**Sensory Ladder**

With a teacher or parent/carer, go through the following lists to identify your feelings, actions and how to make things better at each stage of ‘meltdown’. Some examples have been added but you can delete any and/or add your own.

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| **Meltdown** | | |
| I am feeling:   * Overwhelmed * Angry * Confused * I can’t identify my feelings   I might say:   * “I’ve had enough” * “Go away!” | How I might act:   * Say mean things * Swear * Scream * Pace around * Throw things * Break things * Hit my head * Bite * Spit * Shake | Strategies: Stay with me but allow me some space  OR  Let me stand outside the room (I won’t run off)  Wait for 5 minutes then I can:   * Use an essential oil on my wrist * Paced breathing, in for 4 out for 6 * Suck a mint |
| **Over Alert** | | |
| I am feeling:   * Frustrated * Anxious * Tearful * Agitated * Panicky * Cornered * Embarrassed * Irritated * Upset * Annoyed * Lost | How I might act:   * Angrily * May refuse to do something * May sleep during the day (because I’m not sleeping well at night) * Be rude to people * Distance myself | Strategies: It is helpful if you let me vent my feelings but I might not be able to get things straight in my head.  I may repeat myself – you should let me do this up to 3 times  After this I need:   * Positive reassurance, e.g. ‘You won’t always feel like this’, ‘You will feel better’, ‘Let’s do something else’   Then I will use:   * A cooling mat/weighted blanket * Mindful colouring/walking. Fidget toy. * Muscle relaxation meditation * Deep breathing techniques * A.C.E. (Acknowledge your emotions, Come back into your body, Engage with the outside world) * Use earplugs/noise cancelling headphones |
| **Calm and Alert** | | |
| I am feeling:   * Calm * Enjoyment * Contentment * Happy * Interested * Awake | How I might act:   * Speaking freely with people * I stay awake during the day * I am contributing * Do my work | What I might be able to do: I am engaging in things I need or want to do. I may:   * Read * Spend time with friends * Complete my work * Engage in lunch time activities * Answer questions |
| **Under Alert** | | |
| I am feeling:   * Low * Bored * Disinterested * Flat * Lethargic | How I might act:   * Close my eyes more * Take longer to answer * Not finish my work | Things that might help me stay more alert:   * Light touch on my shoulder * Strong smells * Getting out of my seat * Activities I enjoy * Special interests |
| **Sleep State** | | |
| I am asleep |  | Set an alarm to wake me up  Gentle pat on the shoulder |

**MORE HELPFUL SENSORY DIET ACTIVITIES**

The following is an activity checklist of things you might find helpful in order to decrease or prevent anxiety and distress at home and/or school. Pick out ones that you would like to try

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement:**   * Walking * Lifting weights * Swimming * Rocking yourself * Shaking out your hands and feet * Gardening * Taking a shower * Cleaning * Washing the car * Sports * Jigsaws * Craft activities | **Auditory:**   * Enjoying the quiet / silence * People talking * Singing * Using the telephone * Use my music/headphones * Listening to musical instruments * Relaxation or meditation track * Funny Youtube clips * Mindful listening * Tapping fingers on a desk | **Smell:**   * Incense * Herbal tea * Essential oils * Mindful eating * Sitting in the garden * Bath with bath salts * Baking * Cooking * Perfume * Body lotions |
| **Touch/Temperature**   * Being hugged or held * Blanket wrap / weighted blanket * Getting a massage * Holding / chewing ice * Petting a dog, cat or other pet * Warm or cold cloth to face * Fine water mist on face * Hot/cold shower * Washing dishes * Using stress ball * Fidgeting with something * Twirling your own hair * Washing/styling my hair * Cooking/baking * Using body lotions | **Vision:**   * Watching birds in the garden * A mobile * Window shopping * Photography * Reading * Mindful observations * Mindful colouring * Going for a drive * Favourite film * Watching the clouds | **Tasting/Chewing**   * Chewing ice * Deep breathing * Drinking herbal tea * Mindful eating * Chewing gum * Blowing bubbles * Chew bracelet/necklace * Brushing teeth |