



**After being off school for so long, it is only natural that many young people will be worried about returning to school.**

Here are some tips on how you can support your child to transition back to school life:

- 1. Talk to your child about how they are feeling** about going back to school and try not to make assumptions. Ask them if they are worried or feel scared about anything, but also if they are excited about or looking forward to something. No matter how your child feels, let them know that it is completely normal to feel a mixture of emotions and that everyone will be in the same boat.
- 2. Provide your child with as much information about their new routine and school day as you can.** This will help them to prepare for any changes that have been made to the timings of their day, the layout of their classroom, their peer groups and playtimes. For younger children, it can be really helpful for them to visualise these changes – so ask your child’s school if they can send any pictures to help make things feel more familiar.
- 3. Reassure your child.** During the lockdown we have been told to stay at home, remain socially distant from others and wash our hands regularly. This means children may find it difficult to go back to school because it will be a huge change from what they have been asked to do during the pandemic. Talk with your child about ways they can stay safe at school, such as washing their hands before and after eating, and reassure them that the school are putting measures in place to keep them safe.
- 4. Re-establish a routine to help ease into school life.** During lockdown it is understandable that your family’s routine may have changed. Children are likely to have been waking up later or going to bed later. To help them get ready for school, try to gradually get them back into their usual morning and bedtime routines as they get closer to their return date.
- 5. Don’t put pressure on yourself.** The transition back into school is likely to take some time. Lots of children will experience ups and downs. Try your best to support, reassure and comfort them, without putting pressure on yourself to make sure their homework is done or they settle into a new routine straightaway.
- 6. Think ahead.** As well as reflecting on what has happened during the past few weeks, it is important to help children develop hope and a sense of excitement for the future. At a time like this, it can be hard to feel positive, but identifying the things that they can look forward to will help them to realise that the current situation won’t last forever and their feelings will change.
- 7. Seek support if you need it.** Transitioning back to school after being in lockdown is no easy task. You may find that your child struggles to get back into school or experiences difficulties while they’re at school. If this is the case, reach out to your child’s school as soon as you can so that you can make them aware of the challenges and work together to support your child. If you are concerned about your child’s mental health and you think they need professional support, speak to the school and your GP about the best next step.



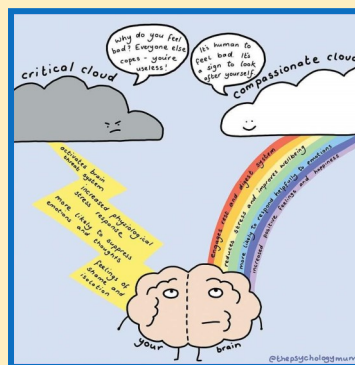
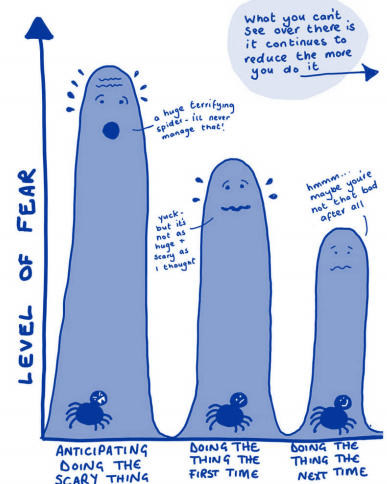
## After School Tips

Many children will come out of school exhausted  
Many will need time to process their day

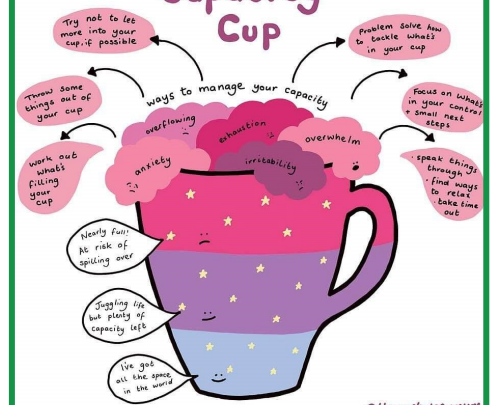
Here are a few ways to ensure your child can DECOMPRESS from their day and avoid blowouts

- Do avoid demands straight away i.e. get changed/unpack your bag can wait
- Do avoid asking them all about their day immediately
  - Do give them a snack
  - Do give them space & time
- Do provide a consistent & predictable after school routine
  - Do try and go straight home
- Do prepare them for any changes to the norm e.g. nanny is collecting
  - Do allow time on a preferred activity straight away

When we get in from an exhausting day we just want to chill & be left undisturbed. The same goes for our little people. Trust that your child will talk and come to you in their own time.



## The Capacity Cup





### Is your child anxious about going back to school?

Talk about the school day: go through the steps to remind them about washing hands

Check with names of the teacher

Lots of schools are providing a video and photos of what school will look like

Time table on the wall so your child can see what days they are going

Be reassuring

Celebrate first day back

Try on uniform

Lay out clothes the night before

Pack the school bag together with a favourite small toy/item

**Do-IT>**

### End the apology epidemic

I'm sorry I'm late >>> Thank you for waiting.

I'm sorry I can't make it tomorrow >>> Thank you for inviting me.

I'm sorry for talking to much >>> Thank you for listening.

I'm sorry for being so upset >>> Thank you for being patient.

I'm sorry I need help >>> Thank you for helping.

## Feeling anxious as our lockdown eases?

We've all spent a lot more time indoors than normal over the last few months. We can expect to see lots of changes when we emerge into the world, from a favourite café that didn't survive the shutdown to greetings between friends that now consist of a nod or a wave, rather than an effusive hug.

Now that the rules are relaxing, it can feel strange to start going out again. It might take a while to get used to things that used to be second nature, like going to work, seeing friends and family and going to the shops.

Many friends and family members have stayed apart during lockdown. Seeing loved ones face to face is a great way to boost your wellbeing, and is especially important if you've been shielding alone, but you might find it feels strange at first.

If it's been a while since you had a gathering, try having a trial run with one person to build up your confidence, if the rules in your area allow this.

However, if you don't feel comfortable going, you shouldn't feel pressured to go. Everyone has a different attitude to risk and if you know you won't feel safe doing a particular activity, plan something else instead.

If you feel under pressure from friends and family, would saying one of these things help?

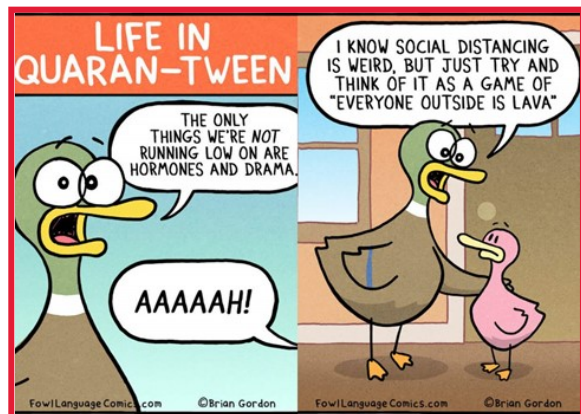
"I'm sorry but I don't feel comfortable socialising indoors right now – why don't we get together for a walk instead?"

"I'd really love to see you all but I'm staying away from pubs and restaurants at the moment– you all have a great time though."

"Although I'd love to see you I won't be able to enjoy myself if I feel anxious – how about we plan a time for a good catch up over the phone or on video chat?"

**Do not be afraid to say no.** People who are not afraid to politely decline requests that are not comfortable for them are setting healthy barriers.

**Take it slowly** – Simple things like doing the grocery shopping, driving a car or spending time with friends might feel strange as you move back into your post-lockdown life. Take note of how you feel and consider speaking to your GP if feelings of anxiety persist or worsen.



## CRADLE YOUR FEARS LIKE A BABY

HAVENING is a technique I have used to help frontline workers deal with workplace stress: doctors, nurses, paramedics, ambulance crew and military personnel.

It's a brilliant form of psychosensory therapy that uses touch to soothe the body and mind. It was created by Dr Ronald Ruden, an expert in neuroscience, who discovered that patterns of repeated touch to parts of the body combined with specific eye movements and visualisations have a rapid, reliable and predictable effect on our feelings.

The patterns of touch used in Havening simulate the way your mother comforted you as a baby, by cradling you in her arms. The soothing action of being held becomes hard-wired into all infants.

Havening combines these patterns of reassurance with sequences to break down the associations that triggered unhappy feelings. As a result, in just a few minutes we can reduce the intensity of an emotion and become calm.

The technique is not merely a distraction. Studies have shown that when we use Havening, we reduce stress chemicals in our body and change the way our brain processes thoughts and feelings.

The effect of the specific sequence given here is to reset the way your brain interprets and responds to stress. Over time, it can actually alter for good the neural pathways in your brain.

Practise these eye movements, body touches and visualisations until you know them off by heart. You can then use them any time you need to banish unhappiness.

To start, pay attention to the discomfort you are feeling and rate its strength from one to ten, where ten is the most powerful. Then follow these steps:

1. CLEAR your mind, or think about something nice.
2. CROSS your arms, place your hands on the tops of your shoulders and close your eyes.
3. STROKE your hands down the sides of your arms from your shoulders to your elbows, down and up, again and again.
4. AS YOU stroke the sides of your arms, imagine walking on a beautiful beach.

With each footstep in the sand, count out loud from one to 20.

5. KEEP your head still while you keep stroking your arms and move your eyes, while still shut, laterally to the left and to the right.
6. CONTINUE stroking your arms as you imagine walking down some stairs and count out loud with each footstep. Aim for 20 steps.
7. OPEN your eyes. If the feeling has moved significantly up the scale of one to ten, you have changed your state of mind. But if the unhappy feeling has not been reduced enough, repeat the sequence.



**Making a mini-beast hotel**  
Turning over logs and looking for mini-beasts offers great anticipation and excitement for children big and small.



**15 Virtual Easter Party Ideas, Games and Activities for 2021**  
<https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-easter-ideas>

INSTEAD OF SAYING	TRY SAYING
"It's bedtime. Stop playing with your toys right now and get upstairs"	"Your toys will all be waiting for you tomorrow. Goodnight, toys! We love you and can't wait to play again soon!"

avoid	try
"Put your shoes on. Please, put your shoes on. Ugh come here and put your shoes on right now!"	"It's time to leave. Do you want to wear your purple shoes or your pink shoes today?"



Things I want to pause and notice about my kids this week...  
@mombraintherapist

- the sound of their laugh
- the excitement they see the world with
- how they show their love
- how they look doing something they love
- the treasures they find & bring home
- how their hand fits in mine
- the cute way they say certain words
- the unique person they are growing into
- how they look when they sleep
- their pride when they show me something new

KIDS INSIDE	KIDS OUTSIDE
SETTLE DOWN! AAAAH! CATCH ME!	LET'S GO FOR A WALK! THIS IS TOO HAAARD! I'M TIRED!

**Easter Holiday Activities**

- How many words can you make using only the letters from Easter?
- Spring is here! While on your walk can you spot any of the following?
  - Daffodils
  - Birds
  - Lambs
  - Tadpoles
- Racing Eggs  
Boil and decorate some eggs. How fast do they roll down the hill? Time them and see whose egg is the fastest?
- Can you build your own 2D or 3D Easter egg using recycled materials or LEGO?
- Create your own Easter Hunt. Hide your Easter Eggs or have someone else hide them for you. Who can find the most?
- Can you design and draw your own Easter Egg wrapper? You can be as creative as you wish!



### Teens quiet or isolating in rooms...

Perhaps the reason teens isolate themselves when they're overwhelmed instead of coming to us with their problems, is because when they're toddlers we isolate them when they're overwhelmed instead of helping them with their problems.

When our kids are small and trying to manage emotions - they can't express what they are feeling. They throw tantrums, they throw things, they have meltdowns, they scream and they whine. This is their way of communicating with us. They need help to organise, process and express their feelings in a healthy way. And society tells us we should punish them for this. Send them to their room, put them in timeout, spank them.

We teach them and train them not to show their emotions. Don't whine. Don't complain. Your feelings are wrong. Be quiet. Eventually they stop expressing their emotions to us because we told them over and over again we didn't want to hear it. For so long they needed to deal with it alone. Alone in their room, their chair, their corner.

And then they turn into teenagers and we expect them to feel safe talking to us. We expect them to know that NOW it's okay. They are subconsciously wired to think the opposite because this is what they grew up learning.

Give your child permission to feel. Let them know their feelings are valid and that you care, no matter how small. Make sure they know that they are heard.

Pretty soon meltdowns over crayons will turn into breakups, heartbreak, sex, or even depression. You want your child to know that you will always hear them, no matter how small. **You are their safe space.**

**Checking in with my stuff...**

How am I feeling right now?  
 tickety boo  stressed   
 wobbly  flat  something else

My top 3 to-dos...  
 1. Absolute must do  
 2. Would be cool if I could do  
 3. Now I'm just shoving off if I do

What's playing on my mind?  
 Stuff I can control...  
 Stuff I can't control...

Take a few deep breaths...  
 BREATHE IN... HOLD... BREATHE IN... HOLD...  
 you are made of the deep breaths, the kind that's all the time you need.

3 things that help to fill my cup...  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Created by Beth Woodbridge @dudleybeth*

**Street art! :)**

Go for a walk and spell a word, phrase or sentence with things, words or letters you find!

### Helping Children to 'Let Go' of Worries

Anxiety can be a difficult thing to 'move on' from when it gets stuck in our heads. It can often lead to rumination which can mean that we aren't fully living in the moment, or that it's tricky to feel relaxed enough to do things like get to sleep. The below strategies might help children and young people to 'let go' of their worries and things they can't control.

#### Feelings Like the Weather

When we are anxious, it can be really hard to remember a time that we didn't feel worried or a time that we will feel better. It might be helpful to explain to children and young people that our emotions come and go, a bit like the weather. Although it may feel like it's stormy right now, if we sit with our emotions it will pass. Some days might be stormier than others, but the weather is always changing and our emotions are a bit like that too.



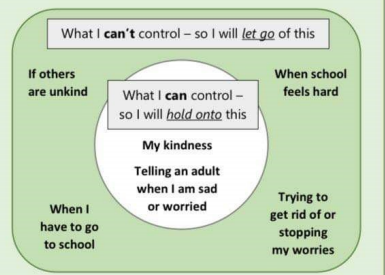
#### Thought Balloons

Support your child to write or draw their anxious thoughts onto drawings of a balloon. Count down, and imagine letting the balloons go. Perhaps you could try letting *real* balloons go!



#### Control Wheels

Control wheels can be another helpful way to support children to remember what they can and can't control about situations that may worry them. This example is around anxiety about school, but you could create your own depending on what is specifically worrying your child.



### THE STRESS RELIEF GIRAFFE

**OUT OF CONTROL**

**SCARED OF LOSING CONTROL**

**NERVOUS**

**UNSURE**

**CALM**

**WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO:**

- Calm breathing exercises
- Use visualisation meditation techniques
- Body tightening exercises (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Sigh to become fully present in the moment
- Practice music therapy
- Change location / surroundings
- Use a stress ball / fidget toy
- Give themselves a 10-second hug to boost their mood
- Colour, draw, write, craft, etc.
- Practice positive self-talk / words of affirmation
- Exercise
- Go outside
- Play
- Hydrate with water

#### Courses and Activities

<https://www.teentips.co.uk/news/tips-for-entertaining-your-teens-during-half-term/>

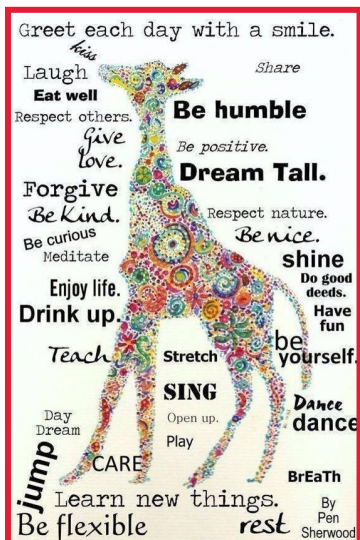
These are just a few ideas to find ways to entertain your teen.





## BB4K – (Bounce Back 4 Kids)

To contact a member of the Bounce Back 4 Kids team please email us at [BB4K@pactcharity.org](mailto:BB4K@pactcharity.org) or telephone 0118 402 1682 / 0118 402 1755.



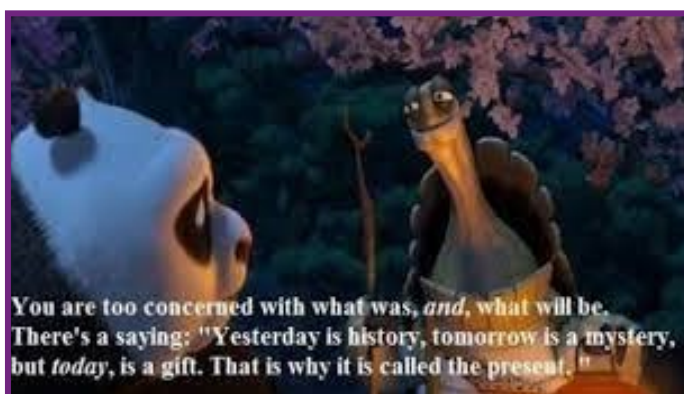
**Qwell online counselling and support service –**  
Available for school staff, parents and families to complement the Kooth service  
<https://www.qwell.io/home>



## ONLINE RESOURCES

A list of websites & apps that are helpful for managing mental health

<p><b>NHS Every Mind Matters</b> <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters">www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters</a> This website offers a range of mental health advice as well as an interactive quiz that's designed to help you feel more in control of your emotional/mental wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Stem4</b> <a href="http://www.stem4.org.uk">www.stem4.org.uk</a> A charity that promotes positive mental health in teenagers as well as encouraging them to build resilience and manage difficult emotions via online resources.</p>
<p><b>Kooth</b> <a href="http://www.kooth.com">www.kooth.com</a> This site contains free mental health support with their online counsellors. It is a free sign up service that has resources such as discussion boards, helpful tips/articles written by young people and an option for them to write mood journals &amp; set positive goals.</p>	<p><b>YoungMinds</b> <a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a> A mental health charity that gives help and advice for young people, as well as encouraging them to get involved in fundraising/campaigning to raise awareness for children &amp; young people's mental health.</p>
<p><b>Childline</b> <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a> A mental health charity for children &amp; young people that has a wide variety of helpful videos, games and articles. They have a free telephone helpline (0800 1111) and message boards where young people are encouraged to share experiences and support each other in a positive way.</p>	<p><b>Samaritans</b> <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a> A charity that offers mental health support &amp; information online for everyone. Their helpline is free and available to all ages. Call 116 123 or email <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> 24/7.</p>
<p><b>Papyrus</b> <a href="http://www.papyrus-uk.org">www.papyrus-uk.org</a> A mental health charity dedicated to preventing young suicide by providing support and resources for young people and their families. They have their "Hopeline" (Call: 0800 068 4141 / Text: 078600 39967 / Email: <a href="mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org">pat@papyrus-uk.org</a>) for children and young people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or for anyone concerned for a young person that could be thinking about suicide.</p>	<p><b>Child Bereavement UK</b> <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org/young-people">www.childbereavementuk.org/young-people</a> A site which has resources for young people who are grieving, as well as providing information &amp; advice to families/professionals on how to best support a young person who is bereaved. A helpline is also available on 0800 028840.</p>
<p><b>Calm Harm</b> An app to help teenagers manage/resist the urge to self harm by providing a wide range of distraction techniques.</p>	<p><b>Clear Fear</b> An app to help children &amp; teenagers manage anxiety through distraction &amp; helpful activities.</p>
<p><b>Combined Minds</b> This app contains psycho-education for parents, families &amp; friends with practical advice on how to provide mental health support to children &amp; young people.</p>	<p><b>Calm</b> A mindfulness app that includes various relaxing sounds to listen to as well as "sleep stories" &amp; some guided meditations.</p>
<p><b>Cove</b> A relaxing musical app that helps people try to capture their mood and express it by making music within the program and capturing it in a journal format. Note: you do not need to know how to play an instrument to use this app.</p>	<p><b>Headspace</b> A mindfulness app that has more of a "podcast feel" to it with various talks, guided meditations and helpful videos available.</p>



### Helplines:

- CRUSE – Bereavement Helpline 0808 808 1677
- Samaritans – 0800 116 123
- NSPCC – 0808 800 5000
- Childline – 0800 1111
- Rape Crisis – 0808 802 9999
- Age UK – 0800 055 6112
- Alcoholics Anonymous – 0800 9177 650
- Papyrus UK – Prevent of young suicide 0800 068 4141 or text 07860039967
- The MIX – Essential support for under 25s – 0800 808 4994
- Silverline – Helpline for older people – 0800 470 8090
- MIND – call 0300 123 3393 or text 86463
- Rethink Mental Illness – 0300 5000 927 (Mon-Fri 9:30-4pm)
- YoungMinds - 0808 802 5544
- Parents Helpline – 0808 802 5544 (9:30-4pm except bank holidays)
- CALM – 0800 58 58 58 or webchat
- SANE – 0300 304 7000
- NHS Volunteer Responders – 0808 196 3646
- Shout – text 85258
- No Panic – 0300 7729844
- Drinkline – 0300 123 1110
- Talk to Frank – 0300 123 6600
- National Debtline – 0808 808 4000
- Refuge - National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247
- Macmillan Cancer Support – 0808 808 00 00
- Stonewall – 0800 050 20 20
- Victim Support – 0808 1689 111
- Women's Aid Federation – 0808 200