



## Supporting your child's emotional wellbeing

Gemma Howard

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Let me introduce myself...

Charlie Waller  
Trust since 2017

Experience:  
Primary Teacher, PSHE  
Mental Health First Aider  
Trauma Recovery Model  
Practitioner  
Emotion Coaching  
Relax Kids  
Lived Experience



## About us

Charlie Waller was a strong, funny, popular, good-looking and kind young man, with a close and loving family. To the outside world, he had everything to live for. Yet in 1997, at the age of 28, Charlie took his own life. He was suffering from depression.

In response to this tragedy, his family founded The Charlie Waller Trust, to open up the conversation around mental health, and to ensure that young people are able to understand and look after their mental health and to spot the signs in others.

Charlie sits at the heart of our story, our vision and our purpose.



# We're talking mental health

## Our vision

A world where people understand and talk openly about mental health, where people and those who support them are equipped to maintain and enhance their mental health and wellbeing, and have the confidence to seek help when they need it.





# Evidence based training



## Positive

We take a positive approach to mental health. We focus on prevention and early intervention, and recognise the importance of offering hope.



## Proven

Our consultancy, training and resources are all based on sound clinical evidence.



## Practical

We give people practical strategies and tools to care for their mental health, and to support others in doing so.



## Workshop aims

- Explain why we all have mental health and how stress effects it
- Demonstrate how brain development and the stress response can effect emotional regulation in ourselves and children
- Provide practical strategies to support your child's emotional wellbeing
- Introduce the Emotion Coaching model as a method to support emotional regulation and wellbeing
- Signpost to further resources and support



## Some of the statistics

- In 2023, around 1/5 children and young people aged 8-25 will have a probable mental health disorder:
  - 20.3% of 8 to 16 year olds
  - 23.3% of 17 to 19 year olds
  - 21.7% of 20 to 25 year olds
- Among 8 to 16 year olds, rates of probable mental disorder were similar for boys and girls,
- For 17 to 25 year olds, rates were twice as high for young women than young men.



# What is good mental health?

“A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community....



**World Health  
Organization**



# What is good mental health?

...Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”



**World Health  
Organization**

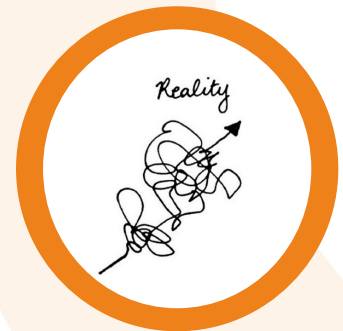
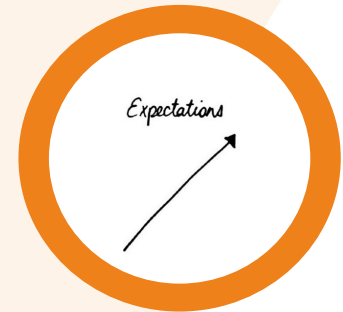
Mental health spectrum tool





# Ups and downs are normal

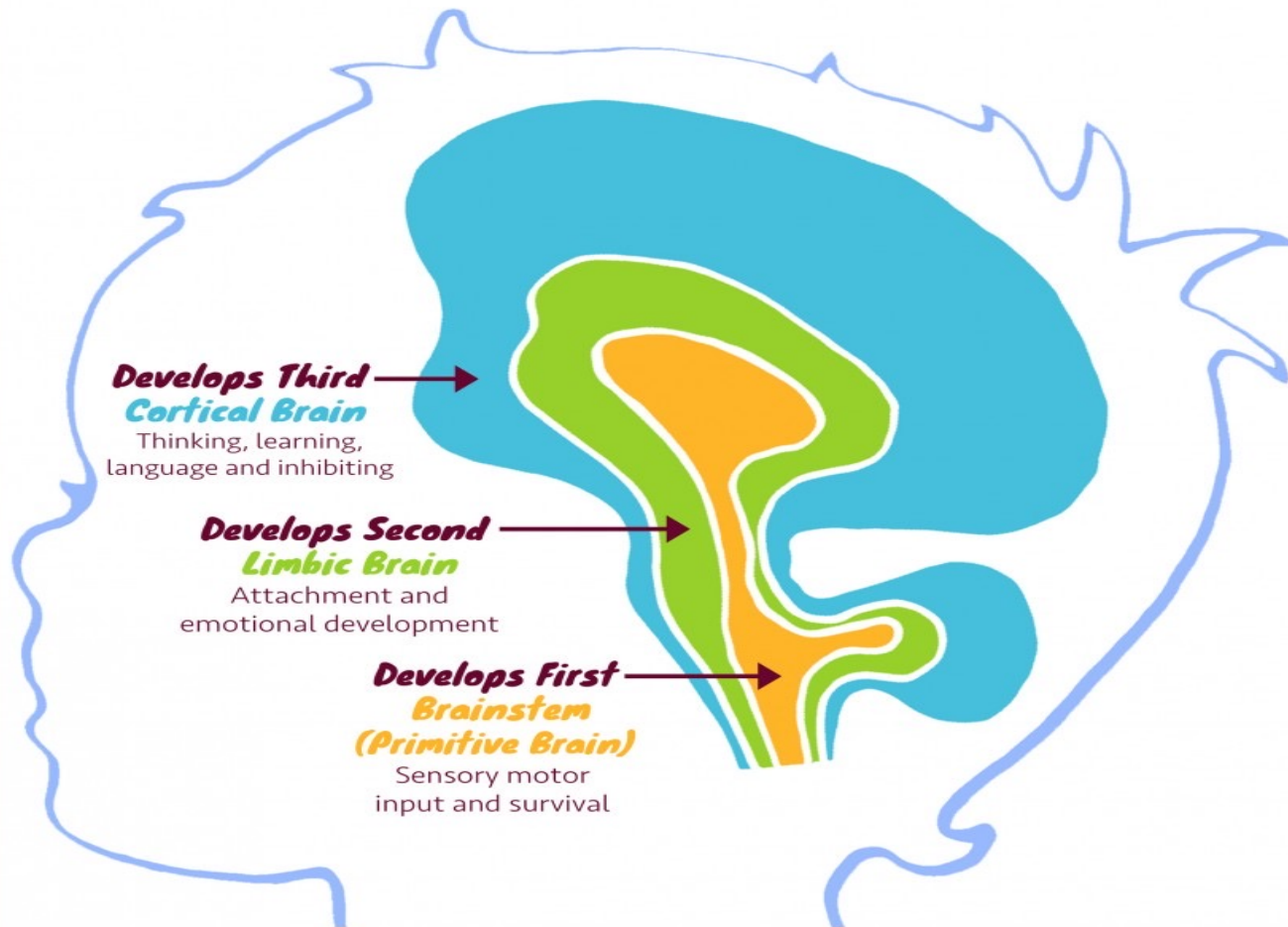
- It's important to recognise that difficult feelings are a normal part of life
- We all experience a wide range of emotions
- Temporary difficult feelings are normal and can be a healthy appropriate response to the challenges of life





# The Developing Brain & Stress





**Children's brains develop  
from the bottom up.**







## Prefrontal Cortex- last to develop

- Working memory
- Decision making
- Planning and strategies
- Prioritising
- Reflecting
- Organising
- Coordinating thought and emotion
- Self-control
- Delaying gratification
- Inhibiting impulses





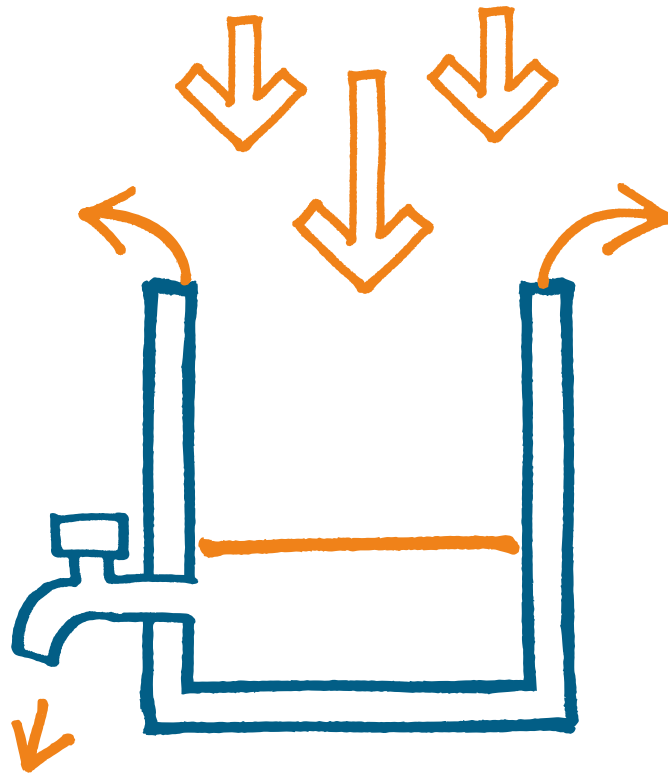
# THE STRESS BUCKET

If the container overflows, problems develop  
—  
'emotional' snapping

HELPFUL  
COPING  
STRATEGIES

=

Tap lets  
stress out



UNHELPFUL  
COPING  
STRATEGIES

=

Tap blocked so  
water fills the  
container and  
overflows



# Stress: The Amygdala Hijack

- Under normal circumstances, you process information through your neocortex or “thinking brain” where all higher functioning – logic, problem solving, prioritising occurs.
- When you are under severe pressure, your brain may panic and activate the alarm system which hijacks some of your higher cognitive functions and puts you into survival and reactive mode.



Source: <https://mindfulnessatwork.ie/what-is-an-amygdala-hijack>



# Stress and the Alarm System

- Release of adrenaline & cortisol
- Heart rate & blood pressure increase
- Pupils dilate
- Muscles tense up ready to fight or flee
- Blood glucose levels increase
- Digestion & immune system shut down

**Brainpower directed towards escape**





# What are the signs that a child or young person may need support with their mental health?

## *STRESS*

- Studying, school or college work
- Temperament (changes in mood or emotions)
- Reactions (changes in behaviour)
- Energy and eating
- Sleep
- Self-harm and suicidality

# How can we support the...



# emotional wellbeing of our children?



# Prioritise your own needs

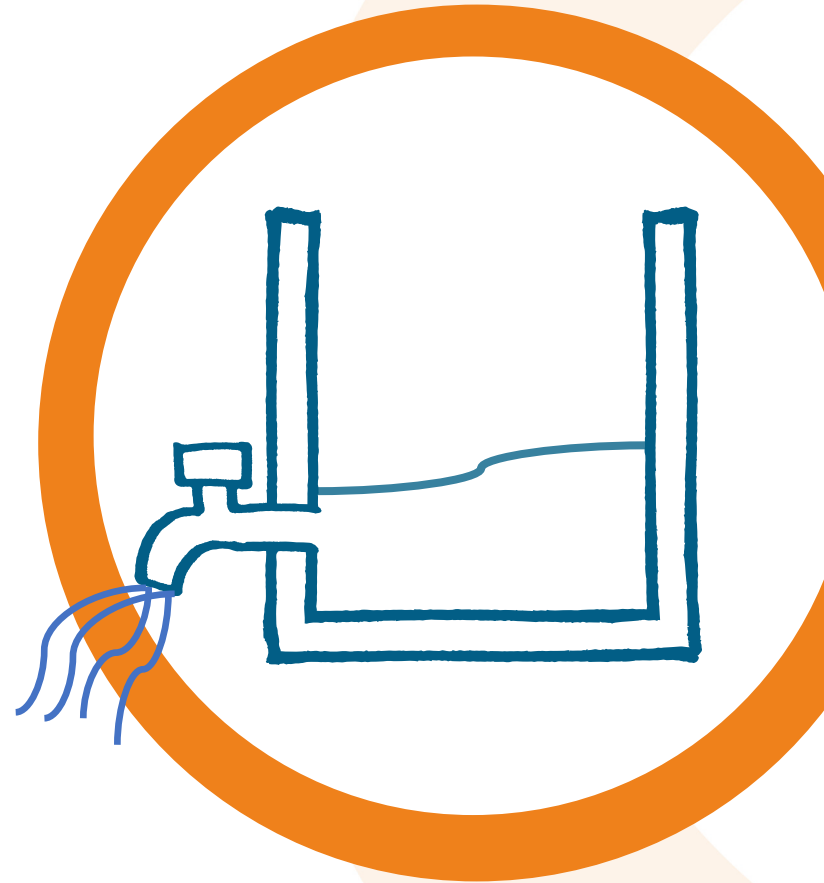
- It's OK to not have all the answers
- Prioritise your own emotional needs
- You can't support wellness in others if you are unwell





## Prioritise your own needs

What helps you to  
empty your stress  
bucket and look after  
YOUR needs?





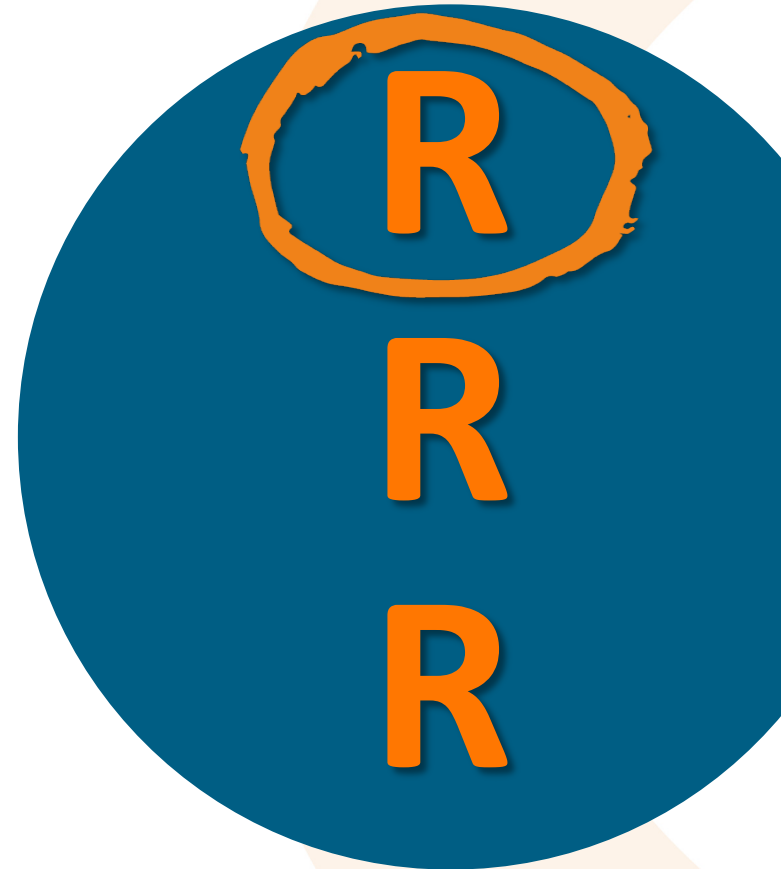


# The 3 Rs

(Bruce Perry)

## Regulate

- Regulate yourself (breathing)
- Calm, safe environment/space
- Soothing, limited language and tone
- Movement
- Nature
- Sound/ rhythm - music
- Grounding exercises
- Meditation/ mindfulness
- Sleep/diet/exercise influence this





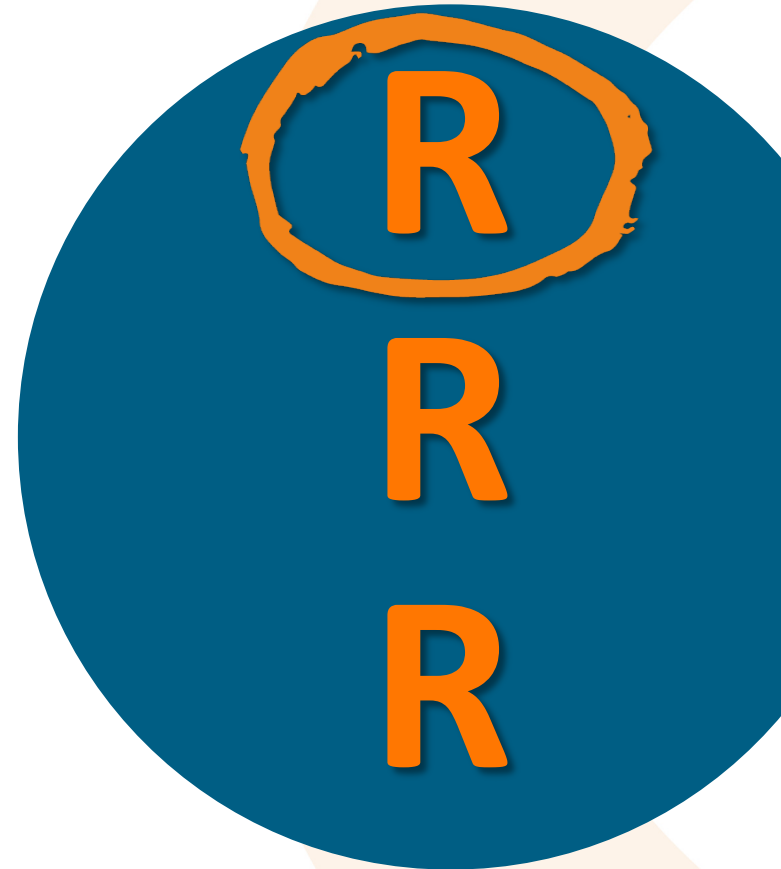
# The 3 Rs

(Bruce Perry)

## Regulate

### Coregulation- safety cues:

- Mirror Neurons
- Ah ha, hum...
- Nodding
- Turning towards
- Breathing calmly
- Be aware of sensory needs
- Tuning in/ checking in





# Grounding

5 things you see...

4 things you can touch...

3 things you hear...

2 things you can smell...

1 thing you can taste...





And...breathe...

Inhale deeply, expanding your diaphragm, to the count of five.

Pause.

Exhale slowly to the count of six.

Pause.

Repeat four times.





# Mindful Moments

- 1 baking/ cooking
- 2 art/ colouring
- 3 music
- 4 sports/ movement
- 5 reading
- 6 gardening/ looking after animals



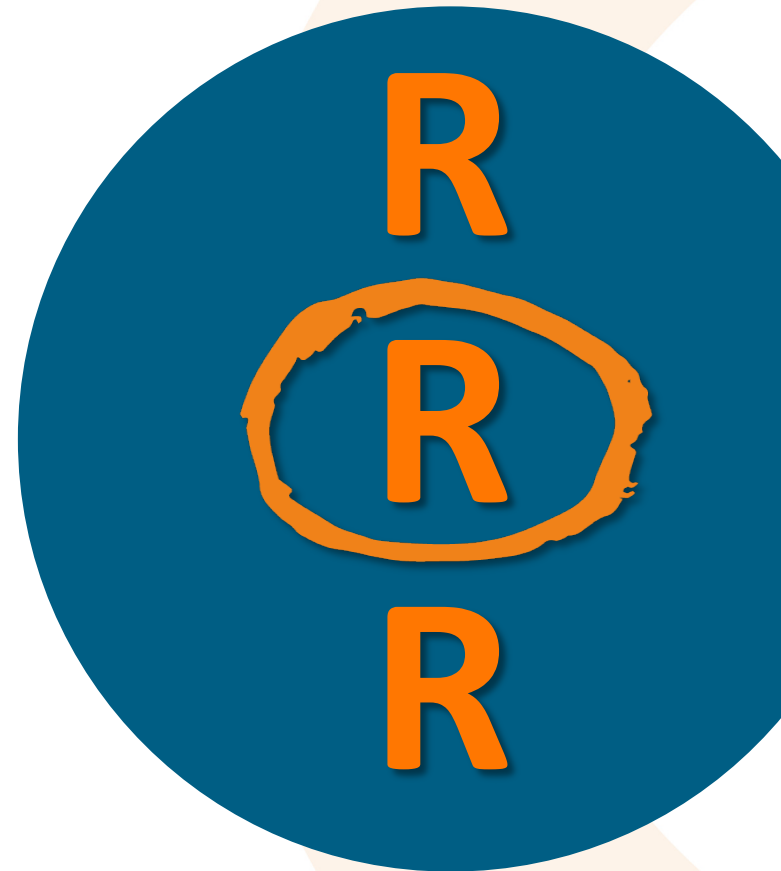


# The 3 Rs

(Bruce Perry)

## Relate

- Connect and attune
- Identify emotion 'you seem angry/upset/frightened'
- Acknowledge and validate their experience 'that sounds really difficult'
- Reassure that you are there for them when they are ready 'I'd like to be able to help when you're ready'



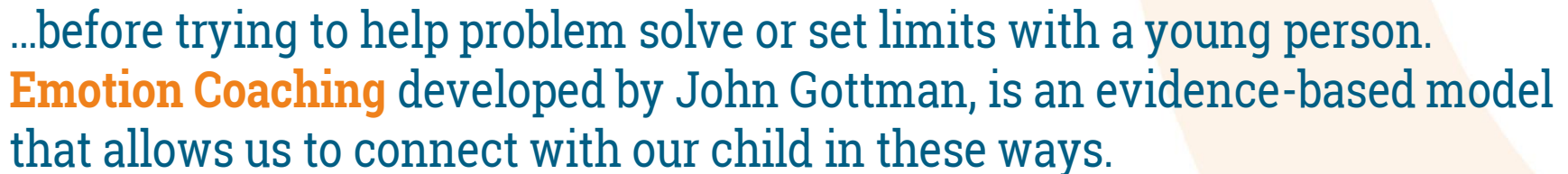
# Empathy versus sympathy







- **Connect** first
- **Listen** fully
- **Validate** how they feel
- **Empathise** with what is going on



For a free copy of 'All Emotions Are OK' book which introduces [mindful emotion coaching and the hand model](http://www.allemotionsareok.co.uk), in an easy to read, accessible format, please visit: [www.allemotionsareok.co.uk](http://www.allemotionsareok.co.uk)





# Mindful Emotion Coaching

**Emotion Dismissive Style** – ‘don’t worry, you’ll be fine’

**Emotion Disapproving Style** – ‘if you hadn’t gone out yesterday and you’d done some work you...’

**Laissez Faire or Permissive Style** – ‘talks about emotions but doesn’t give boundaries or set limits on behaviour’

**Emotion Coaching style** – ‘Pause, Breathe, Connect, Engage with Empathy and Compassion, Problem Solve (with limit setting where necessary)’



***‘When parents are able to use an emotion coaching relationship style at least 30% of the time, their children have fewer behavioural problems, are more emotionally stable and cope better with life's ups and downs’ (Gottman 1997).***

# Emotion Coaching:



- 1) Be aware of the child's emotions (and yours)
- 2) Recognise the moment as an opportunity to connect (before correcting- understanding that all emotions are ok)
- 3) Listen, show empathy and validate the child's feelings
- 4) Help the child to label their emotions using words
- 5) Problem solve and set limits (when needed)



# Processing Emotions part 1



<https://youtu.be/v0hsIqlHOpA?list=RDCMU CRZBPtAPAPDpK1PUFQExoPQ>



## Processing Emotions part 2



<https://youtu.be/gRCvHqOdbME>



# The 3 Rs

(Bruce Perry)

## Reason

- Support to reflect (and problem solve if necessary)
- Support to plan for next time
- Strategies for self-regulation and self-soothing- toolbox ideas (states)
- Teach tools to express emotions
- Teaching about emotions through games/ videos

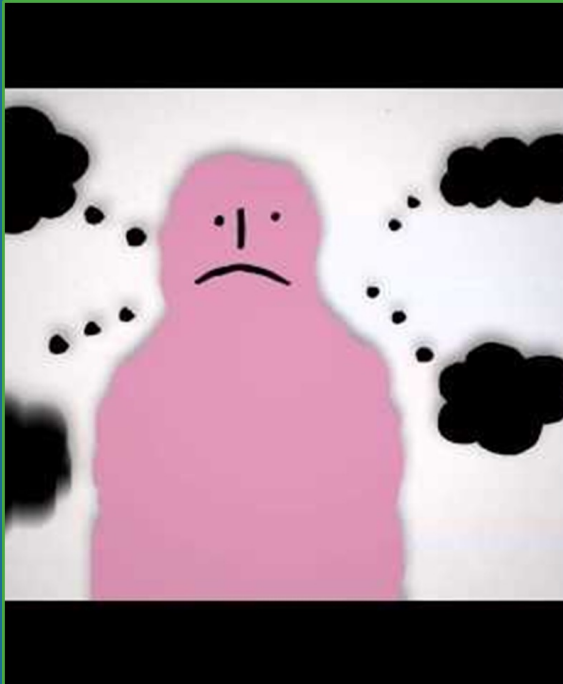
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R

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# Childline Resource



## ANXIETY, STRESS AND PANIC

Feeling anxious or stressed can lead to different reactions. But we can help you find ways to cope if you're ever worried.



### About panic attacks

Find out what a panic attack is and why they can happen.



### Controlling your panic attacks

Learn how to get panic attacks



### About anxiety

Find out what can cause anxiety and how you can



### Managing your anxiety

Check out our top tips on how to manage anxiety.

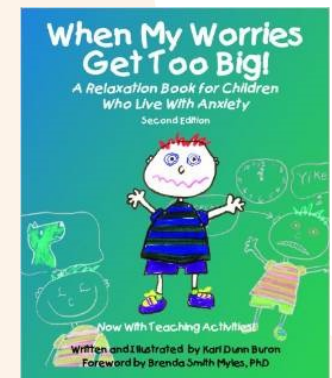
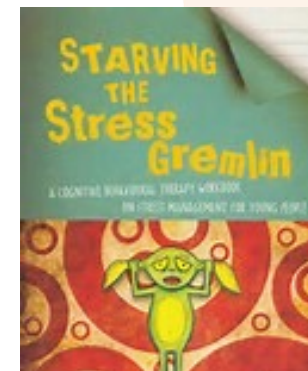
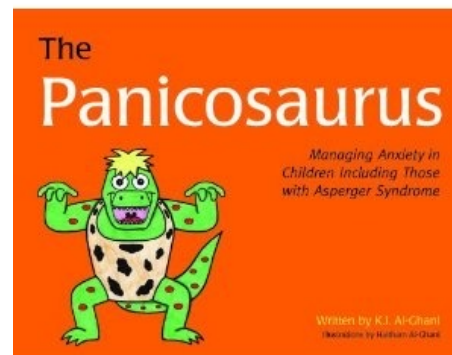
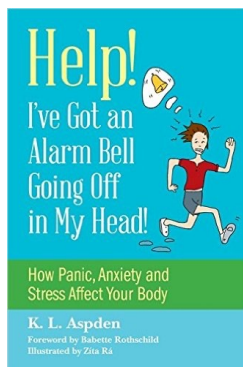




# Helpful books about mental health



Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
*books that make a difference*





# Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence

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Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2014). *Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence*. Retrieved from [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).





## Seeking Support



1. Who, time and place...
2. Talk to a friend
3. Call Childline/ Visit online
4. Speak to a trusted adult at home
5. Talk to someone in school
6. Talk to a counsellor



Improving children's  
mental health

**YOUNG**MiNDS



# How parents can improve children and young people's resilience

- Resilience needs relationships
- Communicate that it's ok to ask for help
- Help children build their executive functioning
- Establishing routines
- Model healthy social behaviours
- Provide opportunities for their social connections
- Provide opportunities for creative play
- Exercise
- Provide opportunities for children to make their own decisions
- Encourage mindfulness practice



## Key Message



<https://youtu.be/-4EDhdAHrOg>



## Resources





# Mental Health Online Support for Young People:

- **Hub of Hope**: a mental health database of local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS support.
- **Childline**: information, advice, support and tools for children and young people up to 19 years old. 0800 1111
- **Kooth**: free online counselling for 10-18 year olds.
- **The Mix**: advice, blogs, articles and 1-2-1 online chat and messenger options for 13-25 year olds. 0808 808 4994
- **Muslim Youth Helpline**: non-judgemental, confidential support 7 days a week, 365 days a year including bank holidays and Eid. All ages welcome.
- **Shout**: a free, confidential and anonymous text support service. 85258 - any age group can text.



## MindEd:

“MindEd is a **free elearning resource**, funded by Health Education England, the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education, aimed at equipping professionals and members of the public with evidence-based information about children, young people, adults, and older people’s mental health. “ (MindEd)

<https://www.minded.org.uk>

It also has a section with advice for families:

<https://www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>



## Helpful websites

- **Samaritans:** Young People and Suicide.
- **Papyrus:** prevention of young suicide.
- **The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM):** helpline support and webchat 0800 585858
- **CAMHS:** <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/>
- **Young Minds:** <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>
- **Anna Freud:** <https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/about/>
- **Council for Disabled Children:** <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/>
- **Special NeedsJungle:** <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/>
- **Chatterpack:** <https://chatterpack.net/>



**Thank you  
for listening**

**Any questions?**

**The Charlie Waller Trust**

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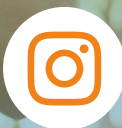
[charliewaller.org](http://charliewaller.org)

Registered charity number 1109984





Follow us



Charlie Waller Trust  
@charliewalleruk

A circular inset image showing two hands forming a heart shape, with a blurred background of people.

## Fundraise for us

Fundraising for us not only brings in money to help us continue our work – it also raises mental health awareness and what people can do to take care of their wellbeing.

**Find out more**  
[charliewaller.org/get-involved](https://charliewaller.org/get-involved)

A circular inset image showing three young people sitting on a concrete ledge outdoors. The person in the center is wearing an orange t-shirt with 'HOPE KIDS' printed on it. The person on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and jeans. The person on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and distressed jeans. They are all looking down or away from the camera.

## Students Against Depression

Our Students Against Depression website is full of clinically based self-help information and activities for students experiencing depression, anxiety and other common mental health problems.

Find out more  
[studentsagainstdepression.org](http://studentsagainstdepression.org)



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