

Tantrum vs. Meltdown

The Scout is upset and acting out. Is he having a tantrum or a meltdown? Many parents and leaders use these terms interchangeably. But they are different behaviors that require different approaches. Here's how to tell one type of behavior from the other.

	Tantrum	Meltdown
What It Is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An angry or frustrated outburst. ● The Scout might yell, cry, lash out, and hold his breath. ● The Scout typically has some control over his behavior during a tantrum. ● The behavior tends to stop when he gets what he wants. (But tantrums can become overwhelming and evolve into meltdowns.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reaction to feeling overwhelmed. ● The Scout might yell, cry, lash out, run away or shut down and withdraw. ● The Scout cannot control his or her behavior during a meltdown. ● The behavior tends to stop when he wears himself out or when there's a change in the amount of sensory input he is experiencing.
What Triggers It	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A desire to get something, avoids something, or elicits a specific reaction. ● Frustration. ● Sudden changes in routine or expectations. ● Not being able to communicate needs and wants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sensory, information, or emotional overload. ● Intense frustration. ● Sudden changes in routine or expectations. ● Not being able to communicate needs and wants.
Signs You	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You know what the Scout wants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You may not know what

<p>May</p> <p>Notice</p>	<p>or is reacting to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Scout is choosing to engage in the behavior. ● He's able to pay attention to what's going on around him. ● He watches other people's reactions and adjusts his behavior to match it. ● He may be trying to bargain for a solution while he's yelling. ● Behavior ends once he gets what he wants or realizes he <i>won't</i> get what he wants by acting out. 	<p>the Scout wants or is reacting to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Scout doesn't seem to have control over his behavior and appears panicky. ● He is shutting down or trying to escape. He's not able to process what's going on around him. ● He doesn't respond to people's reactions or attempts to talk to him. ● He loses his ability to problem-solve and negotiate solutions. ● He needs time to calm down and recover, even after a situation has been resolved.
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