

Children's Mental Health Week 5th – 11th February 2024

My Voice Matters



BCCS

a children's charity for
Essex and East London

Children's exercise (to be done in class)

It goes without saying that is important that children feel listened to by us. If they have enough good experiences of being heard, they are likely to be able to empathise with others, and to engage positively in relationships. Why? Because we are born primed to relate, so some theories suggest, and relating with others is a two-way street. Some children who don't believe in their own self-efficacy, struggle with relating. They don't hold the belief that **their voice matters**.

How can you help? There are so many ways you can raise the self-esteem of a child or young person. Being curious, listening intently, following up on conversations had, and showing interest consistently are all helpful building blocks in showing a child that you hold them in your thinking.



Group Activity

We'd love to hear your feedback if you try this activity with your class. Feel free to do it in smaller groups or as a whole class. You may need to set the tone and be clear about expectations so that children feel safe enough to talk. Good boundary introduction will help, such as ensuring everyone is listening respectfully when someone talks.

Can they draw a self-portrait of themselves. Whilst they draw, you can ask them the questions overleaf and invite them to either tell you about it, or create 'bubbles' around their picture:



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BCCS, 133 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9AB

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society - Registered Charity Number: 1000661

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Group Activity (continued)

- Who do you matter to?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would others describe you?
- Who supports you?
- What helps you relax?
- Who understands you best?
- Who loves being around you?
- What are you good at?
- What are you most interested in?
- What kind of friend are you?
- Who would you talk to if you felt sad/angry/worried?



Then, in terms of school-focused discussion, allow discussion around what they might like to change/what they feel they could do differently/what their experience of school is:

- If I were a class teacher I would ...
- If I were a headteacher I would ...
- If I were a teaching assistant, I would ...

These open-ended questions will evidence your curiosity towards pupils, which, in turn should allow them to be curious about themselves and will invite self-reflection. It will also, most importantly, show them you're interested to know more about them.

Stand-alone exercise, whilst informative, tend to fade into the background. Revisiting discussions a week or so after you've had them will show children that you're interested and keen to build on what you now know about them.



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