November 2024
5th EDITION

RISE Higher

RISE NI (NHSCT) KS2 NEWSLETTER

Welcome! This is the 5th edition of the RISE NI NHSCT Key Stage 2 newsletter! We welcome all our new KS2 parent/carers/families and welcome back our previous parents/carers and families, hoping you have enjoyed our other editions.

This newsletter aims to bring some insight into how to support children who are in Key Stage 2 (Primary 5, 6 and 7)! This edition of RISE Higher will focus on what you as parents/carers/families can do to promote positive Social and Emotional Well-being (SEWB). We hope you find some great tips, strategies and advice to try at home with your children! *But first....*

A REMINDER OF WHAT WE DO...

RISE NI stands for the Regional Integrated Support for Education (RISE) NI. We work in mainstream primary schools in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area to support staff and children from Preschool to Key Stage 1 in the following areas:

- Social, Emotional and/or Behavioural
- Speech, Language and Communication
- Sensory Processing, Fine Motor and Visual Perception

RISE NI has received some additional funding to pilot supports into Key Stage 2 (Years 5, 6 & 7). The focus of these supports is on children's social, emotional and well-being (SEWB) needs.

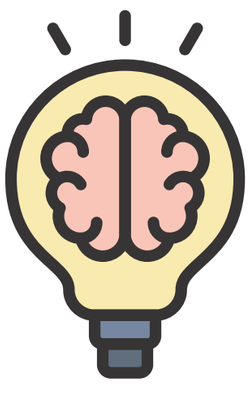
FOR PARENTS/CARERS...

The KS2 RISE NI Parent Website can be accessed as follows:
https://view.pagetiger.com/RISENI/parents

On the website you'll find lots of useful information, leaflets, video demonstrations and training opportunities. Please check it out...especially the Key Stage 2 training, advice and resources! Take time to go through this using the QR or link provided!

This edition of the RISE Higher Newsletter consists of information on:

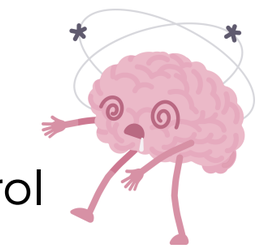
- What is stress? & our Fight, Flight and Freeze Responses
- Talking about our feelings
- Understanding how other are feeling & resolving conflicts
- Breathing techniques and Mindfulness tips



MYTH: Learning about social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) only teaches kids about feelings.

FACT: Teaching kids about SEWB benefits them in so many other ways; they can learn to become more self – aware, develop an ability to regulate their emotions, understand other perspectives, strengthen their social skills/relationships and enhance their decision making skills.

What is stress?



Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control (Mind, 2024).

Stress can impact us both emotionally and physically. The feeling of stress comes from the release of the hormone called ‘cortisol’ within your brain.

Cortisol affects our bodies in various different ways by:

Regulating our metabolism, regulating our sleep patterns, limits inflammation, regulating blood sugar levels and limiting our stress responses.

The three most common stress responses are **fight**, **flight** and **freeze**.

Fight

When we go into ‘fight’ mode our bodies become full of energy and we want to confront and ‘fight’ the situation.

Fight doesn't always mean being physical, it can also mean you use your words, or tone of voice to fight.

How to recognise the signs?

- Tight jaw and fists
- Clenched teeth
- Loud voice
- Erratic behaviour
- Tightness in stomach
- Crying in anger
- Physically lashing out
- Flushed face

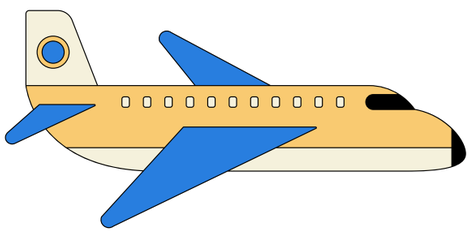
Flight

When we go into ‘flight’ mode we want to escape and avoid the situation.

Flight often involves leaving the stressful situation and walking away.

How to recognise the signs?

- Anxious presentation
- Deep slow breaths
- Unable to focus
- Very restless
- Fidgeting
- Feeling/appearing tense
- Darting eyes



Freeze

When we go into freeze ‘mode’ we feel like we are unable to move or act.

Freeze often feels like you are stuck in that one position and you cannot think or move from the fear.

How to recognise the signs?

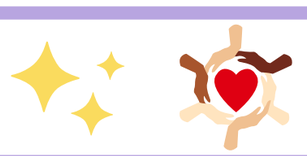
- Cold and numb
- Feeling stiff
- Limbs feel heavy
- Heart rate is slow
- Holding breath
- Pale skin
- Blank expression
- Disassociated

What response does your body often use?

It may be a case whereby in different situations, different reactions or responses occur - It is good to be mindful of these responses so you can spot them and support your child through the response, by practising the breathing or mindfulness tips on the last page.

"There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn’t.'"

John Green



Why are communication skills important with regards to mental health?

We use our communication skills to:

- Talk about how we are feeling
- Understand how others are feeling
- Resolve conflicts and negotiate with others

Speech and Language UK (2024)

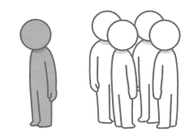
Talking about how we are feeing...

As adults, we can support our children to talk about their feelings. We can;

- **Lead the way** - To encourage our children to open up and to share their thoughts, feelings and emotions, lead by example by discussing how our day went, including the use of feelings/emotions; 'Work was good today, I felt happy talking to my work friends'.
- **Use arts and crafts** - This is a great way for your child to express how they are feeling and provides a chance to discuss it in an open, relaxed and safe environment.
- **Worry Pot** - Create a worry pot within your home. Allow your children to write down or draw their worries in their own time. Make them aware you will read them and you will chat together about them.
- **Reading or Watching** - When you are reading through books together or watching various videos, discuss the emotions of the characters and encourage your child to tell you about a time they have felt the same way.

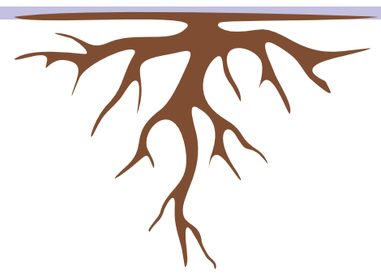
A task to help your children learn how to understand how others around them may be feeling ...

Using the following scenarios, work together to discuss how the person/character may be feeling in that particular situation. Encourage your child to think of ways they could support them and if they have ever experienced that feeling.



- Sarah didn't invite Molly to play but she invited everyone else. How does Molly feel?
- Tom hit the ball at James on purpose and it hit him on the arm really hard. How does James feel?
- Jack is going on holiday tomorrow to Disneyland. How do you think he feels?
- Sarah got a new bike, but Lily didn't and Sarah is making fun of Lily for having an old bike. How does Lily feel?
- Sam is starting a new school tomorrow. How does he feel?

Tips to resolve conflicts...



- Use an **emotions/feelings chart** to indicate how both children are feeling
- **Get to the root** - Discuss with the children what initially caused the conflict
- **Work together** - Think of ways that the situation could be resolved.
- **Look at the bigger picture** - Talk about this issue and look at it from other perspectives. Allow your child time to think about how the other person felt in that moment and how they felt also.
- **Practise statements** to discuss conflict, for example 'In this moment I felt...'

By providing these strategies and modelling these behaviours, it will allow your child to become more aware of how others are feeling and how to resolve conflicts or issues.

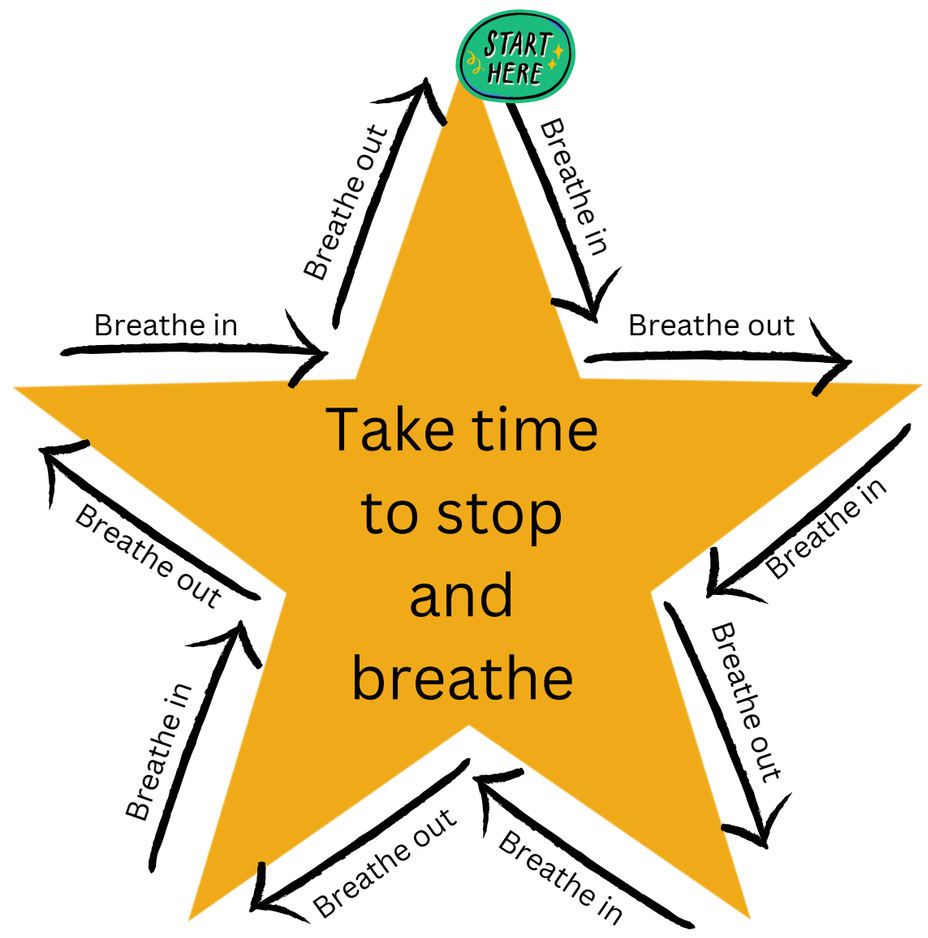
Below are some cut-outs/posters which you can print and place around your house to support your child's mental health and wellbeing. The adults within your house could avail of them too. A good place to put these may be on the mirror in the bathroom, behind your child's bedroom door or a nice quiet place within your home where everyone can take a minute to take a breath and relax in a mindful way.

SEIZE THE DAY

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

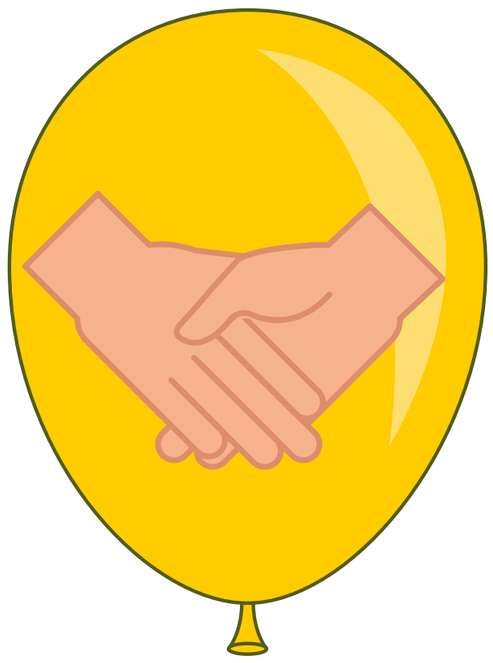
Star Breathing

Use your finger to trace around the star shape - taking breaths in and out as your trace your finger. Go around the star 3 times.



Balloon Breathing

Lie on your back, place your hands on your tummy, take a deep breath in through your nose and try to blow the balloon inside your belly up and then out through your mouth and make your go belly down. Try this for 5 deep breaths.



Breathe in and let your belly get bigger as the balloon blows up, breathe out and your belly will go down as the balloon deflates.

My response to challenges

My emotions

My respect towards myself and others

My words

My actions

Things I can control!

Stand in the mirror and tell yourself these 5 things everyday!

✉ EMAIL US:

If you have any comments on the content of this newsletter or indeed any queries, please send an email to us at riseni.nhsct@northerntrust.hscni.net