
Children's Big Feelings

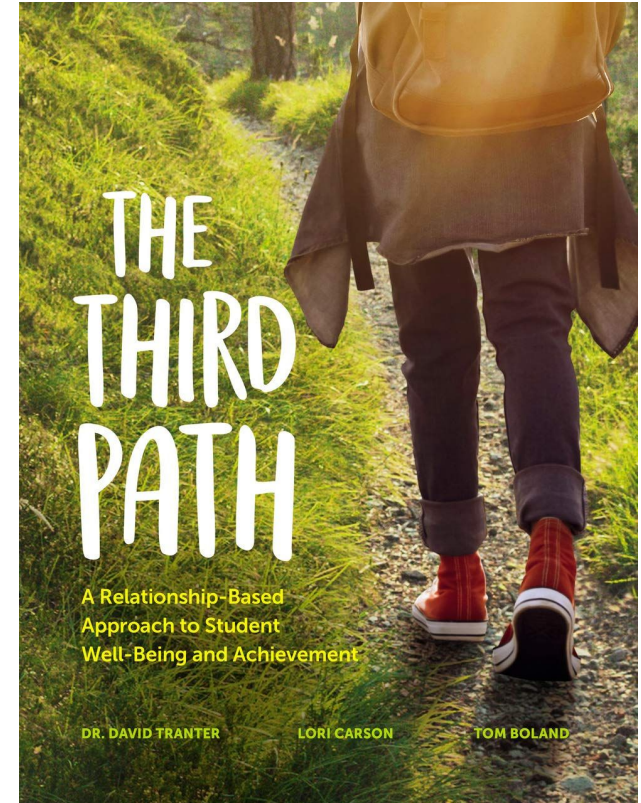
— And how to help them manage —
using Third Path strategies
(and a few extra ideas...)

Today we will be talking about....

- The Third Path approach to learning and wellbeing in our school
- How you can set the conditions to help your children regulate their feelings and behaviour focussing on:
 - Safety
 - Regulation
 - Positivity
- Helping children calm down when they “flip their lid”
- Questions/discussion

The Third Path at VRPS

- A relationship based approach to student well-being and achievement
- Approach which ensures that well-being is strengthened, while high expectations for academic achievement is maintained
- Understand behaviour from a relational perspective
- [Eight conditions for achievement and well-being](#)



Behavioural vs Relational way of looking at behaviour

- Behavioural perspective - rewards and consequences
- Relational approach - what are the needs the student is trying to meet with this behaviour?

First Condition - Safety

To provide a sense of safety:

- Be a secure base
 - Be flexible, but not a pushover
 - Serve and return - listen, empathize
 - Emotionally steady and consistent
 - Playful
- Be consistent
 - Cornerstone of safety and security - predictable
 - Positive, supportive, optimistic
 - Consistent expectations and consequences
 - Routine - mealtimes, bedtime

Safety continued

To provide a sense of safety:

- Be attuned and responsive
 - Give each child what they need - fair is not equal
 - More positive than negative
 - Listen
 - Find ways to help your child feel valued and successful

Safety - and behaviour

- Change your assumptions - reframe your thinking
 - From - children misbehave to get attention - to - children misbehave to seek connection/acceptance
 - From - the child is making a choice to misbehave - to - the child is doing the best they can at the time
 - From - inappropriate behaviour comes from defiant children - to - inappropriate behaviour comes from dysregulated children
 - From the child is being bad - to - the child is trying to meet their needs but doesn't know how

Finally - Create Calm

- Think about your home - is it a calm environment?
- Notice small signs that the child is anxious and catch it early - learn your child's triggers
- Plan ahead - have a calm place, or calming strategy ready
- Be calm yourself

Condition 2 - Regulation

“Stress is a necessary part of growth, and learning how to regulate - to successfully recognize and address stress - is a critical and lifelong challenge”

Understanding Stress

Recognizing Stress

Adults -

- Usually some awareness that we are stressed
- When we recognize it, we can take action to return to a calmer state
- We have a range of strategies
- We have more control over our lives

Children

- May not recognize stress
- Haven't build up strategies
- Dependent on adults to help

If stress gets too big....

Meltdown

Tantrum

Withdraw

Misbehaviour



How does dysregulation happen?

- Hand model of the brain - How the brain regulates emotions
- Children all respond differently to stressors
- When stress becomes too much some may become dysregulated “Flip the Lid”
 - Increase impulsivity
 - More emotional
 - More agitated
 - May withdraw or act out
 - May behave in unexpected ways
- Goal of regulation is to help children recognize their emotions and those of others, and be able to address them - we can teach this

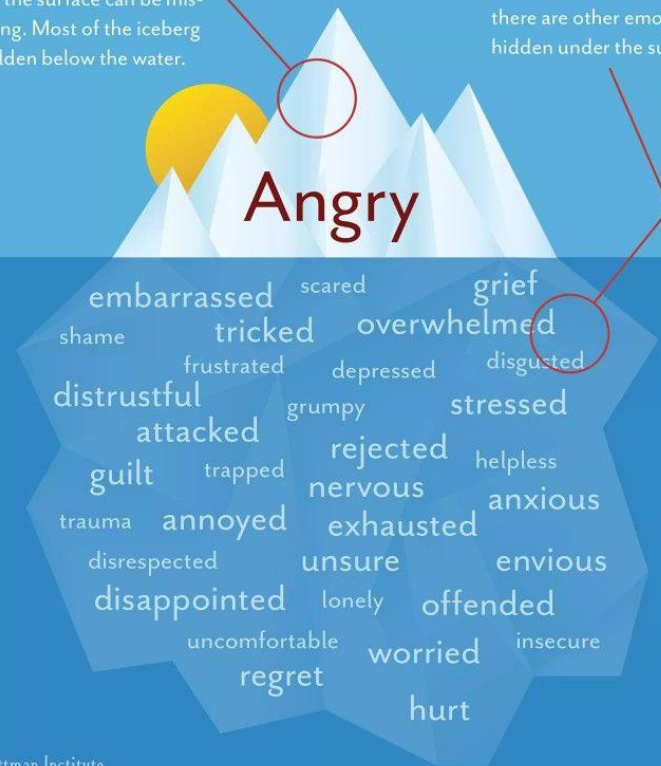
Teach your child:

- To identify their feelings, and how others feel
- Practice regulating

Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.

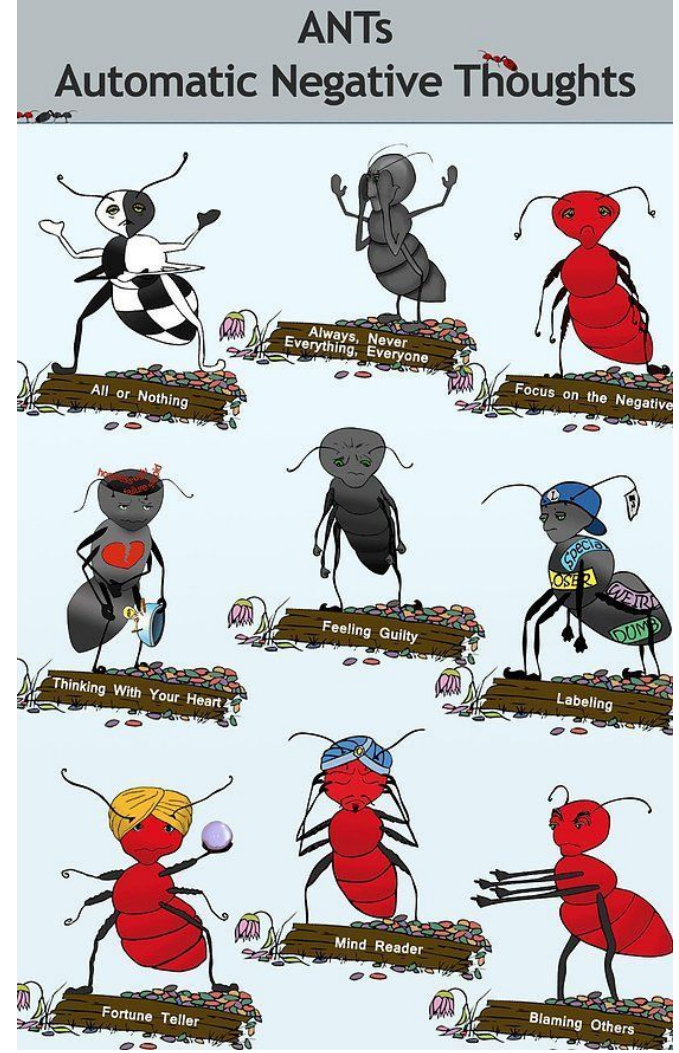


Teach your child:

Perspective - Size of the problem

Teach your child...

Teach children that many of our worries are unfounded - thinking mistakes - ANTS



Strategies to manage dysregulation

- Co-regulate
- Mindfulness (must pre-teach)
 - Deep breathing - hand on stomach - feel it go up and down
 - Mindful listening
 - Mindfulness apps - eg CALM
 - yoga , tai chi - do together
- Example of a mindfulness exercise (start at 39 seconds)

How to talk to a dysregulated child

Emotion Coaching:

- Validate - change BUT to BECAUSE
 - “I can understand why you might feel sad but there’s always next time”
 - To - “I can understand why you might feel sad because you know you’re going to miss out on the fun”
- Support - meet the emotional need
- Support - meet the practical need

Condition 4 -Positivity

Positive Thinking

An attitude that focuses on optimism, happiness and success



Growth Mindset

Individuals who believe their talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others, have a growth mindset. They tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset, those who believe their talents are innate gifts.

Carol Dweck

What Can I Say to Myself?

10 Growth Mindset Statements

FIXED MINDSET



What can I say to myself?

GROWTH MINDSET



INSTEAD OF:

TRY THINKING:

I'm not good at this.

I'm awesome at this.

I give up.

This is too hard.

I can't make this any better.

I just can't do Math.

I made a mistake.

She's so smart. I will never be that smart.

It's good enough.

Plan "A" didn't work.

1 What am I missing?

2 I'm on the right track.

3 I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.

4 This may take some time and effort.

5 I can always improve so I'll keep trying.

6 I'm going to train my brain in Math.

7 Mistakes help me to learn better.

8 I'm going to figure out how she does it.

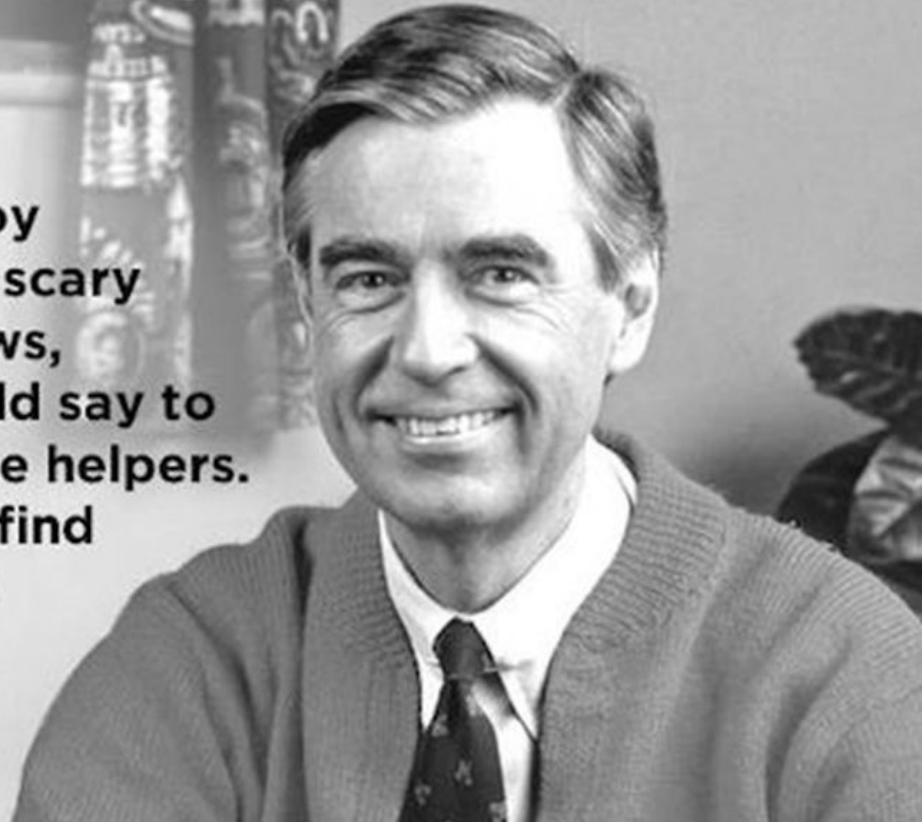
9 Is it really my best work?

10 Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters!

Help your child focus on the positive

**“When I was a boy
and I would see scary
things in the news,
my mother would say to
me, ‘Look for the helpers.
You will always find
people who are
helping.’”**

-Mr. Rogers



Help your child focus on the positive

- When your child comes home from school - what do you ask?
- What does your child say?
- If your child often comes home with negative stories, it may be time to change the conversation

Help your child focus on the positive

Ask:

- What was the best thing that happened at school today?
- Who did you have fun with today?
- What is your class learning in math today (the answer is not nothing...)

If your child wants to talk about a problem they had:

- Stay calm and positive
- Listen with full attention, validate feelings
- Ask how you can help the child solve the problem
- Let your child know that you believe in them

Promote Positive Thinking

- Teach your child to
 - notice and appreciate the positive - write or draw them
 - look for the things that they are grateful for - gratitude journal
 - Do an act of kindness every day

ANY
QUESTIONS?



Resources

[5 ways to build attachment with your children](#)

[Games to build attachment with young children](#)

[Bubble Bounce mindfulness video](#)

[15 mindfulness apps](#)

<https://gostrengths.com/6-ways-to-give-kids-a-stress-advantage/>
[videos and handouts on behaviour and emotion coaching](#)

[Size of the problem](#) poster

[Why do we lose control of our emotions?](#) - understand how the brain works

[Mindmasters](#)

[GoZen Youtube videos](#) videos about feelings and resilience

[Emotion Coaching video](#)