



CALM IN THE CHAOS: DE-ESCALATION IDEAS FOR TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN



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Goals

- Learn effective de-escalation strategies.
- Learn common environmental stressors that contribute to escalation.
- Recognize the rumble, rage, and recovery stages.
- Apply validation, empathy, and reflection.
- Learn how to model and teach self-soothing and distress tolerance skills.



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STRESS AND ANXIETY IN OUR CHILDREN IS OFTEN TRIGGERED OR RESULTS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS SUCH AS:

- Facing challenging social situations with inadequate social awareness, social understanding, and social problem-solving skills.
- A sense of loss of control.
- Difficulty in predicting outcomes of everyday events and behaviors.
- Misperception of social events, and a rigidity in moral judgment that results from a very concrete sense of social justice violations.

(Myles, 2004) 3

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THIS STRESS AND ANXIETY MAY LOOK LIKE:

- Withdrawal.
- Inattention and hyperactivity.
- Aggressive or oppositional behavior, often described as tantrums, rage, and "meltdowns".



(Myles, 2004)

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RUMBLE STAGE



RAGE STAGE



RECOVERY STAGE

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RUMBLE STAGE STRATEGIES



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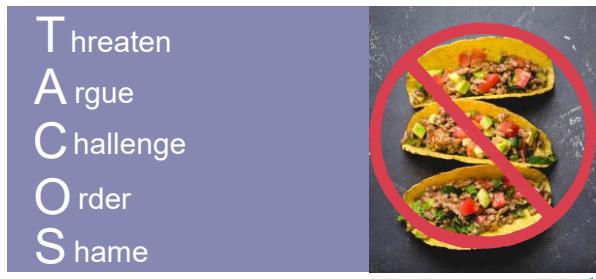
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**RECOVERY AND REPAIR
CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN
BOTH ADULT AND CHILD
ARE REGULATED.**

(Regulated does not =calm)



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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Identify a place and time to talk:

- Ensure that the child is fully de-escalated.
- Ensure that the child feels safe in the space and with the adult.
- Assess whether the child has the energy to participate in this conversation.



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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Explore child's point of view:

- Ask "what" questions instead of "why" questions.
- Example: "You seemed upset when you threw your backpack down. What happened that caused that?"



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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Summarize feelings and content:

- Example: "Let me make sure that I heard everything and have this right You had a bad day at school because and you failed a math quiz, so when I asked you if you had any math homework to do, it made you angry.



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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Connect trigger to feelings to behavior:



- Example (this can be just an addition to the last statement above) "...so when I asked you if you had any math homework to do, it made you angry, and then you threw your backpack down and it broke the lamp.

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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Alternative responses to feelings discussed:



- Ask them to give two or three alternatives (different behaviors) that are positive ways to handle the situation and their feelings.
- Example: "What are some other things you think would work to let me know you are angry (or let the energy of that anger out)?

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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Plan/Practice:

- Let the child pick the plan that she thinks will work for her ... and that is OK with the adult.
- You can also ask what (support) the child may want from the adult.



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THE LIFESPACE INTERVIEW IESCAPE

Enter child back into the routine:

- Thank the child for being a part of this conversation/ thinking about other solutions.
- Ask the child if she is ready for the next activity/expectation of the day, if they are not, explore what support they need.



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DE-ESCALATE

- Remain calm
- Slow Down
- Decrease stimuli
- Avoid threats or shame
- Use short positive requests



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VALIDATE, EMPATHIZE, & REFLECT

"Practically speaking, validation means resisting the temptation to deny or minimize what our kids are going through."

-Dan Siegel, M.D. from No Drama Discipline



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SELF-SOOTHING & DISTRESS TOLERANCE

- Get kids in touch.
- Sit with kids in their distress.
- Model and teach stress management skills.
- Challenge kids at neutral times/micro-dose positive stress narrating.



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"When I know that you care about my feelings and are willing to join me in how they feel to me, I no longer feel alone or overwhelmed..."

When you help me organize what currently feels chaotic, I can calm down and make sense of what previously felt so difficult.

This helps me build a new capacity to deal with these feelings on my own."



-from Raising a Secure Child, by Hoffman, Cooper & Powell, 2017

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