



Promoting resilience in supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health

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Aims for today

- To increase awareness of common mental health difficulties in children and adolescents
- To briefly consider how children's attachments and brain development may affect mental health and learning
- To consider approaches to support children's mental health and wellbeing

What is children's mental health?



What is children's mental health?

Good mental health is characterised by a person's ability to fulfil a number of key functions and activities, including:

- the ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- the ability to learn
- the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others
- the ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty.

(Mental Health Foundation)

Mental health difficulties in childhood

- ALL children have some degree of mental health and it is NORMAL to feel sad, anxious, shy, angry, happy and excited at different times.
- However, 1 in 10 children will experience a diagnosable mental health problem which negatively impacts on at least one area of their life (Mental Health Foundation)

Exercise

- What factors do you think make a child more or less likely to experience a mental health difficulty?
- You can think about factors related to:
 - - The child
 - - Family
 - - School
 - - Community
 - - Society

Risk and protective factors

	Risk factors	Protective factors
The child	E.g. genetic differences, developmental delay, physical illness, difficult temperament	E.g. Being female (for younger children); Secure attachment experience; Sociable; Sense of humour; Problem solving and communication skills; Experience of success; Capacity to reflect
The family	E.g. overt conflict including domestic violence; inconsistent or unclear discipline; death or loss;	E.g. At least one supportive adult/parent-child relationship; affection; clear, consistent discipline; support for education; absence of severe discord

Risk and protective factors

	Risk factors	Protective factors
School	E.g. bullying; lack of positive friendships; poor pupil to teacher relationships	E.g. clear policy on behaviour and bullying; 'open-door' policy for children to raise problems; a whole-school approach to promoting good mental health; a sense of belonging; positive peer influences
Community	e.g. socio-economic disadvantage, homelessness, discrimination	Wider supportive network; good housing; high standard of living; High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying; range of sports/leisure activities

(Department for Education, 2016)

Take 5 minutes

- What might you notice/look for in a child who is experiencing a mental health difficulty?

What do mental health conditions look like?

The following few slides show the signs and symptoms of high end mental health conditions, it is important to recognise them to help identify low level mental health conditions that you can deal with and high end ones that you need to refer on.



Anxiety Disorders

What is Anxiety Disorder?

An inaccurate perception of danger or threat leading to physiological, behavioural and emotional responses that are persistent, excessive and interfere with daily life - 'Fight or Flight or Freeze'



Anxiety Disorders

Signs to watch out for

- General Anxiety Disorder – fear or worry most of the time with no obvious cause, e.g. panic attacks
- Separation anxiety – clingy, tearful, reluctant to try new things
- Social anxiety – difficulties in social groups or presenting as excessively self-conscious
- School-based anxiety – headaches and nausea in mornings, tears or anger at separation, refusal
- OCD – Recurrent intrusive thoughts with behavioural compulsions to reduce the distress caused by the thoughts



Anxiety

Signs to watch out for

- Physiological symptoms – shaking, sweaty, fast breathing
- Agitated, aggressive, difficulty concentrating, excessively tired, nauseous, not eating, withdrawn
- Low confidence, poor social skills, vulnerable to bullying or being a bully
- Excessive avoidance – defiance, withdrawal, absence from school
- Increased risk of alcohol misuse in adolescence as a means to reduce anxiety symptoms



Depression

Signs to watch out for

- Persistent sad or empty mood – may present as irritability
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, low confidence, low self-esteem
- Diminished interest or pleasure in activities
- Changes in body weight
- Sleepiness, loss of energy, agitation, poor concentration
- Recurrent thoughts of death or self-harm



Neurodevelopmental difficulties

Signs to watch out for

Autism Spectrum Condition

- A developmental condition, present from early childhood, which affects children's ability to socially communicate with others.
- Key areas of difficulty:
- Communication: Some children's language develops at a different rate to other children
- Imagination: Children may struggle to play pretend games or make up stories
- Social interaction: Children may struggle to make or maintain friendships and may appear socially isolated.
- Sensory needs: Some children with ASC have heightened sensory needs (e.g. more sensitive to classroom noise)

Neurodevelopmental difficulties

Signs to watch out for

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- A developmental condition characterised by difficulties with:
- Hyperactivity
- Attention
- Concentration
- Impulsivity

Deliberate Self-Harm

Signs to watch out for

- Cutting, Scratching, Burning
- Self poisoning – tablets, street drugs, alcohol
- Release from unbearable emotions (anger, tension frustration, anxiety, depression)
- Self punishment
- Context of inadequate support networks or means to address problems
- Injuries can lead to hospital admissions and possibly suicide attempts



Eating Disorders – Anorexia Nervosa

Signs to Watch out for

- Extreme fear being fat, preoccupied with body shape and weight or distorted perception of body
- Restricted food intake, excessive exercising, laxative use, vomiting
- Can fail to gain expected weight, not just about weight loss. Amenorrhoea (absence of menstrual cycle), delayed puberty, stunted physical development
- From 'normal' to obsessional dieting behaviour
- Social withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor concentration, lack independence from family



Eating Disorders - Bulimia

Signs to watch out for

- Alternates between restricted food intake and large amounts of food in binges, followed by vomiting or laxative use
- May not present as over / under weight
- May avoid eating with others. Secondary social and relational difficulties as a result
- Can become preoccupied / organised around buying food, eating, purging
- Unlikely to disclose behaviour or seek help.



Psychosis

Signs to watch out for

- Altered perceptions and thoughts, loss of touch with external reality, lack of insight
- 1/3 people diagnosed with psychosis experience their first episode before age of 19
- Positive Symptoms (hallucinations, delusions begin) and Negative Symptoms (self-neglect, lack of motivation) in unique combination
- Typically preceded by early symptoms up to 12 months before
- Family history of mental illness is a risk factor, there is a suggested link to cannabis and drug use



Trauma

Signs to watch out for

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Follows a specific incident that involved death, serious injury or threat to self or others.
- Symptoms include persistent re-experiencing (intrusive recollections, psychological distress and physiological symptoms if exposed to reminders) and avoidance / numbing



Trauma

Signs to watch out for

Complex Developmental Trauma

- Exposure to sustained or multiple traumatic experiences throughout childhood, lead to chronically over-activated stress-response system with impact on developing brain.
- Symptoms include difficulties in hyper-vigilance, agitation, aggression, poor capacities in self-control, planning, attention, relating to others.



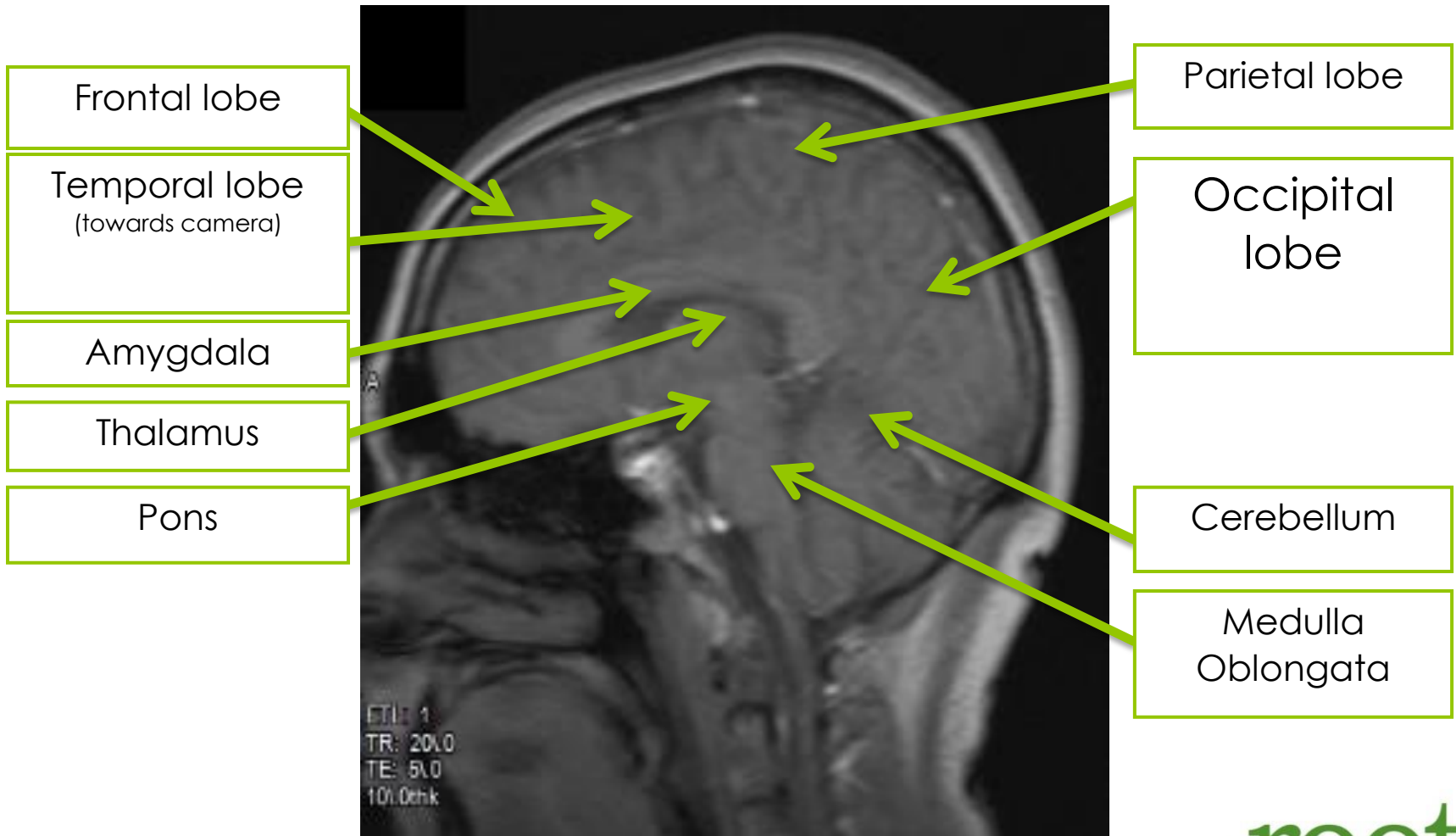
General Points

- Use the Mentor's Mantra
- Each young person and his / her experience of mental health difficulties is unique, it is often a combination of several difficulties
- Feeling heard and understood is very powerful
- Look underneath the behaviour you see to the emotional experience that may be causing it
- **If you are concerned about a child's, seek support from local services – your GP or a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in school is usually the best place to start. They can help make a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or to other services for support.**

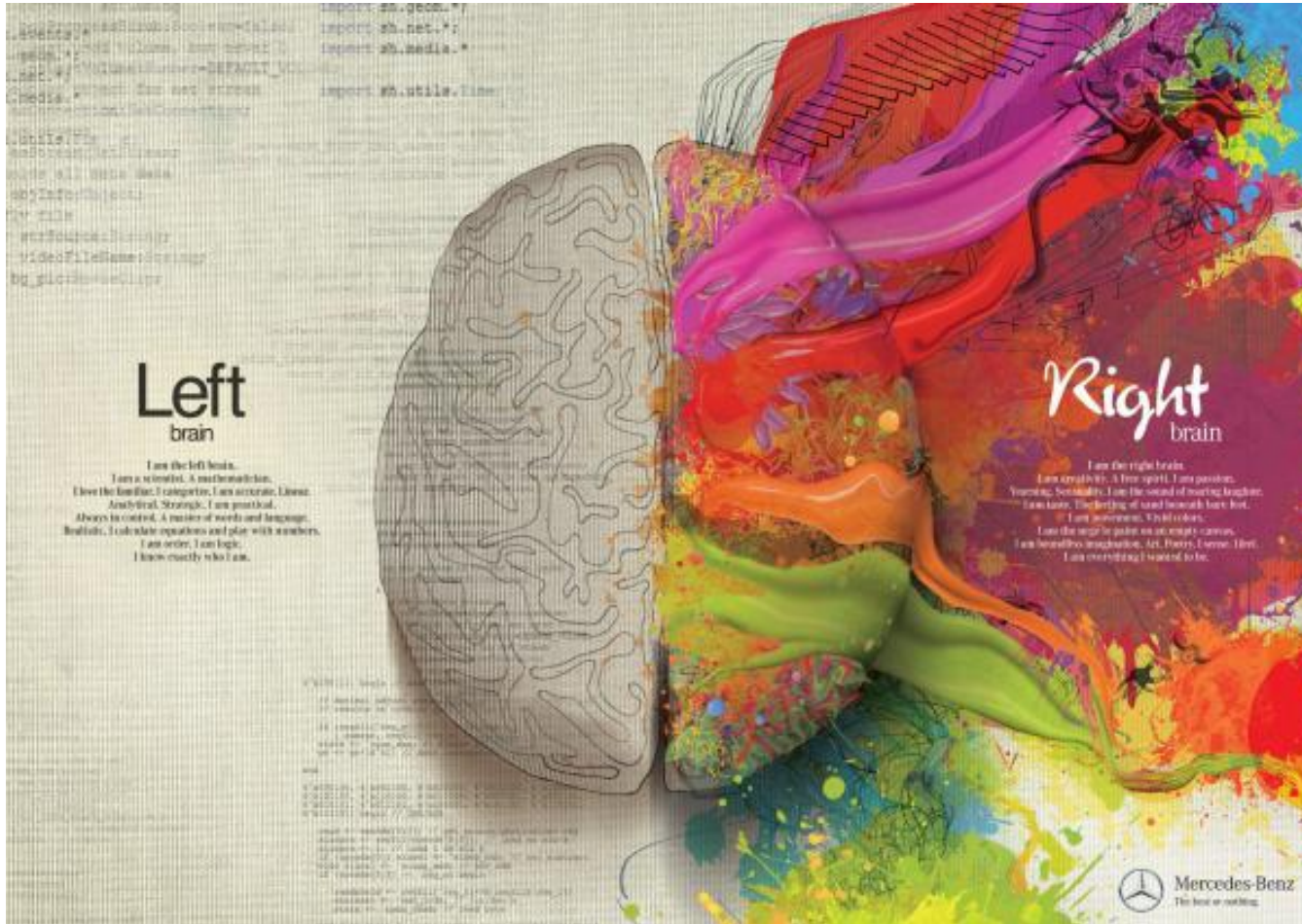


Brain development

(in approximate development order)



The Whole Brain Child



The importance of attachment for children's mental health and learning

- Bowlby (1969) proposed that human babies have a biological need to have a close loving bond with their mothers, or caregivers, and that they are born with a range of attachment seeking behaviours.
- From birth, children develop and adapt their behaviour based on the responses they receive from their caregivers.
- Key function of attachment: to regulate the proximity to caregiver (secure base) to provide a balance of closeness for safety and support with the freedom to explore the child's surroundings.



Reflections

- How can we use this information when supporting children's wellbeing at school?
What might they need from us?

What can help build resilience and support wellbeing within school?

- Acknowledge and validate feelings
- Make it clear you think it is okay to feel this way and to talk about feelings
- Remind children that having uncomfortable feelings is common
- Active listening can help people feel heard: “So you were trying to do your work and then it got really hard. Is that right?”
- Connect and redirect: Name and acknowledge the emotion before thinking about solutions
- Name it to tame it: Help the child re-tell story if something has upset them
- Use metaphors to talk about feelings

The Mentor's Mantra

The four steps to an intervention:

1. You are safe;
2. It's alright to think about it;
3. It's alright to talk about it;
4. Let me help you deal with it.

These will allow recognition, acknowledgement and freedom to talk about the problem.

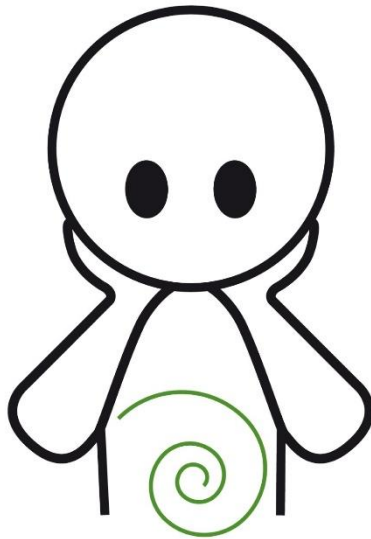
Establishing trust

- Eye contact
- Structure
- Routine
- Predictability
- Meeting their needs
- Empathy
- Emotional containment

Take 5 minutes

How do you deal with your emotions
when you are overloaded?

Unsafe ways of dealing with emotions



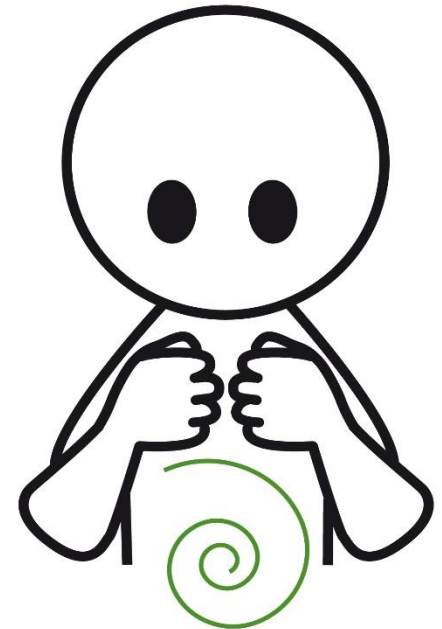
Withdrawing

Hiding away; we may become depressed, or feel paralysed or helpless.



Acting Out

Being taken over by the feelings, often losing control altogether - yelling. Being violent.



Bottling Up

Holding the feelings inside us; we may become so pressurised we eventually explode.

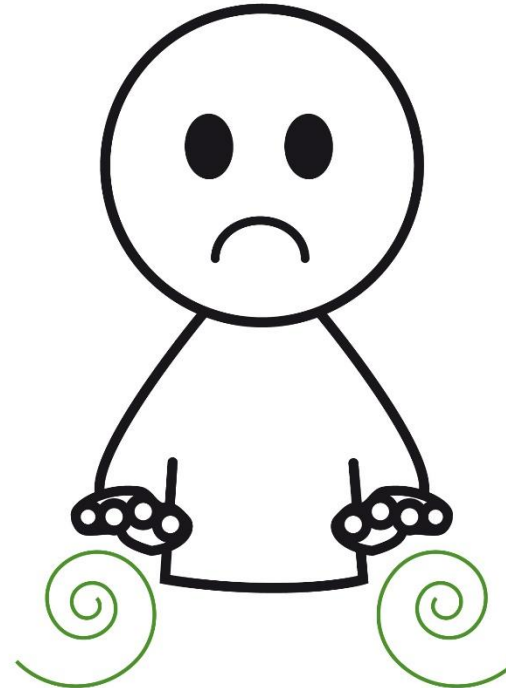


Unsafe ways of dealing with emotions



Dumping

Blaming others for the way we feel; handing over responsibility for our feelings to others.



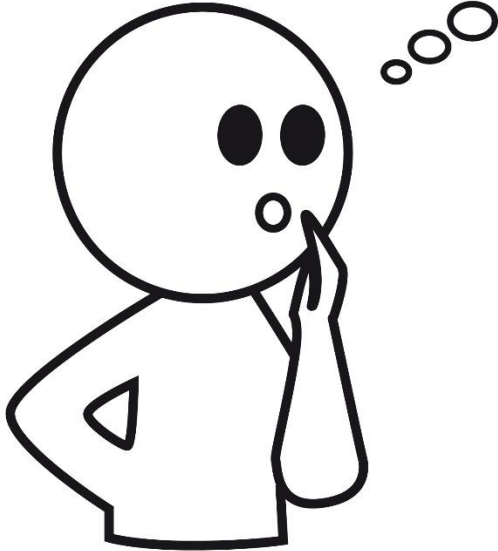
Suppressing

Locking our feelings away, burying them, removing them from our conscious awareness.



Safe ways of dealing with emotions

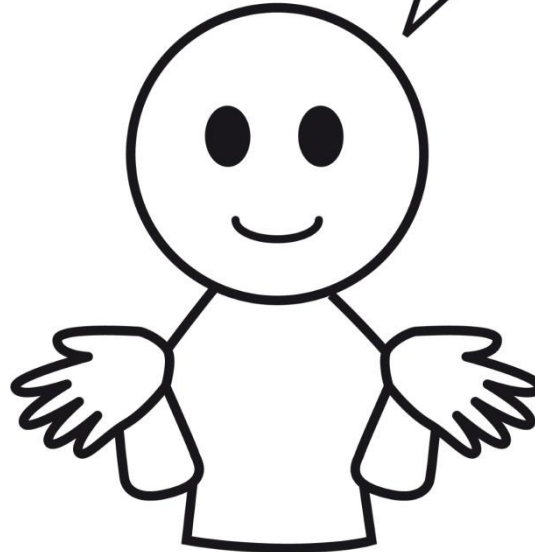
I know I can do this next time.



Reflecting

Accepting our feelings without being overwhelmed by them, thinking about them, reframing and resolving them.

I felt like this today.



Expressing

Letting the feelings out: acknowledging them to ourselves, talking, taking safe action (e.g. crying).



Letting Go

When we have taken notice of the messages our feelings bring, we can release them.



Supporting staff wellbeing

Time to Change Survey

1.Question 1: Have you ever experienced stress, low mood or mental health problems while in employment?

Healthcheck Organisations	Yes, only as an employee or contractor of this organisation	Yes, only whilst working as an employee or contractor of a previous organisation	Yes, both at this organisation and at previous organisations	No, never	I would prefer not to answer
All	34	8	40	16	2
Private	32	10	45	13	1
Public	38	7	39	13	3
Voluntary	21	10	39	27	3

82% of respondents (approximately 12,000 people) reported experiencing stress, low mood or mental health problems whilst in employment.

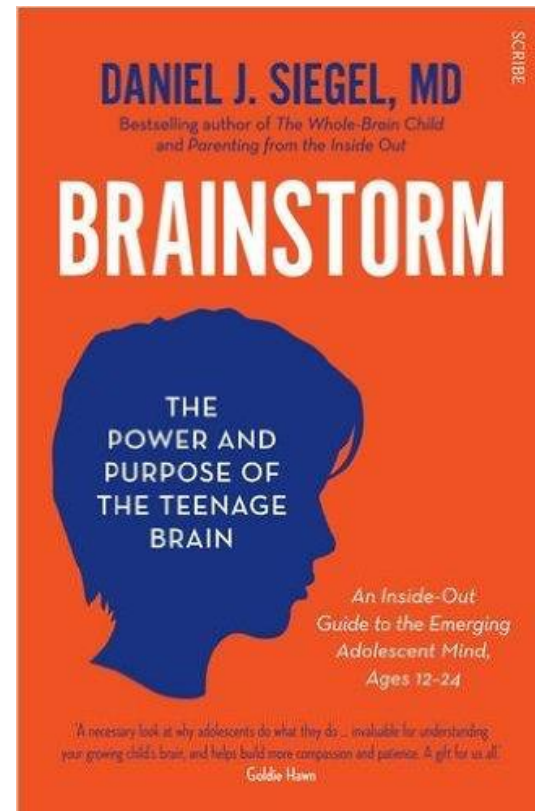
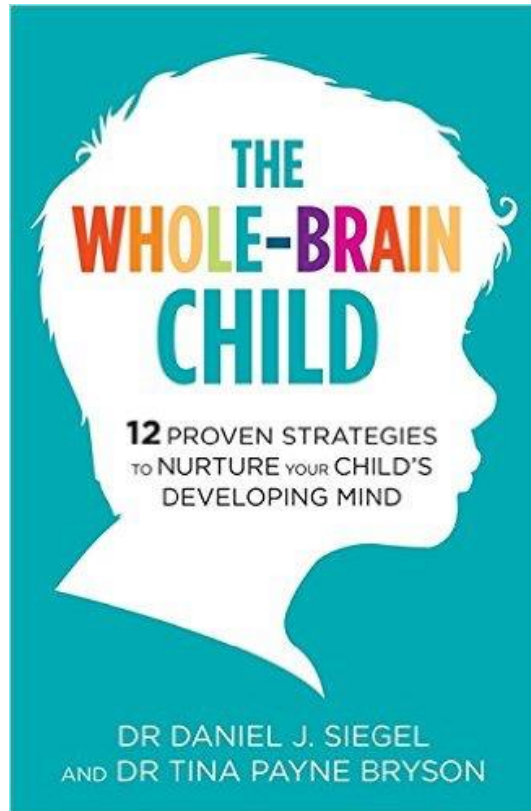
Compassion focussed therapy



Positive mental health habits

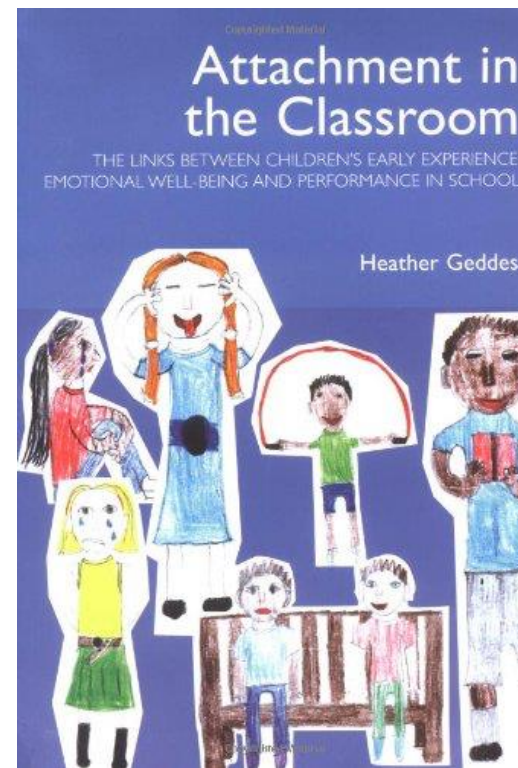
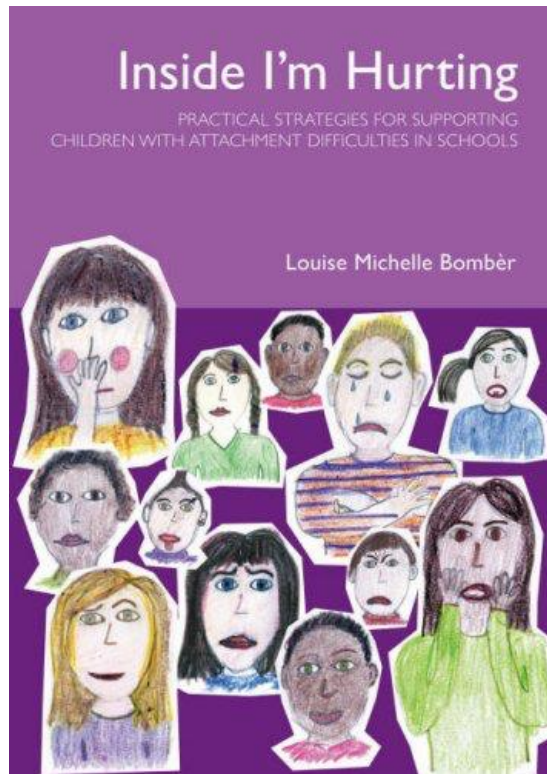
- Gratitude
- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Peer mentoring
- Be able to talk
- Be heard

Useful resources



These books are designed to be read by parents and young people together. They include lots of practical tips for how to support young people's developing minds and wellbeing.

Useful resources



These books provide lots of practical suggestions of how to support mental health and wellbeing in the classroom.

Useful resources

- **Young Minds: The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing.** This website includes lots of information about mental health support services plus advice for young people, parents and professionals
http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people/guide_to_mental_health_services

Useful resources

- The Mental Health Foundation website has lots of information about supporting mental health in children and adults
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help>

Useful resources

- Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS): for information and advice on support for parents, carers and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- <https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/7>

Thank you

