

Emotional Wellbeing Coffee Morning

5th July 2024





EMOTIONAL HEALTH

VS



MENTAL HEALTH

Deals with 'matters of the heart'

Deals with 'matters of the head'

Ability to cope with and regulate emotions

Ability to think clearly

Ability to foster positive relationships

Can be the result of trauma or chemical imbalances

Can be practised and improved

Can be treated with medication and/or therapy

Emotional well-being is how well people are able to process their emotions and cope with life challenges. Managing stress, fostering positive social connections, and taking care of physical and mental health may all help individuals maintain good emotional well-being.

What is Emotional Literacy?

Emotional literacy is the ability to express our emotions and feelings using speech and other forms of communication. It's an important skill that children must develop from a young age to help establish a stable relationship with their own emotions.

Emotional literacy is a key aspect of emotional intelligence, which means our overall ability to deal with emotions. Emotional literacy focuses on how we communicate our feelings and how well we can read others' emotions. Whilst some children will naturally be comfortable doing this, others might need more encouragement and support. Without emotional literacy, children will struggle to express their feelings appropriately and might be confused or alarmed by the emotions of others.

History of Emotional Literacy

The term emotional literacy was coined by Claude Steiner in 1997. Steiner believed that emotional literacy was key in helping humans, especially children, handle their own emotions in an empowering way that would also improve their quality of life.

Steiner also broke emotional literacy down into five distinct parts:

- knowing your feelings
- having a sense of empathy
- learning to manage our emotions
- repairing emotional problems
- putting it all together, also known as emotional interactivity



Emotional Literacy in The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum in England and Wales has long emphasised the importance of cognitive skills in schools. Recently, there has been a focus on expanding kids' social skills, including their emotional literacy, to improve their own well-being as well as the well-being of their peers.

Many educators also believe that emotional literacy could be key to improving other factors, like the behaviour, attendance and academic ability of students.

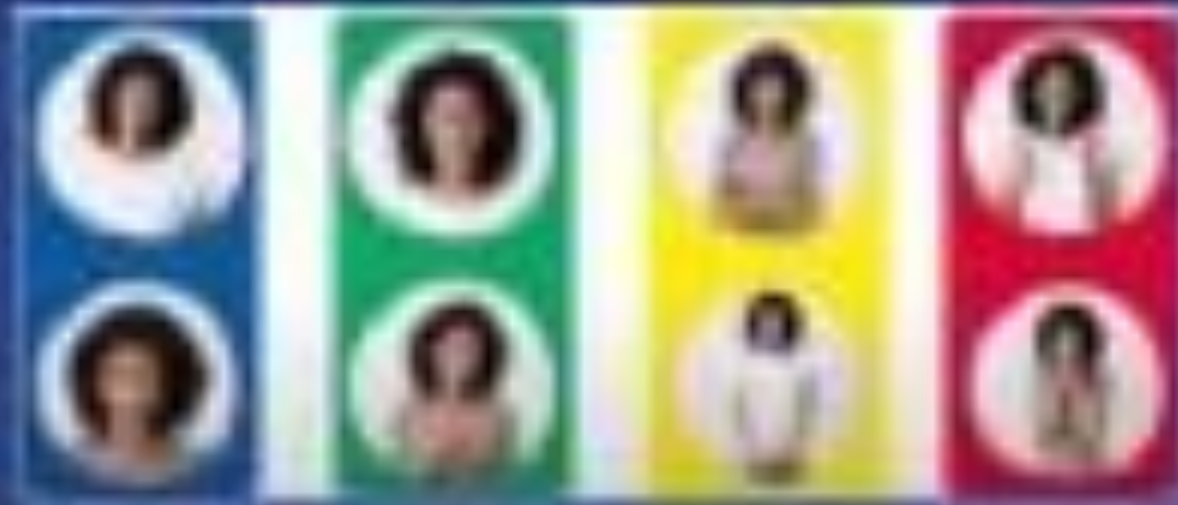
Basic activities to develop children's emotional literacy include learning the vocabulary of emotions and understanding how different emotions can affect others and themselves. These skills are essential in helping children describe and speak about their emotions.



How do you Develop Emotional Literacy in Children?

Some children might need more support in developing emotional literacy skills than others. However, there are some simple things that adults, teachers, relatives and other primary caregivers can do to support a child's emotional literacy skills.

- Provide a good model: if your child is expressing their emotions in a negative or inappropriate way, ask them if they're able to explain what they're feeling and why. Similarly, if you are experiencing an emotional response to something and your child asks what's wrong, explain to them simply how you are feeling using simple language.
- Promote empathy where you can: now your child is starting to recognise their own feelings, why not encourage them to think about others? For example, when reading a book with your child, ask them questions like, 'how do you think that made them feel?' or 'how would you feel in that situation?'
- Show your children that you're here to listen: create an atmosphere where children can share their emotions freely by modelling good emotional literacy yourself. If your child is displaying a strong emotion, ask them about it. You could even help them by explaining how you handle the same emotion.
- Encourage them to talk: as with the above point, you can let your child know you're there to listen to them, but they need to know the language of emotion first. Some children will need more guidance recognising their own feelings, meaning that they might need more support. Use statements like 'I can see that you are happy' to help children link the vocabulary of emotion to what they're feeling.

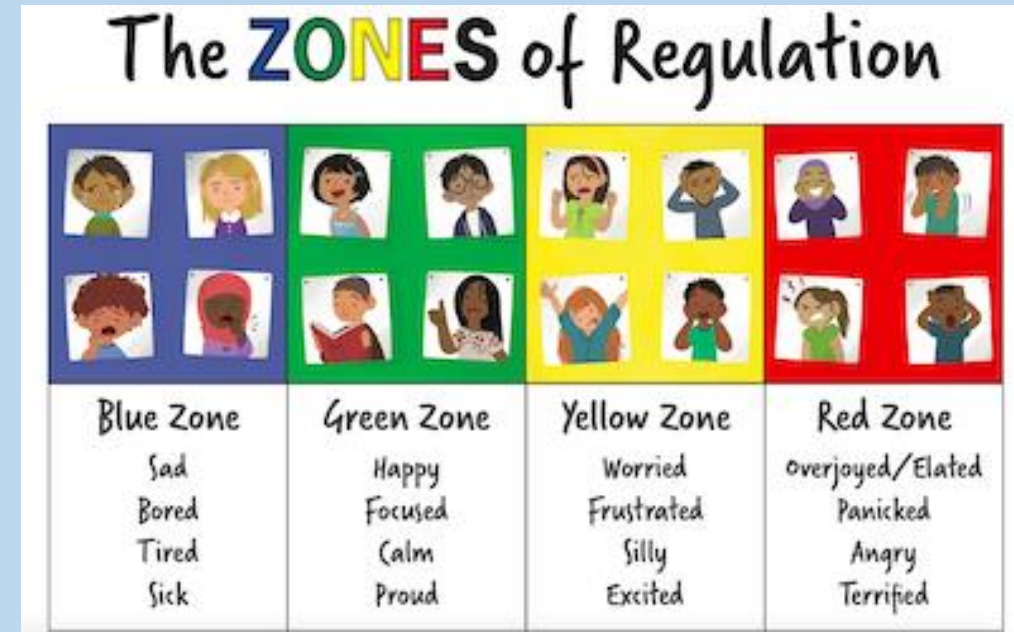


What are The Zones of Regulation?



Different Strategies To Support

- Anger - I can take three deep breaths.
- Sadness - I can use my words to say why I am sad.
- Happiness - I can make someone else happy.
 - Tiredness - I can have a drink.
- Worry - I can draw a picture of my worry in a bubble and blow it away.
- Excitement - I can do a calm activity.
 - Frustration - I can move away.



What is ELSA?

In schools, ELSA stands for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. ELSA support in schools is a project designed to help schools support the emotional needs of their pupils. ELSA acknowledges that children and young people learn best when they feel happier and their emotional needs are being addressed.

The initiative was developed and supported by educational psychologists who used knowledge of how children develop socially and emotionally and apply this knowledge to the needs of pupils.

The role title of ELSA may only be taken by someone who:

- Has attended a full ELSA training course.
- Regularly attends supervision groups led by educational psychologists.
- Currently, are developing bespoke programmes to support the emotional needs of children in their school.



ELSAs are trained to plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils in their school who may be experiencing temporary or long term additional emotional needs.

A lot of work that ELSAs do will be on an individual basis with one child, however, there are cases where group sessions may be appropriate such as when working on social skills and friendship skills.

ELSAs will receive support and supervision from educational psychologists, but will still report to a line manager within their school. Their school will also help with the identification and prioritisation of children who would benefit from the support of an ELSA. This process works best when there is solid communication between the teachers, SENCos and ELSAs within a school.

In these cases, when a child is identified it is also a good idea to make a note of the kind of emotional support that they would benefit from and what areas an ELSA can work on them with. These priorities can then set the aims of the programme which can also act as individual aims for children.

Working on things that are personal to a child is likely to make the impact of the programme more successful.



What can ELSAs help with?

There are a lot of emotional skills that ELSA can help with, including:

- Social Skills
- Bereavement
- Social Situations
- Therapeutic Stories
- Anger Management
- Self-esteem
- Real-life problem-solving skills
- Friendship



How long should an ELSA Programme last?

There are very few cases where ELSA should become a permanent feature of a child's support system, as the programme works best when there are aims for children to work towards and achieve. When planning a child's individual ELSA programme, it is a good idea to plan a term's worth of work. Further intervention towards new aims can be put in place at a later date if it becomes required.

Sessions will typically happen once a week across the length of a term and last between half an hour and an hour.

During a session, an ELSA should:

- Check how the child is and how they have been feeling for the past week.
- Review the content that was covered in the last session and see if any of the information needs to be revisited.
- To introduce new content through engaging games and activities.
- End the session in a way that helps the child to adjust to going back to class.



If the weekly sessions can be scheduled at a regular time it can help children to prepare and the routine can also be beneficial for their emotional needs.

Some children may benefit from shorter sessions depending on how long they can stay engaged. Adults working with a child will get to know the ideal session length for them.

Some children may not respond well to support stopping all at once, so a graduated end to a programme is often a good idea, and a school ELSA can remind children that it is okay to come and talk to them when they need it.

School ELSAs understand that not all changes will happen quickly, and one programme may not be able to meet all the needs that a child has. So when planning the work that will go into a programme ELSAs will be aware of what aims they want to target.





Our ELSA - Mrs Leckey

