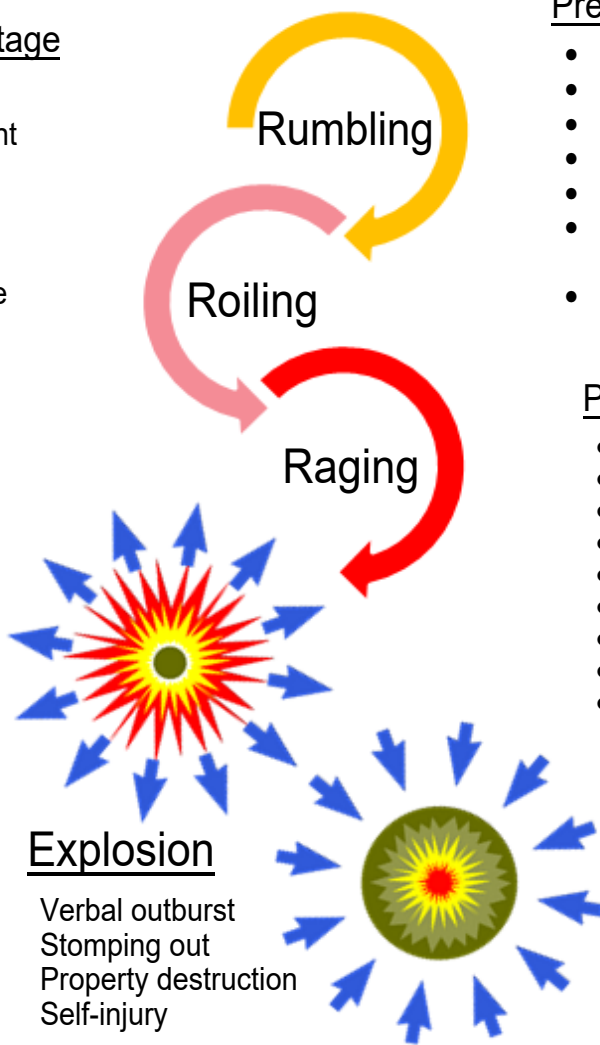


Strategies to Minimize Meltdowns for Students with ASD

Intervene in the Rumbling Stage

- Low and Slow
reduce volume and movement
approach slowly and from below
- Distraction/Redirection
drawing attention to a favorite topic or calming strategy to refocus emotions
- Home base
student returns to a location where he/she can process with a trusted staff member
- Acknowledge difficulties
simply articulating the difficulty and reassuring the student that everyone faces difficulties at times can help a student save face and de-escalate the situation
- Just walk and don't talk
physically moving away from the location of the stress without discussion can allow the situation to diffuse without a meltdown
- Humor
using humor to diffuse the situation by making a faux pas or directing the stress into laughter aimed away from the student can resolve a tense situation
- Silent signal
a mutually determined nonverbal signal can be provided that alerts the student to the rumbling and encourages prevention strategies



Explosion

Verbal outburst
Stomping out
Property destruction
Self-injury

Implosion

Tears
Head on desk
Inertia/Freezing

Precursors to a Meltdown

- Increasing vocal intensity
- Decreased eye contact
- Downward gaze
- Tensing of muscles
- Quick or jerky motor actions
- Muttering about "unfairness" or "stupidity" of situation
- May shut down

Practices to Avoid

- Public castigation
- Power assertions
- Rigid body language
- Sarcasm
- Comparison with peers
- Approaching quickly/from above
- Hands on—even gently
- Violation of instructor's "rules"
- Threats (perceived as inevitable)

Recovery

- Student often sorry, but does not recall event well
- May be physically exhausted
- If pushed too fast, may rage again
- Student must process incident after all emotion is subdued

