

# Losing It!

## Managing Anger

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# Puddle Stomp

## Stamping and chanting



### What you need:

- Big boots
- Huge socks
- Funny slippers
- Sheets of bubble wrap

### What you do

1. Help the child to spread the bubble wrap out on the floor. Secure edges with masking tape if needed.
2. Let children choose if they want to wear boots, socks or slippers. Let them choose some for you too.
3. Hold hands together and start stamping on the bubble wrap.
4. Begin to follow their ideas- led them lead.
5. Make up a sing-song commentary such as "stamp, stamp, STAMP" or "jump, jump, JUMP"
6. Tell them how this can sometimes help with angry feelings. Continue stamping and jumping together.
7. Swap footwear. Try to bring the conversation to feelings. Talk about what you can do when you are feeling cross or angry inside. Reassure your child that they can come to you and tell you or they can get the bubble wrap out for a good stamp
8. Make time at the end of the activity to have some quiet time together. This gives them time to calm down as well as time to say anything they might want to.

*\*Give children plenty of time to get into this activity. They may initially want to sit and pop the bubbles. It takes time to have the confidence to really let go of feelings*

### More ideas

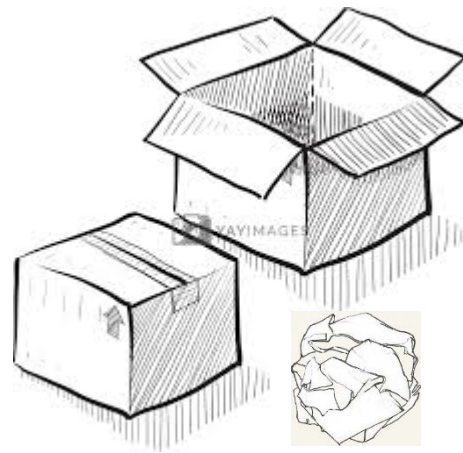
- Put on water proofs and stamp in real puddles
- Take off shoes and socks and stamp on wet grass. Breathe deeply. Look at plants, trees, clouds.
- Move to a space place with a soft beanbag. Take off socks and shoes. Take turns to kick it into the air, as far or high as you can.

# Big Box Bash

Take it out on a box!

## What you need

- Newspaper
- Several different sizes of cardboard boxes (remove staples)
- Cardboard tubes for kitchen rolls
- Masking tape



## What you do

1. Spend time together scrunching up large sheets of old newspaper. Make long twisted shapes and scrunchy balls.
2. Encourage the children to throw the scrunched shapes into the boxes.
3. Bash the boxes with the twisted paper and cardboard tubes. Try to really flatten them on the box. Stamp on the boxes.
4. Work together to press and screw as much scrunched up paper as possible into one of the boxes. Jump in it to press it down. Work together to hold down the lid and seal it with masking tape.
5. Talk about how you feel now you have worked so hard and used so much energy. Talk about how using energy and exercise can change feelings and moods and making you feel better when you are cross or upset.
6. Make sure you allow enough time for the child to finish the activity in their own time. Plan in cooling down at the end of the activity- maybe wash hands in warm water. Take time drying the child's hands. Massage in some baby oil or moisturiser

*\*Reassure the child that boisterous play is OK as long as no-one is getting hurt.*

## More ideas

- Trampolines are great for bouncing away cross feelings too.
- Put the boxes on a safe surface and help the child jump on them until they are satisfyingly flattened
- Play together in very damp sand. Use moulds and buckets to make shape. Tip out and splat with your hands forcefully. Model and support them.

# Beanbag Boxer

Use that energy!

## What you need

- A big beanbag or floor cushion
- Small hand-held beanbags
- Two smaller cushions



## What you do

1. Sit alongside your child, each of you on a cushion.
2. Share the small beanbags out. Place the large beanbag or floor cushion about 1 metre away
3. Take turns to throw the small beanbags rapidly at the target. As soon as they are all thrown encourage the child to belly flop or dive onto the beanbag/ cushion too.
4. Have another go!
5. Talk about how you feel when you have done this- "I was feeling cross because... now I'm feeling much better."
6. Pause to allow the child to respond. Invite them to play again but this time try to throw them even faster.
7. Be sure to finish the game with a quiet relaxing time- perhaps some favourite finger rhymes whilst sitting together on the beanbag.

*\*playing alongside & joining in whilst also sharing your thoughts and feelings will help build rapport and gain the child's trust- both are vital if they are going to be able to express their feelings and for you to gain an insight as to why they might be feeling so angry.*

### More ideas

- Dip sponges into soapy water. Throw them onto the ground or into buckets or boxes.
- Digging is a great way to get rid of anger and frustration.
- Roll lots of balls of playdough and encourage your child to squish them

# Perfect Pizza

Get rid of frustration- make a pizza

## What you need

- Pizza dough packet mix
- Aprons
- Warm water
- Rolling pin
- Baking tray
- Ripe / tinned peeled tomatoes
- Grated cheese



## What you do

1. Wash hands together. Use the opportunity to talk about cooking and making meals at home.
2. Explain that you feel the child could be a really good chef and you would love them to help you make some pizza treats for everyone to eat.
3. Put on aprons and ask the child to help to fasten yours. Ask if you can help fasten theirs.
4. Make pizza dough together. Take time kneading the dough and talking together. Talk about how cooking makes you happy. Ask what makes them happy.
5. Divide and share out the dough to make pizzas.
6. Squeeze tomatoes through your fingers and/or through a sieve into a bowl. Spread onto pizzas.
7. Add grated cheese and bake. Once cooked, cut and share out. Use the opportunity to praise child for their efforts.

*\*Getting really absorbed in this sort of activity can help angry children calm down. These creative activities can allow children to express their feelings more readily as they are focussed on the activity.*

*\* Model words to describe feelings and acknowledge that we all have them. This may help them to process their own feelings. Acknowledge emotions- "You look like might be feeling angry. Is something upsetting you?"*

## More ideas

- Make a cake- beating the ingredients together can help to calm.
- Use a hand whisk with soapy water to make lots of soap suds

# Big Band

Make a big sound

## What you need

- Two tambourines
- Two drums
- Two beaters
- Marching music



## What you do

- 1) Listen to the music together. Practice marching and stamping around outside.
- 2) Sit opposite each other. Play a simple game of 'follow my leader' using the drums and beaters. Imitate the child's actions carefully and more quietly. Make sure you set aside enough time for the child to take the lead on the activity and to have you close attention
- 3) Place the tambourines on the floor next to the drum. Work together to create a steady beat- drum first beat, tambourine second beat...one, two, one, two.....
- 4) Talk about how you are feeling after the drumming session. Give the child time to talk about how they are feeling.
- 5) Spend time together exploring different patterns and sounds. Finish by playing the drum and tambourine quietly and calmly to end the activity.

*\*If the child feels uncomfortable, sit alongside rather than opposite.*

*\*This is a great opportunity to enjoy full attention without the need for talking.*

### More ideas

- Suspend old pots, pans and utensils from a simple frame or rope line. Play alongside hitting objects with a beater or stick.
- Make a big shaker by putting some plastic bricks inside a sealed cardboard box. Roll it around outside for some noisy vigorous play.
- Listen to some music through headphones for a while in a small quiet area or tent. Add cushions to lay on.

# Rip and Stick

Cover it all with layers and layers

## What you need

- Old newspapers
- Paste in a small bucket
- Large decorating paint brushes
- Big pens
- Large sheet of paper



## What you do

- 1) On the paper draw pictures and symbols of things that make you angry/ sad/ unhappy. Invite the child to share and draw their ideas too.
- 2) As you draw tear long strips of newspaper and talk about things that help calm you when you have angry feelings
- 3) Use the big paint brushes to put lots of paste onto the picture. Criss-cross the newspaper over the pictures and symbols.
- 4) Build up lots of layers. Add any extra pictures, symbols or words that the child suggests as you play. Allow lots of time for them to think about things that make them angry.
- 5) Reassure the child that it is OK to feel angry and that sometimes we don't know why. Let the child know that it is important to let someone know how you are feeling so that they can help you deal with these feelings and support you to calm.

*\*Listen carefully to the child. Silences and pauses can tell you more than words*

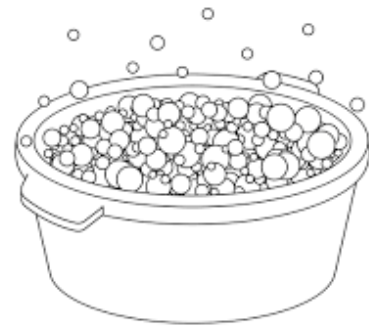
*\*Observe body language to help you respond sensitively to the child.*

## More ideas

- Chalk boards and wet chinks are a good way of making strong marks to convey feelings that are easily wiped away if the child wishes to erase them.
- Try drawing in wet sand or using clay to play with. Both provide strong sensory feedback to the child which can be particularly rewarding and comforting to a distressed child.

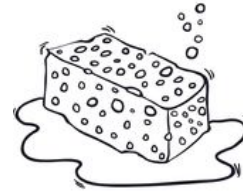
# Squeeze it!

Sudsy water for outside play



## What you need

- Washing up bowl
- Warm soapy water
- Different textured wash cloths and flannels
- Different sizes of sponges
- Plastic containers and cups



## What you do

- 1) Sit together and explore the different cloths and sponges. How tight can you squeeze and wring them? How small can you scrunch them up? Can you squeeze them into containers or cups?
- 2) Talk about how the activity makes you feel as you play.
- 3) Listen to the child's comments and watch quietly as they play, observe body language and non-verbal communication.
- 4) Take the bowl outside and play throwing wet sponges and cloths. Splat them on the ground, wash them and do it again!
- 5) When finished, tip the bubbly water on the ground or grass and stamp/paddle in it.

### More ideas

- Make a squeezey basket- a collection of toys for squeezing and pulling- koosh balls, lycra fabric, silly putty, etc
- Take off cushion covers together. Spend time putting them back on, stuffing the cushions back in and plumping them up.
- Hang a small rug over the washing line and try some good old fashioned carpet beating. (make sure others are a safe distance away)



# Hammer Away

## Pounding and Beating

### What you need

- A bag of plastic golf tees
- A child sized plastic hammer
- Lots of clean egg boxes



### What you do

- 1) Show the child how to use the hammer safely to hammer in the tees into the upside down egg boxes.
- 2) Let the child hammer. If they seem relaxed, talk about different feelings we sometimes have. Reassure that these are normal and it's OK to be cross or upset but not to lose control. Encourage the child to talk about times when they might feel these emotions.
- 3) Reflect back on what they say, acknowledge their feelings and reassure that having feelings is OK. Explain simply a time when you had the same emotion and what you did to help you manage that feeling.
- 4) Sing 'Johnny hammers with one hammer..'

*\*Enjoy a few minutes of shared attention on this simple activity. Model appropriate language to express feelings. Observe the child as you talk with them and listen whilst you observe their body language*

### More ideas

- Set up a simple tool shop with plastic tools in. make sure hammering is available.
- Sing action songs and rhymes as you march, stamp and jump.

# An Oasis

## Creating a safe place

### What you need

- A big cardboard box
- Cushions and beanbags
- A soft blanket
- Lightweight fabrics
- Clips or pegs
- String



### What you do

- 1) The aim is create a calm, quiet, uncluttered place where a child can go if they are feeling tired, fearful, anxious, overwhelmed or angry. Somewhere where they can retreat to rest, think and watch. Use soft fabrics and calming colours.
- 2) Position the oasis so that the child can be seen by adults but where the child can watch what is going on around them.
- 3) Face cushions can help children to show how they are feeling without having to speak.
- 4) Adults need to acknowledge and check-in with the child offering a smile, nod or calming touch if appropriate. Adults need to make the child aware that they know they are choosing to spend a few moments by themselves but monitor that they don't spend too much time there. Check in regularly.

*\*Observe the child and offer different ways for them to convey their feelings- paper and pens- drawing and mark making, sticky labels with faces on, cushions...*

#### **More ideas**

- Add a lavender pillow or put some lavender oil on a small pillow or cushion
- Have a special soft toy that loves to be cuddled in the oasis.

# A bit of Calm

Soothing, calming play

## What you need

- Packet of jelly made up in ice cube trays and turned out on a shallow tray
- Lolly sticks
- Small buttons, beads



## What you do

- 1) Gently poke and prod the jelly with your fingertips. Use a calm, quiet voice to describe what you are doing. Invite the child to do this with you.
- 2) Slow down your words and actions to create a calming atmosphere. Explore the jelly, how it feels, smells, the way it changes when you touch it.
- 3) Offer the child a lolly stick to poke and stick into the jelly. Push buttons and beads into it too.
- 4) Play slowly. Talk about how calming and relaxing the activity is. Talk together about things that make you excited and things that calm you.
- 5) Finish by tipping the jelly into warm water and swishing it around until it melts and disappears

*\*Make sure you are sitting at the child's level and alongside them- calm and non-confrontational.*

*\* Be confident in just playing and being there without feeling that you need to talk much.*

### More ideas

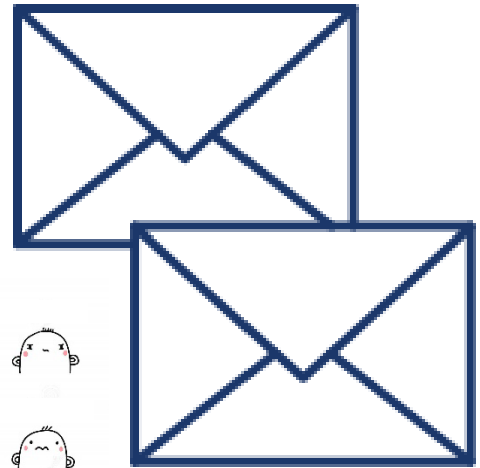
- Stand together and watch clouds moving across the sky or raindrops as they trickle down windows.
- Play simple clapping games together. They are a great way of making a connection with a child that is calming down after feeling angry.

# A Hundred Tiny Pieces

Letting go of emotions

## What you need

- Small pieces of paper
- Pens
- Two envelopes



## What you do

- 1) Fold small bits of paper in half and make some small cards.
- 2) Talk with the child and help them put a 'feeling face' on the front of each card (picture or symbol)- sad, happy, angry, disappointed...
- 3) Talk together and inside draw or write what can cause that feeling. Take time to acknowledge feelings and causes that the child describes.
- 4) Help the child to sort the cards into two envelopes: one of good feelings to keep and one of bad feelings to tear up.
- 5) Tear the bad feelings envelope up into lots of tiny pieces (or cut it up)
- 6) If you can cope with the mess, throw the tiny pieces up in the air and blow the bad feelings away. Hoover them up and empty away.

*\*Encourage the child to think about what triggers their feelings. Reassure them that it is good to have strong feelings and praise them for times when they have managed their feelings well*

### More ideas

- At the end of playing give the child a tiny smiley face draw on paper for them to keep in their pocket to let them know how proud you are of them for sharing their feelings.
- Remember to always praise with smiles, thumbs up, nods, contingent touch whenever you see them behaving appropriately. Be specific- label what you see that you like.