

# Pupil Support Officer

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INTERVENTIONS: CRAMOND SESSION 2019-20



tyne lovell

## PSO Interventions

### Building Emotional Awareness

Emotions can be tricky to verbalise - They can be felt minimally or become all consuming. Children need the opportunity to feel and process emotions without feeling worried about the aftermath. More often than not, the emotion we see in behaviour is not the emotion being felt inside. How many times does embarrassment become anger?

We use a variety of tools to build emotional awareness in school:

- Emotion Talks
- Restorative Practice
- Key Adult Time
- Group Activities

Emotion identification is the first step in building resilience, and is necessary for the next developmental stage of emotion regulation.

### Supporting Regulation

When children experience big emotions or a complete shut down, it can be a signal to us that their nervous system is dysregulated. This means they no longer have access to their whole brain. It's not that they know what they should or shouldn't do and are just ignoring it, it's that they aren't in control of their body in the moment.

Through co-regulation, children develop their own regulation skills by building an awareness of what it feels like when their body is out of control and then how to regulate their system. Helping children to develop their own skills takes practice and consistency. When children are in a dysregulated state, they need a safe space to express their emotions and be given time to calm down. By noticing their dysregulation and following through with reflection, children build skills for regulating their own nervous system.

Key Features:

- Make sure they are in a safe space.
- Communicate clearly with them.
- Leave and breathe.
- Return to support.

Emotion regulation is necessary for children to identify personal coping skills for coping with life's ups and downs.

## Mindfulness & Relaxation

It is important to highlight the benefits of including mindfulness techniques in our lives to help us feel calm. When we practice what works for us individually, we are in a better position to achieve a state of mindful relaxation.

It is important to monitor your mood, and explore what mindfulness means to you. For example:

- Mindfulness is knowing your own abilities but not being afraid to have a go – having a can do attitude.
- Being in the present moment – no past thoughts, no future worries, just being in the present moment right now.
- Concentration on yourself only, paying particular attention to your breathing.
- Being able to think things through and accept your feelings and thoughts. Accepting that there are some things you can't change.

What are the benefits of mindfulness?

- The benefits can be an increase in self-awareness
- Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere, meaning we can use it to make ourselves feel better for a period of time.
- It can be done pretty much anywhere.
- Great for staying calm and taking away stress.
- It can take time for children to get used to it but it helps calm stressful or angry situations.

## Growth Mindset

Growth Mindset activities help children to recognise their ability to learn and can improve motivation. By exploring the different topic areas within growth mindset, each activity builds upon the last. Themes that are explored include: Making mistakes, being inspired, the power of yet, determination, success, everyone is different, and thinking skills.

Key features:

- Mistakes are just experiments that help our brain grow
- Inspiration comes from believing in yourself
- Not Yet – Keep trying
- Determined people keep going even when it feels too hard
- Success is a reward for hard work
- Everyone is different but they can all succeed
- Think positively

## Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM)

'Let's Introduce Anxiety Management' (LIAM) has been developed by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and experts in the field of childhood anxiety. LIAM is run as a partnership between our school, NHS Lothian and Edinburgh City Council. LIAM is designed to help children and young people learn more about anxiety and ways to overcome it. It is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) principles and focuses on what happens to our thoughts, feelings and behaviour when we feel anxious. Importantly, LIAM helps children and young people to learn new ways of dealing with anxiety.

At Cramond, LIAM is being offered to pupils who are experiencing anxiety that they are finding upsetting or difficult to manage. LIAM involves meeting with Tyne Lovell, our pupil support officer on a one to one basis to work through anxiety management resources.

Who might LIAM be suitable for:

LIAM is designed as an early intervention approach and therefore targets low to moderate levels of anxiety that are non-the less having an impact on the well being of a child or young person experiencing this.

Experiencing anxiety and worry is normal and common in people of all ages. While we all experience anxiety sometimes, there are times when anxiety and worry can feel very difficult to manage and can have a big impact on really important aspects of our lives.

Anxiety can, for example, make us feel very upset and get in the way of the things that we would like to do. Common types of anxiety in children and young people include:

- Fear of specific things, (e.g. dogs), or of places, (e.g. the dentist)
- Fear of being separated from your family
- Fear of the unknown or uncertainty
- Fear of social situations
- Panic: Fear of disaster or being out of control
- Worries about upcoming changes, such as changing school.

For children and young people experiencing these difficulties, learning a little more about anxiety and ways of overcoming it can be helpful.

Through sensitive, nurturing and responsive interactions, children learn to trust that they are safe and supported. They realise that difficult thoughts and feelings associated with stress are temporary and can be tolerated.

It's through building positive relationships that we reach these young people. How we communicate with them in the heat-of-the-moment determines whether a crisis is averted or maintained. Expecting them to quickly control their impulses and regulate their feelings is incompatible with the structure of their brain.

### Weekly Nurture Activities

Each group of children are offered opportunities to build on friendships, provide the chance to explore new experiences, learn new skills and build self-esteem and confidence. The aim is for pupils to have a 'resilience toolkit' full of strategies that will promote self-regulation, self-confidence, coping skills and social skills.

Key features;

- Raise Self-esteem and confidence
- Have a good feeling about school
- Being able to share and taking turns, self-regulate and resolve conflict.

### Ongoing Solution Focussed Support

Solution focused thinking is an approach that encourages children to adopt a positive stance in finding a solution. The approach builds on the child's past successes and helps to identify personal qualities. The model involves structured sessions designed to provide the platform for finding a solution to our problems rather than feeling stuck. The aim of the sessions is for children to develop an internal toolkit of personal qualities that encourages the child to do more of what has worked before, and reminds them to think about positive ways they have dealt with problems in the past which can be applied to the present.

Key features:

- Build resilience
- Develop a toolkit of personal strengths
- Build self-esteem and confidence
- Ability to share thoughts and ideas positively