

# WELLBEING and RECOVERY

## Returning to settings/school following Covid-19

A Presentation for Parents and Carers to support the  
Promoting Well-being and Recovery Document by  
West Berkshire Educational Psychology Service in  
July 2020



# This presentation aims to...

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- ❑ ...provide you with some information about how you might support your child/children within the current situation and beyond.
- ❑ ...provide some brief background principles to support you to feel able to try some of the activities contained within the document.
- ❑ ...reference the activities for both **Early years/Primary children (in green)** and **Secondary young people (in blue)** within the 'Promoting Well-being and Recovery' Document.



# Transition (pp.58-61 & pp.38-40)

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- ❑ Individuals and families will have had their own unique experiences and emotions related to lock-down.
- ❑ Families will have had different experiences and made different responses.
- ❑ The transition back to ‘ordinary’ family life is a *process* and not an event.
- ❑ There will be a transition period – there is no rush to ‘get back to normal’.
  
- ❑ Key factors in supporting a helpful transition:
  - to listen to each other and observe/reflect upon one another’s behaviour
  - to provide reassurance (taking care to ensure that listening is still happening)
  - to ensure that expectations are clear for everyone

# Resilience (pp.7-12 & pp.7-9)

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- ❑ Defined here as ‘the ability to bounce back and cope with all the ups and downs of life’.
- ❑ It is important to recognise and label individuals’ strengths and the strategies they are using to cope with any difficult experiences over the lockdown period.
- ❑ Explore and wonder about the possibilities that may have surfaced...
  - Did they/you learn to do something new?
  - Did they/you learn something about themselves or about someone else?
  - What did they/you do to help others? How did that feel?

## Supporting children back into school (pp.58-61 & pp.38-40)

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- ❑ You can support children back into school by providing reassurance that the child/children in your care will be safe i.e. by pointing out all the different provisions and routines i.e. class sizes, hand washing, lunch times etc.
- ❑ Try to focus on the positive experiences in school, i.e. seeing friends and their teacher(s), learning and fun activities, to remind children that school is generally an enjoyable place.
- ❑ Carefully observe and listen to your child/children when they return home to note any concerns, strengths and positive experiences etc.
- ❑ You should share any concerns and helpful experiences with school staff – this is a novel situation for everybody and we are all learning together so supporting each other to do so in a positive and helpful manner will also provide children with good role models.

## Helping children manage difficult experiences (pp.47-57 & pp.29-37)

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- ❑ Some individuals will have had particularly difficult experiences including having to cope with illness and death within their families. Being exposed to death and serious illness can be traumatic for both children and adults.

The following principles are helpful when supporting children and young people to manage difficult experiences:

- ❑ **Relationships within families are important** - focus on re-connecting and developing them.
- ❑ **Create time and space to listen and share** – talk about experiences and discuss what might have been heard from news reports, friends and other family members.



## Helping children manage difficult experiences (pp.47-57 & pp.29-37)

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- ❑ **Open and honest communication is helpful** – try to answer questions in a truthful, age-appropriate manner. Give short, simple explanations and wait for the child to ask the next question. This will also let you know what they are thinking (i.e. avoid giving long explanations – you might flood them with information for which they are not ready).
- ❑ **Lockdown will end** - ensure that children know that, when it is safe to do so, life will return to normal (with a few differences).
- ❑ **Children feel secure and thrive when routines are in place** - try to ensure that everyday routines include healthy eating, sleep, exercise, gratefulness, relaxation, familiar, purposeful activity and fun.

# Managing bereavement and loss (pp.52-57 & pp.33-37)

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- ❑ You should remember that, following a death, grief is expected. Children should be allowed the space to grieve with the support of family members and close friends – it is important to ensure that children are not left alone and with their own thoughts at this time.
- ❑ Regardless of a child's age always talk to them about death in straightforward age appropriate language; avoid using phrases such as 'gone to sleep', 'passed on', 'with Grandma' or 'a star in the sky' use the words death, died, dead – although this can sound/feel harsh, it avoids confusion which can lead to greater upset for the child both in the 'here and now' but also in the future.



# Managing bereavement and loss (pp.52-57 & pp.33-37)

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- ❑ Offer reassurance that pandemics are very rare events and that death due to COVID-19 is unusual. Most people who have died are older and/or unwell and most people who get ill recover – it is important for children not to become frightened anytime someone is ill.
- ❑ Children, just like adults, show their grief in different ways. Try to include children in family acts of remembrance and, if possible, the funeral.
- ❑ Sometimes, extended family members can be a helpful support, they can also support the immediate family affected by the bereavement by being available to support the child/children.

# Looking after yourself...(pp.3-6 & pp.3-6)

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- ❑ It is important for you to take care of yourself – it is easier to care for a child/children when you are rested and feel well.
- ❑ Ensure that you:
  - maintain a healthy, balanced diet
  - keep active and try, when you can, to get fresh air and have adequate sleep
  - have/develop appropriate ways to manage your stress levels
  - have contact with friends and family
  - find some time to spend time doing things you enjoy
  - balance any work commitments with your home commitments (and talk to your workplace to negotiate how you might fulfil the demands of your work)

# Final thoughts...

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- ❑ Be kind to yourself... nobody can do everything – focus on what you can change and do; and when you have done it, notice it.
- ❑ Try something new – link with another parent/carer and try out some of the activities at the same time and then discuss how they went...
- ❑ Encourage your children to complete some of the activities together using 'Zoom', 'Skype' or 'Teams' (with adult supervision) to share the experience.
- ❑ Seek support from you child's school if you are finding situations challenging or need some further advice and guidance.
- ❑ If you have any further questions please contact Cate Wilkes Senior Educational Psychologist: [Cate.Wilkes@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Cate.Wilkes@westberks.gov.uk)

