

What to do with a worry

A workshop to explore worries and to identify how adults can support children

What's in this resource

- Check-in
- Exploring Worries
- Worry Butterflies
- Dealing with a worry respectfully

What do I need?

- Emoji icons
- Worry butterfly template
- Coloured pens and pencils

Who's it for?

- Small groups of children and adults
- Language and questions can be adapted for any age
- Sharing the Worry Butterfly with adults is best done either in very small groups or 1:1

Check-in

It is very important to start this session with a check-in. When it comes to exploring worries it's important to establish trust and give children time and space to talk about their feelings openly.

Sit in a circle together on the floor. Spread the emoji icons (available in resource) on the floor. Explain to children that we will all pick one emoji to represent how we are feeling today. Let them know that we are doing this because it is important to understand how we are feeling and to let others know as well. We are going to be talking about worries today so we need to make sure that we are all feeling comfortable and safe.

Go round the circle with everyone choosing an emoji that represents how they are feeling. If they feel comfortable ask children to say why they are feeling that way. If anyone says anything of concern make sure you follow up safely and discretely.



Exploring Worries

10 minutes in a group

Staying in your circle explain that today we are going to be talking about worries. We want to find out what worries children have in school and how adults can offer support to overcome them.

Start the session with an open discussion. Make sure children feel comfortable, and don't feel pressured to share. Here are some prompts to help the discussion:

- What might a child worry about at school?
- How do children feel when they have a worry?
- When you have a worry at school, how does it affect your day?
- Children can have worries at home too. Do worries from home ever impact on school?
- Do worries from school ever impact on home?

Listen openly to the children and explore any themes that start to emerge from the group.



Worry Butterflies

10 minute activity

Explain to children that you and other adults in school want to support children when they have a worry. To help with that you are going to create some worry butterflies.

You can use the instructions on this page to create colourful butterflies with your children. Make sure they have enough space to draw and write on their butterfly.

On the left-hand wing ask the children to write and draw a worry a child might have in school. This could be from the discussion you had earlier or from something else. Once everyone has a worry written down we can move on to the next stage.

NB: This workshop is not designed to invite disclosures from children; however, some children may write down or talk about a worry that feels like a wellbeing concern. Pay close attention to the children in your group and be mindful that some might need some space or to talk to you about their worry.

How to make a butterfly

Resources

- Coloured paper
- Pencil
- Scissors

How to ...

1. Choose your favourite colour
2. Fold your paper in half
3. On one side draw a shape similar to the letter B, these will be your butterfly wings, make sure they have lots of room on them for writing
4. Cut along your lines
5. Open out your gorgeous butterfly!



Sharing Worries

20-30 minutes with an adult

For this task you can choose whether to continue working in your current group or whether you would like to split into smaller groups of 1/2 children and open the work up to other adults in the school. There are advantages to either approach. Small groups with other adults will take around 10 minutes to complete, a bigger group discussion will likely take 20-30 minutes.



Whether you work in your original group or the smaller adult and child pairs you should now be thinking together about solutions to the worries on the butterfly wings. Think about:

- Who needs to know about the worry?
- How might the child feel?
- How can the adult help a child not to feel so worried?

The adult and child should write their solution on the right-hand wing.

We would recommend doing a check-in with the children at the end of this task to make sure they are ok. Again you can use the emoji icons at the end of the resource for support with this. Make sure there is space for children to share their emotions.

Worry butterflies can be displayed in school and adults should share their learning with other staff so that adults in school know how children would like to be supported when they have a worry.

Top tips for sharing worries

Tips from children on how they like to share a worry in a trustful and respectful way

It is important that every child has an adult they can trust in their life. Someone they can speak to, who they feel they can share their worries with, looks out for them and who will help them stay strong. The role of the trusted adult is to make time to really listen and make the child feel safe and valued.

Below are some tips from children in Aberdeen for how you can become their trusted adult:

- **Children need time** – adults have to find the space in their day to stop and listen to us
- **Adults should be kind and not judge** – they should understand how we might feel and make us feel loved
- **All children need someone who will really listen** – we need adults to look at the child when they are talking, and stay quiet, calm and be ready to listen
- **Confidentiality matters to children** – children want to tell a trusted adult their worries, but they don't want this person to tell other teachers and professionals what they have shared. There should be trusted adults to speak to in private without the worry of it being spread. Children understand that an adult can share worries if it is really serious or they are concerned for a child – for example if a child tells you they are getting abused, hurt, bullied or not enough food.

Sometimes a child might share a worry that is too big for you to support them with on your own. If this happens you will need to follow your school's child protection policy.

Emoji Icons for Check-in

Feel free to use these icons or have children create their own. Cut them out and put them in the centre of your circle for your check-in.

