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Logical Solutions to Emotional Outbursts & Dysregulation

Background: Whether it is overstimulation from ADHD, an argument that will not stop, a PTSD flashback, an anxiety exacerbation, or a spiral of depressive thoughts, there are many triggers for an emotionally overwhelming situation. To make matters worse, those with ADHD also struggle with thoughts that get stuck in their minds and cannot stop thinking on that track until something more powerful dislodges them from it - no amount of reasoning gets through for many individuals. When people are stuck in their emotions, they are experiencing right-brain influence without the benefit of left-brain logic to process it - the signals between sides are not getting through. The solution to get "unstuck" is to entice the brain with a logical distraction. There are many methods that can be readily utilized for most individuals, depending on their personal interests and resources. The list below is by no means exhaustive; any task that primarily consists of numbering, ordering, or patterning is generally appropriate. Doing the chosen activity for 10-15 minutes is generally sufficient to get past the overwhelming emotional state and return to a calm state. Some may then be able to talk through what was going on or get to sleep (if it was preventing sleep).

Low/No Tech:

1. Multiplication tables - randomly ask the individual to answer multiplication questions, especially for odd numbers like 7 and 9. Example: what is 7 times 6?
2. Word search
3. Maze
4. Jigsaw puzzle
5. Organize crayons in rainbow order
6. Anagram shape puzzle

With Tech (apps):

1. Tetris
2. Wordscapes (there is a kids version as well)
3. Candy Crush
4. Dr. Mario (Dr. Pill - free app)
5. Flow Free
6. Block! Triangle Puzzle!