

Strategies to reduce anxiety and/or aggression

1. Create a **timetable for the week**. Put in regular breaks for self-soothe box, square (belly) breathing, mindfulness and grounding techniques. Put tasks/activities in the timetable such as washing up, doing a dance with loud music, doing some stretching, lie down and look at clouds.

2. Create a **self-soothe box** for (let him/her lead on creating it). Make a real fuss of him/her when you are doing it. Make sure it is filled with things that spark happy thoughts/memories. Make sure all 5 senses are covered in the box- Sight, Smell, Touch, Taste, Sound.

3. Practice **square breathing** regularly, practice when he/she is calm as this will help him when he/she is anxious/angry. Square breathing: breathe in for 4secs, hold for 4 secs, breathe out for 4 secs and stop and think for 4 secs. Repeat process until calms. Encourage him/her to push his belly out when he/she breathes out.

4. Practice **pushing belly out** by using a balloon to blow up. This will show him/her his belly expanding.

5. Look for triggers and note these down, keep diaries of behaviours to help look for patterns

6. Practice **Grounding techniques** using the **5,4,3,2,1 approach-**

Name 5 things he/she can see

Name 4 things he/she can hear

Name 3 things h/she can feel

Name 2 things he/she can smell

Name 1 things he/she can taste

7. Use **mindfulness techniques-**

Lay down and look at the clouds.

Stop and listen to the surroundings and ask him/her to describe what he sees/hears.

Ask him/her to draw a picture with his less dominate hand.

Use water, sand, play doh anything that he can feel to allow him to describe the textures/feelings. Google will have lots more ideas on child friendly mindfulness techniques, have a look at them.

8. Make an **emotions scale chart** using emoji type faces. Range them from really happy to really sad. You may want to do your own or you could find a scale on the internet you could use. Encourage to point to the face that best shows how he/she is feeling. Try and put the language that matched the face to help learn about emotions.

9. **Exercise-** go for walks, burn energy with dancing, skipping...anything that gets the body moving and the heart pumping!

10. **Praise** him/her.....over the top (when its warranted)

11. Use **reward charts/jars**

12. Give him/her a big cushion, big teddy, duvet (anything big and soft) to use to squeeze/punch when he/shee starts to hit out at you. Tell him hitting you is wrong and put the soft object between you and him/her.

13. Practice all calming techniques even when he/she is calm as this will help him to use them when he/she isn't calm.

14. When a situation has happened that was difficult spend time with him after (only when he is calm) to reflect together on what happened. Ask him/her to explain how he was feeling, using the emoji scale, or by drawing a picture, try and use words they describe emotions that you think he/she is trying to express e.g. if he draws tears or points to a sad face say "so Mommy thinks you are trying to explain that you are sad".

15. Use the **Elmo video** to help him learn about anger and emotions (Put Elmo letting your monster out into google)

16. Use **positive language**- get down to his/her eye level when speaking, giving instructions. Avoid words that are negative

17. **Always be consistent** and know that I am here to support you.