

10 MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR PARENTS

Encourage communication and talking openly. Support your child in talking about their feelings



Encourage your child to interact with friends and family and to connect with others



Listen to what your child has to say. Be patient and understanding with them

Support your child in problem solving when they experience worries. Help them to find solutions



Engage in some coping skills with your child (i.e. relaxation or deep breathing)

Make sure your child knows that you will be there for them



Don't struggle in silence. If you need extra help go to your doctor or a mental health charity



Make sure your child is looking after their physical wellbeing (Sleep, food, exercise)

Regularly praise, support and encourage your child. Show them love and affection



Help your child to challenge unhelpful thoughts and to think rationally



HOW FAMILIES CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S MENTAL HEALTH DURING SELF ISOLATION



01

Check in with each other on a regular basis. How are you feeling today? Is there anything I can do to help?



02

Engage in some physical activity together. Doing this in a group can increase connectedness and is great for reducing stress.



03

Get some really simple healthy rules in place that you can all follow (E.g. We will make sure to sit down and eat dinner with each other every night)



04

Set a challenge to learn a new coping skill each week. Spend 5-10 minutes each day to practise using it.



05

Organise and plan your week together. Make sure everyone understands what work or school related activities are coming up over the next 7 days.



07

Schedule in time during your week where you can all engage in some activities that provide you with a sense of pleasure and achievement.



08

Work together as a team. Be a strong unit that supports, cares and encourages.



06

Spend 5 minutes each morning when you wake up to engage in some breathing exercises as a family.



09

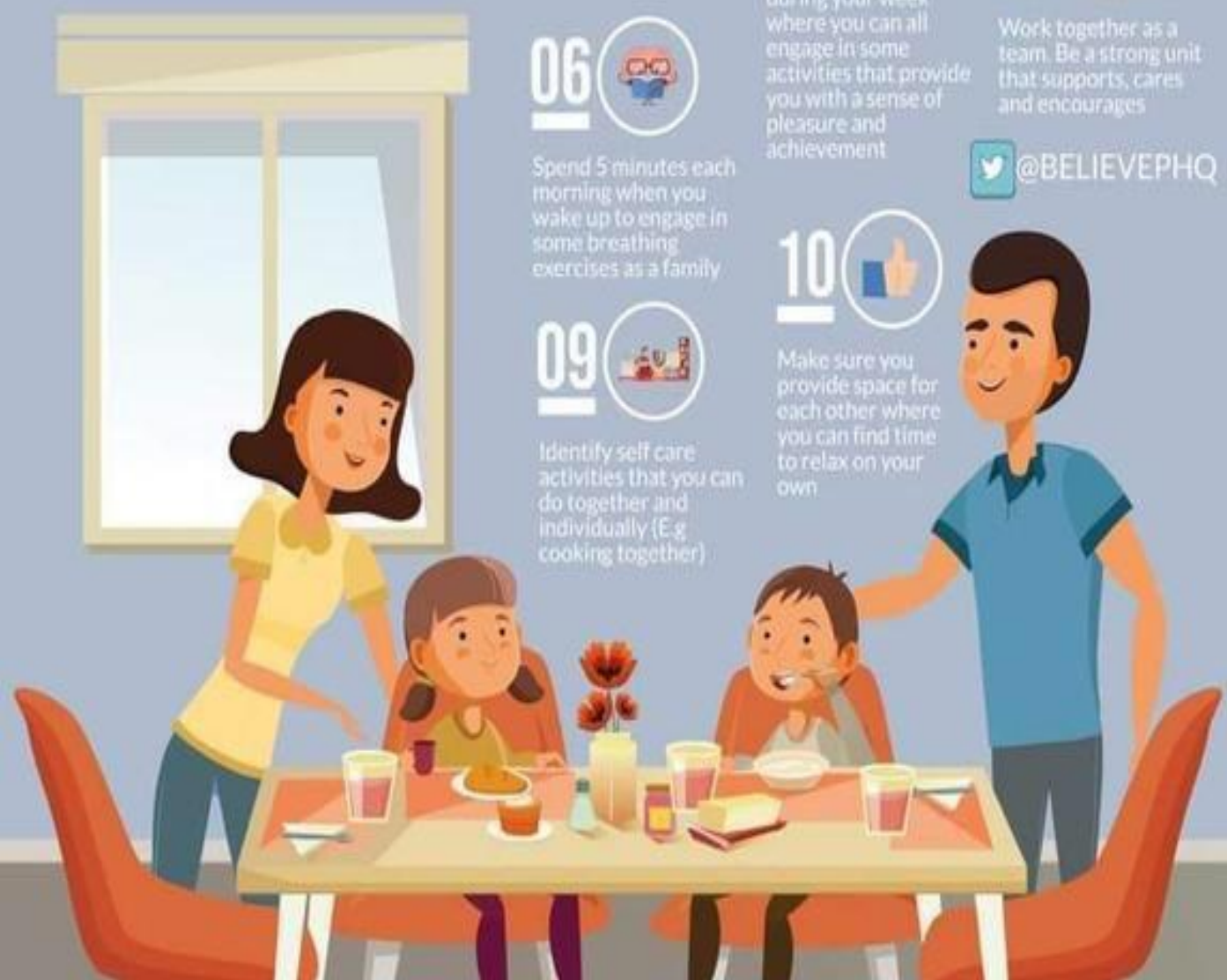
Identify self care activities that you can do together and individually (E.g. cooking together).



10

Make sure you provide space for each other where you can find time to relax on your own.

 @BELIEVEPHQ



Activity 1



This is the alien Maz who has come to Earth to discover more about people, and today wants to learn all about feelings.

Can you draw or write what feelings you know? You could just draw the faces showing different feelings.

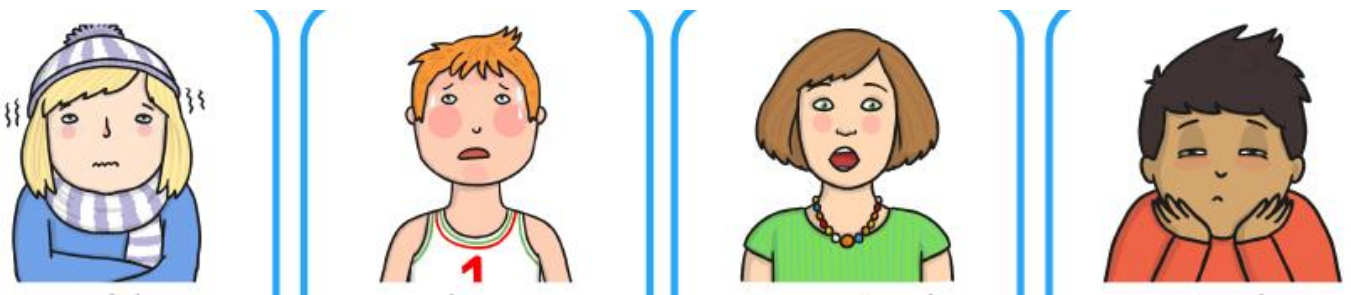
Can you show Maz what different feelings look like on your face?

We all have different feelings – some we might feel every day, and others just sometimes. Our feelings can come and go, and change over time.

Activity 2

Can you label the feeling pictures with the right words?

Can you think of a time when you felt this way or read a book or saw a TV programme showing that feeling?



cold

happy

sad

embarrassed

shocked

upset



angry

hot

tired

worried

Activity 3

How do I feel about....	Happy 	Sad 	Not sure
Eating sweets			
Being in the dark			
Seeing my friends			
Playtime at school			
Seeing a spider			
Getting wet in the rain			
Not going to school			

Hearing a favourite song			
Cuddling a teddy			
The sun shining			
Breaking my best toy			
Not being allowed to play with my toys			

Activity 4

Below draw or write when something has made you feel that emotion.



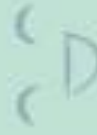








When something has made you feel **sad**.

When something has made you feel **happy**.

When something made you feel **angry**.

CAN YOU COMPLETE THE 7 DAYS OF KINDNESS CHALLENGE?

7 DAYS OF KINDNESS

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
BEING KIND TO OTHERS	 <p>BEHIND A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER OF A NICE MEMORY YOU HAVE TOGETHER</p>	<p>HELP TIDY UP</p> 	 <p>TELL SOMEONE A JOKE</p>	<p>BE KIND, PATIENT AND SHARING WITH YOUR BROTHER/ SISTER/ CLASSMATE</p>	<p>GIVE 3 COMPLIMENTS TODAY</p> 	 <p>MAKE A CARD OR GIFT FOR SOMEONE</p>	<p>ASK A LOVED ONE HOW THEY ARE AND LISTEN CAREFULLY</p>
BEING KIND TO MYSELF	<p>WRITE DOWN 3 THINGS YOU'RE PROUD OF (SMALL OR BIG)</p> 	<p>LISTEN TO A SONG THAT MAKES YOU FEEL HAPPY</p> 	 <p>TRY OUT A MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content;">(TRY ONE OF THESE)</div>	<p>GIVE YOURSELF 3 COMPLIMENTS</p> 	<p>EAT SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD</p> 	<p>SPEND SOME TIME ON YOUR FAVOURITE HOBBY</p> 	<p>PLAY A FUN GAME WITH YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY</p>

Counting breaths

1-2-3

- Encourage the children to focus on their breathing by counting the number of 'in' breaths and 'out' breaths.
- "I am breathing in 1, I am breathing out 1, I am breathing in 2, I am breathing out 2...". Encourage them to continue do this until they reach number 10.

Attitude of gratitude



- Ask the children to focus on their breathing. If they want to, they can close their eyes.
- Encourage them to think of one thing that they are grateful for and encourage them to keep this image in their mind.
- Ask them to notice any feelings or sensations that arise.
- Continue this for a few minutes.
- You could also run this as a writing activity, using the following sentence starters:
 - Something I am grateful for today is...
 - The best thing that happened today was...
 - Something I did well today was...
 - I'll make the rest of the day great by...

Using the senses

- Remind the children of the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting).
- In this order, ask children to focus on one sense at a time, noticing:
 - Five things they see
 - Four things they hear
 - Three things they smell
 - Two things they can touch
 - One thing they can taste
- By focusing on one sense at a time, children will be able to reduce their anxiety.



Colour breathing

- Ask the children to sit or stand in a comfortable position. They can close their eyes if they wish.
 - Ask the children to imagine their favourite colour, or a colour which helps them to feel calm.
 - They are now going to take a breath in and imagine that they are breathing in this colour.
 - As they breathe out, they are going to imagine blowing a bubble made of this colour.
- You can repeat this process for a few minutes and encourage the children to see if they can take longer, slower, deeper breaths (both in and out) and blow larger imaginary bubbles.

Birthday cake breathing

- Ask the children to sit in a chair and place their hands on their bellies.
- Ask them to make their left hand into a fist and to imagine that this is a cake.
- Ask them to inhale, pretending to smell the cake.
- Ask them to exhale, pretending to blow out the candle.
- Continue this for a few minutes.



Feather breathing



- If you can provide real feathers or cotton wool for this activity, that would be great. Otherwise, children can use their imagination.
- Ask the children to sit comfortably on a chair and imagine that there is a feather or ball of cotton wool in front of them. If they have a feather or cotton wool they can place this in one of their hands and hold their hand out in front of them.
- Then ask them to breathe in through their nose and breathe out slowly through their mouth, in order to make the object float.
- Repeat this a few times.

Finger counting



- Ask the children to sit or stand in a comfortable position and to hold one of their hands out.
- Explain that as they breathe in for five counts, they will place each finger into the palm of their hand, until their hand makes a fist.
- As they breathe out for five counts, they will uncurl each of their fingers.
- Keep counting aloud for the children and repeat this activity for a few minutes.

slimy hands

- Ask the children to imagine that they have a ball of slime in the palm of each hand.
- They are going to squeeze the slime as hard as they can as they breathe in.
- They then breathe out and open their hands, imagining that the slime has spread across their hands.
- Repeat this a few times.