

Returning to educational settings:
Recovery and learning in the
aftermath of a pandemic

Secondary Settings



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Suffolk County Council
Psychology & Therapeutic Services (P&TS)



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Thanks to colleagues in Suffolk as well as EP colleagues in Kensington & Chelsea and City of Westminster (Bi-borough EP Service) and Central Bedfordshire colleagues for sharing information that we have used to create this booklet. Please also refer the P&TS booklet - Education Setting Staff: Looking after your mental health and wellbeing – and that of the children and young people you support. This was shared in Suffolk Headlines on 7th May 2020 and can be found on this link www.suffolklearning.co.uk/do_download.asp?did=18871

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RETURNING TO EDUCATION AND RECOVERY: SOME KEY IDEAS^{1,2}

Disasters and emergencies throw light on the world as it is. Some people who study disasters frame crises not just in terms of what is lost but also what might be gained – seeing glimmers of possibility. Every disaster is different, and it is never just one or the other: loss and gain always coexist.

Rebecca Solnit (2009) puts forward the view that emergencies aren't just moments when bad things get worse, or when people inevitably become more scared, suspicious and self-centred. Instead she described the ways in which they open up human reserves of improvisation, solidarity and resolve, pockets of purpose and joy, even in the midst of loss and pain. Solnit's book was not a call to celebrate disaster – but to pay attention to the possibilities it might contain.



“Human beings reset themselves to something altruistic, communitarian, resourceful and imaginative after a disaster, we revert to something we already know how to do.”

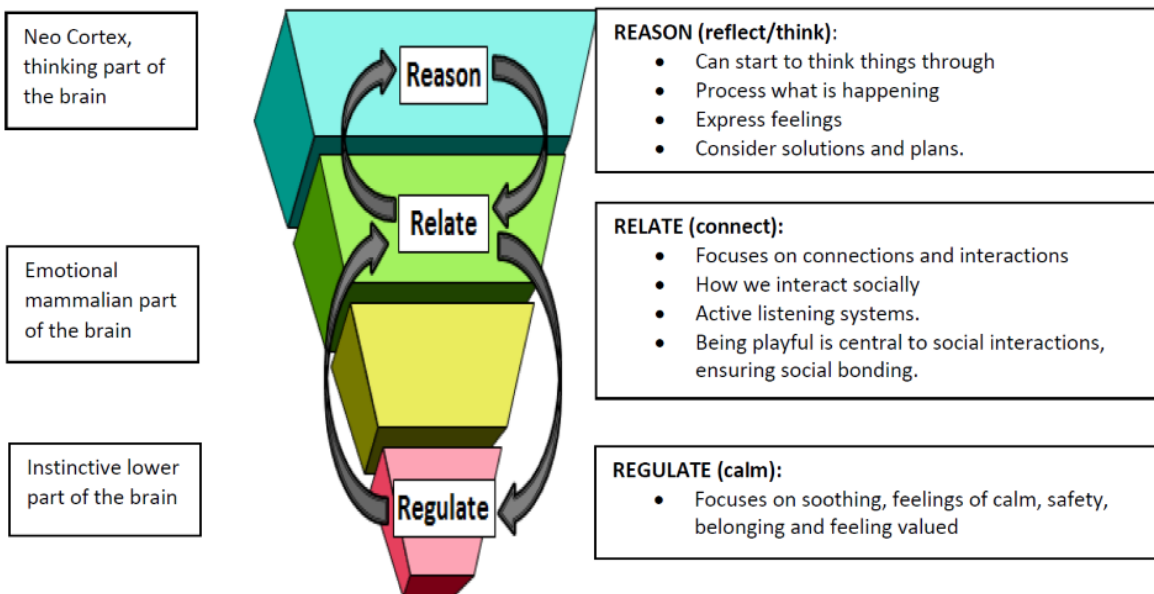
This booklet sits alongside a wide range of resources shared by colleagues across Suffolk for you to consider when planning your own unique recovery journey. As well as the government guidance for a safe return there are a range of considerations and preparation at a whole school / setting level as well as at the vulnerable individual level; taking into account that there are people who will be ‘newly vulnerable’ due to their experiences at this current time. It will be vital to work alongside families and carers in order to enhance the likelihood of a smooth return and settling back into the routines that are associated with being at school.

Our recommendation is that you take a trauma informed approach to recovery in order to support young people to re-settle to learn and overcome challenges that they have and may still be facing (Ref: Louise Bomber, April 2020). Ideas shared in this booklet are aimed to support people during the return into educational settings. Recovery in this context includes being able to regulate our emotions, how we connect with each other (i.e. a relationship-based approach) and our ability to reason (i.e. think about and process what is happening / has happened).

¹ With reference to: *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster* Rebecca Solnit 2009

² https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/31/how-will-the-world-emerge-from-the-coronavirus-crisis?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

RECOVERY=



REMEMBER: REGULATE – RELATE – REASON = RECOVERY

Written by Georgie Zacharzewski and Sue Salisbury with The Jigsaw Service.

Contributions from: The Educational Psychology Service; the ASD Advisory Service; the Academy of Central Bedfordshire; School Improvement Team

Psychology helps us to understand and support behaviour change as well as anticipating people's responses to change. [Click here](#) to read this really useful guidance from the British Psychological Society in order to support you to optimise policies and communication relating to this pandemic.

What can adults working in secondary school age settings do to help themselves?³

'Knowing your children and young people is what makes your school a place that the community will turn to as a key support for children and young people, and in whom the community is placing their trust to aid children and youth in their recovery'

It is a big responsibility, especially when we acknowledge that many adults in your educational setting community will also be experiencing a similar range of emotions and reactions as the children, young people and their families. Experiences of bereavement and loss, caring for someone shielding, living with a frontline NHS worker or carer, coping with additional stressors, worry and anxiety will be shared and lived experiences for many.

³ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

However, we also know that resilience research frequently cites teachers as trusted significant adults and positive role models for children and young people. Education setting staff have the skills needed to support children and young people through difficult times, to help inspire their resiliency and hope and to help them recover their wholeness and find comfort in their community.

Now is the time that the work you have done previously with the students in your setting will help them in their response to the challenges that the transition and recovery period will present. And, as always, we can continue to 'top up' resilience in the way we teach, interact with and model positive behaviour. This doesn't mean we pretend that nothing is different or that we haven't found the pandemic scary, difficult or sad. What it means is we show that people can endure such challenges and are especially able to withstand such hard times when those around them are supportive and caring. It is important to acknowledge that everyone will have their good and bad days and that there are things that we can do that will help us to feel less distressed. Remember:

*"Those who live through terrible times will often be able to help others...and some may go on to do something to make the world a better place. Even terrible things can teach some good things – like understanding, caring, courage... and how to be okay during difficult times"*⁴

As staff in educational settings we need to be seen to be practicing what we are encouraging young people to do. Congruence between our actions and our expectations is vital for trusting relationships. During the period after lockdown you will most likely be exposed to stories and information that are distressing to hear. This can result in stress and distress. Taking time to firstly recognise this and then to adopt strategies that provide psychological resilience and reduce stress is not only important, but professionally responsible.

Look after your own emotional needs

Many of you within the school community could be experiencing a similar range of reactions and feelings in response to the pandemic and lockdown period as the children and young people in your classes. This can make it particularly difficult to focus on the needs of the others. As adults, we have a wider range of coping skills than are available to children and young people and know that we can survive adversity. Children and young people often haven't yet learnt through experience that they too have these coping capacities.

Working with children and young people who have had a particularly stressful and frightening experience of the pandemic could be challenging, and it is possible that in hearing their stories you may also experience stress symptoms. It is not uncommon for teachers to feel some of the anxiety, helplessness and anger that their children and young people feel.

⁴ Marge Heegaard (1991) 'When Something Terrible Happens' Woodland Press.

Managing your own stress⁵

Try to:

- Take time out to get sufficient sleep and rest, relax and eat regularly and healthily.
- Talk to people you trust and allow yourself to be comforted. You don't have to tell everyone everything, but not saying anything to anyone is often unhelpful.
- Reduce outside demands and avoid taking on additional responsibilities.
- Spend time in a place where you feel safe and calm to go over what's happened over the course of the day/week. Don't force yourself to do this if the feelings are too strong or intense at the time.
- Try to reduce your access to the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Try scheduling 'digital power off' times.
- Use relaxation strategies e.g. slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, self-talk.
- Build in opportunities for recognising hope and positive strength.
- Allow yourself experiences of sadness and grief.

Try to avoid:

- Bottling up feelings. Consider whether it would be helpful to talk about them with someone you trust.
- Feeling embarrassed by your thoughts, feelings or those of others. These are normal reactions to a stressful event and period of time.
- Isolating yourself from those you trust and feel safe around.



What might be helpful during this time?

Think about having a buddy at work, so you can check in with each other at various times if needed. It might also be helpful to have someone on hand to help you think through any questions that might come up in class and work through them together.

Don't put any pressure on yourself to do any activities or have any discussions you don't feel up to, that is absolutely fine.

Talk to each other, support each other- the staffroom can become a real sanctuary at times when things are feeling difficult. It never hurts to bring in a few snacks and treats to share or to try and come together for a quick catch-up at break time.

Mindfulness based activities- having strategies you can use in the moment to support you to stop.....clear your mind for a few seconds....focus on your breath....carry on again.

⁵ Adapted from Advice from NHS Guidance for Coping with Stress Following a Major Incident

Psychological First Aid- what can adults working in secondary school settings do to help each other? ⁶

Psychological first aid refers to the actions that can be taken by people without formal psychological or counselling training to provide emotional support for people following an emergency or critical incident.

The following may be useful for staff when providing psychological first aid for each other:

- Ask simple questions to ascertain what help may be needed.
- Emphasise the support available.
- Initiate contact only after you have observed and appraised the situation. It is important to make sure that contact will not be seen as intrusive or disruptive.
- Review the situation and emphasise the positive actions taken by colleagues in managing the situation.
- Listen with compassion.
- Offer to make them a cup of tea/coffee.
- Reflect the words of the person. Don't judge the statements a person makes.
- Ask non-intrusive questions (e.g. "Where were you during...?")
- Keep the discussion based on what happened. Avoid "What if...?" or "I should have..." statements. If your colleague takes this line, bring the talk back to real events.
- In some instances staff members may have an intense and lasting response and need professional psychological help. However, your interventions as a line manager or a colleague can do much to reduce or even remove the need for counselling.
- Follow-up should be at a level appropriate to the relationship between the person and helper. In some instances it may be as simple as asking "How are you now?"
- Remember that psychological first aid is about reducing distress, assisting with the current needs of colleagues and making sure that colleagues are offered the support to allow them to function within their professional setting. It is not about revisiting traumatic experiences.

⁶ Government of Western Australia Department of Education Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan Nov 2011

Recognising the impact of thoughts & feelings on behaviour - An Attachment Aware Approach⁷

For many settings one of the key challenges will be working out how to uphold boundaries and rules during any transition period following lockdown; particularly for those children and young people who are vulnerable and may have experienced lockdown as a frightening and distressing time. We know that consistent boundaries help children and young people feel safer, and that educational settings need to feel as predictable a place as they can be, after experiencing something that has been so unpredictable. However, knowing how to balance this with the need, for some children and young people, to access more intensive support can feel challenging.

What do adults need to be aware of?

Whole school behaviour policies often work for the majority of children and young people, however they are not successful with all. This is especially true for those who have experienced traumatic life experiences (Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs - *traumatic life experiences that occur before the age of 18*) and could also be true for those young people who have experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma or bereavement as a result of the pandemic. Children and young people respond to adversity in a range of ways, including changes in their capacity for learning and physical and psychological wellbeing. These behavioural changes may indicate confusion and uncertainty, or underlying, ongoing distress.

Some children and young people might display observable and active 'acting out' behaviours that communicate a clear emotional need. **It is important to consider what they may be trying to communicate – but do not have the words for.** Other children and young people may become withdrawn or appear unusually needy. We can try to notice our tendency to make judgements around behaviour (e.g. 'mad'/'bad') and remind ourselves to view all behaviour as an indicator of emotions to which we can respond in an empathic and caring manner. This can be particularly hard to do when they act in a way that hurts or frightens others.

Some groups to be especially aware of are children and young people:

- who have experienced significant loss or bereavement
- who have been shielding (or their parents or carers have been shielding) during the pandemic as a result of underlying health conditions, and siblings of those who have been shielding, whose experience of lockdown will have been even more restricted
- with existing social, emotional and mental health needs (some might have Education, Health & Care Plans [EHCPs] that identify this as an area of special educational need that requires intensive support)
- with other known special educational needs or disabilities

⁷ With reference to i) materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network and ii) Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools.

- who are in Care, Children in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan
- who came under Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker status who may have previous experiences of trauma.

For these children and young people, approaches that tend to focus mainly on behaviour can have further negative effects and tend not to provide opportunities for them to learn to express their emotions in a more socially acceptable way.

Considerations for implementing an Attachment Aware Approach⁸

Recognise behaviour as a form of communication	<i>The behaviour might be a very normal response to adverse life experiences</i>
Promote a positive approach	<i>Offer specific and descriptive praise or discrete non-verbal feedback</i>
Differentiate expectations	<i>Set the expectations so that children / young people are not set up to fail</i>
Differentiate response	<i>Express disapproval of the behaviour not the person</i>
Relationships first	<i>'Engage, don't enrage' – empathy comes before problem-solving around the behaviour</i>
Small actions can make a big difference	<i>Smiling at / greeting a child / young person on their way into school can really add to their sense of belonging</i>
Don't expect immediate results or returns	<i>A child / young person might be dismissive of you but this does not mean that your actions weren't valued</i>
Expect sabotage from some children / young people and name it, where appropriate	<i>'Name it to tame it'. Dan Siegel⁹</i>

Recognise that what you feel is a likely indication of the child or young person feels.

What might help?

⁸ Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools.

⁹ Adapted from Sarah Ahmed 2017 Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools.⁹ The Whole-Brain Child 2011 Siegel and Bryson

- The general principle of providing a safe environment, high in nurture and structure, with adults responding in a consistent manner, maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour is still important, most particularly, when other areas of a student's life may not feel as structured. This consistency is containing for young people.
- Trust your instincts in knowing when ignoring low level behaviour is needed. Reflecting on whether students would typically exhibit these types of behaviours, or whether it is “out of character” will help to make informed judgements. Hold on to the importance of flexibility for these students.
- Discuss the relationship between behaviour, thoughts and feelings with students, and how we often use our behaviour to communicate our feelings, particularly when we are unable to label the emotion.
- The use of an ‘authoritative’ versus ‘authoritarian’ approach where adults are ‘in control’ versus ‘controlling’ can be very powerful. We know that fostering connection, inclusion, respect and value for all members of the school community supports young people to feel a sense of belonging, being heard, understood and cared about, and provides a context in which they can start to express their emotions in a more socially acceptable way.



RETURNING OR STARTING AT NEW EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The importance of welcome

When thinking about the return of more children and young people back into your setting consider the 'importance of welcome' in terms of successful inclusion back into your community.



Useful questions:

- what would a great welcome look like for this person?
- What preparation is required to ensure the best welcome?
- What support is required to ensure a great welcome?

Taking time to plan the 'welcome' will be important groundwork that is likely to contribute towards a successful return. It is worth paying attention to planning how you are going to welcome children and young people back; especially those who you know will need additional support. For example, writing cards and postcards about looking forward to meeting / seeing them again as well as liaising with family / carers in order to plan together.

We have found the use of one-page profiles for staff a really helpful way of introducing ourselves to children and young people we have not met before. This could be something that you consider if you have not met some of the students you will be working with.

You may want to suggest that children and young people create their own one-page profiles at home (with the support of an adult) in order to let you know more about them and the best way to communicate and support them upon their return. See Appendix 1 for example one-page profiles for children.

Here are some of our teams one-page-profiles that they use when introducing themselves (i.e. welcome to ..me...) when they start working with a child or young person. Our staff tailor their one-page profile depending on the context and age range that they are working with.



Katie Matthews
My One Page Profile

About me
I love to travel and like to join in most sports activities, like Netball, rock climbing and bodyboarding.

What's important to me as an Inclusion Facilitator?

- ⇒ Building relationships and trust.
- ⇒ Helping you to pursue your goals in a way that's meaningful to you.
- ⇒ Boosting confidence and social skills.

What people like and admire about me...
My friends and family tell me I am...

- A good listener and understanding
- Positive and friendly
- Hardworking and helpful

How to support me.
Help me get to know you by telling me what your favourite things are and what you like doing.

Email me: IF@suffolk.gov.uk



Maia Green
Inclusion Facilitator
My One Page Profile

Others describe me as:

- A good listener
- Patient
- Understanding
- hardworking

I love:

- Painting and drawing
- Writing stories
- Being outside
- CAKE!!! >>>>

How best to support me:
sometimes I make spelling mistakes. Please let me know so that I can correct myself!

As an Inclusion Facilitation I aim to:

1. Work with you to pursue a better future.
2. help you to building friendships
3. boost confidence
4. make you feel good about yourself!

What Is important to me...

- People and their stories.
- I love to walk and run with my music on loud and my dog.

Email me: Maia.Green@suffolk.gov.uk
Text or call me : 07732804000



What people like about me:

- I like to hear about the good things that are going on for people as well as the things that are tricky
- I can help people find a way forward when they are feeling stuck
- I notice details
- I am a good listener



Reni Landor's One Page Profile Educational Psychologist

Contact : 07732804000 or Reni.Landor@suffolk.gov.uk

I love:

- my job as I work with all kinds of people in different situations
- finding ways to help people enjoy learning
- walking in the countryside with my dog



You can help me by:

- Reminding me of the things that are important to you in case I haven't realised
- Giving me feedback about what it has been like working / spending time with me
- Showing me things using drawings or other visual information to back up what I listen to



Tips for creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom¹⁰

As much as returning to an educational setting may feel like a relief, or even feel exciting for some children and young people, it is also likely to be a time when many children and young people feel anxious, particularly those who have underlying health conditions or who live with someone who is shielding. Feeling safe may have come to be associated with 'staying at home', 'social distancing' and frequent handwashing and so we all need to learn new ways to continue to feel safe whilst connecting with our friends and peers and learning together back in our school setting. Staff can help to create classroom environments that provide reassurance, for example, how they are following the latest government and scientific guidelines, and make expectations clear about how we can all look after ourselves and each other.

This may take time and it is important for us to hold on to the idea of a *transition period* as we develop new ways of learning together in the aftermath, rather than rushing or putting unnecessary pressure on ourselves or each other to 'feel or get back to normal'.

Create a safe classroom and educational environment

For children and young people to feel as safe as possible, educational settings and classroom environments need to be high in both nurture and structure, and to be predictable and organised, with clearly stated, reasonable and sometimes minimal expectations whilst young people get used to being back in this environment. This will depend on the needs of the group you are responsible for. Ground rules focusing on how we can keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible together can be co-constructed with groups and classes, with reviews planned to allow for changes and adaptations in response to new developments. New routines and boundaries can be discussed and agreed to provide reassurance to allow children and young people to negotiate their day with confidence.

Help children and young people to regulate their emotions so that they can learn

Children and young people respond to adversity in a range of ways, including changes in their capacity for learning and physical and psychological wellbeing. These behavioural changes may indicate confusion and uncertainty, or underlying, ongoing distress.

Some groups to be especially aware of are children or young people:

- who have experienced significant loss or bereavement.
- who have been shielding during the pandemic as a result of underlying health conditions, and siblings of those who have been shielding, whose experience of lockdown will have been even more restricted.

¹⁰ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

- whose parents / carers have been shielding as, as above, these young people are also likely to have had a much restricted lockdown experience.
- with existing social, emotional and mental health needs (some might have Education Health and Care Plans [EHCPs] that identify this as an area of special educational need that requires intensive support).
- with other known special educational needs or disabilities.
- who are Looked After, Children in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- who came under Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker status who may have previous experiences of trauma.

In addition to having a calm classroom, teaching children and young people strategies to self-calm is useful and conducive to creating a positive learning atmosphere. Sometimes for there to be calmness there needs to be opportunity for movement and the expenditure of energy. Children and young people who seem to be particularly jumpy, anxious, nervous or on edge may find that a game that allows for running around or even being able to get out of their seat and hand out sheets for a class task allows them to resetttle.



Talking about feelings, having posters around the classroom that provide words for feelings and emotions and cueing children and young people into their feelings are all strategies that develop emotional literacy and help children and young people to understand their own and others' feelings. If they seem particularly upset, distressed or angry, it is important to first let them calm down before helping them to identify their feelings.

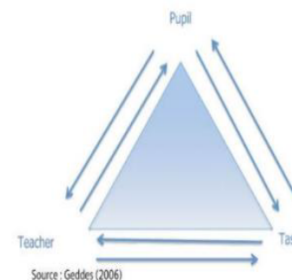
There are many practical activities that children and young people can take part in that encourage and support them to regulate their emotions. See page 21 onwards in this booklet. You could also refer to the Suffolk Local Offer website and the [Specialist Education and Psychology & Therapeutic Services](#) for more ideas around supporting young people with additional needs.

Believe that the child or young person can achieve academic success

The temptation to expect less from children or young people after frightening events is common. Although the capacity for concentration may be affected it can be re-developed through good teaching strategies, support and time. Make all expectations clear, break tasks down to subsets and provide supportive and clear feedback during and after each subtask to check that they are on task and have understood the task correctly. Scaffold the task and the skills required to achieve learning. Acknowledge successes and provide explicit feedback on what has been achieved.

REASON – Key Messages: THE HEALING POWER OF LEARNING (an adversarial growth approach to transformation – Meredith, April 2020 - <https://www.tes.com/news/five-ways-help-children-heal-after-pandemic>).

In the learning (reason) situation, relationships, tolerance of uncertainty and tasks are related. The teachers' skill (which requires teachers to be regulated) is in knowing how to make the learning experience engage the child's capacity to be curious; a child's engagement with the task involves trusting the teacher to support uncertainty and resolve confusion within a safe place. (Geddes, 2006)



Thread this approach throughout the day:

- Consider timetables that give opportunities to regulate emotions at the start of the day. Many children may have been participating in Joe Wickes 09:00 Workout, consider starting the day with physical activity. Physical exercise helps to regulate the Central Nervous System and our emotions.
- Provide opportunities for listening systems such as Check-in Champions and Community Circles/Circle Time, buddy systems, peer mentoring or staff mentoring.
- Consider small group approaches that encourage a rotation and mix of practical, creative and engaging activities.
- Consider building social skill/team building skills into curriculum subjects, making learning practical and fun. For some children, focusing on the familiar and easily achieved helps to keep challenges to a minimum and aids engagement with the learning.

Restore a sense of control and personal efficacy

Provide a place to calm down such as a 'peaceful corner', where children or young people take time out in a quiet place to regain composure and reduce stimulation. Zoning out with music, spending time in libraries, areas for chilling out with creative arts or a game of basketball are all strategies that students have found useful. Talk with students about how they can support their own sense of well-being by building positive actions into their daily life such as *"keeping active, connecting with others, taking notice, giving and keeping learning."*¹¹

Build strengths and capacity

Every child and young person has strengths, aspirations, hopes and dreams. Use solution focused conversations to find out about these. (Asking with interest, *'what are you good at? And what else?'* and if possible, deepening the conversation *'When you are at your best what are you pleased and proud to notice about yourself? What does this tell you about what you might be capable of?'*) Promote opportunities for the child or young person to experience success and help them to work out ways they can put these skills to use in other areas of their learning and life. Sometimes they will need help to make the connections and generalise the skills.

Character Strengths¹¹

Social scientists tell us that everyone possesses all 24 of the above character strengths in different degrees, and these are universal across cultures and nations.



Ask young people to identify their top five strengths (and do the same for yourself!) Discuss other strengths you and they have noticed and build in opportunities to remind them of these. Planning actions and activities to help children and young people to be their best helps to bring a sense of personal control and achievement to the day-to-day life.

Understand the connection between emotion and behaviour

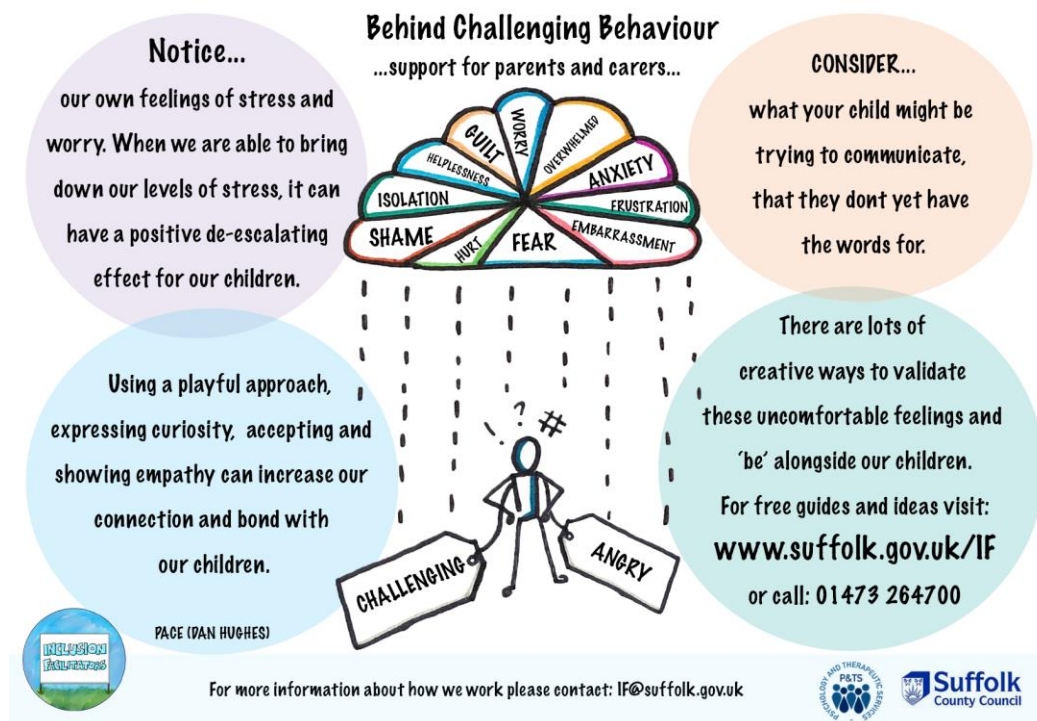
A child or young person that has difficulty regulating emotions may frequently engage in behaviours that appear impulsive and that are challenging to manage.

The strategy of 'Stop, Think, Do' is a good mantra for teachers. Stop and think about what the behaviour might be communicating, were these patterns of behaviour evident previously or could they be a reaction to recent events and a result of painful memories being stirred up? Respond calmly and clearly. These children and young people 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. Talk to children and young people about how they can support their own sense of well-being by building positive actions into their daily life such as 'Keeping active, connecting with others, taking notice, giving and keeping learning.' ¹²

¹¹ Values in Action Character Strengths

¹² Five Ways to Wellbeing New economics foundation. Centre for Well-being. 2008

We have worked in partnership and co-produced a range of resources for families with [Suffolk Parent Carer Network](#). There are several examples of these resources for families, who have children of difference ages and a range of needs, within this booklet. This information will also be helpful for education setting staff to consider.



Emotion Coaching

In Suffolk the Psychology & Therapeutic Service have supported staff to develop this relationship-based approach to help develop emotional intelligence, support children's capacity for pre-social behaviour and emotional regulation. This links really well with the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) training and has been a useful way of supporting children's emotional development and has helped staff to frame challenging behaviour within a relationship focused approach. Please contact our service if you would like to find out more about this approach.

EMOTION COACHING

1. BECOME AWARE OF AND EMPATHISE WITH THE EMOTION
2. LABEL AND VALIDATE THE EMOTION
3. SET LIMITS
4. PROBLEM SOLVE

Emotion coaching is an 'in the moment' relational approach to behaviour that teaches pupils about the world of emotion and encourages the development of self-regulation. It is a natural form of communication and can be used whenever you notice low-level indicators of a difficult emotion being felt by a young person. The more often a pupil is supported to regulate their feelings, the more likely they will be able to do this for themselves.
(Gus and Wood 2017)

Acknowledge feelings alongside balancing boundaries. "I can see that you are angry and that's a really overwhelming feeling, but it's not ok to hurt others when you are angry."

CONNECT BEFORE CORRECT

Be hopeful and optimistic

Some children and young people may experience a loss of trust in the world after a global pandemic; they may believe that because a terrifying thing has happened, they can no longer dare to hope that life can be happy and safe again.



Modelling optimism and encouraging children to see the strengths and coping skills they have and encouraging them to notice acts of courage and kindness will help develop a sense of personal efficacy and future.

It is not uncommon for children and young people to have a less optimistic view of the future after events such as these. Reminding them of their strengths and providing opportunities for setting goals and achieving them will help them to take a positive view of their lives. Remember optimism can be taught and that it is contagious.



Positive Self-Talk for Children and Young People



For more information about how we work please contact us: IFO@suffolk.gov.uk



Engagement, social connection and trusting relationships that are built on respect and positive regard

Communities and societies provide resources which are key to facilitating resilience - being part of a social group is protective and can help people overcome adverse events. However, after events that are frightening such as a global pandemic and social distancing, communities and school communities can change. School provides a community of care for children and young people and it is through the relationships that they have with friends and teachers that they can begin to recover from and make sense of the events.

Some children and young people (and staff) come to school for normality. They don't want to have to talk or think about sad or frightening things that have happened as a result of the pandemic but would rather have a normal school day of learning and play. Being sad and dealing with the emotions and consequences takes a lot of energy and head space. Not talking about what happened doesn't mean that the child or young person isn't thinking about it or is being unusually avoidant. It's important to take our cues from the child or young person and for them to know there is no one right reaction. It's okay to ask them quietly what their preference is.

For many children and young people, their teachers and supportive adults in their educational settings are adults in whom they can confide and ask difficult questions. Many children and young people express the view that they don't want to upset their parents or carers or further stress them by asking questions or saying that they are struggling. This is when a trusted relationship with an adult at school will allow the child or young person to gain the help and support they need.



Working in close contact with parents and carers will also be particularly vital during this time of uncharted waters. This may not have been at quite the same level before the pandemic and may impact on staff.

The [Emotional Well-being Gateway](#) website has a wealth of information and [advice and support options](#).

For young people with additional needs there is also support from a range of additional services via the public and voluntary sector. E.g. [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#), [SPCN](#), [PACT](#) and [Suffolk Family Carers](#).

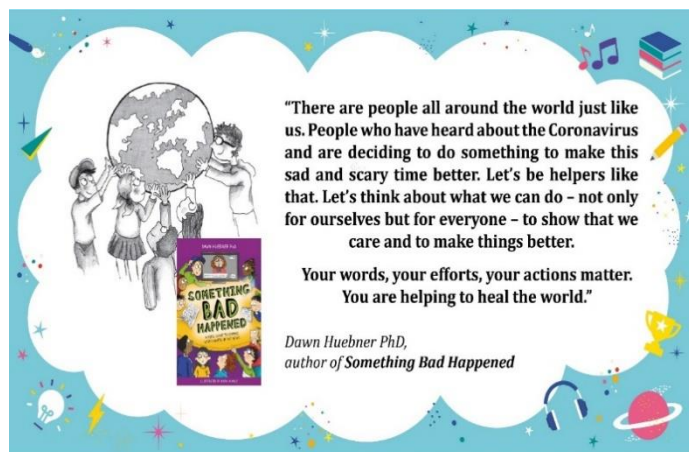
ACTIVITIES PROMOTING CONNECTEDNESS AND RESILIENCE

During disasters and emergencies, alongside the stories of loss and grief, we also hear extraordinary stories of how different individuals, families and communities come together and act with kindness, courage and initiative. We can encourage children and young people to share their stories about ways in which their community helped each other. For example, neighbourhood delivery networks springing up to provide medicines or shopping to people who couldn't get out. We can reflect on what might have changed possibly for the better or what has been brought into sharper focus for us. For example, stories about the impact on the climate such as reduced industrial activity, road traffic and expanded bike lanes leading to air pollution plummeting and birdsong returning to neighbourhoods.

Many events plant seeds, imperceptible at the time, that bear fruit long afterward.¹³

Reading Well - Books on Prescription!

A survey by the Reading Agency (April 2020) indicated that 34% of people in London are [reading more](#) during lockdown. [Reading Well for young people](#) recommends expert endorsed books about mental health, providing 13 to 18-year olds with advice and information about issues like anxiety, stress and OCD, and difficult experiences like bullying and exams. www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-mental-health



Depending on the age of the children and young people, activities listed below may be helpful in promoting **connectedness and resilience**. We suggest working with colleagues in your setting to consider which activities may be useful in your setting. Be aware of individuals who may not want to take part and provide alternative meaningful activities for those who do not want to participate without them feeling 'different' or less relevant in any way.

For older children and young people team projects can develop a sense of shared experience and togetherness. Activities can focus on positive gains made.

¹³ A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster Rebecca Solnit 2009

Topics that can be used in discussion activities or using art and / or digital media include:

- **The role of the individual, family and community:** Thinking about how difference communities came together at this time. For example, #Viralkindness, COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK, Community Choirs, Clap for Carers, 5k for Heroes
- **Reflecting on what might have changed for the better:** For example, impact on the climate, opportunities to pursue a new interest, appreciation of loved ones.
- **Local heroes:** Family and friends who are carers or keyworkers, work for the NHS, leaders in the local community

Strategies and approaches that have really helped when things have felt tough, this could include mindfulness for example, or sharing stories about social activities that stand out for them. See Appendix 3 for Mindfulness Based Activities.

Sharing the creative ways that young people and families have expressed themselves during the lockdown period – by drawing, painting, writing or through music, drama, dance, Ti-Tok challenges etc

Craft & Talk and collaborative activities

This can work really well when groups of children with 2 adults come together to make something and chat during the activity. It's important to try and find times to relax and have fun even when scary or sad things have happened. In other words doing something that involves using fine motor skills (crafting) can help children who seem very restless or have lots of 'unspent' energy.

Betsy De Thiery (2017) also advocates a trauma informed approach stating:

Children and young people need emotional connection with adults and children where they feel safe, cared for and known. They need adults to regularly spend time speaking to them in ways that are not intense but are playful and also meaningful

Young Minds share a wide range of school-based resources on their website. See the following link for an activity suitable for primary and secondary students. It's a great way to get children thinking about the people around them who can support them.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/find-your-feet-identifying-support-networks-activity/>

Positive Memory in the palm of your hand

Draw around the child's hand and get them to write a positive memory for each of the 5 senses (1 per finger) to help them feel safe and calm wherever they are. See Appendix 3 for Positive Memory activity sheet.

Growing around grief (or a traumatic event) using a Grief Jar or class memory book

Children and young people can complete sentence strings about their experiences. Have more than one caring adult in the room to be available for additional support or work with small groups. See Appendix 4 for Growing Around Grief activity sheet.

The hardest thing for me was/is.....

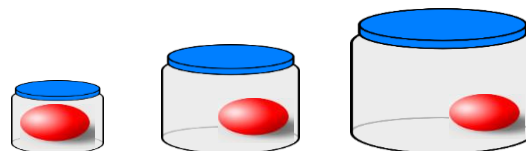
A challenge I have overcome.....

A new skill I have learned...

Right now I feel.....

What I hope for in the future.....

Things I have appreciated most about my family/friends....



Sharing experiences

Team projects can develop a sense of shared experience and togetherness. Relationships develop when individuals feel valued and respected (Mosely, 2014 when talking about Circle Time). Activities can focus on the positive gains made. Topics that can be used in discussions, digital media and projects may include:

- The **role of the individual, family and community**. Thinking about how different communities came together through this time. For example, #Viralkindness, COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK, Community Choirs, Clap for Carers, 5k for Heroes.
- **Reflecting on what might have changed for the better**. For example, impact on the climate, opportunities to pursue a new interest, appreciation of loved ones.
- **Local heroes** – family and friends who are carers or keyworkers, work for the NHS, leaders in the local community etc.
- **Strategies and approaches that have really helped** when things have felt tough, this could include mindfulness for example, or sharing stories about social activities that stand out for them.
- Sharing the **creative ways** that children, young people and families have expressed themselves over the lockdown period - by drawing, painting, writing, or through music, drama, dance, Tik-Tok challenges etc.

- **Writing to Heal** (Pennebaker) Research suggests that expressive writing can be a route to healing. Writing to Heal is an activity that involves people writing down deepest feelings about an emotional upheaval in their life for 15 to 20 minutes a day for four consecutive days. *See Appendix 6 for a Writing to Heal activity.*
- **WORDLES** can be helpful in allowing young people to explore the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing - using online tools, children can generate word clouds from the text that they input. The Wordle gives more prominence to words that appear more frequently in the inputted text.

Ways to Wellbeing activities.

Plan curriculum activities throughout the day/week linked to the 5 ways to wellbeing: [Connect](#), [Take Notice](#), [Keep Learning](#), [Keep Active](#) and [Give](#).



THUNKS on DEATH (Winston's Wish). Thinks are beguilingly simple questions developed by Winston's Wish with Independent Thinking 'that make your brain go ouch'. This set was designed to open up group discussion about grief, death and bereavement. [See Appendix 7](#)

WORDLES can be helpful in allowing young people to explore the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing - using online tools, children can generate word clouds from the text that they input. The Wordle gives more prominence to words that appear more frequently in the inputted text.



Calming activities

For example, approaches based on mindfulness such as Finger Breathing (.b materials – see Appendix 3 and 4)

Guidelines for supporting children and young people during these activities:

- Acknowledge losses, fears and other emotions when present.
- Provide reassurance that the thoughts, feelings and reactions are a normal part of recovering from the losses associated with the pandemic, even though they may be upsetting, and that they will lessen in intensity over time.
- Help children and young people to feel safe in their contributions.
- Celebrate strengths and progress.
- Have supportive and trusted adults available to help in case children and young people become overwhelmed by their feelings and reactions.
- Remind children and young people of their coping strategies through your genuine observations and knowledge of them.
- Focusing any discussions around group collaborative, practical activities or tasks can be helpful with additional adults to support.

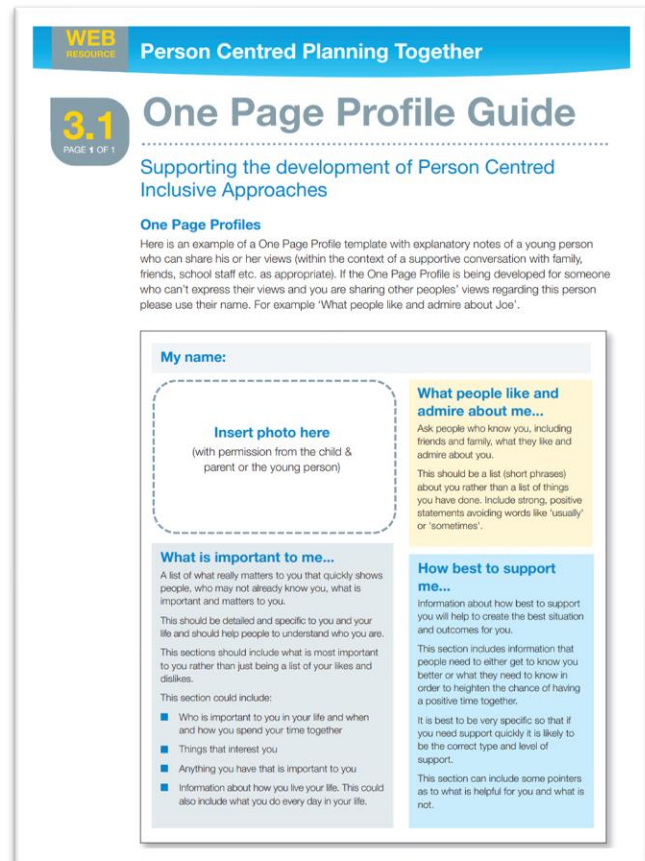


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: One Page Profile template

You can find out more about the use of and how to develop One Page Profiles in the Person Centred Planning Together Downloadable web resources.

This resource was written by Claire Darwin & colleagues from Inclusive Solutions (Newton & Wilson).



The image shows a 'One Page Profile Guide' template. At the top, it says 'WEB RESOURCE' and 'Person Centred Planning Together'. The title is 'One Page Profile Guide' with a sub-header 'Supporting the development of Person Centred Inclusive Approaches'. It is labeled '3.1 PAGE 1 OF 1'. The guide explains that it is an example of a One Page Profile template with explanatory notes for a young person. It includes a section for 'My name:' and a large box for 'Insert photo here (with permission from the child & parent or the young person)'. There are four main sections for information: 'What people like and admire about me...', 'What is important to me...', 'How best to support me...', and 'How best to support me...'. Each section has detailed instructions on what to include and how to write it.

WEB RESOURCE Person Centred Planning Together

3.1 PAGE 1 OF 1

One Page Profile Guide

Supporting the development of Person Centred Inclusive Approaches

One Page Profiles

Here is an example of a One Page Profile template with explanatory notes of a young person who can share his or her views (within the context of a supportive conversation with family, friends, school staff etc. as appropriate). If the One Page Profile is being developed for someone who can't express their views and you are sharing other peoples' views regarding this person please use their name. For example 'What people like and admire about Joe'.

My name:

Insert photo here
(with permission from the child & parent or the young person)

What people like and admire about me...
Ask people who know you, including friends and family, what they like and admire about you.
This should be a list (short phrases) about you rather than a list of things you have done. Include strong, positive statements avoiding words like 'usually' or 'sometimes'.

What is important to me...
A list of what really matters to you that quickly shows people, who may not already know you, what is important and matters to you.
This should be detailed and specific to you and your life and should help people to understand who you are.
This sections should include what is most important to you rather than just being a list of your likes and dislikes.
This section could include:
■ Who is important to you in your life and when and how you spend your time together
■ Things that interest you
■ Anything you have that is important to you
■ Information about how you live your life. This could also include what you do every day in your life.

How best to support me...
Information about how best to support you will help to create the best situation and outcomes for you.
This section includes information that people need to either get to know you better or what they need to know in order to heighten the chance of having a positive time together.
It is best to be very specific so that if you need support quickly it is likely to be the correct type and level of support.
This section can include some pointers as to what is helpful for you and what is not.

One-page profiles with children and young people

Lorraine Erwin and Helen Sanderson

This is also a useful guide outlining how one-page profiles can be used in schools (ref: Helen Sanderson & Associates).

If you would like to see examples of one-page profiles used in a variety of contexts [please click here](#)

ONE-PAGE PROFILE OF A CHILD IN SECONDARY SCHOOL - JORDAN



WHAT OTHERS LIKE AND ADMIRE ABOUT ME

- Kind and caring
- Good friend
- Good with children
- Determined
- Good morals
- A leader

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME

- Getting to know the school quickly
- Knowing where to go if I need help
- Having time to just be with friends and relax
- Access to a telephone when stressed
- Taking classes that are fun but also help me to work toward a career in child care
- Getting through compulsory courses
- Help with math when I need it
- Staying away from situations where I may be influenced to make poor choices
- That both of my parents are involved in my education
- I have a consistent person to go to for emotional, stress management
- Learning good study habits

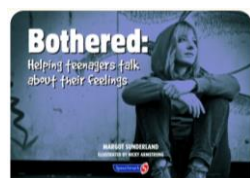
HOW BEST TO SUPPORT ME

- I don't like to ask for help; please offer it if you feel I need it
- After a visit to my dad's house, it takes me some time to get into the swing of things, be patient and offer your support
- If I get overwhelmed I tend to give up, please help me to stay on track
- I like to write stories or in my journal when I am frustrated or sad, sometimes I need the freedom to do this
- I like to be a leader but sometimes get caught up in the drama of a situation; I might need a motivational reminder
- In elementary schools I did not have a lot of homework or studying, I had mostly one on one due to small class size. This will be a huge adjustment to me, please support me developing good strategies
- Stress is not my friend. My anxiety raises and I need reassurance or comfort from someone I love or am comfortable with
- Public speaking makes me physically ill, my anxiety level rises until I am physically sick and cannot function. Please limit that where possible.

Appendix 2: Writing to Heal¹⁴ and supporting CYP with their emotions

<p>Dr. Pennebaker's Basic Writing Assignment</p> <p>Over the next four days, write about your deepest emotions and thoughts about the emotional upheaval that has been influencing your life the most. In your writing, really let go and explore the event and how it has affected you. You might tie this experience to your childhood, your relationship with your parents, people you have loved or love now, or even your career. Write continuously for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>Tips for Writing to Heal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find a time and place where you won't be disturbed• Write continuously for at least 20 minutes• Don't worry about spelling or grammar• Write only for yourself• Write about something extremely personal and important for you• Deal only with events or situations you can handle now	<p>"People who engage in expressive writing report feeling happier and less negative than before writing. Similarly, reports of depressive symptoms, rumination, and general anxiety tend to drop in the weeks and months after writing about emotional upheavals."</p> <p>From "Writing to Heal" by James W. Pennebaker</p>
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[Dr. Margot Sunderland](#) has developed a wide range of resources and books aimed at supporting children to deal more effectively with their emotions in everyday life. [Draw on your emotions](#) is specifically designed to ease the process of talking about feelings and [Bothered](#) aims to empower people to have thoughtful, reflective conversations with teenagers about their life experiences. These books are underpinned by research, psychology and neuroscience in adolescent development.



If you are undertaking this type of activity, consider how this type of work can allow emotions to surface as well as the needs of the young person after the activity should they need any support.

Also, to note: if the young person does want to share their story with others it could be an emotional experience for others hearing the story. So, you may want to consider putting a plan in place for this type of scenario.

¹⁴ Reference Vive Griffith Children and War Foundation Childrenandwar.org.uk

Appendix 3: Mindfulness Based Activities

There are many simple yet effective calming down / mindful activities that you can do just with your hands.

See one of our Inclusion Facilitator team colleagues demonstrate these activities on the SCC YouTube Channel

Hand breathing	Finger tapping	5 things we are grateful for
5-minute mindfulness	How to use your hands when visualizing thoughts and feelings	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSYjpjLYlh8



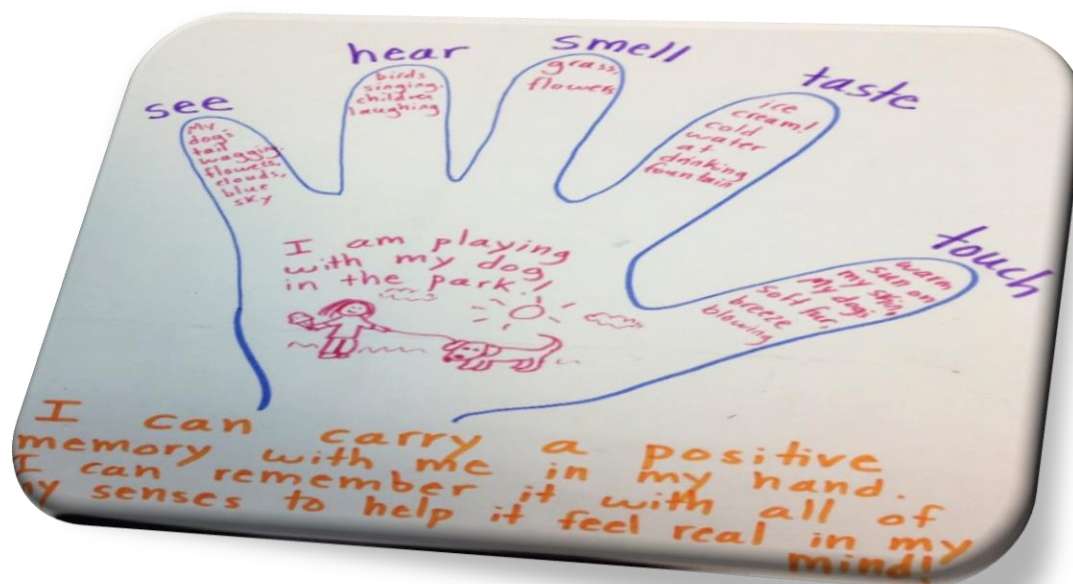
Carrying a positive sense of calm in the palm of your hand

This intervention is powerful to use with children and young people of all ages.

It has been tweaked a bit to make sure all the senses were included. This helps make it a more integrated experience and truly helps the brain and body more fully relate to the sense of calm and happiness from the memory.

1. First have the child or young person trace their hand on a sheet of paper.
2. They then think of a positive memory that would help them feel safe and calm to remember even in the midst of stressful and triggering situations.
3. Write each of the five senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling) on each of the five fingers.
4. The young person or adult with them will draw and / or write about the memory in the palm of the hand.
5. Encourage the individual to identify how the memory is experienced using each of the five senses on each finger and write or draw a picture for each.
6. Last but not least talk about how thinking of this memory can help the person feel a sense of safety and inner calmness despite outer life circumstances.

<https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com/>

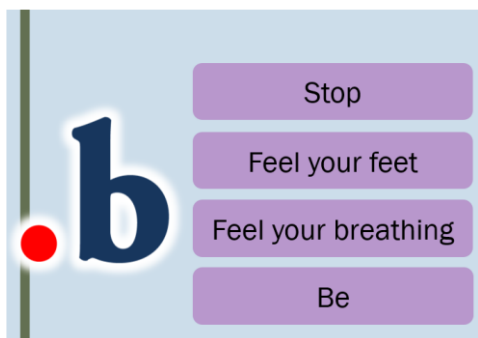


Appendix 4: Mindfulness Programmes in Schools

In Suffolk, the P&TS deliver several Mindfulness programmes.

For example:

- Mindfulness for 11 - 18 year olds (.b) <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/teach-b-foundations/>
- A introduction to Mindfulness for 9 to 14 year olds that can be taught in the classroom as part of the PSHE curriculum in Years 5 - 9 (.breathe) <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/breathe/>



.breathe offers an opportunity for both the teacher and students to 'dip their toes in mindfulness', exploring the ways in which this might support them through the highs and lows of adolescent life.

In particular, .breathe explores issues around:

- Working with the capacity of attention; exploring how we can work with a wandering mind.
- Why humans worry, and how to support ourselves when we do so.
- Sleep – why it is important and what to do if we struggle to sleep well.
- Being with others – the opportunities and challenges of working skillfully with friendships and other relationships, both in person and online

Sessions are designed to last between 40 minutes and one hour, to be delivered once a week for four weeks; **for example**, during the period leading up to the end of the final term in primary school or the first term at secondary school.

Each session includes:

- Exploration of the function and structure of key areas of the brain involved in daily experience
- Introductory mindfulness practices
- Animations
- Discussions
- Exercises they can try in their own time



For more information or to find out about how you **could use the .breathe** programme in your school, please contact:
Megan Smith, Senior Educational Psychologist

megan.smith@suffolk.gov.uk
[01473 265612](tel:01473265612) or [07894 599484](tel:07894599484)

During the day, there may not be time to do a lengthy meditation exercise.

Instead, it is possible to do a brief .b to freshen your awareness, change mental gear, and wake up to exactly what's going on in the moment.

Doing a .b is a quick way to help your brain change mode – from being busy and thinking and doing to sensing / and being. The basics of mindfulness are summed up in this practice. Shifting mode, or changing the gear of the mind is the “Core Skill” of mindfulness.

Doing a “.b” is the way to achieve this. .b is a portable 4-step exercise which goes like this:

1. **STOP** whatever you're doing, maybe noticing you've been in autopilot.
2. **FEEL YOUR FEET** on the ground. Let this ground/anchor you.
3. **FEEL THE SENSATIONS OF BREATHING** as it moves through your body.
4. **Practise BEING** – relaxing into the present moment, BEING HERE NOW!

Very easy one to do with students- in the moment- if they are especially anxious or upset. Anchoring and calming.

Appendix 5: Emotion Coaching

Emotion coaching builds a power base that is an emotional bond – this creates a safe haven, a place of trust, a place of respect, a place of acceptance, a sense of self. This in turn leads to children and young people giving back respect and acceptance of boundaries' (Rose & Gus, 2017).¹⁶

Emotion Coaching tools can be a quick and easy way to support students in developing emotional regulation strategies, where they begin to make explicit links between their thoughts and feelings and how they are behaving. This approach is based on key attachment concepts, such as the importance of connection.

The following principles are central to Emotion Coaching:

All emotions are natural and normal, and not always a matter of choice

Behaviour is a form of communication

Emotional 'first aid' (calming, soothing) is needed first: 'connect before re-direct' (Siegel, 2013), 'Rapport before reason' (Riley, 2009)

Children cannot successfully self-regulate their emotions unless they have experienced and internalised co-regulation i.e. an adult tuning in/empathising with their emotional state and thus 'containing' - sharing, supporting and carrying- their emotional state.

What Emotion Coaching means in practice (how co-regulation works)

Step 1: **Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm** ('I understand how you feel, you're not alone')

Step 2: **Validating the feelings and labelling** ('This is what is happening, this is what you're feeling')

Step 3 (if needed): **Setting limits on behaviour** ('We can't always get what we want')

Step 4: **Problem-solving with the child/young person** ('We can sort this out')

You can find out more about Emotion Coaching and our services to support emotional well-being [here](#)

Appendix 6: THUNKS on Death

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>

<https://www.winstonswish.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Winstons-Wish-thunks.pdf>

THUNKS ON DEATH

Introduction

Thunks™ are 'beguilingly simple-looking questions' that make your brain go ouch. They grew out of educator and writer Ian Gilbert's work on Philosophy for Children and have proved incredibly popular with teachers around the world as a quick and easy tool for getting children and young people's brains to hurt. This particular set, a collaboration between Winston's Wish and Independent Thinking, is specifically designed to open up thinking and discussion around the topics of death, grief and bereavement.

Instructions

The only Golden Rule when it comes to Thunks is that there are no 'right' answers. Their purpose is to encourage thought, debate, argument and philosophical reflection as well as practising speaking and listening skills. From working on a single Thunk as an entire class to having one each, one between two or working in smaller 'communities of enquiry', from using them as lessons starters to building whole lessons around a single Thunk, teachers have used them in many, many ways with children of all ages and academic backgrounds. Good luck!

Winston's Wish is a Registered Charity (England and Wales) 1061359, (Scotland) SC041140 | 0308

WINSTON'S WISH
Giving hope to grieving children

independent thinking

Is being alive a choice?	If every time you laughed, it knocked a minute off your life, would you stop laughing?
Is it better to die suddenly than be given a month to live?	Is it ever cruel to save a life?
Can you choose not to be sad?	Do you love a family member less after they've died?

Should we be made to live longer if we can?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Should you live each life as if it were your last?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Can you love someone who's not around?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Do all your family members have to be alive to be part of your family?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Is anything worth dying for?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Does grief hurt?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

If you dream of someone who has died, are you dreaming of their ghost?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Does a child know what death is?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

If you could live forever, would you want to?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Can death ever be happy?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Is losing a loved one harder the older they are?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Do you die when the last person who remembers you dies?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

**Can you love someone you
can't see?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is it really better to have
loved and lost than not have
loved at all?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Do you still own the things
you've lost forever?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Can you choose to be happy?

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is quantity more important
than quality when it comes to
your life?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Are funerals always sad?

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Are you a different person
once both your parents die?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is it an act of love to let
someone you love die
before you?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**If you put the brain of someone
who has died into a robot, have you
brought that person back to life?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Is a funeral a party?

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Should your online profile be
deleted as soon as you die?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**If someone is being kept
alive, are they living?**

independent
thinking 

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Appendix 7: Growing Around Grief activity for small groups or whole class



Loss and Bereavement

THE JAR MODEL

Choice and Control

Sharing Ordinary Places

Being Someone

Contribution

Belonging

Why?

One way to think about grief is using the jar model. The Jar represents the life and the ball is grief. In the beginning the grief may fill nearly all aspects of life, it may be hard to eat, sleep, think. As time passes life starts to grow around the grief. The grief is always there and stays the same size but there is more room for new experiences and other things to grow around it.



How to use it:

When you are ready to. Start with the smallest jar, colour, draw write in the ball how your grief feels.

In the jar think about the life that is growing around it, colour, draw, write about the thing that are able to grow around it, have you had feelings of hope, new experiences, new sensations?

When you feel ready, this could be in a few weeks or months or even a year, choose the next jar, notice that the ball is the same size, but the jar is bigger, there is more space around the ball to fill with growth and life that have been able to fill your jar.

When you are ready, once again choose the next size jar, notice that the ball is the same size, but the jar is bigger, there is more space around the ball to fill with growth and life that have been able to fill your jar.

Maybe you can put them together, create a picture to remind you that your grief has not grown small, it will still be there, but the space around it has expanded you are able to fill the space with colour, new experiences, feelings that in the beginning you may not have been able to feel. Take a moment to reflect on what you have created.

Be kind to yourself, do not rush to fill your jars, everyone experiences grief in their own unique way so allow it to happen only when you are ready.

*For more information about how we could work with you please contact:
IF@suffolk.gov.uk*



Suffolk
County Council

Loss and Bereavement – The Jar Model



For more information about how we could work with you please contact:
IF@suffolk.gov.uk



Equipment for activity adapted from the jar model by the Bi-borough EP Service:

- Three different size jars, small, medium and large.
- One ping pong ball.
- Plus one large jar per child or one very large jar for the group/class to use.
- Lots of strips of coloured paper with coping or restorative questions such as.

A challenge I have overcome.....

A new skill I have learned.....

A kindness I have appreciated....

A time when I had fun.....

Someone who has helped me.....

Activity

- Place the ping pong ball in the small jar.

Talk about the ball representing grief or sadness after something terrible has happened and the jar representing someone's life.

Ask the children what they notice?

It feels as if the sadness almost entirely fills our lives for a long time after a tragic event and there isn't much space for anything else.

Children are invited to share their ideas/thoughts at any stage during the activity. Reassure them that there are no right or wrong answers.

- Move the ping pong ball to the medium size jar.

Ask what do you notice now?

Time has passed. The grief and sadness have not gone away or got smaller but our life has started to grow around it. Gradually we start to create space for new and different memories alongside the sad memories.

Use the strips of paper with coping or restorative questions on to help children to reflect on what these new and different memories might be.

- Move the ping pong ball to the largest jar.

More time has passed since the tragic event. The grief and sadness have still not gone away but our life has continued to grow around it. Maybe new skills have been learned, new people may have come into our life, new experiences, new places visited.

Ask the children to write or draw on the coloured strips of paper and place into their individual jar or the group/class jar alongside the ping pong ball. The jar can be added to weekly with new and different memories.

Appendix 8: An Introduction to MAPs

Making Action Plans or Mapping Alternative Pathways

MAPs is a person centred, creative, futures planning tool that can be used to facilitate an organisation in thinking around a challenge or issue.¹⁵

MAPs uses both process and graphic facilitation to create a shared vision of a positive future and to make a start on working out what the group need to do together to move towards that vision. The MAPs session will be led by two trained facilitators – a process facilitator who guides people through the stages and ensures that the focus person is at the centre throughout, and a graphic facilitator who creates a large graphic record of each of the steps in the MAP.

WEB RESOURCE Person Centred Planning Together

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MAP outline An introduction to MAP continued

1 Listening to the story so far

Start with the person – what story do they tell?
Allow time for the person and those that know them to describe what has happened in the past. It can help make sense of the present. Go back as far as possible to get the long view (happy and sad). Bring in all members of the group to talk about when they became part of the person's life. The graphic facilitator summarises the 'story so far'. Talk about making a choice about what you take into the future. You can use the 'chains of the past here' and throw them away.

2 Gathering dreams

Imagine the future if everything is on track?
Ask the person (or team) to talk about their dreams for the future.
Guide everyone to think about people, places and activities in the future – what would you love to see happening and how would it feel if you could have it all?
Involve the group after the focus person has shared their dreams. Respect their

words and images. Start with the person/people in the group who love the person the most and move onto the professionals. Always check back with the focus person. Never judge or analyse. The dream guides and gives direction to the rest of the process.
Graphic facilitator says what they have noticed. Process facilitator asks the group what they notice about the dream. What do they notice is happening in the room?



3 Sharing nightmares

A very brief 5 minutes on naming the nightmares.
This helps give the group something to push away from. It is useful to allow people to have fears acknowledged. It may become clear that people are living the nightmare now. It's like naming the 'elephant in the room' although do not discuss any of this – just name it and record it and then move on to the next step.

8 Action Planning/ First Steps

The facilitation has to be clear and assertive in these steps ensuring that the group are being very clear about who is doing what and when.
Name specific actions that will take place over the next 7 – 10 days.
First Steps: Ask the person to name 1 or 2 first small steps that they will take in the next 5 days.
Set a review date: Agree a follow up meeting e.g. 6 months time.

7 Asking what will it take?/What do we need?

Help the group to think about what they will need to move towards the dream and away from the nightmare. List the needs or what it will take – be realistic.
Graphic facilitator recap for the group to hear. It helps inform action planning.
Be careful! this does not become a list of medical model needs for the person (e.g. 10 hours Teaching Assistant time).
Remind people that this is the work of the team. What can the wider team do individually or collectively to propel the person towards the dream, making use of the capacity named earlier.
Offers can be collected and refined here as well as helping the group be really clear what it will take for real progress to a better life.

6 Sharing gifts

Ask the person when they are at their best. OR the team when it is functioning at its best.
What draws them to the person?
List their gifts, strengths, interests and talents.
This looks for positive things that can then be built on in the action plan.
When working with a team you can regroup and take their views one at a time – writing it up as a spiral on the graphic. You can create a relaxing atmosphere by playing gentle music.

5 Who is the person? Exploring Identity

Ask for words (or analogies or metaphors) that people think of when they think of the person (or team/service). Words which sum up their character.
She's like the sun shining through on a sunny day. This can be very affirming.
You can run this section using Post it notes. Ask people to write for themselves and then share them to the group and come and stick the Post it notes up on the MAP.

4 Value Bricks

Listen out for core values while people talk about the dream and write them in bricks at the bottom right hand side of the graphic.
The graphic facilitator can summarise these after the dream and nightmare sections.

The Psychology & Therapeutic Services are highly skilled in this way of working

We can support the delivery of Person Centred Planning processes such as MAP¹⁶.

This process can be really helpful in supporting transition and recovery.

“There are times when life's changes call for new responses and it is good to re-tell and focus people's stories in order to affirm their gifts, clarify what is necessary for those gifts to be well received, and make action agreements that will lead to better opportunities.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Developed by Forest, Pearpoint and O'Brien in 1980s

¹⁶ [More information about the MAP process](#)

¹⁷ O'Brien, Pearpoint and Kahn, 2010

Appendix 9: PATH – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

PATH is a very positive process aimed at supporting a person centred transition.

Please click on this link on the Suffolk County Council YouTube channel for an explanation of how PATH can help at times of transition <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyyW737tINk>

It is forward looking and allows time for visioning and goal setting whilst also ensuring the drawing together of a support network. It can be used for planning with individuals and organisations.

We will be placing these resources linked to this way of working on the Suffolk County Council webpages www.suffolk.gov.uk/PTS and www.suffolk.gov.uk/IF. These pages are due to go live any day now.

Path is a way for diverse people, who share a common problem or situation to align ... their purposes ... their understanding of their situation and its possibilities for hopeful action ... their action for change, mutual support, personal and team development and learning." Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest (1992)

PATH works well when an individual has a group of people around him/her who are committed to making things happen. The PATH process enables people to understand and take control of the situation.

PATH can be used when a situation is complex and will require concerted action, engaging other people and resources, over a longish period in order to make an important vision real. Pearpoint J, O'Brien J and Forest M, 'PATH: A workbook for planning positive, possible futures' Toronto Inclusion Press. www.inclusive-solutions.com/pcplanning.as



PATH can be a very powerful method of encouraging focused listening, creative thinking and alliance building

WEB
RESOURCE

Person Centred Planning Together

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PATH Outline An introduction to PATH continued

PATH is forward looking / establishes vision and goals / ensures enrolment and is very positive



When to use PATH

Experience and research show that PATH can make a **significant impact** to the lives of people when used imaginatively and with a commitment to person-centredness.

Used well, with enthusiasm and commitment, this tool can be an excellent way of planning with people of all ages who might otherwise find it difficult to plan their lives, or who feel that other people and services are planning their lives for them.

Person centred thinking and planning is founded on the premise that genuine listening contains an implied promise to take action. Unless what is learned about how the person wishes to live, and where they wish to go in their lives is recorded and **acted upon**, any planning will have been a waste of time, and more importantly a betrayal of the person and the trust they have placed in those who have planned with them. This is very relevant if the PATH has been used with a young person. Ongoing reviews **MUST** be set up so that follow up action can be checked and supported as necessary.



Appendix 10: Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants in Suffolk

ELSA is an educational psychology led intervention for promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

ELSAs are emotional literacy support assistants working in schools. They are generally Teaching Assistants, pastoral support workers, family liaison workers.

The ELSA project is an initiative designed to help schools meet the needs of emotionally vulnerable pupils. Educational psychologists apply psychological knowledge of children's social and emotional development to particular areas of need and work closely with the team of ELSAs across Suffolk.

The training has a national network (www.elsanetwork.org). ELSAs are provided with regular supervision from a psychologist to develop their understanding, skills and practice.



Since the first training in 2016 the Suffolk Psychology & Therapeutic Service Educational Psychologist (EP) Team have trained 150 Suffolk ELSAs in 93 schools. There are currently 101 'active' ELSAs across 70 schools receiving supervision and support from our EPs.

The work of the ELSAs will be vital when supporting children and young people particularly at the time when schools return e.g. helping to support through times of change / transition. We are sharing a regular ELSA bulletin via our Suffolk ELSA network.

ELSAs:

- help children recognise, understand and manage emotions to increase success;
- plan and deliver individual (and small group) support programmes;
- receive training and supervision from educational psychologists;

- plan and deliver programmes of support to children identified within school as likely to benefit from additional help to increase their emotional literacy. Programmes would normally last between half to one term, and occasionally a little longer;
- support children and young people to recognise and manage their emotions, raise their self-esteem, improve peer relationships, recover from significant loss or bereavement, and resolve conflict effectively.

Most of the support is individual and builds on the relationship of trust that is developed between pupil and ELSA. Some skills will be enhanced through small group work, particularly social and friendship skills (although some children will need individual support first).

Please see the ELSA Support site for free resources for teaching staff and parents to help children cope with the current viral outbreak.

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/coronavirus-support/>

There are several useful ELSA resources on loss and separation:

- <https://www.elsanetwork.org/resources/free-resources/>
- <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/downloads/category/elsa-resources/bereavementandloss/>

Please see that ELSA support have also created a back to school book for those children returning to school.

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Coronavirus-back-to-school.pdf>

We will be in touch about how we hope to enhance our offer to the Suffolk ELSA network during the 'recovery / transition back to school' phase of this pandemic.

At present our yearly **ELSA conference** has been postponed and will now take place on Tuesday 26 January 2021.

The next planned **ELSA training** will be taking place from 4th February 2021 and is available to book on Suffolk CPD Online.

If you would like to talk in more detail about the ELSA Programme please contact megan.smith@suffolk.gov.uk

Appendix 11: The NSFT Psychology in Schools Project

A project team of Norfolk & Suffolk foundation Trust (NSFT) colleagues, including clinical psychologists, have put together a back to school support package in collaboration with the West Suffolk secondary schools that they are working in.

The support pack includes:

- Back to school assembly for students
- Welcome back guideline for staff
- Leadership Team briefing document

THIS IS NORMAL

- We will have lots of different feelings
- Experiencing stress in a crisis means we're human!
- It's okay to not be okay
- The best way to manage uncomfortable feelings is to notice them and express them



NSFT PSYCHOLOGY IN SCHOOLS PROJECT (B Mosley, S St Ledger, T Scully, L Brindle, H Westgate & A Woods) and co-produced with participating schools

[Download the support pack](#)

Appendix 12: Creating an Action Plan

Steps / strategies to consider:

- **Communicate** with young person and family and **prepare** them for what their new context will be like upon their return and why it will be this way (e.g. less people). Some young people will benefit from visits to school to gain confidence in the layout, to hear about the routines and to meet staff.
- Provide **time for preparation** for change and for young person to **ask questions**. Re-orientate with each other, the environment and with new expectations and routines. Be very clear about current priorities and where the focus is in terms of safety, well-being, relationships, boundaries and routine – the learning can then follow.
- **Consider how anxieties and expectations will be managed** and contained by the senior leadership team to staff and staff to young people, parents / carers
- Undertake **Risk assessments** in order to ascertain level of support required (consideration to protective as well as risk factors)
- **Co-produce a transition plan** with clear outline of nature of support and staff involved. It may be that children (e.g. those with additional needs or who are particularly anxious) will need the opportunity to bring **transitional objects** to school to support them with anxiety around separation from home / people at home. One issue to consider here is the health and safety element in terms of the type of transitional object young people may want to bring in. e.g. a child or young person with additional needs may want to bring a cloth or soft toy. It will be important to work with families in this context in order to come up with a plan. There will also need to be system for accessing these items as and when appropriate. Or perhaps consider a 'virtual' transitional object e.g. a picture that means something to the young person, that they can keep with them and look at when needed. Consider those with anxiety issues and allow for a gradual build up of time integrating into their new setting or back into their previous one
- Monitor how young people are feeling (feelings ratings check). Ensure there is **time to check in** – opportunity to express feelings. **Young people may be anxious about health and safety therefore be clear about hygiene routines**
- Provide **opportunity for emotional support** – stay physically distant but emotionally close whilst building up sense of belonging
- **Adopt a relational approach to behaviour**. Time for reflection and to promote kindness
- Communication will all involved re the clear plan around the '**welcome**' back and / or to new school and the support plan available
- Named key adult (with time spent on building working **relationship** and **sense of safety**) supporting young for young person to access them if necessary

- Set up a system for **sharing strengths**, things that you have learnt and things that go well as well as support needs and activities to promote hope for the future
- Consider role of **peer support** in this context
- Provide **time** to talk and **space** to show how they are feeling
- **Refer to the resources available from the Local Authority** including a wide range of support materials from the Specialist Education Services and Psychology & Therapeutic Services in order to plan for children and young people. There is also additional advice and support for children with additional needs. This information can be found [here](#) on the Local Offer and Suffolk Learning website.

Appendix 13: Additional resources including an example timetable for a secondary school

Close communication with families / carers will be essential. We have close links with parent carer networks and have co-produced a range of resources with **Suffolk Parent Carer Network** that will also be useful for education setting staff to consider.



The [DFE](https://www.dfe.gov.uk) website outlines all the latest guidance available to support education settings during this time. SCC teams are also sharing resources on our webpages as previously noted.

Additional resources include those shared by Beacon House (Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team) at

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/>

Transitions

Vulnerable children will be feeling deeply frightened by the end and the start of the school year. The change of routine and the inevitable losses and separations bring back old feelings of abandonment and threat. It's a challenging time for everyone - children and adults alike!

Here are some of our favourite transition top tips for parents/carers and for teachers:

- It's useful for adults to emotionally prepare themselves for the 'transition storm' that is about to begin. Put your seatbelt on and hold tight! The child needs you to be grounded.
- Remind yourself that the child's behaviour is a sign of their inside pain, and they need you to see through the behaviour to help them feel safe, secure and loved.
- Digging down past behaviours to the inside pain, can be hard and tiring work. Take good care of yourself and reach out to your support network for extra help.
- Remind yourself that punishments, withdrawal, consequences and shaming will make the transition harder for everyone.

Help the child to see the storm coming too. Say "The end of the school year can be a tricky. I'm here to help you through it".

- Help the child name the feelings that they have no words for. Try "I wonder if your 'moving up day' feels pretty scary right now?" or "When things are different like this, I wonder if it makes you worry about being left behind?"
- Help make connections between their behaviour and their feelings, try "When you run away like that it makes me wonder if you don't know where to be to feel safe? You are safe right here?"

Be crystal clear. Tell the child the things they need to hear, don't wait for them to ask you because they don't know what they need. **Tell them:**

- How much you care
- That you are not going anywhere
- That they are in your mind even when not in your class/room at home
- That they are safe and protected
- That they will not be taken away

- Tell them what is going to happen that day if the routine is different - use pictures and 'steps' to prepare them.
- Remind them throughout the day what is going to happen and when
- Keep to as much of the usual routine as you can

Children feel fear in their body. Help the child's body to calm by:

- Doing short bursts of physical activity (star jumps, wall push-ups, walking, running) frequently
- Playfully ask them to breathe deeply in the mornings and evenings - e.g. Slow bubbles, blow away the feelings.
- Do body calming activities with them.
- Use sensitive touch to let them know you are there. Touch can be a great calmer.

Stay connected. Use 'transitional objects' to let them know that you are connected, even when apart. How about:

- As a parent, draw a little heart on your hand and the same heart on your child's hand as they go off to school.
- Give your child a special stone, or photo to hold on to at school that reminds them of you
- Teachers - give the child a 'transition card' - a piece of paper with a special message that they look after until you see them again.
- Let the child use their special bubbles whenever they need to.

Remind the child (and yourself) that the Transition Storm will come, and it will go. You will stick it out together, and soon it will be over.

Beacon House
www.beaconhouse.org.uk
Follow us: @BeaconHouseTeam

Brighton & Hove also published the following guidance [Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy](#) which usefully outlines a relationship based approach to inclusion.

Here is an example timetable that shows you the connection with a trauma informed approach that considers the elements mentioned within this document e.g. relate, regulate and reason.

Initial Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) focused daily timetable example:

Timetable

Registration	Check ins 1. Circle Time/Community Circle 2. Physical activity/Structure – up regulate and finish using down regulate 3. Fun connections through eye contact and games - relate Stress Bucket Activity – reason
Lesson 1	
Lesson 2	
Lesson 3	
Lesson 4	
Lesson 5 (last lesson)	How is your stress bucket now? Circle Time/Community Circle

Lesson Structure so that pupils **Regulate/Relate** and then **Reason** every lesson

Starter	4. Physical activity/Structure – up regulate and finish using down regulate 5. Fun connections through eye contact and games - relate
Input	Introduction to lesson activity
Lesson Activity	Practical, fun and engaging Keep challenge to a minimum to start with – remember to gauge tolerance levels and match accordingly
Activity Blast	Physical activity – upregulate and down regulate
Lesson Activity	As above
Plenary	Review of Lesson activity Fun connection activities – see TIAs throughout document

Upregulate – activities that increase energy levels
Down regulate – activities that calm

Have different activities available and appropriate for different levels of engagement ie some may be more academic than others, some CYP will have been studying at home, others will not. Therefore, some need to be eased into the routines of learning.

REMEMBER: REGULATE – RELATE – REASON = RECOVERY

Written by Georgie Zacharzewski and Sue Salisbury with The Jigsaw Service.

Contributions from: The Educational Psychology Service; the ASD Advisory Service; the Academy of Central Bedfordshire; School Improvement Team

References

Coronavirus related support for educational settings shared by the Specialist Education and Psychology & Therapeutic Services – [see message from these services here](#)

If you would like to watch a presentation about returning to school you may find [the YouTube video](#) valuable.

We have been asked by several schools about having a school bereavement policy or charter. Here are some links that you may want to refer to when considering how this fits in with your overall school relationships policy and practice.

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-schools/school-bereavement-policy>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/developing-a-bereavement-policy>

- Managing unexpected endings and transition: [A practical guide to support pupils and students to manage change during periods of disruption](#)
- WINSTON'S WISH Coronavirus related Bereavement materials for schools: How schools can support children and young people; How to tell a child or young person that someone has died from coronavirus; How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible
<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-schools-support-children-young-people/>
- GRIEF ENCOUNTER - Support for bereaved children and their families: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/> and CRUSE: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>
- TEEN BREATHE – monthly mindfulness magazine available from newsagents and supermarkets.
- WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. Marge Heegaard Woodland Press. For younger children up to 11 years.
- WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS: Children can learn to cope with grief (Drawing out Feelings. 'One Education' Education Psychology Team. For older children and young people.

