

# Express yourself – Children’s Mental Health Week toolkit

Children’s Mental Health Week is coming up on 1st February, and the theme this year is ‘express yourself’.

By talking openly about mental health from a young age, children can learn to better understand their emotions, break down stigma, and feel safe enough to reach out for help when it’s needed.

Talking about mental health and expressing our feelings can be difficult, no matter our age. In this toolkit, we’ve rounded up lots of great resources to help children, staff and parents start the mental health conversation.

As we enter into another lockdown, it’s more important than ever to share how we’re feeling with others. Many of these resources can be used for remote learning, and they can all be used to keep the conversation going once schools return.

## For children

### Express yourself: primary assembly and guide – Place2Be

This PowerPoint assembly and [accompanying guidance](#) explores why being able to express ourselves matters, and encourages children to think of creative ways they can share their feelings. This resource is also available in [Welsh](#).

[Go to resource](#) 

## Activities for exploring feelings – Mentally Healthy Schools

The three activities outlined in this resource are designed to help children explore their emotions and feelings, and think about the situations that might trigger those emotions.

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## Talking mental health: animation and toolkit – Anna Freud Centre

This short animation, and accompanying toolkit for teachers, gives children an understanding of what mental health is, and shares consistent and accessible language for talking about mental health.

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## A letter about how I'm feeling – YoungMinds

Some children may find it easier to write down their thoughts and feelings, so this resource is in a letter format and has a handy word bank to help children express how they're feeling.

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## **Understanding our emotions – YoungMinds & Beano**

Teachers can use this PowerPoint and plan to deliver a lesson about feelings, helping children explore their emotions and the vocabulary used to describe them. There are different versions for younger and older children, and for schools in England, Scotland or Wales.

[Go to resource](#) 

## **Feeling good, feeling sad - CCEA**

These classroom activities & lesson plans, linked to the PD&MU curriculum in Northern Ireland, teach children about the range of emotions and how to manage them. Although this resource is designed for schools in Northern Ireland, there are lots of activity ideas schools in other areas can adapt and use.

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## **For parents and carers**

### **You're never too young to talk mental health: tips for parents and carers – Anna Freud Centre**

This leaflet provides simple advice and guidance to parents and carers about how to make conversations about their child's feelings part of everyday conversation.

[Go to resource](#) 

## Talking to my child – MindEd

Tips, videos and suggestions for parents about encouraging their child to open up about their feelings, on a simple interactive website. There is also an [easy-read PDF](#) version available.

[Go to resource](#) 

## Time to talk parent leaflet – Time to Change

This leaflet, created for Time to Talk Day, is designed for schools to print on A3 paper and hand out to parents. This year, Time to Talk Day falls on 6th February, during Children's Mental Health Week.

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# For staff

## Tips for starting a mental health conversation with a child – Mentally Healthy Schools

Use these simple tips and conversation starters to introduce the topic of mental health and wellbeing with a pupil.

[Go to resource](#) 

## **How to talk to colleagues about mental health and wellbeing – Education Support**

This article, from mental health charity Education Support, shares simple, useful tips for school staff about talking to colleagues about mental health.

[Go to resource](#) 

## **Education talking toolkit – Health and Safety Executive**

This useful toolkit is designed to be used as a framework to help line managers have simple, practical conversations about mental health with school employees.

[Go to resource](#) 

## **We all have mental health: e-learning for teachers – Scottish Association for Mental Health**

An e-learning resource for teachers introducing the topic of mental health, and the skills needed to respond to children and young people who are experiencing a mental health problem.

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