“Getting to Know Your Urges” Exercise

We want your child to spend some time intentionally inviting urges to show up and to practice “making friends” with them.

How to do the exercise:

1. Set a timer for an agreed upon amount of time. A successful exercise is measured by this time, not how easy or hard it is.
2. Sit in front of a mirror and look at any hairs you might have an urge to pull.
3. If no urges show up, try touching, rubbing, or playing with your hair.
4. When an urge shows up, use your hand exercise to keep from pulling.
5. Practice having an open, willing stance toward the urge. Let it come sit on your lap without pushing it away. Instead of fighting it, be curious about it.
6. Notice the urge and practice describing any thoughts, emotions, or bodily sensations that come with it.
7. Notice any evaluations or stories that your mind tells about the urge or the exercise such as “urges are bad,” “this is too hard to handle,” or “I am probably doing this wrong.”

How to measure success:

If you child does the exercise for the agreed upon amount of time, it is considered a success. It does not matter whether urges showed up or whether they were big or small.

Remember progress may not be fast. That’s okay. It takes time to develop habits and build skills. Think of this exercise as going to the gym. You wouldn’t expect to be able to lift a lot on your first day. But over time, muscles grow, and you can lift more.