

Preparing **today's** children for **tomorrow's world** by building **resilient, balanced** and **happy minds** at school and at home.

[myhappymind.org](http://myhappymind.org)



# DEVELOPING FAMILIES

## Full of Happy Minds

## INTRODUCTION

There is much in the media and literature about what it takes to create 'happiness' in children and indeed in adults. You would be forgiven for feeling that there is so much that it is almost impossible to know where to begin when tasked with looking for solutions.

So, rather than confuse you with more studies, theories and references we thought we'd share our perspective on the 4 strategies that we think have a big impact on developing mental wellbeing at home.

These are the fundamental principles behind the myHappyMind for Families program but we don't mind sharing them with you!

We've also created a helpful workbook to help you to identify where you are today and where you might want to focus. So, stick with us until the end!

We hope these are useful for you and we would LOVE to hear your thoughts – you can connect with us via Twitter, Facebook or Instagram!

## THE STRATEGIES...

1.

### PROACTIVE STRATEGIES WORK

Homes are incredibly busy places, we get it. Between school, after school activities, homework and the need to stop and relax, it can seem difficult to fit anything else in! It's no wonder then that we can find it difficult to find time to understand and implement mental wellbeing strategies.

Many of the families that we work with tell us that they understand and want to spend more time supporting their child's mental wellbeing but they either don't know how or it somehow slips to the bottom of the pile. Sound familiar? You are not alone!

Part of the challenge is that when we do find some extra time or space we tend to focus it on the highest priority at that point in time. So, unless mental wellbeing has reached 'high priority or crisis' stage, it will rarely get our full attention.

**So what is the answer? Simple, consistent proactive habits create positive mental wellbeing!**

# 2.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

Mental wellbeing has become a topic that many fear and we often hear parents talking about feeling out of their depth or overwhelmed by the subject. This sense of nervousness is not surprising given the impact that poor mental health can have.

There is no question that serious mental health issues require expert intervention. However, we believe that when it comes to establishing preventative practices every parent can and should play a pivotal role.

We also passionately advocate that when you find techniques that work for your child you should share these with the school and encourage them to reinforce them.

**We are on a mission to de-mystify mental wellbeing so that everyone understands how simple and practical it really is.**

# 3.

## HABIT CREATION

Teaching children mental wellbeing habits can't just be about a one off conversation. This is where we feel schools often get it wrong, for example having a mental health assembly and then doing nothing for the rest of the year!

Research shows that little and often is the way to establish sustainable habits that help to build and maintain mental wellbeing. Whether this is a daily goal setting exercise or a morning gratitude ritual, doing it consistently is so important. This little and often approach also makes it super easy to keep on top of each day!

**In our healthiest families children may spend 5 minutes a day on the habits that are helping them to be their best. Now we can all find that, right?!**

# 4.

## POSITIVE VS DEFICIT

It is inevitable that the approach to things change over time. It is our strong view that the approach to mental wellbeing is long overdue a shift and this is why we so strongly advocate for a Positive vs. a Deficit based approach.

Let's explore what this really mean through an example. Schools all around the country regularly run 'anti-bullying' weeks. We call this a deficit based approach because the focus is on the deficit or problem i.e. bullying.

What if instead of teaching kids about bullying we taught them about building positive relationships. What if it wasn't just for a week, what if building positive relationships was part of what children learnt each and every day?

Would it have a different impact? Might it remove the inevitable fear and upset caused to those being bullied and better enable the culprits to see another way? Our experience in schools tells us yes.

**This is why we believe focussing on positive preventative habits at home is the way forward and our clever scientist friends tell us the same thing!**

**So, there are our 4 strategies for building positive mental wellbeing habits in the home. What do you think?**

We have prepared a workbook for you below to help you reflect on how this resonates vs. your current approach to mental wellbeing at home.

Why not take 10 minutes to discuss this with your family and see where your strengths are and where you might have opportunities to do more?

Remember to get in touch, we love to chat and hear your stories!



## STEP 1

Print the scale below and identify where you are against each of the strategies. Mark yourself to the left side if you excel in this area or to the right if there is an opportunity for your school:

					1. Proactive and Reactive						
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
					2. Keep it simple						
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
					3. Habit creation						
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
					4. Positive vs Deficit						
	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

WE EXCEL IN THIS

WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY HERE!



## STEP 2

Think about the following questions and jot down your thoughts:

Reflecting on the results above, which of the strategies are you strongest at?  
What do you do to support this?

Reflecting on the results above, which of the strategies do you want to focus more time on?

What is the one action you will take to use the insight you have captured here to improve mental wellbeing in your family?

### STEP 3

Tell us what you think! We love being social so connect with us on facebook, instagram, twitter or pinterest!

