

How to start a conversation with your classroom about mental health



Top Tip

START NOW!
swipe here



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Let's

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek2023

AWARE
OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
CHANGING LIVES.

Activity Ideas

A Worry Box



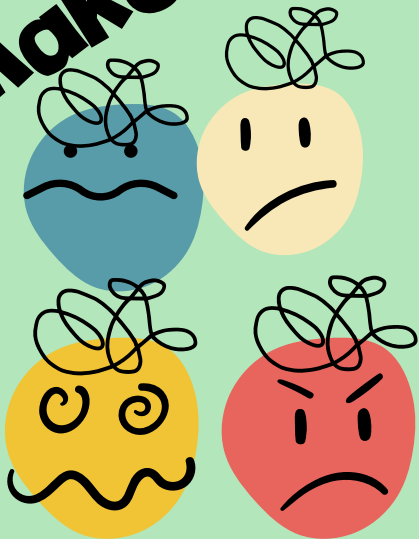
Where children can write & post notes to disclose a worry they have. Keep the box hidden so that privacy can be upheld and a child isn't seen posting a worry by their other classmates.

Grow something



Each child can grow a plant, teaching them responsibility and how to care for something, like how they should care for their mental health. Nurturing it with water (positive thoughts, learning something new etc.), giving it sunlight rather than hiding it in the dark etc. (Getting outside etc)

Make stress balls



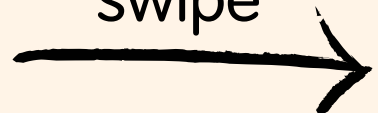
Have a creative session where you make stress balls out of balloons, flour and water. Decorate the faces with emotions and teach the children what the different feelings are and that they can squeeze them to release pressure if they feel stressed or frustrated.

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More Activity Ideas

Create a mental wellbeing wall



Print out positive messages and give them to the children to create visuals for. Then pin them up in a visible place in your classroom. That way, the children can be encouraged by positive messaging at any time of the day. Such as,

“I can do whatever I set my mind to.”

“I believe in myself and in what I am capable of doing.”

“There is no one better to be than me.”

A sticker chart



Perhaps after lunch each child can pick an emoji sticker that represents how they are feeling that day. This could start conversations of recognising what different feelings are and what behaviours they can produce.

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Use open questions

“What did you enjoy most about yesterday?”

and

“What did you not enjoy about yesterday and why?”



★ Top Tip

When children start sharing their feelings, a teacher can validate and understand them by repeating what they said to show you are listening and empathise with them by saying things like "That would make me feel sad too. It's ok to feel sad sometimes." Let them know you are there for them and that this is a safe place to share! Try to have these conversations one on one.

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Don't fix it!

When a child discloses a problem to you don't try to fix it for them. Instead, work with them to help them come up with a **solution.**

solution.



This will

empower



★ Top Tip

Google 'Peaceful problem solving chart for children' and print it out. Either pin it up in your classroom or work through it with a child when they disclose an issue. Say things like, "Let's figure this out together! What could you do to make that subject more enjoyable to study?"

a child and teaches them to know they have the ability to solve their own problems!

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Lead by example!

Where appropriate, try to role model how to open up about your feelings with your classroom and show them how you devise solutions to lift your own mood to look after your mental health. For example, say to your classroom,

“I'm feeling a little sad today because my dog is sick. We all feel sad at times.”

Then invite your classroom into an activity that lifts your mood and tell them why. For example,

“Let's do a creative session. Expressing myself through creativity always lifts my mood.”

Or

“Why don't we do our science lesson outside today? Being outside and looking at the environment always makes me feel better.”



Top Tip

After the activity, ask them what they like to do to lift their moods and if they can give examples of when it has worked for them in the past. This will encourage your classroom to know for themselves the activities that lift their moods, and they will perhaps be quicker to engage in those activities the next time they feel low.

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