



# Chestnut Outreach



Supporting Children's Social and Emotional  
Development at School

Welcome to the Chestnut Outreach SEMH support booklet, created to support children and adults within school. The Team hopes you find it useful.

## Helping Children Cope with Worries

Since children's worries often interfere with their learning, it is helpful to understand their concerns. Children may be worried about their mums and dads, siblings, being sick, being hurt, dying, feeling mad, fighting, being lost, having to go to hospital, failing at school, whether people like them, no one to play with. They may experience worries around things seen or heard such as scary dreams about monsters, ghosts, worries around tornadoes, spiders.

### We can help children cope with their worries ....

- Provide a place where each child feels valued, safe and secure.
- Offer opportunities for children to write down or discuss their concerns or feelings.
- Take time to listen and respond with compassion.
- Encourage the children to make healthy living choices including eating healthy food.
- Stress the importance of getting enough rest and sleep each night.
- Teach them friendship skills, so that they can develop supportive peer relationships.
- Help the children understand that some circumstances CANNOT be changed, so they must be accepted, like death, divorce, or illness. Help them identify things they CAN change.
- Teach them relaxation techniques like slow, deep breathing, counting backwards, or tensing the body and then relaxing.
- Discuss positive coping skills like walking, playing, exercising, jumping rope, reading, resting, writing down or telling someone their problems.
- Teach them to use positive self-talk like: "Everyone feels good and bad, now and then." "Even though I make mistakes, I can do many things well."
- Provide opportunities for them to talk about the future in a positive light, picture themselves being successful, and set goals.



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## COPING SKILL SPOTLIGHT: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

HOW TO DO IT: (use worksheet 1 provided further on in this booklet)



This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep belly breath to begin.

**5 - LOOK:** Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.

**4 - FEEL:** Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.

**3 - LISTEN:** Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

**2 - SMELL:** Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favourite smells.

**1 - TASTE:** Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favourite thing to taste.

Take another deep belly breath to end.



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## Reading Suggestions



Read books with children that demonstrate and model others worrying too which normalise worrying and offer strategies to overcome their fears.

Consider the following books;

**"Mr. Worry"** by Roger Hargreaves, part of the Mr. Men series of books, tells the story of Mr. Worry meeting a wizard who takes his worry away.

**"Wilma Jean the Worry Machine"** by Julia Cook offers children ways to handle worry through the humorous worrywart character Wilma.

**"What To Do When You Worry Too Much"** by Dawn Heubner - A child's guide to overcoming Anxiety; provides child-friendly advice on how to handle worry and anxiety.

## Songs to Help Children Manage Worries/Upset

Sesame Street: Common and Colbie Caillat - "Belly Breathe"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mZbzDOpyIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpyIA)



Belly Breathing Kids | Balloon Breathing | Teaching Kids Calm Down | Social Emotional Videos for Kid

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj\\_btw2IHlo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj_btw2IHlo)



Two minutes Mindfulness: Balloon Breaths/Belly Breaths - Breathing exercise for Children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PcCmxEW5WA>



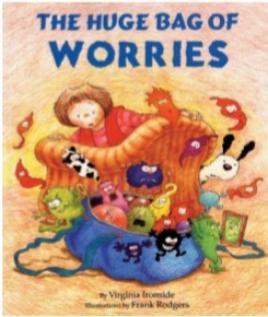


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## The Huge Bag of Worries



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Huge Bad of Worries Wordsearch.

W	O	R	R	I	E	S	F	T	B
B	L	M	Z	X	R	A	R	Y	A
R	D	K	W	C	E	P	I	U	G
O	N	L	Q	V	Q	O	E	J	L
T	B	L	A	I	S	L	N	K	J
H	E	A	L	T	H	M	D	M	E
E	D	D	G	A	D	B	G	D	N
R	D	Y	F	E	F	C	D	F	N
A	S	D	S	C	H	O	O	L	Y
H	U	G	E	F	D	A	S	A	E

#### Words to find:

WORRIES	BAG
HUGE	JENNY
FRIEND	SCHOOL
BROTHER	HEALTH
LADY	OLD



### The Huge Bag of Worries Reading Comprehension.



Tick the right box:

Who was the main character in the story?	<input type="checkbox"/> Jenny	<input type="checkbox"/> Sam	
Did Jenny like her school teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
What sport does Jenny do?	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming	
Did Jenny have a brother or sister or both?	<input type="checkbox"/> Brother	<input type="checkbox"/> Sister	<input type="checkbox"/> Both
Who helped Jenny with her worries?	<input type="checkbox"/> Old lady	<input type="checkbox"/> Old man	
How were the worries making Jenny feel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Gloomy	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry
Jenny described the worries as a horrible shadow she couldn't get rid of.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	
Jenny was very happy at the end of the story.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Helpful hints:



Self Assessment



## Order the characters

Cut out the characters and order them by putting the smallest first...

1

2

3

This activity booklet contains a range of activities based on the book **The Huge Bag of Worries** - this booklet provides cross-curricular work between PSHE and literacy. The booklet is available for free download from TES.

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/the-huge-bag-of-worries-activity-booklet-6141265>

Worksheet from  
Page 2

## 54321 Grounding Exercise





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## Brain Gym Exercises

Area of behaviour that needs supporting	Movement purpose	Targeted area of the brain	Exercise to meet the need
<p>Speech and listening skills. Retention of information/instructions. Creativity and problem solving. Critical thinking.</p>	<p>Midline movements</p>	<p>Laterality</p>	<p><b>Cross Crawl</b> - The child needs to stand up straight, and lift their left knee up. They then need to their right hand on their left knee, crossing the midline of body. After they put their right hand on their left knee, have the child switch by lifting the right knee and putting the left hand on the right knee. Movements should be done slow and accurate. Repeat x 10</p>
<p>Focus and attention. Fidgeting. Listening to the teacher and following instructions. Executive functioning.</p>	<p>Energy exercises</p>	<p>Centering</p>	<p><b>Brain Buttons</b> - The child needs to stand up straight and place one hand over their bellybutton. At the same time, have the child take their thumb and index finger and place the two fingers directly under their collar bone. Both hands should be on the tummy and the collar bone at the same time. Have the child hold that position for at least 30 seconds or as long as it takes for the child to begin feeling re-energized. This exercise is especially good for children before taking a test.</p>
<p>Anxiety and anxiousness. Distressed behaviours. Sensory overload and stress.</p>	<p>Lengthening exercises</p>	<p>Focus</p>	<p><b>Hook-Ups</b> - This can be done standing, sitting or lying down. If the child is standing, have them cross one foot over the other, legs straight. Now, have the child stretch out their arms and cross them in front of their body. As they are crossed, have the palms of the right and left hands touch together and lock fingers. Have the child loop the hands underneath the arms and pull the arms close to the chest. Hold this position for 2 to 5 minutes or for as long as they need to calm the body.</p>



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## Heavy Work Activities



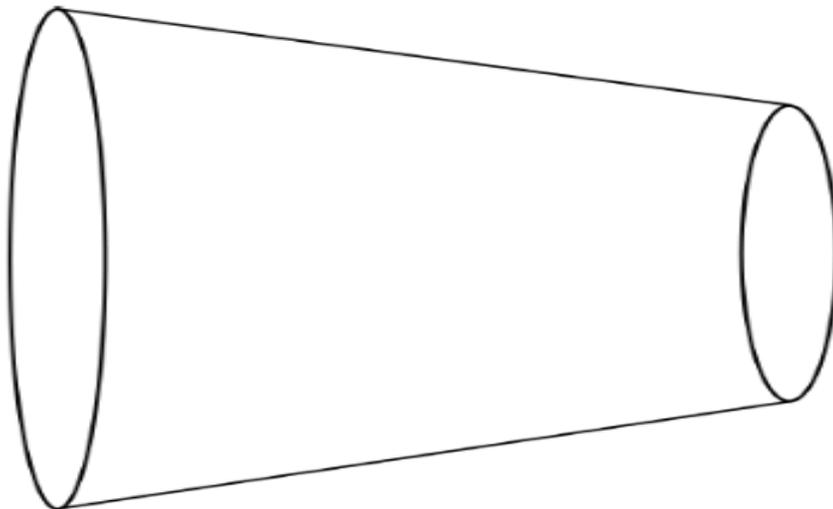
- to help children remain calm and focused

- Pushing or pulling boxes with toys/books in
- Carrying a rucksack with books in
- Seat push ups
- Colouring whilst on hands and knees
- Animal walks e.g. crab, bear, army crawls
- Running and jumping
- Help to move furniture
- Cleaning surfaces
- Squeeze toys
- Pushing cars with one hand whilst supporting self with the other
- Help to put out mats and equipment
- Opening doors for people
- Carrying beanbags on heads or shoulders across room
- Push against a wall
- Playing catch with a heavy ball
- Climbing on playground equipment
- Pushing lunchbox trolleys
- Pulling other children on sheet/blanket
- Fill up trucks with heavy blocks to push
- Playing with damp sand
- Obstacles courses

### MY CUP-O-FEELINGS

Color inside this cup to show how much of each emotion you're feeling right now!  
Use the blank spaces to pick other colors and feelings that you'd like.

**YELLOW = HAPPY**   **RED = ANGRY**   **PINK = HOPEFUL**   **PURPLE = SCARED**  
**ORANGE = NERVOUS**   **GREEN = EXCITED**   **BLUE = SAD**   **BROWN = SURPRISED**



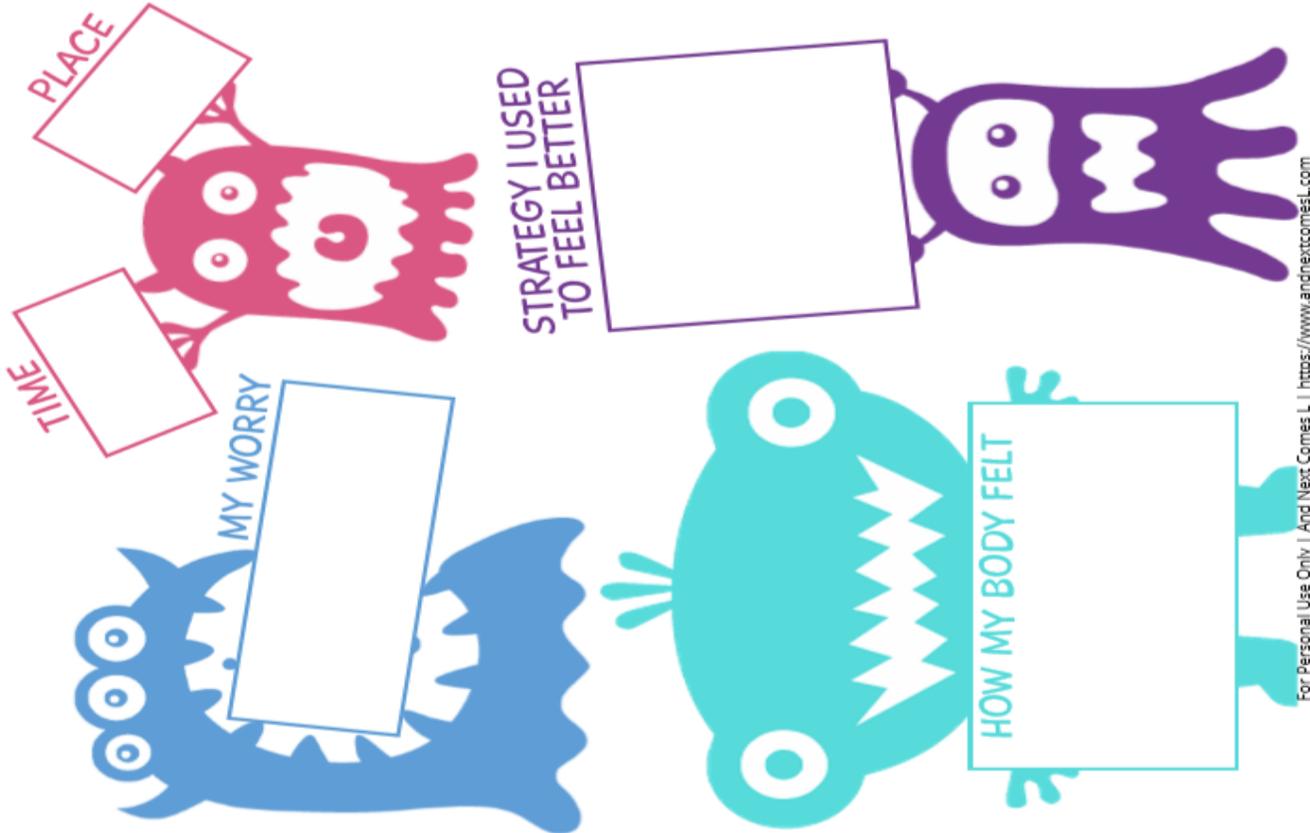


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## MY WORRY MONSTER TRACKER



For Personal Use Only | And Next Comes L | <https://www.andnextcomesl.com>

### Worry Ninja

Help children channel their personal power by imagining themselves with worry-busting strengths. The superpowers that children wish they had can tell us a lot about where they feel powerless.

- Have them choose their favourite superpowers.
- Draw themselves as a Superhero or Warrior.
- Put "Worry Ninja" power cards on a lanyard, that a child can keep in his desk so he has instant access to positive thoughts and empowering strategies to use when that anxiety starts to rise!



WORRY NINJA  
POWER CARDS



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## Label Feelings

Support children with understanding what they are feeling, by encouraging them to recognise what it is (name it). Self-regulation comes from being able to identify what is being experienced - "naming it is taming it"

- Make different emotion faces and have children guess what you might be feeling.
- Throughout the day, help children learn to label their own emotions e.g. it looks like you are feeling mad that we can't go outside; what can we do to help you feel better?
- When reading, ask children to identify how the characters are feeling. They don't have to be "emotion books." Stories like Goldilocks and the Three Bears has lots of opportunities to talk about emotions; disappointed they have to wait for the porridge to cool, curious what the beds feel like, surprised to see Goldilocks, scared to see the bears...



## Practise Gratitude

During difficult times this can be tricky, but there is evidence to suggest that being grateful can help mental health, reduce toxic emotions and increase empathy.

- Sit and reflect with the child some small things that you are both grateful for; sunshine, fresh air, favourite breakfast cereal etc.
- If able, reflect on slightly bigger things that evoke gratitude such as family, friends etc.
- Write these on a small piece of paper and place into a clear jar so that they can be seen and added to.
- Consider writing them on small strips of paper and creating a Gratitude Chain to hang up and display.
- Place these into a journal as an opportunity to give positive reflection when needed during dark times.





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## Making Playdough

Kneading, rolling, flattening and punching the play dough provides the chance to relieve stress and reduce feelings of anxiety and worry, which can lead to children feeling frustrated and acting out because of these feelings. Here's an easy recipe that can be doubled for a larger batch.

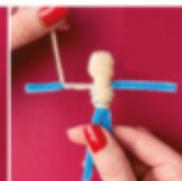
- Add 2 cups of flour to a mixing bowl. Any type of flour can be used, including rice flour if the child has wheat allergies.
- Add one cup of salt and mix in with the flour. Salt is added to discourage the dough being eaten, but it also acts as a natural anti-bacterial agent.
- Next, add one tablespoon of either vegetable or sunflower oil.
- Add one cup of water and mix altogether. It might need to be mixed by hand at this point, so prepare for sticky hands.
- If desired, add about 3 or 4 drops of food colouring and maybe some glitter.
- Once made and finished being played with, store in an airtight container to keep for another time.



## Pipe Cleaner Worry Doll

This simple resource provides a child with an opportunity to externalise worries and concerns, if they feel uncomfortable talking to someone. You will need 2 small pieces of pipe cleaner and some wool.

- Bend the pipe cleaner in half, and at the centre create a small loop and twist together. This will make the head and the arms.
- With the second piece of pipe cleaner, fold in half, open slightly and then place the middle of the pipe cleaner behind the head and resting over what will be the shoulders. This is then moulded and twisted together to create the body and legs.
- Using chosen colours of wool, wrap around the entire body to finish.
- Tie tight knots or use glue to secure loose ends, and add as much or as little detail as wanted.





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## Make a Worry Box

During certain times children can feel as though they are controlled by their anxious thoughts and feel helpless in stopping them. A resource that supports externalising these feelings is a Worry Box.

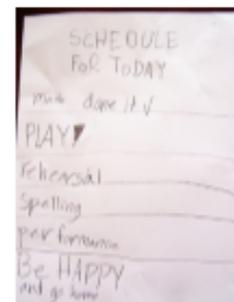
- Find a box as big or as small as you want, and cut a slit into it, either on the side or on the top.
- Include the child in decorating the box, making it personal to them.
- Provide a variety of different sized pieces of paper for the worries to be written on; bigger pieces for bigger worries, smaller for smaller worries.
- Talk through the box's purpose, and consider modelling it's use by writing a worry on one of the pieces of paper, and post it into the box.



## Make a Plan

Support the child with problems, by lending them your adult thinking brain. Together you can use problem-solving steps to make a plan to solve problems that are worrying the child.

- Identify what the problem is, for example I miss my friends.
- Together, generate a list of several ideas to solve the problem; send them a letter, ring them, email, watch a program/read a book you know they like, play a game online together etc.
- From the list, discuss a couple of ways that could actually work, sharing why an idea is viable or not.
- Help the child to achieve their solutions, as support from an adult reaffirms that adults are dependable and reliable.





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## Worry/Reminder Stone or Picture

Consider painting a pebble together or drawing a picture, as a way of supporting time away from friends and loved ones. This can be something that is kept in their pocket and used when needed.

- Decide what they would prefer to do, a picture or a pebble.
- Discuss and use colours that make the child feel happy and calm.
- Talk about what the object represents for them; a reminder to breathe, reminder of a positive thought or memory, or a mantra such as "I can get through this".



## Calm Jar

This is a simple resource that can be used to support stress and anxieties alongside deep breathing for both at home and in school.

- Find a clean plastic bottle or jar, not too big; a small Coke bottle.
- Fill with warm water about 3cm from the top.
- If possible, add glitter glue to the warm water. If not, add clear hair gel and then glitter.
- Consider adding other ingredients such as buttons, sequins etc.
- Place lid on the bottle, and do up as tightly as possible. Consider gluing the lid on to prevent accidents.
- Shake to mix, and watch the contents slowly settle whilst taking deep breathes.





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## Thinking Brain Activity

These are thinking brain activities that can be done either 1:1 or in a group. These activities help disperse stress chemicals within the brain, and allowing children to function more successfully.

- Name animals alphabetically; alligator, bear, cat, dog etc.
- Name fruit and vegetables alphabetically; apple, banana, carrot, date etc.
- Think of a song that everyone knows the words to, and take in turns saying the next word in the song; baa...baa...black...sheep...have etc. See how quickly it can be done and how funny it can sound.



## Travel the World

Encourage learning and recognising permanency through focusing on a country a day. This can be done with an atlas, online or on video clips from CBeebies - Where in the World?

Find out -

- What animals live there?
- What is special about the place and its people?
- What do they eat?
- Which continent is it?
- Identify its location on a map
- What is its climate like?
- Flag
- What is the most unusual fact you can find?





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**My Happy Place**

What things can you hear.....

What things can you taste.....

What things can you feel.....

What things can you see.....



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## Riddles

What goes up and down but  
does not move?

— Stairs.

Where do you find an ocean  
with no water?

— On a map.

What is white when dirty and  
black when clean?

— A chalkboard.

What has an eye but can't see?

— A hurricane!

Mary's father has 5 daughters – Nana,  
Nene, Nini, Nono.

What is the fifth daughter's name?

— Mary.

What has hands but can not clap?

— A clock.

What has to be broken before  
you can use it?

— An egg.

I'm tall when I'm young, I'm short  
when I'm old, and every  
Halloween I stand up inside  
Jack O'Lanterns. What am I?  
— A candle.

What travels around the world  
but stays in one corner?

— A stamp.

What gets bigger the more  
you take away?

— A hole.

What becomes smaller when  
you turn it upside down?

— The number nine.

What can you catch but  
never throw?

— A cold.

What word becomes shorter when  
you add two letters to it?

— Short.

What is the easiest way to double  
your money?

— Put it in front of the mirror.

What stays where it is when  
it goes off?

— An alarm clock.



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What gets wetter as it dries?

— A towel.

What goes up and doesn't  
come back down?

— Your age.

What belongs to you but is  
used more by others?

— Your name.

Everyone has it and no one  
can lose it, what is it?

— A shadow.

It's been around for millions of years,  
but it's no more than a month old.  
What is it?

— The moon.

I'm full of keys but I can't open  
any doors.  
What am I?  
— A piano.

If I have it, I don't share it.  
If I share it, I don't have it.  
What is it?

— A secret.

What comes once in a minute,  
twice in a moment and  
never in a thousand years?  
— The letter M.

Which word in the dictionary is  
spelled incorrectly?

— Incorrectly.

What room can no one enter?

— A mushroom.

What is always coming but  
never arrives?

— Tomorrow.

What invention lets you look  
right through a wall?

— A window.

What tastes better than it smells?

— A tongue.

What starts with 'P' and ends with 'E'  
and has thousands of letters.

— A post office.

A man was driving a black truck.  
His lights were not on. The moon was not out.  
A lady was crossing the street. How did the man see her?  
— It was a bright, sunny day.