

worksheet

Survey for Adults: What Pathway Am I On?

Our first step in helping children with behavioral challenges is to assess ourselves before acting.

Create a moment of awareness by asking yourself: How am I feeling? What am I experiencing? Using the following checklist may help:

Green Pathway of Calm

- I'm breathing at a normal rate/rhythm
- I'm feeling calm in my body
- My voice is modulated, with nice variations (prosody)
- My facial muscles feel relaxed
- I can think
- I can plan
- I can come up with options
- I can ask for assistance from other adults or give myself a break if I'm too upset

Blue Pathway of Disconnection

- I feel slow to react
- I can't think fast enough
- I feel like I'm sinking or disappearing
- I don't feel up to managing the situation
- I feel helpless
- My voice is monotone
- My facial expressions feel frozen
- I feel sad

Red Pathway of Reactivity

- I'm upset
- I'm reacting quickly
- My breathing is shallow or heavy
- My body is tense
- I can't think
- I feel like I'm going to explode
- I'm talking loudly or yelling
- I can't stand or sit still

worksheet

Self-Assessment and Self-Awareness: Staying Calm—Adults

Let's consider our own triggers.

Think about behaviors that you typically go to when your child or the children you work with experience behavioral challenges.

Reflect and write down those factors in your history or current situation that may challenge your ability to stay in the green pathway:

Consider and write down your own personal triggers that can lead you onto a red pathway when you are managing a child's behavior:

These are some positive supports I can create for myself to counter such reactions: _____

exercise

Affectionate Breathing

- Find a posture in which your body is comfortable and will feel supported for the length of the meditation. Then let your eyes gently close, partially or fully. Take a few slow, easy breaths, releasing any unnecessary tension in your body.
- If you like, try placing a hand over your heart or another soothing place as a reminder that we're bringing not only awareness, but affectionate awareness, to our breathing and to ourselves. You can leave your hand there or let it rest at any time.
- Begin to notice your breathing in your body, feeling your body breathe in and feeling your body breathe out.
- Notice how your body is nourished on the in-breath and relaxes with the out-breath.
- See if you can just let your body breathe. There is nothing you need to do.
- Now start to notice the *rhythm* of your breathing, flowing in and flowing out. Take some time to feel the natural rhythm of your breathing.
- Feel your whole body subtly moving with the breath, like the movement of the sea.
- Your mind will naturally wander like a curious child or a little puppy. When that happens, just gently returning to the rhythm of your breathing.
- Allow your whole body to be gently rocked and caressed—*internally caressed*—by your breathing.
- If it feels right, you can *give yourself over* to your breathing, letting your breathing be all there is. Just breathing. *Being* breathing.
- And now, gently release your attention on your breath, sitting quietly in your own experience, and allow yourself to feel whatever you're feeling and to be just as you are.
- Slowly and gently open your eyes.

From: *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook* (2018) by Kristin Neff, PhD, and Christopher Germer, PhD. Used by permission of Kristin Neff, PhD.