



aspire psychological

Emotional Sensitivity & “Big Feelings”

Sensitive children are not “too much.” With the right coaching, they often grow into deeply empathetic, thoughtful, and resilient adults.

Top 6 Signs of Emotional Sensitivity

1. Big Reactions to Small Events

Meltdowns over minor disappointments (wrong color cup, losing a game, small corrections).

2. Slow Emotional Recovery

Stays dysregulated long after the triggering event has passed.

3. Struggles with Being Wrong

Argues intensely or shuts down when corrected—not defiance, but overwhelm.

4. Sensitive to Feedback

Has a hard time being flexible and gets stuck on things needing to go a certain way.

5. Avoidance Patterns

Daily routines are adjusted to avoid triggering emotional distress.

6. Emotional Spillover

Carries distress from one environment into another. For example: earlier school frustration leading to evening meltdown.

6 Evidence-Based Ways to Support Emotionally Sensitive Children

Validate Feelings

Acknowledge the feeling without reinforcing catastrophic thinking.

Example: “I see how upset you are.” or “It’s not such a big deal.”
(Not: “You’re right, this is a disaster.”)

Name Thinking Traps

Teach children to recognize:

- Catastrophizing
- Mind-reading
- All-or-nothing thinking

Example: “That sounds like your ‘worst-case brain’ talking.”

Coach, Don’t Reassure

Move from fixing feelings to building thinking and regulation skills.

Instead of: “No one is mad at you.”
Try: “What’s the evidence? What’s another possibility?”
“What helps you when you are upset?”

Teach Reframing

Use the 3-question model:

- What happened?
- What did my brain say?
- What’s a more balanced thought?

Prioritize Recovery Time

Not Punitive Time-Out. Allow regulation before discussing consequences.

Calm first → problem-solve second.

Reinforce Emotional Recovery

Praise effort toward regulation.

“You were upset—and you reset. That’s amazing!”



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If a child’s anxiety is interfering with daily life—or if parents feel stuck—call my practice.



DR. ARYEH BERLIN

NJ LICENSE #35SI00626800
NY LICENSE #025390

Director

201.639.4669

office@weallaspire.com

345 NJ-17 Suite 33, Upper Saddle River, NJ

www.weallaspire.com