

P4C in the Time of Corona

Keeping your Community Safe

September 2020



Government guidelines for school re-opening in September, together with parent and staff concerns about maintaining some degree of social distancing, could make it challenging to run P4C enquiries in their traditional form. Possible issues include:

- Requirement for classrooms to be set out in forward-facing layouts;
- Lack of outdoor or school hall space for more socially-distanced enquiry circles, or bad weather;
- Risk associated with small groups in close contact;
- Risk associated with activities that involve students moving around such as Change Places, Pass the Ball or Pass the Message;
- Risk associated with passing objects from student to student;
- Risk that enquiries revert to teacher-pupil-teacher dialogue rather than peer-to-peer.

As well as all this there's going to be a lot of pressure to catch up with the curriculum, and a lot of focus on student well-being. So, there will be a huge need for P4C, but quite a few obstacles to doing it in the normal way. We've collected ideas from trainers and teachers on how to make the most of a difficult situation. We hope you find it helpful.

The first, and most important, thing to say is that everything in this document comes second to your school's general guidelines and risk assessments for a safe return to school for all students.

The rest of the documents comes under these headings:

- Quick ideas
- Working with more experienced P4C communities
- Safe P4C areas for Early Years
- Safe P4C in alternative provision
- Outdoors P4C
- Online ideas
- Stimulus suggestions

Quick ideas

Here are some things you could do whilst desks are facing forward in rows and whilst you're avoiding sharing resources:

Re-arrange your space

- When possible use other/big spaces e.g. hall, playground, tents (e.g. open sided gazebos or huge county fair tents/marquees) and sit in a circle with some space between the chairs;
- Students could sit on individual large mats or a 2m x 2m square with a named cushion at each corner;
- Adapt the fishbowl technique so that one row of students is involved in the dialogue and the rest of the class focus on active listening and recording thoughts, then move to another row to continue to build the dialogue;
- Create a P4C safe space for paired work: see below for Early Years example;

Inner circle: outer circle

- We used inner circle and outer circle P4C enquiries with our BEd students to help create a safe physical distance for P4C enquiry.
- We put 15 people in the inner circle and 15 in the outer. The inner circle were the active P4C participants and the outer circle observed. The reasons we did this was not for Social Distancing, of course, but actually to teach the students to listen and wait their turn.
- For the social-distancing scenario it would be good to get the outer circle to observe and identify good thinking moves and feedback to the inner circle, and then vice versa.

Adjust your process

- Increase pair talk (as group talk may not be possible) - they may have two partners - one on each side;
- Use speaker chooses and random selection, such as lolly sticks, sometimes to decide whose turn to talk;
- Consider moving students each week so back row becomes front row;
- Do question-forming in pairs or individually;
- Vote by standing up (raise arms also e.g. three vote - stand up and raise both arms);
- Consider encouraging students to stand when they speak - helps with audibility;

Ideas from summer school

- I have planned a P4C session in a forward-facing classroom for part of a school's summer school- I simply wrote a worksheet with three structured questions that the students can write a response to and then hopefully a conversation can grow out of that. I have added a 'Mindful Minute' opportunity for them to reflect on the answers the group come up with.
- Something I haven't tried yet is whiteboards - I know there will be cleaning issues but if each student has their own board and pen it is a great way of getting individual responses in a group setting.

- Try having an enquiry with eyes closed or blindfolded. *Is eye contact and being in a circle important for community building?*
- Take a leaf out of the flipped learning book and send the stimulus home in advance of the enquiry, asking students to come ready with an enquiry question to air.

Emulate traditional enquiries

- Adapt ground rules to the new situation - *how can we include everyone?*
- Put a circle of names on the board to use when doing rounds;
- Have the names on sticky notes so you can move them around to represent positions on an agree/disagree horseshoe or continuum line;
- High-quality full enquiries can happen even when not in a circle. Do hands up instead of hands out to indicate wanting to contribute;
- Students could all have a class list or a class circle diagram - they can then annotate it during the enquiry and reflect on levels of participation. This, if done each week, could provide good evidence of increasing participation;
- Do online enquiries with up to 12 students on Zoom as an after-school philosophy club.

Use different learning devices

- Use individual reflection logs or P4C journals;
- Use communication cards for students to hold up to allow interaction and non-verbal communication: **red = disagree, green = agree, amber = unsure**;
- Use individual whiteboards to participate and show thinking or keywording;
- Use a large whiteboard at the front to do concept activities - ask students *Where do you think this one should go?*

Exploit technology

- Use technology to allow pupil interaction with tools such as iPads, Padlet, Slido, Parlay and Mentimeter.
- Here's a document on doing P4C via free Google apps which would be useful for teachers and families:
<https://tinyurl.com/GoogleTools4P4C>

Using technology

- North Lakes Primary already uses a lot of tech in P4C (before Covid-19) e.g. all the children have an iPad and they interact to generate their questions and then vote. Using an iPad is an integral part of the session and it works really well.
- I imagine many schools will be using iPads more as a interactive participation tool in this way come September.

Do short-form P4C

- Use P4C activities in bite-size chunks in all lessons to support the curriculum;
- Take advantage of small catch-up groups going out - enquires in rows will be easier with fewer students;

Play non-contact communication games

- I've been asked a few times recently for some activities to develop communication and connection. [My blog](#) has seven ideas which don't involve passing objects:

- Pass the smile
- Rabbit ears
- Group story
- Secret person
- Yes, and ...
- Odd one out
- Imagination game

Other ideas for non-contact P4C games

- What's in the box?
- Postcard Story (pass out and collect in individual images without students sharing them)
- Word Connect/Disconnect
- Would you rather...?
- Good idea/Bad idea?
- Stand up/Sit down if...
- Zip, Zap, Boing
- Pass the clapping pattern
- Blast off / Countdown
- Games with actions/mime
- Wink murder

Don't forget the upsides!

- Students may miss the circle so much that they really value doing full enquiries and normal P4C when we can return to it;
- See the challenge as a community building opportunity. Have a discussion about the logistics and resources - collaborative problem solving;
- See this temporary situation as an opportunity not a problem: for example:
 - *It's a chance for us all to learn how to project our voices to make sure everyone can hear us;*
 - *We can play listening games to see how good we can get at hearing others even when we are not sitting in a circle.*

Working with more experienced P4C communities

I think it might be useful to distinguish between working with classes new to P4C and those more experienced. Certainly, if I were teaching in a school, I would have expectations for my class to be involved in the negotiation of the ground rules and strategies - and I would be relating this to the 4Cs.

In fact, my starting point would probably be to do the first P4C session in rows and get children to consider how it

Collaborative planning and evaluation

- Involve students in the negotiation of how the sessions will be organised from week to week.
- Give pairs of students responsibility for trying out different and creative voting techniques.
- Spend more time evaluating new strategies against the 4Cs, especially caring and collaborative thinking.

will affect the usual P4C before I start introducing any new strategies.

With more experienced groups, I would take my lead from the children whilst being mindful of the social distancing requirements. It would be good for more experienced groups to evaluate each of the 10 steps and consider how they will be affected or to consider aspects of P4C e.g. participation, listening, hearing, speaking, thinking, enjoyment etc.

Peer facilitation

One possibility for practiced P4Cers is to explore thoughts on a stimulus or philosophical question in a peer facilitated group. There are two seating arrangement options to best suit the size of your classroom.

If social distancing can be maintained, the students sitting on the first and the third row can turn their chairs so that they are facing the row behind. In groups of 3 or 4, they are then able to choose a peer facilitator to facilitate their dialogue.

For smaller classrooms, 3 or 4 students in one row can form a group. Perhaps this could lead to the facilitators relaying their group's key thinking back to class as well as the thinking moves, grooves or skills utilized by the group. What a thoughtful, metacognitive activity that would be!

Self-facilitating groups

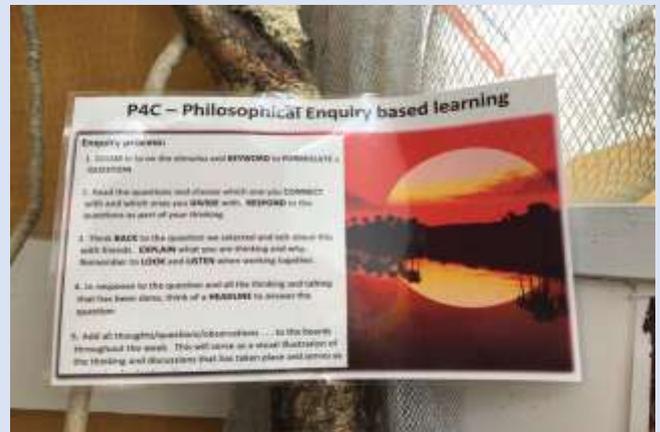
- I've been wondering whether self-facilitating KS2+ groups of four or so might work more effectively in the socially-distanced classroom layout (a little like Reciprocal Reading groups for those that have come across them).
- If each group then shared their thought-tracking with the class, there would be, perhaps, the opportunity for a greater focus on their meta-cognitive development too.

Safe P4C areas for Early Years

At Alfreton Nursery School we have decided to set up safe P4C areas that support collaboration, but at the same time discourage groups of more than two children at a time working in close proximity. Guidance and support for practitioners is on offer within the areas, including support with questioning.

Within our P4C area we have various stimuli and a keyword. There are opportunities for children to draw and write as well as question and debate. Practitioners encourage children to formulate questions relating to the keyword and drawing on mental provocations taken from the objects of fascination. Adults scribe children's questions and observations and display them on the boards, enabling the next children to reflect on others' thoughts and discuss.

As thoughts are captured, a rich collection of inspiration and dialogue grows. During the course of the week, children are gently guided through the enquiry stages displayed in the photograph, and an empathic pace is maintained, ensuring inclusivity for all and a diverse collaboration of thinking.



Safe P4C in alternative provision

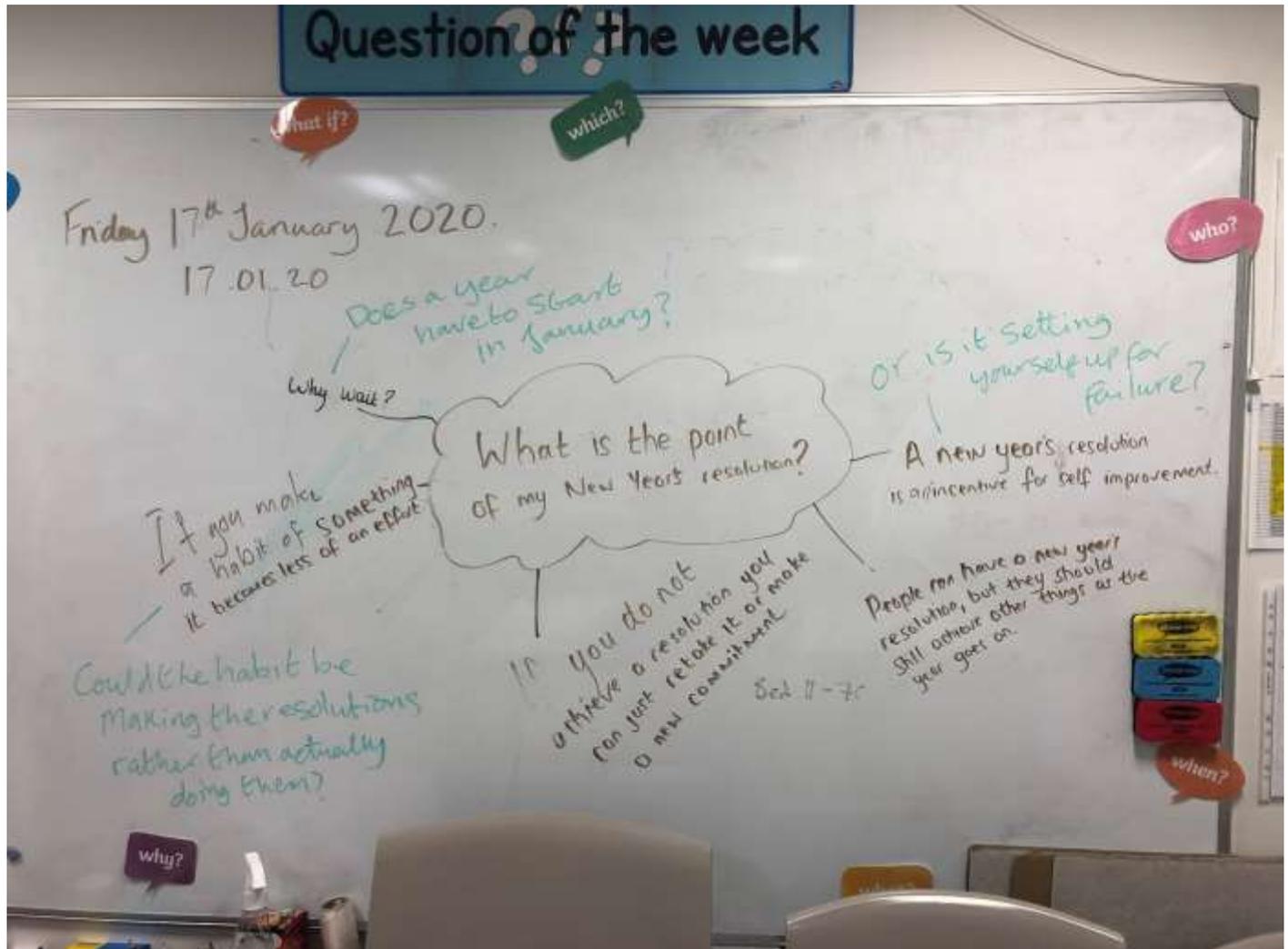
Our work in Alternative Provision settings (PRUs, Hospital Schools and SEN schools) has taught us that flexibility is key when creating communities of enquiry with disparate school communities.

Our main approach is to bring pupils and teachers together, when they can't be physically together, is Shared Projects. One example, is a Philosophical Working Board where a question is posed on a centrally located whiteboard, either by a student or teacher, then built upon by other individuals through questions, comments and challenges, thus enabling everyone to use and develop their skills and knowledge of the 4Cs of P4C.

Our Permaculture projects allow children and adults to work together on a shared, whole school project in their garden or school building, observing and contributing to its progress individually and collectively and on their own terms.

Finally, in addition to the many video communities of enquiry popping up throughout the world, the teachers we work with have been using social media successfully to bring separated communities together,

in particular at one school individual bubbles will make a TikTok about a question or stimulus and another bubble will create a filmed response - allowing children to make cognitive connections with their peers without needing to be together in a physical space.



Outdoors P4C

I am a great fan of P4C and linked Thinking Moves 'in', 'through' and 'linked to' the outdoors. It is such an important time to get all children outside with the many linked benefits, such as wellbeing and of course increased learning. At a time where children's safety is paramount and as a result much time will be sat in rows and facing the front the outdoor classroom offers greater opportunity and many would suggest a reduced risk. [My blog has lots of ideas on this.](#)

P4C in the Outdoors with linked *Thinking Moves* can include very simple activities; such as:

- Collecting 2 items from the locality – which would you rather be? *Justify, Picture, Respond and Weigh up.*
- Go on a bug hunt – what did you find? Record the answers and order according to beauty or likes/dislikes. *Order, Explain, Look and Weigh up*

- Collect items from the locality - group according to same and different or which is the odd one out. *Group, Connect, Divide and Vary*
- Take a moment to pause and listen to the sounds in the environment – How many sounds did you hear? (consider type and degree) Which do you like/dislike? Do we all agree? *Group, Justify, Listen and Respond.*
- Collect sticks or another object from the environment – provide an opening phrase ‘this is not a ‘stick’ this is a...’ *Formulate, Headline, Picture and Use.*



- What is the value of the Rusland Valley?
- Why do you value the Rusland Valley?
- Why do we value nature?

Online ideas

Concept Lines: A useful way to get students collaborating and discussing online, is to create a Google Slides doc where they are able to manipulate various text boxes. Depending on the age of the students you teach (I teach High School) you may have to take them through the process by showing them how to do it.

I have created slides where they have to make a copy for their own group, and ones that require all of us to be able to work on them at the same time.

Collaborative online concept lines - 1

- Exploration of the senses for Grade 11 International Baccalaureate Students, as an introduction to, and problematising of, the senses as a way of knowing:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1NxRy9ABtl6HtwtrnDAYNVBQWtFSXgae3Rli-W-kvBvg/edit?usp=sharing>

Collaborative online concept lines - 2

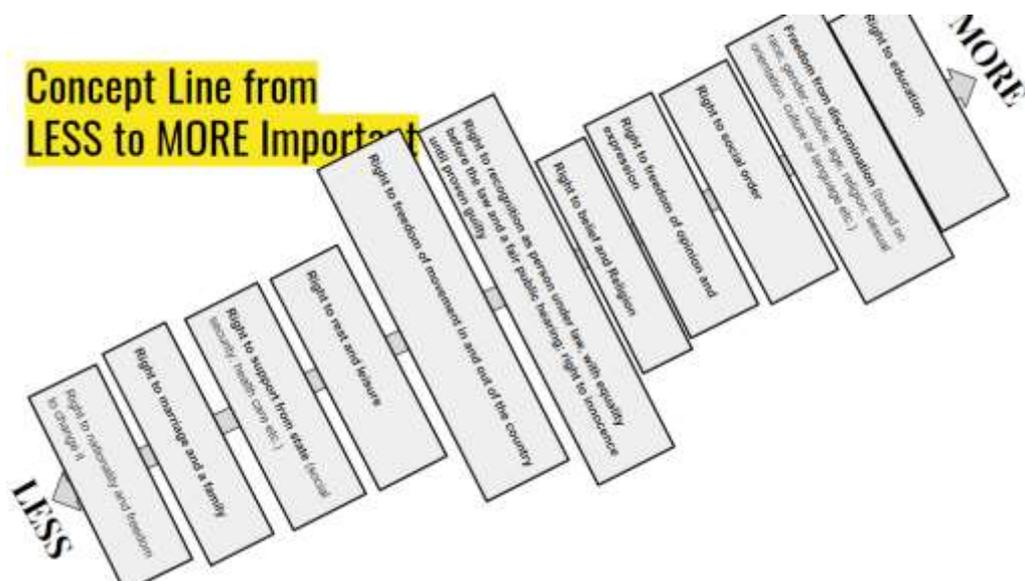
- We used this as an introduction to Human Rights, with the objective of starting discussion and to highlight what happens when one right clashes with another.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1nIRC2kSG8weQQwbK8kspdhNhyHx4HevRBFev8FkAHzg/edit?usp=sharing>

By breaking away into small group chats, where they have a chance to explore the concept line and move things on it, giving reasons to each other, they are given an opportunity to collaborate in a way that is not usually possible online.

We use Microsoft Meet at school, but Zoom, and its breakaway room function, is especially helpful with this sort of activity. Again, the ages of children you

teach play a role. Even with very young children, it could be a possibility to share your screen and have them instruct you (with reasons) as to where to put something, e.g. on a concept line.



Reflection spaces: Using Google Slides to create opportunities for reflection has also proven useful. It gives students an opportunity to examine their own learning, as well as to see what others are writing. Although I do not always advocate for public reflection, I have found that, sometimes, when students see others' insights, they become more nuanced in their own exploration of their learning.

I find that sometimes teenagers resist reflecting, as it means they have to examine their own thinking, and they are quite often focused on the next thing, rather than using what they have already experienced to inform the next learning experience. Drawing on what they have learnt, and especially, what they would like to use next time has proven very valuable.

One of the most interesting reflections was to get students to write their own and then comment on someone else's. They were really supportive of each other.

How to do it

- Step 1: Set up a Google Slide show (very similar to PowerPoint).
- Step 2: Depending on the age of students, create a 'how to copy this document page'
- Step 3: Decide on the concept to be explored
- Step 4: Choose pictures, quotes, examples, synonyms that bring out the nuances of the concept.
- Step 5: Create a concept line with instructions if necessary.
- Step 6: Sit back and watch their thinking emerge.

Get bad news: For this one, I got students to comment on each other's reflections after they had played a game called Get Bad News, which explores how Fake News is generated. They have to win badges, and make questionable moral and ethical decisions to score the highest and 'win':

Get Bad News Game:

LINE 1: Surnames A-G

██████████ The game was very fun and interesting and I found that people will do anything to feel good and get attention even if they know it's morally incorrect.

██████████ Amazing how easily people can lie.

██████████ - to be honest I didn't find the game very difficult, nor was it hard to make 'dubious' decisions, as the game was not real so it was not actually affecting people.

██████████ very good point on how our generation is able to see the difference.

██████████ I did not feel right spreading things that I knew were false. The game taught me that fake news articles often use emotionally triggering titles to get people hooked.

██████████ - I agree but after a while I kind of got into it and almost completely forgot about my morals

██████████ To be honest it was not hard to play the game and get a high score because I just did the opposite of what I would do in real life.

██████████ it did feel weird however trying To be bad and to make the wrong decisions.

██████████ - the game itself wasn't a difficult task, our generation is very experienced with these types of incidents and a lot of us are able to see the difference.

██████████ very good point on how our generation is able to distinguish some fake news from true news at a glance.

██████████ - I found the game really interesting because it started to feel really good and fun to compromise my morals for views. I think this gives insight into why fake news is created

██████████ completely agree with this statement, I'd love to know how you think you and others in your class did when it came to creating fake news.

<https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro>

Get Bad News Info for teachers: <https://www.getbadnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Bad-News-Game-info-sheet-for-educators-English.pdf>

Stimulus suggestions

Sharing and friendship

Younger children

Sharing Cookies



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTFJ9gjfAXg>

Talking points

- Why should we share?
- Does one good turn deserve another?
- When things run short, should you think of others' needs?

Older children

Can I be your friend?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDycZH0CA4I>

Talking points

- What does friendship mean?
- Does what you say depend on where you say it?
- Is it OK to behave the same way, wherever you are?

Willy and Hugh by Anthony Browne: Hulking Hugh seems an unlikely candidate, but as Willy discovers, the oddest couples can make the best of friends. Suggested by Sian Hosmer for 3-5 year olds.

Little Beauty by Anthony Browne: This gorilla appears to have everything he needs, but one day he signs that he is sad and needs a friend. Suggested by Di Horsten for 3-5 year olds.

Simon Sock by Sue Hendra: A hilarious story celebrating friendship and difference from an exciting new picture book partnership. Suggested by Kerry Caddell for nursery.

A Friend for Little Bear by Harry Horse: Little Bear lives all alone on a desert island. He wishes he had something to play with. Then a stick comes floating by, followed by a bottle and then a wooden horse. Little Bear and wooden horse play together and have a wonderful time. But problems arise as more and more things come floating by. Suggested by Gina Mullarkey

Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel: From writing letters to going swimming, telling stories to finding lost buttons, Frog and Toad are always there for each other—just as best friends should be. Suggested by Anastasia Avdieva for age 3-5 and 6-9.

The Storm Whale by Harry Horse: Every day, in a house by the sea, a little boy watches his father leave for a long day's work. One night, a great storm washes a small whale onto the beach. The boy discovers the whale is a good listener. The father discovers the boy is lonely. Together, they return the whale to the sea. And from that day on, the boy learns that the father can be a good listener too. Suggested by Rebecca Gough

Sylvia and Bird by Catherine Rayner: Sylvia is the only dragon in the world and very lonely. But then she meets Bird. Bird is tiny and chirpy, nothing like the huge dragon. And Sylvia worries that maybe she and her little friend are too different to remain friends. Together the two friends take a journey that will change Sylvia's life forever. Suggested by Lisa for age 3-5 and 6-9.

Moon Rabbit by Natalie Russell: Moon Rabbit loves living in the city. She has a wonderful home. Her favourite café. A park to play in. But sometimes she is just a little . . . lonely. And then one night, as the moon shines brightly, Little Rabbit meets Brown Rabbit. Could he be the friend she was wishing for? Suggested by Amanda Hubball for ages 3-5.



You've Got a Friend in Me from Toy Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMN4JZ8crVY>

Suggested by Jane Yates for ages 6-10

Feeling calm

Idea 1: Look at these Blobs. They are all calm. What does calm feel like? What makes you feel calm?
<https://loggerheadpublishing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/215-Blob-Tree-Posters-Detail-1-1.png>

Idea 2: Which Blob do you feel like? Why? Which one do you want to be and why?
<https://youngjournalistacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Blob-Tree-624x877.jpg>

Anxiety

Silly Billy by Anthony Browne

With our little ones I plan to use 'Silly Billy' as a stimulus story. We will be looking at it from the perspective of:

- Different types of worries that can look and feel silly, but all worries are valid. What worries you? Have you had extra worries recently? Explain and Respond to each other. Zoom in to your own worries and zoom out to hear others perspectives. Look and listen to each other.
- Family structure. In the story Billy manages to sleep at his Granny's house. Have you seen family who don't live in your house? How has that made you feel? Who do you tell when you feel worried? Think back and remember what it's been like.
- Looking at the origins of worry dolls and the fact that children all around the world have all suffered worries and loss. Connecting and Dividing globally. Can we Picture what it was like for children in Africa, China, America?
- Do we need to worry about sharing our worries? Billy worries about his worry dolls. Is it okay to share worries? Justify, maintain or negate what you believe.

Can talking about worries help? Stimulus: **Huge Bag of Worries** <https://youtu.be/CDrnuPj7xfs>

Do you have to talk to a person or can you talk to a pet or toy? Stimulus: **Thank Goodness for Bob** <https://youtu.be/sWTnPQqVhHg>

How can you calm down when you start to worry? Stimulus: **Wilma Jean the Worry Machine** <https://youtu.be/Yfva5ltdpEw>

Life not returning fully to normal

What does it mean to be patient? <https://youtu.be/LttVCn0PZ5c> (video: **What's the Big Idea?** Cbeebies)

Where the Wild Things Are https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cOEFnppm_A

- Where would you go, if you could go anywhere?
- What would be so good about that place?
- Would you still go if you had to go alone?

What is a hero? Can I be a hero? <https://youtu.be/jMzdwk7Rt1g> (video: **What's the Big Idea?** Cbeebies)

Bereavement

If you can't be with someone in person can you still imagine adventures with them? How can someone stay as a real part of our life even when they are gone? Can you still talk to someone once they die?

Stimulus: **Grandad's Island by Benji Davis** https://youtu.be/K9_KC3s3IRw

When someone has died do you think they would want you to be able to be happy and have fun without them? Stimulus: **Goodbye Mog by Judith Kerr** <https://youtu.be/3CPkKmB7ukU>

Does love go on forever? How can you use nature to remember the people who have gone? Stimulus: **No Matter What by Debi Gliori** <https://youtu.be/Q4-DrpXZwW8>

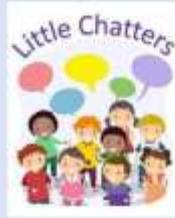
Do I have to pretend I am happy so that people won't worry? How can I help myself to feel a bit less sad? Stimulus: **Michael Rosen's Sad Book** <https://youtu.be/F4WOo0Lsr14>

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