

Practical Strategies for  
Promoting Mental Wellness of  
Teenage Girls and Women  
with ASD

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*Embracing Neurodiversity*





# Overview

1. Validation and Acceptance
  2. Understand Their ASD
  3. Promote Wellbeing
    - a) Make sense of experiences
    - b) Set parameters
    - c) Meltdowns and emotional regulation
    - d) What helps
    - e) Social network
  4. Celebrate Success
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# Validate, Accept, Acknowledge



# Understanding Their ASD

- Key issues:
  - Change anxiety
  - Lack of filter/ Sensory processing
  - Monofocus/shifting
  - Theory of mind
  - Emotional regulation
- First person accounts: blogs, books
- Educate loved ones to increase understanding, create new interactional patterns



# Making Sense of Experiences

- Emotion words
- Personality traits
- Processing
- Scripts



## IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

INTENSITY OF FEELINGS	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	CONFUSED	AFRAID	WEAK	STRONG	GUILTY
<b>High</b>	Ecstatic Elated	Alone Crushed	Betrayed Disgusted	Bewildered Desperate	Fearful Horried	Drained Exhausted	Aggressive Determined	Ashamed Humiliated
	Excited Exuberant	Depressed Devastated	Enraged Furious	Directionless Lost	Intimidated Panicky	Helpless Hopeless	Disgraced Forceful	Remorseful Sorrowful
	Fired-up	Disappointed	Irate	Spaced-out	Petrified	Impotent	Potent	Unworthy
	Overjoyed	Heart-broken	Outraged	Stagnant	Terrified	Lifeless	Powerful	Worthless
	Thrilled	Hopeless Sorrowful Wounded	Seething	Trapped Troubled		Overwhelmed Vulnerable	Proud Super	
<b>Medium</b>	Cheerful	Distressed	Aggravated	Disorganized	Apprehensive	Beat	Capable	Lowdown Sneaky Sorry
	Confident	Down	Agitated	Disoriented	Frightened	Dependent	Confident	
	Contented	Hurt	Annoyed	Foggy	Insecure	Inadequate	Energetic	
	Delighted	Left-out	Controlled	Misplaced	Scared	Incapable	Persuasive	
	Good	Regret	Frustrated	Mixed-up	Spooked	Insecure	Sure	
	Relieved	Upset	Mad		Threatened	Lazy		
	Satisfied		Upset		Uneasy	Rundown		
	Up					Tired		
<b>Low</b>	Fine	Bad	Dismayed	Baffled	Apprehensive	Lethargic	Able	Embarrassed
	Glad	Blue	Irritated	Bothered	Anxious	Shaky	Adequate	
	Mellow	Lost	Perturbed	Perplexed	Concerned	Shy	Capable	
	Pleasant	Moody	Put out	Puzzled	Nervous	Soft	Durable	
	Pleased	Sorry	Touchy	Uncomfortable	Skeptical	Under-par	Secure	
	Satisfied	Unhappy	Uptight	Undecided	Timid	Unsatisfied		
				Unsure	Unsure	Unsure		
					Worried			



# Set Parameters

- Spoon Theory
  - Social
  - Emotion
  - Sensory
  - Time
  - Information
- Accepting limits



# Meltdowns

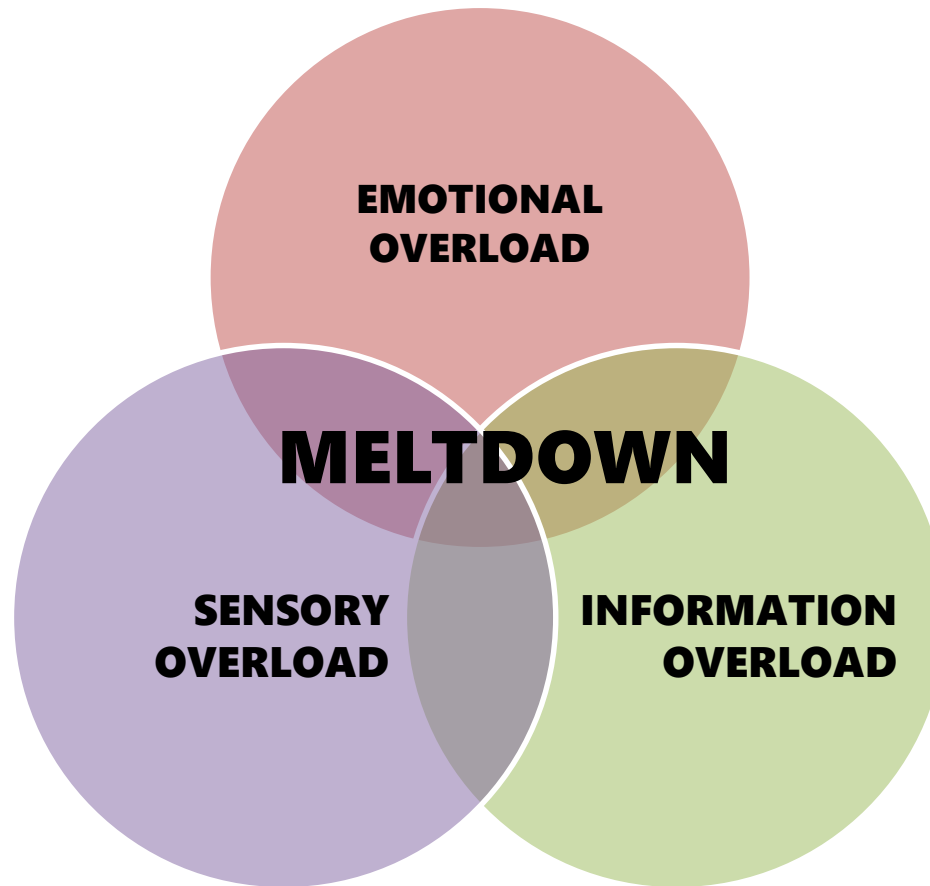


“A build up of emotion. I don’t want to be around anyone.  
I feel suffocated and trapped.  
If I pinpoint what I’m feeling it makes more sense. “



# Emotional Regulation

- What are my triggers?



# What Helps?

- Intense Sensations – Deep Pressure, Ice
- Self Soothe – Drink
- Distraction – Music, Visual
- Grounding Exercises
- Sensory Deprivation
- Imagery – Happy Place
- Deep Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Self-encouragement – “This Will Pass”
  
- Space and Time
- Support and Understanding
- Forgiveness



# Build A Support Network

- Strengthen social skills
  - Scripts, texting, role play
- Know who to trust
- Teach Advocacy
- Disclosure
- Support Groups



# Celebrate Growth

- Emphasize positive coping, good choices and working towards goals
- Live a life that is meaningful to them
- Focus on hope



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