

Children's Mental Health Week 3rd – 9th February 2025

Know Yourself, Grow Yourself



BCCS

a children's charity for
Essex and East London

For parents and carers

We support Children's Mental Health Week every year and we were delighted to learn that this year, Place2Be have teamed up with Disney to celebrate the film 'Inside Out 2'. The film deals with feelings and so is a perfect companion for this year's theme.

The idea of '**Know yourself**' aims to focus on supporting a child or young person to develop their self-awareness, as well as encouraging them to develop as individuals, to '**Grow yourself**'.

We wanted to provide resources for parents and carers to use to better help you engage in a dialogue with your child/ren about their feelings.

With this in mind, we have echoed the colours referenced as emotions in 'Inside Out 2', in the hope they will feel familiar to your child.

A vital skill for a child or young person is to maintain an awareness that big feelings come, that they can feel overwhelming, but that they go. That we can sit with them, **manage** them and understand ourselves within them. For example, lots of children tend to show anger when they feel overwhelmed. It is a defence mechanism: I feel uncomfortable feeling vulnerable, so I'll display anger to keep you at bay.

That isn't helpful and can lead to a child feeling like their big feelings are overwhelming - for them and for you. We want children to feel comfortable with emotion, and to feel confident within themselves about not only how they experience emotions, and how others around them experience them too.

Put simply, when we help children get to **know themselves** by noticing their behaviours and emotions, by getting them to explore them alongside you, you allow your child the freedom to **grow themselves** in terms of their own self-awareness. We want to help you to try it!

Parents' activity: Why don't you talk to your child each day, for the next seven days, about how you both experience certain emotions? Your child could choose the emotion they want to explore. It may be helpful for your child if you go first, and you share your recent experience of having felt angry, envious, sad etc. and they can follow your lead.



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Brentwood Catholic Children's Society - Registered Charity Number: 1000661

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For parents and carers (continued)

The big feelings we are looking at this week are:



As parents, we tend not to feel comfortable with acknowledging a child's feelings because we don't want to say the wrong thing, make it worse, or draw attention to it. But inviting a chat about it shows your child that you want to know, that you get it, and you're attuned to them. It's also really powerful to share your own experience of feeling difficult things.

All emotions feel better when they are thought about and talked about. It really is that simple – so simple, that Disney made a film out of it! The trick for us parents is not to try to fix or disregard our child's emotional exploration.

Suggested interaction:

If your child chooses the emotion **fear**, for instance, it may be helpful to say, "I don't always like to feel scared, do you?". And, "when I feel scared, it's often because I feel I can't do something ..." or "it's often because I feel unsure in myself" or, "when I feel scared sometimes I feel out of control". "What last made you feel scared?" And you're off!

Remember to validate, "do you know what, I get that" or "that makes complete sense to me", or empathise, "I can imagine that felt ..."

It is **so** important that you're listening, and that you're able to focus with your child on the fact they **recovered and carried on**: that's resilience building. Children don't often notice when they recover, they can instead become preoccupied with how often they have felt something. It really helps develop their sense of self, and their resilience if we notice for them how well they have managed something difficult.

Please see our social media channels for a daily "how to" for emotional exploration chats (@bccscharity on Facebook & Instagram) or visit our webpage for Children's Mental Health Week for more hints and tips: <https://www.bccs.org.uk/our-resources/guidance/>