

A Framework for Decreasing Meltdowns: The Cup Kid

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Agenda

- Learn the importance of identifying activities, situations, or events that
 - Contribute to meltdowns
 - Help the student de-escalate
- Learn to
 - Analyze the student's day
 - Determine the danger zones for the student
 - Develop an emptying plan for each danger zone
- Learn to collaborate with the student, other staff members and the student's parents to teach the student how to handle his cup

CUP BASICS

- Things go in the cup.
 - The cup fills up and runs over.
 - The cup empties.
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- We all have a cup
- Different things are cup fillers for different people
- Different things are cup emptiers for different people

A Day in the Life of a Cup Kid

MANAGING THE CUP

Cup Fillers

- Make a list of things that fill the cup. Ask
 - Other staff members who know the student
 - The student's parents
 - The student
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- Environmental factors
 - Physical comfort
 - Amount of sensory input
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Olfactory
 - Movement
 - Proximity of others
- Physical needs and feelings
- Emotional needs and feelings
- Concerns for physical or emotional safety
- Being told “no” or not getting his way
- Slower rate of processing information
- Not knowing what to expect or having inaccurate expectations
- Unforeseen changes in the schedule
- Exciting events
- Difficulty with social interactions
 - Communication differences
 - Difficulty noticing and interpreting social cues
- Difficulty with executive functioning tasks
 - Trouble multi-tasking
 - Difficulty organizing and prioritizing
 - Difficulty sustaining effort on tasks that are hard or of low interest
 - Trouble initiating tasks

Cup Emptiers

- Make a list of things that empty the cup. Ask
 - Other staff members who know the student
 - The student’s parents
 - The student
- Self-stimulatory behaviors
 - Proprioception (jumpers, runners)
 - Vestibular (swingers, spinners)
 - Deep pressure (crashers, squeezers)
- Preferred activities
 - Not as a reward, but as a strategy
 - Teach how to stop when time is up
- Organizational tasks
 - Mundane, easy to do
 - Tasks that require little thinking

- Include emptiers that could be performed
 - At home
 - At school
 - In the car or bus

Monitor the Cup

- What signs does the student give that indicate his cup is filling?
 - Movement: more or less
 - Vocalizations: more or less
 - Self-stims increase
 - Withdrawal: close eyes, hands over ears
 - Talk about specific topic

Danger Zones

- Review the child's schedule and determine where the most cup fillers are
- List the time, place, environment, and specific cup fillers of each danger zone
- Develop an emptying plan for each danger zone

Emptying Plans

- Analyze the cup fillers in each danger zone
 - Which can be removed?
 - Which can be changed to be more tolerable?
 - Given the cup fillers that are left, how quickly will the cup fill?

(Anytime you remove or change a filler, plan how you will reintroduce it in small amounts over time so the student learns to tolerate it.)

- Determine
 - When the cup will be emptied
 - Be aware
 - Be flexible
 - Where the cup will be emptied
 - Identify a safe place, home base, etc. for home, school, and while in the community
 - How the cup will be emptied

Collaborate with Parents

- Share the strategies with the student's parents
- Teach them to develop emptying plans for the home
- Keep each other informed of changes and issues
 - Changes in who lives in the home or significant health issues
 - Heads up when the teacher will be absent
 - Changes in medication
 - Changes in the school schedule

- Schedule conferences as needed to ensure you stay on the same page
- Revise emptying plans as needed
- Strive to return the cup fillers that were removed or changed so the Cup Kid learns to handle the fillers

Consideration 1: A cup that is emptied frequently enough will not run over.

Consideration 2: Taking a nearly full cup into an environment/situation that has numerous cup fillers is a sure-fire way to create a meltdown or shutdown.

Consideration 3: If the environment/situation has so many cup fillers that the student's cup is not big enough to hold them all, a meltdown is a certainty unless you intervene.

Consideration 4: If the student has performed the task multiple times before without incident, but melted down this time, the cup was too full this time.

Last Time...This Time

*If a Cup Kid lived out in the country, would he be a hick-cup and drive a pick-cup?
If two Cup Kids fell in love, would they be a "cupple?"*

Illustrations and content taken from the following books written and illustrated by Nancy W. Kling
The Cup Kid: Parenting a Child with Meltdowns © 2008 by Nancy W. Kling
I'm a Cup Kid! the workbook © 2013 by Nancy W. Kling