



PARENTS MANUAL

APRIL 2020

P1-P3

**WEEK 4**

## Parents Manual – Ready for Anything Term 3 2020.

Dear Parents,

Given the school closures I thought the best way to make sure that Ready for Anything continues to be delivered to pupils is to provide you with the information and resources you need to run a version of the programme in your homes. Usually classes are one hour a week but I am aiming for about 30-40 minutes of activities per week in order to encourage as much discussion about the topic being covered between you and your children. Additionally, I will be providing resources and links to make a calm down kit with your child/children at home which will take time also. I will do my best to ensure that the activities and calm down kit items can be made from things you have at home to avoid the need for any unnecessary trips to the shops. Just store the calm down kit in a shoebox or basket. If you don't have a printer at home, don't worry, the resources necessary for all activities chosen can be opened online and are simple enough to copy out onto a blank page and complete. Where this isn't possible, I will suggest no printer alternatives. The areas we will be covering over the ten weeks are –

- Week 1. Who I am and What is Important to Me
- Week 2. Important People in My Life and the Roles I Play
- Week 3. Emotional Recognition
- Week 4. Emotional Control including Coping Strategies**
- Week 5. Confidence
- Week 6. My Future Self and Making Mistakes
- Week 7. Friendship
- Week 8. Decision Making and Integrity
- Week 9. Gratitude
- Week 10. Kindness

Resources and the manual for each week will be uploaded every Friday at noon in the hope that you will get a chance to do them over the weekend (when the school work is finished). Links will be provided from Ready for Anything's Facebook and Twitter accounts – **Facebook:** Ready4Anything **Twitter:** @RFA\_Belfast

If you decide to do Ready for Anything with your children at home – please let us know how it is going and if there is anything we can help with. Photos and comments can be put on our Facebook Page and I can be contacted by e-mail – [natalie@ready4anything.org](mailto:natalie@ready4anything.org) We have received excellent feedback at previous family workshops from parents who have taken part in the programme with their children. Where possible we would encourage you to complete the activities as well and discuss your thoughts with your children. Games should be played with children as a group where possible or if you have one child, play them with your child and please take part yourself! I really hope you enjoy the Programme and find it a useful resource to get us through this crazy time and to strengthen your children's resilience skills.

Natalie Whelehan  
Director

This content manual is the property of Ready for Anything Ltd. Please use it to do the programme with your children and get some good out of it at this time. Please do not use the manual for any other purpose other than the reason it was shared. If you want to use anything in it for another purpose, please contact me beforehand. Please enjoy...

## **Workshop 4 – Emotional Control**

**Note** – This week is longer than the rest as we are covering emotional control which includes identifying anger triggers, coming up with bespoke coping strategies and learning a breathing technique. Given the times we are in I thought it was important to make this week the length of a full class, covering most activities we would cover in a normal class.

**Workshop Aim** – To further develop an understanding of feelings and to develop skills around controlling and managing our feelings. Through -

- Spotting the things that cause you to feel big feelings that you might need to get under control.
- Examining how to deal with difficult emotions.
- Developing a ‘Calm Down Plan’ to deal with tricky feelings.
- Learning a breathing technique.

### **Recap and introduction**

Last week we talked about feelings and what they make us feel inside. This week we want to look at big feelings such as anger and upset, what make us feel these feelings and ways to get them under control. If you are aware that your child/children have difficulty with one particular emotion e.g. anger or anxiety focus on that emotion during this session. Do always ask if there are other big feelings that they might need to get under control also just in case there are any new emotions that may need attention given current circumstances.

### **Mirror Mirror**

**Aim** - To stimulate cooperation and develop emotional literacy.

**Resources** - Space.

Do this activity with your child. If there are other children/people in your home who want to join in ask everyone to choose a partner and stand facing each other. Ask them to decide who will go first to be the leader – explain that they both will have a chance to be the leader.

Explain that the leader will have to act out a feeling that you will call out and their partner will be the actor. The actor will have to copy how the leader is acting out the feeling in every way as if the leader was looking in a mirror.

Call out 5 emotions for the leader, swap roles and call out another 5 emotions, asking the actors to copy the leader in every possible way as if they were the leaders mirror image. Ask the actors to try to copy the leader in every detail. If there are an

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odd number of people taking part, you may need to have 2 actors and a leader in a group – adjust the number of emotions acted out so everyone gets a chance to be the leader for a few.

## Emotions

Proud, Sad, Scared, Surprised, Angry  
Happy, Worried, Silly, Nervous, Excited

Explain that sometimes things in life don't go the way we want them to and we have to find ways to deal with our feelings.

Ask - Have you ever said or done something that you didn't mean when something was not going as you had hoped and got into trouble because of it?

Explain that sometimes we can act towards others in ways we don't mean because of things that happen in our lives - like one time I couldn't go to a party because I was sick and I was really mean to my sister and took my anger /disappointment out on her. That wasn't very fair to her as it wasn't her fault and she got really upset with me for being mean to her.

Ask your child/children how could we deal with anger, disappointments or upsets that happen in our lives without getting cross?

Explain that we are going to come up with a calm down plan to help us deal with difficult or big feelings that we need to get under control. First of all though, we need to know what kinds of things cause us to have these big feelings so that when something happens that we know makes us angry or upset we have already thought about it and know we might need to put a strategy in place to deal with the big feeling so that we can keep it under control. We are going to play a game called What Winds Me Up.

## **What Winds Me Up**

**Aim** – To identify emotional triggers which might mean we need to put a coping strategy in place to deal with difficult emotions.

**Resources** – Ball and space. This game can be played outside with a football or inside with a soft ball.

Explain that we are going to think about things that might make us angry or upset and have big feelings that we need to get under control. Ask your child/children what makes them angry or upset. Explain that we are going to throw the ball to each other and when anyone catches it, they have to say one thing that winds us up (causes them to get angry or upset). You begin and suggest one thing that will help them to

think about things they might say e.g. I get really angry when I get stuck in traffic and am late for something.

Tread carefully with this game as behaviour of siblings and parents often come up as examples of things that make children angry. Explain that this game is about thinking about the things that cause big feelings so that when they happen in future we know that we need to use a calm down tool to deal with the feeling. Explain that behaviour of family members can often make us angry or upset and to think about examples of this but not to say them if it might make others in their family feel bad.

Pass the ball to your child/children and ask them to say something that makes them angry or upset. Useful suggestions if they are having difficulty thinking of things – no wifi, when someone leaves them out, bullying, too much to do, hunger, when they are told no, not being allowed to use the Ipad, when devices are not charged or battery runs flat, when they get blamed for something that wasn't their fault etc.

When each child suggests something that causes them to feel angry or upset ask -

What feeling they would have if the thing they suggested happened? Ask others taking part how this would make them feel also.

How might they behave as a result of these feelings?

Is there anything they could or currently do to deal with big feelings like these?

### **Calm Down Plan**

**Aim** – To develop a plan to calm down and manage big feelings

**Resources** – Coping strategies – what works for me worksheet (Below) and markers/pens.

Print out the coping strategies – what works for me sheet if you have a printer. If not show your child the suggested calming down tools on the worksheet and ask them to draw or write (if they can) as many things that they can think of that would help them if they were feeling angry or upset. If you have been able to print the sheet, tell your child/children that we are going to choose a number of things that might help us to calm down when we feel angry or upset. See above re any particular feeling your child is struggling with just now. Ask your child/children to tick any of the suggested calm down tools on the sheet that would help them if they were feeling anxious, angry, disappointed, upset or annoyed. Read out some of the calm down suggestions and as you do so ask the children if any of these options would work to help calm them down or if they have other ideas that are not on the list to draw their own ideas (last page). Give some suggestions of things that you know your child likes to do.

When your child/children have come up with their list of chosen calm down coping strategies, ask them to number their top 6. Explain that these are the strategies that we are going to put into our Calm Down Flower that we are going to make next.

## **Calm Down Flower**

**Aim** – Developing a coping strategy to deal with big emotions.

**Resources** – Coping Flower Resource page (Below - print on thick paper or card if possible or copy onto card if you have no printer), list of coping strategies chosen by each child from above activity, markers, colouring in pencils and crayons.

Explain to your child/children that we are going to make a calm down flower. We are going to draw our top 6 coping tools in the petals of the flower and our lovely faces in the middle of the flower. Cut out the flower (if printed or you can draw one on a piece of card and cut it out) and help your children to draw a picture of something that helps them to calm down in each petal. Fold in the petals to show the flower at night and open during the day. Encourage your child to colour in your flower. If you have a spare plan pot and some sand/soil and a lollipop stick you could turn it into a 'real' flower and keep it in their calm down kit. Encourage your child/children to use these coping tools when they need to. The action of opening and closing the flower petals can be enough of a distraction when emotions are getting the better of our children, which makes this activity such a good one.

## **Breathing Technique**

**Aim** – To teach a simple calming breathing technique.

**Resources** – Space to sit comfortably

Explain that another good way to calm down is to do a breathing technique to help them control their breathing. Ask your child/ children to sit comfortably and roll their shoulders back. Ask your child/children to breathe in through their nose for a count of 4, then pause to hold onto the breath for a count of 3 and breathe out through their mouth(s) for a count of 4. Repeat 5 times and count it out for them, reminding them in through the nose, out through the mouth.

When this is finished, ask your child/children how they feel and if they think that would be useful to help to calm down when they are angry or upset. Ask your child/children to try to remember this and do this breathing technique the next time they are upset.

## **Our song**

Sing the positive song you have chosen to end the sessions with or play it on your phone and ask the children to do the actions they think go with the song – clapping, dancing, or other movements. Encourage them to dance, sing and march around while the song is playing to show you that no matter what happens in life they keep moving forward – a verse and chorus is usually long enough.

## Calm Down Kit

**Aim** – To create a box of calming activities and items which can be stored and referred to by your child/children when needed.

**Resources** – A shoebox or basket to store the calm down kit and somewhere quiet in the home to put it.

### Activity 4 – Homemade Stress Ball

My apologies – you won't have these at home probably but for this one, we need water beads (known by kids as orbeez), a balloon for each stress ball, a funnel and an empty individual sized plastic water bottle. You can buy a box of water beads on Amazon/E-Bay or other online shops for a few pounds. Be careful with these. You only need a small amount to fill a bathtub. Start off with a level few teaspoons (3 max for a few stress balls) of the dried beads in a basin of water. These need to soak in water for a few hours. They feel so calming to handle when hydrated but please throw out any beads not used in the stress ball immediately as you can't help but touch them and now is not the time to spread hand bacteria.

When you have hydrated the water beads, use the empty water bottle to suck up the beads by depressing all the air out of the bottle and sucking up the beads into the bottle by putting the bottle into the beads. Get about one third of the individual sized water bottle filled with beads. Place a balloon over the open neck of the water bottle and squeeze and shake to get the water beads into the balloon while **holding tightly** to balloon on the top of the bottle. Continue until you have a balloon full of water beads the size of a stress ball. Carefully remove the balloon from the bottle and tie. It will look the size and shape of a lemon. If you have sharpies, they can draw on the balloon and turn it into a lemon, fish, strawberry etc. \*\*\*This may burst at some stage depending on use – beads everywhere! Although I think it's worth it but you may want usage rules in case it bursts\*\*\*

If you have a home printer, do a search for calming breathing techniques for children. There are lots of other techniques – I like the star one, balloon one or hand one. Print one off if you can and put it in the kit. If you have no printer, see if you can find a feather, put it in their calm down box and encourage your child/children to put it in their hand and watch their breath on it while doing the 4-3-4 breathing technique outlined above.

## Coping Strategies – What Works for Me?

Tick the things that would help to calm you down

Have a Snack



Speak to Someone You Trust



Ask for a Hug



Exercise



Draw a Picture



Use a Stressball



Cook or Bake



Have a Drink



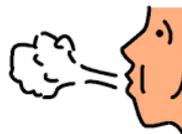
Count to 100



Take a Nap or Rest



Take Deep Breaths



Read a Book



Make Friendship Bracelets



Make up a Handclap



Watch a Funny Video



Tik Tok



Do Yoga



Take a Bath



Punch a Pillow



Do A Puzzle



Play with Slime



Blow Bubbles



Listen to Music



Take a Walk



Stretch



Look at Photographs



Speak to a Friend



Play with your Pet



Read Jokes



Play a Video Game



Go Outside



Sing a Song



Tidy or Organise



Do Gardening



Play a Board Game



Do a Craft Activity



Cry



Dance



Do Gymnastics



Jump on a Trampoline



Ask for Help



Think of Things you are Thankful for



Colour In



Play a Ball Game



Think About Your Talents



Look at a Sensory Bottle



Do a Nature Hunt



Build Something



Make a Scrapbook



Think of Your Happiest Memory



Play Your Favourite Sport



Listen to the Sounds Around You



Look at Something Beautiful



Use Positive Affirmations



Plan Something to Look Forward to



Compliment Yourself



Get Plenty of Sleep



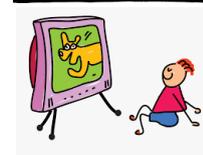
Give Yourself A Makeover



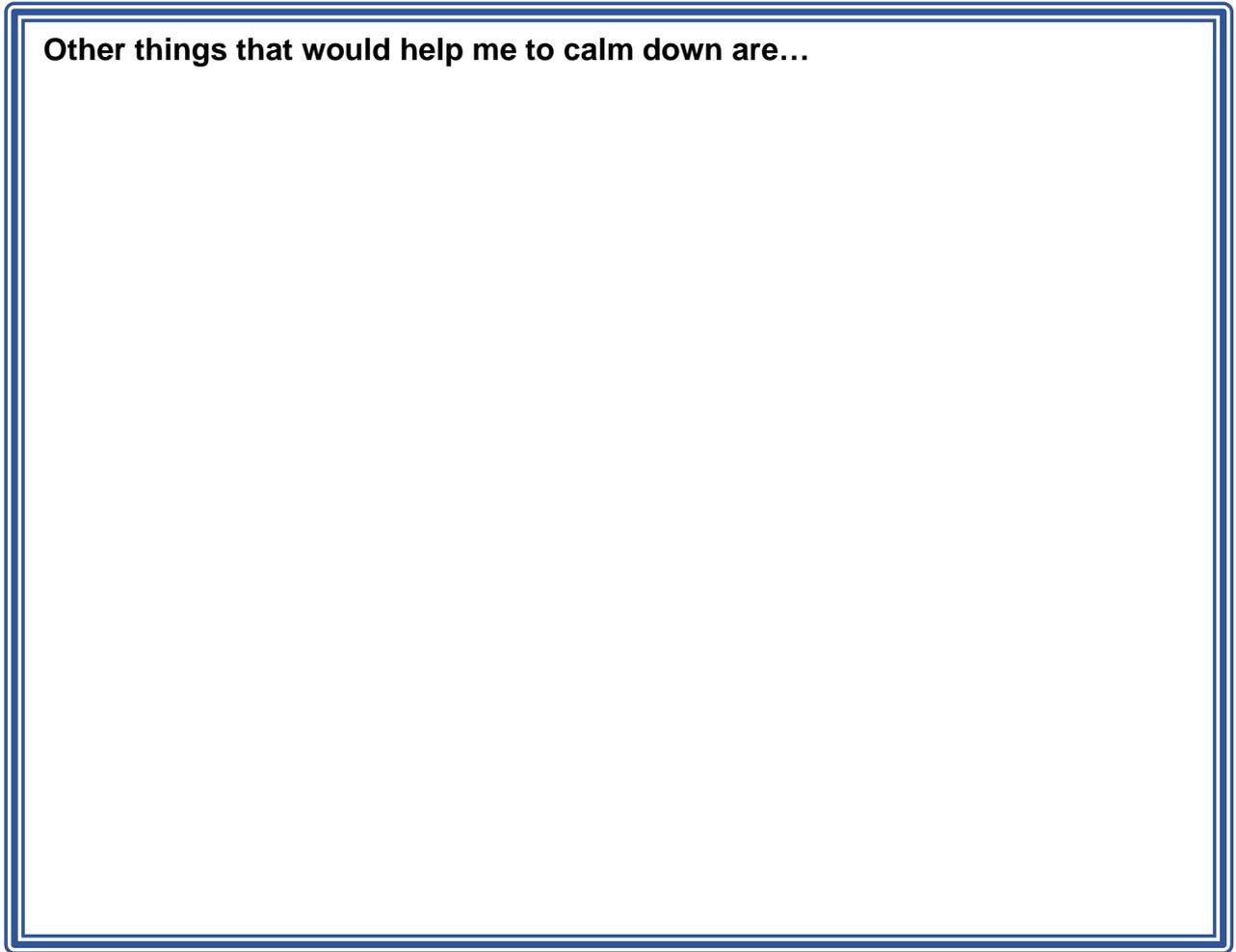
Dress Up



Watch TV



**Other things that would help me to calm down are...**



## Calm Down Flower

1. Draw Your Face in the Middle of the Flower
2. Draw Something in Each Petal that Would Help You to Calm Down if you were Angry or Upset
3. Decorate your Calm Down Flower
4. Cut out the Flower and Fold each Petal in along the Straight Lines. Done!

