



## Ottery St Mary Primary School

### Our school approach to wellbeing

Although it is hard to gauge the exact impact of lockdown upon pupil wellbeing, it is clear that many may have experienced difficulties during the school closure, or may feel anxious about returning to school.

Some children may have experienced loss or bereavement, others may have experienced domestic upheaval or anxieties around money. Many children may be feeling uncertain about what school might be like upon their return. Children with no siblings may not have spent much time in the company of their peers, some children may be suffering from social anxiety or anxiety around cleanliness and the spread of coronavirus.

We are sharing our approach to pupil wellbeing with parents and carers in order that the school and home can have a joined up approach to supporting our children. Upon return to school, we will address this as a whole class within regular circle time and PSHE sessions.

For children that display ongoing or more persistent anxieties, we have alternative approaches which may be of benefit and we will continue to work with other services around this.

- 1) Emotional Logic
- 2) ABCD Pathway
- 3) More about ABCD - Breathing, Safe places, SMART plans.
- 4) Tackling anxieties
- 5) Practical resources to share
- 6) Links
- 7) Recommended reading

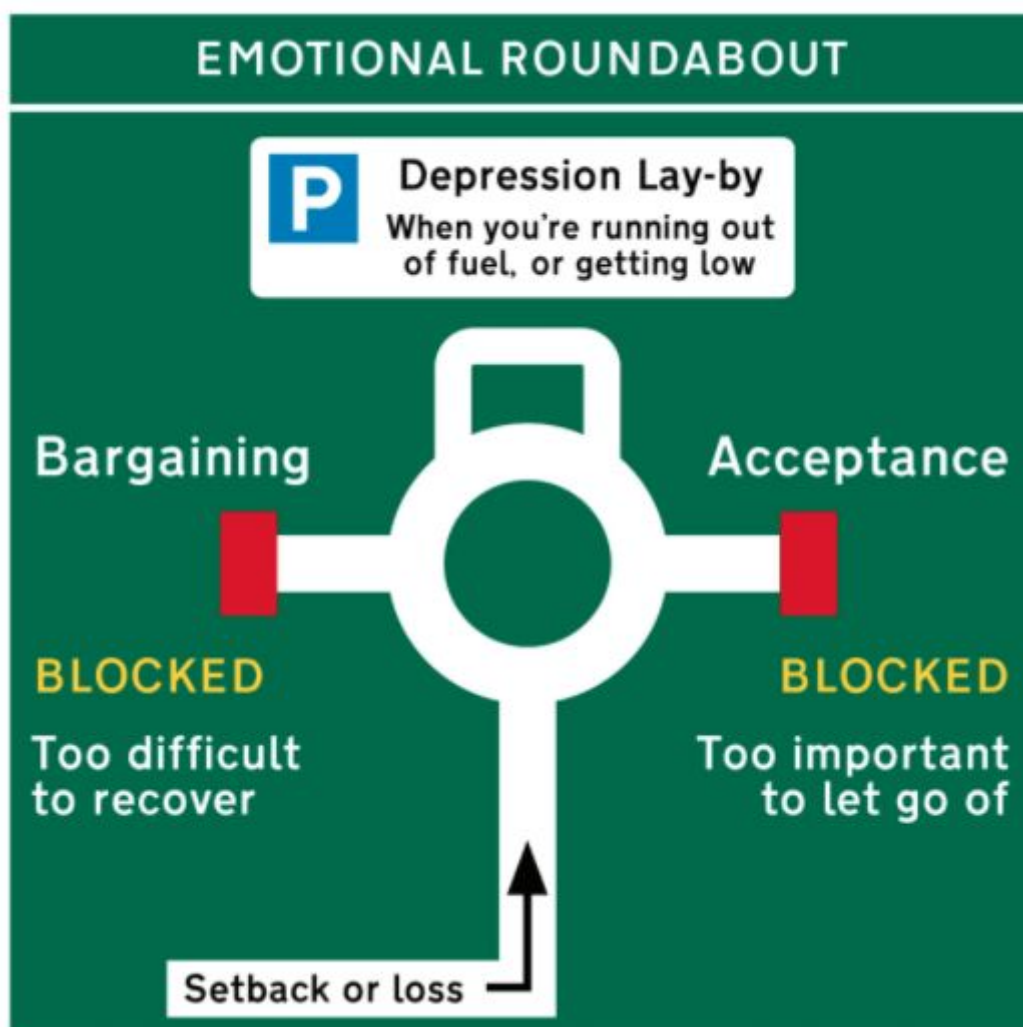


## 1) Emotional Logic

Emotional Logic was developed in a healthcare setting during the late 1990s and has been in use at Ottery St Mary Primary School since 2017. It is a structured way to understand the **useful purposes of emotions** and the ability to turn **unpleasant emotions into positive action**. This life-long learning method leads to emotional strength and resilience.

Adjusting to change is an emotional process and can be difficult. The school's approach to Emotional Logic is based around **discussion**, use of 'cards' and a clear pathway for moving on in times of emotional distress. The change we have all experienced during lockdown will naturally have resulted in emotions for all, and these emotions are useful for us even if they don't feel great.

Emotional logic explores the **seven emotions** related to change particularly when it involves loss. These are 'stepping stones' and are triggered whenever something we value is lost or at risk of being lost. This may be very intense, as in bereavement, or fleeting when experiencing the smallest loss. Even small losses can trigger a very big emotional reaction. Consequently, this method is also effective in helping us to cope better with day to day setbacks and disappointments.

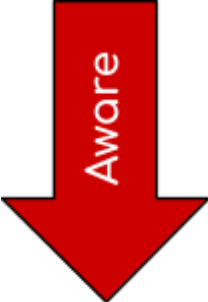
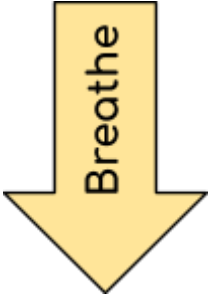
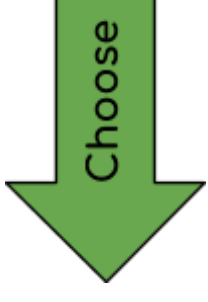
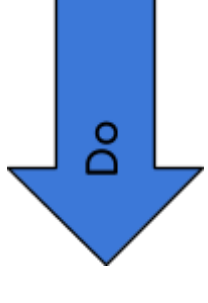


## More about the seven emotions:

| Emotion           | How this might feel   | Why it's useful  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <b>Shock</b>      | Numb, stuck, anxious, fearful, restless, alarmed, panicked, stunned, out of control, unprepared.                                | This means you are not sure you can cope. Shock is useful because it helps you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stop and find a safe place.</li> <li>● Plan what to do next</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Denial</b>     | Ignoring, withdrawing, dismissal, turning away, refusal to believe or accept, shut off, avoiding.                               | This means you can ignore something and carry on. Denial is useful because it can help you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Move on until you are ready to deal with something.</li> <li>● Leave something to deal with it later.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Anger</b>      | Bitter, wound up, furious, enraged, envious, passionate, hostile, offended, full of adrenaline.                                 | This means you want to stop something from being taken away from you. Anger is useful because it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gives you energy to act.</li> <li>● Gives you a voice to show your emotions.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Guilt</b>      | Regretful, going over and over a situation, questioning decisions, wondering what happened, blamed, mistaken.                   | There is only one useful purpose of guilt which is to think about if you contributed to the problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It helps you to think about if you could do anything differently next time.</li> </ul> After thinking about this, it is important to move on from guilt.                       |
| <b>Bargaining</b> | Taking turns, trying again, persevering, Asking 'what if?', persuading. Grab, barge, threatening, insulting, pressuring others. | This means you are ready for action to recover what you have lost. Assertive Bargaining styles are very important because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They help you find ways to recover.</li> <li>● They teach you to be brave and allow you to gain some influence in dealing with the situation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Depression</b> | Hopeless, defeated, exhausted, powerless, empty, flat, dull, miserable, worthless, invisible, empty, low.                       | This means you've reached your limit for now. Depression is useful because it teaches you that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You are not a superhuman.</li> <li>● You might need to stop trying to make too many changes.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Acceptance</b> | Hopeful, chilled, accepting, calm, relieved, free of the past, settled, moving on, joyful, positive.                            | This means you're ready to move on. Acceptance teaches us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We can move on from loss.</li> <li>● We have new opportunities in our future.</li> </ul>   |

## 2) ABCD Pathway

At school, our Emotional Logic lessons will explore the steps needed to follow this pathway in order to recover from a setback or loss.

|   |                                 |  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
|    |                                 | <p>Be <b>AWARE</b> of how you are feeling. Identify and name your feelings and recognise the useful purpose of these emotions.</p> <p><i>Some children may find it useful to scale their emotions using a 5 point scale.</i></p>                                   |
|    |                                 | <p><b>BREATHE</b> - take some deep breaths. Taking 'bunny breaths' can help, as can sitting down and placing your hand on your tummy while you breathe deeply.</p>   |
|  |                                 | <p><b>CHOOSE</b> - find a safe place and possibly a safe person to help you with the next step.</p> <p><i>Remember, a safe place can be something you do, somewhere you go, someone you're with or something you carry in your mind.</i></p>                       |
|  |                                 | <p><b>DO</b> - This is the time for action. Identify what you have lost or are worried you might lose. This will help you to make a <b>SMART</b> plan.</p> <p>A <b>SMART</b> plan is one which is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.</p> |
| <p><b>Assertively bargain to recover your loss</b></p>                              | <p><b>Accept and let go</b></p> | <p>Your plan should help you to either recover your loss by bargaining or to accept and let go.</p>  |

### 3) More about ABCD - Breathing, Safe places, SMART plans.

Be **Aware**: It is important to acknowledge that emotions serve a useful purpose, see ‘**more about the seven emotions**’. Some children may find it useful to scale their emotion using a five point scale.

**Breathe**: Practising breathing techniques before you ‘need’ them is a good strategy. Here are some simple tutorials. Bunny breaths are particularly useful for younger children.

**Bunny breaths** - 3 short breaths in and one long breath out. [Bunny breath tutorial](#)  
**Five Finger Breathing** - Slowly trace the outline of your fingers, breathe in as you go up a finger and out as you go down. [Five finger breathing tutorial](#)  
**Box Breathing** - Breathe in whilst counting to four, hold your breath for a count of four, exhale for a count of four [Box breathing tutorial](#)

**Choose** a safe place: When we talk about ‘safe places’ this can be:

- Something **you do**
  - Eg: building with lego, drawing a picture, tidying up.
- Somewhere **you go**
  - Eg: taking a walk, finding a cosy corner, sitting in nature.
- Someone **you’re with**
  - Eg: a family member, a friend, a pet.
- Something you **carry in your mind**
  - Eg: Visualising a picture, listening to music.

**Do**: Identifying a **list of small hidden losses** can help you make a SMART plan. In this way you can decide what to assertively bargain to recover or what you might need to accept and let go.

In the below example, the small hidden loss is the loss of someone to talk to; this may represent a hidden loss for a larger feeling such as loneliness. The SMART plan takes steps to address this hidden loss.

| Specific                                | Measurable                                 | Achievable  | Realistic                            | Time framed                                |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Name the loss                           | How will you know when you’ve got it back? | Start small and practical.  | Is it worth the effort?              | How long is it likely to take?             |
| <i>I have lost a friend to talk to.</i> | <i>I will have someone to talk to</i>      | <i>I can talk to my teacher about my worry and they can help me identify people to talk to at school.</i> | <i>Yes, this is important to me.</i> | <i>I will talk to my teacher tomorrow.</i> |

## 4) Positive steps for tackling anxieties

Remember, when talking to children about their anxieties and worries, it is important to remember the following:

1. **Make space for conversation** - Let them know you are available to talk, but don't force the conversation.
2. **Demonstrate calm** - Children notice our emotional responses too, often watching the reactions of those around them to decide whether or not they need to feel anxious. Remaining calm will help reassure them that, although things might be difficult, they are manageable.
3. **Empathise and validate** - Try to accept their worry without dismissing it, although it can be tempting to offer "everything will be fine" as a reassurance, it is important to acknowledge their worries as important and valid.
4. **Suggest a different way of thinking** - A worry is a thought and not necessarily a fact. Exploring alternative ways of viewing a situation may help alleviate anxiety.
5. **Reduce environmental triggers** - Is exposure to news making this worry worse? Is a lack of routine making it harder to put this worry into context? Support them with self care, for example getting enough sleep and taking regular exercise.
6. **Help with problem solving** - look for SMART targets and small steps to support.
7. **Check in and monitor progress** - if they have scaled their worry, revisit this. Celebrate success and change the approach if needed.

Below are some common anxieties many children may be feeling about the return to school. Once you have followed ABC and have found a safe place, we have identified some key points to discuss and some actions you may want to take together.

Once you have discussed your child's worry, they may find it helpful to write or draw some of the steps you have shared so they can revisit this later. You may wish to use the ABCD worksheet together. An example of how this might be completed is included in this workbook.

## “I am worried that I’m not going to be safe in school.”

*A hidden loss here may be the loss of a feeling of security, or the loss of familiarity with the school. A SMART plan to regain familiarity or security could include some of these steps:*

- Think about the things you can do to keep yourself safe.
- Remember that the adults in school are working hard to keep everyone safe and there are rules to help them.
- Visit the school website and talk about the handbook which shows the school safety measures.
- Watch the video of the school to see familiar faces who are already safe in school.
- If you’re still worried, write down your worry so you can share it in class or put it in the ‘worry box’ so the adults can help you in school.
- Make a plan to share **‘three good things’** at the end of each school day to help you remember school is safe and fun.

## “I am worried about missing my family.”

*Smaller, hidden losses linked to this feeling could include the loss of close relationships which have been built during lockdown or the loss of special time together as a family. Here are some strategies which could form part of a SMART plan:*

- Remember, the school is really looking forward to having you back; your teachers and friends can’t wait to see you!
- Remember that your family will be thinking about you during the school day.
- Ring fence some special time as a family to share the good things which have happened during school at the end of the day.
- Talk to your family about what they will be doing during the day.
- Talk to your family about all the things you will do at school - reading, play time, lessons, seeing your friends.
- Make a **‘circle of care’** drawing to help you remember all the people who care about you.
- Make a plan to share **‘three good things’** at the end of each school day to help you feel positive about coming to school.

## “I am worried that someone in my family might get sick.”

*Although this represents the anticipation of a huge loss - the potential loss of a family member, smaller hidden losses could include the loss of a sense of security, or the loss of certainty around how to stay safe. Think about these steps in a SMART plan:*

- Remind yourself about the sensible steps we are all taking to stay safe.
- Remember, the vast majority of people who get ill make a good recovery.
- Talk to your family about how they are keeping themselves safe.
- Make a **‘circle of care’** drawing to remind yourself of all the people who are caring for you and your family.

## “I am worried that I won’t have any friends.”

*This worry could be linked to the loss of someone to talk to, or perhaps the loss of confidence in how to play with others. Consider these points when making a SMART plan:*

- Many people have missed their friends and may be feeling the same.
- Your teacher will help everybody to get along and reform their friendships.
- The school is setting aside time to help everybody rebuild friendships.
- Try reconnecting with a friend over the phone first.
- Make a ‘**circle of care**’ drawing to remind yourself of all the people who love and care for you.

## “I am worried about my new teacher.”

*The hidden losses linked to this worry could include the loss of a relationship with the previous teacher, or the loss of familiar faces in the classroom. A SMART plan here could include these steps:*

- Remember, you will still see your old teacher and lots of familiar faces.
- Your old teacher will have shared lots of positive things about you with your new teacher.
- Your new teacher will be really excited to meet you.
- Your new teacher might be different, but change can be positive and it’s great to meet new people and have a fresh start.
- All your friends will be with you and your classmates won’t have changed.
- Read the information you have been given about your new teacher.
- Write down a question you would like to ask your new teacher to find out more about them.

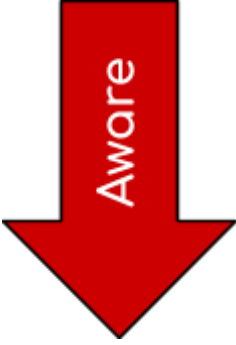
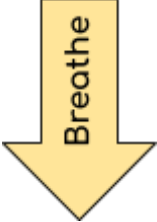
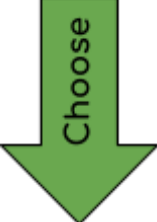
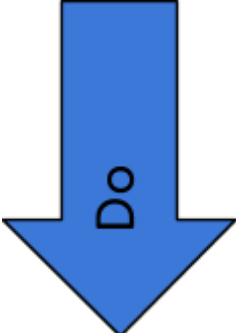
## “I am worried I am behind with my schoolwork.”

*Smaller, hidden losses linked to this worry include the loss of a sense of achievement, the loss of an understanding of progression or the loss of pride in work. These points may help with a SMART plan:*

- Your teachers will work with you to help you settle back into schoolwork.
- You will have learned **many** valuable things during lockdown even if you have not completed lots of school work.
- The school understands that it has been trickier for some people to complete schoolwork at home.
- Talk to your teachers if you are struggling and they will help you.
- Try not to compare yourself to others, focus on your own steps to success.
- Think about things you have learned or experienced during lockdown that you are proud of.
- Set yourself a target you can achieve and reflect on - share your target with your teacher. “**I want to be able to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_(date)**”



## ABCD Worksheet example:

|    | <p>I am feeling <i>worried that I won't have any friends in school.</i></p> <p>Scale your emotion</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 322 1362 546"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="549 322 711 389">1</th> <th data-bbox="711 322 874 389">2</th> <th data-bbox="874 322 1037 389">3</th> <th data-bbox="1037 322 1200 389">4</th> <th data-bbox="1200 322 1362 389">5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="549 389 711 546"></td> <td data-bbox="711 389 874 546"></td> <td data-bbox="874 389 1037 546">                     This is making me a bit worried.                 </td> <td data-bbox="1037 389 1200 546"></td> <td data-bbox="1200 389 1362 546"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | 1                                | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |  | This is making me a bit worried. |  |  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1   | 2   | 3                                | 4 | 5 |   |   |  |  |                                  |  |  |
|   |   | This is making me a bit worried. |   |   |   |   |  |  |                                  |  |  |
|    | <p>To help me breathe calmly I <i>will take bunny breaths until I am ready to talk about this.</i></p>  |                                  |   |   |   |   |  |  |                                  |  |  |
|   | <p>My safe place is <i>sitting in a calm space with my pet cat.</i></p>   |                                  |   |   |   |   |  |  |                                  |  |  |
|  | <p>I will remember that ...</p> <p><i>Many people have missed their friends and feel the same.<br/>My teacher will help everybody to get along.<br/>There will be time during the school day to play games with people.</i></p> <p>Things I can do that will help are:</p> <p><i>Phone a friend.<br/>Chat to my class on the googleclassroom.<br/>Think of something I want to share with a friend - a game, a joke or a story.<br/>Make a 'circle of care' drawing which reminds me of all the people who love me.</i></p>   |                                  |   |   |   |   |  |  |                                  |  |  |

## 5) Practical resources to share

The following are suggested printable resources you may want to use at home to support your conversations. The worksheets can be found on our school website and are linked in the document.

### Recognising emotions:

This worksheet can help you to start a conversation with your child about how different emotions can make them feel or how they might affect their body. Understanding how our emotions affect us is an important part of being able to label them and then move on.

### ABCD worksheet:

Following the Emotional Logic approach we use in school, this can help a child articulate their worry and could be used in conjunction with the suggested steps we discussed in 'positive steps for tackling anxieties'. For KS1 children this may be too wordy, but could help you to frame your conversation.

### My circle of care:

A worksheet to help children remember the people who care for them, from community carers such as doctors, nurses, teachers and firefighters to their close friends and family. The focus of this sheet is to help children remember all the people who are there to keep them safe and well cared for. It could also be used to reassure a child who is worried that a loved one may not be being cared for.

### Three Good Things:

A structured way of focusing on 3 good things each day over the course of 5 days. This could form part of a regular journal, or be put in place to check in on the first week back of school. It is also helpful for children to have something they can reflect on which reminds them of the positive thing that happened that week.

## 6) Links

### YoungMinds:

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

A UK charity who campaign for supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Their website has many resources and there is also a helpline.

### MindED for families:

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>

A free learning resource for families about the mental health of children, young people and older adults, provided in conjunction with the NHS.

### NSPCC:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>

The NSPCC provide support and advice for parents and carers in looking after their children's mental health and wellbeing. Their website includes advice about how to look after your own wellbeing in addition to tips on how to talk to children about mental health.

### Anna Freud:

<https://www.annafreud.org/>

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families offers a range of specialist treatments and assessments for children, young people and families.

### Responsive parenting:

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/comfort/>

A range of resources are available on this website to support responsive and emotionally engaged parenting - they are particularly suitable for EYFS and KS1 children.

### Managing separation anxiety:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/separation-anxiety-and-separation-anxiety-disorder.htm>

A US website with advice for parents on how to manage separation anxiety in children.

## 7) Recommended reading

Sharing books and discussing the emotions and actions of characters within the books is a great way to open up a conversation about loss or emotions.

### **My Hidden Chimp - Prof' Steve Peters**

Professor Steve Peters explains neuroscience in a straightforward and intuitive way - offering up 10 simple habits to help deal with everyday life. This is a straightforward workbook suitable for children in KS2 who may be struggling with discussing their emotions.

### **Starving the Anxiety Gremlin - Kate Collins-Donnelly**

A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) workbook on anxiety management. There is a book for children aged 5-9 and a book suitable for KS2 and above. This book helps children to understand what anxiety is and to find ways to manage this.

### **No worries! / Hello Happy / Online-Offline - Dr Sharie Coombes**

These are activity books for KS1 / KS2 children to support their wellbeing and journey to mindfulness. They deal with anxiety, happiness and balancing digital activities.

### **Michael Rosen's Sad Book**

A poetic and thoughtful look at sadness, illustrated by Quentin Blake and suitable for **all ages**. This book draws on Michael Rosen's own experiences of grief and sadness and is a good starting point for talking about emotions.

### **The Great Big Book of Feelings - Mary Hoffman**

This beautifully illustrated picture book explores a whole range of different feelings and emotions that children might experience - from loneliness and fear to silliness and happiness - in both family and school settings. The final page, 'Feeling Better', encourages children to think about and share how they feel. Suitable for EYFS / KS1.

### **How Do You Feel? Anthony Browne**

Anthony Browne has illustrated a range of emotions, and this is a great starting point to help children label their emotions and empathise with the emotions of others. Suitable for EYFS / Lower KS1.

### **The Colour Monster / The Colour Monster Goes to School - Anna Llenas**

In 'The Colour Monster' we meet a little monster who wakes up one day feeling very confused and experiencing lots of different emotions. He is helped to understand these emotions by thinking about colours. The Colour Monster Goes To School is equally useful for discussing anxieties about starting school with EYFS pupils. Suitable for EYFS / KS1.

### **The Worrysaurus - Rachel Bright**

The story of a dinosaur whose worry grows inside him as he goes on a journey. Very useful for discussing growing anxiety with EYFS or KS1 pupils.