



Anger Management and Emotional Regulation

What is Anger Management and Emotional Regulation?

- Anger management involves recognizing anger triggers and using coping strategies to respond calmly.
- Emotional regulation focuses on understanding and controlling emotional reactions to prevent chaotic outbursts or overreaction.
- For adolescents with developmental disabilities, these skills are specifically important due to challenges in sensory processing, communication, and understanding social cues.

Why is learning these life-long skills important?

- a) Decreases Aggression: Unregulated anger can result in physical or verbal aggression, impacting personal relationships between family and friends.
- b) Improves Social Interactions: Emotional regulation helps adolescents interact positively with both their peers and adults.
- c) Prevents Escalation: By teaching anger coping strategies and emotional regulation skills early, the risk of long term behavioral issues is minimized.
- d) Increases Self Confidence: Successfully navigating difficult emotions supports independence and determination.

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CBT Techniques and Strategies for Anger Management and Emotional Regulation

1. Identify Triggers and Early Signs

- Use visual aids (e.g. emotion charts or scales) to help children recognize physical signs of anger (e.g. rapid breathing, tight fists, flushed face)
- Create a "feelings journal" with caregivers to track situations that often cause frustration.

2. Cognitive Restructuring

- Apply cognitive restructuring or the replacement of negative thoughts with balanced ones (Eg: "I never understand math on my own!" vs. "It is okay to ask for help.")
 - Note: The Cognitive Distortions worksheet is a helpful resource in this step
- Use simple phrases like, "Is this thought helpful for me?" to challenge irrational or unreasonable beliefs.

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3. Relaxation Techniques

- Utilize your own personalized relaxation techniques: Deep breathing, sensory tools, physical activity, guided imagery, ect..
 - Note: The Mindfulness worksheet is a helpful resource in this step

4. Problem-Solving Skills

- Perform fake scenarios to practice direct communication (e.g., "I feel upset when..." or "I don't appreciate when....").
- Break tasks into steps using visual schedules to avoid frustration.
 - Note: The Behavioral worksheet is a helpful resource in this step

5. Positive Reinforcement

- Reward calm behavior with stickers, a sweet treat, or an act of self love to reinforce effective strategies. (e.g. keep an achievement log that you put a star on each time you effectively combat anger with a calm reaction)
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Exercise: Building your own Anger Management Toolbox

Materials Needed:

- One Unassembled White Box
- Coloring Utensils
- Tool Cards (Notecards)

Steps:

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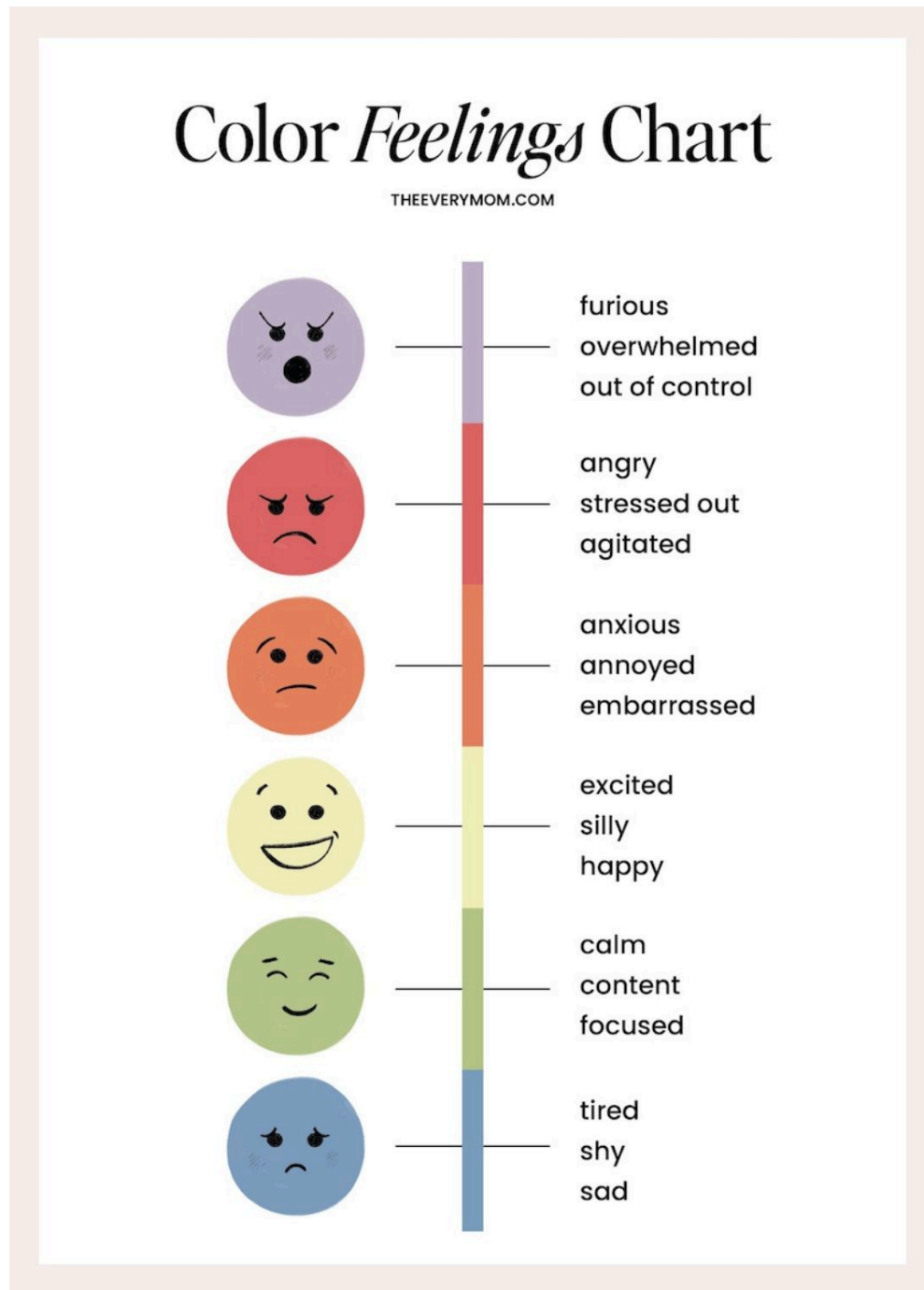
1. Color and decorate it the white box however you'd like—add your name, draw cool designs, use stickers, etc.
2. Create 5 - 6 tool cards which contain written pieces of guidance to problem solve using various strategies: breaking tasks into steps, practicing a relaxation technique before responding, or utilizing direct communication (e.g. "I feel statements")
3. Assemble the boxes and practice using your tools with your caregiver in practice situations.



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Resources:

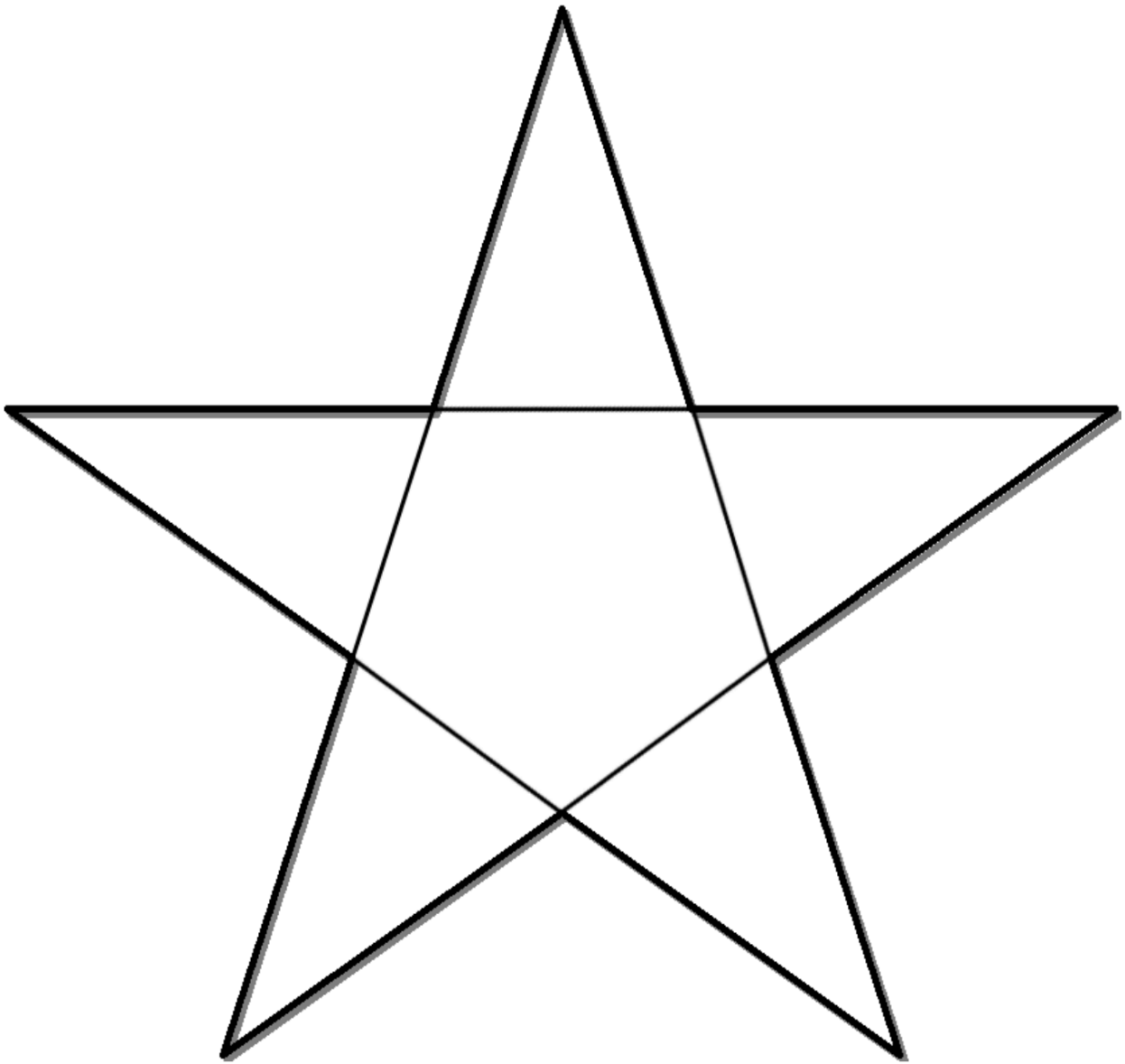
1. Trigger Visual Aid Example: Color Feelings Chart



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2. Relaxation Star Strategy

- Write down 5 relaxation techniques in each of the 5 triangles within the star that you can use when you are facing difficult emotions
- Label the center “My Relaxation Techniques”





3. Positive Reinforcement Log

- Use the positive reinforcement log to set Emotional Regulation intentions for the week with your caregiver.
- Based on the number of total stars you get for the month, assign yourself a specific reward!

Behavior Chart

Goals:	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Target: Stickers

Reward: If I get stickers, my reward will be

If I get stickers, my reward will be