

PARENTING TEENS TO CREATE EMOTIONAL STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

RESILIENCE

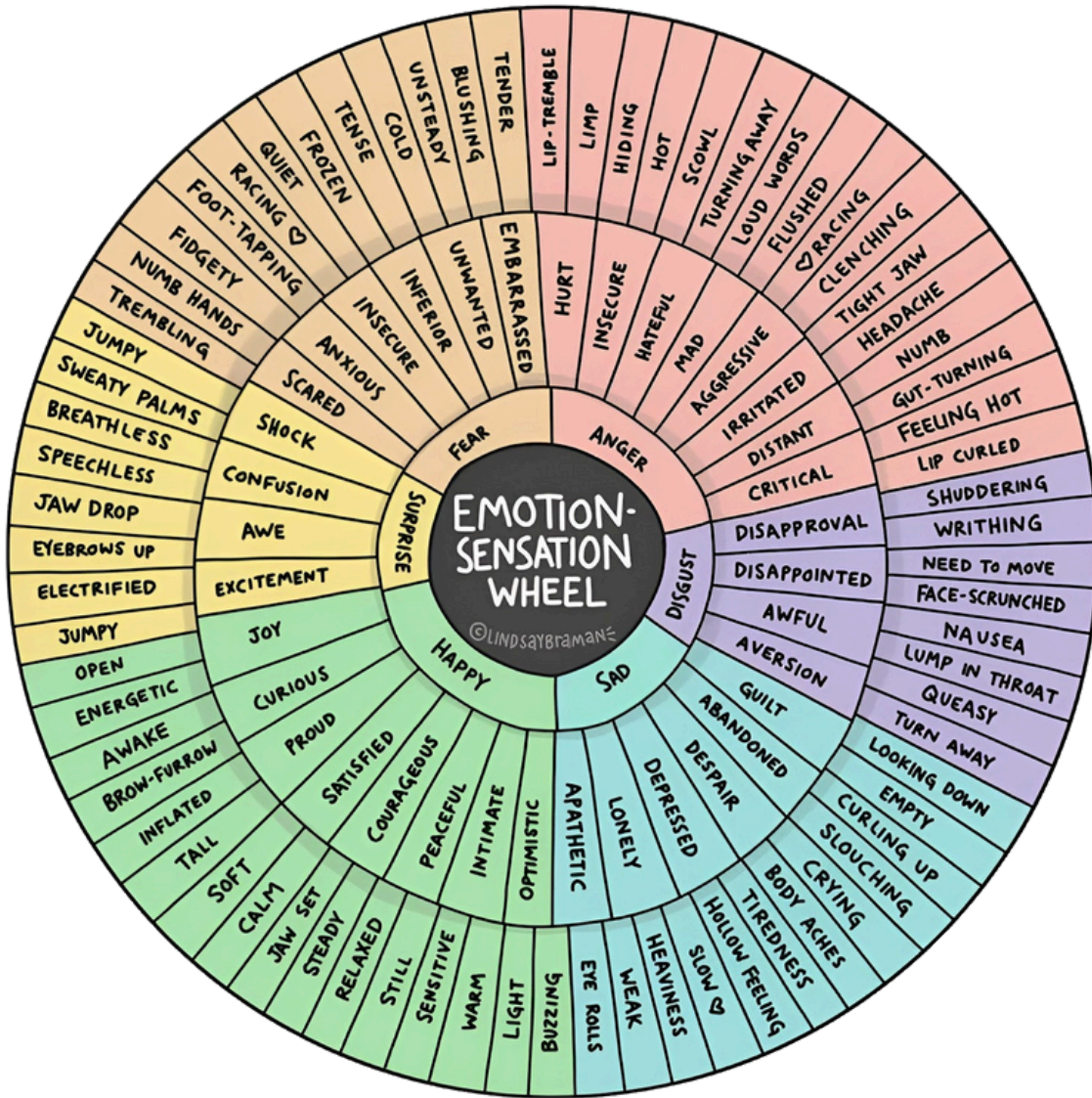
- Defined as adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant sources of stress.
- Internal factors: Self-soothing, problem solving, self-esteem, sense of purpose, optimism, sleep, nutrition and exercise
- External factors: Supportive families, schools and communities

IMBALANCE OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- The Emotional Center (Limbic System) is in Overdrive: This part of the brain responsible for intense emotions and immediate reactions like fear and anger. This leads to more intense feelings and mood swings.
- The Logical Center (Prefrontal Cortex) is Under Construction: The prefrontal cortex is in charge of executive functions like planning, decision-making, and impulse control and isn't mature until the mid-20's.
- This mismatch means the emotional part of the brain "screams" louder than the logical part can "whisper," making it difficult for teens to calmly regulate their feelings and think through a transition.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND SELF AWARENESS

- Step 1: Pause when you notice a shift in emotions, thoughts, or behaviors
- Step 2: "Tune in" to the body
 - Inquire about their physical sensations. What is their body communicating?
- Step 3: Identify emotions
 - Use an emotional wheel
- Step 4: Use coping skills and grounding activities to soothe or co-regulate
 - Provide opportunities in teen's environment for use of their coping toolbox (quiet spaces, comforts/fidgets, time with friends, etc.) – and help build it
 - Co-regulation is a powerful tool as their nervous system will mirror yours
- Step 5: Practice, practice, practice!
 - Parents and teens both benefit from practice, together and individually



EMPATHETIC / ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Focus on your teen with the intention of understanding their message and responding thoughtfully. This includes using warmth, genuineness and empathy to:

- Give your full attention
- Paraphrase their words
- Identify and name emotions
- Allow for silence
- Listen without interrupting
- Show engaged body language
- Ask clarifying and open ended questions
- Avoid judgment or solutions. Validate their experience instead.



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