

# Bear Us In Mind

A Psychological Toolkit For Children



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## Toolkit Guidelines

## Tips for supporters



### BE LED BY THE CHILD

When exploring the various activities in the toolkit, try to understand the dynamics in the family – it's possible, for example, that a parent may need to be present to translate. Your role is to support a strong connection between the parent and child without the parent taking over or feeling overly responsible.

*A parent is likely to be emotionally vulnerable too.*

Focus on allowing the child to have **choice** and **control** over what they are doing, the length of time they spend on it and even where they choose to do it. As a supporter you can help to structure what you are doing together, but ultimately the child can choose the pace and flow of the activity. **They are the experts on how they feel, you simply need to listen and ask the questions that will help them to unlock their feelings and have a sense of mastery over their situation.**



### ACTIVELY LISTEN

**Active listening** is different from passive listening (e.g. nodding your head and not speaking)

Respect what they are choosing to share and actively listen to what the child is saying, by “playing back” what you have heard and checking the meaning of what you have heard.

*‘When you said you were annoyed about school, what did you mean by annoyed?’*

After a child has said something it can be useful to say, *‘Can I just playback what I think I’ve heard?’* This will give the child the opportunity to add more detail and clarify. It is not a test of how well you are listening, it's a way of helping a child to think and reflect on how they feel.



## ASK THE CHILD FOR THEIR HELP

For some people, asking for help might make them feel like they are not good enough. But consider for a moment how flattered you feel if someone asks for your help. Use this mindset to **empower** the child and ask for their help.

*'Help me to understand what it was like to leave your school friends and the tennis club.'*

*'Help me to understand what you saw when you returned to your village after the bomb had hit the church.'*



## SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Children generally find **routines** and **boundaries** help them feel safe. When life is so deeply unpredictable and threatening, regular routines that you can rely on are important. You might find it helpful to work together with the child's parent or carer to find some ways to support them, particularly around routines such as bedtime.

When setting up any activity, it can also be useful to set clear boundaries before you start, so the child knows what to expect, for example,

*'Mum will be in the next room while we work here in the dining room. We may need to ask Mum to help us translate.'*

*'I finish work at 3pm on a Friday so I will come and see you for the next 8 weeks each Friday if you think that would work for you too? We can play a game first and then do an activity from the toolkit – how does that sound?'*



## BE CURIOUS

Ask questions that begin with the word **WHAT** rather than **WHY**. 'What' questions may be less challenging for children and feel safer to answer. 'Why' can make a child feel defensive.

*'What would need to happen for you to feel less scared?' rather than, 'Why do you feel scared?'*

*'What would "good" look like with your exams?' rather than, 'Why are you not working for your exams?'*



## USE SCALING TECHNIQUES

Scaling feelings from 1 to 10 is a way of helping children, parents and their supporters work out how things could be improved.

*Supporting adult: 'With 1 out of 10 being very difficult and 10 out of 10 being amazing, how many marks out of 10 would you give being at your new host home?'*

*Child: 'I'd give it a 7.'*

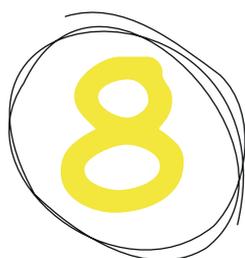
*Supporting adult: 'What would need to happen to make it an 8? Are there any days when it drops to a 6?'*



## ALLOW EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

If the child shows emotion, try not to panic. You are not making them cry or triggering anger but rather allowing them to safely explore their emotions. It is okay to comment with respect and curiosity, and to offer reassurance, but try not to shut it down immediately. For example, *'This is a very tough topic to think about,'* or *'You sound like you miss him so much?'*

It can be helpful to say, *'Let's take some deep breaths,'* and to do this with the child. Remember that, sometimes this might amplify the emotion rather than calm it, so be prepared to say something like *'Do you want to find Mum for a hug?'*



## BE HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY

An environment of **trust** is based on honesty, and it is important for you to establish a trusting relationship with the child you are supporting, to enable them to process what has happened. If you don't know the answer to a difficult question, then it may be best to be truthful. An age-appropriate, honest answer, even if it is *'I don't know that yet,'* may be more helpful than a promise you may not be able to keep.

For example, if they ask, *'How long can we stay with you for?'* you may need to acknowledge the child's mixed feelings: *'I guess we don't know that for sure. We expect you to be with us for 6 months, which I know is so tough as you are away from your dad and all your other home friends. I also know that you are enjoying school, and are very close mates with Jack...'*

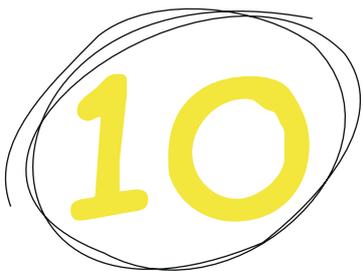


## BE SAFETY AWARE

The children you are supporting need to be and feel safe. Helping a child feel safe can be very simple: this could be with a smile, their own space to sleep and play or access to a regular meal and warm water. Giving them a voucher so they can choose the clothes and toiletries they like can feel empowering. Often the little things bring huge comfort.

If you are sourcing your own items for the toolkit, please ensure they are safe to use. Be aware of the use of candles and never leave a child unattended with a lit candle. You may often have another adult from the child's family with you as you do an activity, but if you are alone, we recommend letting other people in your house or work setting know what you are doing, and consider leaving the door open, so that the space feels private but not isolated. Be aware of internet safety and the sharing of photos and videos of the child or their name. Any sharing of photos should always be done with the consent of both the child and the parent and you should consider any risks involved with this. Being outdoors with a child can be an effective way of opening up conversations but consider carefully where this is done and how safe the child feels.

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** – if you think any child may be at risk of harm or has suffered abuse, contact your local authority's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or, in an emergency, call the police. Ensure the child is safe, make a record of what you were told and keep it.



## REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Children notice and appreciate humility, kindness and curiosity, rather than a know-it-all attitude or a professional mask.

**You are part of a network of support around the child and you do not have to do everything yourself. Please reach out for further support or guidance when you need to, to ensure you are effectively supported, particularly if you are listening to very real and traumatic situations. We have included several helplines at the end of these guidelines (p. 6-7) and on our website to talk through any specific concerns you have. The child's welfare is always at the centre of what you are trying to achieve, and your own welfare is a key part of their recovery.**

In the final of pages of this booklet, please find some helpful information on recognising trauma and signposting to useful links and additional help.

## Signs of trauma

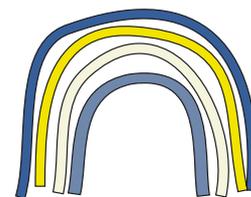
Supporting a child or young person through this time in their life can be challenging and it can be helpful to have some understanding of what you are seeing or hearing. Here are some of the signs of trauma that you may notice. While it is only natural that children will experience any or all of these reactions, if any are both persistent and severe you may find it helpful to contact some of the specialist organisations listed overleaf.

- Fear of being separated from their parent or carer
- Crying or screaming (particularly in pre-school age children)
- Bed wetting
- Difficulties sleeping
- Nightmares
- Having thoughts or flashbacks that seem to come from nowhere
- Angry outbursts
- Difficulties calming down once distressed
- Being fearful or anxious
- Feeling guilty about being safely away from the war
- Easily startled
- Difficulties in concentration
- Withdrawing from family or activities that they would normally enjoy
- Complaining of stomach or headaches more often than normal

Thank you for being open to supporting a child or family with this toolkit. It is important that you also take some time to look after yourself, so that you feel more able to cope with what you may be hearing and seeing. We are often more able to help others if we are also looking after our own wellbeing. The organisations listed at the end have considerable expertise and can also suggest others for your particular concern. We will also post on Instagram any themes that are coming up for supporters.



## Useful links to additional help



### MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA

- Anna Freud – [www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)
- David Trickey on Trauma – [www.annafreud.org/insights/blogs/2017/01/david-trickey-traumatic-events-how-children-and-young-people-can-react-and-how-adults-can-respond](http://www.annafreud.org/insights/blogs/2017/01/david-trickey-traumatic-events-how-children-and-young-people-can-react-and-how-adults-can-respond)
- ASSIST Trauma Care – [www.assisttraumacare.org.uk](http://www.assisttraumacare.org.uk)
- Beacon House – [www.beaconhouse.org.uk/?section=welcome-to-beacon-house](http://www.beaconhouse.org.uk/?section=welcome-to-beacon-house)
- MIND – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide) – [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- UK Trauma Council – [www.uktraumacouncil.org](http://www.uktraumacouncil.org)
- Young Minds – [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

### BEREAVEMENT

- Cruse (help in Ukrainian language) – [www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/understanding-grief-information-in-other-languages/ukranian](http://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/understanding-grief-information-in-other-languages/ukranian)
- Child Bereavement UK – [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)
- Childhood Bereavement Network – [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)
- Grief Encounter – [www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)
- Winston's Wish – [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

### REFUGEE CHARITIES

- AMAR foundation – [www.amarfoundation.org](http://www.amarfoundation.org)
- Amna (Refugee trauma initiative) – [www.amna.org](http://www.amna.org)
- British Red Cross – [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk) (Help for Ukrainian Nationals: [www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine](http://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine))
- Children and War – [www.childrenandwar.org](http://www.childrenandwar.org)
- Refugee Council – [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/information-on-ukraine](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/information-on-ukraine)
- City of Sanctuary – [www.cityofsanctuary.org/get-involved/ukraine/](http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/get-involved/ukraine/)

## FOR PARENTS OR HOSTS

- NACCOM (good practice guide) – [www.naccomm.org.uk/naccomm-launches-hosting-good-practice-guidance](http://www.naccomm.org.uk/naccomm-launches-hosting-good-practice-guidance)
- NHS – [www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/services-and-support-for-parents/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/services-and-support-for-parents/)
- United Nations – [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/prevention-through-family-skills.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/prevention-through-family-skills.html)
- Ukraine Parenting – <https://ukraineparenting.web.ox.ac.uk/eng>

## FOR CHILDREN

- Childline – [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- The Mix – [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

- NSPCC – [www.nspcc.org.uk/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/)
- NHS – [www.england.nhs.uk/safeguarding/how-to-raise-a-safeguarding-concern/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/safeguarding/how-to-raise-a-safeguarding-concern/)
- The UK Government – [www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse)
- UK Police – Emergency: call 999 / Non-emergency: call 101

