

# Pandemic Response: Support for Schools.

Leicester City Psychology Service  
2020 -2021



## CONTENTS PAGE

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Psychology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are all connected</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• 5 key principles of recovery</li> <li>• A graduated response to recovery</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>
<b>Supporting staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness</li> <li>• Ethos and environment</li> <li>• Promoting help-seeking</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>	<b>7</b>
<b>Supporting pupils</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising the impact of thoughts and feelings on behaviour - An Attachment Aware Approach</li> <li>• Creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom</li> <li>• Activities promoting connectedness and resilience</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>
<b>Advice for parents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to help manage anxiety</li> </ul>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1: Writing to Heal</li> <li>Appendix 2: Mindfulness based breathing activities</li> <li>Appendix 3: Emotion Coaching</li> <li>Appendix 4: Cook &amp; Talk - Fruit Salad Activity</li> <li>Appendix 5: An Introduction to MAPs Making Action Plans or Mapping Alternative Pathways</li> <li>Appendix 6: Additional resources</li> </ul>	<b>27</b> <b>28</b> <b>30</b> <b>32</b> <b>34</b> <b>35</b>

# Introduction



**Relationships, Relationships, Relationships; promote them as an intervention. Relationships are the first things we use to support our recovery from adversity.**

The City Psychology Service, the educational psychologists in Leicester, have produced this document as guidance for schools to help foster relationships, resilience and (when needed) recovery as a result of the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic

It will be important to remind ourselves that, a school plays a crucial role in developing and maintaining protective relationships and building resilience and strength: of the children, the staff, the parents/carers and the whole school community. Moreover, this role should be celebrated.

The guidance is intended for use by teachers and support staff in all schools. As general guidance, it will need tailoring to your specific setting and individual children's needs.

We recognise that each school is unique and understands its own children and community better than anyone else. This guidance is therefore designed to offer suggestions from psychological research and theory which schools can interpret and implement as appropriate to them.

The ideas offered here to help build staff resilience (second section), to develop the whole school as a safe, nurturing place (third section) and to support families as part of the school community (fourth section), can build emotional resilience and our capacity to be sensitive to and support others.

The approaches suggested in the document have foundations in psychological theory, particularly the concept of 'resilience,' Background information about these theories is presented first to put them in context. We have put strategies into yellow text boxes for ease of navigation to what might be useful.

---

For bespoke training or group or individual work, please contact your link EP or the Psychology Service on:

**0116 4545470**

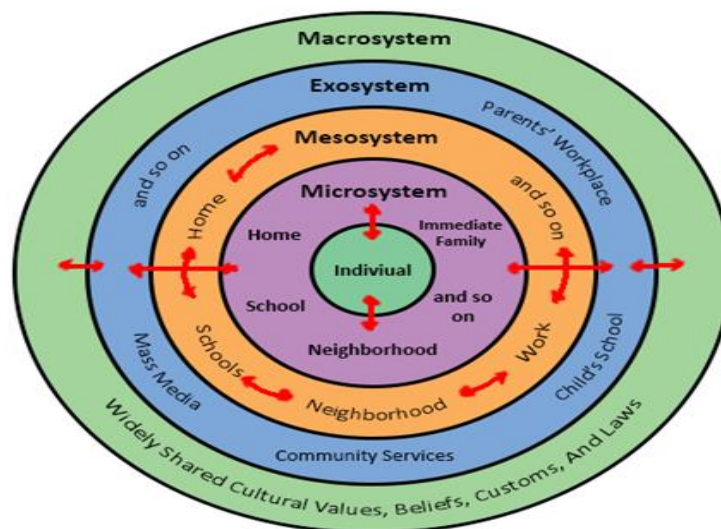
# The psychology

## We are all connected...

This guidance is founded on the principle that we are all, adults and children alike, connected with one another in a network of relationships which has helped us build whatever level of resilience (protective factors) that we have. This resilience will in turn equip us to begin any necessary recovery. Many of us, perhaps most, will be able to manage the changes back as the pandemic hopefully recedes without any problematic anxiety. For some, experiences during the pandemic may have left residual distress: others, meanwhile, will have found being away from school a relief, and anxiety may result purely from the return.

We can imagine that each of us sits at the centre of a number of concentric, interacting social 'systems,' which start with our home, family, friendships and school (or workplace). The circles continue with the web of services (health, social care) and 'big' structures (government, the law) which surround us. The American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner created this 'bioecological' model of development, using the terms 'micro-', 'meso-', 'exo-', and 'macrosystem' for the circles (See diagram on the following page).

The model can remind us of the highly significant effect that the systems closest to a child, such as school, will have on their well-being. Of course, our wellbeing will be challenged by changes in any of the systems: recently, all of our systems have been through many big, unforeseen changes for which we could only minimally prepare.



## Resilience

### How does the idea of 'resilience' fit in?

By emotional 'resilience,' we usually mean someone 'bouncing back' (or 'forwards') after adversity or challenging circumstances. For the purposes of this document, we have chosen to use this definition:

*Resilience is the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, the function, or the development of that system.*

Anne Masten (2014)

Masten also believes that "*resilience is dynamic*". It can change across time, context and situation and individual resilience depends on the resilience in other parts of the system

Our capacity for resilience comes, therefore, from the interaction between many different parts of our lives that are connected like the concentric circles in Bronfenbrenner's model above. It is easy to identify different parts of, or systems in, pupil's lives that interact and will have a bearing on their resilience.

Research and practice tell us that school communities and individuals can, and do, recover from adverse events by drawing on their existing strengths and resources. They 'learn to surf the waves' of adversity, building resilience: this can be seen at individual and organizational levels.

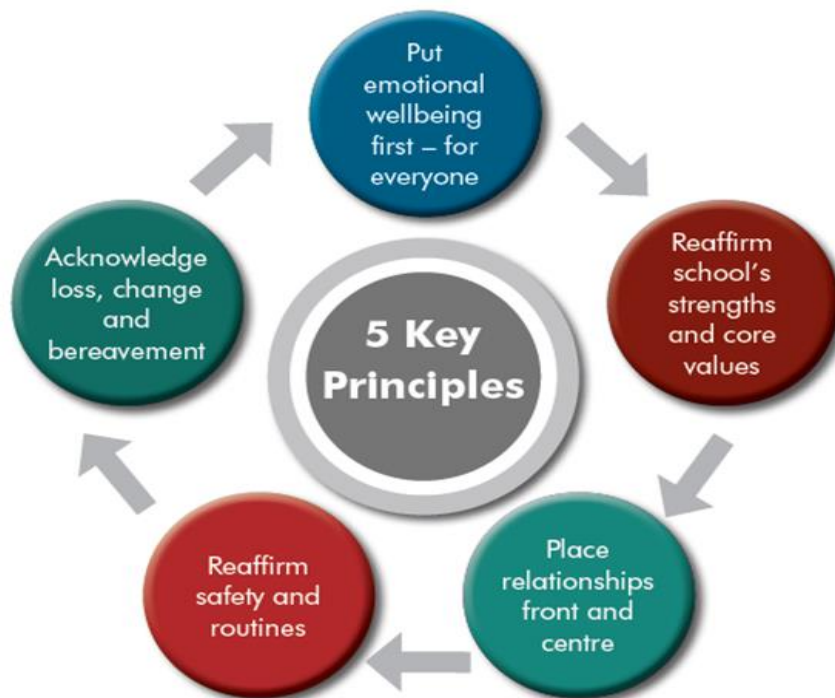
Promoting resilience is not to ignore the potential for trauma or harm. Rather, '*resilience models emphasize positive influences without discounting risks and vulnerabilities*' (Masten, 2011). The approaches suggested in this document subscribe to the view that there is space for a narrative that explores assets, strengths, hope and coping.



## 5 Key Principles of Recovery

Some key protective factors for pupil's emotional well-being and resilience will already exist at school without any need for specialist interventions or knowledge. For example, children's relationships at school and an ethos which prioritises emotional health and wellbeing both contribute significantly (Public Health England, 2016). These are the foundations of the **5 Key Principles of Recovery**. Anne Masten (2001) calls these "*ordinary magic*". Of course, there is no 'magic.' This means that the relationships we hold with each other are special, yet ordinary, and can aid recovery and develop resilience.

These principles can be applied at a whole school level, and at an individual level to promote recovery. The application of universal, whole-school guiding principles is particularly important following a whole-community experience, when the impact on individuals may be unclear. There is also strength in children and adults experiencing shared recovery (Maslow, 1987; Herman, 2015; Masten, 2018; AEP 2020).



# Supporting staff

*“The new focus on children’s mental health serves as an important reminder to us that we must couple support for school staff with the ambitions we have for children’s wellbeing. If we don’t, we will be letting down all school staff. If we want our school staff to do what’s asked of them, then we need to make sure that their mental health and wellbeing is effectively supported.”*

**Professor Peter Fonagy,  
CEO of the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**

The promotion of staff resilience and wellbeing should continue to be explored. Taking good practical and emotional care of staff will help them perform to the best of their ability and ensure that they are better able to support pupils. Workloads, deadlines and challenging behaviours can all impact negatively on the wellbeing of school staff.

## Fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness

Nurturing relationships between staff need not be a time-consuming process; as shown above, resilience is often conceptualised as ‘ordinary magic’. Taking advantage of everyday opportunities to build in this relational support, and opportunities to connect, may help teachers feel valued and ‘held in mind’. Teachers frequently report that relationships with colleagues are key to their resilience. Evidence shows that wider personal relationships, and the ability to draw on support networks such as friends and family, are also beneficial to teacher resilience as they can:

- help build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow you to support others



## Ethos and environment

The ethos and environment of the school will affect staff wellbeing. It is important to build a culture of trust where school staff feel valued and know how to get support. When thinking about the school environment and your staff wellbeing strategy consider:

- The physical environment – do staff members have a space which is dedicated to the staff team and where they can go for time out? While schools will have had to think carefully about the use of shared spaces in line with the public health guidance, is there a staff space which is appealing and comfortable?
- Policies and procedures –are there clear policies and procedures around staff wellbeing, and are the same processes and expectations applicable to all staff? Are policies and processes implemented clearly and equitably?
- Is there clear communication to staff about both internal and external pathways to support? Do staff members know how to access support (both personal and professional) and where they can find more information? Are active listening principles taken on board? These means respect, genuineness, being non-judgemental and fully focused on the other person, 'open' body language and not rushing to solutions or advice-giving.
- Does the culture and ethos of the school encourage open communication, particularly when it comes to talking about concerns? Are all staff members' concerns given equal weight?

## Promoting help-seeking

Research has shown that teachers can perceive help-seeking behaviour as evidence of failing or weakness. Teachers have also reported, however, that both seeking help and being able to give help significantly contribute to their own sense of resilience.

To foster teacher resilience through supporting help-seeking:

- all school staff should model help-seeking behaviours;
- ask explicitly if staff may need additional support and what this might look like;
- encourage staff to seek help from peers – teachers report particularly valuing using peers as sounding boards or engaging in activities together. School might explore mindfulness or being active together with peers or students; and
- Senior leaders can invite feedback, e.g. during staff check-ins or briefings.



## Learning

Teachers value the opportunity to learn and develop their sense of self-efficacy (the beliefs we have in our own abilities) and this in turn cultivates resilience. At this time many teachers have and may continue to experience feelings of self-doubt, particularly as they try to develop ways of teaching and supporting. Staff teams will be learning from successes and failures every day, adjusting plans, trying new things out and reflecting on this. Such an approach is likely to enhance resilience.

To continue to foster resilience through learning, staff teams might like to:

- engage in initiatives that promote team reflection, such as a virtual staffroom; and
- trial a solution-focused approach with a specific focus on doing more of what is working well.

These suggestions should be considered alongside other advice from national and regional government, the local authority, the NHS and relevant unions about how to support your own wellbeing.



# Supporting pupils

## Recognising the impact of thoughts and feelings on behaviour - An Attachment Aware Approach

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

For many schools a key challenge will be working out how to uphold boundaries and school rules during this transition period, particularly for those pupils who are vulnerable and may have experienced lockdown as a frightening and distressing time. We know that consistent boundaries help pupils feel safer and that school needs to feel as predictable as possible after an experience that has been so unpredictable. Knowing how to balance this with some pupils' needs to access more intensive support can feel challenging.

### What do adults need to be aware of?

Whole school behaviour policies usually work for the majority of pupils, but not all. Those who have experienced **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** (*traumatic life experiences that occur before the age of 18*) are less likely to respond to them. This could also be true of any pupils who have experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma or bereavement as a result of the pandemic. As is true of pupils who experience ACEs, most of these pupils will be likely to manage without special provision, in spite of their experiences: 'resilience factors' can outweigh the risk that the ACEs bring. They will be, however, individuals with increased vulnerability.

### Some groups to be especially aware of:

- Pupils who have experienced significant loss or bereavement.
- Pupils and siblings of pupils who have been shielding during the pandemic as a result of underlying health conditions:
- Pupils with existing social, emotional and mental health needs,
- Pupils with other known special educational needs or disabilities.
- Looked After Children, those with a Child in Need plan or who are subject to a Child Protection Plan or any children who are experiencing some form of home instability or stress.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language  
Pupils who came with Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker status who may have previous experiences of trauma.

For these pupils, approaches focusing mainly on behaviour can have further negative effects and tend not to develop more socially acceptable ways of expressing emotions.

Pupils respond to adversity in a range of ways. Not all will experience cause lasting distress and some children may recognise their own resilience. Others will experience changes in their capacity for learning and in their physical and psychological wellbeing which may indicate temporary confusion and uncertainty or underlying, ongoing distress.

While some pupils might respond by withdrawing or appearing unusually needy, others can display 'acting out' behaviours that communicate a clear emotional need. All of us tend to make judgements about behaviour (e.g. 'mad'/'bad'). If we can remind ourselves to view all behaviour as an indicator of emotion to which we have the choice to respond in an empathic and caring manner – even when a young person acts in a way that hurts or frightens others – we will be making a good start.

## What might help....

- Providing a safe, high nurture, high structure, environment, in which adults respond consistently, and maintain clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour is important: especially when other areas of a pupil's life may not feel as structured. Such consistency is emotionally containing for pupils. (see '*creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom*' below).
- Trust your instincts regarding when to ignore low level behaviour. Reflecting on whether pupils would typically behave like this, or whether it is "out of character" will help in making informed judgements. Hold on to the importance of **flexibility** for these pupils.
- Discuss the relationship between behaviour, thoughts and feelings with pupils, and how we often use our behaviour to communicate our feelings: particularly when we are unable to label the emotion.
- An '**authoritative**' approach, where adults are containing, consistent and assertive, rather than an '**authoritarian**' approach, where they are 'controlling and critical.
- We know that fostering **connection, inclusion, respect and value** for all members of the school community helps pupils feel a sense of belonging which incorporates being heard, understood and cared about. This provides a context in which they can start to express their emotions in a more socially acceptable way.



## Implementing an Attachment Aware Approach

- Recognise behaviour as a form of communication - the behaviour might be a very normal response to adverse life experiences
- Promote a positive approach - offer specific and descriptive praise or discrete non-verbal feedback
- Differentiate expectations - set the expectations so that children and young people aren't set up to fail
- Differentiate response - express disapproval of the behaviour and not the person
- Relationships first - 'Engage, don't Enrage' - empathy comes before problem-solving around the behaviour
- Small actions can make a big difference - smiling at or greeting a child or young person on their way into school can really add to their sense of belonging
- Don't expect immediate results or returns - a child or young person might be dismissive of you but this doesn't mean that your actions weren't valued
- Expect sabotage from some children or young people and name it, where appropriate - '*Name it to tame it*' (Siegel and Bryson, 2011, *The Whole-Brain Child*).
- Recognise that what you feel is a likely indication of how the child or young person feels

## Creating a resilient and well-being focus classroom

As much as being back at school may feel like a relief, or even exciting for some pupils, it may be a time of anxiety for others: particularly those who have underlying health conditions or who live with someone who is shielding. They may have learnt to associate feeling safe with 'staying at home', 'social distancing' and frequent handwashing. Many of us will need to learn new ways to carry on feeling safe whilst connecting with our friends and learning alongside peers back at school. By modelling how they are following the latest government and scientific guidelines and by setting clear expectations about how we can all look after ourselves and each other, teachers can help to create reassuring classroom environments. This may take time. The idea of a *transition period* will be important, rather than rushing – or putting unnecessary pressure on ourselves or each other to feel or get back to normal – as we develop new ways of learning together.

### Create a safe classroom and school environment

For pupils to feel safe, schools and classrooms need to be high in nurture and structure and to be predictable and organised, with clearly stated, reasonable expectations. It is important for adults to remind pupils of the arrangements that continue to stay the same, highlight the new arrangements and allowing pupils to ask questions and discuss how things will work. Ground rules focusing on how we can keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible can be co-constructed with groups: class reviews will allow for changes and adaptations in response to new developments. New routines and boundaries can be discussed and agreed to reassure and allow young people to negotiate their day with confidence.

### Help pupils to regulate their emotions so that they can learn

In addition to having a calm classroom, teaching pupils strategies to self-calm is useful and conducive to creating a positive learning atmosphere. Prior to feeling calm, opportunity for movement and the expenditure of energy is sometimes needed. Pupils who seem to be particularly jumpy, anxious, nervous or on edge may find that a brief time out (outside, perhaps) or even being able to get out of their seat and hand out sheets for a class task allows them to resettle

## Talk about feelings

Having posters around the classroom that provide words for feelings and emotions and cueing pupils into their feelings are strategies that develop emotional literacy. They help pupils to understand their own and others' feelings. If a pupil seems particularly upset, distressed or angry, it is important to first let them calm down – perhaps have some time out of the classroom – before helping them to identify their feelings.

## Believe that students can achieve academic success

The temptation to expect less from pupils after frightening events is common. Their capacity for concentration may be affected but it can be re-developed through good teaching strategies, support and time. Make all expectations clear, break tasks down to subtasks and provide supportive, clear feedback during and after each subtask to check that the student is on task and has understood it correctly. Scaffold the task and the skills required to learn. Acknowledge successes and provide explicit feedback on what has been achieved.

## Restore a sense of control and personal efficacy

Provide a place to calm down such as a 'peaceful corner' or a quiet reflective area in school where pupils can take quiet time out to reduce stimulation and regain composure. Zoning out with music, spending time in libraries, beanbag areas for chilling out with creative arts or a game of basketball have all been found useful. Talk to pupils about how they can support their own sense of well-being by building positive actions into their daily life.

*'Keeping active, connecting with others, taking notice, giving and keeping learning.'*

## Build strengths and capacity

Every pupil has strengths, hopes and dreams. Investigate these with solution focused conversations: asking with interest, 'what are you good at? And what else?' ...then 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 pupil to experience success and help them work out other areas in which they can put these skills to use. Sometimes they will need help to make the connections and generalise the skills.

Social scientists tell us that everyone possesses all 24 character strengths (below) in different degrees, and these are universal across cultures and nations. Ask pupils to identify their top 5 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 pupils to be their best helps bring a sense of personal control and achievement to day-to-day life.

*Values in Action Character Strengths Based on Mindfulness in School Project .b and Paws.b materials*





## Be hopeful and optimistic

Some pupils may experience a loss of trust in the world after something as unpredictable as a global pandemic. Modelling optimism, encouraging them 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 pupils to feel less optimistic about the future after such events. Reminding them of their strengths, hopes and dreams and providing opportunities for them to achieve and experience success will help them to take a positive view of their lives. Remember that optimism can be taught and is contagious.

## Offer engagement, social connection and trusting relationships that are built on respect and positive regard

Communities and societies provide resources which are key to facilitating resilience - being part of a social group is protective and can help people overcome adverse events. Unexpected events such as a global pandemic with consequent social distancing, however, can change communities (including schools). School provides a community of care for pupils. It is through their relationships with friends and teachers that pupils can begin to recover from and make sense of the events.



### Remember...

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

## Activities promoting connectedness and resilience

During global pandemic, alongside accounts 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 pupils to share their stories about ways in which people in their community helped each other: for example, neighbourhood delivery networks springing up to bring medicines or shopping to people who can't get out. We can reflect on what might have perhaps changed for the better or what has been brought into sharper focus for us. We have heard about potential climate benefits from reduced industrial activity and road traffic and expanded bike lanes, leading to air pollution plummeting and birdsong returning to neighbourhoods.

Depending on the age of the pupils, activities listed below may be helpful in **promoting connectedness and resilience**. Teachers 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 them that do not make them feel 'different' or less relevant in any way. For older pupils team projects can develop a sense of shared experience and togetherness. 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

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, TikTok 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 1 (p31) for a Writing to Heal activity handout*

Strategies and approaches that have really helped when things have felt tough: mindfulness for example, or sharing stories about social activities that stand out for them. *See Appendix 2 (p32) for Mindfulness Based Breathing Activities.*

Cook & Talk activities. It's important to try to find times to relax and have fun even when scary or sad things have happened. Talk about a time when you were able to relax and have fun. *See Appendix 4 (p36) for a Cook & Talk Fruit Salad activity sheet.*

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.*

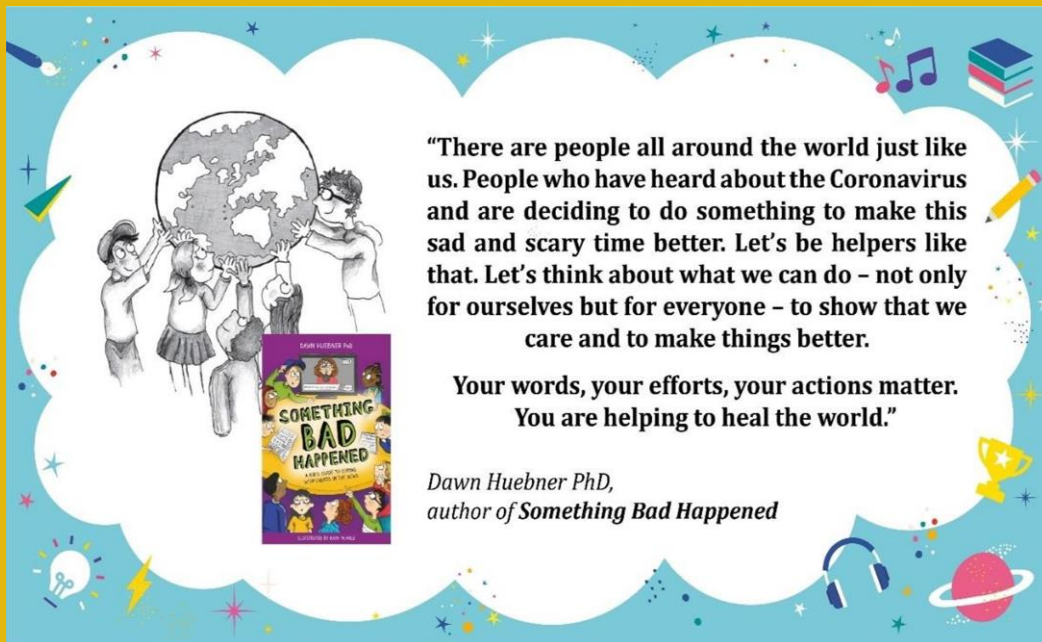
WORDLES can be helpful in allowing young people to explore the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing - using online tools, children can generate word clouds from the text that they input



**Discussing and sharing information** with pupils should be sensitive to a their willingness to talk and share: some may prefer to listen. However, difficult discussions should *not* be avoided as this communicates that some subjects are shameful or even too scary for adults to talk about. Euphemisms for death such as ‘went to sleep’ should always be avoided: instead use ‘died’.

## Reading Well - Books on Prescription!

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



**“There are people all around the world just like us. People who have heard about the Coronavirus and are deciding to do something to make this sad and scary time better. Let’s be helpers like that. Let’s think about what we can do - not only for ourselves but for everyone - to show that we care and to make things better.**

**Your words, your efforts, your actions matter.  
You are helping to heal the world.”**

*Dawn Huebner PhD,  
author of **Something Bad Happened***

# Advice for Parents/carers:

Please see this section as advice for parents which you may wish to print or share with them so that they can support their child at home.

Many pupils will have returned back to school with no problematic anxiety. Some will have been worried or even fearful and may still be.

## Opportunity or challenge?

**Helping a child:** Be 'emotionally containing:' show you know they may be anxious and that you're not overwhelmed by it. This can help them to keep calm.

Keep conversations relaxed and try to keep them going back and forth in a natural, comfortable way: these are called 'reciprocal' conversations.

## Is it normal to feel anxious?

Yes it is! All of us will feel anxious at some points in our lives. At difficult times anxiety or worry are normal.

**What's it like?** Anxiety can make our hearts race, leave us short of breath, put butterflies in our stomach and have us looking out for danger more than we need to – 'hypervigilance.' These are normal effects of anxiety. They are not dangerous and will nearly always pass.

Anxiety can mess up our thinking and decision making, because a part of the brain, which controls rational thinking and decision making, comes to a virtual standstill when we are anxious or angry.

## Will Anxiety go away?

Most anxiety will pass on its own. Sensitive support (containing, reciprocal: see first section) alone usually helps anxiety pass. If more is needed, start with this idea: children need to feel *seen, safe, soothed and secure* to thrive:

**Seen:** feeling noticed and understood

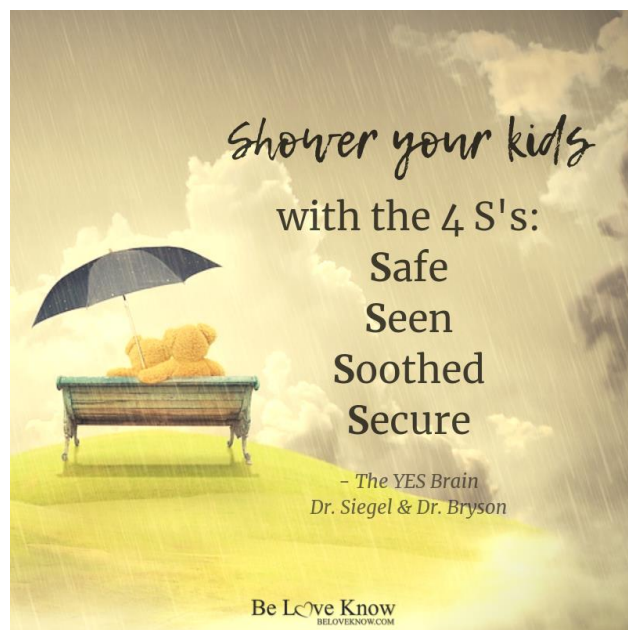
**Safe:** avoid frightening or hurting children, even unintentionally. See [Getselfhelp.co.uk CBT self help and therapy resources](http://Getselfhelp.co.uk) for help managing your own emotions to support this.

**Soothed:** helped to notice, label and manage emotions. Saying things like “I can see you are feeling quite cross/sad/worried at the moment. Can you explain what’s up? What can we do to help you feel better?”

**Secure:** provided with a secure base including attachment to others: then heading out (to school, or elsewhere) with confidence is more likely.

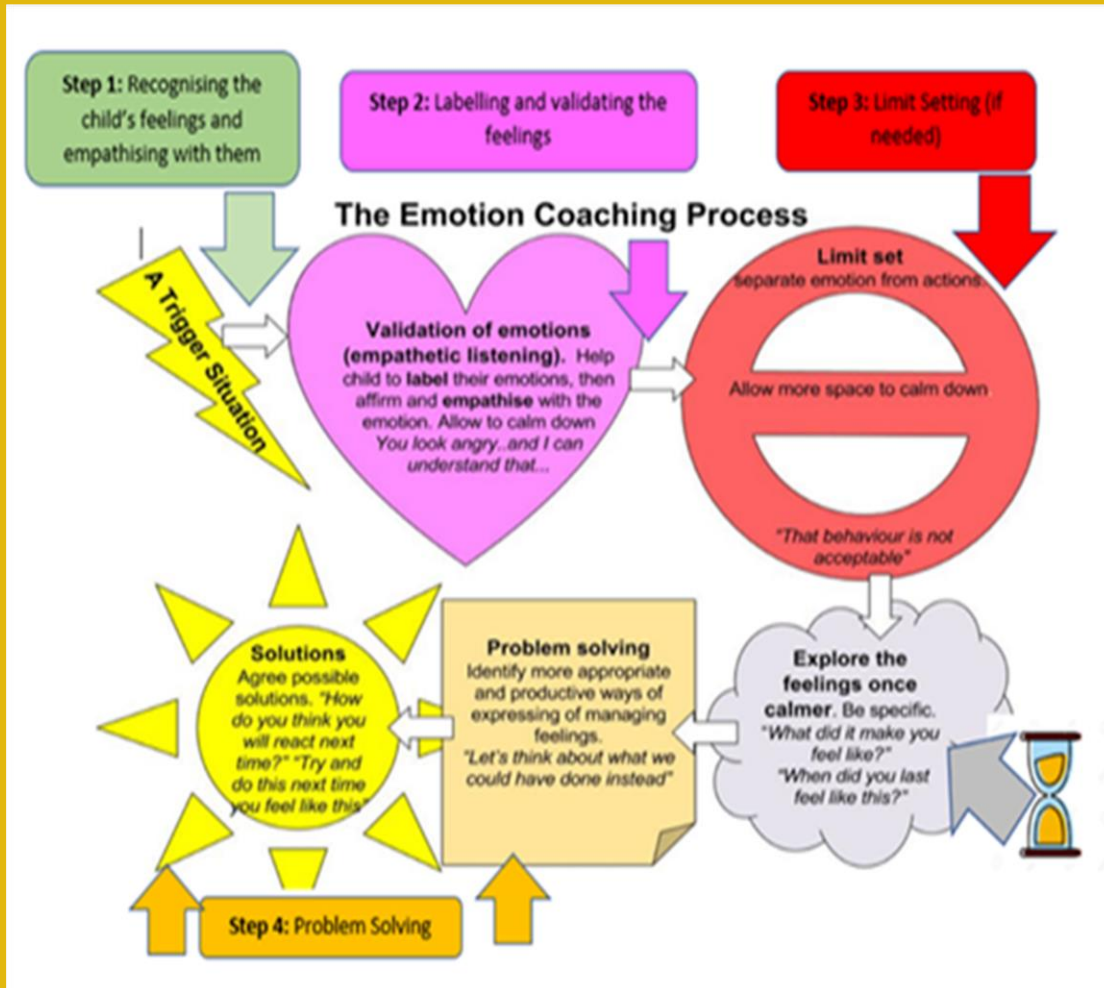
## Strategies to help manage anxiety

Managing anxiety means learning how to get through it, not making it go away. This helps build resilience and the ability to ‘self-regulate’ your feelings: to manage your own emotional thermostat. Many children and young people will need some adult help with this this, to recognise and cope with difficult emotions: we call this ‘co-regulation.’ Below are some suggestions on how to achieve this.



# Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching teaches children emotional regulation. Its 5 steps are 'be aware,' 'connect with your child,' 'listen to your child,' 'name the feelings out loud' and 'problem solve together.'



*If you would like more information, please refer to Appendix 3*

## Calm Breathing

(see also Appendix 2 for more details)

Quick shallow breathing can go hand in hand with anxiety. Breathe in deeper and longer for calmness and health. Breathe IN through the nose, and OUT through the mouth, slowly counting three for each. Your breath is like a wave, going slowly in and out of your body.

**Belly Breathing:** There's a balloon in your tummy! You breathe in – up it goes. Breathe out – deflation. Put your hand on your tummy and feel it in action: your tummy rising with the in-breath and falling with the out-breath. Repeat 5 or 7 times.

**Handy breathing:** Put one fore-finger on the opposite thumb's outside edge. Slowly trace the forefinger around each of the other hand's fingers. Breathe in when the fore-finger is going 'up' and out when it's going 'down.' Don't miss a finger, no cheating!

Or if baking's more appealing (substitute for a healthy alternative where appropriate):





## **Young Minds Parents' Helpline**

Free, confidential online and telephone information and advice for any adult worried about the emotional problems, behavior or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

**0808 802 5544**

(Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4pm)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

# Acknowledgements

The Psychology Service would like to acknowledge thanks to the following services and organisations who have made their resources public and/or given permission to use their materials in this document:

- Association of Educational Psychologists ([https://www.aep.org.uk/recovery-re-introduction-renewal/ August 2020](https://www.aep.org.uk/recovery-re-introduction-renewal/August%202020))
- Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulations Guidance: Brighton and Hove
- BiBorough Educational Psychology Consultation Service
- British Psychological Society  
(<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Resilience%20and%20coping%20-%20supporting%20transitions%20back%20to%20school.pdf>)
- Emotion Coaching (*Rose & Gus, 2017*)
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2018)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Writing to Heal

Reference Viv Griffith Children and War Foundation  
Childrenandwar.org.uk

### 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

## Appendix 2: Mindfulness Based Breathing Activities

Based on *Mindfulness in School Project .b* and *Paws.b* materials

### Finger Breathing

- 1) Rest your hands on your lap or a table and tune into the feeling of your breathing.
- 2) Feel the in and out movements of your breath wherever you notice it in your body.
- 3) Then hold one hand up to your face and use a finger from the other to trace up and down each of the fingers.
- 4) Trace the flow of breath with your finger, pausing when you get to each fingertip at the end of the in-breath and at the bottom of each finger at the end of the out-breath.
  - If your mind wanders, that's ok, just begin again whenever you need to at the next in-breath or out-breath you notice.



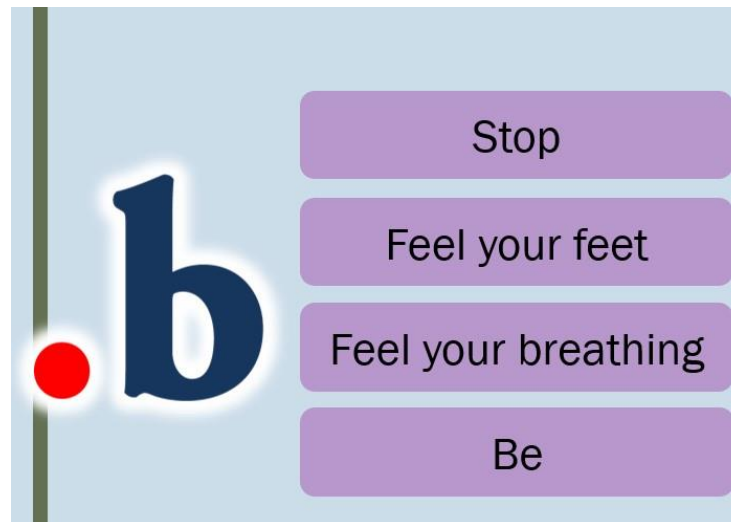
## Stop and breathe

There's rarely time to do a lengthy meditation exercise during the day. Instead, it is possible to do a brief ".b" to freshen your awareness, change mental gear, and wake up to exactly what's going on in the moment. Doing a .b is a quick way to help your brain change mode – from being busy and thinking to sensing and being. The basics of mindfulness are summed up in this practice. Shifting mode, or changing the gear of the mind is the "Core Skill" of mindfulness.

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

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

NOW! A very easy one to do with pupils- in the moment- if they are especially anxious or upset. Anchoring and calming.

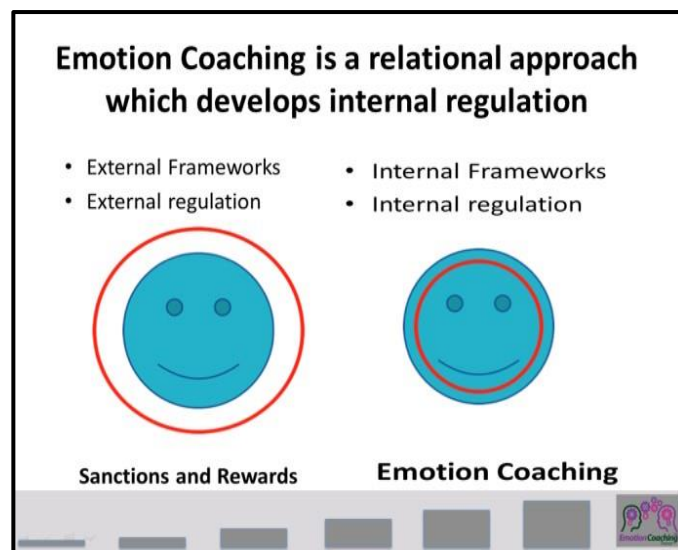


### Appendix 3: Emotion Coaching (Rose & Gus, 2017)

*Emotion coaching builds a power base that is an emotional bond – this creates a safe haven, a place of trust, a place of respect, a place of acceptance, a sense of self. This in turn leads to pupils giving back respect and acceptance of boundaries’.*

*From Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton & Hove Schools*

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



*The following principles are central to Emotion Coaching:*

Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton & Hove Schools

- All emotions are natural and normal, and not always a matter of choice
- Behaviour is a form of communication
- Emotional 'first aid' (calming, soothing) is needed first: 'connect before re-direct' (Siegel, 2013), 'Rapport before reason' (Riley, 2009)
- Children cannot successfully self-regulate their emotions unless they have experienced and internalised co-regulation i.e. an adult tuning in/empathising with their emotional state and thus 'containing' - sharing, supporting and carrying- their emotional state.

## **What Emotion Coaching means in practice**

(how co-regulation works)

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

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

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

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

## Appendix 4: Cook & Talk - Fruit Salad Activity

Adapted by Jane Roller Senior Educational Psychologist ©Bi-Borough EPCS with thanks to Localwelcome.org



This recipe is vegan and does not contain any of the 14 major allergens

Ingredients

Total ingredients needed (for 8)	Ingredients per pair
4 small cups of fresh strawberries	1 small cup of fresh strawberries
4 small cups of green seedless grapes	1 small cup of green seedless grapes
4 firm bananas	1 firm banana
1 cantaloupe melon	2 slices of cantaloupe melon
4 Granny Smith apples	1 Granny Smith apple
4 kiwi fruit	1 kiwi fruit
Fresh Orange juice	1 small cup of orange juice

**Preparation:** Wipe down the table. Work out how many pairs you have at the table (max 4 pairs) and work out how best to position the following utensils per pair. There should be one adult leader per group.

Divide the ingredients between pairs.

Cut the melon into slices and give 2 to each pair.

1 large bowl needed for food waste.

### **You will need (per pair)**

1 chopping board, 1 sharp knife, 1 peeler, 2 mixing bowls, 1 tablespoon.

1 large bowl for food waste, Bowls to serve, spoons to eat with.



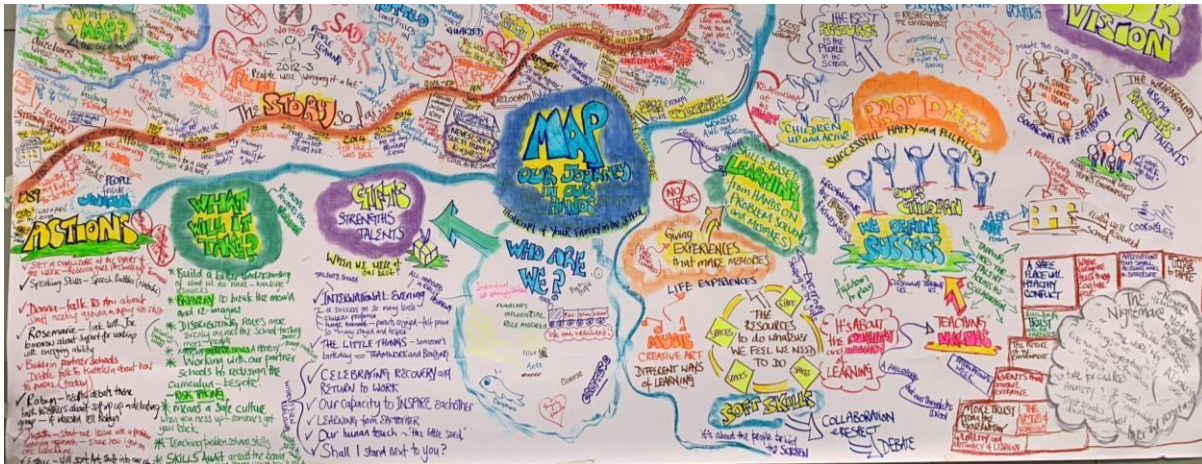
### Introductory script

*Today we're going to learn how to make some salads in pairs at our tables, and at the same time we're going to answer some questions about ways you/we have been coping and staying strong. It's important that we remind ourselves of the courage we have shown and the skills and strengths we have learned this year. We're going to talk to each other about what we have done and what has helped us to do that while we make our salads.*

Ask if there are any questions and don't forget to WASH HANDS before starting.

Steps:	Leader script and Questions for pairs:
1. Cut the tops off the strawberries and cut in half. Add to bowl.	Optional script: We all find different ways of coping during difficult times. Q: Tell your partner/ the group one way that you have tried to 'stay strong'.
2. Cut the grapes in half. Add to bowl.	Optional script: We all have different challenges to overcome. Q: Tell your partner/ the group one of the challenges you have overcome and what has helped.
3. Peel and slice the banana into small pieces. Add to bowl.	Optional script: It's important to try to find times to relax and have fun even when scary or sad things have happened. Q: Tell your partner/ the group about a time when you were able to relax and have fun.
4. Cut the melon slices into small pieces. Add to bowl.	Optional script: Sometimes there are opportunities to learn new things during times of crisis. Q: What strengths or new skills have you developed?
5. Peel and core the apple and cut into small pieces.	Optional script: When scary or sad things happen, the smallest act of kindness can have enormous power. Q: What kindnesses have you noticed and appreciated?
6. Peel and slice the kiwi fruit.	Optional script: Connecting with other people can help us stay strong. Q: What have other people done to help you?
7. Combine the fruit. Pour over the orange juice and toss to coat. Enjoy!	Optional script: Learning new things makes us more confident as well as being fun. Q: What new things would you like to learn or try next year?

## Appendix 5: An Introduction to MAPs Making Action Plans or Mapping Alternative Pathways



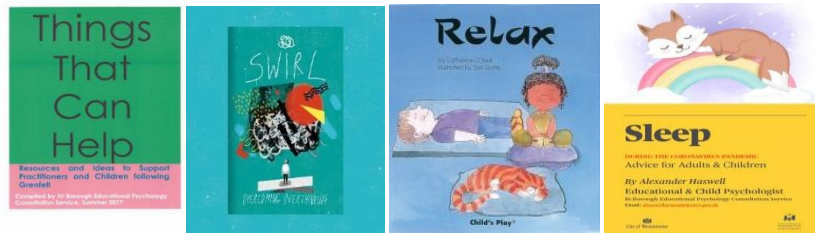
*“There are times when life’s changes call for new responses and it is good to re-tell and focus people’s stories in order to affirm their gifts, clarify what is necessary for those gifts to be well received, and make action agreements that will lead to better opportunities.” O’Brien, Pearpoint and Kahn, 2010*

MAPs is a person centred, creative, futures planning tool that can be used to facilitate an organisation in thinking around a challenge or issue *Developed by Forest, Pearpoint and O’Brien in 1980s.*

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 they 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.

## Appendix 6: Additional Resources

1. SLEEP during the Coronavirus pandemic. Alex Haswell. This and other resources available at <https://www.allsoulsprimary.co.uk/keep-calm-carry-on-reading>
2. SWIRL ZINE An uncomplicated, empowering guide for pupils to help manage worry and rumination. Andy Walton. The Swirl project <https://www.swirlzine.com/>
3. RELAX. Catherine O'Neill. Child's Play (1993). ISBN-10: 0859537897 / ISBN-13: 978-0859537896



4. WINSTON'S WISH Coronavirus related Bereavement materials for schools: How schools can support pupils; How to tell a pupil 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/>
5. GRIEF ENCOUNTER - Support for bereaved children and their families: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/> and CRUSE: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirusdealing-bereavement-and-grief>
6. TEEN BREATHE – monthly magazine available from newsagents and supermarkets.
7. WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. Marge Heegaard Woodland Press. For younger children up to 11 years.
8. WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. 'One Education' Education Psychology Team. For older pupils.



## **Leicester City Psychology Service**

c/o LCC Central Post  
Leicester  
LE1 6RN  
0116 454 5470



Leicester City Council will operate with creativity and drive  
for the benefit of Leicester and its people.

Be confident | Be clear | Be respectful | Be fair |  
Be accountable.