



LifeSkills at Home

Dear Family,

Barnardo's have been working in partnership with Waltham Forest Council to deliver a programme called LifeSkills in your child's school. The LifeSkills Programme aims to develop children's emotional health and wellbeing.

In view of the recent school closures, we have created a document that provides some activities that children could complete, to continue to support their learning and provide opportunities for discussion around keeping emotionally well whilst at home.

Most of all, we hope that the activities are enjoyable and interesting!

Best wishes

Lesson 1 – Self-Image and Self-Improvement

Self-image means the beliefs and attitudes that we have about ourselves. Self-image is formed through our past experiences, our successes and failures, and what others think of us. Each of us is a complex individual and it takes more than just a few words to represent our total self-image. We tend to act like the person we believe ourselves to be – for example, if we believe ourselves to be bad athlete then we will tend to perform poorly at sports. Self-Image is important as it affects how good we feel about ourselves. People who feel good about themselves are more confident, satisfied, successful and do better in school than people who see themselves in a positive light. People who have a positive self-image are less likely to smoke, drink, use drugs or engage in other unhealthy activities.

We can develop a more positive self-image by focusing not only on what we do well but also on how we can do better. If we become more aware of our past successes then we can increase these in the future. Make sure you set goals for yourself that are realistic, manageable, measurable and meaningful to you.

Activities:

Draw a self-portrait. Inside the figure, write down adjectives or phrases that describe you. Eg. Competitive swimmer, calm during tests)

Draw a picture of you doing something you are really good at.

Set yourself a goal and make an action plan to complete it. Would you like to be able to learn to count to 10 in a new language? How about doing the splits?

Draw around your hand. In the palm, draw something you can do really well and on four fingers write something that you are good at (or something great about you) and on the thumb set yourself a personal goal.

Write your own autobiography or 'Life Story' and make a book. Attach pictures or draw them in.

Create a collage about yourself – cut and paste words and pictures from magazines that represent your favourite things and your personality.

Interview your family members about what makes them the same as you and what makes them different to you. What do you all have in common? What makes you unique?

Define these key words and use them in a sentence: self-image, attitude, beliefs

Lesson 2 – Making Decisions

Decision making is the act of making your mind up about something based on values, preferences and the beliefs of the decision maker. As people get older, they have to make decisions that are more and more complicated. Some decisions are made without much thought, while others require more time and conscious effort. It is important to make decisions independently, without being influenced by others.

The three main types of decisions are:

1. Simple choices (such as whether to eat chocolate or vanilla ice cream) can be decided based on what you like.
2. Everyday decisions (such as which clothes to wear) can be decided based on some thought about the possible consequences of each decision.
3. Major decisions (such as where to live) can be decided based on carefully thinking about the possible consequences of each decision.

To make decisions as well as possible, it helps to think about this three step method called the Three Cs of Effective Decision-making.

1. Clarify what decision you need to make.
2. Consider the possible alternatives (think about the different things you might decide to do) and the consequences of choosing each alternative. Collect any additional information that's needed.
3. Choose the best alternative for you and take the necessary action.

Pressure is trying to force someone to do something by using overpowering influence or persuasion. We are often influenced by group members because generally people want to be accepted by the group and not be considered outsiders, different or unpopular.

Activities:

Make a list of all of the decisions that you have already made today and discuss how you made those decisions.

Think up 10 situations that require a decision or involve a problem to solve. Then, practice using the 3C's method of making decisions. Some examples are below:

- A. Your best friend's birthday party is on the same day as your cousin's party. What should you do?
- B. Kieran must decide whether to join the football team or the hockey team. What should he do?
- C. Tom must decide whether or not to go camping with his youth club. He doesn't really like the dark. What should he do?
- D. Mia must choose between doing her homework or watching TV. What should she do?

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- E. Charlie must choose between buying a pair of jeans that are full price, or a top and a jacket that are on sale. What should they do?
- F. Anna wants to go to school but her friend Ali wants her to skip school, what should they do?

Put yourself in the shoes of the character of the book you are reading. Use the 3C's method to help you make decisions for the characters. Would you have done the same as them?

Play 'Would you rather?' to practice some quick decision making.

Create a poster to teach other people about the 3C's method of decision making.

Design a new Theme Park. You'll have lots of decisions to make!

Role play famous historical people making decisions. Should Guy Fawkes try to blow up Parliament? Should King Henry VIII get married again? Should the suffragettes campaign to get women the vote? You could rewrite history!

Imagine you have won the lottery. How would you spend the money?

Define these key words and use them in a sentence: decision, consequence, clarify, influence, pressure, persuasive tactics

Lesson 3 and 4 – Smoking

Smoking cigarettes can have certain effects on the body, such as breathing difficulties or lung cancer. Together, more than 100,000 people die from smoking related diseases in the UK each year. Many people tend to overestimate the number of people who smoke – only 19% of adults smoke. That means that the vast majority of teenagers and adults are non-smokers. There are many excellent reasons for not smoking and no good reasons to choose to smoke.

There is a process to becoming a smoker which people generally follow, leading up to becoming addicted.

1. Trying cigarettes (usually only a few puffs)
2. Smoking cigarettes on occasion (usually with friends, only a few times a month)
3. Increasing how often you smoke (from a few times a month to a few times a day)
4. Smoking a pack or more of cigarettes a day.

Smoking has both long and short-term effects on the body. Nicotine in cigarettes stimulates the heart to beat faster and increases the heart's need for oxygen.

Activities:

Make a list of reasons why people shouldn't smoke.

Create an anti-smoking poster.

Calculate how much it costs a pack-a-day smoker to buy cigarettes per week, month and year. How much money would they save if they cut down to half a pack a day? How would you spend that extra money?

Illustrate a timeline of the process of becoming a smoker.

Research the history of tobacco. How and why did tobacco farming begin? What was the role of slavery in tobacco farming? How did Native Americans view smoking?

Take your pulse before and after exercise, when lying down and when standing up. Why do you think it changes?

Make an information poster to teach people how to take their pulse and the effect of smoking on the heart.

Practise some healthy ways to stimulate your heart, like an exercise video or dancing to a song.

Research some of the common negative effects of smoking on the human body. Can you draw a person and label the effects? Can you compare this to a drawing of a non-smoker's body?

Create a crossword or wordsearch with clues for someone else to complete about smoking.

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Interview a smoker and find out how and why they began smoking. Did they ever try and quit? If they could go back in time, would they still start smoking?

Write some advice for a smoker on how to quit. Can you research how long it takes for the body to return to normal?

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: minority, long-term, risk factor, addiction, socially acceptable, second-hand smoke, biofeedback, carbon monoxide, nicotine, heart rate.

Lesson 5 – Alcohol: Myths and Realities

Alcohol is a drug contained in beverages (drinks) such as beer, wine, or spirits. After a person drinks it, alcohol is absorbed through the walls of the stomach and intestines, directly into the bloodstream. The alcohol then travels through the blood to the brain. Alcohol is a depressant. Once it reaches the brain, it depresses the brain's activity, which in turn affects the body.

Many teens see drinking alcohol as a rite of passage to adulthood. They believe that drinking certain kinds of alcohol (such as beer) is "safer" than hard spirits and therefore not risky. Alcohol is a drug which slows down the functioning of the brain and nervous system. Although many people drink, most adults drink only occasionally and in moderation (58% of adults have had an alcoholic drink in the last week, but 21% of adults don't drink alcohol at all).

Activities:

Draw a comic strip of how drinking might negatively affect your behaviour.

Research and write down facts and statistics about the use of alcohol in the UK.

Create a word search full of the different effects that you might experience if you drink alcohol.

Make an alcohol awareness poster.

Research the history of alcohol. Can you find out more about prohibition?

Research some of the common negative effects of drinking on the human body. Can you draw a person and label the effects?

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: alcohol, misconception, abstinence, tolerance.

Lesson 6 – Cannabis: Myths and Realities

Cannabis comes from a plant with the botanical name of cannabis sativa that both grows wild and is cultivated in many parts of the world. Cannabis sativa contains over 400 chemicals. The seeds of the plant are used in feed mixtures, and the oil is used as an ingredient of paint. It is also known for its biologically active substances, which are most highly concentrated in the leaves and resinous flowering tops. The plant has the ability to intoxicate its users because of the mind-altering ingredient called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. After alcohol and tobacco, cannabis is the most commonly used drug in the UK, but most people **aren't** using it. Less than 1 in 8 adults have used cannabis in the last year.

Cannabis is illegal in the UK. It is a Class B drug and if someone is caught with even a small amount, the police will always take action.

Activities:

Draw a comic strip of how using cannabis might negatively affect your behaviour.

Research and write down facts and statistics about the use of cannabis in the UK.

Create a word search full of the different effects that you might experience if you use cannabis.

Make a cannabis awareness poster, including information about the effects on the body and the laws about use of cannabis.

Research some of the common negative effects of using cannabis on the human body. Can you draw a person and label the effects?

Imagine you are an Agony Aunt and someone has written to you, telling you their friends are pressuring them to use cannabis. Write a response to them.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: cannabis, euphoria, illicit, decriminalisation, legalisation, psychoactive, THC

Lesson 7 – Advertising

Advertising is a powerful source of influence and many of our everyday decisions are subtly shaped by the ads that we see and hear. When we know more about advertising and are aware of the techniques that adverts use, we are less likely to be persuaded to buy something or do something that we might otherwise not do.

The purpose of advertising is to sell products. Many advertisers do not just present the facts, but may actually exaggerate the claims of their products in order to persuade people to buy them. The most common forms of advertising are on the TV and radio, on the internet (including social media), magazine and newspaper ads and billboards. Many brands sponsor concerts and use celebrities to increase their brand recognition.

Activities:

See how many adverts you can spot where a celebrity is endorsing the product. This could be on the television or online. Do you think the celebrity really uses this product? What message are they sending you? How are they trying to influence your behaviour?

Research these common advertising techniques and illustrate them: celebrity endorsement, bandwagon appeal, sex appeal, maturity appeal, popularity appeal, voice of authority, scientific evidence, comparison tests and opinion polls, demonstrations, 'deal' appeal.

Create an 'honest advert' that tells people the truth about risky activities such as smoking.

Logo game – can be played online.

Design a website, poster or video to advertise your school.

Gather a range of different adverts in a collage. Label which techniques each advert is using.

Invent your own healthy product and make a truthful advert (poster or a video)

Create advertisements for products that changed people's lives – the light bulb, telephone or computer.

Write a letter to the Prime Minister to ask him to ban e-cigarette advertising.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: consumer, manipulate, deceptive, target market

Lesson 8 – Violence and the Media

Television, movies, the Internet, newspapers, music, music videos, video games and computer software are powerful forces in our lives. They present images of attractive people acting in exciting, glamorous and often violent ways. The media can be a powerful influence on our behaviours and opinions, and includes things such as: movies, TV shows, music, video games, the internet, newspapers, magazines, books and apps. The media can influence is in similar ways to advertising.

Violence is an act or threat that hurts a person or object physically or verbally.

The media can influence us in ways that are similar to those used by advertising. Many studies show that children who watch a lot of media violence are more aggressive and violent, even when they grow up, than children who watch less.

Activities:

Make a 'Wanted' poster for a peaceful character on television

Research different non-violent protests around the world. Were they successful? Why?

Illustrate a list of ways to overcome conflict that are not violent.

Create a fact file on someone who was famously non-violent, eg. Gandhi.

Write a letter to a media company to propose cutting down on violence or restricting children's access to it. Use statistics to support your argument.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: media, role model, violence

Lesson 9 – Coping with Anxiety

Some situations cause people to feel anxious or nervous. Because anxiety is an unpleasant feeling, it is natural to try to avoid situations that cause it. However, a more adaptive approach is to learn how to cope effectively with anxiety.

Anxiety means feeling nervous, stressed, uneasy or apprehensive. It produces physical changes in the body such as an increase in heart rate, sweating, tightening of muscles and tremors. Different situations cause different reactions in people. There are many different methods that you can use to help you to cope with anxiety.

Activities:

Draw a picture of the body. On your picture, mark all the different places that you might physically experience symptoms of anxiety.

Interview someone about a situation that made them feel anxious. How did they feel? What did they do to overcome this?

Illustrate a list of different things that people could do to help them to overcome anxiety (deep breathing, listening to music etc)

Draw a tree. Fill the trunk up with different things that may make teenagers anxious. On the leaves, write down different techniques that might calm you down.

Watch deep breathing videos on YouTube.

Write 5 anxious thoughts and turn them into positive thoughts. For example 'I'm really worried about the test tomorrow' could be turned into 'I'm worried about the test tomorrow, but I've worked really hard and I will try my best'.

Watch stretching or meditation videos on YouTube.

Listen to Guided Imagery on YouTube.

Listen to Progressive Muscle Relaxation on YouTube.

Make your own deep breathing, stretching or meditation videos.

Make a playlist of music that makes you feel relaxed and calm.

Write your own Guided Imagery.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: anxiety, coping mechanism, relaxation.

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Lesson 10 – Coping with Anger

Anger is a normal but also stressful emotion that can cause problems if not controlled. Although people are often tempted to lash out at whatever made them angry, a better response is to learn how to control your anger. Like anxiety, anger also has physical features.

Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure mixed with an urge to fight back. It is a normal emotion, and by itself is neither good nor bad. Expressing anger can be healthy, but losing control is not.

People deal with anger provoking situations in various ways:

1. Some people do nothing. They put up with the situation or walk away from it.
2. Some people lash out, verbally or physically, at whatever has angered them
3. Some people show their anger in less obvious ways, such as refusing to talk
4. Some people try to control their anger

There are lots of different ways to control anger. Here are three that we recommend:

1. The warning light – imagine you have a warning light in your head. Look at the light whenever you get into a situation that makes you angry. If the light is flashing, it means ‘slow down and think’
2. Count to ten – take a deep breath, look at the person in a friendly and non-confrontational way, count to ten, don’t make any comment until you have counted to ten.
3. Self-statements – reminding yourself that you are calm and in control can help to make you so. When you feel yourself getting angry, you can repeat these statements in your head.
4. Reframing – how you think about a situation can help you to stay in control. Reframing means finding a new way of looking at a situation.

Activities:

Draw a picture of the body. On your picture, mark all the different places that you might physically experience anger.

Create a poster illustrating the three recommended ways to control anger.

Make a list of situations that make you angry, and then decide which technique would be best to use in this circumstance.

Use role play to act out different situations where you could control your anger.

Draw a storyboard of your character in a situation that makes them angry. Then, reframe the situation and demonstrate how the character could control their anger in that situation.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: anger, control, self-statements, reframing.

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Lesson 11 – Communication Skills

We are mostly social beings, in that we spend most of our lives with other people. This makes it really important to learn how to get along with others and function in social situations.

Communication is the act of expressing oneself in such a way that one is readily and clearly understood. Effective communication exists between two people when the receiver interprets the message in the same way that the sender intended it.

Communication can be verbal or non-verbal:

Verbal communication refers to the specific words that we use and our voice inflections (tone of our voice). Examples include speech, music and writing.

Nonverbal communication refers to body language (e.g. mannerisms, facial expressions, body positions, body and hand gestures, etc.).

65% of our communication with each other is accomplished non-verbally. To communicate effectively, our verbal and nonverbal messages need to be the same. Many communication difficulties arise when our words contradict our nonverbal behaviour.

Activities:

Illustrate as many different emotions as you can think of.

Play 'Feelings Charades' and either act out or guess the emotion that someone is showing using only body language.

Write a letter or an email to a friend.

Find an image in a magazine of two people communicating. What can you tell from their body language, facial expression and hand gestures?

Draw a phone screen. What messages can you send just by using emojis? Is it easy?

Learn how to say 'Hello' in as many different languages as you can.

Draw a poster to help other children to get better at communicating their feelings.

Paint the Japanese alphabet characters. Can you write a sentence?

Learn how to write your name in Hieroglyphs.

Make up your own secret code and write a sentence in it (Clue: give each letter a number!)

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: communication, verbal, non-verbal, ambiguous, misunderstanding, paraphrase.

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Lesson 12 and 13 – Social Skills

Social skills are skills that we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and nonverbally. We are social creatures and we have developed many ways to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others. Many people are shy and uncomfortable in social situations – not because there is anything wrong with them, but simply because they have not learned the basic ingredients of social life. Many actors and well-known personalities are shy but are able to overcome this by playing a role. By learning social skills and practicing them in situations that are fairly easy at first, you can develop social self-confidence.

As you get older, your friendships and relationships may change and deepen. This may involve socialising in new ways. A relationship is a meaningful connection with another person.

Tips to make being shy easier:

1. Learn to act – you can learn new social skills and become more self-confident in handling difficult social situations if you act as if you are a performer playing a role. For many shy people, it is easier to pretend they are someone else playing a part than it is to be themselves. This is a great first step in acquiring new social skills and becoming more confident.
2. Start small – begin by practicing easy situations, working up to more challenging ones.
3. Prepare yourself – write out a brief script of what you want to say, how you want to say it and what you want to do in each situation you are trying to master. Then rehearse it! Practice the skills you are learning and how to handle specific situations using the scripts you have developed.

Giving and receiving compliments is something else that people can find tricky.

Tips for giving compliments:

1. Pick something to compliment (something you like about what someone else is wearing, how they look, a skill or ability, a personal quality or a characteristic)
2. Look at the person you are complimenting
3. Say the compliment in a sincere voice. It's really important to sound like you mean what you say.

Tips for receiving compliments:

1. Thank the person who gave you a compliment
2. If appropriate, give a compliment back

Activities

Learn to say 'Hello' in 10 different languages. Make a poster teaching others!

Give everyone you see today a compliment.

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Draw the perfect friend. Illustrate and label their positive qualities and attributes.

Write a movie script where two characters meet for the first time. How can you keep the conversation going?

Use the internet to plan the perfect day out with friends. Where will you go? What's the best way to get there? How much will it cost?

Design a storyboard where you give and receive a compliment. How can you demonstrate confidence?

Write a letter to a friend.

Illustrate a step-by-step guide for how to give and receive compliments.

Create a 'Wanted' poster for the perfect friend. What appealing qualities would they have?

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: self-confident, initiating, sustain, compliment, characteristics, interaction, relationship

Lesson 14 – Assertiveness

One of the hardest things to do can be to say ‘no’, whether it be to a friend or someone pressuring us to do something. There are many situations that we all encounter in which we may find it difficult to express ourselves honestly or openly or stand up for our rights when they are violated – such as asking a favour from someone, returning something to a shop and having someone jump the queue ahead of you.

There are three main ways of responding to these situations:

1. The most common way of handling these situations is by being passive (non-assertive). This may involve avoiding a confrontation, ignoring the situation, or giving in to the other person.
2. Another way of handling these situations is by being aggressive. This may involve ‘attacking’ the other person, over reacting or by being obnoxious.
3. The most appropriate way of handling these situations is by being assertive. This involves standing up for your own rights and expressive yourself in an honest, open and responsible fashion.

There are lots of benefits to being assertive. These include: personal satisfaction, increased likelihood of getting the things you want in life, increased sense of control over your life and respect and admiration from other people. An important part of being assertive is how we communicate our message. Our message is more likely to be heard and believed when we use a firm tone of voice and speak clearly at a rate that conveys confidence.

Procedure for saying ‘No’:

1. State your position. Tell the other person how you feel about something.
2. State your reason. Tell the other person the reason for your position, request or feelings.
3. Be understanding. Let the other person know that you understood their point of view, request or feelings.

Activities:

Illustrate people responding in passive, aggressive and assertive ways.

Make a poster to teach other children how to say no or be assertive.

Act out different scenarios where you can be assertive.

Write a script for a film where one character is assertive and one is not. Who gets what they want in the end?

Research historical figures that stood up for themselves and their beliefs by saying no.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: passive, aggressive, assertive

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Lesson 15 – Resolving Conflict

Conflict can occur in all areas of our lives, especially with family and friends. In most conflict, two things are at stake: each person's goals and the relationship itself.

Five common reactions to conflicts are:

1. Striking back – 'If you won't hang out, you're not my friend'
2. Giving in – 'OK'
3. Breaking off – leaving the area
4. Compromise – each person partly gets what they want
5. Negotiation – work together and come up with a solution to get what's important to them

Negotiation changes conflict to cooperation. Two people try to solve their problem side by side. They create a win-win situation in which both sides get what they want.

It is natural to feel angry when someone disagrees with us, insults us or tries to take what we want. It's important to step back from our anger and keep our emotions under control in order to effectively resolve the situation.

Activities:

Act out the best ways to resolve conflict.

Illustrate a poster of the five common reactions to conflict.

Write a play script where two characters successfully resolve a conflict.

Define these key words and phrases and use them in a sentence: compromise, negotiation, win-win situation