



# Stemming the Tide

HELPING ADULTS WITH ADHD  
REGULATE THEIR EMOTIONS

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Hi, I'm Marcy Caldwell

- Owner and director of Rittenhouse Psychological Services
- Founder of ADDept.org
- Creator of Meltdown to Mastery



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Download the most up-to-date slides and handouts  
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scan for up-to-date slides

### Where we're going today...



- The Process of Emotional Regulation
- ADHD emotional regulation
- The Neurological differences in an ADHD brain that impact emotional regulation
- How these differences create dysregulation
- How do we best treat ADHD emotional dysregulation?

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### What is the process of emotional regulation? How do we actually do it?

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### Emotional Regulation

the ability of an individual to modulate an emotion or set of emotions



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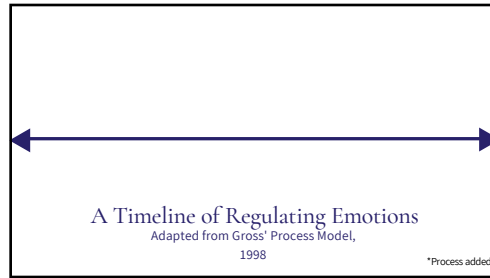
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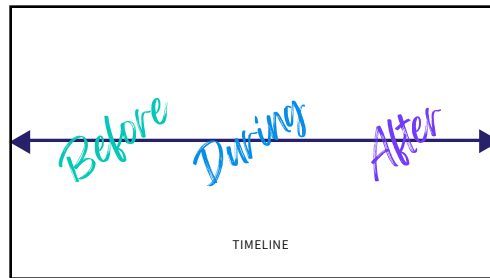
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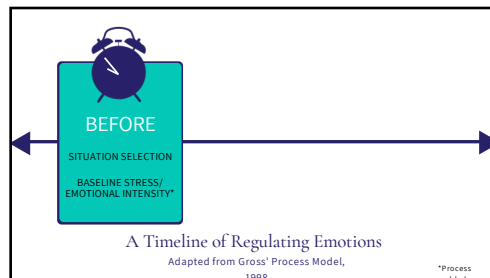
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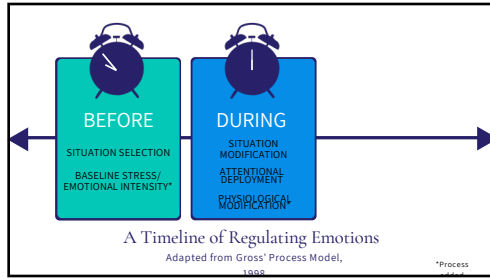
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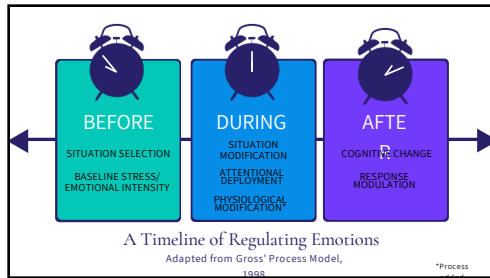
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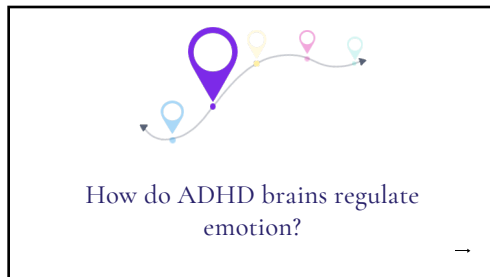
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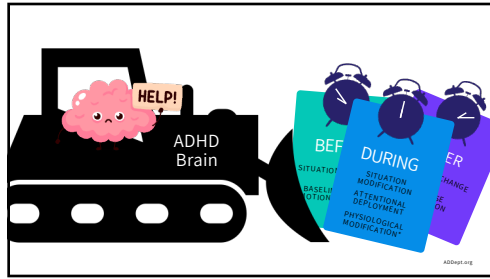
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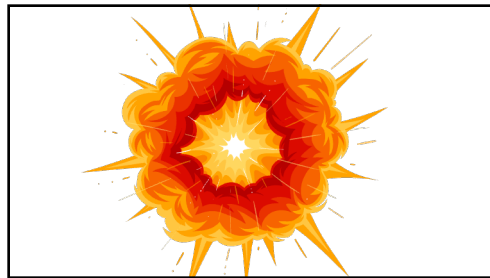
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**Emotional Dysregulation**  
 an emotional response that is poorly regulated and does not fall within the traditionally accepted range of emotional reaction.

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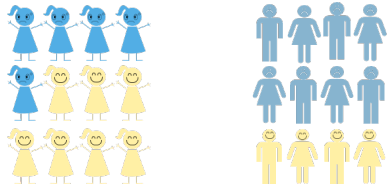
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The all-too common struggle of emotional dysregulation



24-50% of children with ADHD  
Shaw, M. © 2016  
 34-70% of Adults with ADHD

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**Tim**

- 47 y.o. father of 4
- Inattentive ADHD dx after oldest daughter was tested
- Successful doctor/ business owner
- Blowing up at his family and employees
- Seeing red in an instant then left with overwhelming shame



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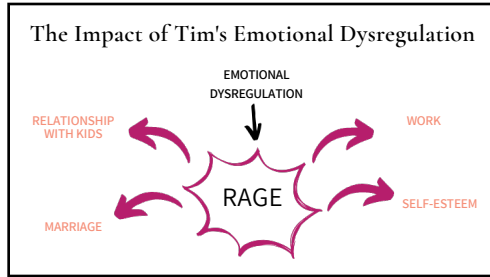
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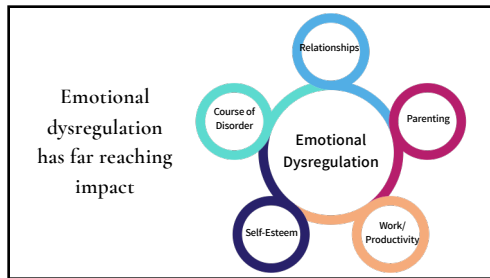
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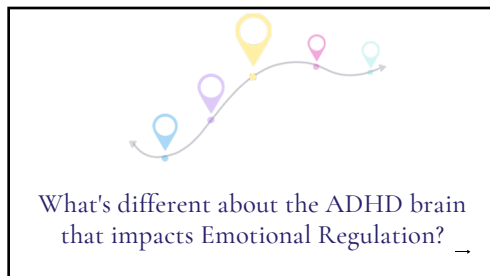
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10 Key Differences in ADHD  
Emotion Processing



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10 Key Differences in ADHD  
Emotion Processing



Reduced Executive  
Functioning Capacity



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10 Key Differences in ADHD  
Emotion Processing



Reduced Executive  
Functioning Capacity



Temporal  
Discounting



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ADHD brains have a strong preference to delay effort/pain and a strong aversion to delaying reward

(Barkley, et al., 2003; Sonuga-Barke, et al., 2001)

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### 10 Key Differences in ADHD Emotion Processing




Reduced Executive Functioning Capacity



Temporal Discounting



Difficulty with Emotion Identification



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### 10 Key Differences in ADHD Emotion Processing




Reduced Executive Functioning Capacity




Temporal Discounting



Difficulty with Emotional Identification



Decreased Early Sensory Encoding



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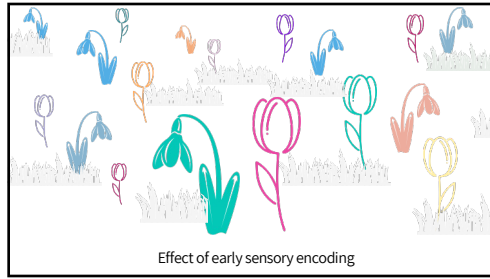
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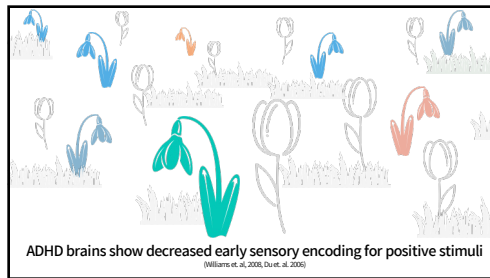
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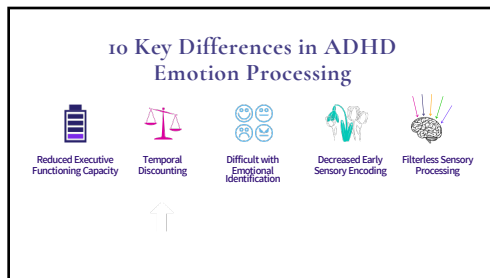
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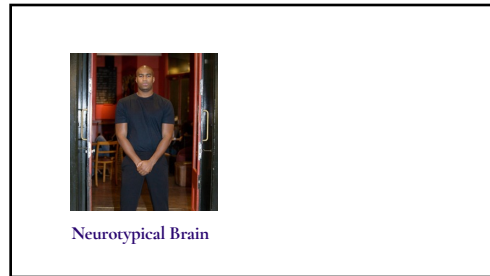
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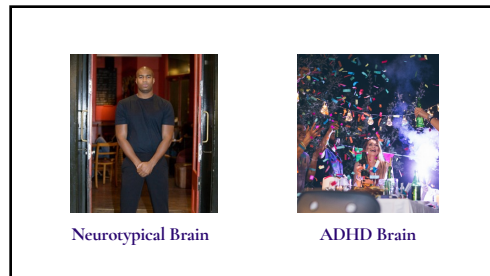
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### 10 Key Differences in ADHD Emotion Processing

- Reduced Executive Functioning Capacity
- Temporal Discounting
- Difficult with Emotional Identification
- Decreased Early Sensory Encoding
- Filterless Sensory Processing
- The "sticky" negative

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10 Key Differences in ADHD Emotion Processing

- Reduced Executive Functioning Capacity
- Temporal Discounting
- Difficult with Emotional Identification
- Decreased Early Sensory Encoding
- Filterless Sensory Processing
- The "sticky" negative
- Bottom Up Processing Deficiencies
- Top Down Processing Deficiencies
- Cognitive Control Deficiencies

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10 Key Differences in ADHD Emotion Processing

- Reduced Executive Functioning Capacity
- Temporal Discounting
- Difficult with Emotional Identification
- Decreased Early Sensory Encoding
- Filterless Sensory Processing
- The "sticky" negative
- Bottom Up Processing Deficiencies
- Top Down Processing Deficiencies
- Cognitive Control Deficiencies
- Default Mode Network Differences

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Task Positive Network

Neurotypical Brain

Active brain networks during goal directed

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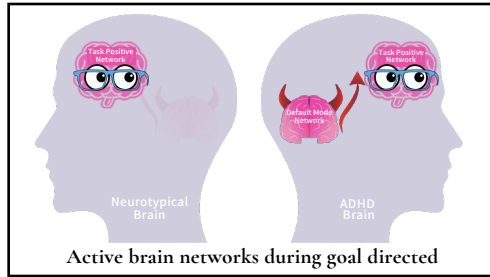
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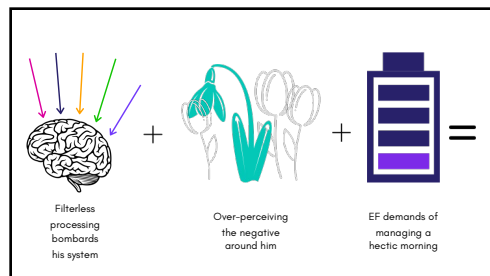
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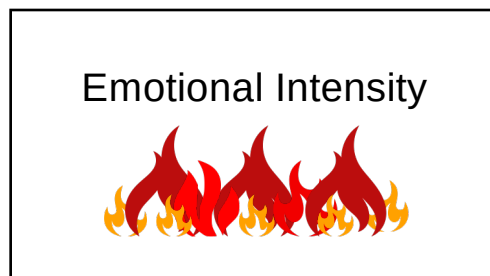
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**EMOTIONAL IDENTIFICATION**  
Doesn't process his daughter's distress at his reaction and doesn't register his own

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**STICKY NEGATIVE**  
Can't turn away from his anger at his daughter

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**TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP, AND COGNITIVE CONTROL DIFFERENCES**  
Lead to a flooding of rage resulting in yelling

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**DEFAULT MODE NETWORK**  
Angry and Shame-filled rumination makes it hard to repair

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How do we help our ADHD clients better manage their emotions? →

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**ADHD-Friendly Emotional Regulation Treatment**

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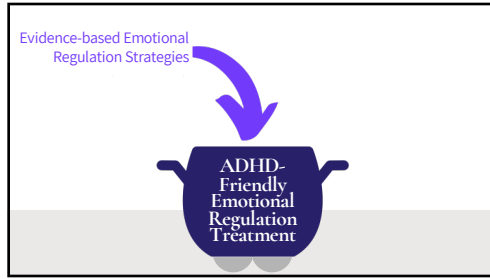
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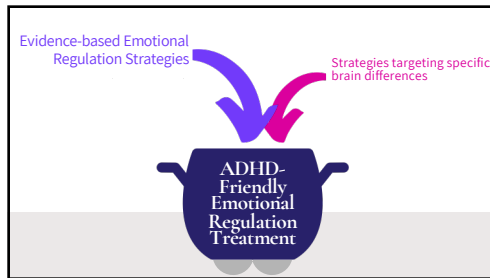
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EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- Cognitive reappraisal, cognitive change strategies
- Evidence supports anxiety, SUD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder and ADHD

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EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- Cognitive reappraisal, cognitive change strategies
- Evidence supports anxiety, SUD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder and ADHD

**Mindfulness- Based**

- Non-judgemental presence of the present situation increases awareness and emotional regulation experience
- Evidence supports MBI for depression, anxiety, and ADHD among others.

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EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- Cognitive reappraisal, cognitive change strategies
- Evidence supports anxiety, SUD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder and ADHD

**Mindfulness- Based**

- Non-judgemental presence of the present situation increases awareness and emotional regulation experience
- Evidence supports MBI for depression, anxiety, and ADHD among others.

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

- Distress tolerance, Mindfulness, and Emotional Regulation skills
- Evidence supports for anxiety, SUD, eating disorder, borderline personality disorder, and preliminary support for ADHD

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**EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION**

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- Cognitive reappraisal, cognitive change strategies
- Evidence supports anxiety, SUD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder and mixed evidence for adult ADHD EDR

**Mindfulness-Based Interventions**

- Non-judgmental presence of the present situation increases awareness and self-regulation experience
- Evidence supports MBI for depression, anxiety, and ADHD among others, some evidence supporting for adult ADHD EDR.

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

- Distress tolerance, Mindfulness, and Emotional Regulation skills
- Evidence supports for anxiety, SUD, eating disorder, borderline personality disorder, and preliminary support for ADHD EDR in adults

**Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**

- Accepting pain as part of a meaningful life, cognitive diffusion
- Clarifying values as the foundation for goal setting
- Evidence supports ACT for pain, anxiety, medical conditions, depression, eating disorders, early evidence for ADHD

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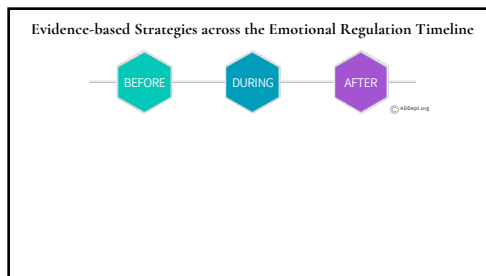
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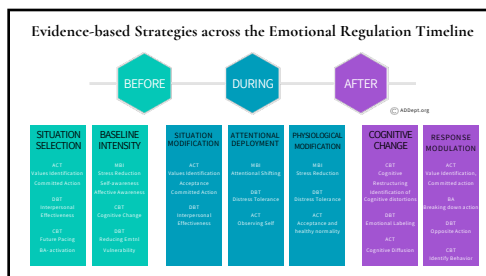
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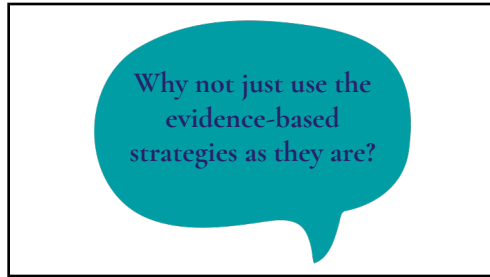
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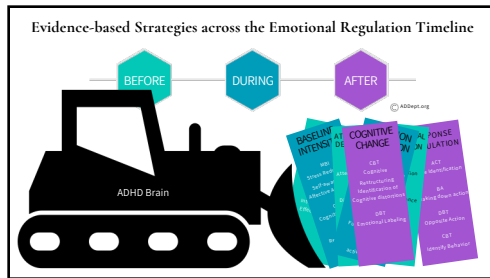
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STRATEGIES TARGETING NEURO-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

①	②	③
Decrease Emotional Intensity	Specific Difference Strategies	Increase Regulatory Capacity

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STRATEGIES TARGETING NEURO-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

①	②	③
Decrease Emotional Intensity	Specific Difference Strategies	Increase Regulatory Capacity

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Start where our clients are

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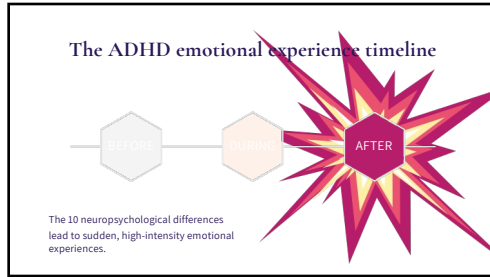
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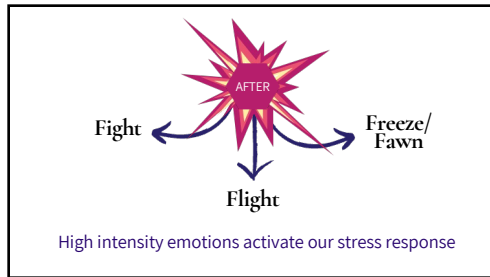
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GOAL/INTENTION/VALUE PROTECTION:

- Get space
- Calm the physiological experience
- Name the feeling
- Honor, allow and use the feeling

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- Protection from stress response
- Allows the brain to experience and feel true safety

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- Activate the parasympathetic nervous system
- Slow the sympathetic nervous system response to begin to reverse the emotional intensification process
- Breathing exercises, TIPP skills, etc.

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**3**  
NAME

- Activates the language centers of the rational brain
- Practice naming with compassion

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**4**  
HONOR

- Using ACT and DBT principles of acceptance and distress tolerance
  - Using DBT distress tolerance skills
- Utilize the power and information of the emotion
  - Helps to ease the demonization of emotions
- Helps "turn the volume down" on the emotion

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Lowered emotional intensity is the key that unlocks the ability to utilize the other evidence-based strategies

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STRATEGIES TARGETING NEURO-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

① Decrease Emotional Intensity

② Specific Difference Strategies

③ Increase Regulatory Capacity

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SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Step 1:  
Analysis of frequent brain difference hurdles



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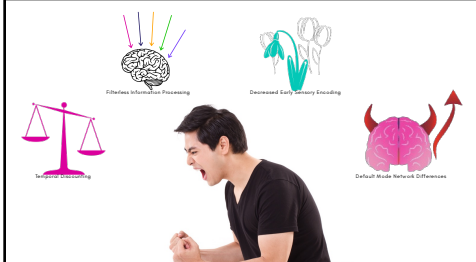
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Impaired Attention Processing

Decreased Early Salient Arousal

Default Mode Network Differences

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SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Step 2:  
Experiment with specific  
strategies targetting key  
differences



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**Temporal Discounting**  
**Strategies**

Vibrant goals rehearsal  
Automate Response  
Incentivize Present Action



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**Filterless Information Processing**  
**Strategies**

Stimulus  
Future Pacing and Stress Reduction  
Physiological Cue Identification



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**Decreased Early Sensory Encoding**  
**Strategies**  
 Gratitude Rituals  
 Meditation



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**DMN difference strategies**  
 TPN Engagement- particularly movement



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**Individual difference strategies:**

Vibrant goal visualization and rehearsal	Psychoeducation
Stimulation reduction strategies	Movement/ Exercise
Gratitude practices	Future Pacing
Mood tracking	Thought Stopping
Meditation	Cued situation selection
Task Positive Network Activation	Nutrition targetted to even blood sugar
Stress Reduction Strategies	Medication
CBT restructuring/ distortion identification	Stimulation Reduction
Automated Response	Incentivize Present Action

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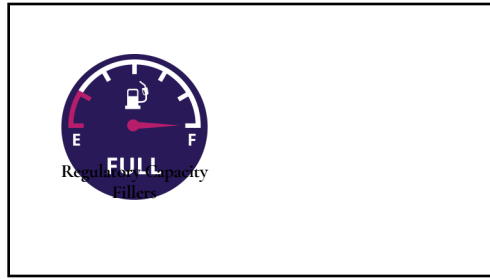
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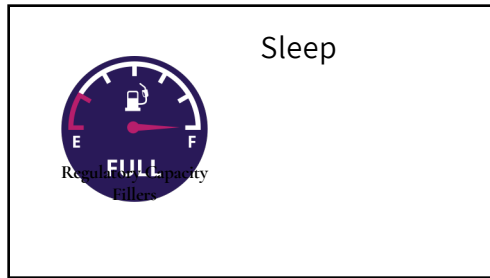
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Sleep  
Medication  
Meditation

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Sleep  
Medication  
Meditation  
Exercise

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Sleep  
Medication  
Meditation  
Exercise  
Nutrition

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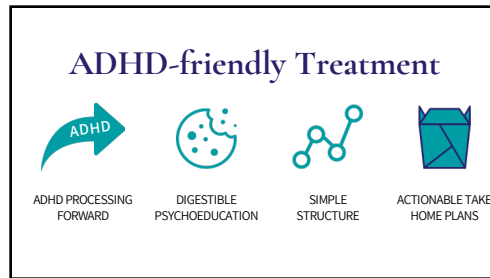
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 **Digestible Psychoeducation**  
Reduces Shame, Allows for Replication

 Bite Sized

 Personalized/  
Relevant

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 **Simple Structure**  
Promotes momentum and action

 Basic structure for sessions  
promotes containment  
and momentum

 Simple Actions provide  
direction for flooded  
brains

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 **Actionable Take-Home**  
Opportunities for replication

 Helps to fight object  
impermanence

 Paired with a Plan

 One Step/  
One Assignment

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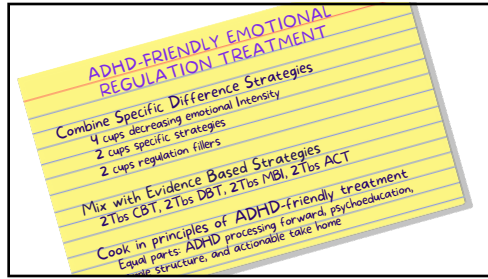
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