



JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS

Parent Support Sheets

Lesson 5: Self – Esteem

Lesson Summary:

In class today, the children were introduced to a video called “The Cup of Love”, where they discussed ways of filling other’s cups, as well as their own. We also played games to help children build their self-esteem through thinking about things that make them special.

Try It At Home Activity: “Cup of Love”

The video “A Cup of Love” was used as part of this lesson [See Lesson 5 Try It At Home Sheet]. This helps your child/the child in your care to visualise how every act of kindness they make is like “filling a cup” with love for others and for themselves. Talk to your child/the child in your care about ways they can keep their cup full.

Dr. Malie and Linsey’s Top Tips:

Parental Self-Compassion – Lotus of Self-Care

All parenting begins with you. How you see yourself as a parent has a huge bearing on how your child/the child in your care will see you and how they view themselves, as **you are a mirror to their feelings about themselves**. If we want our children to love and accept themselves, we need to model this for them first, by committing to **being a good friend to ourselves**.

Having children pushes us to look at ourselves and our emotional baggage, but also affords us an incredible opportunity to grow as parents and as human beings. **Working on yourself** is one of the best investments you can make for you and your child/the child in your care. We encourage parents to **seek support from loved ones or professional support** if you find self-compassion difficult.

To be a calm, loving and empathic parent, **you need to take good care of yourself and fill your cup**. Parental self-care is about recognising your feelings and taking the time you need to restore balance, so you have something to give to the many roles you play in your life.

When we are feeling overwhelmed, we are less able to compassionately respond to our children’s big feelings. However, if we **take a proactive approach to nurturing our self-care**, we build the reserves to take on the daily challenges of parenting.

Malie has developed a “**Lotus of Self-Care**” exercise for parents, which focuses on 5 areas of self-care (i.e., physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social) and asks parents what they are already doing in each area, and what they would like to do more of. Here is the link: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:ad644ada-da17-4ed3-85da-d8c104fea0db>

Inner Kindness Voice – Affirmation Cards

We all speak to ourselves unkindly sometimes, which has huge power over how we feel about ourselves and our wellbeing. Just like adults, many children have a harsh inner critic, like an “inner bully”. We can help children to become aware of their inner bully voice and introduce them to their kinder inner voice, by cultivating self-compassion using affirmations.



Affirmations are statements that help us to overcome our “inner bully” thoughts and visualise and create positive changes in our lives. Affirmations are the perfect way to let children **know their true value** and **be a good friend to themselves**. Making affirmation cards with your child/ the child in your care is a good way of encouraging them to speak more kindly to themselves.

Create affirmations to suit the needs of your own child. Affirmations such as “*I’m just right*”, “*I’m loved*” or “*I’m safe*” will work well for most children. Once you’ve picked a few, get some small pieces of card and write an affirmation on each one. Be as creative as you like! Next, ask your child/ the child in your care to draw a picture or stick some images on it.

As children repeat their affirmations, it can also be helpful to encourage them to use self-soothing touch, by giving themselves a little hug or putting their hand on their heart.

You can repeat positive affirmations with your child/the child in your care at any time of the day or when they’re feeling worried about something. You could pop some affirmation cards in their school bag that they could use during the day as an anchor to being “held in mind” by you. It can also be nice to make a larger affirmation card to stick on your child’s bedroom wall.

Here are a few more tips for building your child/the child in your care’s self-esteem:

1. Show your child/the child in your care lots of affection everyday, and tell them what you love about them.
2. Show a real interest in them and spend time on the things they enjoy, as it gives them the message “You are worth my time. You are a valuable person”.
3. Model self-compassion: Filling your cup will encourage your child/the child in your care to do the same.

Resources:

- The above illustration is from Louise Shanagher’s “Magic Words Cards” available here: <https://www.creative-mindfulness.com/magic-words-cards>
- A great book that teaches helpful self-kindness tools in a very simple and child-friendly way is Fiona Forman’s “Self-Kindness for Kids: Whizzo-Voice to the Rescue”: <https://www.otb.ie/shop/emotional-issues-sphe/self-kindness-for-kids/>