HSC Health and Social Care

Skills to help Practice



Building our Children's Developing Brain and Bend Don't Break

Getting Started



Getting Started: Ideas for using these pages with our children

The skills we want our children to develop are similar in both Bend Don't Break and Building our Children's Developing Brain.

Feelings can't be stopped. They are normal. But we can give our children are ways to deal with them.

We suggest you sit down with your child and do the pages together.

In **Building our Children's Developing Brain** it talks about using Sensations, Images, Feelings, Thoughts (S.I.F.T.) as a skill to help join up different parts of the brain to work together.

S.I.F.T. can then help them understand what they are experiencing inside:

1. **S**ensations in their bodies
2. **I**mages in their minds
3. **F**eelings: Help them say how they feel
4. **T**houghts: What are they saying to themselves?

It has similarities with Catch It, Pause it, Challenge it, Change it in Bend Don't Break.
The skills from **Bend Don't Break** it will be marked on the worksheet.

These worksheets will help you explore:

- Where children experience feelings in their bodies
- Helping your child name what they are feeling and are thinking
- Self-soothing and grounding exercises
- Mindfulness.

Children, young or older don't always have the words yet to describe their feelings. They may tend to use vague words like fine or bad. Their feeling can out of control and be quite scary.

Just by recognising different body sensations and naming how you are feeling can give children greater understanding and influence over what they are feeling.

The pages in toward the end of this pack are designed for younger children who like to draw and colour in.

We hope you find them helpful.

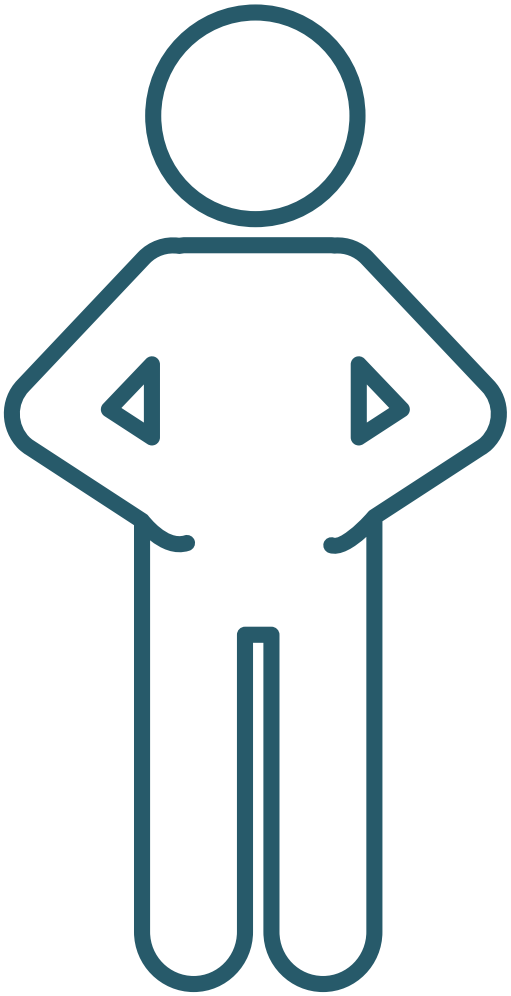


Where do I feel upset?

Where do I feel when I am anxious or upset?

When you are anxious or upset where do you feel it in your body?

Put an X where you feel it most



How would you describe it?

Like a Container

- "I am full of anger."
- "I am brimming over with rage.

As Pressure

- "I am going to explode in a minute."
- "I'm like a volcano about to explode."
- "I need to let off steam."

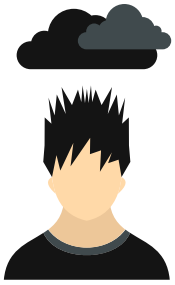
In different parts of the body

- I have butterfly's in my stomach
- I have the weight of the world on my shoulders
- My chest is heavy
- My head is about to explode
- My heart is pounding like a drum.
- I am sweating buckets
- I am crapping myself
- I am hot and bothered
- I can't sit still.

SKILL 1: Feelings come and go

Let the clouds of emotions roll by: Feelings come and go

Feelings are temporary. On average, an emotion comes and goes in about 90 seconds. Over thinking can make those feelings last much longer.



Like dark clouds in the sky we can dwell on them and worry that they are going to last forever. Or we can see feeling as they are: temporary and changing.

It's like being caught in a storm at sea. The boat will rock with each swell of the waves. Like emotions – the wave will calm down given time.



This skill says to notice what you feel and how your body is reacting but don't obey it. Ride out the storm: this too shall pass.

Did you use this skill this week?

What was the situation?

How were you feeling?

What happened when you applied this skill?



SKILL 2: Name it to tame it

Name it to tame it: Naming how you feel

Take each feeling word and list as many other feeling words that be used to describe the initial feeling. Separate words for these feelings into MILD, MIDDLE AND STRONG

FEAR

Mild	Middle	Strong

ANGER

Mild	Middle	Strong

SADNESS

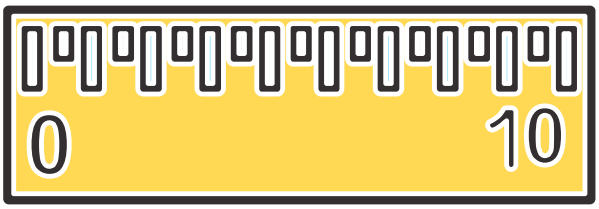
Mild	Middle	Strong

Be more accurate in naming what you really are feeling

Skills 2: Rate the strength of the feeling

When you name the feeling (or have trouble naming it) put a number to it on a scale from 1 – 10 (1 is low)

Stop to think is it really the number I just gave?



How did this skill work for you this week?

What am I thinking?



When we use S.I.F.T. (Sensations, Images, Feelings, Thoughts), we have a better understanding of what is happening to help us choose how to respond.

The "T" is for Thoughts: What am I thinking?

Take a situation and name feelings and types of thoughts

Thought spotter

Think - Feel - Do

What happened?

What did you think?
(Give it a name)

How did you feel?
(Rate on a scale of 1-10)

What did you do?

Types of unhelpful thoughts

- Black and white thinking
- Over generalising
- Mental filter
- Disqualifying the positive
- Labelling
- It's all my fault
- jumping to conclusions
- Making a mountain out of a molehill
- Emotional reasoning
- Should statements.

Push the pause button

When you notice strong feelings or your body's reactions, it is a signal to turn on the left side of our brains. It is like putting "our thinking cap on."
This is a way to control those big emotions.
Here are some ways to create a bit of calming.



Use words or phrases that tell you to clear your head

If we get into a habit of saying certain things to ourselves, we can learn to link that phrase with a signal to think things through.

1. I can work this out
2. Think, think, think
3. Stop, look, get curious
4. This won't last forever.

Breathing

When we get stresses, the body's alarm system turns on.
Stress hormones run through our body.
We breathe faster and shallow from our chest.

By turning on the calming part of the brain we can counter this.
How? Let's try 7/11.

From deep in the pit of the stomach breathe in for 7 seconds and then breathe out for 11 seconds. Do this 5, 6, 7 times and see the reaction. By breathing out more than breathing in you trigger a relaxation response instead of getting yourself more stressed.



By focusing on our breathing during anxious or difficult times we can calm ourselves down.

Try lying down and put a toy or small object on your stomach. As you breath in and out, (from the pit of your stomach not your chest) focus on the toy, watching it rise and fall as it rides the waves of each breath.

A safe place in your head

Picture in your mind a relaxing, calming place. (You can make one up). Go there in your mind for a moment.



Self-soothing and grounding exercises



How Grounding Works to Calm You Down

When we start to think about something stressful, our amygdala, a part of the brain goes into action. The amygdala's job is to filter for danger. It is great for preparing for emergencies but sometimes it kicks in and detects a threat when there really isn't any.

Here is an example: We have a negative thought about a situation, our amygdala says "emergency!" and stress hormones are increased. This changes our body with increased muscle tension, heart breathing and faster breathing.

Grounding techniques to sooth and help you stay in the present.

5,4,3,2,1



If you start feeling really upset, it is helpful to get grounded using your five senses. You can try holding up your hand and counting:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you touch
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is focusing all your attention on something in the here and now. Every time thoughts wander off into the future or the past you gently bring yourself back to the present. It is focusing all your attention on one thing like sounds, smells and sights while not judging it as good or bad, here is an example:

Hold Something and Really Focus on It

Hold an object in your hand and really bring your full focus to it. It may be a stone with patterns or colors that run through it. Feel how heavy or light it is in your hand and what the surface texture feels like under your fingers. This can be done with any object you have lying around or if you know you are going into a stressful situation take one of your favorite small objects and put it in your pocket or purse so you can do this calming exercise on the go.

Can you think of any other ways to push "your pause button"?



Let's look more at Mindfulness.

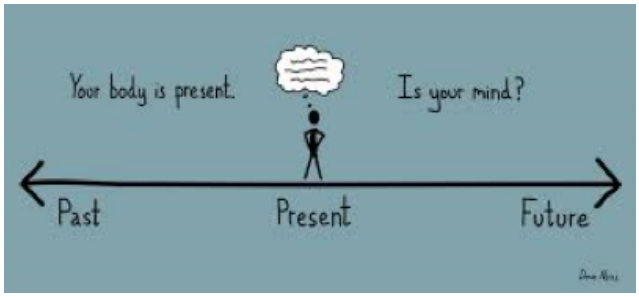


Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is like giving you brain a short rest.

Mindfulness is deliberately focusing all your attention on the present moment on one thing. Every time your thoughts wander, gently bring yourself back to the present on that one thing.



You can begin to get into the habit of mindfulness by:

- Awareness: Awareness involves focusing attention on one thing at a time like sounds, smells and sights
- Being non-judgmental: Don't judge yourself as good or bad
- Present Moment: Fully stay in the present without being distracted
- Open Mind (or Beginner's Mind): An open mind or beginner mind is being open to new experiences and trying new things.

To get started try these: (these are only a few ways to use mindfulness))

Mindful of Breathing: Mindful breathing involves focused attention on breathing. Notice how you are breathing. Notice slower and fuller breaths. Notice your belly rise and fall as you breathe in and out. When your mind drifts away from your breathing, and it will, simply notice it and gently shift your attention back to your breathing.

Mindful of Sounds: Focus your attention on sounds; soft, loud, nearby, or, distant sounds. When your attention drifts away to a thought or feeling, notice what thoughts or feelings you were distracted by, and gently return your attention to the sounds.

Mindful Eating: When eating mindfully, choose a place that is quiet and free of distractions. Before beginning to eat, look at the food. Notice what it looks like, its shape and size and colour. How it smells. Notice any internal sensations; salivation, hunger, urges before you taste the food. Now take a bite. Notice the taste, texture, and sensations in your mouth. Notice your chewing. Notice your swallowing.

Getting the benefit from Mindfulness takes practice. From what you tried today, how did it go?

Pause it Self-soothing Worksheet



We talked about some self-soothing ideas to create thinking time.

- **Use words or phrases that tell you to clear your head**
- **Breathing**
- **A safe place in your head**
- **5,4,3,2,1**
- **MINDFULNESS**
- **Other idea you might have thought of**



In the space below, write down the self-soothing activity you tried

Rate how helpful they were in creating thinking time using the following scale:
1 = Not helpful at all; 7 = Very helpful.

What did you?	Day tried	Success Rating (1-7)	What were the benefits of doing it?

Think through a situation for someone else

You walk past four kids from the class below you and they are in a fit of laughter. One of the kids seems to be looking and pointing in your direction. If you are thinking in a negative way:

Catch It

What are you initially feeling? (name the feeling)

What are you thinking?

(dwelling on the bad, ignoring the good, taking it personal, jumping to conclusions, making a mountain from a molehill)

Pause It

What do you do to create thinking time?

Challenge It

Use that thinking time (other explanations, put things into perspective)

Change It

What is a different way, more helpful way to think) Alternative, evidence, implications



Challenge It, Change It - Use that thinking time



Take a situation and apply catch I pause it, challenge it, change it

What happened?

How did you feel? (rate your felling on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

What did you do? What was going on in your body?

What were you thinking? (unhelpful thoughts)

What did you do to pause - to create thinking time

Challenge It

Evidence

Other Explanations

Putting things into perspective

Change It: A more balanced way of thinking

Gratitude

Monday	Something I did well today Today I had fun when I am grateful for	
Tuesday	I felt good about myself when Today was interesting because I am grateful for	
Wednesday	Something I did for someone today I saw a nice thing today I am grateful for	
Thursday	I felt proud when Today I achieved when I am grateful for	
Friday	I felt good about myself when I smiled today because I am grateful for	
Saturday	Something I enjoyed today Something I had a good laugh about I am grateful for	
Sunday	Something I did for someone today A nice thing I saw today I am grateful for	

At the end of the week how would I describe it for me? 🙂 😐 🙁

Rechargiing Your Batteries: Self-Care



From Bend, Don't Break

Whether you worked on The Five Ways to Wellbeing or Positive Emotions, keep note of what you did and what affect it had on you.

- **Connect**
- **Be Active**
- **Take Notice**
- **Keep Learning**
- **Give**

1. *Notice positive things*
2. *Express these positive things*
3. *Gratitude*
4. *Mindfulness*
5. *Positive rethinking*
6. *Focus on your strengths*
7. *Attainable goals*
8. *Acts of kindness*

Day	What did you do? Take 5	What did you do? Positive emotions	Affect 🙂 😐 ☹️
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Support

From Bend, Don't Break

What did you need?	Who did you get that support from?	How did it make you feel? 🙂😐🙁
When I wanted to share worries		
When I needed advice		
When I wanted to be listened to		
Practical help		
To have fun		
When I want to be with someone who knows me well and understands me		
When I wanted to be listened to		

What stopped you using support?

One of the best ways to get support is to give it.

What support did I provide someone this week?

How did that work out?

🙂😐🙁

My Strengths: What did I see in myself this week?

Pick at least 3

Strength	Who did you get that support from?
Sporty 	
Clever 	
Musical 	
Intelligent 	
Hopeful 	
Strong 	
Loving 	
Artistic 	
Creative 	
Brave 	
Caring 	
Playful 	
Friendly 	



My Strengths: What did I see in myself this week?

Strength	Who did you get that support from?
Honest 	
Sensible 	
Respectful 	
Thoughtful 	
Cheerful 	
Generous 	
Sociable 	
Graceful 	
Funny 	
Helpful 	
Happy 	
Relaxed 	

What 3 strengths from this list are

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Principles of Coping

From Bend, Don't Break

Do we have rules or helpful beliefs that we live by to help us cope? In The booklet Bend Don't Break it mentions the Principles of Coping.

Which of these could work for you?

- No thought or feeling is "wrong". It is what we do with it that really counts
- Be aware of the way your body feels as tension begins to build up. Do something to deal with it as soon as you can
- You are not on your own. Ask for help and advice
- If you are feeling overwhelmed, try to reduce your activities for a period of time if you can.
- Recognise that family and friends have to deal with their feelings too (they may be helpful or unhelpful to you)
- Try to have fun, relax and exercise every day
- You can work to solve some of the problems that are stressing you out
- Feeling guilty and worrying about things you CAN'T change is pretty useless and energy-draining
- Give yourself credit for whatever level of coping you are achieving
- Value and respect yourself – because each of us is, with our strengths, a unique and worthwhile person.

Each day write down one principle you applied that day

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

How would you say your week was? 🙂 😐 🙁

pages for young children



Name the Feeling

When do you feel that way?



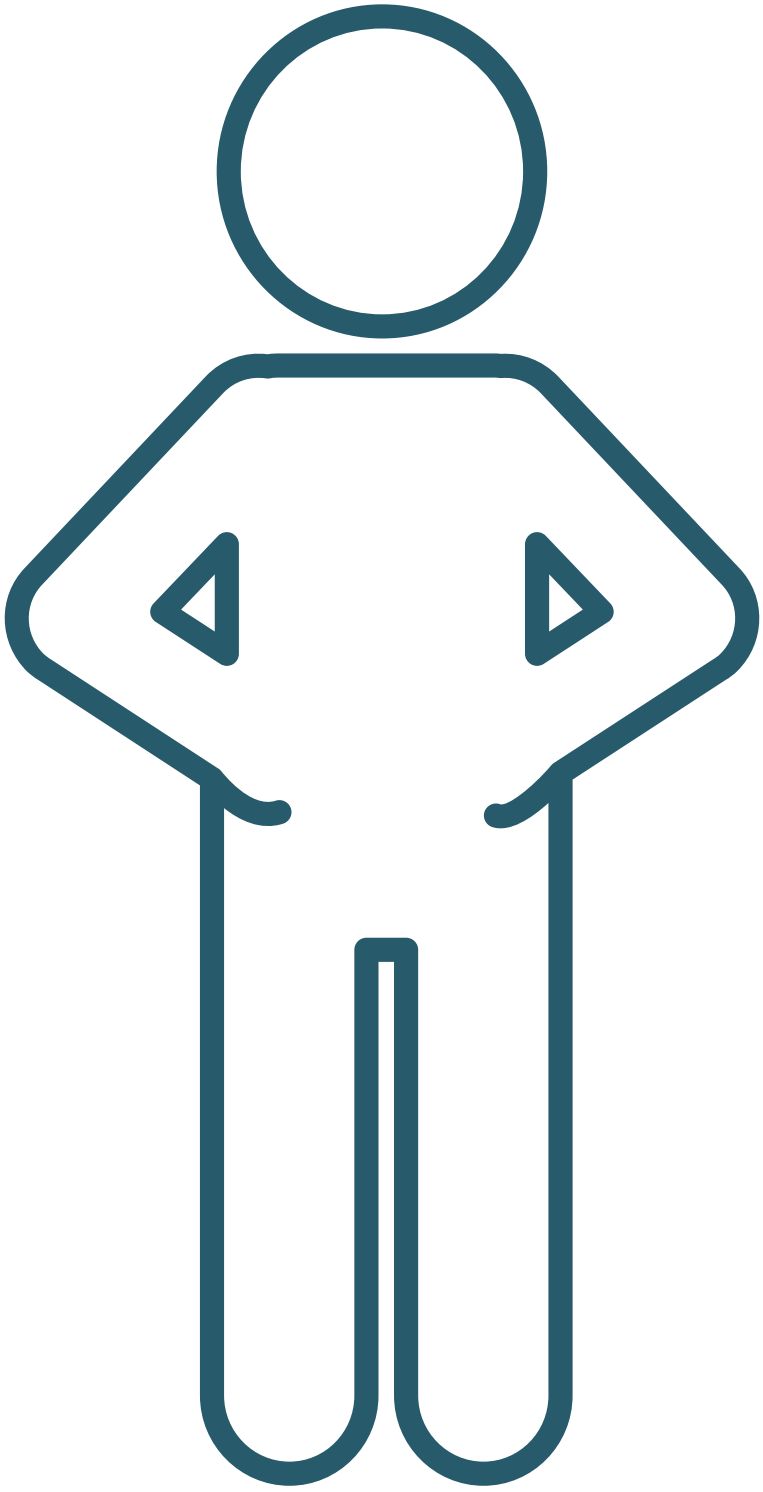
Pages for Younger Children



Where do I feel when I am anxious or upset?

When you are anxious or upset where do you feel it in your body?

Put an X where you feel it most



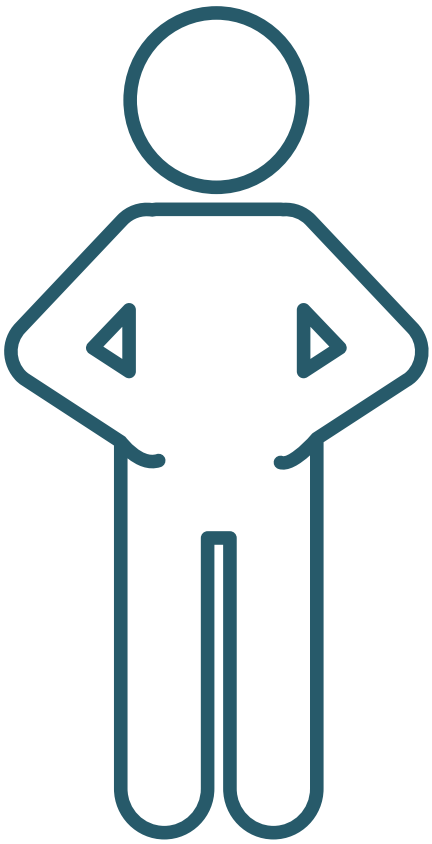
What does it feel like?











Pages for Younger Children

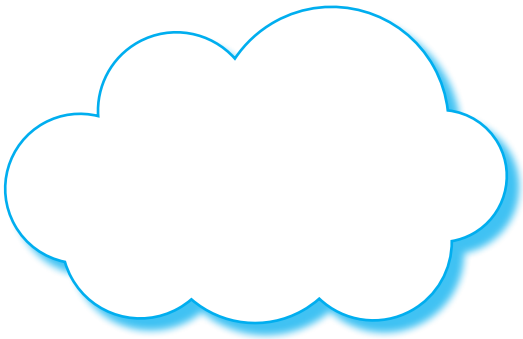


Feelings are like clouds - They come and go

Feelings are temporary. The don't last forever.

Notice what you feel and how your body is reacting but don't obey it. Ride out the storm: It will pass.

Draw what you are feeling in the cloud...



Picture that like a cloudy day, the sunshine is not far behind.
What happened when you did this?



Support

Draw people or things that help you

Share your worries	
To listen to me	
To have fun	
Other - what?	



Pages for Younger Children

Gratitude

Draw one thing for each day

Monday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Tuesday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Wednesday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Thursday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Friday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Saturday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	
Sunday	Today I had fun when... I am grateful for...	

At the end of the week how would I describe it for me? 🙂 😐 🙁

My Strengths

From these strengths, take one you used this week and draw a picture of what happened...



Draw a picture of you using a strength this week like being -
brave; wise; caring; good at something; friendly; dependable; helpful; asking for help; hopeful; curious...