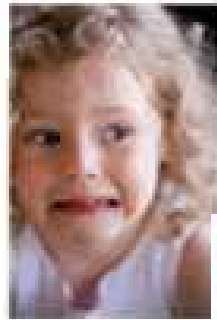


MINDS & HEARTS

A Specialist Clinic for Asperger's Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders



Emotion Management in the Young Child with Asperger's Syndrome



Dr Louise Ford

www.mindsandhearts.net



Overview



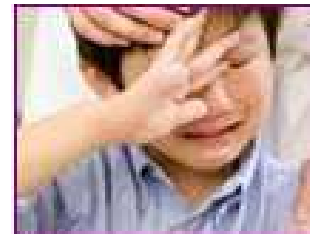
- Main areas of difficulty – anger & anxiety
- Basic emotional education
- Bodily signs of anxiety & anger
- Emotional toolbox
- Facing fears
- A role for parents
- How to handle a meltdown
- Emotion management group program 4-6

years at Minds & Hearts



Anger & Anxiety

- Higher levels anxiety & anger
- Higher resting level/arousal level
- 0-100 in a matter of seconds
- Difficulties calming down
- Fight or flight response almost constant
- Difficulties recognising & managing negative emotions
- Anxiety fuels anger



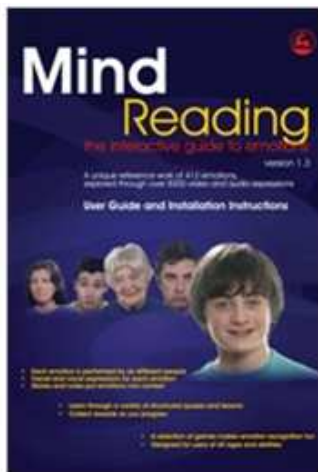
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Basic Emotional Education



- Spend more time on basic emotions
- First step is recognising emotions in others

Transporters DVD series
developed by Autism Research
Centre at Cambridge University



Mind Reading: The
interactive guide to
emotions CD Rom
Jessica Kingsley
Publishers

<http://www.thetransporters.com>

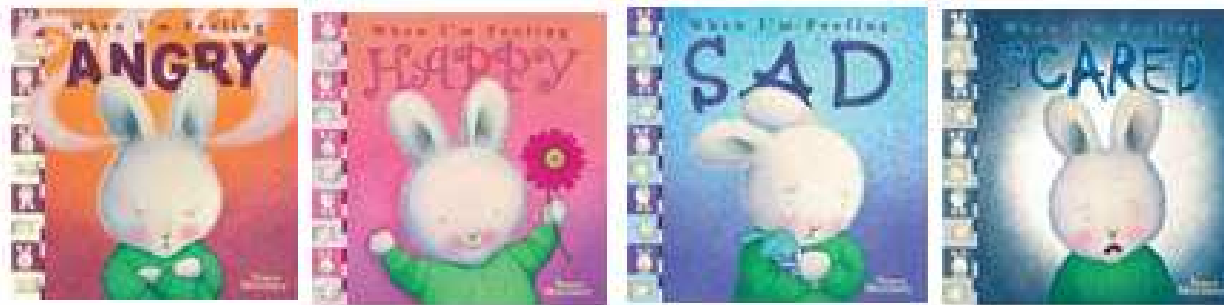


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Basic Emotional Education



- Project on emotions
 - Happy, relaxed/calm, sad, angry, scared
 - Pictures of faces showing feeling
 - Use their interest area “How do you think Ben 10 is feeling now?”
 - Trace Maroney feelings books Five Mile Press
 - Things that make me feel that way

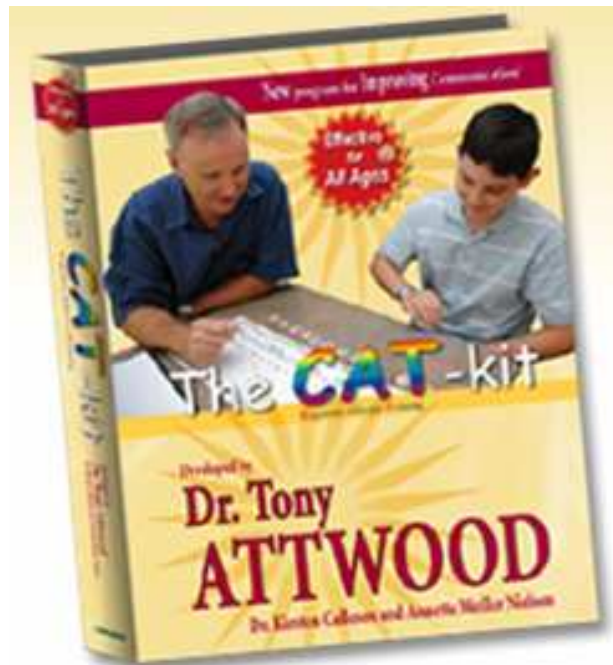
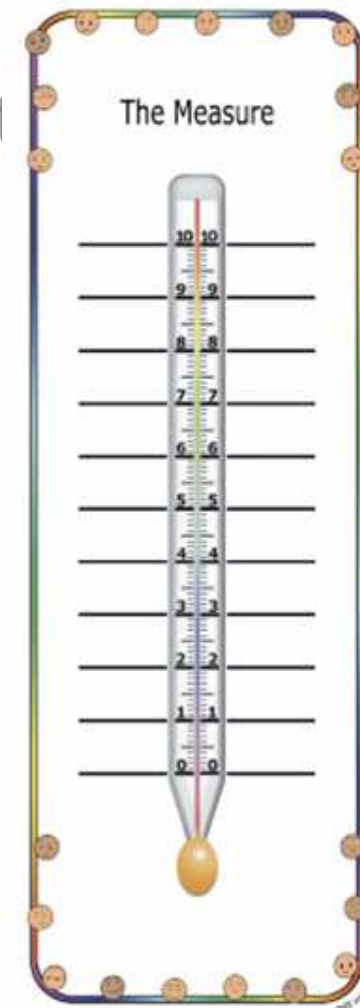


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Basic Emotional Education



- Different levels of the feeling
- The Cognitive Affective Training Kit (CAT kit) Jessica Kinsley Publishers



Cognitive Behaviour Therapy



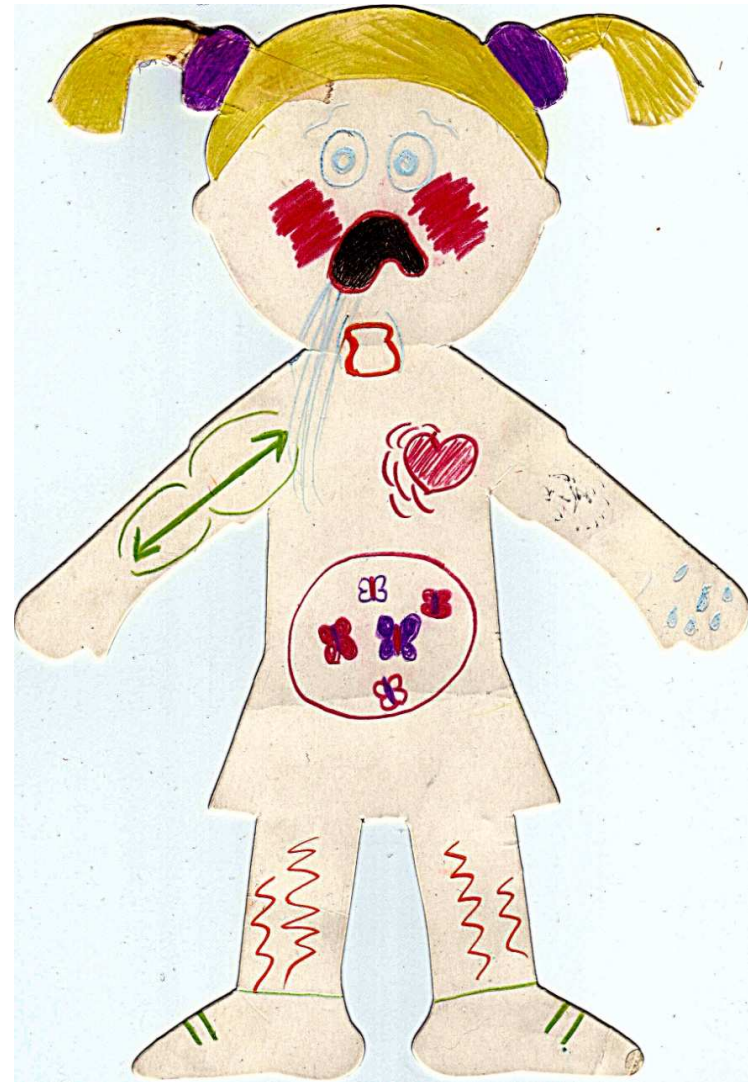
- Better recognising & labelling emotions
- Using strategies to expend physical emotional energy/ calm down
- Understanding relationship between thoughts, feelings & behaviours
- Changing thoughts to improve how feel and resulting behaviour



Anxious/Angry Body Signals

Recognition & Awareness

- Recognising bodily sensations associated with feelings of anger & anxiety
- Identify and monitor these



Emotional Toolbox



Relaxation tools - strategies for below five on thermometer to calm down

- Breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Lego/Drawing
- Listening to music
- Watching TV
- Reading



Emotional Toolbox



Physical tools - strategies for above five to burn up the anxious or angry energy

- Jumping on trampoline
- Punching a pillow
- Creative destruction - recycling
- Swimming
- Riding scooter
- Playing Wii



Emotional Toolbox



Thinking tools – things the child can say to him/herself

- “I can keep calm. When I’m calm I’m smart & I can solve the problem”
- “It might have been an accident. I should check before I get angry”
- “Sometimes plans change. I will get to go to grandma’s another time”



Emotional Toolbox



Social tools – people or pets

- Speaking to or being with family member
- Talking to a mentor or helper
- Patting a pet



Emotional Toolbox



Solitude – mentally & emotionally exhausted after socialising



Special interest tools – a source of relaxation, pleasure & escape



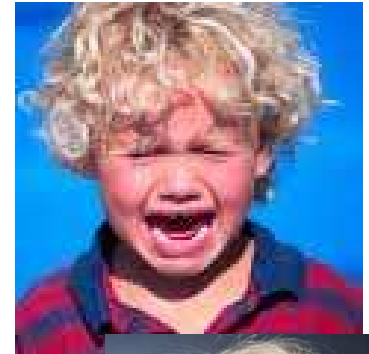
A Role for Parents

- Acknowledge the emotion
- Have the child label & rate emotion
- Prompt the child to use a strategy
- Be careful not to accidentally reward
- Remain calm – escalating emotion will fuel child's emotion
- Be aware that your anxiety can fuel your child's anxiety



Meltdown - What Should I Do?

- Remain calm
- Direct away from source of frustration
- Say something brief like “you are feeling angry and now you need to calm down”
- Suggest activity to burn up energy or calm down
- Don’t discuss or put consequence in place until calm



Further Information

- Not much available for very young age group
- Tony Attwood's Exploring Feelings books Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Evaluation studies (10-12 yrs)
 - Sofronoff et. al., (2005) A randomised controlled trial of a CBT intervention for anxiety in children with Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46, 1143-1151.
 - Sofronoff et. al., (2007) A randomised controlled trial of a CBT intervention for anger management in children diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37, 1203-1214.



Emotion Management Group

- New group program at Minds & Hearts
- Stef Plows' Doctoral research
- 4-6 year olds with an ASD
- 8 week CBT program
- Emotional education & management
- Parent component
- Pre and post questionnaire measures
- No published research for such young age

