

# Welcome!!

Please help yourself to a  
drink & goodies.



Please complete a questionnaire and design a name label – feel free to be creative!!

# Difficulties in attending school

## Who we are and why are we here?



**Emma Touzalin**  
**Family Link Worker**



**Carie Stainsby**  
**Nurture facilitator**



**Claire Deacon**  
**SENDCo**



- \* Please only share what you feel comfortable to,  
(it's OK to have boundaries)
- \* Please keep other people's experiences private.



# Aims of today's session...

- Build understanding
- A place to share
- Peer support
- Tools & strategies



# Good Morning!



What does a good morning look like?

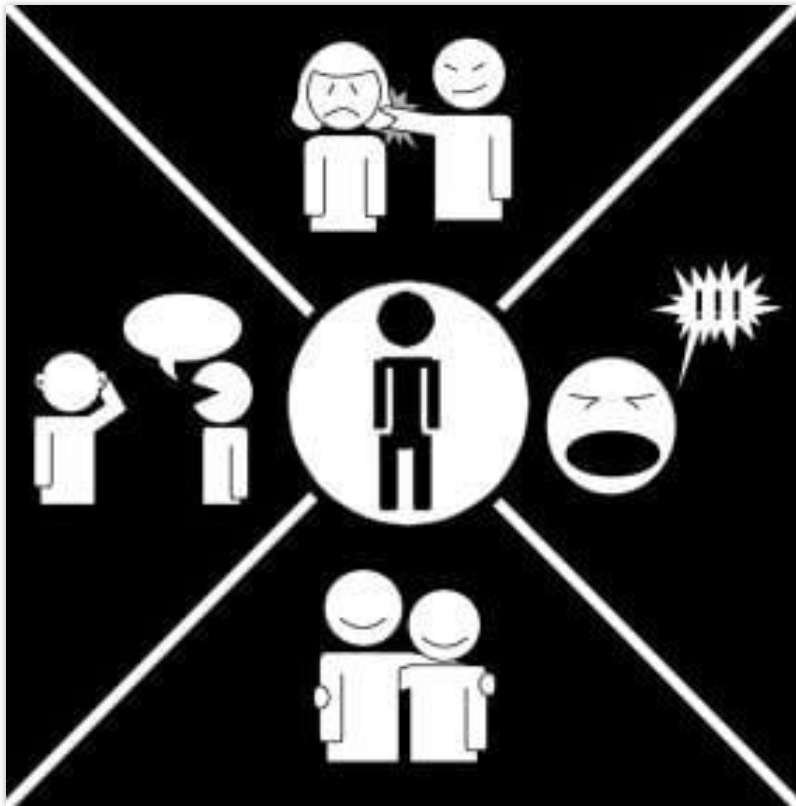
What are you doing?

What is your child doing?

How does it feel?

# Let's start at the beginning

**What are you currently experiencing?**



**What do you currently do to help?**



**What's in your toolbox now?**

# Let's take a look....

Only share what you  
are happy to.

| What is the child doing?      | What are the child's feelings behind this? |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|                               |                                            |
| What are we as parents doing? | What are our feelings?                     |
|                               |                                            |

# School attendance difficulties

We recognise & understand that there are some elements of attending school that can be more challenging for some children...

Separating  
From  
their parent or  
care giver

Young  
Carer & home  
life difficulties

Answering questions in class & tests

Small group  
work with peers

Struggling  
academically

Play time  
& social  
time

Missed some school -  
now feeling confused  
about what they are doing  
& feel work or friends may  
have moved on.  
Or when there are  
questions from  
friends about where  
they have been

A very specific  
fear around a  
subject or activity

**And many more!**

# Difficult Mornings.



*Remember everyone's experience and situation is different and personal*



**Difficult mornings may look like this...**

**The child is reluctant to get out of bed in the morning, is very quiet. They are disinterested in breakfast and begin listing all of their worries about the day at school "the work is too hard, no plays with me, no one listens to me, no one understands".**

**They say "my tummy hurts and I feel sick. I've got a headache too". They start to cry.**

**They don't want to get dressed and run off shouting "I can't do it! Why are you making me go!?"**

# Reflections...

*Remember everyone's experience and situation is different and personal*



Try to connect with your child & understand it from their perspective (it's not silly to them.)



Listen to understand, what are they telling you?



Be curious not furious!



Pause – can help get better/quicker results in the long run.



Wonder & keep an open mind



Be aware of what messages we are giving – tone of voice, language, facial expressions, body language etc.

## Connection, listening, pausing and understanding





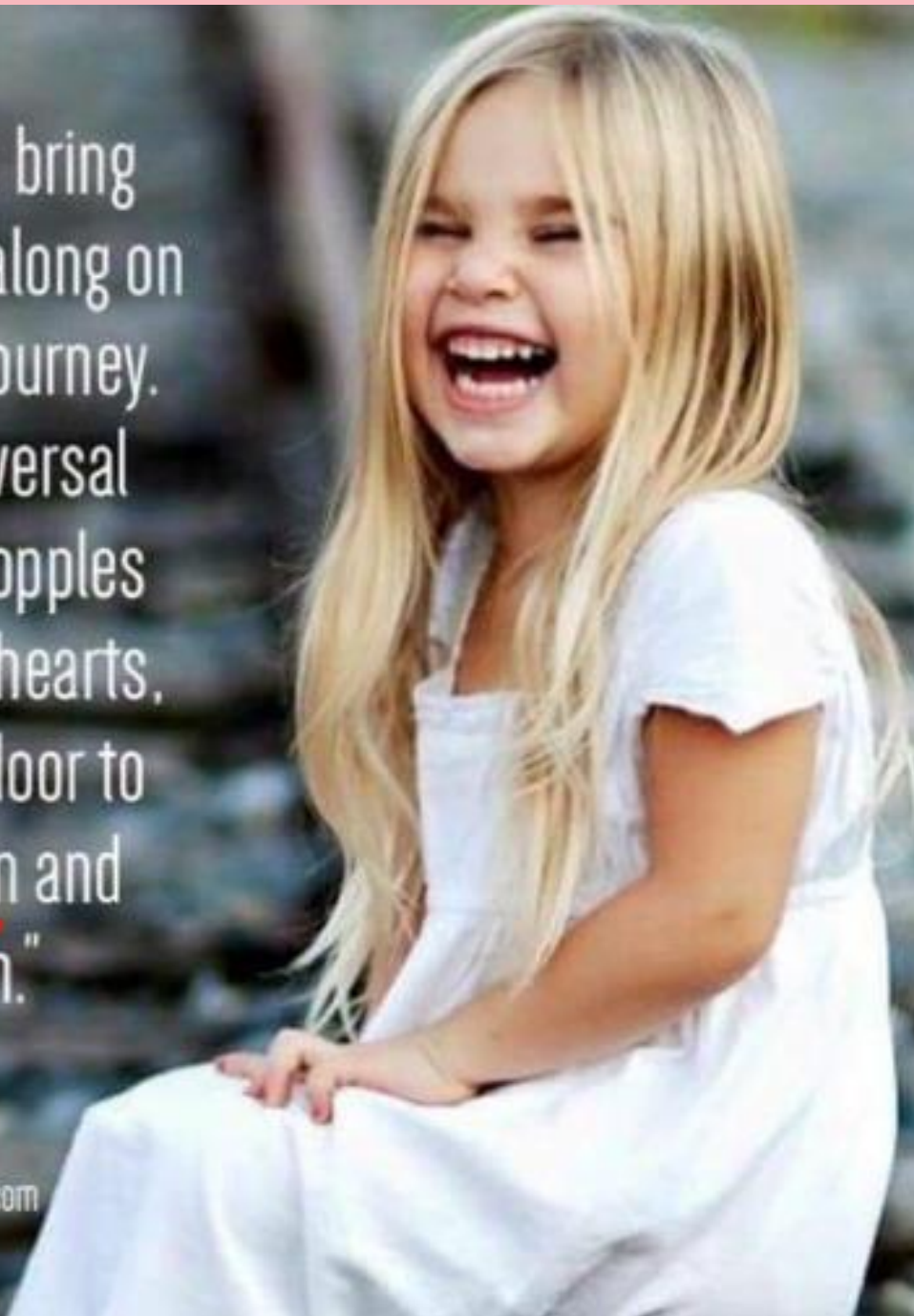
Children pick up on our  
emotional tone  
milliseconds before  
processing our words. And  
that emotional tone  
conveys cues of safety or  
threat, regardless of what  
we're trying to  
communicate.

@youthdynamicsmt



"Don't forget to bring  
your funny bone along on  
your parenting journey.  
Humor is a universal  
language that topples  
walls, connects hearts,  
and opens the door to  
communication and  
cooperation."

L.R.Knost  
"The Gentle Parent"  
[www.littleheartsbooks.com](http://www.littleheartsbooks.com)



# Lets...



Dictionary definition -

# A quick word about ANXIETY

'an  
intense feeling  
of uneasiness  
or fear in  
response to a real  
or imagined  
threat'

- Anxiety is normal and exists due to a set of bodily functions in us from our cave-man days.
- Our body makes us hyper-alert, boosting adrenaline that increases the heart rate and the amount of oxygen going to our limbs, so we are able to fight or run from danger.
- This is known as the “fight, flight or freeze” response.
- This response can wrongly and inappropriately be activated in a person during normal, everyday situations when stress has built up, often unknowingly.

FIGHT



FLIGHT



Oohhala!

FREEZE



# A quick work about ANXIETY

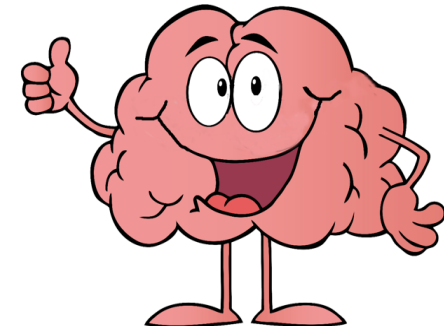
- It is how we think and view events more than the events themselves which is the problem.
- We cannot protect our children from anxiety.
- At some point we all face it.
- It is part of our survival instinct.
- It is something we CAN learn to rationalise and manage.

Support may be needed if anxiety is severe and longlasting.

Help children to understand that their **brain** is making them feel anxious.

*It's important to recognise and challenge these thoughts in order to promote a more positive and realistic mindset.*

*This does require ongoing support, patience, understanding and age-appropriate explanations and tools.*



# The power of parents!

Who is in the best place to help?



# The power of parents!

## How can I help my child?

The fact that you are reading this book shows that you are keen and motivated to help your child. However, you are probably also feeling quite daunted by the prospect. You will no doubt have tried many things to help your child in the past and have probably received all sorts of different advice from different people along the way. You may well feel like you have tried everything you can and may not feel very confident that there is anything further you can do. These sorts of experiences and concerns are very common among the parents we work with. But there are a number of reasons why we would encourage you to work with your child on overcoming their anxiety. We have listed some of these below:

- Where parents can help their child overcome their difficulties, this reduces the burden on children to attend appointments with professionals within schools or the health service, meaning children don't miss out on other age-appropriate activities that they could be doing.



How can I help my child? 9

- Parents are often in a better position than therapists to put strategies in place and to create opportunities for new learning in their child's day-to-day life.
- Parents are often more motivated than the child to make changes, as children may be more focused on the short-term pain whereas parents are likely to be more focused on the long-term gain!
- Parents can sometimes put the strategies in place across the family, potentially helping other children (and sometimes adults) within the family.
- Parents are more likely to remember what has been helpful in the months and years that follow and so are in a great position to put these strategies in place in the future if problems come up again.
- Parents are often the ones having to manage their child's difficulties on a day-to-day basis. This can be enormously stressful, and parents tell us that they want strategies to help them know what to do.

\* For all these reasons we believe that parents are in a strong and unique position to help their children overcome fears and worries. \* The aim of this book is to help you to feel skilled and confident in how to do this.

# Our parenting toolbox



**What will you put in your toolbox ?**

# Tools for the job!



Understand & unpick the issues



Strategies, resources & information



Positive language & mindset ourselves

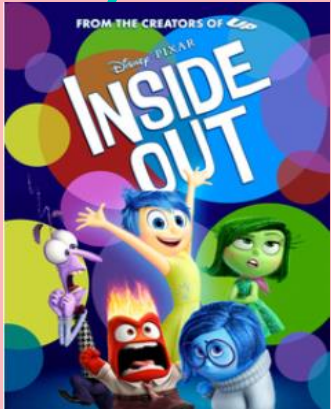


Connect with our child/ren

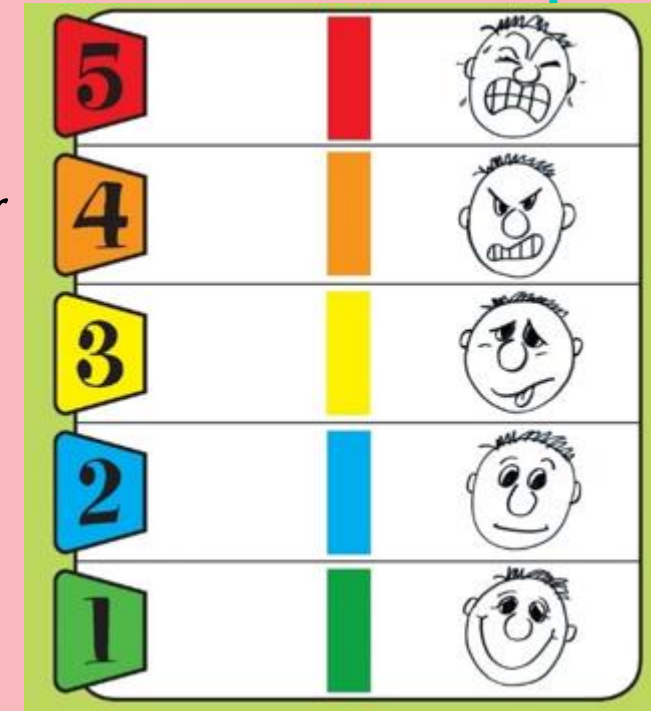


Look after yourself!

# Understanding & unpicking the issues



- Increase opportunities for one-to-one time, so they can talk if /when they want to
- Read stories together to help start the conversation
- Consider the time & place to talk (non-direct often helps like in the car or whilst eating, but not always straight after school!)
- 'I wonder why.... you may be feeling/thinking/appear'
- Watch Inside Out film together
- Scaling tools & asking if this is a big or little worry
- Drawing it, if they struggle to tell you directly
- Keep an open mind, don't assume you know what's going on and don't worry if they don't say or appear to know straight away





# Strategies



It's our job to upskill and support our child/ren with the skills to deal with the situation by themselves (long term aim!)

- Routines (support children's anxiety) plan your routine allowing for what YOUR child needs
- Social stories (see handout)
- Reduce language & consider visual prompts (what helps them calm, or what they need to do next)
- Give them ideas of how to deal with the issue! See example -----
- Naming 3 good things a day – can help to rewire the brain to think more positively!
- Remind your child who they can talk to (at home and at school)
- CBT style goal planning & problem solving – coming up next....

When someone is hurting or annoying me I will:

-  1. Look at them.
-  2. Put my hand up in a 'stop' sign.
-  3. Say to the person, "Stop it, I don't like it."
-  4. If it doesn't work I will get help from a teacher.

© 2015, First Step

## Strategy example - problem solving together

| What is the problem?                                                                               | What could I do?                                                                                      | What would happen if I did this?                                                                                                       | Rating (0–10)           |                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                    |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                        | How good would this be? | How easy would this be to do? |
| The boys are going to ask me questions about where I have been and will probably say I am a skiver | Tell them to mind their own business!                                                                 | They might think I am being rude and annoy me even more or they might listen                                                           | 5                       | 3                             |
|                                                                                                    | Be honest and tell them why I have been off school                                                    | I am scared they will tease me and won't understand                                                                                    | 4                       | 3                             |
|                                                                                                    | Give them a brief answer and change the subject – say 'I have not been well but now I am much better' | They might accept this as I have given them an answer and hopefully they will get bored and move on to something else                  | 8                       | 7                             |
|                                                                                                    | Say my grandma was ill                                                                                | They might not believe me or ask why have I had so much time off for that – there is a chance they might believe me and leave it there | 6                       | 8                             |

### Chloe's step-by-step plan

Agree your  
actions / steps

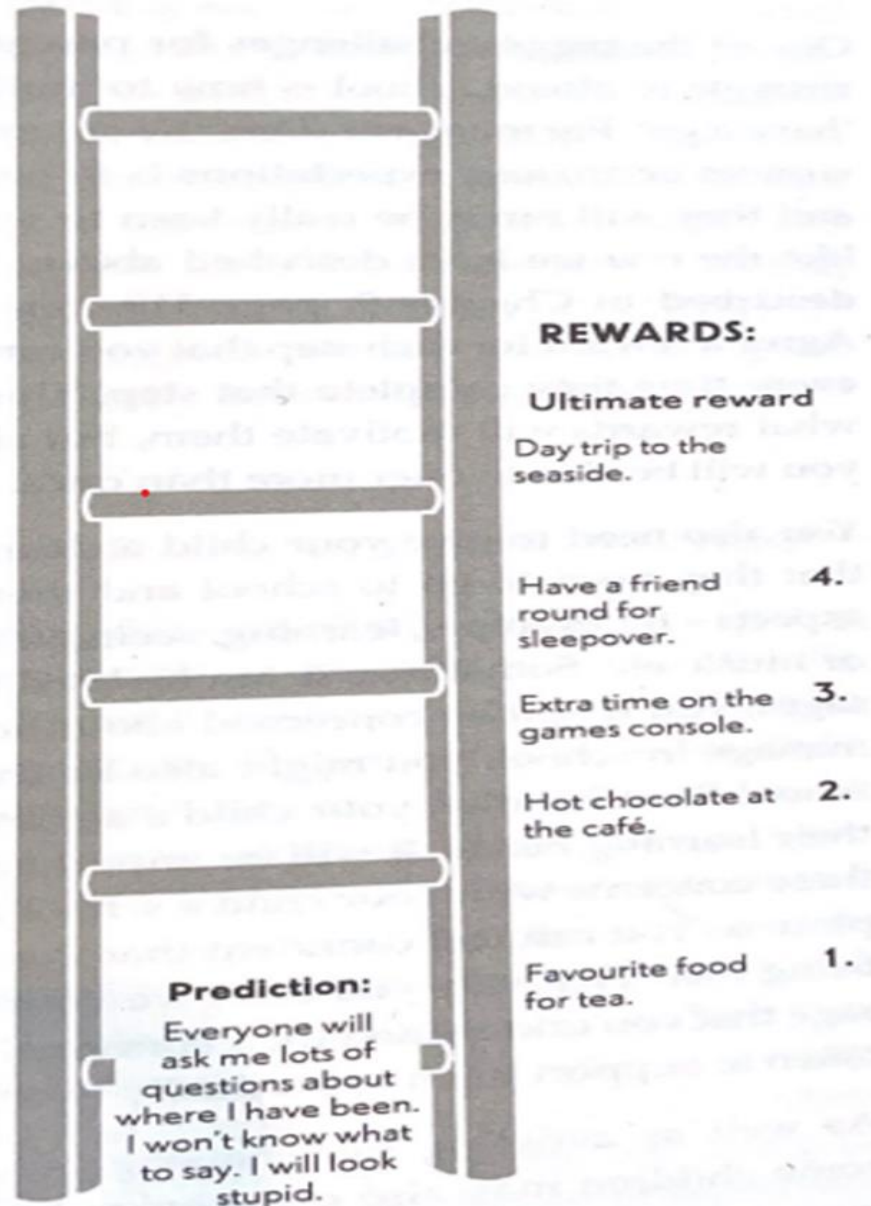
5

4

3

2

1



## Strategy example - problem solving together

### How to motivate your child

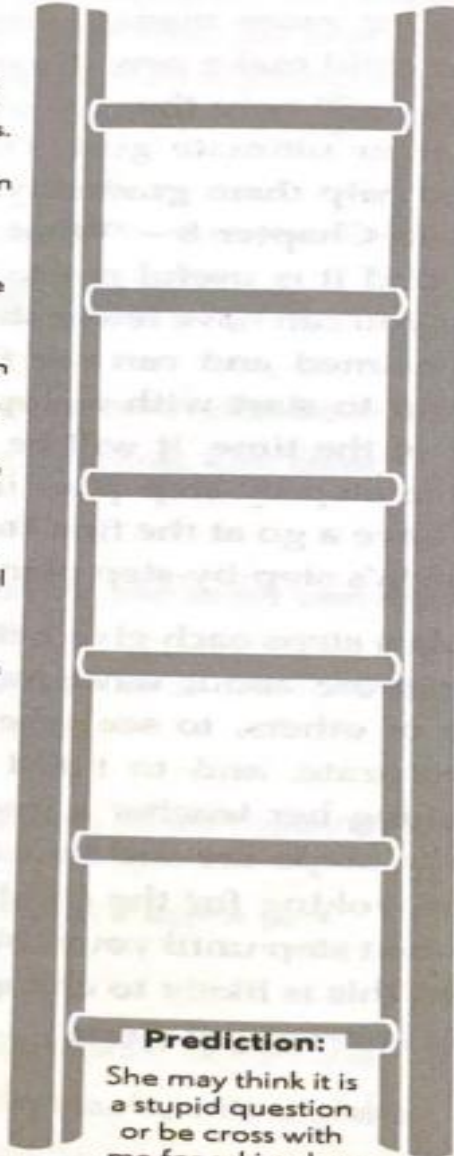
- Use the ladder to agree a reward for achieving each step
- Think carefully about what the reward could be and what will motivate them – but also something that can be given often!
- Give clear positive messages about the benefits of achieving each step
- Give positive messages about school, or the incentive to stay at home will be more of a pull - (e.g see your friends, have a music lesson, play time etc.)

## Layla's step-by-step plan

## STEPS:

**Ultimate goal**  
Ask the teacher a question in front of the whole class.

6. Answer a question asked by the teacher (answer not planned) in front of the whole class.
5. Answer a question asked by the teacher (planned in advance) in front of the whole class.
4. Ask the teacher a question in a small group.
3. Answer a question asked by the teacher (answer not planned) in a small group.
2. Answer a question asked by the teacher (planned in advance) in a small group.
1. Ask the teacher a question after class has finished and classmates have gone.

**Prediction:**

She may think it is a stupid question or be cross with me for asking her something after class

## REWARDS:

**Ultimate reward**  
Dinner out.

6. Go to the craft shop after school.
5. Stop off on the way home at the coffee shop.
4. Make cakes with Mum.
3. Choose a favourite dinner.
2. Stop off on the way home for a magazine.
1. Praise from Mum

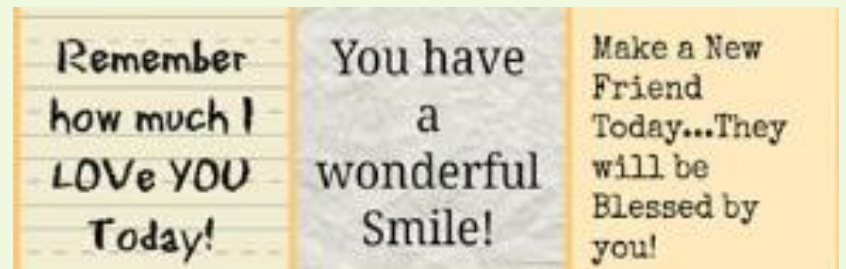
Strategy example -  
goal planning together

## How to build up to your goal

- Set a clear goal first
- Break it down into small achievable steps
- Think about what your child can do to help them gradually learn the skills to help them learn how to overcome their anxiety
- Focus on one bit at a time so it feels do'able.
- If it's feeling too much, break the steps down further - you want your child to be feeling like they are moving forward

# Connecting

- Play is powerful – having fun, time to talk, let them lead and choose
- One to one time
- Routines (before school and after are especially important)
- Lunch box notes
- Join them in their 'thing'
- Time to relax together
- Connection before correction
- Be their calm
- Be their safe place





School

**What do  
you see?**

**Any feelings  
come to  
mind?**



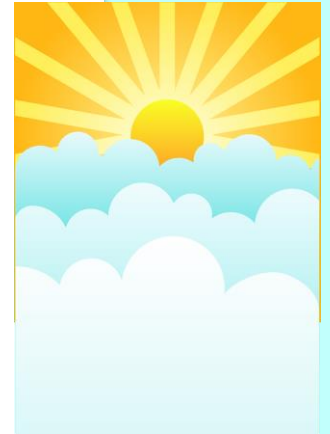
**What do  
you see?**

**Any OTHER  
feelings  
come to  
mind?**

**School** - Fence represents how we look after you & keep you safe

# Positive scripting & language

- ***“I am here; you are safe.”***- Comforting words
- ***“Tell me about it.”***- Time to talk without interruption and time to process their thoughts
- ***“How big is your worry?”***- Represent their worry using an arms length
- ***“What do you want to tell your worry?”***
- ***“Can you draw it?”***
- ***“Let’s change the ending.”***- Break the pattern of thoughts
- ***“Which calming strategy do you want to use?”***
- ***“Its scary AND you’re safe.”*** Acknowledge their feelings but reassure
- ***“This feeling will pass.”*** (good phrase to use at the height of their worry.)

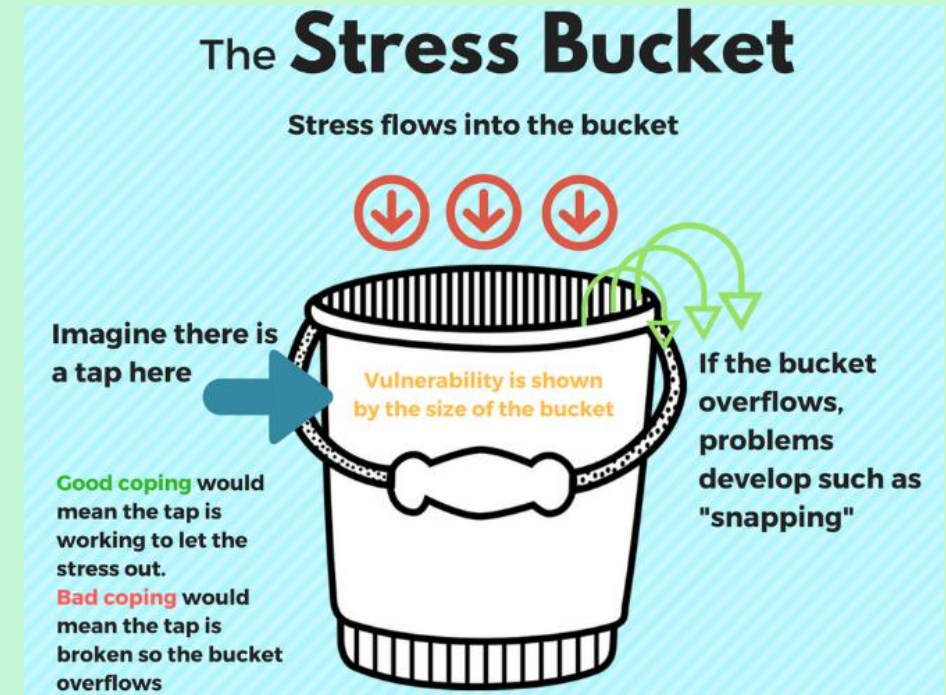




# Looking after yourself



- You can't pour from an empty cup, you need to look after yourself, so you stay emotionally strong
- Make time for you – plan it!
- Identify your support networks and reach out and use them
- Try a service / helpline (see info at the end)
- Be brave, confide in someone if you are struggling
- Find ways to help you calm and relax
- Consider your stress bucket!

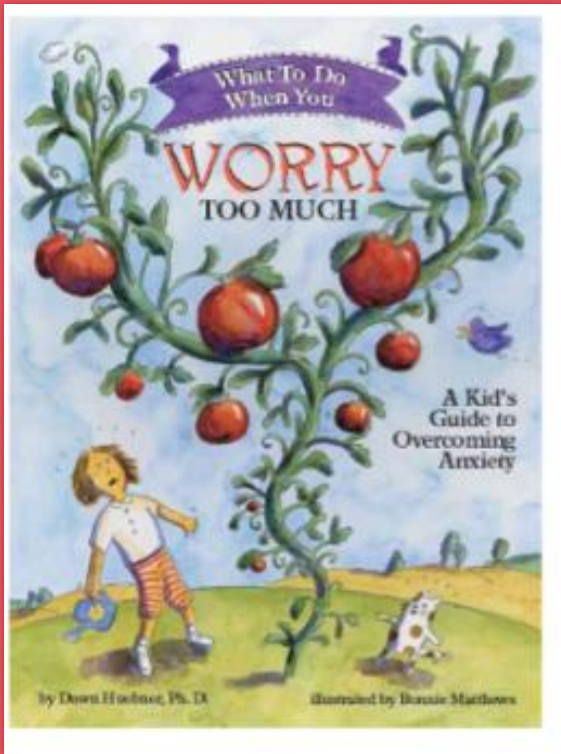


# HELPING YOUR CHILD BE READY FOR SEPT

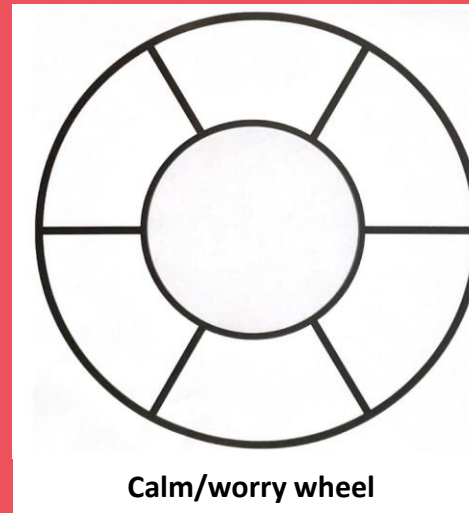
How can  
we prepare  
for this?

How can  
we support  
each other?

What does  
your child  
need?



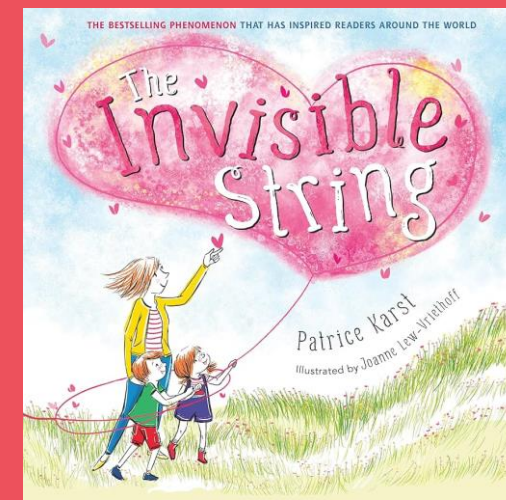
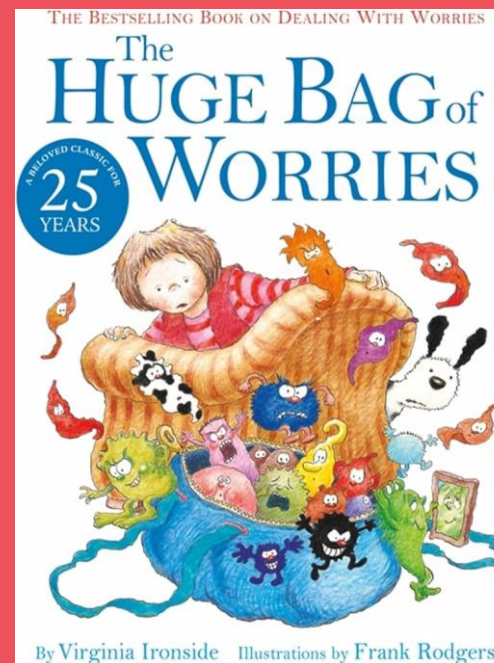
# Children's Resources



| Zones of Regulation                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| When I am in this Zone,<br>I feel like this...                                               | I Can use these tools...                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Green Zone</b><br><br>Calm<br>Happy<br>Feeling Okay                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Happy</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Calm</li> <li>Okay</li> <li>Ready to learn</li> </ul>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do something kind</li> <li>Help others</li> <li>Be a good listener</li> <li>Ask for help</li> <li>Give myself a compliment</li> <li>I am doing well</li> <li>I can play and learn</li> <li>Practice a calming strategy so I can use it when I need to</li> </ul>      |
| <b>Yellow Zone</b><br><br>Loss of some control<br>Silly<br>Excited<br>Frustrated             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excited</li> <li>Worried</li> <li>Silly/Wiggly</li> <li>Frustrated</li> <li>Anxious</li> <li>Loss of some control</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count to 20 slowly</li> <li>Take deep breaths</li> <li>Figure of eight breathing</li> <li>Tense and release muscles</li> <li>Use positive self-talk</li> <li>Think about a safe place</li> <li>Jump, dance or run outside</li> <li>Talk to a trusted adult</li> </ul> |
| <b>Blue Zone</b><br><br>Moving slowly<br>Sick<br>SAD<br>Tired<br>Bored                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sad</li> <li>Sick</li> <li>Tired</li> <li>Bored</li> <li>Slow moving</li> </ul>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a break</li> <li>Think positive happy thoughts</li> <li>Talk about your feelings</li> <li>Ask for a hug</li> <li>Talk to a friend</li> <li>Take some deep breaths</li> <li>Stretch</li> <li>Get a drink</li> <li>Say something kind to yourself</li> </ul>       |
| <b>Red Zone</b><br><br>Out of control<br>Terrified<br>Mad/Angry<br>Yelling/Whining<br>Elated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terrified</li> <li>Mad/Angry</li> <li>Mean</li> <li>Yelling</li> <li>Hitting</li> <li>Out of control</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop what you are doing</li> <li>Take a break</li> <li>Count to 20 slowly</li> <li>Be safe</li> <li>Walk away</li> <li>Ask for help</li> <li>Get a drink</li> <li>Take deep breaths</li> </ul>                                                                        |



Please don't forget their teacher is with them the most





**Chatterminds**

## Mindfulness and Managing Emotions

for 6 - 12 year olds  
(and the whole family)

Handy  
mindfulness  
exercises

Fun crafts  
to make

Includes  
journal pages



# Parents Resources

# YOUNGMINDS



[www.camhs-resources.co.uk](http://www.camhs-resources.co.uk)



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD  
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOLIHULL APPROACH

inourplace  **NHS**

## Supporting emotional health and wellbeing from 0-19+

Free online courses for all parents, carers, grandparents and teens

- Antenatal and postnatal baby bonding
- Understanding your child or young person
- Your child or young person with additional needs
- Teenager's feelings and brain development
- And lots more specialist courses

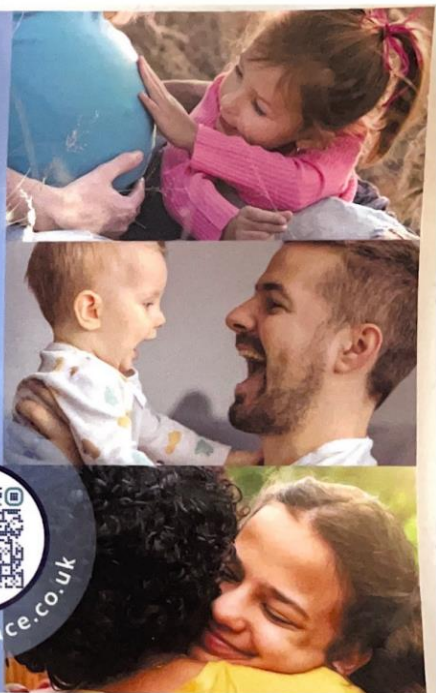
Designed by clinical psychologists in partnership with practitioners and parents

Residents of SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Use Access Code **CONCORDE**

  
[www.inourplace.co.uk](http://www.inourplace.co.uk)

  
in paid partnership with:



[www.socialworkerstoolbox.com](http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com)

We are here for you & can look with you at further help & support

- Parenting groups & courses
- Family support services
- Signposting
- Please see resources on the table & pack to take away

# Services & other places

- **School Health Nurse** - <https://sirona-cic.org.uk/children-services/services/school-nursing-service/>
- **Your GP**
- **Young Minds** - national charity offers confidential online and telephone information and support for anyone worried about the emotional, behaviour, or mental health of a child/young person up to 25 years of age, including ADHD, Autism and Aspergers. **Parents Helpline:** 0808 802 5544 Website: [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger Service** for free 24/7 support across the UK of you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Text YM to 85258.
- **JIGSAW Thornbury** - Supports families who have children who are 0-25 years and have any additional needs or disability. Many children who come have no diagnosis. Weekly support group for parents, carers and children + training courses on a range of topics. Telephone: 01454 416381 Website: [JIGSAW Thornbury | For Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities - SEN Lending Library, Events, Meetings, Bristol Area and the South West.](#)
- **South Glos Parents and Carers** – Information, groups & workshops for parents who have children with a disability and/or additional needs. Website: [South Glos Parent Carers \(sgpc.org.uk\)](http://sgpc.org.uk) Email: [team@sglospc.org.uk](mailto:team@sglospc.org.uk)
- **Chatterminds** - (Private company) offering support for children and parents (cost involved) with ways to nurture mental health and emotional regulation and wellbeing. <https://www.chatterminds.com/> Also runs a helpful Facebook page for parents - 'Mindful living for the 'imperfect' parent. And has a book called 'Mindfulness & emotions'

# Services & other places

- **Solihull** – online parenting resources for parents, carers, grandparents and teenagers in South Glos. This is **free** lifetime access to a range of e-learning and online resources which span from pregnancy to 19 years. These courses can be worked through at a pace which suits the individual, with the aim of increasing parental knowledge and confidence around child development through all stages of the parenting journey. The courses aim to nurture emotional health and wellbeing so that our children can thrive as kind, sociable and emotionally aware people throughout their lives. [inourplace | Solihull Approach – South Gloucestershire | inourplace](#)
- **NHS website:** Advice for parents on a range of parenting issues, including talking to teenagers, fussy eating and teenage aggression. Website: [Live Well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- **Anxiety UK** - Has lots of information and includes ways to help your child [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](#)
- **Caring for Communities and People (CCP)** – Offer outreach support for families at an early help level. Families can self-refer. [Home \(ccp.org.uk\)](#)
- **Off The Record (OTR)** - Free, self-referral counselling service for young people age 11-15, who are experiencing low mood, depression, anxiety, phobias, self-harm, eating problems and/or anger. Young people can call, email or text, and services operate in Patchway, Kingswood and Yate. Also offer parent support groups and sessions. Can also see [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for more information and up to date groups and activities. Tel: 0808 808 9120. Website: [Home - OTR \(otrbristol.org.uk\)](#)
- **Childline:** Free counselling via online webchat, and free support/advice available 24/7 via confidential helpline, and emails via the website. Tel: 0800 11 11. Website: [www.childline.org.uk](#) [Childline | Childline](#)
- **Access & Response team South Glos Children's Services** (Safeguarding concerns & early help) - 01454866000

A tropical beach scene with turquoise water, white sand, and green foliage in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

*Thank you for attending*  
*Please don't forget to do a closing questionnaire*

*Have a lovely summer!*

# Difficulty attending school workshop

## Opening questionnaire

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Your name</b>       |  |
| <b>Children's ages</b> |  |

**What do you hope to get out of today's workshop?**

**On a scale of ☹ 0-10 😊 how worried are you about you child's struggle to attend school currently? -**

Any comment?

**On a scale of ☹ 0-10 😊 how confident are you in supporting your child with difficulties attending school -**

Any comment?

**Anything else you would like to tell us?**

## Difficulty attending school workshop

### Closing questionnaire

|                                                                                                                        |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Your name</b>                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>On a scale of ☹ 0-10 ☺ how confident are you in supporting your child with difficulties attending school -</b>      |  |
| Any comment?                                                                                                           |  |
| <b>On a scale of ☹ 0-10 ☺ how helpful has this workshop been for you? -</b>                                            |  |
| Any comment?                                                                                                           |  |
| <b>Following today's workshop is there anything else you feel you need, or would like information or support with?</b> |  |
|                                                                                                                        |  |
| <b>Any ideas, comments, or suggestions on ways we can improve or follow up on this initial workshop in the future?</b> |  |
|                                                                                                                        |  |

*Thank you for you attending the workshop today and for your time completing our questionnaires*

*Goodbye for now and take care, from Carie, Claire & Emma*