

# Mindfulness Workshop

15<sup>th</sup> February 2019

# ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

## About me

- NNEB Nursery Nurse Diploma
- Elklan Level 3 speech and language support for 5-11 year olds
- ELSA Training with on going 6 weekly supervision.
- Talking and drawing trained in both foundation and advanced course.
- 5<sup>th</sup> year as a registered practicing ELSA.

# Referral system

Referrals for ELSA sessions can come from: Teachers, parents, SENDco, HSLW, children's services and self referrals from the children.

Children are prioritised by the level of need and not by the length of time on the waiting list.

Teachers complete a checklist and this generates an emotional literacy score for the child. I use this and conversations with teachers/parents to plan for each child's individual need. The same checklist is then completed at the end of sessions to measure impact and see the progress the child has made.

# Balloon activity



- Sit comfortably in your chair with nothing in your hands please.
- Over the next 90 seconds I will pop all 5 balloons.
- **When you hear the chime close your eyes and keep them closed for the whole activity.**
- Once the 90 seconds have finished I will ring the chime and you can open your eyes.

- Who managed to keep their eyes closed for the whole activity?
- How did you feel during this task?
- Did you enjoy it?

This activity will give you an idea of the emotional state of a child with anxiety. Would you have been able to follow instructions or be taught something new during the balloon task?

# Anxiety

Symptoms of anxiety in children and signs to look out for in your child are:

Finding it hard to concentrate

Not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams

Not eating properly

Quickly getting angry or irritable and being out of control during outbursts

Constantly worrying or having negative thoughts

Feeling tense and fidgety or using the toilet often

Always crying

Being clingy

Complaining of tummy aches and feeling unwell

You don't need to have anxiety to have anxious moments. We as adults sometimes think that a child's worry is nothing to worry about. Anxiety isn't a conscious choice, always be sensitive to a child's worries. If they have been brave enough to share with you, show interest, compassion and practice mindfulness.

Remember that the symptoms we have looked at could also be caused by other medical problems so always visit your GP if you have concerns about your child.

# What if mindfulness?

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/413/1235/2559/>

Anchored breathing is at the core of all mindfulness. How I teach this to the children is either, smell the flower and blow out the candle or 5 star/5 finger breathing. If your mind wanders during a mindful activity just bring your focus back to your breathing.

Lets have a practice

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/2/3/3/>

How do you feel now?

That was just a 5 minute session, everyone can find just 5 minutes a day to practice mindfulness.



# Mindful eating activity

Again we are focussing on the present moment and if your mind wanders bring it back by focussing our your breathing. This will anchor you in the present moment.

This activity is always popular with the children. You can always try mindful drinking as well.

# Other mindful activities

5 star breathing or 5 finger breathing - I prefer 5 finger breathing as it can be done anywhere. I tend to teach the 5 star initially and then move on to 5 finger breathing.

Mindful colouring – sit quietly with your child, I have found that they like you to colour in with them. Again focus on that anchored breathing and this is often a time when a child will share a worry.

Mindful walks – What can you hear? What can you smell, what can you physically feel? What can you see?

Every day mindful moments – this one is for the grown ups. Put the kettle on and do nothing but watch it boil and practice anchored breathing.

Any questions?

Thank you all very much for coming today and enjoy being mindful with your children.