

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS

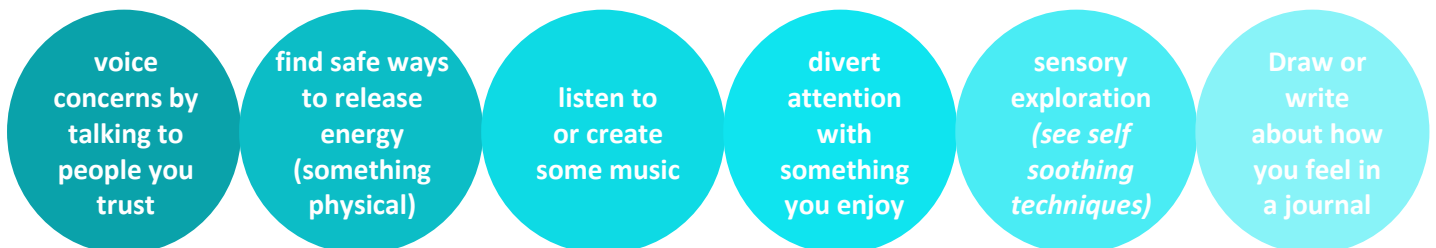
It is normal for children to experience periods of **SADNESS**, **ANGER**, **CRYING**, **OUTBURSTS**, **ANXIETY** or **BOREDOM**. The most important role of the parent is to **understand/accept these reactions as normal** & share your acceptance with your child. Remember your child is working through grief and growing up. If troublesome behaviours do not improve over time get professional support & advice.

Heightened emotions/behaviours like anger/aggression tend to emerge out of **POWERLESSNESS**. The source of this powerlessness is from **HURT**, **LOSS** or **FEAR** of hurt/loss. Helping a child to **FEEL** this emotions through positive experiences of expression can lead to **RELIEF** & **HEALING**. Unfortunately if feelings are expressed negatively with the result of **ABUSE** the cycle of behaviours will continue & possibly get worse. The key is to encourage children to **THINK** as well as feel - to **EMPOWER** them to strategise & plan to change the situation. **CHANGE** = **POWER** + **HOPE**

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD HAS OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS

1. Listen... Then reassure the child is both safe & loved
2. Track back to identify the source of the hurt or loss
3. Develop a strategy for change: include safe outlets for expression & self soothing tools
4. Set boundaries/consequences & work together on goals/aims for the future

SAFE WAYS TO EXPRESS



4 QUICK & EASY SELF SOOTHING TECHNIQUES

1. List 10 things you can hear, smell or see (you could also list streets near you live, favourite animals, countries, etc)
2. Calm your breath by breathing in for 3 counts, holding for 3 counts, breathing out for 3 counts (repeat 5 times)
3. Sensory exploration (blowing bubbles/balloons, stamp on bubble wrap, poke/punch clay, play with slime)
4. Listen to a instrumental song or nature sounds & focus your thought on identifying all of the individual sounds

IDENTIFY HOW YOU FEEL WITH A BODY BAROMETER

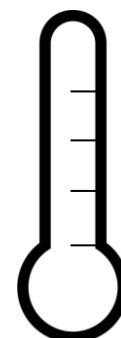
Where on your body changes when you feel different emotions?

colour or draw where/how the emotions are felt



PROMPTS TO CONSIDER

- * Heartbeat * Breathing
- * Temperature * Head
- * Jaw * Gut * Chest
- * Hands/Fists * Sweat
- * Expression (eg. frowning or crying)
- * Legs/Feet/Knees * Shoulders
- * Neck * Voice/Mouth



What colours do you associate with your changing mood?

colour association with intensity of felt emotion or with preferred emotion to least favourite emotion

WHAT KIDS MAY EXPERIENCE WHEN DEALING WITH CHANGE

TURNING OFF THE WORLD: *withdrawing from family/friends/activities, loss of concentration, different eating/sleeping patterns*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- respect their privacy & space
- negotiate an agreement of how much contact is needed
- let them know its okay to refuse your invitations
- continue making offers of contact (no matter how small)
- don't be put off by refusals/rudeness, let them know you will keep reaching out
- accept the way they feel about the situation

HITTING OUT: *quick to lose temper, increase in aggression, argumentative, destructive*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- acknowledge the situation is unfair, let them know it is okay to feel scared
- encourage them to find a safe space
- respond to vulnerability, fear & hurt behind anger
- be firm & clear about unacceptable behaviour & consequences
- offer as many control/choices as possible, involve them in shifting their life

Kids may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Ahakoia wareware te tamaiti i te kōrero, ka kore e wareware i tōu āhua ki a ia.

Children experience a different physical reaction to different emotions.

He rerekē ngā turupana-ā-tinana ki ngā kare-ā-roto rerekē.

DEEP SADNESS: *easily moved to tears, fixation on how things used to be, grief extended over a long period of time*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- let them know its okay to be sad/grieve & find an outlet for them
- take their grief seriously - don't belittle it, or try to "jolly them out of it"
 - explain your experience of grief
 - offer them comfort

HEIGHTENED ANXIETY: *overwhelmingly worried, nervousness, concerns about future, lack of self control, increasingly dependant*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- Acknowledge fear & anxiety, reassure their safety
- Respond to vulnerability rather than demanding behaviours
 - Spell out your commitment to them & honour it
- Tell them you love them (give examples of what you value about them)
- keep in touch with details in their life (friends, big events, favourite things)
 - ask/help them to identify triggers & develop self soothing techniques
- encourage ongoing use of self soothing exercises for emotional regulation

Choose to hug, not to hit.

Kōwhiria te awhiawhi hei aha te patupatu.

WHAT TO AVOID

- denying/ignoring/not allowing anger
- giving in to demands
- bribes
- no set limits
- hitting (doesn't teach how to behave just teaches how to hit)
- reacting with anger

At the end of the day all you can do is **listen**, keep your child **safe**, keep them aware of the **consequences** of their behaviours & offer to help work out **copng** mechanisms. Be alert for signs of depression & **remember to ask for help**.