

# how to deal with children's intense emotions

[always start with how we manage our intense emotions]

*mindfulness approach*

**Emotions** are complex experiences of consciousness, unconsciousness, bodily sensation, and behaviour that reflect the personal significance of an event.

When an **intense emotion** is taking place, the experiences are overwhelmed, the thinking brain flips to the emotional brain and the energy within arises exponentially.

## Do's

- Stay calm, use key words to slow down, i.e. 'breath', 'slow down', 'tiger is coming'...
- Be focused, what is my role in this? is it about the children or about the parents?
- Name and validate the feelings
- Sense the bodily sensations & energy flow
- Observe the reactions, facial expressions
- Ask questions to understand more, listen patiently & reiterate (hold them in the thinking brain longer)
- If too much for parent, just do nothing and accompany (try not to walk away without excuse)
- Take care of ourselves, Parents emotionally

## Don'ts

- Assume what just happened, stay open
- Put the words in children's mouth, ask to clarify
- Dismiss the feeling, i.e. 'don't feel this way, it is not a big deal...', 'there is nothing sad about it..'
- Give in or propose solutions right away
- Be eager to correct the situation (mistakes)
- Say unnecessary statements to make the children feel worse, i.e. 'stop crying, otherwise you will be punished', 'why are you crying...'
- Take it personally, in case they don't listen to you or say something hurtful, they don't really mean it as they are on their emotional brain

## PREVENTION

- Know the triggers (potentially)
- Prepare the mind (heads up)
- Set & reinforce routines
- Align on expectations
- Parents are emotionally grounded
- Equip self and children tools & techniques to calm down



## FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT EMOTIONS that may help in managing emotions:

- (1) It is normal and absolutely ok to have (intense) emotions - it helps us to express our inner world better (consciously and unconsciously).
- (2) Emotions are to befriend with, not to be hidden or suppressed, as eventually they will burst out or harm internally (in form of sickness).
- (3) When comes to children with intense emotions, try not to label them, instead teach them the tools to express themselves constructively.