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Creativity, Communication and Connection: A Therapeutic Toolkit for parents to support young people

You can't use up creativity.
The more you use, the more you have!
- Maya Angelou


Patricia Ojeihonmon and Emily Rothson
Dramatherapists, Battersea MHST

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Plan for today's workshop

- Challenges families are facing
- What is creativity?
- The benefits of creativity for young people
- The development of the adolescent brain
- Why does creativity matter for emotional wellbeing, communication and learning
- Therapeutic tools focusing on different areas – expressing feelings, embodiment and focus/relaxation
- Q&A
- Online Feedback



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Don't worry about taking notes!



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CURRENT CHALLENGES



- Lack of stimulation
- Uncertainty
- Emotion dysregulation
- Limited social connection
- Change in behaviour
- Change of routine
- Mix of environments
- Prolonged times together
- Limited space
- Hopes and expectations lost/changed

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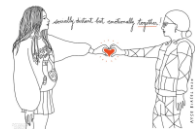
What is Creativity?



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Why be creative during a pandemic?



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'Together we face Corona'

An online exhibition



"Life is just a palette" blogspot – Samaa Al Alir

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Using Creativity to Support Emotional Wellbeing



- Art
- Music
- Movement
- Stories



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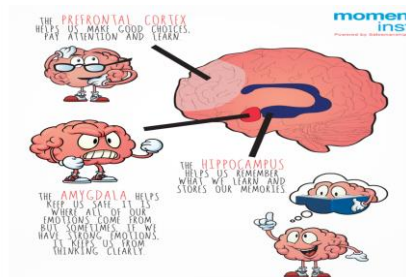
"Young people need a way to process and make sense of their experiences, but as neuroscience shows us, **simply talking about problems often isn't enough**. That's where the power of creativity becomes an essential healing tool, because it offers the means for young people to 'work things out' as well as expressing their feelings and telling their stories". Lenn Sissay



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The Adolescent Brain – General



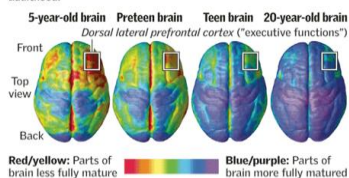
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The Adolescent Brain

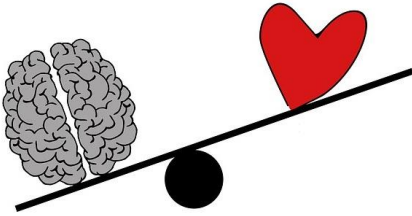
Judgment last to develop

The area of the brain that controls "executive functions" — including weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses — is among the last to fully mature. Brain development from childhood to adulthood:



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The Importance of Emotional & Sensory Regulation



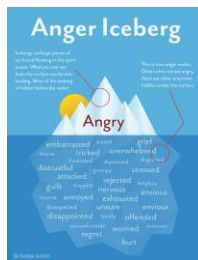
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THERAPEUTIC COMMUNICATION



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CURIOUS CONVERSATION



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4 TIPS FOR MAKING ANGER MORE PRODUCTIVE

1. Understand what triggered you
2. Identify what's going on underneath
3. Help yourself feel calmer
4. Channel your energy

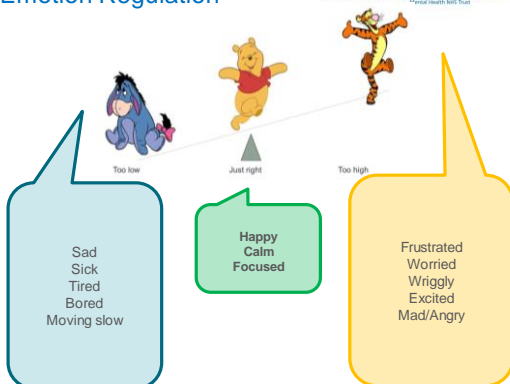
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REFLECTIVE CONNECTION



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Emotion Regulation



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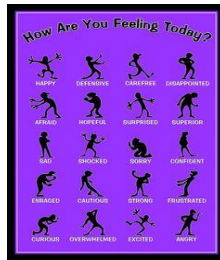
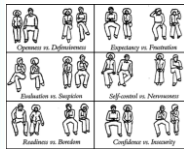


CALM & FOCUS

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EMBODIMENT



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FEELINGS X-RAY



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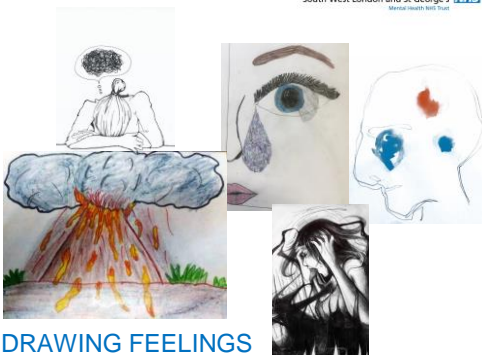
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MUSIC

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DRAWING FEELINGS

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EXPLORING EMOTIONS USING OBJECTS

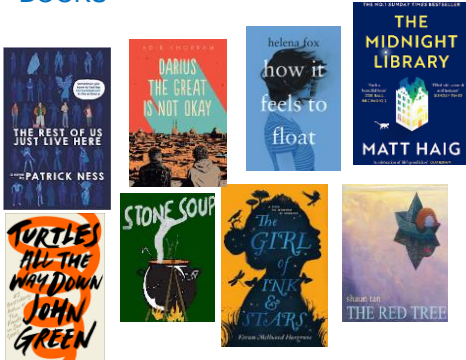


Find some objects to represent a fear or anxiety, place them together to create an image and take a photo if you'd like to.

Projecting fears and anxieties onto something concrete, so that they may 'see' it from a safe distance.

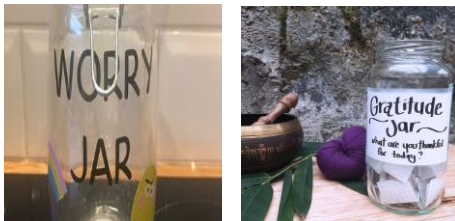
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BOOKS



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CONTAINMENT



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TEENAGE JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What's the best song you've ever heard?
- **What calms you down when you're feeling upset or angry?**
- What is the best compliment someone has ever given to you?
- **Discuss your happiest memory**
- What is something or someone in your life that you feel you can't live without?
- **Describe your most exciting life experience**
- What is the most challenging thing you've ever faced in your life?
- **If you become a parent, what will you do differently from your parent(s)?**
- Talk about a piece of advice given by a adult that you feel is entirely wrong. Why do you feel that way?
- **Describe how music impacts your life**
- Describe what you think your life will be like in ten years
- **What is one thing you feel you do really well?**

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Relaxation Cards

Create Relaxation Cards:

Find pictures or photos which make you feel relaxed just by looking at them.

Or

Draw or write about things that make you feel relaxed just by looking or reading them

Make 3 cards that are small enough and strong enough to fit into your pocket, for example the size of a credit card.



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If you would like further help

- The SWLSTG Children and Young People's Wellbeing Service offers parent guided self-help sessions for common behavioural difficulties and managing anxiety in children and we work with YP with mild to moderate low mood or anxiety.
- DT is offered on a termly basis rotating through all the Battersea Cluster Schools.
- If you feel your YP needs more support please speak to the Mental Health Lead at your child's school or email : wandsworthwp@swlstg.nhs.uk
- We also have a Youtube channel with videos and webinars:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrRKV84lb8Jr69Z7ZhjSjCg>

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Further resources

Apps

- Calm (for adults but some useful tools for young people)
- ThinkNinja (10-18)
- Molehill Mountain (ASD)

Young Minds (website and parent/carer advice helpline 0808 802 5544)

Good-thinking.uk – Mental Health Support for London

[Videos: Dan Siegel - "The Adolescent Brain" - YouTube](#)

[Sarah-Jayne Blakemore: The mysterious workings of the adolescent brain - YouTube](#)

Art Therapy activity for anxiety, grounding and mindfulness (an example, there are lots of others online):

<https://youtu.be/GMSC95hEj2w>

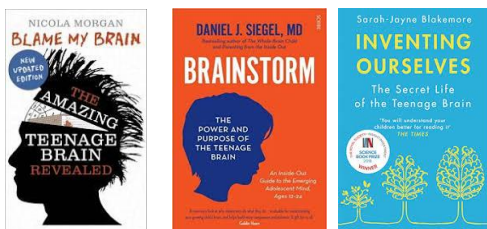
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Books about creativity for Teens



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Books about the Teenage Brain



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Questions