



Staffordshire Emotional Wellbeing Service

Top Tips for Parents

Supporting your child to understand and manage their emotions

The ability to read our own emotions, identify the cause and manage those big feelings; to be able to recognise something you have said or done that may have affected someone else's emotions are crucial life skills that help us to read social cues and form healthy relationships as well as being great for our well-being!! There are lots of ways you can help your child develop this "emotional intelligence"



*Helping them to label their own emotions can help them to begin to express their feelings more effectively...

Verbalise your own feelings so they can hear when you are sad/angry- children learn by watching and listening to others

*Choose an emotion each week and then see if you feel it or spot anyone else feeling it!

* Praise your child for talking about how they are feeling. Let them know it has helped you to understand how they are feeling and how you can help them much better now.

*Acknowledge their feelings- however small or trivial they may seem; they are important to your child and letting them know you value their emotions helps them to want to share them with you.

*Use language such as "you seem a bit upset can I help you?", "what can I do to help you feel better?", "would you like me to respond or just listen?", "you look like you've got some big feelings- shall we chat about them and see if we can find out what they are?", "It's ok to feel like that". All of these help your child open up about their emotions.

*Help your child to recognise emotions in others "why do you think they look sad?", "that little boy looks shy- look how he is hiding away and looking down- I wonder why he feels like that?"

* Helping your child to "scale their emotions" can help you to assess how big they are for your child. If 10 is feeling the happiest they have ever felt and 0 is the unhappiest- how are they feeling right now? What could help them move up one point- maybe a cuddle, going in the garden , stroking their pet?

*Play "emotion " matching games such as dominoes, bingo, pairs games or simply labelling photos of people showing emotions

*"Emotion Charades"- is great fun- write out some emotions and then just act them out for your child to guess and then they have a go- or even do them at the same time and see if your emotion looks the same!

*Use body shape cut outs or simply draw a body outline for your child to "draw" how they feel inside- give them some colours to think about where they feel anger or how their tummy feels when they get anxious...then label with that emotion.

*Read books and stories about emotions- "The bag full of worries", "Don't panic Anika", "I feel angry" are all great for talking about how they are feeling and open up the door for discussion.





Staffordshire Emotional Wellbeing Service



Extra tips for “Angry feelings”

- *Let them know that feeling angry is ok but there are good and no so good ways of showing it- see if they can name some. Remind them that anger is a choice.
- *When a child is angry, they are in “fight/flight” they can’t hear you properly or make rational choices so wait until they are calm before trying to reason with them.
- *Angry on the outside may not be angry on the inside- anxious feelings, shyness and tiredness can all be under the angry outside- take a proper look to find out how they are really feeling.
- *Breathing really does help- when they are calm, practice some slow deep breaths ready to use if their emotions get too big!
- *Try to nip it in the bud- watch your child for signs they are getting angry then distract or diffuse until they are calm and can talk.
- * Take time out yourself if things start to escalate- just explaining that you are “feeling a bit upset/angry” and stepping out of the room to calm down can really help. Always make sure your child is safe !!

Extra tips for “Worried feelings”

- *Let them know worrying is a normal emotion that everyone has.
- *Try to help them to use slow deep breathing as below
- *Help them to challenge whether the worry is real or if they have been overthinking which has made it grow
- *Encourage them to talk about them and help them to write down their worries- maybe give them to a “Worry Monster”- sharing them lessens their strength
- * Having a worry is often about something that feels out of control- helping your child to think of a “plan” can help them to feel in control- maybe help them to come up with 3 things they could do towards that worry ie if they are worried about going to somewhere new- 1. Drive past it to have a closer look. 2. Check it out on the internet 3. Take a favourite toy with you.
- *Discuss it as a little scenario- maybe think about what the worst/best outcome could be i.e. if they are worried about a school test- how would they deal with a low score, what would it feel like if they did really well. We tend to focus on the negative outcomes so looking at other possibilities can give a positive slant to it.
- *Practice what they could say/do if they are worried about a situation i.e. if their friend won’t play with them have a practice about what they could say so they are ready if that situation arises!



. Breathing Techniques....

- *Open and close hands slowly with their breath or use an elastic band or hair scrunchie.
 - *Star breathing- starting at the base of their thumb breathe in and out slowly as they trace their finger around their hand- up to breathe in down to breath out.
 - * Using bubble liquid gently blow bubbles
- Rectangle breathing – “draw” a rectangle in the air- short sides- breathe in then longer outbreaks on the long sides.

