

TECHNIQUES AND IDEAS IN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND AFFECT MODULATION



Funda Training Programme

BREATHING



Take 5 Breathing Exercise

Begin by putting your finger at the base of your thumb. Now gradually move up, as if you are tracing your hand, to the top of your thumb – rest there for a moment. Now move down the inner side of your thumb to your index finger.

Next we are going to add breathing. As you move from the base of your thumb up slowly in heel through your nose. Stop at the top of your thumb for a second. Now as you move down the inner side of your thumb slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeat this 5 x as you move up and down each finger. Slowly in healing through your nose as you move up and slowly exhaling through your mouth as you move down.



Cotton ball breathing

Breathing exercises can be done through blowing cotton balls. Child slowly in hales through their nose and then very slowly exhale through their mouth or blowing through a straw. The idea is to blow so softly and slowly when exhaling that the cotton ball

- a) Stays in their or parents hand
- b) Stays in a round bowl
- c) Stays in a circle or other shape on the floor / table

Bubble Breaths

Bubble breaths is when we slowly in hale through our nose and then close our eyes and slowly exhale through our mouths trying to blow one big bubble. The slower we exhale the bigger we can get the bubble.



Strong Sitting by Nancy Thomas

This amazingly powerful exercise makes such a big difference! I am so excited about all the new brain research and how it is clarifying the healing power of this fantastic, yet simple exercise. We have been using this technique with tremendous success for many years to help emotionally disturbed children! Let me share with you what we are finding:

What is “Strong Sitting”?



It is an exercise that helps the brain to shift gears. It is a time to think, dream, plan, or pray. The correct body position is: sitting on a comfortable mat or rug, cross-legged with the back straight, hands folded in a comfortable spot (resting near ankles for most). Arms are relaxed, and head and neck are straight and facing forward. The chest/lung area must be ‘open’ (not ‘caved in’), to allow oxygen in for the brain to function effectively. When this position is maintained—with no muscle movement—it allows the brain to shift and function freely. A spot with few distractions is best.

What does it do?

Strong Sitting gives the brain an opportunity to shift in the most successful position. Children who have been traumatized have the wiring in their brain more developed in the inner core (R Complex). This is a defence or survival mode. In other words, ‘fight’, i.e. arguing, defiance, negative behaviour; or ‘flight’, i.e. running away; or ‘freeze’, i.e. shutting down. This inner core is where children with RAD are most comfortable because it is the most highly developed section. They seek negative attention and criticism because it puts them in their comfort zone.

The parts of the mind that are less developed with RAD are the Limbic system, i.e. love and attachment; and the Neo-Cortex i.e. logic, reasoning—school work. In order to do Strong Sitting correctly—sitting still, straight and quiet—they must shift gears in their brain to the Neo-cortex by going through the Limbic system. It stimulates both of these parts of

the brain! Each minute they spend doing it correctly exercises the logic and/or love parts of the mind. Brain power!

How long should it last?

We have the children sit one minute for every year of life. For example, a five-year-old would sit for five minutes, a ten-year-old for ten minutes. We start with 30 seconds or a minute, and build up. Positive input helps the brain shift. Keep it easy so you have ample opportunity to give positive feedback and encouragement!

How often is it done?

During the initial healing phase we have found that two or three times a day is the most beneficial. We don't have them do it for long periods because it is difficult for some to sit still and quiet. Several short sessions are better than one long one, because it gives more opportunity to shift gears from one part of the brain to the next. I like to have children do their strong sitting exercise while I am preparing meals. The smell of cooking food is relaxing and helps them succeed.

What Strong Sitting is NOT:

It is not a punishment! It is not the child paying, with their time, for something they have done wrong! It is not to push the child away or isolate them. They must be where you can see them in order to encourage and cheer their efforts. It is a gift of quiet time to regroup, relax and heal.

- In individual therapy each session starts and end with strong sitting
- If there are parents and or house parents involved – the technique can be introduced to them as something that they begin to incorporate in their daily routine with the child – aiming at 3 times a day e.g at the breakfast table, at lunch table or before study time, before quiet time or snuggle time.

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND AFFECT MODULATION

After a general session on emotional awareness (identifying and labelling different emotions, what cause them and what we normally do when we experience them)

PLAYING DETECTIVE

Objectives:

- To encourage children to be aware of their body sensations when they express different feelings
- To help the children be aware of a body sensation when they feel emotions
- To help the children be able to go from a body sensation back to a feeling

Materials

Picture of Same Gender Child or Adolescent

List of Feelings

(See attached outline)

Instructions:

1. Tell the children that each of them will be building a personal body map of sensations so that they can use their body sensations to help them understand their feelings. Tell them they will be playing detective on their own body.
2. First lets just listen to our bodies. What sensations do you notice?



Your Heart

How is your heart beating right now?

Gentle, Fast, Slow, Pounding

Your Breathing

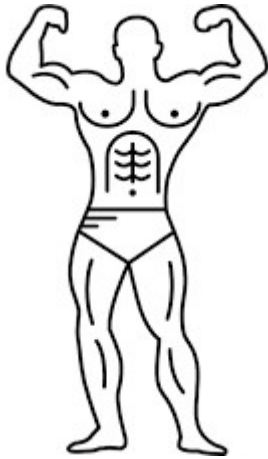
Long / Short

Deep/ Shallow

Slow / Fast

Breathless





Your Muscles & Body

Butterflies in my belly

Lump in my throat

Relaxed

Strong

Tense /Tight



Your Energy

Buzzing / Calm

Focused

Full of energy / tired

Shaky

Sleepy



Your temperature

Hot / burning

Cold

Sweaty



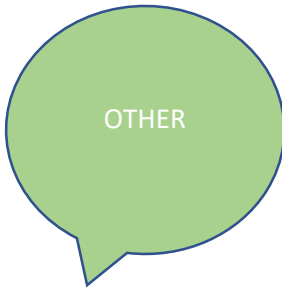
Your Hands:

Relaxed and loose

Clenched / Fist

Fidgety

Sweaty



Other

Voice (calm, loud, shaky)

Hungry, thirsty, full

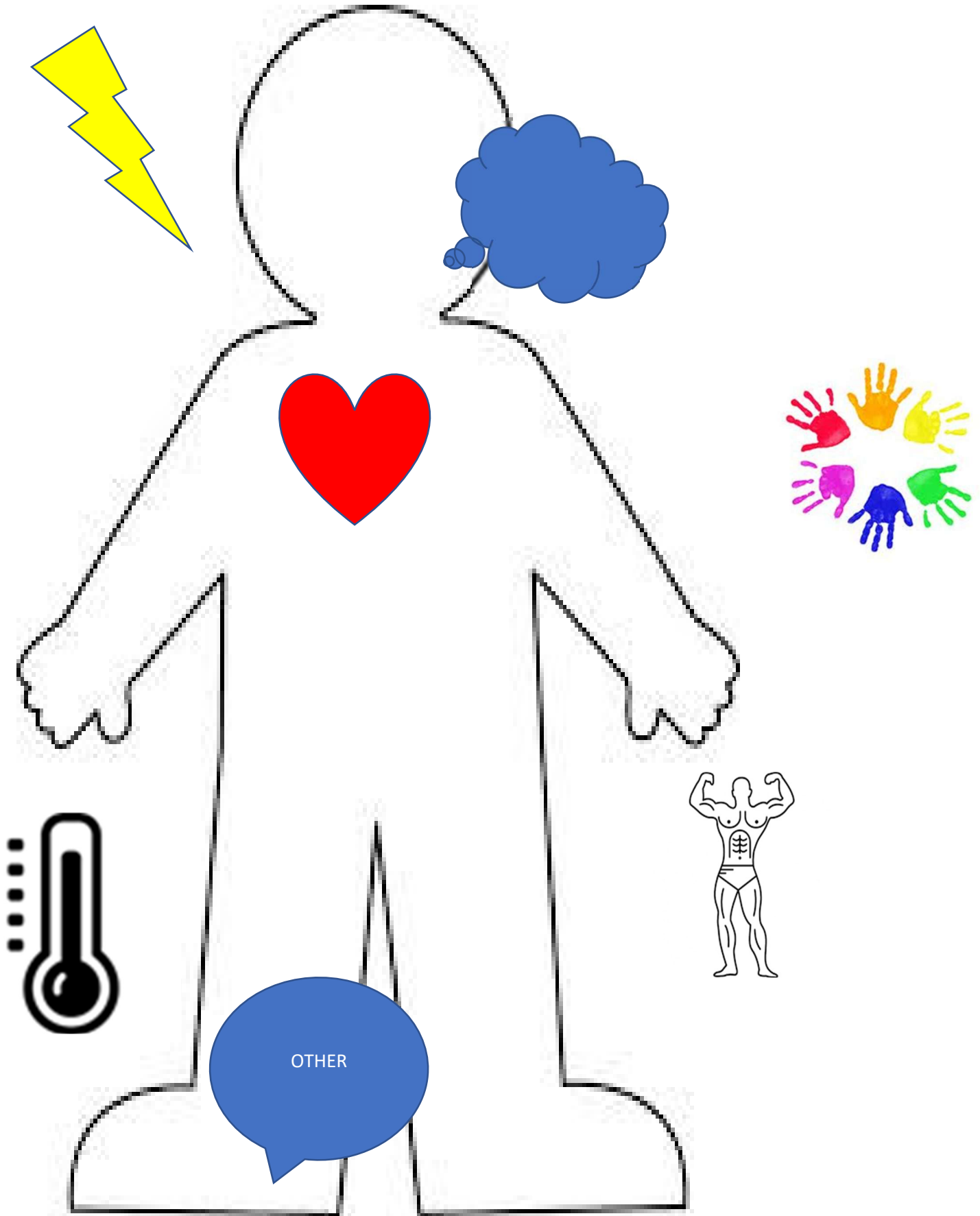
Comfortable / Uncomfortable

3. Give out the list of feelings. Each child can pick a few (three to five) **strong** feelings which they feel regularly. (Same feeling cards as in the previous session can be used)

3. Give each child a diagram of a same gender body of the appropriate age.

4. Ask the children to write their **strongest feeling(s)** at the top of the picture of the child. Ask them to imagine something which will make them feel the feeling. After they have imagined (fantasized) in order to bring forth the feeling, ask them to locate and describe the body feeling on the same gender diagram. Ask them to draw a line to the area of the body where they get the feeling. Next to the location they can write the feeling and the situations in which the feelings arise.

WHEN I FEEL _____



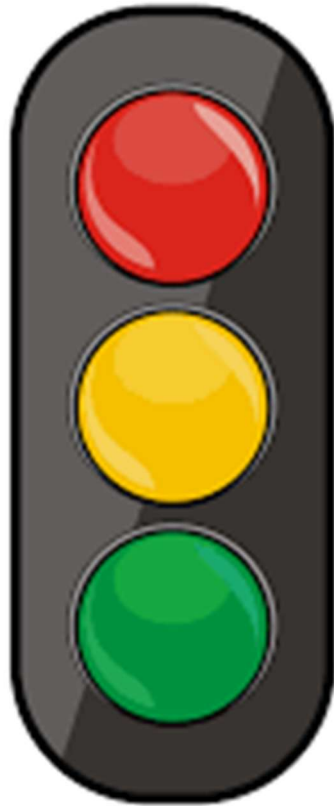
Each child completes this individually and it is then discussed in the group

5. Explain to the children that it is very helpful to be able to go from the body feeling to the emotion felt. Sometimes all the person knows is the body feeling and cannot understand what emotion they are feeling. Body feelings can lead to action without thoughts. When a person can go from the body sensation to the feeling, the brain can be engaged, and the person can then decide about how to act. They can decide what they need to make change to help them feel better. If they can't change it, they may need to accept that they cannot no matter how they act.

6. Explain to them that when they become more aware of their body sensations (why they are feeling a emotion) they can know themselves better. For instance, one day they are feeling really down and out. They feel like hitting someone, but they are not sure why. When they have learned to pay attention to their body sensations enough, they will be able to trace through their body feeling back to the beginning of the emotional feeling. Then, when they know when the emotional feeling started and what it is, they can make some decisions about what they want to do. Making decision about actions keeps people out of a lot of trouble.

PHASE 2 OF PLAYING DETECTIVE

In a follow up session



Play Red-Robot Green- Robot with the child. Therapist child and parent stand in a line. One is the robot and thus calls out either Red Robot or Green Robot. When the person calls out Green Robot the others can move around and attempt to get to the other side of the room or some finish line. When the person calls out Red Robot everyone has to stop and stand dead still. If a person moves, even the slightest move and the person has to go back to the starting line.

After playing this for a while the child is lead into a discussion on how we can control our bodies. In the game they were able to stop their bodies when Red Robot was called out. In the same way we can control our bodies when we experience a specific emotion. We can control the way our bodies react to things.

Those same sensations we experience in our bodies when we are angry or sad, can be used to calm down the attic and our emotions so that we remain in control. Let's go back to our bodies and the sensations we feel with big emotions.

- a) Let group members themselves try to think of body sensations they can use – what can create the opposite of for example fast breathing when we are angry or anxious (deep slow breathing)
- b) Idea is to get group members to try and figure out how they can reverse what is happening in their body / sensations by reversing the sensation.
 - Deep slow breathing versus rapid shallow breathing
 - Slow up and down movement of the body (like a mom rocking her baby)
 - Stretching out our muscles versus tense muscles
 - 90 second rule
 - Getting rid of pent up energy through gross motor movement versus pent up negative energy
 - Vigorous movement of our bodies
- c) In what other ways can we use our bodies / sensations to calm ourselves down.
 - (Look at the other senses – smell, taste, sight, touch, sound)
- d) Fill in the different ideas on the ginger-bread outline drawing (see attached)