

HAPPINESS IS... ACTIVITY PACK!



Storytime™



One of the biggest challenges faced by parents, teachers and carers is helping children to talk about and deal with their feelings. That is why we created this activity pack! We recommend that you read it first, and then share the ideas and activities in it with your kids.

Inside, you will find fun exercises that encourage children to think about the different emotions that they experience, as well as ideas about how they can express them in a healthy way. Check out the tips about developing 'resilience' – the ability to keep going when things get tough!

This pack also includes our new **Storytime Happiness Is... Competition!** Once you have gone through all the activities with your children, ask them to draw a picture of what happiness looks like to them. If they complete the entry form and send their pictures in, they could win wonderful prizes and have their art featured in a future issue of **Storytime!**

From next issue, **Storytime** will feature the brand-new **My Mind Matters!** section, in partnership with the amazing Jessica Bowers. It's full of helpful insights, fun exercises and inspirational tips that should help our readers to become kinder, happier and more resilient.

Be cool. Be kind. Be you!

INSIDE THIS PACK:

➡ Recognising Emotions	2
➡ Feelings Are Like Rainbows	4
➡ Resilience Tool Box	5
➡ Fun with Framing!	6
➡ Gratefulness Diary	7
➡ The Pancake of Mistakes	8
➡ Get Active with Emotions!	9
➡ Talking About Feelings	10
➡ 30 Things You Can Do to Feel Good! ...	11
➡ Awesome You!	13
➡ Your Jar of Happiness	14
➡ Sketch Pad!	15
➡ Happiness is... Drawing Competition ...	16
➡ How to Use This Pack... for Grown-Ups!	17

On page 17-20, there is a special section about how you can help your kids build resilience and get comfortable with their emotions!

With

JESSICA
BOWERS
WELL-BEING WRITER



RECOGNISING EMOTIONS

We all feel emotions – and it’s good to know how other people are feeling! One of the easiest ways to get an idea about how people are feeling is by looking at their faces. Can you match the expressions on these emoticons with the emotions on the list?



- LIST OF EMOTIONS:
- Angry
 - Surprised
 - Nervous
 - Sad
 - Joyful
 - Happy
 - Disgusted



WHAT IS EMPATHY?
 Empathy is the ability to understand and share what other people are feeling!

RECOGNISING EMOTIONS

2 OF 2

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Emotions make us feel different things inside. When you are experiencing the emotions below, think about how they make you feel in your body. Do you feel tense, relaxed, warm or cold?



When I am sad, I feel... _____



When I am nervous, I feel... _____



When I am angry, I feel... _____



When I am happy, I feel... _____

5 MYTHS ABOUT EMOTIONS

We feel lots of different things, and that's OK! Here are some untrue things people say about emotions...

1. 'I am' the emotion I feel.

Truth: You are much more than your emotions. If you have a strong feeling, it won't last forever.

2. Feeling frightened means you are weak.

Truth: It is a totally normal feeling! With help, you can develop your courage and overcome it.

3. There are 'good' & 'bad' feelings.

Truth: All of our feelings are OK! Together, they give us a full experience of life.

4. Good children do not get angry.

Truth: We *all* feel angry sometimes, and we can learn to express it in positive ways.

5. If you cry, you are a baby.

Truth: Crying can be a healthy way to let out your emotions.

FEELINGS ARE LIKE RAINBOWS

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Rainbows are beautiful, but they wouldn't exist without rain!
Our 'rainy' feelings are just as important as our 'sunny' ones...

Feelings

By Jessica Bowers

Sometimes we feel excited, happy or glad.
At times we feel so angry, lonely or sad.

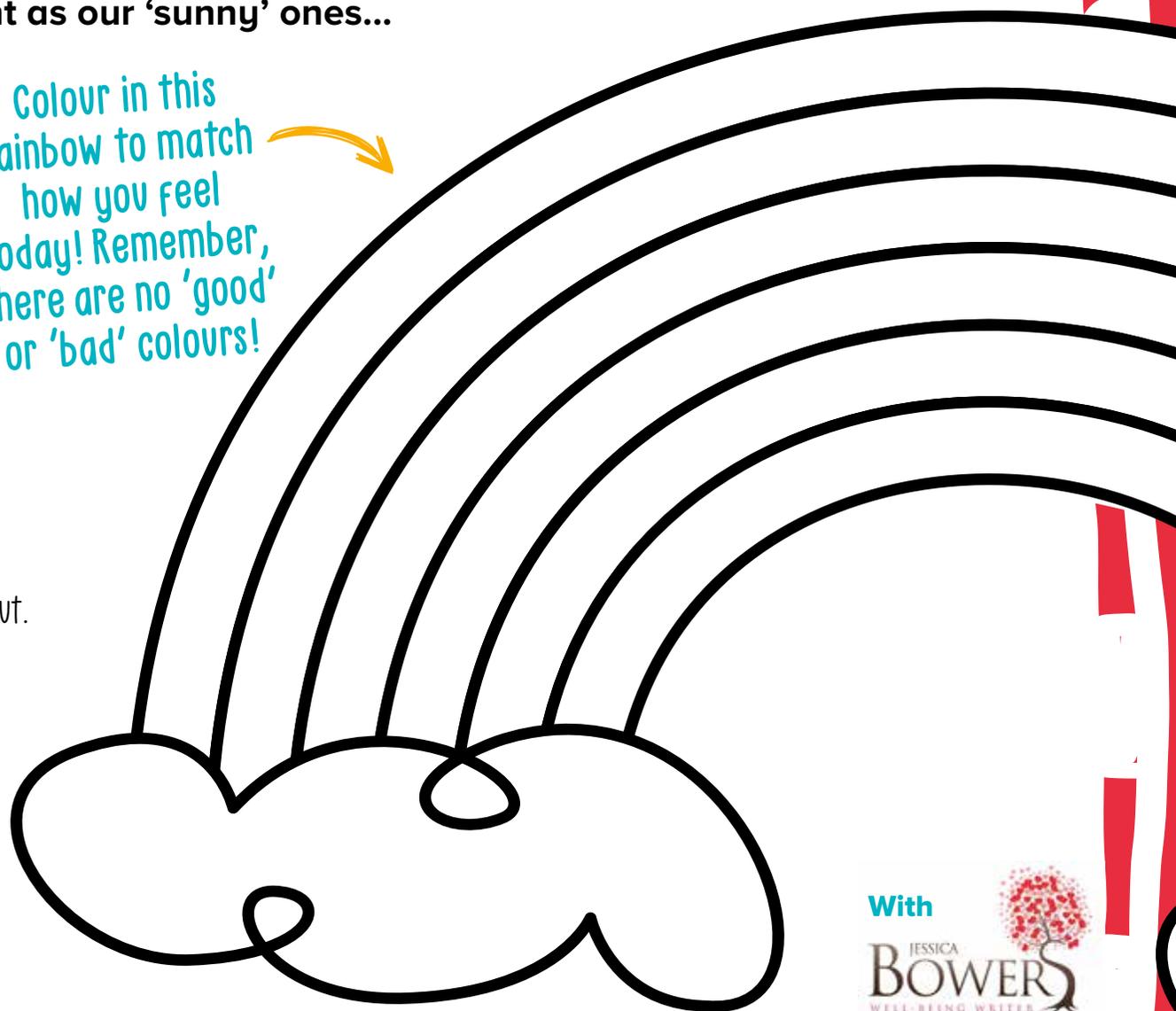
We all get these feelings too, it's not just you.
Mums, dads and teachers can feel grumpy or blue.

Feelings are like sunshine, they come in and out.
They can tell us what is wrong and they're good to talk about.

The good news is, the rainy feelings don't stay forever.
All our feelings change again, just like the weather.

Colour in a rainbow in your own special way.
What colours represent your feelings today?

Colour in this rainbow to match how you feel today! Remember, there are no 'good' or 'bad' colours!



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RESILIENCE TOOL BOX

We all face difficult times in our lives, but our resilience can help us to keep going when things get tough. Here are some tips for how to build your resilience!

MAKE A ROUTINE!

TOOL: It's good to have a regular schedule that you can rely on! You and your parents or carers can work together to set times for work, play, 'together time' and 'alone time'.

Don't be afraid to be flexible, though!

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

TOOL: Getting really good at something helps to build your self-esteem. What is something that you like doing and want to get better at? Set aside some time to practise! **Keep at it and you will get better – and feel better!**

ACCOMPLISH THINGS!

TOOL: Ask your parents or carers to give you some regular jobs to do around the house. **Taking care of these tasks will give you a feeling of achievement AND help others!**

ASK FOR HELP!

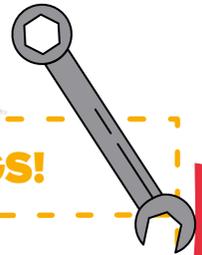
TOOL: Being resilient doesn't mean you can't ask people for help or support. Who are people you trust? Don't be afraid to let them know if you are going through a difficult time. **Telling someone how you feel can help you feel better.**

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is simply the ability to stay calm and keep going when things get difficult! Activities in this pack that can help you develop your resilience are marked with a 'resilience tool' label.



I know I can do it! And so can you!



Positive Thinking

By Jessica Bowers

I woke up on the wrong side of the bed,
then I lost my sock and banged my head.

I went to school and forgot my folder,
I forgot my coat and the day's getting colder.

At play time all my friends were busy,
at lunch my drink was flat not fizzy.

But then I stopped and had a think,
it was much nicer than my usual drink.

When I got up with a big frown,
Dad snuggled me in his dressing gown.

I found my sock, my head's now fine,
I borrowed a coat which was warmer than mine.

I played with someone new today,
so it was kinda cool my friends were busy at play.

In fact when I look back in a new way,
I've actually had a super day!

FUN WITH FRAMING!

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When something bad happens, we can stay positive by looking at what happened in a different way. This is called 'reframing' – read the example below, and see if you can come up with fun ways to reframe the other situations!

OH NO! I can't play outside because it's raining!

Reframe It! Now I can watch my favourite movie under a warm blanket with some popcorn!

OH NO! I didn't get the birthday present I wanted!

Reframe It! _____

OH NO! My best friend is ill at home, so I don't have anyone to play with at lunchtime!

Reframe It! _____

OH NO! My bike tyre went flat!

Reframe It! _____



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GRATEFULNESS DIARY



It is important to remind yourself about the good things you have in your life!
Take this sheet and write in three things you are grateful for every day.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
SUNDAY		



Being grateful is a good way to build resilience - do it every day!



THE PANCAKE OF MISTAKES

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Sometimes, making mistakes can make you feel upset. But the next time you make a mistake, why not 'flip it over' and write about the positive things you learned from the experience?

Making Mistakes

By Jessica Bowers

My heart just sinks, my mistake stinks,
my watery eyes go blink, blink, blink.

I feel silly, my heart's gone chilly,
the path ahead seems so hilly.

Let's just rewind, rethink your mind,
lift the clouds you're stuck behind.

Mistakes are cool, a useful tool,
to help you learn just like at school.

Think and then say "I am OK",
tomorrow is another day!

Go get it wrong, still sing your song,
you're super, fab and you belong.

(Even grown-ups get stuff wrong!)

My mistake!

The lessons
I learned from it!



IT'S OK TO MAKE MISTAKES!
Everybody makes them – and
learning from them helps us to
grow as people!



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GET ACTIVE WITH EMOTIONS

When you are feeling a powerful emotion, why not have fun by acting like an animal? Here are some cool creatures to imitate!

BE LIKE A... DUCK

Quack, flap your wings and jiggle your body – shake those rainy feelings off! Do it as a group, it will get you all laughing and you'll all look positively quackers!

DID YOU KNOW? There are many different kinds of ducks around the world. Antarctica is the only continent where ducks don't live!



BE LIKE A... HEDGEHOG

Curl into a ball to protect your precious heart with your spines. If someone says something hurtful to you, you can imagine that the spikes are keeping you safe.

DID YOU KNOW? Hedgehogs have thousands of spines on their backs. Their little legs can walk for up to 2 miles in the evening. You might have little legs too, but that needn't stop you!



BE LIKE A... LION

If you are feeling nervous about doing something, prowl around like a lion! Feel the lion's strength and power in your own body as you move around.

DID YOU KNOW? Lions live in groups called prides! Think about how much more we can accomplish as a team. Like these strong, confident cats, you can face your fears with help from your group. Never be afraid to ask friends and family for help!



BE LIKE A... SLOTH

If you are feeling anxious about something, think of a sloth! Sloths hang out in the jungle with smiles on their faces. Sit calmly, breathe in and out slowly, and then remind yourself to just take one step at a time. There is nothing you can't handle!

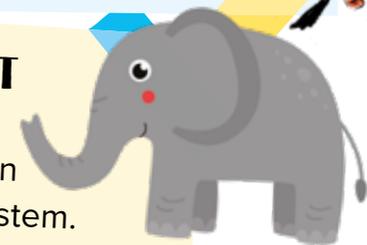
DID YOU KNOW? Sloths only come down from their trees about once a week, and they sleep a lot. If sloths went to school, they would be late for every class!



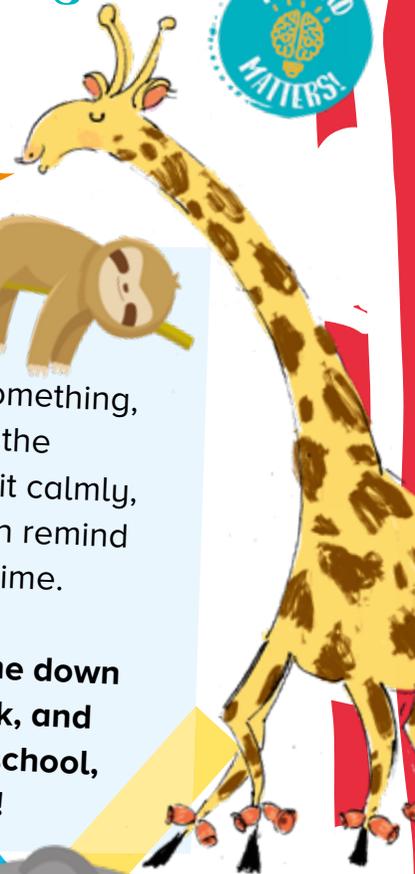
BE LIKE AN... ELEPHANT

Stomp around and use up your angry energy! It's a fun way to get it out of your system.

DID YOU KNOW? Elephants are frightened of bees! Remember, even the biggest animals get scared, and being frightened sometimes is perfectly normal.



Can you think of other animal actions you could do to express your emotions?



TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS

When you see that someone else is feeling some strong emotions, you can sometimes help by talking to them. Here are some things you could say!

You can ASK:

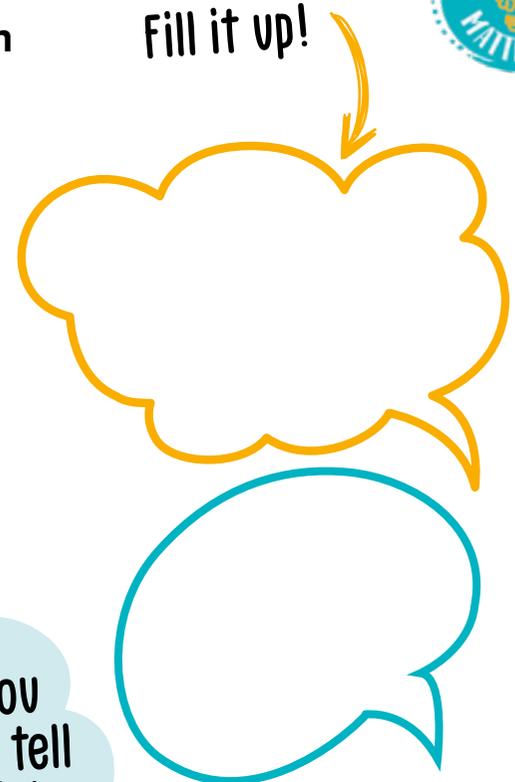
These questions are a good way to start a conversation about feelings!

Hi! How are you?

Did you sleep well last night?

How did it go?
Did you have a nice time?

Is everything OK today?



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Fill it up!

You can SAY:

Here are some other things you could say if you think someone needs to talk about the emotions they are experiencing.

You look happy – you have an amazing smile on your face!

You look sad – I want you to know I'm here for you.

I can see you are upset – I'm listening!

I can see you are angry – tell me about it!

CARING AND SHARING!

What would you say to start a talk about emotions with these characters from **Storytime** issue 85?

1. Oengus from 'The Dream of Oengus' is looking pale and unwell in the morning. What question could you ask him?

2. Grumpy from 'If Life Gives You Apples...' has a bump on his head and looks... well, grumpy! What could you say to get him to talk about it?

3. 'The Happy Lady' is walking through the market with a big smile on her face. How would you start a conversation about how she is feeling?

Possible Answers:

1. You could ask him, 'Did you sleep well last night?'
2. You could say, 'I can see you're upset – did something happen to your head?'
3. You might say, 'What a lovely smile – you look happy!'

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30 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO FEEL GOOD!

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Cut out these fun activity ideas! If you are feeling a bit down, pick one slip and do what it says!

Sing your favourite song!

Do it in the shower or on the way to school – don't be shy!

1

2

Dance around the room!

Play a tune and move!

3

Sprint down the road and back for a boost!

4

Be still and empty your mind!

What do you see, hear and smell?

5

Give someone a compliment!

Spread your joy!

6

Do a dozen jumping jacks!

7

Draw a pretty picture!

8

Write a letter to your future self!

9

Put on a fun hat or a cap!

Find some litter and put it in the bin!

Keep it clean!

10

11

Learn a fun fact to tell someone!

How big? How far?

12

Read a bedtime story!

Have sweet dreams!

13

Do something kind for someone!

14

Tell your favourite joke!

Share the laughter!

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30 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO FEEL GOOD!



Think about the best thing that happened to you today!

15

16

List 3 things you are great at!
You are awesome!

18

Ask a friend how they feel – and listen to them!

Have a nice chat!

19

Close your eyes and use your other senses!

20

Play with your favourite toy!

21

Write out a wish!
And look forward to it comping true!

22

Put on your coolest T-shirt!

23

Have a bubble bath before bedtime!

24

Go for a bike or scooter ride!

Go for a stroll in a park and look at pretty flowers!

Smell them, too!

25

26

Get cosy under a blanket and watch a movie!

Make some popcorn!

27

Tidy up your bedroom!
It will feel great, we promise!

Invite a friend over to play a game!

28

Talk to a new kid at school!

You might make a new friend!

29

30

Look in the mirror and tell yourself how great you are!

AWESOME YOU!

You are a great person – but it's good to remind yourself! Stick these handy little post-its around your room, on doors and on the fridge to remind you of how awesome you are!

You know
who's
AMAZING?
(Look in the mirror!)

Be Bold,
Be Beautiful,
Be You!

Think about the good
things in your life!

Share them with
your friends, too!

You can
try again
tomorrow!

TODAY
IS A NEW
DAY!

You are
GREAT!
Dream big!

YOU
CAN
DO IT!



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YOUR JAR OF HAPPINESS

Life is full of cool things that we should be happy about.
Why not keep reminders of these things in your **HAPPINESS JAR**?

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ A big glass jar
- ✓ Coloured paper
- ✓ Pen or pencil
- ✓ Sticky tape
- ✓ Scissors



- 1.** Get your jar. A large empty food jar is great – have someone help you clean it thoroughly, peel off any labels, and dry it.
- 2.** Make a **'MY HAPPINESS JAR'** label. Stick it to your jar with tape!
- 3.** Cut out strips of coloured paper! Keep them and a pen or pencil near the jar. Whenever something good happens to you or you think of something you are grateful for, write it on a piece of paper and pop it in the jar!
- 4.** Soon your jar will be full of bright and colourful reminders of the good things in your life. Keep it where you can see it!



Draw something that makes you happy in this jar!

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SKETCH PAD!

We hope the activities in this pack inspired you to think more about your feelings and emotions. Now we want to know: **What does happiness look like for YOU?**

To enter this **Storytime competition**, use your imagination to draw a character, animal or place that represents happiness to *you*. It can include things or places that you like, your favourite pets or friends, or anything else that makes you happy.

The winner will be featured in **Storytime Magazine** in May 2022, and will receive a certificate and a book pack. The first two runners-up will receive a certificate.

For more info, go to:
www.storytimemagazine.com/happiness

Use this page to sketch your ideas first. Then draw your picture on the entry form on the next page when you are ready!



For me, happiness is...
a bowl of milk, a ball of wool
and a nice warm blanket!

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ENTRY FORM

HAPPINESS IS... DRAWING COMPETITION

FULL NAME AND AGE: _____

SCHOOL: _____

PARENT, CARER OR TEACHER'S EMAIL*: _____

* Not essential, but it makes it much easier for us to contact you if you win – we do not share data!

HOW TO USE THIS PACK... FOR GROWN-UPS!

It is much easier for kids to develop resilience and emotional coping skills if you help them! This section is full of advice about what *you* can do to help keep them happy and healthy.

How children feel influences their behaviour, the choices that they make, and the way they view their world. Helping children deal with their emotions will make a difference at school, at home, and in social situations. If we support kids and help them develop resilience, they will grow up knowing that they can overcome any challenges life will throw at them.

This pack was created with counsellor and psychotherapist Jessica Bowers, who has worked with children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties for many years. We are grateful that she has shared her tips and advice with us, and we hope that they are useful to you and your children!



JESSICA'S TOP TIPS:

- ➔ Feeling emotions is a part of being human, but sometimes strong emotions can feel overwhelming. Remember that feelings like these do not last forever – especially if you can process them in a healthy way.
- ➔ A healthy way to process feelings is to allow them, express them, learn from them, and let them pass.
- ➔ Let your feelings be a useful guide. Try to avoid labelling them 'good' or 'bad'.
- ➔ Consider whether the thoughts which accompany your feelings are helpful. For instance, feeling sad but thinking that you 'shouldn't' feel sad will just cause inner tension. All of your feelings are perfectly fine!

DISCLAIMER: The tips in this section are just that – ideas for you to consider! You know your children best, and know what works for them! None of us get this stuff right all the time, as we are only human. Forgive yourself for any mistakes you make as parents, carers and teachers, and move forwards!

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JESSICA BOWERS
 WELL-BEING WRITER

TIPS FOR HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH EMOTIONS

Be observant!

Look at when your child's responses and behaviours shift and change, so you can best support them in the way that they need.

For example, at bedtime, it is common for children to get more emotional. Think about what you can do to help them deal with this. Perhaps limiting screen time and providing relaxing activities such as reading and colouring might help?

Support connections and promote relationships!

Our relationships with our family, friends and those around us affect how we feel. That is why it's important to help children develop their social skills – especially learning how to cope with differences of opinion and arguments. This takes lots of time, reassurance and support from adults!

Teach your kids strategies for resolving or defusing conflicts! These might include: ways to communicate without shouting, learning to listen to another person's viewpoint, leaving the room to let emotions settle, turn-taking, and learning to compromise.

Talk about feelings!

Encourage kids to do this, and help them to identify their emotions.

Share your feelings, too! When you have watched a film or read a book together, discuss how the characters might have felt and why. Make talking about feelings a part of your family life!

Think about what causes emotions!

This is best done *after* they have experienced strong emotions.

Help children to recognise the links between their feelings and what causes them. There are times when children will struggle to name and verbalise their feelings, and they might need your help to do this.

Helping them to share their feelings:

- ➡ Listen without judging!
- ➡ If they are sharing something exciting, then match their joy and excitement! This will validate their feelings and boost their self-esteem.
- ➡ Make it clear to them that it is normal and perfectly OK to experience powerful emotions! This is called 'normalisation'.
- ➡ Ask your children to share how they are feeling with you, and really take what they are saying on board. Imagine that you are a container that can hold their strong emotions for them.

TIPS FOR COPING WITH SPECIFIC EMOTIONS

ANXIETY

Simply listening to their anxieties might be enough to calm and reassure children. Guiding them through a simple breathing exercise can also help! Make a plan together, to help them manage and deal with the situation they are anxious about. Many kids also feel less anxious after going outside and running around for a bit! After their anxiety has passed, ask the child if the situation they were anxious about was as bad as they thought it would be. This might help them to be less anxious in future!

TRY THIS: Taking a few deep breaths to calm down!

FEAR

Aim to build courage, rather than trying to 'get rid of' fears. As Nelson Mandela once said: "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it." Set small, achievable targets! Reassure children if they fail – remember that people usually fail before they succeed. Gently encourage them to try again after failing, once they have recovered. This is the secret of resilience!

TRY THIS: Take a break and do something different together!

ANGER

Anger is a normal and healthy emotion! There is no shame in feeling it, and you should share this message with your children. This does *not* mean that we should condone harmful or hurtful behaviour. Children will need help in managing their anger. Talking about the underlying causes of their anger will increase their self-awareness, so that they know what their 'triggers' are. When they use their words to talk about their anger, praise them, even if you do not agree with their version of events. Children need their anger to be heard, understood and taken seriously, and this will help it pass.

TRY THIS: Talk calmly and clearly, explain that you want to help them!

Self-care is for grown-ups, too!

We can help and guide our children by looking after ourselves! Self-care is absolutely vital for parents, carers and teachers. Take a look at pages 11-13 of this activity pack for some tips that may be useful for you as well as your children. Putting resilience, reframing and good self-care into practice sets a great example for your kids!

FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

Why not set aside an area of the classroom with activity sheets and resources (like this Happiness Pack) that can help kids with their emotional well-being. Putting some relevant books there too (see the reading list below) is also a great idea. Children can then access these resources as part of their free play time. This will help them to build a good foundation for their mental health and well-being. Decorate the area with art created by the kids – this will make them feel as if it belongs to them. Why not ask the children to draw or paint pictures inspired by their feelings?

Here are some good books to consider getting for the classroom:

- ➡ ***Daniel's Dreams: Monster Mountain* by Leanne Brown, illustrated by Yogesh Mahajan**
- ➡ ***Eddie's Colourful Feelings* by Nikki Saunders**
- ➡ ***Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud, illustrated by David Messing**
- ➡ ***I Have a Little Bookworm* by Beth Logan**
- ➡ ***Our Feelings* by Katie Budge**
- ➡ ***Ruby's Worry* by Tom Percival**
- ➡ ***The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside, illustrated by Frank Rodgers**
- ➡ ***The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst, illustrated by Geoff Stevenson**
- ➡ ***We Are Stronger Together* by Beth Logan**

OUR CONSULTANT: JESSICA BOWERS

Jessica is a mother of 3 children, a well-being writer, and a counsellor and psychotherapist. Prior to this, she worked with children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties for over ten years.

She is passionate about providing children with accessible and engaging resources to support their emotional well-being. Jessica has written a series of wellbeing-themed children's picture books, aimed at 4-7-year-olds. The first is titled *Fantastic Fin Faces his Fears* – it is available on Amazon. She has also developed a free resource pack for teachers to use, which complements the book – a must-have for Primary Schools!

Jessica is now delivering her 'Get Active with Emotions' workshop in schools, and also gives talks about the books she has authored. Check out her website for more information: www.jessicabowers.co.uk

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