



Social, Emotional & Mental Health Barriers

(including anxieties & behaviour)

Information Booklet

If a child can do
advanced math,
speak 3 languages,
or receive top grades,
but can't manage
their emotions,
practice conflict resolution,
or handle stress,
none of that other stuff
is really going to matter.

How to nurture a child's mental health



Actively listen before offering your advice



Be patient



Share your feelings and validate theirs



Tell the truth



Model healthy behavior



Surround them with healthy adults



Be consistent and follow through with what you promise



Teach them how to be safe



Believe them and in them



Use open ended questions



Have scheduled family time



Limit electronic time for everyone



Reach out and hug them



Practice relaxation exercises together



Model forgiveness



Respond calmly when their emotions are elevated



View their behavior as a window to their needs and feelings



Make play and exercise a requirement



Recognize positive choices



Be present



Set and respect boundaries



what we can
CELEBRATE
for all children

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kindness



trying new things



responsibility



cooperation



setting a goal



empathy

Self-Care & Mental Health
for Kids



Share your own
feelings to
encourage
self-awareness.



Set aside time for
low-stress or
solo activities.



Find social groups
that help them feel
like they belong.



Focus on
articulating
feelings.

"I am angry."
"I am sad."

Encourage
journaling
and diaries.

Encourage your
child to focus
on the moment.



Practice self-care
for yourself to
set the standard.

Establish a
self-care
routine.



Recognize toxic
stress events.

BlessingManifesting

Cultivate interests
and hobbies.



Ride a Bike
OR SKATEBOARD



ASK FOR HELP



Blow
Bubbles

Color
Paint
Draw



CREATE ART!

Listen
to MUSIC



PLAY a
BOARD GAME

MAKE &
PLAY
WITH SLIME



Practice
Gratitude



WEAVE,
KNIT OR
CROCHET

Use Kind &
Compassionate
Self-Talk



Make a
SCRAPBOOK
OR Collage



PRACTICE
YOGA



Hug
or
Climb
a Tree

KICK
BOUNCE
OR THROW
a BALL



JOURNAL OR
WRITE A LETTER



Take Slow,
Mindful Breaths



Cuddle or Play
with Your Pet



Drink
Water



Smile & Laugh

EAT
Healthy



50 COPING SKILLS for kids



Forgive
Let Go
Move On



Cook
or
Bake



Get Plenty
of **SLEEP**



TAKE A SHOWER
OR BATH



STRETCH



Go on a
Hike,
Walk or
Run

Use
Aromatherapy
(Smell Something good)



Sing
and/or
Dance



SAY positive
Affirmations

Take
GOOD
CARE
of the
Earth



Look At or Take
PHOTOGRAPHS



Garden or
Do Yardwork



Visualize
a Peaceful Place



Try or
Learn
Something
New



EXPLORE & DISCOVER
Nature's Treasures



READ a Book
or Magazine



DRINK
A WARM
CUP OF TEA

USE a STRESS BALL
(or other fidget tool)



DO a PUZZLE



Cry



Play Outside



Clean,
Declutter
or Organize

Create
ORIGAMI



Get a
HUG

EXERCISE



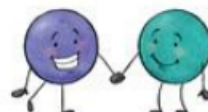
JUMP on a
Trampoline



Rest,
Take a BREAK, or Nap



Do
Something Kind



BUILD



Something



TALK to Someone
You Trust

THE ART OF BEHAVIOR

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WHAT WE MIGHT THINK

stubbornness , lazy, defiant

spoiled, bad parenting, selfish

defiant, difficult, manipulative

bullying, bratty, lack of discipline

immature, bullying, lack of discipline

disruptive, attention seeking, defiant

not
listening

anger

trouble
sleeping

biting

hitting

can't
sit
still

WHAT MAY BE THE CAUSE

ADHD, anxiety, depression,
working memory issues,
sensory overload

ADHD, anxiety, sensory processing,
overactive fight/flight, OCD

sleep disorder, anxiety, depression,
brain processing

communication issues, self-regulation,
anxiety, fear

visual processing issues,
communication struggles,
self-regulation, fear

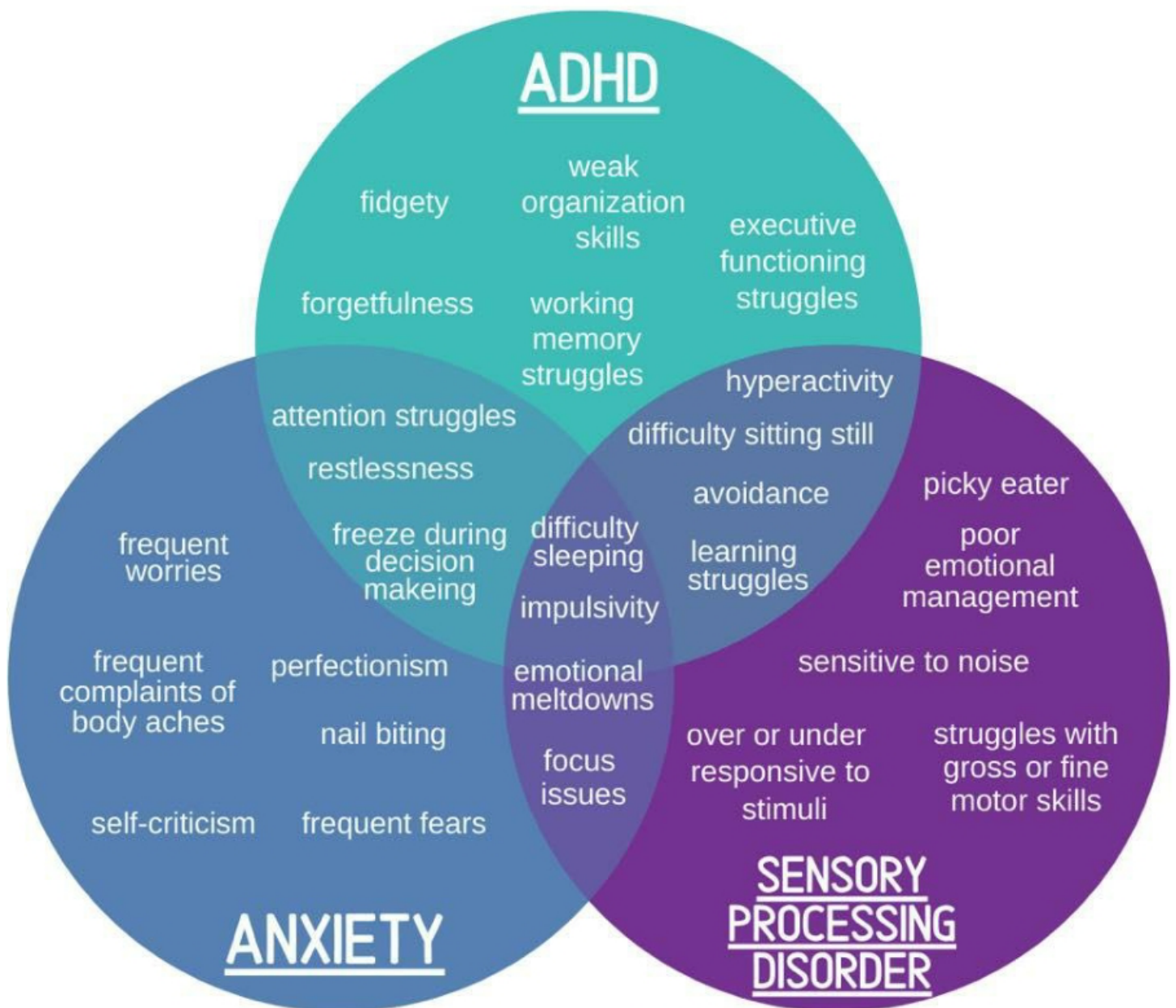
neurological immaturity, ADHD,
sensory processing issues

how are you COMMUNICATING

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What can I do to help your suffering?





WE MIGHT EXPECT
KIDS TO FEEL

VS.

HOW THEY MIGHT
ACTUALLY FEEL

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PROBLEM FOCUSED

SOLUTION FOCUSED

bossy	→	natural leader, visionary
defiant	→	holds strong beliefs, bold, determined
demanding	→	knows what they want, outspoken
dramatic	→	expressive, passionate
fearful	→	cautious, careful
fussy	→	has strong preferences
hyperactive	→	energetic, enthusiastic, on the go
impulsive	→	spontaneous, instinctive
oppositional	→	advocates for a different perspective
rebellious	→	is finding their way
stubborn	→	persistent, determined, steadfast
talkative	→	enjoys communicating
tattletale	→	seeks justice, respects rules
unfocused	→	multitasks, pays attention to many things
wants attention	→	advocates for needs, seeks connection

ANXIETY IN THE CLASSROOM CAN LOOK LIKE

Nervous about eye contact	because I might be called on
Crying in the morning	due to separation anxiety
Afraid to use the bathroom	because of buttons & snaps
Not talking	because of selective mutism
Not eating lunch or snacks	because of stress hormones
Not answering if called on	because I freeze in panic

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ANXIETY CAN LOOK LIKE

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Defiance



Fear



Lack of Focus



Aggression



Avoidance



Overplanning



Physical Symptoms



Sleep Struggles



Poor Testing

Anxiety

can sound like



ANXIOUS CHILDREN

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what we may expect to see



worry



sadness



fear



nervousness

what we may actually see:



defiance



irritability



difficulty sleeping



anger

WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?



BRAIN



- *nervous*
- *anxious*
- *irritable*
- *angry*
- *excited*
- *hypersensitive*

BODY

- *tense muscles*
- *sweaty*
- *feeling warm*
- *nauseous*
- *quick breathing*
- *feeling sick*



BEHAVIOR



- *aggression*
- *avoidance*
- *need to control*
- *verbal attacks*
- *panic*
- *meltdown*
- *crying*
- *can't make a decision*

Designing for users with anxiety

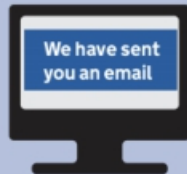


Do...

give users enough time to complete an action



explain what will happen after completing a service



make important information clear



give users the support they need to complete a service



let users check their answers before they submit them



Don't...

rush users or set impractical time limits



leave users confused about next steps or timeframes



leave users uncertain about the consequences of their actions



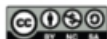
make support or help hard to access



leave users questioning what answers they gave



Home Office



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ukhomeoffice.github.io/accessibility-posters/posters/accessibility-posters.pdf

possible sources of STRESS IN CHILDREN

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Physiological:

sensory stressors, allergies,
lack of sleep, poor nutrition,
hormone changes, lack of
physical activity

Thoughts:

anxious of change, new
experiences, uncertain
future, perception of self
and others



Physical:

injury, illness, sensory
stressors in the environment

Social:

friendships, relationships,
school anxiety, homework,
family challenges

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THE STRESS RELIEF GIRAFFE



OUT OF
CONTROL

SCARED OF
LOSING
CONTROL

NERVOUS

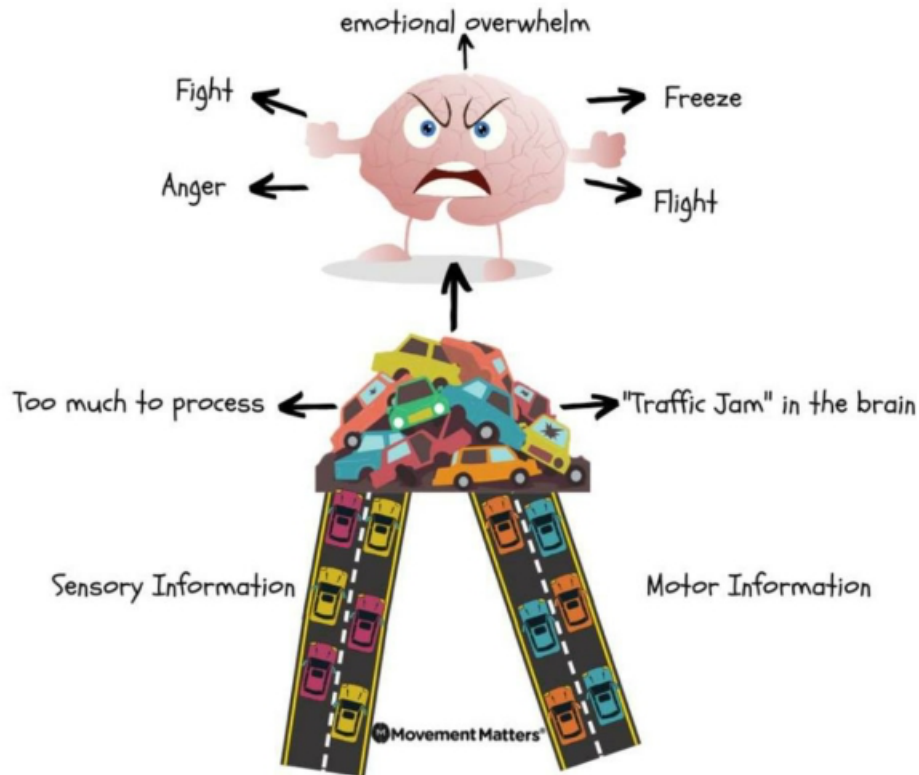
UNSURE

CALM

WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO:

- Calm breathing exercises
- Use visualisation meditation techniques
- Body tightening exercises (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Sigh to become fully present in the moment
- Practice music therapy
- Change location / surroundings
- Use a stress ball / fidget toy
- Give themselves a 10-second hug to boost their mood
- Colour, draw, write, craft, etc.
- Practice positive self-talk / words of affirmation
- Exercise
- Go outside
- Play
- Hydrate with water

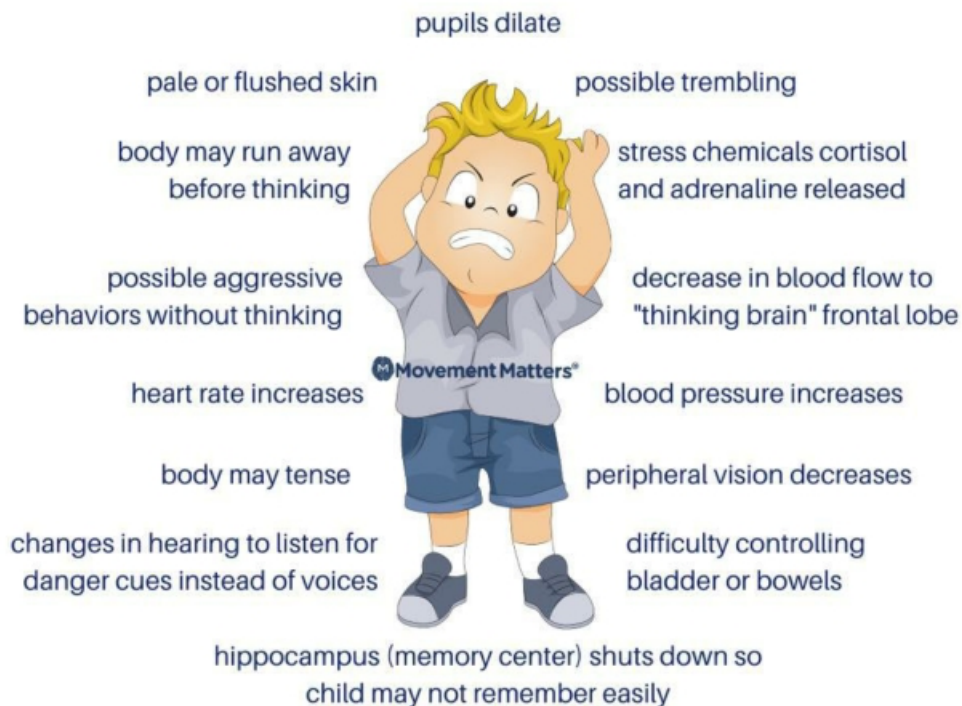
Anatomy of a MELTDOWN



what happens when we are

EMOTIONALLY FLOODED

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TANTRUM vs. MELTDOWN

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related to a need not being met or
not getting what they want

related to a physical/environmental
trigger leading to overwhelm

can recover once need/want is met

takes much longer to recover

often able to
remember why they
were so upset

often unaware as to
what triggered the
behavior

typical during toddler
years

can happen throughout
lifetime

often related to a specific
event occurring before

unrelated to a specific
event occurring before



**doesn't mean you are a
bad parent**

**doesn't mean you are a
bad parent**

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PHASES OF A MELTDOWN

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BREATHE.

As I zoom my attention to my breathing, I will take extra long out-breaths.

Squeeze a stress ball or use another teacher-approved fidget.



Imagine a peaceful and calming place.



Roll my neck and shoulders.

Think of at least 3 things I am grateful for.



Tell my teacher I would like to help or take on a classroom responsibility.



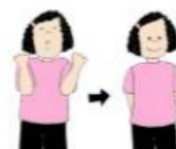
Ask to deliver books to the library or another class.



Ask my teacher for help if I feel upset or overwhelmed.



Count to 10 and back in coordination with my breath.



Squeeze my fists together as hard as I can...hold...then relax my hands.

Invent a secret hand signal with my teacher that communicates I need help.



Push against the wall as hard as I can and then relax my body.



Doodle, draw, or color.



Ask to work with a buddy.

Use 'I-statements' to express how I am feeling, what I need, or what I hope for.



Move away from the distraction or person who is bothering me.



Write down my thoughts or questions if my teacher can't address them right away.



Stretch.



Place my hands over my ears and breathe slowly & deeply, listening to the sound that my breath makes.

Devise a secret code word or signal with my teacher that means time to get back on track.



Tell my teacher I need help with the assignment or lesson.



Ask permission to take a short walk down the hallway or up & down the stairs. And then return.



Drink water.



Give myself an arm and hand massage.

Go outside during recess and notice the sky, trees & sounds from nature.



Rest my head on the desk for a moment or two.



Tell myself a positive affirmation or mantra.



Think of or write a list of 3 positive things in my life.



Talk with my school counselor.

Help a classmate or my teacher.



Listen to calming music with headphones.



Remind myself it's ok to make a mistake.



Visualize a person who supports me and cheers me on.



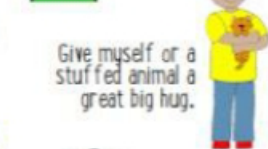
Zoom in on my senses: noticing 5 things I see, 4 things I feel, 3 things I hear, 2 things I smell & 1 thing I taste.



Ask permission to quietly jog in place for a minute or do 20 jumping jacks.



Cross my arms in front of me and do the arm pretzel.



Give myself or a stuffed animal a great big hug.

Read in a quiet spot.



Take a 3-5 minute break in the designated classroom peace corner.



Slowly trace my hand with my finger, breathing in, as I trace my fingers going up...breathing out, as I trace my fingers going down.



Use a 'break card' to let my teacher know I need a break and then use a timer to remind me when to return.

Do an act of kindness.



Eat a healthy snack or tell my teacher I am hungry.



Smile or laugh, even if I have to fake it.



Rub or tap my temples.



Journal or write a letter.



Push my palms together.



Ask my teacher to break down the assignment into smaller chunks so it's not so overwhelming.



When I feel upset, sad, or unfocused at school I can:



Like, love, embrace & accept yourself.

Show RESPECT towards others and yourself.



Use good posture. Stand tall as you are.

Treat yourself with kindness & compassion, even & especially when life gets hard.



Follow your curiosities & learn! Try or create something new.

See MISTAKES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN.



Remember That NO ONE IS PERFECT.



Don't compare yourself to what you see in the media.



Focus on the things you have control over & can change.



Choose friends who treat you how you want to be treated.



Create. Build. Cook. Bake. Garden. Do Art.

Do more of what helps you feel good about yourself.



Look in the mirror & tell yourself, "I love you."



Be YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND

Make choices that stay true to what you value.



Laugh! Play! Have Fun! Get silly!

Learn & practice healthy ways to cope with stress.



Say positive affirmations.



PRACTICE GRATITUDE.



FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES & BE OPTIMISTIC



FORGIVE OTHERS. FORGIVE YOURSELF.



Take slow, mindful breaths.

Eat healthy food.



exercise!

Practice daily hygiene.



TELL THE TRUTH & BE HONEST



Resolve conflict peacefully & use I-Statements.

ASK FOR HELP & SUPPORT

Set goals & work towards them, step by step.



HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET.



Remind yourself that your bravery is stronger than your fear.



Say what you want, need & hope for.

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS, NOT PROBLEMS.



TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST.

Try again when something doesn't work out the way you hoped it would.



Be responsible for your choices at school & at home.



SAY, THANK YOU WHEN SOMEONE COMPLEMENTS YOU.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER.

Give yourself a hug.



Start a new hobby or sport. Join a club at school.



SPEND TIME WITH CARING ADULTS.



Limit how much time you spend in front of screens.

COMPLETE YOUR SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS.



DO random acts of kindness.

HELP OTHERS

50 Ways to Build SELF-ESTEEM for kids

AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



WAYS TO CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

What is a more helpful thought?

What is another possibility?

What would the people who care about me say?

What is the worst that could really happen?

If my friend had this thought, what would I tell them?

Can I be 100% sure this is true?

If the worst really did happen, what could I do to deal with it and who could help me?

What is the best possible outcome?

