



# MANAGING EMOTIONS MINDFULLY



## LET'S PLAY TOGETHER

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

FunConnectFam Project

Funded by  
CNFS-Secrétariat National  
DUO Program - CFMNB and Université de Moncton



# DESIGN TEAM

Dr. Jalila Jbilou  
Dr. Élane Deschênes  
Mrs. Jézabel Jaumain  
English version revised by  
Irène Caron (Psychology)

## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Mylène Lachance-Grzela, Dr. Annie Roy-Charland, Dr. Anik Dubé,  
Dr. Vickie Plourde, Dr. Josée Nadeau, Dr. Liette Andrée Landry,  
Mrs. Danielle Doucet,  
Dr. Roger G. LeBlanc and Dr. Salah-Eddine El Adlouni

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THIS MANUAL WAS:

- Research grant from the Consortium national de formation en santé -Secrétariat national (2021-2023)
- DUO Centre for Medical Education of New Brunswick and University of Moncton research grant (2021-2023)



# MANAGING EMOTIONS

## MINDFULLY

## WHAT IS IT?

Managing your emotions mindfully is intentionally bringing your attention to your emotions in the present moment without judgement and paying particular attention to the sensations and experiences lived during these moments.

### MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS MINDFULLY IS ALSO...

Welcoming your emotions with patience by getting into the habit of expressing them

Building bonds of love, respect and trust within the family

Promoting emotional intelligence, empathetic listening and gratitude

Using a wide range of words to talk about emotions with children

Motivating exploration, stimulating curiosity and encouraging acceptance

Often, we tend to **value and share our positive emotions**.  
On the other hand, we do everything we can to **hide or ignore our negative emotions**.

Positive and negative emotions are part of our daily lives and it is normal to feel them.

The most important thing is not let them take control of our decisions, reactions and behaviors.

**Mindfulness can help us get there!**

## WHY ?

Practicing managing our emotions mindfully

as a family game is a great way to learn together (our children and us) simple and effective little tricks to get through difficult or stressful times and unpleasant or conflictual situations with another person. It helps us to take the time to understand the situation and act calmly. These little tricks will be useful everywhere: at home, at school, at work, during leisure activities, with a friendship problem or with people you do not know.

# TIPS FOR PRACTICING MANAGING EMOTIONS MINDFULLY

## DID YOU KNOW?

Emotions, positive and negative, are useful: they help us identify our needs! Welcoming with openness, recognizing with foresight and accepting with compassion our emotions helps us to act calmly and confidently. Acting mindfully strengthens our self-confidence and improves our relationships with others.



## TIPS TO HELP MY CHILD TO MANAGE HIS/HER EMOTIONS AND STRESS

### EXAMPLES OF STRESSFUL SITUATIONS:

My child has an unjustified tantrum, he/she cries and doesn't seem to feel well, he/she isolates himself/herself in a corner and doesn't talk to anyone, she/he has to give a presentation at school and she/he doesn't feel ready, he/she has to get vaccinated and he/she is afraid of the needle, or she/he hits her/his little brother because he took her/his favorite toy.

### HOW CAN YOU CALM THE SITUATION AND MANAGE THIS STRESS?

1

#### TAKE A BIG BREATH BEFORE ACTING:

Our children's behaviors affect us and sometimes make us react in an exaggerated way.

2

#### RECOGNIZE, NAME AND DISCUSS EMOTIONS

If possible, isolate yourself with your child and get to his/her level (by sitting in front of him/her). Stay calm and speak with a clear and kind voice. Ask the child to tell you how she/he feels "how are you feeling right now?" "what are you thinking?"

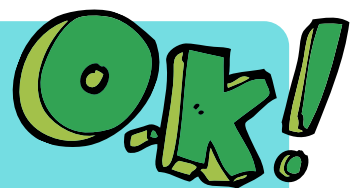
Wait for him/her to finish saying everything he/she has to say, nodding your head and doing encouraging "Um-hum" to show that you are listening and patient. Once the child has finished speaking, **reuse her/his own words and name the emotion**, for example "I understand, right now... you feel anger... OK... I understand..." then discuss with the child where she/he feels the emotion and what it means for her/him.



# TIPS TO PRACTICE

## MANAGING EMOTIONS MINDFULLY

THEN ...



### 3 NORMALIZE THE EMOTIONS AND STRESS FELT

Naming and normalizing an emotion is an important step.

For example: "It's normal to feel angry when someone touches our things" or "it's OK to be scared and that your heart starts racing when you have to talk in front of many people". This does not mean that we should trivialize what the child feels.

### 4 ACCEPT EMOTIONS TO BETTER MANAGE THEM

To better manage stress, the child will need to understand that the emotions felt are like **little red flags** telling us that there is something going on and that we must stop to understand and accept the emotion to be able to act calmly.

Introduce children to the tool of four colors and use it to classify emotion and identify what to do.



**GREEN**

“ I feel  
well, energetic,  
curious, amused,  
happy ”

Great, everything is fine!  
I have energy to learn new things.  
I give a hug, I say a kind word or I do a favor to someone I appreciate.  
I can do a "Mindful meditation" exercise to practice gratitude and appreciate my life.

**BLUE**

“ I feel sad, tired,  
bored, empty, I  
have no  
energy ”

I don't feel too good.  
**It would be nice to talk about it with someone I trust.**  
She/he will give me advice or an idea how to regain my energy. I can also play my favorite music and dance or do a "Mindful movement" exercise.

**YELLOW**

“ I feel  
worried, not well,  
pained, frustrated,  
anxious ”

It's not going well.  
**I need help. I need to talk quickly to someone I trust.**  
I do a "Mindful breathing" exercise. Then I ask someone I like to do a relaxing activity with me, like walking outside, cooking or gardening.

**RED**

“ I feel  
unhappy, enraged,  
angry, aggressive ”

**I am really not okay at all, I need help. I need to talk about it quickly with an adult I trust.** I can ask him/her to do with me a "Mindful meditation" exercise and then do together a pleasant and calm activity like coloring.

# TIPS TO PRACTICE

## MANAGING EMOTIONS MINDFULLY

THEN...

### MY ROLE AS A PARENT

- 5** To manage stress better, the child will need you to reassure him/her, comfort him/her and repeat that "it's normal to feel like this" and that you are here to help him/her get through this difficult time.

It will be important to listen carefully to your child and note:

- what triggered this emotion in the child?
- where does the child feel the emotion in his/her body?
- what does this emotion mean for the child?



If your child is having trouble identifying where she/he feel the emotion in her/his body, you can ask her/him to use her/his favorite plush toy or a doll to show you. For younger children you can also mimic emotions.

If the child finds it difficult to describe how he/she feels, stay calm and give him/her all the time he/she needs. You can take his/her hand gently or get closer to him/her.



For some children, physical contact can be reassuring. If your child does not want physical contact, respect her/his choice.



### THINGS NOT TO DO...



- Never judge the child or make him/her feel guilty by saying for example "If you're afraid to give your presentation in class, it's because you haven't worked hard enough. I told you so...", "You're no longer a baby to be afraid of needles. Come on now!"
- Avoid references to gender like "You cry like a girl", "Boys don't cry." or "Come on, be a man!"



### THINGS TO DO...

Reassure the child, show him/her love, offer him/her help and tell him/her: "You have the right to cry."; " I am here. I love you. »; "I am always here for you. You can trust me and tell me everything! »

# Emotimeter

Age: 3-14 years old

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Material: Scissors (to cut the emotions cards)

The emotimeter is a tool that facilitates emotions management in the family but also in everyday life. It can help your child regain calm and manage his/her emotions better.

**The parent leads the activity by asking his/her child:**

1

While thinking about the four colors of emotions, place your finger on the emotimeter. From 1 to 10, choose the color that best matches the emotion you feel. Colors will help you choose where to place your finger.

Ok, we are going to write that number on a sheet of paper.

Now you are going to choose the emotion card that most represents how you are feeling right now. OK! Put the card close to the number we wrote down.

2

We will take together a big inhale and then a great exhale... Once again... A big inhale and then a big exhale...

OK, read aloud the emotion that the card represents.

OK, I see... what could we do together to help you feel better and let go of the emotion?

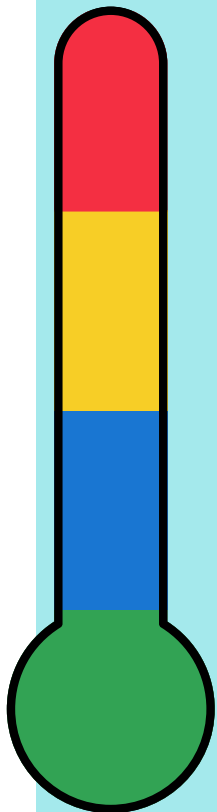
HMMM... Do you have an idea?

3

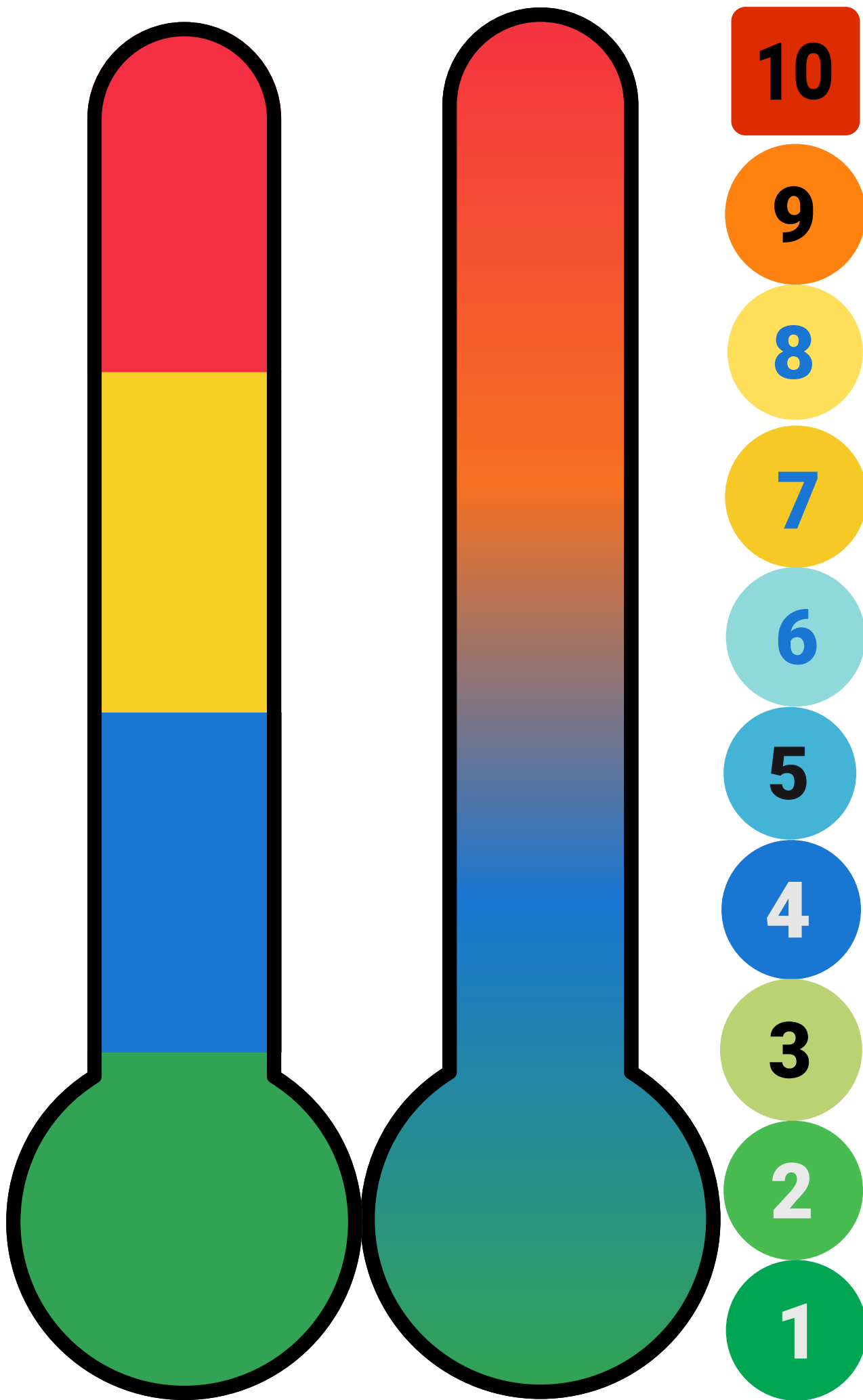
*(The child can use the four colors sheet to identify an activity. Let her/him choose. She/he can offer something different than what's on the four colors sheet, it is OK too).*

Once the activity is over, return to the emotimeter and ask the child to choose the color that best matches how he/she feels. The emotion may still be there, it is OK! It may take a little bit longer for an emotion to fly away. No matter the number, it is important to encourage, praise and reassure the child.

If the child continues to express an emotion that is in Yellow or Red, it will be important to stay with her/him longer and reassure her/him.



# Emotimeter



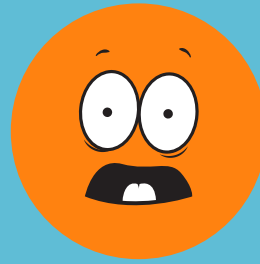


# EMOTIONS CARDS



**ANGRY**

Furious  
Upset



**SURPRISED**

Confused

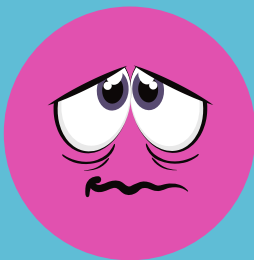


**FRUSTRATED**



**SAD**

Disappointed



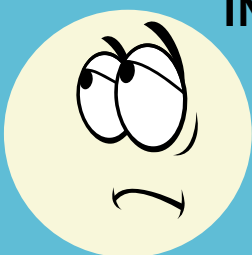
**STRESSED**

Worried  
Nervous



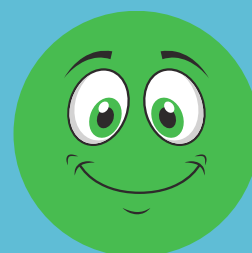
**HAPPY**

Pleased  
Cheerful  
Excited  
Confident



**INDIFFERENT**

Bored



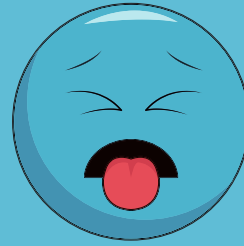
**CALM**

Tranquil  
Relaxed

# EMOTIONS CARDS



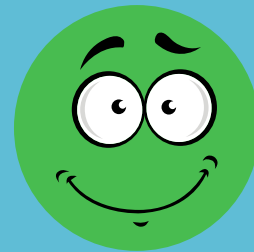
**SCARED**  
Afraid



**DISGUSTED**



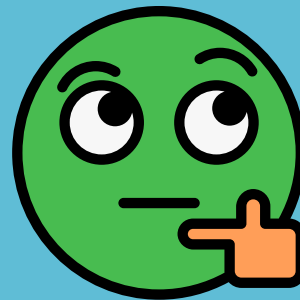
**GRATEFUL**



**LOVING**  
Kind



**PROUD**



**CURIOUS**

# PERSONAL NOTES:



# MANAGING EMOTIONS



For any information about the FunConnectFam project please  
contact: Dr. Jalila JBILOU

Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick  
50 Francophonie St, E1A 7R1  
Moncton (NB)  
[jalila.jbilou@umoncton.ca](mailto:jalila.jbilou@umoncton.ca)



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