

Coping Skills

Coping skills are activities that anyone can do to help manage difficult thoughts and feelings or challenging situations. It is important for everyone to know and use coping skills. It is also best to have a variety of strategies available as not all coping skills work in every situation.

Below I have included a few ideas which you may like to try with your child/children.

TAKE A MINDFUL WALK

Taking a walk and getting out in nature is a great way for children to calm down. Spend a few minutes of the walk making it mindful - ask them to use their senses and focus on what they notice - what do they smell? What do they see? What do they hear? What can they feel? It is a wonderful way to introduce children to mindfulness.

DEEP BREATHING

There are many different ways to encourage children to use deep breathing, however one simple way is to tell them to breathe in as if they are smelling a flower, and breathe out as they are blowing out a candle!



Another way is to ask your child/children to breathe in the cool air for a count of five whilst stretching arms towards the sun, then exhaling slowly whilst reaching down to the earth. Encourage them to repeat this fluid, short sequence of movements several times; it can really help to focus the mind.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful, a readiness to show appreciation and to return a kindness shown to you.

A simple way to promote this is to encourage your child/children to think of all the things that make them grateful. It may be for the sunshine, family, pets or their health for example. Suggest that they draw a picture, or make a gratitude jar. This can simply be a clean jam jar and post-it notes, or get creative and decorate the outside and make beautifully decorated message slips! Ask your child to write down all the wonderful things around them that they make them grateful and pop them inside the jar. This can be a wonderful resource to use if your child is feeling low – they can open the jar and read one of the slips or messages.



RELAXATION

It is important that we all take time to relax in this fast-paced world. One of the best ways to achieve this is to remove any distractions – phones on silent, turn off the television/computer, put down books etc.

Encourage your child to sit or lie quietly for 10 minutes, trying hard to ignore everything around. They should breathe deeply and focus on their breath entering and leaving their body, relaxing all tension and releasing all worries. Practising this everyday can promote a sense of calm and well-being.