

Oughton Health

Oughton Primary School Health & Well-Being Newsletter

Edition 6 Spring Term 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, Oughton Health, our very own newsletter with a focus on promoting good health, both physical and mental, as well as general good well-being. In this edition, we focus on the importance of talk on our well-being.

Over the past decade, we have all welcomed electronic communication into our lives with wide open arms. Life has become so much easier in all manner of ways by the mere touch of a button. The world of communication has opened up and we can contact family, friends, acquaintances and even strangers through a variety of electronic channels. Landline phones have disappeared from many homes. On-line companies vye with each other to create the latest app or platform to enable us to communicate and we snap them up in our eagerness to keep up. This has never more been so apparent than over the past year!

Given the current restrictions on seeing people, we are having to turn to our devices even more to communicate although more and more, we are tending to send a quick text/ instant message rather than pick up the phone and speak. Even when in the presence of another in our homes, our conversation can become limited as we are busy clicking away on our devices - how often do we end up messaging with someone who is sitting in the same building or even room as us??

Is this a problem? The answer is yes, it can be, especially if the majority of our conversations are purely of the electronic kind. Clearly, the current restrictions are stopping us from meeting friends and family beyond our bubbles, but even before this, there was a danger that the art of real communication was being lost which presents the real risk of our 'real' relationships being jeopardised. We need to consider, can healthy relationships really be built with four word sentences and emojis?

Of course losing the skill of real communication will have huge implications on our children. Developmental psychologists studying the impact of messaging are especially concerned about young people's interpersonal skills which have not yet fully formed. If children today do not adequately acquire these skills before adulthood, moving out into the real world can actually be scary as they will have a genuine fear of conversation.

Real communication often takes courage. Developing emotional intelligence is a hugely important part of developing healthy relationships. Messaging, in whatever form, offers only a snippet of someone's real self. It is all too easy to fire off a quick text; talking to someone face to face (even if on face time) or picking up the phone takes time but is certainly worth the effort not only to help develop the skills of conversation but also to help us build positive and healthy relationships, especially needed, we are sure you would agree, in these tricky times. Let's not let this lockdown stop us from talking - go on, pick up the phone and dial a number!



IN THIS ISSUE:

- The importance of talking for our wellbeing

Watch out for our next issue:

- The Great Outdoors

“When you don't talk, there's a lot of stuff that ends up not getting said.”

*Catherine Gilbert Murdock,
Author*



Don't forget to take part in our s

Let's Talk

weekly school conversation themes. Watch out for the themes sent out for Wellbeing Wednesday or weekly via Parentmail once restrictions have lifted .



TOP TIPS FOR TALKING AND LISTENING TO YOUR CHILD/ YOUNG PERSON

- *Set aside time for talking and listening to each other.*
- *Listen when they want to talk, have strong feelings or have a problem.*
- *Be open to talking about all kinds of feelings, including anger, joy, frustration, fear and anxiety. Talking about feeling angry is different from getting angry, though. Learning the difference is an important step for a child learning to communicate.*
- *Remember **children think differently from grown-ups**. There are a lot of things they don't know and a lot of things they don't have the words to talk about.*
- *Let them finish talking and then respond. When listening, try not to interrupt or put words in their mouth - even when they say something daft, wrong or they are having trouble finding the words.*
- *Double check with them using language that they will understand. Sometimes we forget that children don't "get" everything.*
- *Watch their facial expression and body language. Listening isn't just about hearing words, but also trying to understand what's behind those words.*
- *Repeat back what your child has said and make lots of eye contact to let them know you're listening, and make sure you've really understood,*
- *Show your interest by saying such things as, "Tell me more about ...", "Really!" and "Go on ...". Ask them what they feel about the things they're telling you about.*
- *Avoid criticism and blame. If you're angry about something they have done, try and explain why you don't want them to do it again. Appeal to their sense of empathy!*
- *Work together to solve problems and conflicts.*
- *Be honest with each other.*

WHY TALKING IS BEST:

- **Getting it all—the whole story**

In the electronic world, we do not tell an account in any detail; we give a quick version leaving out many of the nuances that make our story relevant and important. We remember and value face to face/ phone conversations more: who we spoke to and their response, how they reacted, whether they offered advice and how we discussed it etc.

- **Reduce the Confusion**

When messaging, we don't realise how little we are actually communicating; we often think we have said a lot more than we actually have. Messages can be interpreted completely differently than we intended and it leaves people on the receiving end totally confused. This isn't helped by autocorrect. What was meant as a simple, innocent statement can be easily misinterpreted. When talking we can share the full story, including the details, removing all confusion!

- **Conversation with Inflection and facial expression**

Electronic messaging removes all inflection and we end up trying to interpret nonverbal visual cues. It is possible to read 10 different subtexts into one four word written sentence! As there are no visual clues such as smiles, frowns, furrowed brows, we are not able to pick up on visual clues. Conversation allows us to pick up on vocal cues such as pitch and tone as well as facial clues and the guesswork is essentially removed.

- **Spontaneity**

Real conversations allow us to take our thoughts, ideas and plans to unexpected places. We may begin telling a story or sharing something and then add-on to it or expand upon it to help the person better understand what we're trying to say.

- **Closure**

When texting/messaging, the conversation can often finish with no formal closure as one person drops off or messages may be responded to in an impersonal way by just answering a question or sending back information. With no formal closure, being left hanging in mid-air can feel rude to the receiver. Face to face conversations pretty much guarantee a decent closure.

Messaging, in whatever form, is clearly here to stay and being in the middle of a lockdown is clearly not ideal for giving us opportunity to talk to a range of people, but that doesn't mean we should let that stop us from having real conversations and sharing our thoughts in a more meaningful way.

Real conversations take time in what are often already hectic days but, if we make the effort, we will walk away with better relationships that far outweigh the time invested. We may not be able to meet up at the moment but we can still talk to each other and/or pick up the phone. Nothing can beat a great conversation to help improve our bonds with our loved ones!

What will your children remember?
Moments spent listening, talking,
playing and sharing together may
be the most important times of all.

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