Growing Together with our Buddies

Session 1

Who am I?
Main objective: For children to start to describe themselves.
For children to have a sense of who they are.

For many children, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on children's ability to self-regulate or understand themselves. Not being able to understand themselves or regulate their emotions can have an impact on the rest of a household with regards to mental health.

This session aims to encourage the children to see themselves in all lights.

Follow up: Link to Jigsaw- Being Me in My World

At school:
- Ask the children to share what they remember about the launch video in assembly Growing Together Again with our Buddies.
- Play the following video to the children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om31NBWfoxY
- Show a recent picture of yourself / hold a mirror up to your face. Talk about what you see. Use words to describe yourself. Describe what you look like, how you smell, what you act like, etc.
- Gather words on the board.
- Talk about what your values are and record these.
- Children are then to do the same.
- Talk about how your feelings might change and why.
- Ask the children to think about how a thought/feeling might be shown/reflected. If people cannot talk, what do they use to express how they are feeling? Children to design their own emoji.
- Children are to explore their buddy by drawing a portrait of them and recording words/phrases to describe their buddy.
- Children are to then complete a self-portrait where they draw themselves using symbols, icons or illustrations that represent themselves. They can use their identity mind map to help them. For some children they may prefer to use words, symbols or pictures from magazines cut out.
- Compile these in the group’s floorbook.
At home:

- Show the child a photo of your child or hold a mirror up to them. Talk about what you can see. Talk to your child about what you think their qualities are, e.g. kind, confident, calm, happy, sad.
- Repeat but ask your child to do the same for you, e.g. talk about what they see and what they think your qualities are. Complete an identity mind map.
- Try the above with different members of your household, including pets.
- Children are to then complete a self-portrait where they draw themselves using symbols, icons or illustrations that represent themselves. They can use their identity mind map to help them. For some children they may prefer to use words, symbols or pictures from magazines cut out. You can save this illustration to bring back into school once we reopen.
**Growing Together with our Buddies**

**Session 2**

**How do I show how I feel or what I am thinking?**

**Main objective:** For children to understand how they can show in an appropriate way their thoughts and feelings.

Throughout our lives we all experience different emotions and we all react differently to different situations. Emotions are *biological* states associated with the nervous system brought on by neurophysiological changes variously associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioural responses, and a degree of *pleasure* or *displeasure*. There is currently no *scientific consensus* on a definition. Emotions are often *intertwined* with *mood, temperament, personality, disposition, creativity* and *motivation*. Emotions can be positive or negative. Emotions produce different physiological, behavioural and cognitive changes. Children can easily pick up on emotions and learn from adults. Empathy is arguably the most important of all pro-social skills. It plays a crucial role in preventing or breaking the cycle of violence; and it’s development needs “seeding,” stimulation, and encouragement. The ability to fully appreciate and understand the perspective of another person doesn’t develop until adolescence; however it is not uncommon to observe a toddler comforting another child. This is the beginning stage of empathy, demonstrating it is never too early to model, encourage, teach, highlight, and reinforce empathy.

**Follow up: Link to Jigsaw- Being Me in My World**

**At school:**

- Show a range of pictures conveying different emotions/scenarios. As a group talk about what can be seen in the pictures. Explore thoughts and feelings. Use this as an opportunity to pull out vocabulary. Further develop by encouraging the children to extend their bank of emotive words.
- Can the children complete a freeze frame to show the emotion? Take pictures to then put in the floorbook.
- Show a range of A3 pictures of different scenarios.
- Choose a scenario for your buddy to go into. Talk about how your buddy might feel and the reasons why. How do you think your buddy might respond (behave) in this situation?
- The children are to then complete the same task.
- Read the following story to the children: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWeDFGBCVXk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWeDFGBCVXk)
- Talk to the children about what your buddy is afraid of (use your imagination).
- The children are to then share what their buddy might be afraid of. Explore how their buddy could cope with this fear.
- The children are to then relate back to themselves. What are they afraid of? How do they cope/how can they cope?
- Children are to then write their own book just like ‘Little Mouse’s Big Book of Fears’. You may wish to provide a variety of resources, which the children can then use to put in their book, e.g. pictures from magazines, newspaper articles, etc. The book is to be A5 and the spine can then be attached to the floorbook.
At home:

- Talk about different feelings people (adults and children can have).
- Explore how these might be different for parents/carers compared to feelings children have. Are there any feelings which might be the same? Talk with your child/ren about why this might be.
- Choose your favourite drink and let your child/ren choose their favourite drink (you might want a biscuit with it), talk about the feelings which you feel you can manage well. Ask your child/ren to talk about the feelings they can manage well. Repeat the chat but for feelings which you and your child/ren know are more difficult to manage. What can you do to help you with these feelings?
- As an activity, you might want to have a go at making a ‘Hidden Henry/Henrietta’.
  - For this activity you just need a paper towel roll and paper (I also use pipe cleaners for the arms and legs).
  - 1) The child makes arms and legs for the cardboard roll and covers the bottom of the roll with paper.
  - 2) Cut two slits on the front, top end of the roll next to each other (this is how the faces are held on the front).
  - 3) Have the child make a variety of feelings faces based on his or her developmental level. Talk about masking feelings and how feelings can be bottled up when they aren’t expressed safely.
  - 4) Take turns telling stories about the character and have the child guess the bottled up emotions.
  - For example, “Matthew looks really angry today in class. He was yelling at the teacher and won’t talk to his friends. But really he’s thinking about how his grandmother died last year around this time and how he is moving to a new school next month.” The child then would guess the hidden emotions and look inside the body to see if they guessed the bottled up emotions correctly (nervous and sad). Then talk about safe ways to express feelings instead of holding them inside (talking to someone, writing about it, etc.).
  - 5) Switch and let the child tell a story and you guess the hidden feelings.
- This activity helps to release some hidden feelings.
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Session 3

How do fears show in me?

Main objective: For children to understand how they behave when they feel fear.
Children can do amazing things with the right information and strategies. Understanding why fear feels the way it does and where the physical symptoms come from is a powerful step in turning fear/anxiety around. Many of the children, during this pandemic, will have been in or know of situations which have created fear and anxiety. For those children, who have not yet returned to school, fear, worry, anxiety may be building. The children need to have strategies to help them deal with these feelings.

Follow up link: Link to Jigsaw - Being Me in My World

At school:

- Write the word ‘fear’ up on the board. Ask the children to talk about what this word means. Provide examples to be able to put the word and its meaning into context for the children. In the floorbook, the children are to list other words which mean the same as fear.
- Model choosing a word and putting it into a sentence to explain something you may fear. Can the children do the same. Focus on children articulating full sentences and comment positively upon their use of rich vocabulary. Wherever possible, encourage the children to expand on their vocabulary.
- Talk about what happens to the body when we feel fear. Complete a mind map in the floorbook. Invite children to record words or phrases on the mind map.
- Read/play the story Hey Warrior to the children. [Link]
- After watching, talk about what the children saw.
- Read The Cool Things About You.
- Model making a list about the strengths about yourself in 3 areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About me</th>
<th>Me with others</th>
<th>Me in Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g. I am brave</td>
<td>I am a great friend</td>
<td>I don’t like loud music</td>
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- Can the children do the same in their group floorbook in their own little table?
- Model talking about your buddy’s fears, e.g. doesn’t like being left a long when you are at work. Then explain one of your fears.
- The children are to then do the same.
- Ask the children what a warrior is. Explain it is a brave or experienced soldier or fighter.
• Talk about how sometimes when we have fears, we need our warrior—the courage inside of us.
• Model designing a warrior-label. Talk about the importance of the different parts, e.g. the warrior holding a balloon speech bubble to provide you with the chance to think positive thoughts when you feel fear; big arms to wrap around to protect you, a magic wand to wave to give you some courage.
• The children are to then sketch their buddy’s warrior on whiteboards. Provide the children with the opportunity to talk about their buddy’s warrior.
• The children, on A4 are to then design, draw and label their own warrior.
• Spend some time allowing the children to talk about their warrior, e.g. its special features.
• Encourage the children to now think of some examples of when they might think of their very own warrior (provide an example to support the children to stimulate thinking).

At home:
• Talk with your child/ren about what fear is.
• Read/play the story Hey Warrior to the children. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzhka72RV30
• After watching, talk about what the children saw.
• Read The Cool Things About You.
• Model making a list about the strengths about yourself in 3 areas.

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• Take it in turns with your child to write a point in the list in each section. You can choose one colour and your child can write in a different colour.
• Talk to the children about your fears and how you perhaps shown them or feel them.
• Sometimes when we feel frightened or worried, we have to be brave. With your child design a warrior which you can both have to protect you when you experience fear.
• Your child might want to write a short story about their warrior and how they protect somebody from a fear.