



Mind Over Magic: Self Regulation Strategies

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Objectives



- Understand emotions, emotional regulation, and emotional dysregulation.
- Learn emotional-regulation strategies to support your child.



How many of these Emotions Did you Experience this Morning?



What are Emotions?



Emotions are conscious mental reactions (such as anger or fear) experienced as strong feelings usually directed toward a specific stimulus and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body

(American Psychological Society, 2024).



Emotions are complex psychological states that involve three distinct components:



- Subjective (Individual) experience
- Physiological response (felt in the body)
- Behavioral or expressive response



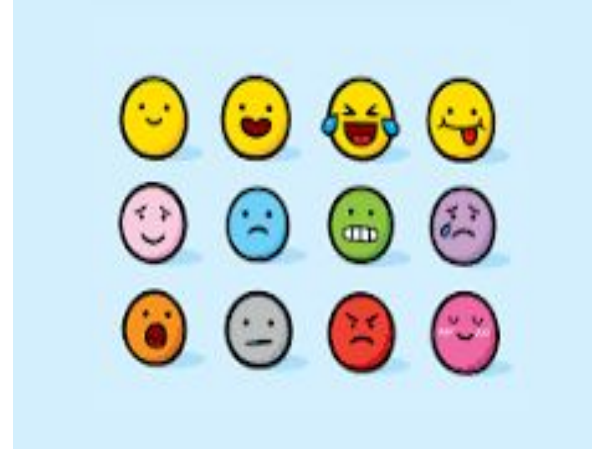
(Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2007)

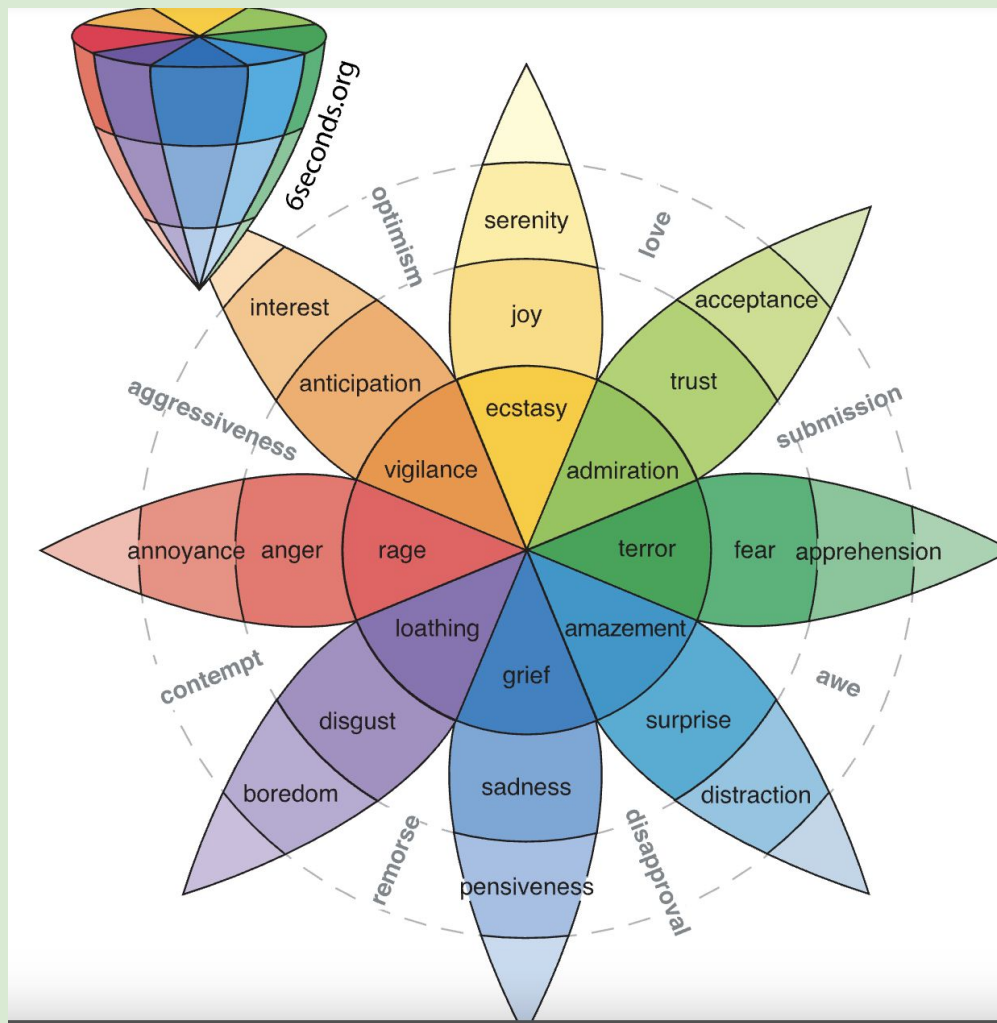


Types of Emotions

- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Disgust
- Surprise
- Anticipation
- Trust
- Joy

(Plutchik, 1982)





Emotional Regulation



- The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior

(Dawson & Guare, 2009; McCloskey et al., 2009).

- These skills can be taught!



Emotional Regulation



- Ability to:
 - inhibit inappropriate behavior related to strong negative or positive emotion;
 - self-soothe and down-regulate physiological arousal related to the above;
 - refocus attention from the emotionally provocative events;
 - to organize emotions for coordinated action in the service of goals and long-term welfare (Barkley, 2022).

Emotional Dysregulation



- The inability to regulate emotions is a core challenge for children with a range of disabilities.
- These children experience “big” feelings, both positive and negative.
- Strength of the reaction to a stimulus appears “out-of-sync” with the nature of the stimulus.

Emotional Dysregulation

- Very little cognitive space between onset of emotion and subsequent behavior.
- Difficulty “calming down” after an emotional reaction.



Signs of Emotion Dysregulation in ADHD

Emotional sensitivity



Heightened reactivity to both positive and negative stimuli, leading to intense emotional experiences

Difficulty self-regulating primary emotional responses



Struggles with managing initial, impulsive emotional reactions, often resulting in outbursts

Difficulties self-soothing



Challenges in calming down after experiencing intense emotions, prolonging emotional distress

Difficulty regulating secondary emotions



Struggles with prioritizing and expressing appropriate emotional responses following the initial reaction

Problems refocusing attention away from strong emotions



Difficulty shifting focus from intense emotions to other tasks, leading to emotional perseveration

Emotional detachment



Withdrawing emotionally as a coping mechanism to minimize exposure to triggering situations

Poor Inhibition

Emotional Impulsivity
Intense behavioral response
Quick temper
Low frustration tolerance

Poor Cognitive Shift

Rumination
Trouble calming down
Extremely sensitive to rejection .

**Poor Working
Memory**

Knee-jerk defense
Cant tolerate feedback
Struggle to use coping strategies



How Can We Provide Support?

Managing Emotion Dysregulation in ADHD

Label the emotion



Identify and name the specific emotion you're experiencing.

Learn your triggers



Pay attention to situations or events that tend to trigger strong emotional responses.

Allow the emotion



Acknowledge your feelings rather than suppressing or over-identifying with them.

Listen to your body



Use relaxation techniques to alleviate physical responses and reduce emotional intensity.

Reframe the situation



Consider alternative viewpoints or interpretations that may reduce the emotional impact.

Practice mindfulness



Engage in techniques to stay present and regulate your emotions with a non-judgmental awareness.

Redirect attention



Engage in activities that divert your focus from overwhelming emotions, such as hobbies, or a change of scenery.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle



Prioritize sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Find activities you enjoy and make them a part of your routine.

Emotional Regulation Strategies

- Teach Emotional Intelligence:
 - Help children identify, label, and describe their emotions.
- Teach specific emotional regulation strategies:
 - Breathing Techniques
 - Mindfulness Activities
- Provide children with environmental and academic supports.
- Support children through Coregulation.

Emotional Intelligence

- It is important for children to understand and accept that they will feel a wide range of emotions.
- Teachers and parents can help children develop their emotive vocabulary and the physical elements of emotions.
- Discuss emotions related to different personal events or story events.
- Use visuals to prompt discussions and enable the child to identify their own emotions.
- Draw, journal, sing about emotions.

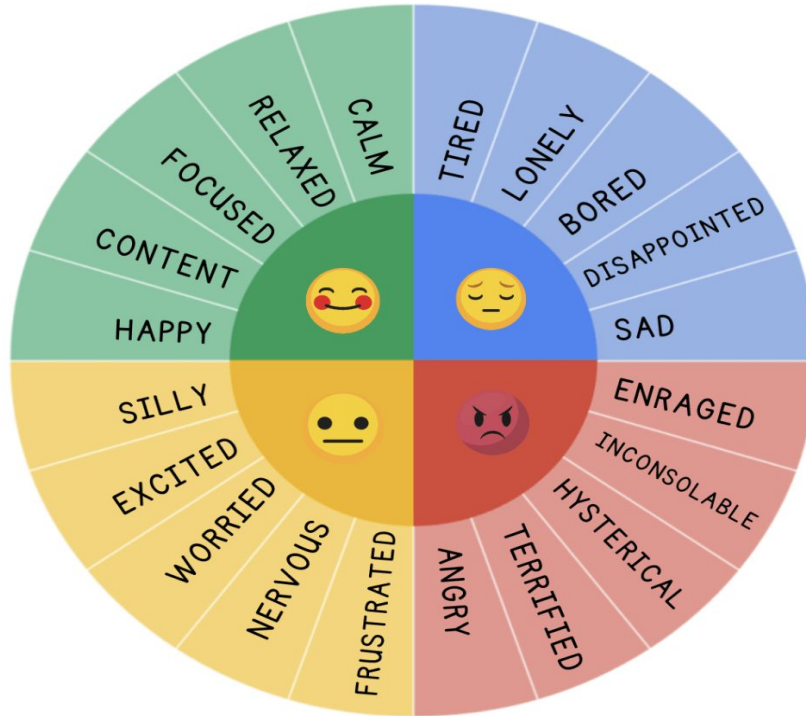
Emotional Intelligence: Visuals



Emotional Intelligence: Visuals



Emotional Intelligence: Visuals



Emotional Intelligence: Visuals



Emotional Regulation Strategies

- Breathing Techniques
- Mindfulness Activities;
 - Grounding Techniques
 - Body Scans
 - Games



Breathing Techniques

- Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body's "rest and digest" activities (in contrast to the sympathetic nervous system, which regulates many of our "fight or flight" responses).
- Allows space for rational thought to engage in a "top down" rationale response as opposed to a "bottom up" emotional response.



Breathing Techniques

- Changing the rhythm of your breath can signal relaxation.
- Can slow your heart rate and stimulate the vagus nerve.



Breathing Techniques

- [Flower and Candle Breathing](#)
- [4-7-8 Breathe](#)
- [Breathing Cards](#)
- [Breathing Exercises for Kids](#)



Mindfulness Activities



- Grounding Techniques
 - [Mindful Handbook](#)
 - [Emotion and Stress Regulation Magic Toolbox](#)
- Body Scan Meditations
 - [Body Scan for Kids](#)

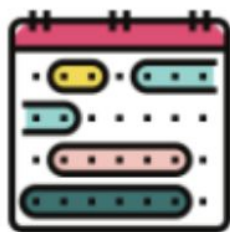


Reduce Environmental Stimulation

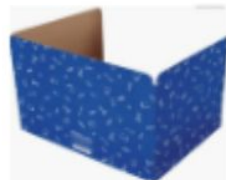
REDUCE AUDITORY DISTRACTIONS



VISUAL CUES AND COLOR CODE



REDUCTION OF VISUAL DISTRACTIONS



ADJUST LIGHTING



PROVIDE SOUND BLOCKING HEADPHONES



ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE SEATING



REDUCE CLUTTER



CREATE A RESET & RETURN SPACE

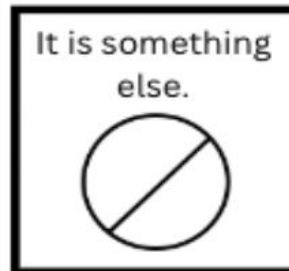
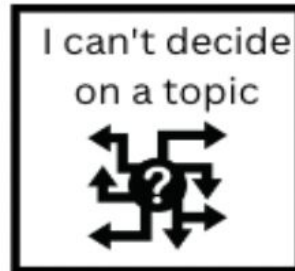
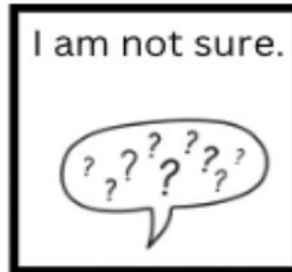
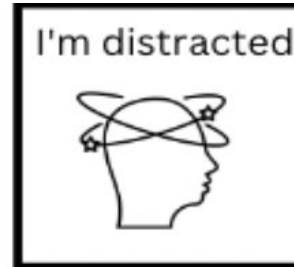
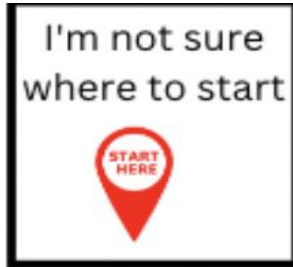


Address Academic Anxiety

Obstacle
I don't understand the assignment.
I can't think of how to start the assignment.
I could probably do the assignment but it will take a lot of work and just the thought of that hurts my brain.
The task is way too boring for me even to contemplate doing it.
This assignment is pointless. I would get nothing out of doing it.
The conditions for working aren't perfect—when they are, I'll get started.
I have way too many things to do and don't know how to prioritize my time.
It's going to take way too long and I don't want to commit that amount of time.
There are other things I'd rather be doing that are more fun or more important to me.
Wait, what assignment? When I leave school at the end of the day I put school behind me (i.e., the cues that remind me to do schoolwork are missing).
The assignment isn't going to affect my grade so why bother (this is particularly an issue when schools use standards-based or outcome-based grading, and when the practice to help students meet the standard doesn't count toward the grade).
Perfectionism—I'm not going to start because I know I won't be able to do work that meets my (impossibly) high standard.
I'm stressed out about other things (either internal or external) and can't focus because of these preoccupations. I'll do better if I wait until my life calms down.
I'm too tired. I don't have the energy to do this now.
I don't want to do this because if I accomplish this, I'm scared of what comes next.



Address Academic Anxiety



Coregulation

Co-regulation describes the interactive process in which adult caregivers share and support self regulation development. As children grow into young adults, they slowly learn to self regulate and adults contribute less to balance the process.



Coregulation



- Provide a warm, responsive relationship where children feel secure and cared for.
- Structure the environment to make self regulation manageable and buffer against excessive stress.
- Skill instruction and coaching to scaffold self-regulation enactment.

Coregulation Activity



Questions or Additional
Resources?

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