

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

Nursery & Primary Settings



May 2020

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



Contents

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN RETURNING TO EDUCATION SETTINGS.....	4
What can staff do to help themselves?	5
Look after your own emotional needs	6
Before we can help others, we need to help ourselves	6
Managing your own stress.....	7
What might be helpful during the transition period?	7
Psychological First Aid	8
What can staff do to help each other?	8
Recognising the impact of thoughts & feelings on behaviour - An Attachment Aware Approach.....	9
What do adults need to be aware of?	9
Considerations for implementing an Attachment Aware Approach	10
RETURNING OR STARTING AT NEW EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS.....	12
The importance of welcome.....	12
Tips for creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom	14
Create a safe classroom and educational environment.....	14
Help children to regulate their emotions so that they can learn.....	14
Believe that the child can achieve academic success	15
Restore a sense of control and personal efficacy	16
Build strengths and capacity.....	16
Character Strengths	17
Understand the connection between emotion and behaviour	17
Emotion Coaching	18
Be hopeful and optimistic.....	19
Engagement, social connection & trusting relationships that are built on respect & positive regard.....	20
ACTIVITIES PROMOTING CONNECTEDNESS AND RESILIENCE	21

Reading Well - Books on Prescription!	21
Collaborative group or class activity.....	22
People who care for me.....	22
Positive Memory in the palm of your hand.....	22
Growing around grief (or a traumatic event) using a Grief Jar or class memory book	23
Craft & Talk activities	23
Ways to Wellbeing activities	24
Calming activities	24
Older Children sharing experiences	24
Guidelines for supporting children during these activities:	25
APPENDICES	26
Appendix 1: One Page Profile template	26
Appendix 2: Tree of Life and ‘Draw on Your Emotions’	28
Appendix 3: Supporting children with activities that help them remain calm	29
Appendix 4: Growing Around Grief activity for small groups or whole class	31
Appendix 5: Tummy Buddies	34
Appendix 6: Writing to Heal	35
Appendix 7: An Introduction to MAPs.....	36
Appendix 8: PATH – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope	37
Appendix 9: Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA).....	38
Appendix 10: Mindfulness in Educational Settings	40
Appendix 11: Creating an Action Plan	41
Appendix 12: Additional resources including an example timetable for a primary school ..	43

Thanks to our 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 http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/do_download.asp?did=18871

Claire Darwin: Principal Educational & Child Psychologist
Suffolk County Council: Psychology & Therapeutic Services

Claire.darwin@suffolk.gov.uk

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN RETURNING TO EDUCATION SETTINGS^{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 are not 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.

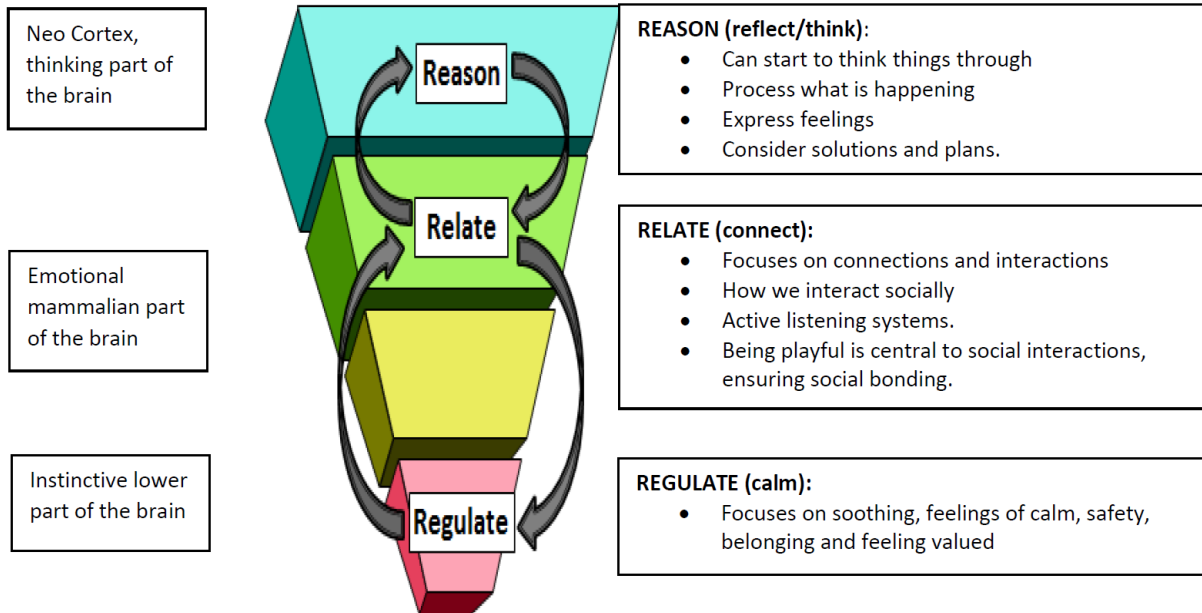
Our recommendation is that you take a trauma informed approach to recovery in order to support children to re-settle to learn and overcome challenges that they have and may still be facing (Ref: Louise Bomber, April 2020). Ideas shared in this booklet are aimed to support people during the return into 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

³ Illustration from *My Hero is You*. A book written for children around the world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. IASC, 2020.

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 staff do to help themselves?⁴

Knowing your children is what makes your setting a place that the community will turn to as a key support for children, and in whom the community is placing their trust to aid children in their recovery. It is a big responsibility, especially when we acknowledge that many adults in your 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.

However, we also know that resilience research frequently cites teachers as trusted significant adults and positive role models for children. Staff in educational settings 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.

⁴ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

Now is the time that the work you have done previously with the children in your class (and education setting) that this will contribute towards helping 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"⁵

Look after your own emotional needs

Many of you within the nursery or school community could be experiencing a similar range of reactions and feelings in response to the pandemic and lockdown period as the children 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 know that we can survive adversity. Children often haven't yet learnt through experience that they too have these coping capacities.

Working with children 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 adults to feel some of the anxiety, helplessness and anger that their children feel.

Before we can help others, we need to help ourselves

As staff in educational settings we need to be seen to be practicing what we are encouraging children to do. Congruence between our actions and our expectations is vital for trusting relationships. During the transition 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.

⁵ Marge Heegaard (1991) 'When Something Terrible Happens' Woodland Press.

Managing your own stress⁶

Try to

- Take time out to get sufficient sleep, 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, if possible, try to plan for the challenges that you are aware will be difficult for you
- 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. Give yourself time for hobbies and interests

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 at a period of time
- Isolating yourself from those you trust and feel safe around



What might be helpful during the transition period?

- Think about having a buddy in your workplace, 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.

⁶ Adapted from Advice from NHS Guidance for Coping with Stress Following a Major Incident

Psychological First Aid

What can staff do to help each other?⁷

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.

⁷ 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 Approach⁸

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 who are vulnerable and may have experienced lockdown as a frightening and distressing time. We know that consistent boundaries help children 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, 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, 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 children who have experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma or bereavement as a result of the pandemic. Children 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 might display observable and active 'acting out' behaviours that communicate a clear emotional need. **It is important to consider what the child may be trying to communicate – but does not have the words for.** Other children 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 a child acts in a way that hurts or frightens others. Some groups to be especially aware of are children:

- 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.
- who are in Care, Children in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan.

⁸ 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 came under Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker status who may have previous experiences of trauma.

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

Considerations for implementing an Attachment Aware Approach⁹

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 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 on their way into school can really add to their sense of belonging</i>
Don't expect immediate results or returns	<i>A child might be dismissive of you but this does not mean that your actions weren't valued</i>
Expect sabotage from some children and name it, where appropriate	<i>'Name it to tame it'. Dan Siegel¹⁰</i>

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

⁹ Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools.

¹⁰ Adapted from Sarah Ahmed 2017 Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools. ¹⁰ The Whole-Brain Child 2011 Siegel and Bryson

What might help?

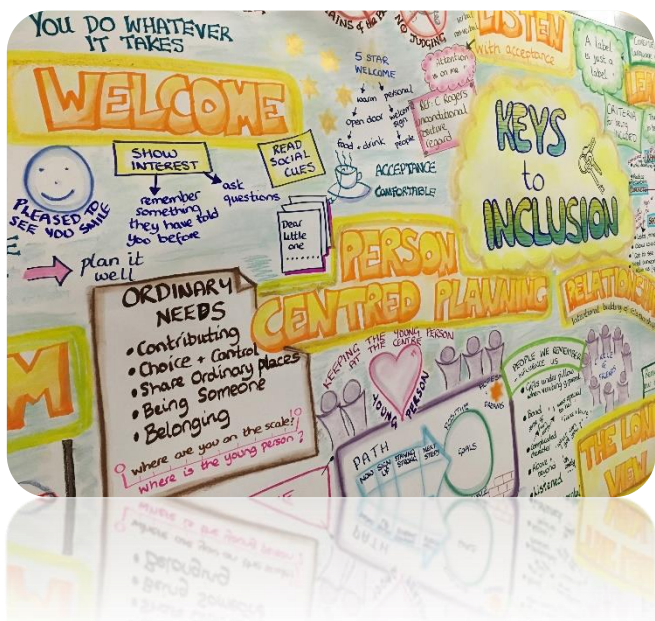
- The general principle of providing a safe environment, high in nurture and structure, with adults responding in a consistent manner, maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour is still important, most particularly, when other areas of a child's life may not feel as structured. This consistency is containing for children.
- Trust your instincts in knowing when ignoring low level behaviour is needed. Reflecting on whether the child 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 children.
- Discuss the relationship between behaviour, thoughts and feelings with children, 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 children 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 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 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 we have not met before. This could be something that you consider if you have not met some of the children you will be working with.

You may want to suggest that children create their own one-page profiles at home (with the support of an adult) or for very young children their family can share key information about their child (see examples in Appendix 1) in order to let you know more about them and the best way to communicate and support them upon their return.

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. Our staff tailor their one-page profile depending on the context that they are working in.



Katie Matthews
My One Page Profile

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.

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

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!

What Is important to me...

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

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 being you!

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



Reni Landor's One Page Profile Educational Psychologist

Contact me : Reni.Landor@suffolk.gov.uk

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



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

IMPORTANT



Tips for creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom¹¹

As much as returning to education may feel like a relief, or even feel exciting for some children, it is also likely to be a time when many children 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. 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 '*re-integration 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 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 children 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 to negotiate their day with confidence.

Help children to regulate their emotions so that they can learn

Children 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:

- 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.
- whose parents or carers have been shielding as, as above, these children 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).

¹¹ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

- with other known special educational needs or disabilities.
- 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.

In addition to having a calm classroom, teaching children 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 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 resettle.



Talking about feelings, having posters around the classroom that provide words for feelings and emotions and cueing children into their feelings are all strategies that develop emotional literacy and help children 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.

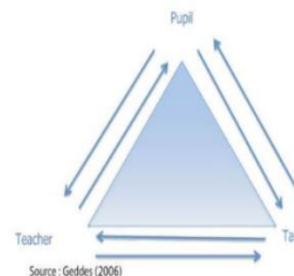
There are many practical activities that children can take part in that encourage and support them to regulate their emotions. See page 18 onwards in this booklet. You could also refer to the Suffolk Local Offer [Specialist Education and Psychology & Therapeutic Services webpages](#) for more ideas around supporting young people with additional needs.

Believe that the child can achieve academic success

The temptation to expect less from children 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 take time out in a quiet place to regain composure and reduce stimulation. Sometimes having music, a range of picture books with a focus on wellbeing, or a jigsaw puzzle or even plasticine where agitated hands can work are calming activities. In the current time the challenge will be working around health and safety advice regarding what materials we can provide in school. See government and your own settings guidance to guide you here. For older children, spending time in libraries, providing areas to chill out with music, or creative arts are all strategies that children report to be useful.

Build strengths and capacity

Every child 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 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 Strengths¹²

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 children 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 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

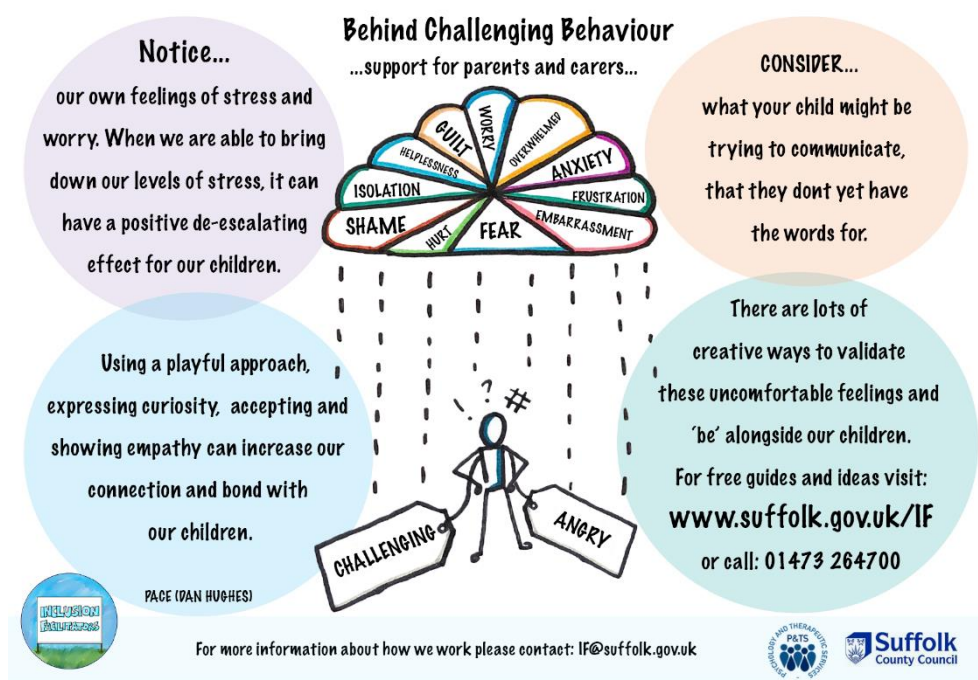
A child that has difficulty regulating emotions may frequently engage in behaviours that appear impulsive and that are challenging to manage.

The strategy of 'Stop, Think, Do' is a good mantra **for staff**. 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. **Children** need to be aware that their behaviour has consequences however they require patient teaching, reminders and clear boundaries and expectations that are repeatedly explained in different ways and enforced consistently. Respond to the underlying emotions rather than the behaviour. Talk to children 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.*'¹³

¹² Values in Action Character Strengths

¹³ 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 different 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 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 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: IF@suffolk.gov.uk



Engagement, social connection & trusting relationships that are built on respect & 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 it is through the relationships that they have with friends and education setting staff that they can begin to recover from and make sense of the events.

Some children (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 isn't thinking about it or is being unusually avoidant. It's important to take our cues from the child and for them to know there is no one right reaction. It's okay to ask them quietly what their preference is.

For some children, their key worker / teacher is an adult in whom they can confide and ask difficult questions. Many children express the view that they don't want to upset their parents or further stress them by asking questions or saying that they are struggling. This is when a trusted relationship with an adult will allow the child 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 children with a range of additional needs there is also support from other 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](#).

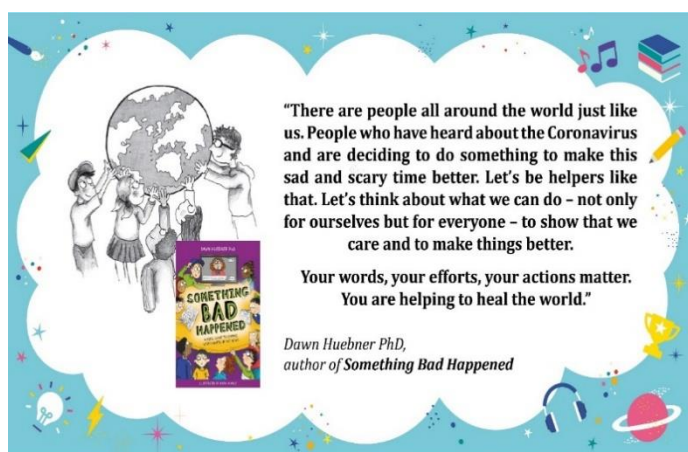
ACTIVITIES PROMOTING CONNECTEDNESS AND RESILIENCE

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 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.¹⁴*

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, and 9 out of 10 parents of children aged 4-11 years agree that reading is a useful tool to open up conversations about feelings. **Reading Well for children** provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing. The booklist is targeted at children in Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11), but includes titles aimed at a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers. <https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/children#health-minds>



Depending on the age of the children activities listed below may be helpful in promoting connectedness and resilience. Staff should work together with colleagues to agree which of the activities would be most relevant and appropriate for their class. 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.

¹⁴ *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster* Rebecca Solnit 2009

Collaborative group or class activity

Betsy De Thiery (2017) 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 this 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/>

Activities could also include; a Tree of Life, making prayer flags, tree of hope using handprints, planting seeds etc. In other words doing something active as this can help children who seem very restless or have lots of 'unspent' energy.



People who care for me

Draw around the child's hand and get them to write on each finger the people they can talk to about their thoughts and feelings. Draw their family or friends involved in an activity or doing something fun, or something fun they are looking forward to doing with their family/ friends in the future.

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 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 children in small groups. See Appendix 4 for Growing Around Grief activity sheet.

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

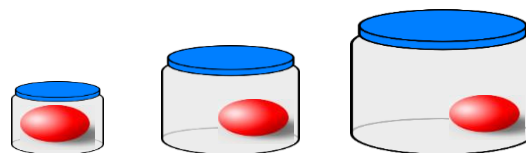
A challenge I have overcome.....

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....



Craft & Talk activities

This can work really well when groups of children with 2 adults come together to make something and chat during the activity. For example;



Make your own story stones to prompt narrative play activities for pre-schoolers and early years (and beyond).

Also see Appendix 2 for the Tree of Life activity which can be undertaken in groups



Talking as a group whilst undertaking a craft activity; sharing challenges that have been faced during this time and how people found ways to stay strong and carry on.

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](#).



Calming activities

For example, approaches based on mindfulness such those shown in the appendices of this document.

Older Children sharing experiences

For older children team projects can develop a sense of shared experience and togetherness. Relationships are people 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.



Guidelines for supporting children 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 to feel safe in their contributions.
- Celebrate strengths and progress.
- Have supportive and trusted adults available to help in case children become overwhelmed by their feelings and reactions.
- Remind children 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.

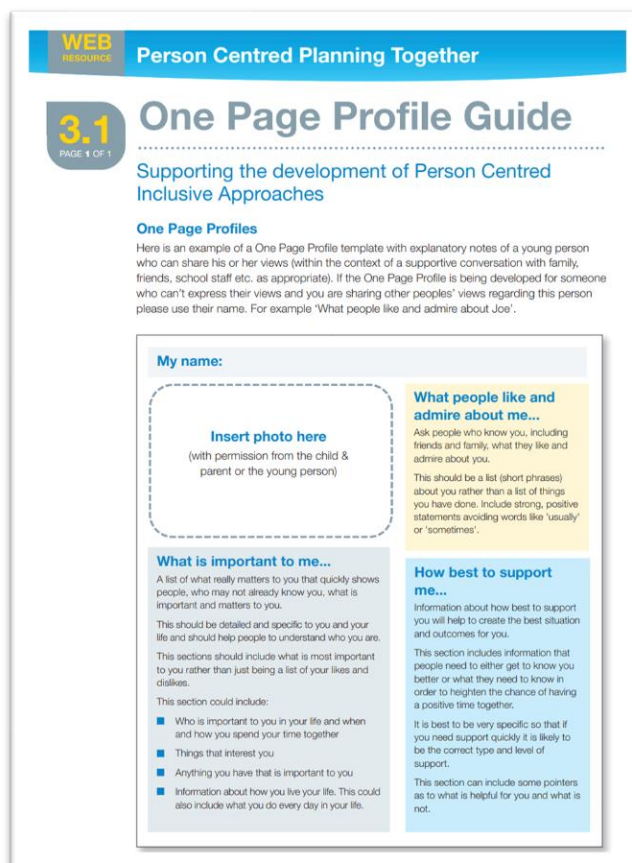


APPENDICES

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'. Below that, it says '3.1 PAGE 1 OF 1' and 'One Page Profile Guide'. The main title is 'Supporting the development of Person Centred Inclusive Approaches'. There is a section for 'One Page Profiles' which explains that it 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'.

The template includes several sections for a person to fill in:

- My name:** A dashed box for the person's name.
- Insert photo here** (with permission from the child & parent or the young person): A dashed box for a photo.
- What people like and admire about me...**: A section for people to write about the person's strengths and interests.
- What is important to me...**: A section for the person to write about what matters to them.
- How best to support me...**: A section for the person to write about how they prefer to be supported.

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).



Harry Smith

How I want to be supported

- I need help with clothes, especially buttons and zips
- I need you to be patient when I am trying to do something and struggling
- Give me clear, short instructions
- It helps if I can go into a room first before other children
- I like to chew - I have a chew toy
- I 'stim' by tapping my hands together - please don't stop me

What do people like about me? What am I good at?

- My smile
- I love doing puzzles
- I'm good at painting
- How I say 'hello' every morning
- I am persistent if something isn't going right

What I love. Things that make me happy...

- My dog, Buddy
- My sister, Sophie
- My mummy and daddy
- I love jumping in puddles
- Quavers
- Tuna sandwiches

Anything I'm not keen on?

- Noises like hand dryers and lawn mowers
- Fruit
- Being touched

My One-Page Profile

© School Run and Shannon Trust Ltd

My One Page profile

Your
Name

Age:
Occupation:

What people appreciate about me

What is important to me

How to support me

SHANNI

What's important to Shanni...

About the people in her life and her relationships

- To live with her mum and Paul and have fun with them
- To spend time around other children playing and having fun (eg dropping up, watching C-bee-bies, DVD's, singing and dancing, playing outside)
- To go and see her family in Ireland at least once every 3 months (Granny Renee, Grandpa, Auntie Karen, Uncle Colin and Gary and most of all her cousin Chloe. Shanni and Chloe have a very special relationship)
- To stay with her Dad once every fortnight
- To spend time with her baby brother when she is at her Dads
- To go and see Jay Jay at least once a week
- Her friends Sam and Rachael at school and playing with them everyday

About how Shanni spends her time

- Anything to do with princesses, fairies, castles and all things fantasy
- Watching C-bee-bies - "Charlie and Lola" and DVD's "Shrek movies, High School Musical, fairy tales"
- Being able to play outside when she wants to (riding her bike, running around, having a swing or a slide etc)
- Her favourite day out would be to be around animals, the beach or going to visit castles
- Going to the cinema at least once a month
- Going to the park - must feed the ducks first, then the park and then go for a "Dora adventure in the forest" - even better with a picnic
- Writing - letters, her name and colouring in and drawing pictures
- Playing her Nintendo DS - Nintendo, Cooking Mama and Disney Princess
- Playing with "Ricky her favourite" Teddy
- Putting on a show for people and her toys and dolls

About mealtimes

- To have her favourite foods during her week (see "To be Successful in supporting Shanni" for more information)
- To have a treat every night after the bath - chocolate, cake, biscuits

About her clothes

- To help choose what she wears everyday - likes tea-shirts with jackets over and swirly skirts, and to be able to change her clothes when she wants to

About school

- To be praised when she does well (loves you to say "well done") needs to know her teachers are pleased with her

About important routines

- To spend time winding down before she goes to bed after her bath (for about half an hour) with a treat. This can be a piece of cake, a bit of chocolate, a cuddle on the sofa and a climb on Paul the giant
- To go to sleep with her dolls/princesses and books in bed beside her
- To have a bedtime story (at the minute it's Charlie and Lola stories) - she will tell you what she wants

What People Like and admire about Shanni

She's beautiful

Mummy's little chicken

A little princess

Funny

Determined to succeed

Creative and has a great imagination

Very affectionate

Gorgeous

Loving and giving

A little leader

A little performer

How best to support Shanni...

At mealtimes

- Shannon prefers to eat little and often (as opposed to a bigger meal at mealtimes). Some of her favourite foods are sausages, eggs, carrots, pasta, Mum's cottage or chicken pie and honey on toast. It's best not to force her to eat, or make an issue about it. She also tends to eat more in the evenings

About any transition

- When you want Shanni to move onto another activity (particularly if she is really enjoying what she is doing) give her prior notice about 5 minutes before. If it's something that she doesn't want to do talk about some of the things she does like about it eg at bedtime a story she enjoys, bath-time - "the bubbles, mealtimes - talk about what she is having to eat and how she can help to make it and get involved, school seeing Sam and her other friends"

About her homework

- That Shanni reads 5 times a week - school reading book and sentence building (usually Sunday-Thursday) Shanni enjoys making up her own sentences and likes to hear what you are writing about her in her reading record
- Shanni is concentrating at the moment on her writing - can write her name well but take advantage of fun learning situations (games, writing cards to people, writing letters to people) where she is learning to write other words
- Shanni is great at maths and we are now concentrating on adding and counting objects

When she is having a bad day

- When she gets upset it is usually related to her being tired or she is frustrated when she is struggling to do things herself. Bend down and give her eye contact, talk in a quiet voice saying "Stop" and try and figure out what is wrong. She doesn't like a face when upset so keep conversation to a minimum initially. If she needs help remind her to ask for help the next time. Shanni often needs you to offer her a way out of the situation so after 2-5 minutes ask her if she wants a cuddle
- Shannon finds it difficult to share with other children sometimes. She seems to believe that the other child is going to take her toys away. Again bend down to her level, remind her that she needs to share and explain that the other child will have their turn and she will have hers. Give her lots of praise when she shares. It also works to remind Shanni that other children have to share also
- Sometimes you need to remind Shanni not to shout. What works to get down to her level and get eye contact, talk to her in a calm, quiet voice ask her not to shout and respond to what she wants when she stops shouting

About car journeys

- If you are on a long car journey (longer than half an hour) make sure you take some water and a snack, paper, pens and colouring books. She also loves listening to music. When she jumps out of the car remind Shanni to go straight to the toilet

LAURA

WHAT OTHERS LIKE ABOUT ME, AND WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MYSELF

Artistic, Caring, Good at climbing, gives great cuddles
Good at making, drawing and building stuff
Creative, Thoughtful, Adventurous

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME

- Having 2 cats - Emily and Jess
- My three stick insects, and seeing if their eggs hatch
- Playing with my friends - Emily, Abbie, Eleanor and Caitlin
- Seeing my cousins - Honor and Phoebe
- Going to Oasis every year with Granny, Aunt Wendy, Uncle Dave, Aunt Clare and Uncle Miguel
- My art box-and doing art at home several times a week
- My yellow teddy, Sunny, who sleeps on my bed
- Knowing what is going to happen each day, and planning ahead for special things like my birthday (I like to plan my party about 4 months in advance!)

HOW TO SUPPORT LAURA

- Laura is sensitive and perceives a small negative comment as a big telling off
- Laura needs lots of praise and encouragement
- Laura does not like change very much and particularly needs lots of reassurance about changing classes
- Laura can seem quiet and shy before you get to know her, she may need you to initiate conversations

Thank you to Granny, Aunt Wendy, Uncle Dave, Aunt Clare, and Uncle Miguel for helping Laura. Mummy and Daddy to write Laura's plan for school

JANUARY 2005

Appendix 2: Tree of Life and ‘Draw on Your Emotions’



(Adapted by Jill Oliver from Ncube-Mlilo, 2006.)

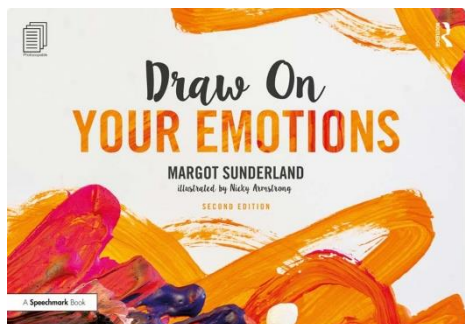
This exercise helps children to cope with trauma or loss and move on with their life. Its aim is to highlight for children their existing strengths, encourage an alternative storyline to a ‘problem saturated’ narrative and increase a sense of connectedness with family and community. This exercise can also be particularly useful when exploring issues of culture and diversity.

The exercise involves encouraging the child to build a picture of their life through the representation of a tree. Encourage the child to build their tree from the ground up, talking along the way about each of the elements that make up their tree.

You can use what you know about the child to help them (e.g. you may know that the child’s grandmother was a very important person who taught the child how to stick up for themselves). This is normally carried out over several sessions, in groups, so that children can share their story and understand each other’s. Other children in the group may also be called upon e.g. to help name each other’s qualities, skills and knowledge in ‘the trunk’.

[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.

“They can help promote a new clarity of thoughts as a first step towards positive action and bring seemingly huge unmanageable and insoluble problems into a new perspective”. You may find this activity (and others published by Margot to be particularly useful at this time).



If you are undertaking this type of activity, consider how they 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 wants to share their pictures with others it could be an emotional experience for others. So, you may want to consider putting a plan in place for this type of scenario.

Appendix 3: Supporting children with activities that help them remain calm

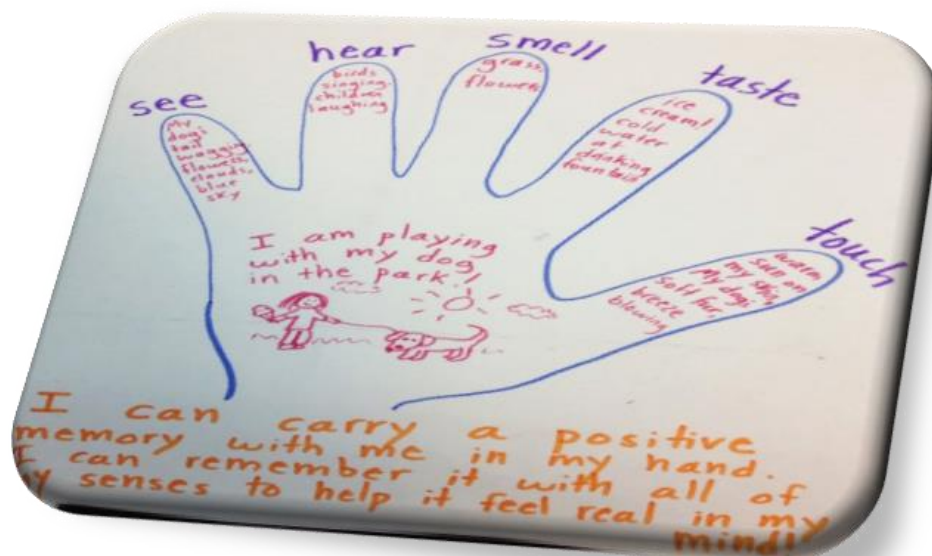
Carrying a positive sense of calm in the palm of your hand

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 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 child 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/>



There are many simple yet effective **calming down / mindful activities** that you can do just with your hands. See one of our team demonstrate these activities on the SCC YouTube Channel



Hand breathing 5-minute mindfulness	Finger tapping How to use your hands when visualizing thoughts and feelings	5 things we are grateful for Five minute activities - hands
---	--	--

Appendix 4: 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....

Someone who has helped me.....

A time when I had fun.....

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.

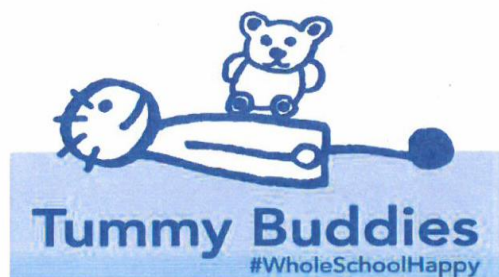
➤ Move the ping pong ball to the largest jar.

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 5: Tummy Buddies

NB current connect may not enable you to use a soft toy in educational settings. So, you may need to amend accordingly and find your own way to run this sort of activity.



1. Choose a soft toy that you can balance on your tummy and ask your teacher to put on some gentle music
2. Take your shoes off and lie down so you are comfortable
3. Put the toy on your belly
4. Breathe in: While your teacher counts to three, breathe in through your nose so your tummy gets big and your toy goes up in the air.
5. Breathe out: While your teacher counts to 4 breath out through your mouth so your tummy sinks and your toy sinks down.
6. Repeat this 10 times, can you rock your tummy buddy to sleep so they feel completely safe, calm and relaxed?



Appendix 6: Writing to Heal¹⁵

Dr. Pennebaker's Basic Writing Assignment

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.

Tips for Writing to Heal

- 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

"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."

From "Writing to Heal"
by James W. Pennebaker

If you are undertaking activities like this older children in school, consider the needs of the child after the activity should they need any support.

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

¹⁵ Reference Vive Griffith Children and War Foundation Childrenandwar.org.uk

Appendix 7: 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.¹⁶

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

5.1
PAGE 2 OF 2

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

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.

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.

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.

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 into a spiral shape 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.

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.

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.

1 The STORY SO FAR

2 OUR DREAM

3 NIGHTMARE

4 WHO IS THE PERSON

5 GIFT AND STRENGTHS

6 WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO GET TO THE DREAM

7 NEXT STEPS

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

We can support the delivery of Person Centred Planning processes such as MAP¹⁷.

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.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Developed by Forest, Pearpoint and O'Brien in 1980s

¹⁷ [More information about the MAP process](#)

¹⁸ O'Brien, Pearpoint and Kahn, 2010

Appendix 8: PATH – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

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

Please click here - [PATH experience](#) which will take you to the Suffolk County Council YouTube channel for an explanation of how PATH can help at times of transition.

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 <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PTS> and <https://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

4.2

PAGE 2 OF 2

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 9: 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 111 'active' ELSAs across 71 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 plan 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 10: Mindfulness in Educational Settings

In Suffolk the P&TS deliver several Mindfulness programmes.

For example:

- Mindfulness for 7 – 11 year olds (Paws b)
<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/teach-paws-b/>
- 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 or 07894 599484

Appendix 11: Creating an Action Plan

Steps / strategies to consider:

- **Communicate** with child and their family in order to **prepare** them for what their new context will be like upon starting at school or for their return and why it will be this way (e.g. less people). Some children 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 children 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 children, 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 children may want to bring in. e.g. some children 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. 'Virtual' transition objects can also convey equally important reassurance. Staff can work with families to explore the ways that they can make use of these powerful images to strengthen connection and support their child with separation: e.g. a kiss or a smile to keep in the child's pocket for when it is needed. Consider those with anxiety issues and allow for a gradual buildup of time integrating into their new setting or back into their previous one.
- For children who have not attended school before (e.g. nursery transfer) the transfer plans will need to be in place in good time so that the child is prepared for their new experiences and additional support plans are put into place in when necessary. [Click here](#) for additional information from SCC Early Years & Childcare Service re Transition Planning
- 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. 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 12: Additional resources including an example timetable for a primary school


The [DFE](#) website outlines all the latest guidance available to support education settings during this team. SCC teams are also sharing resources via [Suffolk Headlines](#) and 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".



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/not 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. blow 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.



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 teddies 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
Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team

www.beaconhouse.org.uk

Follow us:    @BeaconHouseTeam

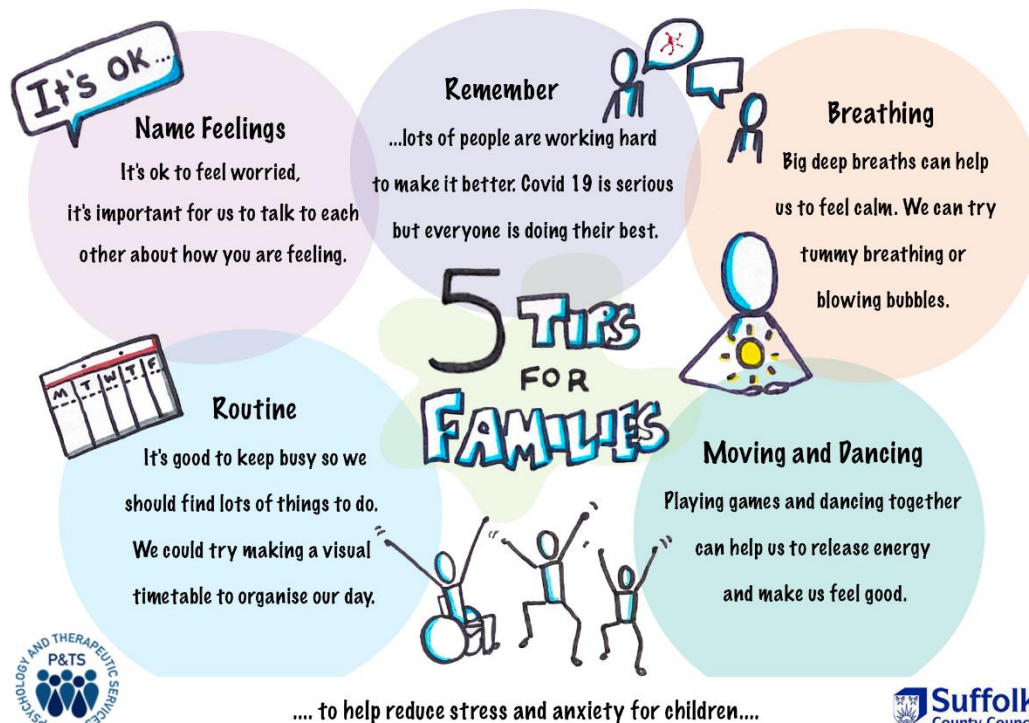
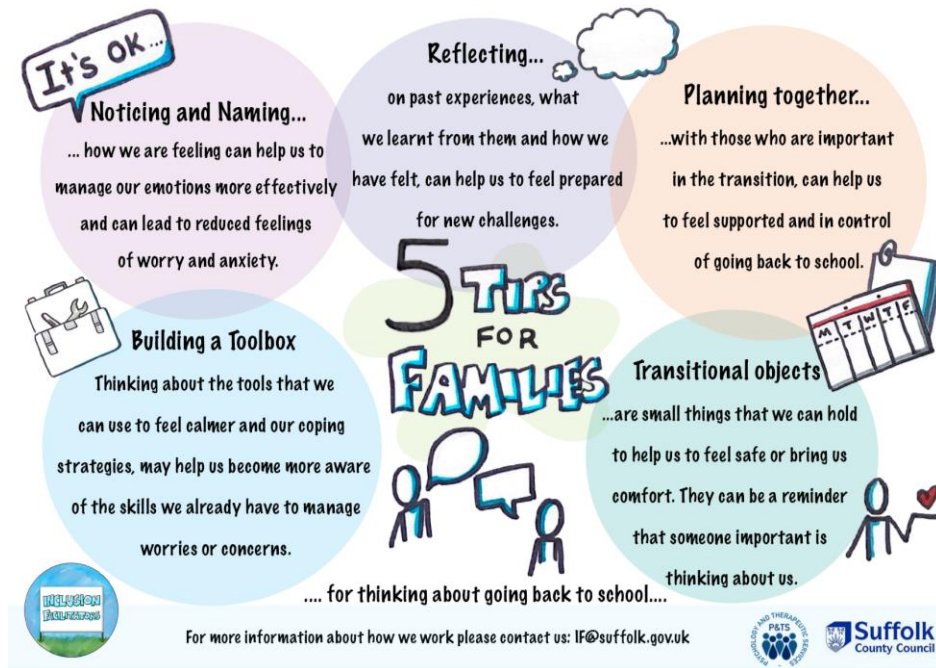
Brighton & Hove also published the following guidance [Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy](#) which usefully outlines a relationship based approach to inclusion.

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.

Registration	Relate: Meet and Greet 'Check-ins' with children; could be placing an emotion on an emotion flower/picture.
Lesson 1	Regulate: Physical activity: Joe Wicks Workout; Power Poses; Active Luton; GoNoodle
Lesson 2	Reason: Curriculum Learning; Practical, fun and engaging Small groups differentiated according to emotional development as well as learning. Mid-way or in response to the emotional states of the children; Regulate: Active Blast + bring to calm
Break	Regulate – Relate - Reason Consider rotating break times; smaller group, higher adult to child ratios facilitating guided social skills activities
Lesson 3	Reason: Curriculum Learning; Practical, fun and engaging Small groups differentiated according to emotional development as well as learning. Mid-way or in response to the emotional states of the children; Regulate: Active Blast + bring to calm
Lunch	Regulate – Relate - Reason Consider rotating break times; smaller group, higher adult to child ratios facilitating guided social skills activities
Registration	'Check-ins' with children; could be placing an emotion on an emotion flower/picture. Regulate: Relax and Calm activities Relate and Reason: Circle Time/Community Circles activities; able to address emotional states using a mixture of calm and alerting activities as well as opportunities for listening systems.
Lesson 4	Reason: Curriculum Learning; Practical, fun and engaging Small groups differentiated according to emotional development as well as learning. Mid-way or in response to the emotional states of the children; Regulate: Active Blast + bring to calm
Lesson 5	Regulate – Relate – Reason Activities that bring the group together, review the day and prepare for the following day.

Close communication with families / carers will be essential for education settings. During this pandemic we have also been in close contact with families and parent carer networks.

We have co-produced a range of resources with **Suffolk Parent Carer Network** that will also be useful for education setting staff to consider.



References

The Specialist Education and Psychology & Therapeutic Services have also shared an outline of our enhanced support offer for educational settings during this time– [see message from these services here](#)

If you would like to watch a presentation about more children returning to school you may find [this 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>

1. RELAX. Catherine O'Neill. Child's Play.



2. 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/>
3. 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>
4. WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. Marge Heegaard Woodland Press. For younger children up to 11 years.
5. 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.

