Blooming Abilities - "Flow"er of Emotions



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Notes

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Feels Like...

- Muscles need to move.
- Tense muscles
- Heart beat fast.
- Feeling hot or overheated.
- Body feels unsettled and dysregulated or unsafe.
- Thinking is not organized or focused.
- Breathing faster
- Unsettled, restless
- ·Flighty, ·Jittery
- ·Unfocused
- Feeling bothered
- Clothing doesn't feel right
- Uncomfortable or itchy
- Want to crawl out of my own skin
-

- Muscles feel tense and amped up and ready to fight.
- Heart beat may be very fast.
- Hot temperature.
- Body feels like it needs to move, kick, hit.
- Body movement is automatic.
- Actions are focused on safety.
- Very repetitive thinking and actions.
- Alert and hyper-focused on fight/flight/freeze - unable to be distracted.
- Exploding
- World is exploding
- Everything is too much
- I can't take it
-

- Muscles may feel a little tense.
- Jaw/face may clench.
- Biting tongue
- Heart beats a little fast.
- May feel warm and/or face flushed or
- Cold hands (blood going to brain)
- Easily distracted by environment (e.g. squirrel)
- Body feels wiggly and scattered.
- Thinking about many things.
-

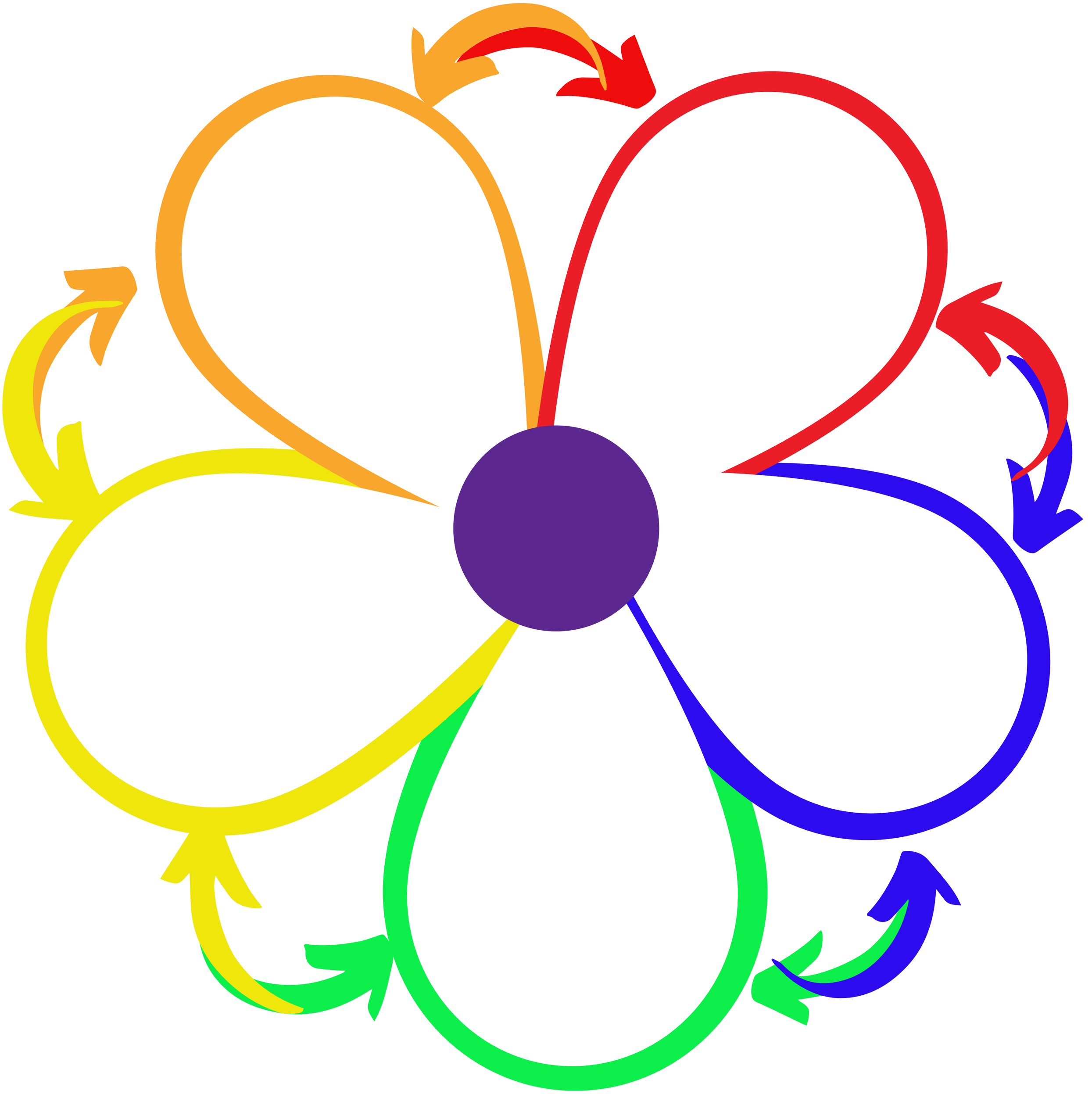
- Comfortable temperature.
- Body feels grounded.
- Thinking is focused on-task.
- Calm
- Relaxed
- Not bothered by things around them
- Steady breathing
- Steady heartrate
- Muscles relaxed
-

- Muscles feel heavy.
- Movements may feel slow and require effort.
- May feel cool or cold temperature.
- Body feels low energy.
- Thinking may be slow.
- Yawing
- Slow moving.

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. GROW.

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Feels Like...



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Possibly Looks Like/Sounds Like...

Start of FIGHT. FLIGHT. FREEZE.

- Cackle-type of giggle (almost maniacal laugh)
- Instant refusal to any request
- Growl or grunt instead of using words
- Pushing their body into others
- Hides under blankets or under table/desk/chair
- "Go away"
- Leaves space unexpectedly
- Scowl or turns body away from others
- Talks back to others
- Flops body around (or flops on ground), "noodley"
- Defiance/refusal about everything
- Whines or complains, or "It's too hard", "I can't"
- Negative about everything, "NO"
- Intense & forceful
- "I'm a horrible person", "I can't do anything right"
-

FIGHT. FLIGHT. FREEZE.

- Screaming
- Hitting
- Yelling
- Crying
- Throwing
- Swearing
- Running away (fleeing)
- "You hurt me" - for any light touch
- Throwing body around
- Fists clenched
- Super Impulsive (would run into traffic)
- Would break anything in path
- Frightened
- Meltdown
- Tantrum
- Running away
- OUT OF CONTROL

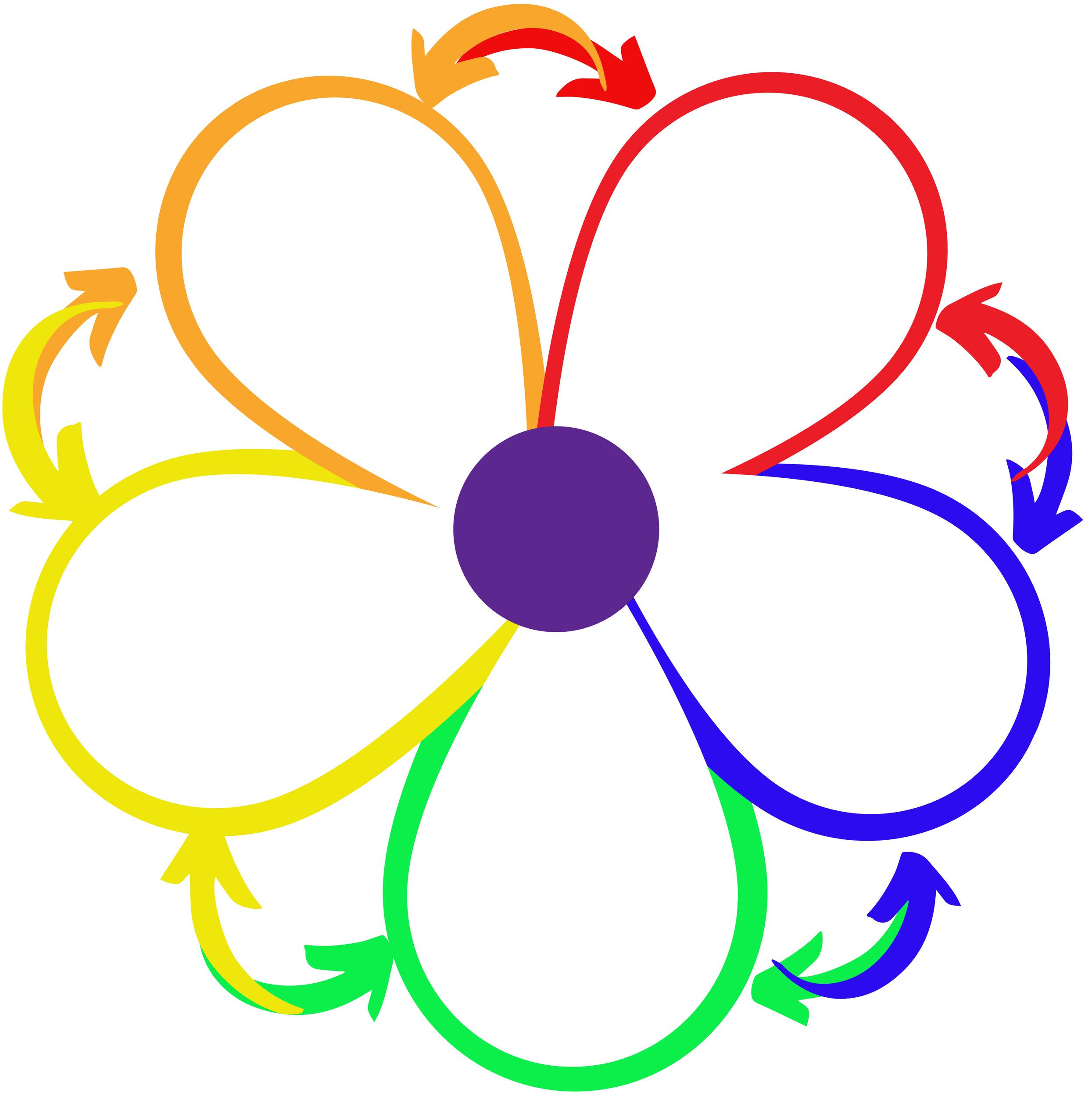
- Randomly and repetitively saying one word, e.g. "pizza"
- Getting up and out of seat almost constantly
- Interested in their topic of conversation only
- Startled easily
- "It's too hard" or "It's too easy / boring"
- Takes a long time to do things (finds the hardest way to do things)
- Needs help to complete tasks they can often do independently
- Restless, wiggly, fidgety, constantly moving
- Wandering
- Talks louder and more "forceful"
- Asking questions (for reassurance) - could be repeatedly
- Asks for/seeks out hugs
- Leaning on walls/others (for extra support)
- Bumping into others or poking/touching others
- Making lots of noises
- Distracted
- Refusal

- Doing one thing at a time
- Body is moving just a little
- Plays or works independently
- Having fun
- Smiling
- Engaged and interested
- Asks questions on topic
- Has empathy for others
- Thoughtful
- Curious
- Creative
- Using words
- Speaks calmly
- Gentle laughter
- Pleasant to others
- Skip in step
- Positive words
- Kind actions
- Plays with others
- Gets work done quickly and efficiently
- Uses manners
- Playful
- Flexible

- Zoned out
- Daydreaming
- Slow to complete anything & everything
- Doesn't seem to hear what I say
- Needs help to complete tasks they can often do independently
- Needs/wants constant hugs & reassurance
- Unable to make decisions of any kind
- "I don't want to..."
- Tears (everything is too hard)
- Blank stares / glazed look / staring into space
- Leaning on walls or furniture
- ·Touching everything & everyone
- Head on desk or leaning on arm / desk (can also be a disengaging – yellow)
- Clumsy, less body awareness, slumped shoulders
- Needs lots of encouragement
- Refusal

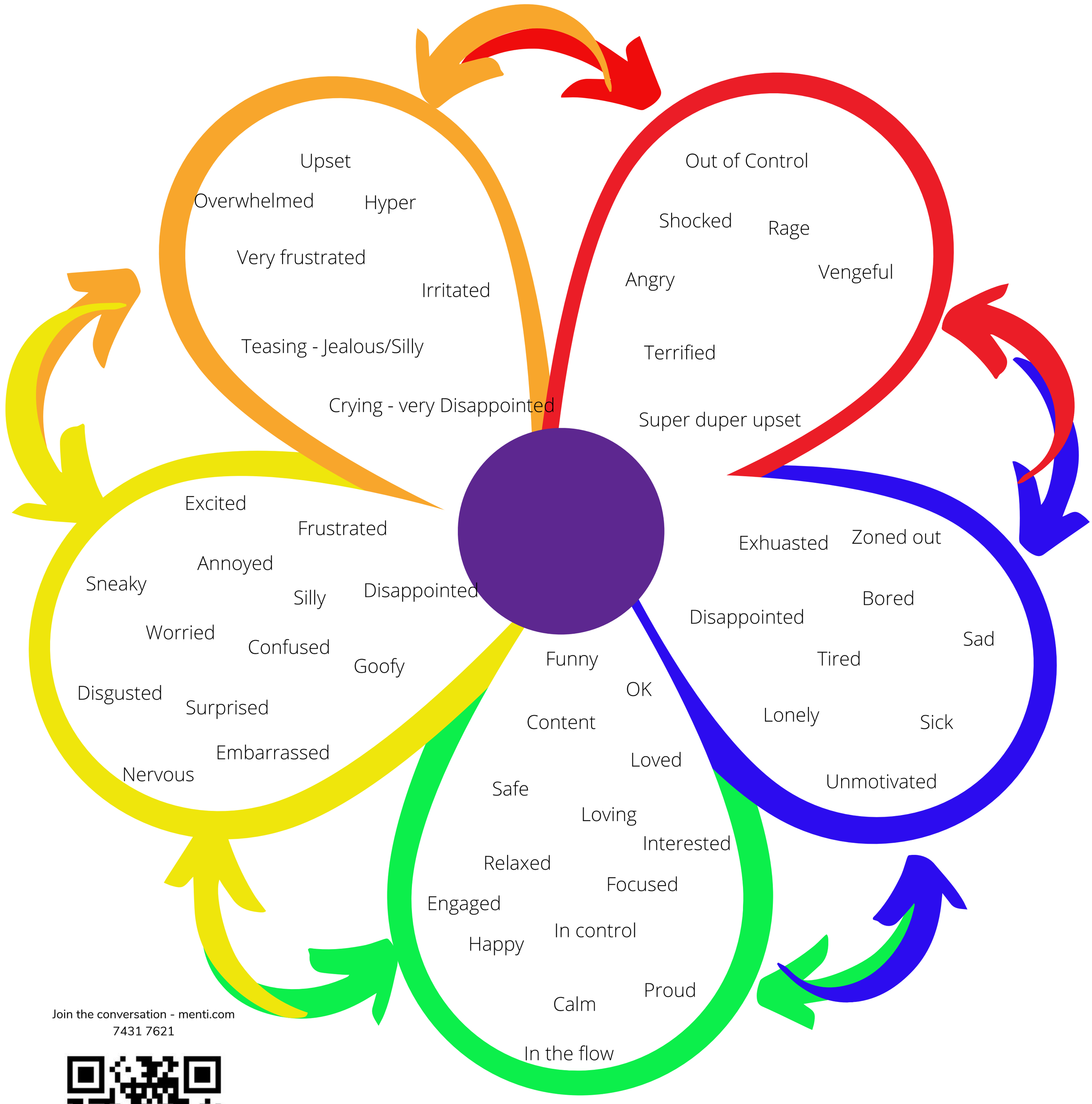
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Looks Like/Sounds Like...



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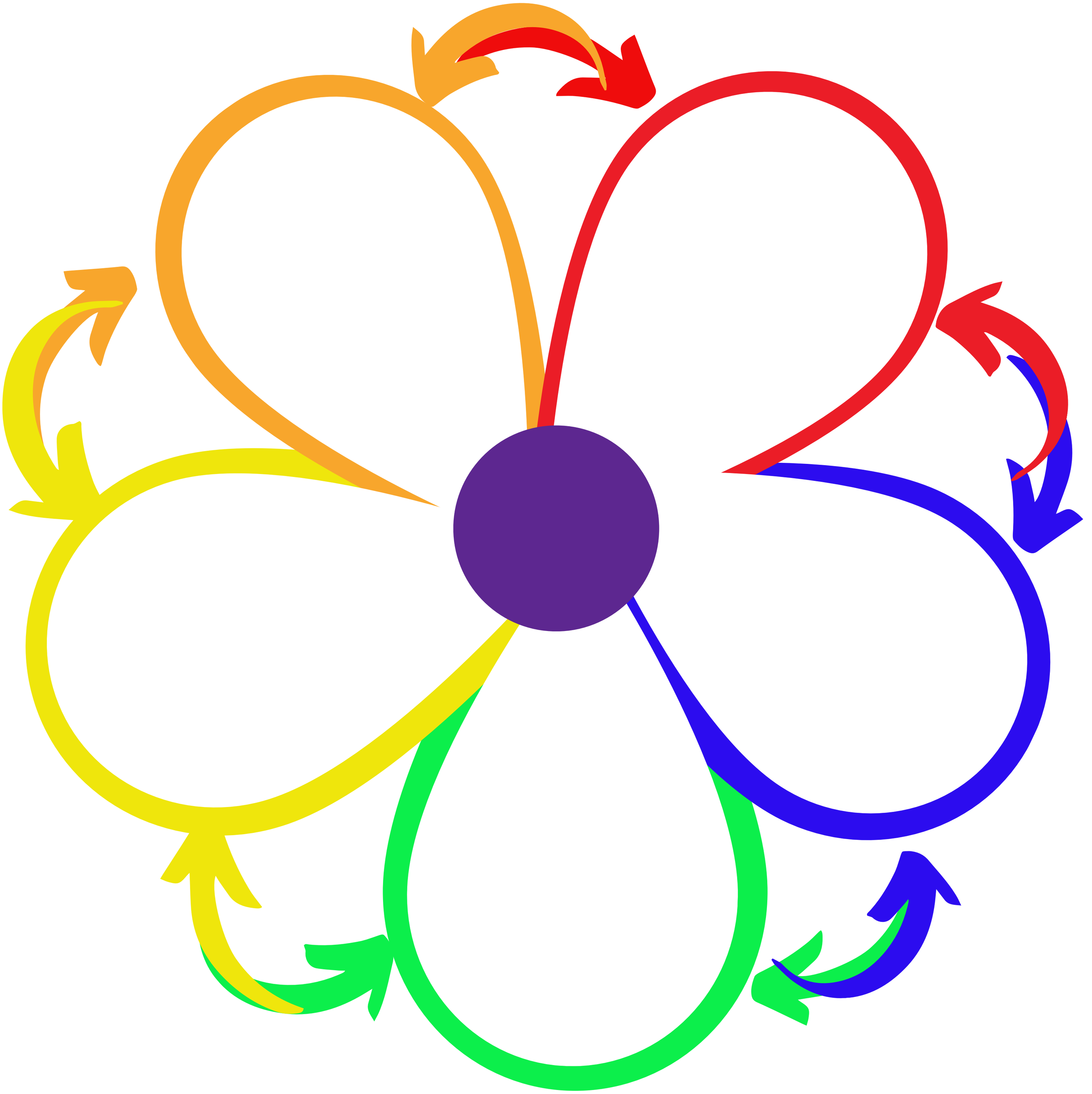
I'm Feeling...



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I Feel...



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Which emotions do you MOST identify with? Least?
What do you see MOST in the child(ren) you work with? Which ones less?



Interest

Do you ever feel something like...

Focused
Curious
Engaged
Alert
Attentive
Inquisitive
Creative
Interested
Passionate
Innovative
Savouring
Awe
Wonder
Amazement
In Flow
Productive
Fascinated
Captivated
Absorbed
Energized
Enthusiastic
Entralled

Balanced

Do you ever feel something like...

In control
Regulated
Settled
Centered
Grounded
Stable
Steady
Harmony
Flexible
Resilient
Even-keeled
Growing
Learning
Sharing
Communicating
Listening
Give & Receive
Organized
Adaptable
Easy-going
Tolerant
Harmonious

Connected

Do you ever feel something like...

Belonging
Appreciated
Seen
Heard
Known
Understood
Accepted
Accepting
Clear headed
Body-Brain Connected
Strong
Powerful
Brave
Determined
Courageous
Trusting
Intuitive
Certain
Whole

Love

Do you ever feel something like...

Loved
Loving
Supported
Supportive
Satisfied
Affectionate
Valued
Respected
Appreciative
Grateful
Thankful
Pleased
Caring
Positive
Optimistic
Compassionate
Empathetic
Thoughtful
Friendly
Kind
Honest
Confident
Proud
Successful

Safe

Do you ever feel something like...

Safe
Comfortable
Relaxed
Calm
Bliss
Tranquil
Ease
At Peace
Settled
Relaxed
Serene
Well-being

Others??

Joy

Do you ever feel something like...

Content
Pleased
Delight
Amused
Playful
Having fun
Joking
Funny
Optimistic
Hopeful
Inspired
Elated
Pleasure

When do you (and the child) experience these emotions?
What are you/they doing?
What does it feel like and/or look like?

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Which emotions do you MOST identify with? Least?
What do you see MOST in the child(ren) you work with? Which ones less?

Dis-Interest

Do you ever feel something like...

Unfocused
Distracted
Restless
Fidgety
Flighty
Ungrounded
Wiggly
Silly
Edgy
Unpassionate
Goofy
Sneaky
Unsettled
Reluctant
Impatient

Unbalanced

Do you ever feel something like...

Unsteady
Vulnerable
Wobbly
Inflexible
Stubborn
Intolerant
Rigid
Concerned
Upset
Impatient
Irritable
Restless
Disappointed
Discouraged
Helpless
Regret
Excited
Surprise
Anticipation
Ungrounded

Dis-Connected

Do you ever feel something like...

Embarassed
Confused
Puzzled
Indecisive
Jealous
Teasing
Betrayed
Vulnerable
Ignored
Overlooked
Weak
Incapable
Timid
Disconnected
Avoiding
Defensive
Insecure
Uneasy
Unsure
Suspicious

Unloved

Do you ever feel something like...

Unloved
Unsupported
Dissatisfied
Aloof
Discouraged
Disappointed
Insecure
Disgust
Judgemental
Pessimistic
Guilt
Dread
Critical
Dishonest
Unsuccessful
Unconfident
Apprehensive

Unsafe/Uncomfortable

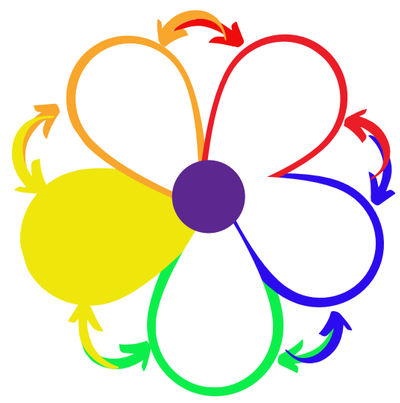
Do you ever feel something like...

Uncomfortable
Cautious
Afraid
Scared
Nervous
Timid
Worried
Anxious
Alarmed
Uncertain
Agitated
Trouble
Frustrated
Annoyed
Tense
Overwhelmed
Stressed
Grumpy

Unhappy

Do you ever feel something like...
another slightly heightened emotion

Unsatisfied
Disgruntled



When do you (and the child) experience these emotions?
What are you/they doing?
What does it feel like and/or look like?

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What Helps me...

GOAL/FOCUS: RELEASE & REGULATE
(co-regulation)

- reduce expectations
- pause & reset
- make a change
- minimal talking
- maintain calm (do YOUR breathing)
- support child
- meet their intensity & anguish "You are mad", "It's not fair", "You want ____!" and slowly start to decrease intensity

GOAL/FOCUS: SAFETY - for self and others

- allow safe release of emotions
- protect and keep safe
- space
- minimal talking
- when they are ready meet their intensity & anguish "You are mad", "It's not fair", "You want ____!" and slowly start to decrease intensity
- follow safety plan

GOAL/FOCUS: REGULATE & RELATE

- offer strategies or tools to support success
- use a tool
  - Breath, Body, Brain, Beliefs
- support
- be alert - is it more lime green or getting to orange?
- can I push through or decrease expectations?
- offer concrete choices
- visual checklists
- take a break
- co-regulation room
- grounding activities (down regulating)
- less talking
- reduce triggers
- pause; consdier a reset

GOAL/FOCUS: REGULATE (rest or nourish)
& RELATE (connect)

- rest
- nourish
- energize (with movement or activity or music)
- upregulating
- expand interest
- increase intensity (in environment)
- connect
- support for success

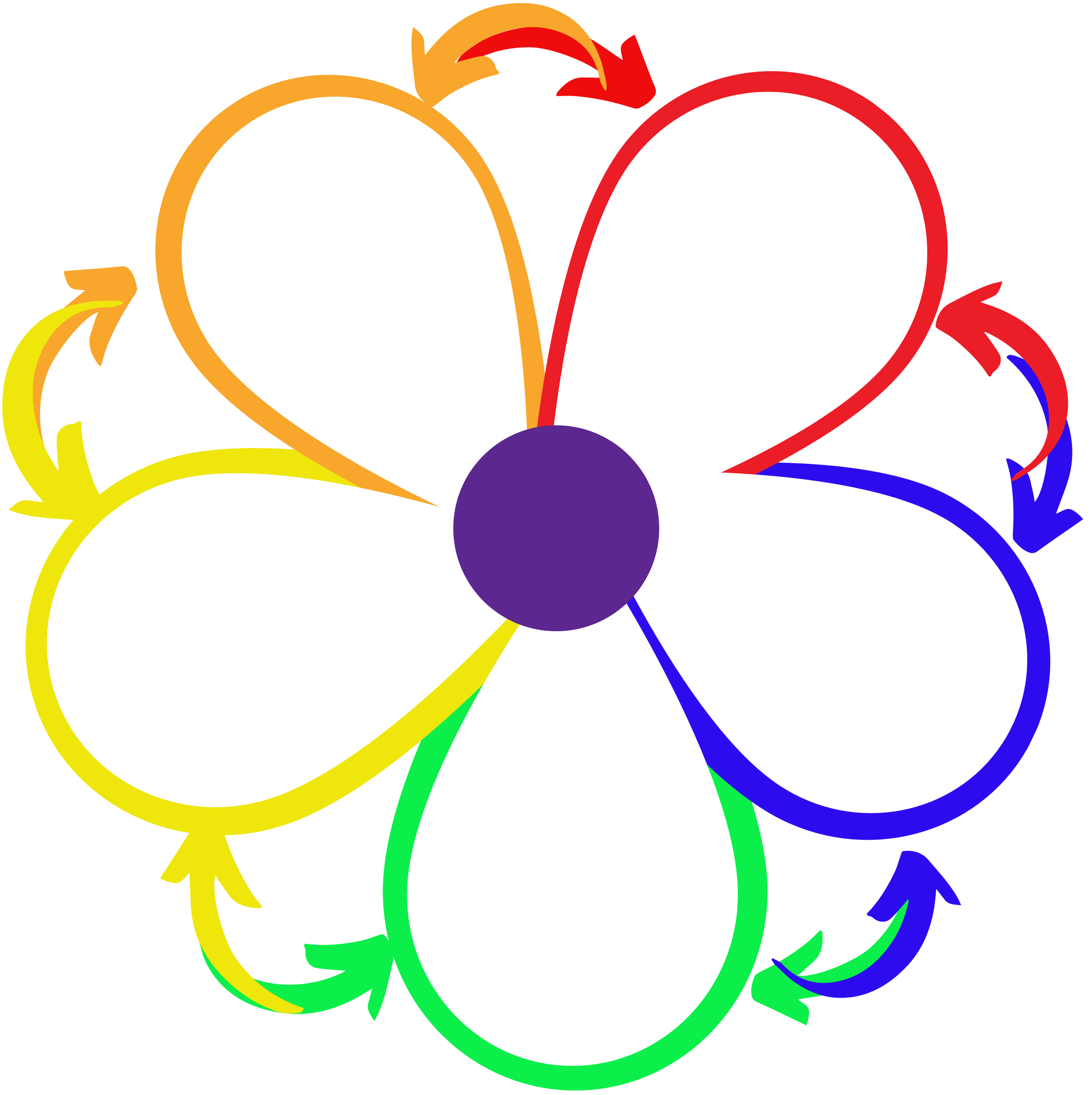
GOAL/FOCUS: REGULATE, RELATE
(connect) & REASON (Grow & Learn)

- grow
- learn, be curious, explore
- problem solve
- tools to maintain
- nurture
- connect
- play & have fun
- engage with interests
- practice & teach
- plan ahead
- stabilizing routines
  - First-Then
  - Checklists
  - Visuals
  - Boundaries
  - Clear expectations
  - Positive feedback & encouragement
  - Specific praise
  - Visual timers
  - Consistency

THIS is where/when kids can LEARN self-regulation skills - so in the times of calm is the best time to introduce and practice!

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What Helps me...



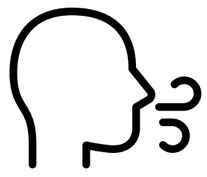
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Emotions & Tools...

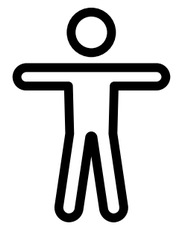
When? Time of Day?
What Might They Be Doing?

Looks Like AND/OR
Feels Like:

Tools or Strategies that might be supportive:



Breath



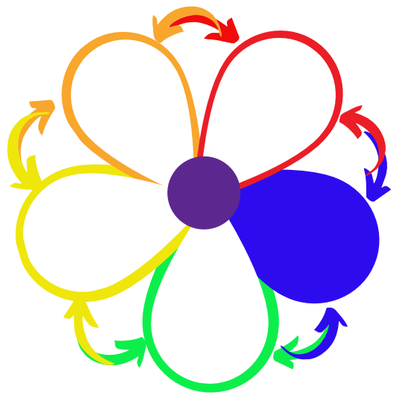
Body

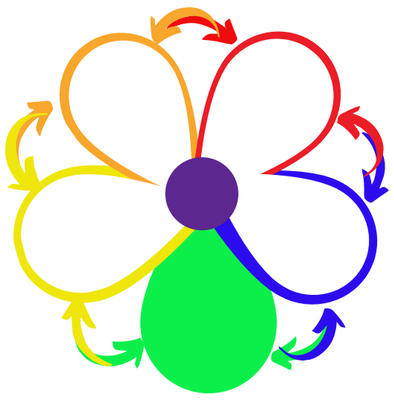


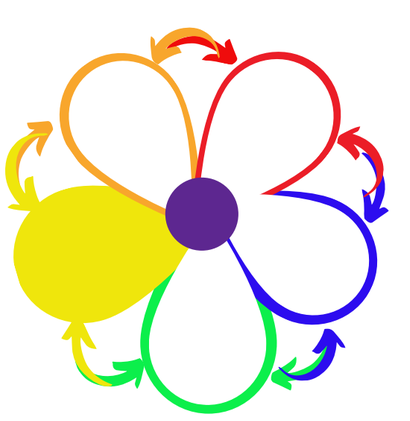
Brain

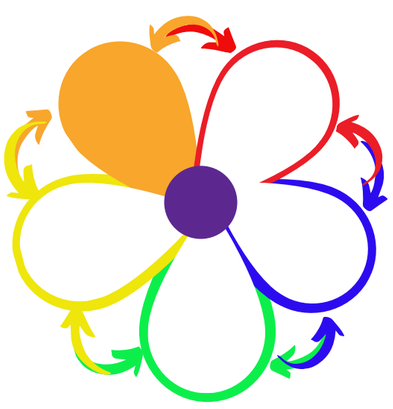


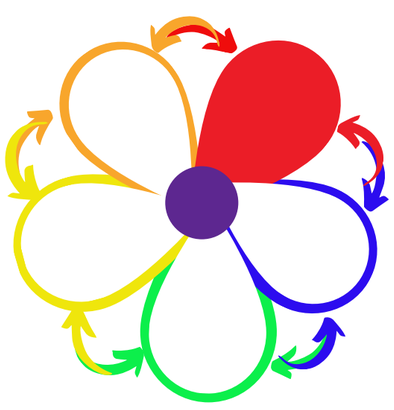
Beliefs







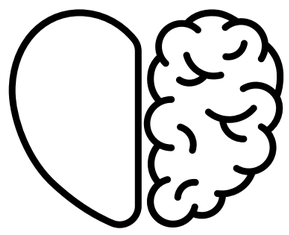


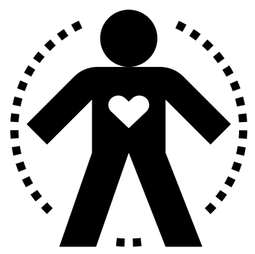


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4 R's of Emotional Explorers







Move Emotion (energy in motion)

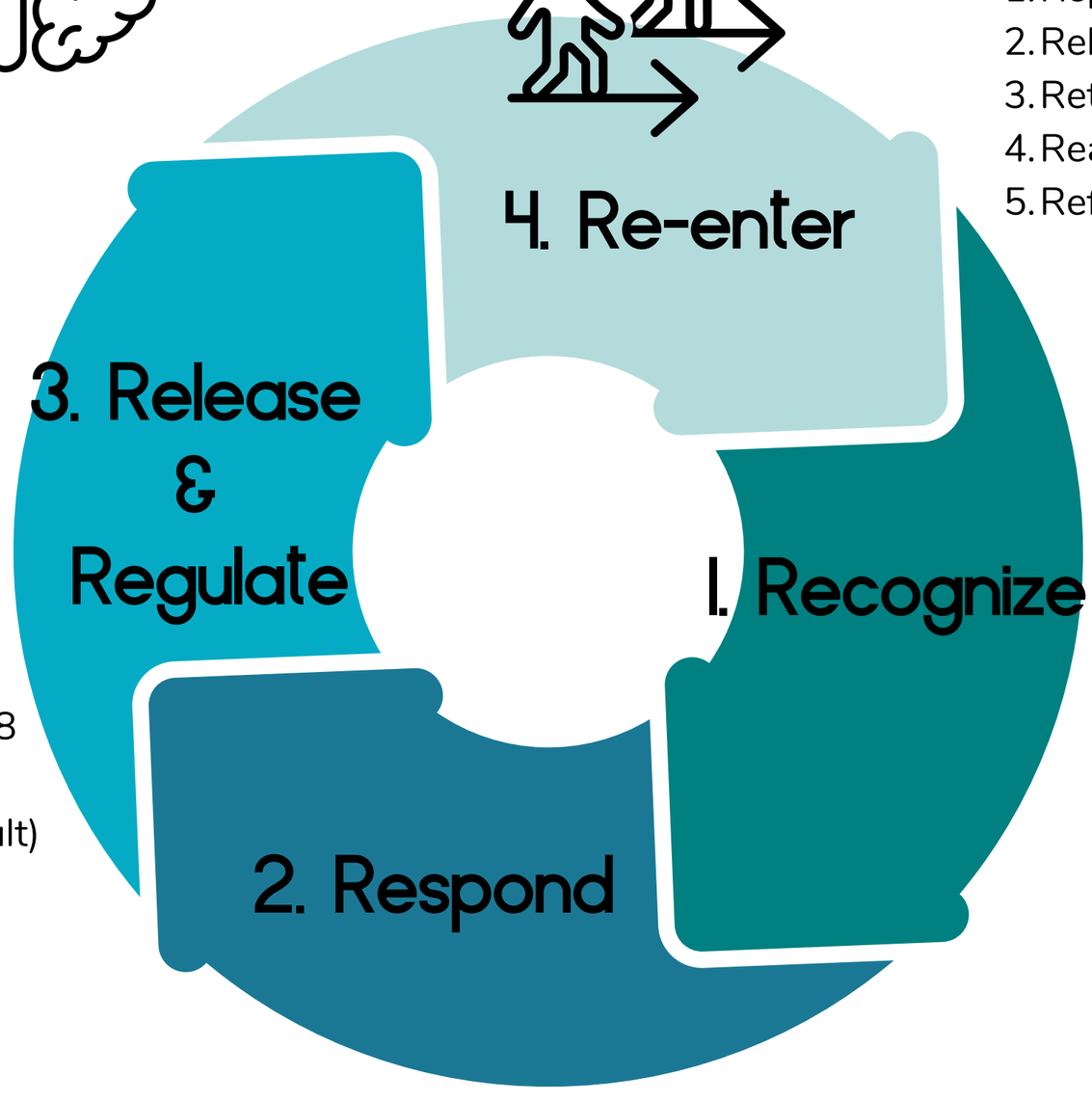
- Proactive
- Move it
- Let it out
- Re-direct (meet needs in safe way)
- Use 8 senses

Connect...

- with self (body & brain & heart - 8 senses)
- with others (especially a safe adult)
- with world (environment around them)

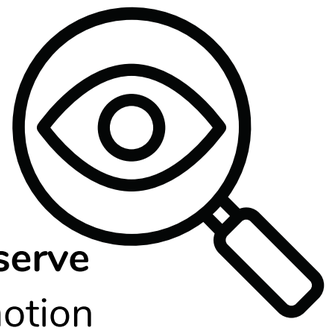
...until your child feels safe and calm again!





What is most needed RIGHT NOW to re-enter & move forward?

1. Repair
2. Relate
3. Return
4. Reason
5. Reflect



Notice & Observe

- What emotion might your child be feeling?
- Name it (to self)
- What are they doing?
- What does it look like or sound like?

Meet your child in their emotion... respond to their needs with:

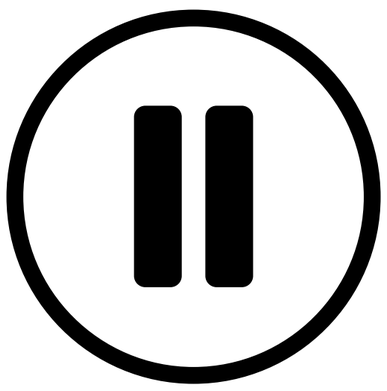
- Support
- Create safety
- Lead with love
- Connect
- Pause
- Be present
- Allow
- Be WITH
- Be quiet
- Accept - it is it is











RECOGNIZE



What are the "Yellow" and "Orange" emotions - caution - pay attention

PAUSE - Use a tool!



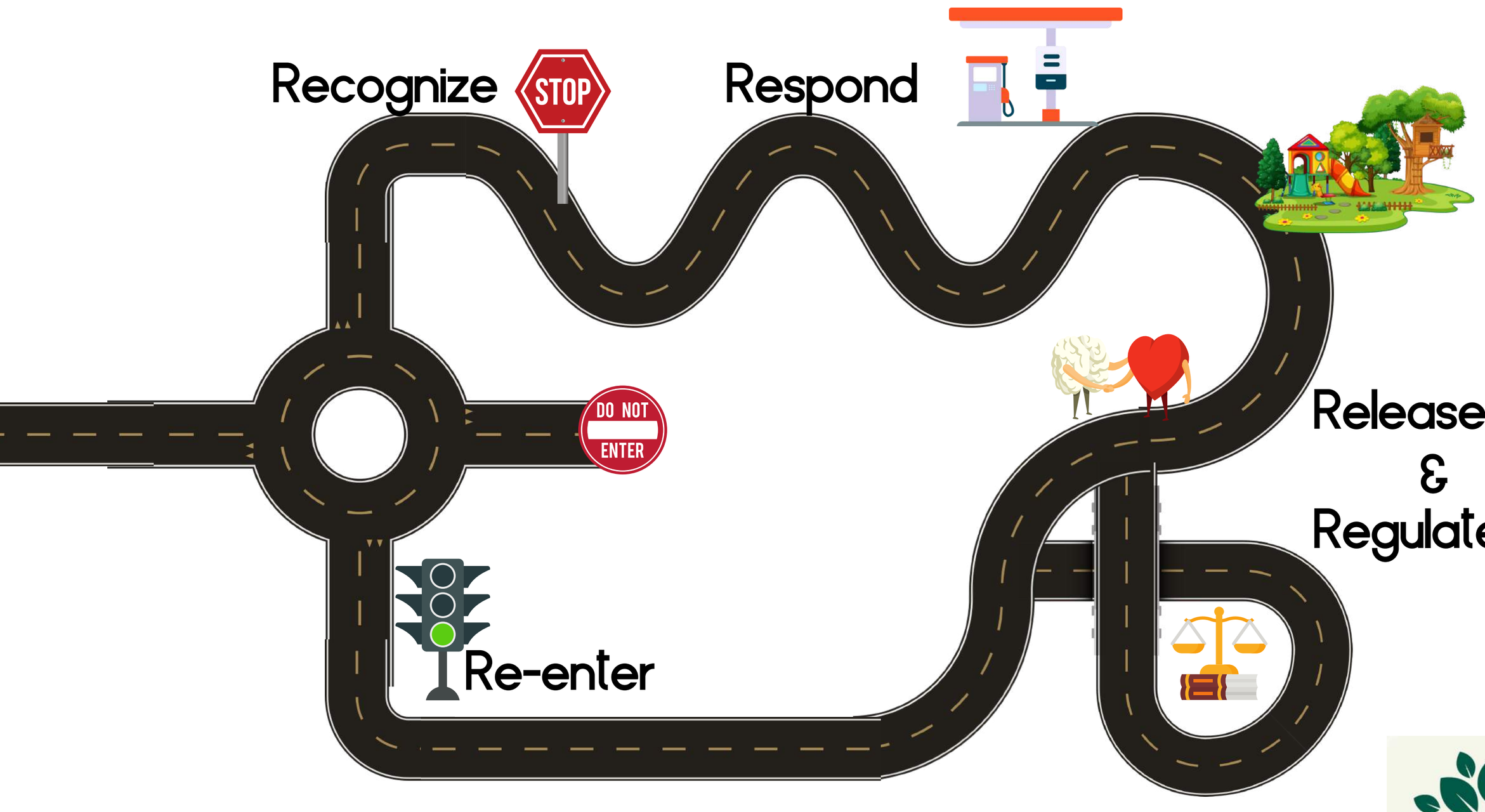


Allow

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4 R's of Emotional Explorers

1. **Recognize** emotions
2. **Respond** to emotions
3. **Release** emotions safely & **Regulate** big emotions and come back to a place of being calm & grounded
4. **Re-enter** "the world" through at least one of the following...
    - compassionate **return**,
    - **repair** relationships,
    - **reason** and problem solve for next time,
    - **relate** and support safety, connection, belonging and love OR
    - **reflect** on the deeper root for the emotions and/or what could be explored or done differently next time



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Recognize

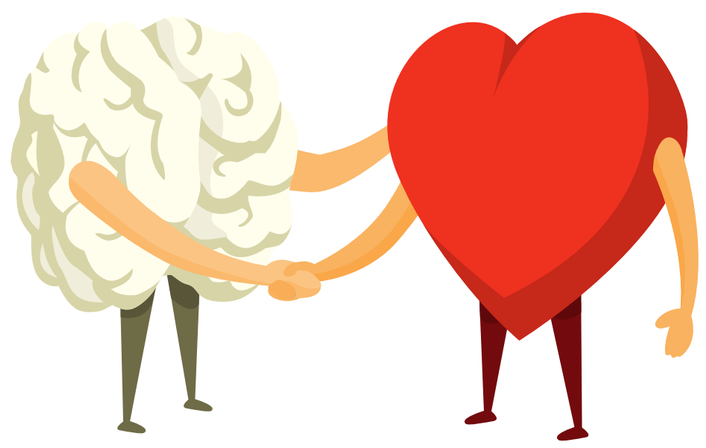
Notice & Observe

- what emotions LOOK like in each petal
- what emotions SOUND like in each petal
- what emotions FEEL like in each petal
- what is the child DOING in each petal
- name the emotion (even just to yourself)



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Respond



CREATE SAFETY.
SUPPORT.
LEAD WITH LOVE.
CONNECT.
PAUSE.
BE PRESENT. BE WITH.
ALLOW. HOLD SPACE.
ACCEPT.
BE QUIET (i.e. stop talking).

Instead of:

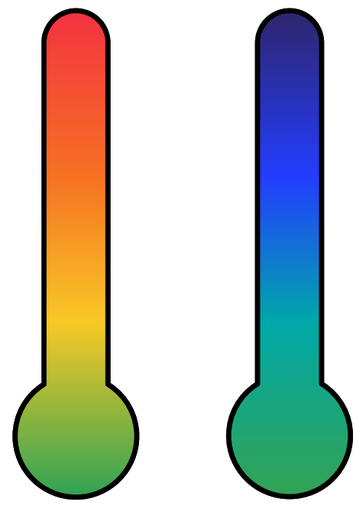
- "That's enough. I'm taking away ....."
- "It's not big deal."
- Thinking, "They shouldn't be acting this way."
- "Stop crying. You don't need to cry."
- "Don't be angry."
- "It's ok. We can fix your picture."
- "Just get over it. We need to go NOW!"
- "CALM DOWN!"

Try:

- Be present and non-punitive. Save any consequences or conversation for later.
- "This feels REALLY big right now."
- Thinking, "I wonder why this is so difficult right now."
- "Let it all out. It's ok to cry. Your tears are ok."
- "You feel angry."
- "Ugh... that picture did not turn out the way you wanted." (meet/match emotion)
- "I'm here. You are safe. I can help you."
- "You feel out of control now. I'm here with you."

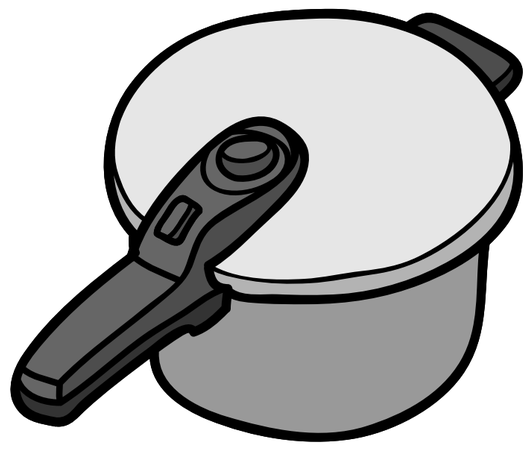


- **Name the feeling.**
- **Name the intensity.**
- **"I feel like hitting".**
- **"I feel angry." "I feel SO SO SO angry."**
- **Slowly decrease intensity...**
  - rage
  - angry
  - frustrated
  - annoyed
  - bothered
  - ok
  - distraught
  - heartbroken
  - sad
  - disappointed
  - gloomy
  - ok



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Release



WITHOUT A RELEASE...
YOU CAN GET AN EXPLOSION

... the pressure and/or intensity keeps building and building
... let out pressure/steam gradually

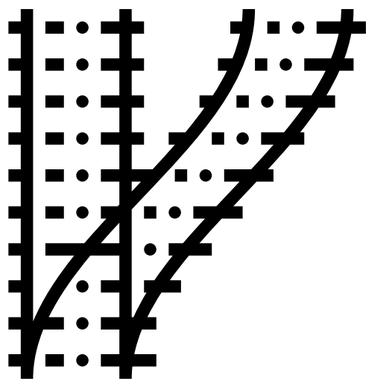
*** This is why it is so important to recognize the **yellow** emotions ***

- pause and use a tool...
  - in **yellow**, that's where we can use proactive strategies or re-direct
- by orange you will get refusals (and possibly explosions or shutdown)

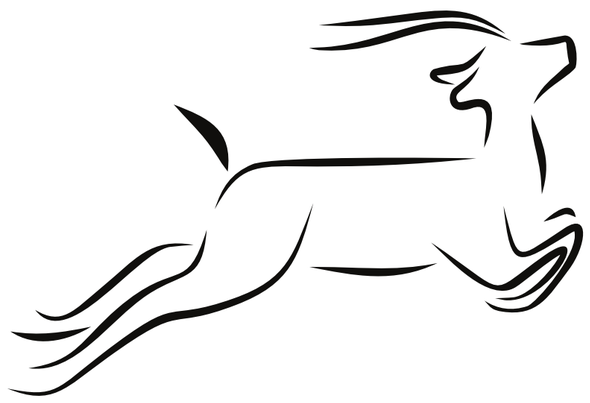
- PROACTIVE



- REDIRECT



- MOVE IT / LET IT OUT



Child needs to know what TO DO - and be specific, positive and playful, then support success - model, do it together, release your tension too (be creative! you've got this!)

Instead of:
"No hitting"
"Don't hit"
"Hands are not for hitting."

Try:
"Can you hit this pillow"
“Let’s shake our arms together”
“Help me hold up the wall!” (Wall push-ups)
Shake arms (maybe with music)
Punch air (with music)
Squeeze fists and release.

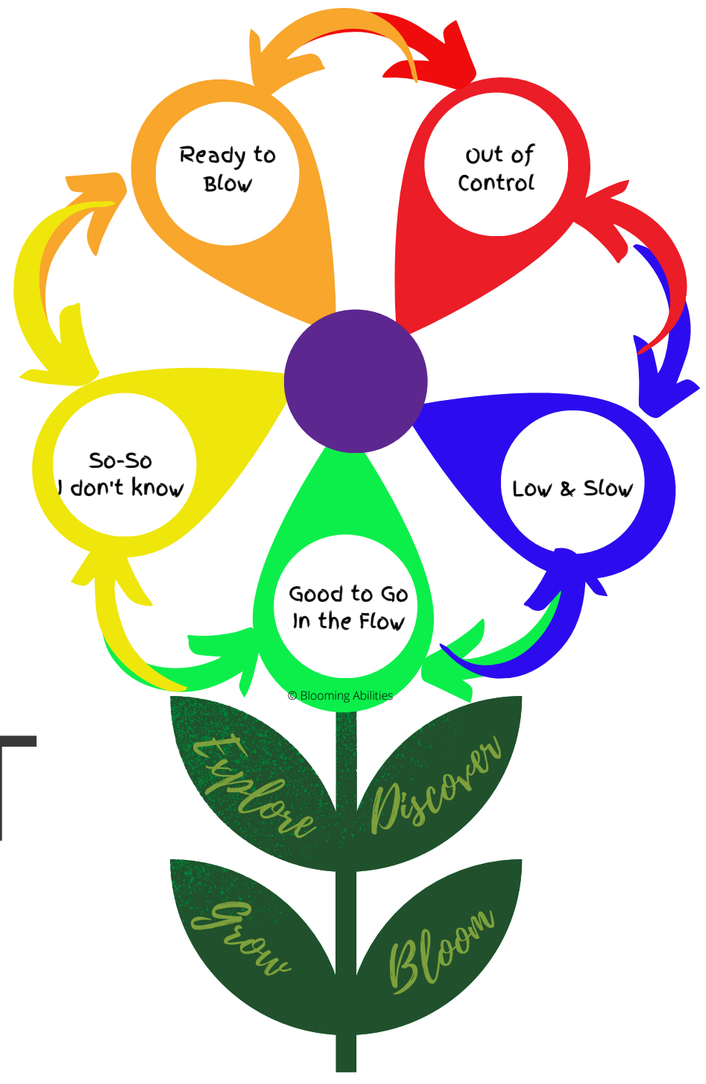
"You are _____. It looks like your body needs _____"

Eg. "You are kicking. It looks like your legs need to move. Can you kick this soccer ball? Can you stomp your feet? Let’s jump on the trampoline. Let’s run as fast as we can (in one spot)."

Replace instead of extinguish behaviours... consider what input the child is seeking or needing to release!

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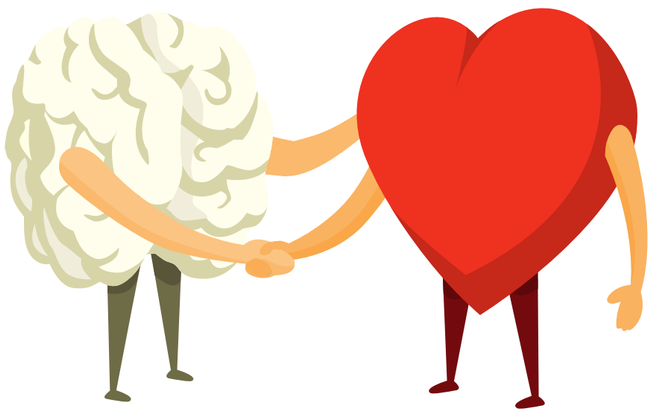
Regulate



GOAL: CONNECTION

- with self (body & brain & heart)
- with others (especially a safe adult)
- with world (environment around them)

...and your child feels safe and calm again!



CONNECT

CO-REGULATE

BREATH, BODY, BRAIN, BELIEFS

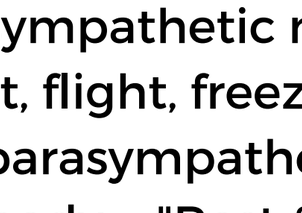
"TURN ON" PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM (PNS)

The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) is the “alert” system in the body (stress response) - "Fight, flight, freeze.”
The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), brings a sense of calm and peace to the mind and body. - "Rest & digest"

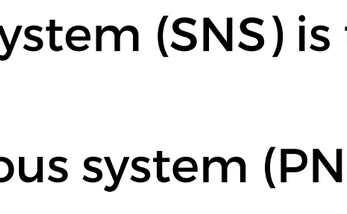
- When the PNS takes over - your heart rate slows, muscles relax, and circulation improves.

USE the 8 SENSES

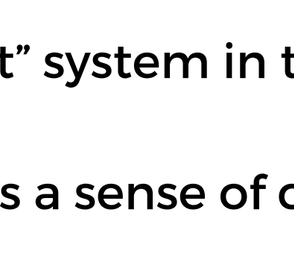
Vision - Eyes



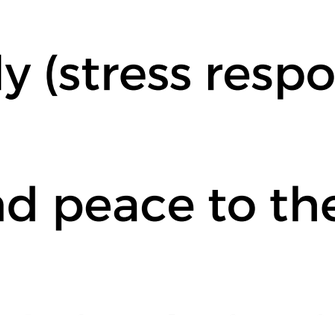
Oral - Mouth



Touch



Proprioception



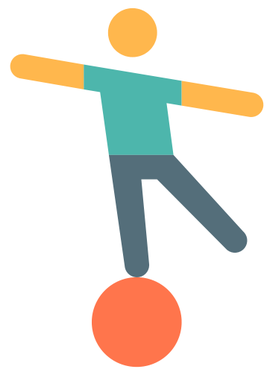
Auditory - Ears



Smell - Nose



Vestibular



Interoception



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Regulate

** Use all 8 Senses **

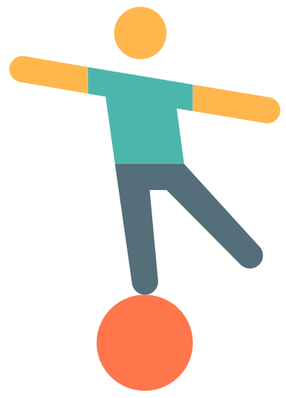
Touch



Proprioception



Vestibular



Vision - Eyes



Auditory - Ears



Smell - Nose



Oral - Mouth



Interoception



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Re-enter

These ONLY occurs after you AND child are regulated, calm & ready to re-engage. You may use ONE (or more)... it will depend on the situation!



1. Repair

This is where lots of good stuff happens! A few ideas of how:

- Let go of "bad feelings" with forgiveness & compassion (so the emotions don't get stuffed away to accumulate or fester.
- Apologize in meaningful ways (i.e. do not demand "Say sorry"
    - Do you want your child to apologize to you for their misbehaviors?
    - If yes, it begins by demonstrating the behaviour you want your child to learn.
    - Own what is yours to own, and apologize to your child when you make a mistake.
    - Being able to apologize for your mistakes is indeed a sign of strength, and you want your child to gain that strength.

REMEMBER... they are still angry and not ready to move on to the repair stage yet. Or maybe they are busy doing something else, and this isn't a good time. This step is all about demonstrating respect for your child.

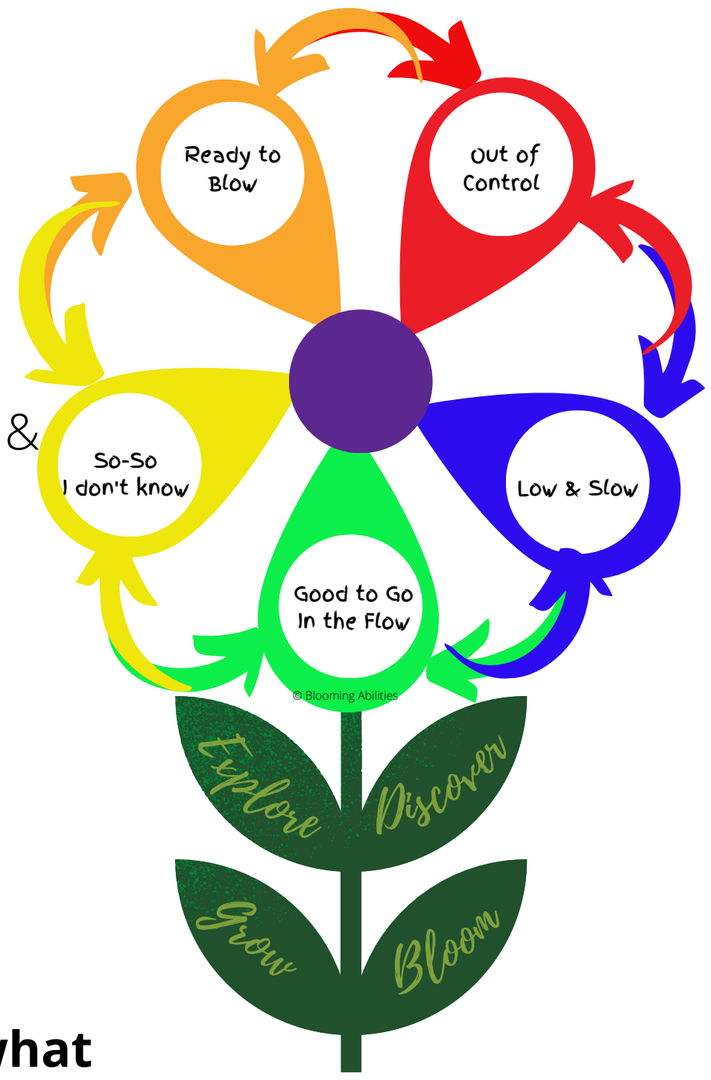
2. Relate

What your child may need most is to rebuild a connection of safety and security, and re-build the relationship... it is a practice, and may feel uncomfortable at first... but keep trying! You'll get there!

- **Re-assure with words**
    - Be aware of your language and ensure your conversation comes out of a place of love instead of anger, blame, shame or guilt.
    - Invite child to talk Listen openly to what was hard or overwhelming for your child.
    - Validate the emotions & help them feel ok about feeling those emotions, such as:
        - "Everyone makes mistakes. I always love you"
        - "That was tough."
        - "You're safe. I'm here for you."
- **Re-assure with affection** (e.g. hug, cuddle or rub back), but in a way that is authentic to YOUR relationship with your child.
    - Affection can melt away negative feelings instantaneously when offered genuinely.
    - Open and loving body language can also communicate support and affection.
- **Relate to previous experiences** to build the muscle memory of success and what they did last time. This also expands a child's belief that they can do it!

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Re-enter



3. Return

A **compassionate** return allows a child to comfortably re-enter & return to the activity they were doing / need to do next.

- Consider what support your child **needs** to return to the activity....
  - regulation support
  - support success
  - being close by, "I'm here if you need me"
  - talk about the plan, i.e. what to do (simple words)

It is NOT always necessary to process and/or talk about what happened in that moment...

- Remember the gazelle? They don't talk about everything... they are able to move on.
- Sometimes, a child needs more space and distance before they are ready to discuss the experience.

4. Reason

Make a plan for next time... exploring a problem solving sequence can help for next time,

- what they will try
- what support they may need from others
  - noticing earlier and using a regulation activity, taking a break, or something else!!

IDEA #1: Discuss & Brainstorm...

When _____ happens, I.... OR When I'm feeling _____, I...

(then make a list of what currently happens/happened)

Current Action: Does it make it better or worse?

Next time when I'm feeling _____ (or when _____ happens) I can try....

(NOTE: This is brainstorming... any idea goes - you can evaluate them later, and so you can have silly, wild and not positive solutions for now). After you are finished brainstorming your child (with support) can evaluate each action (a ?? is okay... then your child can experiment and come back next with the response)...

What I could try next time: Will it make it better or worse?

Make a plan...

Next time _____ happens and I feel _____. I will try _____.

I could also try _____.

And you can also make a plan of when to **practice** the strategy daily at least 1X.

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Re-enter

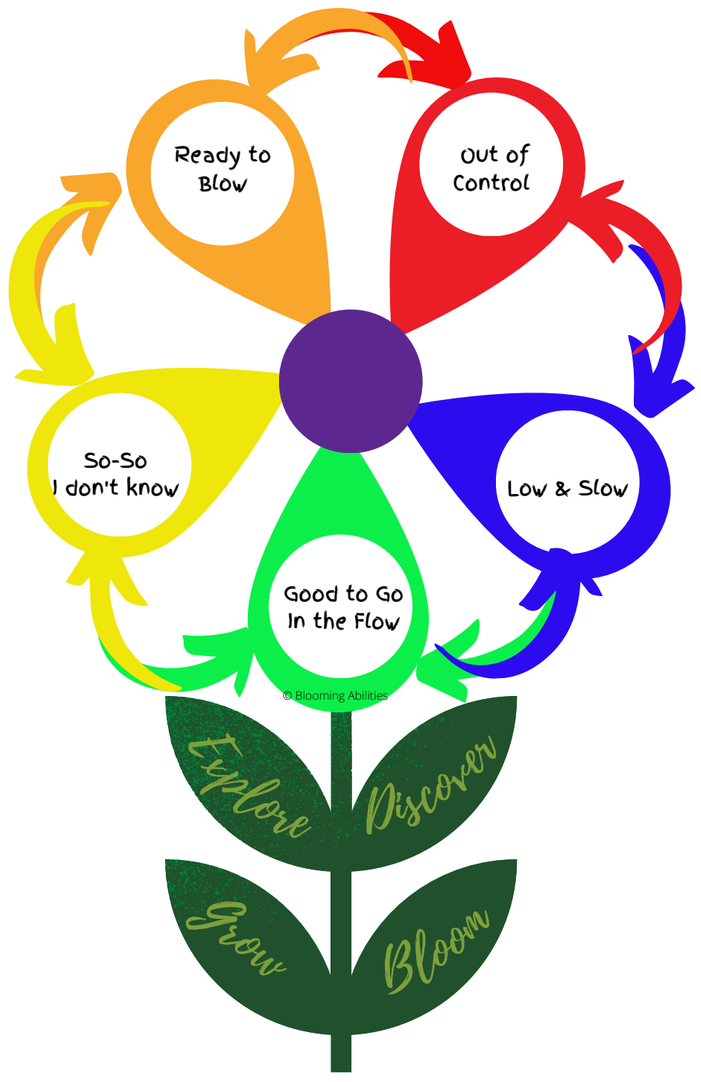
4. Reason (continued)

Make a plan for next time... exploring a problem solving sequence can help for next time,

- what they will try
- what support they may need from others
    - noticing earlier and using a regulation activity, taking a break, or something else!!

IDEA #2: Discuss & Brainstorm...

1. **What is the problem/challenge?**
2. What are possible solutions? (brainstorm a list)
3. From the possible solutions, pick one to try next time.
4. If that doesn't work, pick a back-up solution.
5. After you've tried...
    a. Did it work? Did it solve the problem?
    b. If yes, Great! Way to go!
    c. If no, Pick another possible solution.
    d. What might you do differently next time?



5. Reflect

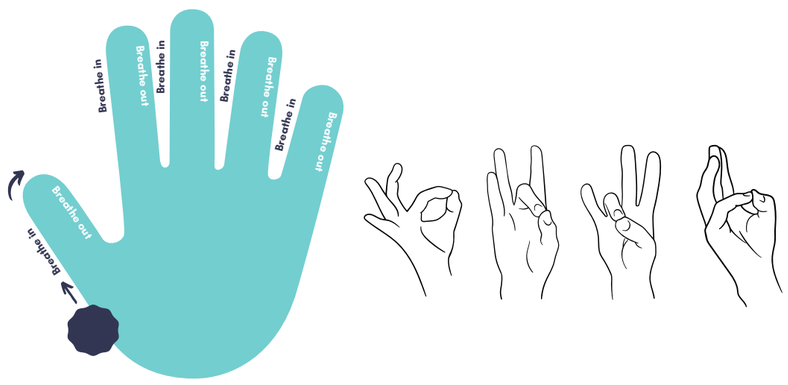
After a situation, it can be helpful to think back over the entire situation - before, during & after and be curious, **(NOTE: this is often more for the adult, but you may involve your child also)..** and consider...

- what might have been the trigger to the big reaction?
    - hunger, pain, tired?
    - frustration, overwhelm, other?
- recognizing the emotion - what did it look like?
    - did I notice early? late? what did it look like just before?
- what were my emotions in that moment?
    - and then go deeper...
    - if anger... what was under the anger? shame? sadness? worry? overwhelm?
- was my response supportive?
    - I wonder why/why not?
- was the child able to release emotions safely?
    - what may have been more helpful? or less of something?
- what helped regulate myself? my chlid?
    - what else could I have tried?
    - what worked well?
- what worked well/didn't work well in the re-entry phase?

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THE 4 B'S

BREATH



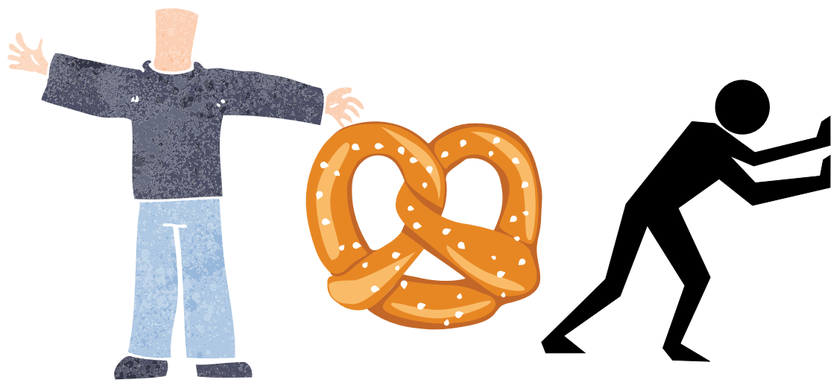
Finger Breathing (and Tracing)
Stretch out one hand so you have space between each finger.
Using the pointer finger from the other hand start at the bottom of your thumb and trace up while you SLOWLY breathe IN nose. When you get to the top of your finger SLOWLY breathe OUT through your nose. Repeat for all fingers until you have traced your whole hand. You can also trace the other hand.

Finger Tap Breathing
Slowly touch your thumb to your pointer finger, middle finger, index finger, then pinkie (baby) finger. You can say any four word short phrase in your mind or outloud such as:
Peace Begins with Me - Breathing Is My Superpower - I Can Do This

Breath Pacer
Explore using a breathing pacer to use multiple senses while breathing - visual, body (open/close arms or cross arms and tap shoulders)

- DAVID Breathe (Microsoft)
- Awesome Breathing: Pacer Timer (Apple app)
- More ideas: https://bloomingabilities.com/breathing

BODY



Be Open.

- close but not too close (maybe in another room)
- open body posture

Relax your Forehead.

Walk away/Take a break (Retreat - safe place with less stimulation)

Deep pressure OR Heavy work

- more ideas at https://bloomingabilities.com/sensory - scroll down to strategies

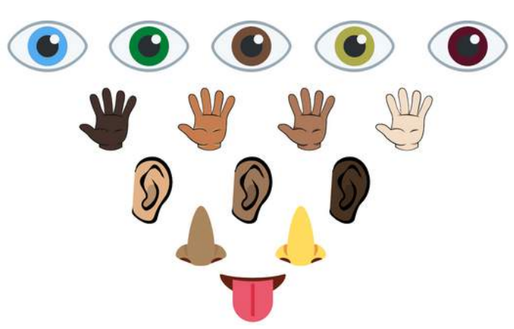
Go outside

Move, dance, shake, run, crawl, jump, stomp

Push-ups (wall, floor, seated, chair) - https://bloomingabilities.com/day-2-move

Pretzel - https://bloomingabilities.com/pretzel

BRAIN



Only THIS in THIS moment.

- Be Present
- Just be in THIS moment
  - **without** future-casting, “lessons" or "shoulds"
- What does this child need RIGHT now to feel safe and supported?
- What do I need to co-regulate?

5 SENSES Mindfulness.

- Come back to the body and present moment which is VERY regulating
- Notice and observe
  - 5 things you can see
  - 4 things you can touch/feel
  - 3 things you can hear
  - 2 things you can smell
  - 1 thing you can taste

https://bloomingabilities.com/day-5-5-senses

BELIEFS



I am here. You are safe.

Peace is contagious. Calm is contagious. (and Stress is contagious.)
Which will you spread? How? What strategies will you use?
Who can you ask for support?

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