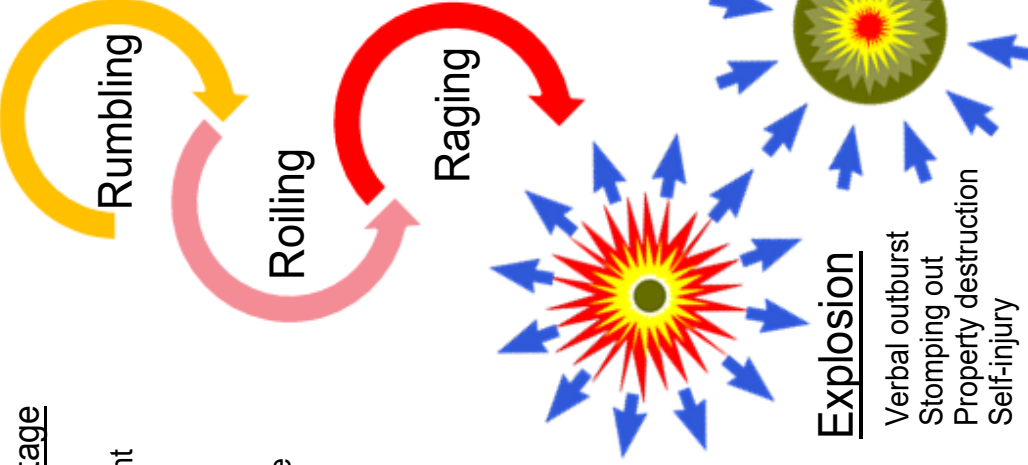


# Strategies to Minimize Meltdowns for Students with ASD



## 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

## 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)

## Explosion

Verbal outburst  
Stomping out  
Property destruction  
Self-injury

## Implosion

Tears  
Head on desk  
Inertia/Freezing

## 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