

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: *Strategies for home and school*

Behaviour Regulation

All behaviour serves a purpose and can occur for many reasons – sensory, social, communication, anxiety, anger, tantrums, etc. You may need a range of resources to help students. I believe in 50/50 behaviour plans where 50% of the strategies used are for the adults to use to manage the child's behaviour, and 50% are strategies for the child to manage their own behaviour.

Emotional Regulation

The emotional world on the spectrum can be very scary! Emotions are often, either turned off or coming on like a freight train! The emotions often come on without warning and are difficult to label and connect to a cause, which leaves the person unable to control them. You cannot control that which you cannot define, label, and understand. (*Excerpt from The Autism Discussion Page, pg 285*). We need to give the child skills and strategies to regulate their emotions.

Dean Beadle discusses how he was given behaviour cards for bad behaviour, every term he would get more and more cards as he didn't know what he was meant to do.

Teaching children about emotions and strategies to regulate emotions makes a huge difference to behaviour. Dean Beadle discusses how when he saw himself as part of the solution rather than the problem that he then knew what he was meant to do. Teaching children to manage their emotions empowers them to identify why the problem is occurring and what strategies they can put in place to address the problem.

DOES your school use Restorative Justice? Do you know children who are not attending school full time? Many children in the spectrum have difficulty regulating emotions and don't know how to "fix" or "reflect on behaviour" when they occur. Teaching Emotional Regulation is the key to success and participation.

There is a great new series of books based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT*) for kids. The workbooks include colouring, word finds, cartoons, puzzles and QUICK, fun activities. I love the fact they are such quick, fun activities as this is more engaging for students with ASD.

*CBT looks at the relationship between our thoughts (cognition), our feelings (emotions) and our actions (behaviours). It is based on the premise that how we interpret experiences and situations has a profound effect on our behaviours.

The Kids Guide to Staying Awesome and in Control

By Lauren Brukner

"The Kid's Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control is crucial in helping children pinpoint how they feel so they can implement which methods work best for them to maximize their learning potential and provide everyday comfort." – Autism Parenting Magazine



For ages 7-14 years | CODE B111 \$35

From breathing exercises, pressure holds and finger pulls, to fidgets, noise-reducing headphones and gum, *The Kids' Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control* is brimming with fun stuff to help kids feel cool, calm and collected. They will learn how to label difficult feelings, choose the perfect strategies and tools to tackle them, and use these correctly whether at home or at school. The strategies and tools are accompanied by cartoon-style illustrations, and the author includes useful tips for parents and teachers as well as handy visual charts and checklists to track learning and progress. (See pg 9 for some great practical strategies.)

When children can start to IDENTIFY emotions (anger, anxiety, sad, frustrated, sensory, tired) they can use the activities in the book to help regulate the emotions. In *The Kids Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control* children can create their own Self-Regulation Menu – with a selection of body breaks or tools to use (pg 96-100). For some students these would be ideal as Dean Beadle said "so you feel part of the solution not the problem!" Teaching emotional regulation allows kids to be proactive not reactive!

By doing activities around emotions with children it also helps you identify triggers and what works. Part of helping children regulate their emotions is noticing their emotions and supporting them to regulate. By undertaking CBT activities with the children you will become more aware of what to look for and what to do.

NEW Books to Help Children Understand and Manage their feelings of Anxiety, Anger and Stress

Starving the Gremlin Series

By Kate Collins-Donnelly

Help children to understand and manage their feelings of anxiety, anger and stress with these engaging and imaginative workbooks. Based on cognitive behavioural principles, these workbooks use fun and imaginative activities to teach children how to manage these emotions by changing how they think and act – getting rid of their Gremlins for good!

Starving the Anxiety Gremlin	CODE B106	\$35 (incl P & H) For ages 10+
Starving the Anger Gremlin	CODE B107	\$35 (incl P & H) For ages 10+
Starving the Stress Gremlin	CODE B108	\$35 (incl P & H) For ages 10+
Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9	CODE B109	\$35 (incl P & H)
Starving the Anger Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9	CODE B110	\$35 (incl P & H)

