



Growing My Fuse

Created by Angela Murphy, Complex Trauma Coach & School Psychologist

Many children who have experienced complex trauma struggle with a short fuse; it's like they go from 0-60 in a matter of seconds. When children reach the end of their fuse, we often see externalizing (verbal or physical aggression) or internalizing (withdrawal, anxiety) behaviours.

The good news is that there are many ways to grow a fuse!

This activity provides a starting point to talk about stress tolerance and coping with stressful experiences, and strategies to "grow my fuse". It is important that this activity be done relationally (with a caregiver).

1 Watch the Wile E. Coyote videos and talk about the difference between the short fuse and the long fuse. Ask the child: *What do you notice when the fuse is short? What do you notice when the fuse is long?*

- Short fuse example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXI1PDTp5gk>
- Long fuse example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5hELThaKME>

Talk about the benefits of having a long fuse.

2 Create a visual by drawing dynamite stick and a long fuse. Along that fuse, add personalized strategies for growing the fuse (caregiver should make their own drawing at the same time).

3 Share your fuse with each other.

4 Post this fuse somewhere in the house as a reference (somewhere the child sees regularly). Add to the fuse as positive coping strategies come up.

