Asking for Help

No one is alone. Just as it’s brave for a child to ask for help, it can strengthen a family when parents and caregivers reach out for support. These resources offer lifesaving help and hope, and can begin the healing process. Most are staffed 24/7 and all are confidential.

General Help

National Parent Helpline
I-855-4A Parent (I-855-427-2736)
Emotional support and empowerment for parents.
nationalparenthelpline.org

Crisis Text Line
Text HELLO to 741741
A free 24/7 text service for people in a wide range of crises.
crisistextline.org

United Way
Dial 211
Referral and information service connecting people with local health and human services. Supports people living with emotional and physical domestic abuse, bullying, sexual assault, alcohol abuse, suicidal thoughts, and more. 211.org

Mental Health

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
I-800-273-TALK (I-800-273-8255)
Available 24/7.
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Hotline
I-800-662-HELP (4357)
Provides information on alcohol and drug abuse, local treatment options, and counselor support. samhsa.gov/find-help

Getting to Safety

National Domestic Violence Hotline
I-800-799-SAFE (I-800-799-7233) & I-800-787-3224 (TTY) & I-855-812-1001 (video phone) for hearing impaired Crisis intervention, safety planning, information, and referrals.
thehotline.org

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
I-800-4-A-CHILD (I-800-422-4453)
Help and answers about child abuse or neglect.
childhelp.org/hotline

National Sexual Assault Hotline
I-800-656-HOPE (I-800-656-4673)
Operated by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN).
rainn.org

Victim Connect Chat
I-855-4VICTIM (I-855-484-2846)
For those coping with the aftermath of crime.
victimconnect.org

The National Runaway Safeline
I-800-RUNAWAY (I-800-866-7829)
For young women who are pregnant and/or parenting while homeless or fleeing abuse.
1800runaway.org

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
I-800-THE-LOST (I-800-843-5678)
Helps find missing children and supports victims of child abduction and sexual exploitation.
missingkids.com
Creating Feelings of Safety & Calm

Peace in the body can create peace in the mind, and vice versa. Focused movement such as yoga is a great way to begin. In a quiet space, lead kids in the turtle pose (also known as child’s pose):

Turtle

When kids are overwhelmed or feel out of control, this pose can help them “turn down” overstimulating input from the outside… and maybe even their own internal noise.

Say, “Get on your hands and knees and sit back on your heels, resting your forehead on the mat. Walk your fingers away from your body to stretch your hips, thighs, and ankles. Try moving your arms back and holding on to your feet. Don’t forget to breathe!”

Then say, “Pretend you are a turtle, safe inside your shell. Or you can pretend you’re a tiny snail in a strong shell, or a little seed, safe and warm in the soil. You choose.”

As kids stay in the pose, you might say:

- Slowly breathe in, slowly breathe out. Feel your chest fill up and empty out. (Again.)
- Feel the ground beneath you. Silently answer these questions: What parts of your body are touching the floor or mat? What does the ground feel like beneath your forehead? Is it cool? Soft? Hard?
- You can rest here. Try to relax your muscles and let your shoulders fall. I’ll ask some questions, but only answer them in your head. Can you hear yourself breathing? Can you feel your chest getting bigger as you breathe in? Can you feel your heart beating?
- Whisper, “I can help myself calm down,” or “There are things I can do to feel safe,” aloud. Repeat the sentences and listen to the sound of your voice.
- When you are ready, come back out of your shell (or crawl up and grow out of the soil).
Creating Feelings of Strength & Confidence

Trauma can destroy a child’s sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities. Developing new skills can help build it back. And balance requires focus and concentration, so this pose can help quiet the mind.

**Tree Pose: Growing Roots**

Say, “Stand straight and steady on two feet. Press your palms together near your heart. Then press one foot into the mat while lifting your opposite heel.” (For older kids: “Turn out your knee with your heel lifted, and bring your heel to your inner ankle. Move your hands up over your head.”)

Say, “You are standing tall and straight, steady and strong. Just like a tree, feel your roots growing from your feet, deep into the ground.”

**As kids stay in the pose, you might say:**

- What season is it? Is there snow on your branches? Leaves? Flowers?
- It’s getting windy. Try swinging your branches (arms). Now it’s sunny. Feel the sun warming your bark (skin). Now it’s raining (or snowing)! Feel the raindrops (or snowflakes) on your skin.
- Reach your branches (arms) wide, out to your sides. Feel the air around them.
- No matter the weather around you, feel your feet on the floor. Try to feel each toe. Your roots will keep you standing strong. Whisper to yourself, “I am growing!”
- Just as a tree is always growing, your body will always be moving a little to help balance you. You’ll never keep totally still! Looking at one spot on a wall in front of you can help you balance.
Breathe Deep

Before, during, or after coloring, try these ideas:

• Say, “Let’s pretend we’re smelling the flowers. Let’s breathe deeply in and out, once for each flower in Elmo’s bouquet.”

• Ask, “Who would you like to give flowers to? Who would you like to get flowers from?”

• Ask your child to help you pick a color for a particular flower.
Big Bird’s Nest

Before, during, or after coloring, try these ideas:

• Say, “Big Bird feels cozy and safe in his nest. Where do you feel safe?”
• Ask, “Would you like to have your very own nest? Why or why not?”
• Ask, “If you had a nest, what would you do there? What would you want in your nest?”
• Display your work at home!

For more resources, go to SesameStreetInCommunities.org
Helping Hands

Before, during, or after coloring, try these ideas:

• Try starfish breathing. Hold up a fist and stick out your thumb slowly as you breathe deeply and slowly in and out. Continue until all five fingers are spread out wide.

• As you color, name things your hands can do—how many can you think of? (hold other people’s hands, clap, write, draw, tap, dig, pat, and so on).

• Trace your hands on the back of this page. You can ask your child to trace yours first, then you can trace hers inside the shape of yours. Ask your child to tell you five different things he is good at. Write one on each of his traced fingers.
The “I Can” Flower

KIDS:
At the center of the flower, draw your face. Then choose a petal. Do what it says, then color it in.

GROWN-UPS:
Along the stalk, write words that describe things the child can do (draw, be kind, ask for help, jump, and so on). Display the completed flower.

- Take three deep belly breaths.
  Say out loud: I can calm myself down.

- Say one thing you are really good at.
  Say out loud: I can do it. I have what it takes!

- Move your body in a way that shows how you’re feeling inside. Say out loud: I can show how I feel without using words.

- Give yourself a hug.
  Say out loud: No matter how I’m feeling, I can give myself a hug.