



## Shri Minds

### *Wellness Newsletter*

Namaste Parents!

The overwhelming response to the last edition of the newsletter has been instrumental in energizing us to return with a 'managing emotions' edition for this month. With a heart filled with gratitude, we present to you the fourth edition of Shri Minds.



Buddy Campaign

Safe and Unsafe  
Touch

Regulation of Emotions  
in School- Going  
Children

What 's Happening This Month

What's Inside

## Managing Emotions

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### *What Is Emotion?*

Authors Don Hockenbury and Sandra E. Hockenbury suggest in their book "Discovering Psychology" that emotion is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioural or expressive response. ***In simpler words, emotions are reactions that human beings experience in response to events or situations.***

During his study of emotion, psychologist Paul Eckman (1972) claimed that there are six basic emotions that are universal throughout human cultures: fear, disgust, anger, surprise, happiness, and sadness. He later added embarrassment, excitement, contempt, shame, pride, satisfaction, and amusement to the list of basic emotions.

The American Psychological Association (APA) states that the type of emotion a person experiences is determined by the circumstance that triggers the emotion. For instance, a person experiences joy when they receive good news. A person experiences fear when they are threatened. More often than not, emotions seem to guide our daily lives. We make decisions and choose activities and hobbies based on whether we are happy, angry, sad, bored, or frustrated.

## ***Why Understand and Manage Emotions?***

Understanding emotions can help us navigate life with greater ease and stability. They motivate us to take action. We usually tend to classify emotions according to how they make us feel – positive (happiness, surprise, etc) or negative (fear, anger, sadness, etc). However, there is more to classifying emotions. Every emotion is as important as the next; they are the crux of our lives as human beings. Emotions have adaptive values, even negative ones. For example, fear – usually considered a negative emotion, is helpful when being chased by an animal.

Emotions inherently are not good or bad. Rather they can be facilitative (enable growth, help in problem- solving, develop resources and opportunities) or they can be restrictive (hinder growth, prevent problem- solving, mask resources and opportunities). For example, an inappropriate amount of happiness leads to a state called mania – an extremely elevated and excitable mood – which is equally detrimental as anger.

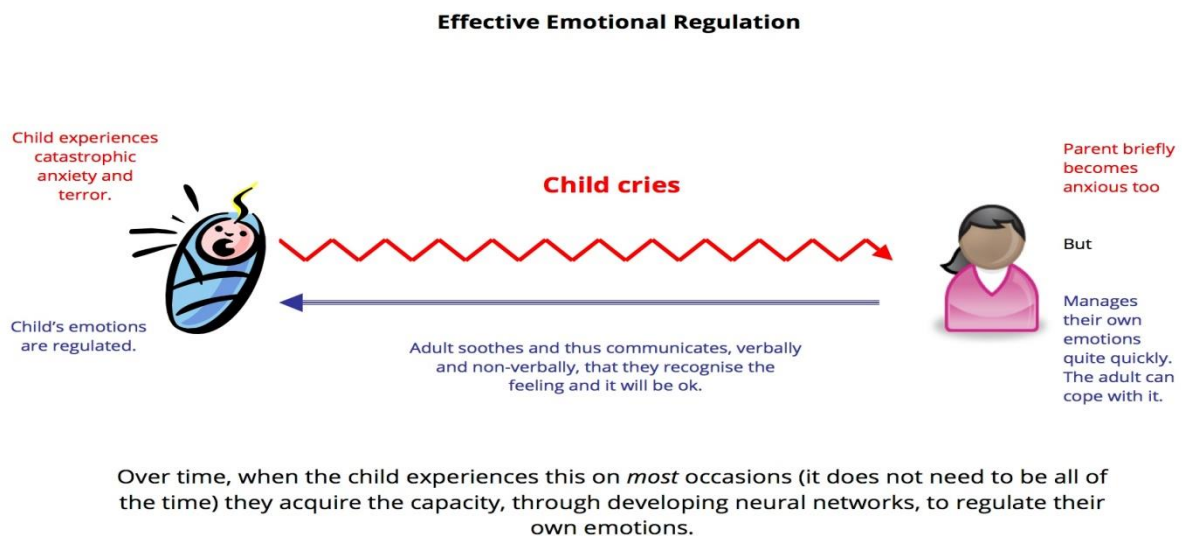
Certain strong emotions can be difficult to experience thus making it difficult to express and manage them as well. Understanding emotions also involves labelling them accurately. This involves reflecting and introspecting. Emotions have a humongous impact on our lives and thus it is crucial to judge when to trust emotional triggers and act on them, and when not to. In other words, it is essential for us to understand how to regulate or control our emotions so we could use them optimally.

## ***How to Manage/Regulate Emotions?***

Every day, we face hundreds of emotion provoking stimuli, and most of them require some action or response from our end. Emotional regulation acts as a modifier; it helps us filter the most important pieces of information and motivates us to attend to it in a way that wouldn't

evoke stress or fear. When we confront a provoking stimulus, the natural reaction of the brain is to activate the amygdala, a brain site that regulates the ‘fight – flight – freeze’ responses. Emotional regulation processes allow us to buy time before we act on the fight – flight – freeze triggers.

“Emotion regulation is the ability to exert control over one’s own emotional state.”



We try to regulate and manage our emotions using various methods and strategies. Some of them are adaptive and some maladaptive. Maladaptive strategies might look like bottling up emotions or suppressing them, overindulgence in food, shopping, alcohol, drugs, thrill or pleasure-seeking risky behaviours. Adaptive strategies may involve behaviours such as rethinking a challenging situation to reduce anger or anxiety, hiding visible signs of sadness or fear, or focusing on reasons to feel happy or calm. Maladaptive strategies threaten our health and well

being while adaptive strategies contribute to improving our well-being. Managing emotions may look different for different people.

**Here are a few strategies one can use to effectively manage emotions in day-to-day life**

### **Self-awareness**

Noticing what we feel and naming it is a great step toward emotional regulation. For example, when you feel bad, ask yourself – Am I feeling sad, hopeless, ashamed, or anxious? Give yourself some options and explore your feelings. Try to name the specific emotions that you can feel intensely within yourself at that very moment, and write them down if you want.

### **Practising Relaxation**

Different forms of relaxation techniques can serve as good strategies while managing emotions, especially strong emotions. Meditation, simple breathing exercises and mindfulness under the guidance of an expert can help with regulating strong emotions like anger and anxiety.



### **Regulation through Creativity**

Art as a form of regulation can also be useful in serving as a channel to express emotions which are otherwise difficult to express. Expressing via written form (poetry, stories, journaling) can

help in reflection and also provide a new perspective on the problem situation thereby leading to fresh ideas for problem- solving.

### **Life skills**

Inculcating essential life skills like problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness building skills, empathy, and coping with stress and emotions have proven to increase overall wellbeing. Developing these skills through regular and repeated practice can help us manage emotions effectively.

### **Social Support**

Human beings are social animals. Social support stands as an effective resource that helps facilitate growth and wellbeing. Creating a robust network of social support comprising of friends and family around ourselves acts as a safety net and is useful during times we face failures. Social support can provide strength in both tangible and non-tangible ways to help us get back on our feet.



# Ways to Express Emotions

## TALK



### CHOOSE

someone to talk to.



### THINK

about what you want to say.



### BE

**PRECISE** in your speech.

## WRITE



### DESCRIBE

your feelings.



### WRITE

what you'd like to say out loud.



### SHARE

(if you want).

## MOVE



### RUN

a lap or two.



### JOIN

a sport or team.



### DANCE

to music that matches the emotion.



# 12 SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



Alert and  
Engaged



heartmindonline.org



Secure and  
Calm

## 1. Take a Time-In



Spend 5 minutes in a calm, quiet space with the child. Connection is a key component of self-regulation.

## 2. Listening Break



Auditory stimulation such as a meditation, soothing music, or an audio book can help re-focus children's attention.

## 3. Rainbow Breath



Inhale and raise your arms above your head, painting a rainbow with your fingers! Exhale and return arms to your sides. Deep breathing regulates the vagus nerve.

## 4. Sing Vowel Sounds



Singing long, open vowel sounds such as "ahh" and "ohh" can balance sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

## 5. Face Painting



Pretend to "paint" the child's face in imaginary hues with the tip of your finger to provide sensory input.

## 6. Cool Down



Offer the child a cool glass of water or a popsicle, or run their wrists under cold water to help their nervous system reset.

## 7. Smell the Flowers



The scent of lavender can reduce anxiety. Mindfully smell fresh or dried lavender flowers with the child, focusing on how the smell makes them feel.

## 8. Move Like Animals



Invite the child to move like an animal that they would like to feel like, such as a carefree bird or proud lion. Somatically, this can help them shift their state.

## 9. Smiling Contest



See how long you can smile for together! Turning a frown upside down can really make you feel happier!

## 10. Tense and Release



Invite the child to clench their fists as tight as they can, then exhale to release. Repeat with various body parts to lower cortisol levels and heart rate.

## 11. Freeze Dance



Play upbeat music and instruct the child to freeze every time the music stops. Linking movement to their senses helps children regulate their bodies and minds.

## 12. Reflect Together



Fostering a self-reflective environment can help children learn to make better self-regulation choices in the future.



# TEACHING KIDS SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation is the ability to control behavioral and emotional responses. It's having the skill to calm yourself down when you get upset, to adjust to a change, and to handle frustration without outbursts. And it's a foundational developmental skill!

Teaching self-regulation takes practice and patience. Here are some simple ways to support your kids' self-regulation skills on a daily basis.



1

FRESH  
AIR



Provide opportunities for outdoor play to let the energy out. Increased heart rate = more blood flow to the brain = more brain power.

2

BUBBLES



Blowing bubbles is a kid-friendly way to practice deep breathing, because to blow them you need to breathe from the belly, at a regular tempo.

3

READ  
TOGETHER



Reading books about emotions is a great way to discuss all the feelings kids have.

4

LISTEN  
TO MUSIC



Calm music can help settle kids down. Making up simple, silly songs can also help children remember self-regulation strategies.

5

REST &  
NUTRITION



Lack of sleep, dehydration, or a hungry tummy can take a toll on anyone's social-emotional skills! Sometimes all a kid needs is a snack or a nap.

More reading...

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-are-emotions-2795178>

<https://positivepsychology.com/emotion-regulation/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/emotion-regulation#:~:text=Emotion%20regulation%20is%20the%20ability,to%20feel%20happy%20or%20calm>