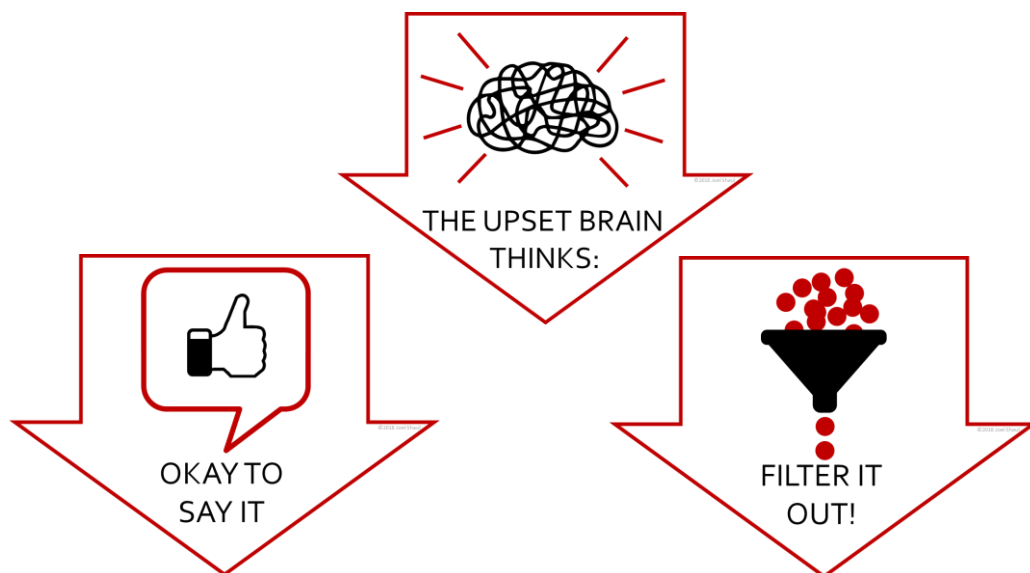


# Filtering Upsetting Statements Activity

This activity is designed to help young people with ASD and other disorders to learn ways to regulate emotional verbal outbursts. The activity raises awareness of what things are okay and not okay to say when you are upset and introduces the concept that thoughts can be “filtered” before they are turned into spoken words.

How to set up the activity: Print the entire pdf. Cut out the three arrows. Cut the numerous statements into strips. Use cardstock for all of this, or paper that you will laminate. The picture below shows how to position the various pieces. (There are just seven of the dozens of word strips shown).



I need to talk!

I need a break!

I need to be alone a while!

I'm disappointed!

I hate you!

I want to hurt you!

You are a \*&%#!!!

## Sample introduction to this activity:

***"When you are upset, you can have many, many upsetting thoughts going through your mind, very quickly. The thoughts can be so many, and so powerful, that they can "escape" out of your mouth if you are not careful. Your mind has a filter in it, to help you us to say useful things, instead of allowing every thought in your brain to rush out of your mouth."***

Now describe a filter; depends on knowledge level of participants.

***"There are different kinds of filters."*** (Have them name some: coffee filter, water filter, oil filter, etc. If you have a prop to demonstrate a filter now, that is good—try a colander, a coffee filter, etc)

***"You can't see the filter in your brain, but the way it works is kind of the same. It is especially important to use your brain's filter when you are upset or angry, so that you say things that are good, things that get you help, and so you avoid saying things that frighten, confuse or anger other people."***

## Other suggestions regarding this activity:

Before introducing this activity, sort through the upsetting statements and remove any that you think might be too strong for your particular participants.

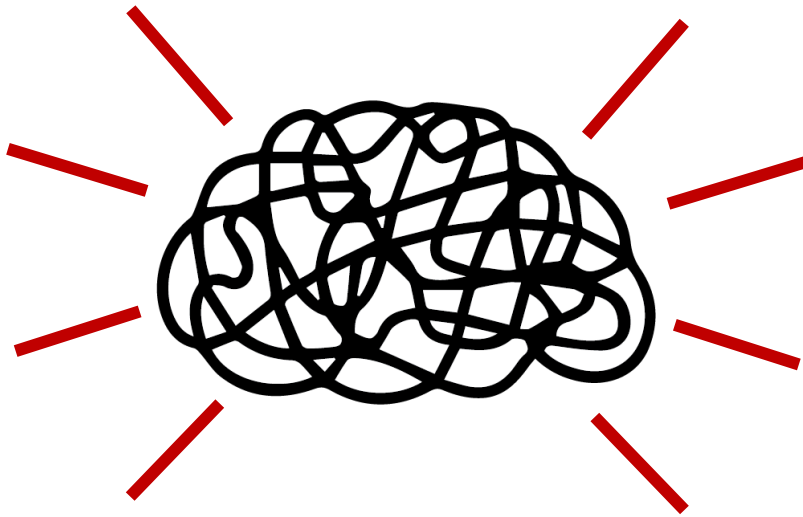
Write out your own upsetting word strips as you see fit.

Have the participant(s) sort the statements into things that are okay to say, sometimes okay to say, and almost never okay to say. The participants place the paper strips into three different rows accordingly.

The exercise usually leads to discussion about loss of emotional control. Encourage the participants to describe episodes of how this has happened to them, what they should have "filtered," and what they should have said differently.

Use this resource in combination with other free CBT resources on my website.

Joel Shaul, LCSW



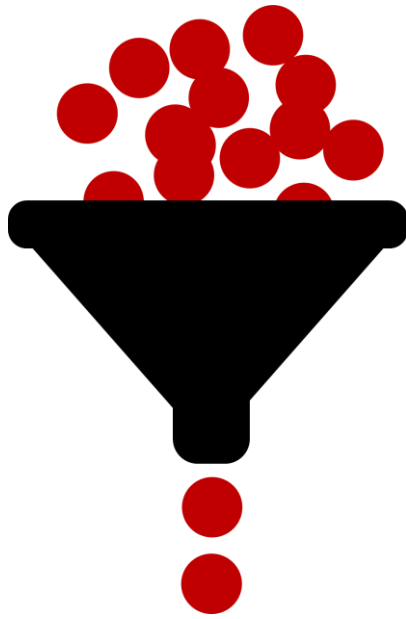
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THE UPSET BRAIN  
THINKS:



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OKAY TO  
SAY IT



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FILTER IT  
OUT!

I need to talk!

I need a break!

I need to be alone a while!

I feel scared!

I feel hopeless!

I feel like I'm no good!

I feel sad!

I feel rejected!

I'm frustrated!

I'm angry!

I'm worried!

I'm disappointed!

No! *Me* first!  
People won't  
listen to me!  
They hurt me  
on purpose!  
I don't like change!  
No! Do it my way!  
I don't want to stop  
what I am doing now!  
This is hard!  
I'm angry!  
I'm disappointed!

I want to hurt the  
bad kids!

I am going to kill them!

They should die!

I want to hit them!

I am going to kick them!

I want to shoot you!

I am going to  
get back at them!

No fair! / want to win!

No! *Me* first!



I hate you!  
You are a \*&%#!!!  
I'm useless!  
I hate my life!  
I wish I was  
never born!  
I want to hurt you!