

NOTE: MORE DETAILED GUIDANCE ON THE 17 MINUTE
TEACHER TUTORIAL VIDEO ON THE WEBSITE

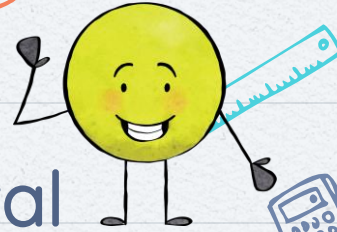


THE PROGRAMME IS...

7+ weeks (15 lessons) in total

First 2 weeks: One daily lesson (guideline amount – can be less frequent depending on the needs & capabilities of your students, & timetabling considerations, although must be at least once per week)

Subsequent 5+ weeks: One weekly lesson



B Sample

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:



Students will need:

- 1) A book or folder in which to stick/keep all their sheets from the programme, including their homework, to refer back to. The book will serve as an important tool for them.
- 2) A personal scrapbook/notebook in which to write their thoughts, draw pictures or doodles, or colour if they wish. Journalling is a proven cathartic tool for processing challenging emotions.

AN UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL SITUATION



USA: 49% of interviewed children said they were worried, while just over one third (34%) reported feeling scared, and one quarter (27%) felt anxious.

UK: 20% of the interviewed children worried about the future due to school closures, and almost 60% worried that a relative might fall sick.

Finland: 70% of participating children reported experiencing feelings of anxiety, over 55% said they were fatigued.

Indonesia: 66% of the children reported they were worried about the current pandemic, especially of falling ill with the virus.

Source: Save the Children: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/%E2%80%98children-risk-lasting-psychological-distress-coronavirus-lockdown%E2%80%99-save-children>

'CHILDREN AT RISK OF LASTING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS FROM CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN': SAVE THE CHILDREN



“While children are resilient, we cannot underestimate the impact the pandemic is having on their mental wellbeing and overall health. Children in a stable environment are likely to fare better, but many children are not so fortunate... If left unaddressed this could escalate to depression and other mental health concerns.

The mental health impacts of COVID-19 could be seen far beyond the life of the pandemic.”

(Marie Dahl, Head of Save the Children's Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Unit, 2020)

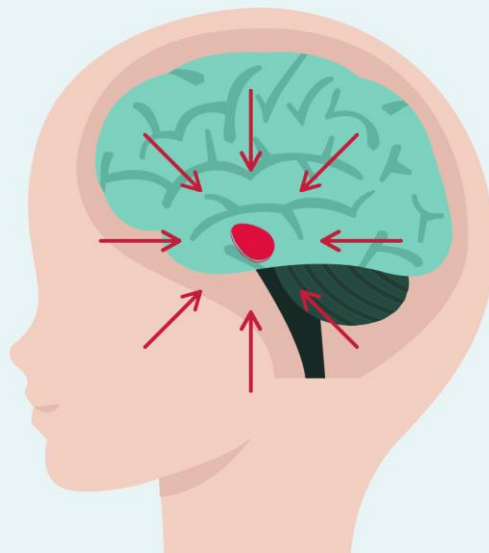
THE BRAIN AND EMOTIONS

The amygdala (or emotional 'smoke detector') is likely to be working overtime for many children on their return to school due to worry and stress.

The result: More emotional dysregulation. They'll more easily be in Fight / Flight / Freeze / Fawn mode.



LET'S LEARN MORE ABOUT EMOTIONS AND OUR BRAINS!



This small part of our brain, shaped like an almond, controls many of our emotions, such as fear or anger. It usually works well (for example it can help us get away from danger quickly) but sometimes it can over-react and get a bit out of control. Some scientists call it our "Lizard Brain".

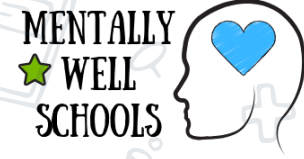
HOW WORRY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS COULD MANIFEST IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



- X Separation anxiety
- X Toileting accidents in school (& possible bedwetting at home)
- X More frequent need to go to the toilet
- X School refusal
- X Excessive need for reassurance
- X Complaints of physical ailments
- X Difficulties with concentration and attention
- X Angry outbursts verbally &/or physically
- X Self-harm
- X Crying more than usual
- X Defiant behaviour
- X Obsessive / Compulsive type behaviours e.g. about washing hands
- X Clinginess to teacher/s or friend/s
- X Quiet, withdrawn
- X Hiding
- X Perfectionism
- X Lying
- X Stealing
- X Low self-esteem and self-recrimination

Sample

STRATEGIES: VALIDATING EMOTIONS



This technique can make a huge difference in defusing strong emotions. Trying to avoid “should”s and “should not”s and passing other judgments is key (and admittedly very difficult sometimes too!)

Examples:

- If a child is lashing out verbally or physically, instead of saying, *“Why are you angry? Don’t be angry”* and effectively telling them to repress the anger, try to say something more like this: *“I understand you feel angry, it’s okay to feel angry”*, while managing the behaviour, *“And we can’t let you lash out like that,”* and then offering another way forward: *“How about you take it out on this bean bag?”*

Similarly, with a withdrawn child:

- Instead of saying, *“You should join in,”* a more effective strategy for emotional wellbeing might be to enquire: *“Is there a reason you don’t feel like taking part?”*

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES



IN THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- ✓ Mindfulness activities
- ✓ Gratitude journal
- ✓ Daily 'Worry Time'
- ✓ Reflecting on changes, as well as things that are the same as before
- ✓ Practising acceptance of self and self-compassion
- ✓ Learning how anxiety/worry, and anger, can feel in their body, & skills to calm these
- ✓ Practising compassion and kindness towards others
- ✓ Distinguishing between things they can and cannot control
- ✓ Recognising unhelpful thoughts and thinking patterns
- ✓ Learning a range of other healthy coping skills to develop a Coping Skills Toolkit which they can refer to when needed

CHILDREN WITH OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

Many of the skills and strategies will help children with additional needs, such as ADHD and students on the autistic spectrum.

However, some activities may need to be adapted.

For example: Some children on the autistic spectrum and with sensory difficulties may be unable to perceive how worry/anxiety manifests in their bodies due to challenges with their sense of 'interoception'. We've tried to include a range of strategies partly for this reason, so you and your students have options to try out what works best for them.

PREPARING FOR SECOND OR FURTHER LOCKDOWNS



- ✓ Talk to your students about the possibility of this ahead of time.
- ✓ Talk about strategies from the programme which they could use if it happens.
- ✓ Ensure they have a copy of our free COVID-19 Lockdown Resource pack for any future lockdowns:
<https://mentallywellschools.co.uk/free-covid-19-coping-skills-poster/>
- ✓ See links to possible Social Stories later in this presentation, which could help in explaining this.

A NOTE ABOUT THE CURRICULUM:

The importance of regular play, PSHE and creative time despite the pressure to catch up with core subjects to the detriment of other areas of the curriculum.



Regularly scheduling these types of activities will be vital in nourishing many of your students emotionally and helping them process the feelings which they may struggle to articulate in words. These pursuits will help mitigate feelings of stress and worry, and boost wellbeing.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAXIMUM EFFICACY FROM THIS PROGRAMME:

1

Find out from parents/carers what the situation is and has been at home including any events such as bereavements or unemployment etc. Have children exhibited any concerning behaviours at home? Ask them to keep you posted.

Share information with parents about the programme, so they can support at home.

2

Monitor students closely. Bear in mind that many will have 'regressed' in the last few months. Extra interventions of different kinds may be required.

We're here to support you in supporting your students' mental health and wellbeing.

3

Do the programme activities with the children. They will help you too, and modelling the skills will help the students. Many of the activities embody the same ideas/principles that will be in our Staff Mental Health Skills Programme.

Remember to take care of yourself too. Sign up for our Free weekly mental health and wellbeing tip for teachers if you haven't already:

<https://mentallywellschools.co.uk/free-email-tips/>

4

Post in our Online Community Forum for more support, guidance and input from us about implementing our programmes, as well as for more general advice about mental health and wellbeing in schools.

We're here to support your students, and you as well!

Sample

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES - BEREAVEMENT:

1.



2. Winston's Wish (a U.K. based charity):

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>



Offer free online bereavement training for teachers and school staff

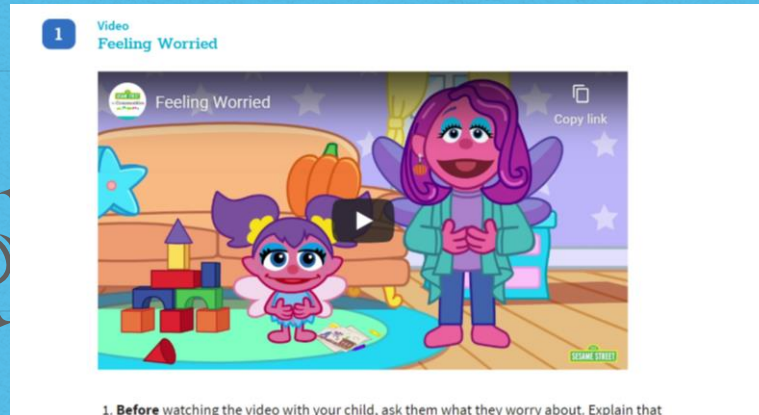


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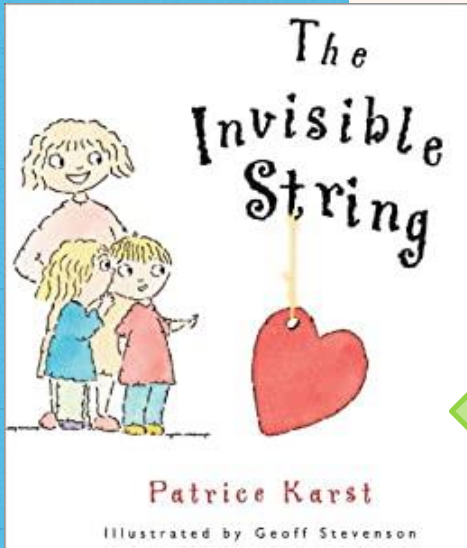
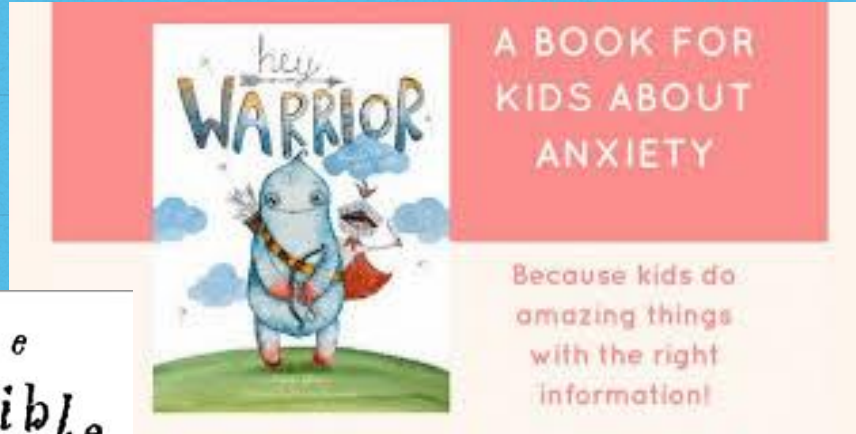
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES – ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS:

We really like a lot of the Sesame Street in Communities videos, for helping explain emotions and mindfulness skills to younger children. They are geared especially towards parents and home use, including:

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/health-emergencies/?activity=feeling-worried-bundle>



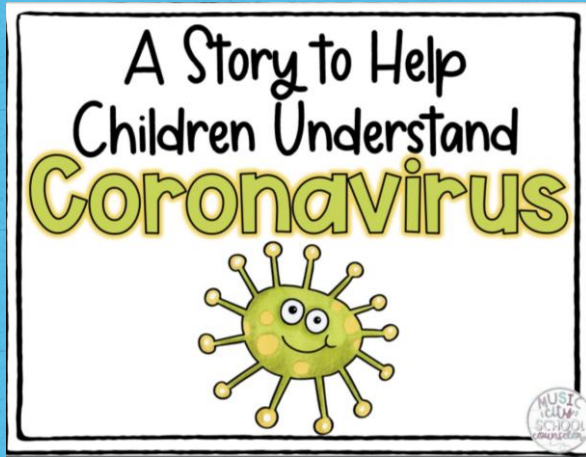
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES - BOOKS:



Good for children with separation anxiety

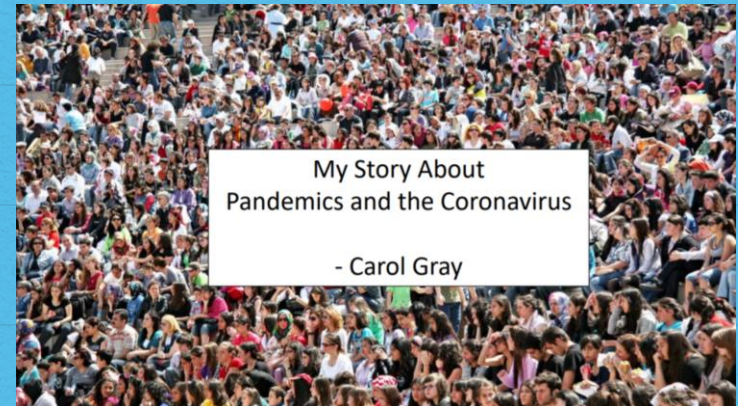


ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES – SOCIAL STORIES ABOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:



<https://musiccityschoolcounselor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Story-for-Children.pdf>

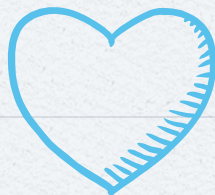
<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>





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WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU



Any questions or feedback?

You can find us in the Online Community Forum at Mentally Well Schools,
or email me directly at: ava@mentallywellschools.co.uk

CREDITS:



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