



# Inclusion Parent Drop In: Emotional Regulation



17.01.2025

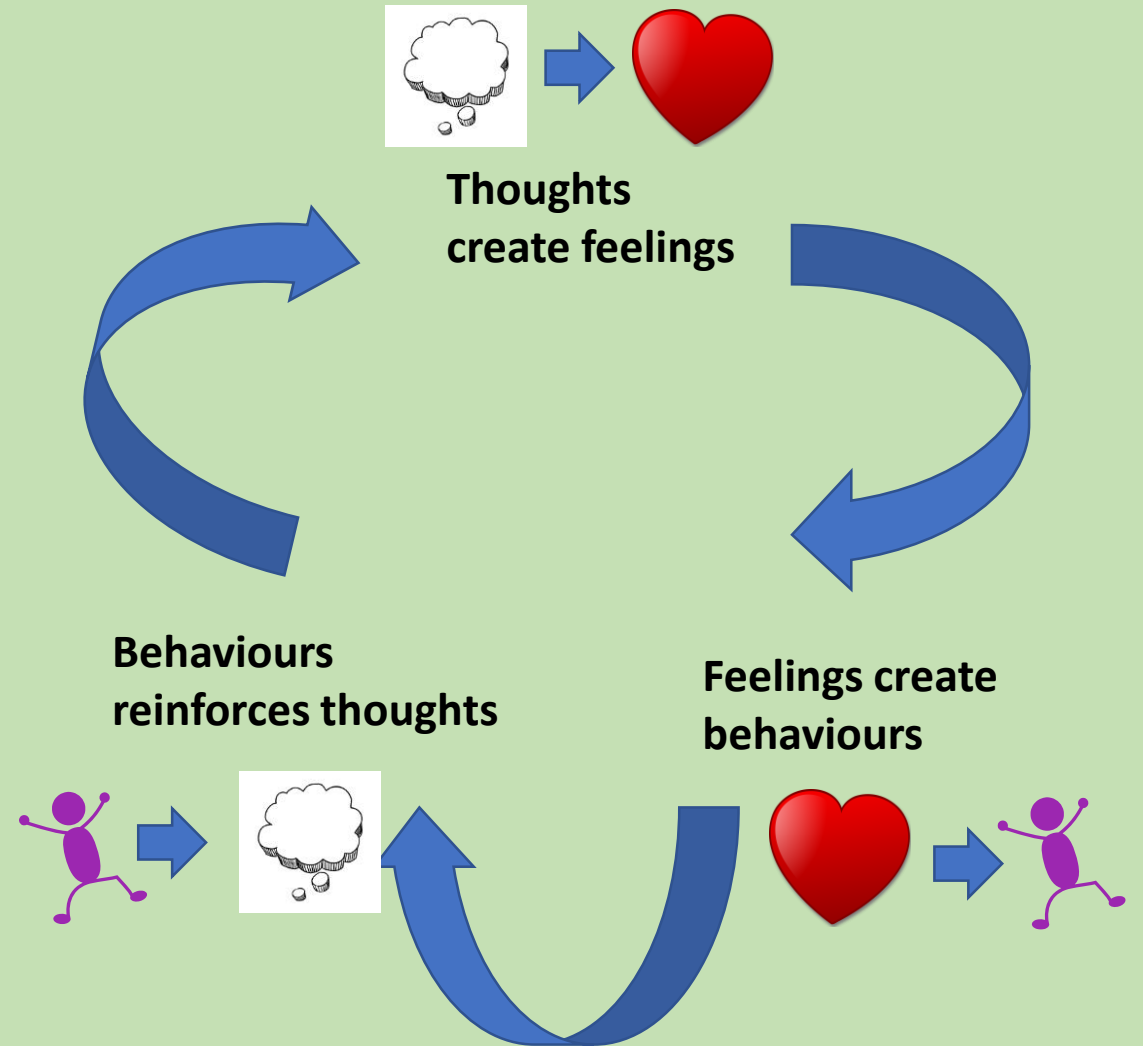


# Why is Emotional Regulation Important?

Emotion regulation is important because our emotions are closely connected to how we think and feel.

Our thoughts and feelings help us to decide how to respond to a situation and what actions to take. In other words, our thoughts and feelings influence our behaviour.

If we learn skills to regulate our emotions instead of acting impulsively and doing something we might later regret we are able to make smart choices. Making smart choices makes our life easier and helps with our mental health.





# The coke bottle analogy

What does an  
emotionally  
escalated  
child look  
like?

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Iceberg –  
What might  
be happening  
underneath?

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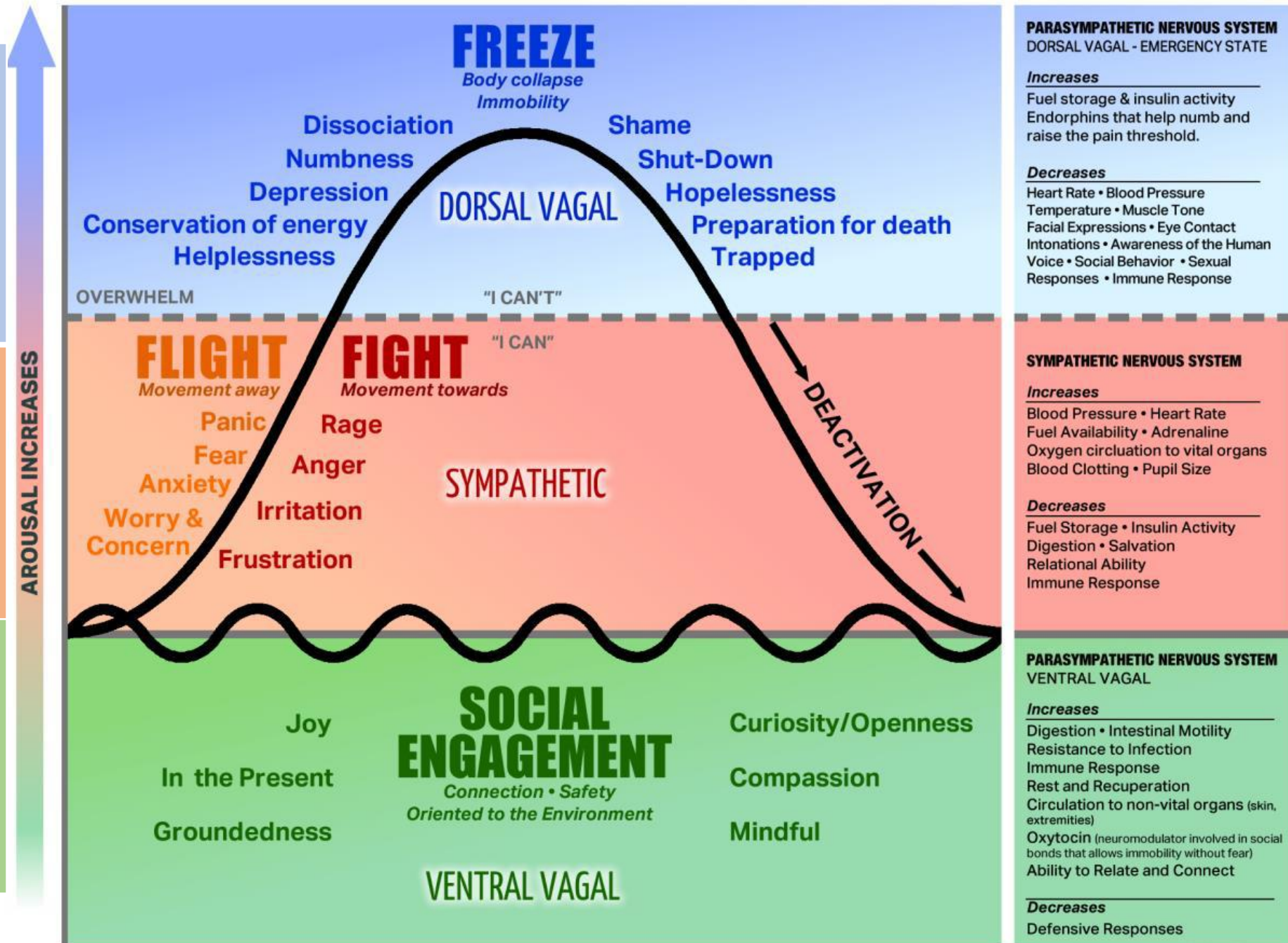


# Escalation in the Brain

If we perceive danger on the highest level the nervous system activates in a way where in we are ready to tolerate high amounts of pain. Often children zone out or exhibit confusing behaviours like erratic laughter or even sleeping – this is called dissociation

When we perceive a threat that is not the highest level we ready ourselves for defence. Children who have experienced trauma will flick into this state very quickly with little to no apparent triggers – this is not a choice.

This is the only place where learning can happen. This is the only state when they can reflect on their behaviour. This is also the state that we need to be in to effectively help escalated children.



# Emotion Recognition

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- The first step to successful emotion regulation is being able to recognise emotions. It is important that your child can recognise emotions in both themselves and others.
- There are 6 key emotions that people have and they are feeling; happy, sad, scared, angry, worried, or bored. All other emotions are variants and different levels of these emotions. If a child can recognise these six emotions in themselves they are well on their way to emotion regulation



Happy



Angry



Scared



Sad



Worried



Bored

# PACE

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- PACE is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes, an American psychologist who works with traumatised children.
- PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. These principles help to promote the experience of safety in your interactions with young people.
- Children need to feel that you have connected with the emotional part of their brain before they can engage the thoughtful, articulate, problem solving areas.
- ***Connect and redirect:*** “When a child is upset, connect first emotionally, right-brain to right-brain. Then, once the child is more in control and receptive, bring in the left-brain lessons and discipline.” ***The Whole Brain Child, Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson***



# Playfulness

When the child feels strong feelings we can initiate silliness jokes and games

- Gives the message that the relationship is stronger than what ever is going wrong
- Diffuses the tension and lightens the mood
- Distracts from the source of conflict or distress
- Reduces the shame
- “You don’t want to walk into school? OK, let’s hop!”



# Acceptance

- Being accepted is fundamental to a child's sense of safety.
- We value the child no matter what behaviours they show us.
- They need to know we are connected to their feelings not judging them.
- We do not contradict the child even if they say things like "I'm bad!" or "You don't love me." Instead we accept those feelings using curiosity and empathy.
- Accepting the child or young person's feelings and emotions does not mean accepting the behaviour and it does not mean agreeing with the child's viewpoint.
- For true acceptance to take place, it is important that the child also knows you can see them beyond their behaviour.



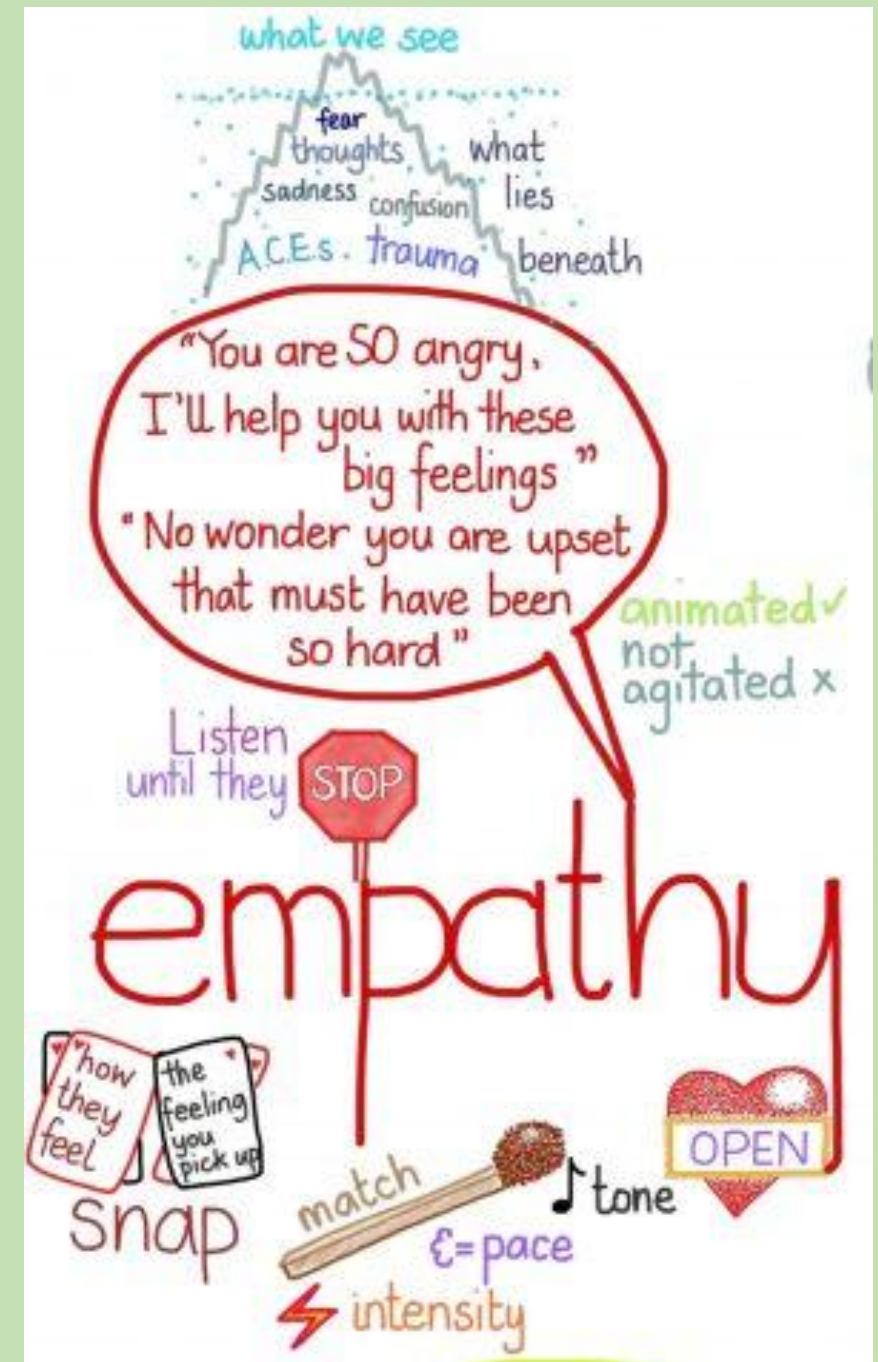
# Curiosity

- We seek to understand the driving force behind the child's behaviour.
- This helps us to connect with them before discussion.
- It shows the child you are interested in what is happening for them and willing to help, not just reprimand.
- This is not the same as agreeing with their perception of the event, but shows your interest in understanding it and accepting the feelings that were involved.
- We ask questions but try not to interrogate (avoid "why?")
- *"Is it ok if I share my idea of what is going on for you? I might be wrong but these are my ideas."*
- *"What do you think was going on?", "What do you think that was about?" or "I wonder what...?"*



# Empathy

- When you show empathy you are showing the child that their feelings are important to you, and that you are alongside them in their difficulty.
- You are showing that you can cope with the hard times with them and you are trying hard to understand how it feels.
- Understanding and expressing your own feelings about the child's experience can often be more effective than reassurance.
- For example, if a child says "You don't love me", you can respond by saying, "That must be really hard for you. I feel sad that you feel I don't love you."
- Acceptance and empathy are your Emotional A&E. They are at the heart of the child starting to feel safe, which reduces conflict, stress and withdrawal.



what we see

fear thoughts what lies  
sadness confusion beneath  
ACEs. trauma

"You are SO angry,  
I'll help you with these  
big feelings"  
"No wonder you are upset  
that must have been  
so hard"

animated ✓  
not agitated x

Listen until they



# empathy

How they feel  
the feeling you pick up

Snap



intensity

tone

ε = pace



"I wonder..."  
"Tell me about that..."  
"I will be curious  
for you..."

prepare to be  
influenced

Their World



Your World



Fun

spontaneous

DON'T SWEAT  
THE SMALL  
STUFF

"Can I join in?"

"Let's skip / dance /  
go crazy"



you are safe

# P.A.C.E



yourself  
help children  
feel secure

nibbles and  
bubbles.co.uk  
@emmalgsutton



# acceptance



Hug  
the  
Cactus



sit  
with the  
uncomfortable



all  
IS  
behaviour  
COMMUNICATION



connection  
with  
7  
correction

"You are loved  
no matter what"  
"Your feelings aren't right  
or wrong, they just  
are."

unconditional  
positive  
regard



# curiosity



suspend  
judgement  
understand



GO  
DOWN  
THE  
WELL  
OF  
UNDERSTANDING  
TO  
THEIR TRUTH

The Well  
of  
Understanding

[Communication Skills: Empathetic Listening - Inside Out, 2015 - YouTube](#)



# To effectively manage escalated behaviour we must be regulated ourselves!

- Breathe!
- Prioritise everyone's safety (yours, siblings, the child)
- Where possible, have a change of face
- 'Lower Slower Less' approach
- Use visuals
- Try not to take anything personally.



# Teaching Emotional Regulation

5	I AM GOING TO EXPLODE!!!
4	I AM GETTING ANGRY
3	I AM A LITTLE NERVOUS
2	FEELING OK
1	CALM AND RELAXED

**GROUNDING WITH YOUR FIVE SENSES**

What are 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE?  **SUN**  
PICTURE ON THE WALL  
PEOPLE WALKING

4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL?  **WIND BLOWING**  
FEET ON THE FLOOR  
PENCIL IN HAND

3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR?  **BIRDS CHIRPING**  
CLOCK TICKING  
CAR HORNS

2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL?  **FOOD FROM THE CAFETERIA**  
LAUNDRY DETERGENT ON CLOTHES  
FRESH CUT GRASS

1 THING YOU CAN TASTE?  **MINT**  
Breakfast  
TOOTHPASTE



How big is my problem thermometer

What's the problem?  Lose a level in a game.

What's the response?  Throw the games controller at the wall

10 BIG

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1 SMALL

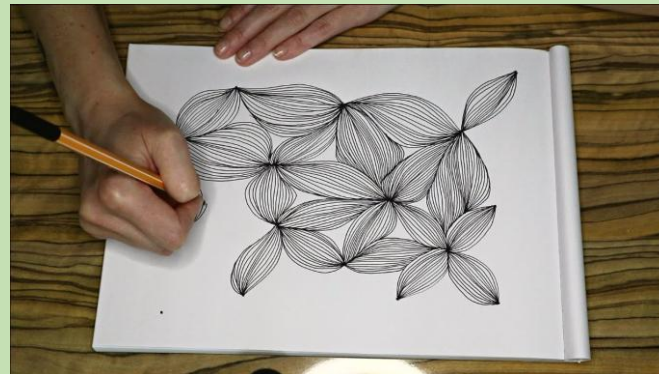
**Deep Breathing EXERCISE**

Place your finger on a white dot. Trace the arrow and take a deep breath in. Pause at the end of the color. Trace the next arrow and breathe out. Continue around the image several times.



## The ZONES of Regulation

			
<b>Blue Zone</b> Sad Bored Tired Sick	<b>Green Zone</b> Happy Focused Calm Proud	<b>Yellow Zone</b> Worried Frustrated Silly Excited	<b>Red Zone</b> overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified

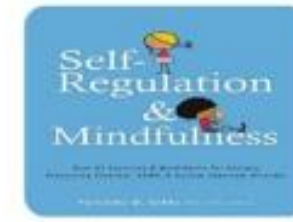




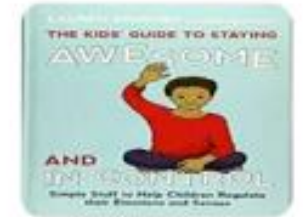
# Book Recommendations



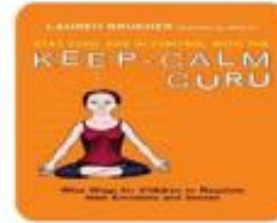
**Self-Regulation Interventions and Strategies** – Teresa Garland.



**Self-Regulation and Mindfulness** – Varleisha Gibbs.



**The Kids Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control** – Lauren Brukner.



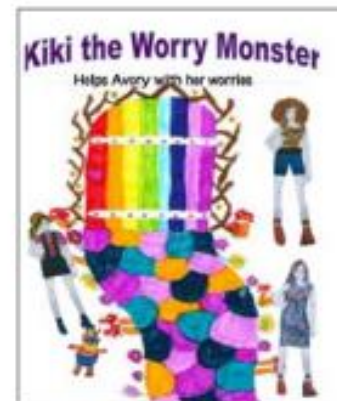
**Stay Cool and In Control with the Keep Calm Guru** – Lauren Brukner.



**The Boy with the Butterfly Mind (Kelpies)** – Victoria Williamson.



**Mrs. Gorski I Think I Have the Wiggle Fidgets (The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses)** – Barbara Esham and illustrated by Mike Gordon.



**Kiki the Worry Monster** – A book written by a 10 year old girl with Anxiety about managing worries.  
<https://bit.ly/3oBWHP4>

**ANY  
QUESTIONS?**

