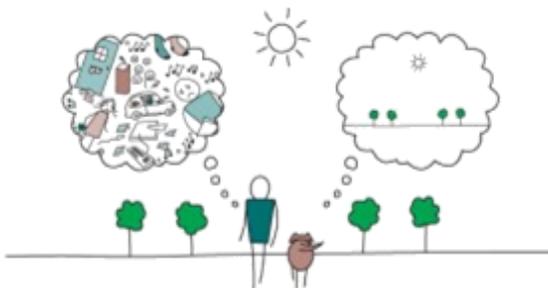


Developing emotional resilience and wellbeing

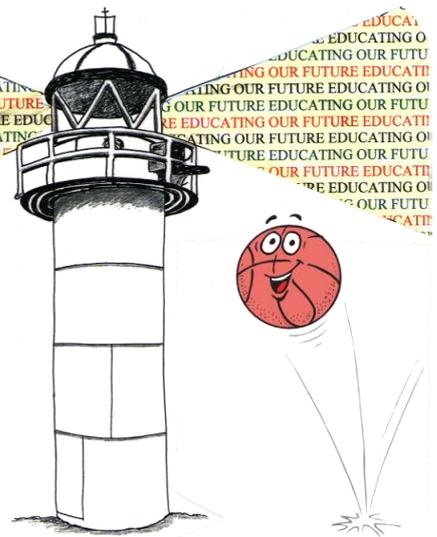
Our ongoing focus in school remains very much on helping children develop emotional resilience – the ability to bounce back after making a mistake, become self confident, believe in themselves and be able to cope effectively with the stresses and anxieties that each day can throw at them. Of course we have always worked on developing self esteem, confidence and determination but feel we now need to drive this even more. We all live our lives at an increasingly rapid rate and building in time to slow down, reflect and become aware of our emotions is essential to cope and maintain a healthy, positive view of ourselves, others and of our lives.

In school we do a lot of work on developing emotional resilience; circle times, assemblies, yoga, mindfulness, forest schools to name just a few – but more is needed and a joined up approach between home and school is essential.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

So, with this in mind I would like to give you some back ground information to help you understand what we are trying to achieve – healthy, happy, confident children who can cope with the challenges that life throws at them; be tolerant of others and be able to build positive relationships.



The stages in a child's emotional development.

Put simply, there are five developmental steps that children need to achieve as they grow up – these build their emotional intelligence and hence their ability to bounce back and cope with the ups and downs of life.

1. Knowing their emotions

The first step is self-awareness - recognising a feeling as it happens. Children eventually reach the stage where they can be aware of an emotion rather than being overwhelmed by it. However they do not learn this over night!

3. Self-Motivation

Children need to learn to control their emotions in order to reach their goals. When they are in charge of their emotions, rather than weighed down by them, they can take charge of their actions. They must learn to resist instant feel good solutions (things and treats) they need to want to do it simply to feel they have achieved their goal – knowing that they did it.

5. Handling relationships

Children are enabled to build successful relationships when they have become skilled in coping with other people's emotions, whilst managing and expressing their own effectively. Emotionally literate people are good to be around because they establish good rapport with us, and we feel able to entrust them with our feelings.

2. Managing their emotions

Once children are aware of their feelings they can learn to handle them. Children need to learn ways of reassuring themselves when they're feeling anxious, calming themselves down when they're angry, soothing themselves when they are upset etc. Every feeling has its value and is a reflection of what is going on in their lives. How well your child manages those painful emotions determines their emotional well-being.

4. Empathy – recognising emotions in others

The awareness of what another person is feeling, is the most important 'people skill' of all, and essential for satisfying relationships. Children who are treated with empathy and respect will grow up to be empathetic and respectful.

It is important to note that even as adults we can still struggle with many of these steps – so the more we can equip our children as they grow up the better they will cope.



Think about your own emotional resilience – it helps you to understand what we each need to work on.



Here are 10 ways to help build emotional resilience – this is what we are aiming to achieve with our children – we need to be the role models and show them how it is done.

- See problems as challenges to overcome; not insurmountable difficulties – for a child, being able to face an appropriate challenge is essential.
- Surround yourself with a supportive network of friends and family – support your children, encourage and build their confidence – make sure they know what they are good at.
- Accept that change is part of life, not a disaster – the way we deal with change will provide our children with the right approach and a model for their future.
- Take control and be decisive in difficult situations – again, provide the model.
- Nurture a positive view of yourself - don't talk yourself down or focus on flaws – your children will do the same.
- Look for opportunities to improve yourself: a new challenge, social situation or interest. Set goals and plan ways to reach them – do the same for your children; new experiences = confidence and self esteem
- Keep things in perspective: learn from your mistakes and think long-term – this is the message we are sending out to the children – mistakes happen – **learn and bounce back!**
- Think positively and try and see the good side of a bad situation
- Practise emotional awareness: can **you** identify what you are feeling and why? Talking to your children about how they are feeling will help them identify problems and then solutions and teach them to recognise their feelings
- Look after yourself, through healthy eating, exercise, sleep and relaxation.



