

HAPPY KIDS

at school & at home

A MONTHLY WELLBEING NEWSLETTER FOR SCHOOLS



HI! I'M CHARLOTTE...

I run the Happy Human Project which is all about empowering children with the understanding and tools to manage big feelings.

I write this newsletter for schools once a month to share my best tips, ideas and strategies for improving your children's mental and emotional wellbeing

BIG FEELINGS HOW TO SPOT THEM AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

Helping children to manage big feelings is a huge part of what I do. Not only is the world increasingly more stressful these days, but their brains are not able to think as rationally as an adult's and so emotions can overwhelm them very fast.

Our brains and bodies are always working together and experiencing emotions is a perfect example of this at play. If you've ever felt butterflies in your stomach when waiting to go on stage or do something scary, you'll be familiar with the link between the mental and physical aspects of emotion.

Learning to recognise these sensations we feel in our bodies is so important because firstly, it helps us to acknowledge and accept how we are feeling (rather than push it away because it's uncomfortable).

Secondly, it helps us to then choose better thoughts, self-regulate or seek help. It's very hard to solve a problem if you aren't even aware of it in the first place!

I wanted to share a quick 3-step check in that you can do yourself, and with children to begin to increase your awareness of your emotional state rather than becoming overwhelmed with a feeling, totally out of the blue.

This is a strategy that you can do at any time and anywhere. It's not something you should only use during tough times. I try to take 30 seconds of silence and stillness before I start teaching to do this and whilst I often find that I am feeling fine, just having the chance to stop and become fully aware of my body, thoughts and feelings is the perfect reset I need,

What's on

BIG feelings Easter Camps

Berkhamsted & St Albans

Mon-Thurs 4-14th April

Suitable for ages 5-11

Book at:

happyhumanproject.co.uk

1. Notice the physical sensations in your body

You could do this in the form of a body scan, starting at your head and moving your focus down through your body. Or, if you have some fairly obvious sensations in a particular part of your body (i.e. butterflies in your stomach, clenched fists, tense shoulders etc), then just focus on those. Notice how the sensations move, how warm or cold they are, what shape they are and perhaps even what colour they would be if you could see them. This part of the process isn't about doing anything about the sensations or feelings, but just watching and noticing them.

With children, a fun way to explore these sensations is to get them to create them either with playdough or by drawing them. Make it a fun activity to increase their engagement with you in it.

Here are two ideas I used recently with a group of children who started by mapping out emotions on a partner's body and then drew them on a piece of paper.





2. Notice any accompanying thoughts

Now take the focus away from your body and more into your mind. What are you telling yourself about what's going on or about what you're feeling right now? Perhaps you've got a few thoughts on repeat like 'I wish I hadn't said x' or 'this day at school is going to be really hard'. Again, if you can, just notice the thoughts, don't panic or try to change them. Surprisingly enough, you will find that often just noticing a thought can go a long way to calming you down.

With children that are willing, you could start to explore the voice of these thoughts and who it is that might be saying them.

3. Time to self-soothe and return to a feeling of calm

Whilst for many people this might be using a deep-breathing technique or taking a moment to meditate; for others it will be going outside for a walk or calling a friend. There is no right way for self-regulating and calming a stressed body and mind and it is so important to find what works for you.



I use a range of strategies in each of my sessions with the children for this very reason. Talking and connecting with peers, massage, gentle stretches, playing games and visualisation are all brilliant techniques to teach children so that they can start to put their own coping toolbox together.



Often we do these things without going through the two previous steps; and that's fine, too. The playground at school is so useful for this, as is the walk to and from school.



BIG FEELINGS EASTER HOLIDAY CAMP

For 5-11 years in:
Berkhamsted (4-7 Apr.)
St Albans (11-14 Apr.)

www.happyhumanproject.co.uk/bookings