



PARENTAL PULL-OUT

Parents: Please remove this centrefold carefully to avoid damaging the staples!

Positive Relationships Programme - Parent Guide

This short booklet is designed to give parents a brief introduction to the "*Weaving Well-Being*" programme and to help them support their children as they complete the *Positive Relationships* (Y5 / P6) section of the programme. The *Weaving Well-Being* programme is a well-being programme for children specifically designed to promote positive mental health and flourishing in children. The skills are based on current research from the field of *Positive Psychology*.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is concerned with the science of well-being, personal growth and resilience. It is founded on the concept of identifying and developing personal strengths. Positive Psychology uses evidence-based activities which help people to flourish, grow and engage with life on an optimal level whenever possible. Our lessons and activities introduce children to many of these strategies and activities which can empower them to become active participants in **creating, maintaining and boosting positive mental health** throughout their lives. Activities have been designed in accordance with the well-being elements of the PSHE/PSE/PDMU curricula.

Why are Positive Relationships important?

Being able to cultivate positive relationships can have a wide range of benefits across different areas of our life. Research has shown that people who have strong positive relationships in their lives experience better health and suffer lower levels of stress. Positive relationships can also help us to live longer and we can feel better about ourselves. Positive relationships also lead to greater success in both our personal and work lives.

The Eight Steps to Enhancing Relationships with Others - the *Relating* Model

In line with the research showing that positive relationships are linked to increased well-being across a number of areas, this *Positive Relationships* programme introduces children to eight evidence-based strategies to nurture positive relationships on a daily basis. The first letters of each lesson combine to spell the word '*Relating*' which should serve as a reminder to the children of each lesson. These strategies are:

- Showing respect to others (**R**espect)
- Having empathy for others (**E**mpathy)
- Dealing with conflicts constructively (**L**ook for Win-Wins)
- Developing listening skills (**A**ctive Listening)
- Practising forgiveness (**T**ry to Forgive)
- Expressing interest in others (**I**nterest)
- Developing a non-judgemental attitude (**N**o More Snap Judgements)
- Focusing on giving (**G**ive, Give, Give!)

The *Positive Relationships* programme introduces each of these strategies as steps towards building relationships with others. The children are given an opportunity to use each strategy, then evaluate and record the effects of each one on their relationships. After trying out all of the strategies on an individual basis, the children are then encouraged to put all of their 'steps' together and use them in their interactions with others.





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To gain maximum benefit from the steps, your child should be encouraged to use them as much as possible. Children will learn these concepts best in a warm, supportive environment in which each of these elements of positive relationships is present. Try to model these elements yourself in your relationship with your child and show him or her that you are always open to learning about and enhancing these concepts yourself. There is a homework task each week which encourages practical use of the strategies and steps. You may even enjoy trying the homework task yourself or involving the whole family in it! In order to help and encourage your child, you may find the following information useful.

Lesson 1: The Importance of Positive Relationships

In this lesson, children learn about what a positive relationship is and identify the different relationships in their lives. They discover the importance of developing positive relationships and the wide range of benefits that this can provide in terms of their happiness, success and well-being. They also learn that there are many steps you can take to cultivate positive relationships and are introduced to the eight steps that will be covered in our **Positive Relationships** programme.

How to support your child: Talk to your child about the importance of relationships. Discuss the key relationships in your life. Give them examples of times that other people supported you, made you feel better or helped you achieve something in your life. Also discuss ways that you may have helped others in the past to reinforce the benefits that positive relationships can bring to each person in that relationship.

Lesson 2: Respect

In this lesson, children learn that respect is based on the concept of equality and valuing of others. The idea of respect as a fundamental part of positive relationships is discussed and children think about how it feels to be respected and disrespected. A set of guidelines for treating others with respect is presented. Children are encouraged to make their own set of guidelines based on this set.



How to support your child: Talk to your child about what respect means and why it is so important to relationships. Discuss their set of guidelines and ask them to explain why they chose them. Recognise and affirm respectful interactions in family life and discuss how they make people feel. Encourage your child to see how respectful interactions build and nurture positive relationships.

Lesson 3: Empathy

In this lesson, children learn the meaning and importance of empathy. Empathy is described as imagining and understanding how others feel **using your heart and your head**. The phrase 'walk in my shoes' is introduced to help the children to understand the concept. Children discuss how it feels to be treated with empathy and why empathy is such an important part of positive relationships.



How to support your child: Talk to your child about the meaning of importance of empathy for others. Emphasise the active step needed to **understand with your heart** as well as your head. Look for everyday examples to give your child an opportunity to think about and try to feel how others are feeling. Ask your child to think about how they would feel if they were in that same situation. Recognise and affirm displays of empathy in family life and discuss the effects on relationships.

Lesson 4: Look for Win-Wins

In this lesson, the children look at how conflicts can arise and discover that the way we resolve conflicts has the potential to enhance or damage that relationship on an on-going basis. They look at the different ways that conflicts can be resolved and the consequences of choosing outcomes that one person feels unhappy about. They also learn how to work to create win-win outcomes where possible which respect the needs of both themselves and the other person involved and the positive benefits this can bring.



How to support your child: Ask your child to explain the different outcomes to a dispute and what a win-win outcome involves. Think about and discuss examples in your life where you have worked with someone to find a win-win solution to a conflict that existed. Consider any small disagreements that you may have had with your child in the past and see if you can agree on what a win-win solution to that problem would be. Look for win-win solutions whenever any further conflicts arise.

Lesson 5: Active Listening

In this lesson, children discover the importance and benefits of active listening in cultivating positive relationships. They learn that actively listening to others can be more difficult than they thought and they discuss the reasons why people often don't listen properly to each other. They get to learn about and implement a number of suggestions that will enhance their listening skills going forward. These are: practise giving your undivided attention, using whole body listening and asking relevant questions. They also discover the importance of responding positively to others' good news.



How to support your child: Ask your child to tell you about the four ways we can improve our listening skills. Encourage your child to practise their listening skills. Provide them with opportunities to do this by spending some time talking to them on a one to one basis about a topic you are both interested in. If you notice your child implementing these skills give them positive feedback on how they are doing and how it makes you feel when they listen. Also look for opportunities to act as a positive role model by taking the time out to actively listen to your child whenever they are sharing some news with you.

Lesson 6: Try to Forgive

This lesson looks at the concept of forgiveness and how it impacts on relationships. It explores the benefits of forgiving others but it also explains that forgiveness is a personal choice and that people may choose not to forgive in particular circumstances. However it does encourage your child to choose forgiveness where possible, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the relationship involved.



How to support your child: For homework this week talk to your child about your own experiences of forgiveness. Discuss examples, however small, of times when you forgave someone who may have hurt you in some way and how this made you feel. Or times that someone forgave you. Talk about any impact this may have had on your relationship. Give your child the option of discussing with you the homework activity where they decide to write about forgiving someone else. They may prefer to keep this to themselves which is also fine.



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Lesson 7: Interest in Others

In this lesson, the children are introduced to the importance of showing interest in others. This is linked to the idea of showing respect to others and showing them that they matter to you. The children are encouraged to show interest in others by asking questions in conversations, giving encouragement and celebrating the successes of others. They discuss how it feels when others show or don't show interest in them on a personal level.



How to support your child: Encourage your child to show interest in others. Recognise and affirm when they ask questions in conversations and show encouragement to others. Reinforce the concept of active listening as introduced in Lesson 5. Perhaps choose a family meal time to practise these skills this week.

Lesson 8: No More Snap Judgments

In this lesson, the children learn about the tendency of our minds to make snap judgements about others without necessarily having all of the information. They learn that this was useful for our ancestors but how damaging it can be to relationships nowadays. They explore different ways people judge each other negatively and discuss any experiences they have of being judged in this way. They are encouraged to notice this tendency to judge and to replace it with curiosity and kindness if possible. The link to self-judgement is introduced and children are encouraged to treat themselves with kindness also.



How to support your child: Draw attention to the mind's tendency to judge and criticise others whenever you see examples of it within the family this week. Give gentle reminders by asking your child to come up with different reasons why someone may have behaved in a certain way before they draw a negative conclusion about the person. Encourage your child to treat themselves with kindness if you hear them being hard on themselves in various situations. As with the other strategies, model this response yourself whenever possible.

Lesson 9: Give, Give, Give!

In this lesson, children explore all the things which they can give to others which cost them nothing in return, for example, kindness, smiles, encouragement, a helping hand and so on. They discuss how giving in this way can build positive relationships and also how it can help them to feel happier and healthier themselves.



How to support your child: Recognise and affirm situations in which your child gives to others this week. Perhaps do a list of ways in which the family can give to each other and organise some type of 'Giving Challenge' in which a certain number of examples of giving is rewarded by a family outing. Discuss the benefits to relationships and to the family as a result of this activity.

Lesson 10: Taking All the Steps

In this lesson, the children get to review the importance of positive relationships and the eight steps they have learned throughout the programme to cultivate positive relationships. They also get to review their experience of implementing the different steps and to decide which of these steps have proven to be the most helpful to them. We encourage them to prepare an action plan to ensure they continue to use these steps, as appropriate, in the future.

How to support your child: Ask your child to discuss their experience of implementing the eight steps to positive relationships. How did this help them in the past? What was their favourite step? What steps will they focus on in the future? Discuss your own experiences of using any of the eight steps in your own life.