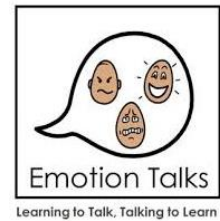


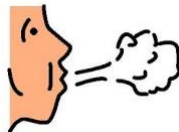
Dear parents/Carers,



We know these are challenging times and our children will need support in dealing with emotions. Frustration of being stuck at home, confusion about what is happening and what the future will bring, sadness, anger, boredom. These are all emotions that we may be experiencing as well, so we have to remember to show empathy to the little ones: what we feel as adults is totally amplified for someone that is just aware of feelings and emotions and has no tools to deal with such things. Moreover, our kids are watching and learning how to respond to stress and uncertainty. It is the right time to wire our children with resilience.

The tips and ideas that follow are very simple tools to deal with rising emotions. Remember to be always understanding and when your child is telling you about his/her feelings make sure to show them that you are listening and that you understand how they feel as we all go through these emotions at times. Encourage them to name the emotion they are experiencing: is it sadness? Or maybe anger? Where is it coming from? What makes you feel this way? Some children may also be able to tell you body sensations that go with it, some children may not even know there's a name for what they are feeling. And this is ok. It is very important that you remind them that IT IS OK. IT IS OK NOT TO BE OK. Allow some time to cool down from a big wave of emotion, then try one of the following activities.

BREATHING EXERCISE



This exercise is great for adults too; it is simple enough so get familiar with it before you share it with your child.

Sit down in a comfortable position and slow your breath down.

Slowly count to 4 while inhaling deeply: divide the inhaling process in 4 inhales, make sure you fill your belly and lungs with air, you should be able to see your belly rising.

Keep the air in for a short time, remember whatever you are doing, do it at your own pace and for as long as you feel comfortable. Exhale in 4 steps, exactly as you did for your inhale. Make sure your belly and lungs are now empty. Repeat for 3/4 times.

FEEL GOOD JAR



This is something that can be handy when dealing with a meltdown. Take some time to prepare this jar with your child so that it is ready to use when needed. Remember that boredom is not essentially negative, children need it as a stimulus for creativity so give them enough time to come up with an idea instead of using the jar immediately.

What you need: an empty jar, paper, scissors, pencils, anything you would like to use to decorate.

Sit with your child and explain you are going to make a feel good jar to use every time they feel down. Have a conversation with your child about things that make him/her feel good and write them down. Try to be as specific as you can. Try sentences such as "listening to a story" (you can write a specific story/title if your child as a favourite one), "sing-along" (add particular song), "Do 10 star jumps", "eat a banana", "build a tower and knock it down" and so on. It can be anything, nobody knows your child better than you and there is no limit to imagination. Have at least 10 activities to put inside your jar. Write each idea on a separate piece of paper and put them inside the jar. Decorate your jar using sharpies, stickers or anything you like, don't forget to put a label that says "Feel Good Jar".

When experiencing a negative emotion ask your child if he/she would like to use this special jar. Shake it and ask your child to pick a random piece of paper. What did you pick?

Remember: sometimes the child may want to discard first choice so allow them to pick again. Usually quick physical exercises help with sadness, while breathing exercises or quiet activities help with frustration or anger.

MIRROR ME

Sit in front of each other. You are now each other's mirror. Ask your child to make a face and copy it. Then it will be your turn and they will have to copy your faces. Keep naming the expressions you improvise and encourage your child to do the same. Here's a range of simple emotions to use:

Happy

Excited

Sad

Surprised

Angry

Grumpy

Silly

Confused

Calm



Once you become good at this game, it can be done faster to see if you can keep up with your silly faces! (you don't need to name each emotion in this case, just have fun!!) It`s going to be hilarious!!

Have fun!

Mrs Buda