

ADHD Emotion Toolkit

Your emotions aren't too big. Your brake system is running on empty. Here are five tools to bring it back online, plus a decision tree and a debrief template. Print this. Stick it somewhere you'll actually see it when things go sideways.

THE 5 TOOLS — QUICK REFERENCE

1

Name it to tame it

WHEN SOMETHING LANDS HARDER THAN EXPECTED

- ' Pause. Notice what you feel.
- ' Say it specifically, not "I feel bad." Try "I feel embarrassed and hurt."
- ' Labelling drops amygdala activity and wakes up your prefrontal cortex.

2

STOP

WHEN YOU FEEL YOURSELF ESCALATING

- ' Stop. Take a breath.
- ' Take perspective. Is this proportionate?
- ' Observe sensations. Where do you feel it?
- ' Proceed mindfully. What's one small next step?

3

Temperature reset

WHEN EMOTION IS FLOODING IN FAST

- ' Splash cold water on your face, or hold ice, for 15-30 seconds.
- ' Or breathe 4-7-8: inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8.
- ' This triggers a parasympathetic reset. Your body calms before your brain catches up.

4

The 10-minute rule

WHEN YOU WANT TO ACT ON THE FEELING (SEND IT, SAY IT, QUIT)

- ' Set a phone timer for 10 minutes.
- ' Do anything else. Walk. Water. Different room.
- ' After 10 minutes, revisit the urge. It's usually smaller.

5

Trigger mapping

AFTER AN EMOTIONAL EPISODE, NOT DURING

- ' Write down what triggered it. Pattern-match across a week.
- ' For each recurring trigger, design one environmental change that reduces exposure.
- ' Prevention beats recovery. Every time.

FLOODED OR FRUSTRATED?

The tools you need depend on what your body is doing. Check yourself first.

What's happening in your body right now?**Flooded / shut down**

Tight chest, frozen, can't think clearly. Brain feels offline. You want to hide, disappear, or sleep.

Try: Temperature reset ' Name it ' STOP

Frustrated / activated

Hot, tense, want to react. Ready to send the message, slam the door, quit the thing. Brain feels too online.

Try: 10-minute rule ' STOP ' Name it

POST-EPISODE DEBRIEF

Fill this in once you're back to baseline. Not during. This is for learning the pattern, not for punishing yourself.

What happened? (One sentence.)

How intense was it?

 1 2 3 4 5

What did I try?

What helped, even a little?

One thing to try differently next time
