

Welcome back!

As promised here is another one of the drivers behind writing TVoBH I'd like to share with you.

A great challenge our children face is the rise in machines powered by Artificial Intelligence.

We know that Artificial Intelligence has already changed the world, quickly and profoundly.

We also know that machines and robots will replace 800 million current jobs by 2030.

Manufacturing will no longer be the “big engine” to create jobs, but all is far from doom and gloom.

And yes, our phones and devices will always be faster and more reliable than us, because we've designed them to do this.

And, they will get better and better.

But, here's the thing!

Just last year an incredibly more effective seasonal flu vaccine was completely designed by an Artificial Intelligence program.

It screened hundreds of billions of compounds and ultimately identified a supportive compound which was tested and put into a new vaccine.

The program was set to work and ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 6 months to unlock the science.

What an achievement for AI, but the most treasured resource was the inspiration, intuition, ingenuity and tenacity embodied in the human collaboration of scientists and technicians at Flinders University.

When all is said and done, AI will never usurp our humanness.

It is the human qualities around connections and collaborative skills we must highlight, teach and develop in our young people.

And, I must share that this same team is very quietly working on a COVID19 vaccine here in Adelaide with the same innovation and collaboration.

Without fanfare they are well into their human trials.

Let's get to Chapter 5:

How times have changed.

Today we talk openly, and frequently, about how to grow EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, how to create environments that nurture it and appeal to resilient mindsets.

We are at the beginning of this new journey in schools, and it's gathering momentum globally.

How invested are some schools in developing emotional intelligence and social and emotional literacy?

What I'm about to read features on the first page of this chapter.

It's written by Toni Burford, the principal at Lobethal Primary School.

"Our Cocoon Room is purpose-built.

It's filled with emotional self-regulating and Interoception equipment and strategies.

Over time, we trained all staff and students how to use it. It has been transformative.

We took this approach due to increasing numbers of students who were unable to handle their BIG feelings.

We had children overreacting; running away, tipping furniture over and tantruming when situations did not go their way.

In recent years, our enrolment grew to include 10% of students with disabilities, predominantly ASD.

My days were hectic putting out grassfires, withdrawing students from classes, contacting parents and counselling stressed students and teachers.

During this time our teachers, who are dedicated, were finding it difficult to meet students' higher-level emotional needs.

I could see the potential in using mindfulness-styled strategies to support them.

These students, however, needed guided practice and rehearsal with an adult when they were calm so they could embed this practice.

I won a grant.

Then I recruited a new staff member with experience in working with students with challenging behaviour, as well as a background in positive mental health and wellbeing. Ashlee has been essential in pulling this together.

The grant allowed us to initially target 8 students.

The training then became systematic, ongoing, and a whole team approach.

Ashlee worked with these targetted students in pairs, 3 times a week for about 30 minutes on guided activities to develop self-regulation.

She also worked in the classrooms of the targeted students to rehearse the strategies with the whole class and to upskill the class teacher.

All teachers began to use the same strategies within their classrooms.

We continue to collect data and it tells us the difference in students being able to self-manage their feelings is dramatic.

This now permits everyone to focus on our core business; learning.

In combination with a dedicated space, each teacher has developed a peaceful corner in their classroom.

As well, they actively teach students how to self-manage their emotions on an everyday basis.

The next few photos are from Lake Windemere PS at Salisbury North who are using a similar approach.

So, what am I beginning to touch on here?

The importance of building a safe, emotionally connected space.

We humans are wired for both social and emotional connections.

When this connection occurs, there's a deep difference to how we feel, how we feel about others, our readiness to learn, our resilience and to our mind health.

When we're with people we like, who like us and encourage us – we grow!

Good mental health are all about opportunities to CONNECT, CONTRIBUTE and to feel CAPABLE.

In this space we commit to 'live and coach' the skills linked to emotion, behaviour, self-awareness, satisfaction, identity, challenge and resilience.

Educators who teach in this space constantly revisit Dan Siegel's brain-hand model with their students.

I love this model as it links emotion to behaviour. It offers a powerful understanding of our precious human condition.....

What we've just done is powerful. We know from brain imaging studies that this knowledge helps direct our attention to areas that help activate the regions capable of supporting us.

And, with practice, every child (even us) can improve the emotional function of our brain.

We know that for a fact.

Working with an emotional bias means we can seamlessly introduce James Nottingham's learning pit to students.

This is a clever analogy that explores our feelings when faced with new learning.

As we take on new challenge, we often feel uncertain, even uncomfortable, and he says it's like descending into a pit

Although challenge is necessary for valuable learning to occur, feeling 'uncomfortable' is not a feeling many will tolerate today.

Instead, they'll give up and find something to distract them, because they are frightened of the uncomfortable feeling or the prospect of not succeeding in the first instance.

We explain to students that when the learning gets hard and they feel stuck, we want them to persist, and ask for help.

We reassure them that this stuck feeling is normal for deep learning.

You want them to think, to take learning risks, to feel 'uncomfortable', to persist, to fail sometimes, regroup emotions and ultimately succeed.

I was in a classroom as a group of 11-year-old students returned from lunch.

Expertly, they filed past a series of pockets on the wall. Each pocket had the name of a student on it and contained 12 different emojis.

Within a few moments, every class member had deftly chosen an emoji that represented how they were feeling and placed it on a Velcro tag next to their name.

Lastly, with all eyes on her, their teacher did the same!

The class began to read silently, and the teacher made her way around the classroom, touching base and quietly chatting with several students about how they were feeling.

Similarly, another teacher I work with has six emotions in large print, on a pin-up board. Across the bottom of the pin-up board are small photos of each student in the class. Students move their photos to represent how they are feeling throughout the day.

What powerful tools to give children a voice, express their feelings and understand their emotions matter to us.

In a study in 2016, Jennifer Fane from Flinders University concluded that emojis, and various options to capture emotions, offer a significant social and emotional support tool to all.

Strictly speaking, feelings and emotions are different.

They are often described as being on different sides of the same coin.

Emotions are responses to change that are hard-wired in our brains.

Emotions usually proceed feelings.

Feelings are the physical sensations we experience.

And, there are about 4,000 feelings words to describe these eight emotional states.

The research has made us aware that the more we engage children in talking about emotions and naming them, the more we strengthen their emotional competence.

A basic start is to challenge your group, to name 20 or 30 or 50 'feelings' words.

Go fast and record every feeling word they say.

Build up a feelings vocabulary as part of your classroom talk.

Make posters to highlight this!

Ask your group, 'Do we experience just one feeling at a time?'

They'll tell you, "No, we can experience different feelings at the same time."

Yes, that's right! Having to process too many feelings, too fast leads to feeling overwhelmed and that's what triggers a meltdown or tantrum.

Next ask; “Tell me a time when you were proud, embarrassed and happy in the same moment.” Students adore this!

Continue by placing 3, 4 or 5 tricky emotions together and ask students to construct a narrative based on these.

What about this person on screen?

He’s just experienced three feelings in the same moment.

Use your imagination, name them and tell his story.

Students of all ages will meet the challenge!

For younger children we play, “Guess the feeling on the face?”

Vary the number of faces based on your group’s age and sophistication

Ask them to work in pairs or groups of 3.

I’d like you to have a go at this right now.

Quickly draw the 10 faces on screen by drawing the 10 circles on a page.

Next, I want you to write the feeling each is expressing next to them.

I’ll give you a few minutes to do this together. Good luck!

Pause the video for a while

>>>>>>>>>>Wait while they work together >>>>>>>>>>

Are you ready?

Let's compare mine with yours!

Did my feelings words match yours?

There's probably not a perfect match and this opens the way to talk about the sheer choice within our feelings vocabulary.

Often there's not a wrong or right – it's a personal choice!

Step it up, and play a game I call, "Guess what I'm feeling like?"

As you know, our voice in combination with facial expressions and body language communicates our feelings to others.

In this game, each student must secretly choose a feeling from a 'feelings list'.

For beginners, the 'feelings list' might focus on just four feelings that you've worked with together.

For older students, increase the challenge and encourage them to choose from a more extensive 'feeling list'.

When it's their turn they may stand, or sit or move about, but the most important thing is that they show that feeling by using their face and body as great clues. No words are required.

This is great fun for people of all ages. Groups always ask to play several rounds.

A handy tip – you go first and model how it's done.

I have 2 for you! ... Boredom... Anxious...

Let's continue to connect feelings and facial expressions.

In this activity, you'll need to link the face to one of the feelings words on the right of the screen.

Are you ready. Here's the first!

Which of the 10 feelings best match the facial expression, and why?

CLICK ... here's your next.

CLICK ... and another. I think this one's easy

CLICK ... Oh this one may be one of the hardest feelings for people to deal with. Can you name it?

CLICK ... and the last. What feeling is this face expressing?

Next, I'd like you to meet, Grace.

Let's have some fun reading Grace's feelings from her face!

Here she is in four different emotional states.

To warm up, name each of them?

Grace 1 – read from slide.

Grace and Lauren first met at Kindy. They've always been the best of friends.

They do a lot together at school, and at home.

Today, they've both arrived at the park for a play together.

How is Lizzy feeling?

Choose an image to show this

Use 6 possible feelings words

Grace 2 – read from slide.

Just as they start to play, Lauren says, 'Hey , Grace, you know the new girl at school called Sara? Well, I asked her to come and play with us here. She's so much fun and I want her to start playing with us sometimes.' Grace doesn't know what to think.

She doesn't know Sara. Sara isn't her friend. She wished Lauren had said something earlier.

How is Lizzy feeling?

Choose an image to show this

Use 6 possible feelings words

Grace 3 – read from slide.

Soon Sara arrives and starts to play with Lauren. Grace notices that they are having a lot of fun together.

They are running, laughing, climbing and holding hands.

She can see that Lauren is so happy playing with Sara and wonders if there's any space for friendship left.

How is Lizzy feeling?

Choose an image to show this

Use 6 possible feelings words

Grace 4 – read from slide.

Next, Lauren runs towards Grace, grabs her hand and says, 'Grace, come on. I want Sara to play with you too. It's no fun playing without you! You know you're my closest friend!'

How is Lizzy feeling?

Choose an image to show this

Use 6 possible feelings words

Next, print this list of 'feelings words' on to card.

Get students to work in small groups and cut out each feelings word from their set.

Ask them to arrange the cards in a ladder formation, just like on screen.

Place the most pleasant feeling at the top of the ladder (they may be proud, excited, relieved) and the trickiest feeling to deal with at the bottom of the ladder (perhaps shame, lonely, disappointed).

Organise the rest so they progress from the more enjoyable, easier to navigate, feelings through to neutral feelings then on to the most challenging. To do this you can lay them on the floor, a desk or fasten them to a large poster sheet.

Use group consensus to make decisions. It will spark some rich conversations.

Finally, ask each group to draw a line through the middle of the ladder where the easier, more enjoyable feelings' give way to the 'trickier type feelings'. We try not to use the expression – good and bad feelings because all feelings have a legitimate place in life.

Interestingly, boredom is usually identified as the first of the trickier feelings.

We must talk to our kids about their boredom!

Boredom is a normal human emotion and has a rightful place.

Pose these statements to your students and elicit their response –

“There is nothing good about being bored”

“Boredom is a valuable teacher, because ...”

Yes, boredom is a valuable teacher as it helps us to learn to be by ourselves, to plan, to daydream, to imagine and ignite seeds of creativity, to mooch and muse about things and to reconstruct past experiences to build better futures.

Big feelings feel like everything is at stake, and they'll last forever.

The truth is that all feelings come and go.

An ideal way to illustrate this is to use a bubble blowing kit with students.

What a perfect metaphor to show that feelings are as transient as bubbles.

Get a bubble making kit for each student.

Together, blow a bubble and assign a feeling to it.

And, if you are thinking that this is an activity just for littlies, you couldn't be more wrong. Every year too many adolescents impulsively harm themselves, or take their lives because they have not learnt to deal with the trickiest of feelings around disappointment, rejection, shame and loss.

They have not absorbed one vital fact. That is, feelings come and go.

Make this activity an annual event for them!

Teach all your students – at every age - to wait 24 hours before acting on any feeling that's tricky, tragic or disastrous.

By deliberately pre-planning to not act on a problem for 24 hours we buy time for our brains to reset and reconsider.

We also build in time to talk to one or two trusted people to compare their thinking with our own.

Often, within 24 hours, we've moved past the initial emotional high-point and have calmed enough to make a much wiser decision.

This practice can be literally lifesaving!

We share with young people that how 'academic smart' you are, only reflects one sort of intelligence.

There are other intelligences, and one of the most important types is emotional intelligence (EQ).

It's the way a person understands the emotions of others, as well as how resiliently they deal with their own emotions.

Think of emotional intelligence as being 'people-smart'.

Some people have naturally good EQ skills.

And, if you don't yet, you can improve them!

Multiple Intelligences 'Self-Assessment Quizzes' are not perfect or definitive, but are useful to better understand our unique ways of learning and knowing.

Here's an activity that will give your students an insight to their 'people-smart' skills, and show others how to do this.

The research illustrates that when young people participate in group conversations and analyse the behaviour and emotions of others, they develop their "social and emotional mind-reading" abilities. In other words they further develop their 'people reading skills'.

Here's a very short story.

It's late on a Saturday afternoon and Jade is curled up on the couch.

She's just started to watch a great movie loaned to her by a friend.

Dad comes in and says he's had some brilliant and unexpected news.

It's so good that he wants to take everyone out to a favourite restaurant for dinner.

Jade starts complaining that it's a stupid idea to go out because she wants to watch this movie, and that's what she'd planned.

She carries on and on. She refuses to go.

Her mum, dad and younger brother quickly give in to her.

Instead dad and her brother make spaghetti bolognese while she keeps watching her movie alone.

When dinner is ready, Jade pauses the movie, grabs her dinner, jumps back on the couch and continues to watch the movie.

The rest of the family have dinner together at the table.

Let's test your 'empathic skills' by getting you to answer these questions.

As soon as I finish each question, see if you have an answer!

- **How would you describe Jade's reaction to dad?**
- **How was Jade feeling? Name 4 of her feelings.**
- **Did she show empathy towards dad?**
- **Give 3 possible reasons that may explain her behaviour?**
- **Name 2 ways Jade could have handled this better?**
- **While Jade insisted she watch her movie, what did her dad and brother do?**
- **Who missed out on what?**
- **Her mum and dad did not fight her. What does this suggest to you?**
- **Come up with 3 reasons why mum and dad have learnt not to fight her.**

This time I want you to become a FEELINGS DETECTIVE, but we'll approach the task differently.

If you hear a feeling that you think Jade felt, stand up and sit down."

Don't let me trick you!

***Jade felt...* Happy, Jealous, Kind, Nervous, Sad, Sulky, Surprised, Worried, Angry, Brave, Disappointed, Excited**

Let's change it up. This time let's be a 'FEELINGS DETECTIVE from Dad's point of view.

If you hear a feeling that you think Dad felt, stand up and sit down."

Happy, Kind, Flattered, Proud, Sad, Scared, Surprised, Upset, Angry, Fed up, Disappointed, Excited

Each of us experiences 'physical sensations' in our bodies that are connected to our 'feelings'.

For example, something that makes us upset is likely to bring on the sensation of tearing up.

Similarly, it's common to feel 'a lump in the throat' and 'a racing heartbeat' when facing a fearful circumstance.

These physical warning signals alert us to the problems at hand.

The message says, it's time to think, and be careful about what we do next.

Learning to understand these signals prevents taut emotions from being stretched too far and causing us to do things we may regret in the heat of that moment.

Let's play! I'll call out a FEELING.

Your job is to think of a typical 'EARLY WARNING SIGN' that likely runs with this FEELING. If you were here with me I'd get you to call them out!

Are you ready?

I feel upset - what might an 'early warning sign' be? ... a lump in throat

I feel bored - what might an 'early warning sign' be? feeling sleepy or heavy

I feel stressed - what might an 'early warning sign' be?

I feel nervous - what might an 'early warning sign' be?

I feel really scared - what might an 'early warning sign' be?

I feel embarrassed - what might an 'early warning sign' be?

Invite students to draw their 'early warning signals'.

The version on screen is available from the website.

Assign a different FEELING to each student and ask them to creatively draw their 'early warning signal' for it.

Let's move into resilience building.

Here are five statements about resilience.

Some are FACTS and others are MYTHS.

Stand up if you believe the statement is a FACT.

Stay seated if you believe it is a MYTH.

1. Resilience is all about thinking positively.

It's a MYTH.

Thinking positively is important, but resilience also depends on optimism, humour, good relationships, cognitive flexibility, willingness to seek help and hope.

2. You are born with it.

This is a MYTH.

Resilience is developed by learning.

It's not a gene that people are born with.

3. Resilience is like following a recipe. If you follow it, you'll be resilient!

This is a MYTH too.

Resilience isn't a single skill or recipe.

4. Resilience is all about preparing for what might happen.

It's a MYTH because it's impossible to prepare for every event that may occur.

Resilient attitudes grow over time and are reflected in the way we respond to unforeseen situations with increasing confidence.

5. What doesn't kill you will make you stronger.

What rubbish.

People love to hear stories about others who've overcome hardship and thrived because of the tough experience.

Too much hardship, too early or too quickly can disable people, and that's a FACT.

It's true that a few people feel a sense of personal growth following a terrible event, but this growth happens because of the way in which this person chose to respond.

There are some fascinating qualities about resilience worth mentioning.

Firstly, none of us are born with it - ready, set to go!

It is a slowly learned capacity that is built through experiencing and working through the ups and downs of life.

And, resilience is not an all-encompassing quality either.

Think about yourself – there are some parts of your life where you are less self-assured, and our resilience can wane.

Yes, resiliency is a fickle quality, even for us supposedly hearty and well-adjusted adults!

Having a sense of realism alerts us to the fact that there are things we can and can't control in our lives.

Researchers have also found that those who develop a humorous insight into themselves and their performances always handle stressful situations so much better.

So, what if I stuff up doing this video today?

I'll remember the good bits I did. I'll smile and learn and to do better next time!

How resilient are you?

Here are a few questions for you and your students to discuss.

When you ask these questions of your students, be brave, and share your own answers,.

For some of these questions you can use a rating out of 5 and then answer it. (5/5=very resilient, 3/5=mostly, 1/5=not resilient, yet)

- **Are you an optimist or a pessimist?**
- **Do you think optimists are more resilient?**
- **When or where are you most resilient?**
- **When or where are you least resilient?**
- **How do you rate your mother's, father's, sisters' or brother's resilience? Compare theirs to yours and rate them.**
- **Are you more resilient now than you were when you were younger? What does that tell you?**
- **Do you choose friends who encourage your resilience and wellbeing? Why is this important?**

You may wish to turn your attention to online 'Resiliency surveys.'

Children's literature has long been a source to teach all sorts of concepts.

So, it's no surprise that the research stresses the value of using children's literature to build emotional awareness and resilience.

Stories assist us to showcase the challenges that people face and ways to cope, or even overcome them.

You can ask student;

- *What as the problem?*
- *Was it solved?*
- *Was it solved well?*
- *Would have you solved it that way?*
- *Are there other ways the problem could have been solved?*
- *Have you ever been in a situation like this?*
- *Can you call yourself resilient if you ask for support?*
- *Is there something in the story that leaves a special message for you?*

There are so many movies where a well-developed character encounters a hurdle; a big change, an injustice, a roadblock or a dilemma in their life.

Movies offer an appealing way to show children how to bounce back from adversity.

By watching and sharing thoughts, children can mentally rehearse the foundations to grow their own brand of resilience.

As well, support students to make their own movies.

Role-playing and film making expands emotional literacy too and the research tells us so!

These are engaging mediums allowing rehearsal, observation and the evaluation of the social and emotional skills in action.

And, when you think about it, there are few other ways where young people can watch them selves back and objectively evaluate their performance.

Just as we did with the concept of 'perseverance', whet your students' creativity by showing them a few images you've photographed, or taken from google images, that represent your take on resilience.

Set them a challenge to take their own photos, or collect images, that showcase 'resilience'.

It's an enjoyable task that can deliver big results.

Put aside time where students can share the images they've collected and discuss these.

Oh, the image on screen was collected by a student of mine.

He snapped this at his mother's work.

He says it's the most resilient plant in the world because every fortnight the cleaners at his mum's work cut it off, and 2 weeks later it's back, growing and looking as healthy as ever!

Or, support students to look at a range of 'sayings that highlight resilience' and share their favourites.

Ask, why particular sayings resonate with them and allow others to soak up their answers.

Get them to make their own resilience poster or a collage.

Inspire a group discussion about one of the quotes on screen

Greek mythology sees the phoenix as a mythical bird with the ability to bounce back, and rise from the ashes.

This, nicely symbolizes resilience.

Display a range of various phoenix images and encourage each student to choose one.

Google images will provide you with all the images you need.

Next ask them to add resilient statements, sayings and ideas on the sweeping tail feathers, such as –

- **“I can handle this”**
- **“Just one thing at a time”**
- **“This doesn’t have to get me down”**
- **“I’m smart enough to get through this” and so on.**

More resilient statements can be added throughout the year every time a student comes up with a new positive coping strategy.

It’s a great way to keep focus and a visual record of successes.

We can improve the resilience of some students by bringing a resilient close to their school day.

While this is a simple idea and a healthy habit, many will never use unless you actively teach it.

Before they leave school, ask them to hunt down the ‘good stuff’ from the day and say what it was.

Record one of their positive comments for them.

Next, ask them to share anything they felt was unkind, unfair or awful.

If something is raised record it for them.

Finally, ask them to rate their school day.

As you know, we work with young people who feel gloomy, sad or feel swamped by aspects of school.

Asking them to do this before leaving school places a full stop on the school day, so whatever has happened at school, can stay at school.

If something tricky is raised during this 60 second catch up, reassure them it will be followed up tomorrow, but they are to leave it here at school with you. Their job is to enjoy the rest of the day!

This is also an ideal way to collect data on the happiness of students, and the sorts of things that are impact on them both positively and negatively.

Let's turn our attention to developing emotional self-regulation in young, and not so young people.

Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's feelings effectively, particularly when under duress.

It is a foundation skill to exercise resiliency.

We also know difficulties with self-regulation are strongly related to emotional immaturity, trauma-based histories and disabilities.

We must never give the impression that these are skills we teach one day, and children will have them the next day.

From a developmental viewpoint, self-regulation takes much, much longer to develop than we like to think.

We have learned about the magic of slow, deep breathing.

It relaxes our brain just enough so the prefrontal cortex can stay online and help us to make rational decisions.

The problem is that it's too hard to experiment with new self-regulatory techniques when we're in the middle of being distraught.

So, the best way around this is to practice when we're in a more relaxed state of mind, every day.

The more we practice, the more adept our brains become at supporting us.

The message here for educators and parents is to embed these practices into the daily lives of young people.

Emotional self-regulation techniques, often bagged as Mindfulness, are tools that help us best manage frazzled feelings.

Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson in their book, The Whole-Brain Child introduced the idea that brains are a bit like a house, with an upstairs and a downstairs.

Enthuse older students to make up stories about the characters who live upstairs, and those who live downstairs.

Enjoy assigning nifty names to them!

Those who live upstairs are thinkers and positive problem-solvers.

There may be Positive Prisha, Thoughtful Tom or Steady Suzie.

They tend to plan, keep their emotions steady, as well as trying to be flexible and empathic.

To do this, they more naturally process their thoughts and feelings in their prefrontal cortex which governs deeper reasoning, insight and precaution. Even when under stress their prefrontal cortex stays online.

Those who live downstairs, however, feel their strong emotions kick in fast.

There's Fast Frankie, Screaming Scully and Runaway Ralph.

They sense change, challenge and differences as a threat, their personal alarm screams at them and they get ready to fight, run or hide. Sometime they'll 'flip their lid' because everything feels frightening.

Motivate students to draw their own pictures of their upstairs and downstairs brains.

Get them to draw a picture of themselves ‘flipping their lid’ and use captions to show what triggers the reaction and what happens when their amygdala becomes the boss of them!

This is a magical way to teach how things are processed neurologically.

For younger children, ‘Affirmation Weaver’ is a book by Lori Lite. It’s designed for children aged 6 to 10 years to develop optimistic patterns of thinking. It’s beaut to have in your toolkit!

Originally developed for young people on the Autism spectrum, ‘The incredible 5-point scale’ is restorative for everyone.

It helps us to identify and manage our feelings.

The approach coaches kids, of all ages, to identify how they feel, the intensity of the feeling, communicate it, and choose a possible solution.

It helps to put abstract information into a visible and measurable format that can become a part of their cognition.

Similarly, ‘The Zones of Regulation’, coaches young people to pay attention to how they’re feeling and regulate their actions accordingly.

Over time, this leads to increased emotional control and better problem-solving abilities.

This cognitive behaviour approach permits students to recognise which “zone,” they’re in, and these are represented by a different colour.

Students learn how to move to a preferred zone, and a toolbox of calming techniques, cognitive strategies and sensory supports are incorporated into the program too.

We always explain to kids that big emotions are not logical.

Consequently, one of the worst things we can do is to argue, or talk a child up, or down, or in, or out of anger or anxiety, when their downstairs brain is in charge of them. Yet, instinctively many of us do this!

Anyone who in this state is experiencing an emotional hijacking.

In other words, it is almost impossible for this child to process our well-intentioned advice.

Just being with them is enough.

One or two comforting words such as, “Sometimes it’s just really hard...” are enough.

You do not need to know all the answers just be there to connect.

It’s counter intuitive, but do not attempt to problem solve at this point.

This can only happen once the prefrontal cortex is back online with their upstairs brain.

Work with your student, or group, to choose just one or two of these mindfulness ideas.

When there are too many options to choose from, nothing gets chosen.

It is often useful to have a special place to retreat to where they can get away from triggers.

This might be a tent in the classroom, a specialised sensory room, or being in a soothing space with someone of their choice

This is not about isolating a young person, but respectfully giving them structure, space, time and dignity!

My experience in working with children and teens who experience anxious, anger and controlling issues is that most feel terrible after the event.

Generally, they are their own worst critics.

The key is finding acceptable ways to let this raw, unbridled emotion pass without placing themselves, others and property, at risk.

Once they've calmed, and feel steadier you might say, **"How's your heart feeling now?"**

This is such a deeply connecting question. It helps them tune back into their innate goodness that was stolen for a while.

This statement also let's them know that you understand and care. Then, as they leave say goodbye with, "Take care of your heart, okay?"

The research tells us we all do best when we have some autonomy over our situation.

And, a 'break card, or similar, is an effective way to do this.

To finish up, here are a few controlled breathing activities I use with kids and adolescents, who say, "I hate doing controlled breathing"

"It doesn't work for me."

I know you'll get it in a heartbeat.

Whether it's blowing a sheet of A-4 paper to each other across a desk, or blowing plastic cups or balls – it is controlled breathing and will deliver the same magic.

Here's a new cute one I recently came across, and it's for every age!

These little caterpillars are fun to build and fun to race.

And, the only way to race them is through controlled breathing.

And, what about the controlled breathing required to make these bubbles?

Check out the YouTube clip!

Nature journaling is about noticing what's happening in nature, drawing it and spending time in with it.

The practice plays beautifully into the hands of a mindfulness because it's an activity that slows our mind down by focussing our attention on the appreciation of nature

For total inspiration, Google images for 'Nature journaling'.

Here are 4 are popular controlled breathing activities used by many who work with children and adolescents.

You'll find each of them on YouTube with a simple explanation. Enjoy the success they can bring.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION is a method that reduces muscle tension.

Many of my clients like doing it and find it useful.

The technique encourages you to systematically tense up particular muscles and then relax them.

The result is doing this light engaging exercise, being in the moment and feeling less tense afterwards.

Don't forget, Angry Octopus.

It's an appealing story for younger children about managing anger by using progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing.

This one is also written by Lori Lite.

Then, there's the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 coping technique for anger, anxiety and anything in-between

5 - say to yourself 5 things you see around you.

4 - say to yourself 4 things you can touch near you.

3 - say to yourself 3 things you can hear in this moment.

2 - say to yourself 2 things you can smell near you.

1 - say to yourself 1 thing you can taste or like to taste.

To finish up I have just five points to make.

First, our children are dependent on our insight, knowledge and ability to wisely guide them towards healthier patterns of thinking.

No one strategy will work for every person in every situation.

This, of course, places an emphasis on getting to know a young person, and a desire to set up environments, conversations, activities, exercises and motivations to assist their transformation.

Second, give children opportunities to experience calculated risks and leadership.

As wise guides let's support them to step outside their comfort zone to encourage their growth.

It's ideal for them to feel challenged, and experience all the big and small feelings.

Third, lead young people to gain a realistic perspective about their lives.

An ideal way to do this is to get them to contribute to others.

To charities, aged-care homes and organisations that serve people who have tricky lives.

Teach that friendships is the best protection against sadness, despair and depression because, "A worry shared with a friend is a worry halved."

Fourth, actively coach your students to develop self-regulatory skills. Teach them Dan Segal's BRAIN-HAND MODEL so they have a real understanding of the link between brains, emotion and behaviour.

Finally, encourage every young person who comes your way to revel in their human capacities; showing kindness to others, and especially being kind to themselves.