

Maintaining mental health during COVID-19: A guide for adults with I/DD and their helpers

Step 1: Check in to your emotions

There are many ways to check in with emotions, verbally and with pictures. It is often easier to try to make these check-ins a regular part of the day and to have others *model* this behavior first.

Example: “Good morning, Billy. I feel frustrated this morning. I want to leave the house, but we can’t. How do you feel?”

Individuals can label their emotions with words, a facial expression, or by choosing a picture that best identifies how they feel. Different individuals may want different visuals to help them choose. Consider making your own visuals with photographs or using one of the options available below.

◆ What if this is really hard for us? ◆

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

1. Play with different emotion facial expressions in the mirror
2. Watch favorite movies/ shows and practice labeling emotions in the characters
3. Play an online game: <https://www.do2learn.com/games/feelingsgame/index.htm>
4. Print out a simple [emotion matching card game](#)
5. Try a more [advanced emotion activity](#)

Step 2. Know your warning signs

Each individual has different warning signs that an emotion is building up and needs to be expressed. Anxiety is often experienced as muscle tension, headaches, and irritability. Anger may build up with more physical signs like clenching your jaw or getting louder. Warning signs may be physical sensations, behavior changes, or thought patterns.

[Explore your warning signs](#)

Step 3. Use those coping skills

There is never a bad time to practice a coping skill. In fact, the more you practice skills when you are calm and comfortable, the more quickly and easily your body and mind return to being calm and in control. There are all sorts of coping skills!

Anger management: [Simple Cards](#), [Full descriptions](#)

Anxiety management: [Simple Cards](#), [Full descriptions](#)

[Deep breathing](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

Apps to make it more fun: <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/emotional-intelligence-apps-and-games>

Visuals to Help Express Emotions



HAPPY



SAD



MAD



NERVOUS

Kimochis

...toys with feelings inside



HAPPY



SAD



MAD



BRAVE



EMBARRASSED



FRIENDLY



SORRY



DISAPPOINTED



FRUSTRATED



SILLY



HOPEFUL



LEFT OUT



EXCITED



JEALOUS



CURIOUS



CRANKY



SENSITIVE



PROUD



INSECURE



GRATEFUL



LOVED



GUILTY



UNCOMFORTABLE



SHY



HURT



SURPRISED



SCARED



KIND

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Calm	Relaxed	Pleased	Content	Refreshed
Frustrated	Worried	Happy	Disappointed	Focused
Angry	Anxious	Excited	Sad	Motivated
Furious	Panicked	Overjoyed	Depressed	Inspired