



Hello summer!

Soon our children finish school for the summer... This is your reminder that your little ones don't need plane holidays and sunshine, it's the trips to the park, playing out in the street with their friends, the bath time giggles and the sofa snuggles that bring the biggest smiles.

As parents, it can feel hard to find time to stop, be present and play with our child with so much going on.

But every once in a while, remind yourself that it is okay to forget about the to-do list, forget about the washing, forget about the dishes and enjoy spending time at home together.

For many children in the UK, the school break can be a hard time for their mental health.

Some young people have feelings of loneliness during the summer holiday, and another one in six said that they never or rarely spend time with friends throughout the summer months.

All around them they see images – splashed across social media and on their television – of sunshine, family holidays, friends hanging out, being carefree and having fun. But for the young people whose summer break does not look like this, these images only highlight the difference between themselves and their peers.

Schools are often seen as focusing on academics, but in reality they do much more – giving children a chance to spend time with friends while also providing a safety net which can be lacking during the school breaks. In the holidays, young people can lose the sense of structure and purpose associated with the school day. Here's some top tips:

1. Connect with friends or family - If your kids can't see their friends or family during the summer, the six weeks will feel like a lifetime. It's important that they stay connected with the people they love, and summer time is a great opportunity to do that.

2. Stay active - Karate, dance, circuit training, mixed martial arts... you name it, they do it. It's because staying active is fantastic for maintaining good mental health. It gets your endorphins going, boosts your mood and raises self-esteem.

3. Go outside - It can be very easy for your children to be glued to the sofa with no school to go to, but it is recommended to head outside and spend time in the sunshine and fresh air. To them, it's an easy and effective element of self-care.

4. Art - Getting arty is super for young minds. It allows them to explore their creativity, helps them to relax, and is a perfect alternative to their screens. When immersed in an arty task, young people (and anyone, really) can reach a calm, meditative place, where they are distracted away from the worries of life.

5. Get cooking - This makes an excellent activity for children to try during the summer months. And if they're not very confident in the kitchen, or if they find the process stressful, they could start with simple, easy recipes, or helping an adult as they cook.



[PACT on Facebook](#)



[PACT on Twitter](#)



[PACT on Instagram](#)

Bounce Back 4 Kids is part of



Parents And Children Together

See all our BB4K newsletters [here on our website](#)

To get in touch email bb4k@pactcharity.org



Don't try and fill every minute of every day. Encourage your children's imagination and mindfulness.

What is this thing called **mindfulness**? Is it for you and your child? And what does it really mean to practice **mindfulness**?

It is such an interesting time, with the wave of mindfulness sweeping over us - organisations and schools are implementing mindfulness programs, with apps, CDs and the media are promoting - so it might be an opportune time to sit back and let the mindfulness wave wash over you also!

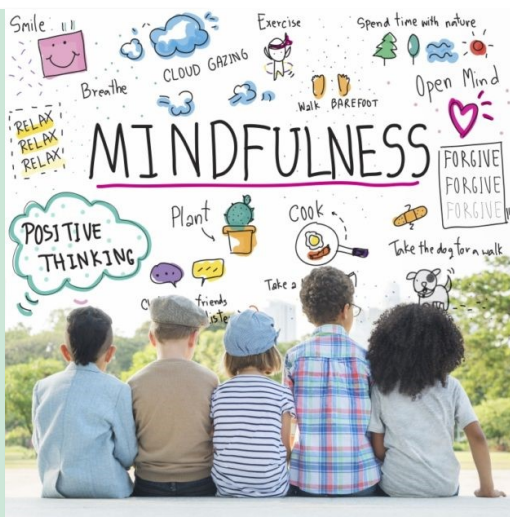
Mindfulness very simply put is being aware. One aspect is self awareness, of body, mind and emotions. This is a practice of attentively watching or noticing what is happening in your whole self, at any present moment, from a loving detached place... a place of compassion and non-judgement, a flowing free place, a place of simply allowing your thoughts, feelings and sensations to be, and even to let them go. The other part is a practice of being present and noticing what is going on outside of you; you know, stopping to smell the roses! So how do we teach mindfulness to young children? Are they not already quite present, already having those times when they are engrossed in an activity and are very in the moment with a single point of focus? Mindfully and in the moment noticing how a toy operates, building with Lego, creating a drawing or painting, hearing or reading a story, interacting with a pet?

Perhaps it might not be so much about teaching them mindfulness, but rather supporting them to continue it, fostering it, and taking it a step further and making it fun and interactive. Guiding them to notice their body and how amazing it is! Guiding them to notice their feelings. Giving them a feeling vocabulary, so at any given time they can start to express how they are feeling... happy, mad, sad, scared, confused, upset... and then they can identify these feelings later, name them, notice and feel them, accept them even. We can validate that what they are already doing is AWESOME! This will see them become more adept at self-regulating, and at self-soothing.



Making story books: Whether you're an avid reader or wanting to get started this might be the perfect opportunity to celebrate reading. Make it a fun day for kids to get excited about reading, maybe even a competition or game. Making a story book could be a really fun way to encourage creativity and

reading, and allowing children to come up with their own narrative can help them process things going on in their heads; being able to explain what characters are feelings as a way of removing their own emotions to someone else is a really helpful insight to children's emotions.



TEACHING CHILDREN MINDFULNESS



Why Mindfulness is Beneficial for Your Kids

- 1 CULTIVATES SELF-COMPASSION
- 2 IMPROVES ALERTNESS
- 3 HELPS WITH UNDERSTANDING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS
- 4 BALANCES THEIR ENERGY
- 5 BUILDS CLEARER COMMUNICATION & STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS
- 6 REDUCES ANXIETY AND STRESS
- 7 ENCOURAGES CREATIVITY
- 8 CREATES HEALTHY SELF ESTEEM



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the state of being fully connected to the present moment, and a way to take a step back from autopilot to gain clarity and focus

"Mindfulness helps us awaken, and by reflecting on the mind we are enabled to make choices and thus change becomes possible"

Think of your automatic mind like a hamster wheel



The uncontrollable events of life and thoughts continue to push the wheel non-stop...



Mindfulness lets you get off the wheel, catch your breath and regain focus

The Benefits of Mindfulness



LIVE IN THE NOW

FIND CALM

BE A HAPPIER PERSON



1. LEAVE THE PAST WHERE IT BELONGS



2. YOU CAN'T CONTROL THE FUTURE



3. TREAT THE PRESENT LIKE A GIFT



4. QUIET YOUR MENTAL CHATTER



5. BE YOUR BEST SELF



6. THE POWER OF GRATITUDE



7. DON'T DWELL ON NEGATIVES



8. FACE YOUR STRUGGLES



PACT on Facebook



PACT on Twitter



PACT on Instagram

Bounce Back 4 Kids is part of



Parents And Children Together

See all our BB4K newsletters [here on our website](#)

To get in touch email bb4k@pactcharity.org



When you need some "me time" but your kids are so close, they're breathing your air.



Parental guilt!

You may be feeling guilty about not being able to spend the whole time with your children because of work or feeling guilty about not being able to afford a holiday or big day-trips, or sharing complicating, emotional and disruptive child contact between parents.

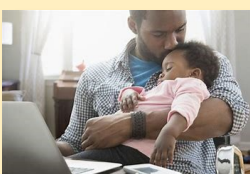
We as parents are no strangers to guilt, it comes with the territory. But the prospect of the long summer break might be bringing guilt very much to the surface for some.

So what is guilt? It is an emotion, and when it comes to parenting, guilt arises because something in our brain tells us that we are failing to be the best we could be for our children.

For most of us, guilt is actually a sign we love our children, and how much we care. Guilt really is a normal emotion, and is basically a warning sign that we need a nudge in the right direction. It can prompt us to make corrective decisions to put right something we feel is going wrong. That is fine if we are feeling guilty for shouting on a single occasion, for instance.

We can respond to the guilt by apologising and acknowledging to our child that our reaction was not ideal.

But if guilt becomes chronic - if we are feeling guilty about something connected to our parenting most of the time - then it is no longer about a specific act or incident. Feeling guilt throughout your entire day can be damaging and exhausting. Guilt can impact on our emotional health, confidence, self-belief and resilience.



Some of the most common reasons for us to feel guilty are: balancing being a parent and working; your child/ren's behaviour; the food and environment your child is in; and the amount of screen time you allow your child, to name only a few.

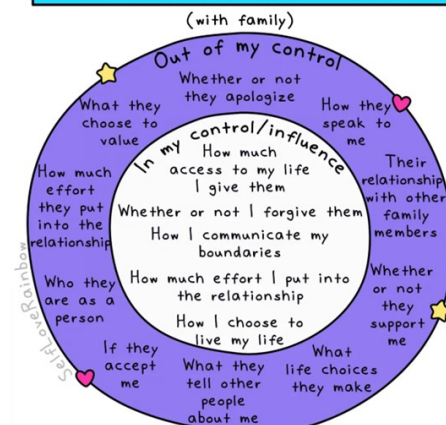
One of the key things to remember is that, as parents, we very often set ourselves unreasonably high expectations. We are our own worst critics, judging ourselves far more harshly than we would judge a friend in the same situation. We assume everyone else is parenting better than us. But we are all winging it! No-one has taught us to be a parent. So we can never live up to unrealistic expectations. If you can accept that, you lower the pressure on yourself and help reduce your feelings of guilt.

Tools and techniques to stop guilt dominating:

1. Be realistic about what you are capable of and what you are in control of. You can support your child/ren's interests and encourage them to be the best version of themselves. But you cannot control their future. Acknowledging this can help you be realistic about what your child needs from you.
2. We all fall into the trap of "compare and despair" but it is toxic. Thanks to social media, not only do we get compared with friends and family but we see lives of celebs too. It can be easy to feel they are 'doing parenting' better than us, but we are only seeing a snapshot of their lives. So remind yourself and ask yourself what it is about this person or their lifestyle that is triggering you and your guilt. Example: if you have a friend who constantly posts about going on wonderful trips with their family, this could be a sign you want your family to have more adventures. It might be a cue to arrange something easy and fun on your next day off or weekend together.
3. Forgive yourself for things that have made you feel repeated guilt. Imagine that you feel guilty about having to work during the school holidays. You might feel that you are not spending enough time with your child and this triggers guilt. Now consider the good that comes of that situation as well. Working may mean that you can afford a holiday, day trip or small treats and pure quality time for your family. Remind yourself that working during the holidays has drawbacks but brings benefits too. Be honest with your family and tell them this too, so they also understand the downsides and the benefits.
4. Be kind to yourself. It isn't selfish to take time out to look after yourself and to relieve your stress, whether that is by going for a walk, exercising, mediating and so on. In fact, that's the best thing you can do for your children, because if we are calm then they will be calm(er) and get the best version of you.



The Circle of Control





Lets have a play day!

Whether that be in the garden, at the park or the beach! Here's a list of places to play outside in Reading, West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire:

- [Reload laser tag in Reading](#)
- [The Reading Mystery Treasure](#)
- [Adventure Dolphin in Reading](#)
- [Basildon Park](#)
- [The Nature Discovery Centre in Thatcham](#)
- [Oxford Spy Mission Treasure Trail](#)
- [Warburg Nature Reserve in Henley](#)
- [Tumblestone Hollow at Stonor Park in Henley](#)

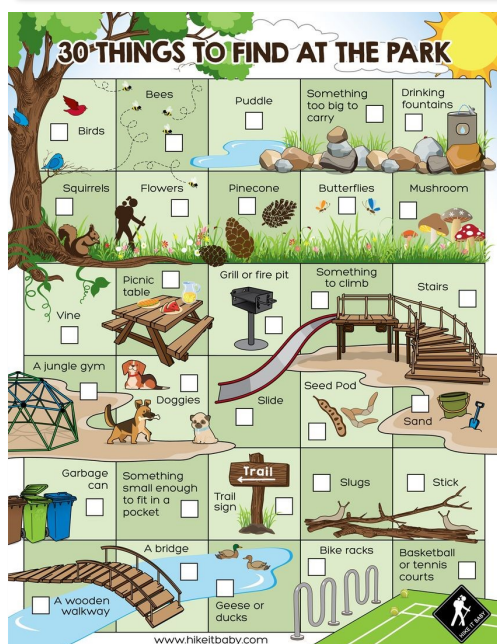


Cake case tip!



my KINDNESS CALENDAR						
for school, home, & the community						
Hug a Family member	Pick up litter	Start a gratitude journal	Do an extra chore	Make a binfeeder	Give out compliments	Write a thank you note
Make a get well card	Smile at everyone you see!	Make a craft to give	Let someone go ahead of you in line	Hold the door for a stranger	Give out Happy Cards	Make your bed
Donate canned goods at the local Food bank	Tell a Funny joke	Help clean up after dinner	Use your manners	Read a book to a Family member	Clean up a mess you didn't make	Write a letter of appreciation
Write a letter of appreciation	Color a picture for someone	Stick up for a friend	Encourage your friends to do random acts of kindness	Donate your old books to the library	Teach a friend on sth one of your skills	Make seasonal crafts to decorate your home

KINDNESS CHALLENGE FOR KIDS



Need to use those delivery boxes up? Cardboard recycling fun!



Easy cooks for kids: Animal toast, hot dog walkers, face pizza, sarnie-on-a-stick, frozen banana yogurt stick and butterfly snack-packs

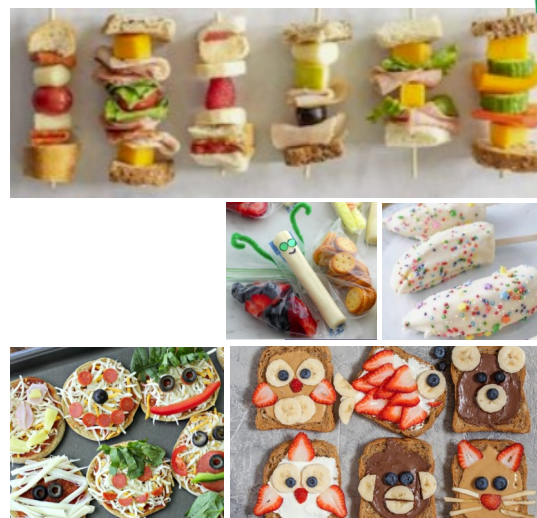
"I'm hungry!!!!!!"

Are your children requesting snacks all day long?



Make a 'Snack attack lunch box'. Allow children to dip in and out all day long and when it's gone it's gone! Adults can have one too! Happy snacking! Responsibility and full bellies!

Kids' Eating Schedule	
SCHOOL YEAR	SUMMER
7:30am - Breakfast	7:30am - Morning Snack
11:00am - School Snack	8:05am - Breakfast
1:00pm - Lunch	8:59am - Snack
3:30pm - After-school Snack	10:00am - Lunch
6:00pm - Dinner	10:47am - Snack
	11:58am - What's for lunch?
	12:03pm - Snack
	12:21pm - Can I have dessert?
	2:07pm - What's for lunch?
	2:15pm - Snack
	2:27pm - What's for dinner?
	2:28-5:59pm - Snacks
	6:00pm - Dinner
	7:02pm - What's for dinner?
	7:05pm - Snack





The summer holidays offer an opportunity to recharge, but some young people may find themselves struggling without the structure and support of school and friends.

Plan for the holidays but give your teen a seat at the table

Do plan, but don't plan alone. Teenagers' brains respond well to the consultative mode, so sit down together and decide some key activities and goals for the summer break.

Choose a time when you are both calm, well-rested and well-fed so you can think through any tricky areas of debate. Ask your teen to research ideas for activities and then discuss them together.

If your teen suggests reasonable ideas, go with them and you will have a young person who is highly engaged and learning how to be a community member.

If you have a budget for summer activities, share the amount and ask them to investigate options that sit within their budget. Adolescents feel passionately about their world (it's an important part of their development) - they love what they love deeply so support them to explore it (even if you don't love it quite as much) because they will learn something about themselves in the process.

Create a holiday routine

Being off-timetable can feel a release at first but having no routine at all can be problematic. In fact, there is good evidence to show that routine can improve wellbeing so get together and agree a daily holiday routine.

House rules are likely to be different during school holidays but they should still be consistent and explicit so that everyone has the same expectations.

Teens sometimes become virtually nocturnal during their holidays, and though their body clock is slightly later, don't let it get too extreme.

Screens have a place but set some agreed boundaries

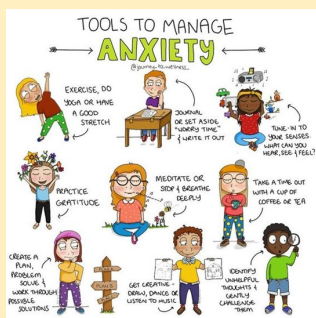
Teenagers are wired to connect with their peers and to search for novelty. This means that devices are highly attractive to teens specifically, as they stand for 'friends and trends'. Agree holiday screen time rules together (remember the drive for respect and consultation is strong in adolescents).

Make sure you differentiate between passive and active screen time. For example, talking with a friend on a video call is likely to be good for your teenagers' mental health. Whereas scrolling through social media aimlessly is okay (so long as it doesn't make your teenager feel anxious or low) but should be limited. Remember we all have activities that aren't strictly speaking ideal pastimes, so keep perspective.

Holidays are a chance to learn life skills

The holidays are a gift for life skill development because you need time to learn any new skill.

Agree a life skill to learn, like navigating the bus routes, budgeting and buying food or cooking a meal once a week. Tempting though it might be, don't simply list household tasks that need to be done, include life skills that need interaction with the outside world. These might be more appealing and are just as useful. The golden rules when learning new skills are repetition and gradual steps that push limits but increase at a rate that is manageable. Make sure you manage expectations appropriately and expect mistakes. Learning any new skill is hard.



Take good risks

Teenagers are more likely to want to take risks – it is not just a stereotype.

A risk simply means that the outcome is unknown; it means you finding out something new and perhaps learning the experience of failure. All part of personal development. Dangerous risks should be avoided but many risks are positive, like taking a chance on an offer or starting a new activity and these should be encouraged. Science shows that the same people who take dangerous risks also take good risks, so direct your teen to good risks and it will feed their need for risk.

Meltdowns

Meltdowns can be more common during the holidays and are certainly more likely during the teenage years.

Teens feel emotions more acutely than they ever have felt them before. It's the brain's way of learning about the environment and the teen brain wants to learn quickly before adulthood starts. Meltdowns almost certainly have a trigger. You and your teen might not know the trigger in the moment, but there will be one in there somewhere. It's also worth considering that holiday meltdowns can be due to a change in sleep or diet as evidence shows a tired or hungry brain is much more likely to be irritable.

So what do you do in the moment?

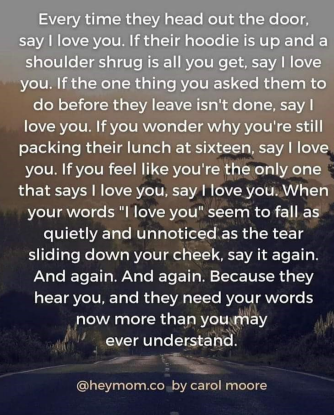
- Just stay close – don't say much but stay around them as it will help them settle quicker.
- Describe the emotion you see without judgment (naming the emotion can help calm the brain).
- Listen to what they are saying (this doesn't mean you agree with what they are saying).
- Paraphrase what they said (if they feel heard they won't need to up the ante emotionally) Don't attempt to discuss or debate the issue in any depth in the moment. Wait until you are both calm – it may take hours or even days – and then think about what happened, why it happened and what you should do next.

Get bored

Some predictability, planning and novelty is certainly a good idea but don't schedule every moment of every day. Figuring out what to do with free time is a life skill too and it is a good idea to be bored sometimes. Boredom includes doing an activity that doesn't excite you when your mind is elsewhere or simply daydreaming. When we are zoning out (in 'default mode') we are awake but not really focused and our brain does extraordinary things: it reflects on the past, visualises the future and considers social perspectives.

Give yourself a break

It's your holiday too, so make sure you look after yourself. The advantage of a well-planned and agreed schedule with downtime, screen time and activity time is that you can see the windows of opportunity for some well-earned me time too.



@heymom.co by carol moore





PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) DURING THE 6 WEEKS SUMMER HOLIDAYS 2023

COURTESY OF MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

ASDA

Kids eat for £1 All Day, Every Day at Asda cafes, with no adult spend required.

TESCO

Kids eat free with a purchase of 60p+ from Mon 24th July - Fri 1st September 2023

SAINSBURYS CAFES

Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main. From 11:30am every day.

BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

THE REAL GREEK

Kids under 12 eat FREE every Sunday for every £10 spent by an adult

TABLE TABLE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

TRAVELODGE

Buy 1 Adult Breakfast from just £8.99 & up to two kids eat breakfast for free

HUNGRY HORSE

Kids eat for £1 on Mondays & up to 2 Kids get free breakfast with 1 adult breakfast

PREMIER INN

Buy 1 Adult Breakfast from just £8.99 & up to two kids eat breakfast for free

SIZZLING PUBS

Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids' mains are £1 with every adult meal.

IKEA

Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

MORRISONS

Spend £4.49 & get one free kids meal all day, every day.

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS

Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day at selected Gordon Ramsay restaurants

PRETO

Kids up to age 10 eat free all day, every day with paying adults at Preto in Half Terms

BILLS

2 kids eat FREE all day, every day from Monday 24th July - Friday 1st Sept 2023

BELLA ITALIA

Children eat for £1 with any adult main. The offer is valid 4-6pm Mon to Thurs.

WHITBREAD INNS

Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased

SA BRAINS PUBS

Children can eat for £1 with any adult main. Valid All Day Wednesdays

FUTURE INNS

Under 12's eat for free with any adult meal. During the school holidays

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM

Kids get 1 mini main, 2 snacks & a drink FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm

YO! SUSHI

From Mon 17th of July until Fri 11th of Aug kids eat free with every £10 adult spend

TO BE CONFIRMED...

M&S and Farmhouse Inns

Copyright of MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

f /ReadingLocalOffer



Information, support and services for Reading's children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families



0118 937 3777 (option 2)

localoffer@reading.gov.uk

www.readingsendlocaloffer.org



[The Brighter Futures for Children Mental Health Support Team](#)

STRUGGLING TO PAY THE BILLS?

We can help

Reading Welfare Rights Income Maximisation Campaign

[Young Minds webpage 'Transition, Change and Mental Health'](#) is worth looking at for those children who may be starting to worry about the change at the end of the school year.



Are you:



On a low income or unemployed?



Disabled or suffering with a health condition?



Feeling overwhelmed by the cost-of-living crisis?



Confused by the benefits system?

What we do:

If you are struggling financially, our trained benefits officers are here to help you. Billions of pounds are left in unclaimed benefits every year, we want to make sure you are getting everything you are entitled to.

Get in touch with us for a free, impartial benefit check.

advisor@readingspecialist.co.uk

0118 955 1070

readingspecialist.co.uk



[PACT on Facebook](#)

[PACT on Twitter](#)

[PACT on Instagram](#)

Bounce Back 4 Kids is part of

PACT

Parents And Children Together

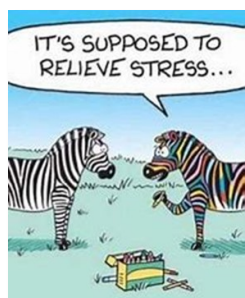
See all our BB4K newsletters [here on our website](#)

To get in touch email bb4k@pactcharity.org



Random acts of kindness make the world a happier place. Kindness is contagious!

Research shows that helping others can be beneficial to our own mental health. It can reduce stress, improve our emotional wellbeing and even benefit our physical health. Helping others feels good. When you help others, it promotes positive physiological changes in the brain associated with happiness. Helping others improves social support, encourages us to lead a more physically active lifestyle, distracts us from our own problems, allows us to engage in a meaningful activity and improves our self-esteem. It helps to keep things in perspective. Helping others in need, especially those who are less fortunate than yourself, can provide a real sense of perspective and make you realise how lucky you are, helping you to achieve a more positive outlook on things that may be causing you stress. Acts of kindness have the potential to make the world a happier place. It can also encourage others to repeat the good deed that they've experienced themselves – it contributes to a more positive community. Evidence shows that the benefits of helping others can last long after the act itself by providing a 'kindness bank' of memories that can be drawn upon in the future.



To contact the BB4K team, please email us at BB4K@pactcharity.org or find out more about us here on our website: pactcharity.org/bb4k.

Bounce Back 4 Kids



Domestic Abuse Recovery Programme

