



Ravenscote Wellbeing Newsletter

May 2026



Mental Health Awareness Week is a week-long campaign that takes place every year in May. This year it takes place 11th-17th May 2026. It highlights the importance of good mental health, challenges stigma and promotes practical actions people can take to support their own wellbeing.

We all know that sharing our feelings is important for our emotional wellbeing, but it isn't always easy. In this newsletter, we'll explore simple, practical ways to make talking about our emotions feel more natural and comfortable.



How to talk to your child about mental health

How to start the conversation

Pick a relaxed moment:

- Over time, you might notice there's a particular time of day or place that makes your child feel more comfortable talking. Set aside time for conversations during these moments.
- If your child or young person is upset, anxious or angry, give them time to calm down. If they're feeling distressed, they will not be able to think clearly and are more likely to shut down.
- Take care of yourself too. If it's been a tough day, give yourself time to reflect and calm down. Talking when you're feeling exhausted, cross or overwhelmed makes it much harder to react well.



Do something together:

- Most children and young people find it easier to talk while they're on the move or doing an activity. Some also find it easier to think clearly if they have something to do with their hands.
- Side-by-side talking is often easier than face-to-face. Not having to make eye contact can take the pressure off. It also makes pauses and silences more comfortable, encouraging them to stick with the conversation.
- Pick an activity that doesn't need too much concentration, so you can focus on chatting. You could:
 - drive somewhere together
 - go for a walk, especially if your child likes walking the dog
 - have a kickaround or play catch
 - bake or cook together
 - doodle or colour-in
 - make something out of Lego



Gently check-in to get started:

- Once you've settled into the activity together, ask some gentle questions. Our conversation starters can help you find the words.
- Parents say it's helpful to think of it like you're throwing out a rope to see if it's the right moment for your child to grab on. Sometimes they'll be in the mood for talking, sometimes they won't.
- If they're not in the mood, it's not your fault. Don't be put off, force them to talk or push for answers. Just focus on enjoying the activity together and give them some space. It's normal for it to take time for them to open up. You can always try again another day.



“ Take care of yourself too. If it's been a tough day, give yourself time to reflect and calm down. ”

How to respond when they're talking

Give them space to open up:

- Leave space for them to start talking gradually. Try not to rush in with lots of 'why' or 'how' questions. It's okay to leave pauses while they think about what they want to say.
- When they are talking, let them speak for as long as they need to. It can be tempting to jump in with solutions or try to 'fix' things straightaway. But that can discourage them from talking. It can make them feel like you don't get it or like you need them to be positive. To begin with, focus on listening.

Stay calm and show you're listening:

- Give them your full attention. Relax your body position and face. Avoid sitting with your arms folded or frowning as they talk.
- Be caring but calm in your reaction. Avoid showing lots of worry, anger or upset yourself. By staying calm, you're showing them that you can manage what they're telling you. This helps them feel more comfortable about talking.
- Conversations like these can bring up feelings of doubt or guilt as a parent. Try to put these to one side while you're talking. You can come back to them when you get your own support from the people around you. Remember that when your child is struggling, it doesn't mean you've 'failed'. You're showing how much you love and support them by being there to listen, which is what they need from you right now.

Show them you believe them:

- Whatever they tell you, try to see it through their eyes. Show them that you can see it's a big deal and that they've taken a risk in telling you. Empathise with how it feels for them. Our conversation starters have helpful phrases to support you.
- Try not to minimise anything they say. Avoid phrases like:
 - just try not to think about it
 - you're overthinking this
 - just ignore them
 - just try to let it go

Offer hope and reassurance:

- When children and young people are struggling, it can feel like things will be this way forever. Avoid coming up with quick solutions to complicated problems. But do show that you're confident there will be a way to make things better.

“

Remember that when your child is struggling, it doesn't mean you've 'failed'. You're showing how much you love and support them by being there to listen.

”

What to do afterwards

Don't give yourself a hard time:

- Your first reaction is not always your best one, especially if something takes you by surprise. It's not possible to say the right thing every time, and your child doesn't need you to. Let them know that you won't always get it right. But you do want to understand what it's like for them and you'll keep trying.
- You can always come back to a conversation and do it over. You could say: 'You know the other day, I got really stressed when we were talking about...I'm really sorry, that wasn't helpful. I really want to understand what it's like for you, can we start again?'
- Try to relax and be yourself around them afterwards. Even if parts of the conversation didn't go well, remember you're doing your best. Your child will be able to feel that you care about what's happening, even if they don't show it.
- Remember it's an ongoing conversation. You don't have to understand everything after just one chat. Keep offering more opportunities to talk.

Talk through it with your own people:

- These conversations are tough to navigate. They might leave you feeling worried, overwhelmed or isolated. Or you might feel unsure about what's going on because they're struggling to open up.
- Other parents have found it helpful to reach out to friends, family and parents who are going through similar things. Having a support network around you can help you be patient while you wait for your child to be ready – and stay calm when they're talking.
- When you do reach out to others, avoid mentioning anything that you agreed to keep private. This could make your child feel worried about talking again. Instead, focus on how you're feeling to help maintain trust.

Be available:

- Ask if there's anything you can do to help. This could be:
- checking in with them every so often
- spending time watching TV together after school
- giving them space when they're feeling stressed
- If they tell you they're going through a tough time, make time for doing things together – like watching TV, going to the cinema, cooking, going for a walk, playing sport or doing something creative. Doing a fun or relaxing activity with you gives them a break from what's going on and helps them feel less alone.

“
It's not possible to say the right thing every time, and your child doesn't need you to.
”

When your child is going through a tough time, you can't always make things better straightaway. But you can make a huge difference by listening and being there. When your child can share what they're going through and feel understood, their difficult feelings become a little easier to manage. Just knowing they can talk to you helps them feel less alone and more able to cope.

Conversation starters

Starting a conversation with your child isn't always easy. You might feel unsure about how to begin or how to keep things going. To support you, we've put together lots of questions and phrases to help you feel more confident getting started.

As you navigate these conversations, remember that it's normal for your child to take time opening up. Try not to put pressure on them to share everything. And don't feel like you have to get it right every time. Instead, focus on listening and making space for talking as part of everyday life. Make sure you lean on the people you trust too. Talking things through with them can give you the headspace and support you need to be there for your child.

Starting the conversation

Start with some general questions to help you both ease into it:

- ✳ What did you get up to today?
- ✳ How did [a subject they did at school today] go?
- ✳ Did you watch the next episode of...yet?
- ✳ How's [a hobby/interest/project they're enjoying] going?
- ✳ What happened at the end of that [book/TV episode/film]?
- ✳ What kind of thing do you feel like doing [this weekend/over the school holiday]?
- ✳ What was the best bit of your day?
- ✳ What was the worst bit of your day?



How your child will feel: They're interested in the things I like/don't like. I know how to answer these questions.

Move the conversation on by gently checking in:

- ✳ It's been a while since we talked about...how's that going at the moment?
- ✳ I've noticed that you've seemed a bit...lately. Is everything okay?
- ✳ I've wondered if...is feeling hard for you at the moment?
- ✳ I've been wondering if something's getting you down?
- ✳ How's [a subject they're struggling with/a teacher they don't like/a friend they've had an argument with/a hobby they've been finding difficult] going?
- ✳ How are you feeling about...?



How your child will feel: They care about the things going on in my life. I feel noticed. I might not be able to answer the question right now, but I've heard it.

Encouraging them to say more

If your child starts talking, there are things you can say to keep the conversation going. When they pause, it's okay to leave a short silence to see if they've got more to say. Then, gently prompt them to continue.

Sometimes, simply reflecting back what they've just said is enough to encourage them. It might go like:

- ✦ Parent: So she told you off and then you were like, that's not fair!
- ✦ Child: Yeah and then ...



How your child will feel: They want to listen to me. They're interested in my point of view. It's so good to be heard and understood.

To help you understand a bit more, you can also ask questions like:

- ✦ So she/he/they said...And then what?
- ✦ So what happened is...Have I got that right?
- ✦ It sounds as if you're feeling...Have I got that right?
- ✦ What I've heard is...
- ✦ I wonder if it's...?
- ✦ Is it like...?
- ✦ Can you help me understand more about...?
- ✦ Can you tell me a bit more about...?
- ✦ What's that like for you?
- ✦ What do you think about that?

Responding to what they tell you

If they do share something, it's really important to show you believe them. Make sure you listen and empathise before thinking about any solutions. The goal is to make them feel heard and understood, not to fix it straightaway.

You can say:

- ✦ I'm not surprised you're feeling...
- ✦ No wonder you're feeling so...
- ✦ It's totally understandable to feel...
- ✦ How could you not be feeling...
- ✦ It's so sad/frustrating/hard when...
- ✦ How unfair/confusing/hurtful
- ✦ I'm so sorry it's been like that for you
- ✦ I'm so glad you've told me



How your child will feel: I feel less alone and less overwhelmed. They get me. I'm not wrong for feeling like this.

Exploring the problem

It can help to think together about what's going on and what might make it better. But they might not be ready to do this straightaway. Sometimes they'll just need you to listen or distract them when they're struggling. When they do feel ready to think it through, making a 'mind map' together can be a good way to reflect on different parts of their life. They can start by drawing themselves in the middle or writing their name. Around this, they can list the things that are bothering them. These might be at home, at school, online, with friends or family, or with a hobby they do.

After this, you can ask:

- ✦ What part feels the hardest right now?
- ✦ What would you like to be different?
- ✦ What do you wish you could change?
- ✦ Can I help you find a first step towards that change?
- ✦ Have you got any ideas of what you'd like to do?
- ✦ How can I help?



How your child will feel: I understand how I'm feeling more. I can manage this. I can ask for help if I need it.

Providing hope and reassurance

When children and young people are going through a hard time, it can feel like things will always be this way. Avoid coming up with quick solutions to complicated problems. But do show that you're confident these feelings won't last forever and things can get better.

You can say:

- ✦ We might not have all the answers right now, but there's always a way through
- ✦ We can take steps towards changing this together
- ✦ It won't feel this bad forever
- ✦ You're not on your own with this
- ✦ I love you and I'm here whenever you need to talk



How your child will feel: Things can get better. I don't have to face my problems alone.

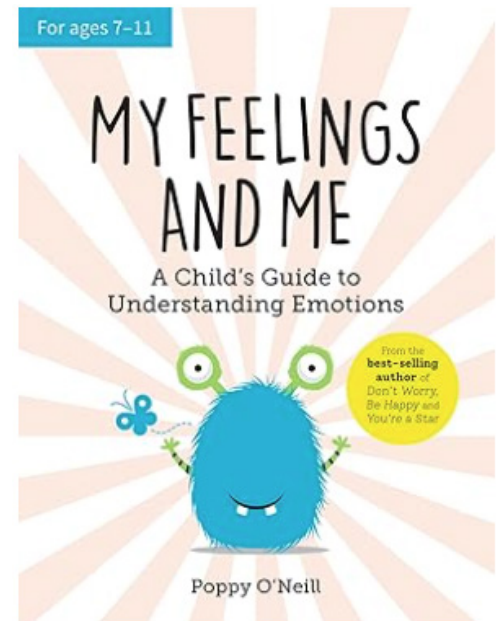
Book recommendation

My Feelings and Me

Does your child struggle to control their emotions? Perhaps they get upset easily and find it difficult to calm down? Do they feel out-of-control at times and want to understand why? These are signs that your child is ready to learn more about big feelings and the physical sensations they experience as a result.

This practical guide combines cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness methods with simple activities to help your child develop the skills to articulate their feelings and regulate their moods. It's aimed at children aged 7-11 because a lot happens in these years that can impact a child's emotional well-being, not just now but for years to come.

Your child will be guided, with the help of Pop - a friendly and supportive character they can identify with - through fun and engaging activities which are interspersed with useful tips, inspirational affirmations and practical information for parents and carers.



Mental Health Resources



UK-based organisations specialising in helping those struggling with their mental health.



You're not alone!

If you're struggling to cope, don't hesitate to reach out...

www.apprenticeteam.org
[/mind-matters/](http://mind-matters/)



Mental Health Foundation

Focus on preventing mental health problems
www.mentalhealth.org.uk



Mind

Offer support to those experiencing mental health problems
www.mind.org.uk



Samaritans

Support those going through mental health crises
www.samaritans.org



Mental-HealthMatters

Deliver high-quality mental health and social care services
www.mhm.org.uk