AUTISM
Sefton Council
All Together Now

Mood Movers

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And
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5 Important questions to consider ?

1. Why do children with social and communication difficulties and autism struggle to cope?

2. Why do they become moody frustrated and anxious?

3. Why do they struggle to understand their own and other people's feelings?

4. Why do they not seem to pick up on social cues and struggle with social interactions?

5. What can we do to help?

In this workshop I will answer these questions.

Children with social and communication difficulties and autism may have difficulty with…

- Communicating their feelings to others
- Changing their feelings when they are anxious
- Knowing their reasons for feeling anxious.
- Knowing when their worries are big worries, medium sized worries or little worries.
- Because of this they may experience the following:-

- Tantrums
- Becoming withdrawn
- Pain
- Distress
- Fatigue
- A lack of motivation
- Changes to sleep patterns

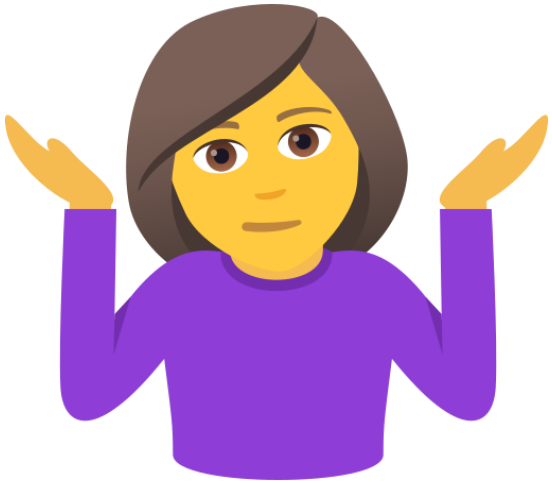
Communication…..

Is more than just words!

Communication is not just about the words we use, but how we use our **facial expressions** and **tone of voice** as well as **body language** to communicate with other people.

Children with autism have difficulties understanding messages that people give to each other without speaking including:

- The meaning we put into our voices
- The expressions on our faces
- Gestures (e.g. using our hands to wave and point)
- What it means to shrug our shoulders



Children with autism have problems understanding what other people are thinking or feeling

They find it difficult to see something from someone else's point of view.

They also struggle with humour and they take things very literally.

"But you must know about the dream I had last night – you were in it!"

Understanding Sensory Needs

Children with autism have problems understanding and expressing their own sensory needs.

They may be:

- **over-responsive**
- **under-responsive**
- **Or present with sensory seeking behaviour**

By **over-responsive** it may mean that a young person:

- Dislikes loud/unexpected noise
- Is easily startled
- Likes to chew to damp down noise
- Hates alarms going off
- Talks loudly
- Hates loud busy environments
- Doesn’t like bright lights
- Prefers a dark environment
- Is distracted by a lot of visual information
- Gags easily when eating/ dislikes strong flavours or smells

By **under-responsive** it may mean a young person:

- Misses name when called
- Has volume on very loud on tv or music player
- Enjoys fast loud music
- Talks loudly
- Likes bright spinning fast moving toys and objects.
- Chews on non food items
- Over fills mouth
- Craves strong flavours
- Doesn’t notice smells around them
- Doesn’t feel pain

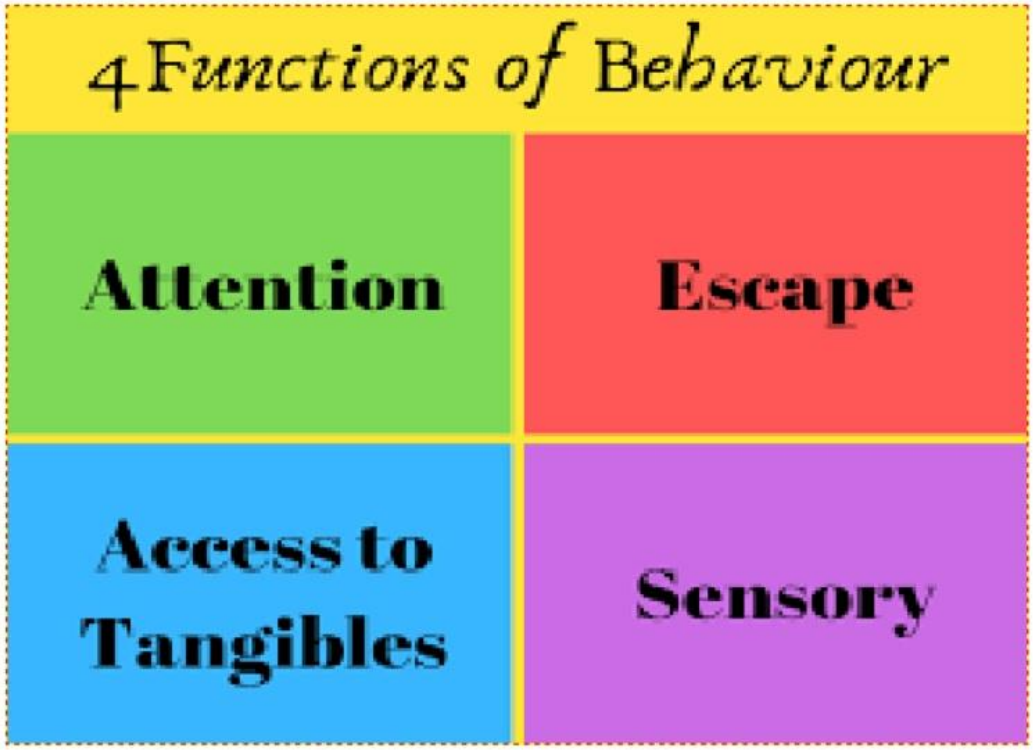
By **sensory seeking** it may mean a young person:

- Licks or bites
- Gives people tight hugs
- Crashes into objects to feel the physical pressure and contact
- Rocks their bodies or move arms frequently
- Enjoys rough play
- Enjoys rolling

What can cause anxiety?

- Trying to make sense of the world or what is happening and social rules
- New places activities or people
- Being given too many choices
- Not being able to make themselves understood or being able to communicate directly
- Differences in sensory processing
- Transitions and experiencing any change however small
- Focusing too much and getting stuck on unpleasant memories stresses or events and never letting go

Too much anxiety can lead to changes in behaviour and **understanding** the behaviour is important for parents!



All behaviour has a function…

As parents we can try and think:

- What does my child get out from doing this behaviour?
  E.g. I shout and scream and then get taken out of the shop.

- Is my child experiencing unpleasant sensory experiences?
  E.g. Too hot, too bright, too many people around, too much noise

- Keep an eye out for triggers
- Remember:

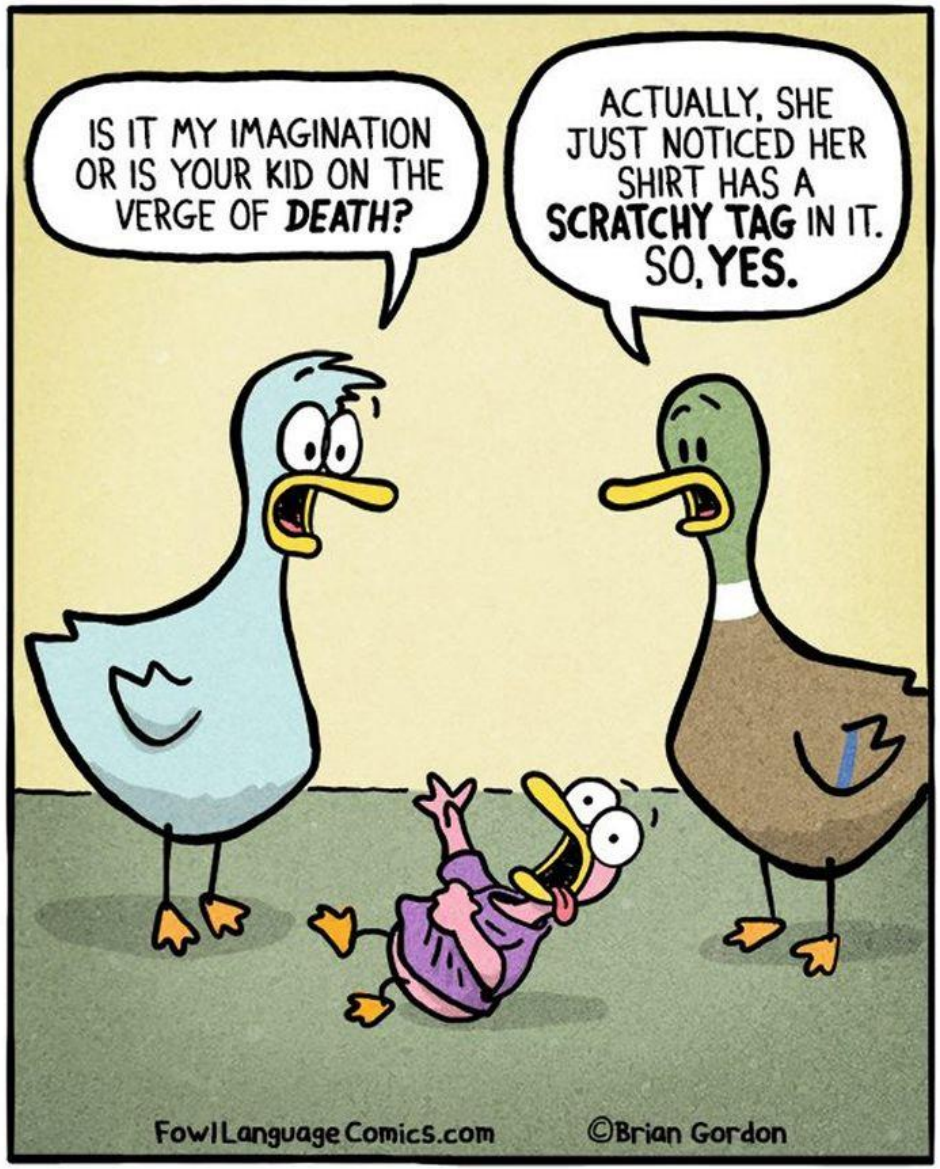
- The **rumble** is the **start of the behaviour**, e.g. fidgeting or pulling a face

- The **rage** is the **acting out or meltdown -** *When you child is reaching maximum stress levels and they have little control*

- The **recovery** is when the **behaviour has passed** and your child has worn himself out.

What can parents do to help?

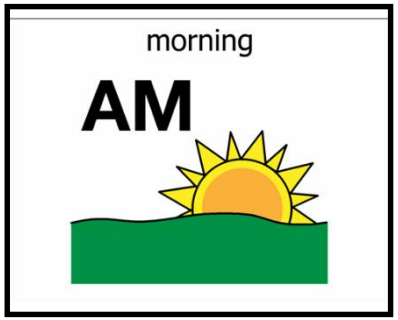
- Stay calm – hard but your own anger and frustration and worry may increase the problem
- Identify a safe place for your child to go to for example a pop up tent, a quiet place in the house.
- Allow plenty of breaks between any activities
- Make routines and stick to them
- Give one instruction at a time
- Give a warning of “something different”. Make it all visual.
- Try and think of the triggers , or what set off the anxiety outburst
- Use the emotional thermometer so your child has a way of communicating the level of their anxiety.
- Use fiddle toys, such as stress balls, clicker cubes play doh or glitter in plastic jars and divert attention

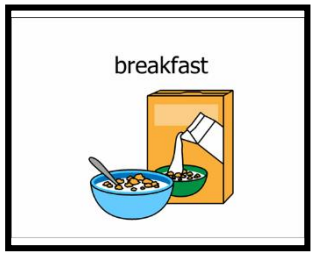

IS IT MY IMAGINATION OR IS YOUR KID ON THE VERGE OF DEATH?
ACTUALLY, SHE JUST NOTICED HER SHIRT HAS A SCRATCHY TAG IN IT. SO, YES.
FowlLanguageComics.com
©Brian Gordon

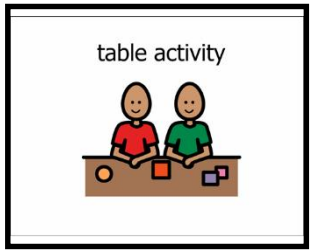
What can help?

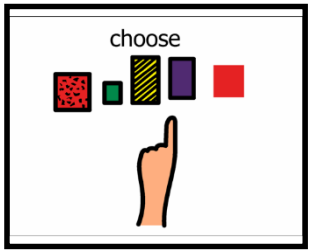
Use visual schedule for daily activities.

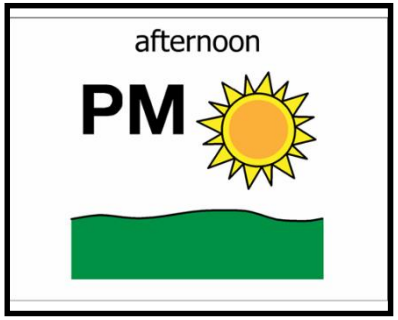
Our Daily Routine at Home



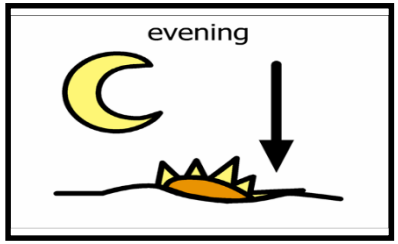








Remove the symbol when the activity has finished. Put the symbol in a finished packet.

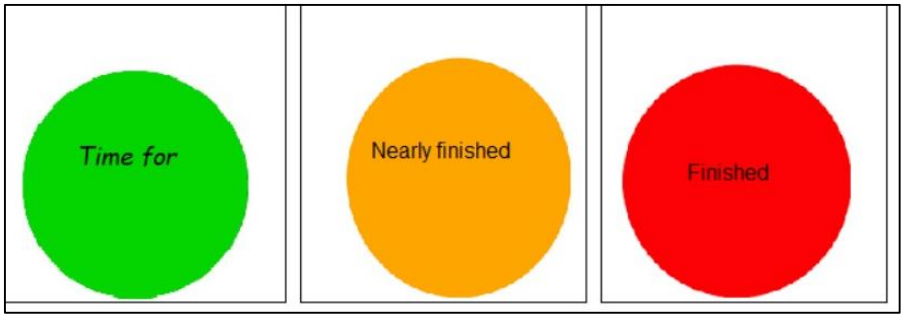


What can help?

Prepare young people for change

Use another Visual

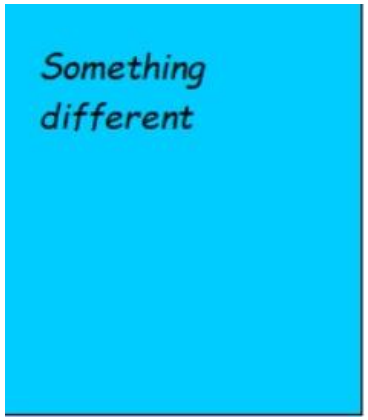
Use traffic lights



Give a warning that an activity is about to start, nearly finish or it is finished

Use a Timer

Show something different card



What can help?

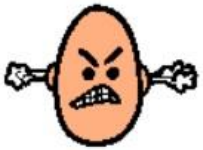
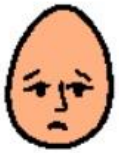
Talk about emotions.

Use visuals

I’m ok

I’m not ok

What can help?
All the family talking about how they are feeling?
I am on green.
I feel ok.
I am on blue.
I feel a bit cross.
I am on yellow.
I am not feeling happy.
I am on orange.
I feel very cross.
I am on red.
I am losing control.
I can try this .
Go for a walk.
Take a break.
Exercise.

Level	Person place or thing.	Makes me feel like this:	I can try this:
5			
4			
3	Mum has burnt the toast		Take a break and have a cup of tea
2			
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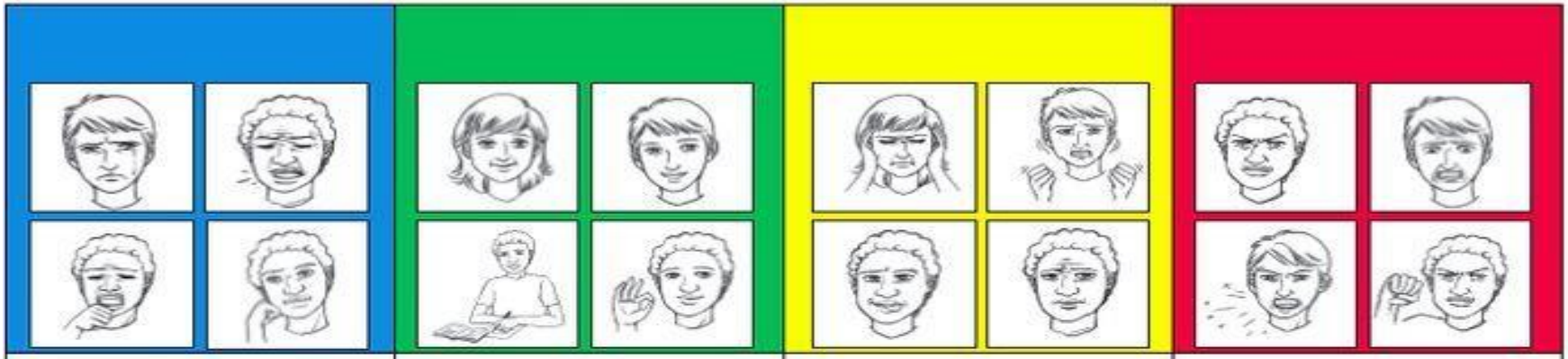
Emotion Thermometer

Emergency		5		
Adult Help		4		
Kid Fix with Adult Help		3		
Kid Fix		2		
Easy Fix		1		
No Problem	How do you feel?	0	What are you doing?	Triggers

The ZONES of Regulation®

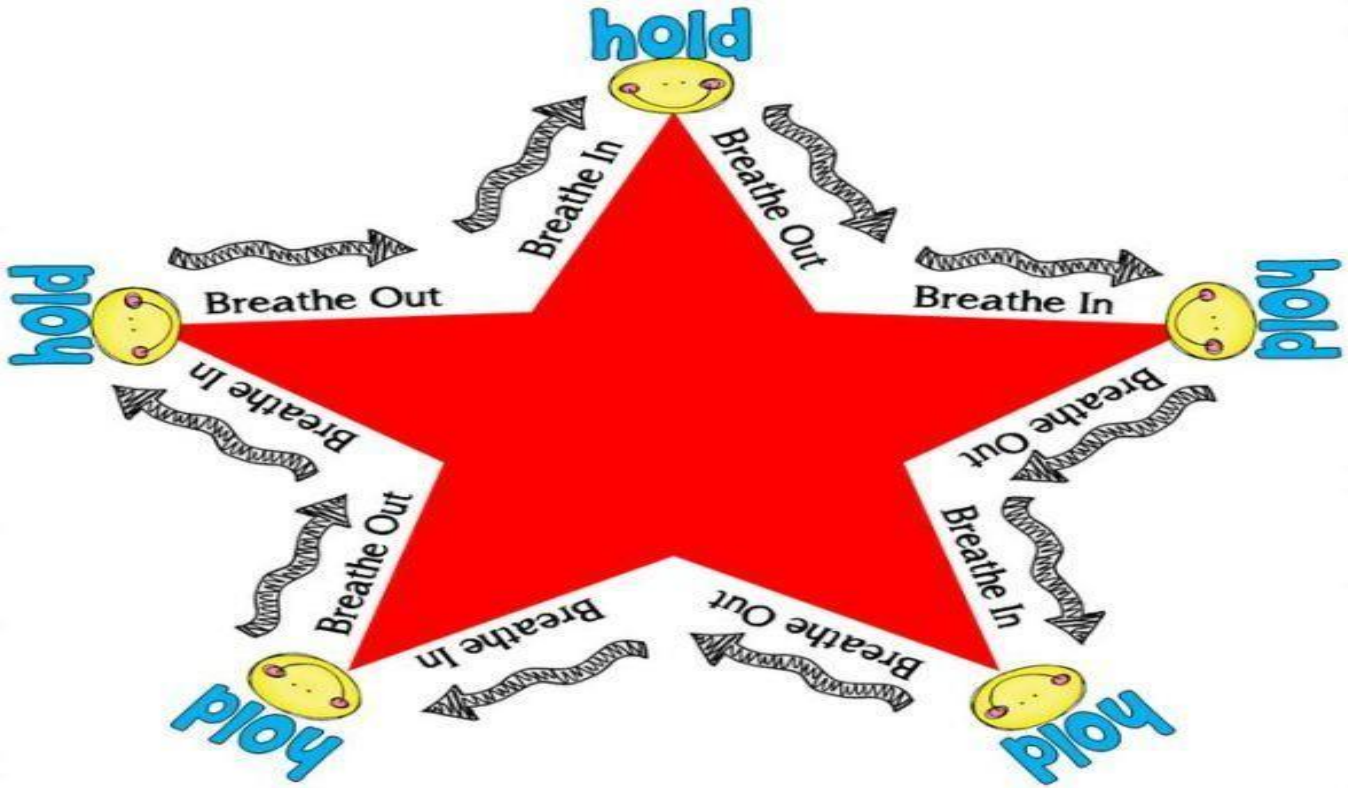


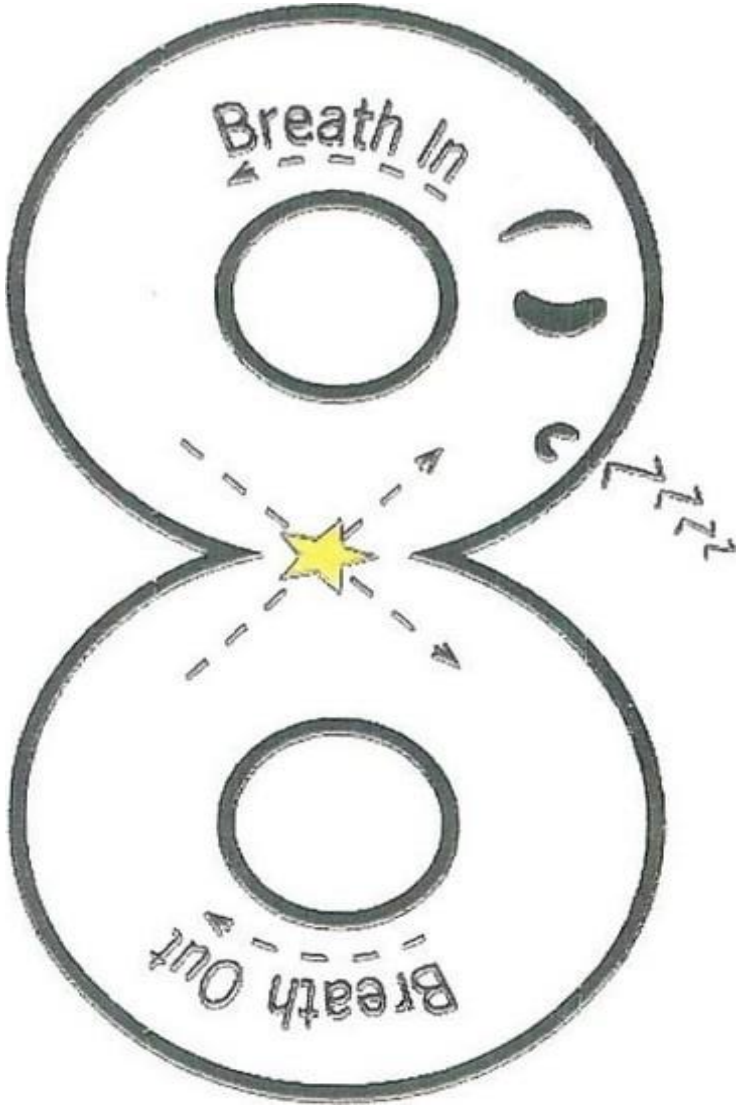
BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad	Happy	Frustrated	Mad/Angry
Sick	Calm	Worried	Mean
Tired	Feeling Okay	Silly/Wiggly	Terrified
Bored	Focused	Excited	Yelling/Hitting
Moving Slowly	Ready to Learn	Loss of Some Control	Out of Control

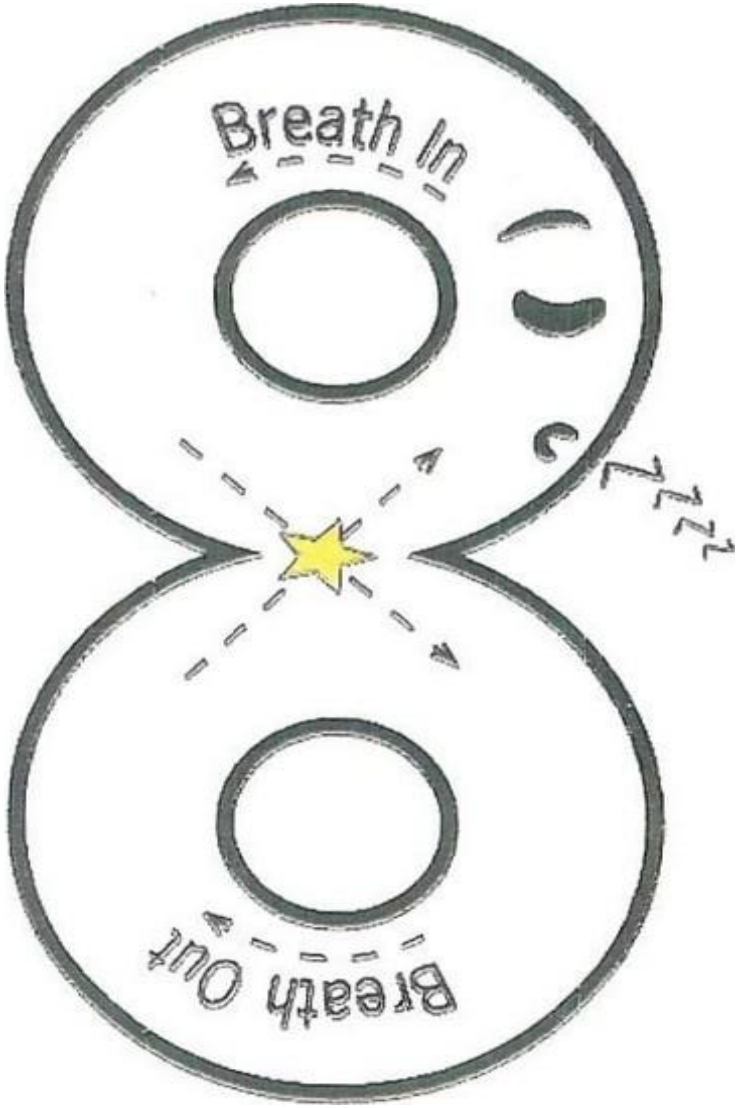
THE ZONES OF REGULATION®
sad
sick
tired
bored
moving slow
good
quiet hands
happy
nice feet
ready to
frustrated
worried
silly
excited
wiggly
mad
afraid
hitting
kicking
swiping
I can try...
I can try...
I can try...
I can try...
asking for hug
going for a walk
jumping on trampoline
bouncing on ball
working
expected behaviors
play with a friend/teacher
petting pig
bean bag chair
going for a walk
bean bin
squeezing putty
weighted blanket
deep breaths
1 2 3
count to 20
squeezing a ball

Star Breathing

Breathe in, hold at the point, and breathe out.
Follow your way around the star.




Breath In
Breath Out


Breath In
Breath Out

Happy

Or

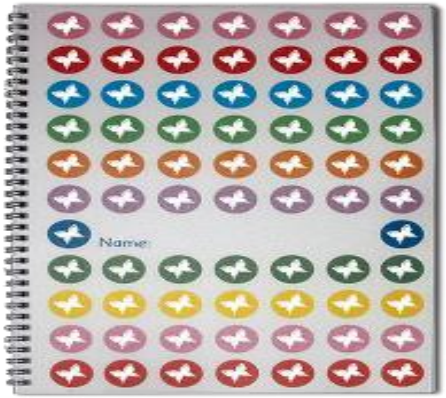
Sad

Happiness Box

Journals -

Four different designed journals to be used as they are, then through action research staff will personalise for each pupil.

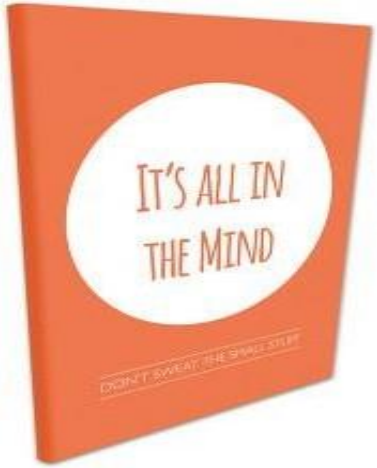
Key-Stage 1-2



Key-Stage 2 - 3

Key-Stage 3-4

Key-Stage 4-5



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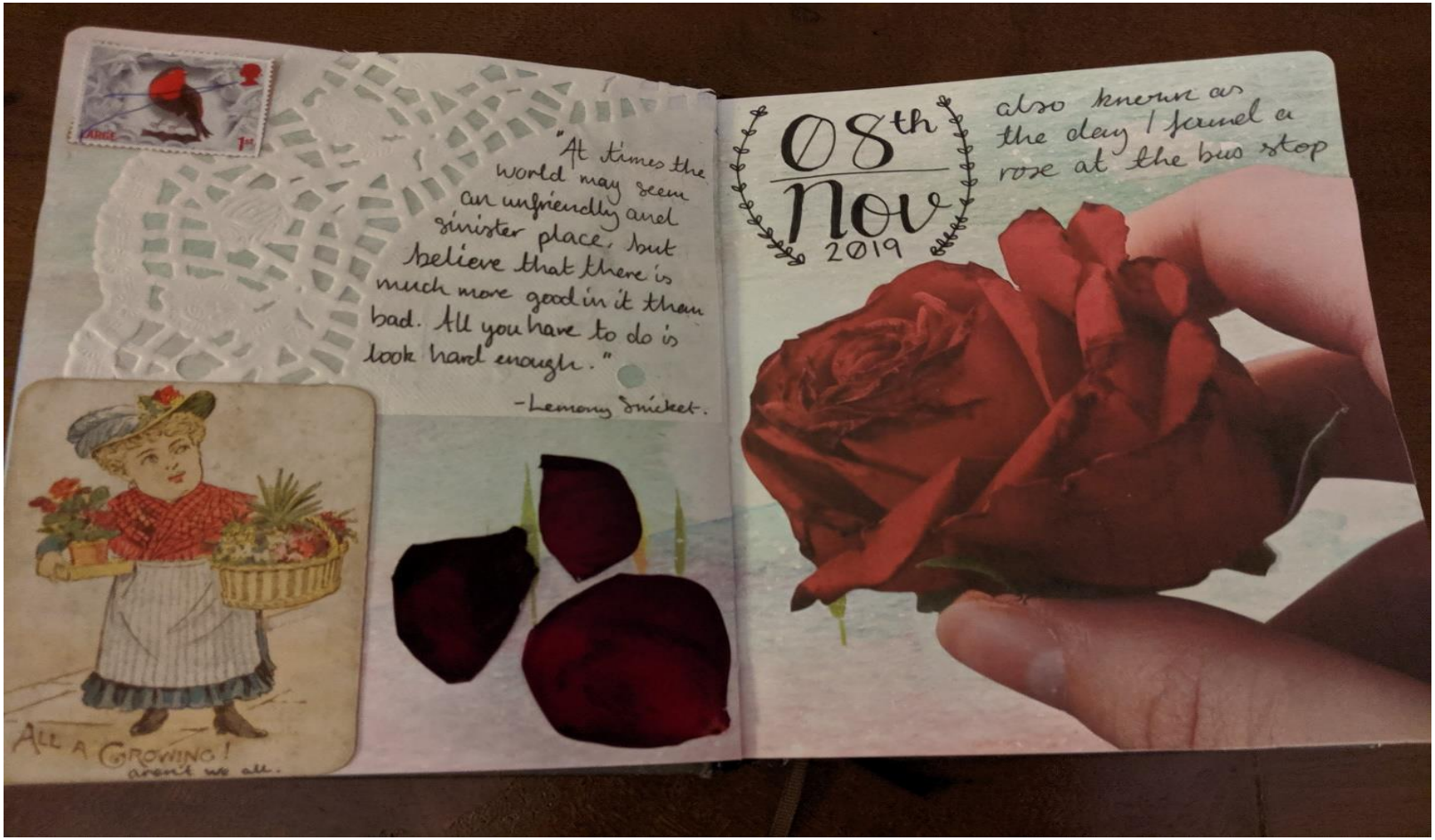
Journal as a positive experience



Useful Websites

https://www.seftondirectory.com/autism
https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/active-roleplay-lesson-starters
https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/advice.page
https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382
https://www.pinterest.co.uk/
https://www.twinkl.co.uk/

- USEFUL BOOKS
- Me and my feelings. A kids' guide to understanding and expressing themselves.
- By Vanessa Green Allen.
- My book full of feelings little medium big How to control and react to the size of your emotions, by Amy v. Jaffe and Luci Gardner
- When my worries get too big by Kari Dunn Buron