

January

# Mental Health Monthly

Below are ideas with helpful web links to support your child's wellbeing while they are at home.

## Help other people

Just getting your child to help other people can make them feel better. Just calling someone for a chat can be a big help and helps restore positivity about the world.



## Look after your body

Encouraging your child to look after their body by eating healthy food, drinking plenty of water and exercising at home e.g., Joe Wicks or Cosmic Kids Yoga on YouTube.

## Place an emphasis on resilience and strength

Focus on your child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.

## Looking after your feelings

If your child is feeling anxious try getting them to think about good things that make them happy. You can always get them to keep a diary and write down or draw about how they are feeling.

## Relax

There are lots of different ways that your child can relax which will help them take notice of the present moment, it will also help them develop their creative side:

- Arts and crafts, such as drawing, painting, collage, sewing, craft kits or upcycling (using items you would recycle to build and create something new)
- Colouring
- Singing or listening to music
- Writing a story
- Creating their own dance routines to music

TAKE CARE



OF YOURSELF

## They could even try something new like Yoga

Yoga is a fantastic, fun exercise that improves posture, flexibility, strength and balance. It can also help children to relax and encourage positive thinking. Why not try it out? Grab a mat, blanket, or towel find some loose clothing to wear and click on one of the following links.

For younger children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-BS87NTV5I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ImHIWzP49M>

For older children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eJoUIBhLkE>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM5MGLMNN\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM5MGLMNN_E)

## Helping Children Cope with Change

It is very likely during the ongoing changes we face, children will need additional support to express and understand their own anxieties and feelings. How children perceive the current changes to the lockdown will vary depending on their age and cognitive understanding, with one common factor, the feeling of confusion. These feelings of confusion may be very challenging, frustrating or frightening for them to grasp. These feelings can leave children feeling overwhelmed. It is important that we listen to and acknowledge their emotions, giving them the time and opportunity to talk about them.



As with any emotionally charged situation, children's feelings often emerge in physical or verbal (mis) behaviour. They are trying to convey something to us and we may need to take the time to understand what they are trying to say. During this time our reactions play a key factor, here are some helpful tips when responding to outbursts.



## Understanding the connection between emotion and behaviour

A child that has difficulty regulating emotions may frequently engage in behaviours that appear impulsive and might be challenging to manage. The strategy of '**Stop, Think, Do**' is a good mantra for parents/carers to use. Stop and think about what the behaviour might be communicating, were these patterns of behaviour evident previously or could they be a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic and a result of painful memories being stirred up? Respond calmly and clearly.



Children need to be aware that their behaviour has consequences; however, they require patient teaching, reminders and clear boundaries and expectations that are repeatedly explained in different ways and enforced consistently. Respond to the underlying emotions rather than the behaviour and build in positive actions into their daily life such as 'Keeping active, connecting with others, taking notice of how they are feeling, helping others and reflecting on things that have gone well that day.'

Below is a story about how our behaviour is connected to the way that our brain works.

**WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About the Two Sides of the Brain**  
**YOUR LEFT BRAIN AND YOUR RIGHT BRAIN**

DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE MANY PARTS TO YOUR BRAIN AND THEY ALL DO DIFFERENT THINGS? IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU HAVE DIFFERENT BRAINS WITH MINDS OF THEIR OWN. BUT WE CAN HELP THEM ALL GET ALONG AND HELP ONE ANOTHER.

OUR RIGHT BRAIN LISTENS TO OUR BODY AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRAIN AND KNOWS ABOUT OUR BIG FEELINGS LIKE WHEN WE'RE HAPPY, OR BRAVE, OR SCARED, OR SAD, OR REALLY MAD. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO THESE FEELINGS AND TALK ABOUT THEM.

SOMETIMES WHEN WE'RE UPSET AND WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, OUR FEELINGS CAN BUILD AND BUILD INSIDE US, LIKE A HUGE WAVE THAT WASHES OVER US AND MAKES US SAY OR DO THINGS WE DON'T MEAN.

BUT THE LEFT BRAIN CAN HELP PUT OUR FEELINGS INTO WORDS. THEN OUR WHOLE BRAIN CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM AND WE CAN CALM DOWN.

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

ANNIE GOT SICK AND HAD TO MISS HER FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. SHE WAS SO MAD ABOUT STAYING HOME THAT A HUGE ANGER WAVE GREW AND GREW AND WAS ABOUT TO CRASH DOWN ON HER.

She's my best friend, and now Lizzie's going to be her best friend.

ANNIE'S DAD HELPED HER TALK ABOUT WHAT SHE WAS FEELING.

WHEN SHE USED HER WORDS TO SAY HOW SHE FELT, HER LEFT BRAIN HELPED HER SURF THE BIG ANGER WAVE FROM HER RIGHT BRAIN, AND SHE RODE IT TO SHORE, CALM AND HAPPY.

**Communicate any concerns with school**

If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or well-being, then please let school know. There will be things that we can do to help and support you.

Miss Snelgrove