



Dealing with Difficult Emotions

We are all emotional beings. We need to teach children to **identify and name** feelings, and find ways of expressing them that are honest, while not hurting ourselves, each other or our surroundings .

All feelings are valid – they contain information about comfort or discomfort, safety and danger, trust and hurt. No feelings are intrinsically bad (though many people are made to feel they are). Everyone needs to be helped to identify and understand their feelings, to express them healthily and respect the feelings of others.

Accept your child's feelings and show you understand - Use **EMPATHY**

Denying someone's feelings won't make them go away. They will come out some other way.

Ways we deal with feelings

Suppressing, Bottling up, Withdrawing, Dumping, Acting out, = feel like they help at the time but don't solve the problem. They tend to be destructive

Below are healthier ways of dealing with feelings

Reflecting – Accepting our feelings, without being overwhelmed by them, thinking about them, reframing or resolving them.

Expressing – Letting the feelings out, acknowledging them to ourselves, talking, taking safe action (e.g. crying, punching a pillow)

Letting go – When we have taken notice of the messages our feelings bring, we can release them.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Empathise with your child, take a guess at how they may be feeling, listen to what they say and reflect back to them, what they have said “So you are saying that you are upset that you didn't get a turn?” Don't try to fix it straight away. Listen and reflect.

We are our children's role models.

How do we communicate our feelings?

Do we model healthy ways to manage anger?

Ideas for handling and releasing anger

Say "I feel....."

Hitting a cushion / punch bag

Write the name down of the person you are angry with and tearing up the sheet of paper

Writing an angry letter

Scribbling on a pad or paper to express anger

Take some time out

Exercise

Walk in the garden/ country

Run around in the garden

Scream out of earshot, or into a pillow

Have an 'I feel angry' mask or placard, or simply say it.

Talk about it with a supportive friend

TRACKING BACK

Children do not 'act badly' – difficult behaviour is driven by difficult emotions

Think of a difficult behaviour and then think of what feelings could be driving the behaviour e.g. anxiety, fear, feeling left out etc. Find out the trigger, then deal with the emotion first.

Communicating clearly and respectfully using an 'I' statement.

Giving an "I" Statement

I feel.....

(Say how you feel)

When.....

(describe the situation, and avoid the word "You")

Because

(state your need not being met)

And what I would like is.....

(describe the behaviour that would meet your need)

This is called 'Guiding without Criticising'

"TOO MUCH STRESS BRINGS DISTRESS"

What may cause children stress? How might they feel? How might they behave?

Use Empathy and Reflective Listening