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STOP & BREATHE

The conversation, interaction or crisis has happened, you can not change that. Now it's over, be kind to yourself and stop. You have done your best. Whether it went well or not, it is done. Ruminating about it will not change it. You can process it later.

Stopping to breathe is important in reducing the harmful effects of all the stress hormones surging through your body.

Try inhaling your favourite aroma, peppermint oil, lavender, chocolate candles! You could keep these handy in a sensory box

EMOTIONS

Now is the time to let your emotions out. Find a place that you can cry, shout, scream, whatever you need. Do this alone or with someone. Write it down, draw or play music, whatever works for you to let out your emotions. Bottling them now can be detrimental to your own wellbeing. This is NOT your fault. You did not cause or choose for this to happen to your family, you deserve to express how you feel.

Emotions need releasing when safe to do so otherwise they build up and will burst out in future when it may not be convenient or safe.

You could try a physical activity to help release your emotions; digging the garden, skipping with a rope, washing the car or ripping up a newspaper; see what works for you.

LEARN

To love and be kind to YOURself. Learn methods that make you feel grounded to use now. You have done the best you could in the given situation. Give yourself a hug, physically or mentally. If things didn't go as expected you can change the way you handle it next time.

We all have the ability to learn and change and grow - the brain is incredibly flexible so you can improve your skills with commitment and practice, to help you cope better with challenges.

It's good to write down what you have learnt in your Parent+ Notebook. This will remind you how you are progressing and you can see how you become stronger in different areas.

FORWARD

Now is the time to put one foot in front of the other. You have stopped, taken time to breathe, expressed your emotions, you are learning to be kind to yourself and you are aware you can do things differently next time. So now you can give yourself permission to move forward with your day, evening or night.

Getting on and looking forwards is an important way of coping with challenge as it allows us to shift our focus from what we don't want to what we do want, which helps us regain a sense of control.

Moving forward with purpose may require choosing a meaningful activity that will occupy you fully, something enjoyable or maybe a task; tidying that drawer, going for a 'focused' walk or lighting a candle and focussing on the light. You could use your sensory box here.

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