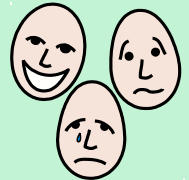


Mental Health Awareness Week 2020 will happen while the country is just starting to ease “lockdown” restrictions, people are practicing social distancing and many families and friends remain apart. People will be experiencing a wide range of emotions, including sadness, anxiety or loneliness. The awareness of the needs of others and the positive mental health of families, children and young people is especially important during this time. This leaflet has been put together to give families and educators ideas about activities and resources they can use to promote positive mental health, mental health awareness and practice kindness.

Understanding Feelings

Feelings Charades Write a list of feelings words on scraps of paper and place them into a container. Each player picks out a feeling and acts it out for others to guess. You could use photos of facial expressions, use more complex emotions words, allow “actors” to say a sentence, only use facial expressions or do a simple movement.



How Do I Feel Today?



Family Feelings Diary Finish each day talking about how you feel and recoding this in a diary or a chart. Encourage each other that all feelings are OK and point out that it is OK to feel different. You could use photos of family members showing facial expressions, simple ☺ symbols, colours to represent feelings or words. You could also talk about why you feel that way. There are lots of apps and templates on line for teenagers to create their own too.

Worry Monster Use an old box or a bag to make a worry monster. Decide together what he should look like or there are lots of ideas online. Write things that you are worried about on paper and “feed” them to the monster.



Feelings as Characters Draw, paint or create different feelings as creatures. Think about how colours, textures, shapes and patterns could represent different feelings. You could get inspiration from the characters in “Inside Out”, “The Mr Men” or “Mindful Monsters” chards. Older kids could use inspiration from Manga to create comics with the different characters



Online Resources

Search “feelings”



twinkl.co.uk



teachingideas.co.uk



britishcouncil.org



bbc.co.uk/cbbc

Need Help?

youngminds.org.uk 0808 802 5544

samaritans.org.uk 116 123

mind.org.uk 0300123 3393

cruse.org.uk (bereavement) 0808 808 1677

mentalhealth.org.uk

Practicing Kindness

Random Acts of Kindness As a family write a set of random acts of kindness cards. They could be making a cup of tea, cleaning the bathroom or drawing a picture for someone. Everyone could have their own set, or a family set. You could each pick a card each day, or surprise each other by choosing to do something kind. You could expand your random acts of kindness to include neighbours while practicing safe social distancing.



Kindness Tree Cut out a large piece of paper to look like the branches of a tree. Stick it somewhere in the house where everyone can see, like the fridge or on a door. Each time someone in the household does something kind, recognise it by putting a leaf or a flower on the kindness tree. You could write down what the person did that was kind on the leaf, or use different colours for different people. Rather than trees, you could put butterflies on a flower, cars on a road, or fish in a fish bowl – whatever your children are interested in.

Recognising Kindness Talk about the different ways people have shown kindness towards each other during “lockdown”. You might talk about neighbours helping each other with shopping, Clapping for the NHS on Thursdays, making rainbows or people who have gone that extra mile to help others. You could write a letter together to someone who you think deserves a “thank you” for their kindness.



5 Tips for Positive Mental Health

📍 **Connect** Positive relationships are key to positive mental health. People can find being away from family, friends and teachers difficult. Staying connected with people outside of your household is especially important while we are all physically apart. Think about different ways that you can contact people you miss. Maybe send someone a postcard, a picture or a poem.

www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-stay-connected-during-lockdown

📍 **Be Active** Physical activity can lower feelings of depression and anxiety in children and adults and is associated with better sleep. For many, going for a daily walk has been an important part of their lockdown routine. You-Tube workouts, yoga, dancing in the kitchen, or a household game of football in the park are all great ways to stay active and boost positive hormones.

www.activeforlife.com/activities

www.cosmickids.com

📍 **Learn** Learning new things is associated with positive mental health, feelings of success and positive self-worth. Lockdown has meant that many of our usual activities have been cancelled, so it is a great opportunity to try new things, start a new project, or research something.

www.thecrashcourse.com

www.zooniverse.org

www.nhm.ac.uk

📍 **Give** Many people have shown extraordinary acts of kindness to neighbours in the recent weeks, but being kind to other people can be something very simple too. A simple smile can make someone feel valued and make a big difference to their day.

www.randomactsofkindness.org

📍 **Be Mindful** Mindfulness is about being more aware of the present moment, what things look or sound like, how things feel, taste or smell, and how we, and those around us, feel. Being aware of what is happening now, rather than worrying about the past or the future, can help us to cope better with uncomfortable feelings of stress, sadness or anxiety.

www.headspace.com

www.stopbreathethink.com

www.changetochill.org

Search “five ways to wellbeing” to find out more