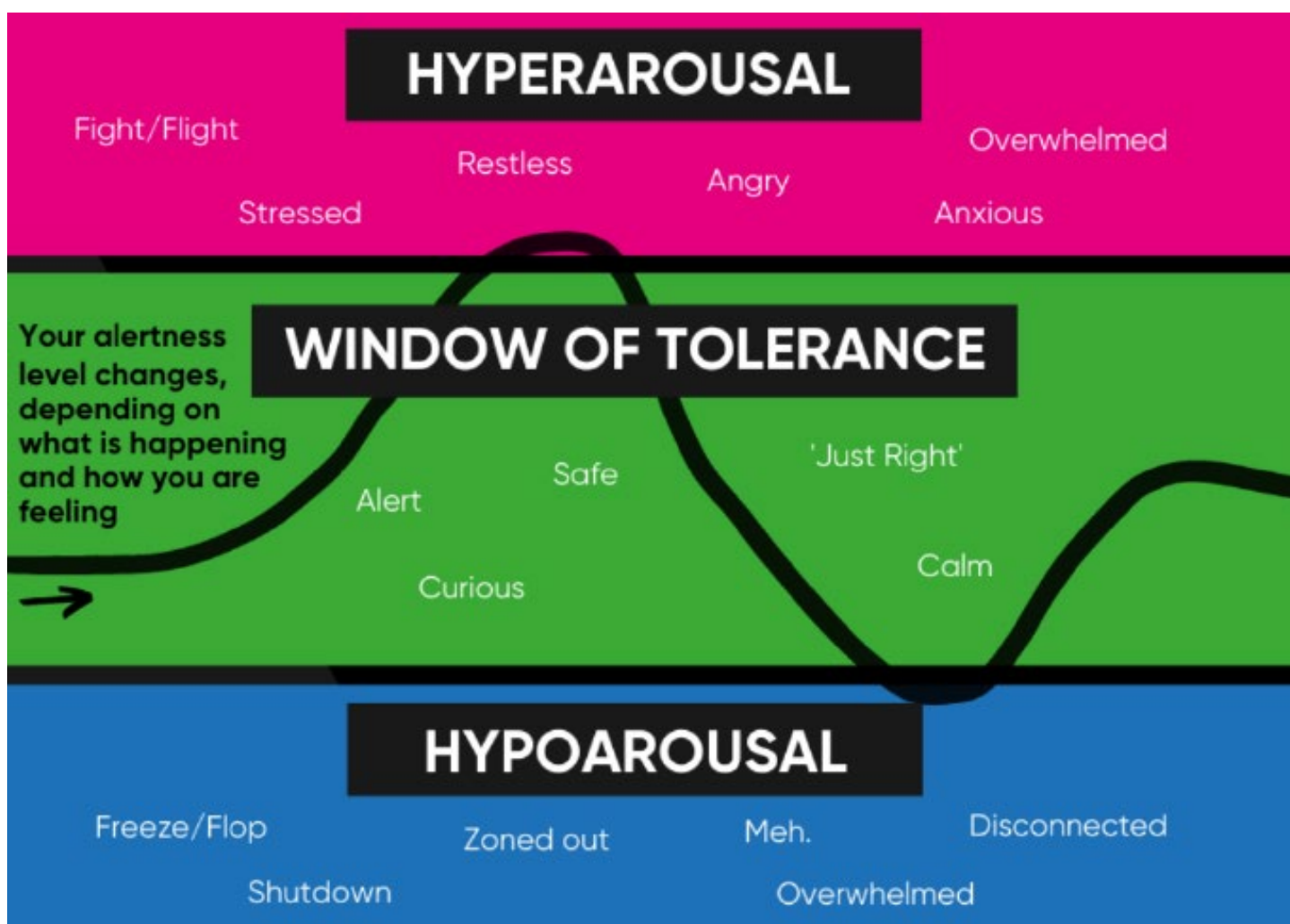
“I’m starting to feel a little bit sick and uncomfortable. I’m feeling stressed. I’m going to go for a walk as that calms me.”

Window of tolerance

The window of tolerance describes the “zone” where we feel:

- just right
- calm
- safe
- happy
- engaged
- alert
- focused
- productive

Many different triggers can push us out of this zone. This makes it harder for us to handle things.

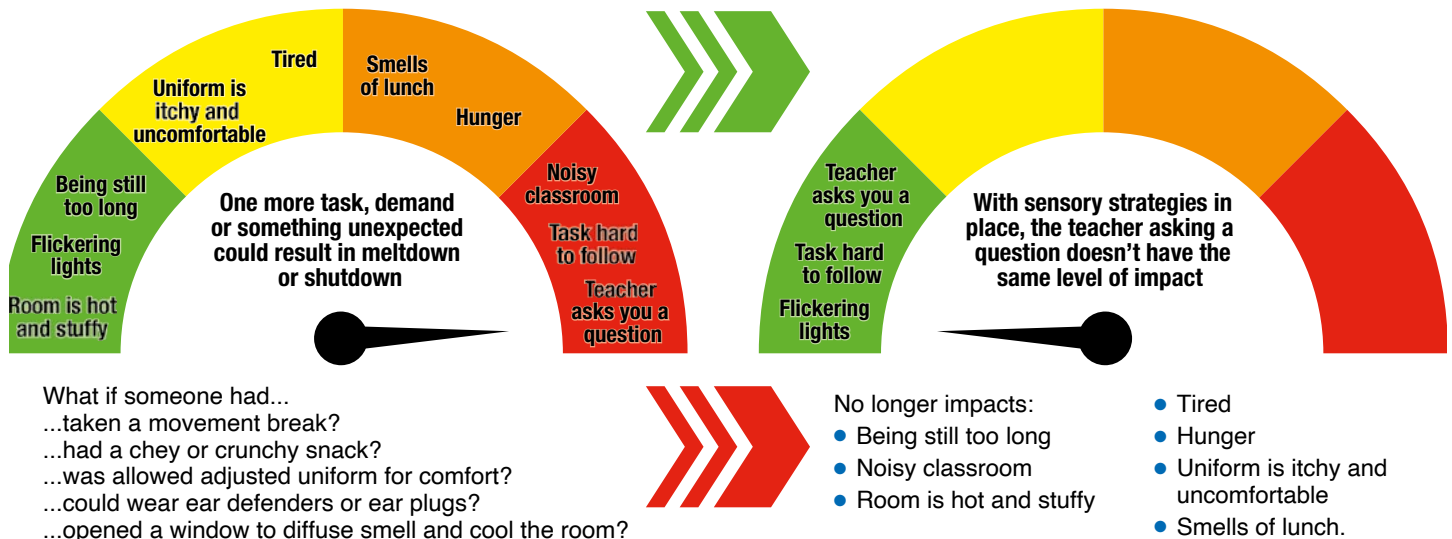


<https://autismunderstood.co.uk/health-and-wellbeing/window-of-tolerance>

A distressed child will need support to get back into their window of tolerance. The following picture shows sensory strategies. These strategies can help a child get back into their window of tolerance.

Sensory strategies make things better

Various factors can impact an individual's ability to do a given task. The particular combination that triggers sensory overload can differ depending on a variety of factors, such as time of day, season, tiredness, hunger, stress, anxiety, transitions or something unexpected happening. Simple reasonable adjustments can have a significant impact on capacity, ability, and enjoyment of required tasks.



These are the differences simple reasonable adjustments can make

Co-regulation

Co-regulation is helping to calm someone when they are feeling distressed.

Co-regulation is a warm, responsive, sensitive way to support your child through huge feelings. This helps them to calm their nervous system. It may take time and practice for your child to gain these skills.

This is an important part of helping ND children. Co-regulation helps them to recognise their own emotions and build their own self-regulation skills.

Parents or carers can help a child understand:

- what they are feeling
- different ways to respond to events

Most adults would not expect a baby to soothe itself alone. But, people expect older children to control their emotions. This is because they do more things by themselves in general.

It can be tricky for ND children to control their feelings and actions. This is because they sense their feelings in a different way.

Co-regulation can help a child:

- work out what they are feeling
- work out what to do about it

Co-Regulation Strategies



Stop and pause together

LISTEN.
LISTEN...

Actively listen



Use a calm voice

play

Find a way to play



Create a safe space



Soft touch or hugs



Get moving - walk, exercise, go outside

CONNECT

Foster positive connection



Problem solve together

KEEP
CALM

Model and share calm

JUST
breathe

Deep breathe

CHOICES

Give choices



Empathy, validate, or understand

Emily Scott, PhD -- @RenewedHopeParenting

What can you do?

Name it to tame it

Help your child recognise their emotion so they can work out what is happening. For example:

"I can see you are angry because your face is red. Your voice has become louder. Your fists are clenched and your body is tense."

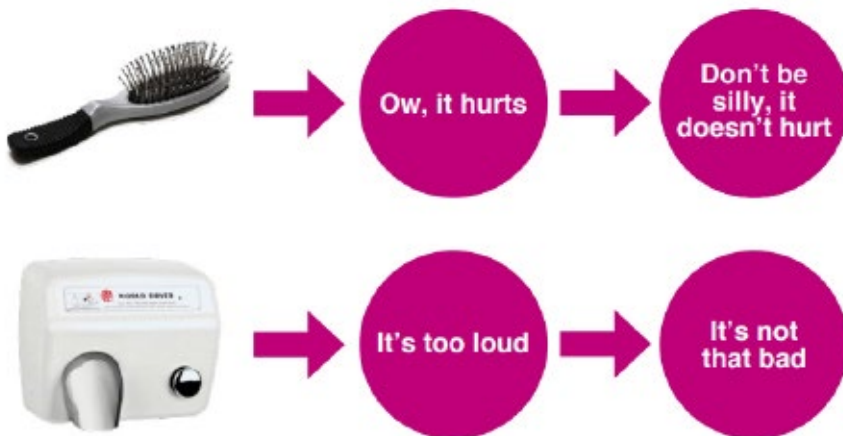
Validation

Some children have different sensory feelings. When this happens, other people's responses can be confusing.

For example:

A child may not like the texture of the food. They may be told "Stop being so fussy".

A child may hear the buzz of a light bulb. They may be told "Well I can't hear anything".



These responses do not make the problem go away for the child. They can lead to emotional outbursts, anxiety and masking.

You may not understand your child's feelings and experiences. It is still important to validate them.

Here's an example of sensory validation:



Name the emotion they are feeling. Tell them you understand why they are feeling it. Do not offer advice or solutions at this point.

For example:

Another child has taken their toy. Your child has become extremely upset.

Instead of saying:

“It’s Ok. Don’t worry. Play with something else...”

You could say:

“I can see you are feeling upset. I recognise you are sad because they took your toy.”

Your feelings are important too

When supporting your child, it’s important to notice your own feelings and emotions.

Children calm down quicker if the people around them appear calm. You can then support them to feel calmer.

You cannot co-regulate when you are feeling stressed or cross. Your child will pick up on this. This can lead to more anger and frustration in your child.

It is important to be within your own “window of tolerance”. You can then support your child back into theirs.



If you are not calm, it is hard for your child to calm down.

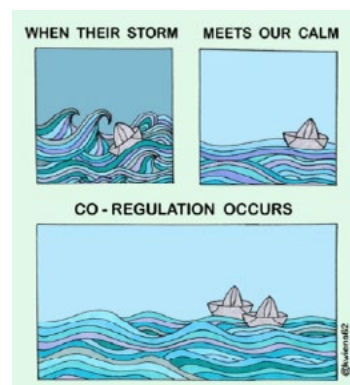
In these moments, it can be useful to

stop, think and choose.

Take some deep breaths for a few minutes.

This will help you feel calmer.

Now you can support your distressed child.

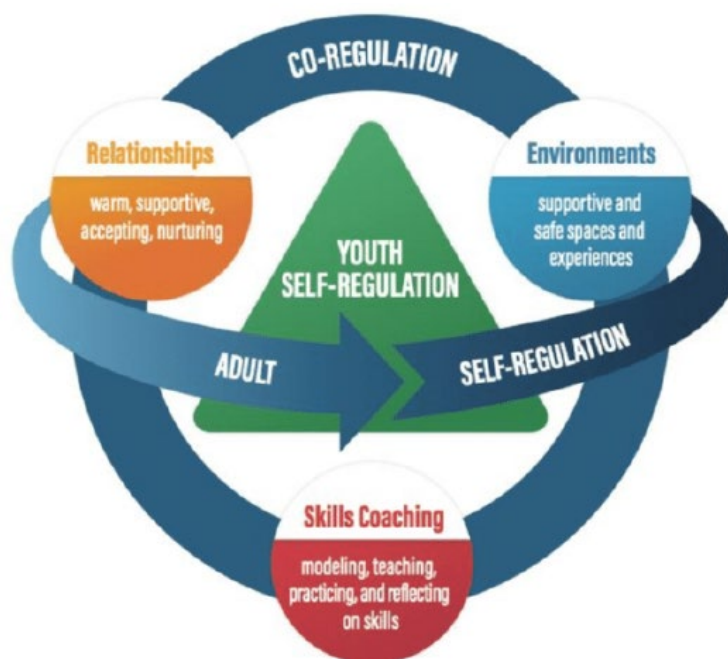


Many ND children need co-regulation for a longer time.

In time they can learn the skills to control their feelings and emotions.

When they have the skills
+ capacity to self-regulate,
they will.

Co-regulation ideas for young people:



Co-regulation ideas for younger children:



Ways to co-regulate with your child



Lower your body position



Lower your voice



Soften your facial expression



Model deep breathing



Do heavy work together



Walk outside



Offer deep pressure



Model a preferred sensory activity



Move your body together



Dim the lights



Stop talking



Change your proximity

Jake's Story



Here is a story about Jake who is 7 years old and autistic.

We will look at how Jake behaves after school and why.

We will look at ways his dad can support him.

This is one example and each child is different. Each child will experience and present in their own way.

Jake attends school full time and is collected by his Dad (Paul) every day after school.

Jake and Paul have a short 10 minute walk home to their house.

When Jake leaves the school, he is often quiet and reserved.

On the way home Paul asks Jake lots of questions about his day. Jake often becomes angry and frustrated when questioned.

When they return home Jake often goes straight to his bedroom. He changes into comfy clothes and plays on his iPad. Jake refuses to talk to his dad or engage with his family.

Paul asks Jake to stay downstairs and do his homework.

Jake shouts and throws things around. Jake says things like "I hate you" and cries.

Jake is reluctant to rejoin the family for any activities.

We will see how Paul can support Jake a little later.

What is going on?

Jake attends school full time.

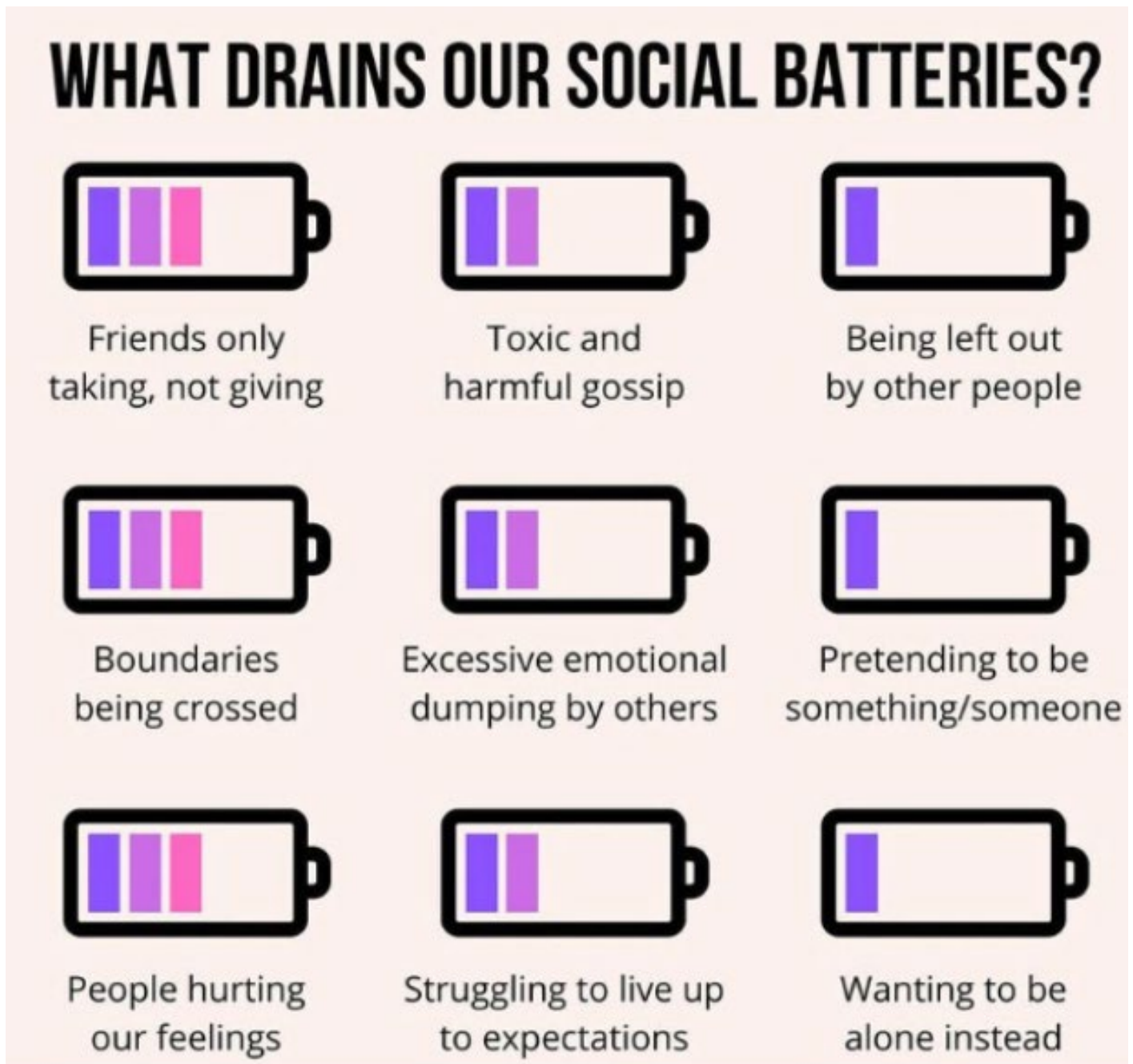
The school day can be a demanding place for ND children. They have many different things they need to manage.

For example:

- masking at school
- socialising
- sensory experience (lights, noises, textures, smells at school)
- remembering rules
- changes between classes
- organising themselves and their belongings
- homework

When Jake leaves school, he is often quiet and reserved.

The demands throughout the day leave Jake feeling burnt out. By the end of the day his social battery is almost empty.



Jake and Paul have a short 10-minute walk home to their house.

Walking helps Jake to feel more balanced through using movement. Walking is a good way to help Jake to wind down after school.

On the way home Paul asks Jake questions about his day. However, Jake often becomes angry and frustrated when questioned.

Asking Jake about his day puts more demands on him. Jake has to think, remember details, communicate with others and behave in a socially acceptable way.

It is natural to want to ask your child how their day has been. They may feel wound up, drained and tired straight after school. They may have been working hard to communicate and mix with lots of people all day.

When they return home Jake often goes straight to his bedroom, changes into comfy clothes.

Jake is addressing his sensory needs. He goes to his safe, quiet space. He changes into comfortable clothes.

Jake plays on his iPad. He does not want to join the rest of the family at home.

Jake prefers time alone, doing activities he enjoys. This helps him recover and recharge his battery. Jake is getting himself back into his window of tolerance. He does things he enjoys on his own. He is meeting his own sensory and emotional needs.

Making a support plan

Making a support plan with your child may help avoid a crisis.

Choose a time when your child is within their window of tolerance and feels calm and content.

Work together with your child.

Explain you want to come up with a plan together. To help them avoid getting so distressed in future.

Work together on how you can best support them. Talk about what you can do to help when they start to feel upset.

Make the plan specific to your child. Write down what they like, what helps them and their needs.

Here is an example of Jake's after school plan to help him regulate after a demanding school day:

- walk home from school
- Limited questions about the day
- Jake can choose not to talk on the walk home
- has a snack and a drink at home
- spends an agreed time alone in his room
- changes into comfy clothes
- agreed time on an iPad
- no demands for an agreed time, then low demands

It is important to work out regulation strategies that work for your child.

Here are some ideas:

- drawing or colouring
- watching videos
- playing on a phone or tablet
- bouncing on a trampoline
- climbing or balancing
- gaming
- time on a swing

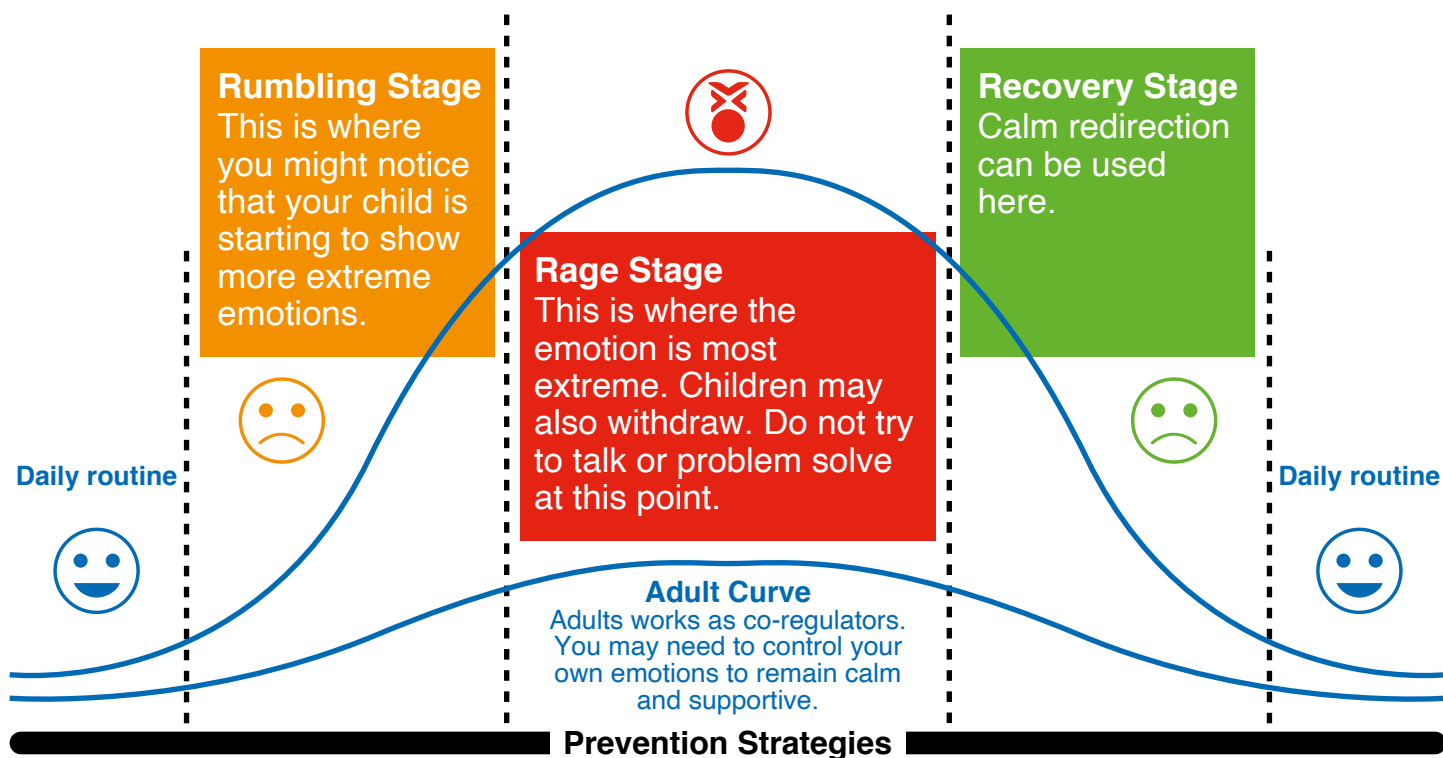
Explore different activities with your child.

Work out what helps them unwind or feel calmer and recharge their battery.

For ideas, see pages 29-32.

What to do when?

The three stages of the crisis curve



At each stage it is important to appear calm and avoid conflict.

1. Rumbling Stage

A child's emotions can seem to come out of nowhere.

Their emotions can appear to increase in a matter of seconds. Often their face does not show their emotions.

At this point:

- look for early warning signs
- remove or resolve the trigger
- offer help and support to unwind or reduce distress

This can help stop a child reaching a crisis.

ND children often come home from mainstream school feeling wound up / distressed.

What the rumbling stage can look like in your child:

- more stimming
- spending more time focused on their special interest
- making noises, sighing heavily
- being quieter and more withdrawn
- being more unsettled and fidgety
- pacing, sweating, uneven breathing
- clenched fists
- voice becoming louder

Jake's early warning signs:

- quiet and reserved
- becomes angry and frustrated when questioned

What to do: Follow the support plan you made together
(An example of Jake's after school support plan is on page 18.)

Here are some ideas to think about in this stage:

- appear calm
- connect
- be safe, soothing and supportive
- use a calm, level tone
- offer to help them
- give them personal space
- use calming strategies e.g. move them to a quiet, calm area
- increasing and/or decreasing sensory input - is it too loud and noisy
- remove or resolve the trigger
- seek to distract or divert their attention
- avoid asking questions and making any demands
- remove expectations and demands

To help your child avoid reaching the crisis stage:

- notice their early warning signs
- know their triggers
- work out what helps them unwind or feel calm

2. Crisis Stage

At this stage a child is in a state of fight, flight or freeze.

They act irrationally and do not have full control over their actions.

They are unable to think clearly or listen to reason.

Do not try to talk or problem solve at this point.

What this can look like:

Jake's crisis signs:

- shouts and throws things around his room
- says things like "I hate you"
- cries

ND children find it difficult to manage big emotions and need co-regulation to calm down.

What to do:

- appear calm
- be safe, soothing and supportive
- avoid direct eye contact and do not stare

- use as few words as possible
- keep your voice low and slow
- say short instructions calmly
- slow your movement down and be as predictable as possible
 - fast or sudden movements can feel threatening
 - do not move towards them without warning
- guide them to a quieter place or remove other people.
 - making a distressed child move can make them more upset
- remove or resolve triggers.
 - turn lights down or off, reduce noise and sounds
- think about your body language and position
 - a distressed child needs more personal space.
 - you may want to offer a hug or comforting touch.
 - being too close to them or touching them can feel threatening.

Other things to consider:

- keep your child safe
 - remove any danger if they are trying to hurt themselves
 - redirect them to reduce injury
 - a child is punching a wall. Put a pillow in between their hand and the wall.
- be willing to bend the rules
 - you may not normally tolerate swearing.
 - do not comment on this now. It will make them feel more overwhelmed and stressed.
- focus on helping them become calm as quickly as possible
- do not make demands
- do not talk about their actions
- do not try to reason with them
- do not add any further demands
- do not punish them for their actions during the crisis. They do not have full control of their words or actions
- do not take it personally

How Dad can support Jake in the crisis stage:

- appear calm
- stop talking / do not make demands
- co-regulate with Jake until he is feeling calmer
- guide Jake to his safe space
- dim the lighting
- offer things which give Jake comfort such as a soft toy or blanket

3. Recovery Stage

It takes a long time for the body to calm down after a crisis.

It takes at least 45 minutes from crisis to reach a calm/relaxed state.

This can take up to 90 minutes. It often takes much longer.

During this stage a child can easily become triggered again.

Big feelings and losing control can be frightening and draining.

Support your child back to feeling calm.

What to do:

- appear calm
- be safe, soothing and supportive
- reassure them they are not in trouble
- check their physical and emotional wellbeing
- make sure they do not feel threatened or challenged.
- be calm and slow and explain what you are doing.
- give them more personal space
- make no demands
- move them to a safe/quiet space to recover in
- engage them in special interests or a pastime they find calming
- let them to be around people that make them feel safe
- offer sensory objects
- play calming music
- give plenty of time to recover

Some children need to do something physical to burn off the extra energy.

Some children prefer to use breathing techniques to calm their body and mind.

Use the strategies that work for your child.

How dad can support Jake to recover:

- stay calm
- reduce language
- guide Jake to his room
- help Jake engage in a preferred pastime
- offer comforting things such as a blanket or soft toy
- offer reassurance

What to do next:

Thinking about your child

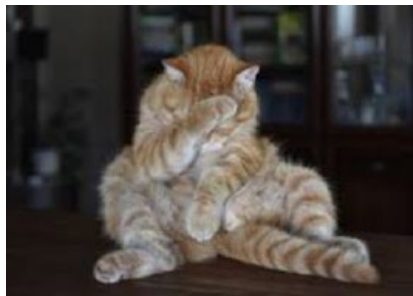
Your child may feel shame and guilt.
They may feel embarrassed.

Do not add to their guilt.
Do not try to tell them that hitting people is wrong.

They may feel angry or bitter about what happened.

Let them know you love them.

Tell them you will come up with a way to make things better together.



You may want to talk about what happened.
This can add to the guilt a child is feeling at this time.
Now is the time to let the child know they are not in trouble.
Tell them it can be tricky to manage emotions all the time.
Tell them that together you will help them learn to do this.

This is something to work on when the child is feeling settled and content.
It is best to talk about what happened in a few days or weeks.
This gives your child time to process what happened.
Wait until they feel ready to talk about it.

It is important to repair your bond and reconnect with your child.
To repair your connection after a crisis, do something together your child enjoys.
You could play a game, go for a walk or watch a film together.

Here are some ideas to think about when talking about a crisis.

- ask them what happened
- offer reassurance
- ask how they feel about it
- listen to learn their experience
- repeat back to them what you have heard
- summarise their feelings and actions to show you see their views
- talk about what other actions you could both choose in the future. For example, move away from the trigger
- it is better if your child thinks about this with you. Instead of you telling them what to do in future
- lower your demands and hopes
- think about making a support plan together



Thinking about you

It is also important for you to think about what happened. Do this away from your child, with someone you can talk to. It is natural to experience negative emotions after dealing with a traumatic event.

Think about who you might be able to talk to.

Think about different self-care strategies you can do for yourself.

This might look like:

- going for a walk
- listen to a podcast
- listen to music
- phoning a friend
- making a cup of tea
- watching a favourite movie
- doing a puzzle
- doing some stretches



Thinking about Jake's story, can you think of ways to support your child?

Strategies to help control emotions

Children need to learn coping skills. These help them manage their feelings and emotions in safe, healthy ways.

There is not a one size fits all. Not all coping skills will work all the time.

ND children experience the world in a different way. Explore what helps your child.

5 Point Scale

The 5 point scale can help young people recognise emotions. It can help them find ways to help control feelings.

Fill this in with your young person, when they are feeling ok.

They may struggle to tell you what they feel. You can help them by saying what you notice or see.

Find coping skills together. Find a few things you can try for each number. Not all coping skills may work all the time.

ND children may struggle to recognise and tell us about their feelings. They may rely on the adults around them. Adults can intervene with a coping skill.

You can use the 5 point scale for different emotions:

- anger
- worry
- anxiety

For example: **Anger**

5 This can make me lose control

4 This can really upset me

3 This bothers me

2 This sometimes bothers me

1 This never bothers me

Here is an example of a Tolerance Scale.

It is important to make this specific to your child.

- what it looks like and feels like for them
- what strategies help them cope at each stage

Name..... My.....scale

Rating	Looks/sounds like	Feels like	I can try to
5	Shouting/swearing, Hitting/throwing/biting, Running away / hiding	I am ready to EXPLODE! I am not listening anymore	Go to my safe space, Punch a cushion, Go for a walk or run Do 20 star jumps
4	Loud voice / disengaged / <u>stimming</u>	I am upset/mad Everything is too hard	Take 5 deep breaths Count to a certain number Ask for a break Go for a walk Squeeze my hands Close my mouth and hum
3	I sigh loudly / growl / make noises / showing signs of stress	I am frustrated I am not getting it	Let someone know I need help Get a drink of water Move away from the trigger Take 4 or 5 deep breaths Write or draw about it
2	I still look normal	I am anxious Having a hard time staying on task	Stretch Listen to music Doodle or colouring in Think of my favourite things Play with my squishy
1	I look normal	I am OK	Enjoy and have fun Ready and willing to learn

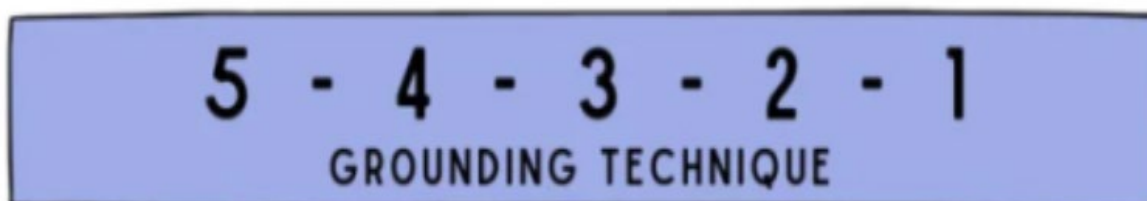
Practice these coping skills with your child when they are feeling ok.
This means they are more able to use them in times of distress.

Grounding techniques

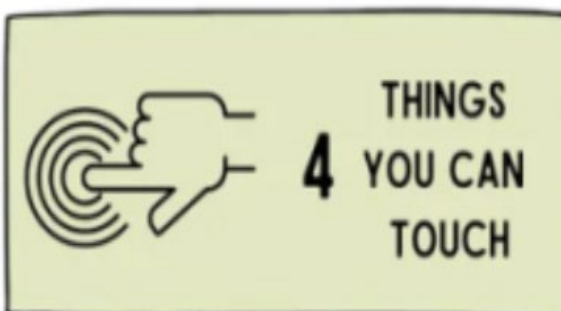
These techniques help you focus on your surroundings. It can help children who enjoy sorting or arranging things.

- sort Lego or pencils into colours
- count all the square or green objects in the room
- alphabet game. Name something for every letter of the alphabet within any group. This could be animals, people's names, foods etc.
- '54321' technique is a really helpful technique. See diagram below for how to use this technique

Lindner Center
of HOPE | UCR Health.



A calming technique that connects you with the present by exploring the five senses.



Distraction techniques focus on **special interests** or playful and fun pastimes.

Distractions are not a reward for negative actions. They are a support tool to help avoid a crisis.

Distractions help children to take a break when thoughts and feelings get too much.

Distractions help them get back on track by focusing on something else.

ND children often have special interests. These can be a source of enjoyment. They can help children unwind. They offer a way of coping with stress.

ND children may prefer to avoid mixing with others. Let them to do their chosen pastime on their own if they want to.

Offer / let them:

- watch a video, listen or dance to a favourite song
- play a game together like noughts and crosses or dot to dot
- build Lego or K'Nex
- colouring or drawing

Movement techniques focus on simple ways to release energy. Some children need ways to get rid of excess energy safely. For some ND children, stimming helps them to regulate, express and deal with emotions.

Small body movements:

- Flexing and pointing feet
- Rolling your shoulders
- Squeezing play dough or silly putty
- Giving themselves a big squeeze or hug

Big body movements:

- Pacing / walking
- Bouncing (gym ball or trampoline)
- Running or jumping
- Climbing or swinging



Sensory techniques focus on using a child's senses to help them control their emotions.

Offer sensory strategies according to what your child likes and enjoys.

For example:

- swinging or rocking or stretching
- balance on one leg, crab walk
- weighted items (e.g. weighted blanket)
- Fidget toys or squeeze ball or play dough
- exercise balls (to bounce on) / trampoline
- jumping up and down
- massage
- different calming smells e.g. lavender
- squeeze hugs

- eat a mint or sour sweet or something chewy
- holding an ice cube in one hand
- sipping cold water
- rip paper
- pop bubble wrap
- scribble on paper and crumple it up
- watch a lava lamp, fish in a tank
- listen to sounds like ocean waves, birds chirping or favourite music
- create a Feel-Good Box (see separate guide)

For more details please see the below websites

www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets/childrens-therapy

(See Sensory section)

<https://autismunderstood.co.uk/autistic-differences/being-sensory-smart-in-more-detail>

Relaxing focuses on calming interests to help a child relax their mind and body. Some children do not enjoy breathing techniques. Try bubble blowing, ball blower toys or whistles.



Square Breathing and 5 Finger Breathing:



Belly Breathing

- put one hand on your chest and one just above your belly button
- take a deep breath in
- fill your belly like you are inflating a balloon
- count 1, 2, 3, 4 whilst breathing in
fill the balloon in your belly
the hand above your belly button should move out
- pause
- then breathe out.
- count 1, 2, 3, 4, whilst breathing out



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Sit on a chair or lie on the floor / bed
- tense your muscles in your toes by curling them for 5 seconds as you breathe in
- slowly release the muscles in your toes as you breathe out
- then move on to your calves. Tense your calf muscles for 5 seconds as you breathe in
- slowly release the muscles as you breathe out
- squeeze your legs together and tense your thigh muscles as you breathe in
- slowly release the muscles in your thighs as you breathe out
- work your way up your body to your neck and head. Breathing in as you tense your muscles and breathing out as you release

This practice can be helpful for preparing the body for sleep.

To watch/listen to a video on Progressive Muscle Relaxation please see the link below:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjO3ws6TVtI

Resources and websites

Name _____

Date _____

When I'm dysregulated I struggle with:

- ☐ Following instructions ☐ Listening ☐ Controlling my impulses
- ☐ Doing work ☐ Focusing ☐ Making safe choices ☐ Problem solving
- ☐ Remembering rules ☐ Managing big feelings ☐ Logic and reasoning
- ☐ Knowing what my body needs ☐ Hard things ☐ Understanding
- ☐ Adjusting my volume ☐ Personal space ☐ Expressing myself

Triggers for dysregulation _____

Signs that I'm dysregulated _____

Things that don't help _____

Coregulation Plan

1. Remind yourself: this isn't the time for conversation or logic.

2. Reduce demands

Reduce/increase sensory input -/+

- ☐ Sound ☐ Lights ☐ Taste ☐ Scent ☐ Movement ☐ Touch
- ☐ Deep pressure ☐ Rough play ☐ Temperature
- ☐ Music ☐ Food/drink ☐ Water play

Supports

- ☐ Comfort items ☐ Deep interests ☐ Silly play ☐ Outside ☐ Creative time
- ☐ Time alone ☐ Social connection ☐ Change of scene ☐ Stimming
- ☐ Construction ☐ Screens ☐ Books ☐ Fresh air ☐ Swings ☐ Safe adult



Name: _____ My _____ Scale

Rating	Looks/Sounds Like	Feels Like	I can try to
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

Overwhelmed

How I feel



What I can do

When I am completely overwhelmed there are only a few things I can manage. I just need to take time to calm down. I can try:

Remember to try these things BEFORE I get too overwhelmed. When I notice my warning signs I can try:

These activities and skills can help me to feel calmer and more relaxed in general. They are good for my physical and mental health and I should try and do them regularly.

Relaxed

YouTube links to children's breathing exercises:

- Balloon Breaths [hwww.youtube.com/watch?v=2PcCmxEW5WA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PcCmxEW5WA)
- 4-7-8 Calm Breathing Exercise www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmBYdfv5RSk
- Belly breathe with Elmo www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpyIA

Co-regulation information:

- <https://reframingautism.org.au/emotional-regulation-part-two-using-co-regulation-to-teach-emotional-regulation>
- <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/co-regulation-the-bridge-to-self-regulation>
- www.spectrumgaming.net/post/the-importance-of-co-regulation-and-self-care
- www.famly.co/blog/co-regulation-children-emotional-development

Emotion regulation:

- <https://youtu.be/7KJa32r07xk>
- CAMHS Dorset <https://camhsdorset.org/young-people/feelings-and-emotionst>
- www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/mental-health-first-aid-kit
- <https://mindmate.org.uk/neurodiversity-information-hub/neurodiversity-characteristics/emotions-nd>

Emotional wellbeing resources:

- www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/anger/#Supportingyourchildoryoungpersontomanageangerpositively
- Dorset Mental Health in Schools Teams: [@dorsetmhst](#) on instagram have a huge variety of wellbeing resources
- Dorset CAMHS have a variety of resources to support emotional wellbeing: <https://camhsdorset.org>
- Dorset Youth have information, resources and signposting services for young people, families and professionals: <https://dorsetyouth.com>
- How to make a calm down box - www.childsavers.org/calm-down-box



Disney Pixar Inside Out

11 year old Riley moves to a new city. Emotions team up to help her with the move. Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness work together.

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or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

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