



Tower Hamlets Schools Counselling Partnership

Supporting children, families and schools

The Schools Counselling Partnership is working to improve the emotional wellbeing of children, parents and staff by working with the whole school community.

Managing Overwhelm

You may be finding yourself overwhelmed. Give yourself a moment: stop and breathe. None of this is easy. You are having to be all things at once – employee, parent, child (to elderly parents), and teacher now as well as the household chores! This will cause overload and you may feel like you cannot cope. You may also be noticing that your children are beginning to have increasing outbursts of anger and are lacking motivation – *they just won't do the work the school has set*. There may be tears and frustration and even regression (a move back to younger behaviours) such as thumb sucking, clinginess and wanting comfort items – you may be seeing some of this in yourself too. We are in times when our survival mode is pretty much in constant. Consequently, our lids will be flipping a lot more than usual.

What can you do: Traffic Lights

When you notice that you are in overwhelm or recognise that you are feeling angry or anxious – **STOP**. You are at a red traffic light. Going through this light means you are taking a big risk. Use this pause to bring your flipped lid back down. You can do this as a family. Slow, deep breaths might help. How about pretending to be astronauts on the moon? Replicate their slow-motion exaggerated movements. What other ways could you get your upstairs brain to give your downstairs brain a hug?

Has your body relaxed? Are you now in a state of relative calm? The traffic lights have changed to amber. This is when you prepare yourself to go. Proceeding at this point still holds some risk. With your downstairs and upstairs brains in connection you can now **THINK**. What are your needs and what are your children's needs? You may be seeing a lot on social media about optimising this time and becoming an entrepreneur or a violin virtuoso. Currently most of us have less time available to ourselves and not more. Now is about sustaining ourselves, psychologically (Minds) and physiologically (Bodies).

And finally, the green light: it is safe to **GO**. Choose what you want to do and do it. Ask for help, there is nothing wrong in giving others the opportunity to support us if they can. If we don't ask the answer will always be no. Keep your mind on what you can do and limit the intake of information that may be making you feel anxious or inadequate. Nobody is having a perfect life in lockdown.

Drawing some traffic lights and hanging them up on your fridge or somewhere you can see them will be a helpful reminder of what to do when we hit overwhelm.

Sometimes we could all do with someone to talk to. If you would like to meet Khalida for a confidential and non-judgemental chat about you, your child or any other worries, she is available on Tuesdays 9-10am. To book an appointment, you can contact her using the details below

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