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Neuro Developmental Conditions Pathway

Understanding and managing strong emotions - All Things ADHD

By
Laura Mackenzie

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Top Tips

- ✓ **Ask for it in writing**
- ✓ **Ask questions**
- ✓ **Stay active**
- ✓ **View video in increased playback speed**
- ✓ **Take a break**
- ✓ **Check understanding**

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Understanding and Managing Strong Emotions

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Session Plan

- What are strong emotions
 - Why we have them
 - What happens in the body
- Emotional regulation and ADHD
- Strategies

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Strong Emotions

What words come to mind when you think of strong and difficult emotions?

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Strong Emotions

Both Anxiety and Anger are emotions linked to what is called ***'Fight and Flight'***

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'Fight and Flight'
is our natural response to
'FEAR'
along with *Freeze, Fawn, Fatigue*

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What happens...

The Amygdala

- our internal alarm system
- releases Cortisol into the brain -> body knows there is a threat
- Adrenalin produced -> preparation for threat

Amygdala on high alert **BLOCKS** information coming into the front part of the brain
so **NO** information can be processed in the rational, thinking part of the brain.

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Behaviour...

- Runs away
- Verbally aggressive
- Physically aggressive
- Defiant
- Throws things

Triggers

- Getting a detention at school
- Forgetting homework
- Feeling tired
- Feeling hungry
- Waking up late

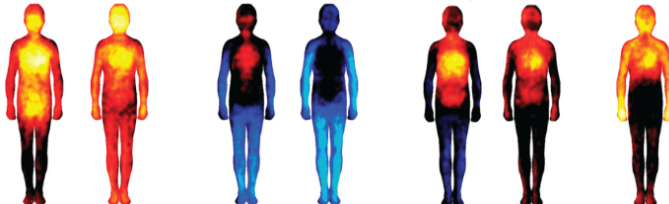
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Physical elements of core emotions

Love Happiness Sadness Depression Anxiety Fear Anger



<https://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646>

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Recap:

- We all have strong emotions
- Fight & Flight response
 - Automatic
 - Can't process new information
- Triggers
- Physical sensations can help identify strong emotions

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Hyperactivity Inattention Impulsivity

Only the tip of an iceberg is visible, the majority is hidden beneath the surface

Difficulty with controlling emotions

- Struggles to set goals, plan and get things done
- Not able to learn easily from own consequences
- Possible learning difficulties
- Brain is less developmentally mature than the body
- Struggling to sleep

Mental health problems – Anxiety, low self-esteem

- Struggles to work with new information
- Loses track of time

(Additu.de/school)

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Why does ADHD make emotional regulation more difficult?

Summarised from Barkley, R.A. (2015). *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment*, 4th ed. New York: Guilford Publications. Found at <https://thrivingwithadhd.com.au/emotional-dysregulation/>

- Very sensitive to emotional triggers
- High emotional **impulsivity**
- Intense, overwhelming emotional reactions that they have to show

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- Difficulty in moderating the emotion and/or replace it with a different one
- Problems refocusing their attention away from strong emotions.
- Difficulties self-soothing due to poor working memory
- Difficulties organising and executing an appropriate response

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ADHD & Emotional Regulation: What You Need to Know – How to ADHD

- How To ADHD is a young adult Youtuber with ADHD
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kew2JhKq3Y&feature=emb_rel_end

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Strategies

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We all have ways that help us to
Self-Regulate when we experience
difficult feelings or emotions

We can learn these skills with practice
and help

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What do we mean by
Self-Regulation?


'It is control (of oneself) by oneself'
(Andrea Bell – GoodTherapy.org)

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Self-Regulation

When we self-regulate, we are able to calm our body and settle the amygdala, which enables us to think and reason more clearly.























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'Zones of Regulation'














What zone am I in?

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Use tools to get in the green zone

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Autism Emotional Tool Kit
Based on a resource within The CAT Kit developed by Dr Tony Attwood

Physical Activity

Social Tools

Relaxation

Special Interests

Thoughts and Perspectives

Unhelpful things

Sensory Strategies

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Dan Hughes' PACE Model

Playfulness – an open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude

- *Less defensive and more reflective when playful*
- *Can help diffuse a difficult or tense situation*
- *Playfulness helps keep perspective*

Acceptance – unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved

- *Active communication*
- *Accepting without judgement or evaluation*
 - *the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions underneath the behaviour*
- *The parent may be very firm in limiting behaviour while at the same time accepting the motive or the behaviour.*

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Curiosity – without judgement children become aware of their inner life

- *Be curious as to what has happened*
- *“What do you think was going on? What do you think that was about?”*

Empathy – a sense of compassion for the child and her feelings

- *Putting yourself in their shoes*
- *Providing comfort and support*
- *Show that sharing the child's distress will not be too much and together they will get through it*

• More information can be found at <https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/>

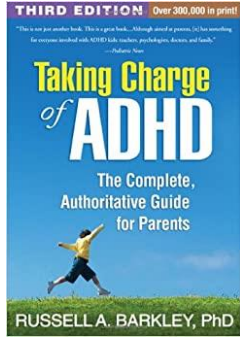
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Further resources

www.additudemag.com

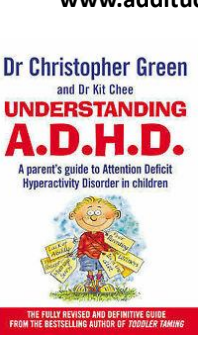


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—Roberta Ryan

Taking Charge of ADHD
The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents

RUSSELL A. BARKLEY, PhD



Dr Christopher Green
and Dr Kit Chee
UNDERSTANDING A.D.H.D.
A parent's guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in children

THE FULLY REVISED AND DEFINITIVE GUIDE FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF TODDLER TAKING

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