








STUDY TIPS : EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Unpleasant feelings, like worry or frustration, are a normal part of life for everybody. When we have these unpleasant feelings, our ability to think clearly and calmly gets clouded. If your child tends to quickly get upset or shut down when they're stressed, this might indicate some difficulties with regulating their emotions in these times.

Emotional regulation is the ability to control and manage emotions (intentionally or unintentionally).

Below are some strategies for how you can help your child build their emotional regulation skills:

-  **"I can't do it yet"** Teach and promote the use of a "Growth Mindset" (focusing on the learning process as a way towards success). See biglifejournal.com for colourful and engaging Growth Mindset resources and posters.
-  Talk your child through ways to calm the physical reactions in their bodies when they are upset. For example, guide your child to use deep breathing, muscle relaxation, mindfulness, yoga, looking at peaceful images (in pictures or their minds), or another pleasant activity to help them physically relax.
-  Encourage your child to vocalise their Worried self-talk (e.g., "this is too hard, I will never be able to do this") and help them think of a Calm thought (e.g., "this is my first time trying this and lots of people aren't perfect at something the first time they try. I can do this if I keep practicing"). You can find a free online program at www.brave-online.com for parents and children to learn how to overcome unhelpful thoughts.
-  Praise and reward your child when they (a) make efforts to calm themselves or (b) become less upset at situations that used to upset them greatly.
-  **Name It to Tame It.** Prompt your child to say "I feel..." statements to help them identify their emotions. This alone can assist in calming your child. Help your child identify all of their emotions (e.g., your child might recognise they feel angry but might not realise they are *scared* or *confused* too). Follow up with further coping and relaxation strategies as needed.
-  If upsetting circumstances can be predicted (e.g., tests are a big source of worry and upset for your child), prepare your child for these situations beforehand (e.g., with your child, develop an action plan or a positive self-talk script to use when they are feeling overwhelmed or upset).
-  Teach your child how to assess The Size of the Problem and compare it with The Size of their Reaction. Where needed, brainstorm proportionate reactions.