

BELONGING MATTERS: Supporting children and young people through bullying challenges

Megan Corcoran

18th July 2024

10am-12pm

career • KAFÉ



Acknowledgement of Country

Carer Kafe acknowledges the Wurundjeri People whose traditional lands we operate on within the Kulin Nation.

We respectfully acknowledge all Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to the land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



Learning & Development

- carerkafe.org.au/training
- Zoom & In Person Sessions
- Online Learning & Resources
- Events & Retreats



CARE + HOUSEKEEPING

We will be talking about trauma, bullying and wellbeing challenges.

Ensure you take care of yourself.

Open a digital document OR have paper and pen ready for activities.

Pause video to complete an activity.



LIFELINE

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au



BEYOND BLUE

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beyondblue.org.au

www.wagtailinstitute.com

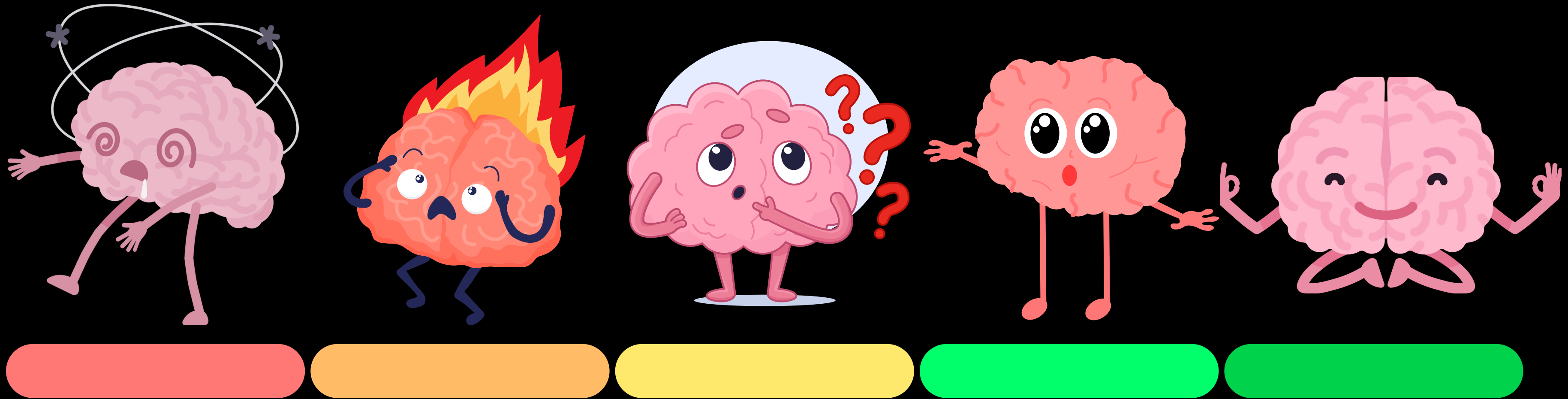


Disclaimer

This educational session is designed for informational purposes only and does not constitute therapy or counselling. As a trauma-informed wellbeing consulting service, Wagtail Institute provides training to enhance awareness and knowledge.

Participants are advised to seek professional support if needed, and this session should not be considered a substitute for such services.

How are you feeling right now?



Which state is your brain in?



What is bullying?
Who is involved and
impacted

Why people bully
Signs and
symptoms

Evidence-based
strategies to
support children and
young people

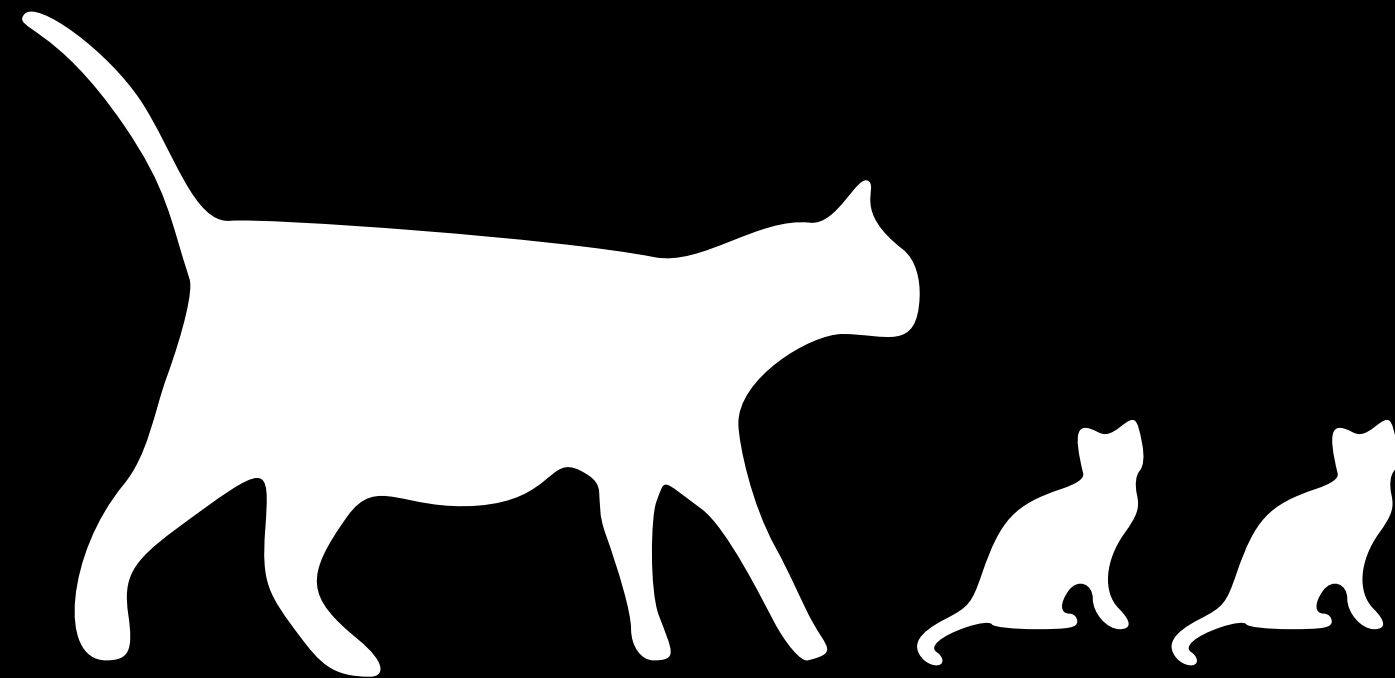
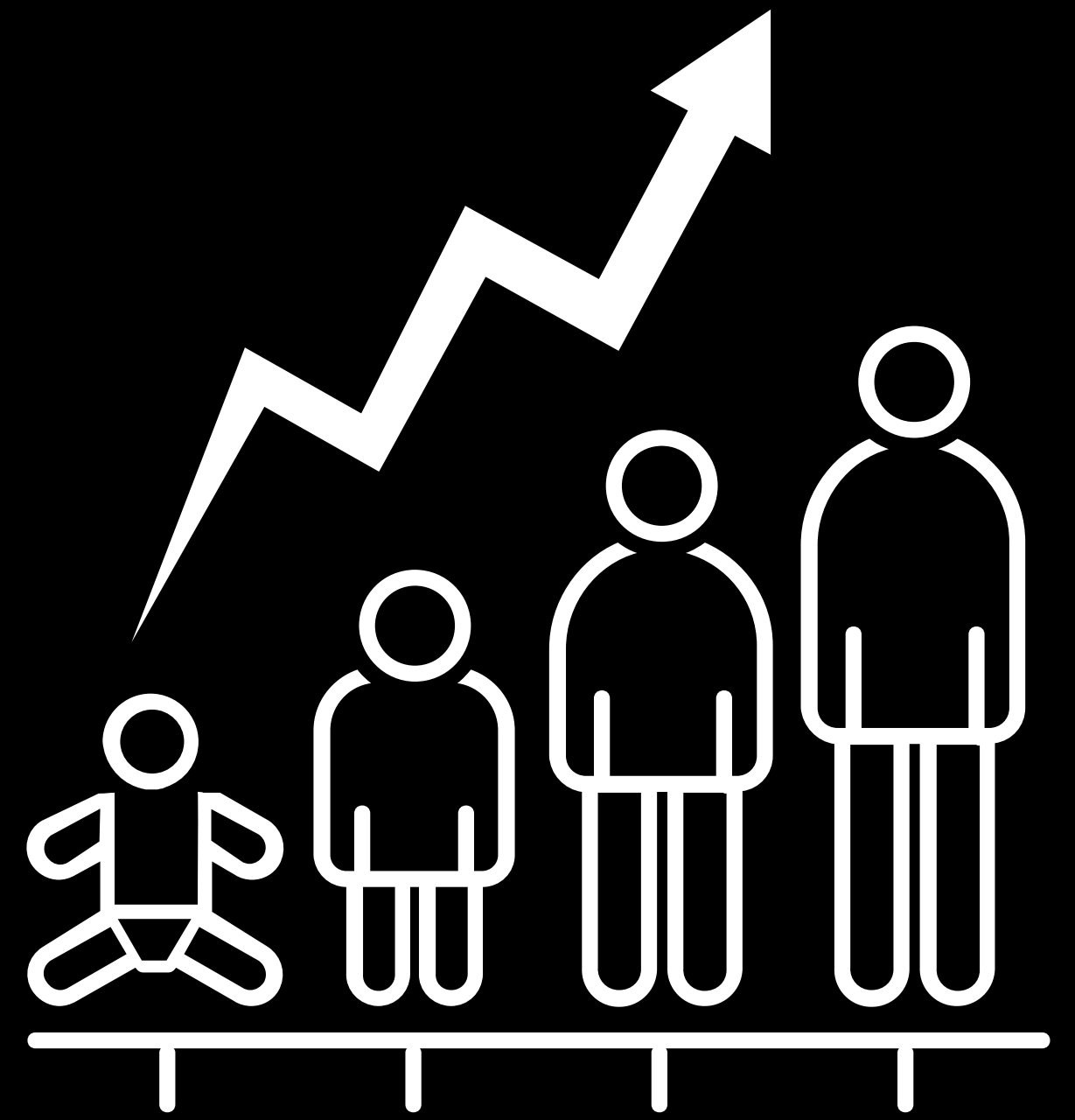
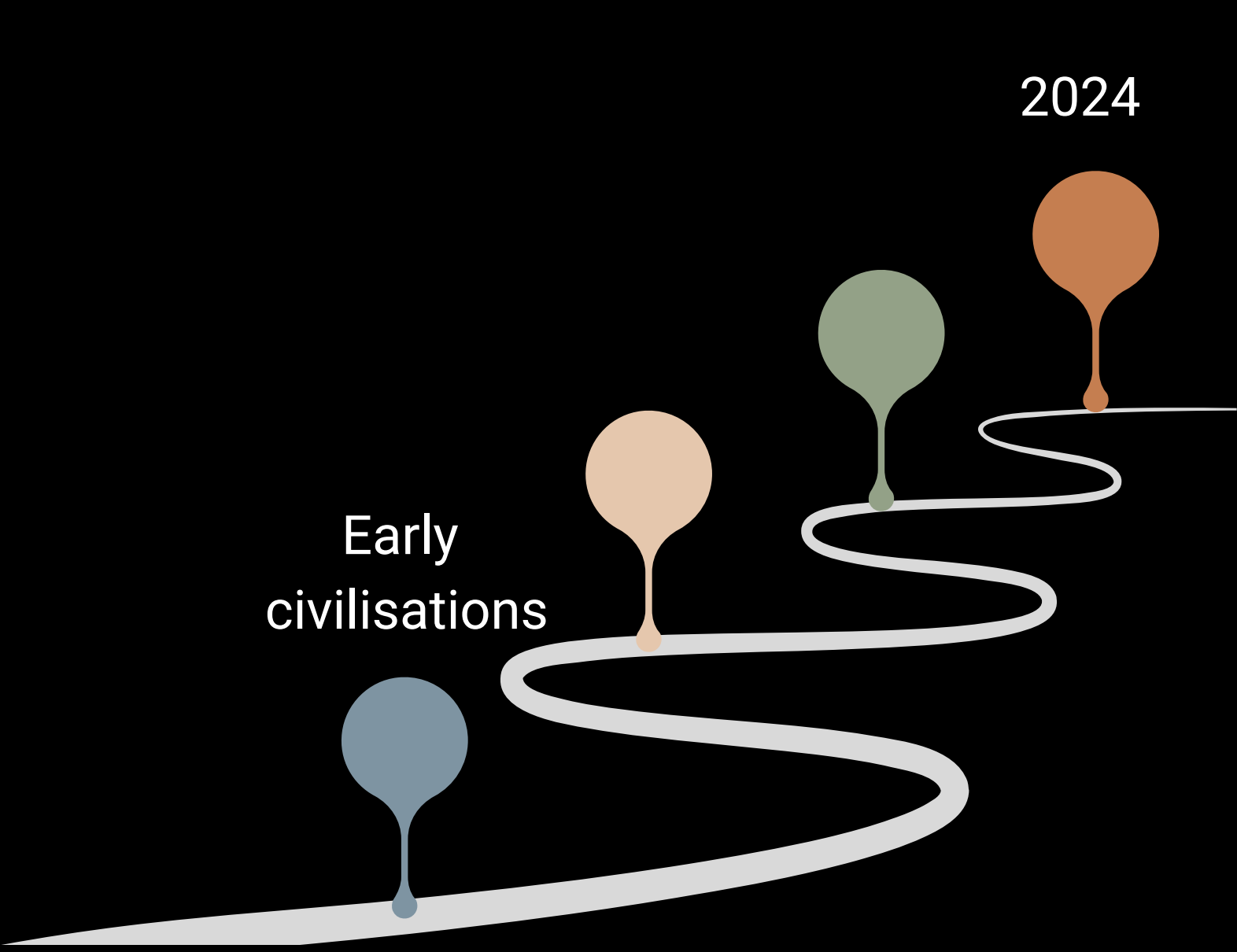
Belonging!

What is bullying?

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when an individual (or a group of people) *repeatedly* and *intentionally* cause harm to another person (or group of people), who is unable to avoid being targeted
(Cross, D. 2024)





Types of bullying

Verbal:

name-calling, teasing, putting down, threats

Physical:

poking, hitting, punching, pulling faces, intimidation

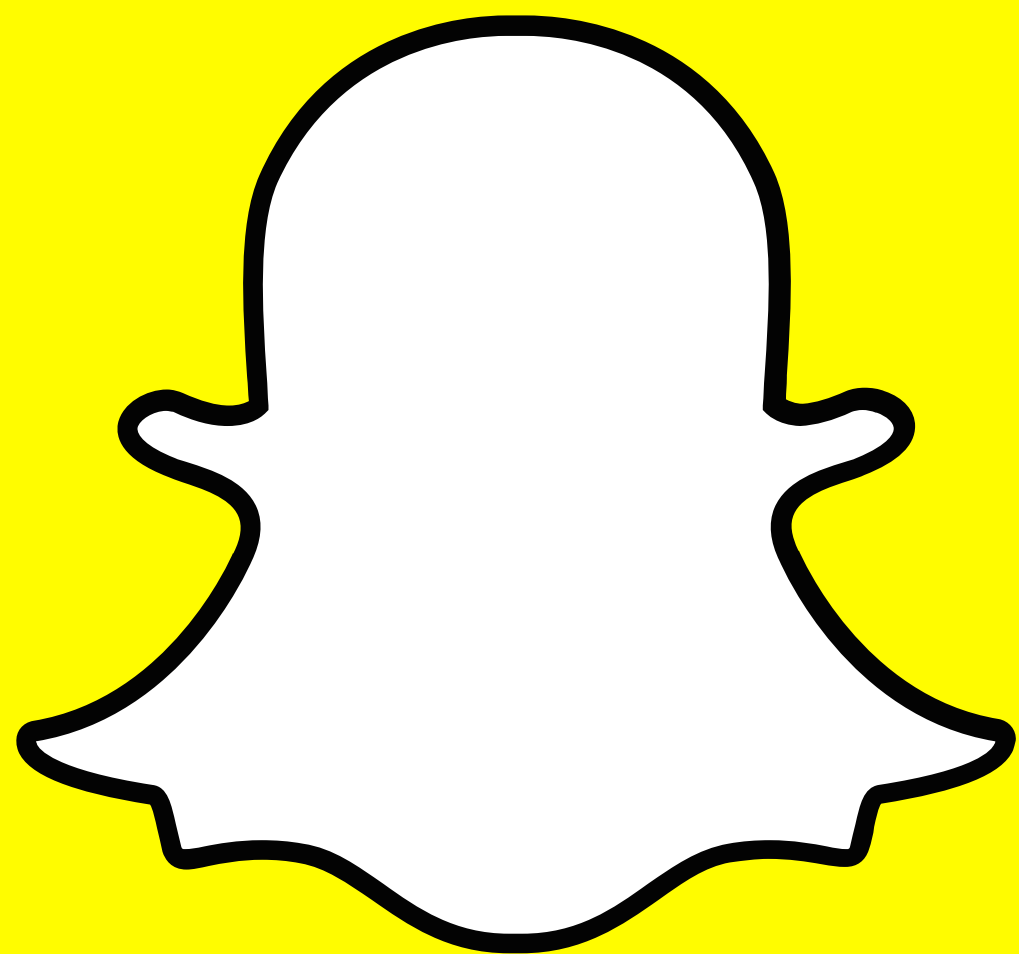
Social:

spreading rumours, leaving someone out, public embarrassment

Cyber:

messages, comments, and pictures online to cause harm





Social & Cyber bullying
can be considered 'invisible' or covert
forms of bullying, as they are particularly
difficult for teachers and guardians to
detect and address.

Bullying in schools facts and figures



Approximately **one in four** Year 4 to Year 9 Australian students (27%) reported being bullied every few weeks or more often.



32% of Year 5s and **29%** of Year 8s reported frequent school bullying.



Approximately **one in five** young school students reported experiencing online bullying in any one year.



Students **10 to 15 years of age** are the most likely to be involved in online bullying.



Hurtful teasing was the most common bullying behaviour reported, followed by having hurtful lies told about them.



Enhancing **social status** with peers is the most commonly reported motivator for bullying.



84% of students who were bullied online were also bullied in person.



83% of students who bully others online also bully others in person.



Students often **tell parents** about bullying rather than anyone else.



Students **may not report** bullying to the school because they fear not being believed or making things worse.



In **85%** of bullying interactions, peers are present as onlookers, and play a central role in the bullying process.



72% of schools reported managing at least one incident of online bullying in the previous year.

Impacts of bullying...



Impacts of bullying...



Bullying
others

Person
targeted

Bullying
others



Person witnessing
the behaviour



The impacts and consequences of being bullied is widely researched.

Physical health consequences include sleep disturbances, headaches, physical symptoms of stress, increased levels of cortisol and potential long-term issues like obesity and heart conditions

www.wagtailinstitute.com



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(Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2016

(Wolke, 2013) Campbell, M.A. (2004)

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Experiences of bullying causes 'social pain.'

Social pain activates the same regions in the brain as physical pain.

Experiencing bullying can lead to depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and suicidal ideation



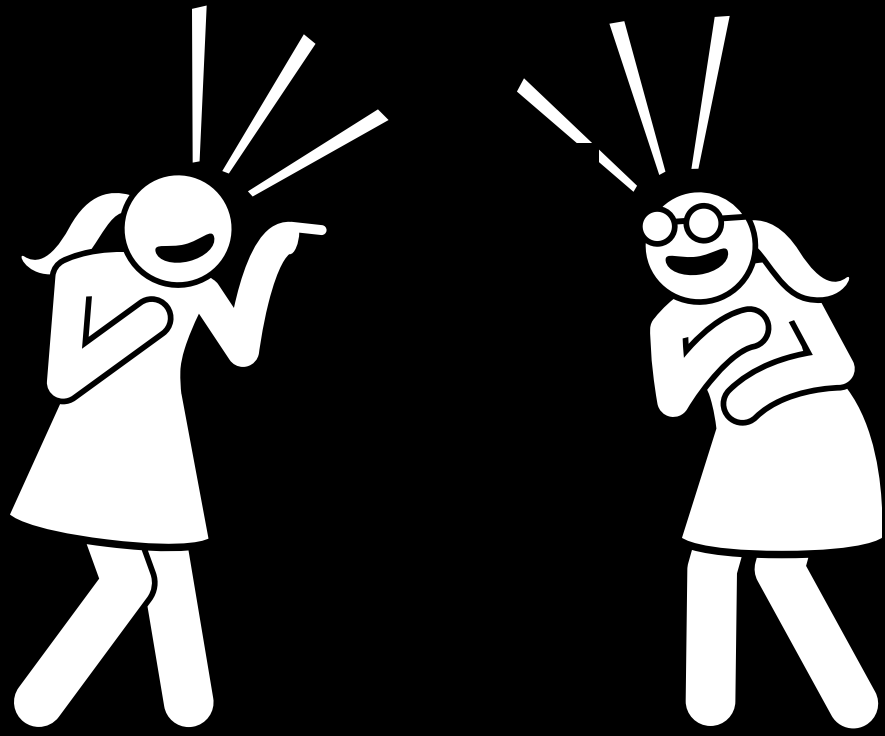


Social pain in the brain

Cyberball experiment: researchers investigated the parallel between physical pain and emotional pain.

Findings: the same region of the brain is activated during physical pain and experiences of rejection (social pain).

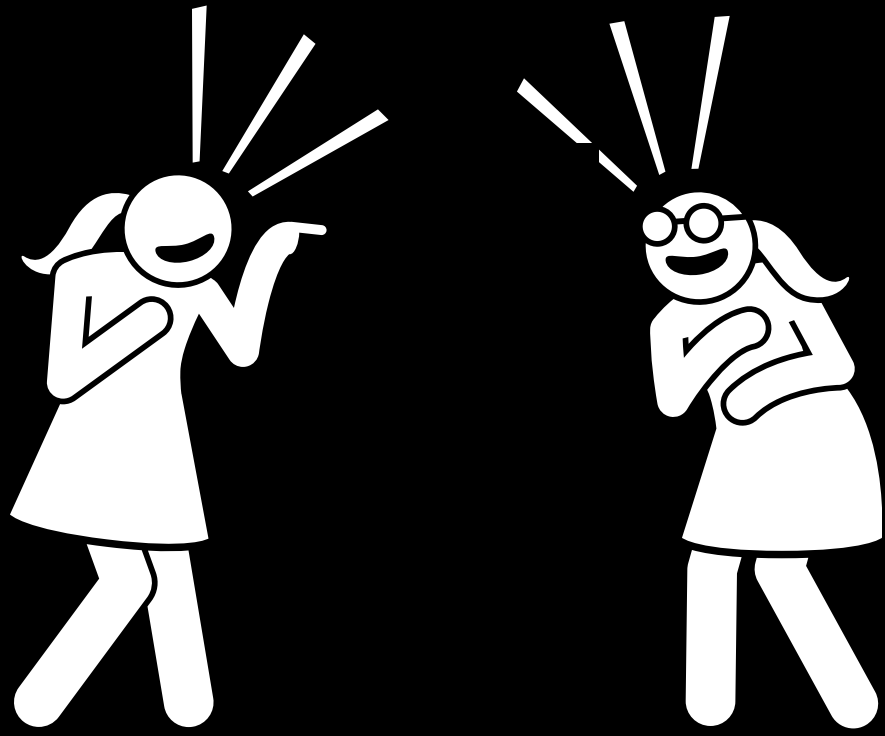
Researchers also found that witnessing social pain in others activated similar responses in the brain



There is less
research on the
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those who bully
others

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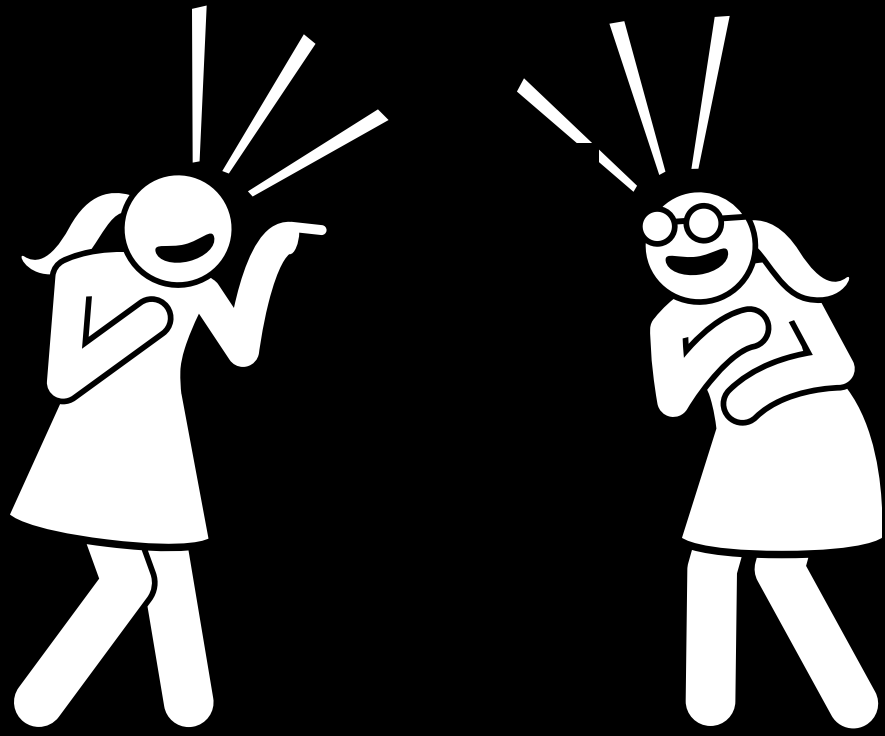
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Associated with feeling
unsafe, poor
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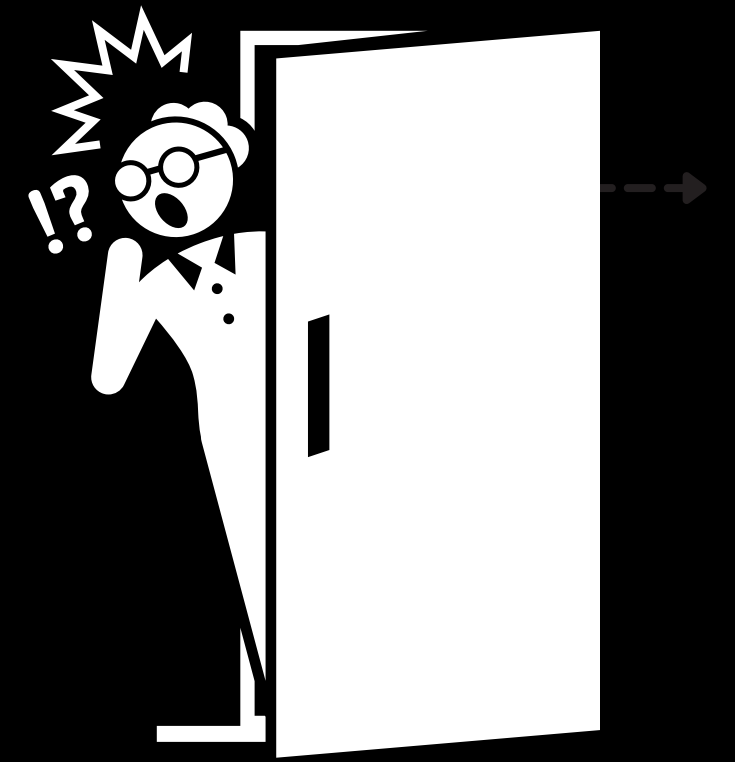
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Children and young
people who engage
in bullying
behaviours can
experience rejection
and social isolation.



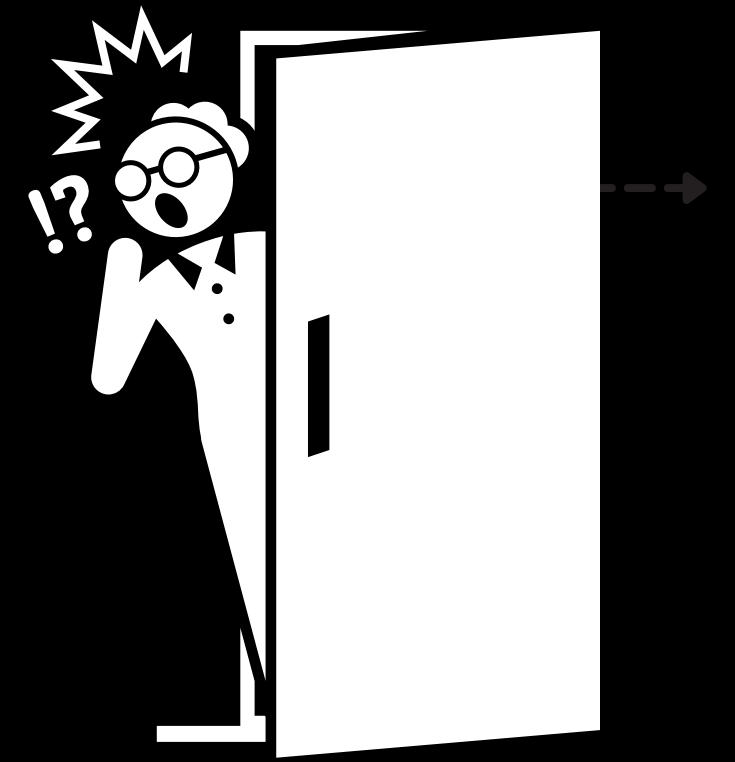
Preliminary research suggests that those who witness bullying may be as much at risk psychologically as those directly involved.

Bystanders experience the combination of **fear** and **guilt**, this can lead to what is known as approach-avoidance conflict.

www.wagtailinstitute.com

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Gordon, S (2020)



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Bystanders can develop anxiety about bullying. This anxiety also can lead the bystander to worry about safety and security at school or in public places.

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Bystanders experience the combination of **fear** and **guilt**, this can lead to what is known as approach-avoidance conflict.

Bystanders were reported to experience sleep disturbances, changes in eating habits, and somatic symptoms (headaches, upset stomach)

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Involvement with bullying in
any role was predictive of
negative health, financial,
behavioral, and social
outcomes in adulthood

(Wolke, 2013)

**Why do people
engage in bullying
behaviours?**

Why do they engage in bullying behaviours?

- The child wants to fit in with a group of friends
- They have been bullied and are trying to regain a sense of power by acting aggressively toward others.
- They are seeking attention from teachers, parents, or classmates, and haven't been successful getting it other ways.
- They are by nature more assertive and impulsive than their peers.
- They tend to perceive the behaviour of other kids as hostile, even when it is not.
- They do not fully grasp how their behaviour is making the victim feel.

(Katz, B. 2024)



However, other research finds evidence of a quite different pattern, where bullies have higher levels of self-esteem than others. Some bullies have high levels of social skills, empathy, and self-regard

In this view, rather than resulting from psychological troubles, bullying behaviour stems from a desire for greater social status among peers.

Faris, R.W. and Felmlee, D (2024)

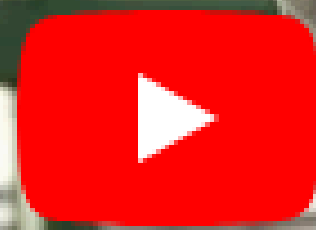





Why do kids bully?



Share



Watch on  YouTube

Reflections?

A child or young person might be at risk of bullying others if they...

- display a lack of empathy towards others
- are hyperfocused on fitting in
- are exposed to other bullying events
- are putting others down
- display recurring behaviour challenges
- have a low sense of belonging
- have exposure to aggression and conflict in the home (Katz, B. 2024)



**How do we know if
a child or young
person is being
bullied?**

Signs a child or young person is being bullied

- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns,
- Frequent tears or anger
- Feeling ill in the morning and not wanting to go to school
- Changing friendship groups
- Unexplained bruises, cuts and scratches.
- Children are more likely to report bullying to their parents and carers up to the age of 12. After that, they are more likely to confide in peers.



**How can we
support children
and young people?**

Being bullied



Encourage communication.

What happened?

How did you feel?

How did you react?

Make a plan together for if it happens again.
Rehearse the plan and include stress
regulation ideas.

Being bullied



Realistic.

Focus on what you can control together.
Making a safety plan, reporting it, etc.

Don't over-promise that you or the school will
make it stop.

Explore why people bully others to increase
understanding and de-personalise.

Being bullied



Focus on social and emotional development

Encourage awareness and empathy towards others

Focus on stress management and regulation strategies

(behaviour can be a reason children exclude others).

Being bullied



Support and engagement.

Encourage them to unplug and take tech-free time.

Focus on those in their life who don't bully.

Identify other safe adults or peers to talk to.

Being bullied

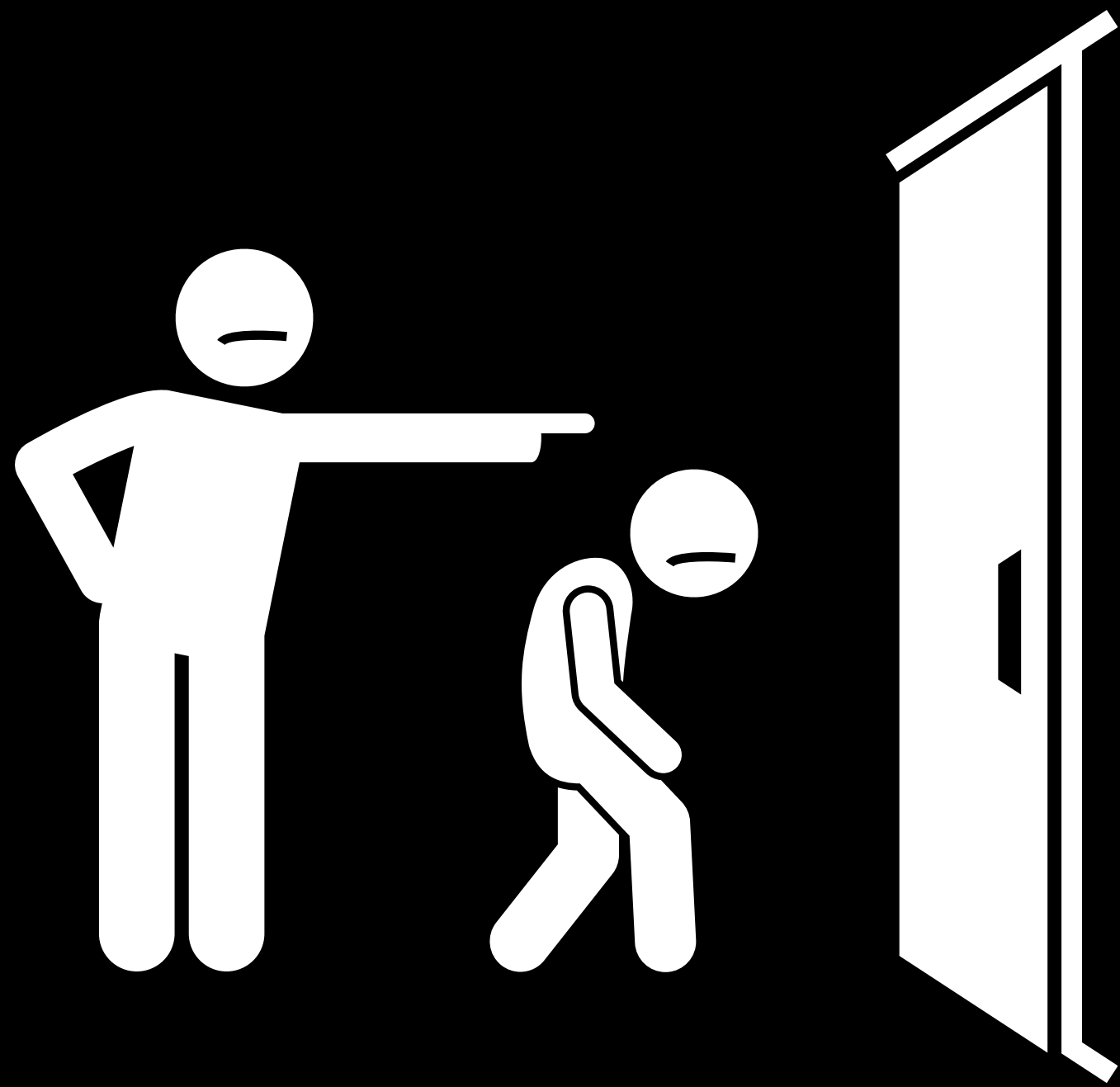


Include positive psychology interventions (PPIs) to boost confidence, self esteem and to maintain wellbeing:

What went well today and why?

Identify and reflect on their character strengths (viacharacter.org)

Gratitude practices



Bullying behaviour +
punishment =
??????



**Bullying behaviour met
with connection +
skill development =
change**



Collaborative Problem Solving Overview

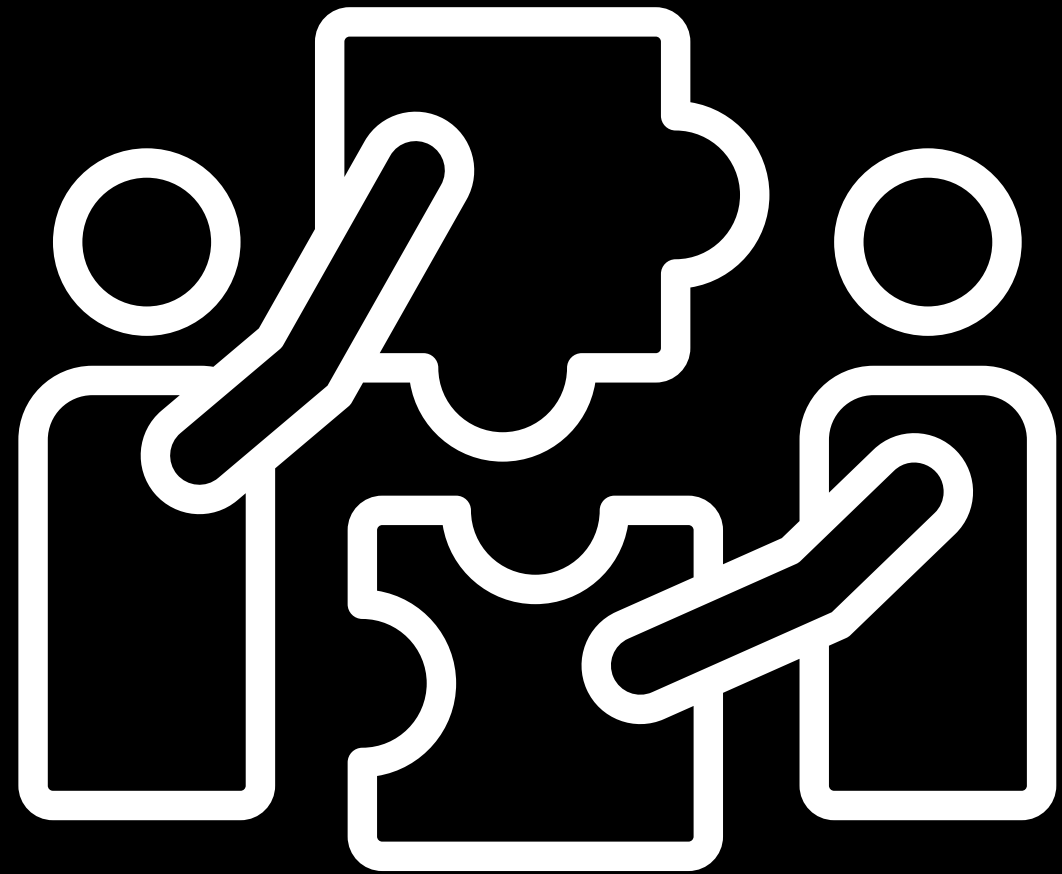


Share



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Collaborative problem solving (CPS)



1. Tell me what happened
2. How were/are you feeling?
3. Why do you think this might be a problem?
4. I think it is a problem because ____
5. Let's brainstorm together how we can solve this problem
6. Which solutions should we try?
7. Let's check in again



**The school just called
and said they have been
bullying others...**

1. Tell me what happened
2. How were/are you feeling?
3. Why do you think this might be a problem?
4. I think it is a problem because ____
5. Let's brainstorm together how we can solve this problem
6. Which solutions should we try?
7. Let's check in again

Modelling what we want to see

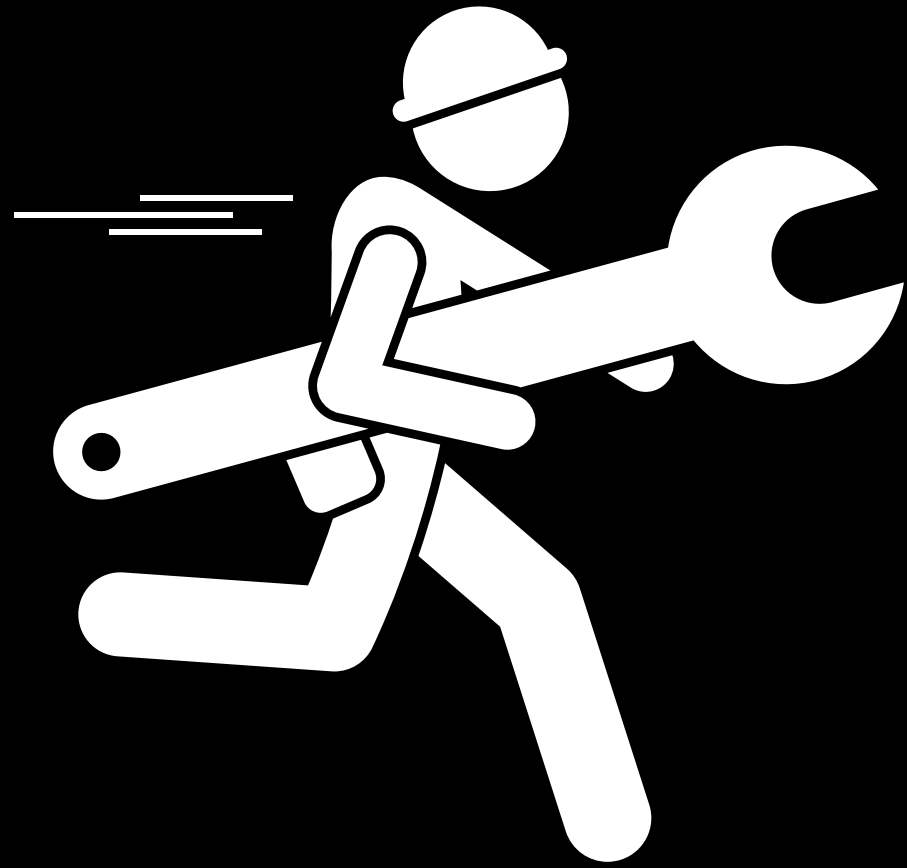


Building a home life that reflects the social behaviours we want to see

Limit the types of jokes, comments and discussions that might promote bullying behaviour.

Model repairing relationships and using CPS to solve our problems, too.

Making it right

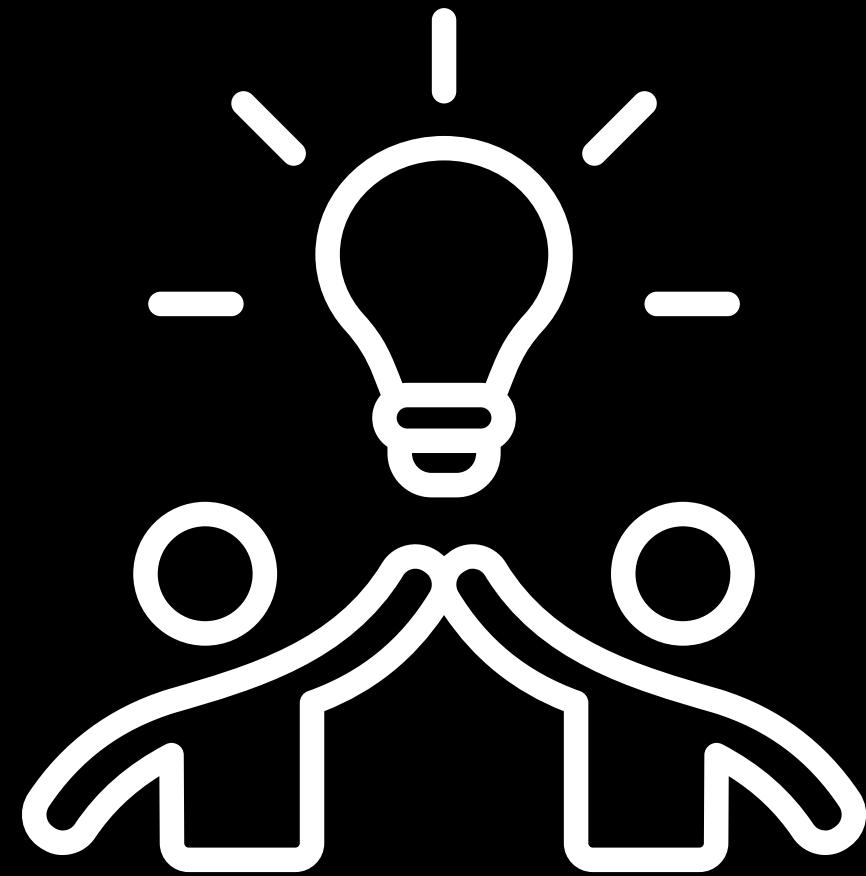


Explore ways an appropriate repair can take place.

Is the child ready to apologise?
Do they want to?

Is there a way we can share their
commitment to being safe with the other
child/children?

Collaborate

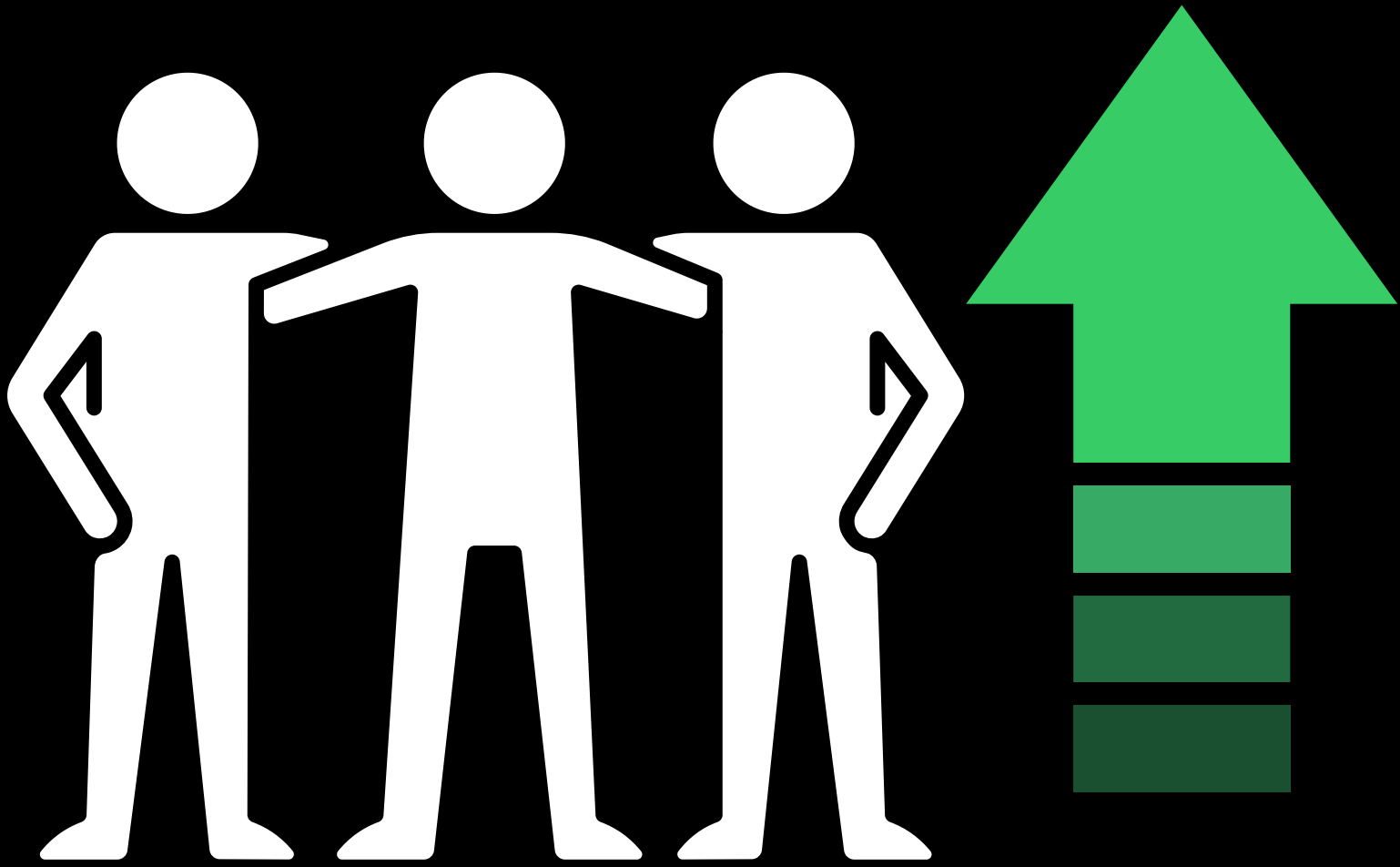


Speak to teachers, wellbeing staff and school leaders about the problem and the steps being taken to solve it

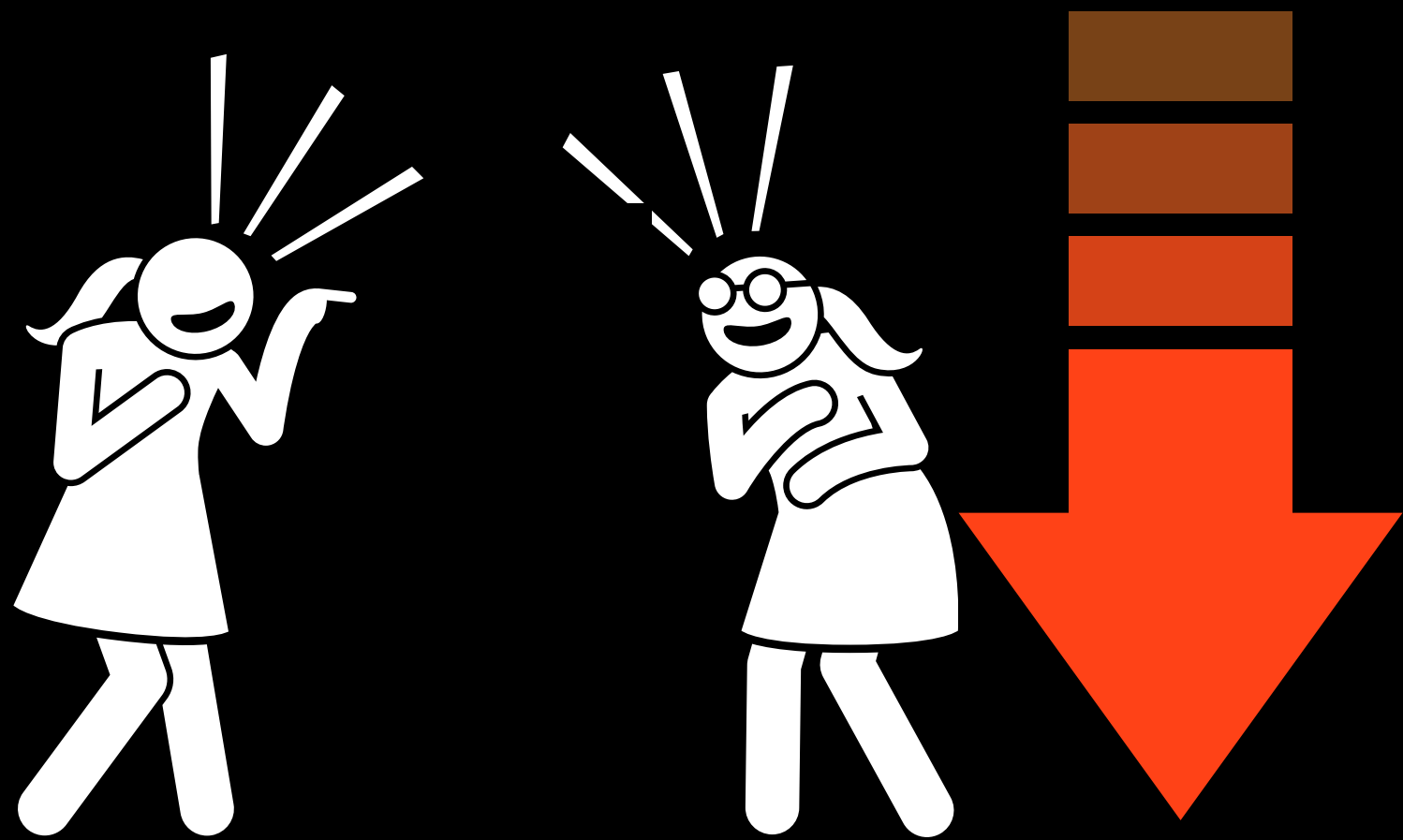
Ask about their social and emotional programs and curriculum

Support the child with any restorative processes and advocate for “appropriate” repair

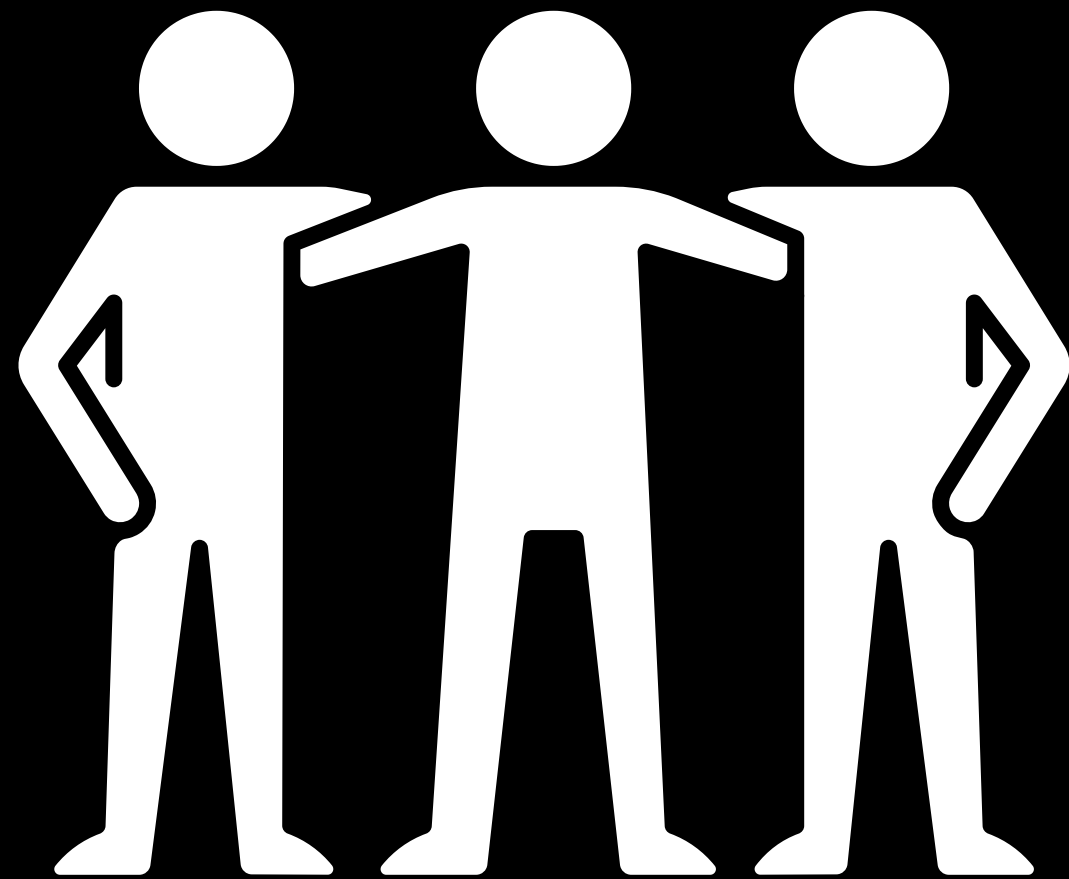
Belonging



Bullying



Belonging



Belonging is defined as a unique and subjective experience that relates to a yearning for connection with others and the desire for interpersonal connection (Rogers, 1951).

The need to belong starts as soon as we are born.

Core connections with others help create an understanding [for most] that the *world is a safe place*

Think of a time when you felt a strong sense of belonging.

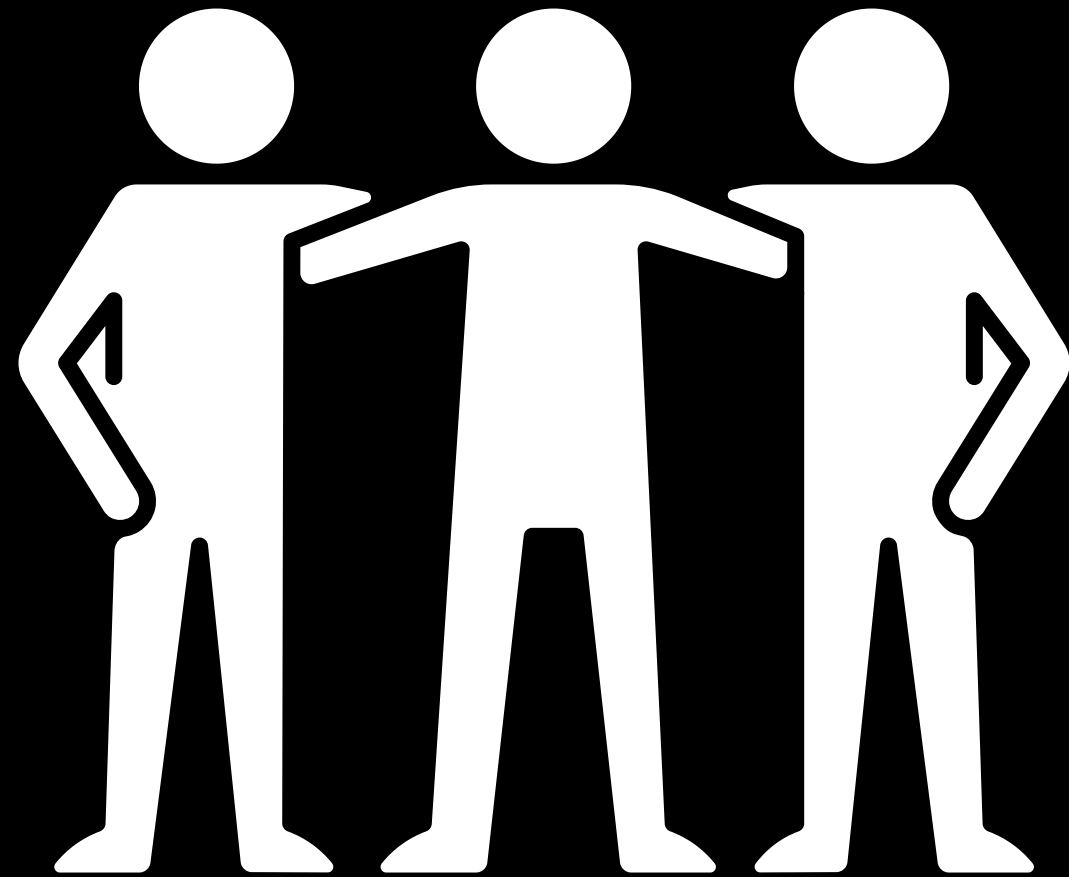
What made that experience meaningful?

**Have you seen children or young people
in care experiencing a strong sense of
belonging?**

What did you notice?

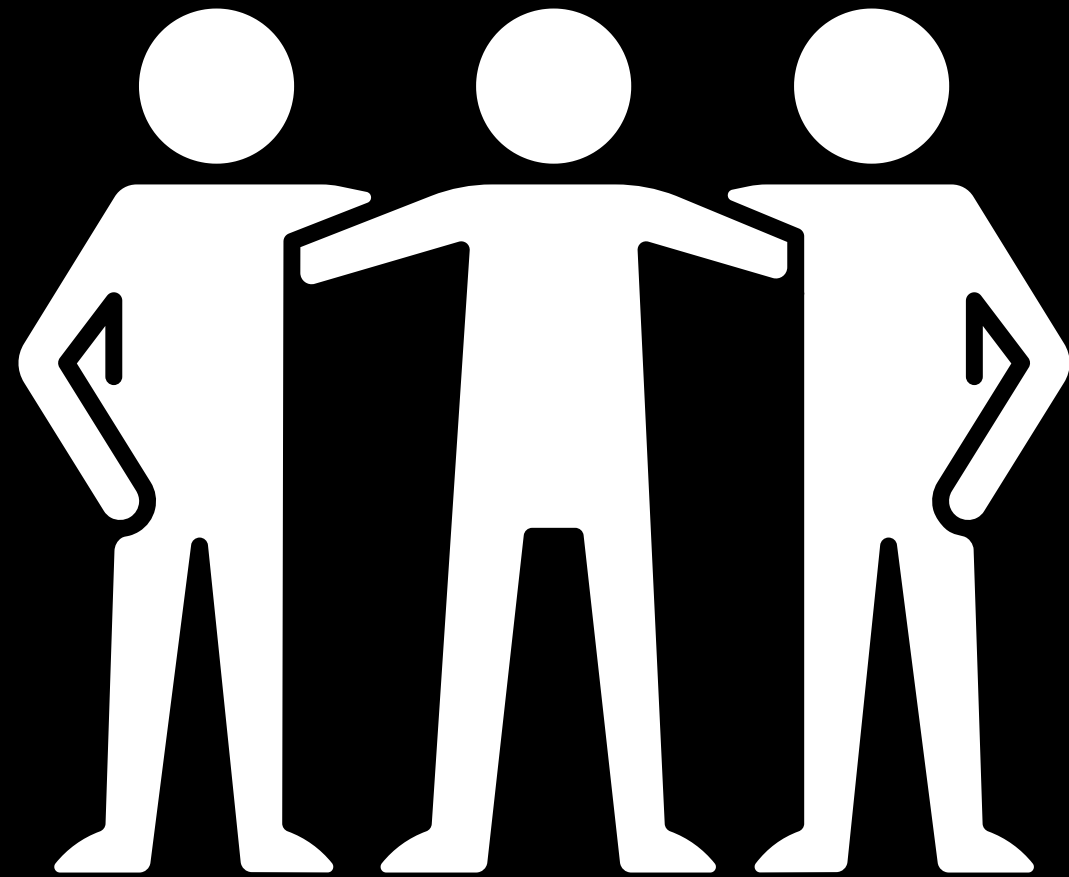
**How can we enhance children in care's
sense of belonging?**

Belonging interventions for carers



- Talk about emotions with children and show them that it is valid and acceptable for them to share how they feel.
- Take an interest in what children are doing
- Make time for each child equally so they feel valued and secure in your relationship with them (i.e., one-on-one time).
- Encourage children to build relationships with others through sports, school activities, clubs etc.

Belonging interventions for carers



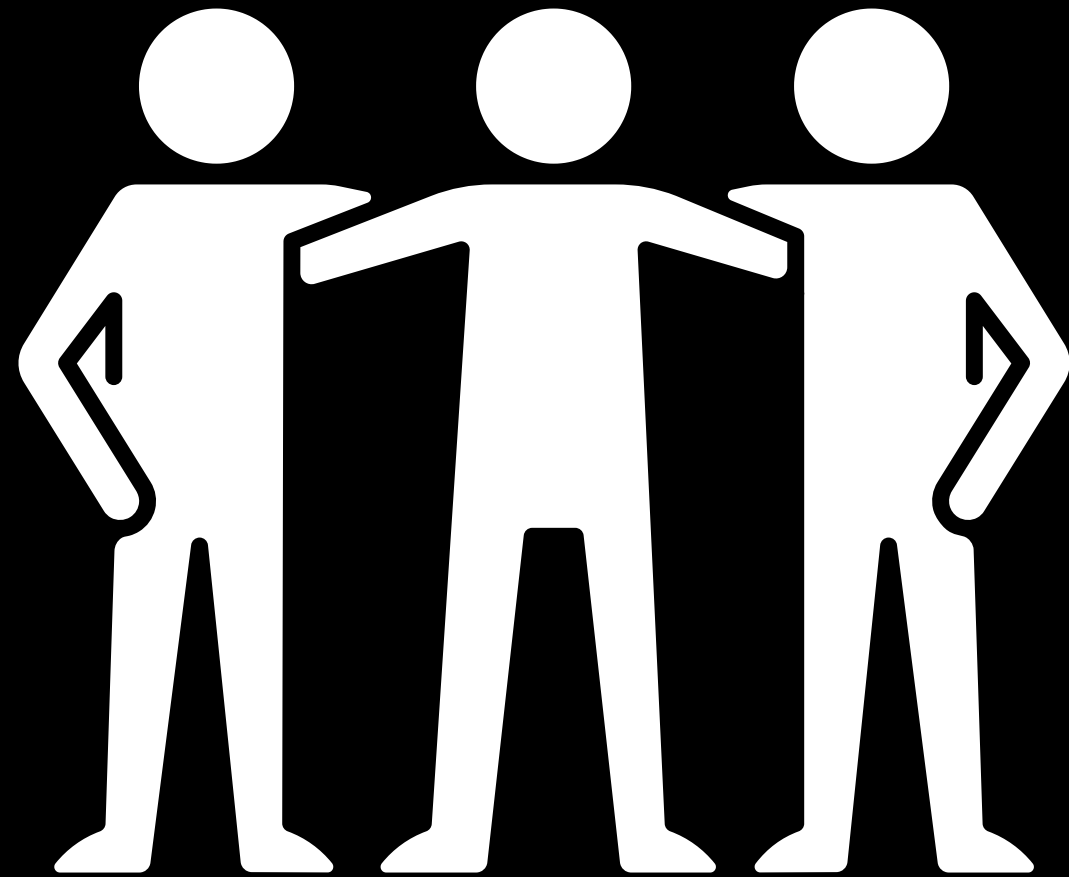
- Strengths interventions:
www.viacharacter.com

Eg. Identify their strengths, tell them how you notice them using them. What makes them likeable? What makes them unique?

- Gratitude interventions

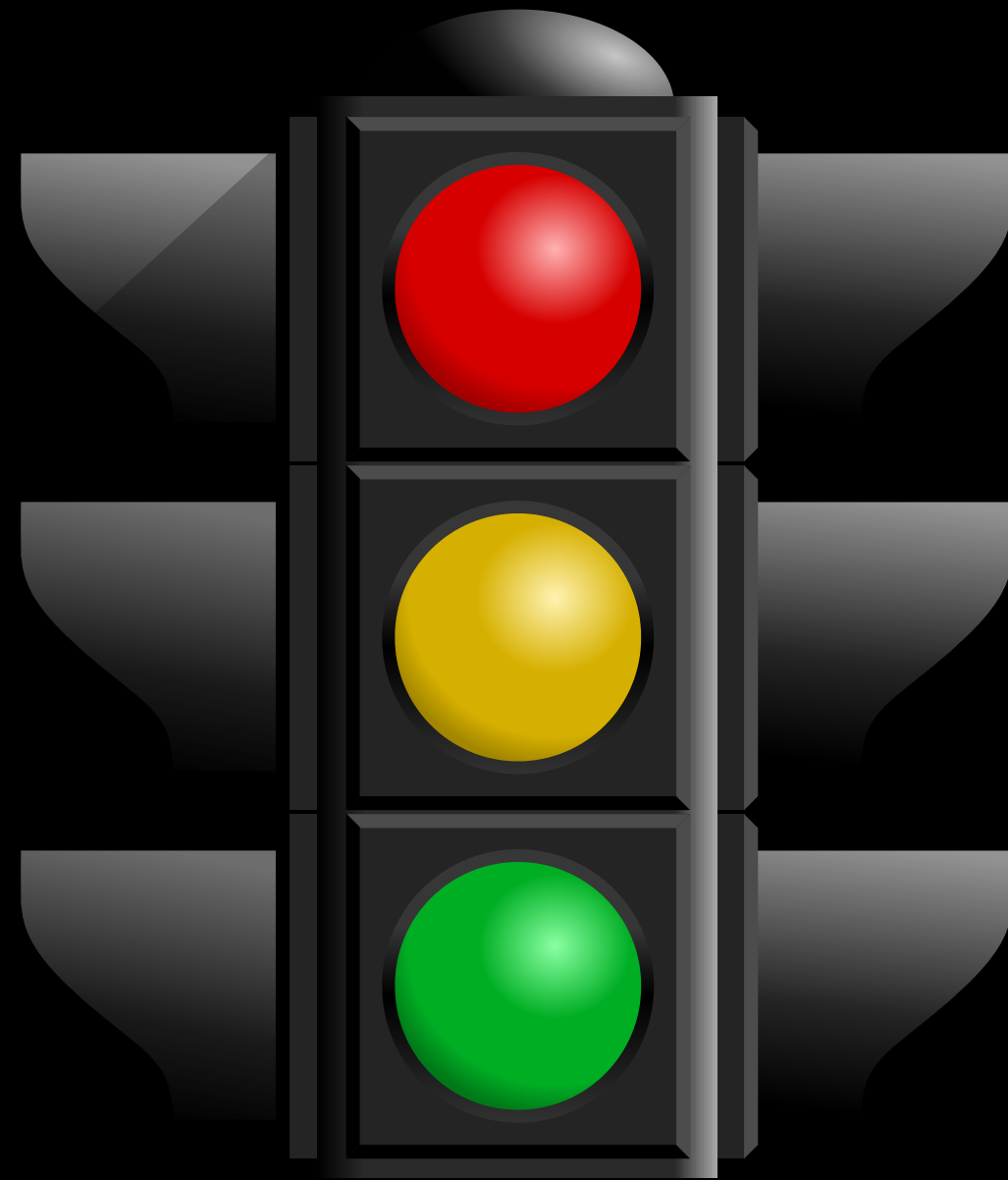
Focusing on the good parts of our day, of school, of family life

Belonging interventions for carers

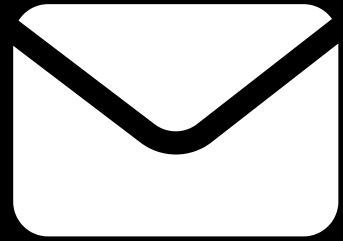


Multi-generational connections!

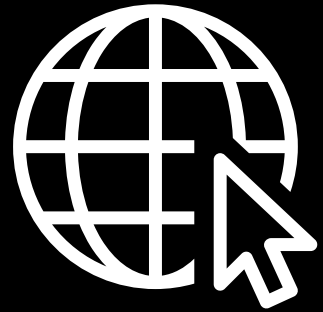
REFLECTING ON TODAY



Keep in touch



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Wag Tales Podcast

