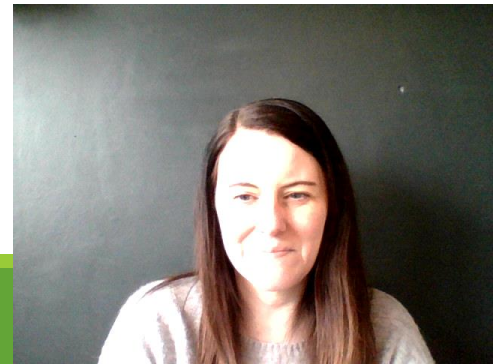


# Transition Back to School After Covid 19

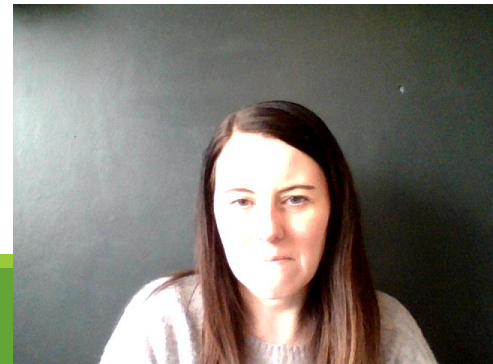
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# Think about your experiences of lockdown and coronavirus...

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What words would you use to describe your experience?



# Children's experiences



"Daddy I love coronavirus!" "Do you – why?" "I get to have breakfast with my mummy AND my daddy!"

"We have time to do things that you usually don't have time for together"

"I think my mummy is a real-life superhero... Spiderman just fights people, but mum is saving real peoples' lives."

"I love being at home, I don't ever want to go back to school"

"My family have had a lot of arguments"

"It takes a village to raise a child and that village has been removed."

"I'm worried school will be really different, I won't be with my friends and I'll have different teachers"

"It's so sad that you can't really see your family that much now"

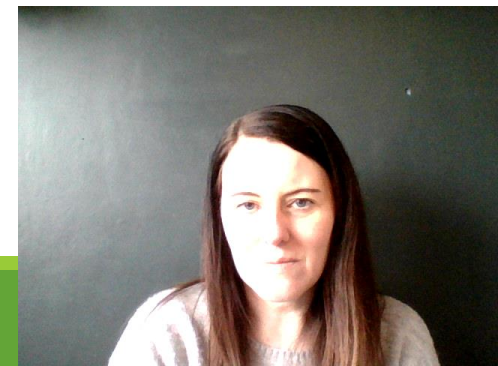
"I miss my friends and teachers a lot"

"My dad's partner is high-risk so I can't see my dad at the moment, so that's difficult."

"I'm worried about my mum working at the hospital"

"I'm worried about going back to school and catching the virus"

"I'm scared to go outside"



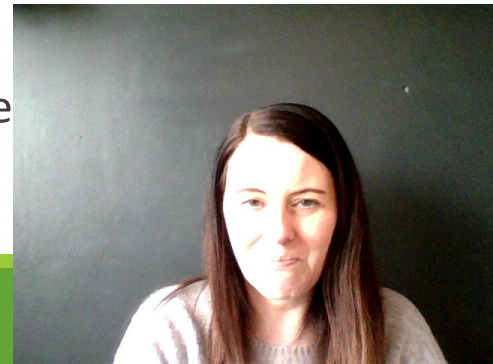
Children will be returning to school from many very differing experiences of lockdown, some will have found the experience positive, having extra time with their families, time away from the potential social, emotional and sensory experiences of school, to have a period of down time will have been a welcome relief for some. These children may find returning to the usual routine and systems of school challenging.

Other children will have had a much less positive experience of lockdown, they may have found the loss of routine and structure and access to social interaction very difficult. Some may have found learning at home difficult or may have had experience of someone they know having had the virus or, sadly losing their life.

Many children will have experienced the adults in their lives feeling anxious, will have seen the news unfold day by day with reports of how many people in our country and around the world who have lost their lives.

We cannot expect our children to return to school at the same point at which they left it, in terms of the curriculum but also in terms of their social, emotional and mental health.

Recent research from Oxford University found that a fifth of primary aged children have fe  
leave their home during the COVID-19 situation (Weale, 2020)

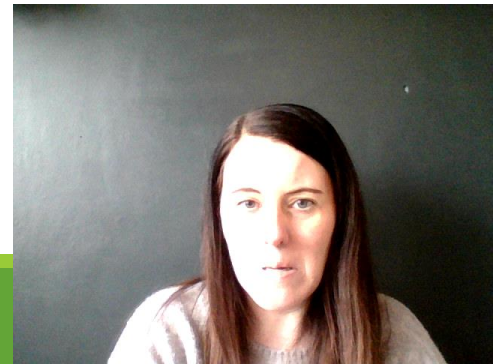


# Somewhere in between...

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Most people will have had an experience somewhere in between these two extremes. On return to school, it will be realistically expected for some pupils to:

- Find it difficult to sit and focus on learning
- Continue to be anxious and agitated, and on 'high alert'- this has been a frightening time and our natural survival response system is switched to 'on' all or most of the time
- Struggle with social interaction and sharing, turn taking etc.
- Have regressed in their skills and attainment, including social and emotional skills
- Be anxious and angry about being back at school
- Be clingy to their parents and carers, especially if they have experienced loss or their caregiver is a keyworker and at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19
- Refuse to come to school on the days they are scheduled to (this issue will need some work to gradually desensitise the child to reintegrating)
- Need at least half a term to again become accustomed to the expectations, routines and demands of school
- Need a lot of additional reassurance and support from key adults in the setting or school
- Need clarity around rules and expectations, and to be gently reminded of these with understanding, when rules are not adhered to / forgotten
- Need additional time to play, relax, develop a sense of feeling safe
- Need to develop a strong sense of belonging in their new group or class before being able to access learning.





# PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Nervousness, shaking
- Weakness, fatigue
- Twitching, tremors
- Aches, pains, tense muscles, muscle spasms
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness, light-headed
- Chest pain, palpitations, rapid heartbeat
- Frequent colds and infections
- Loss of sex drive/ability
- Excess belching, flatulence
- Unexplained "allergy" attacks
- Weight gain/loss without change in diet
- Ringing, buzzing, popping sounds
- Cold or sweaty hands/feet
- Dry mouth, difficulty swallowing
- Clenched jaw, grinding teeth
- Hair loss
- Acne
- Rashes, itching
- Numbness
- Hot/cold waves
- Sweating
- Tingling
- Low energy
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Heartburn
- Panic attacks
- Sense of vomiting
- Frequent urination
- Difficulty breathing

# BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS

- Changes in appetite
- Sleeping too much, too little
- Social withdrawal, isolation
- Aggression, hostility
- Overreactions
- Defensiveness, suspiciousness
- Problems in communication
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Nervous habits (nail biting, fidgeting, pacing)
- Low interest in appearance, punctuality
- Stuttering, rapid or mumbled speech
- Procrastinating, neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Lies/excuses to cover up poor work
- Increased number of minor accidents
- Excessive gambling, impulse buying

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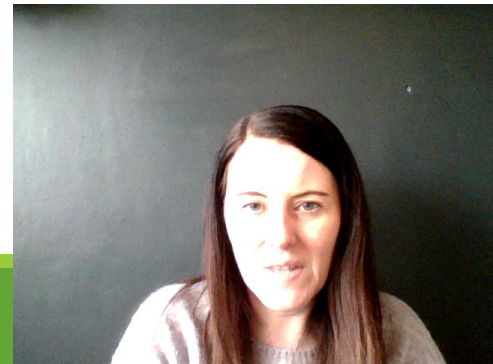


# Loss

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All of our school community have experienced loss over this time, of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom.

Loss can generate: anxiety, trauma, attachment difficulties and bereavement.



# Attachment and Mental Health Difficulties



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Some key figures:

50% of lifetime mental illness begins before the age of 15. Many mental health difficulties are rooted in unmet attachment needs and/or early trauma. 40% of children have an insecure attachment with at least one caregiver. As many as 80% of children diagnosed with ADHD have attachment difficulties.

“Anxiety is a key block to learning, It can prevent the imprint on the brain”

McCullough, A. (2008) ‘Mental Health and Teaching.

Securely attached children are more likely to be:	Securely attached children are more likely to be:
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ better problem-solvers</li><li>✓ more curious</li><li>✓ have increased quality and duration of learning</li><li>✓ have higher academic achievement</li></ul>	





# Support for Staff

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Manage your own stress – get enough rest, eat well, talk to people you trust, reduce outside demands, set aside time for yourself, use relaxation strategies or mindfulness

Promote self-care

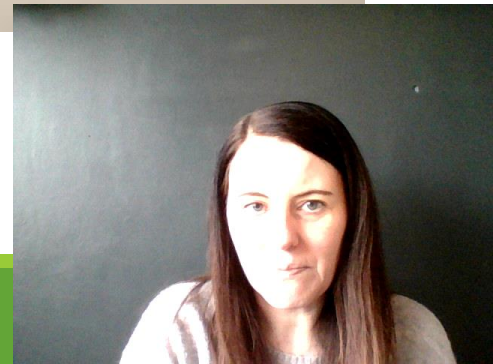
We need to ensure that staff are supported on a day to day basis in school - Listen to each other's experiences

Safe spaces

Ways for staff to explore the loss associated with this time

Acknowledge things that have been positive over the time of lockdown

Provide opportunities for individual supervision or solution-focused meetings







Offer staff opportunities to talk and be curious about their experiences.

Validate and accept their feelings and emotions. Be empathetic and try not to fix, minimise or dismiss their experiences.

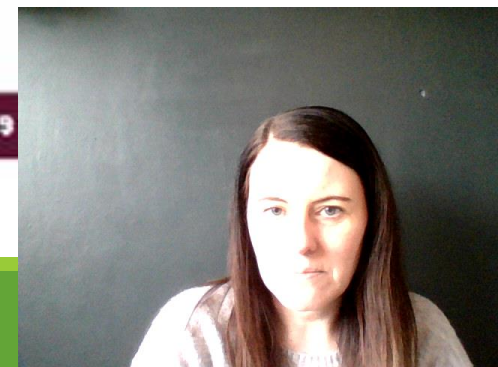
Ensure staff have time away from challenging situations, a safe space and a trusted person to check in with when needed.

## REFLECT

Consider ways to help staff make sense of the changes and maintain a sense of hope. Try and share a daily piece of good news.

Offer opportunities for staff to share their thoughts in a safe way.

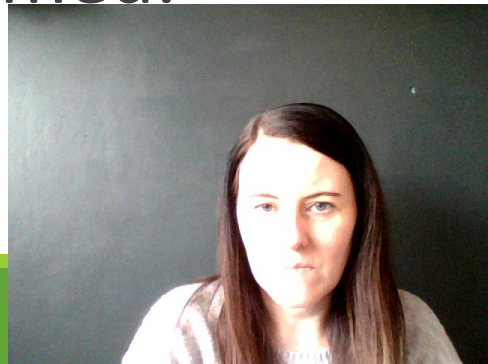
Identify the things that staff are missing and create a calendar of events for when life returns to a more normal state.



# Support for our School Communities

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- Listen to their lived experiences of lockdown
- Reassure them that school is a safe place for their children
- Hold a community act of remembrance where the difficulties are acknowledged, and connection reaffirmed.

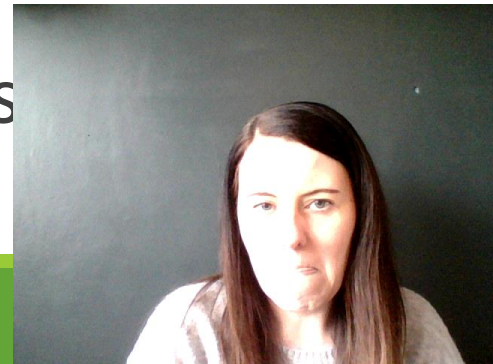




# Support for Children...

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- Find out about children's lived experiences over lockdown  
[www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus](http://www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus)
- Investigate their hopes and fears about returning to school
- Holistic approach
- Focused individual/group approach (personal, needs



# Coming back to school...



this is how  
I feel right now

3 things I want to tell you...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3 things I am  
looking forward to...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

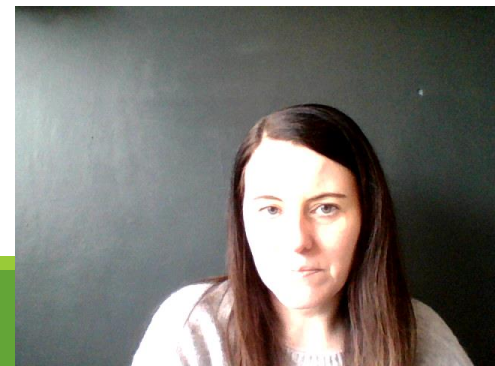
3 questions  
I'd like to ask you...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My favourite thing  
about being at home  
is...

and something I have  
found tricky is...

My name .....



Everything has been very different recently due to the outbreak of coronavirus. You might be missing school, or you may be enjoying your time at home. You will be going back to school at some point, although we don't yet know exactly when this will happen. School is so important as you learn skills that will help you achieve your goals in the future. Have a think about the following questions...

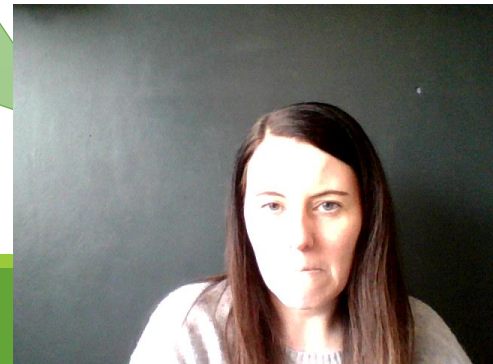
What (or who) have you missed while not being at school?

Do you have any worries about returning to school?

What have you been doing at home that you could tell an adult at school about? Who would you tell?

What are you looking forward to doing when you return to school?

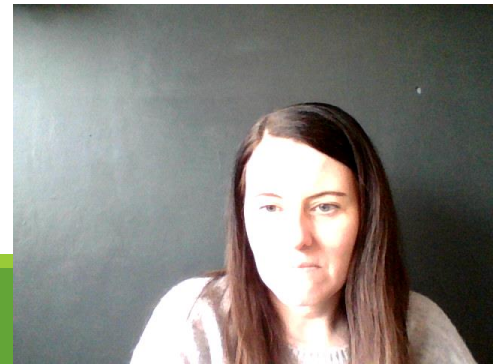
What do you like most about school?



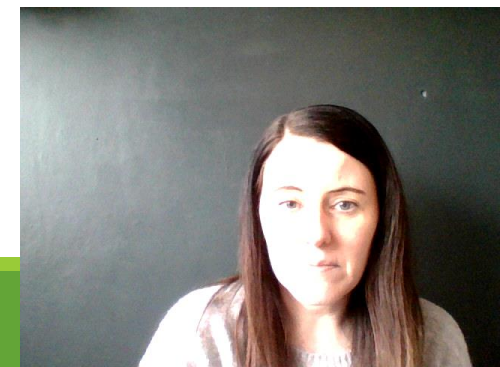
# Areas of Key Importance

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- Create a feeling of safety
- Relationships – re-establish and strengthen
- Play
- Help children to understand and regulate their emotions
- Set out clear expectations
- Understand that all behaviour is communication





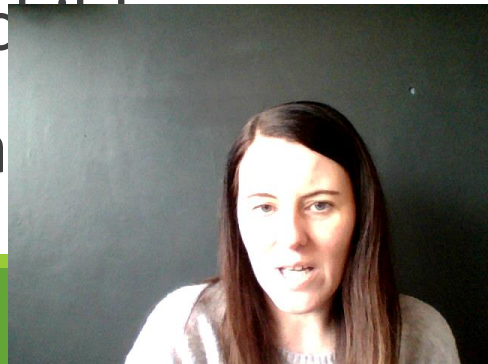


# Safety

This is extremely important as unless the basic need for safety is met the children will not be able to learn.

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- Talk to children about the virus, what has happened and what will be different in school as a result.
- New rules
- Reassure families so the children aren't experiencing anxiety at home.
- Safe Base
- Routines
- Consider staff's tone of voice, body language, playfulness with children
- Can we create safe spaces, corners, tents etc. where children can feel safe and regulate?



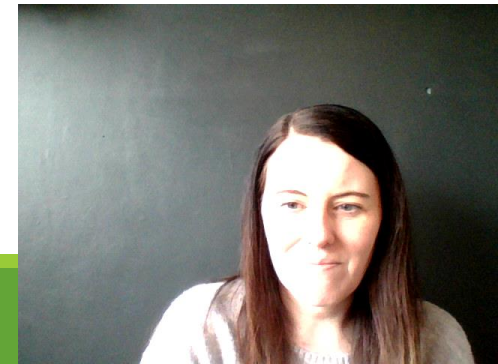
## Relationships

Re-establish and strengthen children's relationships with their peers, with staff and staff's relationships with each other.

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- Some children may need a key adult who welcomes them in the morning and checks in with them during the day. For others, the simple communication that familiar staff are around, and they can talk to them when needed will be enough.
- Play games, lots of them! This will help to dampen feelings like fear and anxiety and is also a great way to connect. - Reconnection is vital to feeling safe and having a sense of belonging.
- Allow children to share their experiences of their time away from school – use art/creativity to explore this, celebrate new skills they have learnt and allow them time to explore what they feel they have missed out on.



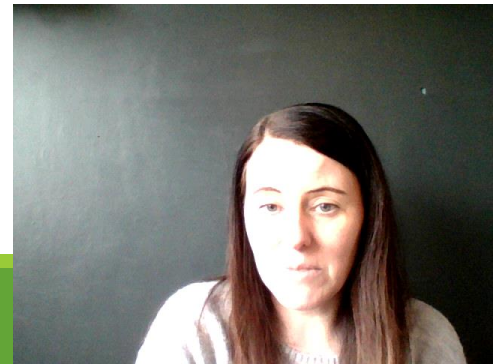
# Play

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Helps to feel safe, to re-establish connections. Play opportunities are vital to helping children make sense of their experiences, problem-solve, reconnect with their peers, and promote their own wellbeing.

Play can help children to:

- make sense of what has happened
- deal with emotional upset and regain feelings of control of their lives
- experience normality and pleasure during times of upheaval, loss, isolation and trauma
- foster resilience through promoting emotional regulation, creativity, relationships, problem-solving and learning.





# The importance of play during Covid-19



## THE POWER OF PLAY

Playing, particularly shared play, is linked to wellbeing and reducing stress in adults and children. Shared play releases hormones and chemicals in the brain and body that support strong positive relationships and leave us feeling less anxious and aggressive. At a time when fear and anxiety are high, play provides an opportunity for family connection.

## TYPES OF PLAY



### PHYSICAL

Jumping, climbing, dancing, and skipping are really important for using up energy that may come from stress.



### ROUGH AND TUMBLE

Chasing, grappling and wrestling safely together can be a vital part of reducing and controlling aggression.



### FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Drawing, creating, baking, building, cutting and sticking.



### RULE-BASED

Hide and seek, treasure hunts, board games, card games and I-spy.

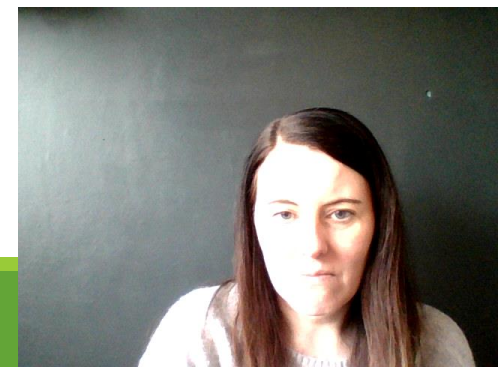


### IMAGINATIVE PLAY

Role play such as tea parties, superheroes or shopkeepers can help children to make sense of experiences.

## PLAY AS TIME TO CONNECT

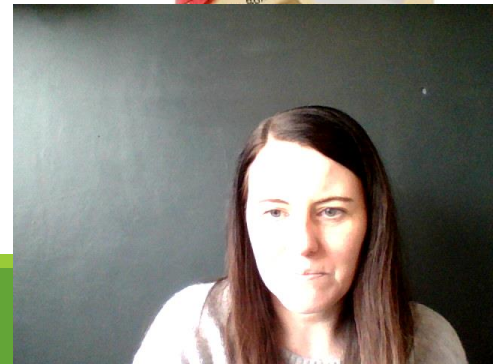
Playing together can also provide opportunities for important conversations that allow children to make sense of their experiences and voice fears and worries with an adult they trust.



# Understanding and Regulating Emotions

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- Give children time to complete activities which they personally find relaxing, listening to music, colouring, spending time outside etc.
- Whole school/class activities like the daily mile, go noodle exercises, cosmic yoga, P.E. with Joe Wicks, brain breaks, breathing exercises etc. will help children to remain active and emotionally regulated throughout the day.
- Person activity – Fill your outline with your current emotions. How do they feel? Where are they?
- Create a worry or question box where children can post things that they would like to talk about.
- Consider the use of journals with older children
- Create happiness boxes





## LAZY 8 BREATHING

Start with an 8 on its side. Starting in the middle, grip up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8 again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



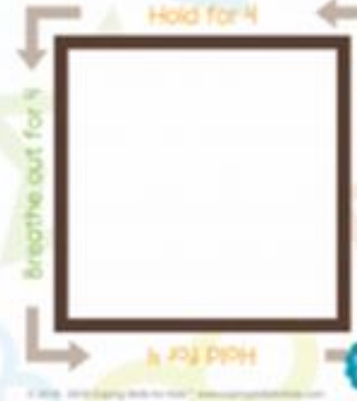
## TRIANGLE BREATHING

Start at the bottom left of the triangle. Follow the sides around the whole triangle to complete one deep breath.



## SQUARE BREATHING

Start at the bottom right of the square, and follow the arrows around the whole square to complete one deep breath.



## STAR BREATHING

Start at any "breathe in" side, hold your breath at the point, then breathe out. Keep going until you've gone around the whole star.



# Regulating Emotions

## Safe place activity

### TUMMY BREATHING

Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

I am playing with my dog in the park!

I can carry a positive memory with I can remember my senses to help

### TAKE 5 BREATHING

Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

### BUMBLEBEE BREATHING

Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then, hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

### ELEPHANT BREATHING

Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

### BUBBLE BREATHING

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.



# Understand that all behaviour is communication

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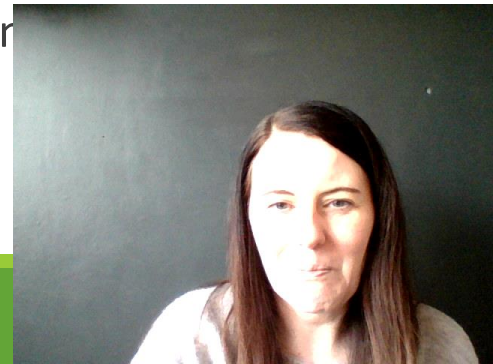
- Help children to connect their emotions and behaviour
- Give children explicit ways to ask for help
- Dan Hughes PACE approach which emphasizes the need for connection before correction, this is not to say that a difficult incident will not be discussed and resolved but children cannot 'hear' correction if they don't first feel calm, connected to the adult and safe.

**P – play** – playful interactions will help to create feelings of safety and belonging, reduce stress and defuse situations

**A – acceptance** – offer acceptance and be empathetic “I know you feel worried about...” “You enjoyed spending so much time at home, it must be hard to leave” etc.

**C – curiosity** – put aside own ideas and try to elicit child's views by wondering about them “I've noticed you've been quiet I wonder if you are worried about something?”

**E – empathy** – show them that we 'get it' “I know this is difficult for you, things have been different lately” etc

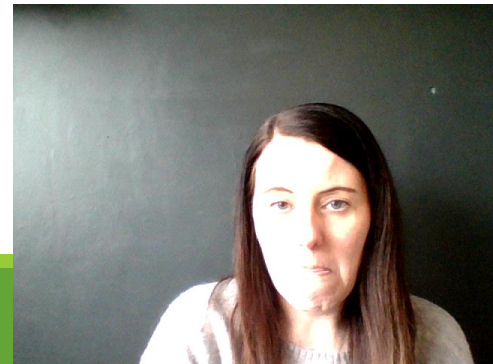




# Re-establish learning behaviour, expectations and goal setting

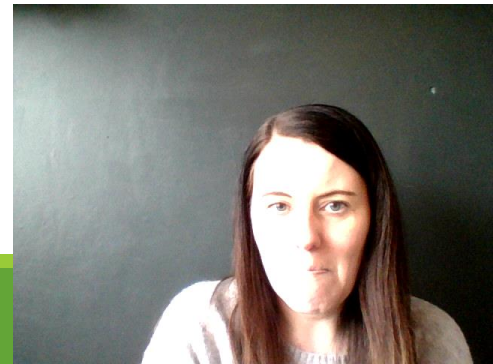
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- Remember learning is developmental, children learn skills differently and their competencies differ.
- Revisit previously covered skills and concepts which may have been disrupted.
- Ensure the basic skills are covered and building blocks are secure before introducing new learning.
- Engage in games which help children to recognise and appreciate their strengths.
- Believe the children can achieve, don't expect less
- Make expectations clear, scaffold, model and chunk tasks into time-limited small steps
- Provide clear feedback
- Build strengths and growth mindset
- Restore a sense of control
- Promote resilience



# More Specific Strategies for Those who Need Them

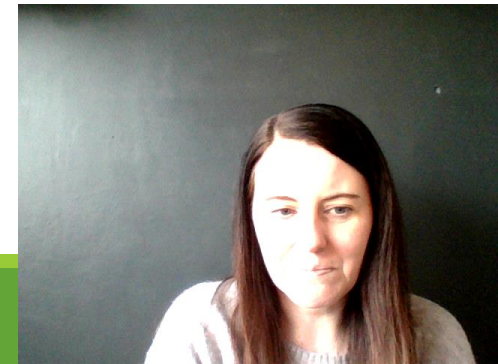
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# Using the Tools of Positive Psychology

Central to any positive psychology approach is that children/young people have optimum opportunities to experience positive emotions.

Ruth MacConville (2009) translated key concepts from positive psychology into five steps that promote overall psychological wellbeing. This includes emotional strength, physical health, moral behaviour and optimism. The five steps are:



# Happiness

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What does happiness mean to you?

How important are these factors in being happy?

Money

Interesting work

Being young

Love

Good health

Having children

Good friends

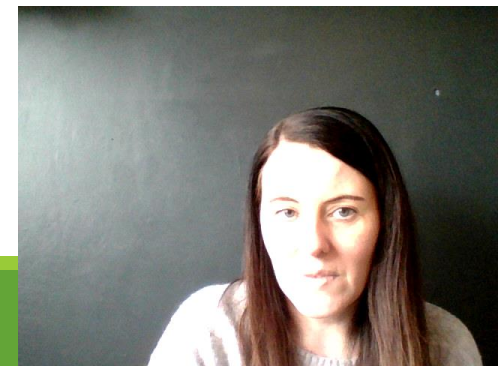
Health

Having a car, a nice house etc.

Company

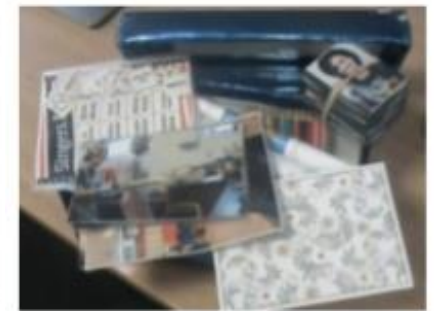
Having power

Being important





# Happiness Boxes



## Step 1

Shoebboxes are good because they have a lid. The lid makes it special because you cannot see what is inside, until the need to open it. It is also private, unless you want to share. The objects inside instantly remind you of 'happy' times, which help calm



## Step 2

Ownership of the box is pivotal. The undecorated box is fine, but decorating it is a positive start of the relationship with the box. Decoration: painted/covered with paper/drawings/stickers



## Step 3

Let the choice of objects be theirs. What makes you happy does not mean it will make them happy. Objects can range from: toy/material/family scarf/putty/photos - *pet/favourite person/home / themselves/holiday/mirror/Hairbrush/sensory object/mindfulness activities - colouring/postcards to colour & send/bubbles/card game/reminder notes - who or where to go to when feeling wobbly /book/ notes on how well they are doing*



## Step 4

The box is ready to use. Introduce the box when you think it is a positive time to be received. Teach when to use the box, talk about times when feeling wobbly or wanting to screech/scream/run! Ensure the box is always accessible



## Step 5

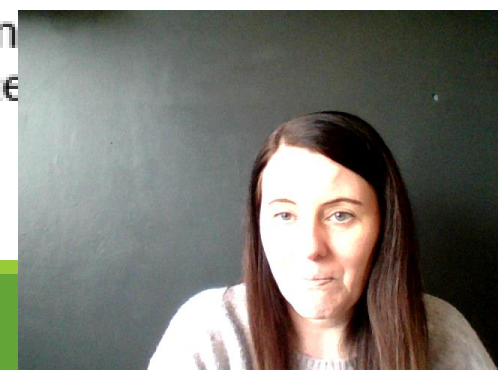
'Happiness' is a lovely term for a child/young person or student to understand, however, there is a deeper message you want them to learn. It is a box, which helps calm, helps to self-regulate and build their emotional resilience.



The boxes need to be accessible to the child ready, for when the need arises. The teacher can usually detect when a child is agitated, or when their mood is low. The Happiness Box will hopefully be soothing to the child and enable them to self-regulate their emotional state.

The real joy comes on the day when the child asks the teacher if they can have five minutes with their Happiness Box. This is a real breakthrough; the child has begun to recognise the emotional need within themselves, identifying a way to bring about resolution to that inner turmoil. That is a significant step forward. It is a skill for life.

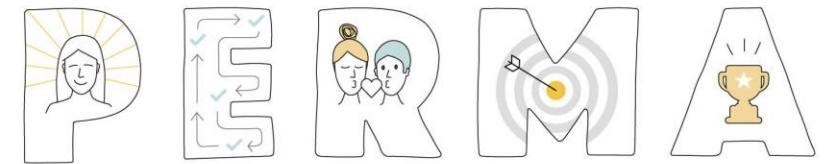
Think about this in terms of yourself. When you are sad or upset you may play your favourite piece of music, go for a run, complete a jigsaw, meditate, do some mindful colouring, cook, walk the dog.... The list is endless, but you know the personal intervention that will restore your state of well-being. It enables you to get through each day. It replenishes your inner strength. It enables you to get through life. Quite simply ask yourself, "what is in your Happiness Box?" Your box may be within you inside. For the child, the starting point may be in a box, which enables learn about their emotions and how to deal with them. One day it may also be a place their mind.



# Perma Model



- P - Positive Emotion.** Feeling good, positive emotions, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment.
- E - Engagement.** Fulfilling work, interesting hobbies, "flow."
- R - Relationships.** Social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction.
- M - Meaning.** Having a purpose, finding a meaning in life.
- A - Accomplishments.** Ambition, realistic goals, important achievements, pride in yourself.



## How to Apply the PERMA Model to Your Life

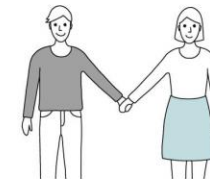
Remember to adopt a positive perspective as often as you can.



Find the things that make you happy and engaged.



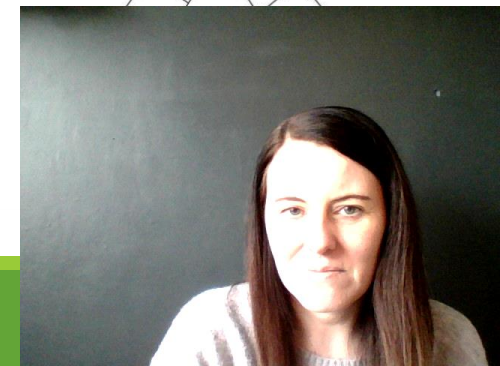
Focus on your relationships with family and friends, and find ways to connect.



Search for meaning and lead a life of purpose.



Savor your accomplishments and strive for further achievement.





# Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

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Cognitive behaviour therapy reveals the role that thoughts play in relation to our emotions and behaviours and advocates that change in thought processes can have a significant effect on altering behaviours.

The main aim when working with children is identifying faulty thinking and encouraging them to break the negative cycle.

ABC

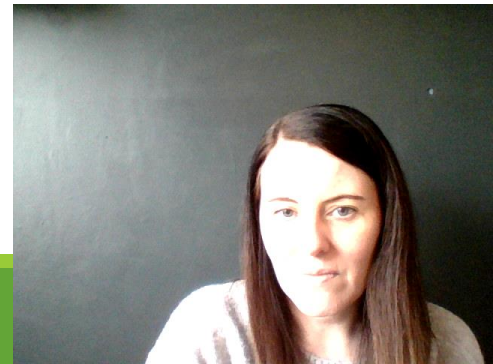
The CBT approach breaks the problem down into 3 smaller parts

A – The activating event (trigger)

B – The negative beliefs that can include thoughts, rules, demands and the meanings the individual attaches to external and internal events

C – The consequences (emotions, behaviours, physical sensations which occur)

Core beliefs

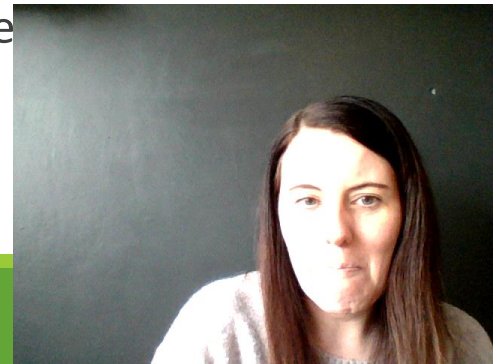




# 6 types of faulty thinking

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1. Doing down – focusing only on the negatives or only seeing the bad in something that was overall positive
2. Blowing up – Making things worse than they are, all or nothing (1 only got 78% not 100%) or magnifying the problem (I got the answer wrong and everyone laughed, I'll never get over it)
3. Predicting failure - Mind reading (I bet they are all laughing at me, fortune telling (knowing you will fail so not trying)
4. Over-emotional thoughts – faulty thinking can result in our emotions becoming very strong and therefore clouding how we think and understand things. Because we feel bad we presume everything is (our emotions take over) We attach negative labels to ourselves (I'm stupid, a loser...)
5. Setting yourself up – setting targets too high and setting ourselves up to fail, creating an impossible standard
6. Blame yourself – everything that goes wrong is our fault – even things we have no control over (I wouldn't start, my computer crashed etc.

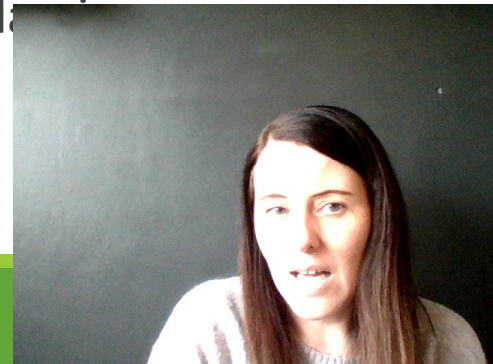


# Test the Evidence

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Once you have supported a child/young person to identify their negative thoughts you can engage them in the following questioning process:

1. What is the evidence for this thought?
2. What is the evidence against this thought?
3. What would my best friend say if they heard my thought?
4. What would my parents say?
5. What would my teacher say?
6. What would I say to my best friend if they had this thought?
7. Am I making mistake e.g. blowing up, forgetting my strengths and good points, blaming myself, predicting failure or thinking I can read other's minds/predict the future?



# Distraction

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Helping children/young people to control their thoughts.

## **Strategies**

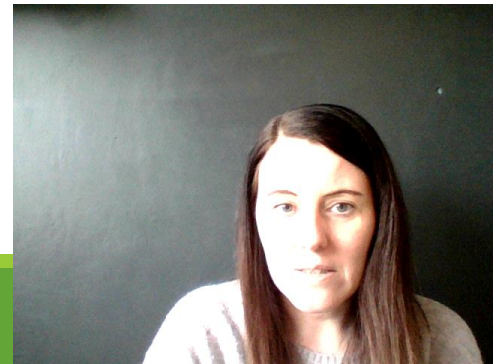
The worry box

Describe what you see

Puzzle it out

Bin them

Self talk



# Mindfulness

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Mindfulness involves maintaining a moment by moment awareness of our thoughts and feelings, body sensations and external environment. It helps us to tune in to what we are sensing at that moment rather than reliving the past or worrying about the future.

Some mindfulness activities to try:

‘Belly Buddies’ – listen to peaceful music while noticing the sensation of their stomachs rising and falling with each breath. (could have a teddy on their tummy for younger children)

‘Mindful Posing’ Go somewhere quiet, familiar and calm and try these poses (The Superman, The Wonder Woman)

‘Spidey-Senses’ Instruct your kids to turn-on their “Spidey senses,” or the super-focused senses of smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch that Spiderman uses to keep tabs on the world around him. This will encourage them to pause and focus their attention on the present, opening their awareness to the information their senses bring in (Karen Young, 2017).

‘The Mindful Jar’ This activity can teach children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions feel overwhelming.

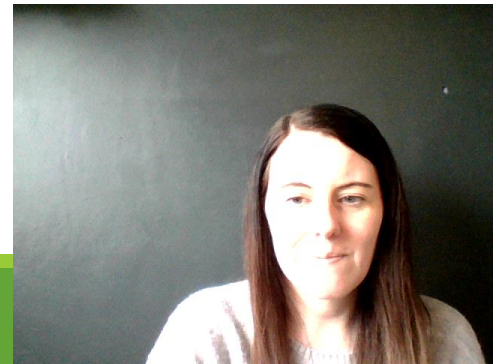
‘Safari’ The Safari exercise is a great way to help kids learn mindfulness. This activity turns an average, everyday walk into an exciting new adventure.

Tell the children that you will be going on a safari: their goal is to notice as many birds, bugs, creepy-crawlies, and any other animals as they can. Anything that walks, crawls, swims, or flies is of interest, and they’ll need to focus all of their senses to find them, especially the little ones (Karen Young, 2017).

<http://kidsrelaxation.com/?cat=15>

<https://www.cosmickids.com/>

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>





# Mindfulness Games for Kids

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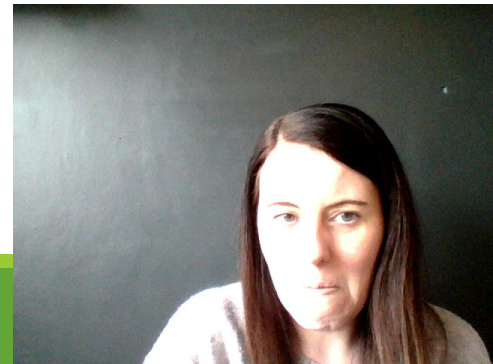
Blowing bubbles. Have your kids focus on taking in a deep, slow breath, and exhaling steadily to fill the bubble. Encourage them to pay close attention to the bubbles as they form, detach, and pop or float away.

Pinwheels. Use the same tactics from blowing bubbles to encourage mindful attention on the pinwheels.

Playing with balloons. Tell your kids that the aim of this game is to keep the balloon off the ground but have them move slowly and gently. You can tell them to pretend the balloon is very fragile if that helps.

Texture bag. Place several small, interestingly shaped or textured objects in a bag. Have each child reach in and touch an object, one at a time, and describe what they are touching. Make sure they don't take the object out of the bag, forcing them to use only their sense of touch to explore the object.

Blindfolded taste tests. Use a blindfold for each child and have them experience eating a small food, like a cranberry, as if it was their first time eating it.



# Mindfulness Rainbow Walk

What can you see that is

- Red
- yellow
- Blue
- Green
- Orange

Write what you see  
in each colour of  
the rainbow



# Breathing Exercises

