

Feelings

Research shows that encouraging children to express their feelings is the key to nurturing emotional health.

No matter how unreasonable the child's emotional reaction seems he/she needs the feeling to be accepted before you can begin to encourage them out of it.

If you discourage the child's feelings by saying "you're ok" or responding impatiently by saying "you're being silly" you will leave the child feeling misunderstood, confused, and anxious.

It is better for the child if you say "I can see you're upset" then stay close and allow the child the time they need to finish being upset with your full support.

When you have done this, you can then help the child to move on to a more positive experience. "You've finished crying; now we can go and play outside"

You could use...

- Feelings cards
- Feelings pictures
- Social stories
- Calm down handout (available on request)

Feeling cards/pictures can be used to allow the child to express their feelings or for the adult to explain how certain behaviour makes them feel with children who have difficulty with social interaction.

A Social Story is an individualised short story that describes social relevant cues in any given situation. It breaks down a challenging social situation into understandable steps by omitting irrelevant information and by being highly descriptive to help children understand the entirety of a situation. It includes answers to questions such as who, what, when, where, and why in social situations, using visuals and written text. Social Stories are used to teach particular social skills, such as taking turns, understanding rules, routines, situations, and upcoming events; and understanding expectations.

Clam down the 'how to' hand-out explains how to use items, areas, and activities to reduce children's anxiety and promote their ability to self-calm (how to sheet available on request)

Useful References and Links

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>

<https://childhood101.com/helping-children-manage-big-emotions-printable-emotions-cards/>