

Managing Emotions Guide

The MEG is for you and your support team. It will help you make sense of your reactions to ‘triggers’, or reminders of really stressful events. Sometimes the things happening around you make it hard to think clearly, stay calm and make good choices. The MEG can help you, your carers and others figure out what leads to difficulties and what helps. Use the MEG to develop strategies for times you have strong emotions, or behaviour that’s hard to control.

With your permission, copies of the MEG can be shared with anyone in your life. That might include carers, caseworkers, grandparents, psychologists, teachers, or school counsellors. The MEG will help you make changes and take charge of your emotions during times of stress.

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| This MEG is by | | | | |
| This MEG is for | | | | |
| The Priority Problem I’m working on is... | | | | |
| Step 1: Understanding my emotions (Building Awareness) | | | | |
| What flips my switch? What happens in my environment to make me upset? | | | | |
| | USUAL STATE | SURVIVAL STATES | | |
| | Chilled Being in control | Heating Up Getting upset | Boiling Losing control | Cooling Calming down |
| Awareness What am I thinking? What am I paying attention to? Am I spaced out? | | | | |
| Affect What do I feel? What does my face show? What does my body feel like? | | | | |
| Action What am I doing? What am I saying? What do I feel like doing? | | | | |

Step 2: Managing my emotions (Applying Awareness)

| | USUAL STATE | SURVIVAL STATES | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | Chilled Being in control | Heating Up Getting upset | Boiling Losing control | Cooling Calming down |
| How can I help myself? | <i>Things I can do to keep feeling good and in control</i> | <i>Things I can do when I start getting upset</i> | <i>Things I can do to stay safe and keep myself from losing control</i> | <i>Things I can do to calm down and fix any problems that happened when I lost control</i> |
| | | | | |
| How can others help me? | <i>Things an adult or friend can do to help me feel good and in control</i> | <i>Things an adult or friend can do when I start getting upset</i> | <i>Things an adult or friend can do to help me stay safe and keep myself from losing control</i> | <i>Things an adult or friend can do to help me calm down and fix any problems that happened when I've lost control</i> |
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Developing a Managing Emotions Guide

The Managing Emotions Guide

The Managing Emotions Guide (MEG) helps to capture information about a child/teen's unique needs. You can support your kids to complete and use this tool to:

- gain insight into their own survival responses
- identify how their actions and emotions change across the four stages of trauma behaviour
- understand how their actions and emotions are connected to their trauma
- develop strategies to help themselves
- identify strategies to gain support from caring adults.

Completing the MEG

The MEG is divided into two sections. In the first section, kids identify their behavioural and emotional responses across the four stages. In the second section, they identify strategies for Cooling or becoming Chilled in each stage. When supporting a child/teen to develop their MEG, it's important to:

- collaborate with their support team to provide assistance
- help them to identify their behaviours and emotions listen to any strategies they identify
- identify things they are already doing to calm down, existing support from others and new strategies that could be included
- understand their emotions and behaviours
- identify and develop strategies.

Some kids will need limited support, while others will require significant assistance. Be creative when considering appropriate supports – for example, would they benefit from drawing pictures instead of writing, or narrating while an adult writes?

Implementing the MEG

Once a MEG has been developed, it's important to use and review the identified strategies. Remember that the MEG is a working document. You should support the child/teen to update it as behaviours change, new strategies are identified or current strategies stop working.

Work with the child/teen to determine who should have a copy of the MEG. It's useful for anyone who supports them through Heating Up and Boiling to have one. Refer to the MEG often, as it is your guide to supporting your child/teen effectively. You should also try to mirror the language used in their MEG. For example, your child/teen might describe their Heating Up behaviours as 'freaking out'. When they're Heating Up, you could say 'I can see you're starting to freak out', then provide a choice of several strategies from the MEG.