

Self-Soothing and Self-Care

Working in child care, especially when you are an employee that may not have a lot of official influence across the organization, can be incredibly frustrating and stressful. When a frustrating event happens, it's important to 1) work through your emotions related to the event; 2) get outside support if you need it; and 3) decide if you need to act. The following questions will lead you through this process while becoming more self-aware.

- 1) What emotions are you feeling and why?
 - Explore and “lean in” to your emotions, do not compartmentalize them.
 - Review the events (as objectively as possible) that occurred to figure out why you are feeling the way you feel, keeping in mind that nobody can “make” you feel a certain way. Most times, current events and past events combine to generate strong, uncomfortable emotions.
 - Explore the object of your emotions. If you are angry, what is frustrating you? If you are afraid, what are you afraid of?

- 2) What needs to happen right now so that you can take care of yourself and your emotions?
 - Physical soothing (take a walk, stretching)
 - Cognitive soothing (affirmations)
 - Social soothing (talk with a friend or family member)
 - Sensory soothing (finding a quiet place, pleasant smells)

- 3) Considering the strength of your emotions and the events, do you need to act?
 - How upset are you? Is your upset primarily due to the event, or to emotions that were triggered by the event?
 - Is this sort of thing likely to happen again and if so, how often?
 - Are the events a threat to your mission and/or that of the organization?