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| **Managing emotional distress – Class Management**  Guidance for Essex Schools and Education Settings  **Essex Educational Psychology**  September 2024 |

**Maintain normal routines and care**

be more tolerant and accepting of CYP and young people (CYP) who might be more restless, distractible, irritable, emotionally volatile and or difficult to engage than would usually be the case.

be flexible from your lesson plan to allow them to talk and ask questions.

When in discussion with CYP, do not be afraid of referring to the person(s) by name.

Be honest when answering questions. Do not be afraid of saying that you do not know the answer or that the question is one that is too difficult for you to answer.

Taking account of CYP’s needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the CYP (avoid using euphemisms).

Consider how best to follow up questions raised, for example, setting up a ‘questions post box’

Allow CYP to talk about their feelings including difficult, confusing and complex feelings. Give them the message that it is OK to talk and that their feelings are a normal experience given the situation.

In the same way, allow younger CYP to express themselves through their play. They are likely to feel the need to ‘work out’ difficult and confusing experiences and play gives them the opportunities to act out some of the issues.

Adults may feel uncomfortable witnessing CYP’s excitable ‘playing out’ of what has happened and may feel the need to intervene. Try to be accepting and permissive except where this is clearly unhelpful and/or distressing for other CYP.

Allow CYP to support each other.

Manage discussion in a calm and reassuring manner. Allow the expression of feeling but try to manage the emotional temperature. Try to help the CYP to achieve a sense of perspective. Reassure CYP about anxieties that they may be experiencing.

Consider setting up a display area for art work, writing, mementos that the CYP may wish to contribute.

Be aware of other CYP in your classes who may not be so visible but who nevertheless may be struggling to cope. Make times and opportunities for them to talk. If you continue to have concerns, refer them through the school’s pastoral processes. Inform parents.

Make opportunities to talk to CYP on an individual or small group basis as part of your social contact with the CYP. Even if the CYP are not very communicative, just being available can be very supportive.

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