

Talking to Your Kids About the Tough Stuff:

how to inform your kids without scaring them

Lindsey McColl, M.C., Registered Psychologist

First- Check in with yourself

How do you feel about what is happening in the world?

Who do you talk to about your own feelings (spouse, family member/friend, therapist, etc.)?

How do you manage your own stress?



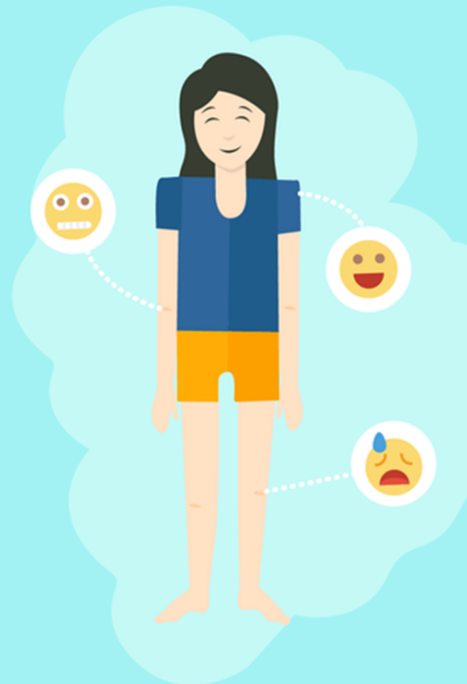
Talking to your kids

1. Be CALM and NEUTRAL

Actively calm and center yourself



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY TALK! TRY A BODY SCAN!



1. Focus your attention one-by-one on your toes, fingers, and every place in-between.
2. Notice any feelings of tension or discomfort. Imagine each area softening and relaxing.
3. If a thought or emotion arises, notice it without judging, then let it go.
4. Breathe. Relax.

DE STRESS
MONDAY *Happy New Week!*

Talking to your kids

2. Choose your time to talk

Avoid close to bedtime

Kids should be calm, relaxed



Talking to your kids

3. Start with a question

“What do you know about ...”

Tailor this question to the child’s age

Use your child’s terminology



Talking to your kids

4. Use developmentally appropriate language

Virus Bad cold
Germs
Sickness FLU
COVID-19
Coronavirus

Talking to your kids

5. Use simple and concise language

For young children, you may want to only talk about hand washing and changes in routine/schedule

For older kids, give just as much information needed to understand

Answer any questions



Talking to your kids

6. Be HONEST and FACTUAL

Builds trust

Encourages kids to come to you
with their questions/fears

“I don’t know” is ok



Talking to your kids

7. Check in again...and again

Kids need time to process information

Take cues from your kids



Talking to your kids

8. Come up with ways to empower your kids

How can they help?

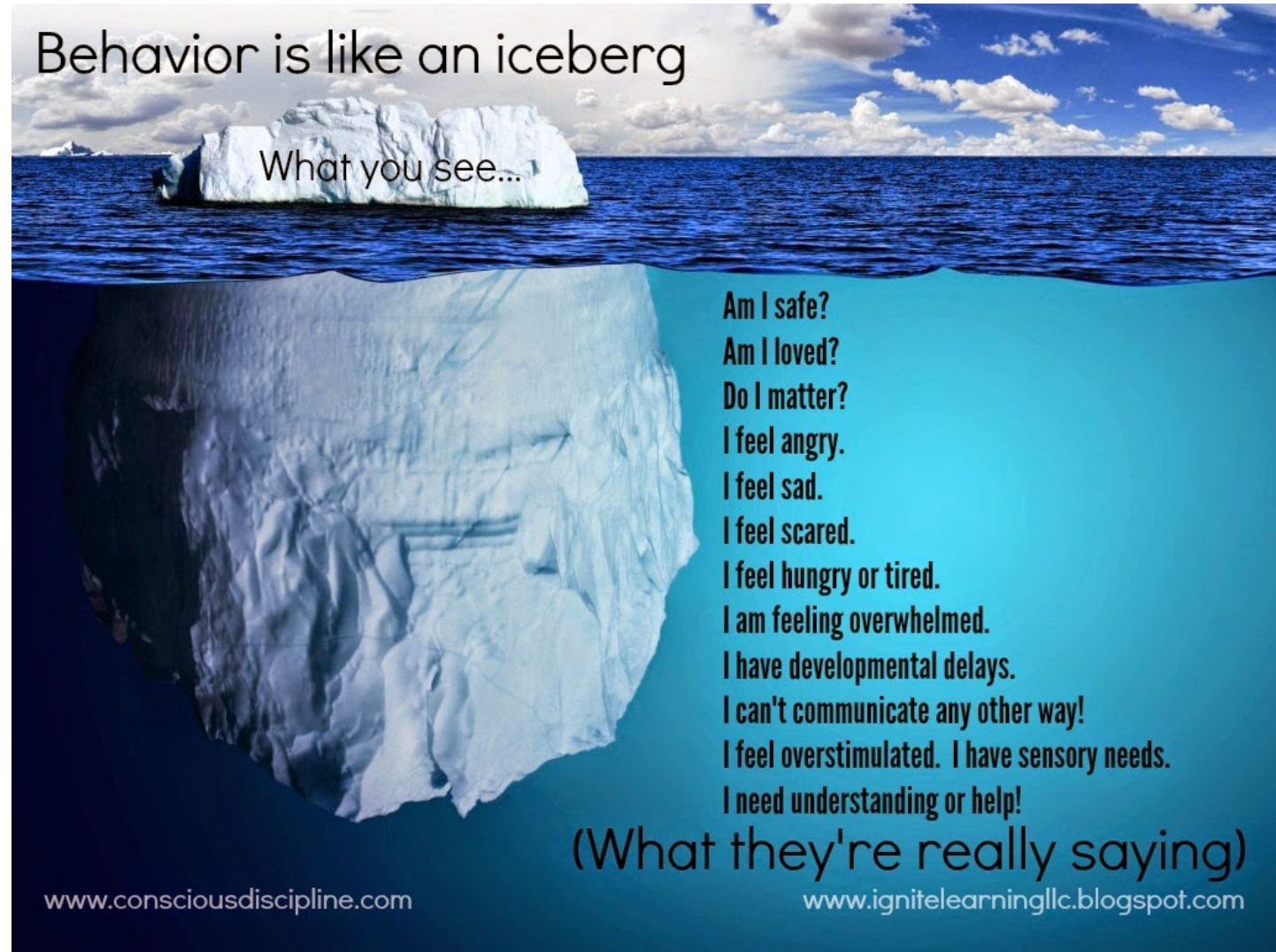
What do they have control over?

Find positive ways to cope together



Remember...

Behaviour is COMMUNICATION.



Remember...

Protect your kids

Turn OFF the news (TV and radio)

exposure to visual information in the media can be traumatic

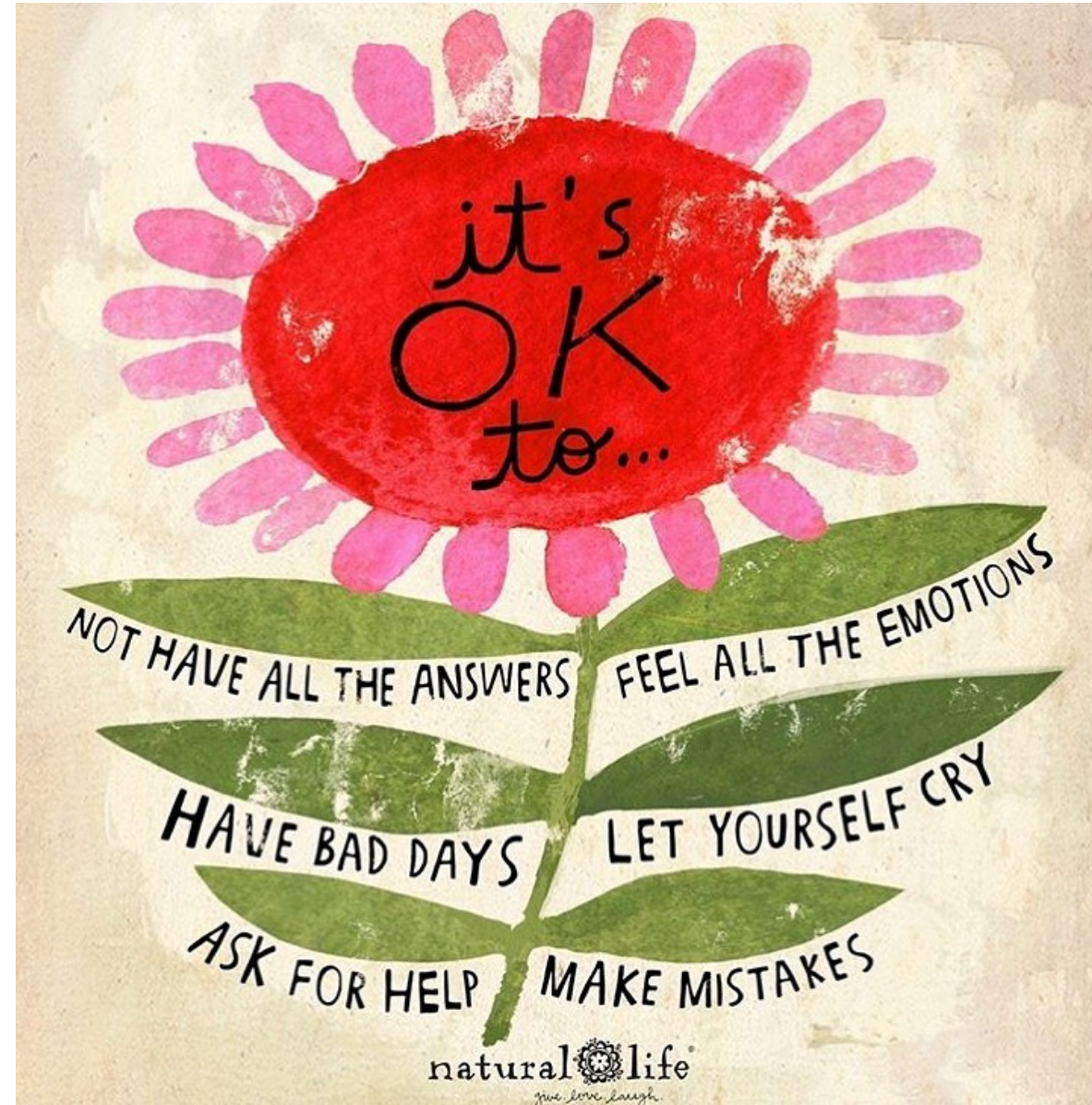
Avoid adult topics in their presence

Talk to adults when the kids are unable to hear you



Remember...

There is no such thing as a PERFECT PARENT.



Questions?

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