Step 1: Pause.

This step is important because instead of acting on feelings right away, you stop yourself and think things through. Count to 100 or say the alphabet backwards.

Step 2: Acknowledge What You’re Feeling.

For example, are you mad at someone, or are you sad because your feelings were hurt by what they did? Whatever it is that you are feeling, it is ok to feel that way.

Step 3: Think.

Now that you have taken a few moments to figure out what exactly it is that you are feeling, think about how you can make yourself feel better.

Step 4: Help.

Take an action to help yourself based upon what you came up with in the “Think” step.

If You Are Having Trouble Thinking Of Ways To Help Yourself, Try One (Or A Few) From This List:

**Mood Boosters**

Read the story of someone you admire

Watch a funny YouTube video

Play with an animal

Watch a movie you loved when you were younger

Reorganize your room

Make a list of places you want to travel

**Address Your Basic Needs**

Eat a healthy snack.

Drink a glass of water.

Take a shower or bath.

Take a nap.

**Process Feelings**

Draw how you’re feeling.

Make a gratitude list.

Punch a pillow.

Scream.

Let yourself cry.

Rip paper into small pieces.

Vent. Venting is not the same as asking for help, it's taking an opportunity to share your feelings out loud. We do this naturally when we talk with someone we can trust about whatever is upsetting us. You can also vent by writing a letter to the person who upset you. Keep the letter a couple of days and then tear it up. Stick to pen and paper—using social media when you are highly emotional can be tempting, but you might say something you regret.

**Problem Solving**

Make a list of solutions to problems – it can help to brainstorm with a friend of family member.

Make a list of your strengths. There are plenty of things about you that are awesome, no matter how down you are feeling at the moment.

If a person has upset you, talk with them directly. Fill in the blanks to this sentence – “I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_ when (this happens) because \_\_\_\_\_\_. Next time, could you please \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Example: “I feel left out when there is no room at the lunch table, because then I don’t have friends to talk to. Next time can you please save me a seat?”

**Volunteering/Acts of Kindness**

Do something nice for someone you know.

Help a stranger.

Volunteer your time.

**Hobbies/Stress Relievers**

Learn something new – there are tutorials for all kinds of hobbies online.

Create - try a craft project, color, paint, or draw. Invite a friend to join you for added fun.

Write – you could write a story, a poem, or an entry in a journal.

Get active – dancing, running, or playing a sport are some good ways to get moving.

Play a video game.

Get a plant and start a garden.

**Relaxation Exercises**

Practice belly breathing –put one hand on your stomach and start to inhale slowly. As you breathe in, imagine a balloon in your stomach filling up and continue to inhale until the balloon is very full. Put your other hand on your heart, feel your heartbeat, and hold your breath for 5 seconds. Now let your breath out slowly for 10 seconds – feel your belly flatten like a deflating balloon. Repeat this process 4 or 5 times and you should notice your heart beat slow down and your muscles relax.

Try progressive muscle relaxation –clench your toes for a count of 5, then relax them for a count of 5, then move to your calves, then your thighs, then your abs, then your arms, then your neck.

Play with Play-Doh.

Go for a walk – feel the ground under your feet and the air on your skin. Focus on your senses.

Find a guided meditation on YouTube.

Do yoga – you can find videos on demand using your tv or online.

Read a book.

Listen to music, a podcast, or an audiobook.

Unplug – turn off your phone, tablet, and/or computer for an hour or so.

**Ask for Help**

Text a friend.

Ask someone to just sit with you.

Call a family member.

Talk to an adult you trust.

Call a friend you haven’t talked to recently.

If you are in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK or text “MHA” to 741741.