

Worries box, how to recognise your emotions

Overview

The objective of a worries box is for the young person to be able to store feelings and situations in the box which the young person is worried or anxious about. Once the worries are stored in the box you as the parent or carer can go through them at the end of the day and address what has happened.

This is useful for the young person as it allows them to store the emotions knowing that there is a constructive outlet for them when they get home. It is also valuable for you as the parent as it gives you a tool to identify what may be affecting the young person outside of the home.

Key rules

Set the same time every day where you and the young person can go through the worries box. This might be straight after school. However, it may help if the young person is fed and watered beforehand.

When you go through the worries box make sure you use a safe space with no distractions. This could be the bedroom, Kitchen or even the garden.

Be Understanding, you don't have to fix everything, just listen.

Constructing your worries box

When making your worries box it is important that it is portable and not too bulky. An old mint tin or even a small Pringles can would work well (other crisps are available). It is essential that the young person has ownership over the box so get them to decorate it. Be creative use pens, paint or wrapping paper. You will also need paper to write the worries on and put them in the box.

Agree the rules

It is important that you and the young person set out the rules together. This means that you agree a time and place to go through the worries box.

Going through the worries box

If all has gone well up to now, then the young person should be going to school equipped with a worry box of their own design, pens and paper. Throughout the day they should be writing down their worries and putting them in the box allowing them to forget about it until they get home and are able to talk about it. During your debrief with the young person it may help if they draw out their worries so make sure you have some paper and pens. Remember to be understanding their worries might be trivial to you. However, it obviously is important to the young person. So be understanding and reassuring. Avoid saying "don't be stupid, he was only joking". Try and say "I understand, that must have been"

Once you have gone through the worries and hopefully relived some stress, shred, destroy or burn (if safe to do so) the worries. This offers closure to the young person.

