

Supporting Social and Emotional Wellbeing



During uncertain time it's natural to be worried. Children are generally very resilient and, in a loving and nurturing environment, will often work through problems and difficult times without needing too much additional help. These exercises will help your child explore, express and explain their worries and open up the conversation with you.

Make a worry jar to help contain your child's worries.

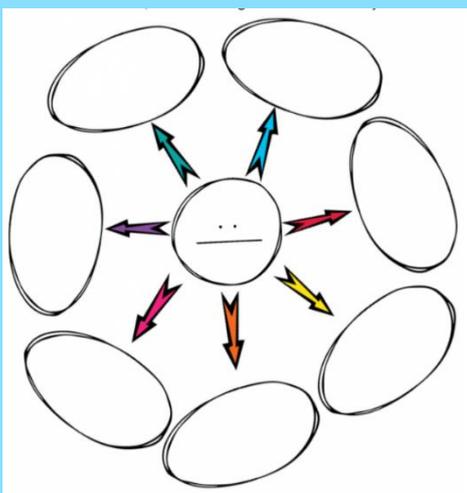
Ask members of your family what they are worrying about.

Together fill up the jar with your worries.

When you have finished, put the lid on to stop the worries getting out again.

If you notice new worries going in the jar you might get chance to read them and address them.

A brilliant way into opening a conversation is beginning with "I am wondering if you..." Sometimes all that is needed, though, is to acknowledge the worry.



Work with your child to identify what worries them.

See if, together you can change these thoughts into more positive ones.

Changing Thoughts

What are some negative thoughts that you are having about a situation? What are some positive thoughts you can have instead?

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Now it's time to
relax

Ask your child (or children) to lie down on a rug or carpet with plenty of room around them and ask them to close their eyes.

Slowly read these instructions to them in a calm, quiet voice.

1. Breathe in through your nose. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then breathe out. Take another deep breath in through your nose. Imagine your tummy is a balloon filling with air. Breathe out slowly and let the air escape quietly like a leaky balloon.
2. Stretch out your legs in front of you, and point your toes. Stretch out your arms either side of you, stretching all the way to your fingertips. Concentrate on feeling the ends of your fingertips.
3. Now you are going to tense all the muscles in your body. Begin with your toes. Curl them over so they are clenched. Then think about tensing the muscles all the way up your legs. Then the muscles in your tummy. Make it as hard as a wall.
4. Now tense your arms as well, so your arms are by your sides and even your fists are clenched. Bring your shoulders up around your ears.
5. Now scrunch up your face. Push your lips together and frown down into your face so your forehead is all crinkled.
6. Make your body go limp again. Think about each part of your body in turn going limp and relaxed: your face, your shoulders, your arms, your tummy, your legs and your toes. Imagine yourself as a floppy rag doll.
7. Take a deep breath in through your nose and breathe out again, notice how relaxed and calm you feel. When you are ready open your eyes.



Can your child identify these feelings in others?

How do these feelings make them feel?

What happens in their body when they feel like this?

Addressing feelings makes them less scary. Talking about them will help children to deal with them.