



# Seeds to grow **MENTAL HEALTH**

# Identifying Emotions

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS VOLUME 1

## MENTAL HEALTH & YOU

Many of us have had a hard time dealing with all of the changes that have happened over the past two and a half years, in both our work and home lives. The same can be said about your children. Emotions may have built-up, and at times, our mental health has suffered.

You may have felt many emotions, but most often, we feel sad (depressed), anxious, angry - or a combination of these! Sometimes we know what made us upset, and sometimes we don't, this is normal.

*Emotions can show up in our bodies in many ways such as: regular headaches, trouble sleeping, irritability, emotional outbursts, feeling withdrawn, overly tired or restless, or eating too much or too little.*

Now is an important time to focus on mental health, and make our home environment a healthy one too. This newsletter highlights

the mental health resources and activities that are being shared with your child's school. Our hope is that this newsletter helps you start a conversation with your children about the emotions they are feeling and gives you similar words to use to talk about these feelings.

In our next newsletter, we will start to talk about the skills children can use to help them deal with their emotions and behaviours.



## A PROACTIVE APPROACH

Having a plan and skills ready for stressful emotions is important, so that we can cope and feel better. These skills are like a lifejacket that keeps us floating in rough, emotional waters.

Just like we practice fire drills to know what to do in case of a fire, it's important to practice how we would react in an emotional emergency.



© Michelle Ayres & Carol Vivyan. The Decider Skills Manual 2019.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Emotional Emergency . . . . .	1
The FIZZ . . . . .	2
What's your FIZZ Scale. . . . .	3
What's my Temperature. . . . .	4
Activities for the Home . . . . .	5-6



[wechu.org](http://wechu.org)





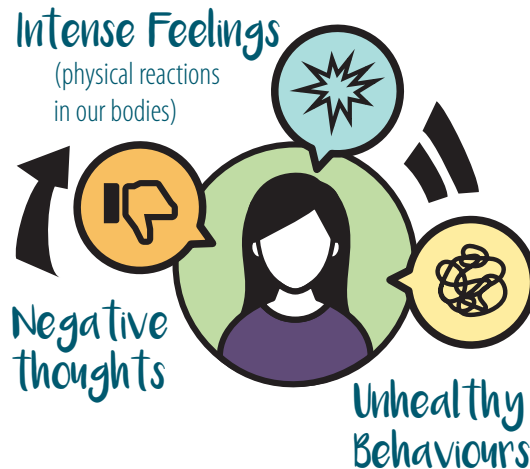
## WHAT IS AN EMOTIONAL EMERGENCY?

An **emotional emergency** is when something tough happens in your life and your thoughts cause your body to react to what you are feeling. Your emotions or behaviours might get out of control.

What one child feels is an emotional emergency may be very different from what your child feels is an emergency.

*Is an emergency forgetting your lunch, failing a test, or losing a friend?*

You can start by having your child identify emotions and being able to talk about how they are feeling. If they can identify and name the emotions they are feeling, they can begin to understand why they react the way they do. Then, they can try to stop the cycle of:



## How can we start to know that we are in an Emotional Emergency ?

The next few pages will provide some different ways of looking at emotions, and then some activities you can use at home with your child to help name and identify emotions. Choose one that works best for you!

## WHAT IS THE “FIZZ”?

### “The Fizz”<sup>©</sup>

*noun*

1. a term used by the “The Decider,” a program created to help people recognize, monitor, and manage their troublesome emotions.
2. The Decider describes “The FIZZ” as the physical signs of emotion in your body.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, emotions can be overwhelming for both you and your children. It’s like we are a bottle of pop that has been shaken. Without coping skills, these emotions can build-up and explode, just like that bottle of pop would. This can result in an unhealthy behaviour.

We all have experienced “the Fizz,” and at some point, almost everyone has had a poor reaction to feeling a strong emotion. If we take a minute and choose how to react, we might get a more positive result.

## Fight..Flight..Freeze..Flop

### Brain hijacked

Our focus in on the danger. Our thoughts race. We find it hard to think clearly and rationally. Feelings of being “unreal” or detached.

### Mouth dries

Saliva is not required at this time.

### Breathe fast & shallow

Helps us take in more oxygen, which is then transported around the blood system. We may feel short of breath

### Adrenaline released

The body’s alarm system stimulates the adrenal glands to release adrenaline and its effects are felt immediately throughout the body.

### Muscles tense

Blood, containing vital oxygen and glucose energy, is sent to the big muscles of the arms and legs - ready for fight or escape. Can also cause aches & pains.

### Digestion slows

Adrenaline reduces blood flow and relaxes muscles in stomach and intestines (blood diverted to limb muscles) causing nausea, butterflies or churning.

### Eyes widen

Alert for danger.

### Body sweats

Adrenaline speeds up and heats the body. Sweating cools the body.

### Heart beats fast

& palpitations. Blood pressure and pulse increase as the heart pumps more blood to muscles. This enables us to run or attack.

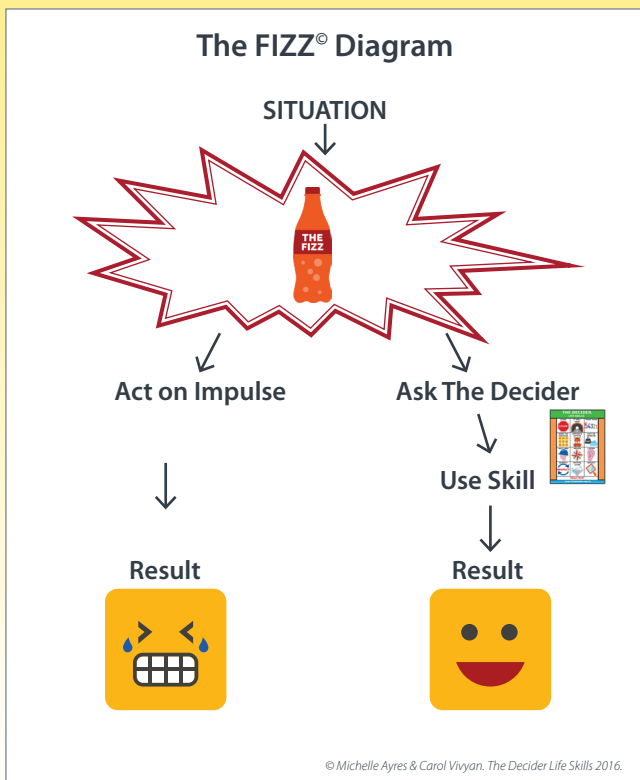
Adrenaline speeds up the body when we feel angry or scared.

The body can ‘flop’ due to a rapid relaxation response to danger. Sadness makes the body slow down and feel very tired.



© Michelle Ayres & Carol Vivyan. The Decider 2016.

## FEELING THE FIZZ



When children are able to recognize they are feeling their “Fizz” go up, they can then choose what skill they want to use to help them to not feel so sad or anxious.

Every child feels emotions differently and they may have many different emotions that are upsetting for them.

On the following pages, you will find activities that you can use in your home. These activities can help your children think about their emotions, what they feel like when experiencing those emotions, and how they react to those emotions.

<sup>1</sup> Michelle Ayres & Carol Vivyan. The Decider Lifeskills Handbook 2019

<sup>2</sup> Michelle Ayres & Carol Vivyan. The Decider Skills Manual 2019

### Activity

## WHAT DOES YOUR “FIZZ SCALE LOOK LIKE?

### HAVE YOUR CHILDREN ASK THEMSELVES:

- What emotions are upsetting for me?
- Do I often feel sad or depressed?
- Am I an anxious person?
- Do I have a problem with anger?
- Are there other emotions besides anger, anxiety, or sadness that I often feel?

**Have your children create a FIZZ® Scale for an emotion they feel is hard to manage.**

### THE FIZZ® SCALE

Make one scale for every emotion you often feel bothered by. Each emotion you feel will have its own unique physical signs on the FIZZ® Scale. What are the first signs you notice in your body? Where do you fall on the scale?

If you get stuck on naming the physical sensations, use the “Feeling the Fizz: Bubble Man” diagram on page 2 of the newsletter to help.

The FIZZ® Scale	Signs that I am feeling the FIZZ®
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	



**What happens when you feel the FIZZ®?**

“The Fizz - the Fizz Scale” Signs I am feeling THE FIZZ pg. 9 the Decider

### IF YOU FEEL ANGRY A LOT

Your "1" may be "feeling calm," and  
Your "10" might be "yelling or screaming,"  
or "giving the silent treatment"

### IF YOU OFTEN FEEL SAD OR DEPRESSED

Your "1" may be "no problem waking  
up for school," and  
Your "10" might be "not able to get  
out of bed"

**IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE PERSON**  
SO MAKE IT PERSONAL FOR YOU!

## Activity

# WHAT'S MY TEMPERATURE?

This is an activity from [School Mental Health Ontario \(SMHO\)](#), that teaches students how to take their "emotional temperature," to help them recognize and regulate their emotions.

### STEPS

#### 1 LOOKS LIKE - SOUNDS LIKE - FEELS LIKE

Develop an EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY, with synonyms for different emotions.

#### 2 DO - SAY - FEEL

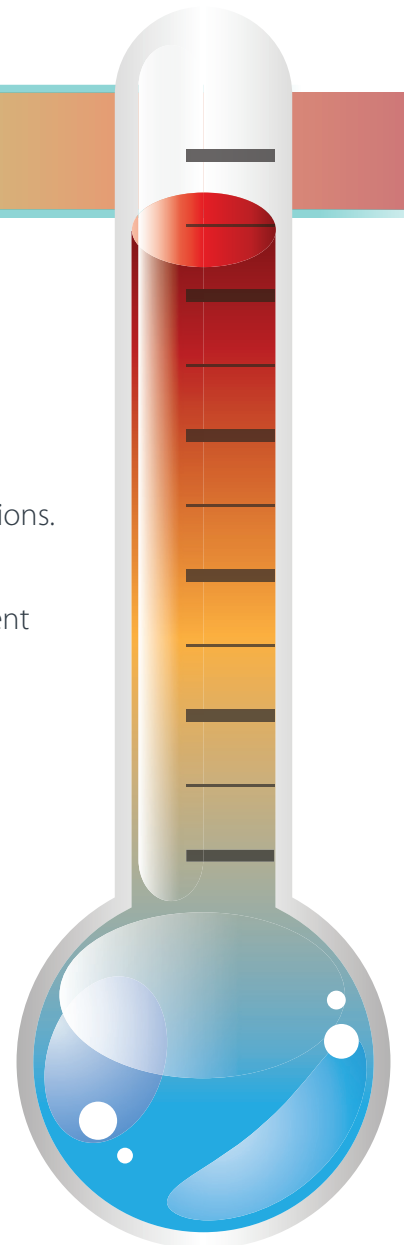
Use the "LOOKS LIKE - SOUNDS LIKE - FEELS LIKE" CHART to explore different emotions and each emotion specifically.\*

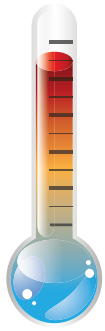
#### 3 Create a thermometer on paper and name the emotion they want to communicate. Then rate the emotion's physical sensations from 1-5.\*\*

*\*Handouts for step 2 and step 3 of this activity are provided on page 5 and 6.*

If you are looking for more activities to do with your children visit the [Supplementary resource section](#) of the "What's My Temperature" activity [School Mental Health Ontario](#) website.

Page 5 of this resource explains more ways you can talk about the "What's My Temperature" activity with your children.





# WHAT'S MY TEMPERATURE?

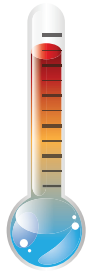
## STEP 1 LOOKS LIKE - SOUNDS LIKE - FEELS LIKE

**LOOKS LIKE** Behaviours or actions you would observe in yourself or others

**SOUNDS LIKE** Things you would hear yourself or others say

**FEELS LIKE** Physical sensations you feel inside

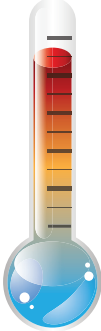
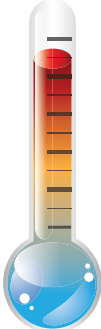
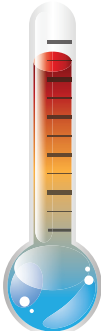
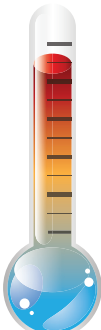
EMOTION	LOOKS LIKE	SOUNDS LIKE	FEELS LIKE
<b>Anger</b>	Eyes rolling	Talking back	Heart beating fast
	Arms crossed	Sarcasm	Face hot
<b>Anxiety</b>	Fidgeting	Backing out of plans	Sweaty
			Butterflies
<b>Depression</b>	Sleeping a lot	Negativity	Tired all the time
		"Nothing matters"	
<b>Other:</b>			



# WHAT'S MY TEMPERATURE?

## STEP 2 DO - SAY - FEEL

Describe the top 5 things that you **DO - SAY - FEEL**  
When your temperature is **HIGH OR LOW**

EMOTION	WHAT'S MY TEMPERATURE	
Anger		High 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ Low 1 _____
Anxiety		High 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ Low 1 _____
Depression		High 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ Low 1 _____
Other: _____		High 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ Low 1 _____