

Wellbeing Wednesday #20

Each Wednesday we will be posting some exciting Wellbeing content for our community. This may include information about how you can support your children's and families' wellbeing, a snapshot on mental health issues currently prevalent in the community, or information about a local service in the area that might benefit you or your child.

Over the final two weeks of term we are going to take a deeper dive into the Zones of Regulation, the topic of a previous Wellbeing Wednesday post. The Zones of Regulation allow us to map how we are feeling, understanding our triggers and strategies to stay calm during times of distress. Understanding our emotions and validating how we are feeling will help many of us return to school as ready as possible.

This week's topic is the Yellow and Red Zone

The **Yellow Zone** is the next zone up from the Green Zone. Where the Green Zone is calm and ready for action, the Yellow Zone is full of thoughts and feelings that might prevent us from focusing on the task at hand. The Yellow Zone includes lots of different emotions, but the common thread is that our heart is beating faster, our feelings are becoming intense, and our mind is busy. It is like a yellow traffic light, telling us to slow down or proceed with caution. Some common Yellow Zone feelings are:



Excited



Frustrated



Nervous



Upset



Jealous

As with all emotions, they have their uses. To be in the Yellow Zone isn't a bad thing, in fact, it can feel great. Excited anticipation of a birthday or Christmas is Yellow Zone. So is seeing your friends after a long period stuck at home. Yellow Zone can also inspire or motivate you. Feeling upset or jealous after failing at something can make you work harder to get better. Feeling nervous or scared of something can motivate us to find safety. Frustration lets us know it's time to leave the situation before you become angry and make a bad choice. All of our emotions are useful in the right situations. In fact, they are our brain's way of helping us to survive and thrive. Unfortunately, we often experience Yellow Zone emotions in unhelpful times. Feeling nervous before we talk to someone new, feeling upset when we lose a class game or getting frustrated at a maths problem don't help us. So it is important to have strategies to get out of the Yellow Zone when needed. Think of these strategies as a way of saying "thanks feelings, but I've got it from here".

Strategies

The basic part of Yellow Zone is that our minds are busy and our hearts are beating quickly. We want to change both of those things to come back down to the Green Zone. Here are two types of strategies:

- **Thinking:** These strategies involve reframing the problem, looking at it from different perspectives. For example, asking yourself is this problem I have actually worth my energy or is it an ant problem? Will I be worried about this problem tomorrow? In a month? In a year? Asking

yourself these questions can help determine if the problem is worth your mental energy. Another thinking strategy is called Flex Brain vs Rock Brain. A flexible brain is like a superhero. It can bend around problems and see different solutions. It's like that toddler's game with shape blocks matching the shape holes. The circle doesn't fit in the square. But the Flex Brain can change and adapt to new and tough situations. It asks for help and tries different solutions. A Rock Brain can't change and is stuck banging into the problem over and over again, getting nowhere and getting more frustrated. You can choose which type of brain you want to use.

- **Calming:** if we can't think our way out, or we are too frustrated or anxious to try, often we need to physically calm our bodies down first. Calming strategies involve deep breathing. Using your breathing is like a magic fix. Our bodies can't physically be angry or scared if we take big, slow and deep breaths. Each breath should take 10 to 15 seconds as you breath in, hold, and breath out. Pushing your breath deep down into your belly. Do this 5 times and you will start to feel relaxed and ready to calmly take on any problem.
- **Sensory:** There are endless sensory aids you can use from weighted blankets, to slime, to bouncing on a gym ball. The key with sensory strategies is to feel what your body wants to do. It might want to move, push, pull, jump be squashed or covered, you might like to take away sound or light or move your hands or fingers to squeeze, click, squish or turn something. There is no right or wrong answer and there is a sensory aid for every need. You might just want a warm hug or a cool breath outside. You can often make your own sensory devices at home, or otherwise there are websites and stores dedicated to exactly this. Have a look at sensoryoasisforkids.com.au or stores like Kmart or Big W.

Finally, the **Red Zone** is where we go when we didn't proceed with caution or slow down. The Red Zone is anger, aggression, terror and elation. Essentially, it's losing control and submitting to your emotions. It looks like this:



Angry



Mean



Aggressive



Terrified



Elated

The Red Zone is where we make our worst choices, and when logic and sense are thrown out the window. Like all the zones, it's perfectly normal and expected to visit the Red Zone. People get on our nerves, we might be in danger, we might be hurt physically or emotionally. Maybe too many things have piled up on our plates or we have too much excitement to contain. However, the Red Zone can be useful. We find out our limits and what we can put up with. We find out what makes us angry or terrified. We find out what happens if we don't make smart emotional choices. We learn a lot about ourselves and our values when we visit the Red Zone. But it doesn't feel good. It feels out of control, exposed and raw. We might make choices that damage our friendships or hurt the people around us.

The strategies to get out of the Red Zone are simple. Stop what you are doing. Walk away and take deep breaths. Give yourself time to breath. Sit somewhere quiet and feel yourself calm. Use the same calming strategies listed above in the Yellow Zone. In lockdown we are likely to feel many emotions and visit all four Zones. Try not to judge yourself for how you feel, just remember your strategies and work on returning to your Green Zone.

Have a great week!

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Kids Help Line

Confidential and anonymous, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. **Phone: 1800 55 18 00**

www.kidshelp.com.au/

Australian Government: Head to Health

Head to Health can help you find digital mental health services from some of Australia's most trusted mental health organisations. Provided by the Australian Department of Health, Head to Health brings together apps, online programs, online forums, and phone services, as well as a range of digital information resources.

headtohealth.gov.au/

Beyond Blue Support Service - Support. Advice. Action

Information and referral to relevant services for depression and anxiety related matters.

Phone: 1300 22 46 36

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support

Black Dog Institute

The Black Dog Institute is a world leader in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder.

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/

Blue Knot Foundation Helpline (formerly Adults Surviving Child Abuse)

The Blue Knot Helpline provides information and short term counselling nationally via telephone for adults survivors of childhood trauma on **1300 657 380** and email helpline@blueknot.org.au ([link sends e-mail](#)) 7 days a week 9am to 5pm AEST.

www.blueknot.org.au

Butterfly Foundation

Butterfly provides support for Australians who suffer from eating disorders and negative body image issues and their carers. **Phone: 1800 33 4673**

thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/

Carer Gateway

Are you one of the 2.5 million Australians who care for a loved one, friend or neighbour? Find out information about the support services available to you, on the Carer Gateway.

www.carergateway.gov.au

Friendline

FriendLine is for anyone who needs to reconnect or just wants a chat. All conversations with FriendLine are casual and anonymous and our friendly volunteers are ready to talk about anything and everything.

friendline.org.au

Gambling Helpline

Starting to think gambling might be a problem? Find out about the signs of a problem and assess gambling issues and spending. **Phone: 1800 858 858**

<http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/>

Headspace

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. We help young people who are going through a tough time.

www.headspace.org.au/

Lifeline

24 hour telephone counselling service. **Phone: 13 11 14 or Text: 0477 13 11 14 6pm - midnight AEST**
www.lifeline.org.au/

Mensline Australia

A dedicated service for men with relationship and family concerns. **Phone: 1300 78 99 78**
www.mensline.org.au/

MI Networks

Offering access to relevant, up-to-date information, peer support and connections to local community networks, Mi Networks members provide a personalised response to the needs of individuals living with mental illness, their carers, friends and family members. **Phone: 1800 985 944**
www.minetworks.org.au/

1800RESPECT

National sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling services 24-hour online support for workers and professionals. **Phone: 1800 737 732**
www.1800respect.org.au/

PANDA - National Perinatal Depression Helpline

PANDA's National Perinatal Depression Helpline, funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments, provides vital support, information, referral and counselling to thousands of Australian parents and their families. Callers do not need to have a diagnosis of antenatal or postnatal depression to make contact with the Helpline, PANDA is keen to support any new parent struggling during pregnancy or after the birth of their baby, as well as their partner, family and friends. **Phone: 1300 726 306 from Mon – Fri, 9am – 7.30pm (AEST/AEDT).**
www.panda.org.au/

QLife

QLife provides Australia-wide anonymous, LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships. **Phone: 1800 184 527**
qlife.org.au/

ReachOut.com

ReachOut.com is Australia's leading online youth mental health service. ReachOut.com is an initiative of the Inspire Foundation, an Australian non-profit with a mission to help young people lead happier lives.
au.reachout.com/

Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia is a leading provider of relationship support services for individuals, families and communities. **Phone: 1300 364 277**
<http://www.relationships.org.au/>

SANE Australia

SANE Australia is a national charity helping all Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life – through campaigning, education and research. SANE conducts innovative programs and campaigns to improve the lives of people living with mental illness, their family and friends. It also operates a busy Helpline and website, which have thousands of contacts each year from around Australia. **Phone: 1800 187 263**
<http://www.sane.org/index.php>