

Brain Buddies - Parent Booklet

Brain Buddies is run by the Mental Health Support Team and delivered to the whole class. It is made up of 8x 1-hour sessions which focus on teaching children about their emotions. It focuses on helping children to notice how they are feeling, understand what happens in their body and brain when they feel different emotions and to use a range of skills to help manage their emotions.

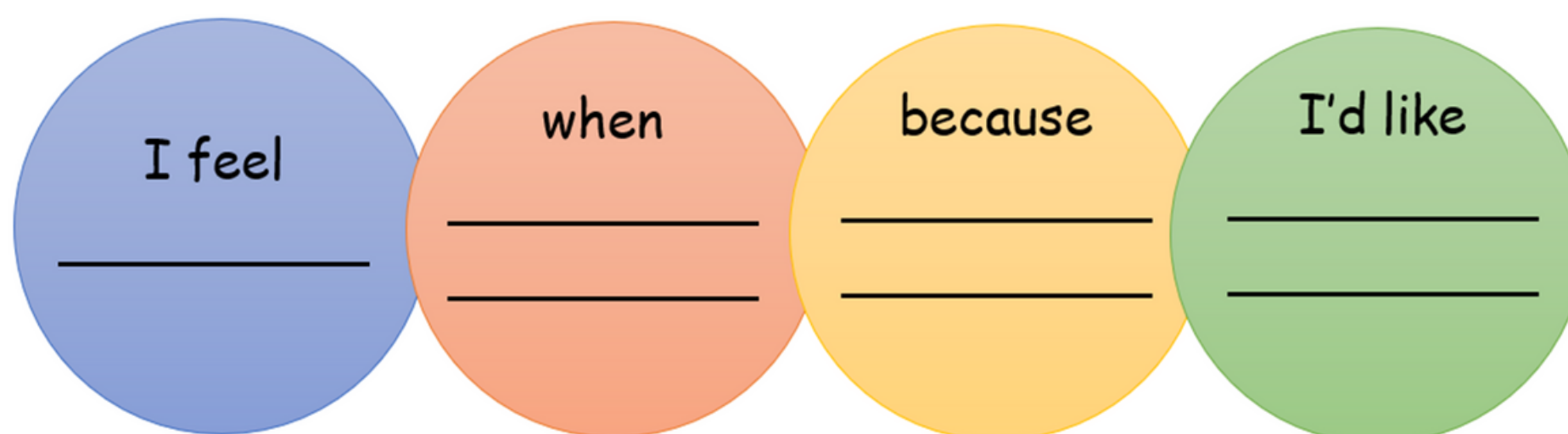


In each Brain Buddies session, your child will learn new skills. They will write down the skills in a Brain Buddies backpack to help them remember and practise what they have learnt. There is an overview of each session and the skills your child will learn below. It is helpful to practise the skills with your child at home so they get used to using them.

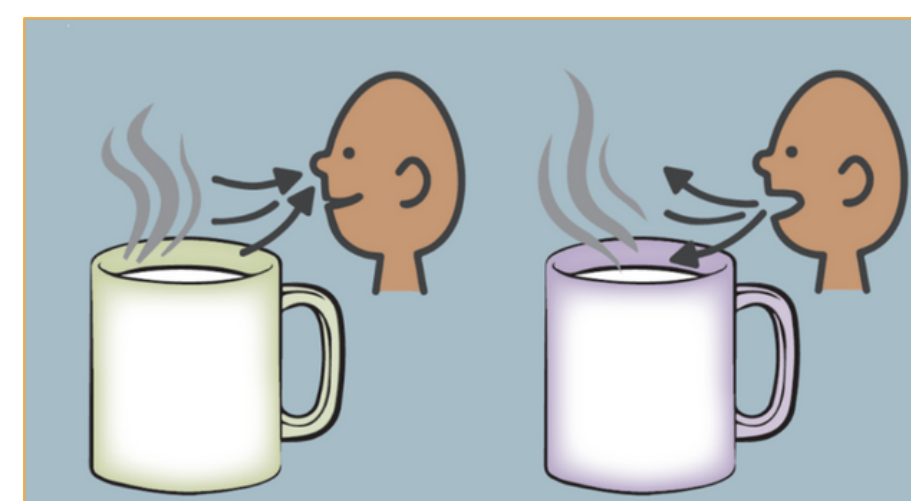


Sessions

- In session 1, your child met the team and was introduced to Brain Buddies. They decorated their backpack and agreed a goal for the class to track throughout the sessions. Your child also thought about who is in their support team, who can help them practise their Brain Buddies skills and who they can talk to about how they feel. Finally, your child learnt their first skill, 'I Statements', which is something they can use to share how they are feeling with other people.



- In session 2, your child learnt that there is no such thing as a good or bad emotion because our emotions are there to help us communicate and to know when something is not right and we need to change it. They also learnt that we can notice our emotions by paying attention to how our bodies feel, e.g. our heart rate, breathing and energy levels. Your child then learnt 3 different breathing exercises as this weeks skills.



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3. In session 3, your child learnt about two parts of our brain: the 'guard dog' survival brain (the amygdala) and the 'wise owl' thinking brain (the prefrontal cortex) and we used our hands to understand how these parts of the brain work together. Your child learnt that our thinking brain helps us make good decisions but if our survival brain thinks we are in danger it takes over and we flip our lid, which makes it hard for us to make good decisions. We talked about how our Brain Buddies skills can help get our thinking brain and our survival brain working together. Today, your child learnt to do a body scan to help notice how they are feeling.



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch a YouTube video of the body scan.



4. In session 4, your child learnt about Zones of Regulation. They learnt there is no such thing as good and bad zones but that sometimes one zone is more helpful than others, e.g. the green zone is most helpful when they are in school. We talked about using our Brain Buddies skills to make sure we are in the most helpful zone. Your child then thought of self-care activities they can do to help themselves feel good as well as ideas of what they could put in a calm kit.

<p>Blue Zone Sad - Bored Tired - Sick</p>	<p>Green Zone Happy - Focused Calm - Proud</p>
<p>Yellow Zone Worried - Frustrated Silly - Excited</p>	<p>Red Zone Overjoyed/Elated Panicked - Angry - Terrified</p>



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5. In session 5, your child learnt lots of additional skills for their Brain Buddies backpack. As with all the skills, it is helpful for your child to practise them at home so they can learn which ones are more helpful for them and what situations it is best to use them in.



Palm Push



Finger Pull



Give Yourself a Hug/ Massage

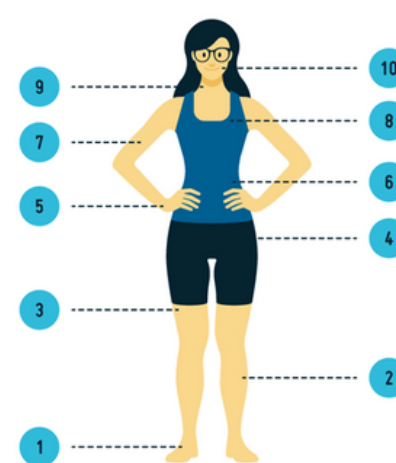


Chair Push-up



RELAX YOUR MUSCLES TO RELIEVE STRESS

Ease tension one muscle group at a time.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch a YouTube video of progressive muscle relaxation.

6. In session 6, your child learnt that our thoughts, feelings and actions are all linked and that our 'self talk' can affect how likely we are to flip our lids. Your child then learnt that we can challenge our unhelpful self-talk by asking ourselves if our thought is helpful and realistic. We discussed how helpful self-talk focuses on our strengths, achievements and being successful rather than unhelpful self-talk which focuses on things that go wrong, criticism and predicting that we won't be able to cope or succeed. When we question our unhelpful self-talk, we can find more helpful ways of thinking.

Example: <i>I came last in a race on sports day.</i>	
A helpful thought: <i>'I can try again next time.'</i>	An unhelpful thought: <i>'I am rubbish. I am never going to take part in sports day again.'</i>
If I had this thought I would: <i>Say well done to the winner and practise for next time.</i>	If I had this thought I would: <i>Get angry and refuse to do more races.</i>



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- 7.** In session 7, your child learnt about how to manage worries. They learnt that sometimes we have worries we can't do anything about and then it is helpful to use 'mind games' (e.g. 54321, counting, naming things) to get our brains focusing on something else. However, sometimes we can do something to solve our worries and then it is helpful to decide if we can solve it ourselves or if we need help. Your child then learnt the STEP method of problem solving.

List 5 things you can see:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List 4 things you can hear:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

List 3 things you can touch:

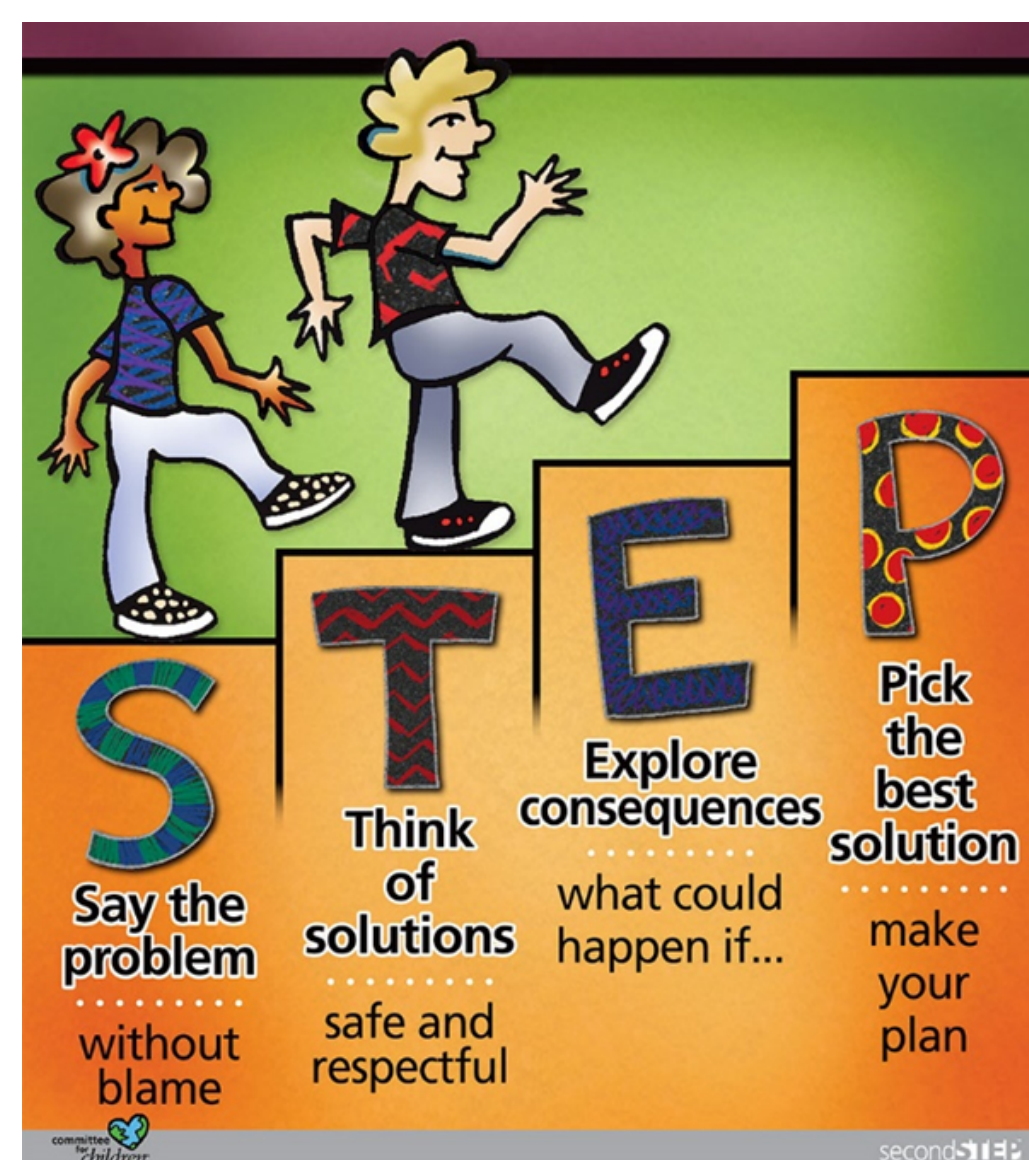
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List 2 things you can smell:

- 1.
- 2.

List 1 thing you can taste:

- 1.



- 8.** In session 8, your child recapped all the skills learnt in Brain Buddies and picked out their favourite ones that they will continue to use. Please continue to remind your child to use their Brain Buddies skills and support them in practising them when needed.

Tips for supporting your child to use their Brain Buddies skills:

- Practise them together (even when your child is feeling calm)
- Ask open questions to help your child think about their emotions and the skills they can use e.g. what zone do you think you are in now? what brain buddies skill could help you?
- Model talking about emotions and how they feel in your body

