



Seeds to grow **MENTAL HEALTH**

Working with Our Emotions

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS VOLUME 3

EMOTIONS & SKILLS

In our [second newsletter](#), we introduced the STOPP skill to help deal with our emotions or behaviours during an emotional emergency.

An emotional emergency is when something tough happens in your life. Your thoughts cause your body to react to what you are feeling. Your emotions or behaviours might get out of control and you may not react the way you normally would.

THE STOPP SKILL IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL AND SHOULD ALWAYS BE USED FIRST.



The STOPP skill puts space between our emotions and our actions. This gives us time to decide how we want to respond to a situation, so we don't react to our emotions.



This newsletter will highlight three new skills that can be used to support us like a lifejacket during rough waters. The first skill is like STOPP, and it can help reduce stress. It can be used to shift our focus when our emotions or "FIZZ" is high. The second skill will help us think differently about a situation and change our emotional response. The third skill gives us a sense of direction and helps to guide us through life.

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The Decider Skills Manual 2019.

In our next newsletter, we will talk about other skills that help us to manage and balance our emotions. As well as skills that can improve our communication skills.

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RIGHT NOW

54321

RIGHT NOW IS A SKILL WHICH USES 54321 TO LOOK OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES TO REDUCE STRESS.

When our emotions are running high, or we are feeling “THE FIZZ”, we may need to use a skill that will help us in the moment. Using the **RIGHT NOW** skill helps to shift the focus away from our difficult thoughts or feelings by using our senses.

When you're feeling THE FIZZ, try the **RIGHT NOW** skill by doing this:

5 Things I can see right now, or imagine I can see right now.

4 Things I can hear right now, or imagine I can hear right now.

3 Things I can touch right now, or imagine I can touch right now.

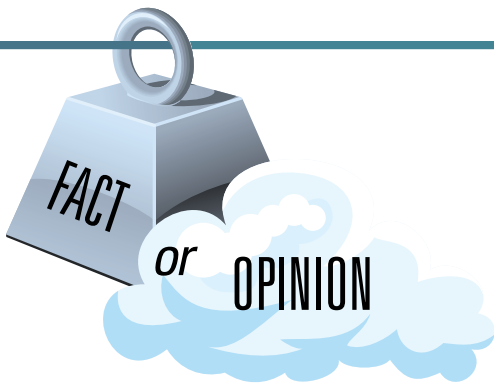
2 Things I can smell right now, or imagine I can smell right now.

1 Take 1 slow, deep breath (in through your nose and out through your mouth). Then, focus on your breathing.



Use what works for you! Think of things you really enjoy. Try looking around or thinking of things with different colours (i.e., 5 red things, 4 yellow things, etc.). Some people like to think of sports teams (i.e., 5 hockey teams, 4 football teams, etc.). Always remember to end with taking that one slow, deep breath.

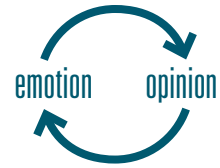
Practice using this skill, so that it comes easy to you when your “FIZZ” is high. Change doesn't happen right away, you have to work on it!



THE FACT OR OPINION SKILL helps us to think differently and change our emotional response.

When we feel stressed, we can have strong opinions and emotions. Our strong emotions reinforce our opinions. Our opinions then increase our emotions, which can lead to a strong reaction. This powerful reaction can cause us to have negative results. Opinions can lead to emotion and emotion can lead to opinions.

If we are having a strong emotional response to a situation, it can be helpful to ask ourselves “Is this a FACT or an OPINION?”



What is a Fact?	What is an Opinion?
Evidence-based (evidence supports the truth). Facts can be proven.	Based on personal beliefs or judgement.
No arguments (can't really argue it).	It can be argued or debated.
Driven by rational thought (head).	Driven by emotion (heart). Can express how someone thinks/feels.
Would stand up in a court of law.	It can change.

For example, if a friend walked past us without saying hello, we might think, “they are ignoring me,” “Wow they are being rude,” “why are they mad at me”. Thinking this way may make you react in a way that is not positive. The only fact here is that your friend walked past you. Everything else was an opinion. When we realize that many of our thoughts are opinions rather than facts, we may not get so upset by them. Instead, we can make informed and calm decisions about what are the best actions to take.

If it is a FACT
We can make choices about what we can or cannot do.

If it is an OPINION
We can recognize that our opinion is based on emotion. We can remove the emotion (opinion) and look at the facts. This is what we do *know* about the situation.

If we ask ourselves “is that fact or opinion” – we can remove most of the emotion (opinions) and go back to the facts. This can help us to be less stressed, more in control, and able to make better decisions.

When you find yourself getting emotional or feeling “THE FIZZ”, remember to ask yourself, am I reacting to a **FACT or an OPINION?**

VALUES



Values are the things that really matter to us.

They are the ideas and beliefs that we hold as special.

They help guide us through life.

Goals can be used to make plans that help us live up to our values.

Our values are like our internal compass. When we choose to do something that conflicts with our values, our internal compass will tell us something is wrong by increasing our “FIZZ”. This might make us feel uncomfortable. We may start to feel the physical symptoms of our stressful emotions. This could be an increase in our heart rate, sweating, or a nervous feeling in our stomach.

It can be hard for children to identify their values, especially those in the younger grades. By helping children identify their “Values”, it will help to lead them in the right direction during a stressful time.

See page 6 for an activity to help children identify their values.

TO DO AT HOME

Working on activities at home to practice the **Right Now**, **Fact or Opinion**, and **Values** skills can make it easier for your child to use these skills when faced with a stressful time.

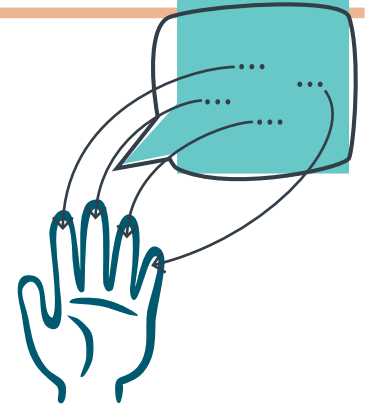
Below are some examples of activities you can do with your child

RIGHT NOW ACTIVITIES

FOUR FINGER AFFIRMATION (from [School Mental Health Ontario](#))

Ask your child to choose four words that make them feel calm and confident.

- It might be a sentence or just four words.
- Examples: "I am loved today," "I believe in me," "Breathe, listen, smile, love," "I can handle this."
- Tell them that each word they pick will match a finger on their hand.
- Have them say the words (affirmations) aloud or in their head and connect each finger with their thumb.
- Tell your child they can repeat this as many times as they like, aloud or to themselves.



KIDS HELP PHONE [Tension Release Exercise](#)

An exercise that helps relax your body from head to toe.

MAKE A CALMING JAR



The jar can be used as a tool that helps children to use their breathing to calm their minds. Children swirl their jar while looking at it and focusing on their breathing. It helps to change their attention from the thoughts they are having or the feelings in their body. At first the glitter will swirl around very quickly (like our strong thoughts or feelings). Then it will start to slow down and becomes calm.

How to make a calming jar

- Fill a clean, empty jar or see-through container with:
 - Water
 - Coloured glitter (or whatever you think will look best in the jar)
 - A couple drops of food colouring (optional)
- Seal tightly.
- Shake the jar and your child can watch as the glitter swirls around. Have them breath deeply in and out as they watch the glitter sink to bottom of the jar.

An activity like this one, called Snowstorm in a bag can be found on the [SMHO](#) website.

RIGHT NOW ACTIVITIES *continued*

BREATHING ACTIVITIES

Deep breaths can help us feel calm when we are worried, upset, or angry.

Hot chocolate breaths

- Pretend to be holding a mug filled your favourite hot drink.
- Take a big breath in through your nose, like you are trying to smell the drink.
- Then take a nice slow breath out through your mouth, like you are trying to cool the drink down.

Repeat as many times as you like.

The [SMHO](#) website also has a **Deep Belly Breathing** activity.

MOVEMENT



- When are emotions, or “FIZZ”, is high, it can be helpful to change what we are looking at or seeing. Try going for a walk or stand at the door or window. What can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell? Can you feel the wind/rain/sun on you?
- Exercise is a great tool to use to help get rid of stress and make us feel happy and energized. Dancing is a great activity to get our bodies moving. Have your child pick their favourite song or make a playlist to put on when emotions are high and dance it out. Try doing stretches or yoga. Here are some [videos](#) to get you started.

FACT OR OPINION ACTIVITY

DESCRIBE THE PICTURE OR OBJECT

People can have different opinions about the same event or situation. For example, ask yourself or your child, what words would you use to describe this picture. Now think about the words you thought of... are they facts or opinions?

	Facts	Opinions
	Clown	Funny
	Painted face	Weird hair
	Colourful	Scary
	Smiling	Happy

Find something around your house to use to do this activity with your child. You can use a chair, a book, a toy. Think of ways to describe the object then talk about if the words used are facts or opinions. Talk to your child about how it's helpful to look at what is a fact or an opinion when they are feeling their emotions or in a hard situation.

VALUES ACTIVITY

FAMILY VALUES

Discuss with your child what the family Values are. After talking about the family values, have your child choose 3 values that are important to them. An older child may be able to come up with family values on their own. Have your child draw a picture showing your family values.

Examples of Family Values

- Respect
- Love
- Cleanliness
- Sensitivity
- Hardworking
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Being Fair

Make a Family Values chart with a list of values. You and you child can look at it when they need a reminder!