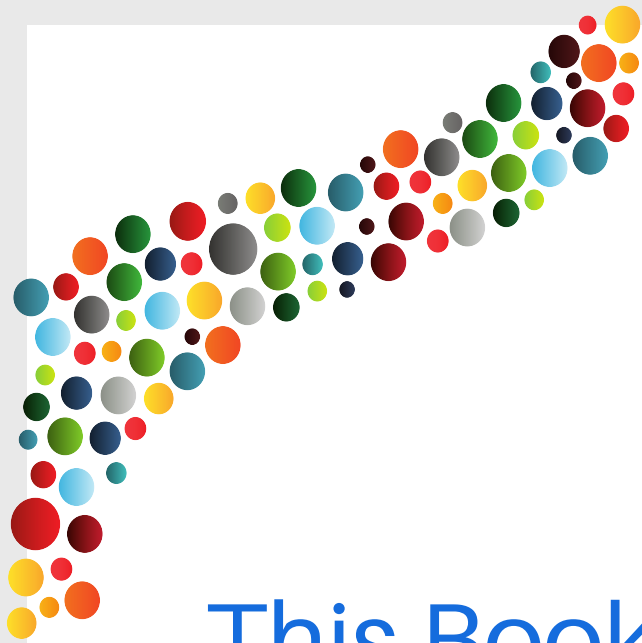




COPING SKILLS WORKBOOK For Children

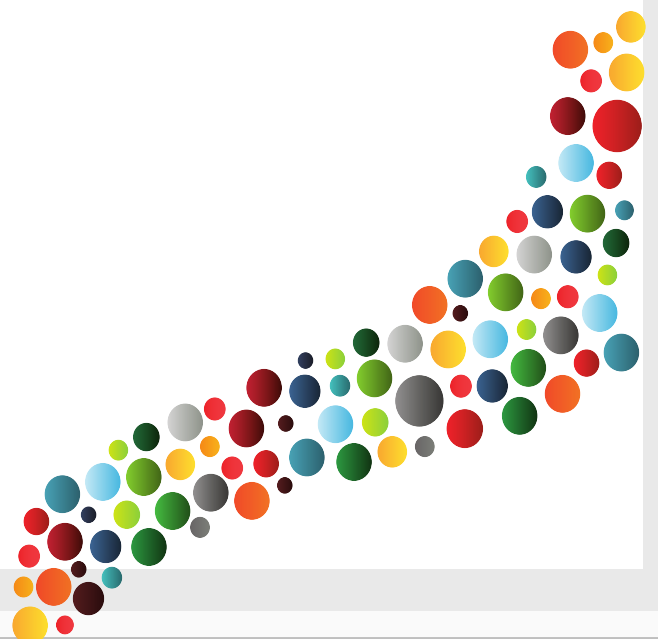
Adult Edition

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This Book can be used
with

The Coping Skills
Workbook
Child Edition



Introduction

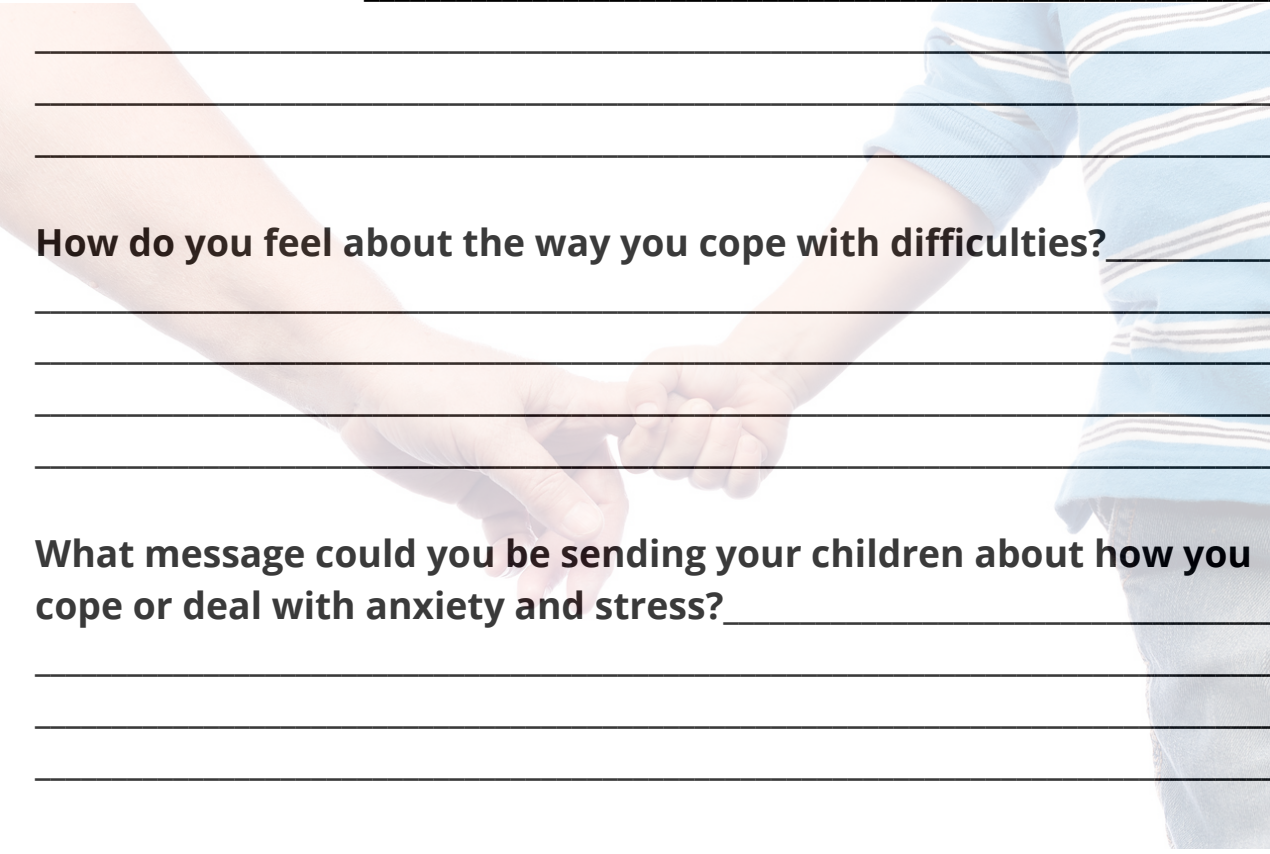
Importance of Coping Skills for Children

The words "coping skills" seems to be everywhere. The term is thrown around, but what does it actually mean.

Coping commonly refers to attempts to manage emotions, thoughts, behaviors, physical symptoms and/or situations in response to stressful events or challenging circumstances.

Basically, it is anything that someone does to feel better in stressful times. These can be positive and negative. Sometimes the skill can make the person feel better in the moment, but cause more issues later. Positive coping skills can help "turn down the volume" of intense emotions and allow increased control over someone's response to the situation.

What do you do to help you deal with difficult situations, memories, and/or emotions? _____



How do you feel about the way you cope with difficulties? _____

What message could you be sending your children about how you cope or deal with anxiety and stress? _____

Importance of Coping Skills for Kids

What emotions were allowed in your home when you were a child?
Were you allowed to be angry, hurt or sad? _____

How did the environment that you grew up in impact your ability to identify, express and handle difficult emotions? How has it impacted your relationships and/or how you parent? _____

When you were younger what ways did you see adults deal with stress, anxiety, difficult situations, etc.? _____

Regardless if it is an adult or a child, people need ways of regulating emotions. The identification and use of coping skills can help people tolerate uncomfortable emotions. The goal should be to manage emotions, but not avoid them. When emotions are avoided long term, other issues can develop and impact all aspects of life.

The following page has a list of positive copings skills to help you as you also learn to manage situations, memories and emotions.

Remember that most coping skills can be both negative and positive depending on how they are used and how often.

Positive Coping Skills

Distraction

1. **Listen to or play music**
2. **Paint, draw, craft, sew, etc.**
3. **Watch funny or inspirational television, movies, You Tube, etc.**
4. **Read**
5. **Work on puzzles or play games**
6. **Journal, write, blog**

Social

1. **Talk to someone you trust**
2. **Give back, volunteer**
3. **Play with or care for animals**
4. **Set boundaries**

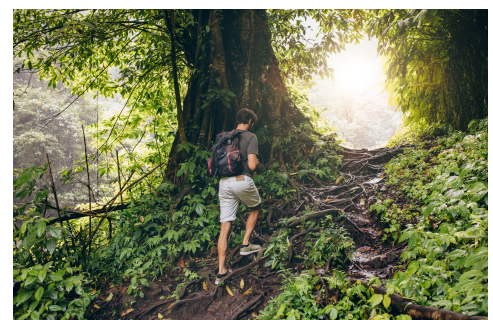


Cognitive

1. **Spend time alone**
2. **Go fishing, hunting, hiking, running, etc.**
3. **Talk with friends, attend an event**
4. **Sit outside and relax**
5. **Engage in a hobby**
6. **Take a class**
7. **List pros and cons**
8. **Act the opposite way than how you feel**

Physical

1. **Work in the yard, clean, organize, do meal prep**
2. **Work out**
3. **Meditate**
4. **Stretch**
5. **Engage in progressive muscle relaxation**
6. **Go for a slow walk**
7. **Get a massage**



Positive Coping Skills

List five positive coping skills that you can try when things get tough. Feel free to add ones that were not on the list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Don't forget that you can learn some of the ones that your child will be learning and you can teach your child some of the ones you have learned.

Negative Coping Skills

Negative coping skills can include some of the following, but most coping skills can be negative when overused or not at the right times.

- Yelling, throwing things
- Acting aggressively
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Driving recklessly
- Excessive use of caffeine, food, medications
- Inadequate self care such as eating, sleeping, etc.
- Self harm including cutting, bingeing/purging, chewing or picking nails/hair
- Procrastination
- Criticizing, blaming, sabotaging, gossiping about self and others
- Enabling others to take advantage of you
- Risky behaviors such as gambling, spending, sex



A Child's View

While it is normal for children to worry, feel anxious or be sad from time to time, there are children that these issues become more disruptive and even impact their every day thoughts and behaviors. It is important to remember that what may not bother an adult, may cause significant disturbance in a child.

Children can be impacted by a single event or from exposure to multiple events over time. The types of situation which can cause intense emotional reactions include:

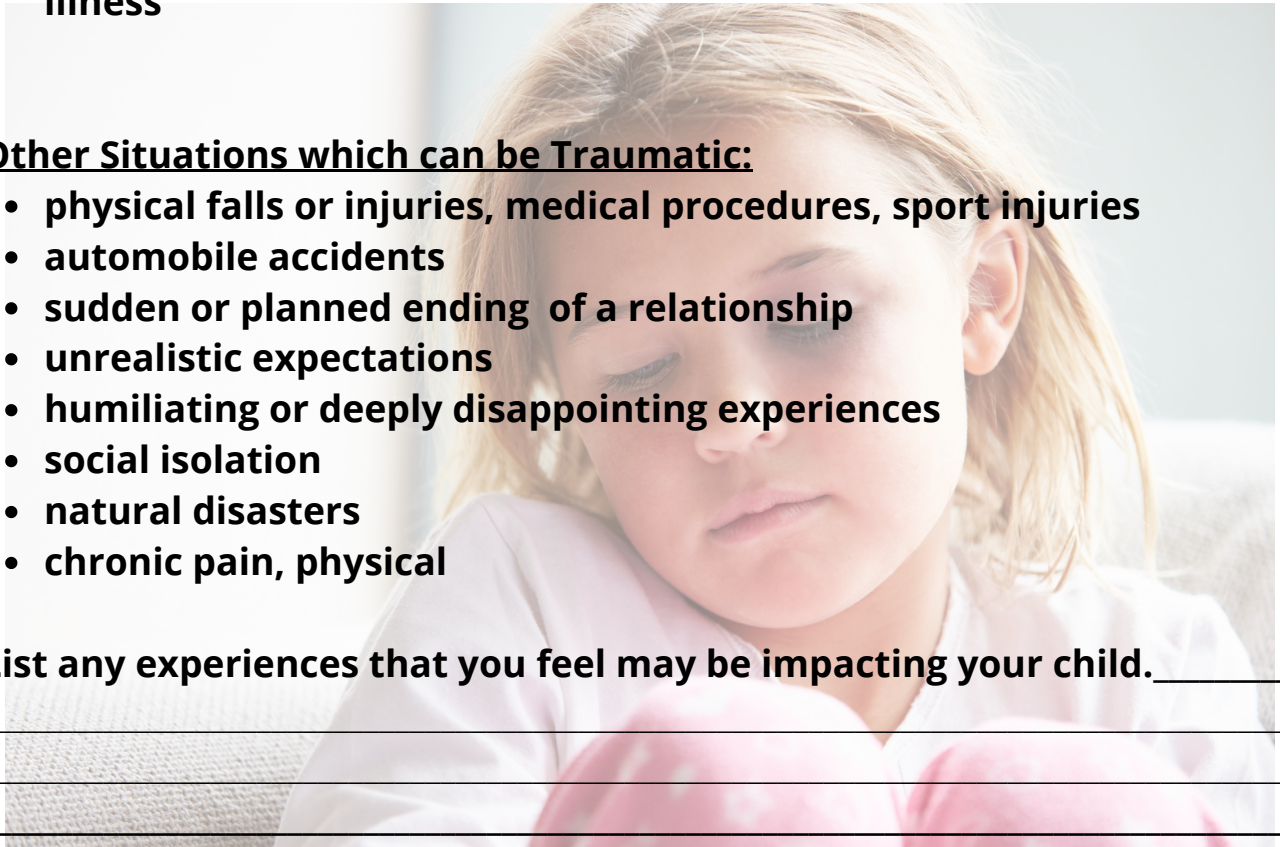
Emotional and Psychological Situations

- sexual, emotional, physical verbal abuse
- physical emotional neglect
- intense exposure to poverty, domestic violence alcoholism, drug use
- loss of a loved one (sudden or gradual)
- exposure to war, civil unrest, social injustice, acts of violence
- insomnia,
- being a victim of theft or robbery,
- being diagnosed with a life threatening illness mental or psychiatric illness

Other Situations which can be Traumatic:

- physical falls or injuries, medical procedures, sport injuries
- automobile accidents
- sudden or planned ending of a relationship
- unrealistic expectations
- humiliating or deeply disappointing experiences
- social isolation
- natural disasters
- chronic pain, physical

List any experiences that you feel may be impacting your child. _____



A Child's View

Often overlooked, but sometimes just as impactful can be situations such as changes in caregivers, unpredictable parental behavior, medical procedures, unstable circumstances due to parental addiction or mental illness, community instability, disconnection among family members, participation in child welfare system, etc.

The behaviors that may be observed in a child can often be misunderstood and even misdiagnosed.

For example:

- Children who are worried and/or anxious may have difficulty concentrating and therefore be diagnosed with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).
- Children who are not participating in daily activities may be diagnosed with anxiety or depression, but in reality have shut down from being overwhelmed.
- Children may appear out of control or angry, but in reality they are afraid of what will happen next.

What are the symptoms/behaviors that are the most noticeable or disruptive? _____

Can you identify an event/situation which may be at the root of your child's behaviors and/or reactions? If so, please write it/them here: _____

A Child's View

The Child Welfare Information Gateway Fact Sheet shares a remarkable quote which can drastically change how we understand, support and help children.

“

Parenting a traumatized child may require a shift from seeing a "bad kid" to seeing a kid who has had bad things happen.

”

How do you think this quote applies to your child or other children around you? _____

If you see an upset child, how would you know if the child is a "bad kid" or "a kid who has seen bad things happen?" _____

*(The fact sheet is available online at
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/child-trauma>)*

A Child's View



Key factors which can influence the impact of these experiences include:

- **Age.**-Younger children are more vulnerable. Even infants and toddlers who are too young to talk about what happened retain lasting “sense memories” of traumatic events that can affect their well-being into adulthood.
- **Frequency.** Experiencing the same type of traumatic event multiple times, or multiple types of traumatic events, is more harmful than a single event.
- **Relationships.** Children with positive relationships with healthy caregivers are more likely to recover.
- **Coping skills.** Intelligence, physical health, and self-esteem help children cope.
- **Perception.** How much danger the child thinks he or she is in, or the amount of fear the child feels at the time, is a significant factor.
- **Sensitivity.** Every child is different—some are naturally more sensitive than others.

A Child's View

Children need help when it comes to coping with emotions and having an adult to support them is crucial to be able to learn and use strategies. If a child is not taught effective and healthy coping strategies, then it is quite likely that the use of unhealthy coping skills and strategies will become evident.

Coping skills fall into 2 different categories:

Emotional Release and Solution Focused

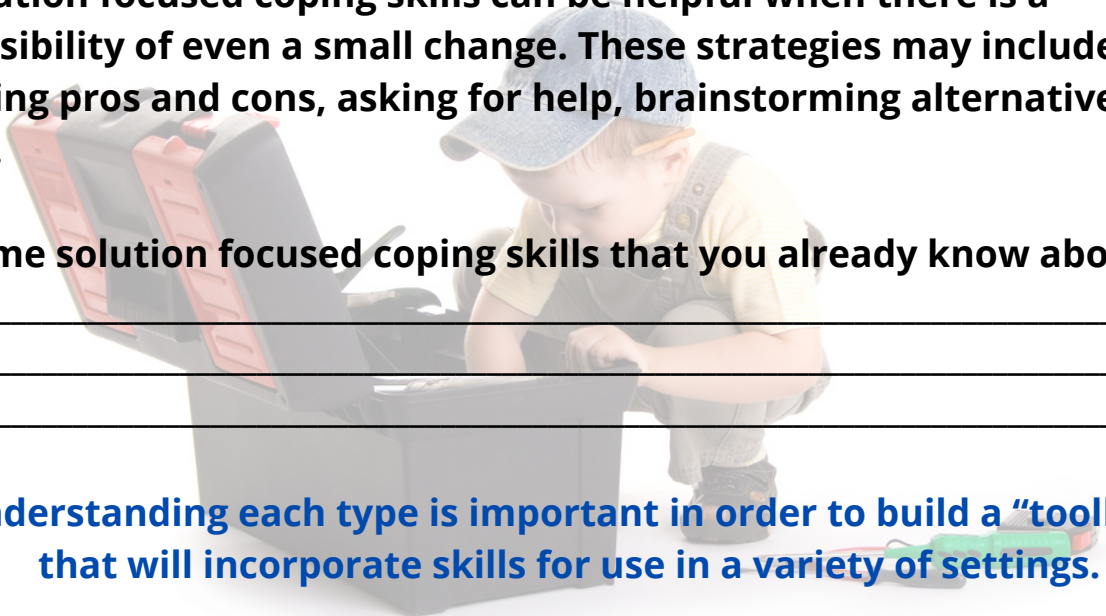
Emotionally focused coping skills are helpful when it isn't possible to change the situation, but it is possible to change your reactions to it or your perception of it. These can include listening to music, journaling, labeling feelings, watch a video video, painting, etc.

Name emotional release coping skills that you already know about.

Solution focused coping skills can be helpful when there is a possibility of even a small change. These strategies may include: listing pros and cons, asking for help, brainstorming alternatives, etc.

Name solution focused coping skills that you already know about.

Understanding each type is important in order to build a “toolbox” that will incorporate skills for use in a variety of settings.



LET'S GET STARTED

The goal of this workbook is for us to work together. We identify the situations, words, etc. that seem to get your child to "flip their lid" and we come up with a plan.

Here we go...

1) On the next page of this workbook, start to track the times that your child demonstrates intense emotion. It may seem tedious, but it will give us a lot of information.

TRUST ME!!!!

2) We will take that information and identify strategies for you to use and coping skills for me to teach that will help your child handle intense emotions.

3) We will track the intensity and frequency and see if what we are doing is working.



Tracking

It is very important when trying to understand the behavior of young children to have the whole picture. Tracking the frequency, duration and causes can significantly increase the ability to understand a child's behavior.

In this section, we will look at what is needed to get a clear picture of what coping skills are needed. Look over the tracking form and become familiar with what you will be looking for the next time your child becomes dysregulated.

In the first section of the tracking form, we will simply be tracking the frequency and times that your child is dysregulated. Place tally marks for each time your child becomes dysregulated in the correct time or day blocks. You can also track how long the incident lasts. (I have included printable forms to make this easier to track.)

This will help identify if a certain time of the day or day of the week is the most problematic. For some children, Mondays are tough because maybe they spent the weekend somewhere else, they went to bed late, or the weekends have less structure.

For some children mornings are especially difficult because they have a hard time waking up, they feel rushed or there maybe inconsistent rules and/or expectations.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Wake up to 9 am							
9 am to noon							
noon to 3 pm							
3 pm-6 pm							
6 pm-9 pm							
Bedtime							

Tracking

In this section, we will track :

- 1) Behaviors your child exhibits during the times he/she is dysregulated. Does he throw himself on the floor? Does she cry?
- 2) Activities that your child was involved in prior to the incident. Was your child playing? In a transition from activity to another? Was it a quiet activity? Bedtime? Meal time? Was it a new activity?
- 3) Who was around immediately prior to the dysregulation? Was your child alone? With siblings? In a crowd? Around strangers?
- 4) Now that you have tracked times that your child has become dysregulated, do you notice any patterns?

Behaviors during dysregulation	Activities prior to dysregulation	People involved in dysregulation	List any patterns you have noticed.

On the back of the page, we will track:

The dates and incidences of times your child became dysregulated. What coping skills was used and any comments about the effectiveness of what was tried.

There is a notes section in case you have additional comments.

Printable form

Tracking Chart of Dysregulated Behaviors

Child's Name _____ Date _____

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Wake up to 9 am							
9 am to noon							
Noon to 3pm							
3 pm to 6 pm							
6 to 9 pm							
Bedtime							

Behaviors during dysregulation	Activities prior to dysregulation	People involved in dysregulation	List any patterns you have noticed.

Printable form

Tracking Chart of Dysregulated Behaviors

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Coping Skills Tracker

Date/Incident	Coping Skill Used	Comments

Notes: _____

Understanding What Your Child Can Do

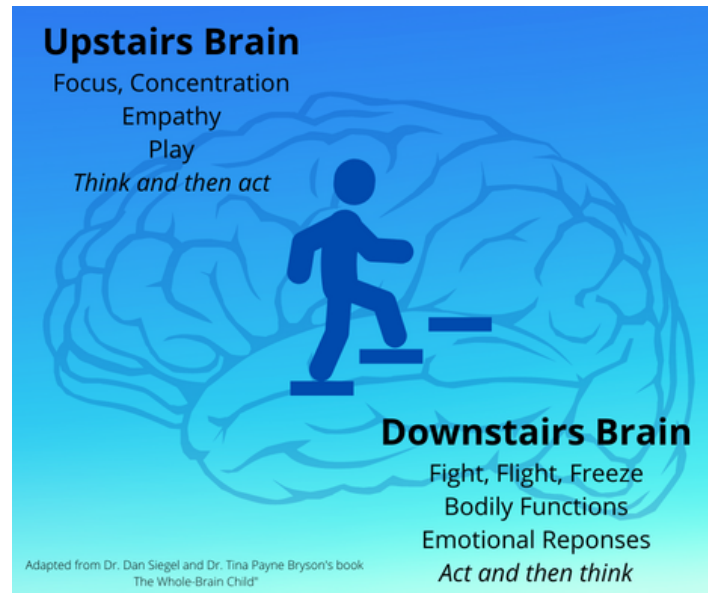
A way to explain the brain comes from Dr Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson's book 'The Whole Brain Child.'

In a house, most of the time the important things are downstairs. The basics that help us live such as living room, alarm system, kitchen, appliances, etc. This is similar to our **downstairs brain**, which I call the caveman or lizard brain, is the instinctive part of the brain. It is developed from birth and is responsible for functions such as making the heart beat, breathing, flinching, and responses such as fight, flight, and fear. It also generates our strong emotions including anger and fear.

The **upstairs brain** is similar to a second story of a house because it's where dreaming and imagining occur. This part of the brain is also responsible for higher order thinking and planning, imagining, analyzing, problem solving and sound decision making. **Since this part of the brain is not fully developed until the mid-twenties, children are actually under construction.** They are not able think like adult and/or cannot respond in adult ways.

How have you seen your child react that demonstrates a time in which he/she was operating out of his/her downstairs brain? _____





The staircase is an important part of a two-story house and that is also true for the brain. When the brain's staircase is built and fully functioning, the upstairs brain can check on strong emotions and impulses from the downstairs and make sense of them. As adults, the goal is to help build and reinforce the trips up and down the staircase. When children experience high emotion and stress, they can become 'trapped downstairs' and are not able to manage their reactions to situation, memories or emotions.

So how do we build this staircase?

The most important thing is to know the child well enough to recognize if the upstairs or downstairs brain is in control. I frequently ask if the child is in their "choosing mind."

What part of their brain is controlling their actions?

A tantrum to get what he/she wants is not the same as a child who is so upset that she/he is having difficulty being comforted or calming himself/herself.

How would you know the difference between a behavior that is manipulative in nature and child who is "trapped downstairs?" _____

First Signs of Distress

(See the activity that was adapted from Stress Bot: Do the Body Scan for an activity related to this concept.)

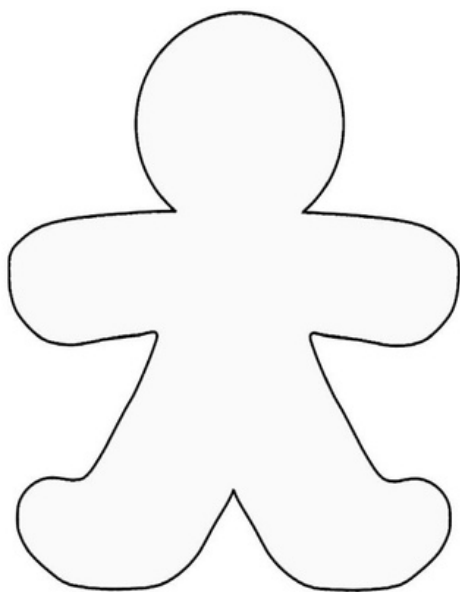
Children often display emotions through their behaviors or even symptoms in their bodies. If they are anxious, they might say their stomach hurts. If they are scared, they might become clingy or irritable. Adults often say “I have butterflies in my stomach” or if someone is happy/proud they might say “That warms my heart.”

Metaphors such as these are longstanding and typically understood. But could they mean more than just an expression? Some research studies have shown a correlation between where we identify physical sensation regarding an emotion and the part of the body that is actually activate when a person feels that emotion.

Why does this matter?

What if by simply paying attention to our bodies we could have an early warning sign about our emotional state? Could simply becoming more aware of what is going on in our bodies help us (and children) become more able to identify, address and regulate our reactions?

Where do you feel it in your body?





Using Resources

Sometimes children need an anchor to help them deal with overwhelming emotions. The anchors are often referred to as resource figures and can include animals, people, super heroes, favorite characters, nature...

What things anchor you when you are upset? Is there something you can think about or remember that calms you? _____

What makes you feel safe or protected? _____

What makes you feel connect/loved? _____

What makes you feel powerful or wise? _____

If children are also able to identify the anchors, they can be used to increase regulation and use of coping skills. The anchors are frequently are in specific themes including: protection, nurturing, powerful, calm, magical, wisdom, connection, etc. If a child cannot actually feel or understand these emotions, then how can they actually be calm, safe, wise, etc.?



Using Resources

Resource figures are typically identified while in session with a therapist, but it is important for parents/caregiver to help discover and use these tools when a child is having difficulty regulating.

The list below will help identify possible anchors for your child. Think about how your child may answer if asked:

- Where is a place maybe you already have, you have seen in pictures, or a place that is only in your imagination, that you can feel safe or peaceful? _____

- Can you think time that made you feel good about or made you feel like a grown up? A time that you did a good job or made a good decision. _____

- Who are the people you have in your life who care about you? _____

- When was a time that you felt like someone was on your side or had your back? A time when someone protected you or you protected someone else. Maybe it's an animal or a superhero that protected someone. _____

- Can you think about someone who is magical or has special powers? _____

When these are identified and practiced, you will be able to work with your child's therapist in learning how to use these skills to help your child manage difficult situations and emotions.

Using Coping Skills

The following pages, as well as the skills listed in your child's coping skills workbook, will help you identify coping skills to try.

KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO TEACH THESE TO YOUR CHILD AND PRACTICE REGULARLY WHEN THE CHILD IS CALM AND ABLE TO FOCUS.**
- **MAKE LEARNING THE COPING SKILL FUN.**
- **HELP THE CHILD USE THE SKILL BEFORE THEY ARE DYSREGULATED. CATCHING IT WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ALREADY A 10 OUT OF 10 IS TOO LATE!**

Once they are identified and written in your child's workbook, use these steps to teach coping skills to your child PRIOR to becoming dysregulated.

Step 1: Introduce a Coping Skill

- Talk to your child about specific times that you have noticed that he/she becomes very upset.
- Be specific and share only the facts.
- Make sure to talk about the emotions isn't bad, but that there are ways to express it that will help you understand them better.
- Tell the child that you can show him/her ways to deal with strong feelings.
- Show the child the skill and model using it.
- Talk about when and where to use the skill including catching the difficult feeling BEFORE he/she gets REALLY upset.
- Practice the skill together.



Using Coping Skills

Step 2: Practice the Skill

- Make sure to practice the skill daily or several times a day.
- Adding it to routines such as before getting into bed, after eating breakfast, etc. can be especially helpful.

Step 3: Use the Coping Skill

- If you see the child start to become dysregulated, remind him/her of the coping skill and have them use the coping skill with you.
- It can also be helpful to talk to your child about using the coping skill if you know that a difficult situation is going to happen.
- Reinforce efforts. Your child might not have been able to successfully use the skill this time, but keep practicing and encouraging.



Practice

Types of Coping Skills

There are basically four kinds of coping skills:

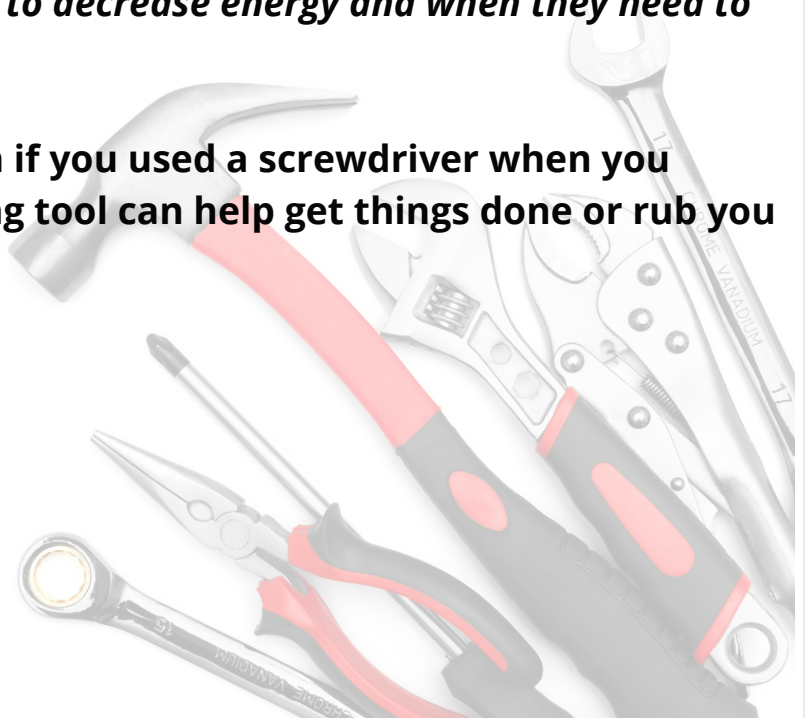
Calming
Distracting
Physical
Processing

The goal is to have a child have some of each category in their toolbox. It is important to have many kinds of coping skills that can be used in different circumstances at different times.

We are looking for skills that the child can use:

- *in a classroom and outside*
- *in a crowded restaurant and at the dinner table*
- *when they need to interact and when they need to be quiet*
- *when they are sad and when they are angry*
- *when they need to decrease energy and when they need to increase energy*

After all, what would happen if you used a screwdriver when you needed sandpaper. The wrong tool can help get things done or rub you the wrong way.



Calming Coping Skills

Imagining/Thinking Coping Skills

Imagine favorite places
Think of favorite things
Name animals of a certain color
Name five soft animals

Sensory Based Coping Skills

Find something to squeeze
5,4,3,2,1

Moving/Action Coping Skills

Taste test
Looking closely at common objects
Cookie breathing

Work with your child to identify calming coping skills that you would like to try and write them here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Calming Coping Skills

Calm Down Box

<https://smileysbunch.com/calm-down-box/>

A Calm Down Box is typically full of objects and activities that a child can use when they're feeling emotions they don't understand.

Frustration and/or anger are usually the most common. The goal is to teach children how to deal with overwhelming emotions, not to prevent them from feeling it. A calm down box can offer options to use when the child is beginning to dysregulate. The options in the box are items/activities chosen by the child and familiar enough to be used on by themselves if possible.

Things to put in a calm down box:

Relaxing techniques:

- deep breathing, mindful meditation, breathing exercise cards, positive affirmations, yoga cards, emotion cards, calm down anywhere

booklet

Things to tear:

- Scrap paper, tissue paper, paper bags

Gooey gooey things:

- Slime, play-doh, therapy putty

Stress relievers:

- Bubble wrap, sensory toys, calm down jars, spiral bubblers, blocks or LEGOs, sensory bags, rainbow sphere

Brain breaks:

- Puzzles, word searches, coloring supplies, books, I Spy Games, file folder games

Block it all out:

- Noise-cancelling headphones, calming eye covers, noise machine (this is the one we bought), weighted stuffed animal, kaleidoscope

Sensory calming toys and tools

- Puffer balls, spiral bubblers, rainbow sphere, therapy brush

Calming music for kids

Distraction Coping Skills

Thinking

Crosswords, Soduku, Word search

Imagine a trip

Plan a trip

Interacting

Play with a pet

Play a video game

Play a game with another person

Play with a friend

I Spy

Activity

Watch/read something that makes you laugh

Make up a game

Organize something

Spend time in nature

Do a craft

Volunteer/Random act of kindness

Bake/cook

Work with your child to identify distraction coping skills that you would like to try and write them here.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Physical Coping Skills

Dancing
Shuffle cards
Use a fidget
Play at the park
Walk
Exercise
Use bubble wrap
Make an obstacle
Swim
Stretch
Shred paper

Processing Coping Skills

Identify what you can control, what you cannot
Write in a journal
Identify triggers
Make an anxiety box
Create a play list
Write a letter to someone
Create a comic strip

Work with your child to identify distraction coping skills that you would like to try and write them here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Processing Coping Skills

Reading books about emotions

Children's books can be a wonderful distraction skill, but can also help children when they need to process situations, experiences or emotions. Children learn to identify emotions that are associated with situations and then are able to use coping skills to deal with them. This can not only lead to increased self confidence and sense of self esteem, but can decrease the reaction to the event and associated triggers.

The following is a list of children's books that help children identify and deal with emotions:

- When I'm Feeling books by Trace Moroney
- The Feeling Flower by Lean Dakroub
- After the Fall by Dan Santat
- Feelings by Alik
- My Mixed Emotions by DK
- All Kinds of Feelings by Sheri Safran
- The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi
- The Color Monster by Anna Llenas
- Today I Feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis
- The Boy with Big, Big Feelings by Britney Winn Lee
- Tough Guys Have Feelings Too by Keith Negley
- My Many Coloured Days by Dr Seuss
- All About Feelings by Felicity Brooks
- 1-2-3 My Feelings and Me by Goldie Millar
- When Sadness is at your Doorstep by Eva Eland
- In My Heart: A Book of Feelings by Jo Witek
- How Are You Feeling Today? by Molly Potter



Some feelings may be more difficult for children to handle than others. Fear, anger, frustration, sadness, loneliness, and worry can be especially uncomfortable. Feeling comfortable and uncomfortable emotions is an important step in emotional maturity. Even using the words "comfortable" and "uncomfortable" can make a significant difference in how children view the acceptability of emotions.

Here's the Plan

What patterns were noticed in sessions and at home? _____

After reviewing the list of coping skills, what skills do you think will work with your child?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

When do you think the coping skills would be the most beneficial?

Additional comments:



Here's the Plan

Make copies of the following pages.

Use the feeling page to identify emotions that you and your child feel coping skills would help regulate. Write the emotion on the page:

When I feel _____

Work with your child to identify coping skills you would like to try and write on on each page. Identify at least two options.

I can do _____

I can do _____

Practice the coping skill when your child is calm and can focus.

If your child begins to feel the identified emotion, remind the child of the coping skills that he/she has learned and help the child use the coping skill.

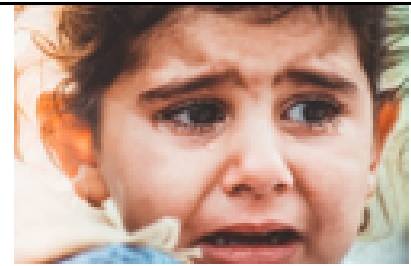
Track if using the identified coping skill is effective. If so, keep practicing and reinforcing the use of the skill. If not, look back through the child's coping skills works to identify other options. Feel free to ask others or search for alternatives.



Mad



Sad



Excited



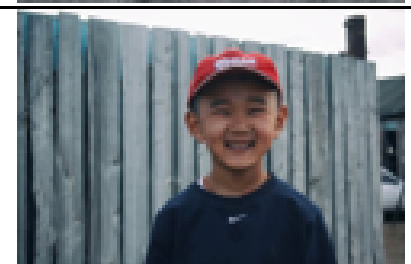
Tired



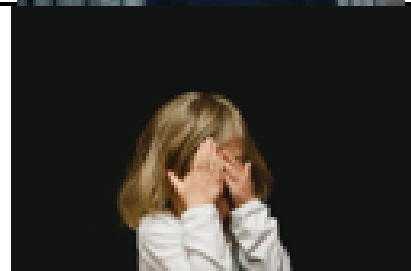
Lonely



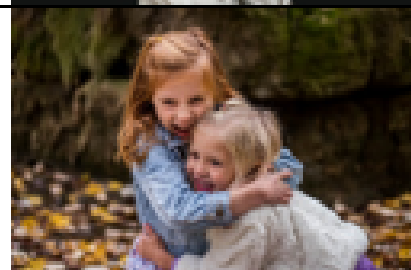
Happy



Scared



Loved



My Coping Skills

Sample Page

When I feel MAD

I can DO 5,4,3,2,1

I can DO COOKIE BREATHING

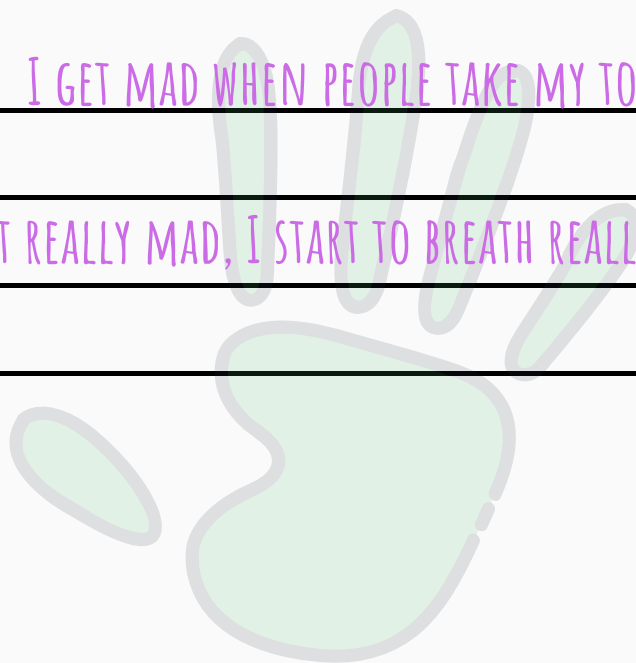
Parent Check Off:

☒ WE DID IT!!!

☐ WE NEED MORE PRACTICE!!!

Notes: I GET MAD WHEN PEOPLE TAKE MY TOYS.

RIGHT BEFORE I GET REALLY MAD, I START TO BREATHE REALLY FAST!



My Coping Skills

When I feel _____

I can _____

I can _____

Parent Check Off:

☐ WE DID IT!!!

☐ WE NEED MORE PRACTICE!!!

Notes: _____



You did it!!

**Thank you for
allowing us to
be a part of
your journey!**



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Resources

Websites

<https://www.verywellmind.com/coping-skills-for-parents-and-kids-3144836#:~:text=How%20Parents%20Can%20Help%20With%20Kids%27%20Coping%20Skills,the%20Way.%20...%204%20Empower%20Your%20Kids.%20a>

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/>

<https://www.thehelpfulcounselor.com/18-coping-skills-strategies-for-children-and-teens/>

<https://www.psycom.net/kids-coping-skills-anxiety>

<https://childhood101.com/coping-skills/>

<http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/stress-bot-do-the-body-scan/>

<http://debrawesselmann.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/Adapting-EMDR-for-Children-With-RAD-Behaviors.pdf>

Videos

Star Breathing

<https://youtu.be/6hSkmmNU7PM>

5,4,3,2,1

<https://youtu.be/8IM8pgMgjEs>

A to Z of coping strategies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EXpkVw3fh0>

Coping Skills for Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=757kKWp7Nio>

Podcast Replay: Helping Kids with Coping Skills with Janine Halloran

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9e2vNi9nGj4>

Teaching Coping Strategies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zh3K-6RdEk>

Controlling Emotions for Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGET9fNNlkw>