



Counselling and providing emotional support for children and young people

Workshop Notes
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Encourage

Tell children you are always available to listen to them.
Remind them of this frequently.

Empower

- Hang back when children go out to play and establish a routine of being around for easy contact
- Tell them if they want to talk about anything they could bring a friend along with them
- If you suspect someone wants to talk perhaps engage them in activities such as helping you to do things
- If you suspect someone wants to talk perhaps engage them in passing first: 'Alright today Suki?'
- Have 'Time to Talk' regularly when you facilitate in step by step pair work and whole class discussions about pertinent issues
- BE BRAVE: 'Today our theme is Coronavirus and worrying about our loved ones getting ill'
- Use A and B role plays to practise children discussing issues: 'A you should invent a problem and B you are playing the teacher and try to help them.'
- Train children in some of the listening skills below and practise them in the techniques
- Use mood/feelings charts in the classroom
- Teach children the vocabulary of feeling

Discussion Piece

Always? Sometimes? Never?

1. To listen
2. To reassure that everything will be alright
3. To ask for specific information
4. To share your own similar experiences
5. To say you understand about the child's experience
6. To explore the child's identity
7. To take responsibility for making everything better
8. To know about the child not just their problem
9. To tell the child what to do
10. To ask the child why they feel as they do
11. To control the conversation
12. To help the child understand their feelings
13. To take away pain by offering sympathy
14. To ask what they want to change
15. To give advice

Other Ideas

Unhelpful

Why questions: can sound blaming and can make the other person feel they have to justify their behaviour. They can be confusing and difficult to answer. *'Why did you feel like that when the teacher told you off?'*

Identification: is based on our experiences and takes the focus away from the child. *'And I know how that feels too. It's so hard – the same thing happened to me when I was younger.'* 'I know... I know' etc.

Sympathy: is saying how you feel about what is happening to them and can leave us wanting to 'rescue' the child *'You poor thing, that sounds awful. I wish I could just make it all go away.'* **NB In contrast to 'Empathy'**

Bandaging: is being dismissive of the other person's feelings and not respecting the importance of what they are telling us. *'Don't worry, it'll all be OK in the end.'*

Diverting: is changing the subject and devaluing what the other person has to say. *'Do you want to talk about anything else?'* We might divert when find it difficult to listen to something or feel it is inappropriate to talk about in some way.

How to provide emotional support

Listen and communicate willingness and time to listen

Communicate warmth and empathy

- Help the young person to tell their story
- Help the young person to identify and understand their feelings
- Help them to understand their problem/situation
- Help them to seek and find their own solution and take action themselves if appropriate

Key Tactics

- ✚ Ask open questions
- ✚ Reflect feelings
- ✚ Praise
- ✚ Paraphrase and summarise to check understanding

1 Engagement

Thank you for coming to talk to me today. What would like to talk about?

Yes we can talk about that and maybe come up with something that might help.

How are you feeling today?

This is a safe place for us to talk.

Tell me about things...

Reflect Feelings-

IT SEEM/SOUNDS LIKE/I AM SENSING/ YOU ARE...

UPSET, SAD, AFRAID, ANXIOUS, FED-UP,

ANNOYED, DEPRESSED, ANGRY, CONFUSED

Paraphrase story So you are feeling because....

Have I got this right?

Praise, Affirm: you are doing very well...

Well done for being able to speak about this...

I can see you find this quite difficult to talk about

Try to tell me a little more about **what** happens when....

Try to tell me a little more about **how you feel/**

how it makes you feel when....

Well done you have explained that very clearly

I sense you are trying really hard to cope at the moment

I know it took quite some effort to come and see me

You deserve to be treated better than this

It is important that people listen to you, treat you with respect

Counsellor: What would you like to talk about today?

Child: I am feeling really sad.

Counsellor: You are feeling really sad- can you tell what is making you feel really sad today?

Child: I miss my dad.

Counsellor: You miss your dad- can you tell me a little more about that?

Child: I want to be with him but he has another family now.

Counsellor: Your dad doesn't live with you anymore and you are really missing him, have I got that right?

Child: Yes. All his attention goes to his new baby. He doesn't care about us anymore.

Counsellor: How does that feel when he doesn't give as much attention to you?

Child: It's as if he doesn't care about us and has forgotten about us.

Counsellor: I can hear that you a feeling hurt at the moment because you feel your dad doesn't care about you and has forgotten you. Tell me a little more about your dad....

Be present.... tune in to the young person's communication style... convey warmth and empathy...go at child' pace... check understanding... show you are going to be non-judgmental... reflect feelings... ask open questions... show willingness to understand... validate feelings

Explore hopes for contact... check understanding of situation... paraphrase... summarise... ask direct questions.... ask probing questions.... ask about the child's world.

Know and explain your confidentiality policy. Know and use your referral line. Do not promise unconditional confidentiality since you may need to breach it.

2 Identify the Need

NON IMMEDIATE RISK

IMMEDIATE CONCERN

To talk

Emotional support

Wants to Change

Support change

Appears Stuck

Motivate to change

Emotional Crisis

Manage feelings, de-escalate and listen for risk

High Risk

Safeguarding- deescalate and work towards referral

3 Tailor Your Response

3.1 -Wants to talk

Provide emotional support

- Be fully present and focused on the child
 - Reflect expressed feelings
 - Listen for/reflect emotions behind the words
 - Help child to identify/name emotions
 - Listen *without interruption*
 - Ask open questions
 - Use silence/give space
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- Use prompts, give encouragement
 - Paraphrase or re-frame
 - Reflect content
 - Help them understand more clearly
 - Summarise complex stories
 - Clarify, check your understanding
 - Explore the young person's world
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- Break down overwhelming issues into manageable parts
 - Ask some direct (closed) questions, with caution
 - Explore the young person's identity
 - Explore how events/situations impact on them
 - Gently challenge where appropriate
 - Help the young person to see their situation from a different perspective

BRING FOCUS: You've mentioned a few things (PARAPHRASE)...
what should we talk about first?

3.2 Wants to Change

Supporting change

Thanks for describing what you are going through

Focus on positives: what do you hope will happen?

ASK THE MIRACLE QUESTION

Scaling 0-10

Why 5 not 4?

Just taking 1 step up the scale: what does it look?

You are doing really well.... it's difficult

EXPLORING OPTIONS

Let's think of some options that might work for you

What would you like to achieve?

What have tried before?

Evaluate options: what might happen if you do this?

What might happen if you did nothing?

External agencies... what do you know about...

ACTION PLANNING

What exactly they are going to do

How, when, where, how around/with

Maybe you could write down what you going to say...

A practice rehearsal in what they might say?

Obstacles to overcome and plan?

Let me know if things work out/don't go plan

Change Cycle

Pre-contemplation: ambivalent about it

Contemplation: thinking about change

Preparation: decision and planning it

Action: changing

Maintenance: trying to prevent relapse

Relapse: trying not to be demoralised

3.3-Appears Stuck

Motivating to change

OPEN QUESTIONS

AFFIRMATIONS

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

SUMMARIES

Simple Reflections

Repeating or re-phrasing what the young person has said

to demonstrate that you have heard.

Complex Reflections

- Double-sided affirmations (on the one hand...on the other...)
- Coming along side: I see... you are always ...
- Amplifications/Exaggerations

It sounds like . . .

It seems as if . . .

What I hear you saying . . .

I get a sense that . . .

I wonder if...

On the one hand ...and on the other hand...

It sounds like the pros outweigh the cons so

it may be that you decide that... is

not something you can do right now.

Immediate Concern

3.4 Emotional Crisis

Managing feelings: de-escalate and listen for risk

Prepare: what has got them into this crisis and what kind of crisis?

Engagement

Empathy: what does this feel like to you?
I understand that must be very difficult for you.
It's totally OK to feel like you do.
I will stay with you and help you through things.

Inform

Many young people find it helpful to do some relaxation activities when they feel this way.
It might help you feel better.
Are there any techniques you have been taught or tried before? Under CAMHS?
What works for them?
Do you think we could try something to make you feel better right now?

Collaborate

We could try them together if you like and see if they help you to feel any better.

Undertake

e.g Grounding technique:
5 things you can see 4 things you can touch at the moment
3 things you can hear 2 things you can smell
Look out of the window tell me what you see
Imagine a safe place: describe, reflect, speculate

Plan

When could you use these techniques?

Lots of others on Childline website

CHILDLINE WEBSITE- Self harm, suicidal thoughts/coping strategies-
Pamper box Make a note of technique for later use or another
Other people to talk to- trusted adult/friend?
Things to distract: movie, exercise, music, write- go for walk-
about feelings in Childline on-line journal
Could you decorate a space in your room/pamper box?
Referral?

IT WOULD HELP ME IF I UNDESTOOD A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOUR LIFE

Who you live with.... what school's like.... friends.....
teachers you can trust

Put the pain in a box

Just for a while... imagine yourself closing the box. What's it like now the pain is in the box and the lid is closed. PRAISE AFFIRMATION...
Can you talk to me now the pain is in the box?
Could you do this again after our call?

Focusing on something you can see

Can help you manage difficult feelings.... a photo or picture you can see right now.... look out of the window.... describe: colours, people what wearing etc.

Focus on something in your life you feel good about.... good at, like, care about... someone they care about.... pet... TV prog.. **tell me about it....**

Count backwards from 100

Self-encouraging phrases

Is a phrase you can repeat to yourself when you are struggling with your feelings... can you think of one yourself...

I'm doing really well... I can stand it.... This won't last forever.... I will make it through this... I am doing the best I can do.

Write three good things about yourself

On phone... post it note,... could be in phone... stuck on a mirror.... what would your friend say? Mum say?

OTHERS

3.5 High Risk

Safeguarding and work towards referral

Self-Harm

Can I ask you if you are self harming in any way?
Can I ask how long you have been self-harming?
What is it like when you self-harm?
What does it give you do you think?
How do you feel before it? After you self-harm?
What are the situations where you are most likely to do it?
What are your fears about living without self-harm?
What would you miss?
Is there anything you might like to understand about self-harm?

PLANING FOR THE FUTURE

Some young people find that when they feel like self harming they can do other things instead that help:
Phoning a friend, contacting Childline, Listening to Music, TV, comedy
Writing a diary, Pamper box
PHYSICAL ALTERNATIVES: punch bag of pillows, rubbing ice, red felt pen, rubber band

IT WOULD HELP ME IF I UNDESTOOD A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOUR LIFE

Who you live with.... what school's like.... friends..... teachers you can trust

SUPPORT

KEEPING WOUNDS AND INSTRUMENTS CLEAN

111, 999, GP

Suicidal Thoughts

Often when you YP talk this way they are maybe thinking about harming themselves or even taking their own life.... have you had these thoughts?

How long have you felt this way?

What is making you feel this way do you think?

Any support in past or on-going?

What do you intend to do?

You are doing so well to talk about this

Explore connections to death

Explore connections to life- reasons for living

Understanding the conflict between the two

Working with them to a point of uncertainty-

Put off making the decision and stay safe for the moment

Help to change:

Any plan?

A safety plan will have to factor in risks

Available support and background

risk factors to keeping safe

IT WOULD HELP ME IF I UNDESTOOD A LITTLE MORE

ABOUT YOUR LIFE

FOCUS ON SAFETY PLAN FOR SHORT TERM-

REITERATE IN FINAL SUMMARY

What are you going to do right now after our chat?

1. Trigger-Emotional dysregulation-
2. Unable to cope- flight /fight /freeze-
3. Pain-Calm/feeling safe

Remember your policies and practice guidelines

Feeling low> feeling suicidal> articulating intention> clear plan> in act of suicide?

G Generalised suicidal ideation when young person has no enduring/active thoughts

A Active suicide plan or have actioned it

R Recurring suicidal ideation- directive model

D Direct action required

Concluding

HELPING TO PLAN

- Ideas of the child
- Exploration should be as broad / creative as possible and may be helped by open questions such as:
'What else can you think of?'
'What would you do if there was nothing getting in the way?'
- Explore what the child wants to achieve.

What have they done already?

What has worked before?

Counsellor can introduce options for consideration:

Suggestions should be made tentatively, e.g. *'What if...?'* *'How would it feel to...?'*

Looking at the consequences of each option:

Each option can be considered in terms of its possible or likely outcome or consequence.

Consider questions such as

What do you think might happen if you do this?

What do you think might happen if you don't do this?

What might happen if you do nothing?

What do you know about ... [external agency]

Help the young person to be realistic about their options

Consider evidence - what might or might not work

Making ideas concrete

What exactly will you do?

Is there anything you will need help with?

Who may be there to help you?

Being specific

When will you do it?

Where will you do it?

Who will you speak to?

What will you say?

Rehearsing:

Go over what the young person might say.

Offer option to rehearse with you.

Help them to make a list or to summarise the points they want to say in order to remember them.

Check out the possible obstacles:

What might get in the way?

How might they tackle those obstacles?

Consider questions such as *'What might you do if...?'*

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

I'm just going to check I've understood what you've told me so far..." [Give summary.] Have I got that right? And you've decided that....

HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT TODAY'S CHAT?

Feeling any better? We are always here for you if you want to talk again.

'Do you think we might end the discussion here?'

You have done so well in talking about this. It so important to talk through things like you have been doing today.

You have explained your thoughts so well.

You are clearly a thoughtful and caring young person: you deserve better than this/feeling happier than this/

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW RIGHT AFTER CONTACT?

ARE YOU HAPPY TO FINISH OUR TALK NOW?

