



Medway
COUNCIL

Serving You

**A BETTER
MEDWAY**
Easier ways to be healthy

Parent Resource book

Our lives are hectic and busy, always juggling and want more time?

Life can be stressful and often leaves us overwhelmed, tired and frustrated.

Remember

*You are good parents
no-one gets it right all the time
no-one is perfect
Things change in time*

This book is to help you find positive approaches to improve your own stress level, prioritise self care and support your families in developing better mental health.

At the end of this book are resources and links to further support and services you can access if you need further guidance.



Starting positive habits to foster good mental health at home for all



Mindfulness is a method of stepping away from the negative or hectic thoughts we all have in school, work or life. Mindfulness can help with stress and anxiety, as well as developing good mental health at home.

It doesn't have to take long, just 10 minutes a day can help.

Mindfulness for children can be as simple as encouraging them to take time as they eat to notice how it looks, smells and tastes. More structured mindfulness that the family could do together might include following free online videos like NHS yoga session -

NHS yoga sessions



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/yoga-with-lj/>

Or breathing exercises like this video from Every mind matters -

Every Mind Matters Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfDTp2GogaQ&t=2s>

Be kind to your mind: 5 ways to wellbeing



https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200231/mental_wellbeing/626/be_kind_to_your_mind_5_ways_to_wellbeing

Follow the above link or search Medway council 5 ways to wellbeing for further support and links available to you.



5 Ways to Well being

Connect - build your social relationships and spend time with friends or family

Be active - engage in regular physical activity

Take notice - be mentally 'present', and focus on awareness and appreciation

Keep learning - maintain a sense of curiosity and try new things

Give - make a positive contribution to the lives of others.

Making a habit of good mental health at home



Below are some things we can do that are inexpensive, free and have no time restrictions.

Spend time together – Spending time with the people we are closest too and make us feel safe, helps with our happiness and well-being. Taking time and doing things even as small as eating dinner together or watching a film can make a big difference.

Pay attention – This is where mindfulness can help. Be mindful of your feelings and emotions. Take time to focus intensively on your thoughts and why you may be experiencing the emotion you feel at that given time. You could use some of the tips on the self-care and self-help page to help look after yours and your child's well-being.

Get physical – The NHS recommends that children get around 60 minutes of activity a day, this could be anything from going on a walk to playing in the garden. To give you some ideas of activities you can do as a whole family follow the QR code below.

Change 4 life family activities



<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/activities/>

Teach your kids – Learning new things and having fun with your children whilst teaching them can build confidence, boost your child's self esteem and give them the feeling of purpose. This could be anything from a new card game, cooking, riding a bike or new physical activities.

Be generous with your time and attention – This means doing something nice like asking your children how they are doing/feeling and paying attention when they answer. Helping them with their homework and taking interest in what they are doing and enjoy.

Things you can do with your child:

Spending time with your children is important it shows love and care for them; acts as a stress buster; improves physical health; develops emotional control; promotes learning, social and language skills and thus can reduce behaviour that challenges in the family or school.

- Go to the park
- Play Jenga
- Play cards
- Go to the beach
- Cooking
- Pizza picnic
- Play a board game
- Movie night
- Lego
- Nature walk
- Scavenger hunt
- Create a space to display art work
- Go swimming
- Fruit picking
- Build a fort
- Arts and crafts
- Listen to music
- Dancing
- Create memory or mood box
- Make cards for family members
- Help them to tidy their room
- Gardening
- Create a mud garden
- Play their favourite video/computer games



Way to Connect with your child

Its important to remember that the little things matter to our children too. This is used to recognise how much time we spend together.

This is a way to reward ourselves and remind ourselves of the importance of engaging with our children, setting good habits to build positive relationships with them.

Remember you are a good parent and we sometimes get things wrong, we all make mistakes. Its important to apologise when we do and focus on the positives.

The ideas below are just suggestions of things you could be doing. Use the blank template to create your own if you want to.

Use the bubbles on the next page to measure what's going well everyday

Took a calming breath
before talking

Hugged my child
for no reason

Apologised

Did something silly, to
make my child laugh

showed kindness to my child
when they got upset






Getting to Know Myself

Have a go at answering the questions below. Its important as good role models to our children to show we know ourselves and what things we enjoy and participate in- we lead by example. Being a parent we can often feel as though we have lost our identity, knowing yourself and enjoying those things can help to rebuild the sense of self and keep our identity.

After answering the questions read your answers back this will help you get a sense of your likes and dislikes and help you to get to know yourself better.



My favourite food is	
My favourite colour is	
My favourite thing to do to pass time is	
Someone I gain support from is	
My most special memory is	
I am good at	
I feel sad when	
My most treasured item is	
I love the weather when it is	

<p>My favourite film/TV show is</p>	
<p>The sport I like to play or watch most is</p>	
<p>My favourite animal is</p>	
<p>One thing I would change at home would be</p>	
<p>I am thankful for</p>	
<p>My favourite hobby/activity is..</p>	
<p>My favourite time of year is</p>	
<p>The most exciting thing I ever done is...</p>	
<p>Our favourite thing to do as a family is.....</p>	
<p>My favourite music is</p>	
<p>My best friend is</p>	
<p>My children come to me for a hug when...</p>	
<p>When I am ill I like to...</p>	

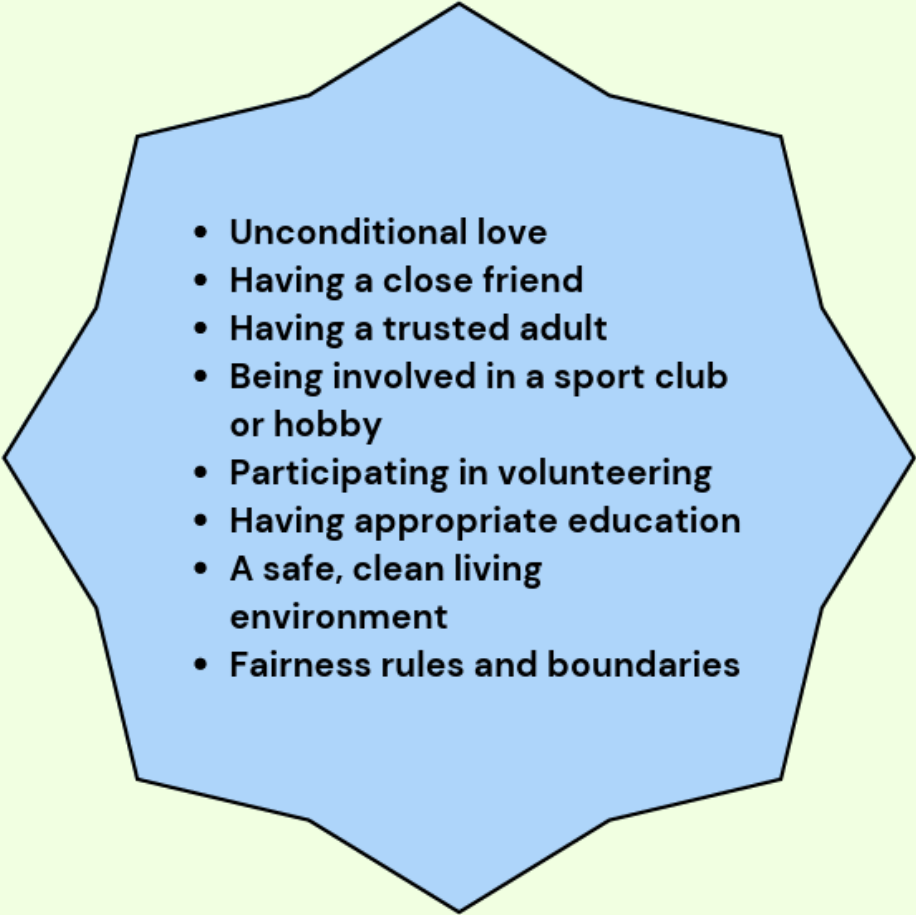
I am afraid of	
Something I would like to learn is	
The best thing that happened to me this year is	
I get embarrassed when	
If I had 3 wishes they would be	
Sometimes it is hard to keep control of my temper when	
If I could change one thing it would be	
I love it when my child/ren...	
I get frustrated when	
I feel like singing or dancing when	
A place I would like to visit is	
The best things about my child/ren are...	
When I am happy I	



PACEs

We all experience challenges in our lives and may have traumatic experiences that effect our own and families mental health.

PACEs (a **P**rotective and **C**ompensatory **E**xperience) help to build resilience and protect against the effects of physical and mental health risks of those challenging times.

- 
- Unconditional love
 - Having a close friend
 - Having a trusted adult
 - Being involved in a sport club or hobby
 - Participating in volunteering
 - Having appropriate education
 - A safe, clean living environment
 - Fairness rules and boundaries

Due to circumstances out of our control we cannot always supply all of these things but even one or two can make a big difference.

Tips for Parenting Teenagers

Chat to your teen



Taking the time to just talk in a relaxed manor lets them know you care.

Show interest in their life

Who are they? Who are their friends? What do they love? What are their opinions about music, politics, celebrities and the environment? What are they interested in?

listen to their point of view



listen with your eyes and ears, try to hear your teenagers point of view first and avoid being judgemental.

Have an open discussion about big issues.

Encourage a home where discussions around sex, drugs, alcohol, and money are safe. Avoid preaching, talk respectfully. A conversation is an exchange of views and opinions.

Firm but fair rules



Stick to rules and boundaries that you have all agreed on.

Pick your battles

Ask yourself, is it worth it at this time? Are there bigger issues at play? Don't have a conversation when either of you are tired rushed or hungry.

Recognise your emotions and reactions



Staying calm, Watch how you talk and the tone of voice used. It's not helpful to shout, tease or blame. Aim to encourage and support so your teen will trust and come to you with their issues.

Language






Notice and focus on good things, don't shout, stay calm. taking a moment to think about what you are saying, setting an example by using appropriate language and apologising when needed.

Words Matter

Our language is important, young people need to be heard heard and understood and their opinions valued. Using positive and appropriate verbal and body language allows us all to express ourselves and feel valued.

YOUR WORDS

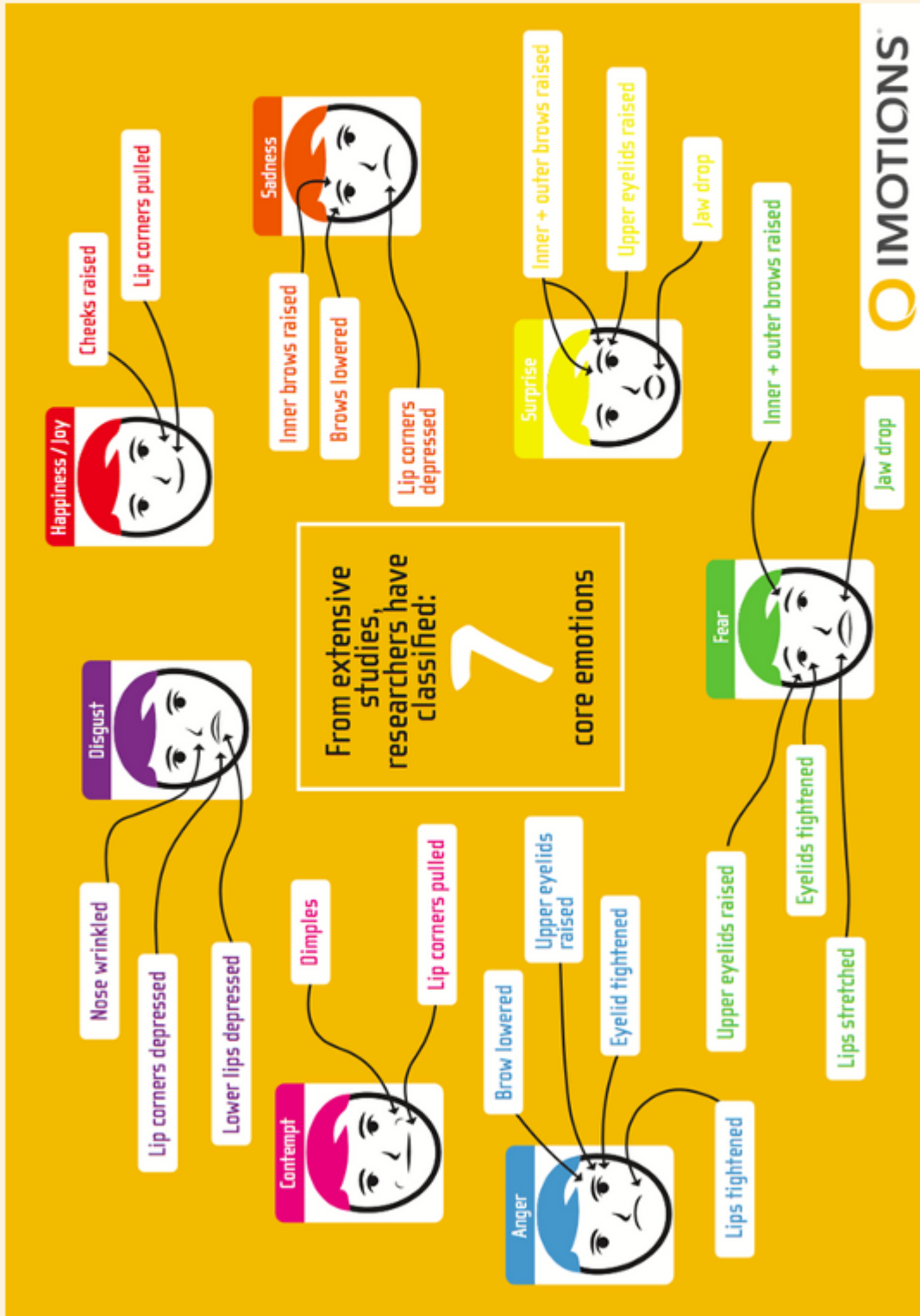
MATTER

	INSTEAD OF...	TRY
	Be quiet.	Can you use a softer voice?
	What a mess!	It looks like you had fun! How can we clean up?
	Do you need help?	I'm here to help if you need me.
	I explained how to do this yesterday.	Maybe I can show you another way.
	Do I need to separate you?	Could you use a break?
	Stop crying.	It's okay to cry.
	Do you have any questions?	What questions do you have?
	You're OK.	How are you feeling?
	It's not that hard.	You can do hard things.
	We don't talk like that.	Please use kind words.

WE ARE TEACHERS

7 Basic Emotions

The resources on the next two pages can be used for you to help younger children recognise their feelings and emotions which can help build trust, help them feel safe and help them to open up in conversations.



How are you feeling today?



aggressive



agonized



anxious



apologetic



arrogant



bashful



blissful



bored



cautious



cold



concentrating



confident



curious



demure



determined



disappointed



disapproving



disbelieving



disgusted



ecstatic



enraged



envious



exasperated



exhausted



frightened



frustrated



grieving



guilty



happy



horrificed



hot



hurt



hysterical



idiotic



indifferent



innocent



interested



jealous



lonely



lovestruck



meditative



mischievous



miserable



negative



obstinate



optimistic



paranoid



perplexed



prudish



puzzled



regretful



relieved



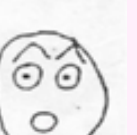
sad



satisfied



sheepish



shocked



smug



stressed



surprised



suspicious



thoughtful



undecided



withdrawn

Managing your mood

When our mood is low it effects our energy levels and how you relate to people around you.

Emotional symptoms:

Often feeling frightened, worried or anxious.
Having upsetting thoughts.
Guilt.
Sad and tearful.
Isolating yourself.
Lack of interest and motivation in usual activities.
Feeling angry or irritable

Here are some signs and symptoms that your mood is lower than usual.



You can use a journal or a diary to help you spot patterns such as what your triggers are (where are you, who are you with, what are you doing), how you notice that tension is building (sweaty palms) and what helps you to relax (looking at photos) and who can help you manage in a crisis (talking to someone at school or phoning a helpline). Journaling is a really useful way to keep track of what strategies you have tried and the ones that work well for you. You can also use the **stress bucket**.

Physical Symptoms:

Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
Feeling tired often and having low energy levels.
Aches and Pains.
Changes in appetite.
Heart beating faster than usual.
Butterflies in your tummy or sweaty palms.
Difficulty concentrating

Remember

Be kind to your mind: 5 ways to wellbeing

The Stress Bucket

The stress bucket is a way of visualising stress. The bucket represents our capacity for stress. The more vulnerable you are the smaller the bucket. If too much stress enters the bucket and the tap is not open to self-care the bucket will over flow and we become overwhelmed.

On the next page is a stress bucket model.
You can use this model to help you and
your child to understand stress.

Events, circumstances and day-to-day things, such as work,
home life, illness or finances, add stress into the bucket.

Sometimes the bucket might feel quite empty, and other
times it might feel quite full.

Understanding where your feeling
of stress is coming from is the first step
to overcome your stress.





Worries at work

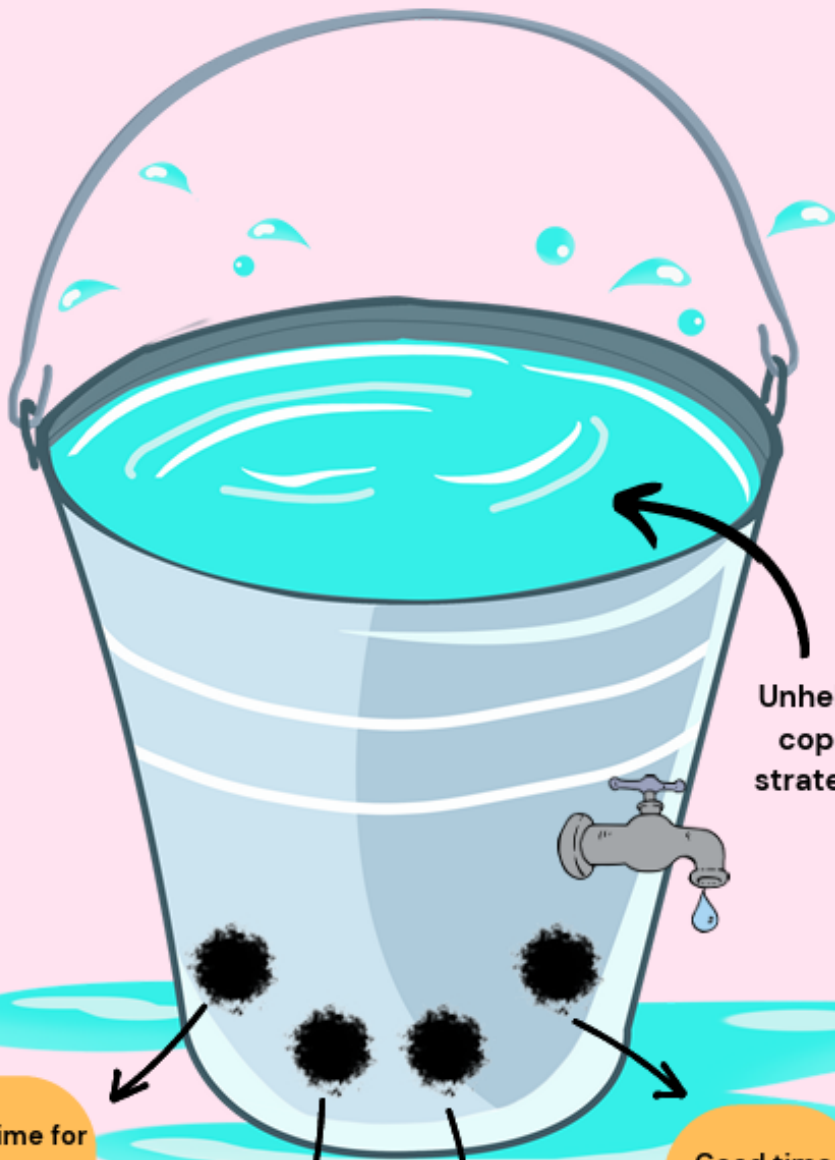
Poor diet

Financial pressures

Lack of sleep

Family and relationship issues

Health concerns



Overflowing/
Overwhelmed



Becoming
stressed/anxious



Coping well



Relaxed



Unhelpful
coping
strategies

Take time for
things you
enjoy

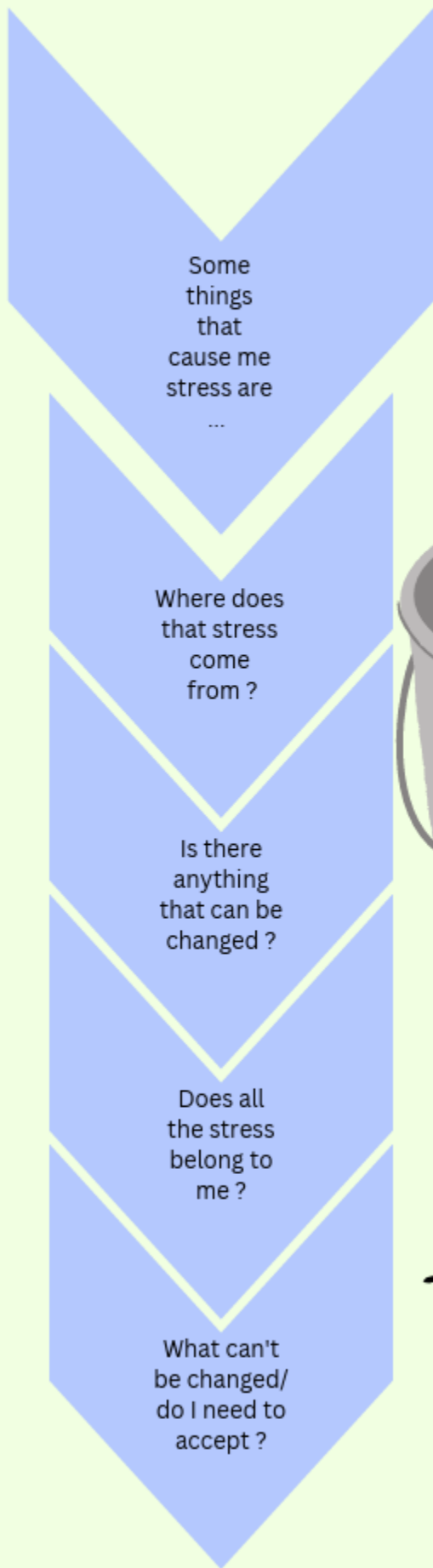
Practising
mindfulness

Talking to
friends

Good time
management

**A certain level of stress
is normal.**

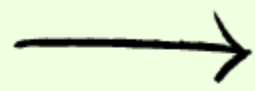
Have a go at filling in this stress bucket to explore where your stress comes from and some of the ways it can be managed appropriately.



Do I have any evidence to support my feelings about stress in my container?

Are there any solutions/ ways to problem solve?

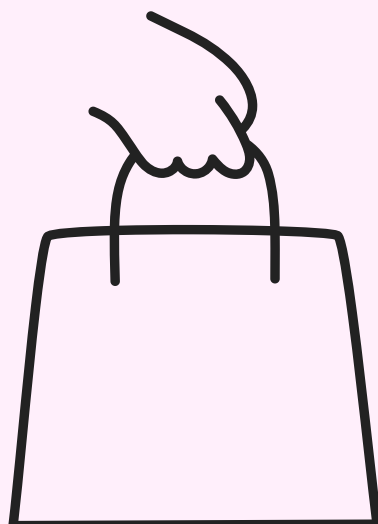
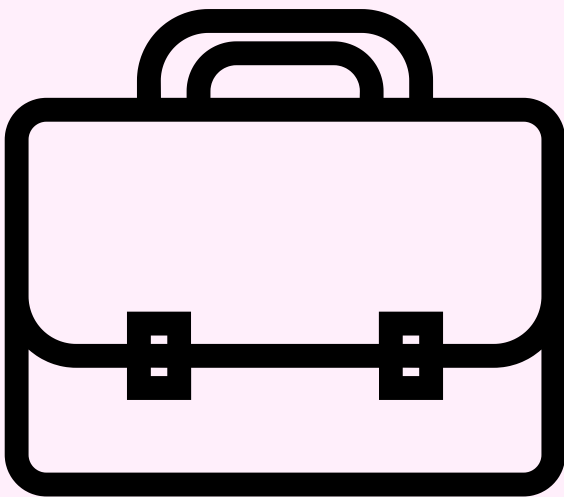
↓ Helpful coping strategies.



Baggage

Baggage is the stuff you carry around with you, such as health concerns, worrying about exams and exam results or how you are going to resolve a disagreement with a friend. Perhaps there is some difficult stuff going on at home or you are finding it hard to forget about a difficult experience you went through when you were younger. These are the things that other people can't see but they make us who we are. Having thoughts and feelings about these things is normal. Even though these things can't be seen, you have to carry them anyway. Sometimes they can weigh you down emotionally and compromise your ability to cope with day to day life and so you need to identify the source of the problem, whether it is a big or a small problem and prioritise what you will try to deal with first. Use the bags to help you name some of the difficulties you are facing now.

you can use this for yourself or to help your children, if we understand our difficulties we can then start to find solutions to solve them.



Venting BIG/Overwhelming Feelings

Sometimes self-care tips will not work, especially if what your feeling seems like it's never going to go away no matter what you try.

Remember its ok to feel this way, its natural and EVERYBODY will feel like their emotions are too big to deal with at times.

Below are some appropriate and healthy tips on how to overcome those big and overwhelming feelings and stressful thoughts and situations.



- Go somewhere quiet and scream
- Punch a punch bag or a pillow
- Throw lumps of ice at the ground and watch them smash
- Write down what made you feel the way you do and scribble it out until the paper is worn through.
- Run up a hill
- Write a letter to the person who has made you feel the way you do (but don't send it)
- Cry
- Have a pillow fight with the wall
- Snap sticks in half
- Play music loudly and/or sing really loudly
- Voice record how you are feeling – scream, shout, cry, vent your emotions then listen back to it.

Self-Care and Self-Help Tips:

You can use these self-care and self-help tips to help yourself and children to de-stress and gain control over your feelings and emotions.

Self-help and care are Personal to the individual. Things that may be useful and help others may not be useful to you.

See links to support page to find out more ways to look after yourself

Sleep.

Focus your attention elsewhere.

Media - watch tv, funny videos, talk to friends.

Art - paint, draw, write.

Listen to music.

Learn to say no!

Vent to someone to let off steam.

Self-soothing - surround yourself with positive senses and comforts such as blankets, candles, calm music, have a bath or shower.

Remember to take medication if you need to.

Drink enough water and eat properly (healthy diet).

Don't be afraid to ask for help or support. No problem is too big or too small if it is having a negative impact on your mental health.

Exercise - Skipping, Cardio, Running.

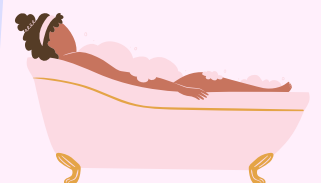
Mindful breathing.

Go outside.



SLEEP

5 ways to wellbeing- be outside



5 ways to wellbeing- connect to others



Links to support

Support for parents/carers:

Dandelion Time -

<https://dandeliontime.org.uk> - helping children with emotional issues, nature based.

Family Action -

<https://www.family-action.org.uk>

Family information service -

01634 332195 - information, guidance

IMAGO Medway navigation service -

030001111965 - help with finances, benefits, filing forms, well being.

All saints community project -

01634 845419 - advice and support at the magpie centre.

Club awesome -

07944785764 - 0-18 year olds with additional needs club.

Oasis -

08009179948 - domestic abuse

PBS -

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/pbs> - Positive Behavioural Support

Support for all:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/pshe-ks2-the-brain-house/zd7kd6f>(link for KS2 kids to understand their brain)

<https://releasethepressure.org>

www.mind.org.uk mental health support

CrisisPeerAlternativeService@northkentmind.co.uk

01322 291380

Support for children and young people

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200606/youth_services_directory

<https://thebeyouproject.co.uk/in-your-area/medwayLGBTQ+>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk> support for young people

<https://www.childline.org.uk> 08001111

www.kooth.com (mental health support for children

Videos

Here are some support videos that could be helpful, share them with your children and young people if you feel they will be useful.

Teen brain film- <https://youtu.be/gm9CIJ74Oxw>

Box breathing video- <https://youtu.be/n6RbW2LtdFs>

Stress bucket- <https://youtu.be/1KYC5SsJjx8>

Teen brain development-<https://youtu.be/6oKsikHollM>

Dr Seigel's Hand model-<https://youtu.be/gm9CIJ74Oxw>

Happiness starts with a smile-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1veWbLpGa78&t=8s>

Developing emotional intelligence-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9h8fG1DKhA>

Notes

