



The SEAL Community Newsletter No. 31, March 2022

Welcome!

Welcome to another newsletter from the SEAL Community. We've lots of new resources, with a focus on understanding and managing emotions— plus the usual news and research round-ups, and some great ideas from teachers sharing their practice.

News update

Helping children worried about the war in Ukraine

We've uploaded the best of what we could find on helping children respond to the current Ukraine crisis. Find the resources [here](#)

We have a SEAL You Tube channel

Have a look at our [series of films](#) designed to help teachers get the best from the original SEAL (and SEAL-Cymru) national resources and the additional resources we've since added to the SEAL website. They are full of ideas and examples of great practice in schools.

So far, we've posted videos which link to four of the SEAL 'Themes':

- how to create a safe and fair classroom environment and to build a sense of community at the start of the school year (New Beginnings/A Place to Learn)
- helping children and young people to get on together – to understand and manage anger. resolve conflict, make and keep friends and work well together in groups (Getting on and falling out/Learning to be Together)
- helping children and young people with motivation and resilience - taking responsibility for their own actions, setting and reaching goals, persisting in the face of difficulties, bouncing back after failure and waiting for what they want (Going for Goals/Keep on Learning)
- helping children and young people to know and value themselves, to understand and manage their feelings, and to use assertiveness skills (Good to be Me/Learning about Me SEAL themes)

The videos were funded by and co-produced with South East Wales EAS, who are using them in training for their school wellbeing leads. We are grateful for their permission to share.

The films highlight what is in each SEAL Theme. They also show how the resources link to the Welsh Government statutory framework for a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing and the new health and wellbeing curriculum, but you can of course skip these if you are in England or another country.



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It's Empathy Day on 9th June

The 2022 theme is empathy, our human superpower. To help schools and libraries get ready, EmpathyLab have launched their [2022 Read for Empathy Collection](#) - 60 great books for 4-16 year olds. From May onwards children can join **The Empathy Superpower Challenge**. The Challenge has a menu of nine fun, creative activities we can all use to boost our superpower. And on June 9th there will be **Empathy Day Live: a** free online festival, with a superb line-up of authors and illustrators demonstrating the Challenge activities, inspiring everyone to give them a go.

Toolkits, resources and display materials will be available from 21 March – find out more and sign up at <https://www.empathylab.uk/empathy-day-2022>

Sharing practice

Self-regulation in specialist provision

At The St Christopher School in Southend, helping pupils (almost all of whom have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder diagnosis) learn to regulate their emotions is very important – and also challenging, given the range of age, communication skills and cognitive ability the school caters for.

Staff have been using the [Zones of Regulation](#) approach for five years. Amelia Howe, who spends part of her time teaching Y1 at the school and the rest running the local authority autism outreach team, told me about how the school has adapted the approach for younger and pre-verbal pupils, using sensory approaches.

For example, to communicate their emotions, children might touch a particular colour of Play-Doh, or slime (blue, green, yellow, red) to show how they are feeling, or come up to sprinkle a particular colour of glitter on white paper on the floor. Or they might put paint, glitter or coloured strips of tissue paper onto a laminated photo of themselves. Older children have their own zones of regulation charts, with a bead to move up or down, or spinner.

Technology is also used to help children express how they are feeling when they cannot communicate in their own words. Laminated symbols and colours can be put under the lid of Talking Tiles, which can be programmed to say 'Blue', for example, when the button is pressed.

Managing feelings

Specific sessions are dedicated to helping children learn strategies for regulating their emotions. Staff might, for example, play some lively music to get the children into an excited, slightly frantic state, then turn off the lights, play some calming music and have the children practise [belly breathing](#). (Try this ['belly buddies'](#) idea from the SEAL website too).

Photos on the wall show different calming techniques. If an individual child is, for example, becoming angry, staff might reflect back the emotion ('I can see that made you angry – in the red zone') then take them to the display and ask them to choose a strategy. For one child practising

deep breathing by pretending to blow out five candles on a birthday cake, one by one, was particularly popular.

Resource Units

Amelia describes how the mainstream resource units she supports use self-regulation strategies. One has a multisensory emotion check-in for the whole group, every morning. Each day there will be a different check-in: one day children might use bottles filled with food colouring to spray a colour indicating their mood onto paper, on another they might pick up a sticky toy and 'splat' it onto a particular coloured sheet on the wall. Children also use split-pin spinners with four coloured, labelled quadrants. They take part in regular circle-time sessions after break or lunchtimes, when events or incidents are discussed, the emotions they led to identified, and strategies to regulate those emotions modelled and practised.

Challenges

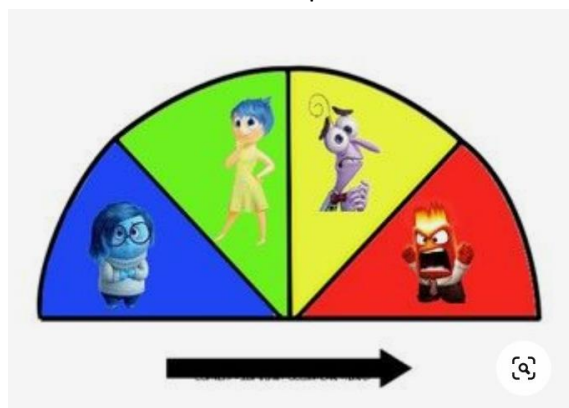
Staff found that children were sometimes choosing 'green' (calm, ready to learn) because they thought that would please their teachers. It was the same when pictures of faces were used: children thought the adults wanted them to be always happy so chose the happy face. To deal with this, adults helped children think about the full range of zones in relation to characters in stories or puppets, asking how they might be feeling. Adults also modelled choosing the full range of emotions themselves.

Another issue is when children have a fixation for a particular colour, or an aversion to a colour – so always choose blue, for example, or never choose it. For these children the adults may need to take the colours away from charts and resources and focus on words and pictures of faces.

Ideas and resources

Amelia recommends the [Attention Autism](#) approach devised by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, for sensory approaches that develop children's shared attention. She also suggests Pinterest (search for zones of regulation) for ideas and printable resources.

Here is a sneak Pinterest peek – ideas based on the Inside Out film characters



Classroom makeover – the next episode

Read [here](#) about what the children thought of Shahana Knight's design for a therapeutic classroom. Just look at the pictures- calm lighting, flexible seating, a collage of photos of all the children to promote belonging, bar tables so staff can stand alongside and connect with children ...

Journalling at Surrey Square Primary

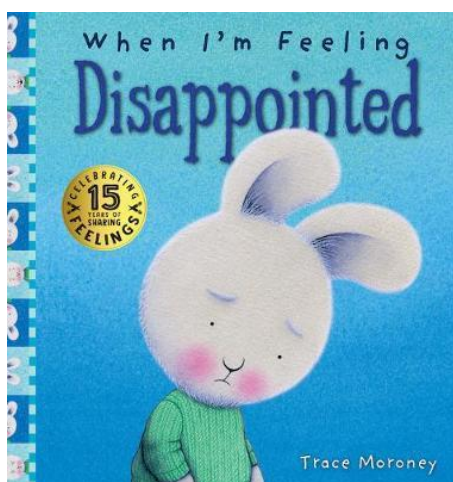
At Surrey Square Primary in London (featured [here](#) in an earlier sharing practice story) every child journals twice a week. On Mondays they reflect on the weekend, identify their current mood and look ahead to the next few days. They are taught a wellbeing strategy to use, and on Friday reflect in their journal on how useful they found it and whether they want to add it to their own wellbeing toolbox.

Self-regulation at School 360



At School 360 in London, children learn how to use relaxed breathing to calm themselves down, from Reception onwards. Sometimes children imagine blowing a big bubble, in [bubble breathing](#) ... at other times they practice [starfish breathing](#) ... or children make up their own ideas- like 'giraffe breathing' (trace the giraffe's long neck up... and down. Staff have planned a progression in mindfulness learning right up to Y6, culminating in children planning their own Mindfulness Guide.

A calmer class in just four weeks



Teacher Julia Richardson describes how she designed a four-week-long narrative unit of work for a class of six year olds, to explore emotional awareness.

She used Trace Moroney's 'When I'm feeling...' picture book series. She read *When I'm Feeling Happy*, *When I'm Feeling Sad*, *When I'm Feeling Angry*, and *When I'm Feeling Nervous* with the class. 'Our week began with a read-aloud and opened into days of discussions, writing, and art,' she says.

Earlier in the year, she had already introduced the children to [Zones of Regulation](#), which teaches children about emotions and emotional control.

Julia recounts how 'We discussed which feelings zones our emotions fall into and the times we felt these emotions. "When was a time you were angry?" I asked during our Anger week. "Have you ever got into trouble for something you didn't do?" The children told stories about being framed and blamed by siblings, about being embarrassed by a parent. It was important to me to give them space to share their own stories, for them to not feel that they had to give me a "right" answer.

Once we exhausted sharing about what made us feel a certain way, we discussed what made us feel better either at home or at school. The children described taking a break at the Calm Table, focusing on their breathing, talking to an adult or friend, colouring, being alone, reading a book, and so on. Midweek, there was a shared writing lesson, and we made a book together about our “emotion of the week” based on the children’s responses. I also added their ideas to a Strategy Chart that was filled with ideas for regulating emotions in the classroom.

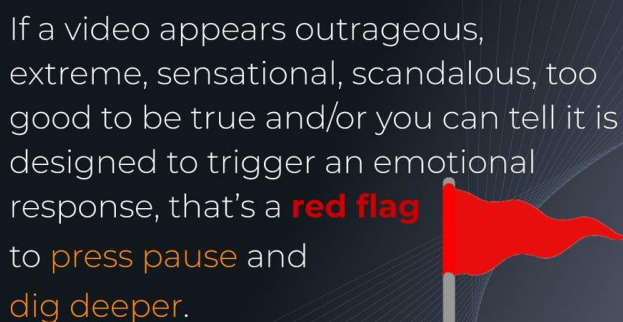
To end the week, children wrote independently about the emotion. I collected their writings each week and bound them into a big book that stayed on our Calm Table for them to read.

I began noticing that when my children needed a break to calm down when frustrated or when they needed cheering up, they would often read through these books on their own to get support from their classmates’ stories. Interestingly, before our unit there had been a culture among my class most notably the boys, that talking about feelings was taboo or babyish. As our unit unfolded, all the children began talking to each other about how they felt, and there was a softer tone in the classroom.

In tandem with our other SEL work, my class transformed over months from a space full of meltdowns and arguments to a more friendly, functional place. I watched my class use the strategies they generated together in the classroom when they needed them. References to this work showed up in our morning emotional check-ins. Children also began helping remind other students to use strategies to cope when they could tell someone was upset or sad.’

Practical tools and tips

Press pause

A graphic with a dark background. On the left, white text reads: "If a video appears outrageous, extreme, sensational, scandalous, too good to be true and/or you can tell it is designed to trigger an emotional response, that's a **red flag** to **press pause** and **dig deeper**." On the right, there is a red flag on a pole. The number "35" is in the bottom right corner.

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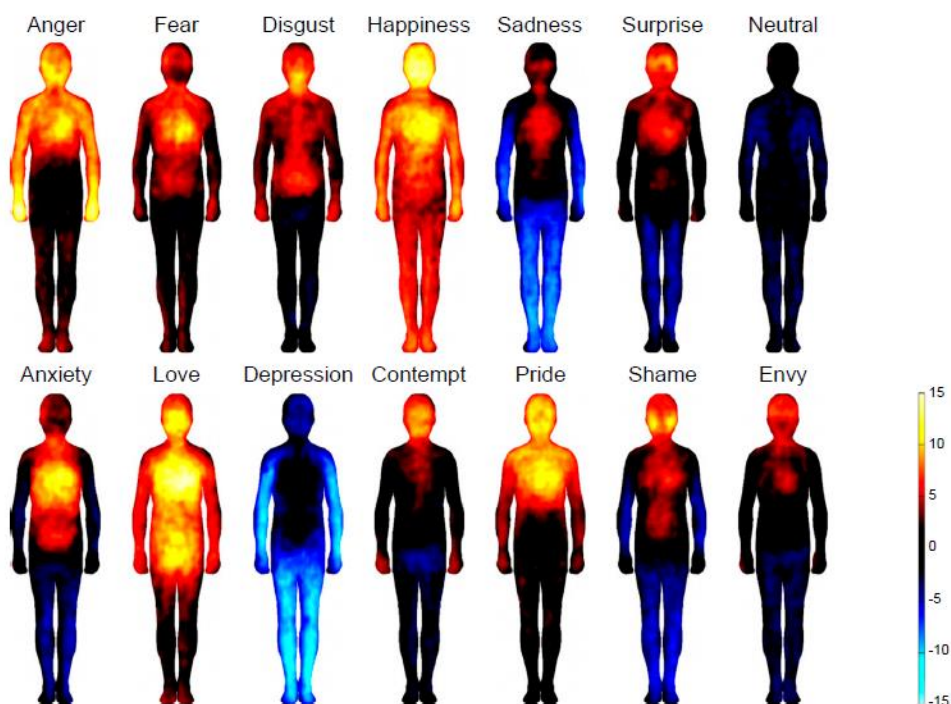
We educate students about spotting fake news online but have we thought about the emotion component? In a new book [Developing Digital Detectives: Essential Lessons for Discerning Fact from Fiction in the 'Fake News' Era](#), Jennifer LaGarde and co-author Darren Hudgins say that before fact checking an online claim, students need to do an “emotion check” first.

Social-emotional learning can help students identify the *why* behind what they share,

she said, and understand the important role managing emotions plays.

“We know that one of the ways to get us to click and hit ‘share’ is to trigger an emotion,” LaGarde said. “Once that emotion is triggered, the flight or fight part of our brain is triggered, and then it doesn’t matter what we know about fact checking. The emotion has taken over.”

Body maps – one to try with the class



In this experiment adults were asked to show where on their body they experienced various emotions, using warm colours for regions whose activation increased as a result of a given emotion, and cool colours for regions where activation decreased. You could ask students to colour in their own body map for a few of the emotions, and compare it with other children and with what the experiment found. Good for helping them use bodily signs to identify their emotions, and expand their vocabulary of feeling words..

Early years emotional check-ins

There are some nice ideas [here](#) for early years emotional check-ins... feelings stones.. children placing their photo on a chart when they come in

Calling all English teachers- try using this fabulous poem

[Brian Bilston's poem](#) 'Refugees' begins

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are ...

Have students read it aloud, then read it backwards- starting with the last line. Great for work on perspective taking.



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[Here](#) is a brilliant film of the poem, created by members of a migrant people's organisation for Refugee Week.

Resource Round Up

New resources for Good to be me/Learning about me

We've new ideas for your work on helping children value themselves, manage worries and look after their wellbeing

For [valuing oneself](#) there are templates using the concept of superheroes to encourage children to explore their own superpowers, qualities and talents (for ages 4-5, 5-7 and 7-11) and a primary resource 'Celebrating being you'

For [worries work](#) in primary we have

- a lesson based on The Huge Bag of worries book
- an anxiety thermometer from the Anna Freud Centre - useful for 1-1 work with children
- an engaging KS1 lesson from Tower Hamlets schools, based on the book Ruby's Worry, and emoticon cards to go with it
- three EYFS sessions based on the same book

Then here are some top mental health resources:

[This](#) is a really nice animation for primary children from the Anna Freud Centre, to help them understand everyday feelings, big feelings that won't go away, how to talk about the big feelings and how to be a good listener

There's also an excellent Y5/6 lesson plan/resources with sentence starters for talking about feelings and practice in being a good listener, an assembly PowerPoint and plan, and interesting cross-curricular lessons. We've uploaded them to the SEAL website [here](#)

For secondary this is a resource we've featured before - DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) from the Samaritans.

The DEAL resources are most suitable for age 14+ and contain session plans and activities that are divided into four themes:

- Emotional health
- Coping strategies
- Dealing with feelings
- Connecting with others

The resources include film and animations

Find them all at <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/deal/deal-resources/>

Public Health England have produced some really good lesson materials on wellbeing (self-care). There is one for Y6, and one for form time in KS3 or 4. Students explore a range of self-care strategies, including connecting with others, being physically active and learning something new. There are nice films of young people talking and some engaging activities, and also a diary pupils can use to log their self-care activities, and suggested text for parents/carers. Find them at <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/self-care-Y6-short-activities> and <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/self-care-ks3-ks4-form-time-activities>

The complete Tutor Time kit

These Australian resources are packed with 15-30 minute interactive lessons on understanding and managing feelings, valuing personal strengths, coping strategies, seeking help, assertiveness, stress management and positive gender relationships (including gender-based violence). There are sets for Y7-8 (Level 7 and 8), Y 9-10. (Level 9 and 10) and Y11 and 12 (Level 11 and 12) The Y11-12 set also has work on setting and achieving goals. Find them all at <http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=2JZX4R>

A new wellbeing collection

We've discovered a nice Australian resilience and wellbeing upper primary resource. There are eight lessons for each year group. Those for Y6, for example cover recognising and managing feelings, turning negative feelings into positive ones, understanding how friendships change, dealing with loss, dealing with disagreements and knowing what to do if cyber bullied. Includes handouts and information for parents. Find them at <https://www.sdera.wa.edu.au/resources/primary-resources/challenges-and-choices-primary/>

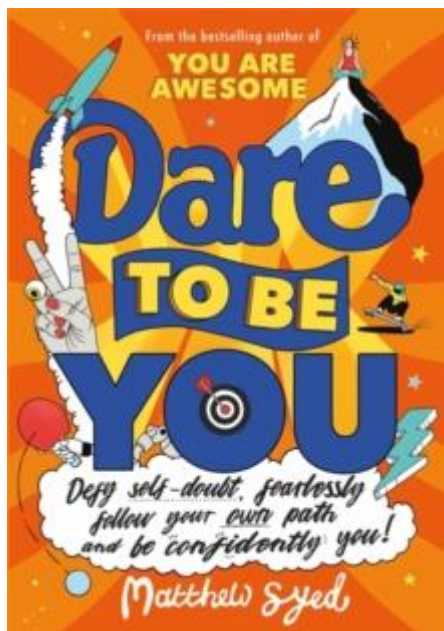
Primary Go Noodle workbooks for children, about understanding and managing emotions. One for KS1, one for KS2. Find them at <https://www.gonoodle.com/activities/PX3vPY/english-k-2-playbook> and <https://www.gonoodle.com/activities/92k3k2/english-3-5-playbook>

[Three early years sessions](#) based on an online reading of 'Happy: A Children's Book of Mindfulness'

A [stress bucket activity](#) for upper primary/Y7, from Young Minds and a stress bucket worksheet at <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/understanding-what-your-pupils-behaviour-is-communicating/>

Something a bit different – a [Social Story framework](#) to use with primary children to help them remember what they should do when they are about to 'lose it'. Designed for children with autism but could be used for children in EYFS and KS1 who struggle with self-regulation.

Dare to be you



For work on Good to be Me/Learning about me have you seen the [very good PiXL free resources](#) based on Matthew Syed's funny and engaging book 'Dare to be You'. The book tackles worries about fitting in ('Kid Doubt') and encourages children follow their own path, celebrate what makes them different and question the world around them. It explores how students can be the creators of their own change and as a result, change the world in which they live.

There are 12 interactive sessions for KS2 or 3 students to complete independently at school or at home and a workbook that goes alongside the sessions. Alternatively they can form the basis of assemblies and lessons. The sessions work without the *Dare to Be You* book but some schools buy copies for the class and use it as a class reader.

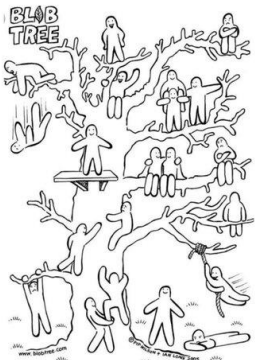
The material includes slides and videos. It can be used in PSHE or tutor time and used in assemblies. There is also guidance for parents. Some schools have used the materials with one class or year group who have previously been less accepting of difference, or who have struggled to gel as a class.

Classes could use the material to decide what changes they would make as a tutor group; this may be a community project or how they conduct themselves around school or acts of kindness they could do.

The package could be used to write a class charter or a 'manifesto for change' where students decide how they want to change their own world together. They could create a 'respecting difference' agreement where they commit to appreciating differences in others.

Some great lesson ideas from Voice 21

Oracy Challenge
voice 21



It's good to talk

It's important that we feel able to open up and talk to others about how we're feeling. However, sometimes it's hard to describe, especially if we are feeling a mixture of different emotions all at the same time.

Activity 1

Watch [this video](#), in which Michael Rosen, Dr Radha and 14-year-old Josh explain why it's important to talk to others about how we're feeling. With a partner, discuss the following questions:

- Why does Michael Rosen say 'some feelings are a bit like a ping pong ball'?
- According to the people in the video, how can sharing our feelings and experiences help us to feel better?

Activity 2

Choose one person from the Blob Tree on the left:

- What do you notice them doing?
- How do you think they are feeling?

Thinking about school at the moment:

- Which blob person (or people) do you feel most like?
- Why do they best show how you're feeling at the moment?
- Which blob people might show how your classmates, teachers or family might be feeling at the moment?

You might want to use some of the following adjectives in your answer:

Anxious

Excited

Energised

Hopeful

Cautious

Nervous

Supported

[This](#) 'It's good to talk' is a nice lesson idea for primary pupil, combining oracy with work on understanding and managing feelings. There's an activity and scaffolding ideas. You can find the Michael Rosen video that's used [here](#)

And [here](#) we have some lovely lessons to help children learn the skills of listening with empathy.

However weird you feel ...

However weird you feel inside, you're not alone. That's the message of this animated [short film](#) created for Childline. The film imagines the sometimes unbearable anxiety of growing up and the ultimately futile attempt to bottle it all up.

Nice one for the Early Years and KS1 whiteboard

Children watch [an animation of characters from the Inside Out movie](#) and have to guess the feeling - includes happy, sad, angry, scared, disgusted

Mesmerising visuals of breathing exercises for the whiteboard

Box breathing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woQPHciR5ec>

Square breathing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF_1ZiFta-E

And from Go Noodle

Melt – relaxation <https://www.gonoodle.com/videos/r2rMeX/melting>

Whale Breaths <https://www.gonoodle.com/videos/ywe97w/whale-breath>

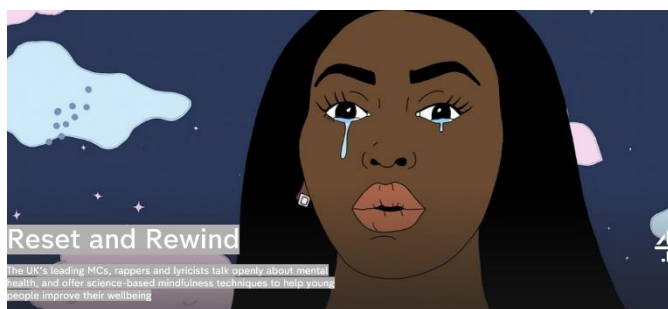
Into Film resources

Film can help pupils to understand their own emotions and develop empathy. Into Film have worked with the Mental Health Foundation to produce a [Mindfulness Through Film](#) resource which guides teachers and their learners through a series of mindfulness activities, such as raising sensory awareness, mindful colouring and walking. It has at its heart a collection of clips from feature and youth-made films, and culminates in a simple filmmaking task.

The resource has been developed for young people approaching changing or challenging circumstances, such as exams and transitioning from primary to secondary school, and is suitable for older primary and the first three years of secondary

Into Film also have [an antibullying resource](#) that's worth exploring


Reset and Rewind- a cool secondary resource from Channel 4



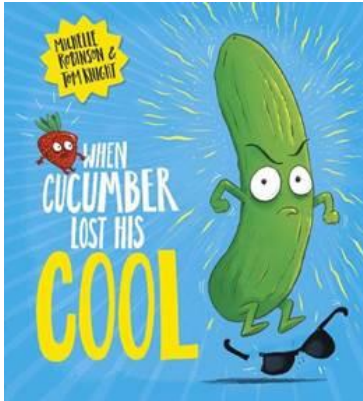
In these [Reset and Rewind resources](#), the UK's leading MCs, rappers and lyricists talk openly about mental health, and offer science-based mindfulness techniques to help young people improve their wellbeing

Liven up your teaching of emotion vocabulary

Use [Emoji finder](#) (or have children use it) to add visuals .. for example, type in 'disgusted' and you

get . Children can also be asked to annotate a text with emojis showing character's emotions at different parts of the story.

A good picture book for understanding anxiety and jealousy



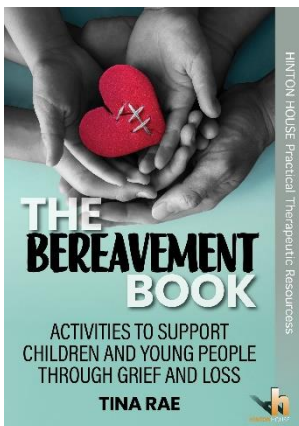
When Cucumber Lost His Cool by Michelle Robinson

Kevin the cucumber starts to feel hot, stressed and jealous – and loses his cool! Now it's up to Kevin's friends to see if they can use what they've learned to help him "chillax" and be his usual cool self again.

Girls falling out

If you're having problems with girls falling out in your school, an organisation we've previously featured <https://www.girlsonboard.co.uk/> now has a just-published book, 'When girls fall out', by Andrew and Holly Hampton, which is aimed at parents useful for teachers too. And don't forget the teaching resources on the members' area of the SEAL website <https://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/got-some-girls-making-each-others-lives-misery> and <https://youtu.be/s7yWXOt9H0s>

Top resource



The Bereavement Book

This is a great book from Tina Rae with activities to support children and young people who have lost someone they love

Research

What's happening in social and emotional learning in English primary schools?

This [study](#) reports the results of a pre-pandemic survey of 600 English primary schools. Nearly all respondents reported that they use explicit terms “social and emotional learning” (SEL) or “social and emotional skills” in conversation with other school staff, parents, and/or school policy documents

Schools were asked to rate the importance of SEL in relation to other school priorities. 46% of schools said that “We believe it is one of our topmost priorities” – but the authors note that that because participation in the survey was voluntary, and the schools had higher-than-average levels of social deprivation, this may not be typical of all schools.

Schools were asked to compare their current SEL provision to five years ago. Almost half (48%) reported they were devoting “much more time” to it now; only 1% reported either “somewhat” or “much less time” devoted to SEL

Participants were asked whether they had a regular schedule for an explicit SEL curriculum. Of the 183 responses to this question, 13% of schools reported they timetabled “more than an hour”, with 44% of schools reporting scheduling “up to 1 hour”, 33% of schools reporting scheduling “up to 30 minutes” and 10% of the sample reporting “no regular schedule”.

Schools that scheduled regular SEL provision were asked which particular SEL programmes they were currently implementing. The most frequently implemented programme (104 schools) was the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme. 9 schools were using PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) and 6 were using .b mindfulness.

57% of schools surveyed reported that they were still using the SEAL materials.

Finally, schools were asked to think about a typical class in school and to reflect to what extent they observed particular teaching practices. The least often observed were strategies to increase pupils’ emotion vocabulary; perspective-taking and self-regulation were the most common.

	Never Observed	Occasionally Observed	Regularly Observed
Deliberate strategies to increase pupil's emotional vocabulary (e.g., word of the day, spellings, class posters)	18%	45%	37%
Deliberate opportunities for pupils to explain their own feelings and the context behind them (e.g., drawing 'feelings', sharing stories in circle time)	3%	39%	58%
Using and teaching calming and regulatory techniques (e.g., count to ten, breath slowly, sit on hands);	1%	41%	58%
Use of perspective taking in understanding social interaction (e.g., discussing empathy in a story, role modelling different ways of behaving)	2%	37%	61%
Deliberate development of communication strategies (e.g., typical scripts for social situations "can I play?")	6%	52%	42%
Deliberate teaching of rational decision making when solving social problems (e.g., reflecting on choice and consequence either through stories or worksheets).	6%	47%	47%

Projecting yourself into the future

Researchers have found that being asked to view a negative experience from a future time perspective ('How do you think you will feel about this a few years from now?') reduces negative feelings about the stressor (for example, 'You fail an important exam') and that greater habitual use of this kind of technique (called temporal distancing) predicts greater mental health overall.

Something to try with students, perhaps? Essential that students themselves do the imagining – not the same as adults telling them they won't feel so bad in a few years....

Read more at <https://doi.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fpspp0000103>

The Good Behaviour Game

The Good Behaviour Game is a universal behaviour management intervention that encourages students to monitor their behaviour in return for tangible rewards.

Previous research found it ineffective in the UK; [this study](#), however, dug deeper into the data to see if the programme worked better in some circumstances than others.

In the large, randomised experiment, seventy-seven English primary schools (over 3,000 children, aged 6–7) were assigned to either receive the Good Behaviour Game or to continue with business-as-usual. Implementation variability and participant risk status were examined as predictors of disruptive behaviour outcomes.



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The study found that in schools which actually took part there was a large, statistically significant intervention effect of the programme if teachers spent at least 1,030 minutes (17 hours) using the Good Behaviour Game over two years

The effect varied in line with the children's risk factors. Those with a high number of behavioural risk factors improved more with increased exposure, and less with decreased exposure than children not at risk.

The study highlights the value in the whole class playing games such as the Good Behaviour Game, even solely for the benefit of a few students who are most at risk.

Humphrey, N., Panayiotou, M., Hennessey, A., & Ashworth, E. (2021). Treatment effect modifiers in a randomized trial of the good behaviour game during middle childhood. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 89(8), 668–681. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000673>