



Helpful ideas to support your child's mental health



POWERFUL PHRASES

TO HELP REGULATE A CHILD

- I'm listening
- I can tell this is hard for you
- It is okay to have this feeling
- Let's try to work this out together
- If you want to be alone, that is okay. I'll be right here when you are ready to talk.
- That was a scary situation! Are you okay?
- I hear you
- Can you tell me about it?
- I'm here for you/to keep you safe
- Can you help me understand why you feel this way?

POSITIVE LANGUAGE ALTERNATIVES

TO HELP A CHILD

Calm down	How can I help you?
Stop crying	I can see this is hard for you
You're okay	Are you okay?
Be quiet	Can you use a softer voice?
Don't hit	Please be gentle
Stop shouting	Take a deep breath, then tell me what happened
Don't get upset	It's okay to feel sad
That's enough	Do you need a hug?
I don't have time	I'm here for you

How to nurture a child's mental health



Actively listen before offering your advice



Be patient



Share your feelings and validate theirs



Tell the truth



Model healthy behavior



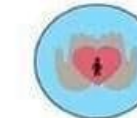
Surround them with healthy adults



Be consistent and follow through with what you promise



Teach them how to be safe



Believe them and in them



Use open ended questions



Have scheduled family time



Limit electronic time for everyone



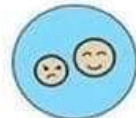
Reach out and hug them



Practice relaxation exercises together



Model forgiveness



Respond calmly when their emotions are elevated



View their behavior as a window to their needs and feelings



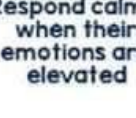
Make play and exercise a requirement



Recognize positive choices



Be present



Set and respect boundaries



Positive mental health and wellbeing makes us feel content, peaceful and valued. Use these tips to improve your mental health one letter at a time.

A ASK FOR HELP You are not alone, so reach out and ask for help	B BREATHE Focus on your breath to find a sense of calm	C CONNECT Connect with friends, family and trusted adults	D DETOX Unplug from social media and other distractions	E EMOTIONS Observe how you feel and label your emotions	F FIND SAFE PLACE Go to a place where you feel safe and at ease
G GRATITUDE Focus on the things you're grateful for	H HEALTHY HABITS Create a balanced routine with healthy habits	I INQUIRE Pause and ask yourself, 'how do I feel right now?'	J JOURNAL Use a journal to express your thoughts and feelings	K KINDNESS Be kind and compassionate to yourself and others	L LET GO! Feel more energised, by moving your body
M MEMORIES Visualise three things you are proud of	N NATURE Improve your mood by exploring the great outdoors	O OPENNESS Be open to new activities and notice what happens	P PATIENCE It's okay to not be okay, so give yourself time	Q QUIET Take quiet moments every day to reflect	R REST Be mindful, rest often and get plenty of sleep
S SUPERHERO Stand in the Superhero Pose for two minutes every day	T THOUGHTS Track your thoughts in a journal, and notice any themes	U UNIQUE You are unique, and so is your mental health	V VOLUNTEER Boost your self-esteem by giving back to others	W WORRY TIME Schedule 'worry time' to help solve practical worries	X EXCITEMENT Do more of the things that bring you joy and excitement
Y YOU MATTER!	Z ZEN				

Find out more about how Optimus Education can help boost your wellbeing at healthinschoolsuk.com

THE STRESS RELIEF GIRAFFE

OUT OF CONTROL

SCARED OF LOSING CONTROL

NERVOUS

UNSURE

CALM

WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO:

- Calm breathing exercises
- Use visualisation meditation techniques
- Body tightening exercises (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Sigh to become fully present in the moment
- Practice music therapy
- Change location / surroundings
- Use a stress ball / fidget toy
- Give themselves a 10-second hug to boost their mood
- Colour, draw, write, craft, etc.
- Practice positive self-talk / words of affirmation
- Exercise
- Go outside
- Play
- Hydrate with water

12 WAYS TO SPARK CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR CHILD



Surprise your child with an extra chapter at bedtime.

Make funny family videos and create a family showreel.



Plan a movie night with lots of popcorn.

Plan a "date night" with your child.



Take a long walk linking or holding hands.

Play your child's favourite sport with them.



Do a family drop-in yoga or meditation class.

Plan a traditional picnic in the garden.



Make up a family handshake which is fun and unique.

Enjoy a games night. Invite family and friends over to get involved.



Encourage family meal times and get everyone involved in the cooking.

Have end of week family meeting and check in with each other.



THE ANGER VOLCANO

ANGER

Anger is neither a positive or a negative emotion. However it can be an uncomfortable emotion.

If anger is not controlled, it can "ERUPT" into violence or abuse.

Like the lava from a volcano that builds the island, anger has a purpose, anger indicates something is wrong.



Anger is a secondary emotion which means there is some other emotion at play. It is important to challenge the anger to see what is behind it. These are common emotions hidden behind anger.

Helpless		Rejection
Embarrassed	Fear	Frustration
	Envy	
Disappointment		Overwhelmed
	Guilt	
Injustice		Jealousy
	Shame	

HOW ANGER AFFECTS YOUR BODY

Vision issues like tunnel vision, sensitivity to light, or blurry vision

Feelings of dry mouth

Decreased blood flow in digestive system

Slow metabolism

Increased likelihood of stroke and heart attack

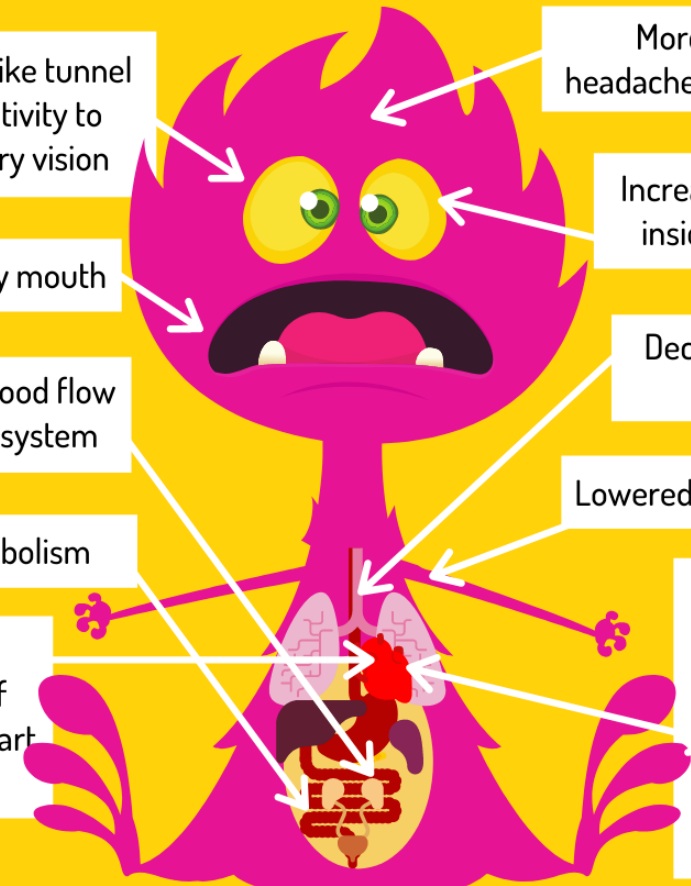
More frequent headaches and migraines

Increased pressure inside your eyes

Decreased thyroid function

Lowered bone density

Increased:
-Heart rate
-Blood pressure
-Blood glucose levels
-Blood fatty acid level



IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS: WHAT TRIGGERED ME

I felt excluded.

I felt powerless.

I felt judged.

I felt blamed.

I felt disrespected.

I felt a lack of affection.

I felt I couldn't speak up.

I felt lonely.

I felt ignored.

I felt I couldn't be honest.

I felt forgotten.

I felt manipulated.

I felt unloved.

I felt controlled.

I felt frustrated.

I felt disconnected.

I felt a lack of passion.

I felt trapped.

I felt unsafe.

I felt like it was unfair.

THE EMOTIONAL CUP

Some ways that children deal with having an empty cup:

- Steal from other people's cups
- Misbehave to get your attention and show that they need a refill
- Seem to have bottomless cups, or need constant 'topping off'
- Can't sit still for refills or actively refuse them
- Bounce off the walls when they approach 'empty'
- Think they have to fight or compete for every refill

What fills a child's cup:

- Play
- Friendship
- One-on-one time
- Love and affection
- Connection
- Succeeding
- Doing what they love



What empties a child's cup:

- Stress and strain
- Rejection by peers
- Loneliness and isolation
- Yelling and punishment
- Failing
- Fatigue
- Doing what they hate



Helping your child back to school

Plan ahead **together** - try using pictures...

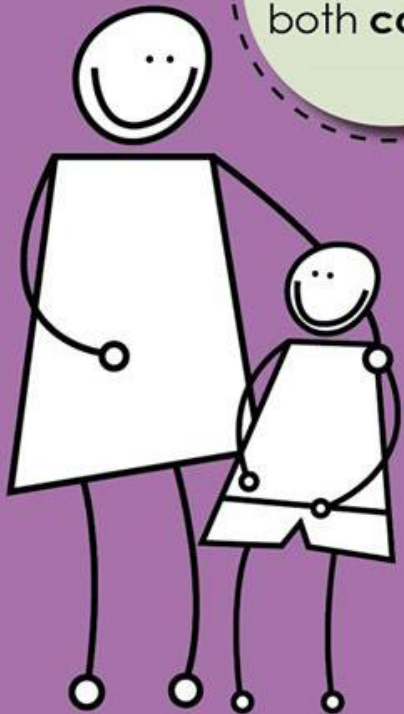
...the **morning routine**, their **uniform**, the **journey to school**

Focus on what you both **can do**

Not everything will be different - the staff, building and some routines will still be familiar

Give praise when they talk about a worry

It's OK to feel worried about change - let them know that!



SWAPPING BAD HABITS

HABIT TO CHANGE



Wake up and grab phone



Skipping breakfast



Spending money on unnecessary things



Binge watching Netflix after work



Snacking when not hungry

WHAT IT GIVES



Feeling of connection



Sense of control



Boost of mood



Relaxation and pleasure



Distracts from doing tasks

NEW HABIT



Write in journal or read a book



Drink a nutritious smoothie



Put money aside for a holiday



Workout for 30 minutes at home



Meditate for 10 minutes

SWAPPING BAD HABITS

HABIT TO CHANGE



Wake up and grab phone



Skipping breakfast



Spending money on unnecessary things



Binge watching Netflix after work



Snacking when not hungry

WHAT IT GIVES



Feeling of connection



Sense of control



Boost of mood



Relaxation and pleasure



Distracts from doing tasks

NEW HABIT



Write in journal or read a book



Drink a nutritious smoothie



Put money aside for a holiday

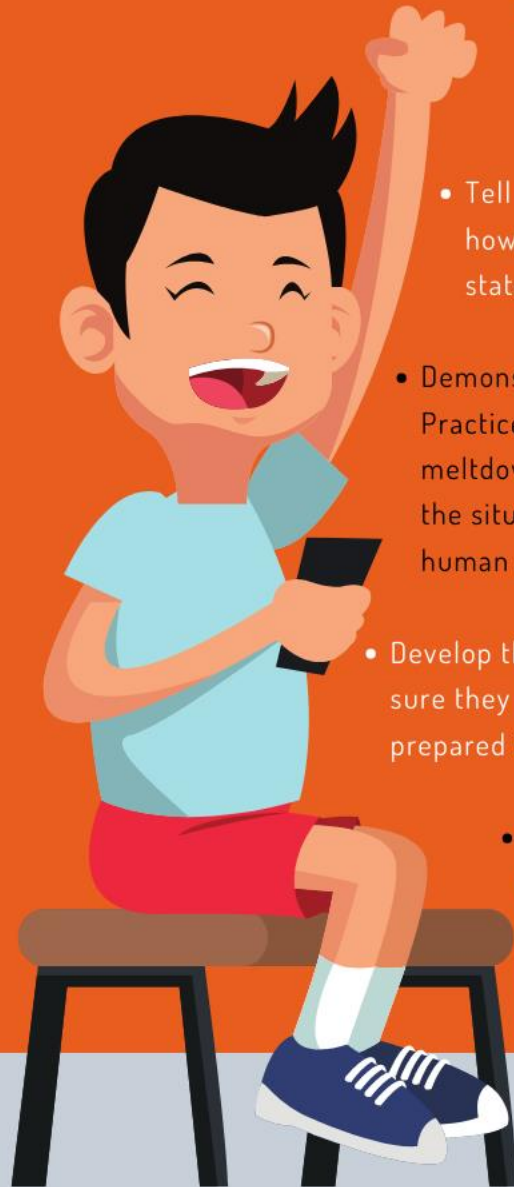


Workout for 30 minutes at home



Meditate for 10 minutes

5 TIPS TO HELP YOUR KIDS LEARN THE ART OF SELF-CONTROL



- Teach them to recognise that fear and excitement feel exactly the same! Help them reframe their fears as excitement- it's as simple as changing their mental state.
- Tell them your story. We have all dealt with our own fears - tell them how you faced a fear and realised that you'd gotten yourself into a state of panic when in reality there wasn't anything to be afraid of.
- Demonstrate how you can switch your mood by making an immediate choice! Practice your own self-control by stopping yourself mid-way through a meltdown and laugh at yourself. Apologise for 'losing the plot' and explain why the situation made you emotional. Give them a chance to recognise that you're human and the reasons why you're upset.
- Develop their control by teaching them self-calming methods and make sure they use these BEFORE facing stressful situations. Being mentally prepared is a huge help to relieve stress.
- Teach them about where emotions come from. Kids CAN actually control their emotions - if they understand HOW! And by giving them this foundation they can build positive thought patterns that last a lifetime. Talk them through the emotion - what is it they have experienced / believe that caused them to become emotional?