

# Returning to School after Lockdown: A Resource Pack for Primary aged Children

To use alongside the support of a caregiver



## Includes:

- ❑ Child-friendly information about Covid-19
- ❑ Common worries children might have and how they can manage them
- ❑ Body sensations associated with worry
- ❑ Tips to make going back to school easier



- A range of coping strategies including practical skills to help keep calm and in control of big emotions
- Resource pages with links to workshops, websites, videos, contacts and apps to support children's wellbeing

## What's been going on?

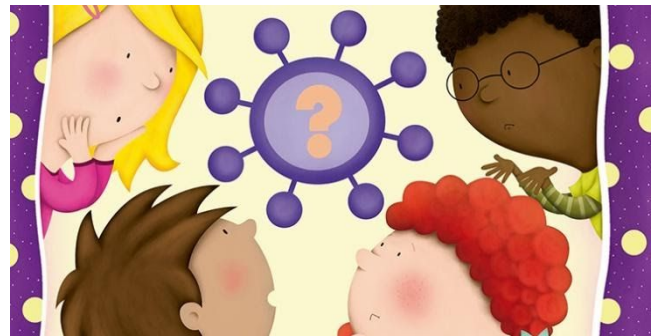
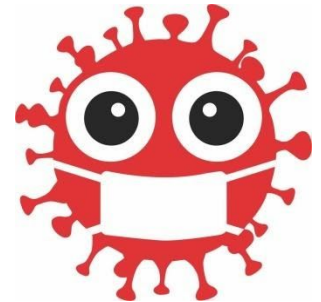
A lot has changed for all of us over the last year. Some of these changes are:

- Covid-19 virus
- Staying at home a lot more
- Schools closing
- Not seeing loved ones as much
- Keeping a distance from others, including loved ones
- Not being able to go to places such as a friend's house, cafes, parks, playgrounds or after school activities
- Parents/carers being at home at day
- Home schooling virtually
- Washing our hands more
- Maybe covering our faces



## What is Covid-19?

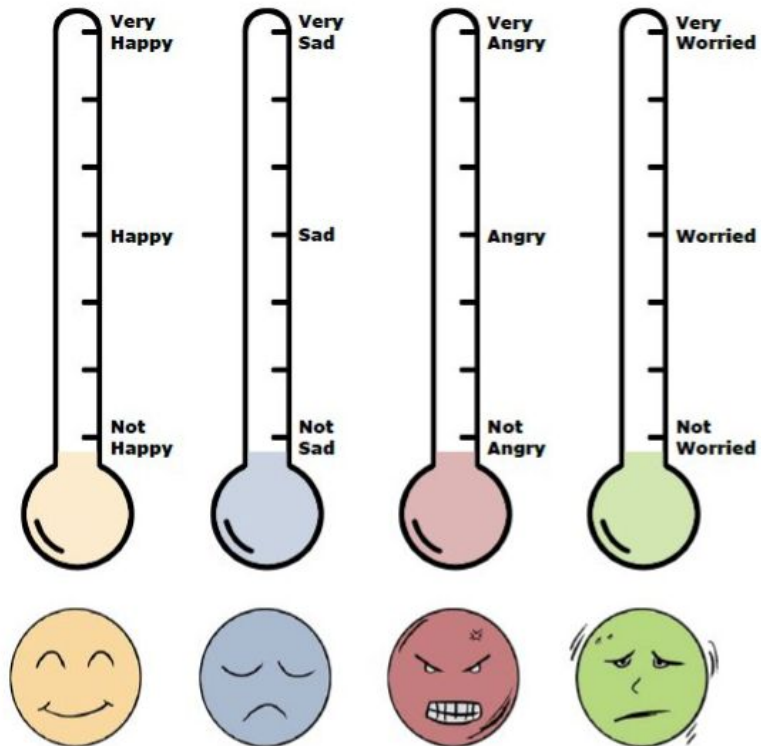
- Covid-19 is an illness that affects breathing and lungs
- It can spread by coughing or touching surfaces or skin that has been contaminated by the virus
- Children who get Covid-19 may feel a little ill, like having a cold but lots of children don't get it at all
- If adults with healthy bodies get Covid-19 they are not likely to become very ill
- Covid-19 can be dangerous for people who already have an illness or are elderly
- Almost everyone who has had the virus has fully recovered



## How do you feel about Covid-19?

Please circle an emoji:

Do you feel any of  
these emotions?  
Where would you  
put yourself on the  
scale?





# You might be feeling lots of different feelings....and that's ok!

There has been quite a lot of change going on. Last year schools shut and you may have been at home for some time or you may have been going into school, although it was a little different to normal. Schools re-opened, although they may have felt a little different. For example you might have been in bubbles with other children. Schools shut again and you may have been at home again or you might have been in school.



Things have calmed down a bit in relation to Covid-19 and schools are reopening. You may be feeling the same about going back to school as last time or you may be feeling a little different. You may be feeling excited or you might be feeling worried. Whatever you are feeling is ok and normal.



Here are some of the things you might be thinking and feeling...

What if I am  
behind with  
my work?

What if I get ill or  
make someone  
else ill?

What if the virus  
comes back again?

I can't wait to  
go back!

I will miss my  
family

What if I don't  
get on with my  
friends  
anymore?

Something bad  
might happen if  
I'm not safe at  
home?

What if I don't  
like it?

I am so excited  
to see my  
friends again.

I might not  
remember the  
rules and get  
into trouble.

What if my  
friends aren't in  
the same  
bubbles as me?

What if I bump  
into  
someone/touch  
something?

## Why do I feel worried and what can I do with my worries?

Lots of children are feeling a little scared or worried about going back to school. That's ok... being worried is normal. But sometimes we find we are worrying too much and things can feel a bit overwhelming.

### Talking

Talking about your  
worries



- ☐ Talking to others about our worries can be really helpful
- ☐ People you might like to talk to are trusted adults (caregivers, teachers, Teaching Assistants and more) or maybe your friends
- ☐ It can feel better to share and it helps us to know we are not alone
- ☐ They might be able to give advice to help you
- ☐ Other people might feel the same as we do

Writing  
down

- ☐ Sometimes it can be hard to explain how we feel and it can be easier to write it down
- ☐ You might like to write a list of all the things you are worried about or keep a journal
- ☐ You can then share this with a trusted adult



Draw  
worry

- ☐ Some children like to draw how they are feeling or express themselves in other ways like painting or making something
- ☐ You can then share this with a trusted adult

## worry time:

It can be helpful to write worries down throughout the day when they come up in our head. Once we have written the worry down we can let it go for now and carry on with our day. Towards the end of the day, it can be helpful to look over your written down worries and spend some time (15 minutes) with a trusted adult going through your worries. Ask yourself, is there anything I can do about this worry? If so, what? Use the worry tree to help you. When worry time has finished it is helpful to distract yourself with an enjoyable activity to take your mind off things.



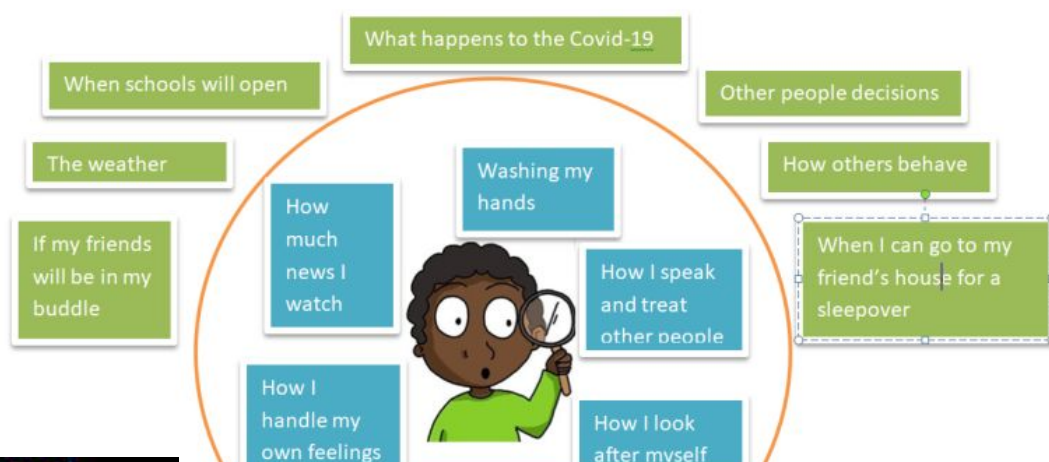


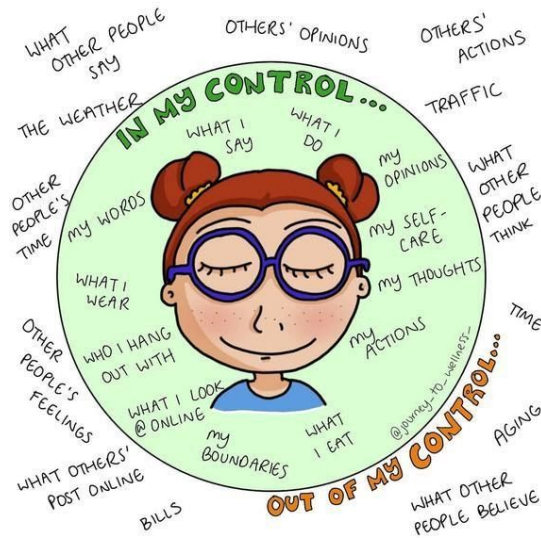
**Recourse from:** <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/the-worry-tree/>

## Do I have control over all worries?

It can be helpful to think about worries in relation to whether we have control over them or not.

- ☐ Make a list off all your worries
- ☐ Draw yourself in the middle of a piece of paper
- ☐ On the inside write all the worries and things you can control
- ☐ On the outside write all the worries and things you can't control
- ☐ Try to focus and dedicate your time and energy on the things on the inside – the things you can control - and try to give less time and energy to the things on the outside – the things you can't control.





# Circle of Control

What I can't control

What I can control

## Things we might feel in our bodies

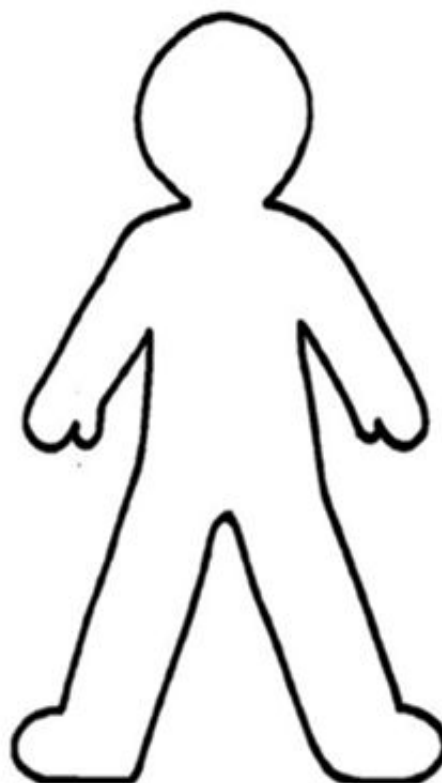
Sometimes when we are feeling happy, excited, nervous, worried, angry and many more feelings we have different feelings in our bodies. Some of things we might feel in our body are shown in the picture below:



Sometimes these feelings in our bodies can feel a bit uncomfortable and not very nice. It's important to remember these body sensations can't hurt us, they aren't harmful and

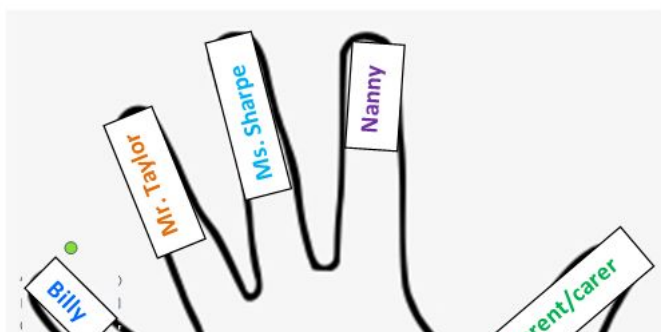
Can you think of a time when you felt a strong emotion like the ones listed above?  
What did you notice in your body?

Can you draw or write on the person what you felt in your body?



## My Back-u

There are lots of different people in our lives who are there to support us and help us. They might help us feel better when we are feeling sad, they might help us with school work or they might be a good friend who we enjoy spending time with.







On each finger write  
someone who is in  
your back-up team.



## Preparing to go back to school:

### Get organised:

- ☐ Get your school items ready (uniform, school bag, stationary, books, P.E. kits)





**Time:**

aily routine might have changed a little, so it helpful to get back into a similar routine as you are at school  
et up at the same time, have break time and t the same time every day  
e feeling nervous about going back to school,

**Stay connected:**

- ☐ You might feel a little worried about seeing friends again after the lockdown and that's OK
- ☐ Try having a catch up with friends before going back to school. This will make you feel less nervous as you will realise your friends are still there and are probably feeling the same way

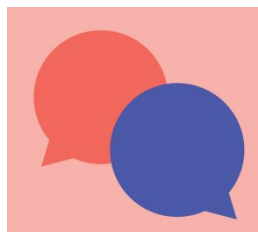


**Talk to a trusted adult:**

- ☐ It can help to talk to others about how you are feeling
- ☐ Talk about the changes you are experiencing and your thoughts
- ☐ You may prefer to draw or write them down your thoughts

**Talking points:**

- ☐ Have you learnt anything from your experience in lockdown?
- ☐ What are you looking forward to about returning to school?
- ☐ What are you worried about in relation to returning to school?
- ☐ What will be the same? What will be different?
- ☐ How will going back to school help you achieve your goals?



# Helping yourself when you are back at school

## Be patient and kind to yourself:

- ☐ Give yourself time to get used to the school routines again and any new rules
- ☐ School may look a bit different so it may take longer to settle than it usually does after school holidays



## Remember:

- ☐ School is a safe place
- ☐ Your school will make changes to make it safe for you
- ☐ Think about ways to keep yourself safe ('catch it, bin it and kill it')
- ☐ Don't forget to reward yourself for your achievements including returning to school!

## D-19 At School



COUGH & SNEEZE  
INTO YOUR ELBOW



KEEP A SAFE  
DISTANCE



WASH YOUR HANDS  
PROPERLY



KEEP YOUR  
DESK CLEAN





# Coping Strategies: Breathing Techniques

## Controlled breathing

1. Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach
2. Take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for 7 seconds; both your hands should rise gently as you breathe
3. Hold the breath for 2 seconds
4. Release your breath slowly for 11 seconds
5. Practice!



## Down Cocoa Coping Strategy

Hold a mug of hot cocoa.



Breathe through my nose to smell the cocoa.  
Slowly count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

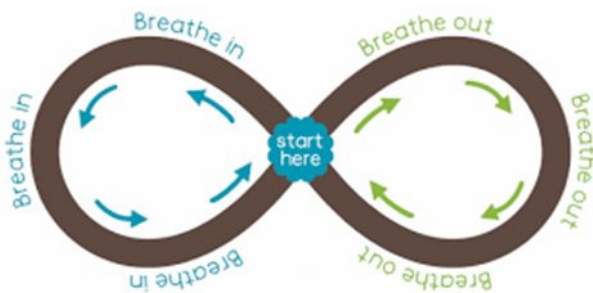


Breathe through my mouth to blow the cocoa to cool it. Slowly count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.



Now I feel calm.

## Lazy "8" Infinity Breathing



## A Breathing Exercise







## Belly Breathing

Belly breathing is a great way to calm down when you are upset.

Imagine that there is a balloon in your belly.

As you take a big breath in through your nose, try to fill up the balloon so that your belly puffs up.

Now breathe out through your mouth (like blowing bubble) and let all of the air out of the balloon.

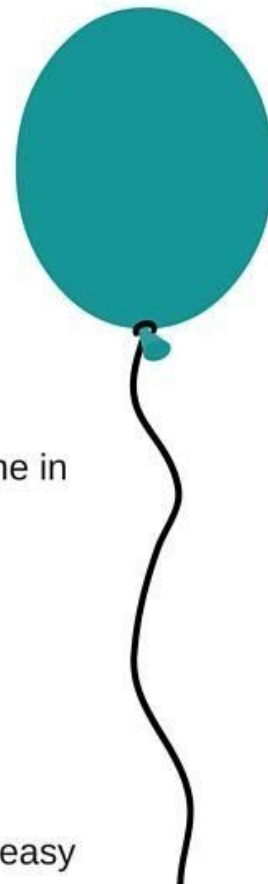
Take slow breaths. Try to count to 4 as you breathe in and count to 4 as you breathe out.

Inhale...2...3...4

Exhale...2...3...4

Repeat until you are calm.

Remember to practice every day until it becomes easy to use when you need it.





## Distraction Techniques:

Sometimes when we are feeling a strong emotion for example worry, anger or fear, distracting our minds can help to make us feel calm again. Below are some ways to do this.

### THE 5 SENSES GROUNDING TECHNIQUE



#### LOOK

Name 5 things you can see



#### FEEL

Name 4 things you can feel



#### LISTEN

Name 3 things you can hear



#### SMELL

Name 2 things you can smell



#### TASTE

Name 1 thing you can taste

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#### Colours

Find five things in the room that are yellow/ blue/ green etc.



#### ABCD

Think of film titles/ names/ books/ countries beginning with A, B, C etc. till you get to Z



Count backwards  
from 60 in 2's or  
spell your name  
backwards

Think of an animal  
for every letter in  
the alphabet



## Positive Self-Talk

Sometimes when we are feeling strong emotions such as sadness or worry, we have negative thoughts about ourselves, other people or situations. Our thoughts are about how we talk to ourselves or “Self-Talk.” Sometimes we get stuck in our thoughts and forget that there can be other ways of looking at things. This can feel really scary in our bodies and make us have even more unhelpful thoughts.

What can we do when this happens? Try these steps:



**CATCH IT** - notice – It’s one of those pesky unhelpful worry thoughts again



**CHECK IT** -Take a step back – Am I sure things are actually as bad as I feel they are? Are my worries realistic?



**CHALLENGE IT** –Is there any evidence this thought might not be 100% true? Might there be another way of looking at this?



**CHANGE IT**- what is a more helpful way of thinking about this?



## Helpful thoughts:-



### Focus on positive things about ourselves

"I'm a kind person, I'm sure I'll make some friends in the end"



### Focus on our strengths and successes

"I'm good at working things out in math's, I'm sure I'll be able to work out this science project"



### Focus on our achievements

"Even though I felt nervous I still managed to ask a question last week in class"



### Focus on Coping and Being successful

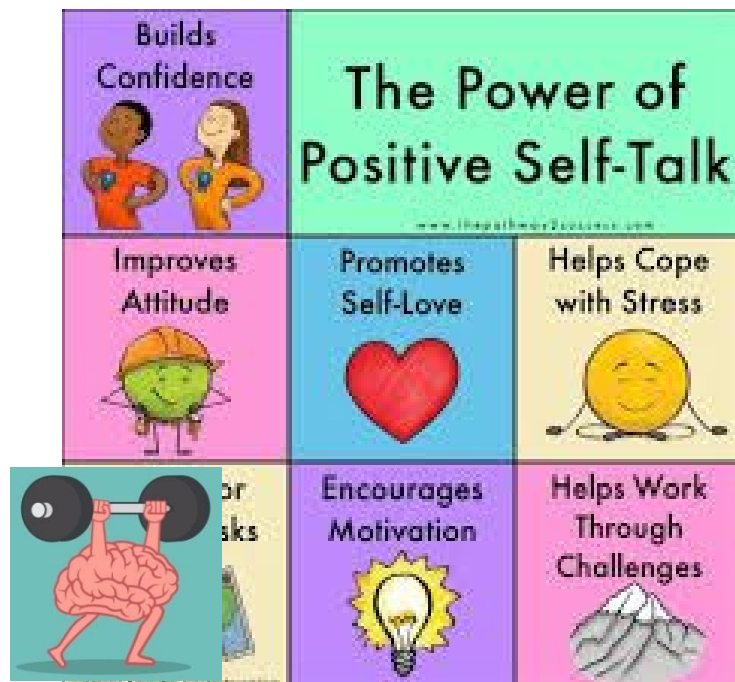
"this is really hard right now but I am sure I can do it if I keep trying"

think  
**POSITIVE**

Positive statements encourage us and help us cope through distressing times. We can say these encouraging words to ourselves, and be our own personal coach. We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties. Examples of coping thoughts might be:

- ★ Stop, and breathe, I can do this
- ★ I can learn from this and it will be easier next time
- ★ I can use my coping skills and get through this
- ★ I can be anxious/angry/sad and still deal with this
- ★ I have done this before, and I can do it again
- ★ This feels bad, it's a normal body reaction – it will pass
- ★ This feels bad, and feelings are very often wrong
- ★ These are just feelings, they will go away
- ★ This is difficult and uncomfortable, but it's only temporary
- ★ Short term pain for long term gain
- ★ I can feel bad and still choose to take a new and healthy direction
- ★ I don't need to rush, I can take things slowly
- ★ I have survived before, I will survive now
- ★ I feel this way because of my past experiences, but I am safe
- ★ It's okay to feel this way, it's a normal reaction
- ★ Right now, I am not in danger. Right now, I'm safe





## Practical Strategies:

Below are some really helpful and practical ways to help calm you down.

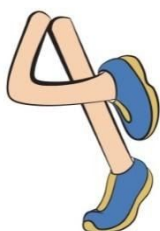
## Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Take 3 deep breaths



Squeeze your feet for 5 seconds. Relax.



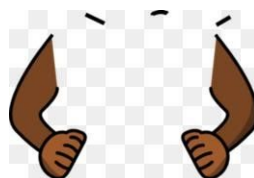
Squeeze your legs for 5 seconds. Relax.



**Squeeze your tummy  
for 5 seconds. Relax.**



**Squeeze your  
shoulders for 5  
seconds. Relax.**



**Squeeze your arms  
for 5 seconds. Relax.**



**Squeeze your hands  
for 5 seconds. Relax.**



**Squeeze your face for  
5 seconds. Relax.**



**Squeeze your whole  
body for 5 seconds.  
Relax.**

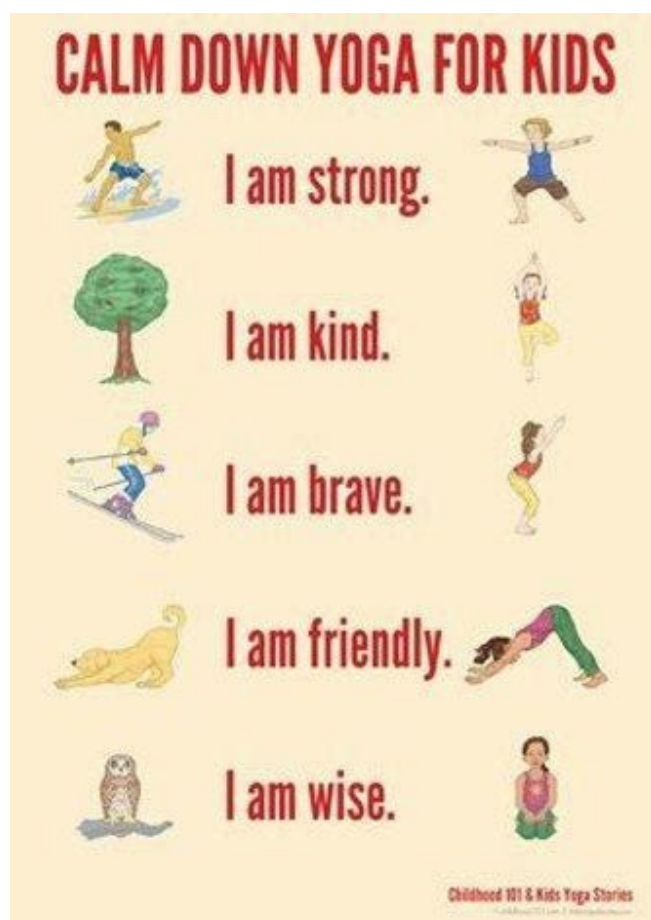


**Take 3 deep breaths**

**Video link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKvRnW-Yic&feature=youtu.be>





Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Td6zFtZPkj4>

Hold this Power Pose for 2 Minutes!





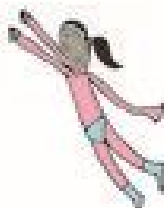
**Bold & confident**



**Wonder Woman**



**Victory**



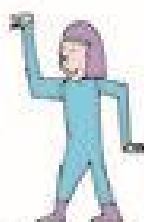
**Generic superhero**



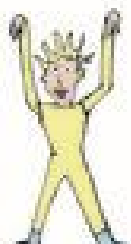
**Statue of Liberty**



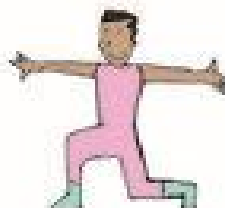
**I'm a little teapot,  
short but with clout**



**Walk like an Egyptian  
(Pharaoh, that is)**



**Raver!**



**Power yoga**

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## HIGH POWER POSE



**STANDING, WIDE STANCE**



**ARMS RAISED IN A "V"  
ABOVE THE HEAD**



**HANDS ON HIPS**



**ARMS CROSSED  
BEHIND THE HEAD,  
SITTING OR STANDING**

## When I feel upset, sad, or unfocused at school I can:

☐ BREATHE. As I zoom my attention to my breathing, I will take extra long out-breaths.



☐ Drink water.



☐ Squeeze a stress ball or use



☐ Push against the wall as hard as I





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Mental Health Support Team

East Hertfordshire



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## Mindfulness Colouring



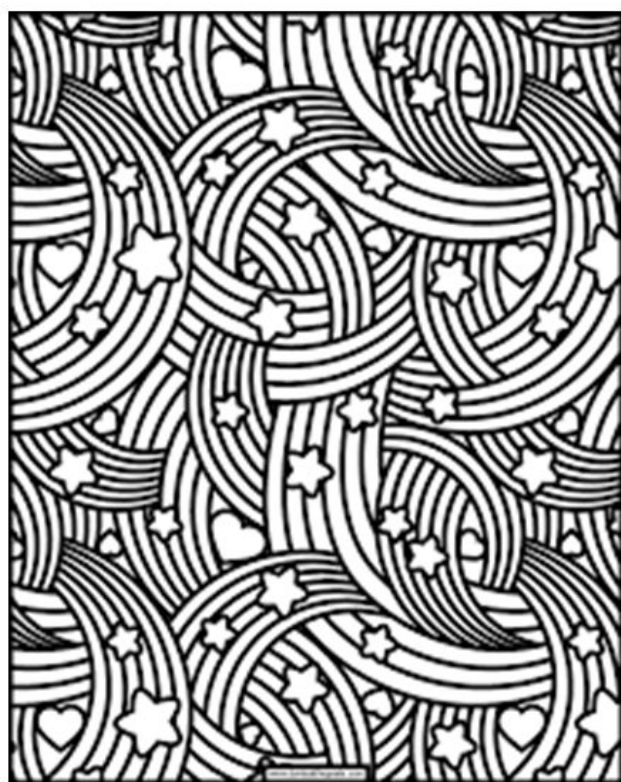
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## Self-Care

It is really important to look after our bodies and brains. Scientists have found that there are things we can do every day to help us feel happier and in control of our bodies and brains. This is called self-care.

Have a look at the table below and circle the answers which best apply to you.

TAKE CARE



OF YOURSELF

Eating enough healthy food			Getting enough exercise		
					
I need to do way more this	I'm doing okay at this	I'm brilliant at this!	I need to do way more this	I'm doing okay at this	I'm brilliant at this!
Getting enough sleep so I don't feel tired			Spending time outside/in nature		
					
I need to do way more this	I'm doing okay at this	I'm brilliant at this!	I need to do way more this	I'm doing okay at this	I'm brilliant at this!

The table above might have given you an idea of what more you could be doing. Have a look at some more examples below. Have a go at creating a self-care plan for yourself. Please see the next 2 pages for examples.



# My self care plan

I can be a good friend by ...

Important people  
Who I trust

This is me

I can keep myself clean and tidy by...

I can eat healthy foods...

mind by...

My hopes and dreams...

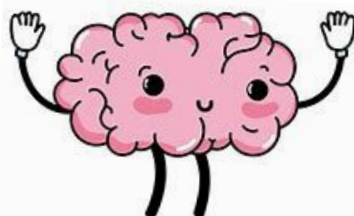
ership University

teaching

es

house

## Self-Esteem:



Self-esteem is how we see and feel about ourselves and this might go up and down at different points in our lives - that is completely normal. Low self-esteem can be caused by a number of things - comparing yourself to your friends, changes at home or at school or your health and many more. Sometimes low self-esteem passes on its own or you can take steps to help yourself feel better. Have a go at completing the Self-Esteem Journal to help boost your self-esteem.

<b>MON.</b>	Something I did well today...	
	Today I had fun when...	
	I felt proud when...	
<b>TUE.</b>	Today I accomplished...	
	I had a positive experience with...	
	Something I did for someone...	
<b>WED.</b>	I felt good about myself when...	
	I was proud of someone else...	
	Today was interesting because...	
<b>THUR.</b>	I felt proud when...	
	A positive thing I witnessed...	
	Today I accomplished...	
<b>FRI.</b>	Something I did well today...	
	I had a positive experience with (a person, place, or thing)...	

## Resources:

### Videos and books in relation to Covid-19:

- Animated video to show children during social distancing restrictions -  
‘While we can’t hug’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PnnFrPaRgY>
- For children aged 3-7 years, Shere Infant School and Nursery in Surrey  
have created an online book ‘Coming back to school in a bubble’:



[https://drive.google.com/file/d/15sUpyqOlgtI\\_eNWp1gnVHQRjopnS\\_axE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15sUpyqOlgtI_eNWp1gnVHQRjopnS_axE/view). Available on audio:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUXDX0WFyno&feature=youtu.be>

- The Little Elf and Flowers of Hope and Bravery is a therapeutic story to help children explore different feelings about returning to school after coronavirus lockdown:  
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/15063/eps-the-little-elf-and-the-flowers-of-hope-and-bravery.pdf>
- A picture book for young children worried about coronavirus:  
<https://en.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx>
- Explaining coronavirus to young children:  
[https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685\\_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf](https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf)
- Dave the dog is worried about coronavirus, a picture book for young children:  
<https://nursedottybooks.com/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus-2/>
- A Carol Gray social story about coronavirus:  
<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23zxNIbEumpw4oKIM7Xy3VKnA25b8Gi53N6YiFleKB9Vx0LQypSPYzzg>
- Coronavirus a book for children, illustrated by Axel Scheffler:  
[https://nosycrowcoronavirus.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Coronavirus\\_ABookForChildren.pdf](https://nosycrowcoronavirus.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Coronavirus_ABookForChildren.pdf)
- The Little Elf who missed his birthday party is a therapeutic story to support primary-age children in exploring strong emotions linked to coronavirus pandemic:  
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/15063/eps-the-little-elf-and-the-flowers-of-hope-and-bravery.pdf>

- Coronavirus a social story:

<https://humberisphn.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Social-Story-.pdf>

### **Video's explaining Anxiety:**

- Fight Flight Freeze – A guide to Anxiety for Key Stage 2 primary school children: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O_5M)
- The owl and guard dog brain – For Key Stage 2 primary school children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so8QN9an3t8>

### **CBeebies have put together some videos for caregivers and children to explore emotions:**

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/talking-to-your-child-about-emotions>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/help-children-cope-with-emotions>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/feeling-better-feelings-tree>

### **Below are some ideas on how children can relax their bodies:**

- Kids muscle relaxation:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc>
- Relax like a cat:  
<http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/26930/Relaxleaflet.pdf>
- Relaxation exercises:  
<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/coronavirus/resource/s/learning-at-home/relaxation-exercises-to-do-at-home-with-your-kids>
- Relaxation for sleep:  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/parenting-in-pictures/sleep-relaxation>

- Calming anxiety: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/calming-anxiety>
  - Seven techniques for helping kids keep calm:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm>
  - 5 finger breathing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSgOW879jjA>
  - Body scan meditation – mindfulness for kids and adults:  
[https://youtu.be/ihwcw\\_ofuME](https://youtu.be/ihwcw_ofuME)
  - Yoga for kids: <https://youtu.be/Td6zFtZPkJ4>
- 
- Progressive muscle relaxation:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc&feature=youtu.be>

### Helpful numbers:

- Single Point of Access (SPA): 0800 6444 101 - a Crisis clinician is available 24/7
- Samaritans: 116 123, open 24/7
- SANE - out of hours helpline: 0300 304 7000, 4.30pm - 10.30pm daily

Most children feel safe at home but some children don't. If you are not feeling safe at home, here are some people to call:

- ChildLine: 0800 1111, [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- In an emergency always call the Police on 999

### Apps:



Chill Panda



Sleepstation



Stress & Anxiety Companion

Supporting you to support growing minds

Mental Health Support Team

East Hertfordshire



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