

MANAGING INTENSE EMOTIONS

Skill Sheet for Caregivers

Every emotion we experience can become intense at times, which makes us want to act in certain ways. Our hedgehog friend in the video was feeling a lot of anger and sadness, he ran away and started crying. However, he learned that when these big emotions take over, the best thing we can do is grab something calming, like the items in the hedgehog's self-care backpack, to help us feel better. These calming items can help bring us back to the present moment. After our intense emotions pass we will be better able to choose how to handle challenging moments.

Summary of the **KEY POINTS** from the video.

- Everyone feels big and intense emotions sometimes.
- Everyone has urges to act that are caused by big, intense, and uncomfortable emotions. The key is riding out the urge and waiting for big feelings to lessen.
- You can ride out big feelings by using your five senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) to ground to the present.

Practice Skills

- Validate your child's emotional experience. Helping them to feel heard and understood is foundational when it comes to tolerating emotions.
- Model opportunities when you utilize a strategy to ride out big feelings. Create your own self-soothe kit that utilizes the five senses that you can show to your child.
- Use specific positive reinforcement frequently, immediately, and consistently when your child utilizes a strategy to ride out a big emotion and impulse. Using specific positive feedback is the best way to shape behaviors you want to see. You might say:



"I see you were feeling overwhelmed, and I love how you're working on riding out those big feelings."

"I love how you're using your stress ball to help with big feelings."

Start with this →

- Before jumping into solving problems for your child to make big feelings go away, start with validation. Listening to and reflecting back what your child is experiencing emotionally helps them to feel heard and reminds them it's okay to feel emotion. It also starts the process of helping to tolerate that emotion.

- When your child is in a calm place, brainstorm some items your child can use to help tolerate big feelings and some activities they can do when feeling overwhelmed to help them ride out that intensity. Having a plan and designated space makes it more likely that your child will use these skills.

On the next page there is an activity that you can share with your child to create a self-soothe kit that can help when big feelings occur.

Activity

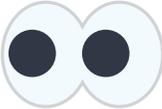
Practicing these skills helps you to increase awareness of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to improve your mental health and wellness.

What Is in Your Self-Soothe Kit?

Brainstorm a self-soothe kit. Come up with ideas for what might be soothing in each category and then collect the items from around your house.

Remember that feeling intense emotions is normal and can make us feel like we need to do something. Using the five senses can help us ride out that wave of intensity and help us choose what to do next.

- 1 Find a small, portable bag that can fit in your backpack (for example, a small pouch, pencil case, or Ziploc bag).
- 2 Select one or more favorite items from each of the five senses to put in your kit (or something that is close by and you have easy access to).

5 Senses	One thing that makes me calm and relaxed is:	Stumped on what to pick? Here are some suggestions:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calming colors• A relaxing scene• Small picture of my favorite person, family member, athlete; or place to visit
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to rainstorm or ocean sounds• Recordings of funny jokes or comedians• Happy or soothing music
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good-smelling hand lotion• Small perfume bottle• A scented candle
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pieces of your favorite candy or other treat like gum or a mint
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Satin ribbon or soft fabric• A small pompom or pouf• A small feather• A stress ball• Slime