

Bolton

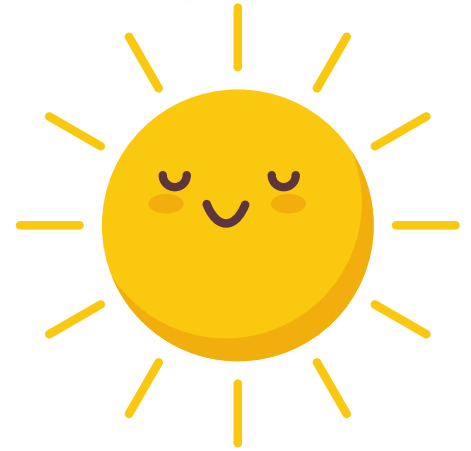
Together

Thriving Minds

activities for children and their families



Introduction



Welcome, Adventurer, to a wondrous journey with our new Wellbeing Workbook, forged with care for you and your cherished children.

Within these pages, you'll unearth a treasure trove of activities, each crafted to ignite sparks of joy, nurture resilience, and foster a sanctuary of mental wellness.

We believe in the power of honest conversations, laughter, and shared moments to construct robust pillars of well-being.

So, let us venture forth, hand in hand, into this magical adventure!

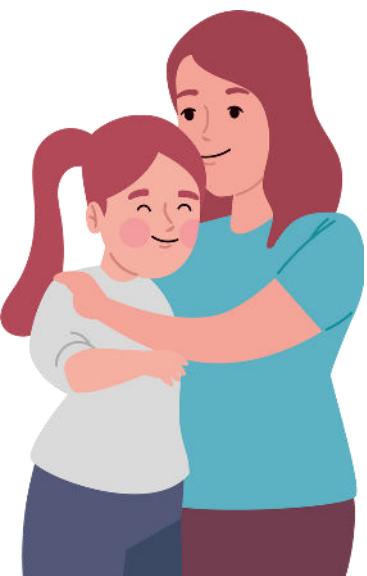


Overview for Adults

This workbook serves as an interactive guide to assist children in comprehending and effectively managing their emotions. It aims to equip children aged 6 to 10 with the necessary tools and activities that promote emotional intelligence, resilience, and mental wellbeing.

Certain activities also encourage parent/caregiver participation. An adult guide is also included, offering advice on how best to support children through the exercises, initiate meaningful conversations, and reinforce the concepts learned.

In addition, a link to useful resources is provided at the end of this workbook.



Guide For Adults

Facilitating a child's mental health and wellbeing is a critical element in their overall growth and development. Encouraging activities that promote emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-awareness can significantly benefit a child's mental wellness. As a caregiver or adult in a child's life, your role in guiding and supporting them through these activities is paramount.

- 1. Be an Active Participant:** It's essential to engage with the child during these activities actively. Your active involvement and encouragement foster a sense of security and support that the child needs.
- 2. Create a Safe and Open Environment:** Foster an environment where the child feels safe expressing their emotions without fear of judgment. This creates an atmosphere where the child is comfortable freely expressing themselves.
- 3. Take What They Say Seriously:** By genuinely listening and valuing what your child says, you can help them constructively work through their emotions. Consider their views and experiences to make them feel heard and understood.
- 4. Provide Support:** It's essential to pay attention to how your child is feeling or behaving. Help your child understand what they're feeling and why. By doing so, you can provide the necessary support to guide them in navigating their emotions effectively.



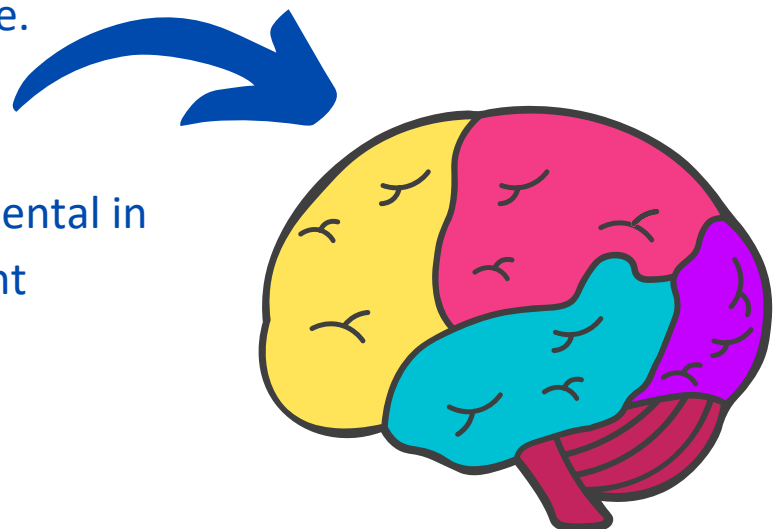
The Science Behind It All

Understanding your child's brain and its development can significantly impact their mental health and overall wellbeing. Childhood is a crucial period for brain development, marked by substantial growth and changes that form the basis for future emotional regulation, decision-making, and social interactions.

The brain demonstrates remarkable plasticity during childhood, forming neural pathways in response to experiences and interactions. Positive experiences, such as nurturing relationships and stimulating activities, help strengthen these pathways, promoting resilience and emotional wellbeing. Conversely, negative experiences can also shape these pathways, emphasising the importance of a supportive environment.

A pivotal phase of childhood brain development involves the prefrontal cortex, responsible for critical functions such as decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. The development of this region continues well into adolescence.

As a parent or caregiver, your interactions and guidance are fundamental in shaping your child's brain development during this crucial period.





Encouraging activities that challenge and stimulate your child's cognitive and emotional skills, while also providing a secure and supportive environment, can significantly aid in their development.

It's important to understand that your child's cognitive and emotional development is a work in progress and appreciate their journey towards positive mental health. This understanding enables you to actively contribute towards their mental wellbeing and help foster a resilient and emotionally intelligent mind.



My Voice Matters



i am
ENOUGH

Listen up, Adventurer!

Deep within you dwells a wondrous gift, a voice that bellows with the beat of your heart. Every word you speak is a seed of your dreams, your thoughts, and your one-of-a-kind style.

Picture your voice as a magic wand, conjuring a pathway to connect with others, and unlocking a world of endless possibilities.

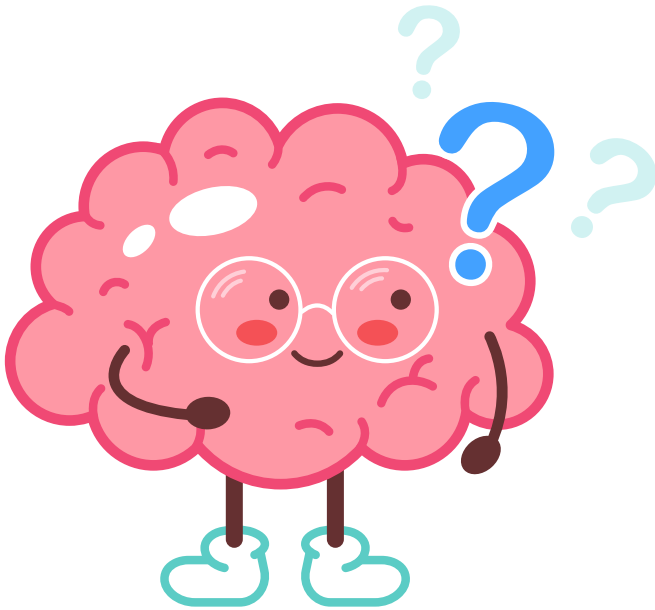
As you explore these activities, let your voice guide you. Because it's your voice that holds the power.

Feel confident and comfortable to share how you feel, especially when things seem difficult.

I am loved

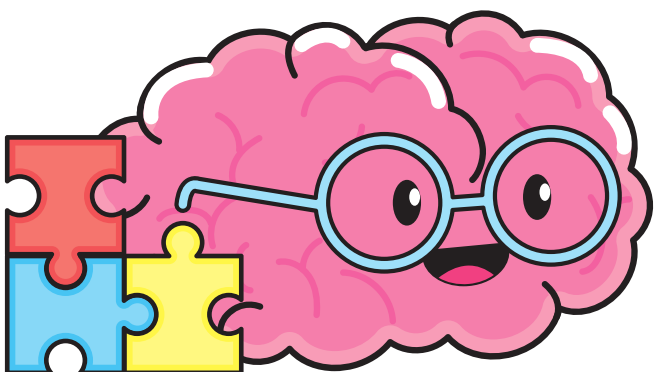
I AM
Strong

Our Brains And How They Work



The brain is the control centre of our bodies. It's like a supercomputer, managing everything we do, from simple tasks like walking and talking, to complex activities like solving puzzles and feeling emotions.

Different parts of the brain have specific jobs. The 'thinking' part helps us solve problems and learn new things. The 'feeling' part is responsible for our emotions, like when we feel joy or fear.



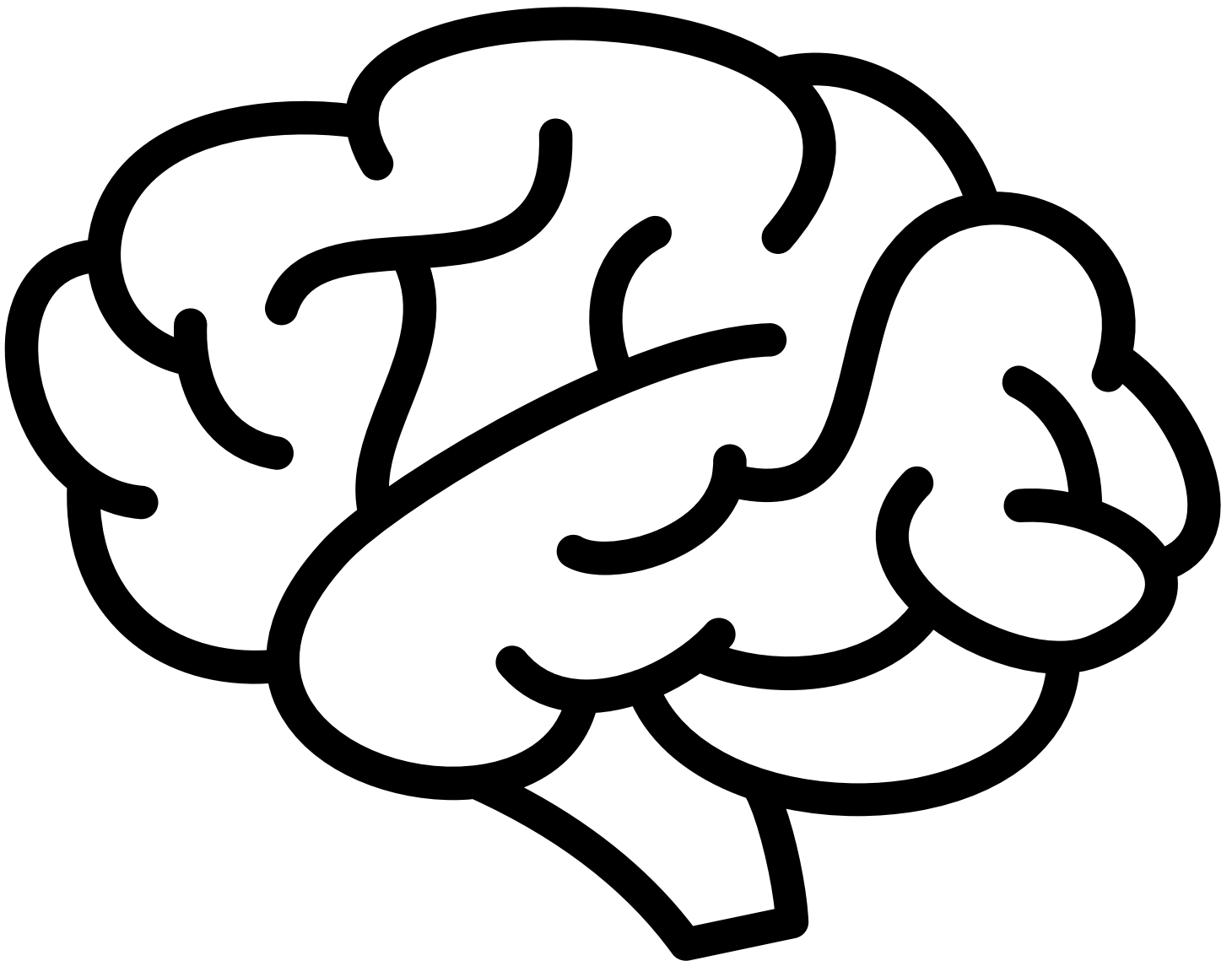
Just like we eat healthy food and play to keep our bodies strong, we also need to take care of our brains for our feelings and thoughts to stay happy and healthy.

My Mind

Are you ready for some calm and creativity?

First, find a cosy, silent spot, and get your hands on some colourful magic wands, a.k.a. colouring pencils, crayons, or markers. Pause for a moment and focus on your feelings right now. Are you feeling like a rainbow, or is there a mix of emotions swirling around? Pick the colours that represent you best, and let your imagination run wild as you colour in the brain below.

Remember, there's no need to hurry, just enjoy the soothing activity.



What Are Emotions?



Picture emotions as a vibrant kaleidoscope of feelings, giving us the lowdown on our inner world. Whether you feel like dancing on rainbows, or hiding under the covers, these emotions are your trusty sidekicks, keeping you in the loop of how you're doing.

Just like weather patterns, emotions can be unpredictable and ever-changing. And that's perfectly okay! It's natural to experience a whole range of emotions at different times. What's crucial is knowing how to handle them like a boss, by talking about them and taking care of yourself.

So, buckle up and let's dive into the world of emotions, where we'll learn to spot them, name them, and keep them in check!



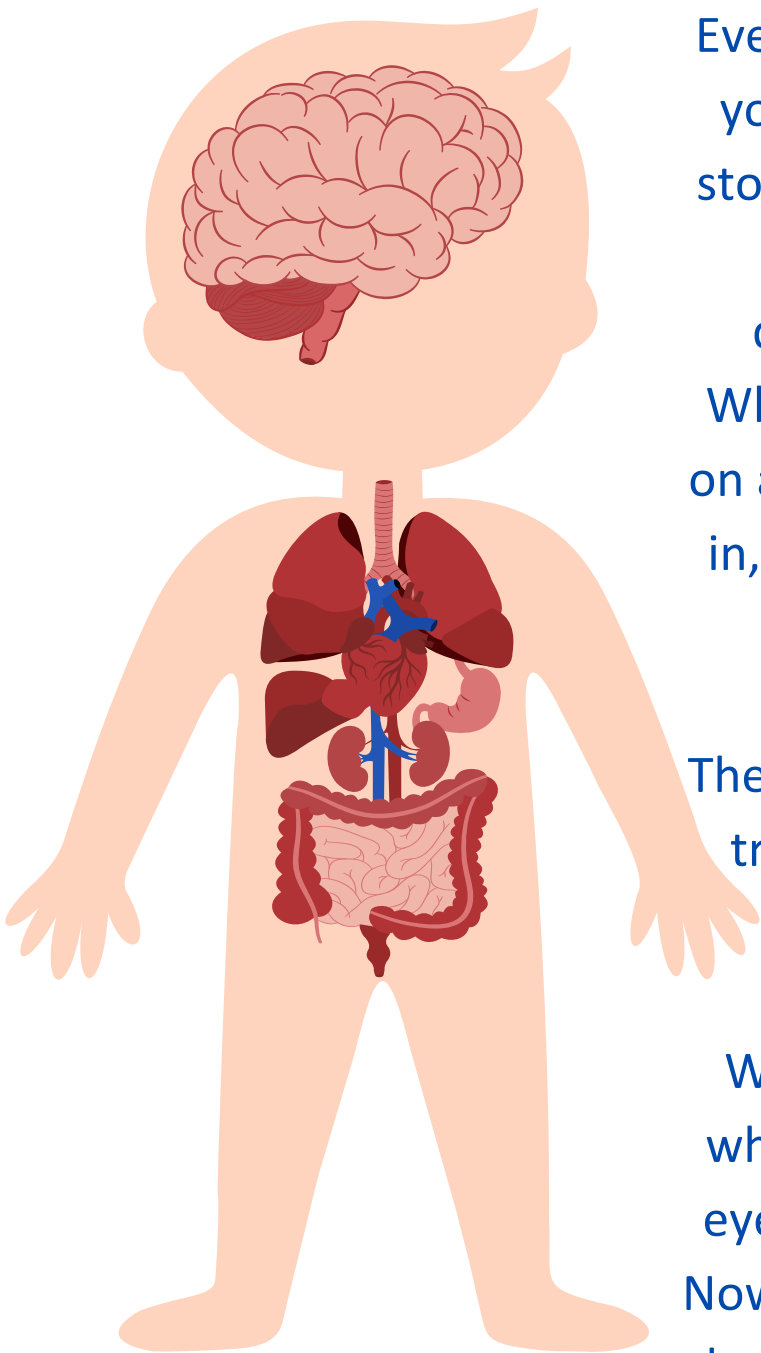
Identifying and Describing Your Emotions

Hey there! You know those feelings bubbling up inside you, like when you're happy or feeling a little down? It's like having your own superpower! Recognising and describing those feelings is like having a special key that helps you understand yourself better.

It's important because it helps you figure out why you're feeling a certain way and what you can do about it. Just like knowing what each button on your favourite game does, understanding your emotions helps you navigate life's adventures like a pro!



Body Scan



Ever felt like your heart is pounding inside your chest when you're excited, or your stomach is in knots when you're nervous?

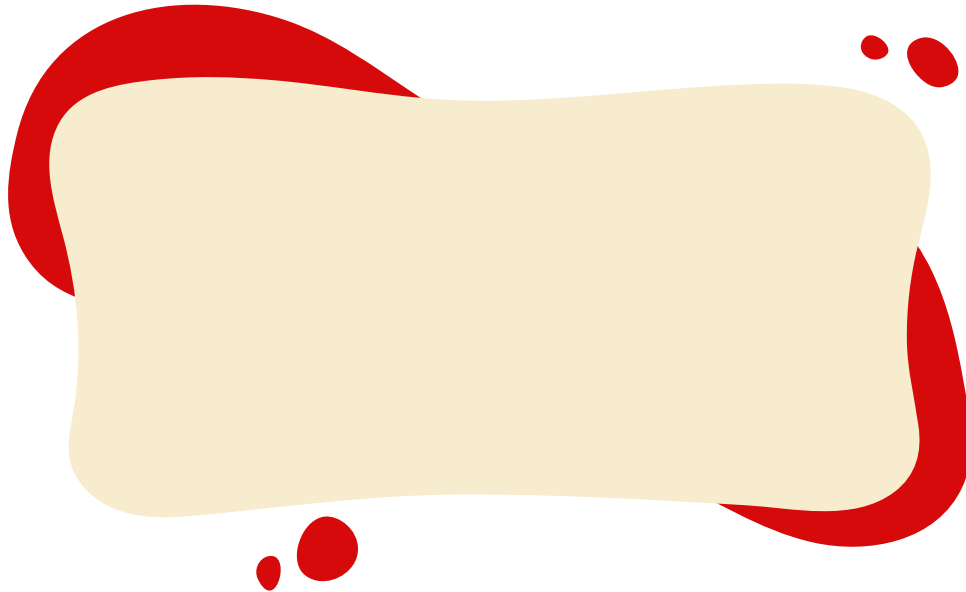
That's your body being a detective, dropping hints about your emotions. When joy bursts in, we feel like bouncing on a trampoline, and when sadness creeps in, it feels like dragging a backpack full of boulders.

The best part? Our bodies are the ultimate truth-tellers, even when we're lost in a maze of feelings.

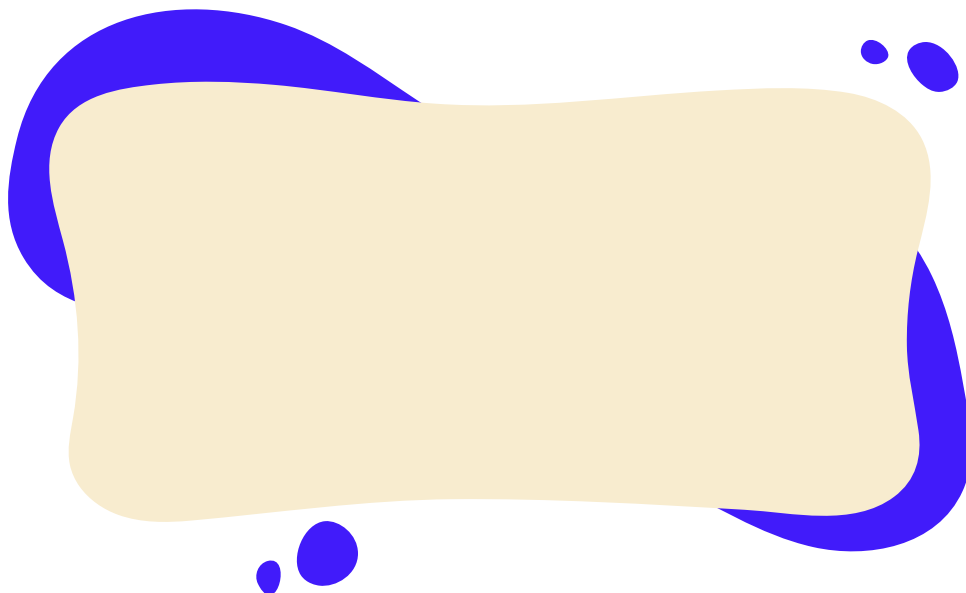
Want to give it a go? Find a cosy corner where you can be a lone wolf. Close your eyes if you want, and take a deep breath. Now, let's play detective by listening to our body. Start with your toes and work your way up, paying attention to every nook and cranny. Take your time and notice what each part is saying. It's like a massage for our minds!

Reflect

What did you notice? Is there any tightness, tingling, warmth, or coolness?



Were there any connections between how your body feels and the emotions you identified?



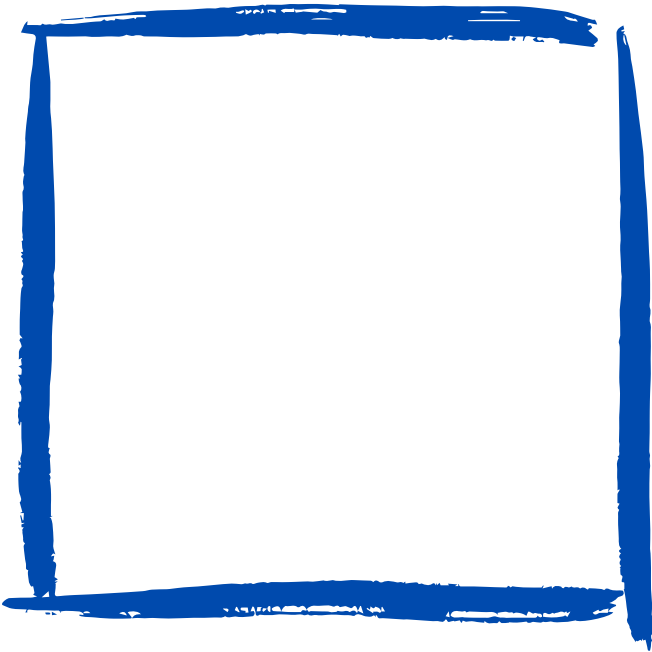
Emotion Wheel



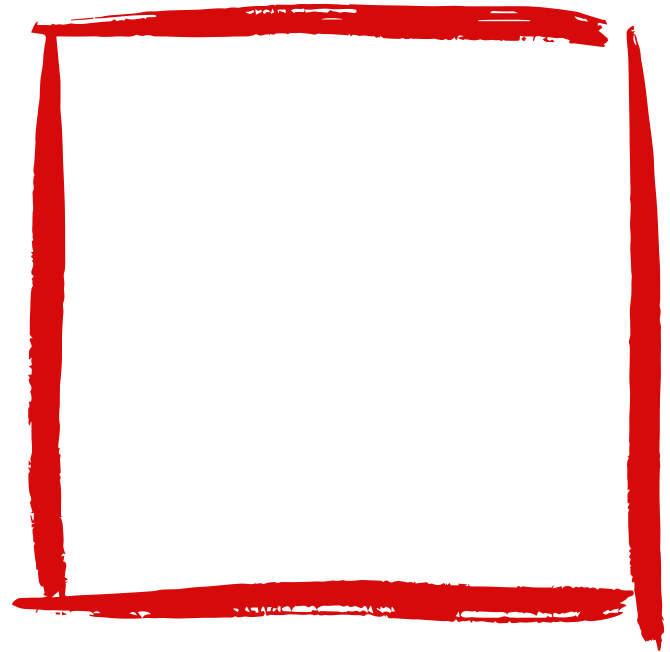
Let's get artsy! Grab a blank piece of paper and draw a big, fat circle. Like a pizza, slice the circle into sections and pop an emotion in each one. Get creative and sketch faces that express these emotions, then add some colour to bring them to life.

Ready for the fun part? Give the wheel a spin! Close your peepers, give the wheel a good spin, and see which emotion it picks. Now, let's complete the table on the next page. Let the emotions journey begin!

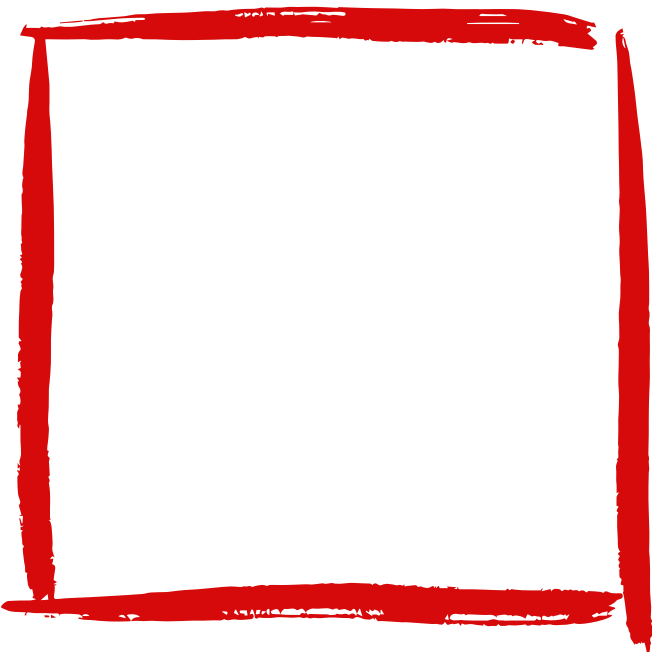
What is the emotion?



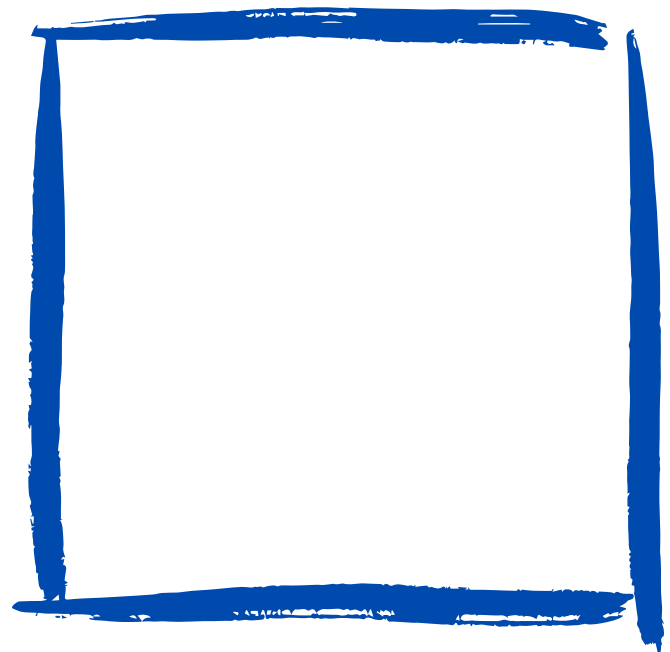
When have you felt
this way?



Why might you feel
this emotion?



What may help when
you feel this emotion?



Describe Your Emotions

Listen up, you know those moments that either make you want to high-five the world or crawl under the covers? Well, here's the secret sauce: describing your emotions is like crafting a story about your inner world. It's like painting a masterpiece with words!

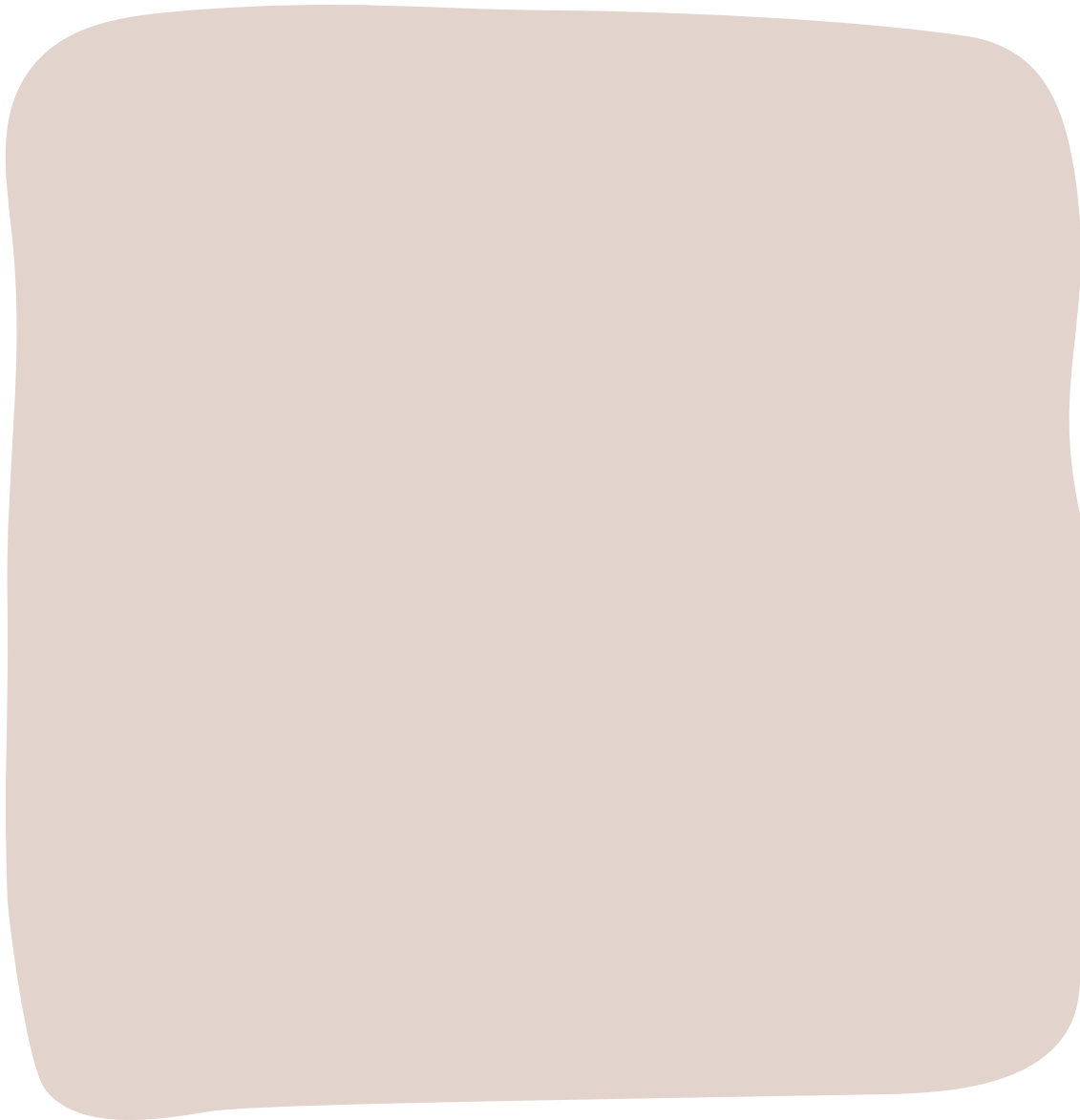
Think of each feeling as a unique colour. Happy is like a burst of sunshine yellow, while sad is a deep, moody blue.

When you share your emotions with someone, it's like handing them a VIP pass to your heart, so they can understand what's going on inside your world. Ready for the next activity? It's like an emotions scavenger hunt, helping you discover the perfect words to describe those feelings.





Pick an emotion



Cut out pictures that express this
emotion and create a collage

My Treasure Map of Values

MATERIALS:

- A big sheet of paper or cardboard
- Coloured pencils, markers or crayons
- Cool stickers or pictures
- Glue

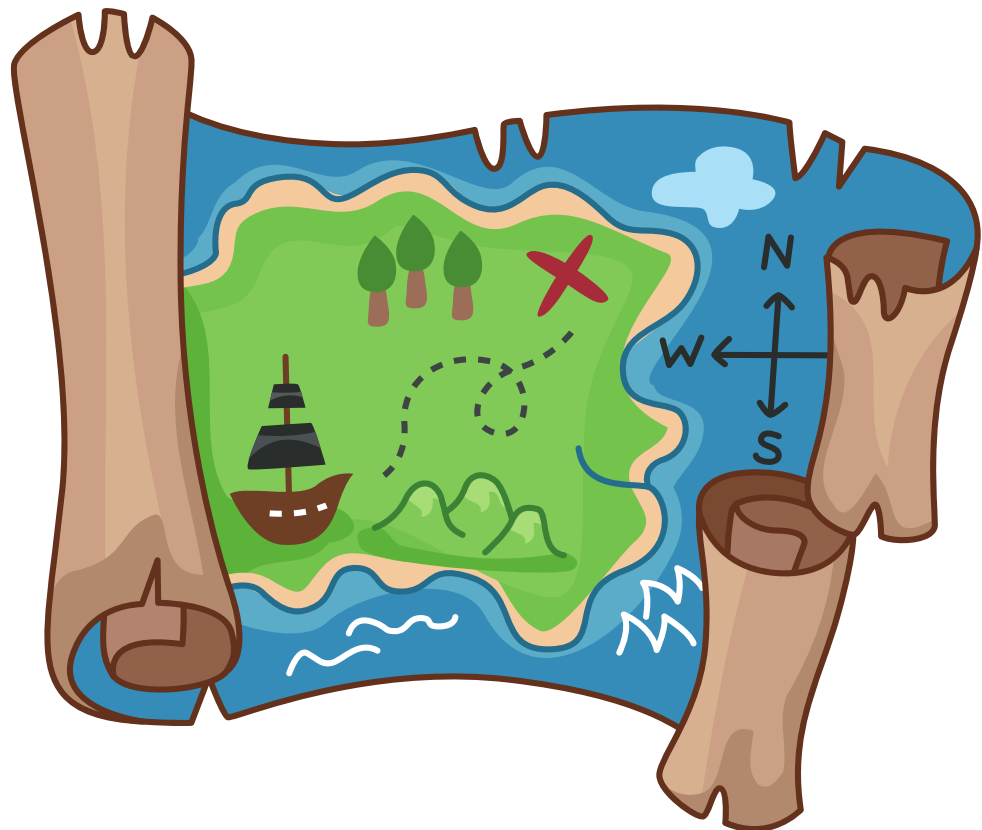


HOW TO:

- 1. Let's make a map:** Spread out your paper or cardboard. We're going to use this as our treasure map.
- 2. Dig out your values:** Values are like your secret treasures, the things that matter the most to you, such as friendship, honesty, bravery, creativity, kindness, and much more.



- 3. Splash some personality onto your map:** Let your creativity run wild by adding eye-catching symbols or drawings that match your treasured values. For example, "compassion" could be a friendly panda or a heart-warming sun.
- 4. Make it your own:** Add a sprinkle of fun by sticking on stickers or pasting images from magazines. This is your map, so let your personality shine through!
- 5. Get chatty:** Once your masterpiece is complete, invite a parent or friend to join in on the fun. Share your values and why they're important to you. Get cosy and tell stories of when those values played a crucial role in your life. The possibilities are endless!



Therapeutic Parenting

Therapeutic parenting prioritises creating a secure and nurturing environment that facilitates a child's emotional growth and development by acknowledging their unique needs and responding appropriately to foster trust, security, and emotional regulation.

Here are the key principles:

1. **Connection and Empathy:** Cultivate a strong, secure bond with your child through active listening and empathy.
2. **Safety and Predictability:** Establish routines and boundaries that instil a sense of safety and predictability.
3. **Positive and Fair Boundaries:** Implement positive reinforcement, redirection, and teaching strategies as opposed to punitive measures.
4. **Mindfulness:** Practice being present and attentive to your child's emotions and needs.
5. **Self-Care:** Prioritize your own well-being to better support your child.

Below, you will find several resources and guidance to help implement these principles effectively.

Tips for supporting children

Be Present

Dedicate uninterrupted time to engage in activities. Show genuine interest and curiosity in the child's experiences and emotions.

Encourage Self-Expression

Validate the child's emotions and experiences. Encourage them to express themselves through art, play, or discussions.

Provide Guidance, Not Pressure

Offer gentle guidance and support without imposing your expectations. Let the child explore and learn at their own pace.

Reinforce Positivity

Celebrate small achievements and efforts. Positive reinforcement encourages continued participation and boosts confidence.

Below you will find some fun activities to do alongside your child(ren) to practice these therapeutic parenting skills.



Rainbow Breathing

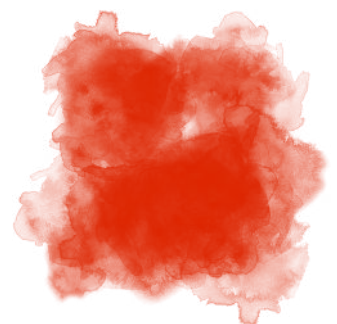


Encouraging Relaxation, Mindfulness, and Emotional Grounding: A Guide for Parents

To regulate your emotions, promoting relaxation, mindfulness, and emotional grounding is essential. Here is an exercise you can do with your child to help them achieve these goals.

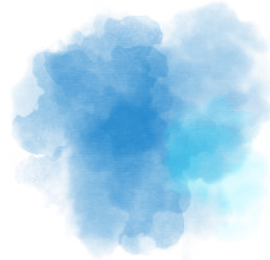
First, find a quiet location where you and your child can sit or lie down undisturbed. Explain to your child that you'll be doing a "Rainbow Breathing" exercise together to help you both feel calm. Tell them how each colour of the rainbow represents a different feeling or energy.

Begin by asking your child to close their eyes. Starting with the colour red, breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, imagining the colour filling your body with warmth and energy, and then hold the breath briefly. Continue the exercise by moving through the colours of the rainbow.

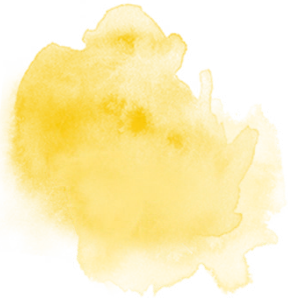




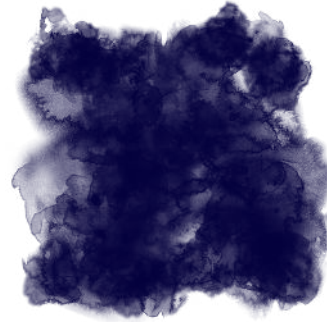
Inhale, imagining the colour orange bringing creativity and joy. Hold briefly.



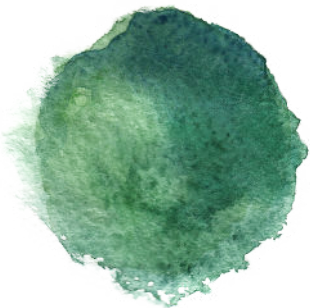
Inhale, imagining the blue bringing peace and stillness. Hold briefly.



Inhale, imagining the colour yellow bringing sunshine and happiness. Hold briefly.



Inhale, imagining the indigo promoting intuition and insight. Hold briefly.



Inhale, imagining the green bringing calmness and balance. Hold briefly.



Inhale, imagining the violet bringing clarity and relaxation. Hold briefly.

Emotion Stones

Creating Emotion Stones: A Step-by-Step Guide

Here's what you'll need:

- Smooth Stones or pebbles
- Paints or markers
- Container or pouch to hold stones

Instructions:

1. Collect a variety of smooth stones or pebbles in various shapes and sizes.
2. To begin, make sure to thoroughly clean and dry the stones.
3. Using paints or markers, assign different emotions to each stone, such as happiness, sadness, anger, calmness, excitement, etc.
4. Add colours or symbols to each stone that represent the specific emotion.
5. Decorate each stone with care, and once you're finished, store them in a container or pouch so you can use them whenever you need to explore your emotions.



Helping Your Child Process Emotions: The Stone Method

To begin, find a quiet and comfortable spot where you and your child can sit together. The following steps can guide you through the process:

1. Discuss the significance of each stone with your child. As you cover each emotion, ask open-ended questions such as, “What does this emotion feel like in your body?” or “What makes you feel this way?”
2. Encourage your child to hold the stone that corresponds with how they feel. Ask them to take a deep breath, focusing on the sensation of the stone and its associated texture and feeling.
3. Whenever your child needs a moment to ground themselves, return to the stones and repeat the process.



Conversation Starters

Starting a conversation about mental health can be easier than you think. Here are some simple ways to begin.

**Tell me about
your day**

**Who do you like
talking to when
you need help or
a hug?**

**Want to share
what's on your
mind?**

**What fun things
make you feel
good and happy?**

Digital Detox

With screens everywhere, from waiting rooms to classrooms and even our pockets, it's hard to avoid them in today's world.

Unfortunately, for some families, screen time has taken over their lives, leading to missed opportunities and a lack of engagement with the world around them. In many households, family time consists of everyone staring at their individual devices.

If your family has fallen victim to these unhealthy habits, a digital detox may be the answer. This doesn't mean avoiding screens altogether, but rather taking a short break to develop healthier habits.



The Benefits and Strategies of Digital Detox for Families

Digital detox may seem like a daunting task, but the benefits are well worth the initial discomfort. It's important to not paint technology as evil to your children, but rather highlight the fun and exciting activities they can do offline, such as playing games, sports, and exploring new hobbies. To ensure a successful detox, focus on what activities you can offer instead of what you're taking away. Here are some tips to get started:



- **Set Clear Boundaries:** If a complete detox is too much, start with mini detoxes by setting time limits and reminders on your children's devices.
- **Make Device-Free Zones:** Dedicate certain areas of your home, like bedrooms and mealtime, as screen-free spaces. Keep handy baskets around the house to quickly deposit devices.



- **Encourage Alternate Activities:** Have fun and engaging suggestions on hand to keep your children occupied when they're craving screen time, such as reading books, playing outside, creating art, or spending quality time together as a family.



- **Lead by Example:** Make sure you're practicing what you preach by being a good role model. Avoid scrolling through social media during screen-free time and instead engage in other activities with your family.
- **Implement Regular Detox Periods:** Consider going without screens for a few hours every evening or having device-free days. Weekends are a great opportunity for family adventures and bonding time without screens. Committing to a digital detox can lead to a happier home and better mental health for everyone.

You may find these additional resources useful:

<https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/My-First-Phone-Poster.png>

<https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Digital-Mental-Health-Offer-within-Greater-Manchester-2022.pdf>

<https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/YLBT-OSI-Cyberbullying-Poster.pdf>



Parent-Peer Support

Bolton

Together

At Bolton Together we also have a range of Parent Peer Support offers which you can self-refer into for extra support. These sessions are aimed at parents/carers of children who are experiencing poor mental health.

Breaking Barriers

Bringing together parents/carers of children with SEND to offer support and advice and signpost to useful information.

Location -

Tuesdays 5-6:30pm or Thursdays 10-12:30

Breaking Barriers NW café, upper ground floor of Market Place (next to TUI). **Contact - breakbarriers3@gmail.com 07717 434 840**

Raise The Youth

One to one guidance and meeting with parent connectors, access to informal support groups to meet others and share experiences.

Also available is an 8 week 'Nurturing Parents Mindfulness Programme.'

Contact - parents@raisetheyouth.co.uk

MHIST - Bounce Back

A 6 week course looking at how Positive Psychology can boost family wellbeing. For parents/carers looking at ways to support their own and their child's mental wellbeing.

Location -MHIST 1st floor, Moorland house. 116 Bark street, Bolton, BL1 2AX.

Contact - christinemakinson@mhist.co.uk

01204 527200

Or you can refer via our website

<https://bolton-together.org.uk/parent-peer-support-referral/>



Additional Resources

In this workbook, you've embarked on an incredible journey towards understanding and nurturing your mental health and happiness.

Remember, just as we care for our bodies, our minds deserve attention and care too.

You've learned fantastic tools and activities, but this is just the beginning.

Check out the additional resources and links provided.

For Children and Young People:

- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/resources/>
- www.bekindtomymind.co.uk
- www.kooth.com
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/>

For Parents/Carers:

- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/parent-peer-support-referral/>
- www.qwell.io
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-guide-to-looking-after-yourself/>



Acknowledgement for Bolton Together's iThrive Partners and Workbook Exercises

We extend our gratitude to Bolton Together's iThrive partners, who have provided invaluable support and guidance throughout the creation of this workbook which has been created by Bolton Together.

We have given credit to the authors of the exercises at the bottom of each page.



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