

## Containment for parents/carers



Just like our children and young people, as adults, we can experience emotions and stress which prevent us from thinking rationally or having the capacity to contain children/young people's emotions in a safe way. We need to practice containing our own emotions before we can support another person. This is an important step in order to facilitate **co-regulation** with children, as responding in a calm, empathetic way can help children to develop the ability to manage distressing emotions.

### How to incorporate containment into your life:

- 1) Find the thing that makes you feel happy, is it looking at the clouds? Taking a few deep breaths? physical exercise?

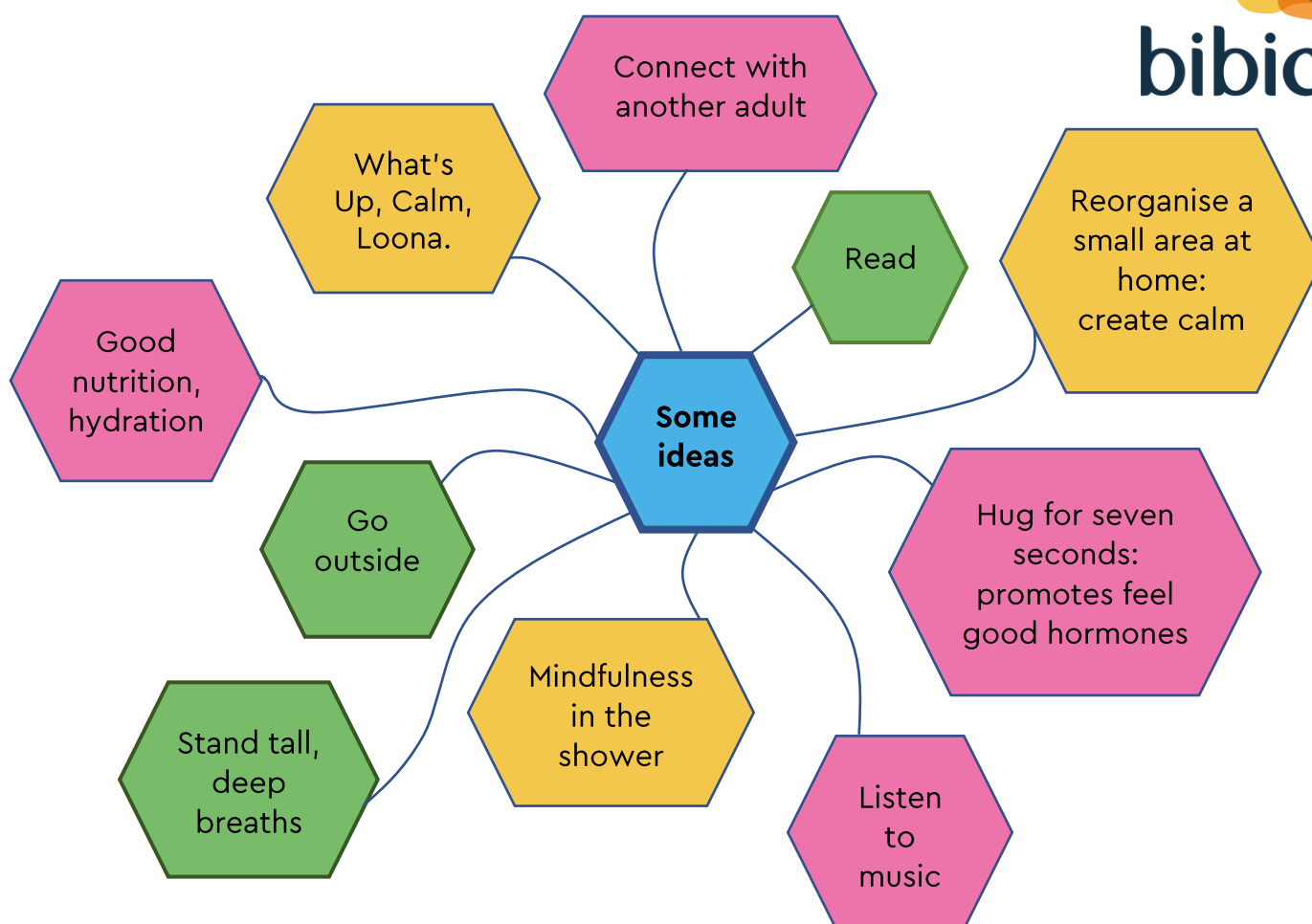
Use this space to note a few ideas to try:

- 2) Incorporate some element of these ideas into your life every day, experiment with time, locations and duration to find the balance that works for you.
- 3) When situations escalate, you will need additional containment time.

Not sure where to start?  
Aim to do **1** thing a day that will nurture, nourish or restore you.



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### Why is containment important for parents and carers?

When children are experiencing emotions they can often feel overwhelmed, and require adults to understand and recognise them, providing them with the opportunity to experience and express their feelings safely. Therefore, it is important for adults to also be aware of their own feelings during these moments, and how their behaviours (when repeated frequently) can impact how a child learns to manage their emotions and reduce difficulties in the future. This means by practicing containment with your own feelings, you are better able to support a child with their emotions.

For example, practicing containment can help to **avoid**:

- Repeatedly **ignoring** or **failing to notice** a child's emotions. This can teach them behaviours such as withdrawing, reduced communication and stonewalling.
- Repeatedly **shaming** and **criticising** a child for having angry, jealous or rageful feelings. This can prevent children from learning how to manage their emotions. This can lead to internalisation of emotions and self-destructive behaviour, such as self-harm and suppressing feelings through food, drugs and alcohol.
- Repeatedly **shouting** at a child. This can teach them to use the same strategies in the future for their own children