



Community Education Service

Child & Youth Mental Health Program

Ron Joyce
Children's Health Centre



Coping with my Child and Youth's Meltdowns

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Presenters:

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Coping with Meltdowns is Understanding the Meltdown

- You're child is struggling and this is their way of communicating that with you.
- Instead:
 - Learn what your child is lacking
 - What skills do they need?
 - Learn to help them before they feel the need to meltdown takes over.



I feel pressure to give in... so should I?

- It's not a win or lose situation
- SOMETIMES discipline and consequences are necessary, but NOT in the middle of a meltdown.
- What are you going through in the moment?
 - You are not thinking rationally either, your emotion is driving you to respond in a certain way.



Upstairs Meltdowns

- When a child is having an “upstairs tantrum” they are working from their logical brain.
- They are in need of routines, guidelines, and set expectations.



Downstairs Meltdowns

- When a child is having a “downstairs tantrum” they are working from their emotional brain, which shuts off all reason and understanding.
- We need to get to the bottom of why a child is having a or meltdown and address the need.
- Don’t do this in the moment.

Upstairs Brain

Allows us to think before we act

Decision-making

Control over emotions & body

Focus/concentration

Empathy

Self awareness



Downstairs Brain

Allows us to act before we think

Fight/Flight response

Emotional reactions

Bodily functions

Source: Siegel & Bryson "The Whole Brain Child"

What is behind the behaviour?

1. Over stimulated
 2. Under stimulated
 3. Not feeling heard
 4. Anxious
 5. Sensitive
 6. Misunderstood
 7. Feels ignored
 8. Low positive coping skills
1. Changes
 2. Being hurried
 3. Disorganization
 4. Easily frustrated
 5. Rigid
 6. Conflict with friends (Bossy)
 7. Impulsive
 8. Manipulative









Dealing with The Upstairs Meltdown

Routines, guidelines, and set expectations.

ROUTINES ARE GOOD FOR KIDS

- They teach:
 - Healthy habits
 - Prioritizing and planning
 - Time management
 - Good organizational skills
 - Independence
- Organized and predictable home environments help children and young people feel safe and secure.

TASK	MORNING ROUTINE CHECKLIST						
	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
 GET UP & MAKE BED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 GO POTTY & WASH HANDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 GET DRESSED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 EAT BREAKFAST	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 BRUSH HAIR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 BRUSH TEETH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

morning routine checklist

M	T	W	T	F	make bed
M	T	W	T	F	get dressed
M	T	W	T	F	eat breakfast
M	T	W	T	F	brush teeth
M	T	W	T	F	do hair
M	T	W	T	F	make lunch
M	T	W	T	F	pack backpack
M	T	W	T	F	get on shoes/coat
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	
M	T	W	T	F	

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- Work with your child
- How much time do they need?
- Have a clock or timer
- Do things need to be broken down?
- Notice effort
- Use a reward chart if necessary


Chores by age

Here are the types of chores children can do by their age group.

Pre-school (4-6 years old)


Chores related to their own daily routines:

 Put dirty laundry in basket and bring in laundry that is dry

 Put away toys and books

 Make the bed

 Fold clothes

 Putting utensils in sink after meals



Primary (7-12 years old)

Chores related to their own routines and some common household chores:

 Sweep and mop floor

 Vacuum floor and carpets

 Weeding the garden

 Help in kitchen

 Wash dishes


 Clear dinner table

 Take out trash



Secondary (>13 years old)

Chores with bigger responsibilities:

 Baby-sit younger siblings

 Clean bathroom

 Cook simple meals

 Wash car

 Do laundry

 Iron clothes

 Buying groceries



House Rules

1. Use your words not your hands
2. Inside voice, yelling is not ok
3. Use your calm down zone when you need a break
4. Try it twice yourself then ask for help
5. No screens an hour before bed



Dealing with The Downstairs Meltdown

What is behind the behaviour?

Learning to Deal with Downstairs Meltdowns

- Stay calm
- Stay positive
- Be supportive
- Be patient
- Ask for what they need
- Offer empathy



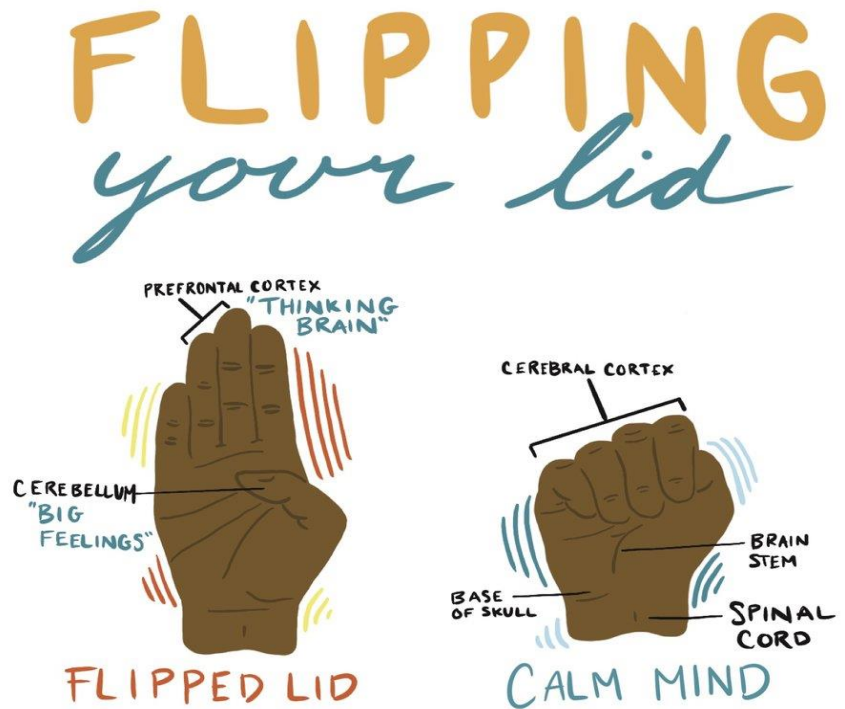
What you can do to model empathy

- Empathize with your child. For example, “Are you feeling scared of that dog? ...”
- Be a role model. ...
- Use “I” messages. ...
- Validate your child's difficult emotions. ...
- Use pretend play.

Flip Your Lid

Video explanation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_hPelcPRTg



You lose access to your prefrontal cortex, your "thinking brain." Your amygdala activates the fight, flight, freeze response, and you operate from a place of fear.

Since all of the parts of your brain are working in harmony, you feel calm, balanced, and alert yet relaxed.



Calm Down Strategies for Kids

pathway 2 SUCCESS



Color or draw



Think happy thoughts



Take deep breaths



Talk to someone



Make a list of choices



Set the timer and take a break



Read



Think of a pet



Look at photos



Use positive self-talk



Take a walk or exercise



Write in a journal

www.thepathway2success.com

Clipart by Kate Hadfield

Calm Down Strategies for Kids:

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/?s=calm+down+strategies>

HAPPY **GRUMPY** **SURPRISED** **FRUSTRATED**

CONTENT **ANGRY**

SAD **CONCERNED**

WORRIED **OVERWHELMED** **HESITANT** **ENVOIOUS**

kimsullivanmft.com

Video for children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4kw3Da6KhM>

More ideas

- Validation
- Parenting tips: planning ahead, when-then
- Understanding mental illness: anxiety and ADHD
- Managing routines
- Managing Meltdowns

Please follow the link to find our resources, course lists and registration information:

<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/mcmaster-childrens-hospital/patients-visitors/family-resources/>

905-521-2100 x74147

Resources

- <http://lemonlimeadventures.com/the-real-difference-between-tantrums-and-meltdowns/>
- <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/family/2019/09/20/why-children-household-chores>
- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/5-how-to-help-your-child-develop-empathy>
- <https://www.additudemag.com/help-your-child-control-his-temper/>
- <https://psychcentral.com/blog/what-self-care-is-and-what-it-isnt-2/>

Books

- **My Book Full of Feelings: How to Control and React to the Size of Your Emotions** by Amy V. Jaffe and Luci Gardner, Autism Asperger Pub. (2006)
- **The Way I Feel** by Janan Cain, Parenting Press (2000)
- **The Feelings Book: The Care & Keeping of Your Emotions** by Lynda Madison, American Girl Publishing (2011)
- **The Feelings Book** by Todd Parr, LB Kids (2005)
- **Learning to Listen, Learning to Care: A Workbook to Help Kids Learn Self-Control and Empathy** by Lawrence Shapiro, New Harbinger Publications (2008)
- **What to Do When You Grumble Too Much: A Kids Guide to Overcoming Negativity** by Dawn Huebner, Magination Press (2006)

Resources

- Contact Hamilton: 905-570-8888
- COAST 905-972-8338
- Youth Wellness Centre (ages 16-24yrs)
 - <https://www.stjoes.ca/youth-wellness-centre>
 - YWCintake@stjoes.ca
905.522.1155 ext. 31725
- [YourSpaceHamilton.ca](https://www.your-space-hamilton.ca)