

# Empowering Parents to Support their Children's SEMH

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# Aims and Objectives

- Understand the link between parenting and SEMH
- Know that evidence shows that good, positive parenting supports good SEMH in children
- Learn strategies that can be used to support healthy SEMH in children
- Be able to pass on practical ways to parents that can be used at home to develop good SEMH
- Model active listening, use empathy and deal sensitively with parents

# My Family



**Saltaire**  
Training Company

# Risk Factors for Poor Mental Health in Children

- **Family factors** – parenting style, conflict/separation/divorce, witnessing domestic violence, bereavement, parental mental health, substance/alcohol misuse
- **Environmental factors** – socio-economic disadvantage, discrimination, work stress, unemployment, lack of access to basic services and support services, war/disaster/overwhelming events
- **Abuse** – sexual, physical, emotional, neglect



# Happiness!



# Evidence Base

- “Parenting is considered a key risk factor in the development of early psychopathology. Low levels of sensitive parenting and greater use of harsh discipline have been causally linked to the development of behavioural problems.”
- “Crucially however, parenting is amenable to change.”

- London Journal of Primary Care. Rachael Ryan, Christine O’Farrelly and Paul Ramchandani. 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017

# Worries

- “Finding working from home and looking after children very demanding. No time alone. No silence. Surrounded by people and electronics all my waking hours.”
- “Balancing all our responsibilities – home schooling/going into work/working from home/housework – feeling stressed.”
- “I worry about my eldest child’s mental wellbeing as she hates not being able to socialise. She does not like playing outside alone.”
- “Mental health of all my children (especially youngest). Desperately missing social interaction with friends, school and all his sporting activities. He is getting increasingly angry.”
- BiB Research – Experiences of Lockdown During Covid-19. April-June 2020.

# Positives

- “Being together with children and family. There has been more family time as usually life is so busy and the children are at school or with their friends. Have enjoyed every minute of being together more as a family.”
- “Not having to get kids ready for school and also as my eldest has epilepsy he had constant seizures in school and at home he’s not had one.”
- BiB Research. Experiences of Lockdown During Covid-19. April-June 2020.



# Breakout Room Activity

- In your breakout groups, discuss what challenges you are facing in school in the light of #Lockdown 3.0
- Share at least one positive thing each that you experienced in the first lockdown in March 2020
- 5 minutes!

# GAP Task

- An explanation of the GAP task so that you can start thinking about it as we progress through the webinar

# Feelings Drive Behaviour

- “Mental health of all my children (especially youngest). **Desperately missing social interaction with friends, school and all his sporting activities. He is getting increasingly angry.**”
- My attitude affects your behaviour!
- Our aim is to help parents and children feel better, happier, empowered and confident – then behaviour will start to change
- Use positive discipline

# Strategies for Empowering Parents

- Listening and Empathy
- Boundaries and Family Rules
- Developing Resilience

If Only You Would Listen....



# Breakout Room Activity

- What barriers do we and others encounter to listening well – colleagues, friends, partners and children?
- Think about your own experiences and those that you have witnessed others experiencing

# Listening Well

- Listen using the core conditions of listening
- **A**cceptance
- **G**enuineness
- **E**mpathy

# Listening with Acceptance

- Listening with acceptance means listening without judgement.
- A frame of reference is a particular set of beliefs or ideas on which you base your judgement of things.
- Think about your frame of reference and how it has changed on one of the following – religion/faith/spirituality, education, sexuality, age or place of birth.



## Breakout Room Activity

- In your groups, share an example of how your Frame of Reference in a particular area has changed from when you were 16 and now

# Listening with Genuineness

- **What does it mean to be genuine?**
- Real, authentic, sincere
- Exactly what it appears to be
- Not counterfeit
- Free from pretence, affectation or hypocrisy



# Listening with Empathy



# SHUSH – Active Listening Skills

- Show you care
- Have patience
- Use open questions
- Say it back
- Have courage
- (Samaritans)

# Boundaries

- We are aiming for parents to have clear, consistent boundaries
- Inconsistent boundaries are confusing for children
- Set a few clear, “rules” using the Family Links Nurture Programme method

# Family Rules

- Family meeting
- How does everyone want to feel? E.g. respected, loved, valued
- What are issues that are bothering everyone and that would benefit from rules?
- Write 3 DO'S and 3 DON'TS – keep it simple and display it
- Introduce rewards for keeping the rules and penalties for breaking them
- Emphasise the reward and make consequences relevant
- **WHAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO IS WHAT WE GET MORE OF**

# Resilience

- Resilience can be taught!
- We all face difficulties and stress in life – that’s inevitable!
- It’s how we, “bounce back” that matters
- [Apa.org/topics/resilience-guide-parents](https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience-guide-parents)

(American Psychological Association updated 26.8.20)

# Ten Tips for Building Resilience

1. Make connections – engage, connect, listen, use empathy. Connect with family and friends
2. Help others – volunteering, helping with tasks at home, acts of kindness
3. Maintain daily routine – children crave structure. Be consistent. But be flexible too. Perhaps very much needed now?
4. Take a break – allow some unstructured time to be creative. Down time
5. Self-care – eat, sleep, exercise. Have fun, take time out. Mindset





# Ten Tip for Building Resilience

6. Move towards goals – focus on a specific task. Face challenges. Not all academic!  
Couch to 5k together? Make a new dish together?
7. Nurture a positive self-view – how have they faced and overcome previous challenges? Trust yourself to solve problems. I CAN DO THIS!
8. Have perspective and a hopeful outlook – having an optimistic and positive outlook. Avoid catastrophising. Use gratitude?
9. Avoid eliminating all risk and allow for mistakes – we learn by our mistakes and taking risks. We learn how to make, “good choices” and that actions have consequences
10. Accept change – it’s part of life. There isn’t one path to success. Have a plan of action but be flexible



# Resources

- [www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)
- [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) (10-18 years)
- [www.qwell.io](http://www.qwell.io) (19 and over)
- Books –
- Happy Confident Me (Journal for 6-12s)
- Resilience (Jayneen Saunders)
- My Happy Mind (Laura Earnshaw)
- My Hidden Chimp (Professor Steve Peters)
- Stories e.g. The Huge Bag of Worries, Mud Boy, The Goldfish Boy

# What Makes Us Happy?

**GREAT DREAM**  
Ten keys to happier living

|                   |   |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| <b>GIVING</b>     |    | <b>DIRECTION</b>  |    |
| <b>RELATING</b>   |    | <b>RESILIENCE</b> |    |
| <b>EXERCISING</b> |    | <b>EMOTIONS</b>   |    |
| <b>AWARENESS</b>  |   | <b>ACCEPTANCE</b> |   |
| <b>TRYING OUT</b> |  | <b>MEANING</b>    |  |

