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Newsletter-TIGPS,Ariadaha



How to deal with children's "Big Feelings"

Life with kids can be wonderful, ridiculous and unpredictable! When our children get upset, most of us get equally upset. If the child is angry at us, we feel defensive or convince ourselves that the child's feelings are unreasonable. Children can have the same big feelings that we do. Your child isn't creating those feelings to harass you, he needs your help to manage them. The only way to resolve emotions is to go through them. We as adults have more life experience to know how to deal with difficult emotions but they don't have that. When our children feel fear, anxiety, or anger, they need our help to learn how to cope. Here are some tips:



Calm yourself first: Use your pause button ,and take a deep breath before you engage with your child.



Connect before you correct:

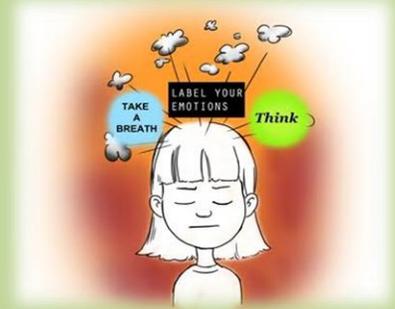
Connect with your child emotionally, and if you can, physically. Try to create a safety zone with your touch, warmth, tone, behaviour. Give your child the verbal or nonverbal message :**"I will help you...You are safe."** In relation to this,deep breathing often works wonders. If you breathe slowly and deeply, your child will also begin to breathe slowly.

Name the feelings: Help your children figure out which feeling they are having. Putting a name to it, can help validate their experience. Having a feelings poster or reading children's books related

Emotional Level	I feel this way when...
 feeling good	
 a little upset	
 upset	
 very upset	

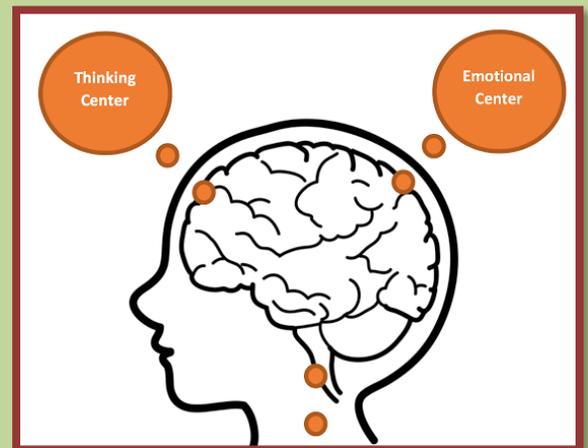
to feelings can be helpful in identifying their own feeling.

Validate the feelings: It can be confusing for a child to manage their big feelings, in a way that leads them to change their behavior from positive to negative. Explain to your child that all of us have these kinds of feelings sometimes, that there's nothing to worry about, that we have to learn how to manage them.



Talk about the brain

Our brains and our bodies are connected, and our brains send out signals when we experience certain “big feelings.” Explain your child that we have two parts of our brain - **thinking brain** that's in charge of making decisions and managing our emotions, another part of our brain - **emotional brain** which is in charge of important things like breathing, digesting food, and holds onto big feelings like anger or anxiety. This part of our brain also reacts to any threats, and can prompt us to run, fight back, or freeze. Sometimes this part of our brain overreacts, and we want to try some strategies to calm it down.



Practice self-regulation skills when children are calm. It is this time that their thinking brain is active and this is the best time to come up with a plan to deal with the times when their emotional brain will try to take over. Encourage taking a break (not a timeout), **deep breathing**, and **releasing negative energy** by exercising, and relaxation strategies such as **progressive muscle relaxation**, **coloring**, **music**, etc. Practice these repeatedly when they are calm. Helping your child begin to recognize their body's early signs of a big feeling (heart racing, clenched jaw, etc.) can help them learn when to employ their self-regulation skills.

Self-regulation is not about 'not feeling'. Locking feelings away can cause as much trouble as any outburst. There is nothing wrong with having big feelings. It's okay for children to feel whatever they feel. What is important is how those feelings are managed. The key is to nurture children towards being able to acknowledge and express what they're feeling, without causing breakage to themselves or their relationships.

When children are able to regulate their emotion, they become less vulnerable to the ongoing impact of stress - they can maintain healthy relationships, and their capacity to focus and learn will also increase. Research has found that the ability to self-regulate is a strong predictor of academic success.



Happy parenting & best of luck for all of us!

Rossey Sengupta, School Counsellor, TIGPS, Ariadaha

Parents who are willing to contribute are encouraged to email their thoughts to totigpsar.counselor@gmail.com