



GORSEY  
BANK

PRIMARY SCHOOL

**KS1 Wellbeing**

**Tool kit**

# Introduction

- Resilience is a key skill that cannot be overlooked. In fact, it can be a skill set that is the difference between surviving and *thriving*. For children and young people living in poverty, those who have barriers to learning, or experiencing stress and trauma, it may be the skill that makes *all* the difference.
- Effective stress management and, specifically, using relaxation strategies can be highly effective for many children. This is the rationale for including a range of strategies and techniques in this recovery curriculum toolkit. It is vital that all adults can and do model these to the children they nurture.

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# Self –Regulate for Wellbeing

The following activities include a range of mindfulness strategies alongside various ideas and developing tools for developing self-regulation.

Research has proven that benefits of incorporating mindfulness into the classroom curriculum has been staggering. Teaching mindfulness to children can:

- Decrease feelings of stress and anxiety
- Improve focus and concentration
- Help with impulsivity
- Improve self-regulation
- Develop empathy
- Reduce aggression
- Improve sleep

# Counting breaths

Use this script with the children:

‘sit comfortably and at rest. Your eyes can be open or closed. Listen to your breath. Feel your natural breath. With me: breathe in and count. When you are ready count in your head at the same time as breathing out. Let’s repeat. Count in.....Count out.....’

You can vary the speed and number of counts.

# Mindful breathing-blowing bubbles

The Bubble Blowing Technique is one of the best mindful breathing techniques for young children. Give each child a small container of bubbles so they can practice blowing bubbles with a wand. They will learn quickly that if they blow too hard or too fast, the bubble will burst before it has time to take shape. By blowing slowly and with purpose, they can blow a perfect bubble.

# Breathing Buddies

Ask children to bring along a stuffed animal each and to then lie down on the floor and put their stuffed animals on their stomachs. Ask them to breathe in silence for one minute and notice how their Breathing Buddy moves up and down, and any other sensations they notice. Ask them to imagine that any thoughts that come into their head turn into bubbles and float away.

Having a breathing buddy there makes meditation more friendly and shows the children that a playful activity doesn't have to be noisy.

# My beautiful place

Visualise a beautiful and peaceful place which makes you feel happy and calm. Close your eyes and picture this. Go to this place in your head when you feel anxious or sad.





# Guess what's in the bag

Fill a paper bag with various objects and ask children to stick their hands in and guess what they are feeling, using nothing other than their sense of touch.

This is a great sensory activity and can be extremely calming as it forces children to focus only on the task at hand.

*Ensure objects have been sanitized and children have washed their hands.*

# The squish and relax activity

Whilst the children are lying down with their eyes closed, ask them to squish and squeeze every muscle in their bodies as tight as they can. Ask them to start with their toes and feet, squish the muscles in their legs, squeeze their stomachs, then their hands into fists and raise their shoulders up to their heads. Ask them to hold themselves squished up for a few seconds and then fully release and relax.

# Make a calm-down jar

To make your own calm-down jar, mix glitter glue with hot water, add a few drops of food colouring. Whisk until the glue 'melts' and mixes properly with the water. Next, add additional glitter, whisk vigorously one more time, transfer the mixture in your clear jar/bottle (do not use glass) and top the bottle up with water so it's completely full. Allow the water to cool to room temperature before securing the lid with glue to ensure it is properly sealed and won't leak. Shake when you need to calm down.

# Personal Weather Report

Ask the children to best describe their feelings right now. Are they sunny, rainy, stormy, calm, windy etc? How do they know they are feeling those feelings? Where do they feel them in their bodies? Ask them which feelings they like best? Then ask them what they can do to feel better – what works? This shows children that they can observe their present state without over-identifying with their emotions. They can learn to recognize that they are not the rain, but it is raining or they are not a scarey-cat, but they can sometimes feel scared.

# Peaceful river

Close your eyes, be very still and imagine you are in a small boat,

Drifting down the river

Lie back and allow the soft breeze and river currents to move you  
gently along

As you lie there let your whole body be completely still

You can feel the softness of the sunshine on your skin

You hear birds singing quietly and the water rippling gently

You feel totally content and serene

As you lie there, let all the muscles in your body relax

Breathe in and out and feel yourself sinking deeper and deeper into  
relaxation.

# Calm it down

How do you stop yourself blowing things out of proportion?  
What can you say to yourself? Make a list of questions and a script that you can use when you know that you are beginning to get things out of proportion. Make this include some calming down messages.

Adapt to make this activity age appropriate.

# Ground yourself – hands in water!

Focus on the water's temperature and how it feels on your fingertips, palms and the backs of your hands. Does it feel the same in each part of your hand? Use warm water first, then cold. Next, try cold water first, then warm. Does it feel different to switch from cold to warm water versus warm to cold?

# Move your body

Do a few exercises or stretches. You could try star jump, jumping up and down, skipping or stretching different muscles one by one. Pay attention to how your body feels with each movement and when your hands or feet touch the floor or move through the air. How does the floor feel against your feet and hands? If you skip, listen to the sounds of the rope in the air and when it hits the ground.



# Get Moving Mentally and Physically for Wellbeing

- Helping children become aware of the ways in which thoughts can influence emotions and behaviour is one of the most valuable lessons we can bequeath. Cognitive-behavioural therapy can help children reframe how they identify, interpret and evaluate their emotional and behavioural reactions to negative experiences.
- The following activities include a range of mental and physical wellbeing strategies alongside ideas and tools for developing positive responses to stress and anxiety including tools from Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

# Basic relaxation strategies to try

- Squeeze a lemon in your hands, releasing the lemon juice into a bowl.
- Stretch your arms over your head reaching for the sky.
- Shrug your shoulders tight and curl up into a ball, like you are hiding in a tortoise shell.
- Wrinkle your nose like you are trying to get the bug off your nose.
- Clench your jaw and then release.

Imagine it has been raining and you are standing barefoot in mud! Imagine you are squishing your toes in the mud – wriggle your toes about in your shoes.

# Feelings facts

How many feelings can you name? How many do you experience? Have a 10 minute thought storm and write down all the feelings you can think of in a list.

# Sad Feelings

Think about a bad time that you have had recently. Describe what was happening, how you felt and how you behave. Is there anything you could have done differently to help yourself? Is there anything other people could have done to help you?

# Notice and stop the worries!

Notice when you are worrying! This is the first step in making things better. If you feel a tummy ache or headache and you find you are breathing is fast, or you notice you are thinking negative thoughts, then take note of these. You can even keep a diary in words or pictures.

When you notice you are worrying, say to yourself 'Stop!' and see if you can get your brain into doing something else. Try thinking of something else (especially something relaxing or enjoyable). Try doing something to keep your brain occupied (like reading, watching a movie, doing a hobby, or playing a sport).

# Worry time

Think about your day and find a time in it when it would be OK to worry – no more than five or ten minutes is needed. This is your special ‘worry time’. When you find yourself worrying at a time when you have other things to do (like bedtime, or while you are trying to concentrate on something else), tell yourself to stop and put off the worries for later, during your worry time.

# Self talk

If you find yourself worrying about the same thing over and over (for example, 'I'll start my school and no one will like me') The write down for yourself the opposite, 'positive' thought (for example, 'People will like me. I am a nice person'). Then every time you notice yourself worrying the first thought, tell yourself the positive, thought. You could even write it down on a small card and carry it with you in your pocket, to remind yourself of it.

# My healthy body

What makes a body healthy? Think of as many things as you can and try to include a healthy diet, positive outlook and exercise.

How many things can you identify? Make a list and then tick against those that you do to appreciate your body.



# My body can do...

Your body is not just something to be looked at and admired! It also does so much in terms of helping you live a healthy and happy life. What does the body do for you? Think about things like digesting food, breathing, moving, sleeping etc. Make a self-portrait and record all your ideas around it.

# Positive thinking

Think about positive thoughts that you have each day. Try to record 3 positive thoughts each day for a week. How do you feel when you read them at the end of each day?

# Music time

Music can help to calm and soothe us. Make up your own playlist. Use music as a calming strategy when you are feeling anxious. Try this over a week and see the difference it can make.

# Keeping it positive

Keeping things positive can be hard work when we are feeling nervous, unsure or a bit low. Make a list of all the things you can think, say and do in order to keep positive. Share this with a friend and see if you have similar ideas or strategies.

# Is this true?

Identify a negative thought you have a lot and then ask yourself how true is this? Write down all the evidence for it and then write down all the evidence against it. Ask a friend to help you with the evidence against it. What do you notice?

# Connect for Wellbeing

Connection with others is vital for our mental health and wellbeing. It is clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people all ages.

Ultimately connections matter. Strong ties with family, and the community provide us with happiness, security, support and a sense of purpose. Being connected to others is important for our mental and physical wellbeing and can be a protective factor against anxiety and depression.

The following activities include a range of positive psychology strategies including various ideas and tools for developing positive connections which reduce stress and anxiety. You may feel you want to adapt them for younger children.

# People Contact!

Do one activity involving contact with other people, each day. Focus on an activity you like – messaging, playing a game, writing a postcard. Practice social ‘pleasantries’: making eye contact, smiling, greeting others as these are quick and easy ways to make contact.

# Kind acts

We know that being kind is good for us. Doing good makes us feel happier. Think of one kind act you can do every day of the week. Write it down in a 'Kind Acts Diary' and try to be kind to everyone you love and to those who seem lonely or sad.



# Things I am grateful for

Thinking about what we are grateful for means the things we feel lucky to have. Remembering them makes us feel good.

Think of things you are grateful for e.g. family, pets, nature, home, school, toys, friends. Write them in a 'Special Gratitude Diary' and try and do this every day.

# Happy memories

It is important to support children to understand that happy memories are an important part of maintaining wellbeing. Introduce children to the idea that they may find it helpful to think about happy memories when they are finding something tough, lots of people do this and find it helpful. Make a Happy Memories Book or Box.

# Ask for help!

When we feel upset or worried, we need to connect with other people who can help us. Write a list of all the people who you can talk to when you are worried. Sharing worries is good for us.

# My 'Happiness Shield'

Draw a shield outline and use it to record all the things, people, thoughts, feelings and behaviours that you have which can protect you against stress and adversity. Use your shield in such times and visualise it giving you protection. Practice this happy habit.

# Positive Diary

To help you to focus on all the evidence in your current situation, rather than just the challenging or threatening problems and worrying thoughts or images, start to keep a 'Positive Daily Dairy'. This is a brief note – on paper, your phone, tablet or computer – of anything you notice each day that appears 'positive' – enriching, pleasing, a reminder of nature, happy, warm, loving etc.

# Plan a treat

Plan a special treat for family and/or friends and make this something that you know they would all look forward to. Why do you think that treats are good things? Do you think people can have too many treats?

# Face your fears

What is the biggest fear you have? Discuss this with a friend or adult and then try to think just how rational this is? Do you really need to feel quite so frightened? What small steps could you take to reduce this and face it? Ask an adult or friend to work to work with you on this.

# Plan a best future

Write out a list of all the things that would make your very best future. Illustrate the list if you like and try think of a wide range of things including how you will think, feel behave, what you will be doing?



# Setting SMART goals

We can feel overwhelmed if we try to set goals that are too big or impossible to reach in a short amount of time. We need to make sure that our goals for change are SMART! Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. Have a go at making a SMART goal for your wellbeing using these headings. Make sure that you set a review and achievement date! Ask an adult or friend to help you.

# Be kind to yourself

Sometimes we can feel angry at ourselves for making mistakes or not doing as well at something as we could have done. It is easy to do ourselves down. We need to forgive ourselves sometimes and just be kinder to ourselves. Think of a time when you were in such a situation and you were not kind to yourself. What could you have done differently?